



January 13, 2026
Volume 3, Issue 1

Rolling Thunder CA-1 Quarterly Newsletter

Our Mission

The major function of Rolling Thunder® Inc. is to publicize the POW-MIA issue: To educate the public that many American Prisoners of War were left behind after all previous wars and to help correct the past and to protect the future Veterans from being left behind should they become Prisoners Of War-Missing In Action. We are committed to helping American Veterans from all wars. Rolling Thunder® Inc. is a non-profit organization and everyone donates his or her time because they believe in the POW/MIA Issue that we are working on.

Rolling Thunder®, Inc. CA-1 is the first fully chartered west coast chapter of Rolling Thunder® Inc. We are dedicated to helping those who are serving, have served and the families left behind of those members in the armed forces who have been wounded, missing or killed in action.



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Meetings

Monthly Meetings

We meet the 3rd Wednesday of every month at the Elks Lodge at 6:30 PM.

Address:
The Elks Lodge #2477
158 Conejo School Rd
Thousand Oaks, CA.
91360

Become A Member

Whether you are a veteran or not, family member of a veteran or not, ride a motorcycle or not, YOU ARE WELCOME!

Rolling Thunder Story

Incorporated in 1995, Rolling Thunder®, Inc. is a class 501(c)(4) non-profit organization with over 90 chartered chapters throughout the United States and members abroad. While many members of Rolling Thunder®, Inc. are veterans and many ride motorcycles, neither qualification is a prerequisite. Rolling Thunder®, Inc. members are old and young, men and women, veterans and non-veterans. All are united in the cause to bring full accountability for Prisoners Of War (POW) and Missing In Action (MIA) of all wars, reminding the government, the media and the public by our watchwords: "We Will Not Forget."

Annual Events

Rolling Thunder CA-1 attends numerous events through-out the year to support, honor, and/or assist local veterans. The following list are the events we have scheduled in 2026 so far:

Gary Jones Memorial Service	1/30/2026
Memorial Day at Pierce Brothers	5/25/2026
Ride for the Blue	5/30/2026
Camarillo Street Fair (Heritage Days)	7/18 & 7/19/2026
Ventura County Stand Down	8/1/2026
Wings Over Camarillo Air Show	8/15 & 8/16/2026
Thousand Oaks Street Fair	10/18/2026
Wreaths Across America	12/12/2026

If there is an event that you would like Rolling Thunder CA-1 to consider, please let us know. We are always looking for ways to support our veterans and raise awareness of the Prisoner of War (POW) and Missing in Action (MIA) issue.

Dates to Remember

JANUARY

- 1 New Years Day
- 19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 27 1973 Vietnam Peace Accord
- 27 Holocaust Remembrance Day

FEBRUARY

- 1 National Freedom Day
- 3 U.S. Four Chaplains Day (1943)
- 4 USO Birthday
- 12 Lincoln's Birthday
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 16 Presidents Day
- 19 Coast Guard Reserve Birthday
- 22 Washington's Birthday
- 23 Flag Raised in Iwo Jima (1945)

MARCH

- 3 Navy Reserve Birthday
- 4 National Hug a G.I. Day
- 5 Seabees Birthday
- 8 Daylight Savings Begins (set clock ahead one hour)
- 13 K-9 Veterans Day (Birth of the U.S. K-9 Corps)
- 15 American Legion Day
- 17 Saint Patrick's Day
- 20 Spring Begins
- 21 National Rosie the Riveter Day
- 25 National Medal of Honor Day
- 29 Vietnam War Veterans Day

Rolling Thunder CA-1 Officers & Board

Officers

- President: John Short III
(800) 606-1390
- Vice President: Allan Woods
(805) 377-4492
- Secretary: Christina Woods
- Treasurer: Lisa Connolly



Board of Directors

- Chairman of the Board: Pat Connolly
- Membership/Board Member : Tom Cook
- Board Member: Jim Kirby
- Board Member: Mike Smith
- Board Member: Russ Miller
- Board Member: Tim Tarry



Member Updates

Welcome to our newest members; Jeff Gorell and David Ibarra.

Missing in Action (MIA) Update

Unaccounted for by War (as of 12/31/2025):

- World War II 71,806
- Korean War 7,386
- Vietnam War 1,566
- Cold War 126
- Gulf Wars 6
- & Libya

Total accounted for so far in FY 2026 (10/1/2025 - 9/30/2026): 46

WWII = 37, Korean War = 9, Vietnam War = 0

Total MIA count for California : 6,324

Recent Event Photos



(West Valley Christian School)



(RT CA-1 Holiday Party)

(Wreaths Across America)

Veteran Spotlight (as reported by Tim Coates)

We are spotlighting our Rolling Thunder brother, **Ron Swindle**. Ron has been a member of Rolling Thunder CA-1 since the organization began, so he is a Charter Member. He was born in Chicago, Ill, August 3, 1947. His family moved to El Dorado Springs, Missouri when he was just 3-years old. They stayed there until he was about 15 years old. Ron attended school in Missouri up to the 9th grade before moving to California. Ron completed High School at Simi Valley High School (so he is kind of a local boy with a southern accent!). He almost played high school football, but he broke his arm, ending his high school football career.

Two years after his high school graduation, he got a letter from Uncle Sam. It seems he was needed to help win the war. So, Ron was drafted into the Army in August 1967. Just a couple of years after graduating high school, Ron found himself heading to Fort Bliss, Texas to attend Boot Camp. After Boot, he was sent to Fort Sill, Oklahoma for Advanced Infantry Training (AIT). He was sent to Artillery Training. If you are talking to Ron and he keeps saying "what?", his training and service to our country may be why he can't hear too well! We tease him a lot, but he laughs it off, has his own retorts, and he returns fire while he "stands his ground".

After AIT, he got orders to go "boots on the ground" to Vietnam, arriving in country in January 1968. His Battery Unit HQ was in Tuy Hoa, RVN (Republic of Vietnam), but he was assigned to a roving battery of 8"-175 cannons. His job was to haul artillery in a 5-ton military truck along Highway 1 and then take muddy side roads to get to remote bases.

While at Base HQ, waiting to join his assigned unit, he found out the Battery he was going to had been overrun by the VC. He still had to drive on those dangerous roads. He and his "shotgun rider" were bouncing around on those thin canvas covered, pile busting seats, trying to spot the enemy before the enemy could get the first shot. Hauling heavy loads of munitions was dangerous and carried with it a lot of stress. Adding to that, one day, a lead truck that was about 50 yards in front of Ron got hit with heavy explosives, the first one hit the front of that vehicle, and the second round landed in the back. He was hauling high explosives, so fear was intense, but soldiers worked through that. It seems that, if you are going to go, go big! Ron worked through all that, until the day he rotated out of Vietnam and was sent home on a Freedom Bird. He was able to walk out of his combat time in Vietnam, on his feet and still standing, in January 1969 after a full year in country.

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Veteran Spotlight (continued)

When he returned home, he was sent to Fort Hood, Texas, where he hauled ammunition for the Army until his Honorable Discharge from active service in July 1969. Once again, as a civilian, Ron found work in a plastics extruding plant where he had worked prior to entering the service, and he worked there for 2-3 years. From there he worked hauling business forms in LACO and OC for another 22 years. Then he drove a roll off truck for 4 more years, and then hauled freight for another 15 years. Ron finally retired from the work force in 2012.

Ron has been married twice. He married his first wife in April 1969, but it ended in divorce in July 1974. That marriage brought a son, now 52 years old. He met his current wife, Kathy, in May of 1976, and they have 2 children together, a son (42 years), and a daughter (46 years). When talking to people, Ron frequently will start a sentence with "my wife", almost as an homage and in the most endearing way, before continuing with his story. She is always the first thing on his mind.

If you are wondering if Ron is a motorcycle rider, yes, he is. He has an 1100 Honda Shadow and 1500 Suzuki Boulevard. He also had a Honda Odyssey. In the past, when he was 22, he rode dirt/desert, racing when he could in Kettleman City and other desert riding areas. Ron prefers riding in tail position, his comfort zone, when on RT group rides. If you don't see him, trust that he is in the back of the pack bringing up the rear, and he will catch up. Rolling Thunder emphasizes that, for safety, it is important to ride within your comfort zone.

Ron has participated in Rolling Thunder events where he helped with painting houses, construction, and weeding veterans' property. RT helped one vet who was no longer able to safely get up the eight front steps to his porch and house. RT members helped build a covering and then installed an electric wheelchair lift, allowing for a safe change in elevation for the veteran. Joe Galante led the construction group of about 12 Rolling Thunder and other volunteers during this process. We, the RT work detail, were able to complete the job, but sadly, the veteran was only able to utilize it for four months before he passed away. It is unfortunate that this veteran succumbed to the effects of Agent Orange. The work we put in to help this vet work through his disabilities was appreciated and rewarding.

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Veteran Spotlight (continued)

We tease Ron, and he laughs it off but, don't take it as any sort of disrespect. Ron is a low-tech guy, he still uses a flip phone, so email goes through Kathy and snail mail may take a while. Yes, we tease him, and he just smiles. He is a good ol' boy, a brother and a friend.

Ron is a dependable member of Rolling Thunder, and he is generous with his time when helping to represent Rolling Thunder assisting veterans. He is devoted to Kathy.

If you get a chance, say hi to Ron.



Veteran Death Benefits (Part I)

BURIAL IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES

ELIGIBILITY/BENEFIT

The VA provides veterans and dependents a variety of gravesite options for burial, though choices are limited to those available at a specific cemetery. These options may include a full casket burial or a columbarium or in-ground niche for cremated remains. A limited number of national cemeteries also provide a scatter garden for dispersing cremated remains.

Gravesites in national cemeteries cannot be reserved, but the VA will honor reservations made under previous programs. The funeral director or the next of kin makes interment arrangements for an eligible veteran or dependent by contacting the national cemetery in which burial is desired. The VA normally does not conduct burials on weekends. However, weekend callers will be directed to a national cemetery that can schedule burials for the following week.

Spouses and minor children of service members and eligible veterans may also be buried in a national cemetery. If a surviving spouse of an eligible veteran remarries, and that marriage is terminated by death or dissolved by annulment or divorce, the surviving spouse is eligible for burial in a national cemetery. Burial of minor children of eligible persons is limited to unmarried children under 21 years of age, or under 23 years of age if they were pursuing a full-time course of instruction at an approved educational institution. Eligible veterans' unmarried adult children who became physically or mentally disabled and incapable of self-support before reaching the age of 21, or 23 if a full-time student, also are eligible for burial.

Parents of veterans may be eligible for burial at a national cemetery. A parent may be buried only within the veteran child's gravesite. No more than two parents are eligible for burial per deceased veteran child. Parent burial eligibility is subject to a determination by the secretary that there is available space within the veteran's gravesite.

PRE-NEED ELIGIBILITY FOR INTERMENT IN A NATIONAL CEMETERY

The VA provides eligibility determinations for interment in a VA national cemetery prior to the time of need. Through the Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility Program, upon request, individuals can learn if they are eligible for burial or memorialization in a VA national cemetery.

Veterans and eligible spouses now can receive a determination on burial at a VA national cemetery prior to their death.

Apply online for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility at va.gov/burials-and-memorials/pre-need-form-10007-apply-for-eligibility/introduction. Or, submit VA Form 40-10007 (Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery), which can be accessed at va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-10007.pdf, and supporting documentation, such as a DD Form 214, if readily available, to the VA National Cemetery Scheduling Office:

- Fax (toll-free): 1-855-840-8299
- Mail: NCA Intake Center, P.O. Box 5237, Janesville, WI 53547

Flying the American Flag

It is proper to display the flag from sunrise to sunset on all days the weather permits. The flag may also be displayed at night if illuminated by a light. But it is even more important to display the flag on national holidays and days of importance, including:

- New Year's Day
- Inauguration Day
- Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday
- Lincoln's Birthday
- Washington's Birthday
- National Vietnam War Veterans Day
- Easter Sunday
- Mother's Day
- Armed Forces Day
- Memorial Day (half-staff until noon)
- Flag Day
- Father's Day
- Independence Day
- National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day
- Labor Day
- Constitution Day
- Columbus Day
- Navy Day
- Election Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- State Holidays
- State Birthdays
- Local Holidays



“I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

Donations

Thanks to all who have contributed in any way to our chapter, organization and Veterans. We are 100% donation driven and 100% volunteer based. No one in the Rolling Thunder® Inc. organization draws a salary. All proceeds donated goes directly to help our Veterans and their families through projects we fund and manage. reminding the government, the media and the public by our watchwords: "We Will Not Forget."

How You Can Help

Without your help we would not be able to help our veterans. Rolling Thunder® Inc. CA-1 is a 501(c)(4) & Rolling Thunder® Inc. Charities is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

You may send donations to: P.O. Box 6672, Thousand Oaks, CA 91359, or Scan the QR Code Below to Donate or click on the following link: <https://rollingthunderca1.givingfuel.com/rtca1-donations>

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