

Rolling Thunder® Charities

★ COURAGE ★



PATRIOTISM ★ HONOR ★ SACRIFICE

Rolling Thunder® Charities, Inc.



Rolling Thunder members across the country help veterans in need by donating wheelchairs...



...serving at Stand Down events and countless other activities.

A 501(c)(3) charitable organization, Rolling Thunder Charities, Inc., was established to help American veterans and their families. It represents a tangible extension of the Rolling Thunder, Inc., mission:

“Our major function is to publicize the POW/MIA issue...

...to educate the public of the fact that many American prisoners-of-war were left behind after all past wars.

...to help correct the past and to protect 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. Each and every individual donates his or her time because we believe in the issue at hand.”

All funds donated to Rolling Thunder Charities are used to help veterans and their families. Contributions may be made to:

Rolling Thunder Charities, Inc.,

PO Box 327

Neshanic Station, NJ 08853.

The Audible Voice for Those Who Cannot Speak

Every year on the last Sunday in May during Memorial Day weekend, hundreds of thousands of motorcycles leave the Pentagon in northern Virginia, cross the Potomac River and roll into Washington, DC, to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on our annual Ride for Freedom, also called the “Run to the Wall.” The massive sound of the motorcycles is akin to the noise created by a bombing campaign over North Vietnam in 1965 dubbed Operation Rolling Thunder. That campaign became the namesake of the ride that began in 1988 to bring awareness of the POW/MIA issue to the American public.

Rolling Thunder is the audible voice for those who never returned from our foreign wars, and who cannot speak for themselves.

While many members of Rolling Thunder are veterans, and many ride motorcycles, neither qualification is a prerequisite. Rolling Thunder members are old and young, men and women, veterans and non-veterans. All are united in the cause to bring full accountability for POWs and MIAs of all wars, reminding the government, the media and the public by our watchwords: “We Will Not Forget.”



“Standing Behind Those That Stood Behind Us.” Rolling Thunder Tennessee Chapter 3 donated a wheelchair to Tami Cook, wife of Vietnam Veteran James Cook, US Army, SSG E6, who suffers from Spinal Cerebellum Atrophy. James Cook was the oldest US soldier still active until he retired in 2008.



Rolling Thunder New York Chapter 3 adopted Gold Star Mother Tess Whiteley and her husband Bill. Mr. Whiteley is a WWII US Marine Veteran, and their son, Wayne A. Whiteley, was killed in action in Vietnam. Mrs. Whiteley, confined to a wheelchair, now has more mobility with the ramp built by chapter members.



Rolling Thunder Colorado Chapter 1 presented a motorized wheelchair to Army Pvt. Joseph Kennedy, twice-wounded in Iraq and now partially paralyzed. Pvt. Niles, far right, accompanied Pvt. Kennedy from Fort Carson, CO, to receive the wheelchair. Pvt. Kennedy is married with a 1-year-old daughter.

The Humble Origins of a Passionate Cause

Rolling Thunder, Ride for Freedom was founded in 1987 by a group of Vietnam veterans, based upon their personal concerns about the prisoners-of-war and military service personnel missing in action from the Vietnam War.

Having honorably served their country, and having taken an oath to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies...” and to “bear true faith and allegiance to same,” these Vietnam Veterans were deeply troubled by the abhorrent attitude of neglect our government had toward those who did not make it out with their lives or their freedom. At the time, there had been more than 10,000 reported sightings of American soldiers living in dismal captivity in foreign lands. Intelligence reports of these sightings were generally ignored by the government and mainstream media. These veterans were ordinary men who understood they had a right to have their voices heard. They became the voices for those who had none.

Together, they laid plans for a gathering in the nation’s capital during the 1988 Memorial Day weekend. They reached out to their families, fellow veterans and veterans’ advocacy groups to unite and form a march and demonstration, heralded by the roar of Harley-Davidsons. The first “Rolling Thunder,” a name trademarked two years later, brought 2,500 participants. Today, more than two decades later, nearly half-a-million motorcycles and tens of thousands of pedestrian onlookers gather for this compelling event.

On the 10th anniversary in 1997, a Vietnam veteran was heard to remark with hope that the POW/MIA issue would be resolved before the 20th anniversary. In 2007, the 20th Rolling Thunder demonstration came and went, and plans for the 21st began. And so it continues, until all POWs and MIAs are accounted for, following the US Army Ranger creed that vows, “I will never leave a fallen comrade to fall into the hands of the enemy.”

Rolling Thunder, Inc., Today

Rolling Thunder was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1995, and National is headquartered in New Jersey. Today, Rolling Thunder is represented by 86 chartered chapters across the US, with new members joining every month. The chapters are strictly governed by the Constitution and By-Laws of the organization, with committee members working on issues such as Government Affairs for the POW/MIA issue, Gulf War and Korean War Affairs, Veterans Community Assistance, School Education and Junior Members’ Youth Programs.

National Successes

Most prominently, through Rolling Thunder endeavors, key federal legislation has been passed to help and protect veterans, including the Missing Service Personnel Act of 1997, the Bring Them Home Alive Act of 2000 and the Persian Gulf War POW/MIA Accountability Act, known as the “Speicher Bill,” enacted in 2002. As a direct result of those latter two pieces of legislation, live American POWs were rescued in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In addition, Rolling Thunder greatly facilitated the publishing of the POW/MIA postage stamp through the United States Postal Service, a chilling depiction of military dog tags with the declaration, “POW/MIA – NEVER FORGOTTEN.”

Local Chapter Efforts

Rolling Thunder chapters nationwide make monthly visits to our local VA hospital nursing homes and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Wards. Members are actively involved with the VA’s Center of Recovery Empowerment (CORE), as well as with homeless veterans programs such as Chris Noel’s Cease Fire House in Florida. Chris was an entertainer for the troops in Vietnam.

Through our chapters, Rolling Thunder members regularly donate cases of food and kitchen equipment to local VA hospitals, helping subsidize our nation’s poorly funded veterans’ programs. Truckloads of clothing are donated to homeless veterans and VA patients each year.

We stage weekend “stand-downs” that give homeless veterans a chance to come in off the streets to a safe environment where they can receive nourishing meals, much-needed clothing and the opportunity to benefit from social services.

The chapters donate POW/MIA flags to local schools and civic groups, and organize flag-raising ceremonies to promote public awareness. As representatives of Rolling Thunder, member veterans speak at schools, scout meetings and other youth programs, sharing their convictions as they educate students and their parents about the patriotism, freedom and human factor of war and the reality of the POW/MIA crisis.

The Need for Rolling Thunder Charities, Inc.

Since Rolling Thunder Inc. was established, our members have selflessly been doing charitable work to improve the lives of veterans. As our vision grew, it became apparent that we needed to raise and distribute extraordinary funds to meet the demands of our cause. Thus, in 2007, Rolling Thunder, Inc., organized Rolling Thunder Charities, Inc., as an IRS-designated 501(c)(3) entity to properly channel those funds.

With seed money from the parent organization, Rolling Thunder Charities, Inc., seeks private funding to further ease the lives of those who have served our country. The monies are solely dedicated to activities such as these:

- Providing financial support to our troops, disabled veterans and their families when they are in need of help
- Providing financial support to a host of veterans advocacy groups to help homeless and impoverished veterans
- Sponsoring dinners and picnics for wounded troops at military and VA hospitals

Contributions to Rolling Thunder Charities are fully tax-deductible according to the rules of the IRS pertaining to 501(c)(3) entities. For more information, donors are invited to call Rolling Thunder Charities, Inc., 908.369.5439, or visit the Rolling Thunder, Inc., website at www.rollingthunder1.com.



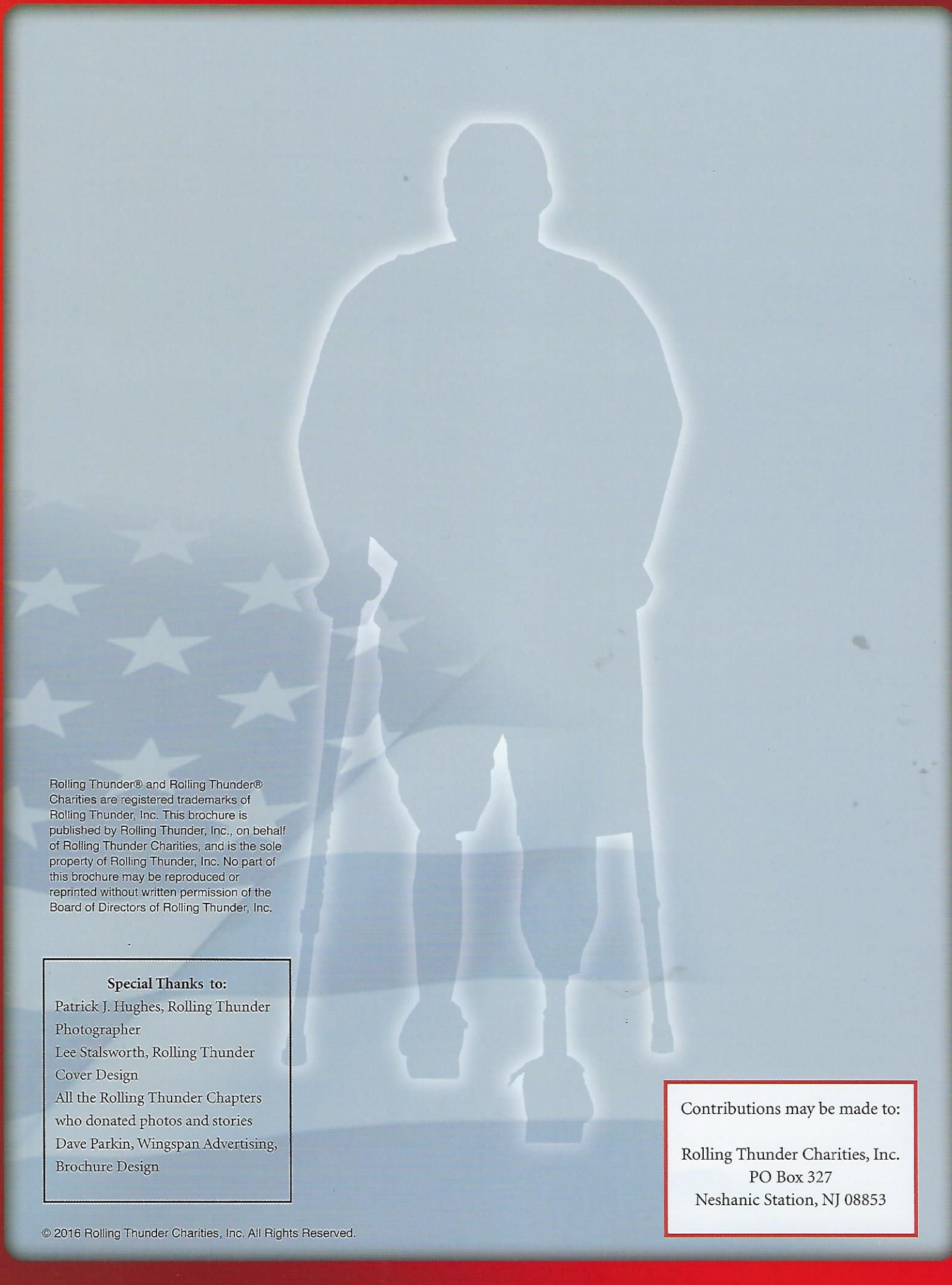
US Navy veteran Harry Roberts, with his stepdaughter, benefited from countless hours and help from Rolling Thunder South Carolina Chapter 4. Members purchased and installed a new stove, fixed a leaky roof, repaired ductwork, donated food and brought him a large magnifying glass to help him read his mail.



John Sanford, a Korean War veteran, had wanted to build a ramp for his wife, Elinor, to ease entry into their home. But he passed away before he could build it. So two other veterans, Bill DeVaughn (left) and Don Eddy, members of Rolling Thunder South Carolina 3, donated their time and hearts to build Elinor's ramp.



Scott Garber, left, Rolling Thunder South Carolina Chapter 4, with Malloy Player, a US Marine veteran, after Scott and the chapter repaired Malloy's heat pump.



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