

2009 Rolling Thunder National Conference (Saturday's Agenda)

Saturday morning started out with taking care of the business of running the Rolling Thunder National Organization with representatives from almost 90 chapters throughout the US represented. After that business was taken care of, the keynote speaker of the conference was presented ...Commander Kirk Lippold, USN, Captain of the USS



Commander Kirk S. Lippold, USN (Ret.)

Cole. On October 12, 2000, a suicide attack against the U.S. Navy destroyer USS Cole (DDG 67) caused a bomb to explode, ripping a gapping hole in the side of the Cole while it was harbored in the Yemen port of Aden. The explosion killed 17 sailors and injured 39 in that terrorist attack. For the next hour and a half, Commander Lippold's riveting account of that day started out with a 5-10 minute overview of his dedicated new crew and the new ship they were training on and how they would prepare for all conditions they would encounter. Then, for the next 70 minutes, Commander Lippold gave a detailed, graphic and riveting account of the moment of the explosion and the preceding events that his men encountered, and how they fought and worked to save the ship and many of the injured crew members in that first critical hour after the explosion. He had everyone's undivided attention and his presentation painted a picture of dedication and determination of his crew with his powerful words. It was a rare first-person account that few will ever be privileged to hear.

After lunch, we were privileged to hear an amazing story from a Rolling Thunder Chapter 4 Kentucky member, Joe Milliner. Joe was a WWII 2-time, ex-POW who was shot down and captured by the Italians and escaped. Then he was shot down a second time and captured by the Germans where he was held till the end of the war. When surrender was inevitable, his German captures told him and others to not go with the Russians if they were the ones to free them, because they would keep them and use the



Damage to the USS Cole from the terrorist bombing.

Americans for Russian labor camps. As it turned out, we now know that over 25,000 American prisoners were kept by the Russians and put into the gulag system and used for slave labor, intelligence gathering, medical experiments or what ever else they

could use them for. But Joe was not freed by the Russians ...Americans came to his rescue and he can home and started a family.

But Joe's POW ordeal was not over. Almost 30 years after he was released, he would get the same news that his parents got when he was captured. Joe's son, William Milliner CWO-3 Cobra Gunship co-pilot was shot down over Laos/South Vietnam border in March of 1971. His status was listed as POW and he was thought to have been held by the North Vietnamese, when in actuality he was in being held in Laos. Since 1989, Billy Milliner was the subject of a "dog tag report" that including his correct Social Security number and several live sightings of Billy in Laos.He was reported as being held with 13 other American prisoners. William has also talked to the Laotian Doctor who operated on Billy's arm and he verified his existence and that he was still alive as recently as ten years ago.

While Joe continues to fight not only the foreign governments who hold our prisoners, but also our own government who continue to ignore the FACT that over 25,000 American prisoners were left and abandoned by our government during the Vietnam War ...and that many are still alive and just waiting for our government to claim them. This is what Rolling Thunder's Mission is all about and it should be the mission of every American to demand the accounting of all our POW/MIAs and to force and pressure our government to bring them back home. Joe and Billy's story are just one...now multiply that times 25,000 and ask your self why? Then ask yourself what you can do about it ...and do something to make a difference.

The conference ended that evening with a banquet and a diner where about 20-25 patients from Walter Reed Medical Hospital were welcomed as heroes and were the special guests of Rolling Thunder for the evening. It was a great conference and all came away with a renewed passion to account for all our brothers and bring them home.



Joe Milliner (left) receiving an Award for his dedicated work from Rolling Thunder Chapter 4-KY Chapter President Greg. A memorial plaque of his son, William Milliner is shown on the wall (upper left).

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WEDNESDAYS at 5PM

Middleton, WI

April

- 14th Opening Night w/ The Shibs
- 21st Two on a Bike w/ Pupy Costello
- 28th Nuts & Bolts Night w/ Poor Rich Kids

May

- 5th Mother's Day Ladies Night w/ The Jimmies
- 12th Spin to Win at Huby & Abraham w/ Blue Olives
- 19th Coolest Cruiser w/ Fondue Party Band
- 26th Coolest Sport Bike w/ Primitive Culture

June

- 2nd Giveaway w/ Mighty Short Bus
- 9th Cougar Night w/ Bob Rocks
- 16th Father's Day Night w/ Westside Andy/Mel Ford Band
- 23rd Best Leather Night w/ Lube Band
- 30th Giveaway w/ Abaris

July

- 7th Buckets for Hunger Charity w/ Mighty Short Bus
- 14th Coolest Custom Bike w/ Bob Rocks
- 21st Two on a Bike w/ Blue Olives
- 28th Giveaway w/ Mighty Short Bus

August

- 4th Best Leather Night w/ Fedora
- 11th Nuts & Bolts Night w/ Undercover
- 18th Cougar Night w/ Lube Band
- 25th Giveaway w/ Madison County

September

- 1st Coolest Harley w/ Primitive Culture
- 8th Sept. 11th Tribute w/ Westside Andy
- 15th Spin to Win at Throttle Threads w/ Johnny Rocker & The High Rollers
- 22nd Coolest Leather w/ Mark Craft
- 29th First Bike Get FREE Dinner w/ Pupy Costello

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