

Singer-songwriter Rockie Lynne is lifelong Harley-Davidson enthusiast and U.S. Army veteran. He has been a member of Rolling Thunder, Inc. for eight years, and is now North Carolina Chapter 2 Vice President. Known as the “Voice of Veterans” for his many patriotic songs, he released the album “Rolling Thunder: We Will Not Forget” to honor the group and its ongoing commitment to American POW and MIA soldiers. He is proud to be a headliner act at this year’s demonstration for the seventh consecutive year.

I still remember my first trip to D.C. with Rolling Thunder. I loved riding my bike into Washington for the annual Memorial Day demonstration, being part of that impressive gathering of motorcycles, running through cheering, emotional crowds, and playing the concert on the National Mall. But the day before was so much more significant to me. A group of us went to two veterans’ homes, who were too sick to attend. We sat in their bedrooms and swapped stories for hours. We let them know they were truly important to us - that we cared for them. They couldn’t come be with us, so we went to them. I can’t tell you how much it meant to those men, and to me. It was one of the most beautiful things I have ever witnessed. And I said right there and then, I have to be part of this.

As I attended more Rolling Thunder events, I learned more about all of the things they do to make a positive difference in veterans’ lives, and how they lobby our government for important legislative changes. I think every great cause needs a theme song, so I wrote the record *Rolling Thunder: We Will Not Forget*, about what this organization stands for, putting into song form their main mission that POWs and MIAs must never be forgotten. And I firmly agree with that mission, that our nation must account for every single person sent off to war. It’s hard to believe, but there are still more than 80,000 soldiers unaccounted for, from all the wars we’ve fought.

After 30 years, Rolling Thunder's work is even more relevant to Americans. For one thing, we now have the ability to identify any remains found through DNA testing. That's why the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery is empty now, because in 1998, they identified the remains of the last unknown Vietnam War soldier, Michael Joseph Blassie, who was shot down near An Loc in 1972. His body was exhumed, they tested his DNA, and were able to return the remains to his family. Can you imagine what it meant to them after all those heartbreaking years? Now, we're sending out new generations of troops to wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and to active duty deployments all over the world – so unfortunately, our mission may never end.

It's still a shame to me that Artie Muller, Rolling Thunder's Commander, and so many of our riders weren't welcomed home from the Vietnam War as they should have been. So this is a peaceful protest to honor those brave men and thousands of others, as a million of us roar in formation into our nation's capitol in support of veterans, and to respect our fallen heroes. It's one cause all Americans can get behind because it's done for all of the right reasons, it cuts across all human boundaries. You don't have to be a veteran to feel part of it. You can be a Republican, a Democrat or an Independent; in fact, you don't need to be political at all. This issue has nothing to do with race or religion, or socio-economic backgrounds. You don't even have to ride a motorcycle to be part of Rolling Thunder, although I highly recommend it!

I think the biggest reason I love being part of Rolling Thunder is because of the people involved, these generous, kind people I've met all over the country every where I go, at every event. The Rolling Thunder community is so honest, and so real. You know, a lot of people say they'll give you the shirt off of their back, but it's just empty words. My Rolling Thunder compatriots really would give you their shirts, and anything else you need. Every year they stage this massive ride, which gets a lot of attention, but it's far

more than that. We have 90 chapters nationwide, and we're doing great things for veterans every single day, both on the national level and in our hometowns.

This year, I'll be on stage again – this time as a headliner. It means so much to me personally, to play for this powerful, iconic gathering, and I hope you can join us this year. The experience may very well change your life, as it did mine. In this world filled with divisiveness and insecurity, Rolling Thunder provides us a unique opportunity to agree upon one thing: all of our brave veterans deserve to be honored, today and forever.

(Email/social media information for Rockie here)

To get your copy of "Rolling Thunder", www.rockielynn.com