

# 5th annual National Armed Forces Freedom Ride

AZ Rider

from Skeeter Peak... The 5th annual National Armed Forces FreedomRide USA was held on May 17, 2014. It was founded by Cathy "Gypsy" Hooper in 2009. Her vision is to have all 50 states participate in this ride/event on the same date. This ride raises awareness for the women and men that have served in our Military and those still fighting for our Freedoms; to recognize them not only every day, but to pay our respect for their bravery, unselfish courage, and commitment on Armed Forces Day. We are currently 25 states strong. Skeeter Peak, the Arizona state coordinator, has been putting this ride together since the beginning.

This year's ride for Arizona was sponsored by the American Legion Post 2. We had 100 riders and over 200 participants and supporters. The ride started at American Legion Post 1 in Phoenix and rode to Post 84 & Ira Hayes Veterans Memorial Park in Sacaton, Post 9 in Florence, Post 27 in Apache Junction,

and ended at Post 2 in Tempe.

The event featured Live Music by the Unknown Associates and a Free Pancake Breakfast and Lunch. The Shared \$\$ Pot was won by Mike Dowlet. There were Opportunity Drawers [raffles], and giveaways. FreedomRide logo T-shirts, Ride Pins, Ride Patches and/or bandanas were available for a donation.

Hog Wear, Purple Slice, Discount Bike Supply, and Kangaroo Hut were just a few of the vendors that were on site selling their goods. Lady Aces set up with her massage booth.

There were special appearances by the Devoted Dolls, Civil Air Patrol Sky Harbor Composite Squadron 301, Desert Warrior Military Vehicles, Joe Miller and Aurora the Eagle from Wildlife Liberty, and Mike Malcom from Buckeye Fire on the bag pipes. A flag and rifle team were presented by the Patriot Youth Corp, POW, MIA, KIA Honor Guard, Motorcycle Color Guards of America and Rhona Maskin

singing the National Anthem.

Cash Prizes were awarded to Patty Thomas for high score and Joe White for low score which was donated back to the charity. The 'Better Luck Next Time' award went to Bob Cowgill from American Legion Post 138.

The funds raised were presented to Margy Bons, CEO and founder of MAM aka Military Assistance Mission. Their mission is to 'Provide financial and morale aid to our current Arizona active duty military, their families, and wounded warriors regardless of overseas deployment status.' Learn more at <http://www.azmam.org/>

For more information about the National Armed Forces Freedom Ride you can visit: [www.azfreedomride.webs.com](http://www.azfreedomride.webs.com)

*Photos taken by: Marion Cartland Arizona Veterans Connection, Denette Reid - Patriot Youth Corp, and Bonnie "Wolf" Paul.*

