

National Armed Forces Freedom Ride

AZ Rider

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The 8th annual National Armed Forces Freedom Ride took place on Saturday May 20, 2017. Armed Forces Day is celebrated each year on the third Saturday in May. The NAFFR is a nationwide effort, with Rides being held in some 20 or so states. Organizer Skeeter Peak has been integral in bringing this ride together here in Arizona. It is a family-friendly gathering and everyone is welcome.

The beneficiary is the 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 their website <http://www.azmam.org/>

The day's schedule started at the American Legion Post 2, located at 2125 S Industrial Park Ave, in Tempe. More than 350 people attended the opening ceremony. Activities at Post 2 included a presentation by Dave Hampton, of AZ's Department of Veterans Services, on behalf of Governor Doug Ducey of the Governor's Proclamation making May 2017 'Military Appreciation Month' and May 20, 2017 Armed Forces Day.

Skeeter sends along "a big thank you to Marion Cartland publisher/editor for the <http://azveteransconnection.org/>. Her son Aaron Cartland lead the Flag presentation by The US Naval Sea Cadets. Another big thank you goes to Annette for singing the National Anthem for the second year in a row. And thank you also to Joe Miller with Liberty Wild Life for taking time out of his busy day to bring Aurora the eagle to represent the USA." She also thanks "all the volunteers who came out to help and support the event."

Not everyone at the Post was able to participate in the rest of the day's itinerary. But after the ceremony concluded, nearly 100 riders took off on a self-paced run of about 106 miles. Stops were at Momma Juggs in Coolidge, American Legion Post 9 in Florence, and last stop at Des-

ert Wind HD in Mesa. It was a points run that involved cards, dice, and rubber ducks. Always the creative one, aren't you ~ Skeeter? Prizes were for High total points, Low points, and Better Luck Next Time. Congratulations to the winners: High Score = 65 Points & \$125 to Greg Harrelson; Low Score = 28 Points & \$50 to Jason Kimbrough; and Better Luck Next Time = \$25 to Crazy Dave. The Shared Money Pot garnered the Anonymous winner \$140; who then donated \$35 back to MAM.

The last stop, hosted at Desert Wind HD included live music by Unknown Associates. Vendors & information booths included Heavenly Blings and Things {Greg Collins}, Discount Biker Supply, Bad Ass Clips {East Coast Bruce}, Sassy Bling Shirts {Kelly Guerin}, Bad MF {Ray Kanarek}, Patch Works {Linda Dahl}, VA Hospital Voluntary Services {Michael Herbert Administrative Officer}, and Crisis 22 Project {Dennis "Skervy" Hicks, VP & Gregg Petersen, President}. Raffles were drawn at the last stop as well. Melissa Hughes from Two Gals Events was the Bartender while her brother Scott Hughes along with Marine Mom Penny Besock were cooking up lunch in the Cookshack.

This day raised \$4200 for Military Assistance Mission. Skeeter expressed thanks to the NAFFR sponsors Desert Wind HD, Budweiser <http://hensley.com/>, Chuck Franklin Law <https://chuckfranklinlaw.com/>, Two Gals Events <http://twogalsevents.com/>, American Legion Riders Post 2, and Green Knights Chapter 28 out of Luke Air Force Base.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of our Military! Congratulations on a day well spent!

Betsy

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