

Stand Up and Stand Proud

Helping Homeless Vets

click title to view
more photos



On Sunday January 14, the Stand Up & Stand Proud organization hosted a fundraiser for the purpose of collecting money to help homeless veterans. The ride originated at the Mesa Marketplace on Signal Butte, with over 500 motorcyclists in attendance.

Before reaching their final destination of Superstition HD on Apache Trail the riders took a 2-hour tour of our Sonoran Desert, including a stop at Tortilla Flats. Traffic control was handled by a police escort, with lights being held for the 400+ bikes all the way from the staging area to Hwy 188.

Once at Superstition HD, participants were treated to a bbq lunch, provided by the Mining Camp Restaurant. The folks at the cook station were plenty busy getting everyone fed. On display was a 20:1 scale replica of the USS Arizona BB-39. The StandUpAndStandProud.org table had a selection of support items for purchase; with these proceeds helping to pay for the website & the organization's administrative expenses.

Emcee Tom Steinhagen, along with his wife Valerie put a great deal of thought and effort into this gathering. Through their hard work and the generosity of their sponsors, 100% of the entry fees paid by the participants DOES go to help Homeless Vets. No promotional or administrative costs came from the registrations. The 3AM Band donated their performance, the Mining Camp donated

the lunch, Mesa Marketplace donated the breakfast, and Mesa PD Motor Squad and Apache Junction PD donated the escort.

Among the clubs & organizations represented were ALR, Black Sheep MM, CMA, Combat Vets Int'l, HOG, Marines MC, PGR, STAR, US Military Vets MC, VFW Riders, VNV/LVMC, and Warrior Brotherhood. Many military oriented patches were being flown by the independent riders as well, to show their support of our GIs & Vets. It was good to see quite a few young people attending. Parents with small children were able to introduce their little ones to the concept of Patriotism.

The afternoon's Military Salute was quite a production, well put together. There was a Color Guard Ceremony. Motorcyclists presented the flags of our Armed Forces, followed by our National Anthem, Pledge of Allegiance, and an opening prayer. There were numerous speakers throughout the day, and a lengthy list of presentations. Some of these were... Apache Junction PD Chief Monohan spoke, and then presented Tom with a challenge coin. There was a recitation on 'What it is to be a Patriot'. The elements of the POW/MIA Table positioned in front of the stage were explained. The American Legion Honor Guard of Post 27 performed the Flag folding ceremony, with Tom offering explanation of each fold. One of the speakers made the poignant correlation that our homeless Vets

are also Prisoners of War. All Viet Nam Veterans in the audience were called up to the stage, for a 'Welcome Home' and 'Thank You' for their service; with a pin being presented to each as well. Members of the Patriot Guard Riders were called up also. They too were thanked for their service & presented with a pin. There was an explanation of the Gold Star Families 'Honor and Remember' flags and a presentation of flags to 2 local Gold Star Moms. Tom offered a heartfelt thanks to the events sponsors; among them Superstition HD, Mining Camp, Mesa Marketplace, and Apache Sands.

The primary beneficiaries of StandUpAndStandProud.org are the Arizona Stand Down and MANA House. The StandDown provides services to homeless veterans including food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, VA and Social Security benefits counseling, referrals for housing, employment and substance abuse treatment. It is the largest outreach to homeless Vets in the nation. MANA {Marines, Army, Navy, Air Force} House provides Veterans secure, safe, clean, transitional housing in a supportive environment.

[Stand Up and Stand Proud](http://StandUpAndStandProud.org) works continuously on behalf of our nation's Homeless Veterans. Please consider this organization when you, or your group, are planning your charitable offerings. Any donation of time or monies that you can offer will be effort well spent.

Bruce & Betsy