

Spectrum



Photos by Jennifer Lindquist

Bikers thunder onto Fort Gordon

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Special to the Signal

Chaps, vests and bandannas were the standard uniform during the American Legion Ride to Honor Injured Warriors Roaring Thunder 2008 held Nov. 1 at Fort Gordon.

Although the appearance of the American Legion Riders differs from the active duty Soldier, they have the pride, passion and heroic nature that makes them an important asset to the Armed Forces.

The Roaring Thunder Ride is an annual event in which the American Legion Riders raise money for the Fisher House, a place for Families to stay while their service member undergoes treatment at Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center. This year's event tripled in attendance over last year's event with an estimated 300 bikers participating in the ride and raising \$30,423 from local businesses, which surpassed the money raised from the last three events combined.

"Here we are with our economic conditions the way they are and people are struggling, particularly small business, yet they are still willing to reach in and donate to the services. It made my heart skip when I saw there were 200 almost 300 bikes. That's a big big turnout to honor our Wounded Warriors and our veterans and to participate with Fisher House," said Art Robb, American Legion Riders activities officer and planner of the event.

The Riders chose the Fisher House due to the importance of having Family present during the healing process according to Robb.

"The first time they had me go to Fisher house and meet the Am Legion Riders, I expected guys in crew cuts. That wasn't quite what showed up. It really didn't matter if they were longhaired, ponytailed with all kinds of things all over the place, but that their heart was in the right place and that came through every time I met them," said Brig. Gen. Donald Bradshaw, Southeast Regional Medical Command and DDEAMC commanding general.

The American Legion Riders are all veterans who ride for different reasons. Some have their motivation embroidered on their vests and other reasons are more personal.

"(I ride) because they didn't have rides like this 40 years ago. The main thing for me is to not allow to happen now what happened to us in Vietnam. We are tickled to death to give our support. It feels good, almost gut wrenching," said Doug Glidden, a retired Army first sergeant who toured at Fort Gordon.

Regardless of their reason for participating in the ride, riders gave their attention, applause and sometimes tears during the ceremony honoring the bikers, veterans and Wounded Warriors.

"All I have to say to you is you are my heroes, everyone standing out there. You are my heroes and that is being always faithful. Semper Fi," said keynote speaker retired Master Gunner Sgt. Rob Robinson, and five time Purple Heart recipient.

(Above) Riders from the Roaring Thunder Rally and other supporters cruise through Fort Gordon on their way to a ceremony honoring Wounded Warriors and veterans Nov. 1. (Below) Corey Jones a member of Faith Riders holds a flag during the Roaring Thunder ceremony.



Photo by Sgt. Marcus Lindquist

(Above) Members of the American Legion Riders line a wall to watch the ceremony honoring Wounded Warriors and veterans at Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center during the Roaring Thunder event. (Left) A member of the Patriot Guard Riders salutes the flag during the national anthem. (Below right) Francisco Cruz, Fort Gordon Fisher House manager displays the check presented to Fisher House during the event.

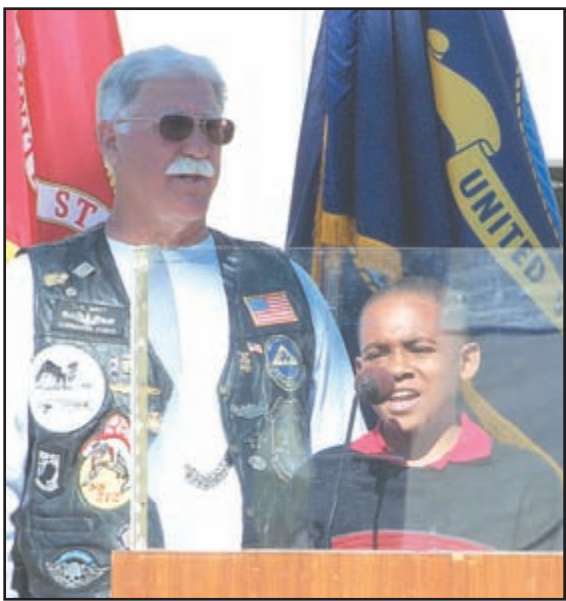


Photo by Mercedes Ballard-White

(Above left) Art Robb, Roaring Thunder 2008 Event Coordinator and American Legion Rider Post 192 assistant director offers encouragement to Robert Washington as he sings God Bless America. (Above right) Brig. Gen. Donald Bradshaw, Southeast Regional Medical Command and Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center commanding general delivers remarks. (Right) Melissa Tune, local television anchor woman serves as narrator for the Roaring Thunder 2008 event that raised over \$30,000 for charities that benefit Wounded Warriors.

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