

By Allen Freeman
President Unit 14-3892

The Texas State Commanders Spring Ride

Riders from across the state of Texas converged on Harker Height Texas on the second day of spring March 21, 2009 to participate in the 2nd Annual Texas State Commanders Spring Ride for the VFW Military Assistance Program (M.A.P.).

(From MAP)

The VFW Military Assistance Program (MAP) is the outstretched hand between the VFW and active duty, Guard, and Reserve military units. MAP offers grants to VFW Posts who participate in military unit functions, such as sponsoring "Farewell and Welcome Home Activities," "Family Readiness Group" events, or other sponsorship ideas.

MAP also links with VFW's Operation Uplink and Unmet Needs programs to create an all-star team of military assistance. MAP and Operation Uplink have provided more than 200 computers to set up Internet Cafes where service members' families may e-mail their deployed loved ones.

In addition, MAP has forged partnerships with various service providers, including www.vetjobs.com, aimed at providing the transitioning service member with relocation and employment assistance. This is a helping hand from the VFW to the active duty, Guard, and Reserve military units. The VFW MAP offers grants to VFW Posts who participate in military unit functions, such as sponsoring "Farewell and Welcome Home Activities," "Family Readiness Group" events, or other sponsorship ideas.



VFW Post 3892 was the chosen location for this year's annual ride. Veterans of Foreign Wars Motorcycle Group of Texas Unit 14-3892 (VFWMG) hosted riders from across the state from the Unit 1, The Woodlands, Unit 2, Abilene, Unit 3, Alvarado, Unit 12, Pittsburg, Unit 14, Harker Height, and Unit 21 Bryan. The night before the Post 3892 Ladies Auxiliary hosted an evening dinner for the up coming event to welcome everyone from out of town as well as the local public.

It all came down to the last 12 hours. With the preparation of 9 months Unit 14 and its officers and volunteers' planned and organized what would prove to be a never-ending challenge of cancellations of events and route recon and numerous route changes before a final plan was approved and adopted. A motorcycle Dart ride was the plan.

As the time drew near for registration, at 0700, everyone enjoyed breakfast and coffee all the while excitement filled the air with anticipation of the day's planned events. At 0820, everyone eagerly lined up to throw darts to kick off the spring ride for MAP. At 0915, the Chaplin led everyone in at prayer for a safe trip. The first motorcycle departed followed by the rest of group on the 165-mile ride through out District 14. During the ride there were six stops planned, each stop would be at different VFW Post with in District 14. Each Post opened their doors for all the veteran and active duty riders. Each VFW Post served everything from breakfast to hotdogs and chili during the visit. VFW's visited were Post 3892, Post 10377, Post 8230, Post 3393, Post 9192, and Post 4008. At each stop, each rider who chose to play would throw darts. Each would continue to build their individual score until the end at which time the player with the highest score would split the pot with MAP. Finally, the convoy of about 35 motorcycle and chase truck returned to Post 3892 to end

a long day. Mike Tuttle, a member from Unit 14, with a total score of 332 won \$254.00 which he donated to the MAPs program. During the awards prizes handed out for the Oldest Rider (Bud Johnson – 74yrs) Unit 14, Youngest Rider/Passenger (Brooke Freeman – 15yrs) Unit 14, and last place with a total combined score in darts of 80 (Luke) Unit 14.

The Commanders Trophy judged by VFW Post 3892 Junior Vice-Commander Rick Harris. He found it a challenge to pick just one motorcycle out of the 35 that made the trip. But in the end the best-outfitted Rig (Motorcycle) went to Unit 14 Chaplin George Banks with a 2006 Suzuki Boulevard with a sidecar. A Total of \$1230.00 was raised during the event.



As the day ended, everyone gathered for a closing prayer to give thanks for a safe return of all members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Motorcycle Group and its Auxiliary members. With new friendships made and old ones renewed, the outlook has never looked better for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Motorcycle Group of Texas.

