

'Apache Honor Run' 2006

The San Carlos Apache Veterans Memorial Motorcycle Run – Run to the Rez III was held on Saturday, November 4th, 06 at the Apache Gold Casino & Resort, located outside of Globe. Judy Ferreiro, Assistant Director of Marketing and Norma Franco, Officer of Human Resources both representatives of the casino, collaborated with John Bush. He is head of the Rez Riders group, and also with the casino's marketing department. Together they coordinated this honorary tribute for all the men & women of the Apache & Navajo Tribes who have served, those presently active, and those who have fallen. I want to extend special thanks to Judy Ferreiro for allowing me to be a part of this very special event.

Saturday morning was perfect; the sun was warming things up a bit and not a cloud in sight. Norma, Judy, and members of the Rez Riders were running the registration table and the raffle bin for the 2007 Harley Davidson Sportster. The fee was \$20 per person and \$15 per passenger which included the meal ticket, run shirt, raffle tickets, and entertainment. They held registration the evening before from 6P – 8P and then 8A – 10A this morning. I was in hopes of tying up with someone to ride with so that I could get the best shots and be a part of the event. I didn't really feel like doing this from a cage, if you know what I mean. Norma got in touch with Jimmy and it was done. I partnered up with him for the ride.

There was a slight delay in leaving the casino, due to a veteran being honored for his final journey. To pay respects, we waited it out and took off after things were clear. To explain the spiritually emotional energy that was generated on this ride during the escort, which was lead by the San Carlos Police, would be impossible to convey. Run to the Rez is not your typical biker run. The San Carlos Apache Tribe supports veterans strongly and displays it emotionally and spiritually. Recognizing those who sacrificed their lives for our country has become a tradition for Native Americans. The parade headed out from the casino around 11A and as far as the eye could see and then some, 230+ motorcycles made their way to the San Carlos Tribal Administration Building for the Veteran Honor Ceremony.

Run to the Rez III



I can't even begin to describe the spiritual outpouring that took place. I couldn't keep my eyes dry. It doesn't even come close to the many types of benefit runs that I have been on. As we would pass by houses and businesses on the Rez, there were families waving and children scrambling to seek a better vantage point from the hill tops. Cars coming from the opposite direction pulled over to the side, honking and waving in honor of the thunder that was passing them by in tribute to their people whom have fought (and still do to this day) for their land unconditionally, in hopes that they would come back to what they have here.

Just before getting into town, there upon a hill is a cemetery for the veterans, and what a sight to behold. Every veteran that was there resting had flags and all were at half-mask. Humbling is the best description for what was felt as we passed by. (I know Flaky was with us during all of this!)

At noon the Honor Ceremony started with the Posting of Colors by the San Carlos Apache Veterans Association. The Master of

ceremonies was Mr. Huebert Martin, San Carlos Apache – U.S. Marine/Vietnam Veteran. The National Anthem was performed by Mr. Bo Goode, a student from the San Carlos High School. Invocation was by Mr. Fernando Pechuli, San Carlos Apache/Vietnam Veteran. The welcoming of other veterans and bikers to the San Carlos Apache Reservation was presented by Ms. Kathy



Kitcheyan, Chairwoman of the San Carlos Apache Tribe. Guest speaker was Mr. Harding Burdette, San Carlos Apache, Peridot Councilman. Honor Song for all Veterans was performed by Mr. Harold Kenton, San Carlos Apache/Vietnam Veteran. Another guest speaker was Mr. Olson Nez, Navajo Nation/Vietnam Veteran. Entertainment was by the San Carlos High School Apache Club. Social Song: Apache Singers (where anyone could join in and dance, Apache Style!) Song, "God Bless the USA" was sung by Ms. Rachel

Hunter, San Carlos Apache. Closing remarks were presented by Mr. Charles Stevens, San Carlos Apache, Gilson Wash Councilman/Rez Rider and last was the Benediction presented by Mr. Raymus Edwards, San Carlos Apache/Korean Conflict Veteran.

After the ceremony the Honor Run was completed by riding to San Carlos Lake at the Dam. It was a picture perfect day for a ride. All the bikes parked in line on the dam made for a great ending for honoring those that served our country. Then it was back to Apache Gold Casino for entertainment by the band 'Country Image, playing some great country and Rock tunes along with other announcements while enjoying the dinner that was provided.

Congratulations go to Mr. Ray Berchman who won the 2007 HD Sportster, the Grand Prize drawing.

Another great showing of the heart came with much support from the crowd of bikers and vets; going to benefit the family of Sergeant Clifton J. Yazzie, who fell serving our country. He is a part of the Navajo Nation; with his family's home in New Mexico.

At 5:30 things were winding down. I want to thank Norma Franco for letting me know about this event and arranging for me to be a part of it. Also to Jimmy for letting me ride with him and feel the true spirit of honor for those that have paid so much for our freedom. Big thanks go to the Apache Gold Casino and Resort for holding the event at their establishment which was possible by Judy Ferreiro, John Bush, and Norma Franco. I look forward to another one of the Rez Rider's event. They're working on the next one. Stay tuned for details.

Till next time be safe, healthy and happy. Catch you all next wind.



Sidekick