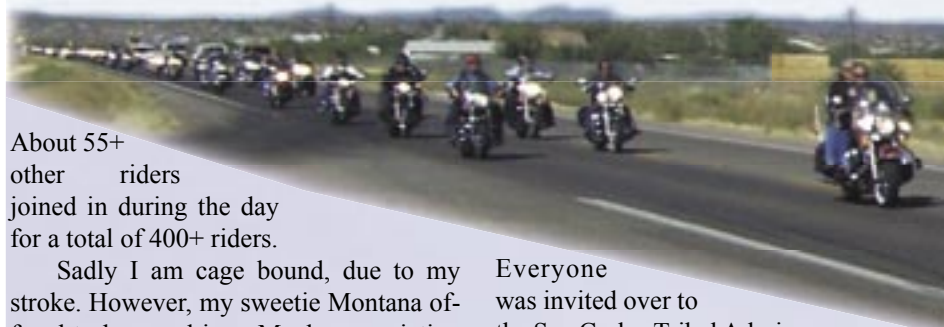


# Run to the Rez VI ~ a Tribute to Veterans

Apache Gold Casino Resort and the San Carlos Apache riders presented the VI Annual Run to the Rez on the weekend on October 23-24, 2009. This Run pays Tribute to All American Veterans.

This event has been hailed as the "Most Spiritual Ride in Arizona," and rightly so. I spoke with a lot of different veterans attending this run. The central idea of virtually all of them was that this run is for healing. James (an Iraqi veteran) told me that when you go to war (or any type of military action) on another soil you leave part of yourself there. Even if you're not physically wounded – WAR leaves you wounded. Each 'Run to the Rez' event allows him to experience a kind of healing that he's never had anywhere else.

That message of Healing has allowed this run to grow larger each year. The first Run to the Rez started with 20 riders. On Run for the Rez III there were 230 registered riders. In 2009, even during a recession - by Friday night there were 200 riders registered. By the start of Saturday's activities there were 345 riders registered.



About 55+ other riders joined in during the day for a total of 400+ riders.

Sadly I am cage bound, due to my stroke. However, my sweetie Montana offered to be my driver. Much appreciation goes out to Judy Ferriero, Apache Gold Casino Resort's Director of Marketing for the hospitality extended to us throughout the weekend. Thanks also to John Bush – Director of the Apache Veterans Association.

The cost of the run was \$25 (a steal of a deal), which included entry into Friday night's Kick Off Party with Gary Farmer and the Trouble Makers and Saturday night's entry for the Pre-concert party and the Eric Burdon and The Animals concert in the Pavilion. The first 300 registrants received a 2009 Run to the Rez long sleeve T-shirt. Friday night & all day Saturday – John Bush and members of the Apache Veterans Association sold raffle tickets for chances to win Harley Davidson Jackets and fancy Jean Jackets that had the Run to the Rez's signature design silkscreened on them.

Friday Night was a blast. Gary Farmer and the Trouble Makers were stirring up the trouble. The dance floor was loaded with couples. Ron & Deb (members of Mtn Motorcycle Assoc) came down off the mountain to party on the Rez. I was happy that Deb won one of the fancy jackets. It was a good night.

Saturday I missed grabbing breakfast with Montana because I was talking with Ms. Judy. I wish I'd taken a recorder. She is a true story teller; sharing several stories about different veterans that she's talked to during the previous Run to the Rez events - about what this spiritual ride has done for them. Throughout the entire weekend, I was captivated every time I spoke with her.

The pack of riders was lining up about 9:30am. The morning was sunny and crisp. You could feel the energy in the air. The San Carlos Apache Tribe supports veterans strongly and

displays it with reverence, both emotionally and spiritually. Recognizing those who sacrificed their lives for our country has become a tradition for Native Americans.

Montana and I took off and drove up the road a ways to try to find a place to get a good shot of the pack as they rolled by. They were supposed to take off at 10am for the cemetery; but roared out earlier than expected, leaving us to scramble a bit. We took a shortcut – while the pack took the scenic route.

Montana stayed down below the cemetery at the San Carlos Tribal Admin Building, while I rode over to the Veteran's cemetery. I arrived just seconds ahead of the pack. Emotions were running high. Every grave had a flag. All the flags were at half mast for the Veteran's Salute. Orville Boni USMC/Vietnam did the Welcome Speech. 'Taps' was played by Kristy Newman-Jackson, Honorary Member San Carlos Apache Veterans Association. Huebert Martin USMC/Vietnam conducted the Introduction and then Taps was played again. There wasn't a dry eye anywhere near me.

Everyone was invited over to the San Carlos Tribal Administration Building where the Veteran's ceremony would continue. I was too filled with emotion to do anything except try to staunch the flow of my tears with a tissue. So I'll let Montana share his thoughts with you.

"I felt most blessed to be able to participate in documenting the Ride for the Rez this year. As a Newby or Nipper (as called in my previous profession, underground mining), I was looking forward to the whole thing with excitement and not just a little trepidation. Everybody made me feel welcome and right at home from the start. What a great way to get broke in to this new life as Lady Jewells' other half.

"At the Tribal Administration Building, I was able to meet and talk with great people like Sgt. James Redde USMC/Iraq, who was the Master of Ceremonies for the Veterans Tribute at the ceremony put on by the San Carlos Apache Veterans Association. He has 3 tours of Iraq in 2003, 2004, 2005 behind him. Huebert Martin sung the National Anthem. I also talked with St Sgt Raymos Edward US Army/Korea. Raymos served in Korea from 2 weeks after the Korean War started in 1950 until 1952. He is the longest serving member of the Apache Veterans Association. His brothers served in WWII. Raymos conducted the opening prayer. San Carlos Apache Veterans posted the Colors. Wensler Nosie - Chairman of the San Carlos Apache Tribe gave the Welcoming Address. The Guest Speaker was Olson Nez – Navajo/Vietnam. Joe Dillon US Army/Vietnam provided the Veterans Recognition. Joe's speech really moved me, because he not only recognized Vets of WWII, Korea, Viet Nam, Desert Storm, and the War on Terror but also those Veterans who served in Bosnia, Somalia, and the dozens of small 'secret' actions that our Presidents have sent our people into in the last 50 years. In addition – Joe

called on riders to recognize military members who respond to people in need of saving, like the members of the military who were sent to help survivors of Katrina and other natural disasters. By the time Simon Hooke US Army/Desert Storm said the closing prayer, I was crying like a baby. It was cathartic." - Montana

Montana and I both needed the 2 hours of time dedicated to "riding on your own" just to regroup. At 2pm we headed out to Timber Camp. Since we weren't familiar to the area, we got waylaid by the Timber Horse Camp exit. Nope – no steel horses there. We back-tracked and then just pulled over and waited for a motorcyclist to come along and lead the way.

A local White Mountain Apache band called "First Born" was pumping out the tunes. John Bush and crew sold more raffle tickets. Members from the Choir Boys MC sold 50/50 tickets and sponsored a Dance Contest. Tina Kniffin won the 50/50 split of a \$150 and Thomas & Alfreda Tsosie from Phoenix won the dance contest. Food and beverages were also available. Montana &

off the rest of the jackets. At 7:45pm, Judy drew the winning ticket for the 2009 Victory Vegas 8-ball motorcycle. The crowd was smaller than earlier in the day, so I think nearly everyone expected that several tickets would be drawn, because you had to be present to win. But low and behold Judy drew a winner on her first try. Ernestine Reeder won the motorcycle. Ernestine has dedicated her life to the Veterans. She and her husband volunteer a lot of time and are very involved with the Run for the Wall. I was very happy to see her win. At 8pm the Pavilion was opened and the Eric Burdon and the Animals Concert got underway.

Wow what a weekend! Montana and I want to extend special thanks to Judy Ferreiro and John Bush for inviting us to be a part of this very special event. The planning is already underway for next year's Run to the Rez VII. As soon as the Tribal Counsel & the Casino give their approval, I'll post this event on every available event calendar website. This is one event you



I stayed long enough to get the names & pictures of the winners and then headed back to the Casino for a much needed nap. From 6-7:45pm was the Pre-concert party. During the party, John Bush raffled

shouldn't miss next year. Sincerely, Lady Jewells & Montana



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