

Superstition Treasure Hunt with CVMA 32-8

The Inaugural Superstition Treasure Hunt, hosted by the Combat Vets Motorcycle Association {CVMA} Chapter 32-8, took place on October 14, 2023. The event started & ended at Superstition Harley-Davidson, located at 2910 W Apache Trail in Apache Junction. This was a unique spin on a fundraising ride, offering a creative alternative to a dice or poker run.

From CVMA Chapter 32-8 Chaplain George 'Comrade' Ruble, "We took the concept of a 'Scavenger Hunt' ride and gave it a 'Treasure Hunt' theme; given the local area's history and folklore regarding the Lost Dutchman's Treasure and our proximity to the Superstition Mountains.

"We partnered with several local veteran-owned or veteran-friendly businesses, local museums, veteran monuments, and similar locations of interest. We had 19 total locations for the Treasure Hunters to visit. This was not only a 'self-paced' ride but it was, as one participant described it, a 'Choose your own adventure' ride! Upon Registration, the Treasure Hunters received passport books and a list of all the participating locations. They decided which locations they wanted to visit, the order they visited them in, and how much time they would spend at any particular location. The number and distance of locations meant that it would be impossible, and illegal, for them to visit all 19 locations. Each location had a point value associated with it.

"The idea was that the participating businesses would not experience any significant disruption to their daily operations aside from stamping the passports of the Treasure Hunters upon their arrival. Redeemable Treasure Tokens were provided to the locations to distribute, however they wanted, to the Treasure Hunters. One location, VFW Post 7968 in Apache Junction, was asking military-themed trivia questions in exchange for the tokens!"

All told, there were 58 bikes & 72 total participants for this inaugural event. All were required to be back to Superstition HD

by 3pm. There were food trucks and music along with many raffle prizes. Once everyone returned

Comrade explained, "Upon returning to Superstition Harley-Davidson, the passports were scored based on the stamps collected. It was stamped 'CLEARED' and returned to the Treasure Hunter as a souvenir. Riders could also exchange any Treasure Tokens they received with an actual 'Treasure Coin'. The Treasure Coins are a limited number, exclusive item which could only be obtained through 'finding' it on the ride or winning it as an award. They are not available for sale."

There were 5 Awards presented, with engraved tumblers and one trophy distributed. The Treasure Hunter, for visiting the most locations, was won by Shane Olsen and his nephew. The Prospector Award, for accumulating the most points, was won by Pam & David Salerno. There were also the Saltiest Road Dog Award for being the oldest Treasure Hunter and the Road Hazard Award for being the Youngest Treasure Hunter. Comrade explained, "In line with many of our military's traditions, we presented the Saltiest Road Dog Award first and then asked him to present the Road Hazard Award to the youngest rider. This symbolizes the passing of knowledge, wisdom and esprit de corps from one generation to the next." Unfortunately, these names were unavailable at the time of this writing. The Lost Dutchman Trophy, awarded to the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association Chapter who showed the event the most support, went to CVMA Chapter 32-1 which is based in Phoenix. Congratulations to all of the winners!

Comrade sent along this message on behalf of the organizers, "When we initially started reaching out to potential businesses and organizations to float our Treasure Hunt concept by them, we were completely blown away at the amount of enthusiasm and support we received from literally everyone we spoke to about the event.

"During and after the Treasure Hunt, the

feedback we received from nearly all of the participants was just as enthusiastic and supportive of the event. Everyone had a great time and is excited for the next one!

"Outside of the Treasure Hunt Ride concept itself, the aspect we received the most comments about was our incorporation of technology from start to finish. Everything from registering, signing waivers, passport scoring, and more was done using QR Codes and web-based form submissions.

"We would not have been able to pull off this event with the success we had without the support from many people, organizations and businesses! Primarily, Superstition Harley-Davidson and their amazing Event Coordinator, Brina Brown! American Legion Post #39 and their Legion Riders, Black Metal Firearms, Hawg Haven Leathers II, Lucky Strike Cycles, and too many more to name!

"Of course, none of this would have been possible without the K9s For Warriors and the amazing work they do to pair veterans with service dogs AT NO COST to the veteran. It's much easier to organize and participate in an event like this when it's being done for a great cause!"

The beneficiary of this event, K9s For Warriors provides highly-trained Service Dogs to military veterans suffering from PTSD, traumatic brain injury, and/or military sexual trauma. Comrade shared, "We wrote a \$5,786.84 check to K9s For Warriors. This was enough to fully cover the lodging, food and other related expenses for 1 Warrior to attend the 21-day handler training class at one of K9FW's facilities." Congratulations to CVMA Chapter 32-8 for this successful outcome! They are already getting started on planning the 2nd Annual Superstition Treasure Hunt for some time in Fall 2024.

My thanks to Comrade for his help with this article.

Betsy

Photos by Randy Anagnostis

