

Run To The North Wall, Sunday, July 16, 2000 by Gary D. Moore (mrr@gmasw.com)

The alarm sounded at 6:00 a.m. The Michigan sky was hazy much like my eyes at that hour on a weekend morning. Quick shower, light breakfast, and on the road by 7:10 a.m. It was humid and moderately cool...64 degrees in Port Huron. Light traffic motored South (West) on I-94. Warning signs of a detour at Woodward Ave were false. Cruised right through. The maiden trip through Detroit on my new 2000 Fat Boy was uneventful, but grand.

Arrived at a restaurant on Telegraph in 70 minutes. Beat my Michigan Rolling Thunder Chapter 3 friends. Food was good. Conversation centered on the events of the day. Bills paid and then off to the staging site at VVA Chapter 259 (Down River Chapter) off Eureka and Telegraph.

Over a hundred motorcycles waited the parking lot along with several Taylor City Police officers. Everyone filled out paperwork for the Bridge (to Canada) crossing. I picked up a pin for Glide and me. The chaps and jacket came off. They got packed for the remainder of the run.

The VVA Chapter 259 President gave brief instructions about the ride to the Detroit (DVA) Vet Center, and the chaplain said a prayer. At 10:00 a.m. the Taylor Police escorted the group. A Michigan State police drove around the escorted bikes and on the wrong side of the road like a crazy man. About a mile or so on I-75 (North) he pulled over a biker who was not wearing a helmet. To each his own with the brain bucket, but that officer should have gotten a ticket for reckless driving. Other than that, the ride was trouble free...one bike pulled off with trouble...the President of VVA Chapter 259. Bad gas.

Motorcycles packed the Detroit Vet Center circle drive. Michigan Rolling Thunder Chapter 3 made room for new arrivals (they staged earlier). Customs paper work got reviewed. We stood in line...again...to fill out. Eventually we got a numbered dot to cross the Ambassador Bridge. Hurry up and wait was something us vets understood.

The Detroit City Police joined the City of Taylor Police at the Vet Center. The signal was finally given. We were off. The route wandered through streets of Detroit that I had not driven in years...past a beautiful sight on Woodward...the new Tiger Stadium. The ball game crowd stood on the edge of Woodward to watch the parade of bikes. It was an awesome (and noisy) spectacle.

Finally, the Bridge. We crossed without stopping. The weather was warmer and humidity rising. Our arrival in Canada slowed the group. A bus with disabled veterans escorted the group at too slow of a pace...for the several miles to Saint Clair College.

Our buddy (CC), met us at the parking lot. Motorcycles from around Canada and the U.S. assembled there...many arrived very early that morning. We barely had time to park...more instructions...this time from Ed Johnson followed by prayer again. Departing the lot was slow but without incident for 1500 bikes plus the bus.

Not having a clue as to how we were to arrive at our destination along the beautiful St Clair River...we just enjoyed the ride. People crowded the edge of the streets along our route. They smiled and waved. It was a mini Rolling Thunder Run, but in Canada.

Finally, we arrived at the North Wall monument along the river. Parking was chaotic. Someone volunteered his front lawn. (A lot of nice people live in Canada.) I talked to a couple bikers about Hooker pipes (bikers always like to talk about their rides). Those pipes would look great on my bike.

Pictures taken and I saw several friends that I had not seen in a long time, namely, Ed and Rick. The ceremony was an excellent tribute to our fallen Canadian brothers. A veteran event is not complete without reference to those who still wait about the fate of their loved ones...those listed as POW/MIA. We stood with heads bowed as we remembered them.

Good byes and hugs at the end of the ceremony. The ride home was rainy (cold and hard) for most of the journey, but the events of the day made it worth getting wet. It was a great day for a ride!