

INDIANA RIDE FOR THE SALUTE

I'm Rick Haberman, Communications Director for the American Legion Riders of the state of Indiana as well as the Communications Director and Assistant Directorwell of American Legion, Avon Post 145. Touching on the 'Indiana Ride for the Salute'; which kicks off the Indiana Blue Star Salute event at O'Reilly Raceway Park on Saturday, May 16th at 2pm. Both of which honor the U.S. Armed Forces and their families. Here is how it started.

In 2006, the American Legion of Avon rekindled the Blue Star Salute; which was not being celebrated much anywhere in the country; to provide for the military families within the community of Avon. The committee chairman, Ralph Zoccolillo ask me to put together some motorcycles from the American Legion Riders to parade in and kick off the event with a roar; we rolled down the road for 1 mile and showed up at Washington Township Park with approximately 80 motorcycles.

In 2007, 'Zoc' moved to make the event a county wide event bringing in support from the Hendricks County American Legions with Brownsburg, Danville, Pittsboro and Plainfield; saluting approximately 200 families. There was such a huge applaud for the riders in 2006, Zoc pretty much decided every year the American Legion Riders would lead the kick off. I brought in other organizations to participate with the ALR; Patriot Guard Riders, Rolling Thunder of Indiana, U.S. Military Vets MC and many other patiotic organizations. Drilling the surrounding areas with flyers and communication, we all met at Coachman's Restaurant in Plainfield to stage and we ended up with nearly 700 motorcycles rolling for 40 miles through Hendricks County. 'Blue', the Colts mascot met us at the entrance of the Hendricks County Fairgrounds to lead us in and again, the tears were worth the trip, the families were so thankful.

In 2008, in conjunction with IndyWest Harley Davidson and their Customer Appreciation day on May 17th we once again brought in the roar to the Indiana Blue Star Salute as we made this the largest Blue Star Salute in the country honoring over 500 families and rode in to O'Reilly Raceway park with close to 1,000 motorcycles while Blue, the Indianapolis Colts mascot led us on to the track. Over 130 of the American Legion Riders carried a special flag each with a name of one of the Indiana fallen heroes lost in the middle-east war and participated in a special ceremony performed by the United States Naval Sea Cadets, Arleigh Burke (DDG-51) Division.

On May 16th, 2009, Join the American Legion Riders of Indiana and many other patriotic riders for a tribute to our men and women in uniform and their families. An Armed Forces Day Celebration. Staging begins at 9:00am on May 16th at IndyWest Harley Davidson. IndyWest Harley Davidson Customer Appreciation Day! Kickstands Up at 1:00pm. \$10 Donation to benefit the Legacy Scholarship Fund, Children of Soldiers Lost since 9-11. Escorted ride for nearly 40 miles through Hendricks County (1 hour) to O'Reilly Raceway Park Oval Racetrack. Indianapolis Colts mascot, Blue will lead us in for the opening act of the family ceremonies of the Indiana Blue Star Salute, the largest Blue Star Salute in the country. Sponsored by IndyWest Harley Davidson and the Hendricks County American Legions.

INDIANA BLUE STAR SALUTE

The American Legion is once again planning the largest Blue Star Salute; Armed Forces Day celebration in the country this year. On May 16th, currently active military servicepersons and their families from all over Indiana, along with the general public, are invited to attend the event at O'Reilly Raceway Park at Indianapolis. Admission and parking is FREE.

With gates open at 1 p.m., the family ceremony will begin at 2 p.m. with the arrival of more than 1,000 motorcyclists completing the 'Ride for the Salute'; making this the third largest motorcycle event in Indiana; A tour through Hendricks

County which raises donations for The American Legacy Scholarship Fund. 133 of the American Legion Riders will carry a special flag each with a name of one of the Indiana fallen heroes lost in the middle-east war. A special ceremony performed by the Riders and the United States Naval Sea Cadets, Arleigh Burke (DDG-51) Division. U.S. and Indiana colors will arrive via skydivers, a flag ceremony, invocation and family presentation will be held, after which ORP will resume its racing schedule, this year hosting ARA oval racing.

The main ceremony consists of comments from dignitaries such as Senator Lugar's office, the Mayor of Indianapolis, Major General Umbarger and others. Various entertainments will be offered in appreciation of Indiana's military families. Robert Spanogle, National Adjutant of The American Legion will be the keynote speaker. Each military family will receive a Blue Star Banner for display in their homes to show their communities that they have a family member in service.

Various military equipment will be on display, including Blackhawk, Apache and Huey helicopters, artillery pieces, military training equipment, and other non-military exhibits. Dove Flight and Lifeline helicopters will base operations from ORP during the event. For the second year and the only time ever that all 5 sports mascots will be on hand as well as the Indianapolis Colts Cheerleaders and Indiana Ice Cheerleaders.

Military families are asked to register at www.HCBLUESTAR.org as soon as possible. Persons interested in the 'Ride for the Salute' may obtain more information at the same website.

Thank you for your time, Regards,

[Rick Haberman](#)

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www.INDIANALEGIONRIDERS.org