

25th Annual Viet Nam Veterans M/C of WI -Annual Summer Twister

As seen in Thunder Press

When you jump on the scoot and head out for that party you have been looking forward to for month's, the relief is so satisfying, you can't wait to get there. The partying, the biker fellowship and the memories that will be made this particular weekend will last you a life time. But when you go to an event put on by a Veterans club you add two more feeling to your inner being, Respect for brotherhood and a special Honor to those that served.

This is what I feel along with the many others that attend the Viet Nam Vets MC of Wisconsin's vnvmc-wi.org Annual Summer Twister held just outside Birnamwood, WI at the WildlifeCampground and Bar. This year like the previous 24 years is always held on the last full weekend of July.

The crowds can be found gathering around the free flowing beer/soda trailer for easy refills keeping the crowd feeling no pain throughout the weekend. 10 bands starting Thursday night with Saturday night bringing House of Holland with Tommy Holland (former lead singer of Steppenwolf) keeping the crowd moving their feet to the beats. Having all the typical events of a biker party including a nightly wet t-shirt contest creating some big ass smiles, over 40 vendors with wares from t-shirts to ceramic figures, wood carvings to bike raffle tickets, bon-fires and the free flashing of breasts making for all the cameras to start clicking with excitement.

The hundreds of people camping on the grounds ranged from a sleeping bag next to a bike with a tarp covering them both, to the super luxury of the forty plus foot motor homes. Many spend time at their campsites relaxing, recuperating or refilling their drinks so they are ready for the next round of fun. Just ask my ol' Lady and her friend Carpy. I didn't see much of either one of them which only tells me one thing, a good time is being had.

But I would like to say that for me, the Twister is an event that I and all others in attendance can thank those that came home and also honor those that didn't return from the Vietnam War. The Brothers of the VNVMC do one of the best tributes that I have come across yet.

On Saturday, the day starts with a thank you ride through town to the cheers and waves of the locals. After returning to the grounds, the service starts shortly after. The crowd gathers together as one for the memorial service. Starting out with a tribute to each of the armed forces branch being honored with their song and flag. The tears roll out of the eyes of hundreds of those that share the heart felt thank you while the roses are laid for those that didn't return and the Brothers that have past on lately. The word "Remember" was spoken by Skypilot, a Viet Nam Veteran from PA after each name of those lost was read, with many of the veterans and citizens that traveled in from all over the country joining in shortly after.

Closing out the ceremony is the "3 Man Living Statue" and "nurses statue with wounded soldier" (reminding all that without them more lives would've been lost) put on by Vietnam Vets of America chapter #236 of Janesville, WI. (www.vva.org) These soldiers are dressed in Vietnam era combat gear and walk gracefully out through smoke. Patterned after the actual statues in Washington D.C .

This part of the program to this day still gives me chills. In some strange way the "3 Man Living statue" actually makes you feel like you understand, and to me that is very important being a non veteran. (I do need to mention that the Twister has rain at least one day each year during the event. The rain has stopped or held off for the ceremony every year. Can you say thank you Jesus!!)

After the program it's time to let the good times roll with some fierce weenie bite competition, slow race, barrel race and road kill bike games just to name a few. A bike show that had some really nice custom, vintage and trike's entered giving the owners a chance to showcase their pride and joy. (We've all been known to do that from time to time).

On Saturday night the fireworks fly, the bon fire glows and the knowing of another great event is coming to an end is hard. The tearing down of spots brings a realization that on the ride home starts in motion the making of plans for next years Twister. I hope to see you there, July 22-25th, 2010!



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