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In The Heartland Of America A New Memorial Is Dedicated On The Banks Of The Illinois River Exit 97 off I-80

On June 19th, 2004, with little fanfare from the public or press, but with great love and dedication from the participants and organizers, an amazing event took place. A granite memorial wall commemorating the soldiers who have died in Middle East conflicts was transported 65 miles from Summit to Marseilles, Illinois with an honor guard of over 12,000 motorcycles. This outpouring of respect and gratitude filled the highway, two motorcycles deep, from horizon to horizon for over 50 minutes. People waved, cried and waved flags from overpasses and bridges and the noise of the engines became a thunderous reminder of the soldiers who have served, fought and died in the Middle East.

This was the second Freedom Run. The wall is 50 feet long and 6 feet high and sadly, has inscribed the names of approximately 2,500 soldiers who have been killed in the line of duty. It stands at 200 Riverfront Drive, Marseilles, Illinois, honoring soldiers from all conflicts from 1980 forward, including: Operation Desert One, the Lebanon Barracks Bombing, Operation Desert Shield/Storm, the USS Cole, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Since its dedication on June 19th, over 115 Soldiers have been added to the memorial. Sadly each week this number grows.

The wall was conceived by Illinois Motorcycle Freedom Run founders, Tony Cutrano and Jerry Cooch, and built by volunteers who generously donated their time, energy, and money to honor the fallen soldiers of the conflicts in the Middle East. The memorial is the only one of its kind in the United States and will provide a lasting place of honor for the soldiers remembered here and a source of comfort for the families of these brave men and women.

Throughout the past year the Illinois Motorcycle Freedom Run has also donated money and delivered memorials to 9 Illinois Veterans Homes and Hospitals. In addition they have donated money to several families of our fallen heroes. Your support is greatly needed. Please spread awareness of the existence of this fine memorial to people across the nation so that our service men and women and their families know we care.

An account has been set up to cover costs of maintaining and updating the names on the memorial. In addition, donations will help with educational or medical expenses for the children of the veterans who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

Make donations payable to: Middle East Conflicts Memorial Fund
Mail to: Marquette Bank
 c/o Freedom Run
 7447 W. 63rd St.
 Summit, Il. 60501

Question? Contact Tony Cutrano - 708-421-3702 tonygreaseball@ifreedomrun.org
 Annual Return Run and Ceremony the 3rd Saturday in June.
www.ilfreedomrun.org


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