

## HONORING VETERANS



Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

Run for the Wall riders left Mount Vernon Outland Airport at around 1 p.m. Tuesday with their end of day destination being Corydon, Indiana. Run for the Wall (RFTW) begins in California and ends at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. Mount Vernon is the only Illinois stop for RFTW each year.

# Run for the Wall stops in Mount Vernon

*This marked the 33rd year  
for the program*

**BY JOSH JONES**

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

**MOUNT VERNON** — A tradition of honor spanning over three decades once again made a stop in Mount Vernon as Run for the Wall returned Tuesday.

This marked the 33rd Annual Run for the Wall. The mission of Run for the Wall is to promote healing among all veterans and their families and friends, to call for an accounting of all Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action (POW/MIA), to honor the memory of those Killed in Action (KIA) from all wars, and to support our military personnel all over the world.

Assistant State Coordinator for RFTW and Director of Mount Vernon Tourism Angela Schrum said Tuesday that the stop was going well. She said the riders were delayed a bit coming out of St. Louis. Schrum said that they estimated a little under 500 riders/support personnel were in Mount Vernon.

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**SHOWING SUPPORT** — Elks Lodge 819 Americanism/Veteran Committee Chairman Keith Hertenstein, **RIGHT**, shakes the hand of Paul Marshall, central route coordinator for Run for the Wall, as they present Hertenstein with a certificate of appreciation and Mount Vernon Elks Lodge 819 with a plaque for their continued support of Run for the Wall Tuesday at Mount Vernon Outland Airport. Several businesses and individuals were honored with recognitions during the ceremony.

## Wall:

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"I think it is great for us to be able to show our respect and appreciation for all the veterans that are coming through," Schrum said. "Their motto is they ride for those who can't. We have had a lot of veterans throughout the years in Jefferson County and it is just a great way to honor them and every other veteran from all the wars."

On Tuesday, riders arrived at around 11:30 a.m. from Interstate 57 at Illinois 15. The motorcyclists traveled eastbound on Illinois 15 and refueled at the Super Hucks Store, 34th and Broadway. After fueling, they traveled eastbound on Illinois 15 to Mount Vernon Outland Airport for lunch. Local law enforcement, fire personnel and other first responders were assisting with traffic control during the event.

Schrum said she believes more than 50 local organizations, businesses and individuals supported this year's stop.

"We have about 10 people on our committee, but it takes way more than that for it to go off, they have a short time to be here and we always want this to be their favorite stop. They have been riding since last week from California and their goal is Washington D.C. on Monday," Schrum said. "Thank you to everyone who has supported this in any way whether it is donating something or standing out on the road waving to them as they went by. It is a very moving tribute that we get to be a part of every year and we are very

grateful for that."

Paul Marshall, central route coordinator for Run for the Wall, said that so far their trip has been going well with little rain and plenty of local and state law enforcement escorts.

"It has been pretty smooth so far," Marshall said.

Marshall said that he has been able to attend Run for the Wall since 2002, having participated in around 13 Run for the Wall programs. He said a big part of Run for the Wall is the camaraderie formed between riders.

"A lot of the guys and gals that go on the run are veterans," Marshall said. "Not all of them, we have a lot of veteran supporters, their family members are veterans, brothers, sisters, friends are veterans and they want to show support for veterans."

Director of Public Relations and Communications Ted Kapner commented on how well the Mount Vernon stop is received.

"It is one of the favorite stops on Run for the Wall, not just because they feed us wonderful fried chicken, and just because it is a beautiful part of the country," Kapner said. "It is great to come out here and see the hospitality with all the locals and just be here with their fellow Americans in preparation for the upcoming Memorial Day holiday"

Marshall said that Run for the Wall is about riding for veterans who no longer can.

"This ride isn't about us, it is about veterans in the past and how they were treated and we want to bring awareness to the fact that there are still people missing in action and POWs in other countries,"

Marshall said. "We offer a place where riders who are veterans who served in combat zones can begin to heal, because they come back scarred. This gives them time to think about their service and meet with others who have (similar) service and be in Washington D.C. at the Vietnam War Memorial, because it is symbolic of all those soldiers of that era in the '60s and '70s."

Kapner spoke on the mission of Run for the Wall.

"We are riding to call for an accountability of all POWs and MIAs, we are riding to honor those that are killed in action, wounded in action and really provide a place where veterans can come and heal from the wounds that they sustained and can't be seen," Kapner said. "That is our mission, we ride for those who can't and we take it seriously. This isn't a party, it is a mission and it is a ride of honor."

Prior to the riders leaving, Marshall and other Run for the Wall officials handed out certificates of appreciation and plaques to some of their biggest local supporters.

At the end of Tuesday's lunch and ceremony, Mount Vernon Airport Director Chris Collins gave his thoughts on this year's stop.

"Another great show of patriotism locally. It was just wonderful seeing everyone coming out, waving flags and welcoming our visitors," Collins said.

The riders left Mount Vernon at around 1 p.m. with their end of day destination being Corydon, Indiana. For more information on Run for the Wall, visit <https://rftw.us/central-route-hub/>.

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Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

**REFUELING FOR THE RUN** — A little under 500 riders/supporters stopped in Mount Vernon to refuel and have lunch at Mount Vernon Outland Airport as a part of Run for the Wall.



Sentinel Photo/TRAVIS MORSE

**AN IMPORTANT STOP** — On Tuesday, Run for the Wall riders arrived at around 11:30 a.m. from Interstate 57 at Illinois 15. The motorcyclists traveled eastbound on Illinois 15 and refueled at the Super Hucks Store, 34th and Broadway.