

Run for the Wall to stop Tuesday in Mount Vernon

*This marks the 33rd year
for the annual event*

BY JOSH JONES
SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MOUNT VERNON — One mission, three routes. 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.

According to a Mount Vernon Tourism press release, the central route of RFTW will be once again stopping in Mount Vernon, to fuel and have lunch on Tuesday, May 23.

More than 300 bikes are expected to arrive in Mount Vernon via I-64 to Exit 95 at 10:45 a.m. where they will fuel their bikes at the Hucks located at 34th and Broadway. From there, they will stage in the Rural King parking lot and parade to Mount Vernon Outland Airport where a dedicated committee and a few student organizations from several area schools will provide a fried chicken dinner and other amenities for the riders. A flag ceremony will be conducted by Mount Vernon American Legion Post 141 and Terri Sullivan will sing the National Anthem.

"So many people and groups come together to make this a great stop for the riders," said Assistant State Coordinator for RFTW, Angela Schrum. "Dave Parkhill is the

Please see **Wall**, Page 6A



Photo Courtesy of Chris Ditto

RUN FOR THE WALL RETURNS — The central route of Run for the Wall will once again be stopping in Mount Vernon, to fuel and have lunch on Tuesday, May 23. More than 300 bikes are expected to arrive in Mount Vernon via I-64 to Exit 95 at 10:45 a.m. where they will fuel their bikes at the Hucks located at 34th and Broadway. From there, they will stage in the Rural King parking lot and parade to Mount Vernon Outland Airport for a ceremony and chicken dinner.

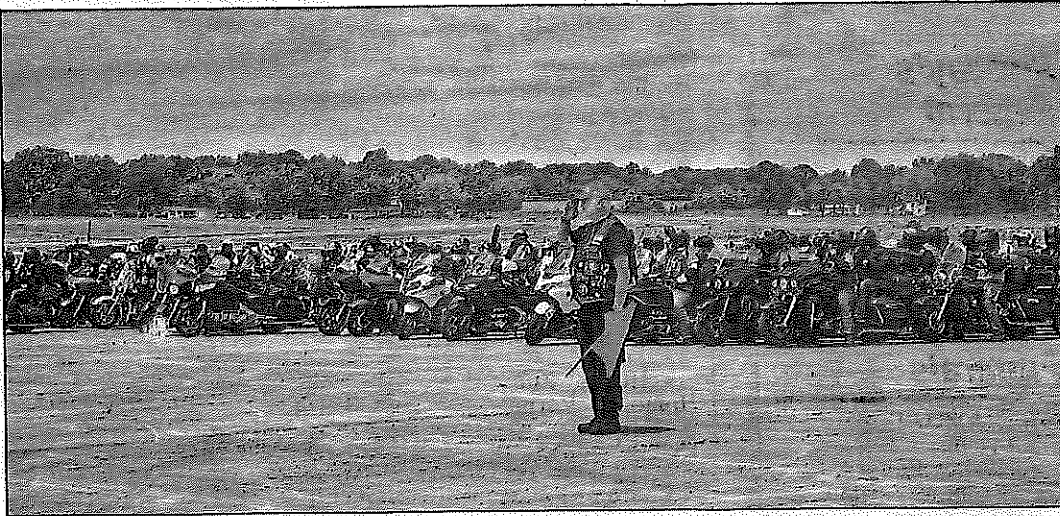


Photo Courtesy of Chris Dilto

RIDING FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T — 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, to honor the memory of those Killed in Action from all wars, and to support our military personnel all over the world.

Wall:

Continued from Page 1A

State Coordinator this year and has done a great job getting all the details lined out with the committee. Mount Vernon Airport are impeccable hosts, and the venue is ideal for the crowd. Our emergency services are integral in getting the riders in and through Mount Vernon and Jefferson County safely. It is a genuine team effort and an honor to be a part of."

Mount Vernon is the only Illinois stop for RFTW each year. Funds are raised by the local volunteers to provide a fried chicken lunch and help pay for their fuel.

"It takes a lot of planning and organization to pull off the gas stop and lunch in the short time they are here each year," Parkhill said. "But it is an honor to show appreciation to the Run

for the Wall riders each year."

Donations are still being accepted towards the fuel for the riders. They can be dropped off at the Mount Vernon Convention & Visitors Bureau, 200 Potomac Blvd., between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Checks should be made to Mount Vernon Festivals, Inc. with RFTW in the memo line.

Those who participate in the Run for the Wall can sign up to join the route at any point from California to Washington D.C. Many people ride the entire route, while others join the pack for a leg of the journey. Once they converge in D.C., riders are free to return to their homes via any route they choose.

Mount Vernon Airport Director Chris Collins recalled last year's event and the outpouring of support and patriotism. He said that the riders are always very appreciative to be inside an air-conditioned building and to enjoy a full chicken dinner meal.

"I have visions of last year with all the students and the patriotism on display by all involved was just overwhelming to me," Collins said, later adding, "We are just honored to play a part."

The pack will leave the Mount Vernon Outland Airport at 12:50 p.m. and travel east on Route 15 to Wayne City where they will get back on I-64 and continue their journey towards Washington D.C. for Memorial Day. Organizers encourage anyone who can to line Broadway between 10:50 a.m. and 11:40 a.m. All times are approximate. Wave your flags and support the riders who say, "We ride for those who can't."

Travelers in Mount Vernon on May 23 during the time when RFTW is present should expect delays and authorities suggest taking alternate routes of Richview Road or Veterans Memorial Drive, when possible, between 10:50 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

More information about the entire RFTW can be found at: <https://rftw.us/central-route-hub/>.

5-13-2023
jjones@morningsentinel.com