

"Poker Run Supports Service Members"

By Sgt. Salju Thomas, Marine Corps Base

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JACKSONVILLE, N.C. — Hope For The Warriors, a nonprofit organization that supports wounded service members and their families, held a poker run Saturday to raise funds for a "A Warriors Wish" project.

This project was established to grant wishes for severely-injured service members, said Robin Kelleher, co-founder of Hope For The Warriors.

"The wishes fall outside the scope of immediate needs and offer an opportunity for us and contributors to inspire hope in the eyes of the wounded," said Kelleher.

Riders picked up cards at five stops along the 70-mile course, which began and ended at New River Harley Davidson dealership, and the person with the best poker hand won. Amy Koury, director of Marketing for Hope for the Warriors, organized the event in which about 200 people participated.



"Most of us are former Marines," said retired Sgt. Maj. Emmett Salas. "This event shows how we take care of our own: active duty and retired," said Salas who is a Purple Heart recipient.

The event raised \$4,300. These funds will go toward granting the wishes of Cpl. Chris Santiago and Sgt. Eddie Ryan.

Santiago was injured by improvised explosive device in Iraq and has since undergone 15 surgeries, including the amputation of both of his legs below the knee. Santiago is at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. and wishes to go home to West Virginia for Christmas. Hope for the Warriors is working to adapt the Santiago home to accommodate and support his injuries.

Ryan was shot in the head twice in April 2004 while serving in Iraq. Ryan has since undergone numerous surgeries and is now with his family in N.Y. Ryan's friend asked Hope For The Warriors to get Ryan an all-terrain wheelchair so that his dad can push him around in their yard and possibly go hunting again.

Robin Kelleher and Shannon Maxwell started Hope For the Warriors this year. Their mission is to enhance quality of life for U.S. service members and their families who have been adversely affected by injuries or death in the line of duty, said Kelleher.



Framed "American Pride"

Hope for the Warrior actively seeks to ensure that the sacrifices of wounded and fallen warriors and their families are never forgotten nor their needs unmet, particularly with regard to the short and long-term care of the severely injured, she added.

More information can be found at www.hopeforthewarriors.org.

Mr. Solovey donates a framed "American Pride" print depicting a Harley-Davidson Fatboy. The piece raised \$375 at the Poker Run for the Wounded Service Members

"Poker Run Benefits America's Wounded Warriors"
Hope For The Warriors™ Raises Money for Wounded Service Members and their Families at the
First Annual Poker Run
10:00 am, November 18, 2006, New River Harley-Davidson

