


# Salute



FALL 2022

The magazine for America's military

## 'RIDE TO LIVE, LIVE TO RIDE'

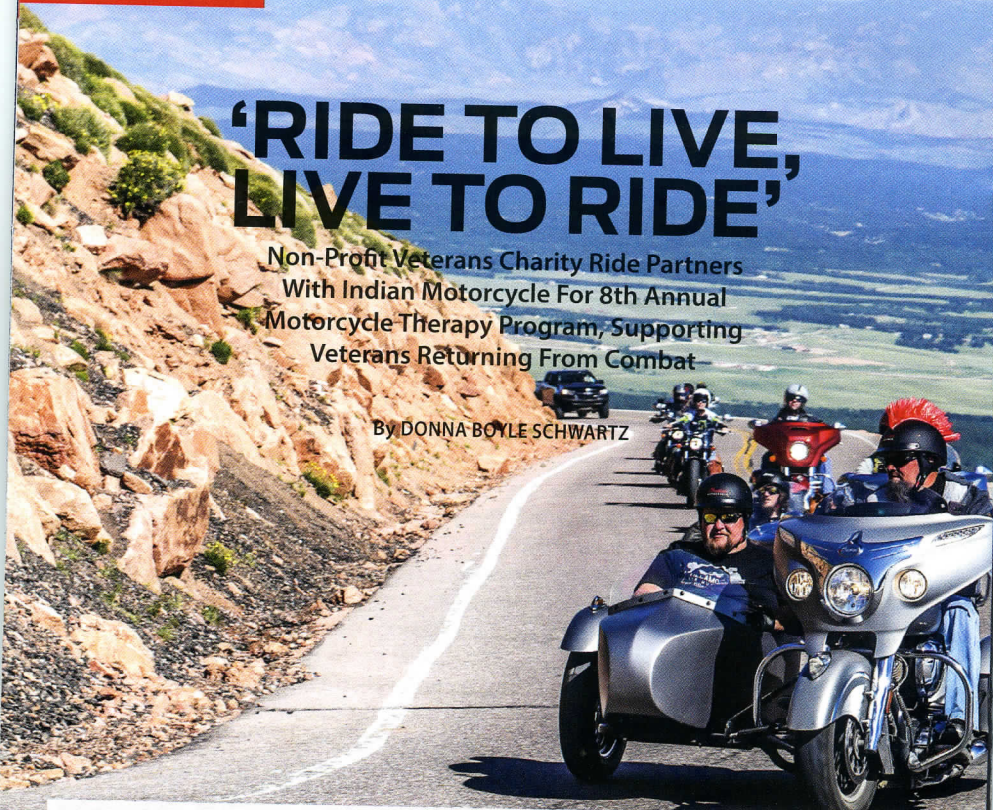
**Non-Profit Veterans Charity Ride Partners  
With Indian Motorcycle For 8th Annual  
Motorcycle Therapy Program, Supporting  
Veterans Returning From Combat**



# 'RIDE TO LIVE, LIVE TO RIDE'

Non-Profit Veterans Charity Ride Partners  
With Indian Motorcycle For 8th Annual  
Motorcycle Therapy Program, Supporting  
Veterans Returning From Combat

By DONNA BOYLE SCHWARTZ



**V**eteran U.S. Army Airborne Paratrooper and lifetime motorcyclist Dave Frey knows firsthand the therapeutic benefits of riding motorcycles to “clear the mind.” After leaving the Army, Dave returned to work in the family motorcycle shop, and he has been riding for more than 50 years.


Nicknamed “Indian Dave,” in honor of America’s oldest motorcycle company, Frey conceived of the non-profit Veterans Charity Ride (VCR) while riding solo to South Dakota’s famed Sturgis Bike Rally in 2014. Along the way, he met a fellow paratrooper. They talked about veterans that were returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and the difficult time so many were having with severe injuries, with post-

traumatic stress (PTSD), and in adjusting to civilian life after their war experiences.

Frey said he couldn’t stop thinking about his fellow veterans and wanted to do something special for them to make a difference in their lives. Then it hit him: the idea to leverage the therapeutic effects of motorcycle riding to create an adventure of a lifetime for wounded and amputee combat veterans adjusting to post-war life.

In addition to working in his family shop, Frey served on the Department of Justice Special Operations Response Team (SORT), and he also worked as a Wild Lands firefighter before his interests turned to filmmaking. He has spent more than 20 years producing special events, corporate videos, and





## All the rides are on America's most beautiful back roads, in Utah and Colorado.

—Dave Frey

documentary films. He reached out to his film-producing partner, Sue Frey, whose parents were both in the Navy, and she shared her organizational skills and creativity. Together, the Freys came up with the idea of "motorcycle therapy" for wounded veterans. At the same time, they decided to film the ride, so the message could be shared with as many veterans as possible.

"All my training and experience has led me to this," Sue Frey relates. "I love helping people, especially our veterans."

Dave Frey adds, "Since 2015 we've taken over 150 wounded and amputee veterans on motorcycles and sidecars to the Sturgis Bike Rally! With a growing number of returning veterans still in need of VCR programming, we're excited to expand and host three multi-day motorcycle therapy events. In this new format, we will reach and support the most veterans in a single year than ever before. All this could not be achievable without the support from Indian Motorcycle and all our loyal sponsors."

This year, VCR will host 10 to 12 veterans on three motorcycle therapy events. The first event is in Moab, UT and Durango, CO, June 10-19; the second in Moab, UT, August 20-30; and the third October 10-18, from Park City, UT to Moab, UT. Each event allows participating veterans the opportunity to push towards conquering their post-war challenges while out on the open road. Throughout the trip, veterans will also conduct team-building exercises, which allow riders to share their service experience during the emotional and mind-detoxing motorcycle therapy event.

"All the rides are on America's most beautiful back roads, in Utah and Colorado, getting to know each other and helping each other with motorcycle therapy," Dave Frey explains. "The shared experiences of serving bring them together, veteran to veteran, to help each other heal. We also show the veterans just how much their service means to America, by stopping in small towns along the

way to meet the people of our grateful nation to celebrate these brave men and women. Along the way, we surprise the riders with excursions and meet interesting and inspiring people. This simple concept, born out of a cross-country ride and a big purpose to help veterans is now a nationally recognized program. Our amazing partners, Indian Motorcycle, Champion Sidecars and Russ Brown Motorcycle Attorneys lead the way and many other generous sponsors ensure we can fulfill our mission." Other VCR supporters have included Jay Leno, Mark Wahlberg, Danny Trejo, Bret Michaels, Zac Brown, and Rinehart Racing.

Indian Motorcycle vice president Aaron Jax, points out, "It's been a true honor to support a life-changing program such as the Veterans Charity Ride; VCR's growth is a testament to Dave and Sue Frey, as they've made it their mission to positively impact the lives of the brave men and women who have sacrificed so much for our country."

"Our successful actions have proven to help veterans who are suffering from PTSD, anxiety, sleeping disorders, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and problems with Re-assimilation into civilian life," Dave Frey comments. "We provide them a safe environment with fellow veterans and people they can trust; give them outdoor activities that are motivating, enjoyable, challenging and of interest to them; introduce them to and educate them on holistic healthy natural alternatives, and assist them with rehabilitating their own personal goals and purposes. The end result of our program is a healthier and happier, more capable individual, who is now living life in a much better physical and mental condition, and able to help and support other veterans to do the same.

"The most rewarding thing for us is when we see a fellow veteran that needed a little help and guidance get that from their time with VCR," he adds. "They start living life and being happy again AND getting a piece of their life back."



## In Their Own Words

Veterans who have participated in past Veterans Charity Ride events say it has truly been a life-changing experience for them. These are their stories:

**Denver Braa**, retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel and former Marine, logged 24 years of active duty service. He joined Veterans Charity Ride in 2020 as a rider and returned in 2021 and 2022 as a mentor and road captain. "There is no adventure without adversity. VCR brings together people with all kinds of personal challenges – both mental and physical – to share tackling some awesome adventures. Together we ride motorcycles as a group, go off-roading, rafting, zip-lining, and other events, most while enduring the heat, wind, and sometimes rain that Mother Nature brings. Individual challenges fade as that old familiar feeling of teamwork we had on active duty comes back and we accomplish our collective goals for that day's challenges.

"Every VCR event has hundreds of moments: simple things, like the return of a smile to a face that hasn't smiled in years, or the return of the light or twinkle to an eye long

gone sad. These moments happen throughout the 10 days we are together and feed the change in how a person sees their own situation for weeks, months, and years to come."

**Milt Yagel**, retired Army First Sergeant, served more than 20 years; during his last deployment, he served as a Recon Scout Platoon Sergeant. He was injured in 2006 when a rocket-propelled grenade hit his truck and detonated inside the cab; he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, and the Combat Action Badge (CAB). He participated in VCR as a rider in 2021 and returned in 2022 as a mentor and road captain. "I wanted to return to give back to my fellow veterans some of what I got from being on the ride. I loved meeting other veterans and sharing some of my past experiences and knowledge with them that I know can help them lead better lives. I know how much it helps me heal by



Every VCR event has hundreds of moments: simple things, like the return of a smile to a face that hasn't smiled in years, or the return of the light or twinkle to an eye long gone sad.

—Denver Braa





helping others. Also, seeing parts of the country that I would not ever have had the opportunity to see and experience if not for VCR. We saw some beautiful country, very cool tourist sites and also places with significant history of our country. I really enjoyed being out in the open, being in the moment. You can never have a bad day on a bike."

**David Green, II**, an Army Sergeant First Class, served for 18 years before needing a medical discharge due to back surgeries connected to his deployments. "Riding motorcycles helps me to get back in the right state of mind and I was missing the camaraderie that I had in the Army. Talking with Denver, Milt, and Sue and sharing with them my struggles and what I have gone through really helped me start to heal; getting to know other veterans that struggle with the same issues I struggle with and knowing that I am not alone. The whole program is rewarding and also life-saving. The love that Dave and Sue pour into the VCR is amazing – I felt like I was part of their family, even to this day!"

**January Goklish** served in the Air Force before a debilitating back injury resulted in a medical discharge. She shared in VCR partly to honor her recently-deceased mother, who loved motorcycles. "This felt like a tender opportunity for me in processing the loss of my Mom to reconnect to her passion and gain support from fellow veterans while navigating the struggles of life. I didn't really fully understand the magnitude of the therapeutic process I underwent in riding motorcycles, and yet it was so exhilarating. Riding through the canyons, wind in your hair, and seeing the beauty of the plateaus, buttes, and mountains was breathtaking and a completely different perspective while on a motorcycle. Participating with the VCR really was a 10-day journey of experiencing the healing power of the outdoors and building a community of camaraderie in meeting complete strangers but supporting one another as we participated in a variety of outdoor activities and feeling like family when our sojourn came to an end.

"It was incredibly touching to open up and share some of the unique challenges that many of us face thoughts of suicide, overcoming drug and alcohol abuse, struggling to navigate the medical system within the VA and trying to get proper medical care, overcoming the challenges in transitioning to civilian life and seeking employment and a decent wage, dealing with PTSD and the loss of loved ones are many

of the things we discussed with each other throughout the week. There wasn't a person in the group that couldn't relate, listen, offer advice, give support and just be a brother and sister to one another. This is what VCR really is about, caring for one another and providing hope and love in helping one another heal and have the strength to press on despite the challenges in life. Matt Martin, one of the participants, frequently reminded us of Steven Redhead's quote, 'The difference between success and failure is not giving up.'"

**Jared Posey**, a retired Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer 4, served for nearly 21 years, including three combat tours in Iraq. "I am sometimes reluctant to meet new people and have anxiety over the unknown. Dave and Sue Frey are amazing people who treat you like family from the first moment. The other veterans were awesome and I was able to feel comfortable and come out of my shell and truly benefit from the motorcycle therapy experience. Re-integrating into society after combat experience is challenging. This opportunity, this ride, and this program has progressed my healing and made me feel more 'normal.' Dave and Sue's organization is really making a difference in veterans' lives. It has made a significant difference in mine. I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to participate and I feel that I have gained a new family."

**Joel McCollough**, a retired Marine Corps Staff Sergeant, served in Operations Iraqi Freedom I and II as a Counterintelligence Specialist, and he is the recipient of a Purple Heart and a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with 'V' Combat Distinguishing Device. He has written articles for TIME magazine's Battleground online as well as RangerUp.com., Coffee or Die Magazine, and is a published poet. He initially joined VCR in 2021 as a writer for Coffee or Die Magazine and returned in 2022 as a mentor and side-car pilot. "The most interesting opportunity on VCR will always be that of interacting with a group of vets who understand my own military experience, no explanations needed. We've all chewed some of the same sand at one point or another, so there's no pretense in conversation because no one's impressed. You got blown up? You got shot at? You got screwed over by the VA? Yeah, we all did. VCR creates a space that allows vets to find camaraderie with other veterans they may have never met, but the shared commonalities make it so strangers become fast friends in a week."





# FORMING GOOD STUDY HABITS

Maximize your military time management skills to make the most of your educational experience

By DONNA BOYLE SCHWARTZ

**M**any veterans take advantage of their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to return to college after separating from the military, which can be a bit of a “culture shock” after the regimented life of an active-duty soldier. Specifically, some veterans may find that their school skills are a little bit “rusty” after so much time away. Learning to study effectively can be the key to a successful college experience, so it is important to form and maintain a stable study routine right from the outset.

Numerous organizations advise veterans to take what they’ve learned in the military and apply it to their new life as college students. For example, in the military, everything happens on a schedule, and troops are taught to adhere to a specific daily regimen. Creating a study schedule and incorporating good study habits into your daily schedule as a civilian can help you succeed and reach your

higher educational goals.

A solid study schedule should include a specified length of time that you will study for each subject and an explicit goal for how much material you will cover during that time. You should also make sure to schedule regular breaks – take some time to go for a walk, listen to music, play with your pets or children, or chat with a friend or spouse. Regular breaks will help clear your head and allow you to focus better on the next study session.

Another key component to forming good study habits is organization, and again, military experience can help you get organized. Just as the military requires troops to pay meticulous attention to keeping uniforms and personal spaces orderly and clean, you should focus on having a clean and tidy area in which to study. Having a dedicated and uncluttered study space will help you organize your materials, compartmentalize



your course work, and help you concentrate by minimizing distractions.

Veterans can also adapt the “team-building” approach used by the military to studying. There are myriad resources available to them in the college environment – most especially, the people. Reach out to fellow students, professors, teaching assistants, librarians, tutors, and counselors for help with studying.

Most colleges and universities have on-campus or online resources purposely designed to help veterans transition to higher education; many schools also have veterans’ support groups and peer counselors to assist veterans returning to school. Form discussion groups with other students in your class; schedule a regular session with one or two “study buddies” to go over material; and get involved in the college community to enhance your academic endeavors.



## TIPS ON GOING BACK TO CAMPUS

All college students can benefit from having formalized study habits, but it can be difficult to “get into the groove” when you are returning to school. The following are 10 effective study habits listed by the East Coast Polytechnic Institute (<https://www.ecpi.edu/>) for both returning and new college students.

- Take and review thorough notes while in class or while doing assigned reading: You’ll absorb key terms and ideas more quickly by writing them down immediately.
- Eliminate lifestyle distractions: Stick to academic websites, silence your phone, and turn off your wireless connection.
- Schedule your study time: Treat studying like any other class or commitment. Pick a specific location that’s quiet, peaceful, and will give you plenty of room to work. Then set a specific appointment with yourself each week, and stick to it.
- Organize your class materials into separate folders: Color-coding can also help you keep different topics separate.
- Take every extra opportunity to study: If a professor or TA offers an after-class study session or extra credit opportunity, try to fit it into your schedule.
- Take care of yourself first – get plenty of rest! Your brain needs to recharge regularly in order to process and absorb new information.
- Study with a group or partner: Exchange notes, quiz each other, and hold each other responsible for showing up to each session.
- Exercise to release stress: Physical activity releases endorphins that reduce stress and depression.
- Take care of yourself first – eat well: Nutrition plays a huge role in your ability to learn; drink plenty of water and make sure you get enough fruits and vegetables.
- Don’t be afraid to ask for help: Reach out to tutors, professors, and classmates if you think you’re falling behind. Whether you have trouble understanding a new concept or just need help managing your time, college is full of people who know exactly what you’re going through.