

## Freedom Run 2012

What a day it was! An early start and some late rider rendezvous points, followed by joining more club members and riders near the fairgrounds in Morris. Once we were all together, we headed into the grounds, paid our fees, received our dog tags and proceeded into the huge crushed stone parking lot to line up with other early arrivals. Some of us wore medals and ribbons from serving the country, while others were dressed in patriotic attire. The all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast included "flipped flapjacks" which were literally flipped in the air toward the receiver whose empty plate was ready to catch. A little aim...a little hope...and nearly all of them were caught. More laughs than a barrel of monkeys.

A sea of bikes filled the huge lot. Before the ride, we all had a sense of belonging as we stood gazing at the flag during the Star Spangled Banner. It was heartwarming to say the least.

Speeches, recognitions, and presentations on the stage up front were all followed by a dusty start. So many bikes, so much dust and the thunder of engines. What a blast!

The long snake of riders must have been two miles long as we wended our way from Morris to Marseilles. Enthusiasts lined the roads in places and were nearly packed along parts of the road as we headed into Marseilles, where the main street was closed to anything but motorcycles and foot traffic. Stores, vendors, food stops were available up and down the street.

Many visitors to the Middle East Conflicts Memorial Wall attended ceremonious presentations near the center. We somberly remembered our heroes, we felt our camaraderie, we stayed cool, ate well and had a fine hot summer day with a town full of riders and bike enthusiasts. It was great to be part of such a huge event. Looking forward to next year's event!

*Larry Jyma*