

# 2012 HONOR OUR TROOPS SNOWMOBILE RIDE

By Diane Voight

The troops started arriving in Eagle River on Sunday, January 22, to watch the World Championship races, complements of the Derby Track. Although there was a mist in the air as the final races began, as usual, the competitors did not disappoint. Overnight the mist turned to all snow and offered a plentiful blanket of fresh snow for the riders to enjoy.

Monday morning began with everyone signing in at the Derby Track, and getting instructions for those who have never ridden, then it was outside to pick a sled from the fleet that had graciously been donated by Yamaha Corporation, Boat Sport Marina, Trakside Sales and Decker Tours. The "Experienced" group took to the trail first, and with Eagle River police officers escorting the snowmobilers across traffic at the major intersections we were out of town and enjoying the trails in no time at all. The trails were a little icy

under the fresh blanket of snow, but in great condition. Some 20 miles later, the troops arrived at Pitlik's Sand Beach Resort for some tasty treats and a warm beverage. After a good rest, it was back on the trail for a jaunt through the Sugar Camp area on our way to Bonnie's Lakeside for lunch. Ed and the crew prepared and served a wonderful pork dinner with all the trimmings, and a decadent cake topped off the lunch to perfection!

It was now time to get back on the trail for the trek back to Eagle River. By this time everyone was a semi-experienced rider... okay maybe a few lessons yet to be learned. The trails across the lakes and through the woods were getting easy, but the trail along Highway 70 presented a few challenges. As experienced riders, we know when to lean and to wait for the sled in front to maneuver the hill before trying it, and



The Mellow group of riders included a fun mix of young and old.



The Cruisers, those looking for a moderate paced tour, gathered for a group photo.



The Experienced riders were able to add a few more miles and make a bit better time.



First time rider Elaine Schachelmayer was the lucky recipient of the toilet seat award for the best oops of the day.



Guide "Doc" was presented a gas can for being the only one to run out of gas along the trail.



Colonel Hamilton presented Bonnie's Lakeside with a certificate of appreciation for contributing a great lunch to the riders.



A heartfelt thanks by the ride participants was given to this year's guides.



*The trails and scenery were perfect for participants in the 4th annual Military Appreciation Ride.*

we know what happens if they don't quite make it up. And of course, there is that deep snow at the edge of the trail that wants to suck you into areas you didn't intend to go. Let's just say there were a few lessons learned the hard way. All was fine at the end of the day as the troops took their own victory laps on the track, signifying a great day.

The evening began back at the Derby Inn with hot chili, brats and hotdogs for all. Presentations were handed out to the major contributors and a round of applause for the wonderful guides. Although they too had a couple little oops, everyone returned unscathed. You know your guide is having a bad day when he's the one that runs out of gas on the trail! But as the saying goes "A bad day on the trail, always beats a day at work!"

### **SPONSORS & DONORS**

- 115th Fighter Wing Family Readiness Program, Madison
- American Legion, Department of Wisconsin
- Association For Families, Milwaukee
- Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs
- Best Western Derby Inn, Eagle River
- Boat Sport Marina, Eagle River
- Bonnie's Lakeside, Three Lakes
- Decker Tours, Eagle River
- Derby Track, Eagle River
- Designs Solutions, Minocqua
- Devils Creek Stump Jumpers, Merrill
- Ken's Sports, Kaukauna
- Lakeshore Snowmobile Club, Manitowoc
- Near North Trail Riders, Athelstane
- Phlox Winter Knights Snowmobile & ATV Club, Phlox
- Pitlik's Sand Beach Resort, Sugar Camp
- Snoopy Sno Goers, Lancaster
- Speedway Snowmobile Club, Verona
- Sundowner's Snowmobile Club, Edgerton
- Track Side, Eagle River
- UPS Store of Waunakee, Waunakee
- Yamaha Motor Corp.

*Additional donations are still being received and are greatly appreciated.*



*Pitlik's Sand Beach Resort was presented a certificate of appreciation by Colonel Metzger for the outstanding brunch.*

### **GRATITUDE ABOUNDS FROM PARTICIPANTS**

To all the many devoted organizers, sponsors, and supporters of the 4th Annual Military Ride - Eagle River, WI.

A heartfelt thank you from my husband and I as well as the other 128 members who participated in the snowmobile ride on the 23rd of January 2012. What a thrilling, breathtaking, and amazing day of fun, beautiful scenery, and excellent camaraderie. The overnight accommodations, rest stops with food, beverages, and excellent home cooking made for a day that we will long remember. Our tour guides were patient, entertaining, and had a great sense of humor, which was helpful during those unplanned detours and clumsy mishaps.

As a sport, snowmobiling is often out of reach because of the expense of the equipment, lodging, hauling, and travel involved. Making "sleds" available to a large group must be quite an organizational feat. Thank you for putting a wonderful sport in easy reach of those who might not otherwise have an introduction or opportunity to participate.

For active duty personnel who are asked to deploy for long lengths overseas or our guard/reserve members who deploy more frequently, having a day to "play" and let loose is a great gift to escape to nature. Military lives take on so many added challenges and responsibilities – burnout is inevitable. A little recreation in the beautiful Eagle River community does a heart and soul immeasurable good. Please be sure to share our gratitude to the local legion(s) and snowmobile groups that have played a vital role in promoting the Military Appreciation Ride and sport.

*- Elaine Schachelmayer*

Our trip to Eagle River was amazing – it was our best trip to Eagle River so far. (We have been up there a few times since my mom moved up in 2005 from Milwaukee.) We can't always get up to Eagle River as much as we would like so this trip really was a family trip and that means the world to us. My husband, SSG Joshua Powers, got home from his last deployment this past summer and we have missed so much time with him. When he got this email about snowmobiling, we were so excited. We have never gone before but we have always wanted to go, and it was amazing. We had so much fun and our kids loved it; they can't wait to go again. I don't really know if many people can relate with a military family. It's a hard life with a lot of sacrifice but it's worth it in the end because we are so proud of everything they do. I really want to thank everyone who put this event together for us because it truly meant a lot to us.

Thank You,

*- Rowena Powers, SSG Joshua Powers, Lilly Powers, Joshua Jr. Powers, Gina Powers*

All in all, it was an exceptional experience from top to bottom. The events (both the racing and snowmobile rides) were very well organized and the people who volunteered their time were outstanding. I particularly appreciated the support from all of the sponsors. The generosity they displayed, especially considering the rough economic times our country has faced over the past few years, is truly remarkable. I think it really shows that even in hard times, great organizations are lead by exceptional people who still see the value in giving back. As a military member, that's exactly why I serve; for people and organizations like that. I left Eagle River feeling very proud of both my country and my state!

*- Keith Hofkens WSN*