

From the December 2016 Inland Mopars Newsletter

2016 Fort Irwin Toy Delivery (submitted by Ken Hamer)

Judy and I picked up Mike Keller and headed out to Fort Irwin early on Sunday, December 18, meeting up with Phil & Mary Leatherman from Extreme Automotive and Ric and Jackie Carr from the National Street Rod Association in Victorville. Our little convoy arrived at Fort Irwin a little while later.

Just like last year we were met at the Main Gate by Sergeant Major Randy Cheadle from the Fort Irwin Directorate of Emergency Services, and were escorted into the main base area where we unloaded the trailer full of toys for the soldiers' kids and the boxes and bags of women's clothes for the soldiers' wives. We were joined there by Command Sergeant Major Daniel O'Brien.

It took a little longer to unload the trailer this year due to the increased amount of toys and the huge increase in bicycles. In 2015 there were 3 bicycles - this year there were 17!

One of the donated toys did not make it to the distribution to the soldiers' kids however. CSM O'Brien took one look at a very proud-appearing Bald Eagle and decided it would not be appropriately appreciated by a young child. Our National Symbol is now on display in the Fort Irwin trophy case for all to enjoy.



The toys and bicycles will be distributed to the soldiers' kids in two batches. A smaller distribution for the children of those families remaining on base during the Holidays, and a larger "Christmas in January" distribution for the children of the families currently off base after they return from their Holiday leave. We were told there are anywhere from 400 to 1000 children that the donated toys will be distributed to. Each unit on base turns in a list of needy families. The lists are reviewed and the toys distributed as deemed appropriate.

Upon hearing this, we all decided we need to do more to help our soldiers' families.

After unloading the toys we had a very nice lunch - again at the only on-base facility open that day - Pizza Hut. During lunch we also talked about the opportunity for civilians to watch some of the intense training that goes on at Fort Irwin to prepare our military for what they will find when they're deployed to the Middle East. We will discuss this further at the January meeting to see who may be interested in driving out to Fort Irwin and joining in a NTC Box Tour.



Every flat space had boxes of toys stacked on it; floor, tables chairs, it didn't matter

2016 Fort Irwin Toy Delivery (cont)



Remember those Mopars at Extreme Automotive shirts you bought? This is what \$3 from each shirt sold bought. One bike from the 2015 shirts sold after the 2015 event & one bike from the sale of the 2016 event shirts, so far. Yes, it was cold. Yes, that is a smile.



In amongst this motley crew you should find Command Sergeant Major Daniel O'Brien, Ric & Jackie Carr, Phil (white Santa beard) & Mary (white beanie) Leatherman, Ken & Judy Hamer, Mike Keller, Sergeant Major Randy Cheadle, and a couple of friends of the Leatherman's. Also in the photo are 3 of the bases finest (didn't get names) as well as the couple responsible for making sense of all these toys; (lady in red jacket without white beanie) & gentleman hiding behind the blue sack in front.