



# SCAT PACK NEWS

**Ft. Irwin 2015 Toy Drive Highlights Special Edition**



This toy drive special edition was created to document Inland Mopars involvement with the Fort Irwin toy drive originally created by Phil & Mary Leatherman of Extreme Automotive.

We had originally met Phil & Mary in 2013 at the Chaffey College Car Show, where they had their 1947 Dodge in the show & their 1931 Chevy "Wild Thang" doing it's outrageous flame show. We invited them to our Mopars in May show at the California School for the Deaf, Riverside, where they again brought both of their cars. The Dodge took Best of Show. The Chevy took best flames. In 2014 they again brought out both cars with the Dodge on display as the 2013 Best of Show. "Wild Thang" again did its flame thing.

We arranged for a club tour of their shop in November. They had mentioned they were doing a toy drive for the kids at Fort Irwin so we surprised them as a club and brought a bunch of toys.

Later I talked with Mary about getting the Mopars together for a casual open house at their shop. It would also be a toy drive. This was the first Mopars at Extreme Automotive in November 2015. It was a small intimate gathering with lots of cars parked on the street, Mary's spaghetti, a Mopar cake, a few brews & grapes. We passed around a questionnaire asking three questions; 1. Did you enjoy the event; 2. Would you attend if it is the same format (open house/informal); 3. Would you be more likely to attend next year if it was a car show format? The overwhelming response was yes, yes & no, don't change it.



Above; Mopar cake supplied by Mary, eaten by all

Inland Mopars invites you to  
**Mopars at  
Extreme Automotive**

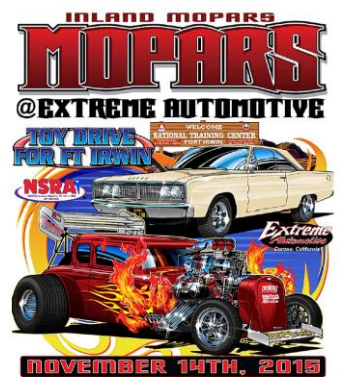
Shop Tours & Toy Drive for Ft. Irwin  
Saturday November 14, 2015 10:00 am - 4:00 pm  
18889 Groveswood Dr. Corona, CA 92879  
Food will be provided



**FREE vehicle inspections for FREE 1984 vehicles**

- For more info: Mike 951-212-0817
- To confirm for head count purposes: Mike 951-212-0817
- Please bring a new, unwrapped toy valued at \$10 or more for the Ft. Irwin toy drive (you can bring more than one if you like)

Home of Wild Thang



Right; Event shirt featuring Wild Thang & Bill Heckman's 1966 Dodge Coronet



Toy collection at first Mopars at Extreme Automotive

We did two more events at Extreme, which morphed into Mopars & Friends at Extreme Automotive, to include anyone, before Phil & Mary informed us they were moving to Texas. That was when they asked us to take over & continue the toy drive. We could not say no.

## Fort Irwin History & 2015 Toy Delivery

The following are excerpts from the December 2015 Scat Pack newsletter with the history of Fort Irwin & the 2015 toy delivery with Phil & Mary Leatherman written by Inland Mopars President Ken Hamer.

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Ft. Irwin

Ken Hamer

Today's Fort Irwin was first established in 1940 by President Franklin Roosevelt as the Mojave Anti-Aircraft Range, a military reservation of approximately 1000 square miles - about the size of the State of Rhode Island. In 1942, the Mojave Anti-Aircraft Range was renamed Camp Irwin, in honor of Major General George LeRoy Irwin, commander of the 57th Field Artillery Brigade during World War I. Two years later, Camp Irwin was deactivated and placed on surplus status.

Camp Irwin reopened its gates in 1951 as the Armored Combat Training Area and served as a training center for combat units during the Korean War. Regimental tank companies of the 43d Infantry Division from Camp Pickett, Virginia were the first to train at the new facility.

The post was designated a permanent installation on 1 August 1961 and renamed Fort Irwin. During the Vietnam buildup, many units, primarily artillery and engineer, trained and deployed from Fort Irwin.

In January 1971, the post was deactivated again and placed in maintenance status under the control of Fort MacArthur (Los Angeles), California. The California National Guard assumed full responsibility for the post in 1972. From 1972 to late 1980, Fort Irwin was used primarily as a training area by the National Guard and reserve components.

On August 9, 1979, the Department of the Army announced that Fort Irwin had been selected as the site for the National Training Center. With over 1000 square miles for maneuver and ranges, an uncluttered electromagnetic spectrum, airspace restricted to military use, and its isolation from densely populated areas, Fort Irwin was an ideal site for a National Training Center. The National Training Center was officially activated October 16, 1980 and Fort Irwin returned to active status on July 1, 1981.

Since its activation, the National Training Center has witnessed many firsts. The first unit to train against the Opposing Force at the NTC were from 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division in January 1982. Infantry and engineer units first augmented the Opposing Force in 1984. June 1984 saw the first use of M1 Abrams tanks and M2 Bradley fighting vehicles on the National Training Center battle field. The first armored cavalry squadron rotation occurred in November 1984. Units from the 101st Airborne Division participated in the first light force rotation in March 1985. The 197th Infantry Brigade participated in the first extended rotation with brigade operations in June 1985. The first urban terrain mission was conducted at the National Training Center Pioneer Training Facility in December 1993.

The National Training Center and Fort Irwin continue to serve as the Army's premier training center. Fort Irwin is the only facility where the U.S. Army can train with active fire from every weapon in their arsenal. Officials from many countries have visited the National Training Center and use it as a model to build their own training centers. As in the past, Fort Irwin pits soldiers against a harsh

## Fort Irwin History & 2015 Toy Delivery (cont)

environment, but now adds a determined and formidable opposing force. As during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and Desert Storm, the National Training Center and Fort Irwin continue to train units to fight and win on the battle field.

During our 2015 toy-delivery visit, we learned that the soldiers stationed at Fort Irwin are there for a minimum two-year rotation. During this time they act as the "opposing force" (OPFOR) to the units that visit for mandatory training prior to being deployed overseas to the middle east. The OPFOR's mission is to drive the training units to the point of failure, because it is only through failure that each unit, and each soldier in that unit, can become strong enough to handle what they will encounter during their deployment.

The soldiers who make up the OPFOR spend three continuous weeks out in the "box" (short for the "sandbox" - the field, the Mojave Desert) away from their families and the base facilities. The 4<sup>th</sup> week is spent back at the main base facilities reviewing the training they were part of, repairing their equipment and getting ready to go back out for another three weeks in the box. They do this all year-around. The only times they are permitted to take leave is during the December holiday period and Spring Break. We all know how hot the summer months get to be in the Mojave Desert. That is when our military is working the hardest.

God bless each and every one of them for their service, their commitment and for what they do for all of us!



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### Toys for Ft. Irwin

December 20, 2015

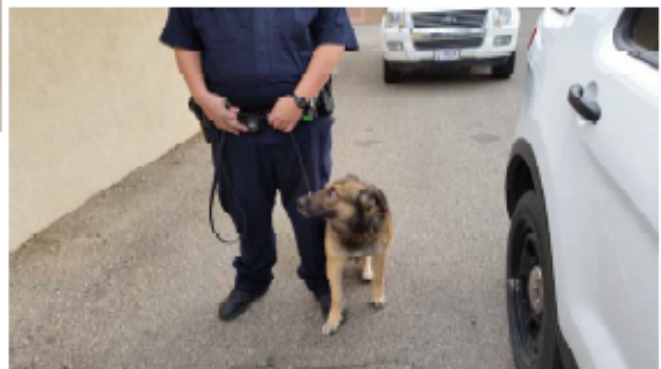
Judy and I met Phil and Mary Leatherman at their home early on Sunday morning, the day after their outstanding toy drive Christmas party, and followed them out to Fort Irwin. Along the way Steve and Beth Backer joined the group in Cajon Pass. And later on, Ric and Jackie Carr from the National Street Rod Association joined our little convoy.

Sergeant Major Randy Cheadle, from the Fort Irwin Directorate of Emergency Services, met us at the Main Gate and escorted us 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. CSM O'Brien had only arrived at Fort Irwin a few days before, in fact he was on his 4<sup>th</sup> day of duty, and was completely blown away by the generosity of the SoCal hot rod community towards the kids and wives of the soldiers at this out-of-the-way military facility. He "guesstimated" that there were over \$20,000 worth of toys in the pile we left from "Santa".

After unloading the toys and clothes, we were treated to a tour of the base stockade since both Sgt. Major Cheadle and CSM O'Brien are part of the Military Police at Fort Irwin. Outside we had the pleasure of meeting "Rambo" and his handler. Rambo is a Belgian Malinois K9 member of the MP contingent at Fort Irwin.

After touring the stockade we all went to lunch at the only on-base facility open that day - Pizza Hut. We had a very nice lunch and learned much more about Fort Irwin and the mission of the soldiers stationed there (part of which is mentioned in this month's President's Message).

We also learned that it is possible 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. Sgt. Major Cheadle said he would check into it for any Inland Mopars members that may be interested. We will discuss this further at the January meeting to see who may be interested.



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