



SCAT PACK NEWS

Ft. Irwin Toy Drive Highlights Special Edition



President's Message

Ken Hamer

Thank You

I am writing this after arriving home from our 2019 Fort Irwin Toy Drive delivery. Inland Mopars Car Club was thanked numerous times for what we have done to ensure a very Merry Christmas for a lot of kids. We were told there are about 3,000 kids on base this year. The thanks expressed by the folks at Fort Irwin need to be forwarded to all club members who shared their time and efforts to ensure this happened. Extra special "Thanks" to:

- Mike Keller, our Fort Irwin Toy Drive Chairman, for all of his time and effort in organizing all of the individual Toy Drive events at the car shows
- Norma Johnston for her outstanding shopping and stretching the cash contributions we received to buy toys
- All club members who participated in collecting toys and donations at the various toy drive events, helped transport toys to storage following the various toy drive events, helped collect toys and load the trailers at the Toy Drive party and/or drove to Fort Irwin to help unload the toys

Thank you to all club members who helped with our 2019 Toy Drive in any way!

After picking up the contribution by the La Mesa VFW, our 2019 Toy Drive delivered two enclosed car trailers filled with toys and about 80 bicycles.

And of course, "THANK YOU" to Don and Ann Long for hosting our 2019 Toy Drive party at their absolutely amazing Party Garage. It is always easy to spot someone who is seeing it for the first time.

Bits 'n Pieces: 2019 Ft. Irwin Toy Drive Update

As Ken mentioned in his President's Message, there are a lot of people & organizations that need to be thanked for the items collected this year. Since I was in La Mesa picking up bikes, I have no idea who brought what or who was there, other than by the guest list. Speaking of the guest list, it was much more legible than last year (thank you Judy) so it will be useable in getting the thank you's & notices out for the 2020 party.

We delivered two 24 foot trailers containing toys & bikes to Ft. Irwin the morning after the toy drive party at the Long's. Trailer number one contained all the toys we had collected since May as well as 24 bikes donated at the toy drive party. Trailer number two contained another 50 to 60 bikes donated by Hilton Vail & friends from the La Mesa area.

Even with all the donations I could see we were down on toys from last year which means I will have to plan a little better for 2020. Suggestions are welcomed.

Toy drive party & delivery covered elsewhere.



Top: on the 31 mile dead end road to Ft. Irwin.

Bottom: Ft. Irwin "elves" & Inland Mopars

Ft. Irwin Toy Drive Trailer Loading

Monday December 9 was toy trailer loading at the Brander's. Besides Sil & Carol, Bill & Debbie Whitson, Lonnie & Robin Clabaugh, & Tim Baer showed up to get toys that weren't boxed up into boxes & into the trailer. It didn't take too long and we were loaded & ready to go to the Long's in prep for the party the following weekend. We swapped Sil's trailer from Sil's truck to my truck and then headed over to the Long's to drop the trailer in preparation for the following weekend.



Ft. Irwin Toy Drive Party

As mentioned earlier, I had gone to La Mesa to pick up bikes so missed most of the party. Thanks to all who showed up. We didn't do an official head count but guessing at filled tables, there were over 200 guests. The color guard this year was provided by the Kaiser High School JROTC from Fontana. I do know that Charlie Buel had delivered a dozen bikes before the party & Sherm Taylor brought a bunch of toys from the Chaffey College Car Club, but have no idea who else brought what. All items were appreciated. Phil & Mary were missed.

Don & Ann Long had the "party barn" decorated for the holidays. There was a DJ this year rather than a band. When I got there people were out on the floor line dancing & then pretty soon SFC Williar from Ft. Irwin was leading a conga line throughout the facility. Also spotted in the line were 1LT Begley also from Ft. Irwin & SGM Sweeney, formerly of Ft. Irwin, who flew down from his base in Washington for the party.

Thanks to all who supported the event. The kids at Ft. Irwin will be glad you did.

2019 Ft. Irwin Toy Delivery photos by Judy Hamer, Debbie Whitson

Since I had gone from the Ramona Tire wet event to Dave Miller's to pick up his trailer for the trip to La Mesa to pick up bikes donated by Hilton Vail & friends, I didn't really see the toy trailer until it was opened at Ft. Irwin. I knew we had a dozen bikes delivered the day before the party by Charlie Buel & was told we had another dozen show up at the party. I dropped the bike trailer back at Dave's house since he was going to tow his trailer to Ft. Irwin on Sunday & I headed to the party. Got there after 7:00. You knew there was a party going on with the music & line dancing. Then SFC Williar headed up the conga line & proceeded to lead it throughout the "party barn".

Then it was time to hook up the trailer & head home for the drive to Ft. Irwin the next morning. Thank you to all the club members who loaded the trailer as well as did the cleanup of the party barn. It looked pretty good again.

2019 Ft. Irwin Toy Delivery (cont)



Sunday morning it was another gas fill up & then head to Dave's house since I had his one set of keys that could unlock his hitch. By 8:30 we were at the 210 & 15 Fwys. As we passed the McDonalds at Hwy 138, I could see Paul Roddy's truck but no one else. Ken & Judy, then Tim & Diane, arrived to join Paul & they headed up the 15. Dave & I were moving along at a "safe" clip when we pulled off at Ft. Irwin Road. A few minutes later the rest of the group caught us. We were a little early & it was pretty windy & cold so we tried to use the trailer as a wind block. It did not work real well. Santa & Mrs. Claus met us at the visitor center & escorted us in. Dave pulled the bike trailer around behind the building to where the containers were, which is where the bikes would be stored. They had those 50-60 bikes out of there & in the container in no time. In the meantime, the toy trailer was opened & the unloading line was formed. Just like last year, boxes I thought were heavy were nothing to these guys & gals. They made short work of it.

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2019 Ft. Irwin Toy Delivery (cont)



Bikes & toys after the almost two hour drive

Everybody pitched in



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2019 Ft. Irwin Toy Delivery (cont)



Fewer toys this year...there was still room in the office



Mrs. Claus eyeing all the goodies before the real work begins



**Thank you to all who made this possible
Planning has started for 2020**

Ft. Irwin Toy Distribution photos by Judy Hamer



Top left: Santa & Mrs. Claus. Center: Mrs Claus & one of her elves. Right: Bikes and more bikes.

Ft. Irwin toy distribution took place Saturday January 11 when the troops had returned from their Christmas leave. We were told there were 3000 kids this year. Four hours to take care of them all.



Ft. Irwin Toy Distribution...some more

Saturday January 11 was the day of the Ft. Irwin toy distribution. The troops were back from their Christmas leave & the kids were ready. Inland Mopars members Ken & Judy Hamer, Tim & Diane Baer, Dave & Tanya Miller, & Paul Roddy were joined by Mark Barnett of Blue Diamond Entertainment (DJ at multiple car cruises & toy drives) along with Hilton Vail, his wife & daughter and several of his "bike friends" for a lunch at one of the Ft. Irwin restaurants (not Pizza Hut) with several of the military personnel prior to the actual toy event. The military personnel were surprised to find out we were not located in Barstow but were from over the hill, as well as Hilton & friends were from the San Diego area.



Left: DJ Mark Barnett & 1LT Begley



Right: Hilton Vail, his wife Lenda & friends



Ft. Irwin Toy Distribution...some more (cont)



Left, from left: Inland Mopars members Paul Roddy, Dave Miller & his wife Tanya, Ken Hamer, Diane Baer



Right, from left: 1LT Begley, SFC Williar, LTC Jackson, & Command Sgt. Maj. Lowe, the highest NCO on Fort Irwin



The troops, & kids, are ready



Left: lots of kids



Right: SFC Williar, without the conga line (see January Scat Pack for details) revving up the crowd



Above: Santa working the crowd



Right: toy distribution has finally started



Ft. Irwin Toy Distribution...some more (cont)



Kids of all ages

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
DIRECTORATE OF FAMILY AND MORALE, WELFARE AND RECREATION
BLDG 1317, NORMANDY DRIVE, P.O. BOX 105094
FORT IRWIN, CA 92310-5000



11 December 2019

Office of the Director of Family and MWR

Inland Mopars Car Club
Attn: Mr. Mike Keller
1636 N. Glenn Avenue
Ontario, CA 91764

Dear Mr. Keller:

Soldiers and their families epitomize what is best about America. Their willingness to make sacrifices in order to build a better future for others and preserve our way of life is a great strength of our Nation.

Donations have a positive impact on the lives of our Soldiers and their Families. On behalf of the Installation Management Command, I am pleased to accept your donation of toys to be given to Fort Irwin children. As you know, acceptance of this gift offer cannot be interpreted as an Army endorsement for any products or services.

This donation will benefit Soldiers and their Families who have given so much in service to our Nation.

Please accept my sincere appreciation for this very generous and thoughtful gift.

Sincerely,

Marion Taylor
Director
Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation



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.

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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 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.

Fort Irwin History & 2015 Toy Delivery (cont)

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Ft. Irwin

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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 4th 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!



Fort Irwin History & 2015 Toy Delivery (cont)

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Toys for Ft. Irwin

December 20, 2015

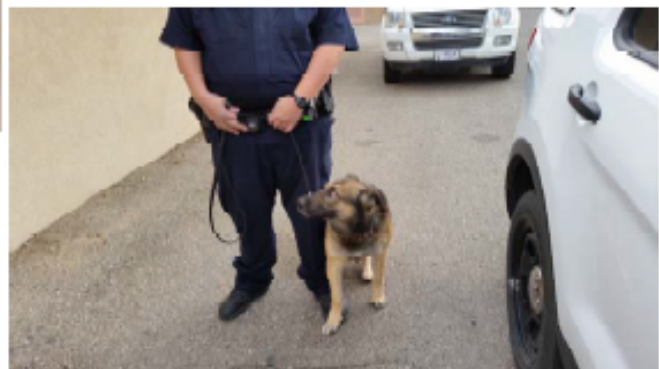
Judy and I met Phil and Mary Leatherman at their home early on Sunday morning, the day after their outstanding toy drive Christmas party, and followed them out to Fort Irwin. Along the way Steve and Beth Backer joined the group in Cajon Pass. And later on, Ric and Jackie Carr from the National Street 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 4th 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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