



Monbulk RSL Newsletter

Veteran Suicide Memorial Ride

By Tina Bull

I came home from work on a Wednesday night in early December to find an unhappy and very pensive, thoughtful husband. When I asked him what was wrong, he replied that "we'd lost another one."

He meant another veteran to suicide. The tally for 2017 at that stage was now at 81 veterans and the 12 months wasn't yet up. I watched as he processed that information and we both sat helpless to the situation and the greater problem overall. Leaving him with his thoughts, I went off to get the evening meal prepared for our family.

He surfaced a little while later and announced he was going on a ride. He and his motorcycle would be taking up the cause before the year was out, and he'd be doing it as a memorial ride for those 81 names we did not know. Matt set up an event through Facebook for December 30th on the Young Veterans Facebook page. He planned to begin the ride at the Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Walk in Seymour and finish it on the steps of The Shrine of Remembrance.

36 hours later, Matt came to me and showed me something neither of us could quite fathom. His little ride had been shared over 350 times and people were registering their interest at incredible rates. Diggers MMC, Vietnam Veterans / Veterans MC, Partisans, Red Knights, Blue Knights and a few other motorcycle clubs had all come on board and were showing tremendous support for this ride.



i) Bikes lined up on the streets of Seymour

Matt's feeling about the large number of veteran suicides in this country was one that was proving to be definitely shared amongst the greater community.

As the next few weeks went by, the event grew to epic proportions and the Young Veterans crew stepped into gear to make sure that they had all bases covered for this

memorial ride that had now gone viral.

Permits were sought from The Shrine to park all of the motorbikes participating in The Shrine precinct, The Coo-Wee Ride folks volunteered to cook a breakfast in Seymour and Caulfield RSL stepped in to supply a function room and nibbles for after the event. And our man, one Matt Bull got briefed on the specific PR rules for the almost certain publicity that would be coming from the media.

The morning of the 30th arrived and bikes began arriving in Seymour from before 8 am for a ride due to start at 10am.



ii) Pre-ride brief at Seymour

In excess of 150 bikes and some vehicles including support vehicles and an ambulance from Emergency Australia all set off from Seymour. More bikes joined the ride along the route through Yea, Flowerdale and Whittlesea – resulting in