

# News and stories

## Gold Star family members honored at Fallen Heroes Ride

July 10, 2017

Metro News Staff | [Metro News](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The 3rd annual Freedom Ride honoring Gold Star families in West Virginia last week was a success, Major General James Hoyer of the West Virginia National Guard said.

Hoyer said they had over 200 motorcycle riders participate in the round-trip ride from South Charleston to Millwood, their largest amount of participants since the event started.

“About five or six years ago we recognized that nobody in West Virginia was recognizing Gold Star families,” Hoyer said on WMOV Radio. “We took it upon ourselves to start an event and it’s grown over the years, and thanks to the work of Senator Manchin, this event is now the mainstay of helping us in the National Guard support those Gold Star families.”

All of the proceeds from the event are used in other events meant to support families who have lost loved ones in the service.

“First and foremost the proceeds go to the Gold Star event we hold each year,” Hoyer said. “Gold Star families can come to Camp Dawson and spend the weekend together. There are opportunities for them to bond and also therapy opportunities, all of that is paid for by the money raised during this ride.”

Senator Joe Manchin, who served as the Special Guest Road Captain, said he was happy to come down and honor those who sacrificed their lives for the United States.

“It is the greatest country on Earth because we have the greatest military that is willing to sacrifice and give their lives for each one of us,” Manchin said. “Anyone in uniform or who has ever been in uniform, when they sign up, they are saying I am going to take a bullet for you, i’m going to do whatever it takes to honor this great country.”

Hoyer said the event just shows how much West Virginian’s care about military members and their families.

“I think it is a testament to West Virginia that even those who don’t serve are somehow tied to military service,” Hoyer said. “West Virginia, even though it is small, has stepped up in a big way to defend this nation, and we

step up as a people to recognize those who do defend the nation.”