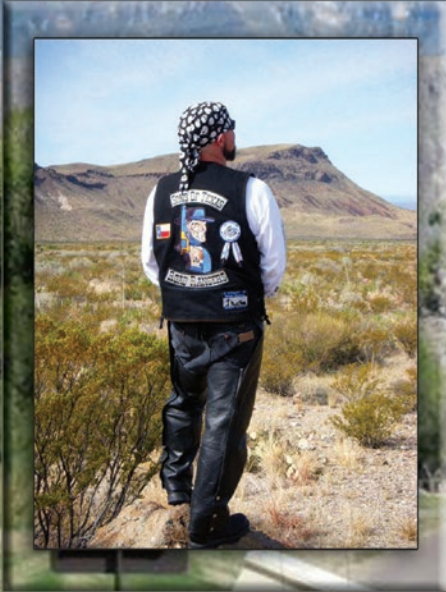


Big Bend Memorial Ride



In Loving Memory of Leo M. Romeijn
By Danny "Lucky" Romeyn, Sons of Texas MTA

There is a brotherhood in the big state of Texas called Sons of Texas Motorcycle Touring Association (SOT MTA). We have six chapters in most of the major cities in the state and I happen to be part of the Bayou City Gamblers Chapter out of North Houston. On November 1, 2008, I lost my older brother to a hard fought battle against cancer. This tragic event made me realize that since cancer plagues my family, someday I will be faced with this disease. In the mean time I realized I should live life to the max. I made myself a commitment that every year around the one year anniversary of my brother's death I would drop everything and hit the open road to lose myself in the relaxed state of mind that riding a motorcycle does to me.

Early 2009 I decided to plan the one year anniversary ride to Big Bend National Park in West Texas for a four day weekend ride. I contacted a couple of my brothers from my SOT MTA chapter and invited them to come along with me and my girlfriend, Jennifer Carlen, on the journey and I got a few takers.

So day one of our trip arrives on Thursday October 22, 2009 at 6:00 a.m., as we met at a local Bass Pro Shop on Interstate 10 in Katy, Houston. I met up with my fellow SOT brothers, Mike "Wicked" Stritz and Jeff "Shadow" Denison. Come to find out brother AJ "Big Daddy" Force had bike issues and would not make the trip. I felt bad for him, because this trip is all he talked about for weeks leading up to the ride.

We knew going into the first few hours we were going to be riding through the back end of a front rolling in and would be dealing with some heavy rain. We headed West on I-10 through a wet storm and finally cleared the front about two hours later, near Luling. We stopped at the next gas station to fill up and shed the rain gear for the cold weather gear. I would like to say that every minute from this point on we had no clouds and 62 degree weather. It made the ride through the rain all worth it.

The ride continued on I-10 north of San Antonio, on to Boerne where we stopped for a little coffee and breakfast tacos with my sister who lives in town. Back on the bikes rested and warm from the coffee and conversation, we headed Northwest on I-10 through Kerrville. At this point the speed limit increases to 80MPH and it felt great to let the horses run the open range. This area of Texas was new to me and I wasn't familiar with the area and I noticed my gas light came on and I started to think... "crap I hope there is a station near". As my gas range indicates I have only ten miles left in my tank, I see a sign for Junction and "Gas 15 miles". Yep this is going to be fun. My ride manages to make the 15 miles and I rolled into a gas station to fill up the six-gallon tank on my 2009 Ultra Classic to the rim for a total of 5.97 gallons. Boy that was close!

We continue on I-10, seeing the wind generators on the hill tops and past the canyons all the way into Ft. Stockton. From there, we direct our steeds South on Highway 67, a lonely two lane roadway with some awesome views for

the last leg of day one ride where we stop at our motel in Alpine; a total of 544 Miles registered for the day. We get all checked in and hit the hot tub and meet up with two more brothers from the Gulf Coast Ghost Riders chapter out of El Paso. Marc "Ref" Huffman and Rafael "Blaze" Saucedo. After catching up and planning out the ride through the park we all decide to call it a night.

After having a big breakfast to start our day two, we head South on State Highway 118, enjoying some spectacular roads and views to a quick fill up just outside the West Park entrance in Study Butte. We had to keep Jenn from going inside, because due to the cold she was wearing an outfit that looked like she was going to hold the place up. In the park we travel just about all the park roads enjoying majestic views, twisty turns, and steep grades throughout the park. We stopped at several spots to take in the views and managed to take some great shots as well. There is only one place to eat in the park and you have to make a serious climb up to Chisos Basin with a 7800 foot elevation to the restaurant. But the trek offered a reward of great views of the park. Sufficiently refreshed, we continued our ride through the park to the East side to Rio Grande Village. We stopped for a bit to take a look at the majestic Rio Grande River that separates USA and Mexico. After a full day riding through such a huge awesome land mass we headed back to end our 330 miles of day two.

On day three, we say good bye to our El Paso SOT brothers

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and make our way East to Marathon. From there, we went North on Highway 385 on a road so quiet we didn't see one car for 30 minutes. We finally made it back to I-10, where we head towards San Antonio. Again, I almost run out of gas due to extreme cross winds for most of the ride. After just dodging a gas issue again we made our way into San Antonio, where we would crash for the night. Once checked in to our motel, we met up with a few of our SOT sisters that came in for a girl's night the night before. We all headed down to the famous River Walk where we enjoyed some really big margaritas and Tex-Mex all while telling all our stories from the road. We hit a

few pubs to talk about future rides or possibly taking this ride again next year, then headed to our rooms, ending day three with a total of 460 miles.

On our final day, we round up the crew and make

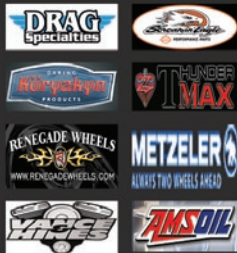


something that the open road on a motorcycle that just makes me enjoy life even more. It's a feeling that only a person who experiences a long ride on a bike would understand. I love knowing that anytime I feel stressed by the world, I can hop on that machine and get rid of any worries or issues I leave behind me.

I have already planned my two year anniversary ride for 2010 and several of my SOT brothers and I are heading on a week long journey to the Southern Most Point in Key West, FL with several fun stops along the way. Although I have lost one brother, have gained a whole

family that is the Sons of Texas. Thanks SOT brothers for coming along on that great ride to Big Bend. the 169 mile ride back in to Katy. We said "so long" to those who made my trip even more exciting than I could have expected. In the days following as I head back to the one-hour commute to my job, I realize that there is

family that is the Sons of Texas. Thanks SOT brothers for coming along on that great ride to Big Bend.



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