

VIEW FROM THE TOP

CEO

LOUNGE

Into Washington's Memorial Day



FROM 1898-1902 • BOXER REBELLION 1900 • NICARAGUA 1910 • PANAMA CANAL 1914 • GRENADA 1983 • PERSIAN GULF 1987-1991 • PANAMA 1988-1990 • IWO JIMA 1945 • SANTO DOMINGO 1916-1924 • WORLD WAR I 1917-1918 • BELLEAU WOOD SOEISSONS STIMMIER BLANC MONT MEUSE - ARGONNE • NICARAGUA 1916-1918 • WW I OLD WAR 1941 PEARL HARBOR • SOMALIA 1992-1994 • AFGHANISTAN 2001 • IRAQ 2003

IN HONOR AND MEMORY OF THE MEN OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES TO THEIR COUNTRY SINCE 10 NOVEMBER 1775



INTO WASHINGTON'S MEMORIAL DAY

THE ROLLING THUNDER IS A MOTORCYCLE RALLY HELD EVERY YEAR IN WASHINGTON, DC, HELD AS A MARK OF RESPECT FOR AMERICA'S SOLDIERS OF WAR

WORDS: ARUNA RATHOD

Little did we know that we were driving right into the history of the United States. The Memorial Day is huge all over USA and observed on the last Monday of May. The weekend begins with activities and is called the Memorial day Weekend. Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who have died in military service for the United States. Rolling Thunder® Inc is non-profit organization united in cause to bring awareness of those missing in action or remain prisoners of war. Harley-Davidson has partnered with Rolling Thunder Inc since 2001 to unite riders in support of men and women who serve USA.

A RIDE INTO HISTORY

Our bus for Washington DC left New York at sharp 9 am. As we left New York, the driver greeted us and smoothly manoeuvred us within a matter of minutes onto the super smooth eight-lane highway, that went through Philadelphia and Maryland. Leaving the fantastic skyline dotted with skyscrapers behind, our ride to the capital started off really well. The bus glided over the roads, and it was after an hour and a half, that

we stopped for just 10 minutes, with a warning by the driver not to be late! A four hour ride, it seemed much shorter and as we entered Washington DC, the first stop was the Union Station, a large bus station where buses from all over the USA assembled for passengers to board and alight.

After this stop, it was a straight ride into the heart of Washington. After we booked into our hotel, we had a late lunch and walked to the White House. Washington is relatively quiet compared to New York and post 8 pm, it doesn't have much action.

PANORAMIC WASHINGTON

The next morning, on May 27th, Sunday, we started our day early, since it was a bright sunny day. A cab to the Capitol Hill left us awestruck. As much as Manhattan is the city of high rises in a limited area, Washington is sprawling, grand and full of history. The sheer scale of the buildings and the amazing architecture left me spellbound. Around 11 am, we could hear the bikes roaring, and we also spotted some Harley Davidsons. When we reached the National Mall area where 12 landmarks of America's history stand proud as symbols to American history and



each monument is uniquely designed. We started with the Washington Memorial, and ended at the Lincoln Memorial which stands at the west end of the National Mall. The Lincoln Memorial is a neoclassical monument honouring America's 16th president. A 19-foot statue of Abraham Lincoln sits overlooking the Reflecting Pool and the Washington Monument. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in front of 250,000 attendees.

Set in vast greenery during summer and thick snow during winters, the National Mall features touching monuments like the magnificent National World War II Memorial and its famous effervescent fountain. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial and the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial is a reminder of the atrocities of war.

ROARING THUNDER AND ACTION

Being Memorial Day, the action had begun. As we walked away from the Lincoln Memorial, we saw that the roads had been blocked. Police bikes and vans were all over and the bikes began rolling in. There's no better place to spend Memorial Day weekend than Washington, DC.

On May 25, the event began with Patriot Harley-Davidson Open House. At 5:30 pm, the riders went to the Candlelight Vigil at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial followed by the Candlelight Vigil Ride.

On Sunday, May 27 the Ride of the Patriots line-up began at 6:30 am and the Ride of the Patriots Ceremony began at 9:00 am. The bikes arrived at the Pentagon parking lot at 10:00 am and reached Washington DC at noon.

Police officers begin the ride, followed by thousands of riders. As we walked close to the Lincoln Memorial, stages were being set up for performances later in the day. A large open space had hundreds of Harleys parked and the Americans were either resting or walking around after completing the rally. The Rolling Thunder Motorcycle Rally brings together motorcycle riders from all over the U.S. to honour Prisoners of War (POW)s and Missing in Action



HISTORY OF THE RALLY
 The Rolling Thunder Washington, DC Inc., and its mission began as a demonstration following the era of the Vietnam War. Many of America's military were killed or missing in action (MIA) and their remains were not being returned home or respectfully buried. There were also reports of live prisoners of war (POW) who were left behind when the war ended. In 1987, Vietnam veteran Ray Manzo (CPL, USMC), bothered by these accounts, came to DC with his idea and met and enlisted the help of fellow veterans to organize a motorcycle demonstration to bring attention to the POW/MIA situation. The first Run in 1988, had roughly 2500 motorcycles and riders demanding that the U.S. government account for all POW/MIAs. It continues to grow every year, becoming the world's largest single-day motorcycle event. Now with over a million riders and spectators combined, Rolling Thunder has evolved into an emotional display of patriotism and respect for all who defended the USA.



(MIAs) who served the USA during the Vietnam War. This "ride for freedom" draws more than 900,000 riders, featuring a route that starts at the Pentagon and winds through West Potomac Park.

Throughout the day, thousands of citizens visit the Arlington Cemetery, the country's largest military cemetery, to pay their respect to immediate family and soldiers buried there. Servicemen and other families place small flags on the graves and distribute roses to visitors.

There are than 250,000 graves at Arlington Cemetery. As we left the cemetery, we visited the Iwo Jima Memorial (also known as the Marine Corps War Memorial). A magnificent sculpture, it has six American soldiers who raised the second American flag at Iwo Jima on Feb. 23, 1945, signifying a U.S. victory in the Pacific during World War II.