

HARLEY TRACKS: Across Vietnam to The Wall

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Minneapolis, MN/June 2015 — Author Mike Rinowski is proud to introduce his book, *HARLEY TRACKS: Across Vietnam to The Wall* (\$29.95/Tracks Press/www.harleytracks.com). In 324 pages, Mike shares a story like no other. How many would imagine an opportunity to honor our fallen veterans on the land they saw last? How many would expect to do it on a Harley Davidson?

Mike lives on his terms, prepared for opportunity and adventure. To have a Harley Davidson in Hanoi, Vietnam, was as unexpected as the job offer in 2008. His plan—to make a living in the golf business and enjoy a ride on his day off—changed a year after his motorcycle arrived. He thought he had made the ride of his life; through mountains and remote jungles, across highlands and along the coast, to the tip of the Mekong Delta. He reveled on a ride like none before. At the end of the trail, an obligation drew him to ride back across Vietnam in the spirit of freedom for the Americans who died there.

Winter wasn't the best time to ride north, but he rode from Saigon on Christmas Eve 2011. Rain, fog, and landslides detoured him from jungle on the Ho Chi Minh Road, and trail conditions farther north challenged him and his Fat Boy. Thrills, determination, and pain killers, carried him through encounters he considered, "all part of the adventure." He returned six weeks later. The bike had taken a beating and he walked with a limp, but most disturbing was a lack of fulfillment. He had missed something on his ride for those who gave all.

His need to ride overpowered a concern for his career, and he became more disciplined in his purpose. With a lot of faith, he returned to the trails. Alone, with undisturbed thoughts on the land they fought and died, and many remained, he crossed a spiritual threshold. To ride in memory of them, as he had, wasn't enough. Mike bonded with their spirits to begin a ride vicariously for them—a ride with a playful vengeance.

After countless adventures in the tracks of others, he had laid tracks like never before; 41,000 miles alone across Vietnam on a Harley Davidson to honor of those who gave all. The experience

humbled him. The splendor of landscape held him in awe. The trails, traffic, and weather entertained him as much as they threatened him. After each scrape, sprain or fracture, he reminded himself that he was the luckiest rider in Vietnam. Once again, he thought his journey was complete, but coincidence and opportunity had more cards to play. A chance meeting with a Vietnam veteran, at a Texas Barbeque in Nha Trang, led to a poignant conclusion nine thousand miles away.

About the Author

Mike was born in 1953, in northwest Minnesota. Virtues, principles, and patriotism were in the nature of a Boom generation. He enlisted in 1971 and served in Germany. He worked in railroad service, the golf business, as a writer, and a publisher. His journey now takes him from his home in Elk River MN, to points across America in recognition and gratitude to those who serve, and sacrificed, for freedom.

For more information, please visit www.harleytracks.com; to schedule an interview with Mike, please call 763 233-2806, or send an e-mail to: 6gear@harleytracks.com.

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Mike's first motorcycle trip rolled out of North Dakota in 1975—his destination was east, and then south. In 1977, he rode to Los Angeles by way of Mobile, AL—and returned a year later. While he absorbed the biker lifestyle, rides took on a life of their own; a relationship built between him and the bike as highways, features, and elements became animated. He learned, too, that Einstein was right. Space and time do warp; after a day's ride, distance and hours felt like a blip.

On foot and on motorcycles, in a car and in the air, Mike followed in the tracks of many. He crossed America in all directions and back, walked on the Great Wall of China, and dived in the Great Barrier Reef of Australia. He crawled into live volcanos and walked among Komodo Dragons in the wild, too. Each adventure brought cherished memories and tales to share, and then they passed. No big deal; he looked forward to the next one. But his journey across Vietnam on a Harley Davidson was unique. Many coincidences lured him to go farther than he could have imagined. Many factors could have doomed it—but they didn't.

His joy ride evolved into a journey with a story he had to share. Demands for a book would be great, and he held no doubt about his commitment for a professional presentation. Although, it would cost his career, which made the financial risk greater. At sixty years old, he entered the literary world with the same faith he rode with. His story helps keep those who gave all—not forgotten—in a special way—with their spirits on a wild ride across the land they saw last. Readers have felt the wind in their face and footboards grinding through curves. The solitude of jungle on the Ho Chi Minh Road was a powerful experience. They laughed with Mike, and shared in sorrow. Many sang along, too, as he stumbled through words in the flower song.

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In Praise of Harley Tracks

“There have been many books about epic bike trips—but none are like this one. Brazen, brave, and seriously badass.”

—**Bill Hayes, Author; *The Original Wild Ones, American Biker & Hell on Wheels***

“If you like motorcycles, *Harley Tracks* has to be your next book. 41,000 miles on a solo pilgrimage to honor those who fought in the Vietnam War. Every day was an adventure.”

—**Henry Zeybel, Editor; *Vietnam Veterans of America Magazine***

“I felt the intimate connection to your surroundings along with the historical events that occurred there. I appreciated the deep respect you had for my fellow soldiers, sailors, and airmen along the way. I was most struck by your pronouncement in The Swan Song Ride chapter, “Brothers, FALL IN. It’s time to go home.” I believe they all heard you.”

—**Tom Campbell, Vietnam Veteran, SEAL Team One**

“I have been aware of your journey but I mostly avoid the Vietnam stuff because it causes me pain. However, a very close friend gave me your book. I read it all on Sunday. I am glad you rode for those who never can. Keep it up for us that have “come home” but left a lot over there.”

—**John A. Shaver, Jr., Vietnam Veteran**

“The book has the power to take you on the trip with him as he visits history that needs a voice like his to tell the story.”

—**Larry Tank, USMC**

“One can see that all we fought for was not in vain.”

—**Dave Barr, Vietnam Veteran, Author; *Riding the Edge & Riding the Ice***

“The best investment I made at the 75th Sturgis Rally.”

—**Tom, Biker**

more at: www.harleytracks.com