



# Local

## SANTA BARBARA COUNTY NEWS

# PEDALING VETERANS AWARENESS

## Ride 2 Recovery Golden State Challenge drew about 140 bikers

A cadre of bicycle riders with a cause rolled through the North County on Thursday, decked out mainly in red, white and blue and seeking healing on the road.

Approximately 140 bikers of the Ride 2 Recovery Golden State Challenge travelled from San Luis Obispo County to Orcutt, past Vandenberg Air Force Base and into Solvang Thursday afternoon as part of their seven-day, 460-mile ride down the California Coast.

The riders are seeking to enhance the public awareness of the challenges faced by wounded veterans. They are also raising money for Spinning and outdoor cycling programs at military and Veterans Administration facilities around the nation.

The riders were accompanied by law enforcement vehicles and also escorted by motorcycle members of the American Legion Riders.

On Thursday night at the Veterans Memorial Hall, comedian Dennis Miller entertained the riders during a gala dinner.

Most of the participants are veterans of the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. There are also a number of single- and double-amputees from the Vietnam War riding the route.

The riders were multi-generational and both men and women are riding. On Thursday afternoon, about eight members of the Village Dirtbags bicycle riding club, from the Lompoc Valley, rode a few miles with the group and later presented them with a \$500 donation.

Today, the riders will depart Solvang in two groups. The riders will leave from 5th Street and Mission Drive at 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. on their way to Santa Barbara via San Marcos Pass.

In Santa Barbara, the group is expected to stop for lunch at 5 Points Shopping Center at the Big 5 sporting goods store before riding to Ventura for the night.

Approximately 240 riders with the Arthritis Foundation's 2009 Amgen



NORA K. WALLACE / NEWS-PRESS PHOTOS

Riders with the Ride 2 Recovery Golden State Challenge traveled from San Luis Obispo County to Orcutt, past Vandenberg Air Force Base and into Solvang on Thursday afternoon as part of a seven-day, 460-mile ride down the California coast. A number of single- and double-amputees from the Vietnam War are riding the route. At right, a rider flashes the peace sign as he rolls past La Purisima Mission.

California Coast Classic Bike Tour are expected to leave Buellton this morning on the way to the Santa Barbara Arthritis Foundation office at 2253 Los Positas Rd. around 10:30 a.m. or so. The riders are journeying 525-miles along the state, and will finish Saturday in Santa Monica.

