

HISTORY, MARYLAND CHAPTER 1

In June of 2002, several local firefighters met and wanted to form a motorcycle club. A number of independent club names were discussed, but our final decision was to join the International Red Knights so that we could benefit from all it had to offer.

Initially, MD 1 Chapter was formed in 2000, but it never got off the ground, so when we contacted the International, they gave us our charter as Maryland 1, and they would hold the MD 2 open in case the original Chapter members started up again.

The current MD 1 chapter's Charter members came from a number of Departments from around the State (mostly from Prince Georges, Montgomery, Howard, and Anne Arundel Counties); centrally located, Laurel became our home base.

Since we were the first official Red Knights Chapter in Maryland, our membership grew rapidly; pulling firefighters from all over the state. Our first meetings were held at Laurel VFD. Now, because of our membership growth, we meet at a number of firehouses, restaurants, bike shops, etc. As with all organizations, we elected officers, filed the appropriate papers to make us legal and made plans on what our goals and mission would be. Ultimately because of our growth, some of our members decided to form their own chapters closer to where they lived (Southern MD and Eastern Shore). Over the last several years, a total of 8 Red Knights' Chapters have been formed throughout the state with well over 300 members.

In the beginning, MD 1 wanted to be involved with charity work, so our first endeavor was to raise funds for the DC area Children's Burn Unit. We successfully raised money so that the children could attend a Burn Camp in central Virginia. This camp provides all kinds of activities for a week. On two occasions, a large group of us rode down to the camp to present our check and to have pictures taken with the kids and our bikes. We took FD hats and T-shirts, and many bags of caramel corn.

Throughout the years, we have participated in many events and causes to benefit firefighters and the general public with Poker Runs, a display stand at the International M/C show in Baltimore, etc. One of our major achievements was collecting personal items to be sent overseas. MD 1 collected over 1000 lbs of supplies that were sent to our troops in the Middle East.

Our main event is the annual celebration/wreath laying ceremony and ride to the Maryland Fallen Firefighter's Memorial in Annapolis. Each year in June, riders from all over come to pay their respects to Maryland firefighters that have died in the line of duty.

Our other main annual ride is to the National Fallen Firefighter's Memorial in Emmitsburg, MD at the National Fire College. The Red Helmets Ride is held the first weekend in October during a special weekend where the families of the previous year's LODD firefighters are honored.

MD 1 is very supportive of our military. We have donated to and participated in welcoming home our wounded troops while they are recuperating at Walter Reed Army Medical center.

Since 2005, MD 1 has escorted the Wreaths Across America trucks that carry 15,000 wreaths that are placed at head stones at Arlington National Cemetery.

Some other rides have been to provide traffic control for fallen police officers, assisted with funeral processions by providing escorts, promoting firefighters and motorcycling by visiting many different fire departments both in Maryland and surrounding states.

Each year since our beginning, we plan our calendar for the year. Our rides are to have fun and promote camaraderie. We have 1, 2, and 3 day rides, evening rides, and rides just to go and eat, especially Maryland seafood.

