

# Down payment ready for Vietnam memorial

## Motorcycle ride raises \$8,000 for cause

By **DAVID HINCHEY**  
Chronicle Staff Writer

COVENTRY — The Coventry woman looking to build a Connecticut Vietnam Veterans memorial in town has raised enough money for a down payment down on the memorial.

Jean Risley, who is looking to build a memorial on the town's memorial green at the intersection of Cross, Lake and High streets, raised more than \$8,000 Sunday during a motorcycle run fundraiser, bringing her total to \$28,000. "It was such a super day, everybody had such a good time," Risley said.

Risley said she is thankful for the support she's received, adding that 280 motorcycles took part in the run, which featured Attorney General Richard Blumenthal as a guest speaker. "I was just overwhelmed by the whole day," Risley said. "I'm still speechless."

She said the feedback she's gotten from those who took part said it was well organized, as the run featured riders from the Rockville American Legion and a mobile wall of honor of Connecticut residents killed in the Vietnam War.

The memorial's location has stirred controversy in town, as the town's appointed veterans commission — the Coventry Veterans Memorial Commission — opposed the location of the monument approved by the town council.

The commission said, among other things, the city of Hartford would be a more appropriate site

for the memorial because it has the infrastructure in place to handle a larger volume of traffic and parking. The commission also said the town's small, rural atmosphere did not lend itself to be used for statewide memorials.

The cost of the memorial is \$40,000, which has been designed to look like the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., with granite panels and names etched into the stone.

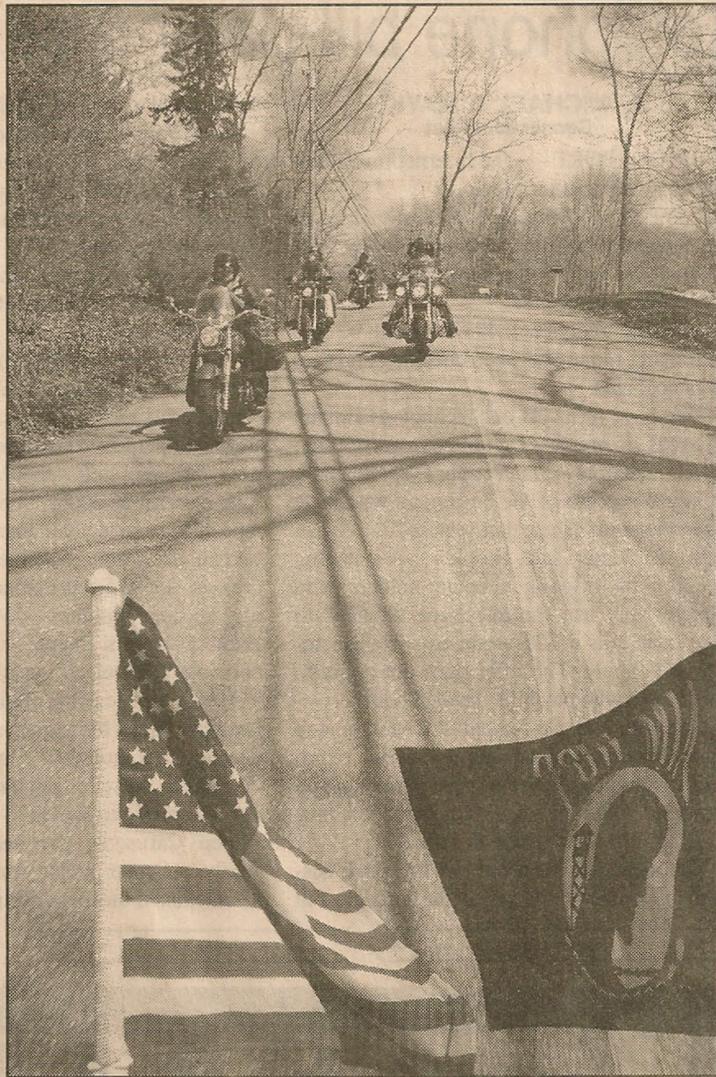
Risley had approached the town council back in July 2006 with the concept of building a memorial in town to honor the 612 Connecticut servicemen killed in Vietnam.

The council supported the idea and voted last November to place the memorial on the town green.

Risley's brother, Robert Tillquist, fought and died in the Vietnam War in November 1965 and was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for valor, according to the Connecticut Vietnam Veterans Memorial Inc., web site.

Risley also invited people to a "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans" dinner and fund-raiser at West Shore Middle School in Milford from 6 to 8 p.m. The cost is \$10 per person and \$5 for veterans. For more information, contact Jean Risley at [Rwrисley@snet.net](mailto:Rwrисley@snet.net) or visit the CVVM Inc., web site at <http://www.cvvm.org>.

Donations can be addressed to: CVVM Inc., c/o Paul Jatkowski, Treasurer, 91 Upton Drive, Coventry 06238.



Lindsay Vigue

Peggy Wright and Dave 'Spider' DeBarge of the Rockville American Legion Riders lead the pack Sunday during the hour-long motorcycle ride for Vietnam veterans. The event raised more than \$8,000 toward a Vietnam War memorial in town.