

# Bike ride helps teach life lessons

*Thomas Zimmerman, Army War College Public Affairs Office*

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*Air Force Col. Lee DeRemer, Army War College Senior Air Force Representative, and his nephews Zhenya and Sasha pose for a photo after completing a ride through Logans Pass during a 30-day, 1,155 mile bike ride through Wyoming and Montana. courtesy photo.*

Aug. 18, 2009 -- For Air Force Col. Lee DeRemer, USAWC Senior Air Force

Representative, a recent 1,155 mile bike ride

was about more than just exercise, it was about mentorship and relationship building with his two nephews, Zhenya and Sasha DeVeney.

The 17-year-old Zhenya and 14-year-old Sasha had recently lost their father Mike, and DeRemer said he wanted to make sure that they boys still knew they had someone looking out for them.

"The trip was a great opportunity to talk with them, provide some mentorship and give them some 'guy' time," said DeRemer. "We've always been close and I wanted it to be a time we could laugh, see some beautiful scenery and just spend time together."

The 30-day trip started in Great Falls, Montana and went in a loop through Montana and Wyoming. The ride included a trip through Yellowstone National Park twice, across the Continental Divide five times and through Glacier National park. The distance traveled is the same as a trip from York, Pa, to Miami, Florida.

"This was something that I had always wanted to do and this was a perfect opportunity," he said. The trio started off with some practice rides before tackling the main event.

The trip included a 100-mile day, an almost 11,000 foot climb while traveling on the Beartooth

Highway and more than 30,000 feet in vertical climbs.

"We climbed for three hours on the day we summited Beartooth Pass at 10,950 feet on the Wyoming/Montana border," said DeRemer. "Though we were well-heated from the exercise, we climbed into snow, which turned to rain and you can imagine the rest. We all had hypothermia, a steep descent, and 18 miles to cover before getting down off the mountain."

The resolve shown by the kids impressed DeRemer.

"The kids were just amazing during the ride," said DeRemer. "Those guys didn't complain once during the whole trip, it was a great time. They just kept going and going. They inspired me.

The lessons they learned and the confidence they gained will serve them a life time."

The confidence gained is one memory DeRemer said he'd take away from the trip.

"The look of accomplishment on the Zhenya's and Sasha's faces after they climbed 3,400 feet to summit "Going-To-The-Sun Road" in Glacier National Park on our final day," he said. "They had become different young men in 24 days and 1,155 miles."

DeRemer's wife Marcie kept a blog going of their trip so friends and family could keep track of their journey. For more stories and photos visit <http://marcieandlee.blogspot.com/>