

The World's Shortest Iron Butt
Or
My Most Expensive Hundred Miles
Or
Who's Watching Over Me and Why?

A brief introduction for those that don't know of me. My name is Joe Denton. I like to ride motorcycles. I like to ride them for a long time and meet other people that enjoy riding motorcycles and visiting with like minded people.

I've had the opportunity to do this as much or more than most in the time I've been involved with BMW's and the internet. I've had many motorbikes before and even worked for one of those 1% type biker rags. When I bought Frau Guttentite (a 1977 BMW R75) I never knew what I was getting myself into.

I work with computers for a living and quickly found IBMWR and the people involved with it. My first encounter as an IBMWR president involved both a get together and my first 1000-n-1 and my first encounter with a fellow president. Tom Childers and I made a ride from Anaheim to Carlsbad (NM) to meet with a group of folks that didn't mind riding for any reason, for any distance. Since then my love of riding has grown, much as my involvement with IBMWR and the long distance riding community.

I drive my truck a few times a year and I do what I can to involve myself with the community. A couple of Death Valley Daze, Utah 1088, helping in the Rawhide Rally, Laurie's Sores Rump Banquet, making good friends with people I hadn't met until they stayed the night in my house with my family, administering the Village Idiots mail list, starting the LDRiders list and finally my Iron Butt Rally attempt.

Well that brings me to the actual story. I had read about the Iron Butt rally years ago (probably in that biker rag I worked for) and it interested me. Two years ago I sat glued to the screen waiting for the reports to come in from Bob Higdon as he reported the last rally. Since then I have managed to involve myself bit by bit to draw closer to the chance to actually be in it. I submitted my application. It got drawn. I still have the E-mail from Mike Kneebone telling me I got in posted up on my wall at work. I spent a lot of time working extra hours and just riding to get ready for this ride. It was getting close. In the time between getting drawn and about a month ago my life had changes. From simple things like bumping the Frau from a 750 to 1000cc's to more complex items like breaking bones in my throttle hand that leave it in mostly constant pain and an operation I should have but wouldn't until I had come back from "the Butt".

On Fathers Day, Robyn, my brother and I were on our way to the airport to go visit my mother. I know that sounds odd butanyway we got into an accident and that drained my Iron Butt savings. (As a side note, both of them have R65s and we have some nice rides together) Since then small miracles began to happen. From people giving me their used socks (so I could throw them away on the Butt) to money in the mail. I have had support such as I had never seen before. Hurdle after hurdle was slowly passed. I added NSD (Never Say Die) to my sig. I was not ready to let anyone down after each set back was conquered. People all over the country had offered

me a place to sleep and food to eat. I was excited about seeing Reed's Landing, visiting Jon Diaz when it wasn't raining, having a bit of social time with Skipper Brown while my oil was changed at his generous expense, visiting with my friend Butch Hayes in Orange, doing time with soon to be friends in Oregon. I even had someone offer to buy me a new set of tires while on the rally. I had a BMW dealer volunteer his time and parts to make sure the Frau was ready. I had new cables put on and fork seals changed. I had never done that alone and deeply appreciated the help and guidance offered. Brian Curry had me set nutritionally (yes the IDN stuff is much better than Power Bars, ask Adam Wolkoff) How could anything possibly stop me?

I planned on leaving on Tuesday. I was going to take my bike in my truck to Reno and meet another rider there where we would get his trailer, add his bike and drive to Lisle, IL. When he still wasn't ready on Thursday, when I was in Reno, I decided to go ahead since I wanted have a bit of a buffer. I packed the Frau and with the help of Reno BMW and a fellow River City Beemer there for service I left my truck at my Grandmother's (small side note, how many of you in your forties have grandmothers with tattoos? Mine has as long as I can remember) and went back to Reno BMW to take off. Some kind advice from Jan Cutler and I was headed east.

Moving along I80 in black leather, earplugs in, well watered, I felt good. I felt real good. Here I was, on a twenty year old bike, heading to the world's toughest motorcycle rally after knocking off one deterrent after another. I was cruising at about 75mph, which is the speed limit. I was in no hurry since I had time and a sleeping bag. the plan for the first night was some supper in Salt Lake City, ride a few hours and find a spot to park where I wouldn't be bothered and sleep till the sun came up. I never got that far. While passing an eighteen wheeler out of Lovelock Nevada strange things started happening. A loss of power, vibration and the general feeling something wasn't right. If a bike talks to you long enough to name it you know when something isn't right. I pulled over and took out the earplugs and listened. It wasn't good. The signs around me said "Prison Area Emergency Parking Only Do Not Pick Up Hitchhikers".

I spent about one and a half hours trying to find the problem. When I took off the oil filter cover I found Gold. At least that's what the bearing material looks like in that fine powder. Realizing that since I had been there for the time I had and no one had stopped yet I was in trouble of being stuck there forever. I eased the Frau back West and gently made it back to Lovelock. I made some calls and checked in to the local cheap motel for the night. Many things went through my head that night, and I was relatively awake considering that I hadn't slept the previous two, too anxious to be gone and on my way. I was trying to find a way to complete my journey. Buy a used bike? Ride Robyn's R65? Change the crank with the R75/5 motor I have at home? It became a moot point not long after I checked out. I discovered my money and gas credit card missing. The motel was no help (not responsible for left items) and I sat and cried on the curb. I am usually not so emotional but this was the end of two years wait and the help of so many people. I felt I had let them all down in one short moment. It's not easy to understand how that felt I know but trust me, it ain't good. Since then most of what I've heard is "someone is watching out for you and doesn't want to go, at least you're alive". I'm trying to let that be the reason because it's the only one I can live with. It's very hard to lose two years of dreams, your bike and over 600 dollars without feeling something.

In closing, good luck to those doing the Iron Butt. I plan on rebuilding the Frau as soon as possible as being as much of the community as possible. With luck I'll see some of you the Beemer Bash and I hope to see the rest of you on the road.

Joe