

Ride Across America by The Prez'

A motorcycle adventure, such as the one we just completed, riding across the United States, took on many lives. One like this had its planning stage, including many Zoom meetings to coordinate dates, times, length of the ride, and what we wanted to accomplish in regard to the sights to see and the roads to ride. In actuality, the weather was a big factor in determining which direction we'd travel. Packing the bike, prior to shipping was also a challenge. You had to be prepared for hot & cold weather, as well as rain and possibly snow (came close to snow outside of Denver, but luckily it never materialized). With limited space on a motorcycle, it was a guessing game, between clothes, tools, repair kits, spare parts, first aid kits, etc. A great suggestion made by the worker at the location from where I shipped my motorcycle was to bring a jump starter, especially for the Harley's. I purchased a micro jump starter which came in handy twice, once for me when I left my ignition on in Quantico and then for Cliff's BMW in Colorado, when his bike would not start in the morning.

So, all that planning said and done, when we arrived 3-4 weeks after shipping our bikes, we not only couldn't remember everything we packed, we couldn't remember into which nook & cranny we stuffed everything, including that spare part, Allen wrench, cold weather shirt, or a spare set of gloves. The average age for this group was 69+ yrs. old, which meant we could barely remember what we ate the day before, so it was a given that we could only hope we packed everything. It would take a couple days to inventory and rearrange everything to ascertain if we forgot anything, such as Baron who forgot to pack a toothbrush.

Day-1 everyone's flight arrived on time. The four of us who arrived early Ubered to Laurel, MD to pick up the bikes. We immediately had to go to the HD dealership (fortunately only a



couple miles away) to get some minor repairs on Baron's & Dewey's bikes. Kent & Cliff, who arrived a few hours later, met us for lunch. From there we were off to the nation's capital for some picture taking. 1st & 2nd gear only, dealing with the traffic on and around Pennsylvania & Constitution Aves. For an hour+ was trying, but we managed and then headed off to Quantico for the first night.



Day-2 started at the USMC Museum. Of course, I am going to say it is very impressive. Kent really enjoyed it because it was FREE!

Upon leaving the museum I had really wanted to take the group to the "Tail of the Dragon" in North Carolina, but as I mentioned earlier, the weather would dictate our

direction and there were torrential thunderstorms and flooding in that area. The best route for us was to head northwest, so once we left the museum it was a day long trip thru Delaware (not exactly northwest) but someone in the group thought it would be a nice ride, which it was, crossing over the Chesapeake Bay, through Dover to our hotel in Newark, DE. The next few days took us on some nice roads thru Pennsylvania and western New York to Niagara Falls. Very impressive!



Ride Across America (cont.)

Once in awhile our navigation systems, whether it be Google maps, Waze, Apple maps, etc., caused us not to trust them or understand their directions. One such memorable time was when we left Niagara Falls enroute to Erie, PA on a Sunday afternoon, with Steve leading this band of MMOC brothers. A bit confused, he decided to stop and double check his readings. This being a quiet Sunday afternoon he thought pulling into this corner business would be no problem, so rumbling in we went (well, the Harley's rumbled). I looked to my right and saw we had pulled into a small funeral home parking lot, adjacent to the front door, and then, to my dismay, I realized "oh damn" there's a memorial service being conducted. We sheepishly got the heck out of there at the lowest possible RPMs.

That night, while staying at a very nice Hampton Inn in Erie, PA we enjoyed a very nice dinner on their 8th floor, highlighted by Kent secretly arranging a birthday celebration for Dewey (just a prank, not his Bday).



Wednesday was a short riding day as we went to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland and then the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, OH.



The next day Dewey's only request was we stop for lunch at "Mom's Diner & Pizzeria" in Archbold, OH. Why, we're not sure, but hey, he's the Ride Director, so off we went. It was a very colorful place with some very good food. The town of Archbold looked like something from a Norman Rockwell collection. We ended the day in Ft. Wayne, IN. Dewey and I went to the HD dealership, one of the top selling dealerships in the country. Their hospitality was fantastic, taking us on a behind the scenes tour of their entire place.



The highlight of the trip was the next day when we went to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. It was the 3rd day of practice for the Indy 500. It was just a stroke of luck that Dewey had to return to his bike which meant we had to wait for him near the entrance, inside the track. As we waited a gentleman, Gary Cornwell, approached us



and began a conversation with us. He certainly was no visitor. He knew too many details of the inner workings of both the speedway and specifically the Indy 500. He said on that day they were trying to get the right settings on the wings of the cars based on wind velocity and direction. Cars would run their laps and then come back into the pit where the data would be downloaded and analyzed. When Dewey caught up with us Gary told us to follow him and he'd show us around. He knew all the security guards and got us



Ride Across America (cont.)

past all of them walking us into gasoline alley where all the teams have their garages. He said it would normally cost \$500 to get into that area.



It was absolutely amazing to see everything up close and personal, including walking directly behind the pit area as the cars would enter and exit at different intervals. And, to see the cars whizzing by at nearly 200 mph, in person, was certainly an experience you

Our next day took us to Kansas. This time it was a request from Baron. He served in the Navy with a fellow named Frank. Baron had not seen him in 57 years. He lived about 20 miles outside of Kansas City. Once we got to the Drury Inn & Suites, a newly found gem of a hotel chain (inexpensive, clean, complimentary breakfast & dinner, plus 3 free cocktails) four of us headed to Frank & Beverly's



place for a home cooked Italian dinner. Frank & Beverly's hospitality

was awesome and the food was terrific. It was good to see Baron & Frank reunite after all those years, and boy did they have some stories!

Leaving the next day, we had our first, but not last, encounter with rain. Not too bad, about an hour, but never fun first thing in the morning. We powered through on a long, rather mundane, ride to Oberlin, KS.

The 2nd ranked highlight of the trip was the next day as we continued west on SR 36 from Oberlin,

towards Denver. As we rode into the town of St. Francis, KS we saw a sign "Motorcycle Museum." Well, that got our attention.



You'd had thought in this small town of 1,300 people the museum would be on that main road, but it wasn't. They actually had a downtown area. That was their "main" street. All I can say is if you are a motorcycle enthusiast and are ever in that



vicinity it would be well worth your

time to stop in and see this collection. The collection is worth millions of dollars. There are 8 motorcycles so valuable that they are kept in a vault for extra security when the museum is closed. The displays, which have each motorcycle's information printed on placards, was jaw-dropping. It really was a hidden gem that we were so fortunate to happen upon.



While the first part of our journey had us riding 250 to 350 miles a day, the last days were long rides, 400+ miles back-to-back days followed by 500+ miles days. The group started to break away in different directions heading for respective homes. We all hit some heavy afternoon rain outside of Golden, CO for about 20 minutes and then four of us had heavy rain, AND lightening the next day with really nowhere to hide.

All-in-all a very successful ride considering all the logistics.

Bucket List

