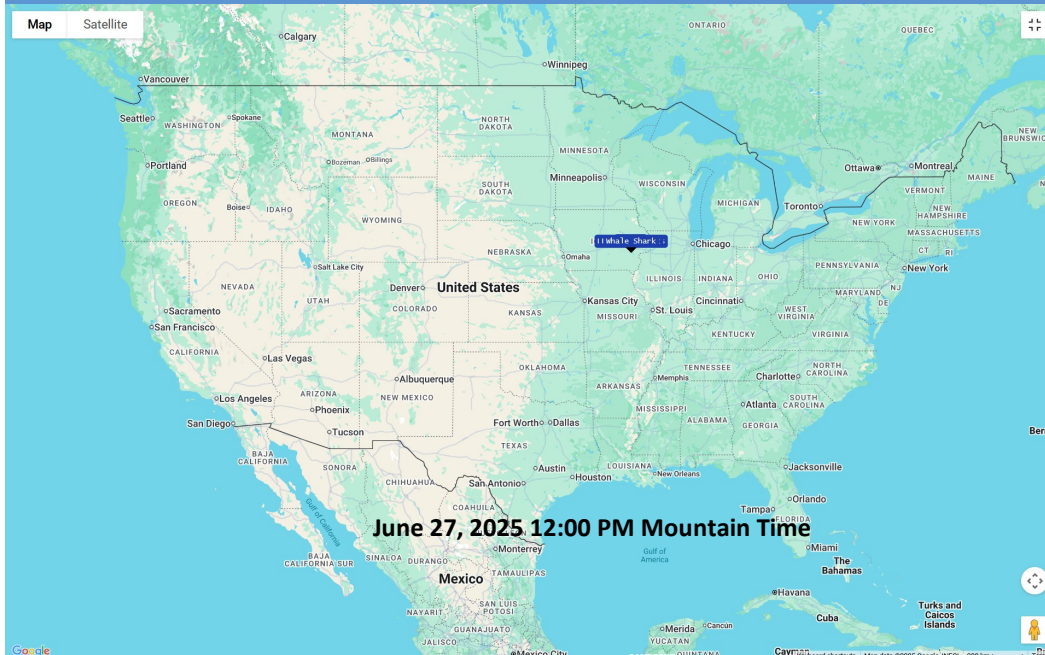


The Iron Butt Daily

Volume 14, June 27, 2025



Notes from the Finish

- There are four additional riders who will not make it to the finish: **Kerri Miller; Mike Riley; Andy Mackey; and Lewis Ballard.**
 - The first rider to check in today was **Rodey Woudema.**
 - The riders were required to bring a lobster claw to the finish. Some say that **Mike Kneebone** was the instigator of that rule, but he flatly denies it. I talked to Mike about it and it turns out that bringing a lobster claw to the finish was in the 1984 IBR. So I want to quash that rumor here and now. Mike may have casually mentioned it to Paul, but the credit (or blame) falls squarely on Paul's shoulders. In any case, **the Wiltshires** picked theirs up on Day 3 of the rally and safely stored in their top box, along with their heated gear and extra clothing. You can imagine what it was like after eight days of travel, especially after storing the heated stuff while still a little warm. Chris Wiltshire reports that by the end, one could smell it from five meters (or metres, 16.404199 feet)) away. It is also worth mentioning that Paul insisted that after displaying the claws to the odo check crew, they dispose of it outside the hotel upon penalty of losing points. The garbage can outside was getting a little rank by 9:00 AM.
 - I talked for a bit with **Wendy Crockett** about her Zontes' catastrophic engine failure. Although the cause is not yet known, Wendy thinks it may have been a lubrication failure, leading to destroyed bearings. She will be shipping it back to the Chinese company for a full analysis.
 - **Martin Little** made it back and checked in successfully. One requirement was to have your rally flag at the finish, which he did. But just a short while afterwards, he lost it somewhere between parking the bike and his hotel room. It's all in the timing.
 - Today is **Chrissy Cole-Gerry's** birthday. She was welcomed at the finish with a rousing rendition of Happy Birthday.
 - **B.J. Herman**, riding one of the eleven-day loops, failed to go to not one but two of the required bonuses on the loop. Shades of legends who had brain misfires on earlier IBRs, like missing Mississippi on a state capital string or one of the Pony Express stations on another long string. A couple of other riders in this rally who both
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Dorothy Gale and the Iron Butt Rally

In 1939, MGM released the film *The Wizard of Oz*. Directed by Victor Fleming (who also directed *Gone with the Wind*, released in the same year), it tells the story of Dorothy Gale, lost in the land of Oz, and her struggle to get back home to Kansas.

For those of you who have lived in a cave their whole life, the movie (based upon the 1900 L. Frank Baum novel) describes the travails Dorothy has along the way to meet the all-powerful Wizard of Oz, who is told he will help her get back to Kansas if she brings him the broom of the Wicked Witch of the West. All she must do is follow the Yellow Brick Road to meet him. She enlists the help of a Tin Man needing a heart, a Scarecrow needing a brain, and a Lion needing courage. In the process, she acquires those traits for herself, meets the Wizard, finds out she had those traits all along and makes it back home.

I always thought of the movie as an allegory describing the traits one needs to be successful in both life and the Iron Butt Rally. And I think the riders this year have discovered the same thing. The Iron Butt Rally is a life-changing experience that is a test of problem-solving, courage, and heart. The one little-mentioned attribute in the movie is what Dorothy brings to the party. And that is persistence, the drive to not give up in the face of witches, flying monkeys, and everything else Mr. Baum throws at her.

This was a tough year for the Iron Butt Rally. Uncertainty about its future prevailed until only six months before the scheduled start, making life tough on both the Rallymaster and riders. Under normal circumstances, both would have one and a half or two years to prepare. But circumstances beyond anyone's control prevented that. Instead, it took a person like Paul Tong, with the perfect balance of brains, heart, courage, and, above all, persistence to make it a reality. Similarly, the selected riders only had one-third of the normal time to prepare. Because one objective this year was to introduce more folks to the event, the rookie class was larger than is usually the case. With no IBR experience and less than normal rally time in the saddle, they accepted a huge burden to prepare for the world's toughest motorcycle event. But accept that burden they did.

This was also a year with many changes to the rally staff and procedures. Paul introduced his scoring app, eliminating the need for an army of volunteers to process the riders at the start and to score them at the checkpoints and finish. Although the app had gone through years of testing and use, it had never been tried with an event of this size. Remarkably, few problems with the app occurred, at least from the rider viewpoint. Sure, there was a learning curve, but quite a few riders had

participated in other rallies Paul had put on – the Heart of Texas and LDX, to name the most prominent of them. From the rally administration point of view, the software was like an iceberg – the riders only saw the app, but sitting in rally HQ I gained an appreciation for what the back-end processes took below the relatively calm surface. Some problems cropped up, as would be expected. Who knew, for example, that Gmail had a 500 message per day limit? But whatever cropped up, Paul was able to find a workaround, invisible to the riders. Of course there were bumps in the road, but nothing was fatal to the rally.

The large class of rookie riders, as in past years, had their own concerns. What will it be like in an eleven-day rally? Do I have the stuff to finish? Will the puzzle Paul lays out be just too difficult to solve? What dangers lie ahead? These are normal concerns but maybe this year they were exacerbated by the shortened preparation time frame. True, the attrition was considerably higher than average. But many of those not making it to the finish had mechanical failures or other reasons out of their control. For those who did make it and earned their coveted three-digit IBA member number, they learned more about themselves than almost anything else they could do in eleven days.

I've been involved with the Iron Butt Rally, first as a bonus scout, then a rider and finisher, and, for the last twelve of them, as staff. This year, I had the privilege of being given the job as scribe. Paul gave me carte blanche to go wherever and talk with whomever I wanted throughout the eleven days. I spent time in the private rider's' portion of the Iron Butt Forum before the rally, the parking lots, rider meetings, the rally control center, scoring rooms, and banquets. I had the opportunity to talk with the riders and listen to them discuss what was on their minds, both positive and negative.

It has always brought me great joy to see the transformation that takes place between the time a rookie IBR rider leaves the start and when they triumphantly reach the finish. I know of the heat, cold, wind, rain and (sometimes) snow they must endure. I understand the mental pressures involved in putting a route together, only to see it go down the tubes with a road closure or flat tire. I can relate to the frustration of sitting and waiting in hundred-degree heat for a stationary train blocking the road to finally clear my path. Of riding the loneliest roads in America without any help for miles and miles if something goes wrong. Of the despair of having a bonus denied after putting it all on the line to nab it.

I also know of the great joy the rally brings to riders. Of the

(Continued on page 3)

Dorothy Gale and the Iron Butt Rally cont. *(Continued from page 2)*

beautiful New England forests and lakes, the endless miles of the Great Plains and southwestern deserts, of the majesty of the Rocky Mountains and the awe-inspiring redwoods and crashing waves of the Pacific Ocean. But it is not only the scenery. It is also the people one meets along the way. In pulling into the Hoka Hey gathering and being greeted by the cheers of one's brethren in this curious of pastimes. Of the kindness of strangers who want nothing more than to see you succeed and will go to extraordinary lengths to help make it happen. In this day and age of strife and conflict, it is good to know that people are, in their heart of hearts, good and not evil. It gives us all hope.

Yes, the Iron Butt rally is filled with pain and stress. But all the riders, at least at one time or another, could take pause from all that to enjoy the serenity of riding on deserted roads in deserted lands with just the sound of their motorcycles singing to them. Each during the rally could take a moment to enjoy a shooting star or the Milky Way on a clear, moonless night in the middle of nowhere, letting the stress and strain melt away, even if it was for just a few minutes. I'm sure it gave them heart, the memories of which they will savor long after the pain fades away,

I also know the feeling at the finish of overcoming those obstacles and completing the job each set out to do. Going in, a rookie rider may not know if they have the brains, the heart, the courage, and the persistence to change mental gears, defeat their demons, and succeed, all the while treating each other less like competitors and more like the brothers and sisters into which they transform. I love to see the look on their faces at the finishers banquet, knowing that being on the podium means less than the pride they feel in successfully competing against themselves and finding they are stronger and more capable than they ever thought they could be. It is a feeling and attitude that will last for the rest of their lives and bring them closer to being the best version of themselves.

And thank you, dear reader, for spending the time out of your busy lives to read my scribblings. I hope I have been able to convey to you some feel for the extraordinary event that has taken place, the people who have tested themselves, and those who make it all happen.

See you down the Yellow Brick Road.

Ira

Notes from the Finish cont. *(Continued from page 1)*

somehow missed Trenton, NJ on the state capital loop, are also eligible to join this august group.

- The time at the finish hotel is currently 11:00 am. Three riders with a chance of making it are still on their way in. Although noon is the time when they will DNF, they will start losing points now.
- **Lee Miller** was in at 10:59 am, the last rider in before penalty points accrue.
- **Brandon Meyers** was the last rider to beat the clock, coming in with ten minutes to spare.
- There were fifty-two finishers of the 2025 Iron Butt Rally, just over half the starting field of 99 entrants.
- Finishers totaled 564,008 miles.
- The finisher with the highest mileage had 13,238 mile.
- The finisher with the lowest milage had 9,364 miles.
- The average miles for the finisher was 10,846 miles
- Two women finished in the top ten.
- Any ties were broken by the number of bonuses successfully claimed.
- There were 18 Gold-level finishers, 12 Silver-level finishers, and 7 Bronze-level finishers.



This year the Iron Butt Rally introduced many innovative improvements in administration, scoring, and other tasks that in the past took an army of volunteers. But it still takes many hours of staff time to prepare and execute the rally. No longer an army, but still at least a platoon or company of people to perform the tasks that can only be done by real human beings.

We would like to take a moment to acknowledge some of the many people who contributed to the success of the rally. They do this not for glory, but out of love of the sport, the rally, and those who put it all on the line to compete in this wonderful event.

I'm sure the list is incomplete. For anyone we missed, our apologies. We love you nonetheless.

Rallymaster

Paul Tong

Chief of Staff

Nancy Oswald

Scoring

Lisa Stevens

Media Affairs

Ira Agins

Tobie Stevens

Catherine Loehr

Heather Gillihan

Odo Check

Jeff Konicek

Liz Jacobs

Doug Jacobs

Jim Peterson

Kevin Craft

Swag Logistics

Tara Tong

Technical Advisor

Lincoln Seals

Additional Scouts, Scorers, and Staff

Jim Frens

Jim Peterson

Jon Kerr

Justin Long

Cletha Vaillancourt

Eric Vaillancourt

David Riley

Bill Wade

Jim Fousek

Donna Fousek

Kirsten Talken-Spaulding

Paul Meyer

Photos from the Finish

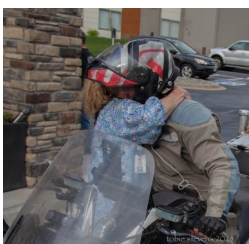
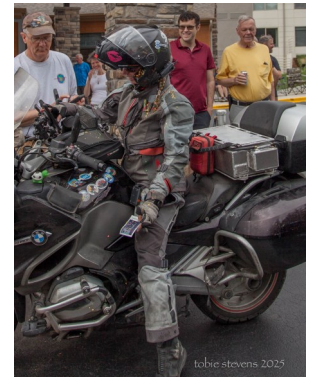
By

Tobie Stevens

For more photos of this and other Iron Butt Rallies, visit Tobie's SmugMug Web pages at <http://tobiestevens.smugmug.com/>



We Have a Winner!



PLACE	NAME	SCORE	MILES	VERSION	IBA NUMBER	STATUS
1	45 : Nichole Meuse	7095	13238	Legged Loops	696	GOLD
2	6 : Scott Durham	6915	12284	Legged Loops	649	GOLD
3	4 : Mike Best	6774	12347	Legged Loops	593	GOLD
4	66 : Alexander Alpert	6657	13217	Legged Loops	697	GOLD
5	53 : Stephen Johnson	6271	12046	Legged Loops	698	GOLD
6	32 : Delora Meyer	6126	12030	Legged Loops	699	GOLD
7	5 : Steve Gallant	5863	11985	Legged Loops	589	GOLD
8	60 : Robert Bowman	5542	10711	Legged Loops	511	GOLD
9	67 : Andrew Hall	5509	10972	Legged Loops	548	GOLD
10	61 : Sjef Vanderaa	5381	11722	Legged Loops	579	GOLD
11	101 : Joseph Schork	5350	10846	Legged Loops	700	GOLD
12	106 : Keith Underdahl	5232	11108	Legged Loops	672	GOLD
13	85 : John Coons	5194	11957	Legged Loops	466	SILVER
14	42 : Frankie Morris-Lamb	4823	11995	Legged Loops	701	SILVER
15	28 : Art Garvin	4758	10265	Legged Loops	340	SILVER
16	58 : Jacob Wetzell	4728	11028	Legged Loops	702	SILVER
17	63 : Craig Phillips	4666	9776	Legged Loops	667	SILVER
18	19 : Anastasia Dudzinski	4561	10297	Legged Loops	703	SILVER
19	49 : Martin Little	4497	9789	Legged Loops	578	SILVER
20	68 : Bradyn Crider	4491	11326	Legged Loops	704	SILVER
21	77 : Daniel Stephans	4471	10723	Legged Loops	211	SILVER
22	21 : Lionel Ramos	4414	11305	Legged Loops	678	SILVER
23	14 : David Kendall	4376	11432	Legged Loops	666	SILVER
24	98 : Wade Chauncey	4220	10693	Legged Loops	668	SILVER
25	31 : Brian Dent	4207	10264	Legged Loops	538	BRONZE
26	96 : Stephen Creamer	4059	10391	Legged Loops	705	BRONZE
27	33 : Lee Miller	4001	9874	Legged Loops	706	BRONZE
28	97 : Thomas Bake	3504	10505	Legged Loops	707	BRONZE
29	7 : John Anderson	3396	12842	Legged Loops	648	BRONZE
30	17 : Herakles Boardman	2980	11036	2011	669	GOLD
31	50 : Bryan Bailey/Marissa Scott	2765	11006	2011	708/709	GOLD
32	24 : Mike Kozicki	2706	10743	1991	710	BRONZE
33	38 : Chris & Stella Wiltshire	2660	11437	2011	675/676	GOLD
34	25 : Bill Karitis	2620	11441	2011	685	GOLD
35	56 : Russell Black	2345	11185	2011	711	GOLD
36	84 : Jim Hicks	2281	10078	1991	712	BRONZE
37	74 : Brian North	2144	10258	1991	713	
38	75 : Christopher Dewall	2122	9751	1991	714	
39	22 : Chris Lumaghini	2020	11342	Legged Loops	715	
40	95 : Shareef AsSadiq	2018	9889	1991	663	
41	70 : Carlos Caycedo	2004	9942	1991	716	
42	52 : Jeff Hallquist	1996	11232	2011	663	GOLD
43	81 : Ewell Nelson	1784	9645	1991	717	
44	54 : Kerri Lundy	1744	9636	1991	718	
45	37 : Rodney Woudema	1704	9614	1991	719	
46	72 : Avraham Azrieli	1704	9364	1991	720	
47	64 : Matt Gerry	1299	9790	1991	721	
48	1 : Brad Phelps	946	9809	1991	722	
49	80 : Eric Edelman	926	9554	1991	512	
50	46 : Lucas Harvey	852	9677	1991	723	
51	41 : Chrissy Cole-Gerry	180	9998	1991	724	
52	73 : Brandon Meyers	0	10613	1991	725	