

Distance Riding with Bruce

© Copyright 2005-2010 Bruce Arnold, All Rights Reserved
<http://DistanceRiding.LdrLongDistanceRider.com>

February 2010

BBG4500: MY BUN BURNER GOLD TRIFECTA Over 4500 miles in under 72 hours!



The most challenging ride in the Iron Butt Association's Bun Burner GOLD motorcycle endurance riding certification series is the **Bun Burner GOLD Trifecta**, also called the **BBG4500**:

<http://www.ironbutt.com/rides/rideslogin.cfm>

The BBG4500 requires three consecutive, back-to-back-to-back days of riding over 1,500 miles in under 24 hours, for a total of over 4,500 miles in under 72 hours. Prior to December 2008, only 7 riders had ever completed a Bun Burner GOLD Trifecta:

Bun Burner GOLD Trifecta Finishers (Back to Back to Back Bun Burner Golds!):

Name	Hometown	Date	Motorcycle	Mileage
Derek Dickson	Duluth, MN	08/28/07	Yamaha FJR1300	4,672
Curt Gran	Pewaukee, WI	07/04/07	Honda ST1300A	4,566
Steve Broadhead	Calgery, AL CANADA	03/13/06	Honda ST1300	4,512
John Tomasovitch	Throop, PA	03/09/06	BMW K1200RS	4,500+
Peter Leap	Marblehead, PA	03/09/06	Honda ST1300	4,500+
Peter A. Murray	Hackettstown, NJ	09/23/05	BMW K1200LT	4,564
John C. Ryan	Roxbury, NJ	10/04/04	BMW K75	4,619

With IBA approval of the ride certification submission I mailed on 17 December 2008, that number increased to 8, and the list at long last included a **Harley-Davidson** rider.

At 2:18am ET Monday 15 December 2008, I pulled an ATM receipt at a SoBe Wachovia to mark the end of my 39th Iron Butt ride, a three-day BBG4500 over which I covered **4,558 miles in 71 hours 6 minutes**. Here's how it went, leg by leg by leg:

Leg 1 of 3 (Route map link: <http://tinyurl.com/BBG4500-Leg1>)

Leg 1 commenced at 3:12am ET Friday 12 December and ended at 1:09am ET the next day, riding from Miami Beach to IH195 to IH95 through Jacksonville, Savannah GA and Florence SC to **Dunn NC** and back for a total of **1,532 miles in 21 hours 57 minutes**. I chose a wee-hours starting time so I would always be in the coldest part of each leg (northern end) at the warmest part of each day (early afternoon) to lessen cold weather impacts and inefficiencies.

True to forecast, the temperature dropped steadily as I rode north. But the winds were mostly calm and the sky was mostly clear all the way to North Carolina and back. There were no traffic jams to contend with either. In fact, I had smooth sailing except for two attacks of stupid: One when I stopped for gas and forgot to pump it before pulling out; and one when I weaved through a slow-moving cager caravan only to learn that the gray Dodge Charger leading the procession was an unmarked NC State Highway Patrol cruiser. The flat-topped young trooper inside was a nice guy, though, and even complimented me on my performance as he was writing my award.

Leg 2 of 3 (Route map link: <http://tinyurl.com/BBG4500-Leg2>)

Leg 2 commenced at 3:36am ET Saturday 13 December and ended at 1:38am ET the next day, riding from Miami Beach to IH195 to IH95 to the Florida Turnpike through Orlando to IH75 to IH10 through Tallahassee and Mobile AL to **Moss Point MS** and back for a total of **1,515 miles in 22 hours 2 minutes**.

After completing Leg 1, I took less than two-and-a-half hours to inspect the bike, eat, shit, sleep (boots on) and slurp down a pot of coffee before commencing Leg 2. A rarity in South Beach, I could see my breath in the chilly night air as I saddled up and headed for the Turnpike. And it only got colder, from there all the way up to IH-75 then IH-10 and westward. But after accepting a blue-light invitation to discuss safe riding techniques with one of Florida's Finest near Tallahassee, the needle on my handlebar thermometer finally moved up into the "tolerable" range. The ride from there to Mississippi then back east and south to the Turnpike was mostly monotonous mile-eating. From Orlando south, though, keeping safely cradled between a couple of racing cagers added much-needed eye-opening spice.

Leg 3 of 3 (Route map link: <http://tinyurl.com/BBG4500-Leg3>)

Leg 3 commenced at 4:16am ET Sunday 14 December and ended at 2:18am the next day, riding from Miami Beach to IH195 to IH95 to IH595 to Alligator Alley through Naples to IH75 to IH475 to IH75 through Atlanta GA to IH20 to **Douglasville GA** and back for a total of **1,511 miles in 22 hours 2 minutes** (coincidentally the same time as Leg 2).

Barely two-and-a-half hours after completing Leg 2, it took a concerted mental and physical effort to wake up from my short nap (boots still on), turn off the alarm, and raise my aching body off the bed. I came within a cunt hair of quitting at that point, but somewhere between throwing cold water on my face and a huge cup of lukewarm coffee down my throat, I regained my resolve to continue the quest. The weather was cool, but dry and comfortable, all the way across Alligator Alley and northward on IH-75 into Georgia. A gray overcast blocked the warming rays of the sun from Macon on into Atlanta, but the temperature was still in the "tolerable" range as I made my turnaround in Douglasville at 3:00pm.

Riding south from there, the growing fatigue of three day's hard riding had me feeling the cold more than I otherwise would. But the further south I rode, the warmer it got. By the time I made it to the Jasper Florida exit, I was no longer feeling the cold, but definitely suffering from fatigue... Making even the simplest decisions—like which of two identical pumps to pull up to—became a challenge. Reaction times diminished—making me thankful I sort of instinctively keep open "lanes", however narrow, in front of me as I ride. And once again I have to thank an Iron Butt legend—U.S. Navy Surgeon General and Vice Admiral Donald C. Arthur—for writing this LDR classic, a MUST READ for anyone considering any serious endurance riding:

Fatigue and Motorcycle Touring

<http://www.ldrlongdistancerider.com/FatigueAndMotorcycleTouringByDonArthur.pdf>

The effects of fatigue are both mental and physical: For example, by the time I reached Ruskin, I had to make an emergency stop because I could no longer hold the throttle open without experiencing excruciating pain in my right hand and fingers (*I don't trust "cruise controls"*). Somehow, my weary mind finally reasoned that by wearing different gloves and holding the throttle from different angles, I could use different muscles—or the same in a different way—and keep on going. I did. Until somewhere north of Fort Myers, where I found myself arguing with somebody about something having to do with our partner in the car in front of us. But then,

thank God, I remembered *I was alone, that there was no “us”, and that we had no “partner” in the car in front of “us”!* And as soon as I realized I was hallucinating, the hallucination ended. It probably all transpired in the blink of an eye, but it was definitely the most memorable moment of the entire ride. *Who the Hell was I arguing with, and what the Hell were we arguing about?* I may never know for sure, but it may have had something to do with my Guardian Angel trying to submit his resignation... He must've hung in there, though, as I managed to make it through the remaining 160 miles and safely home without further incident (real or imagined).

My reincarnated '99 FXDS with its remanufactured Twin Cam 88, new H-D stock carburetor and overhauled 5-speed transmission performed flawlessly throughout this ride. And I can't thank Andy Vazquez, Bobby Gaines, Joey Barbosa, Charles Paken and most especially Diann Pearson enough for taking the pain out of the IBA witness signature requirements for me.

Until Next Time ... Ride Long, Ride Free!

Bruce Arnold

Bruce@LdrLongDistanceRider.com

Follow me on Twitter @ironboltbruce

Co-Moderator, Bruce-n-RCs Biker Forum

Mile Eater Gold Member, Iron Butt Association (IBA)

Sustaining Member, Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF)

Oversolicited Member, National Rifle Association (NRA)

Reluctant Member, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

2009 Chairmans Circle, American Motorcyclist Association (AMA)

Author and Publisher, LdrLongDistanceRider.com|911TruthBikers.com

Signatory, 911 Truth Statement|Petition (911Truth.org|ae911Truth.org)

Member, Peoples Campaign for the Constitution (ConstitutionCampaign.org)

Say No to Cloudmark Authority and all content-based Big Brother Internet Censorship

Repeal the Patriot Act|Reject Citizens United v. FEC|Recall Our Troops|Re-Elect Nobody