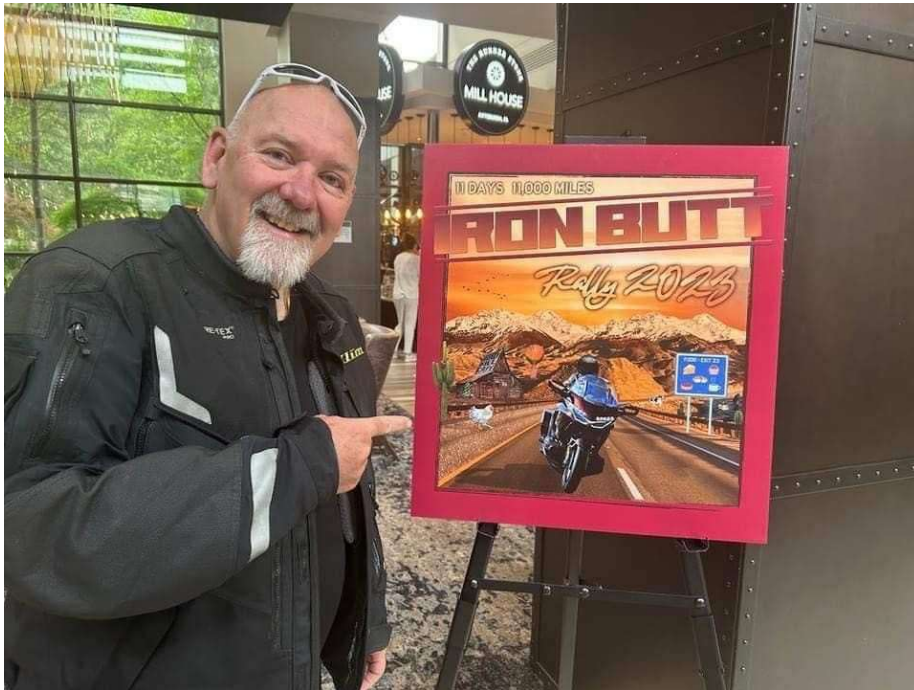


BAM's Celebration of Life



Kevin 'BAM' Baker
Executive Dean at Durham College - Oshawa, Ontario

Canadian Kevin 'BAM' Baker was quite an accomplished person as well as an accomplished long-distance rider! He was a 2022 Hoka Hey and 2023 Iron Butt Rally (IBR) finisher along with many other big ride accomplishments!

We had been friends on Facebook for almost a year. It wasn't until the beginning of the 2023 IBR where I met BAM face to face. We were both IBR rookies! We met during in-processing just prior to the start.

Fast forward to Day 9 of the IBR, I was at a bonus in Meat Cove, Nova Scotia. Located at the most northern tip of Cape Breton Island, Meat Cove is surrounded by jagged cliffs and valleys of connected mountains.

Lawless Lobster (a food trailer) is located at the top overlooking the cove. It was worth 13,731 points!

After acquiring the required bonus photo, I sat at a picnic table eating a Lawless Lobster sandwich. While I was enjoying the spectacular view, BAM pulled up on his Gold Wing.



Meat Cove, Nova Scotia

I knew the 18 miles of partial asphalt/partial pothole-covered dirt road was a rough ride on that bike! But, BAM was all smiles when he pulled off his helmet!

I left him alone to do his thing. I watched him pull out a flag holder, then mount his rally flag on it and take a photo. Once he was done, we talked for several minutes.

We talked about our rally experience so far. Where we had been and where we planned to go next. Then, he briefly talked about his future ride around Australia. Wow! How cool would that be!

The next time we spoke was about 6 weeks later at Hoagy's Heroes TNT rally banquet. It was here that we had a much longer conversation. BAM told me more details about his planned Iron Butt "Ride Around the Big Paddock" (A lap around the perimeter of Australia in 9 days). This was going to be an incredible ride! I was in awe!

The following month on October 7th, BAM was killed as result of a motorcycle accident. It was day 6 of his Australian ride. It was a shock to the motorcycle long-distance community! His funeral was held on October 23, 2023, in Courtice, Ontario.

Hoagy Carmichael of Hoagy's Heroes (Long-Distance Charity Riders) put together a celebration of life event to honor Bam on May 18, 2024, so the long-distance riding

community could come together to honor and remember BAM. This was held in Glen Dale, West Virginia. Hoagy invited BAM's family down to the event and put them up at a local hotel.

On our way to Hoagy's, we stopped in Point Pleasant, WV to see Mothman!

Mothman, in West Virginian folklore, is a humanoid creature reportedly seen in the Point Pleasant area from November 15, 1966, to December 15, 1967. The first newspaper report was published in the Point Pleasant Register, dated November 16, 1966, titled "Couples See Man-Sized Bird ... Creature ... Something". The national press soon picked up the reports and helped spread the story across the United States. The source of the legend is believed to have originated from sightings of out-of-migration sandhill cranes or herons. Wikipedia



Mothman

We made it to Hoagy's place Friday afternoon, the day before the event. We wanted to help anyway we could. Hoagy offered us one of his bedrooms for the weekend. We appreciated his hospitality!

Pat and Janice Cornell were there cooking and preparing for the event. They had already put in many hours of work. The Cornell's and Hoagy made this event happen!



Glen Dale, West Virginia

That evening, Hoagy smoked a pork loin and King Mackerel for his guests. Plus, five large taco pizzas were ordered. Guests included BAM's family and several out-of-town riders. Some of the riders were camping in Hoagy's garage. Others were staying at a local hotel. It was a great evening of fellowship and eating!



Hoagy's Garage

Most of the guests were Hoka Hey riders. The Hoka Hey is a 10,000-mile ride challenge where the riders are required to ride an American made V-twin, sleep by their bikes every night (no hotels) and follow turn-by-turn directions (no GPS) for the entire ride which consists mostly

of backroads. A tightknit group of great long-distance riders!



Hoagy's Garage Patio



Hoagy Lights up the Party

Saturday's event had over 100 riders that showed up from all over the USA and Canada. BBQ Brisket and pork were prepared along with a shrimp boil! A lot of people volunteered their time and resources to make this a memorable occasion!



BAM's Family from Canada

As part of the event, a special Iron Butt Association certificate was available to those that attended,

provided they did an Iron Butt ride to or from the event and met all the requirements. Karen and I decided to tackle a SaddleSore 1000 (1,000-mile ride in 24 hours) on our way home!

The next day, we were up at 4:30 am (Eastern time). We stopped down the street at a Circle K for a DBR (Dated Business Receipt). Official start time was 4:57 am local time (Eastern).

We jumped on I-70 just up the road in Wheeling. There was thick fog as we headed west. The temperature was 68 degrees. Once we rode out of the mountains and into Ohio, the fog vanished. The temperature dropped a few degrees as the sun came up—Perfect weather for riding!

It was 5:39 am as we rode around the southside of Columbus to I-71 south to Cincinnati. Traffic was sparse. The sky was blue with white puffy clouds and the sun was bright! We rolled through Cincinnati at 7:30 am.

By now, the city traffic had picked up, but it was smooth sailing on that Sunday morning. We continued on I-71 to Louisville, KY where we hopped on I-65. Not long after that, we entered Central time zone. As we headed south the temperature headed north! It got hot!

To get in our 1,000 miles, we continued on I-65 through Nashville down to Birmingham, AL. From there, we caught I-22 westbound toward Mississippi. We made good time and didn't stop to eat any meals. A breakfast sandwich at one

of our early gas stops was enough to get us home.

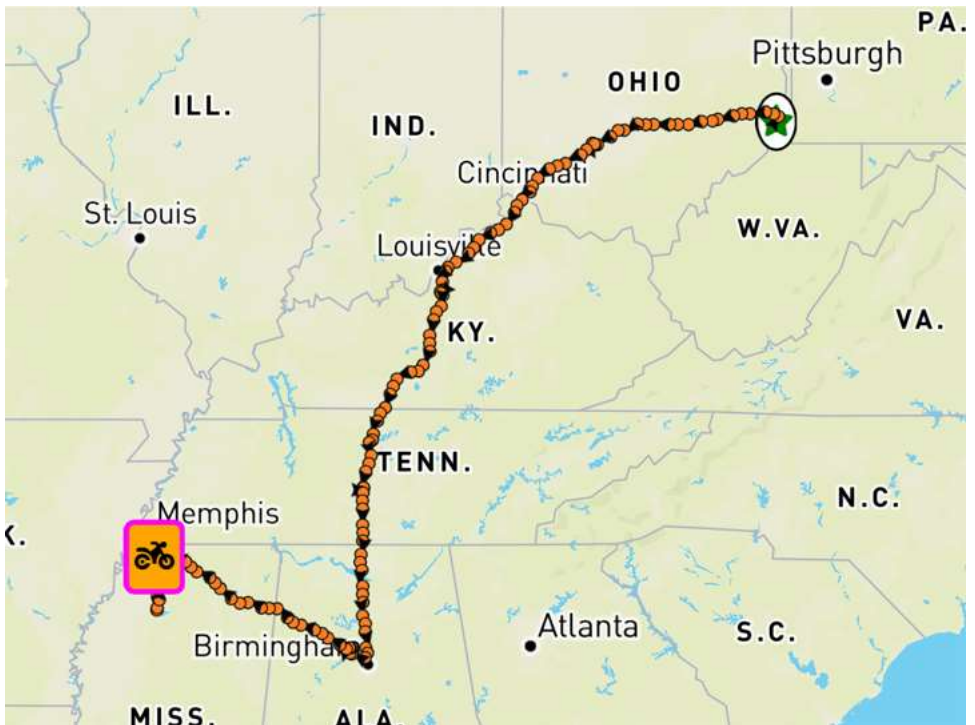
Once we hit I-269 around the southside of Memphis, I knew that we wouldn't have enough miles. I figured we would need to add an extra 90-100 miles to get in our 1,000. When we hit I-55 southbound, we continued past Hernando to the Enid Lake exit before we turned around and headed home.

Back in Hernando, we stopped for our last DBR. Official end time was 6:30 pm for a total of 1,015 miles in 14 hours and 33 minutes.

We had a great time at the event honoring BAM. It was nice to see so many of our long-distance friends. Hoagy Carmichael and his Hoagy's Heroes are some of the best people that you could ever meet! Hoagy

does a lot for children's and veteran's organizations. He is an incredible person!

As always, it's great to spend time on the road, just inches away from Karen! I don't know how she does it, but we do make some memories, visit some cool places and meet some of the greatest people!



1,015 Miles Home from Glen Dale, WV