

# \*Specialty SADDLESORE

Many in the long-distance riding community are not aware that the IBA works behind the scenes with motorcycle clubs helping them host SaddleSore 1000 rides tailored around special events or causes. These rides are intended to bring attention to a particular happening or cause, and also to introduce new riders to the excitement and satisfaction that comes with accomplishing an LD challenge.

One of the most ambitious SaddleSore 1000 proposals to come across my desk was unfortunately born from a military tragedy. On June 28, 2005, eleven U.S. Navy SEALs and eight U.S. Army Special Operations Aviators gave their lives in Afghanistan. Just a few days later Jim Otto, who had served as an Intelligence officer with the Navy Seals, wanted to do something to help raise funds for a memorial. It did not take long for me to figure out that “no” is not a word Jim often accepts. By July 11<sup>th</sup>, less than two weeks after the tragedy, Jim went from never having put on a motorcycle event to drafting a detailed ride plan, setting up rally checkpoints and announcing the Seal 160 (based on the name of their special operations unit). But he was not done there. Since a first-year event can be a tough sell, Jim started calling everyone he knew and started the arm-twisting to come join the insanity. By September 10<sup>th</sup>, Jim helped 31 new riders complete their first SaddleSore 1000 raising \$1,500 for the 19 families of those who died in Afghanistan.

Following that success, Jim Otto formed a group with other veterans to ensure that the memory of those fallen heroes did not fade. With a bigger staff of volunteers, the annual Seal 160 was renamed the REDWING 19 (because the 19 riders had died during operation REDWING) and it grew each year. By mid-April of 2009, Jim and his team of hard working volunteers had 440 riders pre-registered! And on the morning of May 16, a Northern Virginia shopping center lot was filled with 412 motorcyclists eager to ride the 1,036-

mile route—all inside the state of Virginia. At the end, the REDWING 19 had set an IBA SaddleSore 1000 record not only for the largest in-

state SaddleSore 1000, but also a record for the Largest Group SaddleSore 1000 — the previous SS1000 record had been 158 riders. In all, 390 riders successfully completed the ride — including 2005 Iron Butt Rally finisher and Ultimate Coast-to-Coast record holder John Ryan. REDWING 19 riders not only went out and rode an exhaustive route with many twists and turns; they set a SaddleSore charity record of \$51,000!

Since then, the IBA has organized a number of other special SS1000 rides, some in conjunction with its own events and some in cooperation with other motorcycle organizations. Some of the late 2010 rides included, the Bikers-4-Babies SaddleSore 1000, The Ride for Children SaddleSore 1000, a Honda Rune TN-1000 ride, the Hoagy’s Heroes series of rides and the North Carolina Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association Chapter 15-1 SS1000. And there were others!

Conceived, planned and managed by IBR veteran Bill Watt, the first in-house IBA specialty ride was the *24 Hours to Tulsa* (2008) for riders attending the Tulsa, Oklahoma, National Meet. Based on its success, Bill then coordinated the *Mile High Ride-In* (2010) for the Denver, Colorado National Meet two years later. And for those attending the “Pizza Party” in Jacksonville, Florida, we planned the *Orange Blossom Special* (2009), *Legends 1000* (2010), and *Gator 1000* (2011).

Last year in another a first, the IBA teamed up with the BMW Motorcycle Owners of America (MOA)



Working behind the scenes to promote unique events and causes

By Michael Kneebone

# 1000 RIDES

and co-hosted the *Redmond 1000*. Bill Watt, IBR veteran rider Rob Nye, and a small cadre of IBA and MOA members worked together to pull this ride together. Their novel approach to making things easier for the riders was to identify separate starting locations north, east and south of Redmond, Oregon all about 1,000 miles from the MOA's fairgrounds. With a total of 109 riders successfully completing the challenge, the *Redmond 1000* was, by everyone's estimation, an unqualified success. An exclusive finishers' party was hosted by the IBA afterward.



The common theme to all of these specialty rides is that they each start with a fresh idea and a lot of hard work from an *IBA member* who wants to share his or her passion with other motorcyclists. The appeal, especially for long-distance riding novices, is simplified paperwork process, a unique IBA certification, an IBA "World's Toughest Motorcyclist" license plate backer, membership in the IBA, and often a distinctive commemorative pin. For a rider going to a destination where one of these specialty SS1000s is offered, it just makes getting there that much sweeter and is fun for everyone involved.

If you have a dream, there's nothing to stop you from creating a unique and challenging ride either. There's also nothing more fulfilling — share your ideas with us. 🛵

