

The Ultimate Coast to Coast to Coast

Part 1

Insanity



5,945 Miles (Key West, Florida to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska)

The Ultimate Coast to Coast (UCC) is an Iron Butt Association (IBA) coast-to-coast ride from the most southern coast of the USA, Key West, Florida (Atlantic Ocean) to the most northern coast, Prudhoe Bay, Alaska (Arctic Ocean). Due to the extreme nature of this ride, you are allowed 30 days to complete it according to IBA requirements.

The IBA defines an “Insanity” ride as any extreme ride that is completed twice in a row, or back-to-back, with no break in-between!

The real challenge of this ride was the 414-mile (666 km) leg between Livengood and Prudhoe Bay, Alaska on the Dalton Highway (aka,

The Haul Road). You may have heard of this road if you’ve ever watched the TV show “Ice Road Truckers”.



2011 Attempt

I did attempt this ride in 2011 on a Suzuki V-Strom 1000. During that trip, FedEx hired me! I was in the Yukon, 1,000 miles from my

destination, Prudhoe Bay, when I accepted the job! At that time, our future became the priority, so I did a U-turn and headed back to Atlanta to finalize my retirement with Delta Air Lines and get ready to move to the Memphis area!

Thirteen years later, this was my retirement ride! I started my FedEx career with this ride, I might as well end it with this ride too!

The plan on this leg was to ride from Hernando, MS to Key West, FL over the Memorial Day weekend and start the UCC by acquiring all the proper documentation, pictures, sand/water samples, etc., then return home to Hernando, MS, work my final 4 days at FedEx and repack /regroup before heading north to Alaska.

May 23 - After work at 3:00 pm, I had an uneventful ride to Dothan, Alabama for the night.

May 24 - After a few hours of sleep, I jumped up and finished a SS1000 (1,000 miles in 24 hours) to Key Largo.

I arrived in Key Largo in the mid-afternoon. I found a Diners, Drive-ins and Dive place not too far away for dinner, The Pilot House. I hopped on the bike in shorts and flip-flops and headed that way! Their lobster roll was excellent!



Pilot House in Key Largo

After dinner, I rode back to the Pelican Cottages, I was in bed by 8:00 pm.

May 25 - I was up at 3:30 am and out the door! I wanted to make it down to Key West early, so the touristy spots wouldn't be crawling with people!

It was a great ride down the Keys early in the morning! The traffic was very light as I rode down under the moonlit sky. I enjoyed riding over the long bridges and looking out over the calm waters.

Once in Key West, I immediately stopped for a receipt to begin my ride. Official start time - 5:33 am, May 25, 2024.

My personal preference in starting a ride like the UCCC is to do everything "on the clock". When I got into long-distance riding, one of my first big rides was the 100ccc (back-to-back 50cc's or 50 hours coast to coast JAX-SDO-JAX). At the beginning of that ride, there were several veteran IBA riders that told me their preference was to get their start receipt, then go get their water/sand sample on the clock. At

the end of the ride, they would gather their water/sand sample prior to getting their end receipt. I liked that idea and have stuck with it ever since.

As I rode through Key West on the narrow streets lined with parked cars, a mother hen and her chicks ran out from between the cars. The mother hen got spooked and flew up in front of me. She bounced off the flexible windshield of the bike like springing off a diving board! Luckily, I wasn't going very fast and hopefully I didn't run over any of her babies!

When I arrived at the Southernmost Point, I was greeted by two young ladies in bikinis laying on the concrete wall next to the buoy!



Southernmost Point

Just a block away was Ponce de Leon Beach where I got my first water/sand sample for this incredible journey I was about to make!

Although with temperatures in the low 80's, the humidity felt like 100%. I was soaking wet under my Klim riding suit for just the little effort I was putting out to setup my

tripod and go to the water's edge to fill my container.



Ponce de Leon Beach

From here, I went back to the Southernmost buoy to get another picture. The welcoming committee had moved on by now. 😊



Key West - The Beginning

Before leaving the Key, I also wanted to get a picture of the postcard mural, so I packed up the tripod and headed across the Key.



Greetings from Key West

Satisfied with all my pictures, it was time to head north! It was 6:30 am as I left Key West.

It was a nice ride back across the different Keys. This time, it was daylight! Unfortunately, the sun was in my eyes as I headed east to the mainland, a beautiful ride none the less!

I knew the Orlando/Walt Disney World area would be my pain point this Memorial weekend! I was right! Traffic was backed up for several miles. I jumped on the left shoulder and rode around it! It was too hot to be messing around in that heat!

I stopped near Ocala for a BBQ lunch at Sonny's. I took my time so I could cool down. I felt fine, but it did my body good to take a break. Back on the road, no issues. Once on I-10, there was hardly any traffic! Sweet! Everyone must have been where they wanted to be for the holiday! I stopped for the night in Dothan, Alabama.

May 26 - I was up early and out on the road! I wanted to make it home on Sunday! That gave me Monday free before my last four days of work!

Hardly any traffic as I rode through Montgomery and Birmingham! And, the temperatures were nice, but heating up! I arrived back in Hernando at 10:28 am!

May 27 - Bike maintenance. Rear tire removed and oil/filter changed.

May 28 - Work. At lunch, I took the tire to Performance Plus for replacement. I re-installed it on the bike that evening.

Our son, Derek, drove over from Spring Hill, Tennessee to make a special toast for my retirement and UCCC ride. He had bought a bottle of 12-year-old Pappy Van Winkle bourbon that he wanted to share with me!



Cheers to Retirement & Trip

May 29 - Work. I appreciated the retirement celebration and cake that my FedEx manager put together for me! That evening, I repacked/regrouped in preparation for Alaska.

May 30 - Work

May 31 - My last day of work. They kicked me out at 10:30 am! I was on the road by 12:00pm! 😊

The plan was to ride this leg from Hernando to Prudhoe Bay by heading north to Manitoba, Canada since that was the only Canadian province that I haven't ridden in. Angle Inlet, Minnesota, the most northern point in the lower 48 was

only a few miles off the route. I planned to stop there as well!

I had looked at the weather prior to leaving the house. It looked like I'd miss most of the weather system moving through the Kansas City area. WRONG! Once I rode through Jonesboro, Arkansas, I rode into rain. It rained all the way to Kansas City, Missouri and hard rain most of the way! Luckily, it was daylight which helped with visibility.

I do have excellent riding gear, so I did not get wet except for my hands. During hot weather, I wear my summer gloves which aren't waterproof. This leg of the trip, I rode in more rain than sunshine. My hands were water-logged after several days!

I stopped in Kansas City for the night! My goal for the day.



Kansas City

On this trip, I did not reserve any rooms in advance. I wanted the flexibility in case I needed it. Each afternoon, I determined where I wanted to end the day and made a reservation at that time. This worked out well!

Also, I didn't set any alarms. I would leave in the morning when I woke up and felt rested.

June 1 - I pulled out of the hotel by 7:00 am. The weather was much better today, it only rained on me a couple times! I-29 is a nice interstate to ride—Never much traffic.

My goal for today was Fargo, North Dakota. I've stayed there a few times in the past. It's a very nice city; different from what I had originally pictured in my mind years ago. I thought it would be some Cowtown in nowhere North Dakota.

As I rode into town, I saw a huge Microsoft corporate building. I thought to myself, I bet that has a lot to do with the local economy!

I had talked to Karen earlier on the phone and asked her to find me a good place to eat. She gave me three choices. I picked the BBQ restaurant! Good choice!

As I sat eating some of the best BBQ ribs, I looked for a hotel room. \$200!!! No way! Let me look at the next city on my route, Grand Forks. \$125... that's more like it! Only 80 miles away! But first, I need a photo of the postcard mural that Karen found for me.

After the photo op, I rode up to Grand Forks. The hotel room was great! It even had a Peleton bicycle in the room for me to hang all my riding gear to dry!



Fargo, North Dakota

June 2 - I was up and out the door by 6:00 am. There was rain forecasted for Angle Inlet in the afternoon. I wanted to get up and out of there before then.

As I rode through northern Minnesota, I was talking on the phone to Karen when I passed by this unusual car lot in the town of Karlstad. I told Karen I needed to go; I have to get some pictures of this!

All the vehicles in the car lot had track assemblies replacing the wheels! All different kinds of vehicles! They were cool!

"How do you know when you're too far north? When your vehicle needs tracks on it for the winter!"



Mattracks



Karlstad, Minnesota

As I continued riding through the wilderness, I spotted my first bear! A little farther down the road, I spotted another one!

To enter Angle Inlet, Minnesota, you must cross into Manitoba, Canada. That's the only way in and out by road.

When I made it to the border crossing near South Junction, Manitoba, the border agent was all business. After he reviewed my passport and asked a few questions, I noticed his nametag was "Theriault". I said, there was a Canadian kickboxer named Theriault. This surprised Mr. Business and made him smile. Now, he was Mr. Friendly! He said, I don't think we were related, but I remember watching him fight in the early 80's.

He had asked earlier where I was headed. I told him Angle Inlet. Now, he told me to be careful, you'll have about 30 miles of dirt/gravel road to get there but, you've got the right bike! Those Harley guys don't like that gravel!

A few miles into Canada, I arrived at the gravel road! I'm not much for gravel. I hate it too! I learned quickly that 45 mph was much better than 30 mph. It was not a comfortable feeling, but I slowly learned to accept it and relax. It was dusty! I would see a dust cloud coming toward me above the thick forest before I would see an oncoming car or truck!

When I turned at Jim's Corner, I wondered what a bus stop was doing out in the middle of nowhere. There was a gravel parking lot with a covered, plexiglass building. I would find out all about it on my way out!



Gravel Road to Angle Inlet

I continued on the gravel road through the dense forest to the Northernmost Point buoy!



Official Beware of Bigfoot Sign

At the Northernmost Point, there was a small resort with cabins. I assume these were for hunters and fisherman. Jerry's Restaurant was right there, and I was ready for breakfast! Other than that, I couldn't see anything else due to the dense forest. I assumed there was a small population in the area connected by a network of gravel roads.



Northernmost Point Buoy

During breakfast, I asked the server how far Winnipeg was. He said a couple hours. You'll go back on the same gravel road that you came in on. He did say that I would pass the longitudinal center of Canada on my way to Winnipeg! There's a small park with a big sign. Excellent! And, don't forget to notify the Canadian Border officials by phone before you leave! Oh! That's what that plexiglass building was for at Jim's Corner!

I stopped at Jim's Corner to make the border call. Why isn't the phone inside the booth? Hmmm! The lady ahead of me said she had waited 20-minutes before they answered her call. They must be busy with other locations.

After my 20-minute wait, I provided the information the border agent

asked for: Name, Passport Number, tag number, etc. Then, she gave me a confirmation number that would be valid throughout my ride across Canada, so I wrote it down and stored it in our pink rally book.



Canada Border Call-In



Can You Hear Me Now

After the call, I was relieved when I finally hit pavement 30 miles later! The Canadian roads were nice! Especially when I hit Highway #1 headed west. Their Trans-Canada highways are like our interstates, 4-lane divided highway, except when going through towns, you slow down and there could be traffic lights.

Like the server at breakfast said, you won't be able to miss the Longitudinal Center of Canada. He was right!

I took a few pictures and headed on! My goal for today was Winnipeg.

When I arrived, I wasn't ready to stop, so I continued on. But, I wanted to see the city of Winnipeg, so I rode through the middle of downtown. Not much different than one of our big cities! I did stop and make a reservation for a room in Regina, Saskatchewan before I rode any farther.



Longitudinal Center of Canada

I rode in and out of rain again that afternoon on my way to Regina. At one time, the rain was coming down hard with big rain drops! I was glad to find my hotel. It was 7:00 pm. The rain stopped long enough for me to walk next door for a steak dinner. I was hungry!

June 3 - The night before, I had parked in-between two cars to protect the bike from the wind. I also fueled up. That morning, I loaded everything. When I threw my leg over the bike, it started to fall to the right! Oh no! Right into a fairly new black sedan! It was all I could do to keep it from falling! I thought I was going to strain or pull a muscle in my right leg while preventing the bike from toppling over! Luckily, I finally got it upright after a fierce struggle. Whew! That would have been bad! Not only for the new car, but for my bike as well! I could envision the auxiliary gas

tank breaking off the mount and the metal panniers crashing into the side of the car! After a few minutes of recuperation, I headed out.

Saskatchewan and Alberta are big farm areas! You think Montana is Big Sky. These areas are bigger! As you ride over a rise, you can see forever! Their agriculture equipment is huge! A lot of farming was going on as I rode through these areas. I really enjoyed it!

It was another rain on and off day as I rode across Alberta and into British Columbia. My goal today was to make it to Dawson Creek, the beginning of the Alaska Highway!



Start of the Alaska Highway

The rain had subsided by the time I arrived in Dawson Creek. I went ahead and did all my photo ops while it was dry.

I was happy with the progress I had made so far on the trip. Despite the rainy weather, I was a little ahead of schedule!

June 4 - The ALCAN highway was closed around the Fort Nelson area due to wildfires a couple weeks before I departed. The town of Fort Nelson had evacuated for a few days. Luckily, the fires just missed the town. The residents were

allowed back into the town before the highway opened to the public. Since it just reopened, traffic was light.

I stopped in Fort Nelson for lunch. Everything seemed to be normal, businesses open with people out and about. As I headed out of town, there was a pilot truck leading cars through an area that was still active with firefighters. The dense forest of spruce trees was smoldering with black silhouettes of tall narrow tree skeletons where the fire had burned all the needles off the trees. The green trees looked untouched in several patches throughout the charred forests. I assumed the burnt trees had dry needles on them to feed the fire. I'm sure the rain was much needed and appreciated in the area.

British Columbia is beautiful, even in the rain! I love riding in this area—Remote wilderness with a lot of wildlife!

Wildlife count for the day:

1 Moose
1 Porcupine
4 Bighorn Sheep ewes
11 Bears
60 Bison (I rode through several herds)



Brown Bear

The porcupine was new to my wildlife list. He was big and had a bright yellow patch of color on him. I enjoyed watching him meander off into the tree line. I wanted a picture, but he was in the trees by the time I made a U-turn and returned.



Wood Bison

In Watson Lake, Yukon, I had reservations at the Airforce Lodge. I had stayed there back in 2011. An old WWII barracks for military officers. And, the German owner keeps it as clean as it was back then! Once you enter, you are required to remove your shoes. When I arrived, the owner asked if I had eaten yet? I said no. He could see my riding suit was soaking wet. He said you might want to go ahead and eat before you settle in here. He told me there was a Chinese restaurant a couple miles down the road. You won't be disappointed. He was right!



Airforce Lodge

After dinner, I came back and carried in all my things. The owner asked if I need anything dried by morning. I said if you could dry out my 3 pairs of wet gloves, I would appreciate it! He took my gloves and hung them in the furnace room. He had them laying on my boots by the front door the next morning.

June 5 - I stopped by the Signpost Forest on my way out of Watson Lake. It's a collection of signs from all over the world! The most famous landmark along the Alaska Highway. It was started in 1942 by a homesick G.I. He was assigned light duty while recovering from an injury and erected a signpost for his hometown of Danville, Illinois.



Signpost Forest

I added a Team Campbell sticker to the sign. I plan to be back with Karen in August. Then, we will add a metal sign that we've had made!

As I passed through the capital of the Yukon, Whitehorse, I was in new territory! During my 2011 attempt, I had my tires replaced at a motorcycle dealer there, then turned around and headed back to Atlanta.

It was beautiful riding into Haines Junction! The Kluane mountains made for an awesome backdrop for this small town!



Kluane Mountain Range

The road between Destruction Bay and the Alaska state line was rough with gravel patches in several areas. I had heard about this section for 20 years. Everyone said the same thing! Well, it appears 142-mile stretch of road hasn't changed! The gravel patches weren't my favorite thing to ride through! But after going through several, I got used to them.

I did see what appeared to be a grizzly bear. He was on the side of the road in an area that had several signs posted stating no grizzly bear hunting. A little later down the road, a beaver crossed the road in front of me dragging a small tree! He was a big guy! At first, it was hard to figure out what was going on when I watched a tree cross the road!

As I rode through some of these remote areas in the middle of nowhere with an occasional car or truck passing me, I thought how much I really enjoyed the solitude and beauty of nature!

When I was young, I remember watching Animal Kingdom or hunting shows about British Columbia. I dreamed of visiting those places! I'm doing it, but instead of hunting with a rifle, I do

it with a camera, actually a camera phone—Who'd of thought! Very rewarding to me!

At the Alaska state line, I stopped for a photo op at the Welcome to Alaska sign. As I was getting off the bike, I saw a moose approach a lake, walk in and swim across it! As I watched it swim, I could see a little one following behind it! They learn to swim young! It was a great welcoming to the state of Alaska!



Moose and Baby

While at the welcome sign, a young man pulled up in a fairly new pickup truck. He had his pet bulldog with him. A big one! He had him sit in front of the welcome sign for pictures. I thought that was pretty cool! He told me they were going to travel around Alaska. No schedule. They had been sleeping in the back of their truck under the camper shell. Traveling on a low budget but seeing what he wanted to see! He said he had traveled around Japan a year earlier. Good for him!

Next stop, Tok, Alaska for dinner and a room! Fast Eddies was on my list of places to visit and eat. I had heard and read of riders stopping there on their way into Alaska. It was a big restaurant and busy! A

tour bus had just stopped and filled up the place!



Fast Eddies Restaurant

I had the halibut dinner—It was delicious! I checked on a room reservation, but Fast Eddies was sold out for the night. I called another place on my list; they had a room for me! The Golden Bear motel was a nice place—Right out of the 50's. It was clean and a great place to stay!



The Golden Bear Motel

June 7 - The ride to Fairbanks was only 200 miles. Along the way, I stopped in Delta Junction for a photo op at the end of the Alaska Highway. Unfortunately, the iconic memorial signifying the end of the highway was out to be refurbished! I had to make do with a weathered highway sign.

From there, the ride into North Pole, Alaska was underwhelming! A

cheesy Santa Claus house greets you! Fairbanks was only 13 miles away!



End of the Alaska Highway

In Fairbanks, I rode directly to the Trail's End BMW dealership. It just happened to be on Karen Way! I wanted to see if they could get me in for an oil change and service. They could! As I sat outside on a picnic table waiting for the bike, a couple of other adventure riders were waiting. They had already ridden to Prudhoe Bay two weeks earlier! Since then, they had been riding around exploring Alaska!

These new friends were a great resource! They told me where they stayed in Deadhorse, about the tour to the Arctic Ocean and the extreme conditions they rode through! This was all great fresh info for me! Luckily, the temperatures have been slowly ramping up every day since then!

Next, they were headed to the Top of the World Highway. This highway (dirt/gravel road) links Chicken, Alaska to Dawson City, Yukon. In Dawson City, they planned to visit the Sourdough Saloon and drink a Sourtoe Cocktail! A What? A Sourtoe Cocktail! I told them the Top of the

World Highway was on my itinerary and that I would be adding a Sourtoe Cocktail to my adventure also! More on that later!

Once the bike was ready, I headed to the University of Alaska Fairbanks. I had a dorm room reserved there for \$60 a night. It was perfect! As a matter of fact, I reserved a second night due to the weather forecast on the route to Prudhoe Bay. I decided that if I chill out one extra day in Fairbanks, I'd have much better weather for the ride up and back on the Dalton Highway. I'm glad I did!



UAF Dorm Room

Along with my dorm room, there was a laundry room available to use at no charge on the same floor. This worked out great!

My new friends had mentioned a place called the Pump House to eat dinner. It was a great place to eat! I started with a beer out on the deck to enjoy the sun and the river beside it. I spoke with a couple of locals. Then, spoke to a couple that had just finished a cruise and were on a land tour. They had really enjoyed their cruise and now looking forward to a train ride across Alaska. After my beer, I decided to go inside to enjoy

the restaurant dinner menu as the deck menu was limited.

As I was sitting at my table, an elderly man from Wisconsin came by and talked to me. He had seen my bike in the parking lot and was interested in my adventure from Mississippi. A few minutes later, he was joined by his younger, elderly brother and another young man. They sat down at a table near me. I gathered my drink and asked if I could sit with them.

These elderly brothers had purchased a big boat—One you could sleep on, comfortably! They got it for a steal in Texas and brought it up here to Fairbanks to fix up and play with it on the river! Well, things didn't work out as planned, so they were trying to salvage the boat with some major improvements and make a nice profit on it! The young man worked for them in the lower 48, so they brought him along to help.

I appreciated their friendliness and enjoyed our conversation! They had been through several ventures together over the years from cattle ranching to construction to engineering major projects. Quite interesting! They also wanted to hear about my adventure.

June 7 - This was my first down day after a solid week of riding. I was up at 4:00 am washing and drying my clothes! It was actually 7:00 am Mississippi time since Alaska was three hours behind. The sun was as bright at 4:00 am as it was when I went to bed at 10:00 pm. Crazy!

After laundry, I rode over to The Bakery for a nice breakfast. The omelet was loaded with reindeer sausage, onions and mushrooms. Delicious!

Later, I rode out to Skinny Dick's Halfway Inn. A bar with a lot of adult humor items for sale located halfway between Nenana and Fairbanks. What a hoot!



Skinny Dick's Halfway Inn

For dinner that evening, I rode to Pike's Waterfront Lodge. Seated behind me was a small group of friends. Every year, they travel together to a different National Park to hike. This year, it was The Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. They had just returned to Fairbanks on a bush plane from Coldfoot.



Hikers from Chicago

After I ate, I asked to sit with them. A great group of guys from

Chicago. One of them was celebrating visiting his 62nd out of 63 National Parks in the USA. The only one he had left to visit was the National Park of American Samoa. How cool is that!

As I headed back to the dorm room, I fueled up the bike for the ride on The Dalton Highway the next day.

June 8 - I left the dorm room at 5:30 am. It was 82 miles to Livengood where I turned onto the Dalton Highway. I stopped to get a picture of the battered road sign—A seasoned warrior! My confidence grew as the road was still asphalt—That quickly vanished into dirt along with my confidence! Within a couple miles reality set in as I could see the desolate road ahead!



Sign of a Seasoned Warrior

“The highway, which directly parallels the pipeline, is one of the most isolated roads in the United States. There are only three towns along the route: Coldfoot (pop 10) at Mile 175, Wiseman (pop 22) at Mile 188, and Deadhorse (25 permanent residents, 3,500-5,000 or more seasonal residents depending on oil production) at the end of the highway at Mile 414. Fuel is available at the E. L. Patton

Yukon River Bridge (Mile 56), as well as Coldfoot and Deadhorse. The road itself is mostly gravel, very primitive in places, and small vehicle and motorcycle traffic carries significant risk. The nearest medical facilities are in Fairbanks and Deadhorse. Anyone embarking on a journey on the Dalton is encouraged to bring survival gear.

Despite its remoteness, the Dalton Highway carries a good amount of truck traffic through to Prudhoe Bay: about 160 trucks daily in the summer months and 250 trucks daily in the winter. The highway comes to within a few miles of the Arctic Ocean. Beyond the highway's terminus at Deadhorse are private roads owned by oil companies, which are restricted to authorized vehicles only. There are, however, commercial tours that take people to the Arctic Ocean. All vehicles must take extreme precaution when driving on the road, and drive with headlights on at all times. There are quite a few steep grades (up to 12%) along the route, as well.” Wikipedia



The Dalton Highway/Haul Road

Many times, I stood across the line from an opponent, facing him as we bowed-in prior to our kumite match. Some opponents were much bigger

than me or had reputations of being great fighters. After facing opponents like this in well over 300 karate tournaments, I became callused to the adrenalin rush and the thoughts that flooded my mind. No matter how big or tough they are, you must look at them like any other opponent with confidence in yourself to use your best strategy and techniques to overcome them. Don't let your own thoughts overwhelm and defeat you. I didn't come unprepared; I trained and did my homework for this exact moment! This is something I had been looking forward to for years! That's how I looked at The Dalton Highway. I took a deep breath, gave a nod of respect and forged on!

Part of my strategy was to do this ride in early June and to wait that extra day in Fairbanks for better weather. Both great decisions!

The road conditions on the Dalton constantly changed from asphalt to smooth hard packed dirt to rough washboard hardpacked dirt to gravel, then back to asphalt, to gravel or dirt. With potholes in all of it! By the time you got used to one condition, it would change to another! Then, throw in the construction sites! Several of these had pilot vehicles that might lead you through a 5-10-mile stretch around heavy equipment or bad road.

I learned on the rough, washboard, hard-packed dirt to ride in the gravel paths. As much as I hated gravel, it was much smoother, and I could make better time.

After 115 miles, it was nice to take a break at the Arctic Circle sign for a photo op. This was a major milestone. It was a great feeling!



Arctic Circle

Coldfoot, Alaska - The population was 34 at the 2020 census. It is said that the name was derived from travelers getting "cold feet" about making the 240-some-mile journey north to Deadhorse. Coldfoot primarily serves as a truck stop on the Dalton Highway from Fairbanks to Prudhoe Bay. North of Coldfoot, there are no services for 240 miles, until Deadhorse.

The town got its present name when prospectors going up the nearby Middle Fork Koyukuk River would get "cold feet" and turn around. Wikipedia

In Coldfoot, I stopped, fueled up and took a lunch break! As I was paying for my hamburger and French fries, the lady asked if I was headed to Deadhorse. I said that I was. She asked, do you plan to go on the tour to the Arctic Ocean? I do! Do you have a reservation? Not yet. Well, you need one 24 hours in advance, so they have time to do a security check on you! Oh! I better get to it! She gave me a phone number. No one answered. I looked

online and found out where to make the reservation. Whew!



The Most Northern Truck Stop

I was required to provide my driver's license information. Come to find out, my license expired in April!!! Luckily, they accepted my passport information! Unfortunately, I was assigned to the 3:00 pm tour since it was currently 1:00 pm at the time I made the reservation. I had planned on leaving Deadhorse after the tour. This would be a major delay!



2 Gas Pumps in Coldfoot

The temperature was 70 degrees as I left Coldfoot! Back on the Dalton, there were several miles of pavement. But to no avail, it soon turned back into rough dirt road.

I could see the Brooks Mountain range ahead. The mountains were far away as it took forever to arrive there! Another milestone achieved!

I had heard and read a lot about Atigun Pass over the years. I was looking forward to crossing it!



The Brooks Range



Atigun Pass 12% Grade

The gravel road over the Atigun Pass had construction in several places. The thickness of the gravel varied in places. I would be riding on the gravel and the bike would drift to the opposite side that I was aiming for! I thought to myself, I am doing something wrong! Later that evening, I looked up gravel riding on YouTube. It was a big help: Steer mainly with your weight on the pegs and your knees against the tank. Although not very intuitive to me. It did help me out the next day—Well, somewhat.

North of Atigun Pass, there was a wet area of road about 5 miles long. The top 2 or 3 inches was mud! Under that—slick hard-packed dirt. This was the most challenging part

of the Dalton Highway for me! I was tense for those 5 miles slipping and sliding! About a mile into it, I see a group of 3 or 4 bicyclists. They were off to the side of the road. Their bike tires covered in mud! I knew they were thinking, what have we got ourselves into! They had at least another 4 miles to go in that mess! I wonder how long that took?

The Alaska Pipeline ran parallel to Dalton crossing back and forth underground. Most of it was above ground. A huge pipeline!

I didn't realize the area was more like a prairie than a forest. I saw hundreds of arctic ground squirrels and a few large rabbits. I was thrilled when a handful of Musk ox crossed the road in front of me! I was hoping to see some of these prehistoric creatures while I was up there.



Musk Ox



Musk Ox near the Pipeline

Not too far from the small herd of Musk Ox, I saw three Caribou. This was amazing to me to see these animals out in the wild. Bucket list sights for sure!

As I got within 100 miles of Deadhorse/Prudhoe Bay, the temperature started to drop! By the time I arrived, it was 36 degrees and windy!

In Deadhorse, I stopped to talk to another adventure bike rider. His BMW had decals and stickers from South America. It was hard to communicate with him due to our language barrier. He was asking me about lodging. I told him that I planned to stay at the Deadhorse Camp (Info gained from my adventure bike friends at the BMW Dealership in Fairbanks). He asked how much? I said \$200. He shook his head! No way! I will sleep in my tent!

Brrrrrrrr! It was cold! I could not imagine sleeping in a tent in those temperatures and 36 degrees was the high!

I rode around the area to get the layout of the land. Deadhorse is not a town, but a location of several oil company "camps".

Deadhorse is an unincorporated community located within Prudhoe Bay in North Slope Borough, Alaska, United States, along the North Slope near the Arctic Ocean. The town consists mainly of facilities for the workers and companies that operate at the nearby Prudhoe Bay Oil Field. Deadhorse is accessible via the Dalton Highway from Fairbanks,

495 mi south, or Deadhorse Airport. Limited accommodation is also available for tourists.

The permanent population is variously listed as being between 25 and 50 residents. Temporary residents (employed by various firms with local interests) can range as high as 3,000.

Companies with facilities in Deadhorse service Prudhoe Bay, nearby oil fields, and the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS), which brings oil from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez on the south-central Alaska coast. Facilities in Deadhorse are built entirely on man-made gravel pads and usually consist of prefabricated modules shipped to Deadhorse via barge or air cargo.

The area often features large herds of caribou and over 200 bird and waterfowl species, including geese, swans, gulls and eagles. Other indigenous wildlife include: Arctic foxes, Arctic ground squirrels, grizzly bears, polar bears, musk oxen, and Arctic hares. Wikipedia

I did have internet service on my phone, so I looked up Deadhorse Camp. Oh, it was one of the first camps that I passed on the way in. So, I rode back there to see about a room.

The office building looked like a giant metal container with portable buildings (like you would see next to an overcrowded school) behind it. I parked outside the entrance and walked in. Just inside the doorway were shelves of shoes! People would remove their shoes when

entering the building and put them on when leaving. They also had disposable shoe covers to go over your shoes if you chose to keep them on.

I found the office. A young man probably in his 30's was manning the desk. I inquired about a room. He said \$218. Dinner was available for \$20, breakfast in the morning for \$15. By now it was 7:00 pm.

From exploring the local area when I arrived, I didn't have much choice for lodging. This was part of the adventure! I'll take it!



Deadhorse Camp

I also asked about the tour. The young man said he took care of that. I asked if there was any way he could get me on the earliest tour the next day. He didn't think that would be a problem. He'd let me know at dinner.



My Room

He also told me about the proper etiquette with my shoes. Please don't wear them inside any of the buildings without shoe covers or remove them.

At dinner, he told me that I was on the 8:00 am tour! I was so thankful! This allowed me a much earlier start on my trip south!

After dinner, I asked the cook where the end of the Dalton Highway sign was located. He told me the Prudhoe Bay General Store; down the road to the end, then right, then another right! I decided I better go take photos while it wasn't raining!



Iconic End of the Road Sign

Snow and ice still surrounded the iconic "End of the Dalton Highway" sign. I took several pictures!

I asked one of the locals as they walked into the store, where I could get gas. They said the Colville gas station is the only one available. It's just down the street!

I hopped on the bike to the Colville station a couple of blocks away. It was an unmanned gas station with 6 pumps. At the pump, printed instructions directed me to go inside the building to pay with a credit card. After fueling, I would need to go back inside the building and re-

insert my credit card to obtain the receipt.



Unmanned Gas Station

Gas pump and printer all worked as stated! This was an important gas receipt to show the official end to my UCC and the beginning of my ride back to Key West! But, if some unforeseen issues were to arise and I couldn't make it back to Key West on time, I have at least completed a UCC! I was thrilled! What a ride! What an adventure!

Official end time - 21:40 (Alaska Time) on June 8, 2024.

Official start time - 5:33 (Eastern Time) on May 25, 2024.

Total time: 14 days, 19 hours and 7 minutes (15 days).

Total per odometer: 5,945 miles

On back-to-back rides, per the IBA, there is no down time in-between legs. Once you end one of the rides, the other ride automatically begins. No extra time for arriving early. On this particular ride, the initial 30-day clock ended and a new 30-day clock began—And so does this story, part one ends and part two begins!

To be continued...