

Dean Tanji & Lisa Landry's 100 CCC Gold Attempt

This is the story of an Iron Butt Association (IBA) "100 CCC GOLD" attempt. The three "C's" stand for "Coast to Coast to Coast" in 100 hours. For riders in the west, the easiest route is the San Diego, CA - Jacksonville, FL route. Other riders have done longer routes, i.e. San Francisco CA -- New York, NY. To find out more about the IBA and the above rides, go to: <http://www.ironbutt.com/>

The premise is simple. Start at the Pacific Ocean ride across California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida to the Atlantic Ocean and ride back to the Pacific in 100 hours. Total roundtrip distance is approximately 5,000 miles.



Dean Tanji – Married, Tustin, CA. 1998 FLHTCI ElectraGlide Classic, 75,000 miles. HOG Life; American Thunder; MARC – KD6HEL; SCMA Four Corners '97, Three Flags '94, '96, '98, '99, '00; IBA #6124 - SS (X3), BBG (X2)

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Lisa Landry – Married, 3 teens, Dove Canyon, CA. 2000 FLTRI Road Glide – 27,000 miles HOG Life, LOH; American Thunder; SCMA Three Flags '99; IBA #6122, SS, BBG.

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Part 1 – The First 50CC, I-10 East

LISA: For the last year, Dean Tanji and I have been plotting and planning to do an IBA CCC Gold.

With the help of Jim Robertson, Narley Motorcycles, Lomita, CA (our friend and long distance mentor who passed away from cancer early this year), we got our fuel cells and hours of common sense advice about planning, strategy and riding from the experienced Iron Butt Rally road warrior. We got Russell seats, CB's and radar detectors. Dean has a Street Pilot GPS. Another friend installed radar overrides and hardwired all the extra electrical. We picked the collective brain of the long distance rider's list and spent endless hours talking about this - now it was time to do it.

Our ride plan was simple. First, we were a team. If one got into trouble, the other would stay even if it meant not completing the goal. Second, communications – we agreed to be honest about our individual energy and emotional levels. We had to have consistent and informative communications throughout the four days. Finally, NO SPEEDING TICKETS! Yes, we would ride aggressive ... but not stupid!

DEAN: Our main concern was safety. We wanted to test our endurance abilities but to do it in a safe and logical method. If you detail this out, it means that we must average 50 mph over the 100 hours. But traveling at 70 mph, the legal speed limit in most of the states, the ride can be completed in about 72 hours. This leaves 28 hours for refueling, resting and . . . sleeping. Our plan was to ride hard but rest early and sleep, in a real motel bed, a minimum of 4-hours daily.

IBA rides are a balance between rider and machine. This ride is 5,000 miles in 4 days and 4 hours. "Shit Happens!" and it's going to happen to us. The severity, timing, location of our breakdowns AND luck and willingness of the H-D dealers will make this ride successful or a failure. To date there are 25 successful CCC Gold finishers and 95% of the machines are Honda's and BMW's. 1 of them is a Harley we are planning to be 2 and 3.

When you ride against the clock, you see a lot of dealerships, not always in the best situations. Dealerships' service and willingness to help vary from *none* to *extraordinary*. Endurance riders require exceptional dealers and as you'll read . . . we found three of them.



The Start – Mission Bay Park, Ocean Front Walk and Ventura Place. Lifeguard station in the background with

Pacific Ocean beyond.



Its 3:30 AM and Lisa holds the symbolic Pacific Ocean beach sand. Within 50 hours, we plan to hold Atlantic Ocean beach sand.

LISA: Wednesday, April 4, IBA Approved Witness Holley Harrison signed our logbooks at 4 AM in San Diego and we were finally off. As usual, I-8 through Alpine and down into the desert was cold, but our weather window was fantastic. Not too hot, high clouds, minimal winds and the miles just flew by. First gas in Gila Bend and curiously, my bike took almost a gallon more than Dean's - hmmm, not good.

On to Lordsburg and as we pulled in the station, I knew I had a problem. Again a major difference in gas consumption and my Road Glide sounded like it was running on one cylinder. But with no lack of power, we did a cursory check for loose wires then rode on.

As we got into El Paso, I was running real rough. Pulled the plugs and they were not fouled. Our mechanical expertise ended at this point so I went to the help-line. Brian Bentley, owner of Brian's HD, Langhorne, PA, advised us over the phone how to check each

plug's spark. Check the compression - good in both cylinders. Check the flange holding the manifold to the rear cylinder. To do that, I have to loosen the heat shield. Bingo - the manifold is cracked big time. The EFI is reacting to the pressure loss and over-compensating with gas, accounting for my poor mileage.

So, in our infinite brilliance, because going to the dealer to repair would take too much time, we put the bike back together, went down the street to an auto parts store to buy muffler tape. Took the bike apart again, wrap the pipe up real good, re-assembled the bike, gas up and head out. Elapsed time- 2 hours. Ooops, tape can't handle the heat and seems to be on fire before we even get to the freeway. It's 6:00 pm, and most Harley dealers are closed. Only option was to call Barnett H-D. Mike O'Neil, service manager responded, "Yes, we are closing . . . You're on an Iron Butt 100CCC? I'll open a bay and get you out tonight!" When we pulled in (the now closed service bay) there were 4 mechanics waiting at the door for us, and 45 minutes later we were on the road with a new exhaust manifold. They even cleaned the bugs off my windshield and auxiliary lighting. Unbelievable.

DEAN: We lost about 3 hours but we were still good time-wise. We rode most of the night and hit San Antonio, our planned stop at 4 AM CST. Total Ride Time: 22 hours. Total mileage: 1,305 miles.



A happy Lisa with ace mechanic Ralph Sellers, left, and Mike O'Neil, Service Manager, right. From the side of the road, we had called Barnett Harley-Davidson in El Paso. It was closing time and Mike O'Neil, Service Manager's response was "I'm opening a bay for you, come on in." Ralph Sellers and three other mechanics replaced the broken manifold and we are on the road in 45 minutes! This is an extraordinary dealership!

LISA: Slave driver Dean wakes me at 8:45 AM and we're on the road at 9:30 AM. It's I-10 all the way through Houston, Baton Rouge, Biloxi, Mobile, Tallahassee and finally, to Jacksonville.

Absolutely fantastic riding day - we encountered very little traffic or construction. Then, just past Houston, we ran into a 15-mile "dead stop" back up so I spoke to the local in a pick up next to us. He said that if we could get on the frontage road, we could get around it. Only problem is the cut-off is a couple miles up. So, did the only sensible thing - stood up on my floorboards, rode right through the grass drainage ditch/median, hopped onto the frontage road and cranked it back up. Another rider on an unfaired Japanese bike sheepishly looked around, followed us through the ditch and rode with us for miles until pulling up next to me, signaling that he needed gas and waving goodbye.

After 9 hours on the road, we hit Pensacola at dusk and the light reflecting off the water and ships was wonderful. After that, it seemed we were on a bizarre treadmill that is western Florida. The cloud cover kept the temperature very mild, but obscured the full moon and stars. We had mile after mile after mile of black, black, 2-lane divided highway marked with eerie lighted orange construction drums, very few other cars and lots of deer grazing. It was interminable and I was getting verrry sleepy. A quick exchange over the CBs and we pulled over for a power rest and a bite to eat. We ate some disgusting excuse for food and I got a second wind just as we pulled into Jacksonville.

Good thing, too, cause it was Dean's turn to get sleepy/stupid. In his attempt to ride through Jacksonville to get to Jacksonville Beach, he made a wrong turn and ends up lost in downtown Jacksonville. Here we sat in a very bad part of town at 4 AM looking at Dean's GPS. After going in circles for 20 minutes, all he could say was, "Well, we're HERE, we need to get THERE but I don't know how to do it." Imagine the look on the face of the transient I hailed - 2 bikers on Harleys peering intently at what appears to him to be a TV screen and asking him where is the police station. He made a quick exit, giving us no info.

DEAN: No excuse . . . brain fart! I wasn't too concerned because we had 5 hours to go 20 miles to the beach.

LISA: So, we pushed on and I asked directions of the first driver I saw. Good, we're only a few blocks off course and we finally located the Jacksonville Beach PD, just a short 1/2 block from the local donut place, go figure.

We parked in front and Dean went to the security camera to get an officer to come outside to verify our info. Dean is of Japanese decent, about 5'-6" and totally

dressed in black. The female clerk paused and said, "Sorry, there are no officers available". Hearing this, I stuck my face in front of the camera and did my best groveling imitation. After another pause, she said, "An officer will be right out." Nice guy, real interested in our ride, etc. He signed our witness forms at 5:45 AM and we took some photos.

As we finished and mounted our Harleys he mentioned that the dispatcher thought Dean looked like a Ninja so they weren't willing to come out. That was good for a laugh.

DEAN: Today we rode 1,152 miles in 18 hours. Although we are halfway, we do have an official 50 CC completed. The complete trip from ocean to ocean is 2,457 miles.



Dean and Sgt. Eddie Bounds, Jacksonville Beach PD. In the security monitor, they thought I looked like a Ninja and had a little off-screen discussion before coming out to help us. Actually it was Lisa who got him to come out.



Lisa and Sgt. Eddie Bounds, Jacksonville Beach PD.



We are at the end of US 90 (SR212)/Beach Blvd. The Atlantic Ocean is 30 yards behind us. This is our halfway point! Another 2,457 miles to go!



Lisa collecting Atlantic Ocean beach sand.

We ride less than a mile to the beach for sand and photos then on to the motel. We arrive at 6:45 AM and the clerk can *not* understand that we want the rooms we reserved for the previous evening. She was so confused, she gave me the key to an occupied room - thanks a bunch!

Part 2 – The Second 50CC for a Complete 100CCC Gold

LISA: Well, my good friend Dean, the bionic man, let me have a whole 2 hours sleep and we were “clutch-out” at 9:30 AM. Stopped to buy oil then hit I-10 once again . . . only West. This ride isn’t exactly a brainteaser – ride 2,450 miles, turn around, ride 2,450 miles. We made great time in minimal Friday morning traffic, sporadic construction, and perfect riding weather. Wow, we spent the day riding through Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. As we crossed into Texas, I was sure we were going to make it... which is about the time the wheels fell off, literally.

Our plan was to make it back to San Antonio, sleep 6 hours, then home. We reached Beaumont, TX around 10 PM and had 36.5 hours left so this seems totally do-able. We pulled off for an unscheduled gas stop just to be sure we could get to San Antonio. No gas

stations in sight, we quickly decided to merge back up onto the raised freeway, so at full throttle (approximately 25 mph) Dean hit an asphalt median strip and launched the dresser 2 feet in the air and directly into the first lane of I-10. As he hit the ground, saddlebags flew open, stuff seemingly flying everywhere but miraculously he maintained control. The late night traffic is minimal and avoided him as he got to the side of the road. Damage assessment: both tires flat, the rims were cracked and are history, GPS, V-1, etc, still attached by their safety tethers, inconsequential loss from saddlebags and most important, Dean in one piece.

DEAN: Now if you’re going to get into mechanical trouble, do it somewhere near a dealer. Less than 10 blocks away was Cowboy Harley-Davidson of Beaumont TX. A

call to the dealership on a long shot and ... a human answered the phone! They have an all night person on staff answering the phone! 5 minutes later, Randy Graffagnino, General Manager called to tell us a tow truck was on its way. They will take my ElectraGlide to the dealer and it will be given priority Saturday morning. Now we entered tow truck hell. Between 10:30 PM and 12:30 AM, two different companies promised service, we waited one hour each, only to have the driver appear and say they don't DO motorcycles. At 1:30 AM we finally found a service with a flatbed and he was on his way. Between 10:30 PM and 2:30 AM a half dozen Harleys/autos stopped to ask if we needed help.

LISA: With the flatbed on its way, I told Dean I'd meet him at the dealer after I went to check out available motels. A half-mile up, I took the freeway off-ramp for motel row and the bike went BLACK, DEAD, no power. I looked around to assess my situation: I am alone, under a very dark underpass; a group of men standing nearby huddled around a circle, smoking something. NO WAY can I let on that I am not a mean Harley dude, so I pushed my bike a block away to the base of the offramp I know that Dean and the tow truck would have to take. They saw me, stopped and since I was not willing to leave my bike there unattended, say they will be back for me. We moved my bike near the office of one of the motels. OK, I was now bone tired, exhausted - so I took everything off my bike that could be easily lifted - tank bag, V-1, etc., put it on the sidewalk and lay on it. Asleep in 30 seconds in full regalia - Schuberth on, shield down and sunshield deployed. I'm sure I looked like an alien. But the driver came back and thought I'd left and just piled my riding clothes on the sidewalk. He grabbed the clothes and I moved. Startled, he jumped back and I woke up blabbering about my bike being broken (like he didn't know this already).

An actual benefit of this whole Dean Sleep Deprivation Campaign is that I learned to sleep virtually anywhere, anytime - a real plus for long distance riding. Shoot, I slept on a grassy freeway divider and even the sidewalk at a truck stop. Woo-hoo, my dad is one proud hombre at his daughter's accomplishments!

DEAN: We get settled in a fleabag masquerading as a motel at 3:45 AM. At 7 AM I called Lisa and at 7:30 we were in a cab to the dealer. Now the politics, groveling and pleading began. I wanted them to take wheels off a used FLH, mount them on mine and replace with whatever later. In the end it was a compromise of a used front rim and a new rear rim with new rubber front and back. The mechanic working on my wheels is Robie Kerr with two others assistin' as needed. Once the actual repair was in motion, I helped Lisa remove her front fairing and seat and go through all possible areas that might be shorting her electrical. The first thing we found is that the negative connection on her battery was less than finger tight. We tightened that down, check the positive terminal bolt, taped up a few loose wires that appear to have exposed areas, etc. and the Road Glide fired right up.

LISA: 10:30 AM - we're on the road again. Adios Beaumont! Yea!! We can still do this. Dean's little incident stopped us for 10 hours. We are 1,550 miles from San Diego and we had approximately 25 hours to do it. Our 100CCC window closed at 8:00 AM PDT. We got maybe 500 yards from the dealer and my bike went dead again but fired right back up in a minute. The loose negative battery connection was not the problem. Back we went. They looked at Dean with "What's wrong now" looks. Dean pointed at me and explained the situation. Jed Weems, Service Manager and Robie tore my bike apart, each working in a different area, talking constantly - what could it possibly be? In the course of trouble-shooting they disconnected and

removed the heated clothing wires and auxiliary lights. After an hour, Robie decides to pull the battery to check the 30-amp breaker and lo and behold . . . he found that the positive terminal is loose. Not loose at the cable, but loose from the battery case itself. I had a broken battery terminal! This was feeling like the movie "Groundhog Day" and we will NEVER leave Beaumont.

1:30 PM - new battery, new 50-amp breaker . . . we can still get our 100CCC - 1,550 miles in 23 hours. We merged on the freeway, got to 70 with Dean leading. We need speed and luck. We got luck – we got *bad* luck....

DEAN: We were in the fast lane of I-10 West approximately 5 miles outside of Beaumont. We are doing the speed limit ... 70 mph. The traffic was not heavy but there were a few 18-wheelers and cars around us. Suddenly, my Harley started into a slow gyrating wobble. In a matter of seconds the rear end was throwing itself back and forth and staying upright was my sole thought. Lisa, behind me, veered hard right to the shoulder and watched me trying to manage a rear tire blowout. I ride the sidwinding Harley down to about 50-mph. I had very little control and the left-to-right wobbling cycles were getting more severe and it was a matter of seconds before I lost it. I had a choice of dumping it on the freeway or the grassy median between the west and eastbound lanes. It was a no-brainer as I headed for the left-hand shoulder and down into the grassy median. The grassy median falls away at a 30-degree angle with grass 2' high to a drainage ditch. The tall grass slowed the gyrations from getting worse but it was still slamming left and right. After 100 yards, I was still doing 40. It's kinda hard to imagine, but I'm thinkin' "I do not want to do a 'high side get-off' and have the Harley chasin' me." I pulled my right foot out and laid the motor over on its right side. The dresser slid on the right crash bar, footboard and saddlebag mount for another 75 feet until it stopped. A passing pick-up

beeped his horn as I slid to a stop. Lisa had stopped 100 feet up the freeway. She ran back to me, standing thigh high in grass and we were both in shock.



This is the point where we realize our quest for the 100CCC Gold is over. Lisa's Harley is 100 feet up the freeway.



The FLH ElectraGlide Classic ended up sliding at a 45 degree angle on its front crash bar, foot board and saddlebag guard. The end result was no damage!

A quick inspection showed no damage to any part of the Harley except for the flat rear tire.

LISA: Another call to Cowboy Harley-Davidson and they thought we were kidding. (yeah, like this is funny) Dean looked at me and we're both thinking the same thing. "This is like "Groundhog Day" and we are *never leaving* Beaumont". We're stuck in some "Twilight Zone" episode and we've got to keep repeating this until we get it right!

In less than 30 minutes, the dealer's crew-cab pickup and trailer roared up. Four guys

swarmed out of the pickup, grabbed the Harley, muscled it out of the ditch and onto the shoulder. In a matter of 5 minutes, the Harley was in the covered trailer and Dean rode with them back to the dealer. I rode alone and got there first. I pulled in, stopped, stand down, throw my gloves on the ground, helmet off, face down on my tank bag and had a good boo-hoo. It was a mixture of frustration, sadness, disbelief and total relief at Dean's survival. Our 100CCC was over and I knew it. We were by now, quite well known at the dealer and on a first name basis with Morris Moore, one of the owners. He even gave us Cowboy HD T-shirts for being such good repeat customers. Three visits in one day! Meanwhile, in his best Southern Gentleman mode, the sales manager patted my back and said that my husband shouldn't let me do these things cause it's too hard on me ... riiiiightt. That got a few chuckles from my better half when I got home.

DEAN: When we arrived back at the dealer, they got it on the lift and once again Robie inflated the tire. There's a large puncture hole in the 4 o'clock position, 1/2" from the wall. Robie put 50 lbs. in it and it was flat again in less than a minute. Whatever I hit, the tire went flat instantly! This tire had maybe 20 miles on it and it's history! I joked that this was the worst mileage I've ever had on a tire. It will be 4:30 PM before we make another attempt to leave Beaumont. Will Beaumont let us go? For us to make our 8:00 AM Sunday deadline we'll have to do 1,550 miles in 20 hours. That's a average of 77.5 mph. With gas stops, it's over an 80 mph moving average. On Harleys this put us outside our band of safety and I was not willing to put us there. Maybe we were kept here for other reasons ...

LISA: I still wanted to try it and I probably would have, but *someone* had to be reasonable! So now it was different, our sense of urgency and importance replaced by the camaraderie of shared near-disaster,

communal disappointment and a really warped sense of humor.

DEAN: My mechanical problems have not ended. Just west of San Antonio, my odometer takes a dump! This will be my fourth speedo cable on the same speedometer.

LISA: We made it to Comfort, TX, just past Welfare, TX (no, really) and decided we needed a couple of nice rooms, a good meal and a fine wine list, dammit. Yep, no restaurants open at this late hour (9 pm- and the sidewalks are rolled up, too) so we snuck a six-pack of Zima at the Dairy Queen. A fitting tribute to our day.

Next morning, Herr Dean shepherded us out at some god-forsaken hour (NEVER ride with him if you need sleep) and we were going home - feeling like failures, but safe, alive and able to do it again. Our chatter was what could we have done differently and what we will do to better the next ride.

We really took our time now - I think we were both so disappointed that it didn't matter. I called home from Phoenix about 9:45 PM and said I'd be home soon. Cold, cold, cold and windy over the pass into Palm Springs and my electrics had been disconnected in Beaumont and never hooked up again. Fortunately I had borrowed the new First Gear Voyager Jacket for the ride (it's awesome - great armor, pockets, waterproof, etc.) so I was chilly but able to push on.

Waved goodbye to my friend about 2:15 AM as he headed to Lemon Heights and I arrived home in Dove Canyon at 2:45 AM. Too wired to sleep, so checked my email and sent messages to Holley and others who had monitored our progress, spent Monday being really disappointed and now, looking forward to the next ride.

DEAN: No doubt, on the road Lisa and I make a unique riding team. I'm not sure why

we're compatible, but our riding styles are similar. We both hate to stop until the carb is suckin' fumes. She's tall, blond, effervescent, energetic, full of laughs and draws a crowd at every dealer where we stopped. But more important, she's a seriously committed and extremely capable rider and she makes things happen. In this last year, I've ridden over 7,000 miles with her and she is more capable than many other riders. We're kinda like the Odd Couple. Mutt and Jeff. Yin and Yang. Beauty and the Beast. When we pull into a dealership or gas station, folks will come up to Lisa and chat with her . . . they look at Lisa then me then the Harleys then back at Lisa then back at me then in the polite conversation that follows, there's some comment or reference to us as a couple or married and Lisa always replies with glee, "Yes, we're married, not to each other, but we are married!" The looks on their faces are classic!

LISA: Well, for once, Dean is right- we *are* totally different: my saddlebags and tank bag look as if a bomb went off in them- Dean's are alphabetized (obsess *MUCH?*). I am real excitable and spontaneous – Dean is quite calm and methodical, I *sleep* at night - Dean lays awake plotting ways to torture me. Other than our riding styles, I do believe that the main reason I ride with Dean (trust me, it's NOT his ability to interpret his GPS!!) is our matching appreciation of situational

humor – the only thing more sore than my rear end after one of our epic rides is my face - from laughing. Abbott and Costello ride motorcycles.

DEAN: How can I summarize this experience? It was a unique adventure with emotional highs and super low points. I want to emphasize that we never, ever put ourselves in a precarious situation because of being sleepy or physically drained and our riding speeds were always within a safe and controlled range. Our constant communications enabled us to ride throughout the nights alert and safely. Several times I initiated the rest stop and on other occasions, Lisa would request the stop. We slept when we wanted to and power napped when we had to. Finally, we did not donate any funds to state or local governments. Having completed three-quarters of a 100 CCC Quest, our next attempt will be easier.

LISA: An acquaintance asked me just before I left if I had a death wish. I told him, no, I have a Life Wish. I wish to live every moment that I have allotted to me, not merely survive it.

Well, we finished a 50, didn't get a 100, laughed alot, cried a little, got home safely and for the most part enjoyed the hell out of it. What more can you ask?