

## Ride Report Gypsy 2023

*And it all comes down to you*

*Well you know that it does*

*And lightning strikes, maybe once, maybe twice*

*Oh, and it lights up the night*

*And you see your gypsy*

*You see your gypsy*

Oh, to ride. Just ride. No destination in mind, banging turns at will, seeing where the road goes. Freely exploring places where you have never been, where you will never get to again.

Fleetwood Mac got it right.

That is the spirit of a Gypsy Tour. There is no route sheet. We look at the weather, we may toss a coin. A general compass heading is all we need. Then it's all about cruising the back roads to anywhere. For sure we will meet a few characters along the way. We may stumble across a good old happening. Things that happen serendipitously spice up the ride. When we get tired, we find a place to stay over; there are no reservations.

Ed, Fred, and Richard signed up to brave the November winds and venture out on the 1976 RD400, the 1978 CX500, the 1976 CB550K, and the 1970 Triumph T100C. We dressed warm, just in case. A look at the weather suggested that south might be a good direction, so we ate a good breakfast here and headed south into Delaware, following the Delaware River. Route 9 crosses the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal by means of a very tall bridge which allows heavy shipping from Chesapeake Bay to access the Delaware River on the way to Philadelphia, 30 miles north. Great views from up there and sometimes cross winds that can cause concern. We stop briefly at Augustine Beach and admire the plume from the Salem Nuclear Reactor across the river in New Jersey.



As we pass the phragmites reeds that line the river banks, brackish river meanderings interrupt the route frequently, forcing the road to cross over short hump-back bridges that often have standing water on the roadway waiting for the unwary on the other side. Small crab boats are moored here and there, ready to supply local eateries and roadside markets with Chesapeake Bay's famous delicacy. Route 9 is 'the old road', having been replaced by super-slab DE Route 1, so there is generally very little traffic. Some distance north of Dover Air Force Base, however, we come across a line of stopped traffic; was there an accident or what? We sit for a time and are forced to shut down our air cooled engines. Nothing is moving. Finally, we creep forward far enough to see that there is something going on in big field where many cars are turning in. I recognize the spot as a practice area for firefighters: Firebase Lloyd, but today it hosts an unusual Fall Festival. It looks like JRR Tolkien's Middle Earth, with folks dressed in strange Gothic outfits....hundreds of them. If only to escape the traffic jam, we pull in and park, then approach the gate to see what this is all about. What? \$20 to enter? All we want to do is have a quick look around. We discuss this amongst ourselves, and when we turn as if to leave, the gate keeper counters, offering us \$10 admission which is more acceptable, and we are in.

Inside there are booths selling food, arts and crafts, and entertainment. The crowd provides enough entertainment by itself though. People are really into this fantasy world thing, Dressing the part, speaking in accents, behaving a bit strangely, I would say. In addition to the festival attendees, there are 6 or 8 camps set up where veterans are living, off the grid as it were. All in all, a very interesting scene. We circumnavigate the entire area, then regroup at the exit, remount our bikes, and continue south to the Dover Air Force Base Air Mobility Command Museum.

*Fred and Ed, on the way in.*





*Like I said, these people are serious!*



*And there were a lot of them!*

*Richard, on the way out.*

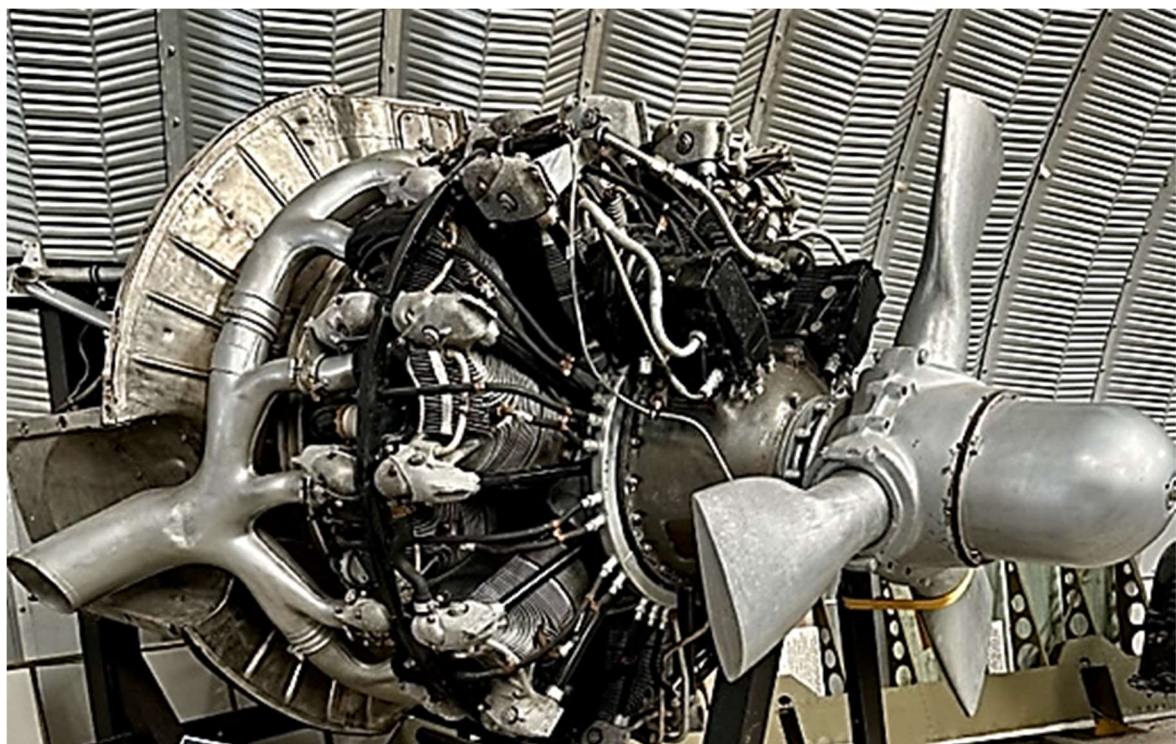
*One of the veteran camps.*





*Ed, himself a pilot, looks to be enjoying the indoor aeronautical display, but what awaits outside?*

*Developed in 1942, The R-2000 was an enlarged version of the Pratt & Whitney R-1830 Twin Wasp, with focus on reducing the manufacturing costs and fuel requirements. The bore was increased to 5.75 in (146 mm), while it still retained the 5.5 in (140 mm) stroke. This brought displacement up to 2,000 in<sup>3</sup> (32.8 L). The R-2000 produced 1,300 hp @ 2,700 rpm with 87 octane, 1,350 hp with 100 octane and 1,450 hp @ 2,800 rpm with 100/130-grade fuel. It looks like there are 2 rows of 7 radial cylinders. It is air cooled and can run on Regular gas; I wonder if it would fit in a motorcycle frame?*





*Among the largest military transport aircraft in the world, The Lockheed C-5 Galaxy was designed and built by Lockheed, and now maintained and upgraded by its successor, Lockheed Martin. It provides the United States Air Force (USAF) with a heavy intercontinental-range strategic airlift capability, one that can carry outsized and oversized loads. The C-5 Galaxy's maximum payload is an amazing 285,000 pounds and the aircraft itself is just under 248 feet long. With an operational range of 5,250 nautical miles, the C-5 can fly from Dover Air Force Base to the Middle East without having to refuel. Launching a fully functional ICBM out the back of an aircraft in flight might sound crazy, but the Air Force first tested this concept successfully in 1974, from a C5 Galaxy.*

*Richard and Fred are about to go on board...*

After the airplane museum, we popped across Route 1 to the Magnolia Diner for lunch, then topped up on gas on the way out. Now we started banging turns and just following



back roads, maintaining our general southerly heading, but not really paying much attention to our exact whereabouts, focusing instead on the rural scenery around us. At times, we turned onto a farm road that turned to dirt for a few miles. Time was suspended as we soaked up the cool, fresh Autumn air, enjoyed the intermittent sunshine, and just followed our noses, Zen-like, and content to just ride, ride, ride.



*The Delaware woods make a handsome background for motorcycle portraits, don't you agree?*

Fred takes over to lead at times. Skillfully banging lefts and rights at random, while watching the sun to keep a general heading. Eventually, we decide to look for lodging and stop at the first motel we come to on a main road. The place looks a bit run down, but I go to office and ask if there are rooms available. The answer is yes, but when I ask about the price, the clerk replies, "Let me show you the room first". Ok, I'm easy. We follow the proprietor around back, past some trash lying on the ground and enter a long, narrow building with a corridor running its length, and rooms on either side. Things get very creepy once the odor hits our nostrils, and our feet stick to the carpet. There are kids sitting on the floor in the corridor playing, and when the door to the available room is opened, we glance inside and just look at each other. This place is a

total dive. I tell our guide, "I think we might want to look for something a little more upscale". He nods knowingly and we depart post haste.

As sometimes happens in these situations, we then cannot seem to find a motel. I stay on the main road, and we search and search, but there is nothing. Finally, as daylight is fading, we stop and decide to consult Siri. Incredibly, there is a *very* upscale motel that we can actually see from where we are standing. It is set back a bit from the road which is why we missed it. We check in, swallow hard at the upscale price, but end up enjoying our relaxing stay. Free coffee and cookies. In the end, we all agree it was worth the price, and dinner just a short walk away.





***“I know there must be a motel around here somewhere.”***

The clock ‘falls behind’ so we get a bit of extra shuteye before leaving in the AM. We adopt a similar riding strategy heading back north until we encounter DE Route 15. This road zig-zags enjoyably through the soy fields and forests of (s)lower Delaware eventually taking us all the way back to the C&D canal. Fred hits reserve and gets a bit nervous as we ride deeper and deeper into his dwindling fuel supply. At one point he just stops and tells me he doesn’t want to run out and be left behind or whatever. Obviously, he is suffering from that common malady that afflicts us all at one time or another: range anxiety. I assure him that I know where I am (not necessarily true) and that there is a gas station just a few miles up the road (I hope) and we make it! With gas in our tanks and snacks and drinks in our bellies, we are ready for the final leg home. On the way, just a few miles shy of our destination, we do a ride-through tour of Mt. Cuba botanical gardens, where

Richard, who is never bashful about talking to strangers, imposes on a woman to take a group photo.



Back at home, Lynn comes through again....BIG TIME. There is a fantastic gourmet meal with adult beverages waiting for us. We sit and eat and talk and just enjoy the camaraderie. It has been a great 2 day ride.

***We have met our inner Gypsy.***

***LEFT TO RIGHT: Richard, Ed, Lynn, Fred, Joel.***





*Of course, we switched bikes throughout the weekend. Here, from left to right, Joel is on the RD400, Fred rides the CX500, Ed straddles the T100C, and Richard is perched on the CB550K.*