

Each year, somehow, the famed Barstow to Vegas Ride survives. We've reported on it to the readers of the country and explained its importance. For those unfamiliar, suffice to say that B-to-V is the Last Great Protest Ride of this generation.

And you know what? As desperate as it all started out, it seems to be working and making its point. Newspaper articles appeared all over the Southland a few days before the non-event, quoting various sputterings from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Sierra Club.

One of the most startling quotes was from the Public Relations Department of the BLM, wherein Delores "Pete" Palmer stated, "We took them to court twice trying to stop it, and we lost. Now, when we try to pass out maps pointing out ways to go around environmentally sensitive areas, they are saying 'The BLM approves Barstow to Vegas is OK' and 'The BLM approves this route.' That is just not true."

The Sierra Club expresses equal dismay. "It's a loophole in the law big enough to drive 500— or even 5,000 cycles, if they wanted to—through, and we are powerless to do anything about it but monitor and press for stricter regulations," says Ike Eastvold of the Sierra Club's San Gorgonio chapter. "Although they have big ads and about 500 people take part, they get around the regulations by taking off in dozens of small groups," he added.

THE RIDE

All arguments aside, people did show up for the ride. Thousands of them. The area around the Alvord road off-ramp was a sea of campers, trucks, vans and dirt bikes. Traditionally, the Saturday right after Thanksgiving is the day people choose to take a casual trail ride from Barstow to Las Vegas.

No one can say what makes them do it. Some have accused the staff of *Dirt Bike* for fomenting civil geekery and pushing B-to-V. Mostly, these accusers have been Sierra Clubbers or BLM weirdos. We cannot deny that each and every year, several members of the *Dirt Bike* staff, their close friends and family, do tend to wander off in the direction of Barstow, to rest a while, then blithely trail ride off in the direction of the sunrise. It somehow seems only natural.

THE RIDERS

In addition to the uncounted trail riders, this year found Team *Dirt Bike* represented by Krause Racing and Metzeler Tires. Krause had originally planned to send his entire team out (consisting of a Bulgarian refugee named Vladisow) to the run, but, instead, took the junket personally.

Andy Poole, the number one Metz pusher in the States, showed up with all of his riding gear, demanding a bike and free beer. Your editor decided to four-stroke-it for the trail ride and

Andy Poole and the Can-Am banger for the idioter. Krause said that the forecast was rain and snow, and declined to roll his brand-new Maico Alpha E enduro bike out of the van. As it turned out, Mr. Know-It-All was the only one who had any common sense. We know we should really have known, but we didn't.

At precisely 9:03, A. Poole and R. Sieman fired up their respective bikes and pointed them eastward. They had the foresight to make some bogus hand guards out of old phone book

BARSTOW TO VEGAS WITHOUT DUST

*Duck-3; BLM-0;
Sierra Club-zip / slant doodley squat*

*By Rick Sieman, with special thanks to Can-Am, U. S. Suzuki,
Tony Murphy and Stuckey's Restaurant*



The Phantom Duck, flanked by our very own Mr. Know-It-All on the left, and Andy Poole (Metzeler Tires) on the right. Poole rode; Krause flaked out.

somehow procured the very same Can-Am 500 that had just finished sixth overall in the Baja 1000. The bike was delivered with little more than a change of tires and oil, with a new Metz up front and a trick Dunlop at the rear. We caught A. Poole in the act of trying to slash the tire on the eve of the trail ride and made him stand watch as punishment.

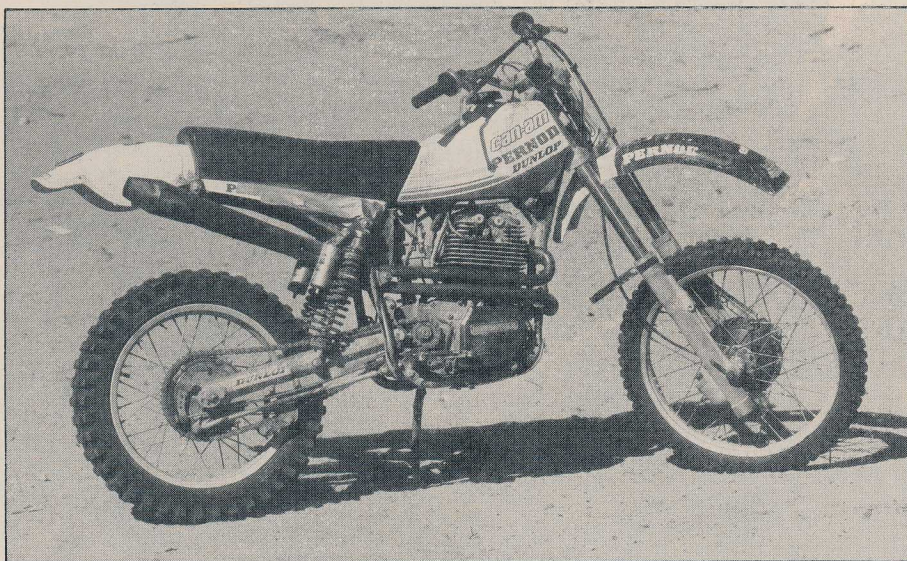
THE MORNING OF THE RIDE

It dawned gray and rotten-looking, with a ledge of black threatening to climb over the mountain peaks. We unloaded the bikes—a Suzuki DR500 for

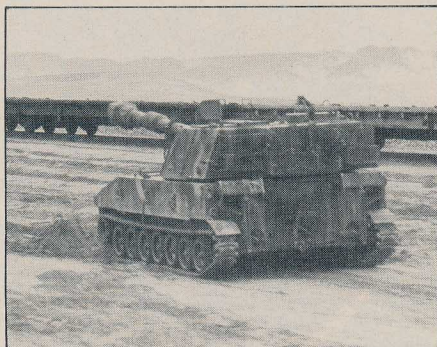
covers and duct tape in case it got cold later on in the ride. They were both thoroughly bundled in fresh Griff jackets, leathers, boots and Turbo goggles with new batteries. No misting or fogging over the mountains, they thought.

The first 12 miles of riding were great, with the air cool, but not snappish. A layer of light rain had fallen the day before, and there wasn't a hint of dust on the great desert floor.

Thumpity-thumpity-thump, went the Dynamic Duo, four-strokes heading east, gas tanks near full and spirits



The Baja/Pernod/Can-Am was a great bike for the ride.



Typical off-road vehicle seen near the Alvord road start area. No joke, folks.

high. At the 13-mile mark, a light rain fell out of the sky.

No problem. The coating of Rain-X on the lenses sluffed the droplets off and hands were protected from moisture with front and back covers of the

Barstow phone book.

After another ten miles, the rain increased and the temperature dropped. Team *Dirt Bike* merely gritted their collective teeth and pressed on. Rather soon, the cardboard protection sopped up a portion of the sky and fell off, like so much wet toilet tissue. Gloves got soaked.

Even the Griff jackets could only hold out the water for so long. Soon, the skies opened up with a vengeance—much like your basic cow-on-a-flat-rock syndrome. Our riding pants channeled water down to fill boots up to the brim. Gloves got dripping wet. Water poured off of chins, elbows, knees, toes and too many other appendages to chronicle in a family magazine.

And then, the temperature took a

dive. A regular three-and-a-half gainer for the basement. The water, which up until this point was happy to flow and drip, decided to become solid. Or... as close to solid as it could manage.

And so, the team of Poole and Sieman forged onward...ever onward, like a couple of frozen harp seals, with the bikes ignoring their total and complete physical misery.

As the miles wore on, so did the riders. Smiles of pleasure soon turned to grimaces of frozen lips. Warm hearts and hot blood settled into cold thoughts and frozen buns. Still, Team *Dirt Bike* forged on. In fact, they forged on so far that they over-rode their pit stop by the tune of 40 extra miles and missed the entire second half of the ride. Such is the mileage of four-strokes.

Anyway, our boys spent most of their time in a sleazy gas station at Razor Road, with a thoroughly anti-biker sort who made them stand out in the cold unless they bought coffee for a buck per cup. They bought a great deal of coffee.

As they sat there listening to the musical sound of air hoses being run over by Buick station wagons, the rest of the riders passed onward, through the fog and the rain and the snow.

By the time the riders charged across the Clark Mountains, snow was falling. Many riders shined it on at that point and retired to the Stuckey's Restaurant at the Cima Road off-ramp. (A special word of thanks is in order for these fine folks. In direct contrast

(continued on page 70)



The dynamic duo before the rains came.



Here's how most of the riders finished the trip.

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BARSTOW TO VEGAS

(continued from page 41)

to the shoddy treatment at Razor Road, they went out of their way to help the cold and shaking riders. They even gave huge plastic trash bags away, free, to those who insisted on continuing. Cheers for the nice guys for a change!

Those who did decide to press on were frozen to the quick; sleet formed on all frontal areas of exposure. Only the hardy, we might add, finished. (The Phantom Duck and his friends all finished, by the way.)

At the finish line, only a handful of those who had actually started were around to accept their drawing prizes in the pouring rain. Many more riders finished the ride inside a warm van, their trusty steeds getting wet and rusty out in the elements.

In Vegas that night... over salutory imbibements... the Duck and Friends talked about the ride and the implications.

The bottom line boiled down to this: once more, the dirt bikers of the country refused to accept defeat and made Barstow to Vegas a stand.

And they came in second.

The winner?

Mother Nature!

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