

The “Great Eight of Bavaria” aka “extreme weather and the Alps by night”

By Lothar Hennighausen

Osterdorf is the Bavarian equivalent to our Lebanon Church and Karl Weimann is their Matt Settle. Karl and Matt share a trait all familiar to us: “give me a hill and I will pack it into any Brevet”. Job related scheduling conflicts prevented me from riding our own DC 600 and in order to qualify for PBP I needed to ride the flat NJ 600K instead. According to Matt, flat Brevets are suboptimal in preparing for PBP (well, he phrased it somewhat more bluntly). However, the Bavarian 1000K provided a great opportunity to ride hills, and plenty of them (after all “I am Lothar of the Hill People”).



Before the start (note the American Rider on the right in the RUSA jersey)

For those who have no time or interest to read the report in its entirety, here are some facts and unique points of German randonneuring.

- 1050 km and 32,000 feet elevation gain (note the Jersey)
- Max/min temp: 95/38
- 59 starters, 30 finishers
- Cemeteries are good places to fill water bottles
- Indoor ATM facilities are optimal sleep stops
- Neat Brevet cards
- Alcohol free beer is consumed during the ride and plenty of Weissbier after the finish

When I talked to Lynn and Steve about the upcoming Bavaria 1000K, they assured me that such an endeavor was straight forward. Lynn: “400K on the first day and 300K each on the second and third day”. But life turned out to be different. All I knew was that the



Brevet was scheduled to start at 1000 hours on Thursday, June 14th. I left Dulles on Tuesday night on UA902 and arrived in Munich the next morning. Naturally the computer had somehow cancelled my rental car reservation and I had to find a car in downtown Munich. After assembling my titanium beauty I took her for a test ride and found her in perfect shape. After a short night I took off for Osterdorf, a village with 350 souls, about 100 miles northwest of Munich. When I arrived the “Alte Schule” (old School House), the center of Bavarian Randonneuring was already buzzing with activity.



Most Randonneurs had arrived the night before and as they are no hotels within many miles, they camped out or stayed on cots in the School House. Moreover, Germans are inherently frugal (maybe cheap) and despise spending money on non-essential items, such as hotels. They rather spend it on beer, bratwurst and sauerkraut. Note, my bike is on the left side.

Check in Tent with Karl on the right and my cycling buddy Ulrich on the left

The cue sheet (Wegbeschreibung) mentioned only ONE sleep stop at 640k, the end of the lower loop of the “Bavarian Eight”. Well, Lynn and Steve had lured me into the belief that 1000ks are built around two sleep stops. Upon questioning, Karl seemed puzzled about the idea of having already a sleep stop after 400k. He made it clear: “the 1000K is the test ride for PBP and Bavarian riders have their first sleep stop in Brest”. Ok?!

At 1000 hours sharp Karl sent off 62 hardy Randonneurs, including one American (they called me “the Ami”). The first leg was easy and not a harbinger of what to come later. We cycled South through the flat lands of Southern Bavaria and despite a headwind we made good progress. We reached the second controle 160 kilometers into the ride after 6:30 hrs and the Starnberg Lake and the Alps just as the sun set. German Randonneurs pick gas stations located close to highways as controls as they are open 24/7 and each gas station has an official stamp (Germans like neat Brevet cards).

My Brevet Card

Chaque candidat doit être porteur de sa carte de route et la faire tamponner dans les lieux de contrôles indiqués dans les cases prévues à cet effet avec l'heure de passage effectif
 Each participant must keep this card with him at any time during the event and have it stamped at the beginning and the end of the ride and also at all demarcated controls with the time of arrival

N° d'inscription / Entry N°
 Henninghausen
 Nom / Name
 Lothar
 Prénom / Forename
 8806 Altimont Lane
 Adresse / Address
 USA Chevy Chase MD 20815

Club du participant / Participant's club
 AUDAX RANDONNEURS ALLEMAGNE 111000
 111007
 N° ACP du club / ACP Code number
 OU / OR
 N° département..... N° FFCT du club.....
 10 h 00
 Heure de départ / Departure time.....
 Signature et cachet de contrôle / Signature and mark of control

CONTRÔLES SECRETS / SECRET CONTROLS

Paris-Brest-Paris
 16 20 07

Médaille demandée / Do you require a medal
 OUI / YES NON / NO

Signature du Titulaire / Signature at the arrival
Lothar

La randonnée a été accomplie en
 The randonnée was completed in
 Heures / hours minutes

HOMOLOGATION

Le responsable de la Commission des Randonneurs
 Le président de l'Audax Club Parisien
 Brevet N°

BREVET DES RANDONNEURS MONDIAUX
 1000
 Randonnée de / of Km
 Organisée le 14.06.2007
 Organised on
 Par ARA Nordbayern Fränkische Alb
 By
 Lieu de départ OSTERDORF
 Location

Contrôlée et Homologuée exclusivement par
 Verified and Validated exclusively by
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Qualificatif pour / Qualifying for
PARIS-BREST-PARIS 2007
 En partenariat avec / Under partnership with
SAINT-QUENTIN-EN-YVELINES
 www.agglo-sq.fr/parisbrestparis
 et la ville de GUYANCOURT




LIEU DE CONTRÔLE / PLACE Distance Horaires / Open - Close	CONTRÔLE / CONTROL Signature et cachet de contrôle Signature and mark of control	LIEU DE CONTRÔLE / PLACE Distance Horaires / Open - Close	CONTRÔLE / CONTROL Signature et cachet de contrôle Signature and mark of control	LIEU DE CONTRÔLE / PLACE Distance Horaires / Open - Close	CONTRÔLE / CONTROL Signature et cachet de contrôle Signature and mark of control
1 Km : 68.2 Lieu / Place : Wertingen Adresse / Address : OMV Tankstelle Heure de passage / Arrival time : 12:00 à 14:32	Bastian Beck Gottmannshofer Str. 8 86637 Wertingen Heure de passage / Arrival time : 12:30	5 Km : 156.07 Lieu / Place : R. Radach Autohof Wörth a. d. R. Betriebs GmbH u. Co. KG Luitpoldpark Rasthof BAB 109 Wörth a. d. R. Heure de passage / Arrival time : 23:52 à 16:08	156.07 R. Radach Autohof Wörth a. d. R. Betriebs GmbH u. Co. KG Luitpoldpark Rasthof BAB 109 Wörth a. d. R. Heure de passage / Arrival time : 16:04	9 Km : 16.06.07 Lieu / Place : Rastpark Fränkische Schweiz West AS Fränkische Schweiz Fegnitz-Neudorf Adresse / Address : Raststätte West Heure de passage / Arrival time : 13:37 à 23:37	16.06.07 Rastpark Fränkische Schweiz West AS Fränkische Schweiz Fegnitz-Neudorf Raststätte West Heure de passage / Arrival time : 18:15
2 Km : 154.9 Lieu / Place : Landsberg/Lech Adresse / Address : ARAL an B17 Heure de passage / Arrival time : 14:32 à 20:16	Aral Center Heimat Heid Schongauer Str. 7 86699 Landsberg/Lech Heure de passage / Arrival time : 16:30	6 Km : 530.3 Lieu / Place : Deuerling/Hasl Adresse / Address : Meixensberger Heure de passage / Arrival time : 02:28 à 21:20	Karl Meixensberger Pirostr. 8 8411 Deuerling Heure de passage / Arrival time : 15:00	10 Km : 17.06.07 Lieu / Place : OMV Autobahn-Tankstelle Friedlsee Oberpfälzer Alb Süd 22278 Buchweg Adresse / Address : Raststätte Heure de passage / Arrival time : 16:20 à 06:16	17.06.07 OMV Autobahn-Tankstelle Friedlsee Oberpfälzer Alb Süd 22278 Buchweg Raststätte Heure de passage / Arrival time : 0:52
3 Km : 243.9 Lieu / Place : Bad Tölz Adresse / Address : ARAL Kiessling Heure de passage / Arrival time : 17:15 à 02:16	ARAL-SECTION Münchinger Sackmühlstr. 23 85748 Bad Tölz Heure de passage / Arrival time : 21:00	7 Km : 636.4 Lieu / Place : Osterdorf Adresse / Address : alte Schule Heure de passage / Arrival time : 06:05 à 05:09	ARA NORDBAYERN Heide + Karl Weimann Osterdorf 31 91788 Feuchtmühl Tel: 09143 1442 Fax: 0915 5 Heure de passage / Arrival time : 00:36	11 Km : 1004 Lieu / Place : Kinding Adresse / Address : ARAL (Achtung) Heure de passage / Arrival time : 19:05 à 13:00	1004 ARAL Kinding ARAL (Achtung) Heure de passage / Arrival time : 17:00
4 Km : 329.9 Lieu / Place : Bernau Adresse / Address : Shell vor BAB Heure de passage / Arrival time : 19:57 à 08:00	Lacker Schmid GmbH Café - Bistro Bernau Heure de passage / Arrival time : 15:06	8 Km : 739.0 Lieu / Place : Heßdorf Adresse / Address : OMV Tankstelle Heure de passage / Arrival time : 09:46 à 14:10	Enneberg Heßdorf Heure de passage / Arrival time : 12:04	12 Km : 1049 Lieu / Place : Osterdorf Adresse / Address : alte Schule Heure de passage / Arrival time : 20:45 à 17:00	1049 schön war's Osterdorf alte Schule Heure de passage / Arrival time : 17:06

Notice: The stamp at 1049 km states: "schön war's", which translates into: "it was nice", maybe even pleasurable.



Approaching the Alps at sunset

The first night

Night riding is fun. The temperatures were pleasant, unlike those experienced on our Fleche. The tall peaks of the Alps towered into the dark blue night sky and the vast alpine lakes reflected the moon. We reached our third controle in Bad Toelz, for almost five decades the home of American forces. The vacated American Barracks loomed like ghosts of the past. Pasta dinner at a local Italian restaurant was washed down with beer (non alcoholic of course).



The next stage was challenging with many 18% climbs and long daring descents (all of the cyclists used the SON). The cue sheets were ambiguous at various

points and we ended up on logging roads, which turned out to be the right route. The long steep climbs were dreadful for the four tandems and the riders walked. However, as



expected, they closed the gap again on the long down hills. First mechanical troubles, a broken chain, hit the group. After 330 km and 14 hours we reached Controle #4 at 0230 hours, again at a highway gas station. We had built a comfortable 5:30 hr time cushion.



It is quite obvious that German gas stations have the distinct flavor of a liquor store.

Franz is quite some character and in some aspects he reminded me of our own Paul, the world's greatest Randonneur. Franz does not own a car and to ride the Brevets he needs to cycle 160 km from his home in northern Bavaria to Osterdorf. After he finished the 1000k he showered had a beer, got on his bike and cycled home. At the 4th controle Franz had his own version of a pasta dish. He enjoyed uncooked Tortellini. What a man!

The second day

We had entered and left the Alps in the dark and now approached the largest Bavarian lake, the Chiemsee, home of castles and other tourist traps. We cycled into the sun rise, passing quiet farming communities, who probably make their living from tourism. I would not want to ride those roads on a Saturday afternoon during the main tourist season.



While on our American Brevets we have a choice of wonderful diners with delicious eggs (over easy) corned beef hash and home fries (yummy) or a more mundane dish at Sheetz or Wawa, Germans just do not have those wonderful breakfast diners. We stopped for breakfast, again at a gas station. Latte macchiato, rolls and Danish-style sweets, enough calories to keep us moving. We now headed north and reached the 5th controle at the river Isar after 450 km and 24 hours of riding, with a time cushion of 6 hours. Who knows, we might need it.

Water! If you need to refill water bottles but no store or restaurant is in sight, there is always help from the Church! Germans tend to water flowers on the graves of their beloved ones and drinkable water, it might even be holy water, if freely available.



The second night

After 36 hours and 570 km into the ride heaven opened its flood gates. The temperatures dropped from the 80s to the 50s. Although originally welcome the heavy and cold rain became a nuisance to say the least. And then, 60 km before the sleep stop and in the middle of nowhere, a spoke in the front wheel broke. My fingers were freezing cold and stiff and I even made no attempt to replace the spoke. I opened the brakes and in order to prevent the wheel from too much wobbling I stayed in the saddle for the next 60 km, which did not serve my butt to well. I was miserable and ready to call a taxi and quit. But my riding buddy Ulrich (no it was not Jan Ulrich) pushed me to continue. We briefly stopped at a bar to change into warmer attire. The bar tender was so stunned with our mission that he opened a back room where we could change. I slipped into my wool DC Randonneur Jersey (thanks Mary for getting it out in time) and moved on after a Latte had helped to warm me from the inside. We arrived at the sleep stop at 0030 hours after 38.5 hours in the saddle, cold and exhausted. After a hot shower and plenty of soup (yes I declined the beer offered to me) I slept for 3.5 hours on the floor. As my front wheel had betrayed me on the 600k and now again, I lost trust in it. Karl's son Sven produced the front wheel from his bike, which I used on the second leg. Apparently, the same wheel had saved an American Randonneur on the Colorado 1200K a few years back.

Why do German Ransonneurs need an ATM card? Since Wawas and Sheetz with their 24 hour service do not exist in Germany, it was not clear to me where one could stay to survive cold weather, rain storms and other kinds of adverse conditions. I was told that all you need is an ATM card. And yes, they were so right on this one. Banks can be found even in small towns and the ATMs are located in the entry way of the banks, which can be accessed with an ATM card.

The third day

This was supposed to be a good day – only 400K to go. It was sunny and not too warm and the miles / kms passed quickly.



Hops! We passed endless fields of hops, a basic ingredient of the oldest and most established drug – man do I love beer. Even our Sam Adams uses those hops. Note, the slightly titled image is not due to C₂H₅OH (Bill, I still need to learn from you)

Although the day started out friendly, we were caught in afternoon thunderstorms – no reason to stop, its just water and electricity.

We passed through a small town named “**Raindorf**” (the village of Rain?). Maybe this should have told us something about the weather in this part of the world. At dinner time and after 847 km we rolled into jet another “Autobahn” controle. My body was aching and I remembered that my mother’s advice about heat. I lied down on the flagstones of

the outdoor patio, and the heat stored during the day radiated through my torn body – soon I was in lala land.

The third night

I was not prepared. Temperatures dropped into the 30s and I was freezing cold - my teeth were chattering. Moreover, the next two stages displayed relentless climbs. As night fell we got lost at a lake and dense fog prevented any visual orientation. We passed a country house with a party underway, maybe a wedding? We asked for directions and got an invitation for dinner and beer. But silly us, we declined and instead of enjoying life we continued the torture. In retrospect, we had a 5 hour time cushion and should have used this to part. On the other hand, a couple of beers might well have knocked us out completely and a DNF was not an option.

Night riders. Did I mention already that Germans do NOT have a pre-ride bike inspection. There is not Matt around to make sure the bikes have working lights and that the riders have proper gear. I wonder why. Clearly ankle reflectors are optional in Bavaria. Michael, the guy on the right is a young stud who always had a smile on his face (also see last picture of the report). He used his space blanket during the ride and later slept under it.



The last morning

At this latitude nights in June are short. The sun rose at 0400 and what a spectacular morning this was. The sun was bright red and the rye was golden already. We were still deep in the most eastern part of Bavaria, places were large American and German tank forces were stationed during the cold war, with the mission to face off imminent Russian attacks. I remember those days in the early 70s when I was a soldier in the German army and participated in joint exercises with US forces, and the rest is history. Now there are only farmers and tourists, and of course crazy Randonneurs. We were also on a mission, finishing the last 200k. The terrain reminded me of some of our rides, steep climbs and steep descends, something that bugs you after a while.



We left “hill country” and moved to a flatter terrain. I started to fall asleep, not a good idea if you go 20 miles an hour with no protection around you. I did the only sensible thing, stop, lie down on the cold ground and take a nap. Others did the same but apparently had planned such a scenario in advance – they carried space blankets.

The finish

After 70 hours and 1004 km into the ride we reached the penultimate controle. The requirements for completing the 1000k were fulfilled but there were another 40 km ahead of us to reach the finish. I suggested to my riding buddies Ullrich and Michael to take a



cab back to the finish – what the heck we do not need those bonus miles. I was told that if I were to do this, Karl, the RBA, would never serve me soup again at any of the Bavarian Brevets and would ignore me forever. OK guys, I got it. After another 2 hours we pulled into Osterdorf and the beer and Schnitzel was waiting for us.

Ulrich enjoying his beer after 1050 km

Finishers:

Lothar, Ulrich and Michael.
Note that my cycling buddies smile, while I appear to suffer.

The Bavaria 1000 was a great experience, mentally and physically challenging. If your job or vacation plans should ever take you to Germany, consider doing this ride. I am sure Karl and Heidi will put you up in the “Alte Schule” and be great hosts. And do not forget your ATM card for those sleep stops in banks. And take cash, because a VISA card will not go far.



Thank you Karl and Heidi – see you in Paris

Lothar Hennighausen, June 24th, 2007