

Wheels of Grit: From Key West to Kittery - A 2,100+ Mile Ride for Resilience

On April 9th, Jodie Knox Coast Guard retiree and lifetime member of Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Auxiliary, Post 5150, Loudon, TN, as well as American Legion Post 176, Springfield, VA member, dipped her rear tire in the Atlantic at Mile Marker 0 in Key West, Florida and began pedaling north with Kathy Ellingsworth as her support vehicle driver and chief of encouragement!

About 50 days later, they plan to arrive in Kittery, Maine, completing a journey that is about far more than distance.

This ride is a fundraiser and awareness campaign to support two extraordinary organizations: Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) and Achilles International (AI). It is also an effort to shine a light on the vital role that local VFW and American Legion posts play in strengthening communities across the country. Veteran posts are important to Jodie as a service member and also as a daughter of Robert Knox, the Post Commander of Post 5150, and Senior Vice Commander of District 2 (TN), and stepdaughter of Dennis Grossman, Purple Heart recipient and member of VFW Post 1990. Jodie will complete each bicycling day at either a VFW or American Legion post so she can connect with other veterans, promote the value of these veteran organizations, and seek support for disabled veterans.

On their way north, Jodie and Kathy visited VFW Post 10148 on April 15th and was met with a warm welcome by our family.

The ride is called ‘Wheels of Grit – Key West to Kittery’ and it is built on a simple but powerful idea. They aim to use this ride to inspire people to turn “I can’t” into “I can try.” This message is something that resonated with Jodie after enduring an accident where she sustained significant injuries and was treated at Walter Reed in their National Intrepid Center of Excellence for her traumatic brain injury.

WWP serves veterans and service members who sustained physical or mental injuries in their service to our country. Through mental health programs, career counseling, and long-term rehabilitative services, WWP helps warriors rebuild strength, independence, and purpose.

Achilles International (AI) empowers veterans with disabilities through their Freedom Program to participate in endurance sports, including cycling and running. AI restores confidence and expands what participants believe is possible.

Both organizations use movement as medicine, a value that aligns perfectly with the spirit of this ride.

Here’s how you can be part of it:

Donate

Contributions directly support fundraising efforts for Wounded Warrior Project and Achilles International. Every amount makes an impact.

Achilles International Fundraising Link: <https://give.achillesinternational.org/WheelsofGrit>

Wounded Warriors Fundraising Link: https://qr.fy.io/r/aAeFFbtMf_

Share

Follow social media posts about the ride. Visibility amplifies impact. Jodie will be posting daily updates about the ride starting on April 9th. You can follow along on either Facebook or Instagram: www.facebook.com/Wheelsofgrit / www.instagram.com/wheelsofgrit

Encourage

Send messages of support. Fifty days is a long time and community encouragement fuels forward momentum.

Keep an eye out for updates from the road.

The journey from Key West to Kittery will span thousands of miles but its real distance will be measured in impact.