

MILITARY RIDERS
THUNDER ROADS MAGAZINE
OF IOWA

Bike Honors The Fallen

By Dick Tremain

The History Channel show I was involved in has aired so my non-disclosure contract has expired. I can now talk about my small role in the filming and the dramatic "reveal" of a custom motorcycle built by Danny "The Count" Koker and his "Counting Cars" crew.

Mark Angle and I are friends and shipmates. We served together in the Navy aboard USS BELKNAP (DLG/CG-26) in the early 70s. He now lives in Virginia and I live in Des Moines.

A year ago, Mark contacted the Counting Cars production company asking if The Count would be willing to build a custom chopper for him to honor eight sailors killed in a tragic accident on the high seas.

That accident happened 39 years ago. Mark and I were both off of active duty and stateside the night of November 22, 1975. That was when our ship, filled with friends and former coworkers, collided with the aircraft carrier USS KENNEDY in the Lonian Sea. BELKNAP, the much smaller ship, suffered severe damage from the impact, fire, and explosions that followed. Seven men were killed immediately while an eighth died two weeks later in a U.S. military hospital in Germany.

After the last fire was put out and the ship towed back to the U.S. for rebuilding, life went on for the survivors, but, for Mark, the memory of that night turned into a white-hot desire to honor the lost. That's why he called the Count.

The Count gave Mark an enthusiastic, "Yes!" In late 2013 Mark met with Danny Koker and his crew and design plans were discussed. Mark made a deposit to build the bike and with specifics entrusted to the builders.

It was now June 13, 2014. The bike was ready for unveiling. My wife, Maureen, and I traveled to the Los Angeles area and stood at our appointed spot: beneath the rear-facing 16-inch gun barrels of USS IOWA's turret three.

Finally, Danny Koker, Mark, the build team, and the History Channel camera crew arrived.

involved in has aired so my non-disclosure contract has expired. I can now talk about my small role in the filming and the dramatic "reveal" of a custom motorcycle built by Danny "The Count" Koker and his "Counting Cars" crew.

Mark Angle and I are friends and shipmates. We served together in the Navy aboard USS BELKNAP (DLG/CG-26) in the early 70s. He now lives in Virginia and I live in Des Moines.

A year ago, Mark contacted the Counting Cars production company asking if The Count would be willing to build a custom chopper for him to honor eight sailors killed in a tragic accident on the high seas.

That accident happened 39 years ago. Mark and I were both off of active duty and stateside the night of November 22, 1975. That was when our ship, filled with friends and former coworkers, collided with the aircraft carrier USS KENNEDY in the Lonian Sea. BELKNAP, the much smaller ship, suffered severe damage from the impact, fire, and explosions that followed. Seven men were killed immediately while an eighth died two weeks later in a U.S. military hospital in Germany.

After the last fire was put out and the ship towed back to the U.S. for rebuilding, life went on for the survivors, but, for Mark, the memory of that night turned into a white-hot desire to honor the lost. That's why he called the Count.

The Count gave Mark an enthusiastic, "Yes!" In late 2013 Mark met with Danny Koker and his crew and design plans were discussed. Mark made a deposit to build the bike and with specifics entrusted to the builders.

It was now June 13, 2014. The bike was ready for unveiling. My wife, Maureen, and I traveled to the Los

REVOLUTION CYCLE
BAXTER, IA

HARLEY-DAVIDSON CERTIFIED
COMPLETE MACHINE SHOP
PARTS & ACCESSORIES

641-507-9250
www.rev-ia.com
BAXTER

It is good to have the non-disclosure gag off. I really like being able to talk about Mark Angle and the BELKNAP Bike. To me this proves that dreams do come true and anyone can honor our fallen in their own special way. All it takes is a dream, a plan, and a little perseverance.