

Memorial Day Ride

The dawn was not far away as the small band of bikers rode through the countryside, approaching the little cemetery situated just outside of the old city. The only sound this pre-dawn day was the throaty purring of their motorcycles, eerily intruding into the silence of the holy ground. As they snaked their way up the twisty gravel road, they held onto the somber attitude which had permeated this ride. Usually there was a sense of hilarity and fun that surrounded these easy-going bikers, but today was a day for reflection on those who had given their lives for the freedom of their brothers and sisters. As they approached a small decline leading to the cemetery gates, they cut the engines of their big twins and quietly coasted to a stop next to the wrought-iron fence.

They dismounted in the glow of false dawn and, on silent feet, began wending their way between the markers to the place they were looking for. For many years they had ridden together, but there weren't that many of them left from the original bakers' dozen. Rocky was there, as well as Lightning. Jimmy and Andy walked along, curiously eying the names carved into the grave stones. They knew there would be no name on the grave they were searching for, but they would know it when they saw it. There had been additions to the crew through the years, but the old-timers were in their sixties and seventies, and they knew that their riding lives were coming to a close fairly soon. Many of them thought that this was going to be their last major foray together, so they wanted it to be special, a ride to the cemetery where the grave of the "Brotherhood"'s organizer was located. They realized that it had been many years since they had been there, and they prepared a special Memorial Day wreath to place on the spot. Shorty and Timmy were an inseparable pair, since shorty's eyes had weakened and he had to become a sidecar passenger. For both, this would be their first and last visit to this particular cemetery. The women they brought along, Mary, Maggie, and Sally, were the first to discover the burial place, and they came along to make sure of the location. Barney and The Archer carried the wreath.

"Here we are," said Maggie, as the little troupe came to a wall of stone. Out of the soft stone a series of caves had been dug and carved, their mouths covered by large round stones which were mortared in place, and immoveable. Near the middle of the wall there was an open crypt or vault which had once been covered by the round stone nearby. There were fragments of mortar still showing where the gaping mouth had been sealed. "I will never forget this place, this is the place where they brought him after he died," Maggie sobbed at the thought. Rocky replied to the whole

group, "I also remember, how Lightning outran me from the meeting place when we heard the news. We can never forget that he gave up his own life so that we all could live. Remember when he was with us, that he told us exactly what was going to happen, but we didn't believe him?" Rocky's companions silently nodded consent. "And I was the worst of all. Three times I denied that I even knew who he was, my best friend." Shorty spoke for the first time, "No Rocky, you weren't the worst, I was, even to the point of capturing and killing members of the Brotherhood. I was so ashamed of myself after meeting him, that I hid for years, figuring you guys would be out for revenge. I was so surprised when you all invited me to be part of the Brotherhood, but you have to know that I am the chief bad guy here." Rocky stated, "Well, the reason for this ride was to honor our friend, who died on our behalf. He was willing to endure torture, shame, and death for us, who really deserved it, and we know that there is nothing we can do to repay him but to live the rest of our lives in his memory. Because he died, we can live, but that's only the beginning. Through us, he continues to live, not just as a memory, but as a reality. I can't explain it, but he has proven it true over and over through the years. That soldier who stood guard over him, who thrust the lance into his side said it all, 'Surely, this was the Son of God.'" With that, Barney and The Archer placed the wreath of red, white, and blue flowers at the open door of the tomb, and the small band retraced their steps to their parked machines. As the roar of the motorcycles shattered the quiet of the night, the Brotherhood looked to the eastern sky, where the sun was just rising over the distant hill. There they saw the form of three crosses, standing in stark relief against the light of a new dawn. Left behind in the stillness, surrounded by dark reminders of death, the bright wreath rested against an empty grave. The inscription on the wreath read simply, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen."(Luke 24:5,6 ESV)

He took your death upon himself, that you might have Eternal Life through faith in Him. Repent and believe today.

Contact me:
Pastor Sam
P.O. Box 557
Adams, WI 53910
fbcaf@aol.com
608-547-8198

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in Memory of Sandy Potaracke**

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