

# THE MECHANICAL BEAUTY OF PURPOSEFUL MACHINES

For the second time in the 20th century, Germany was a rabid dog that needed to be put down. At the age of 19 my Uncle Bud was commissioned by the Eighth Air Force to pilot a B-17 heavy bomber to deliver some love letters to the Third Reich. His airship dropped bombs on strategic targets, such as oil refineries, foundries, and manufacturing plants. In total he flew 15 missions, but it was the second one that really put the zap on his head. Keep in mind that he was/is an old-school hardass with severely faded tattoos of *something* on his forearms and the emotional amplitude of a large piece of granite. His first mission was uneventful; wake up in the early morning, eat breakfast, go to the briefing, drop a few firecrackers on Germany, and return to wash down a tasty steak dinner with a few pops. Upon return to Southern England from his second mission he got out of the plane, counted 77 volleyball-size holes in the fuselage of his Boeing Flying Fortress, and gave the English soil a big smooch. Apparently Hitler's war machine figured out they weren't flying over the Fatherland to enjoy some tasty 1-liter steins of beer.

If there were a time machine, I would trade my soul to go back in time and witness that B-17 with 77 large holes in it because the image of this single-purpose war machine chock-full of holes is beautiful to me. The scars just make it that much more appealing because mechanical bruises tell a story, and that story on a single-purpose war machine is fascinating. In a very small way the Organ Donor is like the B-17. The magnitude of its relevance is, in no way, comparable to a decorated war machine that defended our freedom and guaranteed we didn't have to speak German and wear a silly little mustache. But it is similar in that it is a single-purpose machine with no compromises and minimal comforts.

The Organ Donor is perfectly imperfect with bumps and bruises, and I like it that way. It's not going to win any custom bike shows because it ain't pretty, but, to me, it is a mechanical masterpiece. It is my scratch-built 139-inch rigid with a



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TorqueBox tranny, KK clutch, and FFP primary with outside bearing support. It is a street-legal war machine, and the targets of opportunity are the local quarter-mile tracks and the regional LSR event (Land Speed Record) called the Ohio Mile. The Organ Donor speaks to me, and it quite often tells me, “Bert, *this* is why you love motorcycles.”

So far, it does 9.50 seconds at 142 mph and 165 mph at The Mile, but I hope to do better this year. I am resigned to the fact that I will not be a Pro Stock motorcycle

pilot, so I just have fun with it. It's kinda like golf; I just go out to the tracks and try to beat my last score; it's me against me. As for the name, some crazy bastard in Canada recommended the name on our Facebook page, so I adopted it because it had a little attitude. It is a machine that could very well make me an organ donor, but I don't give a rat's ass because every time I bust off a solid nine-second quarter and sail through the traps at a buck-40 I am truly *alive*, and that's why we all ride and love motorcycles; it makes us feel *alive*. **HB**