



# SEMPER RIDE: Brother of fallen Marine surprised with refurbished motorcycle

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December 21 2015 1:38 PM



**ALTON – Brian Belchik** received a surprise Christmas gift on Saturday, Dec. 19, when he was presented with his little brother's motorcycle, who was killed in action during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

**Cpl. Christopher Belchik** is a Marine who was killed in action on Aug. 22, 2004, by a roadside bomb during his second deployment to Iraq, assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. He was the first veteran in this area to return home KIA.

One of the joys in Chris's life was his motorcycle that he purchased while stationed at Camp Lejeune North Carolina. Although many joked with him about its pink/purple paint job, Belchik was proud of his 1995 Suzuki Katana. Chris would call his brother from Iraq and ask about his bike, making sure it was being taken care of and covered at all times.



Older brother Brian knew he had to maintain that responsibility and forever hold the motorcycle close to his heart. After much persuasion, Brian let go of the motorcycle and into the hands of **Pinto's Kustoms & Collision** in East Alton.

“We originally asked Brian if we could use this bike to do this project and he actually didn't want anyone to touch it,” said Jason Thompson, CEO of the US Veterans Foundation. “But after a little convincing, we got him to release the bike to us and we dropped it off over at Ethan Humbert's shop, at Pinto's Kustom's who took it in and completed the project just for the cost of parts. They didn't charge any labor or anything.”

**[CLICK HERE TO SEE VIDEO OF DETAILS, INTERVIEWS AND THE UNVEILING OF THE BIKE](#)**

**The US Veterans Foundation, Ted's Motorcycle World, Iron House CrossFit, Pinto's Kustoms & Collision** and family and friends all came together to raise the funds to complete a project that the Belchik family could only dream of.

Brian's Saturday morning started out pretty much like any other. As Belchik and his colleagues were conducting their weekly workout session at the **Iron House CrossFit Gym** in Godfrey, little did he know there were dozens of family and friends waiting for him outside in the parking lot.

Although Brian knew his brother's bike was being worked on, he nor anyone else in his family, had seen the bike in over a year and had no idea it was complete and sitting right outside the gym doors.

Escorted by the **Alton Police Department**, the motorcycle was driven in and parked just outside where Brian was lifting weights. Unexpectedly, the garage door lifts open and Brian walks out to see several family members and friends gathered around. As Brian walked around the truck where the bike was standing, his emotions got the best of him as he realized his brother's prized possession was right there, shining brighter than ever.





“I never expected it to look like that,” said Lynn Lenker, the mother of Chris and Brian Belchik. “There are so many things on the bike, so many pictures and emblems...Every time I look at it I see something new and something different. It touches my heart. They put in so much of who Chris was into that bike, I can’t even explain it.”

Cpl. Belchik’s motorcycle has been completely transformed into a rolling memorial for all members of the military who have selflessly made the ultimate sacrifice for our great country.

“I’m glad I have it back, because I have missed it,” said Brian. “It’s where I go sit on and talk to him. This bike meant so much to my brother. It probably means more to me now, but I am just happy to have it back.”

Overwhelmed with joy and happiness, Brian took Chris’s newly refashioned motorcycle for a ride to his gravesite to show his brother that he is still indeed taking care of his motorcycle, as he always will.

