

# Anger meets Mailbox

By MSgt Gregory Rolfe, Lakenheath AB, UK

It was a dry, sunny day in England, a rare occurrence. I had just finished a Class A argument with my wife which, of course, I lost. Not one to admit defeat, I decided that the best way to display my displeasure was to roar out of the driveway on my motorcycle, slinging gravel and throwing dust in the air. After all, that's what Marlon Brando would've done. I even had a "Rebel Without a Cause" motorcycle, a '72 BSA Victor 500. That would show her!

Funny thing about those older bikes, they aren't always completely reliable when it comes to things mechanical.

Besides being hard to start, the old 'Beezers' had drum brakes, front and rear. This means you have to start trying to stop the bike long before you want the bike to stop. This isn't that much of a problem, until you add a 30-year-old carburetor. There's a reason no one uses those old carbs anymore. As they wear, the throttle slide tends to stick. Especially if you crank it open ... hard!

Well, I left the driveway in a triumphant cloud of dust, hit the pavement, and worked her up into third gear. We live in the country, and our road is narrow and winding. As I approached the 15 mph corner just past our neighbors' house, the warning voice in my head sounded, "You're doing 35 mph ... time to start braking!" I let off the wide-open throttle, and it stayed that way, wide open.

Now an old 500cc Beezer isn't the fastest bike in the world, which is why I was amazed at how much acceleration took place dur-

ing the time it took for my brain to register the problem, send the message to my extremities to grab the clutch and brakes, and actually start slowing the bike down. I distinctly remember looking at the speedometer needle reading "60 mph" just as I entered the corner.

Of course, I didn't make the corner. I took it out on my neighbor's mailbox. To my relief, as I picked myself up, I checked the condition of my bike and miraculously a broken rear turn signal was the extent of her injuries. I stood her up, kicked over the engine, and she fired right up. Now came my second thought: I've got to ride home and explain this to my wife. Oh boy. Well, on the bright side, at least I didn't get hurt!

As I pulled into the garage and parked the bike, my mind was working fast. How was I going to explain this one? When I pulled off my right glove, my mind stopped. How did my wrist get so big? At that point, the adrenaline began wearing off, and the pain began. With the pain came the expletives. With the expletives came my wife wondering what happened.

She didn't use any expletives. I wish she had. She just calmly drove me on a very silent ride to the emergency room.

The orthopedist knew me. Our sons play on the high school



Photo by SSgt Sam Bendet

varsity basketball team together. I'm thinking he was glad he wasn't me just

then, and not because of the broken wrist, which had broken in five places, and required a 3-hour surgery and two screws to put it back together. Now let's see, why did this happen? Oh yeah, I got mad and decided to do something stupid to express my anger.

On the bright side, I managed to learn some lessons from all this: *Acting in anger is bad.* Doing something stupid out of anger is worse.

*Motorcycle safety gear works!* I was wearing a helmet, boots, leather jacket, and gloves. I stepped off my bike at 60 mph, and managed to walk away. After seeing the divot that got taken out of my helmet by the mailbox post, I was definitely glad I was wearing it.

*Mailboxes don't move,* even if you signal and honk at them. Well, OK, they move some when you run into them.

If you think your wife is mad after the minor argument you just had, wait until you walk in the house with a stupid injury. ▶

**Editor's note:** Reprinted Courtesy of Naval Safety Center