

Why Motorcyclists Have to Wear Boots

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“I walked around gathering up his toes..”



As I approached the front gate on my way home one night, two motorcyclists were ahead of me. Once through the front gate, they rapidly accelerated and disappeared from view. They were likely traveling 80 mph before they reached the first turn on H-3.

I was traveling the same route, and, as I approached the corner, I noticed one of the riders on the ground. I pulled over and called 911, then hurried to the Marine who was trying to get up. I tried to calm him and urged him to stay on the ground. “Everything will be OK,” I said.

The next person to stop was a corpsman, so I stepped aside and let him do his work. As I surveyed the situation, I saw the rider’s helmet was destroyed. Without it I don’t think he would have survived the crash. His gloves, that racing type with the hard plastic pads, were all scraped up, and the pads were broken off, but they, too, had done their job. Because he was wearing a T-shirt, he had road rash all over his body.

I then looked at the rider’s feet. His

Damaged helmet following the accident.



These heavy shoes reportedly conformed to base regulations, but they were not rugged enough to save the front of this Marines’ foot.

right foot was fine, but his left ankle was definitely broken. If he had worn boots instead of tennis shoes, he might have been spared the ankle injury. Boots also might have saved his toes. His big toe was half gone, the next three were severed, and the little toe was beyond recognition.

As the corpsman continued to help the victim, I walked around gathering up his toes--all the while thinking that if he had worn boots, he might have walked away from this crash. Now, I don’t think he will be walking for quite some time.

I have thought about this day many times. I know that speed was a contributing factor but I also know that, with more protective gear, the consequences might not have been so severe. I learned later that none of this Marine’s toes could be reattached, and he was discharged without any medical benefits. I doubt that he feels the repercussion was worth the thrill of speeding on his motorcycle.