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forget that it should be mandatory that all bikers be required to sign their donor form on the back of their licenses. ABATE members need to take every chance that they get to educate the public about the truths and myths of motorcycle riding.

The last time Wisconsin had a helmet law for riders over age 18 was 1977. In that year, there were 124,824 registered motorcycles in the state. There were 2903 reported injury crashes and 73 fatalities that year. In comparison, in 2005 (with no helmet law for those 18 and over with and M endorsement) there were 249,367 registered motorcycles in the state with 2013 injury crashes and 92 fatalities. Now, I'm no accountant, but percentage wise we are doing much better today than anyone cares to report. We have twice as many bikes on the road (that's a 100% increase) with only a 21% increase in fatalities and a reduction in injury crashes. Funny nobody ever reports those statistics. I'm sure the reason for the reduction in accidents is due to increase motorcycle education and awareness education in the classroom. Bikers have never had as many educational tools at their disposal as they do today. Much of this is due to the diligence of ABATE of Wisconsin Inc. Our persistence in getting the Roadway Users Responsibility Act passed will no doubt only help reduce the number of accidents with increased awareness education and enhanced right-of-way penalties. Our constant scrutiny over the way motorcycle education classes are run in this state also ensures that motorcyclists will be better prepared than ever to enjoy the freedom in the wind that so many of us take pleasure in on a daily basis. Our battle to keep bikers properly insured without discrimination will ensure that none of us become a public burden. We don't need helmet laws to save us from harm; we're getting the job done just fine.

Every time I hop on my bike I'm well aware that I could be injured, or worse, in an accident. I wear pants, boots, often a leather jacket, and eye protection. I never wear a helmet. I realize that motorcycling is inherently dangerous. I use intuition, experience, good judgment and quick reactions to stay safe on the road. My reasonably loud pipes make sure that I'm never in some one's blind spot (and they don't have to point forward for this). I properly insure myself and my ride. I keep my bike well maintained. I don't ever take for granted that some one sees me until I make eye contact. I never weave in and out of traffic (not even on my crotch rocket). And sure, I have even signed the back of my license to help someone else in the event I don't live to ride another day. I do everything I can to help myself and expect nothing from others. It would be nice though, if the cagers could get off their cell phones, put down the newspaper, change the CD before going down the road, and take the time to just drive. People need to take the time to realize that a helmet is not a suit of armor. It is not going to help a rider in every situation. In many cases, helmets can increase the injuries to a rider. I would never say that helmets don't serve a purpose, but as an adult I think I should be able to decide what is right for me. I believe not wearing a helmet has saved my life on several occasions, giving me added hearing and visibility. Education and experience is my best defense. Face it, the cagers aren't looking out for me, I need to look out for them. Because, I AM NOT A PUBLIC BURDEN, they are.

It's A Small World

By: Skypilot

It is indeed a very small world that we live in. It became apparent how small to me a few weeks ago when I attended the "Support Our Troop" rally at the Capital Building in Harrisburg. This is an annual event and will be until our troops are returned to us, presented by WHP Talk Radio and Giant Food Store. People were coming up saying "Hello Skypilot, it has been awhile", people that I met at the very first rally and it got me to thinking.

That evening when I returned home I thought more and more on it. Like the time I ran into a guy on the perimeter pulling guard duty in An Khe, Vietnam, that I was in basic training with. Another time being assigned to a LRRP Team in Co N 75th Rangers, a buddy from high school in one of the other teams in the unit. Processing into Fort Hood, Texas after reentering the Army and running into a Medic who was on the "Dust Off" Huey that picked me and a couple team members up after a fire fight we encountered and took an ass kicking. The strangest encounter, the Nurse who took care of me in the Evac Hospital. It was at "The Wall" in D.C. twenty plus years after I returned from that hell hole we called "The Nam". She called out "Sgt Donaldson", I turned and saw no one I knew (so I thought), she called again and I saw her. We talked for a very long time and I ask how she knew it was me after all the years that had passed. She smiled looked at me and said "she remembered the ones she lost and thought she'd lose". She told me of the nights she'd spend talking to me, with no response from me (I guess it was bad that time) and how one night I finally answered her. She said then "you are going to be just fine now, you are going to make it". The sad thing is I don't remember any thing from those days spend in that hospital. All I could do is hug her and say "Thank you so very much for not giving up on me".

I'm sure all of you have had things like this happen to you in your life and I hope they were all as pleasant as my last reunion I talked about. I know I have a Brother I ride with that it hasn't been so good for him. He has been looking since he has returned from that god forsaken land, but unfortunately he has had no luck. He's not only my Brother, but a close friend we both served with "The Herd" (173rd Airborne) different times and companies and I'd give my arm just to find one person he knew when he was there. He was in one of the roughest battles "The Herd" ever encountered and if I could find just one person he knew it would bring him out of the deepest depression any person should have to go through. I love my friend, my brother and really wish I could help.

Getting back to where we started, the rally is an annual event in May to show our support for the Men and Woman who are out there on a daily basis putting their ass on the line. Sure we had about one thousand people attending, but that was no where near what it use to be. So please take the time to attend this rally and others like it to show just how much it means to us to have Americans serving in the different branches of the Military and putting their lives on the line for us every day of their life. When you have one return home that lives near you take some time to walk down to their home and just say, Thank you, for your freedom you enjoy every day. Remember "Freedom Is Not Free", through history the Men and Woman of our Military have made that possible.

Lastly I would like to say thanks to Dr. Beverly A. Miller Ph.D Lebanon VA my psychologist I'd been seeing for the past eleven years who died 4-24-2006, just eleven days after my Brother I wrote about last month. With out the help she gave me through those years to learn how to deal with things, I would not have been able to talk about some of the things in my articles. "Thank you, Dr. Miller".

Remember America's POW~MIA and their families that still wait for answers. Until next month Be Safe out on the highways and may the Great Spirit ride with you. "

Keep on Triken' "

Skypilot



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