

Flash back to me skidding toward the Dodge, which by now was as big as a house. A calm, detached part of my brain quickly went through the procedures to save my sorry can:

✓ Keep a locked rear wheel locked on a bike that isn't straight to avoid the highly acrobatic but painful "high side."

✓ Lay off the front brake to keep the front wheel in front and the back wheel in back to avoid the less spectacular but abrasive "low side."

✓ Release the rear brake and unlock the rear wheel on the now straight bike and get on the front brake, hard!

✓ Check mirror and prepare to move out of the way of the car behind you whose driver also likes pretty lights.

All this happened in less than a second and I had survived unscathed in spite of myself.

So, what would I like you to learn from my experience? First, training is good! An airman who works for me encountered an almost identical situation a week prior. He donated some skin to the road and is bankrolling a very Merry Christmas for his mechanic's family. The difference? He was scheduled for—but had not attended—a motorcycle safety course. I had been twice very recently.

Next, PPE is good! I was prepared for the worst: full-face helmet, steel-toed boots, motorcycle jacket, gloves, and heavy denim pants; all would have helped to minimize any injury incurred while logging some solo flight time.

And last, complacency is bad! I was riding on the same road, at the same time of day, thinking about my cake and presents, the pretty lights, etc., and I almost paid dearly for it.

Motorcycle safety training saved my life and my 36th birthday! 🍀

# Bad

## Quick Fix, Quick Wound

By PR2 (AW) J. Martinez, VFA-146

We were three months into our current deployment. My day started like any other: tending to the aircrew-survival gear and occasionally making FOD and tool pouches. One of our ordnancemen walked into the workcenter and asked me to make some minor adjustments to his tool pouches.

The task seemed simple enough: Modify the tool pouch so he could fit the strap over the cone of the flashlight and secure it. I wasn't very busy, so I proceeded with what I considered a quick fix. "There's nothing to it," I thought, "just cut a slit along the middle section of a four-inch-wide webbing, and it will slip right over the cone of the flashlight." The tool of choice for this job was my trusty pocketknife.

I started by laying the tool pouch on the deck, held the knife with my right hand, and held the loose end



of the webbing with my left hand. I placed the knife at the center of the material and applied enough pressure to cut through the webbing. In a split second, the knife burst through the material, slid up the webbing, and sliced into my left index finger. I immediately felt the cut but didn't know how bad it was. When I inspected my injury, I realized I had sliced off some skin and flesh.

I went to ship's medical, where corpsmen spent two hours treating my cut. Later, I was released and put on seven days of light duty. Lesson learned: As simple as a task seems, some risk always will exist, especially when there's a sharp blade involved. Use operational risk management in all that you do. 🍀