

# ATV crash a teachable moment for Amherst RCMP officer

Brown in serious accident last July



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Longtime RCMP officer Terry Brown is using his brush with death last summer to educate others about the importance of ATV safety. Brown and his girlfriend were in a serious crash last July near Shinimicas.

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**AMHERST, N.S. –** Terry Brown came within inches of death following an ATV accident last summer. Now he's using it as a teachable moment.

The veteran member of the Cumberland detachment of the RCMP was out with friends last July driving his all-terrain vehicle on a trail near Shinimicas when it crashed, throwing his girlfriend from the vehicle and crushing him underneath.

“It all happened so fast. I looked down and saw the bridge had dropped down by about a foot. I literally saw it at the last second. I gave it a little gas to try to get the front wheels over, but the back wheels caught it flipped,” said Brown. “I can remember everything. I can remember the ground coming up and I remember the ATV coming down on top of me.”

Brown's girlfriend, Aimee Maillet, was thrown clear and knocked cold from the impact while he suffered four broken vertebrae, six broken ribs, a broken collarbone and numerous muscular injuries.

He managed to crawl out from under the 700-pound vehicle and get to his wife as a friend drove upon the scene.

Maillet had hit her head on the ground and Brown is convinced she wouldn't have survived if not for a safety helmet.

"I remember trying to crawl out from under the bike to get to her. By the time Wade (Smith) arrived I was almost out and I was trying to wake her, but she was out cold," Brown said.

Brown told Smith to go for help after several unsuccessful attempts to call 911 via a cellphone. After a while he tried to walk out before Smith came back to the scene, having summoned help.

He knew he had injured his shoulder, but wanted to get help for Maillet.

She was airlifted to hospital with head injuries that included a serious concussion while he was taken by ambulance to the Cumberland Regional Hospital where he would spend several weeks in the intensive care unit. After four months of rehabilitation, Brown was able to return to his job late last fall, but it has taken time for the injuries to fully recover. It has also made him more determined to reinforce the importance of safety when it comes to operating all-terrain vehicles.

"I've been riding for at least 30 years and never had an issue. It happened that quickly to me, literally in the blink of an eye," Brown said. "I saw the bridge and there was really nothing I could do."

Brown said RCMP is seeing a lot of crashes involving all-terrain vehicles, some of which have been fatal. Sometimes, he said, there's too much speed and/or impairment from alcohol.

"I couldn't imagine trying to operate a machine like this without being fully aware, I can't imagine what it would be like being impaired," Brown said. "It's an important safety message. You cannot operate one of these machines while impaired. We've been doing our best to get the message out in Cumberland through public service announcements reminding people to think safety and to not drive impaired."

He is also so appreciative of the support from his counterparts in law enforcement and friends who stuck by he and Maillet throughout the entire ordeal. Many of them flocked to the hospital to show their support while two other friends, who were in Halifax at the time, went to the hospital there to make sure Maillet wasn't alone.

The support included a group of fellow officers and a sergeant with the Amherst Police coming to his house while he was recovering to build a flagstone walkway that he had been planning to build during the summer.

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