

YOUR AMAZING TRUE LIFE STORIES

I'M AMERICA'S REAL

Forget the bad cop in the movie Robocop, meet the real thing ... only highway patrol officer Kevin Holsome is a hero. Here he tells his inspirational story

From the time I was a kid, I wanted to be a cop. Not just any cop, but a California Highway Patrol (CHP) motorcycle cop. And losing my leg won't keep me from returning to my dream job.

It was a sunny afternoon like any other when I sailed along a Southern California freeway on what I called my partner of 15 years - my BMW motorcycle - when I stopped to help a disabled motorist whose flat tire had left her stranded in the center median of the highway.

After securing help for the motorist, I prepared to leave the scene. I was back on my bike, leaning on my right leg to support myself, and waiting for a break in the traffic. I was looking in my right-side mirror when a passing car swerved and swiped the side of my bike.

I was unconscious for a few seconds, then came to and saw my motorcycle on its side, and realized I'd been hit. I felt no pain, so I tried to stand up, but fell forward.

I looked down and saw a pool of blood and realized my right leg was gone, severed at my knee.

One of my first thoughts was that it was three o'clock, and I was supposed to pick up my three-year-old daughter, Yandrell, from school. So I called my wife on my cell phone to tell her I had been in an accident.

I didn't want to alarm her, so I told her that I had cut my leg. At that point, I thought that maybe my leg



RIDING HIGH: Kevin, pictured riding off-duty, is the first California Highway Patrol officer ever to return to active duty with a prosthetic limb

could be reattached. But when I looked around, I could not see it. I had no idea where it could have gone. I was later told that the driver of the car found it embedded in his fender - I never saw it again, and it was deemed too damaged to reattach.

Many people feel my life was forever changed that day in May 2004 - suddenly I was a 44-year-old motorcycle cop missing a leg. But I refused to look at it that way and was determined to get back on my bike.

I was in the hospital for a week, and received countless letters and visits from family, friends and colleagues. I spent the next two months recuperating at home, and then I got

a state-of-the-art prosthetic leg, which took months of rehabilitation to learn to use. I had to keep getting the leg replaced every few weeks as the swelling in my knee kept going down. It took a few months for the swelling to go down completely.

My new leg is computerized and allows me to walk, jump, climb stairs and even chase after a suspect - and can run for 30 hours. It connects like a cell phone to a charger. The leg is activated by tapping my foot on the ground.

Yandrell was in awe, and kept asking: "Where's Poppy's leg?" I explained to her that I lost my leg in an accident, but I have a new one

that's just as good. Through it I always knew I'd be back on the job.

I've always believed that the difference between the possible and the impossible lies in the determination of each individual. There was no doubt in my mind that I'd return to active duty. I met the driver who had hit me during our court depositions. He was never charged - it was an accident and I feel no animosity toward the guy.

I didn't want to retire. And I don't want to return to the CHP and sit behind a desk. I wanted to be patrolling - on my bike. My wife, friends, the department - they were all behind me giving me support