

"Lesson Learned" is a new department meant to inform readers of situations in which other readers have words of caution, advice, etc. after having personally encountered certain ride-related or bike-related situations. This department should not be construed as an endorsement of, or advice to use, any of the methods they used during their "lesson learned".

LESSON LEARNED

MY ADVICE ON FACTORY CABLES

By Bill McIlrath, GWRRA Life Member #22638, of Bethel, Connecticut

(AUTHOR'S NOTE: If you own an 1800 Wing and find you are not interested in this article and/or don't like the direction you think it's taking, please at least read the last paragraph!)

I've heard recently of at least three owners of 1800 Wings who have suffered a broken throttle cable. What I've found is that you *can* get somewhere without it—if you really *have to*—but I don't recommend it. Let me explain...

Lyn and I were 80 to 90 miles from home on our way back from Americade in Lake George, New York when I twisted the throttle to accelerate. Unfortunately, it twisted freely. That said, we were on Interstate 87, south of Albany, New York, and on cruise control, so we just continued on.

Now we usually stop at the last rest area before we switch onto I-84 for home, and we decided to do so again. We figured as long as we didn't run into a traffic jam (and we didn't), we'd be fine. Plus, past experience with Honda motorcycles told me there are two throttle cables, a "pull" and a "return". So, I figured, *Maybe I can use the return as a temporary pull just to get home.* That's when I started to tear the bike apart in the rest area parking lot.

The "Not Recommended" Roadside Surgery

The cables route around the steering head and down to the left side of the throttle body, beneath the air box. To get there, you have to do everything involved with changing the air filter. This includes removing the seat, dash trim, top shelter, cruise control controller, and top of the air box.

When you remove the filter, you'll see there are four screws that secure the box. (Warning!: When you pull out the air box, four air hoses will pull off the bottom of the air box. More on this later.)

At this point, I had come to the "business end" of the throttle cables. In my opinion, the factory service manual is woefully lacking on information concerning the whole system, but what lay before me included a rounded box that houses a cruise control disable switch (that kicks in if you twist the throttle backwards when the cruise is active). And that's when I had a rude awakening: *THERE IS NO WAY TO USE THE RETURN CABLE AS A PULL CABLE!*

[So I intentionally over-tightened the cruise control actuator cable to prevent the throttle from closing.] Then I increased the idle to 2500 RPM and "slapped" the bike back together, even throwing some of it in the trailer. With this increase in the idle speed, I figured we could shift through the gears and get the speed of our Wing up to the minimum needed to accelerate with the cruise control.

[PLEASE NOTE: Jacking up the idle rpm to 2500 is very dangerous, especially if one has to apply maximum braking while the bike is in that condition.]

Our Harrowing "Test Run"

After I finished, we hopped back on the bike, pointed the front wheel toward the exit, shifted gears, and merged with the flow of traffic at highway speed. It was successful...so far anyway.

Several miles later, we switched roads, and the bike made it fine through the toll booth (with EZ Pass; full stop not required), and headed east. The big test would be the next toll, since there I knew the road inclines almost immediately after paying the toll.

Making the most of the available RPMs, we again got up to the requisite speed and did the "push-button acceleration trick" uphill. Luckily, with little difficulty (but possibly a few broken traffic laws) we ended up within shouting distance of home.

The Final (Real) Push Home

Now there are three ways up to our house, but they are all uphill. A phone call to our daughter earlier had three of her friends already there to help push the bike uphill.

First we had to disconnect the Bushtec trailer and bolt it to the hitch of Lyn's Jeep to tow it home. Then we had to unload the saddlebags and trunk to lighten the bike's load. Then, after riding the bike around the block and into an alley (with two friends to block the traffic at the other end), the Wing and I managed to get up enough speed to crest the hill and head into the garage.

Lesson Learned

Okay, so it worked for me. And I'm guessing that, if you are mechanically inclined and very much in need of getting somewhere without the usable throttle, it could possibly work for you. However, that said, I am *not* recommending you try it.

Why? First of all, you will not have the ability to quickly accelerate in order to avoid a possible crash or other accident. Second, remember the air box? You will need to spend another hour or so raising the front of the fuel tank and generating slack in the drain hose behind the lower cover of the left cylinder head in order to reattach the four hoses. Third, the primary throttle cable has two adjustment points, and the middle one is very hard to find, both on the bike and in the manual. (In fact, it was a kink in the area of the middle adjustment point that caused the wear, and ultimate failure, of our cable.)

By the way, this cable needs to be lubricated at least as frequently as called for in the maintenance schedule. Is this a design issue? I don't know. For the 2001 model year, the part number is 17910-MCA-000. I have no idea how many other years use it. Since this particular cable failure, I have been running a "higher quality" aftermarket cable without the middle joint. (However, this is something else I don't recommend, and I'm not anxious to have to replace it.)

Lesson Learned

So what is the point of all these things I *don't* recommend? Simply that I have now learned that I will *never again* travel without a spare of all three factory cables in my trailer. ●