

RIDER DOWN

AUGUST 2025

Two Wheels, One Chance:

Tackling the Real Risks Behind Navy/Marine Corps Motorcycle Accidents

By Juan Aguilar

The Naval Enterprise reported 30 motorcycle crashes in August, with three resulting in fatalities. California led in motorcycle crashes for the 19th consecutive month with 12 reported – accounting for over a third of the crashes (41%) overall; Virginia followed with five reported crashes (1 fatality and 4 nonfatalities) equaling 17% of the incidents. North Carolina, Hawaii, Florida and Nevada each had two crashes comprising 28%. The remaining incidents occurred in various areas within the United States, as well as Japan with two crashes.

Based on August's reporting, 50% of accidents involved riders 25 years old and under, and 57% involved personnel E-5 or below continuing a higher risk trend of accidents occurring amongst younger and lower-ranked riders.

Note: Accurate reporting of individuals' ages is essential for identifying at-risk demographics;

however, 13% of crash reports this month still lack this information, hindering our ability to analyze age-related trends. Detailed and accurate reporting helps ensure data collected reflects actual circumstances. Comprehensive data allows for identifying patterns and trends, such as common causes, locations or times of day when crashes occur.

Since the beginning of fiscal year 2025, rider behavior has continued to be the driving factor behind the majority of motorcycle crashes. Rider behavior encompasses actions such as rider error; procedural, training and licensing compliance; use of protective gear and how the person rides (speeding, lane splitting, etc.). All of these involve the rider's judgement and decisions they make before and during the ride.

Loss of control due to rider error and adverse road conditions emerged as a major factor.

In some instances, overcorrection, abrupt braking or poor visibility due to weather led to serious injuries. These cases emphasize

At a Glance

USN

Rider fatalities this report: 2
Rider fatalities for FY 25: 26

USMC

Rider fatalities this report: 1
Rider fatalities for FY 25: 14

Totals this report

Non-fatal crashes: 27
Fatalities: 3

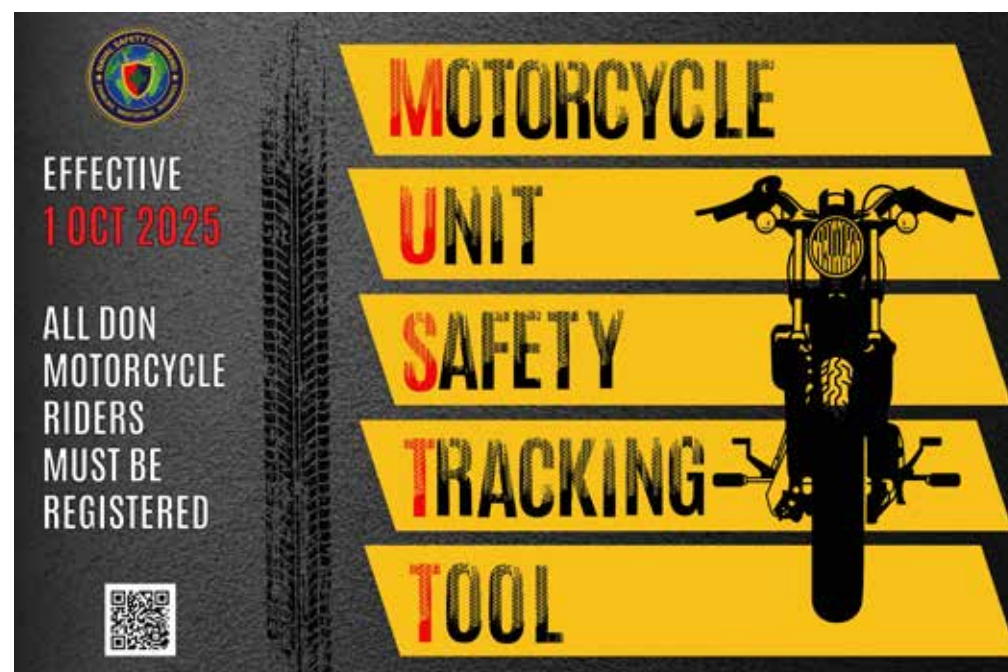
the importance of not only mastering the technical skills taught in courses like the Basic Rider Course (BRC) but also applying those skills with discipline in unpredictable, real-world conditions. Even low-speed mishaps can result in significant injuries when road surfaces are compromised or a rider's reaction is not calibrated to the environment.

Another recurring theme was **limited riding experience or incomplete licensing**. Although many of the service members had completed the required training like BRC, some had not yet obtained valid motorcycle licenses, while others were relatively new riders. The transition from classroom instruction to safe, independent riding takes time and real-world exposure.

A lack of practical experience, especially when combined with complex riding environments or unfamiliar traffic conditions, significantly increases the likelihood of mistakes. It is important to note that training completion does not always equate competence on the road, so ongoing mentorship or advanced riding courses can help bridge this gap.

Group-riding events introduced additional risk factors. Miscommunication, poor rider spacing and the inability to maintain visual contact contributed to some incidents. Group rides require coordination and trust among participants. They also demand careful

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One chance

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discipline in maintaining safe distances, adhering to pre-ride briefs and accounting for varying skill levels within the group. Failure to manage these dynamics led to riders becoming separated, losing control, or being involved in serious accidents.

Rear-end collisions were another notable trend, often resulting from either a rider striking the vehicle ahead or being hit from behind. In these cases, factors such as insufficient following distances, sudden braking by other drivers and distracted driving played a key role.

These incidents highlight the need for riders to remain hyper-aware of traffic flow, maintain escape routes and anticipate the actions of surrounding vehicles, especially in heavy traffic or merging scenarios. Similarly, the drivers of other vehicles must be reminded through command-level safety campaigns to actively look for motorcycles and respect their space on the road.

A significant number of motorcycle mishaps have involved **collisions with other vehicles**, often due to inattentive or negligent drivers. Many riders were struck by vehicles making abrupt lane changes, failing to yield or turning into their path without checking for traffic.

These types of events reinforce the vulnerability of motorcyclists and the critical need for constant situational awareness. Even riders doing their part by traveling at posted speed limits, using proper protective equipment and obeying traffic laws are still at risk when other drivers fail to drive responsibly or anticipate motorcycles in traffic.

On a positive note, it was generally noted that personal protective equipment (PPE) usage was often worn at the time of the crash. However, the presence of PPE in cases with serious injuries speaks to its limits in high-impact crashes.

Although often effective in reducing the severity of injuries, PPE must be paired with the reinforcement of risk management and the continuous application of responsible riding practices. Reports of riders not wearing proper gear, or where this detail was unconfirmed,

the risk of catastrophic outcomes was exponentially increased.

Ultimately, the causes behind these motorcycle crashes reflect a combination of internal vulnerabilities and external hazards. Inattentive or impaired drivers, inexperience, overconfidence, poor road conditions and a lack of post-BRC training all increase risk for military motorcyclists.

As a community, the Navy and Marine Corps must continue to prioritize education, mentorship and accountability when it comes to motorcycle operations. Leaders at all levels should ensure riders are not only trained but also encouraged to seek advanced courses, stay licensed and practice riding defensively.

Amidst the critical mission of ensuring operational readiness, the diligent efforts of motorcycle safety representatives (MSR), supervisors, collateral duty safety officers and command leadership persist in keeping your personnel current with their training and licensing.

Every detail matters in the pursuit of safety. Do not ignore even minor factors as this raises your risk and may result in a collision. Remove one factor and the crash may not have occurred.

Factors were provided from the crashes on the following pages and based on the information presented in the operations reports and the

By the numbers

- 15 (50%) crashes involved collision with a moving vehicle.
- 6 (20%) crashes involved a rollover/overturn.
- 4 (13%) crashes had a rider who ran off the road.
- 4 (13%) crashes had "No Data" reported.
- 1 (4%) crash involved colliding with an animal or object.

By the clock

- Midnight - 3:59 a.m. – 4 (13%)
- 4 a.m. - 7:59 a.m. – 1 (3%)
- 8 a.m. - 11:59 a.m. – 4 (13%)
- Noon - 3:59 p.m. – 5 (17%)
- 4 p.m. - 7:59 p.m. – 11 (37%)
- 8 p.m. - 11:59 p.m. – 3 (10%)

By the day

- No Data – 2 (7%)
- Weekdays – 13 (43%)
- Weekend – 17 (53%)

investigator's reports, most of which are still under investigation.

When reviewing the crash narratives on the following pages, consider other factors that may have influenced the mishap. It's a call to action for riders to engage, reflect and ask themselves, "What would I have done differently?"

Rider Down reports: Important tools to have

The *Rider Down* reports are indispensable tools in your arsenal, integral to safety and training briefs. Their detailed insights and analysis are invaluable in understanding the factors contributing to crashes and formulating preventive measures.

To those with Risk Management Information (RMI) access, we've seamlessly integrated the *Rider Down* reports within RMI. Once logged into RMI, click on the left-hand tab under the "Pubs and Refs" homepage and proceed to "Motorcycle Rubber Side Down" to subscribe to and view these publications. The site contains the current motorcycle publications produced by Naval Safety Command for Navy and Marine Corps MSRs, riders and safety professionals.

It's crucial to understand detailed and accurate reporting helps ensure data collected reflects actual circumstances. Comprehensive data allows for identifying patterns and trends, such as common causes, locations or times of day when crashes occur.



Rider Down is a monthly update of motorcycle crashes that occurred throughout the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. The data in this publication reflects what was reported during the time period covered. Information contained in the report is based on preliminary data and is provided for hazard

Rider Down

awareness and training purposes only. The Naval Safety Command recommends Motorcycle Safety Representatives use this information for training and mentorship programs and forward to others who may have an interest.

Crash data can be obtained from Naval Safety Command.



CRASH REPORTS

Motorcycle Crash Legend

NR represents information not reported

Red entries represent

Marine Corps-specific mishaps
(All times local)

Fatal Crashes

Aug. 10, 7:15 p.m., 25-year-old E-4

Location: Kapolei, Hawaii

Remarks: Rider was struck after a PMV-4 driver made a left turn against a red arrow signal at an intersection. The driver turned onto the street and was broadsided by the rider traveling the other direction. The force of the impact ejected the rider, who was thrown into the rear of the driver's vehicle. Emergency responders rushed the rider to a nearby hospital, where he later succumbed to his injuries. The rider was confirmed to be wearing a helmet at the time of the crash and training was up to date.

Aug. 16, 12:47 a.m., 20-year-old E-4

Location: Nago, Japan

Remarks: Rider was operating a motorcycle at high speed at night when entered a blind curve. Unable to make the turn, the rider ran off the road. He was accompanied by two other riders on separate motorcycles, who stopped and applied a tourniquet to the injured rider's leg. EMS arrived shortly after and transported the rider to the emergency room, where he was pronounced deceased.

Aug. 22, 7:15 p.m., 34-year-old E-7

Location: Portsmouth, Virginia

Remarks: Rider was involved in a fatal motorcycle accident. The cause is currently under investigation; however, alcohol consumption is a suspected contributing factor.

Nonfatal Crashes

Aug. 1, 6:50 p.m., 32-year-old E-6

Location: Rokkasho, Japan

Remarks: Rider was involved in a single-vehicle motorcycle accident after striking a pothole and losing control of his Suzuki GSR-750 sportbike. The rider sustained a broken arm and was transported to a medical facility by Japanese EMS for further assessment. No other vehicles, individuals or properties were involved in the incident. The rider was wearing appropriate personal protective equipment, including a helmet, eye protection, boots and protective clothing. Preliminary findings indicate the rider had not attended a motorcycle safety course prior to the crash.

Aug. 1, 9:20 p.m., 22-year-old E-5

Location: Marietta, Georgia

Remarks: Rider was involved in a motorcycle accident while operating his personal 2017 black Yamaha R1. Rider was transported to a local hospital in critical condition. It is unknown whether the rider was

wearing a helmet, eye protection or foot protection at the time of the accident. However, he was reported to be wearing boots and gloves. Rider had completed a Basic Rider Course in 2022.

Aug. 2, 11 a.m., 21-year-old E-4

Location: Silver Springs, Nevada

Remarks: Rider was riding as part of a group of motorcyclists. While exiting a roundabout on a local highway, the rider was following another motorcycle and accelerated to catch up with the group. The rider ahead suddenly braked to make a right turn. Due to insufficient space to brake and slow down, the trailing rider collided perpendicularly with the rider in front and was thrown from the motorcycle, landing on his back and striking his head on the pavement. EMS arrived on scene and evaluated SVM. At approximately 3 p.m., the rider's spouse drove him to the local emergency room due to a pounding headache where he received a CT scan.

Aug. 3, 3:50 a.m., 28-year-old E-3

Location: Azusa, California

Remarks: Rider was traveling on a local road at the posted speed of 35 mph, wearing appropriate safety gear. Another driver failed to yield the right of way while executing a left turn, crossing into the rider's path. The rider collided with the passenger side of the driver's vehicle and was thrown over the top, suffering a contusion on his right foot. The rider was transported to a civilian hospital by a family member, where he underwent x-rays and a CT scan, which revealed no fractures or internal injuries. The rider was subsequently released and received 14 days of limited duty at a military medical facility.

Aug. 3, 2 p.m., 28-year-old E-6

Location: Richmond, Virginia

Remarks: Rider was operating a motorcycle as the second vehicle in a group ride when the lead rider initiated a stop. The rider failed to accurately judge the stopping distance and was unable to bring the motorcycle to a complete stop in time, resulting in a rear-end collision with the motorcycle ahead. Following the incident, the rider promptly notified the chain of command. The next day, the rider sought medical attention for bumps and bruises sustained in the collision. Medical personnel prescribed 7 days of light limited duty to support recovery.

Acronyms

ARC: Advanced Rider Course

BRC: Basic Rider Course

EMS: emergency medical services

LLD: light & limited duty

PMV-2: private motor vehicle-2 wheels
(motorcycle)

PMV-4: private motor vehicle-4 wheels
(automobile)

PPE: personal protective equipment

SIQ: sick in quarters

CRASH REPORTS

Aug. 3, 6 p.m., 21-year-old E-3

Location: Morehead, North Carolina

Remarks: Rider was operating a friend's motorcycle in a coastal city, accompanied by two other riders. While making a right turn into a parking lot, one of the other riders collided with the rider's right side, causing the rider to fall off the motorcycle. During the fall, the rider sustained injuries to the right elbow and foot, including a small laceration on the foot and road rash on the arm. The rider and the motorcycle were loaded into a truck and taken home. Later that evening the rider notified his chain of command. The following day, the rider sought medical care at a local emergency room, where the ankle was diagnosed with a slight fracture and muscle bruising.

Aug. 3, 6 p.m., 20-year-old E-3

Location: Chesapeake, Virginia

Remarks: Rider was operating his motorcycle on a local road. The rider misjudged the appropriate speed and lean angle required for a curve, resulting in a greater lean than initially anticipated. Consequently, the rider had to take the turn wider, causing the motorcycle to run over a patch of gravel at the edge of the lane. This caused the tires to lose traction, and the motorcycle slid off the road, striking a tree. The rider sustained cuts and abrasions to his right leg and was transported to the hospital for treatment. The following morning, the rider was discharged with pain medication and a bandage for the injured leg.

Aug. 4, 4 p.m., 36-year-old E-6

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was involved in a collision with a car while lane splitting. As a result of the accident, the rider sustained a dislocated finger, road rash and bruises. Due to these injuries, the rider was placed on light duty for several workdays.

Aug. 4, time unavailable, 36-year-old O-3

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was traveling on a main road from a naval base annex toward his home. While in transit, a civilian driver made an illegal left turn against a red light from the opposite direction onto a cross street. The civilian vehicle turned wide, entered the crosswalk and struck the rider on the lower left leg with the vehicle's bumper guard. The impact threw the rider from his motorcycle, causing him to land on his right side just ahead of his vehicle's handlebars. Despite the injury, the rider was able to limp away and drove himself to a local medical center

where they found three fractures to the left ankle. The rider was placed on two days of SIQ, 30 days of LLD and continued treatment.

Aug. 5, 7:30 a.m., 27-year-old, E-6

Location: Pearl City, Hawaii

Remarks: Rider donned safety gear including a jacket, helmet and gloves before leaving home. While traveling on the freeway in the left lane, the rider encountered another motorcyclist entering his lane at high speed, causing the rider to swerve and lose traction, resulting in a crash. The rider was ejected from the motorcycle and slid about 20 feet before stopping, with the motorcycle being struck by passing vehicles. Unfortunately, the other motorcyclist fled the scene. Bystanders stopped and rendered aid until emergency services arrived. The rider was taken to a medical center, treated for minor abrasions, and discharged the same day with no work restrictions. The following day, the rider returned to work.

Aug. 5, 9:30 p.m., 21-year-old, rank unavailable

Location: Hampton, Virginia

Remarks: Rider was attempting to change lanes when another vehicle merged without warning. To avoid a collision, the rider swerved, lost balance and slid on the pavement, sustaining an injury to his arm. The rider was then transported by a companion to a medical facility for further evaluation and treatment. At the hospital, the rider received three stitches. After treatment, the rider was released early the next morning. The motorcycle involved was a sportbike 2007 HD Sportster. The rider was fully equipped with protective gear, including helmet, gloves, jacket and boots, and held a valid motorcycle license as well as completed a basic rider safety course in July 2025.

Aug. 7, 4:15 p.m., 19-year-old E-3

Location: China Lake, California

Remarks: Rider, operating a personal motorcycle, experienced a loss of control resulting in skin abrasions on the hand and knee. No LLD or SIQ were issued following the incident.

Aug. 9, 3:30 p.m., 22-year-old E-4

Location: Portsmouth, Virginia

Remarks: Rider was traveling on a highway when the motorcycle lost traction and slid, causing the rider to fall. The rider was treated at a naval medical facility for injuries sustained in the incident. The fall resulted in oblique hand fractures and the rider was treated with a splint.

Aug. 9, 3:30 p.m., age unavailable, E-4

Location: Leland, North Carolina

Remarks: Rider was riding on a local road when he lost traction navigating a turn. The bike veered off the road, resulting in a crash. The rider was subsequently transported to a nearby medical center for surgery. Information regarding the use of personal protective equipment, speed, training and potential factors, such as alcohol or drug use is currently unavailable.

Aug. 9, 5 p.m., 39-year-old E-7

Location: Fallon, Nevada

Remarks: Rider drove a personal motorcycle to a local restaurant and dropped the bike while attempting to park. The motorcycle fell onto the rider during the parking maneuver. No damage to the vehicle or serious injuries were reported. The rider sought medical attention and received 48 hours of SIQ.



CRASH REPORTS

Aug. 12, time unavailable, 32-year-old E-6

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider lost traction on his front tire while riding downtown due to an unknown fluid on the road. No medical assistance was initially provided at the scene. The rider managed to get a ride home and later returned with help to retrieve the motorcycle. Afterwards, the rider went to the hospital and was released the next morning. The motorcycle involved was an Aprilia RSV-4RR sports bike. The rider was wearing full protective gear, including helmet, eye protection, boots, gloves and a long-sleeved sweatshirt with a protective vest, and held a valid motorcycle license with recent sport bike ARC training in June 2025.

Aug. 12, 5 p.m., 24-year-old E-5

Location: Oxnard, California

Remarks: Rider was driving home from the gym on his motorcycle when another vehicle pulled out into an intersection, cutting him off. Unable to stop in time, the rider collided with the civilian's car. The civilian denied responsibility. A police report was filed. There were no reported injuries, and damage was limited to the rider's motorcycle. The rider was evaluated at a medical facility with no injuries reported.

Aug. 13, 8:15 a.m., 30-year-old E-6

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was enroute to work when involved in a motorcycle accident with another vehicle. The rider sustained non-life-threatening injuries to the shoulder, arm, and leg (side unknown), did not lose consciousness and remained ambulatory. The rider was transported by ambulance to a medical center for evaluation. All PPE was worn included helmet, eye protection, boots, gloves and jacket. Rider holds a valid motorcycle license or permits and completed ARC in June 2024.

Aug. 13, 4:30 p.m., 20-year-old E-3

Location: Bremerton, Washington

Remarks: Rider was involved in a collision with a truck. The rider was transported to the hospital for evaluation and later discharged with minor scrapes and abrasions. The rider was wearing full personal protective equipment, including a helmet, eye protection, gloves, boots, protective clothing and a jacket. He has a valid motorcycle license and completed both BRC and ARC, with the most recent course completed July 2025. Protective gear used likely minimized the severity of injuries. The incident involved no reported severe injuries or fatalities.

Aug. 14, 3:18 p.m., 36-year-old E-7

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was riding a motorcycle and was struck on the left side at an intersection by a car that ran a red light. The rider was evaluated at a local emergency room for injuries to his right leg. The rider has completed BRC and ARC motorcycle safety courses and is endorsed by the state. All required PPE was worn at the time of the incident.

Aug. 14, 3:25 p.m., 22-year-old E-3

Location: Malibu, California

Remarks: Rider was operating a motorcycle on the freeway when he was struck by a vehicle conducting a U-turn. The other driver fled the scene immediately after the collision, which ejected the rider from the motorcycle. The rider was airlifted to an emergency room for evaluation and treatment, then admitted to the hospital.

Aug. 16, 2 a.m., 24-year-old E-4

Location: Oceanside, California

Remarks: Rider was operating a personal motorcycle with one passenger, traveling on a two-lane divided road and ran a red light, colliding head-on with a PMV-4 traveling on a crossroad. The rider sustained multiple severe injuries, including several bone fractures, extensive perineal injury and general body trauma. Emergency services transported the rider via helicopter to a local hospital. Local law enforcement determined alcohol was a factor in the incident. The rider did not have a valid motorcycle license and had not completed the BRC. Although the rider purchased the motorcycle several months prior, his supervisor had instructed him not to operate it until completing the required training and obtaining a license. It is unknown whether the rider was wearing PPE.

Aug. 16, 8 a.m., age unavailable, E-4

Location: La Jolla, California

Remarks: Rider involved in a motorcycle accident. The rider was transported to a local hospital and was pending surgery.

Aug. 16, 10 p.m., 22-year-old E-5

Location: Jacksonville, Florida

Remarks: Rider was involved in a motorcycle accident when another vehicle failed to yield. Rider was transported to a local hospital for a broken leg which required surgery. A titanium rod was implanted, and the rider was prescribed a three-week convalescence period.

Aug. 21, 4:15 p.m., 26-year-old O-3

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was found alongside a local highway exit, with his Yamaha YZF-R6 2020 sportbike. No medical assistance was provided on-site, but the rider was transported to a local medical facility by ambulance. The rider was wearing full protective gear, including a helmet, gloves, boots, jacket and eye protection. He held a valid motorcycle license and completed the BRC in December 2021 and ARC in June 2022. The rider was medically evaluated, with surgery being considered. He is not fit for full duty at this time.

Aug. 23, 1:30 a.m., ages unavailable, E-4/ E-5/ E-6 (3 riders)

Location: East Hampton, New Jersey

Remarks: Three riders were involved in a motorcycle incident. Rider 1

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ENABLING WARFIGHTING READINESS
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sustained a pelvic fracture and was airlifted to a local hospital. Rider 2 suffered a mild concussion, was treated at the hospital, and released. Rider 3 sustained a leg injury. No additional information available.

Aug. 28, 8:59 a.m., 19-year-old E-3

Location: Jacksonville, Florida

Remarks: Rider was involved in a single-vehicle motorcycle accident after the rear tire separated from the rim, causing vibration. Upon braking, the motorcycle was laid down on its side. Rider was taken to naval base ER with minor injuries as a precaution. Rider was wearing full PPE, had a valid license and completed a safety course.

Non-reportable Events

Aug. 16, 1 a.m., 23-year-old E-4

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was arrested by the San Diego Police Department

for disregarding public safety and evading police while operating a motorcycle. A court date was set and attended following the arrest. The rider was released from custody Aug. 17.

(Additional note: It's important to note that, when riders are not seen by motorists or they engage in reckless behavior, they not only put themselves at risk but also increase the chance of accidents. Reckless moves like these are a dangerous addition to the already high risks involved in motorcycling. Fortunately, this rider lived to tell the story.)

Aug. 30, 1:24 a.m., 20-year-old E-4

Location: Norfolk, Virginia

Remarks: Rider was initially observed traveling well over the posted speed limit, exceeding speeds of 140 mph during the police pursuit on a local interstate. After running multiple red lights back on city streets, the rider lost control and crashed head-on into a concrete barrier. EMS performed CPR, but the rider was pronounced dead at the scene.

USN AND USMC MOTORCYCLE CRASHES FY 2025 TO DATE

