



Fatality Bulletin

ARSOF MOTORCYCLE FATALITY AT ESTIMATED 100 MPH

A young ARSOF Soldier was riding his Suzuki GSXR 1000 in moderately heavy afternoon Interstate traffic. At an estimated speed of 100 MPH, he tried to pass through the gap between a garbage truck in the right lane and a van in the left. Realizing he couldn't make it, the rider tried to correct and while doing so lightly contacted the left rear wheel of the truck. He lost control, then slid and tumbled through the air for 200 feet before slamming into a metal guardrail. He died at the scene.

One paragraph, six lines, ninety-one words. End of story? - Not for everyone.

This powerful sportsbike was the Soldier's first motorcycle. He completed the Basic Rider Course (BRC) the same month he purchased the bike. In this course he learned that excessive speed is the leading cause of motorcycle accidents. In the nine months that he owned the machine he had limited opportunities to ride because five months of it were spent in an ARSOF training and qualification course, and two months were spent on an OEF deployment. He died four days after returning from that deployment. The Soldier had no record of previous traffic violations, but his lack of riding experience prompted his Commander to assess him as a 'High Risk' rider. But, in reality this accident has little to do with experience and much to do with self-discipline.

The on-duty expectation of the Soldier to your left and right is that YOU will be self-disciplined and can be trusted to cover their back. The off-duty expectation of commanders and supervisors is that YOU will be self-disciplined and trusted to comply with laws, regulations, etc. The primary purpose of the "Commander's Motorcycle Rider Agreement" (USASOC Form 4056-E) is to ensure the rider clearly understands what is expected and agrees to meet those expectations.

By all accounts this was a good Soldier, yet he willfully and knowingly violated the posted speed limit by an estimated 45 MPH. Time after time good on-duty Soldiers make bad off-duty decisions because they fail to even hastily consider the potential outcomes of what they are about to do. Individual risk management does not stop at the Gate - it is YOUR responsibility and is proven to be a lifesaver.

This death left a hole in a formation that will take time and effort to fill. But, it also left parents without a living son. The Soldier's only brother died of an illness just a few years before this accident. End of story? - Not for everyone.

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