

2013 HANG GLIDING & PARAGLIDING FATALITIES

PARAGLIDING FATALITIES

May 7, 2013 - Zach Orman

Zach Orman (28), a Beginner (P1) pilot and USHPA member since 2013, suffered fatal injuries during a flight in Arizona. He had passed his P2 written test and was in the process of demonstrating skills to achieve his P2 rating, participating in a demonstration flight on a training hill before a class of new students in light and stable conditions. As he approached the landing zone at about 10' AGL, he was hit with an invisible dust devil that rolled the glider 90 degrees and pendulumed him into the ground.

May 12, 2013 - Meg VanSciver

Meg VanSciver (39), an Intermediate (P3) pilot and USHPA member since 2010, suffered fatal injuries within 45 seconds after launching from a mountain thermal site in Golden, CO. Upon launching, the pilot almost immediately experienced strong lift followed by a wing tip deflation. The glider then rolled right, accelerating downwind and into rising air. The pilot gave corrective control input, but the glider then rolled into an inverted position with the wing underneath the pilot. The wing then suffered a partial deflation. The pilot swung through the slack lines to a normal position below the wing and the wing re-inflated. At this point the wing was accelerating back towards the launch and the pilot initiated a 180-degree turn, again entering the rising air. The glider again rolled right and collapsed, spinning the pilot 180-degrees back towards the hill. The pendulum action threw the pilot into the ground, where she suffered fatal injuries on impact.

June 22, 2013 – Henry Ho

Henry Ho, a student flying under a temporary 30-day membership, suffered fatal injuries during an instructional flight. No further information is available.

July 7, 2013 - Edward Simone

Edward Simone (53), a Novice (P2) pilot and USHPA member since 2012, suffered fatal injuries during a flight at Lime Ridge near Walnut Creek, CA. His wing experienced a 50% asymmetrical collapse while scratching for lift close to the hill at a site he had flown many times in the past. The pendulum action created when the wing began to re-inflate swung the pilot into the ground, where he suffered fatal injuries on impact.

September 22, 2013 – Walden Grindle

Walden Grindel, not an USHPA member, suffered fatal injuries during a mini-wing flight at Mt St Helena, CA. The pilot was flying alone and no further information is available.

October 26, 2013 – Timothy Stretton

Timothy Stretton (48), an Intermediate (P3) pilot and USHPA member since 2012, suffered fatal injuries during a flight at Slide Mountain, NV. The pilot was scratching on the lee side of the hill at 3pm and experienced a deflation.

HANG GLIDING FATALITIES

February 8, 2013 - Zack Marzec

Zack Marzec (27), an Advanced (H4) pilot with Aero-Tow signoff, Advanced & Tandem Instructor, and USHPA member since 2009, suffered fatal injuries during an aero-tow launch at Groveland, FL. During the launch, at an altitude of 150 AGL, the pilot encountered an invisible bullet thermal which pitched the nose up, causing the weak link to break. Upon the breakage of the weak link, the glider whip stalled and then tumbled twice. The pilot and glider's leading edge hit the ground simultaneously. The pilot was utilizing his own pro-tow style tow harness, his own high performance glider with VG on, and was not wearing a full face helmet.

June 23, 2013 - Kevin O'Brien

Kevin O'Brien (60), a Novice (H2) pilot with Aero Tow, Platform Launch and 360 Turn proficiencies, and USHPA member since 2011, suffered fatal injuries in Texas when he hit power lines while attempting to land in an unfamiliar landing zone. The pilot had towed aloft and had drifted downwind and out of reach of his designated landing zone while looking for lift.