

# 2016 HANG GLIDING & PARAGLIDING FATALITIES

## PARAGLIDING FATALITIES

### March 26, 2016 – Harrison Fast

Harrison Fast (28) was an Intermediate (P3) pilot and USHPA member since 2013. The pilot was flying a speed wing on the Jungfrauoch in the mountains above Lauterbrunnen, Switzerland. He was separated from his flying partners and went missing. His body was later discovered in glacial terrain below the summit. The cause of the incident is unknown.

### April 16, 2016 – Jordan Niedrich

Jordan Niedrich (24), not a USHPA member, was flying a speed wing off of Bald Mountain in Idaho. He was attempting a second consecutive barrel roll. The pilot didn't have enough altitude and impacted the ground at high speed. The pilot suffered fatal injuries.

### July 13, 2016 – Thomas J. Olney

T.J. Olney (64) was an Intermediate (P3) pilot and USHPA member since 2003. The pilot suffered a collapse not long after launch near Bellingham, WA. Shortly after the initial collapse the pilot had an additional collapse which resulted in an impact with the terrain. The pilot suffered fatal injuries.

### November 24, 2016 – Marge Variano

Marge Variano was an Advanced (P4) pilot, Advanced and Tandem instructor, and USHPA member since 2004. The pilot suffered fatal injuries while flying near Santa Barbara, CA. The accident is still under investigation.

## HANG GLIDING FATALITIES

### January 28, 2016 – Ken Muscio

Ken Muscio (75), an Advanced (H4) pilot and USHPA member since 1980 suffered fatal injuries during a flight in Lake McClure, CA. The pilot was flying around 2:00 PM on what was described as a low, scratchy day at about 200 feet AGL over a known thermal generating hill feature with two other pilots in the air. A midair collision occurred between the pilot's left wing and another pilot's control frame that broke Muscio's glider, resulting in an uncontrollable wing that descended to impact with the ground and resulting in fatal injuries.

### February 2, 2016 – Tomas Banevicius

Tomas Banevicius (39), a Novice (H2) pilot and USHPA member since 2015, suffered fatal injuries during a flight near Dunnellon, FL. He was on his third static winch tow of the late afternoon in 6-8 MPH winds, with the first tow being a tandem and the second and third tows being solo tows. On his third tow, as the glider was coming out of a slight right turn/oscillation, the glider was observed to nose up and then bank back to the right at about 35 feet above the ground (AGL). The right bank continued to increase as the nose of the glider rotated back down until impact with the ground, resulting in fatal injuries to the pilot.

### April 3, 2016 – Nancy Tachibana

Nancy Tachibana (41), a Student (H1) pilot and USHPA member since 2015, suffered fatal injuries during a flight near Tres Penos, CA. The student pilot had progressed using both foot launch and surface tow training to doing linked 90 degree turns from approximately 350 feet AGL. On her fourth tow of the day and second tow doing the linked 90 degree turns, the pilot did not release from the tow line before doing her first 90 degree turn. After the second 90 degree turn, the pilot was flying directly away from the ground-based turnaround pulley and the tow line tightened, pulling the control bar down and diving the glider into the ground resulting in fatal injuries.

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## HANG GLIDING FATALITIES (CONTINUED)

### May 21, 2016 – Jeffery Bohl

Jeffery Bohl (56), an Advanced (H4) pilot and USHPA member since 2012, suffered fatal injuries during a flight in Groveland, FL. The pilot executed an aerotow launch in 8-10 MPH winds crossing slightly from the right of the runway. After correcting a right yaw and bank of the glider as it came off of the launch cart, the pilot's glider went into an increasingly left banked, nose up attitude without any observed pilot corrections. At approximately a 45 nose up attitude and at 50 feet AGL, the pilot's weak link broke and the glider pitched an additional 30 or more degrees nose up. From this attitude at approximately 80 feet AGL, the glider yawed/slipped left and impacted the ground at a near vertical attitude resulting in fatal injuries.

### June 29, 2016 – Larry Heidler, Sr.

Larry Heidler (64), a Novice (H2) pilot and USHPA member since 2013, suffered fatal injuries after launching near San Bernardino, CA. The pilot self-launched in 15 +/- 5 MPH wind conditions. After the launch the glider entered a climbing right hand turn and impacted into a tree behind launch resulting in fatal injuries.

### September 18, 2016 – Dan Fleming

Dan Fleming (69), an Advanced (H4) pilot, Advanced Instructor and USHPA member since 1976, died after a flight near Dunlap, CA. After about 30 minutes of thermal soaring flight, the pilot was witnessed to stop actively piloting his glider, likely due to an in-flight medical event, and was found unresponsive after the glider reached the ground.

### October 22, 2016 – Thomas Pastinsky

Thomas Pastinsky (30), not a USHPA member, suffered fatal injuries after a flight near La Bajada Mesa, NM. The accident is still under investigation.

### November 5, 2016 – Jeffery Glidewell

Jeffery Glidewell (54), not a USHPA member, suffered fatal injuries after a flight near Rossville, KS. The pilot launched using his home-made surface tow winch powered by a car. Approximately one minute into the flight from about 100 feet AGL the glider released from tow, tip stalled to the left and dove into the ground resulting in fatal injuries.