

# 2017 HANG GLIDING & PARAGLIDING FATALITIES

## PARAGLIDING FATALITIES

### January 21, 2017 – Solomon Lee

Solomon Lee (59) was an Intermediate (P3) paraglider pilot, a Novice (H2) hang glider pilot and USHPA member since 2014. The pilot landed in the ocean surf zone after launching near Pacifica, CA. He became entangled in his equipment and drowned before rescuers got him to shore.

### April 11, 2017 – Varick Stringham

Varick Stringham (45) was an Intermediate (P3) pilot and USHPA member since 2015. He was paragliding near Millerton, NY when he suffered a deflation into the trees after launch. He did not survive the crash.

### June 11, 2017 – Sawyer Gordon

Sawyer Gordon (22), not a USHPA member, was speed flying near Salt Lake City, UT when he suffered a fatal crash. The weather was not supportive of flying in the region due to a passing front. The exact nature of the malfunction is not known.

### June 16, 2017 – Matthew Lafler

Matthew Lafler (37) was an Intermediate (P3) pilot and USHPA member since 2012. He was speed flying near Golden, CO when he was injured. The exact nature of his malfunction is not known. His injuries were fatal.

### June 22, 2017 – John Benedict

John Benedict (69) was an Advanced (P4) pilot and USHPA member since 1993. He was involved in a paragliding mid-air collision near Chehalis, WA. One pilot was injured and John Benedict did not survive.

### July 1, 2017 – Clifton Westin

Clif Westin (53) was an Intermediate (P3) pilot and USHPA member since 2012. The pilot was paragliding at Tilamook, OR when he found himself unable to glide to the beach landing area. He landed on the cliff but was caught in substantial surf and drowned.

## HANG GLIDING FATALITIES

### September 4, 2017 – Mark Henline

Mark Henline (57), an Intermediate (H3) pilot and USHPA member since 2013, suffered fatal injuries during a flight near Golden, CO. The pilot launched in the afternoon of a high pressure, blue sky day in about 10 MPH winds. The conditions for the site were marginally soarable due to the crossing wind from the left. From onboard video and flight instrument track log review, shortly after launch the pilot flew to the right of launch into an increasingly turbulent area due to the crossing wind from the left and the terrain. The pilot was descending into increasingly turbulent air and lost adequate control authority of the glider in a 360 left hand turn, hitting a parked vehicle in a descending/slipping turn that was followed by impact with the ground, resulting in fatal injuries.