

“Why I Ride” by Brandon M. DeSimone, MSgt, RIANG - 143d MXG/QA

I didn't realize this was a thing I could share. This is awesome as I am passionate about sharing these stories for people to learn from. Here is my very near miss story.

I live in the northeast and the time of year was fall (I cannot remember exactly when as this was years ago). I was riding on a three-lane highway which I normally ride; I was in the right-hand lane getting ready to take an exit. On this stretch of highway, there are no streetlights and there was construction for a bridge replacement project at the time. There was a guardrail and cement barriers on the right side of the highway with not break down lane. The construction site was not active and had no lights on. It was around 2200 and very dark. I had my leather jacket, jeans, boots, a full-face helmet, and gloves on. As I was riding, without notice there was the tail of a car swinging into my lane, no more than a car length in front of me. The bumper and large pieces of debris sliding across my lane. I was hit with debris as well, from glass to plastics and everything else that was flying from the vehicles. My lane was littered, I had no clear path ahead, and nowhere to go. Somehow, I was able to keep my bike up and rode right through without hesitation, injury, or damage to the bike. I was shaken as this was very close, I could have reach out and touched the accident as it was happening. I stopped to see if I could help anyone involved and was told by the driver of the truck behind me that he feared for my safety. He told me he thought I would have been involved and was surprised I was able to ride through it. There were four cars involved spanning across all lanes of the highway and it stopped traffic. The accident started in the left-hand lane and spread to my lane. I had nowhere to go other than straight through because of the guardrail. No one was seriously injured but all were shaken and confused because it happened so quickly.

I tell this story many times a year as a Motorcycle Safety Program Manager because I think it stresses the importance of the proper PPE, proper riding, and minimizing distractions. I credit my full-face helmet with saving my life that night and haven't stopped wearing a full-face helmet since. It kept the debris from hitting my face allowing me to keep my eyes open, not flinch, and see where I was able to ride. Safety glasses would not have been sufficient to keep this affect. Even the slightest distraction in this situation could have made the outcome much different.

I receive really good feedback when I share this story and it breaks the ice which gets more sharing to happen in the group. I really appreciate the chance to share my story and I hope it offers value to keep our Airmen riders safe!