

I started riding when I was in the Air Force, active duty to commute to work at Nellis AFB. Been riding ever since so I now have over 14 years of riding. I've known fellow members to get into major crashes, even lost an Officer in a unit because he was cut off and impacted a solid object when he went down.

My very first near miss was actually on base at Nellis AFB, NV. If you're familiar with the location, you know main base can be crowded with vehicles ranging from active-duty members driving around in POVs, GOVs, dependents trying to get their kids around or traveling to the base facilities and even retirees roaming the streets. I was headed southbound towards the communication squadron at the time and on my left was the base theatre. A car pulled out and into my lane forcing me to edge close to the curb. I noticed they were an older couple and didn't even recognize me or even react after they moved into my lane. I stayed calm, gave them space into my lane and just slightly accelerated ahead of them. I didn't want to overreact and cause them the elderly driver to make any sudden adjustments that would've made the situation worse. I was wearing full PPE, to include at the time a high visibility reflective lime green vest. I was amazed as to how I wasn't seen. I had a stock exhaust on my 600cc motorcycle, so I was definitely not loud to hear on the road. From then on, I decided that I couldn't rely solely on my PPE to save me. I had to increase my abilities and awareness of my surroundings, especially on vehicles that may pose a hazard to me.

My second near miss was near that same location, I came to a complete stop at one of the 4 way stops at Nellis AFB, NV. I noticed traffic was slightly heavy and 2 adjacent cars were heading toward my intersection on my left. As I was stopped confirming that it was my turn at the 4 way stop, I noticed one car was showing signs of slowing down while the car next to it kept it's same speed while steadily increasing in size as it got closer to the intersection. Sure enough the car went clear through the 4 way stop without slowing down whatsoever. Upon getting a better look, this vehicle's windows weren't tinted, and it was definitely an elderly gentleman driving the vehicle. I knew then that if I had in fact gone through the intersection, the outcome wouldn't have been in my favor with a collision being the worst case. From then on, I look hard at vehicles crossing my path from any angle while also not target fixating, especially if I'm in motion.

I still ride to this day and now I am also an officer in my motorcycle group and I'm riding my dream bike, a Ducati Panigale V4. If there are a few things I could mention, to my safe success over the years to have been able to still be a rider, is to take as many safety courses as the Air Force will offer for free. There's always something to gain from the courses no matter how many years you have or what experience level you think you're in. Also, if you can take these on base for free, you're saving hundreds of dollars. Lastly, if you want to be safe on two wheels, ride with your head on a swivel. Be hyper aware of your surroundings, anything that can impair your vision, reaction time and physical abilities while riding, save it for when you have a designated driver and a plan.

Anonymous
Hickam Field, Hawaii