



TOTAL CONTROL

American Military Bases add Total Control to their Motorcycle Training Arsenal (or T.C.A.R.C. for short).

story by Tracy Martin



CONTROL



The Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force all have a common, motorcycle related problem. Too many off-duty service men and women are crashing, getting seriously hurt or dying when riding their motorcycles. The scenario goes something like this; after a tour of duty in Iraq, soldiers, sailors and airmen return back to the States for some well deserved R&R. They feel confident in their abilities to handle themselves in any situation—after all; they survived a year, or more of hazardous duty. With combat pay burning a hole in their pocket and/or motorcycle dealers local to the base where they are stationed willing to extend them credit, a new sportbike or heavyweight cruiser as a first motorcycle seems like a good idea.

To ride on base or post all military personnel have to have basic motorcycle training—the Motorcycle Safety Foundation’s (MSF) Basic RiderCourse (BRC) or Experienced RiderCourse (ERC). While this is a good start, this type of basic training doesn’t address how to actually control a modern high-performance sportbike, (or a 750+ lb. cruiser for that matter)—what the majority of military personnel choose to ride. In addition, these classes are mostly taught on “trainer” bikes like Honda Rebel 250s or Suzuki GZ250s that make around 15 horsepower. Learning how to ride a low-powered 320-lb. trainer and then expecting to transfer newly learned



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riding skills to a 130+ horsepower sportbike is not realistic. "It's like teaching a pilot to fly a Cessna, then handing them the keys to an F16," according to Lee Parks, author of the best-selling riding skills book "Total Control." "In aviation, this would be considered asinine, yet in the motorcycle world, it happens every single day. This is why many European countries have tiered licensing to keep beginning riders from getting in over their heads."

The Total Control Advanced Riding Clinic (TCARC) has been taught since 1998. The idea started as a response to numerous inquiries Lee Parks had received in the mid-'90s while he was the editor of Motorcycle Consumer News. Basically, there were two types of inquiries: 1) Riders who had taken the MSF BRC and/or ERC and wanted to improve their skills but didn't want to race or do track days. 2) Sportbike riders who were ready to do their first track day, or had already done numerous track days, who felt like they needed some additional skills to help manage their risks. At that time there was nothing available so Lee developed and taught his Advanced Riding Clinic curriculum. This would later serve



Caption text Prestige Elite Std (Bold) 8 pt.

as the basis for his 2003 book Total Control. Interestingly Lee thought that the need for the class would diminish with the publication of the book but exactly the opposite happened. The book is now one of the top-selling motorcycle books of all time, and in 2004 Total Control Training, Inc. was formed to franchise the school around the world to meet the growing demand.

One of the early classes in Phoenix Arizona had a student named Hector Eide from Luke Air Force Base. Eide was the safety officer on base at the time as was so impressed with what he saw that he had the base pay for several of its instructors to go through the Total Control training to help "spread the word" to the rest of the riding airmen.

What Eide told the Total Control team at that event forever changed the focus of the program. "We

can tell you who will get hurt and die from a motorcycle accident off-base in the next year. He will be a 25-year-old, E-2, works in maintenance and rides a sportbike. The only thing we don't know is his name. Because we can't know this, additional advanced training is the best insurance we can provide." This was sobering news to the Total Control instructors who soon found out that the problem of untrained riders on sportbikes was not just a problem in the Air Force but covered all branches of the military. Eide felt that the Total Control curriculum was the perfect solution to effectively address the problem of two-wheeled fatalities (what they call "mishaps") in the military.

Soon thereafter Eide took a full-time position as the military liaison officer with the MSF. He had high hopes that he could be the bridge that could see the advanced training he received with Total Control be brought to the military in a unified fashion with the existing beginner training. When that proved to be impossible due to political reasons, he left the MSF to work for a large military contractor named CFPS where he is currently achieving his goal.

So what is the Total Control Advanced Riding Clinic? It's an 8-hour class that is conducted in a large parking lot and classroom. 60% of the class consists of range exercises and the other 40% takes place in the classroom. The focus of the TCARC is how to successfully negotiate corners at real street-riding speeds and maintain traction process. Advanced throttle and



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braking control are taught right up front. These exercises are followed by topics like; vision, line selection and body position. In addition to physical riding skills there is a classroom session that deals with the psychological aspects of riding a motorcycle—something not offered in current military rider training. Overcoming fear, keeping concentration and having the right attitude address behavior issues that can prevent crashes before they happen. It provides students with the ability to self-asses their limitations to keep them safe on the road.

Fortunately, some forward-thinking bases have been incorporating Total Control into their existing programs to complement the basic offerings. To date Total Control Advanced Riding Clinics have been taught for the Navy, Army and Air National Guard. Across the country military instructors have been trained and the program continues to expand. Unfortunately, it is only been available to bases where soldiers could afford to pay for it or funding could be secured locally. The only way Total Control will be available to all the soldiers, sailors and airmen who need it is with additional federal funding. So please write your local congressmen and let them know the safety of our troops depends on their support for additional training. With a replacement cost of \$500,000-\$1,500,000 per military person depending on job description, just saving a few lives a year could literally pay for the entire program. Even a 30% reduction in mishaps could save American taxpayers tens of millions of dollars, and that's not

accounting for the real value of life, just the hard numbers of replacement costs.

Look for a full review of the Total Control Advanced Riding Clinic in an upcoming issue of 2 Wheel Tuner. In the meantime, go to www.totalcontroltraining.net for additional information.



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