

Yakima, Washington

9.2.97 At approximately 0115 PDT this morning we received by electronic mail the tragic news of Ron Major's death. Although there is very little hard information available to us at this time, we believe that Ron's body was apparently found by the highway patrol on or near I-8 approximately one-quarter of a mile behind his parked motorcycle at some time on Sunday. The bike, a distinctive Honda ST1100, was seen by other participants on the rally as they passed through the desolate area approximately twenty miles from Yuma AZ on their way to the California checkpoint that morning. Two riders searched the area where Ron's motorcycle was seen. They could not find him. It is not known whether Ron's body by then had already been recovered by the authorities.

Initial messages on the long distance rider mailing list speculated whether Ron might have fallen asleep. It is difficult to imagine such a scenario. The motorcycle, according to photographs that we saw at the California checkpoint, was not wrecked. It had been propped up against the guard rail on the shoulder of the highway. The bike's right rear-view mirror is seen on the ground next to the motorcycle. That is the extent of the damage to the machine that is visible from the Polaroid photos one of the riders took at the scene.

Mike and I do not wish to add to the speculations about how this terrible event might have transpired. There is just too much that is not known right now. We do not even know with any certainty, for example, whether the incident occurred in Arizona or California. What we do know is that the loss of someone of Ron Major's stature is a blow from which this community of riders and their friends will not soon recover. Ron was a pillar of the endurance rider set. He was not just known by other riders internationally; he was known personally. No one has ever had as much success for so long in this unusual and demanding sport as did this gregarious, 55 year-old television technician from Temple City, California.

We wish to extend our deepest sympathies to Ron's family and his many close friends in this dark time. It seems almost hollow to say that he will be missed. He was a giant in the motorcycling world. We will not soon see his like again.

Bob Higdon