

07-03-2014 Orange Beach AL – Rian Rider – LEO Off Duty Surf Rescue Attempt

Montgomery police lieutenant dies after being pulled from Gulf in Orange Beach

http://www.al.com/news/mobile/index.ssf/2014/07/montgomery_police_lieutenant_d.html

July 03, 2014 By Marc D. Anderson

ORANGE BEACH, Alabama -- A 35-year-old Montgomery police lieutenant died after being pulled from the Gulf of Mexico by lifeguards Thursday afternoon.

Lt. Rian J. Rider of Montgomery died while en route to Baptist Hospital on LifeFlight, fire officials said.



About 4:30 p.m. Rider was swimming at the Cotton Bayou state beach access with family members when he got caught in a rip current and was taken out about 80 feet from the shore, according to Orange Beach Police Chief Billy Wilkins.



Orange Beach Fire/Rescue crews and EMS personnel prepare to place 35-year-old Rian Rider into LifeFlight near the Perdido Pass bridge after he was pulled from the Gulf of Mexico on Thursday, July 3, 2014. Rider, a lieutenant at the Montgomery Police Department, died en route to Baptist Hospital in Pensacola. (Courtesy Orange Beach Fire/Rescue)

Rider was underwater for about two minutes before being pulled out by Orange Beach lifeguards, according to Wilkins.

Orange Beach Beach Safety Director Melvin Shepard said the situation looked deceiving at first.

"The information I was given by lifeguards and even bystanders on scene was that lifeguards responded to a 35-year-old man who really didn't appear to be in any distress out in the water," Shepard said. "The lifeguard made it to him, handed him the rescue can, the man took it and was able to put it under his arms. Once the lifeguard started swimming back with him is when he lost consciousness."

Lifeguards performed CPR on Rider on the beach and he was picked up by LifeFlight at a location a few miles away near the Perdido Pass bridge.

"From what I was told he had a strong pulse when they put him in the helicopter but then went into cardiac arrest once the helicopter had taken off," Shepard said. "There's really nothing they can do for cardiac victims in a helicopter."

Wilkins said medical personnel continued to try to revive Rider after arriving at the Emergency Room at Baptist, but were unsuccessful.

Shepard said a TV crew from Montgomery was actually in town filming a beach safety segment and caught the entire rescue on video.

"We teach lifeguards to look for key signs but when you see the video -- I don't know if they're going to air it or whatnot -- the guy looks like he's just treading water floating on his back," Shepard said. "There didn't appear to be any panic look on his face or whatever and when the lifeguard made it to him he took the tube, put it under his arms and he went back under water and that was all."

Rider's family members initially got the attention of lifeguards, Shepard said.

Yellow flags were flying at the beach Thursday, meaning there was moderate surf or rip currents. At one point in the afternoon, Shepard said there was a quick spike in surf, going from knee to waist high but it didn't last long.

The National Weather Service's rip current forecast for Thursday was low, but warned, as always, that isolated and potentially dangerous ones could still occur.

Montgomery police officer dies after being pulled from Gulf of Mexico

<http://www.wsfa.com/story/25939835/montgomery-man-pulled-from-gulf-of-mexico>

July 4, 2014 By WSFA 12 News Staff

ORANGE BEACH, AL (WSFA) - A Montgomery Police Department lieutenant died after being pulled from the Gulf of Mexico off the Alabama coast around 4:30 p.m. Thursday, according to Orange Beach police.



Rian with Josh, Leslie, his niece Harley and nephew Sean.
(Source: The Rider Family)

according to Orange Beach police. He was air lifted to a Pensacola hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Rider had been employed with the police department since 2002. He had served in the patrol, traffic, juvenile and criminal investigations divisions. He was currently in command over the Special Victims and Domestic Violence units.

Rider's family released the following statement:

"Our family is saddened by the loss of Rian. He was a dedicated law enforcement officer with the Montgomery Police Department and spent his career helping those who were victims of domestic violence. More importantly, he was a beloved son, bother and uncle to his nephew Sean and niece Harley, who worshiped him. Rian was funny, sweet and thoughtful. He will be deeply missed. We ask for privacy over the next few days as we celebrate Rian's life and mourn his tragic death."

WSFA 12 News had a crew on the same area of the beach reporting on a story about the dangers of rip currents Thursday afternoon. Anchor Sally Pitts says she heard a call for help in the water, and lifeguards quickly got to the man.



(Source: The Rider Family)

Lt. Rian J. Rider, 34, was swimming with family members near the Cotton Bayou Beach Access when

he and his niece got caught in a rip current. Rider was able to rescue his niece, but he wasn't able to free himself, according to the Montgomery Police Department, Rider was underwater for about two minutes before being pulled out by lifeguards,



Lifeguards quickly got to the man.
(Source: WSFA 12 News)

MPD lieutenant remembered as great leader, hero

<http://www.wbrc.com/story/25943721/mpd-lieutenant-remembered-as-great-leader>

By Bryan Henry, Reporter

MONTGOMERY, AL (WSFA) - Those who knew Lt. Rian Rider on a professional level say there is no doubt he'd found his calling as a police officer.



**Rian with his brother Josh and sister in law Leslie.
(Source: The Rider Family)**

The veteran lawman was swimming with family members in the Gulf of Mexico in Orange Beach when he and his niece got caught in a rip current. Rider was able to rescue his niece, but he wasn't able to free himself. He was pulled from the water by lifeguards and pronounced dead at a Pensacola hospital.

Rider started with the Montgomery Police Department in 2002 and had served in the patrol, traffic, juvenile and criminal investigations divisions. He was currently commander over the Specials Victims and Domestic Violence unit.

"Lieutenant Rider was one of our local heroes and will be difficult to replace," a statement released by MPD and the Montgomery Department of Public Safety said.

"Mayor Todd Strange, Director J. Christopher Murphy and Interim Chief of Police John E. Brown would like the Rider Family to know their heartfelt appreciation for Lieutenant Rider's service to the City of Montgomery and the Montgomery Police Department."

Colleagues remember Rider as a dedicated leader.

"He was a staple for the police department," said friend Scott Green.

Green is the Deputy District Attorney for Montgomery County. Green worked closely with Rider.

When Rider arrived at the Montgomery County Courthouse with a case file, there was no doubt he had done his homework and checked out everything that needed to be investigated, Green said.

"He was a great leader, a great detective and knew how to train great detectives," Green said.

Rider was shot in the line of duty five years ago in Montgomery. Green recalled Rider's determination to turn the corner and come back to the police department.

Green remembered something else, something remarkable.

"I never heard him complain about anything even when he was recovering. He took him awhile to get back," Green said.

Rider would have turned 35 later this month.

Remembering Montgomery Police Officer, Rian Rider

<http://www.alabamaneews.net/2014/07/04/remembering-montgomery-police-officer-rian-rider/>

Jul 4, 2014 by Alabama News Network Staff



Updated: Dec 4, 2015A Montgomery Police officer drowned in the Gulf Coast — after being caught in a rip current. Today, those who knew him say they're mourning, but also say they're proud of him because he died trying to save someone else's life.

I spoke with several people who knew Lt. Rian Rider and they say his passion was to help victims. He was a man who always went beyond the call of duty, whether or not he was in uniform. But those who knew him say it's the reason why Rider drowned that ultimately makes him a true hero.

A police department in mourning...

"You know, I don't know how to say goodbye," Said Cpt. Jenny Smith, who says she worked with Rider the last 12 years.

Black bows hang outside of the Montgomery Police Department in memory of Rider. The Orange Beach Police Department says he got caught in a rip current and was

pulled about 80 feet into the gulf. He went under water for two minutes before lifeguards pulled him out. He was then air lifted to the hospital and pronounced dead.

"When I found out that he had passed away it was just devastating," Said Smith She, along with other officers reminisced on the good times with Rider. And they say they're not shocked about why Rider went into the water: it was to save his niece from drowning.

"That he took the action that he did. Of course, the final events are shocking. Surreal, but it's no surprise that he would care for her in the manner that he did," Said commander of the Criminal Investigations Division, Bryan Jurkofsky.

"He loved helping victims, especially children. And now his current position where he was working helping victims of domestic violence," Said Lt. Zedrick Dean.

Rider spent 12 years with the police department, serving in the patrol, juvenile and criminal investigations division. Most recently, he was the commander over Special Victims and Domestic Violence Units at the One Place Family Justice Center.

"When he walked in a room he just always had a smile on his face," Said Steve Searcy, Director of the One Place Family Justice Center.

A smile so contagious...

"We've had plenty of times to laugh with him and dance, as the Bible says. But we'll have more of those times thinking about him and remembering him. But I love him," Said Cpt. Al Wheeler.

And "loving him" is the message those who knew him want to send...

"I'll be there for him like he was there for me and his family will still be taken care of," Said Lt. Christina Thorton.

"We'll take it from here. And we'll see you on the other side," Said Sgt. Jason Thorton.

Rider's family was unable to be on camera with us as they fly back from Orange Beach. But they say Rider was a son, a brother, an uncle; and his nephew Sean and niece Harley worshipped him. Harley is the niece that he saved.

Rider's funeral arrangements have not been set.

Many mourn Montgomery police Lt. Rian Rider

<http://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/local/2014/07/09/many-mourn-montgomery-police-lt-rian-rider/12436653/>

July 9, 2014 Rebecca Burylo , Montgomery Advertiser | Updated July 10, 2014

Montgomery Police Department Lt. Rian Rider was remembered Wednesday as a champion of children and domestic violence victims, with a quick-witted humor and the heart of a servant.

It was Rider's dream to become a police officer so he could help others, and he gave his life doing so.

Last week, Rider, 34, was on vacation with his family at Orange Beach when he saved his 12-year-old niece from a rip current. Rider then struggled himself and had to be pulled from the Gulf of Mexico by lifeguards. He was taken by helicopter to Baptist Hospital in Pensacola, Florida, where he was pronounced dead.

Friends, relatives and fellow officers paid their respects to Rider on Wednesday at First United Methodist Church in Cloverdale.

As the afternoon sun shone through stained glass of the old stone church, the community came together to celebrate Rider's life, career and heroism.

"When he saw his niece was struggling in the surf, he did what heroes do. He went to the rescue to save her and sacrificed himself. And that's how he lived," Mayor Todd Strange said.

Strange added that a person didn't have to know Rider well to know the kind of hero he was.

In an earlier interview, Josh Rider concurred with that sentiment and said he'll always remember his brother as a hero for saving his daughter's life.

Ever since he was young, all his brother wanted to do was to help those around him, Josh Rider said.

"He really liked to protect people," Josh Rider said. "Victims were his passion.

That's what got him up in the morning, making sure people were happy and having good days. Whether it was his fellow officer or a victim, he'd always manage to put a smile on their face."

Interim police Chief John Brown said Rian Rider was a man with a purpose-driven life.

"He understood his purpose, and that was to give of himself," Brown said.

As a lieutenant in the Domestic Violence and Special Victim's Bureau, Rian Rider channeled his passion for helping people into his work and also through the One Place Family Justice Center, where domestic violence victims can go for help of all kinds.

Josh Rider said that is where his brother found his niche.

Brenda Hassell, who went up front Wednesday and laid her hand on the casket, said afterward that Rian Rider and the One Place Family Justice Center helped her following a traumatic experience and that she would be forever grateful for his kindness.

"That day he calmed me down," Hassell said. "Women need that protection and children need that protection, and I know Rian, and I feel like he was a good man."

Though Rian Rider had no wife and children of his own, Josh Rider said his wife, 15-year-old son and 12-year-old daughter were his brother's family.

"My kids were his kids," Josh Rider said. "We'd spend time with each other every weekend. He was a part of our family."

"Whenever we had a big family gathering and the grown-ups would be watching the game, Rian would be in the other room playing board games and cards with the kids. That's where you'd find him," Josh Rider said.

Anyone wishing to make a donation on Rian Rider's behalf should do so to the One Place Family Justice Center, said his brother, Josh Rider.