

Motorcyclist Dies Following Crash With Car

21-Year-Old Grinnell Man Is Victim; County's 1st '61 Fatality

Twenty-one-year-old Ralph Cooper died Thursday morning after a traffic fatality of 1961 when he succumbed at a local hospital shortly after the motorcycle he was operating collided with an automobile just west of the city limits on Highway 6.

Cooper's 19-year-old wife, Sandra, a passenger on the motorcycle, was also seriously injured and is hospitalized with a possible skull fracture, other fractures and multiple cuts and bruises.

Mrs. Cooper was first taken to Grinnell hospital but was later transferred to the University hospitals in Iowa City.

Driver of the car, Ronald DeBont, RFD, Malcom, was not injured.

According to eyewitnesses, the crash occurred about 7 p.m. just in front of the driveway at the A & W Root Beer stand west of Grinnell. The motorcycle was headed west and was just gaining speed after leaving the city limits. DeBont was traveling east and was attempting to make a left turn into the A & W drive entrance. DeBont told investigating officers he was traveling at about 15 m.p.h. at the time of impact.

Point of impact was on the north portion of the highway. Both riders were thrown from the motorcycle, over the motor-cycle and to the pavement. An ambulance was summoned at once and the victims rushed to the hospital. Cooper died shortly after arrival, reportedly of severe head injuries.

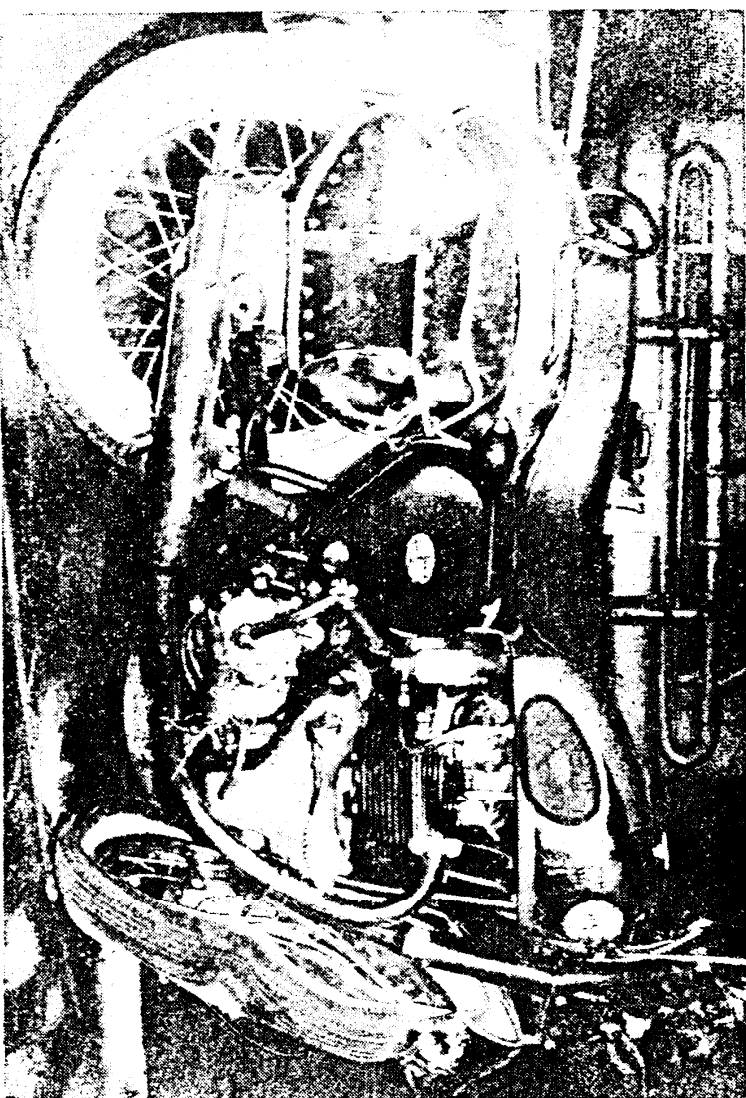
Strangely enough, the fatal crash took place less than a half-mile west of the point where another motorcyclist lost his life only last Sept. 7th. In that crash, Larry Deal, 17-year-old Grinnell high school student, was killed when his cycle collided with an automobile.

The accidents differed in that the car hitting the Deal cycle was pulling out on the highway at the time of collision.

Thursday's fatality served as a grim reminder of the mounting death toll on Iowa highways this year. With the year only half gone, the 1961 motor vehicle death total is running about 50 over that of a year ago. On Thursday that same day Sheriff Bill Welsh had issued an appeal to the motorists to be extra careful while driving.

An investigation of the fatal crash is currently being investigated by officers and a report of the investigation is expected to be forthcoming soon. Called to the scene were Sheriff Welsh, Grinnell Patrolman Kenneth Gearhart, and Highway Patrolmen Gerald Kahler and Paul Gearhart.

The crash victim was the son of Marvin and Bessie Dick Cooper of Rte. 2, Kellogg, and was born Aug. 16th, 1939 in cycle and to the pavement. An ambulance was summoned at once and the victims rushed to the hospital, was united in 1959, in Grinnell, and on July 3rd.



VICTIM'S MOTORCYCLE — Shown here is the motorcycle which was operated by Ralph Cooper of Grinnell, 21-year-old father of two children, who died of injuries received last Thursday evening when his machine was struck by an automobile. Cooper's wife, Sandra, also received serious injuries and is now hospitalized in Iowa City. This was the first, traffic fatality recorded in Poweshiek county this year.

marriage with Sandra Irene Helen (Mary Helen) Long Nichols. Mrs. Roger (Mary Helen) Long Nichols, on Manhattan Beach, Calif., and Mrs. Betty June Cooper at the family home.

To this union were born two sons, Randy Wayne, age 1½, and Michael Wayne, age 6 months. More recently, Mr. Cooper was employed by C & K Transfer Co. of Grinnell.

In addition to his wife Sandra, children and parents, Mr. Cooper is survived by one brother and two sisters: Charles the Smith Funeral Home with the Rev. J. Lester Williams, pastor of the Calvary Baptist church, officiating. Vocal music was provided by Mrs. J. Lester Williams, accompanied by Mrs. Leonard Pearce at the organ. Pallbearers were Carl Buchmeier, Eugene Campbell, James Allgood, Donald Durr, Denver Oliver, Jr., and Dennis Porter. Burial was in Rock Creek cemetery west of Grinnell.

Grinnell Men Head For Swim Pool

Month W Colder A Year Ago ----