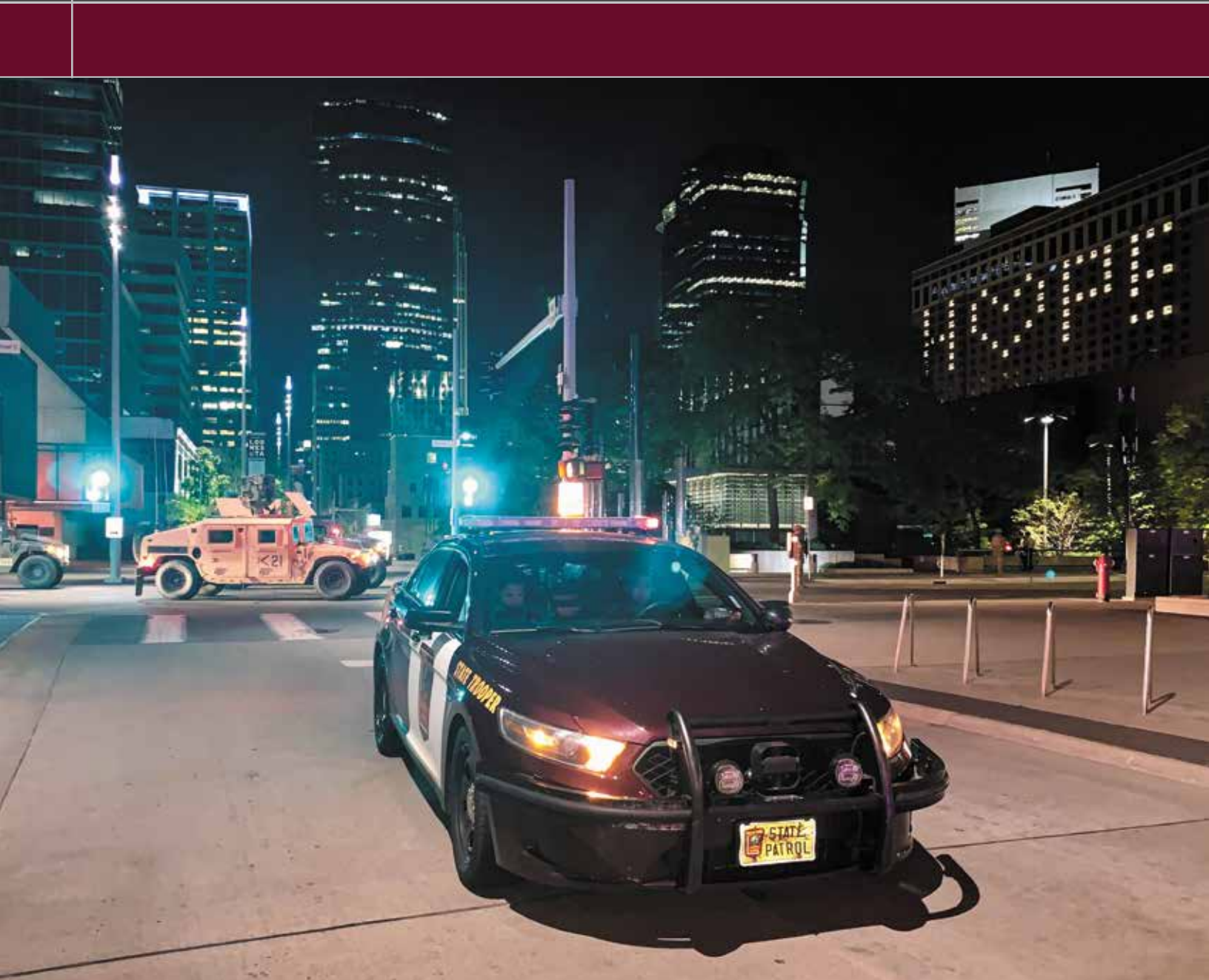


# MINNESOTA TROOPER

Volume 36 • Number 1 • February 2021





# Thank you Troopers for what you do and for who you are!

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## MINNESOTA TROOPER

Minnesota Trooper is published three times annually by the Minnesota State Patrol Troopers Association.

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# What does the MSPTA do for its Members?

## This is what your \$25 per paycheck provides:

- Negotiate the MLEA Contract
- Representation during an Internal Affairs Investigation
- Representation at Critical Incident
- Lobbying at the Capitol
- Representation in the Grievance Process
- Guidance on Worker's Comp Issues
- Education in Retirement Planning
- The *Minnesota Trooper* Magazine
- Quarterly District Association Meetings
- Hardship fund for members who experience a unique hardship such as a natural disaster, illness, or loss of home due to a fire
- Membership into the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association including the Legal Defense Fund
- Membership into the National Trooper Coalition
- A voice on the State Patrol Equipment and Safety Committee



Mike LeDoux • MSPTA President

# President's Report



## Meet Our New President

I am proud to have assumed the role as President of the Troopers Association and I am humbled to be the representative for such a talented and dedicated group that provides security, safety, and service to Minnesotans. I am proud to continue the tradition of association service from District 2700. I had the privilege to work with prior Association Presidents Dennis Olson and Tim Jensen, who were not only friends but also mentors as I began my career. Like many in our ranks I have a proud family tradition of public service. My great grandfather George Lane Sr. began his law enforcement career with the Duluth Police Department in 1923. He was followed by his son and my grandfather George Lane Jr. in 1942, who in turn was followed by his son, my uncle Joel Lane. My nephew Richard has continued this proud tradition becoming the fifth generation to wear the badge. While the shade of my uniform may be different, I am proud to have had the opportunity to serve the Duluth community since transferring to 2730 station in 1997. While history will no doubt view 2020 as one of the most challenging for our profession, wear your badge as proudly as the day you had it pinned on your chest. Know that the vast majority of the people we serve appreciate the level of sacrifice made every day on their behalf.

Be loyal to each other, the profession, and your families. The word loyal is part of our oath as State Troopers. While some may try to turn this word into something it's not, it's vital to our success. Loyalty was front and center in May when the whole agency was asked to deploy to Minneapolis, leaving behind our families and responsibilities to help quell the unrest while protecting those that wished to protest peacefully. This loyalty is on constant display as troopers continue to deploy where needed to maintain public safety. One of the fundamental requirements of government is the security and protection of its citizens which is why its mentioned in the State Constitution and part of our oath. Be loyal to our families and recognize that this year has placed additional stress and anxiety on our loved

ones as we have remained working throughout the pandemic and the unrest. Recognize that our loved ones appreciate simple things like the sound the Velcro makes as you remove your protective vest at the end of a shift, knowing you have returned home safely. When you have the opportunity, spend quality time with our best advocates, our families.

As we look to 2021, be ready for whatever comes our way. I have no doubt we will once again rise to the occasion when called upon. Whether that is a weather event that shuts down significant portions of the state or other public safety matters. I hope the New Year brings hope, happiness and good health to you all. ♦

*Be Proud!  
Mike #88*

I will leave you with one of my grandfather's favorite Irish Blessings

May those who love us love us,  
And those that don't love us,  
May God turn their hearts,  
And if He doesn't turn their hearts,  
May He turn their ankles,  
So we'll know them by their limping.





Left: 5 generations of law enforcement in my family from top to bottom George Lane Sr., George Lane Jr., Joel Lane, Mike LeDoux, and Richard LeDoux.  
Center: George Land Sr. Right: George Lane Jr.



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Colonel Matt Langer

## Colonel's Message



# Our Work Continues

I hope your New Year's resolutions are still in place by the time you read this edition of the magazine. It is always enjoyable to usher in a new year, but particularly so this year. 2020 was difficult on so many levels and yet also successful. With the turning of the page into 2021, I look forward to working with you on our core mission of traffic safety. At the same time, we have the responsibility to prepare for upcoming events like the trials of the former officers in Minneapolis and the construction project across Northern Minnesota.

Hosting one training academy, let alone two, is a major undertaking. It involves multiple divisions within the Department of Public Safety as well as hundreds of State Patrol personnel. The various phases of the recruitment, application, hiring, and training process touch nearly every position either directly or indirectly. It is worth pausing to thank everyone involved. Without their effort, we would not be able to carry on the legacy of our great agency by welcoming the newest generation into our ranks. Those who work directly with training know the work that is involved. Everyone else is indirectly involved by being spread a little thinner as the demands of backgrounds, staff officers, and academy instructors pull resources out of the stations.

The two academy approach in 2021 will allow us to train traditional applicants faster, while still focusing on the recruitment opportunities that come with LETO. This is a major undertaking, but one that is necessary for funding reasons in addition to the reality that we need Troopers on the road as soon as possible. I appreciate the continued emphasis on new ideas related to recruitment. Gone are the days where we could sit back and watch as hundreds of applicants vie for a chance to become a State Trooper. That means we have to work harder and smarter at generating the leads that result in successful applicants.

Some statistics help put our civil unrest work into perspective. Last year, we had our Mobile Response Team (MRT)

deployed over 78 days at the State Capitol. That resulted in over 20,000 hours of work to protect the Capitol and surrounding complex. What is not represented in those numbers are the many other times we augmented staffing for events that didn't rise to the level of needing MRT. Many thanks to all who have spent time protecting this invaluable asset to our state. You traveled from all over, spent nights in hotels, and worked in some tough conditions to ensure we were successful in our mission at Capitol Security.

I wish you the best in the New Year. Keep the faith. We will succeed, not because of our individual ability, but because each one of us contributes to the collective strength of the organization. While we are working in a complicated world and in a difficult profession, our core values continue to be the foundation of our past and future success. ♦



To Our Local Heroes

We thank you.  
We appreciate you.  
We support you.

Our team of Thrivent financial professionals is comprised of former law enforcement officers and military veterans. Having completed our public service careers, we now help officers, first responders, military personnel and their families craft financial strategies to help protect their loved ones while paving a road to retirement.

If you've devoted much of your life to keeping others safe, we've been in your shoes. We're highly familiar with your pension plan, investments and other benefits. We can alert you to common misconceptions about those assets and help you understand what they likely will—and won't—provide.

— Valor Group



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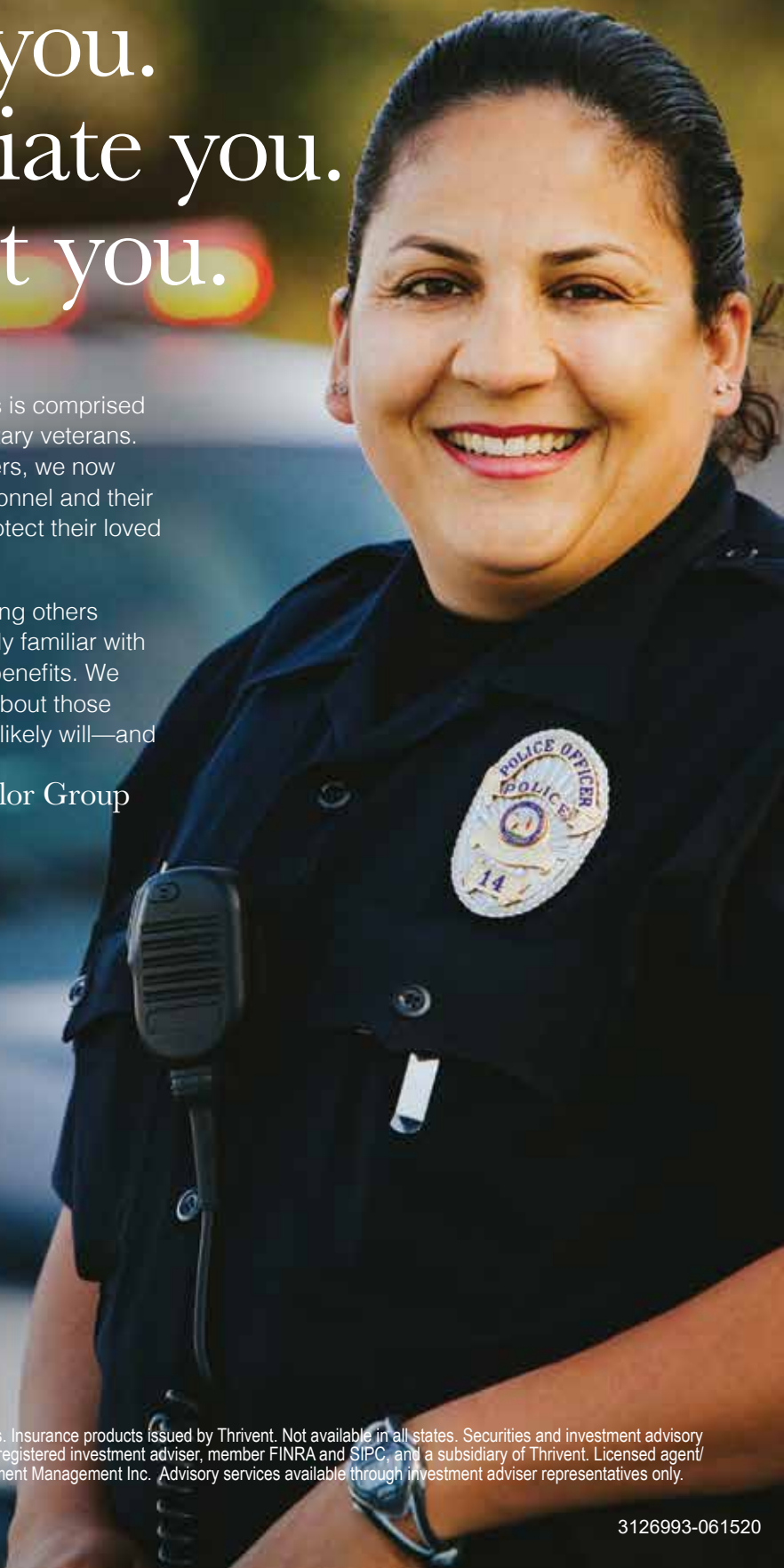
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# DAYS ★ GONE ★ BY

## Oath of Minnesota State Patrol troopers

I do solemnly swear:

*To support* the Constitution of the United States, the constitution and laws of the state of Minnesota and that I will, faithfully and impartially, discharge the duties of a State Patrol trooper, employed and designated under, and pursuant to, the provisions of Chapter 299D and all acts amendatory thereto;

*To serve* the state of Minnesota and the United States of America honestly and faithfully and, at all times, to fulfill my oath as a State Patrol trooper;

*To be loyal* to my supervisors and fellow troopers, and to obey and enforce the law without fear, favor or discrimination as to class, color, race or creed;

*To help* those in danger or distress and, if necessity arises, to lay down my life rather than swerve from the path of duty; and

*To conduct* myself at all times in accordance with the highest moral standards and never commit any act that will reflect discredit on the Minnesota State Patrol or any member thereof.

All this I solemnly swear to the best of my knowledge and ability, so help me God.

MAY 1986/5

### The makings of a Minnesota Trooper —then and now—

	1955	1985
<b>Age Requirement</b>	Between 23 and 35 years old (age limits waived for veterans)	Over 18 years old
<b>Training/Educational Requirements</b>	High school graduate or equivalent	Must possess valid Minnesota Peace Officer's license, or have completed basic police training and have certification as a full-time peace officer in a state with which Minnesota has reciprocity and have passed the P.O.S.T. Board exemption exam.
<b>Examinations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Written test</li> <li>2. Oral interview</li> <li>3. "Rigid character investigation"</li> <li>4. "Rigid" physical exam</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Written test</li> <li>2. Oral examination</li> <li>3. Background investigation</li> <li>4. Psychological evaluation</li> <li>5. Medical examination</li> <li>6. Physical strength and agility test (conducted at Training School)</li> </ol>
<b>Training School</b>	Candidates receive food and lodging, but <i>no salary</i> .	Candidates receive meals and lodging, and are paid \$6.53 per hour (70% of starting salary).
<b>Yearly Salary Range</b>	\$3,600-\$4,680	\$19,481-\$27,750

# Thank You!



## Dear MSPTA,

Thank you very much for your generous donation and hole sponsor at the 2nd annual Tim Bowe 2.0 Golf Tournament. We had a sunny day with 132 golfers to keep Tim Bowe's memory alive. Time gave the ultimate sacrifice in June of 1997 and he left behind a wife, son and saughter who truly appreciate the way the MN State Patrol and the Troopers Association have always supported the family.

Thank you for your continued support!

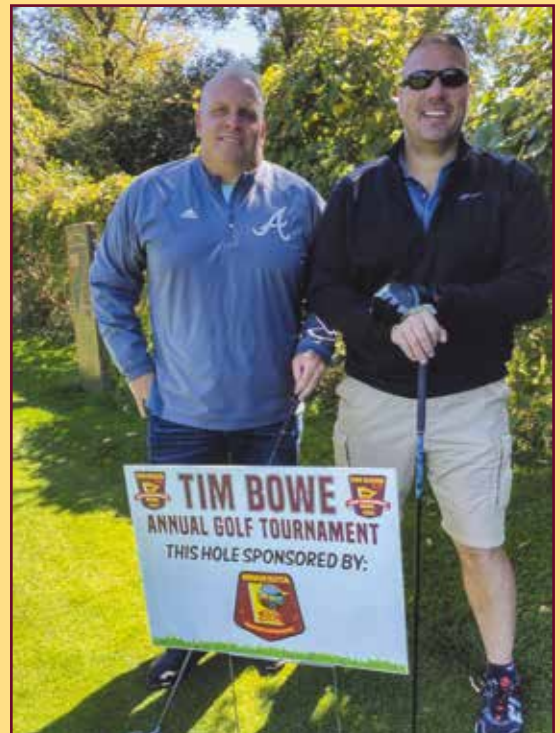
*Jake Ayers, Dave Minkel and Pat Gibbs*

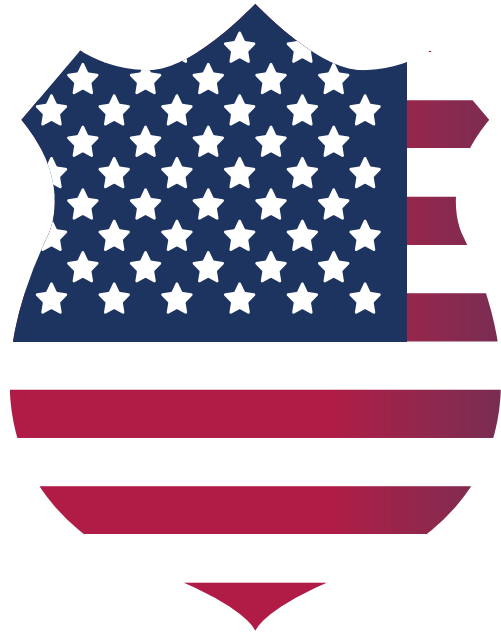
*Dear Friend,*

*"In my memory do an act of kindness each day,  
it is lighting a candle in a world of darkness."*

*With Love*

*Cpl. Timothy J. Bowe – June 11, 1997*





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# Minnesota Retired Peace Officers Association

Remembers those retired peace officers we have lost in 2020



**Wayne Grotberg**  
February 15, 2020 Age 81  
State Patrol 1969 - 1993  
Badge #402



**Norman Nelson**  
August 13, 2020 Age 85  
State Patrol 1960 - 1990  
Badge #106



**Arthur Gensmer**  
December 04, 2020 Age 92  
DNR 1960 - 1987  
K-250 Badge #91



**David Schwanke**  
February 26, 2020 Age 74  
State Patrol 1970 - 1998  
Badge #415



**Thomas Kjellberg**  
September 22, 2020 Age 76  
DNR 1972 - 1999  
K-24 Badge #160



**James Hildebrandt**  
December 09, 2020 Age 74  
State Patrol 1968 - 1998  
Badge #23



**Kenneth LaBoone**  
March 03, 2020 Age 95  
DNR 1948 - 1982  
Badge #K210



**Ivan "Howie" Vetterick**  
October 16, 2020 Age 88  
State Patrol 1957 - 1979  
Badge #291



**David Perry**  
March 31, 2020 Age 80  
State Patrol 1968 - 1994  
Badge #372



**Dave Bulik Jr.**  
October 27, 2020 Age 75  
State Patrol 1967 - 1999  
Badge #351



**Larry Peterson**  
April 01, 2020 Age 82  
DNR 1965 - 1992  
K-26 Badge #128



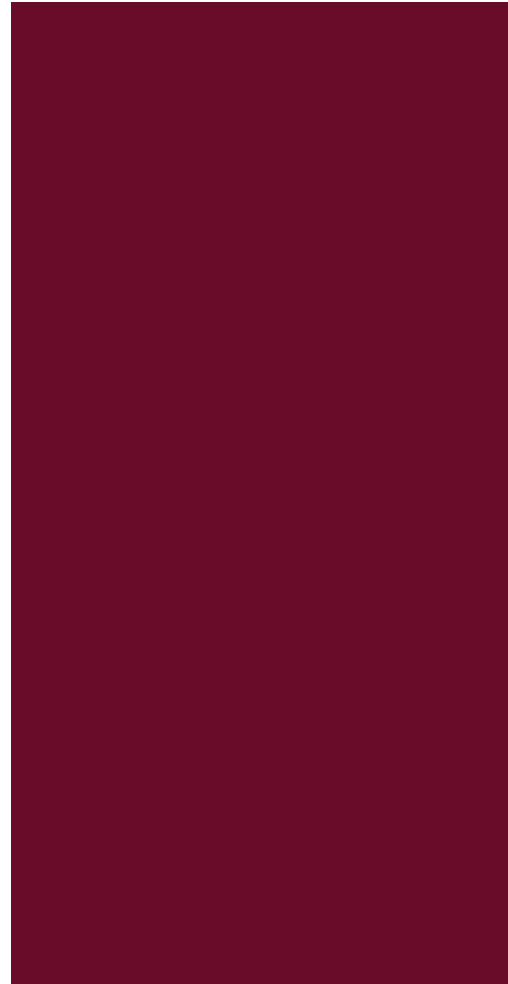
**Donald Monson**  
November 02, 2020 Age 80  
State Patrol 1970 - 1995  
Badge #404



**Russell Wollin**  
July 18, 2020 Age 79  
State Patrol 1969 - 1996  
Badge #397



**Robert Crace Jr.**  
November 29, 2020 Age 77  
State Patrol 1968 - 1998  
Badge #304





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# The Long Road to 8.4



Once upon a time three years ago in a white marble building in St. Paul the MSPTA began a discussion with then Senator Michelle Fischbach about the wage disparity issues being experienced by the men and women of the State Patrol as a result of years without contractual increases. Senator Fischbach had been instrumental in helping the MSPTA change state statute to increase starting pay for recruits entering the academy, so she was well versed on the growing disparity between the State Patrol and our allied agencies. After nearly a decade of collective begging with MMB to no avail. We decided to think outside the box because we were starting to lose experienced troopers to other agencies at unprecedented levels. Recruitment was becoming increasingly competitive and our numbers of applicants were dropping significantly. Troopers in the field worried we would be forced to hire the best of the worst if this continued instead of the best of the best as we were accustomed to hiring. As we researched

the issue, we discovered that many other state law enforcement agencies had experienced a similar problem and enacted legislation to address it.

After Senator Fischbach became Lt. Governor she introduced us to her replacement in Senate District 13, Senator Jeff Howe. Howe had previously been a State Representative and had an impressive legislative track record. When we met him, he mentioned his 35 years of service in the Minnesota National Guard and how he retired from firefighting after a 27-year career. He didn't elaborate on the fact that he had risen to the rank of Lt. Colonel, twice been deployed to Iraq, and was the recipient of two bronze stars. After a friendly exchange of firefighter cop jokes, we began to explain the who, what, when, where, and why we had fallen so far behind in pay. He was a quick study having experienced many of these issues during contract negotiations himself during his career. In short order we formulated

a legislative solution to the pattern settlement problem after studying the best practices of legislation from states such as California, Colorado, Montana, Missouri, Oregon, Texas and Washington.

As the 2019 legislative session began we started the daunting task of educating 201 legislators why intervention was needed to correct a problem that had developed over the last decade. We explained to all who would listen how the wage disparity issue compounded every contractual cycle. As we roamed the marble halls trying to gather signatures on the legislative jackets, we were pleasantly surprised that most legislators were more than willing to sign onto our legislation. Most were unaware that such a large disparity existed. This was a stark contrast to what had been portrayed to our group in negotiations by MMB. We had been repeatedly told over the years that the pattern settlement was the best the legislature would approve

despite concise data showing that we were falling far behind our historic comparable agencies in the seven-county metro area. The argument was made numerous times that state statute 43A.18 required them to assure our compensation was reasonable when compared to similar positions outside state service. We often dreamed if only this statutory violation was citable. After gathering the five required signatures on the senate jacket, we were pleasantly surprised to learn that additional senators were willing to sign on as well and create clone jackets of our legislation. When it was all said and done this legislation was cloned four times and had a total of 25 senators supporting it. On the House side, Representative Jack Considine agreed to author the legislation and understood the issue immediately having had a background in corrections. This legislative jacket was quickly filled with 35 signatures as well and was truly bipartisan when you reviewed the party affiliation associated with the signatures. The next step was to request hearings in the House and Senate Transportation Committees. We appreciated the opportunity given to us by Senator Newman, the chair in the Senate and Representative Hornstein the chair in the House. The testimony before these committees was well received but they ultimately decided to give MMB the opportunity to complete a wage study to help them determine proper compensation for troopers that could be presented in the 2020 legislative session. As the 2019 legislative session came to a close, we started to wonder if critics of our legislation were right in their belief that this legislation was dead and would never get passed since it had never been done in Minnesota. Not willing to quit or except failure we renewed our resolve to continue the fight for parity. As the motion sickness wore off from riding the legislative roller coaster, we

prepared for the 2020 legislative session. Senator Howe continually assured us that this was not the end and vowed he would continue the fight because “it’s the right thing to do”.

The MSPTA began the 2020 session with renewed optimism since the economy was positive and the state had projected a significant budget surplus. As predicted, recent contractual increases for allied agencies had exacerbated the wage disparity. Data we provided only strengthened our disparity arguments and MMB had failed to follow through on the promised compensation study. While we had become accustom to this type of treatment from MMB the elected officials were not as accepting and began drafting legislation of their own to provide the necessary data. Just days before the MSPTA prepared to make our case to the Transportation Committee the COVID crisis shut down the legislature. Despite the pandemic, Senator Howe and legislative leaders on both sides of the aisle reached agreement on legislation in May requiring salary surveys for troopers in 2021, 2023, 2027, and 2031. The intent of this legislation is to make appropriate increases to troopers’ salaries as a result of the study.

As we processed the pandemic and how to navigate in our new reality, unrest erupted forcing the entire State Patrol to deploy to Minneapolis and St. Paul. The marble building had now become our temporary residence and legislation was an afterthought. While we had walked the halls many times, we could honestly say we had never scoped out the most ideal place to sleep or thought to bring a blanket or pillow in the event we had to do an all-nighter. We would soon learn this was an error in judgment as we spent the night on the cold marble floors in what could only be described as the largest slumber party ever held. As one day turned into two and two into three, we were pleasantly surprised when Senator Howe arrived to greet the troops and express his gratitude for making sure the “people’s house” remained unscathed. Senate Majority Leader Gazelka also made an appearance and expressed his gratitude for the sacrifices being made by the deployed troopers. He also indicated he would continue to make the wage disparity issue a priority.

When the unrest subsided the MSPTA returned to legislative activities and Senator Howe continued to work on our behalf for several months to find a compromise that would receive

**Pictured L-R  
Senate Majority Leader  
Paul Gazelka, MSPTA  
President Mike LeDoux,  
Senator Jeff Howe**



bipartisan support. In October, after countless hours of negotiations, Senator Howe was able to reach a legislative compromise that provided an 8.4 percent market adjustment for State Troopers effective the date after enactment. This legislation was signed into law by Governor Walz on October 21, 2020.

Despite numerous obstacles this year the MSPTA stayed focused on our goal. The membership played an invaluable role by emailing senators and representatives. Know that your efforts mattered! We would like to take this opportunity to thank the champion of our legislation, Senator Jeff Howe. His never give up attitude is the reason this legislation made it into law. He is a true statesman, patriot, and friend. Without the support of Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka and Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman and many others this legislation would not have come to fruition.

The MSPTA hopes this legislative action will improve the wages for all law enforcement officers that have fallen behind. We will continue to strive to recruit, retain, and retire the best of the best.

**Supporting Senators:** Abeler, B. Anderson, P. Anderson, Benson, Carlson, Chamberlain, Clausen, Dahms, Draheim, Eichorn, Eken, Frentz, Goggin, Howe, Ingebrigtsen, Jasinski, Laine, Lang, Limmer, Rarick, Ruud, Senjem, Simonson, Tomassoni, Weber

**Supporting Representatives:** Albright, Becker-Finn, Brand, L. Carlson, Considine, Daniels, Daudt, Dettmer, Franson, Grossell, Heinrich, Hornstein, Huot, Johnson, Lien, Lillie, Lippert, Lislegard, Mariani, Marquart, McDonald, Murphy, M. Nelson, Nornes, O'Driscoll, Olson, Pinto, Poston, Schultz, Sundin, Tabke, Torkelson, West, Wolgamott, Zerwas ♦

*It is not the critic who counts;  
not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles,  
or where the doer of deeds could have done them better.  
The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena,  
whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood;  
who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again,  
because there is no effort without error and shortcoming;  
but who does actually strive to do the deeds;  
who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions;  
who spends himself in a worthy cause;  
who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and  
who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly,  
so that his place shall never  
be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.*

-Theodore Roosevelt



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# SGT. Thill SP162 Awarded the Purple Heart

By Trooper Nick Hanson

**T**he Purple Heart award has a history that reaches back to the American Revolution. It's awarded in the name of the President of the United States to any member of the Armed Forces who has been wounded, killed, or died during enemy action.

Sgt. Allen Thill SP 162, who is currently the station sergeant for west metro dogwatch, is also a Major in the United States Air Force and a recent recipient of the Purple Heart.

Major Thill was critically injured during his most recent

deployment to Iraq as an Officer in Charge of all Weather Operations in Support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

Major Thill started his military career when he enlisted in November 2000 as a Weather Forecaster in the 208th Weather Flight. The Weather Flight supports the 34th Infantry Division, 34th Combat Aviation Brigade and the 148th Fighter Wing. During Major Thill's military career, he was deployed numerous times and has been associated with several high profile operations. Some of Major Thill's most distinguished deployments include a 2003 deployment to



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Tallil Air Base in Iraq supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. In 2004 and 2006 Major Thill was deployed to Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo in support of Operation Joint Guardian. In 2005, he supported an Aerial Reconnaissance mission in the jungles of Colombia gaining intelligence on drug trafficking under Operation Palmetto Ghost. In 2015, Major Thill was deployed to Cannon AFB in New Mexico where he was supported 3 special operations squadrons whose mission was to fly predators and reapers over Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen, and Somalia. Major Thill was in charge of relaying and predicting critical weather information throughout numerous countries supporting airborne missions. While deployed, Major Thill helped locate high value targets throughout the world for all branches of the military.

Major Thill was awarded the Purple Heart and Meritorious Service Medal for the events that transpired on March 11, 2020. At 19:30 hours Major Thill was laying in his bed when he heard the first explosion. Major Thill then heard several more rocket strikes in very close proximity to his living quarters. He frantically grabbed his ballistic vest, and while attempting to put it on, he was struck. The rocket strike threw him across the room. He lost consciousness, and after regaining his composure, he noticed smoke entering his room. He could hear several people yelling as he exited his room and attempted to get to the nearest bunker. After reaching the bunker, and although injured, knew others needed his help. After returning to his living quarters, he realized his room was struck by one of the rockets. The roof was peeled back and the walls were completely pushed out. Major Thill heard people close by asking for help. As a first responder, he approached a woman that was sitting in an adjacent room holding a male with a severe head injury. Major Thill gave clear and concise medical instructions to her but knew the injured man needed immediate care. While suffering from his own injuries Major Thill continued to talk to the man in order to keep him responsive until medics arrived. Major Thill was then transferred to the medical clinic for his own injuries and later medevacked to Camp Taji to Baghdad. The initial diagnosis was that he suffered a concussion during the blast and started treatment for a traumatic brain injury.

After returning home from deployment Major Thill had an uphill battle to return to road and recover from his extensive injuries. Since returning to work Major Thill continues to suffer from balance issues, headaches and sensitivity to light. Major Thill hopes to make a full recovery in the near future. ♦





# Your 2020-2021 Executive Council



## **Dan Beasley** **Vice President**

I joined the Minnesota State Patrol in 1996. I have been previously assigned to the 2510, 2520 and 2610 stations. I was also a 2500 District Investigator. I am currently assigned as a 2600 District Investigator.

I am married and have two children, ages 14 and 16. We have a hobby farm in rural Wright County. I spend much of my free time farming or doing kid's activities.

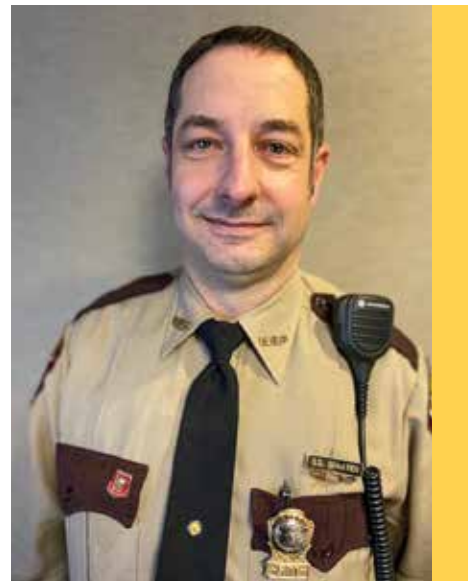
I am looking forward to my new role as Vice President and will continue to serve on the negotiating and legislative committees.

## **Scott Braaten** **Northern Delegate-at-Large**

I started with the State Patrol in May 1999. I currently work the 2730 station where I have been since 2000. I have been the Northern Delegate for the last two years and an active member in the Trooper Association.

I live in Duluth with my wife Jamie and our son Brady. I enjoy hunting, fishing, traveling and working on our hunting cabin in my spare time.

As a part of our Association I want to continue to our efforts in making our pay competitive again and keeping our Association well-funded.

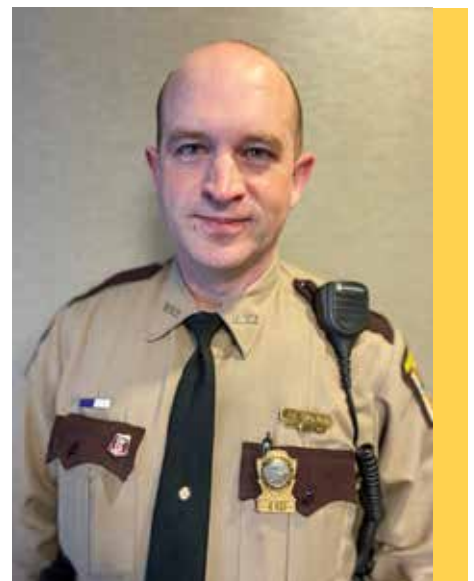


## **Jon Carlson** **District 2700**

Trooper Jon Carlson District 2700 delegate since 2016. Worked in 4450 from April 2009 to July 2011 and have been in Duluth 2730 since then.

I enjoy hiking, biking, and camping with my wife Kari and children Logan (9), Connor (6), and Molly (3).

I will continue my diligent representation of our members.





## **Jack Danielson** **District 3200**

T/Sgt, District 3200 delegate.

Trooper since 1998

Roseau Station for 11 years

Bemidji Station for 12 years

Delegate since 2012



## **Kenny Dellwo** **District 2200**

My name is Kenny Dellwo, SP 11. I have worked as a trooper in the 2220 (Mankato) station for the last 3 ½ years. I am the District 2200 representative. Before transferring to 2220 I worked in the 3130 (Grand Rapids) station for 2 years. My down time is often spent chasing fins and feathers with my two hunting dogs. I look forward to continuing the proud tradition of the MSPTA when it comes to representing the best interests for the hard working troopers throughout our state.

## **Gerald Hanson**

### **District 25900**

My name is Gerald Hanson. I am the 2900 delegate. Have served on the board for 8 years now. 22 years of service in Law Enforcement. I am happy to continue to serve the troopers of MN.



## **Nick Hanson**

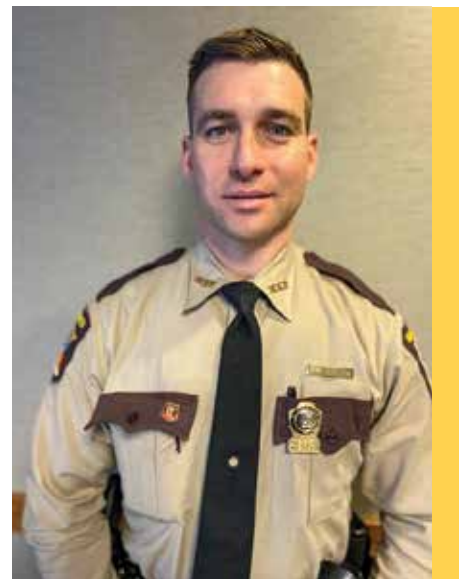
### **District 2500**

Class of 2016 District 2500 Station 4550

My wife, Kellie and have been married since 2013. We have a 9 month old GSD and a 9 year old Pit Bull.

I enjoy dog training, hiking, weightlifting, and competing in BBQ competitions.

As the 2500 District Delegate, I want to play an important role in negotiating a fair contract and supporting the district troopers.





## Rick Harjes Secretary

I started with the State Patrol in 2015 with the 56th Academy. I've most recently been working in the Training Center in Shoreview as the IT Coordinator. I was the 2600 District Deletegate for a short time then elected into the Secretary position. I've been married to my wife, Adrienne, since October 2013 and we have a daughter named Adalyn (4 years) and a son named Isaac (2 years). I love fishing, shooting, camping and single track mountain biking. My goals for the association are to ensure our association remains financially strong and utilize technology to improve communication to members and be a resource for members. I hope this year to get the MSPTA mobile app operational!



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## Mike LeDoux President

Started June 1994, 4460/4470 (St. Paul) currently assigned 2730 (Duluth)

Executive Council Experience

President 2020-Present

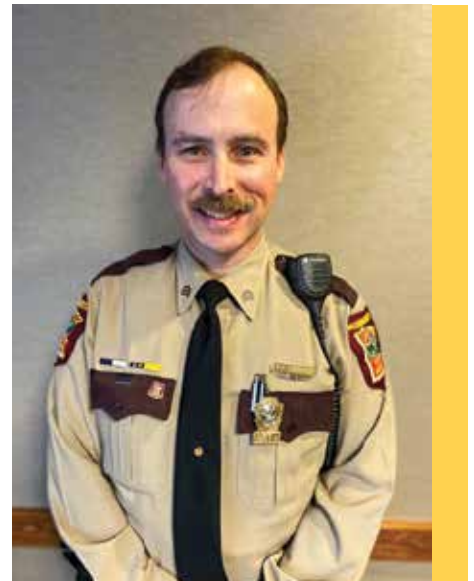
Vice President 2016-2020

District 2700 Delegate 2014-2015

District 2700 Alternate Delegate

I have been married to my beautiful and patient wife Melisa since 2003. We enjoy hiking, hunting, fishing, and traveling. I also enjoy water skiing and playing hockey.

Goals for Association: Return the “negotiation” to the contract negotiations process and break the pattern settlement “take it or leave it” trend. Promote the use of the Legislative Auditor salary and benefits survey (299D.03 Subd. 2a.) to improve wages and benefits for current and future members. Remain proactive at the legislature on issues affecting the membership. Continue to educate legislators on our wage disparity issue and seek appropriate pay increases so we can continue to recruit, retain, and retire the best. Ensure the State Patrol Retirement Fund remains sustainable for active, retired, and future members. Protect the financial resources of the association for future generations. Enforce and improve current contract language. Promote association education and involvement with all members. Prepare the next generation to assume leadership roles in the MSPTA. Promote the security, safety, and service provided to Minnesotans daily by members of the Troopers Association.





## Lee McClure District 2600

Began with MSP in 2013 – Currently assigned to 2630 Station

Family: Wife – Melissa (married for 18 years); Children: Brenna (15) & Elijah (10)

Hobbies and Interests – Hunting, Fishing, Outdoor activities and working on the farm

My goals with the association – Be a good, transparent representative for the troops



## Richard Orpen Treasurer

I graduated from the University of Minnesota in 2003 and started with the Patrol in March 2004. I worked the first five years of my career in the 2520 station and the last eleven years in the 2540 station. I've done many jobs with the Patrol over the years but currently only do background investigations. My wife and I live in Oak Grove with our 12 year old daughter, 5 year old son and 6 month old Doberman puppy. I like to play board games, read, go hiking with my family and go on road trips. I hope to be a positive influence on the council as we continue the good work the council has done over the last few years.



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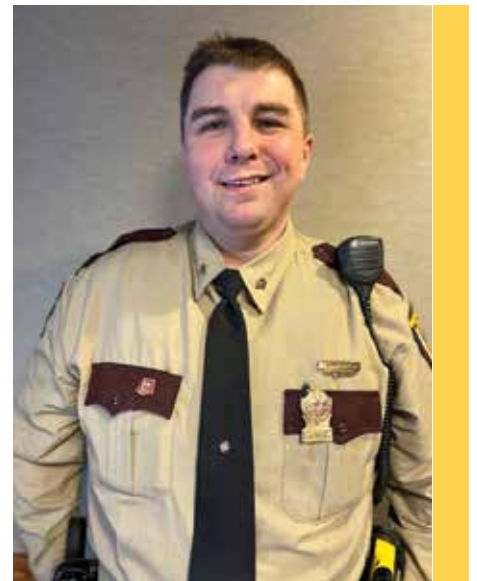
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## Travis Pearson

### District 3100

I'm Travis Pearson currently the Station Sgt of the 3120 Hibbing station, where I have worked since my career started in 2003. I currently have the pleasure of serving as the District 3100 delegate since 2019. I live in rural Mountain Iron with my wife and two kids. My goals while in the association is to ensure Troopers contractual rights are protected, do what I can to fix the wage disparity issue, and help Troopers with any work issues I am able to assist with.



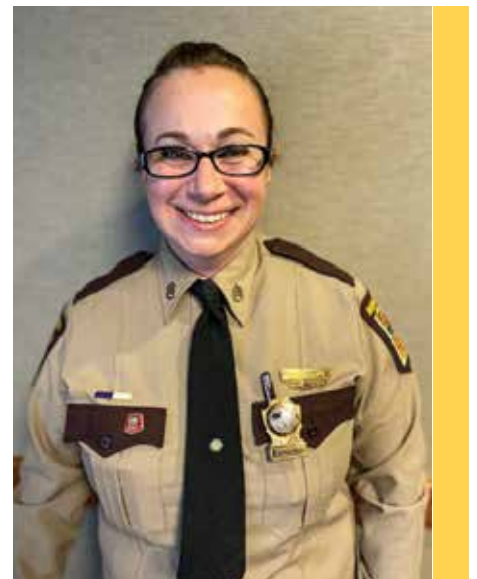
## Kelly Phillips

### District 2000

I started with the State Patrol in 2007, in the 4550 beat, after working for the Minnetonka Police Department for 6 years. In 2009 I join the Crash Reconstruction team and worked there until 2016 when I transferred to the Training and Development Section as the IT Coordinator. In 2018, I returned to the Crash Reconstruction team and have been there since.

My daughter, Mia, turned 10 years old this year. She keeps me fairly busy with basketball, volleyball, and Girl Scouts. About a year ago we added a puppy to the family, because I thought I needed more chaos in my life! In my downtime, I love to travel (especially to the north shore, MN Wild Hockey, and spending time with my friends and family.

My goals for association is to continue to have open communication with command staff and keep attendance high at our meetings. I strongly believe having several smaller meetings around the metro and St. Cloud area has been a benefit to many this year. I also want to continue to fight for what is right for the Troopers and be the voice that asks the hard questions.





## **Jason Theel**

### **Southern Delegate-at-Large**

I'm Jason Theel SP100, I hail out of 4600. I moved to 4600 about a year ago from 2400. I took over for Pat Miles as Southern Delegate. If you ever have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me. I'm here to work for you. I believe we need a strong relationship with admin and ALL work together to make this a great place to work. I have been married for 21 years and have two great kids ages 8 and 10. We enjoy family trips and golfing.



## **Robert Veldkamp**

### **District 2300**

My name is Robert Veldkamp. I live in Edgerton with my wife of 27 years and family. I started in Law Enforcement working as a Deputy in Murray County MN in August of 1993. I started in the Patrol in 1999 out of the best academy (2nd) where I was stationed in the 4450 station. In August of 2000 I transferred to the 2330 station where I am currently stationed. I enjoy spending time with family and help coach the local high school girls' basketball program. I am honored to be on the association and look forward to keeping our agency improving every day.

## **Darcy Weinrich** **District 2800**

Hello, I started working as a police officer in 1992. I have worked for the MSP since 1999 and have been a MSPTA Delegate going on 3 years and currently am assigned to the Brainerd station (2840). I am happy to represent the great troopers of the Brainerd District in the MSPTA and try to help however I can. We enjoy great food and comradery at our MSPTA meetings!!

On a personal level, I have been married 22 years to my wife Tasha. I also have 2 kids, Courtney age 18, going to college at Arizona State and my son, Cole age 16, a junior in high school. I have a 6 month old German Wirehair Pointer, a 6 year old yellow lab and 3 egg laying chickens. I spend a lot of time on the lake with family/friends, bowfishing at night and in North Dakota in the fall hunting.

I look forward to retiring one day and am VERY thankful for the Minnesota Legislators and MSPTA members who have worked hard to support our wages and retirement.



## **Todd Zynda** **District 2100**

I attended the 46th State Patrol Academy in 2001 and worked in the East Metro District until 2003. Since 2003 I have worked the 2130 station in the Rochester District.

I live on a small acreage and enjoy working on various projects, but dislike my tendency of creating too many at the same time. During the spring I enjoy umpiring high school baseball, and VFW/Legion/Town Ball during the summer. I also enjoy taking trips with my wife of nearly 30 years on motorcycle trips during the warmer months.

I continue to learn and improve in my duties as delegate, and strive to maintain respectful communication between the Association, its members, and the State Patrol.



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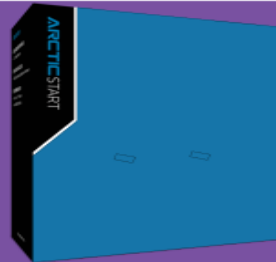
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# A Picture is Worth a 1000 Words

by David Hoffman SP298

**Trooper David Hoffman SP298 & Arik Matson Waseca Police Department**

Like most officer's, I'm not a big fan of taking photos in uniform. And like most officers over the age of 30, I don't take selfies in uniform. But in October of 2018, when a friend and old partner asked to take a selfie with me as we both ended up working together at the Trump Rally in Rochester, I obliged. At the time I had no idea how much that photo would end up meaning to me.

On January 6th 2020, my friend Arik Matson was shot in the head while on duty with the Waseca Police Department and suffered a traumatic brain injury. Most of you have heard the story, so I am not going to go into details.

Arik and I were friends before either of us worked in law enforcement. We both worked in the Freeborn County Detention Center together and were

both promoted to patrol deputies around the same time. Arik ended up working for the Waseca Police Department and I, with the Minnesota State Patrol.

Over the last year Arik has made amazing progress in his recovery. He has already surpassed goals that some thought he would never accomplish. Arik's drive to move forward and not give up has been an inspiration to many officers. He has shown that you can overcome unthinkable odds and survive if you have the right mind set.

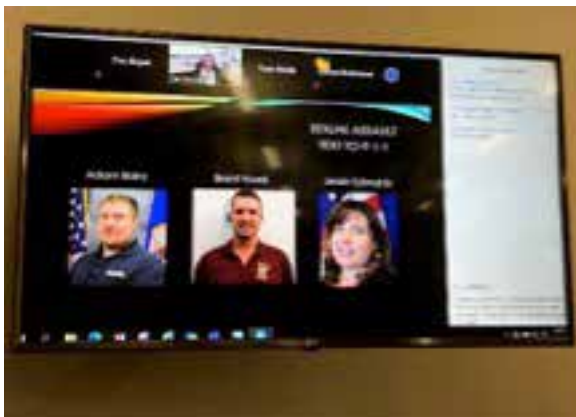
I had the honor to present a check from the Trooper Association to Arik and his wife Megan. I would like to say thank you to the association and every trooper on behalf of Arik and Megan. Everyone's continued support and prayers have been greatly appreciated. ♦





# Making a Difference Award

presented by  
**APCO/NENA/MN SHERIFF'S ASSOCIATION**



In the mid-morning hours August 19, 2019 the Ottertail County Sheriff's Office dispatch center received a unique call. It was an early-stages Text to 911 call. For the MN State Patrol, Text to 911 is not uncommon, just that not many of them are received.

The story behind the call was a teenage girl had been sexually assaulted by her step-father (driver of the truck). They were in a red semi-truck with black and yellow lines pulling a trailer that had red and yellow tarps on it heading westbound on I94 west of Fergus Falls.

RCO Brent Howk answered the call from Ottertail County and dispatched the information to Troopers; while Ottertail County was continuing to text the complainant. Clay County was also advised of the situation. After a successful phone ping on the complainant's cell phone, the area was narrowed down to be near Barnesville. Trooper Lonnie Wambach and an Ottertail County deputy located and stopped the vehicle near Downer. The suspect was arrested.

RCO Brent Howk; as well as the MSP Communications Section (along with Adam Barry of Ottertail County and Jessie Edwards of Red River Regional Dispatch Center and their agencies) were recognized by the APCO/ NENA/MN Sheriffs Association and received a Making a Difference Award at the 2020 Annual conference, held virtually this year. ♦



On November 24, Law Enforcement Liaison Bill Hammes and Office of Traffic Safety Director Mike Hanson presented RCO Michelle Lichy (RTMC) with a Certificate of Recognition and challenge coin on behalf of the Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) Program. RCO Lichy is a vital part of the program dispatching shifts to support the TZD mission. In Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, there is a dedicated dispatcher for Troopers and allied agencies working together during TZD enforcement. In 2020, RCO Lichy worked 28 TZD shifts, in addition to working her regularly scheduled duty shifts. ♦

## Toward Zero Deaths Recognition



# In the Line of Duty Injuries: Minnesota State Troopers

by Jen Yackley



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## Workers' Compensation Benefits

Minnesota State Troopers are entitled to a variety of benefits to cover medical expenses and wage loss if they are injured in the line of duty. Whether the injuries are due to a car accident, a lifting incident, a slip-and-fall while chasing a suspect, or wear-and-tear over time, if the State Trooper's work activities are a substantial contributing factor to the injuries, the Trooper is eligible for Minnesota workers' compensation benefits.

Minnesota workers' compensation covers all injuries arising out of and in the course and scope of employment. This includes physical injuries incurred as the result of a specific incident, physical injuries that occur over time due to repetitive use or wear-and-tear, injuries that aggravate or accelerate a pre-existing condition, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that is the result of work-related traumatic exposures.

Minnesota workers' compensation benefits include medical expense benefits for reasonable and necessary medical care, including hospital charges, imaging like MRIs or CT scans, diagnostic tests, surgery, prescriptions, physical therapy, mental health care, chiropractic care, and mileage expenses. If a Minnesota State Trooper misses time off work or experiences reduced pay as the result of a work-related injury, workers' compensation pays wage loss benefits including temporary total disability (TTD) benefits, temporary partial disability (TPD) benefits, and/or permanent total disability (PTD) benefits. A State Trooper may also

be eligible for rehabilitation services, including retraining benefits, if that Trooper cannot return to his or her former position as a Minnesota State Trooper as the result of a work-related injury.

### **MSRS State Patrol Pan Duty Disability Benefits**

Minnesota State Troopers who suffer in the line of duty injuries may also be eligible for Duty Disability benefits under the Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS) State Patrol Plan. To qualify for Duty Disability benefits, a Trooper must demonstrate that he or she (1) sustained an injury, (2) during the performance of inherently dangerous activities specific to Troopers, (3) resulting in a disability that prevents the Trooper from performing his or her normal duties, (4) for at least 12 months.

Duty Disability benefits are payable at a base rate of 60% of the Trooper's high-five salary for the first 20 years of service, plus an additional 3% per year of service beyond 20 years of service. Unlike State Patrol Plan retirement benefits, Duty Disability benefits are non-taxable through age 55 or longer, in some limited circumstances, including if a Trooper becomes eligible for Duty Disability after the age of 55 but before the Trooper has achieved 20 years of service.

There are extremely complex rules regarding the coordination of Minnesota workers' compensation benefits and Duty Disability benefits for State Troopers. Discuss these coordination issues with an attorney experienced in handling both workers'

compensation and MSRS pension benefits.

### **Health Insurance Continuation Benefits Under Minn. Stat. § 299A.465**

Minnesota State Troopers who qualify for MSRS State Patrol Plan Duty Disability benefits are also eligible for continued health insurance benefits under Minn. Stat. § 299A.465. This statute requires the Department of Public Safety to continue to provide health insurance coverage to the disabled Trooper and his or her family, if applicable, as though the Trooper remained on the payroll. This means that the state continues to pay its share of the Trooper's health insurance premiums. This benefit continues through age 65.

### **Civil Liability Claims - Auto Accidents**

Given the sheer amount of time Minnesota State Troopers spend on the state's roadways, unfortunately injuries as the result of crashes are quite common. If a Minnesota State Trooper suffers injuries as the result of an auto crash that is the fault of a third party, that Trooper may be able to pursue a civil liability claim against the at-fault driver, in addition to workers' compensation and MSRS Duty Disability benefits. A civil auto liability claim allows a Trooper to assert claims for losses that are not covered by workers' compensation, including:

- future wage loss beyond the time limits available under workers' compensation

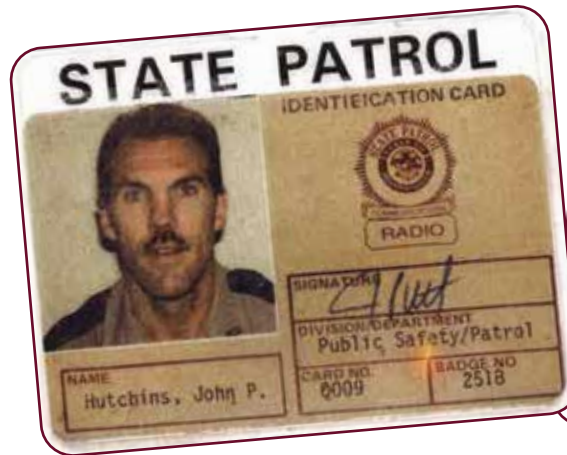
- future loss of earning capacity
- pain and suffering
- loss of enjoyment of life
- loss of consortium

Coordination of benefits for disabled Minnesota State Troopers is complex. This is a very specialized area of law, and it's easy to overlook claims or to make mistakes that can cost a Trooper hundreds of thousands of dollars in benefits. For Minnesota State Troopers, to ensure you are maximizing all potential sources of benefits, contact the experienced attorneys at Meuser, Yackley & Rowland, P.A..

Meuser, Yackley & Rowland, P.A. is one of the few workers' compensation law firms in the state of Minnesota that also handles PERA and MSRS disability claims. We've successfully represented hundreds of State Patrol, police officers and firefighters throughout the state for both workers' compensation and PERA/MSRS disability claims. The knowledgeable attorneys at Meuser, Yackley & Rowland, P.A. can help make the process easier to navigate. Contact us today for a free no-obligation consultation by calling 1-877-746-5680. ♦



# Hutch



December 11, 1985

Ronald Reagan was President, Margaret Thatcher was the UK Prime Minister, the DOW Jones closes above 1,500 for the first time and the NHL tied a record 21 combined goals when Edmonton defeated Chicago 12-9. The average price of gas was \$1.12.

Rudy Perpich was the MN Governor. D Roger Ledding was the Chief of the MN State Patrol.

This is also the same day that John Hutchins started his career as a Radio Communications Operator in D2600/St Cloud under the command of Captain Tom Anthony.

In 1987, John transferred to Golden Valley under the command of Captains Dick Steffen and Kevin Kittridge. August 1993 was a turning point for metro MSP Communications when D2500/Golden Valley and D2400/Oakdale consolidated dispatching efforts and moved to the Water's Edge Building, overlooking the duck pond; in Roseville. John's command while at Waters Edge would be Major Ron Bolin and Major Michelle Tuchner.

2001, John transferred to D2100/Rochester where he worked for over a year under the command of Captain Kevin Daly. He transferred back to Waters Edge in 2003. When 2004 rolled around, another move of the Communications Section would occur, from the Waters Edge Building to the

RTMC building (Regional Transportation Management Center); which is its current location. Beginning in the fall of 2012, statewide consolidation began. All greater MN dispatch centers would close their doors by mid-2013 and be dispatched from the RTMC.

John has endured many changes during his career. Paper radio logs, paper ICRs, having to run ALL 28s and 45s over the air. Media releases were recorded and broadcast to the news media via an automated recording system. Working nights, weekends and holidays...alone.

Badges numbers have been re-issued to new Troopers. (and yes, if he dispatched you, he remembers what badge number you had). Children following in their parents footsteps: Adrian's, Hodapp's, Klawiter's, Mielke's, Lindahl's, Hayes', Lemon's, Smith's, Stricker's, Brynell's. If he forgot someone, he apologizes.

The first ever MDCs were issued to metro Troopers, then migrated Statewide. CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) also came along in 2004. No more paper radio logs and ICRs! Phone handsets were traded for headsets.

Most of John's partners and closest Troopers have long since retired, but John continues on. He does admit: time has gone fast, but it is very rewarding.

Happy 35th Anniversary Hutch! ♦

# Toys for Tots

District 2200 employees and retirees along with other local entities donated a total of 148 Awesome Toys and \$880 cash to the Toys for Tots program! On Wednesday, December 16, the Mankato Chapter of the Marine Corps League came to the District Offices and picked up the donations. After loading up the toys at our offices, troopers went to the Mankato Police Department to help load up their donations as well. Altogether (Mankato PD and MSP) 611 toys, 67 stocking stuffers, 17 books, and 6 bicycles along with the \$880 cash. The donated items will be distributed to local families, making their holidays a bit better this year.

Nearly \$250 worth of toys were donated by 2200 MSPTA ♦



# Food Bank

On December 18th at 0630, 2700 Delegate Jon Carlson, President Mike LeDoux, and Trooper Aaron Gomez presented a check for \$500 to the Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank during a local news broadcast for the food drive. The money donated from the Troopers Association will provide approximately 1500 meals for hungry families, children, and seniors in Minnesota and western Wisconsin. ♦





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## **35<sup>th</sup> Annual Minnesota State Trooper/Guest Golf tournament**

Location: The Wilderness at Fortune Bay Casino and Resort, 1450 Bois Forte Rd Tower  
MN 55790

**Dates: Wednesday and Thursday, July 14 and 15, 2021.**

Time: 10:00 shotgun start for 2-person best ball on Wednesday July 14,2021

9:00 shotgun start for the 4-person scramble on Thursday July 15, 2021

Cost: \$130 for 2 rounds of golf, GPS aided cart, driving range, 2 lunches and one dinner

Reservations can be made at Fortune Bay Resort and Casino (218)-753-7600. Ask for  
State patrol block **Must do so by June 1, 2021** Hotel and Golf are walking distance from  
each other.

Trooper/Guest: \_\_\_\_\_ Retired/Active

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

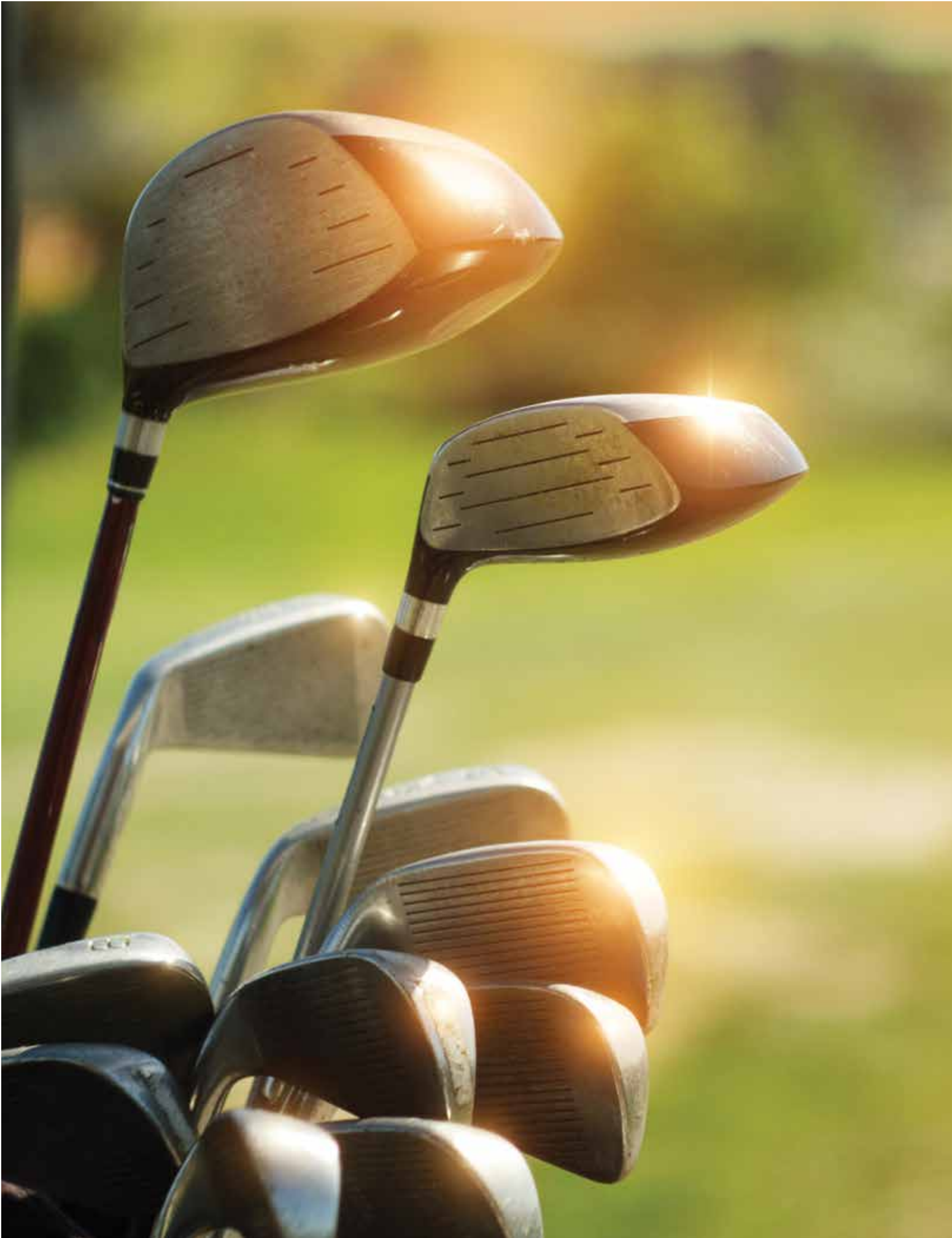
Guest/Trooper: \_\_\_\_\_ Retired/Active/Guest

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Twosome want to be paired with on day  
one \_\_\_\_\_

*Make checks payable to MSPTA GOLF and Mail to Curt Thurmes 13800 Danbury Path  
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***MUST RECEIVE BY May 15, 2021 , or you will not receive the gift I am  
purchasing for everyone. After May 15, it will be opened to Allied  
agencies to participate. We have (3) two person teams remaining and  
we will be full once again. Do not wait.***



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# Blessed Are The Peacemakers.

Channel 5 is proud to salute the peacemakers of our time.  
To the men and women of the Minnesota State Patrol Trooper's Association,  
we say Thank You!



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