

# MINNESOTA TROOPER

Volume 37 • Number 1 • February 2022





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# Retired Trooper's Day

## Tuesday August 2, 2022

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## MINNESOTA TROOPER

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

### 2019-20 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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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



# Finding Not Funding

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*Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier.*

– Colin L. Powell

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**2022** approaches and it seems more like 2020 times two. Like the previous year, I suspect most everyone hopes this year brings a return to normalcy. This past week I found myself wondering if Christmas was going to be spent at the Capitol like many of my colleagues. This stress no doubt wore on our families as they tried to make holiday plans. The support provided on the home front is appreciated and cannot be understated. I hope everyone was able to spend time with family and friends over the holiday.

This past week I heard rhetoric that insinuated law enforcement is a big extended family. It made me reflect on an incident I became involved with in October while working a work zone detail on I35 in Duluth. While I was educating a motorist about his poor choice to go the wrong way up the on ramp, because he was low on fuel, I noticed a young man standing next to the freeway fence that seemed very animated. After an abbreviated discussion I was able to relay a description of a stolen vehicle he provided and warn that the suspect was waving what appeared to be a handgun out the window at the witness. I had no sooner provided this information to dispatch when a vehicle matching that description was reported traveling the wrong direction across the bridge between Minnesota and Wisconsin. It seems the suspect noticed my squad with lights activated and decided to turn around and go against traffic to avoid contact. A short time later a vehicle matching the description was reported reentering Minnesota at high speed followed by reports that the suspect had attempted to rob a bank. This suspect then was reported to have fired a shot into the air while robbing two people. He then attempted to steal

another vehicle at a gas station but was unsuccessful because of an off-duty police officer. As he left the area he was spotted by an officer and a chase ensued. As the chase headed my direction, I tried to get into position to help. The pursuit was terminated but an officer saw the suspect pull up on the sidewalk in front of an apartment complex and witnessed him unloading weapons before fleeing into the building. As I responded to the area, I passed an elementary school and noticed the line of buses sitting out front because it was the end of the school day. Knowing the suspect was near the school caused grave concern. As I pulled up to the location, I had an uneasy feeling knowing that the suspect had a rifle and was now in an unknown location in this two-story apartment complex. I was joined on scene by law enforcement officers from several surrounding agencies. The first minutes on scene were very chaotic and stressful as we worked to pinpoint the suspect's location and worked to evacuate the occupants of the building. At one point he was reportedly firing rounds out an upper window of one of the apartments at a drone being used to monitor his movements. After nearly six hours the standoff concluded, and this crime spree ended. On this day we were one big family working to apprehend a suspect that had been terrorizing people in two states. It mattered not the color of your uniform only your willingness to put yourself in harms way to stop a threat to the community.

This past year I had the privilege of welcoming two groups of cadets to the Troopers Association after successfully completing training at Camp Ripley. I always enjoy these introductions and find myself trying to harness the groups enthusiasm. I

remember well the pride and privilege one feels to have a state trooper badge pinned on them. I always congratulate them for completing the toughest academy in Minnesota. I also thank them for stepping up to serve their respective communities when they clearly had other employment opportunities. Unlike when I began my career, we have far more openings statewide than applicants to fill them. This no doubt can be partially attributed to the demeaning, demoralizing, and dehumanizing of the profession the last few years. In recent discussions with elected officials, I pointed out that the real challenge going forward will not be funding but finding dedicated men and women to step up and serve. Nationwide law enforcement officers are retiring and leaving the profession at unprecedented levels. If this trend continues, we will be facing a new public safety crisis like we have never witnessed. We must end these senseless attacks on an entire profession and support and encourage those that wish to serve.

The city of Minneapolis has experienced unacceptable levels of violence this past year and approaches the all time homicide record of 97 set in 1995 when the city had the unfortunate nickname "Murderapolis". As of October, the city had 23 thousand shot spotter activations from gunfire and 436 carjackings, an increase of 38%. This violent crime has spread

into surrounding communities as well and has left behind countless victims that will be forever traumatized from these crimes. These problems will require a unified and coordinated plan that targets those small groups of individuals responsible for most of the violent crime. It will require cooperation from prosecutors and the courts to hold these individuals accountable for these violent crimes. Unlike the recent sentence in Hennepin County where an individual was given three years probation for not only assaulting but trying to disarm a trooper. This was an unprovoked attack that could have had a tragic ending if not for the intervention of a passing motorist who saw the suspect on top of the trooper trying to disarm him. I applaud the motorist for his bravery and believe the trooper and other victims of violent crime deserve better from our judicial system.

In closing I have had the privilege of being a member of the Executive Council since 2014 and would like to thank past and present members for their dedication to our members. While we will no doubt experience challenges ahead, I would like to thank the membership for giving me the opportunity to continue in my role as president. I am honored to be a representative for such a talented and dedicated group. ♦

*Mike #88*

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Monday  
August 15th 2022  
Cedar Valley Golf Course  
Winona, MN, 55987**



**TROOPER TED FOSS MEMORIAL  
TOURNAMENT**



**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE AFTER THE COMMITTEE MEETS  
THIS SPRING.**



Colonel Matt Langer

## Colonel's Message



# Perspective

**A**s I write this, we are deep into the big push toward the holiday season and the end of the year. It generally brings with a host of administrative deadlines that need to get wrapped up or squeezed in before the end of the year. At the same time, we are steeped in the middle of the trial of former officer Kim Potter and planning for a federal trial of other former officers. Our mission continues to be at the forefront as we bring a close to what will end up being a very deadly year on Minnesota's roads. All of that in addition to planning for two academies, getting ready legislatively, preparing for collective bargaining, etc., means there is – as always – a lot going on. But, I do not need to tell you there is a lot going on because you already know this to be true based upon your work.

We can, and often do, get swept up in the crisis of the day. It can consume us. Sometimes appropriately so, and many times not. There are also times when we experience a shift in our perspective. Like news of Troopers Rob Veldkamp and Derek Haehnel moving into hospice, and ultimately passing away. Not much else seems to matter at all when

news like that breaks, and rightly so. We can tend to take a lot of things for granted and yes, we can have a tendency to be a little negative at times, but we all have much to be thankful for. This is hopefully more at the forefront during the holiday season, but relevant during every season.

I am thankful for the ways in which the State Patrol surrounded Rob, Derek, and their families. Without a doubt, they felt that support. It was present while they were sick, present while we celebrated their lives, and it will remain present into the future. That support is the one thing we can do to make the incredible grief a little easier for their families. Thank you to our honor guard for standing guard and ensuring we had an appropriate send off for our fallen partners.

On a more positive note, I hope to see you soon in 2022. Perhaps the turn of the calendar provides an opportunity to try new things, eat healthier, or spend more time with family. Regardless, it feels good to turn the page and see what the year will bring. Keep up the good work knowing you have my support. ♦

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# Wishes & More A Night of Stars!

by Kelly Phippips

On May 22nd, 2021 my daughter and I were honored to attend the Wishes & More “A night of Stars” gala fundraiser in Bloomington on behalf of the MSPTA. This was the second Wishes and More event I’ve been lucky to attend. Travis Pearson, Richard Harjes, Dan Beasley, and their significant others were also in attendance. For those that are not familiar with Wishes & More, it is a non-profit organization similar to the Make a Wish Foundation. However, as I learned at this event, there are gaps as to what some of the wish granting charities will do for children with terminal or life-threatening conditions. This is why Wishes & More was created in the fall of 2004. For the past several years the MSPTA has donated to the foundation to support their mission of helping not only the kids, but being there for their families as well.

Each year, the Wishes & More gala has had a different theme and this year was dress as your favorite star. There were people dressed as movie stars, athletes, and super heroes! The volunteers once again worked very hard to create an atmosphere where you felt as though you were really Hollywood event. At one point in the night, Batman and the Batmobile arrived to help auction off items! Of course we had to take the opportunity to get our photo by the Batmobile. Who wouldn’t!?

Throughout the night there were several silent auctions and fundraising games to raise money. Several people that Wishes & More had helped throughout the years got up and talked about how their lives had been changed, not only by the illnesses, but by the kindness of the staff at the foundation. The wishes granted ranged from helping sending a family with several young children, one with cancer, on their dream vacation to Florida, to hunting and fishing trips. One of the DJ’s for the evening was a young man that had received a wish when he was sick. He went into remission and decided to volunteer with the organization to give back. However, his cancer has since come back. Wishes and More wanted to give him a little something to thank him for his hours upon hours of volunteering, so they surprised him with a dirt bike of his dreams! The stories of how far they go to help bring joy and peace continued bringing several people to tears. By the time dinner had been served and the dancing began, the foundation had raised almost \$200,000 that night!

I am truly grateful for all Wishes & More does for kids and their families. The support they give the families, from granting wishes to help memorializing those that don’t win the fight, is incredible. If you are looking to help support a worthy cause, please check out their website at [Wishesandmore.org](http://Wishesandmore.org). They have several events throughout the year, including golf tournaments, car shows, craft fairs, and bingo. ♦



# First Truck

by Jason Theel - SP 100

First Truck drivers are never truly off duty. When I was up at the Trooper golf tourney this last July, my state squad was having some issues starting. I guess having a well-trained first truck operator in your golf group always helps! If there is one thing about Don Machacek, he is always willing to help when you need it. He, along with the others in the first detail are always ready to help us troopers and the motoring public. You should treat them like you treat your other partners, they sit behind us in bad weather, knowing they will be the first to get hit, yet they do it without questioning anything. ♦



**District 2700 retiree coffee October 28, 2021**



# Thank You!



December 21, 2020

Mike LeDoux  
Minnesota State Patrol Troopers Association  
1131 Mesaba Avenue  
Duluth, MN 55811

Dear Mike:

Thank you for making the holidays brighter for in need children, families and seniors right here in our Northland communities as part of your \$500.00 donation to "Have a Heart, Help a Neighbor."

As part of the "Have a Heart, Help a Neighbor" event we helped us raise \$9,695 and 162 pounds of food – the equivalent of 29,215 meals for families, children and seniors in NE Minnesota and NW Wisconsin.

As you know, your contributions put meals on the table for our in-need Northland neighbors not only at the holiday season but all year long.

We thank you for your generous support and wish you a wonderful holiday season and Joyous New Year!

Happy Holidays,

*Shaye Moris*

Shaye Moris  
Executive Director

*Thank you, Mike & all!  
Once again your generosity  
will feed many families,  
children and seniors in our  
area! We are grateful  
for you!*

P.S. If you'd like to leverage additional meals for our neighbors this holiday season, please consider providing a gift in the enclosed envelope. All donations postmarked by 12/31/21 will be matched up to \$50,000 by the Joan M. Wismer Foundation. Thank you!

*No goods or services were provided in consideration of this donation.*

NORTHERNLAKESFOODBANK.ORG

4503 Airport Boulevard, Duluth, MN 55811 | 218-727-5653 | Fax: 218-727-0105 | info@northernlakesfoodbank.org

# Toys for Tots

The District 2200 Toys for Tots event was a huge success once again this year. Troopers, supervisors, office support staff, the MSPTA, retirees, and community members donated a total of

195 toys and \$175 in cash. The donated items were distributed to local families helping to make their holiday season a bit brighter. ♦



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# Shop with a Hero

District 3100 Troopers donated \$200.00 from the MSPTA to the Grand Rapids Police Dept for the annual Shop with a Hero event. GRPD organizes this event yearly with funds donated and assisted by local Fire, EMS, and Police agencies. This has been held since 2012 and has involved over 200 kids since then. Pictured here are Troopers Trevor Klatt SP46 and Taylor Znajda SP385 presenting the check to Officer Janell Hecimovich. District Troopers will also be assisting with the event scheduled on December 5th as in previous years. ♦





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**CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS**  
IT'S IN MINNESOTA'S NATURE

**GRAND RAPIDS POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
430 NORTH POKEGAMA AVENUE, GRAND RAPIDS, MINNESOTA 55744 2622

Troopers Association  
Attn: Travis Pearson

Area emergency service providers and Wal-Mart, are hosting the 2021 Shop With a Hero event on December 5, 2021 at 9:00 AM. This event will provide area youth an opportunity to purchase \$100 worth of Wal-Mart merchandise to be given as Christmas gifts to their family members. Youth will be selected by organizers with the assistance of Itasca County Health and Human Services, Ross Resources, Children's Mental Health and Kootasca. Participating youth will be paired with a member of emergency services and local military staff - a "Hero," and given a \$100 Wal-Mart gift card and calculator. Heroes will then assist youth in shopping for holiday gifts for their family. Upon purchase, volunteers will gift-wrap all presents. Following a surprise visit from Santa Claus, the youth will receive a wrapped Christmas present of their own.

The 2012 Shop With a Cop involved 20 area youth and has considerably grown to 30 youth in this year's event. The event has considerably expanded geographically and now annually involves kids as far south as Palisade (Northern Aitkin County) to as far north of Effie (Northern Itasca County). The program has involved over 200 area kids over the past 9 years.

We recognize and greatly appreciated a strong MSP presence in the past involvement in the Shop With a Hero program and are looking for your continued support. For departments that have not participated in the past. As always we are looking for monetary donations for the 2021 Shop with a Hero.

I am certainly available to come and present to your group or answer any additional questions.

Sincerely,

**Andy**

Captain Andy Morgan  
Grand Rapids Police Department  
420 Pokegama Ave  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
218-360-0128

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# Great Harvest

Trooper Mark McGrew (2700) presenting a \$500.00 check from the MSPTA to Executive Director Shaye Morris of the Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank in Duluth on December 10th. It took place during WDIO's "Have a Heart, Help a Neighbor" broadcast. This has been a longstanding tradition in Duluth as we have been doing this for well over a decade. ♦

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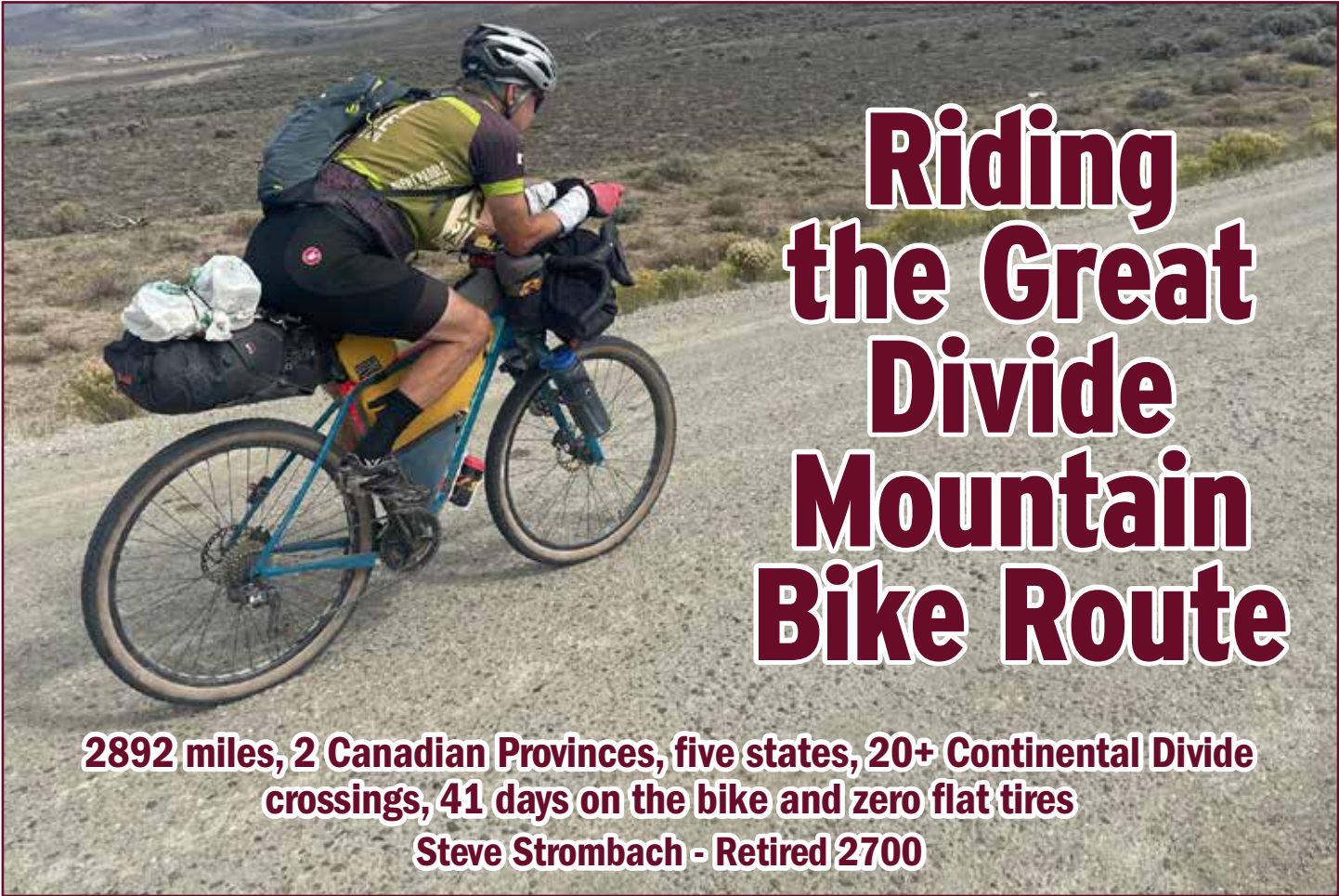


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# Riding the Great Divide Mountain Bike Route

**2892 miles, 2 Canadian Provinces, five states, 20+ Continental Divide crossings, 41 days on the bike and zero flat tires**

**Steve Strombach - Retired 2700**

I am a lucky man! Last fall, I bikepacked the Great Divide Mountain Bike Route (GDMBR). It is an amazing route that starts in Jasper Alberta and follows mostly gravel roads along the spine of the Rocky Mountains to the Border Patrol Station in Antelope Wells NM. I left in August, finished in October, met really great people and saw some amazing country. I am still not quite sure why. It just seemed like an experience I wanted to have.

Since retiring in 2015, I have spent quite a bit of time riding gravel roads in NE MN but I had never loaded my gear on the bike for even an overnighter when my wife, Mary, asked me in early 2020 if I wanted to ride the Great Divide. It felt like a now or never moment so I said “yes”. She gave me her blessing and I started buying the things I needed. The shake down trips I did that fall

went well so I decided that 2021 would be the year.

Between the pandemic, international border closure, wildfires, and drought, it wasn't looking good for much of 2021 but then the border opened on August 9th. I got my stuff together, flew to Edmonton and was in Jasper Alberta on August 16th. The smoke from the wildfires was really bad but blew out on the 17th. I started riding on the 18th. I felt prepared but it still felt like a leap of faith. I hadn't made any reservations, and I wasn't sure how the pandemic was going to affect normally available services in Canada. It turned out to be a really good time to tour by bike. All services were available but there was very little traffic and the campgrounds were mostly empty.

It was 33 degrees when I rode out of Jasper Alberta on Icefields Parkway.

Icefields Parkway took me through Jasper and Banff National Parks and it lived up to its reputation as one of the most scenic roadways in the world. Riding past the glaciers, lakes and crossing the Saskatchewan River was a very memorable way to start this ride. Along the way, I also quickly learned that the people I was going to meet were going to be a highlight of this trip. Shortly after setting up camp in Lake Louise, a sudden storm blew in. After scrambling to get my clothes out of the rain, a fun couple from Edmonton invited me over for dinner and I spent the rest of the evening with them under their tarp next to a fire.

After taking a day off in Banff to resupply and dry out, I started the actual Great Divide Route. The route immediately switched from nice pavement to a combination of single-



### **First good cup of coffee in a week in Fernie British Columbia.**

track mountain bike trails and gravel roads. The route became very remote as I crossed the Great Divide from Alberta into British Columbia through the Elk Mountains.

I relied heavily on two separate GPS devices for navigation and was thankful for both. I also carried a Spot Tracker that updated my location via GPS every 10 minutes so family and friends knew where I was even in the absence of cell coverage. I kept everything charged with a dynamo hub in my front wheel.

It rained at some point every day during the first week but the sun came out when I made it to Fernie, British Columbia. Sitting in the sun with a good cup of coffee felt great. After lunch, I finished the Canadian section and re-entered the USA.

I was riding solo and had not met any other riders, but that changed. Shortly after crossing the border into Montana and setting up camp, two guys from New Hampshire rode in. It was really nice to talk with other riders doing the same thing, and exchange information

about the wildfire reroutes. It started to feel like a rolling community the rest of the way to the Mexico/New Mexico Border. Groups formed, split up and reformed all along the way.

The trail in Montana was tougher and more remote than Canada, but it was home to some of the best hospitality of the route. The Llama Ranch north of Helena, MT is a working ranch that caters only to those riding the GDMBR. When I rolled in, they invited me and three other riders to join them for dinner and their friend's birthday party. I stayed in the cabin named the Alpaca Inn which was generously stocked with food, wine and everything else a tired rider could want. The owners only asked that you pay whatever you think your stay was worth forward sometime in the next two weeks.

The next day, I rode 40 miles into Helena where I had the luxury of staying with family, eating well and resupplying before heading out on some of the toughest sections of the GDMBR.

The next few days required several hours of pushing my bike through rough sections and overnight lows were in the 20s. I learned here that the route was designed to slow you down and the sooner you accepted that the better off you were.

Idaho was next. The descent along the Warm River was one of the most beautiful of the entire route and the campground in the valley made for a perfect place to celebrate my 61st birthday. A swim, nap in the sun, and dinner with three guys from Texas who were also riding the GDMBR made for a memorable birthday.

The next day rode harder than it had looked on paper. It started with a long climb on rough gravel and then the worst wildfire smoke of the entire trip set in as I descended into Colter Bay, Wyoming. At this point, I reunited with some of the riders I had met in Montana. We were all in need of a rest day and Colter Bay was the perfect place. We spent the day eating, doing laundry resupplying and getting caught up on communications with family and

friends. I had been looking forward to seeing the Tetons again but the wildfire smoke was so thick they only looked like shadows looming on the other side of Jackson Lake.

After leaving Colter Bay and the Grand Tetons, we made it to Pinedale Wyoming on the edge of the Great Basin. I was happy to be out of grizzly country but got surprised by a young bull moose in camp at 1:00 in the morning. He left us alone and we left for Atlantic City, Wyoming in the morning. As the day wore on, a storm built behind us. We tried to beat it but got caught and had to wait the worst of it out in a museum in South Pass City. The 132 mile leg from Atlantic City to Rawlins Wyoming was next. Water was limited but we got lucky. We started with a tailwind and it kept getting stronger. We had planned to camp and get water at a reservoir along the way but the wind was so strong that setting up a tent would be very tough so we kept pushing on and made it to Rawlins, WY after 11 hours on the bike.

A few days later, I was in Colorado and approaching the halfway mark. Throughout my ride, the riders I met that were northbound kept telling me how nice the route was in Colorado. The climbs were the longest and highest but the gravel was smooth. The grades were reasonable and the aspens were in full color. After nearly a month on the bike, I was becoming less and less concerned with where I would camp at night. Some days, I would ride until sunset and camp in the woods just out of view. The days had become a very simple repetition of eat, ride and sleep.

That routine took a very welcome turn when Mary flew in and met me in Keystone Colorado for a few days. We spent a lot of time relaxing by the lake and doing some hiking. We also decided



to bike around Lake Dillon. Neither of us felt like pedaling so we rented e-bikes and I rather enjoyed sitting back and letting the motor do most of the work. It was great seeing Mary but I started feeling pressure to start riding again. It was mid-September; it was snowing in the higher elevations and the route ahead included the highest passes of the route. My luck held long enough for me to cross the high point, Indiana Pass, at 11958 feet just ahead of the snow.

I was over halfway but it was late in the season. I had to start carrying more water and food because stores were closing and water sources were being turned off. Text updates on where good water and food could be found from my friends that were ahead of me on the trail were very welcome.

I only had one state left, New Mexico. My bike and body were holding up well but the hiking sections had taken a toll. My shoes worked fine while pedaling



**I made it! 15lbs. lighter than when I started.**

but were not good for the rocky hiking sections. My toes on both feet were numb but didn't really hurt so I kept riding. The numbness stuck with me for over a month after I finished.

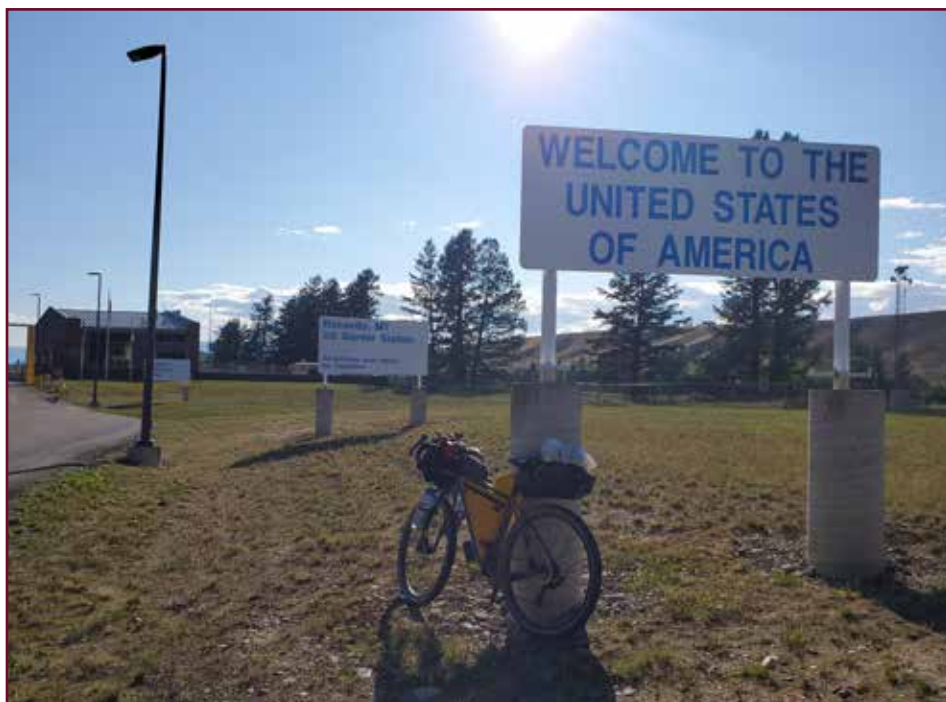
Rain became a problem again. Normally, the monsoon rains in NM would be finished by this time of year but they weren't this year. Some sections became impassable due to mud forcing me to reroute onto paved roads for about 180 miles. I didn't complain. The paved roads were a welcome relief from the rough gravel roads.

Other riders also had to change their plans and this allowed some new groups to form. I had been riding solo since Rawlins, WY so riding and camping with others was a great way to finish. The riding and camping in the Gila National Forest in New Mexico was some of the best of the entire route but that changed south of Silver City. In just a few days, we went from having elk walk close to camp to tarantulas on the

roadway. I was thankful to sleep on a cot inside the Hachita Community Center away from the tarantulas, beetles and ants for my last night on the GDMBR. I finished at the US/Mexico border the next day on October 7, 2021 and was met by a good friend from Duluth.

After enjoying a celebratory dinner and beer, he returned to his family in Santa Fe and I boxed up my bike and flew home to mine.

It was an incredible experience and I am very thankful for the support of my family throughout the ride! ♦



# 63rd



## Minnesota State Patrol



# Trooper Training Academy GRADUATION

## The MSP Training and Development Staff:

Captain Eric Barthel

Lieutenant Andrew Thelen

Lieutenant Karla Bearce

Technical Sergeant Preston Crusier

Technical Sergeant Rick Harjes

Technical Sergeant David Rock

Technical Sergeant Troy Morrell

Technical Sergeant Jon Wenzel

Technical Sergeant Jason Halvorson

Technical Sergeant Jimmy Buggs

Administrative Support Senior, Navay Mar

Administrative Support, Sarah Robinson

Administrative Support, Kathy Craft

## Academy Aide-de-camp:

Academy Staff Officer, Trooper Scott Rudeen

Academy Staff Officer, Trooper Brad Dingman

Academy Staff Officer, Trooper Lisa Lorenzen

Academy Staff Officer, Trooper Trevor Klatt

Administrative Support, Holley Gries

## THE OATH OF A MINNESOTA STATE TROOPER

*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 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 fulfill my oath as State Patrol Trooper;*

*To be loyal to my supervisors and fellow Troopers and 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 arise, 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.*



# The 63rd Academy of the Minnesota State Patrol

*Colonel Matt Langer's Message to the Graduating Class*

**W**ow, what a day. What an opportunity to be here in this space to share this momentous occasion in your life and your career. Congratulations! The logistics to run a State Patrol academy are really incredible. We could not do this without the great support from the Governor's Office, Commissioner's Office, the Minnesota National Guard through Camp Ripley staff and General Lowell Kruse, the legislature, DPS staff, and all of our State Patrol members who contribute to a successful academy. Also wish to thank the legislators and the Attorney General who took the time to attend today's event.

With all of the complexity in our world right now, all of the challenges, all of the rhetoric, and yes – all of the opportunities – it is invigorating to look at the 34 individuals who came together as a team to comprise the 63rd academy class of the Minnesota State Patrol – and who represent the future of our organization and the profession. Today is well-deserved recognition of your effort. It will be great to see the look on your face and the emotion in the faces of your loved

ones as you receive your badge and take our oath of office in a few minutes.

I'll let everyone in on a little secret, the academy is hard. It is intentionally hard. Why? Because it creates the transformation necessary to be successful in this career. By transformation I mean individual transformation and group transformation. Not transforming who you are as a person, but certainly bringing to light the knowledge, skill, ability, tenacity, grit, determination, and growth necessary to prove that you have what it takes. But you are proving this beyond your staff officers, fellow cadets, and leaders of the organization. You are proving this to yourself. You cannot grow if you are comfortable. Nothing worthwhile comes easy. And as you recognized on day one – yes, it was hard.

If memory serves me, it took over 40 minutes for you to fall out of the billet on the first morning. Our ask of you was simple. Get out of the billet at a prescribed time with everyone dressed the same. Simple in con-



cept, but difficult in reality – on day one. When we were together on the first day you might remember my candor when I said nothing about this academy gets easier. But, you improve which means the tasks you confront each day will seem easier.

And as you transformed individually you discovered it is impossible to make it through the academy without working as a team. Relying on each other. Trusting each other. Helping each other. And sure enough, with some practice – getting out of the billet in a few minutes or less with absolute precision became the norm, and the preference.

When we hosted a group of legislators and key staff at the academy, I explained one of our fundamental purposes at the academy is to put cadets under intense fatigue, stress, and decision-making pressure. Not to be sadistic, but to help you grow. For some of you, this was not a new experience. For others, it was brand new territory. Getting yelled at while tired beyond words, stressed beyond measure, and simultaneously having to make a great decision was new. And guess what? You learned about yourself. You learned about your reaction. You learned about resiliency. And while you learned to adapt to that environment, you were building my trust that when you are out at a protest, or on a traffic stop, or in a chaotic situation – you know how to dig deep and operate with our core values at the forefront – even when you find yourself tired, stressed, and forced to make a critical decision.

Without a doubt we need you on the roads. We need help with our mission of traffic safety. As we stand in the midst of a terrible uptick in the number of fatal crashes, I am excited to have 34 mission-driven individuals taking to the roads with passion to make them safer. I am equally excited to have 34 examples of our core values on display.





Respect – treating each person as we would want to be treated. Sanctity of life is not as much related to use of force as it is believing that every human being has inherent value. Treat people with respect.

Integrity – there is not much more humbling than admitting a mistake. Tell the truth. It is far better than any fabrication.

Courage – you have demonstrated the courage to do this job. Also demonstrate the courage to stand up for what you think is right – which isn't always easy – but is always the right thing to do.

Honor – we honor those who have gone before us. Think about the troopers who died in the line of duty and all of those retirees who persevered to create the legacy we own today. Think about the responsibility we have to do nothing other than to continue building and improving.

Excellence – it is not a destination; it is a journey. The process of continuously seeking excellence will keep us honest, keep us learning, and demonstrate a commitment to being the best we can be both individually and as an organization.

When I think back about my academy experience, I am grateful for so many things. I am grateful for Colonel Anne Beers hiring me. I am grateful for my academy staff officers who worked hard to help us improve. I am grateful for the incredible instructors who provided scenario-based training over 22 years ago that many agencies still wish to be able to incorporate into their regimens. I am grateful for the lasting relationships formed with my fellow cadets who have become lifelong friends. People I rely on and who I hope rely on me. The relationships formed in the academy are forever – and they are powerful.

I am also grateful that my academy was hard. Ok, maybe not as much at the time while in the parking

lot on our backs in the middle of the night, but certainly in retrospect. Why? Because I grew. I believed in the process. I believed in what our instructors told us.

General Norman Schwarzkopf was a formidable leader during the Persian Gulf war. In leadership training, we often use one of the clips of the General speaking at a West Point graduation now 30 years ago. He has the swagger of a four star General as he walked around on the stage discussing what makes a great leader. Competence and character, he said. One without the other will not garner both career success and the respect of the people you serve with. He goes on to talk about one of his classmates whom he thought had the utmost in character. He asked him how he built such great character. The person said the answer is easy. "You know, when I went to West Point, I was one of those guys who really believed what they told us up there, and I still do."

You could not make it out of our academy without demonstrating competence and character. I urge you to also reflect back on your time at the academy. Believe in what you learned. Think about what you are grateful for. We care about you and we care about your future, that is why the process was purposefully

hard. You demonstrated competence and character. You grew. You should be so very proud of your accomplishment.

One of the things I enjoy the most about these commencement addresses is the opportunity to highlight who we are by telling real stories about our people. During the summer of 2017, Trooper Keenan Jones intercepted an impaired driver. Trooper Jones found a man in shambles, driving down the road with a bloody face from a nosebleed and a bottle of Fireball in the back seat. The person Trooper Jones pulled over made a series of bad decisions that night. His goal was to become a law enforcement officer but in the moment of knowing he was under arrest for impaired driving, he saw his future crumbling.

The man was admittedly an emotional mess in the back of Trooper Jones' squad car. He relayed that he remembered feeling hopeless and that there was no longer any point in living because of his error that complicated his chosen career. The man remembers Trooper Jones comforting him by reassuring him that nothing about his life was over, nor was his chosen career finished. Trooper Jones recently met with the man and gave him advice similar to what Epictetus said as a Greek Philosopher. "On the occasion of



every accident that befalls you, remember to turn to yourself and inquire what power you have for turning it to use.” Simply put by Trooper Jones, you are sober now, learned from your mistake, and have the opportunity to help others because you have experience that others do not. That is now your story.

Four years after his arrest by Trooper Jones, the man has completed inpatient and outpatient treatment, finished his college degree, and got married – while maintaining his sobriety. He told Trooper Jones, and I quote, “You saved my life that night, and probably someone else’s. If anything can come from our story together, maybe someone else’s life can be saved, too.”

What a great story. Traffic law enforcement works. So, this transformation of yourself, and transformation as an academy class now comes with the responsibility of getting out in the world to transform others, just like Trooper Jones did. You have that incredible opportunity to help others improve upon their situation. When you leave today as a Minnesota State Trooper, go out on a mission to be positive, supportive, convincing, and educational, while enforcing the laws of our state so that lives are transformed for the

better and our roads are made safer.

And so here we are, on the brink of 34 new State Troopers being sworn in. Some might say this is a job, but I think they are short-sighted. Some might say it is a career, which is a little more accurate. Some might say it is a calling, which probably is what most of us think. But maybe a better word for this is vocation. The word vocation comes from the Latin root word of Vocare – which means “to call, summon, or rouse.”

That means a voice from somewhere, ultimately from within, spoke to you and said go after this dream of becoming a Minnesota State Trooper. My hope for you, is that this vocation is defined each day through the words author and theologian Frederick Buechner uses - “A place where your deep gladness meets the world’s deep need.” We know full-well the world needs us. And I can see the gladness on your faces. Never let go of that feeling – you can carry it everywhere you go from here.

Be safe. Be careful. Look after each other. And most of all – know that I care about you, your family, and your success. Congratulations!



# Minnesota State Patrol's 63rd Graduating Class



**Trp. Milo Allen SP432**

I am originally from Lindstrom MN. I currently live in Pine City, MN. I've been married to my wife Kelly for 17 years and we have four boys. My hobbies include fishing, boating and hunting with my family. Before joining the State Patrol, I was a cement mason and a teacher for 13 years. Our family made the change to the State Patrol through the LETO program. I am assigned to the St. Cloud district.



**Trp. Nicholas Brown SP415**

I am from Stillwater, Minnesota. I am assigned to the Virginia station. Prior to the State Patrol, I served 6 years in the MN Army National Guard and deployed in 2013-2014 looking for IED's (Improvised Explosive Devices), performing route clearance operations over-seas. I graduated from the University of North Dakota in 2019 with a Bachelor's degree in Commercial Aviation - Helicopters. Knowing I wanted to fly for Law Enforcement, I applied to the State Patrol through the LETO program and hope to fly for the agency when eligible.



**Trp. Sean Bruns SP653**

I am originally from Le Sueur, Minnesota, but have recently moved down to Rushford. Recently, I became engaged to my girlfriend of 2 years. We enjoy camping and spending our time outdoors. I also have a particular passion for shooting. I recently finished my career in the Minnesota National Guard after 9 years. I also attended the University of Minnesota Duluth and worked in the firearm industry.



**Trp. Brianna Dingmann SP660**

I am originally from Cold Spring, MN. I graduated from St. Cloud State University in December 2020 with a Bachelors in Criminal Justice and Minor in Forensic Science. I grew up an only child. I am currently engaged to my fiancé Matt, whom I have been with for 8 years. Before joining the State Patrol I worked at Subway for 6 years and worked security for St. Cloud State Public Safety Department and the St. Cloud Hospital. I was hired through the LETO program and am currently assigned to the Sauk Centre station.



**Trp. Alejandro Dominguez SP667**

I am originally from Southern California. I moved to the Midwest to pursue college sports and education. I have a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice Administration. Before working with the State Patrol I was a Correctional Officer for over 6 years. My wife is from the Wright County area and that's where we live currently. I am assigned to the Maple Grove station. I enjoy spending time at the cabin fishing and boating.



**Trp. Patrick Fitzgibbons SP640**

I am originally from Shakopee, MN where I graduated from high school in 2010. I then went on to the University of North Dakota and received my Bachelor's degree in Aeronautics in 2014. After college, I enlisted in the MN Army National Guard, which I am still currently serving. My hobbies include playing hockey, water skiing, and traveling. I heard about the State Patrol through their LETO program in 2020 upon returning home from deployment. I am assigned to the Mounds View station.



**Trp. Angela Greenhalge SP446**

I was born and raised in Rapid City, South Dakota and moved to Minnesota in 2014. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Commercial Aviation from UND. Before joining the Minnesota State Patrol, I flew unmanned aircraft in various parts of the world as a government contractor. One of my many goals is to become a pilot for the agency. I am assigned to the night shift in the East Metro district.



**Trp. Kristian Jensen SP663**

I was born in Odense, Denmark. I lived a nomadic life as a globe-trotting educator/school administrator as an adult and a third culture kid growing up. There have been 9 countries called home with many others visited. Along the journey, a wonderful woman from Taiwan joined me and we have two beautiful boys together. I am stationed in Thief River Falls and our family is so happy to plant roots in Minnesota.



**Trp. Logan Knip SP464**

I am originally from Brooklyn Park. I graduated from Totino-Grace High School in 2015 and enlisted in the Army National Guard. I went to College at St. Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire. I played college hockey all four years and graduated in 2019 with a Criminal Justice and Psychology Degree. I moved back to Minnesota in 2019 and worked as a Detention Deputy at Anoka County Jail. I also worked Military Funeral Honors until I was hired on through the LETO Program. I am still proudly serving in the Army National Guard. I am assigned to the Maple Grove station.



**Trp. James Lee SP656**

I'm from Saint Paul and currently still reside there. I have been married for 8 years now and we have a 4 year old daughter. Straight out of high school, I joined the Marine Corps and was active duty from 2011-2015. I spent the past 4-5 years going to school and taking care of my daughter. I didn't really know what to do after getting my associates degree until my wife mentioned that I should go into law enforcement since I like helping people. I saw the LETO program ad online, applied, and eventually got assigned to the St Paul station.



**Trp. Zachary Lehner SP674**

I am originally from Zimmerman. I now live in Coon Rapids. I graduated high school in 2017 and went to Alexandria Technical and Community College. I graduated from their law enforcement program in 2019. I then worked at the Sherburne county jail where I practiced my communication skills. I worked 2 years there and then decided to become a state trooper. I am currently single and I work in the Minneapolis station.



**Trp. Ryan Londregan SP532**

I am originally from Connecticut and moved to Minnesota in 2019. I worked as a private investigator after graduating college with a bachelor's degree. I was hired by the State Patrol through their LETO program and am assigned to the West Metro overnight station.



**Trp. Jordan Lothert SP593**

I am stationed in the Montevideo station. I have a bachelor's degree in Business from Concordia College, in Moorhead MN. I went through the LETO program with the State Patrol. I enjoy hunting, fishing, and spending time with my family and friends when I am not working.



**Trp. Mollie McClure SP343**

I am originally from Sioux Valley, a small town in southwest Minnesota. I currently live in Saint Joseph. I graduated from the University of Minnesota with a bachelor's degree in physiology. Prior to this I was a corrections officer at the prison in St Cloud. I always felt like I could do more and becoming a State Trooper had been a goal of mine for a while and now has become a reality. One goal is to become a crash reconstructionist. In my free time I enjoy anything outdoors from hiking to hunting. I also enjoy spending time with my family whenever I get the chance. I am assigned to the Saint Cloud station.



**Trp. Dalton Miller SP655**

I am originally from Stewartville, MN. I graduated high school in 2016 and joined the Army Reserves. I now live in Shoreview, MN. I enjoy outdoor activities, lifting weights and hanging out with friends. I have a bachelors from Metropolitan State University in Law Enforcement. I am currently assigned to the Minneapolis station.



**Trp. Ryan Moeser SP624**

I am originally from Princeton, MN. I have been married to my wife, Lauren, for 7 years. We have two boys Ryder (6) and Russell (7 months). Most of my free time is spent outdoors camping, fishing, hunting and riding atv. I enjoy watching my sons share the same hobbies as me. I have bachelor's degree from MSUM and worked for Home Depot Pro for 5 years before starting the LETO program. I am assigned to the Maple Grove station.



**Trp. James Noxon SP669**

I was born in Littleton, Colorado and moved to Minnesota in early 1999. I am currently assigned to the St. Paul station where I will likely stay for the rest of my career. I am a husband and father of a beautiful little girl. I came from Arlington Police Department (MN) where I served since 2018 until my acceptance into the Minnesota State Patrol. I hope to someday join the Special Response Team (SRT).



**Trp. Ovie Ovadje SP670**

I am originally from Nigeria, West Africa. I immigrated to the United States in 2007, eventually meeting my wife in Duluth, MN where we also got married. We moved to Hutchinson, MN and became a family of four with a son and daughter. I worked a few different jobs and enlisted in the Army National Guard in 2013 where I still serve part-time. I eventually got hired by State Patrol through the LETO program and I'm assigned to the West Metro dog watch (overnight) station.

COURAGE

STATE



**Trp. Raj Patel SP661**

I am originally from Gujarat, India and moved to Minnesota in 2014. I have Associate Science degree from Normandale Community college in Criminal Justice. Before joining the State Patrol, I worked for The Home Depot. I am assigned to Minnetonka Station.



**Trp. Chad Peterson SP311**

I grew up in Underwood, MN and graduated from North Dakota State in 2018 with a B.S. in Criminal Justice. I enjoy traveling and spending time with family and friends. I got married in 2020 and my wife teaches first grade. Prior to joining the State Patrol I was a Deputy Sheriff for the Douglas County Sheriff's Office in Alexandria, MN. I am assigned to the Rochester station.



**Trp. Michael Peterson SP662**

I was born in Minnesota and currently live in Becker. During my senior year, I enlisted into the Army Reserves as a Combat Engineer. I deployed overseas after graduating high school, conducting route clearance. In 2021, I transferred into the Individual Ready Reserves. After my deployment, I found a job working for a cabinetry shop. I decided to look into law enforcement since it was something I've always wanted to do. I graduated from Alexandria Tech in 2018. After college I worked in corrections for just over a year before applying to the State Patrol. I am assigned to the St. Cloud district.

HONOR



**Trp. Justin Renken SP665**

I am originally from Lakeville, MN. I am the father of a seven year old boy name Kolten. I was in the Army from 2005 to 2013 and was stationed in Hawaii before moving back to Minnesota. After the Army, I worked in operations for a non-profit and most recently worked as a solar developer for a renewable energy company. I was hired through the LETO program and am assigned to dogwatch for the West Metro district.



**Trp. Derrick Row SP664**

I was born and raised in Chanhassen, MN. I went to school at the University of Minnesota and received my Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology of Law, Criminology and Deviance with a minor in Political Science. I then attended the University of Southern California where I received my Master of Science degree in Criminal Justice. I have one older sister who is a Clinical Social Worker in Brooklyn Center and come from a family with three members in law enforcement. In my free time, I love to enjoy the outdoors, whether that's hunting, fishing or camping.



**Trp. Andrew Schommer SP673**

I am originally from Hugo, MN and grew up there my whole life. I graduated with an Associate's Degree in Law Enforcement in 2020. I started my Law Enforcement journey when I was 14 years old. I have participated in being a Police Explorer, Police Reserve, Security, Parking Enforcement, Community Service Officer, and Deputy Sheriff. I was hired as traditional applicant and I am assigned to the Minneapolis station.



**Trp. Patrick Selly SP668**

I am from Belle Plaine, MN. I have two brothers and a sister; I am engaged and have a 1.5 year old daughter. Straight out of high school I joined the Marines and was stationed in California. After I got out of the Marines, I went to school in Ely, MN where I received my Law Enforcement degree. I lived in Babbitt, MN for almost two years and received my skill certificate at Hibbing Community College. After the skills course, I attended the MSP Academy. I am stationed in International Falls. My hobbies include fishing, hunting, and anything else outdoors.



**Trp. Delany Sletten SP643**

I am originally from Northfield, MN. I graduated in 2020 from the College of Saint Benedict with a Bachelor's Degree in Communication. I spend most of my time with friends/family and I enjoy spending time outdoors. Before joining the State Patrol, I worked for a trucking company as a freight broker. I was hired through the LETO program and am assigned to the Hinkley station.



**Trp. Nicholas Swanson SP102**

I am originally from Red Wing, MN. I graduated high school in 2010 and went directly to college at the University of Minnesota Duluth. I graduated in 2014 with a bachelor's degree in biology and a minor in ethics. I worked as a firefighter paramedic for Red Wing Fire Department for three years and as a paramedic in Cannon Falls for two years prior to that. I am married and have no children. I have a full house with two dogs and two cats. In my free time, I do a lot of hunting and fishing. I also enjoy playing music, and spend plenty of time riding motorcycle. I was hired through the LETO program, and am assigned to Rochester station.



**Trp. Ksapa Veaux SP543**

I grew up in many places around the country before finally settling in Mankato in 2011. I currently live in Mankato. I am stationed in the Fairmont station. This is a blessing as it will allow my fiancé and me to stay close to our families in the Mankato area. I graduated from Minnesota State University, Mankato in the spring of 2021 while in the process of being hired by the Minnesota State Patrol.



**Trp. Levi Ward SP672**

I am originally from St. Croix Falls, WI. I graduated from the University of Minnesota, Duluth with a degree in Criminology in 2019. While attending UMD, I took advantage of opportunities available such as white water kayaking and mountain biking. From there, I was hired by the Minnesota State Patrol through their LETO program a year later. I am assigned to the Virginia station. This is my first law enforcement job and have been enjoying the beginning of this career.



**Trp. LeeTou Yang SP627**

My name is LeeTou Yang, I am from Shoreview. Prior to the State Patrol, I worked at an automotive retail store for 12 years selling auto parts. On my days off I enjoy fishing, biking, fixing cars, and working out. I decided to go back to college in 2018 to finish my Criminal Justice Degree. After college I was hired through the LETO program and I am assigned to the Mounds View station.



**Trp. Jeffrey Zerwas SP533**

I am originally from Forest Lake, Minnesota. I am a husband to my high school sweetheart Haylee and a dad of two boys, Oliver, and Brooks. In my free time, I enjoy riding my motorcycle, and playing both acoustic and electric guitar. I enjoy spending time with my family more than anything. We go for walks, play street hockey, and much more. I am assigned to the Thief River Falls station.



**Trp. Taylor Znajda SP385**

I am originally from Stephen, Minnesota, but now reside in Hibbing, Minnesota. I graduated from the University of North Dakota in 2015 with a Bachelor's of Science in Criminal Justice and a Bachelor's of Art in Sociology. I began my career in law enforcement shortly after graduating from the university with the Crookston Police Department. I enjoy participating in outdoor recreational activities such as fishing, hunting, and riding snowmobiles and ATVs. I am assigned to the Hibbing station.

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# Your 2021-2022 Executive Council



**Andrew Larsen**  
D-2300



**Blake Cederstrom**  
D-2400

I have been a Trooper for 13 years all in district 2400. I worked 7 years in the 4460 beat and the last 6 years in the 2410 beat. I have been the 2400 delegate since April of 2020. I am married to my wife Katie and have two children, William 11 years old and Hudson 19 months. I enjoy traveling and snowmobiling in the winter months. During the fall I enjoy being outside and watching the Green Bay Packers. My goal as a delegate is to maintain healthy relationships between troopers and administration and make sure the MLEA contract is adhered to.





## Dan Beasley Vice President

I joined the State Patrol in 1996. I have worked in both 2500 and 2600 as a road trooper and as an investigator.

I am married and have two teenage kids. We live on a hobby farm in western Wright County.

## Darcy Weinrich Northern Delegate

Hello. I am proud to serve the troopers in districts 2600, 2700, 2800, 2900, 3100, and 3200 as your Northern Delegate. I served as MSPTA District Delegate for 2800 for the last 4 years.

A little of my background-I worked for police departments from 1992-1999. I started with the MN State Patrol in 1999 and have worked the New Ulm, St. Cloud, and Brainerd stations. I have been a firearms instructor, FTO and on MFF.

I live in Nisswa and have been married for 24 years and have a 19 year old daughter, 17 year old son and a German Wirehaired Pointer. I enjoy being on the lakes in the summer and bird hunting in North Dakota in the fall.

Have a safe 2022 and feel free to reach out to me for any reason at [darcyweinrich@yahoo.com](mailto:darcyweinrich@yahoo.com)



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## Eric Bormann D-2100

Eric Bormann was born and raised in Rochester, Minnesota. He graduated from John Marshall High school in 1988 and earned his bachelor's degree in criminology from the University of Northern Iowa in 1993. After a short stint as a Correction Officer with Oak Park Heights Correctional Facility, he began his career in Law Enforcement as Police Officer in Albert Lea from 1995-1997. Eric started his career as a MN State Trooper in 1997, worked as an East Metro Dogwatch Trooper until 1998 before transferring to the 2150 station in Rochester. Eric worked dogwatch for several years in Rochester and has served as the Station Sergeant in Rochester since 2010, and as an FTO since 2000. He also served as a Part-Time Deputy with the Dodge County Sheriff's Office from 2019-2021.

Eric is passionate about impaired driving enforcement. He has been a DRE since 2000 and a DRE/SFST instructor since 2001, and a Law Enforcement Phlebotomist since 2017. Eric still actively teaches at the DRE School every year and teaches SFST/ARIDE classes all over the state. Eric served as member of the State Patrol Special Response Team for nine years (2005-2014). He has also taught several subjects at the State Patrol Academy as well serving as an adjunct professor at Winona State University. Eric is married to Misun (who works at the Mayo Clinic), and has two sons (Caleb 20 and Christian 17), and one daughter (Alexa 15). Eric enjoyed playing many types of sports when he was younger. In his free time Eric enjoys spending time with his family, participating in Church activities, fishing (especially deep sea fishing), traveling, studying history and social issues, and swimming/exercising to stay in shape.



## Gerald Hanson D-2900

I have worked with State Patrol since 2005. I am currently serving in 4700 out of Detroit Lakes District. I have served as a delegate since 2013. I look forward to serving the membership for another two year term.





## Jack Danielson

D-3200



## Jason Theel

Southern Delegate

My name is Jason Theel SP100 and I'm honored to be the Southern delegate. I started with the patrol in 2009 where I was stationed in the 4450 beat. I am currently at 4600 working nights. I'm a firearms instructor along with being on the honor guard. When I'm not working I enjoy golfing and spending time with my family. My goals for the Trooper Association are to try and get caught up with the local agencies. I still believe we are under paid and we need to be at the top. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions, my personal cell is 651-398-4846. Thanks for trusting me to represent you.



## Kelly Johnson

D-2800

I have been with the MN State Patrol since 2005 and worked as a Trooper in the Brainerd district out of Cass and Hubbard counties for the first ten years with the Patrol. Since 2015, I've been assigned as the Northern Office of Pupil Transportation and Safety Trooper. I was a St. Louis County Sheriff's Deputy for 4 years prior to that. I continue to serve in the Army Reserves and have over 28 years of service between the Reserves and the MN Army National Guard. I live in Bemidji with my wife Aricka and our two children, Nick (15) and Naomi (12), who are both active in year-around hockey, baseball, and softball, therefore I have little time for hobbies that I like such as hunting, fishing, and playing hockey.



## Kelly Phillips D-2000

I have been working in law enforcement for 20 years, first with the Minnetonka Police Department and then joining the State Patrol in 2007. I started my State Trooper career in the 4550 beat before coming to ISS as a full time crash reconstruction. I did take a short two year break from ISS to work at TDS as the IT Coordinator, before returning to ISS as a full time recon.

My daughter, Mia has been keeping be very busy with her playing traveling basketball, volleyball, soccer, and girl scouts. We did add a four leg fur baby to our family and she takes up what little time I had left. Mia and I love to travel every summer, and her goal is to visit all 50 states with me!

My goal is to continue to be the voice for the members to command staff. I also will continue to stand by members during critical incidents and internal investigations.

## Kenny Delwo D-2220

I have been with the Patrol since 2015. I worked for two years in 3130 (Grand Rapids) before transferring to 2220 (Mankato). In addition to my road duties, I am a member of the Mobile Response Team and work as a crash reconstructionist.

I have a 5 year old German Shorthair Pointer and a 3 year old Golden Retriever. I enjoy chasing upland game and waterfowl with them.

My goals with the Association are to represent the Troopers of my district to the best of my abilities, to assist with any work issues, and protect our contractual rights.




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## Lee McClure D-2600

My name is Lee McClure. I currently work the road around St Cloud in the 2630 station. I have been a trooper since 2013 and have worked in the 4550, 2510, 4580 and 2680 stations previously. I have been married to my wife Melissa for 19 years and have a 16 year old daughter and 11 year old son. In my spare time I work on our family's farm raising pasture beef, pork, and poultry.

## Mark McGrew D-2700

I was hired with the State Patrol in October 1999 and started in the 4550 beat after working with the Superior, WI Police Department from 1996 to 1999. I am currently working in the 2730 station where I have been since 2000. I took over as District Delegate in July of 2021 and was re-elected in the Fall 2021 election.

I currently live in Duluth with my wife, Heather, along with our two sons, Noah and Adam, as well as our German Wirehaired Pointer, Zeppelin. Both Heather and I were born and raised in Duluth and have enjoyed raising our family there too. In my free time, I enjoy hunting, fishing, camping, and hiking.

I look forward to working with the Association to make the State Patrol a competitive place to work and will diligently represent our members to help ensure fair treatment.





## Mike LeDoux Station Sergeant, 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 understanding wife Melisa since 2003. We enjoy hiking, hunting, fishing, and traveling. I also enjoy water skiing and playing hockey.

Goals for Association: 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. Negotiate 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.

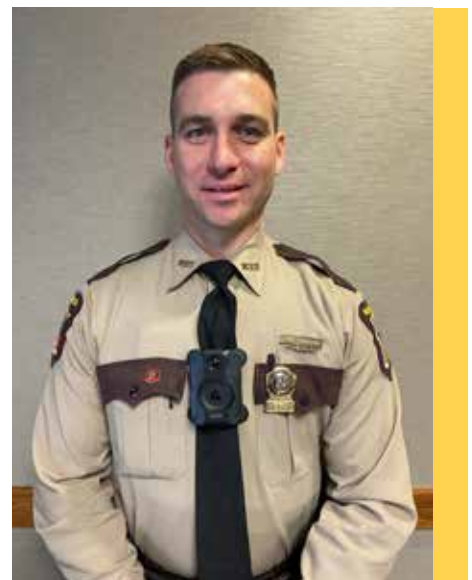


## Nick Hanson D-2500

Transferring to the 4570 station in January 2022 after 5 years in the 4550 station 5 years with MSP.

I am married and live in the Minneapolis area. I enjoy training my dogs, traveling, hiking and paddle boarding.

As the District 2500 MSPTA Delegate I am committed to supporting and working for the Troopers in my District.






## Richard Orpen Treasurer



## 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've been involved heavily with the body cam roll out recently. I was the 2600 District Delegate for a short time then elected into the Secretary position. I've been involved with negotiations and manage the MSPTA website, e-mail communication and got the MSPTA mobile app up and running. I've been married to my wife, Adrienne, since October 2013 and we have a daughter named Adalyn (5 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.

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**Travis Pearson**  
**D-3100**

# The Newest Addition to the MSPTA Fleet

by Dan Beasley

The MSPTA welcomes the most recent addition to its vehicle fleet.

It's a 25cc Kicker bike decked out like an MSP motorcycle. The mini-motorcycle was donated to the MSPTA by Gary Koska of Cold Spring. Thank you, Gary!

Gary spends hours working on these custom made creations and then donates them to various causes. To date he has created 25-30 of these customized Kicker bikes.

The Kicker bikes originally come from California where they have been banned from public use due to the dangers associated with such a small motorized vehicle. The engine has been disabled, but it's still a big hit with the little kids (and even some big ones)!

The MSPTA Kicker Bike is being displayed in the St. Cloud District Office lobby and is available for display at special MSPTA events, like Retired Troopers Day etc. Make sure you check it out if you're visiting 2600 or any of the MSPTA events where our vehicles are on display.



# National Troopers Coalition

by Todd Zynda SP136

The 119th National Trooper Coalition conference was held October 18th to the 20th in Providence Rhode Island and sponsored by the Rhode Island State Police. Mike LeDoux and Todd Zynda attended on behalf of the MSPTA. During the regional breakout session, common topics of pay, pension, recruitment and retention, and Covid related issues. Some states are currently conducting or planning on lateral academy's to address the limited numbers of applicants. Mike shared with the group our recent legislative and contractual pay increases and the legislation requiring the salary survey by the legislative auditor. This was recognized as one of the better accomplishments in recent history and congratulated our association.



Several speakers addressed the coalition including Rhode Island Governor Dan McKee, Colonel James Manni of the Rhode Island State Police, and Ms. Marcia Ferranto of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund which built and funds the National Law Enforcement Memorial and the National Law Enforcement Museum in Washington D.C.

Governor McKee during his speech acknowledged the ongoing contract negotiations involving the Rhode Island State Police. Later in the day the entire NTC coalition while on a tour of the

State Capitol was able to greet the Governor as he returned to the capitol in a sign of support and solidarity for the Rhode Island Troopers in their contract negotiations. Colonel Manni told the group about the compact agreement between the six New England state agencies which provides mutual aid when one is in need of assistance the plan and authority is already in place to streamline the process and response. Since taking over at the CEO of NLEOMF in September of 2019, Ms. Ferranto has made it a priority the National Law Enforcement Memorial and more so the Museum will depict and present the positive image and details of the law enforcement profession.

Side conversations with Troopers from around the country during organized activities or informal gatherings I found to be of most benefit. Many times we found commonality and other times not, but having the opportunity to share these in a personal setting is great experience.





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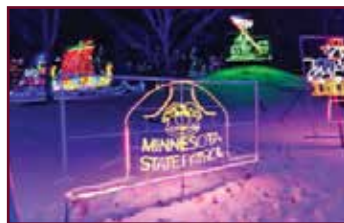
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# Bentleyville






**Pictured is former retired MSPTA President Joe Delwo and retired delegate Scott Fredell as well as current MSPTA President Mike LeDoux and delegate Jon Carlson standing with Mr. Bentley receiving a \$500 donation from the MSPTA.**

This year the Minnesota State Patrol was added to the Bentleyville Tour of Lights display in Duluth on the beautiful shore of Lake Superior. We thank Mr. Bentley and the Board of Directors for this recognition and appreciate their support of those that serve community and country.

If you have never had the pleasure of viewing the display, mark the calendar next year and make plans to take the tour with family and friends. What began as a neighborhood display in 2003 in Esko, MN, has grown into an annual event visited by hundreds of thousands of people. Despite the growth of the display, Mr. Nathan Bentley, the Mayor of Bentleyville, remains actively involved and can be found on site every night. The display has been in its current location since 2009 and was a perfect fit for the Christmas City (aka Duluth) made famous by singer Merv Griffin. It is almost magical to watch kids take the tour making memories that will last lifetimes not to mention the free hot chocolate, cookies, popcorn, and fire roasted marshmallows. The kids also get the opportunity to visit with Santa & Mrs. Claus and those under the age of 10 receive a free knit hat. Guests are encouraged to bring nonperishable food items and new unwrapped toys for the Salvation Army. These donations are then distributed to families in need throughout Northern Minnesota and Wisconsin.

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# HG Training

by Jason Theel SP100

Trooper Kaiser and I had the opportunity to attend Honor Guard training out in Delaware. Captain Sapp of the Delaware State Police is the man that puts this whole thing together, he is truly remarkable. There were Troopers as far away as Alaska and Texas. 53 law enforcement officers came ready to learn and have a hard week of training. We learned several different ways for rifle squad to casket guard along with everything that goes on in a line of duty funeral. Out on the east coast they train together and with other states. Being that they are closer together and not so spread out, it is not unusual that a Maine Trooper would cover a funeral in Delaware or any other states that are close. They talk to and train together on a regular basis. They take drill and ceremony very serious and it was an honor training with them. Mid-week we took a field trip to Arlington National



Cemetery to watch the experts perform their duties. If you have never been to Arlington it is a must see, truly it will make you a proud to be American! We also had the opportunity to visit the naval academy. We both learned a lot of stuff and are excited to show the rest of the gang on our next training date. I have attached some photos for your enjoyment.



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# Finally, a Presumption that Means Something

by Lisa Scmidtke

In 2018, the Minnesota legislature unanimously passed the PTSD presumption, Minnesota Statutes §176.011, subdivision 15(e). Recognizing the significant traumas that first responders are exposed to while protecting and serving our communities, the Minnesota legislature sought to make it easier for first responders diagnosed with work-related PTSD to access potentially life-saving mental health care, and other workers' compensation benefits, to help them heal.

Since the PTSD presumption took effect on January 1, 2019, however, few have benefited. Until now, most employers and insurers have ignored the PTSD presumption, denying approximately 9-out-of-10 claims. Daniel Harrison and Lindsey Rowland of Meuser, Yackley & Rowland, P.A. secured a significant Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals win in the last week of 2021 so that first responders may finally realize the benefits of the 2019 PTSD presumption, which was intended to help Minnesota first responders but has, unfortunately, fallen short.

In *Juntunen v. Carlton County, et al*, the Court decided in favor of our client that unless an employer and insurer communicate "substantial factors" to deny an injured employee's PTSD claim, an injured employee who meets the requirements of the PTSD presumption is entitled to workers' compensation benefits. The decision was unanimous – all five judges on the bench decided the case, none dissented. This is a significant win for first responders with PTSD who often wait years before gaining access to workers' compensation benefits.

Deputy Sheriff Juntunen encountered many tragic and traumatic events during his nearly 20-year law enforcement career (including learning that his former partner at the Sheriff's Department had committed suicide). Deputy Juntunen was diagnosed with work-related PTSD by no fewer than four mental health care providers, including his EAP therapist; yet the employer and insurer almost immediately denied responsibility for his injury. It has been more than two years since Deputy Juntunen stopped working in law enforcement due to his work-related PTSD and he still has not received any workers' compensation benefits. But that is about to change.

The Court's decision will ensure that employers and insurers timely accept responsibility for an employee's work-related PTSD and provide them with benefits to help them return to work (including medical care, wage loss, and job placement services), unless they communicate "substantial factors" to rebut the PTSD presumption.

The Court's decision is also likely to benefit first responders who become disabled from certain types of cancers, heart conditions (including myocarditis and coronary sclerosis), pneumonia, infectious diseases, and COVID-19. Sometimes known as the "subdivision 15" presumptions, these legal presumptions function similarly to the PTSD presumption: eligible employees (first responders who meet certain other criteria) who develop one of the listed occupational diseases, are presumed to have developed the occupational disease because of their work activities. The purpose of these presumptions is to make it quicker and easier for injured employees to access medical care, wage loss, job placement services, and other workers' compensation benefits.

All too often, first responders who have an occupational disease are unaware that their condition may be work related or they become discouraged because their employer and insurer initially denied their claim. The Court's decision in *Juntunen* should encourage employers and insurers to accept responsibility for more of these claims. At the very least, the Court's decision in *Juntunen* sends the powerful message that the PTSD presumption, in particular, can no longer be ignored. Employers and insurers that continue to ignore the PTSD presumption may be subject to penalties and interest.

At Meuser, Yackley & Rowland, we will continue to zealously advocate for our individual clients, like Deputy Juntunen, and the first responder community. We understand the impact of the legal presumptions on your claims. We also understand how to coordinate all your potential claims, including workers' compensation, PERA/MSRS, and Healthcare Continuation (Minn. Stat. §299A), to maximize your available benefits. If you think you may have a work-related occupational disease, or your employer or insurer has already denied your claim, then please call us at 1-877-746-5680 for a FREE consultation.

# MN 100 Club Annual Gala Event

by Dan Beasley with information from Mike Jennings, President, MN 100 Club

On November 3rd, 2021, MSPTA President Mike LeDoux and I had the honor of attending the MN 100 Club annual gala at the Minneapolis Golf Club. The gala is normally held in the spring, but as it seems to affect so many things nowadays, COVID delayed the event until this fall. The good news is that about 200 people attended the event and over \$65,000 was raised, almost double last year's event. Unfortunately, the MN 100 Club needed to raise a lot of money this year to support their mission.

The MN 100 Club is a non-profit organization that provides immediate financial assistance to First Responders who are killed or critically injured in the line of duty. The MN 100 Club was founded in 1972 and has helped 487 families to date, when they needed it most. In 2021, they helped nine families with immediate financial support. That support means that families don't have to worry about working or paying for a funeral while they are dealing with the trauma of losing their loved one.

During the gala there was both a live and silent auction. The live auction raised about \$10,000 for their Children's Christmas Fund. That fund provided \$500 gifts to the children of MN First Responders that have died in the line of duty in the past two years. This Christmas, 15 children received that gift to make their holidays a little brighter and to remind them that they are not forgotten.

This year's gala also hosted three speakers that were outstanding. Former Waseca Police Officer, Arik Mattson and his wife

Megan as well as Arizona 100 Club President Angela Harrolle.

Both families received assistance from a 100 Club (MN or AZ) in a time of need. The Mattson's spoke about the impact that Arik's severe gunshot wound has had on their family and how they are working to find purpose and meaning in the tragedy. Angela Harrolle spoke about her own experience when her husband, Bruce, a police officer and paramedic, was killed in the line of duty in Arizona, leaving her with two small children. Angela worked with the Arizona Department of Public Safety to pass a law to provide lifetime insurance benefits to families of First Responders killed in the line of duty. Her activism has helped to make the AZ 100 Club one of the most successful in the country.

Guests were given challenge coins and a sneak peek at the new MN 100 Club license plate that the MN DMV will begin offering for sale in January 2022. The plate has the MN 100 Logo on a gray background of the American Flag. All proceeds the MN 100 Club raises from the sale of these plates will help support families of First Responders.

The MSPTA is proud to be a supporter of the MN 100 Club.

If you would like more information about the MN 100 Club, or to support their organization, please go to [www.MN100Club.com](http://www.MN100Club.com). The annual dues they collect support the work of the club and provide critical financial assistance to First Responder families when they need it most.



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State Patrol 1971 - 2000  
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**John Elliott**

January 21, 2021 Age 75  
State Patrol 1978 - 2005  
Badge #90



**Harold Murphy**

January 25, 2021 Age 83  
State Patrol 1961 - 1993  
Badge #307



**Larry Rosenberg**

February 12, 2021 Age 76  
State Patrol 1969 - 1999  
Badge #396



**Jim Nickisch**

February 16, 2021 Age 87  
DNR 1960 - 1988  
K-17 Badge #89



**James Powell**

March 02, 2021 Age 71  
State Patrol 1974 - 2005  
Badge #272



**Thomas Lee**

March 13, 2021 Age 72  
State Patrol 1972 - 2003  
Badge #461



**David Allen**

March 19, 2021 Age 82  
State Patrol 1966 - 1998  
Badge #38



**Stephen Bailey**

April 07, 2021 Age 67  
State Patrol 1981 - 2006  
Badge #407



**Robert Norland**

April 10, 2021 Age 75  
State Patrol 1968 - 2000  
Badge #370



**Clint Lindemann**  
 April 22, 2021 Age 84  
 State Patrol 1966 - 1997  
 Badge #77



**Robert Wallace**  
 April 25, 2021 Age 68  
 DNR 1980 - 2008  
 K-512 Badge #248



**Lloyd Rudd Jr.**  
 April 26, 2021 Age 95  
 State Patrol 1952 - 1982  
 Badge #158



**Marvin Schiffler**  
 May 05, 2021 Age 76  
 State Patrol 1968 - 1999  
 Badge #377

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**Dean Paulson**

May 07, 2021 Age 77  
State Patrol 1966 - 1998  
Badge #4



**Sarah (Backer) Grell**

May 24, 2021 Age 39  
DNR 2005 - 2021  
K-254 Badge #478



**Donald Kremer**

June 27, 2021 Age 82  
State Patrol 1966 - 1997  
Badge #287



**Joyce Kuske**

June 27, 2021 Age 51  
DNR 2001 - 2020  
K-311 Badge #447



**Arleigh Anderson**

June 30, 2021 Age 96  
State Patrol 1955 - 1985  
Badge #227



**Francis "Rick" Richardson**

July 30, 2021 Age 92  
State Patrol 1961 - 1984  
Badge #325



**John Stewart**

July 04, 2021 Age 63  
State Patrol 1984 - 2009  
Badge #251



**Robert Elliott**

July 29, 2021 Age 90  
State Patrol 1955 - 1986  
Badge #221



**Alex Gutierrez**

August 06, 2021 Age 47  
DNR 2006 - 2021  
K-19 Badge #504



**Floyd Wise**

September 05, 2021 Age 96  
State Patrol 1957 - 1982  
Badge #295



**Daniel Tersteeg**

September 11, 2021 Age 94  
State Patrol 1955 - 1980  
Badge #203



**Michael O'Gorman**

October 23, 2021 Age 78  
BCA 1977 - 2005  
Call #1320



**Randy Goodwin**

November 10, 2021 Age 57  
State Patrol 1988 - 2008  
Badge #507



**Robert Veldkamp**

November 14, 2021 Age 49  
State Patrol 1999 - 2021  
Badge #238



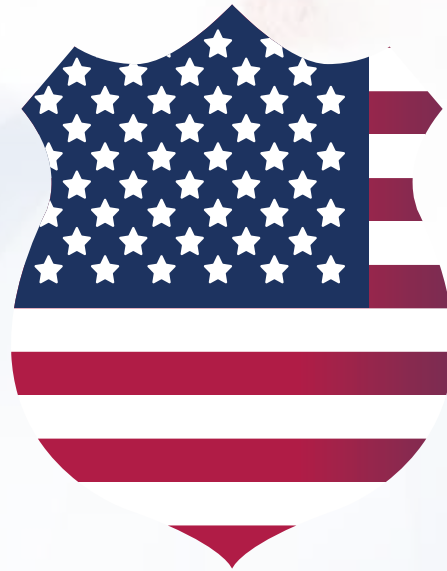
**Derek Haehnel**

November 16, 2021 Age 36  
State Patrol 2013 - 2021  
Badge #473



**Tom Rau**

November 28, 2021 Age 81  
DNR 1969 - 1995  
K-417 Badge #201



**Howard Priebe**

December 19, 2021 Age 79  
State Patrol 1968 - 1997  
Badge #373

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