

MINNESOTA TROOPER

Volume 38 • Number 1 • February 2023



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MINNESOTA TROOPER

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2020-21 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

President

Mike LeDoux
mj55804@gmail.com

Secretary

Rick Harjes
rickharjes@hotmail.com

Southern Delegate-at-Large

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jtheel00@yahoo.com

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kphillips435@mn.com

District 2200

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district2200mspta@gmail.com

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ceder02@yahoo.com

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District 2800

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rveldkamp@iw.net

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What does the MSPTA do for its Members?

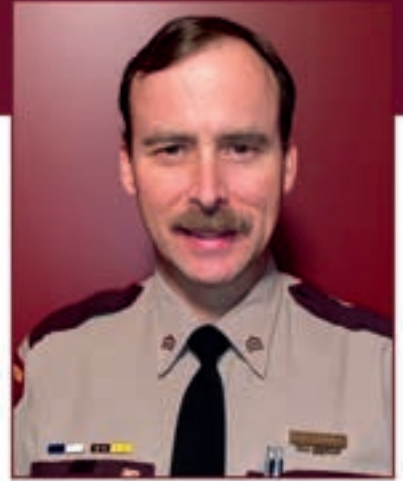
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- The *Minnesota Trooper* Magazine
- Quarterly District Association Meetings
- Hardship fund for members who experience a unique hardship such as a natural disaster, illness, or loss of home due to a fire
- Membership into the Minnesota Police and 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



Unfinished Business

2023 approaches and one can't help but reflect on the past year as we prepare for the new year. Like many of my colleagues, this past week was spent dealing with the snownado that seemed to consume all corners of the state. The calls for service kept us all jumping, as Minnesotans went about their business despite heavy snow and cold temperatures. This workload continued when we arrived home to find snow filled roofs and driveways needing attention. Fortunately, we have received a temporary reprieve from the snow and temperatures have returned to double digits. Despite these challenges, I hope everyone was able to spend quality time with family and friends over the holidays.

I hoped words like COVID and supply chain would somehow disappear from our daily vocabularies, but they remain. It appears this will be the new norm much like the words flu and inflation. Fortunately, we have an amazing ability as a group to adapt and overcome challenges.

The political ads in November seemed to take over all forms of media and I suspect most were overjoyed by the end of the election cycle. We now know the political makeup at both the state and federal level. The state legislature will commence on January 3 and must end on May 22. This will be the first time since the 2013-2014 legislative session that the DFL will have a trifecta. The Minnesota House will be split 70-64 and the Senate 34-33. Last year there was tremendous turnover in both the House and Senate, so I encourage our members to reach out to your elected representatives on the issues important to you and our profession. Minnesota is in unfamiliar territory with an unprecedented 17.6-billion-dollar budget surplus. Most of my career the legislative session began with the word deficit so it will be interesting to see if legislating is equally as difficult when you have a surplus and a trifecta. We must remind those that made public safety promises that we now expect results. If not, we will remember their hollow words in the next election cycle.

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."

-Albert Einstein

Last year public safety was front and center at the legislature and any talk of defunding had changed to refunding. Despite considerable rhetoric, little to nothing was accomplished in support of public safety. This was not for lack of effort on behalf of the MSPTA and many others. Considerable effort was spent at the legislature educating our elected officials on the issues important to our membership. In May we had bipartisan support

for pattern settlement legislation in the State Government/Transportation Conference Committee. This compromise would have amended statute 43A.17 requiring the use of the salary survey data as described in 299D.03 subdivision 2a to be used to compare salaries between the studied

agencies and to make appropriate increases to trooper salaries. It is time to pass this commonsense legislation to make sure all state law enforcement officers are compensated fairly, when compared to their colleagues in the study group established by the legislature. It is crucial that we recruit and retain high caliber candidates as the statewide applicant pool continues to decline.

Last year all legislative attempts to address the recruitment and retention issues failed to make it to the finish line. These issues remain and these legislative initiatives need to be implemented. We need to offer financial and educational opportunities to those that wish to serve their communities. We need to recruit first generation cops to expand our traditional applicant pool. These programs if implemented would remove the financial hurdles experienced by first generation college students and their success can inspire others in the community to serve and pursue higher education. In 1969-1970 the federal government created the Law Enforcement Education Program (LEEP). This program provided loans and grants to those individuals pursuing careers in law enforcement. This program offered necessary financial assistance with attractive forgiveness features. Student loan obligations under this program were canceled at the rate of 25 percent for each year of fulltime employment in law enforcement. The need is now to revisit these programs.

Currently 636 PERA Police and Fire members are eligible for full retirement and another 1,679 will become eligible within the next five years. Currently 46 members of the MSRS State Patrol Plan are eligible for full retirement and another 147 will become eligible within the next five years. It is not if these 2,500 employees will retire in the next five years but when. To put this in prospective, POST Board data indicates Minnesota currently has 10,625 licensed officers. Currently the State Patrol Plan has 937 active members. Those that criticize law enforcement recruitment and retention plans are hateful and hypocritical.

Social Security tax exemption will no doubt be a topic of conversation once again this session. It remains to be seen if this tax exemption will be implemented because of the anticipated fiscal cost. Last year's legislation failed to exclude public safety pensions and others that don't pay into social security. If implemented this tax exemption needs to be expanded to encompass public safety pensions. Last year a COLA increase of one-half percent was proposed for our retired members but failed to be implemented. This modest increase was appropriate since retirees have been frozen at one percent since 2014. Social Security recipients by comparison have received increases of 5.9 percent in 2022 and 8.7 percent in 2023.

Thank you for your service and sacrifice on behalf of all Minnesotans. May the new year bless you with good health and happiness. ♦

Mike #88



On New Year's Eve Duluth set a new December snowfall record of 44.7 inches for the month. The previous record had stood since 1950 at 44.3 inches. During this same time period troopers statewide responded to 6,324 crashes and handled 5,610 vehicles off the road.



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Colonel Matt Langer

Colonel's Message



Changes Continues

The saying, "Change is the only constant" is a simple but true statement. Change is all around us, and it sometimes comes in waves. While I am not sure how many people can truly say they enjoy change, we are wise to accept the changes we cannot control vs. letting them gnaw at us. While change is often associated with loss, change often brings a lot of opportunity.

One of the constant changes comes with retirements. I have recently had some great conversations with stellar members of the organization as they are on the brink of working their last shift. It always gives me pause when considering the contributions, experience, and steadiness that comes with long-term members transitioning into retirement. While we have backfills and promotions to fill positions, many people just are not easily replaceable. Becoming an expert at anything takes dedication, passion, and experience. This means it takes time.

The election in November brought many changes to that branch of state government. In addition to a change in

majority for the Senate, there many new legislators in both bodies. Those new legislators represent a lot of opportunity to help them learn about the State Patrol and our mission. At the same time, we are grateful to have many legislators (on both sides of the aisle) who we have worked with for years and will pick up where they left off last session.

Other changes include 26 new Sheriffs across Minnesota, and of course, a new Commissioner at the Department of Public Safety for us. While at the time of writing this article, we are not sure who the new Commissioner will be, I am confident we will continue to have a good working relationship and the necessary support from that office for us to continue our work.

Lastly, the turn of the calendar represents an opportunity for change. I hope that whatever resolutions you might have contemplated will have some lasting power into the New Year. Most of all, I hope you had a good holiday season and were able to spend quality time with friends and family. I wish you a happy and healthy 2023. ♦

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Jennifer Palmer

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January 18, 2022 Age 94
DNR 1963 - 1985
Badge #248 K - 114



Donald Keepers
February 01, 2022 Age 90
State Patrol 1957 - 1986
Badge #77



John Rindahl
February 11, 2022 Age 85
State Patrol 1962 - 1992
Badge #334



Jack Deuth
February 14, 2022 Age 78
State Patrol 1970 - 1998
Badge #425

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Charles Berg

February 16, 2022 Age 77
State Patrol 1970 - 1999
Badge #58



Kurt Nelson

February 28, 2022 Age 64
DNR 1999 - 2012
Badge #411 K - 161



John Edwards

March 08, 2022 Age 71
BCA 1977 - 2005
Call Sign 1345



Jerry Engelbrecht

March 18, 2022 Age 77
DNR 1972 - 2000
Badge #23 K - 300



Eugene Vincent

March 29, 2022 Age 83
State Patrol 1974 - 1994
Badge #248



Donald Faulkner

April 24, 2022 Age 84
State Patrol 1966 - 1990
Badge #380



Lowell Skunberg

May 09, 2022 Age 71
DNR 1979 - 2002
Badge #233 K - 152



Greg Grose

May 21, 2022 Age 74
State Patrol 1971 - 1973
Badge #431

REMEMBER & HONOR



Orlan "Odie" Dahl
June 28, 2022 Age 74
State Patrol 1971 - 1998
Badge #435



Arne Thompson
June 28, 2022 Age 76
State Patrol 1969 - 2001
Badge #403



Dominic Di Iola
July 05, 2022 Age 84
State Patrol 1964 - 1993
Badge #32



Richard Hull
June 07, 2022 Age 74
State Patrol 1971 - 1999
Badge #429



HEREOS LIVE FOREVER



Gary Ginder
August 31, 2022 Age 84
State Patrol 1961 - 1992
Badge #311



Dennis Olson
September 01, 2022 Age 75
State Patrol 1971 - 2002
Badge #83



Walter Kosel
September 11, 2022 Age 98
State Patrol 1950 - 1983
Badge #127



Thomas Nuesse
September 16, 2022 Age 87
State Patrol 1961 - 1990
Badge #321



Jim Hinz
October 27, 2022 Age 78
DNR 1972 - 1998
Badge #39 K - 510



Sidney Hill
December 03, 2022 Age 87
State Patrol 1966 - 1991
Badge #146



Melvin Dahlberg
December 17 2022 Age 92
State Patrol 1955 - 1990
Badge #206



Leslie Ladewig
December 31, 2022 Age 76
State Patrol 1970 - 2003
Badge #420

THE CLASS OF '85

By Sergeant Tom Lee

On Sunday, August 25, 1985, 25 men and women reported to the Arden Hills Training Center to begin the 33rd edition of the Minnesota State Patrol Trooper Candidate School. Some of these people are experienced police officers and some have just completed their academic and skills training. But all are eager to begin the 11 weeks of training that will prepare them to "wear the maroon."

The first people whom the new recruits meet are the three staff officers who will watch over them during their time at the Training Center. Corporal Bob Borner (2500), Trooper I Dennis Lazenberry (2100), and Trooper Mark Jonassen (2400) are ready to get things rolling and check in all of the candidates.

The candidates have a short orientation session where they meet Sergeant Tom Lee, director of pre-training at the Training Center, and become acquainted with the rules and regulations of rookie school. They also are issued the first of many pieces of equipment that they will receive during their career with the State Patrol.

To come to the candidate school, these people have survived a selection process that started with over 440 applicants in March. First there was a written examination, then an oral board interview. There were also oral and written psychological examinations. During this time, an extensive check was done on each of the remain-



Above, trooper candidates march in formation wherever they go. At the far right is class leader for the day, Therese Hoffman.

Below, Trooper I Dennis Lazenberry, a staff officer at the Training Center, inspects the troops for lint, fingerprints on badges, dust on shoes, and the list goes on. If anything is out of place, even a loose thread, candidates are given gigs.



Classroom instruction today covers First Aid. That's Reina Brekke, EMS instructor from North Memorial, at the blackboard. She is filling in for Dr. Patrick Lilja, director of EMS at North Memorial.

ONE ★ BY

ing applicants. Finally, in mid-July, the selections were made and physical exams were given to the prospective candidates.

The "Class of '85" includes:

Denise L. Bechtold
Paul G. Blaha
Paul W. Bruggman
Roger J. Burgmeier
Anthony D. Follen
Kevin C. Guggisberg
Michael J. Hanson
Randall S. Harms
Paul A. Hayes
Therese M. Hoffman
Nathan N. Jacobsen*
David A. Latt
John L. Magaard

Scott D. McConkey
Richard T. Murry**
Thomas J. Nelson
Jeffry L. Pischke
Garrett S. Schloesser
Dean R. Smith
Mark A. Sprengeler
Mark A. Stehlik
Richard W. Straka
Dale A. Thorson
Scott C. Trautner
William M. Ulvi
Brian L. West

*Joined candidate school in second week.
**Voluntarily left school.

That first night, the new recruits got to know each other, got settled in, and retired to their first night's sleep in the Training Center barracks.

Zero-*"dark"*-thirty. The *real* candidate school begins. No more Mr. Nice Guy. The real stress and regimentation of rookie school is now evident.

At 0730, after having been up for three hours, the "Class of '85" meets the rest of the Training Center staff: Captain C. D. (Swanny) Swanson, director of training; Sergeant Norm Nelson, safety education coordinator and acting director of training in the absence of Captain Swanson; Sergeant Jerry Dickson, director of in-service training; Sergeant Dave Anderson, range master; Sergeant Dennis Roske, Investigative Services; and Diane Lindstrom, administrative assistant whom Captain Swanson calls the *real* director of training. These are the people who will provide the bulk of the instruction at the Academy.

The "Class of '85" has an interesting profile:

- Average age: 25 years old
- Average height: 5 feet, 11-1/2 inches
- Average weight: 173 pounds
- Average years of college: 3
- Number married: 16
- Number of children: 12
- Number of veterans: 3
- Number of former police officers: 18

Over 50 different courses make up the curriculum of the candidate school. Among the many courses are Accident Investigation, First Aid, Registration, Truck Enforcement, Traffic Code, Driver's License Law, Fire-



Sergeant Tom Lee, director of pre-training at the Training Center.



After lunch, candidates attend to work details to work off their gigs. These candidates work quickly to make the patrol cars really shine. Don't forget to buff those hubcaps!



PT! Let's get that body into shape!

NOVEMBER 1985/21

DAYS ★ GONE ★ BY

Class of '85

arms, Communications, Physical Training, Pursuit Driving, Investigative Techniques, and Intoxilyzer Certification. Most of this instruction is received at the Training Center, but there are also sessions in St. Cloud (Pursuit Driving), at the BCA Lab (Intoxilyzer) and the Orchard Garden Scale (Truck Enforcement).

The training that the candidates receive comes not only in the classroom, but also in the non-classroom regimentation that they follow. They wake to reveille each morning, have calisthenics, personal inspection and then breakfast. After a flag-raising ceremony, the candidates settle down to their classroom studies. Around noon, there is time for lunch and work details (working off gigs). Then an afternoon of classes and then some PT.

Supper comes next, followed by the evening flag detail and evening homework. This routine goes on all week until liberty (after *full* inspection) on Saturday afternoon.

Throughout their time in candidate school, the recruits are to keep themselves, their classroom and their barracks *spotless*. They learn to speak when spoken to and always show proper respect for instructors and other guests. They march in formation wherever they go. The idea is not only to gain the knowledge, but also to develop the discipline needed to be a Minnesota State Trooper.

By November 8, 1985, the "Class of '85" will graduate and join the ranks of the Minnesota State Patrol. And on that day, these new troopers will truly learn what it means to "wear the maroon."

The makings of a Minnesota Trooper —then and now—

	1955	1985
Age Requirement	Between 23 and 35 years old (age limits waived for veterans)	Over 18 years old
Training/Educational Requirements	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.
Examinations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Written test 2. Oral interview 3. "Rigid character investigation" 4. "Rigid" physical exam 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Written test 2. Oral examination 3. Background investigation 4. Psychological evaluation 5. Medical examination 6. Physical strength and agility test (conducted at Training School)
Training School	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).
Yearly Salary Range	\$3,600-\$4,680	\$19,481-\$27,750



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Minnesota State Patrol's 65th



Trooper Training Academy

GRADUATION



The MSP Training and Development Staff:

Captain Eric Barthel

Lieutenant Andrew Thelen

Lieutenant Karla Bearce

Technical Sergeant Jimmy Buggs

Technical Sergeant Rick Harjes

Technical Sergeant David Rock

Technical Sergeant Troy Morrell

Technical Sergeant Jonathan Wenzel

Technical Sergeant Jason Halvorson

Administrative Support Senior, Navay Mar

Administrative Support, Sarah Robinson

Administrative Support, Kathy Craft

Academy Aide-de-camp:

Academy Staff Officer, Sergeant Rick Schueler

Academy Staff Officer, Trooper Kristie Sue Hathaway

Academy Staff Officer, Trooper Deanna Wayne

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.



Respect · Integrity · Courage
Honor · Excellence

The 65th Academy of the Minnesota State Patrol

Colonel Matt Langer's message to the graduating class

Let me be one of the first to say, Congratulations! I remember a few weeks ago when I had a chance to visit with you as a class, I drew the "If.....When continuum on the board." At that time, you were pretty close to "When." But now, you are just moments away from that time when "If," is indeed replaced by "When!"

State Patrol academies require an amazing amount of work, by a lot of people. Thank you to our staff officers for giving up your lives to pass along your knowledge and experience to our newest Troopers. Sgt. Rick Schueler, I want to especially thank you for dedicating yourself to this class on the eve of your retirement. There are many, many examples of Troopers who you could choose to model yourself after – Sgt. Schueler is amongst the finest to choose

from. In addition to our staff officers, we have exceptional support staff members, physical fitness trainers, physical therapists, peer support team members, instructors, non-sworn members, Chaplain John Morris, and many others who make the academy experience what it needs to be in order for us to carry on our fine tradition.

Thank you to Governor Walz, for your support, and for your attendance today. Thank you to Commissioner John Harrington and the Department of Public Safety employees who work hard to ensure our success. Our legislative champions, some of whom are here today, have provided considerable and necessary support for the State Patrol. We have a long history of strong, bi-partisan support for the work we do to make Minnesota's roads safer. We also could not be successful



without a long-standing partnership with the Minnesota National Guard. Major General Shawn Manke, General Lowell Kruse, and many others involved with Camp Ripley help make our training possible.

Now, our cadets – soon to become Troopers - you certainly did not get here alone. I know each of you had cheerleaders ready to catch you on the weekends, put you back together, and get you out the door back to Camp Ripley on Sundays. They kept you afloat during the week. And now, this graduation moment is so powerful and so palpable. Why? Because you worked for this. It did not come easy. It was not an accident. It was through intentional hard work.

And all the while, we have been supporting you as well. As I said on your first day, we want you to be successful, but you have to do this. You have to earn this. And, you have.

Some people might know that I really enjoy music. In particular, I enjoy live music, any kind of live music. And if you want to get right down to business, I par-

ticularly enjoy live country music. Especially, the old stuff. I think it paints the picture of a simpler time, with simple lyrics, songs that you might hear for the first time but somehow seem familiar. Songs that you hear one time and will always stay with you. I think the lyrics are often powerful because they paint a picture. They tell a story. And those stories come to life while we listen to those songs. The same can be true for leadership and the work we do. The stories are what bring our mission to life – more so than any statistic.

Like an old country song, let me use words to try to paint a picture of exemplary service by State Troopers. Like when Trooper Kristi Sue Hathaway stopped a driver on Highway 77 for speeding and swerving. It was the middle of the day. She approached and visited with the driver. Right away, she knew something was wrong. Trooper Hathaway noticed the typical cues of an impaired driver. She found an open bottle of vodka in the center console. Sadly, she was also well aware of the two-year-old daughter in the back seat. What could end as another simple and good arrest of



an impaired driver, took a turn for the better. Instead, Trooper Hathaway took the time to implore the driver not to, "Do this to your daughter" before turning her over to jail staff. Trooper Hathaway's own experience as a teenager compelled her to say those words that ultimately formed a connection. That connection is over ten years strong with a sober and successful woman and a happy 12-year-old daughter both of whom still keep in touch with Trooper Hathaway.

Similarly, Trooper Keenan Jones stopped a young man named Jake one night. Jake was intoxicated and needed help. He wanted to make a change. He remembers telling Trooper Jones that he wanted to pursue a career in policing, but figured that dream was over as a result of his arrest. Jake sensed a heart inside Trooper Jones. Trooper Jones explained to Jake that his dream wasn't over. Sure, it was going to be difficult, but you have to turn this situation into your story. Jake remembers Trooper Jones telling him his life and career choice were not over. About five years later, Jake has successfully completed outpatient and inpatient recovery, finished his college degree, got married, and most importantly – has stayed sober.

Or when Lt. Paul Stricker stopped to help a mom whose 6 week old daughter stopped breathing. He arrived at about the same time as an off-duty nurse. They were successful in getting the little girl to breath. 5 years later, Lt. Stricker was invited to walk Elise into her first day of kindergarten. The nurse? She literally ran out of her shoes, leaving them behind in the ditch in order to get to the car to help a complete stranger.

I could spend the morning going on and on about stories like this. Stories like the Trooper who stopped a guy pulling a trailer without any lights. The Trooper helped the motorist into a parking lot, crawled underneath, and fixed a ground wire that was loose, helping the driver get back on the road. Or a Trooper who stopped a driver for a violation of the hands free law. The driver lied about what they were doing,



went home and thought about it, then sent an email explaining a combination of Catholic-guilt and a moral compass compelled them to send a letter in order to admit their violation and set the record straight. She went on to write, "Thank you for your service, the hours you spend away from your family to serve your community, and for the many thankless reminders you hand out. You mean more than you know, do more than you know, and are respected more than you know. I am truly sorry."

My hope is that all of these stories stick with you. Why? Because you have the power to make things better for people. You have the power to transform lives. Each traffic stop, each interaction, each stalled vehicle, each crash, each person stuck in the ditch – is an opportunity for you to make things better and to transform lives. While those opportunities are not explained in the myriad of statistics we can generate, they are the stories behind those numbers and they are actually the catalyst of the public's support for the Minnesota State Patrol.

Our mission of traffic safety is so vital to our state. Nothing makes this more life altering than when you teach your own kids how to drive. Just think what our roads would be like if it was not for the Minnesota

State Patrol and the allied agencies who help us with our mission? We are making a difference. Traffic fatalities are down in 2022. Many states wish they could say the same. Our work on HEAT, street-racing, Project 20(22) and all of the other education and enforcement efforts are paying off. When we announced HEAT earlier this year, my heart was warmed by the Minnesotans who gave us suggestions about what roads they wanted us to work. As it turns out, we proved the fact that Minnesotans do indeed like to see other people pulled over for their poor driving behavior.

By now, you know, embrace, and live out our core values. Respect. We treat each other and everyone else with respect. Just like Trooper Hathaway and Jones. They interacted with individuals who were deep in despair, actually seated at rock bottom. They did their jobs well, and that respect was part of how they transformed lives.

Integrity. We tell the truth – even when it is unflattering. Humility is so critical.

Courage. We are brave. The State Patrol is a resilient organization full of resilient human beings. When times get tough, we turn to each other than those



who love us for help. It takes more courage to let it out than it does to hold it in.

Honor. We honor those who have gone before us. While Sgt. Tom Ludford died several years ago, Barb Degnan still sends a bouquet of flowers to us on the anniversary of his death. Why? Sgt. Ludford helped the Degnans through the death of their son Dan, who was killed by an impaired driver 30 years ago this coming Christmas Eve.

Excellence. Simply put, we are never satisfied with anything short of excellence. It isn't about perfection because we are human beings. It is about the pursuit of excellence. It is about asking ourselves, "How can we be better?" "What needs to change?" "What can I do to make a bigger impact?" It is not about being number one. Being number one at something is not as important as striving for excellence in all that we do. Why? Being in first place might just not be good enough.

Ok, back to country music. Don Williams, by all accounts, a legend, said, "The road of life twists and turns and no two directions are ever the same. Yet our lessons come from the journey, not the destination." There is no telling where your career will lead.

There is no telling the places you will go or the things you will do. What is certain, absolutely certain, is that you are on a journey. One of unimaginable promise to make a difference, to work hard, and to be fulfilled.

Lastly, as I was putting this speech together I was thinking about the chorus "Most people are good" from a country song. I Googled it thinking it was from an old country song. Turns out, it is a Luke Bryan song – a lot more current than I was thinking. But it is true. Most people are good. As you go about your work, you will encounter the worst of the worst. You will encounter difficult situations and difficult people, sometimes with a dissenting opinion about our profession. At the same time, you will experience the best of the best. Often times the best of people comes out during the worst of times. Just like the nurse who ran out of her shoes to help a stranger and the troopers who helped people seated at rock bottom. It is important to stay positive. Stay upbeat. Remember, most people are good.

When we were together on day one, we talked about many things – one of them being humility. It is good to be humble. We are not perfect. Not as individuals. Not as an organization. Arrogance is not one of our core values. The author C.S. Lewis said once that,



"Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less often." This career requires selfless service. As I have gotten older, I have become more and more interested in the stark difference between competence, confidence, and experience, and arrogance.

In a few minutes, you will swear an oath that speaks of the ultimate sacrifice. To be successful and looked

up to as a Minnesota State Trooper means that you are indeed competent, confident, and at the same time.....humble in both your words and actions.

Let me say one more time, congratulations! I am proud of you. You earned it. The Minnesota State Patrol cares deeply about you – all of you. I am eager to see you hit the road and contribute to the safety of our state.



Trooper Vincent Wren's Message

Colonel Langer, Troopers, family and friends of the 65th Academy Cadets, good morning and thank you all for being here to join in celebrating this special day.

I want to start by briefly addressing the Cadets of the 65th Academy – I want to thank you for selecting me to speak on behalf of the class. This is one of the most humbling experiences and greatest honors of my life. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

For all 35 of us on stage, today marks a very important milestone in our lives. For 19 Cadets, today marks the start of a career committed to public service. The other 16 Cadets bring decades of experience working with other law enforcement agencies to the State Patrol. To them, today represents the continuation of careers committed to public service – careers they nobly put on hold to endure the State Patrol Academy. For all of us as a group, today marks achieving a lifelong dream of becoming a Minnesota State Trooper.

It was exactly 100 days ago that the 35 of us met for the very first time. It was Orientation Day - a hot and humid Sunday. We gathered in the bleak gymnasium at Camp Ripley, assembled in formation, and started one of many much needed lessons on marching. While the Academy did not officially start until the next morning, the tension inside that room was palpable. We felt a host of emotions: fear, nervousness, anxiety, many were already experiencing homesickness, and some even felt excitement. Although we had a general idea of what was to come the following morning, nothing could quite prepare us for the journey that would be the next 14 weeks.

Day 1 started at 0434 with Troopers literally shouting everywhere. We scrambled around in our rooms trying to figure out what was going on, what do we wear, where are we going. When the class gathered outside the billet, the fiasco was evident: some Cadets wore their PT uniform, some wore their duty uniform, and some wore unique combinations of both that strangely



made sense amidst the chaos. That morning we made countless trips back into the billet to change, turn off lights, and secure doors. Lap after lap up and down the billet stairs. Oh, and I forgot to mention that it was 85 degrees with 85% humidity that morning. By the time we finally met Lieutenant Thelen, we looked as if we had jumped into a pool with our duty uniforms on.

That first week, we had a lot of questions – Am I supposed to be here? Can I do this? Will graduation day ever come? And do Fruity Pebbles belong in the meat tray? In due time, those questions were answered. Yes, we were supposed to be there; we can do this; graduation day will come – it is here right now. And no, in fact Fruity Pebbles do not belong in the meat tray.

One of the phrases we heard continuously throughout the Academy was “everything here has a purpose.” At many times it was hard to see that purpose, especially when it felt like that purpose was to see how many things we could manage to carry and march with before tipping over. Whether it be keeping our rooms inspection ready at all times, always squaring

our corners in the dining hall, or uniformly parking squad cars in front of the billet, these mundane tasks always harkened back to the State Patrol’s core values. As Colonel Langer has said, Troopers know the core values, they believe in the core values. For the last 14 weeks we have learned to live by these core values. RESPECT. INTEGRITY. COURAGE. HONOR. EXCELLENCE. That was the purpose of the Academy – it was to ensure that we would live those core values both on-duty and off-duty. As we graduate today, we have a lot to be proud of, but we can never forget the purpose of those 14 weeks.

The 65th wants to acknowledge those who have contributed to our success throughout this process. To our family and friends, you took care of the home front while we were away. You changed diapers, tended to sick kids, occasionally brought boots to Ripley when we forgot them, and most importantly, encouraged us to return on the weekends when it was tough to leave home. To the Troopers who served as instructors, thank you for taking time off the road to show us how to be good Troopers. We are excited to be your partners. To those who volunteered as role players whether it be for our Standardized Field Sobri-



ety wet lab or Vehicle Contacts, thank you for giving us realistic training experiences. To our physical training instructors from the Brainerd YMCA who pushed our bodies in ways they've never been pushed before, thank you – you've taught us that our mind quits far sooner than our body.

To Academy Staff, Sgt. Buggs, Sgt. Schueler, Trp. Hathaway, and Trp. Wayne, you've pushed us all mentally, physically, and emotionally over the last 14 weeks. While we spent time away from family, you've spent more. Each day you'd wake up before us and fall asleep after. You all made countless sacrifices to mold us into men and women of character who embrace the Patrol's core values. Thank you.

As a class, we want to take a moment to recognize Sgt. Schueler. On November 14th, Sgt. Schueler will retire from the Minnesota State Patrol with 33 and a half years of distinguished service. Since 1989, Sgt. Schueler has numerous recognitions for his service, including being named Trooper of the Year in 2016, and has taught generations of Troopers in emergency vehicle operations and standardized field sobriety testing. Sgt. Schueler made the decision to close out his career by pushing the 64th and 65th academies, which is fitting for someone so dedicated to the development of young troopers. As a class, we are

especially grateful for the opportunity to learn from him and we will never forget the many times he'd say "unbelievable" or "unacceptable" when we'd do something unacceptable. Please join me in giving Sgt. Schueler a round of applause.

Lastly, I want to close with this. On Orientation Day after we hugged our loved ones goodbye, Academy Staff stayed behind. Here, staff made a promise to our loved ones. That promise was that they would challenge us each day in ways we've never been challenged before so that if and when we start on the road as Troopers, our family can be confident we can handle whatever comes our way.

Now it's our turn to make a promise to our loved ones, to academy staff, and truly to all Minnesotans and those who travel on our roadways. Over the last few years, we've witnessed firsthand the effects of a breakdown in trust between the public and law enforcement. That can't continue. As a class, we promise to always recognize the inherent humanity of each person we encounter whether it be during a DWI arrest or a motorist assist. We promise to uphold the core values of the State Patrol and always serve with compassion and empathy. It's what the public expects of us and it's what we expect of one another. Thank you.



Minnesota State Patrol's 65th Graduating Class



Trp. Bailey Anderson SP497

I am originally from Thief River Falls MN. I got married in October 2021. My wife and I enjoy hunting and fishing together and we are looking to buy our first house. I received my bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Bemidji State University. Before joining the State Patrol, I was a deputy for both Red Lake and Mahnomen counties. I served as a member of the National Guard as a M1A1 tank crewman. I am assigned to the Bemidji station.



Trp. Theodore Argabright SP461

I am originally from Orono, MN and graduated from high school in 2004. I attended Ridge Water College and Alexandria Tech for my law enforcement degree. I currently live in Willmar area and have since 2008. I am married and have three children. Prior to joining the State Patrol, I was a deputy for eight years with the Kandiyohi County Sheriff's Office. In my free time, I enjoy ice fishing, hunting and boating with my family. I am assigned to the Willmar station.



Trp. Reese Benda SP224

I am from and have been assigned the Virginia station. I graduated from Hibbing Community College in May of 2022 with an Associates Degree in Law Enforcement. I enjoy spending my free time playing hockey, working out, and going on trips. Before the State Patrol, I worked at a retail company for four years, where I helped out all around the store. One of my career goals is to push an academy to see the cadets be formed into State Troopers.



Trp. Jamison Bowen SP276

I'm originally from Byron, MN. I joined the Marine Corps after high school and was stationed in Twentynine Palms, California. When my enlistment was done, I returned to Minnesota and went to Rochester Community and Technical College to earn my AA degree in Liberal Arts. After working for the Department of Corrections for a year in Faribault, I applied for the LETD program. I recently moved to Mounds View with my wife and two kids. I am assigned to the Mounds View station in the West Metro.



Trp. Patrick Campbell SP640

I am originally from Blue Earth, Minnesota. I graduated from Riverland Community College in 2008 with an Associate's Degree in Law Enforcement. Prior to joining the State Patrol, I worked as a deputy sheriff for the Faribault County Sheriff's Office for thirteen years. My wife Katie and I have been married for twelve years and we have two children, Presley and Cole. I am assigned to the Fairmont station.



Trp. Thomas Clark SP347

I am originally from Chicago, Illinois. I graduated from the University of Minnesota in 2020 with a bachelor's degree in political science. I worked as a corrections officer for Hennepin County for a year before joining the State Patrol through the LETD program. I think drug interdiction is fascinating and I would love to get more involved in that area as my career progresses. During my free time I enjoy playing golf, drinking coffee, and reading. I am assigned to the Minneapolis station.



Trp. Brianna Cline SP80

I am originally from St. Clair, MN. I attended Augsburg College where I earned a Bachelor's degree in Biology and competed in women's softball. Prior to joining the patrol, I worked as a campus security officer for an all-women's university in Roanoke, Virginia. In my free time I enjoy playing slow pitch softball, practicing guitar, and spending time with friends and family. I was hired through the LETO program and am assigned to the Richfield station.



Trp. Kristopher Doyle SP670

I am originally from Henderson, MN. I enlisted in the Army National Guard in 2017. I graduated from Minnesota State University Mankato in May of 2022 with a bachelor degree in Law Enforcement. Before working for the State Patrol, I worked for FedEx Ground and helped run my family farm. I am assigned to the Maple Grove station.



Trp. Garrett Erickson SP345

I am originally from Menahga, MN. I graduated high school in 2019 then attended college to obtain a law enforcement degree. I originally worked for a couple small town police departments before transferring to the State Patrol. I enjoy hobbies such as sports, hunting, and fishing. I am currently assigned to the 2520 West Metro Station.



Trp. Alex Forsman SP341

I grew up in Monticello, Minnesota and I now live in Brooklyn Center. I went to Hamline University and achieved my bachelor's degree in criminal justice, criminology and psychology. Prior to working for the State Patrol, I worked for the City of St. Louis, Mo as a police officer. In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my girlfriend and working on my many hobbies. I am currently assigned to overnights in the Minneapolis Station.



Trp. Ryan Fuchs SP324

I am from Cold Spring, MN. I graduated from Rocorj High School in 2015. After high school I joined the US Navy for five years. I was stationed in Lemoore, CA. While I was in the military, I married my wife Abby and we had our two amazing boys Beckham and Porter. I attended Alexandria Technical and Community College for two years to get my Law Enforcement Degree. While I was in college I decided that the State Patrol best fit me and what I wanted to do for a career. I am assigned to the Roseau station.



Trp. Andrew Gallagher SP393

I was born and raised in Byron, MN. I graduated high school in 2019. I pursued a career in plumbing only to realize I really wanted a career in law enforcement. I attended Alexandria Technical College and graduated May of 2022. I saw the Minnesota State Patrol was hiring and I was interested immediately. I have set some goals to achieve in my career, such as becoming a Drug Recognition Evaluator (DRE) and also a firearms instructor. I am assigned to the Windom station.



Trp. Logan Gile SP412

I am originally from Cottonwood, MN. I graduated high school in 2019. I then attended and graduated from Alexandria Technical Community College with an A.A.S degree in Law Enforcement. After college, I worked as a full time Patrol Officer for the City of Montevideo, MN. I quickly realized how passionate I was in enforcing the traffic laws of Minnesota to help keep the roadways safe. I am assigned to the Montevideo Station.



Trp. Joshua Hall SP661

I was born in Winona, MN. I graduated from Dover-Eyota high school in 2013. I attended Winona State University and graduated in 2017 with a BS in Criminal justice. I met my wife during college, as she was one of my emergency medical responder (EMR) instructors. I worked part time for Wabasha County Sheriff's Office, Wabasha Police Department and Zumbrota Police Department until 2020 when I was hired by Freeborn County Sheriff's office as a full time patrol deputy. I am assigned to the Albert Lea Station in the Rochester district.



Trp. Chase Jensen SP316

I am originally from Ellsworth, WI, where I lived my whole childhood. I moved to Minnesota in 2020 with my fiancée Megan. I graduated from Chippewa Valley Technical College with my Associates Degree in Criminal Justice; I then completed the law enforcement academy at Chippewa Valley Technical College in 2017. Prior to the State Patrol, I worked as a police officer for over four years in Wisconsin. My hobbies include hunting, fishing, and being outdoors. I am assigned to the Virginia station.



Trp. Kobie Lara SP429

Originally, I am from Anaheim, California but I moved to Osakis, Minnesota in 2012. I graduated from Osakis High School in 2020 then went to college at Alexandria Technical and Community College for my Associate's Degree in Law Enforcement. After college, I went into the Minnesota State Patrol academy in July 2022. I have five brothers and I am the middle child. I now live in Glenwood with my fiancé. I am assigned to the Morris Station.



Trp. Kristopher Larson SP302

I am originally from Lake Park, MN. I graduated high school in 2003. I graduated from Law Enforcement School in 2010 and have been in law enforcement since. I have been married to my wife Melissa since 2014. We have two children, my daughter Cami and my son Clay. I worked in the business field for six years before going back to school for law enforcement. I spend time with family, hunting and fishing when not at work. I am assigned to the Thief River Falls station.



Trp. Anthony Long SP557

I am originally from Eden Prairie, MN. I attended the University of Minnesota Twin Cities where I graduated in 2019 with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology. Prior to joining the State Patrol, I worked in healthcare as a Personal Care Assistant. In my free time I enjoy traveling and spending time outdoors exploring new hiking trails. I am assigned to the Hinckley station.



Trp. Ruben Macias SP514

I am assigned to the St. Paul station. I am originally from central Illinois. I now live in Grant, MN with my wife and three children. I attended the University of Illinois where I graduated with B.S. in Biology. In my free time, I enjoy coaching my boy's hockey team and playing "old man" hockey.



Trp. Justin Mathes SP436

I'm from Ham Lake, MN. I went to Blaine High School and graduated in 2017. After high school, I went to the University of St. Thomas and got my bachelor's degree and graduated in May of 2021. I was a realtor while attending college and during the summer months I worked road construction. I applied to the LETO program and got hired in February of 2022. I am currently assigned to the Mounds View West Metro Station.



Trp. Eric Ossefoort SP267

I'm originally from Pipestone, MN. I have wife (Danielle) and two sons (Caleb and Wyatt). Prior to joining the State Patrol, I worked as a deputy sheriff in southwest Minnesota. In my free time I enjoy doing a lot of hunting, fishing, and camping with my family. I'm currently assigned to the Minnetonka station.



Trp. Jeremy Pionski SP447

I am originally from New Prague but currently live in Erwin Lake. I am engaged and have a one year old daughter. I am a Sergeant in the Minnesota Army National Guard as an Infantryman with nine years of service and two deployments. I graduated from Metropolitan State University with my Bachelors of Science in Law Enforcement. In my free time I enjoy spending time with family and friends. I am assigned the West Metro Shakopee station.



Trp. Brady Prowatzke SP463

I am from Mayer, Minnesota. I have been married to my wife, Kathryn, since 2013, and we have three children, James, Giovana, and Jude. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting and an Associate's Degree in Law Enforcement. Prior to joining the Minnesota State Patrol, I was a deputy sheriff for the past six years with the Wright County Sheriff's Office. I am assigned to the Redwood Falls station.



Trp. Jacob Samdal SP403

I am from Windom, MN. I started my law enforcement career working for the Cottonwood County Sheriff's Office as a Jailer/Dispatcher and also worked at the Renville County Jail. I graduated from MN West in Worthington in 2021. I worked for the Windom Police Department for one year before coming to the State Patrol. In my free time, I enjoy working on computers and electronics. I am assigned to the Windom station.



Trp. Daniel Schmit SP579

I grew up in Red Wing, MN. After high school, I attended Minnesota State University, Mankato where I received my Bachelor's Degree in Law Enforcement. I served as a police officer with Metro Transit Police Department for the past three and a half years. I enjoy golfing, woodworking projects, spending time with family and friends and being outdoors. I am assigned to the Shakopee station.



Trp. Brett Seide SP160

I am from Blaine, MN. I attended Totino Grace High School and furthered my studies at North Hennepin Community College. I had prior law enforcement experience with the Anoka County Sheriff's Office as a deputy. I also worked as a scene/set designer at a haunted house in Wyoming, MN (The Dead End Hayride). In my free time I enjoy playing softball, rock climbing, hunting, and fishing. I am assigned to the Minneapolis station. I love the experience and having great partners.



Trp. Jonathon Stearns SP626

I am originally from Luverne, MN. I grew up in a law enforcement family. My father is a state trooper and my sister is a police officer for the City of Rochester. I enlisted into the MN Army National Guard in 2017. I joined the MN State Patrol after working for the Rock County Sheriff's Office for over a year. I am currently assigned to the Pipestone station.



Trp. Joshua Steinberg SP376

I am from Owatonna, MN and currently work out of the St. Paul station. I graduated from Minnesota State University, Mankato in 2016 with a double major in law enforcement and political science. Prior to joining the State Patrol I was a patrol deputy with the Steele County Sheriff's Office. I have experience working as a community service officer, sales, and emergency communications dispatcher. I am currently serving as a Captain in the Army Reserve. I am married to my wife, Kristen, who is also a police officer. We enjoy camping and hiking, and adventuring to new places around the United States.



Trp. Michael Stillings SP482

I am originally from Apple Valley, Minnesota. I graduated from Eastview High School in 2014. I attended and played division II lacrosse at Wheeling Jesuit University in Wheeling, West Virginia. I graduated in 2018 with a double major in business management and accounting. I then worked for an accounting firm for three years auditing colleges and universities around the country. During this time I also helped coach a high school lacrosse team at Lakeville North High School. I was hired through the LETO program and am assigned to the Maple Grove station.



Trp. Dolf Svoboda SP628

I am originally from Naples, FL. I will be assigned to the Windom station. I grew up with two brothers and two sisters. I went to college at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. After college I moved to Minnesota to be closer to family. Once I was settled in Minnesota, I completed my college degree in law enforcement at Minnesota West. Things I like to do on my days off are riding my motorcycle and always spending time with family.



“THE ROLLIN’ 65TH”

Mission Statement

Protect and serve all people in the state through assistance, education, and enforcement; provide support to allied agencies; and provide for the safe, efficient movement of traffic on Minnesota’s roadways.



Trp. Nolan Swalve SP504

I am from Rosemount but currently live in St. Paul. I have my degree in Marketing from the University of North Dakota. Before the State Patrol, I worked as an account manager for an agriculture company. In my free time I enjoy fishing, playing golf, and spending time with family & friends. In the future, I'd like to join the MRT. I am currently assigned to the Richfield station.



Trp. Mason Turman SP671

I am from Moorhead Minnesota. I attended Minnesota State University Moorhead where I double majored in Criminal Justice and Sociology. I enjoy golfing, snowboarding, and camping. I joined the Minnesota State Patrol through the LETO program. I am assigned to the Thief River Falls station.



Trp. Vincent Wren SP421

Originally from Stillwater, I now live in Bloomington, MN. I have a Bachelor's Degree from Drake University and a Juris Doctor from the University of St. Thomas School of Law. I spend my free time hiking, trail running, coaching cross country, and working with those with disabilities. Before joining the patrol through the LETO program, I worked in compliance and supervision at a financial services firm. I am assigned to the East Metro overnight station.



Access North

Contributed by Trooper Robyn Birr

On October 29, 2022 I presented a check donation to Access North on behalf of the Minnesota State Patrol Trooper's Association. From left to right in the picture is Trooper Robyn Birr (SP 565), Access North Executive Director Don Brunette and Board President Jeff Christian.



Access North is a Center for independent living in Northeastern Minnesota assisting individuals with disabilities to live independently, pursue meaningful goals, and have the same opportunities and choices as all people. The Center is a disability resource for everyone!



Access North held their 3rd annual accessible deer hunt that was scheduled October 28th and 29th, 2022. The base operations was held at Side Lake Community Center. All meals, snacks, water and coffee were provided to hunters and volunteers at no cost. This year they supported 10 hunters into the field. They had heated stands, a volunteer with them to assist them into the blind and volunteers to process the deer. Many volunteers helped to make this happen. ♦



Pictured from left to right: Trooper Robyn Birr (SP 565), Access North Executive Director Don Brunette and Board President Jeff Christian



Vintage Vehicles

By Eric Bormann SP 382

In 1979, the State Patrol celebrated its 50th anniversary. In March of that year, a dozen troopers who made up a group dubbed the "Golden 50," chipped in their own money to fund the acquisition of a Ford Model A and a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, with the intent they would be shown throughout the anniversary year and beyond to promote the State Patrol and their mission. The group took out a \$10,000 loan and the search for suitable vehicles and the start of the MSPTA's vintage collection of replica squad cars began. The Golden 50 Troopers were:

Lt. Colonel Kevin Kitteridge	Captain Virgil Carl
Captain Jack Murray	Captain Clarence Olson
Gary Piece #10	Dick Abraham #17
Al Niedorf #345	Gus Johnson #113
Sgt. Phil Hodapp	Orielle Norland #255
Jim Schemmel #194	

On May 2, 1979, Trp. Birney Hill, of Slayton, located a 1931 Ford Model A Coupe near Edgerton. After a budget restoration and paint job were completed at an Avoca, MN body shop, the group had expended a total of \$4500 for the Model A. The car would be given a complete nut and bolt restoration in 1996-1997 at which time it was cosmetically changed to look like a 1930 model. Highway Patrol markings and equipment were also added to make it look like patrol car of the time period. Currently the Model A replica patrol car is stored in a towable trailer and parked outside in a D.O.T. facility in Maplewood. The Model A runs and is drivable.

On May 22 of 1979 Virgil Carl and Vern Herberg made a trek to Illinois City, IL, to pick up and purchase a 1930 Harley Davidson motorcycle for \$3000. Another \$356 was spent on repairs and a paint job at a St. Paul motorcycle shop. Soon after, dates were scheduled for shows and parades around the state. Highway Patrol markings and equipment were added to make the motorcycle look like a replica 1930 Highway Patrol issued VL90 Harley Davidson. In 2001 the Harley Davidson was given a complete and proper restoration and is now valued between \$35,000 and \$40,000. It is also stored in a trailer at the same D.O.T. facility as the Model A.

An Original 1930 Ford Model A



1930 Harley-Davidson MHP Replica



1930 Ford Model A Replica
(Present condition)



In 1979 Trooper Tom Lundford #105 was working in the 2160 Owatonna station. Tom was assigned a new 1979 Dodge St. Regis squad car. The car was later reassigned to Chief Pilot and Captain Virgil Carl of the Golden 50. The State Patrol allowed Captain Carl and Pilot Gary Pierce to show the Dodge at car shows and events with the Model A and the Harley Davidson. After the 50th anniversary passed Captain Carl and others kept the Dodge hidden and it was never sold. To this day the 1979 Dodge St. Regis remains in the State Patrol fleet with just 45,000 miles on the odometer. The Dodge is stored inside at the same D.O.T. facility as the Model A and Harley Davidson.

On March 11, 1980, a meeting was held and an agreement was made that the Troopers Association and Supervisors Association to pay off the remaining balance of the Golden 50 loan and reimburse each of the twelve founding members \$100. The associations officially owned the Model A and the Harley Davidson. Guidelines were set up for use of the vehicles. For some time retired troopers were hired as temporary full time employees in the summer months to maintain, transport, and show the vehicles to promote the MN State Patrol and its mission.

In 2000 Commercial Vehicle Inspector Jay Sletten became involved with maintaining and showing the vintage vehicles. A heavy duty truck was needed to tow the Model A trailer. The State Patrol allowed Jay to use his state issued Ford F250 to tow and show the Model A and the Harley Davidson. Trooper Ed Carroll was also heavily involved in maintaining and showing the vintage vehicles during that time.

Fast-forward to 2006. After the Minnesota State Patrol celebrated its 75th anniversary it was noted that there was a big time gap between the earliest patrol vehicles and the 50th anniversary Dodge. Several people thought there should be an additional vehicle added to the fleet to commemorate the 25th anniversary year. A contingent of Troopers including Ed Carroll and John Mock set about looking for a 1954 Ford

Mainline to fill the gap. In 2006 a decent 1954 Ford Mainline was located in Cottage Grove and purchased by the MSPTA for \$7500. The adaptation of the Ford from a civilian vehicle to a police interceptor replica was soon underway. Deep into the restoration there were questions asked regarding some of the equipment that would have been used and how it might have been installed. Fortunately Jay Sletten's father Trooper

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1954 Ford Mainline MHP Replica



1979 Dodge St. Regis A38



1954 Ford Mainline MHP Replica
(As purchased)



1979 Dodge St. Regis A38



Norris Sletten (1955 academy) was issued a 1954 Ford patrol car as he began his career. Jay's father provided valuable information and guidance as the Cardiac Cruisers and Century Ave Collision installed equipment accurate to the time period and model of the squad.

With the '54 Ford Mainline replica completion in 2007 there was now another car in the fleet and another vehicle to maintain and show. At that time Jay became more involved with the vintage fleet and has been the fleet biggest caretaker for the last 10-12 years. Fortunately Jay was the fleet manager in District 4700 and could easily adjust his schedule and find a vehicle to tow the vintage vehicles to shows and events. During the summer months Jay said at times he would stay very busy showing the vehicles once or twice a week.

In addition to Jay Sletten's involvement, there has been a corps of civilians that have always been willing to help transport cars or assist with maintenance or repairs. They

call themselves the Cardiac Cruisers and the majority of whom were the labor force behind the restoration of the '54 Ford. The youngest of these guys is about 78 years old now. They are still helping out, but their involvement is declining more each season.

Where do we go from here?

In the spring of 2022 Jay Sletten retired from the Minnesota State Patrol Commercial Vehicle section. Jay moved to southwestern Minnesota as is no longer taking care of the State Patrol vintage vehicles. The State Patrol and the MSPTA owe Jay a huge debt of gratitude for his years of dedication and work to maintain and show the State Patrol vintage vehicles.

In the summer of 2022 the MSPTA and Colonel Langer met to discuss the future of the Minnesota State Patrol vintage vehicles. It was agreed to form the Minnesota State Patrol vintage vehicle advisory committee. This recently formed committee is comprised of two Lieutenants, eleven Troopers and is led by Major Joe Dwyer. This committee will continue to maintain and show these vehicles and promote the image of the MN State Patrol. The committee will also steer this vintage fleet into the future with the possibility of adding new squad cars in the future. With the exemption of the 1979 Dodge St. Regis, the MSPTA owns and funds the maintenance of the vintage vehicles.

If you are interested in the history of the vehicles used by the Minnesota State Patrol since the agency's inception an excellent website to visit is MaroonCruisers.com. It is a very comprehensive website documenting the history of each vehicle with many photos. ♦



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Have a Heart, Help a Neighbor Food Drive

On the morning of Friday, December 9th, 2022, I had the opportunity to meet with Shay Moris of the Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank in Duluth while she was at her food drive in cooperation with WDIO television. The food drive is held annually in early December at First United Methodist Church, also known as the "Cooper Top" church. The food drive is called Have a Heart, Help a Neighbor Food Drive. Shay has been the Executive Director of the food bank since 1998 and the Minnesota State Patrol Troopers Association has had the opportunity to develop a relationship with both Shay and her food bank. Since 2014, the Troopers Association has donated a total of \$5,500 to the food drive. This year was no different in our commitment to fight hunger in the region, as I presented Shay with a \$500 check.

Later in the day when I had an opportunity to meet with some of the staff at the food bank, it was brought to my attention that they raised \$5,621 that day along with approximately 200 pounds of food. The donation number will probably rise as they expect more to come in the mail over the next week or two. Based on a calculation that the staff can do to translate those numbers into actual meals, that means the effort garnered about 17,000 meals so far. According to their website, the Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank ensures people in need of food in NE Minnesota and NW Wisconsin can access meals; approximately 44,000 people or 5.6 million meals are delivered to families annually. Another interesting fact is that the food bank is able to take donations to another level by leveraging 1 donated dollar of cash into \$7 worth of groceries through their different channels.

If anyone would be willing to donate to this wonderful cause, contributions can be made to the following address:

Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank
4503 Airpark Boulevard
Duluth, MN 55811

You could also visit their website at northernlakesfoodbank.org to find out more information about this worthy nonprofit. ♦



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The MPPOA D.C. Fly-In



The D.C. fly-in is an annual legislative conference sponsored by the Minnesota Peace and Police Officers Association (MPPOA) where a group of delegates fly out to Washington D.C. for a few days to meet with legislators. It usually takes place in March of every year, but it had to be moved to November this year because of a COVID-19 outbreak during the month of March. The intent of the conference is to meet with the Minnesota delegation of representatives and senators to express concerns from the police perspective relating to the field of law enforcement. This year, the Minnesota State Patrol Trooper's Association (MSPTA) sent President Mike LeDoux, Vice President Dan Beasley, and Duluth District Delegate Mark McGrew (the writer) to the conference. To say the least, it is a whirlwind affair, but it seems to be a good use of time and resources.

We flew out of the Minneapolis airport on Tuesday, November 15th early in the morning, arriving in Washington at around 1100 hours local time. After finishing a much-needed meal at Primo Family Restaurant, we still couldn't check into the hotel until 1500 hours, so a trip to the United State Holocaust Museum was arranged. Like most Washington D.C. buildings, to get in, we had to go through airport-like security. In many ways, the tour of the exhibit gives one that feeling of being the target of the oppression. It is a very eye-opening experience. Many different aspects of the museum experience were impactful, but it was especially interesting that the gassing of prisoners started on December 8th, 1941, one day after the United States was drawn into World War II by Japan after the December 7th attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

The museum tour ended and by this time we were able to go and check into the hotel, the Pheonix Park. That evening we had a wonderful dinner catered by the hotel staff. We also met with Dennis McGrann, who is a lobbyist from the



Folger Square Group based in Washington D.C. Dennis has ties to Minnesota and works in Washington; part of his job is lobbying for positive legislation regarding law enforcement interests. He is well connected in the D.C. area and has developed constructive relationships with our local politicians from Minnesota. Dennis advised the group that we would be gathering at the hotel in the morning and taking a short walk to the U.S. Capitol. He went onto say that our host for the day would be Representative Betty McCollum (D) from the 4th District. Since Dennis has had so many years in the area, he also warned us that there would be a flurry of activity given the November 8th election had just taken place.

The next morning, we all gathered in the lobby of the Pheonix Park Hotel. Wednesday, November 16th, was going to be our only full day in Washington. Once we were all together, we took that short walk to the Capitol as Dennis described the night before. After a few group and individual photos at the steps of the Capitol, we were directed down to a security area of the building where we had to wait. It was a cold and windy day to stand outside waiting for security to accept the group, but nothing that a hardy group of Minnesotans couldn't handle! It was interesting to note that as we were waiting, we saw a large group of people entering a different door not too

far from us. Dennis said that was the newly elected group of representatives and their spouses from various states entering the Capitol to be sworn in and to attend orientation for the 118th Congress. Before we knew it, we were passing through security and inside the building where the heart of the United States government is working for its citizens.

We were then escorted down to a large conference room where we would be most of the day. It was arranged by Congresswoman McCollum's staff that we would stay in the room while the Minnesota delegation would come and meet with us. We were of course met first by Representative McCollum herself when she arrived and welcomed us to the Capitol. Throughout the day, we met with Representatives Angie Craig (D) (2nd), Michelle Fischbach (R) (7th), Dean Phillips (D) (3rd), Brad Finstad (R) (1st), and Pete Stauber (R) (8th). In addition, both Minnesota Senators, Amy Klobuchar (D) and Tina Smith (D), joined us to discuss topics related to law enforcement. Unfortunately, neither Representative Ilhan Omar (D) (5th) nor Tom Emmer (R) (6th) joined us that day. It was our understanding that Congressman Emmer was busy with his newly appointed position to the Majority Whip and the duties associated with that title in the U. S. House of Representatives. Representative Emmer had been on the schedule to meet with us, but the same cannot be said for Congresswoman Omar.

While we were meeting with the various representatives, MSPTA President LeDoux had the opportunity to recognize Congresswoman Michelle Fischbach. President LeDoux had a wooden State Patrol badge made up for Congresswoman Fischbach with the designation "MN07" in the place where a badge number would be found since she represents congressional district number seven. Over the years that Congresswoman Fischbach was in the Minnesota Senate, she worked tirelessly with the MSPTA executive board in supporting legislation favorable to law enforcement, specifically troopers. Both Congresswoman Fischbach and President LeDoux were instrumental in procuring the much-needed pay increases for the Minnesota Law Enforcement Association (MLEA)—essentially all state law enforcement officers.

In addition to these different Minnesota representatives joining us, we also had the opportunity during our down time to meet with several other people associated with Congress serving in various roles to hear how they keep the wheels turning behind the scenes of government. Deputy Chief Timothy Bowen was the first to join us, giving us an overview of the U.S. Capitol Police (USCP). Deputy Chief Bowen has been with the USCP since July of 2003. Since December 2018, he has served as Acting Commander of the Operational Services Bureau. Deputy Chief Bowen addressed general operations of the USCP as well as the impact of January 6th to the department.

A second guest to come and speak with the MPPOA delegation was General William J. Walker. Walker, a Chicago native, was appointed as the 38th U.S. House of Representatives Sergeant at Arms by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi on April 26th, 2021. General Walker has an impressive history for both military and civilian service to the citizens of the United States. General Walker started his military service as a Second Lieutenant when he took command of a military police detachment out of Somerset, New Jersey, and ended his career as a Major General in April 2021. General Walker also served in various leadership positions within the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). He retired from the DEA as a Special Agent in 2014 after 30 years of distinguished service. General Walker is definitely an impressive person.

After our day of meetings took place, Senator Amy Klobuchar hosted a reception for the MPPOA delegation in Senate Room 219. To my knowledge, this is the first time an event like this has ever taken place. It was a good opportunity to interact with Senator Klobuchar when she stopped by to meet with the delegation in a different venue—away from the political environment.

The purpose for our fly-in was starting to wind down, so after the reception wrapped up, we made our way back to the Pheonix Park Hotel. After arriving back at the hotel, we were served a catered dinner during which time members could interact with one another and get to know each other better since many of us worked in different parts of the state.

The next morning, Thursday, November 17th, we all met in the hotel lobby around 0930 hours so we could make our way back to the Reagan National Airport in time for our flight back to Minneapolis. Fortunately, we made it back to Minnesota without much drama.

On a side note, there were a few political sightings while in Washington D.C. Senator Rand Paul (R) (KY) was seen having drinks and conversation with friends at the Dubliner restaurant, which is attached to the Pheonix Park Hotel. In addition, Senator Chuck Schumer (D) (NY), was sighted after leaving a meeting in the Senate and surrounded by a mob of reporters taking statements from him as we were being led to Senator Klobuchar's reception.

Many would ask if this type of a trip is worth all the trouble. I would say that it is a good use of resources given a whole delegation can meet directly with our federally elected leaders from around Minnesota in one place. Relationships are the key to politics and politics are what drive how we lead our daily lives. Yes, people have differences in their beliefs about how the country should be run, but this type of event allows the opportunity to express concerns to both parties running our government in a respectful forum. ♦

TOYS FOR TOTS



This year Mankato District 2200 continued its tradition of giving to Toys for Tots during the Christmas season.

Troopers, supervisors, support staff, community members, and the MSPTA donated 133 toys and \$712.00 in cash to help those in need during the holiday season.

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The Crash Reconstruction Program and Heavy Truck Crashes

By Kelly Phillips

In 2018 I worked a crash involving a commercial motor vehicle. Nothing out of the ordinary for a crash reconstruction specialist, just another serious injury crash. While I was speaking with the company's owner, he said he wanted his private Reconstructionist to download the speed data from the truck. I had been investigating crashes since 2009 and had no clue that CMV's had that data on them. I watched as their guy pulled out a kit and hooked up to the truck's deutsch connector, opened a Cummins software program and pulled up a sudden deceleration event from the crash. After that crash, I decided to do some digging and figure out more behind this equipment and software. Fast forward to attending several heavy truck crash investigation, Heavy Vehicle Event Data Recorder (HVEDR) technician and analyst trainings, begging and pleading for equipment, and some learning curves. Little did I know what I started!

Since then, the HVEDR program has gone from just me trying to download commercial trucks involved in serious and fatal crashes statewide by myself. To adding five other Crash Reconstructionist specialists across the state. Over 100 commercial vehicles imaged later and grants from D4700, the

six of us now each have Nexiq translation units and two (soon to be three) much larger kits as backups. Many Troopers didn't know we have the ability to download speed data from a commercial truck involved in a serious or fatal crash, but we do! We still have a ways to go, but with the recent Heavy Truck Crash Investigation training all our crash reconstruction specialists went through in Mankato, we are making progress. The biggest piece of advice from any one of us is, if your serious injury or fatality crash has a commercial motor vehicle or bus, DON'T move it within the scene or manipulate it until you talk to a crash reconstruction specialist. The information in these vehicle is much more sensitive and can be easily erased.

The six of us HVEDR reconstruction specialist attended a training in Des Moines, IA put on by Midwest Association of Technical Accident Investigators (MATAI). This training was focused on the role the HVEDR plays in crashes, with a bonus of watching live crash testing! The data was valuable in furthering our abilities to investigate crashes here in Minnesota. If you have questions about the HVEDR program, or if you are interested in becoming a crash reconstructionist, feel free to contact one of us. ♦



HVEDR Crash Reconstruction Specialists from left to right:
Trp. Shawn Mathews (D2200),
Trp. Adam Rochlin (D3200), Sgt. Kelly Phillips (ISS), Sgt. Scott Smith (ISS),
Trp. Shaun Stang (D2800), and Sgt. Andy Brumm (ISS).

Figures 1, 2 and 3
Crash testing at MATAI



Above
Nexiq kit that the six
HVDR CRS have.

Above
One of soon to be three full kits.

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Trooper Gerald Veaux (2200) and his step-father Dave Brave Heart led the escort for the Dakota 38 + 2 Memorial Ride in Mankato on January 26th. Trooper Veaux prepared a short narrative on the ride, its history and the reconciliation efforts his family have been a part of (below). All photos are of Trooper Ksapa "Gerald" Veaux (2200) and his step father Dave Brave Heart.

Trooper Veaux, and his step-father, Dave Brave Heart, are honored to lead the Dakota 38+2 riders from Land of Memories Park to Reconciliation Park in Mankato, Minnesota. December 26, 2023 marks the 160th year since the hanging of 38 Dakota in Mankato. Two more Dakota were later hung in a

Tribal Relations

different location. Trooper Veaux is a descendent of the Dakota people who were exiled to South Dakota following the 1862 US Dakota Conflict and is an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. Dave Brave Heart is also a descendent of the Dakota sent to South Dakota and an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe. Trooper Veaux and his family moved from South Dakota to Mankato in 2011 to be part of the reconciliation efforts that have taken place in Mankato for over 50 years. Dave joined the Mahkato Wacipi (Mankato Pow Wow) committee and led as chairman, until ALS forced his retirement earlier this year. Trooper Veaux also served on the pow wow committee while he was a college student. Trooper Veaux and the rest of the Brave Heart family recognize the importance of reconciliation and healing in Mankato and throughout Minnesota. ♦



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A stylized, painterly graphic of the American flag, with the stars and stripes rendered in a textured, brushstroke-like style. The colors are muted, with a greyish-blue for the stars and a brownish-gold for the stripes.

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

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37TH ANNUAL M.S.P.T.A. TROOPER/GUEST GOLF TOURNAMENT

This Year's event will be held at Thumper Pond Golf Course in Ottertail
on Wednesday, July 19th and Thursday, July 20th 2023.

All active and retired Troopers, Supervisors, RCO's, CVI'S, Support Staff and their guests are eligible

The cost per person is \$150.00 for the event. Cost includes 2 rounds of golf, cart, range facilities, 2 course lunches and a banquet meal on Wednesday evening. Breakfast buffet will be available on Wednesday and Thursday mornings.

Additional evening banquet tickets will also be available.

The golf format will be the same as in year's past with the first day 2-person net best ball followed by a 4-person scramble.

A maximum of 144 golfers will be accepted.

A shotgun start at 10:00 am for the first day and 9:00 am on the second day. Registrations will be on Tuesday evening and 8:00 am on Wednesday.

Practice round will be available on Tuesday for \$50.00 (includes cart).

Please call the Pro Shop for Tee Times. 218-367-6501

Lodging has been reserved at Thumper Pond at the rate of \$119.95 per night. Ask for the State Trooper room rate. Call Thumper Pond direct for your reservations: 877-294-7981 or 218-367-2000.

All registrations for the tournament must be paid by May 19th if you want to receive your early registration prize. To help facilitate and properly plan this event please fill out the registration form and submit with payment and contact information.

Make checks payable to:

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Please submit to:

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Team you want to play with on Wednesday: (Optional) _____

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