

MINNESOTA TROOPER

Volume 36 • Number 2 • June 2021



Officer Andy Ornelas
December 2, 2020



Sergeant Ben Jenkins
March 27, 2020



Trooper Caleb Starr
July 31, 2020



Trooper Eugene Baron Jr.
May 25, 2020



Trooper George Baker
May 24, 2020



Captain Jeff Sewell
September 26, 2020



Trooper Jennifer Czarnecki
December 5, 2020



Trooper Joseph Jon Bullock
February 5, 2020



Trooper Justin Schaffer
March 24, 2020



Trooper Nolan Sanders
March 27, 2020

NEVER FORGOTTEN 2020

"Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God"
– Matthew 5:9



Investigator Ryan Fortini
January 1, 2020



Trooper Thomas Devlin
September 3, 2020



Awards Narratives
[Trooper of the Year] | PG 22

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

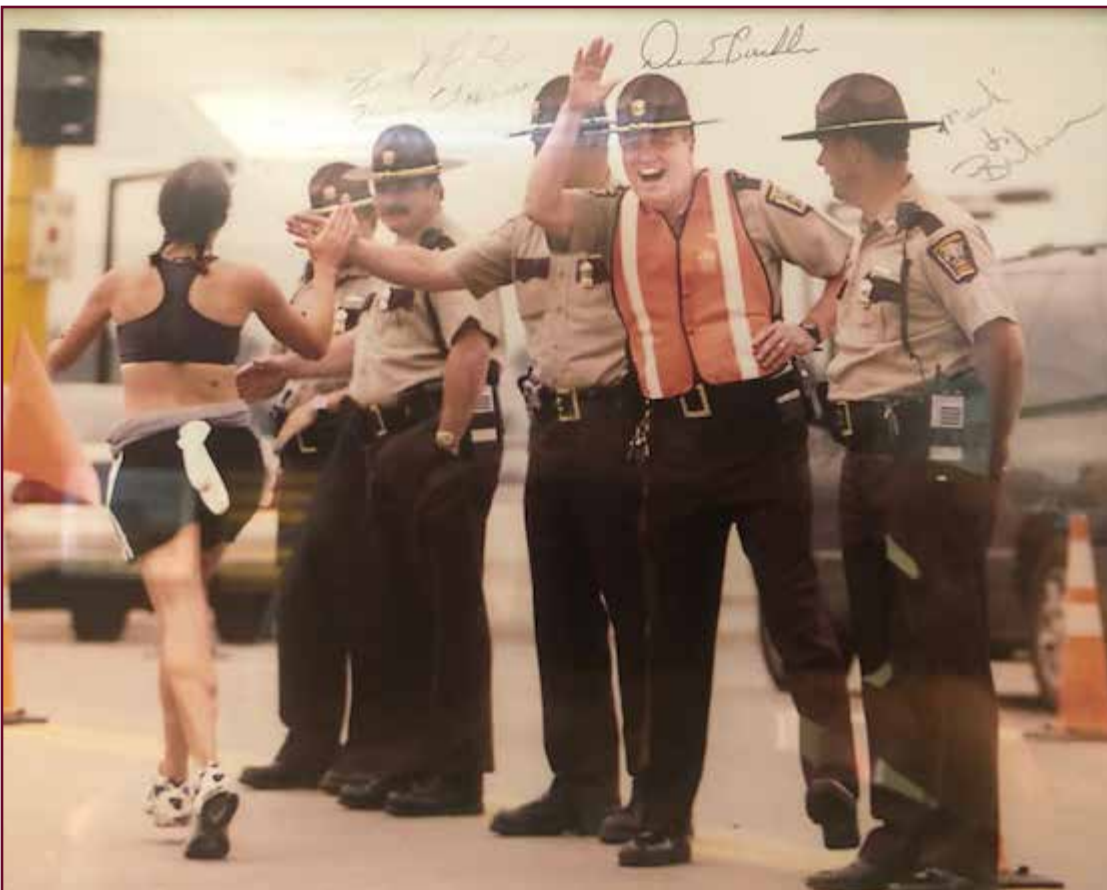
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Retired Sgt Dennis Birchland displays his enthusiasm as runners from a past marathon struggle their way over I 35 in downtown Duluth. Dennis, as well as many other troopers, have run this marathon over the years. We are happy to see the marathon returning this year. We can only hope retired Sgt. Birchland will be just as excited as in the past.

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MINNESOTA TROOPER

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- 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



The Push for Pay

As I write this president's message, I am filled with a mix of emotions as a result of recent events both at the national and local level. I feel a bit drained, like most of my colleagues. We have spent so many consecutive days working without days off it's difficult to remember what our "normal" schedule is. I applaud all state law enforcement officers that have once again stepped up and fulfilled the oath to protect and serve under unpleasant conditions. I would be remiss not to mention our families, who once again took on the additional responsibilities in our absence. I only wish I had a remedy for the serious amount of stress and anxiety placed upon you. Please know the support you provide cannot be measured. Mere thanks doesn't seem like adequate compensation for what you have had to endure as we have worked through the COVID crisis and countless deployments to quell civil unrest.

Despite this expansion of duties and being under incredible stress, troopers have continued to work without a current contract. It is not unrealistic to believe that if and when we reach an agreement, the contract will have already expired. All state law enforcement officers have found themselves in the same storm just riding in different boats. Ironically, MMB has released its FY 2022-23 forecast anticipating a positive balance of \$1.6 billion. This will make their normal declaration of poverty a tough sell.

In January, the long awaited MMB wage study arrived. Better late than never since we waited nearly two years for its arrival. Unfortunately, "never" in this instance would have been better than "late". While the report noted a large wage disparity, it had some fundamental flaws. The study looked at only twenty cities, deviating from our historic comparison group used for comparison since 1994. This skewed the data, eliminating many of the metro suburban departments we compete with for applicants. The comparison was based upon 2018 wage data so it was outdated upon receipt. The report indicated the majority

of troopers received freeway pay and used that additional 2.6% of base wage in an attempt to reduce the disparity. It was immediately pointed out that this was incorrect since freeway pay is only received by approximately 30% of troopers. In March MMB provided us with a modified study based upon feedback received from MLEA and administration. Freeway pay was eliminated from the equation but resulted in little change. We received an explanation that the cities selected for the study geographically represented 290 of the 710 MLEA employees or 41% of the work force. It became clear the second version of this study belonged in the circular file with the first version.

In February the Office of the Legislative Auditor completed their compensation study based on the MSPTA legislation passed in 2020. I would like to thank Joel Alter, the Director of Special Reviews, for the clear, concise, and objective report. This report validated years of work on behalf of our members educating elected officials about the wage disparity that exists for all state law enforcement officers. This disparity is clearly described on page seven of the report. "The top base wage that could be earned by state troopers in 2019 was substantially less than top base wage available to police officers in most cities reviewed." The legislative intervention taken during the special session helped mitigate the disparity at starting wage but a large disparity still exists at top wage. Despite the legislative appropriation troopers remain ranked 33 out of 34 at top pay when compared to the cities surveyed.

The MSPTA now asks the legislature to follow the language in statute 299D.03 and make appropriate increases to patrol trooper salaries based upon the legislative auditor's report. We believe troopers should be paid at or above the median wage of the study. Troopers and all state law enforcement officers deserve to be compensated in-line with similar positions held outside state service. This week the Minnesota Senate Finance Committee approved funding to address this disparity for all

state law enforcement officers. I remain cautiously optimistic that the House of Representatives will follow suit. The legislative process is a rollercoaster ride, so I recommend taking some Dramamine

as we approach the end of the session deadline. The wage disparity has affected career earnings, retirement benefits, and created recruitment and retention issues. The study clearly shows that MMB

owes all state law enforcement officers an apology for denying the existence of the disparity and for allowing it to grow so large. ♦

Mike #88



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Colonel Matt Langer

Colonel's Message



What We Know

To say the last year has been trying would be an understatement. It has been incredibly challenging on so many levels. The COVID-19 pandemic provided novel issues to work through but it also brought out the best of the Minnesota State Patrol and first responders everywhere. The death of George Floyd brought about historic civil unrest. The State Patrol responded to that unrest in an unprecedented way with the hope that it was a once in a lifetime, cataclysmic situation.

While managing our day-to-day mission related to traffic safety, we spent nearly a year planning for civil unrest in northern Minnesota, as well as the inevitable trials of the former Minneapolis police officers. The planning for Operation Safety Net was put into high gear in January when we assigned three leaders to the coordinating table to work with allied agencies on plans to protect the rights of those wishing to engage in peaceful protest, but also to ensure we prevent the dangerous and destructive behavior demonstrated last year. Those plans were in excellent shape and evolving toward a verdict when an officer-involved shooting in Brooklyn Center expedited the need to move resources into the metro.

The State Patrol response to that Sunday night call for help was once again astounding, but not surprising. Troopers came from all over Minnesota to assist and were placed in a dangerous, chaotic, uncertain, and unforgiving environment wherein they exercised true leadership in their effort to protect life and property. With over a week of dealing with challenges in Brooklyn Center, the guilty verdict of Derek Chauvin brought to a close this nearly year-long period of time in our history.

The State Patrol has been at the forefront of Minnesota's response to these challenging events every step of the way. I am grateful for your contribution and know with certainty that you helped stop and prevent destructive and

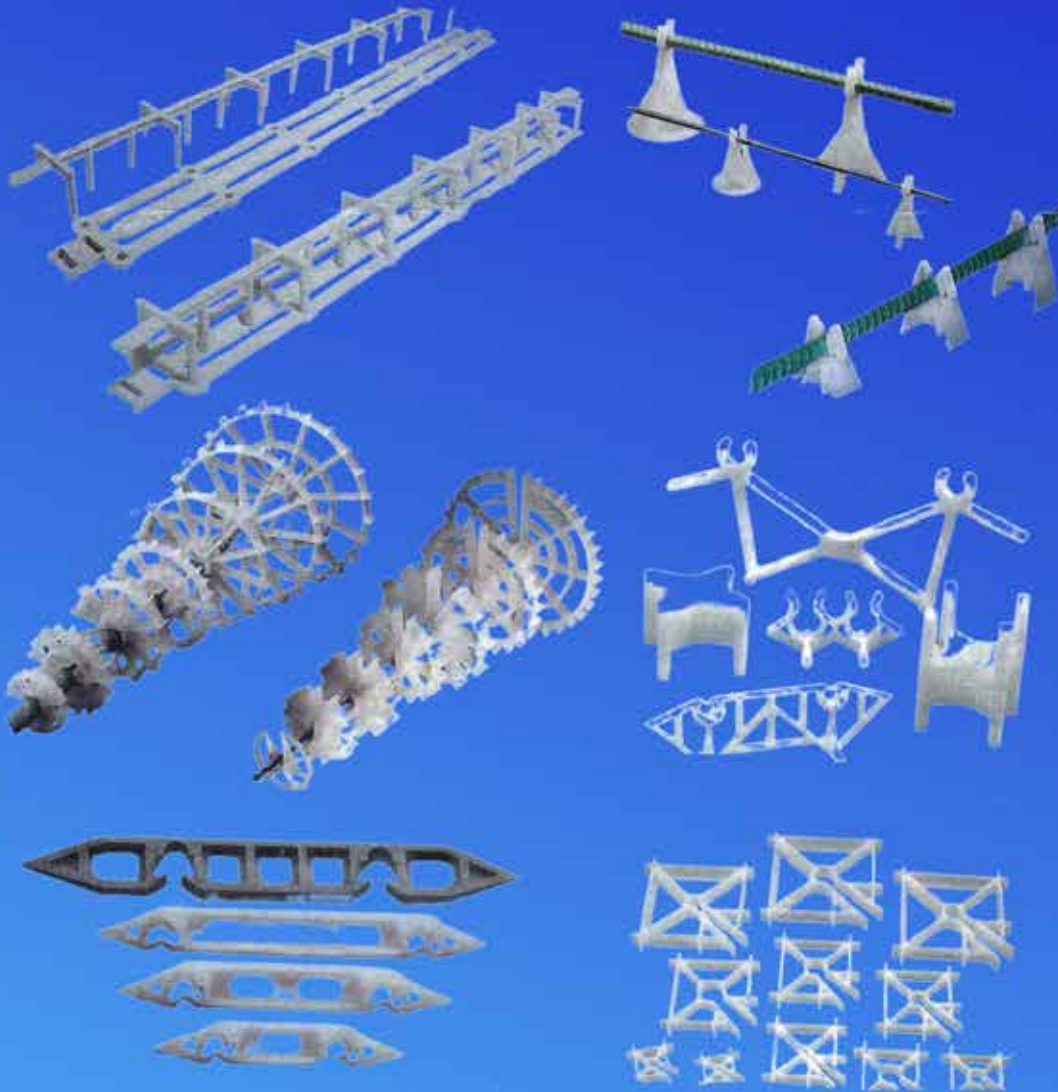
dangerous activities. Were there lessons learned? Always. We continue our commitment to excellence by learning after each critical incident and then implementing those lessons learned.

To be frank, it has been a tough year. It has been tough on the organization, our members, our families, and on Minnesotans. Negativity always seems to be louder than positivity. We sometimes have to search for the good and then pause and consciously think about it rather than let it pass by unnoticed.

And there are a lot of good things to focus on. The State Patrol is a remarkable organization. Throughout the chaos of the past year, I believe our recruitment and academy processes have been solidified as not only necessary, but advantageous. The talent we have is extraordinary. Our traffic safety mission is sound and more important than ever with deaths trending up significantly over last year. More specifically, our commitment to assistance, education, and enforcement (with a focus on speed, seat belts, impairment, and distraction) is firmly rooted in public safety and supported by data. While the path forward for our profession remains difficult to discern, our mission combined with our core values of respect, integrity, courage, honor, and excellence are undoubtedly a beacon on that path forward. This is not the first time the State Patrol has worked through challenges. Keep up the good work knowing you are making a difference. We will persevere together. ♦



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The North Minnesota Forty ... Class of '40, that is

By John L. Hogan
Class of '40, retired

The 1939 Minnesota Legislature enacted the state's first Civil Service law. Governor Harold Stassen signed the bill and a Civil Service Commission was formed. The first examination drawn up by the commission was for an increase in the Highway Patrol, and the test was given statewide in December of that year. Prior to this time, all patrol officers were political appointees and could be removed with a change of the party in power.

The Great Depression of the '30s, while waning, was still predominant, and over 2,000 applicants signed up for the test. The 100 who passed were summoned for the physical, the top 50 of those were called in for the oral and the best 25 of these were named for the Training School. This group, while the first under Civil Service, was the fifth class overall.

The school was held during March, April and May at the U of M farm school in the Midway, not too far from the State Fair grounds. Eldon Rowe was chief at that time, and Frank Corcoran was the assistant chief. On occasion, Chief Rowe was reverently referred to as "J. Edgar" by some of the troopers.

We were quartered in one of the older buildings (long since torn down) and our classroom was in one of the wings. There were only a few farm students attending that quarter, and they ate in the cafeteria with us. These students were mostly veterinary doctor aspirants.

Of the 25 cadets, six were "high-school-only" grads and the balance had one or more years of college education. Two were graduates of the U of M Forestry College, three were teachers, one a fourth-year dental student, one a railroad engineer, one a banker, and several were law students or Business Administration hopefuls. Two cadets, Alvin Johnson and Virgil Safford, were World War I veterans. Of the 25, 23 finished the school and all but one eventually saw service with the patrol.

Our "work week" consisted of two weeks of pick, shovel and wheelbarrow labor, leveling a huge, frozen ash pile near the campus heating plant. We filled in a low spot that later was sodded. The latrine was in one of the veterinary buildings about a half block from the ash pile. One cadet made an hourly trip to the "hisn" but seldom got farther than the desk of a very attractive receptionist. He was not among us the following Monday, and the school had to survive without the services of a self-appointed public relations man.

We furnished our own uniforms and received no pay (as did several ensuing classes). The uniforms consisted of gray shirts with black bow ties, gray breeches, high-top laced shoes and puttees. We had our choice of jackets as long as they were of a subdued color.

Captain D. W. Chet Brown was our "house mother"

and was with us from 10 p.m. Sunday until 1 p.m. the following Saturday. Captain Otto Dougher was our law professor, Captain Ralph R. Potvin taught us first aid and pistol shooting, while Captain Glen Dahl was our state history professor and motorcycle instructor. Captain Neil Gordon demonstrated motorcycle sidecar maneuvers.

We were house-bound in Captain Brown's custody

Do you know the meanings?

Retired trooper John Hogan brought this vocabulary list back from his recent trip to the British Isles. Try covering up the American "translations" on the right and see how well you do. (HINT: Most words and expressions listed are commonly used by troopers on the road.)

Bonnet	Car hood
Boot	Car trunk
Windscreen	Windshield
Tyre	Tire
Petrol	Gasoline
Hard margin	Paved shoulder
Road up	Road under repair
Loose chippings	Loose gravel
Give way	Yield right-of-way
Diversion	Detour
Diverted way	Additional detour signs
Motorway	Freeway
Concealed entry or crossing	Blind crossing
Layby	Rest area
Lorry	Truck
Caravan	Trailer
Panel beating service	Body shop
Recovery vehicle	Tow truck
Dual roadway	Two-way traffic
Round-about ahead	Diversion advance warning
Parking disc	Parking meter
No overtaking	No passing
Temporary dwelling	No long-time parking
Trunk call	Long distance
No naked lights	No open flames
Foot plate closed	Sidewalk being repaired

MAY 1986/17

Class of '40

during his duty hours and were at the mercy of the "whistle-punk" who blew us out of bed at 6 a.m. The whistle-punk was the cadet who had the 4 to 6 a.m. watch. At 6:15 a.m. we were lined up in front of the building for a quarter hour of calisthenics under the baleful eye of cadet Fritz Fredin, a National Guard D-I. By 7 a.m. the beds were made and the rooms ready for inspection. We marched to the cafeteria for breakfast and were in the classroom by 8 a.m. Classes ran until noon with a "let's take five" smoke break at mid-morning, then resumed after lunch with the usual ten-minute "five" break. One warm afternoon during the break (while the fish were in their spring run), Captain Gordon arrived with his sidecar, in which were three big bags of smoked carp and suckers. Needless to say, we had a mighty long "five" that afternoon.

On Wednesday nights we were permitted to use the gym, the handball court and the swimming pool. This treat was a welcome relief from the 150-minute study hour we enjoyed after supper the other nights. Lights were out at 10 p.m. and so were many of the students. (Pooped out, that is.) Shortly after the classwork started, the Civil Service Commission requested we re-take the original written test on a strictly volunteer basis. No one refused and we were never informed of the reason or the outcome of this experiment. About one-third of the way through the course, a second cadet fell by the wayside for not conforming to the uniform dress code. Now we were 23.

When the weather warmed, we started our motorcycle training on the streets of the fairgrounds. When Skipper Dahl was satisfied we could remain upright on the Harley-Davidsons, he led us to the State Fair dump grounds. Here we rode on some very rough terrain, the aftermath of refuse covered with dirt. As time went by and after our confidence increased, we ventured out onto Snelling Avenue and then onto the open highway. Twenty-three stars were born! Dwight Hayden was foreman at the Central shop, and a gentleman by the name of Snyder maintained the motorcycles. Two fine men.

Shortly before the completion of the school, Tony Olson from North Minneapolis came to measure us for uniforms, and a leather craftsman from St. Paul by the name of Bergman measured us for our Sam Brownes. White rubber rain coats with a blue velvet, corduroy collar were issued along with a gray/black military-style overcoat. For our motorcycle pleasure, we had a heavy leather coat or jacket with a double row of brass buttons. On real cold days we would wrap newspapers around our bodies under our shirts to keep the body heat in and the cold out. It took an act of the Legislature to rid us of the bikes. Plastic bowl covers served as rain gear for our caps.

Shortly after going on the job, one-way radios were installed in the cars of the Metropolitan area. Some of the early dispatchers were Herschel Olson, Charlie Kellington, Helen Dutton and a Conway and a Hagenhaugen. Radio log sheets were issued to enter all dispatches and then sent in with our daily report. When sending out a

routine dispatch, the operator would strike a brass gong three times; for an action call, the gong was struck seven times.

Officers stationed out-state depended on the telephone operators to give them the "word." Before leaving town, the officer would leave his itinerary and ETA with the local police or the local operator, then if needed, he could be located and be given the word. I recall one instance in which the operator's assistance was invaluable. I was working Brainerd's Diamond Jubilee with Bob Dille. During the supper-hour lull, Bob and I stopped in at the barracks where the captain, with a "chip-eating grin" on his face, greeted us with, "Here's one for you two. I just got a call from the chief of police at Corpus Christi, Texas, an attempt to locate a Doctor Garrett driving a new-model Cadillac, Texas license unknown, vacationing somewhere in the Brainerd area. If located, have him call the chief at Corpus Christi for an emergency message. Go find him."

Outside, I said to Bob, "Lord, we will never find him prowling the roads, let's get the operators to help us."

We went to the Brainerd office and explained our problem to the head operator. We asked her to have her operators call the eight or ten plushest resorts in the area and if they located the doctor to give him the message. If they could not locate him in the Brainerd area, we asked them to please contact the operators in the neighboring exchanges and ask their help. With a smile, she said, "You bet."

Bob and I stopped for a cup of coffee and a sandwich and upon re-entering the office heard the Captain say, "You're entirely welcome chief, any time, any time at all." Cradling the phone, he said, "That was the Corpus Christi chief thanking us for locating the doctor. How in hell did you do it?"

"It was easy, Captain, very easy. Doctors driving new Caddies vacationing that far from home will stay only in the best, so we put the phone operators to work."

Yes, the phone operators of those days deserved a big, big thank you from the Highway Patrol! I wonder if they ever got one?

Most district headquarters were located in the highway maintenance buildings and had dormitories for the officers to use if they so chose. Most of the "appointed officers" welcomed us wholeheartedly. A few called us "the professors" or "one of the brains," but this soon died out.

One of the old-timers gave me a tip I used several times, and it can be used even to this day: If you have one or more subjects you are taking into the calaboose and feel they may give you a bad time or try to escape, have them take off their shoes and lock them (the shoes!) in the trunk. They won't run very far barefoot, and a stepped-on little toe takes their mind off any further rebellion. And never, never let them light up a cigarette in the patrol car—it is a horrible weapon.

Yep, life began in '40 at \$150 per month and 50 cents per day expense money.



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Law Enforcement United is founded upon, and strives to incorporate our core values within our operations. We are stewards of giving. We are committed to the organizations we support and our mission. We believe that we receive by giving; and strive to recruit a strong core membership and donors to facilitate our mission. We believe in giving our donations to our causes not salaries. We are 100% volunteer driven organization. No board, staff, or member is, stipend or salaried. We believe in fiscal responsibility. By carefully managing our financial resources to ensure focus goes to the core charitable programs we support.

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Bob Elliott Hits 90

Bob Elliott, the beloved patriarch of the 2950 Moorhead/Clay County station, celebrated his 90th birthday on May 2nd in suburban Rollag.

Family, friends, and, partners turned out enmasse to seriously party down with Bob, on a perfect Red River Valley day. ♦

Partners pictured left to right:
Greg Hayes
Howard Hansen
Bob Elliott
Lt. Chuck Backes
Gary Hagen
Jim Fisher



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New Crash Reconstructionists Ready to Hit the Road

By Kenny Dellwo #11

It has been a long journey for some of the 21 new crash recons, but with numerous weeks of training behind them, everyone is now set to help around the state when the need arises.

Eight troopers began their training in November of 2019 with a week long course in Intermediate Crash Investigations. That class was held at the District 4700 office and included officers and deputies from several other Minnesota and Wisconsin agencies. Those eight troopers then made a road trip to South Dakota in December of 2019 to participate in an Advanced Crash Investigations course hosted by the South Dakota Highway Patrol at their training facility in Pierre.

And that is when things stalled out. For a while, at least.

The two week Crash Reconstruction course which was scheduled to be held in May 2020 at the Wisconsin State Patrol's training facility at Fort McCoy was cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns. The class was rescheduled for September, but that was ultimately cancelled as well.

In the meantime, 13 more troopers had begun their crash reconstruction training. They were able to complete their Intermediate and Advanced Crash Investigation courses in Minnesota.

With everyone on the same page the decision was made to combine the classes. The two week Crash Reconstruction class

was held in Arden Hills at AHATS in January. The class was taught by two instructors from the University of North Florida's Institute of Police Technology and Management (IPTM). The two lead instructors were both retired law enforcement officers with an extensive background in crash reconstruction.

One of the instructors, Mike Snow, began his law enforcement career in 1974. After serving in several roles, he would go on to become the Commander of the Crash Investigation/Fatality Unit for the Indianapolis Police Department. He has been working as an instructor with IPTM since 1996.

The other instructor, Larry Williams, worked for the Johnson City Police Department (Tennessee) for thirty-eight and a half years. He retired as the Commander of his department's traffic unit, and was the founder of their first traffic crash reconstruction team in 1987. Additionally, he has been working as an instructor with IPTM since 1989.

After two weeks of hard work, studying, preparation, and practical exercises, all 21 troopers successfully passed the final exam to become certified Crash Reconstruction Specialists.

But the training did not end there.

The next step was becoming familiar with the Total Stations used to forensically map crash scenes. Troopers from the southern districts reported to the Rochester District Office while troopers from the northern part of the state gathered at the Brainerd District Office for the week long course. The class was presented by



The new recons are from the following districts:

- 2100 - Peter Schultz #355, Josh Kuisle #629, Kara Schmidt #632
- 2200 - Kenny Dellwo #11, Mary Turitto #56
- 2300 - Gina deCesare #350
- 2500 - Joe Wressell #236, Megan Gerhard #623, Mike Evenocheck #132
- 2600 - Brett Bilky #599, Bob O'Fallon #266, Lee McClure #191
- 2800 - Sandy Barg #215, Brad Dingman #509, Matt Anderson #313
- 2900 - Andy Anderson #34, Eric Lindberg #348, Brad Warren #137
- 3100 - Chad Kucza #357, Jesse Anderson #433
- 3200 - Adam Rochlin #82

experienced recons, and consisted of plenty of practice with setting up the stations, techniques to help map a scene, and mapping a mock crash scene for use in future training.

Following training with the Total

Stations, troopers attended another week long course on the mapping software used by the State Patrol. IMS Map360 is an advanced program used to integrate all the data collected with the Total Stations into usable information. With Map360

recons are able to take the collected data points and turn them into scale diagrams. This can produce a visual aid that could assist in a crash investigation. Through the scale diagrams recons can determine information such as distances, elevation, and angles needed to make calculations. ♦

MSP UAS Program

Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) have been in use by law enforcement agencies for several years. The Michigan State Police were one of the first agencies I am aware of who began utilizing UAS mapping in crash reconstruction as early as 2017. Since that time the majority of law enforcement agencies are either using UAS or in the process of starting a program. The MN State Patrol officially began researching UAS for use in crash reconstruction in June of 2016 after a presentation by Greg Russell at the Tennessee traffic crash and safety symposium.

In October 2020 the Minnesota Legislature passed 626.19 during a special session. The statute defines the use/application of UAS by law enforcement agencies. With the implementation of 626.19 and after 5 years or research, planning and training the State Patrol purchased it's first two Autel Evo II Pro (UAS) in December 2020. After further

testing was conducted in the metro area, the Autel's began being officially used for forensically mapping serious and fatal crash scenes in early 2021. The implementation of UAS mapping enables rapid forensic mapping of collision scenes. A typical scene in the past was mapped by a Reconstructionist utilizing a robotic Leica TS12 mapping system. On average this would take 90 minutes or more depending on the collision being investigated. The Autel UAS is able to fly and map a scene more accurately on average in approximately 6 minutes.

The data obtained by the UAS is processed in photogrammetry software and imported into IMS Map360 (CAD software). The end product is a too scale aerial view of the entire collision scene.

In late April 2021 the Patrol purchased 7 additional Autel Evo II Pro's. Currently 33 recons are preparing for the FAA Part 107 exam. Passing Part 107 is required

to obtain a remote pilot in command certificate which allows individuals to pilot a UAS. In June we will train these recons in the use of Pix4D which is the (photogrammetry) software used to create the image imported into our CAD software. When this training is completed the Autel's will be deployed as follows; ISS will have 4 and districts 2100, 2200, 2600, 2800 and 2900 will each have 1 UAS.

After the successful rollout of the initial 9 Autel Evo II Pro's we hope to expand the program before the end of 2021. The goal is for every recon to eventually have an assigned UAS as soon as possible. The use of this technology will significantly reduce road closure times and help reduce secondary collisions. More importantly it will greatly increase officer safety by getting our troopers off the highway quicker. ♦



DOC News: Training Computer Aided Dispatch in ISR

By Cody Underdahl



When Intensive Supervised Release agents contact clients in the community, they are now equipped with new safety features. Mobile for Public Safety is the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) program that allows the Minnesota State Patrol and their community allies to self-dispatch when responding to a scene or making contacting with people in the community.

The Minnesota State Patrol recognized the need for their community allies to have a state-wide reporting location and in agreement with the Minnesota Department of Corrections have created a CAD program.

This program allows agents to electronically create an event and check in with the Minnesota State Patrol dispatch when contacting clients at their residence, employment or community programming. That event automatically populates a GPS location to include a physical address with additional details of the community contact added by the agent.

Once the event is created, an automatic predetermined timer will begin. If the agent does not clear the event or the contact with their client requires more time, a radio check from the Minnesota State Patrol will occur for a status update. Agents are also equipped with an ARMER two-way portable radio that allows statewide communication with Minnesota State Patrol, DOC facilities, or additional community stakeholders if needed.

The State Patrol worked in collaboration with Training Coordinator Kelly Wheeler, CPD Dan Traun, DOC trainers such as Tony Esping, Jerome Shear, Jeremiah Sims, Eric Starke, Cody Underdahl and supervisors Roman George, Kelley Blake and Paula Thielen to set up and familiarize agents with the new system. On March 17, 2021 at Fort Ripley, the Intensive Supervised Release North District completed the last of the district trainings to prepare agents to use the system in the community.

Going forward, an iShare sub-site dedicated to 800 MHz and CAD will help to present announcements and to resolve ongoing issues for those using the system.

A special thank you to Sergeant Rick Harjes, Sergeant Mike Krukowski, and Ken Paschke with the Minnesota State Patrol for their assistance with the development of this program and their professional training of DOC staff. ♦

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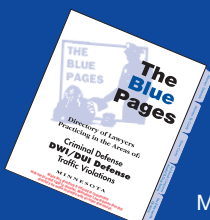


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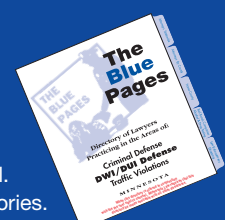
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My Journey

I'm not sure when PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) started to creep into my life, however, I know when I began to realize something was wrong. Looking back two, maybe three, years before I found myself sitting in the parking lot of a local restaurant, crying my eyes out, talking to an attorney. One day my wonderful partner and friend hung an advertisement for an attorney in my office. The ad was specifically regarding first responders and PTSD workers' compensation claims. He pinned it on the corkboard and I never took it down, until the day I packed up my personal belongings and my supervisors came for my gun and badge. Did he know before I knew? There's no doubt.

I saw the same advertisement many times in the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association (MPPOA) magazine. My eyes would linger on the advertisement, but I never cut it out. I've always believed first responders can't get through a career without having PTSD to some extent. When you can eat a pizza in the same room as another dead human being, that isn't "normal." When you stop gasping at unconscionable sights, as "normal people" do, it's a sign that your brain losing its ability to protect itself.

After a conversation with my wife, where I mostly listened, I realized things were not going as well as it seemed in my head. In addition, a dear friend who is employed as a first responder in the metro area may have shared one of the most important moments with me prior to me reaching out for help. During a training session at Camp Ripley, we sat together in my work vehicle after having a few drinks. I could no longer contain my need to test the waters and see how someone outside of my inner circle would react to the news that I was struggling. We sat in the car for what seemed like an eternity, crying, together. In that moment, I finally got the courage to say that I was not "ok" out loud. It was an affirmation that it was "ok to not be ok." My dear friend and brother told me that night, he would keep "hounding" me until I started down the road to getting help. He vowed to drive up to Duluth and drag me to see a counselor. He also encouraged me to protect myself and contact a lawyer. That moment may have been the most important moment of the rest of my life.

Many things happened after that day, not all of which I can recall. PTSD has a funny way of affecting your memory. To honor my family and friends, on the drive home from Camp Ripley, I called Meuser, Yackley & Rowland, and spoke directly to Mr. Meuser. I remember how hard my heart was beating while the phone rang. I was numb, confused and scared to death as I pulled my

car into the parking lot of a local restaurant. I didn't start out our conversation crying, but I was by the time it ended. I sat in the parking lot crying and looking out the window, wondering what in the hell was going to happen next.

The day I submitted a First Report of Injury with the BCA, I quickly realized, I had nobody who understood this battle. I felt alone on an island. Sure, I could talk to my therapist about my thoughts and feelings, but she couldn't answer the "what next" questions. To this day, my therapist and I still talk about how difficult the legal process was on my brain. You not only have to deal with crushing PTSD, but you are also constantly worrying about what is next.

Gaining the courage to make the phone call was difficult, but I'm thankful I stayed with it. If you are a first responder dealing with PTSD and feeling alone, know that there is help. My advice is to seek out an independent therapist and speak to an attorney experienced in workers' compensation. Also, there are amazing organizations such as Heroes Helping Heroes and Soldier's 6 who offer unique support services to first responders coping with mental health issues and PTSD. If you want to reach out to someone who understands what you're going through, I'm here for you.

For Mr. Nordberg's contact information, please contact Meuser, Yackley & Rowland. ♦

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Minnesota State Patrol SRT

By Trooper Sam Catlin

The Special Response Team was formed in March of 1992. The team originally started as a crowd control team. “Hats and Bats” As time went on the team grew and became more of a SWAT team. The mission of the team turned to bringing a successful conclusion to high risk situation through the use of specially equipped and highly trained personnel without injury or loss of life to the citizens, suspects or law enforcement officers. The original members are Tim Bowe (killed in line of duty), Tony Follen, Tom Fraser, Alan Freng, Kim Klawiter, Dan Lewis, John Maggaard, John Mock, Jim Nielsen, Garrett Schloesser, Tony Snyder, Kevin Vacura, Dennis Vandergriff, Russ Wicklund, and Dick Wittenberg. These troopers are legends within our agency. Most of the current members were trained and looked up to these troopers. These original members laid the foundation and set the standards for which we are still trying to achieve today. One thing we try to remember is where we come from

The current Special Response Team is comprised of eighteen Troopers, two Medics, two Lieutenants, and is overseen by a Captain, and a Major. The Medics are



employed by North Memorial Health Hospital, they train and respond to call outs with the team. Every member of the team is trained in entries and attends a week of SWAT school. The team trains once a month with a weeklong training at Ripley. There are also two specialized groups. The helicopter team and sniper team. The helicopter team works with flight. They do extra training on rappelling and deploying from the helicopters. The sniper team trains on long range precision shooting as well as scouting. The snipers also have to attend a week long law enforcement sniper school before they are certified to go on a mission as a sniper.

To be on the team you have to have two years on as a trooper. You have to live within specified stations to be able to respond to the Capitol quickly. The team holds tryouts for those interested when there are openings. Troopers have to pass a physical fitness test, show proficiency with issued weapons, and show decision making skills in stressful situations.

The team trains for any high risk situation which we have encountered or may encounter. Some of the main trainings include active shooter, hostage rescue, high risk entries, crowd control, search and rescue, and VIP escorts. SRT primarily assist other agencies as most jurisdictions have their own tactical teams. The team also assists in training other troopers in the agency. Several members are firearms and combative instructors. Srt has been requested to teach active shooter and tactical survival in academies.

SRT has multiple vehicles and a variety of specialized equipment that members maintain proficiency in. We have an armored vehicle equipped with several cameras, and an LRAD (long range acoustic device. The mobile command post “mothership” carries the majority of equipment to call outs and also has two interior command post areas. Some of the equipment includes ballistic shields, entry tools, chemical agents, distraction devices, and a pole camera. Each member of the team carries either a shotgun with bean bag rounds or a 40MM with less lethal impact rounds. Each member is issued a SRT rifle, pistol, tactical armor, helmets, hearing protection, radios, and uniforms. Some members also have night vision. The members have to pass a PT test once a year, as well as show their proficiency on all weapons systems and issued equipment.

2020 has been a very busy and interesting year, and SRT has been tested in a variety of disciplines in response to it. SRT has conducted VIP escorts for the President and Vice President of the United States, and President-elect Biden. There has been several protests which SRT has assisted MRT with. SRT was also called to The Capitol for the special session. Along with being deployed to the riots and being tasked with a variety of different duties, SRT still answered the call to assist other teams for SWAT oriented missions.

The Special Response Team is a group of dedicated, highly trained, and professional individuals. All of the members are dedicated to protecting and serving to the best of their abilities. The members willingly take on these dangerous tasks for the greater good. The need for this team is apparent with the current climate of our world. The team appreciates the support it gets and the requests for service from all agencies, including our own. SRT has a history of excellence, and will continue to carry on the tradition. As a group we would like to thank our partners, families, and especially wives who support this team. ♦



Awards Narratives

The Minnesota State Patrol established its awards ceremony to honor the exemplary efforts of troopers who have excelled in their mission to protect and serve the people of Minnesota. The ceremony also recognizes citizens and members of other law enforcement and emergency service agencies who performed commendable acts to assist troopers and help others.

Meritorious Citizenship Award:

This award is presented to individuals who have assisted the State Patrol in providing a significant service to the public.

Timothy Andrews

July 3 – During a traffic stop, a suspected drunk driver fled on foot into traffic. Trooper Jesse Einhorn pulled the fleeing suspect off the road and onto the shoulder where the two ended up in a confrontation. Timothy Andrews witnessed the fight and came to Trooper Einhorn's aid. With Timothy's help, Trooper Einhorn got the man under control and into custody.

Emily Roeder

Aug. 21 – After witnessing a vehicle crash into a ditch, Emily Roeder immediately went to help. The registered nurse recognized the driver was suffering from a heart attack and began life-saving measures. Due to the remote location of the crash, it is likely the driver would not have survived if not for Emily's quick actions.

Life Saving Award:

This award is presented to members of the State Patrol who distinguish themselves by performing acts that prevent the death of another.

Trooper Kevin Wellens (District 2200) and Trooper Dahlton Bowe (District 2100)

Jan. 12 – Troopers Kevin Wellens and Dahlton Bowe are credited with saving a man they found unconscious in subzero temperatures. The troopers were helping Mankato police search for people who fled a vehicle following a crash. Troopers found an unconscious, intoxicated man face down in the snow; the wind chill was 19 degrees below zero. They carried him approximately 50 yards through a wooded area to the ambulance. The man's core body temperature was

dangerously low and he most likely would not have survived if not for the troopers.

Sgt. Eric Bormann, Troopers Garrett Bondhus and Patrick Beuning (District 2100)

Jan. 23 – After witnessing a vehicle in Olmsted County lose control, cross the median and get hit by a semi-truck, Sgt. Eric Bormann rushed to the scene and found the driver pinned underneath the vehicle. Sgt. Bormann and Troopers Garret Bondhus and Patrick Beuning extricated the driver, who was critically injured, and began life saving measures. Thanks to the troopers' quick work, the driver survived.

Troopers Alexander Johnson and Elliott Lesser (District 2400) *This presentation is combined with a Meritorious Citizenship Award for Sanjin Boskovic and Abdi Dahir of Allina Health.*

Feb. 20 – Troopers Alexander Johnson and Elliott Lesser responded to a call of a man trying to harm himself with a blade near United Hospital in St. Paul. Allina Health security officers Sanjin Boskovic and Abdi Dahir were already on the scene trying to restrain the man when the troopers arrived and helped stop the man from further injuring himself.

Trooper Carlos Sosa Viscarra (District 2400)

April 23 – When Trooper Carlos Sosa Viscarra arrived at the scene of a single vehicle injury crash, he found the driver and passenger trapped inside and unresponsive. Trooper Viscarra determined the passenger was under the influence of a narcotic. He pulled the passenger from the vehicle and administered a dose of Narcan and performed CPR. The passenger regained consciousness and was transported to the hospital.

Trooper Madeline Droher (District 2500) *This presentation is combined with a Minnesota State Patrol Commendation for Officers Elise Hinderliter and Samuel Kjos of the Minneapolis Police Department AND a Meritorious Citizenship Award for Ahmed Ahmed and Nyamuoch Wuol.*

May 25 – Thanks to the team effort of citizens and law enforcement, a suicidal woman is alive. The woman intended on jumping off the Mississippi River Bridge in downtown Minneapolis. Her friends Ahmed Ahmed and Nyamuoch Wuol found her and held onto her for nearly 17 minutes until Trooper Madeline Droher and Officers Elise Hinderliter and Samuel Kjos arrived. They held the woman in place for another 25 minutes until additional resources arrived and they could help her off the ledge.

Troopers Derek Haehnel, Jennifer Barron and Paul Braun (District 2500) *This presentation is combined with a Minnesota State Patrol Commendation for Chief of Training and EMS Hugo Serle, Lt. Dan Yaekel, Lt. Matt Nordy, Lt. Bob Hampton and Firefighter Brian Oberschmid of the St. Louis Park Fire Department and a Meritorious Citizenship Award for Kari Ann Torma.*

Aug. 12 – Troopers Derek Haehnel, Jennifer Barron and Paul Braun responded to a single vehicle serious injury crash. Kari Ann Torma stopped at the scene and was attending to the driver, who was unconscious and had a weak pulse. Trooper Haehnel administered an oral airway, Trooper Braun retrieved his bag valve mask and Trooper Barron administered chest compressions. St. Louis Park Fire Department members Hugo Serle, Dan Yaekel, Matt Nordy, Bob Hampton and Brian Oberschmid arrived on scene and performed an intubation, and took over bag valve respirations. The driver was transported to the hospital with serious injuries.

Trooper Michael Wren (District 2400)

Aug. 14 – Trooper Michael Wren saw a vehicle crash into the guardrail. The driver was unconscious and unresponsive. Trooper Wren, who determined the driver overdosed from opiates, administered Narcan and rescue breaths. The man eventually regained consciousness.

Trooper Bronson Wehr (District 2700) *This presentation is combined with a Meritorious Citizenship Award for John Mahr.*

Sept. 10 – Trooper Bronson Wehr was off duty in Mille Lacs County when he came upon a vehicle that had run off the road and landed on its roof in waist-deep water. John Mahr witnessed the crash and stopped to render aid. Together, they pushed the vehicle on its side to gain

access to the windows. The trapped driver rolled down the window, allowing Trooper Bronson to open the door and pull him out of the vehicle. The quick actions of the two possibly saved the driver's life.

Trooper Madeline Droher (2500)

Sept. 12 – Trooper Madeline Droher responded to a call about a pedestrian on the freeway. The trooper found the woman and determined she had a gunshot wound. The trooper applied a tourniquet to the victim's leg to control the bleeding. Medics commended Trooper Droher for her life-saving care.

Sgt. Joshua Fellersen (District 2700) *This presentation is combined with a Minnesota State Patrol Commendation for Deputy Alex McGrath of the Lake County Sheriff's Office.*

Sept. 27 – Multiple agencies responded to a report of a juvenile female sitting in the traffic lanes on Highway 61 north of Two Harbors. Before officers arrived on scene, the female ran into the woods nearby and hid. Sgt. Josh Fellersen and Deputy Alex McGrath began to search for her. When Deputy McGrath located the female, she ran toward Lake Superior and attempted to jump off a steep cliff. Deputy McGrath stopped the woman just as she reached the cliff edge and restrained her. Sgt. Fellersen pulled them both back toward safety. The quick actions of Deputy McGrath and Sgt. Fellersen prevented the likely tragic outcome for the juvenile who was experiencing a mental health crisis.

Trooper Cody Kisor (District 2900)

Sept. 27 – Trooper Cody Kisor was first on scene of a reported suicide attempt. The suicidal individual told friends he was going to hang himself at his home. Trooper Kisor found the suicidal man in the basement hanging from a beam, unconscious and not breathing. Trooper Kisor cut him down, lowered him to the floor and began rescue breaths. Trooper Kisor's quick actions prior to EMS arriving saved the man's life.

Trooper Matt Carlson (District 2600)

Oct. 14 – Trooper Matt Carlson responded to a request for assistance from a motorist who had run out of gas. While en route, a vehicle hit the motorist's stalled vehicle and a second vehicle. When Trooper Carlson arrived on scene, he noticed one of the crash victims with a severed leg. Trooper Carlson successfully placed a tourniquet on the victim to control the bleeding until help could arrive. His quick intervention was critical in saving the victim's life.

Meritorious Service Award: *This award is presented to employees for acts involving personal risk-posing hazards which could lead to serious injury or loss of life to the employee.*

Trooper Anthony Butler (District 2600)

Sept. 13 – Trooper Anthony Butler and officers from partner agencies responded to 911 reports of a vehicle involved in several hit-and-run crashes. The suspect vehicle was located at a residence where it had crashed through the garage door and the driver had entered the home. While Trooper Butler and officers initiated a search of the residence, the suspect appeared with a fully drawn compound bow and fired at officers, striking a deputy. Ignoring commands to drop the weapon, the suspect attempted to fire a second shot at officers. Trooper Butler and officers returned fire at the suspect and stopped the threat.

Exceptional Service Award: *This award is presented to employees who have provided extraordinary service in the performance of their duties.*

Multiple Nominees (see below)

Sgt. Jeff Shay – District 4700, Trooper Andrew Haken – District 3100, Trooper Chad Kucza – District 3100, Sgt. Dave Koski – District 3100, Trooper Elijah Allen – District 3100, Sgt. Alan Ryan – District 3100, Sgt. Travis Pearson – District 3100, Lt. Mike Eck – District 3100, Trooper Robyn Birr – District 3100, Trooper Travis Larson – District 3100, Trooper Abigail Burch – District 3100

Aug. 1, 2019 – A juvenile female was on a walk with her infant nephew when a vehicle struck them on the shoulder of Highway 65 and fled the scene. The female sustained serious injuries and her nephew did not survive. Due to the thorough, diligent work of all the troopers involved, and the overwhelming evidence gathered, the suspect was arrested and convicted.

Alexandria Kueker (District 2200)

As Forfeiture Coordinator in Mankato, Alexandria Kueker quickly established a reputation as a hard-working team player who seeks out new challenges and implements efficiencies. Because of these qualities, District 2500 sought Alex's assistance with its forfeiture program. Alex willingly took on the added responsibilities, traveling to the metro area twice a week while maintaining her workload in District 2200. Her positive attitude, knowledge of the forfeiture

program, and willingness to tackle multiple projects is unparalleled.

Radio communications operator (RCO) Martin O'Hehir (Statewide Communications-RTMC)

April 16 – RCO Martin "Marty" O'Hehir fielded a call from a distraught driver who indicated he wanted to harm himself, possibly attempting suicide by crashing his vehicle. The driver reached speeds of more than 100 mph, traveling in and out of ditches, and placing other motorists at risk. Over the course of 22 minutes, Marty calmly encouraged the driver to pull over so he could get him the help that he needed. Marty eventually convinced the driver to pull over safely. Troopers arrived on scene to help the man, who later thanked Marty for saving his life.

Ray French (Headquarters)

Ray French supports the purchasing needs of the agency. He's a valuable resource and is respected by district staff as well as external vendors. Day in and day out, Ray takes pride and initiative in his work and reflects the core values of State Patrol.

Shylina Gibson (ISS)

Shylina Gibson is an administrative assistant in the Investigative Services Section. She displays a strong work ethic in her numerous roles within the section. With a change to command structure and the addition of specialty programs, Shylina took on additional responsibilities. She is considered a go-to person and is relied on heavily for support

RCO Bill Hoium (Statewide Communications-SRCC)

RCO Bill Hoium is a veteran dispatcher for the Brainerd District. His ability to disseminate important information to troopers about chaotic scenes in a timely, professional, and calm manner is invaluable. He performs his job at a high level, connecting with troopers and providing excellent service to the people of Minnesota.

Sue Costley (District 2700)

Sue Costley provides key administrative support to District 2700. With her wealth of knowledge and considerable experience, she is a leader within the agency. Sue displays a strong work ethic in managing her assigned workload while taking on other responsibilities as needed. In addition, she processed an extraordinary amount of contractual service contracts work this past year.

Trooper Jimmy Buggs (District 2500)

Trooper Jimmy Buggs exemplifies the core values of the State Patrol and believes that every traffic stop can change driver behavior. He is a member of the Target Team, focusing on fatal crash causes in high risk areas. He actively participates in recruitment activities and demonstrates high performance standards and a positive attitude in whatever role he takes on.

Sgt. Philip Jergenson (District 2500)

Sgt. Philip Jergenson is a district investigator in the West Metro, Assistant Team Leader for the Special Response Team, and serves as a lieutenant colonel in the Minnesota National Guard. Sgt. Jergenson holds himself and others to a high standard for excellent work. He possesses a strong ability to teach with professionalism, practicality and sincerity. He is considered a leader with a team player mentality.



Eagle Squadron Award: *The Eagle Squadron Award is presented each year to the Minnesota State Patrol trooper who arrested the greatest number of impaired drivers the previous year.*

Trp. Gustavo Culbeaux (District 2500)

Trooper Gustavo Culbeaux arrested 181 impaired drivers in 2020, the most of any trooper. This is Trooper Culbeaux's second consecutive year earning the Eagle Squadron award.

During each shift, troopers aggressively focus on impaired driving enforcement to help prevent life-changing events on our roads.



Leadership Award: *This award is presented*

yearly to the employee who consistently exhibits outstanding leadership and excellence in public safety through their personal actions, guidance, direction and professional involvement.

Capt. Joe Dwyer (Civil Disobedience Preparedness)

The criteria for the Leadership Award revolves around “a consistent display of positive actions for a sustained period of time.” Capt. Joe Dwyer exemplifies these qualities in every role he's held since joining the Minnesota State Patrol. Capt. Dwyer's influence not only individuals, but also the organization as a whole is invaluable.

Critical thinking, listening to others, making sound decisions on limited information and creating feasible operations plans are highlights of Capt. Dwyer's leadership abilities. His ability to think logically and effectively operate under stress is unmatched.



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Civilian Employee of the Year:

This award is presented to the non-sworn employee who best demonstrates outstanding work performance, initiative, leadership and effective interpersonal relations.

Christine Casperson (District 2800)

Christine Casperson has been a member of the Mobile Response Team since 2018. She has tackled complex assignments, which include the organization of the team's personal protection equipment and assisting with the completion of the munition inventory.

Christine is a forward thinker who identifies the needs of the team. She quickly reaches out to team leadership with proposals and handles the purchasing process related to acquire items that will make the team more efficient and proficient.

Christine provides mentoring to her support staff partners to bring them up to speed on team ideology and the expectations of their role as it pertains to the team. She routinely puts the needs of the team above her own, which was evident when she canceled personal plans in order to be available for various operations throughout the state.

The State Patrol can count on Christine in times of need to get the job done and provide direction on how to accomplish work-related duties.



Trooper of the Year: *This award is presented to the trooper who best demonstrates outstanding work performance, initiative, leadership and effective interpersonal relations.*

Sgt. Bryan Bearce (District 2800)

Sgt. Bryan Bearce is a 13-year veteran of the State Patrol and a decorated veteran of the United States Marine Corps.

In June, 2020 Sgt. Bearce clocked a vehicle traveling 100 mph in a 65 mph zone. He saw the female driver who wouldn't stop to be in distress and noted children in the back of the vehicle. Sgt. Bearce suspected the driver was suffering from a mental health crisis and decided to get in front of the vehicle to attempt to stop the driver.

Sgt. Bearce put himself in harm's way to keep the children safe and eventually get the driver to stop. While Sgt. Bearce was exiting his squad, the female tried fleeing with the children, at one point walking toward the highway. Sgt. Bearce safely secured the woman and the children until backup arrived. Throughout the incident, Sgt. Bearce showed compassion, empathy and respect for the woman and her children.

The decisions Sgt. Bearce made led to the best possible outcome in a dangerous and deadly situation. His actions exemplified the core values of the Minnesota State Patrol. ♦

County Attorney's View: Remembering is so important in a world in need of repair

By Mark S. Rubin

May 9-15 is National Police Week, a time to express our gratitude to all of our law enforcement officers who protect and serve their fellow citizens.

May 15 is also annually set aside as a recognition of Peace Officer Memorial Day, recognizing the lives of officers lost in the line of duty.



The body of Sgt. Gary Wilson was carried past a sea of law enforcement officials and others grieving at his funeral service on April 12, 1990. So many vehicles participated in the funeral procession they were still lining up when the hearse reached the cemetery. (1990 file photo by Dave Ballard/News Tribune)

It was the night of April 9, 1990. I will always remember. I was the on-call prosecutor. I received a call at home. There had been a shooting. Seven Duluth police officers, including Sgt. Gary Wilson, had gone to the Seaway Hotel in pursuit of a man who had been involved in an altercation in a bar. The suspect opened fire on the officers. Sgt. Wilson was struck twice. Sgt. John Hartley was wounded. Officers subdued and apprehended the shooter.

By the time I got there, the scene had been secured, the suspect taken to jail, and Gary and John had already been taken to the hospital. I saw the blood, Gary's blood, on the floor. Gary and I had worked together for almost nine years. He was a colleague and a friend.

I drove to the hospital. There was nothing the doctors could do. It was a heartbreaking vigil to allow people to say goodbye. There, gathered at the hospital in Gary's room and in the hallway, were officers, friends, the chaplain, and Gary's family. Through tears we shared more than just handshakes with each other. We embraced as we tried to console each other — and tried to make sense of what had happened.

Sitting in the church pew on some Sunday mornings since, that is my silent plea to the person in the pulpit, to help me make sense of things.

I wish I still had the card a friend sent me 20 years ago when my father died. What I can recall is that it said that though he died, he and our memory of his life will enable him to live forever through the way that we treat each other — how we live, laugh, console, and love each other, long after the

pain of loss. Not unlike my memory of Gary's life, the memory of my father's life remains close.

Nice sentiment. But really, how do we do this?

I read an article a number of years ago titled, "What if Jesus Meant All That Stuff?" The author was of the opinion that often the biggest obstacle to God has been Christians, who have so much to say with their mouths and so little to show with their lives. The simple message of Jesus, to love your neighbor as yourself, seems so simple, doesn't it? After all, it is a paraphrase of the Golden Rule.

To say that these are challenging times for law enforcement is an understatement.

When peace officers make the decision to choose a career in law enforcement, I am certain that when they are sworn in as new officers, they have a vision of what it will be like. They often are filled with the spirit of wanting to, and being ready to, serve their friends, family, community — their fellow citizens. They probably don't realize that they are embarking on an often heartbreaking venture, a career that really amounts to repairing brokenness. They carry out their purpose as law enforcement officers, living out the Hebrew concept of the purpose of life. This is known as Tikkun Olam; to "repair a broken world."

My own path with the St. Louis County Attorney's Office began in 1978. It was one I hoped would allow me to have a job, career, and opportunity to make the world a better place. I loved the idea of working for justice. I had not yet heard of the concept of Tikkun Olam.

What happens along the way? Peace officers see people at their worst, and they see people who do some of the worst things, often to people they purport to care about. Through it all, peace officers are called to treat each and every person with respect and dignity. I do not know how they do it, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year. I do know that it helps if they know that we can all be there for each other, to offer support and strength, and to express our appreciation to them for their service on our behalf.

Which brings me back to Sgt. Gary Wilson. Shortly after he died, I saw him, or thought I did, on the first floor of the courthouse. And then he was gone. It was an experience that shook me but made me feel grateful. Gary truly was one of the good guys. The way he did his job reflected that he believed that Jesus "meant all that stuff." Gary was all about "repairing this broken world."

I also noticed an interesting phenomena amongst my colleagues in law enforcement. From the night of his death, and for the next week, we shared our true feelings more easily with each other. We told each other how much we meant to each other. We even slipped occasionally and used the "L" word.

Mike Royko, the legendary Chicago Tribune columnist, said it best in 1979 upon the death of his wife of a brain aneurysm: "If there's someone you love but haven't said so in a while, say it now."

The law enforcement profession — or calling, as many will describe it — probably has never been more dangerous or more underappreciated. It is important for every one of our peace officers to know how much we appreciate what they do for all of us, their fellow citizens. Their dedication and the challenges they face on a daily basis do not go unnoticed.

We are in this together. We are in the business of ensuring that our communities are safe, that offenders will be held accountable, and that the rights of all — even those who hurt the most vulnerable in society and those who flagrantly violate our laws with disturbing attitudes — are still protected. It is not always easy, but it is always worth the effort. It is our job and it is the right thing to do.

Please join me in thanking our peace officers for their service and also recognizing those who have paid the ultimate price on our behalf. They will not have died in vain. ♦



Mark S. Rubin
is St. Louis County attorney.



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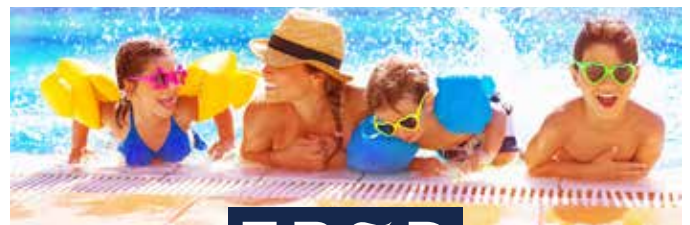
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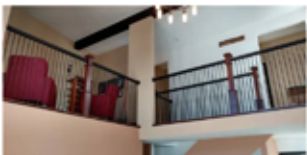
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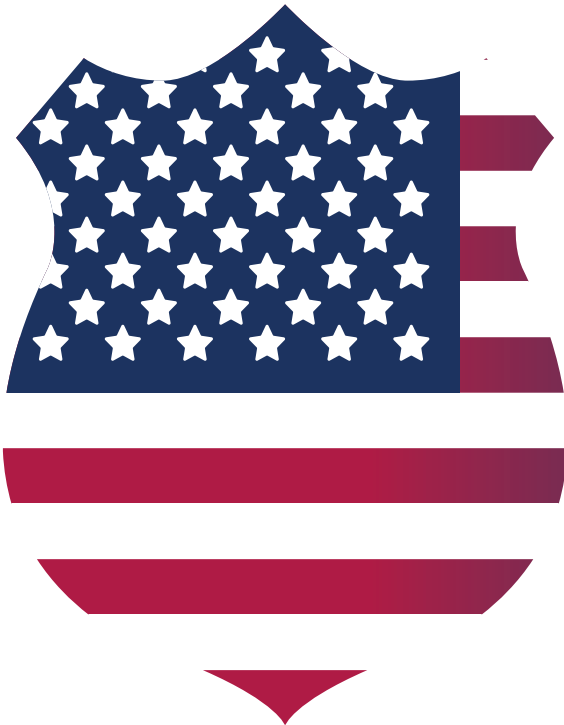
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