

MINNESOTA TROOPER

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RETIRED TROOPERS DAY 2024



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MINNESOTA TROOPER

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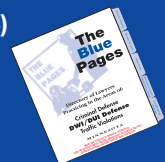
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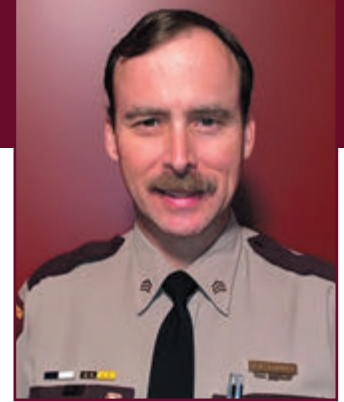
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Mike LeDoux • MSPTA President

President's Report



REMEMBERING OFFICER MITCHELL

Legislative Highlights and Support for Troopers

Once again, I write with a heavy heart as we mourn the loss of another of Minnesota's finest. On May 30, 2024, Minneapolis Officer Jamal Mitchell, just 36 years old, was tragically killed while attempting to aid what he believed was a victim of an active shooter. Without warning, he was senselessly gunned down. It feels as though we are trapped in a relentless cycle of mourning, with no time to heal from previous tragedies.



Though his career with the Minneapolis Police Department began in 2022, Officer Mitchell accomplished what many strive for over decades. He was more than just an officer—he was a father, a son, a fiancé, and a dedicated friend. He leaves behind his fiancée, four children, and a devastated community. Like law enforcement officers across the country, Jamal had the courage to answer the call every day. In his final act, he embodied the essence of heroism. Jamal died doing what society expects of all law enforcement officers: to protect and serve. His sacrifice will not be forgotten.

Law Enforcement Labor Services (LELS) has a benevolent fund currently accepting donations for Officer Mitchell: <https://lcls.org/benevolent-fund/>

The Minnesota House and Senate concluded the 2024 legislative session on May 19 with a familiar last-minute rush. Although a substantial 1,430-page omnibus bill was passed just before the deadline, a capital investment package could not be agreed upon. The final week was marked by intense activity and debate, with time running short and priorities shifting. Lengthy discussions and numerous amendments made it challenging to pass key legislation. This year's session was particularly notable for its disagreements and extended debates on critical issues.

Despite these disagreements, the MSPTA achieved a significant victory with bipartisan support for our pattern settlement language, now enshrined in law (43A.17 Subd 13).

After five years of relentless effort, this commonsense legislation has finally passed, demonstrating that persistence pays off. The new law requires the Commissioner of Management and Budget to use the latest salary and benefits data from the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) under section 299D.03 Subd 2A when negotiating collective bargaining agreements for state law enforcement officers. This ensures our officers receive the salary and benefits adjustments they rightfully deserve, reflecting the responsibilities and demands of their positions.

A heartfelt thank you goes to Senator Howe and Representative Tabke for their unwavering dedication—no one worked harder to bring this crucial legislation to fruition. All state law enforcement officers owe them a profound debt of gratitude. Their commitment deserves the highest praise. I would also be remiss not to acknowledge my incredible and patient wife, Melisa, whose steadfast support was invaluable throughout this process.

On the retention front, the MSPTA achieved a key victory with the passage of our reemployment bill. This pivotal legislation, which received bipartisan support, succeeded thanks to the tireless efforts of Representative Tabke and Senator Hauschild. Equally crucial was the strong backing from pension commission members, whose support was instrumental in advancing the bill.

The new legislation allows troopers and other state law enforcement officers to continue serving without negatively impacting their retirement annuity. Section 11 introduces a provision to Chapter 352B, which governs the State Patrol Plan, offering members greater flexibility. Under this provision, State Patrol Plan members can separate from service and start receiving their retirement annuity. They may return to covered employment after a break in service—provided the break is at least one day if they are 55 or older, or at least one month if they are 50 or older.

During this reemployment period, members will continue to make employee pension contributions, with employer contributions also made on their behalf. Upon their subsequent separation from service, members are entitled to a refund of their employee contributions made during the reemployment period, along with accrued interest. However, employer



contributions made during this period are not refunded. It's important to note that this provision, which allows members to return to work while continuing to receive a full retirement annuity, does not alter the mandatory retirement age of 60.

I recently had the privilege of attending Retired Troopers Day, where I enjoyed discussing our legislative initiatives and reconnecting with our retired colleagues. During these conversations, I was surprised to learn that many retirees were unaware of the public pension subtraction passed during the 2023 legislative session. The MSPTA prioritized this legislation for retired State Patrol Plan members and collaborated with other basic plan members to ensure its passage.

If you receive pension payments or survivor benefits from certain public service pensions, you may be eligible to reduce your taxable income through the public pension subtraction. To qualify, you must meet three key conditions: first, you must receive payments or survivor benefits from a qualified pension plan, such as the State Patrol Retirement Plan or the PERA Police and Fire Plan. Second, your payments must be taxable on your federal tax return. Third, your income must fall within specific limits based on your filing status.

If your adjusted gross income exceeds the specified thresholds, you will not qualify for this subtraction. The income limits are \$96,000 for single filers or heads of household, \$118,000 for married couples filing jointly or qualifying surviving spouses, and \$68,000

for those filing separately from their spouse. The maximum subtraction amounts are \$12,500 for single filers, heads of household, and those married filing separately, and \$25,000 for married couples filing jointly and qualifying surviving spouses. The actual subtraction you can claim may be less, depending on your adjusted gross income.


The Minnesota Department of Revenue recently updated its document on the Public Pension Subtraction, with the latest update on March 21, 2024. This document provides comprehensive information on qualifying pension plans, income limitations, and how to determine eligibility and benefits for the subtraction. I encourage you to inform our retirees about this important opportunity.

This November, it's crucial to get involved in the election. The results will determine not only our next president but also the composition of the Legislature and Congress. As you prepare to vote, keep issues like gas prices, grocery costs, and crime in mind. Take the time to research the candidates, understand their positions, and evaluate their values and goals on the issues that matter most to you and your family. Together, we are a formidable force, so I encourage you to make your voice heard. Above all, vote—it's your opportunity to shape the future. ♦

Thank you all for your service and sacrifice on behalf of all Minnesotans.

Mike #88

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—Arthur Sulzberger



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Colonel Christina Bogojevic

Colonel's Message



MISSION STATEMENT, CORE VALUES, AND PATCH DESIGN

Summer is coming to a close, and as the season ends, a new one begins. I want to take a moment to reflect on our journey and look ahead. It's been an honor to continue the tradition of summer district visits. I looked forward to each visit, knowing that the conversations we had would make the Agency better—for our troopers and for the people we serve. Central Headquarters remains committed to fostering holistic change rather than rapid change. Our focus is on advancing the Agency's success in a meaningful way.

Summer has also reminded us of the dangers on our roadways, with fatal crashes increasing by approximately 11% compared to last year. Instead of focusing solely on the percentage, let's remember that this figure represents 30 more lives lost on Minnesota roadways. There is important work that still needs to be done. As Minnesota State Troopers, your dedication to traffic safety is truly commendable and your commitment to the Agency's core values is evident in the quality of your work.

As we look forward to fall, Centralized In-Service will begin. The research and lesson plans are designed specifically for the work you do and the challenges you face. Our Training and Development staff, along with instructors, spend many hours

ensuring that we receive the most up-to-date, best practices training. The training they provide not only strengthens our current team but also prepares new cadets to become strong partners in the field. Our recruitment efforts remain steady, with a strong LETO class currently immersed in college training and interviews being scheduled for traditional candidates. Your recruitment efforts are appreciated, and no one can explain the pride of being a trooper better than those who are actively serving or retired.

In closing, while it's always difficult to let go of something that has been a part of the Agency for the past 50 years, I want to acknowledge our new patch design. It was a great opportunity for the State Patrol to update our iconic patch with meaningful, modern imagery while retaining some of the traditional elements we all value. As we move forward with the daunting task of distributing the revised equipment, I want to extend my appreciation and thanks to the members of the redesign committee, both sworn and non-sworn, whose thoughtful and intentional work made this update possible. I hope you are all as excited and proud as I am of the final product. ♦

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Commissioner's Corner



PROUD TO BE PAPA BOB

Of all the titles I've held over so many decades, my greatest title yet is "Papa Bob." Our youngest child, and only daughter Sarah and her husband James recently had their second child, Nora Jane. Nora is our 10th grandchild, nine of who are seven years old or younger. It gets pretty interesting at our regular family dinners and our joint family vacations each summer.

You might have heard me talk about or read about my lessons learned from my family and how they guide me. On many occasions, I have witnessed or heard stories about how all of you have had your own families teach you same or similar lessons. As I held tiny Nora, welcoming her to our family, I was heartened to know that she, like our other grandchildren and like so many of us, are blessed to have an opportunity to thrive, to be mentored and surrounded by those who can help guide us. Not everyone has that opportunity.

I also reflected on the importance of adults of character, not only in our families, but also in our communities ... those who work to do what's right, who sacrifice their own family time to look out for families like mine. I thought about all who are on the front lines of helping those in need and follow an oath to protect others. "Papa Bob" is, obviously, a proud family title. I don't often hear in the halls of our buildings or on our highways someone calling out, "Hey! Papa Bob!" However, with that title comes some earned protective traits. At work, just as in my personal life, I am proud to work with colleagues who have a bottom line of safety.

As troopers you are on the front lines each and every day working to create safer roadways, preventing deaths or injuries, teaching and mentoring others in our communities to be safer drivers. You are setting a high standard of conduct as you go about your business. Those within and outside of law enforcement look to the State Patrol as leaders in traffic safety, and as symbols of ethics and high standards. I recently received an email of thanks from a man whose own family became stranded on Interstate 94 due to mechanical problems with their vehicle.

Smoke was coming from the vehicle and his wife, who was the driver, and their young children were unnerved by this episode. The gentleman was unable to help, but wrote that Trooper Brings and Trooper Adair assisted his family. "There can be a tremendous difference between the bare minimum and the service we would want for our loved ones," he wrote. "I think it makes an enormous difference, not just what services first responders provide to our public, but how they do it. I'm sincerely grateful for Trooper James Brings and Collin Adair and that they brought their best when my family was in need."

This response happens countless times every day. I, like others, are grateful for how you serve, and for the difference you make each and every day. As always, I am proud of the Minnesota State Patrol. ♦

THANK YOU!

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A look at patrol history illustrates advancements

Editor's note: Mickey Morris of the Department of Transportation sent in numerous historical articles that appeared in issues of Minnesota Highways from 1953 to 1966. We are reprinting some of them here to illustrate how far the Minnesota State Patrol has come.

Patrol recruit school announced

December 1953

Preliminary announcement of a recruit school for Highway Patrol officers was made by Earl M. Larimer, chief Highway Patrol officer, in naming Captain Vern F. Trapp, Brainerd, to head the school.

The recruit school will be held after the first of the year to train men interested in becoming members of Minnesota's Highway Patrol. It is part of their preliminary examination prior to the establishment of a register of eligibles for certification for employment.

This school will be preceded by four weeks of refresher courses, which will be conducted for current officers. Each officer of the patrol will be in attendance for a five-day course. Dates for these courses will be announced after the recruit school is set, to allow a continuity of the two groups.

The 1954 school will return to the scene of earlier training schools as it will be set up at Camp Ripley near Little Falls. National Guard barracks and mess halls will be used to house, train and feed the officers in the refresher courses, as well as the recruits.

Written examinations and oral interviews conducted by the Civil Service Department have been completed, with

that agency screening the eligibles who will be invited to attend the school as the last part of their qualification.

Radio network is boon to patrol

May 1955

The amazing quickness with which members of the Minnesota Highway Patrol now respond to an accident call or converge on a hapless speeder or fleeing criminal is not due to magic mirrors or the chance of being nearby at the time.

It may seem that way to anxious watchers at a traffic smashup or to the harried law violator.

But in nine cases out of ten, it's due to the patrol's newly completed statewide radio network, which has replaced the stop-gap limited service over two broadcasting stations. In a state of great distances and a limited patrol force, the new network links patrol members to their stations and to each other almost as if they were talking face to face.

The network, as now constituted, was ten years growing from a legislative authorization to an actuality—an actuality of six manual and 11 automatic relay broadcasting stations in two-way voice communication with every on-duty patrol member.

The six key stations are at St. Paul, Rochester, Marshall, Brainerd, Thief River Falls and Virginia. The 11 repeater stations are at strategic points to extend the range of the six manual stations.

The manual stations are of 3,000 watt strength and have 300-foot towers, giving them each a range radius of about 60

miles or more, according to Arthur D. Lane, radio engineer of the Highway Department, who directs the communications system and who planned and supervised the establishment of the network. The relay stations, also with 300-foot towers, extend the network's coverage over the entire state.

Lyle Dills, department structural metals engineer, was in charge of the design, specifications and construction of the towers.

Of the manual stations, those at St. Paul and Virginia are on the air continuously, the others from 8 a.m. to 2 or 3 a.m., 18 or 19 hours daily. Including Lane and his secretary, 31 people are regularly employed in the operation and maintenance of the stations. There are nine dispatchers.

Facilities of the Highway Patrol's network are closely coordinated with broadcasting stations operated by local law enforcement agencies.

Thus, all law enforcement agencies are closely and continuously in contact with each other for concerted action and exchange and relaying of information. Even the Highway Department's truck weighing stations are tied into the network with two-way sets.

The patrol's St. Paul station normally handles about 1,500 messages a day and the other stations from 300 to 700 daily.

This is a far cry from the patrol's early days when field communication consisted of a patrolman listening to occasional emergency broadcasts from commercial radio stations and going to the nearest telephone when he wanted to communicate with his station or another patrol officer.

Captain Vern Trapp, now of Brainerd,

erd, recalls that when he was stationed in the Fairmont area, telephone operators, previously informed of the patrolmen's approximate location, would leave messages at designated places, such as filling stations. These places then would put out red flags to notify the patrolmen to stop.

The patrol began its own radio broadcasting when it first rented and then purchased an antenna tower near St. Paul from KSTP. The State Crime Bureau station at Redwood Falls, no longer in operation, also made regular broadcasts for the patrol. Meanwhile, patrol cars were equipped first with receivers and then with two-way radio sets.

Though the Legislature authorized establishment of a patrol radio network in 1945, the Highway Department was not able to act for several years. Bids were requested in 1951 and the first network station was placed in operation at St. Paul in 1952. Construction of the other stations followed.

The contract for the entire network was approximately \$730,000. Unknown to many Highway Department employees is that, in return for use of the patrol's network for its field communications, the state Game and Fish Division paid part of the cost of the network stations and pays part of their operating costs.

The patrol's radio section also has just recently assumed responsibility for the state Department of Aeronautics to maintain visual omni-range radio equipment at seven airports—International Falls, Eveleth, Bemidji, Brainerd, St. Cloud, Winona and Austin,

Paul R. Martz, chief of the Highway Patrol, reports increased speed and efficiency of patrol operations was immediately noticeable as the network spread across the state in the past three years.

"Not only do the improved communications help law enforcement, but they help save lives in case of accidents in the summoning of patrol members, physicians and ambulances," says Chief Martz.

"When Patrolman Jim Stevens had his left hand shattered by a bullet while

questioning a suspect near Parkers Prairie, he probably would have bled to death except for the promptness with which help was able to respond to his radio call.

"Flashing across Minnesota of a radio warning about four juvenile robbery suspects from Iowa fleeing across Minnesota and fast organization by radio of a 'boxing' operation resulted in their capture near Detroit Lakes. And of course, speeders and hit-run motorists are much more certain of capture when patrol cars both ahead and behind them can be alerted within a few seconds."

Uniform marking begins

February 1960

Use of uniform colors and markings for Minnesota Highway Patrol cars begins this month with the delivery of 62 patrol cars, Chief Leo Smith has reported. Maroon and gold will be the key identifying patrol colors.

The uniform colors and markings are required by a law enacted by the 1959 State Legislature and will be in conformity with regulations on the subject issued January 7 by Commissioner Zimmerman, and effective on that date.

The law and regulations apply to "All motor vehicles which are primarily used in the enforcement of highway traffic regulations by any police department, highway patrol, sheriff's department or peace officer, purchased subsequent to the effective date" of the regulations. Black and white will be the predominant colors for sheriff and police department cars covered by the law.

Traffic enforcement cars in service before January 7 are not affected by the 1959 law.

Under Commissioner Zimmerman's provisions, all new state Highway Patrol cars, beginning with the 62 scheduled for delivery this month, will be maroon in color, with gold trim and with white front doors. On each white door panel, there will be a gold-bordered maroon outline map of Minnesota bearing in gold block letters Minnesota Highway Patrol. The map-shaped identifying

door panels will be similar to those on currently marked patrol cars, except that the car's department serial number will not be on the door panels. The serial numbers hereafter will be on the rear of the cars, just above the license plate.

The name Minnesota Highway Patrol also will appear in gold letters on the trunk lid, and for aerial identification, on a three-foot gold star on the car roof, the star centered by the rotating red warning light.

The 52 patrol cars scheduled for delivery this month and subsequent new patrol cars will come from the factories with maroon bodies and white front doors, Chief Smith said. The door shields and other identifying markings will be applied at the Central Shop.

Since Highway Patrol cars are replaced by new vehicles at the conclusion of use for 60,000 miles or three years, the chief believes total replacement of the patrol's 331 cars will take at least two years.

The uniform marking regulations provide that a motor vehicle used primarily in traffic law enforcement by a police or sheriff's department or other peace officer outside the Highway Patrol shall be black in color, with white front doors and may have additional trim in white. These cars must bear the word police or sheriff and the identity of the government agency it services on the rear end of the vehicle and on the front door panels.

The regulation further provides that while a private motor vehicle is being used temporarily for traffic law enforcement, it shall display removable white panels on its front door bearing the identification of the agency it represents.

The air patrol and law enforcement

May 1966

When Bob Buckman and Ed Sosnoski, two veteran pilots of World War II, joined the patrol in 1948 and

DAYS ★ GONE ★ BY

1952, respectively, they had little thought of one day returning to their wartime occupation of flying as a means of livelihood. They were in the patrol and glad to be, and their job was patrolling the highways on the ground. But not many years later, they were to become the Minnesota Highway Patrol's first flying officers.

The story of the air patrol began in 1955, when the opportunity came to test air support for traffic control. The Minnesota Department of Conservation offered the use of its planes to the patrol, with state game warden pilots at the controls. Patrol officers rode as observers on several weekends, and through radio contact with ground units, proved the effectiveness of directing traffic from the air at trouble spots in the state. So after these test flights, the decision was made.

There followed conferences, feasibility studies and a lot of necessary paper work, all aimed at justifying the expenditure for purchase of airplanes. During this period and later when the planes were purchased, Harry Sieban was safety director, Paul Martz was chief of the patrol, and Leo Smith was assistant chief.

It was not until 1957 that the first aircraft were purchased for the newly formed air patrol unit—two two-place planes. The patrol was fortunate in having several experienced pilots in its ranks, and it was for these two aircraft that Buckman and Sosnoski were selected as pilots in 1957.

Today, the patrol has two two-place aircraft (newer ones that replaced the first ones purchased), a single-engine, four-place plane and a twin-engine plane. The first three are used primarily for traffic control and enforcement, and the twin-engine plane is used mainly for transportation of personnel.

The other pilots are Larry Pressnall,

Howard Vetterick and Earl Mead, who along with Buckman and Sosnoski, are stationed at the St. Paul Municipal Airport, and the sixth pilot is Earl Johnson, who flies out of Duluth. All pilots except Vetterick are veteran pilots of World War II. Pressnall is the only member now flying with a reserve unit. He's a lieutenant colonel and squadron CO of a Marine air group stationed at Wold-Chamberlain.

Although their job is flying, the pilots are assigned to patrol duty on the ground whenever weather prevents flying.

The air patrol has a variety of tasks that take up its time. First of all, there is traffic control and law enforcement. Also, the aircraft are used for traffic surveys, department photography, mercy missions, apprehension of criminals and transportation of key personnel.

The use of aircraft in enforcement of traffic laws has proven to be highly effective. It has nearly eliminated the high-speed hazardous pursuit of the violator. Also, it permits a greater degree of enforcement on stretches of highway where no passing is permitted and the volume of traffic is heavy and operation of a patrol car is difficult. In addition, it has been shown that there is a marked psychological effect on motorists who are tempted to violate the law.

The patrol aircraft are particularly effective in detecting hazardous moving violations such as illegal passing, driving over the center line, failure to stop and speeding.

Enforcing the speed laws from the air requires some very exacting measures. Airplane silhouettes are painted on the highway in selected areas and serve as distance markers. One is at the beginning of the zone and one each at quarter-mile intervals over a distance of one mile. The pilot times the speed of a

suspected violator between two markers. Two zones are marked on the highway in the areas, one in each direction of travel, with a two-mile distance between the zones. The mobile unit working with the aircraft is parked halfway between the zones, giving the pilot an opportunity to work traffic in both directions.

The zones are marked by a Highway Department survey crew, and one of the important factors in a court trial is to have someone who has measured the distance for the markers available to testify. This has been solved by having the pilot and the arresting patrolman in a case measure the distance prior to the trial, where a not-guilty plea has been entered. This eliminates the necessity to subpoena a member of the survey crew to testify.

A stop watch with a ten-second sweep is used by the pilot to time vehicles between the markers. The accuracy of the watch is frequently checked with Station WWV, the National Bureau of Standard Time signal radio station.

When the pilot detects a violation, he radios to the officer on the ground to stop the vehicle, which the pilot identifies by color and position. The vehicle is kept under constant observation by the pilot. After stopping the violator, the arresting officer asks the violator to come to the patrol car where he can hear a conversation with the pilot, who describes the vehicle stopped as the correct one, and that the vehicle has been timed between such and such marker, noting the speed of said vehicle. Then the ticket is written.

It is apparent, then, that law enforcement from the air is a careful procedure, and an exacting one.

There are no immediate plans for expanding the air patrol, but in another ten or 20 years it may become necessary in order to meet demands of growing traffic on the state's highways.



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MINNESOTA STATE PATROL

68th & 69th Academy

To promote
vehicle crashes
in Minnesota through
highly professional
service and the
implementation of
evolving best practices.

arise, lay down my life rather

And to conduct myself at all
moral standards, and never
on the Minnesota State Patrol

All this I solemnly swear to
so help me, God.



Graduation Ceremony 2024

68th & 69th Academy

The MSP Training and Development Staff:

CAPTAIN ERIC BARTHEL

LIEUTENANT ANDREW THELEN

LIEUTENANT KALI KLEINSCHMIDT

TECHNICAL SERGEANT JIMMY BUGGS

TECHNICAL SERGEANT RICK HARJES

TECHNICAL SERGEANT JASON HALVORSON

TECHNICAL SERGEANT ELLISSA SCHMIDT

TECHNICAL SERGEANT DAVE JOHNSTON

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SR., NAVAY MAR

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, KATHY CRAFT

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, HOLLEY GRIES

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SR., LYNLEE ROEBER

68th Academy Aide-de-Camp:

SERGEANT KERRY JOHNSON

TROOPER KEVIN ADRIAN

TROOPER STEVEN JEPSON

TROOPER RUBEN MARICHALAR

69th Academy Aide-de-Camp:

TROOPER SAM CATLIN

TROOPER TRAVIS KOENEN

TROOPER SCOTT RUDEEN

TROOPER JAKE THOMPSON

* SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALL 100+ADJUNCT INSTRUCTORS

Minnesota State Patrol Core Values

RESPECT
INTEGRITY
COURAGE
HONOR
EXCELLENCE

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.



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.**

Commencement Address by: **COLONEL CHRISTINA BOGOJEVIC**



Good morning, and welcome to the graduation of the 68th and 69th Academies. I am honored and humbled to be here as Interim Colonel of the Minnesota State Patrol, and I'm excited to say congratulations to you all. I want to give a special thank you to a few people first. Thank you, cadets, for your commitment and to your family and friends for their support that no doubt helped you get through the toughest moments. Thank you to our staff, specifically the staff of our Training and Development Section. They work tirelessly to make sure our academies run smoothly with an absolute commitment to ensuring our training sets you up for success. Finally, thank you to Lieutenant Governor Flannigan, Commissioner Jacobson, and all of the people at the Department of Public Safety who support our work at the State Patrol.

Graduates and families, I ask you to close your eyes for a moment. Think back to day one, showing up at Camp Ripley, meeting Colonel Langer, being introduced to some of your classmates, and being welcomed by the training cadre. Think of the emotions that each of you felt. Doubt, apprehension, and anxiousness, may come to mind. And maybe, just maybe, a small amount of excitement. Now open your eyes, look out at your support system, and take a breath. You made it to graduation day. You may not remember this speech, or any other words said today, but you will remember this feeling of accomplishment. Each of you have pushed yourself to places you didn't know existed. You did this through stress, exhaustion, and possibly some self-doubt, but you did this together, learning that teamwork is how you have become successful. Now look at the classmates sitting next to you. These people will become some of your best friends, your biggest supporters, and one day you may even call them family. You each have endured a year (or more) of applications, backgrounds,



classroom and physical training to get to this point, but your journey has just begun.

As you move into the next phase of field training, know that this will not be easy, but the academy has prepared you for success. The troopers in front of you will guide and mentor you through this next process, and through your career. You are joining an organization that works very hard to protect everyone who uses our roadways across the state. Without a doubt we need you on the roads. We need help with our mission of traffic safety. As we stand in the midst of another increase in the number of fatal crashes, it's important that we have 35 mission-driven individuals taking to the roads with passion to make them safer and to do it with our core values on display. Core values you now know very well.

Respect — Respect those you come in contact with during your daily duties. We often encounter people at their worst. Please take that into consideration, and treat people with professionalism. Showing others respect can garner respect for you and this profession.

Integrity – Tell the truth. It is that simple. This will not always be easy, and could be uncomfortable at times, but it is always the right thing to do. The Minnesota State Patrol is built on trust. This is possible because as troopers we tell the truth.

Courage – This job takes courage. Joining the Minnesota State Patrol took courage. Leaving jobs where you were comfortable took courage. Many of you upended your family life for this – that took courage. Troopers perform courageous acts every day. I was reminded of this watching an event that Trooper James Lee responded to. He arrived to a vehicle off the road, immediately noticing that it was on fire. The driver was unconscious behind the wheel. Trooper Lee acted quickly to pull him out and drag him a safe distance from the now fully engulfed vehicle. Trooper Lee determined that the driver had overdosed, and immediately started life saving measures. Troopers put themselves in danger just like this every day, in order to serve others.

Honor- Honor those who have gone before us. This Agency is built on strong tradition. 68th Academy, you chose Lichtenheld Legionnaires as your class name. Trooper Roy C. Lichtenheld was killed on duty in a motorcycle crash, leaving behind his wife and one year old child. You have honored his ultimate sacrifice.

69th Academy, you have chosen Dedicated 69th Langer's Last as your class name. This is to honor Colonel Matt Langer. Colonel Langer had a 25 year career and served as Chief of the Minnesota State Patrol for ten years. His leadership and passion for traffic safety is known nationwide. He cared for the agency, and even more cared the people of this agency.

Excellence- We must never stop attempting to achieve excellence. We do this by approaching each day with a mindset focused on making it better than the previous.

I am often asked what it means to be a trooper. Those five core values of course come to mind. I would also add resilience. However, words cannot always clearly explain what it means to be a trooper – oftentimes it is just a feeling. It's the feeling of making a difference. The feeling of making it through the most challenging days. The feeling of pride through service to your communities and the citizens of Minnesota. And maybe most importantly the feeling of support from each other – support our brothers and sisters need in the most critical times.

This past year has brought many challenges. But, the support that law enforcement continues to show for each other is remarkable. I was reminded of this following the death of one of our troopers, his family talked about just how much he loved being a trooper. At his funeral, while it was an incredibly sad event, I couldn't help but also look at the beauty of the love and support surrounding his family. There were dozens of troopers there to honor his memory, many he graduated the academy with and partners he worked with every day. Of course, support doesn't just come in tragedy, you will feel it from each other in your day-to-day work. You will feel it from the troopers you work with on the road all the way up to your supervisors. You will have support from the allied agencies you work with, as we cannot do this work alone. And as you walk across this stage to begin the next chapter of your life – know that you have my full support as well. I may not be able to fully sum up what it means to be a trooper, but I hope you all have gotten a glimpse of what the feeling will be – to be surrounded, supported and make a difference in the lives of those you come across. Whether you call it a job, career or a calling – the work you do is important. Never take for granted the power you have to transform lives for the better. To make our roads safer, and to do everything you can to continue improving upon a legacy that started long before any of us took the Oath of a Minnesota State Trooper.

On behalf of the entire Minnesota State Patrol, congratulations to each of you and welcome to the team!



Academy Class Speaker: **TROOPER CATHERINE BARRIE-MEDELLIN**

68th

Lt. Governor Flanagan, Commissioner Jacobson, Interim Colonel Bogojevic, Troopers, family, and friends of the 68th Academy Cadets, welcome and good morning. Thank you all for being here to celebrate this special day and all of the accomplishments that brought us here.

I would like to thank the Cadets of the 68th Academy for selecting me to stand up here and speak for the Class. This is truly an honor and a privilege, one that I do not take lightly. I would also like to thank our fellow partners of the 69th Academy.

For the 26 of us on stage, today marks an incredibly significant moment in our lives. Weeks, months, and even years of preparation, hard work, and determination have all lead to this singular moment. A moment that we could not have achieved as individuals, rather it took us coming together as team to make today possible.

It all started 96 days ago, when the 26 of us met for the first time. It was Family Orientation Day. A very cold January day. After we found our billets and said tearful goodbyes to our families, we quickly got to work on our first of many lessons on formation and marching. That first night, as we settled into the beginning of many nights away from home, many, if not all, of the emotions were felt. We were anxious, hopeful, restless, nervous, some a little scared, sad, and even excited for the Academy journey to begin.

On Orientation Day, several promises were made. Academy Staff made a promise to our loved ones that they would keep us safe while also pushing us in ways we hadn't been pushed before, that they would build us and shape us into the best versions of ourselves that we could be. Our loved ones also made a promise to us that they would take care of everything at home so that we could be focused on our training.

Throughout the Academy, we have been told that everything happens for a reason, that everything has a purpose. While we may not have realized that in the moment, there has been a purpose for everything that we experienced and everything we have done here at the Academy. Even the smallest and seemingly insignificant events were not random, they were meticulously designed and executed to build us up, make us stronger, make us better, and prepare us to be good partners.

Day 1 was our initiation into what the Academy would be. Picture this, calm and restful sleep; some cadets snoring, some dreaming, some restlessly trying to stay asleep. And then the clocks hit 0434 hours. Everything you are picturing has changed. Lights on, loud, very loud knocking on closed doors, and shouting coming from every direction. As the cadence says, "shouting troopers everywhere." Cadets jumped out of bed, unsure of what to do or of what was even going on. We quickly got dressed in our PT uniforms, prepared to begin our day. Never completely getting it right, whether it was leaving a light on or a door open or a lanyard was showing, we took many trips back into



and out of the billet, and up and down the billet stairs to fix whatever error we made while fixing the error before it. However, the laps inside the billet may have been preferred to the negative temperatures outside, which dropped lower with each lap.

As the weeks went on, we had more and more challenges. Some challenges were expected, some were surprises. Stress can make the simplest of tasks, like buttoning your shirt, counting, not putting clothes on backwards, and remembering our right from our left, next to impossible. One day while marching to lunch, a march we had done many times, what should have been a left became a right. As a tree and a building came dangerously close, we quickly corrected, but it wasn't pretty. When staff asked what was happening, our response was "It's a disaster ma'am." But we made it through, as a team. We did not march into the side of the building and we did march around the tree. But most importantly, we made it to lunch.

The 68th would like to thank all of those who have contributed to us being able to be on this stage today. To our family and friends, you were our rock, you were what kept us going. You made it so we could keep coming back week after week. You celebrated birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, and other milestones without us there while we silently celebrated from afar. Thank you.

To the Troopers who were our instructors, we are beyond grateful that you chose to take time off from your busy road schedules and spend it with us, showing us what it takes to be an exceptional Trooper. Thank you.

To those who volunteered as role players so that we could learn first-hand how to deal with realistic contacts with the public, thank you for giving us invaluable training experiences. To our coaches from the YMCA, you pushed our bodies in ways they've never been pushed before and in ways that some of us never thought they could be pushed, thank you. You have taught us that while our bodies may want to quit, our minds are stronger and can push us through the pain. We will never hear the song "Bring Sally Up" in the same way ever again.

To our chefs, you kept us fed and nourished, you kept us energized during our long days, nights, and weeks. You truly surpassed our expectations and for that, we thank you.

To Academy Staff, Sgt. Buggs, Sgt. Johnson, Trp. Adrian, Trp. Jepson, and Trp. Marichalar, you lived up to your promise. You challenged us and pushed us every day. You pushed us physically and mentally, but you were also there to bring us back up. While we spent these 14 weeks away from our homes and families, you spent even more. You arrived before us each Sunday and stayed after us each Friday. Each day, you would be awake and dressed before we were and each night when we went to bed, you were still awake.

You taught us the core values of the State Patrol

– RESPECT, INTEGRITY, COURAGE, HONOR, EXCELLENCE.

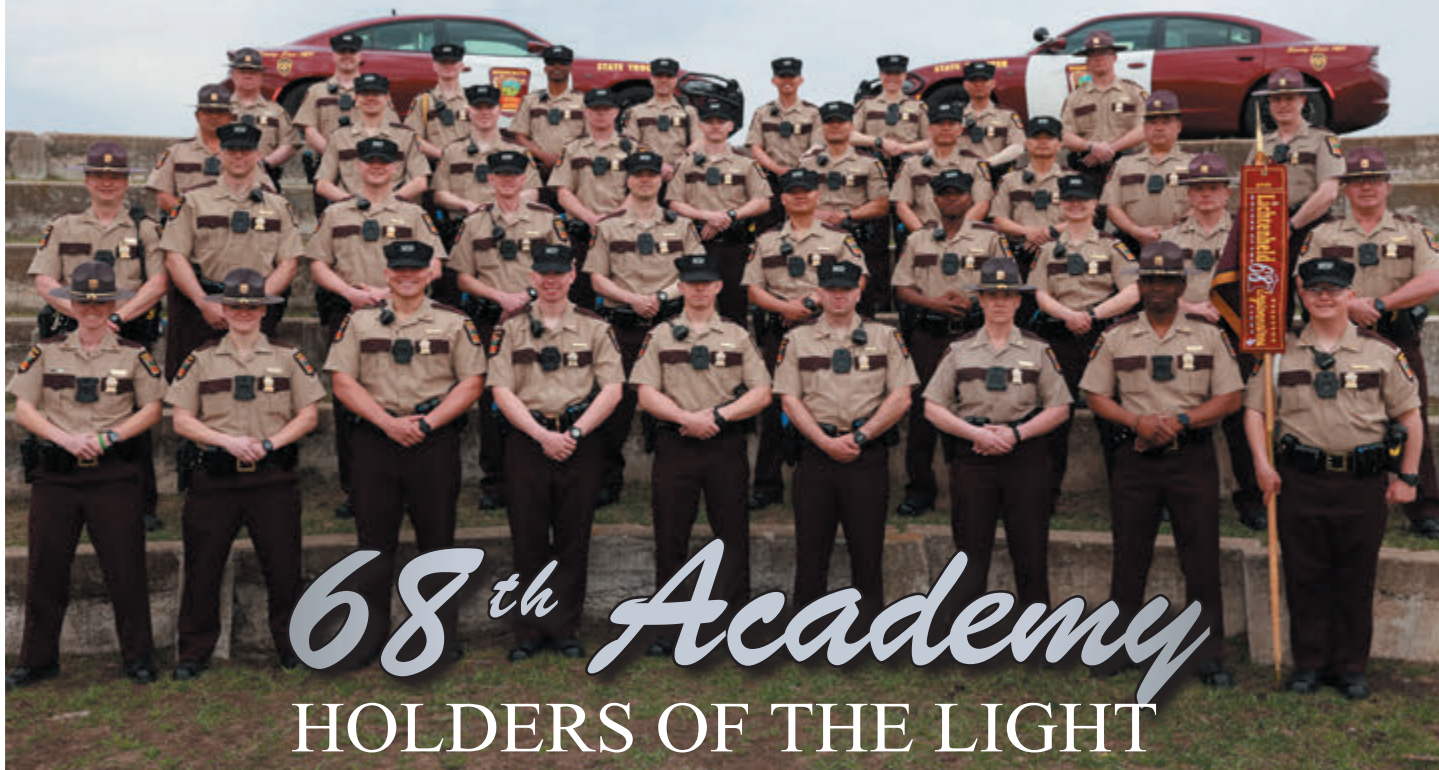
You taught us by example, showing us what it means to be a good partner. The product of your example, dedication, and hard work are sitting on this stage right now and we cannot thank you enough.



Academy Staff experienced additional challenges. At the start of our fifth week of training, the 69th Training Academy began. Staff had to manage two academy schedules, ensuring we didn't overlap at the PT pad or chow hall, and then creating a smooth transition when our training schedules finally aligned and the two academies were combined. The amount of time that was spent in preparation and in the background for this to be achieved is immense, and we thank you.

Now that we have reached this day, that seemed at times might have never come, we make our promise to everyone in this room. We promise to uphold and live everyday aligned with the core values of the State Patrol and always serve with compassion, humanity, and empathy. We will be the partners and people you have trained us to be. We will wear this uniform with pride and humility. It is an honor to be counted among those who have come before us. Our "if and when" is right here, right now. And finally, we would like to take a moment to remember those partners whom we have lost recently with a quote from Emily Potter. "Heroes Never Die. They live on forever in the hearts and minds of those who would follow in their footsteps." Thank you.

LICHTENHELD 68th LEGIONNAIRES





Academy Class Speaker: **TROOPER DAVID HOLMQUIST**

69th



Good morning, Lt. Governor, Commissioner, Colonel, Troopers, Family and Friends of the 68th and 69th MN State Patrol Academies. We are thankful you are here with us to celebrate this **JOYOUS** occasion. To let you know just how joyous this day is to us, I have the word Joyous capitalized, underlined, and in bold in my speech notes.

I know many of you are wondering why this older Trooper is here to give his retirement speech before the class speeches, but actually I am one of the Cadets of the 69th Academy and have the honor of being chosen to speak on behalf of the Dedicated 69th.

This day comes with great anticipation, a lot of blood, sweat, tears, hard

work and about thousand push-ups and then a few more tears. What is it that makes today so exciting and such a proud moment for everyone here? This graduation ceremony is a culmination of an incredible journey that we as Cadets and our families have been on for 10 weeks. It recognizes our hard work and commitment to becoming the best State Troopers that we can be.

I would like to give you a quick glance at what the 10-week academy looked like from the perspective of the 69th Cadets. As I share a few of our moments, highlights and lowlights, you may hear some laughs from Cadets and maybe even a little crying.

The 69th Academy class journey began at the end of January when we met for the first time at orientation. As we gathered together, we shared our years of experience as officers, and as good officers do, we started sharing tips on how to prepare for camp. We all knew the Academy was going to be challenging, but yet I do not believe any of us knew how much we would endure, as well as grow as officers and people.

As we gathered at Camp Ripley on February 11th, to say good bye to our families and begin the academy, you could feel the variety of emotions in the air. A few pondering is this really worth it, to those who knew they wanted this, but the unknowns were weighing heavy on their minds.

The chaos and confusion began day one with a 0434 wake up call. Although wakeup call is a nice way to put it, as it was more like we were in the middle of a tornado with a train derailment happening. I have been on SWAT call outs where we made less noise on a knock and announce entry. Actually, the only thing missing that first morning was a flash bang. This eye-opening morning set the tone for the challenge that lay in front of us.

With all the uniform changes and running in and out of the building many of us did not know which way we were going. In fact, at one point, I remember coming out of my room after being instructed to get physical training clothes on, to find one cadet standing there with his sweatshirt on backwards and his name now on the front. Which, this may surprise you, drew the attention of the academy staff. To



put the icing on the cake when we were told to put our duty uniform on later, this same cadet came out in his duty uniform which was not buttoned up all the way, due to time constraints, so you could see his white t-shirt. Unfortunately, he had put his t-shirt on inside out and backwards so the shirt tag was now front and center. Of course, the Academy staff would not miss this wardrobe mishap either. We made it through opening morning after a number of uniform changes, trips in and out of the building, and about a thousand push-ups. We all realized the challenge before us.

We cannot give enough credit to our amazing academy staff. Their persistence to train us, keep us in line and get us to pay attention to detail was remarkable. They motivated us to work harder each day by either telling us to work harder, making us do a few extra push-ups, or reminding us that we could reach our goal of being on the road someday “if and when” we graduate.

They were always letting us know if we were not motivated enough by informing us we were only giving 20 percent, or maybe 69 percent on a good day, when we should be giving 114 percent.

While marching they would tell us to look sharp, because everyone is watching. They would let us know how much we over or under shot a turn or stopping point. Sometimes we would be really close within 6.9 ft or 11.4 ft and other times not so close at 20 or 50.3 feet. I will be honest we were all impressed by how accurate they were at measuring by just looking, but then about week three we started to realize they were using the same measurements that just happen to be their badge numbers, which we thought was very clever. Through all their work they were always pushing us towards excellence and never accepting anything less than the best we could give.

As the days went on, we continued to meet each challenge head on. With our small group of nine we quickly realized the importance of working together and developing a tight team always willing to help each other.

So, who is the 69th Academy? We are nine dedicated cadets with 86.5 years of combined law enforcement experience, who see the State Patrol as a great place to serve our state and community and continue our law enforcement careers. During our time at the academy, we truly grew together like brothers. This tight bond was of course forged by the hard-work and challenges of the academy, but there was more to this group of nine. Many of our cadets dealt with trauma or tragedy in their personal life’s just before or during our academy time. These experiences created a tremendous strain on them and made it difficult for them to come back to the academy and continue. Displaying extreme perseverance each of these cadets continued to return to the academy, surrounded by his fellow cadet’s support and care, to continue with their dream to be a State Trooper. We are blessed to have had the nine of us together as a class. Although I don’t consider us a class, we are more like a band of brothers who have

each other's back.

To our families who we left every Sunday night to only see you again on Friday night, we are forever in your debt. You carried the load at home, as well as supporting us through this adventure. Thank you for putting us in the car on some of those Sunday nights and sending us back to Camp Ripley. I believe I can speak for all of the cadets when I say we are thankful from the bottom of our hearts and we are grateful beyond measure.

To the 68th Academy, it was a pleasure working with you. Continue to work hard, keep your head up and know we will always have your backs. We look forward to seeing you on the road.

69th it has been a true honor and a privilege to serve with you. Thank you will never be enough.

Thank you all for being part of our special day and celebrating this milestone in our life's. As this chapter comes to a close, we now began another chapter of being a MN State Trooper. Cadets/Troopers continue to be passionate about the career and live your life's according to the core values.

Stay safe and please always take care of yourself and your families. Thank you all.

DEDICATED SIXTY NINTH





Trooper Yahya Abdi

BADGE SP614 | EAST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I am originally from Mogadishu, Somalia and moved to Minnesota about 26 years ago. My wife, Muna and I have been together since middle school and especially enjoy traveling together. I am a father of three; two girls and a boy. In 2008, I earned my Bachelor's of Arts Degree with a Major in Psychology from Metropolitan State University. Prior to joining the State Patrol, I spent eight years as a stay-at-home father. I was hired through the LETO Program and I am assigned to the Richfield Station.



Trooper Kyle Arndt

BADGE SP85 | MARSHALL DISTRICT | 69TH ACADEMY

I grew up in Ortonville, Minnesota where I graduated high school in 2007. After high school, I went to Alexandria Technical College where I earned my Associates Degree in Law Enforcement. I started with the Ortonville Police Department in 2009 and after five years, I moved to Nashville, TN. I moved back to Minnesota in 2019 and started with the Big Stone County Sheriff's Office. I am married and have three boys. I have been assigned to the Montevideo Station.



Trooper Mohamed Bah

BADGE SP495 | EAST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I am originally from Sierra Leone, Africa and I now live in Inver Grove Heights, MN with my wife and two daughters. We enjoy spending our free time traveling. In 2013, I earned my Associates of Arts Degree in Accountancy from Northwest Mississippi Community College. Before joining the State Patrol, I worked for BNSF Railway as a crane operator. I was hired through the LETO Program and I am assigned to the Richfield Station.



Trooper Catherine Barrie-Medellin

BADGE SP48 | WEST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I was born in California, but moved all around the country, as my father was in the Navy. We settled in Minnesota in 1999. I am married and have two wonderful 5-year-olds, Carmen and Jack. I have received a Bachelor's Degree in Geology from the University of Saint Thomas. Prior to joining the State Patrol, I worked almost 8 years for Mn-DOT. I was hired through the LETO Program and after graduating from the 68th Academy, I have been assigned to the E-ZPass Station.

Trooper Louis Biondo

BADGE SP508 | EAST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I grew up all over the country; Utah, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina. Minnesota has been my home since 2000 and my family will be moving to Lindstrom. In 2009, I earned my Bachelor's of Science Degree in Community Psychology from St. Cloud State University. I have been married to my partner, Angela, for 12 years. We have two boys, Salvatore and Enzo and a Boston Terrier named Vinny. Prior to the State Patrol, I worked for Big Brothers Big Sisters for 15 years. I was hired through the LETO Program, and I am assigned to the Stillwater Station.



Trooper Noah Buhr

BADGE SP222 | VIRGINIA DISTRICT | 69TH ACADEMY

I am originally from the Duluth/ Lake Superior Area. I earned my Associate of Science Degree in Law Enforcement from the Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College. I moved to the Iron Range in 2019 after being hired with the Virginia Police Department. After serving 4.5 years with the Virginia PD, I decided to make the switch to State Patrol. I am married, have 10-month-old son and two pups. I am assigned to the Virginia Station.



Trooper Wade Chit

BADGE SP525 | EAST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I was born in Burma in Southeast Asia and lived in a refugee camp in Thailand for about 5 years. I came to the United States in 2005, and I am currently living in the Saint Paul area. In 2019, I earned my Bachelor's of Science Degree in Criminology from University of Wisconsin River Falls, and in 2022, I earned my Master's Degree in Criminal Justice and Leadership from Concordia University St. Paul. Prior to the Minnesota State Patrol, I was working in probation and corrections with Ramsey County. I enjoy the great outdoors and I love to travel. I am assigned to the St. Paul Station.



Trooper Trevor Dostal

BADGE SP419 | EAST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I am from Burnsville, MN and currently living in Rosemount. Prior to joining the patrol, I served as a Community Service Officer with the Burnsville Police Department for 4 years. I received my Associates Degree in Culturally Responsive Professional Peace Officer from Inver Hills Community College. I am nearly done with my Bachelor's Degree in Police Studies. I enjoy hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, and boating. After graduating, I am assigned to the St. Paul Station.





Trooper Emery Forsythe

BADGE SP288 | WEST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I am from Becker, MN, I attended college at the University of North Dakota and graduated with a Bachelor's of Arts Degree in History and Political Science. My wife and I have been married since 2020 and in our free time we enjoy cooking, single-track biking, hiking, and kayaking. Before joining the State Patrol, I worked in the telecommunications industry for 8 years. After graduation, I am assigned to the Minnetonka Station.



Trooper Terrance Gavic

BADGE SP476 | WEST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I am originally from Shakopee MN but have spent recent years in northern MN where I attended college and worked in law enforcement. During college I developed a passion for flying and scuba diving. I had a chance to work alongside the State Patrol MART team and a close trooper friend of mine set me up with a fly along opportunity. This made me realize that this career was a perfect blend of both my passion for law enforcement and aviation. I am assigned to the Minnetonka Station.



Trooper Ryan Geiser

BADGE SP220 | MARSHALL DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I am originally from Shakopee, MN. I was active duty in the Marine Corps from 2015-2023 and was stationed in Okinawa, Japan and Camp Lejeune, NC. I earned my Associates of Arts Degree in Management from the University of Maryland Global Campus in 2021. I have a six-year-old daughter named Lucy and I enjoy hunting, fishing and working on restoring an old truck in my spare time. After graduating from the 68th Academy, I am assigned to the Redwood Falls Station.



Trooper Every Gyi

BADGE SP514 | EAST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I was born in a Thailand refugee camp and I immigrated to the United States in 2006. In 2016, after graduating from high school, I enlisted in the Army National Guard. I was a correctional officer at the Stillwater Correctional Facility for over two years. I enjoyed spending my free time with my wife and family. I was hired through the LETO Program and I am assigned to the St. Paul Station.

Trooper Kyle Hanson

BADGE SP232 | DETROIT LAKES DISTRICT | 69TH ACADEMY

I grew up in Marshall, MN where I graduated from high school in 2016. I attended Bemidji State University and received my Bachelor's of Science Degree in Criminal Justice in 2020. I began my law enforcement career as a deputy. After serving three years, I was accepted into the 69th ETSO Academy. Upon graduation, I am assigned to the Fergus Falls Station. I am recently married to my wife, Alexi, and my hobbies include: snowmobiling, shooting, and fishing.



Trooper Collin Harstad

BADGE SP223 | ROCHESTER DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I was born and raised in Rochester, MN and moved to Oronoco in 2013 with my wife, son and daughter. I received my Associates Degree in Radiography from Rochester Computer and Technical College in 2009. I worked at Mayo Clinic as an MRI Technologist. My family has a black lab and a yellow lab, and I like to spend as much time outside with them as possible. Most of my free time is consumed with my kids' sporting events, which I enjoy watching and hope to get back into coaching. After graduating from the LETO Program's 68th Academy, I am assigned to the Rochester Station.



Trooper David Holmquist

BADGE SP32 | ST. CLOUD DISTRICT | 69TH ACADEMY

I live in the New London area with my wife and three kids. My wife, Diane, is a school teacher. Our son, Robert, is in the Navy and stationed on the east coast. We have two daughters. Raeann, is a sophomore at SDSU and our daughter, Reva, is a Junior in high school. Before joining the State Patrol, I worked for the Willmar Police Department and most recently the Kandiyohi County Sheriff's Office. I am assigned to the Willmar Station.



Trooper Katelyn Janson

BADGE SP108 | THIEF RIVER FALLS DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I am originally from Warroad, MN. I graduated in 2023 from Minnesota State University Moorhead, where I earned my Bachelor's of Science Degree and double majored in Criminal Justice and Sociology. I am engaged to my fiancé Gunnar Nelson and I enjoy spending my free time outdoors with family and my two dogs. I was hired through the LETO Program, and I am assigned to the Thief River Falls Station.





Trooper Gerald Karpe

BADGE SP252 | WEST METRO DISTRICT | 69TH ACADEMY

I have lived most of my life in Minnetonka, MN. I am the youngest of three, with two older brothers. I graduated high school in 2015 and went to North Hennepin Community College where I earned my Associate of Science Degree in Law Enforcement. I was hired by Minneapolis Police Department in 2020 and worked there until I joined the ETSO academy in 2024. On my off days, I enjoy spending time outside with my fiancé and two rescue pit-bulls. I am assigned to the Minneapolis Station.



Trooper Kevin Kuebler

BADGE SP635 | WEST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I am originally from Apple Valley, Minnesota and I am very close with my family. My parents have been married for over 40 years and I have an older brother. Prior to State Patrol, I served 4 years in the Marine Corps (2015-2019) and then obtained my Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice and Psychology from Concordia University in 2023. In my free time, I enjoy car detailing, baseball, reading and writing Christian theology and apologetics. I am assigned to the Mounds View Station.



Trooper Vu Nguyen

BADGE SP471 | EAST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I am originally from Vietnam and came to the US in 2011. I now reside in Eagan, MN. I have been married my wife, Hang, since August 2023. I am currently serving in the US Army Reserve since 2014 and deployed in 2019-2020. I have earned my Associates Degree in Law Enforcement through Normandale Community College. Prior to joining State Patrol, I worked for Storm Lake Police Department in Iowa from 2021 to 2023. I am the first Vietnamese Minnesota Trooper and I am assigned to the St. Paul Station.



Trooper Eric Olson

BADGE SP181 | WEST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I am from Byron, MN, I graduated from high school in 2013. I enlisted into the U.S. Navy from 2014-2019 and served active duty as an Operations Team member at the rank of Petty Officer. I have been married to my wife, Brianna, since May 2022. After leaving the Navy, I worked in construction, the natural gas pipeline industry and as a special education paraprofessional. I graduated from University of St. Thomas in 2022 where I earned my Bachelor's of Arts Degree in Criminal Justice. I went through the LETO Program and I am assigned to the Maple Grove Station.

Trooper Matthew O'Rourke

BADGE SP187 | VIRGINIA DISTRICT | 69TH ACADEMY

I am originally from Grand Rapids, MN. I have been married to my wife, Stephanie, since 2001 and have two daughters, Alexis and Abby. I earned my Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Bemidji State University in 2003. Before joining the State Patrol, I worked as a police officer for the Grand Rapids Police Department for 13 ½ years. My hobbies are hunting and fishing. I was hired through the ETSO Program and I am assigned to the Grand Rapids Station.



Trooper Kyle Oswald

BADGE SP84 | EAST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I am originally from Farmington, MN and I graduated high school in 2011. I attended the University of Minnesota – Duluth and graduated in 2015, earning my Bachelor's Degree in Criminology. I have been married to my wife, Shelby since 2017, and we have a 2-year-old daughter, Maggie. We enjoy watching sporting events and taking trips to the Duluth area. Before joining the State Patrol, I was a dispatcher for Dakota County for 8 years. I was hired through the LETO Program, and I am assigned to the Richfield Station.



Trooper Carter Pavek

BADGE SP472 | EAST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I am from Rosemount, Minnesota and graduated high school in 2020. In 2023, I graduated from Inver Hills Community College earning my Associates Degree in Science: Law Enforcement. Before the State Patrol, I worked a part-time job at a retail store. Some hobbies I enjoy are playing video games and spending time with my family at the cabin. I am assigned to the St. Paul Station.



Trooper Michael Perbix

BADGE SP564 | WEST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I grew up in Plymouth, Minnesota and now currently reside in New Prague. In 2009, I earned my Bachelor's of Science Degree in Chemistry from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. I am a father of two, a boy and girl, and enjoy getting outdoors with them whenever I can. I was formerly a farmer of 10 years in southern Scott County. I joined the State Patrol because I wanted my future career to be just as rewarding. I am assigned to the Minneapolis Station and will enjoy the fast pace it offers.





Trooper Gerald Runnells

BADGE SP216 | ROCHESTER DISTRICT | 69TH ACADEMY

I was born in Rochester, MN and now live in the Pine Island area. I have been married to my wife, Kim, since 2015 and we have three children; Griffin, Kennedy, and Ashlynn. I volunteer for the Dodge Center Fire Department, served for 22 years and have held many titles. I started at Dodge County Sheriff's Office and also worked with Kasson Police Department, where I held positions of Patrol Officer, K9 Officer, and Investigator. I am assigned to the Rochester Station.



Trooper Caleb Small

BADGE SP242 | ROCHESTER DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I am originally from St. Charles and graduated high school in 2014. I attended the University of Minnesota Duluth where I earned my Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration: Marketing. I worked multiple jobs, but decided to find a more purposeful career in the State Patrol. I was hired through the LETO Program and I am assigned to the Rochester Station. I enjoy ice fishing, bow and shotgun hunting, western big game hunting, game nights with my family, golfing and walking my two puppies.



Trooper Anthony St. Clair

BADGE SP110 | THIEF RIVER FALLS DISTRICT | 69TH ACADEMY

I am from the White Earth Reservation. I have lived in the cities of Ogeema, Waubun, and Mahnomen on the Reservation. I was a Police Officer for the Moorhead Police Dept since May of 2023. I was a Police Officer and then transitioned to a Highway Safety Officer for the White Earth Tribal Police Dept from 2020 to 2023. I worked as an EMT for the Mahnomen Ambulance Service from 2018 to 2020. Nearly all of my free time is spent with my 4-year-old son. My Ojibwe name is Aabijiibinew meaning Little Thunderbird. I am assigned to the Bemidji Station.



Trooper John Thao

BADGE SP360 | WEST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I am from Rogers, MN and I am married to my beautiful wife, Rachel. We have 4 boys, Royce, Ryder, Rayden, and Rowyn. A lot of my time is spent with my boys, but when I do have free time, I enjoy running outside, playing sports, and hiking. I was active duty in the Marine Corps for 8 years, I left the military in 2022 and started working in Human Resources. I was hired through the LETO Program and am assigned to the Maple Grove Station.

Trooper Paul Tierney

BADGE SP214 | EAST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I am from Rosemount, Minnesota and I am married with two children. As a family, we enjoy watching movies, hiking, hunting and fishing. We spend time at cabins up north with family and friends as often as we can. In 2022, I was awarded certification in Law Enforcement from Century College and received Law Enforcement Skills Training from Hennepin Technical College. I am a former collegiate athlete and have worked in variety of careers. I am assigned to the St. Paul Station.



Trooper Gilberto Trevino

BADGE SP57 | THIEF RIVER FALLS DISTRICT | 69TH ACADEMY

I am originally from Alvarado, MN and graduated from High School in East Grand Forks in 2014. I attended college at the Alexandria Technical Community College where I earned my degree in Law Enforcement in 2016. Prior to State Patrol, I worked as a State Trooper for the Texas Department of Public Safety and as a Police Officer for the East Grand Forks Police Department. I have been married to my wife, Sarah, since 2020 and we have a 3-year-old daughter. I am assigned to the Crookston Station.



Trooper Brendan Wappes

BADGE SP592 | WEST METRO DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I was born and raised in northeast Minneapolis where I graduated from St. Anthony Village High School and attended college at Dunwoody Institute of Technology and the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. I just married my beautiful wife and cannot wait to start a family with her. Prior to the State Patrol, I was a commercial electrician. My hobbies include anything outdoor related. I was hired through the LETO Program and my current assignment is the E-ZPass Station.

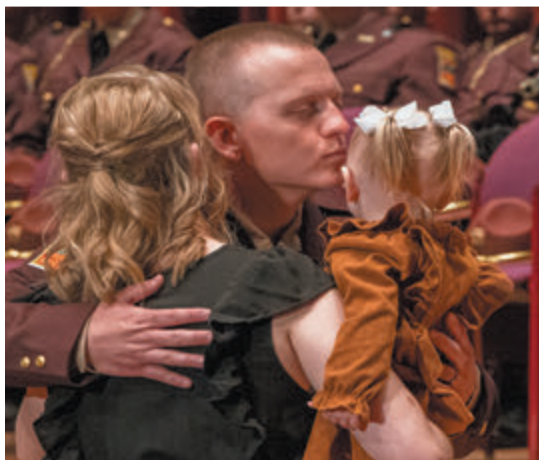


Trooper Cody Weise

BADGE SP544 | MARSHALL DISTRICT | 68TH ACADEMY

I am originally from Elysian, MN and I am now living in Windom. I am married with 2 young daughters and we enjoy camping, hunting and fishing. Prior to joining the State Patrol, I was employed as a security guard for Allina Health where I spent 3 years working at multiple hospitals. During that time, I decided to go back to school for a degree in law enforcement, but then chose to enter into the LETO Program with State Patrol. After graduating from the 68th Academy, I am assigned to the Windom Station.







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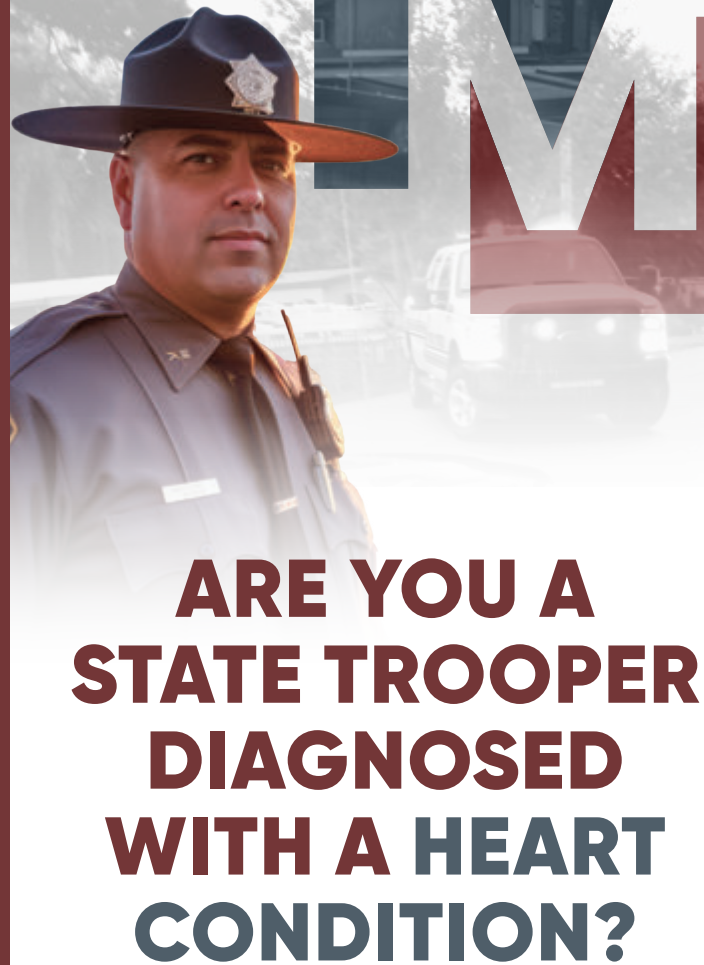
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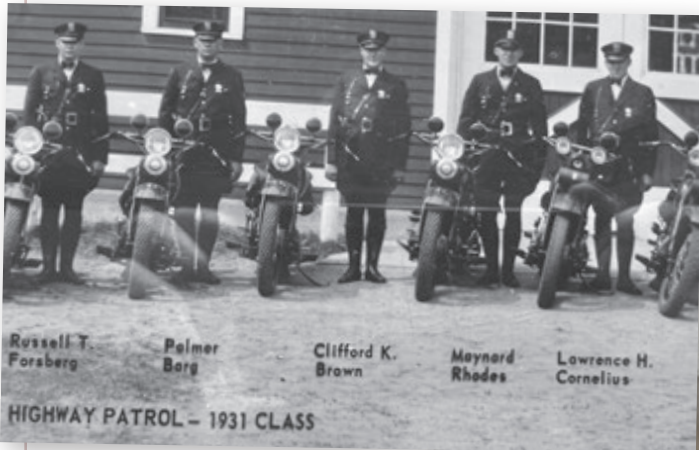


Lawrence Cornelius was born in Elk River, Minnesota, on July 29, 1907. At 22 years of age, in 1929, Lawrence Cornelius attended the first Highway Patrol School at the Earl Brown Farm in Brooklyn Center as one of the first 35 recruits. He was issued Badge #15, and stationed in Elk River. The salary was \$120.00 per month. He received his Diploma from Earl Brown College on the 1st day of April, 1930.



In 1932 Chief Earl Brown resigned from the Highway Patrol and ran for Governor. He was defeated by Floyd B. Olson whereupon John P. Arnoldy was appointed Chief by Highway Commissioner N.W. Elsberg.

The 3rd Patrol school was held at Camp Ripley in 1933 and when that school graduated, 39 officers from the first two schools, which included Lawrence, were relieved of duty without cause due to politics and replaced by officers from the third school. Later in 1935 Tenure of Office was passed under which officers had certain rights before they could be suspended, demoted or dismissed. In 1936 the Highway Patrol Officers Association was formed to prevent political firing which is today's Minnesota State Patrol Troopers Association.



The officer's workday was 10-12 hours, seven days per week with only one day off per month. Original uniforms consisted of breeches and blouse of Oxford gray, along with tall black boots. Their primary duties were to be of assistance to travelers, not to pursue speeders. In the event they encountered a drunk driver, they charged them only with a careless driving offense. Through the years, officers' duties changed much. While stationed at Milaca, Lawrence rode his motorcycle to patrol roadways as far north as Duluth, down to Princeton, over to Stillwater, and across to St. Cloud.

He was married to Mary Ida Coffman on December 6, 1929. They had three children, Theodore Glen, May 22, 1931, Ruth Ann, September 1, 1932, and Elizabeth "Betsy" was born in 1934.



Lawrence Cornelius was one of the officers to lose his job when the third school graduated in 1936. It wasn't until 1939 that Lawrence was reappointed to the Patrol. He was issued badge # 107. During the time Lawrence was relieved from the Patrol, he continued to work in law enforcement as the Chief of Police for Wayzata.

When Lawrence was rehired by the Patrol, he worked in the St. Cloud area for 5 years and then relocated back to the Elk River station where he first started. Officer Kenny Gray

was working the Mille Lacs Station during that time and enlisted in the military during the war. As a result, Lawrence was transferred to the Mille Lacs station in 1942 and stayed there until he retired in October of 1967. While stationed in Mille Lacs as well as his patrol duties, he also trained patrol officers upon graduating from school.

In 1942 Lawrence was also appointed First Lieutenant, Air Corps Reserve, as a pilot. Hoping to use his pilot skills, in 1957 he applied



without success for a pilot's position with the Patrol. At that time, the Patrol had only two planes.

Lawrence enjoyed hunting, fishing and boating in his free time and had a boat and motor repair shop out of his garage in Milaca, Minnesota. His family also enjoyed springer spaniels and raised them as well.



A couple of his partners over the years, as remembered by his son, Ted, were Ed Simonstead, Howard Wicktor, and John Strait.

This picture is noted as taken July 25, 1977, at the Arden Hills State Patrol Training Center. Present from left to right are Earl Larimes, Lawrence Cornelius



Robert Reed, Orange Davis, and Ray Smith. All these retired officers were from the first Highway Patrol Training School of 1939.

In 1966 Lawrence was presented with the 30 years of faithful and meritorious service award from the State of Minnesota. Larry is quoted as saying "Those first years were really something. We rode motorcycles at first and later graduated to Model A's which had charcoal heaters in them to keep warm in the winter. The highways were mostly gravel in those days and Highway Patrolmen had to carry five gallon cans of gas with them because of the lack of service stations." He continued, "There wasn't much traffic in those days but the traffic picked up in the late thirties and seems to be increasing every year. In those first years, I was stationed in St. Cloud and patrolled the road to Milaca and the highway south to Princeton and north to Onamia. Today, 169 is patrolled by state patrol cars. Things have changed."

I met Lawrence's son Theodore (Ted) over 20 years ago.

Ted gave me Lawrence's service pistol for the Patrol Collection along with several other pieces of memorabilia. When Lawrence retired, he was not allowed to keep his badge and pass it on to his son, a policy we do not have today. Your badge is a special part of the uniform that you wore. It identifies who you are and it's a symbol of authority granted by the oath we take. Ted never got his dad's badge.



Ted remembers how well respected his dad and family were in town. Lawrence had worked a lot with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe tribe and became respected by the tribe members. Growing up the son of the Highway Patrolmen was different back then. Ted was allowed to ride with his dad when he was in a patrol car as a teenager usually Friday, Saturday and Sundays. He assisted his dad with many traffic accidents over the years while riding along. When asked by his daughter why he didn't follow his dad into the Patrol he replied, "I witnessed too many traumatic accidents and other incidents that I just didn't see myself as an officer." Ted is now 93 and living in a small town just north of Dallas, Texas. His daughter Cyndi, as well as four grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren live nearby. Cyndi recalls going to her grandparents, Lawrence and Mary Ida, to visit, and her grandpa "stopping by" in his patrol car, in uniform, and carrying his firearm, to grab some ice tea with the family. Even on Christmas Eve when the family was together, her grandfather would be "on duty" and only get to stop in to greet everyone from the family.

Richard C. Smith – Retired
State Patrol Archives Curator

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MINNESOTA STATE PATROL TROOPERS REAFFIRM COMMITMENT TO LEGIONVILLE SCHOOL SAFETY PATROL CENTER

This past July, members of the Minnesota State Patrol Troopers Association (MSPTA) made a visit to the Legionville School Safety Patrol Training Center in Brainerd, Minnesota. Their visit underscored the deep-rooted connection between the Minnesota State Patrol, the MSPTA, and Legionville—a partnership that has nurtured the growth and safety of Minnesota's youth for decades. For many of these young individuals, including several current troopers, the camp served as a formative experience that imparted life skills they carry with them today.

Legionville, officially known as the Legionville School Safety Patrol Training Center, Inc., is a unique program managed by the Minnesota Department of The American Legion. As a nonprofit educational initiative, its mission is to train Minnesota's youth in essential school safety patrol techniques, such as managing intersection safety and overseeing bus patrol operations.

The concept of a School Patrol originated over a century ago, when Sister Carmela of the Cathedral School in St. Paul organized the first patrol at the intersection of Kellogg

Boulevard and Summit Avenue on February 21, 1921. This pioneering effort quickly gained momentum, and by 1922, the program was adopted citywide in St. Paul, becoming an integral part of the city's School System and Police Department. Recognizing its potential, the Minnesota Highway Patrol implemented the program statewide.

The need for standardized training led Earle Brown, the first chief of the Minnesota Highway Patrol, to seek the support of the Minnesota American Legion in 1935. His vision culminated in 1936, when The American Legion launched the first statewide training program at the Crow Wing County Fairgrounds in Brainerd. For two years, the program was held at Camp Ripley before returning to Brainerd, where it utilized local facilities until 1956. The program's instruction was carried out by members of the Minnesota Highway Patrol, Legionnaires, and other dedicated personnel.

In 1948, the Minnesota American Legion took a significant step by forming a committee to raise funds for a permanent training center. The Parker family's generous donation of a 560-acre site on North Long Lake in 1954 brought this





vision to life. Over the years, the site expanded to 610 acres, including 1,500 feet of lakeshore. The property was developed to include various buildings, such as a large barn converted into a multifunctional facility for classrooms, offices, a canteen, first aid room, theater, and recreational space. Modern additions include a dining hall, dormitories, a caretaker's house, and cabins for staff, establishing the Legionville School Safety Patrol Training Center, Inc. as we know it today.

Since its humble beginnings, Legionville has grown exponentially. The program, which started with just two weeks of training for 157 patrolmen in 1936, now serves over 1,000 participants each season, with a session capacity of 168. The program is co-educational, welcoming boys and girls ages 8-13, who are typically selected to attend by their school's patrol advisors. Sponsorship for the participants comes from

a variety of local organizations, including PTAs, civic groups, businesses, churches, and even individual families.

Although the program operates under the guidance of The American Legion, local Posts and Auxiliary Units play a crucial role in its success. They not only send young patrolers to the camp but also contribute funds to maintain the facility and acquire necessary equipment. This support helps keep the weekly camp fee accessible, with the current registration fee set at \$500 per student, often covered by the sponsoring organization or parents.

The visit by the Minnesota State Patrol Troopers serves as a powerful reminder of the enduring legacy of Legionville. This unique partnership continues to empower Minnesota's youth with essential safety skills, fostering a new generation of leaders dedicated to service and community.



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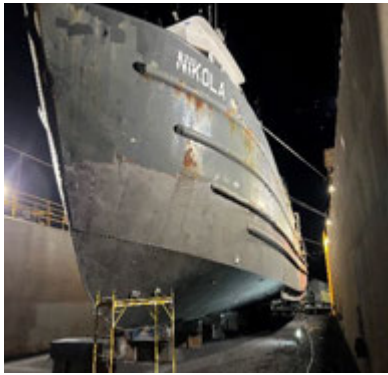
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USE OF FORCE AND THE DUTY TO RETREAT

Mark Schneider
LELS General Counsel

Recently, the Minnesota Supreme Court held that individuals claiming the affirmative defense of self-defense when they committed the felony offense of 2nd Degree Assault-Fear with a Dangerous Weapon have a duty to retreat when reasonably possible to do so. *State of Minnesota v. Blevins*, (Court File No. A22-0432, filed: July 31, 2024). After the Minnesota Supreme Court issued this decision, our office received various inquiries as to how this “duty to retreat” would apply to a peace officer’s use of force under Minn. Stat. §609.06 and §609.066.

Blevins involved an individual pulling a machete out of his waistband when he was confronted by three individuals on a light rail platform near U.S. Bank Stadium. One of the three individuals, a male armed with a knife, confronted and threatened Blevins. In response to the male’s threat that he would cut Blevins’ throat, Blevins brandished the machete. This resulted in Blevins being charged with Felony 2nd degree Assault-Fear. After a court trial, Blevins was found guilty, with the district court concluding that Blevins’ conduct was not authorized under Minn. Stat. §609.06, subd. 1(3) (the self-defense statute).

Minn. Stat. §609.06, subd. 1 provides that reasonable force may be used upon or toward another without that person’s consent under the following circumstances:

- when used by a public safety officer;
- when effecting a lawful arrest;
- in the execution of legal process;
- when enforcing an order of the court; or,
- in executing any other duty imposed upon the public officer by law.

The “self-defense statute”, contained in Minn. Stat. §609.06, subd. 1(3), provides that reasonable force may be used, “when used by any person resisting or aiding another to resist an offense against the person . . .” The affirmative defense of self-defense applies to individuals when they are confronted with a threat, action of another or “offense against the person”.

Recognizing the unique role licensed peace officers play in society to ensure public safety, the legislature enacted Minn. Stat. §609.066 – AUTHORIZED USE OF DEADLY FORCE BY PEACE OFFICERS. Minn. Stat. §609.066,

subd. 2 provides for an affirmative defense in favor of licensed peace officers, justifying the use of deadly force in the line of duty “if an objectively reasonable officer would believe, based on the totality of the circumstances known to the officer at the time and without the benefit of hindsight, that such force is necessary (1) to protect the peace officer or another from death or great bodily harm, provided that the threat: (i) can be articulated with specificity; (ii) is reasonably likely to occur absent action by the law enforcement officer; and (iii) must be addressed through the use of deadly force without unreasonable delay . . .” *Minn. Stat. §609.066, subd. 2*

Given the risks and danger associated with protecting the public encountered by licensed peace officers on a daily basis, the self-defense “duty to retreat” does not apply to an officer’s use of deadly force that is justified and authorized by Minn. Stat. §609.066, subd. 2. The affirmative defense contained in Minn. Stat. §609.066, subd 2 applies to “the use of deadly force by a peace officer *in the line of duty* . . .” Consequently, a licensed peace officer’s use of force outside the line of duty, while committing the felony offense of 2nd Degree Assault-Fear with a dangerous weapon, would be analyzed under the self-defense statute, Minn. Stat. 609.06, subd. 1(3) as discussed by the *Blevins* Court. Of note, the *Blevins* Court limited its

holding to the unique circumstances of that case. To take advantage of the affirmative defense of self-defense when committing the felony offense of 2nd Degree Assault-Fear “when using a device designed as a weapon or capable of producing death or great bodily harm”. *Id.* at ___, the individual must retreat when it is reasonable to do so.

As a result, the answer to the question whether the ‘duty to retreat’ requirement pronounced by the Minnesota Supreme Court in the recent case of *State of Minnesota v. Blevins* applies to peace officers when using deadly force in the line of duty is: No, the duty to retreat does not apply to an officer’s use of deadly force while in the line of duty. The statutory elements of the affirmative defense contained in Minn. Stat. §609.066, subd. 2 apply to a peace officer’s use of deadly force in the line of duty. The officer’s actions are evaluated from the standpoint of an objectively reasonable peace officer based on the totality of the circumstances known to the officer and without the benefit of hindsight.

If you have any questions about other recent court decisions, statutes or other rules of law, please do not hesitate to reach out to your Association/Union representatives. Thank you for all you do and stay safe.

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Captain Brad Quart

The Minnesota State Patrol Troopers Association received a donation of wooden toys from Midwest Wooden Toys (Clear Lake, MN). They are a volunteer based, non-profit company that hand makes wooden toys and donates them to law enforcement in hopes that these toys take away some of the stress for children during law enforcement calls for service. We are receiving enough toys to provide a (six) pack to all troopers in the state. The toys were recently dropped off at Camp Ripley and will be distributed by the training and development staff.

About the toys:

The toys are extremely safe. They are all made only from hardwood, so the wood will not splinter when/if a child chews on them. The wheels and axles are press-fit into each toy with two drops of Tite-Bond glue put in every hole, making sure they will stay in forever. Additionally, the toys are coated only with edible mineral oil, which is completely safe to digest.



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