

AIRCRAFT DIVISION

1946-2009

Fifteen years after Governor Henry Caulfield signed into law Senate Bill 36 creating the Missouri State Highway Patrol on September 14, 1931, the Patrol purchased its first aircraft. The first of two war surplus, Stinson L-5, single engine aircraft were purchased on August 28, 1946, forming the nucleus of the Patrol's aviation history. Members originally assigned to operate these aircraft were Trooper Hugh A. Wallace, serving as senior pilot, Sergeant Ralph H. Eidson and Trooper Robert F. Boyland.

By the early 1950s, the original aircraft were replaced with two Cessna 180s and one Cessna 190. The Cessna 190 was stationed in Lee's Summit and used for traffic control and observation for special events, as well as executive transportation for Patrol personnel. The Cessna 180s were stationed in Sedalia and Jefferson City. These aircraft would respond to requesting troop locations to assist road officers patrolling two-lane roadways, observing and identifying vehicles with drivers making dangerous passes. Statutes listing absolute maximum speed limits for different types of Missouri highways for day and night travel were not passed until 1957.

Aviation capabilities were expanded in 1959, when the Patrol purchased its first helicopter, a new Bell 47G model helicopter. This aircraft was operated continuously from 1959 until 1988, accumulating a total of 8,596.8 hours. Sergeant Bill East, the first member to have full-time flying duties, was assigned to fly this aircraft, responding statewide to calls for service from Jefferson City. Eventually, N5176B was assigned to Troop C and flown by Troop C pilots as N96MP.

Aircraft Division Created

In 1961, while serving his fourth term as superintendent, Colonel Hugh H. Waggoner created the Aircraft Division. Sgt. Bill East was promoted to lieutenant and appointed as the Aircraft Division's first director. In 1961, four years after statutes were passed limiting vehicles speed, aircraft were actively used to observe, detect, and assist with enforcing the speed limit. Speed blocks were painted on highways in several areas of the state and a plane from Jefferson City was scheduled for enforcement.

For years, Patrol aircraft and pilots occasionally flew ranking state officials, and in 1961, a Beechcraft Baron was purchased especially to provide executive transportation for Governor John M. Dalton. In June 1965, an Aero Commander was procured to fly Governor Warren Hearnes. The Patrol provided gubernatorial transportation until the beginning of Governor Bond's first administration in 1973.

On June 8, 1970, Colonel E.I. "Mike" Hockaday, superintendent of the Missouri State Highway Patrol, directed assignment of Patrol plane 76Q to Troop B, Macon, to conduct experiments in traffic law enforcement. Until this time, 76Q had been stationed in Jefferson City, where it was used primarily for speed enforcement on major highways in various troop locations. Seven objectives were established to:

1. Determine if stationing of an airplane in one troop for exclusive use would increase utilization of equipment and manpower.
2. Create scheduling procedures to have pilots available for enforcement flights during high accident and violation times.
3. Increase use of aircraft patrols on supplementary routes.
4. Use aircraft to target and detect a variety of hazardous traffic violations.
5. Publicize activity of aircraft enforcement to achieve a psychological deterrent effect to reduce traffic law violations.
6. Conduct surveys and experiments to broaden the usefulness, and to develop new traffic enforcement techniques.
7. Compare traffic data and accident statistics of the troop with concentrated aircraft enforcement to troops without aircraft enforcement.

At the conclusion of this period--July-September 1970--of concentrated aircraft traffic enforcement activity, data was analyzed against the previous year's statistics. The data indicated Troop B's accident and injury rates were significantly lower than other troops. After evaluating the seven identified objectives of the three-month period of aircraft traffic enforcement, it was recommended by the review board to continue the project for one more year. This project seems to have been the foundation providing for the Aircraft Division's growth and resulting in the assignment of fixed-winged aircraft in eight out of nine troops for enforcement operations.

Listed are the troops and the year of assignment of an airplane dedicated for traffic enforcement to each:

Troop A	1973
Troop B	1971
Troop C	1964
Troop D	1977
Troop E	1974

Troop G	2000
Troop H	1990
Troop I	1994 (reassigned to Troop G 2000)

Aircraft Division's Mission

Since the Patrol's original aircraft were acquired in 1946, it has been the Aircraft Division's intent and goal to provide support and enforcement service to road members, criminal investigations, and emergency services to Missouri's citizens. Traffic enforcement flights were routinely flown to enforce motor vehicle traffic laws, with enforcement expanded in 1961 to concentrate on motor vehicle speed limit violations.

Patrol pilots and aircraft actively flew medical relays, relaying blood, organs, and patients during the '70s and into the late '80s. With improved medical care readily available to all regions of the state and the availability of EMS helicopters to transport patients, the Patrol discontinued medical flights in 1988. Retired Sergeant A.J. Stricker stated some of the most rewarding flights he flew were transporting premature infants to Columbia for expert neonatal care. Sgt. Stricker fondly dubbed these infants "Prop Wash Babies", creating a certificate with Patrol Wings to give to the parents.

Over the years, including the first aircraft acquired by the Patrol, United States Department of Defense (DoD) programs have provided the Patrol with aviation resources to conduct our airborne mission. In the early '90s, the Patrol's aviation assets were greatly augmented when the DoD reallocated excess military aircraft to law enforcement agencies with an active drug enforcement program. Lieutenant Rich Rehmeier was instrumental in acquiring numerous aircraft, to include multi-engine piston, multi-engine turbine and turbine rotorcraft. Patrol pilots, providing aviation services to municipal, county, and federal law enforcement agencies for all aspects of airborne law enforcement, have flown these aircraft more than 13,000 hours since 1992.

The war on drugs has been a home front battle for Missouri with the Patrol being the leader in the detection, apprehension, and prosecution of individuals involved with manufacturing and distribution of illegal narcotics. Aiding with the War on Drugs has been an Aircraft Division priority mission. Rotorcraft resources are allocated annually to assist troop marijuana eradication officers, aiding with the location of cultivated cannabis. Multi-engine aircraft are available to transport arrested drug couriers to their intended destinations. These flights provide timely transportation of Patrol, county, and federal investigators to nationwide destinations to continue investigations of inter-state narcotic distribution organizations. Since 1988, Patrol aircraft have flown personnel to 39 of the lower 48 states to conduct criminal investigations or perform administrative functions. Since 1988, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North and South Dakota, Vermont, Delaware, and Maine are the only states remaining to be visited by Patrol aircraft.

Hazards to Airborne Law Enforcement

Law enforcement by nature is a hazardous occupation and being in airborne law enforcement does not insulate the member from threats. Trooper J. N. Greim, Troop E, was fatality injured on July 13, 1945, while riding in a private plane searching for two fugitives near Corning, AR. His pilot died in the crash. Sgt. Frank Stephens and Sgt. Lewis Bounds escaped death when the helicopter they were operating crashed just north of the Jefferson City Airport on July 31, 1978. Pilot Cpl. Mark Tovar and Sgt. Tony Selvey sustained injuries after their helicopter experienced component failure and crashed on approach to the Cassville, MO, airport on October 6, 1993.

Sgt. Bill Cottom made a safe emergency landing on U.S. Highway 54 near Brazito, MO, on February 13, 1994, after his aircraft engine had a catastrophe failure. Helicopter N90MP was struck with a blast of 00 buckshot fired by a bank robbery suspect on May 19, 1994, with pilots Sgt. A.J. Stricker, Sergeant Greg Word, and Troop F SERT member Trooper Dave Mease on board. Sergeant David C. May, Troop E, and his passenger were fatality injured when Sgt. May's helicopter crashed on May 19, 1999, while assisting with a Special Olympics function. Sgt. Bill Cottom walked away from the wreckage of a November 7, 1989, helicopter crash east of Farmington, MO. Sergeants David Callaway and Matt Funderburk were seriously injured when the helicopter Sgt. Callaway was piloting had a component failure and crashed shortly after departure from the Springfield Downtown Airport on August 7, 2002.

Aircraft Division Summary

As the Patrol celebrates 75 years of history, the Aircraft Division is operating 16 aircraft located in eight troop locations. Two twin-engine aircraft (N2MP a Beechcraft King Air 200 and N116MP a Beechcraft Queen Air BE65), a single-engine Cessna 210 (N92MP), two Bell OH-58 DOD helicopters (N177MP and N283MP), and a Bell 206BIII helicopter (N90MP) are stationed in Jefferson City. Troop A operates N94MP, Troop B operates N81MP, Troop C operates N95MP, Troop D operates N97MP, Troop E operates N873MP, Troop G operates N79MP, and Troop H operates N91MP, which are all Cessna 182 single-engine, traffic aircraft. Troop C operates N96MP, a Bell 206BIII helicopter; Troop D operates N383F, a McDonnell/Douglas 500E helicopter; and Troop G operates N60MP, a Bell OH-58 helicopter. Fifteen full- and part-time dedicated law enforcement pilots professionally operate these aircraft for proactive and reactive missions.

The Missouri State Highway Patrol has provided 60 years of aviation law enforcement service, 45 years as a Patrol division, to Missouri citizens. The Aircraft Division has operated at least 55 aircraft in the past 60 years with

118,740 hours of confirmed flight time. As the Missouri State Highway Patrol celebrates its 75 years of landmark service, the Aircraft Division will continue to provide aviation law enforcement services to fulfill our mission of "service and protection".

Beginning January 2003, the Aircraft Division provided management and supervision oversight for Office of Administration's Flight Operations, which consisted of one pilot, one aircraft maintenance specialist, one administrative office support assistant, two twin engine Piper Navajo aircraft, and one Beechcraft King Air twin engine pressurized aircraft. In July 2006, an inter-agency merger was completed with the Missouri State Highway Patrol's Aircraft Division absorbing OA's Flight Operations personnel, equipment, and facilities. For the first time in the history of the Patrol's Aircraft Division, it had the benefit of a full-time aviation mechanic and administrative office support assistant.

As a result of this merger, the Aircraft Division was tasked with officially providing administrative aviation services to all state-elected office holders, appointed state officials, and qualifying personnel. During the merger process, OA's Piper Navajo twin engine airplanes and the Patrol's Beechcraft King Air and Queen Air airplanes were liquidated. The current fleet of aircraft managed and crewed by the MSHP Aircraft Division are one 1999 Beechcraft, eight place King Air, one Cessna, 210 Centurion six place single engine airplane, seven Cessna 182, four place airplanes, and six helicopters.

All aircraft based and operated from the Jefferson City Memorial Airport were consolidated into the larger hangar that was originally used by OA Flight Operations. The Patrol's hangar, which was built new after the old hangar was destroyed by the 1993 flood, was sold and removed from the state facilities inventory. Prior to relocating Aircraft Division personnel into the new Jefferson City hangar location, personnel from the Patrol's Construction and Maintenance Division completely renovated and modernized the entire office area. Information Systems Division personnel configured the office area with newer system equipment that greatly improved the speed and efficiency of Aircraft Division office equipment and computers.

In 2009, the Aircraft Division, in cooperation with the Communications Division and the State Emergency Management Agency, purchased and installed a new Forward Looking Infrared camera system with an integrated microwave downlink system on a helicopter based in Jefferson City. Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) technology creates clear, crisp visible images based on small differences of emitted temperature between different objects. These images are displayed on a monitor mounted in the cockpit of the aircraft carrying the airborne camera system. The camera has three different lenses with the capability of creating color and low light images as well as thermal images. The integrated microwave downlink portion of the system electronically transmits a digital signal to a ground-based receiver enabling incident commanders to have live information on any number of given events. A set of ground-based receivers includes two portable suitcase units that can be flown in the helicopter and

deployed with ground personnel at a remote site for small scale operations. For larger, long-term operations, receiving equipment was installed in the Patrol's mobile command bus, which would be deployed to the site of any large scale natural or man-made disaster for critical incident management. Equipment was also installed in the Patrol's mobile command bus which can, via an Internet protocol address, link live data to Patrol command staff allowing them to maintain real-time connection with current, ongoing, large-scale critical incidents.

A combination of funding sources--drug forfeiture asset funds and grant monies awarded by the State Emergency Management Agency--were used in the purchase, installation, and training for this system acquisition. This technology will allow the Patrol to deploy the newest available equipment for day and night operations, and will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the respective operations.

On October 15, 2010, at approximately 11:10 a.m., the Patrol's Aircraft Division suffered the tragic loss of Sergeant Joseph G. Schuengel. Sgt. Schuengel was operating a Highway Patrol Bell 206 helicopter, N96MP. While returning to St. Louis-Spirit airport from Jefferson County after completing a traffic enforcement flight, the helicopter crashed on a residential street about four miles southeast of Spirit airport. Sgt. Schuengel was fatally injured in the crash. He is the 28th member of the Missouri State Highway Patrol to make the ultimate sacrifice.

On March 27, 2011, the Aircraft Division underwent a change in the management structure of the Patrol pilots. Under this new structure, the pilots were assigned to General Headquarters, under the direct supervision of the director of the Aircraft Division. The pilots continued to operate from the same airport locations, with one exception. The airplane and helicopter located at West Plains were transferred to Jefferson City, with future intentions of transferring the helicopter to Cape Girardeau. The Aircraft Division pilots were still strategically located at various airports around the state to provide statewide support for aviation calls for service.

As of March 27, 2011, the Aircraft Division operates a King Air C90, a Cessna 210, a Cessna 182, a Bell 206, and an OH-58 helicopter in Jefferson City. A Cessna 182 is located in each of the following: St. Joseph, Macon, Lee's Summit, St. Louis, Springfield, and Cape Girardeau. A McDonnell-Douglas 500E helicopter is located at Springfield.

Division Directors:

- Lt. Bill East, 1961-1976
- Lt. James R. Davis, 1976 - 1980
- Lt. William J. Turner, 1980 - 1988
- Lt. Michael B. Pace, 1988 - 1990
- Lt. Rich L. Rehmeier, 1990 - 1998
- Lt. William V. Cottom, 1998 - 2002

Lt. Greg L. Word, 2002 - 2011

Lt. David K. Striegel, 2011 - present