

Sergeant Randy V. Sullivan

Badge #821
EOW ... February 17, 1996

At 7:30 p.m. February 17, 1996, the state of Missouri lost an outstanding citizen, the Highway Patrol one of its most dedicated employees, and Fredericktown, MO, a community leader. But, all that pales in comparison to what Brenda Sullivan lost. She is forever without her best friend and helpmate. Justin, Brandon, and Caleb lost a father, friend, and role model who can never be replaced.

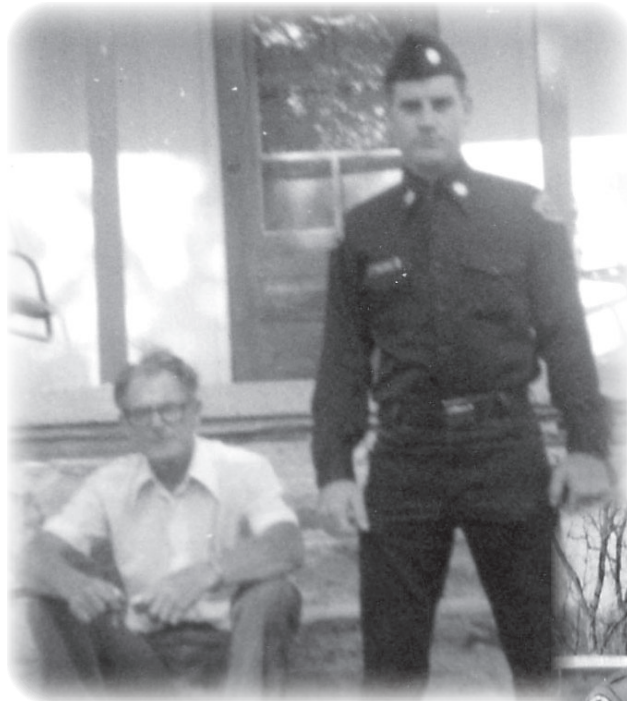
My first thoughts of Randy Sullivan are his quick wit, broad smile, and easy laughter. He loved life so much and was a positive and upbeat person. I have shared a meal in the Sullivan home, and the atmosphere was of the all-American family with everything in the proper perspective.

In an attempt to properly eulogize Randy, so that all who read this will understand how truly special he was, I solicited assistance from a work-

ing companion of 10 years, Jon Daniel. I asked Jon, "Could you just give me your thoughts?" He did, and I really felt these few thoughts could not be improved upon.

"As I sit at my desk, this first day back to work since the funeral, all I can think of is Randy, Brenda, and the boys. You asked me to help you put some thoughts together about Randy, and I'll do my best, but buddy, it's going to be tough. When I think of Randy, my thoughts turn to devotion. As defined in the dictionary, devotion is love given with the whole heart. Randy didn't

just talk about his devotion, he lived it. Every waking moment of every day he showed all of us by his example.



Recruit Randy V. Sullivan during a visit home in 1978.

Newly-commissioned Tpr. Randy Sullivan and his wife, Brenda, on graduation day, December 1978.





The Sullivan family in 1995: Randy, Brenda, Brandon, Caleb, and Justin.

First in Randy's life was his God. He was a deacon in his church, a Sunday school teacher, but most of all; he was a Christian in every aspect of his everyday life. He sang in the choir and did special music from time to time. No matter how late the shift, Randy was in church on Sunday morning teaching, learning, and loving his God.

Second, or maybe tied for first, was Randy's love of family. Whenever you saw Randy, you saw his boys. They worked together; they played together; and oh, did they love each other. He couldn't wait to get home and see them and usually stopped by home if he had missed them because of school. He always left Brenda notes of love and affection when he went to work. He loved and admired his parents, and they him. His last day was spent visiting with them.

His profession also was very important. He was dedicated and conscientious in all aspects of his career. He led by example, never expecting anyone to do anything he wouldn't do. He could be tough, but was much more compassionate than anyone re-

alized. He loved the uniform and the job he was hired to do.

Randy's hobbies included hunting, fishing, and rebuilding old farm tractors. But, perhaps most of all, he just loved being with his sons ... whether it was cutting wood, making a garden, or playing in the yard.

The state of Missouri, Fredericktown, and all of us who knew and worked with Randy are blessed for having known this fine man. He will be missed by all who had the honor of knowing him."

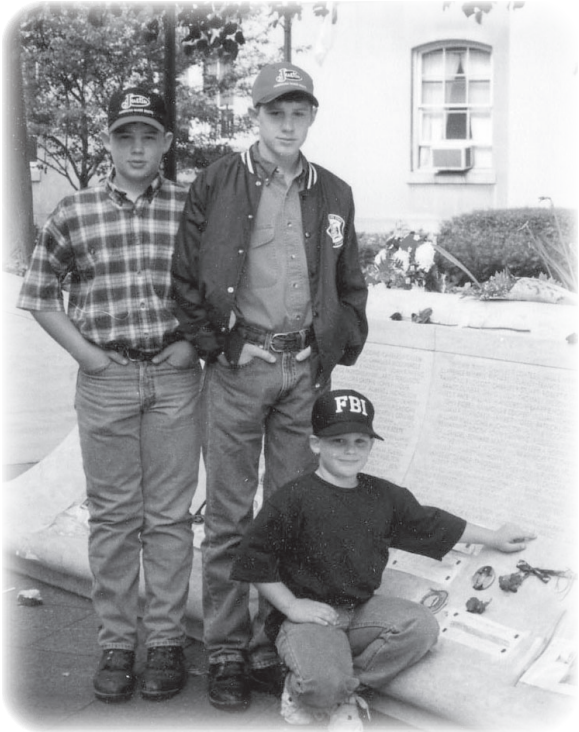
These are obviously the heart-felt words of a friend and someone who knew him well. Randy died in a tragic traffic crash. It was a horrible, numbing experience for all his friends; but there is no one to lash out at, point a finger toward, and say "You are to blame." We just look at this and say, "Why? Why, with all the evil people in the world, was a good man taken in the prime of his life?" He had so much to live for and so many loved him and leaned upon him. It was so typical of Randy to be practical in all situations.

Maybe this was just his final lesson to the boys. "Don't always look for the reasons why in all situations, and don't look to lay the blame for each adversity that life deals us. Some things can't be explained; they just have to be accepted by faith."

One last thing—when we shed tears or offer prayers for this tragedy, make it for Brenda, the boys, and his parents, not for Randy. If Randy died at 7:30 p.m., then in the next heartbeat, he was greeted at Heaven's gates with the words, "Well done, my good and faithful servant."

(This article by Sgt. R. Brent Davis and Sgt. Jon S. Daniel first appeared in the April 1996 Patrol News. Sgt. Davis is now retired Lt. Brent Davis (April 1, 2006). Sgt. Jon Daniel retired April 30, 1999.)

Sgt. Randy V. Sullivan, 40, was killed in a traffic crash on February 17, 1996, on Missouri 72 in Madison County, eight miles



Brandon, Justin, and Caleb Sullivan visited the National Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington, D.C., in 1997.

west of Fredericktown, MO. The crash occurred when Sgt. Sullivan checked a speeding vehicle by radar, turned around to overtake the violator, and as he came over a hill, apparently ran off the roadway in a curve and struck several trees. Troopers responding to the scene found Sullivan's Patrol car engulfed in flames; Sullivan's body was located in the car. Patrol Recruit Christopher R. Thomson, who was riding with Sullivan, was found outside the vehicle; he sustained moderate injuries. Sgt. Sullivan was survived by his wife, Brenda, and three sons, Justin, Brandon, and Caleb.

On August 31, 2002, an informal ceremony dedicated a portion of Missouri Route 72 in Madison County as Sergeant Randy V. Sullivan Memorial Highway. The ceremony was held at the Madison County Courthouse in Fredericktown, MO. Sergeant Randy V. Sullivan was the 18th member of the Patrol to make the Ultimate Sacrifice.



Mrs. Brenda Sullivan and sons, Caleb, Brandon, and Justin, stand near Randy's antique tractor in 1997.