November | December 2024

PATROL NEWS

OVER NINETY YEARS OF SERVICE AND PROTECTION



from the STAFF



Major Paul D. Kerperin
Criminal Investigation Bureau

WHERE'S WALDO?

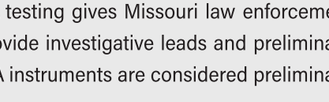
Many of you are familiar with the picture books asking you to find "Waldo," a distinctive looking man wearing glasses, a stocking cap, and his trademark red and white striped shirt, and who is hidden among crowds of people. But what if Waldo wasn't a fun pastime, and instead an unknown and dangerous criminal and Missouri law enforcement needed to track him down in a hurry? That is where scientific and technological advances continue to aid law enforcement in their ability to find and or identify their own Waldos, often with new technology such as Rapid DNA testing.

In 2022, the Patrol's Crime Laboratory Division (CLD) received funding to purchase Rapid DNA technology. Since that time, the CLD has rolled out Rapid DNA devices to six of the nine troops, with plans to secure devices in the remaining three troops in December. Rapid DNA analysis is an automated process that quickly provides a DNA profile, which can be searched against a state offender database, oftentimes in as little as 90 minutes. An individual's DNA acts as their ultimate identifier and is unique to everyone, similar to how Waldo's distinct features make him identifiable in a crowd. Whether it's a violent crime scene or recovered human remains, Rapid DNA testing gives Missouri law enforcement an invaluable tool for fast, reliable results. Those results are then used to provide investigative leads and preliminary identification of biological samples. The matches generated by the Rapid DNA instruments are considered preliminary information and samples must still undergo traditional DNA testing.

Imagine finding Waldo's hat or glasses at a homicide scene. Previously, the items would be collected and forwarded to the crime lab for traditional DNA testing. The traditional testing would oftentimes take weeks or even months to be completed before they could provide investigators with clues to possible suspects. However, with Rapid DNA testing, investigators can now quickly process the sample in a much more compressed timeframe, identifying Waldo without flipping through endless figurative picture pages.

Rapid DNA has already shown its value in cases across Missouri. Recently, officers have cleared stolen vehicle cases by swabbing trash, such as a McDonald's cup and drink straw, or a soda bottle, left in the vehicles at the time of recovery. In both incidents, a profile was obtained and later matched with previously convicted felons, of which one had just been released from jail after serving time for stealing a motor vehicle. This appears to be much easier, much cleaner, and maybe a more successful manner than through use of the fingerprint kits we were provided from our days at the academy. Additionally, the Rapid DNA testing devices have been used to identify human remains and assist in homicide cases. In one case, bone marrow was obtained from an unidentifiable, burned, homicide victim and tested with the Rapid DNA device, resulting in a match. Having the victim's name, investigators were then able to identify and ultimately arrest a suspect in the case. Further testing of blood located on the suspect's clothing resulted in a match with the identified victim.

Finding Waldo may be a fun way to entertain our children or ourselves, but having the ability to identify people quickly is no laughing matter. In the short time frame this new technology has been available in Missouri, it has been very successful in bringing closure to families and helping to keep our communities safe. It will be interesting to see where this new crime fighting ability leads us in the future.



CELEBRATING OVER 58 YEARS OF NEWS
PATROL NEWS

MICHAEL L. PARSON, GOVERNOR
State of Missouri

SANDRA K. KARSTEN, DIRECTOR
Department of Public Safety

ERIC T. OLSON, SUPERINTENDENT
Missouri State Highway Patrol

PATROL NEWS STAFF

Capt. Scott White
Managing Editor

Mark Pottorff
Editor/Reporter

Holly Hyde
Designer

Meghan Clouse
Social Media

Chad Buschjost
Printing

Rachel Hays
Photography

TROOP REPORTERS

Troop A: Cpl. Justin Ewing
Troop B: Sgt. Justin Dunn
Troop C: Cpl. Dallas Thompson
Troop D: Cpl. Sam Carpenter
Troop E: Sgt. Clark Parrott
Troop F: Sgt. Kyle Green
Troop G: Sgt. Eddie Young
Troop H: Sgt. Shane Hux
Troop I: Cpl. Ralicia Tyler

GHQ REPORTERS

Aircraft: Sgt. Jon Cluver
Budget & Procurement: Emma Kliethermes
Communications: Zachary Dykes
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement: Assist. Dir. Jeffrey Sims
Crime Laboratory: Director Brian Hoey
Criminal Justice Information Services: Amanda Gove
Driver & Vehicle Safety: Kimberly Heritage
Drug & Crime Control: Sgt. Brad Germann
Field Operations: Capt. Justin McCullough
Gaming: Capt. Andy Tourney
Governor's Security: Lt. Diana Hutzler
Human Resources: Caitlan Elley
Fleet & Facilities: Zach Russell
Research & Development: Jessica Mealy
Patrol Records: Caroline Keeney
Recruiting & Community Outreach: Tpr. Mike Malone
Training: Lt. Trois Maloney
Water Patrol: Capt. Mike Petlansky

The Patrol News is published by the Public Information & Education Division of the Missouri State Highway Patrol in the interest of all active and retired personnel.
(573) 526-6115

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MISSOURI STATE HIGHWAY PATROL

November | December 2024

PATROL NEWS

OVER NINETY YEARS OF SERVICE AND PROTECTION

Volume 59 • Number 3

IN THIS ISSUE

04 Septmember DPS Members of the Month

05 October DPS Members of the Month

06 The Mild Hogs

07 Courage 2 Report Makes Schools Safer

08 121st Recruits Make History

10 MSHP at the RNC

14 121st Class Graduates

18 Sympathy

19 Retirements

20 17th CVO Class Graduates

22 Obituaries

23 Looking Back in the Patrol News

ON THE COVER

The image on the cover is the 2024 Christmas card from Colonel Eric T. Olson.



(I to r): Captain Justin McCullough (Q/FOB), Lt. Jon Pruiett (E), Trooper Roberto Rodriguez-Penaflor (E), Major Michael Turner (Q/FOB), CVO Patrick Patterson (E), Capt. Jason Cluver (E), CVO Supervisor Mark Counts (E), Lt. Amy Beaton (E), DPS Director Sanda Karsten, CVO Chief Ben Towe (E), Lt. Tycee Williams (E).

By Meghan Clouse (QPIED)

The Missouri State Highway Patrol's Commercial Vehicle Officer Supervisor Mark Counts, Commercial Vehicle Officer Patrick Patterson, and Trooper Roberto Rodriguez-Penaflor were recognized as the DPS Sworn Team Members of the Month for September for their swift actions and collaboration, which saved the life of a truck driver experiencing an extreme medical emergency.

On Feb. 14, 2024, Troop E received a call from the Charleston Department of Public Safety about a possible motor vehicle crash on Interstate 57, in which the reporting party spoke only Spanish. Within two minutes, a Patrol radio operator provided the contact information for Trooper Rodriguez-Penaflor, who is fluent in Spanish. Acting as an interpreter, Rodriguez-Penaflor learned the co-driver of a commercial vehicle was unconscious and having difficulty breathing. He obtained the vehicle description, company name, and location – which happened to be a parking lot across the interstate from the Patrol's Charleston weigh station.

Upon learning of the emergency, CVO Supervisor Mark Counts grabbed the station's automated external defibrillator, and he and CVO Patrick Patterson ran across the interstate to the scene. The patient was unconscious, his eyes were closed, his skin was pale, and he was sweating profusely. Patterson could not find a pulse. The AED advised not to shock but to perform CPR. Because of the patient's size and the vehicle height, the officers could not move him to the ground. Patterson and Counts improvised and performed CPR with the patient in the vehicle.

A Mississippi County EMS crew arrived during the officers' fourth CPR cycle. The patient was placed on a gurney and transported to a Cape Girardeau hospital. Despite experiencing multiple ventricular fibrillation events in the ambulance, the EMS crew was able to stabilize the patient's heart rate enroute to the hospital, and he was released after being treated at the hospital. The EMS crew reported the patient would not have survived the emergency if not for the fast action and teamwork of CVO Supervisor Mark Counts, CVO Patrick Patterson, and Trooper Rodriguez-Penaflor, who had remained on the phone and assisted with communications throughout the event.



Pictured (I to r) Colonel Eric Olson, Trooper Dylon Wyatt (E), Trooper Joshua Schuenemeyer (E), Corporal Jayson Spain (E), and DPS Director Sandra Karsten

By Meghan Clouse (Q/PIED)

On October 29, 2024, Corporal Jayson Spain and Troopers Dylon Wyatt and Joshua Schuenemeyer, of Troop E, were recognized as DPS Sworn Team Members of the Month for October. These three Patrol members demonstrated compassion and commitment to protecting the public by investigating the welfare of a child during a traffic stop.

Trooper Wyatt conducted a vehicle stop for a registration violation. While speaking with the driver, he observed that a 15-year-old back-seat passenger was restrained at the ankles and wrists. The girl's mother said the child was nonverbal and the restraints were to keep her from running away. Corporal Spain and Trooper Schuenemeyer responded when Trooper Wyatt requested backup. Trooper Wyatt also requested the Department of Social Services' Children's Division respond to the scene and contacted the Patrol's Division of Drug and Crime Control. Corporal Spain made calls and confirmed the relationship between the mother and child.

Trooper Wyatt gained consent to search the vehicle and Trooper Schuenemeyer established a rapport with the girl and calmed her. As their concerns grew, the Patrol members requested the two responding Children's Division workers conduct a home visit. The Patrol members accompanied the Children's Division on the home visit and found illegal drugs and extremely unhealthy conditions. The mother was taken into custody for possession of a controlled substance, and the Children's Division placed the child with family members.

The three Patrol members elevated what could have ended as a simple traffic stop into a thorough investigation of the wellbeing of a special needs child. They did not simply report the situation to the Children's Division, but insisted on a response to the scene, which resulted in a home visit. Corporal Spain, Trooper Wyatt, and Trooper Schuenemeyer demonstrated the Patrol's core values of compassion and professionalism, which resulted in a safer living environment for a vulnerable child.

the Mild Hogs



Members of the 2024-Lake City, CO Mild Hogs ride included Juan Villanueva, Tommy Roam, Justin Henderson, Terry Moore, Dan Bracker, and Tom Hollis.

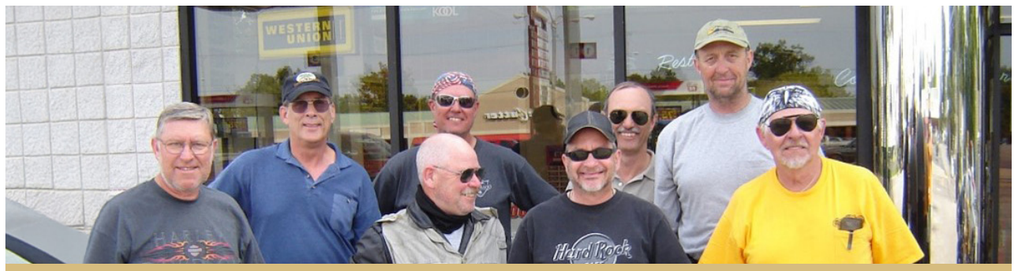
By Ret. Lt. Terry R. Moore (D)

Wild Hogs, a very popular movie released in 2007, was about a group of friends who decided to make a motorcycle trip across the United States. One year prior to the movie's release, a real-life group of primarily troopers made their inaugural trip to the western Rockies. Following release of the movie, this group soon became known as the "Mild Hogs." In 2024, the annual "Mild Hog" ride completed it's 18th year with an ever-changing cast of riders, returning to many of the same destinations as the original itinerary of 2006. Over the years, an expanding list of participants has completed the ride including, upon occasion, some who have driven four-wheel vehicles rather than experiencing the reverberation of the two-wheeled version. Regardless of the mode of transportation, the brotherhood and comradery experienced by these men will bring smiles to all for the rest of their lives.

A description of the trips reads something like this: ride motorcycles hard all day, look for the best place to chow down at night, gather together during the dusk hours to smoke a cigar and tell stories, some of which might resemble some variation of the truth. Over the years, itineraries have included the Grand Canyon, the Rockies of New Mexico and Colorado, the Grand Tetons, Glacier National Park, Zion National Park, the Black Hills of South Dakota, the Badlands, the Smoky Mountains, and the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Upon occasion, challenges interrupted the ride, including incidents involving a dog, a deer, a three bike pile up in the desert of Arizona, COVID, a flat tire, mechanical break downs, and most recently in 2024, a deviation from a return to the Smoky Mountains to the western Rockies mandated by the recent flooding caused by hurricane Helene.

Although the groups composition changes each year, the expanding list of those who have participated now include: Brent Davis, Mel Schmidt, Charley Bradley, Tommy Roam, Juan Villaneuva, Mike Robertson, Terry Moore, Kent Casey, Gary Heskett, Randy Beydler, Dale Ricks (MODOT), Rick Wilson (Kansas trooper), Justin Henderson, Dwayne Isringhausen, Dwell Isringhausen, Ron Cole, Dan Bracker, Tom Hollis, Albert Brown, Mike Cooper, Tim Rousset, and Steve Maples (Christian County Deputy).



Pictured are the members of the 2006 Inaugural Ride to NM and CO: Kent Casey, Mike Robertson, Terry Moore, Dale Ricks, Brent Davis, Steve Maples, Charley Bradley, Mel Schmidt.

COURAGE 2 REPORT

Helping Schools & Law Enforcement Make Schools Safer

By Dr. Mark Pottorff (Q/PIED)



In October 2001, the Missouri School Violence Hotline (SVH) became operational. The SVH joined the Missouri Information Analysis Center (MIAC), a division of the Missouri State Highway Patrol, in 2019, through the actions of the Missouri School Safety Initiative. With the move to MIAC, the program was renamed Courage2ReportMO (C2R).

According to the C2R website, "The goal is to make schools safer by helping school districts and law enforcement learn about school violence as soon as possible. Courage2ReportMO takes CONFIDENTIAL reports involving any public or private school in Missouri with students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade." Any threats of violence or harm to human life can be reported, including assault, sexual violence, weapons, human trafficking, school shootings, planned suicide, and terrorist threats. Reports can come from parents, school personnel, students, concerned citizens, and confidential reporters.

According to Lead School Safety Analyst Dakota Boehmer (Q/MIAC), when C2R receives a tip, "we almost immediately try to engage with the tipster if the tip is submitted online, through the mobile app, or by text, to gain as much information as possible." Because of the confidential nature of the program, "if the tipster chooses to remain confidential, we will then sanitize the tip, meaning we take out any identifying information of the tipster."

C2R analysts then send the tip, via email or text, to school administrators and law enforcement, including the School Resource Officer (SRO), in the area of the report. According to Boehmer, after the initial contact is made with the school and local law enforcement, "if the tip is a threat to life or building, we will also follow up with a phone call to make verbal contact with one school administrator and one law enforcement official."

On September 17, 2024, Missouri saw the effectiveness of the C2R program, after analysts received a tip of a possible planned shooting in the Ritenour School District in St. Louis, MO. "This fall, we have navigated through some challenging times as a school district," said Dr. Chris Kilbride, superintendent of the Ritenour School District. "Our schools experienced several cyber threats that disrupted the daily work of our school community. A threat on Sept. 17 that was reported through Courage2Report quickly led law enforcement to identify and arrest a juvenile with weapons in the parking lot of one of our campuses. Thankfully, the incident was resolved peacefully, and no one was injured."

"The incident highlighted the effectiveness of the Missouri State Highway Patrol Courage2Report School Violence Hotline, demonstrating how critical these resources are in preventing potential tragedies," Dr. Kilbride added. "Over the course of a month, our community shifted from amplifying threats on social media to quickly reporting them through the proper channels. We have recognized an 800% increase in the number of reports to various reporting channels, including Courage2Report. I don't believe this increase is related directly to an increase in the number of threats, but rather a willingness of the community to say something when they see something. Although we have become efficient in identifying the source of threats in partnership with local law enforcement that have resulted in several arrests, each incident takes a toll on our staff, students and families," said Kilbride. "Reporting platforms such as the MSHP's Courage2Report, Ritenour's Safeline, and communication with administrators have given our community important tools to help keep each other safe."

During the GHQ troop meeting on Friday, October, 25, 2024, Colonel Eric T. Olson presented members of the Courage2Report staff with challenge coins in recognition of their excellent work. When asked for comment, Colonel Olson said, "I appreciate the professionalism and effort the MIAC team has committed to the very important responsibility of overseeing Courage2Report. I appreciate the partnerships between the Patrol and law enforcement throughout the state as we work to protect Missouri's schools."

The Courage2ReportMO program is recognized statewide for its excellent work in helping schools and law enforcement to keep schools safe. After the incident on September 17, Missouri Governor Mike Parson praised the program on his X (formally Twitter) feed, saying, "By having Courage2Report, we help keep our home, schools, and communities safer."

Since its beginnings in 2001 as a school violence hotline, the C2R program has grown into an effective tool to help the potential spread of violence in Missouri's schools. Congratulations to the MIAC and C2R team for their excellent work!



Recruits Benjamin and Sarah Swink stopped briefly for a photo the morning of the 121st Recruit Class graduation.

By Dr. Mark Pottorff (Q/PIED)

When the 121st Recruit Class graduated on October 11, 2024, history was made. For the first time in the Patrol's history a married couple, Troopers Sarah A. Swink and Benjamin A. Swink, completed the Academy together.

Trooper Mike Malone (Q/RCOD) worked with the Swinks to get them to the Academy. He said, "It feels like just yesterday, but it was probably about a year ago when my phone rang one afternoon. Fortunately, I was free to answer and started chatting with the woman on the other line." After speaking with Sarah for a bit, Tpr. Malone determined the Swinks "were both eligible for our accelerated academy."

Tpr. Malone "shared details about the Missouri State Highway Patrol, including our hiring and training processes, and highlighted what we could offer them in their future careers as troopers." He stated, "Throughout our many phone calls, texts and emails, I thought to myself that if this worked out, it would be a first for the Highway Patrol. How cool — a husband/wife duo going through our academy."

The Swinks were scheduled "for the written test, fitness test, and polygraph exam on the same day. Unfortunately, when they arrived, the weather couldn't have been worse—freezing temperatures and snow. Welcome to Missouri!"

Tpr. Malone concluded he "knew [the Swinks] were a package deal, both or neither. Good thing for me, they made life easy for a recruiter. They were squared away, showed up in good physical shape, and listened to all the advice I gave them as they prepared for the academy."

Before graduation, I had the chance to ask the then recruits Swink about their journey to the Academy and their time with the 121st Recruit Class. They graciously shared their stories with me.

The Swinks came to the Patrol from Texas, and I asked them to share briefly about their backgrounds as individuals and as a couple. Sarah served in the U.S. Air Force before joining the police department in Mission, Texas, in 2021. Benjamin, also an Air Force veteran, served from 2003 to 2008 as a B-52H Bomber Aerospace Maintenance Journeyman. After the Air Force, he worked for an Air Force Training School as an aircraft maintenance tech, as a civilian contractor in Afghanistan, and for FedEx, working on 747s. In 2019, he joined the United States Border Patrol, serving as a Border Patrol Agent.

> "He knew the Swinks were a package deal – both or neither."

The couple met in 2020 and started a ranch operation, breeding Arabian horses and Texas Longhorn Cattle. The couple made the decision to move their ranch to Missouri to be closer to Benjamin's children and were "fortunate to be able to step into this opportunity" to join the MSHP.

When asked why they chose law enforcement, the Swinks both spoke passionately about wanting to serve their community. Sarah said she "always enjoyed helping people and wanted to be part of making the community where my family is a safer place to live in and grow up." Benjamin had always wanted to serve his community, and "after the birth of my children I had a strong desire to do all I could to make this world as safe as I could for them. I volunteered as a firefighter in North Carolina and found that the Border Patrol would pay me and train me to get into law enforcement."

As the 121st Recruit Class is an accelerated class, the Swinks have both been through the academy experience elsewhere. I asked them how the Patrol Academy experience has been different or the same from their previous academy. Sarah said the Academy "was definitely a lot more physically taxing than my previous academy. It is the same in the sense that the instructors try their best to put out quality officers, but it has been the most shocking experience since Air Force Basic Training." Benjamin stated, "I find the biggest difference to be, at my last academy, trainees were able to leave campus to do as they please after class." He jokingly added, "not to mention having my wife on the same floor sleeping in a different room down the hall."

When asked about what has been most rewarding during their time at the Academy, Benjamin stressed "being elected as the Class Commander and my wife being elected as Vice Commander." He added, "I find it extremely rewarding that we can both make an impact and lead together." Sarah concluded the most rewarding thing for her is "Honestly, just making it to the end and being able to say that we made it and that we successfully became troopers."

As they start their careers with the Missouri State Highway Patrol, we wish the troopers Swink the best. They will both serve in Troop G. Sarah will be in Zone 4, and Benjamin will serve in Zone 3.



Troopers Benjamin and Sarah Swink posed with members of their families after the 121st Recruit Class graduation.



30 Troopers attended the 2024 Republic National Convention to help with security and crowd management. Law enforcement agencies from across the nation joined together to provide safety for this event.

By Sergeant Clark D. Parrott (E)

Thirty members of the Missouri State Highway Patrol met on July 12th, 2024, in Hannibal, MO, for training in preparation to respond to the 2024 Republican National Convention, that was being held in Milwaukee, WI. The Patrol received an emergency declaration and request for assistance via the Emergency Management Assistance Compact. On July 13th, we departed Hannibal and began the journey to Milwaukee. Upon arrival, we attended a briefing at the Milwaukee Police Department training complex and received equipment and training pertinent to the detail.

After training, we made our way to what would be our home for the next six days, Concordia University in Mequon, WI. After everyone was checked into their rooms and beds were made, word of the assassination attempt on former President Trump began to spread throughout the dormitory. While everyone was in a positive and festive mood for the approaching detail, this news seemed to bring the mission into focus and serve as a reminder of why we were there. Patrol members worked tirelessly and received many compliments on their appearance and professionalism from convention attendees, elected officials, and other law enforcement agencies. Patrol personnel were subject to numerous photographs from media personnel, which were used in online articles, newspapers, and broadcasts.

Members were assigned twelve-hour shifts, from 0700-1900 hours, providing security at fixed locations, roving patrols, or traffic control points. Members were divided between the Fiserv Arena, where the convention was held, and the Baird Center. The Baird Center was used by many media outlets and other special interest groups. Four members of the Patrol were assigned to the Fiserv Arena floor and tunnels leading to the convention floor. These four troopers were the only uniformed personnel assigned to the floor. We were honored to be selected as the only agency to be that visible on the floor during our shift.

On July 15, 2024, the first day the of the conference, the detail displayed the Patrol's Core Values. Due to the increase in vehicle traffic and tight security, traffic was extremely backed up and at a standstill. Captain Erik Gottman (B) made the decision to depart the bus and walk nearly a mile, in the July heat, to their respective posts. Because of this decision, Patrol personnel were able to arrive early and relieve the overnight shift.

On the ride back to our dormitory each evening, the bus was filled with talk of who we had seen or who had their picture taken with famous people. Many of those on the detail expressed that it was the best detail they had been assigned to. It was a long and at times physically demanding, but it was the proudest moment I have had as a member of the Missouri State Highway Patrol.



Members of Troop H assigned to the RNC Detail pause for a photo. I to r – Sgt. Andy Henry, Cpl. Michael Miller, Sgt. John Gilliland, Sgt. Mark Wilhoit



Members of the Patrol RNC detail at Milwaukee Police Department wait to check in and conduct a briefing. I to r – Sgt. Alexander Michajliczenko (C), Lt. Scott Ballard (Q/FOB), Capt. Erik Gottman (B), Sgt. Graydon Gaines (B).



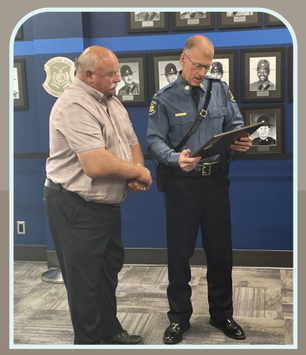
I to r – Sgt. Mark Wilhoit (H), Sgt. Clark Parrott (E), Lt. Scott Ballard (Q/FOB), Cavalier Johnson Mayor of Milwaukee, Cpl. Justin Piccinino (G), Lt. (Then Sgt) Travis Polodna (D), and Cpl. Dustin Duffie (C) on the floor of RNC convention floor.





Mefford and Parsons named Honorary Trooper
Shelby County Sheriff Fredrickson receives Commendation Letter

(I to r) Lt. Bradley Ream, Lt. Paul Behrens, Sheriff Arron Fredrickson, Mr. Kenton Parsons, Mr. Terry Mefford, Capt. Erik Gottman, Lt. Brian Anderson



Captain Gottman honored Mr. Terry Mefford with an Honorary Trooper certificate for his heroic actions.



Shelby County Sheriff Arron Fredrickson was recognized with a letter of commendation after his life-saving actions on July 8, 2024.



Mr. Kenton Parsons received an Honorary Trooper certificate for his brave and life-saving actions.

By Sergeant Justin S. Dunn (B)

On October 21, 2024, Captain Erik A. Gottman, commanding officer of Troop B, Macon, presented Shelby County residents Terry L. Mefford and Kenton L. Parsons with Missouri State Highway Patrol Honorary Trooper certificates, and Shelby County Sheriff Arron Fredrickson with a letter of commendation, at the Missouri State Highway Patrol Troop B Headquarters, in Macon. The Patrol presents the "Honorary Trooper Certificate" to citizens who are nominated by a trooper for bravery or heroic efforts that reflect the qualities of a Missouri State Trooper.

On July 8, 2024, at approximately 0800 hours, on US-36, east of Lentner, in Shelby County, MO, Mr. Mefford observed a vehicle traveling approximately five miles an hour on US-36. Mr. Mefford realized it was unusual and contacted Sheriff Fredrickson. Sheriff Fredrickson advised Mr. Mefford to follow the vehicle with his hazards on until he could travel to the area and overtake the vehicle. Mr. Mefford turned around to follow the vehicle, but just before he approached the vehicle, he noticed it had traveled onto the shoulder and stopped near a drainage ditch.

Mr. Parsons noticed everything going on and had stopped to check on the vehicle and driver. Mr. Mefford and Mr. Parsons realized the vehicle became unstable and began to overturn into the steep drainage ditch. Mr. Mefford and Mr. Parsons grabbed ahold of the vehicle to provide counterweight to keep it from overturning, all while trying to communicate with the driver who was apparently unconscious. Mr. Mefford and Mr. Parsons's effort eventually failed, and the vehicle overturned onto its top, partially submerged in water.

Sheriff Fredrickson arrived on scene, and he and Mr. Parsons climbed down the steep embankment to extricate the driver. Sheriff Fredrickson quickly realized the driver's head was completely submerged in water. Sheriff Fredrickson was able to breach both passenger side windows with a crowbar which was retrieved by Mr. Mefford. Sheriff Fredrickson and Mr. Parsons pulled the driver from the vehicle, and Sheriff Fredrickson began to perform CPR on the driver. A short time after initiating CPR, the driver regained a pulse and began breathing.

Mr. Mefford, Mr. Parsons, and Sheriff Fredrickson's observations and actions were instrumental in saving the life of the driver.

Troop A Honors Seven Individuals for
SAVING MAN'S LIFE
on Truman Lake



L to R: Trooper Jeremy Miller, Brooks Miller, Blake Hoffman, Gracelynn Hoffman, Rebecca Hoffman, Shawn McGaughey, Mark Saur, Sheree Claunch, Trooper Scott Baughman, Trooper Chris Riley.

By Corporal Justin C. Ewing (A)

On September 18, 2024, Troop A held a heartfelt ceremony to honor seven individuals who saved the life of Ron Frazier, 60, of Kansas City, Missouri, after a near-tragic incident on Truman Lake.

The incident occurred on August 3, 2024, near Kaysinger Cove, when the group spotted Mr. Frazier face down in the water. Gracelynn Hoffman, Blake Hoffman, Rebecca Hoffman, Brooks Miller, Shawn McGaughey, Mark Saur, and Sheree Claunch sprang into action, working together to flip Mr. Frazier onto a flotation device, keep his head above water, and move him towards shore until emergency services arrived.

Rebecca Hoffman, a nurse, quickly assessed the situation and informed arriving Troopers that she believed Mr. Frazier had suffered a heart attack or stroke. Their timely intervention was critical in saving his life. Mr. Frazier was airlifted to Research Medical Center in Kansas City, where doctors confirmed he had experienced a heart attack.

The ceremony at Troop A Headquarters was led by Captain Steve Wilhoit, who praised the bravery and teamwork of the group. "You all went above and beyond," Wilhoit said. "Because of your actions, Mr. Frazier is here today."

The highlight of the ceremony came when Mr. Frazier, who was in attendance, expressed his deep gratitude to the group. With emotion in his voice, he addressed his rescuers, saying, "You are all my heroes." Congratulations and a job well done to this amazing group of heroes!



Tpr. Chase Fox and the Troop F Color Guard presented the colors for the 121st Recruit Graduation.

121st Recruit Class GRADUATES

By Dr. Mark Pottorff (Q/PIED)

On a brisk October morning, family, friends, and collogues gathered to witness the graduation of the 121st Recruit Class from the Missouri State Highway Patrol Academy. Captain Joseph L. Armistead (Q/TND) greeted those in attendance and after getting the command from Colonel Eric T. Olson, he said "Sergeant Armstrong, the Colonel has given the command, present the class for graduation." Then to the sound of "Hail, Hail State Patrol," the nine members of the 121st Recruit Class, the Patrol's fourth accelerated Academy class, marched into the gymnasium.

After the class was in place, Mr. Stephen E. Swink, Class Commander Benjamin Swink's father, offered the invocation. Members of the Troop F Color Guard marched in to present the U.S. and Missouri flags, and Sergeant Andrew Henry (H) sang the national anthem.

Missouri Department of Public Safety Director Sandra Karsten presented the keynote address. She began her address by "saying a special thanks to a special group of people that got these soon to be new troopers here, so special thanks to those in the Recruiting and Community Outreach division, human resources, ... and so many others" that helped get this class here. She thanked the recruits' families and assured them that the time their loved ones spent at the Academy "was time well spent," and that they would "come to appreciate the meaning of this time more and more as you feel the support of the Patrol family."

Speaking to the class, Director Karsten said "it is my honor to part of your graduation today." She told the class that although their numbers were small, "your contributions can be great. I am confident of that because of the commitment you made to be here and all that you have accomplished up to this point." She reminded the class that they had already chosen the "noblest of careers, serving others as a member of law enforcement." Dir. Karsten spoke of how each member of the class had served in law enforcement elsewhere, but "there was something in each of you that motivated you to become a Missouri State Trooper."



(l to r) Tpr. Gavin Krech, Tpr. Nathan Bogart, Tpr. Johnathan McGowin, Tpr. Billy Kamp, Tpr. Isaac Smith, Tpr. Taylor Tarwater, Tpr. Anthony Rideout, Tpr. Sarah Swink, Tpr. Benjamin Swink

She reminded the class that "12 recruits began, and you are the ones who succeeded. So I want to say congratulations and thank you for you commitment." She said that "individual officers can make a difference for our entire nation. Sometimes, just by following the training that you are provided." She said, "you have made it through this Academy, and you have worked as a team, all nine of you." She continued, "you're joining an existing team, an extraordinary and committed team where your impact can be even greater." Director Karsten concluded, "your training will allow you to embrace new challenges that will come your way. Each challenge presents an opportunity. I encourage you to pursue experiences that will allow you to continue to grow and do hard things in your law enforcement career."

Capt. Armistead asked Sgt. Armstrong to "prepare the class to receive the oath of office." As the class stood with their right hands raised, Supreme Court Justice Kelly Broniec administered the oath to the nine members of the class. Following their oaths of office, four members of the 121st Recruit Class were awarded their Associate Degree from Mineral Area College by Provost Dr. Keith Zormoski.

After the class received their commissions from Colonel Olson and Director Karsten, Capt. Armistead introduced Colonel Olson to present his remarks. Colonel Olson thanked all who helped get the class ready for their graduation and helped make the ceremony happen. He thanked the new troopers' families, saying "I understand the sacrifice that goes into having troopers away from home ... but I do want to thank our families for their continued support and welcome them to the Patrol family."

To the members of the 121st Recruit Class, Colonel Olson said "congratulations. This is a great day." He reminded them that "you have seen others decide that they are not ready to make this type of commitment, and that's fine. You all have and are here today." The colonel spoke of commitment and told the recruits, "It is important for you to remember your commitment. Commitment will see you through some difficult times, and it's going to ensure your success as a Missouri State Trooper."

Colonel Olson spoke to each member of the 121st Recruit Class before graduation, reminding the graduates that they talked a lot about patience and commitment and how this career is really more like a marathon than a sprint," and he assured the new Troopers, "If you take it one day at a time, and remain committed, you will look back one day

with satisfaction and contentment on your career choice." He concluded by ensuring the graduates, "I am committed to you and your family and look forward to watching your development and service to others."

Four class awards are presented to members of each Academy class during their graduation ceremonies. Members of the 121st Recruit Class accumulated points toward graduation in the categories of physical fitness, firearms, and academics throughout their 15 weeks at the Academy. The person with the highest number of points in each category earned the respective award. The fourth class award, the Superintendent's Award, is presented to the person who has scored the most points overall during their time at the Academy. Trooper Benjamin Swink accepted the Physical Training Award, and Trooper Taylor Tarwater accepted the Academic Award. Trooper Gavin Krech accepted both the Firearms Award and the Superintendent's Award.

Each class that completes the Patrol Academy elects three persons to serve as class leaders. The 121st Recruit Class chose Taylor A. Tarwater as Class Chaplain and Sarah A. Swink as Class Vice Commander. Benjamin A. Swink served as Class Commander and addressed the class and all who attended the ceremony. Trooper Swink told the class, "we started this adventure on July 1st, twelve individuals that didn't even know each other's names. Now there are nine here today ready to graduate." He told the class that they were now family, "brothers and a sister" and "we stayed strong. We kept pushing forward when others decided to take the easy way out."

Trooper Swink told his classmates, "I am proud of each and every one of you ... I could not have asked for a better group to share this with." He continued, "this morning we start chapter two. The Academy is done, on to the next task," concluding "I have not doubt that each of you will meet the next challenge with the same determination that we took this one on with."



Tpr. Gavin Krech accepted the Firearms Award.



Tpr. Taylor Tarwater accepted the Academic Award.



Tpr. Benjamin Swink accepted the Physical Training Award.



Tpr. Gavin Krech accepted the Superintendent's Award, which is presented to the person with the most points overall.

Congratulations to the 121st Recruit Class!

The names, hometowns, and first assignments of members of the 121st Recruit Class are listed below:

Troop D
Trooper Johnathan H. McGowin (Stockton, MO) - Zone 9, Cedar/St. Clair Counties
Trooper Anthony C. Rideout (Fair Grove, MO) - Zone 16, Hickory/Dallas Counties

Troop E
Trooper Gavin A. Krech (Advance, MO) - Zone 2, Butler/Ripley Counties

Troop F
Trooper Billy R. Kamp (Moberly, MO) - Zone 8, Callaway/Montgomery Counties
Trooper Isaac J. Smith (Vandalia, IL) - Zone 5, Camden/Miller Counties
Trooper Taylor A. Tarwater (Columbia, MO) - Zone 3, Boone County

Troop G
Trooper Nathan M. Bogart (Macomb, MO) - Zone 2, Texas/Wright Counties
Trooper Benjamin A. Swink (Aspermont, TX) - Zone 3, N. Howell/Shannon Counties
Trooper Sarah A. Swink (Portales, NM) - Zone 4, N. Howell/Shannon Counties



WITH sympathy

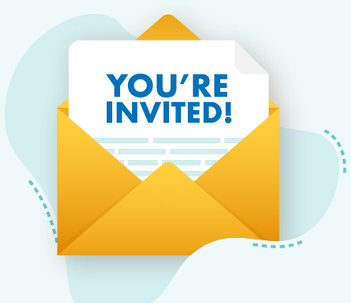
Our deepest sympathy goes to the following personnel who have lost a member of their family.

Communications Operator I Clayton Watson (E) – father
CVO Joe T. Garland (D) – father-in-law
Ret. Sgt. Gary E. Hurt – son
Sgt. Andrew Henry (H) – father-in-law
Admin. Support Prof. Jessica Heyer (I) – grandmother-in-law
Ret. Driver Exam. Spvr. Renee Gentry – father-in-law
Chief Driver Examiner Brian Miller (D) – father
Ret. Lt. Bill Choate – mother
Ret. Lab. Evid. Tech Karen Choate – mother-in-law
Program Assistant Mitchell Marsh (Q/PRD) – grandmother
Cpl. Jason Ashby (Q/DDCC) – father
Cpl. Marc Ashby (E) – father
Tpr. Barbara Littrell (Q/DDCC) – husband
Ret. Capt. Stephen Ferrier – mother
Ret. Tpr. Rick Dowd – mother
Ret. Special Assistant Tamie Quigley – brother
Cpl. Brett Tappendorf (B) – grandmother
Tpr. Gregory Bixler (F) – mother
CO III Katherine McCormick (Q/GD) – grandmother
Cpl. Robert McCormick (Q/FOB) – grandmother-in-law
Ret. MVI David Carroll – wife



My family and I would like to express our sincere thanks for the many acts of kindness shown on the passing of my husband, Retired Sergeant Don L. Lasswell. We truly appreciated the cards, letters, prayers, and comfort we received from current and retired employees of the Patrol during his visitation.

Thanks again and God Bless,
Myrna Lasswell and Family



The Missouri State Highway Patrol Annual Awards Ceremony and MASTERS Banquet will be held on Saturday, April 5, 2024, at the Holiday Inn Executive Center, Columbia, Missouri.

The awards banquet is open to all MASTERS members, MSHP employees, and their guest/spouse. In the past, the fee has been $40 per person, and we anticipate the same for this coming year. The banquet usually starts with a social hour at 5:30 p.m. with dinner immediately following, and then the presentation of awards. If you have any questions, please contact Dee Kempker at (573) 526-6159 or dee.kempker@mshp.dps.mo.gov.

Congratulations ON YOUR RETIREMENT

For your years of dedicated service, loyalty, and selfless giving, we THANK YOU.



JUSTIN E. HENDERSON
Corporal
Troop D
Retired October 1, 2024
21 years, 3 months of dedicated service



DEMOND TAUBER
Sergeant
Q/HRD
Retired October 1, 2024
28 years, 9 months dedicated service



REGINA L. CRUISE
Asst. Chief Operator
Troop C
Retired November 1, 2024
24 years, 6 months of dedicated service



BRENDA J. DAVIS
MVI Analyst
Q/DVSD
Retired November 1, 2024
23 years, 4 months of dedicated service



ERIC B. DOUGLAS
Comm. Operator III
Troop D
Retired November 1, 2024
19 years, 1 month of dedicated service



KEITH L. LICHAY
Sergeant
Troop C
Retired November 1, 2024
32 years, 10 months of dedicated service



ERIC S. ROMPH
Assistant Director
Q/FFD
Retired November 1, 2024
24 years 1 month of dedicated service



JASON L. WYCKOFF
Forensic Scientist Supervisor
Q/CLD
Retired November 1, 2024
28 years, 4 months of dedicated service

17th CVO Class Graduates



CVO Travis W. Noyes, CVO Brantley M. Chamberlin, CVO Alyssa M. Turner, CVO Cristobel O. Arredondo, CVO Irie B. Kudrin, CVO Wyatt S. Jones, CVO Michael D. Sletten, CVO Corey Arndt

By Dr. Mark Pottorff (Q/PIED)

A sizable crowd of friends and family members, joined by a large group of Commercial Vehicle Officers from around the state, gathered on November 18, 2024, to witness and congratulate the 17th CVO Class on their graduation from the CVO Academy. Lieutenant Trois L. Maloney opened the ceremony by introducing Pastor Richard Mahan, who presented the invocation. CVO Recruit Irie B. Kudrin then sang the National Anthem.

The keynote speaker for the day was Ed Hassinger, the Interim Director for the Missouri Department of Transportation. Director Hassinger began by congratulating the graduates on their accomplishment, and also congratulated their families, friends, "and your support system that have been on this journey with you." He told the class that 16 weeks of training is no small feat, but added that he had "no doubt, that it's prepared you for a journey in public service that's ahead." He continued, "and on behalf of the team at MODOT, we are happy to welcome you on that journey."

Director Hassinger spoke of the partnership MODOT has with the MSHP and how that partnership has grown over several decades. He said the partnership does "that crucial mission of keeping travelers safe as they navigate Missouri's roadways." He emphasized that the unique relationship of MODOT and the MSHP has become a model for other states. He concluded his words by telling the graduates MODOT is grateful for the work the CVOs do and "are exited to welcome you to this partnership."

Judge Scott Evans, Municipal Judge for the City of Jefferson, Missouri led the graduates in the oath of office. Lt. Maloney congratulated the eight members of the class, reminding them they may face challenges ahead and "there will, no doubt, come a time in your career where you will rely" on the training received. She told the graduates to "be confident that over the past 16 weeks, you have sharpened your skills, your knowledge, and abilities" to meet the challenges of the job.

Major Benjamin C. Jones, Commander of the Support Services Bureau, addressed the graduates and all gathered on behalf of Colonel Eric Olson. He commended Captain Armistead and his staff "for delivering an outstanding 16 week academy." He also expressed his "heartfelt thanks to the families, friends, and loved ones of the graduates." He reminded the families that "as they embark on their new careers your continued support will be just as crucial in their success and well-being."

Major Jones told the graduating CVOs "this profession you have chosen requires a special combination of our eight core values." He said, "so as you start your careers, always remember as Commercial Vehicle Officers, the public expects you to play a vital role in roadway safety." He finished his advice to the new CVOs by asking them to "please stay committed, stay vigilant, and stay safe."

During each CVO class graduation, two awards are given, one for academic success and one for firearms proficiency. The class academic average for the 17th CVO class was 91.66, and the class average for firearms proficiency was 86.54. CVO Corey J. Arndt received both awards, with an academic score of 94.44 and a firearms score of 93.67.

CVO Cristobel O. Arredondo, class Vice Commander, and CVO Travis W. Noyes, Class Commander, both addressed the class and crowd. CVO Arrendondo thanked the instructors and urged the class "always continue to push yourself and learn more, and be better versions of yourself each day." CVO Noyes stressed that "a tremendous amount of work and support ... made this day possible," acknowledging the graduates' families, the Academy instructors, and the eight members of the 17th CVO Class." He encouraged class members to stay focused, "because our training is not done. We have only learned the basics and fundamentals; we need to be continuously learning throughout our careers."

Pastor Richard Mahan closed the ceremony with the benediction. The class then met with Judge Evans to sign their oaths of office.

Congratulations to the 17th Commercial Vehicle Class, and good luck in your careers.

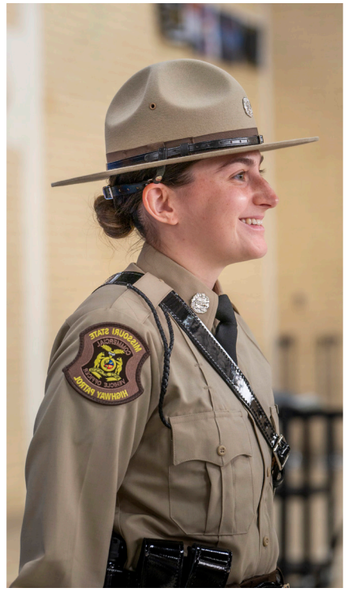


















OBITUARIES



Don Leroy Lasswell

DON LEROY LASSWELL

Don Leroy Lasswell, 88, passed away August 29, 2024, at home. Don graduated in 1954 from Mt. Ayer High School. He joined the Missouri State Highway Patrol on October 12, 1958. At his time of retirement, he worked as Unit Director of Commercial Vehicle Enforcement and held the rank of Sergeant. He retired in September 1991, with a 33-year career with the Missouri State Highway Patrol. Don is survived by his wife, Myrna Lasswell, of 65 years, 3 children, 5 grandchildren, 1 great-grandson, 1 great step granddaughter, 2 nephews, and many other loved family members, good friends, and neighbors. The family suggests memorial contributions be made to MASTERS of the Missouri State Highway Patrol or Crossroads Hospice. To learn more about Don, visit the Langsford Funeral Home website. The Patrol extends its sincerest condolences to the Lasswell family.



James D. Whitfield

JAMES D. WHITFIELD

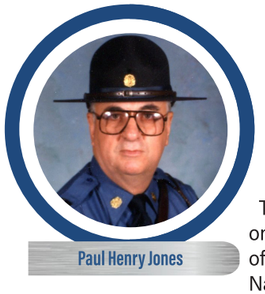
James "Jim" D. Whitfield, 72, passed on September 5, 2024. He graduated from high school in Tallahassee, FL, in 1970. He then graduated from Southwest Baptist University in 1974. On September 1, 1974, Jim was selected to be a member of the Missouri State Highway Patrol. In 1999, he was promoted to the rank of Captain and became the Director of the Motor Vehicle Inspection Division. He retired on August 1, 2005 as the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division Director. James is survived by one sister. The family suggests memorial contributions may be made to cancer research or brain stem injuries in care of the mortuary. To learn more about Jim, visit the Mason-Woodard Mortuary & Crematory website. The Patrol extends its sincerest condolences to the Whitfield family.



Eugene R. Cole

EUGENE R. COLE

Eugene (Gene) R. Cole passed away on September 9, 2024, at his residence with his wife, Teresa by his side. On January 3, 1988, Eugene began his career with the Missouri State Highway Patrol and was a trooper with the Water Patrol Division. After 23 years, he retired from the Patrol on August 1, 2011. The Patrol extends its sincerest condolences to the Cole family.



Paul Henry Jones

PAUL HENRY JONES

Paul Henry Jones, 89, of Bettendorf, IA, passed away on Friday, September 13, 2024, at Genesis Medical Center – East Campus, Davenport. He worked as a Missouri State Trooper, retiring as a Lieutenant on January 1, 1992, after 34 years of service. He served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean Conflict. Survivors include his wife, Joan, two sons, four grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, one sister, and a cousin. The family suggests memorial contributions may be directed to the Transportation Fund of the Kaaba Shrine. To learn more about Paul, visit the McGinnis-Chambers Funeral Home website. The Patrol extends its sincerest condolences to the Jones family.



Gary Richard Miller

GARY RICHARD MILLER

Gary Richard Miller, 79, passed to his next life on September 27, 2024, fighting a very courageous battle against pancreatic cancer. He was a lifelong Springfield, Missouri resident, and graduated from Central High School. Gary enjoyed a great career with the Missouri State Highway Patrol, beginning as a Driver Examiner at Troop D, Springfield. After its creation, Gary transferred and spent the rest of his career within the Motor Vehicle Inspection Division, retiring as chief of the division. He had a sincere interest in the school bus safety inspection program and was instrumental in inspecting thousands of school buses in the Troop D area. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Janita, his Chihuahua, one son, four grandchildren, one great-grandson, one brother, one brother in-law, one sister in-law, numerous nieces and nephews, and many dear friends. The family suggests memorial donations can be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Memorial Giving, 501 St. Jude's Place, Memphis, Tennessee, 38105. In the memo section, please write "in memory of Gary R. Miller." To learn more about Gary, visit the Gorman-Scharpf Funeral Home website. The Patrol extends its sincerest condolences to the Miller family.

WE REMEMBER.

55 YEARS AGO

NOVEMBER 1969 — The cover of the November 1969 Patrol News featured a portrait of Trooper Jesse Roger Jenkins. Tpr. Jenkins was killed in the line of duty on October 14, after arresting two suspects with Sheriff Clarence Landrum of Montgomery County. The accompanying article included the details of the tragic shooting, a photo of the sheriff's desk where the shooting commenced, and a hand-drawn diagram of the office and stairwell. Trooper Jenkins was the eighth trooper killed in the line of duty.

45 YEARS AGO

DECEMBER 1979 — The 1979 Patrol Christmas card was featured on the cover of the December Patrol News. One article celebrated the career of Captain Ted R. Taylor of Troop E. Capt. Taylor had joined the Patrol in 1935, as one of 35 members of the second recruit class. He recalled the salary for a trooper was $125 a month plus an expense account of 50 cents a day, not to exceed $15 per month. A trooper worked 12 hours a day and was allowed three leave days a month. However, Capt. Taylor said the only way to get a day off was to leave town. He stated he was on the Patrol eleven years before he got his first vacation.

35 YEARS AGO

NOVEMBER 1989 — The November 1989 edition of the Patrol News featured an article declaring, "AFIS OPERATIONAL." The process of installing and loading the AFIS system began in mid-1988, but the system was not fully operational until the next year. By November 1989, approximately 465,000 ten-print records had been converted to the new automated system and any new prints were added as they came in to the Patrol. Management of the AFIS system was the responsibility of the Criminal Records Division, now the Criminal Justice Information Services Division (CJIS).

25 YEARS AGO

DECEMBER 1999 — The cover of the December 1999 Patrol News featured four official Patrol Christmas cards. The edition included an article discussing the changes the Patrol had experienced during the decade of the 90s. The list of changes was long, including: implementation of the CDL program in 1990, celebration of the first awards banquet on May 18, 1991, creation of Commercial Vehicle Officers (CVO) in 1994, and coordination of the Alis Ben Johns manhunt in 1997.



15 YEARS AGO

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2009 — This edition of the Patrol News featured a three-page article about an 18-month investigation into a dogfighting ring in the greater St. Louis area. Sgt. Jeffrey Heath (Q/DDCC) was the primary undercover officer involved in the investigation; he worked with Sgt. Terry Mills (Q/DDCC), other law enforcement personnel, and two Humane Society of Missouri investigators to dig deeply into the dogfighting ring. On July 8, 2009, federal, state, and local agents served 28 federal and two state search warrants, and arrested 28 subjects on federal and state charges. More arrests followed, with more than 120 subjects identified during the investigation. Sgts. Heath and Mills, along with other investigators, were recognized nationally for their excellent work.

PATROL HISTORY

By Cpl. Ernest M. Raub, (F)

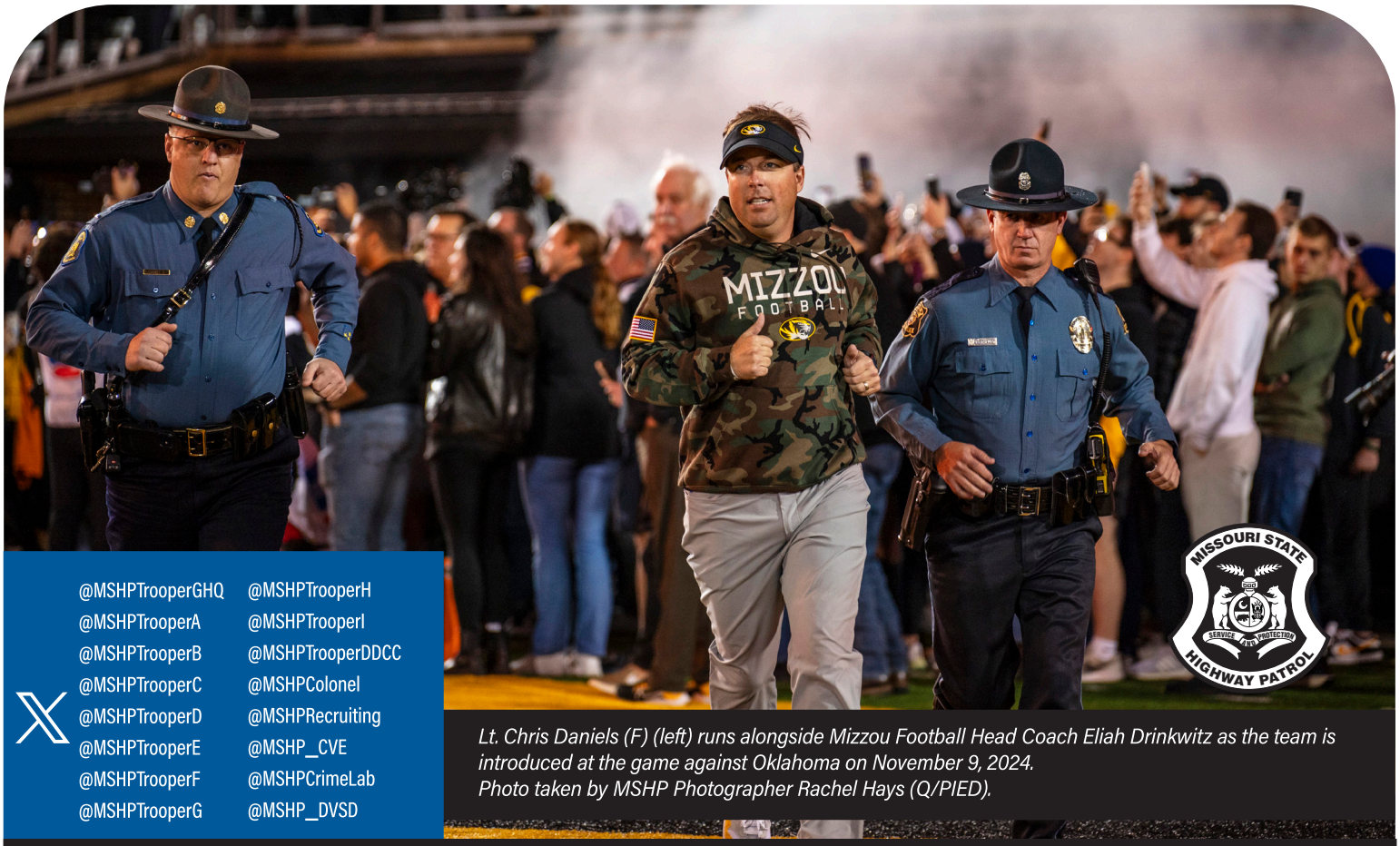
A month after the original Highway Patrol class completed training in St. Louis, it was Christmas time. Many of the members faced the prospect of a lonely Christmas away from their loved ones, having just moved to new areas where they had recently been assigned.

In what had to be one of the most comprehensive schedule changes in the organization's history, members were allowed to return to their home areas for several days. They were still required to work the highways of course, but they were also able to be with friends and family at a special time before returning to the challenges that awaited them in their new careers.

Merry Christmas!

(This article was printed originally in the December 1983 issue of the Patrol News. Captain Raub is now retired.)

MISSOURI STATE HIGHWAY PATROL
General Headquarters
P.O. Box 568
1510 E. Elm St.
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0568



Lt. Chris Daniels (F) (left) runs alongside Mizzou Football Head Coach Eliah Drinkwitz as the team is introduced at the game against Oklahoma on November 9, 2024.
Photo taken by MSHP Photographer Rachel Hays (Q/PIED).

@MSHPTrooperGHQ
@MSHPTrooperA
@MSHPTrooperB
@MSHPTrooperC
@MSHPTrooperD
@MSHPTrooperE
@MSHPTrooperF
@MSHPTrooperG
@MSHPTrooperH
@MSHPTrooperI
@MSHPTrooperDDCC
@MSHPColonel
@MSHPRecruiting
@MSHP_CVE
@MSHPCrimeLab
@MSHP_DVSD