

Montana Trooper

Montana Highway Patrol celebrates 75 years of service, 1935-2010

**Editor's note: This is the second in a two part series chronicling the proud 75 year history of the Montana Highway Patrol. This second segment covers 1989 through 2010.*

In 1989, Attorney General Marc Racicot took office, and Colonel Robert Griffith was promoted to chief administrator of the Patrol. The retired patrolmen's association merged with the AMHP. Montanans enjoyed a 40 year traffic fatality low with 181 fatalities. In May, the AMHP initiated a scholarship program for member's children. In April, Officer Mary Pat Murphy was wounded by a suspect driver who had shot and killed his passenger on US Highway 87 North, north of Great Falls. While she eventually returned to duty, her injuries later forced her early disability retirement several years later. In October, the Patrol began to convert from a Smith & Wesson model 28 or "Highway Patrolman" .357 caliber blued revolver to the Smith & Wesson model 5903 9mm caliber stainless steel semi-automatic pistol. The .357 had a capacity of six rounds with two reloads, while the 9mm had fifteen round magazines with two reloads. The Patrol's FTO program continued to evolve. White Dodge patrol cars were again issued. On October 24, Janet Baker became the first female sergeant in Highway Patrol history, being assigned to Glendive, then Billings. Captain Davis was no longer the commander of the APU, and Sergeant Frank Steverson took over.



1990 Chevrolet Caprice.

in 1983. White Chevrolet Caprice patrol cars were being driven. The 30th academy was held and graduated the last of the cadets.

In 1991, a light blue Chevrolet Caprice was driven and there was a decline in highway deaths to 200. Early in the year, patrol officers went on strike over



1991 Chevrolet Caprice.

In 1990, the AMHP's Montana Hope Project became independent of the AMHP. The highway death toll rose to 212, and the Patrol began to adopt military surplus M-14 .308 caliber rifles for voluntary use by its officers after the .30-30 caliber rifle was dropped

pay issues. Ultimately, the strike lasted less than a week, with the legislature offering a pay increase. On December 19, Officer Shawn Driscoll was involved in a shooting with a bank robbery suspect near Missoula. The suspect fired multiple rounds at Officer Driscoll from an assault rifle, and Officer Driscoll returned fire with his 9mm pistol, fatally injuring the suspect. Officer Driscoll was subsequently awarded the Medal of Valor for his actions that day.

In 1992, light blue Chevrolet Caprice patrol cars were again issued, and Officer Shawn Driscoll became one of the first officers to have a video camera installed in his patrol car, purchased at his own expense. Local DUI Task Force organizations also began purchasing cameras for officers to document their cases. Officer Francine Giono was wounded and killed her assailant in a shooting while working as a part of the APU near Missoula. Sergeant Frank Steverson was no longer the APU commander, with Sergeant Larry Strickland taking over.

In 1993, a green Ford Crown Victoria was driven. Attorney General Joseph Mazurek took office on January 4, and Colonel Robert Griffith continued as the chief of the Montana Highway Patrol. There were 194 traffic fatalities, and the "Little Convincer" seat belt awareness program was implemented.



1993 Ford Crown Victoria.



1994 Chevrolet Caprice.

There were 202 traffic fatalities, and there were an estimated 165 patrol officers, 21 sergeants, 4 lieutenants, and 5 captains in five districts (Missoula, Great Falls, Butte, Billings, and Glendive). A micro computer system was used in accident records to compile crash data, local area networks were installed in two district offices, the MHP activity system was redesigned, computer aided dispatch was becoming a reality, and head-

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The MHP's Honor Guard at the Law Enforcement memorial on the capitol grounds on May 15, 2009. Photo by Clarke Sutphin.

quarters had twenty-two support staff. Officers received new Second Chance Monarch body armor. The aviation program, which had been ongoing since 1983 with Officer Randy Yaeger as the pilot, moved its Cessna 182 RG fixed wing aircraft to a new hangar at the Helena airport. At the time of the move, there was also a proposal for a Patrol helicopter. The 33rd recruit academy was held once again at Fort Harrison near Helena, with 25 graduates. Officers John Stewart and Jeff Mount each received the Medal of Valor for separate incidents. In May, Officer Pete Richardson began to plan for the Patrol's Honor Guard, which became a reality in October, staffed by ten officers from the AMHP's membership and sponsored by the AMHP. Also in October, Stop Sticks were first purchased and distributed to officers in an effort to help curb high speed pursuits. In December, the Patrol's eight full time motor vehicle inspectors each received lap top computers for field use. Sergeant Janet Baker was promoted to lieutenant on October 29 and was stationed in Butte, then Billings.

In 1995, black Ford Crown Victoria patrol cars with white roofs and door pillars and a new striping design to match

the current issue license plate were driven. In addition, one Dodge Intrepid was driven by Officer Tom Butler in Helena. Replacement badges read Patrol Officer. The Patrol began buying in car video cameras in large numbers, equipping approximately 1/3 of its fleet in May. The 1995 legislature authorized a memorial to all fallen Montana law enforcement officers on the capitol grounds, and Officer Tom Butler spearheaded this project. The crash report system, which had previously been a three part carbonless white, yellow, and pink form in use since 1972, was revamped as the Montana Accident Investigators Report, a one part form. Officers underwent training in the Freeman and Militia movements gaining momentum in Montana and across the country. In May, the Patrol celebrated its 60th anniversary, and the television series Real Stories of the Highway Patrol filmed numerous reenactments involving Montana Highway Patrol officers. The 34th recruit academy was held at MLEA in Bozeman. In November, the Patrol saw its first increase in manpower since 1973, with federal funding of ten new officers, boosting the number from 202 to 212. In December, Montana reverted to the "basic rule" to manage daytime

speeds on the highways, as the fuel conservation limit of 55 mph on the two lane highways and the 65 mph speed limit on interstate highways was lifted. The conservation limits had been in effect since 1974. There were 215 fatalities on the highways, along with 1.2 radio transmissions with three dispatch centers in Missoula, Helena, and Billings. With 24 hour dispatch coverage, there were 29 full time personnel, 170,000 phone calls, and 50,000 incidents. These transmissions were received from 238 vehicles and 64 remote repeater sites, managed by two full time radio technicians. In an effort to reduce upper management positions and bolster the number of patrol officers, Colonel Reap began a plan to eliminate lieutenants or assistant district commanders. Lieutenants in districts that did not have a communications center were the first to be eliminated, and as the communications centers were later consolidated into one location in Helena, those positions were also eliminated through attrition and/or promotion. Officers were working nine hours a day and being paid for eight, working six day weeks which saw them rotate from night shifts to day shifts in the course of those six days, with generally two rotating days off following. A typical schedule might have an officer working at 1800 hours to 0300 the first two days, 1500 to 0000 the third, 0900 to 1800 the fourth and fifth, and 0700 to 1600 the sixth.



1996, Officer Steve Wisniewski.

In 1996, there were 198 highway fatalities, and in February, Patrol officers assisted local and federal law enforcement with road blocks and perimeter control in a standoff with a group of Freeman near Jordan. Officers from

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around Montana rotated in over 81 days, at which time the standoff ended peacefully. Since 1978, Patrol headquarters had been located at 303 North Roberts, the Scott Hart building. In March, headquarters moved to a new location at 2550 Prospect Avenue in Helena. The Montana Accident Records System (MARS) was first initiated and was the first computerized version of the Montana Accident Investigator's Report (HQ 1599). The LAN system was also completed, which linked all district offices. In April, a train carrying hazardous materials derailed near Alberton, which closed Interstate 90 for 17 days and forced the evacuation of 1,500 people from the surrounding area. Patrol officers from around Montana logged 2,200 hours of service in the area over an 18 day period. The Montana Law Enforcement Academy moved from Bozeman to the former Mountain View School campus near Helena in July. The 35th recruit academy was held at the new MLEA facility. Black and white Ford Crown Victorias were again issued, but only the roof of the car was white, with the remainder black. The previous design had the roof and all door posts painted white. The graphics remained the same. The Highway Patrol took possession of two surplus Department of Defense Bell OH-58a helicopters, the military version of the Jet Ranger, one to be flown, and the other to be used for parts. The APU was no longer was a permanent duty station, but rather one officer per district was selected to go on rotating, temporary duty assignments with the unit, which was commanded by the same sergeant, Larry Strickland.

In 1997, there were an alarming 256 fatalities, and the Highway Patrol unveiled its own flag, which was blue and gold. The current shoulder patch adorned the center, with four stars along the top, in tribute to our fallen officers. The MHP lost the funding for seven of the ten positions gained in 1995, dropping the number of officers to 205. The fleet of patrol cars was now all black and white, with approximately 1/3 of the fleet turned over every year since 1995. At that time, most patrol cars were equipped with top mounted emer-



1997 Ford.



1997 Dodge.

gency lights. Approximately one car per district was equipped as a "slick top" or with internally mounted emergency lights. On August 28, the law enforcement memorial was dedicated on the capitol grounds. Just after 2200 hours on October 4, Officer Debra Batterson was struck by a passing truck while conducting a traffic stop on Interstate 90 in Mineral County. The male driver from Superior had just reached down to pick up a drink and drifted right, striking Officer Batterson and her car. Sadly, Officer Batterson was unable to return to full-time duty as a patrol officer due to the injuries she received. On October 25th, Mike Frellick was promoted from lieutenant in Great Falls to captain in Missoula.

In 1998, the number of fatalities dropped to 237. In January, District 2 headquarters moved into the Cascade County Regional Detention Center and Correctional Facility along with the Cascade County Sheriff's Office. District 6 in Kalispell was formed on April 1, and the District 4 headquarters in Billings moved to a new consolidated office building at 615 A. South 27th Street along with other Department of Justice divisions after previously being house at the DOT yard at 424 Morey. District 3 also gained a new detachment office in Three Forks. In May, the Patrol began to experiment with and evaluate ten hour shifts for its officers, which were

subsequently dropped. The Patrol also completely phased out the previous Winchester 12 gauge pump shotgun and fully converted to the Remington 870. Black and white Ford Crown Victorias were again distributed as patrol cars. On June 28, Officer Tom Hamilton was wounded when he attempted to assist in the capture of 38 year old David Morgan, who was wanted for the attempted murder of two deputies from Kootenai County, Idaho. While Morgan was evading Ravalli County deputies on Highway 93, Officer Hamilton managed to deploy his Stop Sticks and pursue the suspect when he bailed from his vehicle and hid near a local store. When Officer Hamilton arrived, the suspect opened fire with a 7mm magnum rifle. Despite being wounded in the right arm and side, Officer Hamilton was able to take cover and return fire, eventually wounding Morgan, who was also armed with a 9mm handgun. Morgan subsequently pled guilty to attempted murder in Montana and was sentenced to the Montana State Prison. Officer Hamilton returned to duty on September 11. The 36th recruit academy was held at MLEA near Helena, and in December the Montana Supreme Court ruled the "basic rule" as written was unconstitutionally vague. However, the court also reaffirmed the ability of officers to regulate speed using the careless and reckless driving statutes. Sergeant Larry Strickland retired, and the APU ceased formal operations.

In 1999, there were 220 fatalities, and Patrol officers were driving all black and white vehicles, predominantly Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptors. One Chevrolet Tahoe, a two wheel drive sport utility vehicle, was purchased in June

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1999 Chevrolet Tahoe.

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Trooper Tamra Winchell (MHP 221) on a traffic stop near Hamilton on June 18, 2009. Photo by Clarke Sutphin.

and assigned to Officer Ed Hilbert, then Officer Steve Lavin. The Patrol helicopter was first used in an official capacity to assist in the maintenance of remote repeater sites. On June 25, Colonel Bert Obert replaced Colonel Craig Reap as the Chief Administrator of the Patrol. The legislature responded to the Supreme Court's December of 1998 ruling and passed a numerical speed limit which took effect on May 28. The new statute established a 75 mph speed limit on the interstate, except in urban areas where it was 65 mph. On two lane highways, the limit was placed at 70 mph during the daytime and 65 mph at night, except on US Highway 93 in western Montana where the limit was set at 65 mph day or night. The legislature also specifically granted Patrol officers a 9% pay increase in an effort to bring Patrol officers closer to the average pay for law enforcement officers in Montana. In past years, Patrol officers' pay had fallen below average, and one of the results was an inability to recruit and retain new officers. Officer Randy Owens was awarded the Medal of Valor for his May 21 foot pursuit of a male shooting suspect in Pablo (Lake County), in which the suspect subsequently fatally shot

himself. The 37th recruit academy was held at MLEA near Helena. The MARS rover portable computer program was fully implemented in July, allowing officers to enter crash data on a lap top computer. A new District 1 headquarters in Missoula was in the works. In December, a new use of force in service training program was implemented which focused on weaponless defense and firearms training.

In 2000, there were 237 fatalities, and in February officers switched from a nine hour work day to an eight hour work day. Officers had previously been granted two twenty minute breaks along with a one hour unpaid lunch hour, encompassing a total nine hour shift. The new eight hour shift consisted of only one 45 minute paid lunch break, encompassing a total eight hour shift. Officers were mostly assigned Ford Crown Victoria patrol vehicles, but six front wheel drive Chevrolet Impalas were also purchased, which required new patrol vehicle operations training for those officers. The Chevrolets had the same black and white color scheme and striping but lacked the door crest or patch. The number of "slick top" cars was increased to approximately

one per detachment. The PR-24 side handle baton was still in use, but officers were authorized to carry an ASP expandable baton also, if the officer received training and purchased the new baton at his or her own expense. The 38th recruit academy was held at MLEA near Helena. 60% of the Patrol had less than ten years of service. Since 1974, Montana had a 25% increase in population, and vehicle registrations were up 33%. District 7 in Belgrade was established on November 1, which was housed in the new Belgrade City Hall. District 1 in Missoula moved into a new facility, and Detachment 424 was added in Billings. The Rainbow Family gathered in District 1 in June, and the Patrol dedicated additional officers from around Montana to help police the activity in the area. The Patrol helicopter was also utilized in its first ever law enforcement mission. The Hell's Angels' motorcycle club conducted a meeting in Missoula from July 24 through July 30, and Patrol officers assisted in a combined effort with city, county, and federal officers to monitor area activity. The Highway Patrol again furnished the use of its helicopter, and many other officers from Montana police departments, Utah, and Idaho also contributed officers. Annual events such as the Tetical Festival involved officers from District 1 and 3, as well as forest fire duty. Officer Steve Wisniewski received the Medal of Valor for his part disarming an armed male in Big Horn County. Lieutenant Janet Baker was promoted to captain in Butte on November 18, being the first female officer to attain the rank of captain. With her promotion, there were no longer assistant district commanders and no lieutenants.

In 2001, Attorney General Mike McGrath took office in January, and Colonel Bert Obert continued as chief administrator of the Highway Patrol. There were 237 fatalities in 203 fatal crashes. Sergeants were issued lap top computers, continuing an increase in computer use from 1995. The Patrol began to adopt the ASP expandable baton, establishing instructors and purchasing the baton for officers. A large number of Ford Crown Victoria patrol cars were

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again purchased, but 12 additional front wheel drive Chevrolet Impalas were also acquired. The use of force in-service training continued, with a progressive approach to weaponless defense and firearms training. Officers participated in realistic scenarios, including those utilizing simmunitions training. Mobile data



2001 Chevrolet Impala.

terminals in patrol cars continued to be explored on a trial basis. The 39th recruit academy was again held at MLEA near Helena. In July, the automatic per diem payment for meals was eliminated, and officers began to complete monthly expense vouchers for daily meals. A Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) unit was secured for the Patrol helicopter, enhancing its night operation capability. The Patrol helicopter was also painted black and white by Officer Tom Olds, similar to the patrol cars. The Patrol's fixed wing aircraft, since 1983, had been used to stop over 20,000 motorists, performed 110 emergency medical relays, completed 80 prisoner transports, and was used for many searches and surveillance operations. It was also used for staff and Department of Justice personnel transportation, flying over 4,000 hours.

In 2002, two full-time officers (originally Sgt. Larry Irwin and Officer Mike Feldman) were assigned to the governor's office for dignitary protection duties. The funding for the executive protection section came from the governor's office. Officers were initially uniformed, but transitioned into plain clothes. New 2002 patrol cars were the Ford Crown Victoria (rear wheel drive) and the Dodge Intrepid (front wheel drive). The color scheme was the same black and white, but the striping was modified to match the new Lewis and Clark style license plates recently issued

and placed on all patrol cars. This included a red logo celebrating the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. A maroon unmarked Crown Victoria was primarily stationed in western Montana (Missoula), but traveled the state as needed to curb violations such as bad passes. The mobile data terminal project was running in Billings and Missoula. Officers were able to complete crash reports, daily logs, and maintenance logs on the in-car computer, as well as search driver and vehicle records. Officer Rocky Bailey's patrol car was struck during a nighttime traffic stop on March 29. He was completing a warning with his overhead lights activated when a 1990 Ford Econoline van side-swiped his patrol car, which caused injury to Officer Bailey. The driver of the van did not immediately stop, but drove another 200 yards, stopping briefly, then drove away. The driver and his attorney later contacted and met with Sgt. Tom Hamilton and, based on that interview, the driver was charged with felony criminal endangerment and leaving the scene of an injury crash. He was remanded on \$25,000 bond. New pistols were selected to replace the current Smith and Wesson 9mm model 5903. The Sig-Sauer .357 caliber semi-automatic pistol was the weapon of choice, with current instructors attending new training in

the summer, prior to the distribution of the new weapon. Shotgun barrels were shortened to accommodate an over-the-head shotgun mount which attached to the cage. The 40th recruit academy expanded to 15 weeks in duration. In October, Colonel Obert selected Sgt. Tooley as the new captain in Belgrade. Colonel Obert retired to take a federal security position at the airport in Belgrade. Lieutenant Colonel Shawn Driscoll was promoted to colonel by Attorney General Mike McGrath. Colonel Driscoll amended the uniform policy and no longer mandated the wearing of long sleeve winter weight uniform shirts and ties. Officers were given the choice of wearing a short sleeve summer, long sleeve summer, or long sleeve winter shirt with tie, except when the Ike jacket was worn, which mandated a tie. Turtlenecks were explored as an alternative uniform item. In November, Colonel Driscoll selected HQ Administrative Captain Yaeger as the new Lieutenant Colonel. Captain Tooley took the administrative captain's position in headquarters, and Sergeant Gary Becker was subsequently promoted to captain in Belgrade. Also in November, Colonel Driscoll requested an audit from the legislature addressing the retention of officers. The end result was that the

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On June 18, 2009, Troopers Tamra Winchell (MHP 221) and Chris Hamilton (MHP 292) investigate a crash near Hamilton. Photo by Clarke Sutphin.

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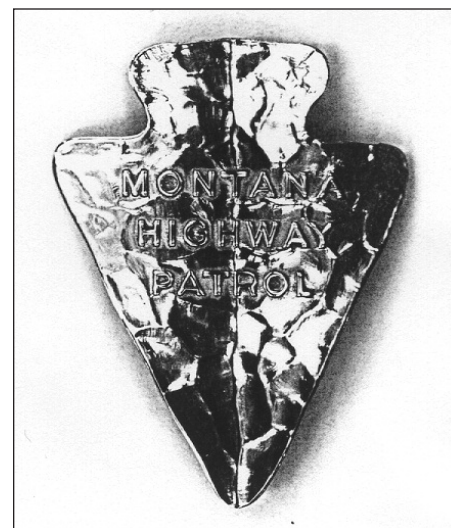
Trooper David Gleich [MHP 216] responding to a call on October 19, 2009. Photo by Clarke Sutphin.

Patrol was losing officers to other agencies over pay issues.

In 2003, new cars ordered were: 33 Ford Crown Victorias, 20 Chevrolet Impalas, and 10 Dodge Intrepids, all black with gold striping and a smaller door crest. New Kenwood radios were issued, both as portables and in car radios. Two more unmarked cars were ordered, including one blue and one gold. The maroon car was moved to Billings, the blue was used in Missoula, and the gold in Great Falls. Four ten hour shifts were being considered. In January, the MHP began to utilize a new officer evaluation system based loosely on the current FTO evaluation system. This was meant to make the process more objective, emphasize the overall work performance, and make less weighty the number of DUI, citations, and warnings. Rather than DUI, a new category was added which added DUI, MIP driving .02 and CMV driving .04 into one alcohol related driving offense category. As a part of the first long range, strategic plan to solve the Patrol's retention and pay issues, the MHP and the AMHP asked the 2003 legislature for a bi-partisan committee to study the officer retention issue and make a recommendation to the 2005 legislature. In quarterly meetings, the MHP

and AMHP asked for elimination of vacancy savings (which would increase the Patrol by 15 officers each year), an increase in the staff of the MHP by 100 officers, and to take the MHP out of the state pay plan and by law place it in a pay rate that was the average of the sheriff's offices where the Patrol had each of its district offices, which was forecast to lead to an increase of 40%. The reasoning behind that was that 90% of all Patrol officers lived within 50 miles of the district offices, and it was felt that Patrol officers should be paid 100% of the average of their corresponding counterparts. In essence, it was felt that if Patrol officers were paid a fair and average wage, the retention issues would cease, and it would be a long term fix. In March, the 41st academy was now sixteen weeks in total, with no night classes and thirteen recruits in attendance. Seven of twenty nine officers in the National Guard were called to active military duty due to the war in Iraq. This included Jeremy Lee in Billings, two officers from Bozeman, one from Livingston, and one from Deer Lodge. In April, officers were being measured for campaign hats to replace the traditional uniform hat. Previously only honor guard members and academy camp commanders had been approved for the head-

gear. Initially, the command staff was issued felt hats and officers straw hats. Eventually, all were issued straw hats. In June, officers were selected for training in crowd and riot control situations. Newly formed, the group was called the Special Events Support Unit (SESU). In July, officers were all issued turtlenecks following a trial period in the winter of 2002-2003. The tie policy remained changed as being non-mandatory. Officers had previously been mandated to wear the long sleeve winter shirt with tie from November 1st through March 31st. In August, Officer Jason Hildentab was involved in a shootout near Lolo with an Ennis murder suspect. The suspect subsequently pled guilty to charges in exchange for a life sentence, rather than the possible death penalty. In September, the new Sig-Sauer .357 semiautomatic pistol was being upgraded and new pistols being issued, with the only difference being the ability to mount laser sites on the new pistols. The in-car video was in the process of being moved to an up front passenger compartment mount in an 8mm form, as was the M-14, with a possible collapsible stock. Thirty-three 2003 Chevrolet Impala patrol cars were received for issuance in 2004, along with 30 Ford Crown Victorias (no Dodge). The Chevrolet was a front wheel drive V-6, and the Ford and rear wheel drive V-8. Colonel Driscoll formed a sergeant's working group to explore labor issues specific to sergeants. The Fatal Incident Reconstruction Sup-



MHP hat piece.

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port Team (FIRST) continued to meet and develop, with equipped vans later being supplied for response in each district. An agreement between the labor union and management enabled officers to begin working a four ten hour shift schedule in January of 2004, statewide. A sergeant's FTO program was being developed by Sgt. Butch Huseby for new sergeants following promotion. The colonel began evaluating the need for an 8th district, taken from parts of Districts 2 and 5, along the hi-line, with Havre being mentioned as the district headquarters. The CAD system was running in the Helena dispatch center. The unmarked car program was expanded to include one car in each district. Captain Janet Baker retired on August 8th. MHP officers began working off duty on a voluntary basis as escorts for the University of Montana football coach during games as a promotional and recruitment tool. A similar offer was made to Montana State University, but the offer was initially declined, although it did become a reality in 2007.

In January of 2004, officers and sergeants alike began to work a four ten hour shift schedule, four days on and three days off, with set days off. This initially included a two week rotation of straight day shifts, then two weeks of straight night shifts, statewide. In February, Colonel Shawn Driscoll resigned to take a position with Swift Trucking in Phoenix, Arizona. Lt. Colonel Randy Yaeger was promoted to Colonel on February 2, 2004, and Captain Mike Tooley was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel on February 7, 2004. Captain Paul Grimstad moved from District 7 (Belgrade) to the administrative captain's position in Headquarters. In March, officers were testing and evaluating laser sights and tactical flashlights for the Sig-Sauer .357. Sergeants and above were being issued black leather jackets in place of the previous green tanker jacket. MHP administration was heavily engaged in efforts to obtain more pay and more officers for the Patrol from the upcoming 2005 legislature. The 2004 recruit academy began with thirteen cadets, five of whom were female. The 8th District was rumored to be becoming a reality in Shelby, although



The MHP's helicopter and three Dodge Charger patrol cars are pictured on April 26, 2007. Photo by Clarke Sutphin.

district boundaries had not yet been formed. The unmarked car program was scaled back, due to concerns raised by citizens and legislators. The administration desired alternately to focus its efforts on the pay and manpower issues and assigned the cars to each district commander. The cars were still available for specific, defined events or needs. In April, the Missoula dispatch center had recently been closed and absorbed into Helena, and the Billings dispatch center was scaling back. Helena began to dispatch the Glendive district and the Billings district overnight. In July, Colonel Randy Yaeger retired, and Captain Paul Grimstad was selected by Attorney General Mike McGrath to be the next chief of the Montana Highway Patrol. In September, Sergeant Butch Huseby was promoted to captain, at first being assigned to headquarters as the administrative captain, then assuming command of the new District 8 in Havre in October. District supervisors gained access to the dispatch CAD system via the internet. In October, dispatch was consolidated into Helena, and District 8 in Havre was established. With dispatch consolidated in Helena, the rank of lieutenant and assistant district commander was no longer in use. Tom Hamilton was promoted to administrative captain in HQ. In November, Captain Mike Frellick retired.

In January of 2005, Sergeant Claney King was promoted to the position

of administrative captain at HQ, replacing Captain Tom Hamilton, who transferred back to Missoula upon the retirement of Captain Mike Frellick. In April, with great effort on the part of many people, HB 35 was introduced and passed by the legislature, which set a standard of pay for new troopers at an average of the eight sheriff's departments where the Patrol had district offices. This would be funded by a \$5 fee added to every vehicle registration and would take effect in July of 2006, after a new salary survey. The starting pay for a trooper was thought to be increasing from \$12.90 an hour to approximately \$17.40 an hour as a result. Legislation also removed the Patrol from vacancy savings and transferred our Motor Carriers Services

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Many of the original badges from 1935 were still in use some 70 years later.

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Left to right: Trooper David A. Graham, Trooper Evan F. Schneider and Trooper Michael W. Haynes. Photos by Burch's One Hour Photo in Kalispell.

Bureau to the Department of Transportation. Black stocking caps with the arrowhead sewn in were distributed as an acceptable piece of headgear. Since 1935, badges had read "Patrolman," and many of the original badges from 1935 were still in use some 70 years later, even after female officers had joined the ranks of the Patrol in 1978. Some new badges had been ordered which read the more gender neutral title of "Patrol Officer," and in May, Colonel Grimstad announced that rather than "Patrol Officer," new badges would read "Trooper." Those with over 20 years of service had the option of buying their badge. Vacancy announcements and DOJ ID cards were now listed as "Trooper" rather than "Patrol Officer." The AMHP board voted to change its name to the Association of Montana Troopers (AMT), pending a membership vote, which subsequently passed. In June, folding M-14 stocks were recalled due to safety concerns, with some collapsing during firing. Shotgun barrels that had been shortened to accommodate the small patrol cars and overhead mounts were being phased back out in favor of longer, stock barrels. In-car video was being returned to VHS. The SESU was wearing solid green shirts and BDU style pants. A new Whelen light bar was being evaluated, which was low, square, and had clear lenses. The LED lights contained within provided excellent visibility. New

cars in 2005 were Ford Crown Victorias (RWD) and Chevrolet Impalas (FWD). They continued with an all black color and gold striping. Reflective cross hatching was added to the rear bumper for safety. Three cars in each district were given "Trooper" decals to add to the front fenders. The decal was black and was applied on the gold striping. The unmarked cars had been assigned to the district captains, but each captain was now receiving a black car, with the colored versions being returned to regular service amongst the troops. Safety spot checks were mandated on a monthly basis for districts. Troopers were receiving state e-mail addresses, which had previously been only given to supervisors and civilian personnel. Emphasis was placed on tracking of daily activity, in particular stops per hour of non-obligated patrol time, with a target of at least one stop per hour. In August, the trooper decal was increased to approximately 6 cars per district. In October, captains and above were re-issued solid green short sleeve shirts, with additional stock on order for sergeants and below. In November, sergeant decals were added to the front fenders. Reflective cross hatching decals were also distributed for older patrol cars, matching the newer issued cars. Captain David Dill retired on December 30th, after which Captain Keith Edgell transferred from Belgrade to Billings.

In 2006, all cars had trooper decals placed on the front fenders. A limited number of cars had state trooper decals placed on the tops of their windshields. Supervisors received light weight black jackets with flaps which read "State Trooper," and troops received black 511 brand jackets with a zip-out insulated liner, which also had flaps which read "State Trooper." The Jet Strobe light bar had mostly been phased out in favor of the new Whelen light bar. The new light bar was clear and low profile, with LED lighting. Motorcycles had been considered, but were placed on hold. Laser speed detection was being evaluated for limited use. 2006 in car cameras were digital. With some initial difficulties, the new units proved to be highly effective. Troopers each received state issued cell phones. Digital cameras were issued, replacing 35 mm, and photos were sub-



The Mobile Impaired Driving Assessment Center (MIDAC).

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mitted to crash records on CD's. Supervisors received digital voice recorders for documentation purposes and interviews. Troopers were issued dark green shirts of all varieties. The uniform policy remained loose in that troopers may generally choose whether to wear a short sleeve shirt, long sleeve summer, or long sleeve winter with a tie or turtleneck. Black winter stocking caps were issued with the arrowhead logo. On October 25th, the rank of lieutenant was brought back, with the promotion of Sergeant Mike Reddick to lieutenant and assistant operations commander.

In 2007, new Ford Crown Victoria, Chevrolet Impala, and Dodge Charger patrol cars came equipped with a built in center console to house electronics. New digital Watchguard in car cameras were phased in which wrote video to DVD's, which proved to be somewhat problematic. In June, Rock River Arms .223 caliber rifles were being obtained and M-14's were to be largely phased out, except for a small number retained in each district for long-range or ceremonial purposes. Utility uniforms (wash and wear) were being issued to all troopers for certain duties, the same as issued previously to SESU members. All cars had received state trooper windshield decals. In late July, the Mobile Impaired Driving Assessment Center (MIDAC) was first used, processing impaired drivers in a mobile DUI processing center. In September, older Motorola mobile data terminals were being phased out and new General Dynamics Itronix dockable laptop computers with Verizon broadband wireless internet capabilities were being phased in. Digital in car and portable radios were being phased in. On October 9th, Trooper David A. Graham died in a traffic crash near Kalispell when a distracted driver crossed into his lane and struck his unmarked patrol car head on.

In 2008, the roving enforcement squad was initiated again, due to a two year grant from the federal government. The Strategic Traffic Enforcement Team (STET) was commanded by Sgt. Pete Richardson and patrolled the most dangerous portions of the state, based on crash statistics. A laser unit was used for speed estimation. The squad worked 10

days on and 6 days off and consisted of one sergeant and five troopers. The squad commander drove a Dodge Magnum station wagon. A different in car camera was being tested, the ICOP system, which recorded all data to a hard drive and later a server for long term storage. This system, like Watchguard, recorded continuously to a hard drive. In September, after years in the planning and testing in the communications center, the MHP went live state-wide with its new computer aided dispatch and records management system, made by CTS America of Florida. Similar to a system used by the Florida Highway Patrol, the system is multi-faceted. On August 26th, Trooper Evan F. Schneider died as a result of a traffic crash when another vehicle driven by an impaired driver struck his patrol car head on near Columbia Falls. Each trooper was issued a portable Itronix laptop with a printer and driver license scanner in their patrol car. Each laptop was broadband wireless internet enabled and tracked via GPS. Troopers then had access to a state-wide messaging and mapping system, enabling them to view all cars and calls across the state, access CJIN-NCIC, issue electronic citations, scan driver licenses, import CJIN and driver returns into citations and crash reports, and write crash reports in a new manner. The system also incorporated arrest reports (probable cause affidavits) and offense reports (pre-trial summaries), as well as a master name index, so troopers could view a history of any subject or vehicle the MHP had previously had contact with in real time. In November, Attorney General Mike McGrath was elected as the chief justice of the Montana Supreme Court, and Steve Bullock was elected as the new Montana Attorney General. In December, Colonel Paul Grimstad announced his retirement, effective December 31, 2008.

In January of 2009, Lieutenant Colonel Mike Tooley was selected by as the new chief of the Montana Highway Patrol. In February, Captain Butch Huseby was selected as the new lieutenant colonel or deputy chief of the Montana Highway Patrol. On March 27th, Trooper Michael W. Haynes died as a result of a traffic crash which had

occurred on March 23rd, when his patrol vehicle was struck head on by an intoxicated driver traveling the wrong way on US Highway 93 near Kalispell. In June, Captain Tom Butler was promoted to major and became the new administrative support commander in headquarters. Patrol cars were a mix of Ford Crown Victorias, Chevrolet Impalas, and Dodge Chargers, with one Dodge Magnum. Dark green t-shirts were authorized as a uniform item, and utility pants were authorized for wear on a daily basis, except in combination with a long sleeve winter shirt and tie, which required traditional uniform pants.

In 2010, all new patrol cars were Chevrolet Impalas, and they sported a new graphics design, which in part celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Montana Highway Patrol. In addition, thanks to Major Tom Butler who spearheaded the project, AMT members were able to purchase at their own expense, 75th anniversary badges to be worn only during 2010. Previously, troopers at the rank of sergeant and above did not have their badge number reflected on the face of their badge, just rank. The anniversary badges, however, were printed with both badge number and rank. In addition, thanks to Trooper Lath Keith who coordinated the project, AMT members had the opportunity to purchase a limited edition, specially engraved Smith and Wesson .38 caliber revolver, similar to that which was carried in 1935. A new black and white 75th anniversary license plate was also issued for patrol cars. □

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