

Montana Trooper

The Trooper Cut Down

By Trooper Toby Baukema

If you've ever been to a campfire sing-along, you've likely heard or sung the old ballad, "Streets of Laredo," which laments the final moments of a dying young cowboy, whose life of debauchery has caught up with him.

But this song, like many "American" folk songs, actually has its origins elsewhere. The tune started as a drinking song among military personnel in Britain and has likely been sung there for a couple hundred years, where it is known as, "The Trooper Cut Down." Like our American version, the song depicts a young soldier whose off-duty diversions lead to his demise. However, confining the words to the first couple verses leave the impression that the soldier or "trooper" lost his life in duty and sacrifice.

The next time you hear this beautiful, mournful tune, give the original words a try and think of our eight fallen Patrol comrades.

*As I was a-walkin' past St. James' Hospital
Early the mornin' though warm was the day
When who did I see but one of my comrades
All wrapped up in flannel and cold as the clay.*

*Then beat the drum slowly and play the fife lowly
And sound the dead march as you bear me along
And fire your bundooks right over my coffin
For I'm a young trooper cut down in my prime.*

*The bugles were playin'; his mates were a-prayin',
The chaplain was kneelin' down by his bed;
His poor head was achin', his poor heart was breakin',
This poor young trooper cut down in his prime.*

**THANK YOU TROOPERS
FOR YOUR COURAGE AND
SACRIFICE.**

In Memory of State Troopers Who Gave Their Lives In the Line of Duty



Robert G. Steele, 1946
Shot in the line of duty near Billings



James H. Anderson, 1954
Traffic stop on Bozeman Hill



Richard E. Hedstrom, 1973
Traffic stop near Kalispell



Michael M. Ren, 1978
Shot in the line of duty near Eureka



David A. Graham, 2007
Traffic crash near Kalispell



Evan F. Schneider, 2008
Traffic crash near Columbia Falls



Michael W. Haynes, 2009
Traffic crash near Kalispell



David J. DeLaittre, 2010
Shot in the line of duty near Three Forks