Troop G History

Before Troop G (1931-1945)

A *Willow Springs Republican* newspaper article dated May 13, 1931, cites an alarming statistic. Car crashes in Missouri were averaging 76 deaths per month, a figure that often exceeds today's totals. The Great Depression and illicit trade in prohibited alcohol had resulted in an equally troubling rise in crime in Missouri. Rural areas were especially affected, and the Ozarks had become a haven for outlaws. County sheriffs and local law enforcement officials were becoming overwhelmed. Thus, the story of Troop G begins with the first Missouri State Highway Patrol class created to address these problems, and two original members of the Patrol assigned to the future Troop G area.

On October 5, 1931, Nathan Hearst Massie began his career in the first Patrol recruit class. The six-week course was held at the "St. Louis Police Training School", as the Patrol did not yet have its own training facility. Massie was one of 55 men selected from a group of 5,000 applicants to be the first Highway Patrolmen in Missouri. Local newspapers report the nomination of nine other young men in the area who were not selected after quite a stringent process, which included a lengthy "competitive written examination" and extensive character evaluation. It was also necessary to pass a "standard military physical examination", which posed no problem to Massie, as he had previously served three years in the Marine Corps.

At the end of their six-week training period, on the evening before graduation, the Patrol recruits were released from school to attend the "Veiled Prophet Parade" in St. Louis. They had been issued their off-duty pistols and were told to "eat and sleep with them". However, they had *not* yet been issued their Patrol identification. While watching the parade, a St. Louis policeman noticed Trooper Massie was armed, and when he could not produce police credentials, Tpr. Massie found himself in a jail cell. By the time his captain obtained his release the next day, both had missed graduation ceremonies and the photo.

Upon graduation, the new troopers were given their assignments and a week to move. Tpr. Massie was sent to Willow Springs, then a part of Troop E with Poplar Bluff as headquarters. He began patrolling on November 25, 1931, in a new Ford Model-A roadster. For a year, he was the only patrolman in Willow Springs and an area extending from the Arkansas line to the Dent/Phelps counties' line.

Tpr. Massie had been on duty only a few weeks when gangster Alvin Karpis and members of the Ma Barker Gang killed Howell County Sheriff C.R. Kelly, of West Plains, on December 19, 1931. The gang was implicated in the robbery of the Bank of Mountain View and Bank of Birch Tree prior to Tpr. Massie's arrival. His reports on the incident were finally put to use as part of the evidence to convict "Public Enemy Number One" Karpis, after he was captured in 1936. Karpis served 32 years in prison, 25 of them in Alcatraz.

On August 27, 1933, Tpr. Massie shot and killed murder/robbery suspect Bud Love at a railroad overpass in the Burnham community. Love was in the process of eluding other officers and had been involved in a shootout with police earlier in the day. He was also wanted for forgery.

Also in the winter of 1931, an original member of the Patrol, assigned to work what would become Troop G, joined Tpr. Massie. Trooper Benjamin Franklin Graham, a native of Clubb, Wayne County, MO, was sent to Van Buren. Troopers Graham and Massie quickly became friends and formed a partnership that would transcend their Patrol careers and remain throughout the rest of their lives.

During October 1932, Trooper E.C. Brown was assigned to Willow Springs. He was from the second Patrol class graduating that summer. Brown remained in Willow Springs for a year and was transferred out of troop. He resigned in 1940.

Tprs. Massie and Graham achieved local fame in their efforts to eradicate the notorious “Perkins Gang”, a family enterprise led by Remus Perkins of Shannon County, who specialized in bank robbery. Over a period of two years, the gang was implicated in the robbery of seven area banks. Tprs. Massie and Graham pursued the gang relentlessly, forcing them to move to other areas for their activities.

Gang member Eugene Goodman (known in local papers as “the John Dillinger of the Ozarks”) was killed by the proprietor of a tavern in St. Jacobs, IL, in a failed robbery attempt in October 1934. Arnet “Web” Perkins, along with a tavern customer and the tavern owner, also died in that shootout. Tpr. Massie was acquainted with Goodman. Prior to his Patrol employment, Tpr. Massie had served as a board member of the Fremont, MO, school. Eugene Goodman had come before this board upon graduation in 1930, asking to be considered as a schoolteacher there.

Another key member of the gang, William Olin “Bish” Perkins, was killed in a shootout with Illinois State Police in September 1935.

The final chapter was added with the arrest and conviction of Claude Dickerson for his involvement in thr shootout at St. Jacobs, IL. Dickerson was convicted of killing tavern employee Ernest Holden and was sentenced to 99 years in the Missouri Penitentiary. Dickerson had been captured in early 1934 and was residing in the Texas County Jail at Houston when four gang members, led by Eugene Goodman, walked into the jail and rescued Dickerson at gunpoint. His recapture ended the Perkins Gang reign of terror.

On June 14, 1933, Sergeant Benjamin O. Booth, became the first Missouri state trooper killed in the line of duty, as well as Sheriff Roger Wilson of Boone County. Tpr. Massie participated in this investigation and received a commendation for his work on the case.

On May 3, 1934, Tprs. Massie and Graham shot and killed Edgar Allen and seriously wounded his brother, Walter, in a gun battle near Cabool. The Allen brothers were wanted for bank robbery.

Also in 1934, Tprs. Massie and Graham shot and killed Grover Hartley, who was wanted for robbery of the Mountain Grove Bank and escaped. Hartley, an associate of Clyde Barrow, had just escaped from jail in Gainesville, Ozark County. It was said he escaped for the sole purpose of finding and killing Tprs. Graham and Massie, who had captured him after escaping from jail two times previously. The officers tracked Hartley to a nearby cabin and when the troopers approached, he opened fire upon them. Somehow both officers were not hit, but in the return fire, Hartley was shot twice—one time by each trooper. He fell, giving the appearance of being dead. While Tprs. Massie and Graham busied themselves with arranging a way to remove his body, Hartley came to life. He obtained two shotguns, a pistol, and a quantity of ammunition. A four-hour pursuit on foot ensued, with numerous shots being exchanged. When they finally cornered the suspect, he still refused to surrender forcing the officers to shoot him a third time. Again, Hartley feigned death and attempted to stab Tpr. Massie when he bent down to try to make Hartley comfortable. Hartley finally died an hour later.

Tpr. Massie continued his string of success in 1934, by solving the insurance murder of Oscar Bushart, near Thayer, MO. Bushart had been killed and his body burned in an automobile to collect insurance. Three men were given life sentences in this case.

In August 1935, Trooper Ted R. Taylor was assigned to Willow Springs. Taylor, also an aggressive crime fighter, soon was in the news.

Tpr. Massie was promoted to sergeant in 1936.

Sergeant Massie and Tprs. Taylor and Graham gained nationwide notoriety in January 1937, for their investigative work solving the kidnapping and murder of a prominent physician in Willow Springs, Doctor J.C.B. Davis.

On January 26, 1937, Dr. Davis was leaving his office when approached by a man identifying himself as “Mr. James” who stated his wife was ill and needed the doctor’s help at their home near Willow Springs. Davis left with the strange man and did not return. The next morning Sgt. Massie was notified of his disappearance and in turn notified Tprs. Graham and Taylor. A nationwide alert was put out for the doctor, and 15 FBI agents were sent to Willow Springs to help investigate.

A $5,000 ransom note was received shortly thereafter. A former deputy sheriff and current service station owner, Wade Baldridge, had a tip from a person who had seen the men in an automobile together the day of Dr. Davis’ disappearance. Sgt. Massie investigated this lead and located a suspect, Robert Kenyon. During a search of Kenyon’s residence, officers obtained a paper tablet pad with an impression of the ransom note still visible. Kenyon was also in possession of a stolen car matching the description of the vehicle in which Dr. Davis was kidnapped and a .25-caliber automatic pistol.

A confession was obtained, and the suspect led officers to a brushy area just off the highway in Olden, north of West Plains, where Dr. Davis’ bullet riddled body was found. In an apparent effort to buy his life, Dr. Davis was shot while writing a check, which was

found still clutched in his hand. He had been killed shortly after his kidnapping, indicating the suspect had never planned to allow him to live.

It was Sgt. Massie's work in particular which resulted in the arrest of Kenyon, who was convicted of the crime and was the first person to be executed in the Missouri gas chamber, on April 28, 1939. Prior to this time executions in Missouri were accomplished by hanging.

Sgt. Massie was not there to witness Kenyon's death. In addition to being the first trooper stationed in Troop G, he also became the first officer victimized by violence in the troop. On February 23, 1938, Sgt. Massie responded to a home in Neelyville to question Frank Payne, a Butler County farmer, who had shot a man during a card game. Sgt. Massie and other officers tried to arrest Payne, who fled in a vehicle when he was approached at the residence. He refused to stop, and the officers shot out a tire.

When the vehicle was stopped, Sgt. Massie approached the driver's side and Payne jumped out with a gun in each hand and fired at him. One bullet struck Sgt. Massie's right hand, causing him to drop his weapon, and another entered his left lung. The other officers on the scene then shot Payne. Payne died the next day in a hospital. Sgt. Massie, 35, was hospitalized for 25 months, returned to limited duty for a short period, and resigned from the Patrol a few years thereafter. He was plagued with medical problems for the remainder of his life.

In 1937, Tpr. Graham was transferred to Fredericktown, in Madison County. He was promoted to sergeant in 1943, and assigned to Kennett, in Dunklin County. He resigned from the Patrol in 1946.

Also in 1937, Trooper H.J. Turnbull, an original member, was transferred to Willow Springs. He was originally from the area.

The New Troop Is Formed (1946-1955)

With the advent of effective two-way radio utilizing frequency modulation, and with World War II over, an effort was initiated for a much-needed upgrade to the Patrol communications system. A search began for the best locations in the state for suitable radio towers, with consideration given to locations where state land was available.

Through the generosity of the Charles Ferguson family of Willow Springs, land was leased to the Missouri State Highway Patrol in perpetuity at no cost. A member of the prestigious Highway Commission, Ferguson had been instrumental in securing a Highway Department Headquarters in Willow Springs years before.

In August 1946, the startup of Troop G was initiated. A small concrete block building was erected to serve as a headquarters radio station with an administrative office. Original secretary Doris Alsup recalled, "There was enough room for three desks and the radio equipment, and not much else".

In addition to FM two-way equipment, a high-powered, short-wave station was installed, allowing statewide and national communication via Morse code. A teletype machine connected to a telephone line was also installed. It was necessary to hire or transfer communications personnel to run the new station. The senior operator, who was appointed chief operator at the new station, was Charles O. “Axe” Alexander, a veteran telegrapher who had been in the Patrol since 1937.

Glenn Barnett related in a letter that he was notified of his employment as a radio operator on July 25, 1946—hired specifically to work at the new station. At that time, he was told to report for duty six days later at Troop D, Springfield, for training, and to remain there until the new station was ready, which turned out to be about a month later. Glenn served the remainder of his career, some 41 years, in Troop G.

Also transferring to the new troop to man the communications facility was Russell O. Trimble. “Russ” had been with the Patrol since 1943. He had been allowed to join the Radio Division prior to his 21st birthday due to a shortage of radio telegraphers during World War II. Russell was promoted to chief operator of Troop G in 1951.

While the headquarters building was being constructed, a secretary and the commanding officer worked out of an office in the basement of the Missouri Highway Department garage nearby. A telephone was not available and for several months the troop commander had to drive up the hill to the construction site where a single telephone had been installed. That line connected to a single telephone became the public number for Troop G, manned 24 hours, number 110. Captain Tandy later recalled that in those early days he and the troop lieutenant often served as desk officers.

Before the troop was officially open for business, Trooper Earl Barkley was called into action. On the morning of August 14, 1946, the sheriff of Douglas County requested Patrol assistance in the investigation of the murder of a local farmer. The man’s body had been found that morning north of Ava, MO. He had gone into town the Monday prior with more than $100 in cash with the intent of hiring a carpenter to do some work and was robbed and brutally murdered with a hammer. Three suspects were arrested in a case that remains in troop files labeled case number one.

On September 19, 1946, the *Willow Springs News* published a special edition calling attention to the official dedication of the troop, and welcoming the personnel of Troop G. At that time, the troop consisted of 17 officers serving a 13-county area. Captain John A. Tandy was commander, and Lieutenant Ted R. Taylor was second in command. The rank of lieutenant was relatively new, having been created in 1943. In addition to command officers listed above, original members of the troop were:

Sergeant Clark W. Huston, Troopers Claude F. Arnold, E.E. Barkley, N.C. Brill, Joseph E. Brummell, L.R. Carter, R.A. Eding, Ferial A. Findley, Ray A. Hovelmann, Luke Holman, Jimmie Howard, G. Richard Knight, R.W. Schuenemeyer, Marvin E. Taylor and D.L. Walker.

Captain Tandy held that position for 22 years, except for a two-month period in 1954. Upon retirement in 1968, he held a record of serving the second longest period as captain in a single troop.

The new troop was manned by a total of 15 road officers, half of them assigned to the northern tier of counties along U.S. Route 66. When Troop I, Rolla, was formed in 1949, Pulaski, Phelps, Camden, Dent, and Laclede counties were dropped from Troop G. Carter County was taken from Troop E and added to the Troop G service area. These changes reflect present day Troop G encompassing nine counties and a 7,547-square mile area.

A new troop headquarters building was constructed in 1951 to accommodate growth in the troop, housing administrative offices, a radio communications center, evidence laboratory, and troop meeting room. The previous headquarters building located at the foot of the 350-foot radio tower was retained as a “doghouse” for radio transmitting and receiving equipment, an emergency generator, and maintenance shed.

Lewis B. Howard briefly served as the second captain of Troop G from March 1, 1954, to April 30, 1954, at which time he was replaced by returning Captain John A. Tandy who served in that capacity until March 31, 1968.

1956-1965

An incident garnering national attention, and related in a 1959 *Reader’s Digest* article entitled, “Thirty Hours at Gunpoint”, describes the kidnapping of Trooper William R. “Bill” Little.

On February 1, 1958, Tpr. Little was parked in front of the Carter County Court House in Van Buren, accompanied by Sheriff Dell. His experience told him a passing vehicle bearing California plates, occupied by two young males, with no luggage visible, was out of place. The two officers agreed something was wrong and initiated a stop at a nearby service station. Although the two men in the vehicles could produce proper identification, something seemed out of order to the officers and a look into the back seat of the vehicle revealed a sawed-off shotgun.

Before the officers could react, the suspects had the drop on them with an automatic pistol and a shotgun. The gunmen forced both men into the service station, which was then robbed, and its occupants taken hostage. The suspects next developed a plan to take the wife of the service station attendant with them, leaving the others. Tpr. Little convinced the suspects to take him instead, along with his patrol car. The sheriff and the others were released.

Taking the vehicle they had been using, along with the patrol car, the suspects headed east on Highway 60 with Tpr. Little at gunpoint. A short distance later the suspects abandoned their stolen vehicle and continued with Tpr. Little driving his patrol car. Sheriff Dell had alerted Troop E Headquarters of the situation, and nearby Poplar Bluff patrol cars began following them closely. Tpr. Little was instructed to have them fall

back or he would be shot. The suspects had already related to Bill they had killed a California officer who caught them during an armed robbery.

Tpr. Little was instructed by the suspects to begin using his red lights and siren to get through traffic more quickly. At Sikeston, a civilian vehicle failed to get out of their way and was fired upon twice by the suspects. At the Illinois/Missouri line the group was compelled to stop for gas, and another service station was robbed at gunpoint. At Bardwell, KY, a police officer began following their vehicle closely and Tpr. Little was ordered to stop. One of the suspects then jumped from the car and fired three shots at the police car with a high-powered rifle.

Upon arrival in Paducah, KY, numerous Missouri, Kentucky, Illinois, and Paducah city police cars continued in the pursuit. The suspects began circling in and out of the business district of the city, and at one point, a city police car approached, and turned on his red lights and spotlight. At that time, one suspect fired numerous times with a shotgun and rifle at the pursuing cars. A Paducah City officer fired back and shot out Tpr. Little's windshield. A running gun battle continued until the pursuing cars were forced by gunfire to back off.

One of the suspects was familiar enough with Paducah to eventually elude their pursuers and they were able to leave the city undetected. After driving another 10 miles, Tpr. Little was ordered to stop at a farmhouse and gain entry into the home. The gunmen held a man and his wife hostage in their home through the night. During the night, a disagreement between the suspects resulted in them breaking up.

Around 3:30 p.m., after the incident started, the suspects divided their robbery money and one left. The other suspect then told Tpr. Little that at midnight it would all be over as he intended to shoot himself. Around 10 p.m., the suspect stated, "This is it". He then instructed Tpr. Little and the hostages in the home to walk outside with him.

Once outside, he instructed them to walk one way, as he walked another. Moments later a shot was fired in the darkness. Tpr. Little bolted back into the home, obtained a shotgun and light. Upon returning, he found the suspect lying face down in the yard with a gunshot wound in the head. Surprisingly, the suspect survived, and the second suspect was soon apprehended. Both received life sentences at Alcatraz for their crimes. Tpr. Little drove his battered patrol car home that night, and continued serving the Patrol, ending his career as a zone sergeant, living the remainder of his life in Van Buren.

In the display case in the lobby of Troop G Headquarters hangs Missouri House Resolution Number 14, recognizing Tpr. William R. Little for his bravery in offering himself as a hostage.

1966-1975

A front-page feature article in the *Willow Springs News,* dated September 15, 1966, begins with the headline, "Troop G, A Community Asset". The article celebrating the

20th anniversary of Troop G stated the troop consisted of a captain, one lieutenant, six sergeants, 17 troopers, six radio operators, three driver examiners, four weight inspectors, two secretaries, and one maintenance person. At that time, 11 officers were stationed in Willow Springs. One sergeant and two troopers resided in West Plains; one trooper in Gainesville; one trooper in Thayer; one sergeant and two troopers in Mountain Grove; one trooper in Ava; two troopers in Houston; one trooper in Winona; one trooper in Ellington; and one trooper was stationed in Van Buren.

Later that same year, October 1966, the rank of corporal was officially created by the Patrol and four members of the troop received the rank.

On April 1, 1968, George W. Thurmond assumed duties as the third commander of Troop G. Captain Thurmond, using the same badge number as outgoing Captain Tandy, number eight, served the troop until he retired November 30, 1972.

A *Patrol News* article dated 1969 gave Troop G's present strength as 35 uniformed members and 21 civilian employees. Thurman was captain and Wilton L. Hutchings was the only lieutenant assigned to Willow Springs.

At the suggestion of Capt. Thurmond, an organizational meeting of the South Central Law Enforcement Association was held March 3, 1969, in West Plains, with 203 officers in attendance.

On March 17, 1969, Trooper Michael E. Weaver was critically injured in a traffic accident while pursuing an intoxicated driver in Texas County on Highway 60. Witnesses reported that the intoxicated driver was on the wrong side of the road and crowded an oncoming 1962 Pontiac towing a 1961 Chevrolet off the road, causing it to lose control. The Pontiac skidded back across the highway into the path of Tpr. Weaver's vehicle, striking it head-on. The driver of the Pontiac suffered serious injuries and Tpr. Weaver suffered critical injuries when his vehicle overturned several times after the impact, pinning him in the vehicle. Tpr. Weaver was in intensive care for several days. The intoxicated driver he was pursuing was arrested later by Trooper Oliver E. Kernick and tested .18 percent on the Breathalyzer.

On April 29, 1969, Sergeant Lemuel R. Carter, well-known safety officer of Troop G, was killed in a traffic accident on Highway 60 in Wright County. Sergeant Carter was off duty when the accident occurred.

Troop G officers participated in a two-day search during the summer 1969 for six-year-old Denise Ann Brady, who became separated from her mother while playing along a creek in the extremely rough country near Johnson Shut-Ins State Park, in Reynolds County. Hundreds of officers and local citizens responded with a search spanning over 40 hours. The child was located unharmed about three miles from the location where she had wandered away from her mother.

On September 12, 1970, while on patrol south of Willow Springs, Troopers George M. "Mike" Zorsch and Robert L. Ross noticed a vehicle driving erratically and followed it onto the parking lot of a local nightclub/restaurant known as "The Aztec Club". When the

driver of the vehicle produced a food commissary card in lieu of his operator's license, Tpr. Ross requested he exit the vehicle and place his hands on the car.

At that time, the suspect went for a gun in his jacket pocket and Tpr. Ross threw him to the ground. The suspect hit the ground, drew a pistol and began firing at both troopers, who drew their weapons and returned fire. Unknown to Tpr. Ross at the time, he had been struck by the suspect and received a flesh wound in the leg. The suspect had also been struck by the officer's bullets but ran into the darkness toward the nightclub.

Tpr. Zorsch called Troop G Headquarters by radio and drew his shotgun from the patrol car. At that time, the suspect fired at the troopers again and entered the nightclub from the rear of the building.

Upon entering the kitchen area, the suspect fired at three persons attempting to flee the room. Two young boys working in the kitchen area were struck, one seriously injured and one, age 13, was killed. The suspect continued into the nightclub where he encountered the club bartender and shot him in the shoulder, taking him hostage as he continued for the front door.

In the meantime, Tpr. Zorsch ran to the front of the building and encountered the suspect and his hostage exiting the front door. Tpr. Zorsch hid behind a vehicle parked nearby and, when the suspect and his hostage were directly across from him, yelled to the hostage by name. The hostage interpreting this as a signal from the officer, ducked down, and at that point Tpr. Zorsch fired a single shot from his shotgun into the head of the suspect, killing him instantly. The hostage suffered no further injury.

As a result of what started as a routine traffic check, two persons were killed and three injured in a night of terror still remembered by many in Willow Springs. The suspect, James Baxter Littleton, was linked to an armed robbery in Oklahoma. Two of his associates in the robbery were located in rural Mountain View and arrested.

Working in a rural troop can have its lighter moments. In the September 1970 issue of the *Patrol News*, Trooper Doug Loring reported that while working rural Wright County one night, he noticed a light swinging back and forth. Upon investigating, he found two men on horseback carrying flashlights. They told Tpr. Loring they were looking for a lost pig and asked the trooper to notify them if he found one. Tpr. Loring asked the name of one of the men, who replied, "He ain't got no name, he's just a pig".

On the evening of February 19, 1971, Trooper Gary K. Atchley arrived at the Howell County Courthouse, West Plains, at almost the precise moment a jailbreak was in progress. Two men in the process of running from the jail saw Tpr. Atchley arriving. One of the men was Howard Littles, who had just been convicted of second-degree murder. The men had overpowered a guard, locked him in a cell and took his .38-caliber revolver. Both escapees were apprehended about four hours later.

On May 11, 1971, Mansfield City Marshal Homer E. Fry, 45, apparently surprised a group of burglars in progress at Richard Brothers store in Mansfield. He was shot in his patrol car several times by more than one caliber of shotgun, though he was able to

return fire with his .357 service revolver before becoming disabled. Officer Fry died a short time later. Though leads on suspects were developed, and several Troop G officers spent a great number of hours on the investigation, no one was convicted of the crime.

A 17-year-old Mountain View youth escaped the Howell County Jail in West Plains June 9, 1971. Jeffrey Lee Borman was being held for the murder of an elderly neighbor couple earlier in the year, having been arrested by Trooper Robert L. Ross shortly after the murders. Borman escaped after throwing hot coffee into the face of Sheriff Gene Jones and then assaulting him. Borman drove away in the sheriff's patrol car, which he drove to Brandsville and abandoned, taking the sheriff's .30-caliber M2 carbine rifle. The sheriff's car was located by Patrol plane and a manhunt was started.

Borman was not located overnight. The next day it was discovered he had broken into three homes and taken additional firearms. He was spotted by a private citizen later in the day and followed by bloodhounds to a hiding place where he was apprehended without resistance.

The old troop headquarters suffered a final indignity the early part of 1972, when a skunk invaded the garage. Trooper Donald E. Davis and Troop Mechanic George Roberts tried a number of methods to extract the beast, including spraying him with a water hose and, finally, *mace*. You might guess the result. Though finally removed from the building, the evidence of his stay lingered throughout the building for several days.

The first day of December 1972, Wilton L. Hutchings assumed responsibility as troop commander. He remained in charge of the troop until his retirement on September 30, 1975.

Bids were opened in June 1973 for new headquarters facilities at Troop G and Troop E, Poplar Bluff.

Construction of a new Troop G Headquarters building began in November 1973. Bad weather during winter and spring delayed progress, but the building was finally under roof in September 1974. Captain Hutchings was quoted as saying, "It will be nice to hold a troop meeting and have everyone seated in the same room". An open house was held April 20, 1975.

Capt. Hutchings retired as commander of Troop G, on October 1, 1975, after 32 years of service. A native of Dent County, Capt. Hutchings served the Patrol from 1943 in Troops A, C, I, and G. Capt. Hutchings retained his residency in Willow Springs, and remained active in civic affairs in the community the remainder of his life. He died at his home in Willow Springs on June 26, 1996.

Victor P. McKee was appointed captain in the troop, following Capt. Hutchings' retirement. He remained in that capacity until his retirement on June 30, 1982.

1976-1985

On February 21, 1976, the West Plains zone office was destroyed by a tornado. Corporal C. Radell Emmerson and Trooper L. Duane Laub were at the zone office filling their cars with gas 15 minutes before it was destroyed.

Members of Troop G made their debut into slow pitch softball, organizing the first team to play locally. Had it not been for a forfeit by another team, the troop's playing record would have been perfect that year ... no wins and 10 losses.

At 3:30 a.m., on August 9, 1979, 51 officers from various agencies in Troop G met at Troop G Headquarters to execute a raid that culminated a six-month investigation into drug activities in the region. The objects of the raid included 12 persons and nine homes spread over 120 acres of land and a large greenhouse used to cultivate marijuana. A total of 12 individuals were arrested. An equal number of arrests in the troop during the remainder of the growing season reflected an ever-increasing problem with drug abuse in the area.

Retired Captain George W. Thurman and his wife were killed in an automobile accident December 16, 1979, in West Plains. Capt. Thurman, 66, retired as commanding officer of Troop G in 1972.

One of the largest snowstorms recorded in modern history struck Troop G on February 8, 1980, dropping 16-24 inches over the entire troop. Drifts on roadways reached heights of three to six feet in many areas. Sergeant Doug B. Loring and Trooper Carl D. Watson responded to the situation with their personal four-wheel drive pickup trucks, as all patrol cars were snowbound, and even those with chains could not push through the deep snow on the roadways. In addition to delivering essential personnel to the office, the two officers began responding to emergency calls. Perhaps the greatest emergency was a woman who began having labor pains located six miles from Willow Springs. On his way to the residence, Sgt. Loring observed another four-wheel drive pickup that had failed in an attempt to make it to the residence, along with a tractor and snow blade. After loading the woman, Sgt. Loring found he had parked on a large woodpile under the snow, and after considerable effort digging, he was able to free his vehicle and safely deliver the woman to a hospital in Mountain View where she had her baby.

On February 25, 1980, Trooper James E. McNiell was working traffic on Route MM in Texas County, near the community of Dunn. He was assisting the driver of a disabled flatbed tractor-trailer, with the driver sitting in his patrol car on the passenger side. His red lights were running when an approaching tractor-trailer veered onto the shoulder of the road, struck him from behind, and demolished his patrol car. Tpr. McNiell and his passenger sustained serious injuries in the accident, and both were hospitalized for several days.

In spring 1980, the troop underwent an open-ranks inspection as part of a statewide review of all troops.

In early 1981, an elderly Shannon County couple was in the process of closing their country store, known as Searcy's Store, located along Highway 60 at Montier. Three men wearing ski masks appeared at the door and windows of the store and began firing. The woman was killed instantly by a shotgun blast to the head, and the man was critically injured by two blasts. Before the men gained entrance to the store they were scared off when someone drove up. The couple had operated a store at this location for 20 years, and a great amount of support from the community was brought to bear in solving the case. These leads were utilized and led to the arrest of three persons charged with and convicted of the crimes.

Following an almost identical path of a tornado that destroyed the West Plains zone office in 1976, a tornado again struck West Plains on April 16, 1982, and again destroyed the zone office. Earlier in the month, a tornado in Ozark County resulted in three fatalities, including the driver of a car blown off the road and into a ravine by the storm.

Robert L. Hampton arrived to assume duties as the new troop commander July 1, 1982, serving until his retirement December 31, 1987.

Troop G officers investigated a bizarre shooting in the early part of 1983. A man in a tavern in Mountain View, having spent the entire day drinking, became belligerent. He went to his pickup, obtained a chainsaw, and returned to the tavern with the stated intent of, "cutting up some". The bartender went to his pickup, obtained a shotgun and confronted the individual with the chainsaw ordering him to put it down. When the man with the chainsaw lunged at the bartender, he fired a single round into the chest of the assailant, ending his life.

During 1984, Troop G Officers were called to help keep the peace during a strike by lead miners in Viburnum, Iron County, which had become violent.

In mid-April 1984, Troop G officers initiated an investigation, which continued for a year and resulted in the breakup of a major car theft vehicle-rebuilding ring known as a "chop shop". The results of this complicated case included the recovery of over 100 stolen vehicles or vehicle parts, and the arrest and conviction in Federal Court of four Howell County men and one Oklahoma man of charges of conspiracy to sell or dispose of stolen vehicles across state lines.

Also in April 1984, Trooper Stephen L. Bartlett was honored with a plaque during the Second Annual Missouri Law Enforcement Conference, sponsored by the Missouri Police Chiefs Association for his work during the investigation into the right-wing extremist group "The Covenant, The Sword, and The Arm of the Lord", commonly known as the CSA. Despite continual danger to him and his family over the span of two years, Tpr. Bartlett was relentless in pursuit of the leaders of the gang suspected of weapons violations and violent activities in the area. On April 19, 1985, 24 officers and three radio operators from Troops G, E, and I assisted over 400 other officers from the FBI, ATF, Arkansas State Police, Ozark County Sheriff's Office, Baxter County,

Arkansas Sheriff's Office, Missouri Water Patrol, and Missouri Conservation Commission in a standoff at the compound of the CSA located in Ozark County.

The Patrol's mission during the incident was to maintain 24-hour roadblocks to prevent unauthorized persons from entering the area and to assist in searching all persons and vehicles leaving while federal agencies served search warrants on the property. An armed standoff ensued and continued until April 24, when the CSA leaders surrendered. Five members were arrested. Some 30 women and children were allowed to leave. A search of the compound yielded 125 guns, including 20 machine guns, anti-tank and anti-aircraft rockets, hand grenades, two stolen trucks, and a 55-gallon barrel of cyanide.

The Troop G Satellite Crime Laboratory opened its doors for business on September 4, 1984. David F. Nanneman transferred to Troop G's laboratory with experience, having previously worked in General Headquarters and as director of the Satellite Lab in St. Joseph.

At 5 a.m., November 9, 1985, numerous Troop G officers were among a group of law enforcement officials numbering over 60 who began serving felony warrants for the arrest of some 70 defendants, involving 108 counts of narcotics manufacturing or sale in south central Missouri. The warrants were the result of a 10-month undercover narcotics investigation by members of the Patrol's undercover team. The arrests centered in the Howell and Wright counties.

1986-1995

A shooting incident on July 15, 1988, led Troop G officers to the residence of Billie L. Dahms, accused of shooting his wife, Brenda, at their residence near Ellington, Reynolds County. The investigation at the residence revealed a large-scale marijuana growing operation. The next day a search warrant was executed on the remainder of the property, and a clandestine methamphetamine lab was discovered in a travel trailer behind the house. Officers confiscated 47 pounds of high-quality marijuana, 15 growing plants, and 13.5 pounds of methamphetamine valued in excess of a half million dollars.

Troop G members, along with several local, state, and federal agencies met at Troop G headquarters to participate in Operation Shakedown on May 23, 1986. The event was planned to prepare in the event of a major earthquake along the New Madrid Fault to the east.

The morning of April 24, 1986, Mr. Byler, the president of the Farmer's Bank of Raymondville, called the Texas County Sheriff's Office reporting he had received a telephone call from an unknown individual who told him his wife was being held hostage in their family home. The caller demanded $100,000 be brought to the home in exchange for her release. A sheriff's deputy instructed Mr. Byler to remain at the bank until officers could contact him there. Instead, Mr. Byler, accompanied by a bank employee, placed $22,000 in a brief case and drove to the Byler home.

Upon arrival, they were confronted by a man dressed in camouflage clothing and blackened face armed with a handgun. He ordered Mr. Byler and his employee to lie face down on the ground and shot each in the back of the head. He also beat and kicked the female bank employee before fleeing with the money in Mr. Byler's vehicle. Both victims, though seriously injured, managed to get to another vehicle at the home and drove back to the bank in Raymondville where they met a Texas County deputy.

At this point, the Patrol and FBI were notified, and when Troop G personnel arrived at the Byler home, they found that Wanda Byler had been killed while lying on a bed with her hands bound. She had been shot twelve times with at least two weapons of different caliber. The vehicle used earlier by the suspect to make his escape was found abandoned just over a mile from the home.

A command post was established in Houston and a massive manhunt and roadblocks were established. An investigation was initiated under the guidelines of a major case squad, and a massive number of leads were collected. One lead broke the case. The female bank employee shot at the Byler home told an interviewing officer that the suspect resembled Roy White, a Houston resident she knew. This bit of information along with the other leads collected and investigated resulted in the arrest of White and the recovery of a portion of the money taken from the bank. White was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in the Missouri Penitentiary, where he died a few years later of cancer.

On September 26, 1986, Troop G's Marijuana Eradication Unit, acting on a tip from the FBI, went to a Wright County farm looking for a marijuana growing operation. Instead, they found a methamphetamine laboratory, one of the largest found to date. Two persons were arrested at this location, and a key was found to a motel room in Springfield, where 43 pounds of methamphetamine were seized, and an additional two persons arrested. Further investigation by the Patrol, DEA, and FBI yielded an additional lab found in a converted dairy barn in Wright County, and one in a home in Laclede County. During the investigation, links were discovered to the Hell's Angels Outlaw Motorcycle Gang, and a multi-state operation was shut down.

In December 1986, as a harbinger of things to come, Troop G Radio Operators Richard S. Carroll, and Robert L. "Lou" Wehmer attended the first training session for the installation of an IBM System 36 mid-range computer in Troop G Headquarters. Later that year, lines were installed to allow two terminals in the radio room, one at the front desk and one in the office of the captain's secretary. The age of computers had arrived.

During summer 1986, a new receiving repeater was installed at Alton to improve communications in rural Oregon County.

Troop G was notified by Trooper Rocky E. Seiner, at 12:45 a.m., June 10, 1987, that he was en route to an attempted murder north of Cabool, in Texas County. Upon arrival, he discovered James and Genola McClennahan had been victims of a forced entry of their home earlier in the evening. They had been robbed, and both suspects had raped Mrs. McClennahan. The couple had then been tied up; Mr. McClennahan was shot with a

bow and arrow, and Mrs. McClennahan was smothered, stabbed and had her throat slashed. Both were left for dead. Upon exiting the home, the suspects set it on fire. Mrs. McClennahan was able to free herself and sought help at her sister's residence nearby. Amazingly both McClennahans survived, though they continued to be plagued with medical problems for years thereafter.

A criminal investigation was conducted by the Patrol and a massive manhunt was initiated based on the couple's description of the suspects and their vehicle. Two days later Illinois State Police at Rock Island arrested both suspects. They were identified as Darin Jay Daniels, 23, and Max D. Miller, 28. Both men were returned to Texas County for trial.

On August 15, 1987, while awaiting trial in the Texas County jail, Miller and Daniels escaped custody. Again, a massive manhunt was launched for the suspects in a stolen vehicle. In the early morning hours the next day, they were spotted riding in a canoe on the Piney River. They eluded officers in the woods until apprehended at a roadblock on August 20.

Siah T. Davis started the New Year in 1988 as commander, initiating his official duties in that capacity on the first day of January. He remained in charge of the troop until he retired August 31, 1992.

Members of Troop G's Division of Drug and Crime Control (DDCC) assisted the Shannon County Sheriff's office in solving a murder during October 1988. An Eminence City policeman discovered a human skull and other bones in the woods near the community of Ink. Further investigation revealed a jawbone fitting the skull had earlier been turned into the Shannon County Sheriff's Office. There were two bullet holes in the skull, and the remains were identified as belonging to Judy Weible of Eminence who had been missing from her home since June 1988. A man who had been dating Weible in the same time frame was arrested and tried for the murder.

During the summer of 1988, Troop G received a complaint that some 60 telephone poles had been cut down and hauled away in Carter County. Thieves had stolen the wire several weeks before. Trooper Moss investigated and arrested two men from Ellsinore who admitted cutting them for use as fence posts.

Tpr. Seiner apprehended a murder suspect following a manhunt in Wright County during September 1989. The body of a 55-year-old woman was discovered on September 28, shot to death with a .30-caliber rifle, at her home. A suspect, the victim's 36-year-old son, surrendered to Tpr. Seiner without resistance when located a short time later.

Trooper J.M. "Mike" Stuart received the Troop G commander's award in 1990, as "the leader in traffic and criminal arrests for the troop". Inspector Jim Gregory was recipient of the civilian award.

In 1990 Troop G led the state in marijuana eradication. That year 57,469 cultivated plants were seized.

In plans developed in 1991, Troop G was designated as the Emergency Operations Center for south central Missouri and southeast Missouri in the event of a major earthquake. Should that happen, the commander of Troop G would become responsible for coordinating all rescue and rehabilitation effort between county disaster coordinators and the 38 state and federal agencies that would be involved. This responsibility upon the Troop G commander remains in effect today.

David L. Cook replaced outgoing Capt. Davis on September 1, 1992, serving as commander of Troop G until August 31, 1994.

A *West Plains Quill* article dated September 9, 1992, relates an incident resulting in the shooting death of a 20-year-old man from Texas County. Trooper D. Kevin Floyd was working traffic on Missouri Highway 95 at the junction of U.S. Highway 60, when he observed a car driving without headlights. When Tpr. Floyd attempted to stop the vehicle but was unsuccessful. This led to a pursuit exceeding speeds of 120 miles per hour. While trying to elude the officer, the suspect attempted to cross the highway through the median and became stuck.

The suspect exited the vehicle and started running toward Tpr. Floyd, who ordered him to lie on the ground. Instead, the suspect turned around and walked back to his vehicle, opened the driver's door, and re-entered his vehicle.

Tpr. Floyd approached the car and ordered the suspect to get out, at which time the suspect spun around and lunged at Tpr. Floyd, who had just drawn his service pistol. At that time, Tpr. Floyd fired a single shot striking the suspect, killing him.

The *Willow Springs News* reported on May 26, 1993, that Corporal William L. Hobbs was awarded the MSHP Citation of Valor, "for performing an extraordinary act of heroism". The award recognized Hobbs for "his courage in confronting and neutralizing a dangerous felon with an automatic rifle".

The article went on to explain this incident occurred on May 27, 1992, while Cpl. Hobbs was assisting members of the Douglas County Sheriff's Department, Missouri Probation and Parole, and other Patrol members who had come under fire while attempting to serve papers on Ray Donald Absher, 63, in the community of Denlow, northeast of Ava. Absher was wanted for violation of his parole for assault and weapons violations.

Absher had refused to surrender or come out of his residence, thus tear gas was shot into his home. He exited the house brandishing an AK-47 fully automatic rifle and began shooting bursts directly at officers, narrowly missing several. Cpl. Hobbs rounded the corner of the home and fired one round from his Glock service pistol, fatally striking Absher in the head. A subsequent search of his home located numerous loaded guns, a large quantity of ammunition, knives, and survival literature.

In 1993, a remote transmitting repeater was installed atop Taum Sauk Mountain in Iron County, MO, to improve radio communications in the eastern portions of the troop.

Also in 1993, the troop's marijuana eradication efforts reached 10,997 plants seized in 185 locations with 44 arrests.

Some 14 retirees and 10 spouses attended the first "retiree breakfast" held at Troop G Headquarters on February 22, 1993. Over the years, the retirees continued to meet at Troop G.

Town Hall meetings were conducted in the early part of 1994. Troop G staff, zone members, along with representative members of the various divisions in the troop met with the public to solicit input from the community and inform the public of the Patrol's mission.

During 1994, Troop G acquired its first K-9. A German shepherd named "Lucky" arrived from Germany to begin his tour of duty with Trooper Steven L. Grass, beginning in May of that year.

Each year during this period brought an increase in total marijuana plants seized. The 1994 season resulted in an especially large figure delivered as the result of a raid upon an enormous operation in Shannon County, with a total of 208,000 plants seized during "Operation 4-Corners". During 1994, Troop G developed 133 cases related to marijuana cultivation.

On September 1, 1994, Arthur Dale Penn was promoted to captain, commanding Troop G. He served as such for one year, at which time he transferred to Troop B, Macon. Capt. Penn was commanding officer of Troop B for four years. At that time, he was promoted to major and transferred to General Headquarters (August 31, 1995). Capt. Penn was replaced by Captain Billy E. Chadwick who would serve as the troop commander for the next 15 years.

In 1995, Troop G had grown to include 52 uniformed members, 24 uniformed civilians, and 10 non-uniformed civilian employees. Plans were under way for the construction of a new regional crime lab. The first of modifications to the buildings to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) began.

A survey conducted by the Information Systems Division revealed a fact already known to many here. Troop G enjoyed the distinction of having the most experienced troopers by percentage in the state.

During summer 1995, a coordinated multi-agency operation on a river in the troop was launched with an objective of reducing rampant drug usage violations on area streams.

Also, during 1995, The Greater Ozarks Major Case Squad was created. Most city and county agencies in the troop were participants and training was initiated.

1996-2005

In July 1996, the Optimist Club of West Plains honored Trooper Jeffery R. Kinder as Officer of the Year. Assistant Chief Telecommunications Engineer William “Bill” Pollard used his summer vacation serving as a member of the Olympic games in Athens, Georgia.

On September 19, 1996, retired Sergeant Bill Little, 70, died at his home in Van Buren. He had lived in Van Buren and worked for the Patrol since 1957. In retirement Sgt. Little was known as “the Patrol” in his community and was one of Carter County’s leading citizens.

In August 1997, Trooper David D. Finley was named the “Law Enforcement Officer of the Year,” by the West Plains Optimist Club.

A new Satellite Crime Laboratory building was dedicated on October 19, 1997. Prior to this date, the lab had been quartered in the basement of the troop headquarters building. This represented a jump from 600 square feet to the 2,400 square feet in the new facility. The basement of the new building provided a much-needed evidence room and a much larger radio repair shop.

Troop G Lieutenant James J. Ewers and GHQ Pilot/Trooper Scott J. Roberts were flying marijuana eradication in the eastern portion of the troop on August 19, 1999. Unknown to them, the Missouri Air National Guard was conducting aerial maneuvers in Shannon County that day when two F-15 jets collided. One plane made it back safely to base after the accident, but the second crashed in a heavily wooded area of Shannon County, with the pilot ejecting. Lt. Ewers and Tpr. Roberts were able to locate the pilot and transported him to Fort Leonard Wood Hospital in their Patrol helicopter.

On September 7, 2000, Garry DeWayne Watson of Bunker, Reynolds County, began shooting a rifle at a Bunker policeman and three city workers near his residence. He was reportedly angry over a sewer easement dispute that had been ongoing over several months. Bullets from Watson’s rifle struck all four victims. Two city workers were killed at the scene; the other worker was seriously wounded. The Bunker city police officer sustained superficial wounds. Troopers and officers from several areas responded to the scene, but Trooper Martin L. “Marty” Wiseman and Water Patrolman Radnell Talbert were first to arrive on the scene. With disregard for their own safety, Tpr. Wiseman and Patrolman Talbert made their way to each of the three shooting victims still lying in the yard in front of the home. They checked vital signs of the two victims who were dead and managed to move the victim who was still alive to an ambulance waiting nearby. For his actions that day, Tpr. Wiseman was given the Citation of Valor by the Patrol.

Trooper Jeffrey R. Kinder was given a Meritorious Citation as a result of his actions the next month. In October 2000, Tpr. Kinder responded to a residence in Licking after Troop G received a request for assistance in a disturbance with a report of shots fired. Tpr. Kinder and Texas County deputies contacted Cecil D. Deidrich, who could be seen

through the windows carrying a rifle. Deidrich was coaxed outside the residence to talk to the officers but refused to surrender and walked back to the entrance of the home where Tpr. Kinder blocked his path. At that point, Deidrich reached into a pocket and produced a handgun. Tpr. Kinder grabbed his hand, pushed him to the ground, and gained control of the weapon. Deidrich was taken into custody without harm to himself or any of the other persons at the scene.

In May 2000, Troop G officers responded to a request for assistance by the Ozark County Sheriff on the farm of Gordon Winrod, a right-wing, racist minister who had abducted six children from other family members. Following a long standoff with numerous officers, Winrod, who was armed and had vowed to not be taken alive, was eventually lured from his home and apprehended. Winrod was sentenced to 30 years in prison for his actions.

Trooper Kelly Leland Poynter, 27, of Houston, MO, was called in the early morning hours of January 18, 2002, to work a three-vehicle injury traffic crash on U.S. Highway 63, in Texas County, two miles south of Houston. While Tpr. Poynter was investigating the initial crash, another speeding vehicle failed to slow for his emergency lights or change lanes and struck and killed him. A wrecker driver was also injured. The driver of the vehicle that struck Tpr. Poynter had been drinking. She was arrested at the scene and was charged with second-degree assault and involuntary manslaughter. She was convicted and sentenced to seven years but released after serving only 120 days—after completing an alcohol treatment program.

His wife and two young children survive Tpr. Poynter. He was the 22nd member of the Missouri State Highway Patrol to lose his life in the line of duty and had served the Patrol six years. On October 15, 2002, the “Trooper Kelly Poynter Memorial Highway” was dedicated in a ceremony along U.S. Highway 63 in Texas County in the area where Kelly Poynter was killed.

Troopers John S. Taylor and Shawn M. Dougherty, and Corporal Craig N. Ponder were recipients of Patrol Lifesaving Awards for their actions on the Current River on March 19, 2002. Tpr. Dougherty and Cpl. Ponder were off duty at the time but responded to a call for help at the Current River Bridge in Van Buren. In the rain-swollen stream three persons canoeing had become stranded and were clinging to trees and logs in the water. The officers, along with Carter County Sheriff Greg Melton, obtained two boats. In the swift, rising waters they managed to rescue all the canoers.

The night of April 27, 2002, seemed ordinary. As communications personnel were preparing to turn over evening operations to the midnight shift, a line of thunderstorms approached Willow Springs from the southwest, creating an F2 tornado aloft, which eventually touched down near troop headquarters. Those inside the building knew the storm was a severe one, as high winds struck the headquarters building seemingly from all sides. But damage to the building was not evident and everyone remained at his or her duty stations.

It was noticed immediately following the storm that radio reception was seriously degraded, as often happens when a large storm front passes. When signals did not improve, Assistant Chief Telecommunications Engineer Keith C. Womack picked up a flashlight and went to the “doghouse” to investigate. A large amount of debris from trees was on the parking lot as Womack made his way there, and as he moved the flashlight side to side, he made an amazing discovery. The 350-foot self-supporting steel tower, standing since the troop began in 1946, had fallen.

The entire length of the tower lay flat on the ground in a twisted pile of steel, wire, and antennas. The tower had fallen in one piece, pointed in the direction of the path of the tornado, the tip of the tower striking a home located in a nearby subdivision. The occupants of the home had just been in the room prior to the tower collapsing and had run from the room just as the tower drove the ceiling of the home through the room and into the floor. Amazingly, no one was injured in the storm, which did a considerable amount of damage in the community, including damage to the homes of Troop G employees.

A temporary tower was brought to Troop G on a trailer from Jefferson City, and in roughly three hours, Troop G was back on the air. A remote transmitter was erected in the coming days on King Mountain, a promontory to the east, delivering radio reception nearly equal to that of the original tower. Work began to clear the debris of the old tower and a new self-supporting tower of equal height was soon erected in the same location. The “doghouse”, located under the tower and the original 1946 troop headquarters building, survived the event with relatively minor damage and was repaired to its pre-tornado condition.

In November 2003, retired Sergeant Jimmie Howard, an original member of Troop G, died at the age of 85. Jimmie joined the Patrol and was sent to Troop G in 1945. Prior to joining the Patrol, Jimmie was in the United States Army, and was stationed at Schofield Barracks, HI, on December 7, 1941. He was eating breakfast in a mess hall on the island when it was machine gunned by a Japanese plane. From Pearl Harbor, he was sent to Guadalcanal and the New Georgia Islands.

Jimmie’s service in Troop G included zone sergeant and desk sergeant at troop headquarters. He was a legendary figure in Howell and Oregon counties, well known in his early years in the troop as the “hottest baseball pitcher in Howell, Oregon, and Ozark counties”.

Jimmie’s first felony arrest came three weeks after he was in his own car. He stopped a vehicle north of Thayer occupied by two men who appeared suspicious. As he approached the car, he noticed a sawed-off shotgun and a revolver in the front seat between the driver and passenger. Jimmie’s first car radio could only receive, not transmit, so there was no way to call for help. He drew his revolver and ordered both men out of the car and having only a single set of handcuffs, connected them together and around the red-light-siren combination on the front fender.

Trooper Howard then proceeded to take them to jail in Alton, 15 miles away. Further investigation revealed the men were wanted in Georgia for murder hours earlier and had been in a shoot-out with police in Mississippi.

The West Plains Optimist Club recognized Sergeant Marty Elmore as Law Enforcement Officer of the Year in 2004.

Sergeant Carl Dewayne Graham was shot and killed on Sunday, March 20, 2005, in front of his home near Van Buren in a cowardly ambush. Sgt. Graham had just completed his shift and was preparing to go see his four-year-old son. A suspect was charged with Sgt. Graham's murder on March 29, 2005. The suspect had been under investigation by Sgt. Graham for leaving the scene of a fatal accident on November 26, 2004. Following the death of Sgt. Graham, the investigation into the accident he had been working was continued. The suspect of his investigation was arrested and charged for involvement as the driver in this accident. His arrest occurred on March 23, 2005, three days after Sgt. Graham's murder. Six days later, while still in custody, the same suspect was charged with Sgt. Graham's murder. Sgt. Graham was 37 years old when he was killed. He had served the Patrol for 12 years. His four-year-old son, Haden, and his parents survive him.

While working speed enforcement with aircraft on September 22, 2005, Trooper Donald “Kevin” Floyd, 45, was struck by a pickup truck pulling a trailer. Tpr. Floyd had stopped another vehicle for speeding, contacted the driver of that vehicle, and had turned to walk back to his patrol car when he was struck by the truck, which had failed to change lanes or slow down as he approached the emergency lights. The driver of the truck cited inattention as his reason for striking Tpr. Floyd. Tpr. Floyd was airlifted by helicopter to St. Johns Hospital in Springfield where he succumbed to his injuries.

Tpr. Floyd started his Patrol career August 1, 1986. After graduation, he was assigned to Shannon County, with his home in Winona. He was a native of Licking, MO. Prior to joining the Patrol, Tpr. Floyd had worked in the construction industry and the oil fields of Texas. In 1989, he was able to transfer closer to home, being assigned to Mountain Grove, Wright County. His wife, Cheryl (Trentham), is originally from Licking, also. The Floyds had two children. Their son, Jacob “Jake”, 19, and daughter, Telena, 16. Tpr. Floyd was an avid outdoorsman, enjoying hunting and fishing, as well as softball and activities with his family. He is the 27th member of the Patrol to die in the line of duty and was the fourth member to die during 2005.

2006-2015

In January 2006, Troop G officers were called to a shooting incident in Summersville, MO, which left one woman dead, and her husband seriously wounded. The couple’s daughter and her boyfriend were charged in the incident.

In February 2006, Troop G officers stopped a commercial vehicle near Willow Springs. The car hauler was found to contain two vehicles, which had nearly 100 pounds of marijuana and five pounds of cocaine. Troop G officers assisted with “rollover”

operations, which yielded five arrests and several seizures in the states of Illinois, California, and Missouri.

Also in February, Troop G officers stopped a stolen tractor-trailer in Eminence, MO. The trailer was found to be carrying over $6 million of stolen cellular telephones. Federal authorities were able to trace the theft to the Cuban mafia in the state of Florida. The Troop G seizure led to the disbanding of that criminal organization. Federal authorities also located a warehouse of stolen electronic equipment in the state of Tennessee while conducting this investigation.

In April 2006, Sergeant Craig N. Ponder received the Officer of the Year award, during the annual The MASTERS Banquet and Patrol Awards Ceremony in Jefferson City. Sgt. Ponder received his award for his leadership qualities demonstrated after the murder of Sergeant C. Dewayne Graham Jr., and following the Taum Sauk Dam incident.

On September 24, 2006, Troop G hosted an open house celebration celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Missouri State Highway Patrol. With an estimated crowd of over 300 persons, the event was deemed a huge success.

In March 2007, Troop G officers were called to assist the Texas County Sheriff's Department with a homicide investigation in Roby, MO. The suspect fled the scene, resulting in a multi-agency manhunt. During the manhunt, it was confirmed that the suspect was sleeping in a hollow log, within the national forest. In May, the suspect was located within a remote area and arrested without incident. Three female suspects were also arrested for aiding the suspected killer.

In April 2007, Troop G Headquarters received a cell phone call from a victim who was involved in a plane crash in Douglas County. The private aircraft crashed in a remote wooded hillside, killing the pilot. The passenger in the plane walked out of the crash site and contacted Troop G with his cell phone. He was able only to give vague descriptions as to his location, but with the assistance of Air-Evac and Troop G, the caller was located within 30 minutes of the crash.

In June 2007, Troop G was advised that a postal worker for the U.S. Postal Service identified a suspicious package addressed to the West Plains Police Department. The Patrol's Bomb Squad was activated and responded to examine the package. It was confirmed that the package contained an improvised explosive device consisting of a pipe bomb. The package was rendered safe, and upon the conclusion of the investigation, a 60-year-old male suspect was arrested and charged.

On October 1, 2008, a suspect shot at a Missouri National Guard helicopter used for marijuana eradication while it was flying over rural Douglas County. A National Guard pilot and Patrol trooper were on board. A trooper on the ground located the suspect, a 69-year-old white female, and took her into custody.

On October 29, 2008, a trooper initiated a traffic stop within the city of Eminence. While issuing a warning to the driver the trooper became suspicious and asked for consent to search the vehicle, which the driver granted. A subsequent search of the vehicle

uncovered a large quantity of individually packaged marijuana-laced “rice crispy treats”, a large quantity of marijuana-laced chocolate candy cups, several margarine tubs containing liquid infused with marijuana, several jars of liquid containing psilocybin mushrooms, and a small quantity of opium.

Overnight from March 17 to March 18, 2008, approximately 10 inches of rain fell in the Carter County area. This rain caused several creeks and rivers to flood. At approximately 9:41 a.m. on March 18, 2008, the Carter County Sheriff’s office received an emergency call in reference to people trapped in a mobile home and vehicle north of Van Buren on Missouri Route D. Trooper Shawn M. Dougherty, along with personnel from the Carter County Sheriff’s Department, Van Buren Fire Department, Missouri Department of Transportation, and National Park Service responded to the scene.

When officers arrived on the scene it was determined there were five individuals trapped. Three were in the mobile home with floodwaters near their home. Two other subjects were trapped at their vehicle and in need of immediate rescue. The vehicle was turned on its side with only a small portion of the vehicle extending out of the flood water. One of the subjects was standing on top of the vehicle and the other was pinned against his truck by the swift water.

Several attempts were made to reach the two subjects at the truck, and finally the subject pinned against his vehicle caught a rope thrown to him. A large tree and two fences were just below the truck and the rescuers, which made for an increased safety risk. Tpr. Dougherty and members of the National Park Service pulled this subject to safety. The line was then thrown to the second subject. This subject placed the rope under his arms and told the rescuers he was unable to swim. Without waiting for instructions, the subject jumped from the truck into the swift water. Because the rope was at full length, only Tpr. Dougherty and Ranger Pat Jackson were holding it. The subject was swept down the current and into the tree. The rope was tight and caused the subject to go under the swift water. Tpr. Dougherty and Ranger Jackson gave the subject slack by walking into the flooded water, which allowed the subject to rise out of the water. District Ranger Marty Towery walked into the flooded water and was able to grab the rope between Tpr. Dougherty and Ranger Jackson and the subject. The subject was then forced under the water another time, and this time was not able to rise out of the water. Without hesitation Tpr. Dougherty jumped into the swift water, crossed the fences, and swam to the subject. Tpr. Dougherty attempted to raise the subject out of the swift water, however, could not get him to rise. Tpr. Dougherty then went under the water and pushed the subject up out of the water. Tpr. Dougherty was able to keep the subject’s head out of the water until he was pulled close enough to the bank for Missouri Department of Transportation employee Roger Christensen to reach Tpr. Dougherty and the subject and pull them out of the water. The rescuers then immediately went to the aid of the three subjects in the mobile home and were able to bring them to safety.

Tpr. Dougherty performed an extraordinary act of heroism extending far above and beyond the call of duty in a situation demanding immediate action and involving considerable personal danger to him. The subject, based on all accounts, would have

died had Tpr. Dougherty not put his life in harm's way to make sure the subject was kept out of the water and able to breathe while he was pulled into the bank out of the tree, fence and swift water. Tpr. Dougherty received a Patrol Valor Award for his actions.

On March 27, 2009, a jury found Lance Shockley guilty of first-degree murder in the death of Sergeant Carl Dewayne Graham Jr. The jury deliberated for three hours before announcing its decision. The four-day trial included testimony from 36 witnesses. Assistant Attorney General Kevin Zoellner represented the state, and Mr. Bradford Kessler, with the Capital Public Defender's Office in St. Louis, represented Shockley. After a brief recess, the jury returned to the courtroom for the penalty phase. On Saturday, March 28, 2009, the jury was asked to deliberate again and decide if Shockley should be sentenced to death or life in prison, without the possibility of probation or parole. When the jury deadlocked on whether to recommend life in prison without parole or the death penalty, the decision then went to the judge in the case. On Friday, May 22, at approximately 1:15 p.m. at the Carter County Courthouse, Judge David Evans sentenced Lance Shockley to death for the March 2005 murder of Sergeant Carl Dewayne Graham, Jr.

On January 24, 2010, heavy rain fell in the Troop G area, causing extreme flooding and making low water bridges impassible. A Hummer H3 sport utility vehicle was swept into the swift water of Bryant Creek on County Road 76-114 in Douglas County. The water carried the vehicle approximately 20 feet from the bridge. Trooper Justin D. Piccinino, Trooper Robert D. Crewse, and the Skyline Fire Department responded to the scene. The water was over four feet deep and continuing to rise. The outside temperature was 40 degrees, and the water temperature was at a hypothermic level. When it was determined the fire department lacked the resources to make an immediate rescue, Tpr. Piccinino decided to enter the water and rescue the female driver from the vehicle. He removed his duty leather, vest, and other gear. Tpr. Crewse obtained rope to use as a tether while Tpr. Piccinino was in the water. Once the rope was around his chest, Tpr. Piccinino entered the water, which immediately carried him downstream to the vehicle. He secured the driver with the rope and swam downstream toward the shore. Once Tpr. Piccinino and the woman were out of the water, measures were taken to prevent hypothermia. Both recovered fully from the incident.

Captain Billy E. Chadwick retired from the Patrol on July 1, 2010, after serving as the commander of Troop G for nearly 15 years. Lieutenant Dwayne F. Isringhausen was promoted to captain and became the eleventh troop commander in Troop G's history. On August 1, 2010, Sergeant George W. Arnold from Troop I, Rolla, was promoted to lieutenant and joined the Troop G staff.

On November 1, 2010, search warrants were served at Camp Zoe in rural Shannon County as the result of a lengthy investigation into illegal drug activity at that campground. In cooperation with the U.S. Attorney's Office, hundreds of officers from multiple federal, state, county, and local agencies were involved in the execution of those warrants.

A two-vehicle traffic crash in Phelps County, on February 1, took the life of a 55-year-old Licking, MO, woman who lost control of her vehicle in a snowstorm and slid into the path of a patrol car driven by Lieutenant George W. Arnold. Lieutenant Arnold sustained serious injuries in the near-head-on collision.

Tpr. Piccinino accepted a Valor Award at the Patrol's annual awards ceremony in Jefferson City. The Patrol recognized him for his heroic water rescue of a woman in Ozark County in 2010. A detailed account of that incident appears in the 2010 section of Troop G's history.

Noblett Lake, a popular lake southwest of Willow Springs, in Douglas County, was drained in August by vandals. Someone opened the gate on the dam, allowing the lake to drain most of its water. Numerous law enforcement agencies were involved in the investigation of that incident.

The merging of the Water Patrol with the Highway Patrol took effect January 1, 2011.

On April 24, 2011, the Troop G area received between 12-14 inches of rain. The unprecedented amount of rain left virtually every river and creek in the Troop G area in a torrent. The Missouri Department of Transportation estimated that nearly 200 low water crossings were closed in the Troop G area due to the high water. That evening, a 54-year-old Hardenville resident attempted to cross one of the low water crossings north of Mammoth Springs, AR. He was swept away by the swift current and drowned. During that same period, Troop G officers made seven swift water rescues.

Troop G officers made over 1,400 criminal and drug arrests in 2011. That number placed them second among all troops in that category.

After several years without a K-9 officer in Troop G, Trooper Robert M. "Mike" Greenan and his K-9 partner, Dak, went to work in September in the troop.

Clerk Typist II Lacey Loring's quick action one October evening in 2011 is credited with saving the life of her husband, Trooper Garrett J. Loring. Lacey found her husband in the kitchen of their home, choking and unable to breathe. He was attempting to perform an abdominal thrust on himself by throwing himself against the edge of the kitchen sink. After performing numerous abdominal thrusts on Garrett, Lacey was able to dislodge the piece of shrimp blocking his windpipe, just as he was beginning to turn blue. Her quick, decisive actions saved Garrett's life.

On October 1, 2011, five former Water Patrol Division officers were assigned to Troop G and began working the roadways. The officers quickly acclimated themselves to the work and embraced their new duties. During the month of December 2011, one of the newly assigned troopers, Brian D. Foster, made nearly 90 arrests, including two intoxicated drivers. Troop G accepted the responsibility for policing four lakes and 13 riverways. The increase in personnel allowed for the addition of Zone 10 as a result of the splitting of Zone 3, Northern Howell and Shannon counties.

On November 17, 2011, a Phelps County Court found Larry Brashers guilty of assault of a law enforcement officer in the second degree, stealing, armed criminal action, robbery in the first degree, and resisting arrest. The charges stemmed from the 2008 assault of Corporal Curtis R. Haden in Texas County.

In 2012, Troop G responded to numerous grass fires during one of the worst droughts in history. As many random fires broke out in the area, officers were tasked with responding and assisting small departments with traffic control, first aid, evacuation, etc.

Trooper Paul V.J. Volkmer's intelligence gathering at a traffic stop led to a search warrant on a residence in West Plains. This led to numerous arrests of people selling drugs in the area. It was revealed that one individual was actively selling controlled substances as a main source of income.

In December 2012, Sergeant Charley A. Hogue accepted the Unsung Hero Award for Region VII from Missouri Special Olympics. Sgt. Hogue's idea of conducting a 5k run/walk has become a mainstay in the community. The events included hundreds of runners and raised a total of $5,100.

On February 15, 2013, an abandoned passenger vehicle was discovered on a remote forest service road in Carter County. The vehicle had been associated with a missing man from the state of Michigan. It contained the man's wallet and the vehicle's keys were in the ignition. The Carter County Sheriff asked Troop G and DDCC officers to assist in the investigation. Officers searched the area around the abandoned vehicle and interviewed potential witnesses but were not able to generate any leads in the missing person case. During the next few months, numerous searches of the area utilizing dogs, a helicopter, and organized search teams revealed nothing. The circumstances surrounding the abandoned vehicle and its missing owner had become a mystery. On June 23, 2013, a volunteer search and rescue team discovered the missing man's skeletal remains. A small handgun was at the scene and there appeared to be a single gunshot wound to the head. An autopsy was performed, and the coroner ruled the death a suicide.

On April 18, 2013, heavy spring rains caused area creeks and streams to overflow their banks. Troop G troopers distinguished themselves by rescuing several persons who were stranded by the rising flood waters. This was also the first instance where a Patrol helicopter, utilizing a short haul rescue line, was used in a water rescue.

Shortly after 8 a.m., Troop G radio received a report of an elderly couple who were trapped in their mobile home due to rising flood waters of a nearby creek in Douglas County. Trooper Daniel J. Johnson and Trooper Jason W. Philpott responded to the scene with a Patrol rescue boat. Upon their arrival, they found the water over the mobile homes underpinning, beginning to enter the dwelling. Tprs. Johnson and Philpott launched the boat in a nearby field and made their way to the mobile home. Once there, Tpr. Johnson entered the residence and found the two persons. He secured them with life jackets and helped them board the rescue boat. Tpr. Philpott operated the boat, which was making its way back to higher ground when the boat's propeller became

fouled by barbed wire from a submerged fence. The boat stalled, turned sideways, and began taking on water from the swift current. The boat quickly swamped, forcing the elderly couple and troopers into the torrent of swift water. Without regard for their own safety, Tprs. Johnson and Philpott retrieved each elderly person and swam against the current bringing both to the water's edge and safety. Tprs. Johnson and Philpott were awarded the Patrol's Valor Award for their act of heroism.

Later that afternoon at about 4 p.m., Troop G received a report of two turkey hunters stranded in a field by flood waters near the Boiling Springs Conservation Area in Texas County. Corporal Scott L. Nelson responded to the scene where other emergency personnel had assembled. Due to flooded timber and debris, the location was extremely inaccessible. One of the hunters was wheelchair bound and the other had left him to look for a way out. As the water rose, the hunter floated from his wheelchair and was able to beach himself on a small patch of high ground surrounded by rising flood water from the Big Piney River. Responders on scene decided rescue from the air was the best course of action. A Patrol helicopter was dispatched from the Patrol's General Headquarters in Jefferson City. Due to the circumstances, a conventional rescue boat was not an option. Cpl. Nelson borrowed a small kayak and paddle from a nearby resident. He paddled to the person and found him hypothermic and disoriented. Cpl. Nelson replaced the victim's wet clothes with dry blankets and supported him until the helicopter arrived and lifted him to safety. The second hunter was located in a field a short distance away and was also rescued by helicopter. Due to Cpl. Nelson's innovative thinking and willingness to intervene, he received the Patrol's Lifesaving Award.

In March 2014, Captain Isringhausen retired as a member of the Patrol. Lieutenant Mark G. Inman, was promoted to the rank of captain and named troop commander of Troop G.

In the early morning hours of April 14, 2014, troopers from Troop G and several other area law enforcement agencies concluded a series of long-term narcotics investigations by arresting 58 individuals in Texas County and the surrounding Troop G area. Their charges were related to the sale and distribution of narcotics. The investigation spanned approximately three years and was conducted by troopers of the Patrol along with the South Central Drug Task Force.

On May 4, 2014, Jason McClurg, a resident of Winona, MO, was charged in the death of his wife after he allegedly poisoned her with Kool Aid laced with drugs. On July 4, while awaiting trial in the Shannon County Jail, McClurg and several other inmates were let out by a dispatcher to stand in the courthouse yard to watch the fireworks show in Eminence. McClurg bolted from the yard of the courthouse and escaped. He stole a nearby pickup truck, which was found abandoned two days later at a cemetery in Winona. A manhunt ensued and later that day, he was taken back into custody by Troop G officers, after he was found hiding in a camper trailer in Winona.

In 2014, Troop G assigned troopers on three occasions to support the Patrol’s mission in Ferguson, MO. In November, a platoon of Troop G troopers was stationed outside the

Ferguson Police Department when the grand jury verdict in the Michael Brown case was read. They were witness to the most destructive night of the Ferguson protests.

On November 28, 2014, Trooper Ryan W. Pace was off duty and preparing to leave his home with his wife, Ruby, when a neighbor ran from his home yelling for Tpr. Pace. The neighbor was in distress and pointing toward his home. Tpr. Pace asked his wife to call 9-1-1 and ran to his neighbor's home. Once inside, he found the neighbor's wife, an elderly female, lying on the floor in the bathroom. She had fallen between the toilet and vanity in such a way as to pinch her head and neck toward her chest. This position restricted her airway and caused her to lose consciousness. Tpr. Pace located a pulse and checked her airway. Determining it was blocked, he braced her neck with both hands, turned her on her side, and opened her airway. Approximately 30 seconds later, she regained consciousness. Emergency medical services personnel arrived and assessed the patient further. Several weeks later, she spoke with Tpr. Pace to tell him she didn't think she would be alive if not for his actions. The Patrol presented a Lifesaving Award to Tpr. Pace for his actions.

In 2014, Trooper Jason C. Kuessner was honored during a West Plains Optimist Club luncheon, where he received the Optimist Club's Respect For Law Award. Tpr. Kuessner was recognized for his contributions to the Patrol's Dive Team as well as his work as a road officer. During 2013, he accumulated an impressive 69 drug arrests. The inscription on the plaque read "For Distinguished and Dedicated Service Advancing the Respect for Law Enforcement".

On February 26, 2015, Joseph Aldridge, 36, of Tyrone, MO, went on a killing rampage and killed seven Tyrone residents in their homes before killing himself. The lone survivor of the shootings identified Aldridge as the shooter. There seemed to be no motive for the killings; however, Aldridge's elderly mother, who had a terminal illness, died just before he went on the killing spree. Twenty-six Troop G troopers and 11 troopers from DDCC assisted the Texas County Sheriff's Department with the investigation. The case drew national attention and is the largest multiple homicide in the history of Troop G.

In April 2015, Troop G hosted its first Student Alliance Program with 19 area high school juniors and seniors attending. The students were exposed to the duties of a trooper. They saw demonstrations by the Patrol's Aircraft Division, SWAT, marine operations, and Patrol K-9.

Improvements to the Troop G Headquarters building were completed in 2015. These included a new roof for the headquarters building, as well as a new roof and heating and air conditioning upgrades for the Troop G crime laboratory location. The Troop G range was remodeled and equipped with a state-of-the-art automated range.

In December 2015, Douglas and Texas counties in Troop G, along with 31 other Missouri counties, were included in a federal disaster declaration due to historic flooding. The only Troop G death associated with the flood occurred on Spring Creek in

Douglas County when a farmer attempted to move his calves to higher ground. He loaded the calves into a pickup, and while attempting to cross the rain swollen creek, was swept away by the fast-moving water. His body was discovered, along with one of the drowned calves, after the flood water receded.

2016-present

In 2016, Troop G K-9 Dak retired. Dak was a six-year-old German shepherd who worked in Troop G for past five years. He retired due to his handler transferring to another position within the Patrol. During his career in Troop G, Dak and his handler Tpr. Greenan were involved in 1,209 criminal arrests. Dak was trained in drug detection, tracking, and protection. His services were in high demand. He responded to 409 requests for service by city, county, and state, as well as federal officers. Dak was also known by many schoolchildren in Troop G schools, where he did programs demonstrating his abilities. Dak lived out his retirement years at the home of his former handler.

On October 7, 2016, Trooper Christopher A. Kimes overheard radio traffic of a shooting at a McDonalds parking lot in West Plains. Tpr. Kimes headed toward the location and was flagged down by a motorist who said the shooting suspect was in front of them driving a white ford pickup with a confederate flag in the rear glass. Tpr. Kimes caught up to the vehicle and a pursuit ensued. The pursuit ended at the suspect's residence where Tpr. Kimes took the suspect into custody without incident. The male suspect had fatally shot his estranged wife and attempted to shoot another male with her.

In October 2016, Troop G hosted its eighth community alliance program with 19 area residents attending. Attendees were exposed to the duties of a trooper. They were given demonstrations by the Patrol's Aircraft Division, S.W.A.T., Major Crash Investigation Unit and learned many other aspects of the Patrol's responsibilities.

In 2016, a bear was captured on a trooper's in-car video system, as it ran across the highway into the side of a moving vehicle. The bear was uninjured and fled the scene. The video was posted to the Patrol's social media accounts and was viewed 162,146 times and was shared 3,227 times.

On October 25, 2016, A masked individual walked from the woods into the backyard of a residence in Texas County where several people were having a barbecue. This person shot two men, killing one and seriously injuring the second. Area law enforcement, including troopers from Troop G and members of the Patrol's Aircraft Division, searched the remote area near the shooting scene. Several days later, the suspect was apprehended inside a country church. On November 14, 2016, the same subject walked out the back door of the Texas County Justice Center after it was propped open by construction workers doing work there. Troop G officers, members of the Patrol's Aircraft Division, and area law enforcement began a search for the subject. He was located the following day after he went to a residence asking the occupant for a sandwich. The resident contacted law enforcement, and the escapee was taken into custody a short time later near the residence.

Troop G saw historic flooding in spring 2017. Nearly 16 inches of rainfall during the last weekend in April caused area streams and creeks to rise to levels not seen in recent history. Evacuations and rescues were plentiful throughout the troop. Damage caused to structures, bridges, and roadways amounted to costs estimated in the millions. The city of Van Buren was almost underwater when the Current River crested above 33 feet.

On October 18, 2017, troopers responded to a report of a shooting at a residence west of Ellington, MO. Upon arriving, they found three people shot inside the residence. Two people were killed in the attack and a third was seriously wounded. Troop G, investigators with DDCC, and members of the Reynolds County Sheriff's Department conducted an exhaustive investigation. On October 28, 2017, leads developed by investigators resulted in the arrest of two men in Ohio for the murders.

On January 25, 2018, an inmate escaped from the South Central Correctional Center, located in Licking, MO. The inmate was serving a six-year sentence for receiving stolen property and burglary. He was scheduled to be released in September 2019. The inmate walked away from the minimum-security housing located outside the facility's electrified fence. Troopers responded along with Department of Corrections personnel and local law enforcement. During the next eight days, a Patrol helicopter was utilized several times during the search. The inmate was taken back into custody on February 2, after he was spotted in a barn south of Licking, still wearing his prison clothes. In December 2018, he was sentenced to seven years for escape and was ordered to repay $15,539 in restitution to the law enforcement agencies who expended the manpower and resources to recapture him.

On the morning of July 18, 2018, Trooper Robert D. Crewse checked on an occupied, disabled vehicle on Clouse Drive north of Mansfield, MO. The single male occupant of the vehicle gave evasive answers to questions asked by Tpr. Crewse and he was unable to verify the person's identity. The situation deteriorated when the man refused to get out of the vehicle. Tpr. Crewse requested assistance and Sergeant Donald K. "Don" Jones, as well as two Mansfield police officers, responded. While the officers negotiated with the man, he opened fire, striking Tpr. Crewse twice. One bullet passed through the hatband of his campaign hat, striking him in the side of his head. A second round struck the left side of his torso but did not penetrate his bullet-resistant vest. During the exchange of gunfire, the suspect was struck with one round in the forehead. He continued to resist and left the van on foot; at which time he attempted suicide by stabbing himself several times with a knife. The suspect was taken into custody and survived. He was later identified and was found to be a parole absconder from Mississippi. Tpr. Crewse was released from the hospital later that same day. For being wounded in the lawful performance of his duties, Tpr. Crewse was awarded the Purple Heart.

In February 2019, Captain Mark G. Inman retired as commander of Troop G. Lieutenant Bruce D. Fiske was promoted to captain and named commanding officer of Troop G.

On July 5, 2019, Corporal Mark A. Philpott and Trooper Derek Rodgers were assisting the Wright County Sheriff's Department attempting to serve a search warrant at a

residence. Upon approaching the residence, a male suspect confronted officers in the yard area, produced a handgun, and began firing at them. They returned fire and fatally wounded the suspect. During the exchange of gunfire, a Wright County deputy sheriff was shot in the leg. Following the shooting, investigators successfully served the search warrant and found a marijuana growing operation inside the residence and an assault weapon equipped with a silencer. Due to their actions during the gunfight, Tpr. Rodgers received a Valor Award and Cpl. Philpott accepted a Meritorious Service Award.

Corporal R. Mike Greenan, Troop G, accepted the December 2019 DPS Sworn Employee of the Month. The award came as a result of Cpl. Greenan's immediate response, quick and thorough investigative work, and bravery, which led to the capture of a murder suspect in Texas County in October 2019. On October 10, 2019, the Texas County Sheriff's Department notified Troop G communications of a male subject lying in the ditch near the junction of Missouri Highway 17 and Missouri Route W. The man was bleeding profusely from the chest as a result of a gunshot wound. He told witnesses he had been shot by someone he knew. Cpl. Greenan had just reported for duty when the call came in and overheard the dispatch. He quickly responded to the scene where first responders were treating the victim. Once on scene, Cpl. Greenan learned the identity of the suspect, a person with whom he was familiar due to previous enforcement action. Unfortunately, the victim died as he was being transported to a hospital.

Cpl. Greenan drove to Mountain View, MO, in an attempt to locate the suspect who had recently bonded out of jail for a different offense. He located the father of the man who had provided the bond and learned valuable and incriminating evidence about the suspect's intentions during an interview. After the interview, Cpl. Greenan was traveling on Route W when a vehicle belonging to the suspect met him. Shortly thereafter, he located the vehicle in a private driveway and saw the suspect running toward the residence. He pursued the suspect on foot and took him into custody without incident. Cpl. Greenan continued to investigate and interview potential witnesses. That afternoon, he obtained first degree murder and unlawful use of a weapon warrants for the suspect.

On August 16, 2019, Troop G officers were assisting the Carter County Sheriff's Department execute a court order to remove a subject from a residence near Van Buren. After unsuccessful attempts to contact the occupant, a Carter County deputy sheriff forcibly opened the front door and was fired upon immediately by a male suspect inside the residence. The deputy was struck by five rounds and Trooper Caleb C. McCoy was struck once in the shoulder. Sergeant Shawn M. Dougherty and Corporal Jason Keussner dragged the wounded deputy from the front yard of the residence to safety. The deputy survived the shooting but sustained disabling injuries. Tpr. McCoy's vest stopped the bullet, resulting in his sustaining only minor injuries. The suspect surrendered to the Troop C SWAT team later that day. Sgt. Dougherty and Cpl. Kuessner received Valor Awards for their actions during the incident.

In 2020, Troop G and Troop I participated in a pilot project to determine the feasibility of remotely dispatching calls for one troop through another. The operational details of the project involved forwarding all Troop G calls during off-peak hours to Troop I

communications. Troop I communications then dispatched Troop G troopers to those calls.

The Missouri Department of Public Safety (DPS) recognized two Troop G employees. Sergeant Dale B. Pounds accepted the DPS Sworn Employee of the Month and Temporary Building and Grounds Maintenance Linda S. Benyo accepted the Non-Sworn Employee of the Month for September 2020. Sgt. Pounds' attention to detail and initiative while patrolling Missouri roadways led to a consent search of a driver's cell phone. The following forensic examination found the driver's phone contained 1,862 images of child pornography. The driver, a registered sex offender, was arrested.

Ms. Benyo was honored for her amazing work ethic, dedication, and resourcefulness during the height of the coronavirus pandemic. She created a sanitization schedule that meant she would have to work seven days a week, constantly cleaning and sanitizing essential areas of the troop. She did this for 46 consecutive days. During this period, in the height of the pandemic, not a single Troop G team member contracted the COVID-19 virus or any other illness.

Ms. Benyo was recognized a second time for her efforts, by being named recipient of the Matilda "Tillie" Sonnen Civilian Of The Year award. The award was presented to her at the annual awards ceremony on April 10, 2021.

In 2020, Troop G went through a reorganization of zones, with the most notable change being Texas and Wright counties merging into one split zone.

In April 2021, a man entered the Snappy Mart Convenience store in Koshkonong and shot four people. One person died at the scene and the remaining three were critically wounded. The shooter was a 28-year-old Thayer, MO, man, who was known by one of the victims. He was arrested a few hours later walking on U.S. Highway 63 south of West Plains.

In the fall 2021 and throughout the spring 2022, Troop G Headquarters underwent extensive renovations. All existing driveway surfaces were removed and replaced with concrete. Additional parking and storage were constructed along the north side of the building. All the windows were upgraded along with an overlay of new tile throughout the building. Also, a new flagpole was installed in front of Troop G Headquarters.

Troop G Communications Operator III Lori L. Wood received the Patrol's Lifesaving Award for her actions during an overnight shift Saturday, December 18, 2021. She received a call around 4:20 a.m. after a woman had driven into high water in Texas County, near Summersville, MO. The victim's belongings had been submerged, including the phone she was attempting to use to call 911. She was able to exit the vehicle and get to shore. However, the victim was unaware of her location. Troop G had experienced nine inches of rain in a relatively short duration causing many local streams and rivers to flood. The outside temperature was in the 20s, and the danger of hypothermia posed an imminent threat. The victim's phone began to fail, and verbal communication was not an option. Operator Wood utilized her personal cellphone and

began to text the victim to obtain her location. Her quick realization of the situation and immediate actions to determine the victim's location allowed emergency personnel to respond without delay and, undoubtedly, saved the victim's life.

On January 16, 2022, Trooper Justin L. Dedmon became aware of an urgent situation through Wright County communications. A deputy had been dispatched to an address in Hartville, MO, in response to an unfortunate incident involving an accidental gunshot. Responding swiftly, Tpr. Dedmon reached the scene and immediately noticed the presence of a male and a female individual.

The male subject stood near a passenger car, while the female, holding a towel, attended to his upper arm. Tpr. Dedmon observed a significant pool of blood on the ground adjacent to the injured man, and the towel itself was soaked with blood. Understanding the gravity of the situation, he swiftly retrieved his tourniquet from its boot carrier and skillfully applied it above the wound, effectively halting the bleeding. It was later revealed that the male had acquired a rifle from an acquaintance, fully aware of its malfunctioning safety mechanism. Regrettably, as he inadvertently dropped the firearm, it discharged and inflicted a wound upon him.

Approximately 15 minutes later, emergency medical personnel arrived at the scene, rendering vital assistance. They promptly transported the injured man to the hospital, where he received necessary medical attention. Tpr. Dedmon's remarkable actions in this critical moment resulted in the preservation of the victim's life. Tpr. Dedmon accepted a 2021 Lifesaving Award recognizing his exceptional efforts in saving this man's life.

Troop G apprehended a subject wanted for murder in Gainesville, MO. At 11 a.m. January 19, 2022, Troop G received a request for assistance from the St. Louis County Police Department to locate a murder suspect. With the aid of cell phone data, it was determined that the suspect was believed to be traveling within the Troop G region. Locating the individual posed a considerable challenge due to the suspect's rapidly changing location and an initially inaccurate vehicle description. Undeterred, the troopers displayed unwavering dedication and commitment to the task at hand. They meticulously reviewed video surveillance footage in Winona, which ultimately provided them with an accurate vehicle description. Armed with this crucial information, the troopers successfully located and apprehended the suspect at approximately 1:30 p.m. in Gainesville. This operation served as a testament to the exceptional dedication and tenacity of Troop G in safeguarding the safety and security of the community.

A momentous occasion took place on August 30, 2022, with the dedication of a newly erected memorial honoring the fallen officers of Troop G. Located prominently before the main entrance of Troop G Headquarters, the memorial stands as a lasting tribute to the brave individuals who made the ultimate sacrifice. The project's funding, amounting to an estimated $20,000, was successfully organized by the local directors of The MASTERS. Through their dedicated efforts, the necessary funds for the memorial and installation were secured. The dedication ceremony held immense significance, with wide participation from the public, retirees, Patrol members, and family members

representing the fallen officers. The ceremony was marked by Colonel Eric T. Olson's poignant opening remarks, followed by a keynote address delivered by Lieutenant Governor Mike Kehoe. Notably, during the ceremony, Capt. Fisk presented Missouri flags previously flown over the Missouri Capitol to the families in attendance, signifying the enduring respect and honor bestowed upon the fallen troopers.

At approximately 1:19 a.m. December 18, 2022, a trooper initiated a traffic stop on Parsons Road, north of U.S. Highway 60, in Carter County. The purpose of the stop was to address a white 2006 Cadillac Escalade that had failed to signal. However, the situation quickly escalated when the suspect refused to yield, and a pursuit ensued. After managing to put a significant distance between the suspect and the trooper, the suspect suddenly brought the vehicle to a halt, exited, and launched a surprise attack on the approaching trooper. The assailant fired multiple rounds, striking the trooper's patrol vehicle multiple times. Fortunately, the trooper emerged unharmed despite the intense gunfire. The suspect swiftly fled the scene, driving in an undisclosed direction on U.S. 60. Through the dedicated efforts of numerous individuals, the driver and the vehicle were successfully identified. On December 30, 2022, the suspect was located deceased in the state of Florida, where it was determined that he had died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Troop G had the privilege of witnessing a moment of great honor as Nathan B. Poynter, the son of fallen Trooper Kelly L. Poynter, graduated from the Patrol’s Law Enforcement Academy as a member of the 115th Recruit Class on December 22, 2022. Following his graduation, Tpr. Poynter was assigned to Zone 2, which encompasses Texas and Wright counties. It is noteworthy that he was now serving the same area his father patrolled 20 years ago before making the ultimate sacrifice on January 18, 2002.

Commercial Vehicle Officer Jason L. Gregory was named 2022 Commercial Vehicle Officer of The Year by the Patrol's Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division. This inaugural award recognized CVO Gregory's selfless dedication and unwavering efforts in supporting the division's mission. His commitment to ensuring the safety and compliance of commercial vehicles on Missouri's roadways earned him this well-deserved recognition. CVO Gregory's outstanding performance sets a high standard for future recipients of this prestigious honor.

In the early hours of May 14, 2023, two officers from Troop G, Corporal Johnathan R. Roberts and Sergeant Adam R. Johnson, undertook a critical rescue operation on the North Fork River near Hales Crossing in Douglas County. Responding to a distress call amidst extensive flash flooding caused by heavy rains, Cpl. Roberts and Sgt. Johnson arrived at the riverbank to find it swollen three to four times its normal size. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, they promptly launched their inflatable boat into the tumultuous waters.

Their first encounter was a female clinging desperately to a partially submerged tree. Sgt. Johnson skillfully maneuvered the boat close to the victim, allowing Cpl. Roberts to pull her aboard and secure her with a life jacket. The successful extraction of the

woman was a testament to their seamless teamwork and dedication. She was quickly handed over to emergency medical personnel for further care.

Undeterred by the challenging conditions, the officers returned to the river in search of additional victims. They soon located a man stranded atop a log amidst the debris-laden waters. The path to him was obstructed by large trees and heavy debris, necessitating an alternate approach. Demonstrating exceptional problem-solving skills and tenacity, the officers navigated downriver to find an opening, then carefully threaded their way through narrow passageways. Cpl. Roberts maneuvered the boat with precision, while Sgt. Johnson adeptly pushed and tied the boat around obstacles. Upon reaching the stranded man, they swiftly assisted him into the boat and ensured his safety before transporting him to medical personnel.

In recognition of their heroism and exemplary service beyond the call of duty, Cpl. Roberts and Sgt. Johnson were honored with the Meritorious Service Award at the Patrol's annual awards banquet on April 27, 2024. Additionally, their remarkable efforts earned them the title of DPS Missouri State Team Members of the Month for November 2023.

On April 29, 2024, a significant search and recovery operation took place in Ozark County when a vehicle was swept off the Warren Bridge over the Bryant River on Missouri County Road 328. At 12:22 a.m., emergency services received a call from a woman reporting her boyfriend's vehicle had been carried away by the swollen river.

A coordinated effort involving the Patrol, Ozark County Sheriff's Office, several volunteer fire departments, and the Ozark County Ambulance was launched. Despite facing extremely high-water levels, swift currents, and dense fog, the crews diligently searched throughout the night and into the morning. At approximately 7:30 a.m., the submerged vehicle was located about 100 feet downstream from the Warren Bridge. The Patrol Dive Team assisted in recovering the vehicle at 1 p.m. and found it empty. The search for the missing individual continued until May 4, when the individual was recovered.

On May 26, 2024, a series of tornadoes struck various counties within Troop G, leaving a trail of destruction and highlighting the unpredictable nature of these natural disasters. An EF-1 tornado touched down at 3:39 a.m. in a hilly, wooded area northwest of Mansfield, MO. Later that day, at 5:11 p.m., another EF-1 tornado struck five miles southwest of Bendavis, MO. At 5:41 p.m., a more powerful EF-3 tornado hit Howell County, touching down on the north side of Mountain View. This tornado severely damaged the MOSWIN tower site. The physical tower structure remained standing, while the cinderblock building that housed the radio equipment was leveled. The cost of the damage was estimated to exceed $300,000. Communications personnel quickly acted, and a temporary tower trailer was placed into service in less than 24 hours. The final tornado, an EF-2, struck Birch Tree, Shannon County, at 6:12 p.m. In all four instances, troopers responded to assist with traffic control and security, and to aid residents.

On March 14, 2025, a significant tornado outbreak impacted multiple counties across the Troop G region, resulting in extensive destruction, injuries, and fatalities. Several long-track tornadoes moved through both rural and populated areas, leaving communities with heavily damaged infrastructure. Troopers encountered blocked roadways due to debris, downed power lines, and fallen timber, often requiring coordination with local agencies to reach affected areas and assist residents and emergency responders.

Just two days later, sustained high winds contributed to multiple fast-moving wildfires. Troopers assisted fire agencies with evacuations, conducting door-to-door notifications, and helping residents safely leave threatened areas as conditions rapidly changed.

On April 4, 2025, widespread flooding followed a significant rainfall event, producing between eight and 10 inches of rain across the region, with localized totals reaching up to 12 inches. Floodwaters caused major roadway closures, including portions of U.S. Highway 63. Two fatalities occurred when vehicles were swept from the roadway. Troopers assisted with recovery efforts, investigations, and maintaining road closures to protect the public.

Troop G also continued efforts to address roadway safety concerns. In response to identified crash trends, a second Travel Safe Zone was established along U.S. Highway 63 between Houston and Cabool in Texas County to improve safety in a high-risk corridor.

On October 14, 2025, at 6:13 p.m., the State of Missouri carried out the execution of Lance Shockley, who had been convicted in the March 20, 2005, ambush killing of Sergeant Carl D. “Dewayne” Graham Jr., at the Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center in Bonne Terre, MO. More than 30 active and retired troopers traveled to Bonne Terre to be present. Sergeant Graham’s father passed away on March 1, 2025, prior to the sentence being carried out.