Troop I History

The year was 1949, and through the hard work and diligent efforts of Senator Emory W. Allison of Rolla, the Missouri State Highway Patrol was about to undergo a significant organizational restructuring. According to The Rolla Daily Herald, Senator Allison had been working for a new troop headquarters to be located in Rolla for four years. However, the bid for the new headquarters, projected at $37,500, was well below the $80,000 allotted by the Missouri Legislature, which prompted Senator Emory to aspire for a Patrol training facility to also be constructed in Rolla. The new troop was to be constructed on a 13-acre tract of land purchased from the Missouri School of Mines and would face the newly constructed Missouri Highway 66. In November 1949, Colonel David E. Harrison announced the new troop would consist of 15 uniformed officers and four radio operators, and would cover the counties of Crawford, Dent, Phelps, Maries, Pulaski, Laclede, and Camden. At that time, only four troopers, Sergeant C.W. Huston and Troopers Ray Hoevelman, F. A. Findley, and David L. Walker, were assigned to that area. Col. Harrison hoped the formation of the new troop would enable the department to more efficiently enforce traffic regulations on the heavily traveled Highway 66.

The local paper included several articles that followed the construction of the new office and specifically detailed the spectacle created in the community as the new radio tower was raised. Apparently, it was quite a sight as citizens closely watched the tower being painted and the awe-inspiring view of its lights at night.

The first trooper to be assigned to Troop I from the Academy was Robert E. Burgess, who received his training at the Missouri State Fairgrounds in Sedalia in 1949. Troop I's first troop commander was Thomas E. Whitecotton, and the first lieutenant was C.W. Huston. Troopers T.W. Pasley and J.D. Chorn were also re-assigned from other stations, and both were promoted to the rank of sergeant. When the new troop officially opened on January 1, 1950, there were eight troopers and four radio operators, along with stenographer Isabell Brookshire and maintenance man John Underwood. According to The Rolla Daily Herald, the office opened "with only a chair, desk, and telephone" inside the facility.

A mere six weeks after its creation, Capt. Whitecotton remarked during a presentation to the Rolla High Twelve Club that Troop I officers had issued 603 warnings and made 28 arrests. During that short period of time, troopers also recovered six stolen vehicles, rendered 1,785 services, recovered $6,000 in stolen property, and investigated 61 accidents.

1950s

During the 1950s, the headlines of The Rolla Herald frequently included many articles that documented the Patrol's role in combating crime. The following are the accounts of a just few of these many stories.

A particularly interesting story documented in the March 3, 1950, edition of The Rolla Herald began by stating, “Life is never dull for the Highway Patrol here, especially when it involves such duties as chasing a stolen airplane in a game of hide-in-seek in the skies above the Rolla area”. Apparently, a stolen airplane from Amarillo, TX, was spotted at the Springfield Airport and the Patrol was notified. Believing it would land at Rolla, troopers waited at the airport, only to find the airplane had actually set down at Waynesville. The pilot of the stolen craft apparently overheard radio traffic that the Patrol was hot after his trail and immediately took off. It was then that a trooper went up in a private airplane and assisted as the pilot chased the stolen plane in and out of the clouds in an aerial game a of cat-and-mouse. The chase reportedly continued until the stolen airplane finally lost the trooper and the helpful pilot, identified as Jim Campbell, near Sullivan. On March 6, 1950, Illinois State Police apprehended the plane’s pilot. Retired Troop I Lieutenant Ray Hoevelmann said he wasn’t sure who the trooper was in this case, but suspected it was Sgt. Huston.

In 1950, the Rolla newspaper also told of another unique investigation, at least by today’s standards, when a youth was arrested for stealing from a farmer. Apparently, a 17-year-old boy, who had been working for an Edgar Springs farmer, quit and then began to make numerous purchases, including a car. Being suspicious, the farmer decided to check the various locations on his farm where he had buried money and found that $2,300 was indeed missing. The youth admitted to troopers he had stolen $500 but was ultimately charged with stealing $1,800.

That same year, then Tpr. Hoevelmann shot one of two juveniles in the leg as the suspects attempted to flee from officers following a pursuit in which the juvenile’s car struck the trooper’s vehicle. When interviewed on the matter some 56 years later, retired Lt. Hoevelmann said he had no intention of seriously hurting the youth.

In May 1950, Capt. Whitecotton stated troopers would start issuing more tickets and fewer warnings in response to the higher number of crashes occurring in the area. At that time, the ratio was about 10 warnings for every ticket.

In August 1950, the Korean Conflict was heating up, and a decision was made to reactivate Ft. Leonard Wood. In reaction to that, Troop I transferred Tpr. G.R. “Dick” Knight from Camden County to Pulaski County. The position of safety officer was created and filled by Trooper Joe Brummell, who transferred from Lebanon to Rolla to fill the new slot. It should be noted that some time during his career, an individual he was trying to arrest shot Tpr. Brummel in the arm and chest. The suspect then committed suicide three days later with the officer’s revolver. Trooper Bob Burgess, who held the distinction of being Troop I’s first recruit, was activated into the air corps, as America was attempting to increase its forces to prepare for the ongoing overseas conflict.

Troopers assigned to Troop I during its early years were involved in investigations of every nature. In addition to those investigations the troopers recovered a large number of stolen vehicles. For example, documented in a June 1950 edition of The Rolla Herald was a story of three Pennsylvania youths, who also were wanted for crimes in their home state, were apprehended in a stolen car by troopers in Crawford County. The next day an article in the same newspaper stated, “Some Pennsylvania citizens are making a habit of getting picked up in Missouri while driving stolen vehicles”. Troopers near Cuba, MO, once again nabbed a car thief who was also an escapee from the keystone state. Within that same short time span, troopers near Lebanon apprehended three Indiana youths in a stolen vehicle. The success of the troopers was best summarized in the August Progress edition of The Rolla Herald when Capt. Whitecotton stated that in the last 12 months Troop I officers had seized more than 80 stolen vehicles.

On April 4, 1951, tragedy struck the Laclede County community of Conway, when a local citizen, identified as Kenneth Essary, shot and killed four family members at their home. When arrested by troopers, he confessed to the crimes but was suspected of likely being mentally ill.

With the reactivation of Ft. Leonard Wood, traffic accidents and fatalities rose sharply. On April 19, 1951, three teenaged girls and a soldier were killed when the soldier attempted to pass a vehicle and collided head-on with a tractor-trailer. In response to the growing traffic problem, Troop I Sergeant Claude Arnold and Trooper Dick Knight, along with General Sturgis of Ft. Leonard Wood, testified before the Missouri Legislature. They requested vast improvements be made to Highway 66, then referred to as “Deathtrap 66”, in an effort to lower the rising number of serious accidents.

In November 1952, Phelps County residents formed a group to combat increasing lawlessness. Also, a grand jury was convened to investigate the community’s growing concern about crime. The report that followed was very critical of law enforcement but was complimentary to the Patrol and its efforts. It stated, “Phelps County has been without protection from criminal activity for a considerable period of time, except for the good services of the State Highway Patrol”. The report also criticized the Patrol’s lack of search and seizure authority and urged all citizens to support legislation to correct the deficiency. According to retired Sergeant J.B. King, his research of the Patrol and its role in law enforcement in Pulaski County yielded similar sentiments.

On February 9, 1953, Troop I had its first change in command when Earl L. Davis took over the helm from Capt. Whitecotton. The 1950s saw four other officers hold the position of Troop I commanding officer, following Captain Davis’ tenure, which ended on February 28, 1954. In 1954, John Tandy transferred from Troop G, Willow Springs, and took over as commander of the Rolla office. However, citing an inability to find a home for his family, on April 30, 1954, Captain Tandy returned to Troop G as their commanding officer. That move resulted in Lewis D.

Howard being promoted to the troop commander's position on May 1, 1954. Captain Howard was one of the original members of the Patrol and a native of the small Pulaski County town of Dixon. At that time, Troop I's manpower consisted of 22 uniformed officers and four radio operators. Theodore R. Taylor followed as Troop I commander, when he succeeded Captain Howard on October 1, 1957. Captain Taylor served until March 1, 1959, when Paul E. Corl was named as commander. Captain Corl held the top position until September 30, 1961.

Using deadly force to apprehend or stop someone who was in the process of committing a felony was common during the 1950s. On April 26, 1955, Trooper Jim Hudson shot and seriously injured the driver of a stolen vehicle, who was also an AWOL soldier, following a long pursuit that covered both Pulaski and Laclede counties. Apparently, the soldier had stolen vehicles on two previous occasions. That same day, Troopers Donald Arnold and Bob Burgess stopped a vehicle south of Newburg on Route T, after the four occupants had robbed a liquor store in Edgar Springs. When stopped, two of the occupants exited the vehicle upon request, however, it took a shotgun blast from the troopers to cause a third suspect to exit. Apparently, the fourth suspect was dead as a result of being shot by the storeowners during the robbery. An interesting note to this story was that the hold-up crew consisted of a female who was the mother of 14 children.

In another incident, during the 1954 Prison Riots, Troop I Sergeant Claude Arnold fatally wounded an inmate as he was preparing to throw a typewriter from an overhead catwalk onto a crowd of unsuspecting troopers.

In January of that year, Sgt. Arnold was patrolling Highway 66, east of Lebanon, when he attempted to stop a vehicle for a routine check. The driver, Robert Loethen of Iberia, refused to comply and a pursuit ensued. Sgt. Arnold fired four shots at the suspect in his vehicle, but his efforts were unsuccessful in convincing Loethen to stop. As the chase continued, Loethen turned north onto Missouri 133 at Laclede-Pulaski County line, where he then pulled over and took cover in a ditch. From that position, Loethen used his .22-caliber rifle to fire at the trooper when the officer pulled up and stopped beside the suspect's car. Sgt. Arnold was wounded in the foot by the gunfire but not seriously injured. Loethen next continued north and later struck a patrol car occupied by Sgt. Brummel and Tpr. Dick Knight. Sgt. Brummel responded by firing a round from his shotgun, which apparently struck Loethen in the face, but resulted in no serious injuries. Troopers between Iberia and Tuscumbia finally managed to get Loethen to stop. It was later learned that the suspect was a former mental patient.

In 1955, Troop I changed boundaries when Camden County was returned to the control of Troop F.

On August 31, 1956, Governor Donnelly signed an executive order requesting guardsman assist state troopers in patrolling the highways during the upcoming

holiday period. The Troop I commander decided that the military personnel could best be used by watching the most dangerous intersections along Route 66.

On September 19, 1956, another Troop I officer was shot when Trooper Norman E. Tinnen stopped an individual for questioning between Lebanon and Waynesville on U.S. 66. Tpr. Tinnen reportedly asked the driver, identified as Roland Westberg of Chicago, for his driver's license and the suspect responded by pulling out a .38-caliber pistol. Tpr. Tinnen attempted to grab the gun, but Westberg managed to fire a round that struck the officer. Later, the investigation revealed Westberg was apparently not content with shooting Tpr. Tinnen just once, as he next stood over the fallen officer and fired three more rounds, striking the officer with two. Westberg then attempted to flee from the scene in his stolen vehicle but went only a short distance before he ran the car into a ditch. The suspect was later spotted by the Patrol airplane and captured about 12 miles southeast of Lebanon. Westberg reportedly quickly gave up after troopers in the plane fired several rounds in his direction. It was later learned that just 24 hours before his encounter with Tpr. Tinnen, Westberg had murdered his 11-year-old cousin in Chicago. In November of that year Westberg was found guilty and sentenced to 25 years in prison. However, after several escape attempts and murdering an inmate, Westberg took his own life. Another interesting note to this story was that a hitchhiker picked up by Westberg might have saved Tpr. Tinnen's life. Apparently, the stranger loaded the injured officer back into his patrol car and took him to a nearby gas station, so that help could be summoned.

On May 29, 1957, tragedy struck in Crawford County when eight individuals are killed when a car on Missouri Highway 19 pulled into the path of an approaching vehicle on U.S. 66 in Cuba. At that time, it was the worst accident in Troop I history.

On January 22, 1957, The Rolla Daily News reported Sergeant Tom Pasley was one of three Missouri state troopers who were chosen to participate in President Eisenhower's inauguration parade, and that Sgt. Pasley proudly rode his motorcycle in the event. Sgt. Pasley again rode his motorcycle in the 1959 VFW Parade in Los Angeles.

On October 1, 1957, U.S. 66 was re-named Interstate 44 as name changes also occurred on many other highways that were incorporated into the interstate system.

When speed limits were implemented, fatalities in Troop I dropped from 58 in 1957 to 31 in 1958.

On June 24, 1959, Trooper Howard J. Delcour and his 1959 Dodge patrol car were pictured on the front page of the local newspaper after he delivered 100 gas masks from Ft. Leonard Wood to the U.S. Medical Center in Springfield in 57 minutes. Tpr. Delcour averaged over 100 mph, so the masks could be delivered to anxious officers. The arrival of the masks allowed officers to storm the facility

under the cover of gas, so that control could be restored and five guards rescued who had been taken hostage by 106 mental patients.

1960s

On the evening of April 21, 1960, Pulaski County deputies and Sgt. Dick Knight were watching a home north of Crocker, where they suspected a burglary might occur. Two suspects did indeed arrive and shortly thereafter the officers heard the breaking of glass. The lawmen identified themselves and the subjects responded by running to their vehicle. However, when one of the suspects decided to return to the house, he was shot and killed as he got to the porch. It was ruled that the suspect, Kenneth Ewing, was committing a felony and the officers were justified in using deadly force.

During the early 60s, Sgt. Pasley, along with Tprs. Delcour and Viesmann, successfully competed on the Highway Patrol's five-man pistol team at tournaments throughout the United States. On June 16, 1961, Tpr. Delcour took first place at the Greater Kansas City Invitational Pistol Tournament. In July of that year, Tpr. Delcour continued by wining all the shooting honors at the Missouri Rifle and Pistol Association Championships. In 1962, the Patrol pistol team placed second at the National Pistol Matches. At that same event Tpr. Delcour once again displayed his shooting prowess became the pride of the Highway Patrol by taking first place in the National Police Division.

On December 1, 1960, 130 truck drivers were arrested in a 24-hour period during a truck check conducted in front of Troop I Headquarters.

On August 24, 1961, the Patrol announced effective October 1, Troop I Commanding Officer Paul E. Corl would be reassigned to General Headquarters, Jefferson City, as a field supervisor and would be replaced by Captain C.R. Oliver, who previously had been serving as Troop C commander.

On June 16, 1962, Sgt. Dick Knight and Tpr. W.V. Bench arrested four individuals after they had held up a bank in Ohio and escaped with $13,365.

On July 23, 1962, troopers investigated a particularly tragic and unusual accident when two brothers traveling on Rt. HH in Laclede County collided head-on. Evidently one brother, along with his wife and their small child, were leaving the family home while the other brother was returning, when the accident occurred. All four family members were killed in the crash.

High speed pursuits were not uncommon, but on October 7, 1963, a chase that was initiated by Tpr. W.E. Aytes on U.S. 66 and reached speeds of 130 mph, made headlines not only in the local papers but also in the Chicago Tribune. Evidently, the individual being pursued was the 15-year-old nephew of Joseph (Pepe) Giancana, who was a reputed high figure in the Chicago Syndicate. The lengthy pursuit, which included many Troop I members, finally ended when

Trooper Lawrence D. Long forced the suspect's car to stop. According to retired Troop I Radio Operator Joe D. Kearse, it was quite a scene when the juvenile's mother showed up at Troop I in her luxury vehicle and accompanied by two large bodyguards.

Another unique incident during that time period occurred when Radio Operator Kearse was called upon to rescue two University of Missouri-Rolla (UMR) students who had been lost in a cave north of Rolla for some 12 hours. Kearse, who was an amateur spelunker and who had explored that cave, stated that UMR officials were particularly fearful because of the forecast of rain and the probability of the cave flooding. In recognition of his efforts, the Missouri Safety Council later presented Kearse with a certificate for saving the students' lives.

On July 13, 1964, the worst accident in the nation on that weekend occurred on Highway 17 in Pulaski County when 10 people died in a four-car pile-up. The accident occurred when a serviceman attempted to pass a vehicle on a curve and struck another vehicle head-on. Following the initial accident, two more cars piled into the first two vehicles. Three of the victims were teenagers from Crocker and six were Ft. Leonard Wood soldiers. Sgt. Dick Knight said it was the worst accident he had seen since 1941, when 18 Ft. Leonard Wood soldiers were killed in an accident near Hazelgreen, which is located approximately 15 miles east of Lebanon. It should be noted that in the 1968 edition of the Patrol News it classified the Hazelgreen wreck as Missouri's worst. The article stated the crash occurred when a military truck was on the wrong side of the road and collided head-on with a tractor-trailer transport truck loaded with paint, resulting in the fiery death of 13 soldiers and the driver of the tractor-trailer.

During the 1950s and 60s, multi-fatality accidents were very common. On February 22, 1965, six members of two families from Fredericktown, MO, were killed in a head-on collision on Missouri 19, nine miles north of Salem. On April 19, 1965, eight people were killed in a traffic crash on U.S. 66, east of Waynesville, when a vehicle jumped a medial strip and struck another vehicle head-on. Evidently, local radio stations created additional difficulties following this accident when they announced the names of the deceased before next-of-kin were notified in person.

According to the 1964 Progress Edition of The Rolla Daily News, there were 34 officers assigned to Troop I at that time.

On April 26, 1965, Bobbie Reeves of Lebanon, MO, was charged with the attempted murder of Trooper Siah T. Davis. The incident occurred when Reeves attempted to run over the trooper after he had stopped another vehicle for drag racing. Tpr. Davis had to dive out of the way to keep from getting hit.

The 1966 Progress Edition of The Rolla Daily News reported that at the cost of $93,000 an addition would be constructed to the north side of Troop I. When completed it would double the troop's floor space to 4,300 square feet. The plans

also called for the paving of the 16,000-square foot back lot. The article went on to say that as of that date, Troop I consisted of 38 uniformed officers, three driver examiners, two commercial enforcement officers, six communication engineers, and four clerical positions. By August 1968, the number of uniformed officers had reportedly risen to 46. The article also complimented the accomplishments of the troop by reporting since Captain Oliver's appointment as Troop I commander, the troop had maintained the "highest enforcement index" in the state.

On March 23, 1967, Lieutenant A.H. Leslie, a 30-year veteran of the Patrol, replaced Captain C.R. Oliver, who retired after 35 years of service as troop commander.

In January 1969, troopers investigated an incident near the Pulaski-Texas County line where the bodies of five individuals were found in a car. Troopers concluded the driver of the car had attempted to cross a shallow-creek when his vehicle became buried in the gravel. When attempts to push the car out where unsuccessful, the occupants apparently got back into the car for warmth and later succumbed to carbon monoxide poisoning when the exhaust pipe became covered.

On July 17, 1969, a Pulaski County coroner's inquest ruled that Tpr. James R. Temmen (F) was justified in the shooting death of James R. Brooks. Apparently, Tpr. Temmen spotted Brooks in a stolen vehicle at a Dixon gas station and fired at the suspect when he refused to halt as ordered and fled in the vehicle.

On November 1, 1969, Captain W.L. Hutchings replaced retiring Troop I commander, Capt. Leslie. That same month, Lt. Dick Knight died of Leukemia at age 59, while still serving as lieutenant.

1970s

On February 23, 1970, Trooper Gary Snodgrass, age 24, was killed in an auto accident when he lost control of his 1969 Plymouth patrol car on Missouri Highway 72, approximately 7.5 miles east of Salem, just west of old Meramec River Bridge. Tpr. Snodgrass's vehicle reportedly traveled off the right side of the road and struck an embankment. The young trooper, who was survived by his wife, Ellen, and three-year-old son, Anthony Wayne, had just graduated from the Academy on September 8, 1969.

The October 4, 1972, edition of the Waynesville-St. Robert, Daily-Guide, stated that over 600 concerned citizens attended a meeting, which was addressed by Missouri Attorney General John C. Danforth. The gathering was in response to the Patrol and Attorney General's Office raiding several establishments in the area known to promote prostitution. According to the Daily-Guide, "Thirty-seven individuals were arrested at three nightspots where prostitutes operated freely". In 1970, similar arrests were made in the Ft. Leonard Wood area.

On December 1, 1972, Lieutenant Harold M. Schmitt took over the position of Troop I commanding officer. He held that position until August 1, 1975, when Troop C Lieutenant Allen S. Whitmer was promoted to captain and took over the position in Rolla. On February 24, 1981, Captain Whitmer was appointed to the position of superintendent of the Highway Patrol and Troop I's Lieutenant Howard J. Delcour was then chosen to lead the troop into the 80s. Captain Delcour held that position until his retirement on January 1, 1989, when Troop E Lieutenant Gary E. Whitener was appointed as Troop I commander.

According to retired Troop I Sergeant Billy J. Matthews, sometime during 1978 the last stretch of U.S. 66 within Troop I, which was located east of Waynesville in Pulaski County, was officially bypassed by I-44 and put out-of-use as a major thoroughfare.

1980s

In 1980, Sergeant Paul J. Mertens was heavily involved in the surveillance of several car thieves in the Rolla area. Apparently, one of the suspects learned of his undercover work and retaliated by hiring an individual to place a bomb on Sgt. Merten's patrol car. Fortunately, Sgt. Merten's struck a pothole as he was leaving his residence, which dislodged the device and made it inoperable. An investigation resulted in three individuals being convicted on charges relating to the bomb and auto theft.

On July 6, 1981, Sergeant Matthews was returning from Jefferson City with a new, unmarked, 1981 Mercury Marquis patrol car. After crossing the Maries-Phelps County line on U.S. Highway 63, he saw an individual urinating alongside the road. Sgt. Matthews confronted the person, later identified as Robert E. Robinson, and after a short discussion asked him for some identification. Robinson responded by pulling a .380 semi-automatic pistol from a small pouch and firing one round, at almost point-blank range, at the trooper. Sgt. Matthews, who was a large and powerful individual, managed to grab the weapon which caused the bullet to strike his torso off-center and barely miss what would have likely been a fatal wound to his left kidney. Then, even though wounded, Sgt. Matthews wrestled the suspect to the ground and managed to keep a grip on the gun in Robinson's hand, while he also kept Robinson from grabbing his service revolver. As the struggle continued, a passing motorist, identified as James Coats of Mountain Grove, MO, stopped to aid the trooper by grabbing Robinson's pistol. Robinson, who was also wanted in the state of Louisiana for homicide, was later sentenced to life plus five years for the assault of Sgt. Matthews.

Less than one year later, on May 1, 1982, a Troop I officer and a deputy responded to a domestic disturbance south of Rolla. A despondent intoxicated soldier, armed with a sword and a filet knife, was reportedly threatening his young children. When the officers arrived, they learned the armed suspect, identified as Donald L. Spanton, had left his home and went into a wooded area behind the house. Preparations were being made for the children to leave, and

the officers were continuing their search when the armed and intoxicated suspect returned home. Other officers soon arrived and lengthy negotiations proved unsuccessful in convincing Spanton to disarm. The presence of a large number of individuals at a saddle club, located just a few hundred feet from Spanton's home, necessitated his capture and safe removal. As the evening carried on, Tpr. Matthews, who had just arrived, initiated a conversation with Spanton. Despite all hopes of an uneventful end, Spanton suddenly raised his sword and stepped toward Tpr. Matthews in a striking position, forcing the trooper to fire his shotgun for his own protection. The investigation showed that Spanton was but a few feet away from the trooper when he fell to the ground.

On November 15, 1984, Trooper Eric S. Wilhoit was shot in the arm with a .22-caliber rifle as he and sheriff's deputies were attempting to apprehend a Steelville resident identified as Andrew R. Arney. A standoff developed when officers attempted to arrest Arney for a weapons violation. After Arney's initial volley of fire, which resulted in the wounding of the trooper, officers returned fire and seriously wounded the suspect. Fortunately, Tpr. Wilhoit's injury was not serious, and he was treated and released from a local hospital.

In 1986, Lieutenant Jack C. Waters passed away from cancer while still serving as an active member of Troop I's staff.

The year 1987 saw extensive remodeling and a much-needed addition to Troop I Headquarters. The construction phase meant numerous hardships on office personnel, especially the communications division, which temporarily had to move their operations to the building's basement. The employees of Troop I worked through the inconveniences and the end result was more office space and an indoor range. The renovation did much to improve the radio division's work area and resulted in greater security for those employees. The old complex was constructed in such a manner that the radio operators were facing away from the front door, which was never locked. The entrance also was constructed so that those inside could not see who was approaching until after they entered. This put the unarmed midnight shift radio operator in a vulnerable position as that person was typically alone in the office. The Troop I upgrade also included an addition to the north side of the garage. Further improvements to Troop I came in 1997, when the radio room was again modernized and elevators were added to meet ADA requirements.

Also in 1987, Missouri had one of its most famous manhunts take place in the Troop I area. The event began rather innocuously on a Sunday night in March when Rolla police officers attempted to contact a subject at a local hotel after they determined he possessed a stolen vehicle. The evening soon turned chaotic when the suspect, identified as John David Brown, fired a shot at one of the approaching officers and then fled on foot. Over the next couple of weeks, a manhunt escalated to a monstrous scale as law enforcement officers and guardsmen from throughout the state arrived to assist. As officers frantically searched using every known resource, including a special FBI search plane,

Brown struck again when he fatally shot an elderly gentleman as he was opening a church for Wednesday night services (near the small town of Doolittle). On April 20, the manhunt ended as leads dried up and homes were no longer being mysteriously broke into. The saga of John David Brown resurfaced just a few weeks later when on May 9, 1987, he was reportedly sighted at a restaurant located near Buckhorn in Pulaski County. Corporal Ralph E. Roark responded and pursued Brown as the suspect fled away in his vehicle. Unfortunately, Brown again eluded officers when he abandoned his vehicle and took off on foot into a wooded area along Highway 17, near Laquey. During the manhunt, which lasted approximately three weeks, officers located Brown's camp in the woods near Laquey but never located the murder suspect. However, Brown did not escape justice as he was later apprehended in Oklahoma and ultimately found guilty of murder, for which he received a life sentence.

In 1988, Corporal Michael A. "Mike" Cooper was one of nine individuals who received an honorable mention from the International Chiefs of Police/Parade Magazine Police Service Award program, when he saved an individual's life following a pursuit in Laclede County. Cpl. Cooper displayed heroic behavior by freeing the driver from a wrecked, burning vehicle, after he had pursued the suspect northbound from Lebanon on Highway 5. In the course of saving the person's life, Cpl. Cooper received burns to his hands and back. The nomination also cited Cpl. Cooper's drug interdiction and marijuana eradication efforts.

1990s

Leading Troop I into the 1990s was Captain Gary E. Whitener. His success resulted in him being promoted to the rank of major in October 1991 and being assigned to General Headquarters. To replace this void, Troop C Lieutenant Ronald P. Wiedemann was called upon to fill the commanding officer's position at Rolla. Joseph L. Swearengen, who had previously served as a lieutenant in Troop D, was next placed in command of Troop I following Capt. Wiedemann's retirement on April 1, 1999. He, too, remained in that position until his retirement, which took place on March 1, 2002. On that date, Randy L. Becker, who had previously served as a Troop I lieutenant, was promoted to captain and named commander of Troop I.

On Sunday, April 17, 1994, Trooper Terry Wilkerson and the officer he was training, Trooper Roger E. Pipkin, were patrolling Missouri 8, east of Steelville, when they received information that Steelville police officers were pursuing an eastbound vehicle on the same highway and that the occupants had fired shots at those officers. A short time later, the troopers spotted the suspect vehicle on Route E at the Huzzah River, near a canoe rental. When one of the vehicle's occupants, identified as Randy Stewart, fired a round at the officers, Tpr. Wilkerson returned fire with his H&K rifle and fatally wounded the suspect. Apparently, Stewart and the other two occupants, who were apprehended, had committed various other crimes before being spotted by the Steelville officers.

On September 23, 1994, Trooper Curtis A. Martin responded to a minor two-car accident on U.S. Highway 63, south of Vienna. During his investigation, he located some ammunition in one of the vehicles, which had been occupied by Mark Ebright and Anthony Denson. As he continued his investigation, Maries County Sheriff Roy Bassett stopped to assist Tpr. Martin. Shortly thereafter, Denson suddenly pulled out a pistol and fatally wounded Sheriff Bassett and then began shooting at Tpr. Martin. A gunfight ensued as the two were separated by nothing more than one of the wrecked vehicles. As Tpr. Martin struggled to gain a tactical advantage during the gun battle, he was also charged and attacked by Ebright. The confrontation ended with Tpr. Martin fatally wounding Denson and shooting and seriously wounding Ebright. The investigation later revealed the two had earlier robbed and then shot a convenience store clerk in Indiana. Ebright was later convicted of first-degree murder and received a life sentence. That year the Missouri Chapter of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Official International awarded Troop I Radio Operators Randy Ebers and Sonny Cash their annual “Critical Incident Telecommunicator” award for their exemplary service during the shooting.

Exactly two years to the day following Tpr. Martin’s incident, Tpr. McDonald H. Brand was forced to use deadly force when an armed motorist confronted him. The incident began when Tpr. Brand stopped Martin L. Wells of Rolla for a traffic violation at the entrance to the eastbound rest area in Phelps County. Tpr. Brand approached Wells and as the violator stepped from his vehicle, Tpr. Brand noticed that Wells’ right hand was positioned near his left side and tucked inside his open shirt. As the suspect turned toward the trooper, a gun fell to the ground. Wells immediately retrieved the gun and a struggle ensued. Wells grabbed the trooper’s right arm while also pointing the weapon at Tpr. Brand. Despite the close struggle, Tpr. Brand managed to draw his pistol and fatally wound the suspect.

2000s

On October 28, 2000, Tpr. James Folsom was forced to use deadly force to save his life. On that evening, Tpr. Folsom and other officers responded to a domestic dispute in Maries County. When they arrived, the suspect, identified as Bradley Davis, began firing a rifle in their direction. Negotiations failed and Davis exited his home, where Tpr. Folsom confronted him. Davis then re-entered his home, grabbed his rifle and pointed it at Folsom. Tpr. Folsom, who later stated that proper training enabled him to save his own life in that incident, shot Davis before the suspect could shoot him.

On May 22, 2003, Trooper Michael L. Newton was killed in auto accident on Interstate 70 in Lafayette County, when a truck struck his patrol car while he was parked on the shoulder. Tpr. Newton was assigned to Troop A at the time, but his death was particularly tragic to those who worked at Troop I. Tpr. Newton grew up in Newburg and was the son of long-time Troop I employee, Gary J. Newton. If not for the tragic event, Tpr. Newton would have transferred back to his native

Phelps County within a few short months. In commemoration of his service to the citizens of Missouri, the bridge crossing the Little Piney River on I-44 in Phelps County was re-named the Mike Newton Bridge.

In 2006, the Patrol broke ground and began construction on a new commercial driver's license (CDL) "supersite" on Troop I property. The project was scheduled to be completed in June 2007 and would allow both the driving and written portions of the commercial driving tests to be given at one location.

Also, during 2006, the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) continued its efforts to make Missouri's highways safer by replacing worn-out sections of Interstate 44. When combined, over 20 miles of interstate were replaced in Crawford, Phelps, and Laclede counties. Together, Troop I officers and MoDOT employees worked hundreds of hours of overtime within the construction zones. Meticulous planning, along with cooperation and hard work, resulted in far fewer traffic crashes than was anticipated within those areas.

In April 2006, Troop I members joined the ranks of other troopers and emergency personnel throughout the state when they responded to the aftermath of several tornadoes in the state's bootheel. On September 22, Troop I officers were again called upon when tornadoes touched down in and around the city of St. James in eastern Phelps County.

On September 23, 2006, more than 100 individuals visited Troop I to help celebrate the Patrol's 75th anniversary. Tours of troop headquarters and the various displays presented educated the public about the many responsibilities of the Patrol.

The dangers of being a state trooper were no more evident than on November 30, 2006, when Sergeant George W. Arnold and Trooper Tyler D. Stewart, along with three Doolittle rural firefighters, were nearly struck by a tractor-trailer on Interstate 44 at the Jerome interchange in Phelps County. The troopers and firefighters had responded to a traffic crash as snow and ice were rapidly causing road conditions to deteriorate. While investigating that crash, an out-of-control tractor-trailer unit slid off the highway and into the center median. Tragically, the truck struck and killed the driver involved in the first accident and then, before coming to rest on top of Trooper Stewart's patrol car, nearly struck the troopers and firefighters as they attempted to dive out of its way. The snow and ice storm continued to wreak havoc on travel conditions as it led to many more traffic crashes, several of which involved patrol vehicles. However, the winter storm may best be remembered by Troop I officers for a massive traffic jam, which occurred on I-44 in Pulaski County as road conditions caused the highway to be closed for nearly 24 hours.

The history of Troop I, from its conception in 1949 to 2006, when the Patrol proudly celebrated 75 years of service to the public, was full of exciting and memorable experiences. For example, in recent years, numerous officers were

recognized for saving a life. In 1988, Trooper Eric K. Volkmer risked his life when he saved another person from drowning after the individual had fallen into a frozen pond. In 2001, Trooper Casey A. Jadwin received the state employee of the month award for June when he saved the life of a young child who had quit breathing. That same year Trooper Neil R. Poynter was recognized for saving a life. In 2005, Trooper Jason E. Riggs, while off duty on a fishing trip in Canada, risked his life to save his guide, who was drowning in the chilly waters of Great Slave Lake. Tpr. Riggs was honored for his actions with the Patrol's Valor Award in May 2006. These were but just a few of the many heroic efforts by Troop I officers throughout its history.

2007 brought the addition of three new troopers to Troop I from the 86th Recruit Class, which included Aimee N. McMahon, Joshua J. McDonald, and Christopher A. Kimes. In 2007, Troop C Sergeant John M. Enderle was promoted to the position of Troop I enforcement lieutenant. Grounds and Maintenance Supervisor Garry J. Newton retired after nearly 30 years of service at Troop I. Also, part-time Driver Examination Clerk Helen L. Minor decided to begin a new adventure after serving more than 51 years.

In October 2007, new facilities designated for commercial and non-commercial driver's license testing and motor vehicle inspection were completed at Troop I. Included were the main office building, a large garage for pre-trip inspections, and a 300' by 300' concrete pad for the CDL skills test. This facility also provided office space for the Troop I Unit of the Division of Drug and Crime Control (DDCC) and for commercial vehicle enforcement officers.

In 2007, Corporal Kyle D. Wilmont made 78 felony drug arrests and was instrumental in an investigation that resulted in several federal drug indictments. His job performance led to him being selected as Troop I's "Officer of the Year". Following the extensive investigation, Troop I officers, along with deputies and federal agents, made numerous drug arrests in Dent County during January 2008. Cpl. Wilmont, who served as the assistant zone commander for the Dent County zone, played an instrumental role in the investigation that ultimately led to federal charges on several of the suspects.

In March 2008, heavy rains produced flooding throughout the Troop I area, resulting in numerous road closures, including such major arteries as I-44 and U.S. 63. Troopers and commercial vehicle officers assisted with traffic snarls and other high-water related events for several days.

In July 2008, Troop I Headquarters made strides toward becoming partially energy self-sufficient, when engineers from the Missouri University of Science and Technology placed a wind turbine and solar panels at the Rolla headquarters.

In July 2008, Captain Randy E. Becker retired, after serving more than seven years as the commanding officer of Troop I. On September 1, 2008, Lieutenant

Lee Ann H. Kenley was promoted to captain and designated as the new commanding officer of Troop I. With the promotion, Capt. Kenley became the first female troop commander in the history of the Patrol. On December 1, 2008, Troop I also welcomed Lieutenant Bruce D. Fiske, who was promoted and transferred from Troop G, Willow Springs.

During 2008, the 43 Troop I officers, who were dedicated to enforcement operations, investigated 2,467 traffic crashes, made 16,696 arrests, and issued 9,039 warnings. Despite several tragic traffic crashes that resulted in multiple fatalities, Troop I ended 2008 with 25 percent fewer traffic fatalities than in the previous year.

In January 2009, Troop I welcomed two new troopers, Kyle L. Knight and Chase A. Stallcup, who were both assigned to Pulaski County. In July, Troopers Joseph T. Peart and Evan T. Hane were assigned to Crawford County, following their graduation from the Patrol Academy. For the first time, Troop I was also assigned two officers, Trooper Neil R. Poynter and Sergeant Justin L. McCullough, to the newly created position of commercial vehicle enforcement trooper (CVET). Personnel changes at Troop I also included the retirement of Driver Examiner Supervisor Gary R. Lane, who had served the state for 19 years.

There were 27 traffic fatalities within the six-county Troop I area in 2009, which was approximately 37 percent fewer than in 2008. Leading the way in traffic enforcement was Trooper Brock A. Vogt, who in 2009, arrested 104 alcohol- or drug-impaired drivers. His combined enforcement efforts resulted in Tpr. Vogt's nomination by Troop I for LETSAC Officer of the Year, Patrol "Officer of the Year", and the American Legion's "Law & Order" awards.

In 2009, Troop I Lieutenant James W. Remillard was honored by being selected to receive The Master's Public Service Award. Lt. Remillard was recognized for the many public service projects he has either led or been involved in, both in Missouri and out-of-state, to assist those in need.

In March 2009, a tractor trailer was stopped by Troop I Commercial Vehicle Officer Supervisor I Thomas W. “Tom” Cross for a vehicle inspection. Further investigation led to the seizure of 263 pounds of cocaine and 1,343 pounds of marijuana. In 2009, the South Central Drug Task Force ended a long-term drug investigation in Phelps County. As a result of that operation, troopers and other law enforcement officers teamed up to arrest over 100 individuals.

Other accomplishments in 2009 included a very successful Troop I open house, the troop’s fifth Community Alliance Program, and employees and troopers from Troop I raising $7,500 for Special Olympics Missouri.

Unfortunately, 2009 will be remembered sadly by many for the passing of two of Troop I's finest employees. On January 4, 2009, health complications resulted in the death of Sergeant Mark D. Reynolds, the supervisor of Zone 1, Phelps and

Maries counties. On March 3, 2009, those assigned to Troop I faced yet another tragic moment, when Communications Operator III Taylor C. Hunt died after losing his battle with a serious illness.

2010s

During 2010, five new troopers were assigned to Troop I. Those officers and their assignments were as follows: Jacob R. Sellars, Phelps and Maries counties; Cory M. Stauffer, Crawford County; Jason W. Philpott, Pulaski and Maries counties; Ralicia A. Feuerborn, Phelps and Maries counties; and Gregory R. Moravec, Dent County.

On March 9, 2010, Crawford County Sheriff's deputies and the Cuba Police Department initiated a pursuit of a Ford pickup in Cuba, which was believed to be driven by a Patrick L. Greer. Greer was wanted by Texas authorities and was reportedly armed and dangerous. Greer quickly led the officers onto westbound Interstate 44, where Trooper Evan T. Hane joined in as other troopers successfully set up spike strips along the way. Near the 200-mile marker of I-44, Greer's vehicle traveled off the right side of the interstate and stopped. There, Greer exited his truck with a pistol, first pointing at himself and then at the officers, who responded by returning fatal gunfire.

On April 29, 2010, Corporal Kyle D. Wilmont stopped a vehicle south of St. James that matched the description of a vehicle used that morning during the armed robbery of First Community National Bank in Cuba. John David Farnell of Fulton, MO, was arrested after Cpl. Wilmont located a weapon and money stolen from the bank inside the vehicle. It was later determined that Farnell had also robbed banks in Moberly, Sedalia, Rolla, Chillicothe, and El Dorado Springs.

During the annual Patrol Award Ceremony & The MASTERS Banquet, Lieutenant James W. Remillard accepted the 2010 The MASTERS Public Service Award. In July, Trooper Brock A. Vogt was the Patrol's recipient of the Law Enforcement Traffic Safety Advisory Council's award, which recognized him for his outstanding enforcement efforts that included 102 arrests for DWI.

On July 1, 2010, a traffic stop on Interstate 44 in Phelps County by Trooper Matthew A. Goodson resulted in the seizure of 500 pounds of marijuana and the arrest of a New Mexico resident. On August 25, 2010, two New York truck drivers were arrested when CVET Corporal Neil R. Poynter and Commercial Vehicle Officer Supervisor I Thomas W. "Tom" Cross determined they were transporting approximately 1,000 pounds of marijuana.

On January 1, 2011, Troop I officers were called upon to assist the public in the aftermath of tornadoes that struck on New Year's Eve, which took the lives of four individuals in Phelps and Dent counties.

Also on January 1, 2011, the Missouri State Water Patrol merged into the Missouri State Highway Patrol and became the Water Patrol Division.

On May 12, 2011, St. Robert Police officers initiated a lengthy pursuit, when a subject identified as Cody Willcoxson, 31, of Southwest City, MO, entered and then exited Ft. Leonard Wood without the permission of military authorities. The pursuit of Willcoxson continued onto Interstate 44 and into Rolla. During the chase, Willcoxson fired over 80 rifle rounds at law enforcement officers, including Trooper Derek B. Blankenship, who successfully deployed spike strips. Willcoxson eventually wrecked his vehicle in Rolla on the campus of the Missouri University of Science and Technology. While still armed, he fled on foot, ran through a campus hall, and then stole another vehicle. Willcoxson then drove south on U.S. Highway 63 and was apprehended in Phelps County by Troop G Officer, Terry R. Nelson.

On October 1, Troop I gained additional manpower, as five members of the new Water Patrol Division were placed within the troops where those officers resided.

On November 20, information was developed indicating fugitive Darryl L. Eye was in Pulaski County. Soon thereafter, Corporal D. Mark Hedrick and Trooper Nicholas A. Smith located Eye just off Randolph Road, in a stolen truck. When confronted, Eye attempted to run over the officers and then sped away from the scene. The troopers pursued Eye until his vehicle traveled off the road and became disabled. Eye fired several rounds and brandished the firearm while inside the truck, causing Cpl. Hedrick to also respond with gunfire. The investigation later revealed that Eye shot himself and was shot by the trooper. He died at the scene.

His dedication to community service in the Lebanon area resulted in Corporal Jason H. Glendenning accepting The MASTERS Public Service Award at the annual awards banquet in Jefferson City.

In 2011, Troop I saw the completion of a new radio tower, replacing the original that was built in 1949, and a complete renovation of the troop communication center.

In 2012 five new troopers were added to the ranks of Troop I. In January, Trooper Clinton R. Capps was assigned to Zone 3, Crawford County, following the December graduation of the Patrol's 94th Recruit Class. In October, following the graduation of the 95th Recruit Class, Trooper Kellen D. Rapier was assigned to Zone 1, Phelps and Eastern Maries counties; Trooper Jeffery S. Cunningham to Zone 4, Pulaski and Western Maries counties; Trooper Jeffrey A. Ice, Zone 8, Pulaski and Western Maries counties; and Trooper Colby W. Tierney, Zone 9, Laclede County. The three commercial vehicle officers assigned to Troop I—John W. Noble, Thomas W. Cross, and Jimmy D. Reid—retired with their many years of enforcement experience. This function was then left in the hands of the Troop I commercial vehicle enforcement troopers.

During the months of February and March, Troop I conducted its first Student Alliance Program. The students were involved in many hands-on activities, which represented a cross section of duties commonly performed by officers.

On March 30, 2012, Corporal D. Mark Hedrick was honored at the IACP conference banquet in Washington, D.C., as one of four officers in North America chosen as a finalist for the IACP/Motorola Trooper of the Year award. Cpl. Hedrick's recognition was due to his exemplary actions when confronted by a known, armed, and dangerous fugitive.

On March 16, 2012, Troop I investigators and troopers responded to a Meramec River access in Crawford County to assist the sheriff's department, where the bodies of three children and their mother were located. The investigation revealed the mother took the lives of her children before committing suicide.

At the 2012 Patrol Awards Ceremony & The MASTERS Banquet, Sergeant Timothy D. Peters accepted the Purple Heart, due to injuries he received when struggling to arrest a suspect who was under the influence of the drug, "bath salts". Troop I Lieutenant Steve P. Davis was honored as the 2012 recipient of The MASTERS Public Service Award. Cpl. Hedrick was again recognized when he received the Meritorious Service Award.

In April, employees of Troop I assisted in the area Special Olympics Missouri competition held at Ft. Leonard Wood. In May, a special Torch Run Took place from Sullivan to Rolla, MO, along Interstate 44. In 2012, Troop I employees raised $7,100 for the outstanding organization.

On August 25, 2012, a contingent of Troop I officers successfully helped maintain peace and order throughout the annual "Bull Float" held in Crawford County. The 2012 event reportedly was one of the largest and consisted of several thousand canoeists and rafters. Float participants put in on the Huzzah River and floated to a take-out point on the Meramec River near the Onondaga State Park.

On April 24, 2013, Troop I officers were involved in a 40-mile pursuit after the driver of a U-Haul fled the scene of a traffic crash. The pursuit ended when the suspect's vehicle became stuck in a ditch as he attempted to cross from the interstate onto another road. Troopers quickly captured the driver as he ran from his vehicle on foot. Later, it was determined that he was under the influence of "bath salts". The chase was initiated on I-44 in Phelps County and ended in Crawford County near Sullivan.

In July, Pulaski County troopers and DDCC investigators assigned to Troop I took the lead in a homicide investigation that occurred in St. Robert. Their hard work resulted in the arrest of three individuals.

On July 29, 2013, Troop I welcomed three graduates of the Patrol's 96th Recruit Class. The new troopers and their assignments were John I. Cobb III, Zone 2,

Phelps and Eastern Maries counties; Joshua L. Dunmire, Zone 9, Crawford County; and Tyler G. Zimmerman, Zone 8, Laclede County.

During the late night hours of August 5, 2013, torrential rain fell in the Troop I area, with the heaviest precipitation occurring around Waynesville and St. Robert. Flash flooding resulted in the loss of two lives when swift moving water swept away a vehicle occupied by a mother and her child. However, the heroic actions of Sergeant Justin L. McCullough and Corporal Lance D. DeClue saved seven lives. The two troopers place their lives in harm's way as they maneuvered their patrol boat through raging flood waters and rescued marooned citizens and other emergency personnel. Other Troop I officers took part in similar water rescues in Laclede, Maries, and Dent counties in the days to follow.

During the fall 2013, 20 individuals participated in Troop I's 7th Community Alliance Program.

Four Troop I officers were recognized in 2013 for their outstanding work performance. Trooper Joseph T. Peart was the Patrol's nominee for the Law Enforcement Traffic Safety Officer of the Year Award. Corporal Robert G. May II was selected as Missouri's nominee for the National Boating Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award. Sergeant Justin L. McCullough and Corporal Lance D. DeClue's rescue efforts during the flood earned them the Department of Public Safety Employee of the Month award in December 2013.

On June 1, 2014, Captain Lee Ann H. Kenley retired after 28 years of honorable and dedicated service with the Patrol. Lieutenant James W. Remillard was promoted to the rank of captain and designated as the new troop commander.

From August 16 through December 6, 2014, groups of Troop I members rotated into and out of Ferguson, MO, to assist Troop C members. Forty of the assigned 67 members of Troop I and one radio operator were part of the detail.

Lieutenant Steve P. Davis was selected to represent law enforcement for the entire state of Missouri when he traveled to the east coast for the Special Olympics' USA Games in June. Lt. Davis took part in a multi-state torch run that ended at the opening ceremonies in Newark, NJ. Along with participating in the torch run, Lt. Davis also spoke at several events and made a television appearance from the studio of Fox and Friends in New York City.

On February 28, 2015, a large winter storm hit the area. The storm was a contributing factor to a multi-vehicle traffic crash on Interstate 44, just west of Troop I Headquarters. The traffic crash involved 12 tractor trailers, 10 passenger vehicles, and a fully loaded Greyhound Bus. To complicate matters, the crash resulted in a hazardous material spill and a complete shutdown of westbound I-44 for over 24 hours. Miraculously, no one was seriously injured in the crash or aftermath.

On July 9, 2015, troopers were called to assist the Phelps County Sheriff's Department with the search for two missing teenage boys, one of which was autistic. One of the boys was located unharmed in a wooded area near his home in rural Phelps County on July 10, 2016. Troopers spent several months assisting the large-scale search for the second boy, Johnathan Shay, who was autistic. On February 21, 2016, human remains were located by a property owner near Dry Fork Creek, south of Saint James. The remains were later confirmed to be that of Johnathan Shay.

Torrential storms brought dangerous flash floods for several days in late December 2015. Our troopers responded to 518 calls for service, 104 of those calls were water-related; they performed 48 water rescues. The flooding claimed the lives of eight citizens and isolated the entire area for several days.

Also in 2015, Lt. Steve P. Davis accepted the most notable award given by Special Olympics Missouri, the John Michael Letz Award. This award is given to an individual who's been identified as an unsung hero, and whose unselfish contributions lead to the great success of the Law Enforcement Torch Run.

On May 18, 2016, Trooper Grant A. Ayres, Zone 3, Crawford County, was involved in a fatal shooting. The shooting occurred on the south service road to Interstate 44 one mile west of Sullivan, MO. Tpr. Ayres initiated the traffic stop for a vehicle not displaying a front license plate. The suspect, who was wanted on drug violations, displayed a handgun, which resulted in the fatal shooting. Tpr. Ayres was not injured in the incident and returned to duty.

In July, the Troop I region once again experienced torrential rainfall that resulted in numerous flash floods. Sergeant Jason H. Glendenning and Trooper Tyler G. Zimmerman took a proactive approach to search for trouble spots on the Niangua River after it flooded. The troopers located a large tree creating a strainer and began to address the problem. Before they could complete the task, they were called upon to rescue a total of 11 people floating down the river. They then moved upriver to stop others from floating into this dangerous area. The troopers subsequently arranged to have the tree removed from the river. Sgt. Glendenning and Tpr. Zimmerman were recognized for their heroic actions. The troopers were named December 2016 DPS Employees of the Month. They also accepted the January 2017 State Employee of the Month award. The Patrol recognized them at the annual banquet in April 2017, with a Valor Award.

In September 2016, Troop I honored the memory and service of Trooper Gary W. Snodgrass, by naming the Meramec River Bridge on Missouri Highway 32 in Dent County in his honor. Tpr. Snodgrass was killed in the line of duty on February 21, 1970. To date, of the 31 line of duty deaths, Tpr. Snodgrass is the only Troop I member that has made the ultimate sacrifice.

Troop I experienced another busy year in 2017. For the third year in a row, Mother Nature was cruel and brought torrential rains in late April and early May. The flood waters isolated the majority of the Troop I area for several days and resulted in numerous road closures. Rerouting traffic, and in many cases, shutting traffic down completely, became a priority. The members assigned to marine operations stayed especially busy performing many water rescues and assisting other agencies.

In mid-September, the civil unrest in St. Louis once again called for a Patrol response, and Troop I was tasked with sending many troopers back to the St. Louis metropolitan area. Their assignment was to help protect lives and property, and to assist the brothers and sisters in Troop C along with the police departments of St. Louis County and St. Louis City.

Sergeant Jason H. Glendenning and Trooper Tyler G. Zimmerman, both Troop I, accepted Missouri Medals of Valor from Governor Eric Greitens on October 28, 2017. The recognition was related to their response after flooding created a dangerous situation on the Niangua River on July 16, 2016.

Corporal Jason M. Hurt and Trooper Colby W. Tierney completed six weeks of training and were assigned to the Patrol's Dive Team in 2018. Earlier in the year, the two officers also assisted the Dive Team in Branson, MO, after the Duck Boat incident.

The influx of heroin in the Troop I region and Missouri led to all Troop I officers working the road carrying doses of NARCAN in the event of a response or contact with someone who had overdosed. Subsequently, Corporal Kyle D. Wilmont and Corporal Jeremy R. McCurdy responded to different scenes where individuals had overdosed and applied the training. Cpl. McCurdy administered NARCAN to reverse the effect of the heroin overdose; Cpl. Wilmont administered CPR to an unresponsive subject until EMS responded and administered NARCAN. Both Cpl. McCurdy and Cpl. Wilmont accepted a Lifesaving Award in April 2019, at the Patrol's annual awards banquet recognizing them for their actions.

Also at the April awards banquet, Corporal Jonathon D. "Johnny" Fariole accepted the Masters Public Service Award for his role in epilepsy awareness in the community surrounding Troop I.

Effective June 1, 2019, Captain James W. Remillard retired. Lieutenant Edwin A. Blaylock, Troop C, was promoted to captain and named commanding officer of Troop I.

On November 15, 2019, Troop I communications notified Trooper Joseph C. Southwood of a shooting at the intersection of Missouri Route A and Missouri Route W in Laclede County. A male and a female were shot multiple times, and the shooter had fled the scene. Tpr. Southwood immediately responded and

located the male and female leaning against a guardrail. The male had gunshot wounds to the abdomen, both arms, and both legs, which were bleeding profusely. The female had gunshot wounds to her chest, left arm, and left leg, which were bleeding profusely. The female victim had applied makeshift tourniquets to her extremities. The male victim had makeshift tourniquets applied to his arms and right leg but was still bleeding profusely from his left leg. Tpr. Southwood maintained his Patrol issued CAT tourniquet on his right ankle while working. He quickly and properly applied the tourniquet on the male victim's left leg, which stopped the bleeding. An ambulance arrived and provided advanced medical care to the victims. Tpr. Southwood accepted a Lifesaving Award for his actions.

2020s

2020 began with a veteran sergeant announcing his retirement. The retirement was somewhat different from others because Sergeant Ronald A. Copeland left the Patrol after 28 years of service to pursue a seat in the Missouri House of Representatives, which he won in November 2020.

The spring began with unknowns and challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Many changes occurred in day-to-day operations. Motor vehicle inspectors, driver examiners, and office personnel adjusted how they provided services to the public. Clerical staff worked remotely from home, the public was required to make appointments for services, sneeze guards were installed, and buildings were sanitized constantly. Many of Troop I’s employees were infected by the virus and many others were quarantined. The nation stayed at home for much of the year, which led to a noticeable reduction in traffic on the interstate system. At the same time, troopers saw a major increase in drivers traveling at very high speeds.

Troop I underwent construction during the late summer with the installation of new windows throughout the troop headquarters. The windows were tinted and gave the troop building a fresh, clean look.

Radio experienced some changes in 2020 during the overnight dispatching operations. A pilot program was established between Troop I communications and Troop G, Willow Springs. Troop I communications personnel started dispatching and handling calls for the entire Troop G area during the overnight hours. In addition to providing continuous communication services for Troop I, as part of the pilot program, Troop I personnel began providing communications services for the Troop G area Sunday through Thursday from 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. and Friday/Saturday from 1 a.m. to 7 a.m.

While on vacation August 15, 2020, in Whittier, CA, Trooper Gavin C. Leach was with friends enjoying a meal at a city park. When he heard a young female screaming, Tpr. Leach responded to her location. Seeing that she had suffered a deep stab wound to the left side of her neck, Tpr. Leach immediately removed

his T-shirt and applied it to the wound to stop the bleeding. At the same time, he directed a friend to call emergency services and request an ambulance. Tpr. Leach continued applying pressure to the wound and comforting the victim until ambulance personnel arrived. Tpr. Leach accepted a Lifesaving Award for his actions.

On November 22, 2020, Corporal Bryan S. Silverthorn and Corporal Paul V.J. Volkmer responded to a low water crossing along a Dent County Road where a truck had washed off the roadway into a flooded branch of Dry Fork Creek. They launched their patrol vessel and maneuvered it approximately 500 yards downstream to where the driver was sitting on top of the truck. The driver, who was diabetic, advised the troopers he was having trouble feeling his legs. Cpl. Silverthorn pinned the boat against the truck, and Cpl. Volkmer held onto the front of the truck to keep the boat from being swept downstream. Cpl. Silverthorn then assisted the driver into the boat and placed him into a life jacket. The troopers then transported the man to the bank where members of the Dent County Fire Department waited. The man recovered from the incident. Cpl. Silverthorn and Cpl. Volkmer each accepted a Lifesaving Award for their actions.

On August 26, 2021, Troop I troopers responded to a school bus crash near St. James, MO. The crash occurred when the driver experienced a medical emergency. The bus traveled off the roadway and into a field. A student on the bus reacted quickly and ran to the front of the bus and brought the bus to a controlled stop. A second student called 9-1-1 and kept the younger students calm. The bus driver was unresponsive when medical personnel arrived and did not survive. Captain Eddie A. Blaylock presented proclamations from the governor and Honorary Trooper certificates from the Patrol to the two students.

March 1, 2022, marked the retirement of one of Troop I's veteran staff officers. Lieutenant Steve P. Davis retired after 30 years of dedicated service to the Patrol. Troop I welcomed Lieutenant Aimee N. Fulkerson, who was promoted after previously serving as a zone supervisor in Pulaski County.

In April 2022, Trooper Cory M. Stauffer received the Purple Heart Award at the annual Patrol awards ceremony. The award stemmed from an incident that occurred on February 10, 2021, when Tpr. Stauffer was assaulted during a traffic stop. Tpr. Stauffer suffered a broken pubic bone in two locations and sustained an injury to his knee. He endured weeks of intense physical therapy, and his injuries required him to be off work for nearly six months. He has since returned to active duty.

On May 10, 2022, Troop I welcomed Trooper Eric Walker after graduating from the Patrol's 114th Recruit Class. This particular recruit class has the distinction of being the first to attend the Patrol's newly created accelerated law enforcement academy.

On July 14, 2022, Trooper Jared Chronister received the Law Enforcement Traffic Safety Advisory Council's (LETSAC) 2022 Officer of the Year Award. Tpr. Chronister was recognized for his outstanding work ethic and contributions to traffic safety and enforcement.

Troop I's facilities underwent renovation throughout 2022. A large window was installed in the driver examination office located in the annex building to facilitate customer service to the public. The main floor of Troop I received a fresh coat of paint and office spaces were updated. The main parking lot of Troop I received a fresh asphalt overlay with the remaining areas being seal-coated for maintenance.

Troopers Gary S. Sloan and Kristopher D. Malay were recognized for their enforcement efforts of removing impaired drivers from the roadway in 2023. They attended the MADD DWI enforcement recognition banquet with Capt. Eddie A. Blaylock.

On July 28, 2023, Sergeant Lance D. DeClue was preparing to begin his shift when he overheard radio traffic from Crawford County regarding a pursuit. The suspect was traveling in a stolen vehicle and firing a handgun toward the deputy pursuing him. Sgt. DeClue reported for duty and followed the pursuit into Washington County and then into Iron County. Sgt. DeClue followed the suspect onto Doe Run Mine Haul Road. When the suspect reached a dead end, he turned the vehicle around and came toward Sgt. DeClue's patrol vehicle on the one-lane road. Sgt. DeClue determined the suspect would put others in danger of death or serious bodily harm if he did not stop him. Sgt. DeClue then intentionally rammed the suspect's vehicle and disabled it. He exited his patrol vehicle and ordered the suspect to show his hands. After the suspect complied, he was taken into custody.

Inclement weather became the primary concern for the winter months, causing traffic issues along Interstate 44 in Troop I. Snow and ice-covered roadways posed challenges for troopers.

On September 30, 2024, Troopers successfully stopped a vehicle and located a child from an Amber Alert issued by Texas authorities.

Major highway reconstruction continued along Interstate 44 in Phelps County. Incidents caused significant back-ups and unique challenges for responding emergency personnel. All lanes reopened in October.

On November 5, 2024, the Troop I area received several inches of rain which flooded roadways including Interstate 44 and US 63.

In 2025, inclement weather became the primary concern during the winter months, causing traffic issues along Interstate 44 in Troop I. Snow and ice-covered roadways posed typical challenges for troopers.

On March 14, an EF-2 tornado struck the Rolla area, causing widespread damage. The tornado caused damage to nearly 1,000 structures.

On April 1, 2025, Captain Jon C. Pruiett became the commanding officer of Troop I. He had previously served as a Lieutenant in Troop C and Troop E.

In August 2025, Corporal Brain N. Crawford located a 15-year-old girl hidden in the trunk of an alleged sexual predator's vehicle. The suspect was taking the girl from Illinois to Texas when the vehicle was intercepted.

Trooper Caleb C. Marlow seized 230 pounds of marijuana during a traffic stop in Phelps County on September 21, 2025.

Troop I had a 34 percent decrease in fatal crashes, three percent decrease in injury crashes, and 16 percent decrease in total crashes investigated.

Troop Commanders
January 1, 1950 - Thomas E. Whitecotton
February 9, 1953 - Earl L. Davis
February 28, 1954 - John Tandy
May 1, 1954 - Lewis D. Howard
October 1, 1957 -Theodore R. Taylor
March 1, 1959 - Paul E. Corl
August 24, 1961 - Chester R. Oliver
March 23. 1967 - Alva H. Leslie
November 1, 1969 - Wilton L. Hutchings
December 1. 1972 - Harold M. Schmitt
August 1, 1975 - Allen S. Whitmer
February 25, 1981 - Howard J. Delcour
June 1, 1989 - Gary E. Whitener
October 22, 1991 - Ronald P. Wiedemann
April 1, 1999 - Joseph L. Swearengen
March 1, 2002 - Randy L. Becker
September 1, 2008 - Lee Ann H. Kenley
June 1, 2014 - James W. Remillard
June 1, 2019 - Edwin A. Blaylock
April 1, 2025 - Jon C. Pruiett