

Washington State Patrol Fallen Officers

In memory of . . .

Trooper James E. Saunders was shot and killed on October 7, 1999, during a traffic stop in Pasco. He was 31 and had been a trooper for nearly eight years. Saunders is the 26th Washington State Patrol officer to die in the line of duty.



Trooper Saunders began his State Patrol career on January 7, 1991, as a cadet assigned to Governor's Mansion Security in Olympia. He was commissioned December 20, 1991, with the 73rd trooper basic training class and assigned to Coulee City, working out of the Ephrata detachment. He transferred in 1996 to Kennewick.

His survivors include his wife, Billie; daughter, Megan; son, James; and parents, John and Jan Saunders of Wenatchee.



IN THE LINE OF DUTY



Vernon Fortin - September 30, 1923

Trooper Vernon Fortin at the age of 25. Trooper Fortin was injured when his motorcycle collided with another patrolman's motorcycle while they were en route to the Lynden fair for traffic duty. Trooper Fortin died five days later from his injuries. At the time of his death, Trooper Fortin served 18 months with the Washington State Patrol.



Irving Thorsvig - October 26, 1926

Trooper Irving Thorsvig was westbound on his motorcycle on August 29, 1926, on the old Bothell-Seattle highway when he slipped on the brick surface. A handle bar struck him in the chest. At first, it was believed to be a minor chest injury, then perhaps a bruised lung. It developed into a serious lung problem. His mother took him to Los Angeles, but he died October 26, 1926, before reaching a sanitarium. Trooper Irving had served 9 months with the Washington State Patrol.



Conrad Tolson - March 24, 1929

Trooper Conrad Tolson died on March 24, 1929, at the age of 39. He died from injuries sustained the previous day in a collision between his motorcycle and an oncoming automobile on the Seattle-Tacoma highway near the Pierce-King County line. Trooper Tolson was southbound on the Seattle-Tacoma highway when an oncoming car veered into his lane. Trooper Tolson's motorcycle and sidecar collided with the oncoming vehicle.



Douglas Cossman - October 9, 1929

Trooper H. Douglas Cossman died on October 9, 1929, at the age of 28. He died from injuries he received in a collision with an automobile and his motorcycle at 46th & Park Avenue in Tacoma. At the time of his death, Trooper Cossman had served only 2 months with the Washington State Patrol as a trooper.



William Pautzke - May 8, 1930

Trooper William Pautzke died 74 years ago on May 8, 1930, at the age of 28. He died from injuries when he ran his motorcycle into the side of a gravel truck in the Burien area of Seattle en route to an investigation. At the time of his death, Trooper Pautzke served four years with the Washington State Patrol.



Captain Loren (Bud) Ray - December 16, 1934

Captain Loren Ray died on December 16, 1934, at the age of 34. Captain Ray died from injuries sustained in a fall at the County/City building in Seattle. At the time of his death, Captain Ray served 6 years with the Washington State Patrol.



Allen Ludden - March 15, 1938

Trooper Allen Ludden died on March 15, at the age of 37. He was fatally injured when he lost control of his motorcycle south of the Seattle city limits at a weigh station on the Seattle-Tacoma highway. At the time of his death, Trooper Ludden had served 18 months with the Washington State Patrol.



John Gulden - December 23, 1942

Trooper John Gulden died on December 23, 1942, at the age of 43. Trooper Gulden was shot as he approached a vehicle he stopped for driving without headlights. (He was unaware the vehicle had two teenage suspects inside wanted for robbery and car theft.) At the time of his death, Trooper Gulden served 13 years with the Washington State Patrol.



Thomas Hanlin - May 26, 1945

Trooper Thomas Hanlin died on May 26, 1945, at the age of 38. He died from injuries sustained 18 months after flipping his patrol vehicle on the Mount Baker Highway near Deming. His injuries at first were considered minor bruises. Later diagnosis revealed head injury.



Paul Johnson - December 12, 1949

Trooper Paul Johnson died on December 12, 1949, at the age of 32. Trooper Johnson died of a gunshot wound to the head after responding to a neighborhood disturbance near Snoqualmie. At the time of his death, Trooper Johnson served 3 years with the Washington State Patrol.



Ivan Belka - August 18, 1951

Trooper Ivan Belka died at the age of 38. A vehicle failed to yield to Trooper Belka's patrol vehicle. He died from injuries as a result of this collision which occurred in Spokane. At the time of his death, Trooper Belka served 8-1/2 years with the Washington State Patrol.



Don Campbell - December 21, 1951

Trooper Don Campbell Jr. died on December 21, 1951, at the age of 28. Trooper Campbell was struck by a truck while directing traffic around a stalled truck on Pacific Highway near Vancouver. At the time of his death, Trooper Campbell served 6 years with the Washington State Patrol.



John Wright - June 28, 1953

Trooper John Wright was commissioned September 10, 1951, in the 16th cadet class. He was assigned to the Spokane Valley detachment. Wright died June 28, 1953, of injuries after he was struck by a hit-and-run driver on East Sprague Avenue at Barker Road in Greenacres, east of Spokane. He was 28 years old.



Gene Bolstad - September 3, 1957

Trooper Gene Bolstad died at the age of 29 attempting to rescue a teenage boy in the surf at Long Beach. Both were caught in an undertow. At the time of his death, Trooper Bolstad had served 2-1/2 years

with the Washington State Patrol.



Ernest Eichhorn - September 16, 1958

Trooper Ernest Eichhorn died at the age of 33. He was killed by a drunk driver while directing traffic in front of the Puyallup Fairgrounds during the Western Washington Fair. At the time of his death, Trooper Eichhorn had served twelve years with the Washington State Patrol as a trooper.



Wes Whittenberg - December 29, 1960

Trooper Wesley Whittenberg died on December 29, 1960, at the age of 29. He was struck by a car while investigating an accident on the Stillaguamish River Bridge on U.S. 99 north of Marysville. At the time of his death, Trooper Whittenberg had served 10 years with the Washington State Patrol as a trooper.



Clarence Johnson - September 8, 1968

Trooper Clarence Johnson died 37 years ago at the age of 26. He was killed when he was hit head-on by a pickup that crossed the center line on a curve between Fall City and Carnation. At the time of his death, Trooper Johnson had served 18 months with the Washington State Patrol.



Frank Noble - February 5, 1972

Trooper Frank Noble died on February 5, 1972, at the age of 42. He was shot during a traffic stop near Toppenish by a furloughed convict who earlier had robbed a convenience store. At the time of his death, Trooper Noble had served 14 years with the Washington State Patrol.



CVEO Joseph Modlin - August 15, 1974

Weight Control Officer Joseph Modlin died on August 15 at the age of 60. He was killed when he was struck by a logging truck trailer while walking toward a second truck at the Home Valley weigh station on Highway 14 seven miles east of Stevenson. At the time of his death, Officer Modlin had served six years with the Washington State Patrol.



Thomas Hendrickson - November 17, 1974

Trooper Thomas Hendrickson died on November 17, 1974, at the age of 31. Trooper Hendrickson was struck and killed by a hit-and-run driver while investigating a traffic accident on State Route 20 in Mount Vernon. At the time of his death, Trooper Hendrickson had served almost four years with the Washington State Patrol.



Glenda Thomas - May 24, 1985

Trooper Glenda Thomas died on May 24, 1985, at the age of 29. She was killed while investigating a multi-vehicle collision on the north Seattle freeway. Trooper Thomas was standing between two vehicles at the collision scene when another car rear-ended one of the vehicles involved in the earlier collision, pinning her between two automobiles. At the time of her death, Trooper Thomas had served only 6 months with the Washington State Patrol as a trooper.



James Gain - March 2, 1987

Trooper James Gain died on March 2, at the age of 42. He was struck by a semi-truck along Interstate 5 seven miles north of Vancouver while conducting a traffic stop. At the time of his death, Trooper Gain had served 19 years with the Washington State Patrol.



Clifford Hansell - July 22, 1987

Trooper Clifford Hansell was killed July 22, 1987, at the age of 25. His patrol car collided broadside with the front of a semi-truck on North Central Avenue in downtown Kent as he swerved while responding to a collision scene. At the time of his death, Trooper Hansell had served 17 months with the Washington State Patrol.



Raymond Hawn - January 17, 1990

Trooper Raymond Hawn died on January 17, 1990, at the age of 47 when he was struck by a vehicle while rendering assistance to a motorcyclist who had run out of gas alongside Highway 12 near Grandview. At the time of his death, Trooper Hawn served 21 years with the Washington State Patrol.



Steven Frink - March 22, 1993

Trooper Steven Frink died on March 22, 1993, at the age of 39. Trooper Frink was thrown from his motorcycle on an Interstate 90 off-ramp on Mercer Island when an automobile he was pursuing spun out of control. Trooper Frink died from his injuries four days after the collision.



James Saunders - October 7, 1999

Trooper James Saunders died on October 7, 1999, at the age of 31 from gunshot wounds while conducting a traffic stop in Pasco. At the time of his death, Trooper Saunders had served 8-1/2 years with the Washington State Patrol as a trooper.