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THE GEORGIA TROOPER

Vol. 26, No. 1
Summer 2012

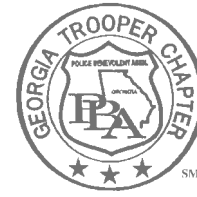


Georgia State Patrol Celebrates 75th Anniversary





THE GEORGIA TROOPER



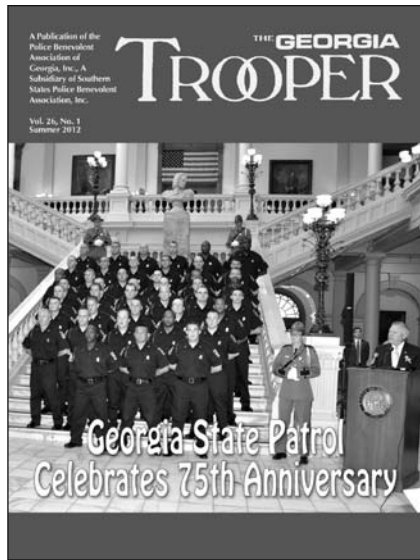
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Georgia Trooper Chapter
Police Benevolent Association
2155 Highway 42 S
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ON THE COVER



Governor Nathan Deal speaking at the 75th Anniversary ceremony as the cadets of the 90th GSP Trooper School look on (GSP Public Information Office Photo)

Van Keller
Editor
The Georgia Trooper

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Membership in the Georgia Trooper Chapter of the Police Benevolent Association of Georgia is open to all Georgia State Patrol members upon payment of an initiation fee.



Letter from the Editor

The department celebrated its 75th anniversary this year and to me it just seems like yesterday that we were celebrating the 50th. It is amazing how time flies. I once remarked to my old friend the late Emmett Whitfield, who retired from the GBI but served as a GSP Post Commander as well as an FBI agent, how fast time seemed to be passing and he said "Wait until you reach 90 then it goes to light speed."

I was disappointed that there was no really cool commemorative item offered like the special revolvers we were able to purchase in 1987. I was unable to attend the ceremony at the capitol so now my goal is to hang around for the 100th anniversary. I am sure it will be a good one. I recently had the privilege of appearing on a radio program called "Georgia Focus" with Col. Mark McDonough and Gordy Wright where we discussed the changes to the GSP over the last 75 years with the host, John Clark. It was on the Georgia News Network and aired on 107 radio stations all over the state. I suspect I was invited because of the research I did to write the GSP history in the 70th Anniversary album.

If anyone has any old GSP memorabilia of any kind that they might like to donate to the GSP Historical Society I understand that they are always on the lookout for old photographs, newspaper clippings, and anything else related to the department. Even if you don't want to get rid of it right now, you might want to put it in your will or ask family members to send it in after your death. Most troopers have saved stuff that was significant to us but might be considered trash by anyone except other GSP members.

As this is being written the retired officers from several different agencies recently did the yearly qualification required for our LEOSA permit at the Whitfield County Sheriff Office range. We have been doing this since 2006 and we have more and more people each time. This time there were over 30 participants. As usual the sheriff, Scott Chitwood, and his staff treated us like royalty and everyone had a great



Van Keller

time. We did the classroom portion then we shot and we finished with a cookout.

I have noticed that there are new groups of retirees meeting all over the state as well as the groups that have been around for a while, we have been meeting for over ten years in Dalton, and I encourage everyone to seek out a group nearby to visit or start one of your own. I would love for someone, other than me, to organize a big cookout or fish fry or low country boil or something at a central location for all departmental members, retired and active, where everyone could get together in one location. I do not

mind helping I just do not want to be in charge.

The 90th trooper school has been going for several weeks now and I heard that they started with 52 and they have already lost 18. The department has been under strength for many years and I wonder where they will find the people to fill the ranks. I understand that it is getting harder and harder to find and keep qualified personnel. I was amazed to see that the GSP has to advertise the job of trooper. When I was hired in 1975 there were over a thousand men on the waiting list for trooper. I guess times have changed. To paraphrase the old Marine Corps slogan the GSP is looking for more than a few good men and women.

I would like to thank Lt. Andy Carrier, Assistant Troop E Commander, for his outstanding article on the new Critical Incident Support Team. I am very interested in this concept and I think it is a tremendous resource for the department. I know that Col. McDonough is very excited about the team and is expecting great things from them. I also would like to thank Gordy Wright and Allison Hodge for their invaluable assistance, again. I truly could not do it without their help.

To submit an article, make a suggestion, present an idea for an article, make comments or to offer constructive criticism please contact me at 706-673-5690 or vankel@charter.net or Van Keller 3220 Old Crider Rd Rocky Face, GA 30740





Off Duty Confrontations

Studies of law enforcement gun-fights have shown that approximately 25% occur while the officer is off duty. Because troopers spend far more time off duty than on duty there is a definite possibility of having to either defend themselves against criminal attack or having to make an arrest or perform some other type of law enforcement function while off duty. The off duty trooper wants to do everything possible to stack the odds of survival in his favor but there are a number of factors in the trooper's favor when he is on duty which are not present while off duty.

The primary difference is in the mindset. The proper mindset is the mental condition that is required to be prepared for combat. A trooper must change into this mindset before each shift when he is preparing to go on duty. Because a shift is a limited period of

time and the dangers of law enforcement work are well known, the trooper should be able to maintain the proper mindset for the entire shift.

This is not normally the case while off duty. Off duty is the time to relax and not have to worry about criminals. If a trooper is not mentally prepared for a deadly force confrontation he will probably not win no matter what handgun-holster-ammunition combination he is carrying.

The presence of family members or friends during a deadly force confrontation can impact negatively on mindset. Troopers are not used to having to protect anyone other than themselves during on duty encounters. If a trooper is required to protect one or more other people his attention will be divided and the tactics used will be different from only protecting himself.

Another factor that affects a trooper's mindset is when he feels a legal, moral, or even imagined obligation to try and intervene during the commission of a crime even when he is off duty.

Two important dangers concerning off duty response are that the off duty trooper is not easily identified and he does not carry the necessary equipment to perform law enforcement functions.

Although an off duty trooper has a badge/ID case to identify himself with it is much less effective than wearing a uniform. Because the off duty trooper is not easily identified he might be shot by another law enforcement officer or possibly by a legally armed civilian. There are many tragic examples of this happening even with officers in the same department.

Also the trooper does not benefit from the psychological advantage offered

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by wearing a uniform. The uniform is a large part of command presence and the projection of authority. Obviously it is much harder psychologically for a criminal to assault a trooper in uniform than one wearing a T-shirt and shorts.

Even after considering all of the disadvantages of performing law enforcement functions off duty, a trooper may be forced to do so anyway therefore he should carry at the minimum a handgun and law enforcement identification. The best way to carry ID is in a wallet type case that holds a badge as well as the departmental ID card.

A trooper must realize that the badge or other indicator of law enforcement status may not be noticed by responding officers. It is critical to follow the commands of the responding officers because they can easily justify shooting an armed individual but it would be extremely difficult to justify shooting them.

A basic rule for law enforcement officers is if you carry a gun carry ID.

If you do not carry a gun do not carry ID. Of course the reason that one needs an ID while carrying a gun is to identify himself as a trooper. Because of the danger of being executed during an armed robbery or a hostage situation if he is discovered to be a trooper, if he does not carry a gun to protect himself he should not carry his ID.

Another difference is the equipment available. The off duty trooper normally does not have access to handcuffs, a TASER, a baton, a flashlight, a radio, body armor, a back-up handgun, spare magazines or a shoulder weapon, shotgun or rifle. Obviously the reason a trooper carries these tools on duty is to perform daily law enforcement functions and to increase the odds of surviving a deadly force confrontation.

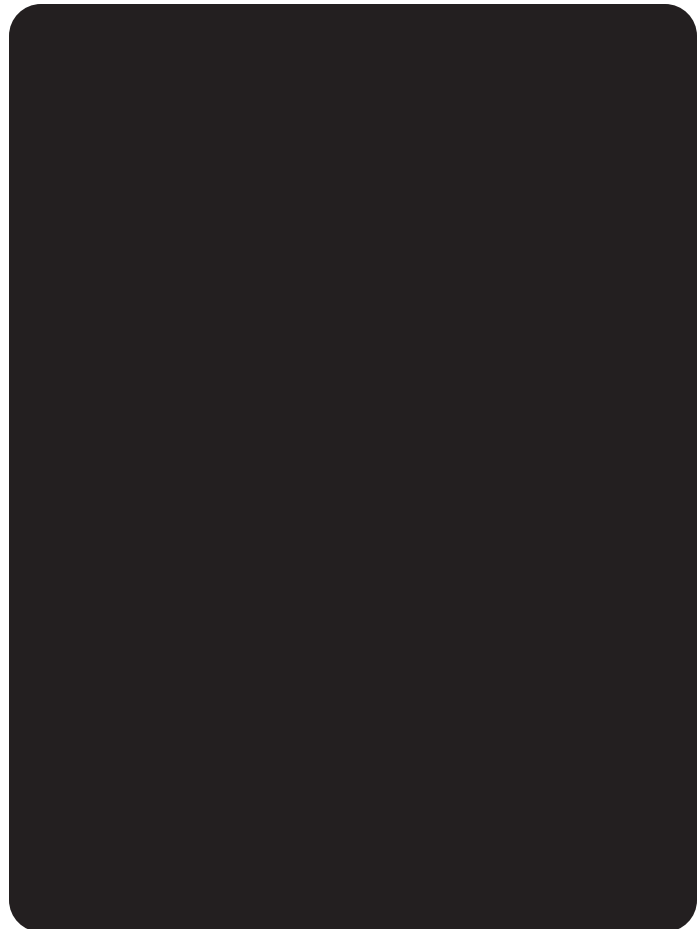
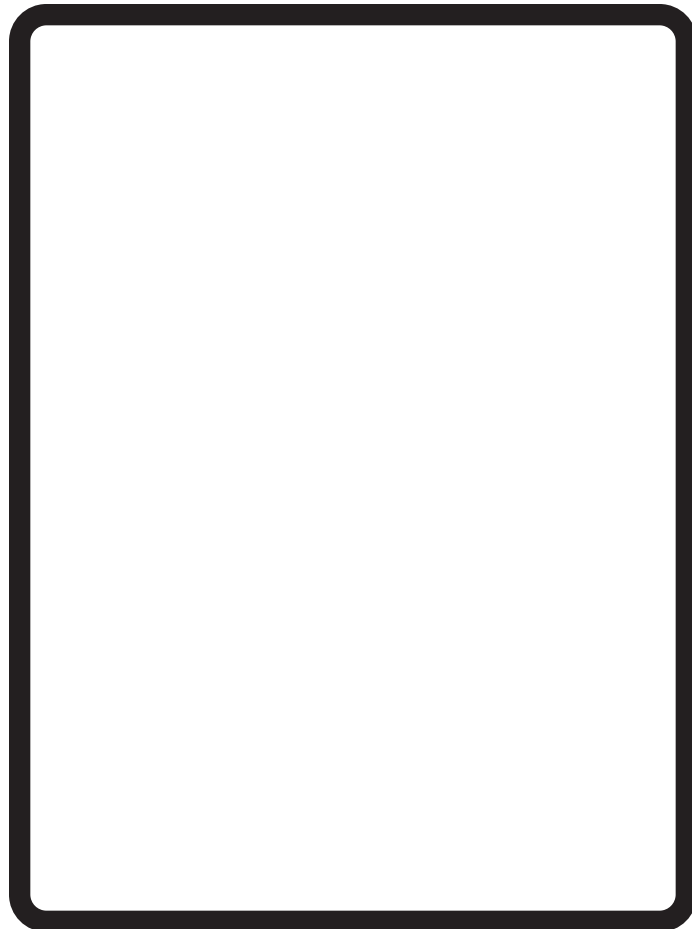
Without handcuffs they have no way to secure the suspect. With no TASER or baton this intermediate level of force is not available. The only intermediate force level weapon an off duty

trooper is likely to carry is a personal size canister of OC spray. Although this is not as effective it does give him a use of force option between talking and shooting. No flashlight means if target identification in reduced light is necessary they have a problem.

The U.S. military special operators have a saying "Two is one and one is none." This is because vital equipment can fall victim to "Murphy's Law." It is the reason GSP Troopers are issued two handguns and two spare magazines. The handgun that is used as a back-up on duty often serves as the off duty handgun. It is smaller than the primary duty handgun and it does not hold as much ammunition. This means the off duty trooper is armed with a smaller primary handgun as well as having less ammunition.

A significant difference is the lack of direct radio communication by off duty troopers. With modern radio equipment

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the availability of back up officers and emergency medical personnel is an accepted fact. There are Communication Equipment Operators whose job it is to keep up with the troopers' location and status. They use the new Computer Aided Dispatch system which is much faster and more efficient than any previous system.

The biggest advantage troopers have over criminals is the ability to request and receive help from other troopers when needed. Imagine if the bad guys had this option! Knowing that medical assistance can be easily summoned is also a comforting thought. Off duty because no radio is available a trooper should always carry a cell phone. But, even with a cell phone, be aware that the communication will be much more susceptible to confusion and delay than when a radio is used.

The most important piece of protective equipment a trooper wears on duty is soft body armor. The vest increases the odds of surviving a gunfight, especially in an ambush type situation. Since almost all of the situations an off duty trooper might encounter will be defensive in nature, the lack of body armor may be critical.

Considering these differences the tactics that should be used to survive an off duty encounter are often very different from the ones used while on duty. An off duty trooper must not lose sight of his objective. His objective is to preserve his life, the lives of his family or friends, and the lives of innocent citizens. His objective is not to enforce laws or capture criminals. He should let the on duty troopers do that. They have the equipment, the proper mindset, and it is their job.

Even though most troopers feel a

strong duty to protect, because a trooper is a trained observer, sometimes it is more practical for him to witness a crime but take no immediate action and then have the criminal arrested later. Unfortunately the less experienced a trooper is the more likely he is to want to do something, not just stand back and observe.

A tactic employed by armed robbers is to use seeded backup. This means allies of the criminal, who are carrying concealed weapons, go into the establishment first and attempt to blend in. They are alert to anyone who might interfere when the actual robber/gunman comes in. This includes civilians, off duty or plainclothes police officers, and even uniformed officers.

They are prepared to shoot anyone necessary to prevent being captured. This tactic has led to the death of several would be heroes. Because some troopers wear clothing off duty that identifies them as such they are in danger of being targeted in this type of robbery.

If a criminal starts indiscriminately shooting innocent people, like happened at Virginia Tech University where 32 were killed and 15 were wounded or in Tucson Arizona where 6 were killed and a congresswoman and 12 others were wounded, quick action by an off duty officer may be the only chance of preventing a massacre. As in most deadly force confrontations, the trooper should attempt to take cover and offer a verbal challenge. But in some extreme cases immediately shooting the gunman may be the only alternative.

Before an off duty trooper performs any law enforcement function he must identify himself if at all possible because once this is done he is not acting as a

civilian and is considered to be acting under the color of state law. This could be an important consideration if any type of legal action, civil or criminal, arises from an off duty confrontation.

A major consideration is whether the off duty trooper is intoxicated, even slightly, because this can affect his judgment, alertness, and marksmanship ability. It is generally considered a bad idea to mix alcohol and firearms.

A good guideline is not to get involved in anything off duty that is not life threatening. This means the crimes will be felonies and not misdemeanors. Some basic tactical considerations while off duty are to remain alert, sit with your back to the wall, be cautious entering convenience stores, banks and other targets of armed robbers, always have your badge case out when your handgun is drawn, carry at least one full reload, and remember to use cover, no vest.

After examining the differences between an off duty trooper and an on duty trooper, it is easy to see why it is more dangerous for the off duty trooper to encounter a criminal. It does not take a rocket scientist to see that a trooper is much more capable of surviving a confrontation on duty than off duty. Unfortunately on duty law enforcement officers are not always around when you need them. Sometimes the off duty trooper finds himself in a situation that requires immediate action. As always Stay Alert-Stay Alive.

Authors note: The use of he instead of the more cumbersome he/she in the text is intended for ease in reading and not to slight the many outstanding female troopers nationwide

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GSP Celebrates 75th Anniversary



Col. Mark McDonough speaking at 75th Anniversary ceremony with Cpl. Lisa Bowen standing at ceremonial parade rest as Capt. Derrick Durden and LTC Russell Powell look on (GSP PIO Photo)

The Georgia State Patrol turned 75 years old on March 19, 2012 and special ceremonies were held at the State Capitol to commemorate the historic anniversary. Governor Nathan Deal was the keynote speaker for the ceremony which was held in the North Wing of the Capitol. In addition, Lt. Governor Casey Cagle, House Speaker David Ralston, and Colonel Mark McDonough also delivered remarks to commemorate the occasion.

In attendance were former Department of Public Safety Commissioners, the Board of Public Safety, and other honored guests as well as active and retired GSP personnel and their families and friends. The cadets of the 90th GSP Trooper School were present for their first day of training and Speak-

er Ralston administered their oath of office.

During the ceremony, the names of the 27 troopers and agents of the DPS who have been killed in the line of duty were read out loud and a bell was rung after each one to pay tribute. This solemn ritual was followed by a 21-gun salute from the GSP Honor Guard, to pay homage and ensure that their sacrifice will never be forgotten. The Honor Guard played a major role in the ceremonies performing several different functions.

On display outside the Capitol was a 1937 Ford GSP patrol car that had been meticulously restored as well as current patrol cars, SUVs, motorcycles, SWAT, and other DPS

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Restored original GSP patrol car (above), 1937 Ford Coupe, compared to the current Dodge Charger (right) shows how much has changed in 75 years (GSP PIO Photos)

vehicles, in addition to other exhibits and equipment from various units to showcase the evolution over the past 75 years for the public.

This diamond anniversary might have been several years earlier if the Peach State had followed the lead of her neighbors, Tennessee and North Carolina, who established highway patrols in 1929 instead of waiting until 1937. Ironically E.D. Rivers had tried for seven years to have legislation passed to create a highway patrol but was repeatedly blocked, even while serving as Speaker of the House. So when he ran for governor in 1936, one of his campaign promises was to establish a statewide law enforcement agency.

It would assist local sheriffs who were undermanned and restricted by small budgets. From 1733 when the state was chartered until 1937 local governments were responsible for law enforcement. Although Rivers' election was popular with law enforcement supporters many Georgians were not sure that they wanted a statewide police

agency, so as with most change and innovation it was controversial.

In response to the huge increase of motor vehicles on the roads and the numerous traffic accidents involving injuries and deaths as a result, the long awaited legislation was finally passed. On March 19, 1937, one of the first orders of business for the recently elected Governor was to sign into law House Bill 18, the 220th Act of the General Assembly. This Act created and established the Department of Public Safety to be part of the executive branch of Georgia government.

The three divisions of the DPS were to include a uniformed division, known

as the Georgia State Patrol, a "plain-clothes" division known as the Division of Criminal Identification, Detection, Prevention, and Investigation (officially changed to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation in 1940), and a division to license drivers, known as the Drivers License Bureau.

Temporary headquarters were set up at a hotel in Atlanta and recruitment began. Approximately 3,000 men applied for the job of state trooper, but only 102 were chosen. From those 102 candidates 80 became the charter members of the Georgia State Patrol. The first Trooper School began on July 26, 1937 at Georgia Tech.

On display outside the Capitol was a 1937 Ford GSP patrol car that had been meticulously restored as well as current patrol cars, SUVs, motorcycles, SWAT, and other DPS vehicles





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The 80 original troopers graduated from Trooper School on August 28, 1937, and were given one week of leave before they returned to Atlanta to be issued their uniforms and firearms and given their duty assignments. It is hard to believe that the first trooper school was only four weeks long. Currently it takes 32 weeks to train a trooper including 12 weeks of on-the-job training with a field training officer.

The original troopers were very different from present-day troopers. In those days a trooper was a white male who was at least 5'10" tall and weighed at least 155 pounds. Of course today a trooper can be male or female and of any race. Also there is no height or weight requirement but they must be physically able to do the job. One of the biggest differences between then and now is the pay scale. In 1937 a trooper started at \$1,200 a year. In 2012 a trooper starts at \$35,471 a year. Even with inflation factored in the modern trooper is paid much better than his 1930's counterpart.

The GSP has undergone tremendous growth and change during the past 75 years. In 1937 it started with 84 troop-

ers, two clerks, 31 cars, and a budget of \$350,000. In 2012 the budget of the Georgia Department of Public Safety is \$94,800,477. The department currently employs approximately 771 Troopers, 157 Customer Service Agents, and 273 civilian employees. Also there are 260 officers assigned to the MCCD and 66 officers assigned to the Capitol Police. In addition to 1236 marked and unmarked cars and SUVs, the department utilizes helicopters, motorcycles, trucks, a command center bus, and even two armored cars for the SWAT team.

In the late 1930's the state was divided into ten districts with eight or nine men at each station. The stations were: (1) Griffin, (2) Cartersville, (3) Gainesville, (4) Madison, (5) Americus, (6) Moultrie, (7) Perry, (8) Washington, (9) Swainsboro and (10) Waycross. The headquarters for the State Patrol was located upstairs in the Old Confederate Soldiers' Home in Atlanta. Today there are 48 patrol stations to work the same 159 counties and each trooper is assigned a vehicle which can be driven to and from work. Headquarters is in same location on Confederate Avenue but it now consists of sev-

eral huge office buildings.

The GSP has evolved from strictly a highway patrol riding the roads, writing tickets and investigating accidents, to a multifunctional organization. Over the years increased responsibilities have been placed on the department and this has necessitated the formation of several specialized units. In the old days the only special unit was the predecessor to the current Safety Education unit which teaches classes to high school students as well as presenting other programs promoting safe driving.

Today there are several units that are full-time assignments for troopers. Implied Consent is responsible for calibrating and repairing the machines that test a driver's breath for alcohol content. Troopers assigned to Executive Security provide personal security for the Governor, his family, and the mansion as well as several other high ranking state officials.

The Training Division is responsible for conducting the basic trooper school in addition to providing ongoing in-service training. The Aviation Division utilizes 14

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GSP Honor Guard (in foreground from left TFC Chris Stallings, TFC Felix Bradshaw, TFC Nathan Truitt and SFC Ritchie Howard) marching in formation through hallway of Capitol to participate in ceremony (GSP PIO Photo)

pilots and helicopters that are strategically located at six hangars around the state. The Specialized Collision Reconstruction Team (SCRT) has five teams also strategically located statewide; their purpose is to aid GSP and local agencies in reconstructing fatal accidents and prosecuting the drivers who were responsible in court.

The Commercial Vehicle Criminal Interdiction Unit (CIU) is a full-time assignment but most of the members are detached from field posts. They concentrate on drug couriers, stolen vehi-

cles, and other criminal activity on the interstate highways. They are the only GSP unit that utilizes K-9's. The newest special unit is the Critical Incident Support Team (CIST) which was formed to provide assistance in dealing with the emotional and psychological aftermath of a traumatic event.

The SWAT team has a full-time staff but is primarily composed of members who are assigned on a part-time basis. The unit includes the tactical team, the support staff, and the crisis negotiators.

They are available to provide support to other agencies in all types of tactical situations such as a barricaded gunman, hostage rescue or serving a high-risk warrant. The Dive Team shares the full-time staff with SWAT but the members are part-time and are composed of a mixture of SWAT members and other troopers. Their purpose is to assist other agencies in evidence recovery and searching for drowning victims.

Five GSP special units are considered sole source providers to other law





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Dan Bray, the GSP Departmental Piper, and the GSP Color Guard in the Rotunda of the Capitol (GSP PIO Photo)

enforcement agencies in the state, particularly rural departments. They are the SCRT, the SWAT Team, the Dive Team, the Aviation Division, and the CIST. Most departments are not large enough to have personnel assigned to these functions full time or to even have anyone with the necessary training or experience to do the job.

Throughout the years many troopers have been assigned to various task forces that have operated around the state such as the current Nighthawk units in the Metro-Atlanta, Savannah-States-

boro, and Columbus areas. The Motorcycle Unit and the Troop C Crime Suppression Unit also patrol the Metro Atlanta area. DPS Special Investigations includes the Internal Affairs Unit, the Background Investigations Unit, the Polygraph Unit, and the Permits Unit.

The Governor's Task Force for Drug Suppression (GTF) is a multi-agency unit that is administered by the GSP. The Honor Guard performs when requested at funerals, memorial services, and other ceremonies both in state and out. All of these special units provide essen-

tial services and are an asset to the entire state of Georgia.

Another tremendous advancement through the years is in communications. From the primitive red flag system of notifying troopers to telephone the post to the current state-of-the-art Computer Aided Dispatch system in each Troop Communication Center, the GSP has changed with the times. The Customer Service Agents who staff them are responsible for handling a variety of communication related tasks.

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Honor Guard prepares to fire 21-gun salute as a tribute to the GSP troopers killed in the line of duty (GSP PIO Photo)

The hundreds of civilian employees at headquarters provide support to the troopers in the field and are essential to the day-to-day operation of the department. They are assigned to the various Administrative and Support Units in addition to serving in several other positions. Also the command staff, each troop, and most of the posts are assigned civilian secretaries.

Several major organizational changes have been experienced by the Department of Public Safety through the years.

One change was losing two of the original three branches. The GBI became a separate organization in 1974. And the Drivers License Division became a part of the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety in 2001.

Another change was gaining two large divisions from other agencies. The Capitol Police Services Unit, formerly under the Georgia Building Authority, became a part of the DPS in 2001 and the Motor Carrier Compliance Division (MCCD) came from the Department of

Transportation in 2005.

Capitol Police officers prevent and detect criminal acts, enforce traffic regulations, and provide personal and building security in the Capitol Hill area. MCCD officers conduct safety inspections of commercial motor vehicles, inspect highway shipments of hazardous materials, and enforce laws and regulations that govern vehicle size and weight. In the Metro-Atlanta area they are responsible for enforcing High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane laws.





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Cpl. Ron Calvert rings bell in honor of troopers killed in the line of duty as Cpl. Renia Wooten stands at ceremonial parade rest GSP PIO Photo)

The Department of Public Safety has been the foundation from which several separate state agencies have been created through the years. These include the GBI Crime Lab, the Peace Officers Standards and Training Council, the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, the Georgia Police Academy, and the Georgia Crime Information Center.

Obviously the department has experienced unbelievable growth but so has the state itself. Geographically it is the largest state east of the Mississippi River,

58,876 square miles. More importantly the population has continued to increase; it was just over 3,000,000 in 1937 and is expected to top 10,000,000 in 2012 making Georgia the eighth largest.

There are over 20,000 miles of state roads and interstate highways in Georgia and the current trooper to citizen ratio of 7.7 per 100,000 is far below the national average of 23 per 100,000. The GSP command staff estimates that a minimum of 1,200 troopers are needed to fulfill the mission of the department.

Since the first troopers went on patrol back in 1937 there has never been a single moment that the troopers of the Georgia State Patrol have not been on duty protecting and serving the state. Over the past seventy five years one thing that has remained constant with active as well as retired troopers is the pride felt in being a member of an organization that has a long proud history and is rich with tradition. □





Best War Story

Once upon a time many years ago a grey-haired Master Trooper had to have his shoulder cut on by an orthopedic surgeon. Unfortunately for him it was his right shoulder and with him being right handed he was temporarily transformed into a one armed man and he had to learn to do everything left handed. After weeks of eating and drinking anything he desired, because his wife felt sorry for him, in addition to drinking a "sympathy milkshake" every night, because he felt sorry for himself, he had gotten so fat that none of his clothes would fit.

So he decided to begin an exercise program, with his doctor's permission he planned to start by going on a leisurely stroll the day after Thanksgiving. It was a beautiful fall day, perfect for a walk. To get ready he put on a photographer's vest, the type with all of the pockets, and loaded up with all of the items he felt were necessary for his excursion.

His wife assisted him as he packed a bottle of water, a Cuban cigar and lighter, a cell phone since he could not drive he would need to call for a ride home and his gun. He never left home without one so he surely would not now with his strong arm in a sling. He was glad he had spent a fair amount of time through the years practicing shooting with his left hand only since now it was the only hand he could use.

When his wife handed him his snub-nosed 38 Special revolver it was in a leather pocket holster. "Take it out of that holster, I'll never be able to get it out with just one hand," he said. "What difference does it make, you won't need it anyway," his wife replied. "You don't know that,"

he said. He was surprised she had even said that since she had been with him when he had in fact had to shoot someone several years before. He took the gun, without the holster, and put it in a pocket on the left side of the vest.

He walked on the Silver Comet Trail, a wide concrete pathway built on an old railroad line. It was designed for walkers, runners, and bicycles but no motorized vehicles. There were benches scattered along the trail so he planned to walk until he got tired then stop and enjoy his cigar before heading back. It was nice and cool and quiet. "It doesn't get any better than this," he thought. He had not been walking long when he arrived at a place where the trail passed near some houses. He saw a man shoveling in the backyard and the two spoke to each other.

After passing the houses the trail entered an area that was heavily wooded on both sides then it made a fairly sharp turn that prevented seeing down the trail very far. Instinctively the trooper moved away from the side nearest the woods as he rounded the curve. Suddenly two individuals holding baseball bats burst from the woods and stopped on the trail in front of the trooper. They were approximately 25 feet away, staring intently and holding the bats menacingly.

The trooper instantly drew his gun with his left hand and held it in the "ready" position, pointed at the ground at a 45 degree angle from his body. His finger was on the trigger. "How're you doing?" the trooper growled locking eyes with the larger of the two, who was also closer. "Uh, uh," he stammered as he

looked at his buddy then they ran as fast as they could back into the woods.

The trooper checked behind him to make sure the two did not have any friends he had not noticed. He concentrated on their description so he could call the police when he got home and make a report. Then it dawned on him that he had a cell phone in his other pocket. So he put up his gun and called 911.

As he was trying to co-ordinate meeting with an officer at the start of the trail the dispatcher interrupted and said "You're not going to believe this. These dumbasses just called in to report on you." "What did they say?" the trooper asked. "They said they weren't doing anything and an old man pulled a gun on them on the Comet Trail."

The trooper chuckled to himself. He had let his hair grow long and also grown a beard while he had been on sick leave so he sure did not look like a trooper. The dispatcher said, "We have a unit headed to their location to arrest them. Can you go by and ID them? Another unit will pick you up and take you there." "Sure," the trooper replied.

When he arrived at the suspects' house the trooper was amused to see law enforcement vehicles from several different agencies including a GSP patrol car. After he confirmed the two were indeed the right ones the trooper walked over to talk to the GSP Corporal. After listening to the trooper's story he said "Those two didn't know who they were messing with." "What a crippled old man with one arm." "Yea right," the corporal said skeptically, shaking his head, and grinning. "Just a crippled old man." □



The DPS Critical Incident Support Team

By Lt. Andy Carrier

Annually, between 130 and 180 law enforcement officers are killed in the line of duty nationwide. Take the number of officers killed in a given year and multiply that number by three. This is the estimated number of officers who will take their own life every year. During the month of January 2012 alone, four NYPD officers died by their own hand. Physicians, EMT's, Paramedics and Firefighters have high suicide rates as well. Annually, it is estimated that between 300 and 400 physicians will commit suicide.

While medical professionals have easy access to powerful drugs, police officers have easy access to weapons. Both professions tend to work long, irregular hours. Dealing with people at their worst is a stressor. Consistently dealing with people at their worst when you have not had proper rest is an eventual recipe for disaster.

Exposure to human tragedy day in and day out becomes "toxic" over time. Dr. Eric Skidmore, director of the South Carolina Law Enforcement Assistance Program (SCLEAP) likes to say that the seeming end result of our profession is that we take in "small amounts of radiation" with each critical incident we encounter. While images of a single incident may be "filed away" or compartmentalized, it is the totality of a career in dealing with human tragedy that eventually catches up with us. Sooner or later, what's filed away or suppressed comes back, and can sometimes do so with tragic consequences.

The macho-attached image associated with our profession tells us to handle a situation, press on and forget about it. If an officer should become troubled or want to seek help, they are, or at least believe they are stigmatized. This reason alone is why many officers will never seek help. To "show weakness" is just not acceptable. There is a reason why the profession of law enforcement is at the top of the list with regard to suicide, alcoholism, divorce and heart disease (and other ailments). By not choosing to accept and deal with the aftershock of a traumatic event, we can open ourselves up to one of the four unfavorable results just mentioned. Often times, these negative results run hand in hand, or one can spawn from another. It sometimes can turn into a downward spiral that can get out of control quickly.

An answer to dealing with personal internal aftermaths of a critical incident or tragic event is timing, an open mind and interaction with people who have been in your shoes and who do what you do. When a coworker has experienced a traumatic event, either personally or professionally, they are bound to enter into a "crisis phase" for an amount of time.



NCSHP Master Tpr. Larry McKeithan, VSP Sgt. Ken Blank, SCHP Cpl. Sally Farmer, and the author at the Post Critical Incident Seminar in Hayesville, NC in February 2012. All are the Peer Team Coordinators for their respective states

How long a person remains in a state of crisis depends on three things. An individual's coping skills (usually based on their life experiences), the seriousness of the event and the support offered will determine how quickly they can get back on track. For our purposes, crisis is the reaction to a specific event or critical incident, not the event itself.

When critical incidents occur, they almost always happen with little or no warning. Tragedy is difficult enough, but when it occurs with no warning, it can totally rock our "assumptive world," so much so that our paradigms, beliefs and priorities change. This is when our ability to cope is challenged. This is when we may sense almost a "loss of innocence." Terry Rando, PhD speaks of the "assumptive world" in several of her books on Traumatology and Thanatology (the study of grief, death, bereavement, and loss). In our "assumptive worlds," we have embedded expectations that we will grow up, have children, retire, bury our parents and that our own children will one day bury us.

Life will have its ups and downs, but we will generally be happy and productive contributors to society. When the unthinkable happens, like the death of a child, our "assumptive world" is challenged, if not shattered. Other assumptions may include the belief in personal invulnerability, the perception of the world as meaningful and viewing one's self as positive. Stressors can be placed into two categories. Maturation stressors include life span events, such as reaching certain ages, children leaving home and retirement. Situational stressors would include a line of duty death or the death of a child. A divorce could fall into either category.

With regards to law enforcement and public safety in

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general, we most often times deal with situational stressors. Situational stressors are usually very tragic and sudden, occurring with no warning. The very nature of our job would dictate this, since much of what we do is reactive. We are responders. The distress that we deal with on a daily basis will take its toll if not dealt with in a healthy, productive way.

As already stated, law enforcement is no stranger to suicide. A police officer in the U.S. is nearly nine times more likely to die as the result of suicide as to die as the result of homicide. An officer is three times more likely to die as a result of suicide than dying accidentally. Nearly every study ever conducted shows that feelings of isolation are common threads associated with depression. Feelings of isolation are born from the belief that no one cares or understands what someone may be experiencing. This is where one of the best practices to ever emerge in the business of law



Jeff Valentine, Eric Skidmore, Andy Gruler, Beverly Coates and Mike Jones of the South Carolina Law Enforcement Assistance Program, which was the first of its type, at the PCIS.

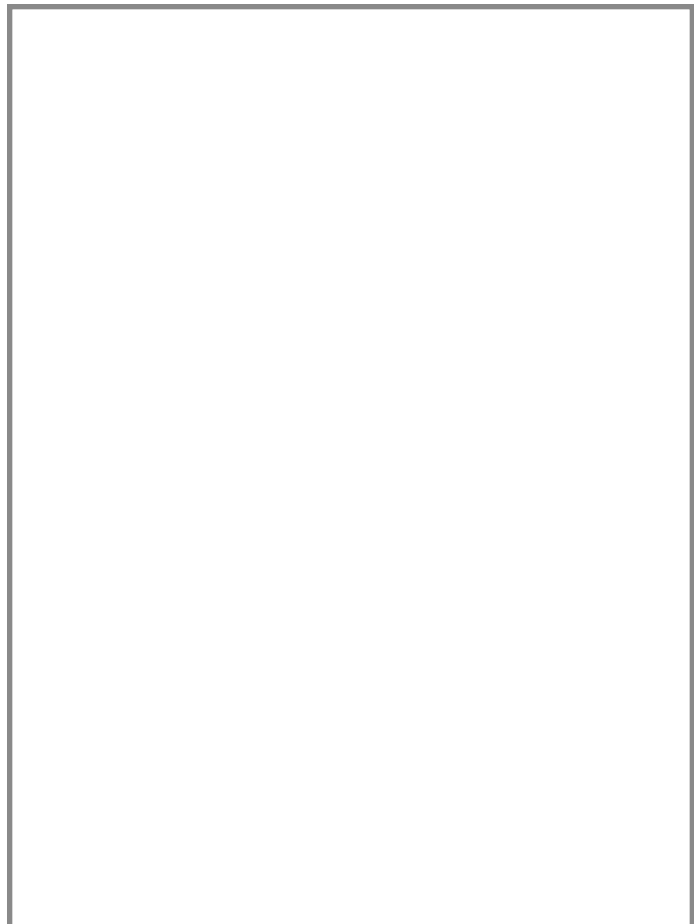
enforcement comes in. Enter the world of Peer Support.

Peer Support has been around for centuries. Although not "officially termed" as such until the last few decades, it has been a given for a very long time that people like to talk and relate to others who have been exposed to what they have been exposed. This does several things. First, credibility and a level

of trust are almost immediately established. Also gained is some comfort in that Peer Team members have been in the same place from a "state of being" perspective as the person or people they are assisting. It lets people who may be in crisis know that what they are feeling (emotionally, cognitively, physically, etc.) is a normal reaction. Sometimes, the only way possible to know where someone is "coming from" is for them to have experienced a similar event themselves. With that said, Peer Team members convey that you can get through the rough spots and that in time, things get better. Peers know, because they have done it.

The more formal applications of Peer Support emerged in the mid 1980's, when the FBI started debriefing agents after they had been involved in shootings. More than thirty years ago, the FBI saw Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) debriefings as a useful

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tool to address the cognitive and emotional well-being of their agents. Along with a proactive Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at every level, the FBI has deemed the mental health of its employees a priority.

Nationwide, there are few departments that incorporate a formally trained Peer Support Team. It is still a relatively new concept. Many head administrators are reluctant to utilize peers for several reasons. Many who still subscribe to the old school mindset believe that traumatic incidents are a reality of the job and that we must merely brush it off and move on. Others believe that psychiatry is the only answer. The bigger picture is that administrators are largely ignorant to what peer intervention is all about.

Several years ago, Georgia State Patrol Colonel Bill Hitchens, Human Resources Director Dan Roach and Martin Teem (HR EAP) began working on the idea of a Peer Support Team for the

Georgia Department of Public Safety. After much research and planning, GSP's first Peer Support Team was sent to Raleigh, North Carolina in September 2010 for their first week of training. It was established that GSP would train fifty members for the new team, thirty initially, followed by twenty later. The first week's training was at the North Carolina State Highway Patrol Academy. GSP troopers and Motor Carrier Compliance Officers (MCCO) were trained, along with troopers and dispatchers from North Carolina.

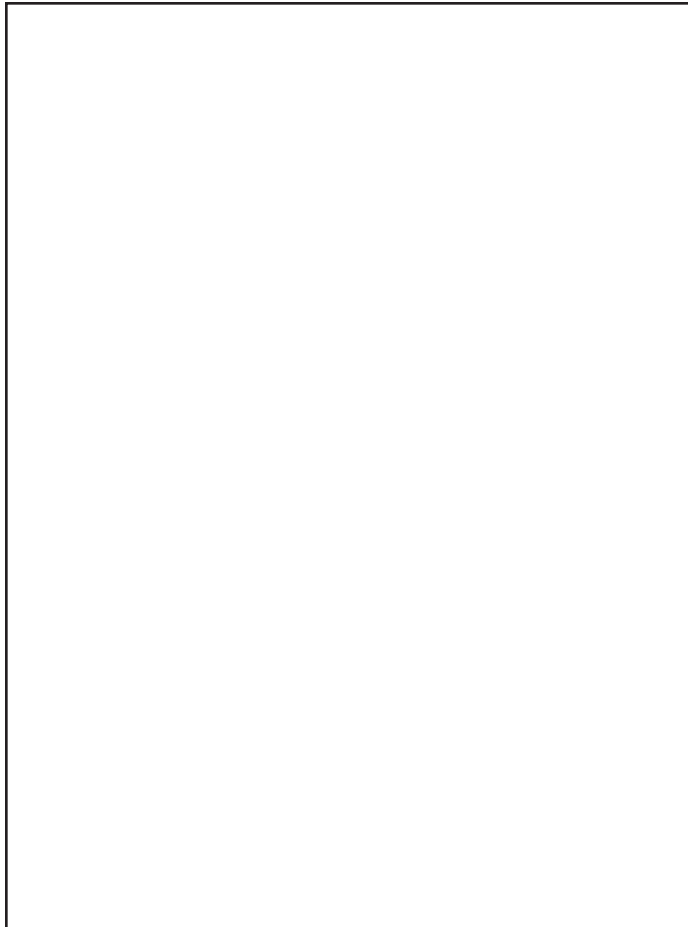
The training model that GSP decided to use was that of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF). This training encompasses seven various levels of training that troopers and officers get. At the time of this writing, everyone has been through the first two levels of training, with many through level five. The training topics include Individual and Group Crisis Management, Critical Incident Stress Debrief-

ings, Mass Critical Incidents, Police Suicide and Interpersonal Communications.

The training is conducted by Dr. Eric Skidmore and Andy Gruler, Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). As already stated, Dr. Skidmore runs the SCLEAP. Andy is a retired U.S. Secret Service Agent who has a Master's in Social Work. He serves as a mental health professional in many CISM debriefings across South Carolina and has helped us in Georgia as well. Both Dr. Skidmore and Andy have assisted in New York in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 and in Blacksburg, VA in the wake of the Virginia Tech shootings.

Dr. Skidmore's assistant at SCLEAP is Beverly Coates. Beverly's son, Mark, was a South Carolina State Trooper who was murdered on the shoulder of I-95 in November, 1992. Beverly is also the President of the South Carolina Chapter of the Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.). All three have worked

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tirelessly in the training of Peer Team members from Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Texas.

On December 27, 2010, Cpl. Chad LeCroy was murdered in the line of duty. He was shot and killed immediately following a vehicle pursuit in Atlanta. His murderer was captured a short time later, not far from the scene of the shooting. It was the first time since 1975 that a Georgia Trooper had been murdered by gunfire and the first time since 1940 that a Georgia Trooper had died on the side of the road as the result of gunfire. Exactly 70 years and one week after we lost Sgt. William F. Black to an escaped convict from Missouri, we lost Cpl. LeCroy to the hands of a cowardly drug dealer. Barely three months after the first troopers and officers received their initial peer training, the newly formed Georgia State Patrol Critical Incident Support Team was faced with the "Super Bowl" of critical incidents.

The DPS CIST immediately dis-

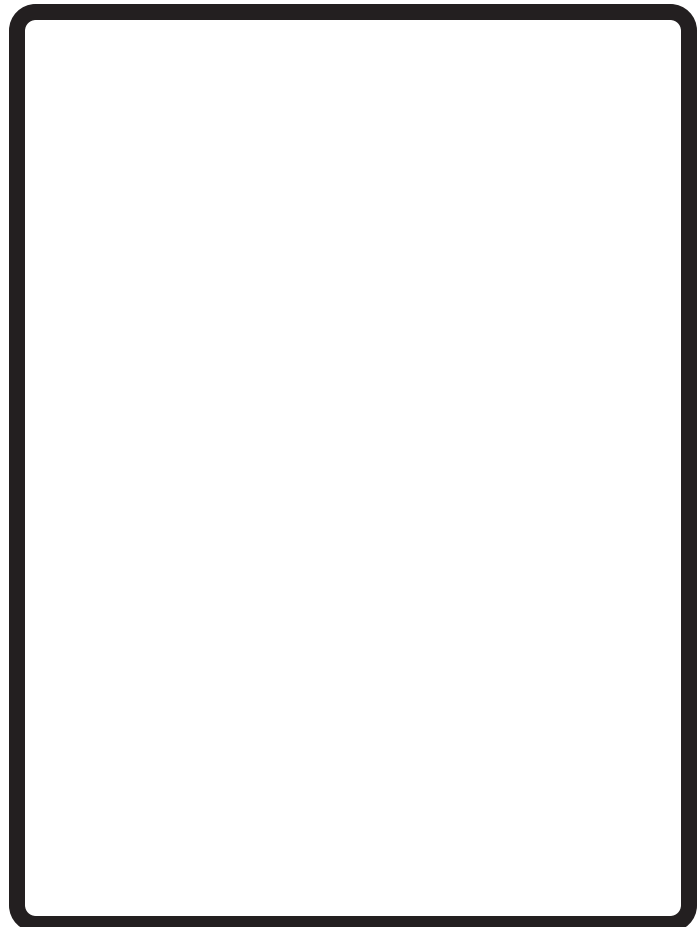
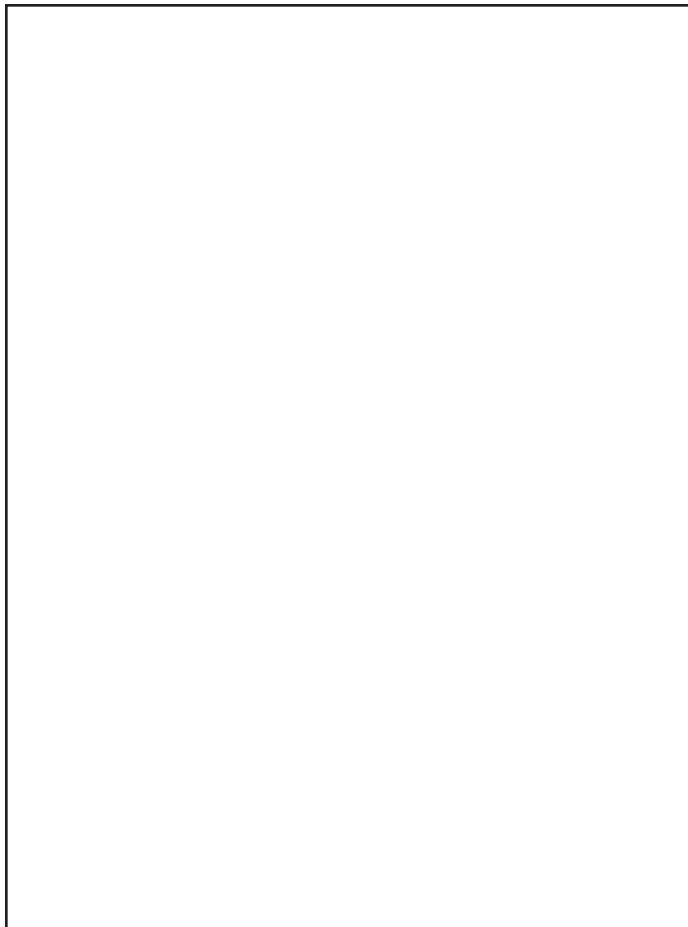
patched to Atlanta after Cpl. LeCroy was shot. CIST members were sent to Grady Hospital where Cpl. LeCroy was pronounced dead a short time after his arrival. He was the 27th Georgia Trooper to lay down his life in the line of duty. CIST members also responded to the various crime scenes. After the team left the hospital and the crime scenes, in the early morning hours of December 28, 2010, a Crisis Management Briefing (CMB) was held at DPS Headquarters. With members of Cpl. LeCroy's Crime Suppression Team in attendance, several CIST members were tasked with trying to take the edge off one of the Georgia State Patrol's worst nights in its history.

Learning concepts and theories in a classroom, then applying what you learn to real world trauma is a daunting task. When the deeply affected are your friends, and wear the same uniform that you do, it's tough. When the person who is no longer among us wore

the same uniform that you do, and was your friend, it's next to impossible. Members of the CIST remained in constant contact with Cpl. LeCroy's co-workers, from immediately following the incident through long after the funeral. A week after the funeral, the CIST conducted Critical Incident Stress Debriefings in Atlanta.

Three debriefings were held. A debriefing for supervisors, a target group (most affected) and a volunteer group were conducted. All were extremely well received. After debriefings, individuals were called by CIST members for follow-up. The members of DPS's Critical Incident Support Team responded unselfishly and showed great character and compassion throughout. The resolve and dedication displayed by all during this trying time was more than noteworthy. For this debriefing, Peer Team members from the Virginia State Police, North Carolina State Highway Patrol and South Carolina

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Highway Patrol volunteered their services. Also in attendance were Dr. Skidmore and Andy Gruler. Their help was appreciated very much.

The Critical Incident Stress Debriefing can be considered the cornerstone of any Peer Team's function. During debriefings, peer members will take on several functions. One team member will lead the debriefing. This role involves asking the various questions, setting the tone of the meeting and generally keeping the integrity of the debriefing in check. With an entire spectrum of emotions sometimes displayed, this can be a challenge. The questions asked are dependent upon the dynamics of the critical incident. Another team member will let the group know about ground rules. This basically involves sharing a standard set of instructions, such as turning cell phones off, stressing the importance of confidentiality, etc. The team member who sets the ground rules for the debriefing has an important role in conveying the structure of the meeting.

In debriefings, there are seven steps that are generally followed. Steps five and six can be considered a "teaching phase" in which a Mental Health Professional (MHP) talks about symptoms, cautions and remedies. Since a MHP will have either a Master's or PhD in Clinical Social Work or other Social Sci-

ence discipline, having a MHP is not always feasible. There are several people on the CIST that have taken a special interest in filling the MHP role when we do not have a practitioner available. These team members have done research on their own and fill this role very nicely when summoned. If in a debriefing, there are thirty participants, the optimum number of peers would be five or six. Other team members may be in attendance, but would sit outside of the group.

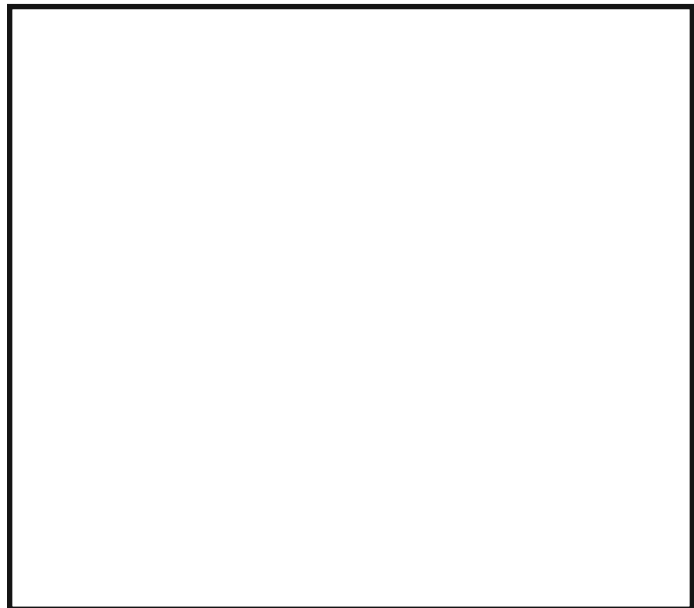
Having the right number of team members seated within the group is crucial. It could be overbearing to have more peers than necessary. Team members seated outside of the group (outer circle) can serve as "chasers". Generally, there are no breaks taken during debriefings. If a participant gets up and walks out, a peer member will follow them out of the room to check on them. Debriefings wind down with final thoughts from participants and peer team members. Participants are advised that team members will remain for some time after the debriefing for one on one communication. Seeing the climate of a debriefing change as it progresses is very rewarding. It's almost a given that as time passes during a debriefing, participation increases.

The Peer Support process has a generally followed script but with latitude,

based on personnel and incident dynamics. Generally, after a traumatic critical incident, peer team members respond to where the affected personnel are located. Informal, one on one meetings take place. During this time, team members are merely there for support. Within 24 hours, either a "defusing" or a Crisis Management Briefing (CMB) may take place. Defusings are often targeted more towards smaller groups and are not as formal as a CMB. During a CMB, a person who possesses knowledge of the incident may review the facts or what is known at that time. This helps stop rumors and prevents people from drawing their own conclusions. People who relay facts may be a chief, district attorney or hospital spokesperson, for example.

During a CMB, some of the phases of the CISD are covered. This generally involves the MHP teaching phases. CMB's usually involve many people, so they are not as interactive as the CISD. A CMB is more informative by nature, than it is participative. The true essence of a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing is participation. The optimum time for a CISD will always be after a funeral if there is a line of duty death (LODD), or any death, for that matter (i.e., suicide). Although a funeral may not offer a full sense of closure, there is a semblance

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of order when debriefings follow. Even the worst of tragedies must include a progressive order of events (incident, manhunt, funeral, debriefing, etc). In a LODD, a funeral with a suspect still at large is extremely unsettling for the officers and family.

In just over a year and a half, the DPS CIST has been a part of the aftermath of numerous critical incidents statewide. Not only has the team been involved in assisting DPS personnel, but it has offered and been requested elsewhere as well. The CIST has assisted Dougherty County PD, Bulloch County SO, Statesboro PD, Albany PD, GA Department of Corrections, GA Probation, Clayton County SO, Athens-Clarke County PD, Atlanta PD, Richmond County SO, Aiken, SC Public Safety (two occasions), W. Columbia, SC PD, Richland County, SC SO, Burke County SO, Waynesboro PD and others. CIST members have assisted the North Carolina State Highway Patrol,

the NCLEAP and SCLEAP with Post Critical Incident Seminars in Hayesville, NC, Eden, NC and Lexington, SC.

Team members have identified members of this department and other agencies who needed further assistance beyond what the CIST offers. Everyone selected was offered additional assistance. From more in-depth one on one conversations with a MHP to seeking out peers who may be a "better fit" for an individual to EAP recommendations, the team is making an impact. The compassion and understanding shown while assisting others to better navigate their way within the "new normal" that has been dealt is a reward for team members.

Recommending that a fellow officer try EMDR Therapy to finally put to rest a horrible image is something that maybe only a peer can suggest. Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a form of psychotherapy that can nearly erase (or greatly dissipate) images or thoughts that have haunt-

ed someone for years. As a team of caring individuals, it is the goal of the DPS CIST to save careers, marriages and maybe even lives. If, at the end of the day, the team has made someone sleep a little better at night, our mission has been accomplished.

GSP Colonel Mark McDonough likes to refer to the CIST as an "emotional SWAT team". The mental well-being of any public safety officer is in the best interest of law enforcement administrators and leaders everywhere. It is primarily in our best interest because we care about our people, more so than from a liability standpoint. It makes sense to believe that truly caring for your people now will lessen the chances of liability later. It is also in the best interest of the public that we serve. The public has a vested interest in having the most well rounded, both physically and mentally, officers protecting what they hold dear. They should expect no less. □

