

History of the
Maine State Police

1921-2008



THE HISTORY OF THE MAINE STATE POLICE

Revised September 2008



1921 – Inspector Harry Thompson

1921

34 members of the State Highway Police began work in July under the supervision of the State Highway Commission. 35 additional officers were commissioned in August. The officers, also known as Inspectors, mostly worked on a seasonal basis but some were appointed full time.

Successful completion of a horsemanship test was required of all applicants and all appointees were required to be reappointed every three years.

The inspectors enforced motor vehicle laws and collected money from automobile registrations and driver's license fees. Some officers were issued Harley Davidson motorcycles and assigned to various headquarters around the state.

Uniforms were army military surplus and O.D. green in color. The one shoulder patch located on the right shoulder was of red background with white lettering indicating "State Police".

1922

The State Highway Police were placed under the supervision of the Secretary of State.

1924

State Highway Police officer Emery O. Gooch was killed in a motorcycle accident on Sunken Bridge Hill in Mattawamkeag on August 9th.



Inspector Emery O. Gooch

1925

An act to enlarge the powers of the State Highway Police” was enacted into law by the Maine Legislature. The legislation allows the governor to appoint a chief and set the duties and powers of the new and separate department.

Arthur H. Field who has served as Lewiston’s police chief was named the first Chief of the State Police and served two years.

On July 25th, sixty new members of the department met in Augusta with Governor Owen Brewster and Chief Arthur Field. They presented their bonds and were commissioned members of the State Highway Police, and were empowered to enforce all the criminal and motor vehicle laws of Maine.

The new officers were issued a motorcycle, a pistol and a law book and were assigned to patrol areas throughout Maine. The weekly salary for an Inspector at this time is \$28.

On August 30th one of the new officers, Fred A. Foster of Lisbon was killed in Belfast when his motorcycle collided with a horse drawn wagon.



1925 – Inspector Fred A. Foster

The uniform remained the same except the shoulder patch is now black with khaki tan lettering and a green pine tree.

1926

The first training troop took place at Camp Keyes in Augusta. The Chief named William Hancock the camp commander. Training took place from April 12th through May 28th.

1927

State Adjutant General James W. Hansen, a World War I veteran, was appointed Chief of the State Police and served for nine years.

1928

On August 22nd, Inspector Frank C. Wing of Monson was killed when his motorcycle collided with a fuel truck in Millinocket.



1928 – Inspector Frank C. Wing

1931

The uniforms were changed to French blue with a black shoulder patch with red lettering and a green pine tree.

1935

The Maine Legislature designated the State Highway Police as the Maine State Police. The name change made official what had been customary for several years. The inspectors now become known as troopers.

For the second time in ten years the department expanded, increasing its complement to 100.

1936

The first automobiles used for patrol were purchased this year. The 46 sedans costing \$515 per unit were bought to replace most of the 46 Harley Davidson motorcycles and 25 sidecars. The patrol vehicles were black and highway safety vehicles were white. Captain Wilbur Towle was named Chief of the State Police and served two years.

The department is divided into five districts with offices located in Wells, Fairfield, Thomaston, Bangor and Presque Isle. Headquarters was located in Augusta.



Trooper Rex St Ledger with a 1936 Chevrolet

1937

Bureau of Identification was created and placed under the control of the State Police. The bureau became the keeper of all criminal and finger print records in the state.

Hundreds of striking shoe workers rioted in Auburn. State Troopers and the Maine National Guard were called in to maintain order.

In October, New Jersey state troopers arrested a Paris, Maine youth in Bergen County New Jersey for murder. In the car he was driving were the bodies of Doctor James Littlefield of South Paris and his wife.

The crime scene located at Paris Hill was one of the first processed by Captain Leon Shepherd utilizing the new emerging sciences of crime scene processing.

This sensational double murder became a national media event resulting in the conviction of the youth and a deputy sheriff. The deputy was released eleven years later on a writ of habeas corpus. In large part, a reason for his release was the evidence found by Captain Shepherd but excluded at the original trial.



1937 – Murder suspect Paul Dwyer points to some items he left at the murder scene to the Cumberland and Oxford County attorneys. The State Police Vehicle belongs to Sergeant Ralph Price.

1938

General John W. Healy was appointed chief by Governor Lewis Barrows and served for three years.

A new barracks was constructed along U. S. Route 1 in Houlton to serve as the 5th District headquarters. This building served as Troop F headquarters until 2000 when it was replaced.

1940

A new barracks was completed along U. S. Route 1 in Thomaston next to the State prison. It is still in use as troop D headquarters today.

The first two-way radios were put into use. State Police communications centers were located in Augusta, Scarborough and Wells.

1941

The new State Police Headquarters building at 36 Hospital Street was completed and dedicated on October 2nd. Prior to the completion of this time the administrative offices of the State Police were located at the State Adjutant's office at the State Highway Commission and the Augusta Airport.

Patrol vehicles are now black with blue fenders to match the officers' uniforms. We returned to all black cars in 1942.

Henry P. Weaver was appointed chief by Governor Sumner Sewall and served two years.

On December 7th the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Troopers were notified of this via a general broadcast from the various communications centers. For the duration of World War II major war events were announced over the new radio system to the troopers in the field.

The State Police instituted state-wide training programs in cooperation with county and municipal law enforcement agencies in the area of civil defense.

Before war's end almost 25% of the agency's manpower took a leave of absence to serve in the armed forces.

1942

On March 19th the designation of District Headquarters for the various parts of the state was eliminated and the state was divided into six newly designated Troops:

Troop A – Wells

Troop B – West Scarborough

Troop C – Fairfield

Troop D – Thomaston

Troop E – Bangor

Troop F – Houlton



Trooper Roger Doyle

Chief Weaver published a book this year detailing methods of report writing and basic police procedures.



Chief Henry Weaver

1943

Chief Weaver took a leave of absence to enter the armed services. Captain Lawrence C. Upton of Millbridge was named acting chief and went on to serve for five years.

On August 17th Trooper Lewis Howard of Hodgdon (at the time a Captain in the U.S. Army Air force) was killed in action when the B-17 "Flying Fortress" he was piloting was shot down over Southern France. He was buried after the war in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington D.C.

For "the duration" of the war, the State Police took on new wartime duties. Inland troopers conducted roadblocks to check for civilians out pleasure driving. Most found in violation (wasting gas) were discovered to be government workers.

Troopers along the Route 1 corridor and the coastal side of it monitored traffic to ensure the use of headlight covers or blackout lights on vehicles operating after dark. Some large bridges and other areas important to defense were guarded by State Troopers until later in the war when these duties are taken over by U.S. Army soldiers.

1944

On July 23rd Trooper Harold Ericksen of Portland (a Lt Colonel in the U.S. Army) was killed in action near St Lo France. He received the Bronze Star and Purple Heart and is buried in the American Cemetery at Omaha Beach on the northern coast of France.

Chief Henry Weaver was seriously injured in a Jeep accident in Italy. Due to his injuries he was unable to return to duty after the War.

1945

The Maine Legislature passed law requiring the Chief of the State Police to come from the commissioned officer ranks of the department. Acting Chief Upton was appointed to the position full time. Captain Joe Young became the Deputy Chief.

Trooper Guy Bachelder of Clinton was the 27th and final officer to take a leave of absence and enter the armed forces.

World War II ends. Most of the officers on leave to fight the war returned and resumed their duties within the department.

1947

In October forest fires raged out of control across the state. One fire started in Oxford County near Brownfield and blew across York County not stopping until it reached the sea in Kennebunk. A second fire burned scores of mansions in Bar Harbor and much of Mount Desert Island.

The State Police radio system became a lifeline in relaying information to firefighters battling the fires which eventually burned over 200,000 acres and took 15 lives.

1948

A new barracks on Route 1 in Scarborough just south of the marshes was completed for Troop B.

Chief Lawrence Upton died in office and Governor Horace Hildreth named retired Captain Francis McCabe chief. McCabe will serve for six years.

The 10th Training Troop was held at the Sanford Airport from April 26th to June 19th.

1950

A new barracks on U. S. Route 2 in Orono was completed and occupied by Troop E at a cost of \$48, 000. This barracks is still the home for Troop E today.

Captain Roger Doyle, head of fleet services collaborated with Ford Motor Company to develop the first domestically produced vehicle upgraded for police patrol. Captain Doyle took delivery of it from Ford Motor Company executives at the Scarborough barracks in April.

1951

The agency had not purchased any new motorcycles since 1942. The remaining ten motorcycles were sold at public auction after the 4th of July holiday.

1952

A new barracks was built on the west side of Skowhegan on Route 2 and occupied by Troop C. This building is still used today as Troop C headquarters.

A new north wing was added to the eleven-year-old State Police headquarters at 36 Hospital Street in Augusta.

1954

Governor Burton Cross appointed Captain Robert Marx as chief of the State Police. Marx served in this capacity for 12 years, the record amount of time any chief to date has served.

Governor Cross approved a reorganization of the department, providing for a central staff of seven officers:

Chief

Deputy Chief

Five captains responsible for:

Criminal Division

Special Services

Traffic & Safety

2 Field Divisions

1955

After a new stretch of the Maine Turnpike was opened from Portland to Augusta, Troop G was established to patrol the highway from Kittery to Augusta.

Troop detectives were selected for each troop this year.

A new Stetson styled hat replaced the cap used since the late 1920's and the black shoulder patch was replaced with the one still in use today.

A new barracks was built on U. S. Route 1 in Kittery to serve as headquarters for Troop A.

Old style license plates changed annually were replaced with semi-permanent license plates designed to be used from year to year. These plates were white with red lettering.

1956

Roof lights were installed for the first time on patrol vehicles.

The department obtained and put to use its first polygraph. A polygraph room was outfitted in the basement of State Police headquarters.



1957 – Troop E at the Orono Barracks

1958

A new fleet maintenance garage was built behind headquarters at 36 Hospital Street.

The department established the first canine unit and acquired two bloodhounds. Trooper William Bickford of Norway was the first handler.

Troopers investigated a fatal motor vehicle accident on route 201 at Richmond Corner. Seven people were killed which made it the deadliest accident in state history. This record stood until 2002.

1959

A Limerick man upset over finances shot and killed his wife, the Westbrook police chief and wounded two State Troopers, Willard Parker and Steve Regina. Hundreds of shots were exchanged during the five-hour stand-off and over 100 police officers responded to the scene.

1960

The 20th training troop took place at Camp Keyes in Augusta from September 5th to November 11th. Captain Willard Orcutt was the Academy commander.

1961

Open collar short sleeve shirts for summer wear were adopted for the first time.

Traffic Division was reorganized. It was made up of traffic records and the motor vehicle inspection program.

1964



1964 – Trooper Charles Black

Trooper Charles Black was shot to death when he responded to a bank robbery in South Berwick. The perpetrators were captured later in the day by New Hampshire and Maine State Police bloodhound units. Trooper Black was the fourth officer to die in the line of duty and the first by gunfire.

The Maine State Police Trooper of the Year award was established in memory of Trooper Black. Trooper Herman Boudreau of Brunswick became the first Trooper of the Year.

1965

The south wing of Augusta headquarters was completed.

Patrol vehicles were changed from black to medium blue in color. The white and red license plates were replaced to blue plates with white lettering. The blue plates are still in use today.

1966

Governor John Reed appointed Parker Hennessey as chief. Hennessey died in his office of a heart attack in 1974.

1968

The criminal intelligence unit was formed to investigate white collar and organized crimes.

Patrol vehicles were now blue with white roofs. We would return to all blue cars in 1972.

1969

The trooper's work week was changed from a six day week to six on and two off.

1970

276 people lost their lives on Maine highways, the most ever for one year. Troopers investigated the majority of the accidents.

The department switched to four-door sedans for patrol vehicles going away from the two door models historically used by the agency.

1971

Seventy troopers were dispatched to Madawaska to maintain order during a labor strike at the Fraser Paper Company. A confrontation between troopers and the strikers and their families resulted in six State Police vehicles being damaged.

The Maine State Troopers Association was formed to represent the troopers and sergeants in contractual matters.

1972

The Maine Department of Public Safety was formed and the State Police become part of that department. State Police Major Eddie Marx of Thomaston becomes the first Commissioner of Public Safety.

In July NESPAC was invoked for the first time and 150 troopers from the other five New England States join 50 Maine Troopers in a gambling raid at the Poland Spring Inn. Sixty people were arrested. This made it the largest mass arrest in the state's history.

1973

The corporal rank was established. All detectives from the criminal division and a number of troopers totaling sixty were promoted to the new rank.

Troop G moved to a new headquarters in Gardiner.

The 29th Training troop was the first to graduate from the new Maine Criminal Justice Academy located on Silver Street in Waterville.

1974

Deputy Chief Donald E. Nichols Sr. of Augusta was appointed chief by Governor Ken Curtis. He served for two years.

Troop I was established and headquartered out of the Orono barracks. The troop patrolled I-95 from Augusta to Houlton until 1984 when it was dissolved and the troopers were rolled into the respective geographical troops.

Troops A, B, & G along with the Southern Criminal Division were relocated to a new facility on Route 1 in Scarborough.

Legislation establishing a mandatory retirement age was passed. Several long time officers were forced into retirement.

The agency adopted a new high collar dress blouse for formal occasions. This blouse is still in use today.



1974 – Colonel Nichols (L) with Lt Rupert Johnson at Thomaston barracks

1975

Major Eddie Marx retired from the state police after a 50 year career. Marx is considered the “Dean of the nation’s state troopers”. Marx was one of the original officers hired in 1925.



1975 – Major Marx at time of retirement

The first aircraft was acquired by the agency for speed enforcement. Trooper Brad Cochran of Troop A was the first pilot.

1976

Governor James Longley appointed Alan H. Weeks of Wiscasset as chief. He remained as chief for eleven years.

The agency purchased citizen band radios for the patrol force. The radios were popular with the motoring public and served as a communications resource for highway safety.

The underwater recovery unit (dive team) was formed.

In August the newly formed State police Emergency Response Unit (now known as the tactical team) responded to its first call in Greenwood City. A gunman had opened fire on two troopers when they responded to a disturbance call. The man was arrested by the team without incident when they entered the home after an all night stand off.

1977

Upon graduation from the 34th training troop, Anna Polvinen of West Paris became Maine’s first female trooper.

The more powerful Smith & Wesson .357 magnum replaced the .38 caliber service revolver.

The mandatory retirement age was removed.

1978

The aircraft enforcement unit became a permanent part of the agency after it proved itself as a useful enforcement tool.

1980

While setting up a roadblock for a high speed chase on U. S. Route 2 in Palmyra, Trooper Tom Merry was killed when the fleeing vehicle collided with his police cruiser. Merry was the fifth officer to die in the line of duty.



1980 – Trooper Tom Merry

In April 90 troopers were assigned to the Maine State Prison in Thomaston for a period of six weeks for a prison lock down. The lock down was the largest assignment of State Police personnel over an extended period of time in the agency's history.

The canine unit was re-established and troopers William Brusco and Paul Gallagher of troop B were sent to the Massachusetts State Police Academy in Framingham for training.

The first BAT mobile was put into service. BAT is an acronym for breath alcohol testing, and the unit is a specifically designed van for rural OUI testing.

George Bush was sworn in as Vice President of the United States. Troopers became involved in security at his home in Kennebunkport that continues today.

Two escaped convicts escaped convicts from the Maine State prison in Thomaston resulted in the largest manhunt in state police history. The search was concentrated around Moody Mountain in Searsport. For twenty-two days hundreds of troopers, deputy sheriffs and game wardens were involved in the search. Trooper Dennis Hayden of China and his canine Skipper

eventually tracked down and captured the pair in a remote campsite.

1982

Troop J was established and headquartered from a new barracks on route 191 in Jackson (East Machias).

The Maine State Police canine school graduated four teams at Colby College in Waterville.

1983

150 troopers and detectives provided security for the National Governor's Conference in Portland. It was the largest assignment for troopers in a single event in the agency's history.

1984

Several new units were established within the agency. An internal affairs unit was initiated to investigate complaints against troopers. The first director of this unit was Captain Ed Wilson.

Within the investigative division child abuse investigators are assigned to investigate child abuse complaints and organized crime investigators are assigned to coordinate criminal intelligence and drug investigations.

It was also this year when the hostage negotiation team started.

1985

The State Police motto, Semper Aequus (Always Just) was adopted.

Retirement benefits for sworn officers are changed. New officers now must serve 25 years to retire with benefits instead of twenty years.

The first awards night was held to honor employees, retirees and civilians.

1986

The Maine State Police crime laboratory was completed next to headquarters on Hospital Street.

On June 17th Trooper Michael Veilleux was killed in Dayton in a cruiser accident. He was the sixth trooper to die in the line of duty.



1986 – Trooper Michael Veilleux

Troop G relocated to its present location along the Maine Turnpike in South Portland.

1987

Governor John McKernan named Captain Andrew Demers of new Gloucester the 12th Chief of the Maine State Police. Demers remained Colonel for six years.

1988

New 9mm Beretta semiautomatic pistols were issued to sworn personnel to replace the .357 Smith & Wesson revolvers.

1989

Since 1929 the State Police had a presence in the town of Scarborough at three different facilities on U.S. Route 1. After sixty years Troop B relocated to a new building on route 26 in the Town of Gray at Dry Mills.

Since the mid nineteen-twenties Troop A had been located first in Wells, then Kittery, and then Scarborough. This year they move to a new

barracks located on route 202 in the Town of Alfred.

On March 31st, detective Giles Landry of New Gloucester was shot and killed in Leeds while investigating a child abuse case. Landry became the 7th officer killed in the line of duty.



1989 – Detective Giles Landry

1990

The new fleet maintenance facility located on the Turnpike in South Portland was opened.

Retired Lieutenant Foster King of Rangeley died at his home at the age of 95. King was the last surviving trooper from the group hired in 1925.

1991

The Maine Law Enforcement Officer memorial located on State Street in Augusta next to the State House was dedicated on May 25th. The memorial honors all law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty.

1993

Governor John McKernan appointed Lieutenant Alfred Schofield chief of the State Police. Schofield served as Colonel for five years.

1994

The Bomb disposal team was formed when the military disbanded the unit maintained at the Brunswick Naval Air Station.

Trooper Jeffrey Parola was killed on November 13, when his cruiser crashed in Sidney. He was a member of the Tactical Team and was responding to a domestic violence call at the time. Parola joined the State Police in 1989. Parola was the eighth officer to die in the line of duty.



1994 – Trooper Jeffrey Parola

1995

Video cameras were installed in cruisers for the first time. The cameras were found useful in OUI arrests and it has other law enforcement uses.

1996

Trooper James Griffith became the ninth officer to die in the line of duty when his cruiser was struck by another vehicle on route 1 in Warren on April 15th.



1996 – Trooper James Griffith

1997

Construction was completed at the crime lab on Hospital Street. The new addition houses a new DNA section.

In August, NESPAC was invoked after an emergency request for immediate assistance comes from the Colonel of the New Hampshire State Police. In Colebrook, Carl Drega shot and killed two New Hampshire State Troopers, a judge, and a news reporter. The gunman subsequently stole one of the state police cruisers and fled the scene. Nine troopers from Troops B & G responded and before the afternoon was over the troopers found themselves in the so-called North-East Kingdom of Vermont. Two more officers from Vermont were wounded in the final shoot-out. Drega was killed.

Two troopers from our Traffic Division responded to map the various crime scenes and detectives from CID I responded to conduct the investigation for the New Hampshire State Police. In all troopers from all the New England states responded to the call for assistance and it was the first time in its 30 year history NESPAC was invoked without prior planning.

On October 17th Detective Glenn Strange of CID III died from complications as the result of an assault while making an arrest in Aroostook County. Detective Strange was the tenth officer to die in the line of duty.



1997 – Detective Glenn Strange

1998

Lt Colonel Malcolm T. Dow of Houlton became the new chief when Governor Angus King nominated him. Dow selected Lt David Viles his Deputy Chief. They served for two years.

1999

H & K .45 caliber handguns were issued to troopers, replacing the Berretta 9mm used since 1988.

2000

A new barracks on U. S. Route 1 in Houlton was completed and is the new home for troop F. The building was constructed behind the old one built in 1938. Upon completion of the new barracks, the old building was torn down.

Governor Angus King nominated Lieutenant Michael Sperry of Carrabasset Valley as the next chief of the State Police. Major Jeff Harmon was promoted to Deputy Chief.

On October 4th the 48th Training Troop graduated 22 new troopers. This became the last full term academy class exclusively for state police recruits.

Integrity, Compassion, Fairness, and Excellence were adopted the core values of the State Police.

2001

The new Maine Criminal Justice Academy was opened at the Old Oak grove Coburn School on route 201 in Vassalboro.

The 48th training troop graduated this year. This was the first class to graduate from what was to become known as the RTT, recruit Training Troop. This training is held for trooper recruits already certified as law enforcement officers by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.

On September 11th when the terrorist attacks occurred in New York City and Washington D.C., all officers on and off duty were called in to their respective troop barracks to standby in case of further incidents.

2002

Troopers investigated the deadliest crash in Maine history on September 12th. A van with 15 occupants plunged off John's bridge in Northern Piscataquis County. The van fell into the river below drowning fourteen of the fifteen occupants.

Principally because of the terrorist attacks the previous September, troopers were assigned on an overtime basis to the Seeds of Peace International Camp in Otisfield. The camp is feared to have become a potential terrorist target. This detail remains in place today.

2003

All sworn members were provided with laptop computers when the agency switched to computer based reporting.

2004

Governor John Baldacci named Major Craig Poulin of China the 16th Chief of the Maine State Police. Lieutenant John Dyer became Deputy Chief. They held office for two years.

Troopers investigated a mother's day crash on I-95 in Carmel. This crash tied for the second deadliest crash in Maine history and the deadliest on Maine's interstate system.

Administrative offices were moved from Hospital Street after staying in the same location for 63 years. The old building remained home to the Traffic Division and the Criminal Investigative Division which covers central Maine.

In July twenty-six troopers and three supervisors were assigned to Boston, Massachusetts for five days when NESPAC was invoked to assist the Massachusetts State Police with the Democratic National Convention.

2005

On August 29th the administration combined Troop B covering Cumberland, Oxford and Androscoggin Counties into Troop A which covers York County. Troop G which patrols the Maine Turnpike now became Troop B.

The Troop J barracks in East Machias that opened in 1982 was closed and the new headquarters was located on route 1A in Ellsworth.

2007

Governor John Baldacci named Lieutenant Patrick Fleming the next Chief of the State Police. Major Robert Williams became Deputy Chief.

The troops were again re-organized, with the exception of I-295 troop lines reverted back to their pre 2005 lines. Troop A now covers York County and I - 295, Troop B Cumberland, Oxford and Androscoggin counties. Troop G is again the Maine Turnpike.

June 24th, Kennebunkport hosted two of the world's most powerful men. President George W. Bush met with Russian President Vladimir Putin at former President George H. W. Bush's

home at Walker's Point. A massive number of troopers were deployed. The meeting was conducted without incident.

In December Corporal Ron Brooks and Trooper Steve Shea, both Iraqi war veterans, traveled to Arlington National Cemetery in Washington D.C. to help place ten thousand Christmas wreaths on the graves there. The Worcester Wreath Company of Harrington donated the wreaths.

2008

The 58th and 59th Recruit Training Troops are hired and the graduates earn the privilege to be called Troopers.



1960 – Trooper Herman Boudreau



**2007 – Corporal Ron Brooks and Trooper Steve Shea place wreaths on gravesites
In Arlington National Cemetery in Washington D. C.**



1933 – District II Headquarters in Fairfield