

2017 Fall Awards Narratives

Captain T. L. Cheek Collision Reduction Award

Troop H, District 3

Troop H, District 3, Anson and Union Counties, had the largest reduction in collisions for the calendar year of 2016. They went from 3208 collisions in 2015 to 2935 collisions in 2016. The 273 fewer collisions represent an 8.5% decrease. The members of H/3 are to be commended for their outstanding efforts to reduce crash related property damage, injury and fatal collisions.

Humanitarian Service Award

Sergeant Brent E. Hipp



On September 15, 2004, Trooper Jack D. Ferree's son, Joshua, passed away unexpectedly from natural causes. He was 24 years old and was attending Cleveland Community College for his Criminal Justice degree. In 2005, Hipp and his wife, Melony, started the Josh Ferree Memorial Softball Tournament to fund a scholarship at Cleveland Community College for students seeking a degree in the criminal justice field. In four years, the tournament raised approximately \$15,000.00.

Since 2010, Hipp has been actively involved in the Special Olympics North Carolina Law Enforcement Torch Run. He has raised over \$20,000 by leading special events throughout his community.

His efforts provide district members the opportunity to interact with their community in a positive manner while presenting a caring, professional, and inclusive image of the Highway Patrol.

Sgt. Hipp has consistently been involved with his community since joining the Highway Patrol in 2002. Sgt. Brent Hipp is recognized for his long and extensive outstanding public service to his community.

Meritorious Service Award

Trooper Robert O. Melby



During March of 2017, Trooper R. O. Melby conducted extensive traffic safety programs at the three high schools within Carteret County. Trooper Melby partnered with local school officials to develop an interactive program utilizing the Highway Patrol's Mobile Driving Simulator. The objective was to re-enforce safe driving habits while encouraging participants to make good choices while operating a motor vehicle. The program included simulations and exercises that allowed new drivers to learn to anticipate dangerous situations and develop critical decision-making skills.

Throughout his career, Trooper Melby has developed traffic safety programs which he has presented to high school students in Carteret County. Trooper Melby has taken the initiative to go beyond what is required of his position to ensure Carteret County's youngest and most inexperienced drivers remain safe on the highways.

Meritorious Service Award

Captain Jeff D. Gordon

Sergeant Michael D. Baker

Sergeant Jorge E. Brewer

Technology Support Analyst Julia A. Jordan

Mr. Lee Queen (Colonel's Appreciation Award)

Mr. Edward Bottum (Colonel's Appreciation Award)

During the spring of 2012, while assigned to the State Highway Patrol Public Information Office, Sergeant Jorge Brewer became aware of a public alert notification system called "Blue Alert". Blue Alert notification was created to honor two New York City Police Detectives who were assassinated while sitting in their patrol car. The system is designed to broadcast an alert to law enforcement agencies statewide when a suspect is on the run after seriously injuring or killing a law enforcement officer.

Sergeant Brewer, on his own initiative, contacted the Texas Department of Public Safety, an organization that employed the Blue Alert system, and obtained information on its effectiveness and operation. Sergeant Brewer, with the assistance of then, Lt. Jeff Gordon, soon developed a process to initiate the Blue Alert system in North Carolina using the already established Amber and Silver Alert system. However, due to various delays and set-backs, the creation and implementation was postponed.

In the Spring of 2016, then Lt. Gordon, along with the assistance of Public Information Officer Sgt. Michael Baker, Technology Support Analyst Julia Jordan, and Business Applications Developers Lee Queen and Edward Bottum, once again continued the effort to implement the Blue Alert system.

They worked to create a bill and introduce it to North Carolina Legislators. During the 2016 legislative session, House Bill 1044, known as "The Law Enforcement Omnibus Bill" was introduced and passed. The Blue Alert Notification System was signed into law on July 11, 2016. In March 2017, the Blue Alert System was successfully implemented and is fully operational.

The Blue Alert system works in the same manner as the Amber and Silver Alert system. It uses radio and TV stations, electronic highway signs and lottery terminals. The alert covers the state with a detailed description of the suspect, the suspect's vehicle, and license plate information or other pertinent information. Law enforcement agencies statewide are also notified that a suspect is on the run after seriously injuring or killing a fellow officer. This widespread notification system can facilitate a swift capture of a suspect thereby eliminating the threat to the community and law enforcement personnel.

North Carolina now joins 27 other states across the country currently using the Blue Alert notification system.

Samaritan Service Award

Sergeant Robert B. Maynard



At noon, on Tuesday, July 25, Sergeant R. B. Maynard was eating lunch at the Chic-Fil-A located at Timber Drive, in Garner. He was urgently informed by an employee that a customer seemed to be choking and needed help. Without any hesitation, Sergeant Maynard ran to the choking lady and told her "I am here to help you". The lady was clearly not breathing as the color in her face was becoming purple and her eyes were open very wide. Sergeant Maynard reverted to his training and began to perform the Heimlich Maneuver. After approximately 12 thrusts, the food dislodged and she was able to breathe again.

Sergeant Maynard recognized a life threatening event and without hesitation, took immediate action. His swift actions undoubtedly saved this lady's life.

Samaritan Service Award

Trooper Dustin P. Efird



On Sunday, July 23, Trooper Dustin P. Efird was traveling north on US301 in Halifax County near the town of Halifax. He noticed a vehicle parked in a private yard with the four-way flashers on. He traveled just beyond the home before turning around, feeling something just didn't sit right with him about the situation. As he traveled back by the home, he rolled his window down to listen for the alarm and heard the vehicle's horn. After pulling into the home's driveway, he heard a female voice call out for help. He notified the Comm Center of his location and walked towards the house. Efird was unsure of what he was walking into. As he approached, he noticed a female lying against a storm door who asked for help, saying she was injured. He immediately contacted Communications and asked for an ambulance to respond to his location. While they were waiting for EMS, she stated that she was a nurse at the jail. Efird then called the Halifax County Sheriff's Office to let them know what was going on.

The next day, Efird was contacted by Major Jay Burch of the Halifax County Sheriff's Office thanking him for what he had done. He stated that Ms. Washington had gotten into the shower around 9:30pm on Thursday, July 20th and that is all she remembered. She had apparently fallen while in the shower and became unconscious. When she woke up it was daylight and she was unable to move. Hours later, she was able to get her leg over the tub and crawl to the door. She found her keys and began locking the car, making the horn sound every time a car went by. Major Burch relayed that Ms. Washington was very grateful and believes Efird saved her life.

Samaritan Service Award

Trooper Mitchell L. Mann



On Friday evening, February 17, Trooper Mitchell L. Mann, was off duty eating dinner at a Western Steak House in Graham with his family. Mann and an (unknown) Nurse who was also eating at the restaurant, noticed Mrs. Faye Faucett appeared to be in cardiac arrest. The Nurse and Mann both immediately went to aid her. They administered CPR until the ambulance arrived and EMS took over. Mrs. Faucett was transported to Duke where she lived for another 24 hour hours before passing. The Doctors told Mrs. Faucette's family that Faye would not have lived through the night if it had not been for Mann and the Nurse performing CPR on her. The quick actions by Mann and the Nurse provided the Faucett family precious time with Faye. Mann's "off-duty" performance on this occasion reflected positively on himself and the Highway Patrol.

Samaritan Service Award

Trooper Jason P. Page



On April 6, Trooper Jason Page responded to a "pin in" collision involving a child on Barger Road in Rowan County. Upon his arrival, Page found the driver alert but injured and a 4 yr old girl in the back seat unresponsive. Once the child was extracted, Page and the paramedics began treating the young girl in an effort to save her life. Page maintained an airway for her at the scene and during transport to Novant Rowan Hospital. He and the paramedics continued to Baptist Hospital where she was turned over to the Brenner Children's Hospital staff. This young girl, despite having long term injuries, is back at home. Trooper Page helped save a life during this incident, along with the assistance of the Rowan County EMS and Rescue Squad personnel.

Samaritan Service Award

Trooper Jason S. Ratliff



Just after midnight, on May 14th Trooper Jason S. Ratliff was on routine patrol near US 421 in Yadkin County. The Yadkin County Sheriff's Office dispatched a call regarding an open 911 line that was believed to be a victim of an assault. Ratliff advised the Sheriff's Office he was close to the scene and would respond. As information came in, Ratliff learned that the victim was moaning in the background and was unable to talk to the 911 operator. Wilkes County Communications Center advised they had a call from the same number and believed the victim had been assaulted and possibly stabbed.

Once arriving to the area where the cell phone signal was triangulated, Ratliff began looking for the victim. He contacted the Sheriff's Office Communications Center and told them he was going to turn his siren on in hopes they could hear it through the open 911 call. The Comm Center advised his siren could be heard clearly and he must be very close. Ratliff exited his patrol vehicle and began to search on foot around an abandoned house and an open field. He began calling out to the victim and after several minutes of searching, heard a person say "help me." As Ratliff continued towards the pleas for help, he observed a large blood trail on the ground leading to a creek. Once at the creek edge, he found a man entangled in honeysuckle bushes, barely conscious and alive. Ratliff and a Yadkin County Sergeant were able to drag the victim to an area where they could triage his condition. The victim had suffered several stab wounds to his chest, upper body and neck.

Ratliff's initiative and dedication to service was directly responsible for saving the life of the stabbing victim.

Samaritan Service Award

Trooper Andrew B. Depoyster



During the afternoon of February 13, Trp. Andrew DePoyster was running stationary radar on I-40.

Trp. DePoyster noticed a truck driving erratically and proceeded to investigate. The truck traveled into the median and crashed into the guard-railing before coming to rest. The driver was slumped over the steering wheel and his face was blue. DePoyster requested emergency assistance, assessed the driver's vital signs and began CPR. After a short while, the driver had a measurable pulse but was still having trouble breathing. Depoyster applied the Heimlich maneuver in an attempt to clear any possible obstructions from the airway. EMS arrived on the scene and determined the driver needed NARCAN. The driver was transported to Mission Hospital for treatment and evaluation. When interviewed, the truck driver admitted to shooting up Heroin at the truck stop off of I-40 at the 37 mile marker, then getting into his truck for work and driving.

Depoyster remained calm and focused, displaying excellence in the field under pressure, while responding to the crash. Depoyster's performance aided in saving the man's life.

Samaritan Service Award

Telecommunications Shift Supervisor Charlotte H. West



On Wednesday, October 4, Telecommunications Shift Supervisor, Charlotte West reported for her shift at 1300 hours. Her supervisor, Telecommunications Center Supervisor, Debbie Reilley was speaking to another Telecommunicator and noticed that Reilley was talking slower than normal and appeared to be having difficulty saying her words. West asked her if she was feeling okay and was told she was fine and just tired. A short time later West asked her supervisor a question and again she noticed something was not right and thought her supervisor may be having a medical issue. West took Reilley outside and informed her that she thought something was wrong medically and explained what she was noticing. West asked her supervisor if she wanted go to the hospital. Reilley refused and tried to ensure West that she was okay. After much persuasion, Reilley agreed to go to her doctors office. West told her she would not allow her to drive and that she would take her in her personal vehicle. West contacted Reilley's husband and explained what was going on. He met them and led them to the doctor's office. West waited at the doctor's office while Reilley was examined. After being examined by the doctor, Reilley was sent to the local emergency room suspecting she was having another stroke.

Once at the hospital, it was determined that Reilley did not suffer a stroke but was in critical condition. She was suffering from low potassium which could have resulted in death. After immediate medical intervention and several days in the hospital Reilley made a full recovery.

The attentive eyes, observation and true concern of West most likely saved Reilley's life.

Samaritan Service Group Award

Sergeant Jason B. Casteen

Trooper Jamie D. Duff



On June 28, Sergeant Jason Casteen was traveling eastbound on I-40 in Duplin County. Near mile marker 365, a motorist came up behind Casteen flashing their headlights and frantically motioning for him to pull to the shoulder of the road. Casteen pulled over and spoke with the motorist. The motorist explained he observed what appeared to be lady performing CPR on a small child two miles earlier on the eastbound shoulder. The motorist had stopped to help the lady, but she told him police were on their way to help.

Trooper Jamie D. Duff was in the area when he overheard Casteen's radio traffic regarding the incident.

In the area of the 361 mile marker, Casteen observed a black Ford Expedition, stationary on the eastbound shoulder with its hazard lights activated.

Casteen spoke with the female driver who appeared to be very calm. Casteen could not clearly see in the rear of the vehicle because of dark tinted windows; however he did observe a female child seated behind the driver in a booster seat. Sergeant Casteen attempted to open the rear door of the vehicle to check on the welfare of the child, but the doors were locked.

The driver spontaneously stated, "The baby is fine." Casteen observed another child in the back seat, slumped over in a child restraint. Casteen and Duff unlocked and opened the rear passenger doors. They both observed a small child who was unconscious, in extreme respiratory distress, and covered in vomit. The child was extremely red, not sweating, and appeared to be extremely overheated. Duff took the child out of the vehicle and placed him in Casteen's patrol car in hopes the air condition would cool him off. Duff took a cup of ice water and began wiping the child down in an attempt to lower his body temperature. He continued in his efforts until EMS arrived and took over medical care.

The female child was also placed in a patrol car with air conditioning. Casteen and Duff noticed she was dirty and smelled of urine.

At the hospital, Duff learned the male child's condition was life threatening and that his core body temperature was not conducive to sustain life. The child was flown to Vidant Medical Center in Greenville and was not expected to live throughout the night. Duff remained in contact with the hospital, checking on the child's condition and learned he made a full recovery.

The emergency room physician who initially treated the child, commended Casteen and Duff for their life saving actions.

Samaritan Service Group Award

Trooper Christopher M. Jeffries

Trooper Mark W. Corbin



On February 14, Trooper Christopher M. Jeffries was on routine patrol in Henderson County when he was approached by a motorist advising him they had observed a distressed young adult female standing on the overpass of U.S. 25 which crosses over I-26. He located the distraught female who had stepped over a guardrail and was standing on the open side of the U.S. 25 overpass.

After contacting Highway Patrol Communications to request assistance, Jeffries approached the female. Observing that she was upset and crying profusely, Jeffries engaged in conversation with her, attempting to calm her down. Eventually, she sat down on the edge of the bridge while talking with Jeffries. Continuing the conversation, he stooped to both knees.

Jeffries seized an opportunity to grab the female's arm to keep her from falling. Trooper Mark Corbin arrived on scene and assisted Jeffries by pulling the female to safety. She was placed into custody of the Henderson County Sheriff's Office where she was provided further assistance.

The selfless act demonstrated by Jeffries and Corbin quite possibly saved the life of this young lady.

Award of Valor

Trooper Matthew C. Eure



On Thursday July 13th, Trooper Matthew C. Eure was off-duty with his wife, enjoying a day at the beach in Pine Knoll Shores. They noticed a woman and young girl walking into the surf. The surf was very strong and rip currents were prevalent in that area. Shortly after, Eure noticed the woman and girl had disappeared from view. After scanning the water and not being able to find them, Eure and a civilian entered the water in an attempt to locate the two women. Eure was able to spot the young girl. He swam to her and pulled her back to the beach through the treacherous surf and currents. The assisting civilian located the woman. After pulling the young girl to safety, Eure immediately went back into the water and assisted the civilian in bringing the woman safely to the beach. Eure rendered medical assistance until the Pine Knoll Shores Fire Department arrived and took over. Both women were transported to Carteret General Hospital for treatment.

This area of the beach had been experiencing rough surf, dangerous rip tides and currents. There had already been drowning deaths attributed to these conditions earlier in the week. Eure's awareness of his surroundings and willingness to place his own life at risk to save the lives of others is the only thing that prevented this incident from turning tragic.

Award of Valor

Trooper James C. Toon



On September 17, Trooper J. C. Toon was off duty and traveling toward Fayetteville when he noticed a single car crash that had just occurred. The vehicle had started to burn and he could hear screams from a female. When Trooper Toon made his way to the car he observed a female that had been partially ejected and also that the fire was gaining strength. He was able to free the woman and pull her to safety. She told Toon that the driver was still in the vehicle. At this point the vehicle was burning intensely and the fire was spreading to the surrounding trees. As Toon was attempting to make his way back to the car, the fire department arrived and extinguished the fire. The driver, who was trapped in the car, had died on impact with massive injuries to his head. The woman was transported and admitted to the hospital for serious, but non-life threatening injuries. Had it not been for the quick and selfless actions of Toon, the woman would have certainly been burned and most likely would have died.

Purple Heart Award

Retired First Sergeant Harry J. Latta

On Sunday, October 4, 1981 at approximately 11:15 A.M., Trooper Harry Latta responded to investigate a DWI complaint on NC 231 just outside of Middlesex. He was informed that Chuck Narron, Narron's father and another male were operating a blue and white pickup truck while impaired and were armed. Approximately one mile outside of Middlesex, Latta observed a blue and white pickup truck parked in the roadway with the driver's door open and a man standing in the road. Latta activated his blue lights and pulled up behind the truck. The man in the roadway walked over to the shoulder and the truck began moving forward. The driver attempted to make a left turn into a driveway but went into a ditch. The man that had been standing in the roadway then ran to the truck, removed a shotgun from inside and started running to a nearby mobile home. At this time, the driver of the pickup exited and began walking towards Latta. Trooper Latta told him he was under arrest for DWI. The driver stated "The hell I am, I ain't going nowhere."

Trooper Latta then took him by the arm and the driver resisted. Trooper Latta was able to gain control of the driver's arm and bend him over the hood of the patrol car in an attempt to handcuff him. Latta then heard a blast and felt a stinging sensation on his right side. He immediately let go of the driver and before he could get cover behind his patrol car, he was shot again on his right side. Latta saw the subject behind the mobile home with the shotgun in his hands pointing at his direction. The subject then fired 3 to 4 rounds before Latta returned fire from his service revolver. Latta called for assistance, retrieved his shotgun and started towards the direction where he last saw the subject. As Latta was nearing the area, the subject stood up in an attempt to shoot again. Latta fired 2 shots and the subject fell to the ground. The Middlesex Police Chief had arrived to the scene by this time. Latta had been struck in the right arm, right side and upper part of his right leg and was transported to the hospital. Bruce Narron (the driver) had been apprehended at the scene. The suspect in the shooting, Chuck Narron was transported to the hospital with injuries from shots fired by Latta. He was then transported to the Magistrate's Office and charged with Assault With a Deadly Weapon with Intent To Kill Inflicting Serious Injury.

Latta's actions displayed his dedication to protect the citizens of North Carolina. Even after being shot two times, he was able to remain calm, return fire and bring the suspect into custody. Latta was hospitalized and released two days later. The incident was weighing so heavily on him he felt the only way to deal with it was to return to duty. After calling his Sergeant, he was cleared to come back to work just a week after the incident occurred.