

## STATE POLICE HEROES OF 2007 ARE HONORED

by **Kevin P. Morison**

Law enforcement service seemed to be in David Rich's DNA. A 17-year veteran of the Indiana State Police himself, Master Trooper Rich's father is a retired Indiana State Police trooper and a former two-term sheriff of Miami County, Indiana. His brother is an Indiana State Police captain.



Master Trooper  
David Rich

So when Trooper Rich, on his way home from work last July 5, spotted what appeared to be a stranded motorist, he did what came naturally: he stopped to help. Unbeknownst to Trooper Rich, the vehicle was stolen and the suspect was armed. As the trooper approached the vehicle, the suspect opened fire with a shotgun through the driver's side window, fatally striking him in the chest. The suspect then turned the weapon on himself and committed suicide.

"He was an unsung hero," a law enforcement colleague from northern Indiana would recall. "Dave would give you the shirt off his back ... and then some."

David Rich was one of 15 officers working for state police agencies who made the ultimate sacrifice in 2007. On March 5, 2008, top officials from state police agencies throughout the United States and their counterparts in Canada came together in Alexandria, Virginia, for a moving ceremony to honor and remember those brave officers. Also honored were two Constables of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police — Douglas Scott and Christopher Worden — who died in the line of duty during 2007. This annual event is organized by the State and Provincial Division of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP).



Constable  
Douglas Scott



Constable  
Christopher  
Worden

Like Trooper Rich, the first two state police officers killed in 2007 died by gunfire. On January 6, Tennessee State Trooper Calvin Jenks was shot and killed by the teenage passenger of a vehicle he had pulled over just outside Memphis. The assailants then ran over the 24-year-old officer's body, before driving off. They were arrested 200 miles away in Nashville. Six days later, Sergeant Nicholas Sottile of the Florida Highway Patrol was fatally shot during a traffic stop when one of the two occupants produced a handgun and fired. Though mortally wounded, Sergeant Sottile was able to provide dispatchers with information on the suspects, who were apprehended the next morning.



Trooper Calvin  
Jenks



Sergeant  
Nicholas Sottile

While encounters with brazen, cold-blooded criminals took the lives of many officers during 2007, the majority of line-of-duty deaths occurred on our roadways. No state police agency suffered greater losses than the California Highway Patrol.



Officer Robert  
Dickey

Officer Robert Dickey died on June 10 when a tire blew out and he lost control of his patrol vehicle on Interstate 8 in Imperial County. On July 31, Officer Douglas Russell was struck and killed while deploying stop sticks to halt a vehicle that had fled the police. As he was placing the devices, the suspect vehicle swerved and hit him. CHP Commissioner Mike Brown said at the time, "The CHP family has suffered another tragic loss. It's our 212th, and I really want to stop counting."



Officer Douglas  
Russell

Regrettably, his wish would not last long. On November 16, Officer John Paul Miller was searching for a reported drunk driver who was causing havoc on I-580. Officer Miller lost control of his vehicle while attempting to negotiate a curve and crashed into a tree.



Officer John  
Paul Miller

Drunk drivers pose a special danger to all law enforcement officers, in particular state police officers who spend much of their time on the roads protecting motorists. Illinois State Trooper Brian McMillen was en route to assist another officer last October 28 when his squad car was struck by two separate vehicles — each driven by an intoxicated driver.



Trooper Brian  
McMillen

Helping others is what law enforcement work in all about. That commitment to service can have tragic consequences at times. On October 12, Trooper Zachariah Templeton, Colorado State Patrol, succumbed to injuries he sustained the previous day on Interstate 76. Trooper Templeton and another trooper were helping a man load chemical tanks that had fallen off his trailer when a vehicle driven by a 16 year old struck both troopers, killing Trooper Templeton instantly.



Trooper  
Zachariah  
Templeton

West Virginia State Police Trooper Brian Linn was killed November 3 while coming to the aid of a fellow officer engaged in a foot pursuit. Responding with emergency equipment activated, Trooper Linn lost control of his vehicle and hit a utility pole.



Trooper Brian  
Linn

Texas lost 22 law enforcement officers in 2007, the most of any state. Among them was Trooper Todd Holmes of the Texas Department of Public Safety, who was killed in an automobile accident on March 14 while attempting to cross a highway to pursue a vehicle traveling in the opposite direction.



Trooper Todd  
Holmes

In far southern New Mexico, State Police Officer Christopher Mirabal was initiating a traffic stop last June 13, when his police motorcycle struck the curb, slid across the road and struck a parked tractor-trailer. Montana Highway Patrol Trooper David Graham was killed October 9, after a pickup truck crossed into oncoming traffic on Highway 2 and crashed head-on into his unmarked police vehicle.



Officer  
Christopher  
Mirabal



Trooper David  
Graham

Unlike most motorists, law enforcement officers do not have the luxury of staying off the roads when conditions are dangerous. Such was the case on January 24, 2007, when New York State Trooper Jose Rosado was patrolling Route 104 in eastern Suffolk County. Trooper Rosado's vehicle skidded on a patch of black ice, crossed the median and was struck by an oncoming vehicle, killing him instantly.



Trooper Jose Rosado



While no call for service is ever routine and no officer death is ever typical, two of the state police officers who made the ultimate sacrifice last year died in highly unusual and tragic circumstances. On August 21, Ohio Highway Patrol Trooper Jack Holland II was on duty at the commercial driver's license facility in Seville when a yellow jacket got into the office and stung him. He immediately applied his allergy medication from a kit he carried at all times. Despite his efforts and those of paramedics, Trooper Holland died at the hospital an hour later.

Trooper Jack Holland II

In New York, State Police Trooper David Brinkerhoff was shot and killed on April 25 under circumstances no agency ever wants to endure. Trooper Brinkerhoff and another trooper were searching for a suspect who had shot and wounded a fellow trooper. The troopers encountered the suspect inside a residence and attempted to place him under arrest. During the struggle, Trooper Brinkerhoff was accidentally shot by a fellow trooper.



Trooper David Brinkerhoff

At Trooper Brinkerhoff's funeral, Acting State Police Superintendent Preston Felton reminded mourners about the true nature of heroes: "In today's society, we have confused celebrity worship with hero worship, and it's time for that to change. Troopers are our everyday heroes."

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The NLEOMF is a nonprofit organization established in 1984 to generate increased public support for the law enforcement profession by permanently recording and appropriately commemorating the service and sacrifice of law enforcement officers; and to provide information that will help promote law enforcement safety. The NLEOMF operates and maintains the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, DC, which contains approximately 18,000 names; is an organizer of the annual National Police Week tribute each May; and serves as a clearinghouse of information about law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. The NLEOMF is leading the building of the first-ever National Law Enforcement Museum, scheduled to open adjacent to the Memorial in 2011. For more information, visit [www.nleomf.org](http://www.nleomf.org).

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