Department of Public Safety

Remembering Those Killed in the Line of Duty
It was the motoring public that advocated the creation of the Georgia Department of Public Safety. In the early 1930’s, there was much concern for the rising death rate on Georgia highways. This concern, increased crime and an insufficient number of law enforcement officers at the local and county levels further revealed the need for a new law enforcement agency.

House Bill 18, the 220th Act of the General Assembly, was signed into law March 19, 1937. The Act created and established the Department of Public Safety, to be part of the executive branch of Georgia government. One division of the Department of Public Safety, the Georgia State Patrol, was created as part of the original legislation. Today, the creation of the GSP is reflected in O.C.G.A. § 35-2-30, which states:

There is created and established a division of the Department of Public Safety to be known as the Uniform Division, the members of which shall be known and designated as the “Georgia State Patrol.”

The Georgia State Patrol is the only remaining division of the Department of Public Safety created by the original act. The other two, the Criminal Investigation Division (GBI) and the Driver’s License Division (DDS) have been made into independent agencies.

O.C.G.A. § 35-2-32 defines the duties of the Georgia State Patrol “...to patrol the public roads and highways of this state, including interstate and state maintained highways, and to safeguard the lives and property of the public; and such duty shall also include accident investigation and traffic enforcement. The Uniform Division shall prevent, detect, and investigate violations of the criminal laws of this state, any other state, or the United States which are committed upon these public roads and highways or upon property appertaining thereto and shall apprehend and arrest those persons who violate such criminal laws.”

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

John 15:13 (KJV)
On December 20, 1940, Corporal Black was shot and killed during a traffic stop on State Route 41 near Ringgold. He was the first and only Georgia State Trooper who has lost his life during a vehicle stop. After his death, Corporal Black was promoted to the rank of sergeant by then Commissioner Lon Sullivan; “in testimony of his tireless efforts in behalf of safety of human beings on streets and highways and his valiant courage in fulfilling his oath to enforce the laws of the Commonwealth of Georgia.
Agent Fields, with less than a month on the job, was involved in a gun battle while investigating suspicious individuals at the Lighthouse Restaurant in Swainsboro on State Route 4 south. He was the first Georgia Bureau of Investigation agent killed in the line of duty.
On February 15, 1950 at 1900 hours, Trooper Bass was struck and killed by a hit and run driver in Cordele. The incident occurred on 24th Avenue, 25 feet west of 5th Street, in front of Trooper Bass’ home.
Trooper Clyde Arthur Wehunt
Badge Number 217

Date of Birth : October 29, 1915
Hometown : Canton, GA
Trooper School : 12th
Assignment : Post 27, Blue Ridge
Date of Death : April 20, 1951
Interment : Chastain Memorial Park
Fannin County

Trooper Wehunt died from injuries sustained in a patrol car crash on April 20, 1951 on GA 5 in Fannin County.
**Sergeant Major George W. Harrelson**
**Badge Number 26**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>December 2, 1914</th>
<th>Hometown</th>
<th>Helena, GA</th>
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<tr>
<td>Trooper School</td>
<td>6th</td>
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<td>Governor</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Herman Talmadge</td>
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<td>Date of Death</td>
<td>August 15, 1952</td>
<td>Interment</td>
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Sergeant Major Harrelson was killed in a car crash in the City of Atlanta on August 15, 1952, at Howell and Houston Streets.
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Date of Birth</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hometown</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Trooper School</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment</strong></td>
<td>Post 14, Donalsonville</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date of Death</strong></td>
<td>August 16, 1961</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interment</strong></td>
<td>Hopeful Cemetery</td>
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<td>Hopeful, GA</td>
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On August 16, 1961 at 1845 hours, Sergeant Gray, Trooper Massey and Trooper Nicholson were involved in a crash in Calhoun County at the intersection of GA 45 and GA 234. Sergeant Gray and Trooper Massey died at the crash. Trooper Nicholson died on August 18, 1961, at Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital in Albany. They were en route from training in Americus to Donalsonville.
Trooper Roy Cecil Massey
Badge Number 115

Date of Birth : May 9, 1918
Hometown : Thomasville, GA
Trooper School : 11th
Assignment : Post 14, Donalsonville
Date of Death : August 16, 1961
Interment : Laurel Hill Cemetery
Thomasville, GA

On August 16, 1961 at 1845 hours, Sergeant Gray, Trooper Massey and Trooper Nicholson were involved in a crash in Calhoun County at the intersection of GA 45 and GA 234. Sergeant Gray and Trooper Massey died at the crash. Trooper Nicholson died on August 18, 1961, at Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital in Albany. They were en route from training in Americus to Donalsonville.
**Trooper Harvey Lewis Nicholson**  
**Badge Number 254**

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<tr>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
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<td>Hometown</td>
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<td>Assignment</td>
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<td>Date of Death</td>
<td>August 18, 1961</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interment</td>
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On May 25, 1962 at 1245 hours, Trooper Looney was killed in a patrol car crash on State Route 306, .4 of a mile west of Cumming, GA.
Special Agent Harrell died from injuries sustained in a car crash on December 23, 1964, eight miles west of Americus on US 280 in Terrell County. He passed away late that morning at the St. Francis Hospital in Muscogee County. He was en route to a reported shooting when he lost control and crashed.
Trooper Turpen died on February 23, 1965 from injuries sustained in a traffic crash on September 30, 1964. He was a passenger in a patrol car involved in a crash on Mitchell Street in Atlanta.
On March 3, 1966 at 1130 hours, Agent Sentell was killed when he lost control of his vehicle on State Route 24, .7 of a mile west of Louisville.
On June 22, 1968, Trooper Page was killed when he lost control of his vehicle during patrol. The incident occurred at mp 12.1 on State Route 2 in Union County.
On April 11, 1970 at 1715 hours, Trooper Tanner was killed when he and Trooper Jeff Schultz were responding to a call for assistance by another trooper. The single car crash occurred in Gordon County on State Route 225, 2.6 miles north of Calhoun.
On June 26, 1971, Trooper Taylor was a passenger in a patrol car driven by Trooper Eric Davis that left the roadway and struck a tree. The crash occurred on State Route 44 in Jones County.
While returning from duty in the Athens area, Agent Collins was killed in a single car crash in Taylor County. The incident occurred on November 5, 1973 on State Route 128, ½ mile north of Reynolds.
Trooper James David Young
Badge Number 481

Date of Birth : June 10, 1940
Hometown : Fitzgerald, GA
Trooper School : 41st
Assignment : Post 30, Cordele
Date of Death : May 4, 1975
Interment : Evergreen Cemetery
    Fitzgerald, GA

Trooper Young and Cordele Police Sergeant Willis Haralson were shot and killed by a prisoner on May 4, 1975 in the Cordele Police Department.
On February 3, 1977, Corporal Dillard was struck and killed by a vehicle while directing traffic on GA 129, 2.8 miles south of Gainesville.
On May 7, 1977 at 2314 hours, Trooper Andrews was in pursuit of a speeding vehicle on State Route 41, 1.5 miles north of Talbotton. During the chase, he lost control of his patrol car and struck a tree. Trooper Andrews died on May 8 from injuries sustained in the crash.
On January 17, 1979 at 2327 hours, Trooper Sewell was killed in a single car crash on State Route 24 in Oconee County approximately 1000 feet north of the Morgan County Line.
On May 18, 1982, Trooper Morris was killed in a single car crash while responding to a report of a school bus crash. The incident occurred on the Atlanta Highway at Monroe.
On July 26, 1983 at 2320 hours, TFC Langston was killed in a single car crash while in pursuit of a vehicle on GA 1 in Polk County. During the chase he lost control and struck a bridge.
On January 10, 1984 at 0119 hours, TFC O’Neal was killed in a crash during a pursuit on Interstate 95 in Liberty County. During the chase, the suspect intentionally struck TFC O’Neal’s vehicle causing him to lose control at mp 70.1. The patrol car left the roadway and struck a group of trees.
On April 27, 1991, TFC Stewart was killed in a single car crash while he was responding to a call for assistance by the Rochelle Police Department. Approximately 4 miles north of Pitts on State Route 215, he lost control while attempting to maneuver around a horse in the roadway.
On December 1, 2003, Trooper Lumley was pursuing a vehicle on GA 16 west of Griffin in Spalding County. His vehicle was intentionally struck by the suspect’s vehicle causing him to lose control and crash. He died from injuries sustained in the assault on December 2.
On August 19, 2006 at 1138 hours, Corporal Young was responding to a call for assistance from another trooper involved in a pursuit. As he was traveling south on Interstate 95, he lost control on the rain slick pavement, crossed the median, and struck two vehicles traveling north. This occurred approximately 1 mile north of GA 25. Corporal Young died from injuries sustained in the incident on August 29, 2006.
Trooper LeCroy was shot and killed in Atlanta after a vehicle pursuit on December 27, 2010. He had attempted to stop a vehicle and the driver fled until it crashed. As Trooper LeCroy approached the vehicle, the driver fired three shots, striking the trooper once in the neck. The gunman then fled the scene in the patrol car and was arrested a short distance away. He was convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to life without parole. Trooper LeCroy was posthumously promoted to the rank of Corporal.