

## President's Message



TFC Louis A. Copponi, President

Recently, one of my fellow senior Troopers e-mailed me a story that was more than the usual spam. Now, I'm not much of an e-mail person. Probably because I'm "technologically-challenged." Even my five-year-old daughter Lauren is more computer savvy than I. But I try to keep up. And this one caught me off guard. It wasn't the joke of the day. It wasn't a chain letter (nice to know some things, like cockroaches, will never die!). It wasn't a funny photo. And it wasn't the latest Paris or Britney video. No, this wasn't any of those. It was a story about a little girl.

The e-mail was the story of a little girl who goes to school on the day the other kids bring their Daddies in to school. The kids introduce their Dads, but this little girl can't. Her Dad is not there. The other Dads talk to the class about their jobs. Eventually, this little girl talks about her Dad and why he isn't there. She tells the story of a policeman who didn't come

home from work one day. But she isn't crying. She tells of her memories, remembering her Dad's face, his voice, his hugs. And she says she knows he is still there, looking out for her and her Mom.

I don't know if this story is true. I guess I wouldn't be surprised if it was entirely fiction. Typical of the Internet. But it doesn't matter. All that mattered to me was that it made me think. Despite the fact that I had about nine thousand other e-mails to open, I had to stop for a moment. I'm not embarrassed to say this story made me clear a lump from my throat. Whether this one particular story is true or not doesn't matter. The circumstances could be from any of hundreds of real incidents, including right here in New Hampshire. Troopers Scott Phillips and Jim Noyes were fathers of daughters. So was Franconia Police Officer Bruce McKay. Troopers Gary Parker and Les Lord and Manchester Police Officer Mike Briggs were Dads. Most of the men whose names are etched in the granite walls of our New Hampshire Law Enforcement Memorial were Dads.

The story is more than the story of the little girl and her dad. It is the story of most policemen. Not in death, but in the story of who and what we stand for. Policemen don't take this career path for the pay. Hardly. My neighbors, my friends, all ask the same question, "Why did you choose that job?" And most of the time I either answer with a laugh and say "for the coffee" or maybe "the cool car". Sometimes I just laugh. Most wouldn't understand. Like our soldiers, our fire-

fighters, our nurses, our social workers, everyone whose life is one of service, policemen choose this career. We choose to deal with people and their problems. We choose to help.

Policemen go where others won't. They go where others fear. They do what others won't. When some criminal threatens his victim, when some madman starts shooting at a school or a mall, when some deluded husband, boyfriend, whatever, decides that if she won't be with him, she can't be with anyone; it is a policeman who steps forward. He runs toward the shots that everyone else is running from.

When a baby cries, when a child cowers, when a woman suffers another beating, it is a policeman who steps in. Threaten your fellow citizens by driving while impaired? Try to poison our youth with drugs? Rob or steal from someone? Assault another person? Molest a child? A policeman will answer the call. And you will answer to us.

Some in our society work to make more than the next guy. Others spend their lives writing about others, satisfied to offer opinions or sit in judgment, never thinking about offering to get involved, to actually do something to help. So much for them. Stay on the sidelines.

That senior Trooper who sent me the e-mail did me a favor. He reminded me why I do this job. For every little girl, every little boy, every other citizen who needs me, I'll be there.

Stay safe. We miss you Gary, Joe, Jim, Scott and Les. □

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