



Photo by Allison Money/Daily Inter Lake.

# 'Taps' for a Trooper

By Nicholas Ledden/Daily Inter Lake

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## HUNDREDS TURN OUT FOR MHP FUNERAL

A somber phalanx of green- and black-clad Montana Highway Patrol troopers stood rigidly at attention Tuesday afternoon over the flag-draped casket of slain trooper Mike Haynes.

[more](#) ►



## Montana Trooper

continued



Photo by Allison Money/Daily Inter Lake.

Strains of "Amazing Grace" rose from a set of bagpipes and toiled through the turbulent and snow-spotted air as Montana Highway Patrol commander Col. Mike Tooley handed that flag — carefully taken from the casket and folded by white-gloved troopers — to Haynes' widow, Tawny.

The patrol's honor guard lifted their rifles and at a barked command fired into the air, following the salute with the mournful cadence of a trumpet playing "Taps."

Out of the silence, a ceremonial last call broadcast statewide burst from the radio of a nearby patrol car.

"All units and stations, clear the radio for a moment of silence in honor of our fallen friend," crackled the dispatcher's voice, identifying Haynes by his badge number.

"159, Kalispell Direct. Status check."

There was no answer.

"159, Kalispell Direct. Status check."

Again, there was no answer.

"Copy 159. You're now off shift and en route to the place your Heavenly Father has prepared for you."

Haynes, 28, died Friday at Kalispell Regional Medical Center from injuries suffered in the line of duty during a March 23 collision with a drunk driver south of Kalispell.

According to investigators, Haynes was southbound on U.S. 93 north of Somers at about 2:40 a.m. when a car traveling northbound in the southbound lanes struck the trooper's marked cruiser head-on.

"Mike was a great man, and he led a great life," said Tooley during Haynes' memorial service Tuesday at the Christian Center Assembly of God Church in Kalispell. "In his 28 years he lived more than most people do in 80."

Hundreds of people — including sheriff's deputies from counties across Montana, police from cities large and small, Highway Patrol troopers from neighboring states, federal law enforcement officers and firefighters — attended Haynes' funeral and the subsequent graveside service at Glacier Memorial Gardens.

With emergency lights flashing, police motorcycles led a procession north on U.S. 93 that stretched the entire route from church to cemetery.

Members of the Patriot Guard Riders of Montana motorcycle organization lined the cemetery's entrance, holding large American flags.

Gov. Brian Schweitzer, Department of Transportation Director Jim Lynch and Montana Attorney General Steve Bullock stood behind members of the fallen trooper's family as mourners placed red roses on Haynes' casket.

During the funeral, Haynes was remembered as a kind, loving, energetic and thoughtful man dedicated to his Christian faith.

Also remembered as a man of honor and humility, Haynes is survived by his wife, Tawny; his two young children, Taryn, 3, and Elias, 16 months; and his parents, John and Melody Haynes of Kalispell.

"He impacted my life, and I'm a better man because of it," said Haynes' brother-in-law, Jamison Wing.

Wing shared with mourners stories of fishing trips he took with Haynes, few of which resulted in any great catch. On one trip to Libby Dam, Haynes was pulled over by a patrolman because of a problem with the boat and trailer he was hauling.

"Later he said to us, 'Man, these sneaky patrolmen, they use cover real well,'" Wing said. Haynes later would become one of those "sneaky patrolmen" protecting drivers on Montana's highways.

Other fishing trips were to the place Haynes later proposed to his wife of five years and to the Old Steel Bridge in Evergreen, Wing said.

"I was impressed by Mike's demeanor, his kind smile," Wing said. "He was a man of few words ... but he was always in perpetual motion, for some reason."

Wing urged mourners to "be like Mike: selfless, hope-filled and just a positive person to be around."

Matthew Haynes remembered his brother as a lover of games who excelled at whatever he did.

"He gave his all no matter what he did, and he was good at it," Matthew Haynes said. "He was a hero, and he died a hero."

Haynes served in Iraq with the Montana Army National Guard before he became a trooper in 2006.

"This wasn't just a job to Mike. He had a purpose," Tooley said. "Mike chose to stand guard over us, as a trooper and a soldier."

John Haynes, Mike's father, also praised his son's life of service to God, country and the people of Mon-

## Montana Trooper



Photos by Nate Chute.



Photos by Allison Money/Daily Inter Lake.

tana.

"That was what my son was, a servant," he said.

Rev. Jim Davey read from statements prepared by members of Haynes' family who did not speak during the funeral.

"Mike was a gentle, kind, loyal and tenderhearted young man. If you weren't his friend, it's only because he hadn't met you," wrote Haynes' mother, Melody Haynes.

Haynes' wife, Tawny, wrote of the great love between her and her husband, a "kind and gentle soul hiding behind that quietness."

Haynes, a 2000 graduate of Flathead High School, was the seventh trooper to die in the line of duty in the Highway Patrol's 74-year history. After 30 years with no fatalities, the patrol has lost three troopers in the line of duty in the last 18 months, all from head-on collisions on Flathead Valley highways.

Reporter Nicholas Ledden can be reached at 758-4441 or by e-mail at [nledden@daily-interlake.com](mailto:nledden@daily-interlake.com).

### **BENEFIT FUND**

The Trooper Michael W. Haynes Memorial Fund has been established at First Interstate Bank. For donations, please see your local branch.

### **MHP'S FALLEN HEROES**

Since the Montana Highway Patrol was founded 74 years ago, seven troopers have died in the line of duty. Five of them were in Northwest Montana.

March 27, 2009: Trooper Mike Haynes of Kalispell died from injuries sustained four days earlier when his squad car was hit head-on south of Kalispell.

Aug. 26, 2008: Trooper Evan Schneider of Kalispell died in a crash near Bad Rock

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## Montana Trooper

continued



Montana Highway Patrol Col. Mike Tooley hands Trooper Mike Haynes' widow, Tawny, an American flag during the graveside service Tuesday for the trooper who died last week. Next to her are Haynes' mother, Melody, and father, John. In the back row, from left, are Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer, Attorney General Steve Bullock and Transportation Director Jim Lynch. Photo by Allison Money/Daily Inter Lake.

Canyon. While in pursuit of a vehicle, Schneider was hit head-on by another vehicle that was forced into oncoming traffic.

Oct. 9, 2007: Trooper David Graham of Kalispell died in a crash two miles north of Kalispell when a vehicle crossed a turn lane and hit him head-on.

April 8, 1978: Officer Michael Ren was shot and killed near Eureka. Ren was trying to arrest a man on an outstanding warrant. Ren pulled the suspect over and approached the vehicle with his gun drawn. The suspect pulled a rifle and shot Ren.

July 19, 1973: South of Kalispell, Officer Richard Hedstrom was writing a warning ticket when he was

struck and killed by a pickup. Hedstrom had been on the road less than three weeks following recruit academy.

Aug. 1, 1954: Officer James Anderson had pulled over a driver on the Bozeman Hill. A vehicle coming from the opposite direction struck Anderson.

Nov. 2, 1946: Patrolman Robert Steele was responding to a report of an armed robbery in Billings. The suspects were headed east on Highway 10. Steele and another trooper spotted the getaway car parked in a ravine off the roadway.

The troopers approached the car on the passenger's side and Steele was shot in the neck. □

# Police Week 2009



Statue at the memorial wall.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy signed a *proclamation* which designated May 15<sup>th</sup> as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week in which that date falls as "Police Week". Every year since, tens of thousands of law enforcement officers from around the world converge on Washington, D.C., to participate in a number of planned events which honor those that have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

The first official memorial service took place on May 15, 1982. On that date, approximately 125 people gathered in Senate Park to honor 91 law enforcement officers. Over the past 22 years we have honored over 3,000 law enforcement officers from around our nation. Today, the National Peace Officers' Memorial Service has become one in a series of events which includes the Candlelight Vigil, which is sponsored by the National Law Enforcement

Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) and seminars sponsored by Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS).

The Grand Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police and the Grand Lodge Auxiliary of the Fraternal Order of Police are very proud to be the official sponsor of the Memorial Service.

In 2009, "Police Week" began on May 10<sup>th</sup>, with 133 law enforcement officers being honored. The Montana Highway Patrol had the sad occasion to add another name to the memorial, that of Trooper Evan Schneider, who was killed in the line of duty while on patrol near

Columbia Falls.

We honor Troopers Robert Steele, James Anderson, Richard Hedstrom, Michael Ren, David Graham, Evan Schneider, and Michael Haynes (whose



Evan's name as inscribed on the memorial wall.



Evan's brother Jim, also a MHP trooper, making a rubbing at the wall.

name will be added to the memorial in 2010), as well as all other law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty. □



Candlelight vigil with a laser beam representing the thin blue line.

# Remembering Evan Schneider, MHP 330



Trooper Evan Schneider passed away in the line of duty on August 26, 2008, and his loss continues to be felt even today.

About Trooper Evan Schneider, Trooper Glen Barcus wrote, "There truly are not enough kind words that can be said about Evan. He was a great trooper, one whom I looked up to and admired, but he was an even better person. His comical and yet laid-back approach to life was definitely out of the norm."

Trooper Barcus sent a compilation of photos that reminded him of those traits in Evan, which included photos Evan



had taken of Interstate 90, milepost 330, just outside of Livingston, reminiscent of Evan's badge number.

Evan was a lover of all animals. Several times he would take pictures of his interaction with dogs. Trooper Barcus wrote, "Personally, I would freak out if a gigantic beast



[more](#) ►

# Montana Trooper

continued



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## Montana Trooper

*continued*

jumped on my car, but Evan rolled down the window and snapped a picture."

There was a one-vehicle crash in Somers last summer. The crash occurred in late afternoon and the DUI driver left the road and crashed into Flathead Lake with his dachshund as a passenger. The dog was not found, and the drunk and his girlfriend were devastated. On Evan's next shift, he went to the wrecking yard to see if it was somehow trapped in the car. Unable to find it, he went to the crash scene and started poking around in the boulders and calling the dog's name. Evan heard some whining and whimpering. Seconds later, the dachshund came running out from under a nearby building, shivering and frightened, yet unharmed. Evan called the owners to come pick up their pup.

Trooper Barcus also supplied several pictures of Evan at work, investigating a semi vs. car crash with Sgt. Roy Christensen just twenty days before he died. These photos are a great tribute to what Evan stood for and worked every day to accomplish.

On his way home from training, Evan happened upon a vehicle parked on the shoulder of MT 200 near Ovando in the early morning hours. He noticed the PT Cruiser had fresh damage and suspected the driver had just hit a deer. Not too excited about having to delay his drive home, Evan pulled in behind the vehicle and approached to talk with



the driver. The man was passed out, beer still between his legs. When Evan awoke the driver, the man had no idea where he was, only that he was on his way from Bozeman to Butte to visit his son. The man was facing eastbound on MT 200.

We all remember a training pamphlet we received in 2007. The cover featured a scraggly looking overweight guy with a goatee with a terrible angry pose. Evan had Trooper Rick Mehring (MHP 272) take several pictures of him imitating this pose. As was common, Evan changed all of the screen savers in the office to this picture and placed a copy of the pamphlet in question by the monitor for comparison.

One day while at break at the Back Room Restaurant in Columbia Falls, Evan left earlier than the others, having been called out. As Evan got into his car, he heard a deputy was in pursuit of a vehicle, and they were literally headed right towards him. Without moving his car, Evan removed his stop sticks and spiked the vehicle as they drove by, thus ending the pursuit. That night, he posed like a proud papa with his spent stop stick.

Evan's zest for life and his career was infectious and left a lasting impression on those who he came into contact with. As we look back, no more fitting tribute can be made. Evan, we salute you. □

