
51st Trooper dies during arrest attempt

Trooper Mike Blanton Dies in the Line of Duty

By Miles W. Turner III

"It always happens to the good ones."

The phrase almost seems like a cliché these days, but on Jan. 29, 2003, Virginia lost one of its finest troopers when Trooper II Michael Todd Blanton, Division I, Area 8, Richmond became the 51st Virginia Trooper to die in the line of duty.

Mike was attempting to arrest a suspected impaired driver when the violator drove away with Mike partially hanging out of the vehicle's open doorway. The driver, Shawn Gregory, 34, of Richmond subsequently crashed his BMW. The vehicle overturned, landing on top of Trooper Blanton. Gregory was apprehended a short time later at a nearby gas station and is facing capital murder and other charges.

Mike joined the Department on March 10, 1998 as a member of the 97th basic session at the Virginia State Police Academy. He graduated on Sept. 4, 1998. Upon graduation, Mike was assigned to Area 8, Richmond, where he spent his entire, yet all-too-brief career. He immediately excelled at his work, particularly in removing impaired drivers from our highways. Mike had already arrested 42 drunk drivers in the six-month period before his death, and he died trying to arrest number 43.

Mike was born June 5, 1973 in Richmond. As his father tells the story, Mike was in such a hurry to enter the world that he was nearly born on Interstate 64! He attended school in Henrico County, graduating from Highland Springs High School in 1991.

Along the way, Mike met Dana. As friends tell it, they were inseparable almost from the start. Dana lived in Orange, and Mike spent many an evening on the phone with her, chatting the night away. When his mother's first phone bill arrived — at \$300 — Mike smiled — and paid it.

Mike and Dana were soon married and remained inseparable. He joined the Air Force and was stationed in Colorado as a military police officer with Dana at his side again. When



Trooper Mike Blanton

he was discharged from the Air Force, Mike returned home to Henrico County where he began working for the Henrico County Sheriff's Office. Although he enjoyed his work, he yearned to be a Virginia Trooper. Mike applied to the Department and was hired as part of the 97th basic session.



A contingent of honor guards from both local and out of state agencies gathers outside the church to join in paying respect for Trooper Blanton.



Trooper Chris Clark places a rose on the hood of Trooper Mike Blanton's patrol car at the St. Paul's Baptist Church during the funeral.



Trooper Mike Blanton is carried from the church by his shift partners as the Governor, Superintendent, and other officials look on.



It was during his tenure with the sheriff's office that Mike's son, Spenser, was born. Mike was a doting father who cared deeply for his wife and son.

I first met Mike after he graduated from the state police academy and came to Area 8 for his post-academy field training. He was quiet and reserved initially, but he had those rosy cheeks that we all loved to kid him about in the radio room. As he got out on his own, everyone could see his true passion – impaired drivers. Almost as soon as he was released to work on his own, Mike began arresting citizens for driving under the influence (DUI) at an amazing pace.

As First Sergeant Lambert remarked during his eulogy of Mike, "He had a God-given ability for catching impaired drivers – something you could not teach. It was a gift."

He wasn't exaggerating. As the Senior Dispatcher on the midnight shift, I can verify that Mike kept us busy when he rotated around to midnights. It was almost a joke when he would stop by at the beginning of his shift for gas, stick his

head in the door of the room and remark, "How many tonight?" referring to the number of DUI arrests he would try to make during the shift.

While Mike loved to joke with all of us in the radio room, when he was on the road, he was all business. His voice would even drop an octave as he spoke across the radio to the dispatchers on one of his many violator stops, intoning the change from "Mike" to "Trooper Blanton." It was the norm for Mike to get at least one impaired driver off the roads every night of midnight shift, and usually it was two – or sometimes three!

Probably as important as his success in his work was his attitude. If Mike Blanton ever had a bad day, those of us that worked with him never knew it. He was always upbeat and cheerful. He almost seemed embarrassed at his arrest rate for DUI's. When his co-workers would playfully chide him about his many DUI arrests, his already rosy cheeks would turn an even deeper shade of crimson.

Mike Blanton was also one of the troopers that the dispatchers could always depend on. When there would be a short shift and no one to go get food, none of the dispatchers had to ask. Mike would call and volunteer to bring coffee or food from a local establishment. While Mike was not the only trooper to do so, he was by far the most consistent. Frankly, in retrospect, I don't know how Mike had time to do all he did. Between arresting impaired drivers, all the paperwork that goes with it, handling his calls for service, and trying to make sure that the dispatchers were taken care of, it seems to me now that he needed more than his eight-hour tour to do it. He always managed to handle the job.

Probably one of the most fitting tributes to Trooper Blanton's enforcement efforts occurred in the General Assembly the day after Mike's death. State Senator Thomas K. Norment spoke eloquently from the floor of the Senate about Blanton's enforcement activities, noting the number of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) awards Mike had received. He then moved to have the senate adjourn for that day in honor of the life's work of Trooper Michael Todd Blanton. While in and of itself this was quite an honor, it was even more so when you realize that in 2001, Senator Norment was arrested for driving under the influence – by Mike Blanton! Even those he had enforcement contact with recognized the value of his work.

When First Sergeant Lambert, who was one of Mike's supervisors, was preparing to speak at the funeral service, he pulled Trooper Blanton's personnel file. While it was filled with commendations, in the nearly six years Blanton had been with the Department, he had not had a single complaint. Blanton had not just avoided a founded complaint – he had never even had one lodged against him. This is despite the fact ➤



In May 2002 Trooper Blanton received the 2001 Outstanding Safety Achievement Award from the Virginia Trucking Association and Virginia Truck Safety Council.

that for years, he had been number one or number two in DUI arrests amongst a Division of more than 200 sworn troopers and officers.

Police officers from across Virginia and Troopers from across the nation came to mourn the loss of Trooper Blanton. Visible at the service were representatives from New York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Maryland, Tennessee, and even the Deputy Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol. Honor guards and motorcycle units literally over 100 strong were in attendance.

The church, St Paul's Baptist on Creighton Road in Hanover County, seats more than 3,000, and it was filled almost to capacity. Governor Mark Warner presented Dana with a folded Virginia flag at the funeral, and the Virginia State Police Honor Guard folded a United States flag from the casket for presentation to Dana at the gravesite.

Amazing Grace was played on the bagpipes and Taps mournfully echoed throughout the cemetery. As a last fitting tribute, a final radio roll call for Unit 971, Mike's badge, was performed at the cemetery. Badge 971 is now retired from service and will never be reissued.

I would be remiss in writing this article if I did not write about Mike's two bigger loves in his life — God and his family. Mike was a devout Christian who believed that his work was an extension of that belief. Mike frequently helped Dana at the church where she works as music director. He had been on several trips with the church to summer camps and other programs he valued as part of his service to God. Mike openly spoke of his love for Dana and Spenser, along with all of his family. His family's love for him was evidenced by the fact that there were nearly as many family members as troopers at Mike's funeral — no small feat.

Mike would frequently bring pictures of his son to show those of us who work in the radio room. Every time he spoke

**Dedicated to Unit 971
Respectfully indebted
572 Div. 5, Area 33**

The Burden of Our Badge

Darkness settles over this shadowy land.
Into the unknown we are cast,
To enforce the laws of both God and man.

Enter harm's way, that's what we do.
Answer panic's call not for I, but for you.
Alone at night while others would flee,
They ask us to confront our destiny.

With reckless abandon, we race through the night,
To answer their calls and confront your fright.

Then comes what we least expect,
A shock so quick with no time to reflect.

A silence so deadly in the still of the night.
The roll call not answered, no click of the mic.
At last they acknowledge what none want to say,
Roll call is finished and our brother passed away.

All beat their chests and make such great talk,
How this is a calling and what a fine line we walk.
But not one understands and none will convey,
Lest they stand our post to bleed blue and gray.

And on that dark street so hardened and cold,
A trooper fought his battle so brazen and bold.
Not for titles, riches, nor praise or great fame,
No. He fought for justice to end chaos' reign.

Alone in the night his lifeblood did flow.
Of what were his thoughts, we are left never to know.
His wife or his son, a last touch of their hands.

One more "I love you," or a glimpse
of his wedding band.

He paid with his life so that freedom could reign.
You slept during the night as he laid there in pain.
So while you ponder these words or bow down to pray,
Thank God for Michael Blanton and
those who wear blue and gray.

— Trooper H. Alan Chambers

of Dana, he had that certain twinkle in his eye that told of his true love for his wife.

While Mike loved being a trooper, he loved God and his family much more. It is rare to find a trooper as open in discussing his love for God and his family as was found in Mike Blanton. He is, and will be, sorely missed. □

Miles Turner is a Senior Dispatcher on the midnight shift in Division I, Richmond.

Tributes Trooper Mike Blanton

Sincere sympathy to the family, friends and fellow officers in the loss of Trooper Michael Blanton. May God give you comfort as you go through this grieving time.
— **Anonymous**

God bless the family of this fallen hero. Rest in peace, trooper.
— **Anonymous**

To our brother in blue, may you rest in peace. Your family, friends, and co-workers are in our thoughts and prayers. God Bless.

— **Officer D. Johns**
Georgia Perimeter College Police Department

REST IN PEACE FRIEND. YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN.
— **Anonymous**

THE BUFFALO OFFICERS - DEPT. OF VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICE AND I — WISH TO SEND OUR CONDOLENCES. OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE WITH TROOPER BLANTON, HIS FAMILY AND CO-WORKERS. GOD BLESS.

— **PO ERNEST G. PENN**
DEPT. OF VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICE

Whoever does not have the stomach for this fight, let him go. Give him the money to speed his departure since we wish not to die in that man's company. Whoever lives past today and comes home safely will rouse himself every year on this day, show his neighbors his scars, and tell embellished stories of all their great feats of battle. These stories will teach his son and from this day until the end of the world, we will be remembered. We few, we happy few, we band of brothers, for whoever has shed his blood with me shall be my brother, and these men afraid to go will think themselves lesser men as they hear of how we fought and died together.
— **Anonymous**

I can't believe we lost another officer in our area. We just buried a Henrico officer earlier in the month. My prayers are with the families.

— **Dave Klisz, Patrol Officer**
Hanover Sheriff's Office

Rest in peace, brother. Thoughts and prayers are with your family and co-workers.

— **State Trooper, Pennsylvania State Police**

I cannot explain in words how upset and mad this

makes me. For your loved ones and co-workers, I am more sorry than words can say that this has happened. We came on together. You went to our home State of VA and I moved and went to TN. I wished I could have been there to help you. I will never forget you or your courage. GOD SPEED. WARRIOR. You can rest now for you have done your time in Hell. See you and Mark one day so wait for me cause you know it won't be the story tellin' session unless I am there laughing with you all. Rest Brother.

— **TROOPER D OSBORNE K-9**
TENNESSEE HIGHWAY PATROL

May God Bless you and your family, it is extremely sad to see a true HERO fall. I never knew you, but I would have been glad to have known you. May God comfort your loved ones and may you serve as an angel watching over other police officers.

— **Reserve Deputy J. Hickory**
Albemarle Sheriff's Office

You gave the ultimate sacrifice. You may be gone, but you will NEVER be forgotten. We are all family in this job, sometimes we are the only family each other has. In pace requiescat, Rest in peace! Keep a watch on the rest of us as we go on shift each day. "When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life in such a way that when you die, the world will cry and you will rejoice." (American Indian Prayer) — Isaiah 40:31

— **Officer Kimberly Moses**
MTSU Campus PD, TN

And time again to step right to fill a gap in the Thin Blue Line. Matthew 5:9: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. My prayers are with the family, fellow Troopers and friends of Trooper Blanton.

— **Officer Scott D. White**
Portsmouth Virginia Police Department

You are a true hero, and will be remembered, not for how you died, but rather for how you lived. To the family and friends of this wonderful hero: When words will never be enough, may you find peace in keeping Trooper Blanton alive through memories. God bless

— **LEO Wife, NJ**

What a tragic loss for Virginia! We are losing too many good brothers and sisters in blue here in Virginia this year. You are the 3rd this month and will be sorely missed. I pray for your wife, son, co-workers and family & friends. No one can explain the

why's of these tragic events. Everyone says things happen for a reason but I can't for the life of me figure that one out.

To the family, I pray for peace in your heart, strength to get through this rough period ahead of you and that you understand how respected Mike is and that we all know he was a hero!!!

— **Romaine Cheney, Surviving Sibling**
VA State Trooper Jessica J. Cheney
EOW 01/17/1998

God bless you and your family. You are in our prayers.

— **PO Doug Eatherton, St. Louis City Police**

RIP Trooper Blanton

— **Officer Sam, Virginia Beach PD**

Such a tragic loss for this Trooper's family and his fellow law enforcement officers. May God comfort everyone affected. Just know that you are not alone. My thoughts and prayers are with all those affected. May you always be remembered as the HERO that you are. John 15:13

— **Shelly Ragsdale, surviving spouse**
Officer Alan Ragsdale, Hohenwald
Police Dept., EOW 11-27-00

Deepest sympathy and condolences to the family, friends, and co-workers of Trooper Michael T Blanton. May God give you the needed strength during these moments. God Bless Him.....

— **Patrol Officer. R. Gomez, Pincrest, Florida**

It is very sad, that the nature of his work exposed him to such peril. My sincere regards to Trooper Blanton's family. God Bless You.

— **Captain Michael Benson**
Camden P.D. Camden, AR.

TO MRS BLANTON AND FAMILY OF TROOPER MICHAEL BLANTON, I'M SO SORRY TO HEAR OF YOUR LOSS, I ALSO LOST SOMEONE VERY SPECIAL TO ME IN THE LINE OF DUTY. I THINK BACK TO THE DAY THAT I HEARD THAT HE WAS SHOT AND I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY ARE GOING THRU. MY FIANCEE AND YOUR HUSBAND ARE IN THE HANDS OF THE LORD AND WILL KEEP AN EYE ON YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

HE IS YOUR LIGHT, TO LIGHT YOUR WAY TO CHEER YOU UP FROM DAY TO DAY. NO MATTER WHAT HE IS HERE FOR YOU TO CHEER YOU UP WHEN YOU ARE BLUE. DO NOT FRET ►

WHEN TIMES GET TOUGH IF THINGS LOOK DOWN OR KIND OF ROUGH JUST REMEMBER, HE'S ALWAYS HERE, IN YOUR HEART, CLOSE AND NEAR.

THERE IS A CHRISTIAN SONG BY MERCY ME "I CAN ONLY IMAGINE" THAT I THINK YOU WILL ENJOY. MICHAEL AND MY FIANCEE NO LONGER HAVE TO IMAGINE, THEY ARE WITH THE LORD NOW....

— **FIANCEE OF A FALLEN HERO—TX**

To the family of Trooper Blanton, the brother officers with the Chesterfield Police Dept would like to say our thoughts and prayers are with you. As an officer who knew Tpr. Blanton, the loss is felt deeply. God bless and God speed Tpr. Blanton, your watch is over.

— **Off SW Marree U-366
Chesterfield Police Dept**

Rest in peace, Trooper Blanton. You, your family and fellow Troopers are in our thoughts and prayers. You were sadly and tragically lost, but you live on in your young son and he will always remember you as a hero as will all of us. God Bless. A brother in blue

— **Ptlm, CPD, NY**

Rest easy, Troop. Your days of fighting are over. We will continue for you. May God bless your family and co-workers.

— **Deputy M. Moore
Warren County S.O. (OH)**

My thoughts and prayers go out to the wife, family, friends, co-workers and especially to the young son of this true hero. May his son know now and forever what a true hero his dad was. Rest in peace now, Trooper Blanton, and continue your watch from above, and thank you for the job you did on earth.

— **Deb Azure
Mother of Deputy Renee Azure, EOW 08/06/2002**

May God Bless Dana and Spencer. Nothing more need be said except we grieve for the loss of a brother and fallen comrade. But our loss pales in comparison to the loss of a husband, to the loss of a father. May comfort in some way find Michael's family, his friends, and all those whom his life touched. While our hearts swell with anger over yet another senseless tragedy, let us fondly remember Michael and find comfort where we can. God speed, Michael..... "The wicked flee where no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion....."

— **Trooper J.P. Flanary
Virginia State Police**

Every night we burn the blue light, the blue light keeps you and others who paid the price in our sight.

May God bless you and your family and may you rest in peace. What happened to you is such a tragedy, and there are no words that can explain the tremendous loss.

— **Anonymous**

We mourn the loss of a great husband, father, public servant and true friend. Michael touched many lives in ways no one will ever know. I miss you, brother.

— **Lt Todd Talbott
United States Air Force**

The prayers and sympathy of my family go out to Michael, his family, friends, and co-workers at this most difficult time. Find comfort in one another.

— **Ptl. P.K. Harding
Binghamton (NY) P.D.**

May your love continue to burn in the heart of your spouse and your light continue to shine from the heart of your child. Rest in peace, my unknown friend. God bless your soul.

— **Trooper 1/C K.B. Duncan
Maryland State Police**

OUR HEARTS AND PRAYERS ARE WITH YOUR FAMILY... REST IN PEACE... WE HAVE THE WATCH.

— **SPECIAL AGENT
SOUTH CAROLINA LAW
ENFORCEMENT DIVISION (SLED)**

Trooper Blanton family and friends our hearts and prayers go out to you. God Bless you

— **Terry Miyares, surviving spouse
Officer Emilio F. Miyares, Hialeah PD, FL,
EOW 11/6/86**

Every night we burn the blue light, the blue light keeps you and others who paid the price in our sight.

One more police officer died today, freedom comes at such a great price. While we share with your department the mourning of tragic passing of our brother in uniform, we are reminded that each act of courage -large or small- is not what makes us Heroes, but makes us all Americans.

With every passing of a fallen Officer we grow ever stronger with dedication to serve. Thank you for your example of our fiber. For we don't know how to say goodbye, so we will see you in another day. As we look to the stars at night, we see the reflection of your badge so bright.

We know that God has a special place for the peacekeepers. We vow to never forget your footsteps here on earth. Every night we burn the blue light, the blue light keeps you and others who paid the price in our sight.

God Bless your family & friends

— **RJF CPD
Sgt. R. Franchino, Clarkstown Police**

GOD BLESS TROOPER BLANTON'S FAMILY, FRIENDS AND CO-WORKERS. OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHIES. IT SADDENS ME TO KNOW THE LAST THREE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS LISTED ON THE OFFICER DOWN MEMORIAL PAGE WERE KILLED DUE TO ALCOHOL OR DRUGS. TROOPER BLANTON, MAY YOU REST IN PEACE. A HERO IS NEVER FORGOTTEN. GOD BLESS.

— **CHIEF RONNIE WATFORD-RETIRED
JEFFERSON POLICE DEPT,S.C.**

God Bless You Brother

— **Ofc. Scott Sparks
Chesterfield Co Police, Va**

GONE BUT NEVER FORGOTTEN! For now we have the watch that you so bravely gave your life for. Honor and defend it we will, for now we have an angel to always guide us. Rest in peace our brother. YOU SHALL FOREVER BE MISSED.

To Michael's family, my deepest sympathy and most heartfelt prayers are with you. Take strength from our heavenly Father, the VSP, and all your family in blue from all over the country for we are with you.

— **Son of Ret. VSP MSTR TPR James E. Porter
(DIV. 4 Wytheville)
Reserve Deputy, Greenville County Sheriff's Office
Greenville , S.C.**

I worked with Mike Blanton when he was in the US Air Force stationed at Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, home of NORAD in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He was a super AF troops and a super security policeman. He used his military training well and went on to bigger and better things in civilian law enforcement. We are proud of him. This is extremely tragic and sad news. Our deepest sympathy to his entire family. Respectfully,

— **D.L. Raimondi
Chief Master Sgt, Retired, USAF**

Rest in peace, brother. Thank you for your service. Our thoughts and prayers go out to your family and friends. — **Officer, Prince William County PD**

I'm very sorry to hear of the loss of a husband and a father. My prayers are with you, your son, and all the family and may God bless you all through these horrible times. — **Patrolman Darrell Jones Lexington Police Lexington, KY**

First to say that my thoughts and prayers are with Michael's family, and especially with his wife, Dana, and his precious child, Spenser. Michael was the image of professionalism, had the heart of gold and was a true friend. He touched my life as well as my husband's with that big heart of his. I can't think of anything else to say but that he will truly be missed here on earth, but I do take comfort in knowing he will be watching us from up above. We love you, Mike... — **Janet Talbott USAF Security Police Spouse**

Rest in Peace, Brother... You will never be forgotten. — **Inv. G. C. Wall Norfolk Police**

The loss of Trooper Blanton is felt by all men and women who wear a uniform and serve their fellow man. Our tears and prayers are with the family and friends. No words can remove the pain and there is no explanation for this loss. The question of why will never be answered. But take comfort in our Lord Jesus Christ. He will provide. Matt 5:9 — **surviving father**

OHP Trp C. Van Krevelen J952 , EOW 11-28-02 Sgt. R. Van Krevelen (ret), Enid Police, Enid Okla

Sincere sympathy goes out to the family, friends, and other co-workers of Trooper Blanton. You all will be included in my prayers and thoughts. — **Trooper C.E. Johnson Jr. Virginia State Police**

May you rest in peace. Sincerely, Your Brother in Blue!!! — **Anonymous**

Another one of our hero's lives is taken too soon. My deepest sympathy to the family, friends and co-workers of Trooper Blanton. May the Lord give you strength and bless each of you during this time. Rest in peace, for your watch here is over. Walk in heaven's beat and guide us all to protect and serve others safely. — **US Ranger Catroppa National Park Service Kennesaw GA**

To honor the memory of Trooper Blanton, and the many who have gone before him, we must carry on.

The thin blue line is thinner today, but its mystery is that it will never disappear. As long as there are men and women willing to pin the badge on everyday and walk through the "valley of the shadow of death", the thin blue line survives! As long as there are those among us willing to be the difference between good and evil, between right and wrong, the thin blue line, the great equalizer, continues through our nation wrapping itself around the world! We police officers are a resilient gang...we will carry on the mission that we have chosen. We must! To honor the memory of Trooper Blanton, and the many who have gone before him, we must carry on. To the family of Trooper Blanton: My words will never fill your void...ever...I will not even try. My prayers, and the nation's, are with you all. To the many other Troopers of the Virginia State Police: Dig down deep, and search for the fortitude and the courage to do what you have to do. Let the thin blue line envelope you. Lean on each other. Remember Michael...EVERYDAY, and never forget his family! Honor him by honoring them every chance you get.

GRIEF IS AN HONOR

"Accumulated grief and sorrow, no longer to be held at bay, have swarmed up and blown the hinges off the gate. Grief and sorrow have flattened me.

After the gate flew open, I learned the most important lessons of my life. I learned that grief is precisely equivalent to love, and the terrible grief felt after the loss of a person one has loved deeply is a necessary consequence of that love and represents its survival in another form. However bitterly, grief is an honor. I learned that grief universally saturates and enriches our world, for sooner or later loss of an almost unimaginable order transforms everyone. Parents die, brothers and sisters die, even children die, and these deaths create irreparable wounds that shrink over time but never heal. On all sides, tears lie just beneath the surface. The emotion that gives rise to those tears is a connective tissue extending far, far down into our common humanity and our individual beings,

and in those depths it becomes indistinguishable from joy."

— **Lt. T.D. Barge East Point Police, E. Point, Ga.**

I was shocked this morning to hear the tragic news of Trooper Blanton's death. This is the second law enforcement officer to die in the line of duty, in this county, this month. I didn't personally know Trooper Blanton, but I do recall seeing him from time to time in the Henrico County Court House. You will be surely missed by your family, friends, and fellow law enforcement officers. Rest in Peace, Brother!

— **DEW, Henrico County Division of Police**

My fiancé, Dennis McElderry, was the first law enforcement casualty of 2003. Having gone through the pain of losing Dennis I can truly understand and feel the pain that Trooper Blanton's family, friends, and co-workers must be feeling. I wish I could give you a few words of wisdom to help you through this tough time, but there isn't anything I can really say or do to make the situation better.

Please accept my condolences on behalf of the McElderry family and remember that Michael is part of huge law enforcement family. If you ever need anything, any number of them will be there for you (as I've quickly found out!) Michael was well respected and well loved. Thank you for a job well done and for helping to make this world a safer place for us all. Please take care of my fiancé, Dennis.

Peace, Love, Luck, and Happiness!

— **Jocelyne Brar Dennis McElderry's fiancée (EOW 01/03/03)**

My sincere condolences are extended to Trooper Blanton's family, friends, co-workers and the Virginia State Police! — **Officer Steve Redding Columbus, Ohio Division of Police**

Thank you for your service, dedication and sacrifice, Trooper Blanton. The oath you took to uphold law and order and protect the citizens in your community has earned you respect in the highest degree. You will be missed by a nation of grateful citizens and Law Enforcement Officers. May you rest in peace.

To the family of Officer Blanton: Thank you for the support you gave him while he did his work. He now has a new beat to patrol, protecting us just as he did while on earth. Be comforted in knowing that he is with God, watching over you in every step you take. May God bless you all.

— **Travis Eyestone- Security Officer Mercy Hospital Security**

So sorry, Virginia. Your state has had more than its share of heartache lately. Am especially saddened at the nature of Trooper Blanton's death, although no death is easy. It does make me feel a little better to know someone was apprehended, but it won't bring Trooper Blanton back. From one coast of America to the other, we are sharing in your sorrow and so disappointed that once again families have to deal with the loss of a loved one. To all those who are deeply touched by this tragic event, I extend my sympathy and ask that our merciful and compassionate Heavenly Father will be near to you as you go thru your long grieving process. It's unbearable without Him. God bless you!

— **Lynn Kole**, Washington State

I cannot begin to express the sadness over this loss and the tragic nature in which Trooper Blanton gave the ultimate sacrifice. I followed the story from start to finish and shed many tears. God be with Trooper Blanton's wife, young son, the rest of his family & friends and also his "extended" law enforcement family. I grieve for you all.

— **M. Claytor, Dispatcher**
Albemarle/Charlottesville PD

I am so sorry to hear of your loss, I will pray for God's comfort and peace at this time.

— **Surviving Sister of OK Trooper**
Chris Van Kreelen J-952, E.O.W. 11/28/2002
Kelly Van Krevelen
Communications Division EPD, Enid OK

We are deeply saddened by the news of the death of Trooper Michael Blanton. Mine and my family's condolences go to his family, friends and colleagues who are in our hearts and in our minds at this time. Sadly, those who remain must shuffle together to close the gap in the Thin Blue Line, caused by his passing. May this Hero never be forgotten.

— **J. Ryk "Bristle" Traeger Snr.**
Senior Constable (Rtd)
South Australia Police (36 years)
Member of Offduty, TopCops
Vietnam Vet and Proud of it.
— **Senior Constable J.R.TRAEGER Rtd**
South Australia Police

ONE MORE OFFICER TAKEN FROM US BY A DRUNK DRIVER. RIP AND I WILL CONTINUE TO DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER AS A POLICE OFFICER TO STOP DUI DRIVERS LIKE YOUR KILLER!
— **POLICE OFFICER JIM GILBERT**
COLUMBUS OHIO DIV OF POLICE

My thoughts are with Trooper Blanton's wife and young son at this time of grief. Words cannot help you through this time, but always know that you are not alone. Your husband, father is now keeping watch from above.

— **Lori Brown**
Aunt of Deputy Renee Azure EOW 8/06/02

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the friends and family. And we are sorry for their loss and our loss.

— **Deputy T. Rudolph #2160, Lcso**

I am always saddened to hear of a Law Officers passing, my prayers go out to the family, friends, and fellow officers of Trooper Michael T Blanton during this delicate time.

God Bless your soul, dear Brother...

— **Officer Glenn McGloughlin**
King County Jail

God bless you and your family, Midnight Roller. I can't believe we have lost another brother this month. God speed, Midnight Roller. You will be missed.

— **Midnight Roller**
Hanover County Sheriffs Office. Va

Michael will be remembered as a consummate professional. His calm demeanor and resolute determination enabled him to be successful as a trooper and in life. May his family take comfort in knowing that he will not be forgotten.

— **Special Agent T.D. Kanode**
Virginia State Police

My deepest sympathies to the family, friend, and co-workers of Trooper Blanton. May you rest in peace now that your tour is done here on earth. You are with God now. Thank you for the service that you gave to your community and this country. You will not be forgotten.

— **Ofc. Darcy Meade**
Kosciusko Co. Sheriff's Office

Trooper Blanton,

My deepest sorrow over this tragedy. May you, your family and law enforcement family be wrapped in the LORD's Comfort and Grace.

— **Anonymous**

To the family, friends and co-workers of Trooper Blanton. .. know that we all share your grief and pain with you. May God bless and comfort you during the difficult times ahead.

— **Jamie Johnson, surviving sister of**
Officer Jon Cook
San Francisco Police Dept.

My sincere sympathy to your family, friends and fellow Troopers. You're a hero to all of us wearing the uniform. Thanks for protecting the highways of Virginia. RIP, my brother.

— **Sgt. Louis J. Torche**
United States Park Police

I am just starting my career with the Virginia State Police, and I can only hope that I can follow the footsteps of Trooper Blanton. My thoughts and prayers are with the Blanton family.

— **Trooper Trainee Brown**
Virginia State Police

To the family, friends, and co-workers of Trooper Blanton. May God comfort you while you deal with the loss of Trooper Blanton. Know that Trooper Blanton was a part of the largest family in the world, law-enforcement, and we are mourning his loss with you. Rest in peace, brother.

— **Officer and Mrs. Mike Davidson**
Bloomfield, Iowa Police Dept.

My thoughts and prayer's go out to Trooper Blanton and his family and co-workers. STAY STRONG !!!!! REST IN PEACE, BROTHER BLANTON, AND GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

— **Sgt. K. E. Bish Jr.**
VA. STATE UNIVERSITY POLICE

Thank you for your service. Rest in peace, blue angel.

— **S. Yates, concerned citizen**

Our deepest sympathy to Trooper Blanton, his family, and friends.

— **S.R.Yeamon**
Danville, VA PD

I'm deeply saddened to hear of Trooper Blanton's death. Thank you for protecting the rest of us from the ignorant drunk drivers who threaten us as we try to live our lives the best we can, like you must have. Thanks for fighting the good fight, I hope that I am given the honor of serving the way that you did. I'll pray for his family and fellow troopers.

— **Pat, Police Explorer, Maryland**

I am so sorry for this horrible loss. I pray God's comfort over Trooper Blanton's family, friends, and law enforcement family he leaves behind. I'm no relation to Trooper Blanton, but it struck a chord in me as Blanton is my maiden name and my husband is a police officer. Even from so far away, it hurts. You will always be remembered as a hero.

— **Cheri (Blanton) Chavers**
Officer's Wife, Anchorage (Alaska) P.D.

Your Virginia State Trooper Magazine

U-971, you will be missed by all as we continue in your mission to protect this fine Commonwealth. To your family, my prayers are with them. They will never be alone for they will continue to be a part of this fine family of blue and gray. A special thanks to you Mike as you taught me a lot about DUI enforcement which I use every day I work. You knew your stuff and I am thankful for you help...you'll never be forgotten when I make a DUI arrest!!!

God bless you, my fallen brother, for Blue & Gray will always be a part of you!!!

— **Tpr. S. R. Mittendorf , U - 1252 Trooper, Virginia State Police**

Mike was a friend who I had lost contact with over the years. I remember Mike as a devoted husband, good friend, and one of the few people who found my jokes funny. I will always have fond memories of Mike. I never had the pleasure of meeting his son, Spenser, however I'm sure a little of Mike lives on through him. To Dana, I pray for peace in your heart. God bless you and your son.

— **Lt Dan Dennis, Colorado Dept. of Corrections**

I pray for God's peace and blessings upon Trooper Blanton's wife, child, family, friends and co-workers. You will never be left alone. Your law enforcement family will always be with you. My son was also 6 when my husband was killed. We also have a daughter. They are what keeps me going and helps me through this hard time. Hold on to your child and God and you will survive. There are many of us out here for you! Never forget that! Psalm 55:22

— **Denise Nichols, surviving spouse
A 'Bama State Trooper Brian Nichols
eow 2/17/2002**

It takes a special kind of person to lay down their life for others. Trooper Blanton gave his life to make Virginia and the world safer place. May God bless the family, friends and co-workers of Trooper Blanton. My prayers are with you all.

— **Trooper Jason W. Ginn
Mississippi Highway Patrol**

Want to express my sympathies to the Virginia State Police and to the friends and family of Trooper Blanton. May he rest in peace. We have the watch now.

— **Inv. Michael Walker
Tallahassee Police Department**

Because of his commitment to duty and his unwavering determination to remove those self-centered, uncaring, DUI drivers off the roadway, he has made

Your Virginia State Trooper Magazine

Your law enforcement family will always be with you.

the supreme sacrifice of his life. His life was stolen from him, his family and friends by the hands of one of those who he was attempting to remove from the roadways before they hurt someone else. I pray justice will be swift and just.

Our prayers and thoughts will be with you, and we will consider it an honor to be there Saturday to pay our respects to a fallen warrior and brother in blue.

May God bless you all.

— **Corporal, Norfolk Police Dept. Traffic Unit**

Mike,

There are no words to express our grief. You are a true hero. God Bless you and your family.

— **Your fellow road dogs in Fairfax.
7th Division Trooper, Va State Police**

Please forward my deepest sympathy to the family of Trooper Blanton. There are not enough of us to go around as it is and the loss of one strikes at the very core of Police everywhere. Please extend my condolences to all those who work with him. Losing a workmate is as bad as losing family

— **Senior Sergeant Pieter Strik
New South Wales Police - Australia**

I am so sorry to hear about Michael's death. Being a member for 25 years, I know the love we have for our profession and I know Michael was a well-respected member of your service. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and the police family in Virginia. God Bless

— **Sgt. Rocky Maze
Edmonton Police Service.
Edmonton . Alberta . Canada**

I only knew Trooper Blanton from occasionally backing him on traffic stops and from court. From the little I knew of him, it was apparent that he was a dedicated professional. His co-workers have every reason to be proud of him. I pray for his wife and young son. It saddens me even more to hear how much of a devoted husband and father he was. God bless.

— **Officer J L Cable
Henrico County Division of Police**

To the family of Trooper Blanton, our thoughts and

prayers are with your family in these tough times.

— **Cpl James Wright, Quantico Military Police**

God speed to your next assignment on heaven's streets. May God grant a swift closure and long lasting peace to your family. Thank you for your service and devotion to duty. You have done well.

— **Concerned Military Member, USAF**

MY THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE WITH YOUR FAMILY. I BELIEVE GOD HAS A PLAN FOR EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US. YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR PLAN HERE AND ARE NOW REWARDED WITH THE AWESOMENESS OF HEAVEN. GOD WILL WATCH OVER YOUR WIFE AND SON. WE CAN ALL REJOICE IN THE FACT THAT YOU WILL ALL BE REUNITED SOME DAY. GOD BLESS EVERY LEO!

— **Former Officer, Clearwater (FL)**

Thank you for your service, sir...You will never be forgotten. You are one of the people that keeps this world in order and, for that, I respect you. We have lost a great guy...one that can never be replaced. My prayers are with the family of Trooper Blanton...God speed sir.

— **Andi-Criminal Justice Student**

You cannot be replaced and will not be forgotten. God bless you and your family.

— **Trooper R. T. Clements, VSP**

Dear Trooper Blanton, You are a true hero - you served your country well, brother. God speed. Our prayers will be with you, your family, and your department. Your brothers and sisters will continue your fight.

— **Steve Guibord, Naples Police
Inv. Jackie Guibord, Provo Police - SISB
— Chief Steven C. Guibord
Naples Police, Utah**

Our prayers and thoughts go out to the family and friends of Trooper Blanton. God be with you on this day of sadness, give them strength. Being a family member of a lot of agencies in this state, no matter a Trooper, a Deputy, a City Police officer, God all made you special. We will keep that blue light burning for you to remember and never forget . You are one of our Guardian Angels now watching over.

— **Melody Holbert & Shannon
wife of a WVSP Trooper**

This is a terrible loss to our society. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family.

To Trooper Michael Todd Blanton's family, may God bless you and be with you during this time. Mike, rest in peace, my friend.

— **Officer Michael D. Bates**
Mount Weather Police (FEMA)

Rest in Peace, Brother.

— **Tpr. Timothy S Conklin**
New York State Police

To the Family, Friends, and extended State Police Family,

No words can express the deep heartfelt grief we feel in the loss of a brother. As a former Air Force Security policeman and Law Enforcement officer in the Commonwealth, I grieve with all. The senseless loss of a Trooper is unforgivable. Rest assured that the Almighty has reserved a great place for Trooper Blanton in his great service. No greater love for man than a man lay his life in defense and protection of others. God bless all who knew Trooper Blanton and all who feel for his family friends and co-workers. GOD BLESS.

H.A. Silverman, Brother in uniform to Frankie Betterton, EOW 5-17-2001

— **Deputy Sheriff H.A. Silverman**
Pittsylvania County Sheriff's Office

Rest in peace, brother. Our thoughts and prayers are with your family and fellow Virginia State Troopers.

— **State Trooper, Michigan State Police**

...there are no words to express what should be an appropriate message of regret for Trooper Blanton, classmate of my son, Trooper John Bishop, 858, rest in peace...there's a special place for you...

— **Chief Herman Bishop (retired)**
Adams, Massachusetts Police Department

TO A FORMER SCHOOL MEMBER, CO-WORKER AND FALLEN BROTHER, YOU WILL BE MISSED BY MANY. TO TROOPER BLANTON, YOU'RE 10-7, IN GOD'S HANDS.

— **DEPUTY, HENRICO SHERIFFS OFFICE**

Rest in Peace, Brother. Tears of Sorrow and Honor flow. You are with God and your Family Now and Forever.

— **State Trooper**
New Jersey State Police

Mike, I only met you a short time ago when you stopped to check on me on a traffic stop. We talked several times in passing or while sitting in court. You were very professional in what you did. You seemed

to enjoy your job to the fullest. I am glad to hear that you were close to God in your family and work life. May God bring peace and understanding to your family during this tragic event. We just lost a brother of ours a couple weeks ago. May you and Andre Booker look over the rest of us and help to keep us safe. God Bless you and your family.

— **Officer A.J. Gordon**
Henrico Division of Police, VA

MAY YOU REST IN PEACE, MY BROTHER. YOUR TOUR OF DUTY IS NOW OVER HERE. MAY GOD BE WITH YOUR FAMILY, CO-WORKERS, AND FRIENDS. I AM AT A LOSS FOR WORDS AND FEEL THE PAIN IN MY HEART FOR YOU AND YOURS. GOD HAS SENT FOR YOU AND NOW YOU CAN WATCH OVER US.

— **SPO RE BRIGGS SR**
NORFOLK PD MOTOR UNIT

God bless the family of Trooper Michael Todd Blanton and the Virginia State Police for their loss. Tpr. Blanton will always be remembered and honored as a hero....Rest in heaven, my fellow brother....

— **Trooper, New Jersey State Police**

May God continue to Bless your Family and Friends, brother. Thank you for a job well done.

— **dsv, NPD**

To the Blanton family, our prayers and thoughts are with you. To a former co-worker and brother, rest in peace. I knew you briefly but will remember you always. God bless you and all who have given their lives to protect others.

— **PtIm. M. J. Gray, Chesterfield Police Dept.**

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." Proverbs 3:5-6 While we cannot fathom what would possess someone to act so cowardly, we can be sure of one thing, Trooper Blanton is on a Heavenly patrol with all the other LEO's who have served with character and bravery. Mrs. Blanton, you are surrounded by many who share your anguish and pain, lean on them...Trooper Blanton, tell Billy (EOW 11-13-01) we miss him every day.

— **Ky Peace officer**
Isaiah 40:31

Words cannot express the grief that I feel for Dana and the rest of the family. Dana- please know that I will ALWAYS be here for you. I love you very

much. You will be with Michael again one day. Love, Ginger

— **Ginger Widmyer Shifflett**

I last saw Michael, Dana, and little Spenser at Dana's 10-year high school reunion this September. Dana and Michael had been married for nearly 10 years and all could see that during that decade they had grown together and developed into two amazing people. They had embraced their roles as husband and wife, father and mother. They were two wonderful people who served God, country, community, and family. Michael made such a positive impact on the world. He won't be forgotten.

— **Anonymous**

I am so sorry for your loss. May Trooper Blanton rest in peace.

— **Sami Thomson**
Surviving niece of Officer Jon Cook
San Francisco Police Department

Michael, I have only known you for two years although it seems as if I have know you forever! I will never forget the fun times that you, Dana, LeAnn and I had. Trooper Blanton, Thank you for making the streets safer for all of our families, you will be greatly missed! When it is my time to leave this world I pray that I would have been half the man you were!! May Saint Michael watch over you now!

— **Scott Mitchell**
AT&T Broadband Investigative Ops.

MY HEART GOES OUT TO YOUR FAMILY. IT SAD-DENS ME WHEN I HEAR ABOUT THE LOSS OF ANOTHER BROTHER. MAY GOD EASE YOUR FAMILY'S PAIN, YOUR MEMORY WILL ALWAYS LIVE IN THE HEARTS OF YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS BEHIND THE BADGE.

— **TROOPER JAMES SELLS**
TENNESSEE HIGHWAY PATROL

The Ingham County Sheriff's Office sends its sincere condolences to the family of Trooper Michael Blanton and to our brother and sister officers at VSP. Rest easy, Brother. Your work is done here.

— **Deputy K.J. Bowden**
Ingham County Sheriffs Office

Thank you, Trooper Blanton, for your sacrifice to our cause. You were an outstanding officer and your efforts will not be forgotten. Rest in peace, brother.

— **Deputy J. W. Houston**
York County Sheriff's Office, Va

My thoughts are with you and your family, Todd.

Go in Peace

Matt
36th SPS Bitburg Air Base, Germany
Gearhart OR. PD
— **Officer Matt Sivley,**
Gearhart Police, Oregon

To the family and co-workers of Michael Todd Blanton - Be strong and remember that Michael will watch over us.

" . . . And when we lay down our night sticks, enroll us in your Heavenly Force, where we will be as proud to guard the throne of God as we have been to guard the city of men."

— **Trooper Kevin F. McMahon**
New York State Police

To the Family and Partners of Trooper Blanton,

You are in my prayers this night! There is no explanation to the senseless loss of Michael, but know that he died doing what he loved and in that he kept us all safe. Be proud of him and know that he watches over you.

— **A Brother In Blue, US Park Police**

Our hearts and prayers go out to the Blanton family and the Virginia State Police.

— **Telecommunications**
Summerville Police Department

God bless you and keep you. Please watch over those of us who still are here doing the job. Peace.

— **Trooper Christopher Bauer**
Kansas Highway Patrol

The men and women of the Illinois State Police offer our condolences to the family of Trooper Blanton and the Virginia State Police.

— **Illinois State Police**

Our hearts go out to your family in this time of need. You were taken way too early. You made the ultimate sacrifice protecting those here in Virginia. The beat you now patrol has no violence. You are a true hero.

— **Sergeant**
Fauquier County Sheriff's Office, VA

My heart goes out to you, Dana and Spenser. I enjoyed seeing you all at the reunion, and Josh and I were hoping to spend time with you and Michael again. My constant thoughts and prayers are with you. Love, Sharon

— **Sharon Chewing**

I worked with Michael while he was stationed at

**You will be remembered
as a strong, fair, family
loving man who
respected God and all
his creations. For this, I
am blessed to have
known you.**

Cheyenne Mtn. All he could ever talk about was going home and becoming a trooper. He was an outstanding troop while in the military, and I am sure he exceeded all expectation as a trooper. My prayers are with Dana, Spenser and all his family. A true loss.

— **Richard D. Hayward, TSgt, USAF**
USAF Security Forces

Dana,

I just figured out that Tpr. Blanton was your husband. I remember you from when I was at S&S (H' Burg). I am so sorry for your loss. You and your son are in my thoughts and prayers. God bless you and your family. May the person responsible be brought justice in a most speedy manner.

Jamie — **James C McCormick Jr . (Jamie)**
Former Police Officer

Take comfort in knowing we all are one family. Our department and its members are there for you at all times.

— **Gresham Police Benevolent Group**

I am greatly moved by the sacrifice of this young trooper. My deepest sympathy to his family, and brothers and sisters of the Virginia State Troopers. May God continue to bless you all, in Christ's name

Sic Semper Tyrannis
— **former member, Richmond Virginia Police**

Saint Michael, heaven's glorious commissioner of police, who once so neatly and successfully cleared God's premises of all its undesirables, look with kindly and professional eyes on your earthly force. Give us cool heads, stout hearts, and uncanny flair for investigation and wise judgment.

Make us the terror of burglars, the friend of children and law-abiding citizens, kind to strangers, polite to bores, strict with law-breakers and impervious to temptations.

You know, Saint Michael, from your own experiences with the devil, that the police officer's lot on earth is not always a happy one; but your sense of duty that so pleased God, your hard knocks that so surprised the devil, and your angelic self-control give us inspiration.

And when we lay down our nightsticks, enroll us in your heavenly force, where we will be as proud to guard the throne of God as we have been to guard the city of all the people. Amen.

— **Sgt Snake**
East Point Police Department, Ga

Rest in peace, May God bless you and your family in this time.

— **Bryan Carlson PTLM**
Berlin Borough Police, PA

Michael, our visits were way too short and far too infrequent. I only wish the time could be caught up. Yet, life continues.

I'm sure by now the world knows what values you upheld as a Virginia State Trooper, they're the characteristics that made me especially proud to call you my cousin. For those who did not know you, they may ask any of your brothers at the Virginia State Police or adjacent agencies. And once informed of your stature, they will all be a step ahead in the good fight if they embody just one of your values of excellence.

You will be remembered as a strong, fair, family loving man who respected God and all his creations. For this, I am blessed to have known you. In this, I also pray all of your family at home there in Virginia can take comfort in that you are now with our Lord Almighty.

And to those who carry on your service with diligence, pride, and professionalism, our indebted gratitude! Thank you for being there at all times, at all costs, and at all risks. May Michael's efforts continue to shine through your daily duties and detail. Let us not forget his attention to his intentions.

Dana, God continue to Bless and keep you and Spenser. Lynn and Mark, be comforted by your knowledge Michael is safely "Home." To Michael's fellow Troopers: God Speed and all the Lord's blessings for your safety as you continue your work and cope with your losses.

— **TODD TOMLIN , RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA**

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