GUNS AND GRIT: THE WOMEN OF THE OKLAHOMA HIGHWAY PATROL

A dissertation submitted to the Caspersen School of Graduate Studies

Drew University in partial fulfillment of

The requirements for the degree,

Doctor of Letters

Charity Nicole Robertson

Drew University

Madison, New Jersey

May 2020

Table of Contents

Dedication

This project is dedicated to my parents, Mike and Brenda Robertson, who have been my most enduring and vocal supporters since the day I came into the world and who believed in me when I could no longer believe in myself. In honor of two of the most extraordinary men I have ever known and who I had the honor of calling family: James Alfred Fugate (EOW 03-14-2017) and Det. Sgt. Eddy Houchins (EOW 03-15-2018). To all men and women who, whether by profession or passion, have dedicated their lives to the serving others.

ABSTRACT

Guns and Grit: The Women of the

Oklahoma Highway Patrol

Doctor of Letters Dissertation by

Charity Nicole Robertson

The Caspersen School of Graduate Studies

Drew University May 2020

The Oklahoma Highway Patrol was founded in 1937 by Governor E.W. Marland to address traffic safety and illegal activity. Prior to 1937, no state policing agency existed and all law enforcement opportunities ended at the county line. An increase in vehicle traffic, thanks to Ford's assembly line and the affordability of vehicles, resulted in an increase in traffic collisions and the need for standardized laws and enforcement. With the mobility afforded by the automobile, criminal activity also increased. A policing agency with statewide jurisdiction, enforcing a set of uniform traffic laws was the answer to these growing problems.

The Oklahoma Highway Patrol began assisting motorists and enforcing motor vehicle laws in the summer of 1937 and has continued doing so, even as the mission of the agency has expanded into drug interdiction, human trafficking and other criminal activities. The Oklahoma Highway Patrol maintained height and weight requirements for potential patrolmen well into the 1960s, but with the advent of federal requirements such

as the Equal Opportunity Act and the National Highway Safety Act, those requirements were negated, opening the door for women to apply.

Prior to federal acts addressing discrimination based on gender, many police agencies in the United States did not have women patrol officers. Women in law enforcement were often limited to jail matron duties, secretarial work, and as enforcers of the moral standards of the day. They were seldom issued uniforms, cruisers, or firearms, and did not receive the same training as the men in their agencies. However, this changed in the 1970s when federal assistance for police agencies was contingent on adherence to new equal opportunity legislation.

The first women went on patrol as Oklahoma State Troopers in 1978. Held to the same strict and grueling standard as the men who applied, the women of OHP are demonstrate a dedication to their calling and determination, which sets them apart as the elite among law enforcement. The following pages contain some of their individual stories in an effort to preserve the history and contributions of these extraordinary women.

Chapter One: Introduction

The state name "Oklahoma," comes from two Choctaw words, which together mean "red people" ("Oklahoma"). The land and its people live up to this definition, born from the hard, red clay that makes up the soil, as well as the blood and tears integral to its founding. Oklahoma was the 46th state to join the Union, but it was known prior to statehood simply as Indian Territory. Indian Territory was originally inhabited by the Great Plains tribes; however, the Indian Removal Acts resulted in the relocation of vast numbers of indigenous peoples to Oklahoma from other parts of the country. This forced relocation resulted in what the Cherokee tribes of Florida and Georgia would call "The Trail of Tears" (Drexler). Indian Territory became a haven for outlaws and fugitives during the Civil War and after, because the tribal justice system was the only form of government in place in the territory at the time, and tribal justice did not apply to white citizens (Burton 52).

Because of this, any crimes committed in Indian Territory or by fugitives escaping to Indian Territory had to be handled by the federal justice system under the auspices of the U.S. Marshals. It would be legendary figures such as Deputy U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves, one of the first African-American U.S. Marshals and a man knowledgeable about both Indian Territory geography and various native-American languages, who would be responsible for enforcing the law (Burton 52).

After the Civil War and during the 1880s, the federal government began moving Native Americans to reservations and giving away land grants to white settlers. The year 1889 saw the first of many land runs in which pioneers gathered

behind a line guarded by cavalry and waited for cannon to go off so that they could run and stake their claims on various tracts of land. Farming and ranching were the primary industry until the discovery of "black gold," which launched the state into an economic boom. As the population of the state increased, with most of the newcomers dreaming of striking it rich, so too did the crime rate. Add to this the affordability of the Model T, a steady flow of moonshiners, and outlaws running from the police, all of which resulted in the state seeing a sharp rise in traffic related injuries and fatalities. Those running from the law knew that they had to cross county lines to find safety, as no state agency existed that could cross between counties in pursuit of justice. Governor William "Alfalfa Bill" Murray was the first to propose a state organization for dealing with the increasing number of motor vehicles on the roads ("Continuing" 12-14). However, as an individual who had attempted heavy-handed legislation in the past in a state driven by people who believed in being self-sufficient, his efforts did not make it far with legislators. But his successor, E.W. Marland, ultimately succeeded in creating a statewide traffic force under the heading of the Department of Public Safety (DPS), the enforcement branch of which would be the Oklahoma Highway Patrol ("Continuing" 12-13).

The beginnings of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol were preserved in a now discontinued yearbook known as simply as *The Oklahoma Department of Public Safety*. The Oklahoma State Legislature approved the legislation, thus creating the Department of Public Safety which included the Oklahoma Highway Patrol on April 20, 1937. J.M. "Bud" Gentry was Marland's choice to be the first Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, and Gentry immediately began

travelling to other states with similar agencies in order to observe how those agencies were organized and run. By May 1937, Gentry had his basic framework in place, and he issued a call for recruits who would become the first State Troopers ("Continuing" 13).

Overall, 500 men applied for the first Highway Patrol Academy, and because the Patrol was formed while the country was in the midst of the Great Depression, applications came in from men from all walks of life who were all struggling to find work. Ultimately, 140 cadets were accepted into the first Academy, which was held at the University of Oklahoma in Norman. Instructors from Maryland and Michigan taught the first Academy cadets, preparing them for the physical, mental, and legal aspects of the job, as well as training them to become the future instructors for the next academies ("Continuing" 14). Thirty days after the first Academy graduated its 85 cadets, the second Academy began, allowing the department to reach its maximum capacity of 125 troopers. In the span of 90 days, the Oklahoma Highway Patrol progressed from an entity only existing on paper to a fully functioning agency ("Continuing" 15).

Commissioner Gentry originally assigned the first State Troopers to patrol specific highways throughout the state. However, after just a few months, Gentry changed this policy and began assigning troopers to specific counties, which allowed them to get to know other members of local law enforcement, judges, and members of their new communities. This tactic along with troopers who regularly assisted disabled motorists and wrote far more warnings than citations caused the general public to accept and even appreciate the presence of these new law

enforcement officers (“Continuing 15-17).

The first troopers of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol monitored the roads while driving 1937 Fords. However, a select group of men became part of a specialized unit known as the “Flying Squadron,” which was composed of troopers who patrolled the roads on Indian (an American brand) motorcycles (“Continuing” 17). These troopers remained at a given assignment for approximately two to three weeks, boarding with other troopers’ families. After a particular assignment ended, they would return to the motors headquarters in Edmond, Oklahoma, debrief their superiors on their enforcement activities, and then subsequently move on to the next assignment. This practice continued until 1938, when the motors unitsmove on to the next assignment. This practice continued until 1938, when the motors units began to receive permanent assignments. However, the Flying Squadron is attributed with having established the Oklahoma Highway Patrol as the primary traffic enforcement authority in Oklahoma (“Continuing” 16-17).

While the Department continued to grow and expand its patrol activities and community involvement in the coming years, this growth was halted by the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. By 1943, the cohort of 150 troopers was reduced to 50 due to troopers leaving to enlist in the armed services. In 1942, Governor Leon Phillips issued a special draft exemption for troopers. However, to demonstrate their dedication to serving not only the state but also their country in its time of need, many troopers voluntarily joined the war effort even after the exemption was announced. And while these men exemplified highly regarded values such as loyalty and selflessness, their absence during war time created a shortage of

troopers patrolling the roads (“Continuing” 18).

To alleviate the manpower issue and to ensure that the department could still fulfill its obligations to keeping the highways safe, the Department of Public Safety waived the patrol requirement that applicants be at least six feet tall and 200 pounds. The DPS also formed an Auxiliary Highway Patrol in 1943 in order to provide basic police training in patrol functions including collision investigation and dispatching (“Continuing” 19-20).

According to the *Oklahoma Department of Public Safety* yearbook, the Oklahoma Highway Patrol division of the Department of Public Safety experienced a period of rapid growth due to the post-World War II economic boom, which along with the affordability of cars thanks to Henry Ford and the assembly line also caused an explosion in vehicle traffic, especially commercial truck traffic.

Between 1945 and 1950, the Oklahoma Highway Patrol added three new divisions: Size and Weights, Safety Education, and Aircraft. The Size and Weights division is responsible for enforcing state and federal regulations on commercial vehicles. The Safety Education Division now known as the Office of Highway Safety is responsible for safety programs across the state, especially those related to seatbelt and child safety seat use, as well as impaired driving. The Aircraft Division now known as Troop O was the first division of its kind in the United States. Troop O utilizes aircraft not just for common purposes such as manhunts and search and rescue efforts, but also for traffic enforcement. In the state of Oklahoma, motorists will periodically see signs stating “Speeds enforced by

aircraft," as the Troop O planes are utilized on a daily basis for traffic purposes ("Continuing" 20-21).

The Oklahoma Highway Patrol would continue to expand throughout the years. In 1966, the National Highway Safety Act established guidelines and provided funding for safety and enforcement on national highways ("Continuing" 22). The ongoing construction of Oklahoma interstates and highways, plus the addition of the turnpikes, placed increasing demands on the Highway Patrol. Moreover, the passing of the Oklahoma Implied Consent Law and Chemical Testing program in 1967 provided further enforcement responsibilities for troopers tasked with preserving the safety of the motoring public, especially as impaired driving became an increasing problem nationwide ("Continuing" 21-22).

According to the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Statistics, impaired driving arrests increased 223% from 1970 to 1986, a trend which would continue through the decades (Greenfield 1). While traffic enforcement is the primary responsibility of Oklahoma State Troopers, they are now also responsible for boating and lake patrol, security at the Capitol complexes and state buildings in Tulsa and Oklahoma City, and Executive Security for the Governor. The Patrol also includes divisions specializing in drug interdiction, tactical activities, search and rescue efforts, riot control, and explosive ordnance and disposal ("Continuing" 24-25).

In keeping with the number and diversity of skills necessary in order to be an Oklahoma State Trooper, the Oklahoma Highway Patrol runs one of the most rigorous training programs in the nation. The Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy

did not begin as a high-stress Academy, but rather as a moderate stress Academy focused on the growth and development of the agency and ensuring that new troopers were familiar with the rules of the road, as well as the mission and values of the Highway Patrol. Brian Reaves of the U.S. Department of Justice defines a high-stress academy as one which "typically involves intense physical demands and psychological pressure" (Reaves 1). A moderate stress academy is one that focuses more on academics and physical training, with a more a supportive instructive to student relationship. While some stress is involved, it does not reach the levels or intensity of high-stress academies (Reaves 1).

The evolution of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy into a high-stress school occurred as Marines returning from combat, especially from the Pacific theater, took over the training of new troopers (Blish interview). In 1954, the Oklahoma Highway Patrol moved from a loose system of training to having an organized training division, which was headed by K.O. Rayburn and run by former military men who understood that the rigors and dangers of battle were not all that different from the dangers of policing. In the 1950s, the Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy began to resemble Marine Corps Basic Training, a trend which would continue until the 1990s (Blish interview).

In the late 1990s, events from earlier in the decade, such as the siege at Waco, the beating of Rodney King, and the O.J. Simpson trial, facilitated a shift in mentality back toward a less rigorous and more academic training program (Blish interview). This shift had one very serious and unanticipated repercussion in that the department began to have disciplinary issues with new troopers. The 50th Highway Patrol Academy earned the nickname "The Walking 50th," due to the

widely held belief that the 50th's main form of physical training was walking and that the cadets of the 50th academy were weak, privileged, and unable to handle themselves on the road (Blish interview). This appearance of weakness, combined with the disciplinary issues attributed to the lack of accountability and a less than rigorous program in the Academy, led to the patrol to reverting back to a high-stress training program and environment (Blish interview).

DPS Commissioner Michael Thompson, a Lieutenant at the time, was assigned as the Commandant of the 51st Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy (Rehder interview). As a military man who stands at an imposing 7 ft. tall, Thompson assured the cadets of the 51st Academy that they would pay for the reputation and sins of the 50th , and that there would be no questioning the strength, endurance, and heart of the 51st Academy cadets. Thompson did not disappoint, and the 51st Academy still has a reputation for its endurance. Even today, being a graduate of the 51st Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy, automatically entitles one to a degree of respect that no other Academy can claim (Rehder interview).

Only a handful of agencies still utilize a high-stress environment in terms of recruit training. High-stress with a mandatory live-in policy makes the Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy a near mirror image of the U.S. Marine Corps boot camp upon which it is modeled (Blish interview). While this program has varied in intensity and duration over the years, the physical demands, consistent emphasis on a constant state of readiness, a sense of professionalism at all times, individual and agency integrity, and respect for long standing traditions, all result in only a select few applicants being selected for each patrol school.

Today's Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy lasts for approximately 21 weeks. The acceptance process in the Patrol Academy takes a year to complete; therefore, only one Academy is conducted per calendar year. Once accepted, cadets report to the Robert R. Lester Training Center in Oklahoma City, where they say goodbye to family and friends and take up residence on the third floor of the training center, known to every trooper as the third deck. Recruits will spend anywhere from four to six weeks on the third deck, with only two to four hours of liberty on Sundays to see family, to purchase any additional personal items they need, and to do laundry (Blish interview). Otherwise, they remain at the training center 24 hours per day, seven days of the week. The first few days are spent with their Academy counselors learning police ethics, drill and ceremony, marching, and the most highly valued academy virtue: attention to detail.

After the first few days, recruits are introduced to the men who will shape them into the troopers they will become through the application of intense psychological, physical, and mental stress. These Tactical officers (Tacs) are responsible for morning physical training, stress inoculation, and creating an environment designed to bring out every failing or weakness in the psyche of the new recruits (Blish interview).

While many of the methods employed on the third deck may appear similar to hazing or ridiculous tasks designed for the entertainment of the Academy staff, the premise of these methods derives from Lt. Colonel Dave Grossman's book entitled *On Combat.* In delineating the virtues of this kind of training, Grossman writes "suppose you are a trainer and you put a warrior through a scenario where he

fails, and then you put him through it again and he succeeds. First you revealed a flaw in his armor and then you taught him how to shore up that weakness" (135).

Grossman also recounts how Ken Murray, cofounder of Simunition, refuses to allow a warrior to "die" in training. Simunition rounds are paint ammunition, but are much more powerful than a typical paintball round, and are used in standard issue firearms rather than paintball guns. In scenario training, Murray insists that no matter how many times a participant is hit, even in what appear to be critical areas, he or she must get back into the fight, stop the threat, and complete the mission (Grossman 133). Some of the academy tasks are such that the cadets have no chance at success. The point of these tasks is to assess how the cadets respond to failure, whether or not they will quit or give up, and how innovative they can be in creating out of the box solutions to seemingly impossible problems. All of these tasks are designed to teach life-saving skills such as discipline and critical thinking under stress, attention to detail, and situational awareness at all times (Blish interview).

For example, each of the cadet barracks must be organized in exactly the same fashion. All cadets must have the same number of shirts and pants, hanging the same distance apart in the lockers, and facing the same direction. Beds must be made to military standards, and brass and boots must be polished to a high shine and be ready for inspection at all times (Blish interview). If the cadets fail in terms of uniformity and attention to detail, they will often find all of their belongings thrown out into the hall, their mattresses tossed down the stairs, and their running shoes tied together in one mammoth Gordian knot. To the outside observer, this

may appear senseless and destructive. However, noticing the small details is what ultimately saves lives.

Keen and well-trained skills of observation are what allow troopers to recognize when something about a vehicle or a person's demeanor and behavior is not normal, and these signs are so sometimes subtle that they cannot even be named, manifesting instead as a feeling of unease. As the Tacs consistently remind the cadets, everything on the third deck serves a purpose, and nothing is random. This approach to training ensures the successful completion of every trooper's primary objective, which is to return home safely at the end of each shift.

Women who enter the Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy can expect to be treated in the same fashion as the men, as the physical standards for entry into the academy are the same for both sexes. For example, women must complete the same number of push-ups and sit-ups to the same standards, as well as complete the runs within the same allotted times. There are no modifications or adjustments (Blish interview). Women are expected to drive, shoot, and fight to the same standard as the men and perform the same physical training in the mornings and in motivational sessions on the third deck. While basic consideration is given to the differing physical needs of the women, the training staff makes one thing very clear: "The Oklahoma Highway Patrol does not graduate male and female troopers; we graduate troopers" (Rehder interview).

Today, the Oklahoma Highway Patrol maintains a force of 811 troopers covering 77 different counties. While some troopers work the road in metropolitan areas, many more are assigned to rural communities, where they are responsible for

several thousand square miles between two to four counties per sector (Walker interview). Troopers in rural areas work the road alone. They may be paired with another trooper on the schedule if manpower allows, but given the vast amount of highway to cover, these rural troopers work in isolated conditions with virtually no back up (Walker interview).

What the women experience in the academy is direct preparation for the hardships and dangers of the job. It is the contention of this dissertation that the female troopers of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol possess a unique set of qualities and characteristics that make them particularly suited to the rigors of being an Oklahoma State Trooper. Their individual experiences narrated in their own words, experiences in the academy, in their communities, and on the road, lend an in-depth perspective to present-day law enforcement narratives that are not always found in more common discussions of gender equality issues, nor in the statistical data used to describe the presence of women in law enforcement. Current research in the field is directed toward the number of women in law enforcement, recruitment issues, promotion and wage issues, training, and the impact on the family.

Several books, including *History in Blue: 160 Years of Women Police, Sheriffs, Detectives, State Troopers,* by Allan T. Duffin address the history of women in law enforcement, recounting the various capacities in which women were first employed as law enforcement officers and providing narratives of their experiences. However, very little documentation exists concerning the women of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, and other than the conversational discussions about the history of the patrol, no record of their personal narratives as Troopers exists.

The overarching question then is: Why are these narratives important?

The female troopers of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol are the modern-day version of the Civil War-era U.S. Marshalls who made their solitary journeys into Indian Territory. The majority of women in law enforcement work for larger metropolitan departments, and while they also work alone, other officers tend to be in much closer proximity (Langton 1). While this in no way lessens the danger, it does change the context of each encounter. Many of these women also work in police and sheriff's departments, where they may take calls ranging from noise complaints to reports of homicides. Troopers in the Oklahoma Highway Patrol are assigned to work the roads in a state in which the ratio of troopers to the land area and population places the troopers at a serious disadvantage in terms of executing their job responsibilities. Oklahoma has a population over 4 million people with 70,000 square miles of territory and 112,000 miles of roadway ("Oklahoma").

According to Major Todd Blish of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, with a force of 811 troopers, including supervisors, specialized troops, and command staff, even if every trooper in the state worked seven days per week, he or she would still be responsible for 138 square miles of highway, interstate, county road, and city streets for towns without police departments. Among field troops, it is common for only one or two troopers to be on duty at any given time, and in the state's largest county, Osage County, that means that a single state trooper is responsible for a land area equivalent to the size of Rhode Island (Blish interview).

In Troop I, which encompasses the Oklahoma panhandle, troopers work 4-county sectors, covering thousands of square miles. This means that those troopers,

including women, are stopping cars anywhere from 10 to 90 miles from the nearest town with no back-up, sometimes in the middle of the night, completely alone. In these situations, troopers can depend only on their training, intelligence, and tenacity in order to ensure that they return home safely at the end of their shifts. But the female troopers of the Patrol have embraced this challenge. They leave the safety of their homes in order to work in the remote dark for the benefit and safety of others, and as a result, they have stories to tell, advice to give, and insight to provide about the policing world that needs to shared not only with those who create law enforcement policy, but also with a public who may not understand the nuances and challenges of being a female trooper in the field.

While some documentation already exists concerning the history of the operations and recruitment for the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, very little exists that specifically addresses the presence of women as troopers within the agency. The decision to open the application process to women resulted from similar moves by other agencies due to the combined legislation of Title VII of Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which defined race, color, sex, creed, and age as protected categories and prohibited discrimination in hiring based on those classes (*The Civil Rights Act*). The first female trooper joined the Oklahoma Highway Patrol in 1978 out of the 36th Highway Patrol Academy. Since that time, 19 women have graduated from academies and have been employed by the Oklahoma Highway Patrol as troopers.

The main source of information in this study with regard to female troopers and their experiences on the Highway Patrol will come from the troopers themselves.

Along with a biographical questionnaire, two or three interviews will be conducted with a number of female troopers and retired troopers who have worked in all areas of patrol life, from metro to rural, lake patrol, EMSU, dive team, and supervisory positions. These women have experienced the evolution of the patrol alongside public attitudes toward women in law enforcement. They have volunteered to share their stories from the road, as well as the motivations that drove them to become troopers, their various backgrounds, and how being a member of the trooper profession affected their personal and family lives. While scholars agree that the policing style of men and women is very different, few have addressed the special circumstances and sacrifices made by women in law enforcement. This project seeks to bring to light how rare and dedicated these female public servants are.

The objective in compiling the personal narratives of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol's female troopers is to allow their stories to draw attention to these otherwise overlooked narratives. Duffin and Heidensohn have addressed the history of women in law enforcement professions, while Koenig, Lord, and Lee have addressed the perception and family/social implications of women in law enforcement. For purposes of cohesion and to allow the personal narratives of the troopers to reflect the changing times in which they began their careers, the project will be organized chronologically, according to when each trooper graduated from the Oklahoma Highway Patrol academy or was assigned to the road as part of a field troop.

The purpose of the project, rather than discussing inequalities in the workplace, equal opportunity, or the balance between work and home lives, is to

allow each narrative to reveal the women's unique policing styles, personalities, trials, and triumphs, as well as to present the female troopers of OHP as exceptional not because they are troopers, but because they are also exceptional individuals.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Women in law enforcement, indeed women in any field with a high potential for violence and a necessity for physical strength, is a topic that has been hotly debated over the decades. Questions of whether or not women are capable of serving effectively in combat, if women are capable of performing the physical tasks necessary to be successful firefighters, if women can handle the emotional strain and use of force situations as police officers never completely disappear from the public eye. As often as women have proved that they are capable of the myriad tasks that require both emotional and physical stamina, women taking on traditionally male roles still introduces a firestorm of questions and concerns. Some of these questions and concerns are legitimate. In much the same way that not every man has the constitution to be a police officer or an Army Ranger, neither does every woman. Women's stature, physical prowess, delicate sensibilities, and gentle natures have all been used as ammunition to prevent them from entering into the policing profession. However, some intrepid women saw a need and forged ahead, determined to protect and serve.

A discussion of the literature regarding women in law enforcement tends to lead toward a conversation of a socio-political nature. The vast majority of the research is non-specific as far as size of department, geographic location and types of responsibilities. Most of the literature focuses on issues that women in law enforcement face as opposed to taking a more personal look at why these women chose this particular profession and what it has meant to them as part of their humanity. Some history on women in law enforcement exists, most notably, *History in Blue*, by Allan T. Duffin. Through thorough combing of archival data, newspapers, histories and other documents,

Duffin has been able to assemble a book that details how women came to be involved in law enforcement in the first place, the roles they took on, the battles they fought to gain and keep their positions, and the ongoing evolution of women in law enforcement.

Duffin's work surveys the years from 1845 to 2009 and considers women across the country in everything from local to state and federal law enforcement organizations. Part of what stirs such strong emotion and interest in the topic of women in law enforcement comes from the question of "have women arrived in law enforcement, and if not, will they ever?" Duffin poses at least a partial answer to this question in his introduction when he states "How long has it taken for women to become equal players in police departments across the United States? The short answer is revealing: It hasn't quite happened yet. But as each decade rolls by, female officers make a little more progress in their request for acceptance and respect in a job that is unique in its challenges, both inside and outside the office" (Duffin viii). Because women still are not accepted fully as valuable members of some departments, they continue to answer questions about their fitness for duty.

Duffin also comments on why so little information exists in regard to the historical record of women police officers. Duffin quotes historian Janis Apier, "'Historical scholarship on policewomen is generally sparse and limited in scope, largely because, until 1970, women composed only about 1 percent of all sworn personnel in the United States'" (ix). In the beginning, women law enforcement officers took on very different roles from the roles they occupy today. From 1845 to around 1900, women acted as prison matrons in the jails, attempting to both protect and guide the female inmates. Similarly, women acted as police matrons helping to guide and protect women

and children in the community in danger of going astray. While these women provided a valuable service, Duffin writes that "resistance to handing women law enforcement powers arose from the traditional understanding of the female role in American society" (2). Women's role in law enforcement was firstly more akin to that of a social worker, protecting women and children, upholding moral standards of the day, and providing motherly guidance (Duffin 1-15).

Throughout the early 1900s to around 1920, women made strides in law enforcement, becoming sworn personnel. However, their role largely was still as enforcers of the social and moral code of the day. The decades following would see dramatic changes in the social landscape and therefore the policing opportunities available to women. Both World Wars meant a diminished male population to act as policemen, and the ratification of the 19th Amendment gave women a voice in official policy. While women became more accepted in municipal departments, county, state, and federal agencies were slower to add women to the police force (67).

However, women continued to press forward toward full policing power. "In April 1930, women finally joined the state level law enforcement ranks when the Massachusetts State Police added its first two female troopers" (68). The path women followed to become sworn officers was often more difficult than that followed by their male counterparts. Women were subjected to higher education and experience standards (71). In New York City, at the training schools for the Bureau of Policewomen, female recruits studied firearms, custody and control, and jiu-jitsu. Physical tests required the candidates to jump three feet over a rope and to grip a special machine squeezing with a

force equal to 100 pounds. Women also were expected to have at least 2 years of college education and experience in fields such as education, social work, and nursing (74).

Throughout the 1920s and into the 1950s, women continued in the role as enforcers of the social standards of the day. However, several developments would begin to change that dynamic. The prevalence of the automobile created issues for all law enforcement, men and women alike. Departments were now tasked with creating and enforcing traffic laws due to traffic collisions and deaths resulting from automobiles. The automobile increased the mobility of criminals, causing issues with jurisdiction, arrests, and high speed chases. The automobile also allowed criminals to escape easily after committing crimes (94-96).

In addition to changes in technology, the start of World War II drew many women to fill jobs left by men who were drafted or volunteered to join the war effort. Women became office managers, factory workers, and law enforcement officers (97-100). Women in the military also began serving as military police. With the influx of soldiers into various cities, policewomen were often tasked with controlling rowdy soldiers about to ship out and monitoring the activities of the women the soldiers brought with them or the entertainment they sought before leaving (101-104). These developments created an increasingly dangerous work environment for women. Between speeding automobiles, dangerous criminal activity, and breaking up rowdy brawls, policewomen began to experience more violence while on the job. As a result, many departments finally relented and began allowing women to carry weapons (107).

The years from the end of World War II through the 1960s were the start of change within many departments, although progress was slow. As Duffin notes of this

time period “even with civil rights legislation and the establishment of federal equal opportunity laws, female police officers still had major hurdles to jump” (110). Women continued to experience the conflict between work and home life, especially as it concerned traditional women’s roles in society. In addition, female police officers faced increased danger in their career choice due to a rise in gangs and drug use. Female officers often went undercover to make drug buys for narcotics units, as the women were less likely to be suspected as police officers (114).

Female officers of the era struggled to maintain an identity as both feminine and an enforcer of the law. Added to this struggle was the ongoing issue of acceptance by their male counterparts and society at large. Duffin writes of the female officers “They were considered secondary to male officers, were paid less, and often weren’t taken seriously in their jobs” (121). Secondary status also meant that women were not being included in the promotional process. Several law suits for equal pay and the right to promote would begin to move the women’s cause forward. In most cases, the courts sided with the women and the women earned the right to apply for promotion and received back pay.

In this era, the first women would also begin routine patrol in cars of their own. At first, women were paired with men, but as happened in New Orleans, this created conflict for the men of the department. Wives of male officers protested the fact that another woman was in such an intimate setting with the husbands for eight hours at a time (139). The city of Indianapolis demonstrated forward thinking when the chief of police assigned Elizabeth Robinson and Betty Blankenship a car of their own. The pair would be the first team of female officers assigned to a routine patrol unit (140-143).

Despite the progress of the 1950s and 1960s, events of the 1970s would provide the greatest impetus for change in regard to women in law enforcement.

Issues of discrimination against women still occurred in the 1970s. For example, in Detroit, in order to apply to be a police officer, "male officers needed only a high school diploma, while women were required to have at least two years of college" (148). However, other departments began making more inclusive changes: "New York City deleted the separate designations *policeman* and *policewoman* and began using the unisex term *police officer*" (148). In many academies, while women applicants were accepted, their training requirements and regimen differed from that of the men. Women also faced the inevitable rumors about conduct between male trainers and female trainees at the academies. Across the country, acceptance of female officers varied widely. In Madison, Wisconsin, the chief of police recognized the value of having women on patrol, especially in regard to investigating certain types of crime; "One issue that women in the community discussed with Couper was what they saw as insensitivity on the part of male officers in handling rape cases" (156). Chief Couper sent a female office with every male officer investigating a rape case to help with victim interviews. It was not long until the value of this policy became apparent, and after a few years, female officers were no longer required to accompany male officers on rape investigations, as the male officers had learned how to approach and assist the victims.

The late 1960s and early 1970s ushered in several bills that would affect the number of women hired as police officers. "The 1963 Equal Pay Act prohibited sex-based wage discrimination in work environments where men and women performed the same jobs" (157). The following year, Title VII of the 1964 act established the Equal

Employment Opportunity Commission, which prohibited discrimination based on race, religion, ethnicity, and sex; however, this act did not apply to state or local agencies. The Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 made it so that Title VII applied to local and state, as well as federal government agencies (157-158). The following years would see lawsuits, challenges, and continued struggles for women advancing their careers in law enforcement. However, women continued to make inroads in the profession. In the decades from the 1980s to early 2000s, the first women chiefs of police would take office and women would be given posts considered too remote or too dangerous in the past, such as Alaska State Troopers or members of urban SWAT teams. Even with such progress, public perception of women in law enforcement, the balance of home and professional life, and hostility from coworkers continue to be issues into present day law enforcement (199-245).

Several other books have been written on the issue of women in law enforcement. Cheryl Mullenbach's *Women in Blue: 16 Brave Officers, Forensics Experts, Police Chiefs, and More* is similar to Duffin's book in that Mullenbach profiles the lives and careers of pioneering women in law enforcement. Mullenbach recounts the history of women such groundbreaking women as Isabella Goodwin, Sadie Likens, and Mary Sullivan. Mullenbach's work differs from Duffin's in that Mullenbach focuses on the lives and achievements of these women through the narrower lens of the officer as individual. Duffin's book, while recounting the personal lives and experiences of women in law enforcement, focuses on trends and developments throughout history. In a departure from both Duffin and Mullenbach, Frances Heidensohn's book *Women in Control? The Role of Women in Law Enforcement* is a sociological study of women in

law enforcement. Heidensohn focuses much more on issues of social order and social control and the ways in which women's entrance into law enforcement has affected socially accepted gender roles, policy and practices in law enforcement agencies. The majority of Heidensohn's work involves women in law enforcement in Great Britain; however, she includes a chapter on women in the United States, noting what she calls some significant differences in policing and women's roles as officers in the United States as compared with Great Britain.

Heidensohn points out that integration of females into the law enforcement meant something different in Great Britain due to the nature of policing in that country. Unlike the United States, which has Federal, state, county and local law enforcement, Great Britain "was policed by only forty-three forces, having unitary control over their territories" (157). In other words, rather than dealing with innumerable agencies controlling areas of vastly differing geographical sizes, populations, and persuasions, Great Britain had a more centralized police force, which meant that policies, procedures, and integration of women was not as easily hampered by administrations or individuals hostile to the idea of women in law enforcement (157). Heidensohn also notes that policing in Britain is very different than it is in the United States due to lower instances of violent crime. Very few officers in Britain are armed and the women wear a uniform different from that of the men. In contrast, working patrol in the United States "meant going out, well-armed, also wearing a bullet-proof vest, in the same uniform that men wore"(157). Women in law enforcement in the United States face the same threat of violence as their male counterparts.

Heidensohn goes on to discuss issues such as those addressed by Duffin and Mullenbach. As in the other research, Heidensohn found that women faced discrimination based on size, perceived physical ability, perceived emotional weakness, and local politics. To add to these difficulties, women rarely had other women as training staff or break-in partners to help them learn to navigate the difficulties of the job and the toll it could take on one's personal, psychological and physiological well-being (158-172). However, in spite of the challenges and outright hostility directed at the female officers, Heidensohn writes that most of the women interviewed maintained a sense of optimism about the job and believed that the work environment and their level of acceptance by their male peers would improve, even if slowly. Heidensohn also notes that the women, to differing degrees and with different emphases, seemed to have a sense of purpose in regard to their profession and a genuine desire to serve the public (156-198).

Because the highly publicized struggles women facing entering the law enforcement profession, one of the questions that often arises in a discussion of the literature on women in law enforcement is how women decide on law enforcement as a career. Many professions are driven by perceptions of traditional gender roles and gender attributes. For example, careers in public service that hinge on communication, compassion, and care giving traditionally have been dominated by women. These fields include social work, nursing, and teaching. Careers in science, technology and business that are perceived to be more logical, competitive, or assertive in nature often are dominated by men (Lord and Friday 63-64). In a study directed at discovering what compels individuals to select policing as a career, Vivian B. Lord and Paul C. Friday

arrived at some key insights about policing as a career and how and why it is selected by women. Lord and Friday's study questioned both applicants to a police department and high school students at two high schools in the same area as the police department on several key points, such as interest in the job, aptitude for the skills required, self-efficacy, barriers, and influences. One item that the study addressed was the perception of policing by the public as opposed to the expectations of the police administrations in regard to necessary characteristics for police officers and the types of activity involved in affective policing. Lord and Friday note "The image of policing has focused on the aspects of the profession that are consistent with stereotypical male traits: however, within the police profession, especially at the administrative level, more gender-neutral qualities such as honesty, patience, and communication skills are ranked high" (Kiehl *et al*. ref. in Lord and Friday 66).

Public perception of a particularly career's requirements has an effect on those who believe themselves capable of performing the job. In a society where public perception of policing is still closely tied to what are considered masculine traits such as physical strength, aggression, and power, women who do not perceive themselves as having these traits in a high degree as less likely to apply for police jobs or consider law enforcement as a career (63-65).

Lord and Friday discuss some important factors influencing women's selection of law enforcement as a career. One of the most important factors is that of role models. While role models and peer and family influence are strong factors in the career choices of both men and women, Lord and Friday note that women in particular are influenced by role models and gender role socialization and must have the appropriate experiences,

successful role models, and encouragement to pursue careers in traditionally male fields (67). In other words, in order to get more women to consider a career in law enforcement, the public perception of the job as only appropriate for men must be broken down and more successful women must be visible in the field to act as mentors and guides to those who might have the aptitude and desire for law enforcement as a career.

Another crucial point addressed by Lord and Friday is the influence of family. In discussing the research of Vermeulen and Minor, who studied career decisions, Lord and Friday found that women were strongly influenced in their career choices by their parents. According to Lord and Friday, family influenced women's professional decisions across the professions and women often relied on information provided by family in regard to various occupations (69). Women in Lord and Friday's study also cited the idea of career not traditionally for their gender, shift work, and possible discrimination as barriers to a career in law enforcement (71). Public misconceptions about policing, notions of traditional gender roles, and a lack of female role models in the field deter many women from even applying for jobs in law enforcement. As a result, since the early 2000s, this has resulted in women being recruited at a slow rate. In 1997, the National Center for Women and Policing went so far as to release a study titled *Equality Denied*, which concluded that women "will never have equal status in police departments, especially in the highest ranks" ("Women" 15). With fewer women in the higher ranks and lower recruitment rate, women interested in law enforcement do not have the mentorship available to them that men do.

Along with recruitment, another topic frequently visited in the literature on law enforcement involves stress and the ways in which stress impacts the daily lives of law

enforcement officers. This discussion has been extended to address the differing stressors women in law enforcement experience compared to their male counterparts. In terms of stress, law enforcement officers experience a good amount. Lt. Col. David Grossman attributes much of this stress to what he calls the universal human phobia. Grossman writes in his book *On Combat*, "one phobia that pushes almost everyone's buttons is interpersonal human aggression. That is the Universal Human Phobia. If I walked into another crowded room and emptied a pistol into one of them, or hacked at one of them with a machete, up to 98 percent of the average audience would experience a true phobic-scale response" (3). Furthermore, Grossman explicitly addresses the actions of soldiers and police officers in regard to interpersonal human violence writing, "Since police officers and soldiers move toward the Universal Human Phobia, intentionally moving into this domain where other human beings will try to hurt or kill them, it is vital that they understand that realm and understand combat" (4). For police officers who face this very real danger every day they go to work, stress is a given. However, add to that unusual schedules that interfere with sleep, a diet that often includes food eaten at a run, and physical exhaustion that results in a lack of physical activity, and the already high level of stress involved in policing climbs even higher.

The elevated stress level described by Grossman keep officers on edge, unable to decompress after everything from a critical incident to a normal day on shift. That stress often carries over into other aspects of life. In *Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement*, Gilmartin writes that most officers exist in a constant state of awareness, even while off duty. They work and live from an elevated sense of awareness, always prepared for danger and violence, knowing they may have to act whether on duty or not. It becomes a

way of life. Gilmartin says "This perceptual set of elevated alertness of the surroundings, which is required of law enforcement officers for survival is referred to in the police culture as officer safety; however, a more accurate term would be *hypervigilance*" (35). The very hypervigilance that allows an officer to be safe at work results in problems elsewhere, however. Because the hypervigilant state is accompanied by a variety of physiological effects, such as elevated heart rate, increased respiration, improved hearing and peripheral vision, and faster reaction times, officers operate in this state while on duty and remain in some level of this state while off duty. However, remaining in this elevated state does not allow the body to rest and recover appropriately and may even result in the officer appearing overly aggressive or confrontational to the public (Gilmartin 38-42).

The biological and psychological state of hypervigilance, this alert and elevated state, often results in the officer being apathetic, uninvolved, and exhausted at home. Gilmartin describes it as a rollercoaster. The high sense of alertness results in a drop in energy and interest that has an inverse relationship to the hypervigilant state, causing the officer to be uninterested in the daily activities of home and family or hobbies he or she once enjoyed (Gilmartin 44-50). Gilmartin notes several tools that those willing to survive the rollercoaster must implement. He writes that survivors practice physical fitness to help offset the physiological damage caused by hypervigilance. He also notes that survivors control their financial well-being and have multiple roles in their lives (124-138). These tasks are ones that the officer must decide to embrace and to which the officer must recommit on a continual basis, as the hypervigilance rollercoaster is a constant part of a law enforcement officer's life.

The stressors of hypervigilance and the constant threat of violence are common to all officers. However, for women in law enforcement, the normal stressors are exacerbated by a wealth of other issues. Gender discrimination, the perception that they are weaker or less capable than their male counterparts, and a lack of female mentors and training partners increase the stress levels of female officers. Another stressor experienced more often by women in law enforcement is a phenomenon known as the second shift. In "Roll call and the second shift: the influences of gender and family on police stress," Don Kurtz found that women in law enforcement often are expected not only to maintain high standards of job performance but also maintain all the responsibilities of home life. Kurtz writes that much research has been conducted on the relationship between the stress of police life and various behavioral and health outcomes. However, family factors have not been researched in regard to the ways in which family and work interact to create or relieve stress. Kurtz notes "Work requirements may directly conflict with obligations at home, creating stress in both environments, (He et al., 2002) and stress generated from conflicts between home life and employment may exacerbate work-related pressures. This relationship may be more pronounced for female officers expected to maintain domestic roles as mothers, wives, and caregivers" (Kurtz 71). Many female officers maintain dual roles as officers and mothers, still acting as the primary caregivers for their children.

In his research, Kurtz points out that women in law enforcement, along with the expected stressors of working odd shifts, dealing with violent offenders, and departmental politics, also must navigate gender discrimination, lack of support from administration, and hostility or negative attitudes from male co-workers (73). While

women have made inroads and are more accepted in the law enforcement field, change is slow; and while men are taking on increasing responsibility for domestic responsibilities, the majority of household tasks still fall on working mothers (73). Ultimately, Kurtz found that this second shift conflict, being full time law enforcement officer then full time caregiver, was a significant cause of stress for women as opposed to men and significantly increased the rate of attrition and decreased opportunities for advancement (74).

A discussion of women in law enforcement would be incomplete without acknowledging questions involving a woman's ability to handle dangerous situations. Even other women call into question whether or not women have the physical and psychological ability to confront dangerous suspects. In a 2005 article entitled "Freeze! I Just Had My Nails Done," Ann Coulter recounts an incident inside an Atlanta courtroom in which 200 pound man on trial for rape wrested a weapon from a female deputy. The accused, Brian Nichols, proceeded to bludgeon the deputy from whom he took the weapon and kill three others, including the court reporter, another deputy, and the judge (1). Coulter goes on to write of a proposed solution to the problem of a small, female deputy being overpowered by a violent criminal "I think I have an idea that would save money and lives: Have large men escort violent criminals" (1). She writes that female law enforcement officers are more likely to use deadly force than their male counterparts and are more likely to be assaulted (6). Coulter bluntly states that women are smaller and weaker than men and accuses feminists of insisting that strength test standards be lowered so that more women can pass; moreover, she insists that acknowledgement of this biological fact and a frank look at the statistics would result in many saved lives (6).

While the issue of physical strength in regard to restraining a dangerous suspect is valid, Esther Koenig wrote in a 1978 article on attitudes toward women in law enforcement: “However no study has ever shown that strength is related to one’s ability to handle a dangerous situation and, in fact, the single highest cause of police fatalities is ambush” (270). Questions of whether or not women belong on patrol continue to pervade police cultures. While physicality is certainly part of the job, Koenig noted in her study that negative opinions of women on patrol largely were held by male police officers. The public generally felt that women officers were equally competent as their male counterparts, and in some situations, because male officers were thought to be stereotypically physical, aggressive, and dominant, the men often incited violence by their demeanor and presence. Female officers, on the other hand, were perceived as being more compassionate, less aggressive, less authoritarian, and thus did not foster a violent or aggressive reaction from those they encountered on the job (Koenig 270-273).

While perhaps to a lesser degree, today’s women in law enforcement battle the same stereotypes and misconceptions about their policing abilities. Modern technology has leveled the playing field somewhat through the use of OC spray and Tazers, and men and women recruits receive the same training in custody and control, employing techniques designed to allow an officer of any size to gain compliance from an aggressive offender.

Finally, in regard to the women of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, their position and the trajectory of their careers and experiences best can be described by the women themselves and the men who worked with and knew them. While the proceeding chapters are dedicated to their individual stories, it is useful to look at how the men of the

OHP viewed their female counterparts. In a September 2016 interview, Major Todd Blish of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol recounted his experiences supervising one of the first two female troopers, Tomi Tatum (Blish interview). Blish recounted that Tatum was a country girl with common sense. She was the first female to achieve the rank of Lieutenant, which according to Blish, took longer than it should have. However, Blish describes her a good supervisor who refused to be put in a box. Tatum, paving the way for the women who followed her, took no slack and executed her duties with a firm but fair hand in dealing with the public. Blish noted that as a supervisor, the female troopers he has supervised tended to driven by different things emotionally and professionally, specifically service to the community. Blish also stated that "Woman have the biggest thing lacking in law enforcement today – empathy" (Blish interview).

Captain Stan Walker is a graduate of the 36th Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy, the first academy to include female cadets. In recalling his memories of the academy, Walker noted that cadets Tomi Tatum and Freda Daugherty were highly aware of their ground breaking and very visible position (Walker interview). According to Walker, both women were treated well by the staff and left no question in anyone's mind that they had earned their spots in the academy. While treated well by staff and the majority of the other cadets, they were treated poorly by some of the cadets who may have felt they did not belong in the patrol academy or on the road as troopers (Walker interview). Both women had long and successful careers after graduation from the academy.

Lastly, retired Captain Brad Shepherd also supervised several of the female troopers of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol. Furthermore, as a member of the patrol's

Officer Assistance Program, Shepherd assisted in critical incident debriefs not only for the patrol but for other agencies within the state, giving him a first-hand glimpse of how women in law enforcement handled not only the day to day tasks of the job but also the violent and tragic. Responding to questions via e-mail, Shepherd stated that he found very few differences in the ways men and women in law enforcement deal with critical incidents. Shepherd noted that females did not necessarily respond more emotionally than males, and, in his experience, the response to a critical incident had more to do with the individual's support systems, past experiences, and learned behavior (Shepherd e-mail). In discussing the patrol duties of female troopers, Captain Shepherd stated that the hurdles for women on the patrol were similar to those of the men, especially in comparison to other agencies. While many other departments work with partners or cover small geographic areas where backup is close by, troopers work alone, often covering several counties. This means that it is the responsibility of the lone trooper to neutralize a violent incident, organize and work a collision, or evaluate and make decisions in any number of situations that might involve violence, tragedy, emotion, and hurt. Troopers must gain immediate control of any situation or put themselves and others at risk (Shepherd e-mail). According to Shepherd, female troopers work harder to be accepted and may face more confrontation from individuals unwilling to accept any form of female authority. Generally, however, Shepherd believes that struggles of troopers are just that, struggles all troopers experience to some degree, regardless of gender (Shepherd e-mail).

Women in law enforcement have faced many trials over the years, but the nature of those trials largely has remained the same. From issues with acceptance by their male

peers, questions about their physical abilities, unfounded beliefs that women are too emotional and unstable for the rigors of police work, and a lack of mentors and role models in the field, women continue to become officers, taking on new challenges and new responsibilities. The next chapters will look specifically at the lives and careers of Oklahoma Highway Patrol Troopers, who coincidentally also happen to be women.

Chapter 3: Retired Lt. Tomi Tatum – Troop A

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Retired Lt. Tomi Tatum has the honor of being one of the first two females hired by the Oklahoma Highway Patrol in 1978 (Tatum). Tatum and Freda Daugherty were both hired to be part of the 36th Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy, and they paved the way for other women seeking to join the ranks of road troopers. Along with being one of the first two female troopers to join the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, Tatum was also the first woman promoted to the rank of lieutenant on the patrol, by serving as a supervisor in the busy Oklahoma City metro area.

Upon first speaking with Tatum, it is clear that she is a woman who believes that you treat people the way you want to be treated, whether they respond in kind or not. Clear and well-spoken with a kind but no-nonsense approach to people, Tatum reflects the values of the farm and ranch culture in which she was raised. She was born Tomisine Pauline Tatum in San Angelo, Texas (Tatum e-mail). Tatum has five siblings, two brothers and three sisters. They lived in a tiny farming community called Very Best, Texas, about eight miles outside of San Angelo. According to Tatum, the citizens of Very Best lived in true western fashion, believing in the old way of "I carry my gun and I fight for my rights" (Tatum interview). Tatum's family eventually moved from Very Best to Austin, Texas, where she attended William B. Travis High School. After high school, Tatum attended Bethany Nazarene College in Bethany, Oklahoma, where her enjoyment of sports led her to major in physical education. Tatum was both a high school and collegiate athlete, which would later aid in her physical preparation for the rigorous patrol academy (Tatum e-mail). In addition to her athleticism, she credits growing up between

two brothers with preparing her for the challenges of being a road trooper. According to Tatum, “I had to be tough to survive those two” (Tatum interview).

While Tatum had always been interested in law enforcement, she made the decision to pursue it as a career after a convenience store where she worked was robbed at knifepoint. She began her law enforcement career as a civilian police office at Tinker Air Force Base in Midwest City, Oklahoma (Tatum interview).

At this time, she realized she wanted to be a member of best law enforcement agency in the state. For her this meant the Oklahoma Highway Patrol (OHP). Tatum and her littermate Freda Daugherty are recognized as the first female troopers of the OHP (Blish interview). Tatum began the 36th Highway Patrol Academy in 1978, when she was just 23 years old. She was so tiny at that time that one of the cadets joked about being able to fit her duty belt around of his legs (Tatum interview).

Prior to going to work for the OHP, Tatum had applied at several local police departments, but she was told her uncorrected eyesight was not good enough. Moreover, according to the standards held by most departments at the time, she was not tall enough and did not weigh enough to become a police officer (Tatum interview). However, in 1978, the OHP lowered its height and weight requirements. Some of the local troopers who knew her told her she should apply for the patrol. While Tatum wanted to be among the best, she knew it would be a difficult road. She was aware that the OHP had never had a female trooper and that she would be entering one of the most difficult law enforcement academies in the nation. So, as a person of faith, she began praying about it. She asked God that if this was her calling in life that the doors would open completely or close completely because she could not handle another disappointment. It was important

to her to do what God wanted her to do. After applying, Tatum called the Department Public Safety (DPS), the state agency under which the Oklahoma Highway Patrol operates, every day. She jokes now that the ladies answering the phone started to recognize her and probably got tired of her calling all the time (Tatum interview).

Finally, the day came when Tatum received a call at midnight to let her know she had been accepted because that was how the patrol did things back then. She was so excited and wanted to call her friends and family to tell them the good news, but she realized that they were probably asleep and would not appreciate such a rude awakening, even for good news. Tatum finally called her mom and broke the news. Like most mothers, her mom was not thrilled with the idea. When well-meaning friends tried to comfort her, telling her that no woman had been able to make it through the academy, Tatum's mother responded, "You don't know my daughter. She grew up between two brothers, and if anyone can do it, it's her" (Tatum interview). Those words proved true for Tatum and her career.

On the day the academy began, the four women selected to attend arrived. One of the first tasks was to jog from the training center across the parking lot to supply to pick up the necessary equipment. One of the women quit after the first day and another soon after that. Freda Daugherty made it through the academy but struggled through most of it (Tatum interview). Like all academy graduates, however, she made it and that was all that mattered.

Tatum recalls that the academy seemed to last forever. They had Gary Adams and Kenneth Strang as house parents, and it was their job to keep the cadets moving in the right direction and deal with any issues that arose over the course of the academy (Tatum

interview). Tatum recalls that Strang was later killed in the line of duty. Gary Adams was a good, godly man of whom Tatum thought the world. Later in his career, Adams was promoted to Chief of the Patrol (Tatum interview).

It was during Adams' tenure as Chief that Tatum achieved the second milestone for women on the OHP, when she became the first female to achieve the rank of lieutenant. Her promotion did not come easily. She was out working one day when she met Chief Adams at the gas pumps. Tatum knew she had scored high marks on the written exam, and she was a high activity, productive worker. Because she had done well with the requirements, she wanted to know why she had been passed over for a promotion. She was told she needed a sponsor, which meant that a promotion was about who you knew and not the job you did. At one point there were 13 lieutenant spots open, and her name was not on the list. Tatum was surprised when she got called by the Chief and told she was being promoted. On the day of the promotion ceremony, the newly promoted Lt. Tatum noted that if looks could kill, she would have been dead, but she does not have any hard feelings (Tatum interview).

Tatum was familiar with the struggle of being a female in a male-dominated profession as a result of her academy days. She learned that the people who opposed her because of her gender were few and that changing mindsets takes time. During her academy days, Tatum was told by male cadets that they were going to make sure no woman made it through the academy. She was told repeatedly she would not last. She says "Parts of the academy were challenging, but if God has put you somewhere and you're supposed to be there, then it's going to be ok" (Tatum interview).

Many of Tatum's experiences in the academy were quite positive, and many of her fellow cadets were supportive. Tatum's physical abilities made her a standout among her peers, especially during runs. One cadet told Tatum that he was glad she was there because she set a good pace for the rest of them. On another occasion, one cadet cussed her out at the breakfast table. One of the house parents came to her and wanted to know what had been said to her. When Tatum replied that she did not want to discuss it, she was told that she could tell the houseparent or the Chief. The cadet was reprimanded, but she was not concerned about the altercation. According to Tatum, "I didn't take it to heart. He was just showing his ignorance" (Tatum interview).

Tatum was a trooper for 28 years, spending 20 of those years as a road trooper and eight as a lieutenant. Her first assignment was Troop A rural in Shawnee, where she worked for a little over a year before transferring to Troop A metro in Oklahoma City (Tatum e-mail). She also spent time in Troop V– motor vehicles inspection, Troop U– Safety Education, and the Turner Turnpike (Tatum e-mail).

After her promotion, she became the public information officer for DPS, spent some time in training, and then went back to Troop A, eventually retiring from the Turnpike. She says of her time, "The best time I spent on the patrol was being a road trooper. It was rewarding helping people and keeping them safe" (Tatum interview).

Like most troopers, Tatum has her fair share of stories and memorable moments from her career, including one or two that reminded her just how dangerous the job can be. She recalls one incident in particular that forever changed her daily work habits. Tatum, like many other troopers at the time, remembers that she never wore a vest when she went on duty. Then one evening when she was out working, she went on a call in the

metro about a suspicious man walking by the railroad tracks. Tatum was unable to locate the man and went on about her business. She received a phone call the next day informing her that another trooper went out to that same location in the morning and was shot. Thankfully, that trooper survived the encounter, but Tatum got up, got dressed and went to supply where she picked up a ballistics vest. She never again went to work without it (Tatum interview).

Having worked in both rural and metro troops, Tatum also noticed the people in rural counties had a different attitude toward law enforcement than the people in the metro. Tatum began her career in Shawnee, a more rural area where people were friendly and accustomed to wave when they saw a trooper. It was not like that in the metro. For example, Tatum went to the University of Oklahoma campus one day to recruit. A man driving in front of her turned on his turn signal, went to change lanes, then whipped back in front of her and flipped her off. Because of his unsafe lane change and aggressive driving behavior, Tatum turned on her emergency lights and pulled the guy over. As she got out of her unit, she could see him mouth “oh, shit!” in the mirror. When she got to his driver’s side window, he kept going on and on about how sorry he was, but that kind of aggressive driving was not surprising in city traffic (Tatum interview).

In contrast, at the opposite end, one day a lady drove past Tatum while she was pulled over on the shoulder after having just completed a traffic stop. The woman pulled over onto the shoulder in front of Tatum’s unit and stopped. When Tatum approached the woman to find out what was going on, the woman was apologizing saying she knew she did not have her insurance card. She had pulled over and turned herself in, and Tatum had not even attempted to stop her (Tatum interview)!

In a similar instance, she stopped a lady one morning for speeding who, as Tatum walked to the window, said “I know, I had my head up my ass; ” Tatum just smiled and told her to slow down. She says that one of the best aspects of working traffic for the highway patrol was that each trooper was allowed to use his or her own discretion in writing tickets or arresting someone (Tatum interview).

Working as trooper for Tatum meant that she was sure to encounter every type of person and personality. She tells this story of working out in the county one night, and a man drove by her, flying up a dirt road. He turned up a driveway to a house and pulled behind the barn. Tatum asked the people who lived there if they had any idea who the man was. The family told her they did not know this person, so Tatum went around to the barn and told him to come out. She told the man he was under arrest, put him in handcuffs, and started driving toward the jail. As if his reckless speed and trespassing were not enough, the man tried the entire way to the jail to convince Tatum to go out with him. He was enamored by the fact that she was the first one to catch him at his little game of running from the police (Tatum interview).

Like many young troopers, Tatum also experienced a feeling of being untouchable, that sense that no one was going to hurt her, and like most other troopers, she experienced a few distinct moments revealing just how dangerous her job was. Tatum recalled

> I got in pursuit of a vehicle in the middle of the night one night. When the driver finally started pulling over, I heard a gunshot. He had a gun out, hammer cocked, and had intended to use it on me. I put him in my unit and took him to the hospital. He was 16 years old. He was driving a stolen car with a stolen gun.
>
> His foster father called one day and said his son wouldn’t do time over this. A little while after that, I transferred to Oklahoma City. I went back and was working part-time at a nursing home after I transferred, and I got a phone call one night at the nursing home. The department doesn’t give out information on

> troopers, so I wasn't sure what was going on. The caller told me the purpose of this call is to thank me for saving his life.
>
> It was the young man from that night who had accidentally shot himself instead of me calling to thank me. He said he had found Christ and had gone to seminary and was going into the ministry.
>
> While I was happy that he had turned his life, except for the circumstances that night, he'd have shot me before I knew what was going on. There are no routine traffic stops because you never know what you're walking up on.
>
> The night of that incident, I had a dream of how that kid would have come out of that car and shot me before I knew it. It was a wakeup call. People out there wish us harm. Treat every stop as though the person has the potential to kill you because they all do (Tatum interview).

Moments like these are the reason other people will never understand why troopers and other police officers never sit with their backs to a door. They never know what might come up.

Tatum then talked about another call she took about a man sitting on the concrete retaining wall on I-35. She got out to talk to him, and he ran across the southbound lanes of traffic in rush hour. Then, he changed direction and took off across the northbound lanes. Other units arrived and they got in a foot pursuit, and finally caught him. They ordered him to the ground and put him in handcuffs, only to find out that he had just robbed a bank and was wanted for three other robberies. After the most recent robbery, he had driven to a little motel, taken some drugs, and thought everyone was out to get him (Tatum interview).

On another day, some other troopers started a chase on the north side of Oklahoma City. The pursuit continued, and Tatum did not think much of it since she was in the south side of Oklahoma City. Tatum was monitoring radio traffic, and the pursuit kept moving her way, so she pulled over and waited on the shoulder. On the eastbound side of I-40, there is a turn onto I-35 to go southbound. The driver fleeing from the police wrecked and was thrown out of the car. He was laying in the ditch "drunker than a

skunk," according to Tatum, and he kept saying "I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry." Tatum responded, "Well, if you're that sorry, I guess we'll have to let you go." Of course, that did not happen, but Tatum was never surprised at the things criminals would believe and say after getting caught (Tatum interview).

People are not the only cause of problems faced by troopers in the field. Once, Troop A metro troopers had to deal with a pig truck that turned over at the Fort Smith junction. Pigs running all over the interstate, and Tatum said that all the troopers were out their units trying to corral these pigs. CNN showed up, and all Tatum could think of was, *Please, whatever happens, do not let the reporters say there are pigs out here herding pigs on live television!* (Tatum interview).

Showing her sense of humor, Tatum eventually found a stuffed pink pig and put it on her lieutenant's desk with a note that said "Wee, wee, you got my brothers but you didn't get me." She even found a pair of pink pig house shoes and told her lieutenant, "I think I'm going to wear these over to the Puzzle Palace today." He begged her not to do that, because apparently the majors at the time did not have much of a sense of humor, especially when a pig truck completely shut down rush hour traffic (Tatum interview).

Working the road as the first of two female troopers was not only a new experience for Tatum, but also for the troopers assigned to conduct her field training. Tatum said her break-in partners, the field training troopers, were wonderful. They taught her well and did not single her out or treat her differently because she was a female (Tatum e-mail).

Most of the reasons Tatum had no issues with her partners in Shawnee came from the fact she worked well with the troopers out there, and she was the type of person who

would jump into the middle of anything. This was a quality Tatum demonstrated even before becoming a trooper. As a civilian police officer at Tinker, she and her partner went to a disturbance call on base one night. She got out of the car with the other officer, and he asked what she was doing. Tatum told her partner she was going inside with him, and he replied that they had a female officer once who would not even get out of the car. Tatum told him, "Well, that's not me," and went right on in with him (Tatum interview).

When she worked the metro, she had another partner who transferred in and not everyone liked him. He got into fight with a violator one day behind a restaurant, and Tatum appeared out of nowhere to help (Tatum interview). On another occasion, Tatum located the driver in a hit-and-run collision at a residence. The driver was a big man, weighing over 200 pounds, and he was drunk. He did not want to cooperate with Tatum and her partner, and a fight ensued. Tatum ended up on the bottom of that brawl a few times, but they eventually put the driver in handcuffs and placed him under arrest. However, that was not the end of the ordeal. The driver's girlfriend filed a complaint on that "brute of a Trooper Tatum." When the couple came in to file the complaint, the troop commander asked the defense attorney accompanying the two how big his client was. The attorney responded that he was about six feet and four inches tall and weighed around 200 pounds. The troop commander replied that she, Trooper Tatum, was five feet and three inches tall and weighed around 120 pounds. The defense attorney asked, "She?" and then got up and walked out. The couple then tried to file a complaint with the Chief's office, who said he would love to see this go to court so this big man who refused to cooperate when he was rightfully arrested for leaving the scene of a hit-and-run

collision could explain exactly how the much smaller Tatum had brutalized him (Tatum interview).

Along with dealing with unruly livestock and unrulier people, troopers also face the task of remaining calm and professional when others are impolite, condescending, and difficult. Tatum recalls on incident with well-known civil rights leader Clara Luper.

"When I was a lieutenant, Clara Luper called to get a ticket taken care of. She attempted to use her influence to get the ticket dismissed, but I told her the only way to get rid of the ticket was to go to court. At that point, Luper lost it, yelling at me over the phone. When Tatum explained what happened to the Captain, he told Tatum he did not blame her one bit and would have done the same thing" (Tatum interview).

In another instance, Tatum stopped a state senator for speeding and wrote him a ticket. Once again, Tatum refused to have the ticket dismissed and told him he was just like everybody else. Tatum refused to give in to privilege. Her thoughts were that any person who decided to commit a crime would pay for it, not because she was harsh or lacked compassion, but because she had witnessed firsthand the tragedies that could occur when people were never held accountable for their actions (Tatum interview).

Tatum also faced the scrutiny and ridicule that the public sometimes directs at law enforcement. She was constantly being told, "I pay your salary" or "Did you meet your quota today?" With a never-ending sense of humor, she responded, "Yes, ma'am, and I thank you because I get a new toaster!" Other people would say, "I'll pray for you" after being given a ticket, and Tatum would reply, "Thank you, I need it!" (Tatum interview).

These day-to-day irritations from the public did not dampen Tatum's sense of compassion and care for the public. Around Christmas-time one year, she stopped a lady

for speeding one day who had her kids in the car with her. Tatum told the woman she was going to write her a ticket, which she did. The woman explained she was a single mom, and while Tatum had originally written her a ticket, she said: “I got to feeling so bad that I chased her down. I can only imagine what she was thinking when she saw the lights came on again. I walked up to the car and asked her if I could see the ticket I wrote her. I took it, and told her and her family have a Merry Christmas and slow down” (Tatum interview).

Tatum stopped another young man for speeding one day. He had a driving record with several previous tickets on file for speeding, but she wrote him a warning and told the young man so, letting him know he just needed to sign it. The young man told Tatum in shock that no one had ever written him just a warning before. Tatum knew at that moment that the warning was doing more in changing his driving behavior than any ticket she could have written him (Tatum interview).

As a trooper, Tatum believed that one had to mix compassion with the responsibility of the job doing because it might be taking food off of someone’s table. According to Tatum, one of the best aspects of being a trooper was the freedom to use her own discretion and good judgement. If a person needed a ticket, he or she got it, but a good trooper uses that good judgement to achieve that best end result.

Tatum took the lessons she learned as a trooper about how to treat people and applied many of the same qualities when she was promoted to supervisor. She remembered as a trooper having supervisors who were impossible to please and for whom no one wanted to work. She told herself that if she got promoted, she would never be that kind of supervisor. At the time of her promotion, Major Todd Blish was the

Captain in Troop A, and periodically, he rotated supervisors. None of the troopers she supervised wanted to switch because they respected her. She believed in treating every person equally and wanted to form her own opinion of people, not take on others' preconceived ideas, which usually worked to her benefit. Many of the troopers let her know how much they appreciated her as a supervisor. Another female lieutenant, Betsy Randolph, once told Tatum how much she appreciated her guidance. Tatum's role as a supervisor only cemented her lifelong principle of treating other people the way she wanted to be treated (Tatum interview).

Some moments in law enforcement bring great joy and satisfaction, while others bring violence and fear. Some moments burn images and emotions into the mind that can scar the very soul. In speaking of the effects law enforcement has on long-term well-being, Tatum noted that the training makes those in law enforcement perceive things differently from a normal person.

She loved her career and could not imagine doing anything else, but she said that officers and troopers constantly draw from their training experiences. These experiences make officers more aware of what is going on around them, and they perceive and relate to people differently. Tatum recognized that she has seen the good and bad in every kind of human and had experiences that others would never have to endure (Tatum e-mail).

One of the most difficult experiences in Tatum's career came about on April 19, 1995, when a little after 9:00 a.m. Timothy McVeigh parked a Ryder truck full of explosives outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. The resulting blast killed 168 people, including 19 children in the first-floor daycare. In the

impossible days that followed, Tatum worked the morgue, putting in 16 hours a day, and she will never forget those images (Tatum interview).

Tatum recalled that the area around the federal building looked like a war-stricken country with people wandering lost everywhere. Many of those who asked about her experiences said they would never have been able to handle working a bombing or the horrific fatalities, dealing with the wreckage and the twisted bodies. She said "People who overhear troopers and other officers making jokes at such times think we're morbid or crazy, but we have to laugh and find some humor to keep it together. I shut my eyes and I can still see some of it. People have no idea what really goes on. I can still see images of carrying those little babies out and all the bodies. It was devastating. There were not enough parts of some of those people to give their families closure. It was tragic, but God gives us the strength to get through those things and go on" (Tatum interview). It is in these moments that the courage and unfailing will to serve of those like Trooper Tomi Tatum come clearly into focus.

The trying moments were often interspersed with moments of levity, and despite the challenges of the job, it was not all serious business. Tatum recalled she and a few others decided to have a little fun with one of their partners. All Oklahoma Highway Patrol cars have "STATE TROOPER" on the back in black lettering. One night as a joke, they took some black electrical tape and taped over part of the lettering so it so it read "STATE POOPER." Tatum and the others let their partner drive around all night with "STATE POOPER" on the back of his unit. He finally made it down to the county office and one of the troopers asked him if he had seen the back of his unit. He said no and asked what was wrong with it. Then he went around to the back of his patrol car to look

and started laughing. He could not believe he drove around like that all night. Such defacing of patrol cars is now a tradition for which Tatum and her partners are only perfunctorily apologetic.

As one of the first women to be a state trooper, Tatum described her experiences as mostly positive. She had a few moments when she had to stand up for herself. Tatum was assisting on interstate when the lieutenant in charge sent her back to the road even though she was one of the first units to arrive. She confronted him about it, and he told her that he was a man and it is a man's job to help protect women. She told him, "I went through the same academy as everybody out here and when I get to the point where I can't do my job, I will turn my badge and gun in" (Tatum interview). But that was a rare incident, and many troopers would rather have her as backup than some of the men.

The only ongoing problem she had was the uniform. Women did not have their own uniforms, but instead they wore men's shirts and ties, which were too big and too long. It took Tatum speaking up to the Chief to get women's uniforms and for the leaders to realize that women were built differently from men and needed different considerations in uniforms (Tatum e-mail).

Tatum is a woman who believes that *right is right and wrong is wrong.* She is a woman of faith and strength, who relies on her faith. She holds to her values and believes she could not make it through a day without her relationship with the Lord. Tatum is the primary care-giver for her mother, who is currently suffering from sundowners, a type of dementia. In her free time, she enjoys art and woodworking, and she believes that at the end of the day, nothing will matter but one's personal relationship with God and taking care of each other.

Chapter 4: Retired Trooper Judy (Jordan) Haley - Troop O

During a recent exchange with Retired Trooper Judy Jordan, now Judy Haley, she shared her two favorite quotes that have been the guiding principles of her life. “Hi, Charity. I am finally feeling better and trying to get packed to go spend time at my lake house. Here are my two favorite quotes. The first one is the Golden Rule: ‘Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.’ The world would be a much better place if people would live by this rule. Even when I had to arrest the most hardened criminals, I would treat them professionally and respectfully, and that may be why I seldom had problems staying out of fights. My second favorite quote was by Abraham Lincoln. ‘And in the end, it isn't the years in your life, but the life in your years’. PS: I think I may have taken this too seriously, and sometimes it seems like I have lived enough life for three people” (Haley e-mail).

These days, retired and living in Texas, Haley lives her life to the fullest, seeking both solitude and adventure in nature. While still a commissioned special officer in Texas, Haley spends a good deal of her time on Greenbelt Lake, fishing and kayaking, even during the colder winter months. In the summer, she adds stand-up paddle boarding, hiking, and camping to her list. Despite of the trials she has experienced, both in her personal and professional lives, Haley exudes a sense of joy and genuine caring for others. She is easy to talk to and has experienced such a wealth of life that one cannot help but be fascinated by her (Haley interview).

At times, it is almost impossible to believe that this outdoorsy, adventurous woman was one of the few who would take on the challenge to become one of the first state troopers of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol (OHP).

Haley was born in Clinton, Oklahoma, in December 1955 and was raised in the small town of Cordell in southwest Oklahoma with one sibling, an older brother, who would influence her decision to become a trooper. In school, Haley enjoyed math and science, as well as music. She had the choice of joining the band or playing basketball in school, so she chose band, since she had a hand-me-down trombone from her brother (Haley e-mail).

As a child, Haley wanted to be either an astronomer, an oceanographer, a professional musician, or an Olympic swimmer. Her high school counselor told her she wasn't good enough in math, so astronomy was out of the question, and Oklahoma was a long way from the ocean (Haley interview). When it came time to make a decision about college, Haley recounted that she came from a poor family, but she was good on the trombone. "I mainly played jazz and was in the marching band, concert band, and jazz band. And I was also in a church group called the Joyful Noise that was a contemporary Christian group. We were on live television in Mexico. One year, we went up to Colorado and toured all around Colorado" (Haley interview). Her talent as a musician allowed her to pursue her college degree. Haley accepted a full-tuition, four-year scholarship to Southwestern Oklahoma State University at Weatherford. In order to keep her scholarship, she was required to major in music, so she obtained a Bachelor of Music Education after four years at college (Haley e-mail).

After graduating from college, Haley accepted a job as a band director. She had one year of band directing in the small northwest town of Billings, Oklahoma, then known as the home of Governor Henry Bellmon (Haley interview). Haley's view of the world changed during first experience teaching school. According to Haley, in Billings,

75% of the students were from divorced families. Haley had never been around divorced families, and she began to understand her students' struggles often started at home (Haley interview). She recounted planning half-time performances for Friday night football games only to find that half the kids were missing when it came time for the game because they had to go with the other parent. Moreover, being such a small town, all the kids went to one school, and Haley taught first through 12th grade band. She laughingly remembered enjoying the students and said, "It was an experience" (Haley interview).

In the summer of 1979, after her first year as a band director, Haley got a summertime job closer to home dispatching at Weatherford Police Department, and that is when she got excited about law enforcement. She said of those times, "I liked the challenge of the job so well, I stayed a dispatcher and never went back to being a band director. I became more interested in law enforcement while being a dispatcher. I hinted that I would like to be a Weatherford PD police officer, but generally women were not accepted back in those days, only seen as office people" (Haley interview).

Haley expressed an interest in applying to the Weatherford Police Department and was told that Weatherford had never hired a woman. While she could have applied at Weatherford, Haley did not want the work environment to feel awkward, so she applied for the OHP, which had begun hiring women. In the pursuit of becoming a trooper, Haley had an excellent support system in her brother, who was a trooper in the Weatherford area and encouraged her to apply for the next OHP Academy (Haley e-mail). It was Webb and other troopers who dropped by the Weatherford Police Department station that made Haley realize she could become an Oklahoma State Trooper. She had heard there were two women on the Oklahoma Highway Patrol at that time, Tomi Tatum and Freda

Daughtery. Moreover, Haley was widely liked and accepted by the troopers in the area (Haley interview).

Her brother, Trooper John Webb, married the daughter of Trooper Curtis Rushing, a legend in the OHP, known as the Weatherford Bear. Rushing's brother Keith was also a trooper, and they all encouraged Haley to apply (Haley interview).

After applying for the patrol in late 1979, Haley was chosen immediately to attend the 38th Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy. She went through with another woman named Carla Wofford, who was about her age, around 24, and had three kids. Haley recalls being amazed that a young woman with three young children worked and fought her way to becoming a State Trooper. In Haley's words, "Female troopers with kids are the real super troopers." Wofford would leave the patrol three or four years later after remarrying to raise her family (Haley interview).

Haley enjoyed the academy. Ironically, she was accepted into the academy with her former boss, the Chief at the Weatherford Police Department where she was not encouraged to apply. Haley credits her time at Weatherford as preparing her for the academy. "Having been a dispatcher for about eight months before the OHP Academy prepared me in a lot of ways, such as the 10-code and traffic laws, and how to talk on the radio" (Haley interview). These skills would prove invaluable in helping Haley earn her place in the 38th Academy.

The 38th academy was a 16-week course. Haley felt like a natural in the academy. She loved it and loved the physical part of it, but she recalled being tired most of the time (Haley interview). She remembered struggling somewhat with the jiu-jitsu and ground fighting, but her brother had prepared her ahead of time for the mental stress by

reminding her that all of the academy is kind of test to see if a person has not only the physical strength but the mental stamina to be a trooper. It's a head game and a mindset. Haley had the correct mindset, and when Tac Officers yelled and criticized or demanded things, she took it all as the head game it was, telling herself, "They can't kill me" (Haley interview). She went on to say of her time in the academy:

> I enjoyed it. I never cried during the academy, but I did during Texas. I was rough and tough and not afraid of anything. And I was used to being yelled at because I had strict parents. It was only 16 weeks, but I liked it. My biggest problem was being so damn shy that, when we did have free time, I didn't know what to talk about. I wanted to do more push-ups or something (Haley interview).

Haley also remembered the structure and discipline, as well as some of the lighter moments.

> The OHP Academy was very military with lots of call-outs, no weekends off for the first three weeks, polishing the floors and baseboards with a toothbrush. They would call us out in the middle of the night into the hallway to stand out there and tell jokes. I had to write home to my mom to send me some jokes because I didn't know any jokes. And a lot of the jokes were racial or sexual or just dark. I remember standing out in the middle of the hall one night and it was my turn to tell a joke to the head Tac Officer, so I said 'What has 42 teeth and hides a monster? Your zipper.' I think I put him in his place. These days we'd be charged with sexual harassment, but back then everybody laughed. We were also taught cussing was ok because for some people on the road, that was the only language they understood. There are people who won't understand you being polite and professional, so you would have to communicate in a different way (Haley interview).

Overall, Haley's experiences in the academy left her feeling well trained and ready to work the road in her first assignment -- Canadian County.

Haley left the academy and headed to El Reno in south-central Oklahoma. This was during the height of the oilfields in the state, and there were plenty of tent cities and truck traffic to make work interesting (Haley interview). Released after only two months of field training, Haley loved working the road. However, her eagerness to get out and

stop cars was hindered by a mileage restriction of 50 miles per day. To get around this, she would stay at her house and listen to the scanner so she would be the first to know of any crashes or chases. She even slept with the scanner on at night so she would not miss any of the action in the troop (Haley interview).

One of her favorite activities when working was the road block. She said, “We used to like to set up safety roadblocks; we’d pick a road anywhere and go to work.” Getting out and working with other troopers on safety checkpoints like that gave the public a chance to see that OHP troopers were friendly, professional, and concerned for the safety of all motorists on the road (Haley e-mail).

Haley’s first years, however, were not without struggles and challenges. Within the first year, Haley got into the pursuit of a pickup truck. When the driver finally pulled over, he refused to get out, so the trooper who backed up Haley helped her get the driver out and into handcuffs. As it turns out, he was a wealthy local farmer and rancher, a fairly powerful individual, and complained to a legislator that Haley had beaten him unmercifully with her nightstick. The irony of this accusation was that Haley did not own a nightstick at the time. The legislator, and consequently the Highway Patrol brass, believed the farmer and investigated Haley all around El Reno but came up with nothing but positive opinions about her. This episode, along with other similar occurrences, had a far-reaching effect in the patrol, resulting in a policy change that made it so that the patrol would no longer take a complaint based solely on word of mouth or powerful people in high places. Complaints would require a signed affidavit for the patrol to pursue an investigation (Haley interview).

Haley, while receiving a largely positive reception from the public, also shocked a few who had never heard of such a thing as a female state trooper. While she was working the road, the public sometimes had a strange response. When Haley came on the patrol, she was 23 years old and a petite, youthful-looking blonde. During the first few years, at only 24 or 25 years old, she stopped cars and the drivers thought she was a little kid (Haley interview). Many were surprised that Oklahoma's finest now included women, let alone women of her size and stature. However, it would only take one time trying to get the best of her for the public to realize that what she lacked in size, she made up for with professionalism, determination, and skill.

Much like the experiences of other troopers at the time, a large part of Haley's troubles came from truck drivers. Several of her neighbors were truck drivers, one of whom had a CB radio and would report on her comings and goings. She was talked about among truck drivers all the way to California on I-40. Like many other troopers at the time, she had a CB radio in her patrol unit and often overheard the "Smokey reports," slang for troopers working a particular area or road. Haley once even overheard a truck driver she had stopped telling people over CB that Haley had given him her phone number (Haley interview).

The rarity of a being a female trooper often attracted much attention from the general public as well. Early in her career or any time she moved to a new assignment, local citizens often stared at Haley in restaurants because people were so shocked to see a female trooper. She would just wave or make friendly conversation, a strategy that made her a well-liked and respected figure in the community (Haley e-mail).

Some common encounters faced by troopers did surprise Haley, however. She recalls being startled when the occasional female driver might reveal slightly more of her breasts or legs, thinking the approaching trooper was going to be a male officer she might distract with her attributes (Haley interview).

After five years working Canadian County, Haley went on to work in Troop B, the Tulsa Metro area, and then to south Tulsa County. There were many differences between working rural Canadian County and the Tulsa Metro. Haley remembers those days in El Reno were at the height of the oilfield days with the tent cities, lots of crashes and call-outs, and snow and ice storms, but she worked by herself. Of working in the metro, Haley stated, "In Tulsa metro, at night, I'd stop a car on the interstate, and all of sudden I have all these backup units. I thought, *'I don't need you, and I don't want you, what are you doing here?'* I was so used to working by myself that it was really different" (Haley interview).

While living in El Reno, Haley married a fellow trooper. They had made the decision to move back to Tulsa. For various reasons, things did not work out and they ended up getting a divorce. Shortly thereafter, Haley was transferred to the OHP's aircraft division in Oklahoma City. She worked in Troop O for three years, and remembers that the troopers in the area worked aircraft assignments every chance they got because it was an opportunity to work together with their partners, which was rare. They could get 15 to 20 contacts in an hour, a task that could take hours on patrol by oneself (Haley interview).

Haley's transfer to Troop O is yet another example of how this determined, dedicated woman made the decision in her life to never let anything hold her back. Haley

recounted the circumstances that brought about her getting her pilot's license. In 1988, she was working in Tulsa on a rainy Friday afternoon. She was working a crash on Yale and I-40 and had just finished picking up some cones and sat in her patrol car waiting for the wrecker to clear the scene when she got hit by a drunk driver doing 70 miles an hour. The drunk driver was laughing and joking as he was being arrested for causing a collision that very well could have cost Haley her life. If the drunk driver had hit her car five seconds earlier, Haley still would have been standing outside of her patrol vehicle and would likely have been killed. However, not the kind of person to cry about her bad luck, Haley used her worker's compensation settlement to get her private pilot's license and instrument rating. Not long after receiving her license, an opening in Troop O in Oklahoma City became available, but nobody seemed to want it. One day in Tulsa, she ran into Department of Public Safety Commissioner Bob Ricks and asked why the spot hadn't been filled. Ricks didn't even know about the opening and told Haley he would look into it. Then, in December, Haley received notice that she had received the open spot (Haley interview).

Working in the aircraft division was a unique challenge, from looking for marijuana fields to working traffic to going on manhunts. Haley flew around 50 hours a month and spent much of her down time studying. She eventually got her commercial and multi-engine licenses as well (Haley interview).

After 15 years on the patrol, Haley took a job flying corporate. She had intended to fly commercial but did not meet the vision requirements due to having Lasik eye surgery, so she stayed corporate. She has the distinction of being the first and only female pilot for the Highway Patrol, an accomplishment for which she seemed destined from day

one on the patrol. Haley told how during the inspection on the day of graduation, for which she was so excited and ready to get to work, she had her nametag on upside down. The Commandant of the Academy, Captain Webb, while pointing out her little problem in time for her to correct it before the ceremony, asked if she would be interested in aircraft. Haley told Webb that she would love to fly but wanted to go out and get some experience working the road before going to a special service. While Webb clearly had faith in her ability to learn to fly, the theory of the patrol at the time was that women would be safer in other assignments as opposed to just working the road, but Haley could not wait to work the road, so to the road she went (Haley interview).

During her time with the OHP, Haley didn't have many instances where she felt singled out because she was a woman. She recalls that she was treated like one of the guys. At one time, one trooper did make a comment about her being a woman, but Haley challenged him to a mile and half race, and he got embarrassed and never said anything else. Haley's take on the encounter was that it was 1980, and some of the male troopers didn't know quite what to think of the women on the patrol. It was a learning process for everyone (Haley e-mail). Like everyone else in the profession, Haley also faced the typical dangers of a road trooper. From non-compliant arrestees to drunk drivers and people just not paying attention, Haley did not remember ever being in fear of her life while working the road. She recalled that after the fact there were probably situations that could have gone badly, but while she was working the road she had no fear. She said, "I do remember one time in aircraft I was called to a manhunt near Ardmore and I was circling in this wide open area with hills and trees and I saw the guy way up in the tree, and I'm telling the troopers how to come in to where he was. They got the guy down out

of the tree, but he had some type of rifle with him, an AR-15 or something, so he could have very easily shot at me while I was circling him in the tree" (Haley interview).

Later on, after seeing a lot of bad things happen to good troopers just doing their jobs, Haley felt more fearful working in Texas than she did when she was young working in Oklahoma.

As if one law enforcement academy wasn't difficult enough, after nine years of flying a corporate aircraft, Haley felt the call to go back to her career in law enforcement. During her time as a corporate pilot, Haley experienced a great deal of boredom, waiting around for the call to fly, so she began working out quite a bit to pass the time. She ran her first marathon in Oklahoma City at the age of 46 (Haley interview). Her background and excellent physical condition made her an outstanding candidate for the Texas Highway Patrol when she applied for their academy at age of 48. Haley was accepted and spent 27 weeks learning just how much had changed in the past nine years. One of the first surprises for her was that Texas had hundreds of women troopers, and she was in the minority being a white female. Most of the other women were Hispanic or African American and had prior military experience (Haley interview). Haley's academy class started out with over 100 cadets and graduated about 85; she started with 13 women and graduated with 11 (Haley interview). Of the her experience in the Texas academy, Haley said, "It was like learning a whole new language and studying to be an attorney at the same time, plus trying to learn all the new technology" (Haley interview).

Out of the academy, Haley was stationed in Dalhart, Texas, in the northwestern portion of the state. Once on the road, Haley noticed significant differences between the way troopers worked in Texas and Oklahoma and how they were allowed to carry out

their day-to-day tasks. For example, in Oklahoma safety checkpoints were a regular occurrence based on a spur of the moment decision. In Texas, it was against policy and procedure to have a safety checkpoint. All checkpoints had to be authorized and the media had to cover them (Haley interview). Moreover, aircraft could not work traffic in Texas, which was one the division's primary assignments in Oklahoma. In Texas, aircraft is responsible for surveillance on the border, transportation, and other such tasks.

With Texas DPS, Haley worked as a road trooper for three years before going into commercial vehicle enforcement for one year, then went into aircraft, where she learned to fly helicopters and had assignments at the border. Especially in regard to aircraft, Haley recalled that most of their time was spent in training and learning about new technology. Everything was really strict and had to be precisely logged in Texas. Of flying in Oklahoma, Haley said,

> In Oklahoma I could go get in the plane and fly whenever I wanted to. I went out one night, and it was full moon was out. I get airborne, and I hear that a plane had just gone down somewhere near Norman, between Moore and Norman, and they said mayday mayday mayday. So, I ended up on a search for a downed aircraft about 10:00 or 10:30 at night. I was just flying for fun, as well as to brush up and train on night flying skills, but I actually found them. I saw the SOS lights. The wings had been clipped off by the trees they hit. They'd run out of fuel and crash landed in a field. I was a member of the 99s, a female pilot organization, and they gave me female pilot of the year award that year for that mission (Haley interview).

Aircraft was a hard assignment in Texas. Haley started flying for Texas in Denton, where she got her helicopter license then worked the border, Del Rio, Austin, and Midland, but it was mostly on the border. She was not home much, and she noticed that many of the pilots were retiring because they were tired of going to the border. Like some others, Haley had the added expense of keeping up two houses, thanks to living in

Dalhart but having to work aircraft at the border. She had no free time to enjoy life and drove many long hours on her days off (Haley interview).

Eventually, she chose to go back to her assignment from a sergeant in aircraft to a road trooper at Dalhart. Shortly afterwards, she met her now husband and got married. After Haley got married, she and James, also a Texas State Trooper, moved to Canyon, and worked Amarillo and Canyon until she was old enough to retire in Texas with full benefits (Haley interview).

Haley considers herself blessed to have met James in what she considers God's good timing. Along with the day-to-day challenges of the job, one of the most difficult aspects of life a life in law enforcement can come from a sense of isolation from the rest of the community, which can include struggles with making friends and developing relationships (Haley interview).

In looking back, Haley said that she did not have trouble meeting people but did have trouble meeting the right kind of people. As a young trooper in El Reno, she had friends in the trailer park but ended up getting burglarized by them. She realized then that it was easier to have law enforcement as friends since it was hard to know who to trust otherwise. She also jokingly recalls that, apparently, she was intimidating to people, something she never really knew. She thought of herself as a strong person and someone who didn't really need anybody, and she was content with that (Haley interview).

When she went to work in Texas, she found herself in the middle of a new relational struggle. She had so much prior experience before going to work Texas that, despite the intimidation of being new in Texas, some of the Texas troopers she worked with were jealous of her. Some of these same troopers held misconceptions about wealth

and her experience, which also caused problems, jealousy, and intimidation in the work environment. Haley noted it is much easier to be friends with other people in law enforcement because the experiences and struggles bring you together in a way that other people sometimes don't understand. For example, some of her friends still don't understand why to this day, she refuses to sit with her back to the door in restaurants or cafes. Having been in law enforcement for over 27 years, Haley believes one's values and expectations are so different and a person cannot unsee all the things they have seen. It is hard to interact with a public whose values are so different (Haley interview).

Despite these challenges, Haley has a network of friends and would not change the wealth of experiences she has had throughout her career. She said "I was always trying to make the best of a situation, even though I didn't like the situation I was in, (the opposite of a snow flake), and wanting to experience a little bit of every adventure, such as at work, being a road trooper, an aircraft pilot, and a federal commercial motor vehicle inspector. In terms of outdoor adventures, I have had the privilege to experience, such things as running, bike riding, swimming, hiking, camping, fishing, windsurfing, paddle boarding, kayak fishing, and sky diving and hunting. I usually describe myself as the jack of all trades, and the master of none, or an adventure enthusiast who tries really hard" (Haley e-mail).

Of her philosophy on how to live life fully, Haley shared that one of her downfalls is that she has always been her own worst critic, and so it really surprised her when others told her they had heard nothing but good things about her. Haley tries her best to forgive and forget the bad things that have happened to her and to live for the adventure and joy

in each moment. She says that she has especially learned that forgiveness wins in the end and brings peace (Haley interview).

Life has moved on for Haley and her husband since they have both retired and gone on to other pursuits. Haley met her husband while working for Texas DPS, and they have been married for seven years. James was a Texas trooper for 41 years and retired as a Corporal in Commercial Enforcement. Much like her own story, James also was hit by a drunk driver while on a traffic stop. The collision killed the truck driver to whom James Haley was speaking. He was in the hospital for six months but was determined to get well enough to go back to work. To this day, James Haley gets a Christmas card every year from the wife of the truck driver who was killed that day (Haley interview).

These days, he farms, raises cows, wheat, grass, and works an occasional security shift. Haley spends her free time in outdoor sports. She likes to hike, camp, fish, mountain bike, windsurf, paddle board, and kayak, and mostly for the purpose of kayak fishing. Not one to sit idly by, she has also learned new skills, like building sheds, remodeling houses, and fixing broken things. On any given day, one can find her in her kayak on Greenbelt Lake, casting for supper and watching the local the wildlife.

Chapter 5: Lt. Betsy Randolph - Troop R

Lt. Betsy Randolph attributes her personal and professional success to her profound belief that God has a purpose and plan for the challenge life presents. She acts by following the words of the New Testament, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4.13, KJV). Randolph's path to supervisor for the Oklahoma Highway Patrol was not conventional or easy. Petite and feminine, it is easy for the casual observer to assume that Randolph is a polite and generous lady who enjoys books, hot tea and gardening. While those things are true, they belie the fiery personality, determination, and grit that drove her to join the military police and later become a drill sergeant in the Army and then a Trooper and Lieutenant with the Oklahoma Highway Patrol. Intelligent and artistic, yet determined and tough, Randolph embodies the opposites that sometimes characterize women in law enforcement.

Randolph was born and spent her early years Artesia, New Mexico, near the southeast corner of the state. Randolph's father was a preacher, and her mother was school teacher. As a preacher's kid, Randolph was no stranger to moving around. She and her family lived in New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma at various points during Randolph's childhood. When she was 11, she and her family were visiting Enid, Oklahoma and attended the church where her father had served as associate pastor in 1976. During their visit, the head pastor of the church resigned and the church leaders asked Randolph's father to take on the role of head pastor (Randolph e-mail).

The family moved to Enid, Randolph's father began pastoring Bethel Baptist Church. Because her parents lived a faith-based lifestyle and wanted to share that with the community, they started a Christian school (Bethel Baptist Academy) and a Christian

radio station. Of her upbringing with a Baptist preacher and a Christian school teacher and supervisor, Randolph says, “I had a very structured home and school life. I grew up in a very strict, Christian home with discipline and rules, and I was taught a Godly, moral compass” (Randolph interview).

Randolph graduated from Bethel Baptist Academy in 1988. From there, she attended Bible college in Springfield, Missouri, but she knew her calling lay in law enforcement. She says, “No one in my family was in law enforcement before me, but to some extent, being a preacher’s kid allowed me to see how man’s laws parallel God’s laws. This also showed me the need for someone to enforce man’s laws, thereby preventing total anarchy” (Randolph interview).

Growing up as the middle child between two brothers, Randolph and her siblings often played games like cowboys and Indians or cops and robbers. She knew when she was five years old that she wanted to be a police officer, and her favorite television show was *Adam 12*, which was about a Los Angeles police officer. Randolph recalls, “I carried an *Adam 12* lunchbox to school I was in first grade. I remember another little girl telling me that girls can’t be police officers, and I told her ‘Well, I’m going to be one!” (Randolph interview).

Along with an upbringing focused on the Christian tenant of faithful service to one’s neighbors, Randolph participated in several sports, developing both her athleticism and her ability to work as part of a team. She says of these experiences, “I lettered in volleyball and basketball—these team sports taught me sportsmanship, loyalty, team spirit, and esprit dé corps” (Randolph interview). These lessons would prove invaluable as Randolph began her career in both the military and law enforcement.

Randolph's path into law enforcement presented its fair share of challenges. Before making a move into her chosen career, she pursued a degree in education at another Bible college in Texas. One day, while she was working as a teacher's aide, she knew with certainty that education was not the field for her. Randolph had been raised in a firm but loving household. However, the stigma that ladies did not go into law enforcement was impressed upon her. She remembers her brothers got to wear jeans and boots to church, but if she asked to wear the same thing, her mom said she was dressed to go to a dog fight (Randolph interview).

She felt like this "ladylike" way of living was not faithful to her calling or purpose in life. She was happy to conform while she lived with her parents, but she knew once out on her own, she had to discover her own path. Randolph also laughingly adds that her mother became her biggest supporter in her law enforcement career as time went on (Randolph interview).

As she took steps to pursue her dream, Randolph moved back to New Mexico and worked for some radio stations there. She could not make ends meet working as a DJ and selling ads, so at just 20 years old, she applied at the Artesia, New Mexico Police Department for the position of detention officer and dispatcher (Randolph interview). The city of Artesia had never had a female police officer, and the supervisors wanted her to go to Santa Fe to go through the New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy, which is similar to CLEET. CLEET is the Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training, sets the minimum standards and training objectives an individual in the state of Oklahoma must meet in order to be a sworn peace officer. CLEET operates a statewide academy to which most departments send officers for training, although a handful, such

as OHP, maintain their own training academies (*Council*). Randolph was living with her grandmother at the time, but when her parents discovered she would be going to the police academy in Santa Fe and then working as an officer in Artesia, they begged her to move to back Enid, Oklahoma (Randolph interview).

At the time, they did not want in their daughter in law enforcement, due to both the dangers and the stigma of women pursuing male-dominated professions. She chose to move back to Oklahoma, but she decided to live on her own. She began working for a few radio stations there but once again had trouble making ends meet. Randolph was independent, and she did not want anyone to tell her what to do. So, in a decision that she now describes as some ridiculous logic, because she wanted to be independent, she joined the Army Reserve and became part of the military police. She recalls being asked on several occasions, "You don't want someone bossing you around but you join the Army?" (Randolph interview).

The challenges of trying to get her foot in the door in law enforcement also influenced her decision to join the Army. She had been trying to hire on with several different agencies, but as in many small towns, she would have had to know someone or have experience, so it was difficult trying to get into law enforcement. The military provided precisely the opportunity she was seeking (Randolph e-mail).

Randolph's unit was based in Wichita, Kansas, and she attended training for her position with Military Police (MP) in Alabama. The MP school was an eye-opening experience. She loved it, and her time there solidified her resolve to follow a career in law enforcement. During this time, Randolph also decided that she wanted to go active duty. However, military regulations at the time required her to serve six months with her

home unit before going on active duty. She returned to her home unit to serve her six months before active duty, but it was 1992, and Randolph had joined the Army near the end of Iraqi war. Her unit was in Iraq while she was in training, and they returned before she could deploy (Randolph interview).

Randolph stayed with this unit for around five years, but she stalled in an E4 position with little room for upward mobility and few opportunities for primary leadership development. She was also married at the time and had a baby for whom to care. She made the decision to join a drill sergeant unit in Oklahoma, went through drill sergeant school, and then served with a unit in Norman, Oklahoma where she had the opportunity to teach at Fort Sill in Oklahoma and Fort Jackson in South Carolina. Randolph describes this time as one of the best experiences of her life (Randolph interview).

Randolph's civilian career in law enforcement began to develop when she became a military police officer (MP) in Wichita. During this time, she was going to school in Tonkawa but living in Enid, pursuing a journalism degree at Northern Oklahoma College. Someone on campus had been arrested and then released, and Randolph went to investigate the story and interview the Tonkawa police chief. Relentless in her questions, Randolph kept asking the chief questions until he offered her a job (Randolph interview). Tonkawa had never had a female officer, and at that time the Council for Law Enforcement Education and Training (CLEET) was holding their training in the basement of the Department of Public Safety (DPS) training center in Oklahoma City (Randolph interview).

Randolph attended the CLEET Academy in Oklahoma City, and it was during her time at the academy that she met her husband George Randolph. George Randolph was a trooper in Oklahoma City at the OHP Training Center, and she would see him in the halls at DPS where he was assigned as an instructor teaching accident investigation, firearms, and law enforcement driver training. She says, "I kept seeing this good looking trooper, and I made a fool of myself trying to get him to notice me. He finally asked me out, and the rest is history" (Randolph interview).

In the first months of their marriage, she was still under contract with Tonkawa, and George was assigned to Oklahoma City. She lived in Tonkawa and worked the midnight shift while he lived and worked in Oklahoma City. Randolph loved her time working at Tonkawa. She says of those times, "Being a police officer in a small town was exciting. Everyone knew me, and I loved the interaction with the town's people and kids from the local junior college. I learned about public relations, building relationships with other agencies, law enforcement experience, but more importantly, how enforcing the law with the cooperation of the public can be mutually beneficial for everyone" (Randolph interview). Randolph learned a great deal from her time with Tonkawa police department, but it proved tiresome.

In the beginning, the Randolphs only saw each other occasionally and did not live together. Their son Bronson was born in December of 1994, so she was able to take maternity leave and be closer to George. Right after their son's birth, she was working with the state regents for higher education at the Journal Record building across from the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building (Randolph interview).

Randolph knew she wanted to get back into law enforcement. So she applied with the city of The Village and Oklahoma Capitol Patrol to get back into policing, but the state had instituted a hiring freeze. But when her son Bronson was four months old, the bombing of the Murrah Building happened. Shortly after, Governor Frank Keating lifted the hiring freeze and made an emergency hiring of police officers. Randolph was one of twelve hired, and because she was already certified through CLEET where the others were not, she went to work immediately in July of 1995 at the Capitol building (Randolph interview).

Randolph worked in and around all buildings that were part of the State Capitol Complex. She promoted to sergeant in 1998, and she moved over to the Governor's mansion and grounds where she worked as the evening sergeant. She remained as the sergeant for the mansion grounds until 2000 when she returned to the Capitol building to supervise the evening shift there (Randolph e-mail).

Around the same time that Randolph returned to the Capitol building, Capitol Patrol and Lake Patrol were subsumed into the Oklahoma Highway Patrol. To accommodate the transition and ensure that all officers were afforded the same opportunities, DPS began running transition academies in 2004 under the guidance of DPS Commissioner Bob Ricks. These transition academies allowed Capitol and Lake Patrolmen who were interested in expanding their duties to that of road troopers to learn the skills and processes necessary for patrolling (Randolph interview).

Randolph chose to take advantage of this opportunity, and she was assigned a field training trooper whose job was to ensure that she could safely and effectively perform the duties of a state trooper. For better or worse, Randolph was assigned to

Trooper Reggie Callins, a trooper well-known for pushing training cadets and probationary troopers to their outer limits. Randolph recalls, “I had a migraine every day I rode with him for the first week because he stressed me out so badly. He failed the sergeant he was training ahead of me. I was so stressed because my job was on the line” (Randolph interview).

Despite Callins’s hard-nosed tactics, he had the safety of the probationary troopers in mind. Randolph remembers one particular experience working with him: “I was working one day and had stopped a lady, and either she dropped her driver’s license or I dropped it. It landed by the car door, and I bent down and picked it up. When I got back in my patrol car, Reggie said, ‘Zero. You’re getting a zero because that lady just shot you in the head.’” At that moment, Randolph understood the danger she had put herself in by leaning down by the car door. The woman in the vehicle could have done anything to her. So while Callins’s methods were stressful, the lessons were invaluable, and she held on to them throughout her time patrolling (Randolph interview).

Randolph learned many lessons from other troopers throughout her career, some in true trooper fashion. She recalls one time working at the Capitol when she had gone up to the Governor’s office. Captain Gary Vinson was talking to her and poked her in the chest. When she flinched, Vinson told her that it wouldn’t have hurt if she’d been wearing her vest. That lesson stayed with her as well, and she wore her ballistics vest from that day on (Randolph interview).

Randolph found one of her greatest mentors and champions in her husband, George. He told her on every traffic stop to approach the car with “A smile on your face

and murder in your heart." Randolph attributes the support and advice of her husband in helping her learn how to be a capable trooper on the road (Randolph interview).

In spite of some of the struggles early on, Randolph worked the road successfully throughout her career. She believes that men like her husband, Reggie Callins, and Gary Vinson made her a better trooper. She gained the confidence to work Logan County by herself. When Randolph transitioned from Capitol patrol to being a trooper working the road, she had to apply, as did all Capitol patrolmen wanting to transition.

Randolph understood that her transition from Capitol patrol to road trooper was not appreciated by some troopers already working the road. They had gone through an academy and earned the privilege of wearing that brown shirt. Randolph had wanted to go through the academy and had applied but a Major told her that since she was a sergeant with Capitol patrol if she chose to go through an academy she was going to lose $17,000 a year to drop back from a supervisor to trooper pay. She hated the situation because she was a drill sergeant; she was in good shape and felt she could make it through an academy. However, she also had a young family to consider, so she chose take the rollover opportunity and go through the break-in process instead (Randolph interview).

Randolph was aware of how difficult it was to become a brown shirt because of her drill sergeant experience. She knew that she would have been upset if that accomplishment had been given away, so she understood the concern some troopers felt with her putting on the trooper uniform without going through the academy experience. However, Randolph proved herself to be a tough, strong-willed, and dedicated partner. She says, "When I leave, I feel like I can leave with my head high. I tried to make

circumstances better for those women who follow in my footsteps" (Randolph interview). She knows she has done her best to be a good partner and has worked hard. While she acknowledged her career on the patrol has been challenging at times, it has also been rewarding.

Randolph has worked numerous assignments since becoming a trooper. She worked Troop A metro in Oklahoma City for some time then Logan county in Troop A rural. She was then assigned to the public affairs office and public information before promoting in 2013 and becoming a lieutenant assigned to Troop R, Capitol complex. She also worked as a counselor during the 61st OHP Academy and as videographer during the 65th OHP Academy. She then returned to Troop A metro as a supervisor and has been there since July 2018 (Randolph e-mail).

She knows from first-hand experience that "anyone working in or around law enforcement will tell you, the most unpopular position to be in on the Patrol is a first-line supervisor, a Lieutenant" (Randolph interview). The responsibilities of declining leave, issuing discipline, and managing workforce often falls to the field supervisor to handle. In spite of this, Randolph has found the position to be rewarding. She says, "You're entrusted with a little more knowledge of the inner workings of the agency, you are given the honor of supervising professional men and women who selflessly serve day in and day out" (Randolph interview).

Randolph is a supervisor who makes herself available to answer questions and assist the troopers who work with her, but she prefers to be in the field rather than stuck in an office staring at a computer screen. She knows not all troopers want a supervisor around, so she spends time working traffic and assisting with calls. She considers herself

a relaxed supervisor, whose only issues in the field come about on the rare occasions when there is a blatant disregard for policy and procedures. She says, “Overall, I trust the troopers working with me or assigned to me. I trust them to do the right thing for the right reason all of the time” (Randolph interview).

When she first promoted, Randolph worked with Lt. Tom Pogue in Oklahoma City at Troop R and then again at Troop A when she transferred to the metro. He showed her the ropes of her new job and made sure she knew the troopers in the metro area. During this time, she was learning her new job and in charge of in-car video evidence. She had mountains of paperwork, a schedule to learn, and new responsibilities to take on (Randolph e-mail).

She admits that her new position ate her lunch the first two weeks. Between logging evidence, responding to subpoenas, and her numerous other duties, she found herself in a whole new dynamic. To add to the struggle, the troopers she supervised were standoffish at first, but she knew she had to earn their trust. Randolph admits she is a people pleaser and wants people to like her. She also wanted to ensure that the troopers she supervised knew she supported them and would do whatever was needed to do to help them during a shift (Randolph e-mail).

Randolph earned the trust and respect of troopers she supervised thanks to her willingness to work hard and to get to know the troopers on her shift. She says, “I had come out to help with a fatality one night, but once the scene was clear, I stood around and talked with them. Three nights in a row, we had fatalities. The guys teased me about being the common denominator, as I worked every night we had a fatality collision. I developed a rapport with them” (Randolph interview). She admits working midnights

was hard on her, but earning the trust of the guys in the metro was essential to her, so any time something happened, she made sure she was there.

Randolph acknowledged that, at times, she overcompensated for the fact she was a female. She had to learn to say no to troopers when they would ask for time off, and no one was available to cover the shift. She had to get used to not being popular all the time. She says, “Sometimes your guys aren’t happy and sometimes your boss isn’t happy with things your guys are doing and you are responsible for all of it” (Randolph interview).

Among the lessons Randolph learned throughout her career, perhaps the most significant lesson concerned how one cares for other people. She recalls of these lessons, “You have to care about people, especially your people. I’ve had some good supervisors and some not so good ones, and so I always wanted to be a good supervisor. Over my 24 years, I have had some great assignments and great partners, and I still enjoy the interaction with the community. You remember the folks waving at you as you go by on the road” (Randolph interview).

Randolph has had moments in her career when the dangers of her chosen profession were crystal clear. She says

> I always worry about my partners. If I hear a pursuit kick up, I immediately stop and pray for God’s protection for everyone involved, especially the troopers. One time, in particular, I thought I wasn’t going to make it home. It happened on September 30, 2008. I worked a day shift that day in Logan County and clocked a speeder southbound on Interstate 35 doing 87 in a 70 mph zone. I turned around on him. Those were the days before cable barriers were installed across the state. I got the car shut down southbound just north of Waterloo Road. It was a Wednesday morning during rush hour. The driver was driving under suspension and had everything imaginable wrong with his vehicle. He stole a license plate from another vehicle and placed it in on his vehicle because his tag was expired. He did not have insurance, he and his front-seat passenger were not wearing seat belts, and when I attempted to place handcuffs on him to take him to jail for his umpteenth driving under suspension arrest, he resisted. A wrestling match ensued and we ended up in the southbound lanes of I-35 on the concrete. It was scary. I

> remember praying God would send someone to help me, preferably before we got run over. It was surreal. The kid was 20 years younger than me and strong. He never hit me. He just passively resisted arrest. No one stopped to help before I got the cuffs on him, but three people dialed 9-1-1 while seeing us struggling. At the end of the day, bad guy went to jail and my hat never left my head (Randolph interview).

It was moments like these when the dangers of this job become clear. However, there are also moments when Randolph has witnessed the impact law enforcement can have on the public.

One of her favorite assignments throughout her years on the patrol has been in the public information/public affairs office. She says of that time:

> My assignment in Public Affairs was probably my favorite as I've always had the gift of gab and enjoyed representing DPS and OHP as a spokeswoman. Once, I met a man at a speaking engagement for the Patrol. He told me he never wore his seatbelt until he saw me giving an interview on TV at a fatality crash. He said I mentioned the victim would more than likely have survived if they were wearing a seatbelt. I could have retired on the spot. My theory about law enforcement has always been about gaining the public's trust—even if it means reaching just one person—selling your traffic safety message each and every time a microphone is in your face or you're on a traffic stop. The idea is to get that person or those people to comply willingly with the law. Now, I won't lie, though. I love working the road: Working crashes, taking drunks to jail, slowing folks down on the interstate, just "Showing the map," as my break-in partner called it. Feeling like I'm making the roads safer for everyone (Randolph interview).

Randolph has dedicated her career to ensuring that those traveling the roads are kept safe and know they are not alone if something happens. She knows that sometimes it only takes talking to someone to help them understand that writing tickets and taking people to jail are only part of it, but keeping people safe is much more the goal.

Along with the moments of danger, Randolph recalls moments of amusement working as a trooper. She tells the story of stopping a man for not wearing a seatbelt one day, around 2006 or so. She approached his vehicle from the passenger side. She says,

> The man was acting all squirrely, hunched against the steering wheel, his left hand hidden between his left leg and the door. I told him repeatedly to show me his left hand. I went so far as to unsnap my Sig Sauer, and I was starting to sweat. "Sir," I said. "I'm telling you for the last time to show me your left hand." The guy smiled at me and slowly raised a stump—his hand missing from the forearm down, and said, "Ma'am, I haven't seen that hand since 1967." Yes, he got the seatbelt ticket and I even offered to "give him a hand" fastening his seatbelt before he drove away (Randolph interview).

In another instance, Randolph recalls a slightly different audience for one of her more amusing moments. When her son Bronson was a little boy attending daycare in Edmond, she had gone to visit his class. Like all kids, they wanted to see her handcuffs. Happy to oblige with something so small that she knew would make the kids' day, she put the cuffs on Bronson. However, when it came time to take them off, she could not get them to release. She thought she was going to have to call someone to cut them off. She finally got the latch released, and all the while Bronson soaked up the attention of his classmates (Randolph interview).

Randolph made it a point to be at school activities and to show her care for the community, whether she was on duty or off. She showed up at football games and band practices in uniform. Her goal was for her community to understand that, true to the nature of the calling, she was a trooper who cared and on whom everyone could count.

Like many women in her position, Randolph occasionally faced challenges as a female and then a supervisor in law enforcement. When asked how she managed those aspects of the profession, she explained that the patrol is not as advanced as the military in that respect. The military had integrated nurses and other support personnel much sooner than most law enforcement agencies, but she notes that the military has been around a lot longer. While in a male-dominated profession, she refuses to act like a man doing this job. She believes all people have strengths and weaknesses. She says, "Women

may have more empathy, and even the presence of a woman can de-escalate the situation. Sometimes the reverse is also true" (Randolph interview). She believes that effectiveness in this profession has much less to do with the gender of the officer and much more to do with professionalism, character, and individual personality traits.

Overall, as far as working with both male and female partners, Randolph feels she has been accepted well and attributes that mostly to her attitude. She believes all law enforcement has a job to do, and it is crucial to present a unified front when facing the public. She also works to be mindful of what other people need and how they feel and how her presence affects those around her (Randolph interview).

While a dedicated trooper and supervisor, Randolph's talents extend far beyond her law enforcement profession. She has associates degrees in both journalism and horticulture, a bachelor's degree in organizational leadership from Southern Nazarene University, and a master's degree in creative writing from Oklahoma City University (Randolph e-mail).

Randolph's endless creativity emerges through her writing and gardening, and sometimes through both together. As a law enforcement officer, there is often a sense of being zeroed in on the profession. Hobbies or pursuits outside the lines of law enforcement strike people as strange and not in keeping with the image. However, she has found that both writing and gardening allow her to express her creative side, and in turn, make her better at being a law enforcement officer.

Randolph mentions that she usually has several projects going at once and has submitted some short stories to different newspapers and magazines. Because she is also an avid horticulturist, she has also published a forestry piece. She has always been a

writer and recalls being a young girl conjuring up stories in her mind. She says, “I started writing at 10 years old. My mom bought me a typewriter with the ribbons and everything when I was a little girl. I also wrote for my college newspaper and the radio station” (Randolph interview).

However, it would be 2009 before she dove deeply into the world of writing, all because of an injury sustained while on duty. She remembers,

> I had been in a fight with a guy and torn up my wrist and elbow. I was off work for about nine months and had two different surgeries, which left me in a cast from my wrist to my armpit. I was going bonkers sitting around with nothing to keep me busy. So I went online and was looking at online courses at the vo-tech. I took a murder mystery course. I had to type one-handed, but it kept me busy and my mind occupied, and the rest is history (Randolph interview).

That murder-mystery course reinvigorated her love for language and words.

For Randolph, language is a puzzle. Language and choosing words allows a person to convey what they are experiencing and feeling, and for her, it is a liberating process. She also loves to handwrite her drafts in cursive. She remembers her mother teaching her how to write in cursive, a particularly bittersweet memory. Randolph amusedly notes that every room in the house has a journal in it so that she can write down her thoughts and ideas as they appear and before the hustle and bustle of the day intervenes.

Over the years, Randolph took several writing classes and had all these pieces she could put together for a book, which she did in 2012. She also joined a writer’s group in 2010 and started a blog called Pistols and Pruners to embrace her love of both law enforcement and horticulture. Amid her writing career, she had some struggles with her publisher, so she learned to self-publish. Now, she and her husband own a publishing company called Two-Lane publishing through which she has published one other author

and additional books set mostly in hometown of Guthrie, Oklahoma (Randolph interview).

Randolph writes mostly mystery stories and helps other people begin their writing and publishing careers. She describes her writing as all over the place, from non-fiction to fiction to articles for the newspaper about gardening. She received her master gardener credits by writing a piece in which the garden plants come alive and would talk to the gardener or each other and solve their own mysteries in the garden. She is also particularly proud of the creative piece she wrote for her master's degree about a female state trooper who was killed and came back to solve her own murder and discovers corruption and all the underhanded dealings going on at the Capitol (Randolph interview).

Randolph finds many synergies between her writing and her work with the patrol. She says, "There is so much freedom in being a writer just like there is freedom in the patrol. Outside of the city in the county on that gravel road, you have enough rope to hang yourself and it can be overwhelming, but if you have the moral compass and incentive to do the right thing, that freedom allows you to express yourself. I get to express myself in writing with all my experiences. It's important to share what you experienced, what you saw and touched and smelled" (Randolph interview). She believes everybody has it in them to write and that to engage the freedom of expression in writing is an art.

Randolph knows from her experiences that tapping into one's creativity in observation and language applies just as much in law enforcement as it does in creative writing. Law enforcement officers are the intuitive interpreters of human behavior and

masters at assessing the human condition. A thoughtful officer can, through the use of language, change what is about to happen in very real situations. She also recognizes that officers carry a burden of experiences. She says,

> We want folks with common sense and a servant's heart, and at the same time, we all have our outlets. It is imperative to have some outlet because your senses are on high alert all the time. You have to have a way to move into a rest state. I hold my law enforcement experiences close to me. I don't want to show the bad guys how we do things or our methods. I'm protective of it. I may slip in something into my writing that gives a glimpse but not everyone needs to know what goes on. The general public doesn't understand necessarily what is going on or why we do what we do, but they do need to know what we go through. The emotions we have seen and felt and experienced will find their way onto a page, and I hope they are true to my voice. I can describe how I felt at the moment. Some things need to be on paper, but only after it can be filtered. We are in a field where everyone else is experiencing the same emotional and psychological struggle. So not only is it important for the public to know our experiences, our fellow officers need to know that their experiences are shared as well (Randolph interview).

Randolph understands law enforcement can feel like an isolating profession at times. Officers often live a vacuum and feel alone, even though they are all going through the same things. She believes women will lead the way in bringing those shared experiences to light. She says, "We are supposed to process the things that happen to us and want to lash out because It's human. It doesn't make us weak or not good at our jobs and while we can't act out we can acknowledge it and find other outlets" (Randolph interview). No officer should feel as though their experiences or emotions are invalid.

Randolph shares instances of the intense emotions felt by law enforcement. In 2014, an assailant entered Vaughan Foods in Moore, Oklahoma, wielding a knife. The individual proceeded to behead one female employee and critically injure another. The assailant was a man whom Randolph had encountered and fought with several years prior. She was interviewed by Geraldo after the Moore incident and said that she wished she had killed the guy when she had the chance. Opinions varied on whether or not she

should have made such a statement; however, she was speaking from a place of deep and emotion and guilt. Randolph acknowledges that she had to come to the point where it was "ok to feel the way I felt" (Randolph interview).

Randolph recognizes that she feels things deeply, especially the things she sees on the job. Rather than a hindrance, she allows these moments to be places of community, shared experience, and strength. She tells the story of sharing at a law enforcement conference that she cried with people when she made next of kin notifications. She was willing to get down in the weeds with them, to grieve, and to recognize the people who are hurting because of what they see every day. She says, "Everyone carries the job, and that can manifest itself in negative ways, as opposed to what happens when I can be with someone in the space they are in. We won't have to carry it as much. Emotions are energy and we carry them with us. You can experience it or you can fight it. We can have moments of empathy and compassion or we can drag it around until it kills us" (Randolph interview).

Randolph's own experiences are her guiding principles when it comes to acknowledging human experience. She says, "Maybe I let too much in when I first hit the road, and then I went the other way. Now everything seems to have come full circle. I feel more and experience things deeply. I never felt empathy for someone who lost a mom until I lost my own, and then I realized how much it changes you, watching someone suffer from cancer. I've had to learn the hard way over the years the lessons of grief and sorrow. I had to learn in the military too what it was like to deal with people who were broken and hurt. Then I wanted people to acknowledge me even when I myself was broken" (Randolph interview). She knows that compassion for the public and the self

is the key to human relationships and understanding, whether personally or professionally.

Randolph acknowledges the patrol has been a rewarding and challenging profession. For her, ending a shift, hanging up her gun belt, and looking in the mirror and knowing she was called to this occupation and knowing she made a difference that day has been the most satisfying aspect of her career. She also loves feeling a part of the community. She says, “Of course, seeing people wave at you—with all of their fingers—is pretty special also. To know the community as a whole supports and appreciates what we do, that’s pretty rewarding” (Randolph interview). In her spare time, when she isn’t working for the patrol, writing, gardening, and playing with the grandbabies, Randolph enjoys motorcycle riding, playing the guitar, reading, traveling, and participating in activities in her church and community (Randolph interview).

Chapter 6: Trooper Lateka Alexander - Troop R

Trooper Lateka Alexander abides by two fundamental principles: “When you are willing to do what others won’t, God will use you to accomplish what others can’t” and “Life isn’t fair, but it’s still good” (Groeschel and Brett). When meeting Alexander for the first time, most people are immediately drawn in by her open and engaging personality. She has never met a stranger and loves talking to the diverse people who cross her path. Along with her friendly and warm personality, she is well-spoken and well-educated and can make any visitor to the Capitol with whom she is speaking feel like he or she is the most important person in the room.

Because of her friendly manner, many might overlook her uniform, complete with a gun belt and handcuffs. No one should not mistake her friendliness for any weakness. Alexander is tough and matter of fact, and no one is more willing to handle any type of confrontation as one of the troopers assigned to patrol the day to day dealings taking place on the state capitol grounds.

Alexander attributes much of her success to her family, who raised her to work hard, be kind, and pursue her dreams. More importantly, her family led by example, showing her how to overcome every obstacle and achieve anything for which she was willing to work. She describes her family in this way:

> I believe coming from a strong praying and supportive family had everything to do with my success. My parents grew up poor but were college educated and did not let their upbringings keep them from succeeding.
>
> My grandfather, the late Forest Anderson, was born in 1872, the son of a former slave who in 1949 was named one of the ten richest black men in America. He was a successful farmer and saved his money for many years and purchased land, on which oil was discovered. He built a school for black and native children because they could not attend white schools. He owned a Ford dealership, cotton gin, a grist mill, and several buildings. There is so much more about my

> grandfather to tell, but you get the point. He showed my dad how to work hard and leave a legacy, too.
>
> My dad did not enjoy his father's money because of his older siblings and the treatment he received, but he did not let that stop him. My parents showed humility and resilience. Did you know my dad was working at Tinker Air Force Base and in 1963 invented the electrical components of the "black box," which is used in most, if not all, planes today? I know, we should be rich! But he was paid $125.00 because he was on federal work time, and that was all he received.
>
> My dad never really talked about a lot of his accomplishments and was more into making sure we were good. My mother taught elementary school for over 37 years, and they basically showed me how to work hard and contribute to society by giving back as well, by leaving a legacy that my children can be proud of. I say all of this because I was told and shown how to work hard, educate others, and be an overall person (Alexander interview).

Lateka Alexander was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and attended high school in Midwest City, where she graduated in 1997. As a child, she wanted to be an attorney or possibly and educator, but she eventually decided she wanted to be juvenile probation and parole officer, as she wanted to have a positive impact on kids who had started down the wrong path (Alexander e-mail).

Always athletic, Alexander played basketball and ran track throughout high school. After graduating, she worked to find her own scholarships and signed on to play basketball at Redlands Community College, where she attended two years. She worked at a local Pizza Hut, went to school, and played on the basketball team. In February of her sophomore year, she tore an ACL playing basketball. While she worked diligently with a physical therapist, she struggled to recover from the injury. However, not one to give up or give in, she spoke with the coach at Langston University, who told her to come to the university and work with their athletic trainer to strengthen her knee. The coach said she would red shirt Alexander until her knee was healed and ready to play again. The coach also made some funds available so that Alexander could pursue her education and her basketball career at the university (Alexander e-mail).

Alexander had significant family connections to Langston as her parents had both graduated from the university, her older sister was a professor there, and her brother was the track coach, so her attendance there was even more meaningful. Because of her dedication to her rehabilitation program, Alexander was ready to play at the start of the season as the point guard (Alexander interview).

Not only was she an outstanding basketball player, but Alexander was also a dedicated student. She attended classes year-round, paying her way through scholarships and working several jobs. After all of her hard work, she graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Corrections, noting that "you appreciate what you have earned by yourself" (Alexander interview).

During college, Alexander became aware of the possibility of being a trooper. In the summer before her senior year, she was going to school, working two jobs, and playing ball. She was also taking a criminal justice class during the summer session, and one of the other students in the class was Oklahoma Highway Patrol Chief Jerry Cason, who was working on finishing his degree. Cason was Alexander's first introduction to the patrol. Cason often talked to Alexander and one of her friends in the class about joining the patrol. Their professor frequently asked Cason to speak about his experiences, and he was often in uniform while answering questions from the other students in the class, as he had a wealth of experience to offer (Alexander interview).

Cason's ongoing conversations with Alexander about the patrol piqued her interest, and she decided to go on a ride along with Pete Norwood, a State Trooper in the Oklahoma City Metro area assigned as the Public Information Officer (Alexander e-mail).

On her first ride along, Alexander and Norwood stopped to help a motorist change a flat tire. The vehicle was a white pickup, and the gentleman driving it was an older white man wearing a pair of *short* shorts. While Norwood was changing the tire, the driver was trying to help but kept his backside kept getting in the way. Alexander recalls laughing so hard that the patrol car was shaking (Alexander interview).

While that first experience was not precisely what Alexander was expecting, she realized how much time and effort troopers spent on helping the public. She decided she wanted to know more about the patrol and continued going on ride alongs, often with Lt. Paul Timmons or Trooper Derek Ware, both of whom became her good friends (Alexander interview).

The fall of her senior year of college, Alexander applied for the upcoming patrol academy. Because of renovations to the Langston University gymnasium, the basketball team played their home games at Douglass High School and Millwood High School, both of which were very close to the Oklahoma Highway Patrol Training Center. Many of the local troopers who knew she had applied to the upcoming Academy came to watch her play basketball, and she developed a bond with many of these troopers. Alexander was also required to complete an internship to graduate, which she completed at the Oklahoma Highway Patrol (Alexander interview).

Alexander graduated from college in May 2001. Fifteen days after graduating from college, she entered the Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy. She says, “I felt like I was in great shape. I didn’t realize at the time that no other black female had attempted to succeed at the academy. I didn’t realize the magnitude of it” (Alexander interview). If anyone was prepared to conquer that challenge, it was Alexander. As a collegiate athlete,

she was both tough and aggressive but also respectful of authority, a trait instilled in her since childhood by her parents. Alexander's mother was a teacher, and Alexander rarely got in trouble as a child because she did not want to be disrespectful to her family or disappoint her father (Alexander interview).

Alexander was the only female and the only black person accepted to attend the academy that year. The academy started with 53 people and included the first Asian-American cadet and the first son of a sitting Governor (Gov. Frank Keating), Chip Keating (Alexander interview).

The cadets were unsure of what their academy days would be like; however, they were informed that they were going to be hell, and they were. Alexander says that she often fell behind in longer runs, a difficult experience for any athlete, but she notes that she was always more of a sprinter, so the fast-paced, long runs were a challenge (Alexander interview). Add up the physical training, the unrelenting mental stress and constant sleep deprivation, and no wonder the cadets struggled physically. However, when the time came to run sprints and circuit train, Alexander's athleticism was evident. She recalls Tac Officer Kendall Johnson saying, "Well, Cadet Alexander, I believe we have found something that you can do well," which was high praise from Trooper Johnson (Alexander interview).

During her time at the academy, Alexander felt as though the Tac Officers hated her, but she realized it was their job to make all of the cadets think that way. Like many other academy graduates, it took some time for the initial impression of those Tac Officers to begin to change. Alexander recalls that, for quite a long time after finishing at

the academy, she could not stand to be around Trooper Charles Cowden, one of the Tac Officers in her patrol school (Alexander interview).

Her academy experiences also provided some additional challenges in that there were no female troopers on staff. Troopers Tomi Tatum and Kathy Thompson would come up to talk with her during the academy, which was helpful and supportive in the otherwise all-male environment (Alexander interview).

Without a military background, Alexander had to learn some things about a paramilitary lifestyle. She learned how to shine boots, properly blouse a shirt, and make beds to military specifications. Even though she had to learn these skills, her years of basketball had made her a team player. One common event in all OHP academies is the "tornado." A tornado occurs when Tac Officers notice that cadets made the beds incorrectly or everything in the barracks is not arranged in exactly the same way, bringing about the rapid demolition of all order. Mattresses are tossed off of racks, shoes are tied together by the laces, clothes are tossed in the hall, and gear is dumped unceremoniously wherever there is an open space (Alexander e-mail). When the cadet rooms were ransacked by a "tornado," Alexander's room was sometimes left untouched. In these instances, she would immediately go to neighboring rooms to help the men clean up, sort gear, and remake beds. She was also willing to ask the other cadets for help when she was not sure how to complete certain tasks or could not finish them by herself, such as blousing and tucking in her shirt.

In the academy, cadets wrote reviews of their peers at various points. At first, the other cadets complained about Alexander because, without any prior military experience and no one to help her, she was unsure about how to fix her uniform. Some of the other

cadets also perceived her as having an attitude, but this came from the fact that she stood up for herself. She says, “I am very animated when I speak and passionate about what I say, and some of the white males didn’t know how to take that. I also believe that some of the men felt like women shouldn’t be troopers” (Alexander interview).

Still others did not care for the fact that she is black. She took this all in stride, attributing their mindset to ignorance, and she knew that some of the male cadets had grown up in areas with very little ethnic diversity where more traditional gender roles still predominated (Alexander interview).

Alexander is a proud graduate of the 53rd Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy whose class motto is, “Following tradition, accomplishing our mission.” Out of the 53 cadets who began the academy, only 34 graduated, and two more cadets quit on the side of the road during the break-in phase (Alexander interview). Alexander was assigned to the turnpike. She was closer to the older troopers she worked with after the academy rather than her “littermates.” She remained close with Trooper Kathy Thompson and was close to a few others until her father became ill (Alexander interview).

Along with the typical challenges of being a trooper, Alexander has faced her share of challenges in her personal life. In 2011, Alexander graduated from Oklahoma City University with a Master’s Degree in Criminology - Corrections. She accomplished this task as a full-time student, working full-time shifts, and raising her children, who were four and six at the time (Alexander interview). She also took on the responsibility of helping care for her father after he became ill. She says, “I was close to my dad. When my dad got sick, he really depended on me, even to help manage his checkbook” (Alexander interview). She went through a lot with her father’s illness, and she went

through even more in her personal life. Alexander believes it is essential to get to know someone, to communicate, and to take the time to discover another person's beliefs and values before allowing him or her into one's life. At the same time, she is a fighter and was not willing to give up on her friends and family without trying to help them.

Alexander's parents were strict, and as the oldest child from her parent's marriage, she was made to be more responsible. Her parents loved her, and her father, brothers, cousins, and uncles always treated her with respect and love. With their example in mind, she decided that in her relationships, she would not accept disrespectful or poor treatment from those who claimed to love her or be her friend.

At this time, two troopers died to whom she had been close, Captain Pete Norwood and Trooper Brandon Babb. Amid the loss of her friends and her father's illness, she also experienced significant difficulties in her home life (Alexander interview). These struggles are one of the many reasons that Alexander believes women in law enforcement need to go the extra mile to look out for one another.

Sadly, this sisterhood does not always exist the way that it should. Alexander recalls being at a women in law enforcement conference out of state with several other female troopers. Throughout the conference, it became clear that the other women did not understand that Alexander was dealing with an ill parent, raising her kids, and going through serious challenges in her marriage. None of the other women with her from OHP were married or had children, and she often felt alone in her struggles (Alexander interview).

Alexander is one of a precious few women to navigate being pregnant while working for the OHP. She believes wholeheartedly that all troopers adhere to the same

standards; however, she says of having a family, “We have to have the kids. God designed it that way, and that’s how it is, but we are held to the same standard in everything else. That’s the only difference in how we handle our business” (Alexander interview). She had her first child about five years after becoming a trooper and recalls that no one quite knew what to do when she informed her supervisor that she was pregnant. Troopers Tatum, Daugherty, and Jordan never had kids, so this was new ground, and no official policy existed as to what to do when a female trooper became pregnant (Alexander interview).

With her first child, Alexander stayed in uniform until she was about four months pregnant. Later with both of her children, she worked on applicant backgrounds, conducted interviews, carried a gun, and remained at work until her water broke. She had her second child about 25 months after her first. At this time, the patrol moved her to an unmarked unit, but she continued to work shifts and kept the same hours. She assisted with recruiting and Troop Z investigations, and still went to training, as long as the classes were not overly strenuous. She feels that she was treated well during her pregnancy and afforded her family leave appropriately, but she notes that the patrol needs a more clearly defined policy for pregnant women, such as the one adopted by the U.S. military (Alexander e-mail).

Alexander’s approach to working with the public is rooted in her desire to help people. Based on her studies of criminology and experiences of life, she knows that law enforcement officers have to approach their job with patience and compassion. She believes in using discretion when making decisions about whether or not to take enforcement action and refraining from dehumanizing violators. On occasion, Alexander

has been overwhelmed by circumstances and works hard to show care and compassion to everyone she encounters (Alexander interview).

One of the most challenging times in her career came in June 2003 when she was involved in a shooting. Alexander stopped a man going 20 miles per hour over the speed limit in a construction zone in the Oklahoma City metro area. The driver had an open container of beer in the car, along with drugs. When Alexander went to place the driver in handcuffs, he would not comply, and they began to scuffle. Alexander says, "He thought my gun was supposed to be his. So when things got way south, and I was able to separate after he had made several attempts to get my gun, I shot him" (Alexander interview). Alexander had fought with the driver, who was drunk and had drugs in his system at the time, and nothing seemed to affect him. He had already had several run-ins with the police at the time of the shooting. According to Alexander, she was angry for a long time afterward, because if the driver had just complied, she would not have had to resort to deadly force (Alexander interview).

While the driver pled guilty to all of the criminal charges, he pursued a civil suit against Alexander. She went through hell for three years, waiting for the civil litigation to be settled. Many people from her community, including teachers, church members, and many others went to the district attorney on her behalf. The defense attorney was attempting to argue that she was in a bad mood when she stopped the accused and had overreacted to the situation. However, video from several other vehicle stops throughout the day and even the previous days, weeks, and months revealed that she was always professional when interacting with violators.

Alexander has gone over that day many times in her mind. She wonders why she only shot the driver once, as no course of fire practiced on the range calls for a single shot. Her thoughts on this are that she saw the driver go down, and so she had control of the situation. She had aimed center mass, as law enforcement officers are taught to do; however, the driver turned at the moment she fired. Despite the gravity of the situation, she is fondly known at the trooper who "shot the guy in the ass" (Alexander interview). OHP use of force experts Reggie Callins and Tim Tipton used her video in training. Despite the driver pleading guilty to the criminal charges, the patrol decided to pay the tort claim to the driver because it was easier and cheaper than fighting a lengthy court battle.

There is a measure of victory for Alexander in the situation, however. Several troopers and police officers have stopped that same driver since her incident with him. He still gets in trouble, but he is cooperative and compliant and shows everyone where he got shot. Alexander even saw him at the courthouse, and he showed her pictures of his children and talked to her. The lieutenant who reviewed the video and completed the report on the shooting believed Alexander behaved professionally and said she was an ambassador for the patrol (Alexander interview).

Being vindicated does not take away the mental strain and stress inflicted on troopers involved in use-of-force cases. Alexander describes the defense attorney's tactics in trying to make her appear moody and with a bad attitude. Of her time on the road, she can only recall three instances where she cursed at someone for their actions.

> The first time I cussed at somebody on duty was on break-in. The drunk I was arresting tried to kiss me. My FTT was there and saw the whole thing. The second time, I was removing debris from the roadway when a semi-driver almost hit me. I had to dive into a ditch, and he ran off the road. I went up to check on him and

> make sure he was okay. It turned out I knew the guy, so I went off. He damn near killed me. The third time was the guy I shot (Alexander interview).

These are the only three people with whom Alexander has had words while working, but she understands the mental stress and strain that can lead troopers to lose their cool. Alexander believes that the department needs to do a better job of regularly checking in with troopers about their mental health. She is in favor of psychological evaluations at regular intervals and better mental health training to help troopers deal not just with significant events like an officer involved in a shooting or death but also the day-to-day struggles of a job centered on confrontations (Alexander interview).

Alexander is no stranger to interacting with confrontational people. Having worked the road on the turnpike, Troop A metro, and now working at the Capitol, she often deals with unhappy or upset people, whether they are the public, another trooper, or a supervisor. At times, she felt like she was treated differently and has experienced sexism and racism. At *all* times, she will speak up for herself. Her thoughts are that she was always treated well and respected by her father, the most important man in her life: "I'll be damned if I'm going to let anyone else treat me in a way my own father never would have" (Alexander interview). She also asks herself whether or not particular arguments are worth the trouble they might cause. She recognizes that everyone with rank is not necessarily a leader. In fact, she was written up once for insubordination because she told a supervisor that he was supposed to lead. Her guiding principle these days when it comes to confrontation is "I don't attend every argument I'm invited to" (Alexander interview).

Alexander has also experienced other struggles unique to women in law enforcement, especially dating and relationships. Past relationships showed her exactly

what it was like to be involved with someone who always sees themselves in competition and who is not secure enough to appreciate an assertive, strong woman. She says,

> Some men try to exert their manliness or testosterone over me sometimes, but I'm not having that. I'm not *a* man, and I'm not going to be *the* man. I'm a woman. I like heels and purses, wearing makeup, and getting my nails done. I'm feminine, and I've never felt like I needed to be a man to do this job. I may have to do some things differently and think differently, but we have one common goal: to go home at night (Alexander interview).

Alexander believes women bring different things to the law enforcement table and the life table, and these are a sense of compassion, empathy, and nurturing. She talks about never having fileted a fish or used a grill, not because she could not, but because there were men around to handle those tasks and so she let them have the satisfaction of being providers and feeling needed (Alexander interview)..

Now, when she dates, it is usually other law enforcement officers or men with a military background because most other men do not understand the rationale behind the choices she makes and why she does things the way that she does things: "Some men can't handle a women with this job, and that's their loss. But don't ever settle. Don't ever water yourself down because someone else can't handle you at your 100%" (Alexander interview).

While years of being a trooper have added some edge to her laid-back and easy-going personality, Alexander wears the badge of a woman who has been through some of life's hardest situations and emerged stronger than ever before.

Alexander is currently assigned to Troop R in Oklahoma City and will have 18 years on the patrol as of May 30, 2019. She has been assigned to the Turner Turnpike, Troop A in Oklahoma City, and Troop R. During her pregnancies, she was temporarily assigned to Troop Z-Auto Theft and recruitment. These days, she enjoys speaking to

various groups and working in the community she protects. She believes a major part of law enforcement is to make communities better, one contact at a time. She finds her most rewarding experiences in helping others in any capacity and calming people during their worst situations. She also takes very seriously the responsibility of being a role model for other young ladies (Alexander e-mail).

In her free time, she is very involved in her children's interests and activities, as well as several service organizations. She is currently a member of four trooper organizations and her sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., which focuses on raising scholarship funds to help community organizations (Alexander e-mail).

Chapter 7: Trooper Amy Cobalt – Lake Patrol

In *Man's Search for Meaning,* Viktor Frankl wrote, "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way" ("Victor" n.p.). Upon meeting Trooper Amy Cobalt, it is easy to see that she has taken to heart Viktor Frankl's approach to life. Down to earth, energetic, and athletic, Cobalt approaches life and work challenges philosophically, letting go of the negative and holding on to the lessons. Cobalt's pathway to the Oklahoma Highway Patrol followed a less traditional route, but through her she work has positively affected the lives of many.

Cobalt was born and raised in Lincoln, Nebraska, the oldest of three sisters. Her father worked for Sears, and her mother was a stay at home mom who worked part-time at the school cafeteria and Target, returning to school to become a computer programmer once Cobalt's younger sisters entered high school. When she was 14 years old, just before her ninth grade year, the family moved to a suburb of Minneapolis, Minnesota, so that her father could continue in his position with Sears. She says of this first experience relocating, "It took me out of my comfort zone. I had to make new friends for the first time, and I went to a progressive school that had sports and lots of activities. It turned out to be a good thing" (Cobalt interview). Living in Minnesota, she took advantage of the opportunity to pursue her love of sports and the water, a passion which would eventually influence her career choices.

Cobalt notes that she never really had a particular calling or felt compelled toward any specific career. She did have an interest in sports and recreation, as well as functional movement. She says, "I don't remember knowing what I wanted to do when I grew up,

but I have always loved the water and spent a lot of time at the swimming pool growing up. I thought I would be a professional lifeguard, kind of like *Baywatch*" (Cobalt interview).

After high school, Cobalt moved to Eau Claire, Wisconsin to attend college, where she majored in kinesiology. The college she attended offered an in-country student exchange program that allowed students to attend colleges and universities in other states for in-state tuition. So, she spent her junior year in the exchange program at the University of Southern Colorado and switched her major to recreation management.

During her year at Southern Colorado, Cobalt met Brandon Hise, a native of Oklahoma, also studying at the University of Southern Colorado. Hise and Cobalt were engaged and moved back to Oklahoma. Cobalt transferred to Oklahoma State University where she finished a degree in recreation management, a degree focused on the management of parks and recreation facilities. Completing her degree required an internship, and it was this internship that ultimately led to Cobalt becoming a state trooper. To complete the requirements of her degree, she interned with a division of the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety (DPS), known at the time as Lake Patrol. Lake Patrol officers were responsible for enforcing boating laws on the lakes and waterways of the state, as well as teaching boating safety (Cobalt e-mail).

Cobalt's husband Brandon Hise was a police officer in Blackwell. Part of becoming a police officer in most small departments in Oklahoma requires the officer to attend several months of training at Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training (CLEET) at the training facility in Ada, Oklahoma. While at CLEET, Hise learned that Lake Patrol was hiring. Cobalt loved every aspect of the job, from teaching to boating to

water rescues. Although she had never before considered a career in law enforcement, that did not stop her. She applied and completed the necessary testing and interview, and with her background in water safety, was quickly hired to help with the hectic summer lake season in 1997, the same year the 49th Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy graduated and began working the road (Cobalt interview).

Cobalt spent that summer working the lake and receiving on the job training; then in the fall, she attended that mandatory CLEET training for all Oklahoma law enforcement, including Lake Patrol. Cobalt's days as a Lake Patrolman were short-lived, however. In 1998, the Oklahoma Highway Patrol subsumed Lake Patrol. Those Lake Patrolmen with enough college hours were reclassified and became State Troopers. They received instruction in aspects of collision investigation and other skills and duties related to working vehicle traffic. Those Lake Patrolmen who had reclassified were then able to remain at the lake in Troop W or could transfer to working the road. Cobalt chose to stay in Troop W, as the water was her passion. She says, "I never wanted to work traffic. I had a water safety background, so that was more of my emphasis. And I feel like over my career I've been able to stick to that. I've done everything I wanted to do" (Cobalt interview).

Before her graduation from college and the start of her career in law enforcement, Cobalt had multiple part-time jobs. As she describes it, "I was mostly working my way through college as a lifeguard, pizza delivery driver, and swimming instructor. I think I have always had a pretty decent work ethic but never thought or wanted a career in law enforcement" (Cobalt interview). Even though she was not drawn to a career in law enforcement, she is proud of the training accomplished, and while taking people to jail or

the adrenaline rush of a pursuit were not her primary interests, her peers recognize the impact on the community she serves. Cobalt is more interested in the safety education and investigation portion of her job. As a Troop W trooper and a member of the dive team, she enjoys the process of locating and recovering drowning victims because it allows her to use technical skills and bring closure to families who have lost loved ones to water-related tragedies. She explains, “We can’t always answer the whys. We can’t explain why people stayed in a vehicle that was rolling backward down the boat ramp or why they weren’t wearing life-jackets, but we can bring the satisfaction of closure” (Cobalt interview).

Even though she had the opportunity to work a road assignment once Lake Patrol became a part of OHP, Cobalt chose to stay with her love of the water in the marine enforcement division. Her first assignment was Lake Eufaula in southeastern Oklahoma. The largest lake in the state, Eufala covers over 160 square miles and draws large crowds during the summer months. At one point, nine Troop W troopers were assigned to patrol due to its size and the volume of activity (Cobalt e-mail). Cobalt worked Lake Eufaula for about a year, eventually transferring Kaw Lake up in the north-central portion of the state because her husband at the time was a police officer in the small town of Blackwell. A year after that, she transferred to Skiatook Lake and remained working that lake for the next four years. Cobalt was also briefly assigned to executive security when Governor Mary Fallin was going through a divorce. In an effort to be sensitive to the Governor’s needs, an all-female protective detail was assigned to Fallin, which meant that many female troopers, Cobalt included, took on the role of executive security personnel.

However, she was soon able to return to the assignment she loved at the lake (Cobalt interview).

During her time on Skiatook Lake, her husband began working as a park ranger in Broken Bow, in the far southeast corner of the state. Cobalt was eventually able to swap assignments with another trooper and work Lake Keystone in the central portion of Oklahoma. She worked Keystone for four or five years while living in Stillwater. The strain and stress of living apart, accompanied by different life philosophies, ultimately led to Cobalt and her husband's divorce. After her divorce, she wanted to move to Oklahoma City, so she transferred to Lake Thunderbird, and worked there until she took on a full-time safety education position in 2016 (Cobalt e-mail).

Cobalt's openly discusses her first marriage and the struggles many men and women in law enforcement face when navigating relationships. Of the difficulties she addresses, Cobalt notes that when she and her ex-husband got married, he was in law enforcement and she was not. She was 22 years old when she got married, and both were beginning their careers. While she believes the impact is different for every individual, she notes, "the job changes you. It makes you more assertive and dominant," which can be challenging to navigate (Cobalt interview). Cobalt also attributes always living apart, coupled with a career-oriented mindset and communication challenges, as significant struggles in her marriage. Cobalt attributes her healthy and happy current marriage to learning from the lessons of her first marriage (Cobalt interview).

While Cobalt's work assignments have been the lake, she is also involved in several special duties, including Cadet Lawman, the OHP Dive Team, and the Emergency Medical Services Unit (EMSU). The Cadet Lawman program invites students

between their junior and senior years of high school to come to Connors State College in Muskogee, Oklahoma, for a week to learn about and experience various aspects of being an Oklahoma State Trooper. The program is highly selective, and students have to apply to be a part of it, as only around 150 spots are available. Cadet Lawman gives students a glimpse into law enforcement training; however, it is also a leadership academy designed to teach students discipline, teamwork, and perseverance (Cobalt interview).

Students who are selected spend their week without access to their cell phones, computers, or their parents, except in cases of emergency. They go through a mini OHP academy that has them up for physical training by 6:00 a.m. and where a lack of attention to detail and instructions results in squats, push-ups, sit-ups, and other physically demanding activities (Cobalt interview). They also experience the TAC (train, assess, council) Officers of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy, who are known for their military-based motivational techniques and speeches. The high-stress portion of Cadet Lawman helps the students learn strategies to control their own emotions and reactions when faced with the feelings and actions of others, a valuable life skill. The students also drive practice driving maneuvers, marksmanship, and self-defense. They ride along with aircraft and lake division troopers and learn the ins and outs of traffic stops, all of which help them appreciate first responders, as well as making them aware of their surroundings (Cobalt interview).

Cobalt initially attended Cadet Lawman as Troop W trooper who would take students out on the boats and show them the responsibilities of the lake troopers. After three years of helping in this capacity, she began attending the week-long program as a

full-time staff member. She now sits on the board of Cadet Lawman, assisting with student selection and planning. Cobalt says,

> What I get out of Cadet Lawman, other than next to no sleep and a few extra wrinkles, is to see the kids develop self-confidence. It's rewarding. I'm over orange platoon, and they go from day one, not knowing each other at all, to getting to know each other and learning to work together in just a few days. They learn the OHP core values and how to apply those values in tough situations. They gain self-confidence and push through some difficult challenges during that week. Some leave before the week is over because they are not yet mature enough to handle being yelled at or haven't put in the effort to prepare for the physical part. But the ones who stay grow so much by the end of the week. To see them at the Cadet Lawman graduation is rewarding (Cobalt interview).

In addition to her work at Cadet Lawman, Cobalt has also been a Medic in several OHP academies. She is often amazed by how long it takes grown men and women in the OHP academy to come together and work as a group and how slowly they learn the lessons that students at Cadet Lawman learn in a few short days. However, she attributes much of this slow learning to the high-stress levels, lack of sleep, and training for life or death encounters. She enjoys the role of medic in the academies because it allows her to use her training as a paramedic to keep the cadets healthy and ensure that injuries are appropriately recognized and treated (Cobalt interview).

Of the academy process, Cobalt attests that all academies, regardless of the staff members involved, ultimately work the same way. She notes of the cadets and their experiences as they struggle through the rigors of the academy: "People don't change, but the academy makes you more of what you are. You show your true colors. We weed out the problem children because you can't change who people are or their core values. The training process evolves, but the message stays the same" (Cobalt interview). That message is that the patrol will not lower its standards; cadets can either rise to the challenge, or they can leave.

While Cobalt did not go through an OHP academy because of how DPS took over lake operations, she has experienced more than her share of stressful training. Even though she went through CLEET and boot camp, she says, “I wish I had gone through to prove that I could and to have that experience” (Cobalt interview). None of her partners doubt her. The universal response among other troopers when you mention her name is “Amy! I love Amy! She’s tough.” Academy graduate or not, other troopers respect her (Simmons interview).

Along with being a Cadet Lawman staff member and OHP academy medic, Cobalt acts as the Dive Team medic and a medic with OHP Emergency Services Unit. Since she was in Troop W, she became acquainted with the troopers on the dive team during drownings. They knew she was a medic and asked her to attend some of their training beginning around 2007. It seemed like a good fit, and she enjoyed the missions to which the dive team was assigned. Cobalt participated in most of the dive training they did and became dive certified, but she decided that she did not enjoy the diving part as much as the medical part, so her primary role is as the team medic.

Cobalt is also a medic with EMSU. An EMT before joining the patrol, EMSU was a loosely formed team until around 2000 when the chief of the patrol gave his blessing for the team formally to become a special service. At that time, EMSU fell under the protocols of the medical director’s office. The team was formed as a state asset to assist with any type of disaster, humanmade or natural, and to accompany the Tac Team and Emergency Response Team on missions. Cobalt used her medic status to assist with 57th and 58th academies, and when EMSU began training on a more regular basis, the team grew in size and became involved with more missions around the state (Cobalt e-mail).

Throughout her career, Amy Cobalt gained valuable training and skills, but at one point, she felt as though something was missing. Having taken the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) in high school, at 29 years old and with seven years on the patrol, she decided to join the Army in 2004. She spoke with a recruiter about what she saw herself doing and signed on to be flight medic. She completed her basic training and additional medical training, then deployed to Iraq in 2008. Speaking of her deployment, she says,

> It was boring at first. We spent three months in training at Fort Sill before deploying, but we couldn't leave. I was with good people, so we occupied our time with games and movie night or playing Rock Band. When we got to Iraq, the experience was eye-opening. People there still live like it was 2,000 years ago. There's no running water, no electricity, and no infrastructure. I'm still not sure if our presence was helpful, as we were pushing values and beliefs onto a culture with different values. But it was a post-9/11 world, and we were there for preventive reasons. Seeing the Iraqis lives, I felt lucky. I haven't had to experience what those people experience. Their soldiers didn't have body armor or up-armored vehicles. When we went out, it was usually to pick up Iraqi soldiers who'd been injured. It made me appreciate what I had, even though I was basically living in a storage container in not so great conditions. I had heat and air, and more than the Iraqi people did. I believe that it would be good for people to go through some kind of training and experience like that. It's a humbling experience that gives you a lot of perspective on what you have (Cobalt interview).

Cobalt continued to serve with the Army National Guard as a flight medic for 14 years. Recently, she transferred to the air guard and currently serves as a medic in the Air Force.

Her tenacity and striving always to give the best version of herself have made Cobalt well-liked and respected in her various assignments. At the beginning of her career, she was the only female trooper in Troop W, and because she was so much younger than the men she worked with, most of them treated her like a little sister, even giving her the nickname "Lil Sis." In some ways, she believes this may have led to special treatment, and she may have been regarded as the golden child, but she was

always a hard worker and willing to take on special assignments and activities. She says, "There will always be those who do not want women around, but I can't think of any specific instances where I felt excluded" (Cobalt interview).

Cobalt feels that always being somewhat of a tomboy has probably helped her in not feeling discriminated against working with mostly men. In her view, the other troopers treated her like precisely what she was, a trooper, and her gender was not an issue. Moreover, she admits that she placed more pressure on herself to be in the best physical shape, the best at shooting and enforcement than others placed on her. She says,

> We put more pressure on ourselves as women in law enforcement. I only felt singled out when Governor Fallin needed only female troopers in her detail, even though some of us had no training in executive security. The only other time I've felt singled out was this year (2019) when they wanted all the female troopers to get together and take a picture for Women's History Month. I appreciate what they were doing, but the approach wasn't good. Sparky (another female trooper) said it best when she wrote that e-mail explaining that we don't look at ourselves as any different. If the women in our communities see us in uniform and are interested or curious, they can ask us about it. I have tried to pull my weight and do my part as a good partner and employee. My family and friends are proud of me and my accomplishments (Cobalt interview).

For Cobalt, most of her career has involved helping others and teaching Oklahomans how to be safe on the water. However, almost every law enforcement career includes a few moments where troopers fear for their lives or the lives of the partners. For her, this moment arose in October of 2016. On October 23, 2016, Michael Dale Vance began running from the police. He was wanted for a series of carjackings, shooting at police, and the murder of his aunt and uncle at their home in Luther. These events were precipitated by a sexual assault case in which he was the suspect ("Police Reveal" n.p.).

Given the violent nature of the crimes, his continued shooting at police, and threats of violence he made in Facebook Live posts, the Oklahoma Highway Patrol

instituted its Signal 1 plan. The Signal 1 plan, once in place, places all troopers on high alert, suspends routine patrolling and day to day activities, and funnels all resources and manpower to the incident ("Operations" 06.02.00).

A few days had passed without of any sign of Vance until a farmer near the western Oklahoma town of Hammon called the Sheriff's office about a vehicle matching the description of the one Vance was supposedly driving. Relatives of Vance had property in the area, and Vance had frequented the area in years past. All troopers in the surrounding counties were assigned to patrol or man roadblocks in and around Hammon. The OHP helicopter, equipped with a thermal imaging and night vision system, flew from Oklahoma City and began observation ("Police Reveal" n.p.).

At one point, the 2007 Mitsubishi driven by Vance was spotted buried under some brush at the edge of a farm, and the farm pickup was reported missing. Later in the evening, the Dewey County Sheriff unwittingly attempted to stop this vehicle on a roadblock because it was dragging a chain causing sparks, a dangerous situation given the drought conditions. A firefight ensued, and the manhunt was on (Cobalt e-mail).

The Oklahoma Highway Patrol Tactical Team was already en route, and the troopers on roadblocks were set up, rifles loaded and ready, to ensure that Vance could hurt no one else. The OHP helicopter had spotted Vance, and most troopers were listening to the radio traffic as the pilots called the pursuit. OHP Tac Team member Brian Costanza caught up to Vance, taking fire through the windshield of his Tahoe on the approach. Costanza ultimately shot and killed Michael Vance, ending nearly a week that had left the entire state in fear ("Police Reveal" n.p.).

Cobalt, who lived in Oklahoma City, was deployed as the EMSU paramedic assigned to the Tac Team. She says of that night, “I was concerned because I knew he would not do down without a fight. We had multiple units in the area, including the Tac Team and air support. I just knew it would be a shootout when we encountered him, and it was” (Cobalt interview). Cobalt also bore the responsibility of examining Vance to assess his condition after the shootout.

In spite of the dangers and stresses, Cobalt shares that being a trooper offers its own unique rewards and opportunities for growth. For her, some of the most rewarding aspects of being a trooper include recovering a victim that has drowned and giving the family closure, rescuing people who are involved in floods or their boat has capsized, and the last day of Cadet Lawman when the cadets share the impact the program has had on them and their belief in themselves. In addition to being challenged as a professional, being a trooper has given Cobalt the opportunity to grow personally. Through her work, Army deployment, and search for personal excellence, Cobalt has learned that being self-sufficient and happy with yourself is critical in developing strong relationships of all kinds. She says of her approach to relationships, “I put it all out there, whether its friends or partners. I communicate who I am and what I want, and people know what I do and respect it. I have also relaxed a bit since I’m within three years of retiring. I’m able to separate myself from the job and put my marriage and friendships as a priority” (Cobalt interview). In all aspects, Cobalt believes that open and honest communication with friends and family creates space for relationships to flourish.

Cobalt has a wide range of outside interests and hobbies to keep her busy. First and foremost, she enjoys spending time with her husband Matt, family, and friends. She

pursues numerous outdoor sports and activities, including camping, kayaking, running, biking, hiking, swimming, and pickleball. She and Matt enjoy working together on the rental properties he builds and sell, as well as traveling. Like all true animal lovers, she notes that "her dog makes her happy." She has not yet taken up an "artsy" hobbies but says she might once she retires. Right now, her life is so busy and full that she is "looking forward to the day when she is totally bored" (Cobalt interview).

Cobalt is also a person of great faith in God who believes in fulfilling her purpose in life. She lives her life with a firm foundation in the words of Jeremiah 29:11 and Proverbs 3:5-6: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" and "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." Her faith, toughness, work ethic, and caring and open attitude make Trooper Amy Cobalt the epitome of grit and grace and a credit to all law enforcement officers.

Chapter 8: Trooper Ashley J. Hampton - Troop F

Leonardo DaVinci said, “Learning never exhausts the mind,” and Trooper Ashley Hampton exemplifies the truth of DaVinci’s words by pursuing excellence in all aspects of her life (Hampton e-mail). Hampton is a petite woman with a lively and engaging manner. Clearly, her small frame supports a strong and stubborn personality well suited to her profession as an Oklahoma State Trooper. In interviews conducted via e-mail and telephone, Hampton discussed her career as a trooper and the ever expanding opportunities she is pursuing (Hampton interview).

Trooper Ashley Jo Hampton was born and raised in Poteau, Oklahoma. As a child, she wanted to become an FBI agent. Hampton’s mother wanted her to be a teacher or nurse, but Hampton was a bit of a rebel and had her mind set on law enforcement. Her experiences with the Oklahoma Highway Patrol came mostly from her parents being pulled over on traffic stop! However, Hampton also had a second cousin who worked as a trooper with the lake patrol (Hampton e-mail).

Hampton’s mother was born in Howe, Oklahoma, about eight miles from Poteau, and her father was from Wynnewood, Oklahoma. Hampton has one older sister who works as a middle school teacher in northeastern Oklahoma. Growing up, Hampton played a variety of sports including basketball, softball, and soccer, and she ran track all four years of high school. Hampton credits her participation in sports for developing her athletic and teamwork skills, which are crucial tools in the Oklahoma Highway Patrol (OHP) Academy environment (Hampton e-mail).

In high school, Hampton read a textbook belonging to a college friend who was studying criminal justice. The book piqued Hampton’s interest in federal law

enforcement and criminal justice studies. While she originally wanted to work for the FBI, Hampton ultimately chose a different path.

Hampton attended high school in Poteau, then attended both Carl Albert State College and Oklahoma State University (OSU). She had taken classes in criminal justice at Carl Albert during high school but ultimately attended the school on a nursing scholarship. While going to Carl Albert, Hampton knew she wanted to study at OSU as well, so she took 12 hours at Carl Albert to maintain her scholarship and 16 hours at OSU, carrying a heavy 28-hour class load that semester. While successfully managing that academic feat, Hampton laughingly notes that after that first semester, "I didn't do that again." Ultimately, Hampton's dislike for needles led her to move away from her nursing scholarship to pursue criminal justice as her area of study. She notes that needles no longer bother her, and law enforcement officers often "grow into things - like dead bodies" (Hampton interview).

Hampton eventually transferred to the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) to complete her undergraduate degree. She graduated in December of 2005 with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Sociology. She worked quickly through her coursework to graduate at 21 years old, the minimum age required by the FBI at the time. However, the year she graduated from college, the FBI changed the age requirement to 23 years of age, and so Hampton chose to pursue her career with OHP (Hampton e-mail).

During her last semester at UCO, Hampton was searching for jobs when she looked up the patrol and saw that she would qualify as an applicant. She completed the

application for December 2006, and when asked about how she learned she could become a trooper stated, “I really just Googled it!” (Hampton interview).

During the application process, Hampton worked at Walmart as a cell phone associate. Her manager at Walmart knew two troopers, Scott Hampton and Mitchell Patten, and introduced Hampton to the pair. She went on ride alongs with the troopers and learned more about the job and its responsibilities, but she very nearly missed out when she failed to attend her first testing date because her roommate threw away her paperwork. Fortunately, she arranged for another testing date and was accepted into the 57th OHP Academy (Hampton interview).

Hampton applied only once before being accepted into the academy, which she believes is partially due to her being female. She was one of only two women accepted into the academy that year, and she was the only female after the second day. She admits the other female cadet took the majority of the heat from the beginning, thanks to a rather significant misstep in the manner in which she addressed one of the TAC officers in the academy. Hampton recalls of the other female, “She put her finger up to Lance Schroyer, one of the TAC officers, and said ‘Hang on a second,’ and then everything went downhill from there” (Hampton interview)

At the academy, Hampton experienced her share of isolation as the only female. She had her own room, but she shared a bathroom with one of the counselors. The male cadets were not allowed in her room after a while, even though it was common for cadets to get together to shine brass. She usually had to find someone to sit with during these times (Hampton e-mail).

Hampton knew of a few of the other cadets from her area, and they were on friendly terms. However, a few of the other cadets were hateful in their attitude toward her and did not feel she should be at the academy, or any female for that matter, doing the kind of work required in law enforcement. Despite the challenges of being the only female, Hampton handled the mental and psychological stress of the academy very well. She attributes her mental stamina to being physically prepared and stubborn. For her, all of the getting up early, getting rooms tossed and torn apart and being yelled at was not a problem. She conquered being the zone commander, the cadet responsible for all the other cadets, a position often used in the beginning of the academy to highlight weaknesses in leardership and decision making skills critical to surving as a trooper on the road (Hampton e-mail).

While Hampton was a strong cadet, she struggled with driving and shooting. Although she progressed well with her first driving instructor, Trooper Gina Gillis, she and her second driving instructor had a bit of a personality conflict, mainly because Hampton had a difficult time following the unofficial OHP driving instructor motto of "drive it like you stole it." While this driving philosophy was designed to help cadets understand their driving limits and the limits of the vehicles they would be operating, Hampton's respect for things that did not belong to her made that a challenge. Ultimately, she changed instructors and changed her mentality about driving, resulting in her successful completion of the course (Hampton interview).

Along with driving, Hampton also struggled with shooting, mostly because she did not have any experience with firearms. She recalls that it took her to Friday of the week-long pistol course to qualify. After that, however, she had no trouble with a shotgun

and a rifle. She also performed well in defensive tactics training, an area that can be challenging to any cadet (Hampton interview).

Being the only female cadet in the academy made the day-to-day challenges of academy life more difficult. Hampton's struggles were amplified because she was also dating the trooper who would eventually become her husband, Trooper Scott Hampton. She did not back down from the challenge and succeeded on her own. As she says of those days when others thought she was receiving preferential treatment due to her relationship with Scott, "He's not here doing my push-ups or my running or fighting or shooting for me" (Hampton interview).

While Hampton says she would not go through the academy again, she maintained a healthy mental attitude throughout her training. She found herself amused by the "tornadoes" (the tossing of rooms and equipment by TAC officers due to lack of attention to detail) and reminded herself that she was getting a strong, fit body with all the physical exercise. She managed the stress of the academy by keeping a sense of humor and writing letters to Scott and her family. Her sense of isolation in the academy resulted in a lack of trust in her fellow cadets. Hampton says now that many of the troopers who went through the academy with her have come around and accepted her as a trooper (Hampton interview).

Hampton graduated from the academy in 2007 and was assigned to Bryan County in the southeastern portion of the state. The break-in phase of training proved especially difficult for her, as the challenges of some of her partner's attitudes toward female troopers and the fact that she was dating another trooper, followed her into the field. Hampton performed well during all three phases of break-in, but she was extended for

two extra weeks during phase three. According to Hampton, her Captain in Troop F told her that he did not feel safe with her out by herself at night and wanted to her to have more time and experience. Hampton expresses that she was not afraid of working at night and never had any reservations about going to calls. She says of those days, “I hated the job. I hated life.” She stayed with it though and has proven herself to be an outstanding trooper throughout her career (Hampton interview).

Hampton faced many challenges typical to both male troopers and female troopers during her career. One problem unique to precious few troopers is what life looks like when married to another trooper. According to Hampton, being married to another trooper, now a Lieutenant, has its ups and downs. In the field, she was excluded from conversations held among other troopers who were concerned she would repeat what was being said to her husband. The two rarely worked together, as they were assigned to the same county but to different shifts. Once Scott was promoted, they worked in two different troops, as he could not be her supervisor.

Scott’s promotion and the shift work have had their advantages in the sense that as a Lieutenant, Scott keeps a more flexible schedule, allowing one of them to be available for their two daughters most of the time. Lt. Scott Hampton is the unique position of having gone through an academy and worked in the field, then witnessed the different challenges and attitudes Ashley encountered in taking on the same job. She realizes that many of the male troopers have no idea what kind of prejudice or impediments women on the patrol face. Hampton does not believe it is a lack of caring, and she says, “Guys just don’t get it” (Hampton interview).

Hampton had not been a trooper long and soon she was expecting her first child. She was still a probationary trooper in 2007 when she began navigating being a female trooper expecting a child. As in the past, the patrol was not quite sure what she should do during her pregnancy. She and her husband had a meeting with the human resources department and were told she could quit and go through another academy or take leave without pay. Hampton did her homework and explained to human resources that Title VII forbids the patrol from requiring her to quit or take leave without pay. She threatened a lawsuit and was placed on light duty for the duration of her pregnancy, but she faced a similar battle with her second pregnancy, during which human resources tried to tell her she had to take leave with a disability (Hampton e-mail).

One of the ongoing problems the patrol has when dealing with issues specific to female troopers is there are still no policies specific to dealing with women's concerns such as pregnancy, even though these issues have been raised before. Hampton's daughters are now 11 and seven years old. In spite of the difficulties of navigating her pregnancies as a trooper, she has not missed a school or sports event, and her career as a trooper is the life her children know. She even jokes that the girls know all the radio codes and can go on and off duty as well as she can (Hampton interview).

Throughout her career, Hampton continued to pursue her education. She went back to school in October 2010 and graduated with an MBA from Oklahoma Christian University in 2011. Hampton wanted to pursue a Ph.D. but decided to wait until her youngest daughter was a little older. Then in 2016, after dealing with some micromanaging by a Lieutenant who made work-life stressful, Hampton decided to begin her doctoral work (Hampton interview).

Of managing the workload, Hampton explains that she works around school. She completes most of her assignments on her days off and before and after work, and occasionally during slow times during the workday. The key to keeping it all together, Hampton says, is aggressive time management. She has a planner and calendar that travel with her everywhere she goes. She is currently working on her dissertation project and jokes that to complete an undertaking such as that "You gotta learn some big words!" (Hampton interview).

Hampton's desire to learn has led her to pursue education outside the patrol but still within the confines of her career as well. She has attended schools to become a public information officer and several collision reconstruction schools taught by the Institute of Police Technology and Management (IPTM). In 2013, she attended one of the most challenging schools in the profession, polygraph examiner school. Hampton compares the coursework to Master's or Ph.D. level coursework, with an emphasis on anatomy and physiology, psychology, and how to read the body. She found the school enjoyable but stressful, especially since she did not have much experience in interview and interrogation. She has been a polygraph examiner for the patrol for the past five years, interviewing both applicants for jobs and suspected criminals. Her criminal exams have included everything from murder to rape to drug court and theft. Hampton finds the criminal exams more challenging as the examiner needs to know the motive and build rapport with the suspect. Such exams can last all day and take an emotional and physical toll, whereas applicant exams are limited to four hours (Hampton interview).

Hampton prefers applicant exams these days and has not worked on a criminal exam in the past two years. She recalls one exam in particular near Stillwell, Oklahoma

in which a 16 year old boy was accused of molesting a child. Hampton says, “He (the suspect) drew a hand and marked off how far he into went into her vagina. But he didn’t get prosecuted because he was 16” (Hampton interview). Examiners in criminal cases often face this kind of stress and frustration.

Hampton faces a set of struggles entirely unique for her in as much as being a female and married to Lieutenant on the patrol, her husband’s brother is also a Captain with OHP and a somewhat controversial figure. Both Lieutenant Scott Hampton and Captain Ronnie Hampton are men of strong personalities and strong convictions who stand their ground. As such, not every trooper is inclined to like them, and she sometimes receives the brunt of others’ displeasure (Hampton interview). Hampton attributes much of the ire directed at the family to Captain Hampton being a man of exceptional intelligence whom others may view as a threat. He is currently the Captain of the Traffic Homicide Unit and has been the Captain of Troop Z, the investigative unit of the OHP. Well-spoken, intelligent, and commanding, it is hardly surprising that the family attracts some attention, both positive and negative (Hampton interview).

After spending 12 years from 2007 to 2019 in a career that has been rewarding at times and stressful at times, Hampton decided to pursue another path. Reaching the end of her doctoral work, she will soon begin teaching at Southeastern Oklahoma State University soon. Her current academic work is leading her to explore mentoring in the field of law enforcement and the impact it might have on individual officers and an agency as a whole (Hampton interview).

Hampton understands the importance of having a mentor in a field as challenging as law enforcement. Back when she first became a trooper, Hampton found a mentor in

Trooper Tomi Tatum, who helped her navigate being a female trooper in a man's world. She remembers Tatum telling her, "Tell the men to take it and shove it. Stand on your own two feet" (Hampton interview). The male troopers need to know that the female troopers can handle their own business and show a little fire in their attitude.

Hampton believes in the importance of women in law enforcement. She believes that women can talk to people more humanly and do a better job at fostering communication and community relations. She recalls stopping a woman for speeding recently. She recognized the woman as the widow of a medic in their town who had died from electrocution while working at the family home some time ago. At that moment, taking the time to talk to the woman and check on her, is what Hampton believes matters most in a law enforcement career. She also considers the most important moments in her career have been moments like that one, where she could stop and talk to someone, encourage the person, help the person if needed, and genuinely serve her community (Hampton e-mail).

She has had her fair share of amusing encounters as well. She recalls some of the moments that made her laugh or shake her head,

> Throughout my career of being a trooper, remarkable stories have emerged while encountering the public. From arresting an intoxicated driver on a go-cart to having a drunk serenade me with a female version of "Bad Boys" on the way to jail, the law enforcement occupation has been humorous. I have had a lady ask me where I got my "outfit" (uniform). Men have asked me on dates and to marry them. I even had an older couple try to give me lunch money on a traffic stop (Hampton interview).

Every moment of this career brings something different. Sometimes those moments are amusing and harmless, and sometimes they are filled with sorrow and struggle. Hampton says of the rewards of the job,

> When I am able to help people by not degrading them, [it] creates a positive image for all other female law enforcement officers. The aptitude this profession engenders gives a woman the inspiration to continue providing a natural sympathetic approach to the community. Ultimately, a female trooper helps with police-community relations, which I feel contributes to the overall rewarding aspects of being a trooper (Hampton interview).

Hampton's work as a trooper has enabled her to be a role model for the women and young girls in her community, as well as her own daughters. She exemplifies the woman who is caring and compassionate yet still strong and capable.

Outside of her career and academic pursuits, Hampton enjoys teaching and owning a property leasing company with her husband, traveling, and spending time with her family.

Chapter 9: Trooper Trinity Simmons – Troop ES

Trooper Trinity Castle Simmons lives her life by her creed found in the story of Robin Hood: "Rise and rise again until the lambs become lions" (Simmons interview). Not being one to back down from any challenge, she continues to stand up to the difficulties in life and a sometimes unforgiving and ungracious profession knocking her down. She is also someone who explores new challenges and pushes herself to grow and expand her knowledge and skills both personally and professionally.

Trooper Simmons was born in Altus, Oklahoma in the southwestern part of the state. From day one, she was destined to become a trooper, as her parents were pulled over by a trooper on their way to the hospital for her birth. As an only child, she and her family made their home in Mangum, Oklahoma, a small town not too far from Altus, and she attended Mangum schools from kindergarten through the 12th grade (Simmons e-mail).

A talented athlete, Simmons played every sport for girls at Mangum: softball, basketball, and track, and then played fast-pitch softball in high school. Unlike many other young people who struggled to find their career path in life, Simmons knew from an early age that she wanted to be a trooper. According to her,

> When I was six, I had just finished with a karate class in Altus, and my mom had a birthday party at the Mazzio's there for me. A guy by the name of Bill Runyan, who was a Captain at Troop M and a friend of the family, showed up in his patrol car. He surprised me by picking me up at the Mazzio's in Altus and allowed me to ride in his patrol car to Mangum after the birthday party. I was on cloud nine.
>
> Even looking back at this experience, it melts my heart. Bill and I took a picture that day, him in uniform leaned up by his patrol car and by his side was this little girl with her hands in her pockets trying to be like him.
>
> Many years passed, and he had retired, but I had become a State Trooper, so we recreated that same photograph with a few differences. This picture was beside my patrol car, and he was in jeans, and I was in a Class A (dress uniform).

> Runyan was undoubtedly the most influential person in my decision to become a trooper. Still to this day I carry a keychain badge that he purchased for me as a Christmas present before going to the academy (Simmons interview).

In the following years, Simmons remained close with Runyan and his family as she was growing up, and he continued to support her choice to become a trooper after he retired from the Patrol and became a sheriff. She also had the support of other troopers whom she had known since childhood. She was the flower girl at Trooper Dirk Hammon's wedding, and, as an adult, she went on ride-alongs with him to learn more about the job. When she graduated from the OHP Academy, Hammon was one of her break-in partners (Simmons interview).

Growing up, Simmons participated in her athletic pursuits and activities unique to agricultural communities, including showing horses and sheep and working on the farm with her grandfather, "Papa." Her first job, like that for many country kids, was hauling hay with papa, which was a hot and sweaty task requiring physical strength and endurance to keep the farm and ranch going. Her second job was as a daycare worker in Mangum. Looking back, she said, "I'm sure that job taught me patience; however, at the time it was the toughest job I had ever had" (Simmons interview).

Between her junior and senior years in high school, Simmons also attended the Cadet Lawman Program. There she met Trooper Jennifer Fisher, Trooper Calvin Symes, and Trooper Kathy Thompson, all of whom encouraged and supported her goal of becoming a trooper. She also went on ride-alongs with these troopers to experience the differences in working the Mangum area and in the Oklahoma City Metro (Simmons interview).

When asked about her career choice, she said the combination of her life on the farm, meeting other supportive troopers, and the Cadet Lawman Program helped prepare her for the academy because they taught her the value of discipline and hard work and that quitting was not an option (Simmons e-mail).

Simmons began going on ride-alongs with troopers as soon as she met the minimum age requirement of 16 years. Her parents supported her decision to become a trooper, as did the troopers in her area who had known her since she was a child (Simmons interview).

After high school, Simmons received a softball scholarship to attend Western Oklahoma State College (WOSC) in Altus, Oklahoma, and began her college career there. Once in college, she worked in the financial aid department in the work-study program and then as a part-time employee. She credits these jobs with teaching her about customer service and how to speak equally to all people. At WOSC, Simmons completed two associate's degrees before applying for a patrol position (Simmons e-mail).

In February 2009, Simmons applied for the OHP Academy and was accepted as a cadet. She was one of only two females accepted into the 59th Academy. In speaking about her academy experience, Simmons said, "I hardly remember patrol school. I started with Lisa Jorgensen. Things went wrong for Lisa when she was zone commander (cadet learder of all the other cadets) and made the comment that it wasn't that hard. Thanks to that little comment, we got smoked (corrected through the use of intense physical activity) every break. She left before fight night" (Simmons interview).

Because Simmons was then the only female, she had a room to herself and was often forgotten by the other cadets in the "tornadoes" that swept through the third deck.

This meant she had six beds to make in perfect military style by herself, along with cleaning up any other disordered belongings. However, always being a good sport, Simmons let the men use her bathroom, as they were sharing it with 11 other people, and she did her best to help out whenever she could (Simmons interview).

Even though she does not remember much her time in at patrol school, a few moments still stick out. Simmons recalls being at the shotgun range wearing the typical BDU's (battle dress uniform typical of the military) that cadets wore to the range. Because the cadets were working on their drills, their pockets were weighed down with extra shotgun shells (Simmons interview).

She said, "This particular drill required you to shoot and move. In one part of it, I did a forward lunge to kneeling, and my pants ripped right down the crotch. They were wide open! Luckily, we were doing night fire, so it was hard to see. I went to one of the range masters and said 'Sir, my pants just ripped.' He looked at me confused for a second then sent me to one of the counselors who asked how bad it was. When he looked and saw where it was and how bad, he turned tomato red, and he sent me to get my range gear and took me back to the third deck to change. I had shorts on, but it was still awkward" (Simmons interview).

The range incident would not be the only awkward moments Simmons experienced in the academy. As the only female, and without a female counselor or medic around all the time, Simmons had to deal with some issues that male troopers did not fully understand in regard to females in patrol school. For Simmons, as was typical of several women in previous academies, the stress, strenuous physical activity, and sleep deprivation disrupted her normal female cycle. When this happened over a couple of

months, Simmons went to see a medic, Trooper Matt Drummond, who asked her if she might be pregnant. When she responded that she absolutely was not, Drummond asked her how she could be so sure. Simmons was then in the position of explaining to him that she had never had sex, resulting in yet another awkward patrol school conversation for her (Simmons interview).

While she enjoyed patrol school and performed well, Simmons also had a few scary moments. She mentioned being headed back to the gun range for night fire one evening in a small bus. Chris West, another cadet, was driving, and she was sitting in the next to last seat. They were going down the road when the bus hit a little gulley. A tree limb was sticking out into the road, and the bus bounced into it. The tree smashed through the window by Simmons. The other cadets told West to pull into the gas station at the corner and warned Simmons to keep her eyes closed. The medic for the evening was Trooper Jeff Dean, and he brushed the glass and debris off of Simmons's face. She was cut and scratched, as her window had taken the brunt of the force from the tree limb. She remembers returning to the third deck and shaking glass out of her clothes, getting blood everywhere, and removing the glass from her skin for days (Simmons interview).

As for training, Simmons recounted some stories from her weeks in defensive tactics during her time at the academy. She even convinced one trooper that women can be just as formidable and just as capable as their male counterparts. Simmons was practicing with one of the instructors, Danny Oliver. Throughout the week, Simmons demonstrated her athleticism, willingness to learn, and fighting skills. He told her at the end of the week, "I have never believed in females on the highway patrol, but you've

changed my mind." He shook her hand and continued to talk to her, which made an impression on her (Simmons interview).

During defensive tactics week, she and Trooper Thomas Setters were working on scenarios inside a vehicle, a Crown Victoria. Simmons was small enough that when Setters attacked her in the car, she was able to turn completely around and donkey kick him several times, eventually drawing her weapon and shooting him with Simunition rounds (Simmons interview).

Simmons did experience one frightening moment during defensive tactics exercises in the academy. On the night the cadets were pepper-sprayed, Simmons says she was woken up in the middle of the night and told to get dressed. She was not given any instructions on equipment or what was going on. She laughingly remembers walking up and down the stairs three or four times to retrieve equipment she thought she might need (Simmons interview).

The cadets were practicing nighttime traffic stops, and it was her turn, so she walked to the driver's side door to speak with the driver, who was a trooper acting in this role for purposes of training. When she got to the door, the "driver" attempted to spray her with pepper spray but missed. She backed up, drew her weapon, and fired Simmunition rounds, and the driver went down (Simmons interview).

However, nothing in the academy is ever that easy. Lt. Steven Cornell was the "safety officer" for the scenario. Simmons went to arrest the driver and felt a tap on her shoulder. She turned around and Lt. Cornell emptied almost an entire canister of pepper spray in her face. She carried on with the scenario, secured her suspect, and then returned to the patrol car to run radio traffic. Once the scenario was over, she went to the water

hoses to begin rinsing off. However, at this point, her asthma began to flare up (Simmons interview).

Simmons had always been able to control it before, but due to the exceptionally harsh irritants of the pepper spray, she was unable to catch her breath. After several inhaler puffs and albuterol treatments, the asthma attack finally abated. The medic on duty, Matt Drummond, was even considering taking her to the hospital. Simmons says, "I've never felt anything like that before. My brain actually felt mushy." It was the only uncontrolled asthma attack she has ever had (Simmons interview).

To top it all off, when the cadets finally came back inside in the early morning hours, they were told to shower but to be sure to use cold water. The burning and stinging from pepper spray are severe and reactivate in water, as the patrol's pepper spray has an oil base. Simmons was still experiencing sensations so intense that when she turned on the shower, she had to ask the female counselor if the water was on hot or cold because everything felt like it was on fire (Simmons interview).

The patrol academy is designed to push the physical and mental limits of the cadets. Athletic and motivated, Simmons approached the academy's challenges with discipline and determination, never allowing herself to consider the possibility of quitting or giving up, not even during the 11-mile long run in the heat and blistering wind of Burns Flat, Oklahoma that gives most troopers a lifelong hatred of running (Simmons interview).

Simmons finished the academy and fulfilled her dream of becoming a trooper. What she did not know at the time of graduation was that her dream job, her calling, would also test the limits of her will to continue in the profession. However, an unfailing

belief in her life's purpose would give her the strength and courage to keep working and keep moving forward when lesser individuals would have given up.

Fresh out of the academy, Simmons went to Kiowa County in Troop M; however, she was transferred at the end of her first break-in phase and the beginning of phase two, just about four weeks into her new career. The circumstances of her transfer were of the kind that females in law enforcement dread. Taught that there is only one standard and they will meet it or fail, women on the Patrol rise to the challenge. Out in the field though, discrimination and inappropriate behavior have not been entirely weeded out. For break-in, Simmons was assigned to two newer troopers for phases one and two and to long-time friend Trooper Dirk Hammon for phase three (Simmons e-mail).

Her phase one break-in partner had just gone through a divorce and had the reputation of sleeping around. Simmons had no prior law enforcement experience, so for her, everything was a new beginning and a new skill, and she was unsure of what was normal. Break-in started well, but one day while on a traffic stop, her break-in partner received a message from the trooper assigned to her for phase two. According to Simmons, the phase two break-in trooper wanted to know "how many times they (she and her phase one break-in) had sex" (Simmons interview). Nothing happened, and a few days later, they went on days off. Her break-in partner was working an armed, off-duty job. Simmons was headed to Altus and asked him if he needed anything. The trooper asked her to bring beer, which she did. Once at his location, he asked her to stay and hang out for a while, which she did as she was trying to be a good partner. Simmons says, "Looking back, I shouldn't have done it, but I was young, and I didn't know any different" (Simmons interview).

After a few inappropriate remarks by her break-in partner, Simmons decided to leave. He sent several messages the next day apologizing for his behavior. Her response was it was no big deal, and they would go about business as usual. However, her daily observation grades began to go down. Soon after she moved on to phase two, her phase two break-in partner was often nowhere to be found when she had a question or needed assistance. For example, she made a traffic stop one evening and brought the driver back to her patrol car, as is typical with OHP. While running his license, an alarm went off to indicate a problem, but her break-in partner was nowhere to be found to explain what the alarm meant, so she ended up calling another trooper (Simmons interview).

In another instance, Simmons stopped a Hispanic driver without a driver's license. The driver had been drinking but was not drunk. Her break-in partner told her to arrest him for driving under the influence because the driver did not speak English. In the state of Oklahoma, when a person being placed under arrest for driving under the influence is read his or her rights and advised of the option to take the state's breath test, a refusal results in immediate arrest without the possibility of a modified driver's license. Refusals also make a violator appear guilty. Simmons's break-in partner advised that when she read the driver his rights, he would not understand and would refuse the state's breath test, resulting in his arrest with a refusal. To add to her discomfort, over the two weeks, Simmons found herself in the middle of nowhere without cell service or radio service and was under the impression that the only way her daily grades would improve was if she had a sexual interaction with her break-in, which she refused to do (Simmons interview).

As a result of her low grades during the break-in phases, Simmons often found herself in the Captain's office and in trouble. She just wanted to get through break-in and get out on the road on her own. One day, the Assistant Commissioner, who is a friend of her family, called to ask her how things were going. She explained that she wanted a new break-in partner. Soon after describing her situation, Simmons was on the phone with the legal division, and they were asking if she was experiencing discrimination. Ultimately, she was transferred within Troop M to Jackson County and given a new break-in partner, Steve Pothorst. While her original break-ins were told not to discuss what happened with her, that did not keep them from telling the Jackson County troopers that she had been transferred because she could not make it (Simmons interview).

Simmons had to relearn many things with Trooper Pothorst. For example, her previous break-ins had taught her that a violator did not need to sign a warning. She stopped a vehicle one day and wrote a warning and was in the process of tearing it out of the warning book when Pothorst asked her what she was doing. After some discussion and explanation, Pothorst told Simmons the violator always had to sign a warning. Simmons says, "I had a fantastic break-in with Steve. I got extended in phase two, and Pothorst told me it was because my first break-ins didn't do their jobs." To this day, Simmons has no idea if any disciplinary action was taken against her phase one and two break-ins partners (Simmons interview).

Once Simmons moved to a different county, she began a break-in phase with long-time family friend Trooper Dirk Hammon. Simmons confided in Hammon and, like a true friend, Hammon compared what happed to her to "reaching over to a guy and

grabbing his balls and going on as if everything was fine." With both Pothorst and Hammon, Simmons knew she had support (Simmons interview). Simmons tells the story,

> Working with Dirk was how break-in should have been from the beginning. I remember one time, we were out working in the county, and we were on this county road. I had to use the bathroom, but we were quite a ways out from town, hunting for drunk drivers. Dirk told me there was no way we were going all the way back into town. So we found a spot, parked in the ditch on this dirt road, and he went to the front of the car, and I went to the back of the car. It was a typical country thing to do, and I knew Dirk was respectful of my privacy and had integrity, so I knew I didn't' have to worry about it (Simmons interview).

Simmons also had her first unit collision while working with Hammon. They were out working traffic one night, and she spotted a car she wanted to stop. It was late and dark, and as she turned around and began following the car to make the stop, a deer ran out in front of her. She managed to evade most of it but ended up hitting the deer in the hindquarters on the passenger-side headlight assembly. Both she and Hammon were feeling deflated, as the Captain at the time was on a terror about unit crashes. When the pair informed the Lieutenant on duty about what happened, he told them he was not coming out to work the accident and to handle it themselves, send in the report, and go home. So, Simmons ended up working her own car vs. deer unit crash. They were headed north out of Altus toward Mangum, ready for the evening to be over, but many times, nights like that get worse before they get better, and such was the case for Simmons (Simmons interview).

As she approached the movie theater in Altus, a stray dog darted out in front of her patrol car. With nowhere to go, Simmons ran over the dog. She pulled over, and both she and Hammon got out to survey the damage. The dog was most definitely dead, but there did not seem to be any damage to her car. So rather than reporting a second unit collision in one night, Simmons and Hammon agreed not to say anything about it. The

next morning, the two were headed to breakfast in Altus when Hammon mentioned that the Captain of Troop M lived only a few blocks from the movie theater. As Hammon recalled, the Captain had a dog that looked quite a bit like the one she had run over the previous night. It was not long before Hammon had her convinced that she had killed the Captain's dog and told her she should go and put a cross by the road since dogs are family to country folks (Simmons interview).

The rest of Simmons's break-in training was uneventful, save for getting stuck on a sand road and having to have the wrecker driver pull her patrol car out. However, any trooper who works the western portion of the state has experienced this particular problem, whether they will admit to it or not (Simmons interview).

Once off of break-in, life did not improve much for Simmons working in Troop M, which was in the spotlight for several reasons at the time, including the behavior of some of the troopers toward Simmons. Her presence in the Captain's office was such a regular occurrence that the troop secretary said she was going to put Simmons's name on the door under the Captain's name since she got called into his office so frequently. The older troopers did their best to help her. Simmons would have collisions reports returned when no one else did, instructing her to change a single word or rewrite a sentence in the narrative because the supervisor did not like how it sounded. The tire pressure in her tires was checked regularly to be sure it was within policy when no one else's tire pressure was inspected. Her supervisors even went so far as to check the number of rifle rounds in her magazine during a unit inspection, threatening discipline since she had 28 or 30 rounds, as per patrol school instruction instead of 27 of 30 as in policy. When Simmons explained that this was what a Lieutenant and firearms instructor in her patrol school had

taught them, she was called a liar until the supervisor called training and discovered the cadets had been taught to load magazines with 28 of 30 rounds as per an upcoming policy change (Simmons interview).

Simmons dealt with this ongoing scrutiny and constant threat of disciplinary action; however, her joy in being a trooper had all but vanished. It happened that one day while she was working she received a phone call from Kerry Pettingill, the next chief of the Highway Patrol. When he asked how things were going, she told him all she had been dealing with in Troop M. Unfortunately, her emergency lights were on because she was driving to a call, which meant her camera and microphone were also on, and the whole conversation on her end was recorded. The supervisors in Troop M found out that she had been sharing her concerns with some people in Oklahoma City. Her Captain eventually sent her for remedial training due to what her supervisors called "serious officer safety concerns" (Simmons interview). She was called into Troop M headquarters and told to pack because she was going to the city for training. Her supervisors also said that she should seriously reconsider her career as a trooper, and she should be ashamed of her officer safety and the mistakes she was still making (Simmons interview).

Simmons packed her bags and headed to Oklahoma City for what she thought would be another round of berating and discipline. On her arrival, she was greeted by a committee of troopers and Lieutenants who had been tasked with reviewing videos of her traffic stops. The reviewers noted that she made a few little mistakes but nothing out of the ordinary for a new trooper and certainly nothing that led them to believe she was anything other than a hard worker dedicated to learning her job. Her "retraining" was over before lunch. She had lunch with Captain Blish then rode with some other troopers

to go out and have some fun stopping cars in Troop G. What she did not realize at the time was that she was being evaluated on her traffic stops and her interaction with her partners. All of the troopers she worked with that day wrote letters saying they would gladly partner with her at any time. Captain Blish told her she needed to put in her transfer and get out of Troop M (Simmons interview).

When Kerry Pettingill became Chief of the Patrol, Simmons submitted her transfer request to Troop A metro. Her decision was solidified when she received her year one evaluation, stating she did not work well with others. On the day when she had finally had enough and was ready to throw in all her hard work, she received word of her transfer to Troop A (Simmons interview).

Simmons moved to Oklahoma City in 2012, and for her, Troop A metro was a whole new world. Her first supervisor, Lt. Reynolds, wondered what was wrong with her, as she would call and ask for permission to wash her car or get an oil change. In Troop M, troopers had to have approval for these simple maintenance items and had to be in a Class B work uniform instead of the dress Class A. Reynolds told Simmons she was wearing him out and she had to relax (Simmons interview).

During her first few days in the metro, Simmons rode with Trooper Jennifer Fisher so she could familiarize herself with her surroundings and get used to the speed of things in the metro. On her first day, she and Fisher worked a three-car collision on one of the off-ramps. Simmons told Fisher that this was her first three-car collision. Fisher's response was, "You mean for today?" Simmons responded, "No, my first three-car ever. I didn't even know there was a place on the report form for a collision on an off-ramp" (Simmons interview).

Later that same day, Fisher and Simmons get called to the scene of a murder at I-35 and Covell Road. When they arrived, they saw a man who had been stabbed in a cartel-style hit and dumped with a bunch of hundred-dollar bills. As if that were not enough for day one in the metro, Simmons and Fisher then got called to a fatality collision near the old Crosstown. When they arrived, they realized the crash belonged to Oklahoma City PD, but they did what they could to help (Simmons interview).

During the investigation, Simmons noticed a rather large police officer on a bicycle. She asked Fisher who the bike cop was, and was promptly told by Fisher, "Shut your mouth, and I'll tell you in the car." Once in the car, Fisher explained that the bike cop was Oklahoma City's first transitioning/transgender officer, and he was in the process of becoming a woman. As a country girl from southwest Oklahoma, Simmons wondered what she had gotten herself into (Simmons interview).

For Simmons, the metro was a playground. Troopers in the area could do whatever kind of work they liked the best, as long as they took their calls. So whether that was stopping cars, doing safety programs, hunting drunk drivers, or searching for drugs, there was always enough activity to keep everyone busy and having fun. Simmons was assigned to swing shift, 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. (Simmons interview).

While her work-life improved dramatically and she finally began to enjoy her job, as in all things, she still faced personal and professional challenges that would test her inner strength and endurance. Simmons recalls one of the most personally difficult times in her career occurred during the 61st Academy. Simmons had been assigned to the academy as a staff member, taking on the role of a counselor. That particular academy began with six female cadets, more than the patrol had ever had at any one time, and the

women looked to Simmons for direction in navigating academy life and as an example for other women in law enforcement.

Simmons was always polite and helpful to the female cadets, even as her own world was falling apart. Simmons and her husband had only been married a short time when the 61st OHP academy began. Her husband was a law enforcement officer with another agency, and as sometimes happens, tensions arose from the extra training, opportunities, and authority afforded to Simmons in her position as a State Trooper. She offered to forego working in the academy so the pair could work on their relationship, but her husband told her to go ahead and help with the academy. Only a few weeks into the 61st, Simmons's came home from the academy to find that her husband had found a place to live and wanted a divorce. Throughout her ordeal, however, Simmons remained professional and continued to assist with the academy process.

One of her most difficult moments professionally would also arise out of her experiences and the people she would meet in the 61st Academy. Trooper Nick Dees was a graduate of the 61st Academy and one of Simmons's favorite cadets. Dees's father had also been a trooper, and Nick, after somewhat wild teenage years, had decided to follow in his father's footsteps and was accepted into the 61st Academy in 2013.

On the evening of January 31, 2015, Simmons was sitting in Troop A headquarters listening to radio traffic on a handheld radio with Trooper Eric Foster, also of the 61st Academy, and Lt. Brian Orr. It was cold and windy, as it often is in Oklahoma, so most troopers were holed up somewhere out of the weather waiting for calls. Simmons and the others were hanging out just listening to radio traffic when they heard an

unknown individual broadcast that a trooper had been hit. The three of them took off out of headquarters and headed to the scene just east of Oklahoma City to assist.

On the way, they met the ambulance headed to the state's only level 1 trauma center, University of Oklahoma Medical, and Simmons peeled off from the group to escort the ambulance to the hospital. At that time, Simmons did not know that two troopers had been struck by an inattentive driver, Dees and another 61st Academy graduate, Trooper Keith Burch. It was not until later that evening that Simmons found out that Trooper Nick Dees died of his injuries at the scene (Simmons interview).

Trooper Dees and Trooper Burch had been called to the scene of a semi-truck rollover on I-40 in the eastbound lanes near Shawnee. On arrival, they saw the semi on its side and one lane of the four-lane divided highway was partially blocked. Noting the emergency lights, most motorists had slowed and moved to the outside lane of traffic. However, one man driving to Arkansas with his toddler had been texting and driving and posting on Facebook throughout his drive. He was not paying attention and drove at highway speed into the collision scene. He departed the road, driving into the median toward the crashed semi where the two troopers were assessing the collision and ensuring no one was seriously injured (Simmons interview).

On the in-car video, taken by one trooper's dashcam, Dees and Burch were walking back toward the semi and heard the vehicle approach. Both turned around, and Dees reacted by shoving Burch out of the way. Burch was still struck by the vehicle, but Dees took the full force of the impact, dying in a ditch on a cold, wintery night while just trying to do his job. Burch was transported to the University of Oklahoma Medical Center and required several surgeries and months of physical therapy He eventually

returned to work the roads. Simmons recalls pulling in to the driveway of her house, sad but not crying, and attempting to process the events of that evening (Simmons interview).

For Simmons, the event was also reminiscent of the day Trooper Dickinson, a Troop O pilot, crashed in Pottawattamie County. The metro troopers were out working a typical day when it came over the radio that Dickinson's plane was going down. He crashed in a field, just about one year before Dees's death, breaking both legs and never flying again (Simmons interview).

Along with experiencing the heartbreak of losing partners in the line of duty, Simmons has also had a few moments of genuine concern for her own safety. She describes a pursuit in which she was involved:

> Foster and I were chasing a car through the city. We went through an intersection, and Foster crashed his car. I called Foster on the radio to make sure he wasn't hurt and continued the pursuit. Eventually, my suspect stops and bails out of the car on foot. I'm chasing him back behind trees and bushes, and I lost sight of him for a minute. At that point, I was concerned about an ambush, but I finally caught sight of the guy again, and we were able to arrest him (Simmons interview).

Simmons recounts another instance involving another trooper. Simmons was working the metro one evening and had a ride-along. She was talking to another metro unit, Trooper Mystal Perkins, when she heard Perkins get rear-ended by another vehicle. Perkins dropped the phone, but Simmons could still hear her talking. Simmons was not far away from Perkins and immediately drove with her lights and sirens to the scene.

At first, Simmons passed the collision because the driver who struck Perkins's vehicle hit the vehicle so hard it knocked out all the lights on the car. The driver was a smaller Hispanic male, and he took off running. Simmons chased him down and managed to get him to the ground, but she knew she was in trouble when he did a full push-up with Simmons on his back trying to hold him down. She was able to administer a neck

restraint and temporarily knock him out, but as soon as she released the restraint, he woke up. It finally took Simmons, another trooper, and a bystander to keep the man down and get him safely restrained. Only later did Simmons find out that the driver was drunk and high on cocaine at the time (Simmons interview).

Other than that, Simmons tells of only one traffic stop that genuinely haunts her. While she was still working in Troop M, she stopped a car coming from Texas for speeding. She said:

> It was late, and I called the driver out of his vehicle and had him come back and sit in the front seat of my patrol car, as troopers often do at night. When the driver comes back and sits down, the hair on the back of my neck stood up. I knew something was wrong, but I didn't know what. I ran his driver's license, and he came back clean. I remember he had scars on his arms. I wrote him a warning and sent him on his way, but I remember watching him closely as he got out and walked back to his car. I watched him until he drove away. I went to put my hat down in the passenger seat, and as I looked down, I saw a razor blade on the seat. I knew that hadn't been there before, so I chase the car down and stop him again because I want to know what's going on. In the middle of my conversation with him, I get a call to go to crash, so I told him to get the hell out here. I believe he was ready to kill me that night, but I have no idea why or what was really going on with him. I will always wonder what would have happened had the call for that crash not come in (Simmons interview).

After working Troop A metro, Simmons transferred to her current assignment, Troop ES – Governor's Security. Simmons has always wanted to work in protection, as she feels it is a higher calling for her to protect those responsible for making decisions for the state. She admits that troopers in this division give up a great deal of their free time to be on someone else's schedule, but she has met many people and experienced many things she would not have been able to do otherwise. She has had the opportunity to travel to New York City, Washington D.C., Mexico, Paris for the Paris Air Show, and Normandy as a result of her position with Executive Security. The work can be

monotonous, and the troopers work at the whim of the governor, so it has its positives and negatives (Simmons e-mail).

In addition to her regular duties, Simmons is an EMT assigned to the Emergency Medical Services Unit of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol. In this capacity, she has worked as a medic in the 64th and 65th OHP academies. She has also worked as a counselor in the 61st and 62nd OHP academies. Working in a patrol school and/or being in a patrol school is challenging. As a cadet, patrol schools change a person. Cadets receive intense training in mental and physical toughness, and often, their personalities harden so that they can manage what they will experience on the road. This can be difficult for friends, family, and loved ones to understand, as the cadet entering the academy often emerges as a very different trooper (Simmons e-mail).

Working in a patrol school is also challenging. Troopers spend months away from home, seeing family and loved ones only on weekends or holidays. In some ways, it is like being a cadet again, as troopers work on the academy schedule and do whatever the cadets are doing, starting with physical training at 4:30 a.m. However, being part of the process and watching the cadets mature and grow into troopers are the rewards, especially since the staff is training the same troopers they will now rely on as partners. A great deal of dedication and pride goes into cadet development.

Along with patrol schools, Simmons is also involved in the Cadet Lawman Program, of which she is a proud graduate. When speaking about the program, Simmons likes that the program makes all kids the same. Economics, social status, and popularity do not matter. They all have to learn to work together to get through the week. The kids learn discipline and what it means to be a responsible and good citizen. They learn

leadership, and in one short week, they become a family. Simmons says that Cadet Lawman changed her life, and she has witnessed it change the course and trajectory of the lives of so many other young people as well (Simmons interview).

While life for Simmons as a female trooper has presented her with professional challenges and personal tragedy, she is also a person dedicated to her career and serving her community. In those moments, she has also found causes for laughter. She tells a story about a traffic stop early in her career.

> When I was at Troop M, I heard one of the troopers stop a car, and the driver of the car had warrants. Well, I was close, so I went to check on the other trooper. Everything was fine, but for some reason this trooper was acting very strangely, and for lack of a better word, awkward. I asked him what was wrong, and come to find out, he had ripped his trousers in the 'buttocks' area. I could not help but laugh because the entire time he would walk backward, holding his pants. I, of course being the nice person I am, took his prisoner to the jail so the trooper could go home and change (Simmons interview).

Another funny story of involving Simmons took place in the Oklahoma City metro area:

> I was out patrolling and looking for violations. I observed a car that was failing to stay in its lane, and the driver was also acting strange. I activated my lights to have a talk with the driver. He steps out of the car, and he is very, very nervous. I was worried that he had a weapon on him because of how he was acting, and he kept trying to hide his right pocket from me. I performed a pat-down, checking for weapons, and came across a big bulge in his pocket. He admitted that it was a sex toy and that was what he was doing going down the road and why he was acting so nervous. There's a first time for everything, I guess! (Simmons interview).

Like many other women in law enforcement, Simmons wishes she had understood how complicated relationships can be once in law enforcement. She finds her friendships developing with people who are either in the military or in law enforcement. She attributes this to an understanding of the mindset of way of life is when a person works in a dangerous field. Whereas law enforcement and the military make life-and-death decisions every day, it is hard to convey that to people outside the field. The struggle is

similar in romantic relationships, as it is challenging to connect with someone who is not of the same mindset. Simmons points out that most law enforcement officers are attracted to other people in law enforcement or the military because when it matters the most, help comes from another uniform (Simmons e-mail).

Simmons is the epitome of a strong, accomplished female: intelligent, feisty, attractive, and fierce. Being a trooper seems to be the perfect evolution of her natural gifts. Moreover, Simmons is a person who believes in self-improvement, and seeks out opportunities for new challenges and learning. After completing her first year of probation on the Patrol, Simmons returned to college and finished her Bachelor's degree at Cameron University. She is also a nationally registered EMT-Basic and only the second female TAC officer at Cadet Lawman (Simmons e-mail).

According to Simmons, the most rewarding aspects of being a trooper are hard to explain. She says, "I took this job to help people and keep people safe. I love being able to 'help' someone whether that is changing a tire, giving them a lift or just turning my lights and siren on for a random child who has those same googly eyes that I had." While inclusion is still an issue, Simmons feels, "The patrol has definitely gotten better at including females; however, I still truly believe we have a very long way to go. Even the command staff sends out emails addressing the patrol with "gentlemen" at times." Still, Simmons has had the opportunity to positively affect the lives of so many people in her community, including many little girls and young women who look at her and say "I wanna be a trooper like her when I grow up" (Simmons interview).

Outside of the patrol, Simmons enjoys working out, seeing new sights and places, and being with her friends and family. She enjoys books, museums, and good food, and is

always willing to go on an adventure. She spends her time at home with her two fantastic "fur children" who bring her happiness and lots of laughter, the lovable dachsunds Ace and Katy.

Trooper Charity Robertson – Troop V: Traffic Homicide

Edward Everett Hale, author of *The Man Without a Country*, wrote, "I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do" (Hale n.p.). While many of the women previously interviewed knew from an early age that they wanted to pursue careers in law enforcement, I am not like them, as I wanted to be a professor of English literature. Even now, my parents would say that my vision for my future was quite specific.

In 1996, Barbra Streisand starred in and directed a film called *The Mirror Has Two Faces*. Streisand plays a professor of literature who struggles in her romantic life. In one particular scene, Streisand is teaching in a theater-style classroom. The university students have filled every seat, the aisles, and all the standing room to attend her class. That was the dream I had for my profession, to be in a place where the people were passionate about knowledge and learning, seeking an open exchange of thoughts and ideas. That vision and dream have changed somewhat, replaced by a grittier, often confrontational path, and falling more in line with retired Navy SEAL Jocko Willink's assertion "Combat is an exercise in creativity" (Willink podcast).

I was born in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. My father worked as a specialist in alternative fuels, and my mother worked as a banker. I have one older brother. Growing up, I was shy and introverted. While my parents worked, I spent most of my time with my maternal grandparents, who lived only a few miles from us in the country. From them, I learned to read, write, tie my shoes, garden, bake, and fish. My grandmother had worked various jobs in retail, and my grandfather was a farmer and rancher. They grew

up as children of the Great Depression and World War II and spent most of their lives living cautiously with their money. They knew to take time to enjoy the most valuable things in life like fishing, playing cards with family and friends, and sitting on the back porch in the evenings chatting with any neighbors who happened to drop by. From my grandparents, I learned what it meant to work hard and be grateful for what you had because someone else always had less.

Growing up, I was shy and introverted. I did not like or play any sports, and I was probably the most unathletic person I knew. I tried playing tee-ball for a while and soccer for one year, but team sports were not for me. I preferred to read my books and be left alone. Most evenings, I could be found sitting in front of my father's recliner, reading a book while he also read. My older brother was far more athletic and outgoing than I was. Good at almost all sports, friendly, and engaging, he was my exact opposite. We attended a private school in Bartlesville throughout our elementary and junior high years. When he reached high school, my brother homeschooled with the former principal and a cohort of other students looking for a more challenging academic path than the one offered at the local high school. My elementary and junior high years were uneventful for the most part until I reached the winter of eighth grade.

Shortly after the Christmas break, school resumed, and I was in my last year at Wesleyan Christian School, trying to figure out where I was going to school after that. My brother was a college student attending what is now Oklahoma Wesleyan University in Bartlesville. It was February and a fairly typical winter. One evening, it had started snowing. The roadways had a coating of white powder, just enough to make slower speeds advisable. My brother was headed to our uncle's house, driving past the university

where he went to school, when a young lady pulled out from the university drive and struck his Jeep CJ-5 near the driver's side door. The CJ-5 was top-heavy and had a narrow wheel-base, so the vehicle immediately began to roll, eventually slamming into a large oak tree. The Jeep was unrecognizable, and so was my brother. Because he was not wearing a seatbelt, he was tossed around inside the vehicle, striking his head on the gear shift mounted on the floor and resulting in a massive depressed skull fracture.

It was around 10:00 p.m. when the phone rang, telling us that my brother had been in an accident and we needed to get to the hospital immediately. On arrival, his doctors began arranging for him to be taken by helicopter to a level 2 trauma center in Tulsa, as the local hospital did not have a neurosurgery team who could handle his kind of injuries. His neurosurgeon at St. John's Hospital was brilliant and gifted, one of the top five in the country, but he had little hope of saving my brother and no faith for any quality of life if he did survive.

However, the human body is quite adept at overcoming just about anything, and my family would argue that the power of prayer decided the outcome. Nine months passed before his release from the hospital's rehabilitation center, and even then he would be in a wheelchair with partial left-side paralysis, a plastic piece replacing most of his skull on the right front side, and partial blindness. He eventually regained the ability to walk and returned to college to finish his degree in pastoral care. However, I always wondered if things would have turned out differently for all of us had he worn a seatbelt. My desire to prevent this kind of tragedy from ruining other families was one of the reasons I chose to become a state trooper.

I attended college at Oklahoma Wesleyan University, like the rest of my immediate family, and graduated with a degree in English literature. After taking a year off to take the GRE and work, I moved to New Jersey to pursue my graduate work at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. Moving from Oklahoma to New Jersey proved to be an adventure. I had traveled quite a bit with my mother as a young adult, but I had never lived away from home. Even during college, the school was only a few miles from our house, so I lived at home rather than in the dorms. So, the first time in my life that I lived on my own was across the country, in one of the most crowded, congested states in the union.

I had visited New York City on another occasion, but I had little idea what living in the tri-state area would be like. Everything was expensive, and I lived on the edge of Newark, which was not necessarily the best place for a naïve, Midwestern girl new to the area. However, I found the people around me blunt and direct in how they handled things, but most were helpful and friendly, in an east coast, Jersey sort of way. I worked at local church as the administrative assistant when I was not going to classes, and I learned to navigate in a whole new world of trains, subways, crowds, and culture.

Seizing every opportunity during this new adventure, I took a train the New York City and wandered by myself every chance I got. Thanks to student rush tickets and free days at museums, I experienced the best in opera, ballet, theater, arts, and history.

After completing my coursework and beginning what would be a decade-long process of finding a topic for my dissertation, I took a job teaching high school English at a local Catholic school. I spent the next seven years in the Madison area, teaching English, tutoring, studying judo and sambo, and growing some lifelong friendships. After

nine years on the coast, however, I began to miss my family. My grandparents were all still alive at the time, but they were getting older, and I had a niece I had only seen once or twice. I also decided I wanted a career change. While I loved teaching high school English, the politics of test scores over knowledge was something of which I no longer wanted to be a part. So, I considered a career in law enforcement. I told myself that I had been dealing with other people's teenagers for the last seven years, and no criminal on the face of the planet could be scarier than that. I also had an extensive martial arts background and had developed a good dose of the New Jersey bravura.

I applied with the Border Patrol and went into New York City to take the written exam. I scored high on the test and, at that point, it was a matter of waiting for the hiring cycle. During this time, I also decided to move back to Oklahoma to be closer to my family. I took a position teaching with an online high school and moved to Tulsa with my significant other at the time, a Muay Thai coach I had met while in New Jersey.

While I was looking for jobs, my mother mentioned to me that the Oklahoma Highway Patrol (OHP) was hiring. She had seen an advertisement in the newspaper, and her exact words were, "I have no idea why I'm telling you this but--. " She was not overly fond of the idea of me in law enforcement. I decided to apply just to see what would happen. I had no idea what troopers did or anything about the job. I planned to get my foot in the door somewhere then go to the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation where I could work in forensics.

During this time, one of my cousins was a Deputy Sheriff in Washington County and explained to me that the Patrol had one of the most challenging academies in the country and a challenging selection process, and I would need a miracle and a lot of luck

to get in, let alone survive in the academy. As someone who hated to be told she could not do something, I decided I would apply and show my cousin just how far I could get. I fully expected to be kicked out of the application process at some point.

Because I had always had an interest in the medical field, I also applied to the University of Oklahoma's School of Health Sciences. The university had an accelerated Bachelor's Degree of Science in Nursing program designed for those who already held a college degree but wanted to change career paths, so I applied for this program, which only accepted 30 students for its cohort each year.

I kept on with teaching, passed the physical fitness entrance test and the written exam for the Patrol, moved on to interviews, then backgrounds, then polygraph, all the while fully expecting other, more qualified applicants to take precedence. Late in 2012, I was quite surprised to be told I needed to schedule a Chief's interview. I made my appointment and went to Oklahoma City to be interviewed by the Chief of the Patrol and the Commissioner of Public Safety. At that point, I knew I might actually get into the 61st Academy, and I had some serious decisions to make.

A few weeks later, I received an acceptance letter from the University of Oklahoma and a letter from the OHP offering me a spot in the upcoming academy. I wanted to do both, but I ultimately decided that I could return to nursing school at another time, but I might never have another chance at a patrol school. I also did not want to take on any more student loans, as the debt from my Master's Degree and doctoral work was plenty. So, I accepted the OHP offer to be part of the 61st Academy.

The day before the academy began in February 2013, I received an e-mail from Border Patrol informing me that I was eligible for the selection process to become a

Border Patrol Agent. If I had known then what was about to happen, I probably would have scrapped the entire notion and gone to nursing school or back to teaching.

I began the 61st Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy in February 2013 with 55 other cadets, including five other females, which was the largest number of females the Patrol had ever had in a single academy. The academy was challenging for me, as I had no prior military service, which would have helped in that paramilitary environment, and I was a somewhat older cadet at 31 years old. Many of the other cadets were in their early to mid-twenties. While I had average athletic ability, two ACL surgeries and three surgeries for a depressed skull fracture had left my body somewhat the worse for wear, so the physical portion of the academy was exceptionally hard for me.

On the other hand, having lived far away from home, having a prior career, and decades of martial arts experience made some of the psychological and mental stresses of the academy less challenging for me than for some of the younger cadets. While many of the other cadets wanted to do all the fighting, driving, and shooting, I enjoyed the classroom portions of the academy, learning the fundamentals of investigation, interviewing and interrogation, and case law.

Like most cadets, I had some rough moments in the academy when I wanted to pack my gear and go home, but I refused to let anyone have the satisfaction of saying "I told you so." Perhaps the only time in the academy I honestly thought I would not make it to the end came during the second week of defensive tactics (DT). Week one of DT was mostly technique and drilling, strenuous but more about teaching proper custody and control. Week two involved far more fighting and scenarios, and while the scenarios were new, fighting certainly was not. However, on day one of the second week, we were

working a round-robin style drill with the instructors, and we had come to the last match of the evening. I partnered with Trooper Mitchell Witt, whose nickname due to his size and strength was Grendel. The head DT instructor, Trooper Reggie Callins, knew I had a background in martial arts and told Witt to push me a little bit. That little bit quickly became more than a little. At the start of time, Witt immediately took me to the ground, we grappled for a while, but he was ultimately able to remove my red gun (plastic) from the holster and toss it away. We continued to work, and I did everything I could to keep him from getting back to my gun. At one point, I was on my back and had him a closed-guard position. He grabbed onto me and stood to his full six-foot, three-inch frame with my legs still wrapped around his midsection.

I only vaguely remember hearing Callins yell at me that I better not let him go. From there, Witt slammed me back down on to the wrestling mats. I landed high on my shoulders, and the back of my head bounced off of the mats. I remember feeling foggy and dizzy, trying to locate my opponent who was still on the offensive. At this point, I was on my hands and knees, and I glanced up and happened to see Witt coming toward me. While we were technically not supposed to strike the instructors, I felt such a sense of desperation in protecting myself, that when Witt lowered his chest to attempt to take me back down to my back, I kicked him solidly in the chest and knocked him back toward the wall. At that point, Callins decided that match had gone on long enough and called time.

Only then did I realize that all the other matches had stopped and everyone was watching Witt and me, as everyone had heard him slam me to the ground. Callins told me immediately afterward that that was one of most impressive things he had seen. However,

the rest of the week did not go well. Suffering from a rather severe concussion only checked by a doctor two weeks later, I spent the week unable to comprehend what was taught, underreacting in various scenarios or not reacting at all, or in the bathroom vomiting every time my heart rate would rise.

Two weeks later, after the end of DT, which I somehow survived but failed to impress, and one week on the pistol range, my group of cadets was working on rifle techniques. I was paired up with Trooper Danny Long, who spent the week screaming in my ear, not understanding that many of us had no rifle experience at all, told continuously to shoot faster, berated for missing the target, etc.

Midway through the week, we were working malfunction drills on the line. It was mid-May at this point and hot out. One of the firearms instructors, Trooper Brett Stephens, was also a TAC officer in the academy. He was giving instructions for the malfunction drill, and we were supposed to be working through it step by step. I kept missing pieces of the drill though. Stephens stood beside and quietly explained that I was intelligent so he should not have to explain things to me multiple times. At this moment, though, he saw the look on my face, and I believe it dawned on him that something much more serious was going on. He took my rifle from me, cleared it, and put it on safety, then had me checked out by a medic. It was only at this point that I was taken to the doctor and diagnosed with a concussion two weeks after it had occurred.

The rest of the academy seemed uneventful by comparison, at least until we received our assignments. My academy class was allowed to create a wishlist of places we would like to be assigned after graduation, based on the counties where slots were available. Much like joining the military, however, you went where you were sent. I had

asked for Troop B metro in Tulsa, Nowata County in Troop L, or Osage County in Troop K, all of which would have put me within about 45 minutes of my family. Instead, I was assigned to Troop I Woodward County, also known as Troop Isolation, in the Oklahoma panhandle. I knew no one out there and had never even been that far west in the state.

I hated every minute of the academy, and as sometimes happens with larger academies, I am not close and do not keep in touch with most of my littermates. There are one or two whom I consider friends. I do not stay in contact with any of the other women. One of the things that is not well explained going into a boot camp type environment, where you spend every waking minute together, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with no contact with the outside world, is how it affects your psyche. In a patrol school, you often see people's less endearing qualities and show a few of your own. While stress inoculation is a primary principle, stress management techniques, breath and body control, and other self-regulation strategies are not taught or discussed, creating an environment where anxiety and hypervigilance dominate.

After graduating from the academy, we had one week to move to our duty stations and report to our new Troop Commanders. I purchased a house when I was first assigned to Woodward County because the state was in the middle of an oil boom, and nothing was available to rent. I moved myself and my significant other to Woodward, Oklahoma and began the break-in phase of my training.

Woodward, like the other counties in Troop I, is driven by farming and ranching and the oil fields. Troop I, unlike the other troops, is composed of six counties in a railcar formation, as opposed to quadrants. From one end of Troop I to the other is about 225 miles. The far west side of Troop I is six hours from DPS headquarters in Oklahoma City

but only about three hours from Red River, New Mexico, to lend some perspective. The counties in Troop I are populated more by cattle, antelope, rattlesnakes, and tumbleweeds than by people. I was the first female ever assigned to Troop I, and the female stationed the farthest west in the history of the patrol.

In many ways, this turned out to be a blessing. Woodward County, for the most part, is made of small-town communities and families who still care about each other. Folks address one another as sir and ma'am, get together to work cattle, and farm and ranch in the old ways, going to work before the sun comes up and only taking off on Sundays to honor the Sabbath. The people are tough, weathered, and as real as the land they work. The land is unpredictable. The panhandle is blistering hot and dry in the summer, and the wind never stops blowing. In the winter, the wind still blows non-stop chaffing every inch of exposed skin. Plagued by drought in the summer and blizzards and whiteouts in the winter, the Western Plains can still be a harsh place to live, even with modern technology.

Although I was the first female trooper in Troop I, my break-in partners seemed to take me in stride. I never felt as though as I was treated as anything other than what I was, which was a State Trooper. My partners also made it clear to friends and neighbors that I was the same as any other trooper, and bad behavior should expect the same result. My first and fourth phase break-in partner, Trooper Cody Rehder, was also my driving instructor in the academy. Sarcastic and funny, he reminded me of some of my New Jersey friends, but with a slight southern drawl. My phase three break-in, Trooper Dustin McAtee, was Rehder's best friend, and also sarcastic and funny but in a more laid back,

country sort of way. Dustin was a farmer and a rancher, as well as a champion team roper, and not much managed to fluster this cowboy trooper.

Break-in was uneventful for me, other than realizing I had found a place where I felt accepted by other troopers, and I knew I had partners on whom I could rely. The only real challenge I experienced during break-in came when my significant other and I broke up during week one of living in Woodward. I was out working traffic when he called me saying that he had a panic attack. Being brand new, trying to learn my job and not get myself and my break-in partner killed, I was upset at this phone call. In what was not the most kind or compassionate manner, I told him when I finally went off duty that he needed to pack his things and go back to New Jersey.

As he was close to 40 years old, I was not prepared to deal with his panic and anxiety while navigating a dangerous profession. I explained that if I had to worry about panicky phone calls from him during the day, I was not paying attention to traffic or the cars I was stopping, which is an excellent way to get killed. So, we parted ways. Looking back, while the outcome would have been the same, I could have been more considerate of his mental and emotional state. By the end of my workday, I was exhausted and out of compassion for anyone else, including myself.

Working as a trooper has presented me with some moments and tragedies that will forever haunt me. Trooper Nick Dees was a littermate of mine, and we had barely been off probation a year when he was killed in the line of duty in January 2015. I remember being at our academy graduation and Reggie Callins telling us to savor these last moments together because the next time we would all be in one place would be for one of our funerals. He was right.

In 2018, I transferred out of Troop I and into Troop V – Traffic Homicide. While I still worked in Woodward County, I was now responsible for investigating all fatality collisions in Troops, H, I, and J, and an area that covered everything west of I-35 and north of I-40 to the Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado borders in the panhandle, which is almost one-quarter of the state. On the first day I was assigned to Troop V, I received a call about 2:00 a.m. from a good friend and Lieutenant in Woodward County, Lt. Mike Fike. Mike called me to tell me that another close friend of mine and a trooper in Woodward County, Trooper Austin Ellis, had been shot while making a traffic stop. I remember feeling my heart race, not wanting to know the answer to the next question, but asking if Ellis was dead. Mike told me that Ellis was alive but had been flown by helicopter from the hospital in Woodward to OU Medical for a collapsed lung.

Mike told me he needed to go on duty and start writing search warrants for the house into which the suspect was last seen fleeing. I immediately got to work, but having never written a search warrant for a house, I was utterly lost. I have been blessed by outstanding supervisors though, and my new day one Captain, Ronnie Hampton, was an expert at search warrants and answered his phone round the clock. I'm pretty confident he never sleeps. He helped me get the search warrants accurately written and formatted, and Judge Eilers, the District Judge, gladly signed off on them. The OHP Tactical Team was called out to serve the warrant, and the spent the rest of the night devising the medical plan and communication with our investigations Captain, Jason Holt on other warrants, directions to various locations, etc., as the teams were coming from all over the state. Eventually, the suspect, Arturo Ramirez, was found trying to cross the highway

about a mile and half from the house where he was last seen, and he was arrested by troopers on roving patrol in the area.

Ramirez and Ellis had gotten into a gunfight before Ramirez fled the scene. Ellis, well over six feet tall and around 220 pounds of muscle, took a round in the vest. While his vest kept the bullet from penetrating, it caused his ribs to flex inward, puncturing his lung. Ellis returned fire through the back windshield and toward the driver's side door of Ramirez's vehicle, striking Ramirez in and through the left hand. Ramirez is just barely five feet tall, which worked to his advantage that evening, as several of Ellis's rounds were found lodged in the upper section of the driver's side headrest.

Few things are as emotionally and psychologically taxing as knowing you have a partner who is injured and in critical condition, but knowing that you have to pull yourself together and think because there is work that must be done immediately and correctly if you are to locate and apprehend your suspect. By the next morning, I did not know what to do with myself. Ellis was stable but would be in the hospital for several days, the suspect was in custody, and the crime scenes had been processed. Yet all the emotions I had been holding back, the what-ifs, the fear, the anger, came rushing in. As troopers, one of the hardest things we face is to know what to do with those emotions, and it is situations like this that lead many of us, myself included to seek professional counseling, at some point during our careers. I remember thinking that night that I had already lost one partner in the line of duty, and I did not know if I could take losing another. As of August 2019, Arturo Ramirez has accepted a blind guilty plea in Ellis's shooting and was sentenced on October 24, 2019, to 35 years in prison with at least 28 of

that to be served. Ellis has since returned to work and is one of the best troopers I have known.

Because of Ellis's shooting, I also witnessed what law enforcement life does to families of officers. Ellis's wife Kristin is a good friend of mine, and while Ellis was in the hospital, a special unit to which I am assigned, the Emergency Response Team (ERT) provided as 24 hour a day watch at the hospital. Two troopers were on duty outside his door at all times. One was available to run errands and help the family if they needed anything, and one sat outside the door keeping watch and monitoring who was coming and going on the hospital wing.

The Ellis family has two little girls, who were approximately four years old and about one year old at the time of the shooting. I saw how Kristin not only had to navigate all of us being around to watch out for Ellis, but she was also caring for her girls, staying up to date with the doctors' reports, and trying to be strong for everyone else.

She may be one of the strongest women I have ever met. I wondered what Kristin must have experienced when she got the call that he had been shot. Did she wonder if she was going to a be widow with two young children to care for? Did she resent his job in law enforcement as it has become so dangerous that not even a quiet, country town like Woodward is safe? Then I wondered what my own parents experienced every time I told them I was going into the field on a manhunt or serving warrants.

In my current assignment as a traffic homicide investigator, my day-to-day work is that of tragedy. I deal with inattentive drivers, drunk drivers, high drivers, and reckless drivers, who through their bad decisions have killed other motorists. I investigate the scenes of collisions, taking photographs and measurements, interviewing witnesses and

suspects, collecting evidence, and finally submitting a case binder with recommendations for chargers to be filed. Many of these collisions are gruesome and violent, and the images do not fade quickly.

On Thanksgiving Day 2018, I was visiting my family in Bartlesville, but with Traffic Homicide, if you are in the state, you are on call, even if you are on days off or scheduled for vacation. Several of the other traffic homicide troopers were scheduled for vacation, so I was taking calls in the area while visiting. I received a call to a two-vehicle collision on a state highway near Ponca City, about an hour east of Bartlesville. I gathered up my gear, told my family I had to go, and headed toward Ponca City. On the way over, I was informed that the decedent was a toddler approximately three years old. When I arrived at the scene, two other troopers and a Lieutenant were there. The road had been shut down, and I began processing the scene. I was able to interview the driver of the pickup that had struck the little four-door sedan. The truck was on the highway and had just come up over a hill when the car, failing to stop at the stop sign, pulled out in front of the pickup. The driver was Native American, tall and broad-shouldered, and he sat in the front seat of my patrol car, telling me what had happened and sobbing.

After that, I began photographing the scene and taking measurements. The car had to come to rest in some people's front yard, and as I worked my way up the debris path and around the car, I noticed the tell-tale white sheet from the EMS crew. Knowing what I had to do but dreading it nonetheless, I had the paramedics lift the sheet so I could photograph the body of the toddler. The boy's mother, who had been driving the car, had taken by helicopter to OU Medical Center in Oklahoma City. The boy's grandfather, who

was also Native American, stood outside the chain-link fence, waiting silently to come in perform the death ritual customary to his tribe.

I also remember going over to talk to the trooper who was first on the scene, Trooper Adam Beck. Beck was also a littermate of mine, and he and a county deputy had been working traffic on the highway, not more than 50 yards from the scene when the collision happened. Beck tried everything he knew to save that little boy but was unable to resuscitate him. It struck me as I stood there talking to him that Beck's own little girl was just about three years old then. Seeing that hurting grandfather, trying to comfort my hurting partner, and still be a professional and do my job were tasks I was juggling all at once. This is what all of us do every day we go to work. I have investigated numerous fatalities, photographed bodies and pieces of bodies, and as most other troopers and law enforcement officers would attest, I remember the faces of every single one of them.

Not everything in patrol work is tragedy. There are plenty of moments that make you shake your head or outright laugh. When I first got out on my own in Woodward County, I stopped a gentleman for speeding one day on one of the state highways. It was sunny but still early in the morning, so I approached the driver's side door. As I got there, the man was turned away from looking through some papers for his insurance verification and talking to me even though he was not looking at me. He called me "sir." He proceeded to apologize and tell me that he knew he was speeding, and he had been thinking about what he needed to do that day at work.

At some point, he finally turned back toward the window to hand me his driver's license and insurance, at which point he said, "Holy shit, you're a girl! Now I'm definitely getting a ticket." He had never heard of or seen a female trooper before, so

when he saw my door maps, he assumed I was a male. The stunned look on his face was enough to get me laughing. I wrote him a warning and sent him on his way.

In a similar incident, I was on my second phase of break-in working one of the state highways just south of Woodward. I turned around on a sports utility going about 10 miles an hour over the speed limit. It was mostly early morning work traffic that time of day, so I walked up to the driver's side window. The driver was a young woman in her early twenties. She was headed to work at one of the local restaurants. She was a pretty girl and rather well endowed, and she had her shirt unbuttoned almost to her navel. I took her information and walked back to my car trying not to laugh on the way.

When I sat down, my break-in partner asked me what was so funny. When I explained what had happened, he bet me lunch that when I took her driver's license and insurance back up to the vehicle, her shirt would be buttoned to her throat. I took that bet, thinking no one would be that obvious about what they were trying to do in the first place. I bought lunch.

On another occasion, I was working the 7:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. shift in the summer, and on one of the back county roads that leads into town, I stopped a car for a missing headlight. It is a road often used by drunk drivers to avoid the main streets and highways. I got out of my car and made a partial approach to the driver's side rear of the vehicle. I tapped on the gas tank to get the driver to roll down the window, which he did. At this point, as is common with state troopers in Oklahoma, I asked the driver to step out of the vehicle. After some slight hesitation, he told me he couldn't get out. I repeated my instructions a little more forcefully, to which he again replied he could not get out of the vehicle. With one hand on my pistol, wondering what this man was up to, I cautiously

approached the window, shining my flashlight inside. When I got there, I saw the driver had a towel over his lap. I asked why he could not get out of the vehicle, and he explained that he did not have any pants on. He had been at the lake fishing and had slipped in the mud on the bank and fallen into the water, and a towel was all he had to cover up. His soaked, muddy pants were on the passenger side floorboard, and his fishing gear was in the backseat. At that point, I waved him on and walked away, really thankful he did not get out of the car and show his uncovered lower half on my in-car video.

In western Oklahoma, many of the funniest moments working come not as a result of people but animals. I have learned a few things about livestock especially. First, always carry a plastic bag full of cake feed. When the cows get out onto the road, shake the bag of cake feed and lead them to the gate. The cows always follow you. Second, horses never follow you. If more than one horse gets out of a corral, you need an army to get them back in because every horse is going to go a different direction. Third, porcupines look huge in the middle of the night, and they waddle. Last but not least, there is a right way and a wrong way to kill a rattlesnake.

Western Oklahoma has mostly prairie rattlesnakes. They are much shorter than timber rattlers and far more aggressive. In the spring and fall, rattlesnakes like to crawl out of the grass and onto the asphalt at night where it is still warm. So, working traffic at night means watching where you walk.

I was working a state highway north of Woodward one evening. Very few cars were out, and it was about dusk. As I drove south, I saw a snake in the middle of the road. I turned around and went back to look at it because I thought it was a rattlesnake, and we have standing orders in Troop I to kill rattlesnakes on sight because they are a danger to

us and also coyotes because they are a danger to newborn calves. When I got next to it in my car, I saw that it was, in fact, a rattlesnake, and it was hissing and shaking its rattle at me. So, I backed up the road to get a running start at it. I had my emergency lights on, just in case another vehicle came by. I hit the accelerator, and as my tires got close to the snake, I hit the brakes.

I remember being told on break-in by Dustin McAtee that you never just run over a snake. It will get caught in the tread of your tires and kicked up into your undercarriage. Then you have to go under there looking for it, and that is a bad deal. So, I did as I was taught, but I still did not manage to kill the rattler. I hurt it, but now it was mad, and I felt terrible because it was damaged but not dispatched. So, I put my car in park and got out my shovel (yes, I carry a shovel). I proceeded to whack this snake on the head, trying to make sure it was dead, while it continued to hiss and bite at me. Only after the fact did I realize that the whole ridiculous dance of hitting the snake with the shovel and then running away because I thought it was after me was recorded for posterity on my in-car video since I turned my emergency lights on.

Along with working the road in Troop I and now being assigned to the Traffic Homicide Unit, I am also an EMT-Basic assigned to both our Emergency Services Unit and as the team medic for the Emergency Response Team (ERT). With ERT, I have had the opportunity to train in search and rescue, mobile field force operations, and numerous other disciplines. The team serves warrants, provides security at protests, and leads manhunts across the state. Most notably, ERT provided site security and guidance to visitors to the Capitol during the three-week teachers' rally in April 2018.

I have also worked at two patrol schools, the 64th and 65th academies. During the 64th Academy, I acted as a counselor to the cadets during the first two weeks of patrol school before returning to the road. In the 65th Academy, I was one of three medics assigned for the entire 20 weeks of the school. Working patrol schools, having been through one myself, is rewarding because I know what the cadets are going through. You see them struggle and fail and struggle some more until they finally begin to work together as group and succeed. As a medic, I ensure the cadets stay healthy and well, and that any injuries or illnesses are treated quickly. In addition to being a medic, I also teach portions of the curriculum, including the legal block and report writing block, as well as the human performance and first-aid sections. I enjoy teaching in patrol schools because I know that I give my best to them during the academy, which means when they leave and go to their field troops, I know I have done everything in my power to give them the tools they need to be good troopers and good partners, which serves our entire agency.

Many aspects of this job make it worth all the suffering and stress you go through to get here. People hug you and tell you thank you for helping them when you change out a tire on the side of the road for them. Families thank you when the DUI driver who killed a friend or relative in a car crash finally goes to jail. Little kids sit in the front seat of your patrol car, playing with the lights and sirens, telling their parents they want to be troopers when they grow up. All of those little things make the sacrifices worth it.

At thirty-seven years old, I will not likely have children of my own. With the way most of my relationships go, and because of the nature of this job, it is also unlikely I will ever get married. Sometimes, those things make me sad. I feel as though I am missing out on some the key elements that make life worth living. Many women in law enforcement

conscientiously sacrifice those things to devote themselves to a public that, with the current climate toward law enforcement, hates us.

We give up things most men in law enforcement will never be asked to give up, and we do it willingly because we feel a call to serve. I remember a Captain on the Patrol saying once that if you are looking for this job make you happy, you need to find another job. This job will bring sacrifice and heartache and tragedy, but at the end of the day, it will also bring a sense of purpose, which is all most of us can ask for, that our lives had meaning.

Chapter 11: Conclusion

One of the many questions that arises, not just for women but for anyone, is what sort of person chooses a career in law enforcement. The pay is substandard, especially when factors like shift work, on-call status, and the potential for danger are considered. Several answers to this question emerged throughout the interviews with the women of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol.

First, and possibly most significantly, the women of OHP grew up with positive role models in positions of authority. Whether through law enforcement, the military, or family, all of the women had individuals in their lives who instilled a sense of pride in the community and sense of responsibility for one's actions and for the community in which they lived. For example, Lt. Tomi Tatum grew up in a farming and ranching community where hard work was expected, and everyone's survival depended on mutual respect and consideration (Tatum e-mail). Trooper Judy Haley's brother, John Webb, was a trooper. He helped her understand what the job entailed and introduced her to other troopers who supported her in the hiring process and when she began working the road (Haley e-mail).

These men set the example for her of how law enforcement officers can positively affect their cities and states. Trooper Lateka Alexander had a strong role model in her father and mother, who believed in education, responsibility, and contributing to the community (Alexander interview). Trooper Trinity Simmons knew she wanted to be a trooper when one man, Trooper Bill Runyan, took time out of his workday to come to her birthday party and show her that troopers take a personal interest in those they protect (Simmons interview). These women were influenced by authority figures who lived the professionalism, integrity, honesty, and dedication they would come to embody.

One of the other commonalities among the women of OHP is their participation in competitive activities growing up. Whether that involved participating in FFA and showing animals, competing in team sports such basketball or softball, or practicing martial arts, these women demonstrated an early willingness to engage in activities that required teamwork, skill development, and the possibility of failure. The women learned early in life about perseverance, and the hard truth that failure is inevitable but quitting is optional. That particular lesson proved essential to not only surviving the academy but surviving work on the road and the emotional and psychological aftermath of a career in law enforcement.

Lastly, the women of OHP all demonstrate a heart for service. These women are well-educated, talented people who would be successful in any profession they chose. They could certainly have had jobs where they had weekends and holidays off, made more money, and do not get called out in the middle of the night. However, they have chosen, or more accurately in their own words, were called into law enforcement. Before joining the Patrol, the women who were not initially pursuing a career in law enforcement were actively pursuing other service-oriented careers. Tatum, Haley, Randolph, and I were all pursuing teaching careers. Hampton had planned to go to nursing school, while Alexander wanted to be a teacher or an attorney. Cobalt wanted to be a lifeguard or involved with the parks department, and Simmons knew she wanted to be a trooper.

The female troopers of OHP come from varied and diverse experiences. They share some common experiences, but at the heart of the matter is the call to serve, to step into the dark spaces and fight for justice, to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

They are aware that there are those in this world intent on doing violence and harm to others, as well as people who make some bad choices. For those who have lost their way, these troopers can be a listening ear or a provider of much-needed course corrections. All of the women recalled traffic stops that at first appeared to be angry, hateful encounters, but turned out to be a person having the worst day of his or her life. The troopers were able to listen, allow the individual to vent, and send them on their way feeling a little more seen and heard and recognized as a person in need. But to those who are intent on violence, they are formidable opponents, willing to die or to kill to protect their communities.

While every profession presents its own set of challenges, being a female in law enforcement presents unique problems. The women may struggle to be accepted by the men with whom they work, but at the same time, they often feel out of place and isolated in society. These women work to fit in and be "one of the boys" so that their partners trust them and see them as equals, not as weak or incapable. In addition to working for acceptance among their law enforcement peers, the day to day stresses of the job and the level and amount of violence they witness can lead them to seek friends solely among their law enforcement peers. They may feel as though they have little in common with other women, and therefore may struggle to make friends or engage in activities outside of the work environment.

Intimate personal relationships can also be a struggle because these women are independent and self-sufficient. They often do not appear to need a partner in their lives, even though an emotional and psychological support system is essential to their overall well-being. Lt. Betsy Randolph navigated those challenges through open communication

and an emphasis on valuing quality time with her husband, who was also a trooper (Randolph interview). Trooper Ashley Hampton also married a trooper and credits open discussion and an understanding of the difficulties inevitable in a law enforcement career as essential elements in her relationship (Hampton interview). Still others, like Lateka Alexander and Amy Cobalt, have dealt with divorce or failed relationships, but have taken those lessons into new relationships and friendships.

More than just intimate relationships can be affected by the law enforcement profession. These challenges extend to relationships with family, as well. A career in law enforcement fundamentally changes a person. Law enforcement officers see the worst humans can do to one another, and managing the stress of those interactions, can lead to changes in communication and family engagement. While some of these changes are inevitable to harden the officer to the day to day stressors of the profession and allow them to continue to be effective in their jobs, wellness practices and mental health initiatives that encourage them to stay engaged and involved with their family and friends are critical. The women of the Patrol understand the importance of relationships and mental health, which has led many of them to seek counseling, either with a professional counselor, a pastor or through the Patrol's Officer Assistance Program.

Women have become a presence in law enforcement, and many of the men they work with have come to appreciate their presence. Women officers may be better able to interview victims of domestic violence or sexual assault. As explained by Lt. Randolph, they may also bring a sense of calm to agitated suspects, victims, or witnesses because of an increased sense of empathy (Randolph interview). While this is not always the case, and some individuals may be more upset by the presence of a woman, women's small

stature and willingness to communicate to de-escalate a situation often results in positive outcomes. The female troopers often share that their willingness to listen, be courteous, and treat others the way they would want their own family and friends treated, prevents many altercations on duty. These women focus on all aspects of communication because they have come to understand that they may be the only voice for those who cannot speak for themselves.

In discussing women in law enforcement and communication, the question of emotional intelligence and intuition often follows. Are women more intuitive and more empathetic than their male counterparts? Several of the female troopers interviewed in this project stated they believed that women were more empathetic and intuitive in their interactions with the public. Emotional intelligence is described as a combination of self-awareness, managing emotions, empathy, and social skill (Goleman n.p.). In his article in *Pyschology Today*, Dr. Dan Goleman says of emotional intelligence tests: "some measures suggest women are on average better than men at some forms of empathy, and men do better than women when it comes to managing distressing emotions" (Goleman n.p.) Moreover, researchers Downey, Papageorgiou, and Stough, noted that in studies on emotional intelligence where women self-reported, the research suggests that women are or believe themselves to be more empathetic, adaptable and perceptive (251).

Many troopers of both genders demonstrate exceptional emotional intelligence and intuition when interacting with the public. While Downey's research indicates that women may have an advantage in emotional intelligence and intuition, determining if there is a difference among male and female troopers of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol would require a research project aimed toward studying those trends. Perhaps one way to

view the concept of intuition and emotional intelligence self-reported by the women of OHP is best described in the words of psychiatrist Abigail Brenner. She writes, “Your beliefs create and dictate what your attitudes are. Your attitudes create and dictate how you respond—in other words, they dictate your feelings. And your feelings largely determine how you behave” (Brenner n.p.). In other words, the female troopers of OHP act intuitively because they trust the feelings created by their prior knowledge and experiences. They act empathetically because they believe, as they have indicated, that people should be seen, heard, and acknowledged first and foremost as human. They are intuitive and empathetic because they believe themselves to be so. Through communication, empathy, personal strength, and a heart for service, the women of OHP are able to positively impact the communities and people they serve.

In concluding this project, I asked the women to share any advice or information they wish they had before stepping into this profession. While the dangers, training, and shift work are apparent considerations, women going into the field often do not understand how the job will affect their personal lives and families. Nor do they always know the physiological affects the stress of the academy will have on their bodies and minds or how they will be received by men in their profession. The experience is different for every woman, but having an awareness of the possibilities beforehand and give women a chance to prepare for what they might face.

Of academy life and law enforcement in general, Trooper Judy Haley says, “Be in the best physical shape you can be before the academy starts because it isn’t easy for anybody, no matter how good of shape you are in. Be used to long hours, lots of study and tests, call-outs at night, and little sleep. Be prepared to be away from home for a long

time" (Haley interview). Haley also encourages women to interact with and talk with other troopers first and learn from them. She advises them to listen to their stories, ask questions, and ride with them, as they have first-hand knowledge of the job and what to expect (Haley interview).

Haley suggests that anyone going into law enforcement learn as much as they possibly can. Whether that is learning about firearms and finding a good instructor to teach you about them, reading books or watching videos, be educated about the professions and its expectations. She also advises any cadets, "Know that you can handle being yelled at, singled out, and disciplined if you don't do something right or good enough. Learn and be able to take and carry out orders. Live a good, honest life, and be able to lead by example. Having this knowledge before you start the academy will give you confidence. Never give up" (Haley interview).

In speaking specifically to women in law enforcement, Haley says, "Law enforcement isn't just a job, it's a career, a career that you can be proud of and one that not many are cut out for. It takes a special type of person – fearless, energetic, enthusiastic, positive" (Haley interview). She reminds young women that this career can control your life, but if you put God, family, and work in that order, you can't go wrong. You will have a family that loves and supports you, but when you go home, set the problems or bad things that have happened aside. She encourages women to live a balanced life and to laugh often and find time to enjoy activities and hobbies. At the end of your career, you will have served honorably and made a life of which to be proud (Haley interview).

Lt., Tomi Tatum's advice is similar to that of Haley's. She advises, "Always have God first in your heart and life. If the desire of your heart is to go into law enforcement, God will and can grant that desire and will always be there to protect you and give you wisdom in any situation you may encounter" (Tatum interview). Much like Haley, Tatum emphasizes that keeping priorities straight and putting people first will lead a person in the right direction in any pursuit (Tatum interview).

Trooper Trinity Simmons offers up advice to women pursuing a career in law enforcement that focuses more on being open-minded about your choices and decisions. She says,

> I would say to not be so dead set on one particular organization. I wish I had done my homework to see what other states and agencies could have offered. I think it speaks volumes about an organization when you talk to the people it employs. I did this, but I only asked male troopers, and while male and female troopers can have some of the same experiences (good and bad) with an administration, it can be very different for females (Simmons interview).

Simmons also reminds young women especially looking to a career in law enforcement that in many places, women are still not viewed as equals to men. The spotlight is often on women, and while a woman may receive attention or be flattered, not everyone has right intentions (Simmons interview).

With those notes of caution, Simmons also reminds women of the positives of the profession. She says,

> You get to help someone somehow every day. You will be challenged daily, and while at times it is exhausting, it will be the most rewarding thing in the long run. You get into this job to make difference, but there will come a day when you question if you ever truly do. Then someday, somewhere down the road, you will see a little kid light up to a Trooper, or you will help that elderly person change a tire, or treat someone like a person when everyone else only sees them as trash. These moments are the ones that allow you to keep that hope for a better world (Simmons interview).

Simmons believes women especially need to do their homework when selecting an agency to join. She advises looking at opportunities for growth within the agency, educational incentives, diversity, and core values. Knowing where you want your career to go and your expectations from the job ahead of time will help you find the right agency for your expectations and the place where you feel you can grow and contribute the most effectively (Simmons e-mail).

Of academy life and job preparedness, Simmons echoes Haley's sentiments about being at the top of your mental and physical game because if you are not, it will show and you will not be able to catch up. She reminds women, "First impressions matter. As a female in law enforcement, you are held and you should hold yourself to an even higher standard than any man. Learn how to talk to people and try to get them to cooperate without ever laying a hand on them. If they do not comply then you take care of business, but this is what makes you stand out. That you can speak sensibly but can be forceful when it comes time for that" (Simmons interview). She also reminds women to be kind to themselves and others, "This job will challenge you, your relationships and your beliefs. You will see, hear and smell things you will wish to forget but cannot. You will see good people in their worst moments. Try not to judge everyone by that one moment. Give yourself and others a little grace but always remember 'smile on your face, murder in your heart.' You must be ready on and off duty to do what others can't" (Simmons interview).

Trooper Lateka Anderson advises any woman considering going into law enforcement to have your "go-to's." For her, these are the people she trusts and to whom she can go any time she needs to vent or is seeking advice. She cautions that not everyone

involved in a person's life can be a go-to. There are people in life who cannot be expected to share the burden this job often carries, which is why it is important to have that core group of people who understand the challenges and can offer support without taking on the emotional baggage themselves (Alexander interview).

Lt. Betsy Randolph's advice would be "don't judge what someone else is going through because we all go through things at times. We all end up broken and damaged. Be compassionate. Find out how you can help. Some people just need you to listen. We don't manage people, we manage the problem and help them get through whatever it is they are going through. I can tell a 23 year old kid about my experiences and the pitfalls to avoid, but we have to go through it ourselves most of the time" (Randolph interview). Randolph knows that most people have to fail or succeed on their own. It can be difficult watching people make mistakes; then loving them through that whole process is hard.

She emphasizes that in the academy, troopers are taught to look out for each other, but they don't always do a good job of truly living that for each other once the academy is over. In a a statement of profound truth, she says, "We kill and eat our own in law enforcement, and that needs to change. We don't ignore them or make light of it. We spend so much time and energy training people that the least we can do is take care of them. Its easy to get wrapped up in our own lives and forget that people have struggles" (Randolph interview).

Randolph's advice comes squarely from the personal experience of losing a partner to suicide. One of the troopers she worked with on the road, Brad Babb, killed himself while she was assigned to the 61st Academy. Randolph admits that he was difficult to deal with at times and became so hard to figure out and understand that no one

could get through to him. Even though some of his partners tried, he ultimately chose to take his own life. It was important that Randolph and the other troopers who worked with Babb could say they made effort to help each other. She says, “When someone is so isolated and so alone that there is no other way out than to kill themselves, the only way to get better is to reach out and get some help and say I’m in a bad spot. Yes, this is making yourself vulnerable but there have to be people to reach out to” (Randolph interview).

My advice to women going into law enforcement and what I wish I would have known ahead of time is to go in with your eyes wide open. Law enforcement is a profession that often attracts the idealistic, those who set out to change the world, and there is nothing wrong with that. However, this profession forces you to deal with challenging people and challenging situations daily, and without proper awareness and self-care, that idealism can quickly turn to cynicism. It does not have to be this way. By talking to other troopers, especially women, so that you understand what you will face and building self-care habits ahead of time, such as a healthy diet, regular exercise, you can prevent the burn out that ruins many careers and keeps us from being as productive as have the potential to be.

Define yourself clearly. Know who you are, what you believe in, what you are made of before you dive into your career. Being in law enforcement is a highly rewarding profession, but it will change you and it will steal your sense of self and your sense of peace if you do not have a grasp of those things ahead of time. It is easy to fall into the trap of becoming the job. No one explains to you that this profession becomes a prison. You will never be completely at ease in public again. You will be watching people,

looking for exits, observing behaviors, and constantly scanning your environment. This is good because it is our job to protect the innocent. The greatest fear most police officers have is that when the time comes to act, they will be caught unaware, on duty or off. It is right and good that law enforcement officers bear this burden, but you will lose yourself to it if you do not know who and what you are or know your own value completely separate from your profession.

There is also a tendency among women in law enforcement to surrender the feminine part of themselves on the altar of being accepted. This is also not a bad thing while on duty. It's goof for the men we work with to see us as one of the guys and for the public to see the uniform, the command presence, and not the gender. However, when the time comes at the end of the shift to hang up your gun belt, it is important to nourish all aspects of the self, including the feminine side that may need to be cared for, that is more receptive, that doesn't have to be in control or in charge all the time. It is important to find balance and to know where that place of equilibrium is for you.

Be self-aware and learn to recognize your own triggers and limits, as this is essence of mental and emotional self-regulation. Find a professional counselor who can help you develop strategies for this. Like the others, I suggest training your physical body for the rigors of patrol school and a life-long career but also work to train your mind. Expand your knowledge base at every opportunity, learn self-management and self-regulation techniques, and above all know yourself and acknowledge when you need a break. You have to be your own best advocate in this profession.

The topic of women in law enforcement, and in this case women in the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, opens a wealth of possibilities for future research. Studies regarding

gender differences in emotional intelligence and intuition in regard to community policing, navigating family and relationships as a female law enforcement officer, and strategies for mentoring female law enforcement officers into leadership positions all provide fertile soil for future study. Perhaps one of the most telling projects in regard to how the Oklahoma Highway Patrol has progressed in regard to the acceptance of women would come from interviewing the women who did not finish the patrol academy. For now, however, we begin with the stories of the pioneers, the first women who made inroads into a difficult career and an elite agency, because their stories give us a solid place to which we can return when we seek to name the qualities that define us as women and as law enforcement officers.

As we look to the past to anchor us in our values and foundation of service, the future will require women of vision to spearhead the move forward. That leadership must occur at every level, from mentoring by senior female troopers in the field up the chain of command to front line supervisors, troop commanders, and zone commanders. However, women in leadership will require providing them the opportunity to first be mentored, both by current leaders within the patrol and through state and nationally recognized programs such as the FBI Leadership Academy. When they arrive in those positions, they will bring with them both the pioneering traditions of the past and the transformational leadership of the future that will drive change and allow the Oklahoma Highway Patrol to remain a force for justice and peace.

Works Cited

Anderson, Lateka. E-mail Interview. April 21, 2019

Anderson, Lateka. Personal Interview. April 26, 2019.

Blish, Todd. Maj. Personal Interview. 20 September 2016.

Brett, Regina. "50 Life Lessons." Regina Brett, 2019, www.reginabrett.com/50-life lessons-god

Burton, Art T. "Lawman Legend Bass Reeves: The Invincible Man Hunter." Wild West 19.5 (2007): 50. MasterFILE Premier. Web. 13 Sept. 2016. 13

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. www.archives.gov/education/lessons/civil-rights-act. Accessed 24 Oct. 2016.

Cobalt, Amy. E-mail Interview. June 11, 2019.

Cobalt, Amy. Personal Interview. June 19, 2019.

"Continuing a Tradition." *Oklahoma DPS History 1990*. Vol. 3. 8-27.

Coulter, Ann. "Freeze! I Just Had My Nails Done. (Cover Story)." *Human Events* 61.10

Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training - Home, 2020, www.ok.gov/cleet/.

"Craig Groeschel." SermonQuotes, 22 May 2019, sermonquotes.com/?s=Craig%2BGroeschel.

Crooke, Curtis. "Women in Law Enforcement." *Dispatch* July 2013. cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/07-2013/women_in_law_enforcement.asp. Accessed 6 March 2016.

Drexler, Ken. "Indian Removal Act: Primary Documents in American History." *Library of Congress: Research Guides*. Library of Congress. Web. 22 Jan. 2019. https://guides.loc.gov/indian-removal-act. Accessed 23 Feb. 2020

Duffin, Allan T. *A History in Blue: 160 Years of Women Police, Sheriffs, Detectives, and State Troopers.* Los Angeles: Duffin Creative, 2012.

Eberstadt, Mary. "Mothers in Combat Boots." *Policy Review* 159 (2010): 33 *MasterFILE Premier*. search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=afh&AN=47916480&site=ehost-live. Accessed 8 Nov. 2016.

Frank, Stanley. "Some Cops Have Lovely Legs." *Saturday Evening Post* 222.26 (1949): 11. *MasterFILE Premier.* search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=afh&AN=19958860&site=ehost-live. Accessed 6 Sept. 2016.

Gilmartin, Kevin. *Emotional Survival for LawEnforcement.* Tuscon: E-S Press, 2002.

Grossman, Lt. Col. Dave. *On Combat*. 3rd. Millstadt: Warrior Science Publications, 2008. Print.

Hampton, Ashley. E-mail Interview. June 5, 2019

Hampton, Ashley. Personal Interview. June 9, 2019.

Hale, Edward Everett. "Edward Everett Hale Quotes (Author of The Man Without A Country)." *Goodreads*, Goodreads, 2019, www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/8183.Edward_Everett_Hale.

Haley, Judy. E-mail Interview. Dec. 30, 2018.

Haley, Judy. Personal Interview. Jan. 8, 2019.

Heidensohn, Frances. *Women in Control? The Role of Women in Law Enforcement*. New York: Oxford UP, 1992. Print

The Holy Bible: King James Version. New York, NY. Oxford UP, 1945.

" Jeremiah." *Bible Gateway.* www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+29%3A11&version=NIV.

Johnson, Robert D. "The Influence of Legal Mandates on the Acceptance of Women as Professionals." *Journal of Social Psychology*. 130.1 (1990): 39. *MasterFILE Premier*.

Koenig, Esther J. "An Overview Of Attitudes Toward Women In Law Enforcement." *Public Administration Review* 38.3 (1978): 267-275. *Business Source Premier*. www.jstor.org/stable/975681. Accessed 27 Feb. 2016

Kurtz, Don L. "Roll Call And The Second Shift: The Influences Of Gender And Family On Police Stress." *Police Practice & Research* 13.1 (2012): 71-86. *Academic Search Premier*. search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=74688372&site=ehost-live. Accessed 27 Feb. 2016

Langton, Lynn. "Women in Law Enforcement, 1987-2008." *Bureau of Justice Statistics,* U.S. Department of Justice, June 2010, https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/wle8708.pdf

"Leonardo Da Vinci Quotes." *BrainyQuote*, Xplore, 2019, www.brainyquote.com/quotes/leonardo_da_vinci_380288.

Lord, Vivian B., and Paul C. Friday. "Choosing A Career In Police Work: A Comparative Study Between Applicants For Employment With A Large Police Department And Public High School Students." *Police Practice & Research* 4.1 (2003): 63. *Academic Search Premier*. search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=10724562&site=ehost-live. Accessed 7 Sept. 2016.

Mullenbach, Cheryl. *Women in Blue: 16 Brave Officers, Forensics Experts, Police Chiefs, and More*. Chicago: Chicago RP, 2016. Print.

"Oklahoma Highway Patrol Operations Manual – Order 06.02.00." *Oklahoma Department of Public Safety*. Intranet. https://intranet.okdps.gov/sites/default/files/policies/OHP%20Operations%20Manual_2.pdf. Accessed 25 Feb. 2020

"Oklahoma." *Worldmark Encyclopedia of the States*, edited by Timothy L. Gall, 7th ed., vol. 2, Gale, 2007, pp. 679-694. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*, go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?p=GVRL&sw=w&u=uchs_ca&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CCX2661700051&asid=cb68df179c4a6d1ad515a0ea098cc824. Accessed 19 Dec. 2016.

"Proverbs."*Bible Gateway*. www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+3%3A56&version=NIV.

Randolph, Betsy. E-mail Interview. Nov. 8, 2019.

Randolph, Betsy. Personal Interview. Oct. 24, 2019

Reaves, Brian. "State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies, 2013." *Bureau of Justice Statistics*, U.S. Department of Justice, July 2016, www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/slleta13.pdf.

Rehder, Cody. Personal Interview. November 17, 2016.

Rosen, Leora N., et al. "Cohesion and Readiness In Gender-Integrated Combat Service Support Units: The Impact of Acceptance Of Women and Gender Ratio." *Armed Forces and Society (0095327X).* 22.4 (1996): 537-553. *Academic Search Elite.*

search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=afh&AN=9608221501&site=ehost-live. Accessed 8 Nov. 2016.

Shepherd, Bradley Cpt. E-mail Interview. December 15, 2016.

Simmons, Trinity. E-mail Interview. May 28, 2019.

Simmons, Trinity. Personal Interview. July 24, 2019

Staff, Crimesider. "Police Reveal New Details about Okla. Manhunt Suspect's Possible Targets." CBS News, CBS Interactive, 27 Oct. 2016, www.cbsnews.com/news/michael-vance-manhunt-police-reveal-new-details-about-oklahoma-manhunt-suspects-possible-targets/.

Tatum, Tomi. E-mail Interview. Jan. 22, 2019.

Tatum, Tomi. Personal Interview. Feb. 20, 2019.

"Viktor E. Frankl Quotes (Author of Man's Search for Meaning)." Goodreads, Goodreads, 2019, www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/2782.Viktor_E_Frankl.

Walker, Stan Cpt. Personal Interview. November 1, 2016.

Willink, Jocko. "187: Principles and Tactics with Creativity Dominates All. MCDP 1-3 Ta..." *Bullhorn*, 2019, www.bullhorn.fm/jockopodcast/posts/187-principles-and-tactics-with-creativity.

Willis, Dan. *Bulletproof Spirit: The First Responder's Essential Resource for Protecting and Healing Mind and Heart.* San Francisco: New World Library, 2014.

"Women Recruited At Slow Rate By Nation's Law Enforcement Agencies, Report Reveals." *Jet* 95.21 (1999): 15. *MasterFILE Premier*.search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cmedm&AN=26741899&site=ehost-live. Accessed 6 Sept. 2016.

VITA

Full name: Charity Nicole Robertson

Place and date of birth: Bartlesville, Oklahoma January 11, 1982

Parents Name: Michael James Robertson and Brenda Rose Robertson

Educational Institutions:

School	Place	Degree	Date
Secondary: Not Available			
Collegiate: Bartlesville Wesleyan College	Bartlesville, OK	B.A.	May 2001
Graduate: University of Phoenix	Online	M.A. Ed.	February 2011
Graduate: Drew University	Madison, NJ	D. Litt	May 2020