

\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*

Captain Neil Weaver  
Government and Media Relations

**Chris Loftis, Communications Director**  
Office (360) 596-4013  
Cell (360) 485-3983  
[Chris.Loftis@wsp.wa.gov](mailto:Chris.Loftis@wsp.wa.gov)

**May 31, 2021**

**Sean M. O'Connell Jr**  
**Commissioned – March 1, 1999**  
**End of Watch – May 31, 2013**



The Washington State Patrol's twenty-eighth member to die in the line of duty was Trooper Sean M. O'Connell Jr. Trooper O'Connell died from injuries sustained in a motorcycle collision while performing extra traffic duty following the collapse of the Skagit River Bridge - since re-named in his honor.

A New York native, Trooper O'Connell served in the U.S. Navy and was a decorated Gulf War veteran before joining the Patrol. He left behind a loving wife, two children, parents, siblings, and many friends upon his death at the age of 38. We remember...

## **BIO**

Sean M. O'Connell Jr. was born on September 10, 1974, in West Islip, New York, to Diane Tufaro and Sean O'Connell Sr. He spent his formative years attending Pawling High School in New York before moving to Washington State. O'Connell continued his education by attending Olympic College and the University of Phoenix, earning an Associate of Arts Degree in Criminal Justice.

His life of service to his community and country began with the United States Navy in October 1992. O'Connell served over four years and participated in the liberation of Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm, earning numerous awards and commendations.

After the military, O'Connell's desire to continue to serve would lead him to the Washington State Patrol. Hired as a trooper cadet on July 15, 1998, O'Connell became a member of the 82nd Trooper Basic Training Class. Trooper O'Connell was commissioned on March 1, 1999, and assigned to Marysville. He joined the Marysville motors unit in May 2012. Trooper O'Connell's tenure with the Patrol included being selected as Trooper of the Year.

## **END OF WATCH**

Trooper Sean M. O'Connell, Jr., died on May 31, 2013. The Skagit River Bridge had collapsed just a week prior, creating an increase of traffic on arterial roads being utilized as detours. Trooper O'Connell was riding his motorcycle, checking the length of the back-up in Conway in the area of Fir Island Road and Greenfield Street when he was struck and killed by a box truck.

At the time of his death, Trooper O'Connell had served almost 15 years with the Washington State Patrol. He was 38 years old.

---

O'Connell is survived by his wife Alissa, children Kian and Miley, father and stepmother Sean Sr. and Rita, mother and spouse Diane and Carole, brother Francis, sisters Julia and Lauren and grandmother Virginia.

In May of 2014, he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions by the Law Enforcement Medal of Honor Committee. A memorial was also erected in his honor at the Marysville detachment Office the same year.

On December 6, 2013, the new Skagit River Bridge was named in honor of fallen Trooper Sean M. O'Connell, Jr.

---



Washington State Patrol Trooper Sean M. O'Connell, Jr., embodied the agency's core value - service with humility. His dedication to performing his duties, coupled with a broad sense of humor and infectious smile, will be treasured by all who knew him during his 15-year career with the Washington State Patrol. He was a good and courageous man, well remembered and deeply missed...

## **Washington State Trooper Sean M. O'Connell Jr.**

**End of Watch – May 31, 2013**  
***Gone But Never Forgotten***