



For Immediate Release

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Washington State Patrol Welcomes 44 New Troopers

Shelton, WA – From Thailand to Russia to Federal Way in Washington, nearly 50% of the 115th Trooper Basic Training Class (TBTC) is made up of underrepresented communities. This class, and the others to follow, are helping the Washington State Patrol (WSP) diversify and continue its legacy of being one of the best trained agencies in the nation.

As a collective, the 115th TBTC has contacted over 8,000 motorists. They have removed nearly 700 DUI drivers from the roadways, investigated over 650 collisions and assisted almost 2,000 stranded motorists in need of help. The 115th TBTC is a well-rounded group of extremely qualified, competent and well trained individuals.

After completing over 1,400 hours of rigorous training, they were presented their commission cards by Chief John R. Batiste who welcomed them and their families to the WSP. Justice G. Helen Whitener swore in 44 men and women making them the newest troopers to join the WSP.

During the formal graduation ceremony, both Governor Jay Inslee and Chief Batiste reminded the class that they are entering a noble profession that will require them to always perform at their very best and serve with the humility that makes a good law enforcement officer. “Our agency has received the highest level of accreditation for law enforcement in the world,” stated Chief Batiste. “We will count on you to live up to that honor and meet those standards in all that you do and say. But it will always be your honesty, character, courage, compassion and professionalism that makes a difference the lives of the people we serve.”

During the ceremony several cadets received awards in recognition of their dedication for specific skills including collision investigation and physical fitness. In addition, the Washington State Patrol Memorial Foundation sponsors the Core Values Award. The Core Values Award is presented in honor of the most recent WSP commissioned officer to give their life in the service to the citizens of the state of Washington. Detective Eric T. Gunderson died in the line of duty on September 26, 2021. This award was presented today in Detective Gunderson’s honor by Captain Jason Linn on behalf of Eric’s wife and two sons. The Core Values Award is determined by an anonymous vote of the cadet’s classmates and presented to the trooper cadet who most exemplifies the training division core values. These values include strong leadership, effective partnerships, professional excellence, acting with integrity and accountability, respecting and protecting individual rights, and earning the trust and confidence of the public. This class’ Core Values Award was presented to Trooper Nicholas R. Jones, who was also designated by his peers as their class speaker.

Academy Captain Robert W. Sharpe presented a number of other outstanding troopers with awards. These awards included:

Top Academic Award

Presented to Trooper Maxwell A. Puff; this award recognizes the outstanding efforts of the cadet who attains the highest grade point average compiled over 30 exams and quizzes.

Top Driving Award

Presented to Trooper Jared M. Gearhart; this award recognizes the highest level of proficiency with respect to driving skills and techniques, decision making and mindset, and steady and constant improvement through each phase of drivers training.

Top Firearms Award

Presented to Trooper Regan J. Klepac; this award recognizes the highest level of proficiency with all weapon systems, marksmanship scores and skills, and demonstration of sound judgement during practical encounter scenarios.

Top Physical Fitness Award

Presented to Trooper Javier Nunez III; this award recognizes the highest level of drive and tenacity in physical fitness testing and training. The recipient of this award consistently performed at the top of the TBTC during physical training.

Top Control Tactics Award

Presented to Trooper Juan Martinez Jr.; this award recognizes the highest level of proficiency in control tactics techniques, to include self-defense, handcuffing, searching and the use of force thought process.

Top Collision Investigation Award

Presented to Trooper Adam J. Harlan; this award recognizes the highest level of proficiency regarding collision investigation, including mathematical computation, scene investigation, information and evidence gathering, report writing and teamwork.

Top Communications Award

Presented to Trooper Maxwell A. Puff; this award recognizes the highest level of efficiency of radio communications knowledge, based upon testing, and practical exercises.

Top Overall Cadet Award

Presented to Trooper Noah D. Baker; this award recognizes the trooper cadet who demonstrated great courage to overcome obstacles, unwavering dedication to stay focused in reaching their goals and their ability to give 100% in every aspect of their training. Trooper Baker demonstrated the necessary skills, abilities and judgement to be an excellent trooper, and he made extra efforts to make continuous improvements.

A class photo and full list of 115th TBTC is attached. For more information, visit www.wsp.wa.gov

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