

Washington State Patrol Celebrates It's 90th Anniversary

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - The Washington State Patrol took time Tuesday to celebrate 90 years of "Service With Humility," in a ceremony at Patrol headquarters in Olympia. The Patrol's official birthday is tomorrow, June 8. On that date in 1921 the first six officers of the Washington Highway Patrol were issued motorcycles, armbands and guns, and told to enforce the traffic laws of the state of Washington. In 1933 the agency was renamed the Washington State Patrol, at which time troopers were given full police powers. Those present, including Governor Chris Gregoire, took note of how the patrol has evolved, and what has stayed the same. "Vehicles change. Technology for gathering evidence improves. Speed limits go up," Gregoire said. "But values are eternal. And when you base your effort every day on a shared value — service — then the work you do lasts much longer than one career."

Chief John Batiste also thanked about 50 retirees who were present for the legacy they left to his generation. "Those of you who came before us left a wonderful agency. We owe you a huge debt of gratitude," Batiste said. He offered a moment of silence in honor of the 26 agency employees who gave their lives in service to the people of Washington. Also speaking was the agency's oldest living retired trooper, 96-year old Bob Rupp. "It was always about service to the people of this state," Rupp said. "Occasionally you had somebody who was a problem, and we did what we had to do. But service came first." Rupp had a chance to ride in a modern police car, and was amazed by all of the current gadgetry such as multiple radios, computers, PA systems and lights. "In my day we had a radio microphone with a button that you pushed to talk. That was it," he said. Borrowing a tradition from the military, Rupp as the agency's oldest trooper and pre-Academy Cadet Brooke Bova used a sword to make the first cut in the agency's birthday cake symbolizing the past and the present. A pre-television film clip about the Patrol, made in the 1940s and which played in local movie houses, is now available on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/user/wspgovandmedia#p/u/1/qDqr81fq_sl.