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Office of the Director  
Florida Highway Patrol

April 8, 2002

Colonel Christopher A. Knight, Director  
Florida Highway Patrol  
2900 Apalachee Parkway  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0500

Re: Trooper Steve Varwell. and Trooper Joe Morris. Troop C, Tampa, FL.

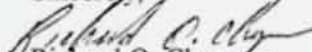
Mr Knight. I feel compelled to inform you of an incident I had just south of Tampa last Thursday I found myself caught between two 18 wheelers and my left front tire blew and disintegrated with a portion of it wedging under the caliper locking the break on that one wheel. I found myself under both trucks for moment and got the steering wheel back all the way to the right and it straitened out the car. The drivers saw what had happened and move away giving me lots of room to get back out and off the road with no other damage. My wonderful wife of 27 years died a few short months ago and I thought I was going to join her for a few seconds.

This area of three lane freeway is the only one I know of in the Eisenhower System where trucks are permitted to use the third lane and I feel firmly that they should not be aloud in it! Please do something to prevent it.

The two Troopers, Mr. Varwell and Mr. Morris came to my aid and you and your staff should be commended for the fine and thorough training they displayed in all phases of the ordeal. They were exceptionally polite, calmed me down quickly. They obviously do not work together all the time as they arrived in separate vehicles, but they joined as one and saw to the fact that I was on my way in minuets rather than the hours that I had anticipated. I was surprised as rarely in my 64 years do I meet this quality of a person, quantity of training and public display of the fact that they enjoy what they are doing. When I look back on the ordeal and realized I had two at once I feel speechless.

You and your staff are lucky to have them and I recommend you all will continue to treat them well. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

  
Richard O. Chapman

cc: Troop C Headquarters, Troop Commander, Major Cyrus R. Brown.