

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I'm Colonel Chris Knight, Director of the Florida Highway Patrol. On behalf of the men and women of the Patrol, I welcome you to Troop C Headquarters, which serves the greater Tampa Bay area. Also, on behalf of the women and men of the Patrol, I want to thank you all for taking time out of your schedules to join us for one of the greatest moments in the history of our agency.

We ask that if you are seated, please stand and remain standing for the presentation of the colors by members of the Florida Highway Patrol Honor Guard, which will be followed by the National Anthem, performed by Mrs. Mary Kay Wilson, and finally, for the Invocation, by our local Florida Highway Patrol Chaplain, Pastor Ed Russo.

At this time, I would like to officially thank everyone who worked so hard to get this project completed. It wasn't until after the violent events of May 19th 1998, when three law enforcement officers from the Tampa Bay area, one trooper and two Tampa City Police Officers, were so violently taken from their families and this community, that the reality of the importance of a need for a memorial monument struck our agency. The pain shared by this community following that event was so great that it produced the drive and the financial resources needed to provide us with this long overdue monument.

Long before the events of May 19th 1998, the Florida Highway Patrol's history has endured many more unfortunate events than we care to remember. During our 62-year history, thirty-seven Troopers have been killed in the line of duty protecting our state. Seventeen Troopers have been shot, fourteen were killed in patrol vehicle crashes, five died in FHP aircraft crashes and one Trooper was killed as a result of an explosion which occurred while he searched the contents of a vehicle following an arrest.

Engraved deep within the hearts of everyone wearing an FHP uniform, both past and present, is the memory and respect for these fallen troopers. This monument will give the families and friends of these troopers a special place where they can come and spend a quiet moment in reflection of their loved one. The monument is open for public viewing as a reminder to all of us of the sacrifices made for safety in our society. The Florida Highway Patrol will forever appreciate the support and generosity of many people from Tampa Bay.

Today's date, December 5th, has special meaning for our agency. On this date in 1941, Trooper Luther P. Daniel was shot and killed in the line of duty. He was the first Trooper in the history of the Florida Highway Patrol to give his life in the line of duty. Today, we are honored to have as our special guest's several members of the Daniel family, who have traveled from South Florida to join us for this very special occasion. In a moment, they will come forward and help unveil the first memorial monument in the history of the Florida Highway Patrol.

Again, thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedules to be with us. We are honored that you have come to share this special moment. Thank you