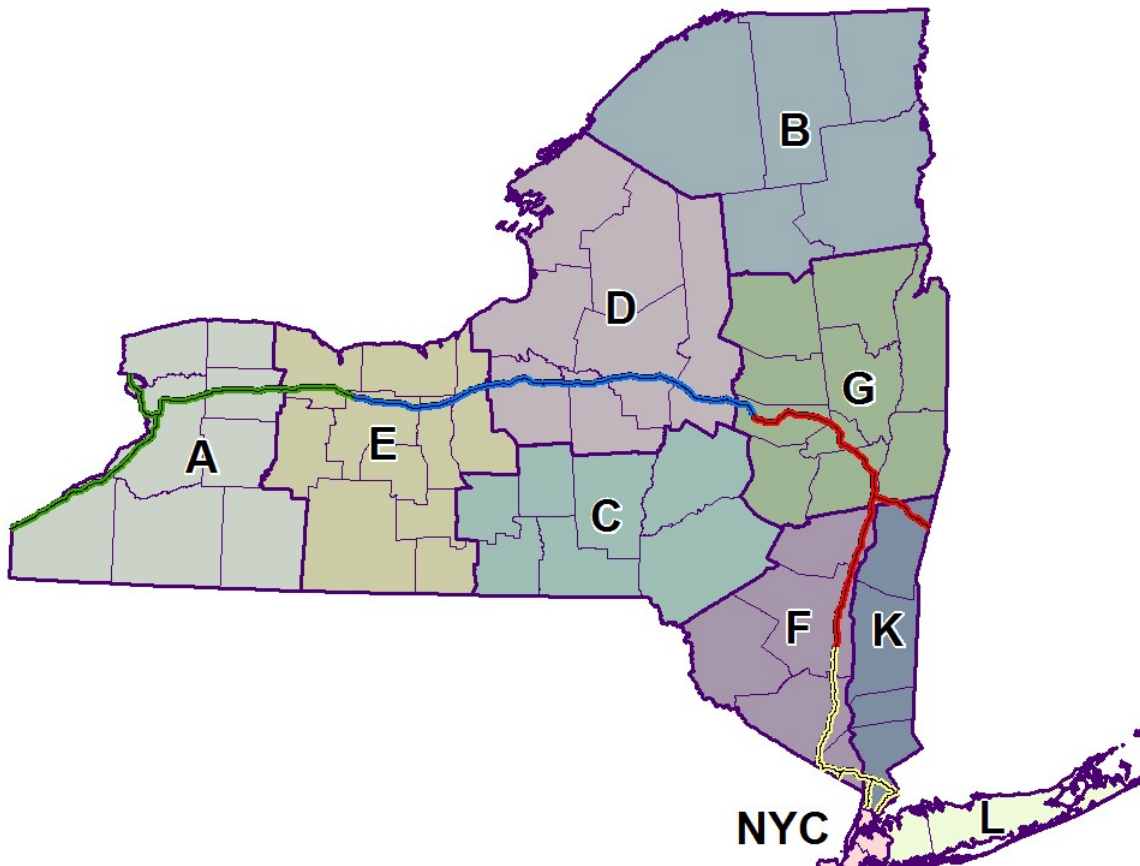


“Ma’am, We’re State Troopers and New Jersey is a State.”

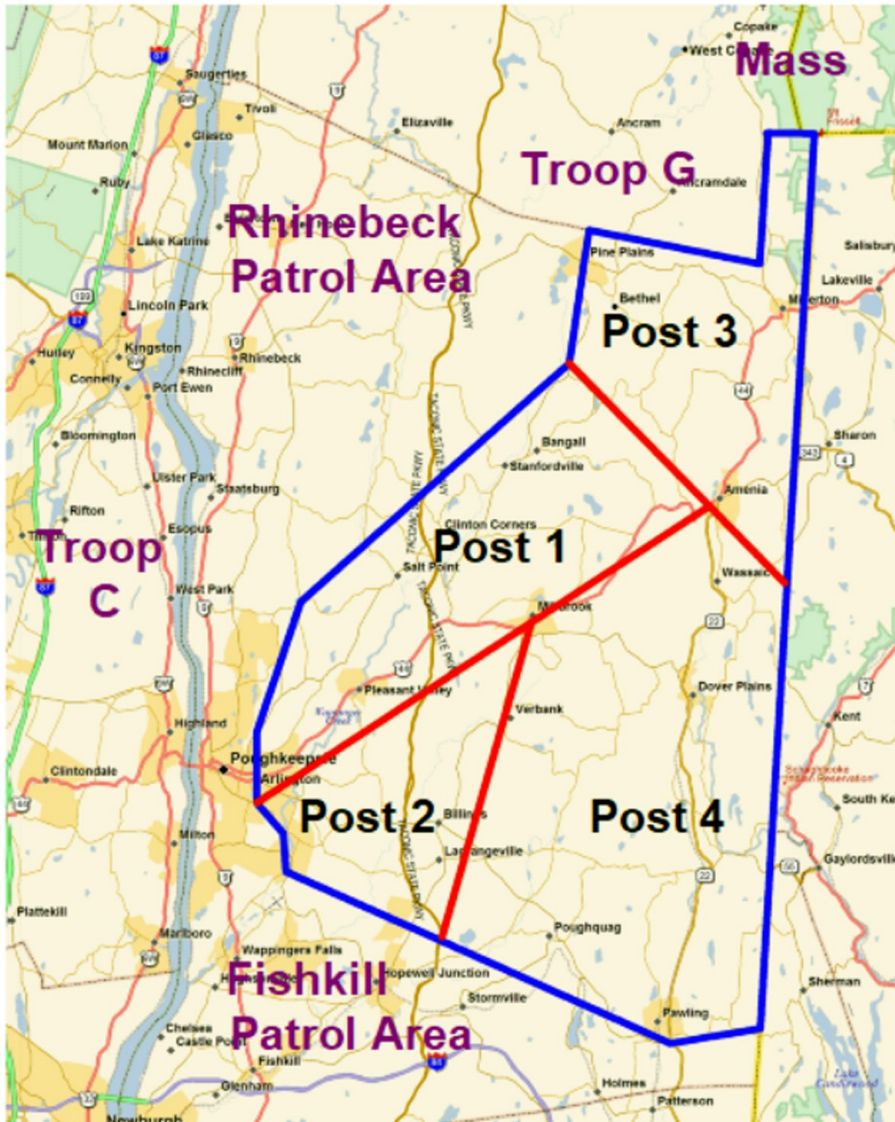
As most New Yorkers know, at least those who live upstate, New York State is bordered by Canada and five states - Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Vermont.

During my state police career I served in three troops, C, K and F. (Actually I served in Troop K twice - I must have flunked it the first time around.)



All three of those troops abut contiguous neighboring states. Although I was never stationed near another state when I was assigned to Troop C, I made up for it in K and F.

New York State Police - Troop K - SP Dover Plains
Patrol Posts (1967)



When I was assigned to SP Dover Plains in Troop K, the entire eastern border of our patrol area was contiguous with New York's border with Connecticut plus a tiny bit of the Massachusetts border.

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As I wrote in *Dover 962*, an account of my days as a freshly minted trooper assigned to SP Dover Plains, the proximity of Connecticut came into play right from the get go and it also introduced me to the unique fraternal relationship state police organizations enjoy.

“I would venture off to my assigned post with my trusty county map in hand and ricochet around like a pinball. I would get lost at least once a day; sometimes several times a day. When I finally figured out where I was, I often discovered that I was on

the next post, in an adjacent station's patrol area or, not infrequently, in Connecticut, which bordered the entire east side of Dover's patrol area.

One day I returned to the station and was somewhat surprised to see a Connecticut troop car parked in front of the barracks. When I went inside, a Connecticut trooper was sitting at a desk in the squad room making telephone calls and taking notes. It was apparent that he was conducting an investigation of some kind.

Trooper Pat Predham was sitting the desk and introduced me to the trooper, explaining that he was working on a case just over the border. He needed to conduct some telephone interviews and, since our station was closer to his post than his own station was, he came to Dover. It turned out that this was not an uncommon practice. Having a Connecticut state police car parked in front of our barracks fueled the popular belief that all troopers had concurrent power on both sides of the border and we did nothing to discourage the idea. I saw quite a bit of the Connecticut troops, particularly since I was frequently lost in Connecticut.

Another reason we saw a lot of them was that the nearest hospital was just over the state line in Sharon. Because of the difference in drinking ages, we had a tremendous number of alcohol related accidents on the weekends and made frequent trips to the emergency room in Sharon. The first time I went there, it was an almost surreal experience. The Harlem Valley, particularly in the winter, is a pretty bleak place. Sharon, on the other hand, was like something out of a Currier and Ives print; a large village green, white picket fences, white clapboard houses with black shutters. When you crossed from the Harlem Valley into Connecticut, it was like the beginning of the *Wizard of Oz* when everything changes from black & white to color.

When I finished my time in Dover Plains in June of 1967 I was transferred to SP Middletown, which was on the extreme western side of Troop K's troop area. In August of 1968 all of Troop K west

of the Hudson River was merged with parts of C and G Troops to become the newly formed Troop F. The old SP Middletown barracks, which had been someone's home in a previous life, was replaced by a large, modern troop headquarters building. Although those of us who were still assigned to patrol now would now be working out of a state-of-the-art building, not much changed.

As was the case when it was still part of Troop K, the southern border of SP Middletown's patrol area abuts about ten miles of New Jersey and about five miles of Pennsylvania.

The southern portion of New York State abutting Pennsylvania is separated by the Delaware River. Initially there was only one bridge which connected SP Middletown's patrol area and Pennsylvania, the Route 209 bridge in the City of Port Jervis. A second bridge across the Delaware was added when Interstate I-84 was built in the late 1960s.

The state line between SP Middletown's patrol area and New Jersey was considerably more ambiguous - an arbitrary straight line which for the most part passed through agricultural land. On tertiary roads, often the only indication that one was crossing into New Jersey was a change in the pavement, if in fact the roads were paved at all.

In the 1960s there were no town police departments and no sheriff's patrol in SP Middletown's patrol area. That was also the case in the adjacent areas of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Consequently, the troopers in each of the three states were the only games in town and we worked very closely on matters of mutual concern. Local burglars didn't pay any attention to state lines, so neither did we. The resulting interactions were somewhat memorable and often humorous - at least in retrospect. Here are a few:

Our mutual disregard of state lines came into play one day when I arraigned a speeder before a town justice who lived about three miles north of the New Jersey state line. In the days before interstate motor vehicle law compacts, there was no way of ensuring that an out-of-state motorist wouldn't just ignore a vehicle and traffic summons he received in New York State - unless he posted bail. I had

stopped a Connecticut speeder on the newly constructed Interstate 84 and took him before the justice to post a nominal cash bail. As it happened, the judge's son was a New Jersey State Trooper assigned to the Sussex Barracks. The son had ducked across the border to have lunch with mom and dad and his marked New Jersey troop car was parked in the driveway when I pulled in and parked beside it.

The motorist followed me into the driveway, exited his vehicle and spent what seemed like an inordinate length of time studying the differences between our two cars.



Finally he worked up his courage and said “Trooper, if that trooper has a defendant before the same judge you’re taking me to, one of us is getting railroaded.”

As Interstate 84 was being built it was opened in segments of varying lengths as construction was completed. The first section to open in our patrol area was a four or five mile stretch which ran from the top of the Greenville Mountain to the Delaware River. There it crossed the new bridge and continued into Pennsylvania for less than a mile before it dead ended at Route 209. Since we were already patrolling our newly opened section, it didn't make much sense for the Pennsylvania Troopers to patrol their tiny segment. We would just cross the bridge and continue into Pennsylvania to make a quick check for disabled vehicles. In theory, if we came across an accident or something requiring more than a request for road service, we would call the Pennsylvania troops - but I don't recall that that ever happened.

One day I had completed such a "swing" into Pennsylvania and nosed into a cross-over to head back to the Empire State. Just then a Pontiac GTO came by headed toward New York State at well over the speed limit. As it went by the driver looked over at the nose of my troop car emerging from the center median, then looked off in the distance and saw the *Welcome to New York* sign.

In those days New York State Police cars were white with a black hood and roof.



Pennsylvania troop cars of the same era were white with a dark green hood.



Obviously the writing on the doors was different, but I'm guessing that at first glance the two cars looked pretty much the same from head-on or in one's rearview mirror.

The guy made a calculated decision and nailed it. In those days Plymouths and other Chrysler product troop cars had 440 c.i.d. engines and were about as quick as it gets for a non-sports car Detroit product. The motorist headed into New York at somewhere around a hundred and twenty with me in hot pursuit. The motorist held on for another quarter mile or so just to make sure he was well across the border, then let off on the gas and let me pull up along side. He looked over at me and smiled until he read the writing on my right hand door. Then the color sort of drained out of his face. We took a ride to the same Greenville judge as in the previous tale, but this time I had the motorist ride with me rather than follow me, because I had a feeling he might not be set free on bail.....

Another interaction with the Jersey troops occurred in the same general area when I was dispatched to a fatal industrial accident on the Jersey border south of the hamlet of Greenville. The complaint had been received by way of SP Sussex, the Jersey barracks which covered their side of our mutual border. A contractor had been unloading a small bulldozer from a trailer when it rolled over on him, flattening him like a pancake. The accident was quite literally on the state line.

There were four Jersey Troopers there when I arrived - the most Jersey Troopers I had ever seen in one place at one time in this most rural part of New Jersey.

In those days the Jersey troops wore blouses and Sam Browne Belts three hundred sixty five days a year and looked very spiffy.

I looked at the body, the bulldozer, the state line sign and the four beefy looking troopers and asked how many Jersey Troopers it took to move a small bulldozer. They said "about four" - and left. It became my accident.



As had been the case when I was stationed in Dover Plains, a great deal of our activity on Friday and Saturday nights was due to the difference in drinking ages between New York and New Jersey. One of the worst places for alcohol related accidents was the sharp turn on Route 284 in the Village of Unionville, just above the New Jersey border. The closest hospital was Alexander Linn Hospital in the New Jersey Borough of Sussex, about eight miles south of Unionville.

Early one Sunday morning my night patrol partner and I finished policing a serious personal injury

accident at the usual location and headed down to Sussex to interview the driver at the hospital. By the time we got done there it was about 2 A.M.

At that time the Jersey Troopers were still required to live in the barracks, whereas in New York we had the choice of sleeping in the barracks or not, depending on how far away one lived. Knowing that most of the Jersey Troopers would be asleep, we naturally headed over to the Sussex Barracks and did a lap or two around the building with our siren wide open, then hightailed it back towards New York.

I'm pretty sure this was not the first time this had happened and it seemed pretty likely that the Jersey deskman would be siccing his night patrol on us, so we took one of the less obvious routes back towards the border. All of a sudden my night patrol partner, who was driving, slammed on the brakes, backed up and shined the spotlight on a street sign. I had absolutely no idea what was going on.

He reached into the back seat and started rummaging through his briefcase until he came up with an arrest warrant. "I've been looking for this kid for a shoplifting charge for the last month. This is where his mother lives. Let's see if he's home."

I pointed out that we were still in New Jersey and I was more than reasonably sure that the *Uniform Close Pursuit Act* did not apply to a month old misdemeanor warrant, but he wasn't going to be dissuaded. The next thing I knew we were knocking on mom's door. After a few minutes mom appeared in her robe and curlers and inquired as to what we wanted.

"We've got a warrant for Johnny. Where is he?"

She looked at us for a minute with a puzzled expression and said "Aren't you New York Troopers?"

(It should be pointed out that New York State Police uniforms and Pennsylvania State Police uniforms might be confused under poor lighting conditions, especially if the troopers were not wearing headgear
.....



..... but there was no way we could pass ourselves off as New Jersey State Troopers. ¹⁾

My partner said “Ma’am, we are State Troopers and New Jersey is a state. Troopers are Troopers. Where’s Johnny?” She thought about that for a minute, again looked puzzled, and then gave up and replied “He’s up in Middletown” and gave us a suggested address. I breathed a sigh of relief and we headed back across the border.

¹ There is one thing the three uniforms have in common. None of the agencies wear badges like most law enforcement agencies do.

About a year later I was sent to SP Ellenville as a station sergeant. Ellenville did not border another state. Then, a few months later, I was again transferred, this time to SP Ferndale as the station commander. Ferndale's patrol area shares a fifty mile border with the patrol areas of Pennsylvania's SP Milford and SP Honesdale barracks, all of which is delineated by the Delaware River.

The areas on both sides of the river were significantly less populated than SP Middletown's patrol area had been, plus there was a river between us and Pennsylvania, so we didn't run back and forth as often as we had in Orange County, but we still interacted with the Pennsylvania Troopers from time to time.

One "extrajudicial" evolution between our two agencies involved *Fugitives from Justice*. Those who haven't been exposed to the inner workings of the criminal justice system might be a little hazy on exactly what the legal meaning of *Fugitive from Justice* is and how it works. Here's an example:

Let's say Billy is charged with Burglary in the Third Degree in New York State. Maybe an arrest warrant was just issued for him and he hasn't yet been arrested or maybe he's been indicted by a grand jury and isn't in custody or maybe he's out on bail following his arrest and failed to show up in court for trial; for the purposes of this example it really doesn't matter in what stage of the initial criminal proceedings Billy was - he's skipped town and there's a warrant for his arrest. Whatever police agency is looking for him enters his name into the both the state and federal wanted files via NCIC and NYSPIN.

Then, let's say, Billy gets stopped by troopers in Pennsylvania and they "run" his name. Low and behold Billy is wanted for felony burglary in New York State. The Pennsylvania Troopers don't arrest him for burglary, they charge him as a *Fugitive from Justice*. It really doesn't matter what felony Billy is charged with in New York - it could be stealing a car or it could be murder. After the troopers check with the "demanding agency" in New York to make sure Billy's still wanted, Billy is arraigned before a local magistrate and most likely committed to jail. (Bail is possible, but not likely.)

At some point Billy will be taken before a “Court of Record” or “Superior Court”, rather than back to a “Justice of the Peace” or “Town Justice”. There Billy can either “waive extradition” and agree to be taken back to New York or Billy can request a hearing. The hearing does not inquire into the evidence of the crime Billy is charged with back in the demanding state, it only delves into whether Billy is the right guy and whether there is adequate paperwork to show he’s wanted for the crime. Probably ninety five percent of the time fugitives waive extradition hearings, to wit: “You got me. Let’s get this show on the road.”

Naturally all of the above takes time. Even if Billy waives his extradition hearing, it probably took a few days to get him on the court calendar. Then maybe there’s a weekend in there where nothing happens. Then, after Billy has signed his waiver form, the demanding authorities have ten days to come get him.

Here’s where the bad (for Billy) part comes in. If Billy were sitting in jail in New York waiting for trial or waiting to “cop a plea”, all that time he spent in jail gets taken off any sentence he might receive. On the other hand, if he spends two weeks sitting in jail in Pennsylvania waiting to be brought back to New York, that time doesn’t count. That’s two weeks down the drain. This ends our civics lesson; back to the story.

Maybe the Pennsylvania troops want to cultivate Billy as a future informant. Or maybe they just want him to see what nice guys they are. “Hey Billy, you already said you wanted to waive extradition. If we could get you back into a New York jail where your jail time counts, rather than sitting in jail here in Pennsylvania doing “dead time”, would you be up for that?” Billy would.

SP Ferndale gets a call at about 11 P.M. “Hey, this is Trooper Smith in Honesdale. Can you have a patrol at the Narrowsburg Bridge at 2 A.M.?” “Sure.”

At 2 A.M. the New York Troopers are sitting at the New York end of the bridge. A pair of headlights show up at the other end of the bridge and the car stops. A car door slams. Guess who comes walking across the bridge?

The Pennsylvania Troopers are happy, they've cultivated a future informant. Billy is happy, he's not going to waste any time sitting in a Pennsylvania jail. The senior of the two New York Troopers in the night patrol car is happy, he gets a felony pinch for arresting Billy for Burglary. ("Well sarge, I knew it was going to be tough finding him, but I didn't give up. I knew he used to hang around Narrowsburg"")

(On a side note, in SP Ferndale's patrol area there are seven bridges connecting New York and Pennsylvania. Why was it always at the Narrowsburg Bridge? Two possible reasons - take your pick. First off, the Narrowsburg Bridge is the closest one to SP Honesdale, the barracks we most often dealt with. The second reason might be that, unlike the other six bridges, the Narrowsburg Bridge is about fifty-five feet above the river - kind of a disincentive for Billy to change his mind half-way across the bridge.

There was one other memorable event involving the Pennsylvania troops. It had great potential to become an interesting caper, but fizzled out at the last minute, quite literally due to bad timing.

Early in 1974 I departed Ferndale for a grand tour of Troop F's Zone Three, first as a zone sergeant and then as the Zone Commander. In 1978 I drew the short straw and ended up back in Ferndale as the Zone One Commander.

One afternoon we got a call from SP Blooming Grove, the Pennsylvania State Police station which had replaced SP Milford to our south. Their troopers had developed information that the next morning around 9 A.M. a subject was going to drive up Route 97 on the New York side of the

Delaware River, park his car, walk across the *Roebing Bridge*², hold up a bank at knife point, then run back across the bridge and drive away knowing that the Pennsylvania Troopers wouldn't be able to initiate a car chase because the bridge was condemned and closed to motor vehicles.



A photograph of the Roebling Bridge taken from the New York side. On the Pennsylvania side is the Hamlet of Lackawaxen - not exactly the Hub of the Universe. The New York side of the bridge is even more rural.

2

The Roebling Bridge, designed and built under the supervision of John Roebling in 1849, is the oldest wire suspension bridge in the United States and was a precursor to the Brooklyn Bridge. It was originally designed to carry D&H Canal boats across the Delaware River. When the canal ceased to operate it was converted to carry vehicles. By 1979 it had deteriorated to the point where only pedestrians could use it, and even then there were missing portions of the decking. It has since been restored and carries single lane vehicle traffic.

The Pennsylvania Troopers wanted us to be close by, but not so close that the would-be robber would get spooked before he parked his car and walked across the bridge. Keep in mind that Route 97 during the morning rush hour is not quite like the West Side Highway in Manhattan. Sometimes two cars go by in a half hour instead of one. Hiding the troop cars in an area with few side roads would be tricky.

I got up at 4:00 the next morning and drove to SP Blooming Grove to make sure everything was in place and then headed up to our end of the Roebling Bridge. Things were complicated by a gentle freezing rain which was quickly coating everything with black ice. Not only might the ice cause the would-be robber to postpone his mission, but complaints of fender benders were coming in on both sides of the river and had to be covered by our respective patrols, making fewer stakeout cars available.

Ice storm notwithstanding, the robber - who was either really dedicated or really desperate - set out on his mission and drove to the Roebling Bridge. As soon as he walked across the bridge to the Pennsylvania side our cars moved into position where he wouldn't see them until he had come back across the bridge and reached his car.

We weren't there to witness the action on the Pennsy side, but the would-be-robber apparently walked up to the side of the bank, checked his watch, pulled his mask down over his face, took a large knife and a canvas sack out of his pocket and walked around the corner of the building to the front door. The bank manager had just entered the vestibule from inside the bank and was in the process of unlocking the front door when the robber came up the outside steps. The manager looked at him, pulled the key back out of the lock and had someone call the troopers.

I don't know what, if anything, the would-be-robber was charged with, but our job, such as it was, was done. One of our troopers sat on the guy's car until the Pennsylvania troopers could cross the river and take it into their possession for forensic processing. Or possibly crushing - Pennsylvania's a pretty tough state.

Damn, the caper had such great potential



“The Hawk’s Nest”, south of the Roebling Bridge on New York Route 97

..... a bank robber running across an icy bridge which had large gaps in the deck followed by a swarm of Pennsylvania Troopers on foot, many of whom were probably plainclothes guys wearing suits and slick soled dress shoes. Then, if he made it, racing off in a raging ice storm with five New York troop cars following in hot pursuit and five Pennsylvania troop cars coming in the opposite direction from the nearest bridge hell bent on cutting him off, rock ledges on one side and a river on the other what could possibly have gone wrong?

Addendum

After reading this story, several retirees replied with tales of their own interactions with our adjoining brothers and sisters. Below are several vignettes. Although the informal “statute of limitations” has certainly expired, I’ve taken the liberty of editing a few to disguise the writers’ identities.

From F Troop: Your story brought back some good memories of A Line extraditions and other “matters of cooperation “ (coffee breaks, etc) with the brothers across the borders. I remember returning to Troop Headquarters one night and observing a few Pennsylvania brothers attempting to remove the big SP sign at the end of the driveway - apparently the SP Lords Valley sign had “coincidentally” disappeared at the exact same time as the nearby annual National Troopers’ Coalition picnic took place and the brothers were seeking retaliation.

From another F Trooper: I was patrolling the southern end of Route 97 when Pennsylvania troop car passed going northbound! I turned around and we both stopped and got out. The operator, a Pennsylvania sergeant, explained that he was from the Milford Barracks and while examining the map of his patrol area noticed that there was a road which crossing the Delaware River on the bridge at Pond Eddy and then dead ended about a half mile into Pennsylvania. He further explained that Pennsylvania State Police were not allowed to cross into New York State without permission from the Governor of Pennsylvania so he sent a teletype to the governor requesting permission to cross into New York. His reason was that the people living there (about 3 families) were citizens of Pennsylvania and had not seen a trooper in many years. The governor agreed that would be a good idea and the sergeant crossed into New York at Port Jervis, drove the twelve miles up Route 97 to the Pond Eddy Bridge and crossed back into Pennsylvania. After driving to the dead end he turned around and went back.

(Author’s note: The sergeant was not one hundred percent correct. Maybe the residents had not seen a *Pennsylvania* Trooper for years, but they had seen a trooper. When I was the Ferndale Station

Commander, I, too, noticed on a map that the bridge led to a road to nowhere, so I checked it out - crossed the bridge into Pennsylvania and drove to the dead end, passing the three families' residences in the process. After all I had learned from my night patrol partner one night in New Jersey, "Troopers are Troopers".)

From an E Trooper: I had some similar experience working with the Pennsylvania troopers out of SP Towanda, both when I was in the bureau out of SP Horseheads and then working narco out of Troop Headquarters. The Villages of Waverly, New York (just inside the line in Troop C) and Sayre, Pennsylvania (just over the border from Waverly) were where we had informal extradition proceedings. We would meet the Pennsylvania State Police detectives at the line and the suspect would step over the line and the other state would take him/her. It worked well! Less paperwork!

Also, when we were working narco we would sometimes cross over to a bar in Sayre where the dirt bags who were selling dope in Chemung County, New York (Troop E) would hang out. We would get to know some of these guys and then make a deal to buy some dope in New York. Sometimes we would make the buy with no arrest and order a larger amount, then pop them later during a buy bust. Were they surprised!

From a B Trooper: The stories remind me a lot of my days stationed at SP Massena on the Canadian Border. We would respond to reports of someone jumping off the international bridge and wonder "who parked that car there, the jumper or the OPP (Ontario Provincial Police)?"

From a T Trooper: In the early seventies, while doing my penance on the Thruway for perceived indiscretions, I was sent to SP Tarrytown.

Back in the day, if your "A" Line partner banged in sick you were on your own. You would cover your post, check for disabled vehicles, and perhaps even write a yellow bird or two. On one of those nights without a partner, I was advised by the Albany dispatcher (the entire Thruway is dispatched

from Albany) that the New Jersey State Police were involved in a high speed chase on the Garden State Parkway, heading towards the New York State line.

After crossing into New York the Garden State continues for a short distance before connecting to the New York State Thruway just south of the Spring Valley Toll barrier. The vehicle being pursued had already blown through several toll barriers and the Jersey troops were in hot pursuit. New Jersey was able to continually update the chase with the Albany dispatcher so that I knew just about when they would hit the New York State line.

Fortunately this all was happening during the early morning hours, so there was very little coming into New York. I decided the only way this chase was going to end on our turf was to light up the highway with enough flares that it looked like you were entering Armageddon through the Gates of Hell. The flares we used at that time all had spikes on end and I hastily placed them all over both lanes of the road in any crevice I could find. Unfortunately, no telephone poles were available where I could stick a few flares higher up to further enhance my pyro light show. I had just finished placing the flares when off in the distance I could see a vehicle approaching at a very high rate of speed.

I retreated to the safety of the troop car which hopefully would be out of harm's way to watch the action. The driver had no idea what was going on so he stopped on the shoulder of the road just short of the flares. I scurried over to the car and retrieved the keys from Junior who had borrowed dad's Maserati to take it out for a little spin.

Within a minute or so three New Jersey troop cars showed up at this surreal scene and were in disbelief as I had Junior 'cuffed and waiting for them for his return trip to New Jersey.

I don't recall laying any Canaries (aka Yellow Birds, UTTs, traffic tickets) on Junior. I am pretty sure that the Jersey boys more than made up for that on their end.

And another story I had forgotten from my F Troop days: One day I was driving a car load of New York State Troopers headed to New Jersey to attend the funeral of Trooper Werner Foerster, who had been killed in the line of duty.

Shortly after I pulled out of a toll booth on the Garden State Parkway, a Jersey trooper pulled us over. "Are you guys going where I think your going?" I acknowledged that we headed to the funeral. "And they charged you a toll?" I nodded.

The trooper was incensed. He went back to his car and returned with a booklet of small toll tickets which were similar to IBM punch cards of the day. These were issued to him to get through the tolls during his regular patrol. He tore out a fist full of them and gave me enough to get us through the toll booths going and returning. (If you haven't been on the Garden State Parkway, there is a toll booth about every twenty five feet - give or take.)

I took note of the trooper's last name so when we got to the funeral I could commend his actions to a member of the New Jersey State Police who was the same rank as I (station commander). I figured the sergeant would know who the right boss was to pass the compliment on to in order to ensure the trooper got credit for his actions.

About six months later I had to call SP Bloomfield, whose troopers patrol the northern end of the Garden State Parkway, regarding a stolen car we had recovered. Low and behold the trooper who had given us the toll tickets answered the phone. I told him who I was and that we appreciated what he had done that day.

He said that he had gotten word of our "atta boy" and appreciated it, especially since it had lent credence to his explanation of another issue which had popped up. Apparently when he had encountered us that day, he hadn't been stationed on the parkway long enough to know that each trooper's used toll tickets could be fed into a computer to plot out their patrol route on any given tour. His bosses were a little mystified as to how he could have been in so many different places at one time, a few of which were a considerable distance off post.