

State Police

Colonel John P. Ferguson
Superintendent

Major Sterling E. Simonds
Executive Officer



Colonel Harry S. Shew receives good wishes from Colonel John P. Ferguson and at the same time extends congratulations to Colonel Ferguson, the new Superintendent.

Change! Constant change, necessary change marked a fast-moving year for the Delaware State Police.

It might even be said this was the year the Department went to the dogs . . . with the addition of the first canine police corps in any state police organization.

Topping the changes was the transfer of all headquarters personnel and functions to the new Headquarters and Troop No. 3 building at Dover. Centrally located, near other centers of the State Government, the new headquarters will assure Delawareans more efficient service.

Changes hit the personnel ranks, too. Colonel Harry S. Shew, Superintendent, headed a list of 17 officers who retired after 20 years of service. The retirements brought with them vacancies and the need for promotions.

Lt. Col. John P. Ferguson was promoted to Colonel and Superintendent; Staff Captain Carl L. Lawrence to Major and Field Force Commander; Captain Sterling E. Simonds to Major and Executive Officer to name a few.

In all, 25 personnel shifts were accompanied by promotions while 28 other promotions were made within the ranks during 1958.

Col. Ferguson brought with him a new concept into office . . . the need for better public relations and he showed this by expanding the duties of the Public Information Officer.

The public is rapidly becoming more aware of the growing demands being made on the State Police Department by the increasingly violent traffic picture and the climbing crime rate.

The biggest effort in the battle to keep the bad traffic statistics to a minimum was in the field of education . . . an effort that earned the Division the highest award conferred by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the "Outstanding Achievement in Police Traffic Supervision" award.



Colonel John P. Ferguson, receiving traffic awards for 1957. On the left is Clifford Foster, representing the Delaware Safety Council, and on the right is Lt. Governor David P. Buckson.

The program paid off, too, statistically. There were a total of 6,110 accidents outside of Wilmington for 1958 . . . an increase of only 1% over the previous year. And though accidents increased, their severity lessened, attributed in part to adverse weather conditions which slowed the drivers.

The Department's pedestrian accident prevention program also earned national honors for the second straight year as it re-earned the first place plaque from the American Automobile Association for its district.

Pedestrian accidents resulted in eight deaths, half the fatality figure of the preceding year.

The drinking driver continues to be the major menace on Delaware's highways and speed and drink continue uncontested as the major violations. Therefore, the State Police accident program continues to give this group increased attention.

After special studies in 1958, the Department determined that 55% of the fatal accidents occurring in the State involved a drinking driver, and 36% of the drivers involved in fatal accidents had been drinking.

"Operation Roadcheck"—to rid the road of the drinking driver—started September, 1958 and moved into high gear in December. Results were encouraging. In December, 1957 there were eight deaths in which five drivers had been drinking. After "Operation Roadcheck" in December, 1958 there were but three fatalities and only one of the drivers involved had been drinking. A total of 822 motorists were arrested during the year for driving while under the influence of alcohol, while 561 pedestrians were arrested for being on the highways while drunk.

Radar continues to be one of the most effective tools in traffic law enforcement. But there were still over 6,000 motorists arrested for speeding, having ignored the Department's "Slow Down and Live" plea.

This helped keep the Traffic Division busy as it made a total of 24,348 traffic arrests and arrested 802 pedestrians. In addition, troopers also issued 165,234 reprimands for unsafe driving practices and defective equipment and 15,873 reprimands to pedestrians.

	1955	1956	1957	1958
Fatal Accidents	91	75	72	62
Fatalities	104	83	83	74
Personal Injury Accidents	1157	1193	1175	1109
Persons Injured	1818	1919	1791	1721
Property Damage Accidents	4464	5055	4793	4939
GRAND TOTAL	5712	6323	6040	6110



The curious ask "How did it happen?" The answer: Speed, drink and wrong side of road.
Result: Two dead, 5 injured. Three cars demolished.

The Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Identification found 1958 a year of new challenges as it experienced the greatest increase in crime over any other period in its history.

Normally, the Bureau expects an increase of 1,000 crimes a year. In 1958 it had an increase of 2,780 offenses. If the trend keeps up the Bureau's 1957 estimate of handling a tops of 20,000 offenses by 1967 will have to be revised to handling that figure as early as 1962.

New Castle County—with the greatest concentration



Speed—and Driver Under the Influence.
Result: One death, one injury.

of the State's population—was responsible for two-thirds of the crime reported. Kent and Sussex County showed increases, but they weren't alarming.

The Department arrested 4,899 for criminal offenses, more than 600 over the previous year.

In a roundup of all types of crimes ranging from burglary and rape to simple assault, vagrancy and run-aways, the State marked a total of 12,836 crimes, an increase of 21.7%. It cleared 9,870, a decrease of 3.2% over 1957 and arrested 4,890, an increase of 15.3%.



A bright spot in the crime statistics showed the State Police auto theft recovery rate had increased even though the number of cars stolen climbed sharply. In 1958, 248 cars were reported stolen, of which all but 18 were returned for a 92.8% mark as against a 90.7% mark the previous year when only 163 cars were reported stolen.

Changing with the times and with demands as did the other divisions of the Department, the efficient State Bureau of Identification inaugurated an Outboard Motor Registration file to cope with the numerous thefts during the summer months of outboard motors, particularly in lower Delaware.

It also showed a 22% increase in the number of criminal fingerprints received from all contributors, for a total of 7,463 fingerprint cards. The photography service met a 32% increase for its services and registered 272 firearms, a drop of 7.5% over the previous year.

Name checks for other agencies climbed to 4,129 as against 2,785 the year before and the bureau's work also resulted in the arrest of 20 for various offenses in the State including one wanted for murder and five for escape—all of whom used aliases at the time of arrest.

The Finance Division accepted the increasing burdens thrown upon it by the various divisions as a matter of course. It continued its unheralded, but vital job of procuring and dispersing all supplies and equipment efficiently and economically.

The Division was able to report the State Police personnel numbered 174 officers and 48 civilian employees, six officers under quota. Overtime imposed by increasing demands resulted in a total of 19,438 hours being posted.

Change came to the Motor Maintenance Division in the form of new vehicles. Forty-two were purchased. The Department saved about \$10,000 by trading in all the cars in one lot. It netted a saving of about \$300 a unit because of its mass purchase.



"Do Not go for a Walk with a stranger."

The fleet rolled up a total of slightly less than 3 million miles, using 265,235 gallons of gasoline for an average of 11.5 miles per gallon. A brake machine was purchased for \$1,200 and has already saved \$420 on 30 brake jobs in its first four months of operation.

A big change in the type recruits they're used to getting was the highlight of the Training Division's year at its Academy. In addition to graduating a class of 22 through its 17-week training program in May, it also graduated the first canines to ever be used by any state police organization.

Within three months, the dogs proved their worth in the campaign to combat the growing prowler problem which existed in the housing developments throughout upper New Castle County.

An important phase of training is the Firearms Division's program, considered one of the most progressive in police circles. This Division contends proper knowledge and use of firearms is the best life insurance policy a trooper can have.

Its ammunition reloading program allows the men to have more instruction by firing off the old ammunition monthly, cutting two-thirds off the regular cost of the training program. This also helps maintain the Division's policy of qualifying each of its officers monthly.

Learning to prevent crime is as vital as learning to cope with it. And the Youth Bureau—a progressive step toward this end—was expanded early in the year after its start on a limited experimental basis.

During 1958, 1,110 youth contacts were received from officers of this Department, with another 230 from other police departments. These were youths, not arrested, whose acts could have been construed as delinquent. The Youth Bureau also conducted 365 parent/juvenile conferences, of which 51 were later involved in some violation which necessitated an arrest.



Vehicles are checked for height and weight.

Youth Bureau letters to parents or guardians signed by Col. Ferguson have helped deter youths from being directly involved in delinquent acts. Over 65% of the parents notified wrote back of their appreciation.

In education, the Youth Bureau initiated a program with the conjunction of the Department of Guidance Services of the Department of Public Information by which its members visit all public high schools at the 11th grade level and present a lecture on the "Rights and Misconceived Rights of Juveniles and the Individual Responsibilities of Children in Our Society." They've also addressed girl and boy scout groups, PTAs and other civic, service and religious groups.

Also waging the campaign to "inform" the public was the Department's Education and Information Division which found an increased demand on its facilities as it strove to keep the public aware of matters of public interest concerning state police activities and as it pushed a safety education program.

The Communications of the Delaware State Police boasted many changes during 1958. Radio equipment was modified and some replaced, regulations were instituted to ease the traffic load on the teletype system and auxiliary power equipment was added to safeguard against electrical failure.

The equipment was modified to take advantage of the Federal Communication Commission's new Geographical Frequency Allocation Plan. The Division moved to the new frequencies assigned with the result it had its first interference-free year since the radio network was installed in 1941.