



## Corporal Dennis E. Engelhard

Badge #355  
EOW ... December 25, 2009

When we are trained in the Patrol Academy we are told you must wear many hats when performing the duties of a law enforcement officer. You will need to be a peacekeeper, counselor, caretaker, disciplinarian, and educator, just to name a few. Let me tell you I know firsthand: Dennis was all of these and more. He was a zone sergeant's dream employee. Dennis never griped, never missed a deadline, he made a lot of contacts, and he answered all his calls without hesitation. In the six years I worked in the zone with Dennis he only asked for one special day off on the schedule. Every month, I would ask him if wanted any particular days off on the

schedule, and he would tell me "No, I will take whatever you give me."

On Christmas Day, December 25, 2009, I was standing in the emergency room of St. Clare Hospital looking at my friend, Dennis lying lifeless in the hospital. As I stood there many memories went through my mind—as if a videotape was playing.

The video started with Dennis arriving to the zone in September 2000. He would come into the zone office with his FTO, and place the items he was carrying on a desk that faced the wall. He would sit down at the desk and quickly begin doing his paperwork. I remember saying to him many times, "Dennis, you just going to walk in here and not say hi, bye, or kiss my grits?" He would spin around in the chair look over his shoulder, smile, and laugh. This desk soon became Dennis' personal desk. There were two other desks with computers on them he could use, but he chose not to because he did not want to be in the way of other zone members.

I thought of the many times I checked his reports. Let me tell you, those were some good reports; a tad long, but well written. He was a thorough investigator and report writer. Dennis would like to use long words in his reports. Words I always had to look up in a dictionary to make sure they



*Dennis worked as a flight paramedic prior to becoming a member of the Missouri State Highway Patrol.*



*Dennis and fellow recruits paused for this photo during their time at the Patrol's Law Enforcement Academy.*

existed. The more he did this, the more I would tease him and tell him I was just a country boy and he was making things hard on me. However, Dennis would just laugh, knowing I was teasing him. He would say he was doing it to make me better educated. This was Dennis teaching me to better myself.

Another video scene of Dennis was one that reoccurred often. Dennis, another zone mate (who I will keep nameless), and I would be sitting in the zone office talking and working. The other zone member and I liked to get into joking conversations with one another and take different viewpoints on a variety of subjects—just to get the other's goat. We would take a breath and ask Dennis what he thought. But, Dennis would laugh at us and say we were just like a

*Colonel Weldon L. Wilhoit, superintendent of the Patrol, congratulates the newly commissioned Trooper Dennis E. Engelhard.*

married couple and he would not interfere. Dennis would ride the fence, because he knew he had to be the peacekeeper.

On several occasions I assisted Dennis with traffic stops. Dennis always had everything under control and really didn't need me there. I knew though when he started shaking his finger at the violator they were going to get a stern, but polite, lecture. During the lecture he was professional, but firm, and justified in every occurrence. This was Dennis being the disciplinarian.

As time went on I knew Dennis was a trustworthy person and friend. At times, I would confide in him and discuss different matters with him. Dennis listened attentively and very seldom gave an opinion. Every once in awhile I could convince Dennis to share his thoughts and give me his advice. When I would talk things out with Dennis I was able to notice all sides of the subject and come to a good



sound decision. Dennis could have been a great counselor.

My video of Dennis took me to one snowy evening when I was walking in the zone office wearing a pair of Rocky boots. The soles of my boots were falling apart for some unknown reason and the tread was being left behind on the zone office floor. Dennis and our joking zonemate friend were present. They couldn't stop laughing and making fun of my poor ole soles. After they were done poking fun at my rotting soles Dennis went out to his patrol vehicle, retrieved his spare pair of Rocky boots, and gave them to me. He said, "I can't have my sergeant walking around without a good sole." Dennis was wearing the hat of caretaker.

On Wednesday, December 30, 2009, those of you in attendance at the cemetery noticed we experienced a technical difficulty with Dennis' "Last Call." I immediately became frustrated, because I wanted the perfect send off for my good friend. He deserved everything to be perfect. But, once again, Dennis popped into my head to soothe these feelings. I think Dennis asked



*The Engelhard family took this photo in honor of Jim and Marge's 50th anniversary.*

God for this technical difficulty knowing that I would not be able stand in formation due to the emotions it would bring to me. Dennis was there one more time to be my caretaker.

Dennis will be missed, but not forgotten. I would like to extend my warmest thoughts and sympathy to Dennis' immediate family and friends. Thank you for sharing him with us.

*(This article by Lt. John M. Enderle, Troop C, first appeared in the January/February 2010 issue of the Patrol News.)*

When I looked at the schedule and saw I was working with Dennis, I knew it was going to be a good day. He always had a smile on his face and positive attitude toward life. He was a trustworthy friend, who was always there when you needed him. He listened intently, and every now and then shared a little bit of his wisdom. Dennis' love for the Patrol was evident as every day he gave his best. He was a hard worker and never complained when asked to give a little bit more of his time. I often heard his zone sergeant comment that he would like to have a whole zone of Dennis Engelhard's. He was so easygoing that on the rare occasion he was riled up, it was hard to keep a straight face. Dennis' animation and determination would come through as he told his tales. Dennis was such an honest person, he often told on himself when he made a mistake.

*(This article by Sgt. Michele L. Coon, Troop C, first appeared in the January/February 2010 issue of the Patrol News. Dennis was initially assigned to Troop C, in Franklin County, and Sgt. Coon was one of Dennis' corporals.)*

Dennis and I were friends before either of us were troopers.

When Dennis was a flight paramedic, many fun times were shared. There was never a dull moment with Dennis. He was always smiling, laughing, joking, and having fun. He had this uncanny way of telling stories, always with animation and descriptions only he could conjure. He helped come up with some of the best nicknames for his co-workers. In fact, some of those nicknames are still being used today. Dennis would have everyone in the room or vicinity in fits of laughter. When it came to his work, he was intelligent, serious, and passionate.

When I asked Dennis' friends and former co-workers what they

remembered most about Dennis, every one of them smiled and then told of a fun memory. The thought of Dennis alone brought smiles. That was Dennis ... a smile maker! I and many others will forever feel the heaviness in our hearts for the loss of Dennis Engelhard. But, Dennis' gift of a smile will appear across our faces when our thoughts are of him.

*(This tribute by Tpr. Amanda J. Kahler, Troop D, first appeared in the January/February 2010 Patrol News.)*

*Corporal Dennis E. Engelhard (#355), 49, was struck by a vehicle at 10:30 a.m., on December 25, 2009. Cpl. Engelhard was completing a traffic crash investigation on westbound Interstate 44 east of Eureka, MO, when a driver lost control of his vehicle on the ice covered roadway and struck him. Cpl. Engelhard was survived by his parents, Jim and Marge Engelhard, his brother, sister-in-law, nephews, and niece. Cpl. Engelhard was the 28th member of the Patrol to make the Ultimate Sacrifice.*



*Dennis and his dog, Jacks, relax at home.*