



Trooper John N. Greim

Badge #148
EOW ... July 13, 1945

John Nicholas Greim was born January 2, 1913, in Warrensburg, MO, the only child of John K. and Grace Scroggs Greim. The Greims were farmers who moved into Warrensburg while maintaining their farm. John graduated from Warrensburg High School in 1929, and joined the Missouri National Guard on October 15, 1929. He attended Central Missouri State Teachers College in Warrensburg for a short time before working as an electrician. Greim worked as a service manager for an automobile dealer in Warrensburg before moving to Kansas City to work as a service manager for a Chevrolet dealer.

On June 6, 1935, John N. Greim married Fae Van Blarcum from Centerview, MO, and they lived in Kansas City just prior to his career with the Patrol. On October 1, 1939, Greim began his career with the Missouri State Highway Patrol and attended recruit training at Camp Hawthorne in Kaiser, MO. Recruit training was completed on November 11, 1939, and Trooper Greim was stationed in Dexter, MO, in Troop E. A daughter, Marla Kay, was born to the Greim marriage on May 12, 1940.

Tpr. Greim was a man of many talents and fashioned a remarkable career in a short span. He was an avid photographer to include both still photos and motion pictures, and had his own darkroom for developing. He was an accomplished motor-

cyclist, pilot, and cabinetmaker, having built a glider and canoe. To his daughter, Marla, whom he affectionately called "Monk," he was a "larger than life character" who loved animals and took her with him flying, fishing, swimming, and boating. Tpr. Greim's interest in photography enabled him to capture much of his daughter's young life on film. The Greim's German shepherd, Fritz, was a member of the family before Marla's existence. The young mother and father wondered if their trusted companion would be agreeable to the presence of a child in the household. Fritz quickly endeared himself to Marla and tore the pants off of the paperboy as he approached her on one occasion. Marla and Fritz were inseparable



A young Marla Kay pilots her "car" at the Greim home.

and the Greims sent out Christmas cards adorned with a photograph of Marla and Fritz together.

The evening of June 23, 1941, Tpr. Greim, while off-duty with his wife and daughter, went to the local filling station for a bottle of "pop." As they sat outside the business, the owner, Hurlus Cox, who was a good friend of the Patrol, came out to Tpr. Greim and told him he was concerned about a customer in the station. Tpr. Greim went into the station and began to question the customer, who told Tpr. Greim he was Henry Williams from Memphis, TN. Tpr. Greim, who was unarmed, in an attempt to identify the subject ordered him to empty his pockets. The subject reached into his shirt, withdrew a revolver, and immediately fired at Tpr. Greim. Tpr. Greim struck the revolver with his hand and the bullet struck Tpr. Greim in the right hip. Tpr. Greim and the subject continued to scuffle across the station. A second shot was fired which struck Tpr. Greim in the left wrist and the subject in the left elbow. The station owner and two other customers assisted Tpr. Greim by hitting the subject over the head with a bottle of "pop." The force of the blow to the head knocked the subject down, and he was eventually disarmed and subdued. Tpr. Greim was taken by ambulance to Poplar Bluff Hospital where he was treated and admitted for a period of four days. Tpr. Greim's ambulance bill for transportation from Dexter to Poplar Bluff, MO, was \$5. His transportation by ambulance back to Dexter was three dollars.

A subsequent investigation revealed the subject who shot Tpr. Greim was actually William Boyd. Boyd had stolen a car the morning of Sunday, June 22, and wrecked it near Cox's filling station at the intersection of Missouri Highway 25 and U.S. Highway 60 and abandoned it. During an unsuccessful attempt to steal a deputy's car Boyd was able to obtain a .38-caliber special (revolver) from the glove box of the deputy's vehicle.

On Monday evening, Boyd entered an auto parts store as the manager was walking out the door and closing. The store manager refused to go back in the store with Boyd and Boyd left. Approximately one-half hour after leaving the auto parts store Boyd arrived at the filling station where he shot Tpr. Greim. Within three weeks of the shooting, Boyd pled guilty and was sentenced to 40 years for the shooting and two years each on the automobile and weapon thefts.

On January 14, 1944, a donation of \$50, a substantial amount at the time, was made to the Highway Patrol Benefit Fund by the owner of a Dexter auto parts store as a token of appreciation for Troopers Harris' and Greim's apprehension of burglars of the business. On November 11, 1944, Sergeant E.F. Dampf, and Troopers Harris and Greim received a commendation for their apprehension of two escaped prisoners of war.

At approximately 10:30 p.m. on March 24, 1945, Tpr. Greim stopped a car on southbound Route 25 south of Bernie, MO, in Stoddard County for having improper lights. Tpr. Greim and the violator both parked off the traveled portion of the road, completely onto the shoulder. Tpr. Greim walked up to the car, spoke to the driver, and then walked to the rear of the car he had stopped. As he got near the rear of the violator's car Tpr. Greim was struck by a northbound vehicle which nearly struck the patrol car after it hit Tpr. Greim. The driver of the northbound vehicle was stopped and, though drinking, was determined by Tpr. Greim not to have been intoxicated. Tpr. Greim's only injuries from the incident were determined to be bruises to the right elbow and calf. In the accident report, the driver stated he never saw Tpr. Greim.

On a personnel questionnaire dated April 30, 1945, Tpr. Greim indicated that his first preference was to be stationed in St. Joseph in Troop A. In justifying his preference Tpr. Greim wrote, "I prefer that part of the state and it is closer to my home."



The Greim family sent a greeting card one Christmas with this photo is of their daughter, Marla, and her dog, Fritz.

On the morning of July 13, 1945, Tpr. John Crow attempted to stop a blue Mercury sedan near Poplar Bluff. Two men occupied the vehicle and fled south on Route 25 with Tpr. Crow in pursuit. Eventually, the pursued vehicle was driven west from Campbell, MO, into Arkansas traveling on gravel roads until they eluded Tpr. Crow. Officers in the area converged in an attempt to stop the vehicle. Tpr. Greim suggested he obtain a plane in Campbell to assist with the pursuit and manhunt. He contacted Claude Hays, a car dealer in Campbell and owner of two planes, and shortly after, Hays and Tpr. Greim were airborne over the area.

The pursued Mercury was located abandoned a short time later. Trooper E. A. Bradley, who was assisting in the search, saw the plane carrying Hays and Tpr. Greim pass low overhead as if Tpr. Greim was trying to drop a note from the plane. After passing Tpr. Bradley, the plane continued down the route of the highway, made a short turn, and dived into the ground. The crash killed Claude Hays instantly. Tpr. Greim was removed from the mangled plane and trans-

ported to the hospital in Corning, AR, by a local citizen, Doyle Van-Gilder, in his pickup truck. Tpr. Greim was pronounced dead at the Corning Hospital shortly after his arrival despite the valiant effort by Dr. J.R. Schirmer to save his life. The vehicle the officers had pursued was later determined to be stolen.

As the events of Tpr. Greim's death unfolded in Arkansas, Fae and Marla Greim were preparing to go on a picnic with their husband and father. Two officers arrived at the Greim residence and told Mrs. Greim they had some "bad news." The officers told Fae Greim that John had crashed. Marla was sent to a neighbor's house while Fae went to the hospital in Arkansas. Marla never saw her father again. She was not allowed to attend the funeral in Warrensburg and stayed at her grandmother's residence during the service. Tpr. John Nicholas Greim was buried in Sunset Hill Cemetery in Warrensburg.

Ironically, the Highway Patrol Benefit Fund, into which Tpr. Greim's auto parts store burglar apprehension donation was made, paid \$1,500 to Fae Greim. Once again, the members of the Patrol stepped forward and through their donations state-wide covered the cost of the funeral.

On August 24, 1945, a check in the amount of \$126 was delivered to Dr. Schirmer for his services in the attempt to save Tpr. Greim's life. Dr. Schirmer immediately endorsed the check and handed it back to the officers with directions to give the money to Tpr. Greim's wife.

In a letter dated, August 30, 1945, Colonel Hugh Waggoner wrote to Dr. Schirmer:

"Your act of giving the fee for your services to Mrs. Greim is one of the most generous which has ever come to my attention, and you may be sure that it was deeply ap-

preciated by Mrs. Greim and the members of this organization.

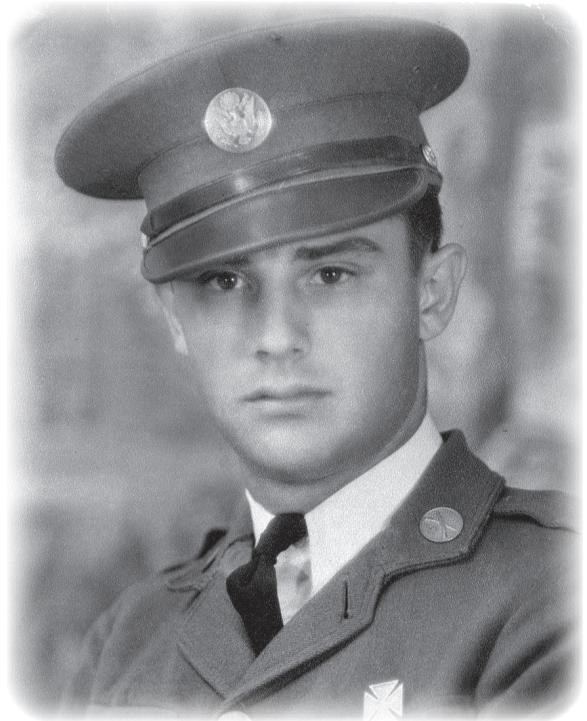
Whenever a man enters into a career of public service as a police officer, he is well aware of the risks which he must take to efficiently perform his duties. We have been fortunate, that in the nearly 14 years of our existence, we have lost but six men in the performance of duty. We have never felt that we were entitled to any special consideration because of our profession, so it is indeed gratifying to receive such fine cooperation and humane treatment as that extended by you in this instance.”

In a note to Colonel Waggoner dated July 26, 1945, Fae Greim requested a Patrol relay for her and Marla’s return to Dexter. Shortly thereafter, the young widow and her daughter were transported by patrol car to their home in Dexter.

Almost immediately following Tpr. Greim’s death, his wife and daughter moved to Warrensburg, where they lived in an upstairs apartment with Tpr. Greim’s parents. Fae Greim had been a homemaker in Dexter, but was forced to go to work when they moved to Warrensburg. Marla spent most of her time with her Grandmother Greim, who cried frequently over the loss of her only child and “light of her life.” The death of her father limited the amount of time Marla was able to spend with her mother due to her mother’s employment.

Approximately two and a half years after Tpr. Greim’s death, Fae Greim married Allen Pollock, a teacher, who had grown up in Warrensburg. Marla attended kindergarten in the Warrensburg school system, but began first grade at Lab School at Central Missouri State University (now University of Central Missouri) where she attended school for two and a half years before the family moved to Grandview, MO. Marla Greim graduated from Westport High School in Kansas City, MO, in 1958.

Tpr. Greim’s mother, Grace, died July 22, 1954, and was buried in Sunset Hill Cemetery next to her only child. His father, John



Tpr. John Greim

K., died December 18, 1957, and was laid to rest next to his wife and son.

Marla Greim attended the University of Colorado in Boulder for two years before she married a Norwegian, became Marla Greim Gagnum, and moved to Switzerland where she attended the University of Geneva. Her move to Switzerland was only the beginning of her life in foreign countries. She and her husband moved from Switzerland to northern England then to Burnham Buckingham Shire near London. The Gagnums had two daughters who were both born in England: Nicole Beate Gagnum, born March 19, 1963, and Lisa Dawn Gagnum, born April 1, 1966.

In January 1971, the Gagnums moved to Toronto, Canada, then in 1975 to Athens, Greece. In Athens, Marla was able to complete her college and received a bachelor’s of science degree in sociology and English literature from Pierce College.

In 1978, the Gagnum’s marriage ended and Marla moved to England with her daughters. She and her daughters lived in England for five years where she met and

married an American psychologist. Her husband wanted to move back to the United States, so they traveled to East Hampton, New York, for a holiday vacation. Marla fell in love with the East Hampton area and bought property there. She and her husband divorced and he returned to England. Marla remained in East Hampton and began a landscape design business in 1984. During her travels throughout the world, Marla learned to speak Norwegian, French, German, Greek, Italian, and Spanish.

Marla's oldest daughter, Nicole, is married, lives in Barcelona, Spain, and has a daughter. The youngest daughter, Lisa, resides in West Chester, New York, where she and her husband have three sons.

In 1983, Hurlus Cox, the owner of the filling station in Dexter where Tpr. Greim was shot, was nominated and received an Honorary Trooper Certificate. Cox was nominated by Sergeant T. M. "Mike" Almond. In the nomination, Sgt. Almond noted Cox's friendship with the Patrol dated back to the department's creation.

Marla Greim Gagnum's memories of her father are cherished and vivid. She eventually had the pictures and home movies transferred onto videotape. She still maintains in her home a walnut bowl and table made by her father. Marla stated, "I absolutely adored him. Everything he did was exciting. He had a motorcycle. He took me swimming and fishing on the Current River. He used to swing me in my swing. I was only five when he died. He made such an impression on me. My life changed when he died." A framed photograph of her father remains on the dressing table in her home. Marla remarried in 2013.

Fae Van Blarcum Greim Pollock died of cancer on September 4, 1988. Her ashes are buried next to Marla's stepfather in Liberty, MO. Unfortunately, Tpr. Greim's headstone in Sunset Hill Cemetery has his middle name misspelled and only the dates of his

birth and death. There is no inscription of his greater commitments as a son, husband, father, and trooper.

(Lt. James P. Ripley, Troop A, researched and wrote this profile in 2004. Ripley retired in 2013.)

Trooper John N. Greim was the sixth member of the Patrol to make the Ultimate Sacrifice.