

Ohio State Highway Patrol

Media Release

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A trooper and sergeant awarded Patrol's Citation of Merit for pulling woman from burning car

MEDINA – Sgt. Matthew Witmer and Tpr. Byron Foxx from the Ohio State Highway Patrol's Medina Post were given the Patrol's highest honors today for their selfless and heroic actions that saved a woman's life following a fiery crash in Medina on December 11. The two were presented with the Patrol's Citation of Merit at a ceremony today at the Medina Post by Colonel Richard H. Collins, Patrol superintendent, and State Representative of the 69th District, William Batchelder.

On December 11, 2008, Sgt. Witmer and Tpr. Foxx helped to save a Parma woman's life by pulling her from a burning vehicle following a fiery two-vehicle crash on State Route 3 at Interstate 71 in Medina Township.

The two officers pulled Deborah Berry, 52, from the passenger side of the 1997 Chevrolet Lumina, which her husband was driving. Both Deborah and her husband, James Berry, 50, were transported by EMS to Medina General Hospital. Mrs. Berry has been in hospital care since the crash and was unable to attend today's ceremony.

During the ceremony Colonel Collins noted "Sgt. Witmer and Tpr. Foxx risked their own lives to save another. This selfless act illustrates the dedication these fine men have for their careers in public safety and their commitment to saving lives on Ohio's roadways."

Tpr. Byron Foxx joined the Patrol in October 1997 as a member of the 130th Academy Class. He earned his commission in May 1998 and was assigned to the Bucyrus Post. In February 1999 he transferred to his current assignment at the Medina Post. Tpr. Foxx resides in Shaker Heights.

Sgt. Matthew Witmer joined the Patrol in February 1982 as a Cadet Dispatcher for the Mansfield Post. In April 1984 he began training as a member of the 113th Academy Class. He earned his commission in September of that year and was assigned to the Milan Post on the Ohio Turnpike. During his career he has served at the Sandusky, Findlay, Ravenna, Bucyrus, and Hiram Posts. He also served at the Berea District Headquarters. Originally of Ashland, Sgt. Witmer currently resides in Seville with his wife, Sandra, and their two children.

Dash cam video of this incident is available at www.statepatrol.ohio.gov.

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