

# Twin Brother Troopers Still Turning Heads

By Tracy Gordon Fox, *The Hartford Courant* Photo by Bob MacDonnell, *The Hartford Courant*



Most of their lives, twins Collin, left, and Carson Konow have stuck together - same interests, same college, same battalion in the armed services and, now, the same profession as State Troopers. Both graduated in the top of their class from the Connecticut State Police Academy in July.

**O**n the first day of training at the State Police Academy, it was confusing enough for instructors to tell one wide-eyed recruit from the other. Then along came **Carson and Collin Konow**.

"The recruits are hard enough, with their shaved heads, to tell apart anyway. What are you going to do with twins?" said **Trooper Stan Terry**, one of the academy instructors. What you do is get them mixed up, a lot.

The Konow brothers are fraternal twins but look almost identical, especially to those who have not known them for long. And especially when they are living, training and eating their meals together in the rather small quarters at the training academy in Meriden. "I had trouble telling which one was which. I'd address one of them about something and he'd say, 'No, that was the other one,'" **Trooper Terry** said.

The twins caused some double takes at the academy, but they probably created some history. Although there have been brothers who graduated in the same class, as far as anyone knows, it was the first time in the department's 104-year history that twins graduated together.

The Konow twins graduated in the top of their class and they were assigned identical blue cruisers and, fortunately for their supervisors, to different barracks. Carson, who is assigned to Troop K in Colchester, and Collin, to Troop E in Montville, recently passed their field training.

It was not surprising to their friends and family that Carson and Collin joined the State Police the same day or that they often got mixed up. "That happened all the time," said Craig Plante of Franklin, one of their best friends. "They do everything together. Their bond together is unbreakable."

Minus a few things, we have very similar tastes," Carson

said. Called "mirror twins," Collin is right-handed and Carson uses his left. At 6 feet, Collin is an inch taller and thinner than his brother, and he has a slightly longer chin.

The twins were born a month prematurely on Oct. 18, 1976. Their mother, Karen Leif, said she was only expecting Carson because 30 years ago women were not routinely given ultrasounds. Carson arrived, and then the doctor told her that baby had company.

Ever since they could walk and talk, the Konows, raised in Franklin, have been competitive, playing baseball and soccer, daring each other to go faster on their dirt bikes, prodding each other to run faster. They shared the same room and fought a lot. They joke that they had their own parking space at the emergency room.

Although others might find it hard to tell them apart sometimes, Leif never had trouble telling Carson from Collin. "I don't think they ever tried to get one over on me," she said. Both decided to attend Norwich Technical School to become electricians like their father, Stephen Konow Jr.

They signed up for three years' active duty on the same day in 1999, thinking they would be separated for their service. They ended up in the same 2nd Battalion of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment at Fort Bragg, N.C., after going through basic training, Airborne School and Ranger School.

It was so unusual for brothers, twins no less, to be in the same company and even live in the same barracks room that the local newspaper did a story on them. Neither brother is wild about publicity because they don't like to be the center of attention. Contrary to myth, brothers can serve in the same company, and the Konows were prepared to be deployed. Their mother worried. "When I first found out, my reaction was one of immediate worry. What if something happened to them?" she said. "But I got over it."

She worries now that they are out on the road as state troopers but said she trusts their training.

That the job can be dangerous, even deadly, was not lost to the twins' training class. All of the new troopers decided to dedicate their graduation to Trooper Russell Bagshaw, who was gunned down in North Windham in 1991. He started at the academy the same day as their class, and the Konows later learned that Bagshaw also had a twin brother.

Collin and Carson worked as electricians before and after their Army service, but they decided to join the State Police after talking to trooper friends, who told them they should take the test. "They said how we'd be good for the job," Collin said.

Their friends were right. Their instructors described both men as leaders of the class who often called cadence when they went on their daily runs.

"They used their talents to better all the recruits," said **Trooper Anthony Carter**, another instructor. Both received

perfect scores on physical fitness and excellent grades. Carson received the prestigious award of best all-around trooper.

That doesn't mean they didn't get some serious ribbing in the academy, even from instructors. On pay day every other Thursday, **Sergeant Eric Cooke** would simply yell "Konow," and watch both come running.

There has already been some confusion in eastern Connecticut with two nearly identical twins driving dark

blue cruisers.

Carson stopped on his way home to help another Trooper who had pulled a driver over in Baltic, which is in his brother's territory. The Trooper started talking to him about something that happened earlier in the day and Carson immediately realized the mistake. "I said, `I'm the other Konow. I'm Collin's brother.'" "It's going to take a few years," he said. □

# Troopers Move Into New Home in Bolton

By James Emanuele, Journal Inquirer Photo by Jim Michaud, Journal Inquirer

The Bolton Resident State Troopers finally have a space of their own. After sharing space in the Notch Road Municipal Center with the former King's School, senior center, and probate court, the Troopers have new quarters in a homestead on the Pistrutto property.

One key change is that there's more room to conduct business. "It's important because we handle a lot of sensitive issues in town," **Trooper James Tilley** said. He said that when they were in the public building, some people felt uncomfortable divulging their problems when there were other people around who were not affiliated with the police. "Now we're more centrally located," he said. "People are more available to us. It's easy to get to everything."

"They did a great job fixing up the inside for our needs," **Trooper Tilley** said. He said that the town worked on some of the walls and the heating system and installed an alarm system, among other projects.

The first floor of the house will be used as the officer's space to conduct interviews and to do their police work. The upper floor will be used as a storage space.

**Trooper Tilley** said that the Troopers occasionally will need to be at their Troop K barracks in Colchester, but stressed they will be at the Pistrutto property "predominantly days and evenings." "Even when we're not there the town is being covered," he said.

The town considered the Troopers' move would be tem-



State Trooper James Tilley sits at his desk in the new Resident State Troopers office in Bolton.

porary. At the time, the town hoped to expand town hall and set aside space for the Troopers. While there still is that desire to expand, the Troopers might not be a part of it.

"I'm under the impression that we're going to be here for the foreseeable future," **Trooper Tilley** said. "They've spent a lot of time and effort making the inside an office environment. "I don't have any reason to believe we're going anywhere else." □

# State to Host 2009 International Law Enforcement Torch Run

Submitted by Sergeant Luis Rosa, BCI (CCIU)

Governor M. Jodi Rell announced at a press conference that Connecticut's Foxwoods Resort Casino has been selected to host the 2009 International Law Enforcement Torch Run Conference for Special Olympics. Every year, the International Conference provides an opportunity for Torch Run volunteers to network, share and learn how to improve their local Torch Run programs, which contribute greatly to increasing public awareness and enhancing the lives of Special Olympics athletes throughout the world.

The Torch Run, an international series of torch relays leading up to the Special Olympics Summer Games, is the largest grass-roots fundraiser and public awareness vehicle for Special Olympics.

"This is a proud moment for Connecticut," Governor Rell said. "We're excited that this first-class event is coming to our state to celebrate the achievements of our athletes. We have them to thank. They are simply having fun, and that puts a smile on not only their faces but ours as well.

"We are expecting over 1000 law enforcement personnel from around the globe to attend the 2009 conference. And we achieved this goal as a team - Special Olympics, our law enforcement men and women, Foxwoods



Resort Casino and the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation.

"This will not be the first time that Connecticut has hosted the world. In 1995, we played host to the Special Olympics World Games and more than 7,000 athletes from around the world participated. The World Games had an enormous economic impact in our state, providing a huge boost to tourism." □

