

Lt. Colonel Michael J. Thomas
2900 Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

August 28, 2017

Colonel Gene S. Spaulding
Director Florida Highway patrol
Neil Kirkman Bldg
2900 Apalachee Pkwy
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

This letter will serve as my voluntary notice of my early retirement.

I am respectfully retiring from my position as the Deputy Director of the Florida Highway Patrol. My last working day will be Friday, September 1, 2017. I have come to the conclusion that it is time for me to leave the Patrol, following 30 years of unblemished, faithful service, due to the recent bad publicity surrounding an allegation that the patrol has, and/or utilizes a quota system. In light of this allegation, I reviewed my past emails, locating one dated May 31, 2017 (attached) that referred to a quarterly SOAR report, which said in part "so we can encourage our members to maintain our 2.0 Citations per hour ratio, as we attempt to provide a safer driving environment for Floridians". In hindsight, I can see how this memo sent to the Chiefs, could have been interpreted as an order for their supervisors to ask for 2.0 citations per hour. This was a grave error on my behalf and should not be considered a negative reflection on the Chiefs or other members of command that may have sent similar emails. I made this mistake and take responsibility for my actions. This error has negatively impacted the patrol's image, which was never the intent, but I feel it is in the best interest of the Patrol that I retire. We as an agency have always tried to instill a sense of pride, ownership and commitment into our subordinates. We have continually stressed the importance of working diligently towards our enforcement efforts, as it is evident that enforcement of serious traffic violations is instrumental in curbing poor driving behavior that often leads to serious bodily injury crashes and fatalities. The Patrol does not generate revenue off of the citations, nor equipment and no member has ever been encouraged to issue a citation that wasn't warranted or supported by visual observance and supporting evidence that the offense was committed. I would like to stress that no member of the Patrol has ever been threatened, coerced or disciplined for failing to meet a desired goal. I personally believe it is detrimental to Patrol to classify goal setting, or the setting of expectations as a "Quota". The Department should be encouraged to work with legislators and the bargaining unit to determine successful performance expectations to ensure members are actively working towards a safer Florida.

I am sorry that I failed you in our endeavor to ensure that the agency maintained its impeccable image and one of public trust, and confidence. I am saddened by the fact that I let you and our members down as it was not my intent. My intentions were honorable and directed towards public safety, but flawed in their delivery and you deserved better. You are a great Leader, who demonstrates the highest levels of integrity, possesses a character that far surpasses most, and your leadership is critical for the success of the Florida Highway Patrol.

I will always remember the good times as well as the camaraderie and friendships that have been forged during my career. I wish the Patrol nothing but success, However, it is with great sadness that I tender this letter of early retirement at this time.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Thomas

cc: Executive Director Terry Rhodes

Thomas, Michael (Lt. Col.)

From: Thomas, Michael (Lt. Col.)
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2017 1:06 PM
To: Brown, Mark; Duarte, Ernesto; Gourley, John (JohnGourley@flhsmv.gov); McCaskill, Mike; Spaulding, Gene; Thompson, Troy
Subject: FW: SOAR Report for April

All,

Please see the link below for our SOAR totals. We will keep this link active (monthly) so make sure to save it to your favorites. I am trying to fix the monthly reports to reflect the citation/total per hour to reflect the percentage like it is shown on the quarterly reports so we can try to encourage our members to maintain our 2.0 citations per hour ratio as we attempt to provide a safer driving environment for Floridians.

Attached, please find the latest SOAR reports that include:

- April 2017 Totals
- April 2017 FYTD Totals

<http://safetynet/FHP/SpecialOps/oss/ReportsLibrary/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fFHP%2fSpecialOps%2foss%2fReportsLibrary%2fSOAR&FolderCTID=&View=%7b73F29EF8%2d00D3%2d4F0E%2dB1F3%2d646990BB11BF%7d>

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