

Lower Lake man among newly sworn CHP officers

Contributed by Elizabeth Larson
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LOWER LAKE – A young Lower Lake man, a set of identical twin brothers and a female Army helicopter pilot who served in Iraq were among the 131 new officers sworn in during graduation ceremonies Friday at the California Highway Patrol's Academy in West Sacramento.

A report from the CHP noted that this class of cadets represents the second wave of the first major expansion of the CHP in decades.

CHP Deputy Commissioner Joe Farrow and Will Kempton, the director of Caltrans, addressed the graduates, and family members pinned badges on the new officers.

The Barnes family of Lower Lake added another CHP officer to its ranks at the Friday ceremony, according to Officer Josh Dye of the Clear Lake CHP office.

Orrin Barnes, son of Officer Mark Barnes, a longtime member of the Clear Lake office, was among Friday's graduates, said Dye. Mark Barnes has served in road patrol, the Lake County Narcotics Task Force and in the CHP's Investigative Services Unit as an auto theft investigator, among various other assignments.

Orrin's older brother, Craig, graduated last year from the CHP Academy, said Dye, and is serving in the Hollister-Gilroy CHP office.

CHP service is "a whole family affair" for the Barneses, said Dye.

Officer Orrin Barnes is slated to join the Mojave CHP office, according to Dye.

None of the graduates, said Dye, are headed for the Clear Lake office.

"We don't have anyone coming here right now," Dye said.

Clear Lake is part of the CHP's Northern Division, which Dye said includes Mendocino, Williams and Colusa, and stretches north to the Oregon border. There are eight CHP divisions statewide.

The entire Northern Division is having staff shortages, said Dye, but some places are worse off than others, and that's usually where the newer officers are sent.

The CHP has a rigorous recruitment process, according to recruitment information on the CHP's Web site.

Candidates go through a written exam, physical ability test, psychological written exam and interviews, with tests scheduled across a five-week period. Those candidates selected also must undergo a background investigation and a medical exam.

The academy lasts six months, during which cadets receive a salary, the CHP reported.

Upon graduation, new officers receive an annual base salary of \$56,880, with annual 5-percent base salary increases annually until they reach the top salary step of \$69,144. But shift pay differentials and other pay incentives raise an officer's potential top step annual income to \$90,552.50.

Many may think only of patrol officers when they consider the CHP, but there are many other positions as well, from academy staff members to canine officers, mounted police, air operations, background investigator, Capitol Protective Services, field training officer, auto theft investigator and more.

For more information visit the CHP online at www.chp.ca.gov/recruiting/html/officer.html.

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