

Maryland Rte. 198 Bridge



As seen from the northbound BW Parkway

Shelia and I lived in Laurel, Maryland for about 35 years (1980 - 2015). Since I was retired military, we purchased most of our groceries at the Fort Meade Commissary and Sunday morning was our usual shopping day. One Sunday morning in 1989, we were on our way to Fort Meade via route 198 and were approaching the bridge over the Baltimore Washington Parkway when a Maryland State Trooper standing in the road held his hands up, directing us to stop. His car with flashers on was parked sideways across the eastbound lanes, blocking traffic. We sat there for several minutes and other vehicles came up behind us. Suddenly, there was a tremendous explosion and the debris from the eastbound bridge went flying up in the air. Some of it came down all around us, small pieces landing on our car. The state trooper was lucky he didn't get hit in the head with a chunk of concrete.

We had read news stories about the planned replacement of the bridge but did not know that the eastbound span would be demolished that morning. After the debris settled, the trooper opened traffic up with eastbound traffic traveling via one of the two lanes of the remaining, former westbound span.

Months later, the new eastbound span, still under construction, collapsed onto the Baltimore Washington Parkway during morning rush hour traffic. 14 people were injured, one woman very seriously.

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