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For Immediate Release

13 Oklahoma Officers to be Honored

Although Oklahoma survived 2007 without a single law enforcement line of duty death, the names of thirteen officers who died in the line of duty in Oklahoma in years past will be added to the National Law Enforcement Officer's Memorial in Washington, D.C. in May. The names will be dedicated on the memorial at Judiciary Square during the 20th Annual Candle Light Vigil the evening of Tuesday, May 13th.

The 13 fallen officers being added are:

Haileyville Police Officer Richard D. Bell shot in the face and killed as he entered a house on a disturbance call October 6, 1909.

Wister City Marshal Robert T. Blassingame was shot as he approached two men on the Wister railway platform on June 17, 1928. Marshal Blassingame was able to return fire and killed one of the men as the other escaped. Marshal Blassingame died from his wound to the stomach three weeks later on July 3rd in a Fort Smith, AR hospital.

Captain Charles W. Bowman of the Muskogee Police Department died just after midnight the morning of June 6, 1927, from a severed artery a few minutes after he was shot in the leg by his own gun as he approached two men sleeping in a car in a closed filling station with his gun drawn. One of the drunken men kicked Captain Bowman's hand causing his gun to discharge striking him in the leg.

Lampasas County (Texas) Deputy Sheriff George M. Doolittle was shot and killed January 8, 1879, near Lexington, Indian Territory (OK) as he attempted to arrest 29 year old Buford Cox for a murder that occurred in Texas. Deputy Doolittle is believed to be buried in an unmarked grave near Lexington.

Oklahoma County Deputy Sheriff Levi A. Ezzell died Monday evening August 24, 1914, after he was shot in the abdomen by his own .45 caliber pistol. Deputy Ezzell was taking 17 year old Warren Mankin to jail for stealing bicycles when Mankin broke loose and started running east down an alley south of Main Street west of Hudson. Deputy Ezzell drew his gun and threw it at the escaping youth. When the gun stuck the pavement it discharged striking Ezzell. Deputy Ezzell made a statement before he died of how he was shot, clearing Mankin.

Jefferson County Deputy Sheriff Louis M. Harvill and Grayson Township Constable William A. Hood were both shot as they walked between two parked cars about 10 P.M. the evening of Saturday, January 28, 1928. Deputy Harvill died within the hour. Constable Hood died five days later on February 2, 1928.

Muskogee Police Officer Leslie Jennings was issuing a traffic ticket the late evening of July 14, 1924, when he was struck by another car and knocked twenty feet striking his head on the pavement. Officer Jennings died early the next morning on July 15th.

Braggs Constable Wicks and Deputy Constable George Johnson Kirk trailed three train robbers and caught up to them on June 18, 1909. When the Constables attempted to arrest the men a fight ensued and Deputy Constable Kirk was shot in the head and killed.

Love County Sheriff Sam H. Randolph was in a Thackerville store about 6 P.M. May 25, 1934, campaigning for re-election when Constable John Smith approached him complaining that he was not given proper credit for arresting a murder suspect earlier. During the heated argument Sheriff Randolph slapped Constable Smith. Smith drew his gun and shot Sheriff Randolph in the heart killing him instantly.

Ada Police Officers Hughey L. Rogers and Luther Prince were advised of an armed man names Weems being in an Ada hotel about 5 P.M. the evening of November 4, 1926. When the officers confronted Weems he pulled a gun. Officer Rogers and Weems fought during which both were shot several times. Officer Rogers died instantly. Weems died a few hours later.

Byars Police Officer Elijah C. Smith came upon a business burglary in progress while making his nightly rounds about 2:30 A.M. June 27, 1937. The burglar(s) shot the 68 year old officer in the left side with a shot gun killing him.

Creek County Deputy Sheriff Thomas E. Tyus had gone to a home in Bristow to serve court papers the evening of July 19, 1911. When no one was home he went to a neighbor's porch to wait. He apparently fell asleep on the porch. Later about 2:15 A.M. when the neighbor woman saw someone asleep on her porch she slipped out a back door and got the city's Night Watchman W. A. Ryder. When Ryder attempted to awaken Deputy Tyus a fight broke out and Ryder shot and killed the deputy. Neither officer recognized the other as an officer in the dark.

For more information on these and the other almost 700 law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty in Oklahoma go to the Oklahoma Law Enforcement Memorial web site at www.oklemem.com