Motorcycle Patrolman John William Neal, Jr. |Cincinnati Police Division



Age: 28
Served: 6½ years
February 16, 1938 to July 13, 1944

OFFICER

John was born December 15, 1915 in the City of Wyoming to John William and Susan E. (Gibbons) Neal, Sr. He attended Wyoming Grade School and Hughes High School. During 1937 he was working as a Kroger Grocery Company clerk.

John joined the Cincinnati Police Department as a Police Recruit on February 16, 1938. He transferred to District 2 (314 Broadway) on April 1st for training.

He was promoted to Patrolman on May 15, 1939 and issued Badge 370. On July 1, 1940, Patrolman Neal transferred to the Highway Safety Bureau (City Hall) as a Motorcycle Patrolman.

Patrolman Neal suffered minor injuries in an accident during

March 1941. On May 9, 1941, during a pursuit, he crashed his motorcycle into a tree at Trimble Avenue and Duck Creek Road and suffered a skull fracture. On June 2, 1942, his bike collided with an automobile and suffered a back injury and cuts and bruises.

He and Dorothy had a son, Patrick William Neal, born April 23, 1942. Unfortunately, the marriage ended in divorce in 1943. He married Virginia Holzhauser on July 1, 1944.

INCIDENT

Twelve days after his marriage, on his to way to work 6:50 a.m. on July 13, 1944, he drove inbound on Columbia Parkway when a sedan driven by Ernest Collins (52) turned left in front of him at Martin Street. The motorcycle slammed into the sedan and Patrolman Neal suffered a crushed chest, fractured skull, jaw, and left wrist, and multiple facial and head lacerations.

Three of the four passengers inside Collins's vehicle were injured as well. Collins and another passenger suffered from shock but reported no physical injuries.

Patrolman Neal and Tuttman were both taken to General Hospital.

DEATH

Motorcycle Patrolman Neal died at the hospital from his injuries at 8:50 a.m. from has basal skull fracture.

Patrolman Neal was survived by his wife, Virginia Neal; son, Patrick William Neal (2); both parents; and sisters, Helen Esther (Neal) Carroll and Russell S. Neal. A visitation was

held in the evening of July 16, 1944 with Fraternal Order of Police services at 8 p.m. His funeral was held at W. Mack Johnson Funeral Home, 1309 E. McMillan Street on July 17, 1944 at 2 p.m. Pallbearers included Patrolmen Ralph Ashby, Eugene Simpson, Charles Bradbury, Bradley Mathis, Wilber Klosterman, and Harry Hull. He was buried in St. Mary's Cemetery in Saint Bernard.

INVESTIGATION

Major Elmer O'Neil, Sergeant Higdon Roberts, and Patrolmen Rex Burdsall and Robert Klug investigated the accident Collins told investigating officers that he believed he had had sufficient time to complete the turn onto Martin Street. He said he was driving about 25 miles an hour and that the cycle was "a considerable distance back from the intersection." Collins was charged with Manslaughter. It was, however, common to charge persons even in accidents so that a grand jury, judge, or jury could make the decision on culpability. We do not know if that was case in this incident.

On July 26, 1944, Judges William D. Alexander and Clarence Spraul dismissed the charges of Manslaughter and Making and Improper Turn, respectively. Witnesses opined that the speed of Neal's motorcycle resulted in the crash.

EPILOGUE

Patrolman Neal's son, Patrick, almost three years old, died from nephritis eight months after his father, on March 17, 1945. He is buried in Walnut Hills Cemetery.

If you know of any information, artifacts, archives, or images regarding this officer or incident, please contact the Greater Cincinnati Police Museum at Memorial@Police-Museum.org.

© This narrative was further researched and revised March 24, 2020 by Cincinnati Police Lieutenant Stephen R. Kramer (Retired), Greater Cincinnati Police Museum Historian, with research provided by Greater Cincinnati Police Museum Researcher Karen Arbogast.