Patrolman Ernest Eugene Cole | Ohio State Highway Patrol



Badge: 122/277
Age: 24
Served: 1¾ years
December 3, 1962 to October 3, 1964

OFFICER

Ernest was born March 13, 1940 in Hamilton to tool maker, Odell Orton, and Mary Ellen (Nelson) Cole. He attended Fairfield High School, graduating in 1958.

Later that year, Ernest enlisted in the United States Air Force. While still an Airman 3rd Class and assigned to Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, he applied for a marriage license to wed Joan Elizabeth Brust (19), a typist from Milford Center, on March 20, 1960. Airman Cole was honorably discharged during 1962.

Ernest joined the Ohio State Patrol as a Cadet and dispatcher at

the Delaware Post on December 3, 1962. He attended the State Highway Patrol Training Academy in Columbus, graduating on January 10, 1964. He was appointed Patrolman and assigned to the Dayton Post.

On September 12, 1964 Mrs. Cole gave birth to their first child, a son. By then, the new father had served his country and community for six years.

INCIDENT

On first and second of October 1964, temperatures in southwest Ohio reached 80º F. Then, on the morning of the third, the temperature dropped to 40º. The difference between the air temperature and that of the moist ground produced numerous pockets of dense fog. Interstate 75 was enveloped in thick fog slowing traffic to fifteen miles per hour at some points. Reports of auto accidents began coming into the Butler County Sheriff's Office just before dawn.

At 6:30 a.m., Kenneth Hall of Franklin was driving his car south on the superhighway, just north of Tylersville Road, when Roy Herbert Hammel (52) of Lima drove a tractor-trailer into Mr. Hall's car, shearing off the left side of the car and killing Mr. Hall. Other cars following tried to avoid the wreckage and piled up in a series of rear-end collisions and side hits. The Patrol said at least twenty cars were involved in the crashes. Ambulances from a wide area were sent to the scene; as were seventeen tow trucks, five Butler County Deputy Sheriffs, and a dozen Ohio State Highway Patrolmen.

Patrolman Cole arrived on the scene and radioed headquarters that he was heading north to direct traffic passing south on the freeway. He went a couple of miles and was setting out a flare

pattern. Dr. Garret J. Boone, Butler County Coroner, said Cole was directing Traffic with a flashlight At 7:30 a.m. Gordon Samuels of West Alexandria drove his vehicle into the pedestrian patrolman. The officer's body was thrown 75 feet down the road and he was killed instantly. Another multiple-car pile-up resulted.

FUNERAL

Patrolman Cole was survived by his wife of four years, Joan Elizabeth (Brust) Cole (23); son, Grant Eugene Cole (3 weeks); parents, Odell Orton and Mary Ellen (Nelson) Cole; grandmother, Mrs. Mary Nelson; and siblings, Daniel Cole and Mrs. Ernest (Mary) Wilson. His funeral was held October 6, 1964 at the Klaus Weigel Funeral Home at North F and Elvin Avenue in Hamilton. He was buried in Rose Hill Memorial Park. Rev. Robert Bieber officiated.

A fund was set up at Dayton to help Patrolman Cole's family. All funds went to Mrs. Cole.

JUSTICE

Hammell and Samuels were both arrested and charged with 2nd Degree Manslaughter, according to Sergeant Edward P. Goffos, commander officer of the Hamilton Patrol post. They were then bound over the Butler County Grand Jury. On January 28, 1965, the Grand Jury failed to indict either one.

EPILOGUE

Mrs. Cole eventually remarried J. Burke Kile and moved to Franklin, Tennessee. Patrolman Cole's son, Grant, married and he and his wife had two daughters. They attended the University of Florida and University of Denver and both were goalies on their respective woman's college lacrosse teams and live in Denver. Grant and his wife live in Alexandria, Virginia.

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

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