Motorcycle Patrolman Lewis William Hall | Cincinnati Police Division



Age: 25
Served: 7½ months
April 16, 1948 to November 30, 1948

OFFICER

Lewis was born on March 30, 1923 in Cincinnati to Charles and Bertha (Ege) Hall. Lewis's birth was assisted by Dr. Fred Trinkle; their paths would cross again 25 years later.

Lewis attended public schools for ten years. After two years of high school and before and after World War II, he worked as a saw man for 1½ years, a truck driver for a year, and a lathe operator for a year.



Lewis joined the United States Navy, soon after Pearl Harbor, during May 1942. U.S.S. L.S.T. 354 was launched during November 1942 and Seaman 2nd Class Hall was put aboard January 4, 1943. LST354 was involved in the occupation of New Georgia, Rendova, Vangunu, Vella Lavella, and Cape Torokina from July to November 1943. During these operations, Lewis was promoted to Seaman 1st Class about March 1943. LST354 participated in the Green Island Landing in November 1943. Lewis was promoted to Coxswain before his boat participated in the capture and occupation of Saipan during June 1944. She was also involved in the assaults on Iwo Jima during February 1945 and Okinawa during April 1945. LST354 was decommissioned on April 6, 1946 with six battle stars. Coxswain Hall was honorably discharged August 16, 1946.

He returned to Cincinnati and, during October 1947, married Mrs. Clara E. (Boebinger) Roat. Mrs. Roat lost her first husband, Technical Sergeant Earl L. Roat, on April 10, 1945 during fighting in Germany. He was posthumously awarded a Silver Star. The loss of her hero husband was not the last tragedy in her life.

The year 1948 was seemingly shaping up to be a good one for both of them. Clara was already pregnant when Lewis joined the Cincinnati Police Division as a Police Recruit on April 16, 1948. He was assigned to District 4 (754 W. 5th Street). But their son was born prematurely on June 24, 1948 and lived only seven hours.

Lewis was promoted to Patrolman on July 16, 1948. Less than ten months later, on October 1, 1948, he was transferred to the Highway Safety Bureau (based in City Hall) as a Motorcycle Patrolman to replace Motorcycle Patrolman John Hughes, who died in a motorcycle crash on June 19, 1948. Patrolman Hall was wearing Patrolman Hughes's leather jacket when he went to work on the morning of November 30, 1948.

INCIDENT

At 1:50 p.m., Patrolman Hall pursued a speeding car outbound on Queen City Avenue. In the 2300 block, just past Sunset Avenue, the car and motorcycle were side-by-side. Arthur B. Evans of Sunset Avenue was waiting for a bus at Queen City and Sunset and saw the vehicle, which was weaving side to side, force the motorcycle off the road. Patrolman Hall dodged the obstacles and came back onto the road to continue the pursuit.

Fred Woulms and Dr. Fred Trinkle found his motorcycle crashed into a utility pole at 2450 Queen City Avenue and Patrolman Hall dead. He had suffered a fracture of the cervical vertebrae, crushing injury to the thorax, fractures of his right hip and leg, a fractured skull, and internal injuries. Ironically, the man who brought Lewis Hall into the world pronounced him dead at the scene.

When his wife Clara was notified, having lost her child months before and now a widow for the second time, she passed out and was rushed to Bethesda Hospital.

FUNERAL

In addition to his wife of 11 months, Patrolman Hall was

survived by his parents and a sister, Mrs. Bertha Gordoni. A visitation was held at Busse & Borgmann funeral home. Cincinnati Police Chief Eugene T. Weatherly assigned Patrolmen Paul Bare, John Gallespie, Wilber Cappel, Bill Rainey, Walter Hanlon, and William Finnell as pallbearers. Patrolman Hall was buried on December 3, 1948, in Section 22, NW Lot 88, of the Vine Street Hill Cemetery.

INVESTIGATION

There were no witnesses to the crash, but it was apparent the he was forced off the road again. Police searched for the killer's auto. A reward was offered. But the vehicle, nor its driver, were ever found.

EPILOGUE

It is likely that Patrolman Hall did not know that Clara was again pregnant when he left home on November 30th. On June 20, 1949, she gave birth to Lewis William Hall, Jr.

Clara moved in with her sister at 4430 Station in Winton Place. But she contracted diabetes and cataracts and continued a very rough life. She began working as a dishwasher in the Winton School Cafeteria during September 1956. However, during her preemployment physical for the job to be permanent, her medical conditions were reported and the Cincinnati Board of Education terminated the widow of two heroes and mother of a 7-year-old.

A month later, on December 28, 1956, she suffered a massive heart attack and died. She was 37.

Lewis William Hall, Jr. survived and thrived and is the father

of two children and five grandchildren.

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

© This narrative was revised November 30, 2018 by Cincinnati Police Lieutenant Stephen R. Kramer (Retired), Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Society Vice President. All rights are reserved to him and the Greater Cincinnati Police Museum.