Substitute Patrolman Earl John Grubb | Hamilton Police Department



Age: 37½
Served: 3¼ years
April 20, 1931 to January 1, 1935

OFFICER

Earl was born June 24, 1897, in Fayette County, Indiana to Charles Monroe and Emma M. (Koch) Grubb.

On April 21, 1918, Earl joined the United States Army. He served in France during World War I and was promoted to Corporal of Baker Company of the 351st Quartermasters Corp. During August 1919, he boarded the U.S.S. Arcadia to return home. Corporal Grubb was honorably discharged on September 20, 1919. While Earl was in France, his father died. When he returned, he moved in

with his mother until at least 1920.

By 1921, he was working as a baker and living at 810 Long Street in Hamilton.

During 1921, he married Esther Perpingon of Aurora in Covington. On May 27, 1922 their son was born, Carl M. Grubb. By 1923, they were living at 1219 Hanover Street. On March 6, 1924, Earl was elected delegate to the Co-Operative Trades and Labor Council.

On October 1, 1925, 3-year-old Carl choked on a piece of meat. His mother could not dislodge it and she and a neighbor took him to Mercy Hospital. He finally swallowed the meat but died enroute to Mercy Hospital from a pulmonary hemorrhage. The Grubbs had no other children.

During 1930, he and Esther were living at 225 C Street, in Hamilton, and he was working as a baker.

During February 1931, Earl and 83 others applied for the position of fireman in Hamilton. On March 18th, the results were published, and Earl finished third. By April 20th, he was mentioned in The Journal News as being a Hamilton police officer. On September 26, 1932, Patrolman Grubb and thirteen other Hamilton patrolmen graduated from the Cincinnati Regional Police Academy, the scope of which was four counties in Ohio and two in Kentucky.

By 1933, he and Esther were living at 1016 Ludlow Avenue in Hamilton.

MURDERER

Elmer E. “Tandy” Adams was born May 31, 1904 in Hamilton to

William H. and Alice Anna (Wood) Adams.

When he was 17, Adams and Walter Clark of Cincinnati stole a 7-passenger automobile from the Executive Stove Company in Hamilton and were arrested after a long high-speed pursuit in Wyoming on February 22, 1922. At the initial traffic stop, the driver backed the car up suddenly trying to run over Wyoming Patrolman Adler. Clark was additionally charged on a pending burglary warrant. It appears, but we have not verified, that he was offered a chance to joined the military rather than be jailed.

After two autos disappeared in Clermont County, Adams was arrested on August 24, 1922, interrogated, and led law enforcement to both in Cincinnati. Additionally, a warrant was signed for his accomplice and cousin, Elmer Harget.

When he was 19, on January 3, 1923, eight members of a burglary ring, including Adams and his brother, Everett “Bud” Adams, were arrested in Hamilton. Everett had felony arrests dating back to 1920. Acting Police Chief C. W. Herman describe it as “the greatest expose of crime in the history of Hamilton” and expected more arrests and more cases solved. Everett was sent to prison for six years. He died April 25, 1926 in prison after drinking poisonous homemade moonshine.

We do not know what happened to Elmer in the case. Somehow, he was free again eight months later and on August 13,1923 and arrested for another burglary, this time in Augusta, Kentucky. It was then that Augusta law enforcement found that he had a deserter warrant outstanding from Camp Benning, Georgia. They turned him over to the military police at Ft. Thomas, Kentucky.

We assume he either went to the brig or served out his enlistment or both, because he was not heard from again until he married Mary Mae Benge in Hamilton during July 1926.

On November 15, 1926, he was arrested and charged with operating a disorderly house after a raid at 822 South Fifth Street. On April 25, 1927, he was arrested at 719 South Second for intoxication.

Within a year, during October 1927, Elmer was arrested in Chicago and charged with committing robberies. He was convicted of Robbery and sentenced to one to twenty years in prison. He served seven years and was paroled about the first of November 1934.

Almost immediately, he began robbing filling stations and broke into the Indian Refining Company where he stole a Colt .38 revolver.

On December 31, 1934, he attended a New Year's Eve dance at the Eagles Temple on South Second Street.

INCIDENT

On December 31, 1934, Sub Patrolman Grubb was assigned to a special duty detail at the New Year's Eve dance. During the early morning of January 1, 1935, Richard Newman, a member of the dance committee, took a gun from a man who was drunk and bothering women, Elmer "Tandy" Adams. Sub Patrolman Grubb was attracted to the incident, arrested Adams, searched him, and found a second gun.

He called for a patrol wagon to transport his prisoner. About 3 a.m., Patrolmen Urban Leugers, patrol driver, and Henry Hart, responded. Patrolmen Hart and Grubb sat in the back seat with Adams. They left for the jail.

Near the intersection of South Second and Ludlow streets, Sub Patrolman Grubb was recounting to Patrolman Hart, "I got two

guns from this bird, he's sure a bad one." Adams replied, "Yes, you ——, you got two gun, but you didn't get this one." He then pulled a third gun, an Iver Johnson .32 caliber revolver, and shot Patrolman Grubb four times and pushed the gun into Patrolman Hart's side and fired once. Patrolman Leugers slammed on the brakes, hurling Adams to the front wall of the patrol wagon, ran to the rear of the patrol wagon, and opened the door. As Adams was aiming and pulling the trigger on his weapon, Leugers shot him three times. Adams's weapon was empty.

A citizen, Joe Helmstead of 164 Beckett Street, came to Leuger's assistance and got into the rear of the patrol wagon as Leuger's drove to Hamilton's Mercy Hospital. Adams was dead with a bullet wound to the heart. Sub Patrolman Grubb was dying, and Patrolman Hart was seriously wounded with a bullet resting near his heart.

DEATH

Sub Patrolman Grubb, still conscious and speaking to Detective Oscar Decker, said, "Get my wife, will you Oscar?" Those were his last words. One of the bullets had entered his chest and coursed through his lungs. He was pronounced dead at 3:30 a.m., becoming the first Hamilton Line of Duty Death in 13 years.

Patrolman Grubb was survived by his wife, Esther (Perpingon) Grubb (35). Patrolmen Chester Schick, Adrian Stricker, Reginald Stone, Ernest Dunivan, Clarence Holden, and Robert Welch served as pallbearers. On January 4, 1935, hundreds of Hamilton citizens paid tribute to Sub Patrolman Grubb. Funeral services were conducted at his home by Reverend F. C. Kuether of St. John's Evangelistic Church before the procession started toward Aurora, Indiana. He was buried next to his son, Carl M. Grubb, in Section M, Lot 43, Grave 2 in River View Cemetery in Aurora.

INVESTIGATION

Patrolman Hart survived the bullet wound to the chest, resting near his heart.

Later, it was discovered that Adams was an Illinois parolee. After his death, he became a suspect in several armed robberies by a team they nicknamed Mutt and Jeff and suspected in two burglaries from a few hours before.

The three revolvers were the Iver Johnson, a U.S. .38 which had not been fired, and a Colt .38 which had been fired twice. One of the Mutt and Jeff duo had fired two shots into a ceiling during one of their robberies. The Colt revolver was taken in a recent Hamilton burglary.

EPILOGUE

Esther moved to 2244 Noble Avenue and took a job as a sales lady in a bakery. About 1942, she went to work at the Mt. Pleasant Market in Lindenwald, retiring 28 years later in October 1970. She lived alone for 35 years before joining her husband and son in 1971.

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

This narrative was revised January 2, 2023 by Cincinnati Police Lieutenant Stephen R. Kramer (Retired), Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Society President.

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