

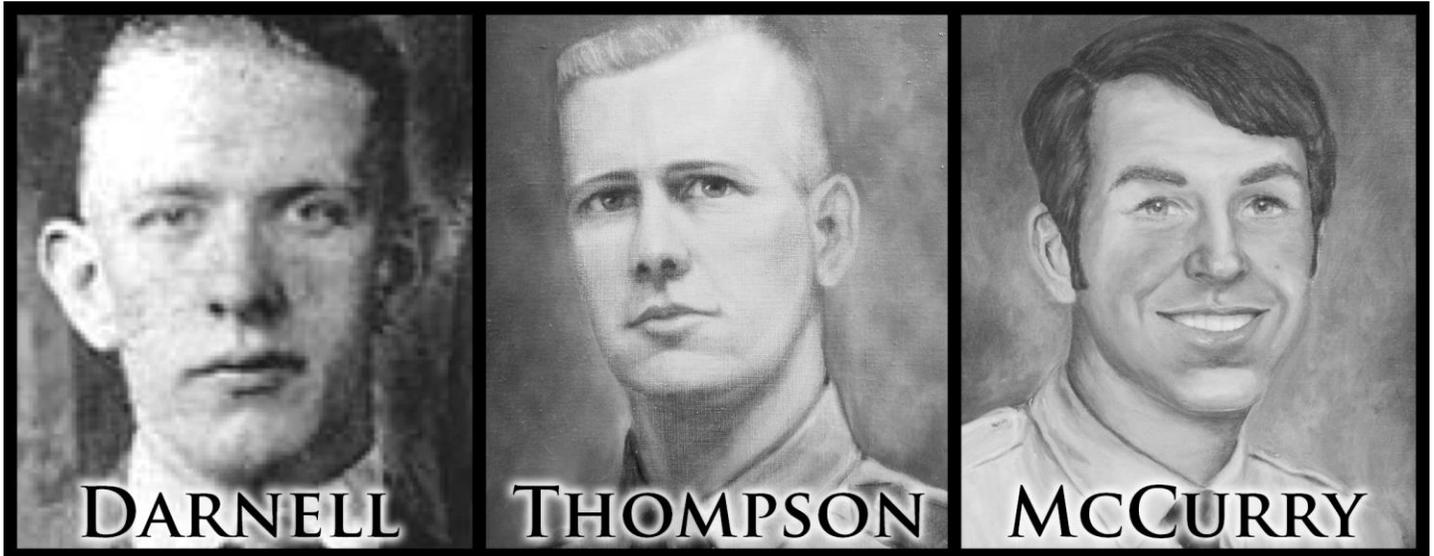


SALEM POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release – May 5, 2014

SALEM POLICE DEPARTMENT HONORS FALLEN OFFICERS

With National Police Week approaching this May 11-17, Salem Police Chief, Jeff Dudley, has taken some time to reflect on the sacrifices made by three courageous officers right here in Salem and share their unique stories.



HARRY WILLARD DARNELL

We begin by going back to December 3, 1923. Patrolman Harry Willard Darnell had be working for then the Town of Salem for two months. Darnell had stopped a driver for a routine traffic violation when another vehicle driven by a known bootlegger passed by.

Darnell jumped on the running board of the vehicle he had first stopped and ordered the driver of that car to follow the other vehicle in pursuit. That turned out to be a fateful decision. Darnell had no idea the driver he was planning to issue a traffic citation to also was a bootlegger. Instead of pursuing the fleeing car as he was asked, the driver pushed Darnell off of the running board and into the road. Both vehicles fled the scene and neither of the men was ever identified.

Patrolman Darnell died from his injuries leaving behind a wife and infant child.

WILLIAM HOWARD THOMPSON

The next tragedy occurred in 1970 when Salem Patrolman William Howard Thompson lost his life protecting his community on April 5 of that year. Thompson was at police headquarters at the end of his shift ready to head home when he heard officers who were on duty call for assistance at an address on Springfield Avenue.

His fellow officers were at this address attempting to serve a warrant on a subject when the man barricaded himself in the house and began firing shots at the officers. Thompson, who had been to the house earlier in the evening and thought he could help resolve the issue, headed back to the scene, even though he was off duty. As Thompson peered across a wall in the direction of the house, he was struck by a shotgun blast from the suspect's gun and killed.

Patrolman Thompson had been with the department for seven years at the time of his death. He was survived by a wife and two young daughters. Thompson Memorial Drive is named in his honor.

RUSSELL McCURRY

Finally in 1976, Patrolman Russell McCurry lost his life trying to apprehend an armed thief. McCurry was working a stakeout at a local motel with other officers from the department. There had been a rash of thefts from vehicles in the prior months and police believed the prime suspect was at this motel.

McCurry observed a male, who matched suspect's description, entering a vehicle in the motel parking lot, and after notifying other officers, he approached the man. Seeing McCurry, the suspect turned and fired one shot from a small handgun striking McCurry in the chest and killing him.

Patrolman McCurry was a United States Navy Vietnam War veteran and was survived by his wife and two daughters. A plaque commemorating his heroic service is permanently on display at the Colorado Street Bridge.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy signed a proclamation that designated May 15 as National Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week which the 15th falls as National Police Week. Two decades later, on May 15, 1982, survivors and supporters gathered in Washington D.C. at Senate Park for the first National Peace Officers' Memorial Day Service to honor law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty.

During this week we not only honor those who have lost their lives protecting our community, but we take the time to say thanks to the dedicated men and women who go out of their way each and every day to protect our community. Please take a moment to say thanks. It's something officers can never hear enough.

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