

# Remembering The Fallen

Police Roll of Honour Trust Chairman, Anthony Rae, reports on the history of the National Police Officers Roll of Honour and Remembrance.

The Police Roll of Honour Trust is unique in being the only charity to research, name and honour every United Kingdom police officer who has fallen in the line of duty since the earliest days of professional law enforcement, over three centuries ago. The Trust is creating the National Police Officers Roll of Honour and Remembrance, which will record, for the first time, details of up to 5,000 British Police Officers who lost their lives on, or as a result of, duty whilst serving in the United Kingdom or in UK administered forces overseas.

## The Trust Badge

The Trust Badge is formally registered at the College of Arms as a Departmental Crown Badge, normally only allowed for use by the police service; it was approved by Her Majesty the Queen after being authorised in an exceptional move by the Ministry of Justice.



## Historical Background

The office of constable is an ancient one and for several centuries was a duty carried out by ordinary citizens as locally appointed but unpaid Parish Constables, gradually supplemented by various other peace officers.

The first professional law enforcement officers followed the English Civil War and restoration of the Monarchy in the reign of Charles II (1660-85) with the formation of a paid Night-Watch. These Watchmen or "Charlies" were often maligned but many paid the ultimate price while carrying out their duties. The mid-18<sup>th</sup> century saw the Bow Street Patrol (known as 'Runners') formed in London and in 1792 the first statutory salaried Constables were attached by Act of Parliament to Police Offices throughout London.

Following this Parliament began to pass local Acts, notably the Glasgow Police Act of 1800, allowing local authorities to begin employing full time constables. Sir Robert Peel began his police reforms in Ireland, which joined the UK in 1801, with the formation of the Peace Preservation Force in 1814 and the Irish County Constabulary in 1822. In 1829 his formation of the Metropolitan Police saw the start of modern policing in England and Wales. How many of the earlier peace officers died in the execution of their duty is unknown but more than 50 are included on the Roll of Honour.

The first recorded death in the "Proceedings of the Old Bailey" dates from 1680 with the unlawful killing of a Constable whose name was not recorded. We include this unknown constable to represent all the unknown dead.

## Murdered on Duty

Research into the Roll began 30 years ago when, recently transferred from Lancashire Constabulary, and browsing in the Commissioner's Library at New Scotland Yard, I discovered the book "Murdered on Duty – A Chronicle of the Killing of Policemen" by Belton Cobb, published in 1961. I was fascinated by the record of 95 officers 'Feloniously Killed' on duty since the first Metropolitan Constable was killed in 1830. PC Joseph Grantham, 31, died from a brain haemorrhage, after a violent arrest; but the 'New Police' were not popular and his assailant was discharged after an Inquest jury found the death was caused by "over-exertion in the discharge of his duty"!

This personal interest stemmed from January 1975 and my first days on the beat at Blackpool, Lancashire, a town that three years earlier had seen the largest number of police officers decorated for gallantry from a single incident and the only posthumous award of the George Cross to a British police officer. Superintendent Gerald Irving Richardson GC died, aged 38, on 23 August 1971, following an armed robbery on a Blackpool jewellers, when he went to assist officers chasing the gang's getaway car. Although unarmed, and knowing two officers had already been shot, Mr Richardson chased a gunman on foot; telling his men to stay back, he caught him but was shot and fatally wounded. The heroism that day resulted in the only example of a double George Cross award, plus four George Medals, two British Empire Medals for Gallantry, and the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct.



## Police Gallantry Awards

Since 1910 there have been only 70 posthumous sovereign's awards:-  
1 George Cross, 31 King's / Queen's Police Medals, 9 Queen's Gallantry Medals, and 27 King's / Queen's Commendations for Bravery.  
(In addition one George Cross and one George Medal have been awarded to Metropolitan Civil Staff Explosives Officers.)

Returning to Lancashire in January 1983, I found myself attending the police funerals of three friends and colleagues from my Blackpool days: Constables Angela Bradley, 23, Gordon Connolly, 24, and Colin Morrison, 38. All three drowned when together they courageously attempted to rescue a drowning man from an icy, storm lashed sea on 5th January 1983; leaving three grieving families: parents, spouses, siblings and children, one yet unborn. This time, the three officers received no decorations for their bravery.

I made a promise to never forget, which became a determination to ensure not only murdered officers, but all fallen police officers who had lost their lives on duty would be remembered, and with remembrance, honoured.

### The Research

My first task was to see what information was available, either publicly or within the police service, writing to the Home Office and all police forces brought the short answer of not a lot. Home Office records, which even for police murders only started in 1946, with other deaths since 1965, were found to be incomplete. Since 1965 details of all deaths on duty should have been notified to the Home Office by individual police forces but this was not always done and in any case they were only retained for 15 years.

Police Forces could offer little more: not a single UK force had a complete Roll of Honour, most had nothing at all or just didn't know. Part of the reason for this sorry state of affairs was the fact that the 70 'Home Office' and other UK police forces in existence in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, had been gradually formed by the amalgamations of some 700 forces in existence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, not surprising some paperwork went astray. This made the reasons for my quest even more imperative, it was not just a case of ensuring our fallen officers were never forgotten – most of them already were!

Even the Metropolitan Police, formed in 1829, and which had a Roll of Honour of sorts at Scotland Yard, only remembered those killed "whilst carrying out dangerous duties or in the performance of acts of special gallantry", and this included only some 50 officers since 1924. An internal memo of the time, querying the possibility of a complete Book of Remembrance for all on-duty deaths throughout the forces history, drew the reply that this was simply impossible as there was no way of knowing who they were. Well not impossible, just not easy, as was proven when, 20 years after my visit to Scotland Yard, the first full Metropolitan Police Roll of Honour was completed by the Trust, containing not 50 but over 500 names of their fallen officers, in a Book of Remembrance dedicated by Her Majesty the Queen in 2001.

<b>The Statistics of Death</b>			
Cases currently recorded on the UK Roll showing cause and location:-			
	<u>Great Britain</u>	<u>Ireland &amp; N. Ireland</u>	<u>Total</u>
Criminal Acts:	414	1018	<b>1432</b>
Misadventure:	411	39	<b>450</b>
Accident:	879	158	<b>1037</b>
Enemy Action:	575	11	<b>586</b>
Natural:	291	45	<b>336</b>
Unknown:	119	17	<b>136</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2689</b>	<b>1288</b>	<b>3977</b>
In addition around 1000 British deaths in the UK and Colonial overseas forces are still being researched.			

In 1984 I joined the newly formed Police History Society, which was of great assistance as the research led to and in fact required a detailed understanding of police

history; they also supported the project financially when it was needed most. This was in the days when all enquiries required a trip to the various record holding offices. My first efforts were to re-check The Times Index, which by searching 'inquests' and 'accidents' uncovered many more 'felonious killings' as well as accidental deaths. By 1985 I was beginning to have stories published in Police Review where the first Roll of Honour appeared in November 1985 remembering over 200 officers unlawfully killed, many more than found by Cobb.

Over the following 10 years, research to uncover the names of the fallen was extensive. Following a complete survey of the Times newspaper since 1795, it included hundreds of other newspapers and magazines, for example every issue of the weekly Police Chronicle journal from 1867 to 1946, and the Police Review since 1893. Official records were examined at the Home Office and the Public Record Office, and several visits made to Bramshill Police College library. The 60,000 deaths in enemy air raids recorded on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Civilian War Dead Roll, were checked for police officers.



**Specials**  
Special Constables have existed for over 200 years; and continue to play a vital role today, paying a heavy price for their service. In Great Britain no less than 238 have died in the line of duty. In Northern Ireland at least 91 Ulster Special Constabulary officers and 128 RUC and PSNI part time and full time Reservists have died.  
(Photo - USC Memorial)

Copies of everything went into the project archive, which now contains some 50,000 source items, 500 books on police service and individual force histories, police murders, and related crime and forensic volumes, together with a similar number of magazines. These sources are being collated and input onto a computer database which will eventually contain detailed summaries of the incidents and biographies of the officers.

### Project Support

Bearing in mind these were the days before internet research, progress was painfully slow, and then in 1995 came an important breakthrough. I applied for a Home Office Research grant, which would give me some funding and valuable duty time to carry out the task. By this time I had found that in Great Britain in the previous 30 years alone (an officer's length of service) there had been over 500 duty related deaths, including over 50 unlawful killings; in Northern Ireland, 375 deaths including over 300 murders! I felt the formation of the Roll of Honour could justify the grant by its value to the service in examining how deaths on duty occurred, as an aid to improving officer safety. It was not to be, the reason given that it was of limited operational value. Ironically, it was beaten by another project to examine deaths in police custody.

### Women Police

The first women police officers in the UK went on patrol during the First World War. Many were volunteer workers from the suffragette movement; they proved their worth and by the Second World War, "Police Women" departments were established nationally.

But equality of work brought equality of sacrifice, with the first death of a female officer on duty in an enemy air raid in 1944. The first peacetime death on operational duty occurred in 1965 in a traffic patrol accident. In the 1970s, with full integration of women into male ranks, came the true cost of equality - in the 30 years from the first fatality in 1944 only seven deaths in the line of duty were recorded, in the 35 years since 1975, 46 have paid the ultimate price.

Of the 53 female officers on the Roll of Honour, 13 have been unlawfully killed: 6 RUC officers and one Civilian Searcher by terrorist acts, and in mainland Britain - two by vehicles, two by shooting and one each by stabbing, and terrorist bomb explosion. There have been 33 deaths in road accidents (11 travelling to or from duty), three deaths by drowning, three from natural causes and one enemy action.



Metropolitan WPC Bertha Gleghorn, the first female officer killed on duty

However, Lancashire Chief Constable Pauline Clare gave her personal backing and assistance to allow the project to be carried out in-Force, and informed ACPO of the project. With ACPO's support soon came that of the Home Office and HMIC, other police associations and all the police forces and federations. It soon had formal contact in over 60 forces, and more than 150 individual police officers, researchers and ordinary members of the public assisted in gathering source items of information. The National Police Officers Roll of Honour Project was born.

In 1997 "The Beat" was opened at the National Memorial Arboretum by the Home Secretary Jack Straw. In view of my work I was invited to the ceremony and asked to provide a Police Book of Remembrance for display at the Arboretum. This led to more articles and more publicity resulting in sponsorship from Roland Smith Insurance Brokers and in 2000 the founding of a charity to oversee the whole project - the Police Roll of Honour Trust.

### Police Roll of Honour Trust

The Trust's three charity objects, for the benefit of the police service and the general public, are: to foster good citizenship by the construction of a Roll of Honour; to advance education by the maintenance of a research archive; and to relieve need by provision of information, advice and support to bereaved family members.

### Creating the National Police Officers Roll of Honour

The Roll includes officers who have lost their lives as a result of criminal acts, enemy action in air raids, misadventure while taking special risks to protect the public

or make arrests, accidents while on routine patrol or travelling to and from duty, natural causes and unknown causes. It commemorates their sacrifice in the public service and provides a focal point and visible means for family and friends to reflect on the loss of their loved ones and to know that their loss is not forgotten.

### A National Resource

The Trust researches and maintains the National Police Officers Roll of Honour and Remembrance for the benefit of the general public and all UK police services. We have provided, or assisted with, Rolls of Honour for many national and local police services and memorial organisations including: the Metropolitan Police Book of Remembrance dedicated by HM The Queen at Hendon in 2001; assisting with the Roll for the Royal Ulster Constabulary GC Garden of Remembrance opened by HRH The Prince of Wales in 2003; and the Scottish Police Memorial unveiled by HRH The Princess Royal in 2004. We have provided the Roll published at the annual National Police Memorial Day service since 2004; and the Roll displayed at the National Police Memorial built by the Police Memorial Trust and unveiled by HM The Queen in 2005. The complete Roll of Honour and much additional material are publicly available through our website.

### Information, Advice and Support

The Roll of Honour archive records details of each officer's name, age, rank and force, date, place and circumstances of death, and any posthumous honours or bravery awards. Also recorded where available is their service history,

### Multiple Deaths

Any death is a tragedy but some are just more horrific than others, especially when multiple casualties are involved.

The greatest loss in Great Britain was on 6 November 1940 when Kilburn Section House was destroyed by a bomb during an enemy air raid, killing 12 Metropolitan Police officers. Northern Ireland's greatest loss saw 10 senior RUC counter-terrorist officers die in a helicopter crash en-route to a meeting in Scotland on 2 June 1994.

Homicides account for the highest casualties - in Britain, three triple murders have occurred: on 6 December 1910, three City of London officers were gunned down by a foreign terrorist gang, leading to the infamous Sidney Street siege. On 12 August 1966 the three members of Metropolitan 'Q' Car 'Foxtrot 11' were shot dead by criminals at Shepherds Bush. And an Inspector, Sergeant and WPC died after a terrorist car bomb exploded at Harrods on 17 December 1983.

The greatest incidents of mass murder have taken place through political violence in Ireland, with no less than 30 incidents involving three or more deaths, reaching double figures on three occasions. On 14 December 1831 the Leinster Constabulary Chief Constable and 12 constables were killed by a rioting anti-tithes mob at Carrickshock. In the 1919-1922 War of Independence, 11 Royal Irish Constabulary officers were killed in an IRA ambush in Co. Limerick on 3 February 1921. The worst atrocity occurred on 28 November 1920 at Kilmichael, Co. Cork, when 17 officers of the RIC Auxiliary Division were killed, also in an IRA ambush. In modern times the mortar bombing of Newry RUC station killed 9 officers on 28 February 1985.

personal and family details and photographs of the officer and any memorials. Through our authoritative archive we are able to provide information and advice to the public, researchers, police forces and related organisations and charities, both to remember and honour our fallen officers and to help promote officer safety by increasing knowledge and understanding of how fatalities occur. Through our Police Family Membership we are able to provide information on how loved ones will be remembered and advice on the care and support available to bereaved families and friends of deceased officers. Our aim is to remember both those who died and those left behind.

### Colonial Policing



International peace-keeping is nothing new for the United Kingdom, whether through the formation to break-up of Empire, or by League of Nations (1919-1946) and United Nations (1945 on) mandate, British police officers have led, and served in, police forces throughout the world.

Many lost their lives, often alongside local colleagues, carrying out their duties for their country and to help other countries. Most are now forgotten except by their few surviving comrades. How many died is not known, certainly hundreds, perhaps thousands. In one force alone more than 300 died in less than 30 years - during the Palestine mandate of 1920-1948.

The Trust now aims to remember all fallen British police officers, no matter where or when they served, before it is too late. (Photo - plaque in St Paul's Cathedral)

### Criteria

The Trust is creating the Roll of Honour in memory of all United Kingdom police officers who lost their lives in the line of duty as a result of criminal acts, misadventure or accident, enemy action, natural causes and unknown causes. Detailed criteria are available, but to summarise:-

'Police Officers' includes: Peace Officers appointed by local authorities prior to the formation of the modern police service, and sworn constables, regular and auxiliary. Unsworn police staff members may also be included where they die performing an operational law enforcement role. A 'United Kingdom' officer includes members of UK police forces and British members of UK administered forces overseas. To assist in the compiling of local or national Rolls for different purposes, causes of death are classified into three sections:

Section One - Officers killed as a result of Criminal Acts or Dangerous Duties - to pay special tribute to officers killed unlawfully or in the course of acts of gallantry, effecting arrests or other dangerous duties. As adopted by the Police Memorial Trust for the National Police Memorial Roll.

Section Two - Officers killed in the Execution of Operational Duties - appropriate for a Roll of Honour of officers killed on operational duty and where names are to be inscribed on a physical memorial. This is the original criteria for the National Police Officers Roll of Honour.

Section Three - Officers who die by any means on or as a result of duty - for a fully inclusive Roll or Book of Remembrance in memory of all who lost their lives in any way connected with their duties. Adopted by the National Police Memorial Day Trust for their Annual Service.

This allows for example, for a memorial to have a Roll of Honour of those killed on operational duty inscribed in stone, complemented by a Book of Remembrance for all.

### Future Plans

This year we hope to see the first full publication of the Roll made available to the general public, which will include, for the first time, details of British losses in Colonial and other UK administered overseas police forces. We are committed to producing a National Police Book of Remembrance with citations of all line of duty deaths, and the inscription in stone of names on a Roll of Honour at a new police memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum. More details of these initiatives will be made available on our website as they develop.

### Lest We Forget

Within the pages of the Roll of Honour and Remembrance are the names of many heroes and heroines but mostly they are the names of ordinary men and women - fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, partners, friends and colleagues. What makes them extraordinary is not how they died but how they lived - doing an often dangerous and thankless job, forgotten until needed - protecting the community for which, in the course of their duties, they lost their lives.

Sadly, as long as police officers are prepared to take risks in the protection of their communities, it is inevitable that the Roll will never be complete. The Trust will ensure future losses are also recorded and added to the Roll, which will continue to serve as an ongoing memorial to those who lose their lives in the service of the public, and those left behind may now be assured their loss will never be forgotten. The Roll is a tribute to those men and women and to their families - Lest we Forget.

### Help us Remember

The Charity relies entirely on voluntary contributions and support to continue its work; you can help by making a donation, becoming a Sponsor or joining the Friends. We also seek information about, and photographs of, fallen officers and their memorials. We are particularly pleased to hear from family, relatives or friends of officers who died in the line of duty.

To help or for further information please see our website:

[www.policerollofhonour.org.uk](http://www.policerollofhonour.org.uk) or contact us at:

email: [enquiries@policerollofhonour.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@policerollofhonour.org.uk)

telephone: 0300 123 7130

or write to: PO Box 999, Preston, PR4 5WW.

You can also donate online at [www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com)