

**LAW ENFORCEMENT MEMORIAL**

Thursday, May 13, 2010

Attorney General Janet T. Mills

Today as lilacs spring forth on nearby saplings, as the cool night air departs and warm breezes usher in a spring in full bloom,...as the season of new birth inspires us to action, today we take a solemn moment to think about our brave fellow citizens of Maine who departed this life in the course of duty.

Eighty-two names engraved on these large stones. Eighty-two untimely deaths from 1808 to 2006. Eighty-two citizens who worked for us, who patrolled our roads, our woods, our lakes and bays.

Each had a life. Each had a family. Each had a duty. And each lost a life to that sense of duty.

Elliott S. Johnson was on duty with the Thomaston Police Department when he got the call from Rockland PD to set up a roadblock to stop a stolen car driven at high speed by a prison inmate out on furlough. Officer Johnson was killed instantly when the stolen car crashed into him, also killing a passenger in the vehicle. He was 45 years old. He left a wife, three sons, three daughters, a stepson, a stepdaughter and several brothers and sisters.

Bill Hanrahan had been with the Warden Service for 15 years in November 1992. He had created the Warden Service's K-9 team which has helped find so many lost hunters and recover so much valuable evidence. He had been searching for a man in the Town of Starks when he collapsed and died of a heart attack. He was 49 years old. He lived in my town and was a neighbor. He left a wife, three sons and a daughter.

Timothy Willard was only 22 years old. He was a probationary officer with the Paris Police Department in December 1978. He was investigating a suspicious individual outside a factory during working hours. Turns out the guy was a distraught husband armed with a loaded handgun looking to kill his wife who worked there. When Tim confronted him, the guy shot and killed Tim instead, and the guy was in turn killed by the owner of the factory. Timothy's bravery undoubtedly saved the life of that woman.

Charles Black was the first state police officer shot and killed in the line of duty. It was July 1964. He was only 28 years old. Trooper Black was in Berwick for a court appearance when a pedestrian reported a bank robbery in progress. Tr. Black went to the back door of the bank and was met by the escaping robbers. He was shot 5 times before he could draw his weapon and return fire. He left a 5-year old and a 2-year old and a wife who was 9 months pregnant with their third son.

Trooper Jeffry Parola was only 27 years old. He had been married only two years. In October 1994 he received the department's award for bravery. Seventeen days later he responded to a tactical team call for help with a domestic disturbance. His cruiser struck a guardrail and was catapulted over an embankment, killing him.

Ralph Heath worked for the Baxter Park Service. A late October storm left a young hiker trapped on a ledge of Mt. Katahdin. Ranger Ralph bravely attempted to rescue the young woman. He fell to his death in the severe winds and blizzard conditions. The remains of Mr. Heath and the young hiker found the following spring.

Paul Simard was 32 and was killed by a 14-year old runaway girl who had been shooting at passing cars. He left a wife and 2 young daughters back in July 1958. He was the first Lewiston officer killed in the line of duty...But he was not the last.

Young David Payne was killed by a fleeing felon high on cocaine in woods of Lewiston. The felon, gun reloaded, then threatened to kill two other officers when they caught up with him.—an event which shocked the city and the broader law enforcement community.

One of the detectives who worked on David Payne's case was Gil Landry, a state trooper about the same age as many of the officers standing in front of me. Gil was happy to become a detective and work in the District

Attorney's office. He was proud though to have a new suit, to be in plain clothes, feeling safe to be off the road, helping children, victims of domestic violence and abuse. Safe, that is, until he went out to do his last interview and was shot through the heart, killed instantly by the target of his investigation. He left a wife and a daughter who was my youngest daughter's age.

I still see Gil's smiling face, standing streamside in a color photo, holding a prize smallmouth bass, as I miss him today.

The stories of these men in uniform remind us that we are still a small town community. Each of these men was taking care of their neighbors, looking out for the safety of their town, just as all of you are committed to looking out for the people of Maine.

They should not be remembered solely because of how they died. We observe their deaths. But we also remember their lives. They should be remembered too for the thousands of other acts of heroism and duty—the lost children found, the theft spoiled, the assault prevented, the burglary punished—the good deeds these men performed routinely, like a day in the life of every man and woman in uniform here today.

Our gratitude goes to you, just as our reverence and prayers go to them today.

So as the trees turn green, the grass thickens and our hearts turn to planting and picnics, we take a moment to remember those who cannot enjoy this lovely day, these 82 souls who have left us through tragedy and who have left a hole in our hearts. They did their duty. And we reaffirm our resolve that they shall not have died in vain.

Thank you.