

Yesterday and Today

by Harry Zirkelbach 07-19-2010

We live in a constant Today, recall and write of, those already spent.

On October 1, 1950 a group of recruits were sworn in as Patrolmen for the Denver Police Department. Quigg Newton presided. He was completing his term as Mayor.

Later these men posed with the Police Chief Herb Forsyth, and two Officers from the Police Training program. There are 24 young new Policemen in that photograph, taken outside Police Headquarters, 1300 Champa Street.

Beginning pay was \$263.00 a month, raised to \$300.00 at completion of a 6 month probation. \$300.00 applied to all finishing probation, regardless of tenure.

Then, Denver police Officers were given 52 days off a year, one day a week. They worked a six day week, allowed to determine at month's onset which days they wanted off. Pay was less than \$1.20 an hour. Police and Fire pay was similar, raises approved by voters.

Rookie police were assigned liberally throughout Denver's five Districts, continuing their education, working with veterans. Seven of this group were assigned East Denver, 17th at Gaylord.

One is remembered here.

Half the Patrolmen worked nights.
A few wished to work nights, exclusively, to the delight of all.
Paul Major was one.
For this he roved all of east Denver.
He backed-up threatening calls, when in that neighborhood.

In the summer of 1953, the Dispatcher received a Silent Alarm from a Pharmacy, E 17th Avenue & Washington St.
These alarms might be caused by an threatened employee,
any alarm trap in a closed building, by accident.

The regular Car for this area responded, Officers Bill McEnamy and Roy Seibler. Arriving, they saw nothing unusual. The Owner/Pharmacist was with a customer, rear Prescription counter.

They conversed to the owner as they approached, and when near,

were confronted by this armed man, who disarmed them.

He wanted drug., was very upset .

The four began a noisy debate, unmindful that Paul Major had responded too.

Recognizing the threat, Paul quietly approached the noisy discussion,
disarmed the hold-up man. A threatening moment, resolved.

In discussion with others later, both Seibler and McEnemy said they feared for their life until Paul disarmed the thief. Both felt Paul saved their life, gave Paul undying loyalty.

A few months later Bill McEnemy resigned from the Department, his family
unable to stomach the thought of Bill being killed.

In fact, most Officers faced family pressure on every Police tragedy.

The 41st Denver Police Officer slain while on duty, died January 20 1965.

This veteran of 15 years was in a police car with Officer Albert Peterson.

They had stopped a car for a traffic violation, found the car was stolen.

Several occupants jumped from the car, ran in different directions.

One was chased into the alley at the rear of 60 Broadway, where one Officer followed,
was shot twice, once in the chest, and once in the back of the head.

There were no witnesses. A short time later Philip Gonzales was arrested, tried,
convicted, imprisoned for life at the Colorado State Prison, June 18 1965,

Patrolman Paul Major was dead at the scene.

He is remembered only by name, on the Fallen Officer Memorial,
but in the heart by all who had the privilege of serving with him, as did I.