

Lower Providence Chief John J. Culp E.O.W. 12/25/1963

Chief John J. Culp made the ultimate sacrifice on December 25th, 1963. He served 33 years in law enforcement, 27 years with the Pennsylvania State Police and 6 years with the Lower Providence Police Department, before he lost his life. Chief Culp was born on February 25th, 1909 in Millersburg, Dauphin County. He joined the Pennsylvania State Police in 1930 and graduated from State Police Training School in Hershey in 1931. Chief Culp served at the South Langhorne, Lehighton, **Doylestown, Philadelphia and Collegeville barracks of the State Police. After 27 years of service with** the rank of Corporal, Chief Culp retired from the State Police on May 31st, 1957. He was appointed as the first full-time Police Chief in Lower Providence Township. Shortly before 10:00 AM on Christmas Day, December 25th, 1963, Chief Culp was found unresponsive in his patrol car shortly after he had notified the County Police Radio Room that he felt ill. Chief Culp was subsequently located by an individual that used the police radio in the car to summon an ambulance. Chief Culp had suffered a heart attack and was transported to Montgomery Hospital where he made his ultimate sacrifice.

District Attorney Ferman said: "Every single day men and women in law enforcement will see this plaque as they enter this Police Department and they will know about Chief Culp's sacrifice. We lost Chief Culp fifty-two years ago and yet the recitation of his life and all that he was involved with resonates today. We are surrounded by men and women in law enforcement whose lives can be very much described like Chief Culp's; involved in the community and committed the protection of our society. It is so important that we honor all of these officers every single day."

Founder of the Fallen Hero Cop Program, Jimmy Binns, has memorialized almost 300 fallen heroes since beginning the program, with today marking the 273rd. Binns explained the importance of sacrifice: "There is no greater love hath a man than to lay down his life for his friends. The support for the service that your dad enrolled in, the sermon on the mount over two thousand years ago when our Lord singled out one profession out of all of the professions... 'Blessed are the peacekeepers, for they will be called children of God.' He did not mention priests or doctors; the only profession he singled out was law enforcement. The profession that all of these men and women have chosen as did your dad. God bless you and thank you for letting us be a part of your extended family."

Lower Providence Police Chief Bud Carroll remembered the Department's first full time Chief: "We are so honored and pleased to have Chief Culp's daughter Carolyn and her husband Dick Bigelow, former Pottstown Police Officer, present with us today. John Culp was not just a regular guy, he was a good man. On December 25th, 1963 John Culp got out of his bed, he put on his Lower Providence Township Police Department uniform, a uniform since the inception of the Department in 1943, has been worn by over eighty individuals. There have only been six Chiefs of Police in Lower Providence Township, with Chief Culp being the second to hold that title and the first to serve in a full time capacity. We are honored today to have one of our police chiefs present with us today, Edward P. McDade who served as Chief from 1993-2000. Chief Culp's was a fate that every law enforcement officer dreads, died in the line of duty. His memory through this plaque will be a part of this building for as long as this building stands. The name Chief John J. Culp will be viewed by all that approach the threshold of this department. Who was John J. Culp? He was us and we are him. He was a Policeman, a Lower Providence Township Policeman. He died in the line of duty serving our community on December 25th, 1963 at the age of fifty-four. We are solemnly honoring his sacrifice in service to our community today and for all days."

Officer Culp's only child, Carolyn Bigelow attended the ceremony with her husband, Dick Bigelow, a former Pottstown Police Officer. The couple traveled from their home in Cape Cod to be here. Dick Bigelow said: "John's career started back in the Pennsylvania State Police when they were riding horses and then motorcycles and then police cars. He was really a mentor to me when I became a Police Officer from Pottstown, and though I really only knew him for about a year and a half, his sudden passing was really tough. I wasn't working that day, but my next door neighbor was. They monitored the call from the County radio and came to the house and told us what had happened. It was just terrible. No one wanted to see him like that, so young. He was good. He was a counselor and he helped me along. He loved Carolyn. There wasn't a thing he wouldn't do for her. John was a good person, a good father, a good father-in-law, a good cop, and he was taken at too much of an early age. Hopefully for this department and the other departments here today, you'll never have to post another plaque in remembrance. Thank you very much for honoring John and for having us here today."