



Indiana Law Enforcement Memorial

NEWS RELEASE

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Removal of Connersville Patrolman Howard Kelley

Fayette County | Patrolman Howard Kelley of the Connersville Police Department has been removed from the Indiana Law Enforcement Memorial due to research having revealed he does not meet the criteria of an eligible line of duty death.

In the early morning hours of Sunday, July 22, 1934, Kelley and Patrolman Lawrence Poe had arrested George Wolf, 53, for the alleged theft of gasoline and placed him in the front passenger seat of their patrol car. Before Poe returned to drive them to the station, Wolf produced a concealed revolver from his waistband, turned and shot Kelley who was sitting in the rear seat. Kelley was transported to Fayette Memorial Hospital with a .38-caliber bullet that entered the roof of his mouth and lodged at the base of his brain. Wolf, a former convict who initially fled the scene near 10th Street and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad trestle, was shot and killed by Poe a short distance away.

It must have been assumed Kelley also died and he has been honored on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington and the Indiana Law Enforcement and Fire Fighters Memorial in Indianapolis since their dedications in 1991 and 2001 respectively. During research we had conducted to determine his burial place, an obituary and death certificate were obtained that revealed Kelley recovered and although the bullet was never removed, he returned to work on the force. Over three years later and after he had worked his shift on November 9, 1937, the 61-year-old Kelley "committed suicide early Tuesday afternoon at his home, 211 West 12th Street, by shooting himself through the head with his service gun."

The bullet entered through the temple over the right eye and exited above the left ear, then passed through a wall of the house and into the adjoining home occupied by a neighbor. Fayette County Coroner David G. Pugh held an inquiry and found that Kelley died at 12:30 pm, ruling the cause of death was a "revolver wound in head" and the manner of death as "suicide." He was survived by his wife, stepdaughter, granddaughter, two sisters, two brothers and preceded in death by an infant son. Kelley, who had served for seven years, was born in Osgood and buried in Dale Cemetery in Connersville.

As there is clear and convincing evidence Kelley died, however tragically of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, we must remove his name from the Indiana Law Enforcement Memorial to maintain its integrity and to honor those officers who made the ultimate sacrifice. These findings and supporting documentation were forwarded to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund for further review. Their criteria for inclusion under the definition of "killed in the line of duty" specifically excludes "deaths caused by the officer's intention to bring about his or her own death." On March 6, their Memorial Names Committee voted to remove Kelley from their Memorial.

Any questions regarding this news release should be directed to: info@inlem.org.

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