

Interior Department, Service Celebrate National Police Week

On Friday, May 14, 2010, the Department of the Interior (DOI) and its bureaus will honor the work of DOI law enforcement officers and remember 134 men and women who gave their lives over the years to protect the Nation's lands, resources, and people.

The 2010 DOI Memorial Wreath Laying Ceremony, scheduled to begin at 1:00 p.m. in the Department's Sidney B. Yates Auditorium in Washington, D.C., will pay tribute to fallen officers from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and U.S. Park Police as well as all law enforcement officers currently serving the Department and its agencies. All Interior Department employees in the Washington, D.C. area are invited to attend this event, which is being held in conjunction with National Police Week.

The Interior Department employs the third largest Federal law enforcement force – a force that includes some 200 Service special agents, 120 wildlife inspectors, and 400 refuge officers. The agency's honor roll of fallen officers remembers eight individuals who worked for the Service and its predecessor agencies to enforce laws that protect fish and wildlife; refuge lands, resources, and visitors; and sometimes the Nation itself.

Refuge Officer Rich Guadagno, for example, lost his life aboard one of the aircraft hijacked outside of Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001 (in all likelihood, he died after joining other passengers in preventing the terrorists at the controls from flying the plane into the U.S. Capitol building). A suspected arsonist shot and killed Refuge Officers Andrew Crews and Joseph Martin in Waycross, Georgia, in 1945.

Fallen Service officers also include Special Agent Mary Monaghan, who died in 1989 when she was struck by a backhoe while walking to her Washington, D.C. office; Special Agent Douglas Morris, whose vehicle was hit by a train in 1990 as he returned from conducting a patrol during goose hunting season in Texas; and Special Agent Thomas Cloherty, who died during required fitness training in Maine in 2005, less than two years after getting what he described as his "dream job."

Early losses in the ranks of Federal wildlife law enforcement include U.S. Game Agent Edward Whitehead, who was shot and killed in Georgia in 1934 by a man he arrested for illegal duck hunting, and 22-year-old U.S. Game Warden Edgar Lindgren, who was gunned down in 1922 by three hunters shooting waterfowl out of season in Iowa only three weeks after he first reported for duty.

These officers shared a dedication to wildlife conservation and the courage to accept the challenges and dangers that come with a law enforcement commission. They were remembered this year during National Police Week commemorations along with more than 17,000 other Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty and whose names are inscribed on the granite walls of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C.

National Police Week has been celebrated since 1962, when President John F. Kennedy signed a proclamation designating May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and setting aside the week in which that date falls to honor law enforcement officers.

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