

## History of the Newton Police Department

The Town of Newton is centrally located in Sussex County, New Jersey. It was originally settled in October of 1751 and was known as Newton Township. During the late 1700s, Newton Township rose as a regional service center. On December 12, 1761, Governor Josiah Hardy established Newton Township as the County Seat of Sussex County.

The completion of Sussex County's first railroad brought rapid commercial and residential growth to Newton Township. Because of the community's accelerated growth, Newton Township was incorporated as a town on March 10, 1864.

In the 1890s, the protection of life and property and the function of preserving the peace in Newton were delegated to Constables who were appointed by the Town Committee. Each Constable had to present an official bond to the Town Committee and they had to be approved by the Committee. The Constables served all of Sussex County as well.

On March 8, 1898, an election was held in the Town of Newton. As a result of the election, the Committee of the Town of Newton was able to allocate \$1,000 for the salary of a Police force. During the next Town Committee meeting, which was on March 17, 1898, a petition was presented that called for the appointment of Isaac Harris and John T. Wheeler as Policemen.

On July 6, 1898, during a Town Committee meeting, it was ordered that the Committee appoint two policemen for a term of 1 year. The next day, John T. Wheeler and Joseph W. Devore were nominated for Policemen for the Town of Newton. It was ordered that the Policemen were to be paid an annual salary of \$500 each which they would receive in monthly installments. The Town of Newton agreed to procure the expense of the Policemen's badge, belt and baton. Officers Wheeler and Devore agreed to purchase their own uniforms, which had to be blue in color.



Police Officer during the 1890s

On July 22, 1898, the Town Committee passed an ordinance for the appointment of two Policemen. On this date, John T. Wheeler and Joseph W. Devore were officially appointed and employed as Policemen for a 1 year term.

An ordinance was also passed which regulated the conduct and specified the duties of Policemen. The Policemen had to conduct themselves in a gentlemanly manner at all times. They were not allowed to frequent or loiter in and about hotels or salons except in the performance of their duties. The Policemen had to enforce the ordinances and arrest all loiters and disorderly persons on the street and sidewalks and preserve the peace and good order in the Town of Newton.



Police Officers were notified of a call for service with a call box similar to the one depicted in this photo.

The Policemen worked a day shift and a night shift and patrolled the streets on foot. The officer on dayshift worked every day from 2pm to 1am while the officer on nightshift worked every day from 6pm until daylight the next day. The officer that worked dayshift had a break from 6pm to 7pm and had to work Sunday from 10am to 12pm.

On May 8, 1899, Officer Joseph W. Devore tendered his resignation as Policeman. The following month, Judson K. Gunn was nominated to fill the vacancy of Policeman.

On July 22, 1899, the Town Committee reappointed Officer John T. Wheeler and appointed Judson K. Gunn as Policeman. Officers Wheeler and Gunn would serve Newton together for the next six years. In July of 1901, the officers would see their first salary increase as the Town raised their annual salaries to \$600 a year.



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On November 3, 1903, the Town Committee granted Officers Wheeler and Gunn their first vacation. They were granted a 10 day vacation. Each officer agreed to work from 4pm to 6am while the other officer was on vacation.

On June 1, 1910, The Newton Police Department was officially created. The Town Committee passed an ordinance that called for the establishment of the Police Department. The Police Department was located at 115 Spring Street, which is on the corner of Spring Street and Moran Street. The building was known as the Howell Building and it was the home of the Town Committee offices as well as the Police Department, which was located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.



115 Spring Street as it currently looks today.

Police Officers would be notified of a call for service by either a light signal or a siren that was mounted at the Newton Fire Department on Spring Street. The department continued to maintain two Police Officers on its force until the 1920s.

During the 1920s, the Newton Police Department saw several changes occur. With the population of the Town growing, the Police Department needed to grow as well. In 1923, the Town Committee hired a Special Officer, who worked part-time, to assist its Regular Policemen. The following year, the Committee hired another Special Officer. In January of 1927, the Town Committee hired another Regular Police Officer, making the Newton Police a three man department. In June of that same year, the Town Committee purchased firearms, along with holsters, for the Police Department.



Officers carried equipment similar to the equipment that is depicted in this picture.

By 1930, the Newton Police Department had grown to six Police Officers, three Regular Policemen and three Special Policemen. During the 1930s, the Newton Police Department had two Police Officers receive promotions. On January 6, 1931, the Chairman of the Town Committee appointed John D. Kinney as the Chief of Police, thereby making him the first Police Chief for the Department. Officer William L. Knoll was appointed Sergeant, thus becoming the first Sergeant for the Department.

On November 24, 1931, Sergeant William Knoll received a Proclamation from the Town Committee for his actions on November 8<sup>th</sup> of that year. On this date, Sergeant Knoll, unaided, arrested Wilford Flood on Spring Street. Flood had recently escaped from the Lucerne County Jail where he was awaiting a transfer to the Eastern Penitentiary in Philadelphia, PA. Flood was serving a life sentence for Murder. Sergeant Knoll was commended in the highest terms for his alertness, intelligence, and bravery in apprehending a desperate criminal.

For the first 20 years, Police Officers patrolled the Town on foot. By 1930, more and more motor vehicles began appearing on the roadways, which were constantly being improved. In January of 1932, Chief Kinney made a request to the Town Committee for the purchase of a patrol vehicle. Representatives from several motor vehicle companies presented their ideas for a patrol vehicle to the Town Committee. After consideration, the Town Committee denied Chief Kinney's request for a patrol vehicle.

On November 29, 1934, Chief John Kinney died in the line of duty. Chief Kinney was taking an individual to jail after making an arrest when he suddenly collapsed. He is only Newton Police officer to die in the line duty. Soon after Chief Kinney's death, Officer Harry Simmons was appointed the position of Chief of Police, making him the second Chief of the Department.



# History of the Newton Police Department

On December 30, 1938, the citizens of the Town of Newton formed a corporation known as the Textile Workers of Newton, who worked at the Sussex Dye and Print Works Inc. on Sparta Avenue. Due to the Textile Strikes that were occurring around the country during this time, the corporation was fearful that they would be attacked for opening the new plant. They petitioned the Town Committee for Police protection to insure their safety and the protection of life and limb in going to and from work.

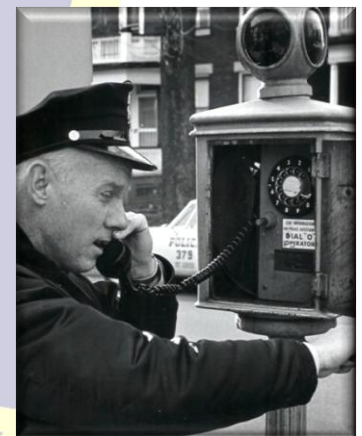


Equipment such as the "Come Along" and "Police Claws" commonly used by Police Officers in the early half of the century.

The Town Committee recognized that the Police Department was unable to provide adequate police protection to cope with such an emergency. The Town Committee made a formal request to the Governor of New Jersey, A. Harry Moore, that he order Colonel Mark O. Kimberling, the Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police, to detail State Troopers to Newton to assist as needed. Colonel Kimberling detailed State Troopers to assist the Newton Police Department for several weeks. No incidents of violence occurred.

As the Department grew in size and responsibility, a more formal rank structure was developed. On March 26, 1940, the Town Committee passed an ordinance establishing the structure of the Police Department. The ordinance stated that the Police Department shall consist of Chief of Police, Regular Police Officers, and Special Police Officers.

In February of 1941, the Sussex Telephone Company was authorized to install a Police-Light Telephone System in order to separate calls for service for the Police Department and the Fire Department. By March, the installation had been completed and was working satisfactorily. The Police Lights were installed at the intersection of Spring Street and Madison Street, on Spring Street, and also in the County Park.



Police Officer using the Police-Light Telephone System.

Around the same time, the Town Committee authorized the Town Attorney to prepare specifications for the leasing of a police car. Several bids were received by the Town Committee to lease a police car based on the following specifications:

- Used car, 1939 or later
- 2 door sedan or coach
- Color: black
- Less than 25,000 miles
- 5 new tires with new tubes
- Set of chains for rear tires
- Heater and defroster
- Combination light and siren
- Tool kit, a jack, and a pump
- Lettering, "Newton Police Department"



Newton Police Department's first patrol car was similar to the 1939 Chevy utilized by the Detroit Police Department which is pictured here.

The Town Committee had two cars to choose from for a police car, a 1939 Plymouth P8 and a 1939 Chevrolet 2 door sedan. The Committee chose the Chevrolet 2 door sedan for the Police Department's first police car. The car was leased from J.R. Roof at a deal of \$25 a month if the car was used less than 1,000 miles a month and \$30 a month if the car was used more than 1,000 miles a month.



## *History of the Newton Police Department*

In November of 1941, the United States Post Office Inspector asked Chief Harry Simmons for cooperation in guarding the transfers and shipments of quantities of currency and cash between the Railroad Depot and the Post Office building. Similarly, the Presidents of the local banks asked for cooperation in regards to the transfers of money from the local banks to and from the US Post Office and the Railroad Express Office. The requests were granted and the officers of the Police Department would assist the US Post Office and the local banks as needed.

In March of 1942, the Town Committee authorized Chief Simmons to assign an officer to police headquarters 24 hours a day. This allowed the Town residents to be able to call the station and speak directly with an officer at any given time. The Town Committee also approved the installation of a two-way radio at the police station.

In 1942, the Newton Police Department saw one of its officers go off to war. On July 27<sup>th</sup>, Officer Emmett "Ted" Leeper was granted a leave of absence for active military service with the United States Army for World War II. Once Officer Leeper's tour of duty was completed, he was allowed to return to his position as a Police Officer. On February 1, 1943, Emmett Leeper returned from his tour of duty with the US Army and resumed his position as a Police Officer with the Department.

During the 1940s and 1950s, the officers worked 8-hour shifts and there were two officers per shift. Dayshift was from 8am to 4pm and consisted of the Chief of Police and a Patrolman. The afternoon shift was from 4pm to midnight and the night shift was from midnight until 8am. During the afternoon shift, there was an overlapping shift from 8pm to 4am in which an officer was assigned to foot patrol in the business district. The officer would maintain his post until midnight, at which time the officer on foot patrol would partner with the incoming officer and they would go on two man patrol until 4am. The midnight officer would then work alone until 8am when he was relieved by the dayshift officer.



Newton Police Officer Chester Zukowski from 1953.

On January 1, 1954, the Town Committee hired W.A. Turnbull to run the Police Department. Turnbull, a retired New Jersey State Trooper, was appointed Chief of Police. Chief Harry Simmons was demoted and appointed Assistant Chief of Police. Turnbull's appointment as Chief of Police only lasted a month. He was demoted to regular officer and Harry Simmons was reappointed as Chief of Police. The position of Assistant Chief of Police was abolished.

1954 saw the retirement of Chief Harry Simmons. Chief Simmons was hired as a Police Officer in 1929 and served the Town of Newton for 25 years. On January 1, 1955, Sergeant Cortelyou Fisher was appointed to the position of Chief of Police, making him the third Chief of the Department.

During this decade, the location of the police station changed several times. The police station moved from its original location on Spring Street to Trinity Street, where the Central Plaza Parking Lot is now located. Several years later the location of the police station changed again.

The Police Department had one patrol car for the officers. A two-way radio system was installed in the patrol car and this greatly improved police services for citizens of Newton. The radio system was run through Sparta Township.



# History of the Newton Police Department

In 1956, the Town of Newton changed its form of municipal government and decided to operate under the Faulkner Act. The Act provided many choices for communities with a preference for a strong executive and professional management of municipal affairs. The Town follows the Council-Manager plan. The Town Committee would now be known as the Town Council.



PBA Local 138 Shield

On January 12, 1959, the Policeman's Benevolent Association Local 138 was officially chartered. PBA Local 138 became the first Law Enforcement organization in Sussex County. Members of PBA Local 138 were comprised of officers from Newton Police, Sparta Township Police, Franklin Police, Hopatcong Police, Jefferson Township Police, and Hackettstown Police. The first President of the Local was Newton Police Officer Clarence Metzgar.

During this same year, Newton Police Officer Clarence "Ish" Friedland started the Small Fry Fishing Contest which is held annually on the grounds of what is now the Sussex County Community College. The Small Fry Fishing Contest is still held today and recently celebrated its 50 Year Anniversary in 2009.

An important dynamic affecting law enforcement was the growing importance of education and training. Physical prowess, once the most important attribute for Police Officers, was now tempered by the need to grasp the new technology crucial to police work, to recognize recent laws regarding police conduct, and to understand the behavior of the people they confronted on duty. All officers were required to graduate from an 11-week residential Basic Training Course at the New Jersey State Police Academy in Sea Girt, NJ.

On December 31, 1962, Chief Cortelyou Fisher retired from the Department. Chief Fisher served the Newton Police Department for more than 30 years. He was hired as a Patrolman on March 22, 1932. Prior to being hired as a full time officer, Chief Fisher served as a Special Officer.

On January 27, 1964, Sgt. Joseph Mussolini was promoted to Chief of Police. Chief Mussolini had been acting Chief for 13 months. He became the fourth Chief of Police for the Newton Police Department.

During the 1960s, the location of the Newton Police Department changed again. This time, it moved across the street to a new facility in the Town Hall which was located at 39 Trinity Street.

Rule #34 of the Rules and Regulations of the Police Department defined which uniform the Officers would wear and during what season they would be worn. There were three different uniforms. During the winter months, Officers wore a blue overcoat, blue shirt, blue tie, blue hat, and blue trousers. During the spring months, Officers would wear a single breasted blouse, which had an open neck with lapels, blue shirt, blue tie, blue trousers, black shoes, and a blue hat. During the summer months, Officers wore a blue shirt, a blue tie, blue trousers, a white hat, and black shoes.

The decade of the 1970s began with Chief Joseph Mussolini approaching retirement. Working under the Chief were Sergeants Ralph Carey and Clarence Friedland. These three commanded nine Patrolmen, eight Special Officers, ten crossing guards, and a full time meter maid. At the time, the department had one marked patrol car and one unmarked patrol car.



Photo from the New Jersey Herald of Chief Cortelyou Fisher's retirement dinner.



Chief Joseph Mussolini sitting at his desk.



## History of the Newton Police Department

In 1970, Sergeant Ralph Carey was appointed to Investigator, thus initiating the first Newton Detective Bureau. The promotion of Clarence Metzgar and James Ransnorth to Sergeant followed soon after. A year later, Chief Joseph Mussolini retired after 32 years as a Police Officer. During September of 1971, after 17 years of service, Sergeant Ralph Carey was promoted to Chief of Police. Chief Carey became the fifth Chief of Police for the Department. Sergeant Clarence Metzgar assumed the responsibility of the Detective Bureau.

1972 found Chief Carey evaluating the structure of the Police Department. He began the implementation of the many changes thought necessary to keep up with modern day demands and technology. Chief Carey found it necessary to seek relief from the daily responsibilities of running a Police Department. More of his time was required for budgeting and planning. Responsibility in other areas was passed down to other staff members.

Several changes were made during the following years. Work load demands dictated the need for a second patrol car. Manpower problems were handled by adding four police dispatchers to the staff, thus freeing the same number of Police Officers to man the new patrol car. During 1973 and 1974, Officers William Teets and Larry Romyns were promoted to Sergeants, thereby creating a Patrol Sergeant for each of the three shifts.

Since its inception in 1971, the Detective Bureau had greatly increased its service to the community. This change resulted in a significant increase in time devoted to criminal investigations and more important, a significant increase in the number of crimes solved. Up until this time, investigative work was done by the Officer that responded to the call of a crime.

Detective Sergeant Clarence Metzgar headed the Detective Bureau and was assisted by Detective Louis Braxton. Both Detectives had become sophisticated in their work through many hours of professional development. They attended courses for fingerprint training, crime scene photography, and many criminal investigative courses. A teletype receiver was installed at Police Headquarters creating a direct line hook-up with the National Crime Information Center.

The Traffic Bureau was also created under the direction of Chief Carey. At the time, it was headed by Sergeant Larry Romyns who was assisted by Officer James Kilduff. Through Federal and State grants, the Traffic Bureau was able to acquire a Breathalyzer Unit, two radar units, and CB radio. Responsibilities of the Traffic Bureau included the monitoring of accident patterns, traffic ordinance revisions, and the maintenance of traffic signs throughout the Town. The Traffic Bureau reviewed traffic patterns and detours with contractors and planned traffic safety at major public events.



Sergeant James Ransnorth holding the Police Department's first body armor. Pictured with Sgt. Ransnorth is Patrolman Bruce Jorritsma.

During the mid to late 1970s, the Department was able to hire two additional police officers through the Campus Police Grant. The Officers were assigned to Newton High School. In the late 1970s, the Newton Police Department was able to acquire body armor for the officers.

During October of 1979, the Police Department moved into a more modern facility located in the new Municipal Building. At the time, a most notable benefit of the new facility was the Police dispatch area. It included modern communication equipment, which was able to cross monitor area Police Departments, State Police, area Fire Departments and local First Aid Squads. Other benefits of the new facility included additional office space, interrogation rooms, and a classroom.



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In 1983, Sergeant Larry Romyns was appointed Chief of Police, making him the sixth Chief of the Department. Chief Romyns was the Chief of Police from 1983 until his retirement in 1991.

On August 10, 1983, Sergeant James Ransnorth was promoted to Lieutenant. A need for a Police Department Operations Officer was identified during the late 1970s. The Office was established in 1980 with Sergeant Ransnorth filling the position. Sergeant Ransnorth was proficient in carrying out the many responsibilities associated with the overall supervision and operation of the department while establishing many innovative standards of operation. Lieutenant Ransnorth became the first lieutenant in the history of the Newton Police Department.

In April of 1987, Chief Romyns instituted the first electronic record keeping system. The system was Law Enforcement Information Recording System, also known as LEIRS. The Newton Police Department became the first department in Sussex County to be “on-line” with a computerized record keeping system. This offered many opportunities and advantages for the Police Department as well as many communities whose emergency services were dispatched through the Newton Police Department’s Communication Center. Chief Romyns also installed the first recording system for the Police Department’s telephone system.

After Chief Romyns’ retirement in 1991, Sergeant James Kilduff was promoted to Chief of Police. Chief Kilduff became the Department’s seventh Chief. During the same year, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) was introduced into the Newton School system. The Department’s first DARE officer was Thomas Morris.

During the early 1990s, the Newton Police Department continued to advance through the computer age. In 1992, a new Computer Aided Dispatch system and Records Management System, called DeskSgt, was instituted. A new 9-1-1 system that was Windows based was installed in the Dispatch Center. This technology greatly improved the Department’s response to calls for service.

In 1993, the Department implemented a bike patrol to augment foot patrol. The Newton Police Department became the first agency in Sussex County to form a bicycle patrol. The idea of bike patrol was developed by then Detective John Tomasula. Officers assigned to bike patrol would patrol the business district as well as any other areas in town that needed to be patrolled.

Upon Chief Kilduff’s retirement in 1995, Lieutenant Michael Meeker was promoted to Chief of Police. Chief Meeker became the eighth Chief of the Department. He was responsible for the implementation of several programs in the Department.

In 1999, Mobile Video Recorders were installed in the patrol cars. This video technology provided a powerful tool for the Police Officers. It provided an indisputable video/audio record of all encounters involving officer and citizen and it also enhanced the prosecution of DWI, drug interdiction, traffic violation and other offenses.

In 2000, under the COPS in School Grant, a Police Officer was assigned to the position of School Resource Officer (SRO). The Department’s first SRO was Patrolman Robert Osborn, Jr. As the SRO, Patrolman Osborn performed the function of the Juvenile Detective and he continued teaching DARE in the Newton school system.

During the same year, a Police Officer was assigned as a full-time Traffic Officer. The Town Council, after seeing a need for safer roads in the Town of Newton approved and allocated monies for the full-time position. The primary role of the Traffic Bureau is to provide aggressive enforcement of motor vehicle laws. The Traffic Bureau also investigates any and all traffic related complaints, the biggest of which is, by far, speeding vehicles on residential streets.



# History of the Newton Police Department

During the 1990s, Detective John Tomasula would rise through the ranks of the Department. He was first promoted to Sergeant and then in 1995 he was promoted to Captain. Captain Tomasula was the first officer to hold the rank of Captain in the Department. In 2000, Captain Tomasula was promoted to Chief of Police, making him the ninth Chief of the Department.



Entrance to the Police Station

In 2004, the Newton Police Department moved into a new, more modern police station. The new station was built next to the municipal building. State of the art equipment replaced older, outdated equipment.

The Police Department completely overhauled its communication system. It was designed to improve efficiency and to accommodate the new communications equipment. Newton Police Central Communications, or "Cen Com" for short, is the hub for all types of emergency communications in Newton. Dispatchers answer 9-1-1 calls, dispatch Police, Fire, and EMS units from all over the county around the clock.

During 2004, the Patrol Division was revamped and squads were formed. The Patrol Division had previously worked a 10-hour shift schedule changed to a 12-hour shift schedule. Four squads were formed and each was under the command of a Sergeant.

In 2006, under the direction of Chief Tomasula, the Department changed its rank and structure. Up until this point, the rank and structure of the Department consisted of a Chief of Police, a Captain, a Lieutenant, and five Sergeants (four Patrol Sergeants and one Detective Sergeant). The position of Captain was done away with and two sergeants were promoted to Lieutenant. The structure of the Department is now a Chief of Police, three Lieutenants, and four Sergeants.

A new addition to the police station was the sally port which minimized the risk of injury to both the officer and to the prisoner, as well as preventing escape. It is directly connected to the processing area of the Police Department.

The processing room was greatly improved in the new station. It contains everything that an officer would need to process a prisoner. Gone are the days of fingerprinting with ink and cards. Today, officers fingerprint a prisoner electronically using the Sagem Morpho fingerprinting system, also known as the "Live Scan system". Fingerprints are digitally recorded on a computer and are immediately sent to the State Bureau of Identification for recordation. The processing of drivers who are suspected of driving while intoxicated has changed as well. Officers now use the Alcotest 7100 MKIII-C to record the breath samples of those drivers that are suspected of driving while intoxicated.

Today's patrol cars have changed from those in the past. Over the years, the patrol cars have changed in color. First they were black in color. They then changed to blue and white, then to white, and then to the current black and white. Each patrol car contains a computer which allows the Officer to have access to the CAD system and to the Infocop system which grants the Officer access to the State's Criminal Justice Information System, commonly known as "CJIS".



2009 "black and white" Ford Crown Victoria patrol car



# History of the Newton Police Department

Each patrol car also contains equipment that the Officer would need for a variety of situations. The equipment is kept in the trunk of the car. The equipment is but not limited to a first aid kit, a fire extinguisher, emergency flares, bolt cutters, a “Lock Jock” kit, and oxygen. The trunk also contains a Benelli semi-automatic shotgun and a Bushmaster AR-15 assault rifle.

In 2009, the way evidence and property was collected and stored was changed. A new evidence management system, called Barcode Evidence Analysis, Statistics, and Tracking System known as the BEAST, was instituted. The BEAST helps to facilitate the collection and preservation of forensic evidence, provides an unbreakable chain-of-custody, and enhances the day-to-day efficiency of evidence collection.

The uniforms and the patch of the Department were changed. The regular duty uniform changed from a Class A uniform to a Class B uniform. Prior to 2009, the uniform was either a short sleeve shirt, during the summer, with a uniform cover or a long sleeve shirt with a tie and Sam Browne belt with a uniform cover. Today’s uniform is considered a Class B style uniform and is more practical and comfortable for the Officers. The Class A uniform is now only used for ceremonies or funerals.



2009 Newton Police patch

The Newton Police Department patch was changed to honor its history. The color scheme was changed to match the colors of the uniform. The patch used to be dark navy with gold trim. The color of today’s patch is navy and French blue, which match the color the uniform. The year “1910” was added to the patch to honor the year that the Department was established. The words “Trust, Integrity, and Tradition” were added to honor the past, present, and future members of the Department.

Over the years, the Newton Police Department has developed into a modern law enforcement and service oriented agency. Today’s Police Officer is better trained and better equipped than his predecessor. New Police Officers are mandated to attend a Police Academy and complete a Basic Police Training course that is approved by the State of New Jersey Police Training Commission. In-service training schools are scheduled for Officers to attend as they progress through their careers. Police equipment has significantly improved since the early 1960s. The Newton Police Department of the new millennium has well equipped vehicles, state-of-the-art radios, as well as a sophisticated computer system.

The past 100 years have witnessed many changes within the Newton Police Department. Although the styles of uniforms, size and shapes of the patrol vehicles, caliber of firearms carried, and the demographics of the Police Department have changed, one thing has not, the dedication and hard work of its members. For 100 years, Newton Police Officers have always answered the call for service and have always been ready to make the ultimate sacrifice as is evident throughout our history. The men of today’s Newton Police Department continue to serve with the same pride as those men who served before us. It is our hope that future generations of the Newton Police Department will look back and share the same sense of pride in wearing the badge as we do today.

Written by: Detective Thomas Muller, May 2010