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RACINE COUNTY, WISCONSIN

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Long gone, but not forgotten

After 90 years, Racine detective is to be recognized as having died in the line of duty

BY MARCI LAEHR TENUTA
Journal Times

Every May for more than 45 years, law enforcement agencies have gathered to honor those who lost their life in the line of duty.

This year's National Police Week is no exception, except for an unexpected addition to Monday's Racine County memorial ceremony.

It's been discovered that a Racine police officer who died in the line of duty in 1918 has never been recognized for his sacrifice.

On Monday, a plaque honoring Detective John Harms will be added to the memorial at Hantschel Park, 5400 Byrd Ave., as part of the annual countywide ceremony.

"We can rectify this now," said Sgt. Bill Macemon of the Racine Police Department, who discovered that Harms had been overlooked. "We can make it right. This gentleman's been forgotten for 90 years."

Macemon, the department's unofficial historian, said he received a call from descen-

dants of Harms looking for a photo of him. The department keeps rosters of officers that go back to 1858, when the police force was first formed.

Macemon found Harms listed, and the date of his death: Nov. 18, 1918. But the book held no other information.

"It only listed the day that he was killed," Macemon said. "It didn't say whether he was on duty."

So Macemon went to the microfilm archives of The Journal Times to see if he could learn more about Harms' death.

According to the report in the Racine Times-Call — one of the predecessors of The Journal Times — on the day of his death Harms was driving at around 3 p.m. to an investigation on the north side of Racine on Hamilton Street.

"He crossed the (railroad) tracks and was struck by a train and was killed instantly," Macemon said. At that time, warning gates

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The Racine Times-Call report on the death in the line of duty of Racine Police Department Detective John Harms in 1918.

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for train tracks were controlled by a person. The man on duty neglected to lower them for some reason. Macemon said the county coroner arrested the controller.

Prior to discovering Harms, the earliest recorded death in the line of duty in Racine County was that of Racine Police Officer Alvin Christensen, who died in a motorcycle accident in 1930. Currently, the names of 15 police officers and deputies from Burlington, Racine and Racine County grace the memorial at Hantschel Park.

The park is named in honor of Detective James Hantschel, who was killed by a suspect in 1963 while transporting the suspect to the police station for questioning. The park was named, and its memorial monument was erected, in 1972, Macemon said. But over the years, the monument and park were forgotten and started to deteriorate.

"People don't even realize it's there," Macemon said.

Three years ago, an effort was undertaken to restore the area. Plans to refurbish the memorial were unveiled during the 2006 ceremony. They included landscaping and a memorial walkway in a ribbon pattern that the designers hope will consist of bricks purchased by members of

FALLEN HEROES

Racine County law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty:

Racine County Sheriff's Department:

Henry D. Denman	June 18, 1953
George W. Hanson	June 18, 1953

City of Burlington Police Department:

Hubert W. Schenning	Feb. 9, 1935
Anthony G. Eilers	Feb. 5, 1962

City of Racine Police Department:

John Harms	Nov. 18, 1918
Alvin B. Christensen	July 13, 1930
Jacob A. Mauer	April 28, 1931
Harry C. Breheim	Aug. 26, 1933
John H. Anderson	March 10, 1935
Frank F. Lenske	May 13, 1936
Arthur Lindstrom	Feb. 12, 1951
Harold Worden	Aug. 25, 1955
Lester McEachern	May 5, 1956
James J. Hantschel	May 15, 1963
Fred Lenske	Feb. 15, 1967
James R. Fine	Jan. 11, 1974

the community.

The very first brick in the walkway will be laid Monday, Macemon said. Purchased by Norb and Shirley Trottier, it features the names of three officers already on the monument: James Hantschel, Tony Eilers and James Fine.

The ceremony, which begins at 9 a.m., also will include the traditional reading of the roll, during which the names of all the

fallen officers will be read. The public is invited to attend.

Order forms to purchase bricks for the memorial walkway, which can be inscribed with names or messages, will be available at the ceremony. The cost is \$75 for a 4-by-8 brick or \$200 for a 12-by-12 brick. For more information, contact Macemon at (262) 635-7724 or via e-mail at:

william.macemon@cityofracine.org