

Sheriff



Larry Ashley, Okaloosa County Sheriff

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OCSO WORKS TO RECOGNIZE OKALOOSA COUNTY SHERIFF KILLED IN LINE OF DUTY 93 YEARS AGO



Just 17 days after taking office in January 1921, Okaloosa County Sheriff John Summerlin was killed when the car he was driving was struck by a train east of Crestview. Sheriff Summerlin, only 34 years old, was driving a man to the train station as part of his official duties when the accident took place. Three other passengers were also killed. Deputy Pat Jenkins began researching the accident. His goal was to try to get Sheriff Summerlin's name added to the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) State Memorial in Tallahassee during next year's Police Week ceremonies and as part of the OCSO's Centennial Celebration in 2015.

Deputy Jenkins got assistance from Sheriff Larry Ashley and the OCSO, the Northwest Florida Daily News, Baker Block Museum, Crestview FOP and numerous citizens in tracking down information.

He located the last two direct descendants of the late Sheriff, great-nephew Scott Morrison of Ruckersville Virginia and great-niece Debbie Morrison of Pensacola. "It is time we honor his sacrifice and service by etching his name among the heroes that already adorn the walls of the memorial at the state capital," said Sheriff Larry Ashley. "When we do this, we are showing his family, as well as the citizens of Okaloosa County, that he is not forgotten."

This month, the Florida FOP voted unanimously to add Sheriff John Summerlin's name to the State Memorial next May. In addition, Deputy Jenkins is also working to have Sheriff Summerlin's name added to the National Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington D.C. His name will also be engraved on the OCSO Memorial at the Headquarters Building in Shalimar to be unveiled during the 2015 OCSO Centennial Celebration as well.

"I think this is one of the most important things we can do to mark our agency's upcoming 100 Years of Service," said Deputy Jenkins. "John Summerlin was only the second Sheriff in our history and lost his life while on duty. He deserves to be remembered for his desire to serve his fellow citizens and the price he paid as a law enforcement officer".

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"The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office provides equal access and equal opportunity in employment and services and does not discriminate"