

# Honoring a fallen, faithful few officers of the law

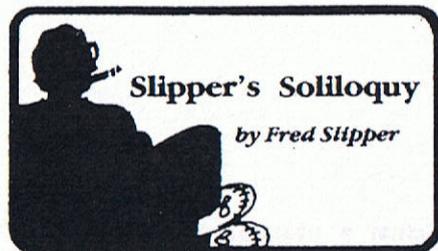
On May 16, 1987, a memorial dedication ceremony was held in Spokane to memorialize all local, county, state and federal law enforcement officers who had lost their lives in the line of duty throughout the State of Washington.

A total of 128 names appeared on the black granite monument, starting with David Sires, Oct. 16, 1881, and ending with James Gain, March 2, 1987.

Deputy Chief Bud Heitman of our local police department gave me a pamphlet describing the ceremony and on it were listed all of the names of the 128 officers killed in the line of duty. I found two names on the list that brought back sad memories. The first was Edward Luton, Dec. 15, 1929, of Hamilton. The second was Carl Strom, Apr. 15, 1933, of Sedro-Woolley.

Mr. Luton was the marshall of my home town, Hamilton, when I was a boy growing up there. I knew all the members of his family. Don, the oldest, is now deceased. Doris (Luton) Smith lives in Tacoma, and Bruce lives in California. The youngest, Mary Rea (Luton) Vlahovich, lives here in Sedro-Woolley.

His wife, Mrs. Bess Luton, was a popular lady in Hamilton, as she was the correspondent for the *Courier Times*. Each week we watched to see if our name was in the Hamilton column. This was in the days before radio and television, and the *Courier* was the main source of upriver news.



I recall the circumstances of Mr. Luton's death very well. I was 12 years old at the time and it made a vivid impression on me.

As part of his duties, Mr. Luton attended the weekly Saturday night dance at Tulip Hall.

It is surmised he left the dance hall

after closing hours and accompanied a group to a private home. Apparently something happened there that led to his being murdered. The home was on the edge of town and for some reason his body was transported back towards the center of town and was located the next morning just across from the high school. This was only a block from our home, which was kind of scary to me.

Mr. Strom was the night marshall of Sedro-Woolley. His body was discovered in a small tin building located where the Doorn and Associates building is now, across from the present post office. It was surmised Mr. Strom surprised a robbery attempt of

C.E. Bingham bank, which was located where Shear Delight is now. Evidence was discovered that a look out had been stationed on the second floor of the building and apparently alerted the robbers who were trying to break into the bank.

Neither of the cases were solved as far as apprehending suspects, although there was strong evidence who was involved in the Hamilton crime. Oddly enough, the house where Mr. Luton was supposedly killed burned shortly after his death.

It is nice to know both of these dedicated lawmen are now properly recognized on a fitting memorial.