



Remembering our brothers who have passed from this life

William T. Lane '48

Dates unknown



William T. Lane
Former Greenbelt Police
Chief and longtime Greenbelt
resident William T. "Bill"
Lane, 82, died on May 6,
2014.

Born in Atlanta, Ga., Lane at
an early age moved with his
mother to the Washington,
D.C., area. He attended
Augusta Military Academy in

Virginia. Upon graduation, he served four years with
the U.S. Marine Corps at Camp LeJeune and in the
Caribbean, attaining the rank of sergeant.

Following military service, Lane joined the Takoma
Park, Md., Police Department at age 21. He was a
police officer there for 11 years becoming detective
bureau commander with the rank of detective
sergeant, the third ranking officer in the department.
On July 15, 1964, he became the chief of the
Greenbelt Police Department. At that time there were
only six other full-time officers on the force.

Lane undertook the task of transforming the small-
town police department into a well-educated, well-
trained, well-equipped professional police agency
serving the needs of a rapidly growing, increasingly
diversified city. Upon his retirement 20 years later
on July 1, 1984, the department had grown to a
complement of 30 officers and eight non-uniformed
personnel. Encouraging his officers to undertake

advanced training,
Lane also obtained
a professional
certificate in law
enforcement and
criminal justice from
the International
Academy of
Criminology,
National Association
of Chiefs of Police,
a significant
professional honor.

Besides dealing
with issues

resulting from the growth of the city and size of the
department, as well as its professionalization and
an increase in the area crime rate, Lane and the
department had to deal with sensitive issues arising
from national events taking place, such as the effect
upon nearby communities of rioting occurring in
Washington following the assassinations of Robert
Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and related
demonstrations at the University of Maryland.

In a time of rioting and volatile demonstrations
throughout the nation where police actions often
resulted in increased violence, the Greenbelt
Department was forewarned of three controversial
events to occur in the city: the first time a black
person would swim at the Greenbelt Municipal



Continued on next page

Swimming Pool, the northeast contingent of the Poor People's March on Washington being hosted for lunch by churches in Greenbelt and a mule-train demonstration by Maryland students to be held at the Beltway Plaza.

In each case, Lane arranged for the placement of a strong force of officers nearby in case trouble should occur, but kept police presence at the event minimal so that the police would not unnecessarily become a part of the controversy. All events occurred peacefully without incident.

His retirement took place with a formal Change of Command Ceremony at which his chief's badge was presented to incoming chief Frank Hutson in the presence of the department's membership and officials from Greenbelt, other municipalities, the county and state. Among gifts presented to Lane was a plaque bearing all of the badges he had worn during his 31-year career as a police officer.

Prior to the retirement ceremony, Lane was feted at a farewell dinner at the Greenbelt American Legion where he also received numerous presentations and acclamations from area politicians and police

officials.

In retirement, Lane and his wife continued to reside in Greenbelt, also enjoying a mountain cabin in Virginia. He also was a U.S. Marshal at the Federal Court House in Greenbelt. Lane was a member of the Greenbelt American Legion Post 136, the College Park Moose Lodge and the Marine League of Bowie, of which he once was commander.

Lane is survived by his wife of nearly 59 years, Lois Tipton Lane, his son Edward T. "Eddie" and daughter-in-law Cheryl Ditch. At the funeral service on May 13, the Greenbelt Police Department provided an honor guard while Greenbelt Police Chief James Craze, former City Manager Jim Giese and representatives of the Marine League lauded his services to the community.

At his request he was buried wearing the ceremonial scarlet dress coat of the Marine League. At the interment service there were both a Greenbelt Police Honor Guard and a U.S Marine Corps Honor Guard, the latter presenting his widow with an American flag. Interment was in the Veterans Cemetery at Crownsville, Md.