

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY RISA VETRI FERMAN
DEDICATES FALLEN HERO PLAQUES TO CORPOREAL LEO KOSCELNICK,
TROOPER FRANCIS M. TESSITORE, PATROLMAN ANDREW W. MILLER
AND SERGEANT JOHN M. THOMAS**

Montgomery County District Attorney Risa Vetri Ferman together with Skippack State Police Department and James Binns, Founder of the Fallen Hero Plaque Program, honored Corporal Leo M. Koscelnick, Trooper Francis M. Tessitore, Patrolman Andrew W. Miller and Sergeant John M. Thomas on October 13th, 2009. The ceremony for the Fallen Heroes took place at the Skippack State Police Department in Schwenksville, PA.



Corporal Leo M. Koscelnick made the ultimate sacrifice on August 15th, 1977. Corporal Koscelnick was killed when he was struck by a vehicle while helping a stranded motorist, Mary Fleming of Wayne, Pennsylvania. Corporal Koscelnick and the tow truck operator, James Della, were standing on the side of the Schuylkill Expressway next to the disabled vehicle when another car attempted to illegally pass a vehicle on the right and lost control of his car, striking Trooper Koscelnick and the truck operator, killing them both. The driver, David Sylvester was not injured, but was arrested and charged with homicide by motor vehicle.

Corporal Koscelnick was a member of the Skippack State Police Department for seven and a half years. He also served with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 109th Infantry of the Pennsylvania National Guard. He enlisted in the Pennsylvania State Police on April 9, 1970, and was assigned to Troop K in Philadelphia. Corporal Koscelnick was survived by his wife, Mrs. Constance Koscelnick who was presented with the State Police Cross on January 18th, 1978. Corporal Koscelnick, age thirty three when he passed, had completed seven years and four months as a Pennsylvania State Trooper.

Trooper Francis M. Tessitore made the ultimate sacrifice on August 5th, 1960. On the morning of August 5th, Trooper Tessitore was on patrol and stopped a vehicle on the Turnpike in Chester County. Trooper Tessitore was standing at the rear of the vehicle, in the process of arresting the operator for speeding, when a truck ran off the roadway. It struck both Trooper Tessitore

and the stopped motorist, killing both instantly. The truck was operated by a seventeen year old boy who had fallen asleep at the wheel. He pleaded guilty to the charge of involuntary manslaughter.

Prior to enlisting in the Pennsylvania State Police, Trooper Tessitore served in the US Navy from June 21st, 1949 to March 26th, 1953. He enlisted in the Pennsylvania State Police from Nesquehoning on October 2nd, 1953, and was assigned to Troop B-2, Turnpike Patrol. Trooper Tessitore was twenty-eight years old when he made his sacrifice. He had been with the agency for nearly seven years and was survived by his wife Mrs. Louise M. Tessitore, two daughters, parents, and two brothers. Trooper Tessitore is buried in Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Cemetery, New Columbia, Nesquehoning. He was survived by his wife, Mrs. Louise M. Tessitore, of New Columbus, Nesquehoning, two daughters, parents and two brothers.



Patrolman Andrew W. Miller made his ultimate sacrifice on April 1st, 1928. At 9:30 p.m. on April 1st, while Miller was patrolling through the city of Pottstown, his motorcycle skid on the street car tracks. He was thrown from the motorcycle, fell to the brick street, and was seriously injured. He was taken to A. C. Shute Homeopathic Hospital in Pottstown where he lost his life at 11:55 p.m. that day. Patrolman Miller enlisted with the State Highway Patrol August 8th, 1927, from Galeton, Pennsylvania, and was assigned to Troop A, Harrisburg, serving with them for seven months before losing his life. Patrolman Miller was twenty years old at the time of his sacrifice. He was survived by his parents, Herman and Susan Miller.

Sergeant John M. Thomas made his ultimate sacrifice May 8th, 1927. Sergeant Thomas was a passenger in a patrol vehicle driven by Captain Albert Carlson. The vehicle became involved in a three-car collision on Ridge Pike, just west of Jeffersonville, Montgomery County, throwing Sergeant Thomas from the vehicle and where he suffered extensive injuries. He passed away before

reaching Norristown Hospital. Prior to his employment with the Constabulary, he served thirty years with the US Cavalry and US Marine Corps. He was honorably discharged January 31st, 1927, with the distinguished rank of Sergeant Major. He was employed as a civilian inspector and instructor of small arms at the Constabulary Training School but was soon given enlisted status with the rank of Sergeant, having completed less than two months of service before his sacrifice. Sergeant Thomas was survived by his brother, Mr. H. E. Thomas, of Drumright, Oklahoma.

Approved for release:

Risa Vetri Ferman