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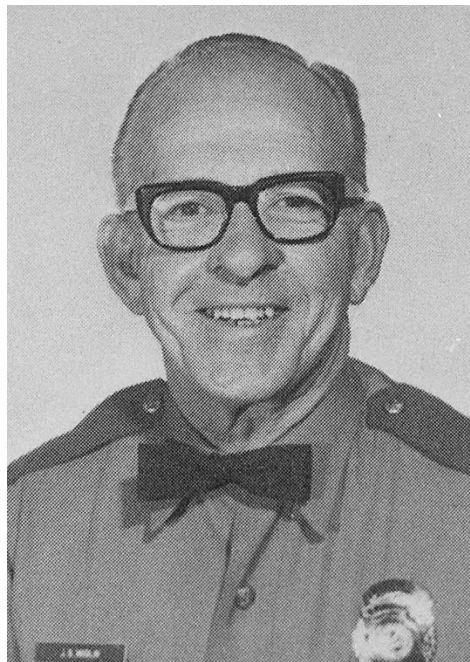
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August 15, 2021

Joseph B. Modlin

Commissioned – December 19, 1969
End of Watch – August 15, 1974



The Washington State Patrol's nineteenth fallen officer, Weight Control Officer Joseph B. Modlin, died after being struck by a logging truck at the Home Valley Weigh Station near Stevenson on August 15, 1974.

Originally from Indiana, Officer Modlin was a jack-of-all-trades with a lifetime of careers including military service, automotive repair, law enforcement and commercial motor vehicle enforcement. A distinguished wartime veteran, he served as a master sergeant in a U.S. Army tank battalion in WWII. Married, with a loving daughter, he also served as a Klickitat County Sherriff's Deputy before joining the Patrol. At 60 years old, he was the oldest member of the Washington State Patrol to ever lose his life in the line of duty.

We remember...

BIO

Joseph B. Modlin was born on May 22, 1914, to Howard and Nellie Modlin in New Castle, Indiana. He was the son of a farmer raised alongside his sister Margaret in Indianapolis, Indiana.

He eventually moved to Detroit, Michigan where he enlisted in the United States Army on June 16, 1941, just six months prior to the beginning of WWII. Modlin served four years three months as a master sergeant in the 738th Tank Battalion in Central Europe during war.

After his military tour, Modlin found himself back in Detroit where he worked for General Motors. Detroit is also where he married the love of his life, Elaina L. Wagner, in 1945. The couple eventually moved to Sunnyside where Modlin spent a decade owning and operating a radiator repair shop. Along the way, he and his wife welcomed a daughter, LouAnne, into the world. The family moved to Goldendale in 1953 where Modlin served as a Klickitat County Sheriff's deputy from 1963 to 1967.

His career with the Washington State Patrol began the following year as a communications officer. He was promoted to weight control officer on December 19, 1969, and assigned to Vancouver.

END OF WATCH

Joseph Modlin was tragically killed on August 15, 1974, at the Home Valley Weigh Station on state Route 14 east of Stevenson. The officer was struck by a logging truck trailer while he was walking toward a second vehicle. He was 60 years old and had served six years with the patrol at the time of his death

The Ridgefield Port of Entry was dedicated to Weight Control Officer Modlin in January of 2020. A permanent memorial marker greets traffic coming into the state Officer Modlin had served so well. His wife, Elaine, passed away a few months later in July of 2020 and he is now survived by many family and friends who remember him fondly.

The Washington State Patrol remembers Weight Control Officer Joseph Modlin not only for his line-of-duty death but for his path-of-duty life. Part of the 'greatest generation,' he was a farm boy who joined the army with world war on the horizon. He led the men and machines of battle in wartime and worked on the machines of industry, transportation and commerce in peacetime before a final career in law enforcement. A family man, a patriot, a business man, a tradesman, a public servant, and a friend, he made a difference in his family, state, nation and world. We remember...

Washington State Weight Control Officer Joseph B. Modlin

End of Watch – August 15, 1974

Gone But Never Forgotten

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