

Healdton Officer and Child Killed in Smashup

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Ardmore, Oklahoma
Tuesday, May 28, 1985

By Diana Baldwin, Staff Writer

HEALDTON - A Healdton police officer and an 11 year old boy were killed Monday night when the boy's father pulled his pickup into the path of the officer, who was in pursuit of a motorcycle.

Killed were Officer Lowery Doug Durlington, 39, a criminal investigator for the Healdton Police Department, and Alan Addington, Healdton.

The boy's parents, Jackie Ray Addington, 33, and Vicky Ann Addington, 30, were critically injured in the 7:59 p.m. accident south of here on state Highway 76.

The older Addington, driver of the pickup, suffered multiple injuries and was airlifted to St. Anthony's Hospital in Oklahoma City. He was in critical condition in the intensive care unit late Tuesday morning.

Mrs. Addington, who also suffered multiple injuries, was airlifted to University Hospital in Oklahoma City. The woman, who was thrown from the wreckage, was reportedly in critical condition in the intensive care unit late Tuesday morning.

Scott Malowney, Carter County Medical Examiner, said he believed Durlington died from injuries he received when his chest was smashed by the steering wheel.

He was pinned in the wrecked patrol car for approximately 15 minutes.

David Aycox, a Healdton ambulance attendant, said Durlington had faint pulse when they arrived. "He was still behind the wheel," said Aycox. "We just started breaking the steering wheel to free him."

Malowney said several attempts to resuscitate the young boy failed. He is believed to have died from massive trauma, the doctor said.

Michael L. Edwards, 33, Healdton, who is believed to have been driving the motorcycle, was taken into custody by Healdton, Wilson, and Lone Grove police officers near Dillard Road about 30 minutes after the accident.

The motorcycle reportedly had some type of mechanical problem.

Edwards has been booked into the Carter County Jail on drunken driving complaint. Charges are pending in Carter County District Court.

Oklahoma Highway Patrol Trooper Terry Dickson, the investigating officer, said a blood sample was taken from Edwards at the Healdton hospital and will be sent to the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation to test for the alcohol content.

"There was an odor of alcohol about the man," Dickson said.

The accident is still under investigation and other charges may be pending.

Dickson said he plans to take the information to Carter County District Attorney Ron Worthen today.

Randy Thomas and Ernest Tonkinson, both of Duncan, have identified the motorcycle and the driver as the one Durlington was pursuing, Dickson said.

The witnesses told investigators the motorcyclist had been behind them revving up his motor, running up on their bumper and passing on the right at a high rate of speed.

The pursuit began on Main Street in Healdton, just minutes before the accident. Durlington was on another traffic stop when the motorcycle passed, Dickson said.

The last radio contact with Durlington was at 7:59 p.m. when he asked for another officer's assistance.

"I am leaving the city limits," Durlington is recorded on the log as telling the dispatcher. "This motorcycle is flat moving."

Edwards told the trooper he had been having trouble with the motorcycle throttle and the accident happened before he came by.

Dickson said the officer was southbound on the highway, with his siren on, when Addington's pickup, which was westbound on a county road, went through the intersection and hit the gravel on the other side of the roadway.

The pickup skidded around and went back through the intersection, colliding with the patrol car, which was traveling at a high rate of speed, the trooper said.

Durlington's car hit the pickup on the left side. Durlington's car left 43 feet of skid marks prior to impact and then continued another 93 feet after impact, Dickson said.

The pickup skidded for 158 feet, overturned on its side, the trooper said.

Bill Daniels and his wife, Joanna, both of Healdton, who witnessed the accident, said they heard the sirens and saw the pickup spin around in front of the police car.

"The pickup went in the air for about 15 or 20 feet," Daniels said. "Everything went flying in the air."

Daniels, who was eastbound on a lease road, said he tried to use the police radio to get help, but it was dead. His wife, after several attempts, got through to Ardmore police on a mobile telephone.

"There wasn't much we could do until the ambulance got here," Daniels said. "They all looked like they were hurt pretty bad."

Dickson was assisted by OHP Lt. Terry Hackworth, Carter County sheriff's deputies, Healdton police and fire officials and the Lone Grove rescue unit.

Smith Funeral Home, Tishomingo, is handling the services.

Officers lose "good friend" in Durlington

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HEALDTON - Healdton Police Chief Bobby Spradling and Assistant Chief Johnny Beshirs didn't just lose a fellow officer Monday night, they also lost a good friend.

Doug Durlington, who had been with the five-man Healdton Police Department for six months as a criminal investigator, was killed when his patrol car collided with a pickup during a pursuit of a motorcycle.

Durlington is believed to be the first Healdton police officer killed in the line of duty.

The black bands over their badges today only hint at the deep feelings members of this Carter County police department are experiencing.

The trio not only worked at the Healdton Police Department together, but also spent time as a team at the Johnston County Sheriff's Department under Sheriff Bud Reed.

"He was a real good officer and close friend," said Spradling, who had known Durlington for 12 years. "It is big loss to the department and to everybody."

"He was a very good officer," said Beshirs, who went to school with Durlington in Johnston County. "He has cleared up a lot of burglaries since he had been here."

"He put all he had into it," said former Johnston County Sheriff Bud Reed. "He took the job seriously."

"He was a good criminal investigator. He would get on a case and follow it all the way through. He did a good job."

Reed, who is now with Oklahoma Lake Patrol at Keystone, gave Durington his first law enforcement job at the Johnston County Sheriff's Department in 1977.

"Doug had been living in Oklahoma City and one day he showed up wanting a job," Reed said. "He went to work for me and went through basic police school."

"He did a good job and was a good deputy. He was pretty well thought of in Tishomingo."

Spradling, Beshirs, and Durington worked together for Reed for three years. Six months ago the trio once again joined forces.

Most of Southern Oklahomans remember Durington for his handlebar mustache and he would just laugh and go on," Spradling said.

When Durington was not working in law enforcement, he helped his brother, Bobby, in the family's upholstery business in Tishomingo.

Durington, who commuted from Tishomingo to Healdton, also was a civil employee at Tinker Field before choosing a career in law enforcement.

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Obituaries

Lowery Douglas Durington

TISHOMINGO - Services for Lowery Douglas "Doug" Durington, 39, will be at 2 p.m. Wednesday at the First Baptist Church. Rev. Floyd Westfall and T. Bone King will officiate with interment in Tishomingo Cemetery.

Born April 6, 1947, in Tishomingo, Durington died May 27 in Healdton.

Reared in Tishomingo, he attended Murray State College, Murows Law Enforcement School and was certified a police officer in 1970. He was an Vietnam Army veteran and a police officer for the Healdton Police Department. He married Georgia Kline Dec. 19, 1970, in Oklahoma City, and was a Baptist.

Survivors include his wife, of the home; two sons, Keith, of Allen, Texas, Dan Stevenson, Tishomingo; two daughters, Kimberly Durlington, also Allen, Kim Kunkel, Oklahoma City; two brothers, Bobby, Tishomingo, Billy, Moore; a sister, Betty Durlington, Tishomingo; and a grandchild.

Smith Funeral Home will direct services.