

The Last Goodbyes of the 5 Who Were Shot Down

By FRANK J. PRIAL

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A dedicated policeman, a survivor of the Italian campaign in World War II, a former high school football star, a man who worked all his life for an elusive goal—*independence*—and a young immigrant from India: they bade loved ones goodbye Monday morning and went off to work. None returned.

Hours later, they all were dead, shot to death by Frederick W. (Fritz) Cowan, a disgruntled employee at a New Rochelle warehouse where all of the victims except the policeman worked.

Mr. Cowan, a professed hater of Jews, blacks and policemen, had been suspended for disciplinary reasons two weeks earlier. The only name he mentioned as he entered the Neptune World Wide Moving Company at 55 Weyman Avenue with guns blazing was that of Norman Bing, the dispatcher who suspended him.

Mr. Bing, who eluded his pursuer, is Jewish. Three of those who were slain were black and one was a dark-skinned Indian; the policeman was white. Five other men, three of them white, were injured by Mr. Cowan's gunfire.

Allen McLeod

Allen McLeod's whole life was police work. He served as a correction officer at the Westchester County Prison in Valhalla before becoming a police officer in New Rochelle six years ago.

"He was a dedicated police officer," said Andrew Forti, a correction officer and close friend. "If he was sick you had to send him home. Even if it wasn't his sector, he would have been the first one in. He didn't hesitate. He jumped out of his car, and he walked right into it."

Officer McLeod was born in Norwalk, Conn., 32 years ago and grew up in White Plains. He, his wife, Donna, and their two sons, Allen Jr., 6 years old, and Chris, one and a half, lived at 17 Addison Street in Larchmont, an apartment building where he worked as a superintendent to supplement his income.

At the apartment yesterday, Mr. McLeod's four departmental citations were hung with pride on the wall, the most recent of them dated only three weeks ago. His highest award, a citation for valor, came on Sept. 8, 1971, when, singlehandedly, he took a rifle from a man who had unsuccessfully tried to rob a bank and was firing the gun in the air on Main Street in New Rochelle.

Mrs. McLeod was too grief-stricken to talk. But her brother, Ronald F. Schuler, told of how 6-year-old Allen had reacted to the news of his father's death. "One minute he's crying and the next minute he's playing," Mr. Schuler said. "He saw his father's boots outside the front door and asked: 'How come my father's boots are still there if my father is gone?'"

Frederick J. Holmes

Frederick J. Holmes, 55, a tractor-trailer driver for Neptune for "at least a dozen years," according to a friend, lived a few miles from the warehouse, at 871 East 219th Street in the Bronx.

Divorced, he lived in a private home owned by his sister, Sarah Batts. Mr. Holmes's former wife and a son live in Brooklyn. A married daughter, Fredericka Chatelain, also lives in Brooklyn with her 10-year-old son.

A skilled mechanic, Mr. Holmes divided his spare time between puttering with his car and taking his grandson fishing and on picnics. He was born in Batesburg, S.C., the eldest of five children. He moved north about 20 years ago after serving in the Army in Europe in World War II. Another brother was killed in a ship explosion in California during that war.

His sisters, who gathered at the house on 219th Street yesterday, described their brother as a quiet, family man. He never discussed the people with whom he worked, they said. So they had never heard of Fred Cowan until they were told that he had killed their brother.

Joseph E. Hicks

Joseph E. Hicks, 59, of 11 Park Avenue, Mount Vernon, had worked for Neptune

at least 25 years, first as a long-haul truck driver and more recently as a helper and packer at the New Rochelle warehouse.

A native of Norfolk, Va., where he starred on the football field for St. Joseph's High School, he moved north in 1946. He and his family lived in New Rochelle until 1959, when they moved to Mount Vernon. At his death he was living with his wife, Grenada, and their daughter, Yvonne, 38, in Westchester Plaza, a modern apartment complex near downtown Mount Vernon.

One son, Edward, is advertising manager for a black-oriented publication in Manhattan. Another son, Joseph A., lives in Chatham, Va. Mr. Hicks also leaves five grandchildren.

Mrs. Hicks, who said she had met her husband at a dance after a football game in Norfolk, said he had never given up his love for the sport.

"He loved to read and watch television," she said, "especially the football games." Mrs. Hicks is a school-crossing guard in Mount Vernon.

The family said Mr. Hicks had traveled all over the country and as far as Mexico as a truck driver. "He loved his work," said his son Edward, "and it kind of took something out of him when he couldn't go out on the road any more."

The Hickses said they did not know why he had given up his driving job, because he remained in good health until his death. One fellow worker said, however, that the long hours behind the wheel had begun to take their toll and that Mr. Hicks had asked to be relieved of driving.

James Greene

James Greene, of 616 East Lincoln Avenue, Mount Vernon, had worked at Neptune for about six years, but only intermittently in the last three months, according to his sister, Ada Gill, of 206 10th Avenue in a section of Mount Vernon that is predominantly black.

On the days when the 44-year-old truck driver was not working, he would have a drink at the Diamond Bar and Grill on West Third Street, stop in at the Hawks Social Club down the block or visit Mrs. Gill.

"He came by last Sunday and sat around and talked and had some banana pudding," she said. He liked his job and was not bitter about the infrequent work. He was glad to be going in again the following day, Mrs. Gill said.

Along West Third Street, residents could not remember the victim as James Greene. "Oh, you mean Peewee," said Basil Campbell, owner of the Delta Taxicab Company. "Everyone called him Pee-

wee. Because he was small." The two men had once driven cabs for the same company.

James Greene, as the other victims of Fred Cowan's rage, had gone to Westchester to seek a better life. It was a goal that may have eluded him. "He used to say that he wanted us to have what he wasn't able to have when he was coming up—an education, a decent place to live, to live comfortably and not to have to ask anyone for anything," said his daughter, Gladys Miller, 24.

"He came up here [from North Carolina] right after I was born," Mrs. Miller said. "We came up later, and he's been working ever since, but it was hard."

For the last two years, Mr. Greene, a widower, had been supporting his daughter's three small children. It was his way, Mrs. Miller said, of giving her a chance to be "independent."

Pariyarthu Varghese

Pariyarthu Varghese was born 32 years ago—the same year as Allen McLeod—but some 8,000 miles away in southern India. He came to this country as a skilled electrician only four months ago. The job at Neptune was his first and he had had it only two weeks when he was slain.

"He never got to enjoy his first paycheck," a friend said bitterly. Friends in the Indian community gathered from as far as Philadelphia and Canada yesterday at the Varghese apartment at 80 Guion Place in New Rochelle.

They came to pay their respects and to comfort his wife, Annammen, a nurse at New Rochelle Hospital, where her husband's body was first taken. "She got a call from a staff member at the hospital," a friend, Thomas George, said. "She was told only that an Indian man had been admitted. She went down and confirmed that it was her husband."

Mr. Varghese's body was scheduled to be flown back to India today accompanied by his wife, who had preceded him to this country from India. "She doesn't know now if she will come back to this country or not," a friend said. He added that she was two and a half months' pregnant.

Police and Firemen Strike in Ohio

WARREN, Ohio, Feb. 15 (AP)—The 110-member police force joined a firemen's strike today in a long-standing pay dispute, leaving this northeastern Ohio city of 60,000 virtually without fire or crime protection. The Warren Police Association struck in midafternoon over pay demands. The 75 firemen walked out last night.