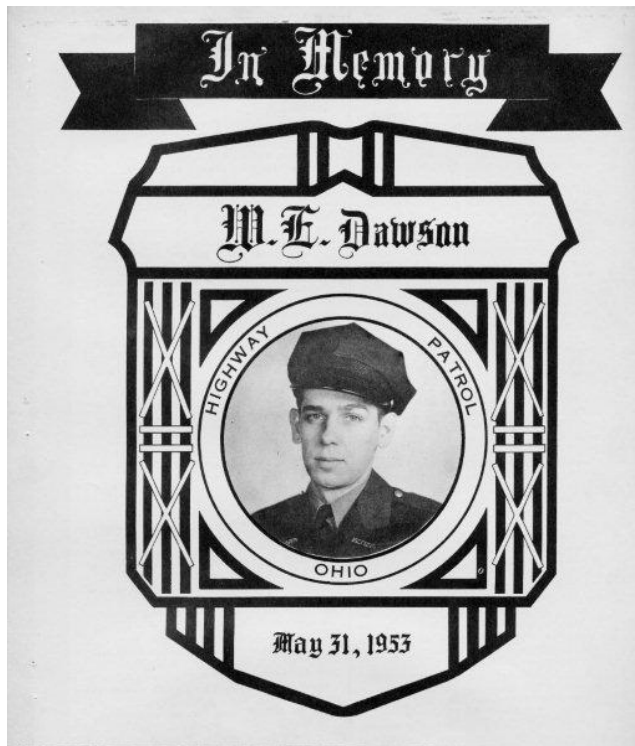


Officer Walter E. Dawson - W8SGN *1917-1953* Each Memorial Day weekend Walt (Pete) is on my mind. To be truthful about it, many times during the year. Pete expired in a crash on duty just north of my home location at the intersection of Ohio Highway 534 and US 422 in 1953.



Pete was a Ohio State Highway Patrol Radio Officer and it was a busy Memorial Day weekend. He had just arrived here from assignment and promotion from our Cambridge D-7 Headquarters. A father for the third time just two weeks prior to his fatal accident. His wife and children remained in Cambridge as they had not had the opportunity to relocate at the new assignment here in the busy Cleveland-Youngstown area.

Walter (Pete) a Cambridge, Ohio native, born in 1917 to Elza (Coal Miner) and Florence Conner Dawson. Pete as a youngster was a good student and became interested in electronics and amateur radio. Described as a jovial guy and loved to make friends. Dawson was described, never too tired or too busy to help anyone. Pete was hired in 1941 as a Ohio State Highway Patrol Radio Officer.

In 2002 your author obtained a copy of the accident report of 1953 and learned Chief Dawson was the second officer to die in less than 4 weeks at the Warren Ohio State Highway Patrol Headquarters, in traffic related accidents.

Your author says “This is just more than a memory for me as I was also stationed here at Warren for the last half of my career knowing full well the dangerous situation of the driving conditions. There is the big city here and then almost immediately the wide open spaces, the changes in driving situations are immediate and caution has to be adhered to.

Dawson was repairing a patrol car radio along side the berm of highway US422 that busy Memorial Day weekend in 1953. He along with the duty officer observed and a violator speed westbound on US422. There was a pursuit and a few moments later at Hwy 534 a crash with a vehicle northbound that didn't stop for red light and siren. The crash ejected both Officers from the vehicle, killing Dawson. The trooper driver survived the crash. The person hitting the cruiser was not injured.

Pete left behind wife Eva, 3 children and two brothers. Pete's funeral was held at deceased's home. Many fellow officers and radio people attended. It was a sad day that a man so young with a new family should go so early in life. “ It was an endless procession, W8CL Clancy Waller said.”

In chatting with the son of retired Chief Operator Harold Rusk, Bob Rusk said, “Dad and Pete were great friends, dad thought the world of Pete and his passing was a personal blow for everyone to accept.” Should anyone have a Pete Dawson QSL card, please contact your author. Another Memorial Day comes near, a Salute to W8SGN and his family is in order! W8SU 2008