

# History of The Mountainside Police Department

By: Allan Attanasio

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On June 5, 1934, the Borough of Mountainside, New Jersey appointed its' first full time paid police officer. Prior to this date, volunteer Chief Marshals, Regular Marshals, Special Marshals and Constables who were appointed yearly by the Borough Council provided police protection.



Constables Badge Circa 1895

The first elected Constable was James O'Connor in 1895. He served for one year and was replaced by Constables Jacob Holms and Adam Huffman in 1896. George Boyton was the next Chief Marshal who served in that position until 1924. He was replaced by, Eugene Kachelreiss who remained through the end of 1927. Robert McCllum and Louis Heckel were appointed in 1928 and 1930. From 1931 to 1933 Edward Hamilton was the Chief Marshal and Charles Honecker was the Deputy Chief Marshal. Charles Honecker was promoted to Chief Marshal in 1933.



Mountainside Volunteer Marshals 1931  
Edward Menerth, Herman Nolte, Fred Schweitzer, Charles Honecker  
Seated: Joseph Lyding and Edward Hamilton

On April 2, 1934, at the Borough Council meeting, Councilman Benninger read a letter from Chief Marshal Honecker requesting that the council establish a full time Police Department in the Borough. The letter cited an increased workload due to a large volume of traffic as a result of the new highway extension being opened. Mr. Honecker recommended a salary of \$117.00 a month for ten hours of daily duty six days a week. He would also be on-call twenty-four hours a day without extra pay. The letter was referred to the police committee with a request for a report at a later meeting.

During the May 1934 Borough Council meeting, a resolution titled “An Ordinance To Establish, Maintain, Regulate And Control A Police Department In The Borough Of Mountainside” was read by Councilman Benninger. Two residents, Mr. Winckler and Mr. Donovan, who both felt that, the financial condition of the borough at the time did not warrant the establishment of a paid police department, expressed objections to the resolution. Mr. Winckler also stated that ample protection was being given to the borough by the State Police who at the time were stationed in Scotch Plains. The resolution was then voted on by the Borough Council and was unanimously adopted.

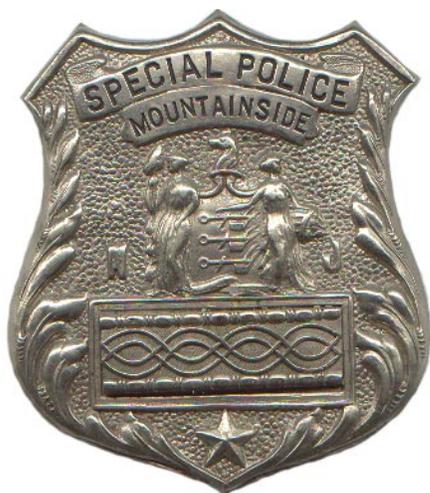
*“Be it resolved by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Mountainside, that an ordinance entitled Ordinance #72 to establish, maintain, regulate and control a Police Department in the Borough of Mountainside, to define the manner of appointment and removal of its members, their duties and compensation be adopted and advertised as required by statute.”*

As a result of this ordinance being adopted, the Mayor and Council then terminated the positions of Chief Marshal, Regular Marshal, Special Marshal and Constable as of twelve o’clock midnight on June 4, 1934 as there would be no further need for them.

The Mayor then announced the appointment of Charles Honecker as the first Chief of Police in the Borough of Mountainside. Mr. Honecker’s position as Chief became effective on June 5, 1934 at an annual salary of \$1,404.00



Chief Charles Honecker  
1934 – 1958



The Mayor also announced the appointments of Fred Lyding, Herman Nolte, Edward Menerth, Fred Roeder, Frank Salzer, Cornelius Clark, Arnold Palmer, Charles Shomo and James Howard as Special Police Officers. The Special Officers were appointed until January 1, 1935 at which time they could be reassigned yearly. They were subject to call for active duty by the Chief of Police or the Chairman of the Police Committee. The Special Officers received compensation in the sum of forty cents an hour for each hour of active duty.

Chief Honecker served as the only full time member of the department until 1936 when Fred Roeder was appointed as a Patrolman. The next full time Patrolmen to be appointed were Christian Fritz in 1937, Frank Salzer in 1939 and Harry Boyton in 1943.

#### **MOUNTAINSIDE POLICE DEPARTMENT 1937**

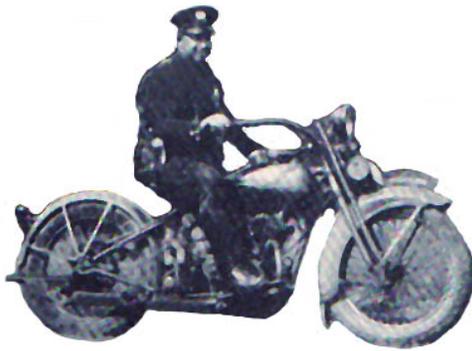


L to R: Rear Row Special Officer Harry Boyton, Special Officer Charles Herrick, Patrolman Christian Fritz, Special Officer Frank Salzer, Special Officer Arnold Palmer.  
Front Row: Special Officer Edward Menerth, Special Officer John Doble, Chief of Police Charles Honecker, Patrolman Fred Roeder, Special Officer James Howard.

Early patrols of the Borough were made on the department's 1925 Harley Davidson police motorcycle and a 1933 Plymouth 2 door coupe. The 1933 Plymouth was replaced in 1934 with a Chevrolet 2 door coupe. Emergency lighting on these early patrol cars consisted of a grill mounted red flashing light, a rear bumper red flashing light and a window post spotlight. Motorcycle patrols were discontinued in 1939.



Chief Marshal Eugene Kachelreiss on the departments 1925 motorcycle



Patrolman Fred Roeder on motorcycle patrol.



Mountainside patrol car parked in front of Ranch 29. 1939

Radio equipment was non-existent in these vehicles. Officers on patrol were required to make frequent passes by Police Headquarters to watch for a pole mounted red light which would be turned on if there was an emergency call waiting to be answered. When the light was lit, the officer had to come into headquarters to receive the information from the desk officer, and then respond to the call. When no desk officer was on duty, the calls were transferred to the Scotch Plains Police Department who were able to turn on the light. The officer then had to call the Scotch Plains Police by telephone to receive the information.

The first radio equipment to be installed in the department's patrol car came in 1941, enabling the officer on patrol to be in direct contact with the desk officer. In the absence of a desk officer, radio communication was made with the Scotch Plains Police who utilized the same radio frequency as the Mountainside Police. A Teletype was installed in Police Headquarters on March 3, 1944, which allowed statewide crime information to be received directly. Prior to this date, the information was relayed to Mountainside by Scotch Plains who had a Teletype.

Special and Reserve Police assisted the regular members of the Police Department between the years of 1934 and 1989. From 1934 to 1941, the Borough Council appointed Special Police to augment the four-member department as needed. In 1941, as part of the Mountainside Defense Council, Chief Honecker established the Mountainside Police Reserve. The first members of the Police Reserve were: Captain George Force, Lieutenant C.B. Murphy, Robert Seibenmorgan, Fred Revaz, Charles Fritz, Frank Chapot, Bernard Buck, M. Chattin, M. Wright, Charles Thorn and Ralph Dietz. The Special and Reserve Officers received their training at the Westfield Adult School for Police Reserves and in later years at the Union County Police Academy at Union College in Cranford. The Special and Reserve Police were required to report to all police and fire emergencies. They were also required to ride alternately, for two hours each Sunday with the on duty Patrolman.



Breast badges worn by the Police Reserve



Left to right Reserve Officer Rodney E. Harris, Reserve Sergeant John Dorio 1950's.  
Mountainside's last Special Officer Robert Hornfisher 1989

The department formed its first Detective Bureau in 1964 when the Borough Council, under the advice of Police Chief Christian Fritz and Police Commissioner Henry P. Wester, promoted Sergeant James Herrick to Detective Sergeant. The Commissioner said that the establishment of a Detective Bureau was an important step in the improvement of police protection and crime prevention. Prior to this date, the patrolmen conducted all follow-up investigations. Jerome Rice was promoted to Detective in 1967 and then Detective Sergeant in 1968, with Herrick being promoted to Detective Lieutenant. In 1969 Sergeant Walter Betyeman was promoted to Detective Sergeant. In 1972 Patrolman Steven Semancik was promoted to Detective. Detective Semancik was also assigned as the department's first juvenile officer.

The current Detective Bureau is responsible for all criminal investigations, maintaining evidence, maintaining criminal files, fingerprinting, conducting background investigations on police applicants and firearms permit applicants. The detectives are members of the Union County Investigators Association, New Jersey Narcotic Enforcement Officers Association, the Union County Juvenile Officers Association and the Union County Terrorism Task Force.



First Chief's badge 1934

Since 1934, the position of Chief of Police has been held by seven of the department's members. First was Charles Honecker who served from 1934 to 1958. Second was Christian Fritz who served from 1958 to 1970. Third was Edward Mullin who served from 1970 to 1983. Fourth was William Alder who served from 1983 to 1998. Fifth was James Debbie Jr. who served from 1998 to 2014. Sixth was Richard Osieja who served from January 18, 2015 to January 25, 2015. Currently the department is under the direction of Chief Allan Attanasio who was promoted on February 17, 2015.

## Police Chiefs of the Borough of Mountainside



Charles Honecker



Christian Fritz



Edward Mullin



William Alder



James Debbie



Richard Osieja



Allan Attanasio



Motor vehicle accident in front of Somerset Bus Co. 1938

From the early years of a lightly traveled highway with no center divider where left turns could be made to today's busy limited access highway, Route 22 (then Route 29) keeps the Mountainside Police active with more than its share of violations, motor vehicle accidents and criminal activity. In response to this activity, the department has created several different units as well as enforcement programs.

Officers of the Mountainside Police Department have been assigned to the Union County Arson Task Force, the joint Union & Essex County Auto Theft Task Force, the Union County Narcotic Strike Force, the Union County High Tech Computer Crimes Task Force and the Union County Emergency Response Team (SWAT) and the Union County A.B.C. Task Force. Within the borough, the department maintains a Major Accident Investigation Team, a Drug Abuse Resistance Education program, a School Resource Officer assigned to the public schools, several Firearms Instructors, a Homeland Security Liaison Officer and a Motorcycle Squad.



Left to right Officer Richard Antonacci and Sergeant Allan Attanasio

The New Jersey Policemen's Benevolent Association, Local #126, represents the membership of the Mountainside Police Department. Early members of the department were members of Local #87, which was comprised of officers from Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Mountainside, Watchung and South Plainfield. As the size of the departments grew, they began forming their own locals. This resulted in Mountainside and South Plainfield forming Local #100 of which Patrolman James Herrick was President. On January 31, 1957 the Policemen's Benevolent Association creating Local #126 granted Mountainside Police a charter. The first executive board of the new local was President Charles Doyle, Vice President Blair Murphy, Recording Secretary Edward Honecker, Treasurer Edward Mullin, Financial Treasurer William Lenehan, Sergeant-At-Arms Harry Boyton and State Delegate Charles Doyle.



**NEW MOUNTAINSIDE PBA LOCAL**—Patrolman Charles Doyle (second from left) receives charter from James Vigilente, fourth vice president of the New Jersey PBA, at last night's organization of the PBA Local 126 in The

Tower Restaurant, Mountainside. Left to right are Police Committee Chairman William A. Heine, Mr. Doyle, Mr. Vigilente and Patrolman James E. Herrick, former president of the Mountainside-South Plainfield PBA Local 100. (E. T. Wiggins Photo)



The P.B.A. represents its' members during contract and labor negotiations. It also sponsors community programs such as Little League Baseball, the Police Athletic League, and the Special Olympics. It presents yearly math and science awards for students of Deerfield School. It also recognizes citizens who assist its members in the performance of their duties and assists its members and their families in times of need. Over the years, members of the local have formed sporting teams competing in the Union County Police Revolver League, Union County Police Softball League and the Union County Police Bowling League.

Target Practice at Heckel's Farm on Summit Road 1950's



L to R: Christian Fritz, Charles Honecker, William Lenehan, Edward Mullin, Charles Doyle, unidentified Special Patrolman



James E. Herrick 1950's



L to R: Jerome Rice, Fredrick Ahlholm, Steven Semancik, Joseph Mazur and Edward Hafeken



Back Row: James Urban  
 Second Row: Michael Jackson, Kevin Betyeman,  
 Allan Attanasio, John Philippakos, Ken Capobianco  
 Front Skip Kutsop



Union County P.B.A. Softball League Champs  
 Mountainside P.B.A. members left to right Jeff Stinner, Richard Latargia,  
 Andy Huber and Michael Jackson

**Patrol Cars of the Mountainside Police Department**



1939



1942



1952



1957



1962



1965



1966



1972



1973



1990



1991



1993



1998 Green & Gold Stripes



Changed To Blue & Gold Stripes The Same Year



2001 Harley Davidson Road King



1999 BMW



2003 Harley Davidson Road King



2003 Dodge Ram



2007 Dodge Durango



2012 Ford Interceptor SUV

## Police Headquarters



Mountainside's First Police Headquarters



Mountainside's Second police Headquarters



Mountainside's Third Police Headquarters (Center Building) 1996-Present

The recording of the history of any organization is a never-ending task. As with any police department, new events occur daily. New officers, vehicles and equipment replace the old. Through the efforts of the past and present members of the Mountainside Police Department, families and friends this history could be developed. Our members are always looking to add to this history and would request that anyone with information or photographs to please contact us. Our sincere thanks goes out to all who provided the information contained within this record.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1895** The Borough of Mountainside is established separating from the Town of Westfield.
- 1895** James O'Connor becomes Mountainside's first elected constable.
- 1896** Jacob Holmes & Adam Huffman become constables.
- 1897-1924** George Boyton serves as Chief Marshal.
- 1924-1927** Eugene Kachelreiss becomes Chief Marshal. Between these years Mountainside starts its first motorcycle patrol.
- 1928-1929** Robert McCullum is appointed as Chief Marshal.
- 1930** Louis Heckel is appointed as Chief Marshal. Serving this year, as Marshals were Charles Honecker, Joseph Lyding, Edward Menerth, Herman Nolte and Fred Schweitzer.
- 1931-1932** Edward Hamilton serves as Chief Marshal and Charles Honecker serves as Deputy Chief Marshal.
- 1933** Charles Honecker takes over as the Chief Marshal.
- 1934** Borough Council passes an ordinance creating a paid police department and appoints Charles Honecker as the first Police Chief at a salary of \$1,404.00 per year. The positions of Chief Marshal, Marshal, Special Marshal and Constable are terminated. The position of Special Police Officer is established and Fred Lyding, Herman Nolte, Edward Menerth, Fred Roeder, Frank Salzer, Cornelius Clark, Arnold Palmer, Charles Shomo & James Howard are appointed at a sum of 40 cents an hour for each hour of active duty.
- 1936** Fred Roeder is appointed as a full time Patrolman.
- 1937** Christian Fritz is appointed as the third full time member of the department.
- 1939** Frank Salzer is appointed to the fourth full time position.
- 1941** Chief Honecker establishes the Mountainside Police Reserves as part of the Mountainside Defense Council. The first members of the police reserves were Captain George Force, Lieutenant C. B. Murphy, Robert Seibenmorgan, Fred Revaz, Charles Fritz, Frank Chapot, Bernard Buck, M. Chattin, M. Wright, Charles Thorn & Ralph Dietz.
- 1941** The first radio equipment is installed in the department's patrol car.
- 1943** C. B. Murphy is appointed Captain of the police reserves.
- 1943** Harry Boyton is appointed as a full time Patrolman.
- 1944** A Teletype is installed at police headquarters allowing crime information to be received directly.
- 1956** The N.J. Policemen's Benevolent Association grants Mountainside Police a charter establishing local #126. The first executive board of the local consisted of: Charles Doyle-President, Blair Murphy-Vice President, Edward Honecker-Recording Secretary, Edward Mullin-Treasurer, William Lenehan-Financial Treasurer, Harry Boyton-Sergeant at Arms and Charles Doyle-State Delegate.
- 1958** Christian Fritz is appointed as the second Chief of Police.

- 1964** The Detective Bureau is established with Sergeant James Herrick being promoted to Detective Sergeant.
- 1967** Mountainside officers join forces with other municipal, county and state officers in quelling the Plainfield Riots.
- 1968** Mountainside assigns officers to the newly formed Union County Police Tactical Force. The Tactical Force was disbanded in the 1980's.
- 1970** Edward Mullin is appointed as the third Chief of Police.
- 1970** Chief Edward Mullin changes the uniform to French Blue blouse coat, Navy Blue pants with a Gold stripe and a French Blue Pershing Hat. In winter months the blouse coat was replaced with a Black leather jacket.
- 1971** Detective Steve Semancik is assigned as the department's first juvenile officer.
- 1980** The Mountainside Honorary PBA establishes an Officer of The Year award program.
- 1983** William Alder is appointed as the fourth Chief of Police.
- 1987** Mountainside officers join forces with other municipal and county officers to combat the growing auto theft rate by being assigned to the Essex/Union County Auto Theft Task Force.
- 1989** Mountainside appoints its first female police officer, Dorothy Sullivan.
- 1990** The patrol division began working four twelve-hour days with four days off.
- 1991** Chief Alder establishes a seven member Major Accident Investigation Team assigning Lt John Olock, Sgt. Richard Osieja, Cpl. Scot Worswick, Det. Steve Semancik, P.O. Allan Attanasio, and P.O. Ken Capobianco as its first members.
- 1992** Sgt. John Olock and Cpl. Scot Worswick establish a Drug Abuse Resistance Education program at Deerfield School.
- 1992** The department discontinued the use of police call boxes. All of the telephones were removed from the utility poles throughout the borough.
- 1994** Union County Re-Establishes at county wide tactical team named UCERT (Union County Emergency Response Team). Mountainside assigns Cpl. Thomas McCartney, Cpl. James Doherty & Det. Donald Amberg.
- 1994** Cpl. Andrew Sullivan receives training as a D.A.R.E. instructor.
- 1995** Mountainside becomes the first department in Union County to install a mobile video recording system in two patrol cars.
- 1996** Mountainsides third Police Headquarters is dedicated.
- 1997** JMK BMW dealership of Springfield donates two mountain bicycles to the department.
- 1998** James Debbie is appointed as the fifth Chief of Police.
- 1998** Sergeant Allan Attanasio is assigned to the Union County Arson Task Force.
- 1998** A suspect wanted in a Maryland murder as well as the shooting of two Plainfield NJ police officers was chased by Officer Andrew Sullivan and later shot to death by officers after refusing to surrender at a road block on Route 22.
- 1999** P.O. Andrew Huber receives training as a D.A.R.E. instructor.

- 1999** P.O. Donald Amberg is assigned as a S.W.A.T. team member within the U.C.E.R.T. team.
- 2000** Chief Debbie re-establishes motorcycle patrols appointing Lieutenant Todd Turner and Sergeant Allan Attanasio as motorcycle officers
- 2000** P.O. Andrew Huber is assigned as the juvenile officer.
- 2001** Chief James Debbie, Sgt. Allan Attanasio, Sgt. Andrew Sullivan, Det. Cpl. Ken Capobianco, Cpl. Richard Latargia, P.O. Donald Amberg, P.O. Thomas Norton, P.O. Steve DeVito, P.O. John Philippakos, and P.O. Jeffrey Stinner assist New York City and NY / NJ Port Authority Police at the site of the World Trade Center terrorist attacks.
- 2001** B.M.W. of North America donates a second motorcycle to the department. Officers Richard Antonacci was added to the motorcycle squad.
- 2001** Public Service Electric and Gas Company donates a van which is refurbished by Sevell's Auto Body as a D.A.R.E. vehicle.
- 2002** Detective Corporal Ken Capobianco is assigned to the Union County Prosecutor's Computer Crimes Task Force.
- 2002** Detective Jackson is assigned to the Union County Counter Terrorism Task Force.
- 2002** An inkless computer scanning fingerprint system is installed at Police Headquarters.
- 2003** Mountainside Police establishes a police motorcycle training program which is selected by 30 NJ police agencies to train their motor officers.
- 2003** Det. Michael Jackson is trained by the FBI in crisis negotiations and is assigned to the Union County UCERT team.
- 2004** Mountainside Fire Chief Gary Cantagallo donates a trailer, which is refurbished by Robert Forgas, owner of General Motor Service, and outfitted to transport the police motorcycles.
- 2004** P.O. Steve DeVito is activated and deployed by the NJ Army National Guard to serve in Operation Iraqi Freedom.
- 2005** P.O. Jeffrey Stinner was added to the motorcycle squad.
- 2005** Detective Donald Amberg along with several other members of UCERT assist the New Orleans Police Department after hurricane Katrina devastates their city.
- 2005** Officers from the Mountainside Police Department were assigned to escort and provide security for the United States President, George W. Bush, during his visit to Westfield, N.J.
- 2007** Sgt. Worswick, Det. Jackson, Cpl Latargia, Cpl Murphy, P.O. Pasquale and P.O. Stolting were honored by the NJ State PBA during their Valor Awards dinner for saving a victim from house fire.
- 2008** Cpl. Ken Capobianco was added to the Motorcycle Squad.
- 2009** The use of the BMW motorcycle is discontinued and a second Harley Davidson Road King is added to the department's motorcycle squad.
- 2009** Mountainside Police begin tracking stolen vehicles via a LoJack tracking device mounted in a patrol car.
- 2010** The Holland government approves a request by the Aruba Police Department to have Lt. Allan Attanasio provide the first police

motorcycle training program in the history of their department. This training was held on the island of Aruba.

- 2011** The police department begins sending emergency & informational community notifications via the Union County First Alert system.
- 2011** A second motorcycle training class is held for the Aruba Police Dept.
- 2012** Chief James Debbie is appointed as Mountainside's Emergency Management Coordinator.
- 2013** James Debbie 3<sup>rd</sup> and Adam Foti are sworn in as the department's 80<sup>th</sup> & 81<sup>st</sup> Police Officers.
- 2014** Andrew Yasinski is sworn in as the department's 82<sup>nd</sup> Police Officer.
- 2014** July 31 James Debbie retires as the Chief of Police and Lieutenant Allan Attanasio is appointed as the Officer in Charge.
- 2014** October 24, Lieutenant Allan Attanasio is appointed as Acting Chief of Police. Sergeants Joseph Giannuzzi & Thomas Murphy are promoted to Lieutenant. Corporals Richard Andrew Huber, Michael Jackson & Richard Latargia are promoted to Sergeant, and Police Officer Jeffrey Sitnner is promoted to Corporal.
- 2014** Police Officer Shaun Bendik is assigned to the Detective Bureau as a Juvenile Detective/School Resource Officer.
- 2015** Police Officer William Stolting is assigned to the Detective Bureau.
- 2015** January 18, Captain Richard Osieja is promoted to Chief of Police.
- 2015** January 25, Chief Richard Osieja succumbs to a fourteen month battle with cancer.
- 2015** Acting Chief Allan Attanasio is promoted to Chief of Police.
- 2015** Police Officer Christopher Feighner is assigned to the Union County Emergency Response Team.