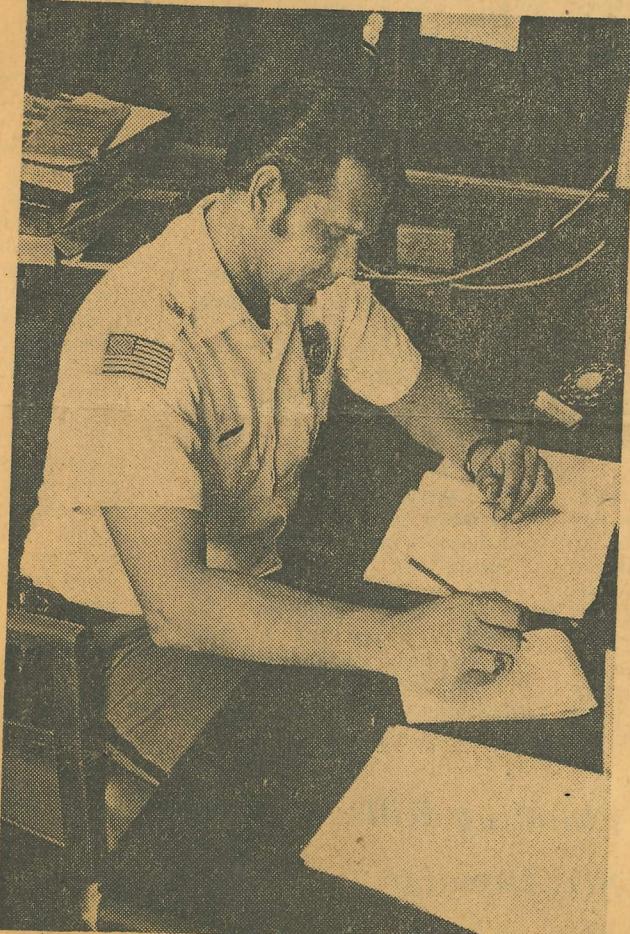


DAILY NEWS

North Carolina's
Finest Newspaper

MORNING, JULY 1, 1973

65th Year, No. 14 — Twenty-Five Cents



Police Chief George Lashley

Gibsonville's Police Chief Shot, Killed

BY ALFRED HAMILTON
Daily News Staff Writer

GIBSONVILLE — A Greensboro man was charged with murder Saturday after this eastern Guilford County town's police chief was shot to death in the line of duty.

Kelly Dean Sparks, 25, of 2710 Pineville Road was formally charged in the Guilford County sheriff's headquarters around 1 p.m. Sparks was taken to Greensboro about 90 minutes after the 6:30 a.m. killing. He is being held without bail.

The dead officer is George Lee Lashley, 31, formerly of Lexington. Lashley was appointed chief of the four-man Gibsonville force on April 9.

According to a reconstruction

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of the shooting based on interviews with Gibsonville police officers and Guilford deputies, the gunfire occurred after Lashley and a Gibsonville town employee investigated a car parked on a gravel path near N.C. 61.

T. G. Evans, the assistant town superintendent, had reportedly discovered the auto during his daily check of a sewage lifting pump about one-quarter two returned. G. G. Evans re-

Lashley approached the car parked in a weedy clearing alongside the pump and discovered four occupants apparently asleep. The four persons inside were driver Sparks, Darrell Stone of Greensboro and two young women who have not been identified by authorities.

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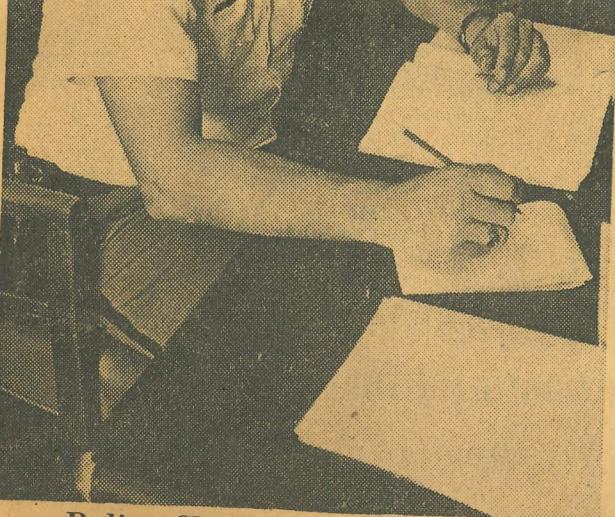
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Lashley tapped on a car window and moments later placed Sparks under arrest for possession of a sawed-off shotgun found in the car, according to a sheriff's department report. The shotgun was later recovered.

After Sparks' hands were cuffed behind his back, Lashley is reported to have told Evans to call for assistance on the patrol car's radio.

Evans later told deputies and
(See Greensboro: A-7, Col. 1)

Police Chief George Lashley

'That Was An Iaeu Man For This Town'

BY ALFRED HAMILTON
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The news of George Lashley's death spread quickly through the little town of Gibsonville and the people came to stand.

By 8 a.m., still in the cool of a Saturday morning, they grouped in twos and threes and stood, talking quietly and watching the unmarked SBI cars and brown sheriff's cars come and go from the tiny city hall.

Their new police chief had been shot to death about 90 minutes before, after only 82 days in his job. He died in a

grassy clearing maybe two miles from where the people now stood.

Lashley became a Lexington police officer in 1963 after riding Uncle Sam's ships for four years. Nine years passed there and he must have been a good cop.

Inside an office in the city hall hangs a plaque with Lashley's name on it: "Outstanding Young Law Enforcement Officer" . . . presented by the Lexington Jaycees.

Nearby rests Lashley's eight-pointed police garrison cap,

brought in after the shooting by one of Gibsonville's remaining three policemen.

Lashley came to the little town amid some controversy; two officers on the tiny force had resigned and the climate wasn't good. But the young officer set out to fix things up.

Sgt. H. F. Greeson sat in the chief's office Saturday morning and pushed his cap on the back of his head. "There were some reservations when he first came because nobody knew him, you know, he wasn't a local man."

Then came a Lashley drive for better pay, a possible two-man addition to the force and a better system of keeping records. The new chief's reputation began to spread.

Greeson continued, "And he was real concerned about the young people around here . . . he had a real respect for what he was doing."

Lashley had earned an associate degree at Davidson Community college while in Lexington and his fellow officers say he planned to register at Elon College soon. He had briefly served as chief of police in Troy and the law enforcement career was no passing fancy.

Greeson interjected, "He was going to be chief here for awhile and see what he could do for us then probably move on to a larger department."

Greeson had been asleep at home when his police radio squalled and awakened him: "Hurry, the chief is in trouble." Greeson drove his own car to the scene and helped arrest a man now charged with murder.

Town manager Richard Honeycutt and another officer came into the office. The men wore coats and ties and had been to Lexington to talk with the be-

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Honeycutt, young and thin, stood in his office and considered

views with Gibsonville police officers and Guilford deputies, the gunfire occurred after Lashley and a Gibsonville town employee investigated a car parked on a gravel path near N.C. 61.

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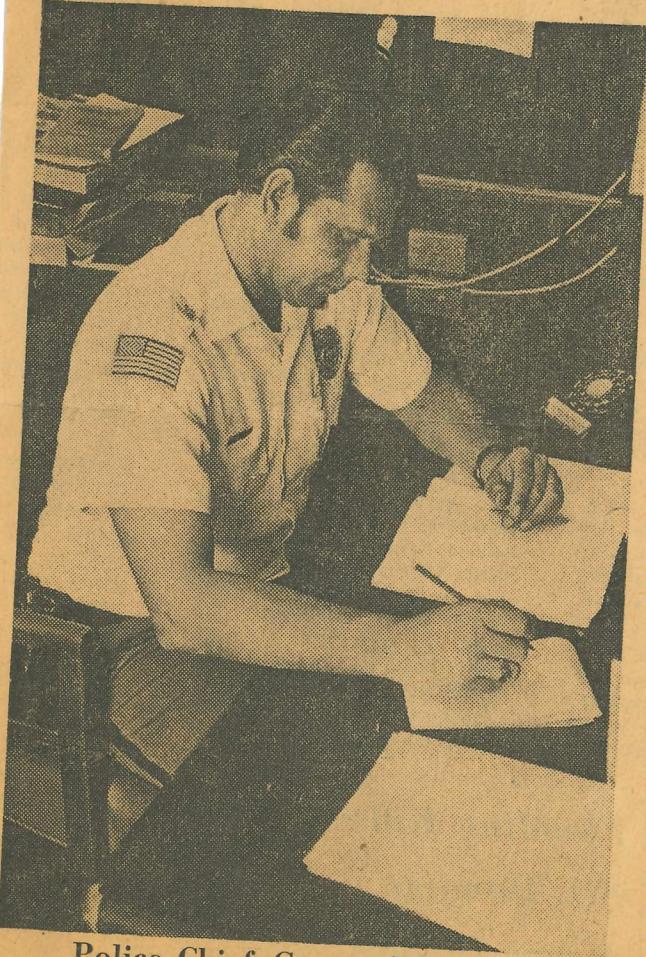
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GREENSBORO DAILY NE

GREENSBORO, N.C., SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 1, 1973



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7-2-73

Gibsonville Chief's Rites Scheduled

LEXINGTON — Funeral services for George Lee Lashley, 31, of 1001 E. Center Street will be held here Tuesday at 1 p.m. The services will be at Holy Rosary Church and conducted by Father Anthony Silverstri. Burial will follow in Lexington Cemetery.

Lashley, while serving in the line of duty as the Gibsonville police chief, was shot to death around 6:30 a.m. Saturday just outside the Guilford County town's northern boundary. A Greensboro man was charged with murder several hours after the shooting and is being held in Greensboro without privilege of bond.

Lashley, a native of Davidson County, served for nine years as a Lexington police officer after being discharged from the U.S. Navy in 1963. During this period, he was honored by the Lexington Jaycees as the town's "Outstanding Young Law Enforcement Officer."

He attended Davidson Community College while working in Lexington and also lectured at the school. He briefly served as police chief in Troy before taking the Gibsonville post on April 9.

Lashley was a member of the Holy Rosary Church and of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

His family will see friends today from 7 to 9 p.m. at Davidson Funeral Home.

Surviving are his widow, Mrs. Patricia Clodfelter Lashley; a son, Christopher Scott Lashley of the home; two daughters

Greensboro Man Is Charged In Slaying Of Police Chief

From A-1

investigating SBI agents that he heard a single round fired as he reached for the radio equipment.

Lashley fell face down on the right side of the 1969 white Mustang still occupied by the girls and on the opposite side from Sparks' position. Stone was said to be outside the car.

The man later accused of murder rushed into heavy trees and bushes nearby and crossed a stream about 50 feet away, according to the account.

He was arrested within 30 minutes as he roamed behind a residence on N.C. 61 less than a mile away.

According to Sgt. H. F. Green-
son of the Gibsonville Police
Department, Sparks was spotted
by searching officers after he

was pointed out by a resident of the area.

Greeson said, "I hollered at him and he put his hands over his head. As I walked closer, he just sat down in a swing."

A bloodhound search team manned by Greensboro police officers arrived on the scene after the shooting, but Sparks had been placed in custody before the dogs were put to ground.

Moments after the shooting, Evans was joined at the scene by Gibsonville officer N. E. Anderson. Lashley died in "just a few minutes," according to the stunned Evans.

The body was taken to Moses Cone Hospital in Greensboro where Lashley was pronounced dead by Dr. W. A. Leonard Jr. of the county medical examiner's office.

The examination showed the

officer died of a chest wound suffered after the bullet entered the upper right shoulder and then coursed downward.

The remaining occupants of the vehicle were transported to Greensboro when sheriff's deputies arrived at the site of the shooting. None had been charged late Saturday after being questioned.

A subsequent check of the auto revealed that the car was stolen Friday in Greensboro. It is registered to Lester Elwood Sandy of 510 Berryman St., according to deputies.

Keith Bulla of the SBI conducted the on-scene investigation after the state agency was asked to join the case by the sheriff's department. Bulla was assisted by Lt. Donnie Summers and Capt. J. P. Worrell of the county force.

Agents immediately found a .25 caliber Italian-made pistol

lying in heavy grass about 20 feet from the large bloodstain where Lashley fell. The victim's service revolver remained in his holster.

The SBI agents worked at the scene for several hours collecting data and searching for additional evidence. By the time the sun burned away a morning mist, regional SBI director Charles W. Ray had arrived and the stolen auto was being dusted for fingerprints.

A plastic packet of disposable syringes was located near the auto along with a paper bag containing clothing. The auto being examined by officers also contained two bags of clothing and a beach towel.

Officers reached the rectangular clearing only by driving along the tiny gravel road. The path amounted to a single lane and several officers were forced to make the return trip to the highway by driving in reverse.

Witness Evans attempted to reconstruct the shooting scene for officers as measurements were taken around the stolen car. Evans, his left arm still spotted with the victim's blood, declined to comment in detail after being advised by investigators.

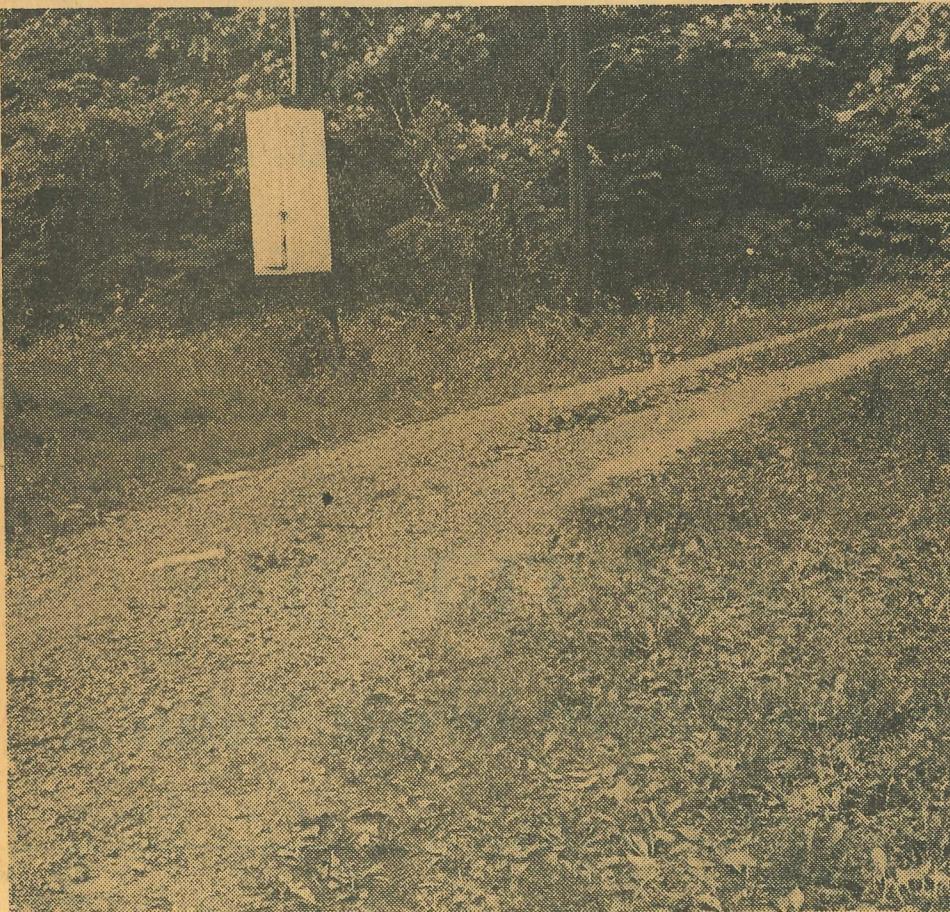
Stone and the two young women were still being interviewed in Greensboro at mid-afternoon. In declining to release the girls' names, Worrell described them and Stone as "important witnesses." Stone and the girls all appeared to be less than 20 years old.

According to sources in the sheriff's department, Sparks said during questioning that he is on parole after being convicted in connection with a shooting incident involving Maryland police officers.

Chief Lashley is the second police officer to die in the line of duty in the small town about 12 miles east of Greensboro.

Delbert Williams was fatally beaten and shot as he investigated a break-in at a Gibsonville store in 1940.

Funeral arrangements for Lashley were incomplete late Saturday. His wife and three children, ages 6, 5, and 1, reside



Staff Photo By Jack Moebes

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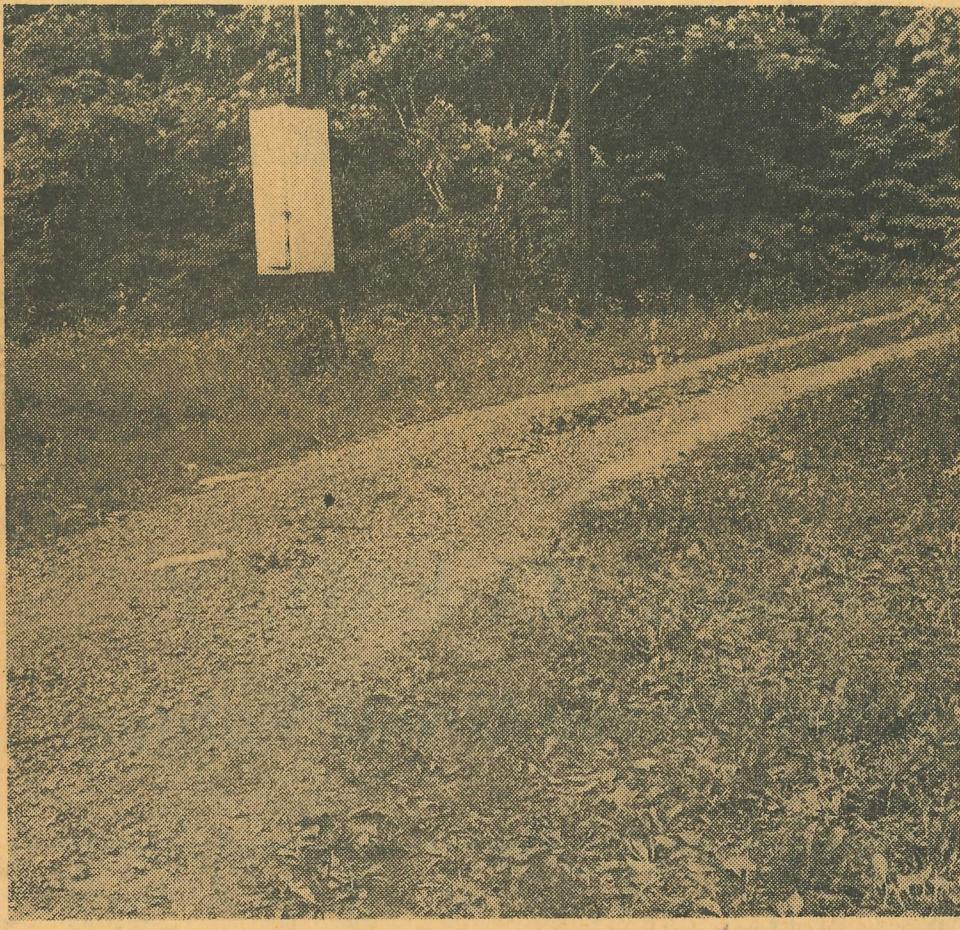
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Lashley were incomplete late
Saturday. His wife and three
children, ages 6, 5, and 1, reside
in Lexington and were planning
to begin the move to Gibsonville
late Saturday afternoon.

Lashley, whose home was at
1001 East Center St. in Lexington,
was a native of Davidson County.
He is survived by his parents,
George T. and Julia Dorsett Lashley of Lexington;
the widow, Mrs. Patricia Clod-
felter Lashley; a son, Christopher Scott Lashley; two daughters,
Andria Leigh and Shannon Dawn Lashley; and a brother,
Gene Lashley of Lexington.

He was a member of Holy
Rosary Catholic Church and the
Veterans of Foreign Wars. He
served four years in the U.S.
Navy as a machinist's mate.



Staff Photo By Jack Moehes

Roadside Area Where Chief Lashley Was Fatally Shot

'That Was An Ideal Man For This Town'

From A-1

what had happened in the last four hours. "I don't know if we can replace that man," he said, "but I suppose we'll just have to sit back and see."

Honeycutt confided as two reporters came in, "Gosh, it's been a rough morning."

Outside, the little town of less than 3,000 people was coming to life. The little clusters of older men still remained but people were shopping at the open-air general store across the street.

B. C. Boyles Sr. runs that

store his business for more

standing had left, gone from a sun getting hotter by the minute. But across the street one still stood, a boy of about 15 staring at an empty police car.

George Lashley had lectured often to young people about the ravages of drug abuse and there was a bumper sticker about rugs on the back of the car.

On the side of the powder-blue car, a hand-painted motto stared back at where the boy stood. It aid, "Serving Proudly."