



WILLIAM L. MARTIN

October 9, 1970



On the evening of October 9, 1970, four men, dubbed the Lee Street gang, pulled up in front of the Royal Inn on lower Hegenberger Road. Three of them donned masks and entered the Inn and accosted a bookkeeper, holding him at gunpoint. Thwarted in their efforts to gain access to the safe, the suspects ran out of the hotel and climbed into their getaway car, a light-colored Thunder-bird and fled the scene.

Sgt. Richard Castle and Officer William Martin spotted the Thunderbird and gave chase. The Thunderbird left the freeway at the Oak Street off-ramp, with the officers in pursuit. The robbers drove around the block and stopped on 6th Street between Oak and Fallon. Two suspects jumped out of the Thunderbird, which sped away towards North Oakland. Sgt. Castle rounded the corner and was immediately fired upon. The suspects advanced on his car continuing to shoot at him. As one of the suspects proceeded to flee he rounded a corner at the same time as Officer Martin. Both men fired shots simultaneously. The suspect was killed outright. Officer Martin fell to the ground, mortally wounded.

The second suspect at the shooting scene was taken into custody. When the Thunderbird's driver arrived at his apartment on Lee Street, numerous officers were waiting for him. He made it into his apartment and took his own life. The remaining suspect was later identified and taken into custody near Lake Merritt.

Sgt. Castle recovered from his wounds and returned to duty. Officer William Martin, age 24, passed away at Merritt Hospital. He had been a member of the Department for 18 months.