



## JOHN R. JOHNSTON

June 27, 1946



In the mid-evening hours of June 27, 1946, an off-duty Berkeley police officer came upon a car sitting in the middle of the street in the 500 block of Merritt Avenue. The motor was running and the radiator appeared to be boiling over. The officer approached the vehicle and saw that it was occupied by a man slumped over behind the steering wheel. He observed that the driver was alive but was having a difficult time breathing. Believing the man to have suffered a heart attack the officer checked further.

At that point he observed that the man in the car was holding a police badge, #89, in his left hand. The microphone to the radio was off to the side of his right hand. He called for assistance and stood by the policeman, who he now knew to be Inspector John R. Johnston.

Inspector Johnston died while en route to the hospital. He had been shot four times in the chest with a .45 caliber handgun. Reconstruction of the shooting offered the theory that Inspector Johnston was in the area looking for burglars. Apparently, he stopped an individual and called him over to the police vehicle. The subject had approached the passenger side of the car and leaned his forehead against the top of the door. Then the subject shot Inspector Johnston and fled the area.

The murderer of Inspector Johnston was arrested within forty-eight hours, tried, and convicted.

Inspector Johnston joined the Department in July 1928. He had been an inspector for three years prior to his death. He was survived by his wife and two children.