Police Facilities Locations

The first recorded location of an Arlington Police Station is that it was “Housed in a small white building located on Pecan Street between Abram Street and Main Street.” In 1923, it was located on “The east side of South Center Street in the second building off Abram Street.” In 1928 the Police Department moved into new quarters at the City Hall located on the southeast corner of W. Main & Pecan, where the present City Hall now stands. The building later became the Tarrant County Sub Courthouse. In 1954, the Police Department moved to 401 W. Main Street (northwest corner of W. Main & West). The building also housed the jail and a Courtroom. Ground was broken for a new station at 717 W. Main in 1964, where the Department remained until it moved into a new, three-story, Main Station, at 620 W. Division Street (at Cooper St.), in 1989. It cost $8.9 million to construct the 88,000 square foot building. It is named the “Ott Cribbs Public Safety Center,” in honor of Arlington’s legendary Police Chief from 1934 to 1971. It is also the location of the Arlington Fire Department. As the City of Arlington has grown, substations have become a necessity. The facility at 4000 Little Road opened in 1971 as a Police and Fire station. A (see “History of Police Department” on page 2)
History of Police Department (from page 1)

portion of the building was used by the Police Department as a Training Center, Community Services, Polygraph Examinations, and Traffic/Motorcycle offices. On December 14, 1973, the section used by the police was dedicated as its first police substation with desk officers on duty 24 hours. Its three jail cells were rarely used. However, serial killer Henry Lee Lucas was held there in the early 1980’s while Texas Rangers and Arlington Police detectives investigated murders he was alleged to have committed in Arlington.

In 1980 the Police Training Center moved from the Little Road Station to its new facility at 6000 W. Pioneer Parkway, where it is today.

Today there are four Police substations in Arlington. The Main Station at the Ott Cribbs Public Safety Center, opened 1989, also serves as the North Station for Arlington. In October 1996 the East Station opened at 2001 New York Avenue. The West Station at 2060 W. Green Oaks Boulevard was dedicated December 19, 2003. Grand opening for the South Station at 1030 S.W. Green Oaks Boulevard was October 25, 2008.

Tactical and Other Operational Units & Other Developments

Starting in 1972, Special Enforcement Officer Gary Shipp led in the development and operation of the Department’s Tactical (SWAT) teams and later, in the mid 1980’s, as a Lieutenant, the development and operation of the Special Operations Units. From Los Angeles SWAT to Arlington’s Tactical/Special Operations units, they were developed after race riots, kidnappings, home grown terrorists, and sniper shootings of the 1960’s and early 1970’s displayed inadequate responses by police.

The Arlington Basic Tactical School and Teams were formed using internal expertise, as the Department had many ex-military with specialized skills and combat experience. Instructors and team members did so providing their own equipment with no budget. Only with the development of the Special Operations Division in the mid 1980’s were there budgeted funds. Policy and procedures were written along the way. Expertise from the U.S. Army and private enterprise assisted with counter-sniper, helicopter deployment, automatic weapons use/qualification, as well as explosive entry breaching of doors and walls. Both the School and the Tactical/Special Operation Teams developed a reputation of excellence with local, state and federal agencies.

The Internal Affairs Division was instituted in 1980 by Chief Herman Perry. On August 18, 1980 Deputy Chief Marion Rettig called Sergeant Danny Sustaire and offered him the position of Internal Affairs Coordinator. After careful consideration, he told Chief Rettig he would accept the position “On the condition that we run it as a straight-up operation and that we be completely open on both sides of any issue.” Rettig agreed that he “would have it no other way.” Sustaire remained in that assignment the next four years.

The City Council approved a full-time Police Chaplain’s position in 1981. After having served eight years as a volunteer Chaplain, Harold Elliott became the full-time chaplain on March 29, 1982.

Under the leadership of Chief David Kunkle, the Arlington Police Department received CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies) accreditation in 1989.

Sgt. James Laman organized the Honor Guard in 1986. The Honor Guard members received their initial training from the Old Guard at Fort Meyer, Virginia.

The Police Museum was started by Chaplain Harold Elliott in 1982, but not formally established until 1989, at (see “History of Police Department” on page 3)
which time it was housed on the first floor of the Main Police Station. With the retirement of Chaplain Elliott on June 30, 2004, the City and Police Department officially named the museum the Harold K. Elliott Police Museum. It was moved to a more spacious room at the Police Training Center (6000 W. Pioneer Parkway) in March 2007. The official re-opening was February 25, 2008. Citizens are welcome to visit the Museum during normal business hours. The Department operates its own Police Academy out of the Training Center. The first class graduated June 8, 1990.

In 1986, the Department changed from a tan uniform, and its first shoulder patch, to its present dark blue uniform. Detective Ann Q. Thompson, a gifted artist, contributed artwork for the department’s second shoulder patch. The 1986 patch was phased out in 2010 and replaced with the current third shoulder patch.

In May 1994, Officer Danny Whittington led the City and Police Department in naming streets around the various stations in honor of the officers who have died in the line of duty. He was driving down Division Street and saw that West Street had been renamed for Mt. Olive Baptist Church Pastor N. L. Robinson. It struck him that the name of streets leading to the stations could be renamed in honor of Arlington’s fallen officers. With the assistance of Officer Mike Sheehan, Arlington Police Association president, and Chief David Kunkle, the proposal was presented to the City Council. It was approved, and has since been extended to the Arlington Fire Department.

In 1999 the Department secured a forty foot customized Mobile Command vehicle, which is used as an on-scene command center. Members of the Department were encouraged to present color and design recommendations for the exterior finish on the Mobile Unit. Officer Jill Hummel’s design was chosen.

Lieutenant Jim Lowery led the Department’s purchase of a Ballistic Equipped Armored Response Vehicle, the B.E.A.R., in 2007. It is designed to assist the tactical team in potentially lethal field operations.

On February 14, 2001, Martha Willbanks, Arlington’s first female police officer, died from natural causes after 28 years of service. She was a patrol lieutenant at the time of her death.

In 1950 the Arlington Police Department had nine paid officers on the roster. In the early 1950’s, an annual Arlington Police budget of $50,880 compensated 15 officers, a judge, and four part-time employees. The FY2010 annual budget was $80.1 million, with 781 authorized positions.

Arlington has lost eight police officers in the line of duty. On November 23, 1930, James Evan Johnson was shot to death. Gary Harl was shot to death on July 16, 1975. Terry Lewis and Jerry Crocker died on October 9, 1992 from injuries sustained after their patrol car was struck by a drunk driver. Craig Hanking died on August 3, 1994 when his patrol car collided with a mail truck. Joey Cushman died on June 7, 2001 when he was accidentally shot by a fellow officer in a training exercise. Craig Story died in a motor vehicle accident involving his police motorcycle on January 13, 2010. Jillian Michelle Smith was fatally shot on December 28, 2010 while shielding an 11-year old girl in a domestic assault.

The Department honors the past, treasures the present, and looks toward the future with positive anticipation. The past is on display in the Police Museum. The present is lived daily. Preparation for the future is evident in what is being done today.

Our Saturday Special... Kate Black!

Kate has been a Saturday volunteer for a year now, and we have been lucky to have her. Kate’s interest in the Arlington Historical Society is due in large part to being the granddaughter of Neil and Becky Tucker. Kate and her whole family have been involved with Front Street Festival for five years. Kate conducts tours, performs office duties, and helped Becky in the creation of our Toy Room at the Fielder. She is multi-talented and self-motivated. We shall miss her next fall. Kate graduated from Martin High School this year, and will enter the University of Dallas this fall. She is planning to study theology. Come in some Saturday and meet Miss Kate and say “thanks!”
The windmill that was once on the southeast Arlington farm of an early (1880) Arlington mayor, George W. Finger, has been refurbished and is now in Knapp Heritage Park. Some 15 years ago, Dorothy Rencurrel, AHS member, arranged for the windmill to be moved to the historical society’s cemetery on Arkansas Lane. This is a “Monitor” brand windmill, manufactured by the Baker Manufacturing Co. of Evansville, Wisconsin. This company made windmills from 1898 to the 1930s. Thanks to AHS Board member Jim Meier, who arranged for the refurbishing (by Chuck Rickgauer of The Windmill Farm and Bed and Breakfast at Tolar, Texas) and installation. And thanks to AHS members and financial contributors who made it possible to get this great new addition to Knapp Heritage Park!

NEW ADDITION TO KNAPP HERITAGE PARK – HISTORIC ARLINGTON WINDMILL !!

Holy Rosary Catholic School 2nd Graders once again hold their annual Pioneer Day at Knapp Heritage Park (May 17, 2011)

Schedule your family picnic, family reunion, school educational event, or other special event at Knapp Heritage Park!

Call 817-460-4001
Knapp Heritage Park - now open weekends!
Members – your help is needed!!

Knapp Heritage Park has become a popular destination for people to visit on Saturdays and Sundays. Hours of operation are 1 to 4 p.m., now through September. Many folks have been stopping by to see the cabins, school house, the new windmill, and the historical displays in the old real estate office, as well as its gift shop. Some of the visitors are coming after a meal at the nearby Babe’s Chicken (flyers of Knapp Heritage Park are in Babe’s Chicken)!

Over the coming weeks, some special activities and events will be featured at Knapp. The Historical Society’s resident artisan/blacksmith, James Ryan, will be pounding out and forging some beautiful metal work (it’s for sale!) on future weekends. Also, your caricature can be drawn for you on selected Saturdays.

Do you realize that Knapp Heritage Park is staffed entirely by volunteers? We really do need the help of our Historical Society members to keep the Park open and available to Arlington residents. Please consider giving some of your time, such as once a month, or so. We think you’ll enjoy visiting with the people who drop by. To volunteer, call Sue Hammond at 817-675-2181 or e-mail her at halfpint5656@yahoo.com. You can be scheduled for the Saturday or Sunday of your choice. Dates are open June through September.

Come celebrate the 4th of July at Knapp Heritage Park!

We will honor the parade participants with a fun awards ceremony. The event starts about 1 p.m. Music, laughter, cookies, punch, and more. Bring your lawn chair and sit under the trees at the wonderful Knapp Heritage Park. The event ends after all awards are given, usually about 2:30 or 3 p.m.
Just Published!! *Images of America* -Arlington, by Evelyn Barker & Lea Worcester

Lots of wonderful photos of Historic Arlington. You need this new book!!
At the Fielder House, $22.

OLD Timers Schedule

Old Timers is now meeting at the Fielder House on the 3rd Thursday each month at 2 p.m.

Old Timers: where long-term Arlington residents (and other speakers) have opportunity to tell stories (and spin yarns?) about Arlington in days past. Everyone is invited to attend these informative and entertaining sessions. Dates and speakers for the balance of this year are:

- June 16—Ann Arnold, author
- July 21—Bob Mann
- August 18—Cassie Holmes
- September 15—Jack Vaughan
- October 20—Carmen Elliot Gooden
- November 17—Mildred Hilbun & Mary Sanderson
- December 15—Doris Kittlehut (Old Toys)

Photos from “The Faces of Arlington”

Get your AHS Newsletter in Living Color !!!
Just send your email address to fielderh@swbell.net
On the “Subject” line, put “Send Newsletter by email”

Put it on your calendar! Front Street Festival 2011
Saturday, September 24, 2011