

05-20-1984 Saluda VA – Robert T Hicks – LEO Auto Accident – Bridge



## OFFICER DOWN MEMORIAL PAGE

REMEMBERING ALL OF LAW ENFORCEMENT'S HEROES

<http://www.odmp.org/officer/6473-lieutenant-robert-t-hicks>



### BIO

**Age** 36

**Tour** 8 years

**Badge** 3

### INCIDENT DETAILS

**Cause** Drowned

## Lieutenant Robert T. Hicks

*Middlesex County Sheriff's Office, Virginia*

**End of Watch Sunday, May 20, 1984**

### ROBERT T. HICKS

Lieutenant Hicks drowned after his patrol car went the guard rail of the Urbanna Creek Bridge as he responded to a call involving a distressed motorist. The patrol left the 300-foot long bridge and landed upside down in 12-feet of water, killing him instantly.

Lieutenant Hicks had served with the Middlesex County Sheriff's Office for 4 years. He had previously served as a peace officer with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for 2 years and as a deputy with the Gloucester County Sheriff's Office for 2 years. He was survived by his wife, son, and three step-daughters.

(Photograph courtesy the Daily Press)

Southside Sentinel, Volume 89, Number 21, 24 May 1984

<https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=d&d=SSE19840524.1.1>

## Chief deputy sheriff here dies in accident

by Larry S. Chowning

In the stillness of the early morning hours Sunday, a loud crashing noise awoke residents up and down Watling Street in Urbanna.

Gordon Robins, who lives at the end of the street, sprang from his bed to inspect his home. "It sounded like something hit the house," he said. "It was so loud. I looked all around in the yard, but couldn't find any damage."

Charles Price, who lives next to the Urbanna Bridge, rushed from his house onto the bridge and found two spans of bridge railing missing. He called the county's emergency number and rescue squad and police officials were on the scene by 4:35 a.m.

About 20 minutes later an oil slick appeared on the murky waters of Urbanna Creek, giving proof that a vehicle had gone over the side.

Then, the gruesome ordeal began to unfold. Identification cards floated to the surface bearing the name of Robert Talmadge Hicks, chief deputy of the Middlesex County Sheriff's Department.

About two hours later State Police divers Joseph Bayly and Charles L. Heptinstall of Gloucester and Gary Estes of the Middlesex Volunteer

Rescue Squad in Deltaville recovered Hicks' body from the Middlesex County Sheriff's Department unmarked vehicle. The car was lying upside down on the bottom and had to be lifted with a cable and wrecker truck before the body could be removed. The car was removed by a crane about 8:30 a.m.

Trooper Lewis Jones III said the car was traveling north, entering Urbanna on Route 227, when it scraped the curb on the right side. It then veered sharply to the left and jumped the concrete curb, taking out two sections of the aluminum guard rail. The vehicle fell into about 12 feet of water.

Jones said there were no skid marks on the road to indicate Hicks had tried to stop, which would indicate he may have fallen asleep. The trooper said it appeared Hicks was exceeding the 35 m.p.h. speed limit on the bridge.

The car had crossed most of the bridge and was within about 200 feet of the Urbanna side when the accident occurred.

A state medical examiner's autopsy report Monday revealed that death was caused by drowning. It will be two weeks before other tests on the body are complete.

Middlesex County Sheriff J. Aubrey Packett said Hicks, 35, was responding to a "motorist in distress" call in Urbanna at the time of the accident. Packett said he last talked to the deputy at a benefit lawn party at Poplar Grove in Mathews Saturday evening.

Radio equipment valued at about \$3,000 was salvaged from the car, said Packett. However, the county's camera, lenses and tripod used for investigations, and fingerprinting equipment, are still at the bottom of the creek, he said.

"The divers said it was too muddy to find anything right now in the creek," said Packett. "A bumper and several other pieces of the car's front end are still down there, too."

Hicks had served with the county sheriff's department since 1977. He was named the second in command in April, when he was appointed lieutenant. A native of Gloucester and a former deputy there, he had also been employed with the security department of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Hicks also was a member of Bethany United Methodist Church, the Virginia State Sheriff's Association and the National Sheriff's Association.

A funeral service for the officer was held Tuesday at the Bristow-Faulkner Funeral Home in Saluda. Burial was in the Bethany United Methodist Church Cemetery at Gloucester Point.

Survivors include his wife, Mrs. Rosemary Luytjes Hicks; three daughters, Mrs. Michelle Lorber, Miss Kimberly Hardie and Miss Melanie Hardie, all of Topping; a son, Robert T. Hicks II of Topping; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Hicks of Achilles; a sister, Mrs. Betty Jane Belch of Achilles; a brother, William Ellis Hicks of Achilles; and a granddaughter.

## Man dies at age 89

A native of Louisa County, Mrs. Chewning was a former resident of Richmond and operated a coffee shop there.

**Robert T. Hicks - May. 20, 1984****(23022)**<http://www.officerdown.com/fallen.cfm?CFID=619021&CFTOKEN=60317370>

Middlesex  
County Sheriff's  
Office Agency  
Patch

Resided: **VA, USA**Born: **Unk**Fallen: **May. 20, 1984**Race/Sex: **Caucasian Male /  
36 yrs. of age****Agency**Dept: **Middlesex County  
Sheriff's Office  
VA USA**Dept. Type: **County/Police**Hero's Rank: **Lieutenant**Sworn Date: **Unk**FBI Class: **Accident - Police**Badge: **3**On The Job: **8 years****Bio:** Not Available**Fatal Incident Summary****Offender:** No Info**Location:** VA USA Sun. May. 20, 1984

**Summary:** Lieutenant Hicks drowned after his patrol car went the guard rail of the Urbanna Creek bridge as he responded to a call involving a distressed motorist. The patrol left the 300-foot long bridge and landed upside down in 12-feet of water, killing him instantly.

Lieutenant Hicks had served with the Middlesex County Sheriff's Office for 4 years. He had previously served as a peace officer with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for 2 years and as a deputy with the Gloucester County Sheriff's Office for 2 years. He was survived by his wife, son, and three step-daughters.

(Photograph courtesy the Daily Press)

**Source:** Website [Click](#)**[More from Middlesex County Sheriff's Office](#)****Lt. Robert T. Hicks****35 years old****Middlesex Co. Sheriff's Dept.****Saluda, VA**

**Lieutenant Robert T. Hicks was drowned May 20, 1984, when the patrol vehicle he was driving was involved in a traffic accident and went of the bridge.**

## In memory of Lt. Robert T. Hicks

[http://www.ssentinel.com/index.php/news/article/in\\_memory\\_of\\_lt\\_robert\\_t\\_hicks](http://www.ssentinel.com/index.php/news/article/in_memory_of_lt_robert_t_hicks)

05.14.2014



(Photo courtesy of Al Samuels)

The Police Unity Tour came to Middlesex County and the Town of Urbanna Saturday in honor of Virginia's fallen police officers. The tour is raising money to support the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund. The riders stopped on the Beryl R. Newman Memorial Bridge over Urbanna Creek in tribute to Middlesex deputy Lt. Robert T. Hicks who died May 20, 1984 when he ran off the bridge en route to an emergency call. His son Bobby was 6 years old at the time. Bobby is now a police officer and he attended Saturday's event. After the ceremony on the bridge the police officers rode through town to the Urbanna Firehouse where they were given refreshments by the Woman's Auxiliary of the Middlesex Volunteer Fire Department. Speaking on behalf of the auxiliary, Lois Jean Brooks said, "We thank all who have supported the Police Unity Tour throughout the years. We thank Urbanna Market and staff, Church View Septic Systems, Walmart and the Central Middlesex Volunteer Rescue Squad for their continued support. This is a beautiful thing to see each year as the bikers ride into our town to honor all fallen police officers. Thank you to all the men and women who do this each year. You are all a blessing."