

07-15-1960 Kansas City MO – Kiefer Burris – LEO PSD Training

Sgt. Kiefer C. Burris

American police officer, Kansas, Missouri, died during a training dive.

<http://www.thediversassociation.com/index.php/sheets>



KC area officers who died in the line of duty

<http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/crime/article76634042.html>

July 15, 1960: Sgt. Kieffer C. Burris, Kansas City Police Department, drowned
July 15, 1960: Patrolman Herbert E. Bybee, Kansas City Police Department, drowned



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<https://www.odmp.org/officer/2576-sergeant-kieffer-c-burris>



Sergeant Kieffer C. Burris

Kansas City Police Department
EOW: Friday, July 15, 1960
Cause: Drowned



Sergeant Burris and Patrolman Herbert Bybee drowned while practicing scuba diving at Lake Lotawana for an underwater recovery unit that the department was forming. At approximately 1600 on that afternoon, the two were spotted by a resident of the lake area and everything seemed alright. However, at approximately 1730, one of the residents noticed Sergeant Burris floating face down in the water, and Patrolman Bybee's body was recovered a short time later. Patrolman Bybee's tank was empty but Sergeant Burris's still had air pressure, so the exact cause of this incident was not known.

Sergeant Burris had been with the agency for 10 years and was survived by his wife and daughter.

KCPD Memorial *Lest We Forget*

http://www.kcpolicememorial.com/pages/burris_bybee_1960.html

Officer Herbert E. Bybee

End of Watch:
Friday, July 15,
1960
Age: 31



Sergeant Burris's still had air pressure, so the exact cause of this incident was not known. It was department policy at that time that they should have had someone with them to watch for any problems that might arise, but on this day there was no one around to help them.

Sergeant Burris had been with the Kansas City Police Department for 10 years and was survived by his wife and daughter.

Officer Bybee had been with the Kansas City Police Department for two years and served in the United States Navy for four years. He was survived by his wife and four

children.

On July 15, 1960, Sergeant Burris and Officer Herbert Bybee were practicing scuba diving for an underwater recovery unit that the department was attempting to form. They were simply practicing diving techniques at Lake Lotowana when apparently something went very wrong. At approximately 4:30 p.m. on that afternoon, the two were spotted by a resident of the lake area and everything seemed alright. However, at approximately 5:30 p.m., one of the residents noticed Sergeant Burris floating face down in the water, and Officer Bybee's body was recovered a short time later. Officer Bybee's tank was empty but

Article

Two Kansas City policemen from the Sheffield Station drowned late yesterday in Lake Lotowana while practicing skin diving in training for a water rescue unit being formed in the police department.

The victims were Sgt. Keiffer Burris, 46, and Patrolman Herbert Bybee, 31. Burris, who was organizing the rescue unit, was teaching Bybee how to use the diving equipment.

Bodies from water.

Sergeant Keiffer C. Burris

End of Watch:
Friday, July 15,
1960
Born: March 22,
1914



Burris' body was pulled from the lake by N. C. Limpus, Lot Z-15, at Limpus' fishing dock about 5:45 o'clock. Bybee's body was taken from the lake about 7:15 o'clock by Ray Van Scoy, Lot M-113, who grappled for the body about 45 minutes.

The two policemen arrived at the lake about 4:30 o'clock, William Parker, Lot Z-18 said. They were using the fishing dock of Parker, a retired police lieutenant colonel, in their drills.

Parker's lot is on the east side of the lake, near the dam.

Parker said he had finished dinner about 5:15 o'clock and was standing in a doorway of his house, about 75 feet from the dock, when he saw Burris sitting on the end of the dock. He also saw bubbles rising about 10 feet from the end of the dock, he said, and then saw Burris put on diving equipment and dive into the water.

Nothing strange in the act.

Parker said he thought nothing unusual about this at the time because he had seen the two men do it before. He left the doorway to take a nap.

It was about 30 minutes later that Limpus pulled Burris' body from the water.

Limpus and his wife were fishing at their dock, two lots away from the Parker lot.

He said he saw something that looked like an inner tube about 25 feet from where he stood.

"I cast toward it and hooked it," Limpus said. "I reeled it in and when it got within about 5 feet of the dock, I saw it was a diving suit."

Limpus then saw a hand and pulled the body out.

Respiration is Begun.

Mrs. Limpus, who was on the dock with her husband, went for help and Limpus began artificial respiration on Burris. Claude Ross, city marshal of Lake Lotowana, arrived shortly afterward and assisted Limpus.

They continued to administer mouth-to-mouth respiration, standard respiration, and oxygen.

When it was learned from Parker that Bybee had been with Burris, Van Scoy began grappling in the area around Parker's dock. Bybee's body was found about 40 feet from the end of the dock in the water about 30 feet deep.

Doctor arrives at the scene.

Bybee also was given artificial respiration until Dr. A. E. Linville, a resident of the lake area who had been summoned arrived about 7:45 o'clock and pronounced both men dead.

"When I saw Keiffer, he was sitting on the end of the dock and the bubbles were coming up about 10 feet from the end of the dock, " Parker said. "It's only a supposition, but Keiffer must have realized that the boy was in trouble and jumped in to rescue him."

In steady stream.

Parker said that he remembered when thinking back to what happened the the bubbles rising were in a steady stream and not in rhythmical bursts as in normal breathing with diving equipment.

Parker believes Bybee's mouthpiece came out, causing the steady stream of bubbles which Burris saw just before he jumped in.

Parker said both men had been wearing weight belts when he saw them earlier. Neither had a belt on when pulled from the lake.

When pulled from the water, Burris was wearing a rubber jacket, metal air tank, face mask, air mouth piece, trunks, and swim fins. The face mask and mouthpiece were twisted around to the back of his head.

Bybee was wearing only a metal air tank, swim fins, and trunks.

Bybee's wife was visiting her mother at Enable, Mo., when the drownings occurred.

Burris, of 3815 Bell Street, was sworn into the police department June 24, 1942, and was promoted to sergeant June 1, 1958.

Bernard C. Brannon, chief of police, said Burris was an experienced skin diver and had been called upon previously when a skin diver was needed in this area. He said Burris recently had been helping to organize an underwater recovery unit, which was to be part of the police department's disaster unit.

Work on the new unit started about three weeks ago. Brannon and Burris was assembling equipment and personnel for the unit. About four men had been selected for training including Bybee.

Burris was wounded in a gun battle in 1948 in which four patrolmen and two suspects, were killed. He was hit twice by bullets fired by a berserk man during the wild shooting the took place at 1334 the Paseo.

The gun battle was termed a new record in Kansas City violence, being the worst since five persons were killed in the "Adam God" riot of 1908, and the Union Station Massacre of 1933 in which five were killed including two police detectives.