

BEHIND THE BADGE

End of Watch



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Detective Tom G. Crabtree End of Watch: September 1, 1922



Detective Tom G. Crabtree was 31 years old when he joined the Raleigh Police Department in October 1917. Prior to joining the RPD he was a member of the Raleigh Fire Brigade. He spent his first few years on patrol before making detective in 1922. He wore badge number 79.

Detective Crabtree drove the paddy wagon and conducted foot patrols in his early years with the Department. He developed a reputation for being a tough, yet fair police officer. As a plainclothes detective, he was summoned from time to time to assist authorities in Virginia and South Carolina on tough cases.

On August 31, 1922, Detective Crabtree was reporting for a surveillance assignment. As he approached Hillsborough Street near Glenwood Avenue, he heard two shots fired nearby. He ran to the area and encountered a subject sitting in the rear of a taxicab, and when he stepped onto the running boards of the taxi he was shot multiple times. As Detective Crabtree fell to the ground, mortally wounded, he was also struck by the taxi as the suspect fled the scene. Detective Crabtree succumbed to his injuries the next day.

Detective Crabtree had unknowingly happened upon Charles Kluttz as he was robbing and assaulting a taxi driver. Kluttz had forced the taxi driver to drive him around town before allowing him to stop at a gas station on Hillsborough Street. Kluttz fired two shots at the taxi driver as he fled on foot, narrowly missing him. Kluttz eventually turned himself in and blamed his actions on years of drug and alcohol abuse. He was found guilty of second-degree murder and sentenced to 30 years in prison, the maximum possible sentence at the time of Detective Crabtree's murder.

Original story by Captain T.S. Jordan and former Detective K.B. Mercer