

Gordon Joinville – A City of San Mateo Fallen Hero

Amended 2021 Preface

In April 2021, I was contacted by William Larsen, a former Chief Deputy District Attorney of San Mateo County, California. Mr. Larsen retired at the end of 2005 after serving 16 years in San Mateo County, and 23 years in the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office, as Assistant District Attorney. He personally assisted in the prosecution of Gordon Joinville's killer. In the interest of factual accuracy, he reached out to me with corrections of important details of my original story on Sergeant Gordon Joinville. He also provided me with documentation of the facts.



The revisions involve three areas of my original version:

1. The circumstances under which Officer Joinville pursued and detained Zachary Lillard;
2. How the murder of Officer Joinville was executed;
3. Facts about Zachary Lillard including his age, parole hearings and cause of death.

I am pleased to offer them as modifications of this article. [The changes from the original 2009 story appear in blue type.](#) Thank you, Mr. Larsen!

Bob Leuten – July 6, 2021

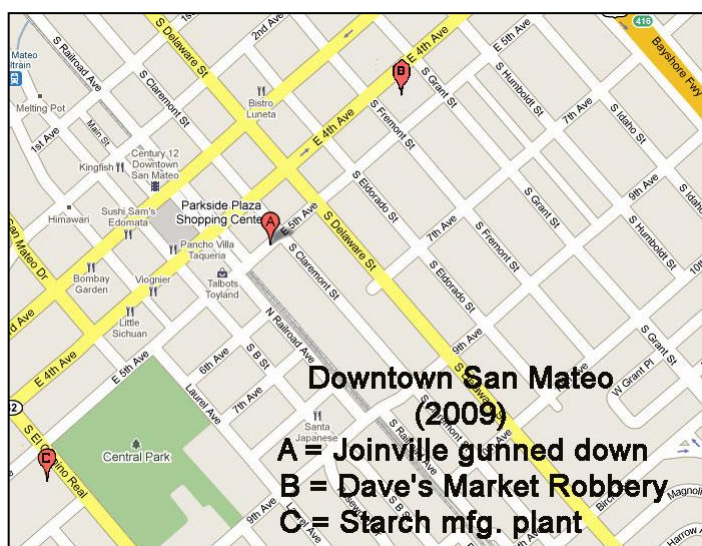
Gordon Joinville – A City of San Mateo Fallen Hero

Part 1 – Officer Down



In May 1968, Sergeant Gordon R. Joinville, a 12-year police veteran on the San Mateo (California) Police Department, was contacted by the office manager of a downtown San Mateo pharmaceutical supply store located on the 500 block of S. El Camino Real - "C" on the map below. The office manager told Sgt. Joinville that a man representing himself to be an assistant to a Stanford Medical School professor wanted to purchase a 100-pound keg of pill binding starch. The manager told him they did not have that in stock and it would be available in one week. The manager asked the man for a phone number, so they could call him when the item arrived. The man declined to provide a phone number and said he would return in a week. The manager thought that was suspicious, since pill binding starch is used to manufacture illegal drugs such as LSD, prompting the manager to call the San Mateo Police Department. Sgt. Joinville asked the manager to call him when the man returned to purchase the item. On Thursday afternoon, May 23, the manager called Sgt. Joinville to tell him the man had returned to pick up the item. Sgt. Joinville asked the manager to delay the man as long as possible, and he responded to the location in his unmarked detective vehicle. When Sgt. Joinville arrived, the man had just left with the keg in the back seat of his Volkswagen Karmann Ghia convertible with the top down. The manager gave Sgt. Joinville a description and license number of the vehicle, and direction of travel. Sgt. Joinville followed that direction and made an investigation traffic stop of the vehicle on Fifth Avenue near the intersection with S. Claremont Street - "A" on map.

This location was one block from the Southern Pacific train tracks. The suspect then got out of his car and approached the police car just as Sgt. Joinville attempted to make a radio call for a license plate computer check. The police dispatcher told Joinville to "stand by" due to heavy radio traffic that was busy handling an armed robbery that, coincidentally, was occurring just six blocks away at a grocery store, 916 East Fourth Avenue, - "B" on map. Before Joinville could transmit the license plate number over the radio, he was shot twice at



point-blank range killing him instantly. Even though the shooting occurred on a busy street in broad daylight, there were no known witnesses. This could be explained by the fact that a Southern Pacific train was scheduled to be passing by one block away.

The forensic evidence indicates that the shooter was seated in the rear passenger seat behind Sgt. Joinville when the two .45 caliber rounds were fired. There was no head rest separating the shooter from the back of Joinville. The first round was a contact wound in the center of officer's lower neck/upper back that left a tattoo bruise in the shape of the muzzle of a .45 caliber pistol. The bullet traveled straight through the chest, through his heart, exiting in the center of his lower chest. That was the fatal wound. The Sergeant collapsed on his right side on the front passenger seat. The second round was also a close contact wound behind the Joinville's left ear that penetrated his brain. Both cartridge cases were recovered inside the vehicle. A .45 semi-auto pistol ejects spent casings at a 45-degree upward angle to the right side of the weapon. All that evidence negates that the weapon was fired from outside the vehicle. That raises the question: Why was the shooter permitted to sit behind the officer armed with a pistol? One likely answer is that Joinville was lulled into being careless. Sgt. Joinville was a scuba diver and occasionally went out on scuba diving party boats in Monterey. So did the shooter and it is likely that they previously met on one of those dives. They recognized each other, Joinville was not aware that the shooter was a fugitive at the time, he had no probable cause to arrest him, and that he was a chronic conman. Joinville had to obtain ID from the shooter to run a wanted person check. The officer did not have a portable radio, so he had to use the one in the police vehicle to run the shooter through the system. In the interim there were three possible places for the shooter to wait. In his own vehicle, stand outside the officer's vehicle, or sit in the back seat of the police vehicle. Joinville selected the third option without patting the suspect down for a weapon—a fatal mistake—and one that has been teaching principle from which other police officers can learn: Don't put suspects in your vehicle without patting them down! The shooter, along with his 100 pounds of starch, then fled the scene.

At approximately 5:18 pm, Joinville was found dead by two small boys on their bicycles. They stared into the car, saw the bleeding man, and raced away for help. One of the boys went to Talbot's Toy Store, two blocks away, and the other went to a nearby Gulf service station on the corner of East Fourth Avenue and Delaware. The Gulf service station attendant, Bob Reed, took the boy's bike and raced to a nearby corner and then pedaled back to the waiting boy stating that he could not find anything wrong. (Due to his excitement, the boy probably did not give a very good description of where the unmarked police car was located.) The boy shouted to Reed, "I'll show you!" and led the way back to Joinville's police car. At 5:25 pm, Bob Reed then broadcast over the police radio, "There's a police officer here who's been seriously hurt, send an ambulance right away..." (This is the same Bob Reed that currently operates "Bob Reed's Auto Service" at the corner of 17th and Palm Avenues in San Mateo.)

San Mateo Police Officer John Burr, who had been best man at Joinville's wedding in 1961, was the first detective on the scene--he was one of the police officers covering the Dave's Market robbery. He pulled open the car door and found his fellow police officer stretched across the front seat. Joinville was pronounced dead shortly thereafter at nearby Mills Hospital. His firearm, a .38 caliber service revolver, was in its holster and had not been fired. In examining the police car, Burr found a notebook that appeared to be hidden beneath

Joinville's body. It was open to a page that had a description of a car and license plate number: "dark green 1959 Volkswagen Kharman Ghia – KKR030."



Gordon R. Joinville
1933 - 1968

At the time of his death, Detective Sergeant Gordon R. Joinville, age 34, left behind a wife, Margaret, and two small children, ages three and four.

Next: Part 2 - The Aftermath

Gordon Joinville – A City of San Mateo Fallen Hero

Part 2 – The Aftermath

As soon as the car's description and license plate number were run through the system the suspect was identified as Zachary Ford Lillard, also known as James C. Andrews. Lillard was single, age 33, six-feet, two-inches tall, weighed 158 pounds, with brown hair and light blue eyes. **He was never married.** He was wanted by the FBI on a federal fugitive warrant for kidnapping with bodily harm and unlawful flight to avoid prosecution. Lillard was also sought in both San Jose and San Francisco for armed robbery and car theft.

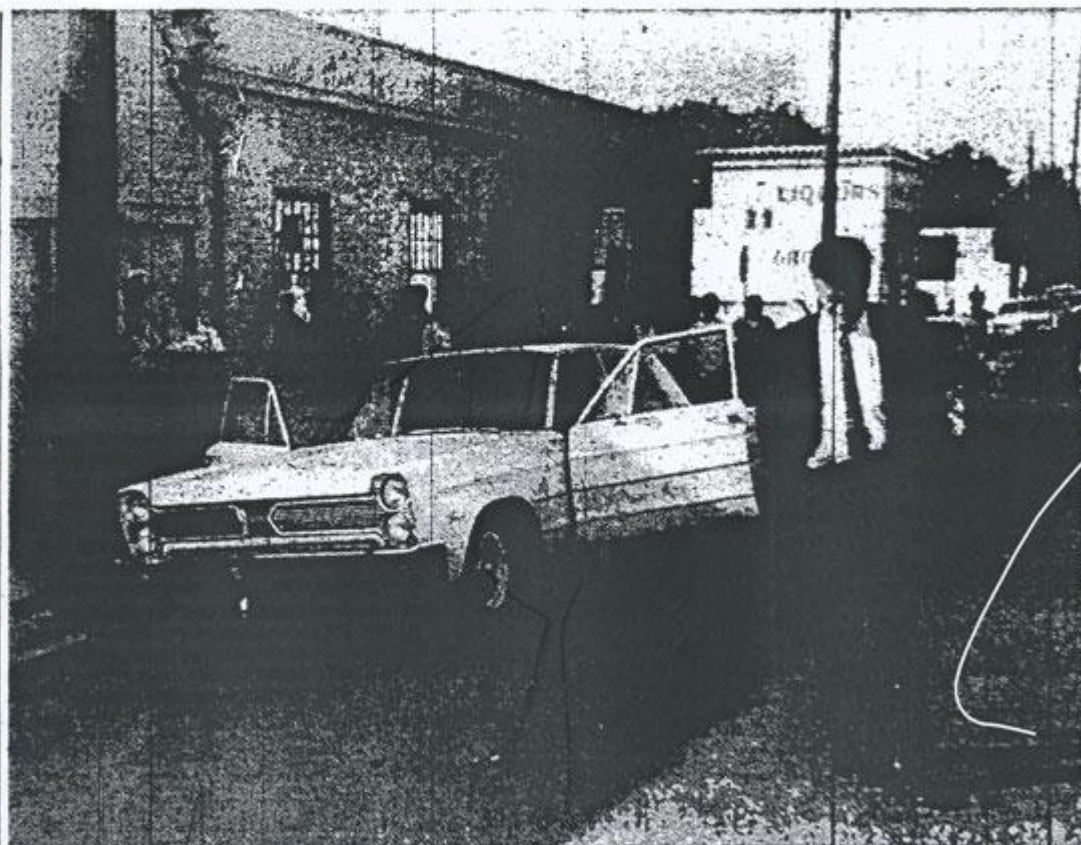
The Times

SAN MATEO TIMES AND DAILY NEWS LEADER

PENINSULA
SECTION

★ SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA, FRIDAY, MAY 24, 1968

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A crowd begins to gather around Sgt. Gordon Joinville's unmarked police car yesterday afternoon. An investigator walks away from the scene his face showing the strain and distress of the tragedy. At left, standing by the telephone pole, is Investigating Officer John Burr, who was Sergeant Joinville's best man at his wedding and the first on the scene. Ironically, the suspected killer, Zachary Lillard of San Jose, is regarded as an excellent scuba diver as was the slain officer, a member of the police skin diving team.

Knowing the serious charges against him with the long prison term he was facing explains the extreme measure that Lillard took to avoid being arrested.

By 6 p.m. (less than an hour after the shooting), an all-points bulletin was issued resulting in the largest manhunt in the history of San Mateo. Scores of police officers, many using their own automobiles, patrolled the nearby streets, highways, and alleys in the search for Joinville's killer. The story of the shooting and its aftermath dominated the local news until early June, when presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated in Los Angeles.

By the next day, Friday, May 24, 1968, law enforcement agencies throughout the West were searching for Lillard. Aiding in the search for Lillard were personnel from the FBI, State Highway Patrol, and neighboring police departments from all over the Bay Area. Even off-duty San Mateo police officers (including some who were on vacation) showed up in their own personal cars and offered to help in the search.

Within a day a fund was established in memory of the slain officer. "The Gordon Joinville Memorial Trust Fund," administered by Crocker Citizens Bank, was established to assist in the education of his two surviving small children. The list of donors to the Trust Fund ran 26 pages. In addition, the family was provided with compensation from Sergeant Joinville's pension, his life insurance (with accidental death benefit), Workers' Compensation, an FBI fund for fallen agents, and the Peninsula Peace Officers' Association.



At 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 25, two days after the murder, the FBI captured Lillard in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. At the time he was arrested, Lillard, unarmed, tried to evade his captors by running into a residential backyard and hiding in a flower bed. Thus ended his freedom, but not for long.

A rifle and two pistols, including the murder weapon, were found in a nearby truck that Lillard had rented. Soon thereafter, his Kharman Ghia (with license plate KKR030) and the LSD manufacturing lab (including the 100 pounds of starch he purchased in San Mateo) were also located. Lillard was immediately transferred to the San Mateo city jail where he was held without bail. On Tuesday May 28 he was arraigned in San Mateo Central District Municipal Court on murder charges. In covering Lillard's capture, local newspapers reported that he was "a known user of amphetamines and a devotee of health foods and the Rosicrucian religious sect."

It was also reported that Lillard was born in Ellenville, New York, and had attended Syracuse University where he studied chemistry. He was fluent in Spanish, a licensed pilot, and an accomplished scuba diver.

The outstanding federal kidnapping charges against Lillard were the result of 1966 discount store robbery in San Jose. In making his getaway from that robbery, Lillard forced a car off the road and kidnapped the driver. Now that Lillard was finally captured and jailed in San Mateo, authorities in Santa Clara County wanted him transferred to San Jose for arraignment on those charges. On October 30, Lillard was transferred to the Santa Clara County jail.

On November 3, Lillard staged a successful escape from that jail. He had somehow smuggled in a pistol--it was never discovered how he did it although it was rumored that he had offered a jailer \$5,000 for a weapon. While being escorted to his cell, Lillard pulled out his pistol. He forced two guards into his cell, ordering one of them to remove his uniform which Lillard put on. Using the guards' keys, he locked them into his cell and then, posing as a guard, walked out of the building a free man. Still dressed in the stolen guard uniform, Lillard flagged down a car in front of the jail. Using his pistol, he entered the car and commanded the driver to continue driving. About a mile away Lillard ordered the driver to pull into a gas station. He then forced the driver out and sped away in the stolen car. Again, all-points bulletins and a massive police search ensued. A week later Zachary Ford Lillard was captured for the second and final time in San Francisco. Again, he was unarmed and surrendered without resistance. That would be the last day of freedom he would ever know.



Detective Sergeant Gordon R. Joinville's funeral was held on Monday, May 27. The chapel service was held at the Sneider & Sullivan Funeral Home in San Mateo. The chapel overflowed with family, friends, uniformed policemen, firemen, and private citizens. Every police jurisdiction in the Bay Area was represented by a contingent estimated more than 700 uniformed officers including the Highway Patrol and the FBI. Virtually all San Mateo city officials were present including members of the city council.

In his eulogy, Bernard Cronin, pastor of St. Matthew's Catholic Church of San Mateo, said:

“It is difficult to conceive of a greater tragedy involving a community than the loss of a police officer through violence. Sergeant Joinville gave a very special kind of public service. We can be quite sure it is not pay, popularity, or acclaim that attracts such men to the job of policing a community. It is only a very fine sense of concern for, and dedication to their neighbors' well-being that can explain the risks these officers take in protecting life and maintaining law and order. In life and in death, Sergeant Joinville represented the acme of ideal service to humanity. In life and in death he represented a perfect embodiment of God's idea of love...It is hoped that his life will always be an inspiration to his colleagues on the force and his influence will prevail with all those youngsters whom he sought to persuade to face up to the reality of life.”

Following the funeral service, a motorcade of 300 police patrol cars and 40 motorcycles proceeded to Skylawn Memorial Park in one of the most impressive funeral processions in the history of San Mateo County. Gordon Joinville's burial plot is space 1, lot 33-A, in the Sunset Circle section of the cemetery. It has a stunning view of the Pacific Ocean.



On January 27, 1969, eight months after the shooting, Zachary Ford Lillard, went on trial in San Mateo Superior Court in Redwood City for the murder of San Mateo Police Detective Sergeant Gordon R. Joinville. Lillard's lead defense attorney was the prominent George T. Davis who had also defended Caryl Chessman, the "Red Light" rapist of the 1950s. A request for change of venue was denied by trial judge Melvin E. Cohn. Lillard did not testify at his trial. In fact, his defense called no witnesses at all. Margaret Joinville, the widow, was instructed by San Mateo District Attorney Keith C. Sorenson not to attend the trial for fear that if she acted with great emotion, the jury might be swayed and serve as the basis for an appeal. Nine days after the trial began Lillard was found guilty of murder in the first degree. The jury of nine men and three women deliberated less than six hours to reach their verdict.



Additional phases of the trial extended into mid-March and established that Lillard was sane, competent, and should be sentenced to death in the San Quentin gas chamber. The only real surprise at the trial did not occur in the courtroom. On Thursday, February 20, during a recess in the sanity phase of the trial, Lillard was allowed to enter a men's bathroom stall unaccompanied while guards stood just outside. Alone, he used a razor blade to make what was later described as a superficial cut to his left arm. The wound took five stitches to close, and the trial resumed on Monday, February 24. Many speculated that by cutting himself, Lillard was attempting to show that he was insane. The jury did not buy it.

On March 14, the jury foreman stated, that the death verdict was returned because of the "cold-blooded, deliberate, malicious killing of Gordon Joinville." Shortly thereafter, Lillard was transferred to death row at San Quentin prison to await execution.

Lillard was only the second person in San Mateo County since 1900 to face the death penalty for the killing of a peace officer. The first was parolee Alexander Robillard, age 21, who was convicted for the August 5, 1959, murder of 36-year-old Hillsborough police officer Eugene A. Doran. Robillard was executed in the San Quentin gas chamber on April 26, 1961. Officer Doran left behind an expectant wife, Alice, and two sons, Eugene Jr., age 15, and Patrick, age 11. A third son, Gary, was born later that year. Coincidentally, one of the first officers at the scene of the Doran killing was John Burr, who was the first police officer at the scene of Joinville's killing. In March 1969, the Eugene Doran Memorial Bridge on Interstate Highway 280 was dedicated in honor of the only Hillsborough police officer to ever die in the line of duty.

In February 1972, the California Supreme Court, by a 6-1 decision, ruled that California's death penalty was unconstitutional. Ruling that capital punishment when judged by

contemporary standards is both cruel and unusual. The Court added that lengthy imprisonments prior to execution constitute psychological torture with a dehumanizing effect. Affected by this ruling were 100 men and five women. The men included not only Lillard but also Sirhan Sirhan, convicted murderer of Robert F. Kennedy, and Charles Manson, convicted in the Sharon Tate murders. The ruling commuted the sentences of all those awaiting execution in California to life imprisonment with the possibility of parole.

On March 1, 1977, Lillard was transferred from San Quentin to California Men's Colony, a medium security prison in San Luis Obispo. Despite being up for parole numerous times and described as a model prisoner, Zachary Ford Lillard spent the last 35 years of his life incarcerated. On October 7, 2003, at the age of 69, he died of brain cancer because of smoker's lung cancer.

Next: Part 3 – A Friend of Youth

Gordon Joinville – A City of San Mateo Fallen Hero

Part 3 – A Friend of Youth



Chief McDonnell promotes
Gordon Joinville to the rank of Sergeant



Gordon Joinville's Badge

Even before the funeral, the local newspapers were filled with stories praising Sergeant Joinville for his work with young people. On Friday, May 24, 1968, the day after the shooting, *San Mateo Times* reporter Vera Graham wrote a column titled, "'Gordie' Was Friend of Boy in Trouble." In her article, she stated, "He was widely recognized for his excellence in investigative work and brought hundreds of juvenile narcotics cases to the fore, salvaging kid after kid...As personal friend, 'Gordie' Joinville was a man to whom one could trust that most precious thing of all -- a child's life."

On the same date, John Horgan, also a writer for the *San Mateo Times* wrote a column about Gordon Joinville, "Youth Loses Best Friend." (Horgan is now a columnist for the successor newspaper, *San Mateo County Times*.) In his article, Horgan wrote, "The youth of the city of San Mateo may not yet realize it, but they have lost one of their best and most dedicated friends. The murder of San Mateo Police Sgt. Gordon Joinville, one of the city's two detectives who specialize in youth work, will leave a void for the communities juveniles that will not be filled easily...It was the young law-breaker, the teenage offender who was having his or her initial brush with the law and be swayed by proper police handling to turn away from a potential life of crime, to whom Joinville's work and attitude meant the most." In a recent telephone interview, Horgan remembers meeting Gordon Joinville: "He was sincere, articulate, a good listener, and he looked you straight in the eye. You trusted him."

When leaving the burial, Margaret Joinville, Gordon's widow, was approached by a black woman who came up to her car and hugged her saying, "Oh what am I going to do? I have six kids and Officer Joinville helped me with four of them! What am I going to do with the other two now?"

Within days after the funeral, Margaret received nearly 200 letters from the parents of some of the children whose lives had been touched by her husband Gordon. These letters expressed their condolences along with the deep appreciation for the help that Sergeant

Joinville gave their kids during difficult times. Margaret saved these letters for many years but recently shredded them all out of concern for the privacy rights of the families involved.

Not all the letters that Margaret Joinville received were from parents. She received a poem about Gordon from a girl whose sister he had helped. Margaret regrets having misplaced the poem but remembers being moved by it.



A College of San Mateo student who knew of Gordon Joinville's work with youth painted some "Police Plaques of Love and Tenderness." Margaret recently left these plaques at the new San Mateo Police station for others to enjoy.

In the early 1960s, one boy, an eighth grader, was caught intentionally causing some minor property damage. Margaret reports, "Gordon took him, with parental permission, all over showing him the "seamy" side of life. Then Gordon showed him the Police Department and made him do a 35-page term paper from the Constitution on Property Rights. If he would do that, the charges would be dropped. The boy did and told Gordon, 'Officer Joinville, I have never learned so much, even in school. I promise I will never do anything wrong ever again.'" Margaret reports that four years later, the boy graduated from Aragon High School with a 4.0 grade-point average.

More recently, Margaret received a series of e-mails from an African American gentleman, now 55, praising her late husband. The man, now a successful college instructor and musician, met Sergeant Joinville only once. The meeting was not result of an infraction, misbehavior, or mischief. Yet, as a young boy, the encounter had a profound affect that would last a lifetime. He said, "When I was 12, a white policeman in San Mateo, Gordon Joinville, {voluntarily drove} me and two other kids to a summer camp in Santa Cruz. He talked about the law, and I remember the tone of his dialog was fatherly and very compassionate. He was one of the kindest men I ever met. He took us out for cheeseburgers, fries, and shakes. After he dropped us off at the camp and before he drove back home, he waited to make sure that we were settled and comfortable. He did not have to do that for a bunch of kids from East San Mateo. A kid never forgets that." Still inspired by the kind treatment he received from Sergeant Joinville, this man volunteers much of his own free time in working with children.

Because of his success in working with young people, Police Chief Martin McDonnell, gave Sergeant Joinville a great deal of latitude in working with kids who wandered from the straight and narrow. Minor property offenses (such as petty shoplifting) and the possession of marijuana are two examples of the kinds of violations on which Joinville would work his "Friend of Youth" techniques. Second-time offenders and children involved in more serious offenses such as drug dealing, violence, and bodily harm to others, were dealt with in more traditional methods including arrest, juvenile hall, and the legal system.



Sergeant Joinville devised a record-keeping system, Juvenile Contact Report or JCR, that would be kept in a County-wide registry to catch second-time offenders who might need more than the "kid gloves" approach.

An excellent communicator and speaker, Gordon Joinville frequently was called upon to give speeches at schools and clubs.



Since 1997, the San Mateo Police Department has been affiliated with PAL – Police Activities League, a national program whose motto is "Building the Bond Between Cops & Kids." PAL targets at-risk youth who, because of a variety of factors, may not be able to participate in school sports and other activities, and youth who are unsupervised during non-school hours. In collaboration with their community partners, PAL strives to create a safe society while promoting the physical, social, and mental development of youth. Program activities include judo, basketball, baseball, computer lab, scuba diving, soccer, rock climbing, camping, and rugby. In Gordon Joinville's era, there was no PAL--he pioneered many of today's PAL techniques and activities.

Sergeant Joinville was respected and admired not only by the parents and youth he "saved," but also by his fellow officers and supervisors. Joinville's partner, Detective Sergeant Herman Neuman (who was out of the country when the killing occurred) frequently referred to Gordon as "One of the best men we have." Chief McDonnell was quoted as saying, "He was a fine officer, a very fine officer, the best cop I ever knew. He had no idea of time in performing his duty. He worked a 24-hour day many times. He was a man truly dedicated."



So how did Gordon Joinville come to be such a fine police officer and devoted "Friend of Youth?" Did he grow up in a stable home environment with a strong, kind, father-figure? The answers are surprising.

Next: Part 4 – The Legacy

Gordon Joinville – A City of San Mateo Fallen Hero

Part 4 – The Legacy

On October 5, 1968, the City of San Mateo held a dedication ceremony at the opening of their new municipal swim pool on Kehoe Avenue. The new swim center, **Joinville Pool** (adjacent to Bayside Middle School), was dedicated in the memory of slain San Mateo Police officer, **Gordon R. Joinville**, who was shot and killed four months earlier. Present at the ribbon-cutting ceremony were members of the San Mateo City Council, the mayor, and members of the San Mateo Park and Recreation Commission. Sergeant Joinville was also memorialized at the San Mateo County Hall of Justice, the Peace Officers Memorial in Sacramento, the National Peace Officers Memorial in Washington D.C., and on numerous Internet sites. Included in the inscription on the commemorative plaque in the Joinville Pool lobby is:



A GENTLEMAN AND A FRIEND OF YOUTH.

So why had Gordon Joinville, in just 12 years on the San Mateo police force, come to be regarded as "a gentleman and a friend of youth"? Any peace officer killed in the line of duty will be memorialized. However, the outpouring of praise and admiration in Joinville's case was overwhelming.

The people whose lives he touched, both young and old, were forever changed by his tenderness and love. How is it that he developed into such a fine person and "Policeman's Policeman"?

One would expect that the seeds of his personality were developed at an early age, in a close, loving, and stable home environment.

If fact, family life in his early years were filled with instability and insecurity. At best, his could be described as a difficult childhood.



He was born Gordon Robert Schaefer on July 30, 1933. He had two younger sisters, Shirley, born in 1934, and Joyce, born in 1937. Their parents, Rose and Adolph Schaefer, raised their family in San Francisco until 1943 when they announced to the three children that they were going to be divorced. Shirley, Gordon's younger sister, was completely devastated by the announcement and felt terribly responsible for the breakup of her parents' marriage. Immediately, all three children were placed in boarding schools--Gordon in Christian Brothers School in Berkeley and the two girls in Dominican Convent in San Francisco. Gordon remained in the boarding school for four years during which time he had very little contact with his other family members.

In 1947 Rose remarried to George "Joe" Joinville at which time all three children took on the Joinville surname. The family then reunited and moved to Sparks, Nevada, where Joe was employed at Swift and Company in Reno.

While attending junior high school in Sparks, Shirley tells of an incident that may have shaped Gordon's future. In Shirley's own words:

"One time, on Halloween, he took a bevy of girls trick or treating. They wanted to 'let down the lights'. (A favorite activity for the night, streetlights used to be drawn up and down on chains, for changing bulbs). That night, as they were letting the lights down, a police car started to chase them. The girls, being girls, ran straight down the middle of the street. Gordon waved the police car down to 'save' them, was arrested and taken to jail. Joe and Rose were in the middle of a bridge party when the cops arrived to tell them of the arrest. Joe went down to the police station and was gone for hours (I remember!) When Gordon and Joe came home in the wee hours of the morning, Gordon reported to me that he and the police officers spent hours telling each other what each of them had done as pranks on past Halloweens! The next day at school, Gordon was the hero of all of the girls!"



Shirley and Gordon
8th Grade, Sparks, Nev.

In a telephone interview with Shirley, she explained that when Gordon saw the police car coming, he "saved" the girls by showing them where to hide so that he could take the entire blame himself for lowering the streetlights. The police did not press charges and Gordon got off with only a friendly warning.

Could this encounter with the policeman in Sparks, Nevada, when he was a teen have been a defining moment in his life? Instead of being penalized, he was taught a lesson in a way that ended up being a pleasant experience. No doubt the good feeling that Gordon felt after his encounter with the police was amplified when he became the hero of the girls at school! Perhaps this is when Gordon Joinville, consciously or unconsciously, decided that he wanted to help others in same manner that he was helped.

Bob Livingstone, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), has been working with San Mateo families since 1987. Here is what he has to say about Gordon's Halloween incident in Sparks:

"Those who have been abused or neglected as children become the walking wounded, with low self-esteem, a tendency to blame themselves for all the wrong that has become them, with feelings of hopelessness and lack of trust. That has a good chance of improving if the abused/neglected child has a positive experience with an adult where he feels loved and cared for unconditionally. This moment of positive regard is so antithetical to his life experience, that he embraces this memory like vice-grip. It can drastically alter deep despair into dreams of love and accomplishment. It is how we define the word miracle."

The Joinville family remained together in northern Nevada for the next three or four years. During their last year in Sparks, Gordon came down with a skin condition. He was bed-ridden for the entire school year with skin that peeled off. Each night he was treated with a

bath of Epsom Salts. After Rose and Joe got summer jobs at nearby Lake Tahoe, California, they took Gordon there with them. Within two weeks he was almost completely healed. Shirley reports that his symptoms seemed to be caused by the extreme alkali in Nevada's water. He never went back to Sparks. Instead, Gordon was sent back to the Christian Brothers boarding school in Berkeley. He remained for another year and was able to make up for the lost year of schooling. Meanwhile, the rest of the family relocated to San Francisco, and shortly thereafter to San Luis Obispo, California.

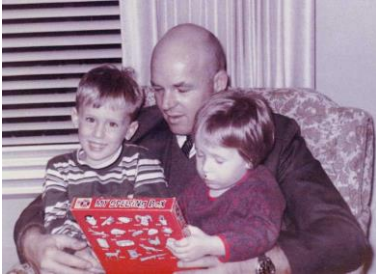
More remembrances from his younger sister, Shirley:

"As I remember him, he was my hero from my earliest years. I followed him like his shadow, and he always seemed to be fine with that. He was always a leader. In fact, when he died, a Sparks High School reunion book was dedicated to him....and he never attended High School in Sparks but graduated from the junior high school. He was the kind of a kid that thought about wearing green hair for St. Patrick's Day, back in the day that no one had that kind of imagination! He was highly intelligent (tested as near genius, according to my mother), and hauled many of us through math and science. His particular skill was to do it without making us feel that we were all blooming idiots for not catching on. He did not 'see' a handicap, in fact his first date was with a girl whose arm would fall out of its socket. Her parents taught him how to put it back in and sent them on their way. He liked to get a group of kids and go out into the country and camp overnight. He always organized it, and because of his reputation, other kids could join him. The other boys saw him as a boys' boy, the girls saw him as 'safe,' cute, and fun. And yet, his hobby was opera. He was a voracious reader. He was allergic to the sun, so learned to be a professional scuba diver and spelunker. (He checked the pipes, under the ocean in San Francisco Bay for heavens sake!) He told me that he had drawn his gun only twice in his professional life, and never used it during the course of an incident. We did have a difficult childhood, and thankfully must have had a solid foundation from somewhere for, as the Menninger's have said, 'Good mental health is the ability to adjust to changing situations.' Joyce became a very successful elementary school teacher, I became a child and family therapist (MFCC), and Gordon became a 'policeman's policeman'."

After high school, Gordon spent two years in the Navy at Corpus Christi, Texas, where he was trained to be a jet engine mechanic. He was immediately discharged when it was discovered that he had double-vision. As soon as Gordon left the Navy he returned to northern California and soon thereafter entered the police academy. After a very short courtship, he married a woman who, prior to their wedding day, did not tell him that she suffered from the effects of rheumatic fever. She died nine months later. Not long after that, he married for a second time. Within a year, he discovered that his new bride was not faithful. A divorce was finalized two years later. There were no children from either of his first two marriages.



Step-Father, Mother, Gordon



Gordon met his third wife, Margaret, in 1959. During their courtship she became a certified scuba diver, just like him. They were married in October 1961 and settled in San Mateo. Their marriage was rock solid for the six-plus years remaining years of his life. They had two children, a boy, and a girl, born in 1964 and 1965. After Gordon was killed in 1968, Margaret found it necessary to finish her college degree. While raising two small children this was

not an easy task. It took her eight years to graduate but she ended up with a distinguished career in clinical lab science at Valley Medical Center in San Jose, specializing in diagnostic blood chemistry. During her 28-year career, Margaret lectured medical school residents at Stanford University and for the Center for Disease Control. She retired in 2005 and still resides in northern California. She never remarried.

Gordon's remembrance is forever in Margaret's thoughts. (She can easily recite the number of years, months, days, and hours of their marriage.) She is inspired by his memory and the love that he expressed for her, their children, and all the young people he helped in his police work. Quoting Margaret:

I have always tried, in Gordon's memory, to keep upbeat and happy, no matter how difficult life has been, as I was so very blessed knowing Gordon. His Stepdad, Mom, and Shirley were all just as wonderful in my life.

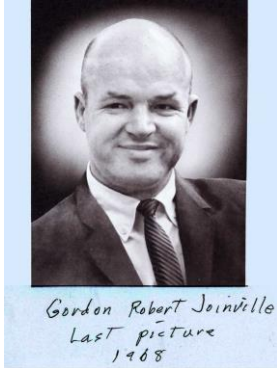
Detective Sergeant Gordon R. Joinville remains the only police officer in the history of the San Mateo Police Department to ever lose his life in the line of duty.

Joinville Swim Center and Park (as it is now called) is a most appropriate memorial for such a fine gentleman and friend of youth. The pool serves the City of San Mateo as the only year-round public swimming facility. Thousands of children have learned to swim in the pool's summer programs over the years, including both Joinville children. The pool is also used for recreational swimming, lap swimming, the San Mateo Master Marlins adult swim team, and several adult swim-fit programs. With his love of the water and young people, Gordon Joinville would have been pleased to see how his memory is memorialized.



It was, in all likelihood, the Sparks policeman on that Halloween night that motivated Gordon Joinville to become the fine, loving man he became. It did not have to be a policeman to

have inspired him; it could just as easily have been an uncle, a coach, a scout leader, an athlete, or a schoolteacher.



Gordon Joinville's story should not be lost in history. It is important we realize that people's lives are shaped by those with whom they interact. He was sent on his all-too-short life journey of helping young people by the kindness and compassion of a caring and understanding policeman. He taught the lesson he learned that Halloween night to others many times over.

Gordon Joinville left as his legacy all the children he helped as a policeman and all people who learned to swim and enjoy the Joinville Swim Center.

* * * * *

If you have something to add, correct, or would like to comment on this story, the author would like to hear from you, **ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE, OR KNOW OF ONE OF "GORDON'S KIDS."** Your right to privacy and confidentiality will be respected. Contact: Bob@Leuten.com or:

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I would like to thank the following for their assistance in compiling the information for this report:

- First and foremost, **San Mateo Police Chief Susan E. Manheimer** and her secretary, **Maya Nakamura**. Without their help, this report would not exist.
- Margaret Joinville (Gordon Joinville's widow)
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- Lieutenant Mike Brunicardi, San Mateo Police Department
- Bob Livingstone, LCSW - www.BobLivingstone.com
- Bob Reed
- Joanne Bracco
- Lori Piacente
- Larry Radetich (who was the first lifeguard at Joinville Pool on the day it opened!)
- Lane Poms
- Nancy Littlefield
- Bart Selby
- San Mateo County History Museum (archives)
- San Mateo Public Library (San Mateo Times archives)
- . . . and all the hundreds of "Gordon's Kids" whose identities shall remain confidential.

Bob Leuten
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