

Statesville Fire Captain Killed by Bomb Blast, 1967

Posted by [Mike Legeros](#) on 16 January 2017, 9:32 pm

On November 22, 1967, Statesville Fire Captain Lee Roy Horton, 41, was killed in a bomb blast, when his booby-trapped personal vehicle exploded beside Station 2 on Security Drive.

This unusual story comes by way of the [North Carolina Fallen Firefighters Foundation](#). They've announced this year's honorees to be added to the state memorial on May 6, 2017. The eleven names include Captain Horton, the one legacy member this year.

Google finds a few archived stories, by way of the Statesville Record and Landmark, the Daily Times-News from Burlington, the Morning News from Wilmington, Delaware, and the Chicago Tribune. And most of those are excerpts from Newspapers.com.

Horton, 41, was killed by a dynamite bomb planted in his pick-up truck. He had finished working a night shift and was preparing to go home. He started the truck and the bomb exploded. The blast "pulverized" the truck and severed both of Horton's legs.

Between 15 and 20 sticks of dynamite were believed to have been placed under the driver's seat. The explosion also damaged the fire station building, next to which his truck was parked.

Motives and Connections

Horton was separated from his wife Ruth, and she didn't know what was behind the bombing, reported the newspapers. Nor did the police have any (initial) idea about motives.

Five days later, in Lexington, NC, the private car of Davidson County Sheriff Fred Sink was bombed. His house was also damaged. City, county, state, and federal law enforcement officers looked for connections to the Statesville's murder. They were joined by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, which was investigating the bombing and murder of a County Solicitor General on August 7, 1967.

Horton's wife was subsequently convicted of her husband's murder. She served just seven years, we're told. She also tried to have him killed once before, but her hired assassins skipped town. They were later brought to court, and claimed they were merely posing as hit men to get her money. And it appears they were convicted on charges of conspiracy, if we read this [court case summary](#) correctly. Captain Horton was buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Statesville.

Believe he's only the third fallen firefighter in North Carolina killed in a homicide, after Robert Young of Winston-Salem FD (1918) and Roy Bailey of Westend FD (1989).