



## Harold P. Stites

Staff Position: Senior Officer

Location: USP Alcatraz

Last Watch: May 2, 1946

Senior Officer Harold P. Stites and Correctional Officer William A. Miller were killed in the three-day riot and revolt by inmates at USP Alcatraz that occurred May 2-4, 1946. The major disturbance, referred to as "the Battle of Alcatraz" and popularly known as the "Alcatraz Blastout," started as an elaborate escape plot that ringleaders decided to turn into a fight to the death when the attempt failed.

On May 2, 1946, six inmates took nine officers hostage and broke into a gun gallery, where they secured weapons. When their initial plan to make their escape through the recreation yard failed, they took control of one of the cellblocks and settled in for a siege that lasted until the morning of May 4. While in control of the cell house, they severely beat the hostages and shot several of them point blank with one of the captured weapons. They also fired upon officers both inside and outside the cell house.

Officer Stites, a member of one of the rescue parties, was killed during an exchange of gunfire with the inmates, as he and several other officers attempted to enter the cell house gun gallery to rescue a hostage. The U.S. Marines helped bring an end to the disturbance.

Unfortunately, it took quite some time to rescue the officers and get them medical care. In all, 15 BOP officers were injured during the Blastout. Of the six inmates who instigated the disturbance, three were killed during the riot, two were tried and executed, and the sixth remained in BOP custody until the 1980s.

Of interest is the fact that Officer Stites ended the 1938 escape attempt during which Officer Royal C. Cline was mortally wounded.