



## Royal C. Cline

Staff Position: Correctional Officer

Location: USP Alcatraz

Last Watch: May 23, 1938

Assigned to the wood working factory, Senior Custodial Officer Royal C. Cline was severely beaten with a hammer and scraps of metal by three inmates attempting to escape. Inmates James Limerick, Rufus Franklin, and James Lucas clubbed Officer Cline in the head and dragged him to a corner. They then made their way to the roof of the old industries building on the north side of the island.

Tower Officer Harold P. Stites, who years later was also killed in line of duty on May 2, 1946, halted the escape attempt when the inmates mounted the catwalk leading to his industries guard tower. When the inmates threw scrap metal pieces at him, Officer Stites returned fire with tower weapons (a .45 caliber handgun and rifle), shooting Limerick and Franklin in the process. Inmate Lucas surrendered. Other officers responded immediately to the gunfire and took the inmates in custody.

Officer Cline died the following day at Marine Hospital from massive head injuries. He was the first officer to be killed at USP Alcatraz.

Officer Cline began his career in the Bureau in November 1931. He first served as a correctional officer at FCI La Tuna (then called the U.S. Detention Farm) and transferred to USP Alcatraz in May 1934. He had been with the agency for more than 7 years at the time of his death.

Inmate Limerick had been serving a life sentence for bank robbery and kidnaping, while Franklin had been serving a 30-year sentence for violation of the National Motor Vehicle Theft Act, assault, and bank robbery. Lucas was 25 years old and had been serving a 30-year sentence for bank robbery and violation of the Dyer Act. He had previously gained notoriety at Alcatraz for stabbing Al Capone with a pair of barber shears.

Inmate Limerick died later that day from a gunshot wound to the head, while Franklin recovered from gunshot wounds to the arm and shoulder. Both Franklin and Lucas were later convicted of first degree murder for the death of Officer Cline and given life sentences.