

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Municipal law enforcement agencies in Onslow County help police the growing populations of the various towns and the City of Jacksonville. Each agency's origins can be traced back to the individual municipality's incorporation charters. As each area has grown in population, so too has the size of their police force. Richlands, Swansboro, Holly Ridge, North Topsail Beach, and Jacksonville each have their own police department that oversees their particular jurisdiction.

SEC. 25. That it shall be lawful for the town constable to serve Constable to and execute all civil or criminal process that may be directed execute process. and delivered to him by any court in the county of Onslow under the same regulations and penalties as prescribed by law in the case of other constables.

SEC. 26. That a policeman of the town shall have the same Powers of authority to make arrests and execute criminal process within the policemen. corporate limits of the town as is vested by law in a sheriff.

Session Laws of the NC General Assembly, 1905.

In 1880 when the NC General Assembly incorporated the town of Richlands, M. B. Steed became the first marshal of the town. By 1905 this position was renamed constable, as in other towns in the county, and the person elected also served as tax collector. Any policemen hired by the constable were given "the same authority to make arrests and execute criminal process within the corporate limits of the town as is vested by law in a sheriff." In 1965 Richlands police expanded their jurisdiction to three miles outside of town limits, where it remains today.

As the population of the county increased due to the construction of Camp

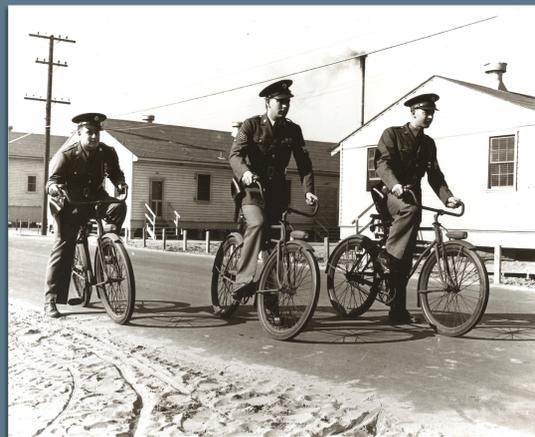


Image courtesy NC Division of Archives and History.

Davis and Camp Lejeune in the 1940s, policing became more difficult. In April 1943 Richlands town aldermen asked for servicemen to be restricted from visiting the town after eleven o'clock as they disturbed the peace. At the urging of the Chief of Police, E. O. Beasley, Richlands town aldermen visited the General on base to ask for Military Police to supplement their own force. The MPs pictured here were stationed on

Camp Davis, where they would have jurisdiction over the servicemen there or in towns like Holly Ridge, Richlands, and Jacksonville, where they may have visited.



Photo courtesy Jacksonville Police Department.

Chief Clyde R. Cook served as Jacksonville's police chief from 1940 to 1976. He oversaw dramatic growth during the population boom associated with WWII and the construction of Camp Lejeune.



Jacksonville Daily News, September 1971.



Jacksonville Daily News, March 1977

Law Enforcement agencies seek out new technology to help better protect themselves and the public which they serve. Polygraph machines like the one above used by the Jacksonville Police Department required not only new technology but specially trained staff to operate the new equipment. New camera equipment helped them record evidence, while radar equipment provided a more efficient way to catch speeding drivers.



Jacksonville Daily News, March 1973.

Levi Simmons, first African American patrol officer at the Jacksonville Police Department, began his career in 1967. Simmons also became the first African American officer to patrol white neighborhoods and be promoted to Lieutenant. He left the JPD in the 1990s and retired from the Kinston Police Department in 2017 after more than fifty years in law enforcement, for which he was recognized as the longest serving certified police officer in the state. Simmons also received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the highest honor that can be given by the Governor.



Jacksonville Daily News, May 1971.



Image Courtesy Jacksonville Public Safety Office.

There are currently one hundred twelve sworn officers and thirty support staff that make up the Jacksonville Police department. The Richlands Police Department has seven full time officers and one part time officer.



Image Courtesy Richlands Police Department.

