

“A LOOK INTO THE PAST” BY SERGEANT KEN NEILSEN

“The Pipes Are Calling”



Sgt. Ken Neilsen

Have you ever wondered why the bagpipes are played at police funerals, and ceremonies? Well if you have I've got the answer for you and it has a lot to do with American and world history.

During the turn of the 19th. Century the United States saw an overwhelming influx of immigrants. Many of these new Ameri-

can citizens were from Ireland and Scotland. They like other fresh off the boat immigrants attempted to seek out gainful employment. What they found in its place however was hostility and discrimination. Thus, they took what jobs they could get which in most circumstances were the least desirable.

At the top of the “least desirable” list during that time period was Police and Fire positions. These jobs paid little, were considered quite dangerous, and received very little respect from the public. As a result the Police ranks

swelled with Irish and Scotch immigrants who brought along with them their own ethnic customs and music. This of course is where the bagpipes come in and eventually became traditional within the Law Enforcement Profession.

So now you have a ready answer if you are ever asked why the pipes are played at police ceremonies and funerals. If you however decide that a history lecture is too long of an answer just tell them that *“where ever brave men and women are, so are the pipes”* and remember there is no shame in tradition and heritage.