

NEWS

Death of a 'brave' policeman

Dare-devil armed robbers laid siege to Ipetu-jesa, Osun State and robbed passengers of luxury buses on the Ilesa-Akure road. They killed a Divisional Police Officer (DPO) who was to his colleagues a "brave" officer and to his children a God-fearing dad. **Wale Folarin** writes on how it happened.

CHIEF Superintendent of Police (CSP) Joseph Ochiriji Ajoge was one policeman known for his diligence and total commitment to duty. He enjoyed the respect of his subordinates and was loved by his superior officers. Policing was a job that he loved so much. The 57-year old police officer would never have settled for any other job- if given a choice- it was widely believed. Perhaps, that explained why he proudly went about his duty, radiating rare bravery and courage. Ajoge died in active service last Tuesday at Ipetu-jesa, Osun State. He was killed by armed robbers.

Until his untimely death, CSP Ajoge was the Divisional Police Officer (DPO), Ipetu-Jesa. Even if a soothsayer had forewarned him about the impending disaster, his courage, bravery and love for humanity, especially those in distress, would have made him to turn deaf ears to such warning.

Ajoge arrived at his office that Monday. He was said to have left the office for his house at about 6: pm. He returned three hours later for the night shift. He was in the office till about 10:00 pm when he left with some of his men on patrol".



• The Police 504 Station wagon car in which the officer and his men rode with bullet holes

While on patrol, he got a distress call at about 3:am, alerting him of some armed robbers who were operating on the Ilesa-Akure highway. The armed robbers were said to have attacked some luxury buses and dispossessed the passengers of their belongings.

He led the patrol team quickly to the scene of the incident, in a bid to rescue the victims and arrest the night marauders who were known to have been terrorising people on that road for sometime. However, when Ajoge and his men got to the scene of the robbery, they met the place deserted and they assumed that the men of the underworld had fled.

Moments after Ajoge and his men alighted from their vehicles, the armed robbers who were hiding, in an ambush opened fire on them. They were drenched in the hail of bullets, one of which hit the CSP on the head, killing him on the spot. Some of his men who fled in several directions were injured. Not satisfied, the armed robbers rained several bullets on the patrol van and the Peugeot 504 station wagon which brought Ajoge to the scene of the inci-

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Speaking with THE NATION on the incident, the first son of the victim, Thomas, described him as a disciplined and God-fearing man. He said that members of the family will not only miss his fatherly advice and care, but will also find it difficult to fill the vacuum created by the death of their breadwinner.

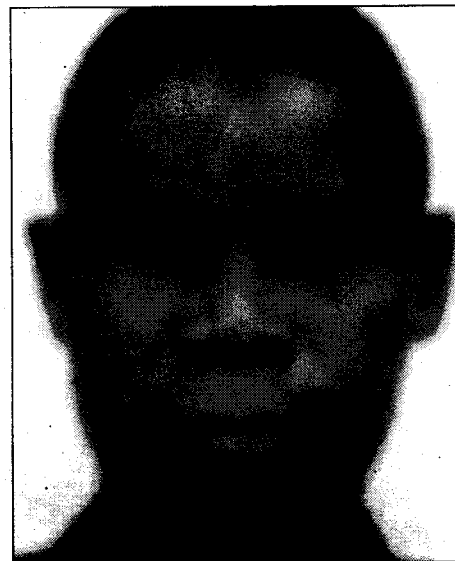
On his father's dreams, he said that the late Ajoge was passionate about seeing all his children in well respected positions in the society. Besides, he dreamt of attaining the highest level possible in his career as a police officer. According to him, arrangements are on to ensure that his father was given a befitting burial at Okene, his hometown, in Kogi State. The late CSP's son also pleaded with the police authorities to ensure that the killers were brought to justice.

The state Commissioner of Police, Mr Sulaiman Fakai, said it was unfortunate that the CSP died the way he did. He described the late Ajoge as a courageous man who served the police diligently.

The Commissioner said plans were on to give the late Ajoge a hero's funeral, while the police will leave no stone unturned to bring the perpetrators of the heinous crime to book.

The state police boss also assured that all the entitlements of the late CSP would be promptly settled, to ensure that members of his family do not suffer.

CSP Ajoge enlisted in the police as a sergeant in September, 1973. He hailed from Okene in Adavi Local Government Area. He rose through the ranks and was promoted CSP in October 2003. CSP Ajoge served as DPO in Otan-Ayegbaju, Ifon-Osun, Iragbiji, Apomu and Ejigbo. He was posted to Ipetu-jesa early this year.



The late Ajoge

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His body was deposited at the mortuary of the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital, Ile-Ife.