

**THIRTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, VETERANS
AFFAIRS, and CONSUMER PROTECTION MEETING**

Chairman Novelle E. Francis Jr.

Virgin Islands Police Department

Wednesday May 25, 2022



Good afternoon Honorable Carla J. Joseph,
Chairwoman of the Committee on GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS, VETERANS AFFAIRS, and CONSUMER PROTECTION,
Committee Members, members of the 35th Legislature,
legislative staff, fellow testifiers, and to the listening and
viewing audience.

I am, Uston Cornelius, your Deputy Chief of Police, for the VIRGIN ISLANDS Police Department, St. Croix district.

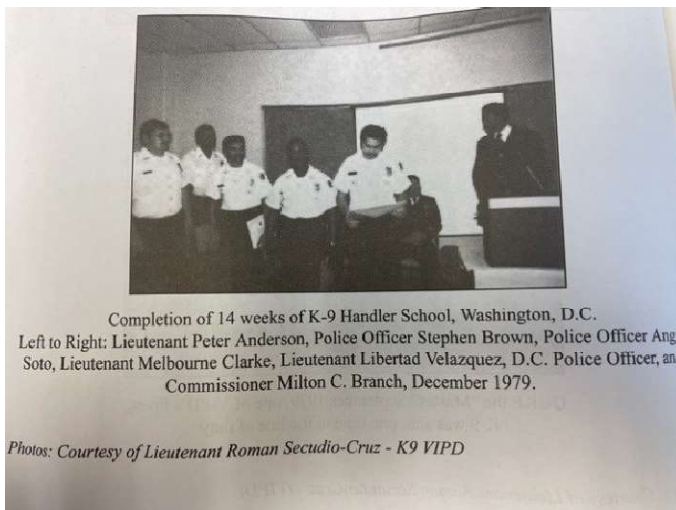
Honorable Carla J. Joseph, I would like to thank you for for inviting me, to say a few words, on behalf of the GOOD Lt., Melbourne Clarke, “Mel” as he was affectionately known.

The community might not be aware, that he was also a K9 Handler, prior to becoming the traffic Guru, that he was.

In 1979, then Police Commissioner, Milton C. Branch, and Police Chief George Washington, “Speedy George”, authorized and designated Sgt. Peter W. Andersen, to research the use of dogs in police work, in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In December of 1979, the first nucleus, of the K9 Corps was formed, and it consisted of five members, and Lt. Melbourne Clarke was one of the proud members.

Lt. Melbourne Clarke was fortunate to travel with his K9 Partner "Bear" where he assisted in solving crimes, on nearby islands.



Eventually Lt. Melbourne Clarke was inspired by Police Officer J. Graham known to most as “Drummer Boy” and he took an interest in traffic and became the traffic commander, and that’s where he became known by most of us.

When I joined the Virgin Islands Police Department in the 1990’s he was the Traffic Commander, and he was feared by all because of his no nonsense style, which most young officers avoided.

Lt. Melbourne Clarke’s training in Traffic Investigations, was very extensive, and ranged from At Scene Traffic Investigation, Advance Traffic Investigation, Radar Operation and Detection, Speed & Crush Depth Analysis, to include Accident Reconstruction.

Lt. Melbourne Clarke was referred to, as the route man, there was no road, on the island of St. Croix that Lt. Melbourne Clarke did not know the route number for.

In an effort to educate, Lt. Melbourne Clarke would be seen often on channel 8, giving safety tips.

To make sure the education did not miss anyone he would also be heard on Saturdays, in the afternoon, on Am 970, with Gerard Luz James, this is where he answered questions pertaining to title 20, rules and regulations, and it ranged from DUI, passing on yellow lines, seatbelt usage, speeding, unregistered vehicle etc.

In the 1990's the Virgin Islands of the United States hosted its 1st 70.3 Half Iron Man Triathlon, and Lt. Melbourne Clarke was tagged as the Go To Person, to be the lead car for this event.

HOT CORNER was the area that the onlookers would flock to, to see the lead car with the number one biker on the tail of the bumper as Lt. Clarke made that tough maneuver.

I'm proud to say I was fortunate to be his sidekick as he showed me how experienced people do it.

I appreciated his leadership, loved the way he carried himself, his hat was always on his head, shoes shine, clothing was always neat and tucked tight.

When it came to eating, Lt. Melbourne Clarke loved his seafood, however he also loved souse, when he came to the office with his souse he had a habit of carefully tucking his napkin around his neck in case of any splatter, I would always harass him asking him "Lt. Wah You Dealing With Man"? He would just chuckle and continue his lunch.

Lt. Melbourne Clarke retired, December of 1999, serving 25 years to this community, and whenever we ran into each other we always reminisced about the old days.

Even after Lt. Melbourne Clarke retired, he could not keep still, and had to find something to do, so he became a Legionnaire, and was District Commander, for post 85, until his untimely demise.

When we laid Lt. Melbourne Clarke to rest, in the Kingshill Cemetery, even though sad, I couldn't help but smile, why you might ask?

It was because his resting place was close to the Queen Mary Highway, route 70, and I saw it ironic, that he was right next to where traffic passes, to continue to monitor the traffic daily.

I want to thank the members of the 35th Legislature for seeing it fitting to bestow this honor upon a deserving servant of this community.

Many of us:

- * Civilian Employee Ms. Louise Arnold,
 - * Sgt. Charles Orange,
 - * Cpl. Lauritz Moorehead,
 - * Cpl. Enrique Santos,
 - * Pofc. Carlton Wakefield,
 - * Pofc. Germaine Payne,
 - * Pofc. Keith Williams,
 - * Pofc. Leslie Hatchette
 - * Pofc. Freddy Ortiz
 - * Pofc. Gloria Singho,
 - * Pofc. Naomi Joseph, and
- Myself.

We are honored to see route 669, a road he travelled on during his career, from the Patrick Sweeney Headquarters, daily, until his retirement be named in his honor.

I know his children Anna M. Clarke, Lynette M. Clarke, and son, Ray Anthony Clarke are proud and happy to see that their father was appreciated, and now, his name, would live on.

Thank You for this consideration, Lt. Melbourne Clarke
“Mel” is truly deserving of this honor.