

Centralia Police Department Awards Ceremony City Council Meeting, May 11, 2010

Each year during the month of May, America takes one week to honor police officers across the nation for their dedication, commitment, service, and sacrifice. This year, May 9 -15 was National Police Week, and Saturday, May 15 was National Peace Officers' Memorial Day, a day, designated by the President and Congress of the United States, to honor those in law enforcement who have made the supreme sacrifice in service to our citizens.

In 2009, 124 law enforcement officers across the nation were killed in the line of duty. In the City of Centralia, six Centralia Police Officers were assaulted; fortunately none with significant injuries.

May 11, we recognized and honored officers and employees of Centralia Police Department. We honor them for their spirit of volunteerism, their dedication and service, their bravery, and their representation of the City of Centralia.

The recognition of personal excellence is an important aspect of this department's activities. Presenting departmental awards for meritorious service provides that recognition, thereby enhancing departmental morale, reinforcing the department's commitment to the maintenance of a high standard of performance by its members, and motivating personnel to perform their duties at the highest possible level.

Certificate of Commendation

The Certificate of Commendation is presented in recognition of a high degree of competence and professionalism in the performance of departmental duties. This includes exemplary conduct during a field incident or operation, outstanding administrative work, the effective handling of a criminal investigation, the organization of a new and beneficial department program, designing and conducting a course of training, and commendable participation in any other activity that improves the department's functioning or brings credit upon the department in any way. It may also be presented to any employee who has demonstrated long-term excellence in service to the department. This award is presented in the form of a certificate

Police Officers John Panco, Mike Lowrey, and Will Phipps

March 26, 2010: Officers Panco, Lowrey, and Phipps responded to a reported car crash on Harrison Avenue. A woman had suffered a heart attack while in her car. The vehicle was involved in a collision with other vehicles on Harrison Avenue and Officer Panco was the first to arrive as he was only seconds away. He removed her from the car and attempted to save her life using CPR. He was assisted by Officers Phipps and Lowrey who arrived at the scene prior to paramedics from Riverside Fire Authority. Despite their heroic efforts, along with the efforts of RFA paramedics, in attempting to save this person's life, the woman did not survive.

For their competency and professional conduct during this high stress event, Police

Officers Panco, Lowrey, and Phipps are hereby formally commended for their actions.

Community Services Officer Per Perez

December 8, 2009: Community Services Officer Per Perez was security at the Centralia Municipal Court. He observed some suspicious activity exhibited by a male subject who was waiting screening prior to entry into the court chambers. This male subject was detained and a search revealed that he was carrying a concealed improvised explosive device. By his initiative and actions Officer Perez prevented this subject from entering the court with an improvised explosive device.

For his competency and professional conduct during this high stress event, Community Services Officer Perez is hereby formally commended for his actions.

Police Sergeant Stacy Denham

The Centralia Police Department was notified that grant funds, in the amount of \$7,500 per site, were available from the Washington State Traffic Safety Commission for the installation of school zone warning lights for local grade schools. Stacy Denham, then an officer assigned to the department's traffic unit, prepared and submitted a grant request for such school warning lights for the Edison and Centralia Christian School. His submission was successful and the materials were delivered. The cost of the lighting and radar equipment consumed the available funds. Officer Denham then contact local businesses to encourage their participation in providing the needed equipment and labor to complete the project. He secured a partnership with War-Mur Electric, Centralia City Light, and Consolidated Electrical Distributors for the necessary installation materials, engineering, and labor; the value of which was equal to the \$15,000 grant received. The traffic control signals were installed and are now operational with no impact to the department's budget. Traffic infraction notices for speeding in those two school zones have decline markedly since installation.

For his competency and professional conduct in accomplishing the mission of the department, Police Sergeant Stacy Denham is hereby formally commended for his actions.

Police Officer Pat Beall

January 25, 2010: officers of the Centralia Police Department responded to an attempted bank robbery at the Twin Star Credit Union. The incident, culminating in the arrest of the suspect, resulted in a great deal of information being generated as to the suspect, other robberies in other jurisdictions, as well as previous bank robberies in Centralia. The cases were further complicated by the many local, state, and federal jurisdictions involved. Lead investigator Detective Pat Beall worked tirelessly and methodically to put the pieces together, distribute, collect, and collate information from the many jurisdictions involved, and prepare the primary case for trial.

The resulting investigation and inter-agency cooperation resulted in the suspect being convicted of all counts. In addition, multiple jurisdictions throughout the Pacific Northwest have been able to prepare cases against this individual and a previous bank robbery in Centralia has also been cleared.

While many officers of the department contributed greatly to the successful outcome of this incident, the leadership, organization skills, and work effort of Detective Beall was recognized by those within the criminal justice community. For his competency and professional conduct in accomplishing the mission of the department, Police Officer Pat Beall is hereby formally commended for his actions.

Life Saving Award

The Life Saving Award is conferred upon any member of the department whose actions directly contribute to saving or significantly prolonging human life. This award will be presented in the form of a ribbon bar, and a certificate.

Previous Recipients of the Life Saving Award:

Officer Chris Fitzgerald (3 awards)
Officer Wayne Compton
Officer Mike Lowrey
Officer Stacy Denham
Officer Will Phipps
Officer Mike Smerer
Officer Dave Clary

Officer Will Phipps

February 27 2010: Officer Will Phipps responded to a motor vehicle crash in the 2600 block of W. Reynolds. A male driver had suffered a medical condition, which apparently caused him to lose consciousness and crash his car into a power pole. Upon arriving at the scene, Officer Phipps observed that the collision had caused the power pole to lean significantly. Sparks from the live power lines presented a clear danger to rescuers.

With full realization of the dangers present, Officer Phipps removed the unresponsive man from the car and performed CPR until medics arrived. His actions greatly contributed to the survival of the male driver.

For his initiative and courage, their sacrifice and commitment, and their willingness to place himself in danger to save life during this incident, Officer Phipps is awarded the Centralia Police Department Life Saving Award. This is Officer Phipps' second life saving award.

Medal of Distinction

The Medal of Distinction is awarded to department members who distinguish themselves in the line of duty by acts of personal bravery, not falling within the guidelines for the Medal of Valor. The medal of distinction will be presented in the form of a medal, a ribbon bar, and a certificate.

Previous Recipients of the Medal of Distinction:

Officer Pat Fitzgerald
Officer Bill Rodocker
Sergeant Dave Ross
Officer Johnny Gonzales

Officer Corey Butcher

July of 2009: Officer Butcher responded to a reported drowning in a lake behind Schaffer Park. Even though the incident was outside the city limits, Butcher responded as he was the closest unit and was one of the first officers to arrive at the scene. It was initially believed, due to the distance and small stature of the victim, that a child had been pulled from the water onto a small island in the middle of the lake. Butcher saw the victim lying on the island, but none of the bystanders appeared to be trying to help, so he shed his uniform and equipment and swam over 500 feet to reach the island. Once there, he discovered it was a small adult male and Officer Butcher, along with a deputy from the Lewis County Sheriff's Office, attempted to revive the victim with CPR and rescue breathing. Despite their efforts, the male subject, who had not drowned, succumbed to a medical condition.

For his initiative and courage, his sacrifice and commitment, and his willingness to place himself in danger to save life during this incident, Officer Butcher is awarded the Centralia Police Department Medal of Distinction.

Citizen Commendation

This award may be presented to any person who is not a member of the department but who has materially aided the department or its officers in some way. This includes assistance in the solution of crime or the apprehension of criminals, aiding an officer in the field in a critical situation, and cooperation with or assistance to the department as a whole in any aspect of the department's administration or operations. This award is presented in the form of a letter signed by the Chief of Police. Recipient: Holly Wietz (see copy below)

Medal of Valor

The Medal of Valor is awarded to department members for conspicuous gallantry while acting in the line of duty, not falling within the guidelines for the Medal of Honor. It is presented to officers for acts of exceptional bravery performed at a very high risk to their own lives with full awareness of the danger involved. This award will be presented in the form of a medal, a ribbon bar, and a certificate.

Previous Recipients of the Medal of Valor:

Officer Paul McCormick
Officer Ruben Ramirez
Officer Tracy Murphy

Officer Neil Hoium

In the early morning hours of January 25, 2010, Officer Neil Hoium responded to a suspicious person call at the Twin Star Credit Union on S. Gold Street in Centralia.

Upon his arrival, he approach a female individual standing in he doorway of the staff entrance to the facility. Officer Hoium approached seeing that she was only partly visible, partially obscured by a party opened door. As he approached Holly Weitz mouthed the words "He's got a gun" and gestured with her thumb and index finger.

Officer Hoium grabbed her by the arm - and at the same time she jerked herself away from the individual holding her. Neil pulled Holly across his body while simultaneously upholstering his sidearm. As he pulled her to his right and to his rear, the suspect presented himself in the doorway, apparently in an attempt to recapture the hostage. Upon seeing him, armed with what appeared to be a black semi-automatic handgun which the suspect was raising up, Officer Hoium fired two shots, striking the suspect twice while retreating with his rescued hostage to a position of cover. The hostage was rescued, the bank robbery foiled, and the suspect was later captured.

The actions of Weitz probably saved Officer Hoium from serious injury or worse. For her quick thinking, and courage in alerting Officer Hoium and save him from potential serious injury or worse, Weitz is presented the Citizen Commendation from the Centralia Police Department.

The actions of Officer Hoium exhibited an act of exceptional bravery performed at a very high risk to his own life with full awareness of the danger involved. He became aware of the danger as he approached the hostage yet continued to perform in a manner which led to her safe recovery from the suspect.

For his initiative and courage, his sacrifice and commitment, and his willingness to place himself in danger to save another's life, Officer Hoium is awarded the Centralia Police Department Medal of Valor.

Volunteer of the Year

The volunteer of the year is selected by the leadership team of the department after nominations are received. Any employee can nominate any departmental volunteer. There are two nominations available - Civilian Volunteer of the year and Reserve Police Officer of the Year. Nominations should reflect special accomplishments, extraordinary donation of time to the department, continuing excellence in service to the department, or some combination of the three categories.

Citizen Volunteer

We have a number of volunteers who deserve to be recognized. It's amazing how much time, during their busy lives of work and taking care of others, they can donate to the Centralia Police Department. Tonight, we're able to say thank you and recognize our civilian volunteer of the year:

Kim Aiken

Kim Aiken is a member of the Amateur Radio Emergency Services Team (ARES), one of the volunteer groups affiliated with the police department. Kim holds an extra class amateur radio license and has been active in the Centralia Amateur Radio Emergency Services Team since 2008 when it was formed. Aiken currently serves as the Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) which allows him to train and mentor new team members. He was instrumental in setting up the backup emergency communications system in the Centralia EOC giving many hours to install antennas, equipment and the systems which allow Centralia to talk with both

the Lewis County EOC as well as the Washington State EOC at Camp Murray during a disaster.

Aiken's knowledge of high frequency, VHF, digital and satellite communications is extensive and he serves on many amateur radio and emergency service boards throughout Western Washington. As the Assistant Emergency Coordinator, Aiken directly supports the team when the Emergency Coordinator is unavailable as well as working hard to provide regular training to all team members.

Aiken is married and owns a local business in Centralia. Without his help and support, the Centralia ARES team simply would not be the cohesive group of dedicated volunteers we enjoy today.

Reserve Police Officer

David Sims

Officer David Sims has been a reserve police officer with the department since January of 2006, beginning his volunteer service in January. After being accepted as a reserve police officer, Dave attended and graduated from a 280 hour reserve police officer basic training academy sponsored by the Thurston County Sheriff's Office. He is completing his final field training officer candidate requirements so that he can be promoted to a class one reserve status, allowing him to work solo patrol.

Officer Sims is very involved with the department, logging over 140 hours of volunteer service already in 2010.

His departmental nickname is "The Transporter" due to the number of arrested individuals he ends up transporting to the county jail so that regular police officers are not pulled off the street.

This is Officer Sims second reserve officer of the year award as he was selected for this recognition in 2008.

Chief's Award

The Chief's Award is presented to an individual who, in the mind of the chief of police, has exhibited the finest in integrity, professionalism, extraordinary effort and attitude in getting the job done. This award is a discretionary award and may or may not be presented each year; it may be presented more than once each year. Recipients of the award may be officers or employees within the department, other law enforcement or criminal justice system professionals, or other individuals who have materially assisted the department in the accomplishment of its mission.

Captain Tim Adolphsen - Riverside Fire Authority

Tim selected to receive this award based on his excellent work in the complete renovation of our joint Centralia Police Department - Riverside Fire Authority Communications Vehicle. The project, taking a grant funded vehicle and converting it from a lab response unit to a fully functional, four station communications vehicle with interoperability between all public safety agencies in the region, has resulted in a communications that is worth four to five times the \$35,000 invested from all

sources. The vehicle also has the capability of serving as an alternate Emergency Operations Center. The attention to detail, the craftsmanship, and the quality work; all are outstanding. While sometimes frustrated at the pace of the project, the end result is a communications vehicle, best in the region and one for which the City of Centralia and Riverside Fire Authority can be very proud.

Adolphsen's extraordinary efforts above and beyond the call exemplify the worthy calling of public service. In talking with other officers and employees of the police department as well as the Riverside Fire Authority, I realize and want all to recognize Tim's extraordinary talent, initiative, and quality of work.

Officer Rick Hughes

Officer Rick Hughes was selected to receive this award based on his excellent work in not only fulfilling the mission of the department, but for his tireless work on behalf of the police officers association. Within the department Rick's efforts have been outstanding as a first aid and CPR instructor, the coordinator of our reserve police officer program, and his willingness to work flexible assignments in patrol and anti-crime during our testing period for commander and sergeant. Beyond that, Officer Hughes's work with the officers' association has been, and continues to be outstanding.

For more than five years, he has spent hours of off duty time working on association programs and initiatives. His work has resulted in scholarships for students, sponsorships for youth sports teams, and Christmas for literally hundreds of underprivileged children. I know the challenges he faces in maintaining enthusiasm for the fund raisers that the association does in order to provide these programs and services; yet the association continues to thrive and be able to provide these needed services to our community. That is in no small part due to his effort and leadership.

Rick's extraordinary efforts above and beyond the call exemplify the worthy calling of public service.

Employee of the Year

The employee of the year is selected by the leadership team of the department after nominations are received. Any employee can nominate any fellow worker, commissioned or civilian; supervisor or worker. Nominations should reflect special accomplishments by the employee, continuing excellence in service to the department, or some combination of the two.

Kristie Bonagofsky

Kristie Bonagofsky was nominated for her excellent work in evidence management, her positive attitude, her level of effort in assisting detectives in transcription, and her general assistance in the records and office details of the department. She is specifically recognized for maintaining an excellent audit trail and documentation associated with the property/evidence vault. Her hard work and positive attitude in the workplace have significantly contributed to the success of the department this past year.

Bonagofsky was nominated by several employees; all noted her cheerful attitude and positive performance at work even while dealing with significant off the job challenges. In fact, one nomination stated, "If you did not know of the challenges Kristie was facing, you could never tell by her actions or attitude." In reviewing the nominations, the leadership team of the department recognized her service, loyalty, friendly attitude, multiple skill sets, along with her conscientious and professional work product across many disciplines within the department's services bureau.

Bonagofsky's performance represents the finest in public service. Her efforts are appreciated and on behalf of the department, well done. We thank her for her continued efforts to work in partnership with our community to protect life and property, reduce crime, and enhance the security and quality of life in our city.