

# *Behind the Badge*

*Fairfax County Police Department  
13th Edition, January 2011*



*Fairfax County Police Department  
Holds National Night Out 2010*

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13th Edition

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### Cover photo:

MPO JT Frey with a McGruff hand puppet during National Night Out 2010. Credit: VIPS Morton A. Berger

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# From the Chief: Public Service

*by Colonel Dave Rohrer*

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I recently had the opportunity to welcome the recruits of the 57th Academy Session. Whenever I have the privilege to meet our newest members as they begin their new journey, I am always struck by, and reminded of, the passion and motivation to serve that presumably inspired each of us, whether sworn, civilian, or volunteer, to be a public servant – one who is either entrusted, or in direct support of our mission, to protect and serve the community.

One of the inherent strengths of our profession is that our purpose and core mission are clear. Yet, it is seemingly too easy to sometimes forget the motivation to serve that brought us to choose this profession as we face the ongoing challenges of our personal and professional lives.

Unfortunately, we also too often deal with the same types of calls for service or the same individuals or repeat offenders, and our men and women are often exposed to the risks inherent to our profession and sights or scenes that can be difficult to witness. Over time and experiences our perspective can too easily become jaded, and we are at risk of growing cynical or at least frustrated. Interestingly, it has been said that cynics are frustrated idealists, and I believe there is some modicum of truth to that thought.

We must, however, always remember that although our mission is not always easy, it is always important and what we do always matters. We must also remember that the vast majority of our community support and respect police officers and our Department, and they too care about their community – a community in which we are an integral part.

I also strongly encourage each of us to occasionally pause and reflect on why we chose to serve. For our sworn members, think back to the excitement and thoughts of that first morning in the Academy or that first shift when you were “cut loose” from your FTI. I believe it can be a meaningful reflection. Similarly for our civilian and volunteer members, you too chose to serve for a reason – you wanted to make a difference or give back to your community.

And those who serve across our Department do make a difference every day – often in ways not even realized. Examples of the latter include a friendly word to a young child, an assist for a stranded or lost motorist, counsel for a teen or family at risk or in need, the arrest of an intoxicated driver who may have imminently harmed themselves or others, answering a question or providing information to

someone at the front desk or over the phone, a motor escort for a funeral, or an empathetic death notification. Our officers, civilian members, and volunteers touch lives in many extraordinary ways, and I wish all could read the countless letters, cards, and e-mails of appreciation and compliment I receive for our men and women.

As a Department we recently began discussions around work-life balance – balance that I believe can also help one maintain a healthy perspective. We must each strive to maintain a balance in our lives, to remember the priorities that matter, to include, for example, one’s respective faith, respect for our country, love for our family, our wellness, respect for others, and being engaged in our communities. I also strongly encourage all to have friends both in and out of policing as I believe it helps to avoid a singular perspective and “group think.”

We each came here with a purpose, one that still exists. We just have to occasionally reflect on our motivation, routinely monitor and manage our expectations and perspective, and remember and embrace the personal reward policing offers. Those who consistently demonstrate professionalism, passion, enthusiasm, and a service motivation are not only role models, but transformational leaders.

So remember why you serve, embrace our mission, be proud of all you do, maintain a healthy work-life balance, respect others, and be safe in all you do. I commend and thank all for serving so well.

- Colonel Dave Rohrer



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# Are You a Fan?

by Lucy H. Caldwell

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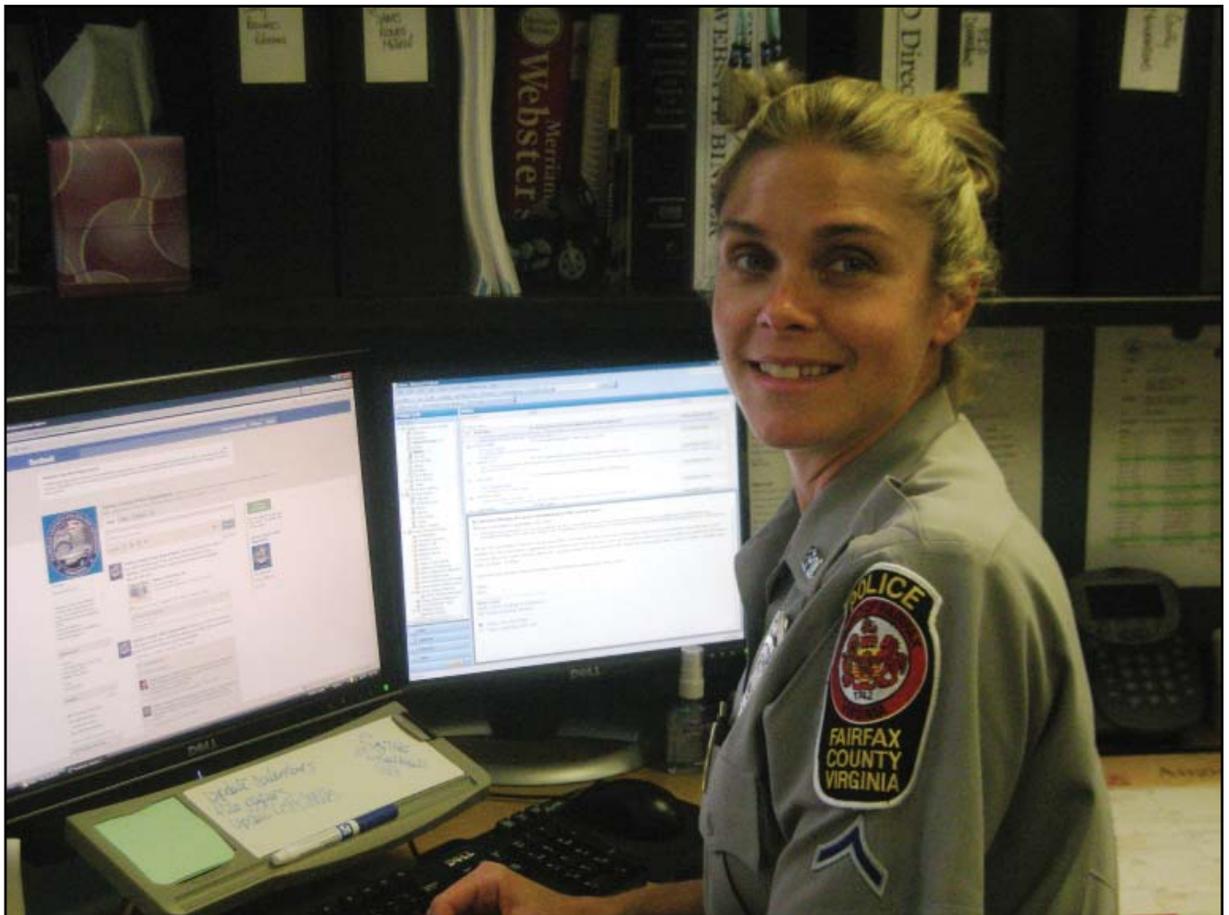


“Social networking and instant communication technologies are here to stay,” said longtime Public Information Officer (PIO) Shelley Broderick, who worked to help establish the new FCPD fan page on Facebook.com on April 7, 2010. PFC Broderick, and other PIOs keep the page fresh with articles and new postings almost daily.

The FCPD has embraced the social networking site as an efficient, cost-effective way of interacting with the public and keeping them informed. With over 500 million users, the social networking juggernaut has overshadowed email as a communications tool.

So far, the site has over 2,000 fans, but PIO hopes to see that figure grow as word about the site spreads. “We’ve seen police departments in other jurisdictions grow to 20,000 and more,” said Broderick, who adds that she has also established a Facebook page for CrimeSolvers. “Sign up and tell your friends to do the same,” she urges. “It’s a great way to stay informed and stay involved.”

Sign up at [www.facebook.com/fairfaxcounty.police](http://www.facebook.com/fairfaxcounty.police).



PFC Shelley Broderick, with the Fairfax County Police Department’s Public Information Office posts a status update on FCPD’s Facebook page. Social media is an important tool to connect with residents.

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# Motor Carrier Safety Enforcement Day

by Second Lieutenant James M. Pollack

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Drive just about anywhere in Fairfax County and chances are good that you're sharing the road with big, commercial trucks – from 18-wheelers to heavy haulers used in construction projects. It's the job of the officers in the Department's Motor Carrier Safety Section to help ensure that truck drivers are properly licensed and the growing number of trucks traveling in, around, and through the County are safe to be on the roads.

checking the licenses of the drivers, the vehicle's brake and steering systems, suspension systems, tires, and frames. Loads were also checked to ensure they were properly secured.

A total of 24 trucks were inspected, resulting in 65 violations. As a result of the inspections, seven trucks were taken out of service for serious safety violations, which also resulted in eight summonses being issued to drivers.

Fort Belvoir Police were recently trained in commercial truck inspections and our officers assisted in the completion of their training. Due to an increase in construction on Fort Belvoir, the area has seen an increase in truck traffic on Route 1 and on the base. Fort Belvoir Police asked that we assist them in conducting this inspection day to further their training.

This multi-jurisdictional approach to enforcement has the support of a number of law enforcement agencies since it increases the number of inspections possible because more officers are involved. It also promotes the sharing of ideas from a variety of agencies, learning about new training opportunities, and keeping up with new laws and procedures.



MPO Michael Gibbons interviews a driver.

Periodically throughout the year, MCS officers pick an area of the County heavily used by commercial trucks and pull rigs over for complete safety inspections. One such enforcement day was held on March 16, 2010 in the Route 1/Fort Belvoir corridor. Military police from the base, Virginia State Police, and two HAZMAT technicians from the County Fire Department assisted MCS officers with the enforcement effort.



PFC Sally McGowan inspects underneath a truck.

The inspections were comprehensive and included

# 32nd Annual Valor Awards

March 5, 2010

**MPO Marshall Thielen, PFC Brian J. Byerson, PFC Daniel Pang and Police Canine/Bloodhound – Molly (Lifesaving Award)**



MPO Thielen and K9 Molly



PFC Byerson



PFC Pang

One cold December day, officers were dispatched to a doctor's office on Arlington Blvd. to assist a family in locating a missing loved one. A woman with a brain tumor and diminished mental capacity had wandered away from the doctor's office. Family and staff checked the office and the immediate area outside the office for about an hour prior to requesting the assistance of police. Temperatures would

only reach 26 degrees this day and the wind was gusting over 20 mph. When she left, the woman was wearing only a sweatshirt and pants. Soon MPO Thielen and his Bloodhound partner, Molly, arrived on the scene and began their search by attempting to find her scent. MPO Thielen used the jacket the woman had worn to the doctor's office to provide a scent for Molly to follow. PFC Pang joined the K-9 team as they set out from the doctor's office. Despite wind chills in the teens and temperatures dropping, Molly took the two officers on a lengthy track. It eventually ended in front of a breezeway to an apartment building. PFC Byerson located her lying under a bush in the breezeway on the opposite side of the building.

More than four and a half hours had passed since she was last seen and nearly one and a half hours since MPO Thielen and Molly had started their track. The woman was suffering from hypothermia and was transported to the hospital for treatment. Doctors reported that had she remained outside for another 30 minutes, the cold could have killed her.

**PFC Scott Abram, Officer Robert J. Gogan and Officer Eric Acevedo (Lifesaving Award)**



PFC Abram



Ofc. Gogan



Ofc. Acevedo

On a cold night in February of 2009, three West Springfield District officers assisted the Virginia State Police with a traffic pursuit for the reckless driver of a U-Haul truck that originated in Prince William County. PFC Scott Abram and Officer Phillip Gogan maneuvered their cruisers in behind the troopers as the attempt to stop the truck entered

Fairfax County northbound of Route 123.

The driver of the speeding truck suddenly made a U-turn and led his police pursuers now southbound. Just as suddenly, he drove onto the shoulder of the road in an attempt to pass other vehicles, lost control, and hit a raised median. The truck flew into the air on impact with the median, flipped its side and skidded to a stop.

The officers scrambled to stop their cruisers safely and get to the truck as quickly as possible. Approaching the wreckage cautiously, they found the cab of the truck empty. PFC Abram spotted the driver approximately 40 feet away in a drainage ditch at the bottom on an embankment leading to woods. Officer Acevedo, who had just arrived on the scene, joined Abram and Gogan to take the suspect into custody. Fighting their way through a tangle of briars and thorns, they reached the suspect, who appeared to be unconscious.

Acevedo is a trained medic and recognized the man's condition was life threatening. He sprang into action, clearing

dirt and leaves from the suspect's mouth and opening his airway so he could breathe. Abram and Gogan assessed the suspect and discovered a severe open head wound that left part of the man's brain exposed. The gaping head wound was bleeding heavily, but the suspect was now able to breathe on his own.

The three officers talked to the suspect, monitored his breathing, and attempted to control bleeding from the head wound as they waited for an ambulance to arrive. Once rescuers arrived, the officers assisted in carrying the man back up the rugged, briar-covered embankment to the ambulance. He died a short time later at the hospital.

### **PFC Nicholas A. Gruber (Lifesaving Award)**



PFC Gruber

PFC Gruber received a message from the station one April morning for all officers to look for a missing possibly suicidal man. He began to check all the hotels in his patrol area by systematically checking both exterior parking lots and interior parking garages at the hotels in the area. Eventually, he found a car matching the description of the missing man's vehicle inside

the parking garage of a Tysons Corner hotel.

He confirmed with the front desk that the man had in fact checked in to the hotel and had not checked out. He found the door to the room locked and a "Do Not Disturb" sign hanging from the door knob. Spotting a hotel maintenance worker nearby, PFC Gruber asked for a universal key, returned to the room and pounded on the door, announcing "police" over and over. He was met with silence.

Believing the man could be in serious danger, PFC Gruber used the universal key to unlock the door but as he tried to enter, the security latch held him back. Hearing no one stirring in the room, he kicked open the door and rushed in. The missing man was lying on the bed in a semi-conscious state. He saw several types of pills scattered around the room and next to the bed as well as a large plastic bag with a strip of duct tape secured to it.

PFC Gruber quick called for medical assistance while he monitored the man's vital signs and continued to provide aid and comfort to the man until he was transported to the hospital.

### **PFC Luis E. Martinez and PFC Larry W. St. Clair (Lifesaving Award)**



PFC Martinez



PFC St. Clair

Last July, dispatchers received a call that a distraught young man planned to hang himself from a street sign.

Nearing the exit ramp from I-95/I-395, the officers were shocked to see a man nearly 50 feet off the ground, standing on the cross beams of a highway sign. They called up to the man in hopes of engaging him in conversation and were simultaneously assessing the situation. He had tied an electrical extension cord around the sign and had the other end tied around his neck. It was crystal clear this young man intended to kill himself and they had no time to spare if they were going to save his life.

The officers didn't let the man's immediate refusal to talk to them deter or discourage them. Both men began talking to the younger man, trying to calm him and convince him not to jump from the cross beams. The officers were making headway and building rapport with him.

They were finally able to convince him to untie the extension cord from his neck and drop it down to them, but he still refused to come down from the sign. The officers continued to talk to him, and eventually convinced him to climb down from his precarious position. The young man so bent on ending his life was now alive to receive the mental health treatment he needed.

### **PFC Christopher S. Newton, PFC Ali Sepehri, PFC Joshua D. Shoemaker and APO Jorge A. Canovas (Lifesaving Award)**

Police in the Town of Vienna relayed a call from a resident of their town about a missing and suicidal woman believed to be in Fairfax County. It was just after midnight on September 27, 2008, that the caller advised his wife had called him

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PFC Newton



PFC Sepehri



PFC Shoemaker



APO Canovas

around 10 p.m. and had made suicidal threats. He believed she was in the McLean area of the county and described the car he thought she was driving. He also told police his wife had made three previous attempts on her life by asphyxiation.

Officers from the Vienna Police Department had already called Verizon and had them check the location of her cell phone by the cell towers. They provided the general location based on the tower her cellular phone was hitting during her most recent calls. Newton, Canovas, and Shoemaker began checking the area diligently for the woman and her minivan. The information from Verizon was helpful in providing a general location but she could be anywhere in a five-mile radius of this location. Several attempts to reach her by cell phone all failed.

Canovas began searching behind businesses in the area. Within minutes he located the minivan behind a bank. He could see heavy smoke inside the van about the time Shoemaker arrived on scene. Although the officers could not tell what was causing the smoke and had no external breathing apparatus, they tried to get inside the van. Investigators later learned the woman had ignited a full container of charcoal

in the back of her van after she taped up the vents and all of the windows from the inside.

They could see a woman slumped over in the front passenger seat of the vehicle as they tried each door. Not only were the doors locked, the windows were taped shut from the inside. PFC Shoemaker used his ASP baton to shatter the driver's side window. Ignoring the broken, jagged glass, he reached in and unlocked the door. The victim was unresponsive and without a pulse. Officers Shoemaker, Newton and Canovas then worked together to pull the victim from the vehicle and into the fresh air. They called for rescue and immediately started CPR.

PFC Sepehri had arrived on scene to assist with the CPR and brought his CPR mask. He began giving lifesaving breaths, while Newton performed chest compressions. Canovas continued monitoring the victim and checking for a pulse. They performed CPR for approximately five minutes until Medics arrived and took over. Despite everyone's efforts, the victim was not revived and was pronounced dead on scene.

## **Officer Brian J. McClelland and Officer Terence M. Stokes, Jr. (Lifesaving Award)**



Ofc. McClelland



Ofc. Stokes

Officers Brian McClelland and Terence Stokes were both dispatched to a domestic dispute call just before 2 a.m. on June 21, 2009. An emotionally distraught woman had called police about her intoxicated and violent boyfriend, but neither officer was clear on the level of violence involved.

The nearly hysterical woman met the officers as they arrived on scene and quickly told them that her boyfriend was drunk and had been threatening to hurt her. She was unsure where he was so the officers began a search of the premises. Once they made their way down the steps and into the basement

they found the boyfriend hanging from the rafters by a sheet. They rushed to lift his body and continued to support him as they removed the sheet from around his neck.

They placed him on the floor and summoned rescue. By this time, the man was conscious and breathing on his own. Rescue arrived and determined he had no injuries and was not in need of medical treatment. He was then taken to Woodburn Mental Health to begin to deal with his suicide attempt.

Investigation into this situation revealed the man was an alcoholic and extremely intoxicated that early morning. He had been arguing with his girlfriend and was so overcome with emotion that he chose to end his life. Had it not been for the professionalism, judgment, determination, and quick actions of Officers Brian McClelland and Stokes to find the frantic woman's boyfriend, it is very likely this man would not be alive today.

**Officer Chad T. Cosgrove (Lifesaving Award) and PFC John T. Asper (Certificate of Valor)**



Ofc. Cosgrove



PFC Asper

In December of 2008, PFC Asper and Officer Cosgrove were dispatched to the Reston home of a woman who was having trouble breathing and appeared to be unconscious. Her husband met the officers at the front door and begged them to go upstairs to the bedroom where his wife was lying across the bed. He told them on the way up that his wife wasn't responding to anything he said and he was scared.

The officers couldn't find a pulse and quickly lowered her to the floor to prepare for CPR. PFC had a rescue mask with him but it wasn't working properly. He knew any attempt to fix the mask would rob the woman of her very slim chance, so he positioned a latex glove around her mouth and began giving her life saving breaths while Officer Cosgrove performed chest compressions. After two full cycles of CPR, emergency medical personnel arrived and took over.

**Detective Andrew L. Smuck and PFC Michelle P. Letellier (Lifesaving Award)**



PFC Letellier

It was 2:40 in the morning on October 2, 2008, when an anxious-sounding young man called Fairfax County 9-1-1 from Alaska. He asked for police to respond to the Fairfax County home of his ex-girlfriend. He told the call taker that his ex-girlfriend told him in a telephone conversation, "I have a noose around my neck and I will be dead by the end of the night."

The dispatcher sent PFCs Letellier and Smuck on their way to the woman's home in the McLean Police District, but continued asking for more information. The ex-boyfriend revealed the woman had attempted suicide several times in the past and had just been released from the hospital after being treated for depression.

The young woman's mother had no idea why police were at her house when she opened the front door to the two officers. She was surprised to learn they wanted to speak to her daughter, but directed them to the basement to find her. Once downstairs, Letellier and Smuck immediately spotted the younger woman hanging from the rafters in the basement laundry room.

Thinking quickly, Letellier grabbed the woman and lifted her, trying to reduce the pressure on her neck. Smuck used his knife to cut through a dog leash around the woman's neck and both officers lowered her to the floor. They checked her vital signs and found she had no heart beat and wasn't breathing. They both knew that her only chance at survival was CPR.

Smuck began chest compressions while Letellier gave rescue breaths. As the panicked mother looked on, the two officers calmly continued CPR for nearly seven minutes until the arrival of rescue personnel. The woman was transported to the hospital where efforts to save her unfortunately failed. She was pronounced dead later that morning.

**MPO Paul Pickett, Jr. (Lifesaving Award)**

One November day, MPO Pickett, Jr. and his wife, Technician Jessica Pickett, were shopping at a grocery store in Stafford County, VA, with their young daughter when an

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MPO Pickett

announcement came over the store's public announcement system requesting 9-1-1 be called for a medical emergency in the seafood department.

Technician Pickett ran to the seafood department and found an unresponsive adult male lying on the floor, breathing sporadically with a flushed face. After Technician Pickett opened the man's airway with

a modified jaw thrust his breathing became more regular. Another customer had witnessed the man stop suddenly, proclaim "Oh my!" and then fell over backwards.

After hearing this information, Technician Pickett directed the store manager to look for the man's wallet for a medication list, which revealed medications indicating diabetic and cardiac conditions. As Technician Pickett and the store manager were examining his chest and extremities the man regained consciousness and asked what they were doing. Technician Pickett identified herself and continued to ask him simple questions. The man was saying a few words one second and unconscious the next. A quick check revealed he had stopped breathing and no longer had a pulse.

Technician Pickett asked the store manager for an AED and was told the store did not have one. MPO Pickett stepped in to assist with chest compressions as Technician Pickett managed airway and ventilations using only the man's t-shirt as a barrier against saliva and blood. They continued the lifesaving CPR for nearly 15 minutes until the Stafford Co. Rescue Squad arrived.

## **PFC Brian J. Ames and PFC Justin M. Urbaniak (Certificate of Valor)**

PFC Ames and PFC Urbaniak were dispatched to a high-rise apartment building in the Mason District on October 15, 2008 to check out a report of a man attempting suicide. Yelling from one of the top floors shattered the predawn quiet as Ames arrived on the scene.

He headed upstairs toward the commotion while Urbaniak positioned himself outside the building and scanned the windows for any sign of a distressed person attempting to



PFC Ames



PFC Urbaniak

jump. Ames found the apartment and first knocked and then pounded on the door. When it was eventually opened, the officer was confronted with a nude man who appeared panicked and scared.

The naked man attempted to close the door in Ames' face, telling the officer everything was okay and the police were not needed. At the same time, Ames heard Urbaniak on the police radio warning him to get inside the apartment fast. Unbeknownst to Ames, the other officer had grabbed his radio after seeing a man lean out a window of that apartment screaming, "Kill me!"

Ames was forcing his way into the apartment as Urbaniak arrived to help. The naked man fled to a back bedroom and a moment later a second man emerged from another bedroom, with blood spurted from deep cuts on both his wrists. The man then collapsed. Quicker than either officer could get to the injured man, the naked man started screaming and frantically ran to his wounded friend.

Quickly donning gloves, PFC Urbaniak grabbed one of the subject's accessible arms and began applying direct pressure as he tried to hold the wounds closed. PFC Ames grabbed several towels and tried to assist while struggling with the second subject who refused to let go of his companion. Fearing further injury to the bleeding man Ames began speaking calmly and reassuringly to the frantic friend, finally talking him through applying direct pressure to the open wounds. PFC Ames and PFC Urbaniak were able to keep the suicidal subject stable until responding medic units could transport him for emergency medical care.

**PFC Donald W. Amos, Jr. and PFC Katherine S. Wright (Certificate of Valor)**



PFC Amos



PFC Wright

Last February, PFC Amos and PFC Wright responded to a report of a brush fire and a suspicious person. As they approached the wooded area, they found a rapidly spreading brush fire moving towards a person lying motionless on the ground. The grass was extremely dry from lack of rain and a stiff wind was blowing the flames toward the person on the ground.

Wright yelled to the person but got no response. They had no breathing devices to protect them from the thicket smoke and only the fire extinguishers from their cruisers to fight the fire. PFC Amos grabbed the fire extinguisher from his vehicle and they rushed in to help.

Amos used his fire extinguisher to defend against the approaching fire and Wright focused on the semiconscious victim and planning a rescue. Only then did Wright notice the woman had burns on her hands and her jacket was scorched by fire.

PFC Wright quickly grabbed the victim by her shoulders and attempted to move her to safety, but the woman violently resisted. It was clear this woman was unaware of the seriousness of the situation and was fighting the officers' efforts to rescue her. The threat from the fast-approaching fire convinced the officers to handcuff the woman and escort her to safety. Even after they had her handcuffed, she continued to fight them. As they got her to her feet, they discovered she was too intoxicated to walk. The officers were forced to pick her up and carry her away from the danger.

The victim remained combative, attempting to kick and bite Fire and Rescue personnel assessing her burns. Eventually she was sedated and rushed to the Washington Burn Center for treatment of third degree burns to her hands and body.

**Officer Patrick C. Briant (Certificate of Valor)**



Ofc. Briant

In June of last year, Officer Briant was dispatched to an incident where a man had been shot. First to arrive on the scene, he began to control and identify two men who were outside the home. He ordered both men to the ground before turning his attention to a man and woman on the front porch. He could see from a distance the man had a blood-soaked shirt and the woman was giving him aid and comfort. The woman told Officer Briant another man was still inside the house.

Once other units arrived on the scene, Officer Briant was able to focus completely on the injured man on the porch. The man shot himself accidentally while handling a .45 caliber handgun. The bullet went into the man's upper left chest but there was no sign of an exit wound. Briant recognized it as a sucking chest wound which makes breathing painful and difficult.

Briant had the man lay on his side which instantly eased his pain and made breathing less difficult. Donning latex gloves, Briant applied pressure to the wound to slow the heavy bleeding. He stayed with the injured man and gave him aid until the scene was considered safe enough for rescue units to enter.

**PFC Kenneth M. Bridgeman and PFC James L. Thur (Certificate of Valor)**



PFC Bridgeman



PFC Thur

On March 17, 2009 both Officers Thur and Bridgeman were called to a house in Burke to assist with a 63-year-old emotionally disturbed woman. Before going inside the

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residence, the woman's husband told the officers his wife had recently been released from a psychiatric unit and wanted to kill herself.

Approaching the house, they heard a woman screaming and found her in a violent struggle with her adult son once they got inside. She held a very large butcher knife over her head and attempted to stab her son as he gripped her by the wrists. The officers ordered the woman to drop the knife. She and her son tumbled to the ground just then, with her on top and still holding the butcher knife.

Officer Bridgeman prepared to deploy the Conducted Energy Device (taser) while Officer Thur prepared to use deadly force if needed. The woman continued to ignore the officers and assault her son. Bridgeman fired his CED and both darts hit the woman's right leg. The five second burst of energy didn't appear faze her or stop her violent attack.

Finally aware that the officers were there, the disturbed woman turned towards them and began to stand up. Her son was able to release his grip and escape to a safe distance. Bridgeman fired the CED again and this time the woman dropped the knife. Both officers rushed her, handcuffed her, and took her into custody.

In the end, the woman was delivered to the hospital and is receiving the medical and psychiatric care she needed.

## **PFC John P. Brusch and PFC David Kroll (Certificate of Valor)**



PFC Brusch



PFC Kroll

PFC Kroll was dispatched to check on a report of a drunken man, possibly armed with a knife, behind a shopping center last January. PFC Kroll found the man in a dimly lit alley, standing with his hands in his jacket pockets. PFC Kroll

asked him to remove his hands from his pockets and show his hands. The man angrily refused to comply, so Kroll requested back-up, drew his service weapon and waited.

PFC Brusch arrived quickly to the scene. The two officers agreed they needed to make sure this man was not armed or potentially dangerous to himself or others. The situation escalated when the man began advancing on the officers, pulled a knife from his coat and threatened the officers with it. As the distance between this man and the officers began to close, Brusch knew the poor lighting and close quarters put both officers in grave danger. He fired two rounds from his service weapon, hitting the man in the chest with both.

More officers appeared on scene and they were able to safely approach the man and handcuff him. He continued to fight PFC Brusch and PFC Kroll as they tried to provide critical care until the arrival of medics.

## **MPO Alice E. Eggers, MPO Robert M. Evans, PFC John R. DeBonis, Jr., PFC Christopher J. Elliott, PFC Julia M. Elliott, PFC Craig A. Thibault and Helicopter Pilot Jason Post (Certificate of Valor)**



MPO Eggers



MPO Evans



PFC DeBonis



PFC Elliott



PFC Elliott



PFC Thibault



Mr. Post

One June evening a depressed, distraught man told his family he no longer wanted to live, then left the house armed with a handgun.

A description of the suicidal man's car was broadcast to officers in all eight police districts in the county and the Fairfax County police helicopter joined in the intense search for

the missing man. MPO Evans spotted the green car from the helicopter. It was parked in a busy shopping center parking lot in the Franconia Police District. PFC DeBonis guided patrol officers on the ground to the exact location of the car and helped them set up far enough away to see without being seen.

Franconia District officers MPO Eggers and PFCs Bauer and Elliott heard the radio traffic and headed to the shopping center to help. Meanwhile, the helicopter positioned cruisers to block entrances and exits and contain the threat, if possible. They also began preparations in the event they had to land for a medical evacuation.

Evans trained the helicopter's powerful on-board camera on the suicidal man's car and monitored the distraught man's movements. He could see a silver handgun in the man's hand, and relayed new information every time the man waved the gun or pointed it at himself. Patrol officers slowly inched their way toward safe positions to start possible negotiations with the armed subject when in the blink of an eye the man put the gun to his head and fired.

Piloting the helicopter, Post found a suitable landing zone in the busy shopping center parking lot. He'd have to avoid high tension wires, several high rise buildings, and lots of

pedestrian and vehicular traffic to land safely, but he had the officers with the most advanced medical training on his crew. He knew the level of skill and care they could provide could be the difference between this man's life or death. Eggers once served on the helicopter and still possessed advanced medical skills and training. She coordinated the actions of several less experienced officers to stem the bleeding from the head wound and immobilize the spine while she checked the man's breathing.

Unable to breathe on his own, the patient faced certain death unless his airway was opened and oxygen was provided for him. The medics assigned to the helicopter are the only ones trained and cleared to perform Rapid Sequence Intubation. They worked as if they had trained as a team for years. The helicopter medics inserted a breathing tube and administered medical oxygen while Eggers instructed patrol officers, untrained beyond basic first aid, to maintain CPR and control the bleeding. The patient arrived at the hospital within 20 minutes of the time he fired the gun, and died shortly after that.

#### Officer Eric R. Glueckert (Certificate of Valor)



Ofc. Glueckert

Last April, Officer Glueckert was the first officer to arrive at a home to investigate a reported suicide. A distraught woman had found her husband hanging from the basement ceiling and called police. He found the front door unlocked and announced his presence as he entered the house. A woman called to him from the basement, so he rushed downstairs to assess the situation.

Officer Glueckert found the woman performing CPR on her unconscious husband and immediately began to render aid. Although he had no personal protective equipment like gloves or a mask, he gave thirty chest compressions and two rescue breaths, and then checked for a pulse. He continued until rescue units arrived and relieved him.

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# 32nd Annual Valor Awards

March 5, 2010

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**PFC Nicholas A. Gruber, PFC David W. Kennedy, PFC Peter L. Micker, PFC Steven C. Nance (Certificate of Valor)**



PFC Gruber



PFC Kennedy



PFC Micker



PFC Nance

The managers and staff at a restaurant in the Tyson's Galleria were upset by the disorderly, belligerent behavior of a former employee who returned to the eatery during the lunch rush. They were alarmed when they saw he was carrying a handgun and that's when they called police.

McLean Police District officers heard the call go out on November 16, 2008 and they headed to the restaurant to check for a suspicious person. Mall security pointed to a car in a far corner of the parking lot and the four officers headed toward it. Just as they were getting close, the man got out of his car and started walking toward them.

Officer Nance spotted the suspect put a gun in his waistband and alerted the other officers of the potential threat. Kennedy, Nance, and Gruber drew their service weapons and Kennedy pulled out his Conductive Energy Device (taser) for possible use as a less lethal option. Gruber issued commands for the man to stop and get on the ground, but the suspect ignored

those orders and kept advancing.

He continued his defiance of the officer's orders and suddenly made a quick movement with his right hand toward the gun he was carrying. Fearing for his safety and that of his fellow officers, PFC Gruber fired his weapon, striking the suspect in the right pelvic region. The suspect fell to the ground.

The officers had just been involved in a life-and-death situation with the suspect, but they took immediate action to render aid now that he was wounded. Although the suspect remained combative, the officers worked diligently to assure his survival. Officer Nance ran to a cruiser and retrieved a first aid kit. All four officers alternated applying direct pressure to the wound and caring for the suspect's welfare while they waited for Fire and Rescue personnel to arrive.

**PFC Michelle P. Letellier (Certificate of Valor)**



PFC Letellier

Last March, PFC Letellier was dispatched to assist the fire department at an apartment and arrived before the first fire trucks. She and another officer were met outside by a frantic woman who led them up the stairs to a man covered in blood. The couple told the officers their friend needed help immediately and agreed to lead them to the friend.

As the apartment door swung open, the officers found a scene of absolute chaos. Six hysterical people, all yelling in Russian, surrounded a very obviously injured man slumped on the living room couch. He had a gaping wound on his upper left thigh that was bleeding profusely. It was obvious from the amount of blood in the apartment that he was in dire need of medical help.

PFC Letellier quickly discovered she was dealing with a stabbing that had just occurred. She found herself trying to save the life of this gravely injured man while wondering if the suspect was among the people still in the apartment. She applied direct pressure to the wound and had one of the on-lookers raise the man's legs to slow the blood loss. PC Letellier scanned the room for something she could use to slow the bleeding. Spotting a hookah pipe across the room,

she removed the long tubing from the pipe and fashioned a makeshift tourniquet. That finally slowed the blood loss significantly.

Once the injured man was on his way to the hospital, PFC Letellier learned the stabbing started as an argument, escalated into physical violence and ended when the victim was stabbed three times.

### **Officer Kevin J. Rusin (Certificate of Valor)**



Ofc. Rusin

Officer Kevin J. Rusin responded to a call for a domestic disturbance in an apartment complex one evening last May. The call taker could hear a lot of yelling but no one came to the phone to report what was happening.

Officer Rusin's knock at the front door of the apartment was immediately met by a frightened and frantic young mother holding the lifeless body of her six-month-old baby. She began screaming at the officer, "My baby is dead! My baby is dead!" Do CPR!"

Officer Rusin could see the baby was turning blue as he took the child from the mother. He immediately advised both the mother and his back up officer that he was initiating infant CPR. He placed the baby on a couch and began infant CPR. Although he had no time to go to his cruiser to get his CPR gear, he continued breathing life into the baby for approximately four minutes, when medics arrived, relieved him and transported the baby to the hospital.

### **Officer Alyson R. White (Certificate of Valor)**



Ofc. White

A disturbing call to 9-1-1 about a man stabbing himself sent Officer Alyson White to a Reston home on November first, 2008. A hysterical woman had called reporting that her 20-year-old son suffering from depression stabbed himself in the neck and abdomen and then ran out of the house.

Officer White found the man

just down the street from his home, standing in the middle of a busy intersection. Her backup was still several minutes away, but White donned protective gloves and approached the young man. She attempted to apply direct pressure to stem the flow of blood, but when she placed her hands on him, he immediately became combative. He tried to grab Officer White's gun and screamed, "Just shoot me!"

Their struggle continued for several minutes until White was able to physically restrain the man. As soon as she had him secured, she sent word that it was safe for paramedics to come to the scene. Then she went to work to stop the bleeding. Ultimately, the man was transported to the hospital where he underwent several hours of surgery to repair his self-inflicted injuries.

### **PFC Ronald J. Grecco, PFC Michael G. Green, PFC Marisa D. Kuhar, PFC Justin E. Lascola, PFC Brendan D. Miller, PFC Sean P. Regan, PFC John Spata, III and Officer Andrew P. Courter (Lifesaving Award) PFC Thomas R. Divers and PFC Jose R. Morillo (Bronze Medal of Valor)**



PFC Grecco



PFC Green



PFC Kuhar



PFC Lascola

It was the evening of February 2, 2009, when the police radios in the Mason Police District called out for a "Signal 1F." A firefighter was in trouble at a medical call and police were

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PFC Miller



PFC Regan



PFC Spata



Ofc. Courter



PFC Divers



PFC Morillo

needed immediately. The Fire Department advised they had been called for 39-year-old unresponsive but agitated man rolling around in his bed. The man became violent, attacked the paramedics, and barricaded himself in his bedroom. That's when his mother let rescuers know her son had two guns in his bedroom.

The situation escalated as the police officers began to arrive. The man had removed his clothing and was now running through the house armed with two guns. While the officers devised a plan to take control of the situation, the suspect

grabbed a large knife from the kitchen and plunged it into his ear canal.

The officers gathered all equipment they would need: ballistic shields, assault rifles, shotguns and Conducted Energy Devices (tasers) were deployed with the officers as they quickly set up a perimeter to contain the irrational man. They could see he was about 6 feet 4 inches tall and 260 pounds. The knife protruded from his head and he held something in his hand, although they were unable to determine what it was.

Suddenly the deranged man charged out the back door of the house and straight at the first officer he saw, PFC Divers. Divers pointed his loaded shotgun at the man and yelled for him to stop and get on the ground. The man ignored the commands and continued to charge. As he closed in, Divers had a life-or-death decision to make. Deadly force was certainly an option, but Divers knew this man needed help. He held his fire as the man attempted to grab the shotgun from his grip. PFC Divers held the shotgun and redirected the man away from him.

PFC Morillo rushed toward the struggle and fired his CED at the suspect. Both darts connected with the subject's back. The man appeared to feel nothing as the 50-thousand-volt charge coursed through his body. PFC Lascola realized the CED wasn't having the desired effect so he grabbed the man and used his CED in drive stun mode. The man still struggled against the charge but got back to his feet and continued to fight the officers. PFC Grecco and PFC Kuhar also tried to subdue the suspect with their CEDs; they, too, had no success.

The suspect broke free from the officers and ran toward a small pond a short distance away. He jumped into the pond face-first and was apparently trying to hold himself under water until he drowned. Despite the frigid temperature of 3 degrees, Morillo and Divers jumped in the pond with him. They struggled to subdue the man in the icy water, pulling him ever closer to shore. With the assistance of Lascola, Grecco, Kuhar, Spata, Green and Courter, they got one handcuff on him and pulled him out of the water.

It took them all to get this man's hands in handcuffs and his feet in hobbles. PFC Spata then retrieved the trauma bag and stretcher from medic units and brought them to the back of the house. The officers wrestled the combative man onto the stretcher and carried him to the medics for injury assessment.

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Even restrained on the stretcher, the suspect continued to fight and resist all medical treatment. Spata, Miller, and Courter were asked to ride in the ambulance to control the suspect and protect fire and rescue personnel.

### **PFC Bruce E. Blackwell (Bronze Medal of Valor)**



PFC Blackwell

open line.

Blackwell found the front door to the house locked and got no answer to his loud banging and announcements of the police presence. Although he didn't get an answer, the call taker could hear him at the door through the caller's open phone line.

Blackwell knew something was terribly wrong inside. He ran to the side of the house to search for a way inside and found an unlocked door. He opened the door and again announced his presence. He was met with silence. Realizing that someone could be seriously injured inside, PFC Blackwell entered the house without the assistance of back-up.

He saw a large amount of blood on the floor inside and a trail leading to the living room. Blackwell followed the blood trail and found the victim standing in a hunched over position and clutching his neck. He could see blood spilling out of the man's neck, through his hands, and soaking into his shirt.

PFC Blackwell immediately moved the man to the couch. He ran to the bathroom and grabbed a towel to apply pressure to the gaping wound. The cut was at least four inches long and a half to a full inch deep. It started at the top of his throat near the jaw bone and ran vertically down to the middle of his neck. It was bleeding profusely and uncontrolled until Blackwell began applying pressure. Fear of contracting a life-threatening disease from the victim's blood never caused him a moment's hesitation.

Blackwell remained with the victim despite not knowing whether the assailant was hiding somewhere inside. Additional officers searched the house and once it was secure, medic units entered and relieved PFC Blackwell of his lifesaving responsibilities. The victim immediately underwent emergency surgery at the hospital and is expected to make a full recovery.

### **Officer Christopher L. Ganci (Bronze Medal of Valor)**



Ofc. Ganci

On May 12, 2009, McLean District Officer Christopher Ganci responded to a complaint of an intoxicated man yelling, cursing, and threatening people outside a neighborhood convenience store. A citizen eagerly pointed out the driver of a big, white GMC SUV across the parking lot when Ganci arrived at the store.

The driver was sitting behind the wheel, swaying back and forth, as the officer approached. The truck engine was running and the driver's side window was down. Ganci could see the man's bloodshot eyes and smell a strong odor of alcohol as he requested the driver to step out of the SUV.

The obviously impaired driver ignored several requests and commands to get out. Without warning, the driver threw his big SUV into reverse and stomped on the accelerator in an effort to get away. Just as suddenly, Officer Ganci spotted a young girl walking into the path of the speeding SUV and knew she was in great danger.

Ganci reached inside the vehicle and grabbed the steering wheel. He knew he risked being pulled under the tires of the big SUV, but he had to turn the truck away from the young girl. The entire time he was leaning inside the SUV, he was trying to steer the truck with one hand and grab the keys with the other. When that didn't work, Ganci unbuckled the driver's seat belt and fought to pull him through the window. The two men struggled as the SUV crashed into the officer's parked cruiser.

After a brief struggle, Ganci was able to get the man under control and into handcuffs. The belligerent driver was eventually transported to the hospital due to his level of intoxication and subsequently charged with Driving While Intoxicated.

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# 32nd Annual Valor Awards

March 5, 2010

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## **PFC Brooks R. Gillingham and Officer Beth L. Gardner (Bronze Medal of Valor)**



PFC Gillingham



Ofc. Gardner

Early one April morning, neighbors started calling 9-1-1 to complain about a very loud, very physical fight between a man and a woman that had now moved outside. One caller reported seeing a man beating a naked woman and dragging her down the street.

Officer Gardner arrived in the vicinity of the calls and was immediately flagged down by a citizen who indicated the man had a knife and had dragged the woman about a block away. As Officer Gardner exited her cruiser, she saw the woman had obvious injuries to her face. She was crying and struggling to get away. The man was holding a dagger-like knife to the woman's throat and still forcing her down the street. With her service weapon drawn, Officer Gardner ordered the man to stop but he told her, "No, I'm taking her, I'm going to kill her. I have a gun."

With that, he opened the driver's side door of an SUV and pushed the woman halfway inside. Officer Gardner considered using deadly force, but knew she could not safely shoot the man without further endangering the woman.

PFC Gillingham was the second officer to arrive as Officer Gardner continued to point her gun at the man and order him to drop the knife. PFC Gillingham drove past Officer Gardner in an attempt to get a better tactical position with his cruiser. Finding that, he drew his service weapon and added his voice to Officer Gardner's commands. The man disregarded their combined orders to drop his weapon telling them, "No. You're gonna have to take me."

The man briefly turned and appeared to be reaching into

the backseat of the SUV; PFC Gillingham saw a clean shot and took it. The bullet hit the man's left shoulder and forced him to drop the knife he had been holding to the woman's throat. As he fell to the ground, the terrified woman frozen in shock and fright.

The officers moved in quickly to handcuff the man and get the woman to a safe place until rescue arrived to check her injuries. The man was bleeding from the mouth, his breathing labored and obviously painful. Additional officers arriving on the scene helped Officer Gardner and PFC Gillingham with basic first aid. Once rescue arrived, the man was transported to the hospital.

Subsequent investigation revealed the man had once had a relationship with the woman he terrorized. Wearing gloves and a mask, he pried open a sliding door at the woman's townhouse. The woman, her fiancé and her four-year-old son were sleeping upstairs when the man crept up the stairs and used a mallet and large dagger to attack the two adults.

## **PFC David J. Montgomery, Detective Steven A. Wahrhaftig and Detective Patrick S. O'Hara (Bronze Medal of Valor)**



PFC Montgomery



Det. O'Hara

The Chesterbrook area of the McLean Police District had been hit with a number of armed bank robberies recently so officers were quick to respond to a new bank alarm at 11:20 on the morning of December 10, 2008. Patrol officers and detectives from the station's Criminal Investigations Section were en route to the bank when reports from the first officers on the scene confirmed one armed man had stormed into the bank and committed a robbery.

PFC Montgomery and Detectives Wahrhaftig and O'Hara, traveling in separate cars, were already in the area of the



Det. Wahrhaftig

bank as witness accounts of the suspect's description and direction of travel were relayed over the police radio. Witnesses at the bank and one witness following the suspect's car were very sure he had a gun.

Based on the elapsed time since the robbery and the direction of travel, these three officers headed into Arlington County and began searching for the bank robbery suspect. This particular area of North Arlington County is maze-like and confusing to anyone unfamiliar with it so they closely coordinated their movements and split up in hopes of catching the suspect making his escape. It helped that the witness following the bank robber was still relaying information to dispatchers, but even the helicopter had been unable to spot the suspect's car from the air.

Finally, Montgomery spotted a person matching the suspect's description walking on 36th Street near its intersection with Kensington Street. He stopped and immediately challenged the subject at gunpoint. He was joined seconds later by Detectives Wahrhaftig and O'Hara. They, too, challenged the suspect at gunpoint.

The three officers and suspect were at a standoff with homes on one side and the back side of a middle school on the other. The potential for danger to citizens was high. When the suspect took a shooting position and raised his gun toward the officers all three fired their weapons at the suspect.

In the end, the three officers were uninjured; the citizens and students were unharmed; the money taken in the robbery was recovered; but the bank robber was dead.

#### **PFC Matthew J. Allen (Silver Medal of Valor)**



PFC Allen

It was just before 7 p.m. on Valentines Day, 2009, a time for couples to sit down to romantic dinners and families to deal with homework and baths. At about that time, though, a 9-1-1 call taker heard chilling screams on the other end of the telephone; then heavy breathing; then silence.

PFC Matthew Allen was the first to arrive at the house. Knowing his backup was less than a minute away, Allen noticed the full-length glass storm door was propped open and the front door was wide open. At that moment he heard yelling and screams inside. He ran to the front door, trained the beam of his flashlight down the dark center hallway, and announced, "Fairfax County Police!" At the end of the hall he saw a masked man holding a handgun to a woman's head. Allen weighed his options. For the safety of those inside, and without regard for his own safety, PFC Allen drew his gun and charged full speed down the darkened hallway.

The suspect turned to get away from Allen and as he did, he slammed full force into a closed sliding glass door. Stunned by the impact, but still armed, the gunman turned and again tried to flee. In the darkness, he tripped over an end table and fell, landing on top of two of his bound victims lying helplessly on the floor. As he suspect fell, PFC Allen heard the assailant's gun fall and strike the floor. That's when the officer began shouting, "Don't move or I'll shoot!" The suspect scrambled to his feet. Leaving his gun behind, he tried to dart past the officer to make his escape. Allen attempted to grab the suspect with his free hand, but the suspect pulled away and fled across the room. The two struggled briefly and the suspect managed to push the officer away and run out the front door. PFC Allen chased the suspect out the door and immediately radioed for backup. When the first unit arrived, Allen was already a block away, still chasing the suspect. All midnight and evening units immediately established a perimeter and K-9 and the helicopter responded. Unfortunately, the suspect eluded capture that night, but he left behind evidence that would eventually lead to his arrest.

When the full extent of the event unfolded, officers learned the armed, masked intruder had kicked open the family's front door, maced the husband twice, bound the wife and one of the children with tape, and was in the act of demanding money and jewelry at gunpoint. Every officer hopes training and instinct will kick in and he or she will have the courage and skills to do the right thing in the face of violence and evil. PFC Matt Allen was confronted with a family's horrible nightmare and an officer's biggest test. He walked up to that front door expecting just another routine call. He gave no thought to himself, but focused instead on getting control of the man with the gun and saving the family. He did what each and every member of the police department has sworn to do: Protect and Serve.

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# National Night Out

August 10, 2010

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McGruff and MPO Frey meet with residents during a neighborhood event in West Springfield.



Chief Rohrer with Chairman Bulova.



TEO Robert Barton and MPO Beth Benham staff the Seat Belt Convincer.



TEO Cecil Starkey, Crossing Guard Leslie Bazemore and MPO Mike Mazik provide residents with information on proper car seat installation and safety.

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# National Night Out

August 10, 2010

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Chief Rohrer speaks with possible future recruits.

Captain Bruce Ferguson with Supervisor Pat Herrity, Springfield District.



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# Chaplain's Corner

by Chaplain Coordinator Michael Shochet

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It's hard to believe that another holiday season has passed us once again! Perhaps you find the holidays a challenging time to be a police officer. Not only are many of you unable to be with your families for this traditional family gathering, but often the holidays are a time when we see an increase in domestic-related crime, and even crime in general.

Some of you may remember news of horrific events – murders, suicides, fatal car crashes, etc... -- that occurred on holidays. It's bad enough to have to notify a family of a tragic loss, but to notify them on a holiday is even worse. For years to come, that holiday becomes a time of pain as they remember the loss.

And many of us who are involved in shift work give up these important days to be with our families or friends because of our schedules. Shift work is stressful all the time, but on the holidays, we are often reminded by our families how much they wish we could be a “normal” family and celebrate like everyone else. Sometimes hearing those words are difficult, yet we need to be reminded that the work we do makes the world better. We give up a little bit of our enjoyment to allow others to celebrate in safety and peace. It's not easy to be on the street when you know that others are at the dinner table, but knowing that you are helping others may make it a little easier.

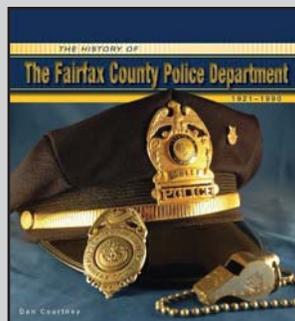
Thank you for what you do to make our world and our community safer. And I hope you were able to find the time to enjoy a holiday meal with your family, even if it wasn't on the holiday itself!

In peace and blessing,  
Chaplain Michael Shochet



Chaplain Shochet

**If you have story ideas, “Our Family Tree” photograph submissions, or would like to otherwise contribute, please email [behindthebadge@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:behindthebadge@fairfaxcounty.gov)**



## History of the Fairfax County Police Department: 1921-1990

This one-of-a-kind publication is on sale now on Amazon.com.

A portion of all proceeds will be donated towards establishing a Fairfax County Police Museum.

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# VIPS Corner

by Donna Spiewak, Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS) Program

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I'd like to start this VIPS Column with a note of gratitude to Second Lieutenant Chris Edmunds and PFC Rex Pagerie of the West Springfield District Station Neighborhood Patrol Unit for action taken by them on September 20, 2009 involving Tony Dee, one of our senior citizen VIPS also assigned to the station. During a routine phone call and subsequent visit to Tony's residence, it became obvious to 2Lt. Edmunds and PFC Pagerie that he required immediate medical attention. Tony was transported to the Inova Fairfax Emergency Room and was subsequently diagnosed as suffering a heart attack the previous night. Happily, I am glad to report that Tony is doing better and is back volunteering at the station. Without the intervention of these outstanding officers, undoubtedly the outcome of this situation would have been completely different. We are indebted to you both for your quick thinking and actions that day.

Although circumstances as I described above seldom occur with our VIPS and APOs, it is gratifying to know that the bonds of friendship between our volunteers and the police department employees are so strong. Thankfully, there are many VIPS and APOs who have forged both professional and personal connections with their supervisors and co-workers

throughout the department. These relationships enable everyone to successfully work together and provide not only outstanding work products for the stations and bureaus, but also give the VIPS and APOs a degree of self-satisfaction and pride knowing that they are members of such an outstanding agency with employees who care about people.

I regularly receive messages from VIPS telling me how much they are enjoying their work assignments and the people they work alongside. Conversely, I also hear from supervisors letting me know how much they appreciate all that the VIPS that are assigned to them are accomplishing when they volunteer. Many are constantly amazed the VIPS are volunteering their free time and expertise at no monetary cost to the department. I pass the "At-a-boys" to the volunteers as I know they appreciate them.

We are constantly striving to find new and interesting assignments for the VIPS. In these budget cutting times, I'm sure there are opportunities in many stations and bureaus where help is needed, not just for data entry work but for other activities. There is a wealth of expertise and experience available to you by all the people who are members of the

VIPS Program. Please let me know if you would like VIPS for your short or long term projects. They are excited to participate and support the department.

VIPS completed 21,054 hours in 2008 and 22,251 hours in 2009 for a total of 43,305 hours. Cost benefits for the hours was \$108,263. APOs completed 47,568 hours in 2008 and 46,488 in 2009 for a total of 94,056. Cost benefits for the hours was \$235,140.

For further information on requesting assistance from the VIPS program, please contact me at 703-280-0524 or [donna.spiewak@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:donna.spiewak@fairfaxcounty.gov).



McGruff with VIPS John Bauer during National Night Out 2010 festivities.

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# Motor Squad Award Ceremony

March 11, 2010

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On March 11, 2010, Lieutenant Colonel Kevin McKenna, Commander of the Headquarters Battalion “Eagle Team,” Fort Belvoir, VA, presented a Certificate of Appreciation to the Fairfax County Police Department Motor Squad. On January 27, 2010, the Motor Squad performed an escort for the funeral of a young child of one of the Eagle Team members from Fort Belvoir to Arlington National Cemetery.

Second Lieutenant Mark Payton receiving the Certificate of Appreciation from Lieutenant Colonel Kevin McKenna.



Fairfax County Police Department’s Motor Squad with members of the Eagle Team.



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# Civilians Walk in Officers' Shoes for a Day

by Lucy H. Caldwell

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Whether they're calculating crime stats, translating reports, or staffing recruitment fairs, FCPD civilians perform a myriad of duties supporting the goals and mission of the Department. But on a warm, sunny Friday in April, around 30 civilians gathered out at the range and track to test their shooting and driving skills at "Civilian Range and Track Day."

An initiative coordinated by Capt. Mike Dittmer, a 24-year veteran of the FCPD, the purpose of the day was to offer civilian staff hands-on experiences in precision shooting and driving in a safe training environment. Capt. Dittmer's wife, Kayla, had attended the FCPD Wives' Day and had "the time of her life." Capt. Dittmer was talking with his civilian staff in CORS about how much Kayla had enjoyed her training and the staff said they would love to have the same opportunity. "Why not expand this concept to the many devoted civilian staff that work with our officers and detectives each day?"



Sergeant David Kuhar provides instruction to civilian students at the track.

"Working with and supporting sworn officers most civilian staff are very familiar with the duties of police officers, but to actually get out and go through some of the same training (although abbreviated) helps these employees better understand the gravity of the split-second decisions officers must make each day," said Dittmer.

The class began at 8 a.m. with welcoming remarks by Lt. Col. Jim Morris, Lt. Jim Kellam, and Sgt. Dave Kuhar. The group divided into two; with half reporting to the track for an in-depth look at high speed, precision driving concepts and a chance for each employee to drive a coned course. Each driver had the option of activating lights and siren, and most chose to do so. As MPO John Lamper told the group, "Risks and benefits of high speed driving must be weighed each time...precision and careful driving must be given full time and attention; you hit a cone and you're out of the game." The second half of the morning was devoted to providing information on weapons, ballistics, tactics, and training. Lt.

Jim Kellam, MPO Ron Dean, and other range staff were able to provide answers to queries posed by the curious civilians. They were patient and thorough as they described parts of the pistol, trigger time, how to load and unload, and the rules of gun safety. Each employee then sidled up next to an instructor in a firing lane and emptied their chambers into their targets.

All sessions were finished by noon and then it was back to work. Capt. Dittmer said that employee reviews were overwhelmingly positive and he hopes to provide the same opportunities for additional staff in the future.

One longtime FCPD civilian manager summed up her reflections on the day's experiences in an email expressing her gratitude saying "I cannot thank you and the folks at the range enough for the hospitality and for providing us with an opportunity to experience a mere segment of your work and responsibility as law enforcement professionals. You made it fun for all, but at the same time the messages and lessons were serious and important; reminders of the overall mission and purpose of policing. Thank you for affording us the exposure."



Above and Below: Civilian participants at the police driving track and firing range.



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# Iron Dog Competition

October 17, 2009

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FCPD competition participants, left to right: PFC Lori Beach, PFC Robin Wyatt, MPO Gary Brown, 2Lt. Shawn Martin, MPO Mark Dale, and MPO Mike Gubesch.



Members of the Fairfax County Police Department's Canine Section, along with 48 other dog teams, competed in the Virginia Police Work Dog Association (VPWDA) Iron Dog Competition held on October 17, 2009 near Blacksburg, VA.

The course was a grueling 1.5 miles starting with a dummy drag of a 150 lb. dummy, running with K-9 to a shooting location, placing six rounds on target while maintaining control of the dog. The course continued uphill to the top of a steep mountain and back down where the handlers picked up and carried their K-9s for 50 feet. They then negotiated the obstacle course, ran down to a boat dock, crossed a small stream, back up a steep hill to the finish line where a decoy had to be apprehended and released.

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# In Memory

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## **Corporal Joseph E. O’Conner, Jr. (Ret.)**

*Date of Passing: July 24, 2010*

Joseph E. O’Conner was born April 6, 1927, in Lorton, Virginia. He served in the United States Navy during World War II in Europe. After the war he worked at the alcohol section of the Work House in Lorton. Joe joined the Fairfax County Police Department in May 1955 and was assigned to the Patrol Division. His assignments included the Groveton, Annandale and Franconia Stations and the Detective Division. He was promoted to Detective Corporal, which was a separate rank at that time, in 1964 and assigned to the Juvenile Bureau. He retired in January 1976. After retirement, Joe worked one year as a bailiff for the Fairfax County Sheriff’s Department. He then worked for the State of Virginia at Gunston Hall Plantation as a superintendent until the mid to late 80’s. Joe then retired to his home in the Tappahannock, Virginia area.

Joe’s wife, Margaret, predeceased him. He is survived by four children and six grandchildren.

## **Sergeant William L. ‘Jackie’ Miller (Ret.)**

*Date of Passing: July 25, 2010*

William L. ‘Jackie’ Miller was born August 6, 1934, in Virginia. He worked for a family fuel oil business for several years. Jackie joined the Fairfax County Police Department in November 1958 and was assigned to the Patrol Division. His assignments included the Groveton and Franconia District Stations, Headquarters and the Emergency Operations Center. Jackie was promoted to Corporal in 1973 and to Sergeant in 1975. He retired on a service connected disability in February 1982.

Jackie’s wife, Virginia, predeceased him. He is survived by four children, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

## ***Family Members***

*The importance of a police officer’s family cannot be measured. We share with you loved ones who passed away during this time. On June 30, Leslie Anne Florence, wife of retiree Keith Florence, passed away. Retiree Billy Woolf’s daughter, Hope, passed away on May 9 and Harold ‘Rabbit’ Dailey’s daughter, Rebecca, passed away on May 20. Retired Captain Bill Gulsby’s 16 year old son, Dalton, lost his battle with cancer on August 10. On September 29, Susan, the daughter of Pat and retired Sergeant Ron Dooley, passed away after a long battle with cancer.*





Behind the Badge  
13th Edition