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The 2014 case that will strike a chord with the Burleson Police Department, and the community that rushed to provide support, is the robbery of Wells Fargo Bank and the shooting of two Burleson Police detectives. At the Jan. 29 Burleson Police Department awards banquet, detectives David Feucht and Nick Grace were each presented with a Medal of Valor and a Purple Heart. Officers K. Martin and A. Reed earned a Medal of Honor and dispatchers Sabrina Rivera and Maria Gonzalez were recognized with police commendations.

It was six days before Christmas. Detectives Feucht and Grace responded after hearing that there was a suspicious person inside the bank on East Renfro Street. The suspect robbed the bank, and as he fled on foot he headed toward the plainclothes detectives. When the detectives confronted the suspect, he shot Det. Feucht. Det. Grace was shot in an exchange of gunfire with the suspect.

Officers Martin and Reed knew that the detectives were shot and that the suspect had fled in to a nearby convenience store. The officers confronted the suspect and made the arrest.

Dispatchers Rivera and Gonzalez took the initial call for help, which turned in to a robbery, then the shootings and finally the arrest. The honorees updated information to first responders at the scene and helped manage the first responders' response to the scene as well as to the hospital.

That incident stands out because it was the first time that Burleson police officers have been shot in the line of duty. But the Jan. 29 awards banquet highlighted the work of many, including the six top award winners. Community Resource Officer David Wardlaw was named 2014 Officer of the Year. Officer Caitlin Swenson was tapped as Rookie of the Year. Deputy Chief Doug Sandifer took home the 2014 Supervisor of the Year. Kathy James, civilian records supervisor/crime analyst, was awarded Civilian of the Year. The Most Outstanding Community Policing Award went to Officer Don Adams, and Officer Joseph Byrom was honored with the 2014 Ofelia Blair Character Award.

Lifesaving Awards

Two officers – N. Thorne and Byrom - earned Lifesaving awards for two separate incidents.

In the summer of 2014, Officer Thorne responded to a report of a man who was shot after he pointed a gun at another man's wife and child. Thorne was the first officer on scene. He took control and applied lifesaving treatment to the victim. Two dispatchers – Karen Dawkins and Maria Gonzalez – received police commendations for the same incident for handling the multiple calls to 9-1-1 and coordinating the response.

Officer Byrom's Lifesaving award was for his action when a person was threatening suicide. The officer secured the knife that the young man had just used to slash his own arm with and began applying lifesaving first aid. Officer S. Morrison was awarded a police commendation for the incident for stepping in and securing the young man's hands after he tried to get Officer Byrom's duty weapon.

Police Commendations

Three officers were presented with police commendations for arresting two suspects, recovering more than 750 pieces of stolen mail, and managing an investigation that resulted in the suspects getting a combined 30 years of prison time. Officers B. Glass and C. Swenson responded to the initial report of drug activity that escalated in to the mail theft case. Officer T. Catron, who was a detective at the time, investigated the case.

Det. C. Garrett and Officers Glass, J. Gomez and J. McDonald earned police commendations for apprehending a burglar, recovering the stolen property, and recovering a stolen vehicle that the burglar used as his getaway car.

Dispatcher Wylene Landrum was honored with a police commendation for handling a call from OnStar concerning a customer who had wrecked a car in a possible suicide attempt. The crash site was hidden deep in a wooded area. Landrum worked with OnStar to pinpoint the location and direct first responders in.

Officers Glass and Byrom earned police commendations for arresting three men for a home burglary and recovering a large portion of the property that was taken.

Sgt. J. Trumble and Officer Catron earned police commendations for operating the City's Mobile Command Post during times of crisis and disaster.

Meritorious Conduct

Earning meritorious conduct honors were Officer K. Cordell, members of the department's honor guard, leaders of the department's police explorer post, and Officer C. Pilgrim.

Cordell's award was for his specialized assignment with the traffic unit's commercial vehicle enforcement. Honor guard members Sgt. D. Pool, officers K. Martin, Thorne, J. Berg, J. Davis, L. Giddings, Gomez, T. Bauereisen, and B. Wichman and Det. Grace were praised for their "highly polished appearance,"

and the “air of respect and dignity” they display when participating in local events. Explorer leaders Sgt. Pool, Officer S. Henken and Det. Garrett were praised for taking an active role in shaping the future of the youth. And, Officer Pilgrim was recognized for befriending a boy named Cain at the City’s Hot Sounds of Summer concert series, then forming a lifelong friendship with him, even walking Cain to class on his first day of school.

Civic Achievement

A civic achievement award went to Records Clerk Karen Goodman for spearheading the department’s participation in the American Cancer Society Relay for Life of Burlison.

Service Awards

Recognized for their service to the department were Det. Garrett, Officer Henken, and Officer T. Mabry for five years of service; Records Clerk Karen Goodman and Det. Grace for 10 years; Inv. L. Sparks and Records Coordinator Steve Haas for 15 years; Sgt. Pool and Deputy Chief C. Havens for 20 years; Sgt. M. McGuire for 25 years; and Deputy Chief Sandifer for 30 years of service.

Safe Driving Awards

Safe driving awards went to Officers Byrom and Henken, Det. Garrett and Deputy Chief Havens for three years; Officers T. Brown and Pilgrim for six years; Officer Davis for nine years; Officer J. Brackett and Sgt. B. O’Heren for 12 years; Sergeants Pool and W. Routson for 18 years; and Sgt. B. Sherman for 21 years.