



A publication of the Southern States PBA

2017

BLUE REVIEW

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE PBA, ISSUE 11





A SHOOTING OR AN ACCIDENT... NO ONE LIKES TO THINK ABOUT IT!

IF IT HAPPENS TO YOU:

- Don't panic! Calm down and compose yourself.
- Don't rush into making a statement.
- Call the **PBA Hotline: 1-800-233-3506.**
- The PBA will provide you with an attorney prior to making a statement - either on the scene or wherever needed.
- Wait until you talk to a PBA attorney before making any statements, oral or written, unless you have been given a direct order to do so.

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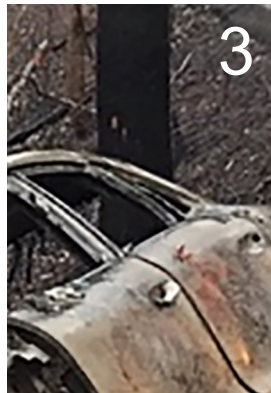
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COVER: Photo courtesy of the West Virginia Department of Commerce.

EDITOR: Jenna Lynn Warner, Director of Public Relations, SSPBA, jwarner@sspba.org

CO-EDITOR: Kaylan Storey, Public Relations & Communications Coordinator, SSPBA, kstorey@sspba.org



RENEE DIXON, SSPBA CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER:

Renee handles the day-to-day operations of the SSPBA under CEO Jack Roberts and has been with the Southern States Police Benevolent Association for 31 years.

"I strive to make sure that every member's concerns are handled with professionalism and care. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (800) 233-3506, ext. 349."



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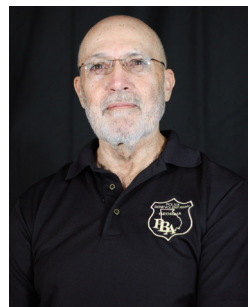
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By Kaylan Storey, Public Relations & Communications Coordinator, SSPBA

The Great Smoky Mountain wildfires that ravaged 17,000 acres in Tennessee destroyed land, but not the first responders that live and work there. When disaster strikes, the brave prevail. This is exactly what a husband and wife law enforcement team did during the horrific fires of November 2016.

Todd and Cindy Myers both began their careers in law enforcement with the Gatlinburg Police Department. Cindy started in 1995, and Todd soon followed in 2000. In 2016, Todd accepted a position with the Sevier County Sheriff's Department. Together, they have three children – Blake, 17, Wyatt, 10, and Whittley, 6. The Myers' Smoky Mountain home has been in the family for generations as it once belonged to Cindy's great-grandparents. Unfortunately, the wildfires that began in late November and burned until December 9th, destroyed the Myers' home.

The only way to truly describe the details

and impact of the Smoky Mountain wildfires, is through the words of someone who lived through them. Todd Myers described the devastation. "The November wildfires were something that anyone who worked that night hopes to never see again. It was devastation that moved at an uncontrollable rate. Most people were caught off-guard because the area had been smoky for a couple of days prior to the night of the wildfires because the National Park had allowed the fires to burn while officials 'monitored' them. My wife was on duty that day. When she called and told me that she was going to have to work over and that they were doing a voluntary evacuation of the area, I had our children pack an overnight bag in case we had to leave. We still never imagined the events that were about to follow," Todd said.

"I worked night shift the weekend leading up to that Monday for the Sevier County Sheriff's Department. I did not go to bed that morning so I could work on removing leaves at some of the cabins that I help take care of on the side. Our children were at school in Gatlinburg until about 11:30 a.m. The school let out early due

to the smoke coming into the building. I picked the kids up from school and went back home to wait on my wife to get off from work. I was supposed to be off that night and we had plans to decorate our Christmas tree. Our house was located below the Park Vista Hotel. Forestry had actually cut a fire line between our home and Park Vista that evening. The dozer came off of the hillside and was sitting across the street from our house. I spoke to a Forestry worker and asked if I should be concerned. He told me not to worry and that they had cut fire lines on the hillside and that the wind was taking the fire away from us," Todd said.

The wind changed direction though and around 6:45 p.m. it picked up a patio umbrella and slammed it into the house. Todd said, "This scared my daughter so she came and got me. When I went outside, the ridge in front and behind our home was on fire. The wind was filled with hot embers and they were blowing all over. I told the kids it was time to go. We loaded their bags and the animals into the car and drove to the Gatlinburg Police Department. I was able to call a good friend of mine from the Sheriff's

Department who was close by. He picked me up and drove back to the house to grab a few pictures and my patrol car. When we left the house, the whole area was engulfed in flames. The neighbor's house was on fire and it hit me that we were about to lose everything."

Todd drove the kids to his in-laws' house. "They were crying and begging me not to leave them. It was one of the hardest things I have ever had to do," Todd said. Once Todd knew the children were safe, he went on duty and headed straight to Gatlinburg to assist in evacuating people from the area. "I can remember getting called in to work. While on the way to my in-laws' house with the children, I called Chief Hodges and told him I would be a little late because my house was burning

was unable to get in touch with Cindy and be sure that she was okay. There were technical problems, and cell phone service went out.

When asked what kept them going during all of the destruction and loss of their home, Todd replied, "We didn't really have time to search for a reason to keep going that night. Everyone was just working to do their part and help as many people as possible throughout the chaos." The Myers don't view their heroism as anything special or out of the ordinary. "We don't feel like heroes. There are many stories from that night of fellow officers and emergency personnel braving the flames to help someone. It's just what we do. It was unfortunate that we lost our home that night, but there

to serve alongside everyone that night," Todd added.

The Myers are currently rebuilding their home in the Smoky Mountains. They hope to be moved in by Christmas of this year.

When the wildfires began last year, the Police Benevolent Foundation began a fund for those officers affected by the wildfires. Tennessee Division President (TNPBA) Johnny Bohanan proudly presented a check on behalf of the Foundation to the Myers family.

Deputy Walker Marshall

Another law enforcement officer who bravely worked to save lives during the wildfires was Sevier County Sheriff's Office Deputy Walker Marshall. While Deputy Marshall does not consider himself a hero, Smoky Mountain cabin community residents Brooke Kratchoff and her mother, Dewana Allen certainly disagree. Deputy Marshall rescued Kratchoff and Allen during the wildfire, but he remains humble. "I did my job, ma'am. I remember somebody needed help and needed out, and it was our job to get them out," Marshall said.

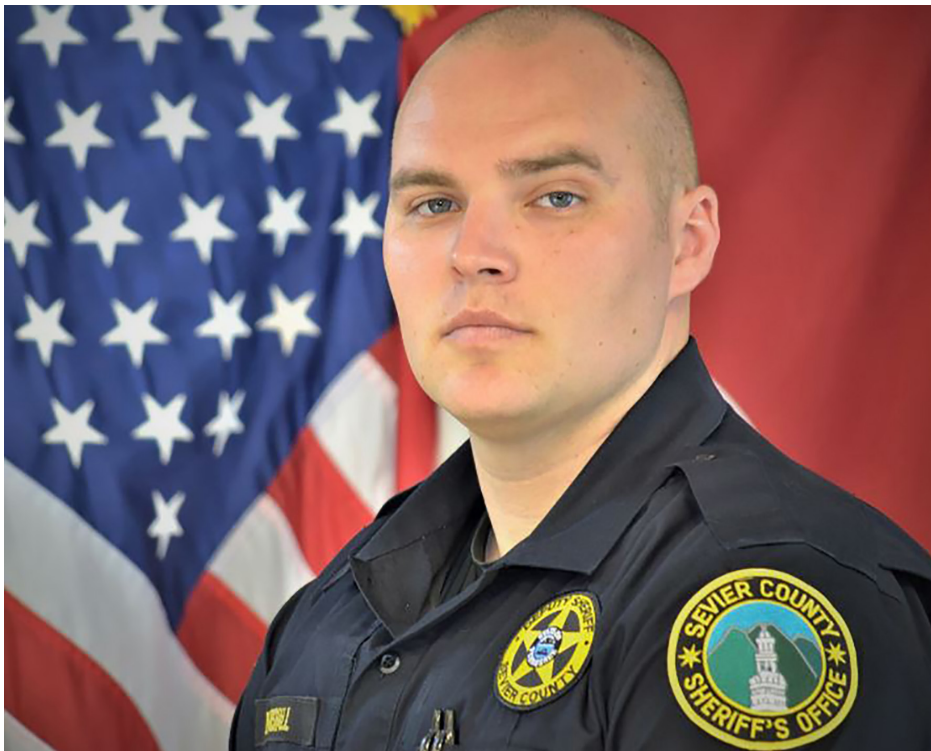
Brooke Kratchoff and her mother, Dewana Allen had called the Sheriff's Office because they needed help getting out of their community due to the wildfires. Due to the large volume of calls that night, their call was placed on hold. "Well it was a call that had been holding for quite some time. We were actually evacuating where Ms. Kratchoff and her mother were (in the cabin community), and we had to leave the area due to the fire. I wasn't actually there when they evacuated people the first time. I just remember hearing it over the radio. After we had gotten another group of individuals—a husband and wife out, someone said that the other call was still holding. I had actually been up in that area recently for an open flame call. There was a burn ban at the time and people were grilling in the cabin. So the fire department and myself went up there and asked them to put it out. As we were leaving, I realized that I knew exactly where I was at because when I was younger, I used to take my truck along the



Tennessee Division President Johnny Bohanan proudly presented a check on behalf of the Police Benevolent Foundation to the Myers family.

down. He told me not to come to work and to take care of my family. I will never forget calling in service after dropping the kids off. My phone rang immediately after dispatch acknowledged me, and it was Chief Hodges. He wanted to know what I was doing and said again for me to go home. I told him my family was safe and I was here to work. There was a pause and then he told me to get my butt to work! Throughout everything going on that night, Chief Hodges checked on me periodically, and I'll never forget that," Todd added. During all the chaos, Todd

were much greater losses suffered by the people that lost loved ones during the wildfires. We count our blessings daily," Todd said. "I would just like to reiterate that everyone that came out to assist with the wildfires that night is a hero. At some point through that night of hell, each and every person on duty found themselves in harm's way trying to assist someone in need. I know we (emergency responders) don't do this for the credit or to be in the spotlight, but much credit is due to everyone that worked those long, horrific hours that night. It was truly an honor



Sevier County Sheriff's Deputy Walker Marshall

trails on the backside of that mountain," Marshall said.

"So, when the call went out, I looked it up on our Geosync system. I was driving a 2016 Explorer at the time and thought I might be able to make it up there. So, I called my boss, Corporal Albert Biggs and asked him. I told him, 'Hey, this is what I'm doing. It might tear my car up.' And he just said, 'Hit it. Go for it man.' And I did. I hit the trail that was pretty rough at the time, and I got disoriented. A tree was down and a cabin was fully engulfed on the right side. So I took a right and realized I'd gone the wrong direction and ran out of road. So I went around the cabin that was fully engulfed

and turned around. There was a tree down and I knew that was the direction I needed to go, so I just rammed the tree with my cruiser. The tree was just kind of hanging in the road. It actually struck my windshield, my roof and light bar of my car. So, I struck that and went under it. There were more cabins on fire. As I would drive past the cabins on fire, the AC on that side of the car would get hot. It was the craziest thing I've ever seen and I've seen a lot of cabin fires. Cabins are solid wood and they burn quickly. The AC in my car was getting hot, I just knew I'd bubbled the paint and my car was going to be ruined. So, I went back down into the backside of the cabin community and I came to down power lines and trees.

I was having to swerve and serpentine in and out. I remember one thing I saw that I'll never forget as I was driving through there - the cinderblock foundations of the houses were on fire. I'd never seen that.

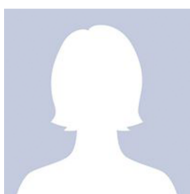
I turned on to Redmond Way (the road that Kratchoff and Allen lived on). I'd never actually been to that road before, but I looked up and there was only one house still standing. It was the very first house on the right. I got on the radio and told my supervisor and the other guys out helping us that night what I was going to do. After they gave me the go-ahead, I beat and beat on that door, but nobody answered. Nobody came to the door. I returned to my car and looked on the map again and saw that the road was the shape of a J, and there were no other houses standing, but for some reason I thought, I'm going to go check this road. I rounded the corner and the two women were standing on the side of the road waving at me. I got them in the car. And then we went back out the way we came," Marshall said.

While most people would agree that Deputy Marshall's actions that night were nothing short of extraordinary, Deputy Marshall disagrees. He said, "I feel like I did my job. Anybody else I work with would have done the same thing,"

The actions of Deputy Marshall and Officers Todd and Cindy Myers are nothing short of amazing. Tennessee Division President Johnny Bohanan said, "These are just a few of the officers and PBA members that heroically worked to save lives that night. Officers came from across the state of Tennessee to help."

Review from the Sevier County Sheriff's Office Facebook page

★★★★★ August 17, 2017



My name is Brooke Kratchoff, my mother Dewana Allen and I were rescued by a sheriff at the last minute on the night of the fire at 12:30 am. We were so scared and I did not get his name. We live at 2103 Glendale Way. He saved our lives and I have no way to thank him for that. But I want him to know that he is an unbelievable man. He literally put his life on the line when no one else would or could. We did not expect him. They told us nobody was coming and to save ourselves. He drove like nothing I can describe. I understand that is duty, but he is really a hero. I did ask around and heard it may have been Officer Walker [Marshall]. But that's not for sure. We hope the best for him. He will always be in our hearts.

POST CRITICAL INCIDENT SEMINAR:

Changes Lives, Saves Careers and Marriages

By Kaylan Storey, Public Relations & Communications Coordinator, SSPBA

Earlier this year, I was fortunate enough to spend three days at a seminar that changed how I view those in the law enforcement community. From March 13th through the 15th, I attended the Georgia Post Critical Incident Seminar. While I have been working for the SSPBA for two years, it was not until this seminar that I truly understood what these officers and their families face during and long after a critical incident.

History of the Program

Retired US Secret Service Special Agent Andrew Gruler leads the PCIS seminar. After being involved in a fatal shooting in 1985, Gruler helped form a peer support team for Secret Service agents that had been involved in critical incidents. The program offered counselors and peer support to help the agents. The program grew quickly and expanded, but was still exclusively for agents. The law enforcement community was also in dire need of a peer support program to help them after critical incidents. That's where Rev. Eric Skidmore stepped in. Skidmore helped start the law enforcement version in South Carolina in 2000. It has since grown to include seminars in eight states. The goal of the PCIS program is to turn vulnerability into strength through learning, utilizing, and offering peer support.

Program Manager for the South Carolina Law Enforcement Assistance Program (SCLEAP), Rev. Eric Skidmore spoke about how the program began. "The PCIS was born in the context of the FBI searching for an appropriate method of assisting their personnel who had been through a critical incident on the job. In 2000, SCLEAP decided to take what was a tried and true method in the federal law enforcement system and apply it to state and local law enforcement.

After 17 years of practice with over 30 seminars completed and over 1,000 officers completing the course, we are utterly convinced that we are on the right track. The PCIS provides state and local cops with a formal follow-up for those officers who have experienced a serious critical incident on the job. For many officers, the crisis intervention programs and psychological first aid applied immediately after a critical incident, is all that is needed. However, other officers need additional assistance. The PCIS can be the next step in helping an officer return to his/her assignment with a sense of confidence and purpose."

DAY 1

The first day began, as you would expect, pretty quietly. Everyone came in and found their seat. No one was really looking to make much conversation. Some officers came with their wives/girlfriends, some came with co-workers, and others came on their own. The room was set up so that the tables made a u-shape in the room and observers sat along the outside wall. As I read the body language of the participants, it was clear that few wanted to be there. Many sat back in their chairs, arms crossed.

Gruler began the seminar by speaking on his career in law enforcement and personal experience with a critical incident. Then the peer support team members were introduced. Each peer support team member has been certified by the International Critical Incident Seminar Foundation. They have all worked in law enforcement as well as each has experienced their own critical incident. This helps them relate to the officers in attendance because they are able to understand what each officer has been through.

After each peer support team member and observer had introduced themselves, Gruler asked each participant to do the same. He asked that they tell about their

critical incident(s), or what was bothering them and brought them to the seminar. There was no time limit given to each person, and they were encouraged to tell as much or as little as they would like. Stories ranged from recent events to ones that happened as long as 20 years ago that still bother the officer.

They also discussed how the media has a huge impact on law enforcement. As one participant said, "The media doesn't write the truth, just whatever makes the best news." SSPBA member and peer support team member David James said, "Officers never want to have to shoot and kill someone. The media misconstrues or only runs half the facts. That's what incites the riots."

Stories ranged from critical incidents that occurred while responding to domestic issues, traffic stop shootouts, suicide by cop, and fellow officers shot in the line of duty - truly terrible things that no one should ever have to see, but as law enforcement officers, they take on the worst of the worst when they put on the badge. The critical incident doesn't just go away when they go home. It stays with them and affects their lives. This includes impacting and affecting their spouses and children.

Spouses & Significant Others Tell All

Several officers brought their spouses/significant others with them to the seminar. This made for an interesting time when the officer would be asked how they were doing. Most would reply, "fine," but their significant other would quickly tell how things really were. The wives spoke about how the job affects their husbands at home. Some officers have night terrors, become withdrawn, can't seem to put the job away and be present and the problems would just keep building up. Some seem to be more paranoid and shy away from crowds. Many of the couples went through





The small group format allowed each participant to speak in depth with those in a similar situation.

counseling but still needed help.

The wives also shared how their husband's job impacts them too. They constantly worry that their husband will be shot in the line of duty. They also worry about their husband's name getting out in the news. Safety and retaliation worries are ever-present. The wives feel as though their husbands don't open up to them about the critical incident and what happened to them. Instead they become distant and shut off.

Gruler and peer support team members spoke to the group about spouses of law enforcement officers. They said, "One - third of spouses don't want to know anything about the critical incident, one third only want the Disney version, and the other third want to know all the information, as in how many inches was the gun from the body." Officers need to talk to their spouses and tell them what happened after the critical incident. Be open and know when to get help.

Small Group Selection

After everyone spoke about why they were there, the room seemed a little calmer than it was at the beginning. There were many tears shed, but everyone seemed to be relieved to be in a room with others who understood. The participants were dismissed for dinner,

and the peer support team met to decide how to break the large group into suitable small groups. The participants were split into small groups so that each person could have a chance to talk more and tell their story. Participants were then placed into groups based on the following categories: spouses, shot, shooter, line of duty death, and cumulative. Cumulative consisted of those participants who had multiple incidents bothering them. The peer support team members then volunteered for the groups they would be best suited for. Each group consisted of five to seven participants and three peer support team members.

DAY 2

On the second day, all participants returned to the seminar. Most looked hopeful for what the day could bring, but a few looked skeptical.

Critical Incident Stress

The day's events began with a presentation on trauma by Andy Gruler. This included defining a critical incident as a trauma that you are not prepared for and/or when something happens that shakes you up. The phases of a critical incident trauma were also covered. It may be sudden or unexpected. The officer may feel a loss of control and a disruption of world beliefs. A critical incident can also

lead to perceptual distortions wherein time may move in slow motion or be accelerated. A great majority of officers report diminished sound and visual distortion. Some officers can remember hearing all the shots clearly but couldn't recall seeing anything. Other on-scene stress responses may include crying, vomiting or nausea. The presenter then stressed to the group that these are all signs of stress reactions and not signs of weakness. The law enforcement officer is not weak and should not be viewed as such for having stress reactions to a critical incident.

Critical incident stress responses can occur at the scene, within hours, days, or even weeks later. Normal reactions after a critical incident can include anger, depression, guilt, isolation, family problems, flashbacks, nightmares and loss of control. The intensity of these reactions waxes and wanes over time but should eventually subside. When these reactions do not subside, the officer is usually suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Many factors may affect the magnitude of an officer's response to a critical incident. These include the nature of the event, the degree of warning, coping style, prior mastery of experience, proximity, amount of stress in life, and the nature and degree of the officer's social support. Training,

experience and the nature of the officer's personal life can affect how well they are able to cope with the stress of a critical incident.

Grief & Mourning

The next presentation was led by Dr. Therese Rando, who works in Thanatology. Thanatology is defined as the scientific study of death and the practices associated with it, including the study of the needs of the terminally ill and their families. Rando said her goal with the presentation was to help the officers realize that they have mourned and grieved hundreds of times in their lives. She said they can grieve their situation and move on because loss is a part of a critical incident. She spoke about the two categories of loss – physical loss (i.e. your car is stolen) and abstract loss (i.e. relationship betrayal or divorce). An abstract loss is just as real as a physical loss. Dr. Rando also spoke about secondary loss or a loss that goes with or results as a consequence of the primary loss.

The officer's bereavement experience is the sum of all your losses along with the grief/mourning that goes with each one. Loss occurs when something happens to alter your assumptive world. Dr. Rando described assumptive world as an organized mental framework containing everything you assume to be true about the world, yourself and others on the basis of your previous experiences. Dr. Rando said that we always experience loss, whether we know it or not. For example, change always involves loss, such as the loss of your baby teeth.

Dr. Rando defined grief as the process of experiencing the psychological, behavioral, social and physical reactions to the perception of loss. Each person's grief is a big deal to them, even if it may not seem important to other people. No two people will grieve the same way because no two people are the same, even those officers that were in a critical incident together.

Dr. Rando concluded her presentation by telling the officers and their spouses that you don't simply get over a major loss that you encounter in your critical incident, but you learn to live with it. Trauma

complicates this but does not prohibit it. With proper support and expectations, people can and do live healthy lives after traumatic bereavement, albeit with many changes within themselves and their worlds.

Small Groups

Following the morning presentations, the participants were broken up into small groups based on their critical incident. This allowed the participants to speak in a more intimate setting with fellow officers or spouses that were going through a similar situation. Each group was led by two to three peer support team members had been through a similar situation as the participants and had successfully come out the other side of the rough patch. Each participant was given as much time as they needed to speak about their critical incident and how they were currently coping months or years since the incident. Some had turned to alcoholism to help numb their pain.

PBA staff representative and member Patrick Cullinan led the group that I observed. A few years back, Cullinan told his personal story about his struggles with alcoholism in our 2014 *Blue Review* magazine. Cullinan's personal struggles gave him the necessary tools to help those in his group that were unable to see past their critical incident. Cullinan was empathetic to his group and able to offer suggestions to help them move forward.

EMDR

Each participant was offered the opportunity to experience Eye-Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy (EMDR). Those who would most likely benefit from the therapy were those who were unable to think about anything other than their critical incident. The therapy aims to help move the traumatic experience from the front of the person's brain to the back where they don't constantly think about it. This therapy was completely voluntary and free for the attendees.

I observed a participant receiving the EMDR treatment. The scene consisted of the officer and the therapist. They sat in chairs facing each other. The therapy session began with the therapist talking

to the officer and asking him to describe the critical incident and what part was bothering him the most. The therapist asked the officer to pull the image up in his mind and describe the scene – blood, bodies, gunshot wounds, etc. After thinking of that image, the therapist asked the officer to rate his stress level on a scale from 0 to 10. The officer said 10. The therapist then began the EMDR by holding up two fingers and telling the officer to concentrate on the image from the critical incident and follow their fingers. After each time of moving her fingers back and forth, the therapist would stop and asked the officer what he saw and to rate his stress level. His stress level gradually went down and the officer said he felt silence and quiet. He said he no longer felt bad and knew that he had done everything he could during the critical incident and could not have prevented what happened.

Personal Relationships

Dr. Stephen Sampson led the presentation on personal relationships in law enforcement. This presentation was especially beneficial for the officers that brought their spouses to the seminar because he was working to ensure that they could have strong marital bonds. Dr. Sampson spoke about the three levels of a relationship – lust, attraction and attachment. He provided several examples of how to properly communicate between spouses. He pulled wives out of the group and had them run through different scenarios and showed them just how important tone of voice is in responding to a partner. He spoke to the officers and told them how not be dismissive to their wives just because they had stressful jobs.

Coping & Resiliency

Andy Gruler spoke to the participants about coping and resiliency after a critical incident. Gruler suggests that the officers reflect on the experience and replay it in their minds as an observer. Avoid explanations that either justify or condemn what happened. Then they should look at the big picture – What happened? How did it happen? What did I do? What did I, or did I not, have control over? What could I have done differently? He told them to remember that they reacted very quickly, without

thinking, and that their training kicked in. In critical incidents, everyone has one of three initial responses – flight, fight or freeze. The officer can control what they do but not what the other person does. Gruler emphasized to them that they did everything they could in the moment and now they just have to deal with their emotions. Everything will be okay. Moving forward, Gruler said that the officers have to make the commitment. They have to be aware of their behavioral patterns, define their goals and formulate a plan of action.

One Man's Story

PBA staff representative and peer support team member Patrick Cullinan spoke to the participants about his struggle with alcoholism, suicidal thoughts and law enforcement career. He also spoke about his critical incidents and the effect they had on him and his family. Thankfully, Patrick was able to get the help he needed. He was able to share his experiences as a peer support team member. They knew that he had been through what they were going through and found a way to come out the other side. Patrick is now 14 years sober.

DAY 3

On the final day, I saw a real change in the participants in comparison to the first day. Everyone was smiling and they looked more relaxed. They were having conversations with each other and exchanging numbers to stay in touch. It was a complete 180 from the first day.

Cops, Docs & Medicine

Dr. Gregg Dwyer spoke to the participants about mood and anxiety medications. Dr. Dwyer said that he works to keep officers healthy on the job. He spoke about the difference between mood and anxiety medications and what symptoms each is used to treat. He said that a person's mind can cause their body to have reactions. Stress is a biologic response that is built into everyone. Again, a person's response to a critical incident goes back to the basic flight, fight or freeze.

Conclusion

After Dr. Dwyer's presentation, everyone

returned to small groups to check in. The goal before leaving was to ensure that each participant had sufficient "tools in their toolbox" to use when necessary. This included each other's numbers and contact information for the peer support team. Some participants spent time with Dr. Rando for more one-on-one therapy. Each participant was sure to go home with something to help them the next time their critical incident started to bother them.

Rev. Skidmore also spoke to the participants about the search for meaning and to believe in a higher power. Rev. Skidmore is just one of the many people that is so passionate about the PCIS program.

"The PCIS program is important to me because I have the chance to see the impact of a law enforcement career on a normal human being. I have the chance to see the impact (short term and long term) of a critical incident on a normal police officer. Despite the best efforts of agencies to support their officers, the problems we deal with in the PCIS program are the problems that are present in every law enforcement agency in the country. Our agencies spend millions of dollars on the best equipment, officer survival, legal updates, etc. Yet, they spend a mere pittance on the impact of policing on the officers themselves. Whether it is a specific critical incident or a career of accumulated stress and trauma, the job has an impact. The PCIS is a tool which state and local agencies can use," Skidmore said.

Skidmore went on to discuss the importance of the PCIS program.

"PCIS is important because it works. It helps cops and those they love to find a way forward through the impact of the incidents and the job itself. It gives our officers hope that they can move beyond the incident(s) which brought them to the PCIS. It gives them assurance that their home agency cares about them. I hope to see the PCIS program expand to more states and nations. In our last PCIS in South Carolina, we had 6 Canadians attend. They came for two reasons – 1. They personally needed PCIS to address their own critical incidents and 2. They came because they know Canada needs

PCIS and they don't have it. At present, we have eight states with PCIS programs in place and have five states very interested in starting a PCIS program. That leaves 37 states very much in need of exposure to this program."

Participant Feedback

This comment from a participant shows the impact of the program. "I was bottled up before I came here. I would not talk to my wife about anything and our marriage was failing. On the night of day two, I called her to see if we could meet halfway between home and here. We stayed in the car for three hours – crying, laughing and talking. You have saved my life, and my wife and kids are forever indebted to the peer counselors and staff," said one participant.

Another participant said, "The seminar helped me open up and express myself. I now realize that I am not alone on this island. Avoidance is not the answer. I have learned that things will happen in life that is beyond my control. How we deal with an incident is our choice."

I was very grateful to attend this seminar and learn more about what these officers go through on a daily basis. I have gained a whole new respect and admiration for law enforcement officers and their families.

For more information on the South Carolina Law Enforcement Assistance Program and other states that offer the Post Critical Incident Seminar, please visit www.scleap.org.

For more information on the Police Benevolent Foundation, please visit www.pbfi.org.

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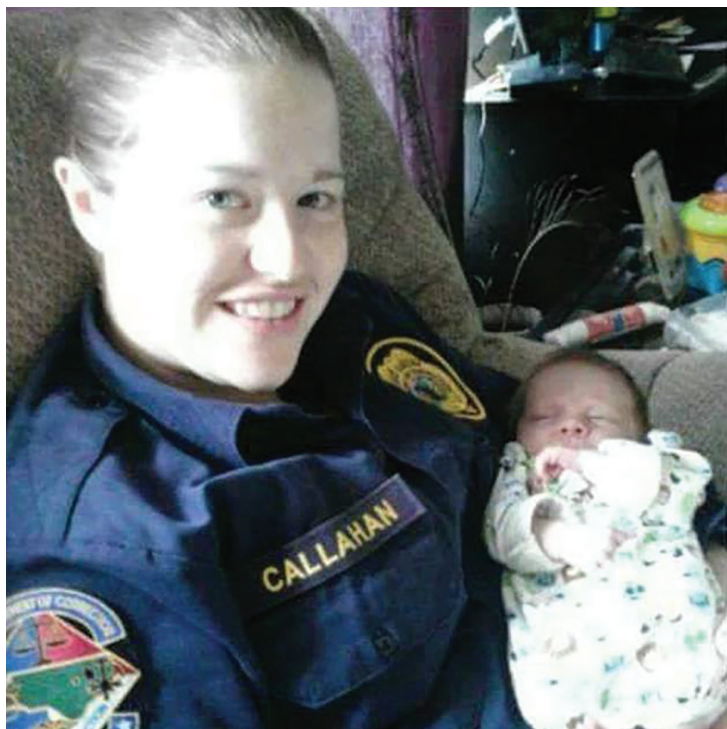
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PBA HONORS MEMORY OF SGT. MEGGAN CALLAHAN BEFORE NORTH CAROLINA SUPREME COURT

Brief in Support of Harris Case Acknowledges Ultimate Sacrifice of Sgt. Callahan



By John Midgette, Executive Director, NCPBA

The PBA is currently representing Correctional Officer Steven Harris in his appeal of his termination from Maury Correctional Institution in 2015. Attorney Michael Byrne was assigned by PBA in June 2015 to represent Officer Harris.

After Officer Harris prevailed before Administrative Law Judge Don Overby, the N.C. Department of Public Safety (DPS) appealed to the Court of Appeals. That court affirmed Judge Overby's ruling that there was no just cause for the termination of Officer Harris.

DPS has appealed to the N.C. Supreme Court, where the case is now pending. PBA filed an amicus curiae brief before the Supreme Court which was prepared by attorneys J. Michael McGuinness and Megan Milliken. In that brief, PBA paid respect to Sgt. Callahan and addressed the highly dangerous environment in which corrections officers work. PBA's brief argues in support of the legal precedent that discipline of state

employees should be commensurate with—that is, in proportion to—the offense. Portions of the brief are detailed below.

“State correctional officers are often subjected to being spit on, hit with excrement and urine, bitten, battered, stomped, kicked, tackled, cut, beaten, stabbed and, like North Carolina

Sergeant Meggan Callahan, murdered, due to inmate retaliation. These unreasonable risks come with everyday work in a prison. Inmates are perhaps the most frequent complainers, seizing upon trivial matters to retaliate against the correctional officers who must manage the inmate population under often extreme stress. Correctional officers on a daily basis deal with things unimaginable to the rest of us, such as being struck with hurled feces and urine with the attending health risks.

State prisons are operated by the N.C. Department of Public Safety (hereafter “DPS”). In recent years, DPS has been all too quick in arbitrarily siding with inmates or other accusers and imposing excessive discipline on correctional officers without just cause and without reasonable or complete investigations. This is a crucial case about just cause or lack thereof in the unique employment environment in our state prisons.”

The brief later addresses Sgt. Callahan's murder in greater detail: “DPS and the dissent overlook the crucial context

of this case: a dangerous prison environment. Correctional Officers such as 29-year-old Sergeant Meggan Lee Callahan, who was murdered by an inmate in April 2017, while in the line of duty, have to live with physical and mental abuse that the rest of us never experience. The inmate accomplished this act of callous violence by brutally beating Sergeant Callahan to death with the fire extinguisher that she had brought to put out a fire—a fire that the inmate set to draw her to the scene of her death.

The bottom line of this case is Judge Overby's finding that Petitioner [Harris] either did not hit the inmate at all or did so ‘but with such insignificant force that it was practically non-existent.’ Various types of insignificant contact by correctional officers is routine in contemporary prison environments. While even insignificant force can be grounds for some discipline, such is not an adequate basis for the extreme penalty of termination especially where, as here, there are numerous mitigating factors that establish this case as a minimum commensurate discipline case.”

The Harris case originated after an inmate created a disturbance by placing feces in a plastic bag which stunk up the cell block. The inmate had to be removed from the cell so that a janitor could clean up. The inmate then began spitting in Harris's face. Witnesses testified at the initial hearing that Officer Harris punched the inmate in the stomach. Less than 30 minutes later, the inmate was screened by a use of force medical screening by a nurse, and there was no evidence of any impact or injury to the inmate. The decision of ALJ Donald Overby stated that “the only rational conclusion is that based on the totality of the circumstances in this contested case is that Petitioner [Harris] struck Walls with very little force.”

Upon its review of the case, the Court of Appeals stated that ALJ Overby correctly determined that the DPS failed to prove

just cause for termination. Nevertheless, DPS appealed the Court of Appeals decision to the Supreme Court.

The PBA amicus curiae brief states, “DPS has a well-established history of appealing the same issues from case to case, without due regard for the lack of success of those arguments in prior cases. On a general level, DPS has struggled mightily in recent years to attempt to limit the rights of State police officers. *Wetherington*, *Warren*, *Bulloch*, and *Shields*, as relied upon by Judge *Overby*, are all DPS cases where DPS

essentially refused to accept this Court’s precedent of the commensurate discipline principle and even claimed that North Carolina Courts lack the ‘requisite institutional knowledge’ to review DPS personnel decisions.”

The amicus brief concludes: “Where, as here, force is so ‘insignificant’ to be ‘practically non-existent’ or trivial, the Carroll/Wetherington formula protects officers like Steven Harris from excessive discipline. That multi-factor just cause formula, as thoroughly applied by Judge Overby and the majority of the Court of

Appeals, did exactly as it was supposed to do—and supported commensurate discipline.

Wherefore, PBA respectfully requests that this Court affirm the decision of the Court of Appeals and reaffirm the Carroll/Wetherington factors and principles.”

For the full text of the PBA amicus curiae brief filed in the Harris case, please visit NCPBA.org.

IN MEMORY OF SERGEANT MEGGAN CALLAHAN



Corrections Officer Carla Elkins presents a special shadow box to the mother of Sgt. Meggan Callahan.

*By Zilla Willoughby, Paralegal,
McGuinness Law Firm*

Meggan Callahan was a sergeant with the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, Division of Prisons. She was killed while on duty April 26, 2017, at the Bertie Correctional Institution in Windsor.

Meggan Callahan was promoted to sergeant in February of 2016. She had worked with the Department of Corrections since 2012.

On April 26, 2017, Sergeant Callahan

responded to a fire at the Bertie Correctional Institution. While attempting to put the fire out inmate Craig Clifford Wissink, attacked her. Sergeant Callahan grabbed a fire extinguisher in an attempt to put the fire out. Wissink was able to take the extinguisher from her and use it as a weapon to attack Sergeant Callahan. Sergeant Callahan later died from the injuries sustained from the attack.

The inmate, Craig Clifford Wissink was serving a life sentence

for a first-degree murder conviction. He has been charged with death of Sergeant Callahan and is now being held in the Central Prison in Raleigh.

More than 500 people came together to honor Sergeant Callahan, including Governor Cooper, in Edenton, North Carolina. A horse-drawn caisson and military honor guard led the funeral procession of Sergeant Callahan.

Sergeant Callahan was killed at the age of 29. Sergeant Callahan was the daughter of John Joseph and Wendy Lynn Gilbert.

She was engaged to Kristin Vogel. She had two sisters, Carissa and Amanda Callahan.

Bertie Correctional Institution was understaffed in the month that Sgt. Meggan Callahan was killed.

State figures show that in April, when Callahan died, roughly one of every five correctional officer positions at the eastern North Carolina prison was vacant.

Bertie isn’t the only state prison with staffing problems. Statewide, about 16 percent of officer positions are vacant.

On June 27, 2017, the NCPBA was proud to be on hand as House Resolution 924 was introduced by Representative Bob Steinburg to honor the life of PBA member and Corrections Sgt. Meggan Callahan. Sgt. Callahan was a constituent of Rep. Steinburg. Rep. Steinburg gave a very moving and eloquent tribute to Sgt. Callahan. His tribute was followed by heartfelt remarks from Representative Bobbie J. Richardson and Rep. Joe John NC House 40. The family of Meghan Callahan and the corrections officers in the gallery were also recognized by House Speaker Tim Moore. House Resolution 924 passed by a 117-0 vote.

The PBA continues to mourn the loss of Sgt. Callahan and will continue to work on behalf of her and her fellow officers to improve their work life conditions.

"ROCK 4 THE COPS" BENEFIT CONCERT RETURNS FOR THIRD YEAR



Chris Lane works the crowd.

By Kaylan Storey, Public Relations & Communications Coordinator, SSPBA

The wildly successful “Rock 4 the Cops” benefit concert returned to the Country Club Dance Hall and Saloon in Augusta, Ga on March 21st. The event was bigger than ever and hosted acts that proudly support the law enforcement community. Headlining the night was country superstar Chris Lane. Before the show Lane said, “I support law enforcement and anyone who serves this country. It’s because of people who risk their lives every day that we are able to do what we do. I am very grateful and thankful. What a great cause to be a part of!”

The energy and support for the law enforcement community was palpable. Each act made sure to speak about their support for the law enforcement officers

and what they do every day. One of the night’s moments that stood out was when Chris Lane asked the crowd if there were any law enforcement officers present. The officers raised their hands, and Lane proceeded to give each one of them a fist bump. It was a small gesture, but one that was evident to mean volumes to the officers and their families.

Rising country group LANCO also performed for the crowd. They put on a great show and were a joy to watch. After the show, LANCO’s lead singer, Brandon Lancaster, stopped for a few questions. When asked what his favorite part of the show was, Lancaster said, “Before the show, we got to go out on the floor and mingle and meet a lot of the officers and their family members. We heard some of their stories and how this whole benefit concert came about. It was really

cool to put a face with the cause you’re trying to support. It’s really special.” LANCO’s drummer and Georgia native, Tripp Howell, was also glad to support the cause because his father was a police officer.

The entire night was filled with great music and fun for a worthy cause. No smile was bigger and brighter in the room than that of event mastermind and PBA Staff Representative Patrick Cullinan. Cullinan has seen the event grow from an idea to a huge success. “Rock 4 the Cops is near and dear to my heart because it fully funds the Georgia Post Critical Incident Seminar. After being a participant of GA PCIS and seeing the difference that it made in my professional and personal life, I have a passion for paying it forward to my fellow brothers and sisters in blue. PCIS is truly saving

officers careers, families and lives. This is the most impactful thing that I have been involved in during my law enforcement career,” Cullinan said. The event raised an amazingly impressive \$50,000+ for the PCIS program.

One hundred percent of proceeds from Rock 4 the Cops benefit the GA Post Critical Incident Seminar (PCIS) program. This program is crucial to saving the lives of officers. Many times after an officer is involved in a critical incident, they need help to deal with the trauma. The PCIS program offers seminars to officers and helps them deal with the trauma that comes from the job. That may include dealing with having to shoot a suspect in the line of duty, being shot, experiencing the loss of a co-worker or partner, or working a traumatic scene. To learn more about the PCIS program, please read the article on page 6.

The night’s benefit concert was a cause that touched many people, including the

night’s opening act, Ben Bradford. “I wanted to help out in any way that I could for the Police Benevolent Foundation. These seminars provide a support system that is desperately needed for all of our officers, and I’m glad I could be a part of helping support such a great cause. Our first responders put their lives on the line every day to keep us safe. Unselfishly, they put themselves in harm’s way for others, so why shouldn’t we show our support for them in every way possible,” Bradford said. When asked about his favorite part of the night, Bradford said, “Meeting and hearing some of the amazing stories and backgrounds from the officers was my favorite part of the show. It was such a humbling experience for me. Never would I ever take for granted what they do for all of us. These are amazing unselfish individuals who deserve our respect and gratitude every day.”

When LANCO lead singer Brandon Lancaster was asked if he could say one

thing to the law enforcement community he replied, “Every night, we’re vulnerable when we’re on stage and there have just been so many times in our careers where we depend on law enforcement, so we appreciate what they do. And also, we appreciate the families that support them. You know, when you’re a family member of an officer, the whole family might as well be an officer because you’re affected by the same thing. So thank you and we appreciate you.”

The third annual “Rock 4 the Cops” was another amazing success. We are already eagerly awaiting next year’s event. For more information on the Police Benevolent Foundation, please visit www.pbfi.org.

Photos courtesy of Dean Wingard.



Country group LANCO took time to meet with officers.



Major Michael Smith and Stitch

By Michelle Smith, PBA Attorney

Since immigrating to the United States in 2013, Police Officer Stitch has been fired twice. To be fired once, is maybe bad luck, but to be fired twice, for doing one's job... Can one be too good of a police officer?

A Belgian Malinois, Stitch was trained in Hungary, and to say he was born into the badge family is an understatement. Stitch's father and mother were both police dogs, with his father a special forces K-9 in the Hungarian Secret Police. Stitch's bloodline is impressive. All of Stitch's siblings in his litter are police dogs, except one who became a service dog.

Stitch was purchased under special arrangement when the German Consulate Office was unable to procure a German replacement for Castor. Castor was officer Michael Smith's long time K-9 partner who was German trained and died from complications from lymphoma.

In July 2013, Stitch flew from Hungary to Germany to Chicago to Atlanta. Stitch met his new handler in the cargo hold hangar at the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. His new handler, Michael Smith, bent down and spoke a few words to Stitch. It was midnight in an airplane cargo hangar, and everyone was exhausted. There was tension in the air. Would they like one another?

Neither Stitch nor Smith has disclosed the contents of that brief introduction. But whatever was said, Stitch licked Smith's ear in the patrol car all the way home. Stitch had found his new home and was ready to go to work.

Stitch was fired from his first job in the United States at the Vienna Police Department in Vienna, Ga. Stitch hit on the police chief's off duty vehicle. Stitch and Smith were on shift, taking a break at the police department, and Stitch sat down and would not move. Word got out that Stitch had hit on the police chief's car, and it wasn't long after that Stitch got his walking papers. The city no longer

needed the services of the drug detecting police dog. Stitch was fired.

Stitch knew he had a big badge to fill, taking over Castor's place. Castor worked even when he was dying from lymphoma. A true public servant, Castor died on Veteran's Day, completing his shift at Vienna Police Department, before giving his final salute. Castor received cancer treatments at the University of Georgia Veterinary Clinic, only missing one police shift throughout his treatments. Castor had a strong work ethic.

Stitch was told of the significant badge he had to fill to take over Castor's position. Stitch, evidently, took that directive too literally. He has been a crime fighting corruption crusader.

After Stitch was fired, Stitch was rumored to be credited with the departure of the Vienna police chief and the mayor of Vienna. Stitch will not confirm or deny his involvement in their departure, but he does not apologize for his integrity and work ethic.

Which brings us to Stitch's second firing at another small south Georgia town, the city of Warwick. It has always been speculated that Castor's spirit whispered of Stitch way over in Hungary to replace Castor—promising Stitch to be far greater in his crime fighting ability than Castor ever imagined. Everyone always assumed that meant Stitch would make the biggest drug bust in history. Stitch has made some good busts. Stitch sits and they give it up.

Stitch's best crime fighting ability may be in his ability to smell out corruption, as well as drugs. Stitch was fired from Warwick in January 2017 for not being profitable. In short, Stitch, who procured four times his costs in drug fines and tickets, was fired for not finding enough

drugs. Really?

Within six months, the City of Warwick would fire Stitch's handler, Major Smith, for not writing enough tickets. Of course, that alleged failure to write enough tickets was only after Smith complained of safety violations and other misconduct. All complaints that are protected under Whistleblower Protection.

It is uncertain where this whistleblower complaint is headed. But with Stitch ferreting out the corruption, it is estimated that some city officials will be leaving office, and changes are most likely coming to the City of Warwick.

Stitch and Smith are currently unemployed and looking for work. With

Stitch being fired at his last two jobs, his work as an independent contractor and crime fighting crusader is uncertain.

One thing is for sure, Stitch never tires of going to work, of doing right, and wearing the badge. In these uncertain times for police officers, take a cue from Stitch. Do not grow weary from doing good. What you do matters, and is important.

----*Michelle Smith, is a PBA attorney in Warner Robins, Georgia. Major Michael Smith is her brother, and she is Stitch's auntie. She has been a PBA attorney since 2002.*

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By Toby Nix, West Georgia Chapter
Member, PBA of GA

What's behind a porch light? Or more specifically, who is behind a porch light?

When I was in my early years, it was my mother behind the porch light. I never once came home and that porch light wasn't on. I didn't realize it at the time, as I was much too self-obsessed to think about anyone else, but behind that porch light was someone waiting for me to get home safely.

I suspect I made her leave that light on later than it should have been more than a few times.

In my adult years, the person who sits behind the porch light has been passed on from my mother to my wife. She is now the one who leaves the light on for me, to find my way home. My wife is the one who sits and worries.

I know I have made her leave that light on later than it should have been more than a few times.

You can put whatever figurative twist you want on this porch light. I am speaking about a literal light that both my mother and my wife have left on for me throughout my life. To guide me home in the literal darkness.

I can say the exact same thing and want it to be figurative and it will still be just as accurate. They have both been a light in my life to guide me home in the figurative darkness as well.

The last time I wrote about work I told a story about my second night on the job, and how I had worked a horrific accident scene (*see article on page 48*).

The evening that story was printed, I met a co-worker's mother who told me she had cried as she read that article. (She told me how it reminded her of a day she knew her son was on a terrible call).

All she knew was there was a really bad scene developing and her son was one of the responding officers to the scene. She told me details of what she was thinking and how she desperately tried to find out any information, the least of which was whether or not her son was all right.

It reminded me of a night I worked not long ago. I left the house for work around 6:00 a.m. I should have been home that evening around 7:30 p.m.

Something happened towards the end of my shift that day that meant I had to work late. I didn't have time to call home to tell anyone I might be late.

I got back in my patrol car around 10:00 p.m. and saw a message from dispatch which said "call your wife." That's never a good message. I don't think, in the history of mankind and marriage, that a "call your wife" message was ever met with "honey we just won the lottery." You know when you make that call you're about to get yelled at.

I checked my phone and had several missed calls. And understandably so. It was 10:00 p.m. I should have been home three hours ago and she had heard nothing at all, other than people on social media talking about something bad happening.

It's hard to understand the position my loved ones are in, constantly worrying. I knew I was alive and well for those three hours, but they did not.

When I got home that night, as tired as I was, I walked straight towards the porch light she had left on for me.

If you are ever so inclined to say a prayer for me and my co-workers, the men and women behind the flashing blue lights, or the flashing red lights, say, too, a prayer for those behind the porch lights waiting for us. They have a difficult job too.

FOWL PLAY

*By Deputy Chief Anthony Bazydlo,
Fulton County Chapter Member, PBA
of GA*

Law enforcement is a profession that requires us to think on our feet when we're dealing with people... or animals. Dealing with animals on the job can be a lot more than just a stray dog call here and there. It can be horses and cows that are blocking roads. It can be gators in swimming pools and on golf courses. Sometimes they can be even more fowl. I'm going to tell you the two best goose stories I've got. I'll start with the second best one, which is mine.

One day I was listening out for the radio because the sergeant on duty had a court appearance to attend to. I told him I'd keep an ear on the shift while he was gone. Out of nowhere, a burglary in progress call came over the radio. We were on the way. The first-arriving officer spotted the suspect still inside the home through the damaged side door he had used to get inside. When I got there the officer sent me into the backyard to cover the rear door while the other units cleared the home. I had my pistol up. I had my radio turned down to a whisper. I was a laser beam of focus on that back door. And then, something bit me.

The bite wasn't extraordinarily painful. It was just a pinch accompanied by a barrage of feathers. I jumped and looked down to see I was being assaulted by the homeowner's pet goose. I suppose I should say that I don't know if it was their pet. It might have been livestock they planned to eat, sell, breed or whatever

you do with a goose in your backyard. All I really knew was the damn thing was biting me. I kicked at it and told it to shoo, thinking that it would surely be enough to scare off this lowly creature. I was wrong. I'm not an expert when it comes to the emotional responses of geese (though I'm told the Georgia POST council is developing a course), but it seemed to take personal offense at my casual dismissal of its existence.

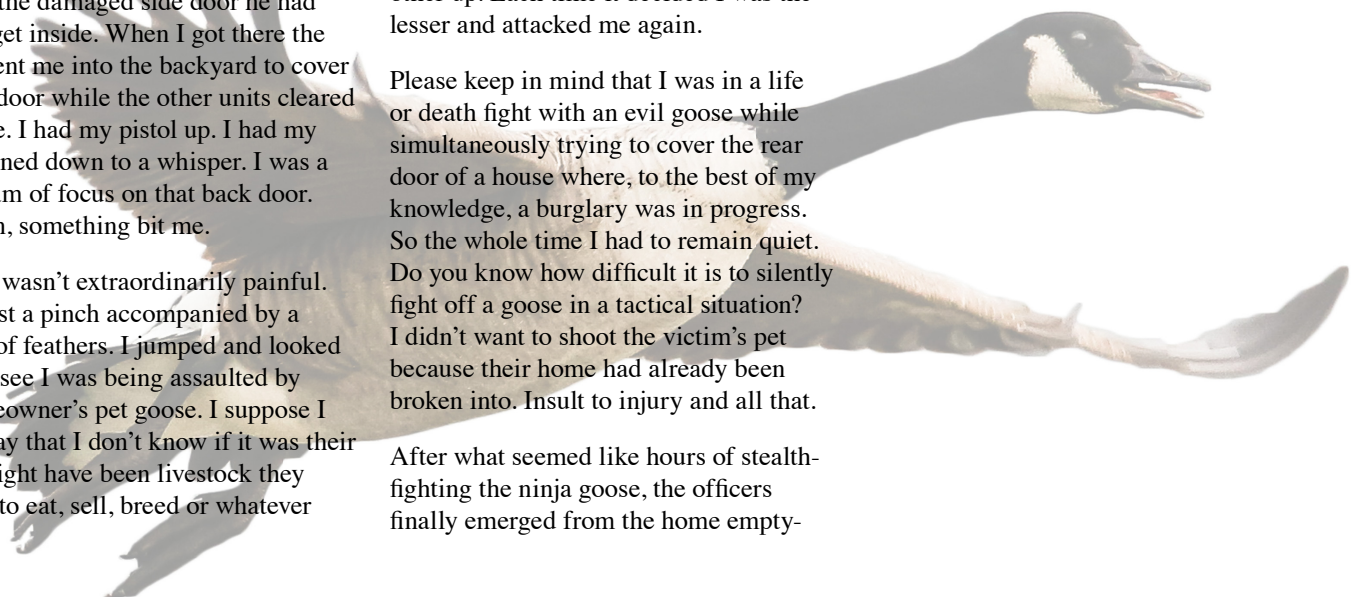
The goose went into full attack mode, and I'll be the first one to tell you that I didn't know geese had an attack mode. I didn't know that I would ever describe something as "aggressively honking" at me. It repeatedly snapped (beaked? pinched? I am lost for an appropriate verb) at my legs while chasing me around the backyard. Worse, I'd swear it was bucktoothed. Buckbeaked? It wouldn't stop. It kept charging me. I would kick at it, even making contact a few times, and we would both step back and size each other up. Each time it decided I was the lesser and attacked me again.

Please keep in mind that I was in a life or death fight with an evil goose while simultaneously trying to cover the rear door of a house where, to the best of my knowledge, a burglary was in progress. So the whole time I had to remain quiet. Do you know how difficult it is to silently fight off a goose in a tactical situation? I didn't want to shoot the victim's pet because their home had already been broken into. Insult to injury and all that.

After what seemed like hours of stealth-fighting the ninja goose, the officers finally emerged from the home empty-

handed. The suspect had spotted the officer through the side door and had fled through the back door prior to my arrival. Not to worry though. We began to receive 9-1-1 calls of a suspicious person running through backyards nearby. My first thought: that's our burglar. My second thought: how in the world did that burglar get past the attack goose? We found him. We chased him. We caught him. For days afterwards I got texts and e-mails full of geese.

That's my goose story, and like I said it's the second best one I have. The best one is courtesy of one of my training officers from years ago. He was dispatched to an aggressive goose at the local park. His report was two sentences: "I was dispatched to the park for aggressive waterfowl. On arrival I took a gander and saw no goose." We laughed and laughed that day at the end of our shift. With more than a little smugness we wondered, how aggressive could a goose really be?



LISBON, PORTUGAL



WALMART JOE'S

HIKING ADVENTURES

APRIL 2011





If you only know one thing about Joe Naia, you know he loves to hike. He began hiking in 2000 and “the bug got him,” as he says. When he’s not out on the trail, he’s working for the SSPBA as the Board Secretary and Treasurer as well as the PBA of GA President. He has been a proud PBA member for 24 years. He stays very busy with his work for the PBA, but he always finds time to enjoy the majestic beauty of nature. PBA of GA President Joe Naia has been featured in the Blue Review twice to highlight his hiking adventures.

When Naia first started long distance hiking, he admits he was clueless. At an outpost along the Appalachian Trail he met a famous long distance hiker and author, Nimblewill Nomand, who nicknamed Naia ‘Walmart Joe’ because of the impractical and bulky gear Naia purchased at Walmart.

*By Emily Deaton, The Press-Sentinel, Staff Writer
This story was featured in The Press Sentinel, a local paper in Jesup, GA. This article is reprinted with permission.*

Joe Naia decided to make the long trip to Portugal based on a promise he made to a friend and the desire to find out more about his roots.

“I have always wanted to go where my mother and father were born. I wanted to find out more. It was a trip to discover my roots,” said Naia, a local hiking enthusiast.

After flying into Portugal’s capital, Lisbon, Naia started his hike on April 18.

The trails that he hiked were all in southwest Portugal.

According to Naia, each trail that he hiked went through several villages including: Vale Seco, Cercal do Alentejo, Sao Luís, Odemira, Sao Teotónio, Odeceixe, Aljezur, Arrifana, Carrapateira, Vila do Bispo, and Cape St. Vincent next to Sagres Point.

He started his first trail at the Santiago do Cacém church, where he had a panoramic view of the Castle of Santiago.

“I took a bus to a town called Santiago do Cacém, where one of the trails started. It was 231 kilometers long,” said Naia.

He added, “At the end of the trail, I wound up at a lighthouse in Cape St. Vincent. It’s the most southwestern part of Europe.”

He stayed and rested in Sagres Point; then he took a bus to Odeceixe to begin the Fisherman’s Trail.

“The Fisherman’s Trail hugs the ocean for 120 kilometers. ... It’s all countryside and is absolutely gorgeous. Southwest Portugal has one of the best climates in the world with 300 days of sunshine,” said Naia.

While on this trail, he stayed in four different towns. After finishing both trails, he had hiked “about 350 kilometers,” said Naia.

It took him three weeks.

There was another trail that he wanted to do, but “the timing wasn’t right,” he said.

The pope was visiting Portugal to attend a celebration.

“There were 1 million people around there, so I decided that I was going to forego that trail. It was a huge event for the country,” said Naia.

The rest of the time he spent in Portugal, he went to search for his roots, specifically where his parents were born.

“My mother and father were born in Portugal in 1902,” said Naia.

He took a train to Murtoza, Portugal, where his parents and four of his siblings were born.

While there, he connected with three of his first cousins on his mother’s side of the family.

“So I went back to my roots, and I was able to locate three of my first cousins; one is 86 years old, a really sharp woman, and the other two are about my age. They took me to our family cemetery, and I found my grandmother’s grave. She was born in 1874,” he said.

Naia did not have enough time to search for the rest of his aunts, an uncle and other family members while he was there, so he decided that he will make another trip to Portugal next year, where he will hike the trails again and find out more about his family.

He said, “I am going back to Portugal. Next time I will have a rented car so that I can go back and search.”

During his hiking and searching journey, Naia had several positive experiences.

He described Portugal’s transportation system as being “top-of-the-line.”

For example, he said, “The trains are just as modern as they can be. In fact, a cart would come down the middle, and they would sell espresso coffee, chips, Coca-Cola and anything else like that. I was just shocked.”

He added, “Matter of fact, the [taxi] cabs have Wi-Fi in them. Transportation is very efficient and very clean.”

He was also surprised by how inexpensive his travels were in Portugal.

“If you are a senior citizen like myself, then you travel for nothing. I traveled from one end of Portugal to the other for less than \$5,” said Naia.

According to Naia, all of the food he had was “absolutely delicious” and was reasonably priced.

He even ventured out and tried a Portuguese octopus dish, which was surprisingly delicious, according to Naia.

During his trip, he consistently encountered friendly people.

“Everyone was very helpful, and those who could not speak English found someone who could for me,” he said. “I do speak Portuguese, but I haven’t spoken it since I was a child. I was pretty lost in the beginning, but as time went on, I picked it up again.”

Almost every person he ran into spoke at least a little bit of English. He said specifically that anyone under the age of 18 could communicate well in English to him, especially with help from smart phones.

He continued to have nice encounters with people throughout his trip.

One woman walked with him in town for an hour, helping him find somewhere to stay for the evening. She even let him use her cell phone to make an international call home so he could update his family on his whereabouts.

In another instance, Naia was having trouble understanding some directions he was given in Portuguese, so he asked two people for help. They translated for him

and even walked with him across town to his destination. All they wanted in return was to take a picture with him.

For his trip, Naia did not make any sleeping-arrangement reservations. Instead, he went to the “town central” of each town, where he would find somewhere to eat and somewhere to sleep.

He stayed in a hotel, a hostel, and a farmhouse, and for a majority of the time, he stayed in rental rooms that were situated above cafés in the town.

“Every room I stayed in was totally immaculate and clean,” said Naia.

One of his most memorable experiences was staying in the farmhouse.

A mother and daughter who lived in the house offered the spare bedroom to hikers.

He decided to stay, was able to shower with towels provided, and said, “there was even a bottle of water and a piece of chocolate beside the bed.”

After Naia stayed the night and ate dinner and breakfast with the mother and child, all the mother asked for was a donation.

“It was the most delightful stay I have ever had. I felt so warm and welcome,” said Naia.

He added, “I did not have a single negative encounter with the people in Portugal.”

After thinking of all the positive experiences he had in Portugal, Naia came to this conclusion: “This is probably the best trip I have ever had. It was the most satisfying.”



WEST VIRGINIA NATURAL RESOURCES CHAPTER FINDS GREAT SUCCESS IN LEGISLATIVE SESSION



By Steve Haines, Natural Resources Chapter President, WVPBA

During the 83rd Legislative Session of the state of West Virginia, the West Virginia Natural Resources Police Officers, with its newly formed PBA chapter, experienced great success with the outstanding assistance of the PBA staff and Executive Director Sean McGowan. The West Virginia Natural Resources Police Officers Chapter is the first established PBA chapter within the state of West Virginia.

Chapter President Steve Haines stated, “West Virginia has been blessed with outstanding natural resources police officers, and the marriage between great officers and the professionalism of the PBA staff was a natural fit for success.”

Senior Vice President Tim White added, “The PBA and our Executive Director Sean McGowan kept us organized far beyond our expectations.” White also serves as the Chairman of the Political Action Committee for the chapter, which held numerous phone conferences hosted by the PBA to organize the lobbying efforts of the committee throughout the ever-changing 60-day legislative session. White added, “Executive Director McGowan hosted many conference calls

and kept us together as one cohesive group devising a clear path for our members.” The PBA staff created a very informative lobbying brochure articulating how our agency had fallen behind in wage increases, which caused a severe lack in recruitment and poor retention of seasoned officers over an approximate 10-year period. The PBA brochure was distributed to every senator and delegate under the watchful eye of PBA’s McGowan, who was totally invested in the endeavor for the West Virginia officers.

Chapter President Steve Haines stated, “Sean truly became one of us and spent a lot of time, even entire weeks lobbying for us. His experience and his organizational skills for our group were invaluable.”

Vice President White stated, “McGowan readily adapted to the new state and easily articulated the plight of the West Virginia Natural Resources Police Officers to the legislators.” The group faced a huge hurdle as West Virginia was facing a 400 million dollar deficit during this session, which was at the forefront of every legislator’s mind. It was a priority to keep the senators and delegates well aware that game wardens are self-funded with constitutionally protected monies, which by law cannot be used for anything outside of fish and wildlife.

The lobbied legislation, although it was amended, was passed and gave the agency’s director the authority to provide increases in compensation. In August 2017, entry-level officers began receiving their increase of approximately \$10,000 a year. The seasoned officers also received an increase to competitive compensation and their tenure pay doubled. Chapter President Steve Haines noted, “the increase in pay for entry level officers will undoubtedly change the face of our recruiting efforts for our agency and we expect our numerous vacancies to be filled very quickly and with quality candidates.”

Virginia PBA Executive Director Sean McGowan said, “When I first met with the West Virginia Natural Resources Police Chapter Board in 2016, I immediately knew that I was working with a highly motivated group of law enforcement professionals and that they were ready to do whatever it would take to move their agenda forward during the 2017 legislative session. The chapter board, led by President Steve Haines and Senior Vice President Tim White, answered every call for assistance, guided the chapter’s activities, and communicated with their members constantly in efforts to keep the legislators aware of the issues and progress of our bills. When members were needed to talk to legislators and walk the halls of the capitol building I could always count on them being there. Chapter board leadership, member participation and teamwork led to the success in 2017 and will lead to more success in years to come.”

Another person who was instrumental to the West Virginia Natural Resources Chapter finding success in the legislature was Colonel Jerry Jenkins. Col. Jenkins was extremely helpful and supportive of the chapter’s efforts. Col. Jenkins said, “It was a pleasure working with Sean McGowan during the past legislative session. I was apprehensive about an out-of-state person not knowing any of our legislators, or being effective in lobbying for the natural resource police officers. I was pleasantly surprised. Sean

hit the road running and never looked back. I never thought that in a year when the state was facing a 400 million dollar deficit, that we would be able to get a pay raise bill passed. It was a team effort and Sean was an important component of that team!”

Sean and the PBA impressed every one of our officers. Vice President White states,

“The PBA professionalism and support system is nothing short of impressive. The PBA and the 60 member staff is there to undertake any request or endeavor, which kept our political action committee moving at an optimum level and focused on our goal.”

President Steve Haines commented, “It is readily apparent that the PBA is the voice

of law enforcement officers and is vastly experienced to undertake any adversity on any level local, county, or state for the benefit of law enforcement officers and agencies. Besides the lobbying effort, the PBA offers so many protections for the officers and commanders who are genuinely doing their best to serve the public.”

2017 ALABAMA PBA MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARDED TO J.T. CARTEE

By Jason Windsor, Northeast Alabama Chapter President, ALPBA

The mission of the PBA is to be the *Voice of Law Enforcement Officers*. No member embodies that motto more than J.T. “Butch” Cartee. Butch has been a PBA member for many years and served as the Northeast Alabama Chapter president since March 2011. Butch has served his community as a law enforcement officer for over 30 years, and has gone through the ranks from patrolman to currently serving as the assistant chief of police for the Albertville Police Department.

During his tenure as president of the Northeast Alabama Chapter, Butch has been instrumental in assisting so many fellow law enforcement officers during difficult times. Butch has made sure that these officers had assistance whether it be legal service, obtaining death benefits, or representation in officer involved shootings on numerous occasions. He has also stood beside his fellow officers many times in courtrooms and hearings as a show of support, regardless of how this impacted his own career. Butch Cartee has a heart and passion for this organization and all that it represents. He truly believes in standing up for others and has made the duties of his position as president a priority in his life and career. The PBA organization as a whole could not find a better representative to carry out their vision in our community, county



Northeast Alabama Chapter President Jason Windsor, Member of Year J.T. Cartee and Alabama Division President Donald Scott.

and state than Mr. Cartee.

Butch has given himself to the PBA organization through his service and dedication for many years. He has been an outspoken advocate for law enforcement through his participation in government affairs from the local to state levels. Butch spends a great deal of his time participating in city council, county commission meetings, and various other areas in an effort to better serve those through his affiliation with this organization. For years, Butch has made certain the Northeast Alabama Chapter participated in political screenings, and

kept its members informed regarding legislation that would affect them in any way. Butch has been on the forefront of ensuring members were kept abreast of any changes regarding their duties, pay, or benefits. Butch Cartee is an outstanding advocate for the PBA, and he understands the commitment the Police Benevolent Association has to protect those it serves. Mr. Cartee has that same dedication to the members and officers he assists.

In addition to his contributions to the PBA, Butch is also very active in our community through mentoring youth via missions with his local church and training our local youth. His current position as an assistant police chief allows him even more opportunity to assist our youth through his leadership position in our community.

J.T. “Butch” Cartee received the Alabama PBA Member of the Year award for the second time on September 9, 2017. Mr. Cartee was also named Alabama PBA Member of the Year in 2008. Mr. Cartee’s hard work and loyalty to the PBA make him a true standout. I am proud to say that Butch is most deserving of this title, and he has dedicated the majority of his career to the PBA, and helping other officers. Butch Cartee is an officer with a servant’s heart and someone who has proven that he is willing, along with the PBA, to stand beside those who would otherwise stand alone.

SLEO CHAPTER BOARD PARTICIPATION



Senior Vice President Jeremy May, Immediate Past President John Crumbley and President Ryan Fowler.

By Ryan Fowler, Georgia SLEO Chapter President, PBA of GA

The phoenix is described as a mythical bird from Greek mythology that is cyclically regenerated or reborn. The bird is associated with renewal and resurrection – a fresh start for an old bird, to put it in more simple terms. The phoenix is much like the Georgia State Law Enforcement Officer (SLEO) Chapter. The SLEO chapter has been in existence for many years, and it incorporates all state law enforcement officers in Georgia with the exception of the Georgia Trooper Chapter, Georgia Bureau of Investigation Chapter, and Georgia Department of Corrections Chapter. The SLEO chapter encompasses Georgia MCCD Compliance Officers, Georgia DPS Capitol Police Officers, Georgia Department of Revenue

Agents, Georgia Department of Community Supervision Agents, Georgia Public Safety Training Center Officers, State College Police Officers from a host of local community colleges and universities such as the Georgia Tech Police Department, the Dalton State College Department of Public Safety Campus Police, and the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice officers, just to name a few.

I have been a member of the SLEO Chapter since 2005 and have been a board member and/or executive board member since 2006; however, many years my various positions on the

board came as a result of necessity rather than need. Simply put, we had members in the chapter, but there was a huge lack of involvement. Basically, the SLEO chapter was a dying bird. Immediate Past President John Crumbley kept our chapter afloat for many years, taking turns being president and senior vice president, while I was the secretary – just barely enough for a quorum, and most of the meetings took place in the Northwest Georgia area.

In 2014, I was the sitting vice-president for the SLEO chapter when our President John Crumbley had to step down for health related reasons. With that, I had finally made the full circle from board member, secretary, vice-president and now president. I started checking prior meeting minutes over the years and speaking with members about why there

was a lack of involvement in the chapter. I found a resounding issue that we as a chapter had alienated ourselves from the rest of the state! Our board members had been located in Northwest Georgia for over ten years, and most of the meetings were in an area that was centrally located for Northwest Georgia, but not the entire state of Georgia. For this reason our chapter was like a dying bird – we starved ourselves (members) to death by alienating ourselves from the rest of the state and those we serve. With that in mind, I set out to have a rebirth of the SLEO Chapter.

I first wanted to recognize Immediate Past President John Crumbley who kept the chapter going through the struggling years. John was dedicated to keeping new member applications going and recruiting with other state agencies to build our member numbers. Without a doubt, had it not been for our Immediate Past President John Crumbley, the SLEO chapter would have ceased to exist long before 2014. I set out to build a new chapter board that was made up of a president, senior vice president, vice president and secretary. We would also ensure that our board members were active and played a role along with the executive board. I requested that the senior vice president and vice president be members that could cover north Georgia in one position and south Georgia in the other. I also sought to fill our secretary position with someone that was centrally located in the state of Georgia and that could cover both north and south. Finally, came the hard part, of knocking on doors, ringing phones and reaching out to members in an effort to build up a strong board. Being a statewide chapter, we only are required to have two meetings a year, but we knew that our chapter would not grow with only two meetings per year. Therefore, we implemented teleconference meetings, recruiting events, political screenings, and agency outreaches to spread the word about the SLEO Chapter. It took from 2014-2017 for this dead bird chapter to be reborn into a well-rounded phoenix.

All of the door knocking, phone calling, outreaches and word of mouth paid off dividends in June 2017. It was time to volunteer for the next three-year term and elect the executive board. For the first time in over 15 years, our initial SLEO chapter board had more than 3 people show up for an election. We had an astounding 13 officers present for the board meeting and election. I was blessed to be re-elected to my first full term as president, having previously filled the unexpired term for now Immediate Past President John Crumbley. I recommended that the board vote Jeremy May as my senior vice president, Brandon Bell as vice-president and Reggie Perry as secretary. This was all approved by the new chapter board.

As I stated previously, I wanted more involvement by the board and I didn't want them merely voting in new executive board members only to be left in the shadows of our decisions. So, I made the

motion to appoint the remaining nine members to important chair positions covering both north, central, and south Georgia. They include: grievance chair and co-chair (3 positions), political action committee chair and co-chair (3 positions), membership committee chair and co-chair (3 positions). This was all approved by the board unanimously, and with these approved motions, the rebirth and regeneration of the SLEO Chapter was complete. The new executive board also moved all board meetings to central locations in Georgia including throughout the year to ensure we give our members an opportunity to be active in their chapter. We also hold membership and recruiting events in the same manner to show our chapter members that we are working for them and their needs.

So, there you have it – the rebirth of a dying chapter in regards to participation to being one of the strongest in the state of Georgia. Currently we boast a

membership of approximately 1,200 members and with no more than 10 deletions per quarter, and no fewer than 100 member additions each quarter. We plan to host many community and chapter events in 2018. We are excited about the possibilities the future holds for SSPBA and the SLEO Chapter.

The PBA of Georgia Award of Excellence was presented to SLEO Chapter Immediate Past President John Crumbley. In recognition for his outstanding service, leadership and dedication, on behalf of the membership of the SLEO Chapter of the PBA of Georgia.

The plaque reads:

“The commitment you have made to the PBA is a direct reflection of your professionalism and strong ethical character. The time and devotion you have given is greatly appreciated.”



108 police suicides occurred in 2016.*

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WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICERS PASSES THE HOUSE



Supporters of HB-37 with NCPBA leadership after floor vote

In what was a historic day for municipal police officers in North Carolina, the PBA was present as HB-37 (Protect Law Enforcement Officers) passed the House on April 27th.

The PBA has been dealing with retaliation cases for a number of years throughout North Carolina. Officers continue to face incredible scrutiny when they come forward to report corruption. On many occasions, they put their livelihoods in jeopardy when they do. In a post-Ferguson world, HB-37 provides accountability and transparency within police departments and allows for a pathway to rid agencies of corruption while offering protection of officers who take the step to come forward.

The PBA is extremely proud of the primary sponsors (Representative

Chris Malone, Representative Nelson Dollar, Representative Debra Conrad, Representative Darren Jackson) and co-sponsors (Representative John Ager, Representative Cynthia Ball, Representative Mary Belk, Representative Susan Fisher, Representative Holly Grange, Representative Ed Hanes, Representative Pricey Harrison, Representative Jonathan Jordan, Representative Rodney Moore, Representative Brian Turner, Representative Donna White, and Representative Linda Williams) for supporting this critical piece of legislation.

Rep. Malone worked tirelessly on this bill since it was originally drafted. This included submitting a re-write of the bill to the J-3 committee to address several concerns. The bill passed by a 7-1 vote.

He also worked to get support for the bill with Republican members as did Rep. Jackson on the Democrat side.

The PBA was also very appreciative of House members who rose to speak for the bill as it was being debated on the House floor. These representatives included Representative Malone who introduced the bill along with Representative Nelson Dollar, Representative Billy Richardson, Representative Amos Quick, Representative Donna White, and Representative Jonathan Jordan gave resounding remarks that showed great respect for officers and the job they do. Their remarks paved the path for the final vote (65-47) and the bill's referral to the Senate. The PBA is grateful to the nineteen legislators who supported this legislation in a bi-partisan effort and is proud to call them our friends!



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CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION (CPR)

By Toby Nix, West Georgia Chapter Member, PBA of GA

I can take over whenever you're ready." Seven words; that's not a very long sentence. None of the words are particularly hard to pronounce. But I found them extremely hard to say recently.

I responded to an "unknown problem/person down" call and arrived on scene about 20 seconds after my zone partner. I walked in the front door of the house and toward the sound of a hysterical female on the line with 911.

I made my way through the living room and into the dining room where I saw my zone partner, my buddy, getting down on his hands and knees and beginning chest compressions on a male. I let dispatch know, over the radio, that CPR was in progress. They could now let the responding EMS units know.

I knew Fire and EMS were already coming as fast as they could. The fact that we were beginning CPR did not speed up their response time, but the more they knew prior to arrival, the better. 911 told me over the radio that Fire and EMS had an eight-minute ETA.

The lady on the phone with 911, whose voice I had followed into the room, was distraught. She was obviously the wife of this male laying on the ground. She was pacing through the house still on line with 911. Each time she would enter the room we were in, she would grasp the magnitude of the situation and become a little more hysterical.

We asked her to stand outside and flag down the responding medic units, to let them know which house we were in and where we were inside it. It would be helpful to the medics when they arrived to be shown exactly where to come. But more than that, it gave her something to do other than seeing the scene that was playing out in her dining room.

I worked 911 for five years before coming on the road as a deputy. I have talked many people through how to do CPR over

the phone. I have taken more than a few CPR classes. I've passed all the tests and practiced on all the dummies they provide in class.

As soon as dispatch told me the responding medic units were eight minutes out, I knew what was about to happen. Had it been a minute or two I might have stayed in the assistant role for my buddy and let him continue CPR until EMS arrived. I couldn't let him do it for eight minutes. That wouldn't be fair to him or the man we were trying to save.

The first three to four minutes of this call I had served as an assistant to my partner. I tried to keep the gentleman's neck straight to allow for any air to pass through. I was constantly checking for a pulse and relaying any new information to 911 over the radio.

I could tell my partner was beginning to get tired. He was wearing a coat, his face was flush. I knew I had to take over CPR. As much as I didn't want to, I said those seven words, "I can take over whenever you're ready." It was as if my mouth was saying words neither my brain nor my body wanted to hear. I was about to find out just how exhausting performing CPR would be.

As my partner told me to take over, I leaned in and did everything I had been trained to do with CPR. I locked my elbows out and bent at the waist with each compression. I counted to 30. The song I chose to sing in my head to keep the beat is not important, but I know it is the correct pace for CPR.

You can take classes, pass tests and practice on dummies all you want. You can even talk people through the procedure over the phone for years. Nothing prepares you for the feeling of putting your hands on a human being's chest and starting CPR. "Am I pushing hard enough?" "Am I pushing too hard?" "Am I going too fast?" "Am I going too slow?" It's as much mentally exhausting as it is physically exhausting.

I think in the excitement of the moment I went a little too fast on the first two cycles. I made a conscious effort to

slow down a little on the following cycles. To my partner's credit, when I took over compressions, he stood up, took his jacket off and threw it to the side and got right back down on his knees and said those seven words to me I had just said to him: "I can take over when you're ready."

He knew this was my first time performing CPR. I worked another scene earlier in the year where I showed up third and assisted with the family while he and another deputy performed CPR. He was trying to help me; he knew how difficult it was. I was trying to help him, I knew he was exhausted. We were both trying to help this man, this stranger, this husband to the lady on the phone with 911.

I continued CPR until the first medic arrived on scene. He came in the room and put down his bag full of whatever medics carry in their bags to save lives. He then said those seven words that were rapidly becoming a theme on this scene: "I can take over when you're ready."

As the medic took over, I was now faced with the gravity of the situation. Up to this point I was just doing, but now I had time to think. I had time to notice all the photos on the wall and the holiday decorations throughout the house. We weren't just trying to save a male, or just a patient. Those are the terms we use for the radio or for information purposes. We were trying to save a man. A husband, a father, a grandfather, a brother.

I went to his wife to try to offer some kind of words of comfort. I'm not good in these situations. I don't think I'm rude, but I think I may be more blunt than I would like to be. I just kept telling her we had done all we could do and her husband was in good hands. Our Fire and EMS are second to none; I believe that. I hope I never need any of the services they offer. But if I do, I will know I'm in good hands.

Through her tears, she thanked me and my partner several times. Family members began to arrive, and they made a point to walk over and thank us through their tears as well. I think I just kept telling anyone who came up to me crying that "we had done all we could do and he was in good hands." That was about all I could get out with a straight face. Truth be told, I kind of wanted to cry with them.





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Glow
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The Race for the Fallen Glow Run benefits the families of fallen law enforcement officers through the Police Benevolent Foundation.

For more information about the race, including upcoming locations, visit:

RACE4THEFALLEN.COM

By Russell Wood, PBA Attorney,
Russellville, Ark.

The City of Conway, Arkansas was failing to attract new police candidates and was losing veteran officers to other departments due to low salaries. In 2001, the City of Conway commissioned a study of comparably sized Arkansas cities to determine competitive salaries. The study indicated that the City of Conway's police officers were significantly underpaid compared to Arkansas cities of the same size and tax base. The mayor of Conway issued a resolution on July 24, 2001, proposing a quarter cent (1/4%) Sales and Use Tax and declaring "the intent of the City Council of Conway to use the voluntary tax exclusively to improve the salary of [police officers]."

Section 1 of the resolution stated that the proposed quarter cent sales tax would be voted on by the citizens of Conway and that the tax "shall be expended exclusively to improve the salaries of those employees of the City whose current salaries are determined by the City Council to be under the 'market pay scales' for similar positions in similar cities in Arkansas."

Section 2 of the Resolution stated that the proceeds of the sales tax "shall not be used to supplant any budgetary resources currently used for the compensation of the employees, but rather shall supplement the salaries of those determined to be deserving."

The language of the Resolution was a result of a meeting between the mayor and the Conway Police Department representatives when the mayor was soliciting their support to pass the quarter cent sales tax. The police officer representatives were concerned that the City would use the sales tax money for other matters besides law enforcement salaries. As a result, the very concise and specific language outlined in the resolution was agreed upon. Once the mayor agreed to the language in the resolution, the Conway police officers

publicly supported and promoted the quarter cent sales and use tax.

On August 23, 2001, the City of Conway conducted a Special Election regarding the levy of a quarter cent Sales and Use Tax dedicated to improving the salaries of Conway police officers, and that tax passed. As a result of the passage of the Sales and Use Tax by the citizens of Conway, the City of Conway enacted pay grids for police. The pay grids reflected guaranteed pay increases for the first seven years a person was at each rank. These pay grids provided the incremental increases in the income for Conway police officers necessary to meet "market pay scales" of similar positions in similar cities in Arkansas. The City of Conway pay grids also included the cost of living adjustment of one percent (1%) approved by the city council. From 2001 through 2008, the City of Conway used the quarter cent Sales and Use Tax as required by the pay grids.

As a result of the pay increase and guaranteed pay increases, veteran officers stayed with the Conway Police Department. The City of Conway also provided potential police applicants with packages outlining the hiring requirements, benefits, pay, and the term of employment. The City of Conway provided all new candidates with the employment pay grid reflecting what the employees would be paid for the first seven years of service at each rank. The City of Conway provided the pay grids to potential applicants to demonstrate that the City of Conway paid a salary on par with similar larger cities.

In 2009, the City of Conway stopped paying the guaranteed step increases in salary each year. The City diverted the revenue from the quarter cent Use and Sales Tax to other general fund activities such as construction of softball fields and escalating maintenance costs of other facilities built by the City. Despite not paying the step increases starting in 2009, the City continued to include the salary pay grids in their new applicant packets. The City of Conway used the police pay grids to lure new police candidates

away from other police departments by representing that the candidates would receive guaranteed, structured and competitive pay for their services. The City of Conway knew this was false and knew that it had not been paying its police officers according to the pay scales. Despite this information, the City of Conway continued to promote the pay grids as guaranteed terms of employment to the police candidates.

In 2011, the local PBA chapter brought this matter to the attention of the PBA. After reviewing this case, it was determined that the City of Conway made an offer of employment to the police officers that consisted of a guaranteed and structured pay scale. The police officers accepted these offers of employment and provided their time and labor in performance of the agreement. The City of Conway's failure to comply with the pay grids is a breach of contract.

Russell Wood of the Wood Law Firm, who represents PBA members in the state of Arkansas, filed a class action lawsuit for breach of contract against the City of Conway in 2012. (To read the full complaint, go to www.RussellWoodLawFirm.com and click on the City of Conway Pay Scales tab at the top). The City of Conway denied the allegations of the lawsuit, and the matter is still in litigation today. Essentially, the City of Conway argued that Resolution R-01-18 is not binding on the City and that once the quarter cent Sales and Use Tax was passed, the money was placed in the general fund and available to the City for any expenditure at the discretion of the City. (See Resolution R-01-18 at www.RussellWoodLawFirm.com and click on the City of Conway Pay Scales tab at the top). The City of Conway argued that Arkansas case law states that no matter what the mayor or city council states on behalf of the City of Conway in a resolution to entice tax payers to vote for and approve a sales tax, the City can ultimately use the funds however it determines to be reasonable. The City of Conway also argued that the pay grid was never meant to be considered

a guaranteed yearly increase in pay but was merely at the discretion of the City. The PBA and the Conway police officers disagreed.

After prolonged litigation during the discovery phase, with repeated efforts to delay and obstruct the discovery process by the City of Conway, Mr. Wood was provided with approximately five thousand pages of discovery materials. In April 2015, Plaintiffs filed a 122 page Motion for Class Certification outlining the Plaintiffs' argument for certifying this lawsuit as a class action. On December 12, 2015, the Court entered its Order Granting the Plaintiffs' Motion for Class Certification and Certifying the Class. The Court also issued its Findings of Facts and Conclusions of Law to Support the Court's Order Granting Class Certification. (See Order and Findings

of Fact and Conclusions of Law at www.RussellWoodLawFirm.com and click the City of Conway pay scales tab at the top). The City of Conway appealed the Court's Order Certifying the Class Action to the Arkansas Supreme Court. (In Arkansas, an appeal of a class certification is a direct appeal to the Arkansas Supreme Court).

After approximately a year of litigating the Class Certification Order in the Arkansas Supreme Court and waiting for a decision, the Arkansas Supreme Court issued its Opinion on February 16, 2017. (See Opinion at www.RussellWoodLawFirm.com and click the City of Conway pay scales tab at the top). The Arkansas Supreme Court affirmed the Circuit Court's Class Certification Order, and the matter was remanded back to the Faulkner County Circuit Clerk to

continue litigation.

Since that time, Mr. Wood has continued the extensive litigation process and numerous requirements that are necessary in class actions. PBA continues its efforts to make the City of Conway accountable for the promises it made to its police officers.

"This type of conduct by cities or counties is unacceptable," said Russell Wood. "Public service employees' pay and benefits seem to routinely have to take a backseat to political pet projects, and this affects the morale of the police force. If anything similar to this is happening at other agencies, I encourage employees to contact me to discuss the situation."

PBA LEGAL DEPARTMENT GROWS TO KEEP PACE WITH MEMBERS' NEEDS

By Joni Fletcher, Director of Legal Services, SSPBA

As national attention has been focused on law enforcement interactions with the public in the three years since Ferguson, Mo. took center stage, many more law enforcement officers in the Southeast have recognized the value of joining SSPBA and having access to PBA's legal benefits. The scrutiny that officers face from the media and the general public is greater than ever before, and officers know it. This reality combined with tireless efforts from the PBA recruiting staff have resulted in significant PBA membership growth.

As membership has grown, the requests for PBA legal service have increased as well. The total number of open cases handled by the PBA legal department has steadily risen. In addition, the severity of the cases has trended up. At one point in 2016, nine PBA members across the various states of the association were under indictment. At least six of those cases went to trial last year on charges ranging from misdemeanor assault to first degree murder. The PBA covered the entire cost of defending those members.

While fewer indictments have been handed down against PBA members in 2017, the number of criminal investigations, member-involved shootings, and member-involved serious accidents has increased. In order to keep pace with the heavy demand for PBA legal services, the SSPBA legal department added counsel Jim Wright to



the in-house legal team in January. Jim is a former police officer himself, and he worked in the Henry County (Ga.) D.A.'s office for thirty years, including the last four years as elected district attorney. Jim currently spends his days on the phone with PBA members, reviewing member

cases, or out on the scene of member-involved incidents.

"It was an honor and privilege to serve the citizens of Henry County," Jim said, "and now the PBA has provided me with the opportunity to maintain my law enforcement contacts and to provide assistance to members in their time of need."

The number of PBA referral attorneys continues to grow as well, with 727 attorneys now signed on to assist PBA members throughout the service area. Increasing the number of attorneys on the referral list is an ongoing priority of the legal department, as we recognize the importance of keeping up with demand for PBA legal services. The PBA staff and elected leadership work continually to identify those attorneys who are willing to serve as dependable members of the PBA team.

These efforts to expand the PBA legal team are all made with the clear purpose of providing efficient, effective legal service to PBA members. This is the foundation of PBA and is a commitment which PBA staff and leadership take very seriously.



NCPBA Division President Randy Byrd accepting a donation from Moyer, West and Associates.

On Thursday, October 19th, the PBA was on hand in Advance, NC to receive a donation of \$1,500 for the Police Benevolent Foundation. Moyer, West and Associates held their annual golf tournament for clients at Bermuda Run Country Club and wanted to make a donation as part of the event. Brett Moyer is a financial planner with this firm and a former officer with the Winston-Salem Police department. He also served as chapter president of the Winston-Salem Chapter for a number of years. During his time as President, Brett secured large donations for the Foundation. We want to thank Moyer, West and Associates for their generous contribution!

THE NORTH CAROLINA POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION PRESENTS LEGISLATIVE EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The North Carolina Police Benevolent Association recently presented their “Legislative Excellence” award to several legislators for their unwavering support for law enforcement and the values of the PBA. Speaker of the House Tim Moore, Representative Chris Malone, Representative Darren Jackson, Representative Nelson Dollar, Representative Jonathan Jordan, Representative Debra Conrad, and Representative Billy Richardson have been longtime supporters of the PBA. Representative Donna White and Representative Cynthia Ball first ran for the legislature in 2016 and were endorsed by the PBA. Even though they entered the long session as freshmen, they worked tirelessly to support PBA legislation. The PBA is proud of these legislators and their efforts. We are proud to call them our friends!



Rep. Billy Richardson: “Receiving this award was a great honor and very humbling. I have worked with the PBA for thirty years to advance the respect and professionalism of our wonderful officers. This award is one that I will cherish.”



Rep. Donna White: “There will never be another award that will make me as proud as the ‘Legislative Excellence’ award from the PBA. I am so honored to have my efforts recognized on behalf of the officers in the PBA who serve and sacrifice every day for the citizens of North Carolina. Please know that I will always work hard to represent you.”

Rep. Cynthia Ball: “Our most solemn responsibility as lawmakers is to work to secure the safety of our citizens. I am tremendously honored to have been recognized in my first term by the PBA with the “Legislative Excellence’ award for working with them to develop legislation that supports our law enforcement personnel and helps keep our citizens safe.”



Rep. Jonathan Jordan: *“It’s an incredibly humbling occasion when your heroes tell you they respect the work you do for them. It’s not the reason any of us do the work, but it is a rare and priceless honor when it happens. All my life I have been in awe of our law enforcement folks on the front line defending our citizens. Receiving the PBA ‘Legislative Excellence’ award is a thrilling honor because it means that those whom I hold in the in the highest regard recognize my support.”*



Rep. Debra Conrad: *“For my past two terms in the NC House, it has been an honor to work with the PBA on legislative issues important to the men and women who belong to this organization. We respect our law enforcement officers for the critical service they give to our communities. I thank each member for my ‘Legislative Excellence’ award. My door is always open to listen to your concerns.”*



Speaker of the House Tim Moore: *“The men and women who serve in law enforcement throughout North Carolina have made a career in public service. It is our responsibility as legislators to ensure they have the tools and resources at their disposal to keep our communities as safe as possible. It is with a deep sense of gratitude that I was honored with the NCPBA Legislative Excellence award.”*



Rep. Darren Jackson: *“It is an honor to be recognized as a friend of law enforcement by the men and women who put their lives on the line every day to keep our communities safe.”*



Rep. Nelson Dollar: *“Receiving the ‘Legislative Excellence’ award from the PBA is an honor; more so the opportunity to work with dedicated law enforcement officers from across the State to improve working conditions, increase benefits, and honor your service to our community.”*



Rep. Chris Malone: *“Receiving the PBA ‘Legislative Excellence’ award was humbling, and I was very appreciative. Every police officer out there shows a rare and courageous commitment to serve their communities on a daily basis, something bigger than themselves. I only hope, in my small way, to say thank you by following their example of service.”*



Legislative Representation: The PBA maintains a professional staff of lobbyists to aid in obtaining legislation beneficial to the law enforcement profession.

MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST CHAPTER CHIPS IN FOR KRANTZ



PBA members Eric Castro, Erika Zanko, Shannon Hope, Holly Krantz, Danyelle Evans, Gulf Coast Chapter Senior VP Ben Taylor and President Mike Prendergast

By Kaylan Storey, Public Relations & Communications Coordinator, SSPBA

When an officer gets sick, his brothers and sisters in blue step up to help. Blue blood runs deep. The Mississippi PBA Gulf Coast Chapter proved this recently when one of their members fell ill. Officer Lawrence Krantz, III was diagnosed with advanced leukemia in March of this year. He quickly became unable to work and had rising medical bills to tend to. His local PBA chapter and nearby agencies answered the call to help.

Lawrence Krantz is a proud 25+ year law enforcement veteran. He completed the majority of his career with the Picayune Police Department, attaining

the rank of Patrol Commander. His wife Holly, who was previously the Criminal Investigations Commander with Picayune Police Department, currently works as a Special Agent for Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). After accepting a position with HSI, she was transferred to the Jackson office. Shortly afterwards, Lawrence left his job as the Patrol Commander with the Picayune Police Department and accepted the Director of Campus Security position with the Forrest County Agricultural High School. He worked there until he was diagnosed.

Mississippi PBA Gulf Coast Chapter Senior Vice President Ben Taylor, a Special Agent with HSI, spearheaded the effort to host a golf tournament and raise money for Krantz and his family. Taylor has served on the Gulf Coast Chapter

board for nearly 10 years and has always wanted to do more outreach beyond the monthly meeting.

Taylor said, "I wanted to see us get out and do something, and when this arose I knew we could help. Holly and Lawrence have three young sons. So with him not working and medical bills mounting, I saw an opportunity for the PBA to step in. I have done a couple of golf tournaments before, so I was kind of familiar with how to plan one and what the return on it could be. I knew, based on our projections, we would be able to help them make up this shortfall financially."

Taylor knows that an event of this magnitude would not have been possible without the help he received. "In addition to the help from our PBA chapter, a lot of

my coworkers here at Homeland Security stepped in. Erica Zanko, Danyelle Evans and Shannon Hope, know how to get things done. So if something was stalling out, or wasn't getting done, they had no problem getting it done and finished. They really, really worked hard on this tournament. The PBA chapter and Police Benevolent Foundation were great as well. On my initial call to Tommy Simpson, the MSPBA executive director, I explained our plans, and he put me in touch with the main office. It was easy to get everything we needed, like sponsor letters from the PBF. A benefit of using the PBF is that its nonprofit status allows for sponsors to receive a tax deduction, if they desire," Taylor said.

The tournament was set up as a four-man scramble. According to Taylor, "The scramble format is the most desired for a lot of people because typically in a scramble, you're playing best ball. If you can put a team together and have someone who can drive the ball and another guy who is great at putting, another who may be best at chipping and another may be better at opening beers, it makes for an enjoyable day. We charged \$300 per team, which equaled out to about \$75 per person, which is a pretty good deal. The course we played, Diamondhead, is a well-maintained course. They use it for

qualifying for the national tournaments. We had a local brewery, Chandeleur Island Brewing Company, that donated the alcohol. The country club doesn't typically let people bring alcohol in from outside, but once they knew that we were basically just trying to get as much money as possible back into the hands of the family, they let us go ahead. They also gave us the homeowner rate to rent the course, which was \$2,000.

The agency (HSI) went around to businesses and casinos (along the Mississippi Gulf Coast there are about 14 casino resorts) soliciting sponsors. Just about every one of the casinos donated something, whether it was a hotel stay, spa tickets, etc.

"We charged \$100 per hole sponsorship and ended up with 23 hole sponsorships, so that basically paid for the course. It was just an all around great experience. It really came together well. We were really pleased with how it turned out," Taylor said.

The response and turnout for the event were above and beyond what anyone expected. Taylor said, "We had a great response from HSI. Our Special Agent in Charge (SAC) office in New Orleans, which oversees offices in the states

of Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Tennessee and Louisiana, and almost every office in that region sponsored holes. We had teams from Mobile, Al. come over. We had a few teams from New Orleans. We even had agents that didn't golf, but still wanted to come out and help in any way they could. Also, our entire MSPBA Gulf Coast Chapter board came out and a few of them played on teams."

All of Lawrence's family came out to the event. Unfortunately, Lawrence was hospitalized at the time of the tournament and was unable to attend. "He was in ICU at the time and was not doing well. He is back home now and his medical retirement has been processed by the state. Thankfully, he seems to be doing better now and on the road to recovery," Taylor said. "I was talking to Holly the other day and he was actually able to make one of his son's baseball games," he added.

After paying for the course rental and a few expenses, the chapter was able to present a check for \$7,400 to the Krantz family; once again proving just how thick blue blood is and how much a few people can accomplish when they want to help their brother or sister during a tough time.

RETIRED MEMBERS

Retired members pay only \$36.00 per year and enjoy benefits including legal services (from their member date) should covered legal issues arise from the time of active membership. Benefits also include a \$5,000 accidental non-occupational death policy, yearly publications and decals.



Find out more online.
sspba.org/retiredmembers

NORTH CAROLINA PBA LEADERS APPOINTED TO COMMISSION



NCPBA leaders Randy Byrd and David Rose

The North Carolina PBA is proud to announce the appointment of PBA leaders David Rose and Randy Byrd to the NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Division. They were both sworn in on August 18, 2017, at the regular meeting of the Commission. Rose was appointed by Attorney General Josh Stein and will serve a three-year term.

In making the appointment, Attorney General Stein made these comments, “I am proud to appoint Sergeant David Rose to the NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission. As an officer with the Winston-Salem Police Department, Sergeant Rose will bring a valuable perspective to the Commission. I thank him for his willingness to serve.”

Randy Byrd was appointed by Speaker of the House Tim Moore and will serve a two-year term.

Moore said, “We are very appreciative of Randy agreeing to serve on the

NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission. As an individual who has the highest ethical standards and a strong relationship with law enforcement officers from across our state, I could not think of a better representative for the commission than Randy Byrd.”

The NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission establishes minimum employment, training, and retention standards for the state’s criminal justice officers. The commission also plans for the effective implementation of innovations in the state’s system of criminal justice employment, training, and education.

To ensure a consistent level of competency and professionalism among law enforcement officials, the Criminal Justice Standards Division administers the commission’s mandatory certification and training programs.

These programs cover all sworn police

officers, correctional officers, probation/parole officers, juvenile justice officers and juvenile court counselors.

The commission has several committees that serve the full commission. Rose will serve on the Education and Training Committee. Byrd will serve on the Planning and Standards Committee.

David Rose

David Rose was born in Ft. Oglethorpe, Ga. and was raised in east Tennessee and southwest Virginia. He is one of seven sons and he has a twin brother. David graduated from Kingsport Christian High School in 1989. While attending high school, he lettered in basketball, baseball, soccer and track. He credits his high school basketball coach, Don Bell, as being one of the most influential people in his early life.

After high school, David attended college at what is now Piedmont International University in Winston-Salem. While

there, he met his wife, Nichole, and they just celebrated 24 years of marriage. David would go on to earn his bachelor's degree in management and ethics from John Wesley College. David and Nichole have two sons, Tyler and Austin. Tyler is a police officer in Winston-Salem, and Austin is a college student.

David began working for the Winston-Salem Police Department in August of 1995. While there he has served as a patrol officer, foot patrol officer, robbery detective, and a homicide detective. He was promoted to sergeant in October 2006, and he currently supervises one of the agency's two Vice/Narcotics Squads.

In the fall of 2015, David chaired the steering committee that re-established the Winston-Salem Triad Chapter of the NCPBA. He remains impressed with the professionalism the organization displays, and he always brags on the service the PBA provides. He knows the number one goal of the organization is to improve the lives of law enforcement officers and he has seen the PBA produce. He is proud to be a small part of this endeavor.

Randy Byrd

Randy Byrd was born in Rocky Mount, and raised in the mountain community of Burnsville, NC by his parents, James and Judy. His dad retired as a high school librarian and his mother as a 4th grade

teacher. He graduated from Mountain Heritage High School in 1984.

After high school, Randy received an associate's degree in law enforcement technology and his basic law enforcement

currently assigned to field operations as a patrol supervisor. Randy has been a certified law enforcement instructor since July of 1996. During this career, he completed his undergraduate degree from Campbell University and completed

the Administrative Officers Management Program through North Carolina State University.

Randy currently serves as the Cary Chapter and the North Carolina Division President and as a Southern States board member. As president of the Cary Chapter, he and fellow board members worked with Cary Town Council members to receive budgetary approval for the Cary Police Department's first K9 team. They also worked with council members to develop a shared leave policy so that town employees could share their leave time with those in critical need. As division president, Randy has worked in the General Assembly to support legislation

to improve the lives of officers and survivors. His work with the PBA has led to three significant appointments that have given him the opportunity to have further input with the local and state retirement systems and improving the justice system.

Randy is married to Stephanie, and they have four daughters and a son: Hailey, Jayme, Brooke, Ainslee, and Lincoln.



David Rose with his family



Randy Byrd with his family

certificate from Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College in Asheville.

In July of 1992, Randy accepted a position as a police officer with the Cary Police Department. During his 25 plus years of service with the Cary Police Department he has served as a patrol officer, detective, sergeant in field operations, sergeant of IMPACT, and sergeant in investigations. He is

Congratulations!

2017 PBF Scholarship Recipients

Kaley Almond
East Carolina University

Taylor Boswell
Georgia Southern University

Dylan Campbell
Longwood University

Stone Dillion
University of Alabama

James Francis
University of North Georgia

Courtney Goss
Georgia Southern University

Caleb Gundich
Georgia Southern University

Zoey Hanson
Appalachian State University

Shelby Hardy
Freed-Hardeman University

Reagan Holdiness
Mississippi State University

Ryan Holdiness
University of Central Arkansas

Rylee Holdiness
East Central Community College

Caleb Jeffers
Auburn University

Adam Johnson
Campbell University

Katelyn Kelly
Campbell University

Alexis McLeod
Horry-Georgetown Technical College

Jared Moore
Northeast Mississippi Community College

Kaitlyn Springer
Tennessee Technological University

Ian O'Toole
University of North Carolina

Payton Owens
Lurleen B. Wallace Community College

Taylor Pointer
Christopher Newport University

Hailee Powell
University of Mobile

Zane Vaccari
Arkansas State University

Sydney West
Charleston Southern University

Laurel Wheeler
University of Alabama



Submit your application online.
pbfi.org/scholarships



In the specialized world of North Carolina employment law for public employees, PBA has a true asset in Raleigh attorney Michael C. Byrne. Since 2014, Mr. Byrne has been representing PBA members in employment matters, and he has done so with a high rate of success.

“My legal practice is devoted to fair play for North Carolina law enforcement and other public employees,” said Mr. Byrne. “Helping PBA to protect its members’ due process and legal interests is a great honor.”

Mr. Byrne’s firm, the Law Offices of Michael C. Byrne, is focused on state employees, particularly in regard to Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) litigation and appeals. He has handled more than 120 OAH contested cases. He has never lost a PBA case in court.

Listed below is a sampling of successful outcomes which Mr. Byrne has obtained for PBA members:

- Correction Officer Steven Harris was terminated for allegations of excessive force. Byrne prevailed on the member’s behalf at the OAH level. The State then appealed to the N.C. Court of Appeals, which affirmed the initial decision from the OAH hearing. The State then

appealed again to the N.C. Supreme Court, and no decision has yet been issued. (See related article on page 12.)

- Correction Officer Gregory Manning was terminated for allegations of excessive force in connection with an incident in which an inmate disobeyed a direct order to stop resisting, committed a high risk act by starting a fire in a sink, and was in possession of contraband. The inmate ultimately pled guilty to all three charges in a hearing before the charging officer/unit manager. Mr. Byrne proceeded to successfully represent the member in obtaining his unemployment benefits.
- Correction Officer Jessica Puckett was issued a three-day suspension for not reporting that her partner left the building. Mr. Byrne was able to settle the case with the state agreeing to rescind the suspension and to award back pay to the member.
- Correction Officer Eric Person was terminated as a result of an altercation with an inmate. The member used a shin kick to gain compliance, as he had been trained. Mr. Byrne assisted the member in his internal grievance proceeding, and the member was reinstated to his position.
- Correction Officer Donald Tubbs was demoted for alleged unacceptable personal conduct regarding a use of force incident. Mr. Byrne successfully represented the member and was able to resolve the case via settlement with a reinstatement to his former rank and salary in exchange for a ten-day suspension.
- NC Central University police officer Tisha Hardy was demoted for alleged unacceptable personal conduct and unsatisfactory job performance. Mr. Byrne represented the member in her OAH appeal, and the demotion was reversed. The state has appealed the decision to the N.C. Court of Appeals.

These are just a few examples of Michael Byrne acting as a thorn in the side of the state as they take action against PBA member employees. Throughout the lengthy mediation and appeal process available to state employees, PBA and Mr. Byrne have worked together to attempt to obtain the best result for the member. Almost without fail, any time Mr. Byrne has prevailed on behalf of a PBA member, the state of North Carolina has played with taxpayer dollars and appealed to the state Court of Appeals, regardless of the basis of the decision or the strength of the lower court or hearing officer’s decision.

Michael Byrne has become a valuable resource for PBA on North Carolina public employee issues and has experience in appearing before various NC General Assembly committees on state personnel issues as well as being a speaker at continuing legal education programs on state personnel and law enforcement certification issues. In addition, he has represented SSPBA several times as the association has weighed in on key employment cases with amicus briefs at the highest judicial levels in North Carolina.

“We are fortunate to have attorneys like Michael Byrne on our side as we advocate for employee rights,” said John Midgette, NCPBA executive director.

“We appreciate his willingness to consider our members’ issues and then to use his wealth of knowledge and experience to challenge the actions of North Carolina’s public employers when they treat their employees unfairly and then spend taxpayer dollars recklessly to pursue appeals, even when the law is not in their favor.”

TOM SLYMON AWARDED SSPBA LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP



Tom Slymon with fellow officers at his retirement party

*By Zilla Willoughby, Paralegal,
McGuinness Law Firm*

Tom Slymon received a Lifetime Membership from the Southern States Police Benevolent Association by a vote on June 30, 2017, at the SSPBA board meeting.

It was with great honor that the Mecklenburg Chapter of the Southern States Police Benevolent Association nominated Tom Slymon for Lifetime Membership.

Tom has earned the respect and admiration of the association, the Mecklenburg Chapter, the Huntersville Police Department, and the Town of Huntersville. Tom has always been known for his high standard approach to SSPBA matters, his compassion to members' concerns, and his concern for the welfare of all employees.

Tom is one of the founding members and with his contributions, assisted in the establishment of the Mecklenburg Chapter in 2006. This action was taken to address serious concerns about unfair disciplinary actions, personnel policies, and work-related procedures. With Tom as the president of the Mecklenburg Chapter, a strategy was developed to address these concerns, which also included a "due process" procedure for employees.

In order to accomplish this mission, Tom led the way to organize and implement political screenings of candidates seeking elected town positions. During these political screenings, the Mecklenburg Chapter gained adequate support for these issues, and a "due process" policy was then implemented.

Tom has been the president of the Mecklenburg Chapter since its inception.

He has devoted an immeasurable amount of time during the past eleven years to achieve the goals of the chapter. Tom frequently attends town meetings as an observer to become acquainted with elected officials and to monitor their voting patterns. Tom also meets with elected officials on his days off to lobby for changes to policies for the benefit of the members.

Tom has coordinated the screening questions and has organized political assessments for those seeking elected positions with the Town of Huntersville, the Town of Cornelius, and the Town of Davidson. In addition, those seeking elected positions often strive for the endorsement of the North Mecklenburg Chapter, due to Tom's reputation and leadership with this organization.

Tom's involvement in the Mecklenburg Chapter, the police department, and the

Town of Huntersville is a testimony to his sense of compassion. He shows great concern for the welfare of others and is actively involved in finding solutions. As a result of this display, Tom was included for input on changes to the town policies when they were being rewritten. In addition, Tom was also asked to participate in the selection process for a new chief of police.

Tom has attended numerous police discipline hearings at the request of the employees and members. In addition, Tom would quickly notify other board members of issues requiring immediate attention.

Tom started his law enforcement career with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department in 1993. In 2003, Tom was hired by the Huntersville Police Department and remained there until he retired. Tom has always provided exceptional police services during his law enforcement career and an absolute commitment to SSPBA matters.

This is only a brief snapshot of Tom's successes as the president of the Mecklenburg Chapter.

The PBA of GA would like to congratulate Jackie Lee on receiving life membership status.

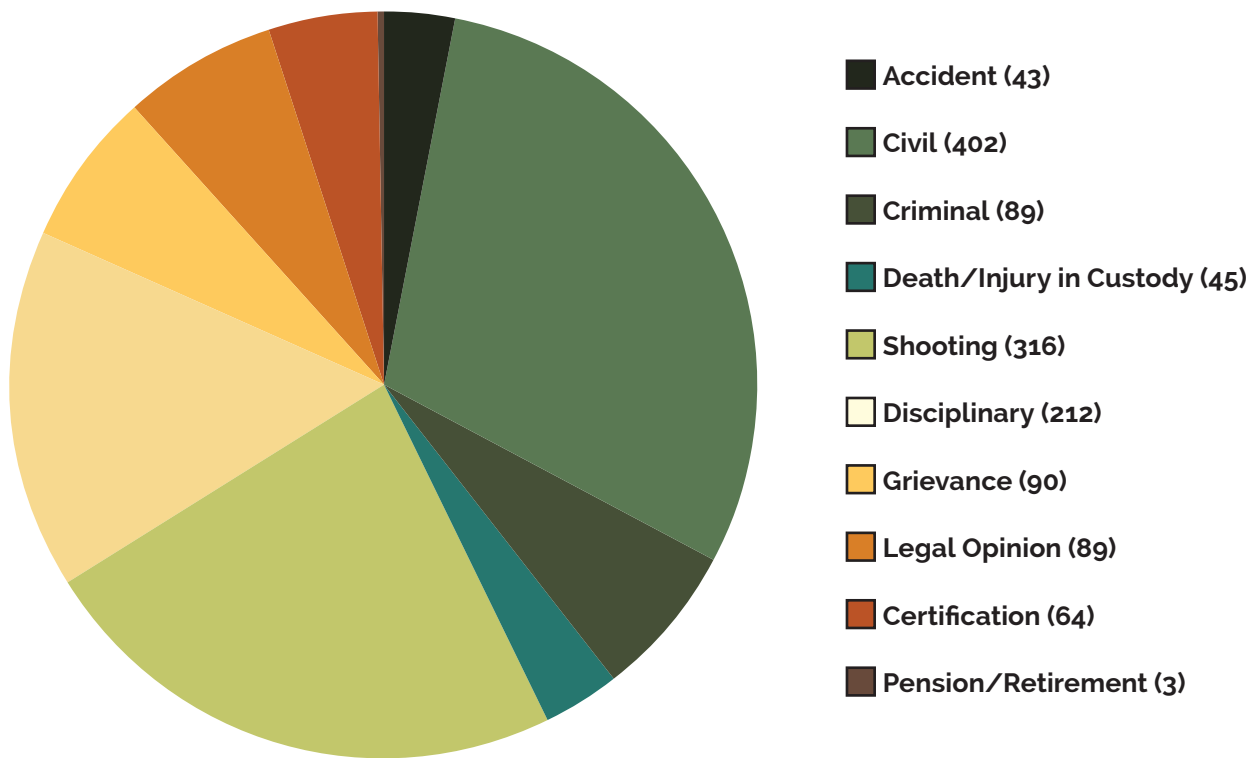
The SSPBA would like to congratulate Randy Byrd on receiving lifetime membership from the Board of Directors for his dedication to the Association for his years of service on the SSPBA Board of Directors

According to the SSPBA by-laws, life members shall be those of active or retired members of the Association who have earned the respect and admiration of the Association and its members. They must have been a member in good standing of the Association for a period of eight years prior to their nomination for life membership.

LEGAL SERVICES: A CLOSER LOOK

Pictured below is a representation of the open Southern States Police Benevolent Association cases for November 2017. As is typical, civil lawsuits make up the largest portion of requests. Please note that member-involved shootings are the second largest category. This number continues to rise from year to year.

Requests for Service
November 2017



TOTAL: 1353

COMMUNITY RELATIONS WITH THE HOMELESS

By Brett Stanelle, West Central Georgia Chapter Member, PBA of GA

As a law enforcement officer, what are the first thoughts that enter your mind when you see a homeless person in your jurisdiction? Perhaps this is the suspect in a series of copper thefts or a public nuisance who has generated multiple complaints of aggressive panhandling. Often times the homeless may be considered a forgotten population when it comes to protecting and serving. Since the inception of the profession, policing has been closely connected to the community. Nowhere was this connection more clear than in Sir Robert Peel's foundational principles, which stressed that the success of the police greatly depends on the perceptions and approval of the public. The profession of policing has recently seen a series of paradigm shifts that have refocused this connection through the concepts of fair and impartial policing, explicit and implicit biases, a greater demand for governmental accountability and legitimization of the police. Now reflect on how the homeless population likely views the officers and deputies in your jurisdiction.

In the Spring of 2017, the West Central Georgia Chapter of the Police Benevolent Association launched a series of projects to build upon the relationship between law enforcement and the homeless in Columbus, Ga. Chapter board member Freeman Johnson developed partnerships with the Rivertown School of Beauty and Safe House Ministries to plan the Blue Lights and the Homeless Love Project. The project came to fruition in February,

just after Valentine's Day. Members of the chapter, including four members of the chapter board, reported to the Safe House early one Saturday morning to join members of the congregation of St. James CME Church in preparing and serving breakfast to the homeless. One chapter member brought his two grandsons to the event to help instill the value of service. The boys helped serve and cleaned up

about a month and was preparing for his first day at a new job later that week. This individual said that without this event he would not have been able to get a hair cut. He had a great sense of humor and made several jokes while in the barber's chair. Despite the fact that this individual had a criminal history, including a conviction for a violent offense, when he left the ministry he looked exactly like he said he

felt, ready to move forward with his life. We also heard the story of a military veteran turned barber who donated his entire day to the project because he finds cutting hair and helping others to be "therapeutic."

In April, the chapter was contacted by the congregation of St. James CME Church in hopes of partnering for another event. The church was preparing for the annual "Eats on the Streets" event and asked the chapter to return to the Safe House and continue working with the homeless community. The congregation had prepared meals and a day full of activities. Members of the chapter board were asked to aid in moderating and scoring Bingo. The congregation passed out

Bingo cards and a variety of counters. A table within the ministry was filled with snacks, drinks and other small personal items to be used as prizes. Once the pastor began calling numbers, the game was on. Several folks were playing multiple cards, employing various techniques for luck and vying for the prize of their choice. When "Bingo" was called, we checked the numbers, congratulated the winners and took a photograph with them in celebration.

Many of the community members that we met provided testimonials that day, but one of the most profound statements



Chapter board members with Lance Moate after he received a haircut from Joe Simmons of the Rivertown School of Beauty.

both the kitchen and dining area.

After breakfast, some dedicated volunteers from the Rivertown School of Beauty joined the chapter members to provide haircuts for men and washes and sets for women. During this project, chapter members got to know some of the people they were serving and heard some inspiring testimonials and life stories. We met a mother and her newborn baby that was only a few days old. She left the Safe House saying that she had not looked and felt this good in a long time. We met a parolee who had been on the street for

came while taking a photograph with one of the winners. As he came to claim his prize someone joked with him about taking his “mug shot with the cops.” The man looked at us and said “it used to be I couldn’t do this, not with you.” The collective effect of these events has had a profound impact on community relationships and on the chapter members

themselves. When it comes to community relations and the legitimacy of the police, Chapter President Joyce Dent-Fitzpatrick said, “Sometimes it’s the little things that many of us take for granted. Regardless of whether you align yourself with the warrior mentality or the guardian mentality of policing, a little service can go a long way towards making you

a better protector. These programs have caused officers within the chapter, some with a plethora of experience, to reflect on how they protect and serve the homeless. Our chapter looks forward to continuing these projects and hopes to make great strides in providing legitimacy for the profession.”

PBA ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL FOR HELP



By Rick Anderson, Former Tennessee PBA Member

The mission of the SSPBA is to be *The Voice of Law Enforcement Officers*. This means when PBA members ask for help, they have the assurance of support from the PBA during difficult situations. I’m a former PBA member who is very grateful for my membership and the work of the PBA. I am Rick Anderson from Hixson, Tenn.

In June of 2013, two other officers and I began comparing notes about some events that could not be reconciled individually. One officer took his suspicions to the city recorder since the issue involved the agency chief. I met with the DA concerning his suspicions. After all thoughts, concerns and evidence had been presented to the DA’s office, the DA in turn contacted the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI).

After all the officers involved met with the TBI agent, we then learned that there

would be a full investigation of the chief over the concerns. At this time, I called PBA and advised them of the situation. The PBA then put me in contact with Chattanooga attorney Stevie Phillips. The PBA was very thorough in their correspondence with me and with Stevie Phillips.

Shortly after the initial contact with this PBA attorney, I learned that three of the city commissioners were upset with all three officers for not reporting the suspicions directly to them so the issue could be handled in-house, so to speak. I was also informed that those commissioners had decided that they should get rid of the three officers involved. I met with Stevie Phillips at this time, and after contacting PBA, a plan of action was developed and put in place.

In August 2014, I was demoted from full-time detective to part-time patrolman and was advised that I would be called to work when needed. After two months without a call, it seemed obvious that the intent of those in authority was to follow through with their plans of dismissal.

The PBA and Stevie Phillips spent a great amount of time discussing the options that would be involved in this type of case. After much thought and debate among them, I was called to meet with Ms. Phillips about the PBA’s decision in this very difficult case. Much to my pleasant surprise, I was advised of PBA’s final decision to represent me in filing a lawsuit in this matter. Because this action would go to federal court, it was determined it would be very expensive. However, because of the principle involved and the applicable law, the PBA felt it was the right thing to do. I was

advised that I had the PBA’s full support in this case to whatever the outcome would be.

In October 2016, I settled his case with the help of Ms. Phillips and the support of the PBA. As poetic justice would have it, all three of those commissioners lost their bid for re-election in November 2016.

Doing what was right cost me my career as a police officer. However, thanks to the SSPBA support, justice prevailed. The TBI prosecuted the chief and obtained a conviction, and the chief was sentenced to two, two-year terms in state incarceration to be served consecutively.

I can personally say that I know the value of being a PBA member. I have confidence in knowing that the PBA supports their members that need legal protection as well as moral support when they are unjustly accused.

The final outcome was not without some disappointment; however, I would not change stepping up to the plate to honor my sworn commitment to uphold the law. I hope this will encourage other officers that are struggling with similar situations to do what is right, even if it could prove costly in the end.

Because of my desire to serve the public in some manner, I have obtained a State Armed Security License and am now working part-time for a security and investigations company. I am looking forward to the day when I can return to a career in law enforcement.

GUARDIAN GAMES COMPETITION MUSCLES UP DONATION FOR THE POLICE BENEVOLENT FOUNDATION



By Kaylan Storey, Public Relations & Communications Coordinator, SSPBA

Foster Ridpath is an athlete, a competitor, a coach and a proud law enforcement supporter. Ridpath owns one of the best CrossFit gyms in Virginia – CrossFit Radford. He also enjoys giving back to the community and has strong ties to philanthropy. Ridpath’s heart for helping those in need led to the creation of *The Guardian Games*.

The Guardian Games consist of functional fitness competitions at various gyms across the region and state. The hosting gym selects a nonprofit that they wish to support. Once the nonprofit is chosen, the event is promoted and online registration is opened. All net proceeds from *The Guardian Games* competitions are donated to the selected charity. *The Guardian Games* began after Ridpath opened his gym, CrossFit Radford, in

2013. “Within three months of opening, we started holding in-house competitions. After two years of traveling and following some of our local competitions, I wanted to create our own, but improve in the areas that are important! CrossFit boxes (gyms) usually have strong ties to philanthropy, so I came up with the idea of giving all the net proceeds from our competitions to nonprofit organizations,” Ridpath said.

Each *Guardian Games* competition consists of CrossFit exercises such as burpees over bar, lunges, reverse lunges, snatches, push-ups, cal rows, wall balls and box jumps.

The Police Benevolent Foundation was chosen as a beneficiary for *The Guardian Games*. “The PBF was actually selected as the first charity to benefit from *The Guardian Games*’ competition, held in 2016. The investment of the officers

to protect and serve should be held in high regard. When I opened the doors to CrossFit Radford, the first group that came in was Radford City police. Within weeks their chief was in the door, leading by example. At the time of our first *Guardian Games* competition, people on social media and across the nation were attacking law enforcement. I am not a fan of bullies,” Ridpath said.

Ridpath’s desire is to execute enjoyable fitness competitions and raise money to help the Police Benevolent Foundation grow. Ridpath said, “In our second year of *The Guardian Games*, I knew I wanted to grow our PBF benefit, and the only way was to take it to the state capital. CrossFit Pushin Weight (CFPW) contacted us about hosting an event and I told them I had the perfect group to benefit, the PBF! The owner of CFPW, Ashleigh Jenkins, thought it was a great idea. We went to work and the competition was

our all-around best competition of the year. Having the competition in the center of the state helped with recruitment and bringing competitors out of D.C., Richmond, and the Virginia Beach area.” Ridpath also appreciated the show of support he received from the VAPBA Executive Director, Sean McGowan. “Sean was there to speak before the event and set the tone for a great competition. It was wonderful for everyone to take a step back and understand what we had done and the difference we were making in the lives of officers in need. We intend on doing it again in 2018 at CrossFit Pushin Weight,” Ridpath added.

Ridpath has big plans for *The Guardian Games* and wants to continue to see the competitions grow. He said, “We are only going to grow and increase participation

and giving. In the long-term, I would like for people to choose to participate in our competitions or other competitions that are not for profit. I hope to create a ripple in the water, so people actually think, ‘I could make a difference for someone in need,’ or create a push for the bigger competition series to give back. Somebody has to have a Robin Hood mentality before things change!”

Ridpath knows none of *The Guardian Games* events would be possible without help. “I would like to thank my right hand man, James Chilton, for assisting with organizing, judging and all the behind the scenes work to put on a great competition. Big thanks to the venues that have hosted – CrossFit Radford, Railyard CrossFit, Prominent CrossFit, Roanoke Valley CrossFit, CrossFit Pushin Weight

and CrossFit Harrisonburg. Without the volunteers, judges and competitions, we would not have been able to raise as much money as we have for nonprofit organizations! Lastly, I’d like to give a shout out to our sponsors: Xtraining Equipment, Again Faster Equipment, Affiliate Guard, Integrity Shirts, 7Five Clothing Company, and Radford Coffee Company. If you are looking to compete or hold a *Guardian Games* event, please check us out at www.theguardiangames.com and find us on social media,” Ridpath said.

Thanks to the hard work of Ridpath’s team and support of the community, *The Guardian Games* has raised over \$5,000 for the Police Benevolent Foundation in the last two years.



The Police Benevolent Foundation (PBF) is especially thankful for individuals, like Foster Ridpath, who take the initiative to create events that raise money for the PBF and support the law enforcement community.

The Police Benevolent Foundation is a tax-deductible 501(c)(3) organization established by the Southern States Police Benevolent Association (SSPBA) in 2005. The PBF provides funding to support SSPBA member benefits.

By Toby Nix, West Georgia Chapter Member, PBA of GA

It was my second night on patrol. I had just completed a three month police academy. The shift I was assigned to was already almost halfway through their two month night shift rotation. So I joined them at the start of a three day work weekend.

The field training program started with me in the passenger seat of my field training officer's Dodge Charger. My field training officer knew I was new to the road and he trained me accordingly. By that, I mean, he made a point to get me to as many scenes as humanly possible. He treated a minor fender bender the same way he treated a burglary in progress.

By this point, between 911 and sheriff's office dispatch, I had spent almost seven years on the radio. It was patrol night number two when I knew I was no longer on the outside listening in.

Anytime a "hot call" came out anywhere in the county my trainer would radio our lieutenant and ask him if we were clear to "be en route for training purposes." Thankfully, my lieutenant always said yes.

There are some calls you know from the beginning aren't necessarily an emergency. There are some calls where you aren't quite certain how serious it is on scene. Then there are those calls you know are really bad right from the initial dispatch. I knew based off of dispatch's information that a really bad motor vehicle accident had just occurred.

This accident didn't happen in our zone so, true to form, my trainer asked my lieutenant for permission to jump zones "for training purposes." True to form, my lieutenant said yes. Because of the distance we had to cover, we were not the first deputies to arrive on scene.

Another deputy was close when the call came out, so he arrived rather quickly and confirmed over the radio there was a fatality. He also confirmed there was a

survivor who was entrapped in a second vehicle.

By the time my trainer and I arrived, the fire department was on scene. They have enough lights on their trucks to make any scene look like it's daytime, no matter what time of night it was.

I remember getting out of the passenger seat and putting on my traffic vest. I remember walking to the car that held the deceased person in the driver's seat. Out of respect for the person, I will give no details. I just kept thinking to myself that I was looking at a human being who had been alive five minutes before.

I was in some kind of shocked stupor. I didn't know what I needed to do, but I knew I needed to do something. My lieutenant asked me to go get a can of spray paint from his vehicle so he could start marking the scene.

I'm still not sure if he told me to get the paint because slapping me across the face would have been frowned upon. But as soon as he gave me something to do, all the cobwebs left my head and I came back to reality. I think it was his way of bringing me back to the scene, giving me something to do rather than just think about what all I was seeing. I don't know,



but it helped me.

I found my way back to the deputy who had arrived on scene first. I wanted to know what he had done as soon as he got there so I would know for future reference.

He told me one of the first things he saw when he arrived on scene was an infant's shoe in the passenger floorboard. He told me as soon as he saw that shoe he prayed that there was no baby in that car. His prayers (and all of ours) were answered that night because there was no one else in that car.

I went back to that car and stared at that shoe and thanked God there was no baby in that car. No sooner had I thanked God then it dawned on me that this person knew whoever that shoe belonged to.

I thought about how somewhere there was a baby asleep who was expecting this person to come home. That baby would grow up not knowing this person.

Throughout this entire time, the fire department was working on extricating the other person from their vehicle. I have said it before and I'll say it again. Our fire department is second to none. I hope I never need any of the services they offer, but I will be happy to know I am in their hands if I do.

I don't know what was worse that night, seeing a deceased person or hearing a surviving person getting cut out of a car. I still don't know the answer to that question. They were sights and sounds I will never forget.

I know that night I knew I would never bat an eye if I pulled someone over for speeding or driving recklessly and they told me I should be fighting "real crime." Speeding is a real crime. Reckless driving is a real crime. There are victims.

Please drive safe. It matters to someone that you make it to your destination safely. If you think there is no one on earth who cares, know that I want you to make it where you are going. And so does everyone I work with.

3 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN THE SSPBA



1. THE LEGAL REPRESENTATION WE OFFER OUR MEMBERS IS THE BEST IN THE BUSINESS!

The PBA provides an attorney to contact you at the scene of all on-duty shootings or serious injuries arising from your law enforcement duties, going to the scene if necessary. The PBA provides an attorney to protect your individual interests if you are named as defendant in any civil or criminal action arising out of your duties as a law enforcement officer. **NO CAP or LIMIT.** Other organizations say they can match our legal benefits, but in the end, the PBA stands alone on this one.

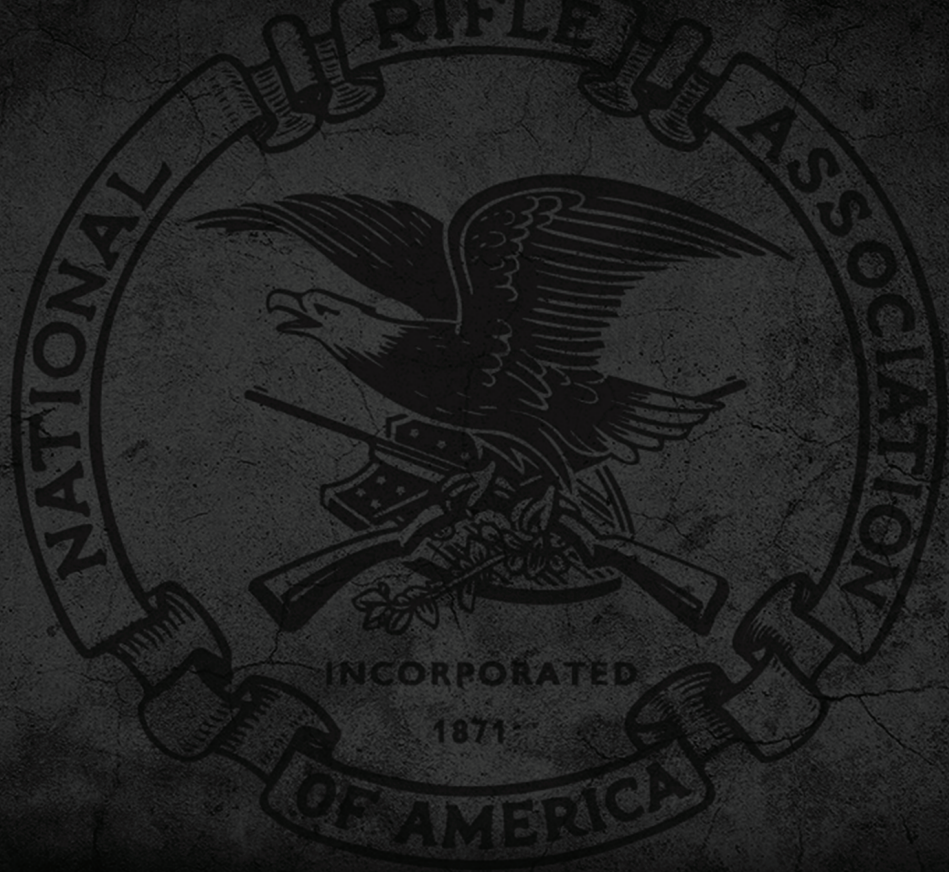
2. THE PBA TAKES A STAND ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS THAT AFFECT OUR MEMBERS!

The PBA maintains a professional staff of lobbyists to aid in obtaining legislation beneficial to the law enforcement profession. If there is critical legislation out there that will affect your job as a law enforcement professional, the PBA is ready to take action and let your voice be heard.

3. THE PBA PROVIDES YOUR LOVED ONES WITH THE SECURITY OF ONE OF THE BEST ACCIDENTAL DEATH BENEFIT PLANS IN THE INDUSTRY IN THE EVENT YOU ARE LOST IN THE LINE OF DUTY.

We believe that our accidental death benefit is the most generous of any such plan in our service area. Your beneficiary will receive: (1) your base salary for one year if you are killed in the performance of your law enforcement duties (maximum payment: \$60,000), or (2) \$5,000 if an accidental, non-occupational death, or to retired and reserve members, in accordance with the terms and limitations of our insurance policy which underwrites the benefit.

*A full description of these benefits and all others that come with a PBA membership can be found by visiting www.sspba.org.



NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

“ Every day law enforcement officers put their lives on the line to keep our communities safe. They put on a badge and holster their gun to protect and serve us. On behalf of the five million men and women of the National Rifle Association, it is my honor to extend our gratitude and respect to every officer who works to keep us out of harm’s way. The NRA stands with the ordinary people who face extraordinary circumstances and act with courage, honor and self-sacrifice so that we may live in a safer place. ”

– *Chris W. Cox, NRA-ILA Executive Director*

NRA

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