

METRO NEWS

Officers honored for action beyond call of duty

Twenty-nine medals have been presented to New Orleans police officers for action beyond the call of duty.

The medals were furnished by Patrick Taylor of Taylor Energy Co. Taylor also presented U.S. Savings Bonds to each recipient.

Medal of Merit recipients received \$500 bonds, while those who earned Medals of Commendation were given \$100. Recipients of Achievement and Lifesaving Medals received \$50 bonds.

The Medal of Merit is awarded for an act in which the officer was exposed to great bodily harm performing a brave act beyond the call of duty, or the officer acted in an emergency and saved the life of another person while his own life was also in danger.

The Medal of Commendation is awarded for an act beyond the call of duty in which the officer takes exceptional enforcement action, including preventing a major crime and apprehending a dangerous criminal.

The Medal of Achievement is awarded when the officer has rendered a service beyond the call of duty and brings credit to the Police Department.

A Medal for Lifesaving is awarded to an officer who saved the life of another in circumstances not involving extreme danger.

Receiving the Medal of Merit were officers Anthony LaNasa, assigned to the K-9 Unit, Officer Dick Beebe, also assigned to the K-9 unit, received a Medal of Commendation in the same case.

On Oct. 29, 1994, the officers were informed that a man inside a nearby lounge had fired his gun several times. The officers immediately went to the front entrance of the lounge. LaNasa saw the man, who was holding a gun in his right hand, running toward the front door. Removing his weapon from its holster, he ordered the man to drop his gun. Instead of obeying the order, the man aimed his weapon at LaNasa. The officer fired two shots, striking the man. The man threw down the weapon but continued outside and Beebe stopped him. Beebe then called an emergency unit for the wounded man.

Officer Harry O'Neal of the 2nd District was awarded a Medal of Merit.

On Feb. 26, about 1:20 p.m. while in a one-man car, O'Neal saw what he believed to be a narcotics transaction. He confronted the two suspects and one turned and appeared to be fumbling with an object in his waistband. As O'Neal attempted to grab the man, he pulled a .45-caliber revolver from his waistband. The man fired one shot at the officer, then fell, dropping his weapon. He managed to get up and run away. O'Neal chased the man over fences and through yards, calling for assistance. O'Neal sent responding officers to strategic locations to keep the man from escaping. The man was found under a house by other officers.

Officers Jerome Dupre, Garold Fayar, Alfred Celestain and James Pollard of the 7th District were awarded Medals of Merit.

On Feb. 4, about 10:22 p.m., Dupre and Fayar stopped to investigate a suspicious vehicle at Read Boulevard and Old Gentilly Road. As they approached, the driver of the truck sped away. During a chase, the driver fired four shots from a .30-30 rifle, all striking the police vehicle. The driver lost control of his vehicle on Hayne Boulevard and traveled up the levee for a short distance. He fired four more shots at the officers. The driver then regained control of the truck, made a U-turn and again sped off. He aimed his vehicle directly at an approaching police car occupied by Celestain and Pollard and fired two shots.

Celestain and Pollard returned fire, and the driver fired more shots at officers before escaping. The officers continued searching for the man and vehicle. On March 8, they learned a man matching the shooting suspect's description was arrested after a chase involving the State Police. An investigation revealed the same driver and truck had been involved in two similar chases with shots being fired. The man was booked with attempted murder of police officers, resisting arrest and obstruction of justice.

Receiving Medals of Commendation were officer Michael Harrison, of the 6th District, and officer Donald Berryhill of the 1st District.

On Oct. 22, about 2:15 a.m., Berryhill and Harrison, both off duty, were in the 2100 block of Martin Luther King Boulevard. They heard gunshots and after investigating saw a man firing shots at another person. As the officers approached, they saw the man shoot the victim several times before fleeing. As the officers pursued, the man fired twice at them. Berryhill was able to tackle the man from behind and place him under arrest. The gun used in the shooting was recovered.

Officers Harry Stovall and Michael Roussel, assigned to Community Oriented Policing, received Medals of Commendation.

On Feb. 26, about 6:55 p.m., the officers were patrolling the B.W. Cooper housing complex when they saw a woman running between two buildings. She stated that she had just escaped from her apartment where two men had entered with a machine gun and were holding her boyfriend hostage. The officers called for assistance. Roussel headed for the front of the building, while Stovall went to the rear. Roussel realized the men were coming out of the building and ordered them to drop their weapons. One of the men pointed what appeared to be a machine gun at Roussel, who again ordered the man to drop his weapon. Both men turned and were running out the back fire escape when ordered by Stovall to drop the weapon and sur-

render. Although the man turned as if to shoot, he was unable to determine where the officer was hiding and put the gun down.

Lt. Daniel Lawless, assigned to the district attorney's office, and officer Patrick Evans of the 8th District received Medals of Commendation.

On Feb. 26, about 7:10 p.m., four people were shot while attending the Bacchus Parade in the 2300 block of St. Charles Avenue. Lawless and Evans, riding on the Bacchus float, observed two men shooting at one another on the neutral ground. As the revelers started to scatter, both officers jumped off the float and pursued the two. One of the men, who had been shot during the exchange of gunfire, was apprehended by these officers and his weapon confiscated. Some of the other officers who responded to the scene ordered emergency units and took care of bystanders who were shot. Other officers cordoned off the scene where the shooting took place and recovered the second weapon used in shooting. Capt. Donald Curole, Sgt. Edwin Hosli, Sgt. Louis Dabboub, Sgt. August Krinke, Sgt. James King, Detectives Thaddaus Zeno, Angelo Smith, Herman Cade, Paul Long, Warren Fitzgerald, Lisa Marie, Kenneth Miestovich and Walter Zschiedrich will receive a Letter of Commendation for their outstanding action in this incident.

Officer Jerome Dupre of the 7th District was awarded a Medal of Commendation, and officer Stephen Rice of the 8th District received a Medal for Lifesaving.

On March 3, about 4:44 p.m., Rice was working a detail at a bank at Read and Lake Forest boulevards when he heard a succession of gunfire. He went outside and saw people running for cover. He then saw a man carrying a small girl who appeared to have been shot. He instructed the man to put the child down and saw that she had been shot in the chest and was bleeding from the mouth. He realized the child's lungs were collapsing and immediately applied pressure to the wound. There is no doubt that Rice's knowledge and quick action saved the girl. In the meantime, Dupre, who was working a detail nearby, heard the broadcast and responded. He saw two people fitting the descriptions of the shooters running through the parking lot. Dupre drove behind them and ordered them to stop. Both were apprehended by Dupre.

Officer Virgil W. McKenzie, of the Identification Latent Prints Section, was awarded a Medal of Achievement.

After a burglary/rape in Metairie in December, Jefferson Parish crime lab technicians requested that several latent prints be run in the NOPD AFIS computer for possible matches. McKenzie noticed the same print number showing up on respondent lists. He compared the latent print to a fingerprint on the ten print card and realized that it

was a negative — that is, a reversed image — of the left index finger. By using the positive/negative reverse feature on the latent print station, McKenzie was able to positively identify the print. Within an hour of the perpetrator's photo being shown as wanted on the evening TV news, he turned himself in, confessed to the crime and implicated his accomplice, who was then also arrested.

Sgt. Craig A. Rodrigue and Sgt. Steven M. Gaudet of the I.S.B. Robbery Section and Sgt. Timothy P. Bayard of the 2nd District received Medals of Achievement.

On Feb. 18, about 2:30 a.m., a young couple was being robbed in the 5100 block of Canal Boulevard, near Delgado Community College, when the gunman suddenly shot the man in the back and then fled. Upon learning of this incident, Rodrigue and Gaudet, who were assigned to patrol routes, returned to the office on their own time and began to check through the files. Feeling that university area establishments patronized by college students were being targeted by the robber, these officers contacted Bayard for his assistance. The three reviewed the files and noted an armed robbery in which a juvenile had been arrested and a revolver recovered, but the two accomplices had escaped. After identifying the accomplices, both were later arrested. The shooting victim died March 6 as the result of complications from his wound, but the female victim positively identified the first arrested juvenile as the shooter. An investigation resulted in the trio being charged with 30 armed robberies. Seven stolen vehicles used in the commission of the robberies were recovered.

Sgt. Robert Barty, Narcotics Section, was awarded a Medal of Lifesaving.

On Oct. 11, 1994, Barty was off duty at home when he was called to assist a resident of the Carrollton Parc Apartments who had accidentally started a kitchen fire. Using a wet towel, he entered the smoke-filled apartment three times to help evacuate an elderly woman and her two daughters, one of whom was eight months pregnant. They were from France and understood very little English. Once he had everyone out of the apartment, he broke the glass of a nearby fire extinguisher cabinet and was able to put the fire out with minimal damage to the apartment.

Officer Raymond A. Huber, of the 8th District, was awarded a Medal for Lifesaving.

On Jan. 9, about 8 a.m., Huber was off duty and flying an aircraft when he overheard air traffic controllers from the Baton Rouge Metro Airport communicating with a student pilot who was in distress. Huber switched the radio frequency to that of the student and learned that he had inadvertently flown his plane into a low cloud ceiling, had panicked

and became disoriented. In his confusion, the student had put his plane into a downward spiral and was speeding toward the ground. Huber immediately intervened and began giving the student instructions via radio. Slowly the student regained control of his aircraft. Huber broke off his instrument approach and remained aloft to continue to give advice and instructions to the student until he emerged from the inclement weather and made a safe emergency landing.

Officers James Pollard and Alfred Celestain, of the 7th District, received Medals for Lifesaving.

On Jan. 1, the officers were patrolling in the 6800 block of Tara Lane when they observed several frantic women crying and yelling for help. As the officers approached, they learned that the 4-month-old grandson of one of the women had stopped breathing. Both officers rushed into the apartment and found the infant lying on the floor. His skin color was blue, there was very little pulse, and there was blood coming from his nose. Knowing there was no time to wait for an ambulance, the officers picked up the baby and ran to the police vehicle. As Celestain drove to the hospital, Pollard administered CPR. Pollard turned the baby on its back and started patting him, hoping to dislodge anything obstructing his airway. Just prior to arriving at the hospital, the baby began to cry. The officers carried the baby into the emergency room and it was immediately placed in an oxygen tent.

Officer Donald Clogher, of the SOD Tactical Unit, was awarded a Medal for Lifesaving.

On Feb. 17, about 1:50 a.m., an automobile ran off the road into Bayou St. John. As the car began to sink, one of the occupants emerged and began thrashing about. Clogher, believing the person in the water would be unable to get to shore on his own, was able to swim out to the man and pull him to safety. The other passenger drowned when the vehicle sunk.

Officers Lawrence N. Coig III,

Michael J. Buras Sr. and Paul J. Ridolfo, of the 6th District, received Medals for Lifesaving.

On Feb. 21, about 11:30 p.m., the officers had just completed a Carnival parade assignment when they noticed smoke escaping from a house on Magnolia Street. As they got closer and could see the flames shooting out of the building, they heard screams for help. The officers found several people trapped on the second floor, behind a window with iron bars. Buras and Coig climbed up to the balcony and began prying at the bars. Before the officers could get the bars off, smoke and flames engulfed the room. Although choking from the heavy smoke, the officers continued working on the bars until they managed to remove them. The officers assisted the people to the ground. They were then informed that an elderly woman was trapped on the other side of the residence. The officers kicked the locked door open and searched the smoke-filled room. They found the woman and carried her to safety.

Also receiving Medals for Lifesaving were officers Andre Carter and Robert Mitchell of the 2nd District.

On March 13, about 2:15 a.m., these officers were informed of a fire at Washington and Rochelave streets. They found a business burning. It was closed and unoccupied, however, the fire had spread to an adjacent apartment building. The officers climbed over a 7-foot iron gate to get into the building. Despite thick smoke they knocked on doors, instructing the elderly residents to go to the front gate. When they learned that all of the residents were out except one person in a front apartment, the officers went back and carried the elderly man to the gate. The officers then lifted each person over the gate. The Fire Department arrived and took over the scene, and the two officers were taken to the hospital and treated for smoke inhalation.

OFFICERS HONORED FOR ACTION BEYOND CALL OF DUTY

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