

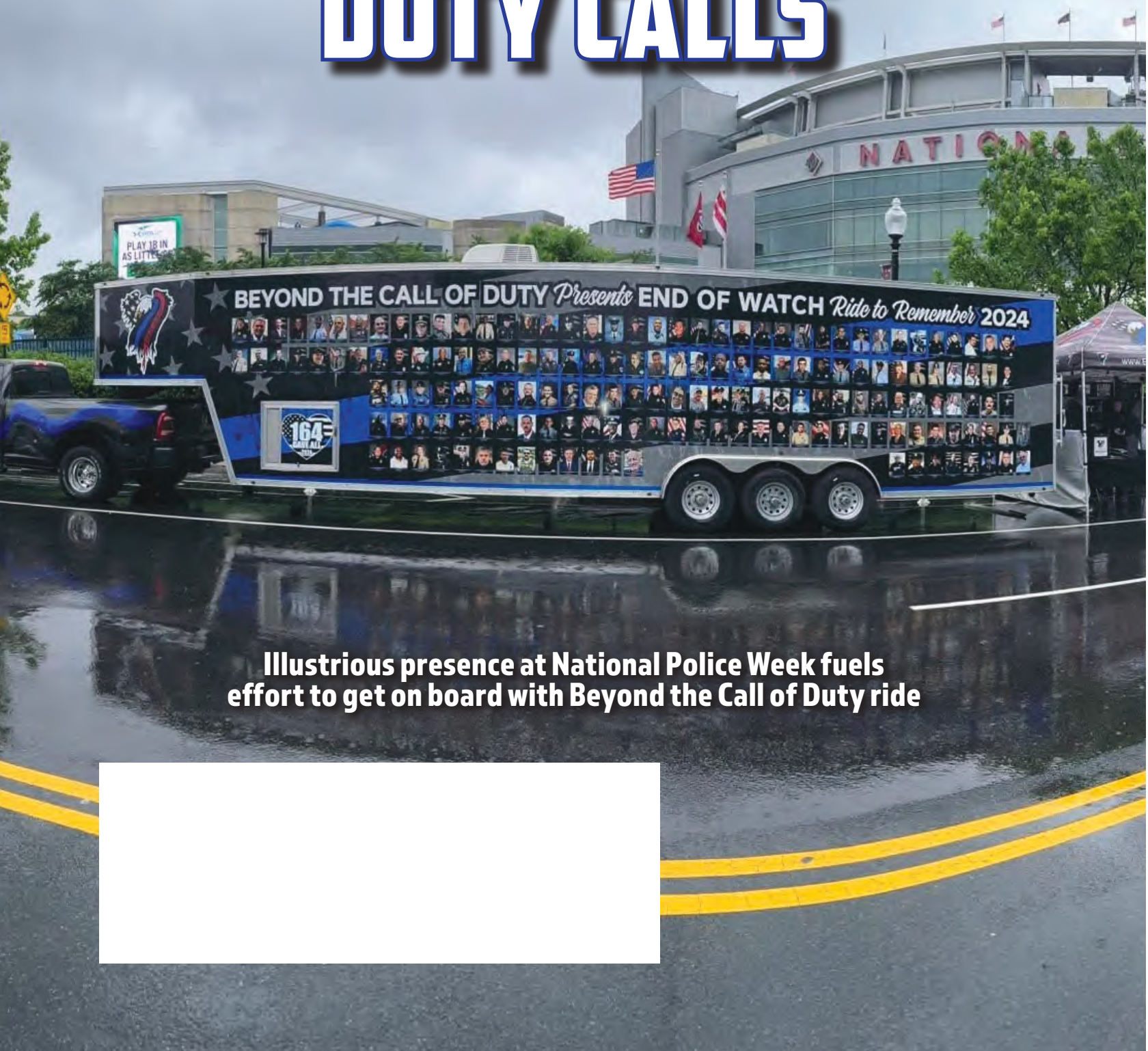


*Fraternal Order of Police*

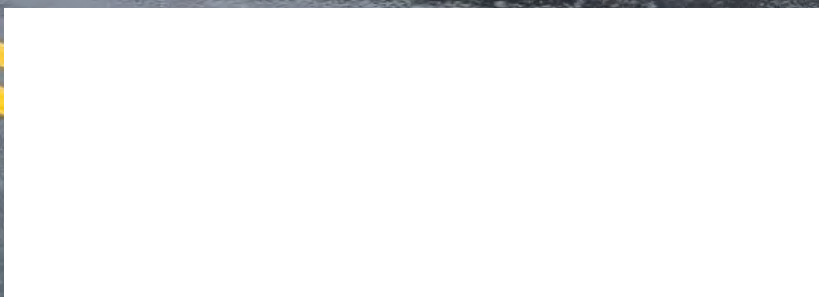
# CHICAGO LODGE 7

Official Magazine • June 2025

## DUTY CALLS



**Illustrious presence at National Police Week fuels effort to get on board with Beyond the Call of Duty ride**





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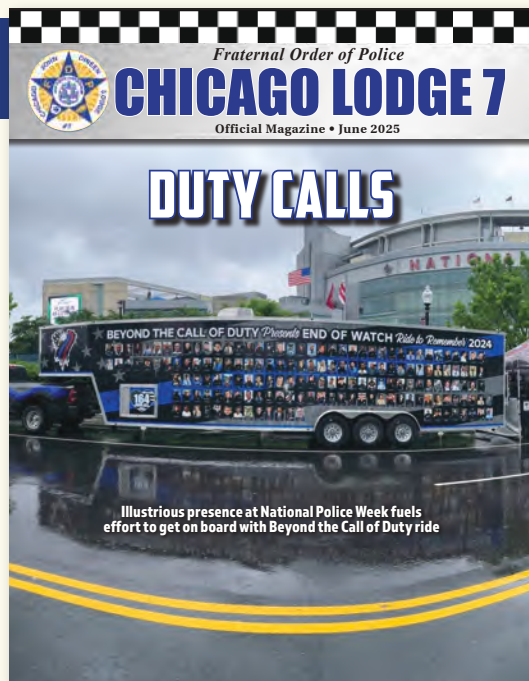
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## COVER STORY PAGE 31

### Along For The Ride

Six years ago, J.C. Shaw heard that creating a motorcycle ride to make a cross-country run for the purpose of remembering and honoring fallen officers could never get rolling. But the retired Yakima County (Washington) Sheriff's Office deputy was not deterred. So he created the Beyond the Call of Duty End of Watch Ride that has crisscrossed the country every other year since 2020. Chicago Police Officers saw the ride come through in 2022 to honor Ella French, and they can watch for the next one in summer 2026. Until then, go for a ride to see how Beyond the Call of Duty began and all the good it has done for the families and departments of fallen officers.



COVER DESIGN BY JENNA RAMOS

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## SPECIAL REPORT : POLICE MEMORIAL MONTH



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**From National Police Week:** Read all about the events of National Police Week 2025 in Washington D.C., including Lodge 7 members coming out in the rain to honor the fallen, the CPD Pipes and Drums and Honor Guard performing memorable tributes and recognizing Chicago Police Officers as national Top Cops.....**Page xx**



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# CHICAGO LODGE 7

Official Magazine  
President's Report



## All in the line of duty



JOHN  
CATANZARA  
JR.

Tent City buzzes with activity during National Police Week. Across the Potomac River from the District and most of the events of the week, the site is filled with all sorts of backers of the blue and is a place for real coppers to hang out and enjoy the fraternalism that adds so much to the week. Tent City becomes just that during Police Week: a big, blue city unlike any other.

And the perfect place for the Beyond the Call of Duty memorial to reside, with its stirring memorial.

You might have seen the Beyond the Call of Duty End of Watch Ride memorial during its pass through Chicago in 2021 or 2022, when then-Lodge 7 First Vice President Mike Mette and I participated, riding across the country to honor fallen officers. The faces of the fallen from the previous two years adorn all sides of the memorial, which is led by motorcycles on the biennial ride to the cities and towns where they served.

National Police Week and remembering and honoring the fallen always gives us heart-wrenching pictures that capture what we do best: honor our own. And if any of these pictures is worth a thousand words, then the pictures of the officers honored by Beyond the Call of Duty are worth a million.

That takes me back to Tent City. I called in a favor and found what I think was the best available location for that memorial during Police Week, right across the street from Tent City. It seems that will be its future home for the next several years, so everybody leaving Tent City can't help but see the memorial as they leave. It just gets people's attention, and this year it led to a lot of poignant interactions.

To sit on the other side of the street and see people coming across, you could literally see 'em pointing, and you just know they're talking about somebody they know on that memorial. Lodge 7 Trustee Chair David DiSanti and I spent some time with officers and survivor family members from across the country who were coming to see their loved ones on the memorial. We have taken this as our duty to help bring recognition, branding and donations to help the Beyond the Call of Duty cause when they start the next End of Watch Ride in the summer of 2026.

Beyond the Call of Duty found a way into my heart when they called to ask if we wanted them here in Chicago for the ceremony on the first anniversary of losing Ella French in 2022. We first encountered the ride when it came through in 2021 to honor the Chicago Police Officers who were lost to COVID.

In 2021, Beyond the Call of Duty called the Department to request making a stop for our Covid losses. The Department inexplicably did not respond, so they called us. At that point, they had made two rides, and when they showed up here, we had the chance to chat with J.C. Shah, who created the Beyond the Call of Duty Ride, and to grasp the uniqueness of it.

Mike and I had the chance to ride with them in 2022 for a couple of legs. We experienced stops outside of Chicago and the powerful empathy and cathartic emotion for the surviving families this memorial presents when you come into their city or their department. It might be in the past when we buried your officer, but we still remember, we still love you.

To be able to contribute to their healing process means more than any of it to me, at least personally. When you come rolling into their city or town a year later or sometimes two years after the line-of-duty death, it just means the world to these families and these department members who were close to these officers. So that's why what they do is so unique and special to me that I am going to continue to be as much of a part of it as I can.

And that's why we're trying to get some exposure and donations, because it costs almost \$300,000 for every ride with hotels, gas, supplies and everything else. Every couple of years, you also have to replace



President's Report continues on Page 6

### CHICAGO JOHN DINEEN LODGE #7

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motorcycles.

One of the bikes used for the 2024 ride was dedicated to Ella French. Every bike has images of three officers — one on top of each saddlebag and one on top of the front fender. The front fender also gets the wind-shield display, but they kind of rotate where your location is on the bike. The one with Ella on the front of the bike is now in Chicago for good with Lodge 7.

In fact, Ella's mom, Elizabeth, will be on the bike with me on June 1 for the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation Ride to Remember. And it will continue to be in Chicago on every police memorial-related ride that I know of.

It's not about just Ella. She has become, in my mind, the representation of fallen law enforcement officers for Chicago, and that will get notoriety for Beyond the Call of Duty across this state, Indiana, Wisconsin or wherever I can take it for rides.

I would never say remembering our fallen is beyond the call of duty, because I feel it is my duty. It started with Ella, because she was my first line-of-duty death as Lodge 7 president. I was the one who sat in Elizabeth's living room explaining to her how her daughter was murdered, because David Brown and the Department did not do that for three days.

It just created this bond and realization for me about maybe what my duty should be going forward for these kinds of situations. And I've tried to carry that over to Andres Vasquez Lasso, to Areanah Preston's family, the Huesca family, the Martinez family, every officer we lost to COVID, and families mourning in the moment or even retrospectively, like losing Jim Crowley 40 years after he was catastrophically injured.

I believe the Lodge 7 president's responsibilities should be going as



deep as possible into these family's recoveries. That duty overlaps into the Beyond the Call of Duty organization and what they do for families. If I can bring that sense of compassion to other families across the country, then so be it.

So we're going along for the ride because I don't know that I've ever believed in a mission more than this one, with all due respect to the CPME, the 100 Club, the Chicago Police Foundation and the others that also go above and beyond. It's that feeling of pulling into a town to honor one of those officers pictured on the Beyond the Call of Duty memorial.

It's empowering. It kind of, I don't know, fills the gas tank, so to speak, to keep going on, trying to inspire other people to do more, which is pretty much why I do it and join this ride.

A ride that leads to moments like this one outside of Tent City just a few weeks ago: Three guys were walking across the street, pointing at the Beyond the Call of Duty Ride trailer. They walked toward the memorial, and J.C. asked them, "You guys got somebody on the memorial?" Two of them pointed to the other guy and said, "His sister."

It's like, "Wow, that poor dude." His sister's there, and just think what's going through his head as he sees her picture. Then you go into, "How

did we lose her?" Call it karma or whatever. She was Major Michelle Quintero from the Madison County, North Carolina, Sheriff's Office, who was swept away in the floods from Hurricane Helene. It happened just on the other side of the border from Erwin, Tennessee, where we took the food trailer. She was reporting to duty and got swept away, struck by a tree and ended up drowning.



That was just kind of an eerie connection, knowing I was in that area and experienced some of the heartache and disaster. Not knowing, obviously, who she was at the time, but now knowing her story, it's just pretty amazing to see that. And feel the power of going Beyond the Call of Duty.

## President's Report: Second Stories

# The Strongest Survivors

Even the monsoon that hit the National Mall during National Police Week couldn't wash out the annual Candlelight Vigil, let alone dampen the spirits of our survivor families, who didn't budge the whole night.

The strongest memory for me from the week was the turnout for the Vigil. With the crappy weather, I really did not anticipate it to be as crowded as it was. But nothing could have provided better cover for the families than the fact that the Vigil was so well-attended.

In the best weather, the crowd filling the middle section with no cover extends almost as far as the eye can see. That section is about the length of a football field, extending well into the grassy knoll leading up to the Washington Monument. And it was still filled this year, albeit with a lot of umbrellas and poncho-clad cops.

I know they had live feeds everywhere, which maybe encouraged people to stay out of the rain. All the TVs in Tent City and the bars and restaurants were playing the Vigil ceremony live — complete with the Roll Call of Heroes, honoring those lost in the line of duty in 2024 — which



could have encouraged people not to attend.

But shame on us if we can't stand out there in the rain for these families whose lives have been destroyed, if we can't survive a couple hours of discomfort and misery when every day, for many of them, it's the same feeling in a different way.

Before we left D.C. on the last night, we went back to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial to pick up the stars we put up near the names of our officers who were added to the Wall there: Luis Huesca, Enrique Martinez and James Crowley Jr.

Enrique's brother, Adrian, who many of us know as one of our finest Chicago Police Officers, snuck up behind me and tapped me on the



## President's Report: Second Stories

shoulder. I'm glad I got to talk to him one more time.

I had a chance to ask him what the week was like compared to what he was anticipating. And Adrian summed it up with one word: "Tough."

I also had a heavy conversation with Edith Huesca and Luis' sister, Lily. I just wanted to know what their take was now, after the fact. It was definitely more emotional and more descriptive. Lily is a rock. Edith is a rock, too. She has taken the opportunity to honor her son's memory and what he stood for, trying to make sure that people change the mindset so that another criminal doesn't have the ability to do to someone else's

loved one what that piece of garbage did to her son.

I also want to acknowledge the connection and — I'm trying to think of the right word here — the repair to the damage done over the last couple of decades to Jim Crowley's family. I had a conversation with Jim's sister, Beth Carter. And she just thanked me for the words I said at the Lodge 7 Memorial the week before National Police Week, apologizing for things and acknowledging that this organization could do better, should do better. I pledge we will do better on behalf of any officers in Jim's situation. It's just what we're supposed to do.

## Sibling Revelry

One of the neatest memories I have of Police Week is of sitting underneath the tent at the end of the Vigil, and Beth Carter was there, talking to Enrique's little sister, Angelica. Beth, who's old enough to be her mother, was telling Angelica that she wants her to commit to going together to the sibling survivor camp that the national Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.) hosts each summer.

They are a generation apart, but in grief, they can pair up and

support each other. Kudos to Beth for reaching out to Angelica, because she's a very quiet young girl and is dealing with her brother's loss differently, certainly, than Beth is. But for her as an adult, so to speak, to reach out to the younger girl who may be struggling and say, "I'll be there for you, and you could probably infuse a little youth and enthusiasm in me" — it was just a defining moment.

## Dinner with the Gold Star families

We have one of our special moments the night before the Candlelight Vigil when we host a dinner for all the Gold Star families, along with members of this Lodge. Just to take their mind off the heaviness for a little bit.

It's just really proven to be a way to lower their anxiety and have social interactions that don't revolve around despair and sorrow. I mean, it's hard not to talk about it, but it's not the only focus of the night.

We started this four years ago at Tony and Joe's Seafood Place in the

Washington Harbour. I think the families enjoy getting away from the Department, just kind of being away from that situation and having a nice dinner and nice conversations with others.

We feel like this turns Police Week from grief to honor. They know the next 72 hours are going to be very, very heavy. So if on the day before, we can have some drinks, have a great meal, have some camaraderie, conversation and maybe some introductions to people they are not going to otherwise meet, it takes their mind off why they're there for a while.



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## Miles of Honor, Moments of Light: Reflecting on the LEU Ride and the Candlelight Vigil



**MICHAEL  
METTE**

Since 2010, I have had the honor of participating in one of the most meaningful journeys of my life, the Law Enforcement United (LEU) Memorial Bicycle Ride. This year was no exception. Over the course of several days and hundreds of miles, we rode with one purpose: to honor the fallen, support their families, and ensure that the names of our brothers and sisters in blue are never forgotten.

The ride culminates in Washington, D.C., during National Police Week, where thousands gather to remember the brave officers who made the ultimate sacrifice. The most powerful moment for me, year after year, is the Candlelight Vigil. As each name is read, and each candle is lit, the silence speaks louder than any words could. It's a moment of collective grief – but also of shared strength, hope, and unity.

This year's ride held even deeper meaning for me, as I carried not only the memory of our fallen officers, but also the memory of my father, Robert "Mouse" Mette, who passed away on April 30. My father was a man of quiet strength and unwavering support. He taught me the value of service, the importance of standing up for others, and the meaning of integrity. Riding in his memory reminded me that the foundation of who we are often begins with those who raised us. His presence was with me every mile.

This journey, both physical and emotional, is only possible because of the incredible support behind us. I want to extend my deepest gratitude to the Chicago John Dineen Lodge #7, the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation, and the Michael P. Gordon Foundation. Your generous sponsorship made this year's ride possible. You didn't just help us cover the miles, you carried the memories of the fallen with us, every step of the way.



I'd also like to thank everyone who came out to support our LEU Benefit back in April. Your presence, your donations, and your shared commitment to honoring the fallen remind us that we are never riding alone. Whether you bought a raffle ticket, bid on a silent auction item, or simply came to show your support, you helped fuel this mission. Every dollar raised goes directly to supporting survivors and ensuring that no hero is ever forgotten.

Participating in this ride each year is a physical challenge, yes, but more than that, it's a spiritual one. It reminds us of the weight of the badge, the price of service, and the importance of remembering those who gave their all. It also reminds us that we belong to something greater than ourselves, a community that refuses to let sacrifice be forgotten.

As I return home, tired but full of purpose, I carry the names, the faces, and the stories of the fallen with me. I carry the gratitude I feel for those who made this possible. And I carry the hope that, together, we are making a difference.

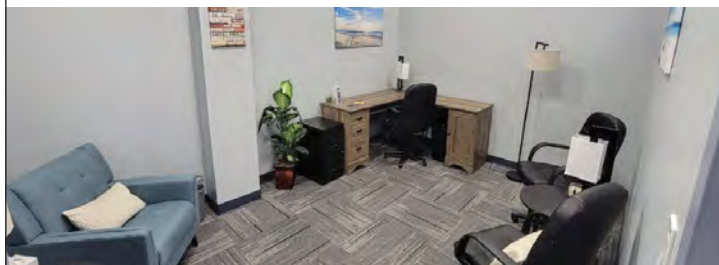
Thank you for standing with us. Thank you for remembering. And thank you for helping us keep their names alive.



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# Discipline Briefs



DAN  
GORMAN

Part of my report given at the monthly General Members meetings include examples of arbitrators' decisions issued at binding summary opinion ("BSO") arbitration hearings. Every investigation has its own individual circumstances, and in most cases, there are multiple allegations and redundant alleged "rule violations" (usually piled on by the investigators). However, below are examples of relatively simpler CR investigations and recent dispositions that have been awarded by the binding summary arbitrators. The following discipline briefs only provide a generalization of the allegations that were sustained in the CR investigation.

General Summary of Allegation	Original Recommended Penalty	Arbitrator's Award
No report, no arrest	1-Day	Expunged
Taser use (8 years ago)	5-day suspension	Expunged
Alleged hung-up on 3-1-1 caller	Reprimand	Expunged
No ISR	Reprimand	Expunged
Alleged derogatory language	25-day suspension	Expunged
Disrespectful language and No BWC	3-day suspension	Reprimand for language. Expunged BWC.
Fail to issued D.I.N. and Hospitalization report	1-day suspension	Violation Noted
No ISR (4 OFFICERS)	15- AND 20-DAY SUSPENSIONS	EXPUNGED (4x's)

## QUOTE BOARD:

To add context to some of the above listed dispositions, below are just a few notable quotes taken directly from the arbitrator's written awards/decisions.

### Quotes from the 6-page arbitration decision re:

#### No report, no arrest

"In reviewing COPA's findings, Commander Sean G. Joyce issued a non-concurrence as to Officer [REDACTED]'s findings, and added his comments could generally be applicable to Officer [REDACTED]'s findings as well. He found, based on a review of the BWC videos, that Officer [REDACTED] accurately documented in his incident reports the circumstances known to him at the time of the incident. He said the reports accurately described the taser incident, noting that it is irrelevant whether [the offender] unintentionally spit in the paramedic's face as claimed by COPA. [The offender's] conduct in raising his voice and leaning in toward the paramedic while lifting his right hand in an aggressive manner is sufficient to classify his conduct as that of an assailant and thereby justified Officer [REDACTED]'s use of the taser. He also concluded there was insufficient evidence to prove Officer [REDACTED] failed to conduct a preliminary investigation."

### Quotes from the 6-page arbitration decision re:

#### Taser Use (8 years ago)

"However, any discipline for alleged offenses nearly 8 years after the fact would serve no corrective purpose and would serve only to be punitive in nature contrary to the principles of progressive discipline that have been agreed to by the parties in their Collective Bargaining Agreement."

"The length of this delay alone is adequate grounds to sustain

the Lodge's grievance..."

### Quotes from the 5-page arbitration decision re:

#### A.R.S. / Call-Back Unit: Allegedly "hung-up" on 3-1-1 caller

"In listening to the recording, the Grievant does sound dismissive as to the manager's wish to file a police report for being bumped in the brief encounter with the angry and possibly intoxicated customer."

"There is no indication from the Grievant that he was ending the call. The line simply goes dead. The burden falls on CPD to show with a preponderous of the evidence that it was more likely than not that the Grievant hung up the phone."

### Quotes from the 5-page arbitration decision re:

#### No ISR

"Finally, the Lodge is correct when it states that COPA is creating a new standard as to the issuance of ISRs, specifically requiring officers to issue receipts before it is requested by an individual. That is not the requirement of Special Order SO4-13-09 – Investigatory Stop System, which only requires officers to provide a receipt at the time of the stop. Here, the Grievant and his partner were in the process of finishing the investigation stop report when it was requested by the driver. The evidence does not support COPA's belief, or more accurately speculation, that the officers were not going to provide a receipt."

### Quotes from the 5-page arbitration decision re:

#### Alleged derogatory language (aka "Parroting")

"...his exceptional complementary history with over 220 awards after only 7 years with the Department is relevant."

"This Arbitrator would impose a 5-day suspension in this matter but for the excessive delay. Accordingly, the Grievant's 25-day suspension is reduced to a Reprimand"

### Quotes from the 5-page arbitration decision re:

#### Disrespectful language and No BWC

"In regard to the BWC violation, Officer [REDACTED]'s BWC shows the Grievant attempting to activate his BWC. It did not activate for some unknown reason, possibly a technical issue." "The Grievant cannot be disciplined for what appears to be malfunctioning equipment."

"The Grievant's comments should also be considered in the context of the incident in which a combative and intoxicated individual refused to obey direction – after being told 4 separate times to exit the vehicle – compelling the Grievant, in his version of events, to attempt an unorthodox de-escalation technique to belittle the passenger to compel him to leave the car."

"The delay in imposing discipline must also be considered in mitigation as this incident took place on October 3, 2019, more than five year ago."

### Quotes from the 6-page arbitration decision re:

#### Fail to issue a Domestic Information Notice and Hospitalization report

"The Grievant's failure to provide the DIN sheet and complete a Hospitalization Case Report were, as noted by CCR, errors of omission and not suggestive of intentional misconduct. This Arbitrator agrees with CCR that these acts are indicative of a lack of knowledge suggesting a need for additional training."

"These documentation violations also took place more than five



years ago by an Officer, who at the time of the incident had no disciplinary history and a complementary history of 24 awards. It is difficult to see how a 1-day suspension, with a corresponding loss of a day's wages, would have any corrective purpose this many years later and would be contrary to the goal of progressive discipline agreed upon by the parties in their Collective Bargaining Agreement..."

**Quotes from the 6-page arbitration decision re:  
No ISR (4 officers)**

"...the delay in this matter clearly prejudices the officers. They cannot recall why they may not have completed the reports due to the fact they were interviewed 2 ½ years after the incident. This was an ordinary investigatory stop, in the midst of a very busy summer, and it is unreasonable to expect the officers to recall what they may have done and why, thus limiting their ability to defend themselves. That alone denies the officers with their due process rights contrary to the just cause requirements of the parties' Collective Bargaining Agreement. It is now 6 ½ years after the incident and it would also serve no corrective purpose to impose discipline for such a minor documentation offense."

"Even if none of these concerns existed, this Arbitrator must also raise a final concern, as expressed by Commander Joseph Bird in CCR, as to the 15- and 20-day suspensions for suspected ISR violations, which almost always result in minor disciplinary action. It appears COPA imposed such an extreme penalty because, in the group's view, it "negatively impacted COPA's investigation" by limiting its ability to identify all the involved individuals. Commander Bird describes this as "COPA's shameful scheme of anchoring proposed penalties.""

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# Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.)



MONICA  
ORTIZ

I have written about Concerns of Police Survivors in the past and wanted to bring awareness to this organization again because of the national support they provide to families of officers killed in the line of duty. We use phrases in different organizations; one common one is "never forget." As police officers, we do our best to honor that term with memorials, fundraising functions, and candlelight vigils. The families, I'm certain, are incredibly grateful for the continued support. We can always do more. When years pass, the statement "never forget" has a different meaning for many surviving families. It's a pain that never goes away, and they are reminded daily of the absence of their loved ones. This is where Concerns of Police Survivors comes into play. This organization helps survivors heal and gives constant support to these surviving family members.

What does C.O.P.S. do? When there is a line-of-duty death, C.O.P.S. will fly survivors from all around the country into Washington, D.C., for National Police Week. All the accommodations are covered and paid for by C.O.P.S. These initiatives are funded by officers and supporters of law enforcement who raise money throughout the year for C.O.P.S. Many of these officers fundraise through national bicycle rides, including Law Enforcement United and Illinois C.O.P.S. Cycle Across Illinois.

Many of these families would not have been able to attend without the support of C.O.P.S. In May 2025, Team Chicago had five cyclists participate in the annual 225-mile bicycle ride from New Jersey to Washington, D.C., with Law Enforcement United Road to Hope during National Police Week. Three of the riders with Team Chicago were gold star wives - Maria Marmolejo, wife of fallen police officer Eduardo Marmolejo, and Crystal Jimenez, wife of fallen police officer Samuel Jimenez.



Team Chicago also included Gold Star Rider Rachel Starr, the wife of Michigan Trooper Caleb Starr. Team Chicago was able to do raise funds that support C.O.P.S. annually for this cycling event.

My first encounter with the national C.O.P.S. organization was in 2008 during Pedal Across Illinois. This well-known organization, which many CPD members may not have heard about, has been in existence since 1984. I want to shed light on C.O.P.S. and its excellent programs for families and co-workers of officers killed in the line of duty. The kids' camp is a program that has made a significant impact over the years, as I've heard from parents, siblings, and other departments in Illinois. It is organized for surviving children (6 years old to 14 years old) and their surviving parent (or legal guardian).

Kids from around the country come in July to participate in camp activities. C.O.P.S. events for surviving families play a crucial role in helping families deal with grief.

C.O.P.S. offers programs for active law enforcement members and activities to help with fundraising for this organization. Here are a few of the programs:

- Traumas of Law Enforcement Training
- National Conference on Law Enforcement Wellness and Trauma
- Coworkers' retreat

C.O.P.S. has many programs available for survivors and law enforcement officers to participate in, volunteer, or make donations. Your support is crucial in keeping these benefits available to these families. I've provided the link if you would like to read more about this organization and all its programs or to donate. Thank you for your time and consideration. Your support means a lot to these families we serve.

<https://www.concernsofpolicesurvivors.org/aboutcps>  
God bless you, and stay safe.



  
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# Got Mold?



ROB  
NOCEDA

Well, where do I start? I briefed the Board of Directors and then proceeded to tell the general membership of the different issues the city has with the older buildings that the department uses. Many of these buildings are not taken care of like city hall. It is usually, for lack of a better term, a patch job. The inconsistent care and maintenance of the city to maintain older CPD buildings is glaring. Look no further than the parking lot in your district that needs some pavement. The paint that

has been chipping on the wall. The rebar that is exposed. The lock-up doors don't lock, where maybe they should. The leak that's in the roof. The mold in the ceiling. I can go on, and I have pictures of many of these issues. Granted, the city has lots of properties, and it is burdensome. But that does not take them off the hook to work on projects and address needs faster and not at a snail's pace.

Many times, the excuse for lack of fixing or rehabbing an issue is, "There is no money." Again, as my old coach said, "Excuses are like buttholes, everyone has got one and it stinks." The city finds money and allocates it where it needs to be. Apparently, basic care and maintenance of properties may not be in the city's strong suit. There needs to be more investment and care in the CPD buildings our members do operations in these structures 24/7. It is a health and safety issue when it comes to our members. The members are being given additional structure and environmental hazards when the job is hazardous enough. That being said, as safety chairman, I am instituting an email address [Safety@chicagofop.org](mailto:Safety@chicagofop.org) where you can send your safety complaints after filling out the form and sending it up your chain of command (this form can be found on our website at [chicagofop.org](http://chicagofop.org)). Please send us a copy of your safety complaint, and a copy of the PSA (public safety administration request) can also be sent to [Safety@chicagofop.org](mailto:Safety@chicagofop.org). The courtesy copies you send us will help us follow up and get some resolution on these important issues.

To close on this topic, if any person you may know, active or retired has any serious health conditions or lingering health issues that may possibly have been caused by being exposed to asbestos, mold or other hazards from being in an older CPD building, I would like to hear about it. Please email me at [rnoceda@chicagofop.org](mailto:rnoceda@chicagofop.org) and we can set a time to discuss.



Picture is from the 2nd floor of the 2nd district ceiling.

## In Memoriam Marine Corporal John Longoria

I would like to mention Memorial Day from last month. I had much to discuss last month, and it flew past me, my apologies for not writing about this extremely important holiday. This holiday is a day in which I take very seriously. The loss of my brothers during Operation Iraqi Freedom deeply affected me. It is something I will never forget. I often think of my many brothers in uniform who made the last full measure of devotion in service of fellow marines and country. It is a day I pray and reminisce of those I served with and who were taken away from us at a very young age. This year I thought heavily on John Longoria, my fellow flat top squad bay brother. John and many of us were sent together to enter the Fleet Marine Force (FMF). John, and many of us FNG/Boot Marines, were sent to continually live in squad bays. Just as we had previously done in boot camp and school of infantry. So, many of us were a big family of brothers in the squad bay. John will always be remembered for his hard work, great personality and his ability to overcome adversity. John grew up in foster care for many years. He was a resilient warrior. Never forgotten. John Longoria was 21 years old when he was KIA, in New Ubaydi, Iraq, on Nov. 14, 2005. Rest well Marine, you earned your Hog's Tooth. May God bless John's family and friends as the 20th anniversary of his passing comes later this year. Keep them in your prayers.

Stay safe and be ALERT.

God be with you all.

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# Opportunities Abound



JIM  
JAKSTAVICH

Hello again officers, both active and retired. The department offers many testing and promotional opportunities for officers to take part in, and you must sign up through the automated application program on [www.cityofchicago.org/policepromotions](http://www.cityofchicago.org/policepromotions) which can be accessed from any computer with an internet connection. Always try to use your department email when signing up, as many of us change and forget personal emails. The most recent test and promotional announcement that I received questions about was for the police technician.

The police technician position is 9126 Title Code, D2 pay grade, and is listed under Employee Resource E05-03. The police technicians are assigned to the Bureau of Counterterrorism. They work and are deployed from Homan Square aka Black Site to hipsters and libtard lawyers. The police technicians have a multitude of duties including, facilitating authorized court-ordered overhears (eavesdropping devices, wiretaps) reviewing and downloading electronic and digital evidence from computers and servers and cameras, tracking devices, installing cameras, and many other essential duties you can find in the order.

Given the physical nature of the duties of the police technician, a medical release form requiring your doctor's signature is part of this application process. I know that it's nearly impossible to simply

call our doctor's office and request that these forms be signed off by your doctor. Most doctors are afraid of any liability and want to see that patient in person and have the ability to ask questions of their patient before they sign off on a medical release form. This aspect of the police technician application created an obstacle for many of those that applied. I was told that the actual number that applied was in the range of 400 plus candidates but only between 170 and 180 had gotten the required medical release forms signed and submitted before the deadline. I related to Labor Relations Division that I felt this short window to get into see one's doctor is limiting the actual number of officers that want to apply. The medical release form also keeps officers who are currently in a "limited duty status" from applying. They may in fact be cleared to "full duty status" by the time the department announces the first or second portion of the exam. The police technician test is in two parts with phase one having two written aptitude tests and phase two being an applied practical exam (simulation of the installation of a covert camera in a bucket truck approx. 20 feet in the air). I cannot stress enough that every officer should take part in as many promotional opportunities that this job has to offer. Getting out of a beat car and into a unit can change your outlook on your career as well as your life. We all just need to find our niche on this job and taking every promotional exam will give you some irons in the fire.

Good luck to all and stay safe.



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# Summary Punishment Action Request (SPAR)



MICHAEL  
COLLINS

Hello again brothers and sisters, both active and retired. For those of you who do not know, SPARs are a less serious form of discipline in lieu of receiving a CR/LOG#. SPARs may be used to process allegations of misconduct made by department or COPA members. It should be known SPARs will not be used to process allegations of misconduct made by members of the public. A CR/LOG# will be obtained in such instances.

Good supervisors will often SPAR an officer to get in front of a potentially more serious form of discipline/suspension the officer may be looking at for misconduct, or actions taken by the officer while performing their duties. SPARs range from reprimands to three-day suspensions. If the officer will be taking suspension time because of the SPAR, the officer is afforded the right to use compensatory time, personal days, baby furlough days, or vacation days if they choose. Some examples of less serious transgressions in which a SPAR may be appropriate are medical roll violations, tardiness, failure to appear in court, uniform violations, failure to provide prompt, correct, or courteous police service, staying down on jobs after leaving the scene, failure to perform assigned duties, inattention to duty (failure to complete a case report, or report an incident), misuse of department equipment, failure to acknowledge or respond to a dispatched call of service, vehicle crash involving a department vehicle that was classified as preventable, failure to identify upon request, failure to comply with department directives,

and body-worn camera (BWC) violations.

When it comes to determining the SPAR penalty the officer will receive, a few things are taken into consideration. The applicable penalty schedule enumerated in the summary punishment directive (see Special Order S08-05), the department members summary punishment history, and complimentary history for the twelve months preceding the date of the current transgression.

Lastly, I have been getting a lot of calls from officers asking if they can contest or grieve the SPAR penalty they received. The answer is you are only able to contest (request a CR/LOG# investigation instead of a SPAR) or grieve a SPAR when it is your fourth one within a 12-month period. However, if you do not agree with the recommended penalty for your first, second, or third SPAR you can submit a To-From respectfully requesting a hearing with your unit commander. The To-From must detail the affected members reason for appealing the recommended summary punishment action, be submitted by the end of the officer's next tour of duty, or within ninety-six hours of when it was received. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached during the meeting with the commander, the officer can then request a hearing with the Deputy Chief. If the issue is still not resolved the officer will receive the penalty.

I hope this helped you better understand the process. Please review special order S08-05 titled Summary Punishment found in department directives for more information. Any questions or concerns feel free to contact me. Stay safe everyone!



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*Hengyi Yang, widow of  
Ofc. Kevin Meng, Dec'd*

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# By Chance or By Choice?



KENYATTA  
GAINES

"Did I choose this job or was I chosen for it?"

It's a question I often ask myself. I assume you have done the same. While reflecting on this topic, you are wondering whether your path was self-determined or was shaped by circumstance, necessity, or something larger than yourself like destiny.

You may have made conscious decisions based on your skills, interests, opportunities, or goals. Therefore, you chose it. Sometimes life leads us in directions we don't expect. You may have happened upon this job due to a chance opportunity, pressure, or survival. Or perhaps it suits you so well that it feels like you were meant for it. In either case, there's a sense of being drawn to it — which is empowering. In this vein of thought, the job chooses you. Both can be true. It's possible that you made choices, but you were also shaped by things beyond our control which led you here. Singing is another aspect of my life where this same reflection happens.

I'm sure you've heard the phrase, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." It is taken from a collection of blessings pronounced by Jesus in the bible. The verse emphasizes the importance of actively seeking and making peace. The phrase suggests that God favors those who are proactive in resolving conflicts and fostering reconciliation. That's literally our job!

Several years ago, it felt like the world had completely turned its back on our profession. Civil unrest was rampant. There were increased attacks acted upon police officers, CPD had multiple suicides within a close period, and civilians and lawmakers alike were challenging our profession. We were in a fight and our reputation

was on the line. The song in my heart went as follows...

## BLUE -

*Every fire you're there to answer the call. When there is trouble, you're the hero of us all. Fear may find you from days behind you. When you're on your way. Don't get discouraged, find your courage you will save the day my brothers in blue. My brothers in blue, this one's for you. Keep fighting forward let love take over united in truth. My sisters in blue, this one's for you. Respond with compassion, let love happen. It will guide us through.*

*You're on the frontline, fighting for your home. You're on the backline but know you're not alone. Friends get farther; times get harder when searching for the truth. Go the distance to make a difference, you'll know what to do. My brothers in blue.*

*When the weight of this world seems too much to bear. Look over your shoulder your Blue family will be there saying hold on I won't let you go. Just hold on. You just keep fighting forward, let love take over and we will be united in truth! Love will see us through.*

During Police Week 2025 at the Annual National Peace Officers Memorial Service, I had the honor of singing my song, BLUE. It is a moment I will cherish forever. My hope is that the song supports and strengthens You and validates Your Why! Hopefully, it reiterated that no matter how you arrived to this profession; the fact that you continue to "be the Police" especially in this societal climate, affirms that you are right where you are supposed to be. Thank You!

Update: An agreement has not been reached regarding STIPENDS, please continue to submit discrepancies through the link on CLEAR. If you have questions, reach out to me directly.

Stay safe!

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# Taste of FOP



MIKE  
GARZA

I woke up this morning to a beautiful day. Was it raining cats and dogs? Yes, but today Wednesday, May 21, 2025, was The Taste of F.O.P. at John Dineen Chicago Lodge #7. I strapped my feedbag and headed out the door. I arrived and nearly knocked over President Catanzara as I headed towards the food. I was courteous enough to yell “hello” as I barreled though. Manners first! Walking up, I could smell the succulent La Chon (roasted suckling pig) cooking on the rotisserie emanating all those delicious juices.

Sgt. Jose Sandoval from the Alliance of Hispanic Law Enforcement was cooking up a storm with taco meat, chicken, steak, and homemade beans and rice.

“George!” I screamed, “Get a picture of this pig!” After he took a couple of pictures of me, I straightened out the confusion and got the right picture. I went to the Latin American Police Association table next, where they also had chicken and steak tacos, which were delightful! As my food adventure continued, I stepped up to the Shomrim Society of Illinois table, said hello to Jeffrey Sacks, Steve, Gary and Harold, then noshed on a bagel with cream cheese and stuffed a cookie in my pocket for later. Remember the rule of eating, savory first, then sweet. You can eat a lot more that way. I walked over to Italian American Police Association table, with Mister ready to lend a hand anytime Phil and Marialisa, and ate a beef sandwich, it was juicy and tasty. The German American Police Association was on hand, with Paul, John and Cora helping serve up a nice bratwurst and sauerkraut, so filling! The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement (NOBLE) had the wonderful Danielle and Kristen help serve up appetizing macaroni and cheese and jerk chicken. I was afraid of over spicing with the jerk chicken right there, so again I put a piece in another pocket for later. PAPA’s (Polish American Police Association) table is always a popular stop, Tom, Connie and Liz had Polish sausage and pierogis. I could say the potato pierogis really hit the spot. They provided a great cushion for drinking nights. The Romanian American Police Association had stuffed cabbage, meatballs, chicken legs, mash potatoes, desserts, and a lot more! Andrea and the team really put out a feast. The stuffed cabbage was cooked in tomato base with a good amount of smoky pork adding to the full Umami flavor. A balance of flavors brought together a – wait a second; I am going back to my Dining Detective review days, which are too complicated. Let me just say this, “GOOD...EAT!” The Hellenic Police Association had some cheese and then some spinach pockets with baklava for dessert. Elias had a special treat at the table, but you had to be there to try it. I loved it. Thanks, Elias! Dave and Karin from the Assyrian American Police Association presented a beautiful table with chicken shawarma, falafel, dolmades, salads, and plenty more. I kept going back for another little piece and another little piece and another – you get the idea. I did not have a chance to stop by Tim and sample the Emerald Societies corn beef and shepherd’s pie because by that time I got here I was busting at the seams, but then I saw the next table, The Asian American Law Enforcement Association, David, Lee and Andrew (4th District!) had good-looking little egg rolls and mixed meat fried rice. I ate probably seven of them, but honestly, they were small.

At this time, Jimmy J was coming out of the meeting shouting “Mike, Mike, Mike, what’s good?” “Everything!” I said.

The Lodge wants to thank all the organizations for participating in this wonderful event. If you did not make it this year, see you next year!



Photography by George Gill

# Lost The Battle But Won The War



PAT  
FIORETTO

When the Lodge authorized the filing of a first of its kind Section 1983 lawsuit against COPA and the city, two huge hurdles needed to be surmounted. The first: coming up with a theory as to how the Lodge itself had standing to bring the lawsuit. The second centered on how we would obtain individual officers to come forward and agree to be named plaintiffs. Although a federal district court judge recently dismissed the complaint, the Lodge and its members should take great pride in what the

Lodge accomplished to reveal COPA's corrupt investigations.

Almost a year ago, on Aug. 18, 2024, the Lodge, along with eight courageous individual officers, filed a Section 1983 lawsuit not only against COPA, then-Chief Administrator Kersten, and several of her staff members, but also against the city of Chicago. The lawsuit alleged that all the "defendants" had been violating police officers' federal civil rights, which the Lodge argued violated the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution – a novel argument. The Lodge alleged that the defendants' individual and collective conduct (especially COPA and its former leader, Andrea Kersten) resulted in unlawful violations of police officers' individual and collective constitutional rights not to be deprived of their life, liberty, or property without due process of law.

Several things happened over the next ten months while the litigation remained pending. First, around the time the Lodge filed its complaint, COPA terminated two of its high-ranking supervisors. These supervisors filed "whistleblower" lawsuits in state court, which claimed COPA (or Ms. Kersten) retaliated against them for protesting some of the same unlawful practices the Lodge raised in the federal complaint. Ironically, the Lodge had named one of the fired COPA supervisors as a defendant in the federal lawsuit: COPA Deputy Chief Administrator Matthew Haynam.

Next, 16 current or former COPA employees wrote a letter, which they all signed, calling on the Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability to consider taking the first step towards removing Ms. Kersten from her position. The employees urged a no-confidence vote be taken against Ms. Kersten, alleging that she "manipulated investigations to align with her own policy agenda" and retaliated against employees who have complained about "bias and mismanagement."

The icing on the cake came on Feb. 13, 2025. COPA Chief Administrator Andrea Kersten did the only good thing as COPA's leader since she arrived at the helm in 2022: she resigned. But not without one last swan-song resignation letter in which she cried foul play and tried to re-write history. The men and women subjected to her leadership and the police officers who suffered the results of COPA's biased investigations know the truth.

Turning to the court's decision. On April 24, 2025, the court found the Lodge has standing to bring a suit on behalf of individual members. Initially, in order to bring a complaint in federal court, a party must have "standing," or the right to initiate a complaint. In its April 24, 2025 memorandum and order, the court concluded that the Lodge has standing to bring suit on behalf of its individual members be-

cause the Lodge sought injunctive rather than purely monetary relief: "...the Plaintiffs assert that the Lodge is seeking injunctive relief regarding the alleged unlawful practices of Defendants concerning its members' due process and equal protection rights, rather than monetary damages." The court's order finding the Lodge has standing to pursue injunctive relief under Section 1983 is valuable even if the court dismissed the underlying complaint because it establishes precedent supporting the Lodge's ability to sue the city on behalf of members harmed in the future.

The complaint pursued four separate theories of liability: (1) Section 1983 deprivation claim against Kersten and other individual defendants; (2) Section 1983 deprivation claim against the city of Chicago (known as a Monell claim); (3) violations of the Equal Protection Clause; and (4) a false light invasion of property claim. The court dismissed these claims on separate grounds.

In essence, the court dismissed the Section 1983 claims of the complaint because the court concluded that the plaintiffs failed to assert a "cognizable property interest" in COPA investigations. The court reasoned that COPA's investigation constituted a "process" rather than a "protected property interest" and that "administrative processes" are not protected by the Due Process Clause. In other words, officers do not have property rights in an administrative investigation process under existing case law. The court also dismissed the Section 1983 portions of the complaint because it concluded that the plaintiffs did not allege that they were denied the right to continued employment. The court reasoned that because the terms of the collective bargaining agreement provide that an officer's penalty in a discipline case is not finalized at the time COPA conducts its investigation, and that officers can (and have) successfully challenged discipline through the grievance process, no actual deprivation exists. The court also dismissed the Equal Protection claim because the Equal Protection Clause does not cover police officers as a protected class. According to the court, existing precedent holds that police officers are not a protected class.

Because the court dismissed the Section 1983 and Equal Protection claims against the individually named defendants, the court had no choice but to dismiss the Monell claim against the city as well. As the court explained, "[A] Municipality cannot be liable under Monell where there is no underlying constitutional violation by a municipal employee." Finally, the court declined to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the state law claim of false light invasion of privacy because it dismissed the federal law claims.

While the court ultimately dismissed the complaint, the precedent set by the court's decision in finding that the Lodge has standing to seek injunctive relief under Section 1983 remains important. Such standing will allow the Lodge to better utilize the federal court system in addition to the means available to the Lodge through the collective bargaining agreement. The Lodge and the other plaintiffs knew that the lawsuit, a first of its kind, would be an uphill battle. However, make no mistake, the Lodge accomplished an important feat: It acted as the catalyst for getting rid of Andrea Kersten. She and the city can spin it however they want, but the Lodge (and each of the named plaintiff officers) should be proud of this accomplishment.



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Joel, Chicago PD

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# Rendering Aid



**TIM  
GRACE**

As usual, COPA has found their new favorite allegation, and it is the failure to render aid. After doing this long enough, you start to see a pattern with the people who reside on the fourth floor at 1615 West Chicago. They appear to run across a general order and then try to fit it into each officer-involved shooting. The flavor of the month is failure to render aid after an officer-involved shooting. We see this allegation whenever even COPA can find no fault in the officer's need to use deadly force. Instead, they will move on to less serious and somewhat low-grade allegations that nevertheless can cause officers real stress and pain to the already ridiculous punishment that is recommended. Rendering aid

has become that subject. It is a petty allegation that once again fails to take into account the dynamics of an officer-involved shooting. However, we can isolate ourselves against these allegations by just doing some subtle things to establish that an effort was done to help the person who just tried to kill a law enforcement officer.

Rendering aid can be found in General Order G03-06. G03-06 is entitled Firearm Discharge and Officer-Involved Death Incident Response and Investigation. It delineates all the requirements officers have after the discharge of a firearm. The first and most important part, from COPA's point of view, is the language regarding the sanctity of life. We all know, as we just did not wake up from a coma, that the department's highest priority is the sanctity of human life. We know this because it has been driven into our heads forever and we also know this because we are human beings and care about the wellbeing of our fellow citizens. Essentially, we are to always remember that life is precious, and everyone has inherent worth and dignity and that we will always act with the foremost regard for the preservation of human life. Fine. We get it. Everything we do is to bring safety to the people we police. However, sometimes situations overcome the rule, and we are required to use deadly force. We use that force because we are presented with an imminent threat of death or great bodily harm to ourselves or another person. We will be in a gun battle with someone who is trying to kill us and once we neutralize the threat, the expectation is that we toggle that switch off and immediately try to save the life of the offender. Again, we accept this as police officers and Chicago police officers do this every day from having to utilize an emergency take-down to having to actually use deadly force. Under the general order section V(B) there is a section that speaks to rendering aid. It states that an officer involved in a firearm discharge or an officer-involved death incident, if physically capable, will immediately request medical attention for the injured and, as soon as it is safe and feasible to do so, provide life-saving aid consistent with their department training, including the Law Enforcement Medical and Rescue Training (LEMART) training, to persons injured by a department member's use of force until medical professionals arrive on scene. The general order further advises us to provide appropriate medical care consistent with your training to any individual who has visible injuries, complains of being injured, or requests medical attention. This may include providing first aid and/or arranging for emergency transportation. When you break that down, you see that the officer(s) must be physically capable to render aid, and it must be safe and feasible to do so.

What this general order was never intended to do, was to turn us into doctors and paramedics. We did not go to medical school, and we do not want to make the situation worse by moving a person with a neck injury or removing a knife that is stopping someone from bleeding. However, it is and will always be the optics that COPA looks to.

The common theme is that a person attempts to kill police officers, and officer or officers then must use deadly force to take the individual into custody and the offender is shot. The officers will immediately handcuff the offender, which is smart as sometimes you do not know where his tool of death is or if he has another. Then the officers should secure the scene, making sure there is not a second offender or a developing hostile crowd. Once that is done and an ambulance has been called, there needs to be some attention paid to the offender. Some words to the effect that say "hang in there, help is on the way" or a check on the pulse and possibly chest compressions will resonate on your BWC. While in some cases it is a futile effort, it will show that you are trying to help. It does not escape this writer that in most cases, and even though this person tried to kill you, our officers have and will put that aside and try to help. The efforts will be noted by COPA and possibly a civil jury when someone claims your discharge was out of policy.

Lastly, you can be forgiven if another officer is rendering aid. This is where the partners to the discharging officers need to step up. First, make sure no officer or innocent civilian is injured and then isolate the shooting officer in a squad car as required by the general order. Then go and render aid. Your partner is going to be in crisis and may not be thinking straight, but you are. That is your job when your partner has discharged- protect him or her. You will be doing him or her a huge service by showing that the sanctity of life is still a priority. It is a hard moment to switch over, but in the long run, it will certainly pay dividends. Especially at COPA.



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## End of Session



DAVE  
SULLIVAN

Several years ago, Gov. JB Pritzker called me personally to assure me that he would make Tier 2 parity for Chicago police and fire pension with downstate police and fire a reality. Since I have been friends with JB for 25 years, I took him at his word. On the last day of the spring session, we took a huge step toward making that promise a reality. Two of our key legislative allies, Sen. Rob Martwick and Rep. Stephanie Kifowit sponsored HB 3657 and added Senate Amendment 2 to get the job done. This important bill passed unanimously in both the House and Senate. Getting a pension bill to pass both chambers unanimously does not happen often. A huge credit is due to all four legislative leaders for their strong support as well as all the Democrat and Republican legislators in both chambers who voted for this bill. FOP President John Catanzara was vital in passage as he joined me and Mike Cosentino in the last week of session to help push through this legislation. We look forward to Gov. Pritzker signing this bill to fulfill his promise to bring pension parity for the brave members of Chicago police and fire.

In other news in the capitol, the legislature adjourned their spring session in the early hours of Sunday, June 1. In next month's newsletter, we will have a full breakdown of the end of session. The new \$55 billion state budget has been passed, but transit reform and funding were not part of that package. This will most definitely be part of future discussions in both the House and Senate. While our important pension legislation passed, the other big discussions on pensions did not pass either the House or Senate. Legislators now are back in their districts for the summer. The dates for the fall veto session have not yet been set. Petitions for running for office next year actually begin to be passed this August.

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# Honoring Retired Members

## May 2023

Name	Rank	Unit	Years
Louis Luna	Officer	124	22

## April 2025

Name	Rank	Unit	Years	Name	Rank	Unit	Years
Thomas J. Barksdale	Officer	701	33	Steven Losacco	Officer	020	28
David J. Bryja	Detective	610	29	Vincent W. Matthews	Officer	012	26
Alexander J. Chorak	Detective	610	11	Robert A. Murphy	Detective	630	31
Anthony G. Ciaravino	Officer	001	28	Gerald M. O'Malley	Officer	189	30
John A. Conway	Officer	050	31	Quincy A. Percy	Detective	620	21
Arcenio Cruz	Officer	050	33	Joseph Prete	Officer	050	31
David B. Davis	Officer	007	29	Lawrence J. Raehl	Evidence Tech	277	31
Domingo Enriquez Jr.	Officer	193	24	Michelle Reed	Officer	002	25
Kenneth L. Fullman	Officer	002	30	Vito Ricciardi	Officer	017	30
Darren D. Hackett	Officer	001	31	Daniel Richards	Officer	025	10
John N. Heneghan	Evidence Tech	117	26	Christ J. Savickas	Officer	701	30
Jemal T. King	Officer	006	25	Keith G. Schuman	Officer	017	30
Robert L. Kujawski	Officer	020	30	Ana L. Valeriano	Detective	610	21
Craig D. Lancaster	Officer	701	30	Hipolito Velazquez	Detective	630	33
Manuel S. Leano	Officer	002	24	Peter S. Vinson	Officer	171	34
Christopher D. Lewis	Officer	006	33	Robert M. Voight	Detective	650	29
Jorge Lopez	Officer	019	30	Chris C. Young	Officer	011	21

## Retiree Meetings

Check the contact info listed with each location to confirm meetings are being held

### North

First Tuesday of the month  
@ 9 a.m.  
D'Agostino's Pizza and Pub  
7530 W. Oakton St., Niles  
Steve Marchfield 773-771-0877

### South

Second Wednesday of month  
@ 10 a.m.  
Jedi's Garden, Oak Lawn

### 8-Ball Luncheon

Last Wednesday of month  
@ noon  
Les Brothers, Oak Lawn  
Dorothy Piscitelli, 773-972-0139

### Bomb and Arson

Second Monday of month  
@ 9 a.m.  
Fiesta Tapatia Restaurant  
Chicago  
Ross Horne, 312-613-9182

### Orland Park Law

**Enforcement Organization**  
Third Thursday of month  
@ 7:30 p.m.  
Orland Park Civic Center  
Orland Park

### Survivors Lunch

Second Saturday of month  
@ 11 a.m.  
Beverly Woods Restaurant  
Chicago

### Public Housing Unit (North, South and Administration)

First Wednesday of month  
@ 10 a.m.  
George's Restaurant, Chicago  
Maurice Brown, 773-577-0154

### Arizona Retirees

Third Thursday of month  
@ 11 a.m.

Eagle Buffet at Casino Arizona  
524 N. 92nd St.  
Scottsdale, Arizona  
Brian DuFour, 623-521-6146 or  
bdu4@aol.com

### Arkansas Retirees

Third Friday of month  
@ noon  
Elks Lodge  
Mountain Home, Arkansas  
Bob Zdora, 870-405-5407

### Florida Retirees

First Wednesday of month  
@ 1 p.m.  
Cop Shop, Cape Coral, Florida  
Tom Faragoi, 239-770-7896

### Michigan Retirees

First Thursday of month  
@ 8 a.m.  
Macks on Main  
101 W. Cedar Ave.

Gladwin, Michigan  
John Nielson  
989-324-0877  
jnnielson@gmail.com

### Northern Illinois/Southern Wisconsin Retirees

Second Thursday of month  
Herner's Hideaway  
202 Williams Road  
Genoa City, Wisconsin  
(Rt. 12 at IL border)  
George Gottlieb, (847) 840-5060

### Hellenic American Police Association Northsiders Retiree Breakfast

First Monday of month  
@ 10:00 a.m.  
Burgundy Restaurant  
5959 W. Irving Park Rd., Chicago

### Hellenic American Police Association Southsiders

### Retiree Breakfast

Second Monday of month  
@ 10:00 a.m.  
Valois Cafeteria  
1518 E. 53rd St., Chicago

### 25th District Retirees

1st Wednesday of the Month  
Tavern on the Point  
6724 N. Northwest Hwy  
7 P.M.

### Northern Illinois/Southern Wisconsin Retirees

Second Thursday of month @ noon  
Herner's Hideaway  
202 Williams Rd.  
Genoa City, WI (Rt. 12 at IL border)  
George Gottlieb, (847) 840-5060



# Honoring Sisters and Brothers who have passed

Name	Status	Age	Date of Passing				
				Robert Hill	Retired	80	May 1, 2025
Laurence R. Traub	Retired	92	May 14, 2024	James S. Brown	Retired	88	May 4, 2025
Michael Jacobs	Retired	82	March 31, 2025	Edward Merkl	Retired	97	May 6, 2025
Kenneth Klug	Retired	78	April 5, 2025	Joseph Gillespie	Retired	92	May 9, 2025
Renato Di Silvestro	Retired	82	April 5, 2025	Robert Jones	Retired	91	May 10, 2025
Charles A. Vera	Retired	75	April 6, 2025	Gregory Janicki	Retired	75	May 14, 2025
Malissa Torres	Unit 018	34	April 10, 2025	Richard Baranski	Retired	76	May 15, 2025
Gary Smith	Retired	89	April 11, 2025	George Leverette	Retired	84	May 15, 2025
Raymond Collins	Retired	74	April 17, 2025	Robert Navigato	Retired	81	May 16, 2025
Jerrold M. Lewis	Retired	85	April 26, 2025	Thomas S. Flynn	Retired	86	May 16, 2025
Robert Mette	Retired	77	April 30, 2025	Paul Buscemi	Retired	92	May 18, 2025

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\*\*MRED, LLC, based on closed sales data for Lisa Sanders, 01/01/2023-12/31/2023

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# The Definition of True Love



RABBI  
MOSHE WOLF

Recently, I was called by one of our members, "Jimmy", and he asked if I could meet him in the emergency room as his wife was in a serious accident, and she needed serious prayers. I met Jim at the ER, we prayed at his wife's bedside, hugged and chatted with the family for a while. (Thank G-d she recovered nicely). As I was leaving, Jim reached into his pocket took out a piece of paper from his pocket handed it to me and said, "Rabbi, sorry if it will make you cry. Please read it and you will know how I feel this moment and please pass it along." The paper looked like it had spent considerable time in his pocket. I went back to my car, opened the paper and it was a story titled "The Definition of True Love." I read it and could not hold back my emotions after seeing his wife so banged up and reading the story. I realized this is a moment in life that I won't soon forget. Please let me share it with you, and it is okay if you too shed a tear, as it will be a tear of true love. Here it is:

## "The Definition of True Love"

My parents were married for 55 years. One morning, my Mom was going downstairs to make Dad breakfast, she had a heart attack and fell. My father picked her up as best he could and almost dragged her into the truck. At full speed, without respecting traffic lights, he drove her to the hospital.

When he arrived, unfortunately she was no longer with us. During the funeral, my father did not speak; his gaze was lost. He hardly cried. That night, we, his children, joined him, and in an atmosphere of pain and nostalgia, we remembered beautiful anecdotes about Mom. He then asked my brother, a theologian, to tell him where Mom would be at that moment. My brother began to talk about life after death and guesses as to how and where she would be.

My father listened carefully. Suddenly, he asked us to take him to the cemetery.

"Dad!" we replied, "it's 11 o'clock at night, we can't go to the cemetery right now!"

He raised his voice a bit, and with a stern glazed look he said: "Don't argue with me, please don't argue with the man who just lost the love of his life, his wife of 55 years."

There was a moment of respectful silence, we didn't argue anymore. We went to the cemetery; we asked the night watchman for permission to go to the spot where she was buried. With a flashlight we reached the tomb. My father touched her casket, got emotional, prayed and told his children, who watched this moving scene: "It was 55 years... you know? No one can talk about true love if they have no idea what it's like to share life with a woman they loved."

He paused and wiped his face. "She and I were together in multiple of life's crises. I changed jobs ..." he continued. "We packed up when we sold the house and moved out of town. We shared the joy of seeing our children finish their careers, we mourned the departure of loved ones side by side, we prayed together in the waiting room of some hospitals, we supported each other in pain, we hugged at each family event, and we forgave our mistakes ... Children, now it's gone, and I'm happy. Do you know why? Please let me explain.

"Because she left before me. She didn't have to go through the agony and pain of burying me, of being left alone after my departure. I will be the one to go through that pain, and for that, I thank G-d. I loved her so much that I wouldn't have liked her to suffer if I went first."

When my father finished speaking, my brothers and I had tears streaming down our faces. We hugged him, and he comforted us, "It's OK, we can go home, it's been a good day." End of story.

That night I understood what true love is. It is far from romanticism,

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it does not have much as to do with the physical relationship (which is very important), rather, it is linked to working with each other, to complement each other, to care for each other and, above all, to the true love that two souls are really capable and committed to really loving each other. Fortunate are those who have been able to experience this blessing in life. And for those who have not, let us remember one of Moshe's most favorite lines, "You can't turn the clock back and make a new beginning, but we can all start today and make a better ending."

Some points to ponder about life, old time advice, and still very applicable today:

- 1) Life is simpler when you plow around the stump.
- 2) Words that soak into your ears are whispered, not yelled.
- 3) Forgive your enemies. It messes up their heads.
- 4) You cannot unsay a cruel word.
- 5) In life, every path has a few puddles.
- 6) The best sermons are lived, not preached.
- 7) Most of the stuff people worry about ain't never gonna happen anyway.
- 8) Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
- 9) Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll enjoy it a second time.
- 10) If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin'.
- 11) Sometimes you get, and sometimes you get got, and that is just the way it is!
- 12) The biggest troublemaker you'll probably ever have to deal with, watches you from the mirror every morning.
- 13) Good judgment comes from experience, and a lotta that comes from bad judgment.
- 14) Everyday life is a gift, enjoy your present.
- 15) Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly. Leave the rest to G-d.

Before we close a little humor from the "Moshe Files" to keep you smiling:

1. The Optimistic Son: A man was trying to teach his young son the evils of alcohol. He put one worm in a glass of water and another worm in a glass of whiskey.

The worm in the water lived, while the one in the whiskey curled up and died. "All right, son," asked the father, "what does that show you?"

"Well, Dad, it shows that if you drink alcohol, you will not have worms"....LOL

2. In school, a young kid "Douglas" was being evaluated for his intelligence and for dealing with challenging questions, was asked by the following question by the school doctor

"If a train was coming down the hallway toward you, what would you do?"

Douglas replied, "I would get in my helicopter and fly away!"

The doctor then asked, "Where did you get a helicopter from?" Douglas replied, "The same place you got that train!" LOL (Send me some of YOUR favorites)

Last but not least, as we celebrate and give honor this month to those special people in our lives, our dads and those who are a father figure to us. We wish a special Happy Father's Day to all the fathers. Thanks for your love, support and always being there when we need you most. We appreciate you and are blessed to have you in our lives.

To My Flock Please Note: G-d willing, hoping to make a pilgrimage to the Holy land sometime in early summer. Some have the custom of writing a prayer note which is placed among the stones in the Holy Western Wall. As we have done in the past it would be my honor and privilege to take your prayer notes and requests and bring them to the Holy Wall with me. My snail mail address is on the bottom.

Please make sure to get them to me by June 15.

On behalf of ALL the chaplains, May G-d bless you and keep you safe. Should you need a shoulder to lean on, an ear to listen, or perhaps have some good humor to share, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

**Chicago Police Chaplains website: [www.chicagopcm.com](http://www.chicagopcm.com)**

**Compliments of your Chaplain,**

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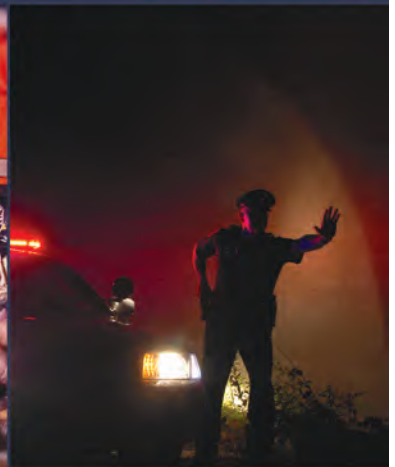
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FATHER DAN BRANDT

In case you happen to be reading this before June 15, we will celebrate our annual Father's Day Mass at 10 a.m. at Gold Star Families Memorial and Park. Being an outdoor venue, if the weather looks questionable, please call (773)550-2369 that morning to make sure the Mass is on. You are welcome to bring folding chairs or a blanket and even a picnic lunch for after Mass.

Also, this month, Police Chaplains Ministry hosts hundreds of our beloved Gold Star Families on their 28th annual luncheon cruise aboard the Spirit of Chicago. If you would like to help underwrite the cost of this outing, feel free to donate via our website or by mailing a check to Police Chaplains Ministry, 1140 W. Jackson Boulevard, Chicago, IL 60607.

Your Department Chaplains are hosting a day-long marriage retreat on Friday, June 27, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Lake Katherine Nature Center and Botanical Gardens in Palos Heights.

We are excited to invite all active and retired Chicago police officers and their spouses to participate in this program intended to strengthen relationships, improve communication and achieve better work-life balance.

This retreat will provide a safe and supportive environment for couples to connect, share experiences and learn valuable relationship-building skills tailored to the unique challenges of law enforcement life. Childcare is included. Please contact Chaplain Kimberly Lewis-Davis for more information at Kimberly.LewisDavis@

ChicagoPolice.org or 312-771-6638.

That same evening (June 27), we'll be "Bowling with Brandt." All are welcome to come show off your bowling prowess at Edison Park Inn on the northwest side. A \$50 donation to Police Chaplains Ministry gets you bowling, three hours of open bar (beer/wine), and unlimited pizza. Come join the fun! Tickets are available on our website.

Keep up with all the above and LOTS more at [www.ChicagoPCM.org](http://www.ChicagoPCM.org).

In light of the death of Pope Francis, I'd like to close with my favorite quote of his:

Rivers do not drink their own water; trees do not eat their own fruit; the sun does not shine on itself and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves. Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is...life is good when you are happy; but life is much better when others are happy because of you.

Thank you for helping to make others happy (AND SAFE!).


God bless you and keep you safe!

**Fr. Dan Brandt, Directing CPD Chaplain**

773/550-2369 (cell/text)


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## CHICAGO LODGE 7 AWARDS



**Nominator: Police Officer Brandon Bassie #3519**



On Nov.18, 2023, 015th District Officers responded to a call of “person shot” located at 110 N. Parkside Ave apartment 2S. The victim was found deceased in the bedroom with several gun shot wounds. The officers quickly ascertained important information from witnesses on scene regarding the offender’s name and whereabouts. While still on scene the officers received an update from OEMC with an “info for the police.” The caller was called back and the officers learned that the offender wanted to turn himself in. The offender promptly returned to the scene where he was positively identified by the witnesses and placed into custody. The offender was still in possession of the murder weapon which was recovered and inventoried. The offender was transported to the area for processing where he was charged with first degree murder.

**It is with great appreciation that Chicago John Dineen Lodge #7 presents these officers with the Distinguished Service Award. Nice Pinch!!!**

## CHICAGO LODGE 7 AWARDS



**Nominator: Police Officer Timothy Fitzpatrick #8646**

On July 13, 2023, at the location of 4355 N. Sheridan Rd., 019th District Officers responded to a call of a “hold up alarm” at Huntington National Bank. The bank security had trackers on the money taken and was giving real time updates to the officers. The tracking device was reported to be stationary at the intersection of Broadway and Grace. The officers observed that a CTA was not moving and conducted a traffic stop. The officers entered the bus

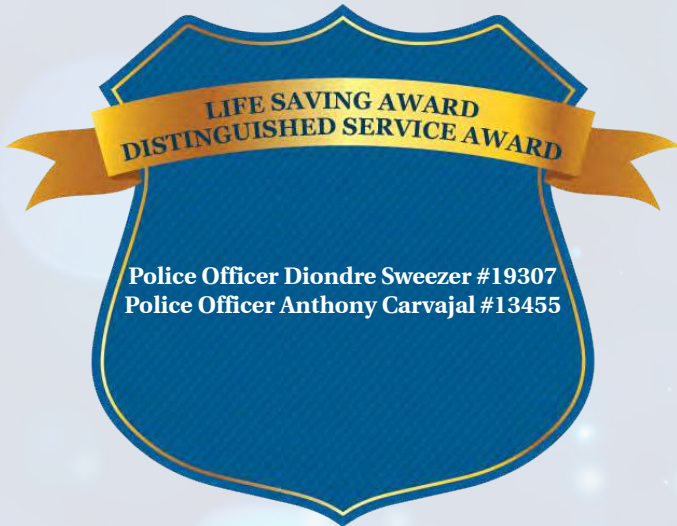


and observed a subject seated at the back of the bus in possession of a black duffel, matching the description of the bank robbery. The officers detained the subject, and he was positively identified by the bank teller as the person who presented a note stating “This is a robbery, I have a weapon. No dye packs, no tracking devices, just give me cash and nobody gets hurt.” The offender was transported to 19West and processed where he was charged with armed robbery. All proceeds and tracking devices were recovered and received by the FBI task force.

**It is with great appreciation that Chicago John Dineen Lodge #7 presents these officers with the Distinguished Service award.**



# CHICAGO LODGE 7 AWARDS



Nominator: Sergeant Tabatha Pringle #2128

On April 24, 2024, at 4758 W. Lake Street, 011th District Officers Sweezer and Carvajal were waived down by a citizen who related that the offender was fleeing southbound and a victim needed EMS at the Green Line Station. The officers immediately relocated to the Green Line and observed a male victim laying face down in the curb with large lacerations to his face and head. The officers



utilized their LEMART training and applied pressure bandages to his injuries and notified EMS who transported the victim to Mt. Sinai Hospital with critical injuries. While still on the scene a citizen notified the officers that the offender had now returned. The offender approached the officers and related that he was involved in a physical altercation with his fiancé, the victim. The officers placed the offender into custody and through witnesses and video obtained it showed that the victim and the offender were involved in a physical altercation, and it had briefly ended. The offender returned with a metal pipe and struck the victim multiple times in his head and face. The offender was charged with attempted murder and aggravated domestic battery. Due to the officers' quick action and investigative skills, a victim was saved and his offender brought to justice.

**It is with great appreciation that Chicago John Dineen Lodge #7 presents these officers with the Life Saving and Distinguished Service Awards. Nice Pinch!**

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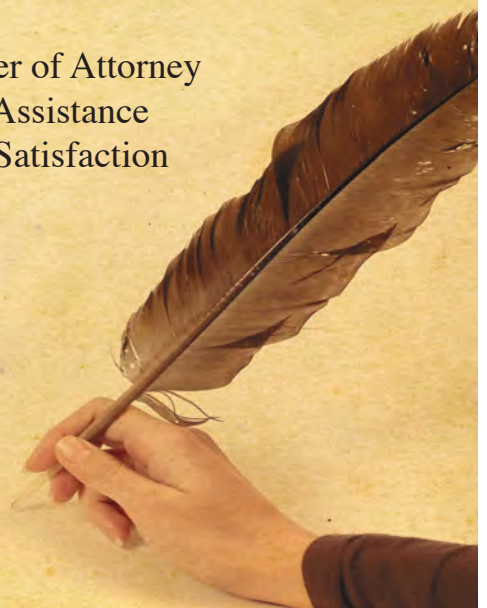
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# In the Line of Duty

Ride along to see how Beyond the Call of Duty has gone above and beyond for the fallen



■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

The force of Beyond the Call of Duty was already revved up when it came back to Chicago in August 2022. The ceremony to enshrine Ella French's star in the showcase at headquarters and reveal her name inscribed at Gold Star Families Memorial Park had concluded nearly an hour before. Rain had invaded the events earlier in the day, but because it was Ella, you knew it wasn't going to pass without a ray of sunshine.

Sure enough, the sun came out when Ella's mom, Elizabeth, and Ella's partners, Carlos Yanez Jr. and Joshua Blas, walked across the street to see Lodge 7 President John Catanzara with a special guest. He had just pulled in on a motorcycle alongside Jagrut "J.C." Shah, the mastermind behind the Beyond the Call of Duty End of Watch Ride.

Since 2020, the End of Watch Ride has been crossing the country visiting survivors of officers lost in the line of duty and their departments. The memorial-on-the-move features pictures of the fallen. Big pictures.

As they all looked at Ella's bright, smiling face and the hundreds of others adorning both sides of this tractor-trailer-sized memorial, the occasion turned into smiles and some laughter. The good times rolled even more when J.C. took Elizabeth for a ride on one of the specially adorned Harleys used on the ride.

"I didn't know Ella French. I did not know Liz. We were just coming to honor an officer that was killed in the line of duty by the name of Ella French," J.C. recalled. "We arrive, and those moments are so inspirational because I get to meet them and listen to these beautiful stories. I'm listening to Carlos, not talking about the horrific moment, but talking about how Ella was this crazy, beautiful partner that he had."

That quickly, that instantly, Beyond the Call of Duty makes its presence felt. It did so with Catanzara when the organization could not get a response from the Department about making a stop in Chicago on its 2021 ride to honor CPD Officers lost to COVID. So they called him.

And here we are.

## Heavy duty

At National Police Week in May, Catanzara helped the Beyond the Call of Duty memorial set up in a prominent place right at Tent City, where officers hang out. How the force of Beyond the Call of Duty hits, how every picture tells a story, occurred all day every day of Police Week with moments like this:

"John was just coming back when I look over and see a lady with three children on our 2023 side of the memorial," Shah described. "I walked over, I said, 'Hi, do you know somebody on here?' She's like, 'Yeah, this is my husband.' I'm like, 'Wow, OK. Do you know about us?' She said, 'I know of you. You came to the department, but the department didn't let us know until 45 minutes before you arrived that you were coming.'"

J.C. brought the woman into the fold right then and there. He pledged to follow and do something for her family when they got back home. And then he and Catanzara prayed with her.

That is the above and beyond of Beyond the Call of Duty. Shortly, we will go along for the ride to hear more about its growing force.

But the next ride is planned for 2026 (they run every other year now). It costs approximately \$300,000 for the End of Watch Ride to make the biennial 80-day trek over tens of thousands of miles.

So, take a minute now. Go to the website, [endofwatchride.com](http://endofwatchride.com). Scroll down to the "donate" button and give \$5 or \$10. Five or 10 from half the officers in the country will generate enough to perpetuate what is becoming one of the brightest tributes to the fallen currently rolling.

"It's just so surreal and just an amazing thing what they do with this memorial," praised Lodge 7 First Vice President Mike Mette, who rode parts of the ride in 2022 and 2024. "And it's not even just the stops that we're at. I mean, even on the road pulling in and getting gas, having people come up and ask questions about what's going on, why we're doing these things."

Such experiences and emotion have Mette ready to make the ride again in 2026. These as well:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



"Actually, a couple of times running we meet somebody and they're like, 'Oh my gosh, my friend is on this memorial, and I saw you in this state and that state.' It is amazing," he continued. "And you look at the map when they're done and how many miles they've gone all over the country, every corner. It truly is just remarkable."

### Let it ride

In 2017, when Shah left the Yakima County Sheriff's Office in Washington, he considered pursuing his idea to honor the fallen. In 2003, he lost his good friend, Saul Gallegos, a deputy with the nearby Chelan County Sheriff's Office, in the line of duty, the first such death Shah had experienced on the job. Both first-generation immigrants, they had worked together on some mutual aid assignments on Memorial Day and Labor Day and used to catch dinner at the end of the weekend.

As a few more line-of-duty deaths came, Shah said he noticed a pattern.

"After six months, we're still checking on the family, making sure everything's going good," he explained. "A year goes by, we slowly forget. Two years go by, we slowly forget. Three years go by, we forget the kids are growing up."

In addition to perpetuating their memories, Shah wondered if there was a way to let all agencies know that their loss is not just felt in their town, city, county or state. And also try to educate the public that it's not just a uniform and a badge number. That each fallen officer has a story that needs to be told. And retold.

"I really didn't envision where we are today," he admitted. "We wanted to remember, right. I am too fat, so I wasn't going to ride a bicycle. I put Harleys in it because Harley Davidson has been an American iconic motorcycle. And these men and women paid the ultimate sacrifice for an entity that's an old tradition in America — policing."

That's how it became a motorcycle ride. Shah then converted a trailer into a memorial by wrapping it in photos of fallen officers. But not just any photos.

"At first, my graphics guy made five-by-seven photographs," Shah remembered. "I said, 'No, no, you're not understanding. I want somebody that's in the next lane over looking at every single photo, and I want all these men and women looking back at them. We were able to get it to 10 by 10. Now, if we have more than 150, I have to shrink it just a little bit.'"

### On duty



The plan then was to go to departments that had lost an officer that year. Pick an officer every day, and as they were riding, talk about that officer.

The road to that first ride was all set. Until, three weeks before the start, they lost a sponsor that had pledged \$200,000 in support. Shah had already spent money to wrap the memorial with photos and prepay hotel reservations.

"I told my wife, and she's like, 'Just relax, don't stress. We'll figure it out,'" Shah detailed. "Lo and behold, she comes back four days later and says, 'Well, we've got enough money to keep it going for three years.' What she had done was she cashed out both of our 401(k)s and said, 'Go ahead and do what you need to do.'"

Beyond the Call of Duty has similarly been inspiring pretty much everybody who comes into contact with it to go above and beyond. There is a wellness program for survivors, and it provides scholarships to be part of those programs. They have even funded K-9s for some smaller departments, as well as helping underfunded departments by donating body armor and training.

All along, Shah seemed to envision this.

"You had a loss. What can I do for you to make you just give me a smile for two days?" he articulated.

Mette, for one, has seen the impact up close. On one of his rides, Beyond the Call of Duty rolled into a department in Kansas made up of just three officers. One had been lost. He witnessed the importance in a way he had never seen in Chicago.

"It creates a resource base for some of these families," Mette observed. "They opened up the door for these families to reach out and have other opportunities, other ways of engaging outside of their own departments."

### Ride on

Planning for the next ride, which will run for up to 80 days, will begin soon. The 2023 images on the memorial will be replaced by ones from 2025, and the ride will hit as many departments as possible that lost officers in 2024, as well as those so far in 2025 and for the remainder of the year.

Each department is asked to provide a location. The families then respond to what they want. The hope is that the community can be notified of the stop so residents can see what the fallen officer meant to the family and the community.

"It's absolutely a humbling moment when we roll up, we see the family there, and they are gravitating to their loved one immediately," Shah said.

He is recruiting officers who will take 10 days to join the ride, noting that it is a therapeutic plus when an officer at a department can relate the hurt to a brother or sister who has just rolled in.

The End of Watch Ride organizer is Allison McCarter,



who Shah met when he was still on the job. He was responding to an active shooter when McCarter came up to him, bleeding and disclosing the whereabouts of the shooter's location.

"We became friends at that point," he added. "A few years later, I ran into her again, at which point I invited her over. She met my mom, and my mom says, you need a sister. She became a sister. And she's just a badass rider."

The other key cog in the machine is retiree Richard Roberts, who drives the truck that hauls the memorial. This is the team guiding the riders from stop to stop, and at each one, Shah says he sees the same reaction.

"When they see us, the next thing they ask is, 'You've traveled all this way to see us?'"

Catanzara shared how making the ride is breathtaking with how hard, fast and long you go. A couple of feet away from another bike also traveling 75 miles per hour.

"But I'm grateful to be part of it, because a lot of these departments and families don't get the recognition and accolades that our department members do, just for various reasons," he acknowledged.

Mette recalls his first ride, from Chicago up through Wisconsin, up into Minnesota, back down through Iowa, Missouri, Kansas and then ending up in Colorado. They went nearly 3,500 miles in one week.

One morning he woke up to the sound of The Punishers law enforcement motorcycle club ready to escort the ride to the next town. Another stop came in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, that truly made him understand the force of the ride.

"A woman heard we were going to be there, so she came out with her daughter to say hi and thank us for doing what we were doing," Mette admired. "We love the riding part, but you're helping families with their grieving and making sure that people remember their fallen family members. I mean, it brings a lot of people together."



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# Everlasting Love...and Support

**Lodge 7 Memorial Service elevates the power of love and never forgetting those who have lost their lives in the line of duty and their families**

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEORGE GILL

Moments into his opening remarks at the Chicago Lodge 7 Memorial Service, President John Catanzara choked up a bit, seemingly at a loss for words. Seemingly unprecedented for him, but also setting the tone for a spot-on afternoon of healing and recognition.

Chicago Police Chaplain Rabbi Moshe Wolf took the stage first and set the tone in his inimitable way, quipping that the Chicago FOP is like a mother-in-law. "Always there for you."

And then led a full house at the FOP Hall in the National Police Prayer, which culminates with "Give to the loved ones the peace and strength to bear the anguish of their loss. Remove all resentment from their hearts, knowing that eternal peace and rest will abide over their loved ones forever."

What followed included emotional, tear-filled statements of gratitude from family members of the two Chicago Police Officers, Luis Huesca and Enrique Martinez, shot and killed in the line of duty in 2024. And the Lodge providing the first honoring of two other names being added to its wall: Officer Benjamin Devlin, lost in 1922, and Lieutenant Edward O'Neill, whose end of watch came in 1972. Also, a personal apology for not giving all the recognition due to Officer Jim Crowley, whose 40-year battle with a catastrophic injury suffered on the job ended Aug. 22, 2024.

"If you've been to this in the past couple years, my mindset is trying to keep our memorial a little more on the lighthearted side and a lot of happiness," Catanzara decreed, intermittently pausing to get out these emotional words:

"These are moments that belong to the Gold Star families," he continued. "And what the real meaning is, is that there will be nothing that this Lodge will not do for your fallen officers. Period. Full stop."

## All you need is love

Chicago Police Officer Brenda Valadez has been coming to the Lodge 7 Memorial Service since 2010, when her brother Alejandro's name was added to the wall in the courtyard outside the Chicago John Dineen Lodge #7 hall. She knows intimately the mission of making this memorial unlike any other and how it lends strength to families of the fallen.

"I remember being here the day that my brother's name was unveiled, and then just looking around and seeing so many people showing their support and knowing what that meant to me, what that meant to my family," explained Brenda, who's been on for 24 years and whose brother Adrian is also a Chicago Police Officer. "I think once you've experienced something like this and you know what these new families are experiencing, you just want to be there for them."

Brenda was there a year later when Sandra Wortham unveiled the name of her brother, Thomas, who was lost in May 2010. Now president of the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation (CPMF) board, Sandra was one of the speakers at this year's service.

And she expounded on the mission statement Catanzara laid down.

"I think that themes are always going to be the same in these situations," Sandra submitted. "It's that we owe our Gold Star families the



honor and respect of the loss that they've suffered. We owe our fallen to take care of their families. That's really it."

The happiness mission truly spread through and from the family members in attendance. Like Kathleen Mocarski, Benjamin Devlin's great granddaughter. Her grandmother, Dorothy, was 5 years old when Ben gave his life in the line of duty.

With the help of Joseph Salemme and the CPME, Ben's name was added to the wall at Gold Star Park. Lodge 7 immediately followed to add his name to its wall, fulfilling the mission Catanzara articulated to bring happiness to a family that had been waiting four generations for the recognition.

"Your efforts have not only honored Patrolman Devlin's memory but have brought great comfort and pride to our family," Mocarski said in her speech. "Today, you've given our family an incredible gift, and it's the gift of remembrance."

Denny O'Neill followed Mocarski on stage representing his seven siblings, three of whom joined him at the Lodge 7 Memorial. He told about how much this meant through the eyes of his mother, who raised eight children with only a little help from the 100 Club of Illinois at the time of Edward's death.

A captain in the Department told her she would get some type of pension. So she went to meet with the pension board to find out about it.

"There were three guys that were up for the pension. One worked for the City and choked on a hot dog at Sox Park," Denny revealed. "The other one was a fireman pulling hose. And my father. And the only one that got the pension was the guy that choked on the hot dog."

All of which seemed to be part of the healing on this day.

"It's a great way to honor the guy," confirmed John O'Neill, Denny's brother. "He loved doing what he did and died while doing it. So I guess from that perspective, we couldn't feel better [than this]."

### Endless love

Striving to fill this Lodge 7 Memorial with as many memorable experiences as possible, Catanzara called on a voice from the past for the keynote: Terry Hilliard, who served as CPD superintendent from 1998 to 2003 and again as interim in 2011.

Catanzara introduced Hilliard as the best superintendent he ever worked under in his 30 years on the job. The supe then plugged in



with comments he hoped would provide inspiration and live up to what he described as "the FOP presenting this special event."

Hilliard emphasized that each name on the wall represents an officer with his or her own thoughts and dreams.

"But by that dedication to service and their courage, the names are forever linked," he continued. "And all of them took an oath to be a Chicago Police Officer because they wanted to make a positive difference."

He concluded his remarks by reading from the poem "The Train of Life." With the message...

*At some stations, our brothers will step down off this train, leaving us on this journey alone.*

*And as time goes by, other people will board the train. And they will be significant.*

*Success consists of having a good relationship with all the passengers on the train of life. Requiring them to give the best of ourselves.*

*We do not know at which station we, ourselves, will step down. When our number will be called. So we must live in the best way. Love in the best way. Forgive in the best way.*

*And always...Always offer the best of who you are.*

### Love stories

Coming to the family portion of the program, Catanzara spoke first on behalf of Crowley, whose family was not able to attend the service. But the Lodge 7 president offered words that eventually resonated to Crowley's sister, Beth Carter, Jim's primary caregiver in the 40 years following him being hit in a beat car by a drunk driver — as well as to the entire membership.

"As the leader of this organization specifically, I want to publicly tell you that I apologize to her for any shortcomings this Lodge had by not doing right by her brother," Catanzara delivered with conviction that spoke volumes. "The day Jim died, I didn't even know his name. And in that situation, shame on me. Shame on us. So, I want her to know that I let all of you know that we're going to do better."

And his next words brought the memorial back to his opening remarks.

"I tasked Monica Ortiz, our third vice president, to give me a list of all the catastrophically injured officers who are currently receiving disability. We should know who they are. We should make sure those families have everything they need."

From her vantage point on the stage, Mocarski shared how she saw the pain on the faces of everyone who had experienced a recent loss. And how that mirrored back the magnitude of the 103 years since Nov. 15, 1922, when Patrolman Devlin responded to a paint factory fire, taking life-saving action and breathing toxic fumes, which led to him contracting the pneumonia that killed him.

Devlin left behind a young wife and daughters Eileen, 7, Dorothy, 5, Loraine, 3, and Merle, 1. Mocarski detailed how the children had little or no memory of their dad.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 36



Records showed fundraisers held at the time provided some support to the family. But the girls and their children lived difficult lives. Mocarski recalls her grandma talking about the challenges they faced. Her mom started the process of getting Ben's loss confirmed as in the line of duty, but despite a death certificate indicating he was a police officer and how he died, she didn't get very far.

Mocarski filed a freedom of information request with the City, and it wasn't until recently, connecting with the CPMF, that the recognition came true. And when she came to the Lodge, Mocarski said she and her family were finally able to look forward.

"Though many years have passed, it's heartening to see the law enforcement profession has grown, building stronger systems of support and standing with families in ways that would have been unimaginable in 1922," she praised. "Recognitions like this reaffirm an essential truth for today's officers: that their sacrifice and service will not be forgotten for generations to come."

Even nearly 53 years after Lieutenant Edward O'Neill died of cardiac arrest on Nov. 1, 1972, Denny O'Neill fought back tears.

Ed was commanding a detail at Midway Airport, awaiting the arrival of Democratic presidential nominee Senator George McGovern. Deteriorating weather conditions and numerous gate changes led to him collapsing while directing a couple of officers. Paramedics were unable to revive him. Senator McGovern phoned Frances O'Neill that night to express his condolences and say thank you for Ed's putting his life on the line.

Denny said he always accepted that it was not a line-of-duty death until he saw a television report about Lodge 7 winning the grievance to have officers lost to COVID confirmed as line-of-duty deaths. With the help of the 100 Club of Illinois, Denny made his case to the Department for review.

"A lieutenant down there called me and said, 'If your dad doesn't deserve to be on the wall, nobody does,'" Denny said.

Chicago Police Officer Adrian Martinez indicated he didn't have any formal remarks when he stepped up to speak about his brother, Enrique, who was shot and killed Nov. 4, 2024. But with his father, Adrian Sr., mother, Rosa Mayen, sister, Angelica, and Enrique's fiancée, Lesly Hernandez, on hand, Adrian seemed to channel Enrique's eloquence.

"I just want to thank the people that are standing there, because one saying that always sticks in my mind is, 'It's all about the person who stands in the rain with you when they could be somewhere dry if they wanted to.'"

Adrian, too, offered a lasting message about the mission of the service:

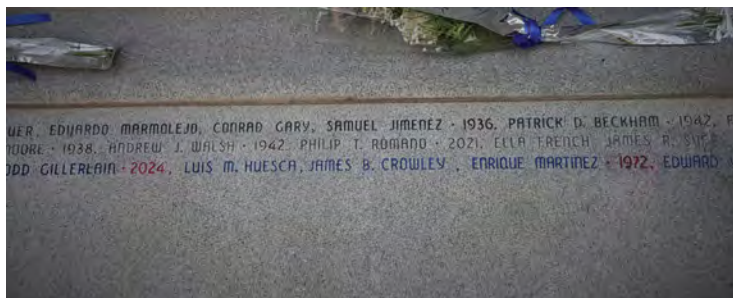
"The objective of life is to learn. The purpose of life is to grow. The nature of life is to change. The challenge of life is to overcome. The essence of life is to care. The opportunity of life is to serve. The secret of life is to dare. The spice of life is to befriend. And the beauty of life is to give."

The Hall came to a full stop when Edith Huesca stepped up to speak. Seemingly speaking for anybody who has lost a loved one in the line of duty.

She did not fight back the tears, and in the process had more flowing from nearly the entire audience. More than a year after her son, Chicago Police Officer Luis Huesca, was lost, on April 21, 2024, Edith explained how a line-of-duty death rips through you.

"Since this bad individual cut off my lovely son's beautiful life, I remember that day as if it were yesterday," she let out. "Some days, I can't avoid crying in front of people because my pain is so big. And I think it happens the same to many of the mothers that are here, many of the families, sisters, brothers, parents."

As Edith related stories about Luis giving her gifts on Mother's Day and Father's Day, she also told how, after finishing college, he did not want a desk job because he wanted to get out and do more for



others. She conveyed the hurt of Luis not being able to continue to serve. And she revealed what has enabled her to face her grief.

"I'm so glad with having the police officers in my extended family and for everything they do for my family, for my loyalty, for my son, for my lovely Luis. And for me too," she exclaimed.

### True love

When the service moved from the hall to the courtyard to peel the tape and reveal the names added to the memorial wall, there was a definite closing of the ranks. Perhaps because of the room in the courtyard, perhaps because it was the time and place for a group hug.

Several members of Chicago Police Officer Areanah Preston's family were there two years and a day after she was lost. Elizabeth French, Carlos Yanez Jr. and Joshua Blas were there to support, as they were supported when their lovely Ella was lost in August 2021.

Chicago Police Honor Guard member Rich Robles bugled "Taps" as only he can. The CPD Pipes and Drums sent up "Amazing Grace" to accompany the revealing of the names. As family members showed their loved ones' names, they each gave a big hug to Catanzara.

And he had one last message to emphasize the mission of always being there.

"As you hit the streets, remember, some of these families lost a loved one a long time ago, other ones did not. The ones who did not have court cases for the people that took their loved ones and our members. Make every effort you can to show up to court dates whenever you see them posted. Make sure that these families feel supported, and that justice is done for them."





# Where You Belong

There's a feeling that only comes at National Police Week

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

■ PHOTOS BY CPD GRAPHIC ARTS

Feeling the nirvana of National Police Week intensified with Beth Carter showing all the ponchos she brought to the Candlelight Vigil, which highlights the honor and remembrance of this sacred week. Rain persisted throughout May 13 in Washington, D.C., and at 6 p.m., two hours before the start of the Vigil, Carter sat undeterred with members of her family in a sideways, misty downpour to see her brother, Chicago Police Officer James Crowley, get the tribute she so much wanted.

Jim was lost on Aug. 22, 2024, nearly 37 years after he was catastrophically injured when a drunk driver barreled into the beat car he was in with four other Chicago Police Officers. Now, the warm blanket of Police Week that every Gold Star family member, copper and even the president and vice president felt, covered Beth. The same way it did the family of Chicago Police Officer Luis Huesca, the family of Chicago Police Officer Enrique Martinez, the pipes and drums bands from the Department and the Emerald Society, the CPD Honor Guard and the hundreds of members who came to D.C. on their own dime.

With the rain soaking through her poncho, Beth let out an emotional story that is what fuels Police Week. Perhaps

she felt the nirvana, or even the higher place where Jim resides.

"There was a time, probably a year post-injury, when Jim and I had a really serious conversation," Beth began. "He brought it up, and I really kind of dreaded the day that he asked me this. He said in a really quiet voice, 'So Beth, I'm not going to be a policeman again, am I?'"

On the night of May 13, Jim Crowley was again a policeman, immortalized, if you will, during the Vigil's Roll Call of Heroes of all those added to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial wall in 2024. When the superintendent called out his name, along with Enrique and Luis, Beth stood with the other survivor family members and every Chicago Police Officer, out in the rain.

It seemed to wash away the hard feelings toward the Department for not embracing Jim the way it should have for the 37 years following his injury. Beth made sure that Jim was buried in the CPD uniform he loved so much, and now she was able to find a legacy for Jim.

"I would say to any organization, please always make sure that there's a spot at the table for everybody because this isn't the time to feel like you don't belong," Beth stated.

## Inscribed forever

See, that's the nirvana of National Police Week. You feel like you belong to this



CONTINUED ON PAGE 38



big, beautiful, blue family that came through in the rain. And also with the tributes from the CPD Honor Guard and Pipes and Drums performing for, remembering and honoring the families. And the throng from CPD that came to salute the families and the profession at the annual Peace Officers Memorial, along with the presence of President Trump and Vice President Vance.

Police Week generates an almost inexplicable presence. It's the goosebumps that came with watching the Bagpipes & Drums of the Emerald Society Chicago Police Department leading the parade of pipe bands through the streets of D.C. and marching into the U.S. Capitol grounds for the Peace Officers Memorial Service on May 15. And that came with the CPD Pipes and Drums playing its winning set at the annual competition by the Capitol's reflecting pool.

You could see the presence of Enrique Martinez glowing on the face of his little sister, 18-year-old Angelica, when she held her candle at the Vigil. Or when Enrique's mom, Rosa Mayen, his father, Adrian Sr., and his brother, Chicago Police Officer Adrian Martinez, made etchings in bright red of Enrique's name inscribed on the wall at the Memorial. Or when the Chicago Police Officers stood in line to salute the family as they walked into the Peace Officers Memorial.

What did they feel about Enrique's presence?

"How much he thought about other people, and his kindness," Angelica shared. "He was just really charismatic, and everyone wanted to follow him around."

### He's with us

Nirvana begins for survivor families when they arrive at the airport in D.C. Officers from the Department's special activities section greet them and start the escort that lasts the entire week. The CPD Honor Guard is there, too.

"As soon as I got off of the plane, I hoped my son, Luis, would be here," Edith Huesca said.

They seemed to commune with Luis, visiting the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial and placing a CPD patch by the picture of Luis on the wall where his name is inscribed. And his sister, Liliana O'Brien, and his brother, Emiliano, sat with Edith in the rain for four hours, soaking in all the emotion.

"I think that the general theme of everything is just overwhelming," Lily described. "It's both a beautiful thing but also a deeply hurtful thing, because it's a reminder that we don't have him, and every time I see his name on the wall, it just makes everything real."

You can imagine what Lily and Emiliano were feeling when they held hands walking into the Peace Officers Memorial. Or when Emiliano escorted Edith to the front by the stage, where survivors placed a red rose on the big star, as is the annual tradition.

"It gives me certain comfort, thinking about Luis as part of God," Edith commented. "He's with us in every place, wherever we go. I have him in my heart and my feelings all the time because my son lives."

### Healing

Nirvana also includes opportunity for reflection. What was the significance of the picture of Jim all by itself on the panel of the wall at the Memorial where his name is inscribed?

It's almost as if the pledge that President John Catanzara made during the Lodge 7 memorial on May 7 — that the FOP will never again fail to remember officers like Jim, left to live with a catastrophic injury suffered on the job — manifested in this. Perhaps this place for Jim at the wall truly enabled some healing for Jim's family.

"Being here is very overwhelming. And I will say this, and this is to anybody that ever is in the same situation, there's sadly a low level of relatability because Jim's manner of death is not a felonious assault and there is a pecking order," Beth submitted. "I'm so grateful for John at FOP for really saying the things that needed to be said so long ago, and to really have the strength of character to speak out and own what went wrong and acknowledge it."

And so, looking skyward, even in the rain, was a calling to know how Jim is a policeman forever.





"I'm sure he is probably at the gates of heaven credentialing and vetting everybody coming through," Beth added.

### Reinforcements

In 1962, President Kennedy declared May 15 National Peace Officers Memorial Day. This year, the 44th annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Service was held on the West Front of the U.S. Capitol.

By this time, sunshine had taken over D.C. President Trump was out of the country, but a video message from the president offered a reinforcement for all officers to take home.

"This week and always, we honor the courageous men and women serving in law enforcement and memorialize those who sacrificed their lives defending the thin blue line," he echoed from the proclamation he issued earlier in the day. "A nation in chaos ceases to be a citadel of liberty.

We will utilize every available means to equip and train law enforcement, retain

qualified officers and recruit on the basis of meritocracy."

Vice President JD Vance delivered the keynote address and sensed the opportunity to generate some lasting nirvana for the law enforcement profession.

"These men and women chose their careers not for enrichment or self-exaltation," Vance praised about the 165 officers who were lost in the line of duty in 2024. "They stepped into the unknown. Their names will never be forgotten, nor will their heroic acts of service which inspire our nation and fill us with great purpose."

Following the service, the contingent of Chicago Police Officers, CPD Pipes and Drums band members, Crowley, Huesca and Martinez family members and other Gold Star families gathered for a photo on the steps of the Capitol. This has become a tradition that the CPD Graphic Arts section began several years ago.

Call it a family photo. A big, beautiful, blue CPD family photo that truly personifies National Police Week.



## Catching a Terrorist

Chicago Police Officers honored at Top Cops Awards for heroic response

■ BY BRITTANY KRUGEL

There's such a thing as divine intervention. After earning honorable mention recognition at the 2025 National Association of Police Organizations Top Cops Awards, that's how Chicago Police Officer Bienvenido "Benny" Acevedo Jr. described what happened on Oct. 26, 2024.

Acevedo, along with Officer Tyler Hayes, Officer Alexis Hernandez, Officer Jonathan Pineda-Reyes and Field Training Officer James Aimers, responded to a shooting call on that afternoon in the 24th District. It was the type of crime that has made too many national headlines dating back to the previous Oct. 7.

An Orthodox Jewish man was on his way to synagogue on the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah when he was shot in what was believed to be a racially motivated attack. The perpetrator hit the man in the shoulder then stood over him ready to finish what he had intended.

Until his weapon jammed. That's when he was spooked by a witness and ran away from the scene.

"Lucky for that victim, his family, they weren't feeling well. So he told them to stay home, the wife and his daughters, and he was walking by himself," Acevedo noted.

Officers then went on the hunt for the suspect, who was still considered armed and dangerous. When the officers did catch up with him, they ordered him to drop his weapon, but he fired at them instead — and not just at them, but at the ambulance carrying the shooting victim.

Acevedo said that as a CFD truck arrived at the scene, he heard the "boom, boom, boom" of gunshots as the vehicles passed the spot where the victim lay. He was in his beat car at the time.

"I'm thinking, 'Get out of this kill box,' which is the squad car," he explained.

They didn't see the shooter until he started running toward an alley. He then came around a corner, firing again at the officers.

"The way we were positioned, it couldn't have been drawn up any better," Acevedo described.

Eventually a foot pursuit ensued, and the suspect continued to fire at the officers. Acevedo fired three shots at the suspect.

"We're all returning fire," Acevedo continued. "He drops. He rises up again, trying to reach the firearm. I fired three more times, and then he wasn't getting up again after that."

Chicago Police Officers actually then saved the shooter's life by using their Law Enforcement Medical and Rescue Training (LEMART). He eventually was taken to the hospital, where he survived his injuries



but was hit with attempted murder, aggravated assault and terrorism charges.

Acevedo was one of several officers who apprehended the suspect, but the rest of the team on the call made the response even more heroic. Officer Hayes was just out of the academy in his first cycle. Hernandez was still on probation. Pineda-Reyes, a former U.S. Marine, was just two years on the job. And having Aimers on hand provided a much-needed steadying presence, Acevedo added.

"Those guys were across the street from me when we lost sight of the offender. They all were fantastic. I am so proud of these young officers," Acevedo praised.

For their bravery, these officers were honored at the Top Cops ceremony on May 12 during National Police Week, with more than 1,500 people attending at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. Chicago Lodge 7 sponsored the trip for all the officers to attend the awards, which were especially memorable for Acevedo, who brought his two young children and his wife along.

After 26 years on, Acevedo has seen some pretty horrific things, and he has the scars to prove it. But the opportunity to save a life makes it all worth it.

"But I will tell you that, all politics aside, one of the highest compliments was when I get the FOP rep telling me that, after reviewing the body cam footage, the superintendent wants to use it as a training video," he reported. "I cannot think of any other honor that could be any more complimentary than that."





# Second to None

**CPD Pipes and Drums performs 'winning' set at annual Police Week competition**

■ BY DAN CAMPANA

Standing by the reflecting pool in front of the U.S. Capitol during the middle of National Police Week, Chicago Police Pipes and Drums bagpiper Amy Prohaska turned to a simple thought that tested her nerves.

"I am a little nervous because I'm not just playing a bagpipe competition," Prohaska began. "I'm playing for our Gold Star families. This is for them."

With a reverberating drumline to back the sweet-sounding bagpipes, the CPD Pipes and Drums turned a year's worth of dedicated practice and emotional focus into what could easily be described as a complete game victory. Finishing second is no small feat at the annual National Police Week Pipes and Drums Placement, where the seemingly untouchable U.S. Customs and Border Patrol Combined unit tops the charts every year.

Ranking second marked an improvement of seven places compared to last year for the CPD band. More importantly, the hard work and musical precision honored the families of the fallen and represented the City resoundingly on the national stage and in front of family members of Chicago Police Officers lost this past year: Luis Huesca, Enrique Martinez and James Crowley.

"We knocked it out of the park. It was solid. We came in strong, we ended stronger, and the middle was just as good," Prohaska added. "We've been practicing this set for over a year, real hard, and it really came together today."

Drums, song selection and that bond forged through practice and common purpose proved to be difference makers for the team in 2025.

"When you have a larger sound like that, especially from the drum corps, the band has a more commanding presence as opposed to just one lone drummer [like last year]," drummer Elfecho Gallardo explained. "The drum corps is the only section in the pipe band that can control their volume because the pipers play at one set volume. It's really incumbent upon us to really add to the color of the tune by varying the

way we play with our volume."

Gallardo and others highlighted the song choices as lending to the set's sound and emotion. In his 14th year with the band, Pipe Major

Luke McKee listed "La Boum," "Lord Lovat's Lament" and "MacPherson's Lament" as the selections in part because of requirements that each song be funeral-appropriate. "McPherson," as the closing tune, is not commonly played, but piper Rob Cranston, a member since the band was formed 25 years ago, submitted that it was perfect for this playlist.

"I love that one," Cranston shared. "I play it slightly [differently]. Not so much a different version as much as some of the notes are different, so I had to concentrate. I was very happy."

McKee praised the performance and the results, especially knowing they feed a growing reputation for CPD in competition.

"We sounded good. We played really well," he offered, noting that he's learned through his career how unpredictable judging can be at times.

Not on this day. The strong performance resonated with the judges. But McKee and the others also knew they had reached the audience that matters most.

"We always want to just sound good ... for the families," Cranston declared. "We figure it's the most important thing. It's like, you want to remember them, their loved ones, with a sound that they can go with and say, that was nice, that was something special for them."

When the results were announced, CPD Pipes and Drums gathered one more time to pose with the trophy they were awarded. Then, they were given perhaps the biggest honor of all for this Police Week: a request for an encore performance.

"It's special for us because each year that we come down here, we have the opportunity to honor our fallen," Gallardo added. "We don't come here by ourselves. We have many Gold Star families that watch us."







# Resounding Words of Honor

## CPD Honor Guard delivers another moving tribute at Police Week event

■ BY DAN CAMPANA

The CPD Gold Star family members rimming the performance ring of the annual honor guard competition stood stoic and silent. But they would soon be moved to tears by what played out before them.

Every word added to the tone, the emotion, the meaning. Whether they knew it or not, what they watched was far from the ordinary tribute to fallen police officers that is part of the annual National Police Week Honor Guard competition.

“Some spin rifles, march and fold flags. But we, as members of the Chicago Police Department Honor Guard, we approach today historically,” proclaimed Officer Will Riga, his words punctuating the air as if commanding the audience to get ready for the ride.

Foreshadowing the dramatic tenor that would follow, Riga lowered his voice for emphasis. Behind him, his fellow honor guard members marched into place with movements bringing the narrative to life. One by one, they carried three dress blue uniform coats symbolizing honor and loss.

“We do not simply gather here today as a presentation of pride and precision and pageantry,” continued Riga, serving as narrator for this year’s performance piece of the competition. “No. We gather here today in the solemn shadow of sacrifice. We gather here today not because we’ve forgotten, but because we remember too deeply to remain silent.”

The CPD Honor Guard performed their mission once again to personalize Chicago’s fallen — Officers Luis Huesca, James Crowley and Enrique Martinez — and celebrate how they lived. They used carefully designed handcrafted woodworking, expressing tribute that stood out from the rest because it skillfully blended pomp and ceremony with unique attention to detail.

They honored the sacrifices of fallen military members by raising the American flag on a portable flagpole brought in specifically as part of CPD’s staging. On wooden displays, all handmade by honor guard member Ramiro Alvarez, they hung three dress blue jackets that won’t be worn again to symbolize CPD’s three latest additions to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial wall. Two other wooden stands were adorned with a saddle and a vest, respectively, to help commemorate CPD’s mounted units named for fallen officers and for all K-9 units.

The large number of onlookers in attendance were drawn in by the CPD Honor Guard’s renowned reputation for stirring performances. The intricately planned words and acts that filled the nearly 10-minute performance spoke, in many ways, directly to Gold Star families.

“The weight of your loss is not yours alone to bear,” Riga announced. “This is not theater. It is a living eulogy, an oath in solemn motion. We stand here today because of that.”

As the honor guard caught its collective breath post-performance, feelings of pride stood out. As did an undeterred sense of purpose for why they do this every year.

“Impactful,” honor guard member Casey Jordan assessed. “As long as we impact the families, that’s what’s important to me. The placing is great, but the way we impacted [the families] is the greatest.”

Coming off receiving the 2024 Chief Judge Award — which recognizes a team based on the nature of their tribute to fallen officers — CPD began planning in earnest about six months ago to once again create a must-see performance.

“Every piece by piece. Every move by move,” Jordan noted about the meticulous process to build things out.

The depth of this year’s presentation came from the careful attention to telling a story cohesively with the use of props, including two visual elements that spoke to the mindset for making a great performance. Riga highlighted Alvarez’s “spectacular” woodwork to create the displays on which the coats were placed.

Although prominent during the presentation, the displays featured a detail added by Alvarez that even the keenest observer might have missed: blue-line flags carved into the wood. Standing nearly as tall as the honor guard members, Alvarez’s creations weren’t merely for show; they have been offered to the families as a lasting tribute to their officer.

“He’s a great woodworker, and we’re lucky to have him,” Riga said of Alvarez.

Another sign that no stone was left unturned: The dress blue coats were specifically and accurately adorned to represent the officers being honored.

“Every coat had every single award that they’ve ever gotten,” Jordan detailed. “It was exactly what they would have worn on the street today. Every award, their star, their nameplate with their designator, everything was to a T.”

Of course, those finer points of woodworking, coat decorating and the measured steps in unison all tie to Riga’s monologue like a perfect soundtrack to a movie. Practice leads to precision, but Riga said he didn’t fully script everything he said. Some of the words and his cadence just flowed from within as something of an out-of-body experience over 10 minutes that disappeared in a flash.

“I feel like I woke up and it was all over,” the 17-year veteran quipped. “It all came from the heart. You’re carrying the memories, you’re carrying the love, you’re carrying the respect for all of our fallen members within the Chicago Police Department, the 606 names that are etched in stone at the Gold Star Park.”

After Riga and the team offered their final salutes, a bell tolled in recognition of the fallen. The CPD Honor Guard then marched off in formation to applause and cheers from the assembled crowd. Getting to that point was a long road, but one the team wholeheartedly commits to for the Gold Star families looking on.

“It’s a lot of practice, a lot of maintenance on our uniforms, but it’s well worth it because of the families,” Alvarez offered. “As long as we make them proud, you can’t ask for anything better than that.”



## Illinois State Memorial



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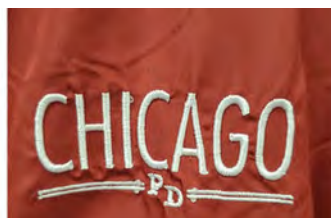
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# BATTLE OF THE BADGES

Photos By Jemuel Santos





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