**AWARDS CEREMONY - March 2, 2016**

**SHERIFF’S CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION: Deputy Frank Leyva**

On April 4th, 2015 dispatch received a call that a man was threating suicide and was armed with a large buck knife. The man was threatening to harm himself with the knife if law enforcement was called. While deputies were responding to the scene dispatch was notified that the man had poured gasoline on himself and had a lighter. When deputies arrived on the scene the man threatened to ignite the fuel if deputies approached him.

 Deputy Frank Leyva initiated negotiations with the man and continued to talk to him while additional resources responded to the remote location. Dep. Leyva’s negotiations lasted for over 3 hours and 15 minutes until specialized resources including fire, medical and SWAT personnel were in place. Ultimately the man was detained for a mental health evaluation and sustained no significant injuries, nor did any of the emergency personnel.

 Deputy Leyva remained calm, professional, and confident though out the extremely intense and delicate situation. His persistence, dedication, and demeanor most certainly averted a tragedy and enabled the situation to be resolved successfully. Deputy Frank Leyva is recognized today for his actions by receiving the Sheriff’s Certificate of Recognition.

**SHERIFF’S COMMENDATION CERTIFICATE: Deputy Jacob Reynolds and Deputy Scott McAndrews**

On June 13th, 2015 while working in the Tuolumne County Jail Deputy Jacob Reynolds and Deputy Scott McAndrews heard a disturbance coming from an inmate housing unit. Deputy Reynolds opened the unit door and immediately saw an inmate who was hanging from the ceiling. Deputy Reynolds and Deputy McAndrews acted quickly to get him down. Deputy Reynolds grabbed the inmate around his waist and lifted him to take the pressure off of his neck and held him up until Deputy McAndrews received a 911 knife and used it to cut though the sheet that was around the inmate’s neck.

 Deputy Jacob Reynolds and Deputy Scott McAndrews are being recognized today by receiving the Sheriff’s Commendation Certificate for their quick action and clear thinking which was directly responsible for saving the inmates life.

**LIFE SAVING AWARD: Tom Atkins**

**PURPLE HEART: Laurie Lyons**

 On September 26th, 2014 Tom Atkins and Laurie Lyons were called upon to assist in the search of two missing adults as part of their duties with the Tuolumne County Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue Team. Due to their experience and knowledge of horses, Tom and Laurie were assigned to check the Chewing Gum Lake area for the missing hikers on horseback. While conducting their search, Tom and Laurie had to navigate a steep narrow granite trail which had steps cut in and granite walls on either side. Tom was in the lead as they climbed the trail. During the ascent, Laurie’s horse stumbled and struck its muzzle on the steps. Believing that the horse may fall, Laurie began to dismount her horse onto the uphill slope of the granite walls. Unfortunately, the horse lunged forward, lost his rear footing and stumbled backwards down the trail. Laurie was not able to get clear in time and was pulled down with the horse. During the horses flailing, he landed on Laurie’s leg several times. Tom was able to get clear of his horse, grab Laurie and pull her to safety before she was drug further down the hill or was completely crushed by the horse.

 Tom’s quick actions undoubtedly saved Laurie from any further injury and even death. Today Tom Atkins is being recognized and commended for his action on September 26th, 2014 with the Life Saving Award.

 Laurie was rescued from the scene and ultimately treated for several torn ligaments in her knee and a fractured fibula. Laurie Lyons is being recognized today for her unwavering dedication and sacrifice to the Tuolumne County Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue Team with the Purple Heart Award.

**DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD: Deputy Jim Scruggs**

 In 1972 Jim Scruggs was hired by the Tuolumne County Sheriff’s Office. At that time we had no formal Search and Rescue Team. Prior to becoming a Deputy with our agency, Deputy Scruggs worked at the Kennedy Meadows pack station. That experience gave him a great understanding of the geography of Tuolumne County and taught him how to safely navigate through parts of this County that most people will never see. From the time he was hired, Deputy Scruggs was vital in the search and recovery of those individuals who lost their way while exploring this County’s wilderness.

 It was not until 1975 that a formalized Search and Rescue Team was established within Tuolumne County. His dedication to the Search and Rescue Team continued throughout his 30 years of service with the Tuolumne County Sheriff’s Office and even into his retirement. To this day, Deputy Scruggs continues to play an integral role in the Search and Rescue Team. His continued dedication, guidance, and experience has significantly contributed to the excellence we have all come to expect from the Tuolumne County Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue Team.

Deputy Jim Scruggs is being recognized today for the over 40 years of service he has provided to the Search and Rescue Team by receiving the Distinguished Service Award.

**SWAT TEAM PLAQUE: Sergeant James Oliver**

Sergeant James Oliver has served the Tuolumne County Sheriff’s Office Special Weapons and Tactics team since 1996. He has held the assignments of Operator, Sniper, Team Leader and Commander. In 2006 he took over the SWAT program as the commander and was instrumental in raising the proficiency level of the team. Sgt. Oliver has been able to acquire the most up to date equipment and training for the team including a robot and participation in Urban Shield. He most recently helped the team with the purchase of a MedEvac Bearcat. His leadership and experience are invaluable to our agency and the SWAT team.

Sergeant Oliver is being recognized today for the over 18 years of service he has provided the SWAT team by receiving this team plaque.

**WASHINGTON STREET SHOOTING**

On November 22nd, 2014 Sonora Police Officer Ryan Webb attempted a traffic stop on a vehicle. The driver led Officer Webb on a short pursuit into downtown Sonora where the driver quickly exited his vehicle and began shooting at Officer Webb. Officer Webb returned fire. During the exchange of gunfire Officer Webb’s duty belt was struck with a bullet, knocking him to the ground. The driver got back into his vehicle and fled. Officer Webb got back into his patrol vehicle and pursued the suspect. Tuolumne County Dispatchers heard Officer Webb’s radio traffic and broadcasted the information to Tuolumne County Sheriff Deputies. The Deputies on duty were able to join into the pursuit of the suspect. The pursuit ended on Washington Street in downtown Sonora where a second round of gunfire was exchanged. The suspect died at the scene from his injuries.

**SHERIFF’S CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION: Sergeant Gregory Rogers, Corporal Oliver Imlach, Deputy Wesley Durnall, and Deputy John Hammell**

 **SGT. ROGERS:** While Sgt. Rogers made his way to the scene from his location, he believed that an Officer had been shot. He proceeded to track the call and radio traffic while trying to monitor the stress in the voices of the other officers. Upon arriving at the scene, Sgt. Rogers took control of the situation and in a calm and orderly way began making sound decisions to process the scene and assure the safety of the deputies and the public.

 Sgt. Rogers calm demeanor and actions that night exemplified the mission of the Tuolumne County Sheriff’s Office. Sgt. Rogers demonstrated positive partnerships with the public, fellow deputies, and the Sonora Police Department. He exemplified professionalism and leadership through his actions and decisions at the scene. He proved to be supportive and loyal to our shared community and to his coworkers. Sergeant Gregory Rogers is receiving the Sheriff’s Certificate of Recognition for his sound and efficient decisions during a time of community duress.

 **CORP. IMLACH:** Corporal Oliver Imlach was riding with his trainee Deputy Meyer when they received the information regarding the pursuit. They joined into the pursuit and exited their patrol vehicle at the termination point on Washington Street. Corporal Imlach noticed bystanders behind the suspect. Showing clarity of thought and restraint under stress, Corporal Imlach did not fire his weapon at that time in fear he would injure a bystander. When Cpl. Imlach had a clear field of fire he attempted to shoot the suspect with his patrol rifle. His weapon did not fire so he immediately reverted to his training to clear the malfunction and render the weapon operational. The exchange of gunfire had ceased and the suspect was no longer a threat once his weapon was operational. Although Cpl. Imlach did not fire his weapon during the incident, he rectified a malfunction and demonstrated discretion, courage and bravery in the face of danger and adversity. For his actions Corporal Oliver Imlach is receiving the Sheriff’s Certificate of Recognition.

 **DEPUTIES DURNALL & HAMMELL**: Deputy Wesley Durnall and Deputy Jon Hammell were also on duty the night of November 22nd. When they arrived at the termination point of the pursuit they parked their patrol vehicles behind other law enforcement units. While they were trying to make their way forward to assist, the suspect was shooting at deputies and officers in the front. Bullets were passing by Dep. Durnall and Dep. Hammell during the exchange of gunfire. This was evidenced by parked vehicles behind their location sustaining bullet strikes.

 Dep. Durnall and Dep. Hammell acted courageously in the face of danger by continuously moving forward toward gunfire in order to assist fellow deputies and officers, as well as protecting the public from further danger. Before they had reached the front line, the suspect was no longer a threat. Dep. Durnall and Dep. Hammell exemplified the mission of the Tuolumne County Sheriff’s Office. Their actions demonstrated that they are committed to keeping peace and order while protecting lives and property. They were truly courageous in the face of danger. They are both receiving the Sheriff’s Certificate of Recognition for their selfless actions.

**DISTINGUSED SERVICE AWARD: Dispatchers Leigh Ann Eastman, Terri Ferrell and Stacey Mac Donald**

Tuolumne County Sheriff’s Office Dispatchers Terri Ferrell, Leigh Ann Eastman and Stacey Mac Donald were also on duty on the evening of November 22nd. Dispatcher Eastman heard Officer Webb’s radio traffic via the scanner and alerted the other dispatchers of the situation. Dispatcher Terri Ferrell broadcasted the information regarding the shooting and pursuit to the Tuolumne County Sheriff’s Deputies on duty. Dispatcher Mac Donald was on the Medical Net with an ambulance dispatched to a medial call. That ambulance and personnel were only a block away from the termination point of the pursuit and Dispatcher Mac Donald could hear rounds being fired in the background.

 The Sonora Police Dispatcher on duty that night was working solo. She was unable to call the Sheriff’s Office for assistance. Our dispatchers took it upon themselves to monitor the Sonora Police Department radio traffic and provide updates to our deputies with the progress of the pursuit. This allowed the Tuolumne County Sheriff Deputies to join into the pursuit with Officer Webb to the termination point where a second exchange of gunfire took place.

 Due to the alertness, fast actions, and information provided by these dispatchers our deputies were able to be in place to stop a deadly threat to our community. Without our dispatcher’s abilities to multi-task and communicate through a high stress situation, other lives would have undoubtedly been lost. Today we recognize Dispatchers Leigh Ann Eastman, Terri Ferrell and Stacey Mac Donald with the Distinguished Service Award.

**MEDAL OF VALOR: Deputy Jerry McCaig and Deputy Scott Meyer**

 On November 22nd, 2014 Tuolumne County Sheriff’s Office Dispatchers took it upon themselves to monitor the Sonora Police Department’s radio traffic regarding a pursuit and exchange of gunfire lead by Officer Ryan Webb. The broadcasting of this information allowed Tuolumne County Sheriff Deputies on duty to follow the progress of the pursuit and enabled them to join into the pursuit with Officer Webb. The deputies followed in the pursuit of the suspect to the termination point on Washington Street in downtown Sonora.

Deputy Jerry McCaig was the second law enforcement vehicle in the pursuit. When the suspect’s vehicle stopped, Deputy McCaig moved his patrol vehicle into a tactical position of a high risk stop. The suspect exited his vehicle and began walking aggressively toward Deputy McCaig while carrying a pistol. The suspect raised his pistol and began firing at Deputy McCaig, striking Deputy McCaig’s vehicle several times and the building behind him. Fearing for innocent bystanders, Deputy McCaig was not able to return fire immediately. When safe to do so, Deputy McCaig fired his weapon at the suspect, striking the suspect multiple times.

 Deputy Scott Meyer was also on duty that night. Deputy Meyer was in the field training program and was riding with his training officer Corporal Oliver Imlach. Deputy Meyer and Corporal Imlach also joined into the pursuit of the suspect and upon arriving at the scene parked their patrol vehicle behind Officer Webb’s vehicle. Deputy Meyer believed that the suspect was attempting to shoot and kill Deputy McCaig. Deputy Meyer drew his weapon and fired at the suspect, striking him several times.

 The suspect fell and attempted again to fire his weapon at officers and deputies while on the ground. Again, Deputy McCaig and Deputy Meyer returned fire striking the suspect. The suspect died at the scene from his injuries.

 Deputy McCaig demonstrated heroic discretion, courage and bravery in the face of imminent danger. His determination and actions not only saved his own life, but undoubtedly the lives of others as well. For his heroic actions on the night of November 22nd, Deputy Jerry McCaig is receiving the Medal of Valor.

 Deputy Meyer demonstrated heroic courage and bravery in the face of imminent danger. His determination and actions not only helped to save Deputy McCaig’s life, but also the lives of others at the scene that. For his heroic actions on the night of November 22nd, Deputy Scott Meyer is receiving the Medal of Valor.