

Medal of Honor

Jim Estes: On December 24, 2021, the department received a report of a restraining order violation at a local shelter. Officer Estes responded to the area where he located the suspect nearby. He engaged the subject in conversation who was visibly upset. After a brief conversation about the intent to arrest the subject and take him to jail, the subject made a comment he was not going back to jail. The subject pulled two knives from his pockets and brandished them at Officer Estes. He then walked threateningly toward Officer Estes. Officer Estes began retreating to the back of his patrol car when the subject rapidly closed the distance. Confronted with this deadly threat, Officer Estes had no choice but to defend himself by eliminating the threat. Officer Estes acted professionally and courageously towards a subject who was acting criminally.

Medal of Valor

Sam Posthuma: On December 24, 2021, Officer Sam Posthuma responded to cover Officer Jim Estes for a restraining order violation. Shortly after he arrived with his recruit Officer David St. Pierre, Officer Estes responded to a potentially deadly threat by discharging his firearm. Officer Posthuma immediately took charge of the incident and directed other officers to complete required tasks for a successful resolution. Officer Posthuma placed the male into handcuffs, directed another officer to move Officer Estes away from the scene and stay with him while applying tourniquets to the suspect's leg. Officer Posthuma's performance demonstrated his dedication to his fellow officers and the citizens of Albany.

Lifesaving Awards

Matt Thomas: On September 9, 2021, Officer Matt Thomas responded to a threat call at a local group home. One of the residents was in a mental crisis, had a knife and was threatening to kill themselves. Officer Thomas was able to engage in conversation with the distraught individual who was standing in the doorway holding a knife. The subject told Officer Thomas he wanted to commit suicide by cop. Officer Thomas talked with the individual for 35 minutes eventually convincing the subject to drop the knife. The subject complied and was taken into custody and treated. If not for Officer Thomas' verbal de-escalation and rapport building with the subject, this likely could have ended differently.

Kelli McMahan: On July 3, 2021, Communications Specialist Kelli McMahan took a 911 phone call involving a suicidal subject. Kelli asked all the right questions and kept the caller engaged in conversation while officers were dispatched to the call. She told the individual what to expect when officers arrived on scene and encouraged them to never lift or point the firearm at any officers. Kelli documented detailed notes to ensure officers were being updated regularly. She remained calm and composed throughout the entirety of the call. Communications Specialist Kelli McMahan's actions and compassion helped save this subject's life.

Jim Estes: On November 13, 2021, Officer Jim Estes responded to a welfare check. A crisis line in Nevada reported they were on the line with the subject advising they were near the Linn County Jail and the subject could not breathe. Officer Estes arrived on scene and approached calling out the subject who did not respond. He noted the subject was very pale and slightly bluish and had a large rubber band wrapped around their neck. He tried pulling the wrapped rubber band off, but there were many layers, so he used his knife to cut through the layers and was able to remove the rubber band from the individual's neck. Officer Estes performed chest compressions and the subject started breathing and coughing. Officer Estes' quick actions that evening saved the subject's life.

Dan Jones, David Vaughn, Gabe Flores: On August 27, 2021, officers were dispatched to the Lyon Street bridge to multiple reports of a subject on the outside of the bridge railing hanging over the water. The subject informed Officer Gabe Flores if any officers come within 20-feet of him, he would jump into the river. Officer Flores quickly communicated this information to other responding officers. The Willamette River was at least 100 feet below the crest of the bridge, and a fall from this height would have been fatal. The subject began walking away from Officer Flores. Seeing this, Sergeant Dan Jones pulled ahead in order to provide a visual barrier which enabled Sergeant Jones to begin verbal contact. The identity of the subject was learned, and Sergeant (now Lieutenant) Vaughn realized he had talked with the subject during prior recent incidents. He used that rapport to talk the subject in to allowing him closer and was able to take hold of the subject's wrist which then allowed Officer Flores to close the distance and take the subject to the ground. Officer Flores, Sergeant Jones, and Lieutenant Vaughn had a brief time to decide and act on a plan that undoubtedly saved the person's life.

Exceptional Service (coin awards)

Bret Adams, Erin Bagley, Trevor Eaton, Ken Fandrem, Gabe Flores, Peter Teague, Perry Baker, Mike Wood: On February 21, 2022, Officers responded to a disturbance call. It was reported there was a subject with a katana type sword who was menacing bystanders and nearby vehicles. It was later determined the subject was actually chasing people with the sword. After being engaged by Sergeant Mike Wood, the subject was uncooperative and refused commands. Officer Trevor Eaton deployed a less lethal bean bag shotgun, Officer Bret Adams deployed his taser and Officer Erin Bagley deployed his firearm. After being warned he would be shot with a less lethal bean bag shotgun or tased, he put the sword on the ground but refused to step away continuing to argue. While Sergeant Wood attempted to deescalate the situation, the subject began making motions to retrieve the sword. Officers Teague and Baker were developing a lethal/less-lethal option should the subject have retreated to the involved vehicle. Officer Gabe Flores, Officer Ken Fandrem, Officer Teague, and Sergeant Wood all converged and wrestled the subject to the ground stopping the threat. Because of the officers' poise, calmness, and actions, the subject's life was saved, and no citizens were harmed.

Distinguished Service:

Laura Hawkins: Community Education Specialist Laura Hawkins began her career with the Albany Police Department in September 2013 as a Police Clerk. She was promoted to Crime Prevention Specialist and then Community Engagement Program Coordinator due to her innovative ideas taking the department into the future. She has single handedly ensured the department remained engaged in local, state and nationally sponsored events. To add one more duty, she was recently selected to be the face of the Albany Police Department as a Public Information Officer. Laura's innovative ideas surround the departments presence on social media. Laura has made a substantial and positive impact to the department, community, and the law enforcement profession worldwide.

Employee of the Year

Sam Posthuma: Officer Sam Posthuma is a very active officer. His wealth of knowledge regarding tactics and criminal investigation have been invaluable. Officer Posthuma is thoroughly committed to being an educated, informed, and forward-thinking trainer, both as a firearms trainer and field training officer. His expertise as a SWAT team leader has provided the department with great training and a tactical advantage. In addition, Officer Posthuma's skills as a tactician helps our team safely respond to challenging and dangerous situations. He is a self-starter who not only focuses on follow up, but also on the importance of following through to completion. Officer Posthuma demands quality of himself and that is shown in his excellent work product whether it be training, report writing, or investigations.

Kenny Allin: Community Service Officer Kenny Allin provides direct immediate support to our team to help with traffic collisions, animal control issues, code enforcement challenges, and most significantly, with our burgeoning homeless issues. He volunteers or shows up without prompting and remains on scene for whatever time necessary to assist. Kenny is focused on service both outside and inside our department. There is never a task that is too small, difficult, or challenging that he will not accept and follow through to completion. Throughout this year, and since he has worked for the department, Community Service Officer Kenny Allin has demonstrated a positive attitude, an eagerness to learn and grow, as well as a desire to help others. Kenny is constantly on the street and focused on increasing the livability of our community.