

## **Behind the Badge: Honoring those who serve and protect**

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During May, National Police Week is celebrated with most memorial services this year falling on Thursday, May 13.

The Iowa State Patrol, the Pottawattamie County Sheriff's Office and the Council Bluffs Police Department will join forces to honor our officers who have been killed in the line of duty. The event will start at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor Thomas Hanafan will open the event by reading a proclamation from the city, followed by members of each agency's honor guard conducting a memorial flag ceremony. This will take place at the county courthouse, 227 S. Sixth St.

A memorial service is planned at the Refuge Bible Church, 634 Willow Ave. This will take place directly after the flag ceremony. During this service, the names of the officers who have fallen in the line of duty will be remembered and honored. Fallen officers include:

Pottawattamie County

Sheriff's Department

Deputy Clarence Woolman: March 25, 1911

Chief Deputy Duane Otto: Oct. 8, 1981

Iowa State Patrol

Trooper Harold Klinkefus: May 18, 1949

Trooper Lance Deitsch: June 30, 1989

Trooper Stanley Gerling: June 30, 1989

Council Bluffs

Police Department

Patrol Driver Charles Platner : Sept. 3, 1905

Detective George Wilson: July 28, 1907

Sgt. Web Miller: May 1, 1935

Officer John Stephens: Dec. 5, 1967

Lt. "Pat" Moore: June 30, 1971

Officer Ronald Roberts: Oct. 24, 1974

These events are open to the public, and we encourage the citizens to take part.

In 2009, 126 officers were killed in the line of duty across the nation. The average length of time on the various departments was 11 years and three months.

Of the officers killed, 125 were male and one was female. The average age was 39 years old. These officers left behind grandparents, parents, spouses, children, family and friends. It is an honor and privilege to pay our respects and show our gratitude to these men and women once a year during this week.

Following the church service, the Council Bluffs Police Department will have its awards ceremony.

During this event, we will graduate the 2010 Citizen Police Academy participants. These individuals have given their time over eight consecutive Thursday evenings from 6 to 9 to learn about our department and what police work is like. We will also name our officer of the year.

Supervisory personnel are asked to submit names of individuals whom they believe are deserving of this award. This award is based on overall performance, not just a single incident. Command staff then selects the officer. Officer Joseph T. Hothersall will receive the award this year.

Our police chaplains have graciously volunteered to coordinate this year's event with the help of Julie Good, R.C. Baxter, Dan Flores and Officer Mark Alba.

During May, several local civic organizations want to recognize the law enforcement community with awards. I find this commitment by these organizations very generous. The majority of the police contact with citizens does not always end with gratitude. Not many people are grateful for receiving a citation or going to jail. However, when community groups take the time and the commitment to recognize members of the law enforcement community for their work, it is rewarding and is truly appreciated by command staff and most importantly, the individual officer. We do not always tell our officers that they do a great job.

Officer Richard Stehly will be honored by the Westend Optimist Club during a breakfast meeting on May 13.

Officer Darren Budd will be honored during the noon Rotary Club meeting on May 27 during the weekly luncheon meeting.

The department's Honor Guard will receive a monetary donation presented by the Eagles Club during a ceremony on May 14. Sgt. Patrick Toscano will accept the donation on the behalf of the department.

I would personally like to thank all the civic groups and the citizens of Council Bluffs for their support of our men and women of the department.

Ralph O'Donnell is Chief of the Council Bluffs Police Department