

# Behind the Star

Alexandria Sheriff's Office Quarterly Newsletter  
First Quarter 2012



## Teaching Teens About Active Shooter Response

In March, as students at T.C. Williams were being taught traditional high school subjects, the students in teacher Kris Gulden's criminal justice classes learned active shooter response strategies from Sheriff's Office Training Deputies Robert Gilmore, Greg Zedalis and Vikas Ohri. Students had been examining active shooter cases like those at Columbine and Virginia Tech. The deputies provided instruction on what students should do in such situations and as first responders, how they are trained to more effectively enter and diffuse the danger.

The students learned that first responders traditionally established a perimeter and then waited until a tactical unit with better ballistic protection and more powerful weapons could respond. This approach changed, however, after the Columbine shooting in 1999 because the threat to those inside a shooting scene was so great that waiting for the SWAT team to arrive could place the students at greater risk. The deputies explained that first responders are now trained to put on protective gear, assemble a contact team with other first responders, locate the threat and eliminate it. This immediate response is designed to save lives and rescue those in danger more quickly. As part of the instruction, the students (seen above with Deputy Gilmore) were permitted to wear protective gear, hold ballistic shields and plastic training weapons, and while in contact teams, conduct a simulated search for the suspect in the hallways.

This is the fourth year that the Sheriff's Office has covered active shooter response in Ms. Gulden's class and the original instruction was first developed by Chief Deputy Lenny George.

### ANOTHER CLASSROOM CONNECTION

In addition to taking part in the classroom instruction for the criminal justice classes at T.C. Williams, deputies also assisted in teaching self-defense at the school. Teaming up with officers from the Alexandria Police Department, Deputies Robert Gilmore and Mark Jessup taught basic self-defense to teens as part of their regular physical education classes in March.

Over the years, hundreds of students have benefitted from learning practical ways to protect themselves. The Sheriff's Office remains committed to continuing this partnership.



### Message from the Sheriff

Once again, I'm proud to share news of the good work your Sheriff's Office is doing. The men and women who serve you are committed professionals who enjoy working with the community and making a difference in people's lives.

You'll be able to learn more about those we recognized in March at our annual employee awards, as well as the top honors won by our K-9 team. You'll also read about the continued outreach to our seniors and to students, and about the professional achievements and leadership of some of our administrative staff.

The work that these employees do every day is important but like anyone in public safety, the potential for danger remains. We experienced a heartbreaking reminder of that in February with the tragic death of Paramedic Joshua Weissman, and we express our sympathy to his family and our partners at the Alexandria Fire Department.

Public service is an important calling and public safety is the most rewarding but at times like this, also among the most difficult.

## Sheriff's Office Mourns Fallen Paramedic

Office provides support, resources to City-wide response to line of duty death of Joshua Weissman

Paramedic Joshua Weissman of the Alexandria Fire Department was on the scene of a vehicle crash on I-395 on the evening of February 8, when he fell from the overpass. His injuries proved to be fatal. Assigned to Station 206, the six-year veteran of the AFD had extensive experience with volunteer and professional rescue squads in his native upstate New York, and as well as in Washington, D.C.

His tragic accidental death was devastating to his family and friends, brothers and sisters at the AFD, his colleagues in public safety and to the Alexandria community. The Sheriff's Office was honored to be one of several agencies that offered support.

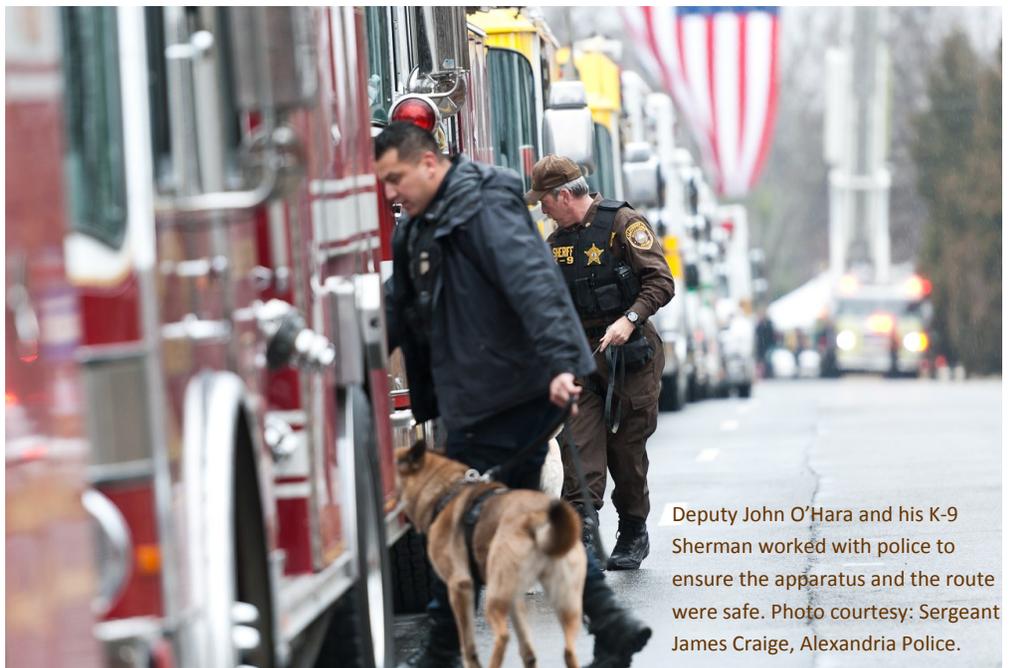
Just after the accident, two deputies assisted Weissman family members by providing an escort to Washington Hospital Center and over the next few days, deputies provided local transportation for family members as they traveled from the hotel, hospital and funeral home. Command staff worked closely with the Emergency Operations Center, the Inmate Work Detail cleaned up the grounds at Ivy Hill Cemetery in advance



of the funeral, and Harry Covert, who recently retired as the Sheriff's Office's Public Information Officer, volunteered to work with the media.

The large procession required multiple agencies to close roads and manage traffic. The Sheriff's Office provided 30 deputies to work the procession route and also arranged for ten additional deputies from Arlington County to assist with traffic control.

More than a thousand mourners, including fire and rescue personnel from across Virginia and New York, came to Alexandria to honor Paramedic Weissman's memory.



Deputy John O'Hara and his K-9 Sherman worked with police to ensure the apparatus and the route were safe. Photo courtesy: Sergeant James Craig, Alexandria Police.



## Inmate Work Detail Update

The Inmate Work Detail kicked off 2012 by removing the remnants of the holiday season that included retrieving and disassembling barricades from the First Night Alexandria celebration and taking down and storing the garland from the Gadsby's light poles along King Street in Old Town.



The IWD was part of a very large operation in January and February that allowed hundreds of pieces of office furniture, once used by the police department, to be reused in other City offices. The IWD collected old furniture from City offices, moved furniture being reused into offices, and filled dumpsters with excess furniture which could then be recycled or sold for scrap.

The IWD also completed special projects for City agencies including moving and rearranging approximately 3,000 boxes of records for City Archives, setting up and breaking down nearly 150 barricades for the

George Washington Birthday Parade, and completing landscaping beautification at the Alexandria Courthouse.

In addition to these special projects, the IWD continued its regular litter patrol removing dozens of bags of trash from Arlandria, Hume Springs, Four Mile Run Park, the King Street and Braddock Road Metro areas, the grounds around Beatley Library, and along the Duke Street and I-395 corridors.

## ADC Emergency Drills

In January and February, Sergeant Candra Callicott, assisted by Lieutenant Dorothy Pope, initiated emergency drills at the Adult Detention Center as part of emergency response training. The first drill involved a bomb threat during Security Team 2A's shift and the second drill involved a power loss in the security system computers while Security Team 2B was on duty.

In both cases, commanders and staff proceeded with emergency announcements, facility lockdown procedures, notifications to other appropriate agencies, and return to normal operations once the emergency had been resolved. The Sheriff's Office routinely conducts such drills to assess and monitor preparedness and to comply with professional accreditation standards.

## K-9 TEAM HONORED FOR TOP FINISH

On Saturday, February 25, Deputy John O'Hara was honored by the United States Police Canine Association at its annual banquet recognizing law enforcement K-9 teams for their achievements in the previous year. Deputy O'Hara and his partner Sherman were recognized for their first place finish in regional explosives detector trials. Seven teams participated in the annual trial, which is made up of three parts. The first tested odor recognition and each canine had to identify six



explosive odors located in 18 cans. Only those dogs who identified all the odors could proceed to the next part. The second part was a vehicle search and each canine had to locate two explosive odors on two vehicles. The third part involved a room search with two explosive odors hidden in three rooms. During the searches, the teams were evaluated on how well they conducted the searches. Deputy O'Hara and Sherman scored 197 out of a possible 200 points!

Deputy O'Hara (center) attended the banquet with his wife Lieutenant Janice Parker and Special Operations Captain Clarke Stearns.

## Outreach to Seniors

Office reaches out to serve senior citizens through crime prevention programs, support of Senior Services of Alexandria

The Sheriff's Office remains committed to outreach programs that empower our senior citizens.

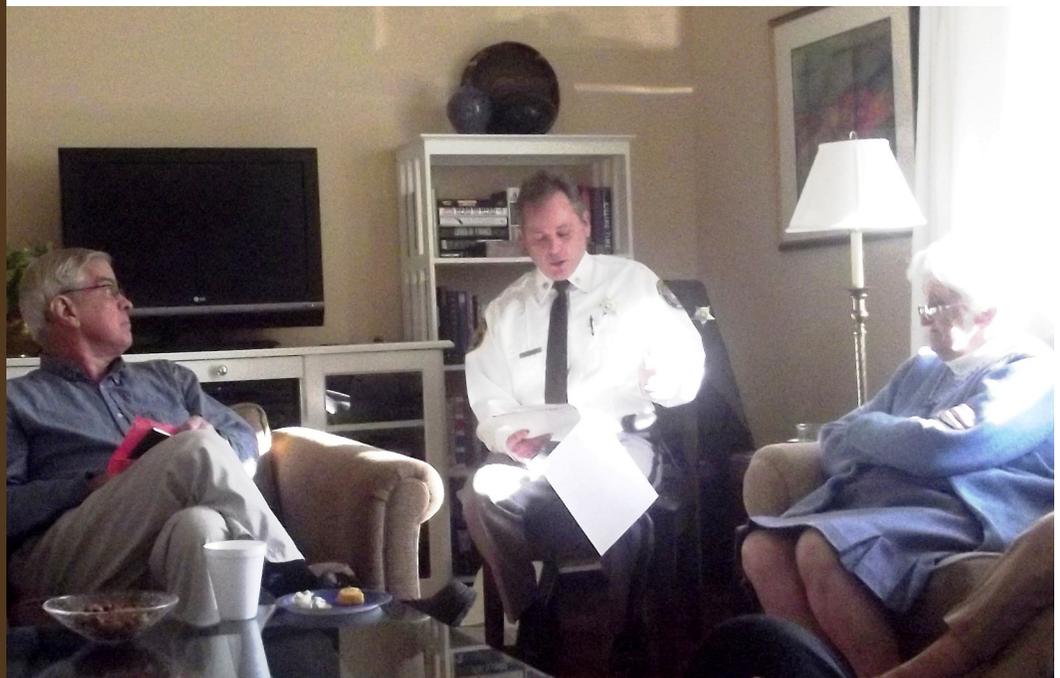
On Thursday, February 9, Chief Deputy Tim Gleeson and Captain Frank Milano attended a special community meeting for seniors in the Clover-College Park neighborhood to discuss how seniors can be impacted by fraud and other crimes. Chief Gleeson serves as the Sheriff's Office liaison for Triad, a cooperative effort of law enforcement agencies, senior citizens, and senior organizations that reduces fear of crime and victimization among seniors by increasing awareness of scams and frauds, strengthening communication between law enforcement and senior communities, and educating seniors on resources in their community program.

Chief Gleeson (below) discussed certain scams that are now prevalent or on the rise, including some that play upon the fears of seniors. He emphasized the importance of never sharing personal and financial information and encouraged anyone who is



victimised to report it to police. Sixteen Clover-College Park residents attended.

The Office also volunteers with Senior Services of Alexandria to deliver Meals on Wheels one day a month, usually with one to three teams taking part. Lieutenant Mike Eller (above) was part of this rewarding effort during the March deliveries.



## City Manager Holds Town Hall Meeting at Sheriff's Office

As part of his efforts to inform staff about the City's proposed budget, City Manager Rashad Young held a series of "town hall" style meetings in late February, including one at the Sheriff's Office. On Wednesday, February 29, the City Manager offered a budget presentation in the Sheriff's Roll Call Room with several dozen members of the Office attending with staff from the City's General Services and Emergency Communications Departments. Mr. Young answered questions from employees and also explained some of the concerns City staff had raised at other meetings.

## New Food Service Contract

In December, the Sheriff's Office selected a new food service contractor and this February, Catering By Marlin's, Inc., which operates as CBM Managed Services, began preparing meals for inmates and staff at the Detention Center. CBM, which is headquartered in Sioux Falls, S.D., was selected after a rigorous bid process made necessary when the Sheriff's Office's contract with Aramark ended. CBM has recently entered into correctional food service contracts with other Sheriffs' Offices around Virginia, including Virginia Beach and Henrico County.



## Employees Honored at Annual Awards Ceremony

On Wednesday, March 21, the Alexandria Sheriff's Office held its annual employee awards ceremony to recognize sworn and civilian staff for their achievements and contributions, as well as recent promotions.

Accreditation Manager Debra Defreitas gave an illustrated and well-received presentation on the Top Ten Reasons to Work at the Alexandria Sheriff's Office. Then the City's Chief of Staff Bruce Johnson delivered the keynote speech before Sheriff Dana Lawhorne presented the following awards.

### **Best Idea – Ramone Brooks**

Ramone Brooks, the System Program Specialist, received this award for his introduction of Wyse terminals in the Detention Center.

### **Community Service – Deputy Marybeth Plaskus**

Deputy Plaskus received this award for her service as a volunteer with the Women's Varsity Volleyball Team of Woodbridge High School.

### **Esprit de Corps – Deputy Pedro Ocasio**

Deputy Ocasio received this award for his enthusiasm on the job, his dedication to helping others on his team learn the booking function, and for the support he gives his team members whenever it is needed.

### **Uniform and Physical Fitness – Deputy Raymond Veney**

Deputy Veney received this award for his overall appearance in uniform and excellent physical condition.

### **Outstanding Performance**

The award is given to one sworn Deputy Sheriff, one line civilian employee, one sworn supervisory employee and one civilian supervisory employee. Those receiving these awards will have each demonstrated exemplary performance in their job class, completed extra assignments, served as role models to their colleagues.

**By sworn line staff** – Deputies Stephen Mackey and Robert Gilmore

**By sworn supervisor** – Sergeant Felicia Mensah

**By civilian line staff** – Ruth Graham

**By civilian supervisor** – Cindy Catlett

### **Unit Spirit Award** – Security Team 1B

Team 1B received this award for its camaraderie, togetherness and ability to accomplish its mission in the spirit of cooperation and teamwork.

### **Contributions by an Employee of a City Agency, Organization or Contractor** –

Stephen Reed, EAI, Inc.

Steve Reed received this award for his superior customer service in the installation and servicing of the Detention Center's new security systems and equipment.

### **Employees of the Quarter – 2011**

Employees of the Quarter were nominated by colleagues for their excellent performance during each quarter in 2011.

**1st Quarter** – Ramone Brooks

**2nd Quarter** – Brenda Gray

**3rd Quarter** – Deputy Robert Gilmore

**4th Quarter** – Michelle Frier

### **Pistol Master**

The following Deputy Sheriffs were recognized as pistol masters for receiving an average score of 99% or better in the Office's annual firearms qualification.

Deputy Ernesto Arroyo

Deputy Keawatin Carter

Deputy Timothy Honig

Deputy Eric Murray

Deputy Pedro Ocasio

Deputy Jarrod Overstreet

Sergeant Brian DeSouza

Sergeant Rawle Kelly

Sergeant Michael Neebe

Sergeant Douglas Woehlke

Lieutenant Michael Eller

Captain Douglas Schuler

Sheriff Lawhorne also recognized the recent promotion of Joseph Pankey, who was promoted to Sergeant in December 2011.

# Alexandria Sheriff's Office:



## NEW EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Between Monday, March 19 and Tuesday, March 27, the Sheriff's Office provided New Employee Training (NET) for ten newly hired staff members, including City employees as well as contract employees with food service and medical care contractors.

The Training Section conducted the session which ensured that these new workers received mandatory training required of all Sheriff's Office staff, including a minimum of 40 hours that civilians working in the Detention Center must receive. Classes covered administrative procedures, cultural diversity, inmate rights, first aid, CPR, defensive tactics, mental health, ethics, emergency procedures, report writing and other important topics.

## OFFICE WELCOMES NEW STAFF

The Sheriff's Office welcomed these new employees to its team during the first quarter:

Tashna Baccas, Senior Therapist (DCHS), January 9

Cortnee Webb, Senior Therapist (DCHS), January 9

Amy Bertsch, Communications Specialist, March 3

Kaelyn Branch, Pretrial/Probation Officer, March 3

Tiffany Ceasar, Information Technology Support Engineer II, March 3



On Monday, March 12, the Del Ray Citizens Association held their annual Meet & Greet at George Washington Middle School. Sergeant Candra Callicott (above) shared information about the Office's Community service work.



On Thursday, March 8, young adults with the Ruby Tucker Family Center met with Sheriff Lawhorne to interview him and learn more about the position of the Sheriff. The five teens are part of the Momentum Leadership Program overseen by Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority under the direction of Jason Ellis. (left to right: Jason Ellis, Rita Rich-Sorto, Savannah Brooks, Mauricio Hernandez, Dominique Scott, Cindy Ramirez, Sheriff Dana Lawhorne.)

# In Touch With Our Community



The Del Ray Meet & Greet gave Vice-Mayor Kerry Donley, Sheriff Dana Lawhorne and Congressman James P. Moran a great opportunity to speak with constituents.



Deputy William L. Morgan recently retired from the U.S. Army Reserve following a 31-year career. Deputy Morgan retired from the 1107th Mobilization Support Battalion as a Command Sergeant Major and his commanders and close friends from the Sheriff's Office attended his retirement ceremony at the U.S. Army Transportation Museum at Fort Eustis, Va., on Sunday, March 4. (left to right) Captain Douglas Schuler, Undersheriff Tony Davis, Deputy William L. Morgan, Chief Deputy Tony DiCesare, Lieutenant Monique Rea and Deputy Robert Gilmore. Photo courtesy: Captain Sean Mathews, U.S. Army Reserve.

## Annual Employee Awards



Fiscal Officer Cindy Catlett was recognized for outstanding performance by a civilian supervisor.



Deputies Robert Gilmore and Stephen Mackey were honored for outstanding performances by sworn line staff.



Sergeant Felicia Mensah was commended for outstanding performance by a sworn supervisor.



Security Team 1B received the Unity Spirit award.

## Partnering with State Police

Virginia State Police are required to verify the addresses of registered sex offenders on a regular basis. This includes visiting the addresses that sex offenders have provided to verify that they are current. Twice a year, the Alexandria Sheriff's Office assists a trooper with these verifications.

On Tuesday, January 17, Lieutenant John Kapetanis and Deputies Raymond Duff (right), Audrey Eskridge, George Gray, and Juan Guzman, under the direction of Trooper J.M. Huntley, attempted to confirm the listed addresses of 14 sex offenders with address within the City of Alexandria.



By the end of the evening, deputies were able to confirm the addresses of 12 of them and provided information on the remaining two to VSP.

The Sheriff's Office anticipates taking part in a similar operation this summer.

## Veteran Deputy Retires

Deputy Sheriff IV Robert Kendall retired following nearly 27 years of service. Deputy Kendall began his career in June 1985 and retired on February 29 of this year. Congratulations!



Below: Sheriff's Office Honor Guard marching down King Street at the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Photo courtesy: Wayne Hulehan

## Parade Traditions in Old Town

This winter, Sheriff Lawhorne and the Sheriff's Office Honor Guard once again marched in both the George Washington Birthday Parade in February and the St. Patrick's Day Parade in March. Deputies provided support to the City and the

Alexandria Police Department with by working traffic posts at these special events. Deputies also provided security and crowd control at the reviewing stand at the St. Patrick's Day Parade.



## Support from The Pink Zone



Above: (left to right) Lieutenant Monique Rea and Deputies Amy Clinton, Lisa Speed and Valarie Wright

On Friday, February 10, T.C. Williams girls' basketball team not only celebrated its Senior Night but also honored breast cancer survivors. The team hosted "The Pink Zone" to help raise money for breast cancer awareness and outreach efforts and welcomed special guests, including four members of the Sheriff's Office who have survived breast cancer.

At halftime, the Titans presented Lieutenant Monique Rea and Deputies Amy Clinton, Lisa Speed and Valarie Wright with roses. They were joined by Sheriff Dana Lawhorne, Police Chief Earl Cook and survivors from the Police Department. Deputy Chief Tim Gleeson joined the Sheriff and deputies in cheering the Titans on for a victory against Annandale.

## Citizens Academy

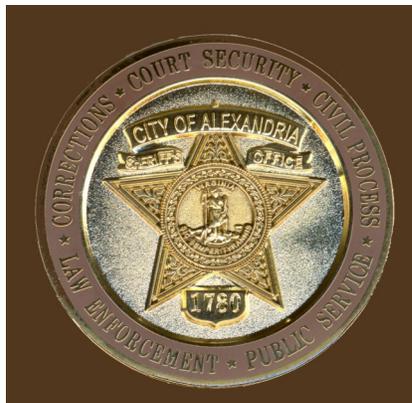
Twice a year, the City conducts the Alexandria Citizens Academy which meets one night a week for eight weeks and allows participants to learn how to access City government, become familiar with the structure, functions and activities of the City, encourage them to get involved in the City's government, and enhance their ability to communicate effectively with City officials.

On Thursday, March 15, Undersheriff Tony Davis and Captain Wendy Webb took part in the Public Safety and the Criminal Justice System session held at Police Headquarters. Undersheriff Davis and Captain Webb discussed the role of the Sheriff's Office, explained the Office's ability to generate revenue for the City, provided an overview of Detention Center functions, highlighted ways that the Office works closely with the community, and explained the importance of accreditation programs and other initiatives that reflect the high standards of the Alexandria Sheriff's Office.

Fifteen participants completed the program and graduated in a ceremony in April. Those interested in attending the next session should visit <http://alexandriava.gov/CitizensAcademy>.

## Save the Date!

The 2012 National Night Out crime prevention event will be held on the evening of Tuesday, August 7. Please get in touch with your civic association and make plans to get involved in National Night Out this year!



## Two Administrative Staff Members Attending LMI

Sergeant Candra Callicott and Fiscal Officer Cindy Catlett became the newest members of the Leadership and Management Institute (LMI), an intensive 10-week program that encourages and educates selected candidates who have the potential to be effective leaders. They are now part of a 16-person class that meets weekly and explores important topics like ethics, change management, decision making, communication and community engagement, public policy development, and conflict resolution and mediation.

## Commander Returns from Special City Hall Detail

Mondre' Kornegay, Commander of the Technical Services Section, recently returned from an extended assignment in the Human Resources Department at City Hall.

Commander Kornegay was first detailed there in February 2011 on a part-time basis to assist with development of new and revision of existing administrative regulations and to oversee the Employee Awards Committee which recommend significant improvements to the City's employee recognition and awards program. The City's Human Resources director commended Commander Kornegay for her hard work and professionalism.

## CREDITS

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