

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

June 26, 2024
1.10

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MEDAL OF VALOR

The Medal of Valor is the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) highest honor and is awarded to the officers who distinguish themselves by conspicuous bravery or heroism above and beyond the normal demands of police service. To be awarded the Medal of Valor, an officer must have performed an act displaying extreme courage while consciously facing imminent peril. The Medal of Valor was first presented in 1925, and to date, there have been a total of 749 recipients. There are 15 additional officers who have been approved by the Commendations Board for receipt of the Medal of Valor at a ceremony on September 5, 2024, for their involvement during three separate incidents.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. That the Honorable Board of Police Commissioners award the Medal of Valor for bravery to:

Metropolitan Division

Police Officer III Howard Ng, Serial No. 30405
Police Officer III Joseph Dominguez, Serial No. 31216
Police Officer III Royce Burroughs, Serial No. 39255
Police Officer III Luis Valle, Serial No. 39185
Police Officer III Guy Dobine, Serial No. 30464 (Retired)
Police Officer III Bruce Adam, Serial No. 30978
Police Officer III Steve Hernandez, Serial No. 34927
Police Officer III Jonathan Pultz, Serial No. 34942
Police Officer III Jose Martinez, Serial No. 26581(Retired)
Police Officer III Phillip Peery, Serial No. 40651
Police Officer III Enrique Anzaldo, Serial No. 25462
Police Officer III Eddie Roca, Serial No. 30565

Hollenbeck Area

Police Officer II Miguel Ruano, Serial No. 39417
Police Officer II Rigoberto Vazquez, Serial No. 39428

Van Nuys Area

Police Officer III Thomas Redshaw, Serial No. 31378 (Now assigned to LAPD Metropolitan Division).

Metropolitan Division

It is recommended that the Honorable Board of Police Commissioners award the Medal of Valor to the above listed officers for their response and involvement with an armed barricaded suspect. On October 8, 2021, members of the LAPD Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team willingly placed their lives in danger to rescue an innocent hostage being held at gunpoint by a criminal focused on death and destruction. This was only the sixth time in the history of the LAPD that explosive breaching was used in a hostage rescue scenario. The suspect, Rudy Anderson, shot at three different people, striking one. He attempted a carjacking, stole another person's bicycle, and then placed the barrel of his gun against a person's cheek and pressed the trigger. Fortunately, the gun failed to fire. The suspect was located by Central Area patrol officers, who valiantly chased him into an apartment building, where he ran out of their view. For some time, the suspect's location within the building was not known. Video was located showing the suspect grabbing a female victim and dragging her down a hallway. The SWAT team was notified and responded to the location. The SWAT Officer in Charge (OIC), met with the Incident Commander, gathered intelligence and formulated a plan.

The available intelligence led officers to believe the suspect was possibly in an apartment located on the fourth floor. The team began to plan for a possible hostage rescue, which included placing explosive breaching charges on two entrances to ensure officers had immediate and direct access to the victim. As the officers assembled their entry team at the door, they determined the suspect was armed, had already shot several innocent civilians, had a possible victim inside, and would not hesitate to shoot police officers.

The SWAT officers at scene were ready for another barricaded suspect event when things took a sudden, unexpected turn. The suspect dragged the victim in front of the apartment window and placed a gun to her temple. Within seconds, the OIC authorized officers on scene to make a dynamic, explosive breach. A countdown was initiated, and both charges detonated filling the air with deafening noise and smoke. The planned primary entrance did not open, due to the suspect placing a filing cabinet weighing several hundred pounds in front of the door, defeating the explosive charge.

Simultaneously, a secondary breach created an entry point due to an explosive charge placed by Officer Bruce Adam. The entry team quickly pivoted and switched from one entrance to the other, communicating, and utilizing swift, dynamic tactics exactly as they had practiced. The entry teams all knew there was a deadly threat inside the apartment, a man with a gun who was ready to take life without hesitation. Regardless, they all stood ready to face that threat, even at the risk of their personal safety. With smoke still in the air, Officer Ng deployed his flash bang into the entrance. Officers Howard Ng, Joe Dominguez, Royce Burroughs, Luis Valle, Guy Dobine, Bruce Adam, Eddie Roca, Steve Hernandez, Jon Pultz, Jose Martinez, Phillip Peery, and Rick Anzaldo followed, intent on locating the threat and rescuing the hostage. The suspect had placed a large concrete kitchen island against the door, and the charge had knocked it squarely in the path of the team. The blast pulverized the drywall into fine dust that now coated the surface of the island which lay at an angle. Officers Ng and Valle stepped onto the surface and immediately slipped; however, they were able to catch their balance and kept

moving forward. The SWAT team flowed into the room as trained, each member working off the person in front of them covering every inch of the room.

Officer Roca moved into the apartment and utilized his rifle-mounted light to observe the suspect facing him. Officer Roca then heard the victim scream and observed the suspect holding a gun to the victim's chest. The suspect used the victim as a human shield as he positioned himself behind a pillar inside the apartment. Additional SWAT Officers, once inside the apartment were alerted to the suspect and victim location.

As Officer Valle entered the apartment, he heard the victim screaming. Officer Valle observed the suspect to be in a prone position with a firearm pointed at officers. Officer Valle observed that the victim had broken free and created distance from the suspect. Officer Burroughs stepped toward the suspect and also observed the suspect was pointing a firearm at officers. Officer Burroughs proceeded to grab the victim and alerted the SWAT teams that the suspect was armed. Officer Burroughs pulled the victim to safety and notified the SWAT teams the hostage had been rescued.

Officers Roca and Valle were the first to reach the suspect, ending his deadly threat. The rest of the team continued to clear the room and verified there were no additional suspects or victims. The victim later said the suspect was firing his gun at the officers as they entered. Although no bullet impacts from the suspect's gun were located, there were several rounds in the cylinder with primer strikes, indicating he had attempted to fire at the officers as they entered. The victim also stated that she was convinced the suspect was going to kill her if the officers had not made entry and rescued her.

All the personnel involved in this incident deserve recognition for their bravery, teamwork, tactical expertise, and dedication to their craft. The entry teams consisting of Police Officers Ng, Dominguez, Burroughs, Valle, Dobine, Roca, Adam, Hernandez, Pultz, Martinez, Peery, and Anzaldo deserve the highest recognition for willingly entering a location in order to face a suspect determined to kill others. For their bravery above and beyond the call of duty, it is recommended they be awarded the Los Angeles Police Department Medal of Valor.

Hollenbeck Area

It is recommended that the Honorable Board of Police Commissioners award the Medal of Valor to Hollenbeck Area Officers Miguel Ruano, Serial No. 39417, and Rigoberto Vazquez, Serial No. 39428. The officers observed a wanted gang member which resulted in a foot pursuit and the suspect firing his weapon at officers at point blank range.

On May 13, 2016, Officers Ruano and Vazquez were assigned to the Hollenbeck Area Gang Enforcement Detail. Their primary duties consisted of gathering gang intelligence, monitoring gang activity, and deterring gang violence. The officers were conducting patrol in a neighborhood plagued by gang violence. As they drove through the neighborhood, they recognized a dangerous gang member with an outstanding arrest warrant standing on the sidewalk with a group of individuals. As the officers approached, they stopped their vehicle and deployed to effect an arrest. When the suspect noticed the officers, he ran.

Officers chased the suspect on foot. Utilizing sound tactics, Officer Vazquez, who was the closest to the suspect, gave the suspect commands to stop and submit to arrest while he closely monitored the suspect's actions. Officer Ruano, who was closely following, effectively performed his duties as the communications officer and notified Communications Division of their foot pursuit status and direction of travel.

During the foot pursuit, the suspect collided with a streetlight, which caused him to lose his balance and run into a parked vehicle. With a clear view of the suspect's hands, Officer Vazquez deemed it an opportunity to approach the suspect and take him into custody. As Officer Vazquez attempted to take physical control of the suspect, the suspect removed a handgun from his waistband and aimed it directly at Officer Vazquez' chest. Officer Vazquez used one hand to redirect the gun away from his chest and head area, while simultaneously attempting to control the suspect.

The suspect, intending to murder the officer, fired three rounds at point-blank range at Officer Vazquez, striking him on his upper bicep. After being shot, Officer Vazquez pushed the suspect to the ground. Officer Vazquez then fell on top of the suspect while continuously pushing the suspect's firearm away from him.

Officer Ruano, who was close behind, noticed his partner had been shot and believed he was gravely wounded. Mindful of the tactical situation, Officer Ruano closed the distance and straddled the suspect's legs. The suspect was still holding the gun in his hand and attempting to discharge his gun at Officer Vazquez. Officer Ruano then fired multiple rounds at the suspect, stopping his violent actions. Arriving officers placed a tourniquet above the officer's gunshot wound and transported him to the hospital, where he received medical attention.

When faced with adversity, Officers Ruano and Vazquez honed in on their training and experience to overcome a dangerous criminal fully committed to taking an officer's life to evade arrest. Officers Ruano and Vazquez are deserving of recognition for their bravery, teamwork, and tactical expertise for taking a suspect into custody who was intent on killing them. For their bravery above and beyond the call of duty, it is recommended they be awarded the Los Angeles Police Department Medal of Valor.

Van Nuys Area

It is recommended that the Honorable Board of Police Commissioners award the Medal of Valor to Officer Thomas Redshaw. Officer Redshaw is credited with saving a woman's life as she attempted to jump off the roof of a building.

On June 19, 1997, Police Officers Thomas Redshaw and Carlos Sanchez, Jr., were assigned to the Van Nuys Gang Unit. They monitored a radio call of a possible suicidal subject atop the roof of the office building at 3900 Sepulveda Boulevard. The officers quickly made their way to the top of the eight-story building. Officer Redshaw immediately established contact with a distraught woman, who was contemplating jumping from the roof. Officer Redshaw communicated with the woman who was straddling the wall with one leg on the roof and one leg dangling over the edge. Officer Sanchez maintained close cover for his partner, while

Officer Redshaw communicated with the subject in an attempt to de-escalate her despondency. Officer Redshaw talked with the subject for approximately 15 minutes, while the on-scene Incident Commander monitored the negotiations. The Incident Commander coordinated with the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) response team, in an attempt to get them to stage their inflatable pillow bag below the victim.

As Officer Redshaw continued dialogue with the subject, she suddenly swung both legs over the edge of the roof wall and was now holding onto the edge of the wall with just her arms. The weight of the subject, unsupported by any foothold, quickly drained her arm strength and she was visibly beginning to tire. At the critical moment, Officer Redshaw locked eyes with the subject and knew she was having second thoughts. He quickly asked her if he could help her and she nodded yes. Officer Redshaw, at great personal risk to his own life, made a desperate grab for the subject's upper body, just as she was losing her grip on the wall. As this happened, Officer Redshaw was able to tenuously grab the subject around each bicep, stopping her fall.

The grip was not ideal and was hampered by the subject's chest being pressed against the outer wall of the roof. As Officer Redshaw pulled with all his might, the leverage that he would have been able to use with his legs was immediately rendered useless due to his locked legs pressed flush against the interior wall of the roof. Seeing Officer Redshaw's predicament, two other officers that were at scene grabbed both Officer Redshaw and the subject and pulled them to safety. At the moment of rescue, the LAFD air pillow was not in place on the ground below.

Aside from a few scrapes and bruises, the subject and all of the officers involved were relatively uninjured. Detective II Christopher McKinney was also on the roof that day and witnessed the actions of the officers. It is Detective McKinney's opinion that if Officer Redshaw had done a single action differently or had hesitated for a millisecond, this incident could have had multiple catastrophic outcomes.

The subject's plight was portrayed the very next day, when the front page of the Los Angeles Times newspaper published a photograph of her body completely hanging over the edge of the wall, the subject's feet were dangling 75 feet above the ground, supported only by Officer Redshaw's grip on her biceps.

For his bravery above and beyond the call of duty, it is recommended that Officer Thomas Redshaw be awarded the Los Angeles Police Department Medal of Valor.

The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

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The two other officers that assisted at scene are being considered separately for the Los Angeles Police Medal.

Should you have any questions, please contact Police Administrator III Annemarie Sauer, Commanding Officer, Administrative Services Bureau, at (213) 486-7060.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dominic H. Choi", is written over a large, empty oval shape that serves as a placeholder for a stamp or seal.

DOMINIC H. CHOI
Chief of Police

FOR: