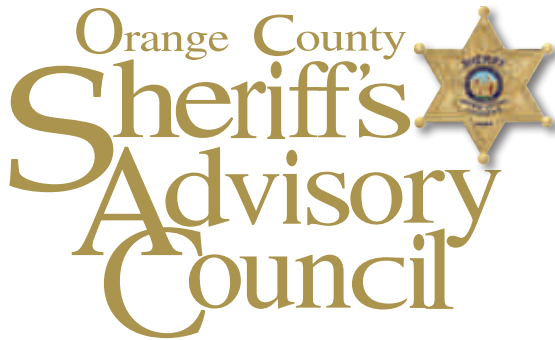


2024

MEDAL OF VALOR

sponsored by the





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Dear Guest,

It has been an honor and a privilege for the Orange County Sheriff's Advisory Council to host the Medal of Valor luncheon for the last 35 years.

The Orange County Sheriff's Advisory Council is a non-profit organization that is composed of more than 400 business leaders in Orange County. The Council has donated time, money, and other resources to support the Orange County Sheriff's Department. This year, we will be awarding 36 medals for 10 incidents. The deputies and employees who are being recognized today have distinguished themselves and the Orange County Sheriff's Department through their actions.

Thank you for being part of this very important event.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Watts". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Aaron Watts

President, Orange County Sheriff's Advisory Council



Thank you for joining us for the Medal of Valor as we recognize the dedicated men and women of the Orange County Sheriff's Department for their great work.

Every day, members of our Department do courageous and valiant acts. The Medal of Valor honors the most exceptional of these actions, and reminds us of our commitment to those we serve.

We see that commitment in action every day with professional staff and sworn personnel working together in public service. Despite challenges, we adapt, train and innovate to do what needs to be done to keep our community safe.

Thank you for being here today and demonstrating your continued support of the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald D. Barnes".

Don Barnes
Orange County Sheriff – Coroner

Valor



Courage



Merit



Lifesaving



Purple Heart



Distinguished Deputy



PROGRAM

CALL TO ORDER

Pipe Band - *Association of Orange County Deputy Sheriffs*

Honor Guard - *Orange County Sheriff's Department*

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Explorer Stephanie Lopez

Orange County Sheriff's Department

INVOCATION

Kathleen Kooiman

Chief Chaplain, Orange County Sheriff's Department

INTRODUCTION

Aaron Watts

President, Orange County Sheriff's Advisory Council

OCSAC Lifetime Achievement Award

Richard Berteau

AWARD PRESENTATIONS

CLOSING REMARKS

Sheriff Don Barnes

Orange County Sheriff-Coroner

PERFORMANCE OF GOD BLESS AMERICA

Explorer Stephanie Lopez

Orange County Sheriff's Department

medal for

LIFESAVING

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Crime Prevention Specialist
Ryan Case p. 23
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MEDAL *for* LIFESAVING

The Medal for Lifesaving is awarded for extraordinary actions while affecting, or attempting to affect, a lifesaving rescue or any other act, which if successful, would be considered lifesaving.

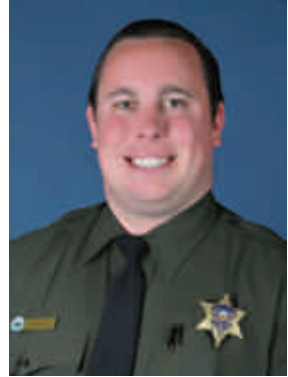
This award is made for actions rendered beyond normal first-aid and without danger to the employee.



Deputy Casey Briggs

Medal for Lifesaving

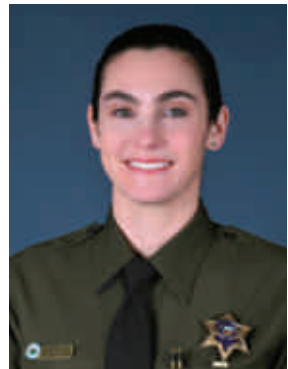
Deputy Briggs was born and raised in Long Beach, CA. Prior to becoming a deputy, he was an Office Assistant and a Correctional Services Assistant (CSA) with the Orange County Sheriff's Department. In 2017, he graduated Basic Academy Class 224. In addition to patrol, Deputy Briggs serves in the Behavioral Health Bureau for Mission Viejo Police Services. He enjoys spending time with his father, retired Orange County Sheriff's Assistant Sheriff Jon Briggs, stepmother, retired Orange County Sheriff's Deputy Susan Briggs, and brother, (CSA) Kristoffer Briggs.



Deputy Stacy Cole

Medal for Lifesaving

Deputy Cole was born in Springfield and raised in Agawam, MA. Prior to joining the Orange County Sheriff's Department, she was a professional basketball player and collegiate basketball coach. In 2017, she graduated Basic Academy Class 228. In addition to patrol, Deputy Cole serves in the Community Services Unit for Mission Viejo Police Services. In her free time, she enjoys family life with her wife, Taylor, daughter, June, and son, Dane.





Deputy Kassy Jacobs

Medal for Lifesaving

Deputy Jacobs was born and raised in San Diego, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, she served in the United States Air Force for 11 years and earned the rank of Staff Sergeant, specializing as a HazMat Inspector, Load Planner and Flight Medic. In 2016, she graduated Basic Academy Class 222. When she is not working, she enjoys spending time with her husband, combat-wounded Navy Corpsman Daniel "Doc" Jacobs, children, Landon, Macy, Savannah, Aubrielle and Adam; as well as her parents, Retired US Navy Seal Kevin Blackwell, and US Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jenny Marshall.





INCIDENT

Deputies render aid to stabbing victim

At about 9 a.m. on November 21, 2023, Mission Viejo deputies were dispatched to reports of a stabbing at the Amazon warehouse in the 25000 block of Jeronimo Road.

When deputies arrived, they found a 48-year-old woman suffering severe wounds after being stabbed in the neck multiple times.

Being the first on scene, Deputy Casey Briggs immediately applied pressure to the woman's neck in an attempt to control the bleeding. His partners, Deputy Kassy Jacobs and Deputy Stacy Cole, arrived shortly after and joined the lifesaving effort.

Deputy Jacobs, a former United States Air Force medic, took control of the chaotic scene. She provided aid and coordinated additional medical care using a specialized first-aid kit with combat-graded supplies to help slow the bleeding and clear the victim's airway.

The deputies worked together to control the profuse bleeding and keep the victim calm until the Orange County Fire Authority arrived.

The woman was taken to the hospital in critical condition where she received a lifesaving procedure to repair her severed trachea.

Thanks to the initial medical care of the deputies and advanced medical aid provided by firefighters, the woman ultimately recovered. Their actions exemplify the finest traditions of the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

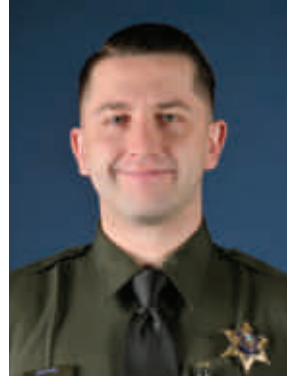




Deputy Conor Cardenas

Medal for Lifesaving

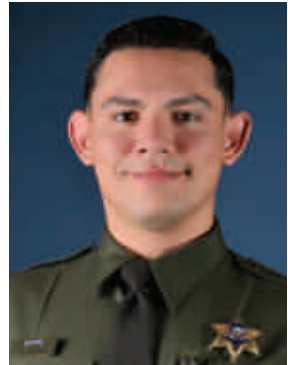
Deputy Cardenas was born in Irvine and raised in La Mirada, CA. In 2018, he graduated Basic Academy Class 234. When he is not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Orange County Sheriff's Deputy Coroner Katia Cardenas.



Deputy Alfredo Garcia-Rodriguez

Medal for Lifesaving

Deputy Garcia-Rodriguez was born in Anaheim and raised in Santa Ana, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he served in the United States Marine Corps for four years and earned the rank of Sergeant, specializing as a Field Radio Operator and Marine Corps Martial Arts Instructor. In 2019, he graduated Basic Academy Class 239. When he is not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife, United States Marine Corps Veteran, Araceli, and children, Ezequiel and Elliot Alfredo.





Deputy Jeremiah Peyus

Medal for Lifesaving

Deputy Peyus was born in Jackson and raised in Pioneer, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he served in the United States Army for 10 years and earned the rank of Staff Sergeant, specializing as a Forward Observer. In 2017, he graduated Basic Academy Class 228. When he is not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Giselle, and children, Jeremiah, Odette and James.



Seal Beach Police Department

Detective Jacob Otto

Plaque for Lifesaving

Detective Otto was born in Upland and raised in La Habra, CA. Prior to working at the Seal Beach Police Department (SBPD), he served as a Task Force Officer with two federal agencies, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). He is currently a Detective with SBPD with nine years of experience and a Recruit Training Officer (RTO) at the Regional Criminal Justice Training Center at Golden West College. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Chelsi.





INCIDENT

Provided lifesaving first aid to shooting victim

At approximately 6:40 p.m. on September 30, 2023, deputies responded to reports of a shooting in the unincorporated community of Rossmoor.

When deputies arrived, they found a man suffering from a gunshot wound lying on the grass outside a residence in the 11000 block of Loch Lomond Road. Witnesses also told deputies there was an additional gunshot wound victim inside the residence.

Deputies first rendered the scene safe so they could begin providing medical aid. A team of deputies entered the home and provided medical treatment to a victim who sustained two non-life threatening gunshot wounds to his leg.

Deputies Eduardo Cardenas, Alfredo Garcia-Rodriguez and Jeremiah Peyus, and Seal Beach Police Detective Jacob Otto began working on the 23-year-old man lying in front of the home. They quickly determined the man was suffering from a serious gunshot wound to the upper chest, and effective and efficient medical care was needed.

Using medical supplies from their individual first-aid kits, the deputies and Detective Otto addressed the injury, applying pressure and helping the victim into a position so he could breathe more easily. They continued to provide medical care until paramedics arrived.



The victim was taken to the hospital, where he ultimately recovered.

After further investigation, deputies learned the incident started as a robbery with both parties exchanging gunfire. Despite the danger, the responding deputies safely secured the scene so their partners could begin providing lifesaving care.

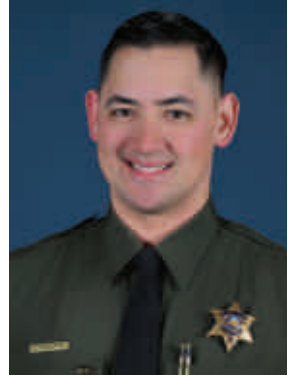
Their actions are in keeping with the finest traditions of the Orange County Sheriff's Department.



Deputy David McElwain

Medal for Lifesaving

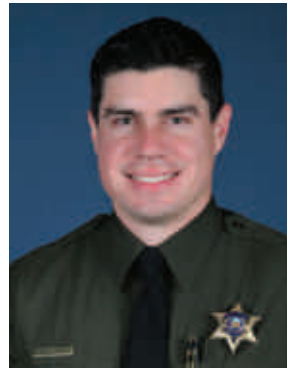
Deputy McElwain was born in Newport Beach and raised in Lake Forest, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he served as an Explorer for the City of Lake Forest and was an EMT for the Long Beach Fire Department. In 2011, he graduated Basic Academy Class 200. He currently works in the Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) as a Patrol K9 Handler and Team Leader. His current partner, K9 Mac, is a 7-year-old Belgian Malinois. K9 Mac is dual purpose trained for patrol operations and narcotics detection.



Deputy Kyle Pendergast

Medal for Lifesaving

Deputy Pendergast was born in La Mirada and raised in Whittier, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he worked as a Community Service Officer at the California State University, Fullerton Police Department (CSUFPPD). In 2017, he graduated Basic Academy Class 230.





INCIDENT

Rescued victims trapped in a burning vehicle

At nearly midnight on April 28, 2023, deputies responded to a rollover vehicle crash on Coast Highway in the city of Dana Point. Two vehicles traveling in opposite directions collided, with the impact of the crash setting one vehicle on fire and the other rolling to its side with two occupants trapped inside.

Deputy David McElwain was among the responding deputies. As he exited his patrol unit, he called for responding units to bring every fire extinguisher they had to smother the flames. Multiple deputies diligently worked to keep the flames at bay until the Orange County Fire Authority arrived.

When Deputy McElwain reached the vehicle that was on fire, the driver-side door was jammed shut. He directed the driver to try and make his way to the backseat. Deputy McElwain and Deputy Pendergast then pulled him out of the burning vehicle.

Deputy Pendergast stabilized the driver's neck and helped keep him in a recovery position until advanced medical care arrived.

Deputy McElwain then joined his partners who were attempting to free the trapped occupants of the rollover vehicle. When he looked in the vehicle, Deputy McElwain saw the woman was trapped beneath the man, his legs pressing down on her while they waited for help.

Deputy McElwain reached in the vehicle and lifted the man's legs off the woman, relieving the pressure until the Orange County Fire Authority arrived to provide mechanical assistance to pull the occupants out.

The deputies' actions that night are in keeping with the finest traditions of the Orange County Sheriff's Department.



Deputy Steven Ledesma

Medal for Lifesaving

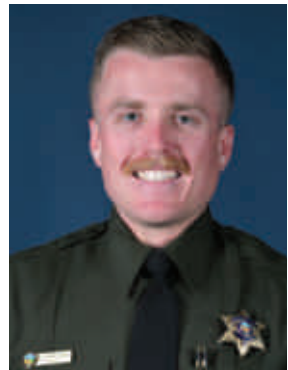
Deputy Ledesma was born in Orange and raised in Brea, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he served in the United States Army Reserve for eight years and earned the rank of First Lieutenant, specializing as an Ordinance Officer. In 2016, he graduated Basic Academy Class 222. When he is not working, he enjoys spending time with his girlfriend, Alexa, and children, Jayden and Justin.



Deputy Cole Snyder

Medal for Lifesaving

Deputy Snyder was born in Anaheim and raised in Tustin, CA. In 2016, he graduated Basic Academy Class 233.





INCIDENT

Deputies pull residents from burning home

At nearly 9 p.m. on December 19, 2023, deputies responded to a house fire in the 25000 block of Mawson Drive in Laguna Hills.

When deputies arrived, the home was enveloped in flames and heavy smoke, making it difficult to see and breathe. The deputies learned an elderly couple was still inside the home and, despite great danger to themselves, entered the residence to find them.

Deputy Cole Snyder entered the home, shining his flashlight and yelling for the victims to move toward the light. He made his way to the back of the home where he found a woman who was disoriented and having trouble walking. He escorted her to the living room near the front door where Deputy Steven Ledesma pulled her to safety.

Deputy Snyder, with Deputy Ledesma behind him, returned to the smoke-filled home and followed the sound of a male voice calling for help. The deputies found the man, who was severely burned and covered in soot, and pulled him out of the home to safety.

Community Services Officer Alexander Pacheco, who also was on scene, assisted with the residents once they were outside the burning home to ensure they were medically evaluated by the Orange County Fire Authority.

Both deputies and CSO Pacheco were taken to the hospital where they were treated for smoke inhalation injuries. For several weeks following the incident, they continued to be affected by the injuries they sustained that night.

The heroic actions of Deputy Ledesma and Deputy Snyder are in keeping with the finest traditions of the Orange County Sheriff's Department.



Crime Prevention Specialist Ryan Case

Medal for Lifesaving

Crime Prevention Specialist Case was born and raised in Lancaster, CA. Prior to joining the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he was a police officer for the Los Angeles Police Department for 15 years. He was hired in 2023 with the Orange County Sheriff's Department. When he is not working, he enjoys spending time with his two children, Emma and Jack, and his father, retired California Department of Corrections Sergeant Thomas Case.



Deputy Tyler Gish

Medal for Lifesaving

Deputy Gish was born and raised in Orange, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he worked in the City of Orange Community Services for the Recreation Department. In 2015, he graduated Basic Academy Class 221. Deputy Gish became an Explorer Advisor in 2022. When he is not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Victoria, sons, Colton and Wesley, and brother, Orange County Sheriff's Deputy Ryan Gish.





INCIDENT

Rescued a toddler who drowned in a pool

At approximately 12:15 p.m. on December 12, 2023, Deputy Tyler Gish and Crime Prevention Specialist (CPS) Ryan Case responded to reports of a 22-month-old who fell into the pool and was not breathing. When they arrived, the child's father was attempting CPR and CPS Case, a former Los Angeles Police Department Officer, immediately took over.

CPS Case performed several rounds of CPR while Deputy Gish applied an AED. When the AED advised no shock should be administered to the young child, CPS Case continued with several more rounds of CPR.

During compressions, the child expelled some water from his lungs and regained a faint pulse. When the Orange County Fire Authority arrived, firefighters provided advanced lifesaving support for the child and transported him to a local hospital.

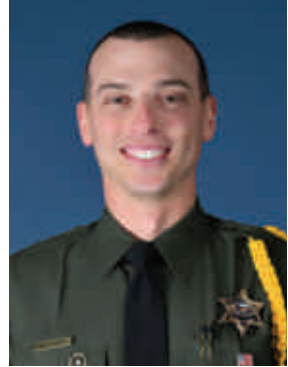
Thanks to the expedient and efficient lifesaving care by CPS Case and Deputy Gish, the toddler made a full recovery. Their actions exemplify the finest traditions of the Orange County Sheriff's Department.



Deputy Steven Greenberg

Medal for Lifesaving

Deputy Greenberg was born in Fullerton and raised in Corona, CA. In 2013, he graduated Basic Academy Class 212. Deputy Greenberg is an Assistant Team Leader of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team. When he is not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Raquel, sons, Spencer and Trevor, and parents, Tustin Chief of Police Stu Greenberg, and Vicki Greenberg.



Deputy Justin MacDonald

Medal for Lifesaving

Deputy MacDonald was born in Orange and raised in Brea, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he worked as a Commercial Plumbing Foreman for 10 years and is a recognized State of California Journeyman Plumber. In 2012, he graduated Basic Academy Class 202. When he is not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Joy, and their two sons, Talon and Colin.





Sergeant Neal Holmes

Medal for Lifesaving

Sergeant Holmes was born in Evanston, IL and raised in Yorba Linda, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he was an officer with Brea Police Department for six years. In 2012, he graduated Basic Academy Class 176. When he is not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Wendy, and four children, Mckenzi, Diesel, Hudson and Navy.



Torrance Police Department

Officer Miguel Delgado

Plaque for Lifesaving

Officer Delgado was born in Inglewood and raised in Torrance, CA. Prior to working at the Torrance Police Department (TPD), he served in the United States Army for eight years and earned the rank of Staff Sergeant, specializing as Military Police. In 2006, he was hired with TPD as a patrol officer. Officer Delgado has been a member of the TPD Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team since 2009 and is also a drill instructor for the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Academy. When he is not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Johana, and their dog, Rocket.





INCIDENT

Provided lifesaving care for academy recruit

On April 27, 2023, a Deputy Sheriff Trainee was running with his classmates from Basic Academy Class 256 during a physical training session at the Orange County Sheriff's Regional Training Academy.

Just before 3:30 p.m., the class was on their final run of the day when the trainee collapsed and lost consciousness.

Academy Tactical Staff members immediately began assessing the trainee and called 9-1-1. Deputies Steven Greenberg and Justin MacDonald, Torrance Police Officer Miguel Delgado and Sergeant Neal Holmes began performing CPR and applied an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

For approximately eight minutes, the team performed CPR and deployed the AED twice, working on the trainee until paramedics arrived.

He underwent a successful heart surgery and medical staff determined the effective lifesaving care provided by the Academy Tactical Staff was critical to his survival.

The trainee continues to work for the Orange County Sheriff's Department and has aspirations to return to the Academy as a Deputy Sheriff Trainee and become a deputy.

The actions of the Academy Tactical Staff exemplify the finest traditions of the Orange County Sheriff's Department.





MEDAL *for* MERIT

The Medal for Merit is awarded for extraordinary performance of duties, which brings significant status or recognition to the department or for meritorious actions or performance that rises above normal duties and occurs during a noteworthy incident.



Sergeant Brian Gunsolley

Medal for Merit

Sergeant Gunsolley was born in Santa Monica and raised in Goleta, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he was a phlebotomist for the Cancer Foundation of Santa Barbara and a security supervisor for the University of California Police Department at UCLA Medical Center. In 1999, he graduated Basic Academy Class 142. When he is not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Dena, son, Nolan, and daughter, Kaitlin.



Developed and implemented a new drug education and prevention program

Sergeant Brian Gunsolley is recognized for researching, designing and implementing a new drug education program called Above the Influence (ATI), positioning the Orange County Sheriff's Department as a countywide leader in prevention programming.

Sergeant Gunsolley identified the need for modernized drug education that set cognitive and behavioral research as the cornerstone for an effective program. He set on a multi-year effort to revamp existing curriculum, creating a program set to become an exemplar of successful drug education.



He engaged existing drug education programs and local experts for knowledge and assistance and researched to ensure the new curriculum satisfies California state health standards for Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs.

ATI is a six-week substance abuse prevention program for fifth and sixth-grade students taught by deputies with the Orange County Sheriff's Department. The goal of ATI is to eliminate substance abuse through awareness and education using a science-based, pragmatic approach.

In January of 2022, Sergeant Gunsolley successfully launched the program in more than 40 elementary schools. The initial feedback from the program has been nothing short of remarkable. Teachers are impressed with the updated curriculum and have expressed their gratitude for keeping students engaged on such a critical topic.

In the 2022-2023 school year – the program's first full year of implementation – ATI reached 37 schools and graduated 3,000 students. In addition, the Community Engagement Team, led by Sergeant Gunsolley, conducted fentanyl awareness assemblies and parent seminars, reaching more than 21,000 students and more than 1,200 parents.

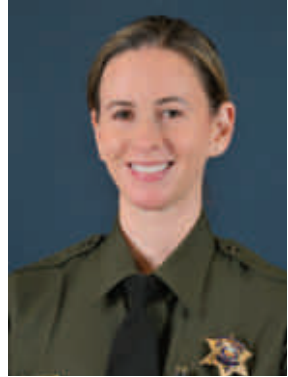
The early success of ATI is a direct reflection on Sergeant Gunsolley's dedication to the program and passion for positively influencing as many students as possible. His work and dedication are in keeping with the finest traditions of the Orange County Sheriff's Department.



Investigator Lauren Felix

Medal for Merit

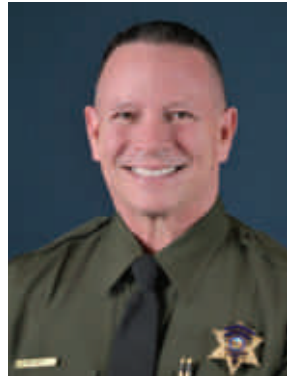
Investigator Felix was born and raised in Orange, CA. Prior to becoming a deputy, she served as a Crime Analyst at the Orange County Sheriff's Department. In 2007, she graduated Basic Academy Class 199. Investigator Felix was a Master Field Training Officer on patrol in Aliso Viejo and worked as an Investigator in the Economic Crimes Unit. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, paddleboarding and spending time with her niece and nephews.



Investigator Robert Taft

Medal for Merit

Investigator Taft was born in Orange, NJ and raised in Parsippany, CA. In addition to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he is a Desert Storm veteran having served concurrently for 30 years in the United States Marine Corps, earning the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and specializing as an Infantry Officer and a Light Armored Vehicle Platoon Commander. Investigator Taft graduated Basic Academy Class III in 1992. He has been a member of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team and the Bomb Squad. In 2001, he was named San Juan Capistrano Deputy of the Year and in 2012 he received the Medal for Merit. When he is not working, he enjoys spending time with his girlfriend, retired Orange County Sheriff's Department Senior Deputy Coroner Michelle Hartney, his two children, Delani and Sydny, and his grandchildren, Christopher and Paisley.





Established the Sheriff's Department's Investigative Genealogy Unit

Investigators Lauren Felix and Robert Taft are tasked with reviewing and investigating Orange County's cold cases. With the success of investigative genetic genealogy in solving decades-old homicide cases, Investigators Felix and Taft set out to become the Sheriff's Department first team trained to apply the technique.

Committing to hours of training, research and skill development, the investigators worked to understand and utilize investigative genetic genealogy to provide loved ones with long-awaited answers.

In November 2022, Investigators Felix and Taft submitted DNA evidence collected from a September 1974 case. Two men off-roading, in what is now Aliso Viejo, found a deceased man on the side of the trail. At the time, the man's death was determined to be accidental and was attributed to alcohol and diazepam intoxication.

Although investigators attempted to identify John Doe over the years, they were unsuccessful.

John Doe's death was later determined to be a possible homicide after the arrest of the notorious serial killer Randy Steven Kraft, who was arrested in 1983 after a California Highway Patrol officer conducted a traffic stop and discovered a dead Marine in the front seat.

Continued next page



In Kraft's trunk was a coded list of more than 67 victims, a detail that prompted prosecutors to name him the "Scorecard Killer." Kraft targeted young men in the 1970s and '80s, and eight of the men he killed had diazepam – also known as Valium – in their system.

Kraft was convicted of 16 murders and sentenced to death, but is believed to be responsible for dozens more murders in Southern California. He currently is on death row in San Quentin State Prison.

Investigators long believed John Doe to be one of Kraft's early victims.

Investigators Felix and Taft sent John Doe's DNA to a private lab, and in February 2023, the cold case team was given a DNA profile.

Using a law enforcement-approved genealogy database and their investigative genealogy skill set, the cold case team began building a family tree for John Doe.

In October 2023, after months of dedicated work, Investigators Felix and Taft identified the possible grandparents of John Doe. They contacted a granddaughter of the couple who told the investigators she had not seen her 18-year-old brother since May of 1974.

Investigators continued to pursue the case, taking them to Kansas City, Missouri, where they met with the possible mother of John Doe. After collecting a DNA sample from her, they were able to positively identify John Doe as Michael Ray Schlicht of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

This case is one of four people Investigators Felix and Taft successfully identified as part of the Sheriff's Department's new investigative genetic genealogy program. Their patience and tenacity bring resolution to victims' families, and their dedicated work is in keeping with the finest traditions of the Sheriff's Department.





DISTINGUISHED DEPUTY MEDAL

The Distinguished Deputy Medal is awarded to a Deputy Sheriff whose exemplary career has left a positive imprint on the Orange County Sheriff's Department. This deputy models integrity, leadership and dedication and is admired for their skills and talents.



Commander Jared Dahl

Distinguished Deputy Medal

Commander Dahl was born in Anaheim and raised in Orange County, CA. In 1993, he joined the Orange County Sheriff's Department as a Sheriff's Special Officer (SSO) and in 1994 became a Deputy Sheriff. When he is not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Julie, and their three children, Coleton, Campbell and Caden.



Commander Dahl exemplifies the values of the Orange County Sheriff's Department, distinguishing himself as a deputy with an unwavering work ethic, commitment to the Department mission and a genuine care for people of the Department and the community they serve.

Commander Dahl joined the Sheriff's Department in 1993 working as a Sheriff's Special Officer before becoming a Deputy Sheriff Trainee in 1994 at the Orange County Sheriff's Regional Training Academy.

After graduation, he was assigned to the Intake Release Center where he maintained multiple collateral duties including volunteering as a member of the Honor Guard and committing time to Department-run Red Ribbon Week activities. His work ethic earned him the 1999 Jail Deputy of the Year Award.



In 2000, Commander Dahl was promoted to patrol, where he worked in the city of Lake Forest. Always looking to expand his skill set, Commander Dahl often pursued specialty assignments including becoming a member of the Lake Forest Bicycle Patrol Team and a Field Training Officer.

He joined the Academy as a Tactical Officer in 2002, where he worked for two years before transferring to Patrol Operations in San Clemente.

In 2005, he became a Motor Deputy serving the city of Lake Forest before promoting to investigator. He first was assigned to the Professional Standards Division in 2008, where he worked in the Internal Affairs Bureau before transferring to general investigations, serving Southeast Operations.

Commander Dahl promoted to Sergeant in 2011 and held many positions, including being assigned to Custody Operations and as the Juvenile Services Bureau Investigative Sergeant in South Operations. He was promoted to Lieutenant in 2016, where he ultimately was assigned to the Training Division as the Academy Commander.

He then was selected to serve as Sheriff Sandra Hutchens' adjutant, where he broadened his understanding of relationships within the Department and across the state. Commander Dahl represented the Sheriff's Department on a variety of legislative issues, working to ensure lawmakers considered the impact their decisions make on peace officers and community safety.

Continued next page



Commander Dahl was promoted to Division Commander in 2018 and has served in three different assignments – a testament to his breadth of experience and knowledge. He currently works as the Transit Operations Division Commander, overseeing the Airport Police Services Bureau, Harbor Patrol Bureau and the Transit Police Services Bureau (OCTA).

Commander Dahl is revered as a dedicated mentor who takes pride in instilling his love for the Department and dedication to its mission in those he has worked with, trained and supervised.

He is known for being thorough with great attention to detail, always ensuring his work reflects the best he has to offer. Commander Dahl is described as a selfless leader who thoughtfully draws out the exemplary work of those around him.

His contributions and commitment to the Department truly define him as a distinguished deputy.



SPECIAL INCIDENT AWARDS

medal for
LIFESAVING

Deputy Jose Ascencion
Deputy Aaron Kozloff
Deputy Thomas Mobley
Deputy Guillermo Novales
Deputy Kenny Sun

medal for
MERIT

Radio Dispatcher Selena Arias

medal for
COURAGE

Deputy Jared Brittain

medal for
VALOR

Deputy Jesus Carrasco
Deputy Juan Contreras
Deputy Brandon Espinosa
Deputy Mathew Harm
Deputy Christian Moreno
Deputy Brandon Saunders
Deputy Daniel Serrano



MEDAL *for* LIFESAVING

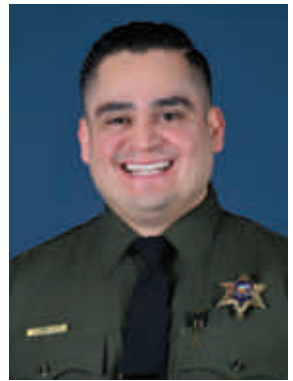
The Medal for Lifesaving is awarded for extraordinary actions while affecting, or attempting to affect, a lifesaving rescue or any other act, which if successful, would be considered lifesaving.

This award is made for actions rendered beyond normal first-aid and without danger to the employee.

Deputy Jose Ascencion

Medal for Lifesaving

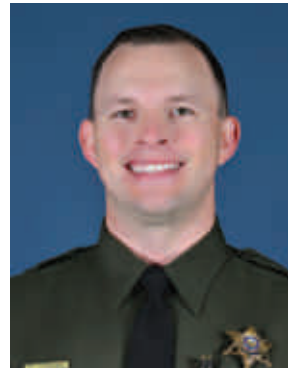
Deputy Ascencion was born in Mexico and raised in El Sereno, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he worked as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) for four years and was an Explorer for the Los Angeles City Fire Department. In 2016, he graduated Basic Academy Class 223.



Deputy Aaron Kozloff

Medal for Lifesaving

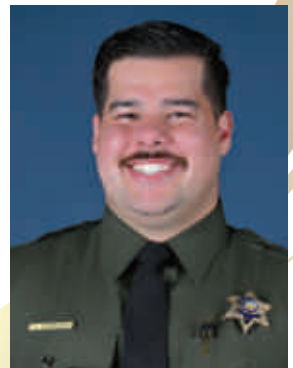
Deputy Kozloff was born in Inglewood and raised in Torrance, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he served in the United States Army for three years and earned the rank of Specialist, specializing in Military Police. In 2016, he graduated Basic Academy Class 225. In his free time, he enjoys moments with his wife, Alyssa.



Deputy Thomas Mobley

Medal for Lifesaving

Deputy Mobley was born in Fountain Valley and raised in Anaheim, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he served as an EMT for three years and a Paramedic for one year. In 2020, he graduated Basic Academy Class 242. In his free time, he enjoys traveling and spending time with his wife, Desiree, and their newborn daughter, Charlotte.

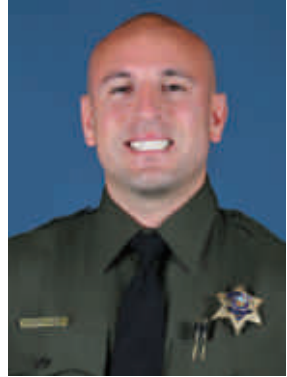




Deputy Guillermo Novales

Medal for Lifesaving

Deputy Novales was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico and raised in Cypress, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he earned his Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice from California State University, Fullerton. In 2016, he graduated Basic Academy Class 210. In addition to patrol duties, Deputy Novales is a Field Training Officer (FTO) and a member of the Behavioral Health Bureau (BHB) in Southwest Operations.



Deputy Kenny Sun

Medal for Lifesaving

Deputy Sun was born in Fountain Valley and raised in Garden Grove, CA. In 2013, he graduated Basic Academy Class 206. In addition to patrol duties, Deputy Sun is a Field Training Officer (FTO), a Threat Liaison Officer (TLO) and, is a member of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT), the Sheriff's Response Team (SRT) and the Special Enforcement Team (SET).





MEDAL *for* MERIT

The Medal for Merit is awarded for extraordinary performance of duties, which brings significant status or recognition to the department or for meritorious actions or performance that rises above normal duties and occurs during a noteworthy incident.



Radio Dispatcher Selena Arias

Medal for Merit

Radio Dispatcher Arias was born in Riverside and raised in Mira Loma, CA. She was hired with the Orange County Sheriff's Department in 2018. When she is not working, she enjoys spending time with her husband, David, who works in Orange County Probation, and children, Jasmine and Henry.





MEDAL *for* COURAGE

The Medal for Courage is awarded for a display of bravery or heroism above and beyond the normal demands of law enforcement service in response to non-criminal situations or lifesaving incidents involving extreme danger to the deputy or officer, or in response to criminal situations involving danger to the deputy or officer in a lesser degree than that required for the Medal for Valor.



Deputy Jared Brittain

Medal for Courage

Deputy Brittain was born in Long Beach and raised in Placentia, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he served in the United States Marine Corps for six years and earned the rank of Sergeant, specializing as Military Police and in Embassy Duties. In 2017, he graduated Basic Academy Class 228. Deputy Brittain was a member of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team from 2020 to 2023 and is a part-time Range Instructor.





MEDAL *for* VALOR

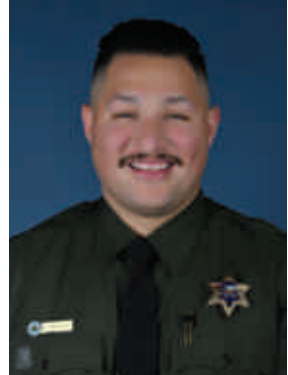
The Medal for Valor is awarded for extraordinary bravery or heroism, above and beyond the normal demands of law enforcement service in response to criminal situations involving an incident which threatened the Deputy or officer's life.



Deputy Jesus Carrasco

Medal for Valor

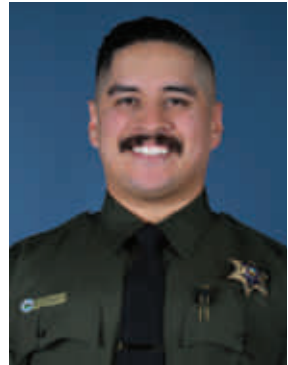
Deputy Carrasco was born in Long Beach and raised in Garden Grove, CA. Prior to becoming a deputy, he was a Correctional Services Assistance (CSA) and Special Services Officer (SSO) with the Orange County Sheriff's Department. In 2015, he graduated Basic Academy Class 214. In addition to patrol duties, Deputy Carrasco is bike patrol trained and a part of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT), Sheriff's Response Team (SRT), is an Explorer Advisor and Field Training Officer (FTO) for Mission Viejo Police Services. He also is a player on the OC Lawmen team. He is recently engaged to fiancé, Taylor Rose Cox, and has two dogs, Cardi and Bonnie.



Deputy Juan Contreras

Medal for Valor

Deputy Contreras was born in Orange and raised in Garden Grove, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he was a Cadet for the Anaheim Police Department. He later joined the Orange County Sheriff's Department in 2017 as a Correctional Services Assistant (CSA) and in 2019, he graduated Basic Academy Class 233. In addition to patrol, Deputy Contreras is a member of the Sheriff's Response Team (SRT) and Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT). When he is not working, he enjoys coaching for Fullerton Pop Warner Football and spending time with his wife, Monica, son, Adonis, and daughter, Athena.

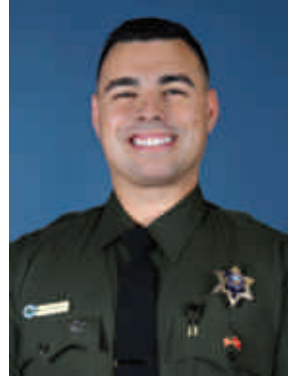




Deputy Brandon Espinosa

Medal for Valor

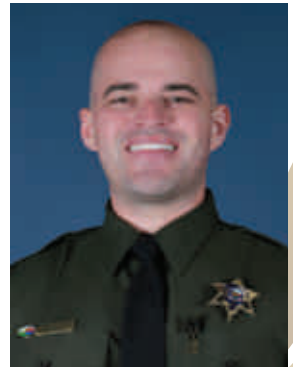
Deputy Espinosa was born in Orange and raised in Chino Hills, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he served in the United States Marine Corps for seven years and earned the rank of Corporal, specializing as an Administrative Specialist. In 2019, he graduated Basic Academy Class 238. In addition to patrol, Deputy Espinosa is a member of the Sheriff's Crisis Negotiations Team (CNT).



Deputy Mathew Harm

Medal for Valor

Deputy Harm was born in Newport Beach and raised in Lake Forest, CA. Prior to becoming a deputy, he was a Special Services Officer (SSO) with the Orange County Sheriff's Department. In 2015, he graduated Basic Academy Class 221.

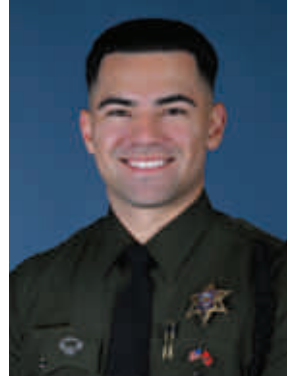




Deputy Christian Moreno

Medal for Valor

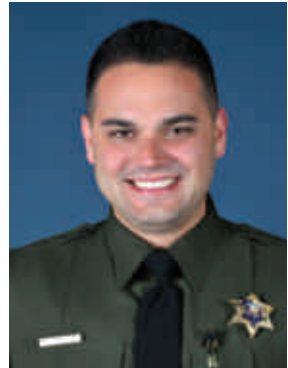
Deputy Moreno was born in Bellflower and raised in Norwalk, CA. Prior to working at the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he served in the United States Marine Corps for five years and earned the rank of Sergeant, specializing as a Military Police Instructor. In 2018, he graduated Basic Academy Class 234. In addition to patrol duties, Deputy Moreno is a Field Training Officer (FTO) and a member of the Special Enforcement Team (SET) in Rancho Santa Margarita.



Deputy Brandon Saunders

Medal for Valor

Deputy Saunders was born in Carson City, NV and raised in Valencia, CA. Prior to working for the Orange County Sheriff's Department, he worked in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) for five years as a Deputy in Custody and Patrol. In 2019, he lateralled to the Orange County Sheriff's Department. In addition to patrol duties, Deputy Saunders is a Field Training Officer (FTO) and a member of the Special Enforcement Team (SET) in Rancho Santa Margarita. When he is not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Janey, and children, Liam, Londyn and Lovelyn.

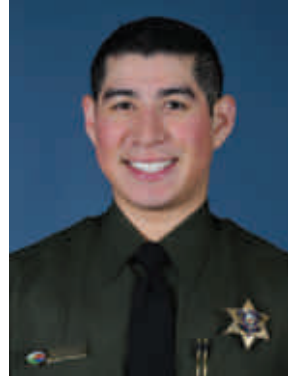




Deputy Daniel Serrano

Medal for Valor

Deputy Serrano was born and raised in Santa Ana, CA. Prior to becoming a deputy, he was an Explorer, Cadet and Correctional Services Assistant (CSA) with the Orange County Sheriff's Department. In 2015, he graduated Basic Academy Class 223. In addition to patrol duties, Deputy Serrano is a Master Field Training Officer (MFTO) and a member of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT).



INCIDENT

Mass shooting in Trabuco Canyon

At 7:04 p.m. on August 23, 2023, dozens of 9-1-1 calls came in to the Sheriff's Emergency Communications Bureau reporting a man with a gun actively firing on patrons at Cook's Corner during their weekly spaghetti night.

As call takers fielded the frantic calls from customers, Dispatcher Selena Arias began sending deputies to the location, staying calm, relaying critical information and working efficiently despite the chaotic incident that was unfolding.

Deputies Jesus Carrasco, Juan Contreras, Brandon Espinosa, Daniel Serrano, Mathew Harm, Christian Moreno and Brandon Saunders arrived within three minutes of the initial 9-1-1 calls.

Deputy Carrasco was leading the group when a witness, Nelson Rosales, came out from behind cover to flag him down. Mr. Rosales shared the shooter's location, changing the trajectory of the deputies' response.

The shooter was on high ground in an upper parking lot behind the cover of a large oak tree, armed with a pistol and a shotgun. The deputies strategically positioned their patrol units to engage the suspect. When they exited their vehicles, the suspect fired on them, sending a shotgun round through the front windshield of one of the patrol units.

For approximately eight minutes, the deputies engaged the suspect in a gun battle, maintaining communication and never wavering in their response.

During this time, dozens of Orange County Sheriff personnel arrived on scene, ready to assist their partners.

Deputies Jared Brittain, Daniel Serrano and Brandon Saunders made the courageous decision to form a team, climb the hill behind Cook's Corner and attempt to engage the suspect from a flank position.


The shooter ultimately was fatally shot by the initial group of responding deputies.

With the scene static, personnel began providing medical aid to the numerous victims. Sadly, three victims were pronounced deceased at the scene – Tonya Clark, John Leehey and Glen Sprowl. As Sheriff's personnel are honored for their actions, we solemnly remember the victims of that tragic night.

Six other victims suffered varying injuries from scrapes and graze wounds to needing lifesaving critical care. All responding personnel relied on their training to provide the best and most efficient front-line medical care.

Among those injured was Michael Bertuccini, who was shot through the side of his chest, the bullet ricocheting inside of him, claiming part of his lung, stomach and liver. Deputies Aaron Kozloff and Kenny Sun tended to Mr. Bertuccini, applying a chest seal to his wound and ultimately carrying him to paramedics about 50 yards away.

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Deputies Jose Ascencion, Thomas Mobley and Guillermo Novales also tended to another critically injured woman, who was shot through the jaw, the fragmented bullet embedding in her neck. They kept her calm, instructed her breathing and assessed the injury before providing medical care to stop the bleeding.

Deputy Novales kept pressure on the wound, accompanying the victim to the hospital, where she received further lifesaving care and ultimately recovered.

Throughout the incident, nearly 250 Sheriff's Department personnel responded, each fulfilling their duties with professionalism and integrity. Today's awards recognize the most extraordinary of actions that exemplify the finest traditions of the Sheriff's Department.

Thank you for attending
MEDAL of VALOR
2024

The Medal of Valor Video
can be viewed at this link:

ocsheriff.gov/MOV



scan with phone camera

Save the Date
MEDAL of VALOR
APRIL 17, 2025

Special Training and Response Facility



Orange County is one of our nation's safest places to live, work and raise a family. The high level of safety we enjoy is largely a result of the strong partnership between law enforcement and the community.

With the public's support, the Orange County Sheriff's Department has remained an innovative organization that is effective in carrying out our mission and is prepared to meet evolving threats. To help us maintain this forward leaning posture the Sheriff's Department, in partnership with the community, is working to build the Special Training and Response (STAR) Facility.

Building our Future - the STAR Facility

The STAR Facility will have more than 7,000 square feet of training space. The interior and exterior training areas can easily reconfigure to emulate a variety of scenarios, quickly becoming a place of worship, school, retail establishment or business.

Scan the QR code to learn more.

Contact : Maribel Marroquin-Waldram | Executive Director
maribel@ocsac.org | 714-293-7909 | star.ocsac.org

