Honoring the Bravest

Police Dept. honors 25 officers in its annual Medal of Valor ceremony.

Stories and photos courtesy LAPD

n May 28, the LAPD honored 25 officers - including five women, a record for the event – with the Department's Medal of Valor, its highest honor.

The Medal of Valor is bestowed upon officers who "performed an act displaying extreme courage while consciously facing imminent peril," according to the award guidelines.

The stories of their heroism follow. The Club congratulates each of the 25 officers for earning this prestigious award.

OFFICERS HERIBERTO SALAZAR, LAURA GONZALEZ, HAYLEY SMITH, VINCENT ROJAS

■ Apartment Fig

On May 5, 2008, in the morning, Officers Heriberto Salazar and Laura Gonzalez, assigned to Devonshire Division, and Officers Hayley Smith and Vincent Rojas, working Missic Division, had just been relea from a Command Post in V Valley Division. Both patrol were driving back to their re tive areas when they saw coming from a fire at an ap complex at Parthenia St Owensmouth Avenue. All cers, without hesitation, the building. The Fire De had not yet arrived. Salazar, Gonzalez, Smith saw several residents run the burning complex and they needed to get ever quickly. They knew that v the Fire Department to as n't an option, so the four risked their own lives and the burning building so the rescue and coordinate eva for the residents. Workin team, Officers Salazar, G Smith and Rojas moved the apartment complex and







eternity, within minutes Officers Gonzalez and Smith cleared the complex and relocated the residents to a safe place across the street. As the last residents from the burning building were placed ut of harm's way, the Fire epartment arrived and assumed nmand. All of the officers sufsmoke inhalation and were to a nearby hospital for treat-They were all later released serious injury. Had it not the quick actions of the ers, the residents of the building may not have without harm or serious

ers Salazar, Gonzalez, nd Rojas are commended heroic actions, courage, sacrificing their own safety ffort to save lives. Without cisive actions of these four many of the residents of artment complex could have Officers Salazar, Gonzalez, and Rojas exemplify teamin unselfish response to the of the community and dedito public service.

OFFICERS PETER VANDERBURGH, FERNANDO AVILA

Store Alte

Sunday evening Sept. 30, 2001, appeared as business as usual at the Macy's Department store in Woodland Hills.

Just after 5 p.m., two men walked into the department store to the fine-jewelry counter to look at a ring. Suspect 1 told the sales clerk he had gotten into a fight with his girlfriend and wanted to buy a diamond ring to make up with her. The sales clerk noticed both men appeared drunk. She had a "bad" feeling about the men, so she asked them to wait and she went into a

small office and called security. She told security there were two drunken men in her department and felt uncomfortable waiting on them.

Moments later, the department store manager arrived to wait on the suspects. Suspect 1 told the manager that he wanted to buy a ring and he reached into his pocket and pulled out a roll of hundred-dollar bills. The manager took a diamond ring out of the display case and placed it on the counter. Suddenly, the suspect picked up the ring, pulled a gun out of his pocket and pointed it at the manager shouting, "Give it all to me!"

The manager began removing jewelry items from the display case and handing them to the suspect, who in turn stuffed them into his pock-



Police Officer

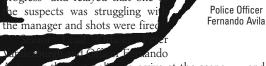
Peter Vanderburgh

cash register. Suspect 2, who had been pacing behind Suspect placed a black plastic bag on the counter. Suspect 1 then began to ut the jewelry inside the bag. The sales clerk walked toward

ne register at the other end of the ounter, but as she walked past the or of the office, she slipped

ol of the gun and pointed it at the nanager's head demanding that ne store manager remove more

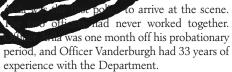
ewelry from the display case. LAPD Communication Division broadcast a "robbery rogress" and relayed that one ne suspects was struggling w





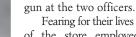
self in the office, Suspect 1 began to grab jewelry with a sense of urgency. He placed the gun on top of the counter so he could use both hands. Realizing a window of opportunity, the store manager grabbed the gun off the counter and stepped back against the rear wall and out of Suspect 1's reach.

Without warning, Suspect 1 jumped over the counter and began to fight for the gun with the store manager. The suspect and manager exchanged punches as the manager fought to keep control of the weapon. During the struggle, a shot was fired but luckily no one was hit.



Officers Vanderburgh and Avila entered the store and made their way toward the fine jewelry department. They could hear the suspect yelling and saw him pointing the gun at the store manager's head.

Armed with a 9-millimeter Beretta semiautomatic and a 12-gauge shotgun, Officers Vanderburgh and Avila slowly approached the suspect and the store manager. They identified themselves as police officers and ordered the suspect to drop the gun and raise his hands.



Fearing for their lives and the lives of the store employees, Officers Vanderburgh and Avila opened fire and hit the suspect. Officer Vanderburgh continued to order the

The suspect turned and pointed his

suspect to drop his gun, but he did not. Officer Vanderburgh fired a second shot at the suspect, forcing him backwards against the wall. Still standing, the suspect was again ordered to drop his weapon.

The suspect ignored the commands and again pointed his gun at both officers. Still fearing for their lives, Officer

Vanderburgh fired a third round at the suspect. He fell to the floor behind the counter, still clutching the gun. The two officers went behind the counter, where the suspect pointed his weapon again toward the officers. Officer Vanderburgh fired a fourth shot at the suspect, causing him to finally drop the weapon. Officer Avila then approached the suspect and handcuffed him.

Officer Vanderburgh and Officer Avila are commended for their selfless courage and bravery. Their actions in the face of imminent peril are the result of a level of gallantry not seen in your average individual. Their level of heroism and professionalism are second to none.

SGT. CHRISTOPHER GOMEZ



Car Fire

Sgt. Christopher Gomez

On Aug. 16, 2006, early in the morning, Sgt. Christopher Gomez, assigned to Newton Patrol, was driving

south on the 110 Freeway from Vernon Avenue, when he saw a black Nissan Sentra get on the freeway going about 100 miles an hour. As the car neared Imperial Highway, it swerved to avoid hitting another vehicle and spun out of control, colliding with the center divider.

Sgt. Gomez raced to the car, which was now on fire. The driver's door was pinned against the center divider, making it impossible to open. Sgt. Gomez saw that the driver was the only person in the car, and realized the man was now trapped inside the burning vehicle. Sgt. Gomez

tried to open the passenger side door, but it was jammed. Without hesitating, Sgt. Gomez smashed the passenger window with his police baton. The car's dashboard caught on fire. Sgt. Gomez could hear loud popping noises, could see the flames and feel the heat of the fire. With the passenger compartment burning and with total disregard for his own safety, Sgt. Gomez used tremendous strength and pulled the driver out of the car through the flames and out the passenger door window. After pulling the man from the car, Sgt. Gomez dragged him to see an analysis.

Moments later, a news phoograph of vertical at the scene and began vides and the which was now completely and make the video is proof that the control of the control of the driver was the car, the driver was survived.

The driver was taken to a nearby hospital, where he was treated for a broken collarbone and smoke inhalation. He said if it were not for Sgt. Gomez' quick action, he would not have been able to get out of the car on his own. The driver said Sgt. Gomez saved his life, and did it without thinking of his own safety.

Sgt. Gomez is commended for his heroic actions commended for sacrificing his own safety to sa property to say the most persons and make. Sgt.

the noble and gallant enter that epic the selfless profession expected for its angeles Police of the draw of the large highest and decrease as the sighest selfless and decrease is the sighest pic safety.



S S S

OFFICER JESUS CARRILLO



Police Officer

Jesus Carrillo

Foot Pursus

On Sept. 3, 200 in the evening Officer Jesus Carril of 77th Street Are Gang Enforceme

Detail, and his partner were on their regula patrol in South Los Angeles. While driving i the area of 83rd Street and Stanford Avenue, the two officers saw a Cadillac SUV with female driver and male passenger run through a stop sign. As the officers followed the vehicle, they requested information to see if the car had been reported stolen. It had not.

Officer Carrillo and his partner decided to pull the vehicle over for the traffic violation, but the driver of the SUV wouldn't pull over. While following the vehicle, the officers saw what looked like the male passenger reaching under his seat. Relying on their training and experience, the officers knew that the passenger could be hiding contraband or reaching for a weapon.

While the SUV continued slowly down the street, the male passenger suddenly jumped out

of the car and ran down a viewa. Officer Carrillo and his partner based he servects by saw him running with a right and ever who looked like a gan. Both our as too coverable titioned the suspection as a distance. The man white the control of the suspection as a distance. The man white the control of the state of the

rer Candia. This pays to a forly to gur put led the suspect, telling his triple of the conwest their side of the fence To consecution of gate ing his body weight to the control of the management of the control of the best and tried to pur the suspect to his side of the heart. That then the control of th

g in Discouling the ring stable method that the suspect and a way and a man the suspect and a way a high no an the suspect

Nothing repeat reging it in from the gate.

The trace of the chairs fact an alument for the guest states of its fact an alument of the guest states of fire and the surged to the surged to the surged to the chair struggle.

If uring the content of the surged to the chair of the

elense

in la mental and

per an anequisuspect

il s e il s

an aer sines une mon

Police Depart Known for worldwide

4NGELES PO

estic Violen

OFFICER JEANETTE FLORES



Police Officer Jeanette Flores

n Aug. 9,

A Case of

Officer Jeanette Flores and her partner, assigned sponded to a domestic

to Hollenbeck Area, responded to a domestic violence radio call. The victim, who was nine months pregnant, told the officers that her common-law husband punched her in the face and stomach and had run from their house. After documenting the woman's injuries, Officer Flores stayed with the victim while her partner went to their squad car to get the reports necessary to document in the assault.

While walking back to the victim's house, Officer Flores' partner saw a man standing on the sidewalk who matched the physical description of the suspect. The officer ordered the man to place his hands behind his head and made his approach to handcuff the suspect.

As one handcuff was setuld to the suspect's right wrist, the suspect a ned clockwise and thrust his left arm around the The suspect now had the officer in transhold. Officer Flores did not hesitate to assist the partner. She jumped on the suspect's back and wrapped her right arm around his neck to restrain him.

The suspect's attack turned vicious. He used his body weight to drive the officer he was holding head first onto the concrete, knocking him unconscious. Officer Flores was unable to keep her hold on the suspect and tried to distract him with three punches to the head. She heard the unmistakable sound of the unsnapping of the retention strap of her partner's' gun holster. As the suspect reached for her partner's gun, Officer Flores made the split-second decision to save their lives and fired one shot to the suspect's head, ending the deadly threat.

The injured officer was taken to a local hospital, where he was treated for a fractured left

attenn. If tactics, aviolent suspect who had attacked an officer of the law and was attempting to use a police officer's firearm against them. If it were not for Officer Flores' quick reaction, the suspect would have surely shot, and possibly killed both officers.

Officer Jeanette Flores' tactical skills, teamwork, clear and collected thinking in an exceptionally dangerous situation, and her ability to function under the most stressful, chaotic and perilous conditions embody the finest traditions of the Los Angeles Police Department.



July 2009

LAPD

Honoring The Bravest

- Continued



LAPD MEDAL OF VALOR

SGTS. GINA HOLMSTROM, SEAN KINCHLA, CHESTER MCMILLION; OFFICERS MAURA TERCERO, JEFFREY ENNIS, LYMAN DOSTER, BENJAMIN SANTERO, ENRIQUE ANZALDO, DANIEL SANCHEZ, EDUARDO PEREZ, DENNIS O'SULLIVAN, ROBERT GALLEGOS, DAVID STAMBAUGH, WILLIAM CASEY, JOSEPH RUBERT; RETIRED OFFICER TODD RHEINGOLD

(#136641)

■ Hostage

n Sunday, July 10, 2005 desperate 16-year-old patcher her stepfather had brought LAPD officers rus in Southeast Los Angeles

Southeast Division pa teenage girl locked behin chain-link fence. Her stepfather came out q ar lot office carrying his 19-month-old of in his arms. After talking to the of stepfather rrying the retreated to his office and infant and a semi-autor began shooting at officers and l officers broadcasted a "hel

Officer Gina Holms Metropolitan Division, h responded and took tactical dent. Officers from several Among them were Office Officer Sean Kinchla, Off Officer Lyman Doster and

While the suspect continu stepdaughter and the officers, Ennis and Doster geared up police rifles, and quickly form plan. Ennis briefed Santero him the responsibility of ground. Officers Kinchla

and Tercero, without hesitation, volunteered for the dangerous task of being the rescue officers.

With help from the LAPD Airship, Holmstrom devised a plan to safely approach the girl.

Working as a team, the officers moved forward and reached the cover of a police car. There they found several of their fellow officers crouched down, unable to move as they too were under hostile gunfire.

Now close to the Holmstrom teenager, began talking to her, telling her to stay down. The teenager was paralyzed with fear, lying between two parked cars. Realizing a bolt cutter was needed to cut the fence. Kinchla placed himself at great risk and ran from the safety of

cover to retrieve the bolt cutter. After obtaining the bolt cutter, Kinchla returned to the rescue

With the team now ready to rescue the trapped victim, the officers stepped away from their cover and moved toward the gate in a diamond formation. As soon as they left cover, the suspect again opened fire on the advancing team. However, the rescue team was deter-



Joseph Rubert





Police Officer **Daniel Sanchez**



Police Officer William Casey





Police Officer Todd Rheingold, Ret.



nour, information about the ed and negotiations with the

rained as crisis negotiators, ect to let his daughter go and surrender ing the suspect was about to harm his d O'Sullivan fired one round at him. The un to his left and dropped

to save the life of the 19-Sanchez, Gallegos Casey, nbaugh initiated a rescue eam approached the office ct ran into the office, still ter, and began firing his e drywall at the approaching

rst to enter the work bay and or his fellow officers. As d the office, he felt a sharp oulder and knew he had been aining officers lined up along shot spect continued shooting at e dry wall, showering the offiand debris.

the officers entered the office for the officer before them.

Knowing Sanchez was wounded, Gallegos used his body as a shield to protect him and engaged the suspect.

Officer McMillion moved toward the door as the gun battle erupted and provided direction. With bullets and debris coming through the drywall, Rubert and Stambaugh entered the office and physically extracted Sanchez. Anzaldo and Rheingold were the last to enter the bay area to assist with the rescue.

The 16 officers had never trained together for this event. They all responded and trusted one another. Each Officer relied on the training they had received. Each performed with exemplary skill, courage and professionalism. They put their own lives on the line to

save a 16-year-old teenager and a 19-month-old baby they had never met. They never hesitated, no matter the risk. Each Officer is recognized for their bravery, courage, teamwork and willingness to place themselves in harm's way to protect their fellow citizens and brothers and sisters in law enforcement.





Police Officer David Stambaugh