INAUGURAL PURPLE HEART CEREMONY

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT
The Los Angeles Police Department’s Purple Heart award for meritorious service was established by the Board of Police Commissioners in May 2009.

The Purple Heart is awarded to officers of the Department who have sustained traumatic physical injury during an on-duty tactical situation and posthumously to the next of kin in the name of those who are killed or die of wounds received in the line of duty.

The Los Angeles Police Department’s Purple Heart is awarded by the Commendations Board in the name of the Department and presented by the Chief of Police.
Message from

MAYOR ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA

September 15, 2011

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the City of Los Angeles, it is my pleasure to welcome the guests attending the inaugural presentation of the Los Angeles Police Department’s Purple Heart Award.

The women and men of the Los Angeles Police Department make a tremendous sacrifice every day as they keep our streets and neighborhoods safe. Their dedication to our City and its residents knows no limit.

I am proud that the Los Angeles Police Department will hereafter recognize LAPD officers who have been traumatically injured in the line of duty, and the families of officers who made the ultimate sacrifice, with the Purple Heart Award. The Purple Heart Award recipients and their families will forever stand as our City’s consummate heroes and as models of unending service.

It is my highest honor to commend the 82 officers and families receiving the Purple Heart Award today as well as the entire force for their valiant service.

Very truly yours,

ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA
Mayor, City of Los Angeles

Message from

THE POLICE COMMISSION

September 15, 2011

Dear Friends:

Welcome to the Los Angeles Police Department’s Inaugural Purple Heart Ceremony. My fellow Commissioners and I were honored to participate in the creation of this very special award, and to see it come to fruition at such a momentous ceremony is extremely gratifying.

While most medals are considered an honor to receive, that may not be the case with the Purple Heart. Actually, the true honor lies with giving the Purple Heart. These recipients are heroes among us who did not hesitate to put themselves on the line to do the right thing. In the face of extreme danger, they opted to forge ahead, pursue justice and protect others. The price for such courage can be very high. While the recipients did not strive to receive this award, their outstanding courage and sense of justice is undeniable. The Purple Heart serves as a small token to show those who have given everything how highly we will always hold them in our thoughts.

With great honor, the Police Commission acknowledges the heroic sacrifices given by the recipients at this Inaugural Purple Heart Ceremony.

Warm regards,

RICHARD E. DROOYAN
President, Los Angeles Police Commission
Board of Police Commissioners

ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA
Mayor, City of Los Angeles

RICHARD E. DROOYAN
President
JOHN W. MACK
Vice President
ALAN J. SKOBIN
Commissioner
DEBRA WONG-YANG
Commissioner
ROBERT M. SALZMAN
Commissioner
September 15, 2011

Dear Friends and Supporters:

On behalf of the men and women of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), I want to personally welcome you to the inaugural presentation of the Purple Heart Award ceremony. This morning, we will honor an extraordinary group of current and former Los Angeles Police Officers who, while in the line of duty, sustained a traumatic injury, were mortally wounded or eventually succumbed to their injuries. Behind each award presented there is a story of selflessness and sacrifice, and behind each story, an officer who made the remarkable choice to put themselves in harm’s way to protect their partner, their neighbor, their city. These events, which so profoundly affect the lives of these officers, and their families, will forever be embedded in the history of the LAPD.

I hope that all of you enjoy this groundbreaking event as we pay homage to the recipients of the Los Angeles Police Department’s Purple Heart Award. To each recipient, on behalf of the LAPD, I am truly humbled by your dedication to serve and protect.

Very truly yours,

CHARLIE BECK
Chief of Police, Los Angeles Police Department
Mistress of Ceremony

Tamlyn Tomita

Tamlyn Tomita made her screen debut as Kumiko in “The Karate Kid, Part II” with Ralph Macchio and Pat “Noriyuki” Morita and has since appeared in numerous feature films, television and theatre projects. She is perhaps known for her roles as Waverly in Wayne Wang’s “The Joy Luck Club” and as Kana, a Hawaii plantation worker in the early 1900’s in Kayo Hattà’s “Picture Bride” and starred opposite Dennis Quaid in Alan Parker’s “Come See the Paradise”, a film exploring the lives of a Japanese-American family and the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. Tamlyn will be appearing in “Hillbilly” and “The Mekado Project” and recently appeared in “Two Sisters” opposite Yun Jin Kim and directed by Margaret Cho. Her list of film credits include Roland Emmerich’s “The Day After Tomorrow”, Greg Pak’s indie fave “Robot Stories”, Robert Rodriguez’s “Four Rooms” opposite Antonio Banderas, Richard La Gravenese’s “Living Out Loud” opposite Holly Hunter; Lane Nishikawa’s “Only the Brave” and the Brazilian-Japanese film “Gaijin 2 – Ama me Como Sou” directed by Tizuka Yamasaki.


Tamlyn has also appeared in several stage productions including the world premiere of Chay Yew’s “A Distant Shore”; “Question 27, Question 28”; “The Square”; “Summer Moon”, Philip Kan Gotanda’s “Day Standing on its Head”, “Nagasaki Dust”, “Don Juan: A Meditation” and “Winter Crane” for which she received a Drama-Logue Award.

Keeping herself busy in an industry that has been slow to receive actors of an ethnic demographic, Tamlyn is selective in the roles she chooses, steering away from images that perpetuate stereotypes. She is always searching for ways to create or balance images and stories about Asian Americans and to explore with others in and outside the film and television industry on issues she is concerned about. Having worked on a variety of Asian American projects such as “Starlight Inn”, “The Charles Kim Show”, “My Life…Disoriented”, “Day of Independence”, “Hundred Percent”, “Life Tastes Good”, “Four Fingers of the Dragon”, “Soundman”, “Requiem” and “Notes on a Scale”, Tamlyn proudly supports Asian American filmmakers and artists in the pursuit of giving the world a gallery of portraits from a golden perspective.

A resident of Los Angeles, she is always ready to lend her support to community events and organizations, and keeps her life simple, focusing on love, work and family.
Policeman Charles Williams

END OF WATCH: January 13, 1923

On January 13, 1923, at approximately 9:30 PM, Policeman Charles P. Williams and his partner Arthur McClanahan were working undercover vice in the area of 6th Street & Central Avenue. The two officers were flagged down by a citizen reporting that a male, black suspect, later identified as John Pryor, was at 1101 E. 8th Street brandishing a revolver and threatening the lives of the residents that lived at the location.

The officers knew this house to be a brothel. It was later discovered that the man was the landlord of the house and had entered to impose a vigilante clean-up of the house by evicting prostitutes. As they were driving there, the police car broke down and Policeman Williams decided to walk the rest of the way. Upon his arrival, he told the man to put his hands up. The suspect fired twice, striking Policeman Williams in the abdomen. A passing truck transported Policeman Williams to a nearby hospital where he died from his wounds.

In a highly publicized memorial service, Policeman Charles P. Williams was laid to rest at Evergreen Cemetery on Friday afternoon, January 19, 1923. In attendance were dignitaries from throughout the city and included, as a California Eagle writer would report, “Forty-two of the Department's colored uniformed officers.”

City officials designated the downtown intersection of Central Avenue and Sixth Street as Officer Charles P. Williams Square.

Detective Sergeant John Fitzgerald

END OF WATCH: June 21, 1921

On the evening of July 21, 1921, Sergeant John Fitzgerald led a raid on a home that was used as a base of operations for burglaries and contained illegal prohibition era liquor and narcotics. Upon arrival at the house, Sergeant Fitzgerald confronted Philip Alguin on the front porch and was shot through the stomach at 10:30 PM. Although mortally wounded, Fitzgerald chased Alguin about sixty feet before collapsing. Fitzgerald died less than two hours later.

According to the Los Angeles Times, Fitzgerald “was one of the best known and most popular officers on the force.” His funeral, described in the Times as “probably the most impressive ceremony ever conducted for a deceased police officer in Los Angeles,” attracted such a crowd that nearly 1,000 people were unable to enter the church.

The suspect fled to Mexico and thus began one of the largest manhunts in LAPD history. He was later arrested and returned to Los Angeles where he was convicted of Sergeant Fitzgerald’s murder and sentenced to life in prison.

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On April 28, 1932, Policeman Paul Donath and his partner, Policeman Gunby, responded to a radio call that a woman had shot her neighbor at 2645 Marsh St. in Northeast Los Angeles. Upon arriving at the address, Gunby went to the rear of the house while Policeman Donath went to the front door. As soon as the resident, Ella May Thompson, saw Policeman Donath, she shot through the door, striking him in the chest and inflicting a mortal wound. Gunby ran to his aid, dragging him to the lawn next door and sent a call for an ambulance and backup. LAPD forced Ms. Thompson, age 29, from her home with tear gas and had to shoot her when she opened fire on the officers.

On the evening of July 24, 1934, Harry Wilson and Paul McDonald held up a café and got away with $5. They moved on to another café, where they told the owner and a restaurant patron as they were leaving, “We’re the new Dillingers and we’re plenty tough.” The restaurant patron happened to be Officer Merle Parmele who was off-duty and in plainclothes. Parmele raced after the men and fired several shots as they got in their car. LAPD Sgt. Edwards, who happened to be nearby, joined in the gunfight between Parmele and the robbers.

During the chase, Wilson and McDonald wrecked their car and then stole the car of Johnny Myers, who happened to be parking in a nearby alley. Policeman Leidy and his partner, Officer Owen Tucker, got the radio call as they cruised the area and stopped the robbers at 33rd St. and Stanford Ave. The officers got out of the car, and Leidy asked Wilson, “What have you got in there?” Wilson fired several shots, killing Leidy as Tucker opened fire at the robbers.

Myers, the innocent owner of the stolen car, was wounded and fell out of the car, pleading with Tucker not to shoot him as McDonald and Wilson escaped. By this time, a large number of officers had responded to the call making it easier to arrest Wilson and McDonald who were found hiding nearby. On Aug. 25, 1934, Wilson was convicted of killing Leidy and sentenced to life at San Quentin. McDonald was convicted of robbery, but found not guilty in Leidy’s death.

On February 4, 1946, at approximately 8:45PM, Gus Boyd and Nathaniel Cooper committed an armed robbery of a movie theater in the area of South L.A. The suspects fled the location and an initial crime broadcast was sent out to all police cars describing the suspects and their route of travel.

At 9:00PM, Metropolitan Division Officers Walter H. Kesterson and E. W. Patrick were conducting crime suppression duties in the area of 43rd Place and Avalon Boulevard when they observed suspects that matched the description of the suspects involved in the robbery. The officers decided to pull over the suspects for questioning. Kesterson, who was the passenger officer, jumped out of the police vehicle and attempted to detain the two individuals. Cooper reached into his jacket pocket, and a scuffle ensued between him and Kesterson. Cooper removed a .38 Caliber Revolver and fired at Kesterson, striking him in the upper torso. Kesterson, despite sustaining a mortal wound, returned fire, killing Cooper. Concurrently, Boyd was also in the process of removing a handgun from his pocket when Kesterson shot him. EMTs responded to the scene where both suspects were pronounced dead.

Kesterson was transported to the Georgia Street Receiving Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries and died upon arrival. Policeman Kesterson was posthumously awarded the Department’s Medal of Valor award in 2007. He was the first Metropolitan Division officer killed in the line of duty.

On the evening of December 8, 1960, Policemen Richard Kent and L. Jeff Poor were assigned to work the felony car, a plainclothes assignment in an unmarked car. Since Policeman Poor had driven the night before, Policeman Kent drove on this particular evening while Poor kept the books.

The batteries in Kent’s flashlight were low, so he decided to stop at the Lucky Auto Parts store to purchase new batteries while Poor waited in the car. Kent, however, unknowingly walked into an armed robbery in progress. A gun battle with the robber ensued mortally wounding Policeman Kent who managed to wound the robber before succumbing to his own injuries. His partner, in the car outside, was responding to the gunshots when he encountered the wounded robber escaping. He chased him capturing him and his getaway driver.
POLICEMAN IAN CAMPBELL #10046
END OF WATCH: MARCH 9, 1963
On March 9, 1963, Policemen Ian Campbell and Karl Hettinger pulled over a car containing two suspicious-looking men in the Hollywood area. The two men, Jimmy Lee Smith (aka “Jimmy Youngblood”) and Gregory Ulas Powell, had recently committed a string of robberies. Powell, the driver, pulled a gun on Campbell and ordered Hettinger to surrender his gun to Smith. The two officers were then forced into Powell's car and driven to an onion field near Bakersfield where Campbell was shot execution style. Hettinger was able to escape, running nearly four miles to reach a farmhouse for assistance.

Powell was sentenced to death, but later had the sentence commuted to life. He remains in prison to this day. Smith was also sentenced to life in prison, but was paroled in 1982. In 2007, Smith was found on LA's Skid Row and taken into custody for parole violations. He died in prison that same year. The tragic events of March 9, 1963, served as the subject for the non-fiction book (and film adaptation) The Onion Field.

POLICEMAN ROGER WARREN #13163
END OF WATCH: MAY 8, 1967
Assigned to the Van Nuys Division, Policeman Roger Warren was shot and killed by a sniper while on duty on May 8, 1967. He was on patrol when his training officer observed someone crouched behind a stone BBQ pit and decided to investigate. When the training officer exited the vehicle, a gunshot was heard. A round from a .308 rifle struck Policeman Warren in the armpit. The suspect was a 16-year-old thought to be seeking revenge on a liquor store manager who had a friend of the suspect arrested for shoplifting earlier in the day. It is also believed the suspect's intentions for the manager were interrupted by Policeman Warren and his partner. The suspect was shot and killed by the training officer and an off-duty police officer from across the street. Policeman Warren was transported to the hospital where he was pronounced dead as a result of the gunshot wound.

Policeman Warren was just 23 years-old and graduated from the Police Academy on his second day out of the academy. His unit had just been released from roll call when he was dispatched on the call.

OFFICER GARY MURAKAMI #14036
END OF WATCH: SEPTEMBER 9, 1968
Officer Gary Murakami was shot and killed on September 9, 1968, while he and his partner answered a call of a disturbance involving a nude man knocking on doors on West 66th Street. As the officers approached the front door of the suspect's apartment, they had to pass in front of a window. As they did so, the suspect opened fire with a .410 gauge shotgun, striking Officer Murakami in the head. The suspect was killed by other officers at the scene who returned fire. Officer Murakami was transported to a local hospital where he succumbed to the wound during surgery. The shooting took place on Officer Murakami's first call on his second day out of the academy. His unit had just been released from roll call when he was dispatched on the call.

Officer Murakami was the first Asian American police officer killed in the line of duty in the United States. Murakami excelled at the Academy and graduated in the top 10 of his class. In 2007, he was honored with the Spirit of Los Angeles award at the opening ceremony for Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

POLICEMAN ROBERT COTE #13991
END OF WATCH: JULY 31, 1969
Policeman Robert Cote was shot and killed by a robbery suspect on July 31, 1969, while responding to a robbery in-progress call where armed suspects had taken the employees of a Woolworth's department store hostage. He entered the store before back-up arrived and was shot by one of the suspects in the femoral artery while searching the store. Policeman Cote, although wounded, exited the store, but died while being transported to Central Receiving Hospital in downtown Los Angeles. The suspect was shot and killed by responding officers.

Policeman Cote's death changed the way calls for wounded police officers and firefighters were handled. The old system of a police/fire ambulance being dispatched from the old City-operated Central Receiving Hospital (located where the LAPD Rampart Station now sits) city-wide to handle injured/wounded police and fire personnel was stopped. After Policeman Cote's death, injured officers and firefighters were taken by ambulance to the nearest emergency room for critical care.

POLICEMAN JERRY MADDOX #14317
END OF WATCH: AUGUST 19, 1969
Hollenbeck Area Policeman Jerry Maddox was killed on August 19, 1969, while patrolling the Pico Gardens housing project. Maddox stopped to investigate a party attended by approximately 18 to 24 youths. As the officers approached the location, one of the partygoers ran from police. Maddox chased the man down a narrow driveway and was handcuffing him when someone shot him in the back.

The suspect, a 16-year-old who had a very lengthy juvenile record, was convicted of Policeman Maddox's murder.

POLICEMAN CHARLES CARACCILLO #10285
END OF WATCH: JUNE 21, 1973
On June 21, 1973, Policeman Charles Caraccillo, a motorcycle officer assigned to the Van Nuys Division, made a routine stop of a motorist and approached with the intent to warn or cite for a traffic violation. As Caraccillo approached the stopped vehicle, the driver, later suspected of auto theft, fired six shots. Although Caraccillo was wearing a bulletproof vest, his first instinct was to turn sideways and draw his weapon. In doing so, one of the bullets entered the armpit area striking Caraccilo in the heart. Despite this fatal injury, Policeman Caraccillo was able to fire several shots at the suspect before collapsing in the driveway across the street.

The shooter, Michael Patrick Hunter, age 21, had escaped from the California Youth Authority in northern California where he was serving time for other felony crimes. Hunter was found guilty of second-degree murder and was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Policeman Caraccillo had served with the Los Angeles Police Department for 14 years.
Meritorious Service

END OF WATCH: AUGUST 17, 1976
Officer Vincent Leusch #16208
Officer Vincent Leusch of Southwest Division responded to a call to assist other LAPD Officers involved in a pursuit on September 12, 1975. As told by a reporter in the Los Angeles Herald Examiner, ‘the high speed …wild bullet-punctuated chase’ proceeded through the streets of Los Angeles for eight miles and ended in Inglewood. Numerous police and motorcycle officers responded to the pursuit while the suspects drove wildly and without regard for public safety. During the pursuit, the suspects sideswiped two private vehicles and at least two other police vehicles causing injuries to LAPD officers.

Officer Leusch’s vehicle approached the stolen vehicle from the opposite direction. He stopped his patrol car and positioned himself with a shotgun behind the open door of the car. The speeding, stolen vehicle rammed the patrol car hurling him 80 feet away. Shortly after, police stopped the vehicle in Inglewood where the juvenile suspects were arrested.

Officer Leusch was transported to Daniel Freeman Hospital and underwent surgery. He lost a leg and was paralyzed from the neck down and died 10 days later on September 22, 1975, as a result of his injuries.

END OF WATCH: SEPTEMBER 22, 1975
Officer Raymond Hicks #12035
Officer Raymond Hicks, a 12-year veteran of the Department, was shot once in the chest during a raid at an Inglewood home. Hicks, a narcotics officer assigned to the Venice Division, was one of five officers who went to the home armed with a warrant. The officers forced their way into the home when a man inside opened fire. Despite his wound, Hicks returned fire, wounding one of the suspects.

Hicks later died at Daniel Freeman Memorial Hospital. His death brought about the issuance of the LAPD raid jackets and the use of body armor.

END OF WATCH: OCTOBER 21, 1977
Officer David Bailey #21939
Officer David Bailey, a Police Academy trainee, was shot by a 17-year-old suspect in the pizza parlor parking lot about a possible grand theft auto. Officer David Bailey, a Police Academy trainee, was shot by a 17-year-old suspect. Bailey, who lived in a Venice apartment, was killed when he stopped his patrol car and stepped out to question a juvénile suspect. Two suspects were arrested.

END OF WATCH SEPTEMBER 27, 1979
Officer David Kubly #22123
Officer David Kubly, assigned to the Wilshire Division was shot and killed by a robbery suspect following a short vehicle pursuit on September 27, 1979. Officer Kubly had attempted to stop the vehicle after observing it run a red light. The suspect led Officer Kubly on a pursuit which ended when the vehicle crashed into a business. When the suspect emerged from the wreck, he opened fire on Officer Kubly with a 9 mm handgun, striking him once in the chest. Officer Kubly was transported to a local hospital where he succumbed to his wounds a short time later.

The suspect was apprehended nine hours after the shooting. The ensuing investigation revealed that the suspect had stolen a car and had committed several other robberies earlier in the day. He was found guilty of murdering Officer Kubly and sent to prison.

Officer Kubly, who served with the Los Angeles Police Department for 18 months, died at the age of 23.

END OF WATCH: DECEMBER 3, 1982
Officer Paul Verna #15086
Motorcycle Officer Paul Verna was shot and killed on June 2, 1983, after making a traffic stop in Lake View Terrace of a vehicle containing two armed robbery suspects. One of the suspects shot Officer Verna once and then passed the revolver to the second suspect, who shot him five more times. Both suspects, ex-convicts on parole, were apprehended and sentenced to death.

Officer Verna had also been awarded the Department’s Medal of Valor for an incident in December 1981 when he crawled into a burning home in an attempt to save two mentally handicapped children. Verna’s record of service also included the city Fire Department and the Air Force.
On November 5, 1983, Officer Wayne DeBord responded to a radio call regarding a fight. Upon arriving at the location, officers were met by a witness who stated they encountered a man with a knife challenging to fight. Officers then observed a man walking with a woman and an 18-month-old child. An argument ensued between the man and the woman, and the man fell to the ground with the child. Officer DeBord realized that he needed to stop the incident from escalating any further. He cautiously approached the individuals and observed that the man had a large knife. Officer DeBord struck the suspect with his baton, which caused the suspect to turn and stab him. Officer DeBord then fired two rounds to stop the suspect’s actions.

Officer DeBord received medical treatment for the knife wound at the hospital.

Officer Duane Johnson was a retired Marine and served with the Department for three years.

Officer Archie Nagao was awarded the Medal of Valor in 1985. Officer Nagao and his partner were conducting surveillance of known street-walking prostitutes when they observed a suspect attempt to commit a robbery at knifepoint. The victim fled on foot, but was pursued by the suspect in his vehicle. The suspect caught up with the victim and then tried to force her into his vehicle. The suspect then fled in his vehicle, leaving the victim behind, and a vehicle pursuit ensued. A contact team was formed to extricate the suspect from his vehicle.

As the officers approached, the suspect started his vehicle and rapidly accelerated backward toward the officers. Sergeant Jauregui was struck by the vehicle and was propelled, causing him to land on his back. The suspect was eventually taken into custody, and Sergeant Jauregui required surgery for his injury. The injuries he sustained as a result continue to cause him problems to this day.

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On the night of June 22, 1987, in a San Fernando Valley neighborhood plagued by drug-related violence, Officer James Pagliotti was shot and killed while serving as a police officer. Pagliotti stepped out of his car, identified himself as a police officer and then took cover behind the car. As he exchanged shots with one of the suspects, his car, which had been left in gear, rolled forward, exposing him to his assailant, investigators said. He was mortally wounded in the chest. Although hit, Pagliotti fired 14 shots, wounding one suspect, Louis Belvin, Jr., age 17. He and the other suspect, Thomas Lee Mixon, 19, were later captured. Belvin was sentenced to 28 years to life in prison, and Mixon was sentenced to eight years in prison.

On February 2, 1987, Officer Daniel Pratt and his partner, Veronica DeLao, were on patrol in an unmarked car when they heard a report on the police radio about a nearby drive-by shooting that had wounded three people. Pratt and his partner went to investigate. Pratt and DeLao spotted a car matching the description of the vehicle used in the drive-by shooting and began following the vehicle. The car ended up at a gas station, so Pratt and DeLao parked their car and were about to exit their squad car when the suspects’ vehicle made a sudden U-turn, drove directly at the officers and began firing at them with an assault rifle. As the officers returned fire, an assault rifle round struck Officer Pratt in the face, killing him instantly. The suspects fled the scene.

On November 10, 1990, homicide Detective Russell Kuster was shot and killed as he attempted to stop a man who was waving a handgun in a Universal City restaurant. The suspect had gotten into an argument with the owner of the restaurant who told the suspect to leave. The suspect went to his car to retrieve a 9 mm semi-automatic pistol, returned to the restaurant and started pointing the gun at other patrons in the restaurant. Detective Kuster, who was off-duty and in the restaurant, identified himself as a police officer and ordered the man to put the gun down. The suspect then fired at Kuster four times. Despite being mortally wounded, Detective Kuster was able to return fire and killed the suspect.

Detective Kuster had been with the Department for over 24 years. Prior to joining the LAPD, Kuster served in the United States Marine Corps and the Ventura County Sheriff’s Department.

He was known for his ability to clear homicides and train other officers. Kuster also helped develop a homicide information, tracking, and management computer program, known as HITMAN, which earned nationwide acclaim and was adopted Department-wide.

On January 1, 1989, Commander Scott C. Kroeber and his partner were assigned to Metropolitan Division and were providing force protection to the fire department due to traditional excessive gun fire on New Year’s Eve. The officers were en-route to a call, escorting a rescue ambulance, when they observed a suspect standing holding a large caliber revolver. He pointed the gun in the direction of their police car. They observed muzzle flash emitting from the gun, when a bullet had penetrated the passenger compartment and struck Commander Kroeber on the forehead. His partner quickly drove out of the line of fire and requested aid. Commander Kroeber was transported to the hospital for treatment of his gunshot wound. The suspect, who was a gang member, was subsequently arrested and charged with the attempted murder of a police officer.
When Officers John Hurd and Richard Householder stopped a vehicle near Vineyard Avenue and Burbank Boulevard on the evening of February 3, 1991, they were vigilant. They had seen the Ford auto with Ohio license plates run a 3-way traffic signal. However, more important, to the officers was the license number. Through a radio check, the officers learned that a different car with California license plates with the same license number as the Ford had been used in an armed robbery in Burbank. The officers, made wary by the “coincidence” of the identical license numbers, remained by their patrol vehicle as they ordered the driver to leave his car and move to the sidewalk.

Officer Hurd approached the man in order to “pat him down” while partner Householder stood guard. However, the caution of the officers wasn’t enough. In an instant, the suspect whirled around, pulled a large .44-caliber handgun from his waistband, and fired directly into Officer Hurd’s chest. Fortunately, the officer’s bulletproof vest deflected the bullet through his shoulder, where it exited under his arm.

The gunman then changed his aim. This time he fired at Officer Householder, where the bullet hit him in the shoulder, but deflected into his neck. The bullet had the power to spin the officer around, so that when the suspect fired again, his second bullet hit Officer Householder in the back. Fortunately, the second bullet was stopped by the officer’s bulletproof vest. Though seriously wounded, the officers drew their weapons and returned fire, driving the suspect to seek cover. They followed him, fearing that the gunman might reload to continue the fight or escape.

Officer Hurd radioed for help, as he and his partner continued to fire from cover behind parked cars. When his partner’s gun emptied, Officer Householder stepped into the open to draw the gunman’s attention while Officer Hurd reloaded. Both officers fired at the suspect until he fell to the ground, mortally wounded.

Although severely wounded and facing imminent death, each officer chose to confront and expose himself to the gunman’s fire in order to protect his partner.

Southeast Division Officer Robert Cosner and his partner, Officer Julie McAltine, were called to a domestic argument at the Imperial Gardens housing project in Watts on February 5, 1991. Upon walking back to their patrol vehicle from the call, Officers Cosner and McAltine were met with a volley of gunfire from gang members armed with a fully automatic assault rifle. Cosner was struck by gunfire in his upper body and leg and fell to the ground. With obstructed vision, a heavily bloodied face and severe injury to his leg, Officer Cosner managed to seek cover until responding units arrived. Although Officer Cosner sustained four gunshot wounds, he managed to assist his partner and also move himself to cover.

Officer Tina Kerbrat was shot and killed on February 11, 1991, just four months after graduating from the Police Academy after she and her partner, Officer Earl Valladares, made a routine stop in Sun Valley to question two men suspected of drinking in public. Valladares, a training officer, wanted to give Kerbrat experience writing a citation for an open-container violation, something Officer Kerbrat had never done before. Before the officers could exit their patrol car, one of the men immediately approached from the rear and opened fire, striking Officer Kerbrat in the face. Unaware that Officer Kerbrat had been shot, Officer Valladares returned fire, killing the suspect. He then trained his gun on the second suspect, put out an emergency call, handcuffed the second suspect and walked back to the patrol car. It was only then that he realized his partner had been shot. Officer Kerbrat was the first Los Angeles Police Department female officer killed in the line of duty.

Created in memory of Officer Kerbrat, the Tina Kerbrat Award is presented to an LAPD recruit deemed “most inspirational” upon graduation from the Police Academy.

On June 13, 1991, Air Support Division Officers Gary Howe and Charles “Randy” Champe were in-flight in Air 12 when they experienced sudden engine failure. Howe and Champe sought the nearest open space into which they could safely land, which happened to be a schoolyard filled with children playing. Unwilling to risk young lives, the officers now guided their dropping aircraft to a secondary and risky street intersection. They were able to maneuver their craft between power-pole lines beneath them. With time running out, they suddenly found their secondary landing site a risk itself. They were able to maneuver their craft between power-pole lines beneath them. With time running out, they suddenly found their secondary landing site a risk itself. The falling airship struck a light standard and crashed nose first to the ground. Officers Champe and Howe perished.

Officer Champe was a Vietnam Veteran and had been with the LAPD for 17 years. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Valor in 1991. In memory of Officers Champe and Howe, the unit designation Air 12 was retired by the Department.
Sergeant Gregory Nichols

INCIDENT DATE: AUGUST 1, 1993

On August 1, 1993, Officer Gregory Nichols and his partner observed a van driving erratically toward them. The driver of the van instantly made an illegal left turn when he became aware of the approaching motor officers. The van then came to a sudden stop, and the officers observed a passenger exit the van and run away. While still on their motorcycles, the officers approached the vehicle to make contact with the driver of the vehicle and suddenly came under fire. Sergeant Nichols was struck by a round fired from the occupant of the van who had fled the scene moments earlier. The officers immediately accelerated out of the line of fire behind a building.

The suspect fled on foot and was never apprehended.

Sergeant Nichols sustained a severe gunshot wound, but recovered and returned to full duty.

Officer Mark Haberman

INCIDENT DATE: AUGUST 1, 1993

Officer Haberman was assigned to a motorcycle unit working the Crenshaw Cruiser Taskforce focusing on gang suppression. On August 1, 1993, Officer Haberman was attempting to stop a traffic violator. Another vehicle negotiated an illegal left turn causing his police motorcycle to collide with its rear passenger door. Officer Haberman sustained extensive injuries due to the on-duty traffic collision.

On April 27, 1995, after many attempts to repair his injuries, Officer Haberman was placed on Permanent Restricted Duty Status.

Officer George Rose, Jr.

INCIDENT DATE: JUNE 18, 1991

On June 18, 1991, Officer George Rose, Jr. was shot and killed in the line of duty while attempting to make an arrest. The suspect fled on foot and was never apprehended.

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On April 27, 1995, after many attempts to repair his injuries, Officer Haberman was placed on Permanent Restricted Duty Status.

Detective Ray Mendoza

INCIDENT DATE: SEPTEMBER 28, 1993

On September 28, 1993, Officer Ray Mendoza was working Newton Division CRASH. Officer Mendoza and his partner were transporting a suspect to the station when they observed a group of known gang members. One of the male suspects appeared to conceal a gun which caused them to stop their vehicle. While still in their vehicle, at least three of the suspects opened fire on the officers. The officers received a barrage of gunfire toward their vehicle, and both of them returned gunfire.

Detective Ray Mendoza returned to duty 10 months after the shooting. Through his dedication and hard work, he was able to overcome the effects of many of his injuries.

Officer Christy Hamilton

INCIDENT DATE: FEBRUARY 22, 1994

On February 22, 1994, Officer Hamilton and her partner responded to a report of gunfire at an Amestoy Avenue home. A teenage boy had just killed his father and called the police. When Officer Hamilton and her partner arrived at the scene, they observed several people screaming at the end of a cul-de-sac. The officers parked a short distance away to devise a tactical plan, but unknowingly parked in front of the location where the suspect had setup an ambush position.

The suspect opened fire with an AR-15 military-style semiautomatic rifle. One round struck Officer Hamilton as she retrieved a radio from the patrol car. The bullet punctured the door and went through an arm opening in her protective vest into her chest causing a fatal wound.

The suspect committed suicide after firing upon the officers.

Officer Hamilton had only been with the Department for three months.

Officer Charles Heim

INCIDENT DATE: OCTOBER 21, 1994

On October 21, 1994, Officers Charles Heim and Felix Pena were assigned to Hollywood Area and received information from a citizen regarding narcotics that were being sold from a motel. Officers Pena and Heim conducted a follow-up investigation at the Dunes Motel. Police Officer Heim took the lead with Officer Pena standing to the left of the door. They knocked on the door of the room, and the suspect’s girlfriend opened it.

The officers observed the suspect lying on the bed with sheets covering his hands. Without warning, the suspect responded by firing at the officers with a handgun. Both officers were struck by the bullets. The officers returned fire at the suspect. Officer Heim was shot twice in the upper body, and Officer Felix’s right hand was wounded.

The armed suspect fled the location prompting the activation of the SWAT Unit that led to a second gun battle. He was subsequently located with a self-inflicted gunshot to his head.

Following the incident, Officer Felix recovered from his wounds, but Officer Heim succumbed to his injuries.
SERGEANT SCOTT DEFOE  #27116  
INCIDENT DATE:  JUNE 2, 1995

On June 2, 1995, Officer Scott DeFoe and his partner were working Wilshire Area Vice. The officers' investigation focused on blatant prostitution and gang-related activity in the surrounding area. As the officers were driving east in an unmarked car on Washington Boulevard near Arlington Avenue, they observed a suspect “tagging” on a wall. The suspect spotted the officers and instantaneously the sound of gunfire erupted. Officer DeFoe suddenly felt his head snap back, and realized that he had been shot in the mouth and was bleeding profusely.

Officer DeFoe's partner managed to fire one round toward the muzzle flash. Unfortunately, Officer DeFoe was not in a position to return fire, so he elected to exit the vehicle to pinpoint the source of gunfire. Several gang members were arrested for the attempted murder of both officers. Robbery-Homicide Detectives determined that between five to eight armed gang members were “lying in wait” as their fellow member spray painted the wall in rival gang territory.

Officer DeFoe was transported to the hospital for treatment. Within a few months, he returned to full-duty. He has since promoted to the rank of Sergeant.

OFFICER CUSTODIO PONCE  #27071  
INCIDENT DATE:  FEBRUARY 1, 1996

On February 1, 1996, Officer Custodio Ponce and his partner were assigned to the Hollenbeck CRASH Unit on patrol for gang suppression. While driving through the Ramona Gardens Housing Project, home to one of the city’s well-established and deadliest gangs, the officers saw a man standing in the middle of the street drinking a bottle of beer. As they approached the suspect, he immediately dropped the beer bottle and started to walk away. Officer Ponce observed a gun in his hand, so he reversed his vehicle and began to chase the suspect. They located the suspect running down a driveway leading into a parking lot when he slipped and fell on the pavement. The suspect picked himself up and began shooting at the officers shattering the squad car window. Officer Ponce exited the vehicle and returned fire. While seeking additional cover, he was struck by 2 bullets, one to his left hip and one to his leg. Wounded, Officer Ponce continued to engage the suspect. The officers managed to strike the suspect causing him to cease his deadly assault. Officer Ponce was transported for medical treatment of his gunshot wounds. He returned to full-duty one month after the incident.

OFFICER SEAN MULFORD  #30366  
INCIDENT DATE:  APRIL 29, 1996

On April 29, 1996, Officer Sean Mulford and his partner observed a vehicle with two suspects commit a traffic violation. The officers attempted to stop the vehicle after they discovered it had recently been stolen. The vehicle pulled to a stop and several passengers exited. Officers continued to follow the driver of the stolen vehicle and initiated a pursuit. The suspect continued to speed away from the officers and fired approximately fourteen rounds from an automatic sub-machine gun. The rounds shattered the police vehicle’s rear windshield. One round struck Officer Mulford in the left shoulder. They continued to pursue the driver until he stopped and abandoned the vehicle.

The driver got away, but all of the suspects were eventually arrested and charged with the Attempted Murder of Officer Mulford and his partner.

OFFICER MARIO NAVAIDAD, JR.  #31588  
END OF WATCH:  DECEMBER 22, 1996

On December 22, 1996, Officer Navidad and his partner, Police Academy classmate Ralph Mendoza, were patrolling the streets of the Wilshire Division when a convenience store clerk flagged them down. The clerk told them that someone had taken beer from his store.

When the officers spotted the suspect, 17-year-old Aleim Ulloa Ortiz, he was carrying a six-pack of beer under each arm. Ortiz loaded the beer under one arm and then pulled out a gun, firing at the officers. Officer Navidad was hit six times before he could even get out of the car. The bullets passed through the unprotected side of his bullet proof vest.

Both Mendoza and Navidad returned fire fatally wounding Ortiz, whom investigators suspect had been on a drinking binge for several days.

Officer Navidad could not recover from his injuries. He had been with the Department for only 21 months.
On Friday, February 28, 1997, the Los Angeles Police Department experienced a day of terror and remarkable heroism. The North Hollywood Bank Shootout will long be remembered as one of the country's most shocking displays of criminal behavior and an outstanding example of professional, heroic law enforcement. On this day, two men in full body armor held up a bank and then proceeded to shower a North Hollywood community with hundreds of armor-piercing AK-47 rounds. Miraculously, no one was killed.

North Hollywood officers were on patrol when they observed two suspects wearing ski masks and armed with assault rifles walking toward a Bank of America. They were walking single file and appeared to force a citizen toward the front doors of the bank. As the suspects entered the bank, officers believed an armed robbery was in progress. The officers then heard the sound of gunfire from inside the bank and immediately broadcast a robbery call. The suspects emerged from the bank armed with assault weapons and began firing toward officers that had arrived on-scene. Officers returned fire at the suspects.

Police personnel engaged the heavily armed suspects wearing body armor, and it was determined that during the 17-minute gun battle, the suspects fired at least 424 rounds at Department personnel. Officers suffered gunshot wounds to various degrees, but each officer wounded also suffered great psychological traumatic injury years after the shooting. One suspect was eventually mortally wounded, and the other who was severely wounded was pronounced dead at the location.

On May 17, 1997, Officer Timothy Colomey responded to a “415 Man with a Gun” radio call. Upon arrival, officers observed the suspect and a foot pursuit ensued. While on the foot pursuit, an additional suspect threw a bicycle at Officer Colomey in an attempt to slow him down. Officer Colomey was then struck by a vehicle traveling approximately 25 miles per hour. He received severe injuries and was told that he would not return to full-duty. Through his dedication and perseverance, Officer Colomey returned to full-duty and was promoted to Sergeant.

On May 27, 1997, Glendale Police Department detectives were at a warehouse in Chatsworth looking for a suspect who had seriously beaten his girlfriend. As they entered the location, they were ambushed by the suspect. One of the detectives was shot several times, and his partner called the Los Angeles Police Department for help. Numerous LAPD resources responded to the help call.

Officers Jude Bella and Kevin Foster were the first officers to respond. They determined that the suspect was barricaded inside the darkened warehouse waiting to ambush any rescuing officers. Concerned with the condition of the wounded Glendale detective, SWAT was requested to respond to the scene. Realizing there would be a delay in the arrival of SWAT, the officers initiated a plan to rescue the Glendale detective. Several attempts were made to rescue the downed officer and each attempt was met with gunfire by the suspect. Officer Bella and the rescue team entered the warehouse. The suspect then fired several rounds striking Officer Bella and Officer Foster. Immediately the rescue and cover teams regrouped and pulled the wounded officers to safety.

After a 2-hour standoff, the SWAT unit searched for the suspect, and found his body with a fatal, self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. Officers Foster and Bella were transported for treatment of their gunshot wounds.

Officer Gajda, who was shot several times, was taken to a local hospital where he did not recover from his injuries.
OFFICER FILBERTO CUESTA  #30753
END OF WATCH: AUGUST 9, 1998

On August 8, 1998, Southwest CRASH Officers Filberto Cuesta and his partner, Officer Richard Gabaldon, were monitoring a loud gang party near Carlin Avenue and Duray Place in Southwest Area. Upon their arrival, Officers Cuesta and Gabaldon determined that they should wait for backup, due to the number of people attending the party.

As Officers Cuesta and Gabaldon waited inside their police vehicle for backup, they were ambushed from behind. Officer Cuesta was struck once in the head by a suspect’s bullet. Officer Cuesta’s partner was able to return fire.

Several suspects were detained for questioning. A shooter was identified and later convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

Officer Cuesta, 26 years of age, 4-year veteran of the Department, succumbed to his injury on August 9, 1998.

OFFICER BRIAN BROWN  #32054
END OF WATCH: NOVEMBER 29, 1998

On November 29, 1998, Pacific Area Officers Brian Brown and Francisco Dominguez were traveling on Centinela Avenue when they heard gunfire. They immediately observed a Hispanic male with a rifle enter the passenger side of a dark-colored Honda. The Honda fled with the officers in pursuit. Additional officers joined the pursuit, which terminated when the driver of the Honda lost control of the vehicle. The passenger, still seated in the vehicle, immediately opened fire on the officers with an assault weapon. Officer Brown was struck by the gunfire and was fatally wounded. Officers Dominguez, McCoy, and Thompson returned fire, resulting in the death of the suspect.

The second suspect carjacked another vehicle prompting another chase. The chase ended when the suspect crashed at Los Angeles International Airport and was shot and wounded during another exchange of gunfire. The second suspect was convicted and sentenced to life.

Officer Brown had been with the Department for four years.

DETECTIVE CYNTHIA FRENCH  #23988
INCIDENT DATE: DECEMBER 31, 1998

On December 31, 1998, North Hollywood Area Officer Cynthia French and her partner responded with other officers to investigate a radio call of an intoxicated, mentally unstable man with a gun causing a disturbance at a Studio City apartment complex. The officers searched the area and entered the suspect’s apartment, unable to locate the armed individual. They did observe several assault rifle cases and several hundred rounds of ammunition.

Later that evening, a second call for service was received from the security guard at the complex, alerting officers that the suspect had returned to his apartment. Officers responded to assist and a tactical plan was formulated. The officers called the suspect in an effort to get him to leave his apartment unarmed. When he refused, the officers knocked on the front door with the same request. The suspect opened the door, but then closed the door and began loading his weapons. The suspect then opened the door and exited the apartment to confront officers. Realizing the suspect’s superior firepower, the officers were directed to redeploy as Officer French provided cover. The suspect then discharged numerous rounds at the officers. Officer French ordered him to put the gun down. The suspect continued to advance on Officer French. Fearing for her safety and the safety of the community, she engaged the suspect in gun battle. Facing overwhelming firepower, Officer French was forced to redeploy near the entrance of the apartment building. Officer French again engaged the suspect in gun battle, receiving a wound in her left arm and left torso. Undaunted by her severe wounds, Officer French in a standing position, faced the suspect and fired again, receiving another wound to her right hand.

Other officers then moved into the garage area and engaged in a final gun battle before striking the suspect with a mortal wound.

OFFICER FRANK ARUJO  #27101
INCIDENT DATE: NOVEMBER 22, 1999

On November 22, 1999, Devonshire units observed a robbery suspect standing near an intersection. As a foot pursuit ensued, the officers cornered the suspect and a major altercation transpired. The suspect was transported to a nearby hospital under heavy guard and sedation. After being released from his restraints for medical treatment, the suspect attacked the guarding officers escaped from the hospital, throwing one officer, who was pursuing him, over a second story stairwell. Officer Frank Arujo managed to catch up to the suspect. Officer Arujo fought hand to hand with the suspect and sustained a major injury while taking him into custody. This injury resulted in a permanent physical impairment.
Officer John Harrison

Officer John Harrison located the suspect, 19-year-old Armando Padernal, hiding in a trash container. During the incident, Officer Harrison's K-9 Search Team repeatedly ordered the suspect to submit to arrest and surrender, but he refused to comply with their commands. As Officer Harrison continued utilizing a bull horn to give verbal commands, the suspect suddenly and without warning popped up from within the trash container and started shooting with two semiautomatic handguns. The suspect fired several rounds at Officer Harrison and the K-9 Search Team. During the ensuing gun battle, Officer Harrison sustained a through-and-through shot to his right leg above his right knee and a gunshot wound to his right hand middle finger. Officer Harrison was transported to a local hospital for treatment and remained hospitalized for several days.

Armando Padernal, who was positively identified as the attempted murder suspect, had an additional warrant for his arrest for a parole violation. Three handguns were recovered from him at the scene of the incident.

Officer John Harrison

On May 16, 2001, K-9 personnel responded to a search for a suspect who was wanted for the Attempt Murder of a California Highway Patrol Officer. Officer John Harrison located the suspect, 19-year-old Armando Padernal, hiding in a trash container. During the incident, Officer Harrison's K-9 Search Team repeatedly ordered the suspect to submit to arrest and surrender, but he refused to comply with their commands. As Officer Harrison continued utilizing a bull horn to give verbal commands, the suspect suddenly and without warning popped up from within the trash container and started shooting with two semiautomatic handguns. The suspect fired several rounds at Officer Harrison and the K-9 Search Team. During the ensuing gun battle, Officer Harrison sustained a through-and-through shot to his right leg above his right knee and a gunshot wound to his right hand middle finger. Officer Harrison was transported to a local hospital for treatment and remained hospitalized for several days.

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Officer Dona Adolphi

On July 7, 2002, Newton Area officers responded to an "officer needs help" call. An officer-involved shooting had just occurred, and the suspect was now in control of a police vehicle. Officer Dona Adolphi and his partner entered the northbound Harbor Freeway and observed another Newton patrol unit following the suspect. When the suspect stopped the police vehicle, he exited and started to act belligerent and extremely aggressive. The suspect failed to respond to the repeated commands to surrender. Officers deployed less lethal munitions to attempt to gain control of the suspect, but he continued his assault by grabbing and punching the officers. During the altercation, Officer Adolphi heard another officer yell that the suspect had grabbed his gun. Officer Adolphi attempted to restrain the suspect's head and upper torso. He knew his actions provided additional time to keep the suspect from pulling the trigger. Officer Adolphi heard several shots being fired and only relinquished his hold on the suspect once he had been shot. Officers fired shots to stop the uncontrollable suspect and ended the life threatening situation.

Officer Adolphi was transported to the hospital for medical treatment of his gunshot wound.

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Detective Victor Alvarez

On December 6, 2002, Officer Victor Alvarez and his partner responded to an "officer needs help" call. A suspect was walking on the sidewalk carrying a knapsack containing a shotgun. Other officers were already on scene following the suspect on foot when they arrived. Officers were then advised by the air unit that the suspect was approaching an intersection, and that action must be taken in order to prevent harm to the citizens that were there. The officers rushed the suspect in order to conduct a team take down. The suspect was able to slightly turn sideways and fire one round from the shotgun as the officers began to make physical contact. The shotgun blast struck Officer Alvarez.

The suspect was taken into custody without further incident.

After extensive years of physical therapy for the wound he received, Officer Alvarez returned to full-duty and has been promoted to the rank of Detective.

Officer Timothy Colson

On December 14, 2003, Officers Colson and Zamudio observed two Hispanic males, one later identified as 19-year-old Javier Vieyra and an unidentified Hispanic male, standing on the east sidewalk of Wilmington Avenue adjacent to a parked Chevrolet Monte Carlo. When the officers were parallel to the Monte Carlo, the unidentified Hispanic fired one to two rounds from a 12-gauge shotgun at the officers. Officer Colson immediately stopped the vehicle, exited the driver's door and drew his 9-millimeter service pistol. The unidentified Hispanic male fired two additional rounds at the officers. Both officers fired back, each caught in a gun battle with a different suspect. Vieyra fell to the ground. The unidentified suspect fled south, but stopped and again pointed the shotgun at Officer Colson. Officer Colson, in fear of his life, fired his pistol at the suspect. The suspect then fled east through a vacant lot, but was found hiding in a trash bin hours later.

Officers Colson and Zamudio were transported to a local hospital and treated for gunshot wounds. Officer Colson was treated and released for minor pellet wounds to his face and right hand. Officer Zamudio was treated and admitted for pellet gunshot wounds to his right knee, right leg, left calf and left eyebrow. A loaded .38 caliber revolver was recovered from Vieyra when he was taken into custody. A 12-gauge sawed-off shotgun was recovered from the east curb of Wilmington Avenue just south of the shooting incident.

Officer Jose Zamudio

On December 14, 2003, Officers Colson and Zamudio observed two Hispanic males, one later identified as 19-year-old Javier Vieyra and an unidentified Hispanic male, standing on the east sidewalk of Wilmington Avenue adjacent to a parked Chevrolet Monte Carlo. When the officers were parallel to the Monte Carlo, the unidentified Hispanic fired one to two rounds from a 12-gauge shotgun at the officers. Officer Colson immediately stopped the vehicle, exited the driver's door and drew his 9-millimeter service pistol. The unidentified Hispanic male fired two additional rounds at the officers. Both officers fired back, each caught in a gun battle with a different suspect. Vieyra fell to the ground. The unidentified suspect fled south, but stopped and again pointed the shotgun at Officer Colson. Officer Colson, in fear of his life, fired his pistol at the suspect. The suspect then fled east through a vacant lot, but was found hiding in a trash bin hours later.

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On February 20, 2004, Officer Lizarraga and his partner were flagged down in the Leimert Park area of Los Angeles by a woman. The woman informed the two officers she was having problems with her boyfriend, Kennick Johnson. She wanted him removed from her home. As the officers approached the man to search him, he pulled out a handgun and opened fire, striking Officer Lizarraga in the abdomen below his vest. Officer Lizarraga’s partner returned fire as the suspect fled the scene.

Officer Lizarraga was transported to a local hospital where he died from his wounds approximately 2 hours later.

The suspect was arrested about 3 hours after the shooting during a large manhunt. The shooter was a gang member who was on parole and had a long criminal history. The suspect attempted to hang himself in his cell a few hours after his first court appearance and died the next day from self-inflicted injuries.

Officer Lizarraga had served with the Los Angeles Police Department for over 2 years. He worked patrol assignments in the 77th Street Area and one year later transferred to the Newton Area.

On November 27, 2004, 77th Street Area Officers Mario Cardona and Matthew Cundiff responded to an "assault with a deadly weapon" call only to be confronted by hysterical partygoers fleeing a homicidal assailant. As they reached the location of the event, they observed a suspect shoot a teenager after pistol whipping him. As Officer Cardona and his partner prepared to make entry, the suspect shot another individual in the stomach and pointed the gun at the individual’s head. Knowing that at least two individual lives were in peril and many others could be in danger, Officer Cardona kicked open the security door.

As Officer Cardona made his way toward the suspect, the suspect turned and shot Officer Cardona in the stomach. Although seriously injured, Officer Cardona gave chase. The suspect attempted to flee, but Officer Cardona closed the distance on him. The suspect turned and pointed his gun at Officer Cardona, but Officer Cardona grabbed the suspect and pulled toward him. From a close contact position, Officer Cardona fired and mortally wounded the suspect.

Officer Cardona was transported to the hospital for his gunshot wounds.

On July 4, 2005, Officer Rodolfo Fuentes and several other officers were investigating a violent carjacking. At one point, Officer Fuentes was on the phone with the Hollenbeck Area Watch Commander, advising him of the incident. Several minutes later, the passenger in a passing vehicle leaned out the window and fired one round from a Glock, 40-caliber handgun. The round struck Officer Fuentes in the middle finger of his left hand while he was on the phone, missing his head by inches.

Officer Fuentes sustained extensive and permanent damage from the gunshot wound.

The suspect was arrested several months later and sentenced to 65 years in prison.

On July 10, 2005, Southeast Division personnel responded to a radio call about a 16-year-old girl who told a dispatcher her stepfather had threatened her life. The first units to arrive encountered a despondent male armed with a handgun. He was holding his 19-month-old daughter as a hostage, and repeated attempts by officers to obtain a compliant surrender and release of the hostage were met with negative results. Instead, the suspect engaged the officers in a gun battle and used the child as a human shield. Additionally, they found the teenage girl locked behind a chain link fence.

Officers requested for LAPD’s SWAT, and Officer Daniel Sanchez was one of the first to arrive. The officers were able to reach the teenager girl and moved her to a safe location. As Officer Sanchez approached the suspect, he felt a sharp pain to his shoulder and immediately realized he had been shot. Despite being wounded, Officer Sanchez drove on, deployed the noise-flash device and never wavered.

On September 11, 2005, Officer Thomas Deluccia was assigned to Northeast Gang Detail. While patrolling the Cypress Park gang territory, he and other Gang Detail officers conducted a Burglary from a Motor Vehicle (BFMV) investigation on a suspect. The suspect pointed a large caliber revolver at the officers which resulted in an officer-involved shooting. During the incident, Officer Deluccia was struck by gunfire in his right hand. He was transported to the hospital for medical treatment.

The suspect, who was a local gang member, was later apprehended and subsequently convicted of assault with a deadly weapon.

On November 16, 2005, Officer Alfonso Mendoza was assigned to Metropolitan Division suppression detail in 77th Street Area. While processing an arrestee at 77th Street station, a back-up call was broadcast for the area. Officer Mendoza and two other partners responded to the call. While traveling through the intersection of Florence Avenue and Broadway, their police vehicle was struck by another vehicle. The other vehicle struck their patrol car where Officer Mendoza was seated. All occupants were transported to local hospitals for various injuries.

Officer Mendoza’s injuries were the most serious of all. Additional injuries from the incident were found during his numerous follow-up medical appointments. Officer Mendoza ultimately was able to return to full-duty status. He was eventually promoted to Sergeant.
Officer Andrew Taylor

OFFICER ANDREW TAYLOR #31466
INCIDENT DATE: JANUARY 22, 2007

On January 22, 2007, Officer Andrew Taylor responded with other officers to a possible “assault with deadly weapon” radio call. When they arrived, the officers were advised that the suspects were in the apartment. Upon investigation, they encountered three suspects who were inside a bedroom. One of the suspects, Matthew Powell, became belligerent and combative and tried to run out of the apartment. He was left under the guard of Officer Taylor who interviewed him while the other officers were inside the apartment. Suddenly, Officer Taylor observed the muzzle of a revolver in the suspect’s hand. Immediately, Officer Taylor attempted to subdue him, but the suspect fired a shot. Officer Taylor managed to tackle him to the floor, but he fired 2 additional shots at him. Officer Taylor suffered a gunshot wound through his armpit, above the level of his ballistic vest. Another shot directly struck his ballistic vest, the force of which bruised a lung, without penetrating his body.

The gunman, 24-year-old Matthew Jerome Powell, died at the scene after three other officers returned fire in the narrow hallway of an apartment building in the 600 block of Coronado Street.

Officer Taylor was transported to the hospital for treatment of his gunshot wounds.

Sergeant Jason Beatty

SERGEANT JASON BEATTY #27023
INCIDENT DATE: MARCH 1, 2007

On March 1, 2007, Sergeant Jason Beatty received information that a suspect wanted for a violent attack in Nevada was holed up in the Howard Johnson Motor Lodge in Reseda. Officers went to the room that the suspect was reportedly in and yelled “Cops!” The suspect immediately attempted to slam the door shut on the officers. Knowing that violent criminals sometimes arm themselves when confronted by police, Sergeant Beatty was determined to keep a visual on the suspect. He used his body to block the suspect’s efforts to close the door. In the process, Sergeant Beatty slammed his elbow on the door frame while simultaneously snapping his neck, causing a severe debilitating injury.

Officer Randal Simmons

OFFICER RANDAL SIMMONS #22885
END OF WATCH: FEBRUARY 7, 2008

On February 6, 2008, patrol officers from West Valley Division responded to an “open 911 line” radio call. When they arrived to the home, the officers tried to contact the people inside and quickly realized they were dealing with a very dangerous situation. The suspect had shot and killed several of his family members. SWAT responded and determined the situation required emergency deployment into the house to rescue at least one downed victim who was critically injured and believed to be alive.

Officer Randal Simmons and his partner quickly and decisively formulated a tactical plan using SWAT officers to rescue the victims inside the home while West Valley officers maintained containment of the residence. As they entered through the front door, the team was met with an onslaught of gun fire from the suspect. During the fierce gun battle, Officer Simmons and a second officer were struck by the suspect’s gunfire and critically injured.

Both officers were immediately transported for medical treatment, where Officer Simmons succumbed to his wounds approximately 30 minutes later.

Officer Simmons had served with the Los Angeles Police Department for 27 years.
DETECTIVE DANIEL HANABUSA  #30828  
INCIDENT DATE:  JUNE 5, 2008

On June 5, 2008, Detective Daniel Hanabusa was conducting surveillance with Hollenbeck Narcotics Enforcement Detail. They were preparing to serve a search warrant at a heavily fortified and protected location suspected of manufacturing and selling cocaine, crystal methamphetamine, and PCP.

Detective Hanabusa was the first officer through the rear door of the location and immediately without warning came under heavy gunfire. Detective Hanabusa’s ballistic helmet was hit by gunfire just above the right eye and the force of the bullet’s impact propelled him to the ground. While on the floor in a seated position, he returned fire, but was struck in the left knee. Several of his partners moved in to rescue him. They were able to drag him away from the shooting suspect.

The suspect who was firing at the police officers took his own life with a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. The other suspects surrendered to police officers shortly after the shooting ceased.

OFFICER OWEN BERGER #37319  
INCIDENT DATE:  NOVEMBER 7, 2008

On November 7, 2008, Southeast Area officers were responding to a call of a man with a gun holding two hostages. As they approached the residence, they observed the rear door open and three females exiting the location. They advised the officers that the suspect was gone and that everything was fine. At that time the officers told the women that they would still have to check the residence. Suddenly, one of the females turned and ran back into the residence. Officer Owen Berger and his partner, fearing for the safety of the female and disregarding their own safety, entered the residence. Officer Berger observed the female go through a bedroom and entered a hallway. As he cleared the bedroom and entered the hallway, he observed the female now in an adjoining doorway with a male holding her. Officer Berger ordered the male to put his hands up. As Officer Berger confronted the male, he came under immediate gunfire from the suspect. The suspect fired two rounds hitting Officer Berger. One round struck him in the right arm just above his wrist and went through into his bullet-proof vest. Both officers were eventually able to redeploy outside the residence.

The suspect was subsequently taken into custody.

Officer Berger was transported to the hospital for treatment of his wounds.
Many thanks to the following for their generosity and time:

Tamlyn Tomita for taking time from her busy schedule to be our event mistress of ceremonies; Jen “Shine” Yin for sharing her beautiful voice and singing our National Anthem; LAPD’s Color Guard for the presentation of Colors; Dave Gomez and the rest of LAPD’s Video Unit for their Purple Heart video production and their continuous support of the LAPF; Ashton Smith for lending his voice to our Purple Heart video; the Los Angeles Police Emerald Society Pipes & Drums Band for supporting the LAPD family through their music; Margaret Correa, Office of the Chief’s graphic designer for her creative talent and skill in the design of our Purple Heart invitation and event program book; Mike Boundy and the City of Los Angeles General Services Publishing team for printing our invitations and program books; Val Eule of Just Flowers for our floral arrangements.

Thanks to the following officers for being stage escorts to many of our families accepting the Purple Heart on behalf of a loved one: Officer Derek Campbell, Officer Danny Chao, Officer Kathy Bell, Officer Estelle Sison, Officer Marco Jimenez and Officer Michael Lockett.

Special thanks to Glynn Martin and the Police Historical Society for research and use of their archival records in locating both images and stories for many of our Purple Heart recipients and Al Atkins and the Police Memorial Foundation for also providing information on Purple Heart recipients.

The Los Angeles Police Foundation is proud to host the Los Angeles Police Department’s inaugural Purple Heart Award Ceremony.

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