



The South Carolina Sheriff

SPECIAL EDITION

Winter 2021

Medal of Valor Issue

from your South Carolina Sheriffs' Association

SCSA 2021 Medal of Valor Recipients

Chesterfield County
Deputy Shawn Gopaul

Georgetown County
Deputy Drew Winans
Deputy Jerome Maybank
Deputy Brandon McWethy

Lexington County
Deputy Mike Medlin
SRO Kevin O'Dell
Deputy Gabriel William Mulkey

Newberry County
Sergeant Corey Cook
Lieutenant Michael Claytor
Lieutenant Thomas Miller

Sumter County
Corporal Andrew Gillette
Senior Corporal Gary Beaver
Staff Sergeant September Craft



Executive Director's Perspective: *Putting Their Lives on the Line ... to Serve and Protect*

Jarrod M. Bruder, Executive Director
South Carolina Sheriffs' Association

Welcome to our 2021 **Medal of Valor** issue of *The South Carolina Sheriff*.

As I've shared before, this issue is both my favorite and the most difficult of our newsletters to put together—it is a favorite because the men and women we honor here are among the very best and brightest of our state's law enforcement officers and first responders; it is difficult because it offers a glimpse into the very real and terrifying risks they encounter each and every day while serving us and keeping us safe.

The actions and conduct of these deputies in the face of extreme, life-threatening danger in the performance of their law enforcement duties qualifies them for the Medal of Valor. We are pleased to honor each of these public servants.

And we are grateful for the training and education which helps prepare these men and women for whatever they may encounter—a traffic stop can turn into a life-and-death struggle; a domestic call can turn into a hostage situation; serving a warrant can turn into an hours-long, deadly standoff—they never know what to expect when they put on that shield and start their shift.

It is thanks to the great response and continued support of Honorary Members like you that your SCSA is able to provide the very latest in education, state-of-the-art training, and critical

support to the men and women of South Carolina's 46 sheriff's offices. As you read this issue, I hope you'll consider making a generous donation in honor of those who serve us so diligently, and so well.

In this issue you'll also meet 14 of our newly elected sheriffs from across the state. These men and women bring a wealth of experience and qualifications to their new posts. Your support of your SCSA helps these new sheriffs, providing practical helps and support to ease their office's transition. Join us in welcoming South Carolina's new incoming sheriffs.

I hope you will enjoy this special issue of *The South Carolina Sheriff*. Join us in honoring the valiant men and women who put their lives on the line to serve and protect the communities and the people we love.



2021 SCSA Medal of Valor Recipients

“The suspect stepped out the front door and fired.”

Deputy Mike Medlin, Lexington County Sheriff's Office



**Deputy
Mike Medlin**

On September 5, 2020, Deputy Michael Medlin, Deputy Brown, and Master Deputy Riccardi responded to a domestic dispute in the Lexington area of Lexington County. Once on scene, the deputies learned that the female half of the domestic had fled the scene and was hiding in a neighbor's residence. They learned that the suspect was still inside the house with both a long gun and a handgun. Deputy Medlin positioned himself at the front corner of the residence and attempted to make contact with the suspect. After several attempts, the suspect stepped out the front door and fired a round from a shotgun, striking Deputy Medlin in the head. Deputy Medlin was able to return fire and force the suspect back inside the residence. Deputy Medlin was transported

“The suspect stepped out of the front door and fired a round from a shotgun, striking Deputy Medlin in the head. Deputy Medlin was able to return fire and force the suspect back inside the residence. Deputies set a perimeter until LCSD SWAT responded.”

*~Bryan “Jay” Koon
Lexington County Sheriff*

by patrol car to the hospital. Deputies set a perimeter until LCSD SWAT responded. Eventually, the scene was turned over to the SLED SWAT team. After a lengthy standoff that included the suspect firing at officers again, he was taken into custody.

Two deputies injured in exchange of gunfire with a suspect

SRO Kevin O'Dell, Lexington County Sheriff's Office

Deputy Gabriel William Mulkey, Lexington County Sheriff's Office

On August 9, 2020, Deputies Kevin O'Dell and Gabriel Mulkey were dispatched with other Lexington County deputies to an active domestic dispute involving a firearm. Earlier in the day LCSD deputies had been called after the victim was assaulted by the same subject and fled prior to deputies arriving. En route, deputies were advised the subject had set a fire inside the apartment.

Deputies Mulkey and O'Dell arrived on scene and attempted to make contact with the subject.

“God was with our deputies today. Everything should check out with them ... they should make a full recovery.

We appreciate the outpouring of local support. It's very refreshing when you see what's going on across the country to know we live in a place that supports law enforcement.”

*~Bryan “Jay” Koon
Lexington County Sheriff*

After refusing to come out for a period of time, the subject quickly exited the residence using his child as a human shield to prevent deputies from approaching. The subject was seen holding a burning piece of cloth near the child as he challenged deputies.

Deputy O'Dell, fearing imminent harm to the child, rushed the subject and struggled with him for the burning cloth. In the process, the subject released the child, drew a firearm he had concealed on his person and began firing. As O'Dell struggled with the subject, Deputy Mulkey came to his aid. The subject continued to fire, striking both deputies. O'Dell sustained injuries to his chest and leg and Mulkey was hit in the arm.

Both deputies disengaged with the subject who continued to fire. Master Deputy Huffstetler returned fire and struck the subject. Deputy Mulkey was able to apply a tourniquet to his injured arm and assisted other deputies in taking the subject into custody without further injury or fear to the nearby neighbors and child on scene.



**SRO
Kevin O'Dell**



**Deputy
Gabriel William Mulkey**



“These three officers acted selflessly to protect innocent lives.”

Corporal Andrew Gillette, Sumter County Sheriff’s Office

Senior Corporal Gary Beaver, Sumter County Sheriff’s Office

Staff Sergeant September Craft, Sumter County Sheriff’s Office

On February 26, 2020, Cpl. Andrew Gillette, Sr. Cpl. Gary Beaver, and SSgt. September Craft were dispatched to serve a Detention Order and Eviction Notice in Sumter County. Arriving, Sr. Cpl. Beaver and Cpl. Gillette approached the doorway on the right; SSgt. Craft secured the door on the left. Cpl. Gillette knocked on the door but there was no response. Officers heard movement in the trailer. Sr. Cpl. Beaver knocked on the side of the trailer. The door opened; the subject stood in the doorway. Sr. Cpl. Beaver advised the subject as to why they were there, explaining what the order stated.

Sr. Cpl. Beaver instructed the subject that he must remove himself from the trailer. The subject informed officers that he was not leaving the property. Sr. Cpl. Beaver explained that

if he refused to vacate the residence, he would be arrested as a trespasser. He still refused to vacate. At this point, Sr. Cpl. Beaver told the suspect he was trespassing and was under arrest.

The subject stepped back, pulled a firearm from his right side and opened fire on the deputies. Cpl. Gillette was wearing his vest, but he was struck in the neck above it. Cpl. Gillette was able to return fire from the ground. Sr. Cpl. Beaver also positioned himself in such a way as to return fire. SSgt. Craft was able to direct other units and EMS to the scene. Not sure of the subject’s injuries or his location in the residence, these officers were able to use a police vehicle for cover, retrieving Cpl. Gillette and relocating him to a safer location to receive emergency care.

“These three officers acted selflessly to protect innocent lives, once the subject chose his course of action. All three officers displayed courage, putting the safety of other’s above their own. All of us at the Sumter County Sheriff’s Office are thankful and forever grateful for the exemplary manner in which these three heroes performed their duties.

Cpl. Gillette will be remembered by all of us who loved him not only for the heroic way he sacrificed his life, but also for the way he lived his life serving his community and setting an example for all of us as he loved his Lord, his family, and the Sumter County Sheriff’s Office.”

*~Anthony Dennis
Sumter County Sheriff*



**Corporal
Andrew Gillette**



**Senior Corporal
Gary Beaver**



**Staff Sergeant
September Craft**

2020 SCSA Medal of Valor Recipients



**Deputy
Shawn Gopaul**

His actions saved a 7-month-old baby's life *Deputy Shawn Gopaul, Chesterfield County Sheriff's Office*

On 10/20/20, deputies and EMS were dispatched to a residence in Jefferson, SC for an unresponsive infant. Dep. Gopaul was the initial first

responder to arrive, encountering a 7-month-old infant, not breathing and unresponsive in the arms of her grandmother. Dep. Gopaul noticed the infant's lips and nose area had a blue tint.

Dep. Gopaul laid the infant on the porch (hard surface) and started performing abdominal thrusts. After a couple of minutes, Dep. Gopaul saw that the infant was trying to breathe but still having trouble. Dep. Gopaul then picked the infant up and administered back thrusts. This increased the infant's breathing somewhat, but the infant was still struggling to breathe.

Dep. Gopaul again laid the infant on the porch and

continued infant thrusts. Dep. Gopaul observed the infant's color and breathing improve. EMS arrived and Dep. Gopaul ran the infant onto their truck. The infant was rushed to the ER and then flown to a hospital in Charlotte.

It was subsequently discovered that the infant had swallowed some bedspread or quilt filling. It was also discovered later that the infant was COVID positive, causing Dep. Gopaul to go into quarantine. The very good news is that the infant is reported to be fine, with no lasting effects.

"I am very proud of Dep. Gopaul. His actions are a demonstration of selfless service and valor—and they saved a 7-month-old child's life."

*~James "JD" Dixon
Chesterfield County Sheriff*



**Deputy
Drew Winans**

"A Call That Would Change Their Lives Forever" *Deputy Drew Winans, Georgetown County Sheriff's Office* *Deputy Jerome Maybank, Georgetown County Sheriff's Office* *Deputy Brandon McWethy, Georgetown County Sheriff's Office*

On December 10, 2019, deputies Drew Winans, Jerome Maybank and Brandon McWethy responded to a domestic violence call in Andrews, SC. Deputies had previously been to this residence on numerous occasions and were familiar with the individual involved.

Deputy Winans made initial contact with the suspect. The suspect was very uncooperative and dismissive. Deputies Maybank and McWethy

arrived shortly thereafter and waited with the suspect while Deputy Winans made contact with the victim down the road.

The victim described the altercation she'd had with the suspect which included his striking her in the face. Physical injury was evident to

Deputy Winans, and children present at the time confirmed the sequence of events as described by the victim. Pursuant to South Carolina State Law relating to domestic violence, the facts obtained mandated a physical arrest occur.

"When considering their proximity of the suspect and the immediacy of his aggressive behavior, Divine intervention looked upon our deputies that day. Deputies Winans, Maybank and McWethy were uninjured during the event. I commend them for their bravery and valor."

*~Carter Weaver,
Georgetown County Sheriff*

Deputies approached the suspect and informed him he would be placed under arrest. The suspect refused to comply, retreating into his residence toward a couch where a handgun and AR15 rifle were in view. The suspect fired several rounds from the handgun

at deputies as they took cover and returned fire. The suspect wounded, the deputies repeatedly offered him medical aid, but he continued to defy orders to put down his weapon. When the suspect fired again, officers returned fire—this time fatally wounding the suspect.



**Deputy
Jerome Maybank**



**Deputy
Brandon McWethy**



Bravery and adherence to training and policies saved lives this day - Sergeant Corey Cook, Newberry County Sheriff's Office



**Sergeant
Corey Cook**

In the early morning hours of 10/25/2020, Sgt. Corey Cook was dispatched to locate a possible stabbing victim who had left a scene in Newberry. As Sgt. Cook approached the location, he observed a vehicle with the lights on in the garage. Sgt. Cook then observed a male exit the garage, raise a handgun, and fire two shots. Sgt. Cook immediately called in the report of shots fired, subject with a gun, and took cover. The only deputy on scene, Sgt. Cook remained calm, alert, and began to give verbal commands to the subject who had retreated into the garage.

After several moments, the subject came out from the garage. Sgt. Cook gave verbal commands to drop the weapon, which the subject acknowledged he had. Sgt. Cook gave commands for the subject to keep his hands above his head and walk toward his voice. Once the subject followed Sgt. Cook's instruction to kneel, Sgt. Cook was able to secure the subject in handcuffs. Sgt. Cook's bravery and adherence to training and policies saved lives this day.

"It is the unknown that our officers face, and they face it with dedication, commitment, and courage to protect themselves and the community in which they serve. Sgt. Cook followed the training and policies, which not only saved his life, but the life of the defendant."

*~Lee Foster
Newberry County Sheriff*

The subject was in possession of a 9mm handgun and an AK-15 rifle Lieutenant Michael Claytor, Newberry County Sheriff's Office Lieutenant Thomas Miller, Newberry County Sheriff's Office



**Lieutenant
Michael Claytor**



**Lieutenant
Thomas Miller**

On the night of January 15, 2020, two Newberry County Sheriff's Deputies put the tools given to them to good use, protecting and serving.

Due to several violent incidents and complaints of gang-related activity, the Newberry County Sheriff's Office is partnering with other agencies for warrant services and advanced patrol. On this evening, Lt. Thomas Miller observed a vehicle commit two traffic infractions. Initiating a traffic stop on the vehicle, the subject turned into an apartment complex,

accelerated, and pulled away. Lt. Miller pursued the vehicle for about a mile, giving out his location to other officers in the area.

Lt. Michael Claytor was near the pursuit location and responded to the area. Lt. Miller pursued the vehicle as it turned onto Holloway Street. Lt. Claytor was coming from the

opposite end. The subject stopped the vehicle in the middle of the roadway, leaving the ignition on and exiting the driver's side with a backpack, attempting to elude deputies.

Lt. Miller and Lt. Claytor pursued the subject through yards in a well-populated residential area, even as the subject fired at them. Both Lt. Miller and Lt. Claytor returned fire toward the subject, striking and disabling him, ending any further threat to themselves or the community. Once the subject was down and secure, both Lt. Miller and Lt. Claytor rendered aid to him. Due to their being located in a dense wooded area, deputies activated their flashlights into strobe setting as a signal to get further assistance to their location.

The subject was found to be in possession of a Springfield Compact 9mm handgun and a Ghost Firearms AK-15 rifle. He was also found in possession of trafficking amounts of heroin and cocaine.

"Both deputies displayed courage, decisiveness, and a clear presence of mind to swiftly react in a life-threatening situation for the protection of our community. This act truly displays that the deputies relied on their training and communication with each other, putting their safety to the side to react to a violent and unpredictable subject who would attempt to do anything just to get away."

*~Lee Foster
Newberry County Sheriff*

Your SCSA Welcomes our Newly Elected Sheriffs

Please join us in welcoming 14 newly elected sheriffs taking office across our great state. As an SCSA member, your support assists these men and women as they acclimate to their new roles and meet the responsibilities of their new office. Meet our new sheriffs:



Sheriff Kenneth J. Bamberg
Bamberg County

Kenneth "Kenny" Bamberg is the first Black sheriff in Bamberg County history, but he doesn't want that to define his legacy.

"Being the county's first Black sheriff is a huge honor," Bamberg said. "It's something I take very seriously. When everything is said and done, I don't want to be boxed in or defined as a Black sheriff, I want to be recognized at the end of my term, or terms, whatever they may be, as a good sheriff. That's what it's all about."

Bamberg began his law enforcement career in 1982 as a U.S. Army military policeman. After being honorably discharged in 1993, Bamberg worked as a civilian law enforcement officer with the Blackville Police Department, Barnwell County Sheriff's Office, with the Second Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office, and as chief of police for the City of Blackville.



Sheriff Steven W. Griffith
Barnwell County

A lifelong resident of Barnwell County with more than 40 years of experience in law enforcement, Steven W. "Grits" Griffith was elected Barnwell County Sheriff.

Griffith started his career in law enforcement in 1978 as a Barnwell County Sheriff's Office dispatcher before becoming a Barnwell city police officer in 1980. From 1982 to 1986, he served as a United States Marine Corps military police officer before returning to the Barnwell Police Department from 1986 to 1989. Since 1989 he has worked for the Barnwell County Sheriff's Office in a variety of capacities, including deputy, shift sergeant, narcotics investigator, criminal investigator, lieutenant, captain and chief deputy. He and his wife Melanie have been married for 35 years. They have two children and one grandson.



Sheriff Kristin Graziano
Charleston County

Kristin Graziano overcame challenges to become the first female and first openly gay sheriff elected in South Carolina.

Graziano started her law enforcement career in 1988, when she joined the Charlottesville Police Department. In 2002, she moved to Charleston to take a job with the Charleston County Sheriff's Office, where she most recently worked on the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team. Some of her past assignments with the agency include serving as a school resource officer, providing courtroom security, serving on an anti-terrorism task force, and working on marine patrol. Graziano was one of five women who ran for sheriff in South Carolina this year.



Sheriff Guerry "Buddy" Hill, Jr.
Colleton County

A graduate of the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy in 1988, Sheriff Hill is a longtime law enforcement officer having worked with the Colleton County Sheriff's Office for 28 years. "I worked my way up from patrol deputy to chief deputy. I've worked in all divisions and supervised within the agency."

Sheriff Hill is an active member of First Baptist Church in Walterboro, where he serves as a deacon. He is also a member of the Colleton County Republican Party and a lifelong member of the National Rifle Association.



Sheriff James Hudson Jr.
Darlington County

A 25-year law enforcement veteran, Sheriff Hudson brings knowledge and experience to the office of Darlington County Sheriff.

Having begun as a corrections officer with the Darlington County Corrections Center in 1995, Hudson worked his way up through the department as a patrol deputy, criminal investigator, and patrol captain, before leaving to serve four years as chief of police with the Hartsville Police Department. In 2015, Hudson returned to Darlington County as chief deputy. "I want to use my experience and knowledge to make the Darlington County Sheriff's Office run efficiently and effectively to combat crime, strengthen communities, restore trust in the community between citizens and law enforcement, and implement groups and programs that will make Darlington County thrive."



Sheriff Douglas B. Pernell
Dillon County

Douglas Pernell was elected Dillon County Sheriff on Tuesday, November 3, becoming the first African-American in Dillon County to win a countywide office.

When it was apparent that Pernell was the winner, he went outside of the Dillon County Voter Registration Office, where several people were gathered waiting for the results, and announced to loud cheers that he was the next Sheriff of Dillon county to loud cheers. Pernell thanked everyone for the support they have shown over the years. He said he would be a sheriff for all people, declaring that the sheriff's office would not harass anyone, but "we will do our jobs" and promised that "with the citizens' help" we can make Dillon County a great place to live.



Welcome

We also want to extend a special welcome to two sheriffs who assumed office earlier in 2020.

Sheriff Carter Weaver, Georgetown County, began serving as interim sheriff after Sheriff Lane Cribb passed away in September 2020 after a brief illness.

Sheriff Hobart Lewis, Greenville County, was sworn in on February 13, 2020, after a special election.



Sheriff Jody P. Rowland
Edgfield County

Jody Rowland grew up in Edgfield County and has worked the majority of his law enforcement career with the Edgfield and Aiken County Sheriff's Offices.

Jody brings a solid background of leadership and management in both public law enforcement and corporate security to his role as sheriff. Jody possesses a strong record of positive change and team building, and he is eager to work closely with elected officials to support and train law enforcement countywide.



Sheriff Thomas B. "TJ" Joye
Florence County

Thomas "TJ" Joye was elected sheriff of Florence County on November 3.

Joye, a Lake City resident, has long-term experience with the South Carolina Highway Patrol—from which he retired as lieutenant and executive officer. Prior to working with SCHP, he served with the Florence County Sheriff's Office in the Patrol Division and with the Army National Guard as a military police officer. "I'm going to be accountable to the people," Joye said. "When people have a problem, they're going to be able to talk to me. That's what I'm going to bring to the table."



Sheriff Donald Hipp
Jasper County

A lifelong resident of Jasper County, Sheriff Hipp graduated from Jasper County High School and the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy.

Employed with Jasper County Law Enforcement for more than 25 years, Sheriff Hipp has held many positions throughout the agency, including lieutenant, patrol supervisor, and detention officer. His most recent position was major with the Jasper County Sheriff's Criminal Investigations Office. Sheriff Hipp and his wife Roxann have been married 26 years, have three children and one grandson.



Sheriff Joshua S. Price
Saluda County

Sheriff Price started his law enforcement career in 2012 at the Saluda County Sheriff's Office. He rose to the rank of Captain. In January of 2020, Sheriff Price resigned from the Saluda County Sheriff's Office to run for the Office of Sheriff. During this time, Sheriff Price worked for the Saluda Police Department as an investigator until he was elected sheriff on November 3rd, 2020.



Sheriff Jeffrey D. Bailey
Union County

A former Union County magistrate with 25 years of experience in law enforcement and the judicial system, Jeff Bailey was elected sheriff of Union County.

Sheriff Bailey has a vision of positive change and assertive action for the sheriff's office. He wants to bring back community trust and respect for the office of sheriff and put a system of checks and balances in place to ensure all parts of the job are handled with care and precision. He believes that training is crucial, and in order to have the best police force available, officers have to be dedicated to consistent development as professionals in this field. He intends to lead by example, ensuring that he models for his officers the qualities that he would like to see in them. Bailey and his wife Kim have been married for 33 years and have two grown children.



Sheriff Max Dorsey
Chester County

Sheriff Max Dorsey began his term as the county's elected sheriff on January 5, 2021. He had served as interim sheriff since being appointed by Governor McMaster on May 7, 2019.

Sheriff Dorsey has more than twenty-five years of law enforcement service. Prior to his appointment, he served with the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED). He also served as the Agency's Clandestine Laboratory Coordinator, which included the management of South Carolina's Drug Lab Clean-Up Program.

Sheriff Dorsey received the 2007 Strom Thurmond Award for Excellence in Law Enforcement. He is also the 2013/2014 recipient of the Enrique S. Camarena Award presented by the South Carolina Elks.

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South Carolina Sheriffs' Association
112 Westpark Boulevard
Columbia, SC 29210
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