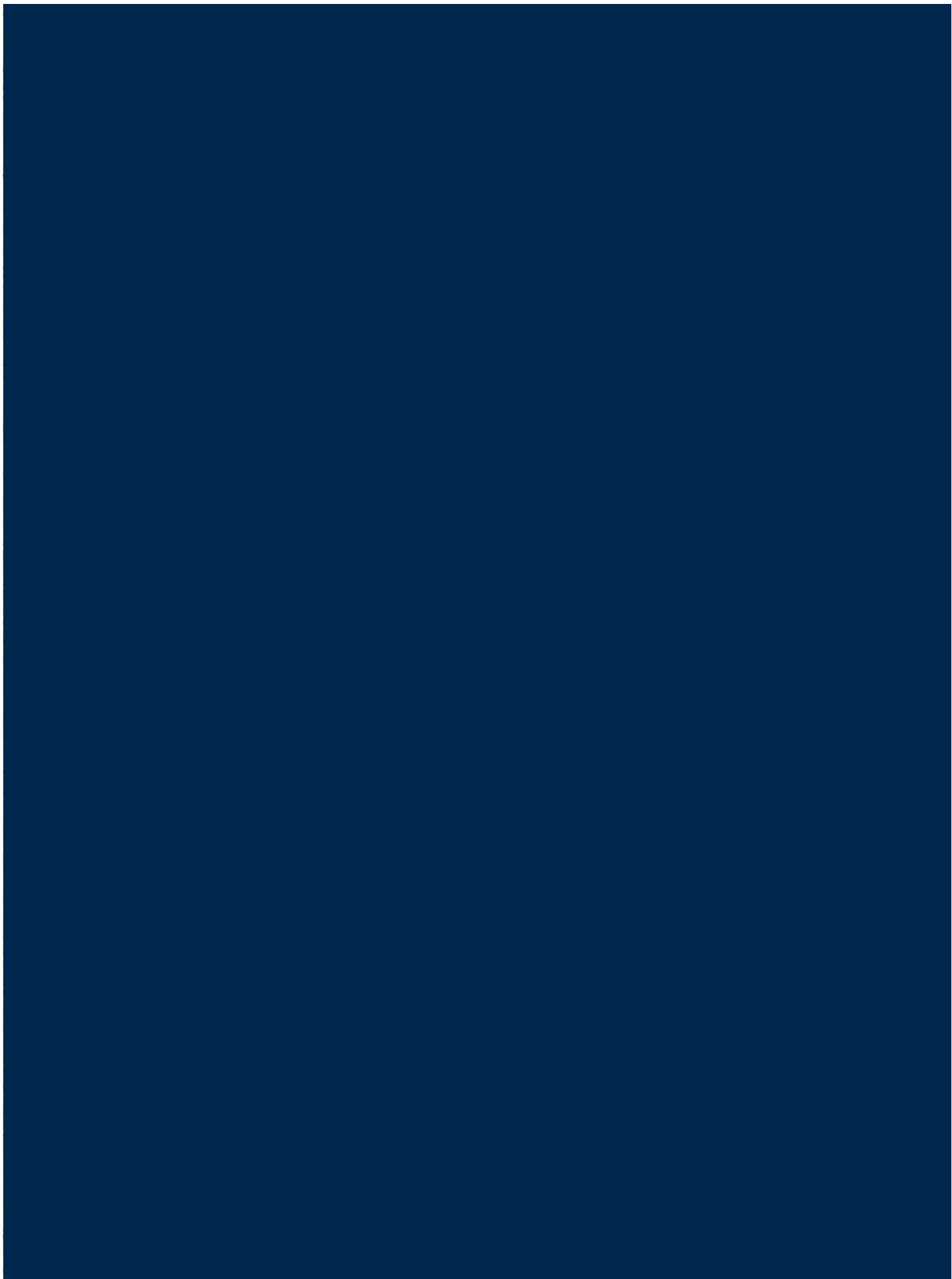




2016 VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT COMMENDATION CEREMONY



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POLICE BOARD AWARD OF MERIT

KANA SATO

JESSICA TERNOWSKI

Ever since high bridges have been built in Vancouver, people have used them to end their lives. Engineers have struggled with various designs to prevent them, but nothing has proved more effective than the generosity of spirit and courage of passersby who simply won't let it happen.

On the afternoon of January 5, 2015, Kana Sato and Jessica Ternowski were walking across the Burrard Street Bridge when they saw a man climb onto the protective railing intending to jump to his death.

Each woman grabbed one of his legs and hung on for what became a life-and-death struggle. The man was determined to jump and fought them. For five long minutes, the women held onto the man while other pedestrians gathered and filmed the incident, and did nothing to help. When police arrived, they took the man into custody, but not before the women were pushed to the ground in the struggle.

For their selfless, brave actions, and for saving a life when many others chose to stand outside the fray, Jessica Ternowski and Kana Sato are awarded the Vancouver Police Board's highest award for civilian bravery, the Award of Merit.

GARRET ALLEN HOPPER

When a police officer needs assistance, can they always count on members of the public to come to their aid? They can if Garret Allen Hopper is nearby.

On the morning of January 21, 2015, Constable Colleen McKittrick saw a drunken man stumble off the sidewalk into oncoming traffic. Fearing for his safety, she ran to help him. At first, he was cooperative, but then he turned violent, struggling with her and darting back into traffic.

As she tried to restrain the man, she found she was losing the battle to his superior size, strength and intoxicated state. She called for back-up, but the man swatted her radio away leaving her no way to communicate. The struggle was becoming increasingly violent.

Even though there were people watching nearby, some even videotaping, only one person came forward -- Garret Allen Hopper. He jumped into the fray and

forced the man to the ground, so Constable McKittrick could handcuff him. But that proved even more difficult, and a second officer who had just arrived joined in. Mr. Hopper then moved to secure the man's legs as he lashed out at the other officer.

Eventually after a struggle that lasted about three minutes, and with the help of other units arriving on the scene, the man was secured, but he was far from subdued. He would subsequently injure another police officer and a jail guard before he was through.

For running to the aid of a police officer without hesitation or thought for his own safety, Garret Allen Hopper is awarded the Vancouver Police Board's highest award for civilian bravery, the Award of Merit.

JAMES CURRIE

It is difficult to predict how one might react hearing a young woman's screams in the middle of the night while walking down a city street.

For James Currie, that reaction was pure instinct. Without any concern for his own safety, he quickly approached where the screams were coming from, and found a man attacking a woman, who was lying on the ground.

The 24-year-old young woman had been waiting for a bus in the 600 block of Smithe Street, when she was grabbed by a stranger, dragged into an alley and sexually assaulted.

James called out, as he dialed 9-1-1 on his cell phone, stopping the violent attack. But his involvement did not end there.

As the man tried to make his escape, James followed him, watching as the man unsuccessfully tried to get into more than one taxi, before running off on foot. As a result of what James witnessed, detectives were able to find fingerprints that would later identify the attacker.

For running toward danger and stopping the attack and sexual assault of a young woman, and giving valuable information that led to the identification and arrest of the person responsible, James Currie is awarded the Vancouver Police Board's highest award for civilian bravery, the Award of Merit.

POLICE BOARD AWARD OF MERIT

BRIAN HADDON **GRAHAM HADDON**

Most parents try to do their best to ensure their children grow up to be model citizens. Witnessing that become a reality is priceless.

When the Haddons set out for the airport on August 5, 2014, looking forward to their family vacation, they could not have imagined the detour their day would take.

As they drove westbound on Southeast Marine Drive and approached Knight Street, they were horrified to witness an SUV rear-end a motorcycle on the off-ramp, pinning both the driver and the bike underneath.

The family pulled over and immediately got out to help. Mrs. Haddon called 9-1-1, and Mr. Haddon directed heavy traffic away from the scene, and dealt with the SUV driver.

Brian, 19, and Graham, 17, went straight to the trapped motorcyclist, reassuring the young woman that help was on the way. Fuel trickled onto the road, but the boys carried on, lifting the front end of the SUV high enough to take the pressure off the driver's legs and torso. They prevented further injury, and calmed the frightened victim until help arrived.

For coming to the assistance of a fellow citizen, and alleviating her suffering, without any concern for their own safety, Brian and Graham Haddon are awarded the Vancouver Police Board's highest award for civilian bravery, the Award of Merit.

DAVID GREEN

Many citizens routinely assist police in emergency situations. They call 9-1-1, report something they've witnessed, or give tips to solve a crime. But how many would be prepared to jump into a violent altercation to help officers arrest a dangerous person?

Vancouver Police Constables Mangat and Marten were called to the Vancouver Convention Centre on September 23, 2015, for a report of a man causing a disturbance. When they arrived, they saw the man boxing imaginary opponents and he appeared to be under the influence of drugs.

When the officers tried to speak with him, he attacked them. He continued to fight and actively resist arrest, causing injury to both of the officers.

David Green was walking by when he spotted the struggle. With no thought for his personal safety, he didn't hesitate to join the melee and to help hold down the suspect. This enabled the officers to subdue the man until back-up officers arrived.

The mysterious Good Samaritan then went quietly on his way before the officers could thank him. When the Department put out a media release to try to find him, it was Mr. Green's co-workers who identified him.

For risking serious injury to help two Vancouver Police officers struggling to arrest a violent man, David Green is awarded the Vancouver Police Board's highest award for civilian bravery, the Award of Merit.

JONATHAN FANE

MICHELLE YOUNG

When someone is in their darkest hour, hopeless and alone, defeated by life and unable to carry on, help sometimes comes from unexpected places. For a woman intent on ending her life by jumping from a bridge, that help came from a man and woman out for a Sunday stroll.

It was the afternoon of October 11, 2014, a perfect day for a walk. As Jonathan Fane and Michelle Young approached the mid-span of the Burrard Street Bridge, they were alarmed to see a woman climbing over the railing. Without hesitation, they rushed toward her, grabbing hold, as she struggled to break free. In their perilous position, and with the woman actively resisting their efforts, any one -- or even all three -- could have plunged to their death below.

The pair was finally able to pull the woman over the railing and back to the sidewalk, but the rescue was not yet complete. The struggle continued, as she remained desperate to finish her mission. It took all their strength to prevent her from doing so. They held fast until police arrived.

For their selfless and heroic actions in the face of grave danger, Jonathan Fane and Michelle Young are awarded the Vancouver Police Board's highest award for civilian bravery, the Award of Merit.

JIM AND VICKI CHU COMMUNITY SAFETY LEADER AWARD

MS. ADRIEN BALAZS

For over 17 years, Ms. Adrien Balazs has worked to make South Vancouver a safe place to live and work. She began as a volunteer with the South Vancouver Community Policing Centre, becoming the Executive Director in 1998. She is responsible for leading the fledgling non-profit organization to one which boasts over 150 volunteers who are involved in numerous crime prevention programs.

Ms. Balazs has made these programs a priority of the policing centre, ensuring they are effective and meaningful. This includes bike and foot patrols, road safety, SpeedWatch, Pooch Patrol, and the Mobile Office, where volunteers visit neighbourhoods and keep residents mindful of crime in the area. She also created two initiatives to assist residents with missing children, and with their lost and found property. Recognizing that international students could be vulnerable to certain types of crime, she created a safety handbook to make them aware.

A creative fundraiser, Adrien is very effective in getting funding from various sources to support the community policing centre's existing crime prevention programs, as well as to develop new initiatives.

In 2008, Ms. Balazs worked with the Vancouver Police Department and the Khalsa Diwan Society to establish the Khalsa Diwan Society Community Policing Centre, the only community policing office located on the grounds of a Sikh temple.

Adrien Balazs is a great leader, who continues to explore new and innovative programs to help bring crime prevention initiatives to the community. Throughout her years with the South Vancouver Community Policing Centre, she has remained engaged, committed and passionate about reducing crime.

Ms. Adrien Balazs is awarded the Jim and Vicki Chu Community Safety Leader Award.



CHIEF CONSTABLE UNIT CITATIONS

VPD TECHNOLOGICAL CRIME UNIT
SERGEANT WAYNE DORE
DETECTIVE CONSTABLE JOHN BJORNSON
DETECTIVE CONSTABLE TOM CALLAGHAN
DETECTIVE CONSTABLE MARK FENTON
DETECTIVE CONSTABLE TIM GREENWOOD
DETECTIVE CONSTABLE JOHN PYPER
DETECTIVE CONSTABLE TIM WARD
DETECTIVE CONSTABLE LES WRAY
DETECTIVE CONSTABLE NANCY YINGLING

We live in a high tech world, with high tech crime. It takes a certain type of police officer to combat criminals and terrorists who use cell phones and computers. At the VPD, those officers work in the Technological Crime Unit or TCU. These digital forensic examiners and internet investigators have developed innovative policing techniques that have been recognized worldwide.

In 2007, Detective Constable Les Wray developed the investigative technique of using a virtual machine to copy a suspect's seized hard drive so evidence could be viewed remotely by investigators. It's a technique now used by police agencies all over the world.

In 2012, Detective Constable Mark Fenton developed a "web bug" that has since been used not just across Canada, but also globally, to locate suicidal people, terrorists, fugitives, pedophiles, and other hard-to-locate suspects.

As computers and cell phones improve their storage capacity, the workload of the TCU increases exponentially. They examined close to 1,000 exhibits in 2013.

For ground-breaking investigative techniques and long-term sustained performance at an expert level since 1999, and for their exceptional dedication, skill and judgement under extreme increases in workload and information overloads, the following members of the Technological Crime Unit are awarded a Chief Constable's Unit Citation:

Sergeant Wayne Dore, and Detective Constables John Bjornson, Tom Callaghan, Mark Fenton, Tim Greenwood, John Pyper, Tim Ward, Les Wray and Nancy Yingling.

CONSTABLE ZACHARY FEDORA
CONSTABLE DAVID HOPP
CONSTABLE CALVIN HTAN
CONSTABLE CHRIS KOCH
CONSTABLE INDERJIT WARAICH
NURSE KARLENE MACDONALD

The taking of a life can be accomplished with a trigger pull, the saving of a life can take a team.

On the morning of February 12, 2014, police were called to an apartment where a mentally disturbed man was trying to kill himself with a knife. He had already stabbed a friend who had tried to stop him.

When police arrived, they found the man covered in blood and stabbing himself repeatedly. One officer tried to physically restrain him, but the man in his mental- and drug-induced state fought back. Another officer fired the less-lethal beanbag shotgun, but with no effect.

Now a number of officers closed on the man who was fighting back, still armed with the knife. In the end, they were successful in disarming him and taking him into custody without anyone else getting hurt.

At this point, another member of the team, Car 87 Psychiatric Nurse Karlene MacDonald, provided invaluable support.

For demonstrating the highest level of courage and commitment to saving a life while using the least violent means necessary, the following members have been awarded the Chief Constable's Unit Citation:

Constables Zachary Fedora, David Hopp, Calvin Htan, Chris Koch and Inderjit Waraich and Nurse Karlene MacDonald.

CHIEF CONSTABLE UNIT CITATION

SERGEANT MARK CHRISTENSEN
CONSTABLE ERIC JORDAN
CONSTABLE JAMES LEISHMAN
CONSTABLE EMILY OVINGTON

Imagine the desperation of a 17-year-old boy who is so intent on killing himself that he climbs over the outside railing of a bridge. A determined group of VPD officers were going to make sure he did not succeed.

Vancouver Police received a 9-1-1 call around 2:30 in the morning on May 28, 2015, reporting a young man mid-span on the Cambie Street Bridge on the outside of the railing. Two plainclothes officers were the first to arrive, speaking to the boy from a non-threatening distance, but he quickly let go and plunged into the water below.

Sergeant Mark Christensen and Constable James Leishman raced down to the water's edge, donned their personal flotation devices and headed into the chilly water.

While the teen did not resist, he remained passive in their efforts to get him to safety. The officers had left their heavy-duty belts safely on shore with another officer, but they were still wearing their Kevlar vests and work boots, the weight only adding to the difficulty of their mission.

Constable Emily Ovington had finished her shift for the night, changed into her civilian clothes, and was headed down to the VPD parking lot. She was still listening to her police radio when she heard the call, and immediately rushed a short distance away to the shore.

Constable Eric Jordan had also arrived, and the pair put on their life jackets and swam out to help their exhausted co-workers. Constable Ovington had brought an additional flotation device, which they placed on the teen.

Very soon, additional officers arrived, and using a rope, they were able to pull everyone to shore. The young man was loaded into a waiting ambulance and taken to hospital.

For working as a team, rushing into chilly and contaminated water in the middle of the night to save the life of a distraught young man, and ensuring everyone returned to safety, the following officers were awarded the Chief Constable's Unit Citation:

Sergeant Mark Christensen, and Constables Eric Jordan, James Leishman, and Emily Ovington.

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S COMMENDATION

CONSTABLE ISMAIL BHABHA CONSTABLE NICHOLAS WONG

When the 9-1-1 call came in from a witness who saw a car driving into the water from the Vanier boat ramp, Constables Ismail Bhabha and Nicholas Wong responded in minutes. It was 10:30 at night on October 13 – it was dark, raining heavily, and cold.

With only the emergency light from their patrol car to see by, the two constables went into the chilly water, swimming toward a floating dock about forty feet from shore, and right next to the submerged car. They could see the rear window and tail end of the vehicle about to disappear under water.

Constable Bhabha smashed the rear window with his police baton, and could see the driver's head inside just barely above water. He reached in to grab the man's arm, but the broken window had caused the car to sink even more quickly, and he was unable to hold on.

The car was completely under water now, so Constable Bhabha thrust his baton through the window, aiming for the spot he believed the driver's hands would be. Within seconds, he could feel him grab hold, and was able to pull him through the window, out of the car and above water.

Constable Wong helped get the man to shore, where there was a waiting ambulance. The 81-year-old German tourist had taken a wrong turn, believing he was driving on a road toward downtown. When he realized what was happening, he hit the gas instead of the brakes.

For rushing into the freezing water in the dark of night, rescuing an elderly man and his dog from a sinking car, Constables Ismail Bhabha and Nicholas Wong are awarded a Chief Constable's Commendation.

CONSTABLE RICH LEE CONSTABLE CAMERON MACKAY CONSTABLE INDERJIT WARAICH

Traffic collisions are generally to be avoided at all costs, but in the early morning hours of August 9, 2012, a traffic collision likely saved lives and put a murderer behind bars.

Earlier the preceding evening, police made a grisly discovery when they found a reclusive 57-year-old man savagely stabbed to death. The case seemed puzzling initially and was made more difficult by the lack of witnesses or video.

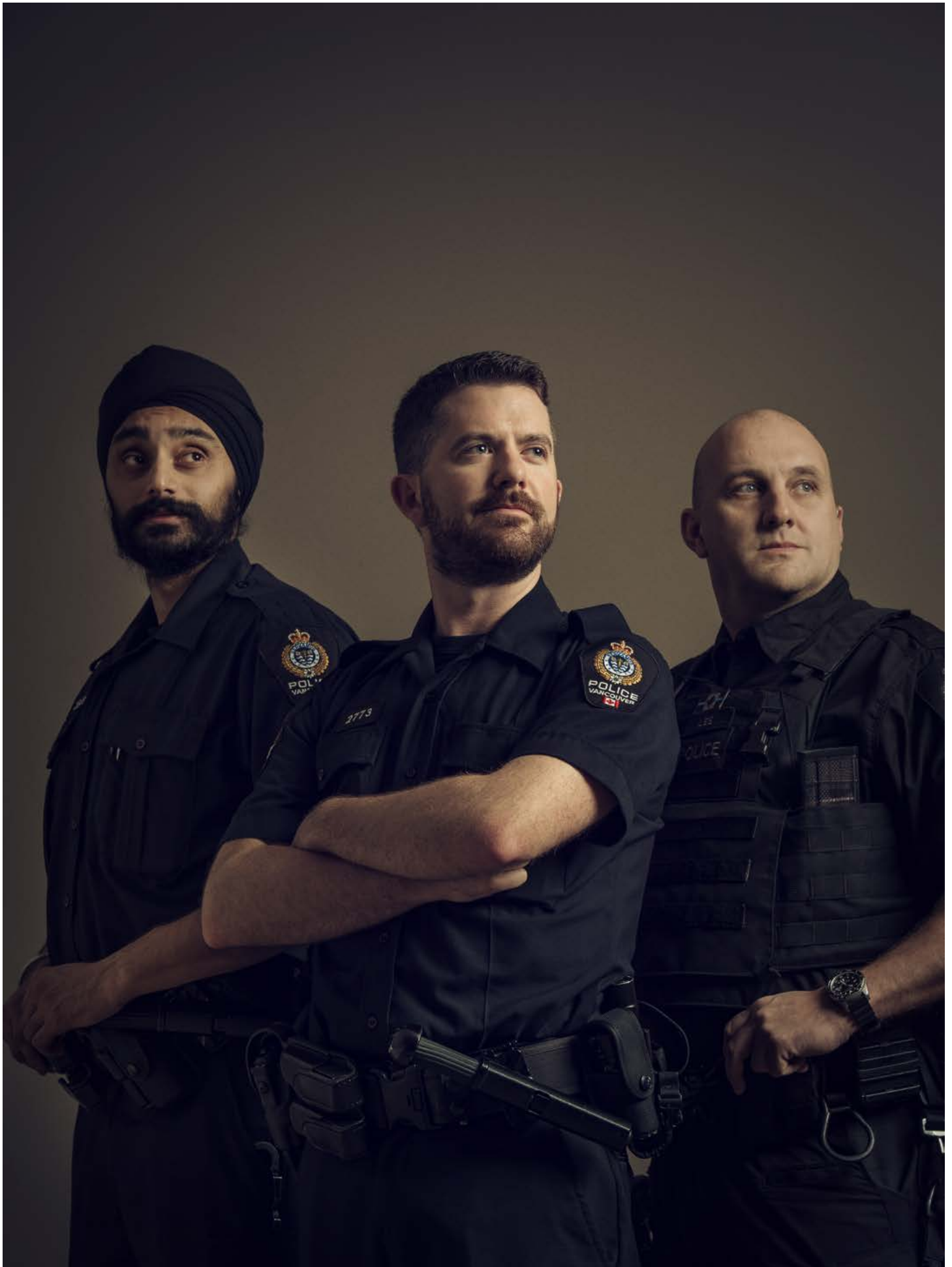
Constables Cameron MacKay and Inderjit Waraich were driving back to the crime scene after taking a break, when they saw a car they had linked to a possible suspect. They immediately began to follow the car, but the driver started driving recklessly in an attempt to avoid arrest. His actions were posing a high risk of injury to the officers following him and to other cars and pedestrians.

Constable Rich Lee, a police dog handler, heard the call and knew there was an urgent need to stop the suspected murderer before he could hurt anyone else. Without regard for his own safety, he used his own car to stop the suspect vehicle, bringing the pursuit to a sudden stop.

Despite being injured in the crash, Constable Lee got out of his car with Police Service Dog Diesel to help make the arrest, ending the risk to the public.

Homicide investigators found key evidence in the car, including the victim's blood. The man was eventually convicted of first degree murder.

For their quick actions and bravery in identifying and capturing a brutal murderer, Constables Rich Lee, Cameron MacKay and Inderjit Waraich are awarded the Chief Constable's Commendation



CHIEF CONSTABLE'S COMMENDATION

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE RAYMOND PAYETTE

It is the anguish and pain of not knowing where your loved one or family member is, or what has happened to them that drives people to the VPD's Missing Persons Unit.

Finding the answers to their questions and dealing compassionately with their anguish is the job of Detective Constable Raymond Payette. Few, if any, have ever done it better.

During his tenure with the Unit, 3,700 files are reviewed annually. But more incredibly, the Unit has a clearance rate of 99.99 per cent.

Detective Constable Payette is known for his tireless work ethic, compassionate approach and investigative tenacity. He understands that the successful conclusion of an investigation is key to ensuring the emotional needs and fears of the missing person's family and friends are allayed.

His humane and caring approach has built bridges with community groups. A local counselling and support services society now welcomes investigators from the Missing Persons Unit to their youth outreach meetings, confident that the investigators act in the best interests of the youth.

He is recognized by the RCMP and police agencies throughout Canada as a subject matter expert in missing person's investigations. No other VPD member has ever received this designation.

He shares that expertise at every opportunity as an active member of the advisory committee of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, and as an instructor at the Citizens' Police Academy.

For solving the many mysteries that haunt those left behind, and for his unassuming determination and commitment to duty, Detective Constable Raymond Payette is awarded the Chief Constable's Commendation.

CONSTABLE GREG BISMAYER CONSTABLE JOHN GRAVENGARD CONSTABLE TAJINDER PARMAR CONSTABLE NICHOLAS THOMPSON

While police officers mentally prepare for any number of emergencies that might come their way, encountering a life-threatening fire and rescuing residents from a burning building is not a common scenario they contemplate.

Constables John Gravengard and Tajinder Parmar were on routine patrol in the middle of a summer afternoon on August 27, 2014. When they observed thick black smoke in the distance, they immediately drove toward it. The officers followed the smoke to the 1200 block of Kingsway, where flames were engulfing the upper front floor of an apartment building. Vancouver Fire and Rescue had not yet arrived and the officers radioed for back-up.

The pair smashed the glass on the front door and headed up the stairs. The smoke was making it difficult to see and they called out to anyone who might still be inside. They could hear a man and woman screaming for help. On their hands and knees they continued, spotting the woman, but a wall of flames prevented them from reaching her. In another direction, they could see the male resident, who was banging on doors, and the officers yelled to him to exit the building.

The Constables returned to their patrol car to retrieve their fire extinguishers and headed back into the building. They called out and searched again, returning to the spot they had last seen the woman. Unable to see and no longer hearing voices, they assumed the pair had either escaped or succumbed to the fire. As they retreated, crawling down the stairs, a portion of the ceiling fell on top of the officers. They were able to free themselves and get to safety.

In the meantime, back-up had arrived. Constable Nicholas Thompson joined Constable Greg Bismeyer at the rear of the building. Hearing a voice, they tried to enter, but had to turn back because of the thick smoke. On hands and knees they tried again, and found a man trapped in the burning building by a locked metal gate. They tried in vain to force it open. The female resident, who had managed to get out of

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the building, provided them with a key. They opened the door and got the man to safety.

All the officers were treated for smoke inhalation. Constable Parmar suffered cuts and burns, and Constable Gravengard received a concussion.

For running into a burning building to rescue residents from serious injury or death, without concern for their own personal safety, and suffering injuries as a result, Constables Greg Bismeyer, John Gravengard, Tajinder Parmar and Nicholas Thompson are awarded the Chief Constable's Commendation.

CONSTABLE BRIAN LEQUESNE CONSTABLE NEIL LOGAN CONSTABLE SIMRIT ROYCOMBOUGH

Many people believe that policing is not a job, but a calling. We've all seen the images of police officers running toward what others are running from. They have a drive propelling them forward -- part instinct, part training and part of who they are -- despite danger, despite injury, despite personal risk.

In the morning hours of December 5, 2014, a man walked into a Surrey grocery store and stabbed one of the employees. He fled into the passenger seat of a vehicle parked outside. Brandishing a large butcher knife, he forced the man behind the wheel to drive.

They were pursued into Vancouver, followed from above by Air One, the police helicopter. Officers on the ground were following, when the hostage suddenly stopped the car at W.33rd and Cambie, jumped out and ran toward them. His captor chased him with the knife, but sensing the futility of his mission, he quickly got into the driver's seat of the car. Officers attempted to box the car in, but the man was able to escape and was on the move again.

Constables Neil Logan and Simrit Roycombough took up the chase, uncertain if there were other hostages still in the car. They were becoming increasingly concerned about the recklessness of the man's driving. Believing he was a significant threat to the public, they made the decision to use their police car to stop the getaway vehicle.

As they collided, the suspect's car left the road and went into some bushes. Constable Logan, who was driving, was momentarily unconscious, and Constable

Roycombough was trapped in their police car. When Logan awoke seconds later, he was instantly out the car door and giving chase to their fleeing suspect. Constable Roycombough managed to free himself and was close behind him.

What followed next was like a scene from a movie. The suspect ran into a fully operating industrial mill. The staff had fled so quickly that all of the moving saws and dangerous machinery were left powered on. The noise in the mill was so loud that radio communication was almost useless.

Back-up officers arrived, including Dog Handler Constable Brian Lequesne and Police Service Dog Bailey. They spotted the suspect as he ran up to the second floor, with Constable Logan in hot pursuit. The struggle to make an arrest would move overtop of a wood chipper and the spiked belt moving lumber toward it -- a fall onto either would result in certain death.

Other officers joined in, as the suspect kept trying to grab at PSD Bailey's face and snout. Constable Logan suffered further injury when he was knocked off a platform, striking his head on the walkway below. Still, he continued on, attempting to make the arrest.

Moments later, the officers finally succeeded in getting the man into handcuffs. He was arrested for kidnapping, assault with a weapon, assault causing bodily harm, flight from police and dangerous operation of a motor vehicle.

For doggedly pursuing a dangerous suspect, despite serious injury and life-threatening danger, Constables Brian Lequesne, Neil Logan and Simrit Roycombough are awarded the Chief Constable's Commendation.

CONSTABLE VIET HOANG CONSTABLE PAUL HOBBS

There are people in the world who are satisfied only doing what is required of them in any given day. But there are also people who insist on going beyond those expectations -- who refuse to settle for anything less than their very best effort in whatever life throws their way.

It was July 22, 2015, when Constables Viet Hoang and Paul Hobbs were nearing the end of their nightshift and their workweek. A robbery call came

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S COMMENDATION

in, and despite working in a different district, they raced to the scene to assist.

The robber had reportedly held a gun to the head of one of his two victims in a downtown hotel room. The women had resisted his efforts, and quickly called 9-1-1 after the man fled.

Constables Hoang and Hobbs spotted the suspect from the description that had been provided, but the robber had also seen them. He bolted and the foot chase was on, the officers keenly aware that their quarry was armed and dangerous. During the chase, the man dropped the handgun, which was quickly retrieved by another officer at the scene, but the possibility of a second weapon was very real.

The chase came to an end in a busy intersection about two blocks from where it started. Though the man resisted and fought with the officers, putting himself, the public and the constables at risk, they were able to arrest him for his crimes.

For placing themselves in grave danger to pursue an armed suspect, and demonstrating admirable devotion to their duty, Constables Viet Hoang and Paul Hobbs are awarded the Chief Constable's Commendation.

SERGEANT MALCOLM EVANSON ACTING SERGEANT CHRISTOPHER GLANVILLE CONSTABLE JOHN WARD

One of a police officer's most important tools is something that simply cannot be taught. Whether you call it intuition, a hunch, or just a gut feeling, you would be hard-pressed to find an officer who doesn't credit it with solving a case or saving a life at some point in their career.

On June 15, 2013, just after 5:00 p.m., Sergeant Malcolm Evanson and Acting Sergeant Christopher Glanville were on routine patrol near East 8th Avenue and Victoria Drive. The officers thought they could faintly smell smoke and were instantly on alert.

Their dispatcher advised that Vancouver Fire and Rescue were receiving reports from callers, also smelling smoke, but they could not pinpoint the location.

Minutes later, the officers located the fire in an apartment building in the 1600 block of E.6th Avenue.

They could see two balconies engulfed in flames, and the fire department had not yet arrived.

At the same time, they learned that many seniors, some in wheelchairs, were living in the building. They called for back-up and headed inside.

The fire was on the third and fourth floors of the four-storey building. The officers cleared people out of the stairwells and then began knocking on doors on the top floor. In one of the units, they located a woman in a wheelchair, and carried her down the four smoke-filled flights of stairs to safety.

Constable John Ward arrived and raced up to the third floor to also knock on doors. Despite heavy smoke and the ceiling beginning to collapse from the weight of water from the sprinkler system, he persisted until the entire floor had been evacuated.

For rushing into a burning building, navigating through thick smoke and extreme heat to rescue residents, Sergeant Malcolm Evanson, Acting Sergeant Christopher Glanville, and Constable John Ward are awarded the Chief Constable's Commendation.

DETECTIVE CONSTABLE DWAIN MAH

There's irony and justice in that sometimes crime does pay – sometimes crime pays for police officers to have better tools to investigate criminals, and for crime victims to be compensated for their pain and suffering.

When Detective Constable Mah came to the VPD Drug Unit, he quickly learned that while suspects were being criminally charged, their assets from illegal activities were left untouched – in essence, while they might go to jail, in many cases they were still allowed to profit from their crimes.

He began to research asset forfeiture, learning that the investigations were very complex and could take years to complete. Many times, criminals were given back any property that had been seized by police.

In 2009, he began looking at the Provincial Civil Forfeiture Office legislation, submitting his first file recommending asset forfeiture that same year. Once his recommendation was accepted, any money from the liquidation of assets went to the Province to fund crime prevention initiatives, supporting communities and victims of crime.

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S COMMENDATION

Detective Constable Mah is the only police officer in BC dedicated solely to working on asset forfeiture, and the benefit is not limited to the VPD. He has been responsible for over two million dollars being seized and utilized for crime prevention initiatives in communities throughout BC.

For righting an injustice, and working within the law to make criminals pay, exemplifying the VPD's commitment to communities, public safety, and victims of crime, Detective Constable Dwain Mah is awarded the Chief Constable's Commendation.

SERGEANT KEVIN BERNARDIN

Anyone who knows Sergeant Kevin Bernardin is aware of his life-long admiration for the superhero Batman. While Vancouver may not be Gotham City, we still have our superheroes, and Sergeant Bernardin would definitely qualify.

Every organization dreams of having this kind of leader, one who exemplifies commitment, passion and dedication, both within the VPD and the community.

Sergeant Bernardin is the liaison between the VPD and ten Vancouver community policing centres, including over 1000 volunteers, and he oversees Block Watch and the Business Liaison Unit. He is a skilled diplomat, achieving consensus by ensuring everyone is heard and valued.

Celebrating the important contributions VPD volunteers and staff make to the safety of Vancouver's residents, he created the VPD Volunteer Recognition Day and the VPD Family Day, an opportunity for their loved ones to peek behind the scenes and see the important work being done.

Sergeant Bernardin also provides a vital bridge between the Department and the community, by organizing the sworn, civilian and volunteer participation in the majority of parades the VPD takes part in, as well as First Responder Weekends at the PNE and Science World.

Keeping abreast of the advances in technology and the opportunities they provide for crime prevention and safety, he has raised money, and been the driving force behind several crime prevention apps. He is involved in VECTOR, the Vancouver Emergency Community Telecommunications Organization, and with the operation and maintenance of the VPD's Mobile Command Centre. He also finds time to be a member of the Crisis Negotiation Team, a vital life-saving unit.

For consistently demonstrating exceptional skill, judgement, dedication and integrity, and for leading with compassion and commitment, Sergeant Kevin Bernardin is awarded the Chief Constable's Commendation.

2015 POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR

CONSTABLE SAM PRIMERANO

Constable Sam Primerano grew up in Vancouver, giving him deep roots and a strong connection to our City and its residents. In his 15 years with the Vancouver Police Department, he has dedicated himself to fighting crime, increasing public safety, and building positive relationships with the community. He has proven to be an exceptional police officer.

His ability to track crime trends and draw links between crimes and suspects, even between jurisdictions, has made him a valuable resource to the entire Department. Whether working in Patrol, in Strike Force, or in the Canine Unit, Sam constantly strives to learn new skills and hone his tactics. He coaches, mentors and shares his vast experience with other officers and in turn, improve the abilities of those around him.

Sam's many awards include one for Meritorious Service from the Attorney General for convincing a suicidal young man to drop his knife. Sam received a Chief Constable's Commendation, not for a single incident, but for his collective noteworthy performance – including making 90 arrests in just three years with his Police Service Dog, Lupo.

Constable Primerano and Lupo are well known in the community, as Sam makes every effort to know the people he's policing. His respectful and empathetic manner extends to the people he arrests, building a trust that has led to receiving valuable investigative tips.

Sam Primerano is a tenacious crime-fighter and a natural leader, possessing initiative, a tireless work ethic and extraordinary police instincts.

For continuously going beyond the call, improving the service the VPD provides to the public, and for making the City of Vancouver a safer place, Constable Sam Primerano is the 2015 Police Officer of the Year.





VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

Beyond the Call