



**SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION**  
**CHIEF OF POLICE**  
**CRAIG N. MEIDL**

LETTER OF AWARD

To: Officer Austin Toal  
From: Craig N. Meidl, Chief of Police  
Date: October 31, 2017  
Re: Lifesaving Award

Sgt. Tom Lee recently nominated you for the Spokane Police Department's Lifesaving Award. The Lifesaving Award is given to department personnel who, by their immediate actions, have saved a human life under unusual and/or extraordinary circumstances. When the Special Awards Committee reviewed your nomination, it was clear that you are most deserving of this recognition.

Sgt. Lee outlined the series of events in his nomination: "On August 19, 2017, at 2258 hours Spokane Police Officers responded to the top level of the Northtown Mall parking garage on the report that a man had been shot. Officers Guzzo and Toal arrived first and discovered a 25-year old man suffering from a self-inflicted gunshot wound to his chest. Officer Guzzo accessed a plastic evidence bag with which he used pressure to temporarily seal the entry wound. Officer Toal retrieved a first aid kit and prepared chest shields. Officer Buchmann arrived and began cutting the victim's clothing off in order to better access the chest wound and search for additional trauma. The officers located a second and larger wound on the man's back. They cleaned both wounds and applied seals to each. Throughout this they spoke to him in reassuring words that they would not let him die. His care was turned over to paramedics from the Fire Department and AMR upon their arrival.

The firefighters were led by Capt. Steve McKee of Engine-15 who stated *"The officers did an excellent job and it no doubt had a significant impact on the survival of the patient. The chest seals were placed correctly and both the entry and exit wound were fully covered and airtight. We could not have done any better if we had applied the seals ourselves. Please pass along our high regard for what was done and tell them that procedure certainly played a large part in the survival of that gentleman."*

AMR Paramedic Thomas Madsen was also on scene, stated that the patient had lost a lot of blood, felt clammy and his left lung had collapsed. He praised the placement of the chest seals which prevented further blood loss and helped ease the patient's ability to breath. He said another significant factor was the officers stripping the victim's clothing to discover the exit wound and any other trauma. Madsen added, *"I was very impressed, they did a great job, they did exactly what they should have. The officers' actions bought the patient minutes and led to a better outcome."*

The patient was rushed to Sacred Heart where he was first treated in the trauma unit and later underwent surgery. Dr. Dan Haggerty leads the physicians group that staffs the Emergency Department confirmed that not only did the young man survive, he had returned for follow up treatment and was recovering well. Dr. Haggerty told me, *"The officers' efforts made a significant difference for the patient, leading to a successful outcome."*

Officer Toal, the Lifesaving Medal is being awarded to you for your heroic actions in the incident outlined above. You will be awarded the Lifesaving Medal during the 21st Annual Employee Awards Ceremony in March 2018.

A copy of this letter will be placed in your personnel file.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig N. Meidl".

Craig N. Meidl, Chief of Police

