



SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION

CHIEF OF POLICE

CRAIG N. MEIDL

LETTER OF AWARD

To: Officer Matthew Clark
From: Craig N. Meidl, Chief of Police
Date: October 31, 2017
Re: Silver Star Award

Recently, Captain Brad Arleth nominated you for the Silver Star Award. The Silver Star is awarded to employees who have displayed courageous actions above and beyond that normally expected. These acts of courage do not rise to the level of the voluntary risk of requirements for the Medal of Valor, but are displays of exemplary acts of bravery. When the Special Awards Committee reviewed this nomination, it was clear that you are most deserving of this recognition.

Excerpts from Captain Arleth's detailed nomination included: *"On June 1, 2017 at about 1512 hours Sgt. Vigesaa and Ofc. Clark were travelling east bound on the 1200 block of Trent Ave. As they passed a vehicle in the adjacent lane, they saw a male suspect, later identified as Nicholas McRae, holding what appeared to be a short barreled assault rifle. Sgt. Vigesaa and Ofc. Clark observed McRae turn onto Denver St. in front of the Union Gospel Mission and drive slowly by the front of the building. McRae turned his car around so that his open driver's side window was closest to the front of the building. Fearing McRae was about to commit a shooting, Vigesaa and Clark attempted to stop McRae. Vigesaa and Clark were wearing normal soft body armor and Clark was armed with an AR15 rifle. Both officers were at a disadvantage with no element of surprise as McRae had looked at them in his mirror. Normal police body armor is not rated for assault rifle rounds. Vigesaa and Clark correctly recognized that immediate action was required to prevent loss of life from a shooting of unarmed and unaware civilians who frequent the sidewalk area in front of the Union Gospel Mission.*

McRae fled the scene in his vehicle, with Vigesaa and Clark and other officers joining in the pursuit. Recognizing the inherent danger of McRae being able to reach a university campus at Riverpoint or reach downtown on a busy afternoon, and knowing McRae was likely heavily armed, a PIT maneuver to stop McRae's flight was used and successful in stopping McRae's west bound progress. McRae fled on foot, and was captured after a short foot chase.

After his capture, McRae admitted to having a modified high capacity AK47 in his vehicle that he referred to as a "chopper", as well as having a revolver. The rifle was later determined to be loaded with a drum magazine containing 63 rounds. McRae stated he was armed for self-defense as a former drug dealer, but that he was also carrying the weapons "to clean up the streets". McRae also suggested he had an issue with the Union Gospel Mission staff.

It is highly likely that Sgt. Vigesaa's and Ofc. Clark's intervention and quick action prevented McRae from shooting at the Union Gospel Mission with a high capacity rifle, inflicting numerous casualties and likely prevented further mayhem if McRae had escaped while armed into a university campus or the downtown core.

The preferable method for dealing with a subject armed in this manner would be a SWAT deployment with armor and superior firepower. However, as that was not an option, the officers responded quickly and utilized tactics that were effective in apprehending McRae without any significant injuries, fatalities, or gunfire."

Ofc. Clark, I am proud to present you with the Silver Star award. You will be awarded the Silver Star Medal during the 2017 annual Employee Awards Ceremony in March 2018. A copy of this letter will be placed in your personnel file.

Craig N. Meidl
Chief of Police

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