



Letter of Award Distinguished Service Medal



To: Sergeant Brent Austin
From: Craig N. Meidl, Chief of Police
Date: January 17, 2020
Re: Distinguished Service Medal

Lt. Mike McNab recently nominated you for the Distinguished Service Medal. The Distinguished Service Medal is awarded to employees who have demonstrated outstanding sustained and exemplary performance along with diligence and devotion to duty. The performance should exceed normal demands required or expected over an extended period of time. When the Special Awards Committee reviewed Lt. McNab's nomination, it was clear that you are most deserving of this award. In his nomination, Lt. McNab wrote:

"Sergeant Brent Austin came to the Spokane Police Department as a lateral hire from Kennewick PD in 1998. After being on the Department for two years he was accepted onto the SWAT team. In 2016 Sergeant Austin was appointed as SWAT's Senior Team Leader; a position of honor and one that carries tremendous responsibility.

As the Senior Team Leader, Sergeant Austin is responsible for the team's development, training, equipment, staffing and most importantly their actions. Like most police agencies, SPD's SWAT team is a collateral duty team. Even the Senior Team Leader fulfills their SWAT obligations in addition to their primary assignment on the department. However, Sergeant Austin has made this a second full-time job. Sergeant Austin works tirelessly to improve all aspects of this team to include designing innovative training, testing new equipment, developing new tactics, training new operators and developing future leaders. He leads a team of high performing professionals that are a direct reflection of his leadership.

Sergeant Austin routinely works on his own time fielding tactical calls, preparing operations, and acquiring equipment for not only SWAT, but other department members as well. He is largely responsible for acquiring and maintaining tactical equipment through the 1033 program, and usually at a significant savings to the department. His vision for the team has expanded to mirror that of the Chief's vision for our department and it shows in SWAT's dedication to community outreach.

In 2018, Sergeant Austin was successful in obtaining funding for a new Lenco Bearcat. It was an enormous undertaking to educate city officials in the necessity for this expensive piece of equipment. Obtaining this vehicle has already proven its value on numerous occasions. This piece of armor allows distance and time in volatile situations. It allows SWAT operators to stay safely behind armor while having the ability to apply a multitude of force options.

During an event, Sergeant Austin is on the front lines with the team deciding how they will be deployed. Deciding the best course of action is a delicate, dynamic and strategic calculus of assessing the need to act while using the least amount of force necessary to accomplish the mission; all of this while weighing the risks to innocent victims and the team's safety. For this task, Sergeant Austin has a tactical acumen that is beyond reproach. His experience and exposure to literally hundreds of incidents has made him an invaluable resource to our community. Sergeant Austin consistently finds the least intrusive method to bring dangerous situations to a peaceful resolution. Not only is Sergeant Austin most deserving of this recognition, we all owe him a great deal of gratitude for his dedication to service. His leadership in SWAT has set a legacy of professionalism, honor and integrity that will undoubtedly be followed long after he passes the torch."

Sergeant Austin, I am proud to present you with the Distinguished Service Award. A copy of this letter will be placed in your personnel file and you will be recognized at the 2019 Annual Employee Award Ceremony on March 12, 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Meidl".

Craig Meidl
Chief of Police