



**2021  
Letter of Awards  
Medal of Valor and Purple Heart Medal**

To: Detective Juan Rodriguez  
From: Craig N. Meidl, Chief of Police  
Date: January 17, 2022  
Re: Medal of Valor and Purple Heart Medal Awards

Sergeant Vigesaa and Captain Hendren nominated you for the Medal of Valor and Purple Heart Medal. The Purple Heart is awarded to department personnel for receiving a wound or injury in the line of duty capable of causing death or extended disability. The Medal of Valor is the highest recognition of achievement presented by the Spokane Police Department. The Medal of Valor is awarded to employees for extraordinary acts of bravery or heroism, while displaying extreme courage by placing oneself in immediate peril. When the Special Awards Committee reviewed this nomination, it was clear that you are most deserving of both of these awards.

On 9/11/2020, Det. Rodriguez was involved in a pursuit of a carjacking suspect. Sgt. Vigesaa stated: *"Det. Rodriguez pulled in behind the suspect vehicle, exited his undercover vehicle and identified himself as a Police Officer. The suspect took off running and immediately shot his .45 caliber firearm at Det. Rodriguez, knowing he was a Police Officer. Det. Rodriguez was struck by the bullet in the right thigh as Det. Rodriguez gave foot chase after the suspect.*

*The suspect had run toward a parked and occupied vehicle when Det. Rodriguez returned fire at this violent and assaultive offender. Det. Rodriguez shot the suspect which ended the threat of violence.*

*During the incident, Det. Rodriguez, even though being shot, did not break stride. Det. Rodriguez was shot in the leg and still ran after this armed and violent offender.*

*When the suspect fell, Det. Rodriguez, with the assistance of Officer LeQuire, still continued his duties in handcuffing the suspect, again after giving chase and being shot in the leg. Only after the suspect was detained in handcuffs, and the threat to the community was eliminated, did Det. Rodriguez stop and assess his own injury. Det. Rodriguez's gunshot wound was inches away from his femoral artery, which could have been fatal to him."*

Captain Hendren added: *"Anytime an officer engages in a foot pursuit it places an officer in danger. Very few officers, however, will ever encounter a situation such as the situation Det. Rodriguez encountered. The suspect, without warning, drew a handgun and fired at Det. Rodriguez. This action alone would give any officer pause. To compound the severity of this incident, Det. Rodriguez was struck by the suspect's gunfire. Det. Rodriguez did not pause, retreat or give up. Knowing that the suspect still posed an imminent threat to fire again, as the suspect was still armed with a handgun, he continued to pursue. Due to the rapidly evolving nature of the incident, Det. Rodriguez could not have known how seriously he was injured. By continuing to chase the suspect, Det. Rodriguez voluntarily placed his life in more danger. His actions were the definition of bravery considering the totality of the circumstances. His decision to remain engaged in this dangerous situation until he was able to neutralize the threat served to protect his fellow officers who were arriving on scene and any civilian in the area. It is my opinion that Det. Rodriguez is most deserving of both the Purple Heart and the Medal of Valor."*

Detective Rodriguez, you have my personal thanks for your efforts to apprehend the suspect, and the gratitude of our community and your fellow officers for your dedication to our profession. I am proud to present you with the Purple Heart and Medal of Valor. A copy of this document will be placed in your personnel file.

Craig Meidl  
Chief of Police

