



Letter of Award Chief's Citation 2023



To: Detective Juan Rodriguez
From: Craig N. Meidl, Chief of Police
Date: November 8, 2023
Re: Chief's Citation Award

Lieutenant Rob Boothe nominated the SPEAR Unit members to receive the Chief's Citation Award. This award is intended to recognize members of a team or unit for participating in an incident, event, or series of events, or project which has a substantial, positive impact on the community or police department. It must be superior in nature and further the department's mission and overall effectiveness. When the Special Awards Committee reviewed this nomination, it was clear that the SPEAR Unit is most deserving of this award. Lt. Boothe's nomination included:

" 'No problem too large or task too big' should be the official motto of the SPEAR unit. There has not been a task that the SPEAR team has not stood up for.

Most recently, after a long string of Kia and Hyundai thefts that had begun almost a year earlier, all of the units were assembled to create a task force to combat the problem. Sergeant Eckersley did not hesitate to volunteer SPEAR to lead the task force. The size and volume of the investigation was quite daunting. SPEAR was able to locate and begin to assemble all of the pieces from multiple vehicle thefts to ring camera thefts, assaults, malicious mischief and other associated crimes. With the pieces assembled it became evident that there were two main suspects. Within six days of identifying the suspects, both were in custody. The drop in thefts was immediate and dramatic. To quote Senior Crime Analysis Tom Michaud, "I've never seen a drop like that in my career."

After a series of legislative changes, the state was plagued by commercial thefts, robberies, and shoplifting. The audacity and brazenness of the criminals was at a level never seen before - many businesses stood by feeling helpless and victimized as criminals walked out with millions of dollars of merchandise. Again, SPEAR stood up and established relationships with all the loss prevention professionals and established a network of communication. SPEAR ran a series of undercover specials that created such success that the heads of many corporations came to Spokane to provide support; several loss prevention agents came in on their days off to be a part of the specials as they were just excited to be a part of stopping the problem.

SPEAR continues to be innovative and creative with regularly publishing bad guy bingo as a guide for other officers to locate suspects that are wanted because of their investigations. SPEAR's unique investigatory abilities have provided tremendous results. In just this year, from January 1st to June 22nd, SPEAR charged 176 different people with a total of 358 new felony charges and 160 misdemeanor charges. Of those misdemeanors, 65 are from one Protection Order Violation case. We have seized 24 firearms, an RV, a motorcycle, and three vehicles. We recovered \$30,546 in cash from a PTA embezzlement case, antiques from a GU museum burglary, silver from a church theft, two Salvador Dali paintings valued at \$30,000 each, and countless items from pawn shops, just to name a few.

It is the constant and continuing superior performance of the SPEAR team under Sergeant Eckersley's leadership that makes them the most suitable candidates for the Chief's Citation award"

Detective Rodriguez, I am honored to present you with the Chief's Citation Award. You and your unit will be recognized at SPD's annual employee awards ceremony in 2024 and a copy of this letter will be placed in your personnel file.

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

Craig N. Meidl
Chief of Police