



## Letter of Award Distinguished Service Medal



To: Craig Meidl, Chief of Police  
From: Justin Lundgren, Assistant Chief of Police  
Date: December 28, 2023  
Re: Distinguished Service Medal

The Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) 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 this nomination, it was clear that you are most deserving of this award. The nomination read as follows:

*"Chief Meidl began his career at the Spokane Police Department nearly thirty years ago in January of 1994. For the past seven and a half years he has served in the role of Chief of Police. During his tenure as Chief, the state and nation experienced significant and sustained challenges making his time at the helm one of the most challenging periods in modern law enforcement history.*

*Chief Meidl not only led the department through the unprecedented storms facing the community, he became a recognized leader throughout Washington State. He was elected by his peers to serve as the President of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC.) He provided impactful testimony to the legislature on police reform issues as well as the re-criminalization of drug possession. Chief Meidl advocated for the adoption of law enforcement best practices and has a long history of implementing reforms to SPD practices before the actions of the Washington Legislature in recent years. He implemented the final recommendations of the DOJ COPS collaborative reform process early in his tenure as Chief. Over the following years, he advocated for more substantial changes to the Use of Force, De-Escalation and Vehicle Pursuit policies. He also mandated every officer receive 40 hours of Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) in their first year of employment as well as offered an Advanced CIT training for some officers including Motivational Interviewing. Later, he fought hard to prevent and modify reform legislation that he found to be contrary to officer and public safety or that diminished accountability for criminal offenders.*

*Under Chief Meidl, the SPD was fortunate to open new modern facilities to house the South and Downtown Precincts. This time also saw the creation of several innovative programs including the Behavioral Health Unit, Air Support Unit (drones), TAC's Bicycle Rapid Response Team, the Violent Crime Task Force, the Homeless Outreach Team and a revamped Stolen Property Unit (SPEAR.) Each of these units has provided added capabilities to the department allowing for a higher level of service to the Spokane community.*

*The Spokane Police Department was twice awarded WASPC recertification under Chief Meidl's leadership. This process covers all aspects of department operations and requires verification that the SPD adheres to the best policing practices in all areas.*

*The Chief empaneled a committee representative of the department who crafted the current Mission, Vision and Values of the Spokane Police. I have heard him say several times that he was proud that this was the creation of the men and women of the department and not a top-down mandate from "on high." He followed a similar strategy when he wanted to revisit the Patrol Staffing model. The new staffing arrangement was the work of a group of Patrol Lieutenants tasked with making the change they would later implement.*

*I would be remiss if I didn't mention the concerted effort that Chief Meidl placed on making connections to the community. He prioritized and expanded community outreach efforts, such as the Police Activities League (PAL) and the Youth Police Initiative (YPI.) It was under his leadership that these programs were emphasized and institutionalized into the department culture. Despite perennial staffing difficulties and almost unlimited demands upon the department, Chief Meidl remained steadfast in his commitment to maintain a dedicated Community Outreach Unit.*

*Despite the competing demands on his time, Chief Meidl maintained a true open-door policy and could frequently be found visiting with officers who had stopped by unannounced to say hello. He carved time out of each in-service to speak to the department, frequented roll call and sent countless personal messages directly to members of the department for a job well done. He also cared deeply about the health of the department members, expanded the size of the PAT, instituted additional support for detectives and took steps to improve employee wellness.*

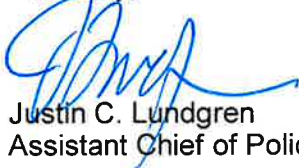
*As he prepares for retirement, Chief Meidl leaves behind a police department with more authorized commissioned officers than any time in department history and only two vacancies. This is incredible considering the staffing challenges faced by many other law enforcement agencies in the Pacific Northwest and across the country. The Spokane Police Academy was awarded a third session of the Basic Law Enforcement Academy that provides a pipeline of up to 30 new officers per year for the SPD. In addition, we have a growing group of SPD volunteers that serve the community and donate tens of thousands of hours to the department.*

*The men and women of the SPD enjoy a considerable amount of support from the community they serve in no small part due to the leadership and direction of the department under Chief Meidl.*

*Chief Meidl's exemplary and sustained service to the Spokane Police Department is uniquely impactful and makes him exceptionally qualified to receive this special honor."*

Chief, I am proud to present you with the Distinguished Service Award.

Sincerely,



Justin C. Lundgren  
Assistant Chief of Police