



# SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION

## CHIEF OF POLICE

### CRAIG N. MEIDL

To: Lt. Dean Sprague  
Sgt. Troy Teigen  
Sgt. Blaine Kakuda  
Sgt. Sean Wheeler  
Sgt. Adam Potter  
Officer Jake Jensen  
Officer John Arredondo  
Officer Yeshua Matthew  
Officer Joseph Matt  
Officer Chris Benesch  
Officer Nicolas Spolski

From: Craig Meidl, Chief of Police

Date: January 31, 2017

Re: Silver Star Award

Major Kevin King nominated all of 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 award. On 05/06/2015 at 2150 hours:

*A citizen phoned 911 to report that her daughter's boyfriend was depressed, intoxicated, and armed with a handgun. She also stated the subject was suicidal. The subject was located outside in back of a residence on N. Ash St.*

*Officers arrived on scene at 2154 hours. Officers were primarily concerned with making sure the complainant, as well as her daughter, were separated from the subject and safely away from the house. Lt. Sprague, Sgt. Teigen, and Officer John Arredondo were at the front of the residence attempting to safely remove these occupants.*

*At the same time, officers were formulating a deployment plan to contain the address and subject, whose exact location there was not known but was reported to be the back yard of the address. At the rear and south of the residence led by Officer Jake Jensen were (then) Corporal Blaine Kakuda, Officer Yeshua Matthew, and Officer Joseph Matt. At the rear and north of the residence led by (then) Officer Sean Wheeler were (then) Officer Adam Potter and Officer Chris Benesch. These officers employed multiple force options in their plan including using vehicles, ballistic shields, and bean bag round shotguns along with firearms.*

*As officers were deploying and developing information regarding subject's state of mind and possible intentions, they were confronted with gunfire from the subject. The subject was mere yards away near a*





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*fence line and had a garage and vehicles shielding him from clear view of the officers, as well as providing him cover and concealment. At this point, one of the residents from the house was still not accounted for.*

*Officers reported fearing for their lives at this point, as the subject was not contained and his physical location provided a tactical advantage. Further complicating the dynamic situation was a concern for the safety of all neighbors as well as potential crossfire issues with officers deployed for containment and contact. Additionally, the subject had the advantage of being in darkness and being more familiar with the location than officers. Officers had the disadvantage of not knowing the subjects exact location, skills with firearms, and being exposed by ambient lighting in the alley.*

*At 2215 hours, the officers at the rear could observe the subject looking their direction in the alley as if making target acquisition. The subject was also heard to make remarks similar to "do it" and "let's do this". The subject fired more shots from his position in the alley behind the address. After officers had given multiple commands to the subject to drop his gun, which he refused to comply with, Officer Spolski fired one round from his duty patrol rifle, striking and incapacitating the subject. The subject was then taken into custody and immediately provided with emergency lifesaving measures by officers until AMR personnel and paramedics took over.*

*In this situation, these officers clearly put their own lives at risk to protect not only those still inside of the house, but the surrounding residents as well. These officers were faced with a known armed suspect who was actively firing rounds. With speed and bravery, knowingly jeopardizing their own lives, they acted to remove those immediately in danger and contain the subject. Once they stopped the threat the subject posed, they then immediately rendered first-aid to the wounded person. This call is the one every police officer trains for, but hopes they never encounter. These officers acted decisively and with courage. Their actions likely prevented many other casualties that night.*

You will all be awarded the Silver Star Medal during the annual Employee Awards Ceremony in March 2017. A copy of this letter will be placed in your personnel files.

Craig Meidl  
Chief of Police

