OFFICER CHRIS LEWIS

The Medal of Valor is the highest recognition of achievement presented by the Department. It is awarded to employees who distinguish themselves with extraordinary acts of bravery or heroism above and beyond that normally expected n the line of duty by placing their own safety in immediate peril in the pursuit of their duties.

In the early morning hours of January 7, 2002, Officer Chris Lewis initiated a traffic stop of a stolen vehicle and was fired upon as he approached the vehicle. The suspects were armed with an assault rifle and a 9mm semi-auto. Officer Lewis was at almost point-blank range, and although bullets did hit his police car, it was nothing less than a miracle that he was not shot. Despite being alone and outgunned—Officer Lewis pursued the suspects.

After the suspect vehicle crashed at First and Division, the suspects fled on foot northbound, which happened to be along the main railroad line through Spokane and towards the Intermodal Station, where dozens of citizens were awaiting train and bus service. Officer Lewis attempted to anticipate the direction of flight of the suspects and drove northbound in hopes of cutting them off on the other side of the railroad tracks. At this point, other officers were in foot pursuit of the suspects and were being fired upon. Officer Lewis joined the other officers to search for the suspects, and they were both eventually captured.

During this extraordinary incident, Officer Lewis displayed bravery and heroism above and beyond that normally expected in the line of duty. Even after being fired upon by these desperate and heavily armed individuals, he continued his pursuit—knowing that he was at a disadvantage. Officer Lewis was engaged in the pursuit of the suspects until they were captured, which required great fortitude considering the events that had transpired. The department is proud to recognize Officer Lewis with the Medal of Valor Award. Officer Lewis was issued the Merit Bar, to be worn on his uniform and he was awarded the Medal of Valor at our annual Employee Awards Ceremony in February of 2003.