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NORTH E WOODALL ISG US ARMY WWLI KOREA VIETNAM JN 30 1924 T JUL 27 2009 APR 27 1979 APR 27 1979

> North E. Woodall risked his life in three wars, only to be killed during a home invasion in 2009. BCI and the Dayton PD are teaming up to bring new energy to the cold case.

COVER STORY

Having fought for his country in World War II, Korea and Vietnam, North E. Woodall eventually retired from the Army and settled into a quiet life at home on Dayton's West Side. ¶ It was there, in a tragic twist of fate, that the 85-year-old former Green Beret was struck on the head and died during an invasion of his Walton Avenue home on the evening of Monday, July 27, 2009. ¶ The front door had been kicked in and a drawer where Woodall was known to keep money ransacked. DNA and fingerprints were collected from the scene, and, a year later, Woodall's driver's license was found in a Xenia parking lot. ¶ Still, the case went cold. ¶ Now, 15 years later, the Dayton Police Department and the attorney general's Bureau of Criminal Investigation are teaming up to take a fresh look at the homicide in the hope that technological advances and new clues from the public yield justice for Woodall and his family.

Continued on Page 7

AWARDING EXCELLENCE

ATTORNEY GENERAL FROM THE



uch of what law enforcement officers do goes unseen by the public. In fact, much of it goes unseen by others in the profession, as well.

That's understandable, given that the services rendered by Ohio's 33,000 peace officers typically don't rise to the level of headline news.

And yet for anyone who has ever been helped by a cop, the assistance provided is almost always urgent and indispensable. Sometimes, it's lifesaving.

Consider what happened in Madison County on the evening of Nov. 12.

Officers Dylan Fout and Denise Dye of the London Police Department were patrolling the city's south side about 6:15 that Tuesday when, out of the darkness, Fout saw a young boy walking alone on a sidewalk on West Center Street. By the time he turned their cruiser around to check on him, however, the boy had disappeared.

As the officers searched the area on foot, a 911

call came into the London PD. A woman said her 5-year-old autistic son had wandered away after the boy's cousin left the front door open.

Recalling from his police training that autistic children are frequently attracted to water, Officer Fout began searching under the nearby overpass where West Center Street crosses Oak Run Creek.

Sure enough, the boy was there, conscious, floating face up in the 40-degree water. Fout plunged in and carried him back to safety. A medic arrived soon after, followed by the boy's mother.

We live in an age when term hero is tossed around so superficially that its context of preeminence is lost on ears grown accustomed to hearing the word regularly in sports broadcasts and TV commercials.

Dylan Fout and Denise Dye are the real deal

— they're truly heroes. This young boy is alive today - and his loved ones have been spared immeasurable pain — because of the wits, training and dedication of these two devoted officers.

But as special and uplifting as this story is, I'm happy to say it isn't unique. Every day, law enforcement officers come to the rescue of people statewide who understand that their best hope for help - sometimes their only hope lies with someone wearing a badge.

Many of these stories never go beyond the walls of the department. Thankfully, some filter out and are brought to the attention of the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy, an arm of my office that oversees the annual Distinguished Law Enforcement Awards ceremony.

The awards cover a broad range of achievement culminating with the Valor Award, which honors officers who, in the face of a violent or criminal situation, risk their safety to protect other people from harm. This past year, to honor bravery across a broader spectrum of actions, we added a category to recognize officers who save or attempt to save someone's life in response to a call for assistance — the very thing that Officers Fout and Dye did.

I encourage you to take a few minutes to read about the award recipients on Page 3; they exemplify the qualities that make policing the noble calling that it is. And because too many acts of valor and exemplary response don't get the attention they deserve, I encourage agencies to reach out to On The Job with your stories.

We want to hear about them and promise to follow up. It's as easy as sending an email to Thomas.Rinderle@OhioAGO.gov.

Your inspiring work deserves to be recognized.

Yours

Dave Yost **Ohio Attorney General**



ach year, the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission shines a spotlight on the outstanding accomplishments of a select few officers who have been nominated by their peers for recognition.

The most recent award ceremony, held in October as part of the 2024 Law **Training Symposium** Enforcement Training Symposium in Sandusky, honored 10 officers, an ATF task force and a civilian volunteer whose work strengthens the bonds between law enforcement and the community.

Victoria Allen Civilian Leadership Award

Honors a "servant leader" who, in the spirit of the award's namesake, works to unite neighbors and local law enforcement for the betterment of the community as a whole

Nicole Banks | Founder and President, Starfish Assignment

Nicole Banks led a social-media appeal in 2018 to help a homeless ex-Marine get back on his feet. Energized by the experience, she took on a bigger mission, working with patrol officers from the Columbus Division of Police who, in the course of their duties, identify community members in dire need of help — for example, an immigrant with no food or furniture, a family suddenly forced to move from a condemned apartment, or an elderly resident with medical issues but no phone to call for help. Through the nonprofit she established, Starfish Assignment, Banks solicits the help of individuals and businesses that have volunteered to assist her and, in turn, provides a lifeline for those who need it most.



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OnTheJob

HONORING THE BEST IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law Enforcement



Group Achievement Award

Honors an outstanding accomplishment by a group of individuals resulting in a significant, positive and lasting impact on law enforcement and/or the public

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) **Cleveland Group IV-Violent Crime Gun Task Force**

In the summer of 2023, ATF agents and task force officers led by Resident Agent in Charge Michael Gajewski teamed with the Cleveland Division of Police and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Ohio to carry out a three-month sting targeting gun crimes and drug trafficking in and around Cleveland. Operation Bomb City employed crime mapping to specifically target individuals and areas that accounted for the most violent crime in the area, leading to the indictment of 84 people and confiscation of 255 guns, 47 of which yielded NIBIN leads. In all, the NIBIN evidence connected to 106 shootings including 11 homicides, 52 felonious assaults, 19 shots fired, and 19 shots fired into a habitation.

where he also serves as training officer.

Training Awards (2 winners)

Honors an individual whose instructional expertise has significantly influenced prospective and current peace officers



Lt. William Parkomaki's passion for training has made an impact. "I struggle to think of a department in northeastern Ohio that he has not trained," said Detective Taylor Cleveland of the Conneaut Police Department. Parkomaki is an expert in active-shooter training, land navigation and tracking, firearms, SWAT tactics, high-threat vehicle engagements, building searches, low-light engagements, stops and approaches, and tactical emergency casualty care. Besides his work with the Ashtabula PD, he teaches at the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy, the Ohio Tactical Officers Association, the Kent State Regional Training Academy, and the basic peace officer academies at Kent State University Trumbull and Lakeland

Community College. He is in the FBI Safe Streets Task Force and the U.S. Marshals Service Violent Fugitive Task Force,



LT. REGINALD "REX" YOUNG | Mount Vernon Police Department

Lt. Rex Young hit on the right formula six years ago when he created a training program for his department. Rooted in OPOTA's Scenario Training Equipment Program (STEP), it provided quality instruction coupled with true-to-life scenarios that involve the enthusiastic participation of community members as actors. The effect is twofold: Officers develop better judgment and hone their skills in patrol operations and drug interdiction, and the community members — elected officials, local prosecutors, journalists and students — come away with a deeper appreciation for law enforcement and the specific threats they face. Perhaps the best testament to the program's success is the number of outside agencies that sign up each year to have their officers to go through the two-week training. "It's become a very popular 'must' for law enforcement administrators," Mount Vernon Police Capt. Andrew Burns said.

Community Service Award

Honors a law enforcement officer whose involvement in civic organizations helps to build bonds between police and the community



DETECTIVE BRANDON LONG | Hilliard Division of Police

Detective Brandon Long has been an integral part of Special Olympics since 2014, beginning with his hometown program, the Hilliard Bobcats. Over the years, he has coached Special Olympians in basketball, golf, volleyball and tennis, and has participated alongside them on unified teams. Currently, he is the state director of the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Ohio. The annual fundraiser involves thousands of police officers from hundreds of communities who, in simultaneous relays from the four corners of the state, carry torches to the opening ceremonies at Ohio Stadium. Every year he also organizes a community softball game between the Bobcats and Hilliard first responders; a Polar Plunge fundraiser; and an Amazing Abilities Open House, which gives members of the special needs and autism communities the opportunity to interact with police and firefighters in a safe setting.

Blue Line Award

Honors a law enforcement officer who is an innovator and has a knack for devising ways to improve day-to-day police work



WHITEHALL POLICE CHIEF MIKE CRISPEN | President, Central Ohio Chiefs Association

When Whitehall Police Chief Mike Crispen was asked by his peers to assume leadership of the Franklin County Chiefs Association, he warned that big changes were necessary. For starters, the organization had to become the voice of central Ohio police leaders; for too long, the dominant voice in the news media regarding law enforcement matters had come from union leaders. More broadly, the organization had to take a more active leadership role in the region's public safety. Now a nonprofit called the Central Ohio Chiefs Association (COCA), the group has achieved considerable success in short order, including partnering with faith leaders, educators, judges, law enforcement officials, and other key partners in Franklin County to develop goals for managing juvenile crime, and working with other area departments to conduct multi-agency blitzes focused on specific crime issues. Membership in COCA includes chiefs, county sheriffs, patrol commanders and prosecuting attorneys in Franklin and the six surrounding counties.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Honors a retired law enforcement officer with a career-long history of extraordinary contributions to the profession



SGT. MATT HARRIS | Columbus Division of Police, retired

In a profession founded on service, Sgt. Matt Harris stands out for the kindness and caring he brought to his 26-year career. That was true during his 20-plus years as an officer and precinct sergeant in the Patrol Division, where he was known for his collaboration and involvement with the community. And it also was evident in his work with the division's Crisis Intervention Team and in the de-escalation training that he provided to fellow officers, including officers from other agencies. Based on his compassionate nature, experience and leadership abilities, the command staff in 2019 tabbed him to head up the Division's newly created Mobile Crisis Response Unit, designed to intercede in potentially volatile service calls involving people with mental-health conditions or substance-abuse issues. Officer Megan Howe, who worked with Harris, said officers and clinicians on the five MCR teams "were awestruck by his relentless efforts to enhance the program in hopes of better serving each and every citizen in our community."

Every year, the law enforcement **Valor Award** recognizes heroic acts carried out under fire during a criminal event. In 2024, Attorney General Dave Yost and OPOTC created an additional category, the **Exemplary Response Award**, to honor an equally important type of heroism — lifesaving.

Exemplary Response Awards (2 winners)

Honors a law enforcement officer who saves or attempts to save someone's life, or performs other exceptional actions, in response to a call for assistance **OFFICER KYLE CUNNINGHAM | Akron Police Department**



Officers found the man in his car at Arch Street and N. Adolph Avenue, his father outside the car pleading for him to come

home. Moments later, the man sped away, got out of the car and ran toward the bridge. "I was just fortunate enough to be there at the right time," Cunningham said. "There are so many officers who would have done the same thing."

OFFICER MARC MERRIWEATHER | Marlboro Township Police Department



As soon as Officer Marc Merriweather arrived on the scene, he realized there was no time to spare. It was about 6:45 a.m. on Oct. 8, 2023, when the call came in about a house fire on Tope Avenue in Stark County's Marlboro Township. Merriweather responded within four minutes and saw the deck on the back of the house in flames. Even more worrisome, a residential propane tank, about 4 feet tall, stood next to the deck, flames shooting out of its pressure relief valve where the gas was escaping.

"Police," he yelled, banging on the door. "Your deck's on fire!." The woman who answered explained that her infirm, elderly mother was in bed in a back room. Immediately outside her mother's wall was the deck - and the propane. Merriweather's body-camera recorded his efforts as he helped the woman to her walker, grabbed her oxygen concentrator and her medications, and guided her toward the door: As he does, the propane tank explodes, blowing off the back of the house, the concussion knocking him to the ground. All the while, he holds onto the woman and gets her, her daughter and their dog safely outside.

Only three minutes passed since he arrived.

Valor Award

Honors a police officer who, despite risk to his or her own safety, demonstrates extraordinary courage in protecting other people from harm



in a running gunbattle and fleeing in their direction.



Ducking for cover, Harmon returned fire. Mansperger, who had been chasing a suspect, heard the renewed gunfire and ran to help. Once the threat was over, Mansperger kicked the pistol away from the gunman as Harmon secured his suspect and Velas attended to a woman screaming in pain nearby. In total, 10 people were shot and two were killed. Hundreds of rounds were fired, and 13 guns recovered. No bystanders were injured. Columbus Police Lt. Brian Steele, president of FOP Capital City Lodge #9, said it was the most chaotic event he had seen in 20 years as a

police officer.

Had Officer Kyle Cunningham been even a second slower, the distraught young man would have jumped to his death.

A video shows just how close tragedy came: Cunningham bolts from his cruiser as the man runs toward the railing of the Route 8 High Level Bridge. As the man attempts to hurtle over the edge, Cunningham grabs him even as the man tries to squirm out of his coat and leap to the street 120 feet below.

As the young man's father watches, other officers arrive, and together they pull the young man back to safety. "Whatever it took, I wasn't going to let go," Cunningham said later.

The incident began about 10:30 a.m. on Dec. 22, 2023, when a woman called 911 about her 24-year-old son having suicidal thoughts and threatening to jump off a bridge.

"I just did what I had to do, but I can tell you that I was terrified," Merriweather said. "Even now, looking at the video, it gives me the heebie-jeebies."

OFFICER CARL HARMON | OFFICER IAN MANSPERGER | OFFICER JACOB VELAS

Columbus Division of Police

The violence began about 2:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 6, 2023. Bars had just closed in the Short North district of Columbus following one of the busiest nights of the year, Cinco de Mayo.

Officers Carl Harmon and Jake Velas were on foot providing security for a team of food-truck license inspectors when a shooting occurred just a few blocks south, in the 600 block of N. High Street.

As cruisers raced to the shooting scene, Harmon and Velas heard on their radios that two large groups of shooters were engaged

But no sooner had they heard the call than they had their own trouble: A group of young adults were taunting each other outside the United Diary Farmers store and fights were breaking out. Soon, it was out of control and Harmon called for help.

Officer Ian Mansperger, working special security duty at a nightclub a block away, responded. As he arrived, "an explosion of gunfire" rang out. Chaos ensued as people ran for their lives, screaming at the steady pop, pop, pop of gunfire.

Harmon, Velas and Mansperger sprinted across the street toward the suspects, who numbered between 15 and 20 in two opposing groups. They identified the active shooters and opened fire. Several shot back.

As Harmon reached the west side of North High Street, he saw that the primary suspect was on the ground, badly wounded, his gun to the side. But as he and Velas scanned for additional threats, the downed suspect raised a pistol and fired several shots.

TRAINING COPS

VR program creating additional content, training pool of instructors

hio's 33,000 peace officers got a glimpse of the future last summer when the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy introduced immersive virtual reality as part of a package of sweeping changes to better prepare officers and recruits for the demands of their job in the 21st century.

Now, just months since the VR rollout, OPOTA is pushing ahead in two key areas of the program: expanding its library of VR video scenarios and developing a network of certified trainers across the state.

To date, OPOTA has distributed about 160 VR headsets to its six regional training partners and to academies at major metropolitan police departments and the State Highway Patrol.

The headsets are currently loaded with six videos focusing on suicide prevention, the teen

brain, mental health, domestic violence, irate families and school violence. The videos, each 8 to 12 minutes, are designed to strengthen an officer's crisis-management techniques by developing their critical thinking and communication skills.

A second series of six videos is in the pipeline and will be uploaded to the headsets in the first half of 2025, said Robert Strausbaugh, OPOTA's director of advanced training. Filming has wrapped up and post-production editing is underway.

The second video series complements content from the first. For example, a video in series one hinted at a possible sex trafficking connection. In series two, that storyline is further developed and used as the basis of another video.

The other major area of emphasis for OPOTA is building up a corps of certified instructors throughout Ohio.

As of early December, 176 instructors had been trained and certified in six sessions at OPOTA, beginning with instructors from the Close to Home regional sites. OPOTA Executive Director Tom Quinlan has authorized the six regional providers to offer instructor-level courses to build the pool of certified trainers.

OPOTA also encourages law enforcement agencies to partner with neighboring departments to expand training. For example,



a small agency might consider getting VR training for its staff by partnering with an adjacent larger agency that has a certified instructor.

Strausbaugh said that virtually all of the agency chiefs or sheriffs he has spoken to have indicated a desire to buy VR headsets of their own. In those cases, OPOTA will advise the agencies on which model to buy and upload the videos at no charge. Upon the advice of their legal advisers, agencies might choose to use CPT reimbursement money to buy the headsets.

VR use in both basic and advanced law enforcement training is still in its early stages, and Ohio is in the vanguard.

OPOTA's training emphasizes situational decision-making, which has been shown by researchers to decrease use of force, discretionary arrests and officer injuries. It is designed to develop "soft skills" (such as listening and deescalation techniques) rather than tactical skills (such as shooting or making arrests).

Once trainees don the headsets, they are "dropped" into the virtual world of the scenario, which offers a 360-degree perspective that enables them to turn to look in all directions.

VR training activates several senses at once and accommodates various learning styles better than traditional classroom courses. Consequently, it generally improves a person's ability to process, distill and retain key information, allowing for more thorough and faster learning.

CPT update: What's ahead for 2025

As in previous years since 2022, Ohio's 30,000 peace officers and troopers will be required to complete 24 hours of continuing professional training (CPT) this calendar year.

Eight of the 24 hours must be completed on the following topics, as mandated by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission:

- Search & Seizure: one hour
- Use of Force: three hours
- Legal Updates: two hours
- Ethics Law: two hours

All mandatory courses are available through OPOTA Online.

Officers and troopers can fulfill the remaining 16 hours of CPT with any combination of pre-approved courses from these categories:

- Officer Trauma & Wellness
- Report Writing
- Domestic Violence
- Leadership
- Vehicle Dynamics

In addition to the CPT classes at OPOTA Online, officers and troopers also have the option of taking classes through any of the six Close to Home regional training sites or at OPOTA's main campus in London.

The state will pay each law enforcement agency up to 100% of officers' salaries while they take the training.

Questions about CPT can be emailed to CPTquestions@OhioAGO.gov

Multiple lesson plans exist for each video because each can be used to train officers across a range of roles, including first-line supervisors, field training officers, patrol officers and tactical officers

VR training can be used to fulfill the state's annual continuing professional training (CPT) requirement, but only if the VR training follows the lesson plans written by OPOTA.

Questions about OPOTA's VR training should be directed to Administrative Assistant Stephanie Parish, who can be reached at 740-845-2480 or Stephanie. Parish@OhioAGO.gov.



Noah Dressell is set to graduate in February from the Toledo Police Academy -18 years to the month after his father, Toledo Detective Keith Dressel, was gunned down by a teenage drug dealer.

NEWS

Keith Dressel

In early December, as the elder Dressel's killer -Robert Jobe, inmate No. A567481 at the Marion Correctional Institution — anticipated his first parole hearing, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost stood ready to fight it.

"The notion of Robert Jobe returning to the streets where he fatally shot Detective Dressel the same streets that the detective's son may soon be patrolling — is, to say the least, chilling," Yost wrote to the Ohio Parole Board.

Jobe, who was 15 at the time of the fatal shooting, was with Sherman Powell, 19, on a corner in north Toledo at 2 a.m. on Feb. 21,

Continued from Page 1

To that end, the office of Attorney General Dave Yost produced a short video about the case, distributing the link statewide on Nov. 11 to coincide with Veterans Day.

"The military has an ethos that you don't leave a teammate behind," Yost says. "We're hoping that someone remembers something - they heard something or saw something — and will reach out to help us get justice for this American hero."

The grandson of a slave, Woodall grew up in Mississippi. He was drafted into the Army in 1945 and became a paratrooper in an all-black unit, eventually rising to the rank of sergeant major. Twice he was awarded the Silver Star, a combat medal honoring gallantry in action. He retired in 1968 after seeing action in World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

With his wife and six children, Woodall relocated to Dayton. He lived for decades in the Walton Avenue home, alone for the last several years after his wife passed. His neighbors loved him. Thirteen of them even trusted him to hold their Social Security money and parcel it out to them as needed to ensure they wouldn't run dry before their next monthly check was issued.

Dayton police believe word got out to the wrong person that Woodall kept large amounts of cash in his pocket and in a bedroom dresser.

PD. "For a decorated veteran of three wars to On the night of his murder, family members come home and be killed in his living room by a dropped by for a visit, leaving about 9:30. When cowardly assailant, we just can't have that." a neighbor came to check on him about 11:30, she found the front door forced open and A profile has been developed from the DNA



AG Yost successfully fights cop killer's parole



2007, when Dressel and two other vice detectives pulled up in their car and interrupted what they believed was a drug deal in progress.

When Powell fled, two of the detectives took off after him, leaving Dressel with Jobe. The two later testified that they heard a rapid series of gunshots. When one of the detectives stopped his pursuit and returned to the car, he found Dressel on the ground, shot in the chest, firing at the fleeing suspect.

Dressel died a short time later at Mercy St. Vincent's Medical Center. He was 35 and left behind a wife and two young children, Sydney, 7, and Noah, 4.

Jobe, who had an extensive criminal record, turned himself in to his parole officer hours after the shooting. He was tried as an adult, convicted of murder and sentenced to 18 years to life in prison. He avoided a mandatory life sentence when the jury acquitted him of the more serious charge of aggravated murder.

In his letter to the board, AG Yost said Jobe had not earned the right to be free:

"Reports indicate that he has committed dozens of violations in prison over the years, including 10 in the past year alone. He clearly has not been rehabilitated, and his release would surely pose a danger to the community at large.

I ask that you consider the highly serious nature of this crime, Jobe's behavioral history in prison, the enduring suffering of his family, and the importance of protecting the public trust in the justice system - and deny Robert Jobe's request for parole."

Dressel's mother, Larraine, also implored the Parole Board to keep Jobe locked up. She recently told a Toledo TV station that she is concerned for her family's safety after receiving threatening phone calls and letters from people she suspects are associated with Jobe.

On Dec. 5, the Ohio Parole Board denied Jobe's request.



It's a matter of looking back into the circumstances to find persons of interest — persons who could have come into contact with our victim, who could have left DNA behind to provide an investigative lead that investigators can follow up on.

Hallie Drever DNA Lab Manager for BCI

Woodall lying bloodied and unconscious on the

been pulled out and a dresser drawer rifled.

"We have no doubt this was a very well-

living-room floor. His left front pants pocket had

orchestrated assault and robbery, and it's imperative

for our community that that we actually solve

this case," said Maj. Brian Johns of the Dayton

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To watch a video about North E. Woodall, scan the QR code or go to https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=cchAVV1DenM.

collected at the crime scene and entered into the FBI's Combined DNA Index System, although no matches have been made yet.

"Maybe the profile has nothing to do with the actual homicide," said Hallie Dreyer, DNA Lab manager for BCI. "But it puts together another piece of the puzzle that could give us some information. It's a matter of looking back into the circumstances to find persons of interest persons who could have come into contact with our victim, who could have left DNA behind to provide an investigative lead that investigators can follow up on."

Authorities are convinced that someone out there knows something about this case.

"The passage of time changes loyalties - it changes perspectives," Yost said. "We all change as we get older. So somebody who might not have been willing to talk earlier might want to clear their conscience now. Also, sometimes science leads us in directions that weren't known 15 years ago, and I'm frankly hoping that we might see some kind of breakthrough with technology here as well. But at the end of the day, we haven't broken this case yet. We haven't solved it, and it deserves to be solved."

Tips about the case can be called in to 855-BCI-OHIO (855-224-6446).



Mark Your Calendar

Looking Ahead



The Attorney General's Office has solidified dates for two major events in 2025. More information will be available in the coming months.

- ✓ Fallen Officers Memorial Ceremony: May 8
- ✓ Two Days in May Conference on Victim Assistance: May 19-20



