

Bristol County Sheriff's Office honors employees who went above and beyond at awards ceremony, Deputy swearing-in

Doing the right thing, even when it means running into a dangerous situation. Preventing further harm to a woman being assaulted and helping the police capture the assailants. Showing compassion for fellow employees around the clock. Representing the department with dignity, class and honor.

Tuesday night at Keith Middle School, Bristol County Sheriff Thomas M. Hodgson awarded several honors to Sheriff's Office employees who went above and beyond the call of duty. The awards were presented during a ceremony in which all deputies were sworn in for 2019 and employees were honored with pins for years of service.

"I wouldn't trade my staff for any in the world, and nights like this prove my point," Sheriff Hodgson said. "Whether being sworn in, honored for years of service, or celebrated for heroism, courage of compassion, Bristol County Sheriff's Office employees are second to none."

Award recipients were nominated by their peers and selected by a commendation board. Those receiving special awards Tuesday night are as follows:

Meritorious Duty, awarded for extraordinary performance in the line of duty: Sgt. Marie Garcia.



Sgt. Marie Garcia was honored with the Meritorious Duty award on Tuesday night for her quick actions in following an armed inmate into a confined space to secure him and preserve evidence.

On Oct. 8, 2018, Sgt. Garcia saw two inmates fighting in the housing unit she was stationed in. After backup arrived, one of the inmates began walking quickly toward the bathroom with a metal object in his hand. Sgt. Garcia, after calling out for the inmate to halt to no avail, quickly and without regard for her own safety followed the inmate into the bathroom, where the inmate flushed the object down the toilet before being secured by officers. Sgt. Garcia then secured the bathroom crime scene and contacted investigators and maintenance personnel who retrieved the object, which turned out to be a weapon and was used as evidence in the investigation.

Exceptional Merit, awarded for actions based on good judgment and performed when an employee faced imminent risk or injury or death on or off duty: Corrections Officers Kyle Reed and Zachary Egan.

On Dec. 3, 2018, Officers Reed and Egan were chatting on

Faunce Corner Road, not far from the House of Corrections, after getting off second shift. It was the middle of the night, and they heard a scream coming from a nearby car. Officers Reed and Egan ran toward the noise and found a woman who had been robbed and assaulted by two men. As the officers ran toward the woman, the two men took off, striking Officer Reed, who was hospitalized with an ankle injury. The officers, who likely saved the woman from more abuse, were able to provide key information to Dartmouth Police, who tracked down and arrested both men and charged them in the assault.

Exceptional Merit, awarded when the act performed is considered necessary to prevent catastrophe, death or injury to another person: Capt. Michael Nunes, Dispatcher Thomas Faria and Corrections Officers Eric Cousens and Nicholas Smola.



BCSO employees were honored with the Exceptional Merit award for helping to save a man's life in September. Pictured with Sheriff Hodgson are, from left, Capt. Michael Nunes, Dispatcher Thomas Faria and Corrections Officers Eric Cousens and Nicholas Smola.

On Sept. 27, 2018, Capt. Nunes, Dispatcher Faria and Officers

Cousens and Smola were playing golf at Acushnet River Valley with several members of the New Bedford Police Department, Mass. State Police and a Foxboro firefighter when another golfer collapsed in the fairway after hitting a shot. The back of the course is far from the street and inaccessible to emergency vehicles, so the Bristol County team members assisted others in taking turns doing chest compressions while CPR was administered for almost 20 minutes until EMS arrived with an AED that was used to bring the victim back to consciousness.

Unit Citation, awarded to a unit, division or command for an outstanding performance or accomplishment in the line of duty: Stress Unit – Capt. Wayne Torres, Lt. Jeremy Carlton, Sgt. Justine Morel, Medical Director Judy Borges and Corrections Officers Ryan Isherwood, Ronald Deschenes and Paul Souza.



The Bristol County Stress Unit received the Unit Citation award at Tuesday night's ceremony in New Bedford. Pictured with Sheriff Hodgson are, from left, Corrections Officer Paul Souza, Capt. Wayne Torres, Lt. Jeremy Carlton and Director of Medical Services Judy Borges. Not pictured are Sgt. Justine Morel and Corrections Officers Ryan Isherwood and Ronald Deschenes.

Created as a conduit to help employees who feel like they need help, the Bristol County Stress Unit consists of a group of security and civilian team members who are focused on helping their colleagues deal with the stresses that come with working in and around corrections. Any BCSO team member can confidentially contact any member of the Stress Unit at any time, 24/7, for assistance with a problem. These volunteers are specially trained to not only be good listeners, but also to be able to identify problems and refer people who need it to the appropriate community resource, whether it is a rehabilitation center or another service provider. The volunteers specialize in substance abuse and mental health issues but can also act on any other problem that may arise.

Sheriff's Award: Bristol County Honor Guard – Lt. Shawn Costa, Sgt. Julio DeFigueiredo, Assistant Deputy Superintendent Matthew Robitaille, Sgt. Scott Algarvio and Deputies Chris Vaz, Francisco Rosario and Jamal Gill.



The Bristol County Sheriff's Office Honor Guard received the Sheriff's Award for their dedication in representing the office with dignity and class. Pictured with Sheriff Hodgson are, from left, Deputies Jamal Gill and Francisco Rosario, Sgt. Julio Defiguredo, Lt. Shawn Costa, Sgt. Scott Algarvio,

Deputy Chris Vaz and Assistant Deputy Superintendent Matthew Robitaille.

Nobody represents the Bristol County Sheriff's Office, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the United States of America better than the BCSO Honor Guard. Hot or cold, windy or sunny, snowing or raining, these volunteers give their time often to carry the colors and represent the BCSO with class and dignity at all types of events, from parades to funerals to official processions and ceremonies. It takes stamina, precision, training and dedication; far more than standing and holding a flag.

"These Bristol County team members go above and beyond and show incredible commitment to the office and their community," Sheriff Hodgson said of all the award recipients. "These employees represent the best of our amazing organization and I couldn't be more proud of each and every one of them."

In addition to awarding special department honors, the event was also an opportunity to recognize employees for years of service and swear in deputies for 2019. More than 225 employees received pins for years of service, ranging from 10 years to 30, and almost 500 law enforcement and auxiliary deputies took the oath from Sheriff Hodgson to be re-sworn in for the new year.