

2019 Incident of the Year Nominations

**Kathryn Melcher, David O'Bryant, Doug Bogart, Sara Welch, Aimee Fearey
San Diego Harbor Police Dept.**

On October 2, 2018 at approximately 0538 hours, HPD Officers were headed to their assignment on Shelter Island and observed a vehicle driving in reverse from Fenelon St. onto Scott Street and on the wrong side of the road. The Officer driving had to take immediate action to avoid a collision. Officers initiated a stop, but the suspect refused to yield. A vehicle pursuit ensued onto Shelter Island. Additional officers responded to assist and while an officer was stepping out of his patrol vehicle, the suspect drove towards him and intentionally rammed the police unit. The officer was barely able to get back in the vehicle to avoid being hit by the suspect car. The suspect continued to evade officers and fled from the scene.

At the time this incident occurred, the Port of San Diego had suffered a cyber-attack and all computer systems were impacted. CAD was down so the Dispatchers were working on manual cards. They were not able to access officer safety information they normally would have. Access to law enforcement systems was through an unstable vpn connection that continually disconnected with delayed responses. Not having access to critical information increased the complexity of the call.

Harbor Police Dispatchers were formally commended for their work during this incident. They were able to manually track the pursuit and trace the location of all officers assigned. They coordinated mutual aid from member city agencies, including air support, K-9, and SWAT. They were extremely resourceful when obtaining the critical information officers needed at the scene. They performed all these functions while operating at an extremely limited capacity during a high stress critical call. The meticulous hand-written notes documented everything that occurred and allowed for easy transition at shift change. The team was calm and collected throughout and there to support one another for any task that was needed. What stood out during this incident was the complete control that the dispatchers had on the situation.

The suspect was successfully taken into custody after the deployment of spike strips, special equipment to break the vehicle window, and pepper balls.

**Dawn Charles & Jane Griffin
San Diego Police Department**

On Tuesday, July 24, 2018, at 0216 hours, Police 911 Dispatcher Dawn Charles received a call in which the caller stated, "I am going to commit suicide." The caller was very matter of fact. He was older, alone, and had fallen out of touch with his adult children.

He was tired and had driven to a private unattended area and was prepared to commit suicide. Dawn worked with the caller to confirm his location. When she asked him how he intended to kill himself he told her that he was sitting in the driver's seat of his vehicle with a loaded handgun sitting on the passenger seat next to him.

Dawn let him know that she was going to get her supervisor on the line. She said, "I am going to be off the line for just a second to get a supervisor, so don't hang up ok?" He responded, "Okay."

Police Lead Dispatcher Jane Griffin joined the conversation. Jane and Dawn would remain on the phone with the caller for the next twenty minutes while officers responded and staged to contact the caller.

When Dawn asked him to put the gun away he said, "I don't know. I'm so alone. I'm so tired and in a lot of pain of being alone. I just called to let you know. I'm so sorry." Dawn told him he did not need to apologize. Jane let him know the officers could help him. He was adamant that he did not think anyone could help him and he said, "I'm not going back to be alone in my room."

Dawn and Jane did not let him dwell on dark thoughts and shifted the conversation to questions about his family, spouse, children, grandchildren and friends. Jane reassured him repeatedly, "They really can help you. Will you let us help you?" Dawn reminded him, "Your life is very important! Can we get you some help please? At least let the officers talk to you."

As the two persisted in pleading with him they reminded him, "We just want to help you so you don't have to feel alone. Your life is important!" He conceded to be willing to talk with police officers. He said to both dispatchers, "I appreciate you. Thank you."

This caller called 911 to let the police know what he had done and where to find him. Instead he reached Dawn and Jane who reached through his darkness and made contact with him by using genuine concern and true compassion. They were able to keep him on the phone engaged in conversation until officers arrived. They explained to him what to expect next and made sure he understood to keep his hands where the officers could see him. Before they left the phone they wished him well.

I nominate Police 911 Dispatcher Dawn Charles and Police Lead Dispatcher Jane Griffin for consideration for Dispatchers of the year. Their efforts had a big impact and made a genuine difference in one man's life.

Linna Kimm
San Diego Police Department

On June 3, 2018 Police Dispatcher Linna Kim was working the Rock'n Roll Marathon . At 1050 hours unit Evnt24 came up on the air requesting a motor unit to cover on a hit and run suspect. Linna promptly got a motor unit started to cover. Shortly after, Evnt24 aired that the suspect drove into the parkade on opt ave and was armed with a gun. With no hesitation Linna aired for a K9 unit and then started to get suspect and vehicle information. Linna swiftly took Centrals air and broadcaste the information and made sure the frequencies were patched.

Linna remained poised while assisting officers with tactical operations. She immediately coordinated with field units and ABLE to establish a perimeter. Linna was consistently conscientious of where units were and properly documented their locations. She rebroadcasted the suspect description when appropriate for units. At one point during the incident an officer requested the air and advised they needed a medic on the 3rd floor for an injured officer. Linna stayed composed and asked her fellow dispatchers to order medics and verified they were 10-4 and enroute. Linna stayed focused for the duration of the event, was aware of her units locations and the details of the incident and consistently provided critical information to units without hesitation. Linna displayed a calm demeanor throughout the entire event.

Linna did an exceptional job during this critical incident. Linna displayed exemplary professionalism by insuring the safety of the officers and citizens. Her commndable work demonstrates a high standard of proficiency, knowledge, and the ability to stay composed during a critical incident.

Erin Means
San Diego Police Department

On June 23, 2018 officers arrived on scene at 4860 Rolando Court, Unit #5, to investigate a radio call of a male walking back and forth, yelling and slamming doors. The officers asked for the Fire Department to respond for a smell of smoke. Upon entering the residence in question, officers were met with gunfire.

Police Dispatcher Erin Means was working the Eastern talkgroup. At 2258 hours, unit 321j3 aired "Shots fired, shots fired." Erin calmly repeated the units transmission, put on the emergency tone, and advised units the location to respond. Units then advised they were in an active gunfight. Erin asked if any officers were injured, there was no response. Shortly after a unit came on the air and called an 1199, an officer was down. Erin quickly patched the nearby talkgroup and a code 12 was issued. Erin responded to each units transmission, updated the event and gathered viable information. It was discovered that an officer was down, barricaded and trapped in a hallway. As the

talkgroup was inundated with radio traffic, Erin did her best to quickly air important information, advise of cross fire situations and proactively coordinate a multi divisional response. She maintained a calm and professional demeanor which set the tone for the officers to remain as calm as possible.

Erin was commended for her ability to handle the unique and intense challenges that this incident came with. She handled the event professionally, took control of a challenging situation and ensured both officer and citizen safety needs were met as quickly as possible.

**Ruth Harrison, Marissa Hoy, and Rebekah Foster
San Diego Police Department**

On April 9, 2018, two young children, an eight year old girl and a three year old boy, were kidnapped from the parking lot of 220 Euclid Avenue. They were inside a vehicle while their father ran a quick errand. Witnesses alerted the father of the children, who was inside a nearby business, but by the time he ran outside the suspect was already turning south from the parking lot onto Euclid Avenue. The father chased the car on foot until the driver turned east onto Imperial Avenue. Police were notified and officers began searching the surrounding neighborhoods.

A short time later, the eight year old girl called 911 from the vehicle and reported she had been carjacked before the call disconnected. The phone was tracked and determined to be near Chula Vista, indicating the car was likely travelling south. After hearing this, Southern Division Acting Sergeant Paul Tena directed Officer Max Verduzco and Officer Robert Henry to respond to the San Ysidro Border Crossing. He also notified the U.S. Border Patrol Watch Commander of the incident. Once Officers Verduzco and Henry arrived at the border, they coordinated with U.S. Customs Agents and began visually inspecting vehicles crossing into Mexico. Within minutes, the car was located in the number one southbound lane a short distance from the border. The driver, Leslie Saenz, was taken into custody and the children were recovered safely.

The quick thinking and prompt notifications made by Police Lead Dispatcher Ruth Harrison, Police Radio Dispatcher Marissa Haughey, and Police 911 Dispatcher Rebekah Foster, as well as the rapid response to time sensitive information by Acting Sergeant Tena, Officer Verduzco and Officer Henry resulted in the suspect being apprehended before she could cross into Mexico. Had she been allowed to slip across the border, the chances of recovering these young children safely would have greatly diminished. These officers and dispatchers are all to be commended for their attentiveness, ability to coordinate with outside agencies, and their dedication to duty. The professionalism demonstrated by their actions assisted this family in their time of need and reflect positively on the entire department.

Del Mar 1199

San Diego Sheriff's Dept.

The officer involved shooting resulting in an 11-99 in Del Mar began on an ICS talkgroup which required a patch with a primary talkgroup as well as LE N COMMAND. Dispatcher Sarah Ward remained calm throughout the incident and kept all units organized. She was an excellent team player and displayed her genuine interest in public service and keeping field units safe.

This incident proved that all agencies can and will work together to provide mutual aid assistance.