

SUPREMACY CLAUSE IMMUNITY // P. 36

FOP



JOURNAL

THE VOICE OF OUR NATION'S
LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS®

SEPTEMBER 2026

WWW.FOP.NET

25th

YEARS LATER

We Will Never Forget

HONORING 9/11 FIRST RESPONDERS

ALSO INSIDE

CONTRACT VS. MOU:
ARE THEY THE SAME?

LEADING THROUGH
UNCERTAINTY



We customize.
You could **save over \$950.**¹



Fraternal Order of Police has partnered with Liberty Mutual to bring you customized insurance so you only pay for what you need. You'll enjoy valuable savings on auto and home insurance along with many other great benefits.



Exceptional service

95% of customers are satisfied with Liberty Mutual.² Whether you're in an accident or just need some advice, know we'll always be on call for you.



Benefits you'll love

Enjoy a number of superior benefits, such as 24-Hour Claims Assistance, Accident Forgiveness³, 24-Hour Roadside Assistance⁴, and Better Car Replacement^{TM5}.



For your free quote, call (844) 589-6686
or visit www.libertymutual.com/fopm

Client #137623

Visit us online



¹Average savings based on a countrywide survey of new customers who reported savings when they switched to Liberty Mutual between 05/2023 and 04/2024. Savings will vary. Comparison does not apply in MA. Comparison does not apply in MA. ²Based on a 2020 study conducted by Liberty Mutual Insurance. ³Discounts and savings are available where state laws and regulations allow, and may vary by state. Certain discounts apply to specific coverages only. To the extent permitted by law, applicants are individually underwritten; not all applicants may qualify. ⁴Subject to eligibility requirements. Benefits and eligibility requirements may vary by state. Coverage provided and underwritten by Liberty Mutual Insurance and its affiliates, 175 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116 USA. Equal Housing Insurer. ©2025 Liberty Mutual Insurance
This organization receives financial support for offering this auto benefits program.

ANP686950-03 CW 2025/01

auto | home | renters | umbrella | motorcycle | condo | watercraft

FEATURE



20 // The Cop Who Never Asks for Help

The Officer Everyone Depends on May Be the One Hiding the Most

WINNER OF A SUMMIT
CREATIVE AWARD



EXECUTIVE BOARD

6 // President's Message

The Energy That Makes Us Strong

8 // Secretary's Message

We Will Never Forget

DEPARTMENTS

10 // Local Lodge News

Updates from New York, South Dakota, Florida and Virginia

24 // Wellness

CKM Health Part 2: Small Changes, Lasting Impact

28 // NFOPU Spotlight

Southern New Hampshire University

30 // Washington Report

Updates on Appropriations, Priority Bills, Drone Regulations and More

34 // Labor News

Contract Versus MOU: Are They the Same?

36 // Legal Counsel

Supremacy Clause Immunity: A Critical Shield for Federal Task Force Officers

40 // Education and Outreach

Leading Through Uncertainty

42 // Chaplain's Corner

So Help Us God



National Fraternal Order of Police

National Headquarters 701 Marriott Drive, Nashville, TN 37214

1-800-451-2711 | Phone (615) 399-0900 | Fax (615) 399-0400

Email: glfop@fop.net | www.fop.net

Executive Board

Patrick Yoes, President
Norco, LA | (504) 234-4300

Joe Gamaldi
Vice President
Houston, TX

Jimmy Holderfield
Secretary
Jacksonville, FL

James Smallwood
Treasurer
Nashville, TN

John Hoyt
Second VP
Philadelphia, PA

Steve James
Sergeant at Arms
Westminster, CA

Rob Pride
National Trustee
Chairman
Johnstown, CO

Past Presidents

Chuck Canterbury
Myrtle Beach, SC

John M. Dineen
Chicago, IL

Dewey R. Stokes
Columbus, OH

National Trustees

Colorado	Rob Pride, Chairman	Montana	Dan Ohl
Alabama	Jay King	Nebraska	James Maguire
Arizona	Paul Sheldon	Nevada	David Moody
Arkansas	Kevin "Bart" Simpson	New Jersey	Kevin Vernon
California	Matt Heady	New Mexico	Robert Radosevich
Connecticut	Daniel DePinto	New York	Joseph Battaglia
Delaware	Joseph Wyka	North Carolina	Dennis McCrary
District of Columbia	Marinos Marinos	North Dakota	Joe Johnson
Florida	Michael Kelley	Ohio	Greg Toyas
Georgia	Jamy Steinberg	Oklahoma	Phil Wise
Idaho	Gregory Austin	Oregon	Mathieu LaCrosse
Illinois	Robert "Rocky" Nowaczyk	Pennsylvania	Christopher Eiserman
Indiana	Joe Hamer	Rhode Island	Louis Gianfrancesco
Iowa	Oleta Davis	South Carolina	Terry Gainey
Kansas	Matthew Blassingame	South Dakota	Tony Harrison
Kentucky	Shawn Helbig	Tennessee	Harold Burke
Louisiana	Kelly Gibson	Texas	Kenneth Gardner
Maine	Mike Edes	Utah	Travis Brower
Maryland	Sherrice Carpenter	Vermont	Jimmy Baldea
Massachusetts	Rich Shailor	Virginia	John Ohrnberger
Michigan	Joe Adams	Washington	Jack Simington
Minnesota	Ruben Marichalar	West Virginia	Stephen Walker
Mississippi	Jake Driskell	Wisconsin	Jerry Johnson
Missouri	Kevin Ahlbrand	Wyoming	Ryan Cox

Editor-in-Chief Jimmy Holderfield

Editor Stephanie Simpson

911MEDIA Staff

Publisher Mark Deitch

Production Manager
Natasha Carleton

Managing Editor
Jenna Anderson

Editor
Anne Ericksen

Senior Graphic Designer
Adam Huntington

Advertising Sales Manager
Leslie Lueders

**Print and Digital Ad
Coordinator**
Sandra Diaz

Client Services Director
Kelly Ross

Senior Editor
Sophia Islas

Art Director
Chad Rooney

Graphic Designer
Richard Chu

Advertising Consultants
Adam James
Bruce Loria

911MEDIA
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

TNI

Published by 911MEDIA®

911MEDIA® is a division of Trade News International, Inc.
For advertising call 877-DIAL-911 (342-5911) | 911MEDIA.com

For editorial submissions, send inquiries to fopjournal@fop.net.

For product guide submissions, email your press release
and hi-res digital image to news@911media.com.



THE FOP JOURNAL is published monthly by the National Fraternal Order of Police, 701 Marriott Drive, Nashville, TN 37214 – 1-800-451-2711. Presort Non-Profit Standard, U.S. Postage Paid in Bolingbrook, IL, Permit No 1309. FOP membership includes a subscription to THE FOP JOURNAL. Subscriptions accepted from recognized law enforcement agencies, government officials and libraries. Non-member subscriptions \$32 a year; single copies \$8.

Media information available upon request by writing or calling National Headquarters. No part of THE FOP JOURNAL may be reprinted without written permission. Publication of any product does not endorse product or service by the National FOP.

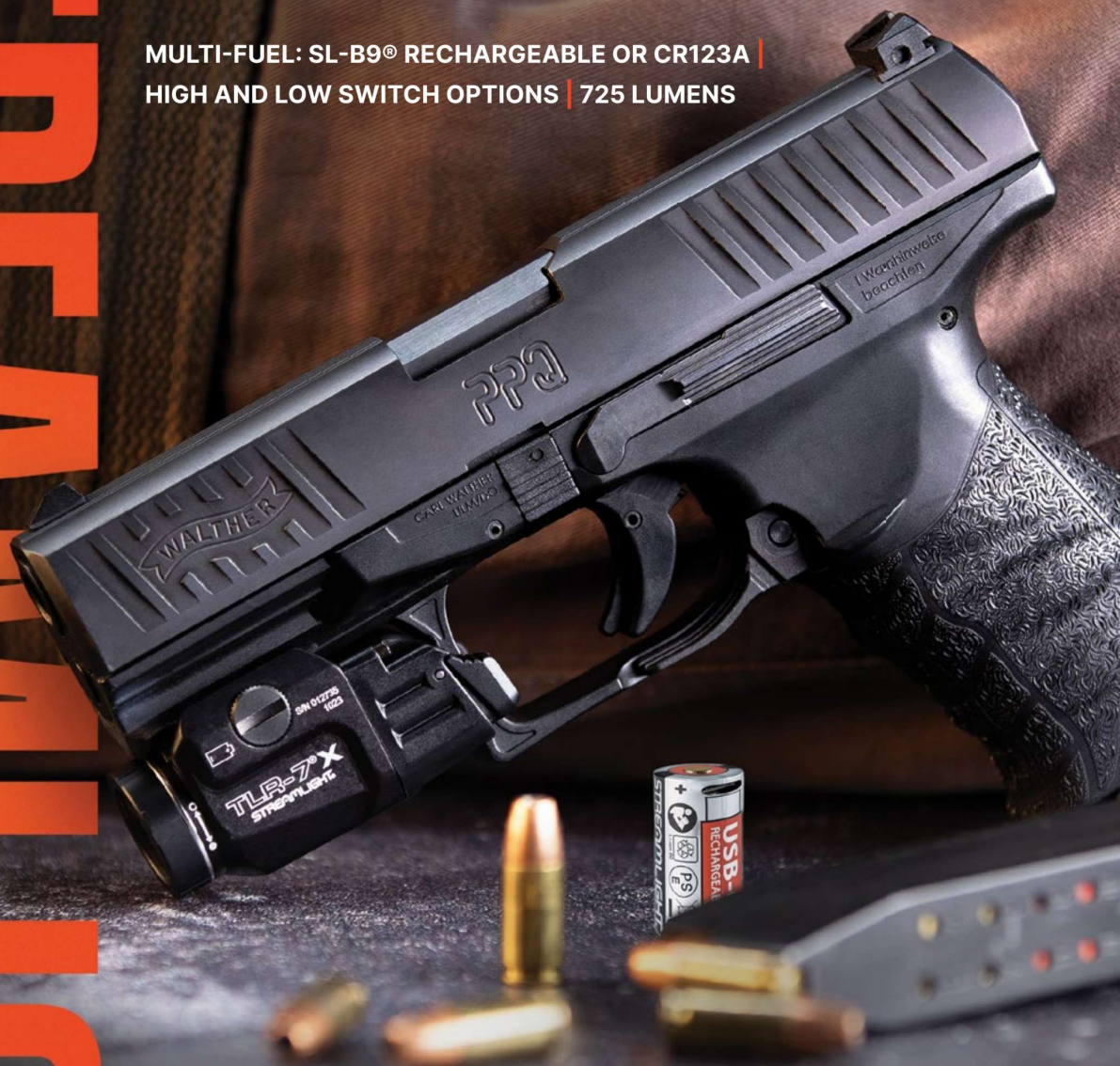
The National Fraternal Order of Police Board of Trustees has contracted with the following vendors to offer services to our members. From time to time, these vendors may market by mail and electronically with the membership to offer services: Armed Forces Eyewear, Avis, Calibre Press, Commerce Bank, Enterprise Holdings, Inc., GovX, HALO/Lee Wayne Merchandise, Hylant Group, Liberty Mutual, Nationwide Advantage Mortgage, Rockwell Watches, Your Travel Experts and 911MEDIA®.

STREAMLIGHT

STREAMLIGHT®

TLR-7® X

MULTI-FUEL: SL-B9® RECHARGEABLE OR CR123A |
HIGH AND LOW SWITCH OPTIONS | 725 LUMENS



[STREAMLIGHT.COM/TLR-7X](https://streamlight.com/TLR-7X)
©2026 STREAMLIGHT, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

STREAMLIGHT®



The Energy That Makes Us Strong

// **WRITE TO US!** If you have further questions, contact Patrick Yoes at (504) 234-4300, or pyoes@nationalfop.org.

One of the greatest privileges of serving as your National president is the opportunity to travel across this country and witness firsthand the strength of our Order. And that strength is not found in a building in Nashville or an office in Washington, D.C. It is found in our members.

Across America, more than 2,200 FOP lodges are led by men and women who give freely of their time, energy and talents. They attend meetings after long shifts. They answer calls from members at all hours. They negotiate contracts, organize events, advocate before legislatures, support injured officers and grieving families, recruit new members and handle the countless responsibilities necessary to keep a lodge moving forward.

Most do it without recognition or fanfare. They do it because they believe in the FOP and in each other.

I am continually in awe of the dedication and positive energy our members bring to their local and state lodges.

Over the past several months, members of our National Executive Board and I have maintained an extensive travel schedule, attending state lodge conferences throughout the country. These conferences provide us an opportunity to update our members on the work of the National FOP, from our legislative and advocacy efforts to officer wellness, legal defense, communications, training and the many other programs serving our membership.

But just as importantly, they give us an opportunity to listen.

Our membership is incredibly diverse. The challenges facing an officer in a major metropolitan department may be very different from those confronting an officer in a rural community.

Priorities differ from state to state and lodge to lodge. Yet everywhere we travel, we find a common bond: men and women committed to protecting the profession and improving the lives of those who wear the badge.

These conferences are also where leadership transitions occur, and I am always encouraged when members are willing to raise their hands and say, "I am willing to serve."

***I am continually
in awe of the
dedication and
positive energy
our members bring
to their local and
state lodges.***

Running for an FOP office requires courage. It means putting yourself and your ideas before your fellow members and asking for their confidence.

Elections, however, have winners and those who fall short. While some prevail, others do not, but falling short in an election does not mean falling short in heart, ability or passion.

In fact, one of the greatest tests of leadership may be what happens next.

Some people allow disappointment to push them away. But I have watched true leaders respond differently. They congratulate the person who prevailed,

roll up their sleeves and continue working for the members with the same enthusiasm they had before the first ballot was cast.

That is leadership.

A title does not create a leader. Character does. Service does. Commitment does. And leadership is demonstrated most clearly when there is nothing personally to be gained from it.

The FOP has endured challenges throughout our history, and there will undoubtedly be more ahead. We will disagree from time to time. We will experience victories and setbacks. But we cannot allow disappointment, personalities or differences of opinion to drain the positive energy that has carried this organization forward for more than a century.

Instead, we should channel that energy into service.

Every member who steps forward to help a fellow officer, every lodge leader who refuses to quit when the job becomes difficult and every member who continues contributing after an election does not go their way makes this organization stronger.

That passion is the heartbeat of the Fraternal Order of Police.

To everyone who gives their time and energy to our Order, thank you. Your commitment inspires me, and it reminds me every day why the FOP remains the largest and most respected voice of law enforcement officers in America.

One voice. One mission. Fighting for those brave enough to pin on a badge.

That is the passion that makes the FOP strong. **FOP**

A nighttime photograph of a city skyline. Two prominent blue light beams project upwards from the ground, creating a vertical path of light against the dark sky. The beams pass behind the main text. To the right, a tall skyscraper with many lit windows reaches towards the top of the frame. In the lower left and center, other buildings with glowing windows are visible.

WE REMEMBER THOSE WHO ANSWERED THE CALL

Their legacy is still felt today.



©2026 First Responders Network Authority. FirstNet and the FirstNet logo are registered trademarks and service marks of the First Responder Network Authority. All other marks are the property of their respective owners.



We Will Never Forget

// **WRITE TO US!** If you have further questions, contact Jimmy Holderfield at (904) 813-0067, or jholderfield@nationalfop.org.

Brothers and sisters, I hope this September edition of the *Journal* finds you and your family healthy and safe. Your National Executive Board has been extremely busy for the past four months attending the various state conferences. Most state lodges hold a biennial conference in the years between National Conferences. We try to attend every conference to share the happenings of the National Lodge with members, learn of the good work being performed by the state lodges and fellowship with our sisters and brothers. Unfortunately, many states have their conferences at the same time, and we can't make it to them all. If we missed you, know that we look forward to seeing you soon.

"We will never forget." September 11, 2026, marks the 25th memorial of the horrific attack on all of us and our great country. The cowardly attacks on that dreadful day resulted in 2,977 people dying, not including the 19 monster hijackers. At the World Trade Center, 2,753 died, including 23 New York City police officers, 37 Port Authority police officers, and 343 FDNY firefighters and paramedics. At the Pentagon, 184 died, including those in the building and on the plane. In Shanksville, Pennsylvania, 40 passengers and crew members died after forcing the plane down. The attacks were the result of the criminal mastermind Osama bin Laden, the leader of al-Qaeda.

Many of our members were too young to remember the attacks. Some were not even born yet. I remember the day well. I had just arrived at my lodge, Jacksonville #5-30, for our monthly board meeting. I was a little early that morning and, as I walked into our small meeting room, several other brothers were glued to the TV. To my shock, I saw the black smoke pouring from the North Tower, which had just been struck by American Airlines

Flight 11. We all thought that it was the result of a terrible accident — something that went wrong with the plane, or a navigational issue. But then the second plane, United Flight 175, crashed into the South Tower. We were horrified. People were leaping from the burning towers to their deaths. The news showed live images of the brave police officers and firefighters running into the buildings, disregarding their own safety, to save as many lives as they could. We shuddered as we watched the massive towers collapse.

During the next hour, reports came of a plane crashing into the Pentagon and another plane crash-landing in a field in southwestern Pennsylvania. America was under attack. The Federal Aviation Administration ordered all commercial



Administration (TSA) was created, which in turn implemented strict rules on passengers and baggage. Photo ID, X-ray scanners, ticketed-only passengers and strict limits on the amount of liquids carried on the plane were mandated. The Department of Homeland Security was created to merge domestic agencies and coordinate antiterrorism. The Patriot Act was passed to allow broader governmental surveillance, and stricter border control was enacted for greater national security, which led to the creation of Customs and Border Protection and ICE. Today, we live under strict security controls because of the evil of 25 years ago. We remember every day how our lives were changed, and I ask that on September 11, we say a prayer for those we lost, those still suffering and their families. "We will never forget."

I am pleased to report that we have completed our transformation of the membership database, Ortu3. All state lodges are on board and the Association Anywhere program is decoupled. We are now working on enhancements for future inclusion in the system. This will be a work in progress. We welcome any suggestions you have for enhancements,

**I ask that on
September 11, we
say a prayer for
those we lost, those
still suffering and
their families.**

and civilian airspace traffic to land at the nearest airport. This ground stop lasted for two full days. The attacks also changed the way we travel and created a centralized intelligence-gathering network. The Transportation Security

but we are using a methodical approach for building them. Most enhancements will take time, labor, skill and money to complete. Any suggested improvements will be analyzed by our membership and IT staff, and if we determine that the enhancement is something that most of our lodges/members will benefit from, we will do a cost analysis. We will determine the timeline to build and the timing in the year so that we don't disrupt other National Lodge functions. At that point, we will present our recommendations to the National Executive Board and/or the National Board of Trustees for approval. Currently we are maintaining a list of enhancements that we will review once we have determined everything in the core operating system of Ortu3 is performing as required. This is the perfect time, since our 2027 per capita cycle will begin at the end of the month. If something is going to go wrong, it's probably going to happen in per capita. Stay tuned.

In closing, it's a pleasure and honor to serve you as your National secretary. If my staff or I can help you in any way, please let us know. I look forward to seeing you at an upcoming meeting. Until then, be safe. **FOP**

Donate to the FOP Foundation

Your donation supports disaster relief, the National Peace Officers' Memorial Service, educational programs, critical incident programs, officer wellness, grants for lodges and members, and more.

For more information, including how to give by mail, visit **FOP.net/donate**.

To give online, go to **fopfoundation.firstresponderprocessing.com**.



Support the NFOP PAC!

We need your support of the National Fraternal Order of Police Political Action Committee (NFOP PAC), which, like our grassroots activism, is an essential part of our National Legislative Program. The NFOP PAC allows us to support candidates who support our members and our profession. As the oldest and largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States, it is crucial we keep our PAC strong, so we can help the candidates who not only support our members but the entire law enforcement community. It is up to us to ensure that they get elected!

We need to increase member participation in our payroll deduction and monthly recurring credit card programs. Please help us advocate on your behalf and do so with the resources needed to be effective. Help us grow our PAC and amplify our voice in the nation's capital.



**Scan to Sign Up
and Donate to
the FOP PAC Fund**

NEW YORK

Twenty-Five Years Later: We Will Never Forget

MIKE ESSIG /

NEW YORK STATE LODGE PRESIDENT

A Quarter-Century After 9/11, the NYS FOP Remembers the Fallen, Honors the Survivors and Carries the Promise Forward

Twenty-five years after the September 11, 2001, attacks, 100 million Americans are too young to remember the day that changed our city and our nation forever. It is our shared promise, made a quarter-century ago, to never forget — so that everyone born after 9/11 comes to understand its significance and its enduring legacy. As we mark this anniversary, a new generation will learn of the unimaginable loss we suffered, and of the bravery, compassion, unity and service that we witnessed that day and in the decades since.

From dusk on September 11 to dawn on September 12, twin beams of blue light rise into the night sky from lower Manhattan, standing in for the Twin Towers. Landmarks and buildings across the city and the nation join in that same tribute of light, a reminder visible for miles that we have not forgotten, and that we will not.

Ground Zero, and the Toll That Continues

A total of 2,977 people died on September 11, 2001. Some of us still remember the smell of that day. When we gather now, we too often hear of another brother or sister we knew who has suffered, or who has passed, from illness connected to the attacks. We have lost count of the funerals we have attended in the years since — and we are still attending them today, 25 years later.



NY FOP President Mike Essig

More than 8,000 people enrolled in federal health programs have died from 9/11-related illnesses — cancers, respiratory disease, digestive disorders — linked to toxic exposure at Ground Zero. That toll from long-term illness has now far surpassed the

2,977 people who died on September 11, 2001, itself. Our lives, and our world, have changed because of that day — especially in our profession. In law enforcement, the FOP will always stand strong and shoulder to shoulder with every brother and sister who was there, and with the first responders and the communities who continue to hold memorial dedications and ceremonies each year at this time.

A Wall That Stands, and a Standing Invitation

The New York State FOP has placed a memorial wall in front of the NYS FOP building, a permanent tribute to those we lost. If your travels ever bring you to New York, we ask that you make your way there and take a moment at the memorial. It is there for all of us — members, families and the public — to remember together.

We Will Never Forget

We will always remember all those, from every corner of the country and the world, who came to assist and support us in New York State during that time. Twenty-five years later, we say the words that have carried us through every anniversary since: We will never forget.

May God bless you all, and may God bless the United States of America. **FOP**

2,753
New York City

184
The Pentagon,
Washington, D.C., area

40
Shanksville, Pennsylvania
— Flight 93

Among those lost at the World Trade Center: 343 firefighters, 23 NYPD officers and 37 Port Authority police officers. In Shanksville, the passengers and crew of United Flight 93 fought back against their hijackers.



(888) 228-8648 | CALCOAST.EDU
ADMISSIONS@CALCOAST.EDU
925 N. SPURGEON ST.
SANTA ANA, CA 92701

Where Working Adults Earn Degrees.

Homeland Security Business
Psychology Criminal Justice
General Studies Education



Human Resource Management
Organizational Leadership
Health Care Administration

- ✓ 100% Online
- ✓ Self-Paced
- ✓ Affordable

10%
TUITION
DISCOUNT *

Law Enforcement Employees,
Government Employees,
Corporate Partners,
Firefighters,
Military.

Apply today! ➔

Accredited by:



*Tuition discount applies to law enforcement, firefighters, military, government employees, and corporate partners enrolling after Jan. 2026. Offer is not retroactive for students already enrolled. Discount is subject to change and/or cancellation at any time without notice. This offer cannot be combined with any other discount(s).

SOUTH DAKOTA A Hunt That Meant More

TRAVIS GUTZMER /
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE LODGE
PRESIDENT

Honoring Service and Sacrifice on a South Dakota Snow Goose Hunt, Courtesy of Hometown Hero Outdoors

When I arrived near Iroquois, South Dakota, for a two-day spring snow goose hunt last March, I quickly realized this wouldn't be just any hunt. It was a fully sponsored hunt through Hometown Hero Outdoors, hosted by Travis and Alex of their Team Minnesota chapter — a completely free opportunity for veterans and first responders to step away from the demands of everyday life and spend time together in the field.

There's something different about an event where nobody is there because they paid to be. **Everyone is there because someone else believes they deserve it.**

Under a South Dakota Sky

Guided by 605 Waterfowl Outfitters LLC, the hunt itself was everything you'd hope for in a spring snow goose migration. But what really stood out was the effort behind the scenes.

Owners Drew and Justin made sure every detail was handled. From scouting birds and setting massive decoy spreads to keeping everyone organized, comfortable and taken care of, it was clear they weren't just guiding a hunt but were invested in the experience. Nothing felt rushed. Nothing felt overlooked. Of course, Mother Nature had her own plans — at least at first.

A snowstorm had rolled through just ahead of the trip, leaving behind cold, wet and challenging conditions for day one. When we took the field that first morning, snow covered the ground, the air had a bite to it and every movement seemed just a little harder.



As the day went on, things got even more interesting. The temperatures began to rise just enough to start melting the snow, and before long, water was finding its way into the pit blind. What started as a cold hunt turned into a wet one, with steady drips turning into a slow, unavoidable "rain" from above. It wasn't exactly comfortable, but nobody was complaining. If anything, it became part of the experience.

Making the Most of It

Despite the conditions, the hunt didn't miss a beat. The decoy spreads were massive. The scouting was spot-on. And even with the weather working against us, birds still found their way into range. When flocks committed, it still delivered that same surge of adrenaline with wings locked, birds dropping, shotguns rising.

Cold, wet or not, it was everything a snow goose hunt should be. But as good as the hunting was, it wasn't what stood out most.

Around the Pit Blind

Some of the best moments came in between the action. In the pit blind, water and all, the guides kept hot meals coming, and those breaks quickly became the heart of the trip. There's something about standing shoulder to shoulder, warming up with good food, that brings people together in a way that's hard to replicate anywhere else.

The conditions may have been rough, but the atmosphere wasn't. Stories flowed — of deployments, tough calls, the weight of service and the quiet battles that continue long after the uniform comes off.

Continued on page 14 >

INFINITY[®]

MASSAGE CHAIRS



"On behalf of the Fargo Police Department, I want to extend our sincere appreciation for the massage chairs we purchased. Since implementation, our personnel have logged 367 uses over just 81 days, averaging more than 4.5 wellness sessions each day. These chairs have quickly become one of the most utilized wellness tools in our department. Officers frequently report reduced tension, improved morale, and the ability to reset both physically and mentally during demanding shifts. Comments submitted through our internal checkout system consistently reflect positive feedback, including appreciation for comfort, ease of use, and the overall benefit to workplace well-being. Your product has made a meaningful and measurable impact on our workforce, and we thank you for contributing to the health and resilience of our officers." — Sgt. Shawn Gamradt, Fargo ND

Massage Benefits That Support Officer Wellness:

- Stress Relief
- Pain Management
- Improved Circulation
- Faster Recovery from Physical Strain
- Enhanced Focus and Alertness
- Better Sleep Quality

*Special pricing available for police departments,
active duty and retired officers!*



Learn how to add a massage chair to your wellness program

Your Rep: Jason Drinkwater

603-910-5236 | jdrinkwater@infinitymassagechairs.com

SCAN TO
SCHEDULE A
MEETING

LOCAL LODGE NEWS

Continued from page 12 >

Laughter punctuated missed shots and celebrated perfect volleys, while the open prairie offered a rare chance to simply breathe.

Shared adversity has a way of speeding up connection, and that first day proved it.

A Change in the Weather — and the Mood

By the time the second day rolled around, everything had changed. What greeted us that morning was a completely different South Dakota. The sun came out. Temperatures climbed. The snow was nearly gone. What had been cold and wet turned into something comfortable.

It felt like a reward for pushing through the first day. And with the better weather came even better conditions in the field. Birds worked easier. Spirits were high. And the entire group seemed to settle into the

moment in a way that only comes when everything clicks.

Brotherhood Built in the Field

Over those two days, I watched a group of strangers turn into something closer to a team. That's the power of what Hometown Hero Outdoors creates. It's not just an event. It's an environment, one where veterans and first responders can reconnect — not just with the outdoors, but with each other.

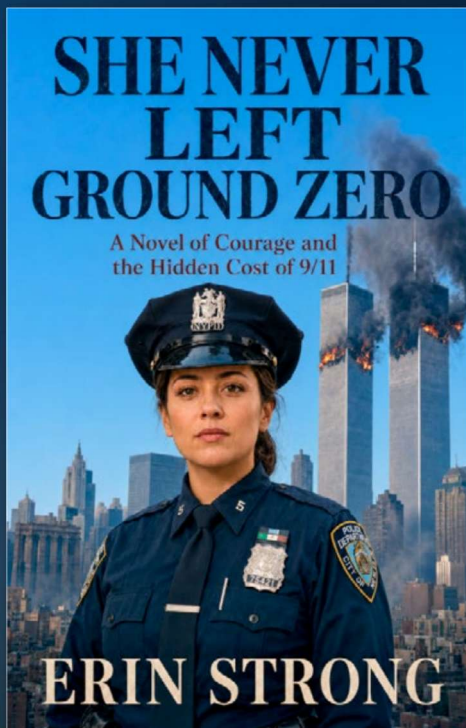
What Stays With You

The hunting was outstanding. There's no question about that. But if I'm being honest, the birds weren't the highlight. It was the people. It was the conversations in the blind. The laughter over a hot meal, even with water dripping from the ceiling. The feeling, by the end of the second day, that nobody was a stranger anymore.

Out there, under a South Dakota sky that went from snow and cold

to sun and warmth, I was reminded of something simple but important: Conditions change. People show up for each other. And sometimes, the best experiences come from a little adversity, a lot of laughter and a group of people willing to share both. Sometimes, the best therapy is a call to the blind and a sky full of geese.

If you're a veteran, active-duty servicemember or first responder interested in future opportunities, Hometown Hero Outdoors offers free membership and a growing calendar of peer-led hunts, fishing trips and outdoor adventures across the country. For more information, visit hometownherooutdoors.org. To book guided waterfowl hunts in South Dakota, check out 605waterfowloutfittersllc.com. **FOP**



FREE 9/11 NOVEL:

She Never Left Ground Zero

She Never Left Ground Zero: A Novel of Courage, Love, and the Hidden Cost of 9/11 was inspired by the true story of a female NYPD officer who served in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, later suffered from a long-term illness and died earlier this year. Author Erin Strong wrote the novel to preserve the human stories behind 9/11 and help readers understand the burdens that police service can place on officers and their loved ones.

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of September 11, the complete digital book is available at no charge through September 30, with no registration, email address, purchase or review required.

Visit sheneverleftgroundzero.com for more information and to download the free PDF.

HERO INDUSTRIES

When Quality Counts

CHALLENGE COINS

NO DIE FEES
AND GUARANTEED FOR LIFE

NO ART FEES
WITH UNLIMITED REVISIONS

NO SETUP FEES
UNLIMITED COLORS & 3D AT NO CHARGE



FALL SPECIAL!



10% OFF ANY CUSTOM + FREE SHIPPING

ON ALL CHALLENGE COIN ORDERS!

USE CODE: FOP26

OFFER EXPIRES OCTOBER 31ST



HERO-INDUSTRIES.COM

**LAPEL PINS
PATCHES
BADGES
BOTTLE OPENERS
AND MORE!**

714-879-3900

INFO@HERO-INDUSTRIES.COM

HERO_INDUSTRIES_INC

HEROINDUSTRIES

FLORIDA

Twenty-Five Years Later: We Remember — and We Give Back

LYNNE CATOGGIO /
ST. JOHNS COUNTY LODGE #113 VICE
PRESIDENT

A Special 9/11 Remembrance Fundraiser Benefiting the Hero Foundation

Twenty-five years after the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the memories remain vivid.

Nearly 3,000 lives were lost that day. Families were changed forever. First responders ran toward danger while others were desperately trying to escape it. Military members answered the call, and communities across America came together in ways that demonstrated the extraordinary courage and compassion of the American people.

On the 25th anniversary of September 11, St. Johns County FOP Lodge #113, in partnership with SK Guns, is turning remembrance into an opportunity to give back.

SK Guns has generously donated a stunning 1911 Commander 9mm, created as a special tribute commemorating 25 years of remembrance: September 11, 2001 – September 11, 2026.

This extraordinary piece is intended to serve as a lasting reminder of the courage, sacrifice and unity that emerged from one of the darkest days in our nation's history. Go to tinyurl.com/skjfop113

SK-Guns-25-years for more details about the gun.

But this fundraiser is about more than remembering the past. It's about supporting those who serve today.

Raffle tickets can be purchased by scanning the QR code on this page, visiting the St. Johns County Lodge #113 website at sjcfop113.org/announcements or going to tinyurl.com/st-johns-county-lodge-raffle.

Proceeds will benefit the Hero Foundation, which provides benevolent assistance and scholarship opportunities for our local law

enforcement officers and their families in St. Johns County, Florida.

Every contribution helps support the men and women who put themselves in harm's way to protect our communities while providing opportunities for the families who stand beside them.

St. Johns County Lodge #113 FOP is deeply grateful to SK Guns for its generosity and continued support of law enforcement. Their donation makes this special fundraiser possible and helps connect an important moment in American history with a

meaningful investment in those who serve our community today.

Twenty-five years later, we remember the victims.

We honor the heroes.

We remember the families who continue to carry the loss.

We recognize the first responders and servicemembers whose lives were forever changed.

And we reaffirm the values that carried our nation forward: courage, sacrifice, unity and hope.

September 11, 2001 – September 11, 2026. We will never forget. FOP

WE WILL NEVER FORGET

25TH

ANNIVERSARY

★ OF 9/11 ★

Honoring the Heroes. Remembering the Fallen.

United in Strength. Forever in Our Hearts.

STANDING STRONG WITH THOSE WHO SERVE



Grace Alley™



An American Tradition



AMERICAN FLAGS ~ AMERICAN MADE

Since 2014, Grace Alley
has been proudly
manufacturing
American flags in
the USA.

QUALITY CRAFTSMANSHIP.
UNWAVERING PRIDE.
BUILT TO LAST.

*Fly it with pride.
Honor what matters.
God Bless America.*



VETERAN OWNED – FAMILY RUN BUSINESS



PROUDLY SUPPORTING

FIRST RESPONDERS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

10% OFF FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT



USE CODE: **PD10** AT CHECKOUT



GRACEALLEY.COM



VIRGINIA

Lodge #13 Associate Member Karen Smith Honored With Prestigious Harry Twiford Award

GREG DEEDS /
VIRGINIA LODGE #13 SECRETARY

Virginia FOP Manuel W. Trenary Lodge #13 associate member Karen Smith was presented with the prestigious Harry Twiford Award by State President Ray Clemons at the 38th FOP of Virginia State Biennial Conference held in Glen Allen, Virginia, on August 12.

The Harry Twiford Award recognizes members of the Virginia FOP who have demonstrated exemplary support, dedication and an unwavering commitment to the organization. Sister Smith was selected from all VA FOP members from the parent, auxiliary and associate lodges around the state.

Sister Smith currently serves in leadership roles at both the

local and state levels. Lodge #13 congratulates Sister Smith on this well-deserved honor and thanks her for her continued dedicated service and contributions to the Fraternal Order of Police.

This award is presented in honor of Brother Harry Twiford, a 43-year veteran of the Norfolk, Virginia, Police Department who was a long-serving and dedicated FOP member from Norfolk Lodge #3 and held several positions on the



Virginia FOP State Executive Board member Ray Clemons presents the Harry Twiford Award to Sister Karen Smith on March 13, 2022. **FOP**

WELLNESS PROVIDERS

Chateau Recovery Midway, UT

chateaufrecovery.com/first-responders

FHE Health:

Shatterproof Program Deerfield Beach, FL

therehab.com/services/first-responders

First Responder Wellness by Simple Recovery Costa Mesa, CA

firstresponder-wellness.com

Harbor of Grace First Responder Program Havre de Grace, MD

harborofgracerecovery.com/first-responders

Throttle and Thrive Palos Verdes Estates, CA

throttleandthrive.com

Warrior's Heart Bandera, TX

warriorshheart.com

Find more vetted and approved wellness providers
and programs at fop.net/officer-wellness/providers.



ENHANCED PATROL RIFLE II

EPR II PRO

THE NEXT EVOLUTION OF COLT'S ESTABLISHED CARBINE PLATFORM

COLT.COM/MLE

THE COP WHO NEVER ASKS FOR HELP

The Officer Everyone Depends on May Be the One Hiding the Most

JAMES MITCHELL

The cop who never asks for help is rarely the officer everyone is worried about.

They're usually the one everyone calls. They take the ugly report without complaining. They stay late. They carry the extra weight. They are steady at the shooting, calm in the fight and useful when everyone else is overwhelmed. When somebody asks if they're good, they say, "I'm fine" and get back to work.

Every squad has one. That officer can remain hidden in plain sight.

Competence Can Become Camouflage

An officer can stay useful long after they stop being well. They can show up, solve problems and carry responsibility while parts of their life

outside the job grow smaller and harder to manage.

Performance can become evidence. If they can still handle a bad call, teach, make decisions and be the person others rely on, they may tell themselves they must be fine.

Competence becomes camouflage. It can hide the damage from other people. More importantly, it can hide the damage from the officer themselves. The job may be the last place the truth appears because it is where they still feel capable, respected and in control.

That is why job performance is a poor wellness screen. An officer can pass inspection while their sleep is broken, their temper is shorter, their marriage is absorbing the impact and every day off is spent recovering enough to do it again. They may not look like they are falling apart. They may look committed.

This is larger than one officer's story. The National FOP's 2023 Critical Issues in Policing Survey found that 50.3% of active officers reported high burnout, 40.2% reported some level of psychological distress and around one-third said the job had a high or very high negative impact on their relationships. Officers rated peer support among the most effective agency wellness services, yet it was not among the most frequently accessed.¹

Those findings point to more than a resource problem. They point to a bridge problem. Help may exist, but too many officers do not trust the path leading to it.

Why Silence Feels Safer

To someone outside law enforcement, the answer can sound simple: If you are struggling, talk to someone. Get help.

Help may exist, but too many officers do not trust the path leading to it.

Inside the profession, it rarely feels that simple.

Cops understand that words can have consequences. We have watched private information travel through a department faster than it should. We know that a rumor can become a supervisory concern, and a concern can affect an assignment, a promotion, a firearm or a career.

The FOP survey identified the same persistent barriers: a culture of sucking it up, concern about promotions, fear of firearm removal and doubts about confidentiality. That hesitation is not always ignorance or weakness. Often, it is an officer trying to protect everything they have spent years building.

For the officer whose identity is built around being dependable, disclosure carries another fear. They do not only worry about what the department will do. They worry that the people beside them will stop trusting them when the call goes bad.

Those concerns deserve honest answers. They do not deserve unlimited control. A reasonable concern can become a dangerous excuse, and silence eventually begins making decisions for you.

The goal is not blind disclosure. It is informed disclosure to the right person.

The Cost Often Shows Up Somewhere Else First

The reliable officer may still look sharp at work because work gives them structure. The radio tells them what matters. Policy gives them a lane. A crisis gives them something concrete to solve.

Home is less orderly. There is no call to clear. No report that tells you the incident is over. That is often where the cost appears first.

They volunteer for more work because stillness feels worse. They sleep in short stretches. Small problems feel like disrespect. They are present with their family but never fully there. They need alcohol, adrenaline, sex, food, gambling or a screen to change how they feel. The people closest to them learn that bringing up the problem only starts a fight.

At work, they are still the dependable one.

Do not ask only whether an officer can still do the job. Ask what it is costing them to keep doing it.

If This Is You, Start Smaller Than a Confession

You do not need to walk into roll call and announce your worst day. You do not need perfect language. You do not need to tell everyone everything. You need to stop carrying everything alone.

Choose reputation, not title. Find one person who has shown that they can protect private information, listen without turning the conversation into their own story and follow through after the first talk.

Know the boundaries. Before talking with a peer supporter, chaplain, employee assistance provider or counselor, ask what stays private, what gets recorded and what circumstances require action. Get plain answers before giving personal details.

Tell one true sentence. Say, “I am not sleeping.” Say, “I am drinking more than I should.” Say, “Things at home are getting bad.” Say, “I am still functioning, but I am not OK.” The first goal is not total disclosure. It is ending total isolation.

Take one concrete step. Make the call. Schedule the appointment. Ask a peer to sit beside you while you do it. Do one thing that makes tomorrow different from today.

Let somebody know the whole direction of travel. You may not be ready to give every detail, but at least one trustworthy person should know where this is going if nothing changes.

Do not wait for rock bottom. Rock bottom is not a treatment requirement. It is damage.

If You Are Worried About Another Officer, Stop Asking Lazy Questions

“You good?” is not a wellness check. It is a greeting, and every cop knows the approved answer: Good. Fine. Tired. Busy.

Ask something harder to dismiss.

Try this: “You are still doing the job, and I am not questioning that. But you do not seem like yourself. You are angrier. You are not sleeping. You are pulling away. I am worried about you.”

Ask, “What is this costing you at home?”

Continued on page 22 >

REFERENCE

¹ Martin, Sherri, and Jacqueline M. Drew. Critical Issues in Policing Survey: Comprehensive Report of 2023 Survey Findings. National Fraternal Order of Police and Griffith Criminology Institute, 2025. fop.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2023-Survey-report-FINAL.pdf.

THE COP WHO NEVER ASKS FOR HELP

Continued from page 21 >

Ask, “Who knows the whole story?”

Ask, “If nothing changes for the next six months, where does this go?”

Those are not diagnoses. They are observations and honest questions. They allow an officer to keep their dignity while making it harder for them to hide behind performance.

A first denial does not mean the conversation failed. The first conversation may only show the person that a door exists. Going back tells them whether you meant it. National peer support guidance consistently emphasizes trust, clear limits of confidentiality, connection to appropriate resources and continuing support.²

Do not gossip. Do not interrogate. Do not diagnose. Do not promise absolute secrecy if policy, law or an immediate safety concern creates a limit. Explain the limit. Stay human. Do not disappear after handing someone a phone number. A referral is not the end of peer support.

Your job is not to save everybody. Your job is to become a trustworthy bridge.

Reputation Is the Program

Departments can buy an app, print wallet cards, train a peer team and contract with an employee assistance program. None of it matters if officers believe asking for help will become squad gossip.

Officers watch what happens to the first person who speaks. That outcome becomes policy in their minds.

A peer supporter earns trust by protecting information, explaining limits before the conversation gets personal and following through without becoming intrusive. A supervisor protects trust by not fishing for details that are not needed. A squad protects trust by refusing to turn another officer’s worst season into entertainment.

The most polished wellness program cannot outrun a broken reputation. Trust is built one

conversation at a time, and it can be destroyed the same way.

Help Does Not Erase Accountability

Wellness conversations lose credibility with cops when they sound like pain excuses conduct. It does not.

Pain can explain harmful choices without excusing them. Trauma can give those choices context without making them acceptable. Recovery requires an officer to stop using pain as either a secret or an excuse.

An officer can be wounded. An officer can be responsible. An officer can need help. All three statements can be true.

Seeking help before a crisis is not avoiding responsibility. It is taking responsibility while there are still more choices available, before a spouse, a supervisor, an internal investigation, a doctor or a courtroom has to make them for you.

Call for Backup

Police work teaches us to call for backup before entering a dangerous situation alone. Calling does not mean we are incapable. It means we understand risk, resources and the limits of one person.

You have spent your career answering other people’s calls. Let someone answer yours.

Somewhere along the way, many of us decided that logic applies everywhere except our own lives.

Asking for help does not erase what you were capable of. Treatment does not cancel courage. Accountability does not mean you are beyond repair. You do not have to lose everything before your pain becomes legitimate.

If you are the cop who never asks for help, you do not owe anyone a public confession. Give one trustworthy person one honest sentence today.

“I am still doing the job, but I am not OK.”

That sentence is not surrender. It is a call for backup.

You have spent your career answering other people’s calls. Let someone answer yours.

James Mitchell spent nearly two decades in law enforcement in patrol, tactical, investigative, field training and instructional assignments. He is an Army veteran. He now works in mental health and is completing graduate training in clinical mental health counseling. His writing focuses on first responder identity, trauma, recovery, peer support and purpose after service. FOP

REFERENCE

² U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, “Peer Support for Officer Wellness,” February 2023; and International Association of Chiefs of Police, “Peer Support Guidelines.” cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/02-2023/OSW_peer_support.html and theiacp.org/resources/peer-support-guidelines.

TruLookup™



Discover the Benefits of TLOxp

Build stronger cases that close more quickly

Uncover deep insights and hidden relationships manual searches often miss. TLOxp® enables you to connect the dots to people, assets and organizations faster and with greater detail, ensuring your due diligence delivers the goods.



See how you can streamline investigations with a free trial of TLOxp.

© 2026 TRANSUNION LLC ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

TransUnion®

CKM HEALTH PART 2: SMALL CHANGES, LASTING IMPACT

Building Health Through Life's Essential 8

In Part 1 of this series, we introduced CKM health (tinyurl.com/aha-fop-ckm) and the importance of addressing heart, kidney and metabolic health together. The encouraging news is that improving health does not require dramatic changes overnight.

Through their ongoing collaboration to advance officer wellness, the National Fraternal Order of Police and the American Heart Association encourage officers to focus on small, sustainable actions that support lifelong health, resilience and performance.

Start With Your Numbers

Officers monitor critical information every day. Your health deserves the same attention.

Knowing key health measures can help identify risks early:

- Blood pressure
- Cholesterol
- Blood sugar
- Kidney function
- Weight and waist circumference

Regular wellness screenings are an important part of maintaining readiness and preventing long-term health issues.

Focus on the Essentials

The American Heart Association's Life's Essential 8™ (tinyurl.com/AHALifesEssential8) provides a practical roadmap for improving CKM health.

Get Healthy Sleep

Sleep is one of the most powerful recovery tools available. Better sleep supports healthy blood pressure, blood sugar regulation, weight management and mental performance. For officers working shifts, consistent sleep routines and recovery strategies can make a significant difference.

Eat Better

Perfect nutrition isn't realistic for every shift, but progress matters. Packing meals, choosing more fruits and vegetables, staying hydrated and limiting highly processed foods can improve energy and metabolic health.

Be More Active

Every movement counts. Walking during breaks, stretching between calls, using the stairs or participating in department fitness programs can support heart health, blood pressure control and weight management.



Manage Health Factors

Monitoring blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar and weight can help officers stay ahead of emerging health concerns and reduce future CKM risk.

Avoid Tobacco Use

Eliminating tobacco remains one of the most effective actions for protecting cardiovascular health and improving overall wellness.

Continued on page 26 >

Check out the American Heart Association's Life's Essential 8™ (tinyurl.com/AHALifesEssential8) resources or scan the QR code to explore more tools that can help you track your health, set goals and stay strong — for the job and beyond.

The American Heart Association and the National Fraternal Order of Police are proud to collaborate to improve the cardiovascular health and overall well-being of law enforcement officers.



(800) AHA-USA-1 | heart.org



The Duty Pistol Professionals Trust.



GLOCK® 45 Gen6 9mm
Blue Label | AmeriGlo® Bold Sights

Honor. Service. Glock Blue Label at OfficerStore.



Scan to Shop



Visit OfficerStore.com

Follow @officerstore:    

BLUE VIEW

TUNE IN TO THE FOP PODCAST

Listen in every week to hear from law enforcement experts, elected officials and other notable leaders to gain insight



into the issues and current events surrounding the law enforcement community.

Available now on FOP.net, FOP's YouTube channel, Apple, Google, Spotify and Amazon Music.

CKM HEALTH PART 2

Continued from page 24 >

Wellness Is a Team Effort

Officer wellness is strongest when it is supported by peers, leaders and organizations. Peer support programs, fitness initiatives, behavioral health resources and wellness education all contribute to a culture where officers can thrive both personally and professionally.

Seeking support is not a sign of weakness. It is a proactive investment in resilience, readiness and career longevity.

Moving Forward Together

The National Fraternal Order of Police and the American Heart Association believe that protecting officer health is essential to protecting officer safety. By understanding CKM health (tinyurl.com/aha-fop-ckm) and embracing Life's Essential 8™ (tinyurl.com/AHALifesEssential8), officers can take practical steps toward a healthier future.

Every healthy choice — whether it's improving sleep, scheduling a wellness screening, taking a walk, managing stress or knowing your numbers — is an investment in your ability to serve, lead and enjoy a long, healthy life.

Because protecting the public starts with protecting those who wear the badge. **FOP**

SAFEGUARDING FREEDOM

The Story of the
FRATERNAL ORDER of POLICE



SAFEGUARDING FREEDOM: *The Story of the Fraternal Order of Police*

The National Fraternal Order of Police History Committee and the National Board of Trustees are excited to present you with a new book, *Safeguarding Freedom: The Story of the Fraternal Order of Police*. This literary work is the result of reviewing historical documents, combing through thousands of photographs and conducting interviews to give the reader a comprehensive history of how the Fraternal Order of Police has impacted policing in America. Author Max DiLallo, co-author with James Patterson on numerous books, along with the direction of National History Committee Chair David Stevens, has worked tirelessly over the past year to reveal the journey of the FOP.

This fantastic book is available from the National Office for \$25 plus shipping, and the proceeds benefit our National FOP Foundation. Donations of \$30 or more to the Foundation will receive a free book.

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE DESERVES EXCEPTIONAL RECOGNITION



PROUDLY MADE IN THE USA



100% USA LABOR
100% USA MATERIALS



888.411.7744
LIBERTYARTWORKS.COM



Southern New Hampshire University



A Benefit Built for Those Who Serve: Save 15% on Your Education Through SNHU's State Strategy

Long shifts. Unpredictable schedules. Demanding responsibilities. Law enforcement professionals dedicate their careers to serving others. Through Southern New Hampshire University's State Strategy initiative, public-sector employees may receive a **15% tuition discount** on SNHU's online degree and certificate programs, as well as Professional Skills courses. For members of the National Fraternal Order of Police, this benefit creates another way to make education more affordable for your personnel.

The State Strategy benefit is simple: eligible employees of a state, municipality, township, village, borough, city, district, town or other qualifying public entity may receive a **15% tuition discount**. A separate partnership is not required for eligible public employees to access the State Strategy discount.

Why Officers Choose SNHU

- 15% tuition discount for eligible public employees and NFOP members
- 100% online programs with no set class times
- Transfer up to 90 credits from eligible prior college coursework, academy training, military experience and more
- 200+ degree programs including criminal justice, psychology, business, leadership and more
- Professional Skills courses that can be completed in as little as six weeks

Education can support professional goals, leadership development, specialized career paths or preparation for a second career after public service. Whether someone wants to finish a degree started years ago, earn a new credential or build skills for the next step, SNHU offers online options designed for working adults.

SNHU's online programs are built around flexibility. There are no set class

times — just weekly deadlines and 24/7 access to coursework, which can make it easier for learners to manage school alongside rotating shifts, overtime, family responsibilities and the demands of public safety work.

Students can choose from more than 200 career-focused associate, bachelor's and master's degree programs in areas such as criminal justice, psychology, business, leadership and more.

SNHU is also transfer-friendly. Online students may be able to transfer up to 90 credits from eligible prior college coursework, academy training, on-the-job learning, professional military experience and more. For many law enforcement professionals, this can help shorten the path to a degree by recognizing experience they have already earned.

In addition to degree programs, SNHU offers Professional Skills microcredentials for learners who want a shorter, targeted option. These six-week courses are designed to help build job-relevant skills and can lead to a

digital badge that may be added to a resume. For public safety professionals, microcredentials can be a practical way to strengthen skills in areas such as leadership, communication, decision-making and workplace readiness without immediately committing to a full degree program.

Eligible public-sector employees may receive a 15% tuition discount on SNHU's online degree and certificate programs, as well as Professional Skills courses.

Your service matters. Every day, law enforcement and public safety professionals invest in their communities. SNHU's State Strategy initiative is one way to help eligible public employees invest in themselves. Whether the goal is professional growth, personal achievement, a career change or completing a longstanding educational goal, SNHU is ready to help make the next step possible.

Learn More

NFOP member benefit: snhu.edu/nfop
State Strategy eligibility: snhu.edu/unitedstates

Professional Skills member benefit: skills.snhu.edu (promo code: NFOP15). **FOP**

Discount note: The 15% tuition discount for state employees is valid for SNHU online course-based programs only and cannot be combined with any other university discount offering or promotion. If a student is eligible for multiple tuition discount offerings or promotions, SNHU will apply only the single highest-value tuition discount.

The National Fraternal Order of Police University

The National Fraternal Order of Police University (NFOPU) has successfully paved the way for hundreds of FOP members to pursue higher or continued education. For more information on the NFOPU Consortium, go to **FOP.net/fop-university**.



Charles Town, WV



Ashland, OH



Orange Beach, AL



Romeoville, IL



San Diego, CA



Cape Girardeau, MO



Manchester, NH



Tiffin, OH



Cincinnati, OH



Arlington, VA



Adelphi, MD



San Diego, CA



Williamsburg, KY



Fayette, IA



Minneapolis, MN



Wichita, KS

FOP.net/fop-university

Updates on Appropriations, Priority Bills, Drone Regulations and More



The 119th Congress is coming rapidly to a close, with both chambers in recess for the month of August. The House returns on August 31, and the Senate reconvenes after Labor Day to begin what looks to be a very busy September before once again recessing ahead of the midterm elections.

Appropriations, Continuing Resolutions and Reconciliation, Part 3

While debate on the appropriations measures is ongoing in both chambers, the House passed H.R. 9770, the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2027, by a vote of 220–205. Similarly, the Senate passed its “clean” continuing resolution (CR), H.R. 6500, on a 90–6 vote. Both bills extend government funding until December 4. The House is expected to consider the Senate-passed CR when it returns from recess.

The House also considered and passed H. Con. Res. 113, which starts the process for another budget reconciliation, by a vote of 216–214. The bill, which includes \$73 billion in funding for the Iran war, \$12 billion in farm aid and a \$10 billion fund aimed at incentivizing states to adopt elements of the SAVE America Act, now moves to the Senate for further consideration.

New Protect and Serve Act Introduced in the Senate

The National FOP is proud to announce that Senators Thomas R. Tillis (R-N.C.) and Christopher A. Coons (D-Del.) have introduced S. 5214, the Protect and Serve Act, an updated version

Just the Facts:

» The Protect and Serve Act has been reintroduced in the Senate with clarified language, and the Senate has passed a bill that would make needed reforms to the PSOB Program. The FOP is also pushing Senate leaders to ensure public safety measures are included in the final version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2027. Meanwhile, the FCC issued a notice requesting public comment on proposed rules prohibiting the importation and marketing of previously authorized foreign manufactured drones and components that meet a “military-grade” definition.

of the original bill that was introduced early in the Congress. The FOP spent months working with staff in these offices to help refine and clarify the language in the new bill.

The legislation would create a new offense under federal law for any person who kills a law enforcement officer “willfully and with the intent to kill ... solely because of the officer’s status as a law enforcement officer.” The new bill is also bipartisan and is cosponsored by Senators Michael D. Crapo (R-Idaho) and Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.). We are currently focused on growing the number of co-sponsors and getting a markup before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

The House bill has 117 co-sponsors but has not advanced in that chamber’s Judiciary Committee because of opposition from members of the majority.

Legislative Update: Senate Passes PSOB Reform Bill

The Senate considered and passed S. 3897, the Officer John Barnes and Chief Michael Ansbro Public Safety Officers’ Benefits Program Expansion Act, by unanimous consent. The bill makes needed reforms to the Public Safety Officers’ Benefits (PSOB)

Program, to ensure that the men and women who serve our communities — and their families — receive timely and meaningful support when tragedy strikes. The bill would require the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to notify claimants promptly if information is missing and to issue benefit determinations within 270 days of receiving a complete claim. If that deadline is missed, interim benefits will be provided, offering critical financial stability to families during periods of uncertainty. The legislation would also mandate audits conducted by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) for claims pending more than one year, and subpoena authority for unresponsive agencies will help reduce unnecessary delays. It further streamlines death benefit approvals for 9/11 responders and survivors who have already received verified determinations from the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund or the World Trade Center Health Program, accelerating assistance to those who have already sacrificed so much.

The legislation now goes to the House for further consideration.

Continued on page 32 >

FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE



When It's **YOUR NAME** on the Line

In today's environment, one moment can turn into a career-defining event.

The FOP Legal Defense Plan ensures you're never facing it alone. With access to legal counsel, coverage for administrative, civil, and criminal matters, and the ability to choose your attorney, you stay protected when it matters most.

Stand protected. Enroll today at foplegal.com

800-341-6038 | foplegal.com



Top Priorities in Brief



H.R. 3226, the Law Enforcement Officers Equity Act

House: 73 co-sponsors (19 R, 54 D)

Senate: Not yet introduced

H.R. 1505/S. 636, the Public Safety Employer–Employee Cooperation Act

House: 65 co-sponsors (10 R, 55 D)

Senate: 2 co-sponsors (2 D)

H.R. 2243/S. 679, the LEOA Reform Act

House: Passed

Senate: 12 co-sponsors (12 R)

H.R. 1551/S. 5214, the Protect and Serve Act

House: 117 co-sponsors (94 R, 23 D)

Senate: 3 co-sponsors (1 R, 2 D)

H.R. 2094/S. 978, the Homes for Every Local Protector, Educator, and Responder (HELPER) Act

House: 149 co-sponsors (52 R, 97 D)

Senate: 27 co-sponsors (9 R, 18 D)

To see a full list of legislation supported by the FOP in the previous Congress, please visit tinyurl.com/ycy5k5rv.

Members should continue to monitor the FOP's social media platforms and our website for the latest legislative news.



WASHINGTON REPORT

Continued from page 30 >

FOP Pushes to Include Public Safety Measures in NDAA

The FOP has urged Senate leaders and the Committee on Armed Services to ensure that S. Amdt. 6468, which has been included in the manager's amendment to S. 4784, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2027, remains in the final bill. This bipartisan amendment was offered by Senator John Cornyn III (R-Texas) and includes 14 bills — all of which have passed the Senate in this Congress as standalone measures but have yet to be considered in the House. The FOP specifically supports the following provisions in that amendment:

- The Fighting Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Act, which would direct the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to develop treatment programs for law enforcement, fire, emergency medical and 9-1-1 personnel who suffer from PTSD or acute stress disorders
- The Strengthening Child Exploitation Enforcement Act, which closes loopholes in federal criminal law related to child abuse and exploitation
- The Carla Walker Act, which would establish a pilot program to make cutting-edge forensic genetic genealogy DNA analysis tools available to state and local investigative agencies

The House version of the bill, which does not contain these provisions, was passed last month on a 216–212 vote. The Senate will resume consideration of the bill following the August recess.

Regulatory Update: Proposed Rules Would Expand Drone Ban

On July 21, the FCC filed Public Notice DA 26-758 ([fcc.gov/document/fcc-proposes-prohibit-import-marketing-covered-equipment-0](https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-proposes-prohibit-import-marketing-covered-equipment-0)), asking for comment on prohibiting the importation and marketing of previously authorized foreign manufactured drones, or unmanned aerial systems (UAS), and components that meet a “military-grade” definition. This is an expansion of the December 22, 2025, rulemaking that

essentially banned the importation and purchase of new drones manufactured by Autel Robotics and Shenzhen Da-Jiang Innovations (DJI Technologies) Sciences and Technologies Company Limited.

The new proposed rulemaking applies only to foreign produced equipment that is on the Covered List, was previously authorized and has “military-grade” UAS/critical components. Under the proposed rule, “military-grade” means that the UAS has any of the following features:

- Weighs 55 pounds or more
- Is capable of dispensing agricultural spraying or aerosol systems
- Contains or integrates sensors capable of thermal imaging
- Contains or integrates sensors of light detection and ranging (LiDAR)
- Has certain docking stations that enable landing, takeoff, battery recharge/swap and data/payload transfer
- Is designed to incorporate a “defense article” on the U.S. Munitions List
- Possesses swarming technology

Foreign-made UAS with thermal imaging and LiDAR capabilities are explicitly included because of their dual-use potential for military/intelligence applications, even though they are widely used in civilian and public safety contexts.

The new, proposed ban would **not** apply to:

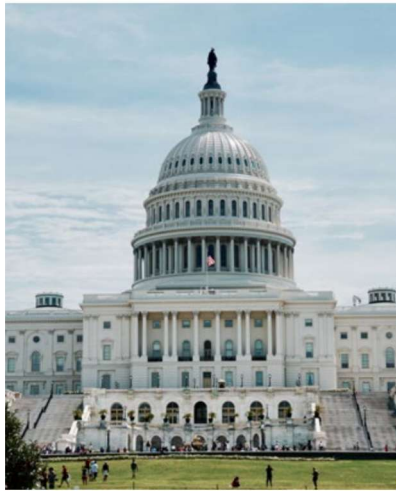
- Domestically produced equipment
- Imports/marketing solely for federal use or for commercial testing/product development
- Items already carved out of the Covered List (the Defense Contract Management Agency Blue UAS Cleared List), those meeting Buy American standards under certain conditions, Conditional Approvals by DoD/DHS and certain “toy drones”

If adopted, the prohibition would generally take effect 180 days after Federal Register publication of a final decision.

Other Legislative Activity

The FOP has supported the following legislation since the last issue of the *Journal*:

- **H.R. 3633**, the Digital Asset Market Clarity Act or CLARITY Act, which would establish a clear regulatory framework for digital assets and provide law enforcement with tools needed to investigate criminal conduct involving these assets
- **H.R. 8675**, the Training Rural Law Enforcement Officers Act, which would authorize the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to extend grants to certified and accredited law-enforcement-related nonprofit organizations in order to train agencies that have fewer than 50 sworn personnel at no cost to them individually nor as a department
- **H.R. 8776**, the Officer Wellness and Peer Support Act, which directs the U.S. attorney general to conduct a comprehensive study and produce a report identifying effective strategies and best practices to reduce stigma, expand access to confidential peer support programs and improve overall mental health resources for the men and women who protect our communities
- **H.R. 8818**, the End Fentanyl Trafficking With Local Task Forces Act, which would expand multiple anti-drug task forces to improve cooperation and collaboration between departments to combat the fentanyl epidemic
- **Passed House — H.R. 8874**, the Homeland Security Capabilities Preservation Reporting Act, which would require the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to report on critical homeland security capabilities developed through Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) funding, which is intended to enhance the security and resilience of high-risk urban areas
- **H.R. 9503/S. 477**, the No Leniency for Fentanyl Dealers Act, which would reduce the amount of fentanyl needed for a 10-year mandatory minimum sentence from 400 grams to 20 grams



Election 2026: Model Congressional Questionnaire on the FOP Website

The National FOP has made its 2026 Congressional Candidate Questionnaire available on the FOP website at tinyurl.com/fop2026candidatequestionnaire.

The model questionnaire was prepared by staff at the Steve Young Law Enforcement Legislative Advocacy Center in Washington, D.C., to aid state and local lodges in evaluating federal candidates for the U.S. Congress in the 2026 election cycle.

The questions are drawn from issues supported by the National FOP. It is particularly important for state and local lodges to endorse candidates who support our top-priority items and to publicly oppose those candidates who do not. The success of the National Legislative Program depends on having an active grassroots base and on electing lawmakers who support our pro-law-enforcement agenda. Lodges are encouraged to include appropriate local and state issues that are important to them and that will help our members determine which candidates support the FOP's agenda.

Sign Up for the FOP's Weekly Update

The FOP's *Weekly Update* from Capitol Hill is distributed every week, providing our members with the latest news from Washington, D.C. If you're not receiving it, go to tinyurl.com/FOP-weekly-update to sign up.

Please make sure you are a regular visitor to all our social media platforms,

as these frequent posts are the best way to keep up with the National FOP's daily activity. Follow the National FOP on:

- Facebook (@GLFOP)
- X (@GLFOP)
- Instagram (@FOPnational)
- Truth Social (@FOPNational)

Do your part! Please **share**, **comment** and **like** our content.

NFOP PAC Update

The NFOP PAC still needs your support!

We have to continue to grow and raise more funds for our PAC, as we still lag behind funds raised by other law enforcement and public safety groups. We need more of our members to contribute to ensure that our PAC has the resources to support candidates who will fight for our officers and the issues that are important to them.

From now until Election Day, we are asking all FOP members to find a way to contribute to the National FOP PAC. Our profession depends on having well-informed lawmakers who listen to and understand the challenges facing law enforcement today.

We are urging members (and lodges) to sign up for recurring, monthly contributions using their credit card. This is the most effective and reliable way to contribute and to strengthen our PAC.

These contributions need not be for large amounts (though these are also very much appreciated) — but every dollar helps! If every FOP member gave just \$1, we could raise \$382,000! If 10% of our members gave just \$5 this year, we would raise more than \$191,100.

To donate online, please go to nfop-pac.firstresponderprocessing.com. If you would like to donate via check, please make it out to the National Fraternal Order of Police Political Action Committee and mail it to 328 Massachusetts Ave. NE, Washington, D.C., 20002. For inquiries about our effortless payroll deduction program or to sign up for recurring monthly donations, please contact the Steve Young Law Enforcement Legislative Advocacy Center at (202) 547-8189 or David Taboh at dtaboh@fop.net.

Thank you to all of you who have supported and continue to support our PAC with regular contributions. **FOP**

Contract Versus MOU: Are They the Same?



We are sometimes asked about the differences between a contract and an MOU and whether these terms can be used interchangeably. The answer is that an MOU is usually an expression of intent, while a contract is a legally enforceable agreement. However, an MOU can become a contract if it contains all the elements of a binding agreement.

The bottom line is that an MOU equals understanding plus intent, while a contract equals enforceable obligations.

Title doesn't matter — content does. The title does not control the legal effect. If an MOU contains mandatory language ("shall," "will"), consideration, clear obligations and defined enforcement mechanisms, it can be treated as a contract, even if labeled "MOU."

The bottom line is that an MOU equals understanding plus intent, while a contract equals enforceable obligations.

An MOU is generally a policy-level understanding or agreement in principle, while a contract (CBA/MOU-Contract) is a fully enforceable labor agreement with mandatory terms, grievance pathways and binding obligations. In labor relations, the



distinction matters because MOUs can become binding contracts if drafted with mandatory language, which is why labor unions often require "agreement-grade" MOUs.

When to use a contract (CBA/MOU-Contract): When the topic affects wages, hours, working conditions, discipline or benefits; when enforceability is required (grievances, arbitration, past practice protection); when the agreement must survive leadership changes; and when

the union needs guaranteed rights and management needs predictable obligations.

When to use an MOU (Side Letter Agreement): To clarify a single issue (e.g., shift bid procedure, specialty pay interpretation), to pilot a new process without committing to long-term contractual obligations, to resolve disputes quickly without reopening the entire CBA or to document mutual understandings that support day-to-day operations. **FOP**



**Scan the QR code
for more information
about NFOP Labor
Services.**



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Institute of
Criminology

Lead the future of policing

MSt in Applied Criminology and Police Management



Evidence-
based policing



A global professional
network.



Real-world impact
and leadership skills.

“Transformative for both research and real-world policing”



Part-time for policing
professionals



Applications open
September 2026.



[crim.cam.ac.uk/
Courses](http://crim.cam.ac.uk/Courses)



Supremacy Clause Immunity: A Critical Shield for Federal Task Force Officers



A recent decision from the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia deserves the close attention of every officer who serves on a federal task force, and of the attorneys who advise them. In *State of Georgia v. Heinze and Hutchens*, Case No. 1:22-cr-00388, the court dismissed a state indictment, including two counts of felony murder, against two task force officers who used deadly force while executing federal arrest warrants. The decision is a significant reaffirmation of a doctrine that protects officers from state criminal prosecution when they carry out their federal duties, and it offers practical lessons at a moment when officers increasingly find themselves becoming defendants for actions taken in the line of duty.

Supremacy Clause immunity, rooted in a foundational 1890 Supreme Court decision (*In re Neagle*, 135 U.S. 1 [1890]), protects a federal officer from state prosecution when two conditions are met. First, the officer must make a threshold showing that they were performing an act authorized under federal law. Second, they must show that in performing that act, they did no more than what was necessary and proper — meaning they subjectively believed their action was justified and that belief was objectively reasonable.

The procedural posture matters enormously here. Once an officer makes their threshold showing, the burden shifts to the state. The state cannot defeat immunity “merely by way of allegations.” It must come forward with actual evidence sufficient to raise a genuine factual dispute over whether the officer was doing no more than necessary and proper. A motion to dismiss on immunity grounds is not a substitute for a jury trial, and the trial court’s job is not to

Just the Facts:

» The recent case of *State of Georgia v. Heinze and Hutchens* reaffirms Supremacy Clause immunity, which protects officers from state criminal prosecution when they carry out their federal duties. Officers must make a threshold showing that they were performing an act authorized under federal law and did no more than what was necessary and proper. Once they make that showing, the burden shifts to the state to produce evidence — a powerful protection. The case offers practical lessons, including that reasonable reliance on teammates’ investigative work is protected, and that a mistake in judgment, absent criminal intent, does not expose an officer to state prosecution.

weigh the truth of competing accounts. This framework recognizes a hard reality: officers should not have to endure the full weight of a criminal trial simply because a prosecutor has alleged wrongdoing.

The state cannot defeat immunity “merely by way of allegations.” It must come forward with actual evidence.

The court found the first prong easily satisfied, and its reasoning is instructive. The state argued that the officers exceeded their authority by entering the apartment without a search warrant and by firing numerous shots. The court rejected this framing. Those arguments, it held, go to the **reasonableness** of the officers’ actions — the second prong

— not to whether they were acting within the scope of their duties as federal officers tasked with arresting a fugitive. This distinction is one every task force officer should understand. Being wrong about a tactical or legal judgment does not, by itself, place an officer outside the scope of their federal authority.

The heart of the decision addressed whether the officers’ conduct was necessary and proper, examined through the lens of the underlying felonies — burglary and aggravated assault — that supported the murder counts. On the entry, the officers relied on a governing Supreme Court framework permitting entry into a residence to execute an arrest warrant when the officer reasonably believes the suspect resides there and is present inside. Officer Heinze testified that the lead investigator advised the team that the suspect had established residency at the apartment. The court held that officers need not have formal proof of residence; it was enough that the suspect occasionally stayed there and had been identified at the apartment that very day. Critically, the court emphasized that an officer’s reasonable reliance on a fellow

Continued on page 38 >

This Retired Cop Spent 28 Years Inside the Mortgage Industry. Then He Wrote the Guide That Shows Working Homeowners How to Safely Pay Off a 30-Year Mortgage in as Little as 7 Years.

On a \$300,000 mortgage at 6%, the bank's 30-year plan collects **\$347,514 in interest.** *(Locked in at 3%? The same loan still collects \$155,332.)*

A free 45-minute read for the law enforcement officers who refuse to retire still owing the bank.

If you're like most homeowners — and a lot of the people reading this wear a badge — you signed your mortgage years ago, and nobody has ever walked you through what that loan is actually built to cost you. Not the lender. Not the closing agent. Not the retirement statement that lands in your inbox every quarter.

That number has a name. The industry calls it your TIP — your Total Interest Percentage — and yours was tucked inside the two inches of paperwork you signed at the closing table. On the mortgage above, the TIP is 115.8%: for every dollar borrowed, the bank collects another \$1.16 in interest. Nobody in that chain earns a dollar when you pay off early — so nobody points it out. In 28 years inside the industry, I never saw it happen. Not once.

I wore a badge before I ever worked a loan file. Since then, I've taught hundreds of California homeowners — many of them first responders — to become mortgage- and debt-free years, often more than a decade, early. Now I'm bringing that teaching to the first responder community nationwide.

This guide shows you where your TIP is hiding on your own paperwork — and how a mortgage like yours can be gone in as little as 7 years instead of 30: no refinancing, not one dollar of new debt, and six figures in interest kept in your pocket instead of the bank's.

Free • A 45-minute read • No upsell • No refinancing • No HELOC • No new debt



Gregg Knight

Financial Educator & Mortgage Professional Since 1998

CLA™ — Certified Liability Advisor · 1 of 38 in the United States

Retired Law Enforcement Officer · Founding Member, National Institute of Financial Education

SCAN OR VISIT

NoMoreMortgage.com/fop



LEGAL COUNSEL

Continued from page 36 >

officer's investigative conclusions does not create a fact dispute absent some evidence putting them on notice to question those conclusions. This is an essential protection for team-based operations, where officers must trust the work of colleagues in fast-moving situations.

On the use of force, the evidence showed the suspect descended the stairs, pointed a firearm at the officers and did so repeatedly even after being ordered to drop the weapon. The court noted the well-established principle that deadly force is reasonable to counter an immediate threat of serious physical harm. The defense expert, along with an internal review board, confirmed the force tracked with training and policy.

The court's treatment of the state's rebuttal arguments is where officers and their counsel will find the most valuable guidance. The state argued that physical evidence suggested some shots were fired from a location inconsistent with the officers' accounts. The court held this did not raise a **material** dispute, because even if true, those shots would have been fired early in the encounter when

the suspect was still armed and a threat. The state also asserted that the officers fired too many shots, but the state's own expert agreed the suspect pointing a gun justified deadly force, making the raw number of shots fired immaterial.

As to shots allegedly fired after a flashbang was deployed, when the state claimed the suspect was no longer a threat, the court acknowledged a factual dispute existed but found the state's theory rested on stacking inference upon inference. There was no direct evidence tying either defendant to those shots, and no evidence that any such shots caused the death, given that the suspect had already been lawfully shot numerous times. The court also declined to let the state proceed on a party-to-a-crime theory, noting Georgia law requires proof of shared criminal intent, not mere presence.

Three points stand out. First, the shifting evidentiary burden is a powerful protection — officers who make a genuine threshold showing force the state to produce real evidence, not speculation. Second, reasonable reliance on teammates' investigative work is protected. Third, and most fundamentally, the decision reaffirms that a mistake in judgment or

a “botched operation,” absent criminal intent, does not expose an officer to state prosecution.

This decision does not grant officers immunity from accountability. It ensures that accountability is measured by the correct standard — one that recognizes the split-second, dangerous reality of executing warrants against armed fugitives. **FOP**

FOP GENERAL COUNSEL

500 South Front Street,
Suite 1200
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Phone: (614) 229-4567

Cell: (614) 581-1125

Email: ljames@amundsendavislaw.com

There Is ALWAYS Another Option

FOP Vetted and Approved Crisis Hotlines



FOP.net/officer-wellness/crisis-hotlines



Join law enforcement professionals from across the nation for a premier week of education, collaboration, and professional development designed to strengthen leadership, wellness, labor relations, legal knowledge, and chaplaincy.

Why Attend?

- **Choose the training that's right for you** with five specialized educational tracks.
- **Learn from nationally recognized experts** in wellness, leadership, labor, legal, and chaplaincy.
- **Expand your network** by connecting with peers facing similar challenges and opportunities.
- **Explore innovative solutions** at the vendor showcase supporting today's law enforcement professionals.

Customize Your Experience

Attend a single track or combine two tracks for a full week of learning and networking.

- **Wellness Professionals' Forum: \$200** | February 21
- **Labor/Legal Leadership Forum: \$600** | February 21–23
- **Wellness Summit: \$450** | February 22–23
- **Chaplaincy Leadership Summit: \$300** | February 23–24
- **Leadership Matters: \$600** | February 24–26

Registration Opens October 1, 2026

Mark your calendar and watch for additional details.

Questions? Contact: Stephanie Simpson at ssimpson@nationalfop.org

We look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas for Pathways to Excellence 2027!



Leading Through Uncertainty

Why Crisis Leadership Takes Center Stage at Pathways to Excellence

Every leader in law enforcement will, at some point, face the moment that defines them: the instant when the plan falls apart, the information is incomplete and a decision has to be made anyway. That is the reality our members live every shift, and it is exactly why our Education and Outreach team has built the 2027 Pathways to Excellence conference around a single, urgent theme: leading effectively when the stakes are highest and the path forward is anything but clear.

I am proud to announce that one of our premier speakers for Pathways this year will be Lieutenant Colonel Robert J. Darling, USMC (ret.),¹ a man who did not simply study crisis leadership

from a textbook but lived it from inside the room where it mattered most.

Lieutenant Colonel Darling retired from the U.S. Marine Corps in October 2007 after just over 20 years of active-duty service. He flew attack helicopters in Desert Shield and Desert Storm during the first Gulf War and in Somalia during Operation Restore Hope. In 1998 he was selected as a presidential helicopter pilot with Marine Helicopter Squadron One, and in October 2000 he was handpicked to serve in the White House Military Office's Airlift Operations Department.

It was in that role that Lieutenant Colonel Darling found himself, on the morning of September 11, 2001, standing shoulder to shoulder with the president, vice president and national security advisor inside the underground President's Emergency

Operations Center. He witnessed, firsthand, how leaders make decisions when there is no playbook, no certainty and no time to spare. He chronicles that day in his book, *24 Hours Inside the President's Bunker, 9/11/01: The White House*, and has since become an internationally recognized speaker on crisis leadership, having addressed audiences at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, the FBI National Academy, the CIA, the U.S. Marshals Service and numerous other government, military and civic organizations.

Our members are, by profession, first responders and crisis leaders. Every day, our brothers and sisters in blue are called upon to sense a rapidly changing situation, make a decision with incomplete information, communicate that decision under pressure, act on it and then learn from the outcome. Lieutenant Colonel Darling's session, "Leadership in Times of Uncertainty," builds directly on that reality. Using the Harvard University framework of Sense Making, Decision Making, Meaning Making, Terminating and Learning (SDMTL), and grounded in the OODA Loop that so many of our members already know from tactical training, this session will give attendees a practical, repeatable model for leading through any critical event — not just the historic ones, but the ones that unfold on a Tuesday night patrol shift or in the chaos of an unfolding department crisis.

Paired with his keynote retelling of 9/11 from inside the White House

SHARE YOUR STORY!

So many of us learn from the experiences of others, especially others with whom we share things in common. Do you have a story to tell of overcoming adversity in your own life? The National Officer Wellness Committee would like to hear it!

Whether you would just like to share your story privately with peers on the Committee or are willing to share with readers so that all can learn from it and celebrate with you, we want to hear from you! Contact us confidentially at officerwellness@fop.net.



¹ At Lieutenant Colonel Darling's request: for more information about his work and speaking engagements, visit robertjdarling.com or contact him directly by email at robertjdarling@gmail.com.

bunker, this is more than a history lesson. It is a call for every leader in our organization to recognize the importance of accountability, accessibility, authenticity and the courage to act, the same tenets our organization was founded to uphold.

Our Education and Outreach team has spent the past several months building a Pathways to Excellence conference that reflects the seriousness and urgency of this moment for our membership. Beyond Lieutenant Colonel Darling's keynote and leadership session, we are curating a full slate of workshops, panel discussions and peer-to-peer learning tracks designed for members and executive board members at every level of our organization, from lodge leadership to State and National officers. Our goal is simple: every attendee should leave Pathways with tools they can put to use immediately, whether they are managing a budget, leading a lodge through change or making the split-second calls our profession demands.

We are finalizing session details, speaker logistics and conference

materials now, and we could not be more excited about the caliber of leadership development we are bringing to our membership this year.

Registration for Pathways to Excellence opens October 1, 2026.

I encourage every member, executive board member and rising leader in



Don't forget about the Collaborative Reform Initiative – Technical Assistance Center (CRI-TAC) for no-cost training and consultation delivered by the field, for the field, from subject-matter experts from across the country. For more information, visit cops.usdoj.gov/cri-tac.

our organization to plan now to attend. This is a conference built for the moments that matter most, and Lieutenant Colonel Darling's session on crisis leadership is exactly the kind of preparation our members deserve.

We look forward to seeing you at Pathways. **FOP**



WANT A PRINTED COPY OF AN ARTICLE THAT APPEARED IN *FOP JOURNAL*?

**Perhaps you or your lodge
were featured in the magazine
and you'd like a keepsake
to share or display?**



**Contact 911MEDIA for more information on ordering
a reprint: production@911MEDIA.com.**



So Help Us God

Examining the Role of Chaplaincy in Law Enforcement Leadership and Development

How do we bring moral clarity to the labor, legal and legislative issues of our time in the policing profession?

Legitimate privacy concerns with personal information, license plate readers, counter-drone technologies, surveillance techniques, body-worn cameras, police reporting and public documentation raise many such questions.

Countless folks have opinions on all sides of these issues, but where can we find truth in the middle of it all?

As with all issues of life, finding answers raises a question: **According to who?**

Over the past several years, we have collectively asked this simple yet profound question.

As your National chaplain, I have been privileged to speak before thousands of our members in various forums, including

local, state and national conferences — breakout sessions at our Wellness Summit, Leadership Matters, Labor Council and Legal Seminars — as well as line-of-duty funerals, memorial services and scenes of tragedy and triumph.

As a local lodge president, I have raised these three simple words before city councils and state legislative committees, in the halls of Congress and within the walls of the White House.

And alongside our attorneys, we have posed the inquiry in administrative, civil and criminal proceedings and publicly in press conferences before, during and after such proceedings.

Taking the question on its surface, most focus on the What, Where, and When portions of the responses. However, the deeper meaning is revealed in the How, Why and Who of the outcomes.

Generationally, moral clarity gets further complicated by those who compromise the foundational principles of our society within which we must operate as those who are required to enforce the

very laws society has cultivated via our representative form of self-governance.

All too often, citizens of our constitutional republic — including ourselves — blur the lines of self-will and self-governance with the idea of self-truths ... as in the oft-touted phrase “Well, that’s my truth.”

But, as we know all too well, we are called upon to swear or affirm and only bear witness to the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth ... so help us God.

So, what is truth? That is the question asked by a man who would become the most famous judge, jury and executioner in all of history.

As your chaplain, I can tell you many of your fellow members of the FOP have been asking this very question. It is why this year we convened the first-ever FOP Chaplains Conference at the Pathways to Excellence Expo. We witnessed a powerful response to this forum, which produced a thought-provoking time of reflection, recharging and rededication to the path of Excellency in Chaplaincy.

We implore all local and state lodges to invest in your board chaplains and chaplains for pastoral care by sending them to next year’s Chaplaincy Leadership and Development Forum on February 23–24, 2027, in Las Vegas.

Some find the so-called Sin City an ironic place to convene a forum of chaplains, but we planted the flag of faith there last year and are taking back ground that the evil one has stolen.

Sin City ... according to who?

We hope to see you and your chaplains there ... so help us God.

As always: Keep looking up ... it’s where our help comes from!

*National FOP Chaplain Rick Snyder also serves as the president of the Indianapolis Fraternal Order of Police. **FOP***

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

The FOP constantly endeavors to hear about the experiences of our members, so that we can understand how best to serve you.

The FOP was selected to partner with the Department of Justice to build standardized training in law enforcement peer support. Share your thoughts with us on how this training can best help our profession at surveymonkey.com/r/PowerInPeers.



The FOP Store

United in FOP Gear



www.thefopstore.com

Remembering Their Courage Honoring Their Call.

September 11, 2001, remains forever etched in our nation's heart—a day of unimaginable loss and extraordinary courage.

The passage of time may soften the edges of memory, but it must never diminish our gratitude for those who answered fear with courage, chaos with duty, and unimaginable danger with service.



Justice Federal Credit Union is humbled to serve the justice, law enforcement, and public safety communities.



On this solemn anniversary, we stand with gratitude beside those who protect our families, our neighborhoods, and our nation.

We will never forget those who answered the call, the families that carry their legacy forward, and the responsibility we share to honor them through unity, resilience, and service.



Justice ★ Law Enforcement ★ Public Safety

Federally Insured by NCUA

