

# Bulletin

# 21-08

Date: August 5, 2021

**OFFICERS OF THE MONTH – JUNE 2021 – CAPTAIN JOHN HEALY, OFFICER KEMUEL GAMBIRAZIO, OFFICER ARIOL LAGE, OFFICER CRAIG LOVELLETTE AND OFFICER JOSEPH MATTHEWS**

On Thursday, June 24, 2021, Officers responded to 8777 Collins Avenue in reference to a general fire alarm at the Champlain Towers South condominium. Upon arrival, Officers Craig Lovellette, Kemuel Gambirazio and Ariol Lage encountered what seemed like smoke filled air, but there was no smell of burning or flames observed. They quickly discovered a surreal and unbelievable sight. The Champlain Towers South Condominium had partially collapsed. Officers heard screams for help, but could barely see amidst the dust filled air making it difficult to even breathe. Despite the treacherous conditions these first responding officers entered a very dangerous zone without hesitation to assist anyone they could. Their bravery and selflessness were admirable.

Officer Lovellette was the acting sergeant on this tragic early morning call and assumed command. Immediately understanding the severity of this situation, he quickly called for additional resources and notified the SPD Command Staff. Officer Lage and Officer Gambirazio coordinated with the first responding units of the Miami-Dade Fire Department and police units responding from neighboring jurisdictions. They secured a hot zone perimeter to prevent further disaster in what potentially could have been an additional collapse of the remaining portion of the condominium and rapidly worked on evacuating nearby buildings.

Captain Healy was awakened moments after the collapse and arrived just minutes later, living just blocks from the site. His experience as a police commander was immediately a notable asset on this chaotic scene. He established command and control, ensured our officers safety while quickly assessing the situation and determining the next operational needs. Captain Healy designated the Town of Surfside Community Center as the best staging location for survivors and other evacuees to gather safely and arranged for the facility to be opened. These first responding officers directed the many dazed and confused citizens to safety. Thank you to the wonderful Parks & Recreation Staff that without hesitation assisted at the Community Center in the middle of the night and for many days thereafter.

Officer Joseph Matthews was assigned to the Communications Dispatch Center when the first calls for help in this incident were received. As the telephone lines rang nonstop and the police radio transmissions described the severity of this disaster, Officer Matthews remained calm and professional while assessing the situation. Officer

Matthews is praised for his remarkable support to the desperate loved ones and citizens asking questions while relaying critical information to officers on the scene and coordinating additional personnel response.

In addition to the aforementioned exceptional actions by the first to respond, I commend the many SPD members both civilian and sworn who selflessly gave their all working as one team to assist those so tragically affected by this disaster. Officers worked long hours for many consecutive days, assigned to traffic and perimeter posts in extreme heat and battling inclement weather. Civilian staff supported those efforts by coordinating water, meals and other logistical matters to assist the operation.

Officers Tammy Campbell and Alberto Knight are noteworthy examples of the extraordinary work performed. These officers were the first assigned to the Police Incident Command Post joined by Miami-Dade Police and other high-ranking commanders and were instrumental in providing me and the SPD command staff critical operational briefs and relaying orders and information among the various agencies working together. SPD Detective Diana Leon was assigned to work with the Miami-Dade Homicide Unit and quickly established herself among the most seasoned homicide detectives in the county. Detective Leon was part of the homicide team tasked with the difficult duty of tracking and identifying the victims lost and notifying the next of kin. These officers were praised for their professionalism by the highest levels of command in the Miami-Dade Police Department.

I am extremely proud of and commend all the SPD personnel who under unimaginable circumstances met every challenge with poise, courage and compassion. The dedication and professionalism exhibited in response to the worst tragedy ever suffered by the Town of Surfside will forever be appreciated. Congratulations to Captain John Healy, Acting Sergeant Craig Lovellette, Officer Kemuel Gambirazio, Officer Ariol Lage and Officer Joseph Matthews as the recipients of the June 2021 Officers of the Month Award in recognition of their actions in the immediate aftermath of the Champlain Towers South collapse.

#### **OFFICER OF THE MONTH – JULY 2021 – OFFICER RONALD DONOSO**

On Monday, July 19, 2021, at approximately 12:56 p.m., Officer Ronald Donoso was patrolling the residential area when he observed a male subject loitering in the area of a residence in the 600 block of 92<sup>nd</sup> Street and another male subject five feet away from the driveway of the same house. As he drove closer, he observed no cars in the driveway and the home appeared to be unoccupied. When the subjects noticed Officer Donoso approaching, they began to travel southbound on Carlyle Avenue on their bicycles failing to stop at the stop sign on 91<sup>st</sup> Street. Officer Donoso conducted a traffic stop of the subjects at 91<sup>st</sup> Street and Carlyle Avenue. Officer Campbell responded as a backup unit, read the subjects their Miranda Warnings and offered the subjects the opportunity to dispel their alarm as to their presence at the residence. The subjects, who are homeless, stated they were coming from the CVS Store located in Surfside and

had been hired to work at the Surfside building collapse site. The subjects did not know the name or phone number of the person who sent them to work there. One of the subjects was carrying a backpack, which upon his consent to search, revealed bolt cutters. The subject stated he was going to use the bolt cutters to work at the site and cut debris. Officer Campbell contacted the Miami-Dade Command Post to verify this information, however she was informed that they did not request nor hire anyone to work at the site. Officer Donoso contacted the homeowner, who was inside the home during the incident, confirming that she did not know the males. Pursuant to this investigation, the subjects failed to dispel the officer's alarm. Subsequently, both subjects were arrested for Loitering and Prowling and Possession of Burglary Tools. Officer Donoso's actions prevented a crime from occurring as revealed by the home video surveillance which showed one of the males checking the rear door of the residence.

Officer Ronald Donoso is a dedicated professional, exhibits a strong work ethic and highly respected by his peers. He is commended for his outstanding proactive patrolling, his commitment to the Town of Surfside and the community he proudly serves. Congratulations to Officer Ronald Donoso as the recipient of the July Officer of the Month award...well deserved!

**HIGH ACHIEVERS**

Officer Arch  
Officer Donoso  
Officer Gabriel  
Officer Gambirazio  
Parking Enforcement Officer Castro

**SIGNIFICANT INVESTIGATIONS/INCIDENTS**

Auto Burglary  
07/03/2021 at 1100 hours  
400 block of 91<sup>st</sup> Street  
Unknown subject(s) entered an unlocked vehicle between 07/02/2021-07/03/2021 and stole a pair of sunglasses valued at \$300.00 dollars.

Auto Theft Arrest  
07/14/2021 at 1050 hours  
9200 block of Abbott Avenue  
During a traffic stop, the officer discovered the driver of a motorcycle had no I.D. or registration documents. A record check of the motorcycle revealed it was reported stolen on 7/4/2021 from North Miami, FL. The driver was arrested for driving without a valid license and auto theft.

**Battery by Strangulation-Domestic Violence Arrest**

07/15/2021 at 2210 hours

300 block of 91<sup>st</sup> Street

The victim's boyfriend of 20 years choked her during a verbal altercation over finances. The boyfriend then fled as the victim was calling 911. A detective generated an arrest flyer for the boyfriend disseminating it to surrounding police agencies. Detectives located the boyfriend and he was arrested on 07/20/2021.

**Gas Leak**

07/18/2021 at 0922 hours

233 95<sup>th</sup> Street – Chai Wok

Officers responded to a call of an odor of gas emitting from the front of the business. The business was locked and vacant and the business owners were out of town however a family member of the business owner responded. Miami-Dade Fire Rescue responded and turned off the gas main line. A leak test was conducted by TECO Gas and a gas leak was discovered inside the restaurant.

**Loitering and Prowling and Possession of Burglary Tools Arrest**

07/19/2021 at 1257 hours

600 92<sup>nd</sup> Street

An officer observed two males suspiciously loitering in front of a driveway of a residence. The males rode away on their bicycles after noticing the officer. The males were stopped and revealed they were homeless and claimed that they were in the area seeking employment at the building collapse site. It was confirmed there was no employment being offered at the site. One of the male's had a pair of bolt cutter inside his backpack. The home was checked, but no signs of criminal activity were found. The homeowner confirmed that she did not know the males and they were both arrested. The following day, the homeowner advised that after reviewing her home's surveillance cameras, she noticed that one of the male's walked to her backyard to check the back door. The door was locked and the male left the area.

**Auto Burglary**

07/28/2021 at 1200 hours

9400 block of Abbott Avenue

An unlocked vehicle was burglarized between 07/23/2021 and 07/25/2021. Various cosmetics valued at \$10,000.00 dollars was stolen from the trunk of the vehicle.

**Commercial Burglary**

07/28/2021 at 1830 - 07/29/2021 at 0640 hours

9133 Collins Avenue-Surf Club Residences

The project engineer arrived at the construction site to find the front gate chain and lock missing and four storage containers located on site open. A total of \$16,000.00 dollars' worth of tools and equipment were stolen. Crime scene responded and processed the scene.

**JULY COMMUNITY INITIATIVES / LAW ENFORCEMENT EVENTS**

The FLOW (Florida Licensing on Wheels) was July 19<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. at Town Hall.

The Surfside Police Department hosted a community blood drive on July 22<sup>nd</sup> from 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. in the Town Hall municipal parking lot.

**AUGUST COMMUNITY INITIATIVES / LAW ENFORCEMENT EVENTS**

The Police Department coordinated for the Parks and Recreation PEAR Program Summer Camp a K-9 Demonstration from the Sunny Isles Beach Police Department on August 17<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. at the Community Center.

The supervisory staff meeting is August 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. in the Police Training Room.

The Surfside Police Department will host two community blood drives on August 11<sup>th</sup> and August 22<sup>nd</sup> from 11:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. in the Town Hall municipal parking lot.

The FLOW (Florida Licensing on Wheels) is August 16<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. in the Commission Chambers.

Code Enforcement will host their monthly Special Master Hearing on August 18<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers.

The monthly Coffee with the Cops is August 26<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. in the Police Training Room.

**TRAINING COMPLETED IN JULY**

Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Uniform Traffic Citation Training- Ofc. Campbell, Ofc. Valino, CO Castillo

SWAT Training- Sgt. Torres

Traffic Control for Civilians – PEO C. Acosta