



COUNTY OF YOLO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Police Week Starts May 15
National Police Week honors officers killed in the line of duty
Local Memorial Events Scheduled May 10th & 11th

(Woodland, CA) - May 4, 2016 - Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced that the week of May 15th is National Police Week, which honors officers who have been killed in the line of duty. Because May 15, 2016, falls on a Sunday, many events will take place before the official dates this year. National Police Week has evolved over the last 30 years. What began as a Memorial Service attended by 120 survivors and supporters of law enforcement has evolved into a week-long event that gives survivors and other supporters an opportunity to come together and honor those law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty. Originating in 1962 with President John F. Kennedy signing a proclamation designating May 15th as Peace Officers Memorial Day, the week-long event held in Washington D.C. hosts thousands of law enforcement officers from around the world. The Memorial Day also offers several events honors those officers who have died and provides support and supportive services to the families and friends.

The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial is the nation's monument to law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty. Dedicated on October 15, 1991, the Memorial honors more than 20,000 federal, state and local law enforcement officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the safety and protection of our nation and its people since the first known Line of Duty death in 1791. As of today, the State of California has 1,602 names of officers who paid the ultimate sacrifice engraved upon the National Law Enforcement Memorial. The California Peace Officer Memorial located at 10th Street and Capitol Mall in Sacramento was unveiled on May 13, 1988, as a memorial for these California officers who have paid the ultimate sacrifice. The Yolo County Retired Peace Officers Association spearheaded the effort to get a memorial erected for fallen Yolo County law enforcement officers. This effort led to the unveiling of the memorial in 2013 on the Yolo County Superior Courthouse grounds.

According to the National Law Enforcement Officer Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) in the past ten years 1,439 law enforcement officers have died in the line of duty. This is an average of 144 officers killed per year, or one line of duty death every 61 hours. There were 123 law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty in 2015.

Yolo County has endured the loss of 11 of its community protectors since 1912. Most recently, the murder of Yolo County Sheriff's Deputy Tony Diaz occurred on June 15, 2008. Deputy Diaz's murder occurred just three days after the killer of local CHP Officer Andy Stevens was sentenced to death in Yolo County Superior Court for his murder on November 17, 2005.

In addition to the District Attorney's role in prosecuting these murders and all other state and local crimes that occur within Yolo County, the District Attorney also employs law enforcement officers within its Investigations Bureau. Currently the District Attorney's Office has 15 full-time and six part-time sworn peace officers working as criminal investigators. These investigators complement the approximately 300 law enforcement personnel that serve Yolo County.

The following Yolo County Peace Officers are listed as officers who have died in the line of duty, the date of their End of Watch (EOW) and how they died.

California Highway Patrol

Officer Andrew Stevens EOW: November 17, 2005 - Gunfire
Sergeant Gary Wages EOW: March 15, 2001 - Vehicle Collision
Officer William Freeman EOW: December 22, 1978 - Gunfire
Officer Roy Blecher EOW: December 22, 1978 - Gunfire
Officer Ivan Casselman EOW: August 24, 1935 - Motorcycle Collision

Yolo County Sheriff's Office

Deputy Jose "Tony" EOW: June 15, 2008 - Gunfire
Deputy Walter Leinberger EOW: November 18, 1943 - Gunfire

Winters Police Department

City Marshall William Rice EOW: October 18, 1912 - Gunfire

West Sacramento Police Department

Officer James McKnight EOW: June 16, 1990 - Gunfire

Davis Police Department

Officer Douglas Cantrill EOW: September 7, 1959 - Gunfire

Woodland Police Department

Officer Lawrence Sills EOW: June 13, 1945 - Motorcycle Collision

There are two events scheduled at the Yolo County Peace Officer Memorial located on the grounds of the courthouse at [725 Court Street in Woodland](#).

On May 10, 2016, Yolo County law enforcement agencies and the Yolo County District Attorney's Office are sponsoring a Peace Officer Memorial "Walk to Remember." The brief ceremony begins at 12 noon, with the walk starting immediately after the ceremony. The walk is about one mile in length.

On May 11, 2016, Yolo County law enforcement agencies, in collaboration with the Yolo County Retired Peace Officer Association, will be honoring Yolo County's fallen officers at a more formal ceremony. The ceremony begins at 12:10 pm.

For more information, please contact Rob Strange at rob.strange@yolocounty.org.

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