



COUNTY OF YOLO
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Police Week Starts May 15th
A ceremony to honor officers killed in the line of duty and
a memorial walk to remember are scheduled for May 19th

(Woodland, CA) – May 13, 2022 - The week of May 15th is National Police Week, which honors officers who have been killed in the line of duty.

National Police Week has evolved over the years. What began as a Memorial Service attended by 120 survivors and supporters of law enforcement has evolved into a weeks-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 over 23,000 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. 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 grounds of the old historical Yolo County Superior Courthouse on Court Street.

According to preliminary data compiled by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF), as of December 31, 2021, 458 federal, state, tribal and local law enforcement officers died

in the line-of-duty in 2021. This is an increase of 55% from the 295 officers killed during the same period last year, and is the highest total line-of-duty officer deaths since 1930 when there were 312 fatalities.

Yolo County has endured the loss of 12 of its community protectors since 1912. Most recently, the murder of Davis Police Officer Natalie Corona, which occurred on January 10, 2019.

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 Cause: Gunfire
Sergeant Gary Wagers EOW: March 15, 2001 Cause: Vehicle Collision
Officer William Freeman EOW: December 22, 1978 Cause: Gunfire
Officer Roy Blecher EOW: December 22, 1978 Cause: Gunfire
Officer Ivan Casselman EOW: August 24, 1935 Cause: Motorcycle Collision

Yolo County Sheriff's Office

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

Winters Police Department

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

West Sacramento Police Department

Officer James McKnight EOW: June 16, 1990 Cause: Gunfire

Davis Police Department

Officer Natalie Corona EOW: January 10, 2019 Cause: Gunfire
Officer Douglas Cantrill EOW: September 7, 1959 Cause: Gunfire

Woodland Police Department

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

The Yolo County Retired Peace Officers Association will hold its annual memorial event honoring fallen officers at 12:00 noon on Thursday, May 19, 2022, at the Peace Officers Memorial monument located on the grounds of the old historic courthouse, at 725 Court Street, in Woodland.

The Yolo County District Attorney's Office will hold its annual walk to remember, which will begin at the conclusion of the memorial event. The walk begins at the monument, and winds through the City of Woodland. The route is about one mile in length and ends in Heritage Plaza. The public is welcome to attend both the memorial event and the walk to remember.

For more information, please contact Wendy Wilcox at wendy.wilcox@yolocounty.org.

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