

# Visiting sheriff honors The Thin Blue Line



**Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods pays respect to the memory of the officers who gave their lives in the line of duty in Levy County and in Williston, and he speaks to the families of those men, to law enforcement officers and to the general public.**

## **Story, Photos and Video**

**By Jeff M. Hardison © May 20, 2017 at 9:47 p.m.**

**WILLISTON** – As the bell in the pavilion rang 10 times to mark the moment, Williston Police Department Chaplain the Rev. Charlz Caulwell gave the opening prayer Friday morning (May 19).

Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods was the keynote speaker as the Williston Police Department and Levy County Sheriff's Office hosted the Annual Law Enforcement Memorial. The visiting sheriff gave a memorable speech about the Thin Blue Line, about the fraternity and fellowship of law enforcement officers, about remembering two specific men who gave their lives in the line of duty, and about thousands more who paid the ultimate price as they protected life, property and freedom.

**VIDEO CAN BE SEEN BY CLICKING THE LINK ON THE MAY MAIN PAGE**

**\* In this video, Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods talks about the media scrutinizing law enforcement officers. He said officers are ‘targets for just wearing the uniform.’**



**WPD Chief Dennis Strow introduces his friend Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods.**

WPD Chief Dennis Strow introduced his friend Sheriff Woods after WPD Chief Deputy Clay Connolly spoke about the late WPD Cpl. David W. Moss and LCSO Undersheriff W.I. “Brett” Beauchamp III spoke about the late LCSO Deputy A. Hagood Ellzey.

There were members of the Moss and Ellzey families at the memorial, and there were officers from various agencies in the audience as well as members of the general public.

Carolyn McLain, 15, of Dunnellon played Amazing Grace on the bagpipes after Glenn Robinson played Taps on a bugle to end the program.

The young Miss McLain was brought to the event by her mother Michele McLain, who said she is the chauffeur for her daughter on these occasions. The young piper is a member of the MCSO Pipes and Drums.

In 2002, Ed Dean, then the high sheriff of Marion County, ordered that the Sheriff’s Pipes and Drums be formed. The Marion County Sheriff’s Pipes and Drums is the only Pipe Band in the State of Florida to be an actual part of a law enforcement agency.

Before the traditional music ended the program, there were words shared to help people

honor some of the fallen.

Sheriff Woods, who has served in the MCSO for 26 years and was elected sheriff last year, spoke about the noble calling and duties of law enforcement officers. And he addressed the loyalty to one another of members of this profession, and their loyalty to the laws that govern everyone.

Law enforcement officers who come face to face with death hold steadfast faith against the overwhelming fear from danger, he said, at all times showing compassion for those they serve.

**President John F. Kennedy issued the following proclamation on May 4, 1963:  
By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation**

Whereas, from the beginning of this Nation, law enforcement officers have played an important role in safeguarding the rights and freedoms which are guaranteed by the Constitution and in protecting the lives and property of our citizens; and

Whereas, through constant application of new procedures and techniques, such officers are becoming more efficient in their enforcement of our laws; and

Whereas it is important that our people know and understand the problems, duties, and responsibilities of their police departments and the necessity for cooperating with them in maintaining law and order; and

Whereas it is fitting and proper that we express our gratitude for the dedicated service and courageous deeds of law enforcement officers and for the contributions they have made to the security and well-being of all our people; and

Whereas, by a joint resolution approved October 1, 1962 (76 Stat. 676), the Congress has requested the President to designate May 15 of each year as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the calendar week during which such May 15 occurs as Police Week:

Now, Therefore, I, John F. Kennedy, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate May 15, 1963, and May 15 of each succeeding year, as Peace Officers Memorial Day, in honor of those peace officers who, through their courageous deeds, have lost their lives or have become disabled in the performance of duty.

I also designate the week of May 12 through May 18, 1963, and the calendar week during which May 15 occurs of each succeeding year, as Police Week, in recognition of the service given by the men and women who, night and day, protect us through enforcement of our laws.

I invite State and local governments, patriotic, civic, and educational organizations, and the people of the United States generally, to observe Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week in this year and each succeeding year with appropriate ceremonies in which all our people may join in commemorating law enforcement officers, past and present, who by their faithful and loyal devotion to their responsibilities have rendered a dedicated service to their communities, and, in so doing, have established for themselves an enviable and enduring reputation for preserving the rights and security of all citizens.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States of America to be affixed.

DONE at the City of Washington this fourth day of May in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and eighty-seventh.

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## **THE THIN BLUE LINE**

Sheriff Wood said the symbol known as the thin blue line represents law enforcement officers seeking to uphold the law to protect people's lives, property and freedom.

Each year an average of 60,000 officers are assaulted, he said.

During the past decade, an average of more than 140 officers have been killed each year in the line of duty in the United States.

Throughout the history of the United States, in excess of 20,000 officers have made the ultimate sacrifice, Sheriff Woods said.

The sheriff said men and women in law enforcement answer a noble calling.

He addressed the next part of his speech to law enforcement officers.

He said they are soldiers of the law, who are entrusted with an honor.

"We must serve honestly, faithfully, and if need be, lay down our lives as other have before us," Sheriff Woods said, "rather than swerve from the path of duty.

"It is our duty to obey the law," Wood continued, "and enforce it without consideration of class, color, creed, or condition. It is our duty to be of service to anyone who may be in danger or distress.

"And at all times," he continued, "conduct ourselves so that the honor of the badge or star may be upheld."

In the next part of his speech, he addressed other guests at the event.

He mentioned that famous radio commentator Paul Harvey Aurandt (Sept 4, 1918 – Feb. 28, 2009), better known as "Paul Harvey," was a famous radio broadcaster.

However, many people do not know that he was the son of a police officer who was killed in the line of duty, when the future broadcaster was only 3 years old.

One of Harvey's famous sayings was "And now, for the rest of the story..."

In 1970, Harvey broadcast the following:

## **"What are policemen made of?"**

### **By Paul Harvey**

"A Policeman is a composite of what all men are, mingling of a saint and sinner, dust and deity.

Gulled statistics wave the fan over the stinkers, underscore instances of dishonesty and brutality because they are "new."

What they really mean is that they are exceptional, unusual, not commonplace.

Buried under the frost is the fact: Less than one-half of 1 percent of policemen misfit the uniform. That's a better average than you'd find among clergy!

What is a policeman made of? He, of all men, is once the most needed and the most unwanted. He's a strangely nameless creature who is "sir" to his face and "fuzz" to his back.

He must be such a diplomat that he can settle differences between individuals so that each will think he won.

But...If the policeman is neat, he's conceited; if he's careless, he's a bum. If he's pleasant, he's flirting; if not, he's a grouch.

He must make an instant decision which would require months for a lawyer to make.

But...If he hurries, he's careless; if he's deliberate, he's lazy. He must be first to an accident and infallible with his diagnosis. He must be able to start breathing, stop bleeding, tie splints and, above all, be sure the victim goes home without a limp. Or expect to be sued.

The police officer must know every gun, draw on the run, and hit where it doesn't hurt. He must be able to whip two men twice his size and half his age without damaging his uniform and without being "brutal." If you hit him, he's a coward. If he hits you, he's a bully.

A policeman must know everything-and not tell. He must know where all the sin is and not partake.

A policeman must, from a single strand of hair, be able to describe the crime, the weapon and the criminal- and tell you where the criminal is hiding.

But...If he catches the criminal, he's lucky; if he doesn't, he's a dunce. If he gets promoted, he has political pull; if he doesn't, he's a dullard. The policeman must chase a bum lead to a dead-end, stake out 10 nights to tag one witness who saw it happen-but refused to remember.

The policeman must be a minister, a social worker, a diplomat, a tough guy and a gentleman.

And, of course, he'd have to be genius... For he will have to feed a family on a policeman's salary.

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After reading a version of this piece by Paul Harvey, Sheriff Woods said a person who believes Harvey's words can truly understand the noble calling that men and women answer when they accept the duties of being a law enforcement officer.

The sheriff then addressed the family members of the officers being honored and memorialized that day.

Sheriff Woods said none of his words can bring comfort to them for their loss. He said time may heal them from this loss.

The sheriff said over time all officers will be gone and forgotten. However the officers who gave their lives serve as a beacon for the nobility of the badge or the star.

And these individuals are not just beacons for this generation, he continued "but for generations who are to come long after we have left this Earth."

As for the Thin Blue Line, the sheriff said the Thin Blue Line represents officers protecting society from evil and chaos, so that society remains good and orderly.

The sheriff went on to say the Thin Blue Line also represents a strong bond between all law enforcement officers everywhere.

This line demonstrates support by everyone in the profession for the tough job they must perform. It's an encouragement to stand on that line together in service of others.

Sheriff Woods said that one sad duty he sees as sheriff is to attend funerals of fallen officers. He may not know the person who died in the line of duty, Sheriff Woods said, "... And yet, when I stand at the funeral, a lump comes in my throat, and a tear will roll down my cheek."

This reflects the love between all officers that cannot be explained, he said. And this is part of that Thin Blue Line.



**WPD Deputy Chief Clay Connolly speaks about the life of the late WPD Cpl. David W. Moss.**

## **DAVID W. MOSS**

Deputy Chief Connolly read the following:

“Corporal David W. Moss was shot and killed while attempting to assist what he thought to be a disabled vehicle.

“As 2:09 a.m. on July 30 (1988), Corporal Moss arrived at the scene of what appeared to be a disabled vehicle near the corner of Southwest Sixth Street and First Avenue in Williston. Eight minutes later, Corporal Moss stopped responding to calls from dispatch. When his partner arrived on scene, he found both David and his assailant dead.

“The forensic investigation showed Corporal Moss was shot and killed in a gunfight. Before Corporal Moss died he fired six rounds hitting his assailant with five of them.”

Deputy Chief Connolly said this official statement talks about how Moss died. He gave listeners a little insight into the man’s life.

Moss was 31 years old when he died, leaving behind a wife, a mortgage, a passel of animals and a vintage 1965 Chevy, Connolly said.

Moss had joined the WPD in 1984, Connolly said, after serving in the United States Air Force and after being the dogcatcher in Williston. He love children and professional wrestling.

On that fateful night, he was confronted by a dysfunctional ne’er-do-well who had a stolen pistol that was taken from a house where he had been “squatting illegally,” Connolly said.

The disabled car that Cpl. Moss was investigating had been stolen by that man just minutes earlier, Connolly said.

He was ambushed by the thief, “and yet he had the presence of mind to stop the threat before others could become victimized,” Connolly said.

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## **A. HAGOOD ELLZEY**

Undersheriff Beauchamp said that Sheriff Bobby McCallum was unable to be present for the memorial, and Beauchamp was serving to represent the LCSO.

The late Deputy Ellzey is the only deputy with the Levy County Sheriff’s Office to have died in the line of duty, he said.

Deputy Ellzey died Jan. 28, 1945 while on patrol in the city limits of Otter Creek by two men who luted him into a wooded area and shot him with a shotgun.

Before dying, he was able to identify both men, and they were convicted and sentenced to spend the rest of their lives in prison.

On May 3 of this year, Florida Senate Bill 368 was passed and this will allow for a section of road in the town of Otter Creek to be named in honor of Deputy Ellzey.

Undersheriff Beauchamp specifically mentioned his appreciation for the efforts of State Rep. Charlie Stone (R-Ocala, Dist. 22) for Rep. Stone’s efforts leading to this bill reaching fruition.

Several of the Ellzey family members continue to help people by their work in public service, Beauchamp said.