



# CUMBERLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT

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To: Officer Matthew Merriman

From: Chief Charles Rumsey

Date: July 24, 2023

Subject: Issuance of Meritorious Service Award

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The Meritorious Service Award is awarded to an individual department member for a highly unusual accomplishment under adverse conditions with some degree of hazard to the life of the member, unit, or other person.

It is my honor and pleasure to recognize you with this Meritorious Service Award for actions taken on July 3, 2023, to rescue a woman considering suicide on Blackstrap Road.

On July 3<sup>rd</sup>, at approximately 4:45AM, you arrived on Blackstrap Road in response to the report of a person on the railing at the I-95 overpass. Upon your arrival, you exited your cruiser and began your approach of the individual, whom you could see was sitting on the overpass railing, with both feet over the rail.

Immediately, you began attempting to establish rapport and communication with the woman to deescalate the situation and convince her to move to safety. You understood that if she jumped or fell onto the Interstate below, a fatality would certainly result.

Due to the noise of traffic on the Interstate, you slowly moved closer in hopes of hearing the individual if she responded to your efforts to help her. As you did so, you observed the individual stand up on the ledge and remove her hands from the rail. You suspected that tragedy was just moments away.

As you continued to implore the subject, “please don’t do this,” you maneuvered to within arm’s reach. With no hesitation, you grabbed her around the waist, and pulled her back over the rail to safety. You both fell to the roadway on Blackstrap, and you kept the woman secured briefly so she did not attempt to return to the rail.

As you secured the woman to ensure her safety, you continued calmly communicating with her and working to get her off the wet roadway and into a cruiser for her warmth and comfort. The speed and ease with which you switched from crisis management mode to concerned caregiver was truly impressive and heartwarming to see. You maintained your concerned and calming contact with the individual until Cumberland Rescue arrived to transport her to the hospital for evaluation and further care.

It is my firm belief that, without your swift, decisive, and efficient action, the woman you encountered would have intentionally jumped, or accidentally fallen. I am so impressed with your attempts to connect with this individual who was in crisis and to implore her to not take her own life. As you did this, you also assessed the situation, determined what needed to be done, and did not hesitate. Your conduct brings honor to the Cumberland Police and puts on display our department values of Dedication, Respect, Integrity, Vigilance, Excellence, and Nobility. These actions make you eligible for our department’s Meritorious Service Award, which I am pleased to present to you tonight. I am proud of you, your team members are proud of you, and I know that the community is proud of you as well. We are lucky to have you watching over the Town of Cumberland.

Congratulations!