



**NEWS RELEASE
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PURCELLVILLE POLICE OFFICERS HONORED WITH VALOR AWARDS

PURCELLVILLE, Va., July 26, 2021 — Today, three Purcellville Police Department officers were honored at the 2021 Loudoun Chamber's Annual Valor Awards held at the National Conference Center in Lansdowne, Virginia. Officer Alexander Burkett received a Bronze Medal of Valor, Sergeant Paul Kakol received a Lifesaving Award, and Officer Raymond Starkey was honored with a Certificate of Valor for their heroic actions during two separate incidents in 2020.

Officer Alexander Burkett and Officer Raymond Starkey were honored for their courageous and swift response to an incident in February 2020. The original call was dispatched as a noise complaint of a car loudly revving its engine in the early morning hours, but by the time Officer Burkett arrived on scene, the incident quickly became much more dangerous. When he arrived at the location, Officer Burkett instead found a vehicle which had driven into a building at the same address and was half engulfed in flames. He quickly used all his strength to assist the injured driver out of harm's way, who was initially very disoriented and unable to move, safely away from the burning vehicle and building. Officer Starkey then arrived on scene and proceeded to evacuate the burning apartment building and began pounding on doors to alert residents inside. Due to the early hours, waking all the residents proved very challenging, but Officers Starkey and Burkett persisted until every apartment was successfully evacuated and all the residents were safe and accounted for.

The incident required a large fire department response and resulted in four families being displaced, but fortunately no one was injured by the fire. An investigation revealed that the driver was under the influence of drugs and became incapacitated with his foot on the accelerator. The driver was arrested for driving under the influence of drugs. Thankfully due to Officer Burkett and Officer Starkey's actions, no lives were lost in what could have been a much more tragic situation.

Sergeant Paul Kakol was recognized for his excellent response to a potentially life threatening incident in April 2020. Sergeant Kakol was dispatched to a shooting, and upon arriving on scene, grabbed his trauma bag and quickly assessed the situation. He located a male victim with a severe gunshot wound to his upper leg. Because the exact nature of the shooting had yet to be determined, Sergeant Kakol directed the other officers on scene, Alexander Burkett and Raymond Starkey, to secure the scene and guard the evidence while he evaluated the victim's injuries and provided life-saving measures. Sergeant Kakol established a rapport with the victim to keep him calm while evaluated the patient's injuries. Finding no exit wound and minimal external bleeding, he was confident that the victim's femur was shattered because the leg felt like "Jell-O." He was concerned there

could be life-threatening internal bleeding. As a result, Sergeant Kakol applied direct pressure to stop the blood flow to the leg and quickly applied a tactical tourniquet from his trauma bag. The first paramedic arrived on scene while Sergeant Kakol was packing the wound with hemostatic gauze to promote rapid clotting and prevent blood loss. Sergeant Kakol advised he would finish packing the wound then get out of the way for medical personnel, but the paramedic was so impressed with Sergeant Kakol's work, he directed him to stay and keep working.

Sergeant Kakol prepared the patient for transport and continued to provide primary medical care until the victim was moved to a gurney. The victim was transported to the INOVA Trauma Center at Lansdowne where he underwent extensive surgery to repair his femur, which was confirmed to be shattered. Fortunately the victim survived the shooting, which was determined to be accidental.

The physician who treated the victim was "very complimentary" of the work done by Sergeant Kakol, including his wound packing and specifically noting his tourniquet was "perfectly placed" and likely would have saved the victim's life even had the femoral artery been severed. Without hesitation, Sergeant Kakol applied critical medical treatment and for his quick and decisive actions, he was honored with a Lifesaving Award.

"I am so proud of all the first responders and citizens honored at today's ceremony. Sergeant Kakol, Officer Alexander Burkett, and Officer Raymond Starkey went above and beyond the normal duties for a police officer and I am proud to have them as part of the Purcellville Police Department. If you ask each of them individually, they would say they are just doing their jobs, but it just shows the type of character they have. They are willing to do whatever it takes to help a citizen, regardless if they could get hurt in the process themselves. We are so fortunate to have these brave officers as a part of our Purcellville team, and we are grateful to work alongside so many amazing fellow public servants in Loudoun County," said Chief of Police Cynthia McAlister.

The Loudoun County Valor Awards program awards were established by the Loudoun Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with the local public safety agencies, to recognize and acknowledge members of the various public safety departments, as well as everyday citizens, who have placed themselves in harm's way over the past year to ensure the safety of others.

A total of 9 courageous citizens and 76 heroic first responders from the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, and the Town of Leesburg Police Department were also recognized at the event.



Sergeant Paul Kakol and Officer Alexander Burkett (not pictured, Officer Raymond Starkey)

The Town of Purcellville, Virginia

“Purcellville-your small Town, where history and progress intersect and people prosper,” is an award-winning town of over 10,000 residents located in Loudoun County, approximately 50 miles west of Washington, DC. Having received the prestigious Siemens Sustainability Award for Small Communities, Purcellville continues to be honored for its green initiatives with most recently being the Tree City USA recipient for the 12th year. The Town was reaffirmed as a AAA rated community by S&P Global Ratings, the highest credit rating possible, and is ranked “Safest City” in Virginia in 2020. Once a stop along the W&OD rail line, which has been converted to a multi-use trail from Alexandria, VA to Purcellville, the Town has maintained its historic old-town feel through the restoration and maintenance of its many downtown structures, reflecting the Victorian architecture popular during the early 1900s. Today, Purcellville is the economic hub of western Loudoun County and a popular weekend destination for antiquing, equestrian activities, farmer’s markets, wineries, breweries, distilleries and restaurants. More info at www.purcellvilleva.gov.

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