



CITY OF HARRISONBURG  
**POLICE**  
DEPARTMENT

# 2023 Annual Report





CITY OF HARRISONBURG  
**POLICE**  
DEPARTMENT

### **OUR MISSION**

The Harrisonburg Police Department will partner with our community to reduce crime, solve problems and improve quality of life.

### **OUR VISION**

An unwavering commitment to community safety and security through selfless acts of service.

### **OUR VALUES**

#### **HONOR**

We are honorable because it is the foundation on which all other values depend.

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

We are accountable in word and deed because our actions have a direct effect on the community we serve.

#### **DEDICATION**

We are dedicated to delivering the highest quality service because we are committed to earning the trust and respect of our community.

#### **INTEGRITY**

We act with integrity because it is the cornerstone on which the trust of our community is built.

#### **PROFESSIONALISM**

We are a professional organization because we are committed to providing the highest level of service and safety.

# 2023 Annual Report: Harrisonburg Police Department

## Dear Community Members,

On behalf of the men and women of the Harrisonburg Police Department it is my honor that I share with you the Harrisonburg Police Department's 2023 Annual Report. This document is not just a collection of statistics and achievements; it is a testament to the unwavering dedication and professionalism of our staff. Within these pages, you will find narratives and photos highlighting the change and growth of our department as well as innovative programming that exemplifies our steadfast commitment to serving you, the heart of Harrisonburg.

**Strategic Vision and Renewed Commitment:** In the summer of 2023, we embarked on a strategic planning process that was as inclusive as it was intensive. Thirty cross-sectional members of our department came together, drawing on survey results from all ranks to chart a course for our future—a 'true north' that now guides every decision we make.

**Cultural Enrichment and Community Engagement:** This year marked a significant expansion in our cultural diversity training, with the entire department participating in the 'Law Enforcement and Society' program at the National Holocaust Monument and Museum. We also added to our community engagement efforts by introducing the Victim Service Liaison Coordinator position and launching new volunteer initiatives like the Dog Walk and Watch and the Blue Envelope Program.

**Operational Highlights:** Our officers responded to 87,215 calls for service in 2023, with the majority being proactive engagements such as directed patrols, business checks, and traffic stops. The remainder were responses to community reports of various concerns, such as animal complaints, suspicious activity or vehicle and welfare checks.

**Organizational Growth:** The year was marked by both farewells and fresh starts, with retirements and promotions paving the way for new leadership and opportunities within our ranks. We welcomed two Deputy Chiefs, promoted sergeants and a lieutenant, and added 14 new officers to our family—all dedicated to the Harrisonburg community.

**Appreciation:** I extend my deepest gratitude to our officers and professional staff for their dedicated service. I also wish to acknowledge the collaborative efforts of our public safety partners, the Harrisonburg Fire Department, and the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Emergency Communication Center. A special thank you to the Harrisonburg City Council and City Manager Banks for their unwavering support of our mission.

As we look to the future, we do so with optimism and a renewed sense of purpose. Together, we will continue to build a safer, more connected Harrisonburg.



Kelley D. Warner

Chief of Police

# Contents

## Administration

Administration Staff  
Notable Projects  
Promotions  
Awards  
Retirements  
Accreditation  
Chaplains  
Professional Standards  
Personnel Development  
Records  
Property & Evidence  
Honor Guard  
Grant Funding

## Special Operations

Community Resource Unit  
School Resource  
D.A.R.E  
Victim Services Liaison Unit  
Traffic Unit  
Animal Care and Control  
Auxiliary Police

## Patrol Operations

Patrol Squads  
Calls for Service Statistics  
IBR Statistics  
Specialty Officers  
Community Engagement  
Police K-9s

## Criminal Investigations

Major Crimes Unit  
Specialty Units  
Key Cases  
Case Statistics

# Police Administration

2023 brought several changes to HPD Administration. Chief Warner reorganized the Department into two Bureaus, Support Services and Operations. Along with this reorganization, Chief Warner promoted two Deputy Chiefs, Deputy Chief Rod Pollard (Support Services) and Deputy Chief Todd Miller (Operations).

In addition, Chief Warner re-established the Administrative Lieutenant position to oversee the Personnel Development Unit, the Records Unit, Property and Evidence, the Quartermaster, and Hiring and Recruitment. This position was filled by Lieutenant Chris Watson who had previously been assigned to the Patrol Division.



*Deputy Chief Rod Pollard*



*Deputy Chief Todd Miller*

## RETIREMENTS

*Captain Carl Cline retired, leaving vacant one Captains position (Support Services) while Captain Jason Kidd (Operations) oversees the Patrol Division and Criminal Investigations Division.*

## NEW STAFF

*Juliana McGrath added as our new Outreach Specialist*

*CPO Jason Wyant was rehired as the newest member of the Personnel Development Unit.*

*Robert Landes was hired as part-time Personnel Development Officer.*

# Notable Projects

## Recruit Mentorship Program



In 2023 HPD continued assigning police mentors to the recruits at the Central Shenandoah Criminal Justice Training Academy in Weyers Cave. As the Harrisonburg recruits studied at the academy to become sworn officers, they kept in touch with sworn officers to maintain their connection to HPD.

## National Police Week - Art



During the month of May, to honor National Police Week, the Oasis Art Gallery donates the Water Street display window to HPD. In 2023, we displayed artwork from police employees.

## Employee Wellness



To promote overall health and wellness, employees began participating in team sports events like first responder kickball, with the intention of continuing with other sports such as dodgeball or pickleball. Employees also began participating in yoga practices led by volunteer instructors.

# Strategic Planning

In August of 2023, a cross-section of 30 members of the Department participated in HPD's Strategic Planning Retreat for 2023-2025. We enlisted the assistance of an outside facilitator to help us with this project. We started with a department-wide anonymous survey and then 1 ½ day retreat.

The Department tweaked our Mission, Vision, and Values to what we believed was important to us and how our actions reflected those beliefs. In addition, we identified short, and long-term objectives and assigned champions to those objectives. For example, several of our challenges are found within the recruitment and retention arena. We have assigned the Professional Standards Sergeant as the champion to collaborate with their team and design a comprehensive recruitment plan that expands over the next three years.

Updates regarding our 2023-25 Strategic Plan are reviewed at bi-weekly Command Meetings held by Chief Warner.



# Promotions



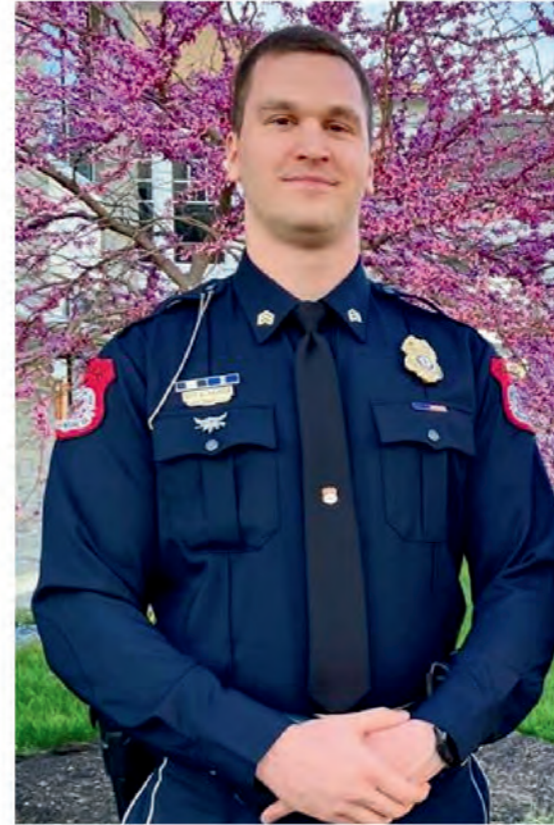
**WESLEY DOUGLAS**

*Patrol Lieutenant*



**BROOKE WETERELL**

*Professional Standards  
Sergeant*



**EVAN KEIRCE**

*Patrol Sergeant*



**AMIE RAYMANN**

*Patrol Sergeant*





# Awards



## HEAT Award

The Help Eliminate Auto Theft program (HEAT), which is coordinated through the Virginia State Police, recognized HPD for its efforts in combating auto theft. In 2023, Patrol officers proactively recovered nearly 20 stolen motor vehicles.



## Public Service Award

Officers Andrew Keller and James Weaver received the Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority Outstanding Public Service Award for their hard work and dedication to improving the quality of life for the residents of Lineweaver Apartments.



## SAR Valor Awards

Fort Harrison Chapter Sons of the American Revolution

Left to right: Wes Douglas, Alaina McWhorter, Rose Mary Nuno, Brian Tusing, Kelley Warner (Alex Denny not pictured)



## SAR Officer of the Year

Sergeant Brooke Wetherell was selected as the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year by the Virginia Society, Sons of the American Revolution, several months after receiving the Law Enforcement Commendation Medal from the Fort Harrison Chapter.

# Retirements



Ronald Howard  
Sergeant  
24 years of service

Sandra Bare  
Administrative Specialist  
37 years of service

Scott Drugo  
Sergeant  
20 years of service

Carl Cline  
Captain,  
22 years of service

K9 Vader  
Canine,  
8 years of service



## **ERIN MILLER**

*Accreditation Manager*

# Accreditation

During the course of 2023, HPD Accreditation personnel completed terms 1-3 and are moving into term 4 of the re-accreditation process. On July 1, 2023, the accreditation standard OPR.01.12 (body cameras) was required to be in effect. On November 16, 2023, HPD completed a mock assessment of terms 1-3. This assessment was completed by Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC) assessors from various outside agencies. HPD also began moving to the PowerDMS platform to allow for a more streamlined policy process. In 2023, VALEAC updated their webpage to better assist the law enforcement agencies and their accreditation managers. The Harrisonburg Police Department will begin the re-accreditation process in August 2024.

### **What is VALEAC?**

Virginia Law Enforcement Accreditation Coalition (VALEAC) - is an advocate for agencies that are accredited or in the self-assessment phase with VLEPSC. VALEAC provides support, guidance, links to resources, and networking opportunities for member agencies. VALEAC collaborates with DCJS and VLEPSC to identify and coordinate program initiatives. VALEAC conducts quarterly meetings during which training and networking opportunities take place.

### **VALEAC Vision Statement**

Providing law enforcement agencies in the Commonwealth with the opportunity to enhance public safety through the implementation of professional standards.

### **VALEAC Mission Statement**

*Endorse, Promote, and Support the concepts of accreditation for law enforcement agencies participating in the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC) Program. The Virginia Law Enforcement Accreditation Coalition (VALEAC) is an advocate for member agencies by providing networking opportunities, support, guidance, and linking agencies to applicable resources.*

# Volunteer Chaplaincy



**Rabbi Jeffrey Kurtz-Lendner,**  
**The Reverend Dr. E. Thomas Murphy, Jr.**

*Police Chaplains*

After more than two decades of service, Chaplain Tom Murphy (picture on the right) retired from the Harrisonburg Police Department. A mainstay and recognized face and voice within the Department, Chaplain Murphy's dedication and commitment built the Chaplaincy into what it has become today. We wish Chaplain Murphy well on the rest of his journey and he will be sorely missed at HPD.

Chaplain Jeffrey Kurtz-Lendner (pictured on the left) joined the department in the fall of 2021. Since Chaplain Murphy's retirement, he has assumed responsibility for the Chaplaincy Program. Chaplain Kurtz-Lendner has had the chance to offer prayers at various ceremonies, attend a variety of Department meetings, visit staff throughout the Department, participate in riding with officers on patrol, and engage the staff in the ECC. He looks forward to building upon the success of Chaplain Murphy and expand the Chaplaincy program in 2024 to include additional chaplains.

# Professional Standards



## Recruitment and Hiring

In 2023, the Professional Standards Unit conducted 10 hiring processes. These processes were held for the positions of: Police Officer I, Police Officer II, Records Specialist, Training & Personnel Development Officer, Outreach and Communications Specialist, Animal Control Officer, and Administrative Specialists. Over 60 applicants were interviewed with 20 new hires. Police Officer openings peaked with 20 open positions and was nearly cut in half where we stand today.

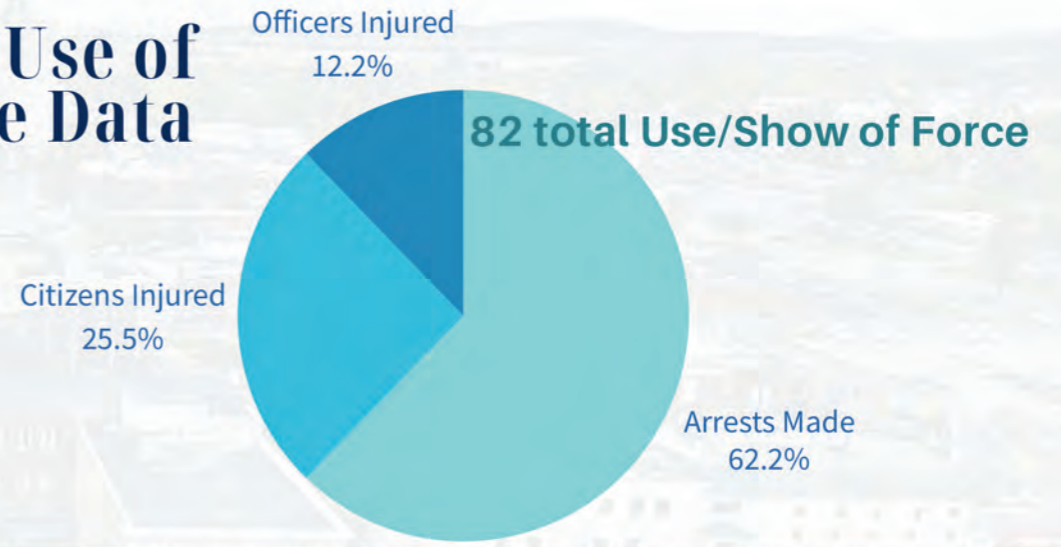
Additionally, seven promotional or specialty processes were conducted for HPD's Field Training Officers, Honor Guard members, Major Crimes detectives, School Resource officers, and two promotions to the rank of Sergeant.

As part of our strategic planning in 2023, the Professional Standards Unit worked to establish a streamlined hiring process. While the statistics from these changes will not be available for several more months, their effectiveness is already proving to be successful. These changes allowed the unit to combine additional steps of the hiring process into one initial day of testing. Previously, an applicant may not have received a conditional offer of employment for several weeks. The goal for streamlining this process is to allow an applicant to receive a conditional offer as soon as the first day of testing!

# Internal Investigations

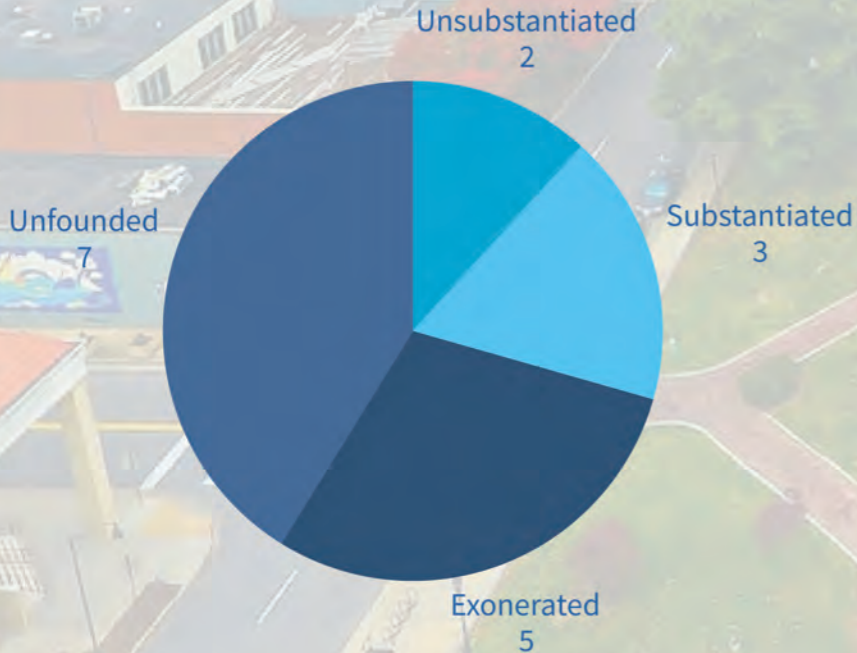
The Internal Investigations Sergeant reviews internal and external complaints about police employees, and leads the Use of Force Review Board. In 2023, there were a total of 82 Use/Show of Force. As a result, 61 citizens were arrested, 25 citizens were injured and 12 officers were injured. Each of these incidents was reviewed by the Use of Force Review Board and every use or show of force was found to be within policy.

# 2023 Use of Force Data



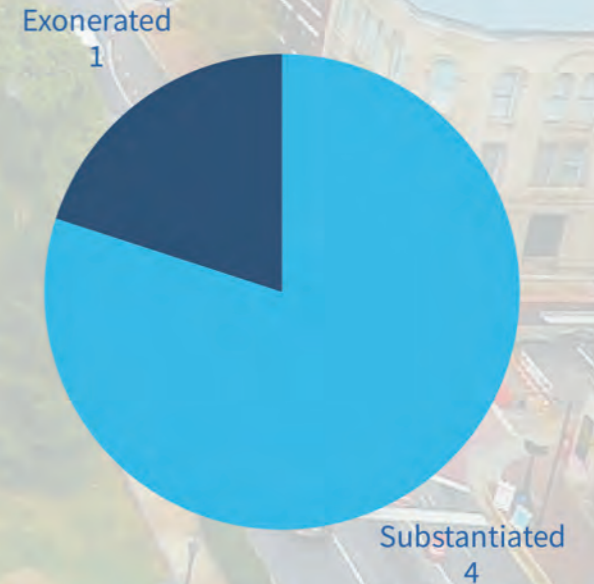
# Citizen Complaints

17 Total Complaints



# Administrative Investigations

5 Total Investigations



# Personnel Development

The Harrisonburg Police Department is known around the state for the level of training received. Often, during their interview process, new recruits will tell panel members that one of their reasons for wanting to work with HPD is the amount of training officers are allowed to attend and the amount of training received throughout their career at HPD. Our Training Unit ensures our officers have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to resolve situations they will encounter while on duty. HPD values career development, succession planning, and personal development, with an emphasis on leadership training.



## Trip to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

The Museum engages with law enforcement at the federal, state, and local levels to learn about the role of police in Nazi Germany and to reflect on their role in a democratic society today. 90 HPD employees traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend the museum's signature program, Law Enforcement and Society: Lessons of the Holocaust (LEAS), presented in partnership with the Anti-Defamation League.

---

## New Performance Evaluations Launched

A committee worked diligently to create police, supervisor, and professional staff-specific performance evaluations, with a new Professional Development Plan. Professional Development Plans help individuals identify and acquire the skills needed for career advancement, boost job satisfaction, and help align personal goals with the Department's objectives. As our employees advance through their Professional Development Plan, they become more skilled and motivated, benefiting them and our organization.

The Professional Development Plan will be completed annually with evaluations and reviewed once during the middle of the evaluation period to ensure goals are being met. Goals and aspirations may change throughout an officer's career at HPD. To ensure job satisfaction and to help our team be successful, we believe the Professional Development Program is an essential part of our leadership philosophy.



## **Mass Casualty/Rapid Response Training**

HPD collaborates with other agencies annually to train for mass casualty response. In August of 2023, first responders from multiple area police agencies, the Harrisonburg Fire Department, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Emergency Communications Center, the Harrisonburg Rescue Squad, and Harrisonburg City Public Schools trained together to provide a real-life experience of joint response. After several classroom training sessions, the final scenario took place at Harrisonburg High School and involved role-playing victims and suspects, an active shooter, and a mock fire in the building.



# Training Highlights



## **NEW OFFICERS**

*12 new officers received a total of 14,400 hours of training*

## **IN-SERVICE**

*90 officers attended 3,780 total hours of in-service training*

## **LEADERSHIP**

*44 employees attended 16 leadership classes*

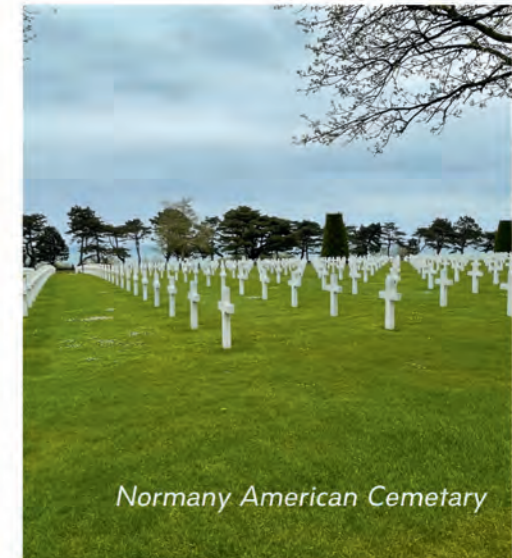
## **ACADEMY CLASSES**

*70 employees attended 32 classes at the regional academy*

# D-Day/Normandy Leadership Experience



Omaha Beach



Normandy American Cemetery



Utah Beach

Deputy Chief Miller traveled to Normandy in April 2023 in conjunction with the New Jersey Association of Chiefs of Police (NJACOP) for the D-Day/Normandy Leadership Experience. The underlying purpose of this course is to teach today's law enforcement leaders about democratic leadership and decision-making by immersing them in a "living classroom." The course provides the historical and strategic context and facilitates in-depth discussion to reach a deep understanding of "leadership in action." Planning, organization, communication, teamwork and initiative amidst profound and increasingly rapid changes in circumstance are as critical now to effective execution as they were in 1944. Deputy Chief Miller said "The Normandy Leadership Experience was an unforgettable opportunity to experience leadership in action as well as to network with law enforcement professionals from across the country. This program provided an extremely unique perspective surrounding leadership that most law enforcement professionals haven't been able to experience."

Throughout the Normandy Leadership Experience participants examine key strategic objectives and the tactical events that accompanied them, and focus on the role that leadership played in effective implementation, or the lack thereof. Participants also reflect upon the relevance of these timeless lessons and how each relates to contemporary leadership initiatives in participants' current roles.

# FBI LEEDA Trilogy

---

14 officers or supervisors from the Harrisonburg Police Department attended one or all of the three-part FBI-LEEDA Trilogy Series. Of the 14 officers, 5 finalized their trilogy series in 2023, adding to their continued leadership development.

## *Supervisor Leadership Institute*

---

This is a cutting edge 4 1/2-day program built especially for supervisors and middle managers to enhance their leadership competencies. The faculty members are senior law enforcement leaders who are committed to passing on their lessons learned. The program includes personality diagnostics, leadership case studies, mentoring, developing your people, performance management, risk management and credibility. This institute is student-centered and rich in facilitated dialogue and group work.

## *Command Leadership Institute*

---

This dynamic, intensive, and challenging 4 1/2-day program is specifically and uniquely designed to prepare law enforcement leaders for command-level positions. The focus is to provide real life contemporary, best-practice strategies and techniques for those aspiring to command-level assignments. Faculty members are passionate instructors with executive level law enforcement and leadership experience. Students will be engaged in topics like credibility, command discipline and liability, dealing with problem employees, and leading change within an organization. The Command Leadership Institute is student-centered with a high degree of student involvement.

## *The Executive Leadership Institute*

---

This program is designed for executive-level law enforcement leaders and focuses on the emerging challenges facing our profession. This highly interactive program follows the FBI-LEEDA “Cops Talking to Cops” model of professional development. The seminar uses a wide range of source material and calls upon participants’ own professional experiences to facilitate individual development and learning. The following is a list of topics to be covered in the ELI program: Trends in law enforcement, Implications of the 21st Century Policing Report, Public trust and legitimacy, Bias and diversity, Employee wellness, Power, Transformational leadership, Social and emotional intelligence.



## Senior Management Institute for Police

*Captain Kidd completed the Senior Management Institute for Police (SMIP) from the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) in Boston, MA. SMIP is a sought-after three-week training program held annually at Boston University. Captain Kidd described his experience as “an extremely valuable opportunity that provided me with top-tier instruction from Ivy League level instructors, interactions with renowned police leaders such as Chuck Ramsey and Bill Bratton, among others, and networking opportunities with police leaders from across the United States and abroad.”*



## Milwaukee Honor Guard Clinic

*Seven members of the Harrisonburg Police Department Honor Guard attended the first ever Milwaukee Honor Guard Clinic held at the Central Shenandoah Criminal Justice Training Academy (CSCJTA). Officer Lanphier is an adjunct instructor for the Milwaukee Honor Guard Clinic (MHGC) and was able to collaborate with the CSCJTA and the MHGC to host this prestigious clinic. During this clinic, the HPD Honor Guard was able to further develop their team skills pertaining to different types of ceremonial procedures.*



## Gettysburg Leadership Experience

*Seven officers and supervisors attended the Gettysburg Leadership Experience - This unique offering teaches you to think more creatively and critically by merging case studies anchored in history, modern leadership lessons and eye-opening excursions.*

# Police Command and Leadership Seminar



Three patrol officers and eight supervisors along with one civilian supervisor attended the weeklong **Police Command and Leadership** seminar hosted at HPD in conjunction with the New Jersey Association Chiefs of Police. The NJACOP Command & Leadership Seminar is a unique blend of theory and application designed to aid in the development of future law enforcement leaders. The course is a 5-day program that utilizes behavioral science theories in conjunction with scenario learning to enhance development and education. Four Areas of interest during the 5-day course are: ***Preparing Yourself to Lead, Understanding and Motivating Others, Leading Great Teams and Leading Great Organizations.***



## Advanced Professional Policing Practices

Sgt. Keirce travelled to London in December 2023 in conjunction with the New Jersey Association of Chiefs of Police (NJACOP) for Advanced Professional Policing Practices. This seminar explores the most contemporary practices, skills, issues, and collaborative techniques from the perspective of some of the world's most respected and progressive policing agencies and executives. The 2023 Advanced Professional Policing Practices Seminar was held at multiple police and government locations in London, England, including New Scotland Yard, local City of London and London Metropolitan Police station, the Central Criminal Court ("Old Bailey"), the United States Embassy, and the UK Police Memorial.

Sgt. Keirce said "I was incredibly lucky to have been chosen for such an eye opening and unique training experience. Every day I had the opportunity to learn from some of the most talented policing professionals in London who were just as excited to ask us questions about policing the states as we were to learn about policing in England."



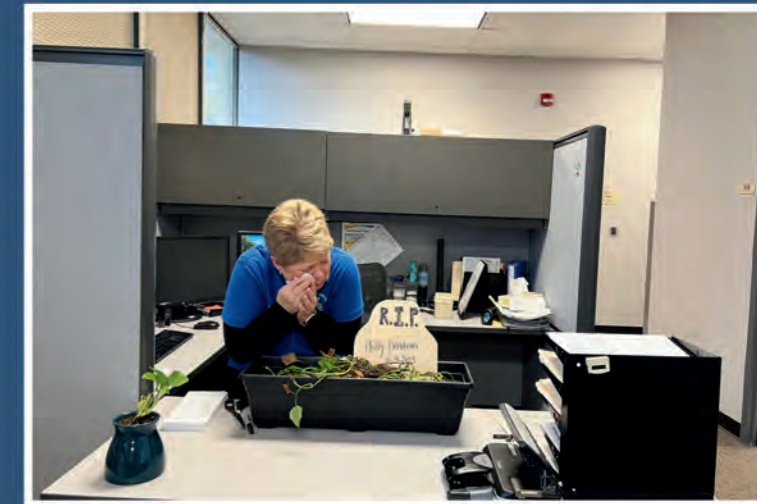
# Police Records

As the initial point of contact upon entering the Public Safety Building, the Records team is the welcoming face for visitors. They are dedicated to assisting civilians with inquiries, directing them appropriately, and facilitating any necessary paperwork they require. The Records Unit's goal is to provide helpful guidance and support to ensure a smooth and efficient experience for all who enter the doors of the Public Safety Building.

The Records Unit adheres to the guidelines established by the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Incident Based Reporting enables the real-time reporting of crimes as they unfold, facilitating the integration of various factors such as victim and offender details, the relationship between victim and offender, property loss amounts, location of the offense, and more. This comprehensive approach enhances the accuracy and effectiveness of crime reporting and analysis.

Additionally, the Records Unit heavily relies on the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), overseen by the FBI, and the Virginia Crime Information Network (VCIN), managed by the Virginia State Police (VSP). This integral system serves as a central repository for crucial information, encompassing capias, warrants, direct indictments, probation violations, protective orders, missing children and adults, as well as stolen vehicles and articles. Through these state and national databases, law enforcement agencies can access vital data to support their investigative efforts and enhance public safety.

Despite the multitude of responsibilities and the handling of sensitive information, the Records Unit endeavors to foster a positive and engaging work environment by participating in various activities alongside the HPD. Participating in different events allows the team to unwind, build stronger bonds, and cultivate a sense of community within the department.

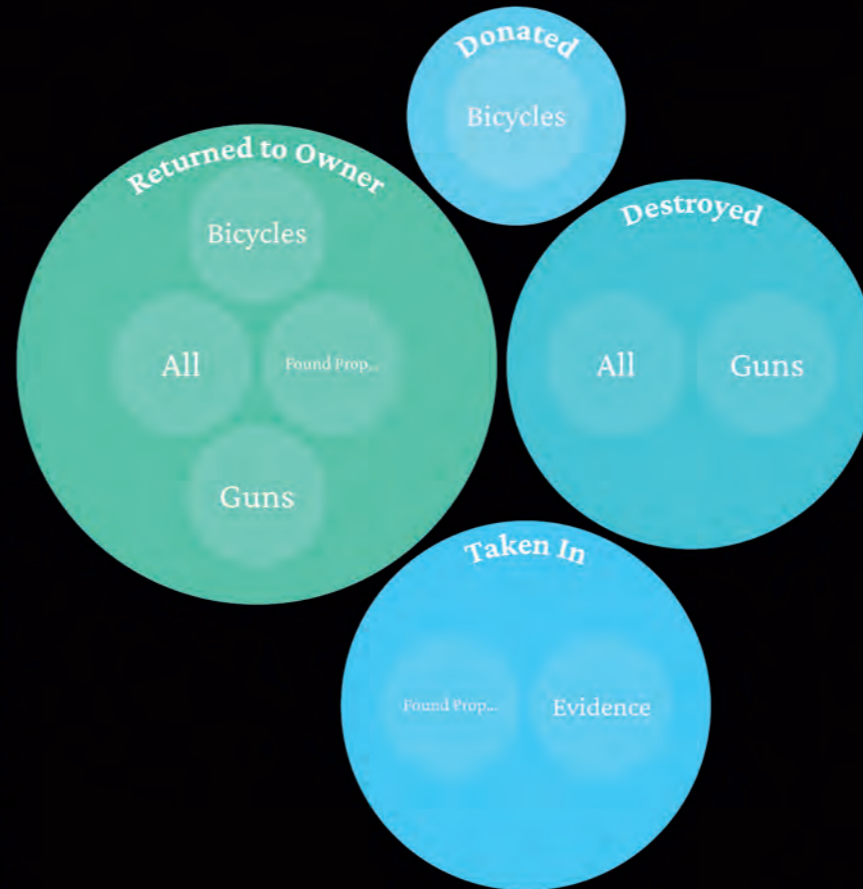


# Property and Evidence

The Evidence Unit processed over 2,000 items in 2023. Along with evidence intake, the evidence custodians make monthly trips to the Department of Forensic Science to deliver evidence for processing, and a mid-year trip to the NASA Incinerator in Hampton for the evidence destruction (as ordered). Evidence Custodian John Lamb resigned after eight years of dedicated service to the City.



Evidence Custodians Courtney Driver and John Lamb



## 2023 Numbers:

**200 Items of Found Property**  
74 items Returned to Owners

**103 Items of Property/Evidence**  
Returned to Owners

**8 Guns as Found Property**  
4 Returned to Owners

**40 Guns submitted as Evidence**  
9 Returned to Owners, 3 Destroyed

**21 Bicycles as Found Property**  
1 Returned to Owner  
18 Donated to Mercy House

**348 Items of Property/Evidence**  
Destroyed



# Honor Guard



The Harrisonburg Police Department Honor Guard was formed in 1990 and is a part-time unit comprised of sworn officers from within the department. The Honor Guard stands as a symbol of respect, tradition, and unwavering commitment to duty.



The Honor Guard also represents HPD at many ceremonies that require the national and state flag to be presented. This includes departmental swearing-in ceremonies, parades, promotions, sporting events, and others deemed appropriate.



The team's priority is to honor and pay respects to fallen officers and their families. This is accomplished through each member's personal discipline, precision, and deep sense of reverence. In the face of tragedy, the Honor Guard stands as a pillar of strength, symbolizing the unbreakable bond within the law enforcement community. Members of the Honor Guard attend services across Virginia and neighboring states.

# Grants

Several projects are funded by state and federal grant funds each year. Several programs receive recurring funding annually. In 2023 HPD was awarded funds for three **NEW** programs: purchasing new patrol vehicles and automated license plate reader cameras; hiring licensed mental health professionals to respond with officers to mental health crisis calls; and helping our Muslim and Jewish places of worship to increase security.

Program	Funding Agency	Amount	Description
ARPA Law Enforcement Equipment	VA Dpt. of Criminal Justice Services	\$302,000	Vehicles and pole cameras
Connect and Protect: Behavioral Health Response	Department of Justice	\$550,000	Enhancing mental health crisis response with qualified mental health professionals.
Combatting Hate Crimes	VA Dpt. of Criminal Justice Services	\$108,700	Enhanced security for Muslim and Jewish institutions.
Bullet Proof Vests	Department of Justice	\$10,696.91	Replacement of expired vests
Violent Crime Against Women Enhanced Enforcement Team	VA Dpt. of Criminal Justice Services	\$133,333	Dedicated detective for crimes against women (2 years)
BYRNE Equipment	Department of Justice	\$16,964	AEDs for patrol vehicles
Internet Crimes Against Children	VA Department of State Police	\$15,000	Overtime, training and equipment for ICAC detective (not grant funds)
DMV Selective Enforcement	VA DMV	\$26,995	Highway safety enforcement

# Special Operations



## Community Resource Unit/SRO/D.A.R.E.

Sgt. John Hancock  
Rebecca Bechtel  
Ronald Bowers  
Chris Terrell  
Tony Hermes



## Victim Services

Tina Abreu, Coordinator



## Traffic Unit

Sgt. Wayne Westfall  
Greg Deeds  
Kevin Argiro  
Justin Kline



## Animal Care and Control

Joseph Lezotte and  
Geoffrey Bechtel



## Auxiliary

# Community Resource Unit

The Community Resource Unit focuses on community outreach, crime prevention, and school safety. Our goal is to work with our citizens to improve the quality of life through problem-solving, crime prevention, positive community interactions, and reducing crime. The Community Resource Unit (CRU) is comprised of a CRU Sergeant, CRU Officer, four School Resource Officers and a DARE Officer. The Community Resource Unit hosts several community events and safety education classes, conducts threat assessments, and partners with local community leaders, local businesses, and nonprofit groups.



# Community Police Academy

This year the Harrisonburg Police Department celebrated 29 years of conducting its annual Community Police Academy. The CPA has grown into a 10-week program that is held every Tuesday starting in March. In 2023 we had over 20 participants from our community participate in the program. The CPA teaches the following through in-class learning and hands-on instruction:

- Emergency communications
- K9 operations
- Traffic stops and vehicle operations
- Crime scene and evidence collection
- Restorative Justice
- Driving demos
- Patrol procedures
- Major crimes and crime scene collection
- SWAT and Crisis Negotiations
- Firearms safety
- Use of force and search & seizure laws
- Gang & Drug Task Force operations



[MORE INFORMATION](#)

This past year the Harrisonburg Police Department was able to conduct its 2nd annual PATCH camp. PATCH camp stands for Pride, Accountability, Teamwork, Courage, and Honor. This program provided 16 young adults with exposure to HPD and the role it plays in our community. Its goal is to foster the camp's core values within Harrisonburg City youth by participating in a free week-long summer camp. The camp is supervised by officers within HPD and members of the Community Police Academy.

# PATCH Camp





## National Night Out



2023 marked the 40th anniversary of National Night Out. Communities from all over the Shenandoah Valley take part in this event on the first Tuesday in August. The Harrisonburg Police Department participated by visiting 5 separate locations throughout our community. Officers, city officials, and members of the community began the event by meeting at City Hall. Participants then traveled throughout the City of Harrisonburg to include the Northeast Neighborhood, Harris Gardens Apartments, VMRC, Al-Akram Mosque, and Mosby Heights Apartments. Each location had a tremendous community turnout, and we look forward to hopefully adding more locations in 2024.

# JMU Partnership

## Embracing Student Life

The Harrisonburg Police Department partners with James Madison University through several programs. HPD participates every year in the JMU Orientation's Block Party. During this downtown event, new students are welcomed to Harrisonburg and provided with safety information, K9 demonstrations, and a motorcycle escort from campus to downtown. At the beginning of every school year, HPD partners with The Office of Student Accountability and Restorative Practices (OSARP) to provide educational information on noise ordinances, alcohol violations, and safety tips for the returning JMU students. HPD provides informational flyers and delivers those by going door to door in student housing off campus. HPD also partners with OSARP in monthly meetings held at the Student Success Center. The goal is to help educate students on alcohol and drug awareness. Students can ask officers questions to become better informed on local and state laws, and provide risk-reduction strategies.







# 2023 New Programs

## Blue Envelope Program

The Blue Envelope Program is a collaboration between the Rockingham County Commonwealth Attorney's Office and the Harrisonburg Police Department. The Blue Envelope Program has been adopted by law enforcement agencies all over the country with HPD developing the first of its kind in Virginia. The provided envelope allows those with communication difficulties to better interact with officers. These difficulties may include autism spectrum disorder (ASD), anxiety, difficulty hearing, or other disorders that may impair their ability to communicate during a vehicle related encounter with law enforcement.

## High Five Fridays

This past year HPD started a program called High-Five-Fridays at all our elementary schools. Every Friday HPD officers take time to greet students as they arrive during the morning drop-off. This program is a fun and easy way to bring smiles to our students, staff, and officers. HPD looks forward to continuing this program into 2024.

## Dog Walk and Watch

The Dog Walker and Watch program was originally created by the National Association of Town Watch (NATW), the same organization that brings us National Night Out. The goal of the program (with a slight change to the title) is to encourage citizens to keep an eye out in their neighborhoods while outside every day of the year. The Harrisonburg Police Department advertised the program and accepted applications for the first training on Nov. 9th. Citizens were given an orientation and were provided with tips on how to be more observant while walking their dogs. Several members of the community participated in the first orientation, and we plan to host more trainings throughout 2024.



## School Resource Officers

The School Resource Officer (SRO) program works in cooperation with the Harrisonburg City Public Schools. There are two SROs assigned to Harrisonburg High School, and one SRO assigned to each Middle School. The SROs provide support by building positive relationships with our students, staff, and parents. The SROs conduct safety assessments and participate in classroom instruction to promote safety awareness. In addition, they provide officer coverage for school sporting events and after school functions.

# D.A.R.E.

Blue Group

9:10 - 9:30 Morning Meeting	9:35 - 10:05 Music	10:10 - 11:00 Math	11:05 - 12:10 Reading	12:15 - 1:15 Lunch	1:20 - 2:15 Science
--------------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	--------------------------	-----------------------	------------------------



Mice  
How do they get  
+ food?  
ing seeds,  
ts, fruits and  
grass  
at eats it?  
ally, snakes  
nd

Cows  
How do they get  
+ food?  
photosynthesis  
- What eats it?  
Cows, horses  
and mice  
here does it live?

I can find the quotient  
 $576 \div 3 = 192$   
 $7 \times 42 = 294$   
 $77 \times 40 = 3080$



# D.A.R.E.

## 37 years of education

HPD's Drug Abuse Resistance Education program, known by its acronym D.A.R.E., is a cornerstone in our continuing partnership with Harrisonburg City Public Schools. 2023 marked D.A.R.E.'s 37th year in Harrisonburg and the 40th year since the program was created in an innovative effort to combat illicit drug use and abuse. D.A.R.E. has been recognized as the most comprehensive K-12 prevention program in the world. While the initial focus of the program was to "just say no," the program quickly began to incorporate the life concepts that empower students to make good decisions, resist peer pressure, become effective communicators, and understand risks and consequences while learning facts about drugs and alcohol. What sets D.A.R.E. apart is that the instructor must be a law enforcement officer certified to teach the program. HPD welcomed our newest D.A.R.E. officer in 2023, Officer Rebecca Bechtel. Officer "B", as she is known to her students, excitedly began her new role in March following the retirement of longtime HPD D.A.R.E. Officer Mike Gangloff. Officer Bechtel was able to teach her very first D.A.R.E. lesson in October, by the time the school year is complete she will have taught the program to 26 4th-grade classes in the city's 6 elementary schools.



Field Day



Turks Game - D.A.R.E. Night

# Victim Services Liaison Unit (VSLU)

The VSLU works with families and witnesses impacted by crime, drug overdoses, and unexpected deaths. The unit provides support and advocacy services to the victims of crime in our community and makes partnerships throughout the City with various community resources.

## Events Attended:

- New Bridges Know Your Rights Event
- Mexican Consulate Event
- Hispanic Festival
- PATCH Camp
- Coffee with a Cop
- National Night Out
- Islamic Community Event
- Public Schools Resource Event
- Skeleton Festival
- Salvation Army events



**Tina Abreu, Victim Services Coordinator**

## Partnerships:

United Way  
Commonwealth Attorney's Office of Victim Witness  
Services  
Collins Center  
JMU and EMU Victim Services  
Church World Services  
New Bridges  
Blue Ridge Legal Services  
Community Services Board  
Social Services and Child Protective Services  
First Step and Mercy House Shelters  
People Helping People  
Strength in Peers  
Bright View  
Rockburg Cares  
Valley Associates for Independent Living

# Traffic Unit

The Harrisonburg Police Department Traffic Unit has a supervisor and three Officers, Sergeant Wayne Westfall Jr., and Career Officers Greg Deeds, Kevin Argiro and Justin Kline. The Unit's goal is to reduce injuries and deaths from traffic crashes. The Officers investigate traffic crashes, enforce speed limits, monitor traffic control devices for compliance, and focus on distracted driving. Traffic crashes are examined for causes and deployment plans are developed to focus on changing driving behaviors. Sergeant Westfall uses available databases to examine where crashes occur in the City and assigns Traffic Officers to areas for directed enforcement efforts.



Sergeant Westfall is a voting member of the City's Traffic Safety Commission and Advisory Board, working with Public Works Officials on traffic safety initiatives. Sergeant Westfall manages the accident reconstruction team (advanced accident investigators) including officers from other divisions, to investigate crashes involving serious injury or death. The team members receive specialized training in accident investigation. Unfortunately, during 2023 the team had to be called in to work crashes with serious injury and death.



Traffic officers also participate in special events by providing a visual police presence and safety to participants. The special events range from parades to festivals.



Mid-2023 HPD implemented a new traffic safety program using speed cameras in a construction zone. Officers review the footage of speeding vehicles and approve civil summons issued by the contracting agency.

# Animal Care and Control



The Harrisonburg Animal Care and Control Unit comprises two officers: a dual sworn Police Officer/ Animal Control Officer and a civilian Animal Control Officer. Career Officer/Animal Control Officer Geoff Bechtel serves as the statutory ACO for the City of Harrisonburg and has been with the Unit for eight years. 2023 was a year of changes. Our former civilian ACO left the agency, and a hiring process was held to fill the position. Joseph Lezotte was hired and attended an animal control academy. After completing the academy, Lezotte underwent field training with Officer G. Bechtel.

The Harrisonburg Animal Care and Control Unit continued its commitment to the community and the animals despite being an officer down for half the year. There were over 1600 animal-related calls for service in 2023, and despite the challenges, over half of them were handled by our Unit and the assistance of Officer Rebecca Bechtel, who is also Animal Control Certified. There were multiple seizures and cruelty cases, including a case that involved the shooting of a dog and the seizure of multiple dogs, with many people being criminally charged. The dogs all found homes, one of which stayed within the HPD family after removal from the owner.

Our unit also remained committed to community policing and outreach, taking part in most of the community events that took place throughout the year and new animal-related community events through Parks and Recreation.

# Auxiliary Police

The Auxiliary Police Unit has nineteen members who provide operational and administrative support to the Harrisonburg Police Department.

A component of the Special Operations Division, the all-volunteer Auxiliary Police Unit has eleven sworn officers-one Lieutenant, and ten officers-who have met the Commonwealth of Virginia's law enforcement training standards. Eight non-sworn members are committed solely to administrative services.

The Auxiliary Unit provides additional patrol officers during peak activity periods and handles traffic and crowd control functions at special events such as parades and other duties at special events in the city.

They also serve as members of specialty units, such as the Major Crimes Unit, Community Resources, Restorative Justice, and the Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT) as well as assisting the Department with administrative projects.



***The wide-range of private sector skills and knowledge that the Auxiliary Officers bring to the Department has proved to be an important resource in furthering the Department's mission.***

***They include photography, High-level audio-visual technologies, medical expertise, teaching, corporate management and small business entrepreneurship, education, intelligence analysis, the creative arts and firefighting.***



# Patrol Operations



A Squad



B Squad



C Squad



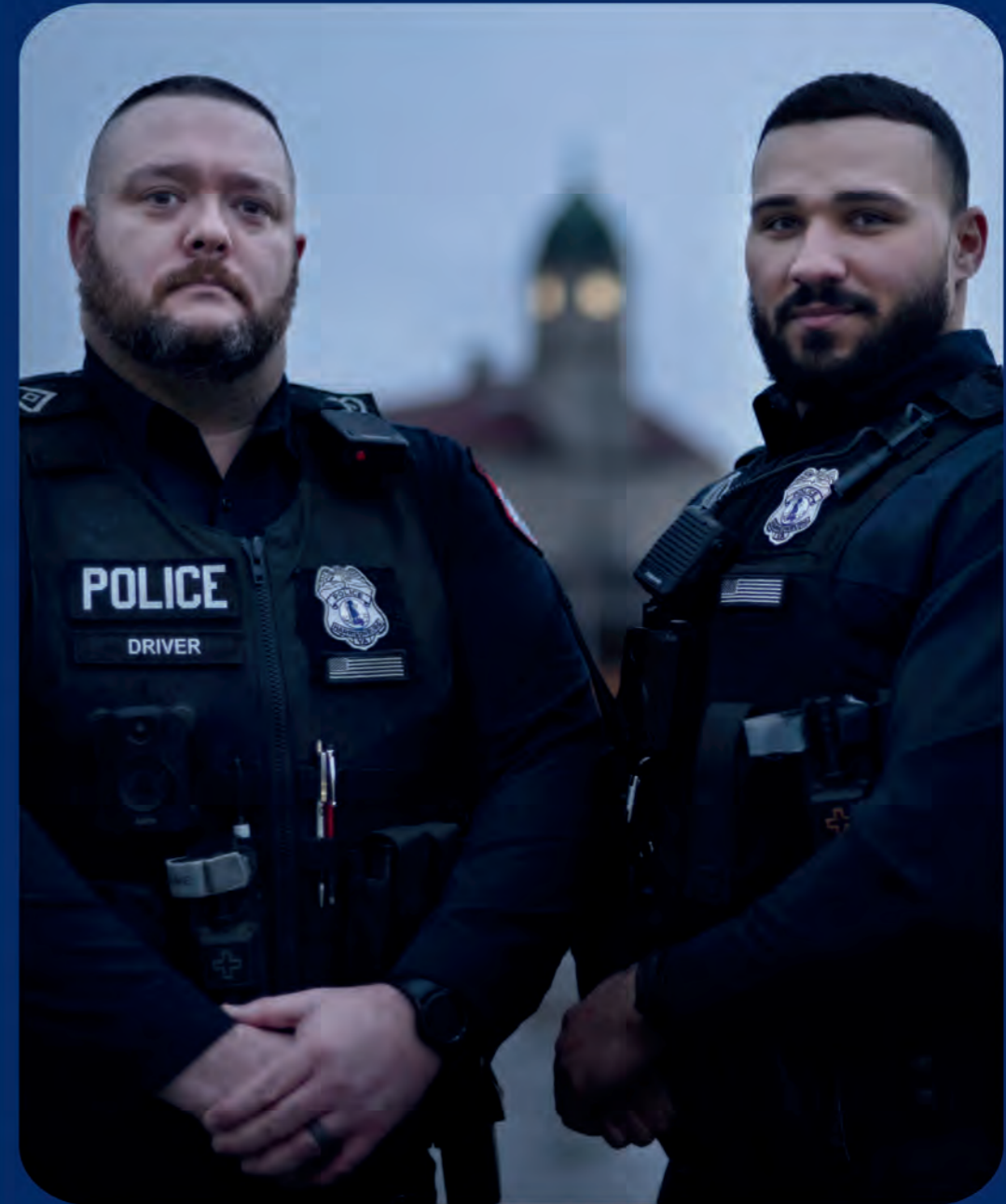
D Squad

2023 was a successful year – a year with significant changes in the Patrol Division and a year in which officers again provided excellent policing to the Harrisonburg community.

Continued staffing shortages challenged squads to meet minimum staffing requirements and the trend of a nationwide mental illness crisis continued throughout the year. However, HPD's officers rose to the challenge of delivering quality policing services despite these challenges.

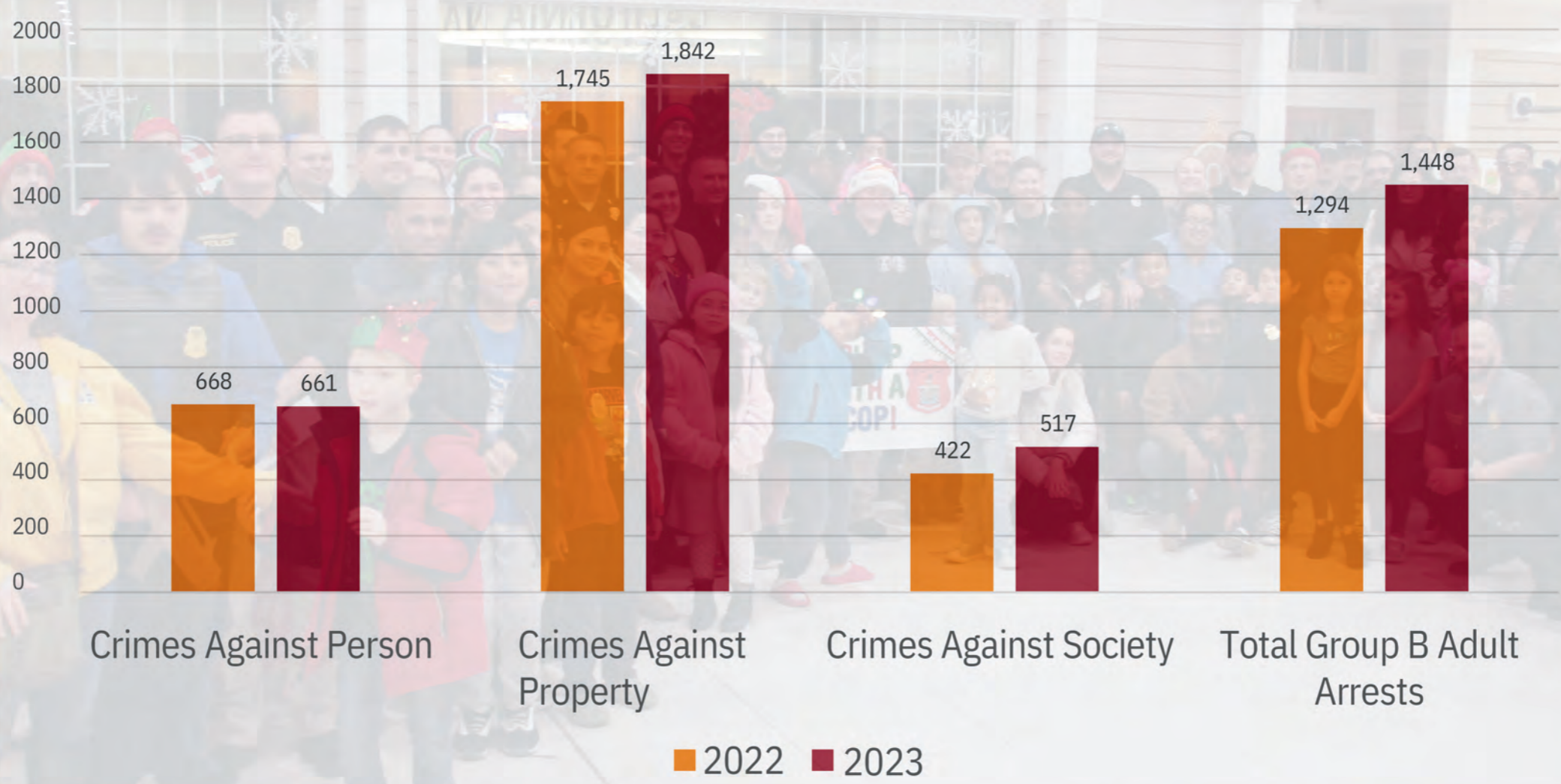
During 2023 several key promotions took place and the Patrol Division for the first time had four Lieutenants assigned to the Patrol supervisory team. Sgt. Douglas was promoted to Lieutenant in March and served as a Division Commander assigned to night shift with B Squad. In October, HPD promoted Captain Pollard and Lieutenant Miller to serve as the Department's Deputy Chiefs and the Department reorganized itself to form two bureaus from the previous design of three bureaus. Deputy Chief Miller was assigned to the Operations Bureau, comprised of the Patrol Division and the Criminal Investigations Division. Captain Kidd was transferred to the Bureau Commander of the Operations Bureau. In late-December MPO Raymann was promoted to Sergeant and began her in-house supervisory training.

While there were many accomplishments during 2023, perhaps the accomplishment with the most direct effect to the Patrol Division was the fact that 12 officers completed their initial training and received their first personnel assignment to the Patrol Division. Officers Arp, Copeland, DeAtley, Luna, John Miller, Jordan Miller, Pedroza, Pifer, Scull, Stewart, and Valencia were all new additions to the Patrol Division during 2023. As staffing continued to be a major challenge at HPD and in law enforcement agencies across the country, these additions to the Department were very positive to the division and Department as a whole.



# 2023 Statistics

## NIBRS HPD Crime Overview 2022 & 2023

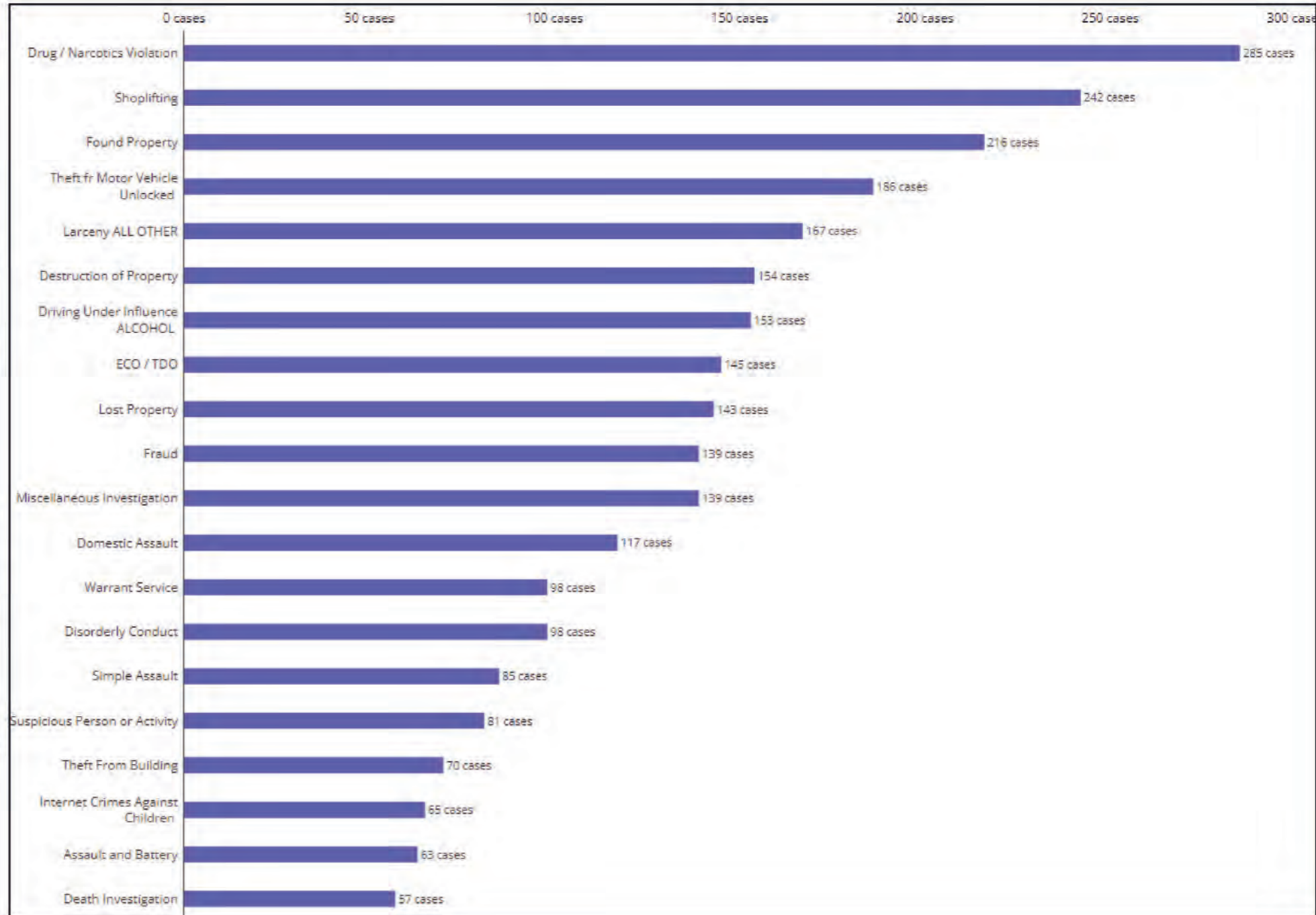


# Incident Based Reporting

## Top 20 Cases by Incident Type

NIBRS is an incident-based reporting system in which law enforcement collects data on each crime occurrence. Designed to be generated as a byproduct of local, state, and federal automated records systems, in 2011, the NIBRS collected data on each incident and arrest within 22 crime categories made up of 46 specific crimes called Group A offenses. For each of the offenses coming to the attention of law enforcement, various facts about the crime are collected. In addition to the Group A offenses, there are 10 Group B offense categories for which only arrest data are reported.

These numbers are not the same as the Calls for Service Statistics, which document officer responses



# Calls for Service Statistics

Total Calls

87,215

Citizen Generated Calls

19,675

Proactive Patrols

47,461

ECO/TDO

145

Drug Violations

287

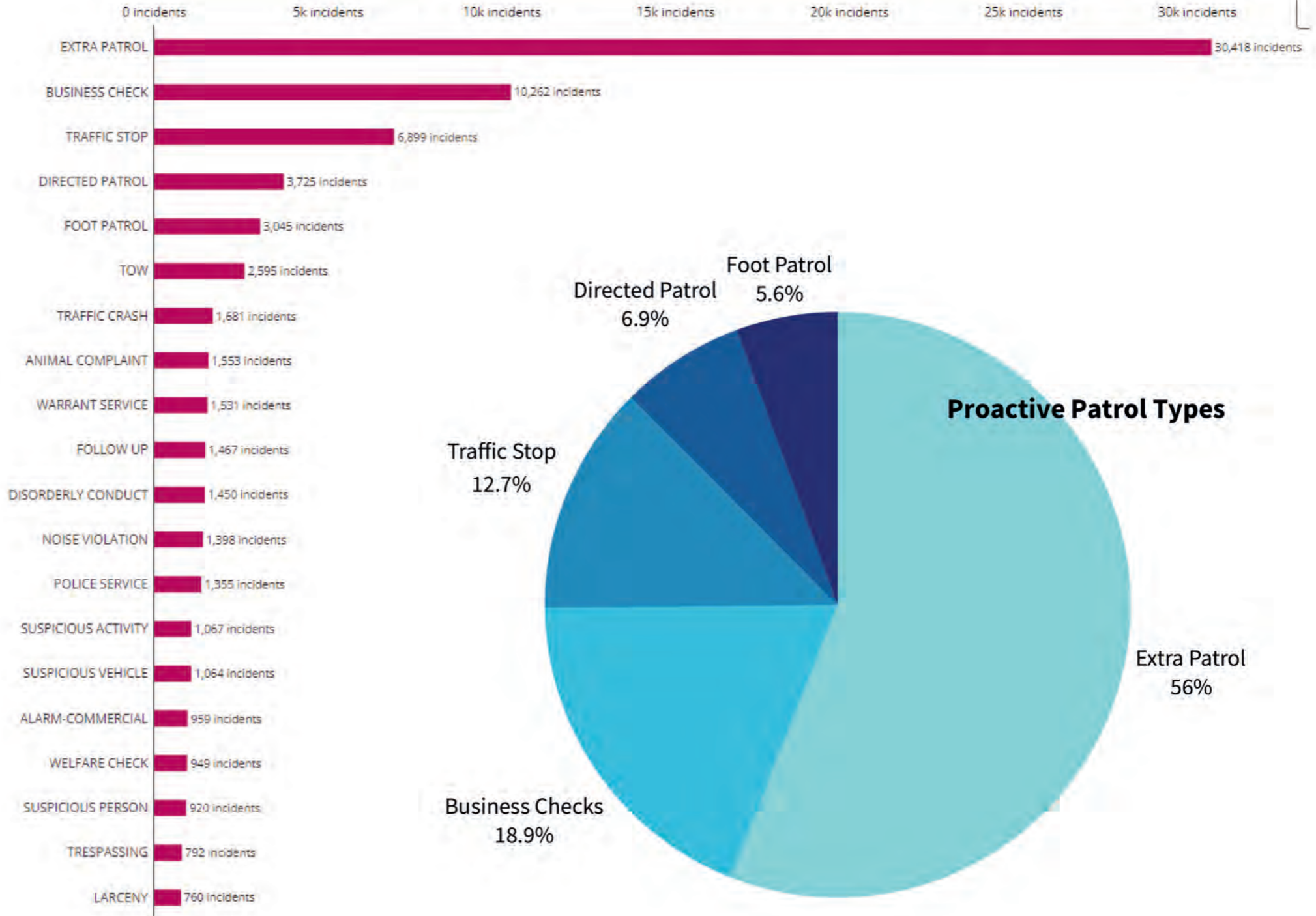
DUI/DUID Arrests

182

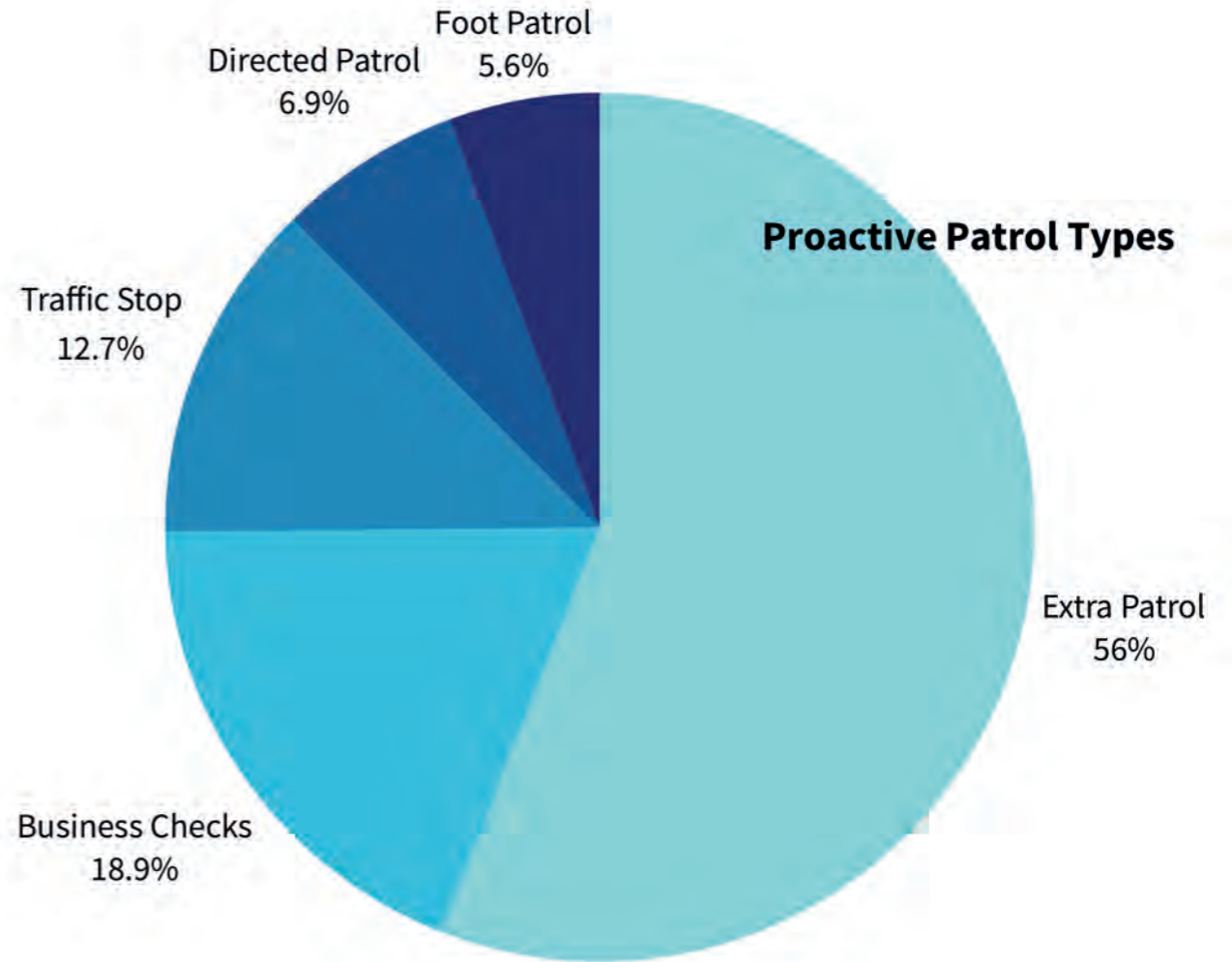
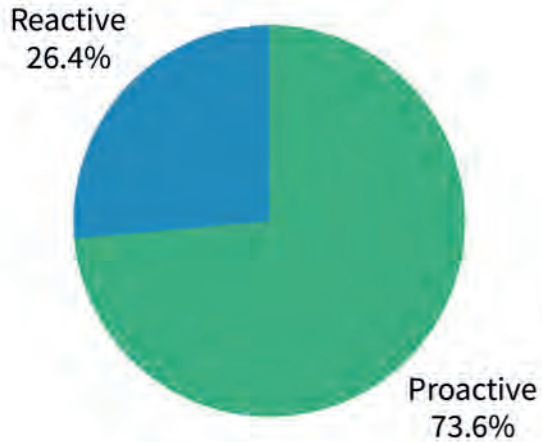
Emergency custody orders (ECOs) are involuntary mental health evaluations in which an officer takes an individual into custody for a mental health assessment with a pre-screener from the Community Services Board. Temporary detention orders (TDOs) are temporary mental health commitments, typically following an ECO, which normally require HPD officers to transport an individual to a mental health facility.

# Calls For Service

## Top 20 Responses by Call Type



The top five call types shown in the graph to the right are pro-active calls, initiated by patrol officers. This shows that 73.6 of the top 20 calls are proactive actions, with only 26.4 being reactive response to calls for help.



# Significant Calls



## Liberty Street Abduction and OIS

On May 6, 2023 Officers responded to a domestic dispute involving a firearm which developed into an abduction. The suspect led officers on a high-speed pursuit in which officers attempted several redirection measures to protect the public. These were done at great personal risk to the officers. After bringing the suspect vehicle to a stop, officers placed themselves in harm's way to rescue the hostage and protect the community from additional threat posed by the suspect. The suspect disregarded all commands and refused to relinquish his weapon, exit the vehicle, or allow the victim to leave the vehicle. The suspect engaged the officers with a firearm and the officers responded to stop the threat. Throughout the incident each officer demonstrated quick thinking and measured responses to the threats presented. Immediately after stopping the threat posed by the suspect, officers immediately rendered aid until rescue personnel arrived on location.

## Burgess Road OIS – Assist Other Agency

On June 4, 2023 HPD officers and RCSO deputies responded to a disorderly situation at Wal-Mart on Burgess Road. The suspect involved wielded a knife and charged the officers, causing a lethal force situation inside the store. HPD officers cleared and evacuated the business and then proceeded to secure the scene until Virginia State Police arrived to handle the investigation.

## Armed Robbery – Linda Lane

On November 30, 2023, HPD officers were dispatched to an armed robbery at Lowes on Linda Lane. The victim stated that he had listed a minivan for sale and that the eventual suspect had stated he was interested in a test drive. During the test drive of the vehicle, the suspect produced a firearm and ordered the victim to exit the vehicle. The suspect picked up his family who was waiting nearby and they fled the scene in the stolen minivan. Officers identified the suspects through items left at the scene and the two adults in the vehicle were later arrested in Tennessee.

## Old South High Street Burglaries

On August 1, 2023, an HPD officer observed a vehicle in the area of Old South High Street with fictitious plates. The officer had recently taken a burglary report in the area and initiated a traffic stop on the vehicle. During the stop, the driver stated he was a sovereign citizen and refused to exit the vehicle. Eventually officers had to extract the driver from the vehicle and a follow-up investigation revealed that the address on Old South High Street had been victimized in another burglary. Items from the residence were located in the suspect's vehicle and the driver was later arrested on charges stemming from the burglaries.

## Suspicious Vehicle – Serial Burglaries

On December 23, 2023, an HPD officer identified a suspect vehicle that was associated with numerous burglaries from storage units in Harrisonburg. The officers performed a traffic stop on the vehicle and several other officers assisted to investigate the matter. They identified the driver and the Major Crimes Unit assisted as well. This identification proved vital to the investigation as HPD detectives obtained a subsequent search warrant at the suspect's residence, which yielded over \$45,000 in recovered stolen property from burglaries throughout the Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, and Augusta County.





# Specialized Patrol Units



Bill Keller

In 2023 HPD was pleased to resume its Business Resource Officer program as MPO William “Bill” Keller was assigned to the Valley Mall to reboot this initiative in his part-time role at the department. In a partnership with the Valley Mall, HPD re-opened its Valley Mall substation, which also serves as MPO Keller’s base of operations. MPO Keller brings years of experience and professionalism to this position and plays a key role in preventing and investigating shoplifting offenses through his presence and the relationships he builds and maintains with businesses in and around the Valley Mall. Having a dedicated officer assigned to the area has been invaluable to patrons and businesses alike.



Don Klotz

MPO Don Klotz serves as the Downtown Resource Officer and his primary assignment is to patrol the downtown area of Harrisonburg. In this highly visible role, MPO Klotz can often be seen patrolling on his assigned bicycle. The Downtown Resource Officer serves as an ambassador, problem-solver, and resource to the visitors and businesses of the downtown area and is an important part of HPD’s partnership with the community in its community policing strategy.



Isabella Stunda

During 2023 Officer Isabella Stunda successfully completed her training as a certified Drug Recognition Expert (DRE). The DRE Program has received national acclaim for its success in identifying drug-impaired drivers. Officers trained as DREs can be called upon to assist with roadside incidents involving impaired drivers, and to differentiate between drug influence and medical and/or mental disorders. This program is an extremely valuable tool in combating the adverse effects of impaired driving and will help to ensure safer streets in the Harrisonburg community. The training consists of a 72-hour classroom session, followed by a 40-hour field certification week. Acceptance into the program is highly competitive.

# Community Engagement



Lemonade Stand



Hispanic Festival



Skeleton Festival



Pride Festival



Special Olympics Torch Run



Touch-A-Truck



*Walter Sharp is one of three part-time officers, helping to fill in when the patrol shifts fall below minimum staffing needs.*



*Ten of HPD's 18 female officers pose for an International Women's Day photo.*

# Police K-9 Unit

To maintain their patrol readiness and certification, the Harrisonburg Police K-9 team trains every Wednesday, sometimes traveling to other areas of Virginia. The Unit put in 533 hours of training in 2023. All the K-9s have maintained their certification with the Virginia Police Canine Association (VPCA). One handler and the supervisor also attended the HITS K-9 Conference in Scottsdale, AZ. This conference brings together some of the best minds from across the country to train for better and safer K-9 deployments. MPO Hummel (K-9 Vader) and MPO Flick (K-9 Kyro) competed in the 2023 Iron Dog Competition hosted by the VPCA for the last time, marking K-9 Vader's last time competing. The competition challenged the canine and handler's ability to work together to complete a grueling course with numerous obstacles. Both handlers and canines represented the Harrisonburg Police Department with distinction and honor against teams from across the state. MPO Thomas Chandler with K-9 Riggs, MPO Tyler Flick with K-9 Kyro (each Belgian Malinois), and MPO Eric Hummel with K-9 Vader (German Shepard), were assigned to the K-9 unit for 2023.



The K9 unit was also requested to assist 20 times for the patrol deployments, which consist of building searches, evidence searches, tracking, or looking for an individual who may have fled the scene. Building searches make up the largest percentage of the use for patrol deployments. Our K9 Unit was used to search for individuals two times during the year; this resulted in three arrests without incident.



### Free Air Sniffs or Search Warrants

116 deployments

52 resulted in narcotics seizures

32 resulted in arrests



### Drugs Removed from the Streets

2.97 Kilos methamphetamine

9.02 grams cocaine

259.15 grams of heroin

1 gram crack cocaine



### Other Deployments

20 patrol assists

Building searches

# Emergency Response Team



The Harrisonburg Police Department's Emergency Response Team (ERT) is a multifaceted unit that brings together two specialized teams: the Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) and the Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT). These teams collaborate to provide a comprehensive approach to handling critical incidents involving community members, police officers, and suspects. While the SWAT team focuses on tactical responses, the CNT concentrates on communication-related aspects of these situations. By working together, these teams are able to develop and implement modern strategies that align with the community's expectations for effective and efficient emergency response.

The HPD crisis negotiations team is a specialized unit within the organization tasked with managing high-stakes situations as part of an overall team with SWAT. HPD comprises nine negotiators who each train for different roles on the team, such as primary negotiator, secondary negotiator, coach, and technical specialist. CNT members train once a month to ensure they maintain proficiency with their communication skills and equipment. HPD CNT uses communication skills, empathy, patience, and the ability to remain calm under pressure. Negotiators establish rapport with the individuals involved in the crisis, de-escalate the situation, and work towards a peaceful resolution. They employ various negotiation techniques, including active listening and empathy, to understand the motivations and needs of the subjects. Overall, a crisis negotiations team operates to resolve high-pressure situations peacefully, safeguard lives, and minimize harm to all parties involved. Collaboration, communication, and strategic decision-making are central to their success in diffusing crises effectively. As part of their continued training, members attended week-long specialized training through the FBI and NATO negotiations schools.



*Emergency Response Team members review maps of the area from within the Command Post while investigating multiple attempted home burglaries on Maryland Avenue.*

## ERT IN ACTION

---

One notable example of the CNT and SWAT Teams collaborating in order to provide a comprehensive approach to handling critical incidents occurred in October 2023. Intelligence was received that a violent robbery suspect was in a residence located in the 600 block of North Liberty Street. The person was wanted on charges of Armed Robbery and Use of a Firearm in the Commission of a Felony.

Detectives relayed this information over the radio and, together with Patrol officers, established a perimeter around the residence. Additional resources were requested, and responses included SWAT, CNT, K9, and the drone and robot team. A command post was established to coordinate the use of resources and to manage the overall event. Negotiators attempted a peaceful resolution but failed when the suspect terminated communications. A progressive level of intervention included the use of the LRAD\*, PA system, cellular telephone, text messages, drones, robots, gas, K9, and SWAT operators.

SWAT operators found the suspect hiding in a bathroom cabinet and took them into custody without injury to the suspect or officers. On-scene personnel then terminated SWAT operations, collapsed the perimeter, and eventually the command post. The suspect was transported to the Public Safety Building, where he was interviewed and provided critical information, leading to additional suspects being charged and arrested.

*\*A long-range acoustic device (LRAD), acoustic hailing device (AHD) or sound cannon is a specialized loudspeaker that produces sound at high power for communicating at a distance.*

# Special Weapons and Tactics Team

The SWAT team's unwavering commitment to saving lives and protecting the community is a testament to their dedication. They willingly put themselves in harm's way, responding to a wide range of incidents, from domestic disputes to active shooter situations. Their specialized skills and equipment enable them to neutralize threats swiftly and effectively, preserving life and preventing harm. Their commitment to excellence is evident in their continuous efforts to enhance their skills and stay ahead of evolving threats. The HPD SWAT team, with its advanced training, equipment, and specialized skills, is a vital asset to the community, ensuring the safety of countless lives and the protection of the innocent.



## SWAT Roundup

In November 2023, HPD SWAT competed in SWAT Roundup International in Orlando, Florida. This highly challenging competition allows teams from around the globe to compete against one another. In total, 49 teams competed in the 2023 SWAT Roundup, which served as a great opportunity to not only compete but also learn and develop relationships around the world.



## SWAT Competition

On October 20th HPD hosted its 21st annual SWAT Competition. The event was held at the Harper-Presgraves Regional Training Center off Greendale Road. A total of 14 teams competed this year from throughout Virginia. As the host of the event, Harrisonburg does not have a competing team.

The competition is primarily a training opportunity designed to challenge SWAT officers to excel in a variety of skills under pressure, according to the press release. In the event of a major incident, it is likely that SWAT teams from more than a single agency will be deployed. These types of events promote networking and the sharing of technical expertise and ideas on equipment and tactics.

The Chesterfield County Police Department's blue team was the overall winner. The Stafford County Sheriff's Office's green team was the second-place winner, and the Chesterfield County Police Department was the third-place winner.





# HARRISONBURG PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING



**Criminal Investigations**

# Major Crimes Unit

In 2023, the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) continued to deliver the quality investigations that the City of Harrisonburg has received in previous years. However, the recent staffing challenges at HPD were particularly felt in CID in 2023, as five positions remained vacant for most of the year. As such, members of CID worked to overcome this challenge by sharing duties to ensure that the division delivered its mission to the community. The knowledge and experience possessed by the members of CID, combined with collaboration and teamwork, proved instrumental in the division's efficiency and effectiveness. From financial crimes to homicide, each detective contributed to the department's mission to reduce crime, solve problems, and improve quality of life.

When fully staffed, the Criminal Investigation Division consists of the Commander, Lieutenant Chris Monahan, Detective Sergeants LaPrevotte and Long, eight General Detectives, three Drug Task Force Detectives, two Gang Task Force Detectives, an ICAC (Internet Crimes Against Children) Detective, a Violent Crimes Against Women Detective, a Digital Forensics Detective, one lead Forensic Technician, an Administrative Specialist, and a Crime Analyst. 2023 proved to be both interesting and challenging, but the members of CID had a very successful year.

*MCU supervisors and detectives review case assignments.*



*Polygraph Operator Mike Spiggle works on a case.*

# VSTOP Detective

Within HPD's Major Crime Division, there are several specialized positions, and one of them focuses on violence against women. In 1994, the United States Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) to help better protect women. The VAWA includes the Services, Training, Officers, and the Prosecution (STOP) grant program. The Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) administers the STOP Violence Against Women grant in Virginia, known as the Virginia STOP Violence Against Women Act (VSTOP). VSTOP offers grant funds to successful applicants for activities that increase the apprehension, prosecution, and adjudication of persons committing violent crimes against women. HPD received the grant and has successfully maintained it since 2016.

Detective Aaron Dove has been the full-time Detective with Major Crimes funded by the VSTOP program since HPD was awarded the funding in 2016. While patrol officers are the initial responders in most domestic violence-related calls, Det. Dove offers support to the officers with guidance and resources.



Det. Dove's caseload is focused primarily on sexual assault cases, which can be particularly time-consuming due to the sensitive and personal nature of these offenses. Whenever crime victims need assistance with resources or navigating the justice system, he can provide that help. He also works closely with the Rockingham County Commonwealth Attorney's Office to ensure each case is reviewed and the necessary charges are in place.

In 2023, Det. Dove was assigned 63 cases, and 18 of those offenses were sexual in nature. In addition to VSTOP cases, Det. Dove also assists with major crime cases occurring in the City of Harrisonburg.

# R.U.S.H. Drug Task Force

In 2023, the R.U.S.H. Drug Task Force continued their important work of combatting those trafficking illegal narcotics in the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. The total value of narcotics confiscated by the Task Force was over 2.2 million dollars. Methamphetamine and fentanyl pills were the largest percentage of the drugs seized, with 16,518 grams and 29,421 pills, respectively. Detectives initiated 458 cases and obtained 422 charges on individuals.

Due to continued staffing issues, Detective Patrick Smoot was the sole investigator assigned to the Task Force by the HPD during 2023. Detective Smoot focused a large amount of his efforts on combatting illegal fentanyl and overdose cases, initiating 73 cases for the year (second highest on the task force).

In one notable case, Detective Smoot received multiple citizen complaints about an individual possibly selling narcotics. An investigation revealed a possible suspect with multiple drug distribution convictions and criminal street gang ties. Further investigation led to a traffic stop of the individual. A search warrant at the suspect's residence yielded 275 fentanyl pills, three ounces of methamphetamine, and 3.5 grams of cocaine. The suspect was convicted on six felony drug-related charges.

In June of 2023, Detective Smoot initiated an investigation involving several individuals suspected of distributing crack cocaine. One of these suspects was identified as the shooter in an incident that occurred in August of 2023 in Harrisonburg. Detective Smoot led an investigation with local, state, and federal partners that resulted in a buy/bust of a middleman, which then led to the successful identification of the shooting suspect. After recovering a firearm, crack cocaine, and U.S. currency during the execution of a search warrant at a hotel, the suspect was arrested on an attempted murder charge for the shooting in August.



# Key Cases

## North High Street Homicide:

In March of 2023 a male was found deceased in an apartment on North High Street. Detectives determined the incident to be a homicide. During the lengthy follow-up investigation that ensued over the next several months, detectives utilized many investigative tools surveillance footage, license plate readers, and cell phone call detail records to identify the suspect. The suspect was charged with murder in the first degree and use of a firearm while committing murder.

## Officer Involved Shooting:

In May of 2023 the Force Investigation Team (FIT) was tasked with investigating the officer-involved shooting on Liberty Street in which HPD officers engaged an armed suspect to save an abducted female victim stemming from a violent domestic incident. The FIT is a specialized group of detectives who investigate officer-involved incidents to determine potential criminal conduct. The FIT investigated this incident and referred it to the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney, where it was determined that the Officers were cleared of any criminal wrongdoing.

## East Market Street Shooting:

In August of 2023 a male victim called 911, stating that he had been shot in his vehicle at the intersection of East Market Street and Burgess Road. HPD officers and Major Crimes Detectives arrived on the scene and located three bullet strikes to the vehicle, one of which struck the victim in his upper chest, narrowly missing his heart. The victim identified a possible suspect, and detectives were able to confirm the identity of the suspect. Charges were obtained for aggravated malicious wounding, use of a firearm in the commission of a felony, and shooting into an unoccupied vehicle.



## Armed Robbery:

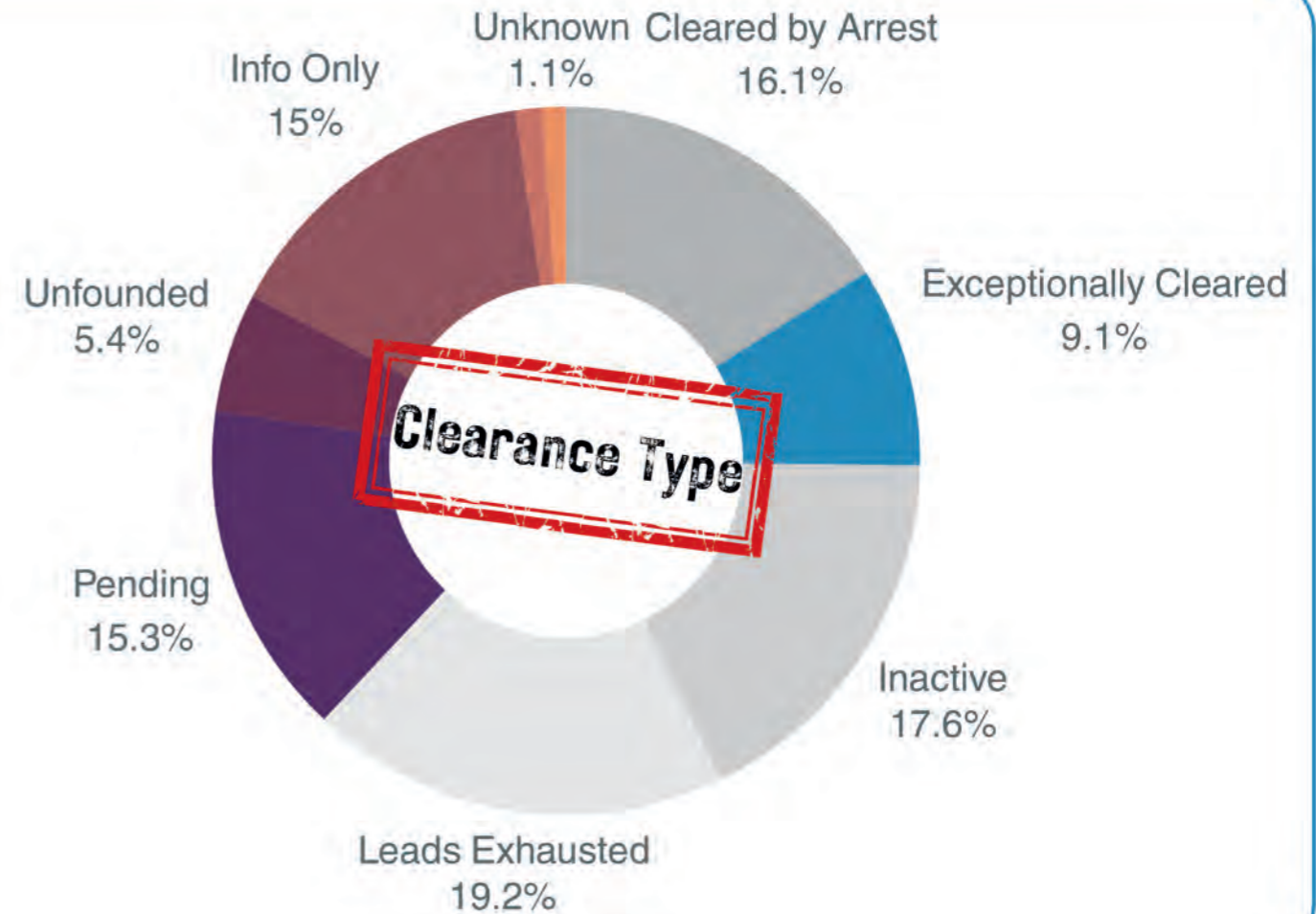
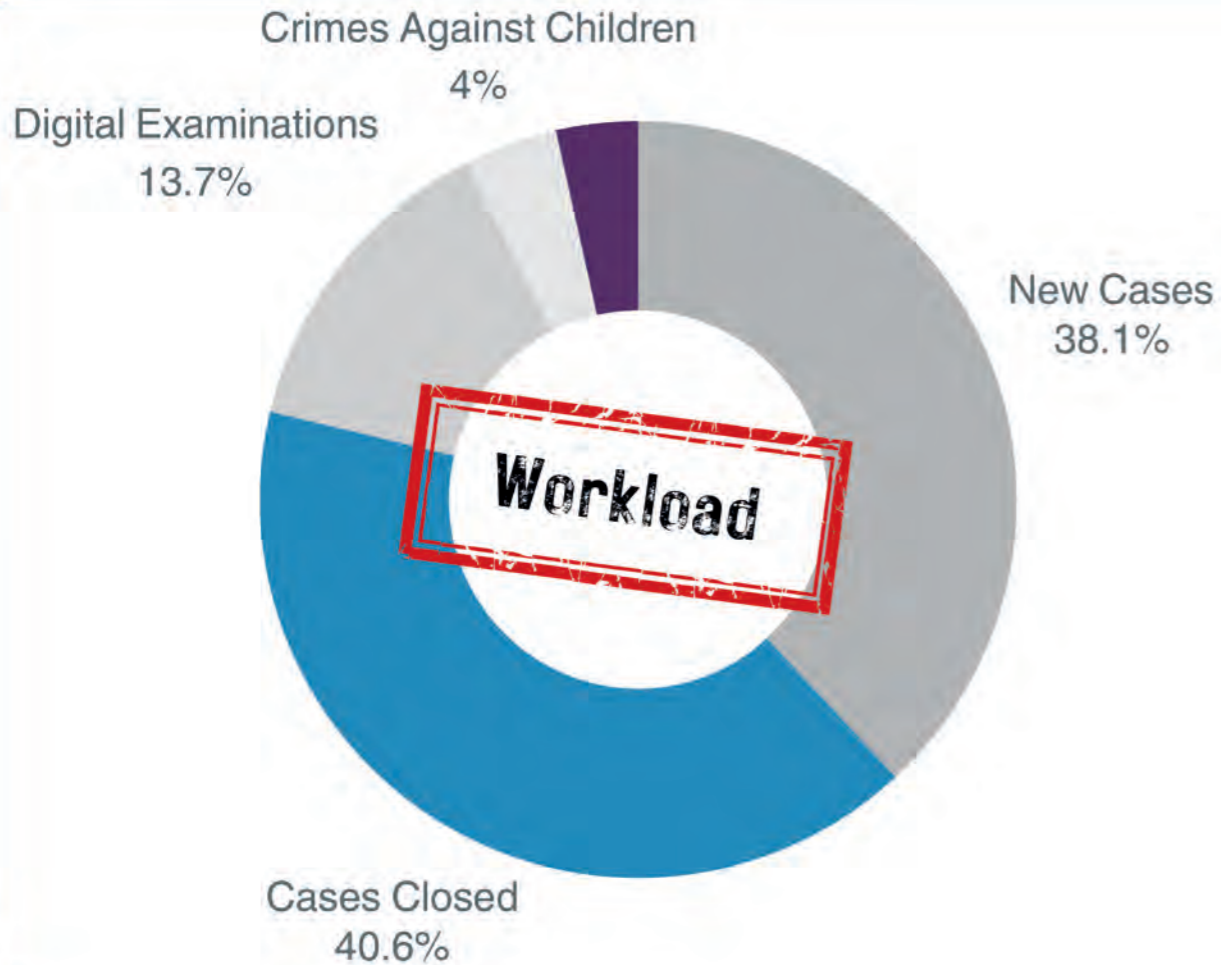
In September of 2023 detectives investigated an armed robbery at the East Market Skill Games and Vape Shop where the victim shopkeeper was robbed at gunpoint by a masked male in the early morning hours. Video surveillance showed two others in the business and a vehicle leaving the scene from the Sheetz parking lot. Eventually, detectives used license plate readers to identify the suspect vehicle. The individuals in the store at the time of the robbery were also identified. The juvenile offender was identified through further investigation, and charges were obtained. This resulted in a standoff situation on North Liberty Street in which the HPD SWAT team was able to take the offender into custody safely. It was later determined that his older brother, mother, and her boyfriend were accomplices in the crime, and charges were obtained for them as well.



## Bank Robbery:

In December of 2023, an unidentified male entered Summit Bank wearing a clown mask and demanded money. The clerk activated the hold-up alarm, and the male left on foot. Patrol officers were able to locate the male shortly after the attempted robbery. MCU detectives interviewed the suspect and a search warrant was executed at his residence. Evidence from the bank incident was recovered and the offender was charged with attempted robbery.

# 2023 Case Investigations



An aerial photograph of a city street scene. In the center, a large, multi-story building with a flat roof and several satellite dishes is visible. The building has a sign that reads "HARRISONBURG PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING". The surrounding area includes other buildings, parking lots with cars, and streets. The overall tone is slightly desaturated and has a soft, hazy appearance.

# Law Enforcement Code of Ethics

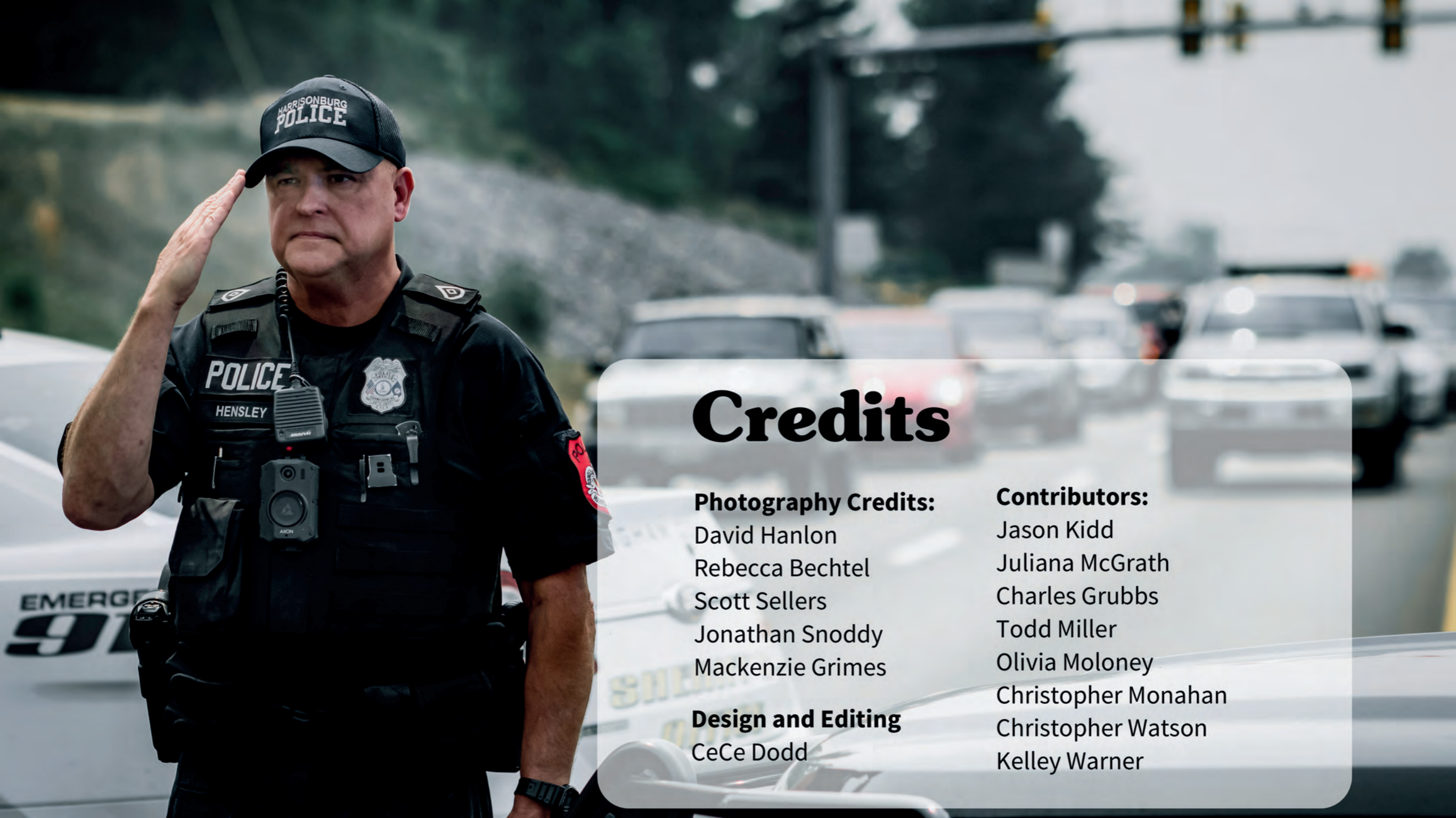
As a law enforcement officer, my fundamental duty is to serve mankind; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality, and justice.

I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all; maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn, or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be consistently mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed in both my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the laws of the land and the regulations of my department. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or that is confided to me in my official capacity will be kept ever secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.

I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, political beliefs, animosities or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities.

I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, animosities, or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately, without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities. I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held as long as I am true to the ethics of the police service. I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself to my chosen profession...LAW ENFORCEMENT."





# Credits

## Photography Credits:

David Hanlon  
Rebecca Bechtel  
Scott Sellers  
Jonathan Snoddy  
Mackenzie Grimes

## Design and Editing

CeCe Dodd

## Contributors:

Jason Kidd  
Juliana McGrath  
Charles Grubbs  
Todd Miller  
Olivia Moloney  
Christopher Monahan  
Christopher Watson  
Kelley Warner