

## **2007 Awards:**

1. An award of **Meritorious Police Duty Second Class** is presented to **Sgt. Anthony Borsella and Canine Dutch** for their actions on March 28, 2007. On that date, a crime victim reported to police that she was just robbed by two persons who stole her Ipod. Sgt. Borsella, while patrolling the area of Colonial Avenue, observed two males fitting the description of the Robbery suspects. Upon observing Sgt. Borsella, the two suspects began to flee. As they started to run from Sergeant Borsella, the suspects were told that Dutch, who was barking and very excited, would be released to assist with their apprehension. Upon hearing that, both suspects stopped immediately. With the assistance of officers Christopher Casucci and Danny Green, both suspects were placed under arrest, searched and transported to headquarters. Both suspects were identified by the victim and charged with Robbery in the Second Degree.

For their actions in this case, **Sgt. Anthony Borsella and Dutch** are presented with Meritorious Police Duty Second Class. Meritorious Police Duty Second Class is awarded to a member of the Department who in the performance of police duty has significantly contributed through the performance of good police work, leading to the arrest and apprehension of criminal offenders or to criminal investigations which lead to a successful conclusion. Recipients of this award receive a Blue-White bar for their uniform and a Mayor's letter of commendation.

For their actions in this case, **Officers Christopher Casucci and Danny Green** are presented with an Honorable Mention Certificate. An Honorable Mention Certificate is awarded to a member of the department who shall perform his routine police duties in an efficient manner and which is worthy of recognition but not eligible for one of the other citations. Recipients of this award shall receive a Letter of Commendation from the Mayor.

2. An award of **Meritorious Police Duty Second Class** is presented to **Patrolman Ahmed Artola**, for his actions on April 27, 2007. Sergeant Daryl Jackson and Officers Christopher Casucci and Jason Pallett responded to an Assault at 313 Fifth Avenue. Upon arrival they discovered the victim bleeding profusely from the nose and her left hand. Officer Pallett assisted the victim, requested medical personnel to respond, and broadcast a description of the suspect over the police radio. Officer Artola, who was working an off duty traffic detail at First and Lincoln Avenues, observed the wanted person walking in front of 33 Lincoln Avenue. Artola notified the other responding units of his observation and with the assistance of Sergeant Jackson and Officer Christopher Casucci, proceeded to place the suspect under arrest. Through further investigation it was determined that the suspect had forcibly dragged the victim along the ground for a distance of over thirty feet and had forcibly removed a bracelet from the victim. The suspect was charged with Robbery in the third degree, Assault in the third degree and Possession of Marihuana.

For his actions in this case **Officer Ahmed Artola** is presented with Meritorious Police Duty Second Class. Meritorious Police Duty Second Class is awarded to a member of the Department who in the performance of police duty has significantly contributed through the performance of good police work, leading to the arrest and apprehension of criminal offenders or to the criminal investigations which lead to a successful conclusion. Recipients of this award receive a Blue-White bar for their uniform and a Mayor's letter of commendation.

For their actions in this case, **Sergeant Daryl Jackson and Officers Christopher Casucci and Jason Pallett** are presented with an Honorable Mention certificate. An Honorable Mention Certificate is awarded to a member of the department who shall perform his routine police duties in an efficient manner and which is worthy of recognition but not eligible for one of the other citations. Recipients of this award shall receive a Letter of Commendation from the Mayor.

3. An award of **Meritorious Police Duty Second Class** is presented to **Patrolman Ahmed Artola**, for his actions on July 11, 2007. While on patrol, officer Artola observed a vehicle fail to properly signal prior to making a right turn on to Boulevard West. Officer Artola activated his overhead emergency lights in an attempt to stop this vehicle. Once the driver realized a police officer was attempting to pull him over, he began to speed up. Officer Artola, activated his siren, notified headquarters that he was in pursuit of the vehicle and gave a description of the wanted vehicle. The pursuit went through Mt. Vernon onto Sanford Boulevard, back into Pelham then southbound on the northbound lanes of the Hutchinson River Parkway. When the driver realized he was going the wrong way on the parkway he made a u-turn, now preceding north on the parkway. Desk officer Carden notified all responding officers that the vehicle was a stolen vehicle. The suspect vehicle now exited the parkway at Pelhamdale Avenue and proceed into Eastchester. Eventually, the suspect came back through Pelham on Lincoln Avenue and then into New Rochelle. All responding Pelham officers with the assistance of New Rochelle Police Officers affected a Felony stop on North Avenue where the suspect was placed under arrest. The suspect was charged with Felony Reckless Endangerment First Degree, Criminal Possession Stolen Property Fifth Degree, Reckless Driving, and Unlawful Fleeing a Police Officer in a Motor Vehicle and Unlicensed Operator Second Degree.

For his actions in this case **Officer Ahmed Artola** is presented with Meritorious Police Duty Second Class. Meritorious Police Duty Second Class is awarded to a member of the Department who in the performance of police duty has significantly contributed through the performance of good police work, leading to the arrest and apprehension of criminal offenders or to the criminal investigations which lead to a successful conclusion. Recipients of this award receive a Blue-White bar for their uniform and a Mayor's letter of commendation.

For their actions in this case, **Sergeants Anthony Borsella and James Mitrione and Officers Sean Mc Dowell and Orlando Baerga** are presented with an Honorable Mention certificate. An Honorable Mention Certificate is awarded to a member of the department who shall perform his routine police duties in an efficient manner and which is worthy of recognition but not eligible for one of the other citations. Recipients of this award shall receive a Letter of Commendation from the Mayor.

4. An award of **Meritorious Police Duty Second Class** is presented to **Detectives Richard Deere and John Hynes** for their actions leading to the arrest of a Robbery suspect. On December 14, 2007 a pedestrian walking on Pelhamdale Avenue in the area of Colonial school was approached from behind by an unknown male with a knife. This male demanded the victim hand over her pocketbook. The victim threw the pocketbook at him and asked him not to hurt her. The male suspect then ran south on Pelhamdale towards Colonial Avenue. Searches of the area by patrol units were unable to locate the suspect. The next day, the Detectives contacted Citibank and were informed that a debit card in the victims name was used at four different locations in Mt. Vernon shortly after the robbery. After receiving this information the Detectives went to Target and TJ Max in Mt. Vernon and obtained a copy of the surveillance video of the suspect who used the debit card. The detectives then had still photos of the suspect made from the video. The detectives showed a video of a person shopping in Target to the victim. The victim advised the detectives that the person on the video appears to be the same person who robbed her. From viewing the video the Detectives ascertained that the person might be a high school student. In an effort to identify him, they proceeded to Mt. Vernon High School to show a copy of the photo to security officers at Mt. Vernon High School. Security personnel were able to identify the suspect. With this information the Detectives put together a photo array for the store clerks, where the debit card was used and the Robbery victim to view for identification of the suspect. The suspect was positively identified, located and placed under arrest for Forcible Robbery with a Weapon.

For their actions in this case **Detectives Richard Deere and John Hynes** are presented with Meritorious Police Duty Second Class. Meritorious Police Duty Second Class is awarded to a member of the Department who in the performance of police duty has significantly contributed through the performance of good police work, leading to the arrest and apprehension of criminal offenders or to the criminal investigations which lead to a successful conclusion. Recipients of this award receive a Blue-White bar for their uniform and a Mayor's letter of commendation.

**5.** An **Honorable Mention Award** is presented to **Detective John Hynes** for his actions leading to the arrest of a burglary suspect. On June 17, 2007 the police department received a report of a burglary that occurred sometime between Friday, June 15, 2007 and Sunday, June 17, 2007 on the second floor apartment at 421 Fifth Avenue. While investigating the burglary Detective Hynes learned of a surveillance video camera in the business next to the burglary location. Detective Hynes was able to make a copy of the video spanning the time frame of the burglary of the unoccupied apartment. Through his diligence, reviewing over 48 hours of the videotape, he was able to see a male enter the apartment through the side door. The victim recognized the suspect and was able to identify the burglar. He was later questioned and placed under arrest for Burglary.

For his actions in this case, **Detective John Hynes** is presented with an Honorable Mention certificate. An Honorable Mention Certificate is awarded to a member of the department who shall perform his routine police duties in an efficient manner and which is worthy of recognition but not eligible for one of the other citations. Recipients of this award shall receive a Letter of Commendation from the Mayor.

**6.** An **Honorable Mention Award** is presented to **Detective John Hynes** for his actions leading to the arrest of a burglary suspect. On August 26, 2007 officers responded to an activated alarm at a commercial establishment. Upon arrival, officers discovered the window on the front door had been smashed, allowing an unknown person to gain entry. Detective Hynes was contacted, processed the crime scene and interviewed the business owner. During the interview the owner informed Detective Hynes of a video camera at the business next to his establishment. Detective Hynes review the video, was able to see the suspect running northbound on Fifth Avenue out of the parking lot from where the burglary occurred, but was unable to make identification. Detective Hynes then proceeded to another local business that has a video surveillance camera. While reviewing the video from this establishment, he observed the same person who was running from the burglary scene, to be walking past the video camera and he was able to identify the suspect from previous encounters with him. Knowing where the suspect is employed Detective Hynes went there and placed the suspect under arrest. The suspect was charged with Burglary in the Third degree and Criminal Mischief in the Third degree.

For his actions in this case, **Detective John Hynes** is presented with an Honorable Mention certificate. An Honorable Mention Certificate is awarded to a member of the department who shall perform his routine police duties in an efficient manner and which is worthy of recognition but not eligible for one of the other citations. Recipients of this award shall receive a Letter of Commendation from the Mayor.

7. On July 30, 2007 at 4:25PM, Pelham headquarters was notified that a landscaping van was just stolen from Colonial Avenue. Witnesses stated that the van was last seen traveling westbound on Colonial Avenue towards Mt. Vernon. All Pelham units began a canvass of the area and a canvass of Mt. Vernon. After a few minutes, Pelham Manor Officer Timothy DiSantola observed the van parked on South First Avenue in Mt. Vernon. The van appeared to be unoccupied and the rear door was open and it appeared that all the tools and equipment had been removed. Officers from Pelham, Pelham Manor and Mt. Vernon K-9 units began a foot canvass of the immediate area and found all the property in the rear yard of a nearby property. Questioning of residents of that area led Pelham detectives to a suspect. This person was found and subsequently arrested and charged with Grand Larceny and Unauthorized Use of a Motor Vehicle.

For his action in this case, the Village of Pelham presents Pelham Manor Police Officer Timothy DiSantola with an **Honorable Mention Award**.

8. An award of **Exceptional Merit, Second Class** is presented to **Det. Richard Deere**, and also to **Lt. Christopher Calabrese, Det. William Hess and Det. Terry Malone of the Westchester County Department of Public Safety**

On July 18, 1983, Josephine O'Keefe was found murdered in her apartment in the Village of Pelham. She was strangled with a dog leash and it appeared that she was sexually assaulted.

At the time of the homicide, a vaginal swab was taken from the victim and held as evidence. Additionally, a hair follicle was found and held for evidence. It was obvious that this hair did not belong to the victim. For the first 17 years of the investigation, focus was placed on two suspects who were in the area on that weekend, and had a connection to the victim. With advancements in DNA technology continuing each year, in the late 90's the 2 suspects were asked to provide a DNA sample in which they complied. After the samples were taken, they were compared to the sample from the vaginal swab and both proved to be negative.

With this information, in 2000, Detective Rick Deere began to look at the case and to look for other suspects. He took an interest in a person named in the original report who appeared to be somewhat of a vagrant. He did odd jobs around the apartment building, also working at a local store located on the ground floor of the apartment building. Deere's investigation revealed that this person was also known to sleep on the roof of the Apt. building and sometimes in the halls or the basement. The person gave the name of Kenny Jones, but Deere quickly learned that his real name was Kenny West.

As this case was so old, Deere sought out the help of the Westchester County Department of Public Safety. Three investigators were assigned to help out on the case, William Hess and Terry Malone, along with Lt. Christopher Calabrese. These investigators made 2 trips to Florida to re-interview one of the original

suspects and also took trips to upstate NY to interview the other. After the interviews were complete, Deere, Malone Hess and Calabrese all believe that the 2 original suspects were not involved and that their efforts should be concentrated on West. During this time period, Calabrese also placed an order to develop a DNA profile on the vaginal swab. This was done and a profile was obtained and placed into CODIS.

Deere tried to get some background info on West. He learned that he was in jail on a manslaughter charge for his involvement in the shooting death of a Mt. Vernon bouncer. Deere learned that West's charge was reduced from murder because he cooperated with investigators in turning states evidence against his co-defendant. As Deere began to look for West in the Dept. of Corrections database, he found that West had been transferred to a Federal facility. Federal Correction Officers would not provide any details where West was being held but only said that he would be released in April 2006.

During this time, Deere was also talking to some residents who lived in the apartment building in 1983 and were still around Pelham. As he gathered more and more information, he and the other investigators felt that West was becoming more than a person of interest.

When West was finally released from federal prison, he was out on Parole. Shortly thereafter, he violated his parole and was placed back in prison. This time in a NY State facility. As a normal course of business, prison officials would take a DNA sample. Knowing this, Deere pressed prison officials to rush West's sample analysis. They finally acquiesced and in August, 2007, West's DNA sample matched the vaginal swab sample that was taken from the Victim.

Armed with this knowledge, all four investigators worked on strengthening the case against West. During the investigation, the detectives learned that Mt. Vernon PD had an unsolved homicide from 1986. The detectives advised MVPD investigators of West and the fact that he used to work at a bar very close to where this unsolved homicide victim was found. The Detectives worked with MVPD Detectives comparing notes on West. Eventually, it was learned that West was linked to the Pelham case by statements made to Mount Vernon Detectives while they were investigating their case. Other statements were made to the Detectives that linked West to both cases.

In March 2008, after meeting with representatives from the DA's office and relaying all the information on both cases, the DA's decided to bring both cases to the Grand Jury. The result was that West was indicted in both cases on Murder charges.

The Josephine O'Keefe murder case was finally solved due to the joint effort and teamwork of Detective Rick Deere of the Pelham PD, Detectives William Hess and Terry Malone and Lt. Christopher Calabrese of the Westchester County Department of Public Safety. These investigators spent many hours and traveled

long distances to interview and re-interview witnesses. Their persistence was a vital component in bringing this case to a successful conclusion. After 25 years, a very cold case was solved due to some hard core investigating and dogged determination.

For their actions in this case, Det. Rick Deere and Lt. Christopher Calabrese, Dets. Terry Malone and William Hess are presented with an Award of Exceptional Merit Second Class. This award is presented to officers who intelligently discharge their police responsibilities and perform an act of exceptional and outstanding police work with or without the presence of Danger. Recipients of this award receive a Red/White/Blue ribbon with Gold Medal which contains the New York State Emblem. They also receive a Red/White and Blue bar with a star in the center, for their uniform, a Mayor's Letter of Commendation and 2 days leave of Absence.