

Fallen officers recognized by area law enforcement

Written by Harry Colbert Jr.
Thursday, 16 May 2013 14:53



Officers from throughout the metro honored their fallen comrades as a part of Peace Officers Memorial Day.

In a Wednesday (May 15) ceremony inside the Minneapolis City Hall Rotunda, officers from the Minneapolis Police Department and the Hennepin County Sheriff's Department gathered to pay tribute to area officers killed in the line of duty. Minneapolis Police Chief Janee Harteau said she is thankful that two more officers would not have to be memorialized following a May 10 shooting incident that led to two officers being shot. Both officers survived the incident. This suspect was killed.

"We will be forever grateful that two of our own were not killed in the line of duty last Friday (May 10)," said Harteau, who said on average, nationwide, one officer is killed in the line of duty every 57 hours.

The chief became emotional when she recalled the days of her being selected to head the Minneapolis department and her first day on the job. Harteau said she could not revel in joy because at the same time, Cold Spring officer Tom Decker was killed in the line of duty.

"On the day I was confirmed, I learned of Tom Decker's (death)," said Harteau, wiping away tears. "It should have been a joyous day, but I was heart broken. I didn't know Tom Decker but I didn't need to; we are cops. My first day as Minneapolis chief wasn't spent in Minneapolis; it was spent in Cold Springs at Officer Decker's funeral."

Lt. Bill Whisney of the Minneapolis Police Department read off the names of 61 area officers killed in the line of duty, beginning with Robert Laughlin of the Minneapolis Police Department, who was killed on July 28, 1884 and culminating with Mike Pollitz of the St. Louis Park Police, who was killed in November of 2011.

Hennepin County Sheriff Richard Stanek said it is important to remember every officer who gave the ultimate sacrifice to protect the general public.

"The only thing I know for sure is those of the Minneapolis Police Department and the Hennepin

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County Sheriff's Department and officers of surrounding counties will never forget (those killed in the line of duty)," said Stanek. "God bless the peace worker."

Similar ceremonies were held throughout the nation and around the area including in St. Paul.