

## **VIRGINIA LAW ENFORCEMENT: A COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY**

I have visited the National Law Enforcement Officer's Memorial in Washington D.C. with my family. What a moving experience to see all of the names of officers who have given their lives for simple people like me. It is a very moving and touching encounter that everyone should experience. It will make you appreciate be and thankful that we have people who dedicate their lives to protect the people

The Virginia Law Enforcement theme "Commitment to Community" means a lot of things, especially to me. This theme means things like putting your life in danger for someone else, your community and your fellow man, or not coming home to your family until you finish things that have to be solved. It means getting a phone call in the middle of the night and not even thinking twice about leaving your family to go help another family in greater need. It stands for leaving your own children when somebody else's child needs help. It means caring for others and putting others before yourself. It means protecting. It means serving. It means never knowing from one call to another whether it will be your last. These are just a few of the things that the Virginia Law Enforcement theme means. It means putting one's community first . Being a law enforcement officer means never knowing when that life threatening moment might come, but knowing it could be on the very next call. Their families also know all of the above. I believe a true law enforcement officer is a "Call To Duty", a call made from God. God knows what it takes to be an officer and I believe he hand picks these special people.

Police officers are very involved in the communities that they work in. They are seen talking with the people of the community to find out what needs to be done within the community and what is going on in the community. Police officers take up time with the children in the community trying to keep them off the streets by giving them different activities

to do and just trying to instill trust. They attend school functions such as baseball, basketball, and football games to make sure that the children of the community are in a safe environment. Some police officers even go to school with the children in the community to protect them. Officers monitor public places of interest such as malls, theaters, recreation facilities, and local stores just to make sure that nothing goes wrong and if it does then they are there to do something about it.

Police officers go to work when no one else does. Officers of Virginia are on call twenty-four hours, seven days a week when most everybody else works a nine to five job. When the average person gets off his or her job for holidays such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Easter a police officer does not, he/she stays at his job to protect and serve the people of his community. When something goes wrong in the middle of the night when everybody else is asleep, a police officer is there to figure things out and again make sure his community is safe. At six in the afternoon when families are eating together and sharing how their day went, a police officer is still at his job making sure you are safe.

I have seen all of the above in its entirety. I have been at the kitchen table eating dinner with an empty space. I have been awoken during the night by the ringing of the telephone. I have been laying awake at night wondering if the telephone call was the "last call". I have heard the call for the S.W.A. T. team to come immediately. I have lived all of the above for you see, I am the son of a veteran police officer. My father has been a police officer for twenty eight years, and still is to this day. I admire his caring and dedication. It has made me a better person to see through him just what it takes to be that officer that so many people depend on.