

2018

Visalia Police Department
ANNUAL REPORT







### Mission Statement

The City of Visalia Police Department has been established to preserve the public peace, prevent crime, detect and arrest violators of the law, protect life and property, and enforce criminal laws of the State of California and Ordinances of the City of Visalia.

# Organizational Values

The Visalia Police Department has a recognized set of values that operate within the organization. We see these not as the dictate of one individual group, but as a set of shared common beliefs; these shared values provide a common cause for all employees in the organization.

Integrity, Service, Fiscal Responsibility, and Our People.



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# City of Visalia

Serving as the cultural, economic, and commercial hub of Tulare County, the City of Visalia continues to grow – in population, diversity, and sophistication. Visalia's community takes great pride in the small town feel and high quality of life that accompanies big city amenities.



The City of Visalia is centrally located in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley and draws visitors from metropolitan areas with its stunning backdrop of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

# Acknowledgements



Visalia City Council 2018

Top Row (L-R): Council Member Steve Nelsen, Mayor
Warren Gubler, Council Member Greg Collins.

Bottom Row (L-R): Council Member Phil Cox, Council
Member Bob Link.



Randy Groom
Visalia City Manager



# About the Cover

Visalia Police Department's Honor Guard is led by Sergeant Paul Esquibel. The Honor Guard is pictured on the cover page, top left photo (L-R): Officer Isaac Stephens, Officer Daniel Gonzalez, Officer Robert Avalos, Officer Miguel Leon, Officer Miles Chorley, Officer Vincent Muto, and Officer Samantha Gonzales. Visalia Police Department's Honor Guard is often asked to provide a range of ceremonial functions at Department, City, and civic events. This year, the Honor Guard attended 10 law enforcement funerals, posted/presented colors at nine (9) events, and attended three (3) trainings.



# **Contact Information**

Λ	Ы	Ы	ress
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303 S. Johnson St. Visalia, CA 93291

#### **Emergency Assistance**

9-1-1

#### Non-Emergency Assistance

(559) 734-8116 (559) 734-8117

#### **Records Unit**

(559) 713-4222

#### **Online Reporting**

and Anonymous Tips

www.visalia.city/VPD

#### Duty Officer Desk

(559) 713-4257

#### Concept by:

Carina Mello
Former Senior Administrative Assistant
Chief's Office

#### Photo Credits:

Gary Williams
Sergeant
Professional Standards Bureau

#### **Editor:**

Araceli Delatorre
Administrative Assistant
Chief's Office

# Message from Chief Jason Salazar







This year's annual report highlights various operations within the Visalia Police Department that all contribute to the provision of professional law enforcement services and towards a higher quality of life for Visalia. In 2018, the Visalia Police Department responded to more than 136,000 Police calls for service within the city, a 4% increase from 2017. Most importantly, there was a 7% decrease in Part 1 Crimes in 2018 with reductions in both property and violent crimes, as well as a continued decrease in gang-related violent crimes, which is down by 93% over a 10-year span.

Despite the reduction in Part 1 Crimes, we continue to pursue effective strategies to reduce homelessness and its impacts on our community. Homelessness is genuinely a community-wide issue that requires strong collaborations and community participation to address. This year, we were excited to introduce a new partnership between the Visalia Police Homeless Outreach and Proactive Enforcement (HOPE) Team and Tulare County Mental Health Services. This partnership pairs a mental health worker with HOPE Officers in the field to provide direct services to those in need to address chronic homelessness and mental health issues through more effective solutions and services rendered. This has been a very positive and successful partnership that we hope to build on in the future.

This year also saw the introduction of body-worn cameras on all uniformed personnel, as well as the launch of our Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) program. The body-worn cameras have already proven to be a valuable tool in capturing evidence, building community trust, and providing protection for our officers. The UAS program has also offered another resource that enhances our operations and increases officer safety in certain situations. An upgrade to the Department's 9-1-1 system (completed in 2018) also sets the stage for **Text to 9-1-1** capability to launch in 2019.

This year's most notable case is the resolution to a cold case homicide and string of crimes that terrorized Visalia in the mid-1970s, known as the Visalia Ransacker crimes. This series of crimes involved the murder of Visalian Claude Snelling and, despite tremendous efforts over the years, remained unsolved until 2018. The Visalia Ransacker was long believed to be the same person as the Golden State Killer - a serial killer who committed violent crimes throughout the State in the 1970s and 1980s. Through DNA advancements, the Golden State Killer was identified and arrested this past year. Through continued investigation, the Golden State Killer was also identified as the Visalia Ransacker (more on page 38), closing a painful chapter in Visalia's history and bringing justice to those who were victimized by his crimes many years ago.

I am always proud of the excellent police work carried out daily by all VPD staff. Many of our staff were recognized for their work at the Visalia Police Department's first Annual Awards Ceremony. Those staff members were presented with Employee of the Year Awards, Watch Commander Awards, Life Saving Medals, Medals of Meritorious Service, and Medals of Valor. I am honored to work with these great men and women who serve Visalia, and we are very blessed to be part of this great community.

Thank you!



# Command Staff

#### **Captain Brian Winter** Operations



**Captain Steve Phillips** 



**Lieutenant Brent Abbott** District 1 Commander



**Lieutenant Osvaldo Dominguez** District 2 Commander



**Lieutenant Amy Watkins** Special Enforcement Bureau

Command Staff is responsible for the overall management and leadership of the organization, working with staff, the City organization, and the community to develop both short and long term public safety strategies and partnerships that ensure for efficient and effective operations.



Lieutenant Luma Fahoum Night Watch Commander



**Lieutenant James Andrews** Night Watch Commander

**Operations Support** 



Lieutenant Ron Epp Investigations Bureau



Veronica McDermott Support Services Manager



Lieutenant Candido Alvarez Professional Standards Bureau

The Financial Analyst reports directly to the Chief of Police.



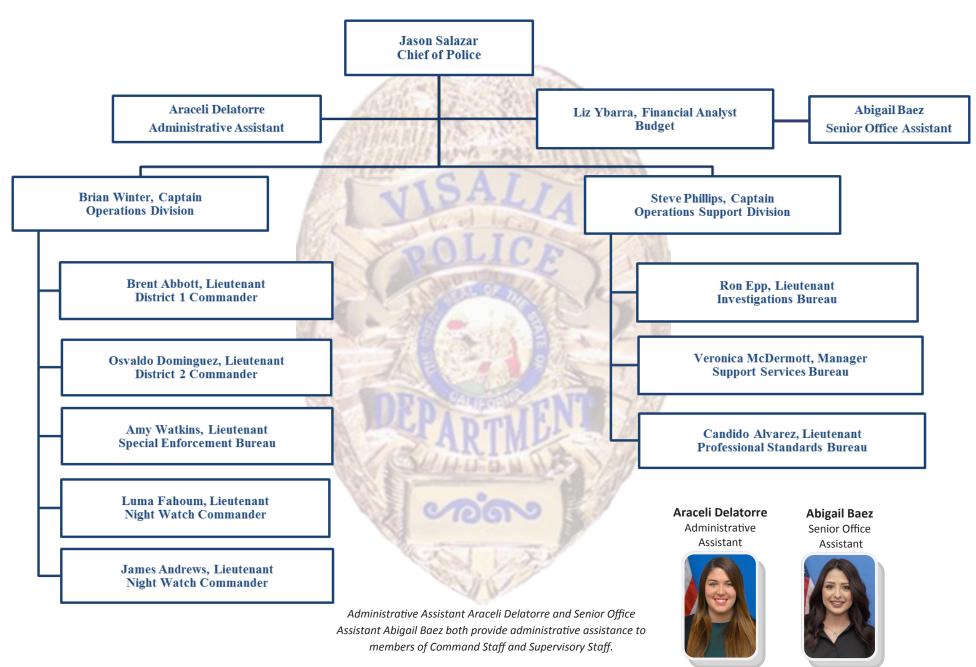
Liz Ybarra Financial Analyst Budget

The Visalia Police Department's Command Staff is comprised of the Chief of Police, two (2) Captains, seven (7) Lieutenants, one (1) Support Services Manager, and one (1) Financial Analyst. The Department has two (2) main Divisions: Operations and Operations Support, each led by a Captain.



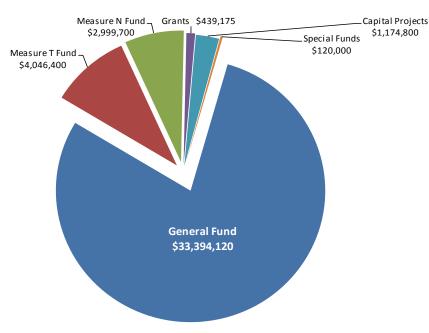


# Command Staff Organizational Structure



# Financial Operations

#### Visalia Police Department Budget: FY 2017 - 18 Resources



**Budget Total: \$42,174,195** 

# Grants JAG, \$39,175 Office Of Traffic Safety, \$200,000 \$200,000

**Grants Total: \$439,175** 

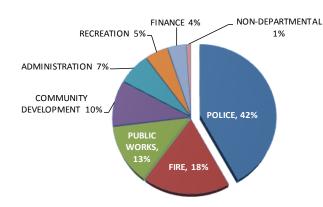


**Liz Ybarra**Financial Analyst
Budget

Financial Analyst Liz Ybarra manages the Financial Operations of the Police Department and reports directly to the Chief of Police. The Financial Analyst is responsible for managing the Operating Budget, Capital Projects, and Grants. As the liaison between the Police and Finance Departments, she ensures the Police Department is in compliance with all financial operating policies and procedures, as well as facilitates all purchases. The Police Budget represents 42% of the City's General Fund.

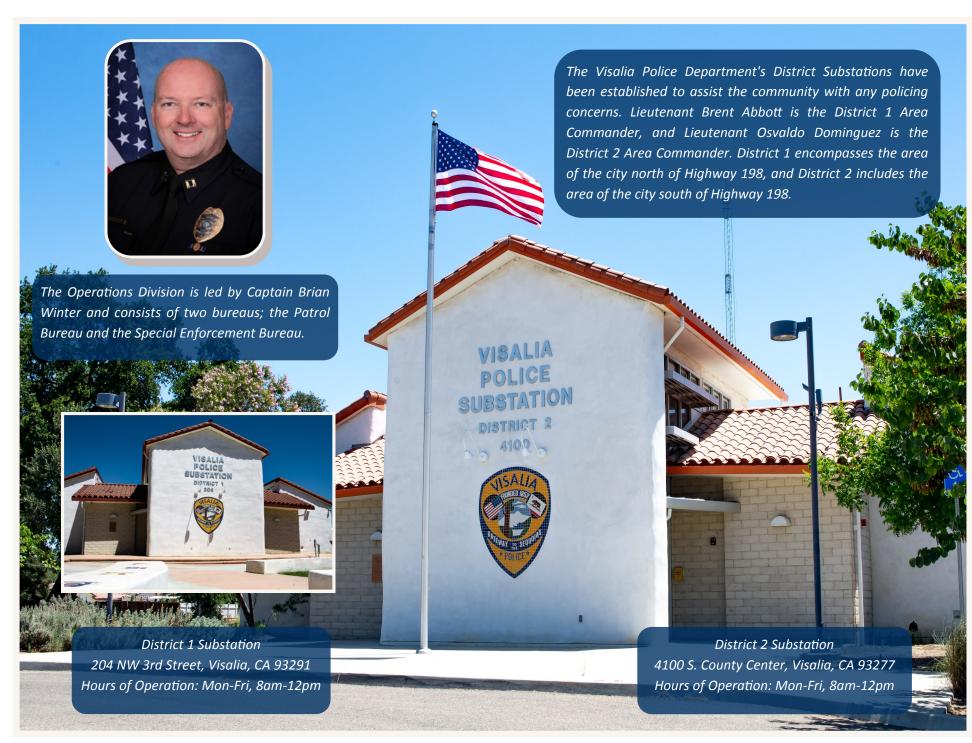
The Police Department also acquired additional funding with the recent approval of the ½ percent Essential Services Sales Tax, known as Measure N. Measure N allowed the Department to gain 13 new officers in FY 2017 - 18 and five (5) officers in FY 2018 - 19. In total, the Department will increase its Patrol force with 30 new officers over ten years thanks to Measure N.

#### City of Visalia Budget: FY 2017 - 18 General Fund Operating Expenditures by Department



POLICE	42%
FIRE	18%
PUBLIC WORKS	13%
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	10%
ADMINISTRATION	7%
RECREATION	5%
FINANCE	4%
NON-DEPARTMENTAL	1%

# OPERATIONS DIVISION



# PATROL BUREAU

### Patrol

Members of the Visalia Police Department's Patrol Bureau recognize the most important product to offer is service. Officers continually strive for excellence, performing their duties with competence and compassion. The Visalia Police Department's Patrol Officers dedicate their time to preserving the highest community standards and maintaining peace and order.

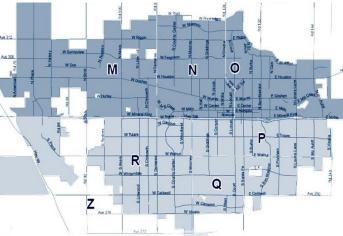
The Patrol Bureau serves as the foundation of all police services. Officers assigned to Patrol are first responders who respond to emergency calls, a wide variety of calls for service, and proactive policing measures. There are 75 police officer positions allocated to Patrol including six (6) Police K9 Officers, 10 Sergeants, two (2) Police Agents, and five (5) Community Service Officers.



Pictured above is Officer Brooke Wright.

21250

Pictured above (L-R): Officer Corey Harris, Officer Luis Berrocales, Officer Samantha Adney, Community Service Officer Paul Chao, Officer Dustin Thompson, Officer Victor Yates, Officer Nicholas Marrero, and Officer Nathan Berry.



calls for service are generated or initiated at the Patrol level. Many specialized service units are also part of the Patrol Bureau and are also highlighted in this report; however, the work of the staff at the Patrol level is the foundation and most essential of the police services we provide.

The Visalia Police Department responded to more than 136,000 calls for service in 2018. The majority of those

The Visalia Police Department's Patrol Bureau consists of two Districts: District 1 and District 2. District 1 encompasses the area of the city north of Highway 198, and District 2 includes the area of the city south of Highway 198. Each District contains three (3) separate beats, and the boundaries are the city limits of Visalia, which are approximately 37.49 square miles (refer to map).

# Commercial Policing Unit

The Commercial Policing Unit has been active for over 20 years. The original positions were assigned to Downtown Visalia and on Mooney Boulevard. Today's Commercial Policing Unit looks very much the same; however, the three (3) officers assigned are responsible for a much larger commercial area.

Officer Jason Feierbach is the current Downtown Commercial Policing Officer. His area of responsibility extends from Mineral King Avenue north to Murray Street and Conyer Street east to Santa Fe Street. Officer Feierbach specializes in working with the small business community and handles crimes and investigations such as vandalism, theft, and trespassing. He spends most of his time listening to the concerns of the downtown business owners and maintains a visible presence in this area.

Officer Dale Rush and Officer Brian Scott are the current Commercial Policing Officers on Mooney Boulevard. Currently, their area of responsibility extends to several blocks east and west of Mooney Boulevard. They also address issues with larger chain stores throughout Visalia. The Mooney Commercial Policing Officers also initiate and complete their investigations. Through this process, they can maintain a close relationship with the merchants of the Mooney corridor.

Pictured to the right are members of the Commercial Policing Unit (L-R): Officer Jason Feierbach, Officer Dale Rush, and Officer Brian Scott.



# Traffic Unit

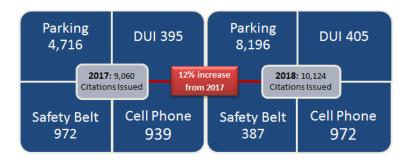


Sergeant Mark Feller Traffic and Parking Enforcement



The Visalia Police Department's Traffic Unit is comprised of one (1) Sergeant, one (1) Agent, eight (8) Motorcycle Officers, three (3) Parking Enforcement Officers, and five (5) DUI Enforcement Officers who are committed to the safety of the motoring, pedestrian, and bicycling public. Its mission is to enforce the Vehicle Code and educate the public to reduce collisions and avoid fatalities.

The Traffic Unit partners with the Office of Traffic Safety on many grant-funded details to fulfill the mission of traffic enforcement and safety education. Officers support these details from the Operations and Operations Support Divisions. The Traffic Unit also relies heavily on the assistance provided by the Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) for details such as DUI Checkpoints. These details have proven to be effective in reducing the number of traffic-related collisions and promote positive public awareness of traffic-related issues.





Pictured above (L-R): Parking Enforcement Officer Christopher Fuentes, Officer Robert Gilson, Officer Adam Aguallo, Officer Alex Barton-Sabo, Officer Jeff Wheeler, Agent Clay Moffett, Sergeant Mark Feller, Officer Andrew Souza, Officer Isaac Stephens, Officer Joe Paddock, Officer Scott Nelson, and Parking Enforcement Officer Gabriel Rodriguez.





2018	Details
8	DUI Checkpoints
23	DUI Saturation Patrols
5	Court Stings
3	Warrant Details
2	Stakeout Operations
19	Traffic Enforcement Details
8	Motorcycle Safety Operations
11	Click It or Ticket Operations
16	Bicycle Pedestrian Details
6	Distracted Driver Details

# Body-Worn Cameras (BWC)







Over the course of the last few years, body-worn cameras have increasingly become a staple in modern policing. While much of the discussion surrounding body-worn cameras has focused on transparency, accountability, and police-community relations, body-worn cameras have proven to be a valuable tool in capturing evidence and providing support to officers.

After an extensive process to develop policy and select a body-worn camera system that best suited the organizational needs, the Visalia Police Department implemented its body-worn camera program in August 2018. Currently, 120 uniformed Department personnel are equipped with the Axon Flex body-worn camera system.

The BWC program has a five-year cost of \$815,000 for camera support and digital evidence storage. Funding for the BWC program was attained through General Fund monies and funds associated with Measure N. Additionally, the Department received a \$150,000 grant from the Federal COPS program to assist in the implementation of the BWC program.

As part of the BWC program, the Department also created a Digital Evidence Technician position which was funded through Measure N. The Digital Evidence Technician is responsible for managing and maintaining the BWC program and processing records requests associated with BWCs.

BWC Stats
(August 21, 2018 to December 31, 2018)

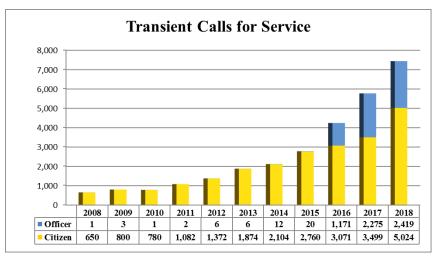
Total Evidence: 18,318 Videos

Data Total: 6.52 Terabytes Digital Evidence to DA's Office:
555 Videos

# Homeless Outreach and Proactive Enforcement (HOPE) Team

The Visalia Police Department's Homeless Outreach and Proactive Enforcement (HOPE) Team is a dedicated team that focuses on homeless issues throughout Visalia.

Pictured to the right are the members of the HOPE Team, Top Row (L-R): Officer Nate Henry and Mental Health Clinician Jerry Castro. Bottom Row (L-R): Officer Tim Haener, Officer Jared Hughes, Sergeant Brent Miller, and Officer Leroy Hickey.







Homelessness continues to be a challenging community issue in Visalia as it is in many other cities across the nation. This challenge is made clear by the increase in transient-related calls for service as noted in the chart above. In 2018, the HOPE Team expanded from two (2) dedicated officers to four (4) dedicated officers and one (1) Supervisor to meet these challenges. The HOPE Team works to minimize the impact of transient-related calls for service on Patrol by utilizing a strategy of enforcement, prevention, and intervention.

This year, the Visalia Police Department partnered with Tulare County Mental Health and began dedicating one (1) HOPE Officer to work side-by-side with a Mental Health Clinician as a field response team to engage individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. These individuals may be eligible for mental health services, alcohol and drug programs, or veteran and self-sufficiency services.

The Visalia Police Department's and Tulare County Mental Health's goals for this endeavor are to connect individuals to services and ensure they receive them in a culturally competent and professional manner. The pilot program is expected to run two (2) days a week for 18 months and may be extended, based on its results.

### K9 Unit





The Visalia Police K9 Unit consists of six (6) Patrol K9 teams and one (1) Narcotics K9 team. The Patrol K9 teams are assigned to the Patrol Bureau and provide valuable assistance to officers in the field. The K9 Officers are often used in high-risk situations to aid in locating suspects, increasing officer safety, and providing assistance with searches of buildings or open areas for people and evidence. They are also some of the Department's most popular officers at various community events.

In May, the Visalia Police Department K9 Team competed and co-hosted the 33rd Annual Sierra K9 Trials with the Tulare County Sheriff's Office. Out of 35 K9 teams, Officer Daniel Roberts and Xero placed 2nd in Obedience and 4th in the Evidence Search. Officer Mike Carsten and Bronson placed 5th in Agility and 4th overall in the Open Division. Officer Ryan Park and Flic placed 3rd in Agility.

The K9 Unit also competed at the Bakersfield Police Department K9 Trials along with 35 other K9 teams. Officer Mike Carsten and Bronson were awarded 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Open Category, Officer Ryan Park and Flic took 1<sup>st</sup> place in Handler Protection and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in Agility, and Officer Daniel Roberts and Xero won 1<sup>st</sup> place in Obedience.



Roto is a 1 ½-year old Dutch Shepherd from Mexico who is handled by Officer Bill Hansen. Lorenzo is a 2-year old Belgium Malinois from Mexico who is handled by Officer Ryan Lasalde. King is a 2 ½-year old Czech Shepherd from Czechoslovakia who is handled by Officer Thomas Higgins. Blazer is a 2-year old Belgium Malinois from Mexico who is handled by Officer Sean Schiebelhut.

These K9 Officers were purchased thanks to generous community donations from various organizations and individuals. The Visalia Police Department is grateful for the continued support it receives from the community. Through these donations, the Department was also able to purchase vests for the K9s.



K9 Unit (L-R): Officer Thomas Higgins/K9 King, Officer Ryan Park/K9 Flic, Officer Daniel Roberts/K9 Xero, Sergeant Chris Jennings, Officer Bill Hansen/K9 Roto, Officer Ryan Lasalde/K9 Lorenzo, Officer Sean Schiebelhut/K9 Blazer, and Officer Mike Lombardo/K9 Ami (not pictured).

#### **K9 Retirements**



K9 Deuce (left) is a 7-year old German Shepherd who was handled by Officer Rick Johnson. Deuce retired on February 5, 2018, after six years of service to the Visalia Police Department. K9 Bronson (right) is a 7-year old Belgium Malinois who was handled by Officer Mike Carsten. Bronson retired on July 21, 2018, after six years of service to the Visalia Police Department.



Thank you for all your hard work and dedication.

Congratulations on your retirement!

# Volunteers In Police Services (VIPS) Unit



**Hours Volunteered** 

4,508 hrs. in Administration

2,123 hrs. in Patrol

1,589 hrs. on Details

9,066 hrs. Total

The Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS) Unit is overseen by Lieutenant Luma Fahoum and Sergeant Brent Miller. The VIPS Unit is comprised of a group of 45 highly motivated individuals who, after completing a 10-week Citizens Academy, become Volunteers who provide essential but non-hazardous police services. The VIPS work as Citizens on Patrol, assist with crime prevention, and provide traffic control.

These are just a few of the many ways these citizens work to help the Visalia Police Department and the community. Their dedication is displayed daily in numerous realms of police service. Many of the Department's community events would not be possible without the assistance from these dedicated public servants.



# Explorer Post #32



Pictured above is Jose Chavez who was hired as a Community Service Officer with the Visalia Police Department, following his exit from Explorer Post #32.

There are currently 17 Advisors and 13 Explorers in Explorer Post #32. Each Visalia Police Department Explorer receives outstanding mentoring, coaching, and support from Advisors. As a result, over the past few years, several Explorers moved on to full-time careers within the Visalia Police Department. These achievements were accomplished with the hard work and dedication of these individual Explorers and those who take on the collateral duties of mentoring them.

At the Tulare County Explorer Competition held in April, the Visalia Police Department Explorers competed in 22 scenarios and received first place in the Night-Time Traffic Stop, Vehicle Search, Hazardous Response, Shooting Skills, and CSI categories. Pictured to the left are some of the Explorers and Advisors during an event.

In August, Visalia Police Department Explorers completed the week-long 2018 San Diego County Explorer Academy. At the academy, Explorers continued their journey on learning what it takes to become a law enforcement officer, including submitting themselves to the physical rigors associated with a police academy. These challenges included push-ups, learning proper marching/formation etiquette, entering a tear gas house, and direction from drill instructors.







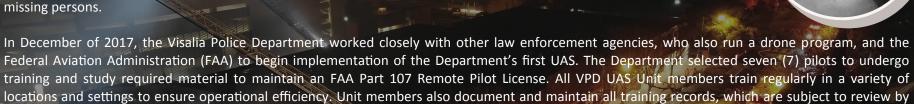
Pictured to the left are previous Explorers who are now Police Officers with the Visalia Police Department (L-R): Officer Daniel Gonzalez, Officer Luis Berrocales, and Officer Desiree Gillioun.

# Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Unit

The mission of the Visalia Police Department's Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) program is to provide airborne support to police operations in a safe, responsible, and transparent manner to preserve the peace, increase officer safety, reduce response times for aerial support, and improve the quality of life in Visalia.

UAS are small, remotely operated, unmanned aerial systems; also commonly referred to as drones. They are efficient and effective in providing law enforcement critical information to respond to calls for service, emergencies, or to conduct criminal investigations. Some examples include: providing an overhead view of an area or incident for ground personnel, safely clearing the interior of buildings, providing detailed documentation of crime and accident scenes, and searching for lost or missing persons.

the FAA.



The Department's UAS Unit consists of Lieutenant Amy Watkins, Sergeant Steve Scofield, Officer Edvin Canto, Officer Nate Henry, Officer Leroy Hickey, Officer Jonathan Lamar, Officer Sean O'Rafferty, Officer Jeff Wheeler, and Officer Rob Zieg. They maintain six (6) drones for use with various functions throughout the city.

In 2018, the UAS Unit flew a total of 72 missions. These missions benefited the Department's SWAT, Youth Services Unit, Narcotics Unit, HOPE Team, and the Visalia Fire Department. They were used to search for evidence, provide real-time information for search warrants, and several public presentations.



# SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT BUREAU

# Special Enforcement Unit (SEU) and Narcotics Unit



Pictured above (L-R): Lieutenant Amy Watkins, Sergeant Randy Lentzner, Officer Austin Huerta, Officer Arturo Alvarez, Officer Sean O'Rafferty, Officer Michael Elliott, Officer Vincent Muto, Officer Dirk Alfano, and Officer Samantha Gonzales.



**Human Trafficking** 



The Visalia Police Department supports strong enforcement of human trafficking laws through assigning two (2) officers to work closely with the Tulare County Human Trafficking Task Force. The two (2) officers are members of the Special Enforcement Unit and perform a variety of investigative and enforcement activities to help eliminate human trafficking within the City of Visalia.

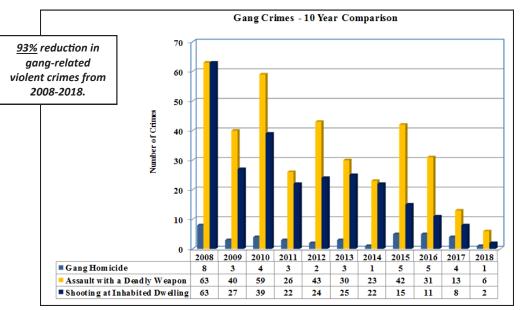
In 2018, officers completed 40 hours of training and conducted 21 human trafficking related details of which 18 arrests were made, six (6) investigations were initiated, and three (3) cases were submitted to the District Attorney's Office for prosecution related to human trafficking crimes.

Captain Brian Winter oversees the Visalia Police Department's Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB), and Lieutenant Amy Watkins leads the Bureau. SEB contains detectives and officers within the Narcotics Unit and Special Enforcement Unit (SEU).

The mission of the Special Enforcement Bureau is to disrupt criminal activity related to criminal street gangs and how they support their lifestyle including, but not limited to: the manufacture, transportation, sales and use of illicit drugs; and sales and possession of firearms in the City of Visalia. The Special Enforcement Unit also focuses on street-level enforcement strategies to affect a reduction in Part 1 crimes, to address community issues, and have a direct impact on crime.

In 2018, the Special Enforcement Unit made 117 arrests, conducted 17 search warrants, 187 probation/parole searches, 210 field interviews, and seized 39 firearms. The Narcotics Unit made 119 arrests, conducted 63 search warrants, and seized 427 pounds of marijuana, 1,578 marijuana plants, 51 pounds of (other) narcotics, 35 firearms, and \$184,563 in currency.

Officers from the Special Enforcement Bureau participated in numerous outreach events to engage youth in the community (featured to the left). SEB teamed up with Visalia Parks and Recreation for Neighborhood Games where officers played sports and enjoyed lunch with the kids.

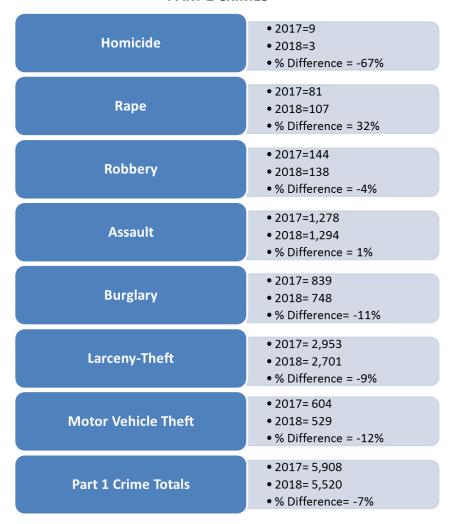


# **Statistics**

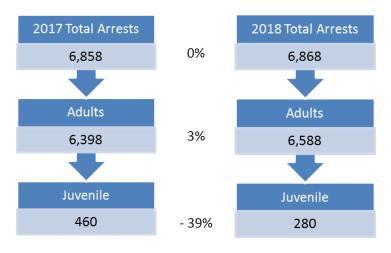
#### **DEMOGRAPHICS**



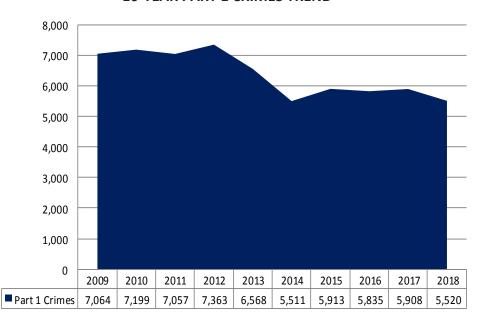
#### **PART 1 CRIMES**



#### **ARRESTS**



#### 10-YEAR PART 1 CRIMES TREND



### **Statistics**

#### 2018 CALLS FOR SERVICE (CFS)

# Total Calls for Service

(Excluding 9-1-1) 158,783









Police

- •2017 = 130,931
- •2018 = 136,374
- •%Difference = 4%

Fire

- •2017 = 15,650
- •2018 = 15,532
- •%Difference = -1%

Animal Control

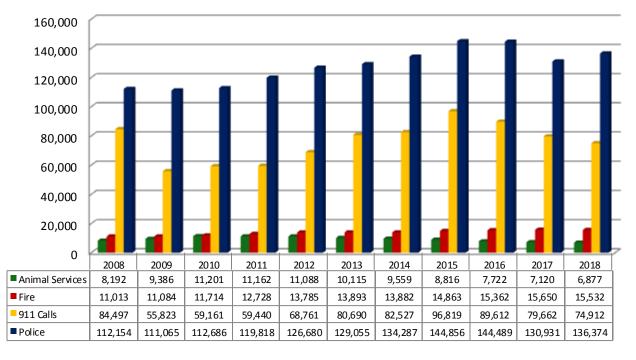
- •2017 = 7,120
- •2018 = 6.877
- •%Difference = -3%

911 Calls

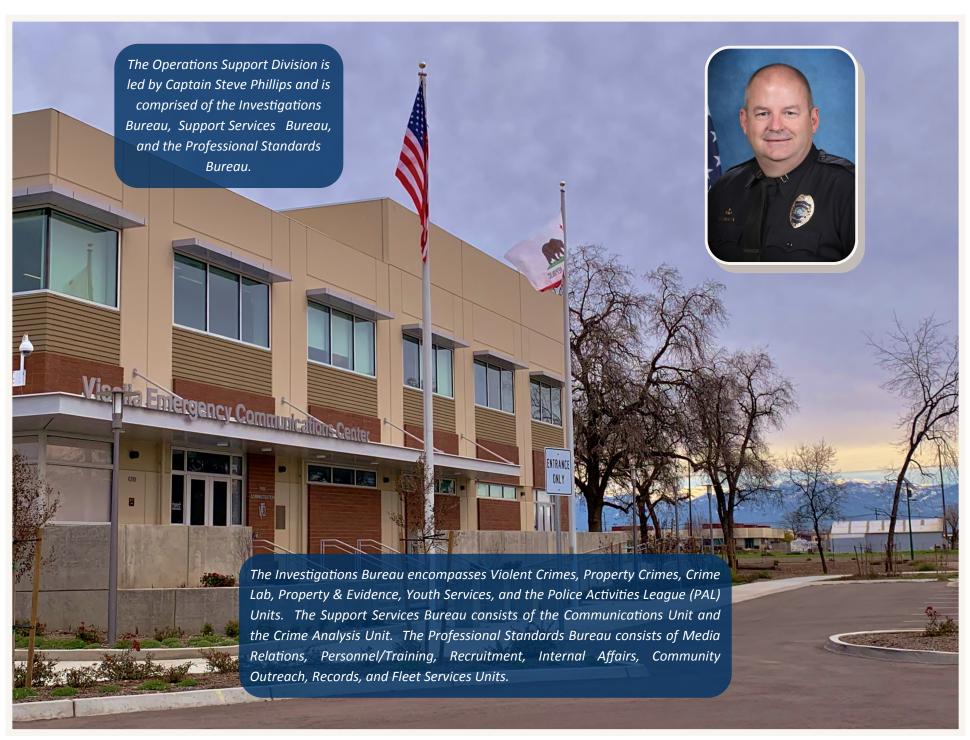
- •2017 = 79,662
- •2018 = 74,912
- •%Difference = -6%



#### 10-YEAR CALLS FOR SERVICE COMPARISON (ANIMAL SERVICES, FIRE, 911 CALLS, AND POLICE)



# OPERATIONS SUPPORT DIVISION



# INVESTIGATIONS BUREAU

# Violent Crimes Unit & Property Crimes Unit

The Violent Crimes Unit investigates and arrests violent offenders as a means of improving the quality of life for the citizens of Visalia. To accomplish this, members of the Violent Crimes Unit work with other units of the Visalia Police Department, allied agencies, and the Tulare County District Attorney's Office to obtain convictions related to these investigations. In 2018, the Violent Crimes Unit investigated 1,164 cases, including three (3) homicides and 60 robberies. The Violent Crimes Unit also made 95 arrests during this time.

The Violent Crimes Unit consists of one (1) Sergeant, one (1) Agent, seven (7) Detectives, and two (2) Investigative Technicians. The Unit investigates "Crimes Against Persons" which includes homicide, robbery, assault with a deadly weapon, kidnapping, suspicious deaths, rape, child abuse, child molestation, physical elder abuse, and other felony assaults. The Unit also tracks 290 PC Sex Registrants to ensure they are in compliance.



Members of the Violent Crimes Unit are pictured above (L-R):
Detective Henry Martinez, Detective Robert Meier, Detective
James Cummings, Agent Nate Flaws, Detective Michael
Morgantini, Detective Bryan Somavia, Investigative Technician
Ted Smith, and Investigative Technician Priscilla Portillo.

#### Sergeant Dan Ford Violent Crimes



The Property Crimes Unit improves the quality of life for the citizens of Visalia by investigating and arresting individuals who commit burglaries, grand thefts, petty thefts, check fraud, credit card fraud, embezzlement, identity theft, and financial elder abuse.

In 2018, the Property Crimes Unit investigated 837 cases, made 287 arrests, conducted 54 search warrants, and recovered a total of \$1,065,557 in property and currency.

The Property Crimes Unit consists of one (1) Sergeant, six (6) Detectives, and one (1) Investigative Technician. The Unit is also a member of the Tulare County Reduce Auto Theft Task Force (TRATT), which is a multiagency unit designed to combat auto theft throughout Tulare County.

In 2018, TRATT made 222 arrests and recovered 353 motor vehicles with a value of approximately \$2,365,100.



Members of the Property Crimes Unit are pictured above (L-R):
Detective Brian Young, Detective Jeff Dowling, Sergeant Russ
Gauger, Detective Dwight Brumley, Detective Blake McEwen,
Detective Jason Tejeda, Detective Matt Jones, and Investigative
Technician Carol Andrews.

Sergeant Russ Gauger Property Crimes



# Crime Lab





Pictured above (L-R): Supervising ID Technician Bob Douglas, Senior ID Technician Laura Lathrop, Hourly ID Technician Jose Martinez-Cuevas, Hourly ID Technician Lindsay Uriarte, Hourly ID Technician Elizabeth Halstead, Hourly ID Technician Dezaree Domenech, Hourly ID Technician Tai Scott-Welch, and Senior ID Technician Sarah Guzman.

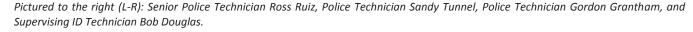


The Crime Lab is placed organizationally in the Investigations Bureau of the Police Department. The Crime Lab supports the Patrol and Investigation Bureaus of the Police Department with crime scene processing and technical analysis of evidence. An Identification Technician performs multiple tasks to include: crime scene and evidence photography, 3D laser scanning, friction ridge print development/comparison, forensic analysis of portable electronic devices; and the location, collection, and preservation of evidence. The Crime Lab is staffed by one (1) Senior Identification Technician, two (2) Identification Technicians, five (5) Hourly Identification Technicians, and is led by Supervising Identification Technician Bob Douglas. The Crime Lab had a total of 459 assignments and 110 cases that included fingerprints for analysis in 2018.

# Property and Evidence Unit

The Property and Evidence Unit is responsible for the receipt, storage, safekeeping, release, and disposal of all property and evidence that comes under the control of the Police Department. The Property and Evidence Unit manages approximately 14,500 items of property and evidence daily. In 2018, the Property and Evidence Unit managed 10,341 incoming items and 9,608 outgoing items.

Police Technicians serve as the Department's Property and Evidence Officers. They are responsible for maintaining security and control of property and evidence the Police Department acquires through normal duties and responsibilities. The Unit is staffed by one (1) Senior Police Technician, two (2) Police Technicians, and is led by Supervising Identification Technician Bob Douglas.





# Youth Services Unit

The Youth Services Unit is led by Lieutenant Ron Epp and Sergeant Chris McLain. The Unit is comprised of nine (9) Police Officers who are assigned to the five (5) high schools and five (5) junior high schools within the Visalia Unified School District. These officers provide police services and guidance to the students and staff at these schools as well as their elementary feeder schools. Youth Service Officers are able to serve the youth of Visalia through instruction, mentoring, counseling, and enforcement. The Visalia Police Department values the successful partnership with the Visalia Unified School District and, together, provide a safe learning environment for the youth in the community.

Pictured to the right is the Youth Services Unit (L-R): Officer Frank Lopez, Officer George Weaver, Officer Jason McWilliams, Sergeant Chris McLain, Officer Michael Morgantini, Officer Dominic Mena, Officer Max Navo, Officer Jason Logas, Officer Rob Zieg, Officer Arturo Villarreal, and Officer Julie Peterson.





















The Visalia Police Activities League (PAL) is a program led by Officer Art Villarreal that allows Police Officers to provide a positive influence to at-risk youth in the community. Visalia PAL offers a variety of services to those youth through education and athletic based programs, which include Leadership Training, Boxing, and PAL Honor Camp.

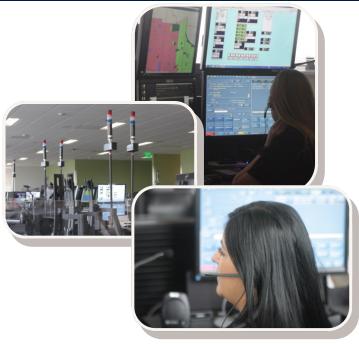
This past year, PAL partnered with ProYouth of Visalia at the Wittman Center. This partnership expanded

and enhanced services PAL offers which directly benefits at-risk youth in the community. Programs available include athletic activities such as soccer and basketball, indoor activities including video games and crafts, and a technology-based program that provides learning computers, 3D printing, drones, and robotics.

In 2018, PAL had 603 new youth sign-ups for its programs such as PAL Boxing, its Drop-In program, and PAL Honor Camp. Also during this time, PAL had an average daily dropin of 79 youth and served 1,624 youth through various PAL sponsored events.

# SUPPORT SERVICES BUREAU

### Communications Unit



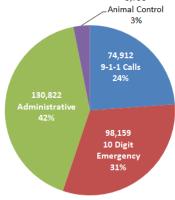


Pictured above (L-R): Assistant Communications Operator Ira Taylor, Support Services Manager Veronica McDermott, Communications Supervisor Darlene Friend, Assistant Communications Operator Juliana Warren, Communications Operator Pamela DeLong, Senior Communications Operator Staci Stokes, Senior Communications Operator Monica Dukes, and Communications Operator Stacy Handley.

Police Support Services Manager Veronica McDermott oversees the Visalia Police Department's Communications Unit. The Communications Unit is a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), responsible for answering 9-1-1, and non-emergency calls for the City of Visalia. The year 2018 was the first full year operational in the new Visalia Emergency Communications Center. While settling into the new building, the Communications Unit maintained responsibility for the receipt, disposition, and documentation of telephone and radio calls in both emergency and non-emergency matters for the Police, Fire and Animal Services Departments. On November 29, 2018, the processing of Animal Service calls by the Communications Unit was expanded to include requests for service in the cities of Exeter and Farmersville.

Communications Supervisor Darlene Friend leads the Communications Unit which consists of one (1) Communications Supervisor, five (5) Senior Communications Operators, 22 Communications Operators, and one (1) Hourly Call Taker. Processing calls can be inherently taxing, as callers are often dealing with traumatic events. Communications Operators are trained to ask key questions pertinent to each unique situation and to obtain the nature and urgency of the incident. Visalia Police Department Communications Operators are responsible for answering and processing information from seven (7) emergency (9-1-1) lines, 15 non-emergency lines, and nine (9) roll down or direct connect lines. Each call is prioritized and dispatched to the appropriate Police, Fire or Animal Control resource in the field via Mobile Data Computer (MDC) and one of several radio channels. The Communications Unit operates 24 hours a day, 365 days each year.





In 2018, the Communications Unit fielded 74,912 9-1-1 calls, 98,159 10-digit emergency calls, 130,822 administrative calls and 9,798 Animal Control calls, for a total of 313,691 phone calls for the year. Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Calls for Service for 2018 by agency totaled: 136,374 Police, 15,532 Fire and 6,877 Animal Control.

# PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BUREAU

# Professional Standards Bureau

Lieutenant Candido Alvarez oversees the Professional Standards Bureau which includes the Media Relations Unit, Internal Affairs, Community Outreach, Recruitment, Personnel/Training, Records, Fleet Services, Digital Evidence Technician, and Duty Officer Desk. In 2018, the Bureau continued robust hiring efforts to fill many vacant positions attributed to standard attrition rates and growth associated with Measure N.

#### **Visalia Police Department Staffing**

Sworn Staff 159 Professional Staff 73 Hourly Staff 18 Volunteers (Reserves, VIPS, Chaplains, Explore 50

Pictured to the right are members of the Professional Standards Bureau, Front Row (L-R): Public Information Officer Gary Williams, Administrative Technician Shawna Kneeland, Duty Officer Heidi Voss, Training Sergeant Kevin Kroeze, Police Specialist Dexter Valencia, and Lieutenant Candido Alvarez. Bottom Row (L-R): Digital Evidence Technician Kris Lara, Senior Office Assistant Abigail Baez, Community Outreach Coordinator Rebekah Jones, and Hourly Assistant Sabrina Gomez.



# Firearms Training Unit



Pictured above are members of the Firearms Training Unit (L-R): Officer Bill Brokhoff, Officer Renny Collins, Officer George Weaver, Agent Nate Flaws, Lieutenant Brent Abbott, Sergeant Greg Byerlee, Officer Jeremy Ediger, and Officer Tim Connors.



The Firearms Training Unit is comprised of one (1) Lieutenant, one (1) Sergeant, one (1) Agent, and five (5) Officers. All members are certified by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) as Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors, as well as trained and certified Armorers for each weapon system. The primary function of the Firearms Training Unit is to provide safe, relevant, and effective firearms related training, effective conflict de-escalation techniques, administer firearms qualifications, make necessary modifications, and periodic maintenance and repair of Department-owned firearms. The main strength of the Firearms Training Unit is its people and their dedication to safety and quality.

The Firearms Training Unit also conducts Active Shooter Unified Response training annually in partnership with the Visalia Fire Department for all staff (pictured above). This training is designed to prepare both departments to respond effectively and interact seamlessly while responding to mass casualty or active and violent crimes in progress.

# Records Unit

**Lisa Davis** Records Supervisor





Members of the Records Unit pictured above (L-R): Records Specialist Noele Reidmann, Records Specialist Victoria Anderson, Senior Records Specialist Anna Saldana, Records Specialist Tereese Oregel, Records Specialist Maria Cortez, Senior Records Specialist Jeannette Hart, Senior Records Specialist Melissa Lujan, Lead Records Specialist Monica Wierenga, Senior Records Specialist Alice Bejarano, Lead Records Specialist Jenna Wells, Records Specialist Jason Chau, Lead Records Specialist Diane Owensby, and Records Specialist Kate Noel.

The Visalia Police Department's Records Unit serves the public and the Police Department in processing, maintaining, and distributing all police files and handling public records requests. In 2018, the Records Unit processed 16,341 reports and 1,338 online reports for a total of 17,679 reports. The Unit consists of 14 full-time and eight (8) hourly employees.

Records Supervisor Lisa Davis also oversees the Court and Subpoena Services Unit, which serves as the liaison between the court and Department, processing incoming subpoenas, and requests for information needed for upcoming criminal proceedings. In addition, a new electronic subpoena service was adopted to increase efficiency and receive real-time updates directly from the court. Court and Subpoena Services have also experienced an increase in requests due to the Department's recent implementation of body-worn cameras.

# Crime Analysis Unit



Pictured to the left are members of the Crime Analysis Unit (L-R): Volunteer in Police Services Peggy Shulman, Crime Analysis Technician Jessica Van Noort, Hourly Crime Analysis Tech Erika Peralta, and Crime Analysis Tech Jessica Yunt. The Visalia Police Department's Crime Analysis Unit is comprised of two (2) full-time Crime Analysis Technicians, one (1) part-time Crime Analysis Technician, and one (1) Volunteer in Police Services. The Crime Analysis Unit utilizes current technology to assist various units by providing incident location maps, crime studies, and assistance with specific cases.

In 2018, the Crime Analysis Unit aided the Violent Crimes Unit by producing a map outlining all incidents involving the Visalia Ransacker case. The map included case-specific crime details embedded within and was an essential component to preparing the case for a successful criminal filing.



# Community Outreach

The Visalia Police Department understands that its success is dependent upon a strongly forged partnership with the community. The Community Outreach Coordinator is tasked with engagement with the many facets of this community by providing crime prevention information or participating in various events throughout the city. The Community Outreach Coordinator organizes Department-wide efforts, National Night Out, and the Citizens Police Academy. Of special note, the Neighborhood Watch Program grew by 31% in 2018 compared to last year. All events are coordinated with the assistance of Department staff to mutually prevent crime and make Visalia a safer place for all.







48

National Night Out

Locations



Coffee with a Cop

Department Tours 5

#### Rebekah Jones Community Outreach Coordinator



### Social Media Team

A dedicated Social Media Team works daily on providing relevant and up-to-date information that impacts the community. The Social Media Team is also assisted by officers assigned to various units; together they form a Social Media Committee. The Social Media Committee meets throughout the year in a collaborative effort to create various publications for viewing. Follow us on our social media platforms for news updates, event information, and to connect with others in the community.

We thank you for your ongoing support of our social media efforts!

-Social Media Team

Follow us @VisaliaPD













Pictured to the left are members of the Social Media Team (L-R): Sergeant Gary Williams, Administrative Assistant Araceli Delatorre, Community Outreach Coordinator Rebekah Jones, and Lieutenant Candido Alvarez.

# HIGHLIGHTS

# **Annual Awards Ceremony**



The Visalia Police Department held its first Annual Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, January 17th at the Visalia Convention Center. The ceremony recognized the Department's Employees of the Year, as well as recipients of the Visalia Police Department's Watch Commander's Award, Purple Heart Award, and Life Saving Award. In all, a total of 13 awards were distributed during the ceremony. The Annual Awards Ceremony was attended by Department staff, dignitaries, family, and friends.



# **Promotions**

Mike Short
Promoted from
Agent to Sergeant



**Kevin Grant**Promoted from
Detective to Agent



**Mona Whaley**Promoted from
Officer to Agent



Clay Moffett Promoted from Detective to Agent



Jessica Norman
Promoted from
Communications Operator
to Senior Communications Operator



Michaela Cromer
Promoted from
Communications Operator
to Senior Communications Operator



Monica Wierenga
Promoted from
Senior Records Specialist
to Lead Records Specialist







# Accomplishments



Pictured above (L-R): Lieutenant Amy Watkins, Officer Samantha Gonzales, and Chief Jason Salazar.

#### National Latino Peace Officers Association Officer of the Year

Officer Samantha Gonzales was honored as Visalia Police Department's Latino Peace Officer of the Year by the National Latino Peace Officers Association (Central Valley Chapter) at an awards ceremony held in September.





Pictured above (L-R): Sergeant Russ Gauger, Sergeant Mike Verissimo, Sergeant Mark Feller, Chief Jason Salazar, Support Services Manager Veronica McDermott, Officer Scott Nelson, and Police Technician Sandy Tunnel.

#### City of Visalia Employee Service Awards

Pictured to the left are Visalia
Police Department's employees
recognized at the 2018 City of
Visalia Employee Service Awards
for having over 15 years of service
with the Department.



### Retirements

Teresa Angel
Senior Records Specialist
Records
19 Years of Service



Ruben Cabatic
Police Officer
Patrol
26 Years of Service



Tim Connors

Police Officer
Patrol

31 Years of Service



Judy Morgan-Ronding Lead Records Specialist Records 36 Years of Service



# Visalia Unified School District's First Responders Academy

















Members of the Visalia Police Department collaborated with other local first responders and the Visalia Unified School District (VUSD) to provide job demonstrations to students enrolled in Golden West High School's First Responders Academy and Redwood High School's Academy of Law and Justice. Students observed how officers respond to and investigate a crime from beginning to end. This included a crime scenario where Dispatch, Patrol, Investigations, Fire, EMS, and the Crime Lab were involved.



Booths were set up where students could obtain information regarding SWAT, Bomb Squad, UAS, and K9 Units. The Visalia Police Department is honored to be able to participate in a program which allows interaction with future leaders and first responder professionals to assist them in choosing their career path.

A second academy was held in October where members of the Visalia Police Department and other first responders participated in Visalia Unified School District's First Responder Career Day held at the Visalia Emergency Communication Center (VECC).



# Relay for Life



The Visalia Police Department was honored to hand out Cancer Survivor Medals at Visalia's Relay for Life, a community-based fundraising event for the American Cancer Society. These fundraising events help communities from across the globe fight back against cancer.



Pictured above are members of the Visalia Police Department with attendees of the Relay for Life Event (L-R): Officer Frank Lopez, Officer Stephanie Rapozo, Officer Luis Berrocales, Event Lead Coordinator Valerie Jasso, Agent Mona Whaley, and Officer Corey Harris.



# Ransacker Case Solved



Between April 1974 and December 1975, the Visalia Police Department investigated a series of more than 100 residential burglaries committed by a suspect who later became known as the Visalia Ransacker. During the course of that investigation, the Ransacker murdered Visalian Claude Snelling who had interrupted the attempted kidnapping of his teenage daughter by the suspect in September of 1975. During a stakeout detail to try to capture this suspect who had terrorized the Visalia community for a period of almost two years, Visalia Police Detective Bill McGowen confronted the suspect. The Ransacker fired a shot at McGowen, striking his flashlight, and ultimately escaped in December 1975.

Although the string of crimes in Visalia ended in December 1975, a series of residential burglaries, sexual assaults, and homicides began to occur throughout the State of California between 1976 and 1986. The suspect in those crimes was known as the East Area Rapist and, ultimately, as the Golden State Killer responsible for more than 50 rapes and 13 murders. Visalia Police long believed that the suspect known as the Visalia Ransacker was also the Golden State Killer. In April 2018, Joseph DeAngelo was identified as the Golden State Killer through advancements in genealogical investigations. Although DNA was never located in any of the offenses that occurred in Visalia, tireless work conducted by various investigators with the Visalia Police Department throughout the last 44 years resulted in a criminal filing with the Tulare County District Attorney's Office in August of 2018 against DeAngelo for the murder of Claude Snelling. The solving of this case closes a long mystery that was part of Visalia's history and brings some justice to those who were terrorized by his crimes at the time they occurred.



Pictured above is Detective James Cummings who most recently led the Ransacker Investigation in Visalia.







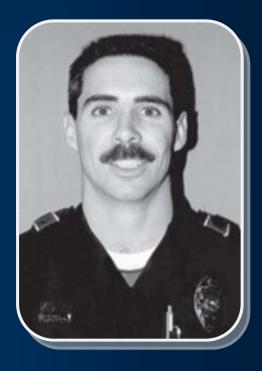
# In Memorian



Sergeant Charles H. Garrison

Visalia Police Department EOW: Tuesday, November 5, 1946





Officer James J. Rapozo

Visalia Police Department EOW: Friday, January 9, 1998

In honor there is valor.

# Tulare County Peace Officer Memorial



# Remembering California's Fallen Officers





Deputy Steven E. Belanger
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
EOW: February 06, 2018





Deputy Mark Stasyuk
Sacramento County Sheriff's Department
EOW: September 17, 2018





Officer Greggory Casillas

Pomona Police Department

EOW: March 09, 2018





Sergeant Ron Helus
Ventura County Sheriff's Office
EOW: November 08, 2018





Deputy Sheriff Ryan Zirkle
Marin County Sheriff's Office
EOW: March 15, 2018





Deputy Tony Hinostroza III Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department EOW: November 25, 2018





Officer Kirk Griess

California Highway Patrol – Solano Area Office

EOW: August 10, 2018





Corporal Ronil Singh
Newman Police Department
EOW: December 26, 2018









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