



News Release

Lexington County Sheriff James R. Metts, Ed.D.

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DEPUTY OF THE YEAR

The South Carolina Sheriffs' Association on Wednesday, August 13 recognized Lexington County Sheriff's Department Lt. John E. "J.J." Jones as Deputy of the Year for 2008. Jones received the honor during an evening banquet that was held as part of the association's summer training conference in Myrtle Beach.

Lexington County Sheriff James R. Metts introduced Jones as the winner of the prestigious award. The state Sheriffs' Association recognized Jones for his exemplary conduct during several critical incidents, including a standoff with a suspect on Interstate 26.

Jones, 34, of Gilbert, serves as assistant commander of the Sheriff's Department Region II Patrol District, which is based in Pelion, Metts said.

"Throughout his career, J.J. has demonstrated deep and genuine concern for his fellow officers, intense loyalty to his chain of command and a strong devotion to duty as a law enforcement officer," Metts said. "The exceptional valor that J.J. demonstrated in the line of duty makes him very worthy of being honored as Deputy of the Year."

On January 23, 2007, Jones was the first supervisor to respond to assist two deputies who were involved in a gunfight with a suspect who fired gunshots at the officers when they responded to a domestic dispute at the man's home, Metts said. Jones removed one of the deputies who had been shot and wounded to a safe area, where emergency medical services personnel began providing medical treatment for the officer. Metts presented Jones with the Sheriff's Department Medal of Valor in recognition of the heroism that Jones displayed during the incident.

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On May 9, 2007, Jones served as incident commander in a standoff with a man who was barricaded in his vehicle on Interstate 26, Metts said. The man had fled from law enforcement officers after being identified as a suspect in an active rape and kidnapping investigation.

Jones directed the response of officers from the Lexington County Sheriff's Department, Calhoun County Sheriff's Department, Orangeburg County Sheriff's Department, South Carolina Highway Patrol and South Carolina Law Enforcement Division to the standoff, Metts said. After three hours, Paul Fletcher Reid surrendered and was arrested in the sexual assault and kidnapping.

Metts presented the Sheriff's Department Meritorious Conduct Medal to Jones in recognition of his actions in the standoff. Reid, 47, currently is serving a 30-year prison sentence after being convicted of kidnapping.

On March 31, 2008, Jones again demonstrated exceptional valor when he coordinated the response to an incident in which a man barricaded himself in the attic at a home and set several fires inside the attic, Metts said. Jones led a team of officers who forced entry into the attic, where they rescued the man and extinguished the fires. Jones has been nominated for the Sheriff's Department Lifesaving Award in recognition of his heroic actions in the incident.

Jones' wife and son, Laura and Jacob Jones; his parents, Johnny and Jean Jones; and his in-laws, Shirley Rawl, Russell Rawl and Sharon Rawl, attended the banquet on Wednesday to honor Jones, Metts said.

The Sheriff's Department hired Jones in 1997, two years after Jones began his law career with the University of South Carolina Police Department, Metts said.

Jones served with distinction as a patrol deputy, resident deputy, narcotics investigator/K-9 police dog handler and patrol sergeant before he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant and assigned to be an assistant regional patrol commander, Metts said.

"J.J. is an exceptional officer who rapidly earned promotions through the ranks as a result of his enthusiasm, dedication, knowledge of law enforcement and effectiveness in answering calls for service," Metts said. "J.J. has demonstrated remarkable leadership qualities. He sets a superb example for the officers who are under his command."

NOTE: A color digital photograph of Lt. John E. "J.J." Jones can be transmitted by e-mail. Please contact Major John Allard to request a copy of the photo.