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National Police Week 2017: Honoring and Remembering our Fallen Law Enforcement Officers

Again this year, communities across the United States will come together during National Police Week—May 14-20—to honor and remember those law enforcement officers who made the ultimate sacrifice, as well as the family members, friends and fellow officers they left behind.

This year, the names of 394 officers killed in the line of duty are being added to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, DC <http://www.lawmemorial.org>. These 394 officers include 143 officers who were killed during 2016, plus 251 officers who died in previous years but whose stories of sacrifice had been lost to history until now.

Of the 143 killed last year, 9 were from Georgia. Those were Officer Nicholas Smarr of the Americus Police Dept., Deputy Anthony Freeman of the Bibb County Sheriff's Office, Officer Timothy Smith of the Eastman Police Dept., Officer Jody Smith of the Georgia Southwestern University Police Dept., Deputy Justin Scott White of the Newton County Sheriff's Office, Deputy Sheriffs Daryl Smallwood and Patrick Sondron of the Peach County Sheriff's Office, Officer Gregory Barney of the Riverdale Police Dept., and Deputy United States Marshal Patrick Carothers.

The names of all 394 fallen officers nationwide will be formally dedicated during the 29th Annual Candlelight Vigil on the evening of May 13, 2017 to be held on the National Mall between 4th and 7th streets. So that people across the country can experience this unique and powerful ceremony, the vigil will be webcast live over the Internet beginning at 8 pm (EDT) on May 13th. To register for this free online event, visit www.LawMemorial.org/webcast.

The Candlelight Vigil is one of many commemorative events taking place in the nation's capital during National Police Week 2017. The national observance is organized by a group of organizations led by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF), Concerns of Police Survivors, the Fraternal Order of Police and the Fraternal Order of Police Auxiliary.

On May 15th each year, the Fraternal Order of Police and the Fraternal Order of Police Auxiliary host a ceremony on the west steps of the U.S. Capitol to honor fallen law enforcement officers and their families.

In tribute to American law enforcement officers and at the request of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, Public Law 103-322 designates May 15th National Peace Officers Memorial Day, which is one of only two days each year during which government agencies, businesses and residents are to fly their U.S. flags at half staff.

For more information about National Police Week, please visit www.LawMemorial.org/policeweek.

Gary Gullede
Sheriff