

# JULY OFFICERS OF THE MONTH

By Sergeant Jim Britt  
SPOG Sgt-at-arms

This month's officers of the month are Officers Hudson Kang, Liz Kennedy, Canek Gordillo, Chris Myers, Adam Merrit, Chris Bandel and Josh Vaaga.

On April 20, 2017, Officers Merrit and Gordillo were on bike patrol in the area of Pike Place Market when a call came out of a robbery at the 7-Eleven in the 600 block of 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. The suspects were described as two black males and one black female. One was reported to be armed with a handgun, which had been displayed during the robbery. Officers Merrit and Gordillo responded to the area and located the three described suspects walking in the 900 block of 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. Officers Merrit addressed the suspects, who initially complied. One suspect ran on foot westbound with Officers Merrit in pursuit. Officer Gordillo remained to cover one suspect, who was complying but was in reach of his coat, which appeared to contain a heavy item. Officer Merrit caught up with the running suspect and was attempting to take him into custody when the female suspect struck him in the head with a soda bottle. The running suspect was then able to continue running on foot while Officer Merrit dealt with the female suspect. Officer Gordillo then continued the footchase with the male suspect that had run, following him into the loading dock of the federal building at 1/Marion. Officers Kennedy, Vaaga, Myers, Bandel and Kang joined him at that location. While running into the building, the suspect drew a handgun from his waist. The suspect entered a small room and turned to aim at officers. During the resulting exchange of gunfire, Officers Kang, Kennedy and Myers were struck by gunfire. Officers Kennedy, Myers, Gordillo and Vaaga were able to return fire, subduing the suspect within the loading dock.

Officer Myers sustained a grazing wound but was able to return fire and ensure the safety of a downed officer. Officers Kennedy's vest was struck by a round and, despite this, she was able to return fire and had to be convinced to leave the stack that had formed to address the now down suspect. Officer Kang was struck by a round in the jaw that took a winding path through his torso. After being struck, Officer Kang was down but maintained cover on the suspect. Officer Bandel crossed the open area to Officer Kang's position and evacuated him to a safe location where he was treated by SFD personnel.

These officers acted with incredible bravery, several while having been wounded, while rushing toward an armed and dangerous suspect who had committed a crime. Their actions ensured the safety of the people of Seattle in the face of ultimate danger. They are a credit to the men and women of the Seattle Police Department, who rush headfirst into danger every day.