

SPOG November Officer of the Month

**BY Sgt. Jim Britt
SPOG Sgt-at-Arms**

Sgt. Rich O'Neill nominated Detective Fran Smith #4952 for the SPOG Officer of the Month for her heroic actions while off-duty in Las Vegas on October 1, 2017.

Detective Smith was in Las Vegas with her adult daughter and a group of friends to enjoy the Route 91 Three Day Country Music Festival. On the last night of the festival Detective Smith's daughter was with her friends near the right hand side of the stage. Detective Smith was with some other friends near the left side of the stage. Just after 2200 hours the festival turned into a nightmare as a crazed gunman opened fire from a hotel window high above the crowd. At first it was a burst of five to six rounds and some thought it was just fireworks. Suddenly more shots rang out and Detective Smith saw people in the crowd falling to the ground. People began to scream and scramble for cover. Detective Smith, relying on her years of experience and training swung into action. She grabbed several of her friends who were crying and dragged them over the top and through a vendor's tent near the back of the crowd. Detective Smith comforted her friends and devised a plan to move to a safer place once the volley of shots subsided. When there was a pause in the shots she yelled to them to run low and take cover behind a nearby van. The shots rang out again and sounded like automatic weapon fire with the sound of ricochets all around them.

After getting her friends behind the van, Detective Smith kept planning the next tactical move as all the while she did not know where the shots were coming from. The scene was beyond chaotic. During the next pause in the gunfire, Detective Smith directed her group to run towards a temporary fence where they jumped and crashed through it.

All the while, Detective Smith was separated from her daughter and when the shots first rang out she had texted her husband, retired Officer Steve Smith, who was back in Washington and informed him of "shots fired." Steve was agonizing to hear an update from his wife and daughter as the minutes seemed like hours. Detective Smith received a text from her daughter stating she was safe and had run to a safe area. Cell phone service in the area then went down.

Detective Smith could still hear shots. She saw people staggering around with blood on their clothing. Many people were screaming and crying. The once friendly festival area looked like a war zone. Knowing that her daughter was safe, Detective Smith directed her attention to helping as many people as she could. Detective Smith came upon a girl who was crying and had a gunshot wound to her left shoulder area. Detective Smith removed her own outer shirt and used it to wrap the injured girl's arm

in a compress type bandage. She directed the injured girls' friends to apply pressure to the bandage to control the bleeding. Detective Smith moved on to another group who were huddled around a person who was down covered with coats. Detective Smith identified herself as SPD and offered to help. The group pointed to the down person and told Detective Smith that their mother was dead. Detective Smith offered her condolences and then moved on to see where she could help next. She came upon a young girl named, "Lindsay" who had blood stained shorts and was crying hysterically telling Detective Smith that she was so scared. Detective Smith held this young girls' face in her hands and held her until she calmed down. Detective Smith then moved to where a man had a serious wound to his abdomen. Detective Smith assisted others in getting this injured man loaded into the back of a pickup truck.

When not providing comfort and first aid, Detective Smith guided the scrambling concert patrons by pointing to a safe exit route. Detective Smith encountered a man named, "Chris" who was very distraught. Chris asked Detective Smith if she could "bring his wife back" and then he told her that his wife was dead. Detective Smith got Chris some water and cigarettes that he had requested.

Detective Smith finally was reunited with her daughter in a nearby hotel and she finally got to contact her husband, Steve Smith and relieved his fears when she said they were all safe.

In the aftermath, Detective Smith noticed that she had sustained cuts and abrasions from taking cover and leading her friends to safe areas going over fencing and display booths.

Detective Smith displayed an incredible amount of bravery and self-sacrifice. Her actions in guiding scared and frantic people to safe zones very possibly saved lives. The comfort and first aid that she provided to complete strangers was a touching example of caring and love in the midst of a truly evil act.

Even though Detective Smith was on vacation and off-duty, she clearly went way above and beyond the call of duty. Her brave heroic actions were outstanding and she clearly is one of Seattle's Finest!