

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

- MEMORANDUM -

TO: MAJOR JENNIE HOFF
ASC CHAIRPERSON

DATE: May 8, 2022

FROM: SERGEANT VELIER ZACCHEO
UNIFORM PATROL DIVISION

SUBJECT:
OFFICER OF THE MONTH
APRIL 2022

I would like to respectfully nominate Officer Christopher Challenger, for Officer of the Month of April 2022.

Traditionally, the City of Coral Gables Police Department's Officer of the Month is awarded based on apprehending criminals or solving cases. However, police work has evolved greatly, and Community Policing plays a vital role in police work today.

On April 13, 2022, Officer Challenger was dispatched to a residential alarm. When he arrived at the residence, he met the homeowner, Mr. John Tomberlin, who is 90 years old. Officer Challenger engaged in a conversation with Mr. Tomberlin and discovered he is a retired City of Miami Police Officer. Mr. Tomberlin distinguishly served with the City of Miami Police Department from 1956-1990. Mr. Tomberlin invited Officer Challenger inside his home where they continued their conversation and he proudly showed Officer Challenger his shadow box on the wall that had City of Miami Police badges and patches.

Through their conversation, Officer Challenger discovered that it would be Mr. Tomberlin's 91st birthday the following week. Officer Challenger promised him that he come back to celebrate his birthday.


Throughout the week, Officer Challenger researched Mr. Tomberlin's career and was able to locate multiple newspaper articles. Some of the articles discovered dated back to 1959 and continued throughout Mr. Tomberlin's illustrious career. Officer Challenger took all the articles and carefully pieced them together to create an impressive montage of Mr. Tomberlin's 34 year career. In addition to the framed photos, Officer Challenger also used images of Mr. Tomberlin's original City of Miami Police ID and printed it on an aluminum tumbler to present to Mr. Tomberlin on his birthday.

During this short period of time, Officer Challenger advised me, PIO Sergeant Escobar and City of Miami Police to coordinate a large gathering of officers to celebrate this special occasion. Although everyone was onboard, the large gathering did not come to fruition due to circumstances beyond his control, he was still able to assemble an intimate gathering of Coral Gables Police and City of Miami Police, all on their own time.

Mr. Tomberlin, his daughter and granddaughter were elated to have the police officers present on his birthday. He was overcome with emotion to have the police comradery once again. Officer Challenger took a routine alarm call and turned it into to a positive police experience with a fellow police officer and a long time City of Coral Gables resident. Officer Challenger always represents the City of Coral Gables with compassion and professionalism. Therefore, he should be commended for his actions, by being awarded with the Officer of the Month of April 2022.

Reviewed by:

DATE

 7079

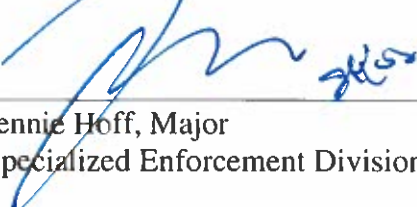
Joseph Werner, Lieutenant
Uniform Patrol Division

5/8/2022

 7626

Jesse Medina, Major
Uniform Patrol Division

5-9-22

 2157

Jennie Hoff, Major
Specialized Enforcement Division

5/8/22

VZ/vz

The Miami Herald

Sunday, April 19, 1959

No. 138 Florida's Most Complete Newspaper 49th Year 252 Pages 20 Cents
A Latin American Edition Is Published Daily

Top Police Hero Is Second Choice

By AL FINKELSTEIN
Herald Staff Writer

The Miami Police Department's committee for handing out hero medals had to find a new hero before it could give



out bravery awards Saturday.

The committee discovered that the designated hero had left the police force to enter private business.

So Policeman Herbert C. HADDAD Keil — because he isn't on the force — doesn't get his Gold Medal of Valor, the department's highest award for bravery.

Fortunately for the medal-naming group, it had a considerable list of officers who performed outstandingly in 1958.

Hurriedly, fellow officers agreed the distinguished service award should gleam from the trophy room of Policeman First Class Roland C. Wirth.

A 28-year-old Air Force veteran and a four-year man on the force, Wirth was named for saving the life of Policeman Roy C. Hussleton.

In separate cars, the two officers chased and captured an armed mental hospital escapee in a spectacular race through downtown Miami streets Dec. 29, 1958.

As Wirth closed in on the gunman with his car, the deranged patient cocked his gun at Hussleton who approached from the opposite direction. Wirth distracted the man's attention by sounding his siren, then pumped four bullets into him as he turned to fire on the officer.

The wounded patient was later re-committed to the State Mental Hospital.

For his part in the capture, Hussleton will receive a Silver Medal of Merit.

Although would-be winner, Keil won't be formally honored; officers at the station still talk of the 26-year-old cops foray into a Coconut Grove drugstore gun battle Sept. 7, 1958.

He, too, shot a bandit and saved the life of fellow Officer John C. Tomberlin.

Tomberlin and Policeman First Class Neil M. Garfield, who also participated in the



BONNER POULIOT ALLGOOD HUSSELETON LIVELY HARDIN



SHEPHERD NASH CLARK TOMBERLIN GARFIELD KENDALL



Officer Keil
... first choice for award



Officer Wirth
... he got gold medal

holdup melee at the Tropical Pharmacy, 3199 Grave Ave., will receive Silver Medals of Merit.

The awards will be formally presented May 1. Winners are selected annually from the city's 618-man force by the Fraternal Order of Police, Miami Lodge 20.

Other Silver Medals of Merit will go to:

DETECTIVE WILLIAM C. BONNER — for saving a skin-diver after his oxygen supply cut out under water.

DETECTIVE H. T. KENDALL — for diving into the Tamiami Canal and saving a woman driver whose car had plunged into the water after swerving to avoid a collision on the road.

POLICEMAN FIRST CLASS GEORGE S. CLARK — for calm and courageous conduct in single-handedly arresting four burglars at the scene of a robbery.

POLICEMAN FIRST CLASS GLENN V. LIVELY — for chasing and cornering an armed 21-year-old love-crazed youth.

POLICEMAN JAMES A. HADDAD — for applying immediate artificial respiration on a 20-year-old woman, near death from toxic poisoning. Bronze Medals of Service will be awarded to:

DETECTIVE CHARLES M. SHEPHERD — who spotted a

gunpoint five armed bandits, some of whom later were found to be carrying narcotics.

POLICEMAN FIRST CLASS KEITH HARDIN — for his patient undercover investigations which broke up one of South Florida's most notorious car parts-stealing gangs.

POLICEMAN FIRST CLASS GORDON POULIOT — for arresting a child molester with a 27-year record whom he first suspected while off duty, shopping at a supermarket.

PATROLMAN CLEOPHAS ALLGOOD — for "breaking" a series of grocery thefts by a "tip" he obtained through his friendship with neighborhood businessmen.

WANTED

If you have any of the following dated DIMES we will pay you a premium.

1916D
1942 OVER 41

SIDNEY W. SMITH
OLD COINS ANTIQUES
2512 BISC. BLVD. PR 7-1200

Moves Invalids Easily—Without Back-Breaking Lifting!

HOYER PATIENT LIFTER

MOVES ANY PATIENT FROM BED TO CHAIR — OR INTO A CAR — EASILY — SAFELY!

- Hydraulic lifters that are absolutely SAFE
- ELIMINATES ALL LIFTING on the part of the nurse
- ADAPTABLE — makes it easy to move any invalid or bed patient from bed to chair, and back again — even into and out of a car.

IMMEDIATE DELIVERY

LOW RENTAL NO INVESTMENT

IN MIAMI CALL PLeze 1-8561

IN FT. LAUDERDALE CALL JACkson 4-1936

CHAIR RENTAL & SALES, Inc.

John Tomberlin, Happy 91st Birthday from the Coral Gables Police Department



City told to pay cop for hazards of street, range

By ARNOLD MARKOWITZ
Herald Staff Writer

A Miami policeman, walking a downtown beat for 25 years, is entitled to workmen's compensation benefits for breathing and hearing problems caused by engine exhaust fumes, horn toots and the bang, bang, bang of the pistol range, a state appeals court ruled Tuesday.

Now the city must pick up a 20 percent share of the tab for occasional medical examinations and treatments that officer John Tomberlin has been paying for; a group insurance plan takes care of the rest.

The decision does not make Tomberlin, a policeman for 30 of his 55 years, a rich man. Neither is he a sick man; according to his

lawyer the wear and tear on his ears and lungs are not bad enough to silence the steps he still plants daily on the city streets.

"This is Officer Friendly. He loves being downtown," said lawyer Peter S. Schwedock. "He has no ambition to be anything but a street patrolman, greeting people. He's just a nice man who enjoys people and being downtown."

"The money is basically *bubkes* (an insignificant amount), probably a couple of thousand in medical bills. The importance isn't in the amount. It's the protection he'll have medically."

Tomberlin cited doctors' reports of a progressive high-frequency hearing loss caused mainly by practice on the shooting range, and shortness of breath blamed on

above-normal air pollution from downtown traffic. Tracing those conditions back past the 1970s, his 1984 workmen's compensation claim asked for payment of related past, present and future medical expenses.

The city refused. Tomberlin appealed to a deputy commissioner of workmen's compensation, who agreed last August that his problems are job-related.

Because he had not submitted his personal doctors' names for advance approval, the city did not have to pay earlier bills but would have to pay future ones, it was decided. The city's appeal of that ruling was turned down by the First District Court of Appeal, which holds statewide jurisdiction in workmen's compensation appeals.

No decision has been made about another appeal to the Florida Supreme Court.

"Greatly simplified, the law in Florida says that to claim an occupational disease you must show you've suffered a hazard greater than the general populace in kind and degree," said Assistant City Attorney Rafael Suarez-Rivas, who worked on the case.

"The city's position was that a policeman standing on the street has no greater impairment than an office worker or a sanitation worker, or anyone else on the street in an urban area. We didn't feel that walking the streets was an occupational hazard. Our point is that hundreds of people walk the streets downtown."



—Special Staff Photo
John Tomberlin
...displays new flags

Green Flag Will Be Flag of Life

By **ARTHUR JOHNSON**
Special Staff Writer

When the burden of traffic fatalities falls on Dade County's conscience — or is lifted, even briefly — residents are going to know it.

Flags flown from police motorcycle units throughout Dade will flash the signal.

On days when there are no fatalities, the flags flying from the rear of police motorcycles will be green.

When a fatality has occurred within the last 24 hours, the flags will be changed to black.

The Dade County Citizens Safety Council, which arranged the program, said the motorcycle units will appear with the flags beginning Monday morning.

J. I. Jackson, safety council director, said the program will continue for the remainder of this year "as a public educational effort."

The council said fatalities now are 20 per cent below the level of last year in Dade. The tabulation shows 89 accidental traffic fatalities as compared with 119 for the same time last year.

Leg Severed, Victim Dies In Surgery

By EDNA BUCHANAN
Herald Staff Writer

"I don't think I'm going to make it, officer," the old man said.

"You CAN make it! Just relax," the young policeman said, kneeling on the blood-soaked sidewalk, as downtown shoppers froze in horror.

The old man was right. He died in surgery two hours later, in spite of the policeman's efforts and fast work.

THE LEG of the 81-year-old man, standing in the sun on the sidewalk in front of Jefferson's department store, 1500 Biscayne Blvd., was severed when a nine-year-old Plymouth struck another car, mounted the curb and pinned him against a metal pole.

The driver, Peter Alcantara, 82, said the brakes failed. Police said they seemed to be in working order. Alcantara sat dazed in his car.

Officer John Tomberlin, on a routine off-duty job directing traffic at the Omni Complex a half block away, heard the crash. He ran to the victim.

"One leg was almost completely gone," Officer Tomberlin said. "There was blood all over."

"I NEED a belt!" Tomberlin shouted.

"Here! Take mine," a man in the crowd said.

Tomberlin tightened a tourniquet around the old man's thigh, stopping the massive bleeding. Fire Department paramedics rushed the victim to Jackson Memorial Hospital where surgeons failed to save him.

The name of the dead man, who lived in Miami Beach, is being withheld until his family can be notified.

Officer Steve Smigelski charged Alcantara, of 1350 NE Miami Court, with careless driving resulting in an accident.



City told to pay cop for hazards of street, range

By ARNOLD MARKOWITZ
Herald Staff Writer

A Miami policeman, walking a downtown beat for 25 years, is entitled to workmen's compensation benefits for breathing and hearing problems caused by engine exhaust fumes, horn toots and the bang, bang, bang of the pistol range, a state appeals court ruled Tuesday.

Now the city must pick up a 20 percent share of the tab for occasional medical examinations and treatments that officer John Tomberlin has been paying for; a group insurance plan takes care of the rest.

The decision does not make Tomberlin, a policeman for 30 of his 55 years, a rich man. Neither is he a sick man, according to his

lawyer the wear and tear on his ears and lungs are not bad enough to silence the steps he still plants daily on the city streets.

"This is Officer Friendly. He loves being downtown," said lawyer Peter S. Schwedock. "He has no ambition to be anything but a street patrolman, greeting people. He's just a nice man who enjoys people and being downtown."

"The money is basically *bubkes* (an insignificant amount), probably a couple of thousand in medical bills. The importance isn't in the amount. It's the protection he'll have medically."

Tomberlin cited doctors' reports of a progressive high-frequency hearing loss caused mainly by practice on the shooting range, and shortness of breath blamed on

above-normal air pollution from downtown traffic. Tracing those conditions back past the 1970s, his 1984 workmen's compensation claim asked for payment of related past, present and future medical expenses.

The city refused. Tomberlin appealed to a deputy commissioner of workmen's compensation, who agreed last August that his problems are job-related.

Because he had not submitted his personal doctors' names for advance approval, the city did not have to pay earlier bills but would have to pay future ones, it was decided. The city's appeal of that ruling was turned down by the First District Court of Appeal, which holds statewide jurisdiction in workmen's compensation appeals.

No decision has been made about another appeal to the Florida Supreme Court.

"Greatly simplified, the law in Florida says that to claim an occupational disease you must show you've suffered a hazard greater than the general populace in kind and degree," said Assistant City Attorney Rafael Suarez-Rivas, who worked on the case.

"The city's position was that a policeman standing on the street has no greater impairment than an office worker or a sanitation worker, or anyone else on the street in an urban area. We didn't feel that walking the streets was an occupational hazard. Our point is that hundreds of people walk the streets downtown."

The Miami Herald

Friday, October 16, 1959

Complete Local Ed.

By ARTHUR JOHNSKY
Herald Staff Writer

When the burden of traffic fatalities falls on Dade County's conscience — or is lifted, even briefly — residents are going to know it.

Flags flown from police motorcycle units throughout Dade will flash the signal.

On days when there are no fatalities, the flags flying from the rear of police motorcycles will be green.

When a fatality has occurred within the last 24 hours, the flags will be changed to black.

The Dade County Citizens Safety Council, which arranged the program, said the motorcycle units will appear with the flags beginning Monday morning.

J. I. Jackson, safety council director, said the program will continue for the remainder of this year "as a public educational effort."

The council said fatalities now are 20 per cent below the level of last year in Dade. The tabulation shows 89 accidental traffic fatalities as compared with 119 for the same time last year.

The Miami Herald / International Edition Saturday, February 1, 1986



AL DIAZ / Miami Herald Staff

Miami police officer John Tomberlin stands watch over the closed Haitian consulate office in downtown Miami.

The Miami Herald Saturday, February 5, 1977

Leg Severed, Victim Dies In Surgery

By EDNA BUCHANAN
Herald Staff Writer

"I don't think I'm going to make it, officer," the old man said.

"You CAN make it! Just relax," the young policeman said, kneeling on the blood-soaked sidewalk, as downtown shoppers froze in horror.

The old man was right. He died in surgery two hours later, in spite of the policeman's efforts and fast work.

THE LEG of the 81-year-old man, standing in the sun on the sidewalk in front of Jefferson's department store, 1500 Biscayne Blvd., was severed when a nine-year-old Plymouth struck another car, mounted the curb and pinned him against a metal pole.

The driver, Peter Alcantara, 82, said the brakes failed. Police said they seemed to be in working order. Alcantara sat dazed in his car.

Officer John Tomberlin, on a routine off-duty job directing traffic at the Omni Complex a half block away, heard the crash. He ran to the victim.

"One leg was almost completely gone," Officer Tomberlin said. "There was blood all over."

"I NEED a belt!" Tomberlin shouted.

"Here! Take mine," a man in the crowd said.

Tomberlin tightened a tourniquet around the old man's thigh, stopping the massive bleeding. Fire Department paramedics rushed the victim to Jackson Memorial Hospital where surgeons failed to save him.

—Herald Staff Photo.

John Tomberlin
... displays new flags

Green Flag Will Be Flag of Life



Department of Public Safety
CITY OF MIAMI
Miami, Fla.

JOHN C. TOMBERLIN

25/56 NAME 5'9"

AGE HEIGHT WEIGHT

Blue -Blk. Me

EYES HAIR BUILD

POLICEMAN

EMPLOYED AS R-000

Signed *[Signature]*

DIVISION

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY



PISTOL
MASTER

PISTOL
SHARPSHOOTER

PISTOL
EXPERT



