

I have always said it is easy being the Sheriff of Weld County because of the men and women who work for me. Most people who have a job go to work daily and don't think twice about their safety at work, they take it for granted. There are always certain risks in day to day activities such as being involved in an automobile accident or slipping on the winter ice. Most people don't go to work with the knowledge they might be injured or killed, or have to take a life during their daily activities. This is one of the areas where a career in law enforcement is very different than any other career I can think of.

Thankfully, most days in a law enforcement officer's job are routine. There were 145 days in 2006 that changed the lives of many families forever. That was the number of officers across the United States that were killed in the line of duty, more than one officer every three days. The first recorded police death was in 1792. Since then there have been more than 17,900 officers killed in the line of duty. Additionally each year an average of 56,000 officers are assaulted and sustain approximately 16,000 injuries. The deadliest day in the history of law enforcement is one all of us still remember, September 11, 2001. On this single day 72 officers were killed responding to the terrorist attacks on America. Every officer knows he or she may be called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice. It is not something they sit around thinking about or even talk about. This is simply a fact that has been accepted by those who choose to work in law enforcement.

The Weld County Sheriff's Office has the unfortunate distinction of joining the ranks of other departments who have lost deputies in the line of duty.

On December 31, 1940 Deputies Earl J. Bucher and Guy McGinnis were responding to a disturbance approximately 8 miles southwest of Johnstown. Fred Bernhardt had chased his 16 year old son off the property then shot and killed his wife Anne when Deputies Bucher and McGinnis responded to the call. As Deputy Bucher approached the cabin Bernhardt fired a shotgun hitting Deputy Bucher in the face, killing him instantly. Bernhardt then took Deputy Bucher's badge and pinned it on his own chest. After an hour long gun battle Bernhardt was eventually shot and killed and deputy Bucher's badge was recovered.

On August 4, 2004 Deputy Earl Rounds was serving civil papers when he was hit by a tractor – trailer and was killed.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy signed Public Law 87-726 designating May 15 as Peace Officers' Memorial Day, and the week in which May 15 falls as National Police Week. The law was amended by the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, Public Law 103-322, signed by President Bill Clinton, directing that the flag of the United States be displayed at half-staff on all government buildings on May 15 each year. While the actual dates change from year to year, National Police Week is always the calendar week, beginning on Sunday, which includes May 15.

This evening at 6:00 pm you are invited to attend a memorial for fallen law enforcement officers at the Weld County Centennial Center courtyard. I will be the keynote speaker

and the Sheriff's Office Honor Guard will be there along with many law enforcement officers from the local area. I hope to see you there.

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