



SALEM POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS RELEASE

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SALEM POLICE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES 2010 OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Police Officer Philip Weddle, who is assigned to the Patrol Division of the Salem Police Department, has been selected by his peers as “Officer of the Year” for 2010 after he disarmed a suspect and likely prevented a suicide last July.

“We responded to a call at the Salem Golf Course concerning an intoxicated male who had possibly fired gun shots,” he says. “When we arrived, we found a man sitting up against a tree with a pistol on his lap.”

As the officers approached the man, he raised the gun, pointed it at them and then taunted police to shoot him. Without hesitation and due regard for his own safety, Officer Weddle grabbed the gun from the suspect and successfully disarmed him without incident or injury.

“Philip’s actions during this incident show his true professionalism, and how he placed himself into harm’s way in order to disarm this person and keep the individual from harming himself or the other officers at the scene,” says Salem Police Chief Jeff Dudley. “Philip demonstrated his ability to maintain his composure and cognitive reasoning under a dire life-threatening situation.”

Later, officers determined that the suspect had, in fact, fired the weapon prior to their arrival and that he had consumed prescription medication in contemplation of taking his own life with the handgun. He was taken into custody and charged with *Brandishing a Firearm* at the officers and *Discharging a Firearm within the City Limits*.

“We ended up getting him out of there and getting him some help, but my main objective was to get that weapon away from him to ensure the safety of me and my buddies.”

To be honored by those “buddies” after a relatively short stay with the Salem Police Department has proven to be a very humbling experience for Weddle.

“Usually, an award is given to you by administration, so it means a lot to me knowing that the people I work with think this much of me,” he says. “It’s really amazing to get this honor.”

“Philip is the type of officer you hear very little about, but the kind who is always there doing his job,” says Dudley. “He is a team-oriented officer and one who is always willing to help his co-workers.”

Weddle is a Bedford County native and second generation law enforcement officer. His dad, Philip Weddle, Sr., is a Lieutenant with the Roanoke County Sheriff’s Office.

After graduating from William Fleming, Weddle began his career at the county Sheriff’s Office before joining the Salem Police Department in 2008 as a Patrol Officer.

“My dad told me that if I was going on the road that I better go to Salem,” he says. “This is the best department in the valley and there’s a real family environment here.”

Philip and his wife, Tracy, reside in Boones Mill. He will formally receive the honor at the Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce’s 77th annual awards dinner that will be held at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center on March 22.

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