

OFFICER TOM CHAPMAN



The Medal of Merit is awarded to employees who distinguish themselves by meritorious achievement or service. Meritorious actions are those which clearly surpass that which is normally required or expected.



Officer Tom Chapman has been the background investigator for new hires and lateral officers, and, for the last several years, has gone above and beyond in every aspect of his job. Ofc. Chapman has been assigned to this job on and off since about 1998. He has processed approximately one half of this agency's commissioned officers. For one person to do this is truly extraordinary. Ofc. Chapman also sits on 90% of the oral boards and is the main contact person/spokesman for the SPD. As a panel member on the oral boards, Ofc. Chapman's knowledge of military protocol and format are absolutely invaluable. He is exceptionally well prepared for each board and his attention to detail in his notes and written reports are exemplary. Ofc. Chapman takes it upon himself to do follow-up calls and he personally calls every individual that leaves a message either on e-mail or voice mail and keeps a running list of potential lateral hires. Because of his engaging and honest personality, almost every applicant—whether they are hired or not—comes away from the experience feeling they were treated fairly and honestly. More than once, I have been told by applicants that have not been hired, that they felt they were not only treated fairly but that they also were given the best chance to succeed.

Due to layoffs experienced in 2004, our reputation among potential lateral officers was extremely poor. In fact, it was so bad that the list for laterals was almost non-existent. It was only through Ofc. Chapman's personality and the personal touch that he fosters with each person, that we overcame that hurdle and began to again hire lateral officers. On many occasions, Ofc. Chapman has either delayed or cancelled scheduled vacation time to finish the hiring process. This is especially noticeable when the department ends up in a time crunch and absolutely needs to have people ready for an Academy session. Ofc. Chapman volunteers to come in on weekends and administer physical agility tests to out-of-town applicants. He schedules extra tests and flexes his schedule to meet the needs of applicants. At the last minute, he will stay several hours late to accommodate an applicant and complete an investigator's interview so another potential applicant can be hired. As a 30-year veteran of the SPD, Ofc. Chapman's dedication to his job and the commitment to this agency are unparalleled. Ofc. Chapman has served this agency as a SWAT officer, an EDU officer, an FTO as well as several other important positions. In each place he has served, he has gone above and beyond, and is well respected by line officers, supervisors and administrators.

Without a moment's hesitation, I can truly say that the quality people that the SPD has been hiring are in large part due to the efforts of Officer Thomas Chapman and for his actions, he was awarded the Medal of Merit.