



THE BLUE FAMILY TREE

Newsletter article June, 2023

June started out with a bang for me and it developed easy motivation for this month's article. The Blue Family Tree shares tips to save your life in the heat of the moment on the road. We give advice on how to save your life from the long term stressors of the job. We guide our readers on ways to be successful at the conclusion of a police career; to be able to stand tall and say, "I did it. I'm a little battered and bruised, but I'm in tact and better off for the service I gave."

Part of that is developing a culture in your agency that supports you. Police everywhere have a tendency to make their agency the bad guy, and much of the time it's well deserved. The conflicts in day to day mission can be polarizing between the line and the executives. Over time anything that isn't how we like it can simply be put on the administration. It's an easy scapegoat. While there are many reasons for conflict and disagreement between the ranks, in the end we have created issues that aren't always there. Command staff has a never ending uphill battle to move us to their side while still accomplishing their missions and serving the officials that oversee their positions. We are all rag dolls being pulled in many directions. you must admit your executive staff is that and then some.

In staying with this concept consider within your own department times you have seen your department back an officer, or step up for them, and times you have felt they did not. "My department doesn't have my back." While that statement, when shared with others reflects directly on the command, much of the time the officers who come to that conclusion are basing it on line level responses to their crisis. It's you and I that create the culture that makes a department worth giving the best years of your

life to. Have we taken care of a spouses needs? Have we mowed a lawn when an injured officer couldn't? Have we created a meal train? Did we visit the hospital and sneak in a shot of whiskey? Have we been good teammates whether we knew the affected member or not? Do we preach "family" but not practice it? Do we really mean it when we text and say, "Let me know how I can help. I'm here."

The member in need pays attention. They see who calls, texts, and visits. They know who finds a need and fills it. They know who is sincere, and who didn't give a second thought. For them to walk away from the experience convinced the department is in fact there for its members, its members need to step up, not just command. And command cannot leave this display of care to only the line level. They need to participate as well. We can all separate work and family. We can all recognize that command may have to take formal action against the member down the road. This doesn't mean they don't care today.

Every member from the newest probationary rookie to the chief should show support to members in their time of need. This creates an environment of family and produces a work place that officers can make 20 years with the comfort of knowing they have surrounded themselves with good people. Most of the time our offer to help with whatever we can is enough and goes by without being called on, but if you are called on to help, be prepared to back the support you offered.

In spite of historical differences between the ranks, I can assure you I have found an agency that supports its line level and my career is survivable because of it.

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