



THE BLUE FAMILY TREE

Newsletter article May, 2020

It's May. A time for blooming flowers. A time for yard work. A time to get out of the house, hike, bike, ride, camp, whatever you love to do. This is a doing month. And this May stands a chance to be that more than ever, with stay at home orders lifting all around the country.

May is also a time we reflect on more than 24,000 peace officers who gave their lives in service to their communities. I would hope as working peace officers in today's climate, that we would pay respect to them every time we fix the strap on our vest, or zip our button up shirt, or thread those keepers. May is really an opportunity to make the rest of the community aware of the staggering numbers and just what they have done for us, and what we continue to do each day. May is about creating awareness in those who do not live it daily.

An added benefit is our opportunity to really emphasize our own respects more so than a quiet moment in the locker room before shift. If you have never taken the time to go to Police Week, I highly recommend making the time before your career is over. Every cop should attend at least one, and I would bet, after your first visit to Police Week, you will try to attend over and over again. The police memorial by itself is a somber and breathtaking place any day of the year. But when you go and see all the wreaths and flowers, and bottles of Jack, and cans of Copenhagen, left on the wall in honor of a name written below them, it will start the tear ducts up. And then as you quietly walk the loop and see uniformed officers from thousands of miles away crying with friends and family and widows and children, well there's no holding back the flood waters of your own emotion anymore, I don't care how tough you think you are.

Then there's Tent City. A safe and secure place for police and their families to go visit vendors and have a beer, or two.... dozen. You'll meet officers you may have conversed with in a FB group but never met in person, and you might even run into some of those cop celebrities we have all grown to love on social media. You can buy Blue Line merch, eat smelly funnel cake, smoke giant cigars, and listen to pipes and drums as they come marching through to continue the atmosphere of remembrance. When thousands of police are gathered together with spirits, warm weather, and pipes, the memories can be nothing short of amazing, year after year.

There is so much more to do. Don't miss Kelly's Irish Times, just a few short blocks from the capitol. If you think you have been to a cop bar before, but you haven't been to Kelly's, then maybe you have been to "A" cop bar, but you haven't been to "THE" cop bar. For many, Kelly's is the highlight of their week in DC. There are honor guard competitions in front of the capitol, the police unity tour, and so much more.

This year, Police Week, like everything else, has been canceled due to COVID-19. Those of us that look forward to it each year, are heart broken, realistically not for ourselves, but for the families joining us this year to add their loved ones to the wall. Prolonging that process has got to be very difficult as the ritual does provide a level of closure to many families.

I suspect that Police Week 2021 will be the biggest event to date. The turnout in participation, vendors, events, and families coming to add names will be as unprecedented as the vents of the beginning of 2020.

I urge you to find thirty seconds at the beginning of every shift to do what we do once a week in may. The examples above are great opportunities. Take a conscious moment everyday before you go risk your own life and remember those who went before. I firmly believe that doing so may save your life by brining a level of awareness to your daily actions, and it will instill a level of pride in what you do to be represented by such an outstanding group of heroes like those 24,000. Giving to The Blue Family Tree is one of those ways you can consciously reflect on and pay respects as well. All money received in, is evenly split and gifted to all families who lose an officer in the line of duty. It is a family gift to members of our family who suffered our greatest nightmare.