

SALUTE TO FALLEN CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS 2007

By Vicki D. Duncan

The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C., provided the setting for this year's wreath-laying ceremony, which inaugurated Correctional Officers/Employees Week, May 6-12, 2007. In addition to honoring slain correctional employees from the Washington metropolitan area, the ceremony paid tribute to five local and national officers who lost their lives in the line of duty in 2006 and a District of Columbia correctional officer who had recently succumbed to a heart attack while on the job.

Craig W. Floyd, chairman and CEO of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund and the driving force behind the National Law Enforcement Museum under construction across the street from the memorial site, delivered the keynote address. The role correctional officers play in ensuring safe communities will be highlighted among the museum's exhibits, which is tentatively titled "One Tough Beat," he said. The museum is scheduled to open in four years.

More than 500 correctional officer names are inscribed on the memorial, Floyd said. Names of 16 additional correctional officers — four killed in 2006 and 12 that until this year had slipped through the cracks — were added on May 13.

According to the memorial fund's research, Floyd said, "the first recorded correctional officer to die in the line of duty was William Bullard of the Missouri Department of Corrections, who died on June 14, 1841. Officer Bullard was beaten to death during an escape attempt."

Floyd praised correctional officers who today are armed only with a radio, a baton and their people skills. "Given

Photos by Vicki D. Duncan



A Montgomery County, Md., honor guard member pays tribute to fallen comrades.

that they are responsible for the custody and security of some 1.5 million inmates nationwide — a number that is expected to reach 1.7 million in the next five years — our correctional officers do a remarkable job," he said. "The public may sometimes overlook those who walk that one tough beat," Floyd added, "but those of us in law enforcement certainly know, understand and are grateful for their dedication and bravery, their service and sacrifice. This memorial will help ensure that we will never forget."

Jacqueline F. Brown, Ph.D., chief administrative officer in Prince Georges County, Md., and president of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, which sponsored the event, welcomed the more than 200 people who attended the solemn ceremony. She noted that correctional officers receive little recognition for doing a difficult, often thankless job and praised them for their important contributions to the rehabilitation process.

Captain Charles Wyant from the Loudoun County, Va., Sheriff's Office and president of the COG Correctional Chiefs Committee, was master of ceremonies for the event. As Brown read the name of each individual slain officer, a



Honor guard members prepare to lay roses for fallen correctional officers.



Craig Floyd of the Law Enforcement Memorial Fund Foundation served as keynote speaker for the day's event.



Combined color guard members march in formation to present the colors.



Attendees listen to keynote address given by Craig Floyd.

bell was rung, a dove (white homing pigeon) was released and an honor guard representative came forward to lay a traditional long-stem rose in remembrance.

Captain Thomas Shaw of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office played "Taps" as the wreath was lowered into place by the wreath holders. Jason Gowdy of the Washington, D.C., Regional Police Pipe Band followed this with "Amazing Grace."

After the retiring of colors by a special color guard comprised of representatives from several jurisdictions, seven honor guard teams competed in the annual regional honor guard team competition. The Prince George's County team won for the fifth year in a row, followed closely by the District of Columbia team and the squad from Montgomery County, Md. The award for best appearance went to the Loudoun County team. Representatives from the Maryland and Virginia state police organizations and the Philadelphia Honor Guard judged the event.

Vicki Duncan is the public information officer for the Prince George's County, Md., Department of Corrections and coordinator for the wreath-laying event.



The wreath is carried by honor guard members from the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.