

Aptos VFW post cites three for community work

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APTOS — Every once in a while, a cop or a firefighter will do a little extra for their community or their department.

Every once in a while the community notices.

Sheriff's Sgt. Dave Deverell, Aptos/La Selva Firefighter Scott Cullen and former CHP Capt. Steve Ellis were all recognized by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Aptos Post #10110 last week for outstanding community involvement.

"As veterans we theoretically risked our lives for our country," said Aptos VFW Quartermaster Terry Reeder. "These emergency services type people risk their lives on a daily basis."



Cullen

The post has given the awards for the last eight years. This year, Deverell and Ellis received "Officer of the Year" in their jurisdictions, and Cullen earned the "Firefighter of the Year."

Deverell, who became Aptos' local sheriff's sergeant last year with the opening of the substation on Soquel Drive, said he is pleased by the award.

"Law enforcement over several decades has tended to lose contact with the public it serves," Deverell said. "This is taking us back to where we're supposed to be."

Deverell spent three years as a young deputy patrolling Aptos. Twenty-three years later he is in charge of the sheriff's substation in Rancho Del Mar shopping center, which averages about 150 walk-ins and callers per month. Deverell can also be found at nearly every Aptos Chamber of Commerce event, community clean-up days and coordinating law enforcement at large events like the fireworks show at Seacliff State Beach.

"The most important part is the citizen contact," he said.

And Deverell's citizens were tickled pink with the award.

"I'm so excited," said Aptos Chamber of Commerce Co-Director Karen Hibble. "Oh that makes my heart hurt, he just deserves it so much."

Aptos/La Selva Fire Captain Phil Scofield agreed.

"Dave is an excellent choice. He's so high-profile in Aptos," he said. "He would have been my pick as the person for the Aptos area."

Scofield also had reason to crow, because one of his firefighters earned an award as well.

Cullen, Scofield said, is in the process of revolutionizing how the fire department locates homes and fire plugs throughout the district. He's been with the district for seven years and is redoing the map system on the district's personal computers. When he completes the project all the engines will carry brand new maps.

"He's just one of those good all-around firefighters," Scofield said.

Reeder said Cullen's wife recently gave birth to their second daughter and the four-day-old baby came to the award ceremony.

Former CHP Captain Steve Ellis, who recently departed his post to become Assistant Chief in San Luis Obispo, also received an award.

Like Deverell, Ellis spent a lot of time working with the community during his 11-year tenure with the highway patrol. Marc Monte of the Monte Foundation, which sponsors the annual fireworks show at Seacliff and several other events, said Ellis supported the foundation from the word go.

"From the beginning he told me, 'whatever you need, the Highway Patrol will get you,'" Monte said. "Ever since then he's just been totally supportive."

Reeder said the VFW doesn't usually give these awards to brass, but because Ellis has left the area after many years of service, they felt it was appropriate.

"He's just done a remarkable job here," Reeder said.