

2015 Award of Distinction Leadership

I would like to nominate Sergeant Ronald A. Copeland for consideration for the 2015 Missouri State Employee Award of Distinction in the category of Leadership.

Sergeant Copeland is designated as a Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Trooper (CVET) within Troop I. Sergeant Copeland is tasked with all duties involving commercial motor vehicles, as well as being designated as one of the primary troopers responsible for responding to disasters and critical incidents throughout the state of Missouri.

The law enforcement community, along with the rest of Missouri, faced one such critical incident as the nation focused on events unfolding in the community of Ferguson during 2014. The widespread civil unrest and protests, combined with criminal acts perpetrated by some individuals, proved challenging for law enforcement.

Sergeant Copeland was designated as a squad leader within a field platoon assigned to the front lines of the protests. As a result, Sergeant Copeland was tasked with leading, guiding, and directing actions of officers as they stood on skirmish lines in an attempt to protect the lives and property of the community. The skirmish lines proved especially challenging for officers, as they often were subjected to verbal barrages as well as having numerous items thrown at them as they stood just a matter of inches from protesters. Sergeant Copeland was instrumental in maintaining a calm and professional demeanor among the officers on the line. Sergeant Copeland continually monitored every person on the line, including the officers and protesters; ensuring safety was maintained while simultaneously allowing the voices of the protesters to be heard. Sergeant Copeland's leadership skills were displayed on numerous occasions when he would approach a particular vocal area on the skirmish line and engage members of the protest group in meaningful conversations. This resulted in the protesters recognizing his leadership role, and through his positive interaction with the group a tense situation was often de-escalated. At the conclusion of each rotation his squad was assigned on the skirmish line, Sergeant Copeland would contact his squad members to ensure each of them was both physically and mentally okay and then prepare them for their next assignment.

Sergeant Copeland is an outstanding leader, which is exhibited in his daily duties and during critical incidents. Sergeant Copeland was able to effectively lead his squad during a tense, stressful situation in Ferguson. For these reasons, I respectfully request he be considered for the 2015 Missouri State Employee Award of Distinction in the category of Leadership.