



During this time of year, as we prepare to celebrate the holidays, I am always reminded of how fragile life is and how quickly our world can change. On December 14, 2006, I was with some of our officers in Quantico Virginia preparing to witness the FBI National Academy graduation of one of our Sergeants on the following morning.

It was a time of celebration and I was so proud to have another of our officers graduating from what can only be described as the pinnacle of law enforcement training. Having attended myself, I knew firsthand what it felt like to walk across that stage and receive my certification from the Director of the FBI.

As all of those thoughts were running through my head about my experiences and what a thrill this would be for our Sergeant to walk across that stage in the morning, I received a phone call that erased all of the joy and celebratory feelings that I had just experienced. Shortly before 830 pm, the call came in that a member of our department had been critically injured. We immediately packed up and drove back to Maine in time to see our colleague before he left this world at 1125 am. For anyone who has responsibility for the safety and care of their colleagues, there is nothing more difficult than the loss of life under your watch.

Jim Durant was one of the founding members and was proud to serve as a Volunteer In Police Services (VIPS). His work, and the work of his VIPS partners allow our officers to concentrate on the more technical aspects of policing. Jim made the ultimate sacrifice when he was struck by a car while directing traffic so that officers could concentrate on their investigation.

Jim Durant was an honorable man who proudly served his country as a soldier in the Army; a wounded and decorated combat veteran in Vietnam. In 1985, Jim was honored with the Red Cross Certificate of Merit for saving the life of a co-worker. The certificate is the highest honor that the Red Cross can bestow upon an individual for meritorious service and was signed by President Ronald Reagan. Jim retired from the Federal Aviation Administration in 1996 after 25 years of employment. He also worked for L.L. Bean in Freeport as a Security Officer and First Responder.

For many that would have been enough, he certainly had earned the right to kick back and spend time with his lovely wife Janine, their three children Darlene, Jacqueline, and Christopher, and

four granddaughters. But that's not who Jim was; his desire to serve his community carried over into his retirement years. He took great pride in his work with VIPS, most notably assisting people with launching their boats at Pine Point and making sure they had everything they needed for a safe boating experience.

It has been thirteen years since we lost Jim Durant. I think of him often. As I walk down the hallway or wait for the elevator I am drawn to his smiling face on a plaque that reminds us all of his proud service. I miss seeing that smile on his face and hearing his cheerful greeting. You were a good man Jim. One that your family, friends, and colleagues are proud to have known and served beside. R.I.P. my friend, we thank you and cherish your memory.—