

City honors officer with Heroism Award

February 22, 2020



Crescent City Police Officer Alex Pearson was honored Feb. 18 at the City Council meeting with an Act of Heroism Award for life-saving actions he took while with the California Highway Patrol three years ago.

Police Chief Richard Griffin got emotional while recounting the events of Feb. 16, 2017.

Three years ago, Feb. 16, 2017, there was an incident on Highway 101 South near Klamath. CHP Officer Jose Martinez was involved in a wreck. His car ended up under a semi-truck and then caught on fire.

“What happened next is nothing short of heroic,” Griffin told the council members. “What I watched on the body cam video of then Deputy Alex Pearson is almost unexplainable.”

He was the first officer on the scene. He went back and forth, trying to extract Martinez from the vehicle, including cutting safety belts and ripping stuff out of there.

“Mind you, this is while the vehicle is almost completely engulfed in flames,” Griffin said. “What I saw was a person, I know this because he told me, that day if someone was going to die, he didn’t want them to die

alone. I'm very proud to have Mr. Pearson with us on the Crescent City Police Department. And I wanted to make sure that even after three years, this is recognized."

Last week, Pearson was recognized with the Medal of Valor from the Del Norte County Sheriff's Office.

The now-retired Martinez was on hand to present the Heroism Award to Pearson.

"If it wasn't for this guy, I probably wouldn't be here. The first guy on the scene, he did what he could to get me out of that car. It felt like hell was all around me. He was doing all he could — car's on fire. He cut my seatbelt. He was doing all he could. I just want to thank this guy," Martinez said before hugging Pearson.

Pearson addressed the council, trying to spread the credit amongst all the emergency responders.

"I'm beyond grateful for this. That day proved many people can work together to get to a better outcome than what was presented. I'm glad it turned out better than it started," he said.

Mayor Blake Inscore read the award certificate then shared how proud he was of Pearson.

"I have known you since you were a lifeguard at the pool. I'm a transplant here, but I was thrilled when you made your decision to serve your community as a member of the Crescent City Police Department. If I'm being completely honest, I was, selfishly, saddened when you went to work for the Sheriff's Department," Inscore said. "But in retrospect, and along with Mr. Martinez, I'm glad you were there in that moment in time. You have made this community proud, and I'm even prouder you have chosen to come back to the Crescent City Police Department. When it comes to matters of crisis, we're not 'this department' or 'that department.' We are one community. Your acts have proven that."