

To whom it may concern,

On August 16th, 2023, I began my lifelong goal of becoming a law enforcement officer when I swore into the Wasco County Sheriff's Office at 21 years old. Unlike larger metro police agencies I began my field training prior to attending the basic police academy at DPSST. On my second day sworn in, I responded to a rollover crash where the driver was ejected from their vehicle, injuring their head and exposing brain matter.

I did not begin the police academy until December of 2023; I received 4 months of real world experience including pursuits, death investigations, warrant arrests and a variety of day-to-day call types modern day police regularly respond to before ever walking through the DPSST doors. I dread leaving to the academy, knowing I would be unable to gain more of that experience for 4 months. Being a hands on learner, I struggle to retain knowledge unless I am physically able to see or do things myself; I was scared that sitting in a classroom learning from PowerPoint and lectures would result in becoming a worse law enforcement officer.

One requirement of DPSST while attending basic police is sending an email to your agency at the end of every week explaining what you experienced, learned and any test scores you received that week. I believe that in every one of the 16 emails sent home to my agency, I stated at one point or another that I was ready to be done at the academy and back on the road.

Immediately after taking our final exam, my class coordinator Eamon Obrein entered the classroom. During this conversation with the class, Eamon stated that statistically someone in that very room would be in an officer-involved shooting within 12 months of graduating. I clearly remember thinking, word for word, "Yeah, right, I work in rural Wasco County, that will never happen to me." However, my 16 weeks at DPSST came and went and two days later I walked across the stage and shook Mr. Obrein's hand as I received my certificate.

Less than 2 months after graduating, I became that statistic. At approximately 2:00 A.M on June 18th 2024, I was sitting on an onramp for Interstate 84 in The Dalles when I glanced in my drivers side mirror and observed a large tow truck-type vehicle cross over the dimly lit overpass with no lights on. As I continued to observe the truck, which I later learned to be a 27,000-pound Ford F-700, it ran a stop sign and headed towards downtown The Dalles. I knew I needed to stop the truck, so I proceeded to back off the onramp in an attempt to catch up to the vehicle and initiate a stop. As I approached the vehicle, I noticed a large steel cable approximately 3 inches in diameter dragging 20-30 feet behind the truck. I notified dispatch I was going to conduct a traffic stop in the Home Depot parking lot and requested an additional unit, as I believed the driver was intoxicated.

My dispatcher asked me to repeat my location and right as I was able to, the driver put the truck in reverse and accelerated hard in an attempt to ram my patrol car. I put my vehicle in reverse and backed out onto the street where I began performing a high-risk traffic stop. The driver did not comply with my commands to exit the vehicle and drove toward the parking lot exit. At this time I initiated a pursuit and followed the truck as it exited the parking lot and headed toward town.

I warned responding officers/ deputies of the cable dragging behind the truck, as well as the fact he would try to ram police vehicles. While in pursuit, I watched as a City of The Dalles police car was heading in my direction. The tow truck driver swerved hard into the oncoming lane, attempting to ram

the police car. The officer successfully maneuvered his vehicle to avoid being struck. As the pursuit continued towards town, a second officer pulled off onto the side of the road to wait for the truck to pass so he could join the pursuit. At that time, the driver of the truck rammed the police car, knocking it off the roadway, over a curb and into a pole. The truck driver then decided to turn around and angle the truck toward myself and my patrol car before accelerating towards me. At that time, I, along with another Deputy and City of The Dalles police officer, opened fire upon the driver, ultimately ending his life from a fatal gunshot wound to the femoral artery.

After the truck came to a stop, we removed the driver of the truck from the vehicle and began performing life-saving measures, such as applying tourniquets. As the driver was transported by ambulance to the local hospital, I took a second to look back; it was then I realized how close the truck was to my patrol car and where I stood. I was able to open my driver side door and contact the front of the truck that had just attempted to run me over not once but twice.

The hood of the truck was level with the roof of my Ford Explorer. After the incident was over, I realized how much the training I received at DPSST paid off in the real world. How the training I dreaded going to allowed me to come home to my family that night. Every action I took that night was trained into me by the staff of DPSST. The traffic stop classes where we did repetition after repetition, practicing radioing to dispatch and giving important information. The emergency vehicle operation classes, where hours were spent practicing driving in every direction, paid off when I had to drive in reverse to avoid being rammed. We were training in pursuits and how to communicate with fellow officers while in pursuit. Countless hours were spent on the firing range in all shooting conditions, such as low lighting and exiting vehicles. When I fired upon the driver of the vehicle, my duty weapon had malfunctioned approximately 10 rounds into shooting and without hesitation, I was able to clear the malfunction and perform a tactical reload as we had done time after time at the range.

DPSST is the reason I knew that as soon as it is safe to do so, the State of Oregon requires law enforcement to perform life-saving measures after using lethal force. In week one of the academy at DPSST, I remember our class applying tourniquets on ourselves and each other time after time until we could do it without thinking twice. I was 22 years old, fresh out of the academy, and just in a fatal officer-involved shooting. However, I knew everything would be okay because of the training I received at DPSST. I knew my actions were justified, and I knew how to cope with my emotions.

Multiple officers and deputies were involved in the incident, all with varying years in law enforcement, different backgrounds and views on policing. But the one thing we all had in common was DPSST. We all walked the same hallways, sat in the same classrooms, and received the wealth of knowledge they have to offer. Once you leave DPSST, you continue to receive support and knowledge from their staff.

After my shooting, I reached out to Eamon Obrein to express my gratitude for the training and the staff at DPSST. Without hesitation, Eamon offered his support and time as I navigated through my experience. I was no longer a student of his, no longer his responsibility, but he still willingly offered his time to me on top of being a father and teaching future law enforcement officers of Oregon.

DPSST is a wealth of knowledge, with instructors from all sorts of agencies who have worked various specialty jobs such as fish and game, SWAT, and detectives. The training being done at DPSST is saving

the lives of not only law enforcement officers but also of the communities we all work in. The wide variety of knowledge and experience from staff combined with the large number of repetitions makes DPSST an irreplaceable asset in protecting the lives of all Oregonians.

Attending DPSST was an honor and experience I wish every law enforcement officer in the country could experience. The quality of training is unmatched and vital for making effective police officers to better our communities. I can attest to their training and standards working in the real world and can attest to the fact that I went home safe to my family that night because of the training I received. Fate put me into my situation but the training at DPSST is what brought me home.

Sincerely, Deputy Joshua Augustus

Basic Police class 436.