

'Many Thanks for Their Service'

A VFW Post in Virginia awarded four local public servants with VFW's Public Servant Award

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VFW Post 8469 members in Fairfax, Va., honored four public servants for their outstanding achievements through the organization's national Public Servant Awards on March 4.

As part of the national VFW program, which encourages Posts across the country each year to nominate local law enforcement and first responders, Post 8469 members presented their four honorees with the esteemed award during a ceremony at the Post.

"Too often, these people are not recognized for the extreme value they provide to the community, every day and at some personal risk, and more often are called out by the media when something goes wrong," Post 8469 Commander James McCarl said to open the ceremony. "Congratulations to these good people, and many thanks for their service."

Joined by family members, supervisors and Post 8469 affiliates, the four public servants, which consists of two Virginia State Police officers, a Fairfax County Police dispatcher and a Fairfax County Police explosive ordnance disposal officer, were celebrated with their own respective plaques honoring their service to the community.

A Virginia State Police special agent since 2014, Robert Guyton was recognized for his role as lead investigator in a recent case considered one of the largest in the state's history due to the number of troopers and officers involved in the incident.

As noted in Guyton's award nomination by his supervisors, "His work and professionalism were significant factors in determining the facts that ultimately led to multiple charges."

Another Virginia State Police special agent honored was Ira Dallam, Sr., who after a 21-year career as a Marine joined the police force in 2014. Assigned to the Northern Virginia Mass Transportation Initiative (NVMTI), Dallam helped seize nearly \$14 million worth of illicit narcotics.

"Countless families should be thankful to Special Agent Dallam for preventing them from

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experiencing the pain of losing a family member to an overdose death,” read his nomination, which came from his supervisors at NVMTI, a multi-agency drug task force coordinated by the Drug Enforcement Administration.

The VFW also honored Fairfax County Public Safety Communicator John Ihling, who in 2023 answered 23,939 calls, surpassing the average limit by a margin of 10,000 calls. Known for his volunteer hours and answering callback pages, Ihling represents the agency in the APCO Government Relations Counsel and currently serves as co-chair of two Virginia APCO committees — Emerging Technologies in 911 and the 911 Committee.

According to his award nomination, “His unwavering dedication and work ethic have significantly contributed to the agency’s ability to meet the demands of our community, showcasing his commitment to public and responder safety, as well as life preservation.”

The VFW Post 8469 awards ceremony concluded with Master Police Officer Brian Storm, an explosive ordinance and disposal technician who has served on the Fairfax County Police Department EOD/Bomb Squad for almost a decade.

Storm was recognized by Post 8469 for his continued devotion to planning and executing bomb squad training events, as well as creating a training program for patrol officers to assist in dealing with suspicious package and improvised explosive devices.

With more than 500 hours of bomb squad training, Storm’s “knowledge and experience as an EOD technician” is recognized by all his commanders and fellow officers, according to his award citation.

Post 8469, chartered in 1946, had 283 members as of June 20.

This article is featured in the 2024 August issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Ismael Rodriguez Jr.](#), senior writer for VFW magazine.