



HAPCOA

HISPANIC AMERICAN POLICE COMMAND OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

PO Box 767

Cibolo, Texas 78108

HAPCOA AGUILA AWARDS NOMINATION FORM

CATEGORY:

- ☐ LA AGUILA STATUE
- ☐ VALOR GOLD MEDALLION
- ☒ MERITORIOUS SERVICE SILVER MEDALLION
- ☐ COMMUNITY SERVICE BRONZE MEDALLION

Please print or type

NAME/TITLE OF NOMINEE: Michael Lynn Connelly

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: Air Force Office of Special Investigations

TELEPHONE No: (520) 228-0588 EXT. _____

Nominated by/Department: 2nd Field Investigations Region/OL-B

Address: 5255 E. Gafford Way, Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ 85707

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**** Please attach a letter not longer than three (3) pages with justification why the nominee should receive the indicated HAPCOA Aguila Award. All nominations MUST BE received by HAPCOA via mail, email, or fax by 01 September of any given year.**

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR FORCE OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS
2D FIELD INVESTIGATIONS REGION, OPERATING LOCATION BRAVO
DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, ARIZONA

17 Aug 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR HISPANIC AMERICAN POLICE COMMAND OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

FROM: AFOSI 2nd Field Investigation Region/Operation Location-Bravo
2915 S. 12th AF Drive
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ 85707

SUBJECT: HAPCOA Aguila Award Nomination for Special Agent, Michael L. Connelly

Special Agent (SA) Michael Connelly has continuously distinguished himself by consistent, superbly high-quality competence in complex counterintelligence (CI) and law enforcement (LE) operations. He possesses the highest degree of initiative, greatly enhancing the ability of this unit throughout the Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR). His actions have played a central role in the safety and security of more than 34 thousand Department of Defense (DoD), United States Coast Guard, and other U.S. Government personnel traveling throughout SOUTHCOM, a often volatile region with active insurgencies where DoD members are currently targeted. His leadership in this area greatly enhanced the ability of U.S. and Host Nation countries to work together in the fight against narcotics trafficking. He has a unique ability to exercise visionary creativity regarding the importance of United States power in the region and how to best apply it given his mission, role, and tools.

AFOSI 2nd Field Investigation Region/Operation Location-Bravo (2FIR/OL-B) unique mission of providing CI services to all DoD elements throughout SOUTHCOM. SA Connelly's meticulous attention to detail, deep understanding and application of operational concepts, has significantly improved all processes and services delivered by this special unit. SA Connelly's competence has been exceptionally important in establishing AFOSI as a premier interagency partner in Honduras, Belize, Colombia, Chile, Brazil, Peru, Panama, Ecuador, Haiti, and Curacao. In addition to the partnerships he has created at each United States embassy, he has also built bridges to host nation allied law enforcement and intelligence services where none had existed before his tour of duty. SA Connelly, through his outstanding leadership ability, professional attitude, and genuine concern for the security of our homeland, directly supported the execution of over 1200 counter drug missions which resulted in the seizure of 301 metric tons of narcotics valued at more than 4.74 billion dollars.

His superlative knowledge, skills and abilities led to the rapid identification and establishment of a network of critical host nation and U.S. Government liaison contacts dramatically improved the unit's information collection and reporting processes. SA Connelly expanded his efforts to the point where information he generated drove national level policy discussions held by the decision makers at the Component Commander (COCOM) level regarding the protection of key national defense programs and personnel.

He flawlessly executed interagency criminal and counterterrorism investigations, resolving dozens of threats to U.S. national security. SA Connelly's motivation and innate talents led to him being handpicked to lead Force Protection Detachment-Chile, a position designed for someone at a much higher rank. He knows and understands the technical aspects of the standard DoD reporting application, and has received several high value ratings for his work.

SA Connelly was handpicked to conduct a CI assessment of the premier Colombian Air Force fighter base identified in the Defense Cooperation Agreement between the United States and Colombia. His work resulted in the identification and neutralization of three hostile foreign intelligence agents aggressively planning and carrying

out attacks against US personnel and assets. Additionally, he identified and neutralized an advanced SIGINT platform targeted at sensitive US communications. SA Connelly was praised by top Air Force leadership for his proactive initiatives resulting in an increase in safety and security for all DoD assets and personnel working jointly with the Colombians. SA Connelly rapidly and aggressively identified serious threats to U.S. and Colombian forces, and skillfully used his diplomatic prowess to reach out to both U.S. and Colombian leaders to ensure threats were eliminated. His actions created an immense amount of positive political capital and enabled future joint Colombian-U.S. CI initiatives.

SA Connelly has volunteered to take on the toughest missions tackled by this office, without hesitation he selflessly stepped up during two catastrophic earthquakes in Haiti and Chile. He managed a ten-member team deployed in support of the relief efforts in Haiti ensuring AFOSI provided the first CI team at J2X disposal. His efforts directly led to the protection of 22 thousand DoD members and facilitated rescue and aid efforts for more than 1.17 million Haitians and ensured 36 million pounds of supplies were safely delivered by airlift. Throughout a very chaotic and fluid environment, SA Connelly used his ability to adapt and used ingenious methods to devise outside the box solutions for complex issues. His selfless initiative and dogged persistence in this endeavor greatly enhanced the effectiveness of the deployed team and resulted in a successful joint international aid mission.

Working outside of his traditional focus on U.S. Air Force operations and assets, SA Connelly has taken the initiative to learn and apply maritime and ground security concepts and has provided outstanding support to all service components in Colombia, Honduras and Chile, as well as U.S. Army and Navy humanitarian and other tactical missions throughout Latin America. His outstanding initiative has directly benefited the operational reach of this unit by making him a well-rounded, diversified agent who can accept any mission at any time.

While leading a twelve-man protective service detail supporting twenty U.S. General Officers, SA Connelly discovered a potential car bomb located in the basement of the General's hotel just prior to the arrival of the General Officers into Colombia. He quickly delegated responsibilities and personally labored to eliminate the potential car bomb while using his strong liaison relationships to quickly augment the current security posture at the hotel. Due to his quick actions, the General Officer's visit was unaffected and the threat was eliminated immediately. His performance under pressure was lauded by the U.S. embassy team in Colombia and the organizers of the visit.

His resourcefulness is unmatched, allowing this unit to greatly improve its ability to systematically engage both United States and partner nation counterparts in more productive ways. He identified that many partner nations have a lack of formal understanding of the AFOSI mission and how AFOSI can work effectively with the partner nation to advance mutual goals. He bridged this gap by creating an unclassified Spanish language pamphlet highlighting AFOSI's capabilities and advantages as the agency of choice by partner nation. This product has been benchmarked for use with partner agencies throughout Latin America. His work in this area greatly enhanced and improved the understanding of the AFOSI mission by partner nations and augmented the trust of partners throughout Latin America.

SA Connelly's maturity, judgment, and positive attitude provide a contagious environment for the people around him. While he was leading the Force Protection Detachment in Santiago, Chile he facilitated a seminar focused on improving the quality of all intelligence products. The results of his efforts drastically improved the intelligence products and helped the unit garner nine Air Force and DoD-level awards.

SA Connelly is the illustration of working smarter and investing now for the future success of the unit. He forged relationships with the top Chilean leadership in the two main Chilean LE agencies and coordinated a virtual source network represented by daily threat bulletins from each of these LE agencies. This daily information stream will not only benefit the unit today but years into the future. His confidence, competence, and reflection of core American values and leadership skills were directly reflected while he led the Force Protection Detachment in Santiago, Chile. Due to his leadership the unit quadrupled production and greatly improved the prestige and access of the unit by forming direct relationships with upper echelon leadership of Chilean agencies. Due to these

relationships, he was able to identify and deter the collection efforts of seven probable foreign intelligence officers working against U.S. efforts in the country. His level of interaction and collaboration with host nation is very significant for a field agent of his rank and is a direct result of his leadership abilities. Furthermore, he cultivated professional relationships with high-ranking Chilean police and military officers at the director level. He meticulously planned, executed, and escorted four senior officers to high-level liaison events at critical conferences in the United States with no supervision. His leadership in this area greatly enhanced the access enjoyed by this office and resulted in dramatic production gains.

SA Connelly's leadership also greatly improved command and control of this unit. He pioneered a deployment process to ensure all agents deploying to Latin America deployed with the complete understanding of their job and realistic expectations for the deployment. His system worked so effectively it allowed each deploying agent to operate autonomously with little supervision. It empowered each agent with a sense of ownership and responsibility and because it was so effective it raised the operational tempo for both the unit and the deployed agents. SA Connelly also reevaluated the effectiveness of several time intensive products produced by the unit and offered a creative solution reducing the time to accomplish those activities by 75%. Additionally, he created a medium where the products could be rapidly and effectively shared with the top DoD customers enabling these top officials with all the necessary information at their fingertips to make informed decisions.

SA Connelly constantly creates new operational concepts that greatly expand the scope and significance of this unit's mission in Latin America. For example, while working in Honduras he identified a lack of communication and coordination between the various Honduran military and LE agencies which needed to be remedied to ensure threat information relevant to DoD personnel and assets were accurate and timely. To fix the information sharing problem, SA Connelly sponsored a quarterly LE working group where representatives from all the Honduran military and LE agencies participated and coordinated threat information in a neutral arena conducive to sharing and resolving problems. The quarterly working group increased cohesiveness between all host nation and U.S. agencies and resulted in a dramatically more efficient mechanism to counter threats and process real-time threat information.

SA Connelly has displayed a high degree of creative talent in expanding AFOSI's reputation and capabilities throughout Latin America. His efforts have not only benefitted this unit, but additionally his work has elevated the DoD and the U.S. as a whole ensuring strong, long term relationships with our key partners throughout Latin America.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Raquel Z. La Barr', written in a cursive style.

RAQUEL Z. LA BARR, SA, USAF
AFOSI 2 FIR/OL-B