News Release
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KPD’s ‘Top Cops’ honored with Law Enforcement and Security Awards

LĪHU‘E – The Law Enforcement and Security Coalition of Hawai‘i recognized Patrol Services Bureau (PSB) Officer Kalani Apilado and Administrative and Technical Bureau (ATB) Sergeants Alan Santella and Len Nitta as Top Cops. They were honored at the virtual 36th Annual Law Enforcement and Security Awards ceremony where tribute was paid to 2020 and 2021 Top Cop nominees who exemplify professionalism, dedication, heroism and community service.

Sergeants Santella and Nitta were recognized as Kaua‘i Police Department’s (KPD) 2020 Top Cops (the ceremony was not held in 2020 due to COVID). Santella and Nitta are responsible for the training and recertifying of KPD employees consisting of 154 sworn and 54 civilian personnel.

They are each fully certified instructors assigned to KPD’s Training Section. Their certifications include but are not limited to Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC) Instructor, Defensive Tactics (DT) Instructor, Firearms (pistol, shotgun and rifle) Instructor, Physical Fitness Instructor and Verbal De-escalation Instructor.

The many accomplishments by Sergeants Santella and Nitta include lead instructors for the 91st, 92nd and 93rd Recruit classes where they trained a total of 25 new Recruits in skills, such as Defensive Tactics, Taser, OC Spray, firearms (pistol, shotgun and rifle), Non-Emergency Vehicle Operations (NEVO) and EVOC, and Unknown/High Risk vehicle stops – a combined total of 69 weeks or 2,760 instructional hours.
As the lead instructors for KPD’s annual firearms re-qualification training, they re-qualified 109 sworn personnel within a five-month period while also conducting various trainings with KPD’s 92nd and 93rd Recruit Academy classes.

As lead instructors for KPD’s annual Defensive Tactics (DT) re-certification training, they assisted in re-certifying 131 personnel within a nine-month period, while also conducting various trainings with KPD’s 93rd and 94th Recruit Academy classes.

They also administered nearly 100 Physical Readiness Standards Tests (PRST) to new KPD police officer applicants – a six-exercise physical fitness test battery administered to potential new hires to measure their fitness.

Moreover, Sergeant Santella is a long-time member of KPD’s Special Response Team (formally known as SWAT) and is currently the interim SRT Commander – a position usually held by a Lieutenant, while Sergeant Nitta recently retired from the SRT team after serving as a team member for 20 years.

“The occupation of a police officer is a challenging job because of the everchanging landscape. Police officers have had to adapt to a myriad of changes, often times on short notice, requiring law enforcement to make policy adjustments and to train their officers accordingly,” said ATB Lieutenant Ken Cummings. “Sergeants Santella and Nitta have been directly responsible for the training of KPD’s new hires and incumbents alike, and continuously exemplify the meaning of a top-notch officer.”

Officer Apilado was recognized as KPD’s 2021 Top Cop. He has been with KPD for approximately five years and is currently assigned to the Līhuʻe District, 2nd watch.

Some of Officer Apilado’s accomplishments within his last evaluation period include writing and serving 29 search warrants on vehicles and property related to drug cases. He also recovered a total of 35.35 grams of methamphetamine, 61.3 grams of marijuana, 3 grams of heroin, $2,008 in U.S. currency, $960 in counterfeit U.S. currency and one illegal firearm.
Officer Apilado was also responsible for issuing 557 traffic citations, 28 arrests for Operating a Vehicle Under the Influence of Intoxicants, 96 felony arrests, 311 misdemeanor arrests and 114 bench warrant arrests.

Moreover, Officer Apilado was selected to become a Field Training Officer in PSB to help train new officers and he has attended numerous trainings within the field of law enforcement. Officer Apilado is also enrolled with the University of Phoenix and is working on his Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice Administration.

In addition to his hard work in law enforcement and to further his education, Officer Apilado is currently serving with the Army National Guard and has been for the past 11 years.

“During his short time with KPD, Officer Apilado has become a leader in drug enforcement and traffic enforcement,” said PSB Lieutenant Scott Brede. “He has demonstrated his commitment to keep our families, streets, communities, and island safe from drugs and other dangers.”

To learn more about Top Cop Hawai‘i and to watch the ceremony, please visit www.topcophawaii.com.

Officer Kalani Apilado.
Officer Kalani Apilado with Chief of Police Todd Raybuck and Captain Rod Green.
Sergeants Alan Santella (left) and Len Nitta. Sergeant Alan Santella and Len Nitta with Assistant Chief Kalani Ke (left) and Lieutenant Ken Cummings.

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