The 2017 Officers of the Year

This year’s winners
Manuel Byrge & Gordon Collier

All Securitas divisions in North America annually recognize Security Officers of the Year for Heroism and Performance. In acknowledgement of their extraordinary achievements, Division Management invites the winners for an expense-paid trip to the New York area. The 2017 winners traveled to the Securitas Eastern Operations Center (EOC) in Parsippany, NJ, where they were honored at a presentation and luncheon. Winners received a commemorative recognition plaque and a $5,000 cash award. They were also treated to dinner and a private tour of New York City. EOC employees turned out in force to witness the presentation and applaud the winners. Chief Operating Officer Bill Barthelemy presided over the presentation ceremony, and encouraged each winner’s Branch Manager to describe the effort put forth by the officer.

Manuel Byrge

Security Officer of the Year for Performance

During his four years with the Cincinnati, OH branch, Security Officer Manny Byrge has epitomized the Securitas core values of Integrity, Vigilance and Helpfulness. Clients, customers and contractors at the corporate campus where he is assigned know him as an achiever in constant pursuit of excellence.

Account Manager Matthew Mulcahey is quick to describe him as without equal with respect to the performance of his duties, client focus and dedication to Securitas.

Modeling Core Values

Highlights from the past year illustrate just a few of the ways Officer Byrge epitomizes the core values in the execution of his duties. He demonstrates his Integrity by going the extra mile, even when he thinks he’s alone. Such was the case when he not only refueled the client’s patrol vehicles, but checked the oil levels as well. His attention to detail was witnessed by the client who expressed appreciation for Byrge’s commitment to a job well-done.

On another occasion, while on duty during a severe thunderstorm, Officer Byrge saw a woman fall in a parking lot. Because of his Vigilance, he was able to respond immediately. Without being called, he went to the parking lot to help the woman regain her footing and provided support as she walked back to the building where he summoned the on-site nursing staff, which provided medical assistance for the woman’s severely injured wrist. The client again documented the incident as exemplary.
His willingness to take the initiative leads to many opportunities for Byrge to demonstrate his Helpfulness. When a contractor explained that it was difficult to know which doors required service because work orders reference doors by number instead of by location as the contractor knew them, Officer Byrge created a binder of building drawings showing each door number of every building on the campus. The binder has been a valuable resource for the contractor, increasing the efficiency of its service.

There are many other examples of Officer Byrge’s dedication. Whether a task is routine or urgent, his response is prompt, focused and professional. He consistently sets the example for outstanding client service, ensuring the resolution of issues through direct action or referral. He has been an anchor during times of transition, delivering continuity of service and providing knowledge transfer.

In 2017, Byrge received three teamwork awards from the client as well as several from the local Securitas branch office. Despite recognition and frequent praise, Byrge expressed surprise and awe when informed that he’d been selected as Security Officer of the Year for Performance. In addition to being announced in the client’s newsletter, an open house attended by contractors, clients and colleagues was held at the client site to celebrate Byrge’s achievement. Many came to offer congratulations which were accepted with his typical humility.

Mulcahey’s pride in Officer Byrge was evident as he described an officer who gives his best every day. “Manny does not work to be thanked or recognized. Going above and beyond is simply a part of who he is,” he explained. “Manny does not merely provide excellent service and outstanding performance; Manny is excellent and outstanding.”

Byrge said that he felt lucky to work for Securitas. In remarks that were modest and understated, he said, “I hope that my experience will serve as an example to others. Everything we do is a chance to strengthen our relationship with the client.”

Gordon Collier

Security Officer of the Year for Heroism

An active shooter situation is never routine and a visceral fear for most, yet when that scenario presented itself while three year employee Officer Gordon Collier from the Dallas, TX branch was on duty, he showed outstanding courage and selfless service. Because of his actions, the event was resolved without injury to employees, co-workers or the shooter.

While on duty at a client’s data facility, Collier received an early morning call from a contractor who was
working on-site. Collier was familiar with the individual from routine interactions at the facility, so when the person indicated that he was under attack from someone trying to kill him, Collier immediately headed to the second floor where the caller said the disturbance was occurring.

Upon arrival, Collier, a Marine veteran, quickly assessed the situation. Recognizing the familiar odor of burnt gunpowder, he also noticed the haze that results from a recently discharged weapon. Collier announced his presence and identified himself as a security officer. While assessing the situation, he asked if everyone was alright. He called out individually to the contractor, asking him to confirm that he was unharmed.

When the contractor repeated that someone was trying to harm him, Collier cautiously entered the office where the contractor was located. He could see the worker partially obscured by a cubicle wall at the opposite end of the office suite, but was unaware that the contractor was armed and had been shooting. When Collier encouraged the worker to follow him to safety, the agitated individual refused, insisting people were trying to kill him.

It was then that Collier noticed sheetrock dust on the floor and 6–8 bullet holes in the wall directly behind him. When his repeated request for the contractor to leave with him was refused, Collier directed the worker to turn off the lights and take cover while Collier sought additional help. On his way out, Collier radioed the Command Center to contact 911.

Once back at the Command Center, Collier remained on the phone with emergency services and provided firsthand observations from the scene. When law enforcement arrived, he supported efficient and safe movement through the building by tracking their progress via camera and remotely opening doors as they approached. The remote operations support facilitated the search and minimized damage to the building by avoiding the need for door breaches.

While the police continued their search, shots echoed through the building. Officer Collier redirected employees arriving for work out of the building and away from potential danger. He pulled those already in the hallway into the safety of the command center.

About an hour after he’d made the first call to security, the contractor called the command center again, indicating that he was being pursued. Aware that the police were entering the second floor, Officer Collier reassured the worker that it was the police and directed him to raise his hands. The worker responded by setting his weapon down and raising his hands as law enforcement entered the room. His compliance likely saved his life.
Throughout the high-pressure event, Officer Collier remained calm, controlled and focused. He protected the lives and safety of the approximately thirty employees who were on campus. His quick response to the area of the shooting allowed him to accurately assess the situation and provide valuable information to first responders. His knowledge and use of the access control system allowed them to move quickly and efficiently toward the target while minimizing additional damage to the client’s property. Responding officers agreed that Collier’s effective management of the contractor saved his life. In the end, the active shooter incident resulted in no casualties.

The client’s CEO wrote to Securitas North America CEO and President Santiago Galaz and Global and National Accounts President Keith Hopkins, CPP to offer his appreciation. “I want to express my sincere gratitude for the Securitas team at one of our large facilities in Texas. I especially want to recognize Gordy Collier,” he wrote. “After a shooter opened fire, he ran toward the danger and convinced the suspect to disarm. This situation easily could have ended in tragedy. Yet thanks to Gordy, no one was injured, and property damage was minimal. Speaking for thousands of employees in North Texas, we appreciate the Securitas team, and we’re especially grateful to Gordy.”

Collier later learned that the shooter had been armed with an AR-15. The police told him that the whole event had lasted 38 minutes, but for Collier the time had flown by. “There was so much to do. I didn’t have time to think—just act,” he said. “My eight years as a Marine had prepared me for this. I wasn’t sure exactly what I was facing, but I knew exactly what to do.”

**Everyday Heroes**

Officers Byrge and Collier demonstrate the Securitas values in action. Their service and dedication are a model for all employees and demonstrate why Securitas is The Leader in Protective Services. They join a select group of officers who’ve been previously recognized. However, they stand united with all officers who, in the course of their duties, distinguish themselves through actions large and small and demonstrate what it means to be an Everyday Hero.

Chief Operating Officer Bill Barthelemy recognized all officers who represent the company when he said, “We owe Officers Byrge and Collier our deepest gratitude. They establish the benchmark for what it means to wear our uniform. We are thankful for them and our more than 100,000 officers stationed daily at client sites who perform their best and help to protect our clients and their facilities.”