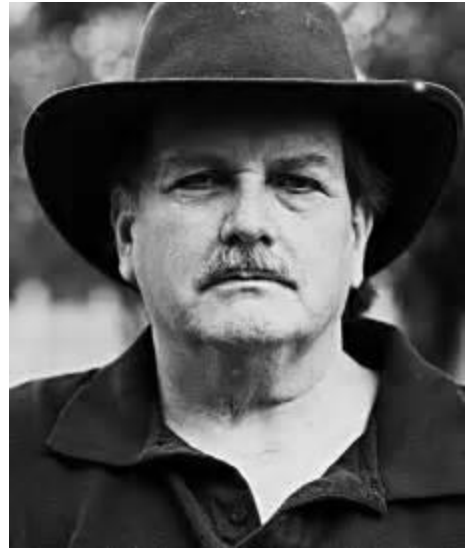


## **Fr. Dan Brandt's Corner...**

Last month we laid to rest **PO Andre Van Vegten**, Star #14931. On the evening of January 7, 1997, while assigned to the 008th District, Officer Van Vegten and his partner responded to a "shots fired" call at 43rd and Latrobe Avenue near the LeClaire Courts public housing development. En route to the scene, the officers spotted a vehicle containing four known gang members who fled northbound on Cicero Avenue at a high rate of speed. Before the officers could even radio in the pursuit, another vehicle veered into their lane of traffic, forcing them to take evasive action. The officers' police vehicle struck the center-lane curb and crashed into a concrete planter. They were pulled from the wreckage of their burning squad car by passing motorists just seconds before the entire vehicle was engulfed in flames.



Officer Van Vegten was taken to Mount Sinai Hospital in critical condition. He suffered a collapsed lung, a shattered right femur and a broken rib which had pierced his aorta. The rapid blood loss from that injury left him legally blind and paralyzed from the chest down. After emerging from a six-week coma, Andre underwent several surgeries at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and was transferred to the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago for therapy. In the following years, he suffered through numerous surgeries and continuously battled infections and wounds.

Andre succumbed to his injuries on 02 NOV 2017. [May this Chicago Police hero rest in peace.](#) You can see and print Andre's memorial card on our website ([www.ChicagoPCM.org](http://www.ChicagoPCM.org)), by clicking on the "Memorial Cards" link. If you would like one mailed to you, feel free to send me an email through the same website.

Police Chaplains Ministry recently hosted hundreds of **Gold Star Families** at a holiday dinner on the Club Level of Soldier Field, overlooking the police memorial. This was a wonderful evening indeed, and a chance for families, who lost a loved one in the line of duty, to spend time together. Letters were sent out last month to supporters on our mailing list soliciting financial assistance for the evening...and very generous donations have been flowing in. [But I also wanted to invite you to consider making a donation.](#) If you wish to do so, your tax-deductible gift (payable to Police Chaplains Ministry) may be made online via our website or mailed to/dropped off at 1140 W. Jackson Boulevard, Chicago 60607. **Thank you for helping us to remind Gold Star Family members that they and their loved ones are NEVER FORGOTTEN.**

We remember our Gold Star heroes at every Police Mass. Please note the **Police Masses at Mercy Home** (1140 W. Jackson Blvd) on Sunday, 10 DEC, and Sunday, 24 DEC, are at their normal time of 11:00 a.m., but on **Christmas Day**, Monday, 25 DEC, we will offer Mass at **10:00 a.m.** to get you home sooner to open gifts and prepare dinner. While this is a Catholic Mass, [ALL are welcome!](#) Bring your family.

If you're doing **last-minute Christmas shopping**, take a look at our website's "Merchandise" link for items like coffee cups, hot/cold drink tumblers, t-shirts, lapel pins and challenge coins. We can ship them to you or directly to the gift recipient.

Recently I met with a retiree who continues to be haunted by memories of some of the awful things he witnessed during his 30+ years as a member of the greatest police department in the world. I am glad he reached out...and I hope he utilizes the **professional counseling** resources available to him and all active/retired members of the department. If you ever need to address similar memories or are having any issues you'd like to discuss, I beg that you please reach out. There are many resources available to you.

Finally, this time of year can be very stressful. For hints on how to thrive during the holiday season, please see the "Resource and Outreaches" page on our website. *Whatever* holiday you might celebrate, may God be a big part of it—with abundant blessings to you and your family!

*Fr. Dan Brandt, CPD Chaplain*

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