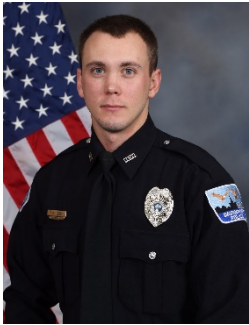


## PURPLE HEART AWARD NOMINATION

By Tim Pillack, Past President



The 2019 Purple Heart Award Recipient is Davenport Police Officer Ryan Leabo. Officer Leabo has been with the department for 3 years and is a member of the Iowa National Guard. Officer Leabo is currently assigned to the department's Neighborhoods Energized To Succeed (NETS) unit.

On April 25, 2019 members of the NETS unit observed two suspicious males in a high crime area. Officer Leabo exited his patrol vehicle and ordered them to stop so he could talk to them. They ignored Officer Leabo's numerous requests to stop. One subject, later identified as Brett Dennis, was wearing a small handbag. As officers got closer to Dennis, he took off running. As he was running down an alley, he was trying to reach into the handbag. While running from Officer Leabo, Dennis yelled at Officer Leabo to shoot him. Officer Leabo caught up with Dennis and attempted to take him into custody by grabbing him from behind in a bear hug. At this point, Officer Leabo observed Dennis pull a semi-automatic handgun from the handbag.

A struggle ensued with Officer Leabo trying to get control of Dennis' handgun, as he drew his own weapon. During the struggle, Dennis fired two rounds. The first round struck Officer Leabo in the left leg. The second round struck Officer Leabo in the chest. This round was stopped by his body armor, likely saving Officer Leabo's life. During the struggle, Officer Leabo fired one round striking Dennis in the right leg. Officer Leabo's handgun then malfunctioned. Dennis disengaged and ran from Officer Leabo. Additional officers arrived and Dennis was taken into custody about a block away. Dennis' handgun was recovered under an air conditioning unit near where he was taken into custody.

Officer Leabo was transported to a local hospital for emergency treatment. Officer Leabo was treated for significant bruising to his chest area where the bullet struck his body armor, a gunshot wound to his left leg and minor injuries to his head, shoulder and lower extremities. Having been cleared by the Davenport Police Internal Affairs and the Scott County Attorney's Office, Officer Leabo has returned to work on restricted duty as he recovers from his injuries.

The subsequent investigation by the Scott County Sheriff's Office resulted in Brett Dennis being charged with Attempt to Commit Murder, Felon in Possession of a Firearm (2 counts), Violation of a Protective Order, Robbery in the 1st degree and Theft 3rd.

For his heroic actions, Officer Ryan Leabo was nominated for the Iowa State Police Association, Purple Heart Award. The award will be presented to Officer Leabo at the ISPA annual conference in Waterloo on October 8, 2019.

*The Iowa State Police Association 'Purple Heart' award was developed in 2013 for the purpose of honoring law enforcement officers who have been seriously wounded or killed in the line of duty as a result of a combat incident.*

*The Purple Heart award is granted to any sworn Iowa peace officer who has been seriously, critically, or fatally injured in the performance of law enforcement duty. In addition, this award may be conferred if an injury was averted by the wearing of body armor. This award will be given in all cases resulting in line of duty death, but will otherwise be limited to those cases involving an attack by an assailant or the performance of an act of valor.*