



# Cape Cod SWAT

article by Sgt. Michael Riley

The officers of Barnstable Police Department who are members of the Special Weapons And Tactics Team were honored to be the guests at this year's Bluecoats dinner. We parked our Bearcat armored rescue vehicle at the front entrance and were delighted to interact with the arriving members and explain and demonstrate the workings of some of our equipment and the Bearcat itself.

Just a little about the team and its organization, purpose and history. It was started in 1998 with 24 officers as the Barnstable-Yarmouth Special Response Team, and in 2005 expanded into the Cape Cod Regional Law Enforcement Council SWAT Team (Cape Cod SWAT), covering from Sandwich to Provincetown. There are now 32 SWAT officers, 5 Tactical Paramedics, one Team Doctor, 8 Crisis Negotiators, and one attached tactical police K-9. SWAT is a collateral duty as members have full time duties at their departments, and respond when needed to SWAT activations anytime they are called. We have been called out in the middle of the night many times, even Christmas Eve and Super Bowl Sunday (yes, the Pats were playing!).



*Spencer Jackson, Corey Frederickson, Michael Puntonio, Armando Feliciano, Adam Ruggieri, Jon Pass, Sgt. Michael Riley, Sgt. Robert Bitinas*

To become a SWAT member, officers have to have three years experience as police officers, be recommended by their Chief, complete an application including a 500 word essay, pass a background investigation, a PT test and a pistol qualification. If they complete all that, they get an opportunity for an interview in front of the Team's leaders and have to pass the muster of the existing team members.

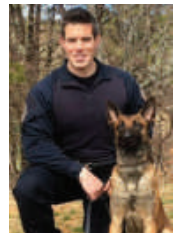
Since its beginning, the Team has responded about 280 times, including high risk warrants, barricaded subjects, hostage rescue and the Boston Marathon Bombing and subsequent manhunt in Watertown.

Because this was such a special group, the team members felt comfortable relaying some of their most memorable experiences at the dinner.

Officer Armando Feliciano talked about his response to the April 19, 2013 shoot out in Watertown with the two suspects in the Marathon Bombing, and how when he and his partner arrived in the Bearcat there were unexploded IED's littering Laurel Street and the chaos that was prevalent until the search got organized and the rest of our team responded.

Sgt. Rob Bitinas and Officer Mike Puntonio relayed the events of May 22, 2015, when the team was called to the basement of a house in Hyannis at 1:30 in the morning for a man who had taken his girlfriend's two small boys hostage at knife point. They talked about some of the difficulties they faced and what they were considering as the negotiations went downhill, and how when they made entry to the small room they were able to overpower the suspect and rescue the two boys.

Officer Corey Frederickson responded to the fatal shooting of Yarmouth K-9 Sgt. Sean Gannon in Marstons Mills on April 12, 2018, and he talked about his experiences as he responded from the station and took up a perimeter position in the front of the house, and then watched as the suspect was taken into custody and the team searched the house. Sean was a member of our team and April 12 was the hardest day any of us had ever experienced as police officers, but we emerged from that experience a stronger team and rededicated ourselves to our mission in his memory.



The presentation ended on a lighter note with Officer Jon Pass corralling two Bluecoats into participating in a Tactical fashion show that got great laughs from the audience.

As always, great thanks to the Bluecoats for all they do to support the men and woman of the Barnstable Police department, and for allowing us to share some of our experiences and thoughts with them.