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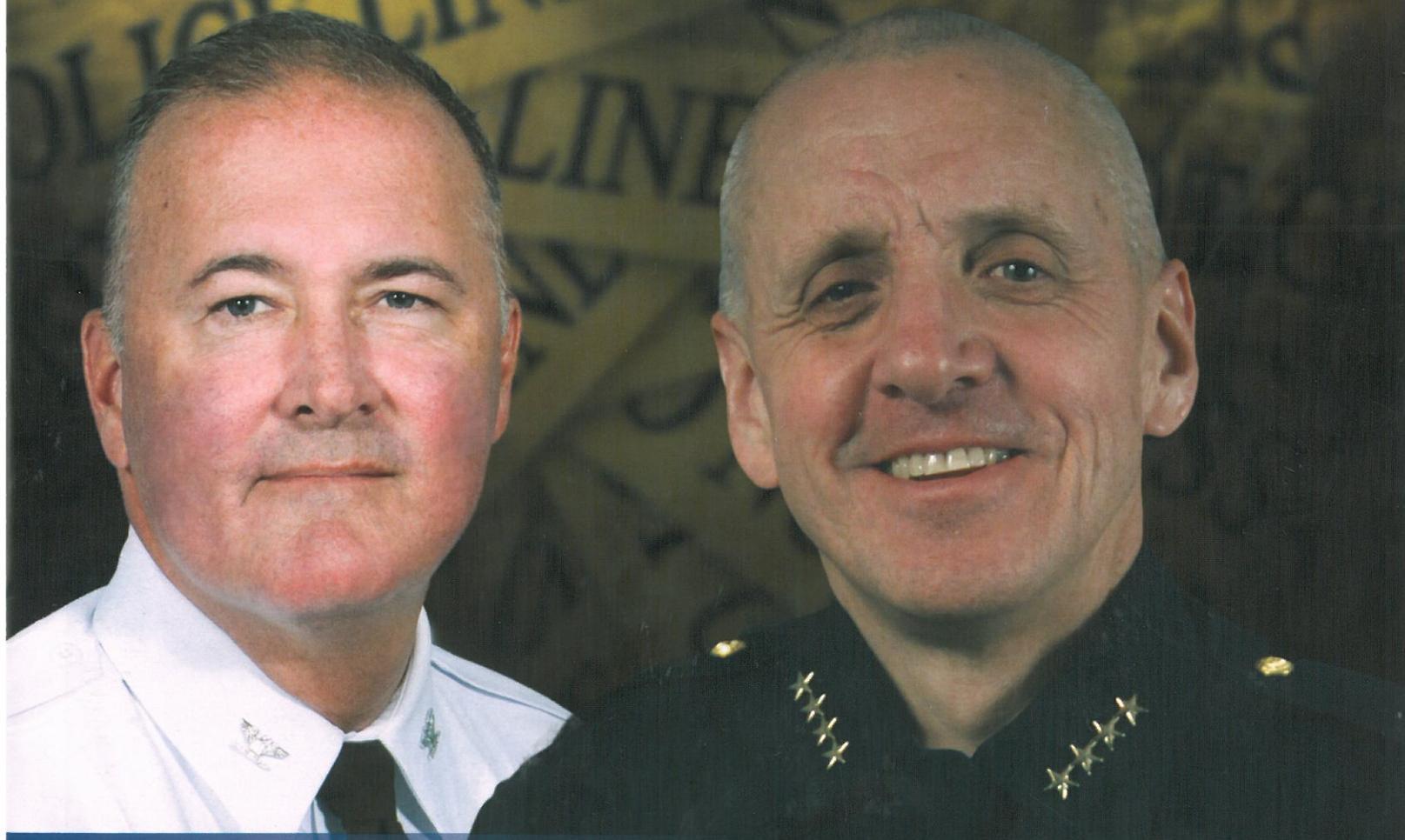
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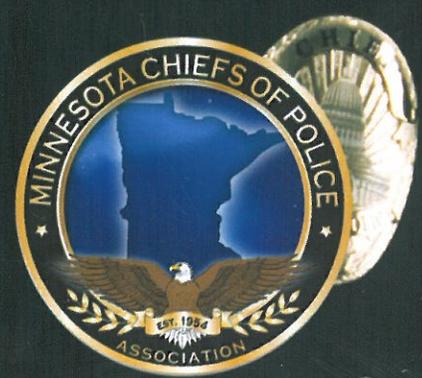
MINNESOTA Police Chief

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FERGUSON CAN HAPPEN ANYWHERE:

ETI proudly presents a speaker lineup from the frontlines of the protests and offers a guide forward



An Exercise in Developing an Understanding of Our Partners Across the Ocean

BY CHIEF SCOTT NADEAU, COLUMBIA HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT

I think it all started with my attendance of the FBI National Academy in the summer of 2014. This was one of the greatest training and personal development opportunities of my career, and it exposed me to not only world class instructors and speakers, but to a student population that included 48 states and 23 different countries. I had been somewhat naive in thinking that policing in our nation, and in some respects around the world, was probably pretty much the same thing with some regional and cultural differences. In some ways I was right, as we often do a similar job, but in many significant ways I was also very wrong about how policing is different around the world. I learned a great deal during these 10 weeks and at the same time developed both a better appreciation and respect for some of

our international brothers and sisters, as well as an interest in how policing worked in different countries.

The City of Columbia Heights has an active Sister Cities International group that partners with another city in Lomianki, Poland. The Sister Cities relationship was formed after an American WWII bomber was shot down while dropping relief supplies to Polish citizens during the Warsaw uprising as they battled the Nazis, and one of the crew members had ties to Columbia Heights. In the past decade the two cities have exchanged elected officials, members of the Sister Cities groups and high school students. When I started to discuss a police officer exchange, both communities strongly supported it as a great way to exchange information between police professionals and strengthen the bond

between our communities.

After almost a year of planning, I, along with two sergeants and an officer, took the long flight to Poland and eventually our sister city, Lomianki, a Warsaw suburb. Lomianki's chief and one of his officers, who was working as a translator, met us at the airport. Although most Polish officers I encountered understood at least some English, we still required a translator for the more in-depth conversations. Our Polish counterparts welcomed us warmly. They brought us on tours of police facilities, training facilities and shared with us experiences of numerous interactive demonstrations including riot control, K-9 patrol tactics, command and control centers, water patrol and other areas of Polish policing. We were so warmly received in Poland by everyone, from their top police commanders to their honor guards, it quickly became clear the immense respect they had for both us and American law enforcement.

Similarities

Law enforcement throughout the world seems to wrestle with the same types of issues, from managing interventions on domestic assaults, terrorism, illegal immigration, police training, gang violence, officer performance and accountability, or equipment and budget issues. The Polish officers' perspectives of



Columbia Heights officers with council members from Lomianki.

American law enforcement seemed fairly accurate, although somewhat shaped by movies and media. They were also aware of the debates occurring in our country around recent protests and had questions relating to how we, as the police, manage those types of conversations.

Differences

Like many European nations, the Polish police are a national police force, highly centralized and paramilitary in its approach to command structure. It's similar to the traditional American police structure with a heavier lean into the military hierarchy and makeup. The role of the police has

continued to evolve since the nation freed itself from communist influence in 1989. Naturally after only 26 years many Polish citizens are still distrusting of their police. Having toured a concentration camp and areas where the Nazi's and then the communists removed or killed dissenters, this is not difficult to understand. Since 1989, the Polish police have worked hard to establish a dialogue and trust with its citizens, many

of whom lived in fear and repression under the former communist government. The progress in police-



Tour of situation room and dispatching center in Warsaw.



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Department Profile



Columbia Heights officers with Lomianki Chief, the Stroz Miejska and the deputy chief.

community relations in Poland is undeniable.

Another issue we discussed was local communities wanting to have more

say in the activities of their police operatives, and a more open dialogue with the police. Really, it appears to be the beginnings of Community

Oriented Policing, ensuring that the police and community are in active conversations in order to understand each other and to progress towards the problem solving of community and crime issues. They are also actively involved in speaking and forming relationships with youth in the schools, much like we are.

Perhaps the biggest difference is pay and the funding of their police activities. While they are competent in their duties and very proud of their service, the average Polish police officer makes the equivalent of about \$5,000 per year, compared to that of \$48,000 for an American officer. Senior command staff makes considerably more, but still far less than their American counterparts, and are expected to work up to sixty hours per

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week. The equipment of the Polish police continues to improve, but squad cars are small (often a Kia or similar style European sedan) and it appears that there can be challenges in obtaining equipment and/or supplies.

The Differences Seem Small

Take away the differences in language and geography, as well as some cultural dissimilarity, and the Polish police who hosted us did not seem very different at all. They not only did their jobs to the best of their ability, but they were proud to be police officers and to serve their communities, just as we do here in America. During our visit they captured some bank robbers after a massive search, and I recognized the grin on their faces as being the universal look of a police officer who had just protected their community – and caught the bad guy.

They also love America. As the representatives of the Columbia Heights Police Department laid a wreath at the memorial to the American bomber mentioned earlier, both Lomianki's city officials and police officers stood at attention, under the flags of both of our nations, celebrating our countries' shared sacrifices and undeniable bonds. Later at a dinner hosted in our honor, we spoke of our countries' futures, both shared and apart, and of how difficult but beautiful democracy was.

In Conclusion

As our 747 raced the sun back to America, I pondered on what it is to be a police officer and how the difficulties follow us as cops anywhere in the world. And yet in any country you will find the best and brightest willing to step up and serve because they understand it's a higher calling. In America we are fortunate to have the equipment, pay, training and public support that come from decades of difficult conversations and societal struggles. Struggles that continue today but even in these times when public support seems to be low, and our job is made less popular if not more difficult, let us remember that many have more challenges than we do. Our position in the world necessitates that we continue to lead courageously in our communities both for our citizens and as an example for others, both foreign and domestic.

And like me, if you are curious about policing outside your community and country, take the time to educate yourself. I suspect that you will find a world full of heroes, heroes who may look and speak different than the cops you share a cup of coffee or squad car with, yet they are heroes with whom we all share the undeniable bonds of knowing what it is to make the honorable and difficult decision to protect and serve their communities each and every day.



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