**Sergeant James E. Thode** *End of Watch: December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010* 

James, or Jim to his friends and family, started his distinguished fourteen year career with the Farmington Police Department in July of 1996. During his initial years, Jim served as Field Training Officer, as well as a member of the Training Division where in 2003 he received the Owen Landdeck Training Award. He also assessed to the prestigious Special Weapons and Tactics Team, and ascended to the vital role of Team Leader.

In 2004, Jim laterally transferred to the Detective Division before his promotions to Corporal (March 2006) and Sergeant (December 2006). In April of 2010, just months before his final military deployment, Jim was decorated with the 2009 Supervisor of the Year Award.

Jim enlisted in the United States Army in 1984. After finishing his degree at the University of Arizona, he was commissioned and entered active duty. Upon completing his commitment, he joined the Army National Guard and served with a combat engineer unit stationed in Blanding, Utah. In 2003, he deployed with his unit to Iraq and, upon his return, his unit was transitioned to a sapper (explosives) unit.

In 2010, his unit deployed to Afghanistan to serve a road-clearing function. This dangerous task was greatly needed due to the high number of improvised explosive devices (IED) used by insurgents. On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, Sergeant First Class James E. Thode was killed in action while locating an IED. In the greatest tradition of the military, he led from the front, ordering his men to stay to the rear while he located the device, and was awarded the Bronze Star.

At his funeral Assistant Adjutant General Jefferson Burton of the Utah National Guard said, "There is no doubt his name will forever be engraved on the hearts of his soldiers as a man of undisciplined character. His life was a living embodiment of what a man should be." A funeral precession several miles long and flanked by over a hundred police vehicles displaying flashing lights and sirens weaved its way through the city. Thousands of onlookers flanked the precession route, standing silent with many waving American flags as a final display of respect.

A fellow Farmington Sergeant commented, "He was a pillar within our department, respected from the top to the bottom and a true inspiration and example of what everybody should be." As a final display of honor, fellow Farmington Police Officers lined Sergeant Thode's casket, removed their white gloves and placed them upon it forever leaving a piece of themselves with their fallen friend.

Sergeant Thode's memory is honored by the James Thode Leadership Award, which is issued to those midlevel supervisors (Sergeant or Corporal) who consistently promote career and personal development of others, encourages others to strive for self-improvement and/or personal achievement, or routinely provides positive leadership with uncompromising integrity and dedication to the Farmington Police Department.

Sergeant Thode, tragically, became the first active Farmington Police Officer to be deployed on military assignment and killed in action. He was survived by his wife and two children.