

Hotels cut rates for 'friends in blue' - - Patriot-News, The (Harrisburg, PA) - January 23, 2018 - page A3

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DEPUTY U.S. MARSHAL SLAIN

Some area hotels are offering discounts for police officers who will be attending the memorial service Thursday for a deputy U.S. marshal who died in the line of duty last week.

Also, donors can pay for hotel rooms that are being booked by law enforcement in the "buy a room for a friend in blue" program.

A public memorial service for Deputy U.S. Marshal Christopher Hill will be held at 1 p.m. Thursday in the Giant Center in Hershey.

"All are welcome to attend and commemorate the life of the fallen hero," says his obituary.

Volunteer Kara Johnsen, a police wife, contacted hotels to ask if they would accept donations for law enforcement coming into town for the memorial service. So far 10 are on the list, including Clarion Inn & Suites in Susquehanna Township, Residence Inn Harrisburg/Hershey, Country Inn and Suites in Lower Paxton Township, Sheraton Harrisburg/Hershey, Fairfield Inn & Suites in Hershey, Crowne Plaza Harrisburg, Ramada Inn in Lower Paxton Township, Red Lion Hotel in Lower Paxton Township,

Sleep Inn & Suites in Swatara Township and Quality Inn in Lower Paxton Township.

Katie Ibberson, whose husband is the township fire chief, said several years ago she had attended a law enforcement funeral in upstate New York, and learned her hotel room was paid for by the people of the town.

"We never forgot that. When I heard officers would be coming from around the country, I wanted to do something," she said.

Ibberson said her private Facebook group of wives of law enforcement and emergency services has grown from 20 to 1,200 members in 36 hours.

In addition to the hotel project, she set up a You Caring page she created has raised about \$975 so far toward a \$15,000 goal. They are also organizing meals for the Hill family, selling T-shirts and stickers, and making gift baskets for the Hill children.

Ibberson said wives also offered support for the widow of Lt. Dennis DeVoe, a Harrisburg firefighter who died in a crash on the way to a fatal fire in March 2017.

On Jan. 18, Hill, an 11-year veteran of the U.S. Marshals Service assigned to the Middle District of Pennsylvania, was part of a Marshals Service task force executing a warrant in Harrisburg, when he was shot and killed.

Also shot was York police officer Kyle Pitts, who is recovering from a wound to his elbow.

Investigators say the marshals went to a home in the 1800 block of Mulberry Street to arrest Shayla Towles Pierce, when 31-year-old **Kevin Sturgis** opened fire on them, killing Hill and injuring Pitts. Sturgis died after police returned fire.

Harrisburg police said a ballistic vest may have saved the life of one of its officers. Jeffrey Cook, a 27-year veteran, was struck in the chest by gunfire, but the vest stopped the bullet from causing any injury. Cook has served three assignments, totaling six years, with the U.S. Marshal's Task Force since 1997.

Hill, 45, was born April 1972 in Sacramento, California, to John David Hill and Katherine (Carroll) Hill.

He served his country as a Ranger in the U.S. Army for three years before becoming a deputy U.S. marshal.

"Chris was known for enjoying hunting and golfing with friends and family. More importantly, Chris was best known for his devotion to his loving family," says his obituary.

Christopher was preceded in death by his mother, Katherine (Carroll) Hill.

Surviving are his wife, Sylvia Nicole (Lee) Hill; son Travis Hill and daughter, Ashlynn Hill; his father, John David Hill; his brother, Joey Hill and wife Michala of Florida; and his sister, Melinda Wagner of South Carolina.

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