

Tualatin's Police Officers Annual Physical Fitness Test: ORPAT

EDITOR'S NOTE:

I was talking to Officer Eric Hermann a few weeks ago and he mentioned that Tualatin Police Officers were going to do their annual physical fitness testing the following week, so I asked the Chief if he'd fill me in on the details and perhaps allow me to participate. Officer Eric Hermann was also kind enough to take some great photos.

The course was set up at Hazelbrook Middle School November 9-13 for Officers to test. Chief Barker's description to me of the event, its practical function and the results it produces, was so clear I thought I'd run it virtually the way he sent it to me. Officers not only compete for bragging rights, but also earn a pay incentive for successfully performing the test in less than 5.5 minutes. It's just another example of how our Police force stays prepared to keep Tualatin safe.

When I first saw the course, it looked fairly straightforward. There was a 15 foot long "balance beam" to run across, a 4 foot mat to long jump over, stairs to climb up and down, a bar you had to crawl under, hurdles to clear, a 3 foot bar to swing over (on to a mat). At first glance it seemed like it would be rather easy, but after the 3rd lap it began to take its toll. Each lap went progressively slower and each task seemed to become slightly more difficult each passing lap. After six laps, you had to run over to the push/pull machine set to 80 pounds of weight and push it in fully and walk it back and forth about 8 feet each way for six times. Then you had to pull it fully extended for 6 times back and forth as well. Between the sets was a drill where you touched a wall and either went to your back or your belly (depending on the instructions ordered by administrator). All of this was timed and you had to complete it in less than 5.5 minutes to obtain the incentive pay, which all the officers strive to do.

Lastly, after a 1 minute warm down, you had to carry (or pull without stopping) a 165 pound dummy for approximately 25 feet. (Having a 17 year old teenage boy at home, I had a slight advantage on this one.) This amount of weight isn't too bad for the Officer Hermann types, who weigh around 250, but there are men and women on the force who weigh far less than that, so the challenge is significant.

All in all, it was far more exertion than I had predicted. I consider myself to be in good shape and couldn't wait to beat Chief Barker's time, but to my shock and dismay, the old fella beat me soundly. He was humble in his victory and said he had many years experience running the course, but next year I vow to take him!

-JC



WRITTEN BY: **KENT W. BARKER, CHIEF OF POLICE**
Police Officers in the State of Oregon

are only required to pass a physical fitness test one time and that is prior to being hired or at least being able to pass it once they've been hired and attend the Basic Police Academy in Salem, Oregon. It's not that difficult for a young, new officer to successfully complete a physical fitness test. But what happens to the officer who starts to age and/or gets out of shape? They get injured! Most police officer injuries are caused during training. Police Training is so technical now and the best training is "realistic training." Officers pull muscles, twist ankles, etc. If the injury is severe enough, the officer can't work full patrol duties, which requires us to fill the spot and pay overtime. In other words, injuries cost money \$\$\$\$.

Other common injuries are twists and sprains when officers have to quickly jump out of their cars or run after someone. A normal person would say that if officers keep themselves in shape, they wouldn't get injured. But even professional athletes have an extensive warm-up period before they compete in their sport. Our officers, who are patrolling in a patrol car, aren't sitting around doing stretching and warm-up exercises. We never know when we may have to overcome a resisting arrestee or run after a fleeing suspect. If we stop a suspect and they become combative, we can't tell them to hold on for 20 minutes while we warm-up first....I think you get my drift.



Kent W. Barker, Chief of Police

With current Federal laws, labor laws, contracts, and other rules, it's nearly impossible to discipline an employee who is not in shape. So we thought we could encourage officers to get in shape with incentives. Since we started this incentive program back in 2007, we have had less on-the-job injuries and lost work time than what we had before we started the program.

When we hire new officers, they must successfully complete the ORPAT course in 5-1/2 minutes or less. But now with our incentive program, we make every sworn officer run the ORPAT course once a year. Sworn officers include our patrol officers, supervisors, captains, and even me, the Chief of Police. Our officers may not admit it, but there is a hidden competition that goes on amongst them as you always hear them comparing their times with each other. We have even had one of our traffic officers and our Tactical Negotiations Officer run through the course with their full equipment on. In other words, it would be like running the course with a 25-30 pound bag on your shoulders.

I'm proud to say that all of our officers, not just our new officers, take this test every year in our effort to stay in good physical shape.



Yours truly, clearing a hurdle in one of the 6 laps. (Pheew!)



Sgt. Cooper flying over bar.



Sgt. Nate Cooper hurdles over obstacle.



Sgt. Cooper landing the jump with Det. Sgt. Jim Noragon keeping a close eye.



Officer Hermann maneuvering 80 pounds on the push/pull machine. (Check out those guns!)



Yours truly jumping over the bar.



Officer Eric Hermann getting across 15' balance beam.

Photos courtesy of Officer Eric Hermann