



# DENVER POLICE MUSEUM

## The Denver Police Museum Board

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## DPM NEWSLETTER

Winter 2024

# Message from the Board

Thanks for being here. Big things are happening with the Denver Police Museum and we couldn't be happier to share them with you! Inside you'll find information about upcoming events, news, and stories related to the Museum's activities and our collection, and opportunities for Museum supporters like you, to make a tax deductible donation before the end of the year.

Here's a quick look at several key Museum initiatives that are underway:

## Celebrating the 165th Anniversary of the Denver Police Department

This year, the Denver Police Department will celebrate the 165th anniversary of its founding on December 9, 1859.

## Holiday Ornaments are Back

We will again offer our very popular holiday ornaments for those wishing to support the Museum with your tax-deductible donations. The 2024 ornament honors the Denver Police badge worn by officers from 1890 to 1896.

Due to overwhelming support for the Museum last year, we ran out of ornaments in mid-December. The enclosed envelope can be mailed to the Museum or you can make a donation on the Denver Police website at <https://denverpolicemuseum.org/shop/>.

## Memorial Honoring the United Airlines Flight 629 Tragedy

On November 1, 1955 a Denver man placed a bomb in the luggage of his mother who was traveling on United Airlines Flight 629 aboard the plane named the Mainliner Denver. The bomb exploded in the air east of Longmont killing all 39 passengers and five crew members. No federal law existed at the time regarding placing of an explosive device on a commercial aircraft and so the case was tried in Denver on the local level. The Denver

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## Upcoming Events

### United Flight 629 Memorial Unveiling

In late 2025, the Museum will host a solemn ceremony to remember the victims of the United Airlines Flight 629 disaster. This event will be dedicated to the families and loved ones of those who perished when the Douglas DC-6B, registration N37559, was destroyed by a bomb on November 1, 1955.

The Museum is committed to educating Coloradans about this tragedy and honoring the victims. By remembering the events of United Airlines Flight 629, we honor the 44 lives lost and reaffirm our commitment to aviation safety and the role of law enforcement in investigations. This tragedy serves as a stark reminder of the importance of vigilance and security in the aviation industry. For more information, please visit <https://denverpolicemuseum.org/events-and-programs/flight-629/> ●

## Happenings

### Fallen Officer DeHerrera Sign

Unfortunately, a minor traffic accident at 19th and Federal Blvd. resulted in fallen Denver Police Officer DeHerrera's memorial sign being knocked down. Due to the employees of Precision Homes and former DPD Sgt Jim Pelloni, we became aware that the sign was missing from its location. A special thank you to the members of the Untouchables Motorcycle Club for coming out on a Sunday morning to ensure the sign was placed on a new pole. The Untouchables are made up of current and retired police officers from various agencies that share an appreciation of motorcycles and community service. ●



### Middle School Youth Learn About Police Technology

On September 25, 2024, the Denver Police Museum hosted a Police Technology youth program for students from Grant Beacon and Montbello Middle Schools. Participants included Denver Police Department Bomb Squad, the RTCC (Real Time Crime Center), Denver Police Museum volunteers, and Denver Public Schools SPARK: Early Career Exploration. The students toured the RTCC camera center, visited the Museum, and



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## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

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Police Museum archive collection contains pieces of the aircraft that were introduced as evidence during the trial.

Unfortunately, this story has been largely forgotten in our state's history and no memorial exists to honor the innocent victims of this tragedy.

The Denver Police Museum has taken the lead to correct this oversight. We are currently leading a coalition of other museums and citizens to place a memorial to the victims of United Flight 629 at the Stapleton Tower on the 70th Anniversary of the tragedy (November 1, 2025). We plan to honor victims and create greater public awareness both locally and nationally of this tragedy. This event also resulted in significant changes to airline safety measures. It was the first-time cameras were allowed in court and the 1959 Warner Brothers Movie entitled the FBI STORY starring Jimmy Stewart and overseen by J. Edgar Hoover highlighted the bombing in the beginning of the movie. We hope to have a special display in History Colorado in the fall of 2025.

Denver Police Museum volunteer, Jeffrey Burke, has put in countless hours of his time on *Ancestry.com* to locate all



44 victims' families and through the hard work of Debora Libonati, we have sent letters inviting them to memorial events occurring between October 31 and November 1, 2025. We have also identified key law enforcement officials and United Airlines executives

who played a key role in solving this case. We have reached out to their surviving family members to ensure they receive the overdue recognition they deserve.

In order to raise the necessary funds to build the memorial we are offering a special challenge coin honoring the victims of Flight 629. Your contribution is tax deductible and all funds collected will be used for the purchase of a memorial marker to be placed in front of the Stapleton Tower. We are incredibly grateful to a local family foundation, who wishes to remain anonymous, for their support of this project.

If you are interested in volunteering or participating in any of the memorial events we plan to provide more details in January 2025. The challenge coin is available now with your donation to the Denver Police Museum.

Thank you for your continued support! ●

## HAPPENINGS

### *Continued from page 1*

viewed historic police cars. Students also interacted with the Bomb Squad officers and the specially trained bomb canines. They also viewed equipment used by the Squad.

Part of the Denver Police Museum's STEM and Civics Enrichment Program, the program covered ways in which law enforcement utilizes GPS (Global Positioning System) technology to track bank robbery money packs, bikes and automobiles and other specific items when probable cause indicates that a crime is being committed. ●



## Museum Introduces New Gun Safety Class for Youth

In partnership with the Clay Connections Foundation, the Denver Police Museum hosted a Youth Gun Safety Training program exclusively for DPD families on October 12, 2024. This special youth program focused on how to shoot shotguns, safely store firearms, and break clay targets in a safe environment. This first of its kind program was made available to youth 12 years of age or older. ●



## Museum Welcomes Police Recruits

Denver Police Museum President, Mike Hesse, welcomed the Denver Police Recruits on September 30, 2024 their first day of training. Mike was honored to speak to the recruits and share a brief history of the outstanding organization they are joining. He was very impressed with this group of young people! ●



# A Thank You to the Colorado Rockies

The Denver Police Museum expresses our sincere appreciation to the Colorado Rockies Organization for their support in the 2024 season. The Rockies provided the Denver Police Museum with over 1,400 tickets for distribution to retired and active officer families, and Museum and police volunteers. This generous donation allowed the Denver Police Family the opportunity to spend precious time with loved ones and cheer for our home team! A special thank you to Ashley Schutz who

oversees the program for her efforts to make this a success. We would also especially like to thank retired Denver Police civilian worker, Jeannie Springer, for her work to collect the ticket requests and put together seating for guests. This is a cumbersome task and she handled it with great professionalism—without her involvement this program would not be possible. ●



## A History of Police Communications

Before police radio systems were first implemented, police officers assigned to their beat were limited to communicating with police command using telephone booths, call boxes, police boxes, or physical meetings. Calling for help or signaling other officers could only be done by shouting, using a whistle, or hitting things to make noise. This meant that properly calling for assistance, reporting an incident or arrest, being dispatched to handle a crime, or requesting police resources was only possible if the officer could reach a telephone or call box.

Due to their cost and size, early police radio systems were only used in police cars and buildings. Officers on foot patrol still had to rely on telephones and call boxes. Portable radios introduced in the 1960s made radio communications widely accessible to all officers. Early portable radios were heavy and had a short battery life, an issue that gradually disappeared as technology advanced.

The Motorola MT500 portable radios first entered Denver Police Department service in 1978, succeeding Motorola MT 220 and GE "brick" handi-talkie units. Unique features of the MT 500 included improved battery life as well as a "dock" in the patrol car which connected to the car's microphone, battery, and antenna. This enabled an officer to be in constant communication with dispatch and other officers in either a car or on foot at a scene.

In addition, the MT 500 had a panic button feature that signaled the dispatcher that immediate assistance was needed.



GE and Motorola hand-held radios (a.k.a. handi-talkies), and mid-1950's police car radio control panel.

Affectionately known as the "turkey gobbler" tone, the radio also broadcast a three-toned audio alert that identified the specific radio and therefore, officer, assigned to that radio. Dispatch could immediately identify the officer and location (presuming the officer had kept dispatch current on location) and send nearby units to provide assistance. On more than one occasion a civilian used that feature to aid an officer in distress. Retired DPD Sgt. Chris Hoag said that if you heard a citizen on a police radio, you knew things were bad and help was immediately needed; the officer may have been incapacitated or in the fight for their life. ●



The MT 500 garnered national attention in the 1984 movie "Ghostbusters."



GE "brick" handi-talkie on officer's belt.



Denver Police Department MT 500 showing panic button.



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## Broadway Halloween Parade

October 19, 2024 marked the day for the annual Broadway Halloween Parade in Denver. The Denver Police Museum was honored to join the Denver Police Mounted Patrol as we led the parade. Several thousand Denver residents lined the parade route in costumes. Happy to report that the Mounted Patrol and the Denver Police were greeted with warm cheers! ●

## Annual Country Club Neighborhood Tradition Continues

On Sunday, October 20, Chaun and Erin Powell continued their annual tradition of inviting Denver Police Officers and their neighbors to join for a fun get-together lunch at their home on Sunday, October 20. Games for the kids and wonderful food was provided at this community building event. Money was raised for the purchase of additional bullet proof vests for our officers. A special shout-out to the Powell family for their outstanding support for DPD! ●



## Paul Schauer - In Memoriam

Paul Schauer served on the Denver Police Museum Board from 2013 to 2023. Paul was a highly respected member of our community and an invaluable part of the Denver Police Museum. Paul represented the Museum at a number of different Police Museum Conferences throughout the United States and Canada at his own expense. He was a strong supporter of law enforcement and will be greatly missed. ●

## Dale Coski - In Memoriam

In the early 1980s, Dale Coski began serving the Denver community as a Denver police officer. While on duty in 1983, she was struck by an automobile when she went to the assistance of a stranded motorist. Dale lost her left leg above the knee and lived with a closed head injury and dealt with quadriplegia until her death. Her disability did not stop Dale from continuing to serve her community as an advocate and champion for others with disabilities. ●



### The United Airlines Flight 629 Challenge Coin

Unfortunately, Colorado historians have largely forgotten the bombing of United Airlines Flight 629 that occurred on November 1, 1955. The bomber placed a bomb in his mother's suitcase to collect insurance he purchased at the aircraft's departure gate. All 44 passengers and five crew members were killed.

Since there was no federal statute at the time (no one had ever placed a bomb on a domestic commercial aircraft prior to this time), the trial was handled by the Denver District Attorney's Office. The Denver Police Museum has artifacts from the plane in our collection.

Thanks to the hard work of Denver Police Volunteers Jeffrey Burke and Debora Libonati we have located and invited surviving family members to the unveiling of the memorial on November 1, 2025 (the seventieth anniversary of the tragedy).

Unfortunately, in spite of the fact that it was the second largest mass casualty event in our state's history, there is no memorial to the victims. The Denver Police Museum is determined to correct this oversight with your help.

We have designed a special challenge coin honoring the victims and first responders to this largely forgotten event. The Flyco Tower at Stapleton has agreed to allow the museum to place a granite memorial in the shape of an airplane fuselage with the names of the victims and logos of responding agencies at the entrance of the tower.

We are raising the money through donations with those giving \$30 or more receiving the memorial challenge coin as our gift to you. All the funds raised will go toward the memorial. Would you help us correct this oversight and help us honor the victims of this tragedy with your donation? A special thank you for the continued support of a local family foundation whose generous gift allowed us to purchase the coins.

To support our efforts in building a memorial for United Airlines Flight 629, you may make a donation to the Denver Police Museum via the enclosed envelope and form or through our website at <https://denverpolicemuseum.org/events-and-programs/flight-629> •



### The Denver Police Museum Holiday Ornament

For the last several years the Denver Police Museum has produced a holiday ornament honoring various Denver Police Department badges worn by our officers throughout the 165-year history of the department. This year we are recognizing the badge worn from 1890 to 1896.

A minimum donation of \$30.00 is required per ornament. Ornaments may be obtained by making a donation to the Denver Police Museum via the enclosed envelope and form,

through our website at <https://denverpolicemuseum.org/shop/>, or at the main branch of the Rocky Mountain Law Enforcement Credit Union.

We want to thank retired Denver Police Sgt. Dean Christopherson for his work to help design these collectible ornaments and we appreciate the opportunity to highlight the rich history of the Denver Police badge. •





## About the Denver Police Museum

The Denver Police Museum is helping to create safer, stronger, and more vibrant communities in Denver and beyond. Since its founding in 2008, DPM has focused on building bridges between law enforcement and our communities. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, DPM is dedicated to providing opportunities for people to hear, see, feel, participate, understand, and appreciate the value of police in our lives and communities. We couldn't do it without you. •

Learn more or contribute online at <https://denverpolicemuseum.org/donate/>

## You Can Support the Denver Police Museum

Your financial support, stories, donations, and gift of time serve as a living legacy, creating opportunities for community understanding and engagement, strengthening the city's relationship with the community, and inspiring the next generation of law enforcement professionals. Gifts to the Museum support our extensive collection of artifacts, engaging events, and educational initiatives. Your donation will ensure that the story of Denver's law enforcement history will be preserved, explored, and celebrated for generations to come.

Yes! I want to:

- Volunteer for the Museum.
- Share my story about the Denver Police Department.
- Donate an artifact to the Museum.
- Underwrite an Oral History segment.
- Make a contribution to the Museum.

Enclosed is my donation of:  \$30  \$60  \$90  \$120  \$240  Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*With each \$30 of donation amount, we would like to send you  
a gift of either of the following (please specify your preference):*

- 2024 Holiday Ornament(s) – Number of Ornaments:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Flight 629 Challenge Coin(s) – Number of Challenge Coins:** \_\_\_\_\_

\$30	1 gift item
\$60	2 gift items
\$90	3 gift items

...and so on.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State : \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

You may also contribute online at <https://denverpolicemuseum.org/donate/> or mail this completed form to:

Michael Hesse  
4460 Dover Street  
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033