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# Tac-Medical Unit to help injured cops in dangerous situations

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By Jeff McShan / 11 News

HOUSTON—Van Postell and his friend, Cameron Decker, are two impressive Houstonians who will be working together to save lives.

11 News Video



Tac-Medical Unit to help injured cops in dangerous situations  
September 2, 2009

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Both men are reserve deputies with the Harris County Sheriff's Office.

That means they go through all the standard law enforcement training (just like the others) and work for the sheriff's office when they can—for free.

Decker is also a med student studying at Ben Taub to be an emergency room doctor. Postell, a trained paramedic, has brought many critically through the doors of Ben Taub's busy ER.

For all the time Decker and Postell devote to public service, they might be called the ultimate volunteers.

But why do they do it?

“How many other students get the wonderful opportunity to work in one of the busiest ERs in the country

treating countless patients, leave and go kick down doors of fugitives?" Decker said.

After he joined the reserves, Decker and another doctor, George Kiss, came up with an idea to start a Harris County Tac-Medical Unit.

Their goal? To provide SWAT members and officers in other specialized squads with emergency medical care on the spot, whenever and wherever it's needed.

Postell signed up immediately, and the sheriff's office backed the idea 100 percent.

What happened in Waco during the Branch Davidian conflict is a perfect example of why a tac-medical squad is needed.

When suspects fired shots through the walls of the compound back in 1993, several federal agents were hit. Four of them died.

Since there were no medical personnel near the action, the wounded agents were rushed away to safety on the hoods of cars.

"And if an officer is hit and, you know, he does go down, then there might be 10 minutes before he gets help. So that is why I do it. I want to be there for them," Postell said.

The Harris County Tac-Medic Squad is being formed now, and Chief Kevin Maples believes it will eventually be one of the largest in the country.

And two unique people, Postell and Decker, deserve much of the credit.

"Let me tell you, I couldn't be more proud of those two individuals. They are the first two that started the tactical medicine group. I have just now come in, with the help of both of them, and started to formally put together procedures," Maples said.

Harris County Sheriff Adrian Garcia wants to put together his own SWAT team. When he does, members of the tac-medical unit will be there working with them.

"We absolutely love medicine. We absolutely love emergency medicine, and we really think we can get involved in this law enforcement aspect. Why don't we just bring them both together, as we've seen so many other cities do," Decker said.