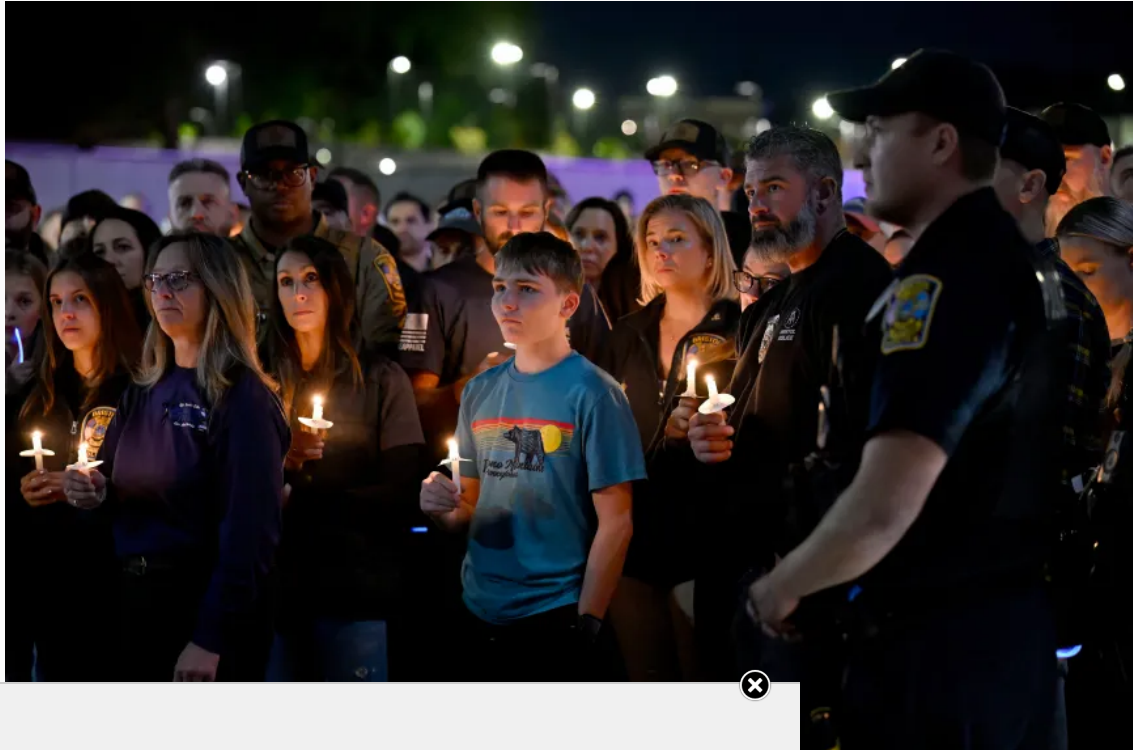


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Bristol solemnly honors fallen officers one year after their tragic deaths. Police chief reminds community that 'love conquers all'



in the line of duty, Thursday, Oct. 12, 2023. (Jessica Hill/Special to the Courant) n the one-year anniversary they were killed



By **JUSTIN MUSZYNSKI** | jmuszynski@courant.com | Hartford Courant
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A sea of candles filled the area of North Main Street in front of the [Bristol Police Department](#) Thursday evening to honor the two officers who made the ultimate sacrifice a year ago.

The masses in attendance, each holding a flickering candle, paid tribute to Lt. Dustin DeMonte and Sgt. Alex Hamzy on the day that marked a year since they were shot and killed during [an ambush attack](#) after being lured to a home on Redstone Hill Road on Oct. 12, 2022.





"Tonight we gather here to pay respect, recognize and honor Lt. Dustin Demonte, Sgt. Alex Hamzy and Officer Alec Iurato who placed themselves in harm's way so valiantly for us," Bristol Police Chief Brian Gould told the crowd. "Dustin and Alex making the ultimate sacrifice, protecting and serving us. We are forever grateful for these exceptional officers' sacrifice, courage and valor."

The mood Thursday was mostly solemn as hundreds packed an area of North Main Street that was closed off to motorists for the vigil. The area outside the department resembled what it did a year ago at this time, with the very police cruiser that was parked out front last October, which quickly filled with messages of sympathy and support from the community.



People gather at a vigil for Lt. Dustin DeMonte and Sgt. Alex Hamzy outside Bristol Police Department. (Jessica Hill/Special to the Courant)

Photos of DeMonte and Hamzy were again proudly displayed by police, and the bronze statue of St. Michael the Archangel — the patron saint of law enforcement — that is brought to police departments when they lose one of their own could also be seen outside the Bristol Police Department as the community paid tribute to the department's unimaginable loss.

The somber mood Thursday was lifted a few times when those in attendance applauded upon hearing the hopeful and uplifting words about carrying on the memory of DeMonte and Hamzy and honoring them by continuing to unite.

"Love conquers all," Gould said. "Go in peace. Be well. Appreciate each other and hug one another. God bless you all."



Bristol Police Chief Brian Gould holds a candle at a vigil for Lt. Dustin DeMonte and Sgt. Alex Hamzy outside Bristol Police Department. (Jessica Hill/Special to the Courant)

Donna Hamzy, Alex Hamzy's sister, also spoke during the vigil and opened up to those in attendance, telling them how much her family has appreciated all the support they have received over the past year.

"Alex would be so proud of this city and the love you have all shown to our family," Donna Hamzy said. "Your support has validated what he already knew to be true about this city, about this community, why he dedicated his life to protecting it and you."

"In this candle-lit moment we see not only the darkness of loss, but also the love that surrounds us," Donna Hamzy continued. "It can be easy to succumb to grief and anger. But let us instead honor and remember the qualities that defined how my brother and Dustin lived. Let us carry on in the special place that it is."



Lifelong Bristol resident Judie Ostrowski holds a candle to pay her respect for Lt. Dustin DeMonte and Sgt. Alex Hamzy. (Jessica Hill/Special to the Courant)

The sister of the slain officer also said Thursday that, in the year after her brother's death, she has grown to know why Alex Hamzy was so honored to be a police officer.

"My brother was so proud to be a member of the Bristol Police Department family, and over this last year my family and I have experienced first-hand why Alex was so proud of his brothers and sisters in blue," Donna Hamzy said. "The amount of love, support and just plain presence in our lives has been and is incredible. We are forever grateful for how you stepped in, in Alex's absence, to lift our family up."

Police on Thursday evening also showed a montage of photos showing DeMonte and Hamzy and a number of their Bristol Police Department family at weddings, gatherings, sports games and other significant life events. The photos were accompanied by slow acoustic songs that
feidel, released two blue balloons into the



The bronze statue of St. Michael the Archangel — the patron saint of law enforcement — was on display in front of the Bristol Police Department. (Jessica Hill/Special to the Courant)

The public vigil Thursday evening was just one of several ways Bristol police this week honored their fallen brothers. The department members attended two memorial services for each officer earlier in the day that were not open to the public.

A First Responder Memorial Garden on Wednesday was dedicated to the memory of DeMonte and Hamzy and opened to the public at St. Joseph's Cemetery at 522 Terryville Ave. The garden features a stone patio with blue benches on either side — one dedicated to each fallen officer displaying their respective badge numbers — and a memorial rock in the center with a bronze plaque that dedicates the monument to DeMonte and Hamzy who “without hesitancy, sacrificed their lives to protect the Bristol community through heroic efforts.”

The city is also planning to build a permanent memorial outside the front of the police department that will honor all five Bristol officers who have died in the line of duty. The memorial is slated to feature a centerpiece stone with all five officers' names at the center of a wall that horseshoes the area where the community a year ago created a temporary memorial.

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