

A Case for The Thin Purple Line

White Paper

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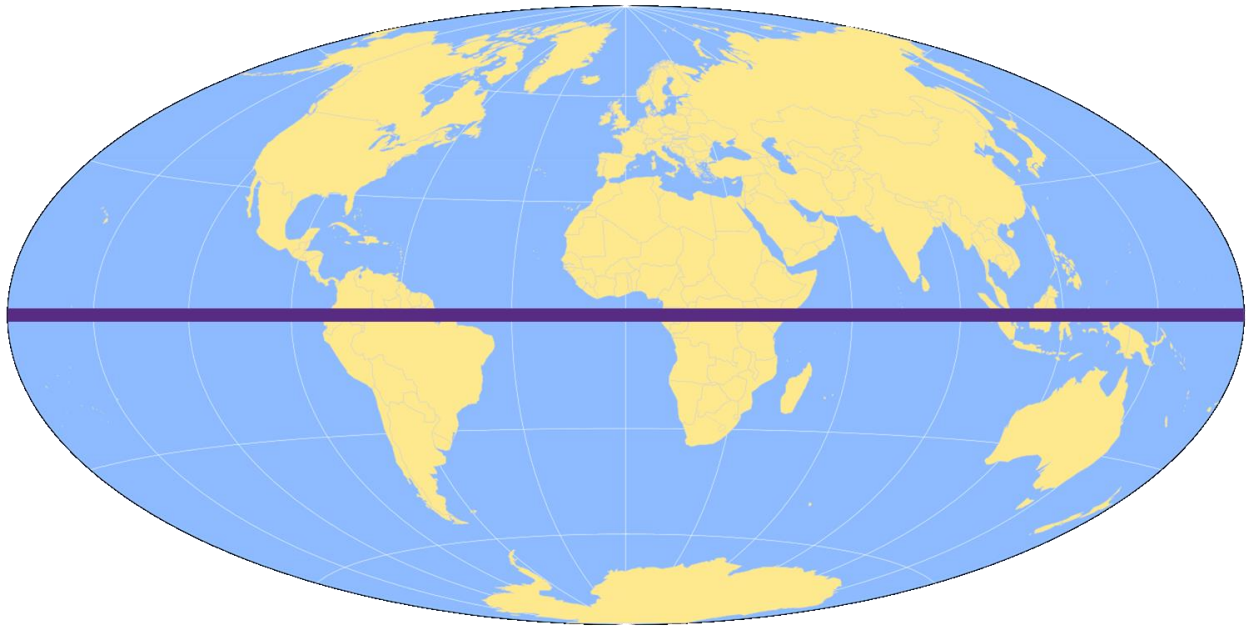


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Executive Summary

In the United States, as in other countries, the "Thin Blue Line" has come to be recognized as a symbol used by the law enforcement profession and the public alike to honor the contributions of law enforcement as well as to memorialize those law enforcement officers who have been killed in the line of duty.

In the modern era of public and private safety, "thin line" colors have come to represent the various disciplines of professionals that help others. Beyond the "Thin Blue Line" being a symbol used by the law enforcement profession, the "Thin Red Line" is now used by the firefighting community to show support for firefighters as well as to memorialize firefighters who are killed in the line of duty. Additional colors have come to represent other related disciplines such as the "Thin White Line" for Emergency Medical Services and the "Thin Gold Line" representing Communications Operators (dispatchers). The "Thin Green Line" represents Federal Agents such as Border Patrol, Park Rangers, Game Wardens and Conservation Personnel whereas the "Thin Silver Line" represents Corrections Officers. What is missing is any type of a standardized "Thin Line" color that represents the security profession, both public and private.



Velvet Purple - Pantone Color PMS 2612

While security personnel in the public and private sectors form an essential part of the protective apparatus of most nations, and outnumber law enforcement personnel by a two-to-one margin, they do not at present have their own "Thin Line" color. After much research, the ASIS Law Enforcement Liaison Council (LELC) voted on July 11, 2018 unanimously to recommend the color purple (Velvet Purple [Pantone 2612]) be adopted as the official "Thin Line" color for the security profession. The LELC Chair will forward this matter to the ASIS Board of Directors with the strong recommendation that they support this initiative and vote to adopt this proposal. Other relevant and related professional associations and organizations, such as the International Foundation for Protection Officers, are also highly encouraged to adopt the color purple (Velvet Purple [Pantone 2612]) as the official "Thin Line" color for the security profession.

Introduction

It's hard to go anywhere in the United States and not see obvious signs of support for the law enforcement profession. The common, ordinary citizen properly views law enforcement officers as the barrier between an orderly society and pure chaos. Over the past few years, law enforcement officers have been injured and killed at increasing and alarming rates and there has been a corresponding swell of support for these men and women by the communities they serve. Indications of the strong support for law enforcement are obviously visible by symbols in the color blue that range from bumper stickers on vehicles to shirts people wear displaying pro-law enforcement messages. People are placing blue glass light covers over their porch lights that illuminate a blue light indicating their support for law enforcement officers and can be seen at night up and down the streets in many residential neighborhoods. However, one of the most common and recognizable symbols for law enforcement support is that of the "Thin Blue Line."

The "Thin Blue Line" is a symbol used by the law enforcement profession and the public alike and has come to symbolize the relationship law enforcement has in the communities as the protectors of fellow civilians. Not only do they protect from criminal elements and disasters, but they also provide assistance to those in need such as someone who may become stranded on the side of a roadway as they are going about living their lives. The "Thin Blue Line" is also used by law enforcement and others to memorialize those law enforcement officers who have been killed in the line of duty.

According to Thin Blue Line USA, the "Thin Blue Line" American flag represents law enforcement and is flown to show support for the men and women who put their lives on the line every day to protect us. This symbol is hailed as the proud front for a national movement promoting compassion and support for our nation's police officers. The phrase "The Thin Blue Line" is synonymous with "The Police" and "Law Enforcement" and can be used interchangeably. It is the "Line" in "Line of Duty." In visual terms, it is found in one of two variations. The first is a simple, centered blue line with black space above and below it. The second, as a single blue stripe on an otherwise black and white, American flag, located just below the stars".

The Thin Blue Line is difficult to miss. In addition to seeing it on American flags with one blue horizontal stripe, it is easy to see blue stripes popping up on yards, bumpers, hats, and other forms of apparel. The "Thin Blue Line" has become the de facto, standard symbol for law enforcement support in the United States, Canada, Great Brittan, and in many other nations around the world.

Background

It is generally accepted that the genesis of the Thin Blue Line can be traced back to the Crimean War in 1854. During the Battle of Balaklava, the first move by Russian forces towards Balaklava was repulsed by the stand of the 93rd Highlanders, led by Major-General Sir Colin Campbell. Campbell formed his men into a line (rather than into a square, which was the accepted way for infantry to face a cavalry charge) and the probing Russian advance was driven off with volleys of musket fire. This action became known as 'The Thin Red Line' [1]. The Thin Red Line came to symbolize strength and resolve for good. It is therefore understandable why the law enforcement profession would adopt the values imbued by The Thin Red Line and adopt the concern for their profession. Of course, since the widespread color for those in law enforcement is blue, it is also understandable why the law enforcement profession would exchange the red line for a blue line.

Problem Statement

In the modern era of public and private safety, "thin line" colors have come to represent the various disciplines of professionals that help others. Beyond the "Thin Blue Line" being a symbol used by the law enforcement profession, the "Thin Red Line" is now used by the firefighting community to show support for firefighters as well as to memorialize firefighters who are killed in the line of duty. Additional colors have come to represent other related disciplines such as the "Thin White Line" for Emergency Medical Services and the "Thin Gold Line" representing Communications Operators (dispatchers). The "Thin Green Line" represents Federal Agents such as Border Patrol, Park Rangers, Game Wardens and Conservation Personnel whereas the "Thin Silver Line" represents Corrections Officers [2]. What is missing is any type of a standardized "Thin Line" color that represents the security profession, both public and private.

Security personnel in the public and private sectors form an essential part of the protective apparatus of most nations. Globally, there are an estimated 20 million private security workers. In the United States, the U.S. Department of Labor statistics states there are more than 1.1 million private security guards in the U.S. compared to 666,000 police officers [3]. More importantly is this number only reflects those security personnel who are employed in the private sector. Add to this the tens of thousands of security personnel who are employees of the U.S. government and it becomes clear that security personnel in the United States alone outnumber their law enforcement counterparts by nearly two to one. Law enforcement is not alone in its numbers being fewer than security. According to the NFPA, there are 1,160,450 local firefighters in the U.S. Of the total number of firefighters 345,600 (30%) were career firefighters and 814,850 (70%) were volunteer firefighters [4]. What these numbers demonstrate is security personnel in the private and public sectors are a major force in protecting people, property and information. Because security personnel are a key part of the protection system, they too deserve to have their own "Thin Line" color.

Solution

At present time, there is not any agreed-upon color representing the security profession for those in the public and private sectors. That is why it is right and proper for those who work in security to have their own "Thin Line" color. This would be used to show on-going support for security professionals and to create a better sense of professional community as well as to honor and memorialize the security professionals who are injured or killed in the line of duty. Just one case-in-point is that of Rick Rescorla.

Rick was the head of security for Morgan Stanley in the South Tower of the World Trade Center. He was a true security professional who understood the World Trade Center (where Morgan Stanley was headquartered) was a particularly vulnerable terrorist target. Rick developed an emergency evacuation plan in 1997 which he required the Morgan Stanley employees to practice over and over. On September 11, 2001, when the Port Authority issued an announcement over the buildings PA system that everyone in the South Tower of the World Trade Center should remain calm and stay at their desks, Rick, instead, immediately began the evacuation process. With bullhorn in hand, Rick ordered the Morgan Stanley employees to evacuate the building. Before the second plane struck the South Tower, his colleagues were on their way down the stairs. Thousands of people—nearly 2700 to be precise—owe their lives to Rick Rescorla, and many are vocal about that fact.

Because of Rick Rescorla's foresight and belief that he knew what was right, nearly every Morgan Stanley employee made it safely out of the South Tower before it collapsed. Incredibly fearless and courageous, Rick entered the South Tower of the World Trade Center to ensure all of the Morgan Stanley employees had safely left the building. He believed there were a few who still needed help. Rick knew he was facing difficult odds when he reentered the Tower and was last seen near the 10th floor, on his way up to help the last of his colleagues leave the building. When the South Tower collapsed, Rick was still in the building. His body was never found [5]. It is Rick Rescorla and other security professionals like him that are deserving of being honored and memorialized. Security professionals having their own identity via their own "Thin Line" color would help properly honor them in the same way that sister professions use their own "Thin Line" colors to properly honor their own.

What "Thin Line" color is the best and most appropriate to represent security professionals? To best answer this question, a committee comprised of members from the ASIS Law Enforcement Liaison Council (LELC) conducted extensive research into this question. The outcome of that research resulted in the LELC committee recommending the color purple be adopted as the official "Thin Line" color based on the following factors:

- The color purple is derived by combining the color blue (the color for law enforcement), the color red (the color for fire) and the color white (the color for EMS). Since the duties and responsibilities of most security professionals entail duties of each of these other professions (policing, fire prevention and response, and emergency medical response), the color purple makes the most sense.
- While there are varied meanings and interpretations of the color purple, this color combines the calm stability of blue and the fierce energy of red. The color purple is often associated with nobility, creativity, wisdom, dignity, devotion, peace and independence. The color purple has a variety of effects on the mind and body, including uplifting spirits, calming the mind and nerves, enhancing the sacred, creating feelings of spirituality, increasing nurturing tendencies and sensitivity, and encouraging imagination and creativity.
- The color purple is separate and distinct enough from the colors of other public safety and related disciplines that there can reasonably be no confusions between the color purple and the other colors now used by public safety and other related disciplines.
- A query was conducted with multiple sheriffs and police chiefs asking them if they would support purple as the "Thin Line" color representing all security – public and private. Without fail, not only did every sheriff and police chief think it was a good idea, but they strongly supported purple being designated as the "Thin Line" color for the security profession.
- The use of a dedicated "Thin Line" color for security professionals would help in forming and building strong and vibrant partnerships.
- Security professionals having their own "Thin Line" color would help raise awareness of the security profession with the public.
- The use of the color purple by the security profession would not interfere with any other generally-accepted color that is associated with any other protective service, public safety domain or related discipline.

Conclusion

The committee presented its research and findings to the LELC during their monthly meeting on July 11, 2018. The committee recommended ASIS International adopt the color of Velvet Purple [Pantone 2612] as the official global color to represent all security professionals in the public and the private sectors. This motion was brought before the entire LELC for a vote. The results of the vote were this resolution was unanimously adopted by the LELC. The LELC Chair will forward this matter to the ASIS Board of Directors with a proposal that the ASIS Board of Directors support this initiative by voting to approve this recommendation.

References

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