

SEVEN CITIZENS RECEIVE MSA MEDAL OF VALOR



Pictured above: Scott Ray Billings (middle) with Sheriff Brian McLean (Houghton County) and Sheriff Gary Rosema (Ottawa County)

Six came to the aid of Capac Police Chief Raymond Hawks after he was shot and one came to the aid of a store clerk who was stabbed. These seven men and women were honored at MSA's 2009 Summer Training Conference Memorial Banquet.

On Sunday, February 22, 2009 at about 8:30 p.m. Scott Ray Billings stopped to purchase a soda at the Vriesland Convenience Store in Zeeland Township, which is located in Ottawa County. He was in the store when he heard the cashier, Mary Olbert, scream. When Billings looked up he saw a man standing over the cashier with a large knife. The suspect quickly ran out of the store when Billings gave chase. As the suspect, who was later identified as the estranged husband of Mary Olbert, ran off, Billings yelled at the suspect to stop. The suspect turned and threw the knife he still had in his possession at Billings who gingerly picked up the knife, using protection not to disturb fingerprints, and ran back into the store to give aid to the victim. Olbert had been stabbed with the large butcher knife in her upper chest. She was bleeding severely but was able to call 911 while Billings chased the suspect. While on the phone with Ottawa County Central Dispatch Olbert collapsed due to blood loss. Returning to the store Billings used his cell phone to re-establish contact with central dispatch while holding direct pressure on the very large and potentially fatal wound Olbert had sustained. Emergency help responded quickly and Billings stayed with the victim, applying direct pressure onto the wound and encouraging Olbert to hang in there until help arrived. Through medical reports and other evidence it is clear the actions of Billings were essential in saving the life of Olbert. For his heroic actions on that day Scott Ray Billings was awarded the MSA Citizen's Medal of Valor.



Pictured above with Sheriff Tim Donnellon (St. Clair), Chief Raymond Hawks (Capac PD) and Sheriff Brian McLean (Houghton County) are the 6 recipients of the MSA Medal of Valor.

On April 16, 2008 in St. Clair County Capac Police Chief Raymond Hawks was called to investigate a report of a reckless driver. He had no idea that this routine call would change his life and the lives of his family. During the investigation Chief Hawks found that the suspect was Don Burke, a man that the Chief had dealt with on many occasions. Chief Hawks made a decision to tow Mr. Burke's vehicle. Knowing that there might be some problems, the chief called for assistance. Deputy Tim O'Boyle was not far from Capac and volunteered to respond. While Deputy O'Boyle was enroute, wrecker driver Mike Thorpe arrived. Chief Hawks was speaking to Thorpe, instructing him on which car to tow when the suspect came out of his home and shot Chief Hawks, incapacitating him. He then shot multiple times at Thorpe, narrowly missing his head. Deputy Tim O'Boyle had just arrived, drawing Burke's attention. Burke then fired several rounds at Deputy O'Boyle, striking him in the head. The sudden eruption of gunfire drew the attention of the neighborhood residents. It was then that the citizens of this small community came to the aid of the injured officers.

Monica Teem and William Klobnock were enjoying a relaxing afternoon in Klobnock's home when they heard the sound of shots being fired. Teem immediately went to the window and saw the chief laying on the ground at the back of his patrol car. Without regard for her own safety she ran out to render aid to the fallen chief. When she got to Chief Hawks, she could tell that he had been shot in the upper right arm and chest and was bleeding profusely. She applied pressure to the bleeding. Knowing that it was a serious injury, she ran back to Klobnock's residence. She instructed Klobnock to call 911, get a towel and scissors. Teem and Klobnock then ran back out to the Chief. Using supplies they had gathered they cut the chief's shirt and applied direct pressure to his wounds, preventing him from bleeding to death.

Sandra Jaros was wrapping a gift when she heard the unmistakable sound of gunfire. When she looked out her window she saw Burke standing on his porch firing a rifle and Chief Hawks dropping to the ground. She ran to her bathroom to grab towels. Without knowing where Burke was, she ran into the street to help the chief. Once at the chief's side she helped Teem stop the bleeding from the chief's gunshot wounds.

In the midst of the terrifying ordeal, wrecker driver Thorpe never thought of fleeing the scene. He immediately called 911 and exited his truck to assist the Chief. His first thought was that the suspect may continue shooting. With this in mind, Thorpe told Chief Hawks that he was taking his service weapon to protect them. Chief Hawks was asking anyone to call his wife, Vicky. Thorpe took the Chief's phone, found the number for Vicky Hawks and called her to tell her what had happened.

Vicky Hawks received the call she always feared. Her husband had been shot in the line of duty. She immediately knew that she had to get to him. She drove to the scene and found her husband seriously wounded with people trying to save his life. Vicky immediately joined their efforts, talking to her husband and helping him onto the wrecker so that he could be moved out of danger. She stayed by his side while he was driven away to a waiting ambulance and has been by his side ever since.

Andrew Kokoszka had also heard the shooting. He looked out and could see Chief Hawks down on the ground and yelling for help. He selflessly ran out to help. Finding that first aid was being administered to the chief, he helped Thorpe shield the chief from further danger. Kokoszka and Thorpe then tried to get Chief Hawks out danger. They first tried to move him to the back of his own patrol car. When that would not work, Thorpe repositioned his wrecker so that he, Kokoszka and Klobnock could lift Chief Hawks onto the bed of the wrecker and move him to safety.

While others were attending to the chief, Teem went down the street to check on the sheriff's deputy whom she believed had been shot as well. Upon reaching Deputy O'Boyle, she found him to be holding his head and told him that she wanted to check his injuries. Deputy O'Boyle

attempted to get Teem out of danger but she refused to leave before she could help the injured deputy. She only left Deputy O'Boyle when he repeatedly ordered her to get out of harm's way.

During the ensuing chaos, no one knew where the gunman had gone. Even knowing that he could return at any time and continue firing, these brave individuals put themselves in harm's way to aid two fallen officers. Even after this day, these citizens continued their bravery and aided in the investigation and the successful prosecution and conviction of the shooter. For their efforts, which saved the life of Capac Police Chief Raymond Hawks, Vicki Hawks, Sandra Jaros, William Klobnock, Andrew Kokoszka, Monica Teem and Mike Thorpe were each received MSA's Citizen's Medal of Valor.