

Please welcome from the Massachusetts State Police:

Trooper David Stucenski and K-9 Frankie

On April 30, 2016, Springfield Police received calls reporting a hit-and-run crash on a road next to Interstate 91. After striking several cars, the suspect fled onto I-91 southbound. A witness contacted the Massachusetts State Police Springfield Barracks and remained on the phone while following the suspect from a distance, as patrols responded to the area.

As the witness followed, the male suspect exited the highway and abandoned the vehicle in the parking lot of a car dealership. The witness continued to monitor the developing situation and relayed to the barracks the location and description of the man as he crossed beneath I-91. At this time, the suspect noticed the witness following him and drew a handgun from his waistband, brandishing it at the witness and his girlfriend.

Massachusetts State Police K-9 Section Trooper David Stucenski, along with his K-9 partner Frankie, was responding to the area. Trooper Stucenski saw the suspect at the intersection of East Columbus Avenue and Main Street. He got out of his cruiser and ordered the suspect to halt. The suspect ran across East Columbus Avenue. Trooper Stucenski retrieved Frankie from his cruiser and repeatedly shouted out K9 deployment warnings to the suspect, who did not heed the warnings and kept running. Trooper Stucenski pursued on foot, and deployed Frankie to assist with the apprehension.

Upon reaching a grassy area next to the road, the suspect abruptly turned toward Trooper Stucenski and Frankie, took a .357 revolver from his waistband, and fired a shot at them. The gunshot missed, striking the ground in front of the trooper. Almost simultaneously, Frankie, unflinching, charged into the shooter and took him to the ground with such impact that the gun fell from the suspect's hand.

The suspect resisted violently, punching and attempting to choke Frankie. But Frankie was undeterred, and steadfastly maintained his grip on the suspect until Trooper Stucenski and another trooper who responded as backup were able to take the man into custody.

The suspect was treated for minor injuries; Trooper Stucenski and Frankie were unharmed. The .357 magnum revolver, which had an obliterated serial number and five more rounds in the cylinder, was recovered at the scene, as was the bullet that had been fired. The suspect, a Sierra Leone national, was found to be wearing an ankle transponder placed on him by the United States Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement as a felon subject to deportation. He was charged with numerous felonies and held on \$1 million cash bail.

The immediate and decisive response by Trooper Stucenski and Frankie in confrontation with a dangerous armed felon likely prevented others who crossed the fleeing suspect's path from being harmed or killed. Trooper Stucenski and Frankie acted without regard for their own safety, with great courage in the face of danger, in service to the citizens and state they protect.

For their brave actions that night, Massachusetts State Police Trooper David M. Stucenski and his K9 partner Frankie are awarded the George L. Hanna **MEDAL OF VALOR**.

Please welcome from the Lynn Police Department:

Officer John R. Bernard
Officer Matthew R. Coppinger
Officer Michael J. McEachern
Officer Joshua M. Seaman

On January 29, 2016, at approximately 0838 hours, Officer Matthew Coppinger, Officer Joshua Seaman, and Officer Michael McEachern went to a Bay View Avenue residence to serve warrants on a suspect after the Lynn Police Domestic Violence Unit had received information that he was staying at that address.

There were five warrants for the male party, which the Lynn Police Department had been trying to serve for several weeks. A majority of the warrants stemmed from violent confrontations between the suspect and the mother of his child. He had been telling victims that he had a firearm and that he would use it against the police. The suspect had an extensive violent history with the Lynn Police Department, dating back to 1998. His past included multiple entries for 209A violations, witness intimidation, home invasion, and armed assault with intent to murder. The responding officers entered the Bay View Avenue home, located the male party in a locked second floor bedroom. The suspect then yelled to the officers through the door that he had a gun and he would kill them.

Within seconds, a second floor window opened above the front porch. The suspect came out of the window, stood up on the roof, and pointed a handgun at an officer, who drew his handgun. At that point the suspect turned and ran around the roof, heading towards the back of the house. Officers Coppinger, McEachern and Seaman then ran outside, in an effort to confront the fleeing suspect.

Officer John Bernard, who has also arrived on scene, along with Officers McEachern and Seaman gave chase. He then proceeded over fences and through the yards of the adjacent homes in an extremely congested area.

Officer Coppinger ran down Bayview Avenue to Western Avenue, in case the fleeing male came out of the yards to that location. As the officers gave chase; the suspect pointed his handgun at the pursuing officers.

The suspect encountered a female party who was driving to work in her personal vehicle. He immediately pointed his handgun at the female and ordered her out of her car. The suspect then held the handgun up to the female driver's head, pushed her away from her vehicle, and sat in the driver's seat.

At that point, the officers who were giving chase approached the suspect, while ordering him to drop his gun. The suspect then chose to aim the firearm at Officers Bernard, McEachern and Seaman, who were then upon him. In an effort to protect themselves and innocent bystanders, the officers were forced to discharge their service weapons to end the imminent threat and stop the suspect from hurting anyone during his violent rampage. The suspect then dropped the handgun and was removed from the vehicle. The officers administered first aid to the male party in an effort to save his life. The suspect was transported to Salem hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Officer Bernard, Officer Coppinger, Officer McEachern and Officer Seaman exhibited the highest level of courage professionalism throughout this entire incident, as they disregarded their own personal safety to pursue an armed and violent suspect who was putting the public at risk.

For these reasons, Officer John R. Bernard, Officer Matthew R. Coppinger, Officer Michael J. McEachern and Officer Joshua M. Seama, of Lynn Police Department are presented with the Trooper George L. Hanna MEDAL OF VALOR.

Please welcome, from the Lowell Police Department:

Officer Guillermo Rojas

and

Officer Chase Suong

On March 25, 2016 at 10:57 PM, Lowell Police Officers Guillermo Rojas and Chase Suong responded to a report of an armed assailant at in the town of Lowell.

A family member had informed Lowell dispatch center that the armed man, “Was going to kill everyone” and the subject himself told dispatch, “Send the cops now before I kill everyone”.

Upon arrival, Officers Rojas and Suong approached the front of the two-family home and observed the front door to be open. Within seconds they observed a man armed with a meat cleaver in one hand and a large kitchen knife in the other descending an interior stairwell from the second floor.

The man’s hands were bloodstained. The officers retreated while ordering the suspect to drop the weapons. The suspect verbally refused, while the officers repeated commands to stop and drop the weapons. The suspect quickly closed on the officers and raised both hands, still holding the weapons. In fear of their lives, both officers fired on the suspect, stopping the threat. The officers then disarmed the suspect, administered aid, and searched the dwelling for victims. The suspect succumbed to his wounds. Officer Rojas and Suong knowingly

attempted to enter a home to aid potential victims who may have been seriously injured by an armed assailant. When in fact confronted by the armed assailant, the officers held their fire while attempting to stop the subject. When faced with no other choice, the officers discharged their weapons to protect themselves and each other.

For bravery in placing themselves in the line of fire to pursue and apprehend armed suspect, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is pleased to present Officer Rojas and Officer Suong with the Trooper George L. Hanna MEDAL OF VALOR.

From the Lowell Police Department, please welcome:

Officer Buntha Kieng

On February 6, 2016, Lowell Police Officer Buntha Kieng and other officers were dispatched to 29 Pine Hill Rd. for a report of an armed home invasion in progress. Upon arrival, Officer Kieng encountered a male victim with a head wound outside of the home. The victim stated that he had been pistol whipped, and the armed suspects were still inside with another victim. Without back up and with complete disregard for his own safety, Officer Kieng approached the home and opened the storm door. He saw a male prone on the floor. It was later learned that this second victim had also been pistol whipped. Officer Kieng also saw a suspect descending the interior stairs, armed with a large silver .45 handgun.

The suspect raised the firearm and pointed it at Officer Kieng. Fearing for his life, Officer Kieng fired his service firearm, striking the suspect twice and stopping him. Officer Kieng covered the suspect until back up officers arrived on scene, and then rendered aid to the downed perpetrator. The suspect survived his wounds and was charged with armed home invasion and assault. The suspect was found to be a dangerous criminal with a lengthy record. A second suspect was also taken into custody nearby, and was also charged.

Officer Kieng knowingly placed himself at risk of death or great bodily harm by entering the scene of a violent crime in progress in order to rescue a victim. Relying on his training, he was able to neutralize a deadly threat and take a violent criminal into custody. At the same time he was able to rescue a wounded victim, protect himself from harm, and maintain in the crime scene.

For his brave and decisive actions in a highly dangerous situation, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is proud to present Lowell Officer Bethuna Kieng with the Trooper George L. Hanna MEDAL OF VALOR.

Please welcome, from the Fall River Police Department:

Officer James T. Hoar

And

Officer David L. Gouveia

On Monday, June 13, 2016, Fall River Police Communications issued a radio broadcast on behalf of the Tiverton Rhode Island Police Department informing the agency that a shooting had taken place in their town and providing a vehicle and suspect description. At approximately 7:21pm Officer Gouveia spotted what would later be confirmed as the suspect/suspect vehicle from the Tiverton shooting. Officer Gouveia, who minutes later, was joined by Officer Hoar, attempted to stop the vehicle in question and a motor vehicle pursuit ensued. Unbeknownst to Fall River Police personnel at the time the suspect, Edward Acquisto, had just committed a murder and was fleeing the scene when encountered by Officer Gouveia and Officer Hoar.

Officer Gouveia and Officer Hoar pursued Acquisto into Tiverton where the pursuit was ordered to be terminated. Upon ending the pursuit, officers observed that a Tiverton Cruiser had spotted the suspect and had picked up the pursuit. Concerned for the safety of the lone Tiverton Officer (Cpl Joseph Wieszbicki), Officer Gouveia and Officer Hoar followed along at a distance until Acquisto stopped his vehicle.

Officer Gouveia, Officer Hoar, and Cpl Wieszbicki began to issue verbal commands as they attempted to interact with Acquisto who suddenly exited his vehicle with a gun in hand and began to shoot at officers. Cpl Wieszbicki, Officer Gouveia and Officer Hoar returned fire engaging in a gun battle with Acquisto. Ultimately Acquisto was killed with no injuries to any of the officers or civilians on scene.

Edward Acquisto was a career criminal with a violent criminal record who had previously been sentenced to a term of life in prison in Rhode Island in 1979. He was released on parole in 2003. He had murdered an acquaintance, John Cloud, less than an hour before officers spotted him and attempted to stop his vehicle. Acquisto was a violent parolee who had no intention of peacefully submitting to attempts to take him in to custody.

Both Officer Gouveia and Officer Hoar showed calm and restraint during the incident. Radio transmissions were clear and concise during the pursuit as well as in the aftermath of the shooting. Both officers used sound judgment during the pursuit, operating their separate police cruisers in a safe manner. Officers also made the proper decision to continue to follow along after ending the "pursuit" of Acquisto's vehicle; Cpl Wieszbicki was alone and about to engage in a life and death encounter with a dangerous criminal. Officers were able to effectively engage Acquisto and prevent additional loss of life or serious injury. This encounter took place in a residential neighborhood on a summer evening with families outside enjoying the weather. Without the swift and decisive intervention by these officers an already tragic situation may have become much worse.

For their courage in a life-threatening situation, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is pleased to present Fall River Officer James T. Hoar
And Officer David L. Gouveia
with the Trooper George L. Hanna Award MEDAL OF VALOR.

From the Everett Police Department, please welcome:

Officer Joseph F. Pepicelli

On April 21, 2016 officer Pepicelli responded to the Everett Square Downtown area for a male harassing passers-by in a heavily populated area of both pedestrians and vehicular travel. Upon arrival officer Pepicelli, a one man unit, located the subject in question and attempted to speak to him. Initial information relayed to the officer was that the subject was believed to be armed with a knife. As officer Pepicelli attempted to make verbal contact with him, the subject became agitated and officer Pepicelli tried to calm him down. Within seconds of the contact, the subject pulled a knife from his back pocket and began to wave it in aggressive manner. Officer Pepicelli immediately recognized the threat to him and numerous pedestrians in close proximity. Officer Pepicelli withdrew and created distance by backpedaling into the middle of Broadway, drew his service weapon and held it at a low ready position while still trying to calm the subject down. Officer Pepicelli had no barrier between him and the subject and after the subject began to slowly move closer to him, he went into a full sprint leading the way with the knife in hand towards officer Pepicelli. Pepicelli believing his life was in imminent danger raised his weapon and discharged his weapon an effort to stop the threat to him and the public around him. Officer Pepicelli's rounds were all accounted for and neither he nor any member of the public was injured. Backup officers were just arriving on scene as the shooting took place and immediately rendered first aid. Despite their efforts the subject passed away from his injuries.

The whole incident lasted less than a minute with officer Pepicelli having to make tough decisions to protect himself and the public as this is a highly congested area during this time of day.

For his swift action in a dangerous encounter, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is pleased to present Everett Police Officer Joseph Pepicelli with the Trooper George L. Hanna MEDAL OF VALOR.

Our next award presentations are for both the Medal of Valor and the Medal of Honor.

As you have already heard from the brave accounts told this morning, the Medal of Valor is awarded to police officers who demonstrate actions above and beyond the call of duty. While both medals recognize the most distinguished acts of bravery, the Medal of Honor is the highest and most prestigious award given to a police officer who has demonstrated actions above and beyond the call of duty, *in the face of certain and imminent danger to life and limb*. Previous

recipients of the Medal of Honor are the finest examples of police officers in our Commonwealth.

From Boston Police Department, please welcome:

Officer Keith Kaplan

and

Officer Kurt S. Stokinger (HONOR)

On January 8, 2016, Officer Kaplan and Officer Stokinger, were both assigned to the Drug Control Unit. On that day, they observed a known drug dealer in the area of Mount Bowdoin Terrace.

As both officers exited their vehicle, the suspect then got out of his vehicle and without warning, began firing a handgun and striking Officer Stokinger in the leg.

Officer Stokinger, although injured, discharged his Department issued weapon resulting in a gun battle with this violent suspect. This armed suspect then fled on foot with Officer Kaplan in pursuit as other officers rendered first aid to the wounded officer. These officers applied tourniquet to Officer Stokinger's leg to prevent further blood loss.

In the meantime, Officer Kaplan, with his Department weapon drawn, ordered the armed suspect to drop his weapon. After a violent struggle, this suspect was placed under arrest and the department recovered a loaded firearm with obliterated serial numbers.

For his uncommon heroic reactions under a potentially deadly encounter, while disregarding his own safety, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is pleased to present the Trooper George L. Hanna MEDAL OF VALOR to:

Police Officer Keith Kaplan

On behalf of a grateful Commonwealth, it is with deep appreciation that the highest award for policing, the Trooper George L. Hanna MEDAL OF HONOR, is presented to Police Officer Kurt S. Stokinger.

Our next award presentation is again for both the **Medal of Valor** and **the Medal of Honor**.

Please welcome from the Boston Police Department:

Sergeant Norberto B. Perez (VALOR)

Officer Lenin Ortiz (VALOR)

Officer Clifton W. Singletary (VALOR)

Officer Richard D. Cintolo (HONOR)

Officer Matthew J. Morris (HONOR)

Officer Eric Schmidt (HONOR)

About 10:50 p.m., October 12, 2016, a 9-1-1 call was placed to the Boston Police Department from Area A-7. The caller, stated that he was having issues with his roommate and a check of prior history indicated that a firearm was in the house. Police Officer Eric Schmidt and Officer Richard Cintolo arrived on scene and after interviewing the caller who indicated that the firearm was not involved in the present incident. (Based on the information the officers broadcasted the update that there was no firearm involved. We need to add how Officer Morris got there, which isn't listed in the original.)

As officers encountered the suspect, they observed him wearing a bullet resistant vest. Officers Morris and Cintolo frisked the suspect for weapons at which time they located a firearm on him. Officer Cintolo yelled, "GUN!" and a violent struggle ensued. During this violent struggle, several rounds were fired by the suspect and Officers Cintolo and Morris were critically hit by gunfire. Officer Morris was struck with a round in the left leg, severing the femoral artery. Officer Cintolo was struck by bullets in the neck and upper torso area.

Both Officers Morris and Cintolo fell to the ground and the suspect fled across the basement apartment while he continued to shoot at the officers. Officers Schmidt and Morris were able to return fire and became pinned down, they continued to hold their position while running low on ammunition. Officer Morris who was down with a critical leg wound, was still able to throw an extra magazine to Officer Schmidt, which held their position long enough for the suspect to yell "I give up". Officers gave commands to show his hands and throw out the gun, there was no response from the suspect. The suspect, feigned surrender; stating that he would give up, but failing to comply with the officers' orders. Officer Schmidt could hear the distinct sound of rounds being chambered into a shotgun. The suspect pointed the shotgun and another gun fight ensued. Officer Schmidt, fired multiple rounds into the wall where the suspect was barricaded, causing him to fall, although he was still in possession of the loaded shotgun.

Officer Schmidt realized that Officer Cintolo had stopped responding and that Officer Morris was losing a lot of blood. Officer Schmidt observed Sergeant Norberto Perez coming down the stairs and told Sergeant Perez to get the injured officers out and he would provide cover. Sergeant Perez immediately went to the aid of both downed officers, using his body to shield the injured officers from further gunfire in complete disregard for his own safety and welfare and began immediate treatment and rescue of the officers. Officer Clifton Singletary ran into the basement to assist Sergeant Perez and Officer Schmidt. Officer Singletary used bullet resistant shield to help protect Officer Cintolo from gunfire, as well as using his body to protect Officer Morris while attempting a rescue. Officer Singletary, in complete disregard for his own safety

and welfare, then continued to shield and protect both downed officers until both officers were removed from the basement.

Officer Schmidt continued to provide cover for Officer Singletary and Sergeant Perez were running low on ammunition requested that SWAT Officer Lenin Ortiz give him one of the available rifles. Officer Schmidt stated that he saw the suspect's hands on the shotgun move and he discharged his rifle several times until the suspect movement stopped. The SWAT team arrived in the basement and proceeded to clear the apartment and secure it.

Sergeant Perez took off his belt and applied a tourniquet to Officer Morris' leg, slowing the bleeding. Officer Singletary, placed his finger inside the gunshot wound, finding and plugging the severed femoral artery. It is no exaggeration to say that if these officers had not taken that action, Officer Morris would not have survived his injuries.

Both officers have endured multiple surgeries and extended rehabilitation during their recovery. For the incredibly brave and decisive actions of these officers, resulting in saving a fellow officer's life, the Commonwealth is pleased to present the Trooper George L. Hanna **MEDAL OF VALOR** to:

Sergeant Norberto B. Perez
Officer Clifton W. Singletary
Officer Lenin Ortiz

For their valiant actions and exceptional heroism, which surely prevented the injury of more officers, a grateful Commonwealth is pleased to present:

Officer Matthew J. Morris
Officer Richard D. Cintolo
Officer Eric Schmidt

each with the highest award for policing, the Trooper George L. Hanna **MEDAL OF HONOR**.

Our next award presentation is for the **Medal of Honor**.

Please welcome from Massachusetts State Police:

Sergeant Michael H. Baker
Sergeant Scott M. McDonald
Trooper Albert J. Kardoos

Early on the morning of Sunday, May 22, 2016, Auburn Police Officer Ronald Tarantino was killed by gunfire while conducting a motor vehicle traffic stop. The investigation by State Police and Auburn Police identified the suspect in Officer Tarantino's homicide as a known violent felon.

The Massachusetts State Police Special Tactical Operations Team – known as the STOP Team – was activated as the investigation continued throughout the day. That afternoon, the STOP Team moved into tactical positions around a residence in Oxford where the suspect was believed to be hiding. A State Police negotiator made exhaustive efforts to convince the suspect to surrender peacefully. A friend of the suspect came out of the house and surrendered. Commanders debriefed the associate and learned that the suspect was in the house with his pit bull and had made statements indicating he would not surrender and would not be taken alive.

The STOP Team entered the house, part of a duplex, and began a room-by-room search for the suspect, making use of the team's robots and a State Police K-9 unit. After clearing one side of the duplex, team members located a fairly large opening in the basement wall. With the homeowners of the adjacent residence already out of their house, the team made a tactical entry into the adjoining home.

STOP Team Trooper Albert J. Kardoos, and Sergeants Michael Baker and Scott McDonald cleared the first floor, and then moved up to the second floor. They entered a bedroom with a closed door that presumably led to a closet. As they opened the closet door, a hand holding a gun thrust out from behind clothing and opened fire; simultaneously, a pit bull charged out of the closet, past the troopers, down the stairs and out of the house. In defense of their lives, the troopers returned fire and neutralized the threat. In the armed assault by the suspect, Trooper Kardoos suffered a gunshot wound to his shoulder.

Sergeant McDonald and Baker assisted Trooper Kardoos out of the house, where the tactical medic team from the University of Massachusetts Medical Center was waiting. Trooper Kardoos underwent surgery that evening and has undergone rehabilitation for his injury.

Taking into consideration the resulting life-threatening injury he sustained during the apprehension of a murder suspect while under fire, the actions of Trooper Albert J. Kardoos represent an example of extraordinary courage and heroism. The actions of Sergeant Scott M. McDonald and Sergeant Michael H. Baker in decisively and immediately ending a violent situation while faced with a threat to their own lives and safety, epitomize the highest ideals of bravery and tactical precision.

Undertaking a prolonged high risk operation that culminated in an act of sudden violence directed at them, Troopers Kardoos and Sergeant Baker and McDonald remained poised and

acted in accordance with the highest levels of their rigorous training. Their conduct was an exemplary reflection on the law enforcement profession.

For their valiant actions and exceptional heroism, which surely prevented the injury of more officers, a grateful Commonwealth is pleased to present:

Sergeant Michael H. Baker
Sergeant Scott M. McDonald
Trooper Albert J. Kardoos

each with the highest award for policing, the Trooper George L. Hanna MEDAL OF HONOR.

Our FINAL award presentation is for Medal of Honor.

Please welcome from Auburn Police Department:

Family of Police Officer Ronald Tarentino Jr.

On May 22, 2016 Auburn Police Officer Ronald Tarentino Jr. stopped a motor vehicle in the town of Auburn for having an illegal attached license plate. Before exiting his cruiser to conduct a roadside investigation, Officer Tarentino informed dispatch and his fellow officers that the license plate was currently attached to a white Infinitu SUV and not the Nissan Maxima it was registered to.

At some point during a conversation, while waiting for another officer to arrive, Officer Tarentino became engaged in a struggle with the suspect, during which the suspect produced a stolen .45 caliber semi-auto handgun. Officer Tarentino reverted to his training by advising over the police radio that shots had been fired and sought cover behind his cruiser as the suspect continued to fire on him. Sadly, the suspect's initial burst of gunfire struck Officer Tarentino 4 times, twice in the left arm and twice in the back. One of the rounds entered under officer Tarentino bulletproof vest, causing internal injuries that resulted in the death of our beloved officer Ronald Tarentino Jr. The suspect than fled the scene in the white Infiniti.

Officer Tarentino's decision to inform dispatch of the vehicle and registration discrepancy proved vital to the identification and subsequent location of the suspect. After the local media broadcast information about the actual suspect vehicle, a civilian conducted authorities and the suspect was ultimately located and killed during another gun battle, this time with troopers from MSP.

Officer Ronald Tarentino Jr. is being honored posthumously with the highest award for policing, the Trooper George L. Hanna MEDAL OF HONOR.