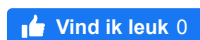




Biden to Medal of Valor honorees: 'We owe you big'



By [Jordan Gass-Pooré - Spring 2015](#) Feb 11, 2015



Click on photo to enlarge or download: Tennessee Highway Patrol Sgt. Lowell Russell, left, and Knoxville police Officer Andrew Michael Keith reunite on the White House lawn after Wednesday's Medal of Valor ceremony. Keith received the award for saving Russell's life in March 2012 after Russell's patrol car caught fire. SHFWire photo by Jordan Gass- Pooré

WASHINGTON – In his 22 years with the force, now-retired Lt. Brian Murphy of the Oak Creek, Wis., Police Department has responded to numerous calls, but none would measure up to the call he received Aug. 15, 2012.

There was a disturbance at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin.

Murphy arrived at the temple to find two dead people and a suspect running away. When he drew his weapon, the suspect shot him 17 times.

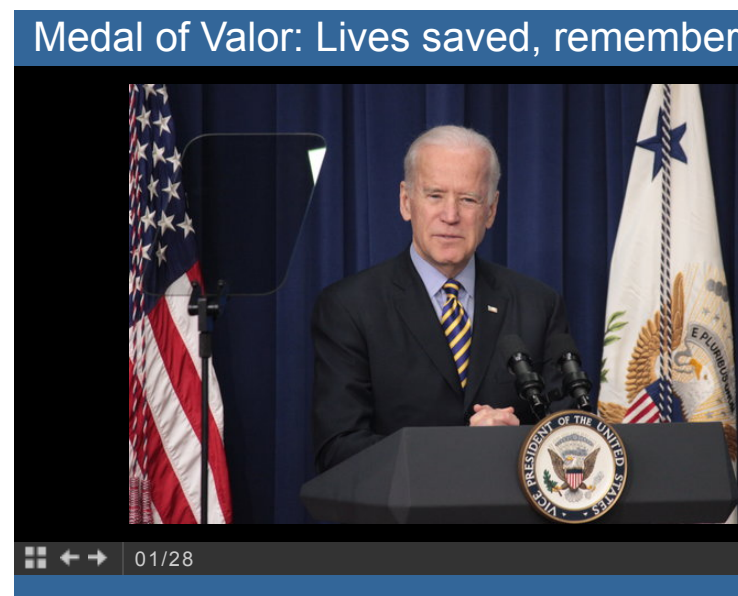
The entire situation, from the time Murphy received the call to the suspect shooting himself, lasted six minutes.

It was for Murphy's actions that he was one of 22 police officers and firefighters honored at a [Medal of Valor](#) ceremony Wednesday at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Vice President [Joe Biden](#) and Attorney General [Eric Holder](#) presented the medals to 20 recipients and the families of two officers who were killed as they responded to armed robberies while they were off duty. The medal is a blue, upside-down star attached to a purple and yellow striped ribbon.

"We owe you big," Biden said. "You're a rare breed. You're all crazy. We love you for it. We need you. You are the best thing we have going for us."

Members of the [Watertown, Mass., Police](#) and [Fire](#) departments were honored for their contributions in the April 2013 arrest of Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev.



Tsarnaev and his brother, Tamerlan, shot and threw explosives at the officers and firefighters who took

part in a chase later in the day.

Tamerlan Tsarnaev died as a result of the incident, and Dzhokhar, who is on trial in Boston, was arrested 20 hours later.

Holder said this year's Medal of Valor recipients, who committed acts of bravery from 2011 to 2013, are a reminder of the importance of law enforcement agencies in communities.

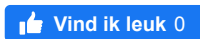
The medal is the country's highest honor for public safety officers. It has been given to 95 people since Congress created the award in 2001.

Reach reporter Jordan Gass-Pooré at jordan.gass-pooré@scripps.com or 202-408-1490. SHFWire stories are free to any news organization that gives the reporter a byline and credits the SHFWire. Like the Scripps Howard Foundation Wire interns on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).



About Jordan Gass-Pooré - Spring 2015

Jordan Gass-Pooré is a Spring 2015 reporter for the SHFWire from Texas State University.



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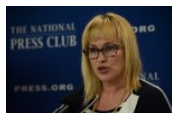
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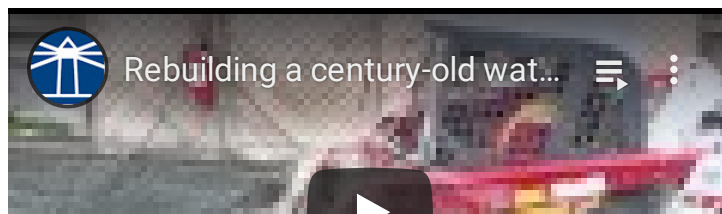


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