



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAYETTE COUNTY OFFICERS RECEIVE CONGRESSIONAL BADGE OF BRAVERY

Uniontown, PA – Two Fayette County police officers were awarded the Congressional Badge of Bravery by U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey Wednesday morning at the Joseph A. Hardy Connellsville Airport.

Masontown Borough Police Chief Ronald “Scott” Miller and German Township Police Cpl. John Lingo received the award, which honors exceptional acts of bravery in the line of duty by federal, state and local law enforcement officers.

On Sept. 19, 2018, a man entered the Masontown Borough Complex and opened fire in District Magistrate Daniel Shimshock’s office, wounding three people.

Then-Sergeant Ronald Miller, who was later promoted to chief, quickly drew his weapon to engage the shooter and protect those around him. During the firefight, Miller was shot in the hand and incapacitated.

The shooter continued firing upon innocent people until Lingo ended the incident by reaching the shooter and eventually neutralizing him, ultimately preventing what could have been a tremendous loss of life.

“Every day across Pennsylvania, about 25,000 men and women put on the uniform, and they answer the call of anybody who needs help. While the rest of us have the luxury to run away from trouble, they run toward it, to protect and defend all of us,” Sen. Toomey said. “There is no doubt that Chief Ronald Miller and Corporal John Lingo are heroes. Their bravery and response on September 19, 2018, saved lives, and I am honored to recognize those actions.”

Lingo, who also works as a full-time Fayette County Sheriff’s Deputy, recounted the chaos of the incident and said any of the officers present that day could have just as easily been the one to end the encounter.

“I was scared, but I was mostly really mad because he was shooting at Scott (Chief Miller),” Lingo said. “Scott’s a good friend of mine, and I honestly thought he was dead from being shot that close. It’s something I never want to have to do again.”

Lingo said, while he appreciates the honor, he believes “an award should go to every officer there that day,” especially Masontown Officer Alexis Metros. He also praised Judge Shimshock and his office staff for “doing wonders” in a high-pressure situation.

“Those ladies in the office, especially; they did everything they could’ve done to hide people, barricade the doors and get them out. They were just excellent,” Lingo said. “It could’ve just as easily been Officer Metros who took out the shooter. I just happened to pick the right hallway and find him first. I just thank God no one else was killed. I wasn’t trying to be a hero or anything. I just did my job.”

Miller said there “wasn’t a whole lot of time to feel anything in the moment” when the shooting began.

“You saw it happening, and years and years of training and mental and muscle memory took over,” Miller said. “It wasn’t until afterwards that we started thinking or having any emotions about what just happened.”

Miller also said he wishes all the officers and magistrate staff were being recognized by Congress.

“Of course, I’m very humbled by this, but it feels weird to be singled out when there were others who could have done the same thing. We just happened to be the first two to reach him, so I’m having some mixed emotions about being picked from the crowd,” he said. “It’s a great honor, and I will accept it, but everyone involved that day took some kind of action; from trying to hide people or assisting the people that were injured. I don’t feel worthy of all the attention.”

Miller said he knows he and Lingo were anonymously nominated and chosen after a long process that involved many committees, and he thanked Congress and all others involved for the honor.

“I grew up with family members in the armed services talking about receiving medals for this and medals for that, and I always thought, ‘That’s great. You deserve those accolades,’” he said. “I now know the feelings they were having about being recognized when so many of their peers who also made sacrifices maybe didn’t get that same recognition. This is a tremendous honor. I just wish we could all share the experience.”

Lingo and Miller were two of only 18 recipients nationwide chosen by former U.S. Attorney General William Barr to receive the Badge of Bravery for the 2018 cycle.

Stephen Kaufman, acting U.S. Attorney for the Western District, also participated in Wednesday’s ceremony, which was attended by the Fayette County Board of Commissioners; Fayette County Sheriff James Custer; Fayette County District Attorney Rich Bower and many more.

Commissioner Dave Lohr said the officers’ “bravery, dedication and courage” while under fire “underscore the heart that is characteristic of people in this part of the country.”

“I am proud to live in a community where this kind of dedication exists, and I am grateful to have these fine men working in Fayette County. They have my utmost respect and appreciation,” Lohr said. “Too often, we as a nation get swept up in the scandals surrounding incidents involving police. So much of the focus is only on the bad, without acknowledging what is good. I believe it is important to spotlight the good done by law enforcement personnel, the life-threatening situations they face, and the personal sacrifices they endure.”

Lohr said Lingo and Miller acted swiftly, courageously and selflessly “in the face of imminent danger” to prevent citizens’ deaths.

“That is laudable. There’s so much that is good in Fayette County; and our first responders are doing good, necessary work,” he said. “That our law enforcement community is seeing two of its own receiving well-deserved recognition provides much-needed encouragement for all of our first responders.”

Commissioner Scott Dunn said that, while a “sad and tragic” event brought everyone together for the Badge of Bravery ceremony, it serves as an opportunity to “remind the public of the challenges and risks that law enforcement officers incur every time they report for duty.”

“Whether it be police, the sheriff’s department, constables, probation officers, corrections officers, private security, et cetera - these men and women are to be commended and thanked for their services,” Dunn said. “I personally, and as a county commissioner, appreciate that the Department of Justice is honoring Officer Lingo and Sergeant Miller for their bravery.”

Dunn said Sept. 19, 2018, will “undoubtedly, forever impact the daily lives of these two gentlemen and their families.”

“It’s my hope that this recognition will reassure each of them, as well as their colleagues in law enforcement, that they have our continued support and gratitude,” he said.

Commissioner Vince Vicites said Lingo and Miller are heroes who put their lives on the line to protect Fayette County residents.

“Deputy Lingo and Chief Miller demonstrated incredible bravery and courage in the line of duty,” Vicites said. “It’s fitting that the federal government honor these heroes. There could have been a much bigger tragedy that day, but these two individuals made a huge difference and saved so many lives. They are truly American heroes, and should be commended for their service.”

For more information about Wednesday’s Badge of Bravery ceremony, visit www.toomey.senate.gov.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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