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9/11: A TRIBUTE TO HEROES

City honors three officers for valor

Reactions to fires earns others special recognition

By **MICHELLE MONROE**
Messenger Staff Writer

ST. ALBANS — Three St. Albans Police Dept. (SAPD) officers were presented with St. Albans City's highest award Wednesday night — the Medal of Valor.

The award was given to Sgt. Francis McCarty, Cpl. Paul Talley and Officer Keith Cote in recognition of their courage. The officers ran into a burning building on July 30 in an effort to rescue a double-

'While trying to rescue him, burning debris was falling from the ceiling ...'

Liz Gamache, mayor

amputee.

Awards also were given to AmCare Ambulance personnel, SAPD dispatchers, the Georgia, St. Albans Town and St. Albans City fire departments, and two other SAPD officers.

St. Albans City Mayor Liz

Gamache began the awards ceremony by asking for a moment of silence in recognition of the anniversary of 9-11 and "in remembrance of those who perished that day and for all those emergency responders who made the ultimate sacrifice."

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MICHELLE MONROE, St. Albans Messenger

From left: Sgt. Francis McCarty, Cpl. Paul Talley and Officer Keith Cote stand at attention Wednesday night in the Bliss Auditorium while receiving a standing ovation after being given the Medal of Valor. The officers were awarded the medals for running into a burning building to rescue a trapped man on July 30.

Honor

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Gamache went on to describe the call SAPD dispatchers received at around 1 a.m. on July 30. Thomas Page was trapped inside his apartment, which was on fire.

McCarthy, Talley and Cote were the first on the scene. "Without hesitation or consideration for their own safety, the officers entered Mr. Thomas Page's flame-engulfed apartment," said Gamache. "While trying to rescue him, burning debris was falling from the ceiling, the temperature was quickly rising and an oxygen tank exploded in the apartment."

The explosion blew the officers to the ground near the entrance to the apartment.

All three men entered the building and were able to bring Page out. His injuries were too great, and Page died the next day. "We are deeply saddened by the loss of a community member and express our deepest condolences to Mr. Page's family," Gamache said.

After rescuing Page, the three officers went into the building to evacuate 11 residents from the other apartments in the building.

"They ran in when most would have run away," said SAPD Chief Gary Taylor.

Firefighters from St. Albans Town and Georgia joined the city in battling the blaze, which was successfully confined to Page's

apartment.

SAPD officers assisted AmCare personnel in getting Page into the ambulance, with Cpl. Talley driving the ambulance so paramedic Alex Wright, EMT Stacie Rose and EMT Chuck Kuthe could perform CPR and other care in the rear of the ambulance.

The city presented plaques to all three departments in recognition of their efforts in battling the blaze and another which occurred five days earlier on Edwards Street in the city.

The Medal of Valor is presented to city police officers and firefighters "who distinguish themselves by conspicuous bravery or a heroic act above and beyond the normal demands of service. To be awarded the Medal of Valor, a police officer or firefighter would have performed an act displaying extreme courage while consciously facing imminent peril," said Taylor, who presented the medals.

Certificates of Appreciation and Meritorious Service were also presented to:

- SAPD dispatcher Craig Caforia,
- SAPD dispatcher Alisha

Downes,

- AmCare paramedic Alex Wright,
- AmCare EMT Stacie Rose,
- AmCare EMT Chuck Kuthe,
- SAPD Officer Michael Schrader,
- and SAPD Officer Roger Langevin.

St. Albans Town Fire Chief Harold Cross told the assembled firefighters and police officers, "I'm proud to be associated with each and every one of you."

In closing the ceremony, Gamache told the first responders, "We don't think enough of how much all of you matter to us each and every second of every day."



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We're Still Standing

by Hannah Schoedert,
7th grade student

Those twin towers
Standing tall with pride,
Fell with grieving hearts.
Stunned, America cried.

But we're still standing.

Bin Laden tried

