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## Madison County deputy gets medal of honor

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As far as Kyle Doolen is concerned, all he did was get shot.

But according to the state of Illinois, he's a hero.

Doolen, 30, a deputy with the Madison County Sheriff's Department, has received the Illinois Medal of Honor. It caps a long list of honors Doolen has received since he was shot in the line of duty during a high-speed pursuit of armed suspects last year.

On July 7, two teenage boys and a 13-year-old girl attempted an armed robbery and escaped in a car they had stolen in Ohio. They had fired at an Alton police officer who tried to pull them over and fled onto the interstate.

"We passed the vehicle that we knew had to be it, got behind them and confirmed it," Doolen said.

The teenagers put the convertible top down, and one of the boys leaned out of the car and started firing, police said. Five bullets hit Doolen's car, one of which struck Doolen in the arm.

Since the shooting, Doolen said he's a little different in his approach to the job.

"I'm a lot less relaxed, less complacent," he said. "After you've been doing this job a while, a certain level of complacency sets in. ... It's an eye-opener."

Mostly, Doolen said, that's a good thing. "After all is said and done, I would say it couldn't hurt," he said. "Being more aware is always a good thing, but to have to go through something like that ... changes the whole way you perceive life."

All three were taken into custody, and Doolen has received recognition from groups ranging from the Illinois Sheriffs Association to Sons of the American Revolution and the TV program "America's Most Wanted." He was one of eight finalists in the show's "All-Star" contest but did not win.

"I'm really not the attention-getting type," Doolen said. "I appreciate the recognition, but on behalf of the entire sheriff's office. Just because I'm the one receiving the awards doesn't mean I deserve it."

Sheriff Robert Hertz said Doolen's nomination was passed unanimously. "This is the first time I can recall (for this department)," Hertz said.

Of the three teenagers, the girl has pleaded guilty and been returned to her parents. The driver is in the county jail, Doolen said, and the shooter is incarcerated at a mental health facility.

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