



## Deputy honored for bravery during shooting

By [SANFORD J. SCHMIDT](#)

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EDWARDSVILLE - Deputy Kyle Doolen never imagined during the early-morning hours of July 7 that he soon would be putting his experience as a stock car driver to use.

"It was pretty steady, routine - although I hate to use the word 'routine' in this job," recalled the Madison County sheriff's deputy, who was honored for bravery at the Madison County Board meeting Wednesday.

Doolen, 29, went to Roxana High School and wanted to be a machinist until someone talked him into being an auxiliary police officer in his hometown. Once he went on a call with red lights and siren activated, he

was hooked.

In high school, he was always interested in cars and drove stock cars at area speedways, such as Godfrey Speedway. He continues that interest as a hobby.

About 2 a.m. Monday, July 7, Doolen pulled in behind a suspect Chevrolet Camaro and kept going at speeds up to 90 mph as a suspect in the back of the car stood up through a convertible top and fired five shots at him with an assault rifle.

"My first thought was, I hope they didn't hit my dog," said Doolen, referring to his canine partner in a cage in the back of the squad car.

"I really didn't have much time to think, except for, 'Stay with them,'" he admitted.

Doolen was patrolling the area near Highland when a call came over the radio that suspects in a stolen car from Ohio were headed west on Interstate 70 and already had tried to kill a police officer in Altamont.

Doolen and another officer didn't hesitate; they went to the interstate to look for the Camaro.

"He wasn't sent there. He went. He took it upon himself," Sheriff Robert Hertz said.

"There is a saying that law enforcement is to protect and to serve. It isn't just a saying; it's a commitment," Hertz said. "And this officer not only made a statement, he's committed."

Doolen was honored by a resolution from the County Board and a special award from the sheriff.

Board Chairman Alan Dunstan told board members he saw the shot-up squad car and the damage that was done and was amazed at Doolen's calm commitment.

"This guy kept his cool," Dunstan said.

Doolen received two standing ovations from the board members and others in the audience.

Hertz pointed out that high-caliber bullets went through the front windshield of Doolen's squad car and into the

dog cage in back. A bullet fragment lodged in Doolen's arm, but he kept going, when others might have stopped, Hertz said.

"Others might have pulled off to the shoulder of the road," the sheriff said.

The bullets also went in through a passenger window and the light bar on top.

"The light bar is about a foot from the officer's head. I'm convinced that this suspect was not just trying to disable the police car," Hertz said. "The intentions of those people were very ugly."

Even after the shots, Doolen continued to chase the Camaro into Collinsville, until the suspect driver got off the interstate and turned into a subdivision, where the occupants scattered. Doolen continued to stand along the perimeter until the suspects were tracked down and captured, without a shot being fired in the residential area.

Only then did Doolen go to an emergency room for treatment, and he was back on the job the next day.

"This man didn't miss a day's work," Hertz said.

Doolen is the son of Chris Doolen of East Alton and Terry Doolen of Cottage Hills. His wife is Jodi Doolen.

"He isn't just my deputy sheriff; he's our deputy sheriff," Hertz said.

Dunstan pointed out that all law enforcement officers have a tough job, and Doolen's act of bravery just illustrates the point.

Three suspects have been charged with attempted murder and other charges. They are being held in the Madison County Jail in Edwardsville, awaiting trial.

[sanfordjschmidt@hotmail.com](mailto:sanfordjschmidt@hotmail.com)

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