

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

**CITY OF PLYMOUTH POLICE OFFICERS THOMAS KOVAL AND
ALEXANDER FOX; PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP POLICE OFFICER MICHAEL
FRITZ**

Despite the record-setting, nine-degree-below-zero temperature, three courageous police officers braved overpowering heat to save dozens of lives last year.

On February 10, 2011, Plymouth Police Officers Thomas Koval and Alexander Fox, along with Plymouth Township Police Officer Michael Fritz, responded to a blazing apartment fire in Plymouth. Heavy black smoke billowed from the 24-unit complex. It was 2:30 a.m., which meant most of the residents were asleep, unaware of the inferno surrounding them.

The fire department was on the way, but the three officers knew they could not afford to wait. Although they had no protective firefighting equipment, the three swiftly moved door-to-door rousing and rescuing residents.

Because of the building's layout, all evacuations had to be made through a partially enclosed courtyard, where dense smoke blinded both the officers and the residents. That meant the officers had to guide themselves and those they rescued by touch, feeling their way along the courtyard wall until they could spot the welcome sight of flashers on their police vehicles parked in the street.

(more)

PLYMOUTH/222

Despite it all — without help or proper equipment — these three brave officers continued their rescue even after the fire department arrived. Although the building was totally destroyed, every resident escaped. The only injury was to the woman whose faulty electric blanket had started the blaze, and she suffered only minor burns on her feet when she attempted to stomp out the fire.

City of Plymouth Police Officers Thomas Koval and Alexander Fox, and Plymouth Township Police Officer Michael Fritz are true heroes, responsible for saving dozens from a blazing building without protective equipment or regard for their own safety. They're also modest men who would, no doubt, say that their rescue was "no big deal."

Officers Koval, Fox and Fritz, POAM salutes your courage by presenting each of you with a 2012 Police Officers Association of Michigan Distinguished Service Award.

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