

**OFFICER OF THE YEAR**

**WALKER POLICE OFFICER TREVOR SLOT (POSTHUMOUS)**

**OTTAWA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES SHAWN JAMES, RICHARD SYKES, MERI-BETH BROUWER, TRAVIS BABCOCK AND TYLER KEMPEMA**

**MUSKEGON COUNTY SHERIFF'S LT. SHANE BROWN**

**MICHIGAN STATE TROOPERS JOE YOUNG, CHRIS BUSH AND DAVE CARDINAS**

**DISTINGUISHED SERVICE**

**OTTAWA COUNTY SHERIFF'S SGT. KEVIN ALLMAN**

Small-town Michigan normally evokes images of a friendly, peaceful and slow-paced life. Last October, two armed men shattered that tranquility, leading law-enforcement officers on a three-county, high-speed chase as bullets flew in their direction. When it was over, both suspects and one officer lay dead in the road.

It all began last Oct. 13 in the quaint southern Muskegon County town of Ravenna, population 1,206. Just after 10:30 a.m., two men — brandishing long guns and demanding cash — burst into Ravenna's Chase Bank. The same two were suspects in an earlier bank robbery in a neighboring town with just over 200 residents — and may have been involved in even more bank heists in nearby towns.

Fleeing the bank in a car they'd stolen the day before, the suspects soon switched to a second vehicle, an SUV, and headed south toward Ottawa County with FBI agents now on their trail.

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## OTTAWA COUNTY/222

As they crossed the county line, Ottawa County Deputy Tyler Kempema joined the pursuit through yet another small town, Coopersville, about 12 minutes from the original crime scene. As the vehicles moved onto I-96, a second Ottawa County deputy, Travis Babcock, joined the chase.

Gunfire rang from the fleeing suspects' SUV, striking the hood of Babcock's patrol vehicle.

Muskegon County deputies, Michigan State Police troopers and Ottawa County sheriff's deputies joined the pursuit at speeds up to 120 miles per hour. Repeatedly, the fleeing suspects fired at the pursuing law-enforcement officers.

As the dramatic chase moved into Kent County, Walker Police Officer Trevor Slot — hoping to deploy spike strips to stop the suspects —raced to westbound I-96, just ahead of the oncoming suspects. It would be his last valorous act.

Within seconds, the bank robbers' SUV, racing at 108 miles per hour, swerved directly into Officer Slot, killing him instantly.

The impact was so forceful, it paralyzed the suspects' SUV. The driver, armed with his long gun, fled the extensively damaged vehicle. He ran towards the responding officers and began firing at Deputy James, who was still in his patrol vehicle off to the side near the suspects' SUV.

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OTTAWA COUNTY/333

Realizing the danger James faced, Michigan State Police Trooper Joe Young — now in the lead car — attempted to run the suspect over with his vehicle to prevent him from reaching the freeway. The suspect dodged Young's attempt to stop him, but State Trooper Chris Bush, immediately behind Young, succeeded, clipping the suspect's arm, making it difficult for the suspect to raise his gun to fire at his pursuers.

Meanwhile, Ottawa County Sheriff's Deputy Rick Sykes bravely left his patrol vehicle to chase the suspect on foot.

Sykes, James and State Police troopers all fired, killing the fleeing suspect.

Meanwhile, as the fatal chase unfolded outside the suspects' car, Muskegon County Sheriff's Department Lt. Shane Brown entered the scene from the off ramp and spotted the second bank robber hiding in the rear seat of the disabled SUV — with his long gun leveled toward the officers.

Brown immediately shot the armed suspect, killing him and ending one of the longest 34 minutes in all of the officers' lives.

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## OTTAWA COUNTY/444

Tragically, Walker Police Officer Trevor Slot lost his life in his heroic attempt to assist fellow law-enforcement officers as they dodged bullets during the dangerous high-speed chase. But had it not been for the bravery and professional actions of his fellow law-enforcement officers in apprehending the two dangerous criminals while protecting each other, this incident could easily have proven fatal for many more.

Today, we posthumously recognize Walker Police Officer Trevor Slot and honor the fellow officers he died protecting. For their exemplary behavior, teamwork and bravery under the most stressful and dangerous conditions, we proudly present 2012 Police Officer of the Year Awards to:

- Ottawa County Sheriff's Deputies Shawn James, Richard Sykes, Meri-Beth Brouwer, Travis Babcock and Tyler Kempema;
- Muskegon County Sheriff's Lt. Shane Brown;
- Michigan State Troopers Joe Young, Chris Bush and Dave Cardinas.

(more)

OTTAWA COUNTY/555

In addition, we wish to salute one more person, Ottawa County Sheriff's Sgt. Kevin Allman. Throughout the incident and well into the night, Sgt. Allman, stood solidly behind his fellow officers. He put his own neck on the line, running much-needed interference with the administration, so the deputies involved could focus on executing their dangerous mission. And he continued his unwavering support throughout the initial hours following the day's trauma, dealing with the bureaucracy and helping them cope as they absorbed the deadly ordeal.

For the invaluable way he backed and encouraged his colleagues under the most trying circumstances, POAM honors Ottawa County Sheriff's Sgt. Kevin Allman with our 2012 Distinguished Service Award.

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