

POLICEMAN HERO NOMINEE

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BY KEITH EPPS

Fredericksburg police officer Joe Young says he was just doing his job.

Others believe Young did much more than that.

The six-year veteran has been nominated for a hero award from "America's Most Wanted" for his actions on June 6, the night his close friend--Officer Todd Bahr --was killed.

Bahr was ambushed and shot in the back of the head at The Commons at Cowan Boulevard while looking for a suspect who was threatening to kill his former girlfriend.

The suspect, 47-year-old Gregory Berryman, killed himself after a subsequent gunfight with Young and two city deputies.

Police spokeswoman Natatia Bledsoe said Young's actions that night probably saved other lives.

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Young was at the apartment complex next to the police station that night while other officers were trying to apprehend Berryman. Berryman had already been to the complex that night with a gun, police said.

When Young learned that Berryman had fled from police, he knew where he was heading.

Young put the woman, her boyfriend and a child in a back bedroom of the second-floor apartment and told them to stay there.

He then took a young man who was on a "Ride Along" with him that night to a third-floor landing and made him lie down.

Finally, Young moved his cruiser a short distance away and left the door open and the radio blaring in an attempt to distract the suspect.

"I knew he was coming and I knew what his intentions were," Young said. "So I did what I was trained to do."

The suspect rolled around the corner about 30 seconds after Young positioned himself on the second floor between the suspect and his apparent targets.

Shots had been fired a few moments earlier. Young and others didn't know until later that one of those shots had killed Bahr.

The suspect fired multiple shots into Young's cruiser, apparently thinking an officer was inside.

Young and two dep-uties--William Reyes and Steve Johnson--exchanged gunfire with the suspect. Police said that after being shot, Berryman shot himself in the head.

Young, who worked as a flight instructor before joining the city force in August 2003, has already received accolades for his efforts.

He and the two deputies were awarded Medals of Honor from the department in August.

Young was also named the department's Officer of the Year for 2008.

Bledsoe said city prosecutor Travis Bird nominated Young for the "America's Most Wanted" award, which will be decided in part by Internet votes.

Young said that while he appreciates the recognition, he'd much rather have Bahr back.

"He was my best friend," Young said.

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