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## *Distinguished Law Enforcement Valor Award*

**Officer Chad Stafford**  
Hamilton Police Department

As the first officer to respond after a 911 caller reported “a big, tall guy carrying a big gun with a banana clip ... shooting at everything,” Officer Chad Stafford was on the scene in 90 seconds the morning of Feb. 15, 2014.

A 16-year law enforcement veteran, Officer Stafford ordered the 18-year-old suspect to drop his weapon — a civilian model AK-47 — while taking cover behind a parked car. The teen fired several shots at the officer, including one that traveled through the car and grazed the officer’s head. With blood streaming down his face and obviously outgunned, Officer Stafford moved from behind the car and fired two rounds from his duty pistol, striking and killing the suspect.

“This was,” said Hamilton Chief J. Scott Scrimizzi, “without question an act of selfless bravery under the most extreme conditions. I could not be more proud of the actions Officer Stafford took that Saturday morning doing what he was sworn to do, protecting the lives and property of the citizens of Hamilton.”

An investigation revealed troubling facts. The teen was involved with drugs, fascinated with weapons, and had serious mental health issues. He had more than 200 rounds available for the AK-47 along with a Glock 10mm pistol loaded with 14 rounds and an extra magazine.

A woman who held a towel to Stafford’s head until paramedics arrived told the Hamilton Journal News, “We’ve got all kinds of kids around here. If it was later in the day and (there were) kids around here, they could’ve been shot.”

In addition to this award, Officer Stafford earned the Hamilton Police Department Medal of Valor for his actions that day.