



# Press Release



## Bristol Tennessee Police Department

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE:** 5/9/2018

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### **Sgt. Matt Cousins named NRA Law Enforcement Officer of the Year**

At the annual meeting of the National Rifle Association (NRA) one of Bristol’s own, Sgt. Matt Cousins of the Bristol Tennessee Police Department, was recognized as the NRA’s Law Enforcement Officer of the Year.

The award was presented for his “quick thinking, courage under fire, and life-saving actions,” according to a news release from the national organization.

Sgt. Cousins was the second officer on the scene the morning of July 7, 2016, when Lakeem Scott opened fire on passing cars and the Days Inn located on the Volunteer Parkway, killing one person and seriously injuring another. Once arriving on scene, Cousins noticed spent shell casings and realized that the suspect was armed. As he was obtaining his patrol rifle, he detected the suspect moving in to ambush other officers from behind. Sgt. Cousins ordered the suspect to drop his weapon on two different occasions. The suspect began firing upon the officers, at which time Cousins was hit in the leg. Cousins returned fire, seriously wounding the suspect who was still trying to fire upon officers after he fell to the ground. Officer Cousins’ quick actions resulted in a swift resolution to the matter which prevented further injuries or deaths.

The award, established in 1993 by the NRA, recognizes an exceptional act or service by a law enforcement officer. Cousins was in Dallas, Texas to accept the award where he commented that it was ironic that the NRA presented him the award there, where five officers were killed in the line of duty on the same day as the Bristol shooting. “It happened like 17-18 hours later,” Cousins said. “It’s tragic what happened here and there. At the end of their shifts officers are just doing their jobs and trying to make it home.”

Chief Blaine Wade, who joined Cousins in Dallas for the presentation said, “the department is truly honored to have an individual receive national recognition for their service to the Bristol community.” Wade continued, “Sgt. Cousins’ valorous actions on July 7, 2016, during a gunman’s ambush on our officers, saved our officers’ lives and potentially many more lives in the community. We are truly grateful to have Sgt. Cousins as a member of the Police Department and our community.”

For more information on the NRA award, please contact Chief Blaine Wade at 423-989-5587 or [bwade@bristoltn.org](mailto:bwade@bristoltn.org).

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