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Hotsinpiller, 6 other deputy US marshals in W.Va. honored with Congressional Badge of Bravery

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
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   CLARKSBURG, West Virginia — Seven deputy U.S. marshals in West Virginia were awarded the Congressional Badge of Bravery on Friday for extraordinary acts of courage on the job, including a posthumous recognition for 24-year-old Derek Hotsinpiller.

Hotsinpiller died Feb. 16, 2011, in a shootout with a fugitive in Elkins. The graduate of Fairmont State College and son of a former Bridgeport police officer was just beginning his own law enforcement career when he became the first deputy marshal killed by gunfire in 19 years.

His mother, Pam, accepted the award in a ceremony from U.S. Sen. Jay Rockefeller.

Also honored were Supervisory Deputy U.S. Marshal Alex Neville and Deputy Marshal Wesley "Fred" Frederick, both of whom were shot in the same gun battle that killed Hotsinpiller.

"U.S. marshals feel a distinct call to serve and protect the public," said Rockefeller, D-W.Va. "The act of violence that took the life of Derek Hotsinpiller was profoundly tragic."

Fugitive Charles Smith, who had been wanted on drug charges, also was killed. His wife, Sherry Lou White, was later sentenced to five years in prison for lying to authorities as they searched for Smith.

The couple's daughter, Cassandra Smith, got six months' probation and community service for her participation in his concealment, while her boyfriend, Anthony Lambert, was sentenced to five months in prison.

The marshals were wearing protective vests as they entered the family's house, but Hotsinpiller was shot in the neck and doctors couldn't save his life after he was rushed into surgery.

After the shootout, investigators found 22 loaded weapons strategically placed around the home. The windows had been covered with blankets to hide the occupants.

Other deputy marshals recognized were at the ceremony Friday were: 10-year veteran Philip Efaw, who also served five years with the Marine Corps; 20-year veteran John Hare; 16-year veteran Paul Hickman, a member of the Special Operations Group and a veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; and six-year veteran Joseph Nichols, who spent four years in the U.S. Air Force.

The medals were created in 2008 and are awarded each year by the U.S. attorney general to officers who have either been injured while

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performing their duties at great personal risk, or to those who were unhurt but still demonstrated extreme courage.

Only 59 have been awarded so far, including the seven in West Virginia.

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