

# La Crosse Tribune

## Lawmen awarded first Badge of Bravery

By [MICHAEL MARTIN | Coulee News](#) Posted: Wednesday, October 26, 2011 11:36 pm



Sen. Herb Kohl presents an award to Onalaska police officer James Page.

Onalaska police officer James Page and La Crosse County Deputy Sheriff Daniel Baudek have become the first officers in the nation to receive the Justice Department's Congressional Badge of Bravery.

The award was presented Wednesday at Onalaska City Hall by U.S. Sen. Herb Kohl, who told the men that their actions responding to a domestic violence call in the town of Hamilton on May 29, 2010, "made their community and the entire state of Wisconsin proud."

The officers pulled two girls and two dogs from a smoke-filled home that had been set on fire by their father, Keith Marchbanks, after he stabbed his 45-year-old estranged wife in the leg and stomach.

Page shot Marchbanks when he charged with a knife and dragged him away from the burning house.

Marchbanks was subsequently paralyzed from the waist down.

Responding to a domestic violence call "in the middle of nowhere" with two children trapped in the basement of a burning house and a suspect who'd just stabbed a woman?

"It doesn't get much more intense than that," Onalaska Police Chief Jeff Trotnic said.

Marchbanks was sentenced in March to 21 years in prison.

"For the only time in my 22 years in law enforcement, for a brief moment, I didn't know if

I was going to get home to my family," Page testified at the sentencing hearing. "You looked eyes with me that night, Mr. Marchbanks, and I saw into your soul. I have no doubt you were going to kill me."

U.S. Rep. Ron Kind of La Crosse issued a statement praising the men.

Congress created the award with the Badge of Bravery Act of 2008.

Many officers were nominated, but only 21 from across the country were ultimately able to pass two review boards and earn the approval of Attorney General Eric Holder, said John Vaudreuill, the U.S. attorney for Wisconsin's Western District.

Baudek and Page were the first to receive their awards.

"I'm extremely humbled to be here today," Page said. "It's not anything anyone else here would not have done. My prayers still go out to the Marchbanks family - that still weighs heavily on my mind."