

The Police Federation's Police Bravery Awards, in association with *The Sun*, were set up to recognise the work of police officers who carry out courageous acts every day. *Police* highlights the stories behind some of the nominees in the last of a series leading up to the award ceremony, to be held at The Dorchester Hotel in London on July 13.

Bravery

Photography: Getty Images

Robber wields blow torch at sergeant

Nigel Payne tackled a hulking nineteen-stone jewellery thief who had just held up a store in a town centre armed with a blow torch.

The incident unfolded late morning on 30 November last year when force control received a panic alarm from a jewellery store in South Walk, a pedestrianised area of Cwmbran.

The thief kept repeating, "I have something here for you" and indicated to a bulky item in his pocket in a bid to scare off Sgt Payne, from Gwent Police, and two colleagues who had trailed the offender to a nearby car park.

Instead of backing down, Sgt Payne opted for attack as the best form of defence and lunged at the 6 ft 4 inch aggressor, who had minutes earlier smashed up a jewellery shop and grabbed handfuls of gems.

A violent struggle ensued before Sgt Payne, a married man with two teenage boys, was able to subdue the offender with the help of colleagues who sprayed the man with an incapacitant.

During the fracas, the officers discovered the weapon they had been threatened with was a blow torch when it dropped from the robber's pocket.

Sgt Payne had just started duty when he was called to attend the scene. A security guard informed him the robber had pointed a gun to his head prior to entering the shop and smashing up display cabinets.

Fearing for the safety of shoppers in the vicinity, Sgt Payne ordered the evacuation of neighbouring shops and shouted to other shop workers, who had gathered to watch the commotion, to lock their doors and exit from the rear.

Shortly afterwards, Sgt Payne was joined by other officers, two of whom were tasked to keep watch at the rear of the shop. The officer endeavoured to catch the robber's eye and demonstrate a police presence was at the front in a bid to make him exit the shop from the back, which he did.

The officer radioed his colleagues and instructed them to follow the offender, keeping a safe distance from him. Shortly afterwards they informed him the robber had entered a car park.

It was here that Sgt Payne and his two colleagues encountered the thief who repeatedly threatened them. It was when the offender moved towards them that Sgt Payne stood his ground and tackled the man as his colleagues began to retreat.

The offender was finally subdued and arrested. He pleaded guilty at Newport Crown Court to offences of robbery and possession of an imitation firearm.

Officers pulled pair from burning wreck

Met police officers Anthony May and Michael Pinder put their lives on the line when they dragged two unconscious men from a burning car seconds before it exploded.

The drama unfolded when the officers were patrolling in their police van at 2.40 am on Christmas Eve. They spotted a Mini being driven through red traffic lights with no headlights on and attempted to follow the car in Hillingdon.

The officers lost sight of the vehicle, but after a short search, found the driver had crashed near a junction. The car had spun round and was now facing the wrong way in the road with the passenger hanging out of the window. Both officers jumped from their car and ran to the burning wreck. Flames licked around the unconscious passenger whom they were unable to pull free from the jammed window and door.

As PC Pinder held the man's head clear of the flames, the officer's leg, arms and hands were being burned by the heat. PC May then ran to the driver's side in a bid to try to find an alternative to help him escape. It was then that the officer found a second unconscious man slumped across the driver's seat, wedging his passenger in. The interior of the car was now alight but PC May pulled the driver free from the burning wreckage. PC Pinder pushed the passenger into the car then pulled him free from the driver's side.

Both officers pulled a man each to safety, but just as they began carrying out first aid on the unconscious men, the car exploded, less than a minute after they had first arrived at the scene.

The pair were awarded a commissioner's commendation for their bravery, tenacity and unselfish attitude to their own safety which saved two men from being burned to death.

“The interior of the car was now alight but PC May pulled the driver free from the burning wreckage.”

Nominees from the third group of four regions:
(does not include those forces who have not nominated or those highlighted in the article)

Region 7 - Wales/Cymru

Dyfed Powys PC Tracey Evans
 PC Lloyd Hopkins
 Sgt Charles Gabe

North Wales PC David Jones
 PC Lee Parker

South Wales PC Richard Wiseman

Region 8 - London

Metropolitan

DC Steven Graham
PC Simon Kelly
Det Sgt Phillip Davies
PC Steven Marks
DC Stephen O'Brien
Insp Rod Feichtinger

