



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

HEROIC DEC OFFICERS AWARDED LIBERTY MEDALS FOR BRAVERY, SERVICE TO NEW YORK STATE

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- [Awarded Liberty Medals](#)



ALBANY – Environmental conservation law enforcement officers face unique job challenges, especially because the person an officer is encountering is often armed and, in many cases, a skilled marksman in remote areas.

This potentially volatile situation manifested itself at approximately 5:20 p.m., on November 29, 2016. A full 50 minutes after sunset, Environmental Conservation Officers James Davey and Lt. Liza-J Bobseine were called to investigate a trespassing complaint and reports of illegal hunting with shots fired. During the course of their investigation, the two officers came upon fresh tire tracks in a field in the Town of Gallatin in Columbia County. While walking through the field under heavy fog and rain, Officers Davey and Bobseine heard voices and fearlessly decided to approach the law-breaking hunters.

As the officers approached the illegal hunters, a shot was fired from a .30-30 rifle. The bullet struck ECO Davey, resulting in significant damage to his pelvis and associated blood vessels. Lt. Bobseine, acting quickly, was able to apply a compress to the significant wound and maintained pressure on the injury for more than one hour, while also calling for medical support. While attending to Officer Davey, Lt. Bobseine was also able to keep the suspect under control, a half-mile into the field.

Officer Davey was sent to Mid-Hudson Hospital where he underwent extensive surgery to repair damage and was placed in the hospital's Intensive Care Unit in stable condition. Lt. Bobseine's swift response was later credited with preventing

significant loss of blood that could have otherwise cost Officer Davey his life.

“ECO Davey and Lt. Bobseine knew the dangers they faced when responding to a call of illegal hunting. They courageously acted to enforce the laws of our state. It is despicable that anyone would ever claim they mistook two uniformed, law enforcement officers for an animal,” Senator Young said.

“The bravery of my constituents, Environmental Conservation Officers James Davey and Lt. Liza-J Bobseine, is a testament to their professionalism, training and commitment to serving New York State. The quick thinking and actions of Lt. Bobseine very likely saved Officer Davey’s life after he was shot by a poacher. Officers James Davey and Lt. Bobseine are outstanding public servants and shining examples of the positive difference our ECOs make every day. They are truly deserving of the New York State Liberty Medal honoring their heroic service,” said New York State Senator Kathy Marchione (R,C,I,Reform-Halfmoon).

Lt. Bobseine’s actions were instrumental in the apprehension of shooter, Alan Blanchard, and another suspect. Blanchard would later be charged with second-degree assault, after claiming he mistook the officers for a deer.

“Law enforcement officers always trust their partners to have their back. In this case, Lt. Bobseine’s ability to remain calm and control the situation was instrumental in saving the life of Officer James Davey, and enforcing the hunting laws of our state. Both ECOS should be commended for their dedication to duty and their brave actions to enforce the rule of law,” said Senator Young.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos said, “DEC’s Environmental Conservation Officers are often working behind the scenes to safeguard New York’s natural resources for future generations. The success of DEC’s ongoing efforts to protect our air, lands and waters depends on them. Officer Davey and Lieutenant Bobseine—and their extraordinary courage on the night of November 29th—represent the best of our ECOs and their unwavering commitment to service. On behalf of New York’s environment, I commend them for the work they do each and every day.”

Lt. Liza-J Bobseine, a 10-year veteran of the Environmental Conservation Police and native of Cattaraugus County, comes from a long line of public servants. Her father and grandfather were both State Environmental Conservation Officers, and her brother is also an Environmental Conservation Officer.

No stranger to life-saving actions, in 2011, while stationed on Long Island, Lt. Bobseine was credited with saving the life of a 66-year-old woman who was sitting in her car in a parking lot and had stopped breathing. For her heroism, Lt. Bobseine was honored as "Officer of the Year" by the New York State Rifle and Pistol Association.

Prior to her service as an Environmental Conservation Officer, Lt. Bobseine was a Forester with the DEC's Division of Lands and Forests. She holds a master's degree in forestry from the SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry School and she was commissioned as Lieutenant in 2013.

A 12-year veteran of the force, ECO James Davey graduated from the DEC Basic Police Academy in 2005. He spent many years on the Marine Enforcement Unit in New York City, where he gained a reputation as an excellent officer.

ECO Davey transferred to Westchester and Putnam County in 2008, where he expanded his role in public outreach and education, becoming very familiar with local sporting groups and often participating in their events.

After relocating to Columbia County, ECO Davey again enhanced his role in public outreach and education, gaining recognition for his assistance at the annual Columbia County Veterans Pheasant Hunt, which is affiliated with the Wounded Warrior Project. He is currently assigned to patrol Columbia County, acts as a Division of Criminal Justice Services-Certified Police Instructor and recently became a Certified Firearms instructor for the DEC.

"These two individuals are the very definition of a hero. They are deserving of our utmost thanks and praise, and I am proud to have sponsored the Liberty Medal resolutions honoring both courageous officers. We thank them for their service to our great state," said Senator Young.

The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established in 2014 as the highest honor a Senator can bestow upon a constituent. It is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers.

Video from today's Session can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/BzjX1dLRpDU> .