



*Pictured L-R are: NCOA Chairman of the Board CMSgt Gerald Morey, Paul Kingsbury of BlueCross Blue Shield, IT2 Thomas James, Cherry Stovall of BlueCross Blue Shield, and FLTCM Delbert Terrell representing the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy James Honea.*

The 2023 NCOA Navy Vanguard Award, sponsored by BlueCross Blue Shield, was presented to Petty Officer Second Class Thomas D. James in honor and memory of Medal of Honor recipient Machinist Mate First Class Robert R. Scott.

IT2 Thomas James showed exceptional heroism during the active shooter event at a local Colorado Springs venue on November 19, 2022. IT2 James' courageous and selfless actions prevented further injury and saved countless lives.

IT2 James was at a local Colorado Springs night club when shortly before midnight a heavily armed assailant entered the premises and began indiscriminately firing his AR-15 style rifle at the unsuspecting crowd injuring 18 and killing five innocent patrons.

According to a local newspaper, Patrons described bullets flying and a scene of blood and pandemonium, as they tried to drop to the ground and get to safety. When the shooting began, IT2 James was in the rear of the club with his friends, far from the entrance and the gunman. He was in a good position to flee with a relatively lower threat of injury, However, IT2 James quickly recognized and assessed the active shooter

situation. Risking his own life, IT2 James immediately acted and charged the gunman through the club, tackling the gunman to prevent the further loss of life despite sustaining a life-threatening gunshot wound. With the help of another patron, IT2 James subdued and disarmed the gunman until police arrived on the scene. The mayor, the police and the club's owners credited those interventions with saving lives and helped bring the gunman into custody.

Had it not been for his courageous and selfless action, the death toll in this tragic event would have been even higher.

IT2 James' distinguished courage and prompt actions in the face of great personal risk to protect fellow patrons reflect credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.