

Corporal's a survivor

York's Bart Seelig was unharmed when he was shot at while holding a shield.

By TED CZECH
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It wasn't until York City Police officers pulled back from a Salem Avenue house that Cpl. Barton Seelig saw the dent in his ballistic shield.

The shield had withstood two shots from a .25-caliber handgun in nearly the same spot, said York City Police Sgt. Craig Losty, tactical team leader for the York County Quick Response Team.

"I looked at it and you could see this big dent in it," Seelig said. "I was just amazed that I couldn't feel any impact at all."

Without the shield — wearing only body armor — the shots would have hit Seelig in the chest and caused injuries, Losty said.

Recently, the injury-free Seelig was inducted into the Kevlar Survivors' Club, sponsored by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and DuPont, manufacturer of Kevlar, a material used to make body armor.

The club was established in 1987 to encourage police officers to wear body armor, regardless of brand, said Kelly Carson, club spokeswoman. Seelig was number 2,920 on the club's roster, she said.

Seelig, a member of the QRT, picked up the shield at the department on May 22 after officers went to the house for complaints of loud music and shouting.

There, Wendy Wertz told them her son, Scott Allen Wertz, had pointed a gun at her, police said. Seelig said he went to Wertz's bedroom window to talk to him. With one hand, Seelig held the shield; with the other, he pushed down the window.

Wertz then fired several rounds at Seelig and Officer Jennifer Harrison, who was behind him, police said.

The QRT was then called to the scene, and several hours later, police arrested Wertz and charged him with attempted homicide, aggravated assault, reckless endangering another person and possession of a firearm with serial number obliterated.

Wertz is free on bail and last month was ordered to stand trial.

Bill Graff, chief deputy prosecutor for the York County District Attorney's office, which oversees the QRT, said Seelig deserved the distinction of being inducted into the club.

"He's a good cop, he showed a lot of courage," Graff said. "People don't stop to think, a cop is out there facing danger all the time."

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