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Slain EMT's 2 colleagues don't want 'hero' label

By DAVID C. SHAMPINE

TIMES STAFF WRITER

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2009

CAPE VINCENT — Two men who were on a medical call with Mark B. Davis the night he was killed here do not want to be identified as heroes, according to Jefferson County's outgoing director of fire and emergency management.

State police disagree.

"I and state police consider them heroes for what they do every day and obviously for what they did that night," senior Investigator Colleen M. O'Neill, Alexandria Bay station, said Wednesday.

Glenn W. Morrison, who leaves his county job Friday to be a full-

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time paramedic with Thousand Islands Emergency Rescue Service, continued Wednesday not to name the two men who were with Mr. Davis, 25, when he was fatally shot late on Jan. 30 at 114 S. Esseltyne St. He was withholding the names, he said, at the requests of the two men, both 19, and their families.

"Their wishes are that they both not be identified as heroes," he said. "They are still reeling from this tragedy."

He added, however, "They did an excellent job, above all expectations."

One of the men is an emergency medical technician, and the other is a new member of the fire department who was on the scene to assist in carrying EMT equipment and a patient if needed, Mr. Morrison said.

The three, along with Douglas J. Putnam, ambulance foreman and driver with the Cape Vincent Fire Department's emergency squad, responded to the apartment of Christopher G. Burke, 25, and Trisha M. Crosbie, 23, to treat Mr. Burke for difficulty in breathing. They initially went to their ambulance garage, but found that the emergency vehicle had a flat tire, Mr. Morrison said.

They called for TIERS to respond with an ambulance and proceeded in their private vehicles to the house on South Esseltyne Street.

While Mr. Davis and the other EMT treated Burke, who was said to be alert, Burke bolted away from them, grabbed a rifle and started shooting. Mr. Morrison said the three rescue personnel rushed to the rear door, according to Investigator O'Neill. The two 19-year-olds made it outdoors, but Mr. Davis was at the doorway when he was felled by a shot, Investigator O'Neill said.

Mr. Putnam, 73, was outdoors when the shooting occurred. He tackled Burke outside the house and "struggled to contain him" until a Clayton police officer arrived to take him into custody.

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Mr. Morrison said Mr. Putnam also resisted being identified for his role in Burke's capture.

Burke was injured during his scuffle with Mr. Putnam, according to Jefferson County Sheriff John P. Burns. He did not elaborate about the injury. Burke, who is charged with second-degree murder and fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon, remained in Samaritan Medical Center, Watertown, under police guard Wednesday as he continued treatment for the injury, the sheriff said. He declined comment about mental evaluation, which is also believed to be ongoing.

Mr. Morrison originally had planned to leave his county job on Feb. 6, but extended his departure to this Friday because the arrangements for the Davis funeral last week precluded work he needed to finish in the fire and emergency management office.