

STAR OF COURAGE

Mr Ronald GIANONCELLI, WA

On the morning of 31 January 2004, Mr Gianoncelli intervened during an armed robbery at a newsagency in Koondoola, Western Australia.

Mr Gianoncelli, his wife and sister had opened their newsagency and postal agency for routine Saturday trading. Within half an hour an armed man walked in, confidently demanding money from the till and a safe at the rear of the shop. He menaced Mr Gianoncelli's wife with the handgun before pointing it at Mr Gianoncelli who was preparing to open the safe. A female customer walked into the store, distracting the gunman who then aimed the gun at her. The offender impatiently demanded that the safe be opened immediately. As Mr Gianoncelli attempted to explain the routine delay in activating it, the gunman fired off a round which grazed Mr Gianoncelli's head. The offender then turned on Mr Gianoncelli's sister, aimed the revolver directly at her and demanded that the safe be opened in five seconds. As the offender began counting down, Mr Gianoncelli believed that he was serious about his threat and, fearing the fatal consequences, Mr Gianoncelli lunged at the gunman. As the pair struggled the gun was discharged, wounding Mr Gianoncelli in the stomach. Momentarily dazed, he continued to pursue the gunman, lunging at him again. The gunman fled, with Mr Gianoncelli following on foot. While he was running the gunman turned and fired off more shots. Mr Gianoncelli retreated and intended to continue the chase by car. However, realising the seriousness of his injuries, Mr Gianoncelli gave up the chase and waited for police and ambulance officers to arrive.

By his actions, Mr Gianoncelli displayed conspicuous courage.