

2017

Patrolman Craig Anderson
Patrolman Cory Planisek

Willoughby Hills Police Department

It happens when you least expect it. It happens on the most routine of calls. It happens on day shift when you can almost feel that you made it through another day. But it is never routine, and if you drop your guard, bad things can happen.

For Officers Anderson and Planisek, this was the case in Willoughby Hills, just before 2:00 pm on September 28th, 2017. The call was an irate customer, acting erratically, at Classic BMW. Routine at best. Both have been on many similar calls. Today would be different.

At the location, they located the male. They identified him, and learned of warrants for his arrest. This time, this was not routine. The male ran, with the officers pursuing him. They exited the dealership, where Planisek tackled the male. Suddenly, the male produced a handgun and began firing. Both officers were hit multiple times. But they knew that they could not lose this fight. Although seriously wounded, Planisek held on to the male and got control of his gun hand. Anderson then shot the male four times with his service weapon. The suspect was neutralized, the threat was ended. The officers and the suspect were all transported to hospitals, where after extensive treatment, all are recovering.

In his letter nominating his officers, Chief Christopher Collins wrote that even though they were shot several times and seriously wounded, they continued to engage the suspect, and ensured the safety and welfare of the any dealership employees and customers. Although the suspect had emptied his weapon against the officers, he was found to have another loaded magazine on his person.

As was said, there is no routine call. There is no time for an officer to let his guard down. Even in Lake County, Ohio, officers must face the reality that they may be called on to make the ultimate sacrifice for their fellow man. In this case, due to the bravery of these two officers, today was not that day. And it was a great moment when they were introduced at the Blue Coats Awards Dinner, standing proudly in their dress blues, in front of family, friends, and co-workers. Hopefully they have fully recovered, physically and mentally from this routine call, and will continue to perform their duties in the same exemplary manner no matter the call.

Their heroic actions were found to be deserving of the Jorge Medina Distinguished Service Award for 2017.