

2005

Patrolman Joseph M. Kulnane

Fairport Harbor Police Department

The year 2005 was only a couple of days old when an event occurred which would add the name of Patrolman Joseph Kulnane to the esteemed ranks of honorees of the Lake County Blue Coats.

On January 6th 2005, Kulnane was on patrol in the sleepy Village of Fairport Harbor when he received a call to respond to a report of a suicidal 78 year old man. Upon arrival, the subject's wife told Kulnane that her husband was in the basement, and had just shot himself.

Kulnane, backed up by Chief Mark Kish, went down the stairs and could hear moaning coming from the back area of the basement. They continued toward the sound of the moans, and saw the male's legs sticking out from behind a wall.

Kulnane found the subject sitting behind the wall, still holding a .32 caliber revolver in front of his chest. Kulnane reacted immediately, ordering the man to give him the gun. At the same time, without hesitation, he grabbed the gun and pulled it away from the male.

It was determined that the male had fired a test shot, and that the gun had then apparently misfired. Two rounds in the weapon had indentations on the primer but had not fired. Kish felt the outcome may have been different, and possibly tragic, had Kulnane chosen to draw his own weapon when approaching the male. In nominating Kulnane for the award, Chief Kish stated "Kulnane reacted immediately to the situation and took control of the gun while putting himself in jeopardy. I firmly believe that this man is alive today because of Officer Kulnane's actions."

Kulnane received the Jorge Medina Distinguished Service Award at the annual Blue Coats banquet on February 8, 2006. Chief Kish stated "I am very proud of his actions. Kulnane is the first Fairport Harbor officer to ever win this award, so this is very important to our department."