

1982

Patrolman Richard Greben

Willoughby Police Department

It's hard enough to talk someone out of a suicide plan, especially when part of that plan is "suicide by cop"; the act of forcing the police to end your life. Or to convince that person to come out of a building where they are holed up with seemingly nowhere to go. It's even harder when the person that you are talking to is a former police officer and an experienced marksman. Or that the subject had done this before - in this case in Painesville some 6 years earlier. But those are some of the challenges faced by Patrolman Richard Greben on October 17, 1982.

Greben was alone at the Willowick Police Station when a call came in that the male had started shooting from his house after an apparent domestic with his wife. While other on-duty officers rushed to the house, Greben made phone contact with the subject. He tried to convince the male to come outside, however, the male stated he would come out with a gun in each hand so the police would shoot him. He kept stating that he wanted to die. The male would hang up but Greben would persistently call him back and talk some more.

Responding officers set up a perimeter around the house and eventually two dozen officers were on scene. The stand-off ended some 8 hours later when the male gave himself up without hurting himself or anyone else.

Willowick Police Chief Ron Dopirak nominated Greben stating that "Not only did he save the man's life, but he took a lot of pressure off the other men who were outside the house waiting."

Greben credited his fellow officers, several of whom were lying on the ground or behind cover such as bushes, as being the ones deserving of the award. Chief Dopirak disagreed stating "he's Mr. Modesty himself."

On November 30, 1982 at the Kirtland Country Club, the members of the Blue Coats, and fellow safety forces members, honored Richard Greben, awarding him the coveted Blue Coat award.

Greben passed away in May, 1993.