

1987

Patrolman Leadele Reese

Mentor Police Department

You are never really off duty, especially if you take on extra duties or responsibilities. Even when you are at home, sound asleep. And when the call comes in, there's no time for a shower, the morning paper, breakfast, or even that first cup of coffee. There's no time to get the cobwebs out of your head. The call has come in and you have to be operating at your peak of efficiency.

That's the situation that Patrolman Leadele Reese found herself in on April 15, 1987. Contacted at home, in the middle of the night, Reese, a trained hostage negotiator, was summoned to a factory near Tyler Blvd, where a distraught male was threatening his own life with a shotgun. He had fired one shot into the ground which may have been an attempt to commit "suicide by cop." The male had been contained and the Mentor SWAT team was on scene at the time that Reese entered into this situation.

Reese was quickly briefed by on scene commanders, and then quickly initiated contact with the male. Protected by barricades, she was within 18 feet of the male. During the next hour, she discussed any and every subject that came to his mind. She told him that she cared about him, and later stated "I did. I didn't want him to kill himself." Gradually she gained the trust of the male and was successful in his decision to throw down his weapon and surrender. Reese was directly responsible preventing a suicidal act and ensuring that no one on scene was injured.

Chief Richard Amriott would later write that "your negotiation skills separate you from other police officers into one who does something special. Your (own) experiences were used to show proper empathy for the subject, yet you were accountable and truthful in your conversation."

Patrolman Reese became the first female police officer honored by the Blue Coats. She received her award on December 3, 1987 at the annual awards banquet held at Hellriegel's.

Reese has since left the law enforcement profession and is now retired.