

2023

Patrolman Charles Cox
Patrolman Anthony Haddad
Patrolman Bradley Nicholson
Patrolman Shawn Wilson

Mentor Police Department

In America in 2023, an active shooter with mass casualties unfortunately, is not an uncommon occurrence. First responders, police, fire, and medical have incorporated situational scenarios into their training regimen to familiarize personnel with planning, response, tactics, stabilization, rescue, and safety of responders and citizens. In spite of all this, responders know that their sworn oath could possibly result in the loss of their own lives. In the back of their minds, however, is the hope that such a situation won't happen here.

On November 16th, 2023, it did happen here - in Mentor, Ohio. All of the training and planning was suddenly a reality. Officers were dispatched to a call of an active shooter at the Mentor Greens Mobile Green Estates. The above four officers arrived within seconds of each other, and faced what can only be describe as a battlefield. The sights, smells, gunfire, sirens, and the rush of adrenalin, tested their abilities in ways they had never known before. They came under fire from an unknown assailant at an unknown location. A victim was lying in the street, and the officers made an attempt to render aid. Gunshots forced them to take cover.

While assessing the situation and establishing a perimeter around the suspected shooters location, Officer Nicholson located a second wounded victim, who had been wounded in the arm and leg. He was able to get this victim out of the immediate area and to fire department medical personnel for medical care. Once they were able to identify the source of the gunfire, they were able to take cover and establish a perimeter to contain the gunman.

Patrolman Cox located another victim lying outside of a trailer, north of the first victim. As he assessed the injuries, the suspect again began firing. Cox dragged this victim into a patio enclosure, and started CPR. While performing CPR, Cox learned the identity of the shooter and relayed this information to the other officers. Recognizing the critical injuries of this victim, arranged a meet with a Rescue Task Force. Disregarding the threat to his own safety, Cox combat carried this victim approximately 50 yards to the meet and continued CPR until the medics arrived and took over care.

Officer Cox, then joined a group of officers on a Rescue Task Force Team, who were able to retrieve the initial victim who was very close to the suspect's trailer. This situation went on for several hours, as officers worked to evacuate other nearby residents to safety and secure the scene while neutralizing the threat.

Tragically, three innocent citizens lost their lives and another was seriously wounded on that day. The gunman was later found to be dead from a self inflicted gunshot wound.

It is a testament to the training, discipline, self control, and bravery of these officers that throughout this entire incident, not one gunshot was fired by the officers of the Mentor Police Department.

In his letter of nomination, Mentor Police Chief Kenneth Gunsch would write that "Officers Anthony Haddad, Bradley Nicholson, Shawn Wilson, and Charles Cox put themselves in imminent danger in an attempt to provide aid to the gunshot victims. These officers came under direct fire from the suspect. All four officers' heroism, at imminent personal hazard, in combat with an armed adversary, warrant them consideration for the prestigious 2024 Jorge Medina Distinguished Service Award".

The Lake County Blue Coats, Inc, agreed with Chief Gunsch's assessment and nomination of these four officers and selected them for this year's award. They were honored and the awards were presented at the annual banquet on February 23, 2024 at the La Malfa Centre.