

2019

Patrolman Ryan Cueni

Painesville Police Department

It's July 23rd, 2019, midnight Shift, the "graveyard shift". Several hours of bedlam followed by several hours of dead quiet. Everybody is either sleeping it off, or just plain sleeping. At about 2:45am right on the cusp of bedlam and boredom, a Painesville officer observed a vehicle run a red light at Richmond and Chester. What should have been a "routine" traffic stop, suddenly turned into an adrenal pumping high speed chase. Within minutes, that driver would lose control on Renaissance Dr, skid off the road, and flip over into a pond. What was an apprehension now became a rescue mission.

Officer Ryan Cueni and several other officers were now on scene. The vehicle was overturned in the water and was quickly sinking. In the dark, and not knowing what he would face, Cueni went into the water. He could hear screaming and he worked feverishly to open the passenger door and get a female out. Officer Kevin Love, Brian Avery, and Cory Whitt were in the water to assist, and helped the female to shore. She told them that the driver was still inside. Cueni refocused on the car which was now close to being submerged. He was able to locate the male driver and with much difficulty feed him from the vehicle. Within seconds the car was totally under water. Both victims were treated and released from the hospital, and the driver faced several serious charges,

In presenting the award, President Jason Wuliger stated that "these were folks that were running from the police. While Cueni is running to save their lives, he also has to be worried about what might be in that vehicle and what those people might intend for him."

Once again, the Blue Coats had the benefit of a widely shared dash cam video of the entire incident. Viewing that video, there is no doubt that Patrolman Cueni saved the lives of two people, while putting himself in jeopardy. The Jorge Medina medal was well deserved for his actions on that evening.