

Waukesha Freeman (WI)

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Waukesha man used Civil War-era ammunition to kill himself, make explosive device

Author: Troy Laack Freeman Staff

Article Text:

WAUKESHA – A Civil War re-enactor who dropped an improvised explosive device after shooting himself Tuesday suffered from depression for many years, according to his ex-wife.

Chad L. Cross, 35, of Waukesha, used a Civil Warstyle replica handgun to shoot himself in the chest in the 800 block of Manor Drive shortly after 8 p.m. Tuesday, said Capt. Ron Oremus of the Waukesha Police Department. The ball ammunition from the muzzle-loaded weapon killed him, Oremus said.

Julie Weiss, Cross' ex-wife, said they have two sons.

"Everybody would say, yes he loved his children, you know," Weiss said. "He loved his family, loved his kids. And when he was in his ups, he was a fun person. He was fun. He made people laugh.

"It's just a tragic loss for everybody," Weiss said.

Cross lived in the 300 block of South Street with a friend, a 32-year-old woman, Weiss said.

The woman had Cross in her car while she picked up her daughter at a residence on Manor Drive, according to the Waukesha Police Department's dispatcher's log and Weiss.

The woman called police at 8:14 p.m. after learning that Cross was suicidal and had a gun, Oremus said.

Cross apparently asked the woman to take him somewhere so he could "off himself," the dispatcher's log said. The woman told dispatchers that Cross had one or two drinks at dinner and she was afraid that he might hurt himself if she tried to take him to the hospital, the dispatcher's log said. The woman's 8-year-old son was in her car at the time, the dispatcher's log said.

When police arrived, Cross got out of the car and walked away from them down the sidewalk, Oremus said. Officers tried to talk to Cross, then he shot himself at 8:19 p.m. and dropped the explosive device about 100 feet north of Kensington Drive.

Police used the Waukesha County Sheriff's Department's armored Bearcat vehicle to approach the explosive device.

The Milwaukee County Bomb Squad used a robot to transport the explosive device to a nearby retaining wall, where it was disabled at 11:43 p.m., according to the dispatcher's log and Oremus. The explosive device was about 3 inches by 4 inches and about 2 inches thick, Oremus said. The explosive device was designed using black powder and ball ammunition from a muzzle-loaded weapon and "was very dangerous."

The Bomb Squad then found a suicide note and bomb-making materials in Cross' residence, Oremus said.

Weiss and Cross divorced 12 years ago but she and her current husband allowed Cross to live with them for about 18 months, she said. Cross moved to the South Street residence about

one month ago.

“Any of us who know him just know he’s just dealt with depression a long time,” Weiss said. “He’s separated again from a second wife.”

The 32-year-old woman told Weiss that Cross was suicidal on Thanksgiving, Weiss said.

“She had just said that he was feeling down, feeling alone,” Weiss said. “I think now going through another separation, he’s just unfortunately been one of these people who I’ve watched through the years deal with depression and probably needed help and just did not seek help.”

Cross worked as a fabricator at Speedy Metals in New Berlin, Weiss said.

“He’s always paid his child support,” Weiss said. “He was just a workaholic.”

Police took precautions Tuesday night by having residents in the area of Manor Drive and Kensington Drive either evacuate their homes or seek shelter in their basements, Oremus said.

Police and fire trucks blocked off Kensington Drive between Minaka Drive and West St. Paul Avenue. Manor Drive was blocked off between Kensington Drive and Harris Highland Drive, and Harris Highland Drive was blocked off between Manor Drive and West St. Paul Avenue.

A Waukesha Metro Transit bus was at the police roadblock on Kensington Drive near West St. Paul Avenue for residents who were evacuated or couldn’t get to their homes, Oremus said. The bus was there so residents could keep warm while authorities handled the incident.

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Waukesha Freeman (WI)

November 30, 2011

Section: Front Page

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35-year-old man shoots self, prompting evacuation

Author: Troy Laack Freeman Staff

Article Text:

WAUKESHA – Waukesha police and the Milwaukee Bomb Squad responded to an incident in which a man shot himself then dropped what officers believed could have been an improvised explosive device shortly after 8 p.m. Tuesday, police said.

A female called a crisis line about her friend, a 35-year-old man who had been suicidal, said Capt. Ron Oremus of the Waukesha Police Department.

She called 211 and told operators that the man had a gun and crisis workers in turn told police at 8:14 p.m. that the man was in the area of Kensington Drive and Manor Drive.

Officers responded to that area and saw the man walking down the street.

“They made contact with him verbally, at which time he inflicted himself with a gunshot wound and as the subject fell, a package fell from him as well and landed on the ground,” Oremus said. “The officers are being precautious as they learned from the friend that this male is into improvised explosive devices and so we have the Milwaukee Bomb Squad on scene at this time to try to investigate to see if in fact that is a bomb of some sort.”

Police didn’t know around 10:15 p.m., when Oremus talked to reporters, if the man had killed

himself or not.

“We don’t want to risk the lives of our officers by going up (to the suspect),” Oremus said. “We have the bomb squad and their robot and they’re able to do some things there – potentially maybe grab him out or the package and separate the two so we can take action and render aid where appropriate.”

Police were taking all precautions by evacuating the immediate area or telling residents to seek shelter in their basements, Oremus said.

Police and fire trucks blocked off Kensington Drive between Minaka Drive and West St. Paul Avenue. Manor Drive was blocked off between Kensington Drive and Harris Highland Drive, and Harris Highland Drive was blocked off between Manor Drive and West St. Paul Avenue.

A Waukesha Metro Transit bus was at the police roadblock on Kensington Drive near West St. Paul Avenue for residents who were evacuated or couldn’t get to their homes, Oremus said. The bus was there so residents could keep warm while authorities handled the incident.

Police had not wrapped up the situation by press time. Oremus could not be reached later Tuesday night for further details.

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Caption:

Charles Auer/Freeman Staff Police officers stand near a squad car while watching an area near Manor Drive and Harris Highland Drive on Tuesday during a tactical situation.

A Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Office Bomb Squad member drives a bomb disposal robot off of the truck during a tactical situation at Kensington Drive and Manor Drive on Tuesday. Charles Auer/ Freeman Staff

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