

PO Blake Andrews

Columbus, Ohio Police Department
Recipient of the 2024 Mario Apuzzo, Esq.
Combat Cross

PO Blake Andrews of the Columbus, Ohio Police Department had almost a decade of law enforcement experience, having started his career in Kentucky before ultimately joining the Columbus, Ohio PD when, on July 6th, 2023, PO Andrews and his partner responded to a report of a bank robbery-in-progress. The suspects fled the scene after reportedly stealing approximately \$90,000 in cash. Responding officers had limited information about the suspects and only a brief description of their vehicle, a dark colored Porche SUV that was stolen from a Porsche dealership at gunpoint, then used as a getaway vehicle after they robbed a bank. Police had little information regarding the number of suspects, their descriptions, or the number and type of weapons that were involved.

Blake and his partner decided to try to interdict the suspect vehicle, setting up a stationary position monitoring traffic along a highway. Both officers intercepted the suspect vehicle and pursued it at high speed. After briefly losing sight of the vehicle, they then again located it after it crashed or was deactivated by the Porche dealer. PO Andrews and his partner observed two suspects running on foot from the scene. They exited their cruiser, drew their weapons, and began giving verbal commands to the fleeing suspects.

Almost immediately, Andrews was ambushed from the rear by a third, unseen suspect who was crouched down and hiding, waiting to ambush responding officers. The suspect immediately opened fire, striking Andrews five times. The shots severed PO Andrew's femur, destroyed internal organs, struck the back of his ballistic vest, and penetrated his hand. Due to the femur being severed, Andrews collapsed to the pavement but managed to return fire at his assailant as he went down. Andrew's weapon malfunctioned and had to be cleared as he reloaded and continued to fire at his assailant, along with other officers who were now on scene. Blake warned his colleagues that he was hit. Hearing this, the perpetrator advanced on Andrews, intent upon finishing him off. But Officer Andrews continued fighting by firing at the suspect until he was neutralized. Thanks to the efforts of other officers at the scene, a tourniquet was applied to stem Blake's bleeding, and he was rushed to a trauma hospital. Thanks to the work of the skilled surgeons, and excellent care from the doctors and nurses, PO Andrews survived.

For conspicuous heroism in the face of deadly gunfire while courageously engaging armed robbery suspects and neutralizing a suspect who posed a clear and present threat of death to law enforcement officers, PO Blake Andrews is awarded the 2024, Mario Apuzzo, Esq. Combat Cross.