



## Police Officer Brandon Stalker

*Toledo Police Department, Ohio*

End of Watch: Monday, January 18, 2021

[ADD TO MY HEROES](#)

### BRANDON STALKER

Police Officer Brandon Stalker was shot and killed at about 6:30 pm during a barricade involving an arson suspect.

At approximately 2:20 am the front doors of the historic Rosary Cathedral had been set on fire and racial statements were spray painted onto the walls. At approximately 3:30 pm officers spotted the suspect near his house in the 2300 block of Fulton Street and attempted to talk to him. The man drew a handgun and ran into a home where he barricaded himself inside.

The department's SWAT team responded to the scene and, after negotiations failed, fired a chemical irritant into the home in attempt to force him outside. The man emerged from the home holding two handguns and opened fire. Officer Stalker, who was on a perimeter position, was struck in the head and fatally wounded.

Other officers returned fire and killed the subject.

Officer Stalker had served with the Toledo Police Department for 2-1/2 years. He is survived by his child and fiancée.

---

BIO

**Age** 24    **Tour** 2 years, 6 months    **Badge** 514

CRIME

# Police Officer Who Was New Father Killed in Ohio After Hours-Long Standoff with Suspect

Officer Brandon Stalker, 24, leaves behind two young children and a fiancée

By **Harriet Sokmensuer** | Published on January 19, 2021 03:14 PM



An Ohio police officer was killed in the line of duty when a standoff with a man wanted for arson and vandalism turned violent.

Officer Brandon Stalker, 24, was fatally shot during a two-hour standoff Monday evening, according to a Toledo Police Department news release. Stalker leaves behind a fiancée and two young children, age 7 years old and age 3 months old, the [department wrote on Facebook](#).

The incident began shortly before 4 p.m. on Monday when officers on the Toledo Police Gang Task Force spotted a suspect wanted in the arson and vandalism of Rosary Cathedral earlier in the day, according to the news release.

When officers attempted to stop the suspect, he produced a handgun and fled into his house. Negotiators were called to the scene, but the suspect did not respond and after more than two hours, the department's SWAT team deployed chemical agents into the house.

Stalker was stationed on the perimeter of the scene to keep residents away when shortly before 6:30 p.m. the suspect emerged from his home with two guns and opened fire.



# Toledo Police release details on fatal standoff

**B** ALEXANDRA MESTER   
 The Blade  
 amester@theblade.com

JAN 21, 2021 10:07 AM

Toledo police said Wednesday they believe the man who shot and killed [Officer Brandon Stalker](#) was suffering from mental illness.

In a news conference, Chief George Kral and Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz said the family of Christopher Harris, 27, had recently tried to get him help before a standoff with police Monday when he fired two handguns at officers, killing Officer Stalker. Mr. Harris was subsequently killed by five officers' return fire.



Christopher Harris

The mayor said he is heartbroken and sad, but also angry because “something is wrong in our system” when a man whose family is adamant he was suffering from mental illness could legally purchase two handguns.

ADVERTISEMENT

“How is it that sometimes HIPAA laws prevent our officers from knowing that a suspect at a situation is mentally ill?” Mayor Kapszukiewicz said.



[Mike Sigov and Allison Dunn](#)  
Family mourns, remembers Christopher Harris



had no way to know in advance. Chief Kral said Toledo police had no record of previous crisis interactions with him.

Mr. Harris was the suspect in a case of [arson and vandalism](#) about 2:30 a.m. Monday at the historic Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Cathedral on Collingwood Boulevard. Chief Kral said a tip called into Crime Stopper led investigators to obtain arrest warrants for Mr. Harris.

He noted Mr. Harris was known to sometimes stand at Bancroft Street and Ashland Avenue holding a sign saying “Jesus is black” — a phrase spray-painted on the cathedral — and had recently been charged with vandalizing his former apartment with similar sayings.

ADVERTISEMENT

Police visited Mr. Harris’ last known address in the 2200 block of Fulton Street at about 12:30 p.m. Monday, but he was not home. Members of the Toledo Police Gang Task Force later saw him smoking a cigarette outside the home just before 4 p.m.

Officers approached Mr. Harris, noting he had a firearm. The suspect then fled into the house, leading to a [two-hour standoff](#).

Chief Kral said negotiators were in contact with Mr. Harris by phone in short spurts, during which he made “wildly incoherent statements.” Mr. Harris said he wasn’t going to jail, that police

Kapszukiewicz.

“He also mentioned that he is Jesus and he is God,” Chief Kral said.



[Alexandra Mester and Allison Dunn](#)

**Family, community pay tribute to fallen Toledo police officer at vigil**

Police were aware of posts the man was making to Facebook while barricaded in the home, as well as other concerning posts in recent days.

A crowd had gathered at the scene, and Mr. Harris’ mother, Crystal Harris, was with police. Chief Kral said that even though she desperately wanted to go inside and calm her son down, police could not take the risk.

“There is no way on God’s green Earth that I’m going to let someone into a barricaded house where we know the suspect has a weapon and he has made homicidal threats on Facebook,” he said. “I just cannot put her in that predicament.”

Chief Kral said negotiators knew quickly that Mr. Harris was not “rational enough to actually participate in a negotiation.”

“The good thing about a barricade is time is on our side, and we’ll use that as long as humanly possible,” he said.

But it will get to a point where negotiators must decide it’s time to use other means to end the standoff and hand control of the situation to the tactical commander, he continued. When attempts to negotiate with Mr. Harris ultimately failed, police fired tear gas into the home as is standard procedure for a barricaded suspect.



Toledo Police Offer Brandon Stalker

Mr. Harris emerged from the front door about 6:22 p.m. with a gun in each hand and began firing, investigators say. Officer Stalker was standing on the scene's perimeter, taking cover behind a cruiser, when he was struck once in the head.

Chief Kral said five additional rounds struck a police tactical vehicle. SWAT Officer Brian Jackson had been taking cover behind the top hatch, which was struck four times.

"If that hatch was not there, we would be burying two police officers on Tuesday," he said.

Mr. Harris fired a total of nine rounds. Officer Jackson, along with fellow SWAT officers David Marsh, Adam Knaggs, Gregory Linkous, and Benjamin Kiser fired their department-issued rifles a combined total of 19 times.

Mr. Harris was struck eight times, Chief Kral said. The Lucas County Coroner's Office on Wednesday determined he died of multiple gunshot wounds and ruled the death a homicide.

Two police officers and a lieutenant with the Toledo Fire and Rescue Department immediately began administering emergency aid to Officer Stalker. He was rushed to Mercy Health St. Vincent Medical Center where he died.



“I was there the entire night, and I watched with awe,” he said. “They were, for lack of a better word, incredible. They did everything humanly possible to save him.”



Toledo Police Departme

Share

While some members of the public are questioning the heavy police response when Harris was accused of property crimes, Chief Kral said officers had to respond as they did when the suspect escalated the situation.

“There’s no way after our officers saw him with a gun and we saw the social media posts, we couldn’t simply back away,” the chief said. “And I get it. That’s the frustrating thing here. These were property crimes.... We wish we could have Mr. Harris handle things differently, but unfortunately we have to deal with what he presented to us.”

As snowflakes fell during a vigil Tuesday night for Officer Stalker, Kennah stepped up to a police cruiser, her face lit up by its red and blue lights. Her young voice, loud and clear, was broadcast over the radio to all units.

“I love you, daddy, and I got your six, dad,” she said, meaning she had his back.

Toledo police on Wednesday afternoon announced Officer Stalker’s private funeral will be held at 10 a.m. Tuesday at the University of Toledo’s Savage Arena. The service, which will be broadcast by local media, will be followed by a procession to Toledo Memorial Park in Sylvania for private burial.

The same facility about six months ago hosted the funeral for Officer Anthony Dia, a police academy classmate of Officer Stalker who was shot and killed in the line of duty July 4 by an intoxicated man. The drastic difference in the circumstances of the two incidents shows officers “can never be complacent for any call for service, whether it’s a barricaded gunman, whether it’s a prowler call, whether it’s a drunk,” the chief said.

“We have to keep our sixth sense up and never take anything for granted until we’re sure there’s nothing that can hurt as at that scene,” he said.

Chief Kral said he “couldn’t be prouder” of how other officers are still performing their duties and protecting the community while grieving Officer Stalker’s death. A specialized team of officers from across northwest Ohio has been called in to provide grief counseling and help officers through this difficult period.

“I want them to know that I pray for them every night,” Chief Kral said in a brief message to all officers. “I care for them. I love them, and I love their families.”

The Toledo Police Federal Credit Union has opened an account in Officer Stalker's name, from which 100 percent of donations will



## Family, community pay tribute to fallen Toledo police officer at vigil



ALEXANDRA MESTER AND ALLISON DUNN  
The Blade

JAN 20, 2021

12:23 AM

After a succession of tearful embraces, Cosette Stalker turned to face gathered well-wishers at a vigil Tuesday night for her son, slain Toledo Police officer Brandon Stalker.

“I lost my only son,” she said. “But my son did his job, and that’s what he loved doing.... Thank you all for being a part of us.”

Several hundred people, some of them fellow officers and Lucas County Sheriff’s deputies in uniform, gathered in a parking lot at Washington Junior High School in northwest Toledo to both grieve Officer Stalker’s death at the hands of a crime suspect Monday afternoon and celebrate his life.

ADVERTISEMENT

Following a moment of silence and prayer, bagpipers played “Amazing Grace” and Chinese lanterns were released to float into the air like tiny hot-air balloons.



[Alexandra Mester](#)

**Toledo Police release details on fatal standoff**

“We are all one community, and we need to start showing that,” said Dee Lynn, the vigil’s organizer who said an hourlong rally in support of police had been scheduled for noon Saturday on Michigan Street near the Lucas County and probate courthouses.

Present at the vigil, but not addressing the crowd, were Officer Stalker’s older child, Kennah Miller, 7; her mother, Rebecca Miller; and his fiancée, Ashley Brooke.

Ms. Miller said earlier in the day that Kennah, who posed at the vigil with a sign honoring her father, has Officer Stalker’s smile.

ADVERTISEMENT

“She’s Brandon’s twin,” she told The Blade. “She was his best friend.”

[Officer Stalker](#), 24, taught Kennah to roller skate starting at about 1½ years old, taking her to Ohio Skate nearly every weekend. Kennah now also plays T-ball, following in her father’s footsteps as a baseball player at Whitmer High School.

Ms. Miller said she and Kennah will do all they can to be sure her half-brother, 3-month-old Grayson Stalker, will grow up knowing everything about his father.

“We’ll keep it alive for him in all types of ways,” Ms. Miller said.



[Brooks Sutherland and Sarah Elms](#)

**Toledo police officer, suspect fatally shot in armed standoff**

The children's father, Officer Stalker, died Monday evening of a single gunshot wound to the head and his death is considered a homicide, an autopsy by the Lucas County Coroner’s Office determined.

Officials believed Christopher Harris, 27, was involved in vandalizing and setting fire to a historic cathedral early Monday, court records show. Members of the Toledo Police Gang Task Force then saw him in the 2200 block of Fulton Street just before 4 p.m. Monday.

Police attempted to end the stand off by firing tear gas into the home, which is standard procedure for a barricaded suspect, Chief George Kral said in a media conference on Monday evening.

But it didn't end peacefully.

Mr. Harris emerged from the front door with a gun in each hand and he began firing, investigators say. Officer Stalker was standing on the scene's perimeter when he was struck.



Brandon Stalker

Officer Stalker was rushed to Mercy Health St. Vincent Medical Center where he died, also leaving behind a fiancée.

“They lost him during surgery.... Trying to tell Kennah was just a wreck,” Ms. Miller trailed off before continuing. “I’m not sure she really understands, being so young. She knows that heaven is in the sky and that she won’t see him anymore, but I don’t think it’s really going to hit her until the funeral.”

Officer Stalker, Unit 111, is the first line-of-duty police death reported in Ohio this year. Seventeen line-of-duty deaths have

“It is a very difficult day for the city,” Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz said in the news conference Monday night. “The events that took place today challenge all of us in how best we should respond to the sadness that we feel in our hearts.”

Ms. Miller said she and Officer Stalker met at Ohio Skate in 2012, and Kennah was born in 2013. Though they have been separated for some time, they coparented well together and maintained a positive relationship.

“He’s been there for me if I needed him,” she said. “He’s a really good guy, a great father.... I know he was super excited to graduate and be a cop. I know he went out doing what he wanted to do.”

Adam Incorvaia met Officer Stalker about seven years ago through common friends. They spent time playing sports and enjoying summer evenings with other friends.

Mr. Incorvaia described the officer as an incredible son, father, and overall person.

"I can remember wrestling him on the trampoline one day and we both fought and would not give up. That was his mentality: he never gave up and he pushed himself to be great," Mr. Incorvaia told The Blade.

"He will forever be missed by me and all his friends and family as we are all shocked and heartbroken over this," Mr. Incorvaia added.

Crews returned Tuesday morning to the historic Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Cathedral, where the culmination of events started early Monday. Workers began cleaning up graffiti from the church walls.

"We stand in prayerful solidarity with Officer Stalker's family and friends, with Chief George Kral and the family of the Toledo Police Department, and with our entire community," Bishop Daniel E. Thomas said on behalf of the Diocese of Toledo. "Together with all

protect and serve us all."

And a few blocks away, the bitterly icy wind served only to make an awful task even more brutally painful as two Toledo police officers scrubbed the area where their brother in blue lost his life.

A Toledo Fire and Rescue Department truck soon arrived to help, the crew blasting the pavement with high-pressure water at the intersection of Fulton and Columbia streets near the Old West End.

Mr. Harris was fatally shot by an unspecified number of other officers' return fire, police said. He was also taken to St. Vincent and pronounced dead, and the other officers have been placed on administrative leave as is standard protocol.

Toledo Municipal Court documents showed several pending charges for Mr. Harris for allegedly vandalizing and setting fire to a church. He was also charged last week with vandalizing an apartment after he allegedly spray painted "the whole inside" of the residence in the 2000 block of North 14th Street before moving out.

On Monday, warrants filed in court state Mr. Harris "spray painted in large letters 'Jesus is Black' and 'Black' numerous times on the brick wall and the brick structure of the Rosary Cathedral ... causing significant damage."

Another warrant for Mr. Harris, this one for an arson charge, states he poured a flammable liquid "onto the large wooden front doors of the Rosary Cathedral, then lit it ablaze."

The Blade attempted to reach relatives of Mr. Harris on Tuesday. Mr. Harris' mother and aunt were not immediately available.

Bobi Axtell, who lives on Columbia Street near the standoff scene, witnessed police outside the residence and began recording the incident on video just moments before the fatal shooting.



neighborhood and she said many of her neighbors do fear the police.

“I’ve seen too much, I know too much, and it was too much,” Ms. Axtell said. “It was too much last night the way they surrounded the neighborhood. And then a cop gets killed, so it was bad all the way around.”

Her neighbor contacted her around 4 p.m. Monday and together, they watched the incident unfold. She started recording when additional officers arrived in a tactical vehicle, which she described as a “tank.”

In the recording, bangs could be heard as officers deployed tear gas in an attempt to end the standoff. Three officers huddled behind a police cruiser parked to the left, facing the residence, and additional lights were put on side windows of the home.

At least one additional bang was heard and someone from inside the house opened the front door and then the storm door was thrown open.

“The moment he came out of the house, nothing else could be done because I saw him with two guns blazing. There was no doubt,” Ms. Axtell said.

The shooter appeared to lean with his arm extended out of the doorway, firing at least one shot, the video shows.

Police immediately returned fire with red lasers pointing at the house as the suspect fell to the ground. In the video, Ms. Axtell also dropped to the floor and yelled for her neighbors to get low on the ground.

“Call 911,” a child says.

“That is 911,” a man responds.

No other injuries were reported on Monday.



Dia, 26, who was fatally shot July 4, graduated from the same police class and both joined the department in July, 2018.

Officer Dia was killed shortly after midnight by an intoxicated man at the Home Depot at Alexis Road and Lewis Avenue. Edward Henry, 57, was walking away from Officer Dia, then turned and fired one round from a .22-caliber handgun. While the officer wore his department-issued body armor, he was struck in a vulnerable underarm area. Henry then walked into a nearby wooded area and killed himself.

Younes “Tony” Dia, Officer Dia’s father, said he went to the hospital to be with Toledo police officers as medical staff tried desperately to save Officer Stalker.

“It was like reliving the same nightmare we went through six months ago,” he told The Blade. “It just felt like I lost another son.”

Mr. Dia said he had met Officer Stalker a couple of times, and knew he graduated the Toledo Police Academy with his son. He said the added coincidence that his son’s now-retired unit number was 118 and that Officer Stalker was killed on Jan. 18 — 1/18 — struck him, and pledged that the Dia family will do everything it can to support Officer Stalker’s loved ones.

“There’s really nothing you can say or do that’s going to make it better,” Mr. Dia said. “We want to show as much love and compassion for the family as we can. I know it helped us seeing all the support we had.”

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine opened his twice-weekly coronavirus briefing Tuesday from Columbus with words of condolence and a moment of silence in honor of Officer Stalker.

“[Officer Stalker] leaves behind a 7-year-old daughter, a 3-month-old son and other family members. Our hearts go out to them, his comrades in arms, and Chief Kral and his colleagues in the Toledo Police Department,” Mr. DeWine said.



of-duty death.

The Toledo Police Federal Credit Union has opened an account in Officer Stalker's name, from which 100 percent of donations will go to his family. Donations may be sent to TPFCU, Attn: Officer Brandon Stalker Memorial Account, 4280 Heatherdowns Blvd., Toledo, OH 43614.

A Go Fund Me page has also been created on behalf of the officer's family. By 2 p.m. Tuesday, the fund had raised more than \$14,500 toward a \$50,000 goal.

*First Published January 19, 2021, 12:22pm*

---



*To Protect and Serve*

*In Loving Memory of*

***Officer Brandon M. Stalker***

1996 - 2021



## Services & Gatherings

Service: Private Service  
John F. Savage Arena, 2025 N. Douglas  
Rd., Toledo, Ohio 43606

Interment: Toledo Memorial Park  
Sylvania, Ohio

Newcomer - Northwest Chapel (419-473-0300) is assisting the family

Brandon M. Stalker, age 24, of Toledo, passed away unexpectedly Monday, January 18, 2021 at Mercy St. Vincent Hospital. He was born on October 12, 1996 to David and Cosette (Lowe) Stalker in Toledo. Brandon was a 2015 graduate of Whitmer High School. He played baseball throughout high school and travel ball. Brandon went on after school to coach Whitmer baseball and was a mentor to many kids. He had a huge heart and was always helping others. Brandon entered the Toledo Police Academy on July 31, 2018 and graduated on March 2, 2019. He was a proud Toledo Police Officer until the end of his watch.

Brandon enjoyed roller skating, bowling and riding his motorcycle. He looked forward to family outings, especially camping and swimming. Brandon loved nothing more than spending time with his family, most importantly with his children and fiancé. His sense of humor, smile and caring nature will be deeply remembered and missed by all who knew and loved Brandon.

Left to cherish Brandon's memory are his fiancé, Ashley Ohmer; children, Kennah Miller-Stalker and Grayson Stalker; his canine companion, Zola; feline companion, Chester; parents, David and Cosette Stalker; sister, Crystal Morgan; special sisters, Madisyn and Macie Traczyk; brothers, Tyler Stalker and Billy Morgan; niece, Madyson; nephew, Mickael; Soon to be in-laws, Dave and Brandy Ohmer; Grandparents, William David (Joan) Lowe and Barbara Grover; and many aunts, uncles, cousin, other extended family members and dear friends. He was preceded in death by Donald and Anna Stalker.

The family would like to give a special thank you to all the staff at Mercy St. Vincent's Hospital trauma team, the Toledo Police and Washington Local Schools for all of their love, care, compassion and support given to Brandon and our family through this tragic time.

Those wishing to make memorial contributions in honor of Brandon are asked to consider the Brandon Stalker fund at Toledo Police Federal Credit Union.

To share a memory of Brandon or to leave a special message for his family, please click the "Share Memories" tab above.