

FALLEN FINEST

POLICE OFFICER THOMAS P. RUOTOLO 41 Precinct



Officer Thomas Ruotolo was shot and killed after he and his partner stopped a suspect with a stolen Moped on Tuesday, February 14, 1984.

Officer Ruotolo and his partner were on patrol when they heard a report of a stolen Moped over their radio. At about 6:40 pm, while canvassing the area, the officers observed a male suspect riding the stolen Moped pass in front of them and pull into a gas station at the corner of East 149th Street and Bruckner Boulevard in the Hunts Point section of the South Bronx.

Officer Ruotolo pulled the patrol car up behind the suspect and he and his partner exited. As they approached, and before they said a word, the suspect drew a snub nosed revolver and opened fire, striking Officer Ruotolo in the head. His partner returned fire, but was shot and wounded. An off-duty officer who was using the pay phone at the gas station witnessed the incident and opened fire on the suspect, but he too was shot and wounded. The suspect, who was struck four times in the exchange of gunfire, fled, leaving a trail of blood behind him. He was later apprehended at a local hospital when he showed up seeking treatment for his wounds.

Officer Ruotolo did not survive his injuries. His partner and the off-duty officer were removed to Lincoln Hospital where they both later recovered from their wounds.

The suspect, a career violent criminal who was on parole for manslaughter and robbery, pled guilty to one charge of first degree murder and two charges of first degree attempted murder. He was sentenced to 40 years to life in prison. He is not eligible for parole until January 2024.

Officer Ruotolo was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor at the NYPD Medal Day ceremony on June 11, 1985.

Police Officer Thomas P. Ruotolo had been a member of the New York City Police Department for three years and he was 30 years old. He was survived by his wife, Mary Beth; his parents, Pascal and Katherine; and his brother, Paul.

