

Northern Illinois town on lockdown as police manhunt continues

Kristina Betinis
3 September 2015

A heavily militarized manhunt across Illinois and Wisconsin continued into a second day Wednesday. The subjects of the search are three men of whom little is known other than their physical description, allegedly involved in the shooting death of a police officer in northern Illinois.

The manhunt is being prosecuted using the only information given by a local police officer, Joseph Gliniewicz, who was shot and killed after reportedly pursuing the three. The description of the men was given to the police dispatcher—two white men and one black man. Gliniewicz's service weapon was recovered at the scene. No additional details about his death are being released.

Based on this vague description of the suspects, a massive paramilitary response has been mounted across an entire region and the town of Fox Lake was put on lockdown. Hundreds of federal and local officers in heavy gear and armed with assault and sniper rifles—some on horseback—fanned across the area of small towns, including local and state police, SWAT and air patrols of helicopters equipped with heat sensors, and federal agents from the US Marshals, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the FBI.

The manhunt is centered in Fox Lake, Illinois, a village of 10,500 people at the border of Wisconsin, about 60 miles north of Chicago. The area is part of a 15-lake waterway system popular among vacationers.

After the shooting on Tuesday morning, the Federal Aviation Administration established a no-fly zone over the area at the request of local police, and passenger trains were stopped and searched. Roads were blocked off leading into and out of the area, and schools across three districts were locked down.

Residents were advised to continue to stay in their

homes, or “shelter in place” on Wednesday, as the manhunt was expanded. Three school districts—Fox Lake, Big Hollow and Gavin district schools, and some private schools—were also closed. Public buildings including the Fox Lake library remained closed.

At the end of the day Wednesday, 400 local and federal law enforcement personnel are reported to be involved in finding the three men fitting Gliniewicz's description. A two-mile stretch of the area has been flooded with waves of police, an estimated 50 dogs and dozens of helicopters, a tactic known as a “saturation patrol.” Police are continuing door-to-door canvasses of the area. Social media sites and area surveillance footage are also being combed.

At a Wednesday press conference, Lake County Major Crimes Task Force Commander George Filenko indicated that the aggressive search efforts would continue: “I'm not going to set a time limit on this. I have a murdered colleague—a police officer—and we're not going to stop.”

It is not clear yet whether schools and public buildings will be permitted to re-open.

With increasing regularity, the flimsiest legal pretenses are being used to justify lockdowns of cities and towns and execute broad sweeps of streets, schools, homes and businesses by heavily-armed local and federal law enforcement personnel.

Earlier this summer in upstate New York, police placed several towns on lockdown in the search for two escaped prisoners. There, as many as eight hundred local and federal law enforcement officers were deployed and residents were instructed to shelter in place. It later came to light that prisoners in the Clinton Correctional Facility were tortured to extract potential information about the escapees, after having been questioned by Democratic state governor Andrew

Cuomo.

On Tuesday, President Barack Obama released a statement on recent police killings in Texas and Illinois, declaring “I also promised that I would continue to highlight the uncommon bravery that police officers show in our communities every single day. They put their lives on the line for our safety. Targeting police officers is completely unacceptable—an affront to civilized society.”

Attorney General Loretta Lynch used the shooting to reaffirm the White House’s support for the police saying Wednesday. “I strongly condemn the brutal police shootings in Texas and in Illinois. We have had four more guardians slain, and frankly our hearts are broken over this... I have spent virtually my entire career working closely with state, local and federal law enforcement officers and these men and women volunteered to take on the most challenging, dangerous and important jobs that we have here.”

No additional information is being released about anything the investigation may have uncovered. Gliniewicz is the second Fox Lake police officer to be killed while on duty in more than 30 years, and the numbers of police killed on duty in the US has dropped historically. By June of this year, police had killed 500 people in the United States.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact