

Cops use 'stun gun' to end siege



Joseph Blazek is taken from his ground-floor apartment in Graniteville.

S.I. Advance Photo by Irving Silverstein

By ED BARBINI
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Police ended two tense hours of negotiation yesterday by storming a Graniteville apartment and disarming a bat-wielding tenant.

The tenant, Joseph Blazek, who police said had a history of mental problems, had barricaded himself in his ground-floor apartment at 1290 Richmond Ave. and was slamming the baseball bat against the doors and walls before he was subdued by emergency service police using two different types of "stun guns."

Officials said later that it was the first time that the electric shock devices had been used by police on Staten Island.

Blazek, 35, was not injured in the attack. He was taken from his apartment, kicking and screaming, to St. Vincent's Medical Center for psychiatric evaluation.

"This was an extremely dangerous situation," said Officer Robert Prather of the Island's Emergency Services Squad 5, who was one of the officers who subdued Blazek. "We didn't know exactly what kind of weapons he had, and we were concerned that he might hurt himself or one of us."

The drama began in mid-morning, when a city marshal and a case worker from the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities arrived at the three-room apartment with a court order to evict Blazek. Police said the tenant was being evicted because he had set fire to his kitchen last month and refused to let the Fire Department inside to put out the blaze.

Blazek refused to leave his apartment and he locked himself inside, screaming at his neighbors

through an open window. Police from the 120th Precinct were called to the scene, as was the Fire Department, in case Blazek set another fire.

"This was an unpredictable situation," said Sgt. Raymond Diaz of the 120th Precinct. "We weren't sure what this person would do."

After a priest and police from the Hostage Negotiation Team tried and failed to talk Blazek out of the apartment, a decision was made in consultation with Borough Commander Samuel Marino, who was at the scene, to storm the apartment in hopes of overwhelming Blazek.

As police officers stood outside and banged on wooden boards outside Blazek's window to distract him, Emergency Services officers, led by Prather and his