

= Northern Illinois University shooting =

The Northern Illinois University shooting was a school shooting that took place on February 14 , 2008 . Steven Kazmierczak shot multiple people on the campus of Northern Illinois University in DeKalb , Illinois , killing five people and injuring another twenty @-@ one , before committing suicide .

The incident happened at the campus 's Cole Hall at approximately 3 : 05 p.m. local time . The school placed the campus on lockdown ; students and teachers were advised to head to a secure location , take cover , and avoid the scene and all buildings in the vicinity of the area . Six people died in the incident , including the perpetrator , tying it with the University of Iowa shooting as the fifth @-@ deadliest university shooting in United States history .

After the incident , the university administration cancelled classes for the rest of the week as well as the following week .

= = Shooting = =

At approximately 3 : 05 p.m. CST , Steven Kazmierczak entered a large auditorium @-@ style lecture hall in Cole Hall (Auditorium 101) with approximately 120 students , where an oceanography class was in session . Kazmierczak was wearing dark brown boots with laces , jeans , a black T @-@ shirt with the word " Terrorist " written across the chest imposed over an image of an assault rifle ; a coat ; a black knit hat ; and a black utility belt with two magazine holsters , a holster for a handgun , three handguns (a 9 × 19mm Glock 19 , a .380 ACP SIG Sauer P232 , and a .380 ACP Hi @-@ Point CF380) , eight loaded magazines , and a knife . He also carried in a 12 gauge Remington Sportsman 48 shotgun concealed in a guitar case . Once he armed himself , he went to the auditorium , where he entered at the extreme southwest corner of the room . This led directly to the stage in front of the classroom ; Kazmierczak used that position to fire into the crowd of students . He opened the door with such extreme force that many witnesses described him as " kicking the door in " .

He next shot at the instructor , who was standing on the east side of the stage . The instructor tried to run out the exit at the southeast corner but that door was locked . The instructor ran toward the east end of the classroom out the main exits , in which the students were trying to exit . Some students who were not able to immediately escape hid under or in between the seats . When Kazmierczak paused to reload after firing three rounds , some students shouted " He 's reloading " and began to escape . Others continued to hide or were too shocked to react .

After shooting all six shotgun rounds , Kazmierczak fired on the room 's remaining occupants with the 9mm Glock pistol , firing a total of approximately 50 rounds . He was reported to have walked up and down the west aisle and directly in front of or on the stage , firing at people as he went . He shot and killed himself before police reached the room . The police recovered 55 un @-@ expended rounds of ammunition from the scene , including two fully loaded magazines containing rounds for a .380 semi @-@ automatic pistol .

A total of 25 people were shot , six of whom died (including the perpetrator , who shot himself before police arrived) . One witness reported that the gunman shot at least 30 rounds ; police later collected 48 shell casings and 6 shotgun shells .

At the time of the shootings , Kazmierczak was a graduate student in the school of social work at the University of Illinois at Urbana @-@ Champaign . He was a former NIU Sociology graduate student . NIU Police Chief Donald Grady described him as " an outstanding student , " who reportedly had stopped taking psychiatric medication recently and became " somewhat erratic " .

= = = Emergency response = = =

The first 9 @-@ 1 @-@ 1 call of an active shooter was reported at 3 : 06 p.m. Seven seconds later , NIU police officers were notified by the dispatcher . At 3 : 06 : 33 p.m. , NIU police officers Ayala and Zimmeroff responded and told dispatchers that they were in the area . Driving northbound on

Normal Road near Swen Parson Hall , they encountered students running east from the Martin Luther King Commons area . One student shouted , " He 's shooting over there " , pointing west towards the MLK Commons area . Officer Hodder was also driving in the area and encountered the same frenzy .

The officers proceeded in their vehicles , then on foot , joining Chief Grady , Lieutenant Mitchell , and Lieutenant Henert , who had reached the west side of the Commons area after coming directly from the Police Station . Also racing to Cole Hall from the Police Station were Sergeant Ellington and Officer Wright . Sergeant Holland was on patrol just south of the area along Lincoln Highway when he heard the call come in , and approached the area . In the MLK Commons , Chief Grady advised the officers to immediately begin attending to victims and identify witnesses and direct them to a room in Holmes Student Center , where they could be interviewed . Some of the officers began attending to injured students who were running from the scene .

While Henert established perimeters around Cole Hall , Mitchell and Grady entered the building , where they met with Holland , Ellington , and Wright . Ellington , the first officer to arrive on the scene , evacuated the adjacent auditorium , and met with the other officers in the front walkway . Holland was instructed to remain in the hallway to ensure no one came into the auditorium and that the shooter did not come out . Grady , Mitchell , Ellington , and Wright entered the south auditorium , discovering a body on the stage , surrounded by guns , with a pool of blood coming from the head . Victims with varying injuries lay on the floor or were propped up against the seats . Confirming there were no immediate threats , Grady and Mitchell began attending to victims , while Ellington and Wright confirmed that the shooter was dead . At 3 : 11 : 42 (five minutes after the first 911 call) , Ellington reported to the dispatcher , " Shooter 's down . Shotgun 's secure . We need an ambulance and the coroner at Cole Hall . "

At the same time that officers arrived at Cole Hall , Sergeant Rodman , who had left a meeting at the Holmes Student Center , arrived at the west entrance of that building to find a shooting victim who had been shot in the back and the head , along with another victim who had blood on the face , seeking help for his injured friend . Rodman attended to the most severely wounded victim .

By 3 : 11 p.m. , a DeKalb Fire Department ambulance was the first to arrive on the scene and was staged in a nearby parking lot . The parking lots near the Field House were used as a staging area for ambulances and fire trucks that arrived from throughout the region . At 3 : 13 p.m. , Sergeant Ellington advised that there were at least two deaths . Officers encountered several problems , including a piercing fire alarm that had been pulled , as well as very high radio traffic and static that made it hard to hear radio calls come in . In addition , due to conflicting reports (including the presence of a shooter at Founders Memorial Library) and the multitude of injured victims at various buildings around campus , officers needed to check multiple sites to rule out the possibility of multiple shooters and multiple shooting sites . Injured victims began appearing at Neptune Hall (just north of Cole Hall) and at DuSable Hall (west of Cole) . At 3 : 21 p.m. , as personnel arrived from the DeKalb Fire Department , DeKalb County Sheriff 's Office , DeKalb Police Department , and Sycamore Police Department , officers advised that the scene and perimeter of Cole Hall were secure , and that it was safe for emergency personnel to proceed to the shooting site and to the sites of the injured victims .

At 3 : 34 p.m. , after a sweep of Founders Library was conducted and officers determined that Neptune and DuSable were not shooting sites , they declared the area safe . Police officers established a reception area for law enforcement personnel at Wirtz Hall , and an investigative command center at Holmes Student Center . By 4 : 00 pm CST , school officials announced that there was no further danger . They said that counselors would be made available in all residence halls .

= = Victims = =

= = = Fatalities = = =

A total of six people , all residents of Illinois , were killed in the incident :

Catalina Garcia , Juliana Gehant , Ryanne Mace , and shooter Steven Kazmierczak were declared dead on the scene at Cole Hall , while Daniel Parmenter was pronounced dead shortly after arrival to Kishwaukee Hospital at 4 : 00 p.m. Gayle Dubowski was flown to the nearest trauma center , St. Anthony Hospital in Rockford , where she was pronounced dead shortly after arrival at 4 : 14 p.m.

= = = Injured = = =

A total of 21 people survived the incident with injuries . 17 sustained gunshot or buckshot wounds , while three injured their knee or back escaping the scene ; one injury was undetermined . Of the injured , three remained in Cole Hall , five had fled to Neptune Hall or its parking lots , one to DuSable Hall , two to the Holmes Student Center Bookstore , two to the Holmes Student Center 's Sandburg Auditorium , three to the Health Services Building , and five returned home to seek treatment .

16 of the injured victims were transported to DeKalb 's Kishwaukee Community Hospital . Of the 16 , one of the wounded was transferred by helicopter to Rockford 's Saint Anthony Medical Center , three to Downers Grove 's Good Samaritan Hospital , and one to Rockford Memorial Hospital .

On February 15 , 2008 , an additional victim sought treatment at Kishwaukee Hospital , bringing the total of hospitalized injured victims to 17 . On February 15 , 2008 , seven of the victims were in critical condition , one in good condition , one in stable , and eight discharged , according to Kishwaukee Community Hospital .

Like those killed , all who were injured were from Illinois . Some of the injured include :

= = Perpetrator = =

Steven Phillip Kazmierczak (August 26 , 1980 ? February 14 , 2008) was born in Elk Grove Village , Illinois . He was a student at the University of Illinois at the time of the shooting and was a former student at Northern Illinois University .

= = = Personal life = = =

He graduated from Elk Grove High School in 1998 , during which he was treated temporarily for mental illness at the Elk Grove Village Thresholds @-@ Mary Hill House psychiatric center , for being " unruly " at home , according to his parents Gail and Robert Kazmierczak . He later went on to study sociology at Northern Illinois University (NIU) . Though his family moved to Florida in 2004 , Kazmierczak continued his education in Illinois . He enlisted in the United States Army in September 2001 , and was discharged before completing basic training in February 2002 for lying on his application about his mental illness . His mother died in Lakeland , Florida in September 2006 from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (also known as Lou Gehrig ? s disease) . At the time of Steven 's death , his father was living in a retirement community in Lakeland .

= = = Education = = =

Kazmierczak graduated from NIU in 2006 where he received the Dean 's award in 2006 and was considered a stand @-@ out , well @-@ regarded student . Campus police describe him as a " fairly normal " and " unstressed person . " Faculty , students , and staff " revered " him and there was no indication of any trouble . NIU President John G. Peters said that he had " a very good academic record , no record of trouble . " Kazmierczak was Vice @-@ President of the NIU chapter of the American Correctional Association ; he had also written about the U.S. correctional system , specifically prisons .

In 2006 , Kazmierczak , along with two other graduate students and under the lead authorship of a sociology professor , co @-@ authored an academic paper entitled , " Self @-@ injury in Correctional Settings : ' Pathology ' of Prisons or of Prisoners ? " ; it was published in the academic

journal Criminology & Public Policy .

He was enrolled at NIU in the spring of 2007 , where he took two courses in Arabic and a course called Politics of the Middle East . His research paper was on the subject of Hamas and its social service projects . He left to begin graduate work in the School of Social Work at the University of Illinois , where he intended to study mental health issues . He was enrolled part @-@ time at the University of Illinois during the fall of 2007 and worked from September 24 through October 10 at the Rockville Correctional Facility for Women near the Illinois ? Indiana border . His reasons for leaving were unclear ; he simply , " did not come back to work , " according to Doug Garrison of the Indiana Department of Correction . By early 2008 , at the time of the shooting , he was again enrolled full @-@ time at the University of Illinois .

= = = Possible motives = = =

He died of a self @-@ inflicted gunshot wound after the shooting ended . ABC News reports that his behavior seemed to become more erratic in the weeks leading up to the shooting , and that it is believed he stopped taking medication beforehand . His girlfriend , Jessica Baty , confirmed that Kazmierczak was taking Xanax (anti @-@ anxiety) , Ambien (sleep aid) , and Prozac (antidepressant) , all of which were prescribed to him by a psychiatrist . She said that he stopped taking Prozac about three weeks prior to the February 14 shooting . She also said that , during their two @-@ year courtship , she had never seen him display violent tendencies and she expressed bewilderment over the cause of the rampage . " He was anything but a monster , " Baty said . " He was probably the nicest , most caring person ever . "

After the shooting , authorities intercepted a number of packages he sent to her , which included such items as a gun holster and ammunition , a textbook on serial killers for her class , the book The Antichrist by Friedrich Nietzsche , and a final note written for her , signed with his given name and family name . The shooting was baffling to those who knew him , as he appeared outgoing and never appeared to have social problems . This has also confused investigators , who have not found a suicide note . Some of Kazmierczak 's former NIU roommates described him as a quiet man who usually stayed to himself . They stated that , while fairly normal , they did not see him spend much time with other students .

Kazmierczak described himself as a sensitive person in his personal statement for the University of Illinois graduate school . He also felt victimized during his adolescent years . He expressed interest in helping people with mental problems , and wanted to work with people " in need of direction . " Although initial reports said there were no signs , he was considered troubled . A story published by Esquire stated that he allegedly had a history of mental illness and attempted suicides , was bullied in high school , and had shown an interest in previous school shootings , particularly those that occurred at Columbine High School and Virginia Tech .

According to a report published by the United States Fire Administration , Kazmierczak is believed to have studied Virginia Tech perpetrator Seung @-@ Hui Cho 's actions and used a similar modus operandi .

= = Reaction = =

The university 's official website reported the possibility of a gunman on campus at 3 : 20 p.m. , within 20 minutes of the shooting . The website then warned students , " There has been a report of a possible gunman on campus . Get to a safe area and take precautions until given the all clear . Avoid the King Commons and all buildings in that vicinity . " By 3 : 40 p.m. , all NIU classes were canceled for the remainder of the day and the campus was closed by NIU officials as part of a new security plan devised after the Virginia Tech shootings 10 months earlier . Students were asked to contact their parents as soon as possible .

All NIU Huskie sporting events , home and away , through Sunday were canceled . Most students left campus for the weekend . A spokesman for the ATF stated that agents were dispatched to the scene to assist and to help trace the weapons used . The FBI also sent agents to assist . According

to police , Steven Kazmierczak removed the hard drive from his laptop computer and a computer chip from his cell phone and did not leave a note that could help explain why he chose a geology class on Valentine 's Day to open fire . Investigators were expected to spend at least three more weeks until releasing a report on the incident .

= = = Vigils and memorial services = = =

Approximately 2 @, @ 000 gathered on campus on the evening of Friday , February 15 , for a candlelight vigil to commemorate the victims ; among other public figures , Jesse Jackson and Robert W. Pritchard spoke . In the days after the shooting , the Lutheran Campus Ministry held nightly candlelight vigils . All classes and athletic events were canceled through February 24 , 2008 . Faculty and staff returned to work on Tuesday , February 19 , and for the remainder of that week received special information and training to help students upon their return to classes the following week .

On February 21 , exactly a week after the shooting happened , five minutes of silence were observed from 3 : 06 @-@ 3 : 11 p.m. CST , accompanied by the tolling of bells throughout the community , at a special ceremony attended by thousands in memory of the victims which was held at the MLK Commons . Moments of silence were also held elsewhere throughout the DeKalb community . There was a special memorial service held in the NIU Convocation Center on February 24 , the day before classes resumed , in honor of the victims that initiated a set of activities and services aimed at community recovery . Due to the loss of one week of instructional time in the middle of the semester , an extra week was added in May .

= = = Condolences and tributes = = =

United States President George W. Bush , Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich , U.S. Senators Barack Obama and Dick Durbin , and U.S. Congressman Donald Manzullo offered their personal condolences to NIU President John Peters and the University community in wake of the tragedy , as did many local communities and school districts , and a plethora of universities across the United States .

The Chicago Blackhawks NHL franchise wore NIU Huskies decals on their helmets during their game on Sunday , February 17 , 2008 , versus the Colorado Avalanche . A moment of silence was also observed before the national anthem at the game , and the team wore the same decal during its next two games at the St. Louis Blues and at home against the Minnesota Wild . The Chicago Wolves of the AHL held an NIU night during which there was a moment of silence and NIU students were given the opportunity to participate during in game promotions . The Rockford Icehogs , also of the AHL , wore their red jerseys on the following Friday and Saturday night during the team 's two home games at the Rockford MetroCentre , distributed red and black ribbons , had a 5 ' by 16 ' sign for people to sign , as well as encouraged fans to wear red to the game .

During spring training , Chicago White Sox manager Ozzie Guillén and general manager Ken Williams sported NIU caps in tribute to the victims . For their 2008 season , the Chicago Cubs flew an NIU flag over the grandstands in the out field . Virginia Tech had a tribute with students wearing shirts saying " Hokies for Huskies " . Students wore these shirts during their basketball game against Georgia Tech on February 23 , 2008 .

Jon Bon Jovi offered his condolences in a Billboard magazine article , after his band Bon Jovi was forced to cancel rehearsals slated to begin on February 14 , 2008 at the NIU Convocation Center in preparation for the North American leg of the Lost Highway Tour . The Chicago @-@ based Jam / Prog Rock band Umphrey 's McGee played a benefit show at the Egyptian Theater on April 8 , 2008 for the NIU Memorial Fund . The incident was also immortalized as the subject of a David Bowie song called ' Valentine 's Day ' on the long awaited comeback album of 2013 ' The Next Day ' .

= = = Cole Hall today = = =

After February 14 , 2008 , Cole Hall was closed to the public . Classes that were held in the building 's two large auditoriums were relocated . On February 25 , 2008 then @-@ Governor Rod Blagojevich and University President John G. Peters proposed the demolition of the current Cole Hall . The proposal came as a response to the " bad " memories of the students who have to attend classes in the building . The proposal would tear down Cole Hall , leave the Cole Hall site as a memorial site , and erect a new building called " Memorial Hall " nearby , at a cost of approximately \$ 40 million .

However , due to mixed emotions on the decision , President Peters sent out a message to all NIU students via their student email accounts , soliciting comments from students and the extended NIU family . In addition , a committee was established to help reach a consensus on the future of Cole Hall .

On May 8 , 2008 it was announced that Cole Hall would be remodeled inside and out pending \$ 7 @.@ 7 million in state funding . This decision was made based on conversations between Dr. Peters and members of the campus community as well as the results of an online survey taken by students and faculty .

On August 27 , 2009 , the NIU Board of Trustees approved a \$ 9 @.@ 5 million budget on the Cole Hall renovation project , approximately \$ 8 million of which will come from the aforementioned state funding , and the rest from student fees . The East auditorium , which was the scene of the incident , will no longer be used for classes , and a replacement lecture hall will be built elsewhere on campus . On January 27 , 2010 , Illinois Governor Pat Quinn came to the NIU campus to release the funds for the renovation of Cole Hall .

On January 14 , 2011 , the reconstruction at Cole Hall officially commenced . The building re @-@ opened on January 17 , 2012 . Cole Hall now houses the Anthropology Museum , which was housed in the Stevens Building previously .

= = = Memorial garden and sculpture = = =

On October 2 , 2009 , a metal sculpture designed by artist Bruce Niemi entitled Remembered was unveiled at Northern Illinois University .

The sculpture is part of a garden built in remembrance of the victims of the NIU shooting , located directly across from Cole Hall . The memorial area also features five red granite walls erected in a half @-@ circle pattern which read " Forward Together Forward Together Forward . " The phrase " Forward Together Forward " , borrowed from the university 's fight song , became a motto and theme used in the healing of the NIU community after the shooting . Each wall features the name of one of the students who died in the shooting . A walking path with benches is also included . The memorial is flanked by trees and shrubbery . The memorial was funded entirely by private donations .

= = Earlier incident and possible threats = =

The campus was shut down on December 10 , 2007 , the first day during exam week , after graffiti was found on a restroom wall warning of a possible shooting . A university spokesman said that the warning , which was discovered December 10 , made reference to the Virginia Tech massacre , in which 32 people were killed , but it could not be immediately determined whether the threat was related to the shootings on February 14 , 2008 . The Chicago Sun @-@ Times reported at that time that an unknown person posted the graffiti in the Grant Towers D residence hall , which included a racial slur and the notation " What time ? The VA tech shooters [sic] messed up w / having only one shooter . " However , NIU President John Peters stated that he did not believe that the December incident is connected to the February 14 shootings .