

FBI Uniform Crime Reports--Selected Examples of Police Officer Deaths While Serving Warrants

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Section I

Summaries of Felonious Incidents **ALABAMA**

Three officers with the Birmingham Police Department were shot and killed after serving an individual with a misdemeanor

warrant for domestic assault at a known drug house in Ensley. A fourth officer with the department was injured during the incident, which occurred shortly after 1:15 p.m. on June 17. Upon arrival, the officers surrounded the home. Two officers, one aged 58 with nearly 29 years of law enforcement experience and one aged 40 with nearly 7 years of law enforcement experience, were at the back door of the residence. Another officer, 36 years old with 11 years of law enforcement experience, was at the rear of the house, and the fourth officer, 33 years old with nearly 4 years of law enforcement experience, was at the front door. The officers at the back door gained entry and served the warrant on the individual when another man in the house fired 15 rounds from a 7.62x39 mm semiautomatic rifle, striking both officers at close range. The 58-year-old officer was fatally struck in the front of the chest. The 40-year-old officer was fatally struck in the torso when the rounds penetrated his protective vest. The officer at the rear of the house went inside the residence to join the other officers when he heard shots. He was also fired upon, but his holster deflected the round. He reported that shots came from the front of the house as well as the back. The officer who was covering the front of the residence had entered also. He was wounded in the torso, the round having penetrated his body armor, and was fatally shot in the face. The 27-year-old subject of the warrant and the 24-year-old alleged shooter took the service weapon, a 9 mm semiautomatic handgun, of one of the downed officers and fled the residence. Police arrested the pair a short time later at a nearby home. Both suspects had past criminal histories and were

under the influence of narcotics and alcohol at the time of the incident. The alleged assailant was charged with three counts of Capital Murder and one count of Attempted Murder. The subject of the warrant, a known drug user who was on probation at the time, was charged with three counts of Capital Murder on a Law Enforcement Officer and Attempt to Commit Murder.

NEW YORK

A short time after 8:30 p.m. on September 10, two detectives with the New York Police Department were killed while attempting to apprehend a suspect wanted for a domestic violence complaint. The 39-year-old detective with 15 years of law enforcement experience and the 43-year-old detective with over 22 years of experience arrived at the address to find the suspect sitting inside his car. While the officers were attempting to remove the suspect from the car, the suspect grabbed a 9 mm semiautomatic handgun from one of the detectives and discharged seven rounds, mortally wounding both officers. Before the 43-year-old detective succumbed to the wounds he suffered in the front lower torso and fatally in the front upper torso, he was able to provide the identity of the man who had shot him to a dispatcher. The 39-year-old detective, although wounded in the front upper torso, rear lower torso, and mortally below the waist, was able to draw his own service weapon and fire one round, which struck the 28-year-old suspect. After fleeing on foot and carjacking a vehicle, the suspect was arrested at an apartment building the following day and was charged with Murder.

NORTH CAROLINA

A 34-year-old sergeant with the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office was ambushed, shot, and killed while attempting to serve commitment papers to an apparently mentally disturbed individual. Around 10:15 on the evening of April 4, the sergeant, along with three deputies, arrived at the residence of a man whose wife had requested the commitment order earlier in the evening. The

wife alleged that the man was having “ Vietnam flashbacks,” was heavily armed, and had commented to her that he would not be taken alive if she called the police. The officers arrived at the couple’s residence, which had been landscaped with tall shrubbery, including an abundance of bamboo. The yard included shooting positions and yardage distance sticks and was enclosed by a chain-link fence. The sergeant, who was a 9-year veteran of law enforcement with 8 years on the SWAT Team, elected to be the first one to cross the locked gate of the fence. As the sergeant crossed the dark yard, his fellow officers heard him tell someone to “put that down.” There immediately followed a blast from a 12-gauge pump-action shotgun, and the deputies lost sight of the sergeant. Shots were exchanged with the suspect, and a perimeter was established as the deputies shot the lock off the gate and retrieved the victim sergeant from the yard. The victim had sustained wounds from the buck pellets of the shotgun that struck his right torso, neck, and face. One of the pellets severed his aorta, and he died at the scene. Responding officers of the SWAT Team arrived on the scene and found the 56-year-old shooter dead of a self-inflicted shotgun wound to the head.

PENNSYLVANIA

At 1:45 a.m. on March 19, a supervisor with the First Judicial District (FJD) of Pennsylvania was shot and killed while attempting to arrest a man in Philadelphia. The 53-year-old supervisor with 8½ years of law enforcement experience, an FJD investigator, and two officers with the FBI’s Philadelphia Violent Crimes/Fugitive Task Force **went to the apartment of a man wanted on Rape and Drug Violations.** The task force officers requested assistance from the Philadelphia Police Department, which sent two officers to the scene who covered the alley behind the apartment. One of the task force officers knocked on the apartment’s front door and indicated their identities to the occupants. Several seconds later, a woman inside the apartment opened the door and told the officers that the man they were looking for was in the bedroom. The officers entered the poorly lit apartment, and as the woman stepped into the kitchen, the man opened fire on the officers with a .45-caliber semiautomatic handgun. One of the bullets struck the supervisor in the stomach below his protective vest, and he fell to the floor. Despite his injury, the supervisor was able to fire 15 shots, but apparently none of those shots hit the offender. As

they backed out of the apartment along with the other task force officer, the investigator was shot in the stomach and one of the task force officers was struck in the left hand. The officers then heard two shots from inside the apartment. The task force officers attempted to come to the aid of the supervisor, but when they tried to reenter the apartment, the suspect opened fire on them again. They returned fire and shot the suspect in his back and leg. One of the officers called for backup from the Philadelphia Police Department and numerous officers, including the officers who had been covering the rear of the apartment building, swarmed to the front of the building. The suspect climbed out of a rear window in the apartment and broke into the apartment directly below. The responding officers searched the man's apartment, but failed to find him. Philadelphia Police Department SWAT officers located a blood trail in the man's apartment and followed it to the apartment below, where they found and arrested him. The FJD supervisor was taken to a local hospital where he died from two gunshot wounds to the back of his head. The 40-year-old suspect, who had a prior criminal record that included arrests for Murder, Rape, Robbery, and Aggravated Assault, was transported to a local hospital where he was treated for his wounds. He was charged with First-Degree Murder, 3 counts of Attempted Murder, 3 counts of Aggravated Assault, and Firearms Violations.

Shortly before 11:30 a.m. on March 31, two deputy sheriffs with the Bradford County Sheriff's Office were shot and killed in an ambush in the city of Gillett while they were attempting to serve a failure-to-appear warrant on a known drug dealer.

The two deputies went to the home of the man's father, which had an auto junkyard behind it and was located in a heavily wooded area, in an attempt to locate the subject. The deputies knocked on the front door of the residence, but no one answered. They then went around the house to the junkyard. The man, who had prior arrests that include Assault on a Police Officer and Weapons Violations, is believed to have hidden among the cars and fired 3 shots from a .38-caliber handgun at the deputies. The 36-year-old veteran deputy with 9 years of service in law enforcement was struck in the neck and died instantly. The 30-year-old deputy with 4½ years in law enforcement was mortally wounded in the stomach by a bullet that entered his protective vest between the side panels. The suspect's father heard the gunshots and found the officers. The wounded officer was able to

ask him to call for help. The father went to his house and telephoned the sheriff's office to inform them that one officer was dead and another wounded. When the medical personnel arrived, they determined that both deputies were dead. Not being certain of the identity or location of the shooter, they retreated from the scene. When the backup officers arrived, they were unable to locate the suspect on the property or determine how he was traveling. Law enforcement personnel from Pennsylvania and New York launched a massive search involving hundreds of officers. The officers set up roadblocks, searched for the suspect from the air by helicopter, and looked for the man in the wooded areas using K-9 units and tactical teams. The next day, an officer in a helicopter spotted the suspect walking on a road a few miles from his father's house. Officers on the ground took him into custody without further incident. The 27-year-old man was charged with two counts each of First-Degree Murder and Third-Degree Murder.

TEXAS

A 33-year-old senior patrol officer with the Huntington Police Department was shot and killed on March 13 shortly after 11:30 a.m. after stopping a motorist who was speeding. When the 10-year veteran officer learned that the driver was the subject of an active warrant for possession of a controlled substance, he approached the man to take him into custody. The man then exited his vehicle and shot the officer one time in his face with a 9 mm semiautomatic handgun. The officer lost consciousness and dropped to the ground, whereupon the killer fired another round into his back. Before fleeing, the assailant attempted to disable the police in-car video system by firing into the monitor. Nevertheless, the video continued to run and recorded the entire incident. Local law enforcement pursued the killer to a house in Nacogdoches, where the 24-year-old man committed suicide by a gunshot to the head. The victim officer died 3 days later at an area hospital.