



Gulf County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Mike Harrison

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PRESS RELEASE
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ADDITIONAL DETAILS RELEASED IN OFFICER INVOLVED SHOOTING

On Sunday, March 24, a deputy with the Gulf County Sheriff's Office (GCSO) was involved in an officer involved shooting. The incident occurred on Avenue A in Port St. Joe. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) was immediately notified and responded to the scene to start an investigation. The shooting resulted in the death of Joseph D. Durman (46) of Kingsport, TN. The following is a statement released today by Gulf County Sheriff Mike Harrison:

At approximately 3:13 PM on Sunday afternoon the GCSO was notified by the Bay County Sheriff's Office that the Mexico Beach Police Department was headed toward Gulf County in pursuit of a subject involved in a gas drive off. The GCSO was also informed that the pursuit began in Bay County and the suspect had "struck a Tyndall Air Force Officer." The vehicle being pursued was a white Ford Explorer with an Alabama tag, but the license plate did not return to the vehicle it was displayed on.

The Deputy located the vehicle west of Port St. Joe on US 98. The vehicle was occupied by one white male. Once behind the vehicle, the deputy activated his emergency lights and siren. The suspect increased his speed and refused to stop. As the pursuit continued, the deputy observed the driver digging around in the seat for something and alerted responding officers with the Port St. Joe Police Department.

The suspect turned east on Avenue A in Port St. Joe from US 98 and the deputy was able to force the vehicle to stop, with his patrol car, just past David Langston Drive.

Durman exited the vehicle and pointed what three separate law enforcement officers from three separate law enforcement agencies believed to be a gun at the deputy. He was given commands to drop the weapon. After Durman failed to comply with commands he continued to point the weapon at the deputy. The deputy was forced to use deadly force.

Special Agents with the FDLE responded to investigate the incident and crime scene technicians from the FDLE Office in Pensacola responded to process the scene.

A black battery pack was recovered under Durman's body and it is believed that this is item that was pointed at the deputy as if it were a gun. The approximate dimensions of the battery pack is 4" x 2 ½" x 1".

The investigation to date has revealed that Durman had an extensive criminal history that included false imprisonment, aggravated assault, aggravated domestic assault, fleeing and eluding, and resisting law enforcement. He was a convicted felon.

This week we have learned that Durman was an absconder from probation out of the State of Tennessee for aggravated burglary. We have also learned that he was wanted out of the State of Alabama for escape from a work release program. It was also determined this week that the vehicle driven by Durman was stolen out of Shelby County, Alabama, and contained stolen property.

The deputy forced to make a split-second decision to take the life of an individual has been a law enforcement officer with this agency for 25 years. He has an impeccable record and has never fired his weapon in the line of duty.

My heart goes out to the Durman Family on the loss of their son and my heart goes out to my deputy whose life is forever changed by this event. However, I feel that it was ultimately Durman's actions that lead to his death.

The FDLE continues to investigate this incident and will submit their findings to the Office of State Attorney for review.

Prepared by: Capt. Chris Buchanan
Approved by: Sheriff Mike Harrison