For Immediate Release

Sep 07, 2013

Update 2 re. Officers Involved Shooting at 3311 40th Street North

Deceased Armed Suspect: Lealann Russell Melder COOLEY, W/M, 04/11/1967 of 3311 40th Street North, St. Petersburg (DMV photo attached)

Detectives have made contact with Cooley’s common-law wife and 18 year old daughter, both of whom resided with him at 3311 40th Street North. We are not releasing their names at this time as both are considered witnesses.

Both reported to investigators that Cooley had been drinking heavily and acting strangely throughout the previous day. He had been taking his firearms out and loading them while acting paranoid and making suicidal threats.

Due to his behavior, both felt it was prudent for them to leave the residence and stay with relatives until Cooley’s behavior abated.

As noted earlier, we will be releasing the names, ages and time of service for each officer later in the day.

Information released by Mike Puetz, 727-420-6448, michael.puetz@stpete.org

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Previous release of Sat Sep 07, 2013 09:02:21

Update re. Officers Involved Shooting at 3311 40th Street North

Detectives have released additional preliminary details regarding this morning's officers involved shooting at 3311 40th Street North.

The deceased armed suspect is believed to be a 46 year old white male who resides at that address. We have been told by neighbors that he has a wife and daughter, neither of whom was at home at the time of the shooting. Their whereabouts is currently unknown, but there is no cause at this point to be concerned for their safety. Once next-of-kin has been notified, we will release the name of the suspect.

According to investigators, we received an initially call of shots being fired somewhere in the neighborhood at about 1:43 A.M. this morning. No specific address was given and the caller did not want to be identified. Officers responded to area, but heard no shots and saw no evidence of anyone out in the neighborhood.
At about 3:36 A.M. another call was received, this time complaining of loud music in the same neighborhood. Again no specific address was given, however as officers arrived on the scene they heard the sound of a gunshot coming from the residence at 3311 40th Street North.

Additional officers arrived on the scene and began to approach the residence where the armed suspect was seen standing on the enclosed front porch armed with a handgun, later determined to be a 44 cal. magnum revolver.

A total of seven officers were on scene and ordered the suspect to put his weapon down. The suspect did put the handgun down on a table, but then reached down near the open front door of the house and picked up a 30/30 lever action rifle which he raised and pointed at the officers who were standing around the front yard area of the home. Six officers discharged their weapons mortally wounding the suspect who pronounced deceased on the scene by Fire Rescue personnel.

A check of the interior of the residence revealed a shotgun and a bandoleer of shotgun ammunition just inside the front door as well. Inside one of the bedrooms, two rifle cases and assorted ammunition was found lying haphazardly about the bed and on the floor near the bedroom closet.

Investigator also learned from talking to neighbors that the suspect had been intermittently discharging a firearm in his backyard throughout the previous day and into the morning hours. He was also apparently the one playing the loud music, but neighbors expressed reluctance in calling the police earlier, not wanting to initiate any problems between themselves and the suspect and hoping that he would eventually stop.

All six officers have been put on administrative leave while investigators from the Department’s Investigative Services Bureau, Internal Affairs Unit and the Pinellas/Pasco State Attorney’s Office conduct their inquiry.

We will be releasing the names, ages and time of service for each officer later in the day.

Photos showing the weapons and ammunition found at the scene are attached and forthcoming.

Information released by Mike Puetz, 727-420-6448, michael.puetz@stpete.org

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Previous release of Sat Sep 07, 2013 05:27:22

Officers Involved Shooting

Investigators are currently on the scene of an officers involved shooting at 3311 40th Street North which occurred at about 3:59 AM this morning. Preliminary information indicates that officers had been in the area on a noise complaint when they heard a shot emanating from the area of this address.

Officers approached the residence where they observed a man sitting on a porch armed with a handgun. When the officers challenged the man, he retreated back into the house, but subsequently reemerged with a rifle which he pointed
at the officers. In response multiple officers fired at the man who was wounded and later pronounced deceased on the scene.

The commander on the scene is requesting that responding media stage near the intersection of 34th Avenue North and 40th Street. Mike Puetz will be enroute and should be on scene at around 6:00 AM to provide an update.

Information released by Mike Puetz, 727-420-6448, michael.puetz@stpete.org