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NEWS RELEASE

Suspect Injured in Deputy Involved Shooting

For Immediate Release: Cristie Kahler, HCSO Office of Media Relations, 443-409-3340

[April 21, 2016, Bel Air, MD] Earlier today, Deputies from the Harford County Sheriff's Office Special Operations Division were involved in the non-fatal shooting of an adult male in the 2000 block of Stratton Court in Bel Air, MD.

At approximately 12:10 p.m. on Thursday, April 21st, Patrol Deputies assigned to the Harford County Sheriff's Office Southern Precinct were dispatched for the report of a suicidal subject who was reported to be drinking heavily and had fired shots from a handgun inside the home during a domestic dispute. Information gathered by patrol deputies from witnesses at the scene identified the subject as James L. Ward, 42. Deputies also learned that Ward was suicidal and confirmed that he had fired several gunshots within the home. No injuries were reported as a result of those gunshots.

Patrol Deputies established a perimeter and moved to safeguard nearby residents. A number of additional shots were heard by responding deputies while positioned on the perimeter. Deputies assigned to the Special Response Team (SRT) of the Special Operations Division were requested to the scene and assumed command of the incident. Members of SRT, with assistance from the Crisis Negotiation Team, attempted to engage in negotiations with Ward to bring the incident to a peaceful end.

Ward remained in the residence while deputies engaged in negotiations, and repeated attempts to convince him to peacefully surrender. At approximately 2:40 p.m., when phone conversations with the suspect had ceased, Ward shot multiple rounds in the direction of deputies who were taking cover in the Harford County Sheriff's Office Tactical Rescue Vehicle. In fear for their safety, the safety of other members of the Sheriff's Office, and that of the surrounding community, two deputies fired upon the suspect, injuring him. Ward exited from the residence and was arrested without further incident. No deputies or civilians were injured during the incident.

Medics from the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company, who were staged in the area, immediately began to render first aid. Ward was then transported by Maryland State Police Helicopter to the University of Maryland Shock Trauma Center where his injuries are considered serious but not life threatening.

During the incident, dismissal of students at nearby schools was coordinated with Harford County Public Schools to ensure the safety of all students.

Investigators and Forensic Service Unit Detectives from the Harford County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigations Division are conducting a comprehensive investigation into the incident.

The deputies involved have been placed on routine administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation.