



## **-UPDATE-**

March 31, 2014—The Good Samaritan that assisted Corporal Crecelius has been identified.

The unknown man that assisted Corporal Crecelius pull Mark Vanvleck from the burning Jeep has been identified as Nickolas Kingston, 22, originally from Forest Grove and currently enlisted in the US Navy in Oak Harbor Washington. He has agreed to talk to the media. Please call me for his contact information.

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Case #14-504627

### **Off-Duty Deputy Rescues Two People from Burning Vehicle**

March 30, 2014—A vehicle crashed at a high rate of speed and burst into flames. There were three occupants, two of them were unconscious. The vehicle caught fire as an off-duty Washington County Deputy Sheriff pulled the unconscious occupants from the vehicle.



On March 29, 2014, at 8:11 p.m., Washington County Sheriff's Deputies were called to SW Springhill Road, north of the intersection of SW Laurelwood Road, concerning a serious single vehicle crash. This is east of the community of Gaston.



A 1994 Jeep Grand Cherokee was northbound on SW Springhill Road traveling at a high speed when it crashed. The Jeep sped through a stop sign at SW Laurelwood Road then left the roadway striking two drainage culverts and two trees before coming to rest. The jeep crashed with enough forward force to separate the engine and transmission from the body. The transmission was launched 46 feet down the roadway from the Jeep.

The Jeep landed upright and began burning as Christian Bandmann, 23, who was seated in the rear, escaped from the right rear door.

Off-duty Washington County Sheriff's Corporal Cheryl Crecelius came upon the scene moments after the Jeep crashed. Corporal Crecelius saw the driver and front passenger were unconscious as the fire began encroaching into the passenger area. She realized there was a very short window of time to rescue them before the fire took their lives. The Jeep received extensive damage and all of the doors were jammed closed except the right rear door.

Corporal Crecelius unfastened the seatbelt and pulled Jason Eaton, 25, from the front passenger seat backwards through the right rear door as the Jeep filled with smoke. She placed him on the ground a safe distance from the fire that was rapidly consuming the vehicle. He was regaining consciousness as she raced to free the unconscious driver.

Corporal Crecelius unfastened Mark Vanvleck's seatbelt as she attempted to pull him backwards out of the same rear door. The fire had consumed the entire engine compartment and flames were breaching through the floorboard area as the smoke began to get very thick in the passenger area. Mark Vanvleck's legs were pinned between the dash and seat making it impossible for Corporal Crecelius to pull him to freedom. She crawled back out of the vehicle to get assistance. There was an unidentified man in his 20's that stopped and helped by getting back into the burning vehicle with Corporal Crecelius. Together they were able to free Mr. Vanvleck, 25, from the vehicle moments before it was fully engulfed in flames. He remained unconscious until Gaston Fire Department personnel arrived and were able to revive him.

Christian Bandmann was transported to OHSU by Lifeflight. Jason Eaton and Mark Vanvleck were both transported by ground ambulance to a local hospital. All three men received non life-threatening injuries.

Mark Vanvleck was cited for DUII, Reckless Driving, and two counts of Fourth Degree Assault. Additional charges are possible as the investigation continues. Due to Mr. Vanvleck being in the hospital, there is no booking photo available.

Corporal Crecelius received a minor injury to her hand and suffered minor smoke inhalation. She is expected to make a full recovery.

Sheriff's Deputies are searching for the unidentified man that assisted in saving Mr. Vanvleck from the burning wreckage.

The Washington County Crash Analysis Reconstruction Team responded to the scene to assist in the investigation. Forest Grove Police also responded to assist with the crash. Springhill Road was closed until after 1:00 a.m. to gather evidence and diagram the scene. Investigators believe alcohol and speed were factors in this crash. The investigation is ongoing.