

Montana Trooper

Virginia attempted homicide suspect and bomber apprehended

By Sergeant Kelly Mantooth

On November 1, 2012, at approximately 1040 hours, Trooper Joseph Dejong stopped a small red passenger car with Minnesota plates that was travelling west on US Highway 87, just east of the town of Stanford, for speeding 86 mph in a 70 mph zone.

Trooper Dejong turned on this vehicle immediately after it went past. This vehicle did not immediately pull over.


Trooper Dejong contacted MHP dispatch via the Highway radio to inform dispatch of the stop and the license plate of the vehicle.

When the vehicle stopped, Trooper Dejong performed a passenger side approach to the vehicle. The lone male occupant informed Trooper Dejong that he was travelling from Virginia to the "Dakotas to look for work in the oil-field." Trooper Dejong asked the driver if he knew where he was and the driver stated, "Montana." The driver stated, "Oh, did I miss the Dakotas?" The vehicle had a lived in look, and Trooper Dejong was thinking this could be an interdiction stop. Trooper Dejong took the subject's driver license and papers back to his patrol car.

As Trooper Dejong was walking back to his patrol car, his cell phone rang. It was MHP dispatch calling him on his cellular phone to inform him the plates on the vehicle had come back as having been stolen. Trooper Dejong gave MHP dispatch the driver's information, and multiple felony hits came back, which include attempted capital murder charge in Virginia. Trooper Dejong requested Triple III and EPIC check and also requested MHP dispatch to contact Trooper Goodemoot to come to his location, all via the cellular phone. Trooper Dejong knew Trooper Goodemoot was the closest MHP trooper, as they had just met and visited at the Judith Basin County Sheriff's Office in Stanford. Trooper Dejong also contacted JBCO dispatch via his radio and asked for the JBCO Sheriff to come to his location, although Trooper Dejong did not state to JBCO dispatch why he wanted the Sheriff there. Both the Sheriff and his Undersheriff were approximately 15-20 minutes away from Trooper Dejong's location.

After about ten minutes of Trooper Dejong waiting for backup to arrive, the driver of the car abruptly drove away and began travelling at 60 MPH while failing to yield to lights and siren.

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Stafford County Sheriff's Office
Crime Analysis Unit

WANTED SUBJECT





Photo Date 6.26.2012

Laurence Alan STEWART II


AGE: 25

5'11"/220

Brown hair/Brown eyes



Suspect Vehicle:
Red 2013 Hyundai
Accent Sedan
VA/WVA-8249



Suspect Vehicle:
White 2000 Nissan
Altima Sedan
PA/HUM-1923

Stock Photo of Vehicle

Please be on the lookout for Laurence Alan Stewart II. He is a person of interest in three separate pipe bombing incidents that occurred on October 30 in Stafford County and the City of Fredericksburg. Stewart is also wanted out of Stafford for Indecent Exposure, Obscene Sexual Display, and Violation of a Protective Order.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the Stafford County Sheriff's Office at 540-658-4400.

Stafford County Sheriff's Office
1225 Courthouse Road
P.O. Box 209
Stafford, VA 22555
Phone: 540-658-4450

At the east edge of Stanford, approximately 2 miles into the pursuit, the driver threw out a pipe bomb that exploded as it rolled to the edge of the road.

Meanwhile, Trooper Goodemoot was preparing to set up a spike strip west of Stanford.

However, the driver turned north onto a gravel road prior to getting to the spike strips and Trooper Goodemoot's location. Trooper Goodemoot caught up to the pursuit on the gravel road.

Trooper Dejong requested air support, along with other officers for assistance.

The driver slowed at an intersection to a private lane, and there was a private, unoccupied vehicle parked at this intersection. The driver made a u-turn and faced the oncoming two troopers. Trooper Dejong stepped out with his AR-15 rifle, after which the driver stopped, made another u-

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1 The first bomb as it ignited in front of Trooper Dejong's patrol car; 2 The first bomb as it exploded in front of Trooper Dejong's patrol car; 3 The second bomb smoking on the gravel road; 4 The second bomb as it ignited on the gravel road; 5 The sixth bomb as it ignited on the highway; 6 The seventh bomb as it lay smoking in front of the deputy's pickup; 7 The seventh bomb as it exploded just beside the deputy's pickup.

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turn, and continued on the gravel road. It was shortly after this the driver threw out a second pipe bomb. Trooper Dejong saw this pipe bomb and stopped in the road, making sure Trooper Goodmoot also stopped. They both watched the fuse burn, and this bomb had a long fuse. Eventually, the bomb exploded, sending shrapnel and debris flying past their cars with some of the debris striking the patrol cars.

Waiting for this long fuse, the subject was able to get a good lead. Troopers Dejong and Goodmoot continued trying to catch up to the vehicle, but were also tactical in their approach to crest of hills and curves.

Undersheriff Schmitt of Judith Basin County was travelling west on US Highway 87 between Stanford and Geyser, trying to get to the end of the gravel road before the subject did. Schmitt could see the red car traveling fast on the gravel road, approaching the entrance to the highway. Schmitt placed his patrol pickup at an angle to the intersection and stepped out with his patrol rifle. The subject did not stop as he traveled onto US Highway 87 and continued west. The subject ducked down below the window as he drove past Schmitt.

JBCO contacted the Geyser school to go into lockdown. No one answered the phone at the school, so they had to contact a neighbor to go over to the school to have the school go into lockdown.

The subject continued on US Highway 87 past Geyser, with Undersheriff Schmitt in pursuit. Troopers Dejong and Goodmoot were trying to catch up, with pursuit speeds now close to 100 MPH. The subject threw out three separate bombs at Schmitt, bringing the total to five. One detonated after he went past, and the other two did not detonate at all, as the fuses fell out of the bombs.

Trooper Waddell was enroute from Great Falls to assist when he stopped at milepost 12.7 to set up spike strips. As the subject approached Waddell's position, the spike strip became entangled with the front tires of Waddell's patrol car, and he was unable to pull

the strip out for the subject's car to drive over. A truck driver had stopped behind Waddell and had gotten out of his truck. As he was walking near the front of the truck, the subject swerved towards him, although the pedestrian truck driver was able to get out of the way. Waddell threw his unused strips into his patrol car and fell in behind Undersheriff Schmitt, continuing the pursuit.

Cascade County deputies set up spike strips at milepost 1, just prior to Armington junction. Possibly one tire of the subject's vehicle was damaged by the spikes, although the subject continued on. Cascade County pre-staged a deputy at the entrance to Belt by the Armington scale, blocking this entrance into Belt.

Trooper Don Lee literally threw his spikes at the vehicle after it passed the Armington scale and was successful in spiking the tires.

Undersheriff Schmitt could see several vehicles starting to come down the Belt hill. Schmitt knew there were many police vehicles behind him, but none in front to stop traffic. He surmised this pursuit was about to end, and he was concerned for the safety of the public. Consequently, Schmitt pulled out and passed as the suspect vehicle started up the Belt hill with tires smoking and rubber falling off the rim(s).

As this was happening, the subject threw out his sixth and seventh pipe bombs. One of these bombs went off right next to a Cascade County vehicle and Trooper Don Lee's patrol car.

The subject turned off to head north on a gravel road near the foot of the Belt hill, which leads into the town of Belt. A Cascade County deputy with a pickup came up behind the subject's vehicle and bumped the car, causing it to go off the road into a small ravine on the north side of the road.

The subject left the disabled vehicle and fled on foot downhill towards Belt creek armed with a pistol.

Cascade County deputies, Troopers Waddell and Lee, Undersheriff Schmitt (JBCSO), and later Troopers Dejong and Goodmoot surrounded

the subject in the creek bottom. Officers were ordering the subject to drop the gun and the subject cried, "My mind is telling me to run, but my body won't move!"

A Cascade County deputy tried to deploy a Taser, but only one probe struck the subject. During the Taser distraction, a Cascade County deputy was able to tackle the subject to the ground and disarm him. The subject was taken into custody and placed into Trooper Dejong's patrol car.

Medical was called to check the subject. A Department of Homeland Security helicopter arrived after the subject was in custody. A Malmstrom Air Force Base explosives team was called to the scene, along with agents from the BATF and FBI.

The Great Falls Police Department was set up with a road block east of Great Falls at the railroad overpass near the old Bar-S supper club. Great Falls PD supervisors had informed their officers the subject and vehicle was not to enter the city.

Found in the car after the pursuit was a Remington 870 shotgun with over 50 rounds, an extra loaded magazine for the pistol, multiple license plates from other states, numerous survival gear type items, numerous gift cards the subject was using for fuel and food so his credit card couldn't be tracked, six full five gallon gas cans, and seven more pipe bombs.

The pipe bombs were made of steel pipe and steel caps. The caps were secured with Teflon plumbing tape, filled with smokeless powder and a mixture of steel ball bearings, sheetrock screws, nuts, and bolts.

The MAFB explosives team was used to secure the vehicle immediately after, and they also retrieved the unexploded bombs by Geyser. US Highway 87 was closed between Stanford and Raynesford until these bombs could be secured.

During a later conversation it was said, "God was watching over these officers during this incident," and someone else amended the statement to say "God was standing right next to these officers." □