



Whatcom County Sheriff's Office

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEPUTIES AWARDED STATE MEDAL OF HONOR

Whatcom County, WA – On February 10, 2022, Deputy Ryan Rathbun and Deputy Jason Thompson responded to a neighborhood dispute in the Kendall area. While investigating the dispute, [both deputies were shot in the head by an armed suspect.](#)

Both Deputies [returned to active duty](#) after numerous medical procedures and months of treatment.

On Friday, May 5, 2023, Deputy Rathbun and Deputy Thompson each received the Medal of Honor for Exceptional Meritorious Conduct and Serious Injury While in the Performance of Duty. This medal was awarded from the Washington State Attorney General's Office during the Law Enforcement Medal of Honor / Peace Officer Memorial Ceremony in Olympia.

"During this incident, Deputy Rathbun and Deputy Thompson each placed the life of their partner and the lives of innocent citizens above their own," said David Heitzman, Attorney General's Chief Criminal Investigator and Secretary of the Law Enforcement Medal of Honor Committee.

"We are extraordinarily proud of these deputies for their performance under fire and their endurance and efforts through the recovery process as well as their commitment to return to serving our community," said Sheriff Bill Elfo. "We are also very grateful for the assistance provided in the field by responding law enforcement officers and the private citizens who risked their lives to assist; the medical care provided by Fire/EMS personnel and PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center; the overwhelming prayers, support and kindness of so many; and the esteemed Committee of law enforcement professionals who reviewed our nomination and selected Deputy Rathbun and Deputy Thompson for this recognition of exceptional meritorious conduct."

[A link to the Body Worn Camera footage of the incident that led to this award can be found here.](#)

Photos follow, courtesy of Heather Davis, Photographer, Office of Government and Media Relations, Washington State Patrol.



Sheriff Bill Elfo, Washington State Patrol Chief John Batiste, Deputy Ryan Rathbun and wife Jessica, AG Bob Ferguson



Sheriff Bill Elfo, Washington State Patrol Chief John Batiste, Deputy Jason Thompson and wife Tawsha, AG Bob Ferguson

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The Whatcom County Sheriff's Office is located at 311 Grand Avenue in Bellingham, Washington.
Office Hours are Monday – Friday, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm