



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OFFICER INJURED DEFENDING PERSONNEL AND PATIENTS AT HOSPITAL

ATHENS, TENNESSEE – June 21, 2019 – On Friday, June 21, 2019, at approximately 8:00 am, officers from the Athens Police Department were dispatched to the Starr Regional Medical Center in reference to a mental health patient that was fighting with ER Staff.

Officers arrived on scene and immediately intervened to subdue the suspect and prevent him from fleeing to the interior of the hospital. During the scuffle, Officer Randy Queen wrestled with the suspect on the ground and suffered an injury to his leg. He saw that the suspect was trying to run into the interior of the hospital but was unable to stand and pursue him. Fearful that the suspect would harm someone within the hospital if he escaped the area, he shouted for the other officer on the scene, Beau Swafford, to deploy his Taser. Officer Swafford deployed his Taser and was able to successfully subdue the suspect until other officers arrived on scene and helped take him into custody.

The suspect will face multiple charges for the incident, including simple assault, assaulting an officer, resisting arrest, and evading arrest.

Chief Couch, of the Athens Police Department, said “I’m proud of the way that these officers put themselves in harm’s way to defend our citizens today. Unfortunately, this injury isn’t an uncommon occurrence. Athens Police Officers are routinely injured, exposed to communicable diseases, and subjected to verbal abuse by suspects in the course of their duties. Words can’t express the admiration I have for the way that these men and women go about their duties, despite the often-harsh conditions associated with the law enforcement profession.”

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