



# St. Petersburg Police Department News Release



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## **For Immediate Release**

February 22, 2011

## **St. Petersburg Police Officer Killed in the Line of Duty**

Officer David S. Crawford, 46, a sworn officer with the St. Petersburg Police Department for over 25 years (he was sworn in as a police officer on July 13, 1985) has been shot and killed in the line of duty. His family has been notified and they are now at the hospital.

The St. Petersburg Police Department is still mourning the loss of Sergeant Thomas Baitinger and K-9 Officer Jeffrey Yaslowitz, both of whom were killed by a wanted fugitive 28 days ago.

### Summary:

On Monday February 21, 2011 at 10:30 p.m., Officer David Crawford and Officer Donald J. Ziglar, 41, responded to the 700 block of 3rd Avenue South on a call of a Suspicious Person.

A resident there called the St. Petersburg Police Department after observing a man, holding a broken brick in his hand, walking in the rear yard of the resident's home. The resident thought the man might be trying to commit a burglary in the area.

The resident described the suspicious person as a black male in his late teens or early twenties, wearing a dark-colored hoodie. The resident last saw the man when he jumped a wall or a fence.

Officer Ziglar arrived on the scene at 10:34 p.m. Officer Crawford arrived a few seconds later.

Additional patrol officers began moving into the area as well.

Officer Crawford circulated the area in his police cruiser and found the man near the southwest corner of the intersection of 2nd Avenue South and 8th Street South.

Officer Crawford parked his cruiser near the corner of that intersection and exited his vehicle to approach the man.

At 10:37 p.m., Officer Ziglar reported an exchange of gunfire and then told the Communications Center that an officer was down.

Officer Ziglar found Officer Crawford lying on the pavement near his cruiser. Officer Crawford had sustained multiple gunshot wounds fired from close range.

The suspect fled the area on foot. He has not been captured at this time.

There was no evidence at the scene to indicate the suspect was injured during the exchange of gunfire with Officer



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Crawford.

Officer Crawford was transported to Bayfront Medical Center where he was pronounced dead.

The suspect fled the area on foot, heading generally south from the scene. St. Petersburg Police Department K-9 teams tracked the suspect for several blocks until they lost the suspect's scent. Police Officers with bloodhounds were also brought in and those teams produced the same results.

Many police units are now conducting a grid search of the area, which extends generally south of the scene of the shooting for several blocks.

Some streets are closed to all vehicular traffic until further notice, including: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street South from 1st Avenue South to 15th Avenue South and 8th Street South between 1st Avenue South and 5th Avenue South.

Please advise all north-west traffic to use either 4th Street South or 16th Street South.

Police units have also established check points at various locations inside of the search area so officers can check all vehicles leaving the area.

Rick Stelljes, Campus Police, Pinellas County Schools, has advised us that the school system is closing three schools located in or near the search area for the day.

Here are the schools that are affected: John Hopkins Middle School is closed and all students will be notified to attend class at Thurgood Marshall Middle School; Campbell Park Elementary School is closed and all students will be notified to attend class at Fairmount Park Elementary School; and, Melrose Elementary School is closed and all students will be notified to attend class at Perkins Elementary School.

Chief Harmon has made an appeal to the public, asking that anyone with information about the shooting or the identity of the killer to please call our Communications Center at 893-7780.

Information by Bill Proffitt on February 22, 2011 at 5:00 a.m.