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PRESS RELEASE

September 6, 2017

WILLIAM WARD CONVICTED OF FIVE FELONIES INCLUDING ASSAULTING OFFICERS WITH DEADLY WEAPONS: SENTENCED TO MAXIMUM

William Jay Ward, 66, was sentenced to state prison on September 5, 2017 to the maximum sentence allowed of 23 years and 8 months for his assault on multiple police officers on February 25, 2016 just outside of Benton, CA. A Mammoth jury had previously found Mr. Ward guilty of all counts on June 8, 2017. This will be Mr. Ward's third commitment to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and had been previously convicted of a strike offense for assaulting a police officer with a firearm in Fresno County.

On February 25, 2016, Mr. Ward was contacted by Mono County Sheriff's deputies in an attempt to have him vacate the property he was illegally squatting on. As deputies requested Mr. Ward to come outside, Mr. Ward sped away from the property in his vehicle in an attempt to flee the deputies. Once Mr. Ward was cornered and ordered to surrender, he rammed Deputy Magdaleno Hernandez's vehicle at a high rate of speed. Deputy Hernandez was able to jump from the vehicle a split second before impact and was not injured.

Mr. Ward refused to surrender and embarked on a short vehicle pursuit through the sagebrush. He was traveling at speeds upwards of 40 mph. The deputies followed Mr. Ward along a dirt road with their lights and sirens activated. Mr. Ward ultimately returned to the property where this incident started and barricaded himself in the home.

The Inyo-Mono Special Enforcement Detail Team ("SED") arrived and assumed command of the scene. Hours later, the SED team approached the home with an armored vehicle in an attempt to either breach the house or have Mr. Ward peacefully surrender. Instead of surrendering, Mr. Ward shot at the armored vehicle with pellets from a high-powered pellet gun which the jury found to be capable of causing great bodily injury or death. One of the pellets struck Inyo County Sheriff Lt. Juan Martinez in the head, resulting in a divot in his ballistic helmet. Mr. Ward fired shots at the deputies for approximately fifteen minutes.

The SED team introduced CS (tear) gas into the home which had little to no effect on Mr. Ward. The team eventually breached the house and Mr. Ward wrestled with two deputies and pulled the gas mask off of one of the deputies. That deputy immediately exited the home and vomited from exposure of the CS gas. Mr. Ward was taken into custody and a search incident to arrest revealed at least ten fixed-blade knives concealed all over his body.