



Rick Staly, Sheriff

## FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

*"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."*

# NEWS RELEASE

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**Prepared by:** Shannon Martin

**Phone and Email:** (386) 281-9733; [martin@flaglersheriff.com](mailto:martin@flaglersheriff.com)

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## **Busy Memorial Day Weekend and Increased Patrols** **Results in a Safe Holiday Weekend for Most and** **Arrests for Some**

The men and women of the Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) maintained an increased presence on roadways with a seatbelt, speed, and aggressive driving enforcement along with countywide DUI enforcement over the Memorial Day weekend. The Marine Unit patrolled the beaches and Intracoastal waterways as well to promote boater safety and deter Boating Under the Influence (BUI) as long as the weather permitted.



Speed enforcement detail with Deputy Uncle Sam.

Deputy Uncle Sam was assisting deputies with a speed enforcement detail on Palm Coast Parkway on Monday. The FCSO encourages everyone to obey posted speed limit signs for the safety of themselves and others on the roadway.

"I believe the extra presence of deputies on the roadways and waterways along with a lot of rain on

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1769 East Moody Blvd., Bunnell, FL 32110

386-437-4116 – Fax 386-586-4888

Mailing: P.O. Box 879, Bunnell, FL 32110

[www.flaglersheriff.com](http://www.flaglersheriff.com)

Monday helped us have a safe weekend in Flagler County,” Sheriff Rick Staly said. “The overall goal was to keep Flagler County residents and visitors safe and we achieved that, but some did not listen and spent part of the holiday weekend in the Green Roof Inn.”

The increased presence of deputies resulted in a total of 3 DUI arrests and zero BUIs over the holiday weekend. There were a total of 36 vehicle crashes with 13 of them resulting in injuries to the occupants of the vehicles. A total of 209 traffic stops were made along with 20 boating stops. In addition, a total of 15 arrests were made for various other violations of Florida laws.

One arrest of note from the holiday weekend occurred on May 29, at 4:05 AM, when deputies observed a white Toyota Camry, operated by Taro Ward (DOB: 10/17/1999), traveling on US Highway 1 approaching South Old Dixie Highway.

Ward’s vehicle entered the round-a-bout in the left lane and began to straddle the solid white line separating the lanes. Deputies then saw Ward exit the round-a-bout, failing to maintain a single lane and crossing a solid white line.

Deputies attempted a traffic stop on Ward and he initially seemed compliant but then fled. Once it was clear the vehicle was fleeing from law enforcement, deputies deactivated emergency lights and sirens and did not pursue.

Deputies observed Ward’s vehicle a short time later traveling eastbound on County Road 304 from State Road 11. Deputies were able to successfully deploy stop sticks and Ward’s vehicle became disabled.

Deputies located the vehicle crashed nearby with no passengers, but could hear voices in the woods. A perimeter was established and the FCSO K-9 Unit and Volusia air support responded.

Around 5:00 AM, deputies located two subjects, identified as Justin Hill (DOB: 11/21/1997) and Carlton Hankerson (DOB: 03/03/1998), laying on a truck inside a fenced property. Hankerson was found to have a 9mm pistol magazine containing ammunition. Another 9mm pistol was located near the vehicle with ammunition. The subjects were secured and placed in a patrol vehicle.

When questioned by deputies, Hankerson and Hill admitted to running from the vehicle and that there was a 3<sup>rd</sup> subject with them, Ward. Further investigation found the vehicle belonged to Enterprise Rental and was rented to Ward.

Ward was entered as missing and the search continued until the following afternoon when a resident called FCSO and reported that they had found a naked male, Ward, laying in their yard asking for help. Ward was taken into custody and transported to AdventHealth for medical evaluation. Footage of the incident can be seen here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qSAYUroqpar2qOXvs1BG-CYRddHbOkOu/view?usp=sharing>

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Hankerson, Hill, and Ward were arrested and transported to the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility.

Hankerson is charged with Carrying a Concealed Firearm and Resisting an Officer without Violence. He was held on a \$3,000.00 bond. Hill is charged with Resisting an Officer without Violence and was held on a \$500.00 bond.

Ward is charged with Aggravated Fleeing with Property Damage, Resisting an Officer without Violence, and Leaving the Scene of a Crash with Damage to Property. Ward was also wanted by Bradford County for an out-of-county warrant for Possession of Marijuana and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia.

“We had a busy Memorial Day Weekend answering over 1,328 calls for service,” Sheriff Staly said. “A few people tested our will to keep the community safe and instead lost their freedom by visiting the Green Roof Inn, like the guys that fled from deputies. This is another great example of how our deputies never know what a traffic stop can lead too. But these offenders learned that when you run from FCSO you still go to jail, you just go there tired and with more charges and in this case naked. I also thank the resident that called us that helped us find the last offender.”

While Memorial Day weekend is over, the Flagler County Sheriff’s Office asks the public to continue to practice boating and water safety as we enter the summer months and never drink and drive.

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