

Man shot with bean bag round still in hospital

JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

A member of a forest work crew is recovering after being shot with a bean bag round on a dare Tuesday night.

Gregory Barron, 29, of Reno, Nevada, was shot in the upper thigh at the Frazier Campground near the Umatilla-Union county line while a group of people were drinking and celebrating. According to reports from the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office, Barron and Austin Vaught, 28, agreed to shoot each other with the bean bag rounds on a dare. Vaught, a Greenville, Texas, resident, was not shot.

Sheriff's Capt. Dave Williamson said Barron was still in Grande Ronde Hospital in La Grande and that his condition was stable, but deputies had not yet been able to speak to him. A spokesperson for the hospital declined to confirm Barron's condition.

Ian Reid, the district ranger for the North Fork John Day Ranger District, said the two men were with his group, a 20-person crew of veterans from all branches

of the armed services that spend the summer thinning forest and working as an initial fire suppression crew during the summer.

Reid said he had been gone all week and was not present when the incident happened.

The men were off duty when the incident happened, Reid said, and may have been done with their temporary employment for the season. Reid said he had not yet spoken to Barron or Vaught, but hoped to speak with both of them and make sure they are OK.

"I'm sure he probably feels a lot of remorse," Reid said. "It was an accident. It's a very tight-knight group."

Bean bag rounds are classified as "less lethal" ammunition that can be shot from a shotgun or rifle. The rounds are supposed to hit a larger area and not penetrate the body. They spread out in flight and distribute the impact of the round over the target. They are sometimes used by police to slow or suppress someone. Though not necessarily lethal, they are still dangerous and can be fatal if shot from too close or at a vital organ.

Cause of shed fire at mobile homes unknown

East Oregonian

A shed in a Hermiston mobile home park caught fire Friday morning, sending a column of smoke into the sky and sending residents of the park out of their homes. No one was reported to be injured, and the cause of the fire is still unknown.

The back shed at a home in Vista Park Mobile Home Park, on Northeast 10th Street, caught fire, spreading to the awning of the home. According to park manager Pat Hughes, the home itself was not burned.

Hughes said he and a few other residents were trying to fight the flames

before firefighters got there, in efforts to save the house. Several water tenders and ambulances from Umatilla County Fire District arrived on the scene shortly after the fire started.

Hughes said he was not sure if anyone was in the home at the time of the fire, but that three or four people live there.

Cole Willenberg, who lives in the home where the shed caught fire, said he was at a friend's house when he came outside and saw smoke coming from his home.

Another resident said there were several family heirlooms in the shed.

Teen suffers life-threatening injuries

Underwent emergency surgery, making remarkable recovery

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Pendleton High School sophomore Tristan Morris is recovering after suffering life-threatening injuries in a crash.

His father, David Morris of Adams, said the 16-year-old boy was driving Wednesday at about 7:45 a.m. on Cayuse Road when his car ended up in a ditch. An ambulance transported Tristan to St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton, then to an emergency helicopter that flew him to Oregon Health & Science University, Portland.

Tristan, 16, suffered fractures in his face and other injuries, David Morris said. His son also underwent emergency surgery Thursday morning in which doctors removed a part of his skull to allow for brain swelling.

Since then, Tristan has shown remarkable recovery, his father said, and is now breathing on his own.

"Now it's just monitoring him 24 hours a day," Morris said.

Tristan is a big game hunter and plays baseball and basketball, David Morris said, but the long recovery he faces could hamper those endeavors. Morris also thanked school sports teams, family and friends for their outpouring of love and support for Tristan.

PHS student Cora Theis opened a donations web page Friday with a \$20,000 goal to help pay for Tristan's medical expenses. The effort raised more than \$2,400 in its first four hours.

The crash was the first of several in recent days that sent locals to hospitals.

Travis Hoeft, 27, of



Contributed photo by Shawn Penninger

This head-on crash Thursday near Pendleton sent the two drivers to hospitals.

Pendleton, and Jack Mann, 49, of Pilot Rock, went to separate hospitals after a head-on crash Thursday around 5 p.m. near Pendleton.

The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office in a written statement reported Hoeft was driving

a Dodge Ram pickup on Hoeft Road when he crossed into the oncoming lane and smashed into a Chevrolet Silverado. The head-on crash trapped Mann, the Chevrolet's driver.

The Pendleton Fire and Ambulance Department responded to the wreck, along with sheriff's deputies, Pilot Rock fire and police and the commercial emergency service LifeFlight. Emergency workers freed Mann and a helicopter ambulance flew him to Kadlec Regional Medical Center, Richland, Washington.

Hoeft also suffered injuries; a ground ambulance took him to St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton.

The sheriff's office did not report information about their injuries. St. Anthony



Contributed photo by Shawn Penninger

A LifeFlight helicopter lifts Thursday with one patient after a head-on crash Thursday near Pendleton.

treated and released Hoeft, and Kadlec staff reported Mann was not at the hospital.

The sheriff's office also reported Hoeft received a citation for careless driving.

And Pendleton emergency crews Friday morning freed another driver. The city fire department responded to the westbound side of Interstate 84 near milepost 225 to assist the Umatilla Tribal Fire Department with the crash of a semitrailer. First responders removed the driver from the rig after extensive work.

Shawn Penninger, Pendleton's assistant fire chief, stated in an email this was

the first time the department used its new extrication equipment to help save a life. He added Pendleton's fire bond, which voters approved in November, paid for the equipment.

The driver was seriously injured, according to the statement, and fog grounded the LifeFlight helicopter. A ambulance took the victim to St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton.

Agencies have not identified the driver.

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.

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For more information, please call (541) 276-1987.

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