

# OCJS Special Report

Ohio Statistical Analysis Center

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## *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted 2011*

### U.S. and Ohio Statistical Summary

In November 2012, the FBI released its annual *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted* for 2011. The report is based on data submitted to the FBI from agencies participating in the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Program, FBI field offices, and federal agencies including the U.S. Capitol Police, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of the Treasury, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. Data is provided for duly sworn city, university and college, county, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement officers feloniously killed, officers accidentally killed, and officers assaulted, with narrative descriptions provided for incidents where officers were feloniously killed.

The data pertain to those officers who at the time of the incident met the following criteria:

- They were working in an official capacity
- They had full arrest powers
- They ordinarily wore a badge and carried a firearm
- They were paid from governmental funds set aside specifically for payment of sworn law enforcement representatives

In addition, their deaths must have been directly related to injuries received during the incidents.

#### **U.S. statistics**

- Seventy-two law enforcement officers were feloniously killed in the line of duty in 2011. The deaths occurred in 30 states and Puerto Rico. In 2010, 56 officers were feloniously killed.
- Characteristics of the feloniously killed officer in 2011:
  - Average age was 38.
  - Average length of service was 12 years.
  - 69 officers were male, 3 officers were female.
  - 68 officers were white, 3 were black, and 1 was American Indian/Alaskan Native.
- Characteristics of the incident surrounding the murder:
  - 32 percent occurred during arrest situations.
  - 21 percent occurred in ambush situations.
  - 15 percent occurred during traffic pursuits or stops.
  - 13 percent were killed during tactical situations.
  - 10 percent of officers were killed answering disturbance calls.
  - 7 percent of officers were killed while investigating suspicious persons or circumstances.
  - 1 officer (1%) was killed while transporting or maintaining custody of a prisoner.

- 1 officer (1%) was killed while conducting investigative activity.
- Sixty-three of 72 (88%) officers were killed by a firearm. Of these, 79 percent were killed with handguns, 11 percent were killed with rifles, and 10 percent were killed with shotguns. Ten officers attempted to fire their own weapon and 17 fired their own weapon during the incidents. Thirty-three percent of firearm deaths of officers occurred when the distance between the victim and offender was between 0-5 feet.
- Seventy-one percent of all officers feloniously killed were wearing body armor at the time of their murder.
- Seventy-seven identified offenders were associated with the 72 homicides. The average age of the alleged offenders was 32 years. All but two were male. Of those whose race was reported, forty-three were white, 29 were black, 2 were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 1 was Asian/Pacific Islander. Eighty-three percent had prior criminal arrests, and 22 percent were under judicial supervision at the time of the felonious incident.
- There were 53 accidental deaths of law enforcement officers in 2011. Thirty-five died as the result of a vehicle accident, including automobile (30), motorcycle (4) and aircraft (1) accidents. Five were struck by vehicles (directing or stopping traffic, assisting motorists). Four were accidentally shot as a result of crossfire or other firearm mishaps. Nine officers died as the result of other accidental causes.
- 54,774 officers were assaulted in the line of duty, a rate of 10.2 per 100 sworn officers. Eighty percent of these officers were assaulted with personal weapons, such as hands, fists, or feet. Twenty-seven percent of all assaults resulted in an injury.
- One-third of officers were assaulted while handling a disturbance call. In other circumstances, 15 percent were assaulted while attempting arrest, 13 percent while handling, transporting, or in custody of a prisoner, 9 percent while investigating a suspicious person or circumstance, and 9 percent were assaulted during a traffic pursuit or stop.
- Over a 10-year period, 42 percent of felonious killings of officers occurred in the A.M. hours between midnight and noon, while the remaining 58 percent occurred in the P.M. hours. In 2011, the six-hour stretch between 10 P.M. and 4 A.M. accounted for 35 percent of felonious killings. Interestingly, however, 14 percent (10 incidents) occurred during the daytime hours of 10 A.M. - noon. The six-hour stretch between 8 P.M. and 2 A.M. was the most active time for felonious assaults on officers, as 42 percent of all assaults occurred during this time period.

### Ohio statistics

- There were four felonious officer killings in Ohio in 2011, which is the greatest number of felonious officer killings Ohio has seen since 1997. Since 2002 there have been 17 felonious killings in Ohio. Three of the four officers were killed with a firearm, and one was killed by a vehicle.
  - A 40-year-old deputy sheriff with the Clark County Sheriff's Office was shot and killed in an unprovoked attack on January 1. The deputy, who was a 12-year veteran of law enforcement, and a sergeant responded to shots fired at a trailer park in Springfield. Once on the scene, the deputy, who was wearing body armor, began gathering evidence and photographing the

scene where the shots were allegedly fired. A man exited one of the trailers and shot the deputy in the head with a 12-gauge shotgun. The sergeant ran to the area but was unable to get to her. After calling for assistance, several officers arrived on the scene. Officers prepared to remove the victim deputy when the suspect began shooting at them. An exchange of gunfire ensued. Another officer was shot but was not killed. Special Response Teams from multiple jurisdictions arrived on scene and removed the victim to take her to the hospital, where she later died. It was later found that the 57-year-old suspect apparently died in the shootout with officers.

- o A 61-year-old retired police officer with the Columbus Division of Police died as a result of injuries sustained in an attempted arrest 31 years earlier. On December 18, 1979, the officer, who was 30 years old with 8 years of law enforcement experience, was on patrol in his cruiser. He observed two individuals behaving suspiciously and followed them. They entered a store and the officer followed. The first suspect responded to the officer's request for identification, but the second refused and attempted to reach his right hand into his left front inside coat pocket. The officer grabbed his arm and pulled it back out of his coat. The first suspect moved in from behind and struck the officer in the face. A struggle ensued and the first suspect fell to the floor. The officer reported that his gun fell out of his holster and while he and the first suspect were struggling for the gun, the officer was shot in the rear lower torso/back by the second suspect. Both suspects fled on foot but were tracked to the residence of one of the suspects. Both suspects surrendered after tear gas was shot into the residence. The shooter, a 16-year-old male who was under the influence of narcotics and alcohol, was tried as an adult, found guilty, and sentenced to 25 years in prison. The first suspect was sent to the Ohio Youth Commission. The victim officer was retired on disability after sustaining permanent paralysis below the waist. An autopsy confirmed that his death was a direct result of complications from his injuries.
- o A 30-year-old patrol officer with the Sandusky Police Department was shot and killed on March 19 while attempting to make a traffic stop. Around 3 A.M., the officer, who had nearly 9 years of experience, was traveling in his patrol vehicle when he observed a man riding a bicycle without headlights and attempted to stop him. When the officer blocked the bicycle's path with his car, the man began riding on the sidewalk. The officer exited his vehicle as the man approached the back of the passenger side of the vehicle. The officer ordered the man to get his hands out of his coat, but the man drew a .38-caliber revolver and fired four shots at the officer. He then fired two more shots as he walked around the back of the vehicle. The officer fell to the ground but was able to return fire, striking the offender twice. The offender ran from the scene and was found hiding a short distance away. The officer, who was wearing body armor, was struck in the lower back, arm, and upper back. The officer died from the wound to his upper back, where a round entered through the armhole of his vest. The offender was charged with aggravated murder, having a weapon while under disability, and carrying a concealed weapon. He was under the influence of alcohol and drugs the night of the shooting. He was known to police and had a prior criminal history including murder and police assault.
- o A 36-year-old sergeant with the Warren County Sheriff's Office was killed during a felony traffic pursuit in Lebanon. The pursuit stretched for 12 miles across the county and the suspect's vehicle reached speeds in excess of 120 mph. The suspect also drove directly into the path of oncoming deputies' vehicles, causing the deputies to take evasive actions to avoid a head-on collision. At an intersection on which the suspect was traveling, the sergeant parked his vehicle and attempted to deploy a tire-deflation device. When the vehicle approached the sergeant's location, the driver veered off the highway and struck the sergeant. The sergeant suffered multiple injuries and was killed instantly. Additional units arrived within seconds to find the victim sergeant, but were unable to locate the suspect. Air support and K-9 units were brought in to assist with the search, and K-9 units helped a deputy locate the suspect. The 22-

year old suspect was charged with numerous crimes, including murder. He had a prior criminal record that included drug violations, violent crime, and weapons violations.

- Two Ohio officers were accidentally killed in 2011. An officer from Uniontown Police Department with 20 years of law enforcement experience was struck by a vehicle while directing traffic. An officer from Stow Police Department with 17 years of enforcement experience died from complications from an injury sustained while he was on duty.
- During 2011, 131 Ohio agencies reported 267 assaults on officers. Eighty-seven percent of the assaults were committed with a personal weapon, such as hands, feet, or fists. Five percent were committed with a firearm.
- The rate of assault per 100 officers in Ohio in 2011 was 5.5, which is below the U.S. rate of 10.2 per 100 officers.

