

State Trooper shoots, kills Hardwick man, AG says

Westhoven, William . Daily Record ; Morristown, N.J. [Morristown, N.J]14 June 2018: A.4.

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FULL TEXT

A fatal officer-involved shooting was reported in Hardwick on Tuesday night. This was the second trooper-related fatal shooting in the small rural Warren County township in a span of six days.

The Attorney General's Shooting Response Team is investigating both.

Stephen Cogelia, 32, was fatally shot by a State Trooper at his family home, according to a report from the attorney general's office. Cogelia, according to the report, was armed with a hunting knife and had threatened family members.

Six days earlier, a New York man led troopers on a chase from the Delaware Water Gap to a secluded area of the sparsely populated North Jersey township, where he died after an exchange of gunfire. Attorney general's office spokesman Peter Aseltine said the office has "no information to suggest that these shootings are connected in any way." He declined to give any information on the troopers involved.

New Jersey State Police referred all questions to the attorney general.

State troopers patrol the township with a population 1,696 as of the 2010 U.S. Census. It includes portions of Worthington State Forest and does not have its own police force.

The second shooting occurred shortly after 9 p.m. Tuesday at a home on Sunset Lake Road. According to the preliminary attorney general's office investigation, Cogelia threatened to kill his father who had asked him to leave the home. He also threatened to kill others in the home, according to reports.

Cogelia's father reported the threats in person to the state police station in Hope and asked for a temporary restraining order. While at the station, a relative called the father to report Cogelia had returned to the home and was making additional threats.

Five troopers responded, and according to the attorney general's office, when they entered, Cogelia threatened violence against them.

Troopers encountered Cogelia, who was armed with a knife, in a second floor bedroom, reports show. One trooper fired his service weapon, struck and killed Cogelia, according to the report.

Cogelia was pronounced dead at the scene. No troopers were injured.

Aseltine said no additional information would be released at this time.

The attorney general's Independent Prosecutor Directive establishes strict procedures for conducting all deadly-force investigations. Both incidents are currently under investigation.

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