

Submitter: Jakob Gentry

On Behalf Of: Rex Von Borstel

Committee: Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

Measure: SCR4

Dear Senator Hansell,

I am writing this letter to you to add my support for my step-brother, Sherman County Deputy Douglas Eugene Smith. Doug was like a big brother to me for the short time that I knew him. The day of the fatal crash that took him from us I was out hunting with my dog not more than a mile and a half away. I remember when then Sheriff Gerald Lohrey and our pastor showed up at the house to give us the horrific news of Doug's passing. I remember going outside and sitting on the back porch area and thinking to myself how close I was to the accident and did not have a clue that it had happened. His patrol car along with the other vehicle had burned with such heat that the pavement was melted. For years both Fred and Diane von Borstel could not drive that way. It was simply too painful a reminder. After years of requests to the Oregon DOT to pave over the damage they finally complied and that burned section of road was covered. Doug and his patrol car were removed from the crash site together, covered and hauled to Portland for the medical examiner to remove Doug's remains. Both my adopted parents could not go to Portland to retrieve his ashes, that was left up to me. His duty weapon, a Smith and Wesson .357 magnum is still in my possession, damaged beyond repair. The impact of the crash was so great that his badge was torn off his uniform shirt and went through the windshield, it was later found along side the road. His badge is now at the Sherman County Museum. Both Fred and Diane never recovered from his death. His older brother Steve has passed as well. As you may know I am the only surviving member of the immediate family. I have waited for years to see some sort of marker be placed where he passed. The time that I spent with Doug I will never forget. I spent forty-one years in law enforcement and have just recently retired. Doug was a shining example of what law enforcement was all about.

Please consider this letter as my support for resolution in accordance with HB 3039 and request the Oregon Department of Transportation place a roadside memorial along Highway 97 in Sherman County to remind people passing by the spot where he died of the sacrifice he made.

Sherman County Sheriff Brad Lohrey and I grew up together and we both remember what Doug meant to the people that loved him and those he served.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Rex von Borstel