

06-06-2021 William H Smith – LEO – Attempted Rescue - Surf

Deputy Sheriff William H. Smith

<https://www.odmp.org/officer/25316-deputy-sheriff-william-h-smith>



**Baldwin County Sheriff's Office, Alabama
End of Watch Sunday, June 6, 2021**

WILLIAM H. SMITH

Deputy Sheriff Bill Smith drowned while attempting a water rescue of three distressed swimmers in the Gulf of Mexico off of Fort Morgan Road.

He and another deputy entered the water in an attempt to rescue the three swimmers. Deputy Smith also became distressed during the rescue. Deputy Smith was taken to a nearby medical facility where he was pronounced dead. The other deputy and all three swimmers were also treated at local facilities.



Deputy Smith had served with the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office for seven years. He had previously served with the Calhoun County Sheriff's Office and had served as a firefighter for 30 years.

BIO

- Age 57
- Tour 7 years
- Badge Not available.

INCIDENT DETAILS

Cause Drowned
Water Rescue

Baldwin County Deputy Drowns, Another Hospitalized Saving Swimmer

<https://www.al.com/news/2021/06/baldwin-county-deputy-drowns-another-hospitalized-trying-to-saving-swimmer.html>

Jun. 06, 2021

Law enforcement officials are offering condolences to the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office after one deputy reportedly drowned and another was hospitalized Sunday after trying to save a swimmer in distress. Efforts by AL.com to reach sheriff's office officials late Sunday night were not immediately successful.

Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall identified the deputy as William "Bill" Smith, 57. Marshall said Smith died while successfully rescuing the swimmer Sunday night. "Deputy Smith's brave and swift response to save the life of another should cause us all to pause and reflect upon the sacrifice of all law enforcement. We can never repay Deputy Smith for putting the life of a potential victim ahead of his own," Marshall said. "Tonight, we

offer our prayers to Deputy Smith's family and his friends and colleagues in the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office." Marshall said Smith is married and has two children.

Smith served previously with the Calhoun County Sheriff's Office before joining the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office seven years ago, Marshall said.

"Praying for our brothers and sisters at the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office. Sending much love and prayers their way," Escambia County Sheriff Heath Jackson posted.

Fox 10 reported the two deputies went into the water after spotting a swimmer in distress in the Gulf of Mexico.

Additional details were not immediately available.

This is a developing story and will be updated as more information is available.

Baldwin County Deputy Drowns Trying To Save Swimmer In Distress Near Fort Morgan

https://www.fox10tv.com/news/baldwin_county/baldwin-county-deputy-drowns-trying-to-save-swimmer-in-distress-near-fort-morgan/article_5139b67c-c733-11eb-bf9a-333aa7a03427.html?fbclid=IwAR2ncV1C34CwUvQUKy121eNFV_nu7vVYiccATQ_pMXz5ZYXRRdQFrEc6ITI

June 6, 2-021

FORT MORGAN, Ala. (WALA) -- A Baldwin County sheriff's deputy died Sunday night after he went into the water to save three swimmers in distress.

A law enforcement source told FOX10 News two deputies were patrolling the area when they spotted the swimmers in trouble in the Gulf.

According to officials, Deputy Bill Smith died during the rescue attempt, the other deputy is hospitalized and expected to survive.



(March 26, 2021) Deputies Sydney Wentworth and Bill Smith organize lifesaving equipment before going on patrol



BCSO Deputy Sydney Wentworth

The swimmers rescued from the Gulf are also expected to survive.

In March, [Deputy Smith was featured in a FOX10 News story](#) about Baldwin County deputies assigned to patrol the Fort Morgan peninsula and be ready to respond to any calls for assistance or emergencies.

Sheriff Huey "Hoss" Mack said Smith was a seven-year veteran of the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office.

The City of Orange Beach on Monday morning released a statement indicating that a fellow deputy who also responded has been released from the hospital.

The statement reads: "Condolences to family & friends of Baldwin County Sheriff's Deputy Bill Smith who died Sunday while responding to swimmers in distress on the Fort Morgan

peninsula. BCSO Deputy Sydney Wentworth has been released from hospital and is expected to recover after responding as well."

Sheriff Says Deputy Bill Smith Died A "True Hero" While Saving Lives

https://www.fox10tv.com/news/baldwin_county/sheriff-says-deputy-bill-smith-died-a-true-hero-while-saving-lives/article_612766a2-c7c8-11eb-857a-374a19b7fd53.html

June 7, 2021

GULF SHORES, Ala. (WALA) -- Baldwin County Sheriff Huey "Hoss" Mack revealed more details about the water rescue in the Gulf that led to the death of Deputy Bill Smith.

The sheriff said Smith died while successfully saving the lives of swimmers in distress and is a true hero.

Deputy Smith and Deputy Sydney Wentworth were called to the area of Dune Drive in Fort Morgan around 6 p.m. Sunday after a report of a swimmer in distress. The sheriff's office said Wentworth went into the Gulf to rescue a woman who was struggling to stay above the water.

Sheriff Mack said a beach attendant noticed the swimmer and Wentworth in the water and rushed in to help, not realizing the deputy was rescuing the swimmer.

As the beach attendant swam out to the two women, he started going underwater himself. The attendant told investigators he then felt Deputy Smith grab him and tell him to hold on to a rescue buoy and swim to shore.

As Smith was towing the attendant to the shore, he was overcome by the heavy seas and went under. Deputy Smith and the attendant were pulled to the shore by Logan Lambert of the Gulf Shores Fire Department. Deputy Smith was rushed to the emergency room where he was pronounced dead.

"Bill Smith did what Bill Smith always did," Sheriff Mack said. "He saw the need to put his life on the line to save somebody else's. And that's what he did. He saved a life."

Sheriff Mack said everyone else pulled from the water is expected to survive. Smith had been with the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office for seven years and previously served with the Calhoun County Sheriff's Office in northern Alabama.

The sheriff said Smith played an essential role in starting up the Beach Patrol Unit serving Fort Morgan.

Smith's Beach Patrol vehicle will be on display at the sheriff's office in Robertsdale as a memorial for anyone wishing to leave flowers or say a prayer for Smith's family and coworkers.



Deputy Bill Smith's Beach Patrol truck

In Memory of Deputy Sheriff William H. Smith

<https://caseguard.com/articles/in-memory-of-deputy-sheriff-william-h-smith/>



JUNE 06, 2021 |

Alabama Deputy Drowns in the Gulf of Mexico

Alabama residents were stunned to hear the news that a local deputy had died while attempting a rescue over the weekend. On Sunday, June 6, 2021, Deputy Sheriff William H. Smith drowned while trying to rescue distressed swimmers in the Gulf of Mexico.

Smith was 57 years old, yet despite his age and the equipment he was wearing, he went into the water to rescue the life of another.

Smith, a retired firefighter from northern Alabama, served with the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office for the past seven years. At around 6:00 pm, four swimmers decided to venture out for a swim in the gulf near Indie Condos on Dune Drive. A call came into the department about a swimmer in possible distress, and several law enforcement officers in the area answered the call.

Deputy Smith went in the water to save another person's life and tragically lost his own. Another deputy, Sydney Wentworth, also nearly drowned and had to be rescued by other emergency personnel. She was treated at the local hospital and released. Deputy Smith was pronounced dead when he arrived.

Smith is the second officer to lose their life in the US in the past weekend during a water rescue attempt. Water safety is essential for everyone to follow.

Baldwin County Sheriff's Office

Smith had served with the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office. The BCSO is the primary law enforcement agency for the unincorporated areas of Baldwin County, Alabama. Located in Bay Minette, Alabama, the county covers 437 square miles of coastline and waterways that the sheriff's office patrols.

The BSO was initiated in 1809 with its first sheriff, Benjamin Baldwin. The deputies patrol an area of approximately 2,027 square miles and serve a population of roughly 224,000 residents.

Remembrances

Deputy Smith leaves behind his family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers. All will come together to grieve and celebrate the life of Deputy William H. Smith. He touched many lives through his civil service. He spent more than thirty years as a firefighter and worked as a deputy with the Calhoun County Sheriff's office for many years.

Many individuals in the community will honor him as he is laid to rest with the many honors he has earned.

The Baldwin County Sheriff's Office released a statement regarding the loss of Deputy Smith. "It is with great sadness the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office has to confirm the loss of one of our own. Deputy Bill Smith passed away last night, June 6th, while attempting a water rescue of a swimmer in distress on Fort Morgan Road.

Another deputy also had entered the water in an attempt to rescue the individuals as well. That deputy was transported to a hospital and is going to be OK. All of the swimmers (3) who were in distress are being treated for the non-life-threatening situation.

Deputy Smith was a seven-year veteran of the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office. Thank you for keeping Deputy Smith's family and the sheriff's office in your prayers."

Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall shared his condolences. "Tonight, we have lost a brave Deputy in the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office, and another is in the hospital after an accident while trying to rescue swimmers in distress. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families and the entire Baldwin County Sheriff's Office."



<https://bcsofoundation.baldwincountyal.gov/BillSmith>

Deputy William H. "Bill" Smith, Jr. age 57, a native of Alexandria, Alabama and a resident of Gulf Shores, Alabama passed away Sunday, June 6, 2021. Bill was preceded in death by his parents, William H. Smith, Sr. and Marian A. Pate. He is survived by his wife, Samantha K. Smith, two sons, William H. "Bo" Smith, III and Michael Jacob "Jake" Smith; sister, Dr. Patty Pate Atkinson and her husband, Dr. John Atkinson and their children, Prescott, Shelby and Anna Lee. Funeral services will be held Saturday, June 12, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. at the Baldwin County Coliseum, 19477 Fairground Road, Robertsedale, AL 36567.

The family will receive friends prior to the service beginning at 12:30 until the service time at 2:00 p.m. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Michael Malone Memorial Scholarship Fund 800 Veterans Road, Gulf Shores, AL 36542 or to the Baldwin County Sheriff's Foundation, 310 Hand Avenue, Bay Minette, AL 36507.

Bill truly had a servant's heart. His career in Public Service began as a volunteer fireman while still in high school. He went on to become a Paramedic/Firefighter in Dekalb County Georgia. It was there in his 30 years of service, he rose through the ranks to Deputy Chief of Operations, receiving multiple Medal's of Honor, Exceptional Merit Awards, as well as Firefighter of the Year. During his off time from Georgia, Bill was the Fire Chief in his hometown of Weaver Alabama, and was a mentor to countless volunteer firemen, otherwise known as "Bill's Boys". Many of them would go on to a professional career in the Fire Service.

Bill also worked for Dale Jarret Racing Adventure as a driver/instructor, giving people the opportunity of a lifetime to ride in or drive a race car around various Nascar tracks in the Central and Southeastern US.

Shortly after retirement from the Fire Service, Bill decided to begin a new career, this time in Law Enforcement. He was hired by Calhoun County Sheriff Department and sent to the Sheriff's Training Academy, where he was elected President of his class.

With a lifelong love of the beach, Bill applied and was hired at Baldwin County Sheriff's Office. Bill loved his department, his co-workers, and was especially proud of his detail in Fort Morgan. He made fast friends with the Fort Morgan Fire Department personnel.

Bill didn't believe in giving anything less than 150% in everything he did, including loving his wife and children with every ounce of his being.

It is said that your life is made of two dates and a dash. Bill's dash was filled with passion, purpose, adventure, service to others, and most importantly, love.