

Sheriff's deputy rescues man from burning car

by Cheryl McDermott

A King County Sheriff's Office sergeant risked his life Friday to save an unconscious man trapped in a burning car near the Seattle-Tacoma airport, authorities reported.

Sergeant Bryan Howard, a 38-year old, 16-year veteran who currently serves as a K-9 sergeant, was on patrol when he heard the sound of a loud collision about 1 a.m., April 13.

According to a news release, Howard looked for the crash and four blocks away found a car high-centered and teetering on a barrier at International Boulevard and S.R. 518, on fire and billowing dense smoke.

Howard was unable to see if the car was occupied, and quickly moved to temporarily knock back the flames with a fire extinguisher. Still unable to see, he climbed into the passenger side of the vehicle, and by feel he located the driver behind the wheel.

Sgt. Howard tried to pull the unconscious man out of the burning vehicle, but first had to cut the driver's seat belt before he was able to drag the victim out of harm's way, deputies said.

Howard returned to the car to search for other victims, but the driver, a 24-year old Kent, Washington resident, was the only occupant.

As the sergeant dragged the still unconscious man farther away from the vehicle, the car fully engulfed in flames.

The driver was taken to a hospital, but deputies later determined he had allegedly been drinking, and he was placed into custody and turned over to a Washington State Trooper.

Sgt. Howard suffered from minor smoke inhalation, and was treated at Highline Hospital and released.

Sheriff's deputy rescues man from burning car by Cheryl McDermott