

**CONTACT:**

**Walt Stowe**

PIO/Community Relations Deputy  
Garfield County Sheriff's Office  
106 County Road 333-A  
Rifle, CO 81650  
Cell: (970) 309-9697  
Email: [wstowe@garcosheriff.com](mailto:wstowe@garcosheriff.com)



**SHERIFF LOU VALLARIO**  
**GARFIELD COUNTY, COLORADO**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

---

For Immediate Release

Date: May 9, 2014

Time: 12:45 PM

Title: Shooter Identified

**IMPORTANT:** Please direct any media requests to the contact above. Do not contact the Garfield County Emergency Communications Center or Patrol staff for media requests.

GARFIELD COUNTY, Colo. –

On Thursday morning at approximately 9:10 AM two Colorado State Troopers stopped to assist a motorist on Westbound I-70 at the 129 mile marker.

Colorado State Trooper Eugene Hofacker approached the driver's side of the stopped car. The driver, Thomas Albert Orneles, born July 7, 1973 shot Trooper Hofacker . The second Trooper, who was approaching from the rear returned fire on the suspect.

The suspect, Orneles, was killed in the exchange. There were no other occupants in the car and therefore no other suspects in the shooting.

The ensuing investigation required the closure of I-70 in both directions for an extended period of time. East bound traffic was released shortly after 2:00 PM and west bound traffic resumed around 4:30 PM, once the crime scene had been recorded and a proper investigation completed.

Trooper Hofacker was transported to the Valley View Hospital in Glenwood Springs. As of the time of this report Trooper Hofacker is reported to be doing well and in high spirits despite relatively serious injuries.

The Garfield Sheriff's Office would like to extend a sincere thanks to all the agencies that worked together on this incident, including the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, the Glenwood Springs, Police Department, Colorado State Patrol, the Eagle County Sheriff's Office, the Garfield County Coroner and any other agencies directly or indirectly involved in the investigation of this incident.

**No further information will be released.**

*The mission of the Garfield County Sheriff's Office is to provide solutions for the people by utilizing and employing strong morals, good character, untarnished integrity, technical knowledge and fiscal responsibility through professional, ethical and equitable conduct.*

# # #