

Tarrytown trooper killed in accident

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YONKERS — A 31-year-old state trooper from Tarrytown was killed last night in a violent crash on the New York State Thruway after his cruiser was struck from behind by a Jeep Cherokee at the scene of a minor accident.

The White Plains man driving the Jeep also died, according to an Associated Press report this morning. Six other people were injured in the accident, according to Trooper Jesse Temple, a state police spokesman.

The trooper was identified as Robert Ambrose, 31, of Tarrytown.

Ambrose was parked on the shoulder of northbound Interstate 87 at Exit 4, near the Cross County Parkway when the cruiser was rammed from behind by the Jeep Cherokee at approximately 8:30 p.m. The cruiser burst into flames, and both Ambrose and the driver of the Cherokee, Jason Boney, 20, of White Plains, were killed.

After being hit by the Jeep, the cruiser struck the two vehicles that had been involved in the earlier accident.

Two passers-by said they ran to the scene moments after the crash.

"There was a Yonkers police officer smacking the window of the (police) car with a shovel trying to get him out," said Mike Lepratto, 27, of Yonkers. He said he heard bullets exploding in the cruiser as the flames engulfed the vehicle.

Lepratto, who ran to the accident scene with Loukas Soumbasakis, 19, of Yonkers, said they saw the trooper trying in vain to escape from the right side of the vehicle, which was parked next to a guardrail.

A tow-truck driver suffered a serious leg injury, Lepratto said. "It looked like his leg was about to come off," he said.

Stafford Williams, a Yonkers resident who was driving to the Cross County Shopping Center, said he heard the deafening impact 50 feet away and saw the fire. He said he parked his car, ran to the burning car and grabbed two fire extinguishers from the tow truck, but that it was already too late.

"The flames were too much, even with the extinguishers," he said. "We tried to get to him, but the fire was just too much."

Williams said he and other people pulled two victims from the two other cars involved, a Honda and a Buick, both of which had been parked in front of the cruiser.

"They were in really bad shape," he said. "They were bleeding from all over their heads."

Hours after the accident, the mangled and burned cruiser was covered by an orange tarp as dozens of police, firefighters, Department of Transportation workers and other emergency personnel worked at the accident scene. The wreckage of the Jeep, which also was burned, was mangled into the cruiser. The back of the Buick, which was struck

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by the cruiser, was sheared off.

Several grief-stricken police officers could be seen consoling one another. The dead trooper was apparently a training officer.

"I just spoke to him three hours ago," one was heard saying.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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