



## **FORT BRAGG POLICE DEPARTMENT**

250 Cypress Street  
Fort Bragg, CA 95437-5437

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Chief of Police

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

Releasing Officer: Lt. John Naulty  
Report Number: FG1201243  
Date / Time Incident: August 25, 2012, 7:04 p.m.  
Location of Incident: 260 S. Franklin Street, Fort Bragg  
Crime or Incident: Suspicious Structure Fire, Illegal Marijuana Cultivation  
Victim(s): State of California/City of Fort Bragg  
Suspect: Randy W. Wilkinson, 61 years, Fort Bragg

#### **CIRCUMSTANCES:**

On Saturday August 25, 2012, at approximately 7:04 p.m. Fort Bragg Police Officers responded to the area of 260 S. Franklin Street to assist Fort Bragg Fire Department with a reported structure fire at that address. Upon arrival to the area, officers noted that a small garage/shed type structure adjacent to alley east of 250 S. Franklin Street was fully involved in flames.

Fort Bragg Police began evacuating residents in a two story structure south of the location. Fort Bragg Fire arrived on scene and did an excellent job suppressing the fire but also protected any further damage to nearby structures. A neighboring structure was less than ten feet away.

Officers quickly determined the structure was uninhabited, and was being used for indoor cultivation of marijuana. Officers contacted the owner of the property who immediately became evasive about the discovery made, and stated he had "sublet" the shed/garage to a third party whom he could not clearly identify, and denied any knowledge of the illegal activity taking place.

The cause of the fire was not determined by fire investigators prior to officer departure from the scene, however the investigation continues.

On August 27, 2012 Fort Bragg Police officers went back to the 260 S Franklin St. location with a Search Warrant. Officers determined that Randy Wilkinson is the property owner and responsible for growing marijuana that burnt in the structure fire. Officers located another illegal marijuana growing room within his residence, along with burnt items from the shed fire. Fort Bragg Fire was called to respond for a hazard check of the residence. It was determined that Wilkinson's electrical inside the home was unsafe. PG & E was called and terminated power to the residence until proper permits were obtained and the home wiring was repaired.

Fort Bragg Police Department will be submitting this case to the Mendocino County District Attorney for review of charges. The report will also be forwarded to the City of Fort Bragg for the numerous licensing and building code violations that officers observed.

The Fort Bragg Police Department requests that anyone who may have any additional information regarding the cause of this fire or any suspicious activity observed leading up to the fire, contact the Fort Bragg Police Department at 707-964-0200 or leave a message on the Confidential/Anonymous Crime Tip Hotline at 707-961-3049.

The police department requests that if you live near or see illegal marijuana growing operations like this to please call the Police Anonymous Crime Tip Hotline. It is important that residents understand the dangers from the overloading or illegal tapping into electricity that tends to overload a home circuitry, leading to structure fires that can quickly spread, given the right conditions of late at night, heat and or wind.

**END**