



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **SUFFOLK FIRE & RESCUE AWARDS AND RECOGNITION CEREMONY**

SUFFOLK, VA (November 15, 2019) The Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department's Awards and Recognition Ceremony honored members of the Department and citizens in addition to officially promoting six Officers during the event on Thursday, November 7, 2019, at the Hilton Garden Inn – Suffolk Riverfront. The promotees and honorees are detailed as follows:

#### **Battalion Chief James Broglin**

Battalion Chief Broglin joined the ranks of Suffolk Fire & Rescue in April of 1999. He earned an Associate's Degree in Fire Science in 2016 from Columbia Southern University. He is currently assigned as the Department's Health and Safety Officer in administration.

#### **Captain Taz Lancaster**

Captain Lancaster joined the ranks of Suffolk Fire & Rescue in September of 1998. He earned an Associates of Fire Science in 2018 from Columbia Southern University. He is currently assigned to Ladder 3 C Shift.

### **Captain Chris Cornwell**

Captain Cornwell joined the ranks of Suffolk Fire & Rescue in June of 2000. He obtained his Bachelors of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from Bluefield College in 2010. Captain Cornwell is currently assigned to Fire Station #5 A Shift where he serves the Department's newly organized Maritime Incident Response Team.

### **Lieutenant Debbi Dumas**

Lieutenant Dumas started with the City of Suffolk as a Dispatcher before joining Suffolk Fire & Rescue. She later earned her National Registry Paramedic Certification. She is assigned to Engine 25 A Shift.

### **Lieutenant Richard Ward**

Lieutenant Ward joined Suffolk Fire & Rescue in September of 2003. He earned an Associates of Applied Science in Fire Science from Tidewater Community College in 2012. He is currently assigned to Engine 1 B shift.

### **Lieutenant Doug Carter**

Lieutenant Carter began his career with Suffolk Fire & Rescue in October 2011. He obtained an Associates of Applied Science Degree in Emergency Medical Services in 2014. He is currently assigned to Ladder 5 B shift.

### **Firefighter of the Year Award - Lieutenant Kyle Hehl**

Lieutenant Christopher K. Hehl joined the Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department in September 2006. Lt. Hehl received his Associates in Science Degree from Tidewater Community College in 2006. He was promoted to Lieutenant in August 2016 and is currently assigned to Station 1, Engine 2, "C" Shift.

### **Paramedic of the Year Award - Lieutenant Roger Stinnette, Jr.**

Lieutenant Roger W. Stinnette, Jr. joined the Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department in March of 2002. Lt. Stinnette completed his Paramedic Certification in 2001. He was promoted to Lieutenant in August 2016 and is currently assigned to Station 6 Engine 6 C Shift. Lt. Stinnette was also selected as Paramedic of the Year in 2007.

### **Citizen Appreciation Award**

The Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue recognized Solenis (formerly known as BASF), located at 2301 Wilroy Road. On October 10, 2018, Solenis provided their facilities and services to assist Suffolk Fire & Rescue's Technical Rescue Team in a joint level exercise. The confined space drill combined Suffolk's Technical Rescue Team and Solenis Emergency Response Team (ERT) for a well-coordinated and successful training event. Working hand in hand with the Solenis Emergency Response Team provided an invaluable opportunity to build stronger working relationships and team familiarity. This was only accomplished through Solenis' commitment to service and has allowed our organization to maintain a high degree of readiness.

### **Citizen Appreciation Award**

The Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue recognized Skydive Suffolk, located at 1200 Gene Bolton Drive. In April 2018, Skydive Suffolk provided their facilities and services to assist the Tidewater Regional Technical Rescue Team (TRTRT) in a drill hosted by Suffolk Fire & Rescue. Skydive Suffolk not only provided their facility and parachutes for the scenario, but also provided classroom instruction on parachutes and skydive emergencies. Skydive Suffolk's commitment to service allowed for the Regional Team to be better prepared for incidents by maintaining a high degree of readiness for such an event.

### **Citizen Appreciation Award (Civilian Award) – Brian Pritchard**

The Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department honored Brian Pritchard with the Citizen Appreciation Award for making a generous donation to purchase pet resuscitation masks. These masks have been placed in service on all Suffolk Fire & Rescue front line units as well as EMS1. As we all know, pets are just like family and these pet resuscitation masks have been a welcome addition to the tools used daily to protect and serve.

### **Citizen Appreciation Award (Civilian Award) - Peyton Rose**

The Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department honored Peyton Rose with the Citizen Appreciation Award. Rose is a Boy Scout in Suffolk Troop 1 and, as his Eagle Scout project, assembled and donated 100 emergency bags to Suffolk Fire & Rescue to be distributed to children and adults that have been involved in a fire, accident or other type of emergency. These bags have been put into service on all Suffolk Fire & Rescue equipment and provide comfort to citizens at what could possibly be their worst moment.

### **Medal of Honor – Captain Taz Lancaster and Firefighter Matthew Nixon**

On January 1, 2019, a full alarm assignment was dispatched to a residential structure fire at a residence in the 130 block of Maple Street. EMS-1, Engine 3, Ladder 3, Engine 2 and Medic 3 all responded from Station 3. These units arrived in less than 2 minutes to find a one and a half story residential structure with heavy smoke pushing from the gable vents. As the fire personnel approached the house with tools and lines being stretched, neighbors advised that the occupant of the home was still inside the burning house.

The Engine 2 officer established incident command as Engine 3 and Ladder 3 made entry into the structure. Firefighter Nixon and Lieutenant Lancaster led the search as Captain Scott Brower, Firefighter Kate Mason, and Senior Firefighter Michael Turner brought the hose line to protect the search and attack the fire. Firefighter Nixon found the unconscious occupant lying on the floor near a bedroom. He and Lieutenant Lancaster removed the occupant from the burning structure. Once they had the

occupant outside, EMS-1 and Medic 3 rapidly began providing Advanced Life Support medical care. They then transported the patient to the Sentara Norfolk General Hospital Emergency Room where care was transferred to an awaiting critical care team.

The Crews of Engine 3, Ladder 3, Engine 2, Medic 3, and EMS-1 were presented the Certificate of Commendation a Unit Citation as well as a result of their response to this incident.

### **Certificates of Commendation**

*Senior Firefighter Les Lemasters* responded to a call for an adult female who was having a psychiatric issue. With her were her two children, one of which was having a medical issue. After deciding that Medic 5 was going to transport both the mother and the child to the hospital for evaluation, the mother quickly decided that she was going home and took her child and started walking toward her vehicle. Suffolk Police were on scene and an Officer attempted to stop her using de-escalation techniques. At this point, the situation escalated very quickly and the mother with the child in her arms started walking into oncoming traffic on Pughsville Road. Firefighter Lemasters quickly went into action removing the child from harm's way and back to the ambulance. His actions stopped the child from being harmed. His dedication to the goal of protecting life was demonstrated in his actions at this incident.

*Captain John Gray* has served on the Suffolk Peanut Fest Executive Committee as a representative of the Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department since 2000. His many duties include managing the staffing and leading the Emergency Operations Functions to cover both Fire and EMS responses. The festival lasts for four days each October and draws approximately 125,000 people. Captain Gray works closely with the Fire Marshal's Office and the Peanut Fest vendors to make sure they remain compliant to Life Safety and Fire Code Standards.

*Firefighter Barry Utter* demonstrated support of the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) by being the Department's coordinator for the Annual MDA Fill-the-boot Campaign. He was responsible for contacting several locations to secure a partnership with Local 2801 and the Department to allow our members to stand outside their business with the intent to raise funds to support the research for finding a cure for Muscular Dystrophy.

*Lieutenant Craig Abraham* is the National Night Out coordinator for Suffolk Fire & Rescue. He was instrumental in getting Suffolk Fire & Rescue involved in the National Night Out activities and celebration and has been a strong advocate for National Night Out and the Department's involvement.

### **Medal of Merit**

*Fire Training Officer Mary Riddick and Lieutenant Rainey Dail* have demonstrated a long-term commitment to behavioral health by providing certified peer counseling to our members, Dispatchers, Police Officers and neighboring localities. On numerous occurrences, they have responded to the hospital and to fire stations when crews have treated and transported critically injured patients with tremendous potential for triggering posttraumatic stress disorder to offer comfort and professional resources for the trauma our providers have witnessed. They have followed up with the providers to ensure they are on a path of recovery from long term stress. Their commitment to our provider's mental well-being is unwavering even while assigned to the Fire Academy which takes a tremendous amount of their time.

*Fire Medic Joe Jarman and Lieutenant Travis Saunders* demonstrated their support of the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) by walking to Richmond to bring awareness to MDA. They raised a significant amount of money for muscular dystrophy research. Travis and Joe led the kick off of the 2019 Suffolk Fire & Rescue MDA Fill the Boot Campaign and together raised over \$20,000 from their walk.

*Senior Firefighter Lucas Weaver and Lieutenant John Oliver* co-chaired the Health and Safety Committee for several years, even at times when they were only a committee of two. Their contributions include crafting policies regarding Toxic Exposures, Cancer Reduction, Physical Fitness, Traffic Managing, and Personal Protective Equipment Care and Maintenance. They have been instrumental in implementing National Fire Protection Association compliant physicals to enhance the health and safety of our firefighters.

### **Certificate of Commendation a Unit Citation**

*Senior Firefighter David Creekmore and Senior Firefighter Mike Fernandez* were presented with the Certificate of Commendation a Unit Citation. On the afternoon of March 5, 2018, Lieutenant Jeremy Gould, David Creekmore and Mike Fernandez, were assigned to Ladder 5. They responded to assist a citizen off the floor after she had fallen out of her chair. Once off the floor, the citizen reluctantly expressed to the two firefighters her need to use the restroom. David asked the citizen if it would be acceptable if he and Mike helped her to the restroom and stood just outside in the event she was unable to get back up. The citizen was unable to attend to her personal matters and David and Mike decided it was not in keeping with the values of the Department to leave the citizen in such an undignified state. In addition, believing the citizen's living conditions were worthy of review, both firefighters requested Adult Protective Services to respond to the residence. David and Mike's actions that day demonstrated the very best of humanity. Their compassion and empathy for the plight of others are qualities worthy of recognition.

*Lieutenant Robert Hodges, Firefighter Eric Koster and Firefighter Dwight Leidy* were presented with the Certificate of Commendation a Unit Citation. While backfilling Chesapeake Fire Station 12, Engine 2 responded to a residential structure fire in the City of Chesapeake. The call came in at 2:30 a.m. and Engine 2 was the first unit to arrive at a working structure fire with heavy fire showing and all additional resources were a considerable distance away. Conditions were cold, wet and visibility was poor. Though initially presented with many difficulties, including unfavorable weather, poor

visibility, unknown hydrant locations, impaired communications, and an overwhelming amount of tasks that needed to be completed, Lt. Hodges, Koster and Leidy were able to execute a fire attack, search a building and establish water supply before additional units were able to arrive.

*Lieutenant Eric Thrush, Lieutenant Travis Saunders, Master Firefighter Mike Brinkley, Senior Firefighter Chris Jordan, Senior Firefighter Lucas Weaver, Firefighter Michael Joseph, Firefighter Jeff Jochens, Master Firefighter Mike Bagley, and Fire Medic Charlie Blanchard* were presented with a Certificate of Commendation a Unit Citation. On June 6 2018, Suffolk Fire & Rescue crews responded to a technical rescue incident involving a small child in a community pool with her arm trapped in the pool vacuum port. The members of Ladder Company 6, Rescue Company 1, and Medic 6 worked seamlessly to free the child's arm having to remove several layers of concrete and rebar to gain access to the port, while also assisting with keeping the child's head elevated above water and reassuring her throughout the entire incident so that she remained calm. The expertise, skill, commitment and compassion for a child in need that was displayed on this day, led to a successful outcome.

*Fire Medic Robert Barrett, Firefighter Andy Gray, Lieutenant Fred Walden, Firefighter Joe Edwards, Senior Firefighter Tracy Bourn, Master Firefighter Chris Thomas and Lieutenant Teresa Monroe* were presented with a Certification of Commendation a Unit Citation. The crews from Engine 8, Medic 8, and EMS1 went above and beyond for a 5-year old that had been accidentally run over by a vehicle. The child's parents drove him to Station 8 from Gates, North Carolina. Nightingale was unavailable to fly the severely injured child. The distraught parents and traumatically injured child were transported by ground to CHKD. The crews utilized not only their training but personal skills as parents and caregivers to ease the stress of the child and made the transport as non-traumatic and as pleasant as possible.

*Lieutenant Alan Bain, Master Firefighter Andy Kitchen, Lieutenant Christopher Hehl, Firefighter Blake Jennings, and Fire Medic Louis Jiannine* were presented with a Certificate of Commendation a Unit Citation. On April 30, 2018, Suffolk Fire & Rescue personnel responded to a citizen who was in cardiac arrest. Crews initially were dispatched for a motor vehicle collision. Engine 2 was first on scene and quickly determined that this event was medical in nature as there was minor damage to the vehicle. Crews promptly delivered appropriate care. Due to their efforts in recognizing and treating this patient, they were able to achieve a pulse. Patient was transported to Sentara Obici Hospital and has since been discharged.

*Fire Medic Manuel Franco, Firefighter Travis Williford, Lieutenant Les Stickels, Firefighter Cory Stephens, Firefighter Darren Clark, and Lieutenant Dustin Hummer* were presented with a Certificate of Commendation a Unit Citation. On July 5, 2018, Suffolk Fire & Rescue personnel responded to a citizen who was in cardiac arrest. Crews promptly delivered appropriate care. Due to their efforts in recognizing and treating this patient, they were able to achieve a pulse prior to transport. The patient was transported to Sentara Obici Hospital and has since been discharged.

*Fire Medic Eric Munford, Master Firefighter Mike Brinkley, Lieutenant Derik Felton, Fire Medic Rachael Heikens, Master Firefighter Mike Bagley and Lieutenant Teresa Monroe* were presented with a Certificate of Commendation a Unit Citation. On January 10, 2018, Suffolk Fire & Rescue personnel responded to a citizen who was in cardiac arrest. The patient was taking a nap with her husband when she was found slumped over in her chair. Crews promptly delivered appropriate care. Due to their efforts in recognizing and treating this patient, they were able to restore a pulse. Patient was transported to Sentara Obici Hospital and has since been discharged.

*Lieutenant Eric Thompson, Firefighter Steve Bernick, Lieutenant Craig Abraham, Senior Firefighter James Carter, Senior Firefighter Jerome Freeman, Firefighter Robert Young and Fire Medic Chris Cook* were presented with a Certificate of Commendation a Unit Citation. On November 29, 2018, Suffolk Fire & Rescue personnel responded to a citizen who was in cardiac arrest. Crews arrived and promptly delivered appropriate care. Due to their efforts in recognizing and treating this patient, they were able to restore a pulse. Patient was transported to Sentara Obici Hospital for a hospital stay and has since been discharged.

*Lieutenant Richard Ward, Senior Firefighter Jason Belaire, Master Firefighter Tommy Thomasson, Firefighter Dwight Leidy, Firefighter Michael Joseph, Lieutenant Teresa Monroe and Suffolk Police Officer Benjamin Holland* were presented with a Certificate of Commendation a Unit Citation. On September 29, 2019, Suffolk Fire & Rescue personnel responded to a citizen who was in cardiac arrest. Initial CPR was delivered by Officer Benjamin Holland who was stopped in the street by a bystander. Suffolk Fire & Rescue units arrived and promptly delivered appropriate care. Due to their efforts in recognizing and treating this patient, they were able to restore a pulse. The patient was transported to Sentara Obici Hospital and has since been discharged.

### **2019 Fire Chief's Award of Excellence**

The Fire Chief's Award of Excellence is presented each year to a member of the Suffolk Fire & Rescue family in recognition of their continued dedication, perseverance, professionalism, and commitment to the values, goals, and success of the Department of Fire & Rescue. All personnel of the Department, sworn and civilian, are eligible for consideration.

This year's Fire Chief's Award of Excellence was presented to a uniformed member of our family who has been instrumental in the successes and daily operations of Suffolk Fire & Rescue for MANY years. This year's award winner is known for always being available to offer council, direction, wisdom, a laugh or two, and most importantly – his heart and ear.

Deputy Chief Franklin T. (Ted) Adams has been a fixture with Suffolk Fire & Rescue since 1986. Over the past 33 years, he has progressed through the ranks to where he now has arguably one of the most difficult jobs in the fire service, Deputy Chief of Operations. Deputy Chief Adams oversees 250 firefighters and officers and their performance on a daily basis to include overseeing the Stations, apparatus, and the "situations" that occur with overseeing such a large workforce.

Over the past 33 years, and certainly the past four years as the Deputy Chief of Operations, Deputy Chief Adams has demonstrated a tremendous amount of support and dedication to our Department and its' personnel. He defines leadership and is always willing to listen when presented a problem or concern and is always willing to lend a hand to a firefighter in need. One of his Battalion Chiefs stated, "When one of his members is having a 'bad day,' Chief Adams is always looking for a way to help them through their situation. He is a leader, and that is part of our job, however, Chief Adams takes it to a much higher level. Unfortunately, we have had several members with major medical emergencies over the past few years and Deputy Chief Adams has spent countless days, not hours, at the hospital when these tragic events took place. He put his personal and professional life on hold to be there for his firefighters and their families."

Deputy Chief Adams exemplifies how a leader should be dedicated to both the organization and the men and women who serve the organization. Ted is an intricate part of what makes our Department so great.

## **Medal of Honor and Medal of Valor**

On March 11, 2019, Battalion 2, Engines 9, 6, and 4, Ladder 6, Rescue 1, Tankers 9 and 1, Medic 6, Safety 1, and EMS 1 were dispatched to a reported garage fire threatening a residence. While enroute, a large column of black smoke was visible from Fire Headquarters. At 9:33 a.m., Engine 9 and Medic 9 arrived and reported a large detached garage well involved with the house and two vehicles also on fire. Lt. Laurina Watson assumed command and Firefighter Doug Darden pulled the garden lay to protect the portion of the main residence that was not yet on fire that was only feet from the well-involved garage and vehicles.

At the direction of Lieutenant Watson, Firefighter Darden operated the attack line in the breezeway that separated the garage from the residence. This was a tactical position for the attack line because Engine 9's crew were able to protect the main residence from additional fire damage. Once Lieutenant Watson felt they had stopped the threat of additional fire from advancing on the main residence, she directed Firefighter Darden to execute a transitional fire attack on the well-involved garage.

The transitional attack worked well through the windows of the garage so Lieutenant Watson and Firefighter Darden advanced their attack line forward in the breezeway between the main home and the garage, toward the door in the middle of the garage. Fire conditions were not as advanced at this section of the garage, and access to the fire was unobstructed. Lieutenant Watson and Firefighter Darden made the door and operated the attack line in the doorway for several minutes. Sensing that fire conditions were not changing, even with an aggressive fire attack, Lieutenant Watson advised Firefighter Darden to retreat the attack line to the corner of the garage and residence to continue their attack from the corner of the building. During the retreat to the corner of the garage, Lieutenant Watson noticed the B-side wall of the garage moving towards Firefighter Darden. Captain Keith Johnson and his crew of Ladder 6 were assigned Rapid Intervention Team by Battalion 3. As Captain Johnson begin a 360° size-up of the burning structures, Captain Johnson saw the wall collapsing from

the front yard and yelled, "Wall, wall, wall" and saw Lieutenant Watson push Firefighter Darden away from the collapsing wall just as the wall came down.

The burning masonry wall had landed on Lieutenant Watson. Captain Johnson and Firefighter Darden went immediately to the collapsed garage to perform a rescue of the trapped Lieutenant. Lieutenant Watson's torso was hanging out of the debris of the fallen wall and roof and brick were on top of her. The two of them began to dig out Lieutenant Watson who was unable to free herself from the burning brick and fallen debris.

Lieutenant Watson did not have any recollection of the rescue until she was pulled away from the collapsed area and debris. Once removed from the debris and pulled away from the hazardous area to the front yard of the structure, Medic 9 met Captain Johnson and Firefighter Darden and the Firefighters assigned to Rescue 1 with a stretcher and medical equipment.

Medic 9 loaded Lieutenant Watson on a stretcher and provided advanced life support care to Sentra Obici Hospital. Firefighter Darden received injuries while digging out Lieutenant Watson and was transported to Sentara Obici Hospital for treatment for his injuries.

For their quick and decisive actions of rescuing Lieutenant Watson from the debris of a falling wall and roof structure, Captain Keith Johnson and Firefighter Doug Darden received the Medal of Honor.

For Lieutenant Watson's quick and decisive actions of noticing the wall of the structure about to fall on and trap Firefighter Darden, and selflessly sacrificing her body and well-being over that of another, Lieutenant Watson received the Medal of Valor.

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