

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE _____

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SUFFOLK FIRE & RESCUE WELCOMES NEW FIREFIGHTERS

SUFFOLK, VA (January 31, 2020) Suffolk Fire & Rescue welcomed 21 new Firefighters to their ranks following a Commencement & Badge Pinning Ceremony last evening, Thursday, January 30th, before a capacity crowd at King's Fork High School's auditorium.

The Hampton Roads Recruit Fire Academy (HRFFA) Class 16, who chose the name "PEANUT CITY KN16HTS", was hosted by Suffolk Fire & Rescue and included a total of 22 men and women that graduated following intensive State-Certified Basic Recruit training combined with grueling physical training that began in March 2019.

During his opening remarks, Chief Michael Barakey noted, "For this night to occur, both the Suffolk and Portsmouth Fire & Rescue Departments provided very competent, committed Officers, Instructors, and Mentors to coach these fine Firefighters in their training."

In addressing the recruits, he further stated, "You are now in rare company. You're going to give of yourselves so that others may live, because Firefighters serve without hesitation or judgement."

The dynamic Key Note Speaker for the evening was Deputy Chief (Retired) Bobby Halton, Albuquerque Fire Department, and Editor-In-Chief of Fire Engineering Magazine. For more than 140 years, Fire Engineering Magazine has provided training, education, and management information for fire and emergency services personnel worldwide. Chief Halton's passionate remarks about "God and Country" were especially impactful not only with the new recruits, but also for veteran Firefighters.

Class 16 members include the following individuals that will be reporting to various Fire Stations across the City of Suffolk, many in fact earlier this morning:

Alexis Albright
Scot Allen
Cody Baines
Joshua Baker
Stacie Ellis
Ashton Felts
Adam Fischbach
Scott Hitter
Charles Kelly
David Keller
Austin Mills
Jonathan Monahan
Ashleigh Oszust
Mariya Register
Nicholas Retson
Robert Shelton
William Stephens
Donald Vaughan
Matt Wendel
Raquel Wheby
Christopher Wynne

Reporting for duty at Portsmouth Fire & Rescue is graduate Amani Harper.

Suffolk Fire & Rescue Instructors included HRRFA Director Captain Leon Ratliff, HRRFA Coordinator Lieutenant Rainey Dail, HRRFA Co-Coordinator Fire Training Officer Mary Riddick, HRRFA Lead Instructor Fire Medic Bryan Grasser, and HRRFA Staff Instructors Fire Medic Edward Tuck and Fire Medic Joe Jarman.

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