

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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October 31, 2016



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

SUFFOLK, VA (October 31, 2016) The Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department's Awards and Recognition Ceremony honored citizens and members of the Department in addition to officially promoting 17 personnel during the event on Thursday, October 27, 2016 at the Hilton Garden Inn – Suffolk Riverfront. The honorees are detailed as follows:

#### **Battalion Chief Owen C. Thomasson**

Battalion Chief Owen C. Thomasson joined the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue in September of 1995. Thomasson obtained an Associate's Degree in Fire Science in 1995 from Tidewater Community College. His previous assignment was Engine 1 A shift. His current assignment is Battalion 2 C shift.

### **Captain Raymond E. Willet**

Captain Raymond E. Willet joined the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue on March 16, 2006. Willet received his Bachelors of Science in Health Science from Old Dominion University in 2014. He is also a National Registry Paramedic and received the Paramedic of the Year award in 2011. Willet's previous assignment was EMS 1. He currently serves as the Captain of the EMS Bureau.

### **Captain Nicholas W. Savage**

Captain Nicholas W. Savage joined the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue in September of 2004. He received an Associate's Degree in Fire Science in 2012. His previous assignment was Rescue 1 C shift. His current assignment is Ladder 3 A shift.

### **Captain James C. Sessoms**

Captain James C. Sessoms joined Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue in September of 2003. Sessoms has an Associates of Science in Business Management, an Associates of Arts in Liberal Arts, a Bachelor's of Science in Government Administration, an Associates of Applied Science in Fire Science and an Associates of Applied Science in EMS. Sessoms' previous assignment was Engine 4 C shift and he is currently assigned to Engine 6 B shift.

### **Captain Keith W. Johnson**

Captain Keith W. Johnson joined the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue in March of 2004. Johnson obtained Paramedic status with the City in 2007. He has an Associate's Degree in General Studies from Paul D. Camp Community College. Captain Johnson is a member of the Communications team and is currently assigned to ladder 6 C shift.

### **Captain Marc M. Wilkerson**

Captain Marc M. Wilkerson joined the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue in April of 1999. Wilkerson received his Associate's Degree in Fire Science in 2005 and an Associate's Degree in Emergency Medical Services in 2007. Captain Wilkerson's previous assignment was EMS 1 A shift. His current assignment is ladder 5 B shift.

### **Captain Brian A. Bunting**

Captain Brian A. Bunting joined the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue in October of 2001. Bunting received his Associate's degree in Fire Science in May of 2010. His previous assignment was Engine 5 B shift. His current assignment is Engine 25 A shift.

### **Captain Eric L. Mathews**

Captain Eric L. Mathews joined the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue in March of 2001. Mathews is currently enrolled at Columbia Southern University pursuing a degree in Occupational Safety and Health. His previous assignment was Engine 2 A shift. His current assignment is Engine 3 B shift.

### **Lieutenant Colton S. Pulley**

Lieutenant Colt S. Pulley joined the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue in September of 2003. Pulley obtained an Associate's Degree in Emergency Medicine from Tidewater Community College in May of 2008. He was named Paramedic of the Year in 2013. His previous assignment was Engine 1 C shift. His current assignment is EMS 1 B shift.

### **Lieutenant Roger W. Stinnette, Jr.**

Lieutenant Roger W. Stinnette, Jr. joined the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue in March of 2002. Stinnette completed his paramedic certification in 2001. He was selected as Paramedic of the Year in 2007. His previous assignment was Engine 6 A shift. His current assignment is Engine 6 C shift.

### **Lieutenant Theresa D. Monroe**

Lieutenant Theresa D. Monroe joined the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue in 1995. She received her Paramedic certification and her Associate's Degree in Fire Science in 1997. Her previous assignment was Engine 6 B shift. Her current assignment is EMS 1 A shift.

### **Lieutenant Durand O. Coltrane**

Lieutenant Durand O. Coltrane joined the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue in March of 2005 after ten and a half years of military service in the U.S. Navy. Coltrane received his Associate's Degree in Applied Science EMS from Tidewater Community College in 2007. He was previously assigned to Engine 3 B shift. He is currently assigned to EMS1 C shift.

### **Lieutenant Charles P. Chapin**

Lieutenant Charles P. Chapin joined the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue in March of 2002. Chapin is a graduate of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs Fire Marshal Academy, Law Enforcement for Fire Marshals. He is a certified Fire Investigator, Fire Inspector, and Advanced Code Official. Lieutenant Chapin is assigned to the Fire Marshal's office.

### **Lieutenant Bradford T. Saunders**

Lieutenant Bradford Travis Saunders joined the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue in September of 2005. Saunders received his Associate's Degree in Fire Science from Tidewater Community College in 2015. He was previously assigned to Engine 1 B shift. His current assignment is Rescue 1 A shift.

### **Lieutenant Rainey O. Dail**

Lieutenant Rainey O. Dail joined the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue in March of 2003. Dail became a Paramedic in 2007 and received Paramedic of the year in 2010. Her previous assignment was Engine 5 B shift. Her current assignment is EMS Training Officer.

### **Lieutenant Christopher K. Hehl**

Lieutenant Christopher K. Hehl joined the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue in September of 2006. Hehl received his Associates in Science Degree from Tidewater Community College in 2006. His previous assignment was Rescue 1 B shift. He is currently assigned to Engine 2 C shift.

### **Lieutenant Benjamin R. Brower**

Lieutenant Benjamin R. Brower joined the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue in March of 2009. Brower received his Paramedic Certification in January of 2012 and obtained his Associate's Degree in Fire Science in 2013. He was previously assigned to Rescue 1 B shift. His current assignment is Rescue 1 B shift.

### **Lieutenant Kenneth W. Nelms – Firefighter of the Year**

Lieutenant Kenneth W. Nelms was named the Firefighter of the Year. Lieutenant Nelms has worked tirelessly on the Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department's fire hose program. Nelms spent countless hours on and off duty working on the fire hose program trying to get it up to date and NFPA compliant. He coordinated the loading and numbering of every piece of hose in the Department. He was instrumental in the research which led to the department investing \$100,000 dollars in much needed new fire hose. Nelms' hard work and dedication has made the Department a safer place for our members and the citizens we protect.

### **Firefighter/Medic Joseph A. Jarman – Paramedic of the Year**

Firefighter/Medic Joseph A. Jarman was named the Paramedic of the Year. Jarman has been a member of the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue since 2003. He has been the MDA fill the boot coordinator for the last 3 years and a MDA camp counselor from 2009 to 2015. He was the lead for the Department's pink shirt campaign and has been a Paramedic for 9 years. His peers have said that Joe is very compassionate towards his patients. He treats all patients like he is treating a member of his own family. He keeps a constant positive demeanor regardless of the stress of the job, the call volume or any personal issues with which he may be dealing.

### **Eddie Smith – Volunteer Firefighter of the Year**

Eddie Smith was named the Volunteer Firefighter of the Year as a member of the Whaleyville Volunteer Fire Department. Smith is a resident of the community of Whaleyville and shares his knowledge of computers, programs and technical awareness with the administrative side of the organization to produce training calendars, monthly truck check off sheets, secretary duties and serves as the chairman of the membership liaison committee. He does all of this while being a naval

cryptologic technician performing a wide range of tasks in support of the national intelligence gathering effort.

### **Eric Wynne – Most Active Volunteer**

Eric Wynne was presented the Most Active Volunteer Award as a member of the Holland Volunteer Fire Department. Over the past year, Eric has shown the officers and career staff at station 7 that he was meant to be a firefighter. Eric has pulled a total of 116 duty hours and continues to strive towards becoming a role model for other members of his volunteer organization. Eric continues to focus on his education and has recently completed his Emergency Vehicles Operations Course. He does all of this while working for Emergency Medical Response during the day. Suffolk Fire & Rescue would like to thank Eric for his service to the community.

### **Joe Therrien – Certificate of Appreciation (Civilian Award)**

Joe Therrien was presented the Certificate of Appreciation (Civilian Award). During the 10th session of the Suffolk Youth Public Safety Academy, one of the students and her family lost their home to fire. Therrien learned of the situation and he opened his home and his heart to the family. Therrien allowed the family to stay in his residence which allowed the family to resume some sort of a normal live. The children were able to get back in school and began to put their lives back together. Not only did Therrien provide shelter for the family, he also provided meals. What was going to be a couple of weeks, turned into 5 to 6 weeks. What makes Mr. Therrien even more worthy of an award is that he did not know this family prior to this event. This is the kind of person that makes Suffolk the great place that it is today.

### **Captain John D. Wilson – Medal of Merit**

Captain John D. Wilson received the Departmental Medal of Merit. Captain Wilson has a long history of exceptional customer service to the citizens of Suffolk. He constantly exhibits exceptional customer service to the citizens as well as his co-workers. He is always available to teach anyone anything and at any time. He has an attitude of positivity, acceptance and inclusion which makes his exceptional leadership skills even more effective. His attitude is contagious in the best way, and through his customer service skills, he creates an environment conducive to learning and truly makes everyone enjoy their job.

### **Lieutenant Jeremy E. Gould & Senior Firefighter John M. Piver – Medal of Valor**

Lieutenant Jeremy E. Gould and Senior Firefighter John M. Piver were both recognized with the Departmental Medal of Valor. On the morning of March 30, 2015, Lt. Gould and Senior Firefighter Piver rescued a female who was attempting to take her own life. The female had waded out about 150 feet into the river and was holding onto a bridge piling. She was not responding to anyone calling to her from the shore or the bridge. The water was around 45 degrees that day and she was chest deep in the water. Gould and Piver were both familiar with the area and determined that they could wade out and retrieve her. They decided that waiting for a unit with cold water suits would take too long so they were tied off to a tag line and waded out to the female's location and brought her safely back to shore. Both Lt. Gould and Senior Firefighter Piver acted without due regard for their own safety and put the victim's life first.

## **Public Education Specialist/Fire Investigator – Pamela C. King**

Public Education Specialist/Fire Investigator Pamela C. King received the Fire Chief's Award of Excellence. Suffolk Fire & Rescue Chief Cedric Scott noted that he was very proud to present the award to King who is a person who never says no and always gives 100% in everything she does. She loves the Fire Department and this City. King was hired by the City of Suffolk in 1986 and joined Suffolk Fire & Rescue in 2000. Serving as the Public Education Specialist/Fire Investigator, King conducts investigations and works with determining fire origins and causes, bomb threats, and environmental crimes. She has been involved in many public education/community outreach programs over the years including Fire & Life Safety Camps, Youth Public Safety Academy, Suffolk Redevelopment & Housing Authority Fire Safety Program, Risk Watch Program and Partners in Education Program with Suffolk Public Schools. King is also involved with Project Lifesaver assisting with administrative and search functions.

She also coordinates the Department's Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program. King participates in additional activities including the Pink T-Shirt Campaign for breast cancer awareness, Battling Cancer Series (flag football tournament with area fire departments), MDA Fill the Boot, SFR/SPD annual flag football game to benefit Relay for Life, and is involved in fundraising and relief efforts for SFR employees in need.

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