

NEWS RELEASE

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JOE BAGLEY VFW POST 2582 HONORS SUFFOLK PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL

SUFFOLK, VA (June 7, 2018) The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) presents Public Servant Awards to emergency medical technicians, law enforcement personnel, and firefighter personnel each year nationwide. Prior to the June 6, 2018 Suffolk City Council Meeting, Suffolk's Joe Bagley VFW Post 2582 presented awards to two members of the Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department as well as one member of the Suffolk Police Department. Award winners must have demonstrated recognition by their colleagues or those they serve, consistent excellence in the performance of their duties, and consistent dedication to their official responsibilities over a period of years and continuous growth in responsibilities and skills within their profession.

Lieutenant Jeffrey W. Matthews – VFW Emergency Medical Technician Public Servant Citation

Lieutenant Jeffrey W. Matthews joined the Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department in 2009 and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in April 2017. Prior to his promotion, he was assigned to Engine Company 25 at Fire Station 5 on Bridge Road and is currently

assigned as the Emergency Medical Services supervisor on “C” shift, 1st Battalion operating out of Fire Station 1 on Market Street. Lt. Matthews holds numerous professional certifications and is certified by the Commonwealth of Virginia as an Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic

Lt. Matthews is known throughout the Department for his positive and uplifting personality and for treating everyone with respect and dignity. He has been described as having “an amazing work ethic that is simply based on a desire for excellence.” Every shift, Lt. Matthews can be found spending time at other stations conducting training classes, checking in with medic crews, and following up with patient care needs.

In his nomination for the award, Lt. Matthews was noted for his technical expertise and the high quality service he provides to the Department and our citizens as well as his positive approach and “can-do” attitude. His professionalism and sincere desire to produce positive outcomes for others is truly inspirational.

The VFW Emergency Medical Technician Public Servant Citation is presented to an individual who actively gives emergency medical treatment and provides rescue service or civil disaster assistance as a member of any public or volunteer company organized to give emergency medical care, rescue and civil disaster assistance to our nation’s citizens.

Battalion Chief John D. (Demitri) Wilson – VFW Firefighters Public Servant Citation

Battalion Chief John D. (Demitri) Wilson joined the Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department in 1999. He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in February 2005 and to the rank of Captain in 2012. He recently was promoted to the rank of Battalion Chief in March 2018. Chief Wilson holds numerous professional certifications, including Heavy

Tactical Rescue Technician and Rope Rescue Instructor. He earned an Associates Degree in Fire Science from Tidewater Community College in 2010. Prior to his recent promotion, Chief Wilson was assigned to Rescue Company 1 and was Commander of the TRT. He is now assigned as the Battalion Chief on “A” shift in the 1st Battalion operating out of Fire Station 1 on Market Street. Chief Wilson also received the Department’s Medal of Merit in 2016.

Chief Wilson is a highly self-motivated professional that strives for excellence in all he does. In one of the nomination letters received, Chief Wilson is described as “the ambassador for our Department in many different areas using his professional demeanor, outgoing personality, and strong work ethic. I have called on Chief Wilson for many special assignments over the years and he gladly welcomes any opportunity to serve.”

The VFW Firefighters Public Servant Citation is awarded to any individual who actively fights fires as a member of any public or volunteer company organized to fight fires and give assistance to our nation’s citizens.

Detective Rachelann Cain – VFW Law Enforcement Public Servant Citation

The Suffolk Police Department awarded Detective Rachelann Cain their Police Officer of the Year award for her investigative work as it relates to the arrest of a Suffolk resident, Lionel Nelson Williams, who was attempting to provide material support to ISIL. This case was investigated by the Norfolk Joint Terrorism Task Force, of which Detective Cain is assigned to, and the Suffolk Police Department. The FBI was informed in March of 2016 that Williams had been posting ISIL-related videos and content about supporting the group on his Facebook page. Williams allegedly posted that, “It’s time for me to take a stand. I stand with “Dawlah.” Dawlah is a term that means “state” in Arabic, and members of ISIL and supporters refer to the group using this term. In April of 2016, an undercover FBI agent made contact with Williams on

Facebook. In a private Facebook message, Williams stated, "I can't wait for the day that the black flag of Islam exists all over Maryland, D.C., Virginia, and Chicago." In another exchange between October and November 2016, the agent told Williams on an encrypted messaging app that they were in territory controlled by ISIL and he was trying to purchase 10,000 rounds of AK-47 ammunition and 50 magazines. Williams asked how much the ammo would cost in that territory and said that he would try to help. Williams allegedly sent money and ammunition to a person he thought was helping ISIL. During the course of the investigation it was learned that Williams had purchased an AK-47 assault rifle the day after the terror attack in San Bernardino, California in December 2015.

In December of 2016, Detective Cain was headed out of town for Christmas and received a call from her supporting case agent requesting her to return to help due to the escalation of Williams' behavior. Detective Cain was about 2 hours from her destination when she turned around and returned back to Suffolk.

Once arriving back to Suffolk, Detective Cain immediately went into work. Based upon all of the information obtained, Williams was taken into custody on December 21, 2016 by members of the Joint Terrorism Task Force and the Suffolk Police Department. Two firearms, including an AK-47 and a semi-automatic handgun, were recovered in a post-arrest search of Williams' residence.

Detective Cain spent countless hours working on declassification for trial and discovery. This process included coordination with several Departments at the FBI, United States Attorneys and defense counsel. With these efforts, Lionel Nelson Williams accepted a plea deal on August 16, 2017 and is awaiting sentencing. He has agreed to serve 20 years in a Federal Prison.

If it were not for the investigative efforts of Detective Rachelann Cain, Williams may have been successful in aiding ISIL and his efforts could have resulted in countless deaths.

The VFW Law Enforcement Public Servant Citation is awarded to any individual who serves in a municipal, county, state or federal unit tasked with enforcement of the laws pertaining to their area of responsibility. This award does not apply to individuals employed by private companies for security services.

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