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## Executive Committee Meets In Port Deposit

By Ron Watkins, MSFA  
MSFA Public Relations Committee

The fourth Executive Committee meeting for the year was held in Port Deposit and was hosted by the Water Witch Fire Company on April 22 and 23, 2017. As in the other meetings this year, the 125th anniversary of the MSFA was celebrated with a parade, a special presentation at the steps of the town hall, and other anniversary activities.

The meetings were held at the VFW building, because of room constraints, but the hospitality was in no way lacking. The meeting was well attended, with Saturday afternoon devoted to celebrating our anniversary with a parade through downtown



*The commemorative arch. See additional coverage page 8*

Port Deposit.

It was a rainy day, but the enthusiasm was not dampened, as Chip Jewell gave a presentation of the early history of our organization, followed by the parade, led by mem-

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Beyond the Fire Statistics

By Brian S. Geraci,  
State Fire Marshal

For most of us in the fire service the incidents that we respond to are just moments in time that come and go. Some of them we remember more than others based on the nature of the incident. But for the survivors or family members who have lost loved ones, their fire remains with them each and every day.

We lost 12 children and 56 adults in 57 fatal fires in 2016. We look at the numbers and the statistics at the state and national level but that does not tell the whole human story.

For those of you who saw the movie "Manchester by the Sea", you saw the very real, painful and long term effect fire can have on an individual, a family and the community. This movie got it right in depicting the human side of the pain one has from losing loved ones due to fire. Fire statistics cannot capture the pain or the devastation that ensues or the thoughts of the survivors as they watch in horror as the flames engulf their home knowing that no one else escaped.

The reality based lessons contained within the movie were on the mark but the one lesson that was not addressed or that is less often seen is the danger of complacency. Complacency and changing one's behavior is the greatest challenges we face in trying to prevent the 911 call. With the number of fire incidents declining due to public education, use of ten year sealed smoke alarms, residential fire sprinklers along with additional codes

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## The President's Corner

By Michael A. Davis, President, MSFA.

Wow! Where did the last three years go? Better yet, we've made it to 125 years! It has been a real pleasure and honor to serve as the President of the Maryland State Firemen's Association this past year.

The years may have seemed to go by quickly but I know we were making good progress for the association along the way. This would not have been possible if it wasn't for the support of my family and you, the membership.

My wife Ann has been a key driving force behind supporting me and keeping me straight! She's all too familiar with the commitment it takes, having come up through the chairs of the Ladies Auxiliary of the MSFA, taking over 10 years to become the President in 2014. The love and encouragement from her and my family really made this all possible. I'm forever grateful for Ann's mom, Cathie as well, for all the babysitting allowing me time to enjoy everyone's banquets, events, and meetings.

Many of you have welcomed us with open arms as we often traveled together to these events as well, giving us great memories to cherish with our two boys who always love a reason to go see a fire engine!

I've learned a lot along the way, gained friends for a lifetime and will still continue to support and fight for our world's greatest volunteers! Maryland is made up of about 68% volunteers with several combination career departments across the state. Most often, when someone calls 911, they're going to see a volunteer respond to help them. Sure, it may be in an area served by all career stations but odds are, one or several of those staff are

volunteers elsewhere. That's because we are dedicated professionals, committed to helping our fellow citizens.



The fire service is really a large family that's always there for each other, and it really shows as I traveled across this state these past years. Remember to always be thinking about the future while looking through the past so we can remain the best there is. We are and will remain roll models in the fire service around the world as long as you put your mind to it. I believe we will always be the best because we are!

Thank you to our Convention and 125th year Celebration Committees. These folks have really made a grand show at each of our executive meetings, along with the host companies. I'm sure by now you've seen all the work they've done along the way as you make your way around the convention center this week.

Be safe this year while we celebrate our grand 125 years! Safety is everyone's responsibility. As always, we are here for you! Need help? Just ask.

Sincerely,  
 Michael A. Davis, President  
 MSFA, 2016-2017

*Volunteer.  
 Get Involved!*

## I Had to See it to Believe It

Photo & Article by  
Nevin Steffy

On Monday, May 8th, Queen Anne's Box 6-12 was struck for the motor vehicle collision with a subject trapped and the vehicle reported to be on fire on High Bridge Road.

Alerted were Millington, Sudlersville, Galena, and Crumpton fire companies. I was one of the first on the scene. Finding that the trapped occupant had been removed from the vehicle by good Samaritans, I proceeded to photograph the incident.

I stopped taking pictures as crews were making good progress on extinguishing the fire, to speak with a Deputy Sheriff on the opposite side of the road, when a loud bang was heard and a pneumatic cylinder, used to keep the

hood of the vehicle up, exploded and shot from the vehicle about 60 feet and landed near where I was standing.

I have taken many vehicle rescue classes, and have often heard of this happening, but I have never seen it occur, and kind of thought it to be more "folk lore" than truth.

Needless to say, I can now attest to the fact it is the truth. In the photo I took of the strut, you can see it was propelled approximately 60 feet from the burning car. Had a first responder of any kind, been in front of that strut when it let loose, they would have experienced a serious injury.

Pay attention at all times, and remember your training....for SAFETY's sake!!!



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## Beyond the Fire Statistics

(Continued from page 1)



and standards, we see the folks in our communities paying far less attention to fire safety. People do not believe that fire can happen to them or to their families.

We all know that fire does not discriminate among victims and that we have not yet solved the fire problem within our State or the country. We all must remember there are real people behind the statistics and that we need to work smarter and harder to eliminate fire deaths and injuries within our State. This reminder was made painfully clear in “Manchester by the Sea”. We must place more emphasis on Public Education and Community Risk Reduction to overcome the complacency within our communities and change those unsafe behaviors.

We need to continue to get the message out into our communities each and every day. When you return home from the convention, please plan to continually get the fire prevention message out into your communities. Take advantage of the two weekends set aside each year for Community Risk Reduction to get out and address fire and life safety concerns with the members of your community. I hope that many of you and your departments were out May 6th & 7th and will be out for the next CRR weekend scheduled for October 21st & 22nd.

Seek all opportunities to interact with the public, not just during Fire Prevention Week in October. Many of you hold community events at your departments and roll a fire prevention message into each and every one of these. Instead of yelling bingo have them yell ‘smoke alarms’! Work with us and your fire prevention folks at your departments, county associations and the MSFA Fire and Life Safety Committee, we are all in this together.

When you do have a fire related incident, especially where a fatality or injury was involved, make it a point to get back to that area as soon as possible to talk to the people that were impacted by this event and check and install smoke alarms where needed. As of January 1, 2018, the 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms will be required to be installed as a replacement for all current battery-only smoke alarms. Continue your focus on our senior and youth populations.

Go to schools, day care facilities, parks, sporting events, senior centers and other locations where members of your community will be located. Do not wait for them to call you, reach out and ask to visit and share the information and knowledge you have on preventing fires.

It takes very little time, but the information that you will share goes a long way in the end. Make fire prevention and fire ground safety your top priorities within your departments and reinforce that message often with your personnel.

All members of the Office of the State Fire Marshal are committed and dedicated to making Maryland safer from fires and explosions. We are doing our part by enforcing the State Fire Prevention Code and arresting individuals who use fire and explosives as weapons against you and your community.

Congratulations to the MSFA on your 125 years of dedication to your members and the State of Maryland. Thank you for all of your continued efforts in making fire prevention the most important service you can provide to your community. Remember “Fire is Everyone’s Fight”!

Stay safe and be kind to one another and to your community.

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## The Volunteer Trumpet

This periodical is issued six times a year by the Maryland State Firemen’s Association. Its purpose is to publish interesting and informative articles for the volunteer fire, rescue and EMS personnel of Maryland.

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## Chip's Firehouse Logbook: Past, Present and Future

### The First Convention

by Chief Clarence "Chip" Jewell, III

For the 125th time, the Maryland Sate Firemen's Association gathers to bring together volunteers from throughout Maryland representing nearly 370 volunteer fire and rescue companies assembled at the MSFA Conference and Convention.

As the sun and sea of Ocean City are enjoyed in 2017, we celebrate our past and remember those first MSFA officers that had the vision of a great organization.

Though the convention to organize the MSFA was held in Frederick in June of 1893, the first concept meetings were held in the winter of 1892.

Leadership of three companies of Frederick, Independent Hose Co. No. 1, Junior Steam Fire Engine Company No. 2, United Steam Fire Engine Company No. 3 along with members of the Guardian Hose Company of Mechanicstown (now Thurmont) planted the seed of an organization consisting of the many fire companies from through-

out Maryland.

June of 1893 would present the perfect opportunity to propose such an organization and recruit charter members. Fire companies would already be arriving in Frederick to help celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Independent Hose Co. No. 1. The "Independents" had been in continuous service since 1818. A mammoth parade was planned with invitations sent to most fire companies in Maryland and as well as companies across the east coast.

Each year, a large firemen's parade is held at the closing gavel of the MSFA convention. The very first convention parade was actually organized by the Independent Hose Co. No. 1 to celebrate the founding of the company and 75 years of dedicated service to the

community. With wool parade uniforms and temperatures in the 80's, over 5000 firefighters gathering from the masses. The parade served as the first MSFA Convention Parade and ultimately the largest annual parade held in the State of

*As the sun and sea of Ocean City are enjoyed in 2017, we celebrate our past and remember those first MSFA officers that had the vision of a great organization.*



Maryland.

Turn back the clock. As the sea and cool breeze of Ocean City invites families for a vacation in 2017, imagine what it was like in the heat of June of 1893 in downtown Frederick. As Ocean City has the famed boardwalk, rustic 1893 Frederick had some board walks between stores, cobble stone streets, and dusty dirt roads. The fragrance of Thrasher fries and the salty Atlantic would have been replaced with the smell of horse manure and factory soot.

The convention today is held in an edifice of concrete and steel built especially to house the MSFA and other large conventions in comfort. The first official meeting of the MSFA was most likely held in a hot and humid room on the second floor of Independent Hose

*(Continued on page 11)*

"The organizational foundation they developed 125 years ago has withstood the test of time and continues to move into the future serving the interest of thousands of volunteer fire and rescue personnel throughout the Free State."



## Maryland Fire-Rescue Services Memorial Foundation

### *"Finding A Face For A Hero"*

*"The search is on and the search will continue..."*

*It is our most earnest hope that someday there will be a picture of each LODD Hero displayed alongside their name."*

The Maryland Fire-Rescue Services Memorial Foundation's website includes a **Fallen Hero/LODD Directory** that contains an individual profile for each of Maryland's Fire~EMS~Rescue & MSP Aviation Command Fallen Heroes, whose names are displayed on the Memorial's Wall of Honor in Annapolis.

In spring of 2016, it was realized that out of the 410 LODD profiles in the Directory, nearly **240** had no photograph of the Fallen Hero.

*"... so it began, April 2016 LODD Directory Project  
Phase One: "Finding A Face For A Hero"*

### **UPDATE**

**As of June 1, 2017 & thanks to the help of many...  
of the 240 Hero profiles without a photo of the Hero, individual photos for 135  
Maryland Fallen Heroes have been recovered, are being processed, and are  
being placed alongside each Hero's name in the LODD Directory.**

*...the search is on and the search will continue....*

**Thank You !**

[www.MDFireRescueHero.org](http://www.MDFireRescueHero.org)



## Frederick Co. VFRA Hosts Annual Awards Ceremony

Article by Linda Canole, Frederick Co. VFRA.

Photos by Ron Watkins, MSFA

On Monday, April 17, 2017, the Frederick County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (FCVFRA) held their Annual Volunteer Fire and Rescue Recognition Program. The Program, which took place at the Walkersville Volunteer Fire Company, provided an opportunity to recognize the many contributions volunteer personnel make in providing fire and rescue service to the citizens of Frederick County. The Program featured the presentation of seventeen awards and the induction of ten individuals into the Hall of Fame. The following is summary of the award presentations:

- Charles H. "Mutt" Deater, Jr. Apprentice of the Year — Shawn Pyles of Brunswick Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Co; Joshua Smith of Walkersville Volunteer Fire Company
- Winona "Winnie" Crum Rookie of the

Year - Scott VanDermark of Lewistown District Volunteer Fire Department

- Mumma Outstanding Service Award - Eric Smothers of Brunswick Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Co
- Clint Hughes Departmental Fire Prevention Award - Junior Fire Company
- James H. Stavely III Fire Prevention Award - David Keller III of Citizens Truck Company
- Millard "Mick" Mastrino Instructor/Safety Award - Kristi Staley of Walkersville Volunteer Fire Company
- Everett W. Gaver Service Award - Mary E. Ambrose of Lewistown District Volunteer Fire Department
- Robert L. Renner Departmental Service Award - Alan Hurley of Rocky Ridge Volunteer Fire Company
- Cletta Abrecht Auxiliary Member of the Year - Myrtle Sturtz of Middletown Volunteer Fire Company Auxiliary
- Louise Lenhart Auxiliary Encourage-

ment Award - Michelle Curry of Middletown Volunteer Fire Company Auxiliary

- Fire/Rescue Departmental Training Award - New Market District Fire Company 104 hours per active member; Independent Hose Company 88 hours per active member; United Steam Fire Co 87 hours per active member
- Dr. James Marrone EMS Member of the Year - Ronald F. Kefauver of Middletown Volunteer Fire Company
- Firefighter of the Year - Alan Staley of Walkersville Volunteer Fire Company
- Michael Wilcom Officer of the Year Award—Valaria Kilby of Gracham Volunteer Fire Company
- Outstanding Unit Award -Brunswick Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Company
- Heart of a Volunteer Award - Helen Eyler of New Midway Volunteer Fire Company



2017 inductees to the FCVFRA Hall of Fame. Front row (L to R), Dorothy Moss, Betty White, Deborah Perkins, Ronnie Eyler, and Lorraine Ferrell. Back row, L to R, Marty Fuller, Dennis Mathias, James Goodman, Eddie Lapole, and Matt Stahley.

## MSFA Has Grand Celebration in Port Deposit



By Mike Dixon

PORT DEPOSIT, April 22, 2017 — On a Saturday in April, the Water Witch Volunteer Fire Company hosted a grand celebration for the Maryland State Firemen's Association, as the fire service group marked 125 years of serving the State. On this damp day, a light spring rain fell for much of the afternoon, but that didn't put a damper on this celebration as Port Deposit and companies from throughout the region turned out to mark the occasion. There was an impressive parade, fire boat demonstrations, speeches, fireworks, a pub crawl, and much more. Here are some photos of the ceremonies downtown and the parade.

Above: The Fire Brigade Pipes & Drums of Greater Baltimore leads the parade, passing under the MSFA arch; Bottom Left: Chief Chip Jewell talks about the history of the fire service in Frederick Co., and MD.; Bottom Right: Miss Fire Prevention, Sierra Nichole Smallwood, helps introduce the charter companies of the MSFA. Photos—Dixon





After a grand day, there was lots of cleanup to be taken care of Above: Water Witch veteran firefighter, Bob Caffrey, operates the aerial unit; left MSFA PP Tom Mattingly chairs the 125th anniversary committee; below: As the rain came down, Treasurer Ron Siarnicki, who also chairs the Convention and Conference Committee, gets things packed up as activities move to the June's annual convention in Ocean City.



Port Deposit - 125th

Continued from page 3



( L-R) Captain Allen Dinan, Lt. Ian Morlok and firefighter Rocky DiGivanni on marine 552 of the Susquehanna Hose Company.



Above: Water Witch Fire Police had a busy weekend, beginning Friday evening as MSFA members arrived in Port Deposit; bottom: On the way to the Ocean City Convention.



**Elect Mark A. Bilger**

**MSFA President**



A large red-bordered box containing the text 'Elect Mark A. Bilger' and 'MSFA President'. Below the text is a horizontal double-headed arrow. At the bottom of the box is a portrait of Mark A. Bilger in a dark blue police uniform with a badge and patches.

## Chip's Logbook

*(Continued from page 5)*

Company with windows propped open to get some fresh air. Electricity was still relatively new, having just been extended to the outer environs of Frederick County by the trolley system.

Most likely the members of the companies that arrived in Frederick had no advance knowledge of the potential of participating in the organization infancy. But, as they gathered, they were approached with an idea from the first MSFA president, J. Roger McSherry, of an organization to awaken "...to the necessity of a more thorough and complete organization .....promote and increase their efficiency as firemen..." I am certain there was much discussion as to the need for such an organization.

And how would companies located hours apart become a cohesive group? The commitment of 11 volunteer fire companies and one volunteer veteran organization launched this idea into action. On June 7 & 8, 1893, the Maryland State Firemen's Association was officially born.

To have charter members of the MSFA reach from Port Deposit to Frostburg was truly an accomplishment in 1893. No interstate highways, no email, no telephones. The Transportation Committee was one of the first committee developed by the early MSFA leadership to assist in travel and accommodations for convention attendees. Motorized fire apparatus were still a decade away.

***"On June 7 & 8, 1893, the Maryland State Firemen's Association was officially born."***

Horses and trains were the primary mode of transit. Steam and hand pumpers had to be transported by rail to participate in early parades.

Until 1967, the conventions moved around cities and towns throughout Maryland. From Baltimore City to the small town of Lonaconing in Allegany County, firemen have "ruled the town" with hijinks and parades. By far, Ocean City has hosted the majority of the conventions, providing many families with a vacation opportunity. The last convention outside of Ocean City was held in Frederick in 1967. A "Special Centennial Convention" was also held in Frederick in 1992.

As you enjoy the beach and beauty of Ocean City, keep in mind the early pioneers of our organization that had the foresight to envision a statewide organization to promote and support the volunteer fire and rescue companies of our state. Our cruise down Route 50 to "reach the beach" has replaced the dusty travel that could take days, not hours, to reach the convention. Imagine the elements of travel our forefathers had to endure.

Pause a moment to remember the leaders of the Frostburg Fire Department No. 1, Independent Junior Fire Company of Hagerstown, First Hagerstown Hose Company, Antietam Hose Company of Hagerstown, Pioneer Hook & Ladder of Hagerstown, Independent Hose Co. No. 1 of Frederick, Junior Steam Fire Engine Co. No. 2 of Frederick, United Steam Fire Engine No. 3 of Frederick, Union Bridge Fire Co., Westminster Fire Engine & Hose Company No. 1, Water Witch of Port Deposit, and Volunteer Veteran's Association of Baltimore.

The organizational foundation they developed 125 years ago has withstood the test of time and continues to move into the future serving the interest of

thousands of volunteer fire and rescue personnel throughout the Free State.

Welcome to a truly historical event as we celebrate the 125th convention and 125 years of dedication and commitment as you join fire service leaders with a collective vision to promote and foster the volunteer fire and rescue service in the great State of Maryland.

Congratulations on the 125th anniversary of the Maryland State Firemen's Association!!

### BE SAFE

### CHIP

### Port Deposit Meeting

*(Continued from page 1)*

bers of the Harford-Cecil Color Guard and a contingent of pipers from several of the Pipes and Drums groups. Apparatus from the surrounding area participated in the parade.

The infamous "Water Witch", often seen at the Convention in Ocean City, also was spotted in the parade route. A beautiful arch had been constructed similar to the ones from the first parade in Frederick was in placed just before the town hall, and will be reconstructed at the parade in Ocean City as we wind up our year of celebration.

## Celebration of Life for Barry Johnson

By Ron Watkins

A Celebration of Life was held for Barry Willis Johnson of the Laurel Volunteer Rescue Squad, Prince George's County Company 49 on May 20, 2017.

Barry died after a long battle with Pancreatic Cancer on April 25, 2017 surrounded by family. He was 59 years old. On December 29, 1993, Barry married his high school girl friend Cynthia Wright at the same church where they met in 1973, Christ Congregational Church in Silver Spring Maryland. Barry and Cyndy shared a dedication to church work especially the Retreat House in West Virginia, to EMS education and to volunteer work in the MSFA.

Barry is survived by his two adult children, Jordan Tyler Johnson and Jessica Lyn Johnson. Barry is preceded in death by his father, Keith Willis Johnson and mother Carolyn Love Baria Johnson. He is survived by his brothers Erik (Kendra), Stefan, and Leslie (Mae), Sister in Law Betty Laffan (John) and mother in law Dr. June Wright, nieces Marilyn (Neil), Bethany and Nicole, nephews Nicholas, Jacob, Timothy and David, and grandniece Diana, and many cousins on both coasts.

Barry was born in New York on Long Island and moved to Silver Spring Maryland in the late 1960's. Barry graduated from Montgomery Blair High School in 1975. He attended Montgomery College, Jackson State University and Virginia Tech majoring in Business Administration. He returned to school at University of Maryland University College and completed a second degree in Computer Science in 2005.

Barry was an avid runner and was joined by his daughter Jessica in many 5 and 10K races for charity. Most recently the entire extended family has participated in the Purple Stride walk/

run for Pancreatic Cancer in DC and Baltimore. Even during Chemotherapy, Barry participated in the first MSFA Cancer Support walk in 2016 and was planning to register for 2017. When not programming computers for work, he created websites and Facebook pages for American Trauma Society, Laurel Volunteer Rescue Squad, Blair High School, Prince George's and Maryland State Firemen's Association and his church. Barry shared his love of cooking and grilling with family and friends on any occasions: sun, rain or snow.

His love of entertaining with food came from years of working in the food and beverage industry (Sir Walter Raleigh's followed by Marriott). A past time his son Jordan continues to enjoy. Barry Johnson started his public safety career in Montgomery County in high school as a cadet at Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad as part of the Scout Cadet program while attending Blair High School.

During his life time he was a member of BCC (Montgomery County), Providence VFD (Baltimore County) Bel Air VFD (Harford County) Hillandale VFD (Montgomery County) and in Sept. 1999, he transferred to Laurel Volunteer Rescue Squad in Prince George's County to focus on EMS and Rescue. During the past 15 plus years at LVRS 49 Barry served in a number of leadership roles including 10 years on the Board of Directors and President of the BOD for three years.

Barry's professional background in Information Technology provided him with additional skills to develop first a web presence for LVRS and then a Facebook page. Over the years he has mentored other members in both the programming and the responsibilities that go with social media in public safety. Barry also served at the county



and regional level on the Emergency Education Council of MIEMSS Region V and the Prince George's County Volunteer Fire & Rescue Association.

Barry's involvement naturally extended to the Maryland State Firemen's Association as a delegate, committee member and committee chair. He is a member of both the Prince George's County and Maryland State Firemen's Association Hall of Fame.

Barry worked in Section 508 /Web Accessibility for the past 17 years with the FAA, DHHS, DHS, and most recently with Department of Education and Office of Civil Rights. As member of the Deque Systems Inc Corporation, he enjoyed working with a team of experts that shared one goal making information accessible to everyone.

In lieu of flowers, remembrances may be made to Retreat House Fund at Christ Congregational Church to support accessibility or Barry Johnson EMS Scholarship Fund to support the Paramedic Program at Laurel Volunteer Rescue Squad.

The family also appreciates contribution to support pancreatic cancer research through the annual Purple Stride events coordinated by the Pancreatic Cancer Network.

## Frederick County

(Continued from page 7)

### Hall of Fame Inductees

- Ronnie Eyler of Rocky Ridge Volunteer Fire Company;
  - Lorraine Ferrell of Brunswick Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Company
  - Marty Fuller of Libertytown Volunteer Fire Company
  - James Goodman of Middletown Volunteer Fire Company
  - Charles "Eddie" LaPole, Jr. of Jefferson Volunteer Fire Company
  - Dennis Mathias of Rocky Ridge Volunteer Fire Company
  - Dorothy Moss of Brunswick Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Company
  - Debbie Perkins of Junior Fire Company
  - Matt Staley of Walkersville Volunteer Fire Company
  - Betty White of Urbana Volunteer Fire Department
- Eric Smothers, president of the Frederick County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association presented Ron Watkins a Certificate of Appreciation for the many years Mr. Watkins has served as the photographer for the Awards Ceremony.



The Fire/Rescue Department Training Award — Pictured (L to R), John Patton, Independent Hose Co., Larry Beard, New Market VFD, and Jeana Danarella, United Steam FD.

Congratulations to

Maryland State Firemen's Association

Best wishes for your convention week.

Thank you for your past support and I ask for your continued support

Richard Blair



for 1st Vice President  
Of the  
Maryland State Firemen's Association



The Outstanding Unit Award: (L to R) Courtney Nalborczyk and Chief Anthony Smothers of the Brunswick Vol. Ambulance & Rescue Co. Not pictured were Jennifer Williams, Jonas Zieller and Chad Johnson.

## A 1927 Accident Takes Life of Fire Chief in Harford County

By Mike Dixon, Historian

*In my practice as a historian I occasionally find hints in old records about a long forgotten, undocumented fallen police officer or firefighter.*

*When that happens, I pick-up the evidentiary fragments and trace the trail back through time, seeking to make sure the public servant's ultimate sacrifice isn't forgotten in the mist of time.*

*This investigation came about while I was working as the historical consultant for a Maryland Public Television Documentary on the Conowingo Dam.*

*I was looking at a previously unexamined question of workers killed on the job at this massive construction project.*

*Here's the narrative.*



The Conowingo Fire Department's Engine. Photo Courtesy of the Exelon Corporation.

The first shovel of earth for construction on the massive hydroelectric plant, the Conowingo Dam was turned in March 1926, newspapers reported. Soon some three to five thousand men flocked to the rural area of northeastern Maryland seeking to earn good pay. In addition to those working on the Stone and Webster and the Arundel Corporation payrolls building dam and the generating plant, there were laborers on the railroad, contractors on roadways, and crews erecting transmission lines stretching to Philadelphia.

To accommodate the incursion of this massive population in the rural, remote area of northeastern Maryland, the two construction companies established large work camps. Since houses and barracks were going up rapidly in

the boom town, public safety had to also be provided. There was a hospital capable of accommodating about two dozen patients. It had a resident doctor and a staff of nurses, as well as operating and sterilizing rooms.

Col. Claude B. Sweezy, the former warden of the Maryland Penitentiary, was the director of public safety. He supervised a fire department, police force, roads and other things. Under his command, a police force of nine members was headed by Chief Robert Whitney, a former motor traffic officer at the Bel Air Station.

The Conowingo Fire Department, equipped with an engine, protected the works camps and the construction site. Chief George R. Chapman commanded fire-fighting operations.

On April 25, 1927 at 6:05 p.m., he was

riding in the command seat on the pumper as it traveled on the state highway in Harford County. The machine suddenly crashed into a roadside bank, overturning and pinning him under the truck. He was dead when taken from under the vehicle, newspapers reported. The Chief, 53, was from Baltimore and he was buried at Loudon Park Cemetery. the death certificate recorded.

Next year, during the annual memorial service next year in June 2018, Chief Chapman's name will be added to the Maryland Fire Rescue Services Memorial Wall of Honor as a Maryland Fallen Hero.

*Notes: Chris Smithson, a respected and skillful Maryland Genealogist, helped research the family history on this case. The assistance of the Harford County Historical Society is also acknowledged.*

***The Conowingo Dam Fire Department, equipped with an engine, protected the works camps and the construction site. Chief George R. Chapman commanded firefighting operations.***

## Fire Service Says Final Goodbye to Bob “Pappy” Hahn

By Mike Dixon

NEW CASTLE, May 13, 2017 – On this Saturday, as a continuous rain soaked the City of New Castle, DE., first responders from three states gathered at the Good Will Fire Company to say goodbye to Robert “Pappy” W. Hahn, a senior fire service member. Pappy passed away on May 8, 2017.

The 85-year-old Navy veteran, who served in Korea and Vietnam, mustered out following an enlistment of 23 years. Afterward, he continued his public service, joining four fire companies – Charlestown, Good Will, Hacks Point, and Chesapeake City.

Today, family, friends, and firefighters from three states came to Station 18 to honor the memory of the veteran emergency responder and support the family. Chief Richard K. Brooks, III, the Cecil County Dept. of Emergency Services, officiated and Pappy received full fire department honors. The Harford County Volunteer Firemen’s Association Honor

Guard performed its solemn duty, standing watch during the funeral.

At the end of the service, as pallbearers carried the flag draped casket slowly to the hearse, uniformed members of the service lined the way. Their badges covered with mourning tape, they stood at attention and saluted. Other Long-standing traditions, including the crossed ladders, bagpiper, and the final radio call, all honoring the respected member of the fire service. Outside, the hearse passed under the crossed ladders of two aerial trucks, an American flag hanging from the top of Good Will and Charlestown units.

He touched many lives through his involvement in the community and the fire service. “Pappy” was a member of



The final ride on Chesapeake City Engine 212, a 1958 Ford. Photo by Steffy

MSFA Committees, and was a fixture at meetings as he and his wife, Robyn Sheldon Hahn, the president of the Cecil County Firemen’s Association, worked on MSFA business.

## Singerly Marks 125 Years of Service

By Mike Dixon

ELKTON, January 22, 2017 — The Singerly Fire Company was incorporated on Jan. 22, 1892, and since that time the department has protected the Elkton area. To mark this special occasion, Singerly kicked off this year of observances with a birthday party at Station 13 on Newark Ave.

Nearly 200 members, governmental officials, officers of firefighter associations, and fire companies from three counties were present to help Elkton mark this important milestone. The Company is named for William Singerly, a wealthy Philadelphia industrialist, who donated money to help get the company started. State and County officials, firefighter associations, and mutual aid companies throughout the region made remarks and offered congratulations. And, of course, at the end of the program, the birthday cake was cut.

MSFA PP John Denver is coordinating events for Singerly, and a number of activities are planned during the year.

Photos: top - (l to r) SFC President Phil Scot, MSFA President Davis, and SFC VP Steve Horah.

Bottom — William Singerly (actor Mike Collins) made a trip through time to make remarks about the progress Singerly has made since he helped with a contribution in 1892. He is talking with County Executive Alan McCarthy





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**Representing the volunteer fire,  
rescue and EMS personnel of  
Maryland**



The marine unit from the Susquehanna Hose Company was one of the units participating in the fireboat demonstrations at Marina Park in Port Deposit.

Photo: Dixon

