



Answering the call: Alex Hebert and the Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad

By Ellen McBride, EMT-B, SECRETARY, VIRGINIA BEACH VOLUNTEER RESCUE SQUAD (Reprint from the Jet Observer)

He remembers pulling into the parking lot in the ambulance, responding to a breathing difficulty call. Suddenly, the patient went into cardiac arrest. Alex Hebert and two other members of the Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad went to work, bringing the patient back to life.

"I was hooked," says Alex. "The realization that I could do something that could affect the rest of someone's life was amazing."

Today, Senior Chief, Master at Arms, Alex Hebert is safely home with his family in Virginia Beach, having just returned from Afghanistan. Alex, an MP and firearms instructor, was a police mentor and helped train the Afghan National Police. "We were a provincial reconstruction team," explains Alex. "Our job was building the infrastructure, government and police force in a particular area of the country."

He is also a medic. He was certified as an EMT-Basic through the Navy in 2005, and has volunteered at the Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad for two years to keep up his skills. "I took the city's Enhanced class and had just finished it before I had to leave for training to go to Afghanistan last year. In fact, I got my test results that I had passed just four days before I left." Alex laughs, "I'm not released by the City yet, but I am state-certified."

In Afghanistan, he told them he could help beyond his firearms and training duties. "In every unit there is a four-man medical staff. I told them, 'This is what I bring to the table.' They said I could jump in and help them anytime." And he did. When they went out on convoy, senior officers were comfortable adding the role of medic to Alex's responsibilities. He also helped on base. "We had a forward surgical team like



in the show M*A*S*H, though not nearly as big. Any cases that came in from other bases, I would help with the triage. Because of my Enhanced skills, I could do IVs, intubations, and administer drugs."

Now back in the States, Alex feels just as strongly about what he "brings to the table" by continuing to offer his skills to the people of Virginia Beach. "The community gives to us as military members; we don't have to pay the taxes, but we use the school system and we use the roadways." Alex pauses. "This is a great way to give back, by volunteering or giving donations to the Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad."

Established in 1952, the Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad provides premier pre-hospital emergency medical care 24 hours a day every day of the year at no cost to the citizens and visitors of the City of Virginia Beach. Volunteers use eight ALS-certified ambulances, an ALS-certified heavy rescue/squad truck, and other equipment to provide effective care. Over 125 operational members staff both the Oceanfront and the newly opened Great Neck stations. Last year, the Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad responded to over 10,800 emergency calls.

"I feel I can give back to the community with a skill set I'm glad I'm able to share," says Alex. "Virginia Beach has the largest volunteer rescue squad system in the world.

And it works. It works because of the professionals who volunteer their time and service to this city. It works because of the military and non-military people who are volunteering and supporting it. I encourage everyone to support it."

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Mission: To provide services to the community which preserve life, improve health and promote the safety of citizens and visitors who live, learn, work and play in our community. This mission is accomplished through a systems approach focused on providing timely responses; high quality patient care services; public awareness and education; proactive safety interventions; and all hazards readiness.

Vision: We are a leader in the emergency medical services field and the community is confident in our services.

The Virginia Beach Department of EMS Call Stats

YEAR 2008/2009	CALLS FOR SERVICE
4th Quarter 2008	9,168
1st Quarter 2009	9,072
2nd Quarter 2009	9,989
3rd Quarter 2009	10,263
Total	38,492

THE COUNCIL OF VIRGINIA BEACH VOLUNTEER RESCUE SQUADS, INC. INCLUDES:

- Ocean Park Volunteer Rescue Squad
- Davis Corner Volunteer Rescue Squad
- Chesapeake Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad
- Creeds Volunteer Rescue Squad
- Kempsville Volunteer Rescue Squad
- Blackwater Volunteer Rescue Squad
- Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad
- Plaza Volunteer Rescue Squad
- Sandbridge Volunteer Rescue Squad
- Virginia Beach Volunteer Water Rescue Team

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Let the ghoul times roll!

Plaza Volunteer Rescue Squad hosted its annual Halloween party event, Operation Safe Haven. The event, which is in its 12th year, once again attracted more than 800 children and 400 adults. It included a haunted



Young volunteers, Sammie Collins and Kayla Sizemore (EMT-E Christi Collins' granddaughters), helped with Operation Safe Haven's relay race.

house, games, face painting, a costume contest, relay races, treats and prizes galore.

"It's a safe alternative to trick-or-treating," says Christie Collins, who has been involved with the annual event for the past eight years. "In this

economy, we expected that many porch lights would be out on Halloween night, so we are always excited to provide this event as another option."

Operation Safe Haven relies on the support of local companies who donate money, prizes, and time volunteering at the event. This year, the Salem High School



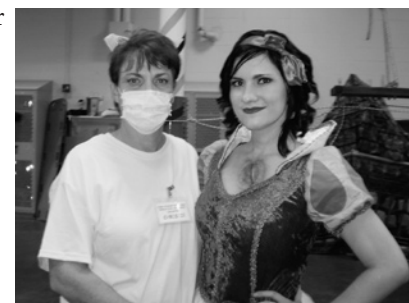
All volunteers from Operation Safe Haven 2009 take a moment to say "Cheese!"

theater group participated as

actors in the haunted house. Donated prizes included tickets to Laser Quest, Nauticus, The Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center, Moe's Southwest Grill, Jungle Gym and more.



Visual and Performing Arts Academy (VPAA) students pose along with Snow White (a.k.a. Lauren Collins, VPAA Class of 2008).



Lauren Collins, who served as the haunted house lead tour guide, takes a risk standing next to her "Swine Flu" mom, Christie Collins, chairperson of this year's Operation Safe Haven.

Moving on up!

Congratulations to the following individuals who have advanced their EMT certification levels!
(SEPTEMBER 1 - OCTOBER 21, 2009)

Life	Paul Carr	Lori Whittaker	Paula Swartz
Robin Barnes	Jessica Caruso	James Williams	Blair Whitley
Andrew Bedinger	Olivia Dawood	Debra Wong	
	Tara Deel		EMT-Intern
EMT-P	John Doub	EMT-Trainee	Tyler Blankenship
John Johnson	Michael Ferguson	Eric Alibangbang	Colton Brant
Katherine Savage	Teddy Ginn, Jr.	Matthew Catoire	Kevin Cunningham
	Jorge Hodgson	Derek Coffrin	Megan Dane
EMT-E	William Laws	James Farrow	Kevin Danovich
Jenni McFarland	Paulette Merricks	Jason Kehoe	John Golden
Sarah Meredith	Bradford Sauer	Daniel Kiernan	Nathanael Klimis
	Peter Seidler	Christine Machaj	Michael Leary
EMT-B	Christopher Sloan	John Pinion	Malissa Lessard
Matthew Belcher	Brian Stocks	Bryan Roberts	Janelei Moravek
Evan Callaway		Ira Swartz	Santiago Vallee, III

Explorer Post 800 works the scene at Annual Fire Fighter Challenge

The students of Explorer Post 800 continue to be active, recently collaborating with their brothers and sisters from Norfolk Explorer Post 116 (fire fighters) in the annual Explorer Post Fire Fighter Challenge. They served as the on-scene medics and did a fantastic job.

This talented group of young men and women hones their EMS skills during meetings every second and fourth Sunday of the month. They welcome all kids ages 12 and up. For more information, contact Debbie Joyner, EMT Advisor, at 576-2999.



Explorer Post 800 members Wendy Danner and Taylor Gitliz treat a Norfolk fire fighter who volunteered to be a patient at a recent Explorer Post Fire Fighter Challenge. Taylor, a new MIT for Ocean Park Rescue, was previously the first captain for the Post and has returned as proctor.

Post members Daniel Gray, Cheyenne Nedham, Thomas Trumbauer and Lauren Plaine wait for a patient to be brought out of the "smoke house" during the annual Fire Fighter Challenge.



Our Hero!

Congratulations to Rescue 14's Mike Rydberg, EMT-B, who was selected as a City of Virginia Beach "Hometown Hero" and represented EMS in this year's Neptune Festival Grand Parade. Captain Tom Harp, Rescue 14, presented Mike with these two impressive awards. Well done!



Miyazaki City Volunteer Delegation visit Virginia Beach EMS

Members of the Miyazaki City Volunteer Delegation recently traveled to sister city, Virginia Beach, to attend the Miyazaki-Virginia Beach Volunteer Conference, held at the Virginia Beach Conference Center, on October 20. They departed for Washington, D.C., after a very packed two-day visit, which included meetings with Virginia Beach EMS and Fire, to discuss volunteerism.

Left to Right: Jim Doubler, EMT, Plaza Rescue Squad; Keishi Onitsuka, Deputy Chief, Sadowara Branch Miyazaki Volunteer Fire Brigade; Tsugio Shimadaya, Deputy Chief, Chuo Branch Miyazaki Volunteer Fire Brigade; Bobby Hill, Recruitment Coordinator, Virginia Beach Rescue Squad Foundation; Masahisa Takahashi, Deputy Chief, Miyazaki City Volunteer Fire Brigade; and Bill Walker, Captain, Plaza Volunteer Rescue Squad

First call for new police air ambulance

Inaugural transport marks the culmination of more than five years of work with multiple City agencies

Just after 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 21, EMS and Fire crews requested an air ambulance for a patient involved in a rollover crash on Princess Anne Road, just north of the North Carolina border. The Police Department's new Bell 407 air ambulance, callsign "Air Medic," immediately responded.

MPO Scott Abbott served as pilot-in-command with MPO Dave Cook acting as flight officer. EMS Division Chief and Chief Flight Medic Ed Brazle and Senior Paramedic Chuck Singleton were on board as the medical crew. After a quick evaluation at the scene, care was smoothly transferred from the ground crew, including volunteers from Blackwater and Creeds Rescue Squads, to the flight medics. The patient was flown to the Trauma Center at Sentara Virginia Beach General Hospital and admitted in stable condition.

This inaugural transport marks the culmination of more than five years of work by a number of staff from across the City, including Police, EMS, Fire, Management Services, Purchasing and Public Works. Pilots, flight officers and medics have been training together for more than 18 months, including ten EMS volunteers and 16 EMS career, each of whom has completed a specialized air medical training course. A core group of flight medic instructors works with each medic to hone their skills and complete required certifications as this program grows. The EMS Air Medic volunteers have participated in more than 120 hours of additional training, above and beyond all other EMS training.

"The entire initiative is unique," said Chief Brazle, "and as far as we know, this is the only Medevac service in the country that strictly uses volunteer as well as career EMS providers. Without the participation and dedication from our EMS volunteers, the AirMedical program would not be a reality. This successful first transport allowed the patient to more rapidly receive Trauma Center medical care, and makes the acquisition, training and preparation of the air ambulance well worth the effort."

For more information about volunteering with Air Medic, contact the EMS Office at 757-385-1999.



Volunteers Kevin Lipscomb, Rich Mayes and John Carey help load a patient during an Air Medic drill.

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