

Nelms retires from PAPD after 20 years

By Richard Crumbacker

Crisfield-Somerset County Times

PRINCESS ANNE — After 20 years, Lt. Robert H. Nelms III has retired from the Princess Anne Police Department. His last day on the job was March 13 and he is now working part-time as court security in Worcester County.

Chief Tim Bozman had a plaque and shadow box prepared for Lt. Nelms to present to him at the May 2 town meeting, but he did not attend to receive it. The chief said later that Lt. Nelms wasn't interested in a lot of recognition for his service.

In December Lt. Nelms responded to downtown apartment that was on fire, arriving ahead of firefighters



Rob Nelms

and EMS. He removed an injured person from the building and started CPR. For that he received a Life Saving Award during a staff appreciation luncheon in January. In 2010 another act of life saving was recognized when he responded to a house on Pine Street, and provided immediate care to a wheelchair-bound man, moving him to the floor to start resuscitation procedures.

The U.S. Marine veteran and Fruitland resident worked for the Delmar and Salisbury police departments, and the Wicomico County Sheriff's Office prior to coming to Princess Anne in June 1996. He is the son of a former sheriff of Wicomico County, R. Hunter Nelms Jr. who served from 1984-2006.

Chief Bozman said the department hired Sue Dize, an officer from the UMES police department, to fill the vacancy.



County Times/Richard Crumbacker

Inducted into Hall of Fame

Robert Lankford, a former volunteer firefighter who joined the Marion Fire Department in 1948, was inducted into the Del-Mar-Va Volunteer Firemen's Association's Hall of Fame. It is in recognition of his meritorious service on behalf of the firefighters of the State of Maryland, and the announcement was made at the 87th annual convention held April 30 in Chincoteague. Unable to attend, the certificate was accepted by Donnie Howard, an active Marion firefighter and Hall of Fame member since 1987. He nominated Mr. Lankford, who has been a life member since 1988. He held every office in the fire department, and at age 90 is now its oldest living member. He is a resident of the Chesapeake Cove assisted living center in Crisfield.

Through an officer's eyes: Saving a life from overdose

By Jenni Pastusak

The evening of February 21, 2016 was another night on the job for Corporal Robert Smith of the Princess Anne Police Department. Smith, working the 4 p.m. to 4 a.m. shift with his partner, Officer Kara Meeks, followed the pair's regular pattern of listening to the scanner for any sign of distress or emergency. That's when they heard EMS tones identified as a medical emergency.

They heard a Sheriff's Office deputy was headed to the scene and made the call to respond as backup. In route they learned that it was a possible drug overdose, two victims in two different apartments and EMS was on the scene.

"When we arrived to the apartment building, paramedics were working on a man lying on the floor in the back living area who was in full cardiac arrest," said Smith. "We found a second victim, a female, in a bed barely breathing."

Smith and his partner didn't waste a moment's time. They ran to their vehicle to retrieve several doses of Narcan®. Narcan, the trade name for Naloxone, is a life-saving medication that can quickly restore the breathing of a person who has overdosed on heroin or prescription opioid pain medication like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, fentanyl or methadone.

They administered Narcan to the woman and started oral air bag ventilations. The woman was not responding but they didn't give up. It was time to administer another dose of Narcan. After the fourth dose of the overdose medicine, something happened.

"Finally we saw her eyes flutter," said Smith. "It was a good feeling



Special to the Crisfield-Somerset County Times/Jenni Pastusak
Princess Anne Police Corporal Robert Smith, with a dose of Narcan in his hand.

knowing she was alive. We as police officers have sworn the same oath to protect lives. That is our job. Every single day officers are saving lives. This day wasn't unlike any other."

Unfortunately, the first victim wasn't as lucky and didn't make it. The woman was then transported to the hospital for further medical assistance but the evening wasn't over just yet. Another man, identified as the woman's boyfriend, who was sitting on a nearby couch, was spotted nodding off, falling in and out of consciousness.

"We rubbed on him until he regained consciousness," said Smith. "When asked if he took the same drugs, he answered yes. He revealed that they thought they were doing cocaine but it turned out to be fentanyl."

The man was transported to PRMC and treated by paramedics to prevent slipping into a state of overdose.

"Heroin is a huge problem everywhere and needs to be addressed," said Smith. "There are drugs out there everywhere that people are experimenting with and don't think about the consequences. With weekly overdoses and two fatalities so far, this is the worst I have seen it in my 16 years in law enforcement. Heroin is easily accessible and the user will most likely always go back and use again because they are chasing that high. I almost think society's mentality has moved from 'don't do drugs' to 'drugs aren't so bad'. Narcan is a great resource but we also need to get to the root of the problem."

The Somerset County Health Department has reported eight overdose reversals through the use of Narcan in one month. Narcan works only on opioid overdoses, reversing them by blocking the receptors

in the brain where opiates attach. Overdose victims usually resume breathing and awaken within minutes. But Narcan is not a substitute for emergency medical care. The individual administering Narcan still needs to call 9-1-1 for emergency medical help. Narcan offers a temporary reversal lasting 30-60 minutes, enough time to get the individual to a medical facility to receive further treatment.

Without additional care, the opioid can reattach to the receptors in the brain and the person can go back into an overdose state.

The Somerset County Health Department offers free Narcan training the first Monday of each month to residents from Somerset County. The training includes information about prescription opioids and other street drugs, recognizing the signs and symptoms of a drug overdose and what steps to take when responding to an overdose.

Participants will also learn about the Narcan nasal spray, a new device that requires no assembly and administers the medication to an individual in one dose.

Narcan training is the first Monday of each month, 5:30 p.m. at 8928 Sign Post Road in Westover. To register call 443-523-7190. All participants will leave the training with a certificate that will allow them to obtain a free dosage of Naloxone (Narcan) from specific local pharmacies.

The Somerset County Health Department is also available to do on-site training for groups of 10 or more, call 443-523-7190 for more information.

— Jenni Pastusak is a public relations specialist with A.S.A.P.R. in Salisbury.