### THE RAPPAHANNOCK ROLL CALL

A publication of the Rappahannock Area Lodge #15, Fraternal Order of Police, Inc.





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Fraternal Order of Police, Inc. 2024/25

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### RAPPAHANNOCK FOP LODGE 15 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

In January of 2024, Lodge 15, participated in the annual rally day for the Virginia General Assembly. The lodge helped to bring attention to a number of legislative initiatives before the General Assembly. Following the Rally Day, then Director Webster and Trustee Hornung participated in the Annual Day on the Hill at the U.S. Capital. Members Webster and Hornung met with all of the Virginia Congressional Representative's Chief of Staff or Legislative Aides to bring attention to legislative initiatives promoting the law enforcement community.

On March 04, 2024, Lodge 15, attended the FOP legislative meeting held at Washington D.C. Lodge #1. National President Pat Yoes, National Secretary Jimmy Holderfield, National Legislative Committee Senior Legislative Liaison Tim Richardson, and National Legislative Committee Executive Director Jim Pasco addressed the attendees. The top priorities for the FOP include; support the Social Security Fairness Act H.R. 82/S 597, oppose any legislation that would require the participation of public employees in Social Security, support the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act H.R. 3539, support the Law Enforcement Officers Equity Act H.R. 1322/S 1658, support the LEOSA Reform Act H.R. 354, support the Protect and Serve Act H.R. 743, Support the Homes for Every Local Protector, Educator, and Responder (HELPER) Act H.R. 3170, support the Law Enforcement Officers Parity Act S. 1658 and Support the Thin Blue Line Act H.R. 130.



In May of 2024, the Lodge hosted an awards ceremony to honor our active brothers and sisters, and a memorial service to honor our fallen brothers and sisters. The keynote speaker for the Memorial and Awards Banquet State Senator Tara Durant. The following LEO's were recognized for their outstanding achievements FOR 2024:



Keynote Speaker State Senator Tara Durant



Joe McBride and Member of the Year FOP VP Lodge 15 Chaplain Bill Benton



Fredericksburg Police Department Officer of the Year – Officer Gregory Baugher



Virginia State Trooper of the Year – Senior Trooper Alexander Lubbers



Stafford County Deputy of the Year – Master Deputy Scott A. Fulford

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Rappahannock Area Jail Corrections Officer of the Year - 1stSgt Kyle Shaw



Spotsylvania County Deputy of the Year – Deputy Sheriff Amanda Mele

In July of 2024, the Lodge awarded college scholarships. See Page 23 for the article and photos of the FOP #15 Scholarship Recipients.

In July of 2024, the current slate of officers was re-elected to leadership of the Rappahannock Lodge 15. The only exception was Neil Hornung who was appointed Director since the current Director, Frank Webster, had been elected Vice President of the Virginia FOP.

David Theisen - President Joseph McBride - 1st Vice President Brian Wheeler - 2nd Vice President Larry Carmon - Secretary Thomas Gibson - Treasurer William Benton - Chaplain Carl Poates - Sergeant at Arms Roger Henry - Trustee J. Craig Peters -Trustee Dustin Sutton - Trustee Hector Cruz -Trustee Michael Hamilton - Trustee Thomas Howie - Trustee Neil Hornung - Director Michael Montalvo - Past President Francis Webster - Trustee

On October 01,2024, the Lodge held our annual crab feast as a thank you to the membership.

On December 7, 2024, Rappahannock Area Lodge 15 participated in the annual Fredericksburg Christmas Parade. The theme for this year's parade was "Toy Land". Several members helped in decorating the float and we had the privilege of having Cub Scout Pack 325 participate. Lodge 15 sponsors Cub Scout Pack 325.

On December 14, 2024, Rappahannock Area Lodge held its annual Cops and Kids shopping event in collaboration with the Target Department Stores, Fredericksburg, Virginia. The Loge had registered over 150 local area children for 2024. Numerous law enforcement agencies, to include NCIS, AF OSI, FBI, and Immigration and Customs Bureau along with Virginia State Police, Spotsylvania County Sheriff's Office, Fredericksburg Police Department, and Rappahannock Area Regional Jail.

On Friday, December 20, 2024, we held our annual Christmas Party. It was catered and well attended. Santa made an appearance and toys and gifts were provided to members' children and grandchildren.



Lodge 15 President Theisen and Director Hornung receiving 2024 Charter renewal from Cubmaster *Dan Gray, Pack 325* 

Rappahannock Lodge 15 currently has 256 members. 180 Active-Duty members and 76 Retired members.



Fraternal Order of Police, Inc. 2024/25

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### RAPPAHANNOCK AREA LODGE 15 AUXILIARY LODGE

The Fraternal Order of Police Auxiliary is an ancillary organization of the Fraternal Order of Police made up of family members of FOP members. The Auxiliary is the only national support organization of its kind.

The Fraternal Order of Police Auxiliary was organized to unite families of members of the Fraternal Order of Police; to promote their welfare socially, morally and intellectually; and to encourage them in all things pertaining to their good.

In 1920, a group of wives of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, police officers gathered to discuss issues concerning their husbands and their jobs. This was the birth of the first "FOP Ladies Auxiliary." In 1941, Kathryn M. Milton became the first national president of the Ladies Auxiliary. Since that time, the Auxiliary has grown to over 1,900 members in 100 subordinate Auxiliaries representing 28 states.

In 1985, membership eligibility that originally allowed only females as members was extended to family members (18 years of age or older) of any member of the Fraternal Order of Police. In 1987, the name of the organization was changed, dropping the word "Ladies" to reflect the growth in membership of the organization.

The Rappahannock Area Lodge 15, Fraternal Order of Police Auxiliary donated 36 crocheted scarves and 7 crocheted blankets to the Loisann's Hope House of Fredericksburg this year. They are handmade throughout the year to donate to the kids every fall. This year Jessica Martien graciously accepted the donation.

Melissa Felts and Laura Green, owners and operators of Return 2 Home Lost Pet Resources, were awarded the 2024 Citizens of the Year award by Spotsylvania Sheriff's Department.





Melissa Felts, Sheriff Roger Harris and Laura Green

Since the start of their nonprofit in 2021, Melissa and Laura have rescued 327 pets. They have assisted Spotsylvania Animal Control with safely capturing 25 pets and counting since 2022.

In 2023, they were awarded grants from FOP Lodge 15 which helped them to purchase more equipment to allow them to continue tracking and trapping lost or stray dogs and cats..

The community sometimes calls upon their assistance at all hours, day and night, seven days a week, even on holidays. They have become a valued asset to their division and county when recovering challenging and hard-to-capture pets that may take days or weeks. With their particular skills and unique abilities, they have reduced the time a pet is away from home and subjected to harm being unrestrained in society.

A huge congratulations to Melissa Felts and Laura Green.

The Rappahannock Area Lodge 15 Auxiliary is always looking for those who are interested in volunteering their time to help those Law Enforcement Officers and their

families to ensure that they never walk alone. If you are interested, you are encouraged to contact Cindy Sutton, President of the Rappahannock Area Lodge 15 Auxiliary at 540-891-0491, lodge15auxiliary@gmail.com.



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### Law Offices of Hector Hernandez PLLC Attorneys at Law / Abogados

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Mental Health Skill Building (MHSS): Provides home-based, goal-directed training designed to assist the individual in obtaining independence or stability within the community. Services are available for adults with a mental health diagnosis that results in significant functional impairments in major life activities.

Outpatient Therapy: Provides individual, couple, or family therapy to children, adolescents, and adults coping with serious and stressful difficulties in their lives. Services are available in-person or via Telehealth.

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Therapeutic Mentoring: Provides 1:1 support for children and adolescents exhibiting behavioral challenges.

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### GIVING TO WORTHY CAUSES

### **RIDE TO THE WALL**

Ride to the Wall is a cross-country motorcycle ride that ends at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Rappahannock Area Lodge Secretary Larry Carmon was presented with a check for \$250 to help with the cost of expenses. Both Larry and his wife rode their own bikes from Stafford to the West Coast and back. There were approximately 1100 riders who participated.



Lodge member Craig Peters presents Larry Carmon with a check for participation in the Ride to the Wall

### **DISTRESS FUND**

The Distress Fund provides financial help to members and their families as well as nonmember Law Enforcement who are killed or injured in the line of duty, suffer a catastrophic illness or other loss.

Rappahannock 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Brian Wheeler and Chairman of the Distress Fund was presented with a check for \$2000 to augment the funds on hand.



Lodge member Craig Peters presents 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Brian Wheeler who is the Chairman of the Distress Fund with a check for the fund

# **Catherine Tucker**

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Rappahannock Area Lodge #15





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Wellness exams are recommended to monitor the healthy development of your growing child from birth to early adulthood. Our providers are specifically trained in the needs of growing children through each stage of their life. Wellness exams consist of a comprehensive exam in which children are screened for any disease risks and provided nutrition, safety, immunization and development information. Your provider will monitor the development of your child and measure his or her height and weight, as well as examining the body from head to toe. Any preventative needs will be recommended during these exams.

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### 2024-2025 Scholarships Awarded

### Leach-Harrell Scholarship Recipients

In July, 2024, the lodge presented scholarships of \$1,000 each to the following 12 recipients:



Emma Aguilar Germanna Community College Sponsor - Thomas Ray Hairfield



Gabriel Bailey Kutztown University Sponsor - J. Craig Peters



Alexis Benton Germanna Community College Sponsor – William Benton, Jr.



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throughout the entire construction process. We establish long-term relationships with clients through our dedication to personal performance, commitment, communication and earning the trust of those we work for.

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#### Home Repairs

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### Home Safety and Security

William Allen Harrison IV, Battlefield Homes, Fredericksburg, VA 9/2024

As a builder and designer of custom homes, my work is mostly for people who are moving to areas with relatively low crime – nice neighborhoods or rural settings. My purpose here is to walk through several considerations of home and site security, focusing on those that I consider in my work, as well as those that I consider (as both a husband and a father of many children) in my home.

A site risk assessment, along with an inventory of one's concerns, develops an overall picture that can be used to evaluate security and safety concerns based on one's own situation and environment.

"What is at risk?" Are you concerned about your family, animals, property, vehicles, valuables or collections, such as art, jewelry, instruments or books?

"What are the potential threats?" If you live in a high crime environment, what is the type of crime – burglary, vandalism, fire, flood? With a realistic picture of the likelihood of different threats, together with your inventory of what you care about, you can think about building systems to address the likelihood of bad events that would affect the things that are of value to you.

A 20-acre lot in a rural area is going to look different from a half-acre lot in a crowded neighborhood or an apartment.

Look at options for each level, from furthest out to closest in. At the perimeter, for example, if you live at the end of a long, remote driveway, a gate or entrance feature on your driveway can be both a physical and psychological barrier to criminals targeting your property, and they can also be helpful landmarks to emergency services such as Fire and EMS. A camera at the entrance to your property can alert you to visitors, and since almost everything these days is wireless, they are easy to install.

At the next closest level, outside your home itself, deterrents can be things like outdoor lighting, motion detection, fencing, a dog, landscaping that minimizes concealment for bad guys, and security system signage (whether you have a security system or not).

In my work, I primarily consider home design, and the obvious consideration is the access into the home - i.e., doors and windows, porches, and decks. Basement doors are access points that are a concern, and if the basement is little used, may warrant a home security system. If your deck has steps up to it, then the door on the deck is also an access point. Your front door is the one you will usually answer when strangers knock (if they aren't knocking at the front door, you're probably already in trouble), and a door with enough glass, or sidelights, lets you see who's at the door without opening it.

As for security systems, almost everything today can be wireless or wired. The advantage to wireless is that it can be configured for existing homes easily. Either way – wireless or wired – a security system can be an excellent way to alert you whether you are home or not. Cameras are excellent for monitoring both heavily trafficked areas and for keeping an eye on remote areas that don't get much attention (basement doors again). Some insurance companies offer a discount, or even require, a home security system on a new home.

Home security camera systems can also utilize motion detection, have recording capabilities, and can alert you whether you are at home or not.

Inside the home, many people like to have a good (solid core) door with locking ability as an escape room. Leaving aside the question of whether you have plans and the means to defend yourself in the event of an intruder, such a "safe room" can be a good idea – somewhere you can retreat to and buy a little time; however, some form of communications ability – i.e., a phone line – would be a good idea.

When building a home, we often create a vault / safe room under a concrete front porch, even having gone so far as to install a vault door. The advantage to this setup is that you have a room with concrete walls, a concrete ceiling and a concrete floor, which is very secure given that it has the right door on it. It is a great place to store valuable objects and is virtually fire-proof.

Speaking of fire, I have re-built homes for several families who lost their homes due to a house fire. Most were started in the garage. I have seen rechargeable batteries that started fires, and I recommend that the batteries you use on outdoor equipment be charged on wire shelving, away from combustibles, and on timers that shut the charger off after an appropriate amount of time.

Combination smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are now required in all new homes, but older homes may not have detectors for carbon monoxide. They are highly recommended, and if possible all detectors should be wired together so that when one goes off, they all go off.

At least one fire extinguisher is also required in new homes, located in the kitchen. I recommend several in your home, placed so you can reach them quickly, at least one on each level.

Well-designed safety and security systems are fairly easy to achieve at minimal expense, whether you are building a new home or fitting an older home.




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In 2018 Piovan UnaDyn moved to a 90,000 square-foot production facility located in Fredericksburg, Virginia.





#### SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE





Sheriff Roger L. Harris

This edition of the Rappahannock Roll Call is focused on the Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office. The current Sheriff is Roger Harris who has served as the Sheriff of Spotsylvania County for several years. The FOP posed a series of questions on the history and responsibilities of the Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office to Sheriff Harris. This article is based on the responses provided by the Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff Harris has been in office since 2012. He states it has been his pleasure to see Spotsylvania County continue to thrive and grow as one of the safest places to reside in our Commonwealth. Sheriff Harris has brought community policing to the forefront with educational efforts, events, and crime preventative measures. The Apartment, Business, Worship, and Neighborhood Watch programs continue to flourish and expand. National Night Out increases in size each year. Blue Christmas is in its eleventh year and now serves over 1,000 less fortunate children with toys and clothing, as well as many teenagers and senior citizens.

Numerous financial saving efforts have been put into place. Grants are sought, with many received, on a continuous basis to be able to meet the County's quest to reduce expenses. Our Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) program has been a tremendous cost saver. Volunteers from all aspects of the community are contributing time, talents, and more. These selfless workers participate in many community events, on our Search and Rescue Team, the Animal Shelter, and in the office.

It is Sheriff Harris' goal to continue serving Spotsylvania County and bring the best of law enforcement to the community.<sup>1</sup> The Spotsylvania County Sheriff's Office reached 300 years of service in August of 2024. Spotsylvania County has a rich and unique history. **Spotsylvania County** is a county in the Commonwealth of Virginia. It is a suburb approximately 60 miles (90km) south of D.C. It is a part of the Northern Virginia region and the D.C. area. As of 2024, Spotsylvania County is the 14th most populated county in Virginia with 149,588 residents.<sup>[7]</sup> It's county seat is Spotsylvania Courthouse.<sup>[8]</sup>

Located along the Rappahannock River bordering the City of Fredericksburg and Stafford County, Spotsylvania County is part of the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area. Since 2010, the population has increased by 19.3%. For comparison, Virginia's population has only increased 7.7% in that time. Spotsylvania County is currently the 74th highest-income county in America.<sup>[9]</sup> At the time of European encounter, the inhabitants of the area that became Spotsylvania County were a Siouan-speaking tribe called the Manahoac.<sup>[10]</sup> As the colonial population increased, Spotsylvania County was established in 1721 from parts of Essex, King and Queen, and King William counties. The county was named in Latin for Lieutenant Governor of Virginia Alexander Spotswood who incidentally was also the second great-grandfather of Robert E. Lee.<sup>[11]2</sup>

Along with the county, the law enforcement requirements have grown exponentially. Hence, the Sheriff's office has grown over the years. The Mission of the Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office is to provide an efficient, quality law enforcement service to all citizens of Spotsylvania County. This will be achieved through a meaningful and sustained public partnership which will promote and ensure a safe environment with a focus on mutual trust, integrity, fairness, and professionalism.





Spotsylvania Sheriff Office SWAT Vehicle

few SWAT teams in the U.S. to have a licensed physician who volunteers as a medic during SWAT operations whenever he is available and who also trains with the SWAT team.

The primary focus of the Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office is to continue to build positive relations with the community. This will be done by improving service capabilities through the effective use of personnel resources, time, equipment, technology, research and planning, in order to continue to meet the safety and security expectations of the community. According to Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office it continues to provide quality service and law enforcement assistance to all the citizens of Spotsylvania County. Currently, the Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office (SSO) has approximately 350 personnel, the majority being law enforcement. Currently, the biggest challenges facing the SSO and the community are recruitment and retention of their officers. As has been reported through the Fraternal Order of Police National Lodge recruitment has proved challenging due to the lingering effects of the defund police movement. However, it is opined that this trend may improve with changing attitudes toward the law enforcement profession.



There are six divisions within the Sheriff's Office that together serve all of the law enforcement functions described above: Field Operations, Special Operations, Criminal Investigations, Animal Control, Courts Security and Civil Process, and Administrative Services. Within these Divisions are additional specialty functions. The Emergency Communications Center is a 24/7 operation that serves as the 911 answering point for calls for service and the dispatching of public safety services. Some of the other specialty functions within the divisions are: Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), K9 Unit, Ground Search and Rescue Team, Street Crimes Unit, Narcotics Unit, Traffic Services Unit, Motor Unit, Crisis Negotiations Team, Marine Patrol Unit, Dive Team, School Resource Unit, Civil Disturbance Unit, Bicycle Team, Drone Team, Honor Guard, and Crime Prevention Unit.<sup>1</sup>

The Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office participates in a number of activities to support the community. The list includes The Spotsylvania County Christmas Parade and demonstrations by the K-9 Unit and Tactical Units.



Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office K-9 Memorial, funded by the Rappahannock Area Lodge #15







Sheriff Harris and Santa Claus participate in the Spotsylvania Christmas Parade, providing Christmas gifts for those who need assistance.

Since COVID and the BLM movement, the SSO has enhanced the importance of de-escalation in the calls to which <u>it</u> responds. As the SSO noted, it also has highlighted the deficiencies in the mental health industry. In order to address deficiencies within the SSO, they are focusing on recruitment and retention to allow for a strong future. In order to further build the relationship between the citizens of Spotsylvania County and the SSO, it continues to improve with increasing engagement with local businesses and civic organizations. Sheriff Harris notes that the relationship is getting better overall.

#### **Spotsylvania County Animal Control Officers**

Dog Catcher's, in the historical sense, they are NOT. The history of Animal Control goes all the way back to the 1800's but has evolved over the centuries to what we know today as Animal Control. Although there is very little history available about the evolution of Animal Control, we do know that Sheriff Smith merged Animal Control with the Sheriff's Office in 2009, creating this new division.

On November 19, 2012, Sheriff Harris saw that our Animal Control Officers were deputized allowing them to enforce all laws, regulations and ordinances. "This change recognized the hazardous conditions our Animal Control Officers often work under and helps make the Sheriff's Office run even more efficiently...". For many, animals hold a special place in their hearts, with some even preferring them over humans. The Spotsylvania County Sheriff's Office Animal Control Officers understand this sentiment deeply. "We love them, we care for them, we want to rescue them. Some would go so far to acknowledge that animals heal us. Our AC Officers do all the above, and because of their unique skill set they are able to take it to a level that many of us cannot even comprehend. Our AC Officers meet ALL kinds of animals. Dogs, cats, cows, sheep, goats, llama's, fox, deer, bear, raccoons, possums, lizards, snakes, bats, eagles, bees and even alligators! Each situation calls for a careful approach to maintain the safety of both officer and animal, all the while looking for the best possible outcome for finding the animal a home, medically treating them or releasing them back into their natural habitat. Animals have no voice. They cannot ask for help. They cannot ask for freedom. They cannot ask for protection. You are their voice. You are their help. You are their chance at freedom. You are their protectors.

After the Rescue.... Rescuing an animal is complicated. They cannot advocate for themselves, and they cannot care for themselves. The process is only just beginning when our deputies save them. We are extremely fortunate to have the most amazing Animal Shelter Team! These men and women go above and beyond every day, working tirelessly to ensure that every animal is clean, healthy, fed, comfortable and loved. They never stop looking to place these homeless animals in forever homes, foster care or rehab. They bond with them, name them and make sure that they are happy. These folks are truly the unsung heroes. With extraordinarily little recognition, they do the dirty work that gives way to hope for the ones without a voice. Shelter work is back breaking, noisy and messy, it is filled with the joy of finding a forever home to the sadness of mistreatment and being overlooked. The one thing for certain is that every animal that enters the safety of our shelter is cared for and loved. The staff is an amazing testament to humanity.





Civilians and Uniform Deputies assigned to the Animal Control Unit

Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office has an Animal Control Unit that provides numerous services to the community. Though they mainly handle incidents with domestic animals like dogs and cats, their officers sometimes encounter unusual cases. Animal Control responds not just to domestic animals but wildlife incidents as well. They have responded to bald eagles, bears, deer and other wildlife. The SSO Animal Control Division is comprised of 8 Deputies, one Sergeant and one Captain to include the Animal Control Division. The Animal Control Division is also staffed by several civilian employees. The ACD responds to incidents involving stray animals as well as cruelty cases involving domesticated animals. The Animal Control Division also provides support to the Fredericksburg Police Department.



**SSO Animal Control Unit** 



Animal Control unit caring for one its residents.



Deputy Sheriff Amanda Mele . presented an award from the Virginia Animal Control Board



Deputy Sheriff Puakea is having fun with a Shepherd Husky

Sheriff Harris stated he appreciates the relationship that the SSO has with the FOP. He notes that the SSO and the FOP Rappahannock Area Lodge #15 work together well. According to Sheriff Harris, the FOP, Virginia Sheriffs Association (VSA), and the Police Benefits Association (PBA) each have strengths that support the SO in different ways. The FOP supports the SSO financially and is always donating funds to assist in many SSO programs. The PBA and VSA support us in ways that the FOP cannot. Those organizations allow us to be a part of their organization, they give us purchasing power and assistance in ways that we cannot do on our own. One area in which the FOP provides direct assistance to active-duty law enforcement officers is the Legal Defense Team. According to Sheriff Harris he was not aware of the benefits offered through the FOP's legal defense team.



Deputy Sutton with his personal best bud Hershey

The Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office has grown over the years to become a fully accredited, premier law enforcement agency within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Accreditation is a vital aspect of any professional law enforcement organization.

"The Spotsylvania County Sheriff's Office has been accredited by the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC) since 2006. VLEPSC was established to provide law enforcement agencies in the Commonwealth with an avenue for demonstrating that they meet commonly accepted standards for effective and efficient agency operation. VLEPSC has four sections of standards: administration, operations, personnel, and training."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> https://www.spotsylvaniasheriff.org/annual-reports

- <sup>2</sup> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spotsylvania\_County,\_Virginia
- <sup>3</sup> https://www.spotsylvaniasheriff.org/annual-reports

<sup>4</sup> Ibid







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#### Remembering All Who Serve The Canine Memorial 50 Years of Service



The journey toward creating the Canine Memorial began with a deep passion for local history, particularly that of the Spotsylvania County Sheriff's Office. As a lifelong resident, I've always been connected to the office with several relatives who have served. In 1990, I joined the department and soon discovered an old training certificate from 1975, which led me to a significant discovery—Mr. Tom Mills, the first documented K9 handler for the Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office. Tom Mills had received a dog named Christian in December 1974, marking the beginning of the county's K9 program.

I reached out to Mr. Mills, and through our conversations, I learned about the bond between a handler and their K9 partner. Unlike pets, these dogs are working partners who share a daily bond of trust and camaraderie with their handlers, both on the job and at home. Inspired by this relationship, I sought to honor these four-legged heroes.



To create the memorial, I enlisted the help of Captain Del Myrick, a well-respected officer with extensive experience working with K9s. Captain Myrick has played a key role in training K9s within the sheriff's office and across Virginia. Together, we envisioned a memorial to recognize the sacrifices of these K9 officers and celebrate their importance to the department and the community.

Thanks to a generous donation from a friend, we acquired a concrete statue of a German Shepherd, which became the memorial's focal point. Captain Myrick also reminded me of a granite marker left at the training range, which featured the Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office badge. We worked together to raise and place the granite piece at the memorial site. This marked the first phase of our effort to honor our K9s. Now, visitors to the Spotsylvania training range are greeted by the statue of a canine and the granite marker.

As the memorial took shape, I considered how we could further honor our K9 partners. One day, while visiting the fallen officer memorial at the sheriff's office, I had an idea. Sheriff Roger Harris and Captain Myrick agreed that we should place a bronze statue designed to oversee the fallen deputies' memorial as a fitting tribute to the K9 officers. This bronze statue would honor not only the fallen K9s but also the ongoing work that these incredible animals do in serving our community.

The Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office has had 49 years of K9 service, with dogs playing vital roles in locating missing persons, recovering evidence, uncovering drugs, and protecting their handlers. One of our most honored K9s, Caine Dux, was even featured in the National Law Enforcement Museum in Washington, D.C. Caine Dux was shot in the line of duty in 2016 while pursuing a suspect but showed unparalleled loyalty by returning to his handler's side despite the injury. This act of bravery is a testament to the unbreakable bond between our K9s and their handlers.

The first documented K9 officer in the Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office was Christian, handled by Tom Mills in 1975. Since then, many K9s have served with distinction, and each one is honored when they pass. The burial site where these heroes rest is a special place, visited only by select officers due to its significance.

To ensure the community could pay its respects to these unsung heroes, we were able to fund a bronze statue thanks to the generosity of the Fraternal Order of Police, Rappahannock Area Lodge #15, located in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The statue was placed at the Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office, providing a public tribute to the K9s who have served and continue to serve with honor. This project, entirely funded by donations and volunteer work, came at no cost to the citizens of Spotsylvania County.

Through this memorial, we aim to honor the memory and sacrifices of our K9 officers, ensuring that their dedication and loyalty are never forgotten.

I would like to give special thanks to Sheriff Roger Harris for his leadership and commitment to our K9 program and this department. I would also like to thank Major Delbert Myrick for all of his dedication and hard work on this project.

Deputy Troy Wheeler



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The Rappahannock Area Lodge 15, Fraternal Order of Police Auxiliary held its annual craft show in the fall. The funds raised from the fees charged to the vendors who participate help the FOP Auxiliary in supporting activities for Lodge 15 such as the Christmas Party, Christmas Parade and the Cops and Kids annual event.



Vendors participating in the annual craft show

FOP Auxiliary Bonnie Estep, Trustee Roger Henry, Chaplain Bill Benton, and Lodge President Dave Theisen

The Rappahannock Area Lodge 15 Auxiliary is always looking for those who are interested in volunteering their time to help those Law Enforcement Officers and their families to ensure that they never walk alone. Contact Cindy Sutton, President of Rappahannock Area Lodge 15 Auxiliary, at 540-891-0491 or lodge15auxiliary@gmail.com if interested.



Several vendors displaying their crafts at the craft show.



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# 2024 Fredericksburg Christmas **Parade and Lodge Christmas Party**

Rappahannock Area Lodge #15 participated in the 2024 Fredericksburg Christmas Parade. The theme for the Christmas Party was "Toyland". Hence the toy land themed floats. According to some estimates it was one of the largest parades with a attendance numbers expected to be pre Covid levels.

Cub Scout Pack 325 participated in the Christmas Parade with Lodge 15. The Lodge is a Sponsor of Cub Scout Pack 325.



On December 20th, Lodge 15 hosted its annual Christmas Party. This is one of the highlights of the lodge. The Christmas Party was well attended. As usual, Santa Claus showed up and provided stories, as well as presents, for all the children in attendance.





Santa Carmon reading to the children at the Lodge Christmas Party



Lodge decorated for the Christmas Party

The Christmas Holiday is a very enjoyable time for all of the members of the Rappahannock Area Lodge 15. The members really look forward to this special occasion to spend time with members they haven't seen and to share their "war stories".





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#### About Us

Since 1984, Capitol Contractors has been an industry leader in the mechanical contracting industry in Northern Virginia. Gail Stepp founded Capitol Contractors and in so doing, realized his dream of bringing "top-quality installations" to the mechanical and utility contracting fields. The proud family tradition continues today under the watchful guidance of Gail's son Sean Stepp, who serves as President.

Locally-owned and rooted in the regional economy, Capitol Contractors is committed to our community, our state and our country. Our firm is fully bondable and performs work as a prime mechanical to owners or as a subcontractor to General Contractors.

Capitol Contractors excels at providing high quality plumbing, mechanical piping, ductwork, insulation, controls and utility installations for numerous customers including military bases, government installations, commercial locations, industrial plants and municipalities.

We pride ourselves on keeping safety as our prime concern. CCI has developed and constantly strengthens an in-house safety plan, built in accordance with multiple sources including but not limited to the Army Corps of Engineers EM385 1-1 and OSHA guidelines. Our project managers and foremen all carry 30-hour or at minimum, 10 hour OSHA certificates. Our field staff are trained in rigging, elevated work platforms, fall protection, confined space, as well as all required certification. At the end of the day, we want a happy customer and a safe and healthy workforce.

In carrying out our founder's principle that "top quality work is the best and only advertising," the mechanics, technicians and management of our firm are committed to customer satisfaction, on-time delivery and to professional work standards second-to-none. We perform plan and specification work, design-build work and maintenance contracts. Many of our recent projects involve green technologies such as geothermal water source heat pumps, magnetic bearing ultra-high efficiency chillers, low flow or no water use plumbing fixtures, etc. CCI has participated in several LEED certified projects. We also have extensive knowledge in HVAC commissioning; mainly as mechanical representatives but occasionally as the commissioning agent, performing the entire process in-house.

Having this experience helps CCI to proactively drive a project and ensure that the end product matches the original intent and that it is built to the owner's satisfaction. We also have an in-house 3D pipe/duct design team to aid designers, general contractors and other trades in BIM modeling and enhanced coordination efforts. This has allowed us to streamline our prefabrication process. By prefabbing many aspects of plumbing and mechanical systems, CCI is able to increase jobsite efficiency and build time – drastically improving the construction schedule for all parties involved. We do all this to maintain the long-term goal of making certain that every customer is totally satisfied.

#### Capitol Contractors Inc. Management Team

- <u>Sean C. Stepp, President</u>
- David Hatch, Project Manager
- <u>Scott Briscoe, Project Manager</u>

At Capitol Contractors we believe that there is only one way to install our work: The right way, the first time. We look forward to having an opportunity to service your needs or to become a member of your contracting team. Please <u>contact us</u> with any needs you may have.

Rappahannock Area Lodge #15



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Rappahannock Area Lodge #15

# 2024 FOP #15 COPS & KIDS

FOP Lodge #15 held our 33rd annual FOP #15 Cops and Kids Project (formerly known as the Richard L. Parsons Memorial Shop with a Cop Project) on December 14, 2024, at 6:00 AM The event was held at the Target store in the Central Park shopping area in Fredericksburg. We hosted 211 children in need that were nominated by their school counselors in the city and four surrounding counties, the Thurman T. Brisben Center (homeless shelter), Loisann's Hope House (long-term homeless shelter), and Empower House (domestic violence shelter), to go Christmas shopping with a law enforcement officer or other volunteer with a budget of \$125.00 for each child. We raise the funds for this project from a portion of our annual lodge fundraising campaign, donations from our individual members, and donations from our community through a small direct mail campaign. This has been our FOP Lodge #15's largest project every year since its inception in 1992.

Dozens of law enforcement officers from the City of Fredericksburg, the Counties of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania, and Stafford, the Virginia State Police, and various other local, state, and Federal agencies, both lodge members and non-members, volunteered their time on their day off to come to the store in uniform or raid jacket to assist the children with their Christmas shopping. In addition, we also had student volunteers from the Fredericksburg Academy and the Chancellor High School National Honor Society as well as other volunteers from the public. We even had a live band from the Fredericksburg Christian High School playing Christmas music for the enjoyment of the children, their families, the law enforcement officers, and store personnel. Our Cops and Kids Project has been a great success for 33 years and we have been able to give over 5,704 children in need the joy of experiencing a wonderful Christmas at a total cost of over \$600,000.00 over the years. Target has been a very generous partner in this endeavor. Not only do they reconfigure their schedule to suit our needs by opening early for us, but they have given Cops and Kids a very generous contribution for many of the 21 years (as they did this year) as well as excellent logistical support. We're already looking forward to this December for our 34th FOP #15 Cops and Kids at Target!

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Rappahannock Area Lodge #15



Real estate is personal-and so is my approach. I offer a standard of excellence rooted in experience. clarity, and care. I take pride in giving back to our community: from schools. REALTOR churches, and youth sports teams to law enforcement and neighborhood organizations. With expert training, respected designations. and a heart for our community. I serve my clients at a level far beyond the ordinary.

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# Rappahannock Area Lodge #15 P.O. Box 7393 Fredericksburg, Virginia 22404

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