

Medical Minutemen for the Next Millennium



Alan Perry, Jim Nugent, and Cheryl Colorado assess an injured patient during a drill.

We take it for granted that when we call 911, someone will come to our rescue. What is not often understood is that, unlike the city's firefighters, the rescue squad that responds to a call in Virginia Beach is made up of all volunteers. The Kempsville Volunteer Rescue Squad (KVRS) is one of 11 all-volunteer units in Virginia Beach that together make up the largest all-volunteer rescue squad in the United States.

KVRS currently has 130 unpaid trained members who give up 48 hours of their free time each month to help save lives. Add to that time spent advancing training, handling routine administrative and maintenance tasks, and you have even more hours on this volunteer job.

The group sees themselves as the medical equivalent of the minutemen of yesterday, only instead of taking up arms to fight, the rescue volunteer is ready to pick up their gear and run to help the seriously ill and injured at a moment's notice.

The squad is staffed seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The members come from all walks of life. One is an office worker by day, emergency medical technician by night. Another is a computer programmer. Quite a few are in related healthcare fields. While their ages and backgrounds differ, one thing they all have in common is a noble, altruistic desire to help people in need.

Each volunteer must pass a six-month training program qualifying

him or her to perform a variety of life-saving techniques. They operate fully equipped ambulances and are the primary means of transporting emergency cases to the nearest hospital. This service is provided at no cost to the injured or ill person. Virginia Beach is a city of 400,000 people and growing every day. The city maintains a paid fire department staff, but still relies on volunteers to run this crucial service. "It's going to be a challenge to continue to service a city this large," concedes KVRS president and 11-year volunteer Kevin A. Lipscomb. Yet he believes it is an important service to maintain. "Volunteering is essential to democracy in this country. Sending a volunteer to control an emergency is like handing him a key to the city – he ends up feeling pride, ownership and responsibility for the city that put so much trust in him. This makes him want to return the favor all the more."

Lipscomb adds that volunteer rescuers have gone on to become city magistrates, department heads and hold seats on city council.

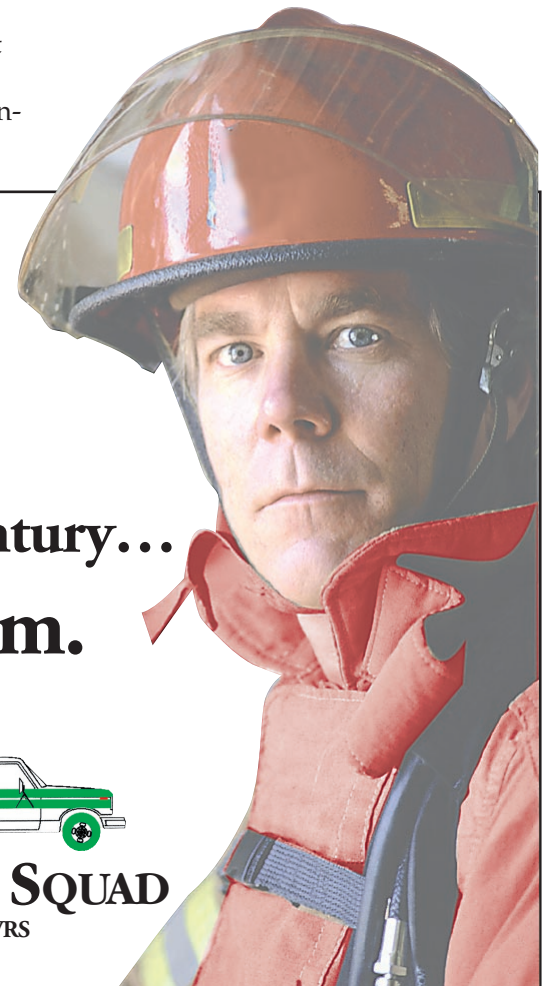
It's also an outlet for active people who want to do more with their time than sit around. "We tend to be type A personalities who can't relax unless we're doing something useful," Lipscomb theorizes. "I can come to the station for a 12-hour shift and relax with my friends watching a football game because I also know I'm ready to respond to a call at any minute."

The volunteers form a tight-knit group. Here they find people they can count on in a pinch. Most volunteers tend to be fairly young, often

just starting out in their careers. It attracts equal numbers of men and women. Because of the hours, many have yet to settle down with a family, but there are always exceptions. Take the Budy family for instance. When Christi Budy became a volunteer while still a nursing student, her mother Kathy was so intrigued she decided to get trained. Next, Christi's sister Jenny Moore, a quadriplegic, got into the act helping with administrative duties. Finally Christi's father Joe Budy threw his hat into the arena. Joe is now a shock trauma technician, an advanced level of EMT.

The Kempsville Volunteer Rescue Squad focuses its mission on emergency medical service (EMS), rescue and support services. Its roots stretch back to 1950 when the first Kempsville Volunteer Fire Department was formed by people mostly from the Amish-Mennonite community of farmers in what was then Princess Anne County.

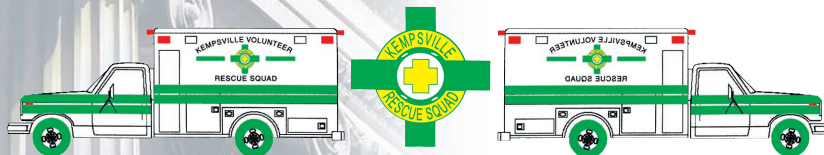
Today KVRS has a fleet of response vehicles that includes mobile intensive care ambulances, quick response intercept vehicles, a heavy-duty crash/rescue truck and a multipurpose support truck. They are responsible for disaster preparedness and mass casualty incident management techniques. Some of the volunteer members teach emergency medical and rescue classes as well as CPR instruction.



KVRS

a Kempsville institution for almost half a century...
... ready for the Next Millennium.

*With your help,
we'll be there
when seconds count.*



KEMPSVILLE VOLUNTEER RESCUE SQUAD

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