

**05-01-2011 St Clair Co MI – John Makuch LEO PSD Pool Training
Heart Attack**

**John Makuch
St. Clair County Sheriff Dive Team May 1-2011**

From St. Clair County Michigan

A 20 year veteran of the St. Clair County Sheriff Dive Team died Sunday after suffering a heart attack during training.

John Makuch, 56, of Algonac was rushed to St. Joseph Mercy Port Huron hospital from the Blue Water YMCA during training Sunday, according to a statement from the sheriff department.

Members of the dive team, some of whom are trained paramedics, tried to revive Makuch using an automated external defibrillator and CPR. Treatment was continued in the ambulance as well as at the hospital where he was pronounced dead.

"This is a terrible tragedy; a terrible loss for John's family, the dive team, the sheriff's office and the community as a whole," Sheriff Tim Donnellon said. "John wore many hats in our community and was very committed to the team and the Sheriff's Office."

Makuch was certified in search and rescue diving, ice diving and in 2009 earned his dive master certification. He also was a United States Coast Guard licensed captain and taught dive team members navigation, boat handling and sonar operation

Funeral arrangements set for dive team member

<http://www.thetimesherald.com/article/20110502/NEWS05/110502013>
May. 2, 2011

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St. Clair County Sheriff's Dive Team Volunteer Suffers Fatal Heart Attack « Brotherhood of the Badge

<http://3491.blogspot.com/2011/05/st-clair-county-sheriffs-dive-team.html>

PORT HURON, Mich. (WDIV) – Authorities said a member of the volunteer St. Clair County sheriff's dive team has died after having a heart attack during training in Port Huron.



Sheriff Tim Donnellon said in a statement that 56-year-old John Makuch died at an area hospital after being rushed from the Port Huron YMCA on Sunday morning. Dive team members, who are trained paramedics, tried to revive him at the scene before an ambulance arrived.

Donnellon said Makuch joined the Dive Team in 1991 and was certified in search and rescue diving, ice diving and in 2009 earned his dive master certification. He was also a United States Coast Guard licensed captain and taught dive team members navigation, boat handling and sonar operation.

He served more than 20 years on the dive team, and was a member of the Dive Team Board of Directors and an assistant dive chief.

The Sheriff's Office Dive Team is a branch of the Marine Division and is an all volunteer organization. According to Dive Chief Wayne Brusate, this is the first death recorded since the team's inception in 1969.

Makuch is survived by his wife of 28 years, Eileen, daughter Ann Marie (and fiancé Craig), and son John. Visitation is scheduled for Tuesday from 2:30 p.m. until 9 p.m. at the Gendernalik Funeral Home in New Baltimore. A showing will be held at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday at Immaculate Conception Church in Ira Township, with Mass at 10 a.m.

God Bless and Stay Safe
BOTB

Fallen St. Clair County diver honored at National Police Memorial Service

<http://www.voicenews.com/articles/2014/05/22/news/doc537e4029e9ee6852540687.txt>

Published: Thursday, May 22, 2014



Pictured at the National Police Officer Memorial, left to right, are Johnny Makuch, Dive Chief Wayne Brusate, Eileen Makuch and Lt. Paul Reid. Photo by JERI PACKER

St. Clair County Sheriff's Office Dive Team member John Makuch, who died three years ago at age 56, was one of the fallen honored recently at the National Police Memorial Service in Washington D.C.

Makuch served more than 20 years on the St. Clair County Dive Team and worked his way through the ranks as a member of the dive team board of directors and an assistant dive chief. He

was also certified in search and rescue diving, ice diving and earned his Dive Master Certification in 2009. Makuch was also a U.S. Coast Guard licensed captain and taught navigation, boat handling and sonar operation. He began serving as a Clay Township trustee in 2007.

The 33rd annual National Peace Officers Memorial Service took place May 15 on the West Front of the United States Capitol. Vice President Joe Biden spoke at the service. After the service, Biden met individually with the dozens of families of fallen officers who attended the service. St. Clair County Sheriff's Office Marine Division Lieutenant Paul Reid and Dive Team Chief Wayne Brusate also attended the memorial services.

Following the service, a wreath-laying ceremony was conducted at the National Law Enforcement Memorial. Makuch's wife, Eileen, and his son, Johnny Makuch, were given a flower that was placed in the wreath. Eileen Makuch was also given a medal in honor of her fallen husband.

Makuch, who joined the dive team in 1991, suffered a massive heart attack during a training exercise at the YMCA in Port Huron. Former Clay Township

Supervisor Jay DeBoyer said at the time of the death that he considered Makuch a "trusted friend and colleague."

"I would hold him up against anyone in St. Clair County," he said. "He was dedicated to making sure the township was running right."

John Makuch's name will be engraved on the National Law Enforcement Memorial in January 2015.

Clay Township Treasurer Tom Krueger, then a township board trustee, served with Mukuch on the board at the time of the death.

"John really gave back to his community," he said. "He was interested in making the township the best it could be."

St. Clair County Sheriff Tim Donnellon said it was "with great sadness" when he reported Mukuch's death to the community. Makuch is survived by his wife of 28 years, Eileen, daughter Ann Marie and son John.

Benefits slow for families of those who died in line of duty

<http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2015/09/04/benefits-families-fallen-officers/71692922/>

September 4, 2015 Beth LeBlanc, Times Herald

John Makuch died after suffering a heart attack during training with the St. Clair County Sheriff Dive Team more than four years ago.



The mother of Sgt. Brandon Mendoza, the Mesa, Ariz. Police sergeant who was killed by a drunk illegal alien on his way home from work, speaks about death benefits.

But his family had to wait more than two years after the 56-year-old Algonac man's death to receive the federal benefits available to families of those killed in the line of duty.

"We had the most issues, I think, because it was a non-traditional position," St. Clair County Sheriff Tim Donnellon said. Makuch was a paid on-call volunteer.

"That complicated it. There was a lot of paperwork involved, a lot of documentation ... But, in my mind, it was clearly a line-of-duty death."

A USA Today Media Network investigation found that Makuch's family wasn't alone in their struggle for recognition from the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Programs.

The program was set up in 1976 to help families of police officers, firefighters and other emergency workers who die in the line of duty or after severely stressful events on the job. The program paid survivors \$464 million from 2008 to 2013 for death benefits.

USA Today reviewed the tracking records for about 1,500 claims filed since 2009, including the case of John Makuch.

Of those 1,500 cases, 900 were listed as closed and more than 500 were still pending as of April. The average time to review those 900 cases and make a decision on them was 391 days.

According to information obtained from the U.S. Justice Department, Makuch was assigned a claim number Aug. 10, 2011, about three months after his May 1, 2011, death.



(Photo: Times Herald file)

The Public Safety Officer Benefits Programs approved Makuch's claim Nov. 18, 2013.

Makuch died from a massive heart attack during a St. Clair County Sheriff Dive Team training exercise at the Blue Water YMCA in 2011. He was a 20-year veteran of the dive team.

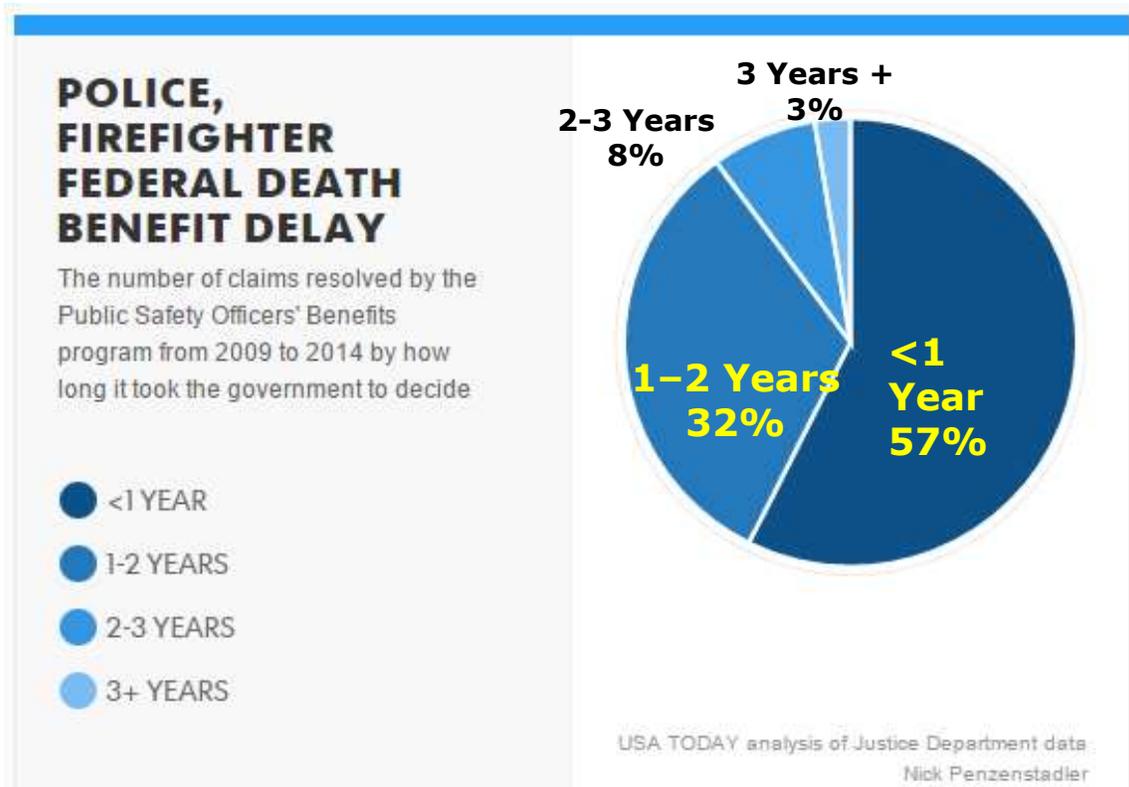
In May 2014, Makuch was honored at the National Police Memorial Service in Washington, D.C.

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[USA TODAY - Police, firefighter survivors wait years for death benefit](#)

Makuch's family was eligible for the benefits under the Hometown Heroes Survivors' Benefits Act. The legislation specifies that a public safety officer who suffers a fatal heart attack during or up to 24 hours after on-duty training died as a direct and proximate result of a personal injury sustained in the line of duty and his or her family is entitled to compensation.

POLICE, FIREFIGHTER FEDERAL DEATH BENEFIT DELAY

The number of claims resolved by the Public Safety Officers' Benefits program from 2009 to 2014 by how long it took the government to decide the case:



USA TODAY analysis of Justice Department data Nick Penzenstadler

USA Today reports the Justice Department has known about the delay in processing those claims for more than a decade.

A Justice Department review of the program released in July found it provided poor instructions to survivors filing claims, poorly tracked claims, and didn't document reasons for approving or denying claims.

The review noted there were many cases that were missing information from families and the local agency the deceased worked for.

While the Justice Department sorts through issues delaying federal benefits, a bill that's moved through the Michigan Senate is arguing for state consideration as well.

Senate Bill 218 would amend the Public Safety Officer Benefits Act, requiring the state to continue insurance coverage for the families of first responders killed in the line of duty. The bill would not extend health care benefits in cases where the family has another insurance source.

Terrence Jungel, executive director and chief executive officer for the Michigan Sheriffs Association, said some larger departments in Michigan provide ongoing insurance coverage to family or dependents after an officer or firefighter is killed in the line of duty, but many do not.

"The majority of sheriff's offices do not provide that benefit, as is the case I think with the majority of smaller police departments," Jungel said.

"(The legislation) plugs that hole," Jungel said. "It rectifies the horrible injustice that's imposed on the families of police officers and firefighters who have made that ultimate sacrifice."

Senate Bill 218 passed out of the Senate April 29. It was referred to the House Appropriations Committee.

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