

06-06-2016 Lake Norman NC – Bradly Long – FF PSD Deep Recovery OOA – UPDATE-FINE

Bradly Long

"Captain Long died in the line of duty while working the scene of a drowning at Lake Norman. Captain Long and two other firefighters were conducting an underwater rescue operation in attempt to locate a drowning victim when they experienced an emergency underwater. Two of the divers were able to return to the surface, but Captain Long did not. A rescue effort was implemented. Captain Long's body was brought to the surface and he was pronounced dead at the scene. The two firefighters that resurfaced were taken to Lake Norman Regional Medical Center with non-life threatening injuries. This investigation is going to be lengthy and very detailed."



Diver searching for missing swimmer unaccounted for, officials say

<http://www.wsocvtv.com/news/local/divers-searching-for-man-on-lake-norman/324651319>

Jun 6, 2016 by: Dave Faherty

MOORESVILLE, N.C. —

A diver from Sherrills Ford Fire and Rescue is missing in Lake Norman, officials said. Two other firefighters were rescued after a diving accident in about 50 feet of water.

Channel 9 reporter Dave Faherty was there Monday afternoon as three divers went into the water looking for the a 29-year-old swimmer who was reported missing Sunday.



Divers search for man on Lake Norman

About an hour later a call went out for more ambulances and help to search the area along Lake Norman where we could see wildlife officers running to meet two of the boats.

Onboard, Faherty could see firefighters working on two injured divers who had gone down between 50 to 80 feet.

Catawba County Emergency Services confirmed there was an emergency situation underwater involving three divers from Sherrills Ford Fire and Rescue. Only two of the three divers made it back to the surface.



Two other divers were communicating. Search for missing 29-year old has been suspended for now. Asking for prayers.

"It's difficult. This is one of our own that's out there missing and the other two who were hurt, they were our own," said Emergency Management Coordinator Karyn Yaussy.

"We send our best to their families and to them. We ask for everyone's prayers and thoughts that this turns out as best as it can."

Officials said the two divers rushed to the hospital are awake and trying to communicate.

The search for the 29-year-old is suspended as they search for that missing diver.

A Charlotte Fire Department vehicle was involved in a crash in Iredell County while responding to Lake Norman for the dive emergency.

CFD vehicle involved in crash on the way to help missing diver search.
Scene mostly clear @wsocvtv [5:12 PM - 6 Jun 2016](#)

29-year-old swimmer disappears Sunday

For much of Monday, loved ones could only watch as firefighters from Charlotte and Sherrills Ford used sonar equipment to search the bottom of the lake at depths between 50 and 80 feet.

Family members said they thought the 29-year-old, who they describe as a good swimmer, was joking when he began having trouble in the water.

Making matters worse was the strong wind pushing the boat away from him as he struggled to stay afloat



<http://twitter.com/GinaWSOC9/status/739833016093159424/photo/1>



<http://twitter.com/GinaWSOC9/status/739833016093159424/photo/1>
6 Jun 2016 9:55 AM - Gina Esposito

Charlotte Fire Dept. sent crew out in the water to help with the search.

Channel 9 was told that four people were on the boat on the Mooresville side of the lake when three of them jumped off to swim. The boat drifted away and one man never resurfaced.

"An accident can happen to anybody. Especially in the conditions we had yesterday with the wind blowing. You know it is moving the boat away. You got to remember it is deep water," Sgt. Ron Robertson with the North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission said.

Family members told Channel 9 that the missing man's pregnant wife was on board when he jumped in the water, and that the couple also has a 2-year-old.

Despite having sonar equipment, crews said the search has been difficult. The water is murky and more than 60 feet deep.

Divers combed the area near Charter Place for hours Sunday evening and as the search grew, crews had to rope off one of the driveways.



<https://twitter.com/DaShawnWSOC9/status/739618897465335808>
[5 Jun 2016 7:44 PM - DaShawn Brown](#)

Crews currently searching water more than 50 feet deep; officials say murkiness making it hard for crews to see

At one point, they even shut down the road.

Emergency crews from Lake Norman Fire Department as well as Catawba County divers from Sherrills Ford responded to the scene Sunday, and additional divers were called in to assist in the search.

Authorities said the other three boaters were OK.

Officials: Firefighter, two divers experienced emergency underwater

<http://www.wbtv.com/story/32161285/officials-firefighter-two-divers-experienced-emergency-underwater?clienttype=generic>

June 7th 2016 **By WBTV Web Staff**

HERRILLS FORD, NC (WBTV) – Officials spoke publicly Tuesday on 28-year-old Captain Bradley Long, the firefighter who died during a search for a missing swimmer on Lake Norman Monday.

Long and two other firefighters went into the water to search for a 29-year-old man who jumped off a boat Sunday and didn't make it out of the water.

Officials said Long and the firefighters experienced an "emergency" in 35 to 75 feet of water, close to where the swimmer went missing. Two divers came out of the water, Long did not, officials said.

"A rescue effort was implemented and when they reached him he had already succumb to his injuries," Catawba County Emergency Management said. The two other firefighters went to Regional Medical Center with minor injuries.

The press conference started at 9 a.m. at Terrell Baptist Church in Sherrills Ford. Long's family accompanied the officials, who said Long died doing what he loved.

The family released the following statement Tuesday:

"Our family would like to thank everyone from ALL of the fire and emergency services in Sherrills Ford and Catawba County, all regional agencies who have helped, and friends, family and



CREWS SEARCH FOR MISSING SWIMMER IN LAKE NORMAN

(Christian Flores | WBTV)

community members for their support during this difficult and tragic time. We ask for prayers and peace as we take time to grieve and heal today and in the days to come. He passed doing what he loved to do and was passionate about."

RELATED: [Firefighter dies during search for man on Lake Norman](#)

Long worked at the Newton Fire Department and was a volunteer with Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue, where he had been a member for 12 years. He was working with Sherrills Ford during the search.

Rescue crews had been searching the lake since Sunday afternoon for the missing 29-year-old swimmer. Officials said he jumped off a boat with two other people. The boat wasn't anchored and started to float away. The three tried to swim and catch up with the boat, but the man wasn't able to make it back to the boat.

RELATED: [Body of man missing on Lake Norman recovered](#)

After suspending the search around 9:30 Sunday evening due to darkness, crews started searching again 8:30 Monday morning.

The names of the divers injured have not been released, but officials said they are also from Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue. Officials said they were responsive when they were taken to the hospital.

The search for the missing man was suspended once Long went missing in the water. Officials confirmed the body of the missing man was recovered along with Long's.

The Newton Fire Department released the following statement Tuesday:

The city of Newton and the Newton Fire Department offer their deepest condolences to the family of Capt. Bradley Long, who died during a search for a missing swimmer on Lake Norman on Monday, June 6. Long joined the Newton Fire Department as a part-time firefighter in June 2007. He became a full-time fire engineer in May 2011 and was promoted to fire captain in August 2015. Long began his firefighting career as a junior firefighter at Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue when he was 14 years old, and he continued to volunteer there. Long was a highly-trained and dedicated member of the Newton Fire Department. He was named Fireman of the Year by the Newton Elks Lodge this year.

Newton Fire Chief Kevin Yoder said they are mourning the loss of Bradley. "He has been a valuable part of our department, and his impact will be remembered for many years to come by the Newton Fire Department family," Yoder said.

Family of the missing man said they are thinking about Long's family as well as their own, stating "the family considers that man a hero."

The Iredell County Sheriff's Office is investigating Long's death. Officials say the investigation will be "both lengthy and thorough in nature."

My son loved what he did," father of firefighter who died in dive rescue

<http://www.fox46charlotte.com/news/local-news/155245908-story>

JUN 07 2016

IREDELL CO., NC (WJZY) - A news conference was held Tuesday morning for 28-year-old firefighter, Captain Bradley Long, who died trying to recover a body during a dive rescue on Lake Norman.

He was a volunteer firefighter for Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue and worked full-time as a fire captain for the City of Newton.

Karyn Yaussy with Catawba Co. Emergency Services made the following statement:

"Captain Long died in the line of duty while working the scene of a drowning at Lake Norman. Captain Long and two other firefighters were conducting an underwater rescue operation in attempt to locate a drowning victim when they experienced an emergency underwater. Two of the divers were able to return to the surface, but Captain Long did not. A rescue effort was implemented. Captain Long's body was brought to the surface and he was pronounced dead at the scene. The two firefighters that resurfaced were taken to Lake Norman Regional Medical Center with non-life threatening injuries. This investigation is going to be lengthy and very detailed."

One of the injured firefighters was released from the hospital Monday night and is now recovering at home. The other firefighter will be released from the hospital Tuesday afternoon.

Authorities said the water at Lake Norman is 35 to 75-feet deep and Captain Long's body was found very close to the original person missing.

Captain Long came from a firefighter family. His father, Jerry, was a firefighter for 25 years. Long grew up accompanying his dad to fire departments, trainings and exercises.

"First of all, I want to say thank you for your respect, please give us time to grieve. My son loved what he did. He was passionate about what he loved. I want to say thank you to our brothers at Sherrills Ford Fire Dept. They're family with us. Thank you to all the state and federal agencies that have comes to help bring Bradley home," Jerry said.

Long began his firefighting career as a junior firefighter at Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire

and Rescue when he was 14-years-old. He became a part-time firefighter for Newton Fire Dept. in June 2007 and full time fire engineer in May 2011. He was promoted to fire captain in August 2015.

"We are mourning the loss of Bradley," Newton Fire Chief Kevin Yoder said. "He has been a valuable part of our department, and his impact will be remembered for many years to come by the Newton Fire Department family."

He exemplified compassion and caring for all of those that encountered him, according to Yaussy and Dion Burleson PIO for Denver Fire Dept.

NC Wildlife is conducting the investigation of the original 29-year-old swimmer, Isaiah Cruz, who drowned and Iredell County Sheriff's Office is investigating Captain Long.

Community mourns loss of Newton firefighter Bradley Long

<http://www.wsocvtv.com/news/local/community-mourns-loss-of-newton-firefighter-bradley-long/328685336>

Jun 8, 2016 by: Dave Faherty

Capt. Bradley Long's uniform is on display at the Newton Fire Department station, one of many departments he dedicated his time and service to.

Long was killed in the line of duty Monday in a diving accident on Lake Norman. He was one of three divers searching for a missing swimmer when the emergency happened. The other two divers were pulled from the water, but Long did not make it.

Channel 9 reporter Dave Faherty talked to firefighters and city leaders about his effect on the community.

Faherty saw people stopping by to offer their support to firefighters on Tuesday.

Long's fellow firefighters have placed his fire gear and helmet on the dash of the fire truck that he responded to fire and emergency calls.

"(He's) one of those folks who everybody wanted to work with. He was one of those individuals who you always saw a smile on his face. (He) was always willing to do what he could do to help his coworkers and members of the community as well," said Newton Fire Department Chief Kevin Yoder.

It was members of his own department who agreed earlier this spring that Long should be the one recognized by the local Elks club as firefighter of the year. Two members of the Elks club shared a photo of Long with Channel 9 after he received the award in April. The Elks club was having a meeting when they learned the news of what happened on Lake Norman.

"A lot of us who were here that day were in that meeting and the meeting just kind of came to a stop. It is devastating for Newton. I don't know if we have ever lost a firefighter," said Elks member Janelle Callahan.

"I do remember he was just joking and laughing and seemed like he was the life of the party," said Elks member Karen Hoard.

Many of the people in the Newton area are in disbelief over what happened at Lake Norman Monday afternoon. Many people knew Long well, including the town's mayor, who believes the community will come together to support his family. "We're still in shock. You never expect it to happen. You know it can but you never expect it to happen so we're very saddened by this news," said Newton Mayor Anne P. Stedman.

This is the second time in a month that firefighters have had to mourn the loss of one of their own.

Pineville volunteer firefighter Richard Sheltra died April 30 after responding to a fire caused by a lightning strike at Edwin Watts Golf store.

[Retired Pineville fire truck to help Sherrills Ford after similar tragedy](#)

He died from smoke inhalation.

Just last week, the community celebrated what would have been his 21st birthday by bringing local firefighters cookies in his honor.

A processional will escort Long's body from Wake Forest-Baptist Medical Center to Bennett Funeral Home in Conover. Marked emergency vehicles will participate Wednesday.

'He was an angel and God wanted him for a reason'

Faherty has done several stories where he has seen Long up close, helping people in a number of ways.

Earlier this year when a major waterline in Newton broke, Channel 9 was there as Long, along with other firefighters delivered water to the elderly.

Ruby Blake said Long was the one who knocked on her front door. She remembers him well.

"Kind. Beautiful personality and a people person. He's the kind of person that will be missed and I wish there were more Bradley Long's in the world," Blake said.

Two months later, firefighters said Long was one of several firefighters who responded to a three-alarm fire on Northwest Boulevard.

Just last week, Long helped Mario Crespo whose kitchen was heavily damaged by a fire. Crespo is at a loss for words after learning the firefighters who helped him died while trying to help a family on Lake Norman.

"To hear that he died? Oh, my God," Crespo said.

Joyce Barr was also helped by Long during the water outage.

"He was nice, real nice," Barr said.

Her neighbors said he also responded to medical calls in the area.

"He was an angel and God wanted him for a reason," said neighbor Katie Roberts. A mother sent Channel 9 a photo of Long spending time with her son during a visit to the fire department.

His chief said Long touched many lives.

"Just a great firefighter. He was loved by all the members of the department. We're all certainly grieving the loss of Bradley," Yoder said.

Channel 9 learned from town officials that Long started his firefighting career as a junior firefighter at Sherrills Ford at the age of just 14.

Firefighters who survived Lake Norman diving accident return to duty

[HTTP://MYFOX8.COM/2016/06/16/FIREFIGHTERS-WHO-SURVIVED-LAKE-NORMAN-DIVING-ACCIDENT-RETURN-TO-DUTY/](http://myfox8.com/2016/06/16/firefighters-who-survived-lake-norman-diving-accident-return-to-duty/)

JUNE 16, 2016 BY WEB STAFF,

LAKE NORMAN, N.C. — The two survivors of a deadly accident on Lake Norman are in good condition, according to Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire Rescue.

Chief Rick Davis of Sherrills Ford – Terrell Fire and Rescue said Ben Godfrey and Derek Sigmon, firefighters and certified public safety divers with Sherrills Ford, have returned to active duty after last week's diving emergency that took the life of fellow firefighter [Capt. Bradley Long](#), [WSOC](#) reports. Godfrey and Sigmon continue to grieve the loss of their friend and coworker.



Lake Norman

The fire department said it is thankful for the community's prayers and thoughts as the entire fire family is working through this loss and asks the media and public to continue to give everyone involved distance and allow them privacy.

The incident on June 6 is still under investigation by local, state and federal agencies.

Talking with the family of fallen firefighter Bradley Long

<http://www.wbtv.com/story/32494219/talking-with-the-family-of-fallen-firefighter-bradley-long?clienttype=generic>

July 20th 2016, July 21st 2016 By WBTV Web Staff

SHERRILLS FORD, NC (WBTV) – "If you call a first responder, they're going to come for you. Doesn't matter who you are. They're going to come for you."

Those are the sentiments of Amy Shearer, the older sister of firefighter Bradley Long.

Bradley died June 6th, 2016 when he and

another firefighter rescue diver went into Lake Norman to recover a missing man.



(Photo provided by family)

What happened that day is still under investigation. His family doesn't want to talk specifics until the investigation is closed. But they do what you to take a moment to meet their son and brother and understand the critical role first responders play in our lives. They sat down exclusively with Anchor Molly Grantham.

"He was living his dream to be a firefighter," Amy said. "He was doing what he wanted to do with his life."

Bradley never knew anything except public service. The Long family has given their lives to giving back.

Father Jerry Long was a firefighter for 25 years and rescue diver for 12. Bradley's older brother Chad was military, then a police officer and is now a Lincoln County Sheriff's deputy.

Sister Amy works in the medical field and mom Signora is a mail carrier. So it really meant something to Amy when she pointed out how men and women in this field -- police, fire, medic, dispatchers -- work tough jobs for little pay and often get zero thanks.

"Bradley gave his life to serve others," she said. "He died doing what he loved." Brother Chad agreed.

"Bradley was daddy's clone," he said. "They were like the same person. He followed in his footsteps."

Jerry says that's what makes it so hard now.

"The last six weeks have been difficult because I think, you know, I brought Bradley to this. I brought Bradley to what killed him."

What gets Jerry through is the support he says his family feels from "The Red Line"... how firefighters refer to their brotherhood.

"There hasn't been a day where one of the firemen hasn't called or texted me to say, 'Jerry, do you need anything?'" he said. "People don't realize that firefighters do much more than fight fires. They dive. Do car wrecks. Medical calls. High angle rescues. So much stuff people don't realize."

"Some of the best stories I've heard were in the receiving line," Chad said. "I don't know how many people said, 'You don't know me. I don't know you. But your brother saved my life.'"

The Sherrills Ford Fire Department is selling t-shirts to benefit the Captain Bradley Long Memorial Fund.

To see them or learn more information, go here

<https://squareup.com/store/sherrills-ford-terrell-fire-and-rescue/>

Officials: Fallen firefighter Bradley Long drowned during June search

<http://www.wbtv.com/story/32575881/officials-fallen-firefighter-bradley-long-drowned-during-june-search>

July 29th 2016, **By WBTV Web Staff**

SHERRILLS FORD, NC (WBTV) - Officials in Iredell County have confirmed that fallen firefighter Bradley Long drowned while searching for a missing swimmer in Lake Norman.

Long's exact cause of death has been under investigation since his death on June 6. Friday, Major Andy Poteat of the Iredell County Sheriff's Office said test results showed Long "ran out of air under water."

Poteat said investigators have found no problem's with Long's equipment and no signs of foul play. He said the death was a "tragic accident."

RELATED: [Bradley Long's family talks about his life and legacy](#)

Several other agencies are still investigating Long's death, including OSHA. His dive equipment was sent to experts.

Major Poteat said he believes it was standard gear and would show how much air was left, but that Long ran out before resurfacing. He would not speculate on why Long ran out of air.

Long and two other firefighters went into the water to search for a 29-year-old man who jumped off a boat and didn't make it out of the water.

RELATED: [Firefighter, two divers experienced emergency underwater](#)

Officials said early on that Long and the firefighters experienced an "emergency" in 35 to 75 feet of water, close to where the swimmer went missing. Two divers came out of the water, Long did not, officials said.

"A rescue effort was implemented and when they reached him he had already succumb to his injuries," Catawba County Emergency Management said in June.

The two other firefighters went to Regional Medical Center with minor injuries.

Long worked at the Newton Fire Department and was a volunteer with Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue, where he had been a member for 12 years. He was working with Sherrills Ford during the search.

Long descended to the bottom, back to a depth of about 82 feet, Poteat said.

When the third diver reached the bottom, he was in the process of maneuvering Long to get him to the surface when he experienced issues with his mask, Campbell said.

Investigators: Empty air tank led to diver's death in Lake Norman

http://www.statesville.com/news/investigators-empty-air-tank-led-to-diver-s-death-in/article_9fa5f63e-55d4-11e6-a23c-03e065f04cba.html

Jul 29, 2016 By Donna Swicegood

Bradley Long, 28, died during rescue operation June 6; OSHA probe continues

Iredell Sheriff Darren Campbell said the death of a diver during a rescue operation on Lake Norman last month was a tragic accident.

Campbell said Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue Capt. Bradley Long, 28, drowned during an attempt to recover the body of swimmer Isia Cruz, 29, of Charlotte.

On Friday, Campbell, Criminal Investigations Division Supervisors Maj. Andy Poteat and Errin Jenkins detailed the findings of the sheriff's office's seven-week investigation into Long's death, which occurred near the Hager Creek Access area in Mooresville.

Campbell said a company recommended by the N.C. Chief Medical Examiner's Office examined the equipment worn by Long, two other divers who went to the

hospital after the incident on June 6 and a fourth set of gear that was on the boat being used by Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue.

The experts concluded there were no problems with any of the dive equipment but that Long's primary air tank was empty. A secondary tank he was wearing, however, did have air, Campbell said.

Poteat said the incident unfolded on the afternoon of June 6 while Long and others from Sherrills Ford-Terrell were taking part in an operation to find the body of Cruz, who disappeared June 5.

Long and a second diver were working at a depth of 82 feet in an area pinpointed by sonar as a possible location of the body, Poteat said. A monitor aboard the boat indicated to the two divers that they needed to surface and Long and the second diver began an ascent, stopping at around 20 to 30 feet below the surface for a "rest stop" to avoid decompression sickness, commonly called the bends.

At that point, Poteat said, Long gave an indication that he was out of air. The second diver tried to help, and at some point, the masks of both divers came off, which caused the second diver to ascend too quickly, he said.

When he reached the surface, a rescue diver on the surface then descended to try to rescue Long, Campbell said.

Jenkins explained the third diver's mask began taking on water and he was unable to clear it. The pressure on his mask increased the further he dove, Jenkins said. That prompted the third diver to ascend quickly. Both he and the other diver were taken to the hospital for treatment.

Poteat said there was some indication that Long and the other diver attempted to use a regulator to access a secondary, smaller tank, called a pony tank. "It all happened so quickly," he said, that they were unable to get a grip on the regulators.

Campbell said the investigation also revealed there is no electrical current that may have been involved in the deaths of either Long or Cruz. "There is absolutely no truth to that," he said.

Poteat said the investigation included interviewing everyone involved as well as looking at the computer data from the dive equipment.

Campbell said the determination of procedure, training and other issues will be addressed by an investigation currently underway by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Poteat said findings from the sheriff's office investigation were shared with OSHA representatives.

Poteat said the sheriff's office largely focused on whether there was any criminal activity or malice that contributed to Long's death.

"There was no foul play. It was a tragic accident of someone trying to recover a family member for some other family," Campbell said.

EXCLUSIVE: Investigation reveals how firefighter drowned in Lake Norman

<http://www.wsocv.com/news/local/exclusive-investigation-reveals-how-firefighter-bradley-long-drowned-in-lake-norman/413942817>

Jul 31, 2016 by: Allison Latos Updated: - 2:23 PM

IREDELL COUNTY, N.C. — Channel 9 anchor Allison Latos spoke exclusively to the Iredell County Sheriff's Office Friday about its investigation into the drowning of Sherrill's Ford-Terrell firefighter Bradley Long.

Long died after an underwater emergency while diving for a missing swimmer in Lake Norman on June 6.

Related Headlines



Community remembers fallen Newton firefighter Capt. Bradley Long



2 firefighters who survived Lake Norman diving accident return to duty



Community mourns loss of Newton firefighter Bradley Long



<http://twitter.com/AllisonWSOC9/status/759119048407789568/photo/1>

29 Jul 2016

#BreakingNews @IredellSheriff tells me findings in deadly diving investigation. How Cpt. Bradley Long died @wsoc tv 6
[3:10 PM -](#)

Long and another diver spent about 14 minutes searching 82 feet below the surface for a missing swimmer when they and crews above determined it was time to resurface.

IMAGES: Procession for Capt. Bradley Long

Long experienced an emergency when the divers were 20 to 30 feet from the surface for a safety check.

"At that point, there was a signal given by Mr. Long that he was out, or low, or fixing to run out of air," Sheriff Darren Campbell said.

The diving expert who helped in the investigation said the divers should have been able to swim to the surface.

Long's partner tried to help, but somehow both lost their masks and couldn't get to their backup tanks, the sheriff said. That's when the other diver resurfaced.

Another rescue diver jumped in to help Long, but he also had issues.

"There was a leakage in the mask and no way for him to clear it," the sheriff said. The rescue diver, unable to reach Long, resurfaced, and the volunteer firefighter drowned.

Crews later pulled his body and the missing swimmer from the lake.

Diving experts from Garner, North Carolina examined all of the equipment and found it functioned properly.

Long's primary oxygen tank empty was empty, the sheriff said.

Foul play was not involved in the accident, Campbell said.

"Hopefully this never happens again, but hopefully the information we learn from this will help someone else," he said.

The Sheriff's Office closed its investigation as state and federal officials now look at the divers' training and if they were equipped to handle the depths.

The two divers who survived, Ben Fodfrey and Derek Sigmon, are back on duty with the Sherrill's Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue.

Governor Pat McCrory signed a law last week honoring Long that amends the state Firefighters' and Rescue Squad Workers' Pension Fund that provides survivorship benefits for members killed in the line of duty.

Medical Examiner: Drowning listed as cause of death for Lake Norman diver

<http://www.fox46charlotte.com/news/local-news/193610067-story>

August 18, 2016



A local firefighter who lost his life trying to recover the body of a missing swimmer on Lake Norman died from drowning, according to the North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

Authorities said Bradley Long, 28, drowned due to an arterial gas embolism while SCUBA diving.

Major findings at autopsy included heavy lungs, fluid in the sphenoid sinus, an enlarged heart, and air within the right pleural space and heart.

Long was a Newton firefighter and was working on a search and rescue mission through Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire-Rescue to retrieve a body of a person who drowned in the lake.

**RELATED: Community bids a final farewell to fallen hero
Captain Bradley Long**

According to witness statements and those on scene, Long and his dive buddy reached the rescue basket at the depth of around 80 feet. An air check with surface



Medical Examiner: Drowning listed as cause of death for Lake Norman diver

personnel with completed 14 minutes into the dive, and divers were told to begin a controlled ascent.

Per dive computer interrogation, Long's ascent was performed with increasing speed from 68 feet and without performing required safety stops.

According to a witness statement, Long got to the 20 foot safety stop and motioned to another diver that he was out of air, removed his mask, removed the mask of his dive buddy and panicked.

The dive buddy surfaced from the water and called for help.

**RELATED: Authorities: 2 firefighters doing well after deadly
accident on Lake Norman**

Per Air Hogs Scuba interrogation of the dive computer, Long was breathing at a rapid rate throughout the dive, causing rapid gas consumption, descended to the maximal depth of 81 feet, and did not return to the surface when he was low on air.

The review of the dive equipment showed the gas cylinder was essentially empty. According to the report, the backup gas sources were unused.

Embolism killed rescue diver in Lake Norman, autopsy shows

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/local/article96494777.html#storylink=cpy>
AUGUST 18, 2016 BY MARK WASHBURN

A firefighter who drowned in Lake Norman while trying to retrieve the body of a lost swimmer died from a gas embolism after running out of air and surfacing too rapidly, according to a report released Thursday by the Iredell County medical examiner.

Bradley Long, 28, of the Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue fire department, died on June 6 after gas bubbles likely blocked an artery during a hurried, emergency ascent, according to the report.

Long was in the water with two other divers from the department for 14 minutes when rescuers monitoring air usage from a boat on the surface signaled them to begin a controlled ascent.

Long, who was 6-foot-1 and 300 pounds and laboring at up to 81 feet deep, was breathing heavily throughout the dive, investigative reports said, causing rapid consumption of the gas in his Scuba tank. He did not ascend when he was low on air, investigators concluded.

When the divers began going up, the report from Iredell medical examiner Franklin Pippin said, Long ascended with increasing speed after passing 68 feet in depth without performing required safety stops.

Common diving protocols require divers to stop for about 3 minutes 15 to 20 feet below the surface to give the body time to release nitrogen build-up. Without the pause, bubbles can form in the blood blocking circulation or leading to decompression sickness.

At 20 feet, a fellow diver said Long motioned that he was out of air and appeared to panic, removing his mask and the mask of the other diver.

His fellow diver surfaced and called for help, but Long drowned before help could reach him.





No equipment problems were found with the dive gear used that day. Long's tank was found to be essentially empty and no back-up sources of gas were used, investigators found.

Long's death was investigated by the Iredell Sheriff's Office. Separate investigations are underway by OSHA and other agencies.

Long, who grew up in a fire-fighting family, was a captain at the Newton Fire Department, which he joined as a part-time firefighter in 2007. He was named Fireman of the Year by the Newton Elks Lodge this year.

He also volunteered with Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue, starting 12 years ago.



Sherrills Ford Fire Department fined \$5,600 in firefighter's diving death

<http://www.wsocv.com/news/local/sherrills-ford-fire-department-fined-5600-in-firefighters-diving-death/448049261>

Sep 20, 2016

MOORESVILLE, N.C. - The North Carolina Department of Labor has fined Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue in connection with the diving accident that took the life of a firefighter.

Bradley Long died while diving for a missing swimmer in Lake Norman.

[Click to read the Department of Labor's document on fine \(Reproduced Below\)](#)

The citation said Long's air supply wasn't adequately monitored. It also states there was an entanglement hazard with a rope.

At least one diver failed to perform an equipment safety check before the dive and there wasn't a back-up air supply. The fine totaled \$5,600.

The department has 15 days to contest the citation.

Channel 9 obtained an autopsy report that said Long drowned because of a buildup of gas in his arteries.

Long and another diver spent 14 minutes searching 82 feet below the surface. They tried to resurface but Long experienced an emergency at 20 to 30 feet below the surface.

Diving experts found the diving equipment had functioned properly.

Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire & Rescue fined after Capt. Long died in diving operation

http://www.hickoryrecord.com/news/sherrills-ford-terrell-fire-rescue-fined-after-capt-long-died/article_71c36c76-73ab-5463-915d-60aa6631a147.html

Sep 20, 2016 [By Tom Neas](#)

HICKORY – The North Carolina Department of Labor fined Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire & Rescue on Tuesday for the death of Capt. Bradley Long during a June 6 recovery operation in Lake Norman.

The citation states SFTFR must pay \$5,600 within 15 days or contest the citation.

According to the citation, the department was in violation of N.C. general statute 95-129(1), which states employers must provide a workplace "free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious injury or serious physical harm to his employees."

The citation lists out eight violations:

- » **Failure to monitor the air supply of two divers**
- » **At least one diver attached a body recovery bag and a search rope**



Robert C. Reed / Record:
Sherrills Ford Fire and Rescue Chief Rick Davi (right) comforts Jerry Long, father of Capt. Bradley long, who lost his life in the line of duty during a diving accident on Lake Norman during a search operation earlier this year.

bag to his rig, creating an entanglement hazard

- » **Failure by at least one diver to perform an equipment check prior to the dive**
- » **Lack of a redundant air supply by one of the divers**
- » **Failure to train at similar depths and conditions to where the recovery was taking place**
- » **Lack of an annual evaluation of the rescue dive team**
- » **Failure to maintain consistent dive records**
- » **Failure to maintain training documentation, medical evaluations and certifications**

Long failed to perform safety stops while surfacing, according to an autopsy report released Aug. 18. The Associated Press reported Aug. 19 that one of the divers said Long motioned he was out of air and panicked, removing both men's masks.

The men were between 35 and 75 feet from the surface when the incident occurred, Catawba County Emergency Management Coordinator Karyn Yaussy said in June.

A rescue attempt was made to rescue Long after the other two divers surfaced. The two men were hospitalized with non life-threatening injuries and released the next day.

"My son loved what he did and he loved helping people," Long's father, Jerry Long, said during a June 8 press conference. "He passed doing what he loved doing." If the department does not contest the citation, they also must complete corrective actions.

The citation gives potential actions, such as implementing additional safety practices and improving training standards.



<https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/firefighter-fatalities/fatalityData/detail?fatalityId=4507>

Bradley S. Long

Captain Bradley Long and one other diver were searching for a missing 29-year-old man in Lake Norman when they encountered an emergency. A third diver entered the water after a Mayday was called. While the two other divers eventually surfaced, Captain Long never resurfaced and was later recovered and pronounced dead at the scene. Rescue crews had been searching Lake Norman for the missing man a day prior to the emergency involving Captain Long. Officials said the missing man jumped off a boat with two other people. The boat was not anchored and started to float away. The three tried to swim and catch up with the boat, but the missing man was not able to make it back to the boat. While the search for the man was suspended once Captain Long went missing, officials confirmed the body of the missing man was eventually recovered as well. The two other divers were responsive when taken to the hospital for treatment, one of which has been released.

Department Information:

Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue

4011 Slanting Bridge Road
Sherrills Ford, North Carolina 28673
Chief: Rick E. Davis

Fatality status is provisional and may change as USFA contacts State Fire Marshals to verify fatality incident information.

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Age: | 28 |
| Rank: | Captain |
| Classification: | Volunteer |
| Incident date: | Jun 6, 2016 16:00 |
| Date of death: | Jun 6, 2016 |
| Cause of death: | Unknown |
| Nature of death: | Drowning |
| Activity type: | Search and Rescue |
| Emergency duty: | Yes |
| Duty type: | On-Scene Non-Fire |
| Fixed property use: | Outdoor Property |