

State Police asked to investigate Chesapeake officer's death

<http://hamptonroads.com/2011/12/state-police-asked-investigate-chesapeake-officers-death>
December 22, 2011 By [Sarah Hutchins](#) The Virginian-Pilot

CHESAPEAKE - The medical examiner's office has not been able to determine a cause of death or the manner in which police officer Timothy Schock died during a dive-team training exercise Tuesday afternoon. 12-20-2011

Autopsy results were inconclusive and toxicology results are pending, according to Glenn McBride, a representative for the medical examiner's office.

Also Wednesday, police Chief Kelvin Wright announced that he has asked the Virginia State Police to investigate Schock's death.

"Their expertise in the area of underwater search and rescue will... prove valuable to this effort and we greatly appreciate their willingness to assist," Wright wrote in a statement.



Timothy Schock of the Chesapeake Police Department's dive team takes part in a training session in January 2008. (Virginian Pilot file photo)



Officer Timothy Schock of the Chesapeake Police Department drowned on Dec. 20, 2011.

Police spokeswoman Kelly O'Sullivan said it is common for the department to ask an outside agency to review cases involving accidents or deaths. Along with a member of the Chesapeake Police Department, the state police will look at the dive team's equipment and training exercises.

"There is absolutely nothing suspicious about this," O'Sullivan said. "We just want to see specifically what went wrong."

Schock, 41, was taking part in an underwater search-and-rescue training exercise at Oak Grove Lake Park when he began struggling for breath, police said.

When Schock surfaced in the lake, he told his team partner he couldn't breathe, Wright said in a statement

Tuesday. The partner tried to give Schock a respirator, but he pushed the device away and went back under water, Wright said.

Fellow divers and an emergency rescue crew from the Fire Department tried to save Schock's life, Wright said, but the 16-year veteran was later pronounced dead.

O'Sullivan said Schock had spent about eight years on the department's dive team and was a U.S. Marine Corps veteran. He had a teenage son and a fiancé, she said.

Walter Gonzales, one of the owners of Fat Frogs Bike and Fitness in Chesapeake, said Schock had been a member of the store's competitive racing team for several years.

"He was a shop rat," Gonzales said. "He'd come in with a cup of coffee from Starbucks and just hang out."

Schock always had a smile on his face and a story to tell, Gonzales said. He'd reel off lines from TV shows and movies or talk about work. Recently, Gonzales said, the officer had been telling friends about the upcoming dive-team training.

An officer broke the news of Schock's death to his friends at the bike store soon after the accident, according to Gonzales.

"It kind of let us know how much the 'Frogs' meant to Tim," Gonzales said. "He talked about us so much at work that they called us."

Gonzales said the store will host a memorial bike ride for the officer in mid-January.

"His service to the community, it wasn't just part of his job; it was with everyone," Gonzales said. "He truly stood for what he was."

O'Sullivan said a candlelight vigil for Schock will take place at St. Stephen, Martyr Catholic Church, 1544 S. Battlefield Blvd., at 7 tonight. This morning, the Police Department announced that a wake/viewing will be held at 6 p.m. Tuesday at HD Oliver Funeral Apartments, 1416 Cedar Road.

Chesapeake to release findings on officer's death

<http://hamptonroads.com/2012/02/chesapeake-release-findings-officers-death>

February 9, 2012 By [Sarah Hutchins](#) The Virginian-Pilot



CHESAPEAKE- An investigation into the death of Chesapeake police Officer Timothy Schock during dive-team training in late December has lingered for more than seven weeks as four agencies have looked into the circumstances surrounding his death.

Police Chief Kelvin Wright said he is close to releasing a summary of the department's findings now that three of the agencies - the Chesapeake Police Department, Virginia State Police and medical examiner's office - are

wrapping up their individual investigations.

"I feel we owe it to Tim and his memory and his family and the officers that the information surrounding the circumstances surrounding this tragedy are made public," Wright said.

Schock, 41, was participating in routine underwater search-and-rescue training at Oak Grove Lake Park on Dec. 20 when he surfaced and told his partner he was having trouble breathing. The partner tried to give Schock a respirator, but he pushed it away and went back underwater.

Despite lifesaving efforts, the 16-year veteran was later pronounced dead, Wright said.

Schock had served on the dive team, which is a secondary assignment for officers, for about eight years. The 13-person unit trains one day a month - at Oak Grove Lake Park and other locations - and was activated eight times last year, according to information obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request.

Wright has been reluctant to release additional information - including the type of equipment the divers were using and whether Schock had any known health problems - citing the ongoing investigation.

The department does not consider the death suspicious but initially prevented additional information from being released by citing a pending "criminal investigation."

Wright explained that terminology by saying all deaths are treated as homicides until proven otherwise.

In Schock's case, part of the delay has come from the number of witnesses who had to be interviewed and the need to test the diving equipment. That equipment, including the air in the air tank, had to be sent out for extensive evaluation, police said.

"These things take time," Wright said. "We owe it to Tim to do a thorough investigation. We didn't want to take any chances."

Wright also requested the assistance of the Virginia State Police after meeting with the agency's dive master the night of Schock's death.

"I felt I needed someone with proper expertise to advise me on the subtle nuances of diving," he said.

After an investigation spanning several months, authorities determined that the trooper died of a medical condition, State Police spokeswoman Corinne Geller said.

A Freedom of Information Act request for information gathered by the State Police on Schock's death was denied based on the Line of Duty Act.

That act requires that any documents created during a line-of-duty-death investigation be kept confidential. The General Assembly unanimously agreed to add the records exemption in 2010.

As of Wednesday morning, a spokesperson for the medical examiner's office said a doctor had not yet made a final determination as to the cause and manner of Schock's death. The initial autopsy was inconclusive.

Because Schock died at work, the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry is also investigating his death, according to spokeswoman Jennifer Wester.

City Councilman Rick West said he expects "full disclosure" about the incident once Chesapeake's investigation is complete. If the department does not make information available, he said, the City Council will probably ask for it.

"I would be surprised if that doesn't happen freely, without any pressure," West said. "It's just the right thing to do."

Full text of "[Schock Statement 2 15 12](#)"

Chesapeake

V I R G I N I A

Office of the Chief of Police

304 Albemarle Drive

Chesapeake VA 23322

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

CHIEF'S STATEMENT

CHESAPEAKE, VA - FEBRUARY 15, 2012

Officer Kelly O' Sullivan

(757) 240-0519

Before I begin, I would like to take this time to formally thank Colonel Steve Flaherty, Superintendent of the Virginia State Police, and 1st Sergeant Mike Berry for the assistance provided by their law enforcement agency. From the moment I called Colonel Flaherty requesting aid and throughout this investigation, their assistance has been of great value as we seek to fully understand the sequence of events that took place on December 20, 2011, when we suffered the tragic loss of Officer Timothy Schock in a dive training exercise.

Clearly, this is an incident of high public interest and we want to provide as much information as we can. I will take questions after I have completed my prepared statement. However, there are details that I am not going to provide out of respect for Officer Schock's family. Furthermore, the release of information contained in the report provided by the Virginia State Police is prohibited by law.

In pursuit of the cause or causes of this awful tragedy, the Police Department launched an investigation using detectives from both our Investigative and Support Bureaus. It is my belief that we owe it to Tim, his family, and his fellow officers to complete a comprehensive and exhaustive investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death so as to identify any practice, policies, equipment, etc., that contributed to this unfortunate situation.

To the members of our police family, the community, and the media, my comments up to this point have been minimal, and I thank you for your patience. I felt it was unwise to comment on the case until we had a thorough, complete, and factual accounting as to what took place.

Both the Virginia State Police and the Chesapeake Police Department conducted numerous interviews of all the parties involved in this incident. All of the equipment was rigorously tested for functionality and reliability. Air samples in the tanks were examined for quality as well.

The following is a summary of what took place:

On December 20, 2011, Officer Timothy Schock, a 16-year police veteran and six-year member of the Chesapeake Police Underwater Search and Recovery Team (USART) was participating in a regularly scheduled, monthly training exercise at Oak Grove Lake Park, located at 409 Byron Street in the City of Chesapeake. Prior to beginning his dive, Officer Schock noticed a button had fallen off his power inflator, a device used to either inflate or deflate his buoyancy compensator. Inflation or deflation of the vest allows the diver to rise out of or lower himself into the water. A weight system is worn to help submerge the diver. After a discussion with a diver on the shore, it was determined that the button in question was the one used to deflate the buoyancy compensator, and since the vest in question had an alternate, manual method of inflation and deflation, Officer Schock decided to continue with the training exercise.

Officer Schock and his partner submerged to begin their dive at 11:30 a.m. While navigating to the first of three buoys on their preplanned course, Officer Schock and his partner realized they had missed their mark and decided to resurface at a location which was past the midpoint of the lake. At that point, they had been underwater for approximately 17 minutes without incident. Officer Schock and his partner discussed correcting their course, re-oriented themselves to the marker buoy, and decided to resume their dive. By all accounts, everything appeared to be normal at that time.

As the divers re-submerged, Officer Schock's partner reached the bottom first and noticed Officer Schock struggling to ascend. He observed that the bladder of Officer Schock's buoyancy compensator appeared to be empty. Officer Schock's partner immediately went to his assistance by inflating his own vest and using its buoyancy to lift them both to the surface. Once on the surface, Officer Schock immediately removed his full-face mask and told his partner that he was out of air. Officer Schock held onto his partner for buoyancy.

After safely ascending and alerting the personnel on the shore that they were in distress, Officer Schock's partner tried unsuccessfully to manually inflate the buoyancy compensator, which would not hold air. His partner offered his breathing apparatus to Officer Schock, who took one breath and then pushed it away. Officer Schock's partner told him to release his weights, which are contained in a belt around a diver's waist. Officer Schock responded, "I can't." Officer Schock and his partner were unable to work through the malfunction and the decision was made to head to the closest shoreline.

As they were making their way to shore, they were face up in the water with Officer Schock hanging onto his partner's neck and scuba tank, kicking their way to shore. Seeing all that was taking place, Officer Schock's teammates immediately mobilized and drove around the lake to get into a better position to help them. As they were kicking to shore, Officer Schock's partner asked him if they were headed in the right direction and Officer Schock responded yes. As they

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were kicking towards the shore, the dive team members on the shore observed both Officer Schock and his partner's heads out of the water.

As they were making their way to shore, Officer Schock made several position adjustments on his partner, moving higher up on his scuba tank and neck. Officer

Schock's partner informed him that he was beginning to choke him and to relax his grip, which he did.

Shortly thereafter, his partner noticed that Officer Schock had released his grip and slipped beneath the water. Officer Schock's partner was unable to bring him back to the surface. A rescue diver reached their location soon after, brought Officer Schock to the surface, and began lifesaving efforts. As they got to shore, they continued CPR until EMS personnel arrived.

At this point, we believe the cause of the accident can be directly related to two failures on the part of the diving equipment Officer Schock was using at the time of the accident:

1. A malfunctioning power inflator: Due to age, wear, and lack of proper maintenance, the power inflator's deflator button broke off and fell in the water, along with its counter-pressure spring and spacer. As a result, the buoyancy compensator would not hold air.

The evidence suggests that this part failed after Officer Schock had been in the water and had surfaced at least one time.

2. A malfunctioning weight release system: It is believed that Officer Schock attempted to release his weight system by pulling on the ripcord and was unable to release his weights. This is supported by Officer Schock's statement to his partner after his partner told him to release his weights and he replied, "I can't."

To further support this, Officer Schock made no attempt to release his weights, even when his partner told him repeatedly to do so throughout the ordeal.

As a result of the investigations, we will do the following:

1. Replace all current buoyancy compensators and weight release systems with new equipment.

2. Investigate and select a new weight release system that works with the buoyancy system.

3. Enhance the existing equipment maintenance, storage, and service program contained in the USART's Standard Operating Procedures.

4. Incorporate a formalized "Buddy Check" of all equipment worn by a diver prior to any diver getting into the water.

5. Require the use of a boat with flotation devices readily available when conducting dive operations in large bodies of water or navigable waterways.

6. When operating in deep water or conducting high-risk dive operations, have Emergency Medical Services personnel on scene.

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While the dive team members are highly trained in underwater search and recovery, the very nature of this type of work requires continuous updating of knowledge, skills, equipment, and practices to which I am committed.

Attachments

4



Weight Release Cord Weave



Ripcord Handle



Power Inflator

Full press conference on Schock's death

http://www.wavy.com/dpp/news/local_news/chesapeake/full-press-conference-on-schocks-death

Published : Thursday, 16 Feb 2012, 7:40 PM EST

CHESAPEAKE, Va. (WAVY) - The Chesapeake Chief of Police says that an equipment failure contributed to the death of Officer Timothy Schock during Dive Team training on Dec. 20, 2011.

Police Chief Kelvin L. Wright made this announcement in a news conference Wednesday afternoon.

Click on the attached video to see the entire press conference.

http://media2.wavy.com/video/criticalmedia/2012/02/16/Ches_Chief_of_Police_nfc_42dd55-0ec8-45cb-8377-fb522a486558.mp4

Police: Diving equipment failed for Chesapeake officer who died

<http://hamptonroads.com/2012/02/police-diving-equipment-failed-chesapeake-officer-who-died>

February 16, 2012 By [Veronica Gonzalez](#) The Virginian-Pilot

CHESAPEAKE - Two pieces of a police officer's diving equipment failed during a December dive-team training exercise, leading to the drowning death of Officer Specialist Timothy Schock in a Greenbrier lake, according to findings released Wednesday by the Police Department.

Adding to the tragedy, no boat was on hand at Oak Grove Lake Park to immediately respond when Schock went under while diving and failed to surface.

Nor were emergency responders standing by to help him the moment he went in distress, according to findings released by Police Chief Kelvin Wright.

Schock's death was ruled an accident due to drowning, though the 41-year-old father of one and a 16-year department veteran also had an enlarged heart, contributing to his death, according to a spokesman with the Medical Examiner's Office.

The day Schock died, his troubles began when a piece fell off his buoyancy compensator, an inflatable vest that helps a diver ascend or descend, causing it to malfunction.

A button on the power inflator that deflates the vest fell off, but he went underwater for the first part of his training with no problems, and he could manually inflate or deflate the vest. Later, when he went back down to continue training, the power inflator stopped working and the vest wouldn't hold air anymore.

The second issue contributing to his death was when he tried to release the weights from the vest by pulling on a ripcord. It didn't work, Wright said. The weights alone weighed a little more than 40 pounds.

The chief immediately suspended the team's diving exercises as a precaution and ordered the equipment tested.

Although some equipment was sent off-site, problems with the weight-release system divers use to make it easier to get under water were quickly apparent. Wright said weight releases of the other 12 divers were tested and they all failed.

"I can't explain why," he said.

"They trained for these events," Wright said. "But because of multiple failures, this is difficult to overcome."

On Wednesday, police provided the first real glimpse into what went wrong during a routine training exercise at the lake off the Va. 168 Bypass.

Previously, the chief had declined to release many details, saying he wanted to wait until his department and the Virginia State Police had concluded their inquiries.

Testing the equipment took time, he said, as did interviewing the members of the dive team who witnessed what happened.

"I felt it was unwise to comment on the case until we had a thorough, complete and factual accounting as to what took place," Wright said at a news conference.

On Dec. 20, Schock, a member of the dive team for six years, was practicing routine underwater search-and-rescue maneuvers. He was with a dive buddy, an officer the department declined to identify.

After he and his partner submerged at 11:30 a.m., they noticed they had missed the first of three buoys they were trying to navigate, so they resurfaced after being underwater for 17 minutes.

When they dove down again, Schock's partner reached the bottom first and noticed Schock was having trouble ascending and noticed his vest was not filling with air. So the partner inflated his own vest to float to the surface with Schock, according to the findings.

When they surfaced, Schock removed his face mask and inexplicably told his partner he was out of air, even though his tank still had enough air in it "to sustain him throughout the training exercise," said police spokeswoman Kelly O'Sullivan.

As Schock held onto his partner, they alerted other officers around the lake that they were having problems. The partner tried to blow air into Schock's vest, without success, and offered his respirator.

Schock took a single breath and then pushed it away.

When his partner told Schock to release his weights, he said: "I can't."

Both Schock and his partner decided to swim to shore, and Schock held onto his partner's neck and scuba tank.

With no boat on the water, other officers saw the two and got in their cars to drive around the lake to their aid.

Before they could assist, Schock's partner told him to loosen his grip because he was choking him. When Schock did, he let go completely and slipped underwater.

Another rescue diver brought Schock to the surface a short time later and began CPR until emergency crews arrived.

Wright said the age, wear and lack of proper maintenance caused the power inflator to fail.

Schock's equipment was three years old, and the department has been using its equipment for eight years, O'Sullivan said.

Among the changes Wright announced is that a technician will service all diving equipment. Police divers had been maintaining their own equipment until Schock's death.

"We have checked with a dive expert in another city," Wright said.

"He went through the equipment. We should have had them serviced by a technician. (Dive team members) lacked the expertise."

In addition, emergency responders will be present during practices and a boat will be on the water. The chief said the department had applied for grants to buy new vests, power inflators and two boats before Schock's death.

In the wake of the accident, the department is replacing all vests and weights.

The department also is incorporating a "buddy check" of all equipment worn by a diver prior to them submerging. If something isn't working properly, the officer will not be allowed to dive.

An investigation by the state's Department of Labor and Industry is ongoing.

Dive Equipment Failures Confirmed as Cause of Death for Chesapeake, VA Officer Timothy Schock

<http://www.hsinjurylaw.com/blog/dive-equipment-failures-confirmed-as-cause-of-death-for-chesapeake-va-officer-timothy-schock.cfm>

2/16/2012



It is always a tragedy when an [officer of the law dies](#), but when the officer dies due to a preventable accident the loss is even more tragic. [Timothy Schock of the Chesapeake Police department survived the Marine Corps and years on the street only to be killed when two pieces of equipment on his dive gear failed.](#)

His rig's power inflator, a smaller mask that inflates or deflates a buoyancy compensator, stopped working while Schock was training underwater. When he was unable to stay afloat, Schock tried to drop his weighted belt, but, according to a report on the fatal accident, the release mechanism stuck and could not be opened. The malfunctioning inflator and weight belt combined to make him run out of air and unable to surface.

Tests done all the police department's dive equipment following Schock's death showed that all the dive team's weight belts were defective. My question, as a [Virginia personal injury lawyer](#), is why weren't the belts checked and replaced before the divers went into the water? This was not an emergency call that required immediate response. It was a planned training dive, meaning there was plenty of time to follow all safety procedures and do extra equipment checks.

Faulty product lawyers with my firm help people who have been seriously injured by defective car brakes and steering columns, children's strollers, toys and other items that were improperly manufactured, inspected or tested receive compensation from negligent companies. If you are [seeking information about a product defect or an unsafe, dangerous consumer product, check out this page](#).

Dive Co.: Equipment issues impossible

http://www.wavy.com/dpp/news/local_news/chesapeake/equipment-maker-on-officers-death

Zeagle Dive Systems speaks on officer's death

17 Feb 2012

CHESAPEAKE, Va. (WAVY) - A dive equipment manufacturer says it's impossible that their equipment caused a Chesapeake police officer's death.

Officer Timothy Schock died in Dec. during dive training.

This week, Chesapeake Police Chief Kelvin Wright said Schock's [Zeagle Dive Systems](#) Power Inflator and Rip Cord Release failed. Wright also said that after Schock's death 12 other divers' Rip Cord Releases failed during testing.

Both Zeagle Dive System's president and an engineer told WAVY.com that the Chesapeake Police Department has not contacted them and that they haven't seen the equipment Schock was diving with when he died.

The company said they learned there was an alleged problem with their equipment when Hampton Roads dive stores starting calling them about 10 On Your Side's report.

According to Zeagle Dive Systems' President Dennis Bulin, the importance of sending the equipment to a certified technician is stated right on the equipment itself.

"Your BCD, including the inflator, should be inspected and maintained by an authorized Zeagle dealer at least once a year and more often if you dive frequently," Bulin said.

Zeagle Engineer Jim Fox said Officer Schock should have aborted the dive the moment he realized his power inflator was broken.

"That was about one of five or six things that started this whole snowball," Fox said.

Once Officer Schock couldn't get to the surface, Zeagle's president said he should have dropped his weights.

Police said Schock couldn't.

"Sometimes people modify the rip cord system too. That's why the fact that 12 of them failed is very, very curious and bizarre because that just doesn't happen," Bulin said.

Bulin doesn't know if they were modified because he hasn't seen them.

"Once they have a real diving expert look at the equipment, all the equipment that was actually used and investigate the training procedures and everything that was done...You're going to find out what the real problem really was here," Bulin added.

10 On Your Side called every city in Hampton Roads to see if other police departments have their equipment serviced at a certified dealer. Hampton Police Department does, Norfolk Police Department does, Newport News Fire Department does and Virginia Beach Police Department does.

Spokespeople for each of those cities made it clear they didn't want their methods to be compared to Chesapeake's.

10 On Your Side is waiting to hear back from Portsmouth and Suffolk.

In a statement released to 10 On Your Side Friday, it was learned that Schock had on a dry suit.

Fox said that is significant

"All he needed to do instead of uselessly trying to get it into the BC [was] hit the inflator on his dry suit and the buoyancy would have been produced by the inflator on his dry suit," Fox explained.

An alternative Chesapeake police have not talked about yet.

Chief: Chesapeake police will learn from drowning

<http://hamptonroads.com/2012/02/chief-chesapeake-police-will-learn-drowning>

February 18, 2012 By [Veronica Gonzalez](#) The Virginian-Pilot

CHESAPEAKE - In the wake of the drowning of an officer during a diving exercise, the city's police want to improve the way the underwater team prepares to work.

Earlier this week, Chief Kelvin Wright revealed that two malfunctions on Officer Specialist Timothy Schock's gear resulted in his death Dec. 20 while he trained at a Greenbrier lake.

The equipment that failed was a power inflator on Schock's buoyancy compensator, an inflatable vest that helps a diver ascend or descend. A button fell off the power inflator that deflated the vest, eventually causing it to malfunction so that it wouldn't hold air. His weight release system also failed while he practiced search-and-recovery operations at Oak Grove Lake Park. The weights help a diver descend.

The manufacturer of the buoyancy compensator, Zeagle, has not had a recall on its buoyancy compensators, said Jill Doczi, manager of Dive Quarters in Virginia Beach.

Before Schock's death, the 13 officers on the dive team - a secondary role for them on the force - maintained their own equipment. That was according to standard operating procedures that were revised in July 2009. And the team's equipment officer was to conduct quarterly and annual inspections of equipment, according to the department.

"Let's make sure this is not just a lesson lost," Wright said. "It's not confined to that one issue with the dive team and Tim's death. It's bigger than that. Just because you've had a dive team for 30 years doesn't mean you're doing everything right."

Among some changes he spoke about Friday are a regular maintenance schedule for diving equipment and hiring an outside agency to service it.

"We will contract out with an individual or a company to service the stuff," he said, adding that equipment maintenance wasn't always well documented.

"Regardless of whatever condition is it in, every year it will be sent out, because that's going to be on a maintenance schedule."

He said Schock's power inflator was replaced three years ago, but he did not know why.

"We rely upon them to raise the flag that something was wrong," Wright said of the divers.

In Virginia Beach, the eight-member, full-time police dive team sends out its dive equipment to be maintained by a vendor.

"We do not maintain, inspect, repair or do official certifications of our dive equipment," said Sgt. Brian Ricardo, who supervises the marine patrol unit and dive team. A local vendor does it all, he said, and buoyancy compensators, power inflators and weight systems are inspected annually.

Doczi of Dive Quarters said the diving equipment warranty would be void if not inspected annually.

After Schock died, the Chesapeake dive team's operations were suspended until new equipment arrives.

In an emergency, the chief said he's asked the Norfolk dive unit to fill in.

Another change Wright announced is a more formal buddy-check system that includes a checklist to make sure all equipment works properly. The police chief said the dive team had used a buddy-check system that was more of a " cursory inspection."

A buddy-check system is standard for any dive operation, whether it's for work or recreation, Doczi said.

"You go over all the gear and make sure it's in good working condition," she said. "You discuss what the dive plan will be.... You go over in your pre-dive check everything that will happen from the moment you leave the boat or shore and come back."

The Chesapeake police system includes a laminated checklist that will include when equipment was serviced.

"There's a bigger lesson to be learned here," Wright said. "That the things we consider to be routine are not routine."

<https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?121+ful+HJ433ER+pdf>

2012 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 433

Celebrating the life of Police Officer Specialist Timothy Brian Schock.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 2, 2012
Agreed to by the Senate, March 7, 2012

WHEREAS, the City of Chesapeake lost an admired police officer when Police Officer Specialist Timothy Brian Schock died on December 20, 2011; and

WHEREAS, a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, Timothy Schock joined the Chesapeake Police Department in 1995 and quickly earned the respect of his fellow officers and superiors for his commitment to protecting and serving the City of Chesapeake and its residents; and

WHEREAS, during his 16-year tenure with the Chesapeake Police Department, Timothy Schock was a member of the underwater search and recovery team and honor guard; served as a bike officer, a field training officer, and a criminal investigations detective; and was involved in community policing; and

WHEREAS, Timothy Schock worked diligently to prevent crime in the Chesapeake area, earning an Outstanding Teamwork Award in 2011 for his part in helping drastically reduce larcenies; and

WHEREAS, an outstanding officer, Timothy Schock pursued opportunities to enhance his knowledge and training and completed his undergraduate degree in criminal justice while serving with the Chesapeake Police Department; and

WHEREAS, actively involved with Special Olympics, Timothy Schock volunteered with the organization's fundraising events, serving as a safety diver for its Annual Polar Plunge and participating in the Annual Torch Run and Tip-A-Cop events; and

WHEREAS, Timothy Schock was the recipient of numerous awards and accolades for his distinguished service, including a Letter of Commendation for his commitment to the Community Policing Project, Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of Outstanding Voluntary Service to the High School Safety Challenge 2000, and twice received the Star Performer Award for Outstanding Service to the City of Chesapeake; and

WHEREAS, a devoted law-enforcement professional, Timothy Schock touched the lives of countless individuals as he dedicated himself to serving his fellow residents and officers, and his untimely death is a solemn reminder of the perils faced daily by those who serve and protect others as law-enforcement professionals; and

WHEREAS, Timothy Schock will be fondly remembered for his infectious smile and laugh and greatly missed by his son, Nicholas, who brought him great joy; fiancée, Tammy; other family members and friends; and fellow police officers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of a respected law-enforcement professional, Police Officer Specialist Timothy Brian Schock; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Police Officer Specialist Timothy Brian Schock as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

ENROLLED

H1433ER

Questions linger about Chesapeake officer's dive gear after death

<http://hamptonroads.com/2012/03/questions-linger-about-chesapeake-officers-dive-gear-after-death>

March 12, 2012 By [Veronica Gonzalez](#) The Virginian-Pilot



Officer Timothy Schock, 41, died Dec. 20 during routine dive training.

CHESAPEAKE - Weeks after an investigation into Police Officer Timothy Schock's drowning was completed, it's still a mystery how a simple system designed to be used in diving emergencies failed to work.

Schock's weight-release system, which allows a diver to quickly drop weights that are helping to keep him underwater, inexplicably failed Dec. 20 during routine dive training at Oak Grove Lake Park in Greenbrier. More puzzling was that the same equipment used by the rest of the 12-member police dive team also failed to release properly

when tested.

"I'm still perplexed about the whole thing, because it's not logical to me," Police Chief Kelvin Wright said last week in response to a Freedom of Information inquiry.

The Virginian-Pilot also learned that Schock was storing weights in the correct pockets on his diving vest; and he was wearing a dry suit, which neither he nor his partner tried to inflate when his weight-release system failed.

The weight system is fairly simple. Weights are stored in pockets on a buoyancy compensator - an inflatable vest that helps divers ascend or descend. When a diver pulls a red handle on the vest attached to a thin, plastic cord threaded through nylon loops, the bottom of the weight pockets open, dropping the weights.

While that aspect of the investigation remains murky, it's clear that a second piece on Schock's Zeagle SAR buoyancy compensator broke even before he submerged, according to police.



Chesapeake Police Chief Kelvin Wright speaks Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2012, at the city's police headquarters about the diving death of Officer Timothy Schock during dive-team training in December 2011. (Brian J. Clark | The Virginian-Pilot)

A button on the power inflator that deflates the vest so a diver can descend fell off. Schock was apparently unaware that the missing piece also would leave him unable to inflate the vest to help him surface.

Under new dive-team guidelines being drafted by Wright, Schock never would have submerged with faulty equipment.

Wright suspended the dive team's operations after Schock's death and asked Norfolk police's Harbor Patrol Unit to fill in.

The department is buying the dive team new equipment, and the team is not expected to be in service for at least another two months, Wright said. That's when the new guidelines will be implemented.

Dennis Bulin, president of Florida-based Zeagle Systems, said he wants to inspect the equipment to understand what happened.

"We would certainly like to... have more detailed information," he said Friday, adding that he's been told the equipment can't be released at this time. "We've sold thousands and thousands of these, and we've not had these kinds of problems. If you take care of your gear and have it inspected, you'll lower your risks of anything like this ever happening."

Bulin's comment hit on a key element of Wright's reforms in light of Schock's death: maintenance.

The department is changing how equipment is stored and beefing up its maintenance policies. Equipment now will be maintained on a regular schedule by a certified technician.

Under old policies, it was left to police officers to maintain their own equipment, with the dive team's equipment officer visually inspecting it on a quarterly basis and the team's commander inspecting it annually. Officers no longer will be allowed to store equipment in their vehicles or in the department's dive truck for long periods of time, as they had been doing, Wright said.

"I want to make sure we properly store everything, establish maintenance records and so forth," Wright said.

The Pilot learned through the Freedom of Information request that although equipment was to be inspected every quarter, last year, equipment was inspected only three times during the year because of "workload requirements," according to a written response to the request. The last inspection of Schock's gear was Oct. 18, according to written information provided by the city. The previous inspections were done on Feb. 15 and June 21, 2011.

Generally, equipment problems rarely contribute to diving deaths. Proper equipment maintenance and training, experts said, prevent fatalities.

A nonprofit association that attempts to track diver fatalities, Divers Alert Network, did an 11-year study that looked at 346 cases in the United States and Canada where a specific cause could be cited. Lack of air and divers getting trapped were the leading contributors of diving deaths, while equipment was found to be at fault in 15 percent of the cases.

"Equipment was really a very small percentage, and most of the time it was the ability of the diver to handle the equipment error (rather) than just the pure failure," said Petar Denoble, senior research director at the network and co-author of the study. "I'm not trying to put all the blame on the divers. We are monitoring for possible equipment failures because we want manufacturers to know about... design errors to improve it."

Denoble echoed the importance of taking care of the equipment.

"It's like a car," he said. "You have to periodically pay some attention to the car. You have to periodically take it to get serviced. Open scuba equipment is not complex, and maintenance is quite simple, but it has to be done."

Wright has said the age, wear and lack of proper maintenance caused Schock's power inflator to fail. The police department could not produce a receipt for Schock's faulty power inflator, which was not manufactured by Zeagle, and it wasn't clear who made the piece because there was no label on it.

The team's buoyancy compensators were bought in 2002, and Schock was wearing more than 40 pounds of weights.

Wright said he had one of his officers test a weight-release system on one of the team's buoyancy compensators after Schock's death, and the officer could not release the weights. Wright then reached over and tried to pull the cord on his officer's vest himself.

"I had difficulty doing it," he said. "It required a great deal of effort."

The Virginia State Police was the leading agency that investigated Schock's death and tested his equipment, but its findings are not public record under the state's Line of Duty Act, which requires documents created during such an investigation be kept confidential.

Wright said he couldn't reveal details about the State Police investigation, but said the report didn't provide a definitive answer to why the systems failed.

Some in the dive community suggested silt or muck might have gummed up the weight-release system or that other equipment Schock was wearing obstructed Schock's ability to engage the system. However, Wright said both have been ruled out.

Zeagle's president, Bulin, said diving equipment can reliably last for years when properly serviced.

"It is a very simple system," Bulin said of the weights. "Again, even simple systems have to be maintained. They have to be put together right. Maybe it wasn't put together right. Maybe they modified it. We don't know."

Police diving equipment fails again

http://www.wavy.com/dpp/news/local_news/chesapeake/police-diving-equipment-fails-again

06 Sep 2012, Melanie Woodrow

CHESAPEAKE, Va. (WAVY) - Nine months after Chesapeake Police officer Timothy Schock died during dive training because equipment failed, the department says its equipment failed again.

A Chesapeake Police Department spokesperson confirms a piece of dive equipment did not work during last week's training, so all of the department's equipment was sent to be tested.

"When the dive officers/team conducted their inspection on the new dive equipment at their last training (last week), it was discovered that a part of one of the regulators was not operating appropriately, therefore, all of the new equipment was sent off to be tested," Kelly O'Sullivan with the Chesapeake Police Department said

O'Sullivan could not say when the dive equipment would be back.

While the equipment was being tested, a Virginia Beach man drowned on Labor Day. Don Burford, 59, died close to Shell Road. A sailor who was on the scene and searched for the victim before police arrived spoke to 10 On Your Side.

"All of a sudden we all heard a live scream, 'Help, help, help,' from across the cove," sailor and certified diver Jonathan Wood said.

Wood was one of the first to search for Burford. Wood says when Chesapeake police showed up, they did not have dive gear.

"They were in the water with metal poles dipping them down in the water seeing if they could feel anything," Wood said.

Wood says that is how the officers found Burford's body.

"So I asked them, 'What are you guys going to do about it?' and he said the Norfolk Police Department was dispatched and they were on their way with a marine boat," said Wood.

Norfolk Police Spokesperson Karen Parker Chesson said the dispatch call came in at 6:05 p.m. and the marine boat arrived at 6:21 p.m.

Chesapeake Fire Captain Scott Saunders said the initial call for help came in at 5:10 p.m. According to those numbers, one hour and 11 minutes passed until the marine boat arrived to save Burford.

"It was more an outreach to other families especially with small children to keep an eye out when you're out on the water especially in Chesapeake," Wood said. "Just keep an eye on your children, keep an eye on your family members your loved ones your friends because anything can happen in a split second and it's going to take a while for them to respond obviously."

Dive equipment failure corrected

http://www.wavy.com/dpp/news/local_news/chesapeake/dive-equipment-failure-corrected

07 Sep 2012, Melanie Woodrow

CHESAPEAKE, Va. (WAVY) - 10 Is On Your Side is digging for answers after the Chesapeake Police Department's dive equipment failed for the second time in 9 months.

Thursday, WAVY.com reported divers responded to a drowning Labor Day without dive gear because it was being tested following an equipment failure. The next day, the Chesapeake Police Department responded to 10 On Your Side's questions.

According to documents, divers discovered problems with two pieces of equipment Aug. 29. The following day, the department sent out 36 pieces of equipment for testing.

In February 10 On Your Side got a closer look at what a buoyancy compensator and regulator looked like after the police department's own officer Timothy Schock died during dive training in January. Schock's buoyancy compensator and weight belt experienced problems.

After Schock's death, the department purchased new equipment which experienced problems of its own. According to Chesapeake police one of the regulators made an unfamiliar sound toward the end of August during testing. Additionally, a cable came out of a buoyancy compensator when it should not have.

The equipment failures prompted the police department to send all of their equipment for testing the next day. However, four days after the equipment was sent away, a man drowned off Shell Road. Officers that responded to the scene did not have diving equipment with them.

In a statement to 10 On Your Side, a police spokesperson said a reasonable and prudent plan was executed which involved a surface swim and search for the victim.

"The Underwater Search and Recovery Team does not serve a life guard function..."

while every effort is taken to respond to emergencies the basic function... is search and recovery," Public Information Officer for the Chesapeake Police Department Kelly O'Sullivan said.

Chesapeake Police divers did ultimately recover the victim's body. According to police, technicians determined the regulator was working correctly and the problem with the buoyancy compensator was corrected.

All of the equipment was back in service Sept. 6.

Timothy Brian Schock

<http://www.cityofchesapeake.net/government/City-Departments/Departments/Police-Department/history/memorials/schock.htm>



**Chesapeake Police Department
Killed in the Line of Duty - December 20, 2011**



Medal of Honor



Chesapeake Police Department Badge

Timothy Brian Schock was born November 8, 1970 in Frankfurt, Germany. After honorably serving four years in the United States Marine Corps, he joined the Chesapeake Police Department on November 1, 1995. Police Officer Specialist Schock attended the 36th Session of the Chesapeake Police Academy and graduated on April 1, 1996.

During his tenure with the Chesapeake Police Department, Officer Schock served as a Community Policing Officer, a Field Training Officer and a Detective. He received several commendations and awards, including a Team Award, and two Star Performer Awards. Officer Schock also served on the Honor Guard and the Underwater Search and Recovery Team. He was an active member of Law Enforcement United.

On Tuesday, December 20, 2011, at approximately 11:30 a.m., Police Officer Specialist Schock was participating in a regularly scheduled monthly dive training exercise at Oak Grove Lake Park. During the training exercise Officer Schock experienced a series of equipment malfunctions which contributed to his drowning.

Police Officer Timothy Brian Schock died in the line of duty on December 20, 2011 while in the performance of his fundamental duties of serving mankind, safeguarding lives and protecting property.

Timothy Brian Schock

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/pilotonline/obituary.aspx?pid=155156810>

Obituary [Condolences](#)



Timothy Brian Schock

Chesapeake - Timothy Brian Schock, 41, of the Chesapeake Police Department, died in the line of duty on December 20, 2011. Born in Landstuhl, Germany, he was the son of the late Terrance Schock and Linda Dolan.

Tim graduated from St. Leo University with a degree in Criminology. He served his country in the [United States Marine Corp.](#) and was a sixteen year veteran of the Chesapeake Police Department serving as a [Police Officer](#) Specialist assigned to the Uniform Patrol section, serving as a Bicycle Officer, Field Training Officer, and dive team member. During his career Tim also worked as a Detective in the Criminal Investigation Section.

He was also a member of Law Enforcement United. Tim was an avid cyclist; he was a member of the Fat Frogs Racing Team, and was also a board member of the Riverwalk Civic League.

Survivors include his son, Nicholas B. Schock of Chesapeake; a sister, Tamitha L. Schock of Lake Placid, Florida; his fiancé Tammy Hill of Chesapeake; maternal grandmother, Delores Shorner of Chicago, Ill.; and numerous nieces, nephews, extended family, and friends.

A funeral service will be held 11 a.m., Wednesday, December 28, at Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church, 215 Las Gaviotas Blvd., Chesapeake, by the Reverend Father Brian Rafferty. Burial with military honors will follow at Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk. The family will receive friends at the Chesapeake Chapel of H.D. Oliver Funeral Apartments, 1416 Cedar Road, Chesapeake on Tuesday evening from 6 to 8 p.m.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to Law Enforcement United, 1701 Myrtle Ave., Chesapeake, Va. 23325. Online Condolences may be shared with the family at www.hdoliver.com.



Published in The Virginian Pilot on Dec. 25, 2011

- See more at:

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/pilotonline/obituary.aspx?pid=155156810#sthas h.v05Xi51S.dpuf>