Rescue Squad to celebrate its 70th anniversary

by Larry Chowning

The Middlesex County Volunteer Rescue Squad (MCVRS) is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year and a number of events are scheduled to commemorate the squad's long standing service to the county.

The Deltaville Maritime Museum (DMM) will be honoring MCVRS squad members during intermission at the Groovin' in the Park series with Lynda Smith and Seventh Street Band on Saturday, June 27 from 5-8 p.m.

At the last regular season Deltaville Deltas

baseball game of the season on Saturday, July 25, at 7:30 p.m., rescue squad members will be recognized on the field and honored at the opening "first pitch" and during the playing of the Star-Spangled Banner.

Squad members will also be recognized at the fourth annual Rescue Regatta, an MCVRS fundraiser, that runs from Friday, July 31-Aug. 1. This year the skipper meeting and other events will be conducted on Friday at DMM and after the races on Saturday in the Chesapeake Bay, dinner, music and the awards ceremony will be held at DMM with the Michael Clark Band

featuring Tracy Clark on vocal playing until 9:30 p.m.

"We plan to have a good number of squad members at all of these events," said Tina Mennett, MCVRS Vice President and CPR trainer.

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Squad ...

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History

MCVRS in Deltaville began in fall 1956 in the garage of Mrs. William F. (Claudia) Marchant, where it conducted its first meeting. Prior to that, and until 1969, local funeral homes provided ambulance service in other areas of the county.

The MCVRS was one of the first volunteer squads in the state of Virginia. The squad was organized just a year after Dr. Harold Felton came to Middlesex as the community's general practitioner.

He was among one of eight men who started the MCVRS and in a 1998 Sentinel interview, the late Dr. Felton said that the squad's first ambulance was a 1957 Ford station wagon. "I remember riding to Richmond banging around, holding an IV bottle, and trying to monitor a patient," he said in 1998. "There was so much noise that we had to pull over to see if the patient's heart was

still beating." MCVRS's first officers were Virgil Miller, captain; Leonard Wright, secretary; Frank Medicus, treasurer; Addison Hall, first lieutenant; William Vaughan, second lieutenant; and William "Punky" Foster, recruiting officer.

Under the auspices of the MCVRS, the Urbanna Branch was formed in 1968 when donations from people throughout the county allowed the purchase of a new rescue squad vehicle for that area. CMVRS folded in 2018 due to lack of volunteers and funding issues.

Middlesex County taxpayers have picked up some of that slack by providing some paid emergency services but funding is all channeled through MCVRS and the allvolunteer group still provides most of the emergency response service throughout the county.

Donations and volunteers

The squad is seeking donations and volunteers. Mennett said she was recently rummaging through the squad's attic and found an article in a 1981 Southside Sentinel featuring a photo of a new $38,000 ambulance

just purchased by the squad. "We bought a new ambulance this year (2026) and it cost over $400,000," she said. "We thank the community for their continued support over these 70 years and the contributions they have made in keeping our volunteer rescue squad going."

Middlesex County Rescue Squad members show off their Boston Whaler rescue boat in the early 1960s that they used for boat rescues in the lower end of Middlesex County. They include, from left, early rescue squad members William Vaughan, Leonard Wright, Ryland Hall and Addison Hall. (Sentinel file photo)

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