



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
South Carolina Fire Academy
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Dennis Ray, Academy Superintendent

For Immediate Release:

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State Fire Academy Graduates 16 in December

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 16 recruits, Friday, Dec. 7, 2018, from its eight-week firefighter candidate school in Columbia. Keynote speaker was Chief Joseph "Bo" Bowers from Awendaw District Fire Department.

The firefighters from eight fire departments across the state, and three open enrollments, underwent a 320-hour training program of classroom and hands-on firefighting skills development.

"This challenging eight-week program requires commitment, passion, and dedication," Fire Academy Superintendent Dennis Ray said. "These recruits have successfully worked together as a team, performed extensive hands-on training with live fires, and passed intensive practical skills evaluations and written tests to meet the National Fire Protection Association standards," he said.

The comprehensive training, offered quarterly at the Fire Academy, includes emergency responder first aid training, hazardous materials operations training, auto extrication, flammable liquids and gas firefighting, rescue training, and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Firefighter I and Firefighter II levels.

"With the successful completion and graduation of these new firefighters who will now be dedicating their lives to serving their communities and the state, our South Carolina fire service is enhanced," Ray said. "I am proud of their accomplishments and I also commend the dedicated Fire Academy instructors who brought the recruits through these weeks of instruction leading to graduation."

The following recruits graduated Dec. 7, 2018:

- Willis Berkshire, St. John's Fire District
- Shamar Brown, St. John's Fire District
- Thomas Charette, North Charleston Fire Department
- Michael Crews, Open Enrollment
- Alexander De Guzman, Open Enrollment
- David Dodd, Cayce Public Safety
- Travis Doolittle, North Augusta Department of Public Safety
- Guilherme Fune, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- James Kerber, Camden Fire Department
- Brandon Miranda, North Charleston Fire Department
- Justin Parker, Colleton County Fire-Rescue
- Marshall Pye III, North Charleston Fire Department
- Brandon Ramirez, Open Enrollment
- Brenden Shaw, Hanahan Fire Department
- Kelli Stanley, North Charleston Fire Department
- William Stephens, St. John's Fire District

The following awards were also presented:

Order of the Maltese – Brandon Miranda, North Charleston Fire Department

The Maltese Cross is a firefighter's badge of honor, signifying that he or she works in courage – a ladder rung away from death. The Eight Obligations of The Maltese Cross are: Live in Truth, Repent of Sins, Love Justice, Be Sincere and Whole-Hearted, Have Faith, Give Proof of Humility, Be Merciful, and Endure Persecution.

This award is chosen by the class recruits.

Chief Robert Frick – Alexander De Guzman, Open Enrollment

The Chief Robert Frick Award is given to the recruit with the highest grade point average.

Pride of the Battalion – Willis Berkshire, St John's Fire District

The Pride of the Battalion award is given to the recruit who has demonstrated "Leadership, Integrity, Determination and Good Value."

This award recipient is chosen by the instructor staff who worked with the recruits during the eight-week program.

The Fire Academy provides emergency services training to the municipal fire service - both paid and volunteer - airport crash rescue departments, industrial fire brigades and emergency teams and service organizations including EMS, law enforcement and military from around the state and the world. The Fire Academy is accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress and National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board) for multiple NFPA firefighter levels.

The Fire Academy and the State Fire Marshal's Office make up the Division of Fire and Life Safety, which is a division of the S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation.