



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### 2020 National EMS Awards of Excellence Recipients Announced

Clinton, Miss. – NAEMT and EMS World are pleased to announce the recipients of the 2020 *National EMS Awards of Excellence*. The awards will be presented during NAEMT’s virtual General Membership Meeting on Tuesday, September 15. We congratulate the following recipients and recognize their outstanding contributions to the EMS profession and the patients they serve:

**Stephen Lincke, Paramedic, Wantagh, New York**  
2020 NAEMT/Nasco Paramedic of the Year, *sponsored by Nasco*

**Jonathon Thatcher, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), South Rim, Utah**  
2020 NAEMT/Braun Industries EMT of the Year, *sponsored by Braun Industries*

**Paul Pepe, MD, MPH, Dallas, Texas**  
2020 NAEMT/Bound Tree EMS Medical Director of the Year, *sponsored by Bound Tree Medical*

**Scott DeBoer, CCRN, Dyer, Indiana**  
2020 NAEMT/Jones & Bartlett Learning EMS Educator of the Year, *sponsored by Jones & Bartlett Learning*

**Colleen Mitchell, Senior Airman, EMT, United States Air Force, Land O’Lakes, Florida**  
2020 NAEMT/North American Rescue Military Medic of the Year, *sponsored by North American Rescue*

**Onslow County EMS, Jacksonville, North Carolina**  
2020 Dick Ferneau Career EMS Service of the Year, *sponsored by Ferno*

**Sun City Center Emergency Squad, Sun City Center, Florida**  
2020 Volunteer EMS Service of the Year, *sponsored by EMS World*

**Stephen Lincke**, EMS Captain, is a paramedic and 40-year member of the Wantagh Fire Department in New York. He had been a deputy chief for 34 years for the New York City Fire Department Bureau of EMS. Nominated by Joseph Pignataro on behalf of the department’s awards committee, Stephen is noted for delivering exceptional care to his patients and utilizing the latest EMS protocols. He is a patient advocate and supports his patients and their families through stressful situations, providing them with the information they need to make decisions about their healthcare. Stephen leads two EMS squads and oversees training and supplies. He guides the new members and ensures continuing education opportunities for all personnel. Stephen was appointed to the department’s COVID Task Force for his experience in maintaining the supply chain, particularly for personnel protection, and his disaster management experience and resource coordination. Stephen was recognized by the New York State Department of Health for his Leadership in EMS. State EMS Director Ryan Greenberg stated that the recognition was for “professional performance invaluable to the EMS system” and for “setting a standard for others to emulate.

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**Jonathon Thatcher** is an Advanced EMT for Tooele Army Depot Fire Department in Utah and serves as Tooele County EMS Council Chair. He also works part-time for Mountain West Ambulance (MWA) and serves as the volunteer assistant fire chief for Stockton Fire Department. Colleagues commented that Jonathon is a professional and constantly learning, growing, teaching and evolving. Through his leadership and great attitude, he continues to make EMS an amazing profession to be part of. Co-worker Jase Connors' nomination commends "Jonny" for being a leader in his community, caring for others, and being knowledgeable in his role. When providing patient care, he advocates for his patients. He is compassionate and calming to all around him. He trains regularly and works with others to promote the highest levels of care. He also participates in a program for children in need. "Jonathon is an excellent example of what an EMT should be and sets a high standard," said Connors.

**Paul E. Pepe, MD, MPH**, is medical director for numerous EMS agencies in Texas and Florida. Also, coordinator of the Metropolitan EMS Medical Directors ("Eagles") Global Alliance, which impacts 137 million people throughout the world. Dr. Pepe was nominated by dozens of esteemed colleagues for his tireless efforts over four decades in advocating for patients, advancing science in EMS, creating educational innovations and also for consistently supporting every EMS practitioner he has supervised or worked beside. Well-known for his hundreds of groundbreaking research publications in critical care, cardiac arrest and EMS system innovation, nominators also cited his unparalleled leadership role for EMS during the COVID-19 crisis. Rapidly ascertaining boots-on-the-ground intel across the globe and then rapidly disseminating pivotal concrete knowledge to EMS leaders worldwide, he provided guidance and reassurance to colleagues responsible for the EMS response for the tens of millions within their jurisdictions. Always championing EMS, Dr. Pepe founded the National Association of EMS Physicians and then served as its first elected president (1987-1990). In 2005, he was cited as "the most accomplished emergency medical services physician of our generation" when receiving his lifetime achievement award from the American College of Emergency Physicians. For his current award, nominators emphasized, "Dr. Pepe continues to have an innate ability to create order out of chaos and to redirect us into a more pragmatic, productive focus. By guiding us to research better ways to save lives, improve operations and advance the specialty of EMS, he has elevated our stature in the eyes of the scientific world, global leaders and the public at large."

**Scott DeBoer, RN, MSN, CEN, CPEN, CCRN, CFRN, EMT-P**, is a critical care transport nurse and the co-founder, with his medic wife Lisa, of Pedi-Ed-Trics Emergency Medical Solutions. He applies over 30 years of experience into his engaging seminars and hands-on skills labs which have been presented in all 50 states and 7 countries. His nomination noted, "He has taught well over 1000 programs all over the world, written 9 EMS related books, co-authored over 100 emergency journal articles, been the subject of multiple nightly news television pieces because of his unique hands-on labs for EMS, and teaches audiences up to the thousands." A colleague presenting with Scott commented that very few educators approach a single presentation with such a degree of enthusiasm and dedication. Another colleague wrote that Scott has the ultimate combination of intellect and educational background coupled with a unique presentation style that makes him stand head and shoulders above the rest. His work ethic and dedication to providing excellent educational opportunities for EMS are superb. Scott likes to say that he "doesn't like taking care of big people" and as such, helping medics and nurses around the world learn better ways to care for kids has been his career focus and passion.

**Colleen Mitchell, Senior Airman, EMT**, has embodied all the principles that this award represents. She faced deadly, chaotic circumstances with courage, compassion and determination, all in the effort to save the lives of others. She conducted the first-ever Tactical Combat Casualty Care Course in her area of responsibility, teaching eight classes and ensuring sixty-six United States Department of Defense and host nation personnel were educated on emergent life-saving medical care procedures. During an attack earlier this year, she took control of the scene, quickly assessed and executed critical life-saving actions that cared for two severely wounded individuals and she brought dignity and respect for the deceased.

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Her professionalism, proactiveness and calm under pressure served her and those that she directed well during a time of crisis. From the accounts of the Lead Operator at the time of the attack, to the Surgeon General of the United States Air Force, SrA Mitchell's actions demonstrated the best of what our emergency medical technicians are trained to do in time of crisis. SrA Mitchell has also been recognized for exceptional meritorious achievement. Nominator Group Commander Colonel Michael D. Foutch wrote, "I am incredibly humbled by her performance under fire, in the act of triage, treatment, care management and direction of those far above her pay grade to stabilize the situation. During her deployment, and particularly on the day in question, she was the best Medic anyone could hope for and she is without question, a true American hero."

**Onslow County EMS (OCEMS), based in Jacksonville, N.C.**, is a paramedic-level public utility model EMS system in its 33rd year of service. It answers 23,000 calls a year and transports approximately 12,000 patients to seven different regional hospitals. The system has a full-time staff of 78 paramedics and EMTs and a complete staff of 113. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune and its three supporting bases are located in Onslow County, making it the state's youngest in median age, and with such a young population, significant trauma is more frequent than in most similar-sized communities. Almost 60% of the call volume at OCEMS is trauma-related, with more than a 1,000 leveled traumas per year.

In 2018, OCEMS along with the Naval Medical Center's Level III trauma center, began teaching Stop the Bleed. More than 6,000 civilians have now completed the training and every law enforcement officer in Onslow County now has a Stop the Bleed kit and tourniquets. In 2019 OCEMS began utilizing low-titer O+ whole blood (LTOWB) for trauma and medical patients. OCEMS is in a prime position to provide training to Navy corpsmen prior to deployment overseas and the battlefield. The partnership between the military and civilian organizations has been a highlight of the trauma program and has made it a model program for the Department of Defense, U.S. Navy, and Defense Health Agency. In return OCEMS receives clinically sophisticated training from the many specialists at the Naval Medical Center and through their simulation programs.

Started in 2017, OCEMS' community paramedic program has built an opioid response and treatment program that connects overdose patients to recovery services. Patients who agree to recovery but cannot gain immediate access are evaluated for admission into the community paramedic suboxone program, a bridge for abusers until they can be admitted into medication-assisted treatment. OCEMS was awarded an NIH pilot to evaluate the effectiveness of community paramedics administering suboxone to patients to prevent re-overdose and substance abuse while awaiting connection to recovery.

This is the only known program in the United States where paramedics are administering suboxone and connecting patients to treatment. OCEMS is recognized yearly as an AHA Mission Lifeline: Gold Plus system. Working with partners in Wilmington, it's modified the MEND/RACE score to accurately identify patients most likely to need neurosurgical or thrombectomy for stroke.

**Sun City Center Emergency Squad, Sun City Center, Fla.**, is a senior community with approximately 30,000 residents in the winter, 22,000 in the summer. Its unique rescue organization, consisting mostly of retired residents—average age: 72. The Sun City Center Emergency Squad has more than 400 volunteers, of whom approximately 140 are EMTs and EMRs. The squad has four ambulances and two wheelchair vans that provide transportation to medical appointments for residents who are wheelchair-bound. It averages 5,000 calls a year, with another 1,000 wheelchair van runs. Its annual budget of \$450,000 is raised through fund drives and regular donations. The squad doesn't accept insurance or use any tax monies—it is completely funded by the community.

The squad participates in all state and county EMS meetings, including the state Emergency Medical Services Advisory Committee, where it has served on the Communications Committee since 2011. On the county level it is active with Hillsborough County's Emergency Medical Planning Council and Trauma Advisory Council.

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The squad has been an active leader in the community throughout its 55-plus years. In January 2020 Chief Mike Bardell met with local organizations and organized a “Disaster Planning for Homeowners” program attended by more than 800 residents.

The squad was the first in the state on FirstNet, the emergency communications network for first responders, and created a local network with senior facilities. Sun City’s community education efforts include fall prevention, Stop the Bleed, CPR, a community health symposium, and a community needs assessment. Throughout the years the squad has been recognized locally by multiple organizations. Hillsborough County commissioners recognized it in 2016 and again this year. In June 2013 it was selected by the Florida Council on Aging as the top EMS agency in the state for its service to seniors. In 1988 President George H.W. Bush recognized the squad as one of his “Points of Light.”

*Nominees for the Paramedic and EMT of the Year Awards are scored on how the nominee: provides superior patient care; is an effective advocate for patients and their families; works with peers to foster a positive work environment; demonstrates professionalism in interacting with patients, their families and other medical professionals; and demonstrates a commitment to continuing professional education.*

*Nominations for the Educator of the Year Award are scored on how the nominee: consistently demonstrates commitment to providing high quality, professional education for EMS practitioners; serves as an outstanding role model for EMS practitioners in the classroom and in the community; effectively mentors EMS students at all stages of their professional development; introduces and incorporates innovative approaches and tools in the classroom, which enhance students' learning experiences; and contributes and participates in the development of education content that expands the body of quality EMS curriculum.*

*Nominees for the Military Medic of the Year Award are recognized military medics (MOS-qualified active, reserve or National Guard US Army Medic, Navy Corpsman or Air Force Medic) who demonstrate excellence in the performance of military emergency medicine, with their primary role being that of theater patient care.*

*Nominees for the Service of the Year Awards are scored on the following: advances in EMS education and training in the agency; innovations in prehospital care and protocol development implemented by the agency; medical community involvement with the agency; EMS system/program upgrades implemented by the agency; worker safety and well-being programs implemented by the agency; injury and illness-prevention projects implemented by the agency; and public-education project sponsorships the agency is involved in.*

**About NAEMT** - Formed in 1975 and more than 82,000 members strong, the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians ([NAEMT](#)) is the only national association representing the professional interests of all emergency and mobile healthcare practitioners. NAEMT members work in all sectors of EMS, including government agencies, fire departments, hospital-based ambulance services, private companies, industrial and special operations settings, and in the military. Contact: Kathleen Taormina, Marketing and Media Director, [kathleen.taormina@naemt.org](mailto:kathleen.taormina@naemt.org)

**About EMS World** - [EMS World](#) serves the full spectrum of emergency medical services providers: EMTs, paramedics, dispatchers, physicians, nurses, educators, researchers and administrators. Through a monthly print publication, website, podcasts, webinars and the world's largest EMS-dedicated annual conference, [EMS World Expo](#), EMS World is the leading authority on providing expert-guided clinical, management and regulatory content to a discerning and dedicated audience on the front lines of out-of-hospital care.

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