



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 16, 2023

### 2023 National EMS Awards of Excellence Recipients Announced

Clinton, Miss. – NAEMT and EMS World are pleased to announce the recipients of the 2023 *National EMS Awards of Excellence*. The awards will be presented during NAEMT’s General Membership Meeting on Tuesday, September 19, and at the Opening Ceremony of EMS World Expo on Wednesday, September 20 in New Orleans, Louisiana. We congratulate the following recipients and recognize their outstanding contributions to the EMS profession and the patients they serve:

**Richard “Ricky” Battle, Paramedic, Hawthorne, California**  
2023 NAEMT/Velico Paramedic of the Year Award

**Wayne Chan, EMT, Monroe Volunteer Ambulance, Monroe, New York**  
2023 NAEMT/Demers-Braun-Crestline-Medix EMT of the Year Award

**Eric Bauer, MBA, FP-C, CCP-C, C-NPT, Paramedic, Bowling Green, Kentucky**  
2023 NAEMT/Jones & Bartlett Learning Public Safety Group EMS Educator of the Year Award

**SSG Sean Clerkin, Paramedic, Manassas, Virginia**  
2023 NAEMT/North American Rescue Military Medic of the Year Award

**Matthew Letizia, DO, FACOEP, Elizabeth, New Jersey**  
2023 NAEMT/Bound Tree-Sarnova EMS Medical Director of the Year Award

**Jennifer Anders, MD, Baltimore, Maryland**  
2023 NAEMT-AAP/Handtevy Pediatric EMS Award

**Plum Emergency Medical Services, Inc., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**  
2023 NAEMT-ACEP/Technimount EMS Safety in EMS Award

**Salem (VA) Volunteer Rescue Squad, Salem, Virginia**  
2023 Dignitech Volunteer EMS Service of the Year Award

**Jamie Gray, BS, AAS, NRP**  
2023 EMS World/Dynarex EMS Caring Award

**Sheldon Community Ambulance Team, Sheldon, Iowa**  
2023 EMS World/FirstNet®, Built with AT&T Wellness and Resilience Award

**Sachse Fire-Rescue, Sachse, Texas**  
2023 Dick Ferneau Career EMS Service of the Year, Sponsored by Ferno

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**Richard “Ricky” Battle**

“Every day, do something nobody asked you to do” is a motto Richard “Ricky” Battle lives by, especially in providing care to his patients. Working for the Los Angeles County Fire Department, Battle provides superior cardiac, trauma and other emergent and non-emergent care. Not only does he practice and train others in EMS in proper lifesaving techniques and care during transport, but he takes the time to care for the family—securing the house, making sure the family knows where their loved one is being transported to, and using a language line for translator services. He understands the importance of providing emotional support to patients, and their loved ones, who may be frightened, in pain, or in distress. Through his actions, Battle can transform any scene from being chaotic to compassionate. He is an advocate for both the patient and family. Battle also helps to educate crews about the importance of building good working relationships with nursing home and long-term care facility staff. He devotes time to building the profession of EMS. He volunteers to help with the EMS Clinical Challenge and has been integral in promoting the diversity and equity themes in the challenge. Battle is an instructor, lifelong learner, and one of the most sought-after preceptors for LA County Fire.

**Wayne Chan, EMT**

Wayne Chan has been an EMT for over 20 years and is the president and training officer for Monroe Volunteer Ambulance in Monroe, New York. He is also a delegate to the Orange County EMS Council and serves as treasurer for the Hudson Valley Regional EMS Council. Chan’s patient care skills are exemplary and his confidence “makes everyone around him feel they are in good hands.” Chan has a way of interacting with patients and their families that instantly puts them at ease. He is methodical in his scene and patient assessment. He communicates with the family and accurately reports to the hospital to ensure the best possible outcomes. Chan is a patient advocate and has built a great rapport with area physicians and healthcare administrators to request help with volunteer retention, funding for equipment, and long patient turnover times at the hospitals. He also continues his education path in active shooter events by researching and participating in drills to refine his skills in responding to mass casualty incidents. He holds monthly drills for the agency’s youth squad and seeks training opportunities to bring back to them. Chan received both Orange County’s and Hudson Valley’s Educator of the Year awards in 2018, and the Orange County, NY Meritorious Service Medal for contributions to EMS in 2019.

**Eric Bauer, MBA, FP-C, CCP-C, C-NPT**

Eric Bauer is president and CEO of FlightBridgeED. He is also founder of the FlightBridgeED Podcast, FlightBridgeED Air & Surface Transport Symposium, and created an award-winning prehospital Ventilator Management Workshop and critical care review course. Bauer has committed himself to delivering high-quality continuing education for more than 30 years. He inspires leaders to be better role models and students to keep learning. He was an early adopter of short and focused clinical education. His students commend him for providing easily digestible content with one student saying, “Eric has made me a better provider.” He is an accomplished instructor, author, and podcaster. Bauer received the John Jordan Award for Excellence in Transport Medicine Journalism from the Air & Surface Transport Nurses Association and was the first paramedic to become an honorary fellow of the Academy of Air & Surface Transport Nurses. He has served as a development partner with education institutions, and a regional clinical compliance and education manager at a large air medical service. Bauer is working on his doctorate of education in Health Care and continues to work as a paramedic.

**SSG Sean Clerkin**

SSG Sean Clerkin sets himself apart as a special operations medic, flight medic, and leader. He has an incredible work ethic, exemplifies servant leadership and demonstrates passion for educating others and pursuing medical knowledge. He has made significant contributions as an Army Special Operations Aviation Command (ARSOA) flight medic in developing flight medics and medical officers, conducting operational activity, and providing field exercise support for outside entities. Over the past 12 months, Clerkin has been deployed to two locations for greater than 90 days. During these deployments, Clerkin responded to two urgent casualties in the back of an aircraft, providing outstanding care despite evasive maneuvering. His expert resuscitation of patients with penetrating abdominal wounds as well as extremity hemorrhage

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highlights his dedication to the fundamentals of damage control resuscitation, ensuring these wounded servicemembers survived. He has published three peer-reviewed manuscripts, one as a first author in the *Journal of Special Operations Medicine*. As the landscape of military operations evolves, Clerkin is pioneering safe and efficient methods to rescue critically injured patients in an austere Arctic environment. He led the initiative for bringing the first unit of fresh whole blood on an ARSOA aircraft north of the Arctic Circle.

#### **Matthew Letizia, DO, FACOEP**

Dr. Matthew Letizia is the medical director for a significant number of EMS, fire, law enforcement and ocean rescue agencies in New Jersey. He is actively involved with each agency, advising, guiding, directing, and identifying areas for improvement. He assists EMS personnel with learning critical decision making, clinical assessments, and procedures during high-pressure situations through field training and regularly scheduled lectures. He believes every call is a learning opportunity and does frequent ride-alongs with EMS practitioners, offering mentoring and training on scene. Dr. Letizia reviews and continually updates department policies and protocols ensuring they are up to date based on the latest evidence, new therapies, best practices, advancements, and literature. He also helped to advance patient safety by creating a Just Culture and stressing the importance of safety incident reporting. Dr. Letizia is the medical director of the community college EMS program and has been able to secure agreements with hospitals and EMS agencies to provide students with the opportunity to complete their required observation hours. His unrelenting self-awareness, positivity, humility, empathy, professionalism, and integrity are the building blocks upon which he has built his prehospital reputation and success.

#### **Jennifer Anders, MD**

Dr. Jennifer Anders is an assistant professor of pediatrics at Johns Hopkins Children's Center and associate state EMS medical director for pediatrics at the Maryland Institute for EMS Services. She has been a leader in pediatric EMS care for almost two decades. Through her research, education, mentorship, and clinical leadership, she has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to ensuring that children throughout Maryland and the country receive high-quality, professional EMS care. She has led research, education, and policy initiatives that have directly improved EMS care for children. Anders is the chair of the Maryland Institute for EMS Systems Pediatric Quality Improvement Committee and Data Analysis and Research Team. She facilitates an annual Pediatric Research Forum and helped to expand the pediatric EMS evidence base. She has published dozens of peer-reviewed manuscripts focused on improving pediatric EMS care and has received multiple national awards for her research. Anders is a powerful advocate for children in EMS systems throughout Maryland, promoting the unique needs of children in prehospital and emergency settings. She has also partnered with the Maryland EMSC Family Advisory Network on developing a pediatric termination of resuscitation protocol for EMS and children in severe respiratory distress.

#### **Plum Emergency Medical Services, Inc.**

Plum EMS provides service to Pennsylvania's Plum Borough, Allegheny County, and neighboring communities. A small service with 26 team members, Plum EMS covers 30 square miles with a population of 28,000, handling over 3,300 911 calls per year. Plum EMS has shown dedication to the safety of their crew members, patients, and the community with their "comprehensive training programs, attention to detail, and unwavering commitment to quality assurance and quality improvement," said one nominator. The agency's Safety Committee continuously works to identify improvement opportunities. Plum EMS participated in a National EMS Quality Alliance (NEMSQA) project to reduce unnecessary lights and siren use. Initially, the agency responded to about 45% of their 911 calls without lights and siren and now that number is up to about 90% without any negative clinical outcomes. Plum EMS is committed to a Just Culture throughout all aspects of its operations and is frequently asked to work with other agencies to share their best practices. Just Culture is part of the fabric of their personnel—from operations leaders to first line practitioners. Plum EMS maintains regular community outreach by teaching AED and CPR courses, holding car seat safety clinics, hosting school groups at their station, and participating in community events.

#### **Salem (VA) Volunteer Rescue Squad, Salem, Virginia**

The Salem (VA) Rescue Squad recently celebrated 90 years of volunteer service to the city of Salem in western Virginia, making it the second-oldest all-volunteer rescue squad in the United States, according to life member

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Darlene Gee. The Salem Rescue Squad was organized in November 1932 and was called the Salem Life Saving Crew. Operating out of one station and staffing 29 active members, the ground BLS agency operates three fully equipped BLS ambulances, three response vehicles and two golf carts for large events. The squad responds to approximately 2000 calls annually, Gee says. Recruitment and retention at a small volunteer service is a constant reality, and due to aggressive efforts the squad has successfully doubled its staff over the last two years. Provider education is another strong focus. Salem Rescue Squad promotes CE by paying for its members to attend events such as Rescue College at Virginia Tech, the First Responder Virginia Convention, and EMS Symposium in Norfolk. Salem Rescue Squad partners with the local YMCA to promote community health education while further recruiting members. “We also work closely with our three major medical facilities to promote public education and to assure that there is a therapeutic relationship between us and these agencies,” says Gee. The squad provides standby coverage for entertainment, sporting events and other large events such as Olde Salem Days, Salem After 5, and the Salem Fair (one of America's largest free gate fairs), in addition to remaining ready to respond to any disaster in the state.

#### **Jamie Gray, BS, AAS, NRP, TP-C**

Jamie Gray is EMS director for the state of Alabama in addition to running medical calls as a volunteer and serving as a volunteer firefighter. He is a nationally registered paramedic and holds certification as a tactical paramedic. “Mr. Gray demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to his community,” according to his nominator Doug Roberts. Gray is a member of the National Disaster Medical System as a deployable disaster medic and a volunteer member of a Law Enforcement Special Operations Unit Evacuation Team, and serves on the board of directors and acts as current chair of the South Region of the National Association of State EMS Officials. He is a former director of the Alabama Opioid Assistance Project and vice chair of the Alabama Mutual Aid System Advisory Council, as well as serving on the Emergency Medical Services for Children Advisory Council, Opioid Crisis Advisory Council, and the Data Driven Prevention Initiative Advisory Council. Gray began in emergency services in 1998 and in addition to medical certifications, holds certifications as a firefighter, fire service instructor, and EMS instructor as well as HAZMAT operations. He has served as a dispatcher, rode an ambulance, and taught EMS classes full time at a community college. He still teaches CPR classes for health care students of all disciplines and for local churches and organizations. “Mr. Gray epitomizes servant leadership and inspires others to give back and pay it forward,” Roberts says.

#### **Sheldon Community Ambulance Team, Sheldon, Iowa**

Embodying the spirit of the Wellness and Resilience Award, Sheldon Community Ambulance Team (SCAT) runs 800 calls per year with a staff of 25 members and three EMS vehicles serving residents in and around the town of Sheldon in northwest Iowa. “SCAT recognizes the importance of prioritizing the wellness and resilience of its staff,” says Kevin Miller, emergency services education coordinator at Northwest Iowa Community College. “They have implemented proactive programs to support the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of their personnel.” SCAT offers wellness initiatives such as fitness challenges, health screenings, and access to resources for stress management and mental health support. SCAT also provides access to health care benefits for its providers including regular medical checkups, counseling services, and employee assistance programs, and encourages its staff to prioritize self-care and take necessary steps to maintain their well-being. “By promoting a healthy work-life balance and providing the necessary resources, SCAT ensures that its personnel are supported in maintaining good physical and mental health,” says Miller. Understanding the importance of addressing the emotional impact that critical incidents can have on their staff, Sheldon Community Ambulance Team has implemented standard operating procedures (SOPs) that prioritize peer or professional debriefing sessions following critical incidents. Despite its small size, SCAT empowers its employees to identify and participate in solutions to agency challenges. The service’s commitment to wellness and resilience makes them a deserving candidate for the Wellness and Resilience Award, concludes Miller.

#### **Sachse Fire-Rescue, Sachse, Texas**

Under the Leadership of Chief Marty Wade, citizens of Sachse, Texas—a northeast suburb of Dallas—are served by a 39-person team of professionals operating out of two stations with an annual call volume of 3,200. “For a fire-based EMS service we provide a very elevated level of care,” according to Lee Richardson, Deputy Chief of Operations for Sachse Fire-Rescue. The department operates three Mobile Intensive Care Units and is in the

process of implementing point of care lab tests utilizing ePOC blood analysis system. In 2020, Sachse Fire-Rescue partnered with Justin Northeim, DO, as medical director. All paramedics were brought up to a standard baseline of knowledge including required certifications in BLS, ACLS, PEPP, AMLS, PHTLS, TECC, geriatric EMS, EMS safety, and neonatal resuscitation. The department is developing an EMS-specific career path and an MIH-CP program with telehealth component. “These opportunities elevate our service [and] level of care, and offer opportunities for employee engagement.” Fire Chief Marty Wade states, “It’s all about culture. Under SFR’s leadership, the City of Sachse is designated as a Heart Safe Community through the Cardiac Committee of the North Central Texas Trauma Regional Advisory Council (NCTTRAC); several SFR members sit on various NCTTRAC and regional hospital systems committees. SFR further provides community outreach and education to businesses and groups within the city such as CPR/AED, Stop the Bleed and proper use of fire extinguishers. A robust CE program is directly tied to the department’s continuous quality improvement (CQI) initiative. SFR leverages real-time and cumulative data via the BEST system to evaluate how they measure up to other services and to identify improvement strategies.

### [View nomination criteria](#)

**About NAEMT** - Formed in 1975 and more than 90,000 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.

**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 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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