

M.A.B.A.S. Division 20

Honor Guard

Firefighter Kelly Ann Johnson

2011 Annual Report

M.A.B.A.S. Division 20 Honor Guard Team

The MABAS Division Twenty Honor Guard was formed in April 2004 by Lt. Doug Halverson. The premise for establishing the Honor Guard was to ensure that all members of MABAS Twenty departments were afforded Honors at their funeral regardless of membership in union. Just two weeks after the first meeting, and before a training program was even established, MABAS Twenty suffered a Line of Duty Death. Lt. Jeff Bergstrom of the Stone Park Fire Department was killed in a vehicle crash while responding to a structure fire in a neighboring town. With only 3 members of the newly formed honor guard having prior experience, the Honor Guard trained almost non-stop for 72 hours through the night and rain in order to perform the funeral for Lt. Bergstrom in a manner that rendered honor to his service to the division.

The Honor Guard is formed from representatives from each of the 19 towns that comprise MABAS Division Twenty. The experience of the Bergstrom funeral taught the Honor Guard that it necessary to maintain a high level of training at all times in order to remain prepared in the event they will be called upon to perform a funeral for one of their own. As a way of maintaining the highest level of skill required, the Honor Guard began participating in Honor Guard competitions. These competitions require the unit to practice and execute their duties at a level above and beyond that required during a line of duty death.

During the practicing for the competitions, the Honor Guard drill team was formed. The drill team receives extra training and equipment that allow them to perform at a level in the best tradition of military and civilian honor guards throughout history. In 2008 the Drill Team competed in the National Fire Department Honor Guard competition held in Indianapolis during FDIC, an international conference for the fire service. Placing fourth overall after several controversial calls by the judges, the Drill Team re-focused its efforts and returned to win 2nd place in 2009. Not satisfied with 2nd place



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M.A.B.A.S. Division 20 Honor Guard



M.A.B.A.S. Division 20 Honor Guard Team receives first place in the 2010 National Fire Department Honor Guard Competition in Indianapolis at the FDIC International Conference.



Lieutenant Jonathan Hoadley and Firefighter Kelly Ann Johnson are members of the M.A.B.A.S. Division 20 Honor Guard Team.

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In 2012, MABAS Division 20 Honor Guard has the distinguish privilege of collaborating with the National Fire Department Honor Guard competition, showcasing the very finest display of discipline and precision of fire and EMS Honor Guard units, throughout the United States to be held in Indianapolis. This year the competition features a newly designed course and scoring system and will be judged by the instructors of the National Honor Guard Academy.

In addition to performing at competitions, the Honor Guard has performed Honor Guard duties at dozens of wakes and funerals throughout the division, 9-1-1 memorial services, parades, and fundraisers. The unit has also been deployed to aid other fire departments around the State by performing funeral honors for their line of duty deaths, as well.

In addition to the above duties, Captain Glen Busch, Honor Guard Commander, is the founder and lead instructor for the Regional Honor Guard Academy in Elmhurst, Illinois. This academy teaches Fire, EMS and Police Departments the techniques and standards of the Honor Guard to units from around the country and Canada. Lt Doug Halverson and Lt. Josh Hintz have recently begun to instruct at the academy as well making the MABAS Twenty Honor Guard the largest participating academy in the nation.

2012 promises continued success for the MABAS Division Twenty Honor Guard. The Honor Guard will continue to serve their fellow brother and sister firefighters. We will provide are services to the surrounding community and to those places where we are called upon.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly

Kelly Ann Johnson
Firefighter/Paramedic