

07-14-2016 Jason Austin - Medic- Off Duty Dive Training - Lake

Washington County EMS Paramedic Dies In Off-Duty Scuba Training Dive

https://www.johnsoncitypress.com/washington-county-ems-paramedic-dies-in-off-duty-scuba-training-dive/article_2e2b0ce1-d4dc-53b0-83b9-52a9ddcf582a.html

Jul 14, 2016 Updated Jul 5, 2020 [Becky Campbell](#)

A veteran Washington County/Johnson City EMS paramedic died Thursday while on non-work-related scuba dive training at an area lake.

Sgt. Jason Austin, 36, of Limestone, was working on his deep dive certification at South Holston Lake Thursday afternoon when the accident happened, according to the Sullivan County Sheriff's Office. Capt. Andy Seabolt said Austin was transported to Bristol Regional Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead.

EMS Executive Director Dan Wheeley said the agency was mourning and in shock from Austin's sudden death. Austin was part of the EMS management team and served as a field training officer for new employees.

"He'd done really well and moved up the ranks pretty quickly," Wheeley said. Austin began his EMS career in May 2012, served with the Limestone Volunteer Fire Department and worked part-time on a rescue truck at Fall Branch Volunteer Fire Department. His EMS shift was the group on duty Friday, just hours after learning their direct superior had died.

"They're doing OK," Wheeley said. "Their captain and lieutenant called each one and told them what was going on. They're going to bury this today and do their job and do what they need to. They have a job to do today in taking care of people. With their days off, that's where it's going to hit everybody."



Jason Austin

On social media, friends and co-workers poured out their hearts and emotions about Austin's death and offered love and support to his wife, daughter and other family.

Wheeley said two chaplains are available for any employee who needs to talk to someone.

Austin, who had been diving for about two years, was also on the EMS dive team, Wheeley said. That team conducts rescue dives as well as searches for drowning victims and investigative searches for law enforcement.

Sullivan County Sheriff's investigators were handling the accident investigation.

A scuba death investigation includes reviewing the diver's log book — details of all dives are supposed to be logged and signed off on by the instructor — as well as inspecting the equipment Austin used and getting details of the actual underwater incident from those involved in the dive.

South Holston is the preferred lake for scuba training because Watauga Lake is very cold and Boone Lake is murky with limited visibility.

Victim identified in Sullivan County drowning accident

<https://wcyb.com/features/weekend-drive/victim-identified-in-sullivan-county-drowning-accident>

Friday, July 15th 2016 by Olivia Bailey



SULLIVAN COUNTY, Tenn. - We're learning more about the victim that died in a diving accident on South Holston Lake Thursday afternoon. A Limestone, Tennessee man is dead, those who worked with him say 36-year-old Jason Austin was a well respected and enthusiastic first responder.

"He's always been a public servant and involved in helping people his whole life," Washington County/Johnson City EMS Chief/Executive Director Dan Wheeley said.

The diving incident occurred around the dam area on South Holston. "A couple of the other divers who were there with the gentlemen were able to put him on a boat

and bring him to Lakeview Dock," Sullivan County Sheriff's Department Captain Andy Seabolt said.

Sullivan County investigators continue to look into the cause of Austin's death.

Seabolt said, "We will review the equipment and inspect that as well." Austin served as a sergeant for Washington County/Johnson City EMS, as well as a firefighter for the Limestone Volunteer Fire Department.

"Was very passionate about advancing paramedicine and making sure what we did is on the cutting edge of our field," Wheeley said.

Two years ago, Austin joined the EMS dive team. "It's something he really was a little anxious about when he first got started with it, but he fell in love with it and has been working a lot to advance his dive certifications," Wheeley said.

His co-workers describe him as a family man, even within the department. Wheeley said, "One of our other employees referred to him yesterday as the brother he never had because they spent all their time off work together." Sullivan County investigators have not determined a cause of death.

They have ordered an autopsy.

Ems Sergeant Dies After Diving Accident At South Holston Lake

https://heraldcourier.com/news/ems-sergeant-dies-after-diving-accident-at-south-holston-lake/article_55b5d09b-a6d3-5bee-8ef7-a55507ef0747.html

Jul 15, 2016 Updated Apr 18, 2019 Robert Sorrell | Bristol Herald Courier

BRISTOL, Tenn. — Co-workers described Jason Austin, who died Thursday after a diving accident at South Holston Lake, as a dedicated, friendly paramedic.

Austin, a sergeant for the Washington County-Johnson City Emergency Medical Services, was training for recreational diving near South Holston Dam Thursday afternoon. The cause of his death was not known Friday.

Sullivan County Sheriff's Office Capt. Andy Seabolt said the agency received a call about a possible diving accident



Jason Lynn Austin

at 3:21 p.m. Austin, 36, of Limestone, Tennessee, was taken by boat to Lake View Dock.

He was then transported by Sullivan County EMS to Bristol Regional Medical Center, where he died Thursday evening.

"Mr. Austin was working on a diving certification when the incident occurred," Seabolt said.

An instructor was with Austin and provided care for him, Seabolt added.

Austin was on the Washington County-Johnson City EMS dive team, but was working on recreational diving, according to EMS Executive Director Dan Wheeley.

"He was a member of our dive team," Wheeley said. "He was working on his deep dive certification, which is just another step."

The dive team typically trains at South Holston, the Gray Quarry, Boone Lake, the Nolichucky River and pools.

"South Holston is a much clearer lake than Boone Lake," Wheeley said. "The visibility is much better. It's a safer place to dive, whether you're doing training or diving recreationally."

The deepwater area near the dam is a popular spot for area divers because of the limited visibility at Boone and cold waters at Watauga Lake.

Austin, who started working for the agency in 2012, also served with the Limestone and Fall Branch volunteer fire departments.

"He was a dedicated paramedic," Wheeley said. "He was dedicated to not just EMS, but dedicated to the field. He was very involved in protocol development and trying to advance EMS."

Austin was well-liked, Wheeley added.

"He never had anything but kind words about people," Wheeley said. "He was an overall nice guy."

The EMS crew was in mourning Friday.

"It leaves a void in not just the company but in the individuals," Wheeley said.

"Some employees were obviously closer to him than others. We all feel the loss. I think a lot of people are still trying to process that. I don't think it's really set in for a lot of us."

The shift that Austin typically works with was working Friday, which Wheeley said was helpful for those employees.

"We all deal with tragedies every day," he said. "Thankfully, it's not usually close to home as this is. The work allows them to focus on something else now."

The Sullivan County Criminal Investigations Division is investigating.

"At this time, we don't exactly know how he was injured," Seabolt said.

During the investigation, the investigator will evaluate the diving equipment that Austin was using, such as the breathing apparatus.

The incident is the second death at South Holston Lake this summer. An East Tennessee State University student, Austin Oga, drowned in June near the U.S. Highway 421 boat ramp, while swimming with friends.

Funeral arrangements have not yet been set. Austin leaves behind a wife, a Greene County EMS paramedic, and a 2-year-old daughter.

Tenn. Paramedic Dies During Off-Duty Dive Training

<https://www.emsworld.com/news/12233927/tenn-paramedic-dies-during-off-duty-dive-training>

07/19/2016 Becky Campbell Johnson City Press

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Chilhowie Man Third Drowning Victim This Season At South Holston

https://heraldcourier.com/news/local/chilhowie-man-third-drowning-victim-this-season-at-south-holston/article_5730d4ca-d467-52e6-b5f7-beb362d912e5.html

Aug 16, 2016 Updated Apr 18, 2019 Robert Sorrell | Bristol Herald Courier

BRISTOL, Tenn.—A Chilhowie, Virginia man became the third person to die at South Holston Lake this summer.

On Saturday, Bobby Jackson, 43, and his wife, who was not identified, were swimming with some friends at the Jacobs Creek Campground when she turned and saw him face down in the water, according to Sullivan County Sheriff's Office spokeswoman Kristen Quon.

An unidentified witness jumped into the water and pulled Jackson to the shore, where she and several others administered CPR, she said. An EMS crew and the Sheriff's Office were called to the scene, but were unable to revive Jackson. Quon said officers do not believe he was wearing a lifejacket and are unsure why he began to struggle.

The drowning remains under investigation.

It was the second drowning death on South Holston this year. In June, Austin Oga, 19, died in a drowning incident near the U.S. Highway 421 boat ramp. Friends told the Sheriff's Office that the East Tennessee State University student had been swimming in water about 25-30 feet deep. A friend tried to reach him, but wasn't able to do so.

Jason Austin, 36, died in a diving accident at the lake on July 14. Austin, a sergeant for the Washington County-Johnson City Emergency Medical Services, was training for recreational diving near South Holston Dam, EMS Executive Director Dan Wheeley said.

Quon said Tuesday the Sheriff's Office is still waiting for the autopsy results in Austin's death.

Tenn. Paramedic Dies During Scuba Dive Training

<https://www.ems1.com/fatal-incidents/articles/tenn-paramedic-dies-during-scuba-dive-training-3muqGgo56aXY2QfQ/>

Jul 18, 2016

Sgt. Jason Austin died Thursday while working on his deep dive certification.

SOUTH HOLSTON LAKE, Tenn. — A paramedic died Thursday during a non-work-related scuba dive training incident.

Sgt. Jason Austin, 36, was transported to the hospital after the accident occurred, where he was pronounced dead.

Austin worked for the Washington County/Johnson City EMS agency and began his EMS career in 2012.

He worked for the Limestone Volunteer Fire Department and worked part-time for the Fall Branch Volunteer Fire Department.

EMS Executive Director Dan Wheeley said the news of Austin's death came as a shock. "He'd done really well and moved up the ranks pretty quickly," Wheeley told [Johnson City Press](#).

Austin's coworkers were notified shortly after his death. "They're doing OK. Their captain and lieutenant called each one and told them what was going on," Wheeley said. "They have a job to do today in taking care of people. With their days off, that's where it's going to hit everybody."

Austin leaves behind a wife and daughter.



Sgt. Jason Austin.
(Photo Courtesy the Johnson City Press)

Officials are investigating the incident, and will review the scuba diver's book and inspect the equipment Austin used.

Jason Lynn Austin

http://www.greenevillesun.com/obituaries/jason-lynn-austin/article_0996d3ea-c371-5b10-b16faa1e144be16f.html

Wednesday, July 20, 2016

Obituaries

Died: July 14, 2016

Jason Lynn Austin, 36, of Limestone, passed away Thursday at Bristol Regional Medical Center.

He was a paramedic for Washington County Johnson City EMS and he was a member of the Limestone Volunteer Fire Department.

Jason was a member of the Dive Team and Search and Rescue.

He was of the Baptist faith and a Mason of the Arcana Lodge.

He was a loving father and husband. Survivors include his wife: Jenna Austin; a daughter: McKenna Austin; his father: Al Austin of Limestone; a sister and brother-in-law: Angie and Terry Beets of Greeneville; his mother-in-law and father-in-law: Kathy and James Stephens of Mosheim; a brother-in-law: Cole Stephens of Mosheim; a nephew: Austin Beets; his grandmother: Viva Kate Malone of Chuckey; uncles and aunts: Jerry and Jill Malone of Afton, Larry and Louise Austin of Gloucester Point, Va., Dr. Maynard and DaVena Austin of Greeneville, and Mark and DiAnn Dowell of Deltona, Fla.; and many special friends.

He was preceded in death by his mother: Brenda Austin; and his grandparents: Lonnie and Grace Austin and Sam Malone.

The family will receive friends from 2-6 p.m. Thursday at Kiser-Rose Hill Funeral Home with a memorial service following at 6 p.m. Thursday in the chapel. Chaplain Danny Ricker will officiate along with the honor guard from the Johnson City Washington County EMS and Limestone Fire Department.

There will be a gathering of family and friends at Limestone Free Will Baptist Church after the service. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to First Tennessee Bank for his daughter, McKenna.

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.kiserrosehillfuneralhome.com

Fundraiser Saturday For Local Paramedic's Daughter Following His Death

<https://www.wjhl.com/news/fundraiser-saturday-for-local-paramedics-daughter-following-his-death/>

Oct 7, 2016 / 08:57 PM EDT / Updated: Oct 7, 2016 / 08:57 PM EDT

JOHNSON CITY, TN (WJHL)- This summer, the EMS community in our region lost one of its own. 36-year-old Sgt. Jason Austin died while working on his diving certification, leaving behind a wife and two-year-old daughter.

Now, Austin's EMS brothers and sisters are honoring him and working to provide for his little girl.

"He was just a guy that'd give you the shirt off of his back," Tim Mize with Washington County/ Johnson City EMS said.

Austin dedicated his career to serving and saving the lives of others as a paramedic.

"He was a really good guy, liked to joke a lot, he was kind of rough when he needed to be but he was very honest and straightforward," Mize said.

This summer, Austin went to South Holston Lake to get his deep water diver certificate, but the unexpected happened. He drowned leaving behind a wife, daughter, and friends.

"It's never easy losing a friend and unfortunately we lost several over the last few years but in the public safety community here in this local area but it really hits close to home when he's a friend and you still have to go to work the next morning," Mize said.

Now his friends at EMS are stepping up to be there for his wife and young daughter.

"He was always there for you no matter what time of day," Mize said.

Friends and coworkers are hosting a benefit this weekend that will go towards a trust fund for his daughter McKenna, in honor of her beloved dad.

"I think it's important for us as a community and public safety and EMS especially for us to really help out our own people," Mize said.

Event Info:

The Jason Austin Memorial Ride and Car Show is Saturday at Biker Wear on the Bristol Highway in Johnson City.

Ride registration is at 9:30, the car and bike show starts at noon.

The event will also include live music, games for the kids and a silent auction and raffle. *Copyright 2016 WJHL. All Rights Reserved.*