

08-04-2011 Cobb Island MD – Christopher Staley – Vol FF Attempted River Rescue

## Man, firefighter drown at Wicomico Shores pier in Mechanicsville

<http://wjla.com/news/local/christopher-lee-kelly-michael-staley-drown-in-waters-at-wicomico-shores-pier-in-mechanicsville-64823>

August 8th 2011



Family and friends will bid farewell to a volunteer firefighter who drowned while trying to rescue another man at the Wicomico Shores pier in Mechanicsville Saturday.

Funeral services for 22-year-old Christopher Staley will be held at 11 a.m. Friday at the Christ Episcopal Church, located at 13050 Rock Point Road in Wayside, Md.

Authorities say Staley and a group of friends were gathered at the Wicomico Shores pier Saturday evening. His friend, 24-year-old Christopher "CJ" Kelly dove into the water and began struggling to swim back.

Several people, including Staley, jumped in to rescue him. Staley managed to reach his friend, but the rough water kept sweeping them under.

"He had his hands on CJ trying to pull him back, but the current, they went under and popped back up," says a friend.

Both Staley and Kelly drowned.

Both men were recovered later that night near the pier. Their bodies have been transported to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Baltimore for an examination.

Chris Staley, of Newburg, a firefighter with the Cobb Island Volunteer Fire Dept.

Staley, of Newburg, had been a member of the Cobb Island Fire Department for six years, following in his father's footsteps.



“He basically lived and breathed the fire department he would do anything, he had a heart of gold,” said Jimmy Jackson.

Authorities say rough water from the storms may have been a factor.

Family and friends will be holding a candlelight vigil at the pier Thursday at 9 p.m.

The Charles County Dive Team, Cobb Island Volunteer Fire Department, Seventh District Volunteer Fire Department, Mechanicsville Volunteer Fire Department, Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Coast Guard, Mechanicsville Volunteer Rescue Squad, and the Newburg Volunteer Rescue Squad assisted with the recovery efforts.

Two others drowned in Maryland over the weekend as well.

On Saturday, an unidentified person fell off a pontoon boat and drowned in Assawoman Bay near Ocean City.

Sunday afternoon, Anne Arundel County police say a 57-year-old man drowned in Edgewater. Police say Judson Bell swam into Whitemarsh Creek to retrieve a piece of trash and disappeared under water. Witnesses brought Bell to shore, but he died at a hospital.

## Two Young Men Drown Near Wicomico Shores

<http://somd.com/news/headlines/2011/14189.php>

August 08, 2011

LEONARDTOWN, Md. (August 8, 2011)—A man and his would-be rescuer both drowned Saturday evening at the Wicomico Shores Public Landing in Mechanicsville.

Police investigators determined that at approximately 6:15 p.m., Christopher Lee Kelly, 24, of Hughesville, jumped into the water from a pier and struggled to swim back to the pier. Several citizens including Christopher Michael Staley, 22, of Newburg, entered the water in an attempt to rescue Kelly. Both Kelly and Staley drowned.



**Christopher Stanley**

Search and recovery was conducted by members of the Charles County Dive Team, Cobb Island Volunteer Fire Department, Seventh District Volunteer Fire Department, Mechanicsville Volunteer Fire Department, Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Coast Guard, Mechanicsville Volunteer Rescue Squad, and the Newburg Volunteer Rescue Squad. The victims were recovered later that night near the pier.

The victims were transported to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Baltimore for an examination.

Detectives from the St. Mary's County Bureau of Criminal Investigations (BCI) are conducting the investigation.

### **UPDATE: Two People Drown Near Wicomico Shores Pier**

<http://www.thebaynet.com/articles/0811/updatetwo-people-drown-near-wicomico-shores-pier.html>

08/08/2011

On August 6, 2011, at 6:33 P.M., emergency crews from Mechanicsville VFD Co. 2, Mechanicsville VRS Co. 29, St. Mary's ALS, Newburg VRSFD EMS Co. 14, and Dentsville EMS Co. 15 as well as state and county law enforcement were alerted for the possible drowning at the Wicomico Shores pier in Mechanicsville on the Potomac River. As information continued to come in, it was reported that a 21 year old and 23 year old were in the water and had not surfaced for at least two minutes prior to the 911 call. These reports turned it into an open water rescue causing rescue boats from Mechanicsville VFD Co. 2, Seventh District VFD Co. 5, Second District VFD Co. 6, Cobb Island VFD Co. 6, Charles County Dive Rescue Co. 13, Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Crews arrived on scene and were informed that one of the victims had fallen off the pier and the other followed to assist the first when neither of them came back to the surface. Crews immediately began searching the water in the area with Chief 2A holding the command. As of 11:00 P.M. on August 6, rescue crews were still canvassing the area, searching for the two young victims.

Responding Units: Squad 2, Utility 2, Jeep 22, Raft 22, MSU 22, Chief 2A, Boat 5, Boat 6, Charles Boat 6, Medic 291, Ambulance 299, Ambulance 296, Charles Ambulance 149, Charles Ambulance 158, as well as units from The Charles County Dive Rescue Team, Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Both bodies have been recovered. Names will be released soon.

#### **UPDATE:**

##### **POLICE REPORT**

On August 6, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. officers responded to the Wicomico Shores Public Landing in Mechanicsville, Maryland for the report of two (2) male subjects drowning.

Detectives from the St. Mary's County Bureau of Criminal Investigations responded to conduct an investigation. Preliminary investigation indicates at approximately 6:15 p.m. hours, Christopher Lee Kelly, 24 of Hughesville, Maryland jumped into the water from a pier and struggled to swim back to the pier. Several citizens including Christopher Michael Staley, 22, of Newburg, Maryland entered the water in an attempt to rescue Kelly. Both Kelly and Staley drowned.

**Search and recovery was** conducted by members of the Charles County Dive Team, Cobb

### **Md. Firefighter Drowns During Rescue Attempt**

[HTTP://WWW.FIREHOUSE.COM/NEWS/10460181/MD-FIREFIGHTER-DROWNS-DURING-RESCUE-ATTEMPT](http://www.firehouse.com/news/10460181/md-firefighter-drowns-during-rescue-attempt)

AUG 9, 2011 BY MANNY FANTIS

A well known volunteer firefighter from Cobb Island was among two men who drowned Saturday in the Wicomico River, officials said in a news release.

"Christopher Lee Kelly, 24 of Hughesville, Maryland jumped into the water from a pier and struggled to swim back to the pier. Several citizens including volunteer firefighter Christopher Michael Staley, 22, of Cobb Island, Maryland entered the water in an attempt to rescue Kelly.

Both Kelly and Staley drowned," St. Mary's County police said.

The men were in the water near the pier at Wicomico Shores on the river, at around 6:15 p.m., officials said.

Monday, the Cobb Island volunteer fire company was draped in black. Staley is considered a hero for attempting to save the other man. Former Chief Jimmy Jackson says the department considers it a death in the line of duty. Staley was Cobb Island's most active young volunteer, credited with responding on more rescue calls than any other member in 2010.

Everyone in Cobb Island is in shock, not only because Staley was so well known, but because the drowning comes only 5 months after his older brother was killed on the job cutting trees.

Both men were landscape workers in addition to being members of the volunteer fire company.