This page was exported from - Shelburne Free Press
Export date: Fri Oct 30 5:07:36 2026 / +0000 GMT

Dufferin County paramedic receives Governor General?s Exemplary Service Medal

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A member of the Dufferin County Paramedic Service (DCPS) recently received Canada's highest honour for the profession, recognizing his more than two decades of dedicated service.

The Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs (OAPC) recognized 130 paramedics with the Governor General's Emergency Medical Services Exemplary Service Medal during a ceremony on Sept. 25. Among those recognized was John McMurray, who has been a paramedic for 21 years.

?The Exemplary Service Medal is awarded to paramedics who have dedicated at least 20 years to delivering the highest standard of care. Throughout his tenure, John has not only embodied the qualities this medal represents, but he has also served his country with distinction. It is truly fitting that John is being honored for the care and compassion he has consistently shown to his community,? said Dufferin County Paramedic Service Chief Gary Staples, who nominated McMurray for the award.

McMurray is a second-generation paramedic, following in the footsteps of his father. While he always had aspirations of working in emergency services, he first became interested in firefighting, but found his true calling as a paramedic.

McMurray's first day on the job coincided with his 30th birthday, and since then, he's been working in paramedicine, in various capacities.

However, his service goes beyond serving individual communities. He was a reservist for the medical unit in Hamilton, with a deployment in Afghanistan, and assisted in domestic operations from 2008 to 2018.

At age 34, he enlisted in the Canadian Armed Forces and was deployed at age 36, before being released eight years later as a Master Corporal (MCpl).

McMurray currently works as a community paramedic, a role introduced by the DCPS around eight years ago.

Community paramedics develop relationships and provide care in people's homes. They provide wellness checks, safe home assessments, blood work, urine tests, referrals to community partners, and assistance in system navigation.

The purpose of the Community Paramedic Program is to help manage increasing demands for paramedic services while shifting some of the workload off emergency departments, clinics, and hospitals.

?It's not the lights and siren side of things that everybody sees ? up and down the streets all the time,? said McMurray. ?We have a different kind of perspective on things. We're able to spend extra time and develop relationships with our clientele.?

When he found out he was to receive the Governor General's award, he was surprised, but very appreciative of the recognition.

McMurray said if there's anyone in the community interested in a career in paramedicine, he'd encourage them to pursue it.

?It can be a very rewarding job, a very rewarding career path,? he said. ?Much like any other career, it's what you make of it.?

OAPC President, Chief Greg Sage, praised the 130 paramedics who received the Governor General's Emergency Medical Services

Exemplary Service Medal this year.

?Paramedics in Ontario demonstrate every day the caring and compassion they have for their communities. It's an honour to recognize these exemplary members on behalf of Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon, the Governor General of Canada,? said Chief Sage. ?The OAPC is privileged to present the medal to so many dedicated paramedics in Ontario.?

The service medal was created in 1994, and since then, there have been roughly 3,710 Ontario recipients. The award was created by the late Governor General Romeo LeBlanc as a component of the Canadian Honours System.

Since the award's inception, there have been approximately 3,710 Ontario recipients of the medal and bars.