

Hanover County Sheriff's Office nearly sweeps Fifth Annual LawFit Trooper Challenge competition that took place October 12-14, 2006.

The four members of the Sheriff's Office who participated in the LawFit Trooper Challenge--Investigators Matthew McGrain, Investigator Keith E. Parknow, Deputy Craig A. Spruill, and Frank C. Dressler--earned 1st place in the 4-man team competition, 1st place in the 20-29 age group, 1st place in the 30-39 age group, 2nd and 4th places in the overall individual competition, and 3rd in the 2-man team competition. Participants represented law enforcement agencies and military units from various states including Virginia, Maryland, South Carolina, North Carolina, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Kansas. Locally, Richmond Police and Virginia State Police participated.

The Sheriff's Office has integrated officer fitness at every level of the agency. On an annual basis each officer is required to perform an occupational simulation course to demonstrate his/her fitness for duty. "This ensures our citizens and each officer that everyone has the ability to perform life saving physical activity during the course of their tour of duty," said Colonel V. Stuart Cook. The Sheriff's Office is currently the only agency in Virginia that mandates this level of performance as a prerequisite to employment. "The entire agency is proud of the efforts of these officers and the emphasis they put on an essential, but often ignored, element of law enforcement," said Colonel Cook.

The Trooper Challenge was developed in the aftermath of the 9-11-01 terrorist attacks and with the mandate of Homeland Security in the United States. The health and fitness of law enforcement personnel is more important than ever. Officers are being called upon to perform increasingly diverse duties in support of military and national security personnel. A high level of fitness can be the key to both officer and citizen survival. With this in mind the National Center for Public Safety Fitness has established the LawFit Trooper Challenge to recognize those state troopers and highway patrol officers who have proven that they are fit to serve. The National Center for Public Safety Fitness invites all State Police and Highway Patrol agencies to send their fittest officers to compete in the Fifth Annual LawFit Trooper Challenge in October 2006 at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. This event includes four-person teams, pairs, and individual competitions.



Pictured are Deputy Craig Spruill (left) and Deputy Frank C. Dressler. Investigators McGrain and Parknow are not pictured because of their current assignment.

The Trooper Challenge consists of a series of six fitness and job-related competitive events:

1. One repetition maximum bench press (1RM) - based on percentage of body weight lifted
2. One-minute timed sit-up test
3. Sit and reach flexibility test
4. Pull-ups
5. 200 yard agility course
6. 1.5 mile run

These tests have been found to be good predictors of an officer's fitness for duty. Scores for the events are age and gender adjusted to provide a fair and equitable competition for all participants.

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