

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
9 A.M. EST, November 15, 2005

BROUGHTON VFD GRADUATES BITS CLASS 2005-1

SOUTH PARK, PA, NOVEMBER 15, 2005: The Broughton Volunteer Fire Department in South Park Township, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, graduated Class 2005-1 from the Broughton Intradepartmental Training System (BITS) on Friday, November 11, 2005. The graduation ceremony was held at Broughton Hall with members of the graduate's families, members of the department and officials of South Park Township in attendance. The graduates of Class 2005-1 were: Ralph "RJ" Balash, Corey Brunetti, Jordan Kelly, Scott Sopp and Joe Gazzam.

The BITS program, developed by BITS Supervisor/Captain Dan Tschippert in the early 1990's, provides initial orientation into the fire department and instruction on the very basic fire fighting functions through a structured, modular, 120-day course. Topics such as the history of Broughton VFD, Standard Operating Guidelines, apparatus and equipment, ropes and knots,

and many other basic fire fighting skills and knowledge are covered. Above all, the BITS program is tailored to teach safety, teamwork and respect of the fire service, Broughton and each other. The BITS program is the foundation of the graduate's next step in their formal training: attendance in a state sanctioned Fundamentals of Firefighting, an 88 hour course covering many of these topics in much greater detail.

Lead BITS Instructor Keith Sylvester was assisted by BITS Instructor Tony Lauer. They were also helped in the later stages of the class by Firefighter Bob Cagna and Firefighter Mike Harris during the evaluation of the candidate's skill levels.

Training Officer/First Assistant Chief Pat Pace, a State Certified Fire Instructor, commented on the importance of training, safety and the BITS program.

Fire Chief Dennis M. McDonough related many comments he has received over the years from other fire departments and Instructors on how well trained, how well disciplined and how respectful in training classes and in actual fire incidents Broughton personnel are. Additionally, Chief McDonough presented the evolution of the BITS program over the years from its beginnings in the early 1990's into what it is today, "...a formal curriculum devoted to the orientation of new members into Broughton Volunteer Fire Department."

"Being a member of Broughton does not come easy with two bingos each week and training three nights per month," said Chief McDonough, "but it does come with rewards. These rewards are often intangible, and often help our members advance themselves in their careers. We have had several members move on to career fire fighter positions in several departments, become police officers, develop careers in the United States Air Force, become police chiefs, and Emergency Medical Technicians. I always remind our members, whom I stay in touch with, that they are Broughton trained, something no one can take away from you no matter where you go or what you do."

Before BITS Supervisor/Captain Dan Tschippert presented the graduates with a Certificate of Completion, a specially designed t-shirt specific to BITS Class 2005-1, an LED flashlight and a Res-Q-Wrench, the class project was presented. This project was designed to promote team work among the members of this class and to reinforce the inherent dangers of fire fighting.

The project assigned was to research the 1994 St. Valentine's Day, Bricelyn Street fire in the City of Pittsburgh in which three members of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire lost their lives.

After the formal closing of BITS Class 2005-1 by Chief McDonough, those in attendance were treated to snacks and soft drinks.

Broughton Volunteer Fire Department is located in South Park Township in Southern Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. The department has been in existence since 1926 and is proud to boast of forty-seven ACTIVE members and a total membership of nearly 100. The Department holds bingo every Monday and Thursday night and conducts training the second, third and fourth Tuesday of each month. The first Tuesday is reserved for a monthly Board of Directors and General Membership meeting.

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