

Remembering



Richard Michael Sheltra

***Pineville-Morrow Volunteer Fire
Department and Rescue –
North Carolina
Volunteer Firefighter***

April 30, 2016

Age: 20



*R*ichard was born June 2, 1995, to Michael and Linay Sheltra. Raised in Charlotte, North Carolina, Richard was born to be a firefighter. His father is a former chief of the Carmel Volunteer Fire Department, and his mother rolled on calls until the early stages of her pregnancy with Richard. Nicknamed “BamBam” for his sometimes less than graceful mannerisms, Richard made a habit of showing up to his sister’s pretend tea parties in full junior firefighter gear as a young boy.

He graduated from South Mecklenburg High School, where he played football and lacrosse and was active in Key Club and Young Life. Immediately after high school, he turned all of his focus and energy toward becoming a fulltime firefighter. He took classes in fire science at Central Piedmont Community College and joined the Pineville Volunteer Fire Department. Richard followed the legacy of both mother and father who are retired volunteers of Carolina and Carmel Fire Departments. A diligent student and faithful volunteer, Richard earned A’s in classes toward his degree and accumulated firehouse accolades, including Most Training Hours and Rookie of the Year. Richard was in his fourth year as a volunteer firefighter and in the final stage of the application process for the Charlotte Fire Department.

The consummate southern gentleman, Richard loved his country, his boots, chocolate chip cookies, country music, and Alabama football. He loved the outdoors and working out. He had a strong, quiet Christian faith that showed itself in his desire to serve his community and his caring for others. When asked why he wanted to be a firefighter, Richard wrote that he wanted to be there for people who may be experiencing “the worst day of their lives.”

On the day of his death, April 30, 2016, Richard spent the day with his mother. After joining her in a charity walk and later having dinner with her, he reported to the station as there were storms headed into the region. During the storms, the department was dispatched to a working fire in a strip mall. He was one of the members on the initial suppression line, became disoriented, and died as result of asphyxiation. His brief 20-year stint on earth made a difference in many lives. He is deeply missed by his family, friends, and fellow firefighters.

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. John 15:13