

# The EMS Experience

Saluting those with 20 years or more in EMS

Andy Foote, EMT-P



Andy Foote, shown above with Michelle Oliver, EMT-I (left), and Michelle Bryan-Slovik, EMT-P (right), has spent his entire 27-year career with City of Beaumont EMS.

## What was your first day on the job in EMS?

In 1982, I was an EMT-basic and rode for a day with Diamond Ambulance company out of Port Arthur, Texas. This ride was special because Port Arthur was my hometown. In 1984, I became a paramedic and began my tenure with City of Beaumont EMS. I worked there part-time until 1989, and I went full time right after I retired from Mobil Oil.

## Which services have you worked for over the years?

I worked only the one day with Diamond EMS, and the rest of my

career has been entirely with the city of Beaumont. I also do QA-QI for Priority One ambulance out of Silsbee, Texas.

## Why did you get into EMS?

I was a hospital corpsman in the U.S. Navy from 1963 to 1969. I was offered a job with Mobil Oil right after I was discharged, and the money was too good to turn down. I was in the Fire Department/Safety Department, and we started a rescue/first responder ambulance at the refinery. Mobil sent me to EMT-basic school and paramedic school, and I was hooked again. I really missed the medical field, so once I put my 20 years in with

Mobil, I took a \$50,000 pay cut and went to work for City of Beaumont EMS. I have not had one regret since.

## How has the field changed since you've been in it?

I was actually at the very beginning of the new paramedic field. Now every one knows about MAST trousers, Thomas half-rings, Philadelphia collars, and so on. But there were good ACLS courses and BTLs courses starting up around the late 1980s.

I think here in Beaumont, the real challenge has been keeping up with the call volume. There were 115,000 citizens in Beaumont in the early '80s, but a lot of those days we made only two or three calls and had only two ambulances. I can remember one day that we made no calls at all. My first year, we made less than 1,000 calls. Today, with enhanced 911, we still have 115,000 citizens (we swell to 300,000 people on Monday-Friday work days), but we make 18,000 calls a year with six trucks and two supervisor vehicles.

I have also been very lucky to have had great medical directors throughout the years who believed in treating the patients and making them well before we get them to the hospital. This has enabled me to use the best drugs and protocols for the entire time I have been here, and it continues today. Everyone who works here knows that they actually practice paramedicine every day.

## Is there a particular moment or call that stands out?

I would have to say there were two. We had an 18-wheeler that

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crossed the median of Interstate 10 and ran head-on into a Trailways bus. There were over 14 fatalities and multiple amputation-type injuries. It was my first real multi-trauma call. The second was in 1997—a food poisoning outbreak at a local hotel, with more than 250 patients at one time. We had just put phenegran on the ambulances that day. We filled the hospitals and worked a good MCI drill at the same time. I have had too many calls that have touched my heart over the years, and I thank God for all of them.

**What has been your favorite part of your career in EMS?**

Anyone who has spent any time in the EMS field, and has done it right, would have to say the many great people that they have come in contact with is the best part. I once made calls on children, and I now make calls on their children. I hope that I have made an impact, in some small way, on this field and this city. It has been a tremendous 27 years. I feel that City of Beaumont EMS has the reputation of being a top-notch service. I know that, more than anything, the employees, past and present, have been the greatest medics anyone could have worked with. They have meant the world to me. I know that they will continue to move forward and keep

up with the ever-changing field that is emergency medicine. The hardest thing for me in this career is having to leave it. As I retire this year, I look back on everything with a huge smile and a small tear in my eye.

*Have you or someone you know been in EMS for 20 years or more? Texas EMS Magazine wants to hear from you! We'd like to publish these profiles in the magazine and then upload them to a spot on our website that will be dedicated to a first-person history of EMS. For information, write Kelly Harrell at [kelly.harrell@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:kelly.harrell@dshs.state.tx.us). And don't forget—we need photos, too!*