KFD promotes 30 firefighters at special ceremony Wednesday

LĪHU’E – The Kaua’i Fire Department (KFD) held a special ceremony Wednesday morning at the Kaua’i War Memorial Convention Hall to promote 30 firefighters.

“It is my honor to congratulate all of these firefighters here today,” said Fire Chief Steven Goble. “All of you have so worked so hard and continue to serve our community with respect and integrity. But, with great honor comes great responsibility.”

Wednesday’s ceremony required attendees to show proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test before entering the Convention Hall.

“To our firefighters, our brave hearts, who protect us, you have allowed all of us to sleep easy at night,” said Mayor Derek S. K. Kawakami. “Whether it is a flood, hurricane, or pandemic, it is comforting to know that we have a team of people willing to put themselves in harm’s way to protect our community. I and indebted to these individuals and families who allow them to do what they do.”

After Assistant Chief Solomon Kanoho recited the Firefighters Prayer, friends, families, and colleagues proceeded to pin the firefighters.

FIRE CHIEF STEVEN GOBLE:

Fire Chief Steve Goble arrived here last year from Henderson, Nevada, where he served with the Fire Department for more than 25 years. Steve began his career as a firefighter in 1990 and worked his way through the ranks to become Chief of the Department in 2011.
He “retired” from the fire service in 2016 to work in the private sector as the Executive Director of Emergency Management/Security for the Venetian Resort in Las Vegas. Steve is excited for the opportunities he has found here and feels very fortunate to have the chance to work and live in such a beautiful place surrounded by warm and kind people.

Steve started his assignment as our new Fire Chief back in July 2020.

**DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF MICHAEL GIBSON:**

Mike was born and raised in Los Angeles and Orange Counties, Southern California. Mike grew up with a passion for serving as a firefighter, with his father serving for 37 years with the Los Angeles County Fire Dept. Mike is married to his amazing and beautiful wife Michelle, a High School Teacher that previously taught for two years at Kapaa High School. She is currently completing her current assignment on the 9th island of Las Vegas. Mike has over 28 years of experience in the fire service, working 2-years as a paid, on-call/reserve firefighter in Loma Linda, CA, and later, serving for over 26 years at Henderson Fire Department in Nevada, including eight years as a Battalion Chief.

Mike is blessed and lucky to be living and working again here in Kaua‘i. Mike, and wife Michelle, have a high level of respect and admiration for this island, and the community, and want to do all they can to protect and support all of you.

Deputy Chief Gibson started his assignment on January 2021, under the command of Fire Chief Steven Goble.

**ASSISTANT CHIEF SOLOMON KANOHO:**

Solomon was born and raised on the island of Oahu. His father, Ezra, moved the family back to his native Kauai in the summer of 1977. Solomon started his career with the department back in June 1994 and served as Battalion Chief for 3 ½ years. Solomon is honored and proud to work alongside the men and women of the department. He is also very thankful for having worked alongside Mayor Kawakami and the entire Incident Management Team during the COVID19 response. He would like to
Thank his wife of 33 years, Sue, and their son Justin for their support, love, and dedication to their community.

Assistant Chief Kanoho started his promotional assignment in July 2020, under the command of Fire Chief Steve Goble.

**BATTALION CHIEF JAYSON PABLO:**

Jayson was born and raised on the Westside of Kaua‘i. He joined the department back in July 1999 and served on the department's SCBA committee and as a Fireground Instructor. Jayson would like to thank all those who came before him, including everyone that he has worked with in the past. He is honored to serve his community alongside the outstanding men and women of the department and looks forward to continuing to serve everyone in his new assignment. In attendance are his parents Roland and Pat Pablo, and his wife Ces and son Jentzen.

Battalion Chief Pablo started his promotional assignment back in September 2020, on the 2nd Battalion – Blue Shift under the command of Assistant Chief Kanoho.

**BATTALION CHIEF EHREN EDWARDS:**

Ehren was born and raised in Kekaha and joined the department back in July 1999. He served most of his 22 years of service at our Līhuʻe Fire Station on Engine and Rescue 3. Ehren has always been involved in training within the department, including mentoring new recruits under his command to ensure they mastered all aspects of firefighting. Ehren is very grateful for his family's support throughout the years.

Battalion Chief Edwards started his promotional assignment on 3rd Battalion – Green shift, under the command of Assistant Chief Solomon Kanoho.

**FIRE CAPTAIN AARON HAWTHORNE:**

Aaron was blessed to join the Kaua‘i Fire Department ‘ohana in June of 2003. He is proud to have progressed through the ranks as a firefighter on an engine company, a fire rescue specialist, an operator on the engine & Hazmat companies, and in the Training bureau. Aaron looks forward to
motivating, mentoring, and enabling the personnel under his command while ensuring the families of their loved one’s safety. Aaron would like to thank the members of KFD for their mentorship and his family for their unwavering support. Joining him here today are his parents Steve and Toni, his wife Denise and son Tyler.

Captain Hawthorne started his promotional assignment at Ladder 4, Koloa Fire Station under the command of Battalion Chief Jayson Pablo.

**FIRE CAPTAIN NICHOLAS HILL:**

Nick grew up in Anahola and Kīlauea and graduated from Kapa’a high school. He joined the Kaua’i Fire & Ocean Safety ‘ohana back in 2007. Nick served on the engine and rescue companies as a firefighter and Rescue Operator. He is also involved in the departments Fire Ground Survival Cadre and oversees our asset inventory and control.

Captain Hill started his promotional assignment at Station 6 – Hanapēpē, under the command of Battalion Chief Jayson Pablo. Joining him today is his mother Terry and Sister Danielle.

**FIRE CAPTAIN SEAN KITAMURA:**

Sean was born and raised on the island of Kaua’i and is a graduate of Kapa’a High School and The University of Hawai’i, at Mānoa. Sean started his fire service career back in 2001 as a member of the Honolulu Fire Department before transferring to KFD back in 2007. Sean serves on the departments Apparatus Committee, Pumping Apparatus Driving Operator, and Initial Fire Attack Cadres. Joining him here today is his wife Chesne, their youngest son Connor, and his parents Doctor and Mrs. Monty Downs.

Captain Kitamura started his promotional assignment at Station 7 in Waimea under the command of Battalion Chief Ehren Edwards.

**FIRE CAPTAIN BLAIR YAMASHITA:**

Blair was born and raised on Kaua’i and is a 16-year member of the Kaua’i Fire Department. Blair is a member of the department's Health and Wellness Committee and our Operational Drone team.
He also serves as the Division Recorder for the Hawai‘i Fire Fighters Association. He would like to thank all of those he has worked alongside, including previous captains and his 17th Recruit Classmates that have helped mold and shape his career. Most importantly, he would like to thank his family for the sacrifices they have made so that he can be standing here today. Captain Yamashita started his promotional assignment at Station 6 – Hanapēpē under the command of Battalion Chief Ornellas.

**FIRE CAPTAIN ROGER MILLS:**

Roger began his career over 20+ years ago, starting with the Honolulu Fire Department back in 2001. He would later transfer to KFD back in 2005. His last assignment was the Firefighter 3 at Station 2, 2nd Battalion, in Kapa‘a. Roger would like to thank the senior leadership for their many years of guidance, direction, and inspiration to help achieve his goals in the department to serve his community proudly. He would also like to thank his family and friends for their continued support throughout the years.

Captain Mills started his promotional assignment at Station 6, 3rd Battalion in Hanapēpē, under the command of Battalion Chief Edwards.

**FIRE CAPTAIN JUSTIN ‘KAEO’ KINOSHITA**

Kaeo was born and raised on the westside of Kaua‘i and started his fire service career with KFD back in 2006. He has worked on several of the department’s engine companies including stations 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, before being promoted to Fire Rescue Specialist on Rescue 3, and later as a Firefighter 3 in our Training Bureau. Kaeo has assisted the department in several areas, including procurement of our department uniforms and other essential equipment. He would like to thank everyone that has helped him during his career. He would also like to extend a special thank you to his previous Captains, including Tamura, Quinlan, Fujii, Metivier, Scovel, Hussey, and Hirata, who has prepared him for this moment.

Captain Kinoshita started his promotional assignment at Station 6 – Hanapēpē under the command of Battalion Chief Jayson Pablo. Pinning him today will be Kiinani Mata.
FIRE CAPTAIN KALEO SAIKI

Kaleo hails from the island of Moloka‘i and the town of Kaunakakai. He started his fire service career with the Honolulu Fire Department before KFD back in May 2007. Joining Kaleo this morning is his girlfriend, Lianne Manuel, his children Keahi, Kanoe, and Ka’olu. Kaleo would like to thank the Chiefs and the department, both past and present, for their help, guidance, and support. He also extends a sincere mahalo to the fire administrative staff for their continued patience; his girlfriend and family are flexible and supportive of allowing me to do this job, and Captain Kitamura for his encouragement and mentorship during the promotion process.

Captain Saiki started his promotional assignment at Station 5, 3rd Battalion, under the command of Battalion Chief Edwards.

FIRE CAPTAIN JEREMY COLE

Jeremy was born in Michigan and later moved to Hawai‘i, where he eventually started his fire service career with the Honolulu Fire Department in 2003, before joining KFD in July 2011. Jeremy would like to thank his family for their love and support throughout the years. In attendance, today are his mother, Susan, wife Jodi, and daughter Moana.

Captain Cole started his promotional assignment in the department’s Training Bureau under the command of Deputy Fire Chief Gibson.

FIRE CAPTAIN KAMUELA ‘MICAH’ MOKUAHI:

Micah is the son Sammy ‘Steamboat’ and Sheryl Mokuahi. Micah grew up in Honolulu, just down the street from a Fire Station that planted the seed to become a Firefighter.

Micah started his career with KFD back in 2001. He has had the opportunity to work with many awesome people through the years and thanks all of them for their time together and influence on his life. Micah serves on the USLA cadre and is the director of our communications committee. On his days off, he coaches canoe paddling at Kapaa High School for the past 17 years. Micah would like to thank his
widely known for his four children Sariah, Sammy, Napela, and Naomi, for their love, support, and for putting up with him for 22 years.

Captain Mokuahi started his promotional assignment at Station 5 – Kalaheo, 1st Battalion, under the command of Battalion Chief Jason Ornellas.

**FIREFIGHTER 3 KALAN ZARBAUGH:**

Kalan Zarbaugh was born and raised on Kauai, then moved to Oahu for high school, graduating from Punahou. He joined the Kauai Fire Department back in March of 2009 and has 12 years of service. He would like to thank his family for putting up with him all these years and thank the Firefighters that he has had the pleasure of working with over the years for the knowledge they have shared. In attendance today is his wife Allison, daughter Riley, father Kent, mother Roberta, and brother Kleve who is a Lieutenant in our Ocean Safety Bureau Training Office.

Firefighter 3 Zarbaugh started his promotional assignment at Station 2 – 1st Battalion in Kapa’a, under the command of Captain Bush.

**FIREFIGHTER 3 ALAN SATTA:**

Alan was born and raised on the Garden Isle. He started his career with the department back in 2009. Alan leads our department’s elderly fall prevention program in conjunction with the Counties department of elderly affairs. Alan would like to thank God, his ‘ohana, his Fiancée Kayli, as well as the entire Fire & Ocean Safety ohana for supporting him throughout his career.

Firefighter 3 Satta started his promotional assignment at Station 5 – Kalaheo, 3rd Battalion under the command of Captain Kaleo Saiki.

**FIREFIGHTER 3 EDWARD ‘PONO’ PANANGANAN:**

Pono has over 20 years of service with Kaua’i Fire & Ocean Safety. He joined our Ocean Safety Bureau back in 2001, and join our Fire Operations Section in 2013. His last assignment was at Station 8 – Kaliaka as a Firefighter2 – Hazmat Specialist. In addition, Pono served as an Ocean Rescue & Rescue
Craft cadre. He is also an instructor on our Vehicle Extrication cadre. He would like to thank his parents, wife & children for their sacrifices, patience, love, and inspiration.

He also sends a special thank you to all those who have endlessly supported him and his family. He loves you all!

Firefighter 3 Pananganan started his promotional assignment at Station 1, 1st Battalion, under the command of Captain Pa.

**FIREFIGHTER 3 CHRISTOPHER ‘JODY’ SIMPSON:**

Jody grew up on the north shore of Kauai and started working with our Ocean Safety Bureau back in 1999 as a water safety officer. He would later join our Fire Operations section, becoming a Firefighter in 2009. In addition, Jody serves on our USLA cadre and Operational Dive Rescue team. During his spare time, he is the Head coach for Namolokama canoe club in Hanalei. Jody would like to thank all his family, friends, and past and present coworkers for their support.

Firefighter 3 Simpson started his promotional assignment at Station 2, 3rd Battalion, Kapaa, under the command of Captain Apao. Pinning Firefighter 3 Simpson will be his wife, Kristin Foster, along with his keiki, Kohana and Kaikou.

**FIREFIGHTER 3 DEVIN MEDEIROS:**

Devin grew up in Kapa’a, Kaua’i. He joined the Kaua‘i Fire Department back in 2009. He served at various stations throughout the island but spent most of his years at Station 2, Kapa’a. Devin serves as the Director of our Grant Committee and has successfully secured numerous grants for our department. In total, our department has received federal and state grant awards in excess of $12 million. Devin also serves as an instructor with Blue Card Command cadre and is also a Multimedia team member.

Firefighter 3 Medeiros started his promotional assignment at the department’s Prevention Bureau under the command of Capt. Jeremie Makepa.

**FIREFIGHTER 3 MARC BEEBY:**
Marc moved to Kaua‘i right after graduating from UC Santa Cruz in 1995. He joined the Kaua‘i Fire Department back in March of 2009. Marc would like to thank his family for their encouragement and support. He would also like to thank all current and past members of the Kauai Fire Department who have contributed to building a tradition of excellence which I am honored and humbled to be a part of. Attending the ceremony today is his Daughter Sariah and Son Kawai.

Firefighter3 Beeby started his promotional assignment at Station 6, 3rd Battalion, Hanapēpē, under the command of Capt. Saiki.

**FIREFIGHTER 3 MICAH THAYER:**

Micah was born and grew up on the Garden Isle. He started his career with KFD back in 2009. He would like to thank his wife, Jodie, for her unwavering support throughout his career. He would also like to thank all the Firefighters he has had the privilege to work with, both past and present. He feels very honored and blessed to serve this community. Joining Micah today are his wife Jodie and sons Kingston and Kekoa.

Firefighter3 Thayer started his promotional assignment at the department’s Training Bureau.

**FIREFIGHTER 3 DARYL ‘DJ’ HIGASHI**

DJ was born and raised on the Island of Kaua‘i, in the town of Kōloa. He started his career with KFD back in July 2011. Here to celebrate this event is his wife of 11 years, Avian, son’s John and Zekie. He would like to thank his family for holding it together while he was away at work and training. He would also like to thank his previous crews, instructors, and chiefs who took the time to share their knowledge and expertise. They have all inspired him to become a better firefighter, husband, father, and person.

Firefighter3 Higashi started his promotional assignment at the department’s Prevention Bureau under the command of Capt. Makepa. Pinning Firefighter3 Higashi will be his two sons John and Zekie.

**FIREFIGHTER 3 ELI EMERY:**
Eli was born and raised in Kaua‘i and grew up in Kalāheo. He graduated from Waimea Highschool and joined the department back in 2003. He spent most of his career working at our Kapa‘a, Kalāheo, and Hanapēpē Fire Stations. He would like to thank his wife, family, friends, and coworkers for their support throughout his 18 years of service.

Firefighter 3 Emery started his promotional assignment at Station 6, 2nd Battalion, Hanapēpē, under the command of Capt. Hill.

**FIREFIGHTER 2 – HAZMAT SPECIALIST AMBELIQUE HEDSTROM:**

Ambelique was born in Fort Benning, Georgia, and grew up in a military family. He has been with the department for 12 years and worked at almost every station on the island. His last assignment was at Station 1, Hanalei. Ambelique is married to his lovely wife, Melissa, and has two children, Ajax and Riley. Ambelique attributes all his success to the help and support of his family, and he is proud to serve his community and the island of Kaua‘i as a hazmat specialist.

Firefighter 2 Hedstrom started his promotional assignment at Station 8, 1st Battalion, Kaiakea, under the command of Capt. Jeff Weiss.

**FIREFIGHTER 2 – HAZMAT SPECIALIST RYAN NAGAOKA:**

Ryan was born and raised in Kaua‘i. He joined KFD back in 2010 with recruit class 22. Ryan would like to thank his wife Diandra, son Markus, as well as his mom, dad, sister, and the Melchor ‘ohana. He would also like to thank his 22nd Recruit classmates and the KFD Ohana.

Firefighter 2 Nagaoka started his promotional assignment at Station 8, 3rd Battalion, Kaiakea, under the command of Capt. Abreu.

**FIREFIGHTER 2 – HAZMAT SPECIALIST TRAVIS MIYAZAKI:**

Travis was born and raised on Kauai’s south shore and currently resides in Lawai with his wife, Jana, and daughter, Malie. He joined the Kaua‘i Fire Department in August 2015 with Recruit Class 26. In attendance are his parents Reynold and Glenda Miyazaki, and daughter Malie Miyazaki. He would like to thank all the firefighters and officers he has had the opportunity to work with and those who have
invested their time with him. Most importantly, Travis would like to thank his wife, daughter, and family for their support and sacrifice in allowing him to serve.

Firefighter 2 Miyazaki started his promotional assignment at Station 8, Kaiakea, 1st Battalion, under the command of Capt. Weiss. Pinning Firefighter 2 Miyazaki will be his daughter, Malie.

**FIREFIGHTER 2 – HAZMAT SPECIALIST ROBERT GRANCE JR.:**

Robert was born and raised on the windward side of O‘ahu and relocated to Anahola, Kaua‘i in 2007 to raise his family. He started his career with KFD in 2009. He is a member of our Driver Training cadre and assists in Community Outreach Services, including Sparky trailer and Hands-Only CPR training.

Robert would like to thank his wife, Lahaina, and their four children, Hualalai, Hi‘ilawe, Hinali‘i, and Bronx Hialoa for their love and support. He would also like to thank the entire Kaua‘i Fire Department for their constant encouragement and support.

**FIREFIGHTER 2 – RESCUE SPECIALIST KEOLA KEAHIOLALO:**

Keola is originally from the island of Oahu. He started his fire service career back in 2005 when he joined Hawaii Fire Department. In 2008, he transferred and joined KFD. He would like to thank God for this promotion opportunity and his family for their support over these years. Attending today’s ceremony are his daughters Avani and Tevah.

Fire Rescue Specialist Keahiolalo started his promotional assignment on Rescue 3, 1st Battalion, under the command of Rescue Capt. Tanita.

**FIREFIGHTER 2 – RESCUE SPECIALIST IRAH NISHI:**

Irah Nishi was born and raised in Kaua‘i and has been with the Kaua‘i Fire Department since 2010. Irah spent time working at several stations including, Station 4 – Koloa and Station 3 - Lihue. Irah would like to thank his parents, Paula and Bobby Nishi, his two sons Cairo and Forrest, and his girlfriend Kalei for their continued love and support.

Fire Rescue Specialist Nishi started his promotional assignment on Rescue 3, 1st Battalion, under the command of Rescue Capt. Tanita.
FIREFIGHTER 2 – RESCUE SPECIALIST CHASE CRANE:

Chase grew up in Pismo Beach, California. His family moved to Kauai back in 2006. Shortly after his older brother joined KFD, he was soon to follow KFD back on August 5, 2016. Chase would like to thank his brother Cadin for always pushing him to becoming a firefighter. He would also like to thank the KFD ohana for an amazing career and is very grateful for this promotion. In attendance, this morning is his brother, Firefighter 2 – Hazmat Specialist Cadin Crane and his family, as well as his girlfriend Leann Lopez.

Fire Rescue Specialist Crane started his promotional assignment on Rescue 3, 2nd Battalion, under the command of Rescue Captain Andrade.
Fire Chief Steven Goble
Mayor Derek S. K. Kawakami

###