

09-22-2016 Ulster Co NY – Kerry Winters – LEO PSD Training -Medical



## OFFICER DOWN MEMORIAL PAGE

REMEMBERING ALL OF LAW ENFORCEMENT'S HEROES

### Officer Down Memorial Page

<http://www.odmp.org/officer/22975-sergeant-kerry-winters>

Sergeant Kerry Winters



#### Bio & Incident Details

**Age:** 51

**Tour:** 31 years

**Badge #** 450

**Cause:** Drowned

**Sergeant  
Kerry Winters**

### **Ulster County Sheriff's Office, New York End of Watch: Thursday, September 22, 2016**

Sergeant Kerry Winters drowned while conducting a training dive with the Ulster County Sheriff's Office's In-Water Rescue Team in Ashokan Reservoir at approximately 12:30 pm.

He became separated from his two dive partners during the dive. He was found unresponsive a short time later and brought to the surface where other deputies performed CPR and utilized an AED. He was transported to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Sergeant Winters had served with the Ulster County Sheriff's Office for 31 years and was assigned to the Corrections Division. He is survived by his wife and two children.



Please contact the following agency to send condolences or to obtain funeral arrangements:

Sheriff Paul J. VanBlarcum  
Ulster County Sheriff's Office  
380 Boulevard  
Kingston, NY 12401

Phone: (845) 331-2810

## Ulster County corrections sergeant dies in dive training exercise at Ashokan Reservoir

<http://www.dailyfreeman.com/general-news/20160922/ulster-county-corrections-sergeant-dies-in-dive-training-exercise-at-ashokan-reservoir>

**09/22/16**

KINGSTON, N.Y. >> A sergeant with the Ulster County Sheriff's Office died Thursday while he was involved in a training exercise at the Ashokan Reservoir, county Sheriff Paul J. VanBlarcum said.

Sgt. Kerry Winters, 51, a 30-year veteran of the Ulster County Sheriff's Office Corrections Division, died while participating in an "In-Water Rescue Team dive training operation," the sheriff said in a press release.

VanBlarcum added that the investigation is ongoing and is in a preliminary stage.

"We are all devastated at the loss of Kerry Winters, Corrections Sergeant from the Ulster County Sheriff's Department," Ulster County Executive Michael Hein said in a prepared statement. "Our thoughts and prayers are with his family during this time of unspeakable grief. The entire Ulster County family mourns this profound loss of an individual dedicated to public safety and helping others."



**Ulster County Sheriff's Office and other emergency vehicles are outside HealthAlliance Hospital's Broadway campus on Thursday after the incident.  
Photo by John Bechtold**

The Ulster County Sheriff's Office was assisted at the scene by the Olive Fire Department, Olive First Aid, the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office, the Greene County Sheriff's Office and the New York City Police Department Environmental Conservation Police. In addition, the Ulster County Sheriff's Office was assisted by the Kingston Fire Department and Kingston Police.

### Sergeant at Ulster Sheriff's Office Dies in Dive Exercise

<http://hudsonvalleynewsnetwork.com/2016/09/22/possible-fatality-ashokan-reservoir/>

September 22, 2016. **Kathy Welsh**

**OLIVE** – A 30-year veteran with the Ulster County Sheriff's Office died Thursday afternoon in a diving exercise at the Ashokan Reservoir, according to the sheriff's office.

They identified the victim as Sgt. Kerry Winters, 51, who worked in the corrections division.

The sheriff's office did not say how he died but said he was among those participating in an In-Water Rescue Team dive training operation.

Dive teams from at least three sheriff's agencies and several area fire companies were on the scene earlier on Thursday near Brodhead Road at state Route 28A.

Winters was taken to HealthAlliance of the Hudson Valley's Broadway campus. The incident is being investigated.

Access to the trail leading to the water was blocked, but officials and emergency responders were going back and forth throughout the afternoon—some bringing additional gear to the reservoir.

The incident happened at around 1:30 p.m. Investigators remained at the scene throughout the afternoon.

Ulster County Executive Michael Hein offered his condolences to the sheriff's staff.

"We are all devastated at the loss of Kerry Winters, (a) corrections sergeant from the Ulster County Sheriff's Department. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family during this time of unspeakable grief. The entire Ulster County family mourns this profound loss of an individual dedicated to public safety and helping others," he said.



**Emergency vehicles near the scene in Olive on Thursday afternoon. Photo by Paula Mitchell.**



**Dive teams from three sheriff's departments, including Ulster County, at the scene on Thursday. Photo by Paula Mitchell.**

## **Sergeant who died in Ashokan Reservoir dive accident recalled as 'big, strong guy' and family man**

<http://www.dailyfreeman.com/general-news/20160923/sergeant-who-died-in-ashokan-reservoir-dive-accident-recalled-as-big-strong-guy-and-family-man>

**09/23/16** By **Diane Pineiro-Zucker**, *Daily Freeman*

KINGSTON >> Sgt. Kerry Winters was "somebody you'd want to dive with, somebody that had your back," Ulster County Sheriff Paul VanBlarcum said Friday.

Winters, 51, a 30-year veteran of the Sheriff's Office, died Thursday after being found unconscious during an in-water dive training exercise on the Ashokan Reservoir in Olive. The sergeant, an experienced and accomplished diver, was wearing full dive gear and a back-up air supply when the accident occurred, the sheriff said.

"At this point, we have not found any equipment issues," he said.

VanBlarcum, who knew Winters for the sergeant's entire career, said Winters joined the department as a corrections officer on June 27, 1986, and "worked his way up." Winters was promoted to corporal and then to sergeant and he worked under three sheriffs — Michael LaPaglia, J. Richard Bockelmann and VanBlarcum.

Ulster County Superintendent of Corrections Jim Hanstein said Winters worked in the jail for his entire career and handled intake at the Kingston facility.

"He was one of the behind-the-scenes guys that don't get half the credit they deserve," Hanstein said.

The superintendent said he first met Winters when he was in his 20s. "He was a big strong guy with a real zest for life and an extremely contagious laugh ... a great giggle," Hanstein said. "It will be something I'll miss."



**Sgt. Kerry Winters**  
*Provided*

Winters was one of the original members of the sheriff's emergency response team, once served as the department's grievance coordinator and was a 15-year veteran of the dive team, VanBlarcum said. As a dive team member, Hanstein said, Winters was on "24-hour call."

While on the dive team, Winters was involved in "numerous recoveries of bodies and evidence and involved in numerous swift-water rescues," VanBlarcum said.

"During [the storms] Sandy and Irene, Sgt. Winters and the team performed over 30 rescues," the sheriff said.

VanBlarcum said Winters lived in Saugerties with his wife, Michele, and two sons.

"All he ever talked about was his wife and kids," Hanstein said. "That was the center of his universe."

The cause of Winters' death remains under investigation, and "we are awaiting medical tests," VanBlarcum said. He said the state police and the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration will participate in the investigation.

Winters had no ongoing medical problems the sheriff knew of and "was a big, strong bear of a guy," VanBlarcum said. He said Winters was missing for less than five minutes when the search-and-rescue effort began.

Winters was taken to HealthAlliance Hospital's Broadway Campus in Kingston by the Olive Rescue squad and pronounced dead there a short time later.

In a statement on its Facebook page, the Kingston Police Department offered condolences "to our brothers and sisters at the Ulster County Sheriff's Office and especially to the family of Sergeant Kerry Winters."

"Many of us at the Kingston Police Department had worked with Sergeant Winters at some point in our career or would see him in our station when he would stop by on court days. He will be missed!"

Funeral arrangements for Winters were pending Friday.

## **New York - Long Time Ulster Sheriff's Employee Dies During Training Exercise**

<http://www.vosizneias.com/250331/2016/09/23/new-york-long-time-ulster-sheriffs-employee-dies-during-training-exercise/>

September 23, 2016 by Sandy Eller

New York - The Ulster County Sheriff's Department is mourning the loss of one of its own after a 30 year veteran drowned during a training exercise.



51 year old Sergeant Kerry Winters died Thursday during a training dive at the Ashokan Reservoir located 13 miles west of Kingston, one of two reservoirs that are part of New York City's Catskill Water Supply System. Winters became separated from his two diving partners at approximately 12:30 PM and was found unresponsive less than five minutes later. He was declared dead shortly thereafter at HealthAlliance Hospital's Broadway Campus in Kingston.

According to The Daily Freeman, Winters was an experienced diver and was wearing full dive gear, including a back up oxygen supply, at the time of his death.

State police and the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration are investigating the incident and Sheriff PJ Van Blarcum said that no malfunctions have been found in Winters' equipment.

Winters joined the Ulster County Sheriff's Department in 1986 as a corrections officer and worked his way up through the ranks over the years. A 15 year veteran of the dive team at the Sheriff's Office, Winters was involved in numerous rescue and recovery operations, including 30 rescues during Superstorm Sandy and Hurricane Irene.

Winters' death was being mourning by the Jewish community, which has a large presence in Ulster County during the summer months.

"During the hurricane there were a few Jewish camps in Wawarsing that flooded and the dive team under his command came in and helped us a lot," Joel Gold, a chaplain with the Ulster County Sheriff's Department, told VIN News.

"He was a great person," added Gold.

According to Van Blarcum, Winters had no known medical issues. He "was a big, strong bear of a guy," said Van Blarcum.

A resident of Saugerties, Winters leaves behind a wife and two grown children.

Funeral arrangements for Winters have yet to be announced.

## **Death of Ulster County sheriff's dive team member Kerry Winters attributed to 'medical incident'**

<http://www.dailyfreeman.com/general-news/20160930/death-of-ulster-county-sheriffs-dive-team-member-kerry-winters-attributed-to-medical-incident>

**09/30/16** *By Freeman staff*

KINGSTON >> The Ulster County Sheriff's Office dive team member who died last week after falling unconscious during a training exercise suffered an unspecified "medical incident" that led to his death, according to state police.

Sgt. Kerry Winters' death has been ruled accidental, Trooper Steven Nevel said Friday. Nevel said he did not know the specific cause.

A final autopsy report will follow completion of toxicology results, but the investigation is "pretty much all wrapped up," Nevel said.



Winters, 51, a 30-year veteran of the Sheriff's Office, died Sept. 22 after being found unconscious during an in-water dive training exercise in the Ashokan Reservoir in town of Olive. The sergeant, an experienced and accomplished diver

who had been on the sheriff's dive team for 15 years, was wearing full dive gear and a back-up air supply when the accident occurred, Sheriff Paul VanBlarcum said last week.

The sheriff said Winters was missing for less than five minutes when the search-and-rescue effort began.

Winters' death was to be investigated by state police and the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration, VanBlarcum said.

Winters, whose full-time assignment was being a corrections officer at the Ulster County Jail, was laid to rest Thursday after his funeral at a Glasco church. More than 1,000 law-enforcement personnel and other emergency responders lined U.S. Route 9W in Saugerties to pay their last respects as the funeral process made its way from the church to the cemetery.

Winters is survived by his wife, Michele, and two sons.

## **1,000-plus pay last respects to Ulster County Sheriff's Sgt. Kerry Winters**

<http://www.dailyfreeman.com/general-news/20160929/1000-plus-pay-last-respects-to-ulster-county-sheriffs-sgt-kerry-winters>



GLASCO >> More than 1,000 law-enforcement personnel and other emergency responders lined Route 9W on Thursday to pay last respects to Ulster County Sheriff's Sgt. Kerry Winters, whose death served as a reminder to them that their jobs come with risks.

Winters, 51, was a member of the sheriff's dive team who died Sept. 22

after being found unconscious during an in-water training exercise at the Ashokan Reservoir in the town of Olive. The cause of his death remains under investigation.

A funeral procession led by police on motorcycles brought Winters' casket to St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in the Saugerties hamlet of Glasco for a funeral Mass. The casket was carried from the hearse to the church by Winters' fellow members of the Sheriff's Office dive team.



**Tania Barricklo-Daily Freeman  
Members of the Ulster County  
dive team served as pall  
bearers Thursday at the funeral  
of their fellow diver Kerry  
Winters**

About 150 people attended the Mass, while about 100 more stood outside the church.

After the Mass, Winters' casket was driven along Route 9W to St. Mary of the Snow Cemetery in nearby Barclay Heights, where he was laid to rest. Members of more than 30 agencies, some from well outside the Mid-Hudson Valley, stood along the route to pay tribute.

"The reality of this job is what it is," Greene County Sheriff's Deputy J.R. DelVecchio said. "The reality of last week's accident drives it home. You never know when the time is up. You never know when you cannot make it home."

DelVecchio is a member of Greene County's dive team, which often trains with Ulster's.

Greene County Deputy Raymond Feml, also a dive team member, said the risks involved in responding to in-water calls cannot be underestimated.

"We go places people don't want to go," he said. "... The Hudson River ... is black water. You can't see anything, you don't know what you're working with, you don't know what you're going to find."

Ulster County Executive Michael Hein said before entering the church that Winters had "given everything" in service to the community.

"Our county is heartbroken," Hein said. "All of our thoughts are with his family. I care deeply about each and every one of the people who serve, and this really speaks to the importance and danger of the job they do."

Units taking part in the lineup along U.S. Route 9W included state police; the U.S. Department of Homeland Security; the state Department of Environmental Conservation; the sheriff's departments of Ulster, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Sullivan, Delaware, Broome, Oneida, Putnam and Rockland counties, and New York City; the New York City Department of Environmental Protection; city police from Poughkeepsie, Newburgh and Niagara Falls; town and village police from Saugerties, New Paltz, Shandaken, Rosendale, Marlborough, Ulster, Wappingers Falls, Fallsburg, Liberty and Yorktown; and fire departments and rescue squads from Saugerties, Woodstock, Ruby and Port Ewen.

Winters was a 30-year veteran of the Sheriff's Office who's full-time assignment was being a corrections officer at the Ulster County Jail.



**Led by law enforcement, the funeral procession for Ulster County Sheriff's Sgt. Kerry Winters makes its way along Main Street in Glasco on Thursday.**

**Tania Barricklo — Daily Freeman**



He lived in Saugerties and was a graduate of Saugerties High School. He was married and had two sons.

## **Cause of Ulster County dive team member's death was 'asphyxiation due to drowning'**

<http://www.dailyfreeman.com/general-news/20161005/cause-of-ulster-county-dive-team-members-death-was-asphyxiation-due-to-drowning>

10/05/16 BY Freeman staff

KINGSTON >> Ulster County Sheriff's Sgt. Kerry Winters died of "asphyxiation due to drowning," with "other significant conditions contributing to death," a state police captain said Wednesday.

Capt. Pierce Gallagher said Winters' death certificate states the contributing conditions were two heart-related problems: cardiomyopathy and atherosclerotic coronary artery disease.

The official cause of death was issued less than a week after state police said a "medical incident" contributed to Winters' death.

Winters, 51, a 30-year veteran of the Sheriff's Office and an Ulster County Sheriff's Office dive team member, fell unconscious Sept. 22 during an in-water dive training exercise in the Ashokan Reservoir in the town of Olive. He died after being found unconscious in the water.

The sergeant, an experienced and accomplished diver who had been on the sheriff's dive team for 15 years, was wearing full dive gear and a backup air supply when the accident occurred, Sheriff Paul VanBlarcum said the following day.

The sheriff said Winters was missing for less than five minutes when the search-and-rescue effort began.

Winters' death was to be investigated by state police and the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration, VanBlarcum said. The status of the OSHA investigation was not immediately available Wednesday.

Winters, whose full-time assignment was being a corrections officer at the Ulster County Jail, was laid to rest Sept. 29 after his funeral at a church in the Saugerties hamlet of Glasco. More than 1,000 law-enforcement personnel and other emergency responders lined U.S. Route 9W to pay their last respects as the funeral procession made its way from the church to the cemetery.

Winters is survived by his wife, Michele, and two sons.



## Kerry Winters Sr. Memorial Fund

<https://www.gofundme.com/2sh42rw>



### • Story Updates **1**

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- To all of our great sadness, Kerry J. Winters, Sr. died suddenly while on a dive training exercise on September 22, 2016. Kerry was a sergeant with the Corrections Division of the Ulster County Sherriff's Department, and a volunteer on the rescue and recovery dive team. His sudden passing has left the whole family reeling. Needless to say, his wife, my sister-in-law, Michele, and their two sons, Kerry Junior (24) and Kyle (19), are in a state of grief and shock. Family and friends have found beautiful ways to show love and pay their respects. The uniformed services and first responders came from miles around to make Kerry Senior's wake and funeral truly memorable, and we were all so proud of Michele and her boys for the way they held up through it all. Now that the ceremonies are over, Michele is facing the practical and financial repercussions of the sudden death of her partner in life. As of now, Kerry Senior's death while in the line of duty is under investigation, and it is not clear what financial benefits, if any at all, are due to his widow. I'm starting this fund to help Michele pay the bills in the short term: mortgage, taxes, college tuition. We all know that it takes both salaries of a working couple to meet these expenses, and Michele has to do it on her own. Let's all pull together to help Michele and her sons get through this hard time.
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