



ROYAL ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES POLICE FORCE

Public Relations and Complaints Department

P.O. Box 835

Kingstown

Tel: (1-784) 485-6891 or (1-784) 485-6697 or (1-784) 457-1211 Fax: (1-784) 456-2816

Email: relations.complaints@gmail.com

Your Reference:

January 9, 2025

PRESS RELEASE

Sub-Lieutenant Celia Charles Rises as the First Female Coast Guard Officer to Attain Her Rank

Steady determination, a deep sense of purpose, and genuine care for others; these are the qualities that shine brightest in Sub-Lieutenant Celia Charles. In ascending to the rank of Sub-Lieutenant, she not only breaks new ground as the first female Coast Guard officer to do so in the most recent promotion but also exemplifies the boundless potential of perseverance and vision. Her journey, shaped by personal faith and an unshakable belief in community service, stands as a symbol of hope for those who dare to forge unconventional paths.

Her story took root in August 1997, when she answered the call to serve within the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force (RSVGPF). Though policing was not her initial aspiration, the late Mr. Owen Randolph Charles, her father; Justice of the Peace, retired Police Officer, and Prison Officer, offered the wise counsel that propelled her onward. The early days were steeped in challenges; transitioning from civilian life was daunting, and she considered leaving. Yet six months of rigorous training revealed her knack for leadership, enabling her to thrive in a field largely occupied by men.

Much of her impact has unfolded at the SVG Coast Guard Service, where she has devoted the majority of her 27-year career. Between April 2022 and October 2023, she was seconded to the Regional Security System (RSS) Training Institute as a Maritime Training Officer, further proof of her adaptability and thirst for growth. There, she planned and taught a variety of maritime courses, deepened her strategic thinking, and formed meaningful relationships that have enhanced her aptitude. She relished this opportunity to broaden her horizons, and she urges others to seize similar openings whenever they arise.

Alongside her professional duties, Sub-Lieutenant Charles has nurtured a heart for volunteer initiatives both within the constabulary and beyond. As one of the coordinators of the Vermont Police Youth Club, President of the Women Police Association, and a member of her church's women's ministries, she embodies a spirit of service that complements her law enforcement responsibilities. Undeterred by the fact that female representation in the force remains modest, she is convinced that women can excel locally, regionally, and internationally, making an indelible mark wherever they serve.

Her personal influences speak volumes about her trajectory. She admires the poetic brilliance of Maya Angelou and draws inspiration from Retired Superintendent Ruth Jacobs, calling her an emblem of excellence for female officers. She also credits Commander (Ag) Deon Henry of the SVG Coast Guard Service and Brian Roberts, Director of the RSS Training Institute, for shaping her perspective. Above all, she remains grateful to her mother, Mrs. Irma Charles, whose example of humility continues to guide her.

Infused with her mantra, Philippians 4:13 "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,*" Sub-Lieutenant Charles openly expresses gratitude for the divine grace that has sustained her. She extends thanks to her family and to everyone who contributed to her achievements within the RSVGPF and the SVG Coast Guard Service. Having served at Beat and Patrol, Vermont, Layou, Chateaubelair, Barrouallie, Telecom, SSU, Traffic, and even as an instructor at the Police Training School, she has built a versatile skill set informed by real-world experience, unflagging zeal, and faith in a higher purpose.

In her current role, Sub-Lieutenant Charles oversees both the Coast Guard Sub Base in Bequia and the Operations Center at the main Coast Guard base. The Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force celebrates this groundbreaking promotion, confident that her ascent will inspire future generations of women to pursue their calling with the same spirited tenacity. Her rise to Sub-Lieutenant stands as a testament to possibility; proof that with courage, diligence, and faith, any barrier can be overcome.

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