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OMNI CEDO DOMUS

What is Fire Science?

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Email the Editor: <u>Ricky.Brockman@navy.mil</u>

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News Distribution



By Ronny J. Coleman

My first class in "fire science" was at Santa Ana College in the early 1960s. I remember thinking when I first entered the fire service that I was going to get into some real "science" to be able to fully understand what I was doing as a firefighter. Before I started my new career, I was a biology student and was accustomed to the scientific method of inquiry. Not unlike many of you, I was really enamored with the early textbooks that attempted to define exactly what that science was all about. I recall that in one of my first classes, the textbook for the class was the

NFPA Handbook. I think it was the fifth edition at the time. The book was massive and contained many articles that I simply did not understand. I diligently read the homework assignments and periodically found myself "in over my head."

Why? Well, because I am not an engineer I simply did not understand some of the things that I was being told. Until I could visually see them they did not really exist in my mind. This led me through decades of burning buildings as part of the state fire training process to gain experience in fire behavior and building construction. Even then, what we lacked in instrumentation, we made up for with observation. Our definition of fire science was still woefully inadequate. I don't know how many thousands of hours I spent lying on my stomach trying to create flashover conditions in a room with contents. I conducted numerous burn activities actually trying to create backdraft. I remember studying the concept of rate of heat release as part of the vocabulary of dealing with fire flow. I continued calling it fire science but it was really a practitioner's science.

You might be wondering why I am raising this issue now. Well, it is because fire science is now actually coming to the forefront as realistic science to support our operations.





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Check out the following websites: <u>http://nist.gov/public-safety-security-portal.cfm</u> and <u>http://ul.com/global/eng/pages/newscience/firesafety</u>. Better yet, put these two websites under your favorites or post them on your iPad so that you can periodically go back and look at them. It is not good enough to check



them out just one time. You need to look at them about every six months. What is posted there is going to change and you need to know about those changes.

What I do want to place emphasis on is the importance of this type work. As I look back on the past of the fire service, I realize that there were significant authors

who helped shape the philosophy of modern firefighting tactics and strategy. How can anyone even begin to discuss the topic of tactics and strategy without mentioning Lloyd Layman? Or, Manny Fried – or Bill Clark. Each of these gentlemen contributed significantly to the development of our tactics and strategy through their wisdom and experience.

I learned a long time ago that there is a difference between a demonstration and a test. Demonstrations are when you attempt to show somebody something that you want them to learn, and you are trying to make the point, but you are not sure how it is going to work out. A test is something that you design so that every time you do that test, you get the identical results. We, as firefighters, deal a lot with demonstration. Scientists deal a lot with tests. It appears that there may well be a really strong need for us to bring these two concepts together in a much more formalized fashion.

What I am in reference to is modern fire ground tactics and strategy. There are many individuals in the fire service that don't believe that they need to learn anything new because they have been around for a long time. I am reminded of the old adage: "A person can have 25 years' experience – or one year's experience, 25 years in a row." My friend Shane Ray and others have now coined a term called the "smart firefighter." I can recall the London Fire Brigade in the 1990s talking about the "safe firefighter." In other words, how do we fireproof the firefighter?



As one who is experiencing the waning years of a career, I would love to have the opportunity to use the way-back machine and start all over again. I am convinced that we have a whole new generation of firefighters that have the opportunity to alter their behavior towards fire by using science instead of intuition. It will not happen by accident. It will only happen when people become firmly committed to changing their vocabulary and their behavior based on the strongest possible evidence that is emerging from the work of science.

# Clipboard (Cont.)

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I don't want to disparage the experience that I had, because it was valuable. I once worked on a project that took us almost a year to burn down the business district of a town called Willows. We obtained thousands of hours of experience in a relatively short period of time. That type of training environment doesn't exist very much anymore. I will guarantee you that no matter how sophisticated a simulator is, it is not the real world. We need to do everything in our power to understand the real world as we use our knowledge as a tool. Go to the UL and NIST sites, read the information they are offering us and then ask yourself how does this apply to me? If you are in operations, it could apply on the next fire that you are going to. If you are in fire prevention, it could apply to your future plans for protecting your community.

We all have a stake in science.

About the Author: Ronny J. Coleman is the former California State Fire Marshal, Past President of the IAFC and Chairman Emeritus of the Center for Public Safety Excellence. He has won numerous awards in his lifetime career devoted to writing about fire and life safety.

## **Combs** Cartoon



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## Wrong Dragon



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## Last Alarms

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The USFA reported 34 deaths to date in 2014. The following line of duty deaths were reported since we published our last issue:



**Edward Walsh** Boston, MA

**Michael Kennedy** Boston, MA

**George Underwood** Lake, WV

#### 2014 Totals

♥ 24 (71%) 🚍 2 (6%)

♥ Indicates cardiac related death F Indicates vehicle accident related

# **TCOoO** Update



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# Taking Care of Our Own

Check with your Fire Chief if you wish to make a leave donation. There are currently 26 DoD firefighters in the Taking Care of Own program.

Name	Location	Point of Contact
Joey Tajalle	NAVBASE Guam	Julie.Quinene@fe.navy.mil
Dana Picard	Westover ARB, MA	Diane.Lessard@us.af.mil
Billie Edwards	March ARB, CA	Melinda.Miller.2@us.af.mil
Wilson Humphries	USAG Camp Parks, CA	Alexis.A.Rivera8.civ@mail.mil
Peter Giles	Kirtland AFB, NM	Curtis2.Ray@kirtland.af.mil
Christopher Lumpkin	Fort Belvoir, VA	Joyce.R.Peck.civ@mail.mil
Chris Burke	Fort Wainwright, AK	David.Halbrooks@us.army.mil
Christopher Matthews	Portsmouth NSY, NH	Marc.J.Smith@navy.mil
Annie Sands	Altus AFB, OK	Nils.Brobjorg@altus.af.mil
Mark Davis	JB Langley-Ft Eustis, VA	Dale.E.Hankins.civ@mail.mil
Michael McClure	Niagara Falls, NY	Peter.Stein@us.af.mil
Russell Reynolds	Niagara Falls, NY	Peter.Stein@us.af.mil
Richard Jefferson	Kirtland AFB, NM	Curtis2.Ray@kirtland.af.mil
Thomas Trost	Wright Patterson AFB, OH	David.Warner@wpafb.af.mi
Eric Schafer	Eglin AFB, FL	Kevin.Remedies@eglin.af.mil
Jeff Noel	Ft Campbell, KY	Charlotte.M.Epps.civ@mail.mil
Stephen Garman	Fort Detrick, MD	Katherine.M.Szamier-Bennett.civ@mail.mil
Robert Meola	DES Susquehanna, PA	Henry.Hoffman@dla.mil
David Gill	NAS Fort Worth JRB	Allen.Almodovar@navy.mil
Melvin Wilson	NAS Fort Worth JRB	Allen.Almodovar@navy.mil
James Johnson, Jr.	NWS Indian Head, MD	Mike.Carroll@navy.mil
Phillip Booren	MCB Quantico, VA	Raymond.Loving@usmc.mil
Brandon Fines	Fort Belvoir, VA	Erika.M.Nieves.civ@mail.mil
Dana Woods	NAS Oceana, VA	Marc.J.Smith@navy.mil
Nathan Cerulli	DLA San Joaquin, CA	Dewey.Rose@dla.mil
Patrick Campbell	NAVBASE Ventura County, CA	Paula.Hays@navy.mil



## Annual F&ES Awards

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## Annual F&ES Awards

We are proud to present the DoD service component winners here;

#### Large Fire Department of the Year

US Army - Fort Bragg, NC US Navy – Navy Region Northwest US Marine Corps – Camp Pendleton, CA US Air Force – Ramstein AB, GER

#### **Medium Fire Department of the Year**

US Army - Fort Detrick/Forest Glen, MD US Navy – NAVSTA Rota, Spain US Air Force – US Air Force Academy, CO

#### **Small Fire Department of the Year**

US Army - Fort Meade, MD US Navy – SUBASE Kings Bay, GA US Marine Corps – MCAS Cherry Point, NC US Air Force – Mountain H9ome AFB, MT US Coast Guard – USCG Base Kodiak, AK DLA – DLA Richmond, VA

#### Fire Prevention Program of the Year

US Army - Fort Drum, NY US Navy – Navy Region Southwest US Marine Corps – MCAS Yuma, AZ US Air Force – RAF Alconbury/Molesworth, UK US Coast Guard – USCG Base Kodiak, AK DLA – DLA Richmond, VA

#### **Civilian Firefighter of the Year**

US Army - Travis Jones, Fort Benning, GA US Navy – Naoto Hashiguchi, Navy Region Japan US Marine Corps – David Lewis, Camp Pendleton, CA US Air Force – Cardell Pickens, McConnell AFB, KS US Coast Guard – Marcus Stewart, USCG Base Kodiak, AK DLA – Colin Andres, DLA Susquehanna, PA

#### **Civilian Fire Officer of the Year**

US Army - Scott Dollman, Fort Jackson, SC US Navy – Peter Sorenson, Navy Region Japan US Marine Corps – Brett Johnson, Camp Pendleton, CA US Air Force – Michael Lefebvre, JB Elmendorf-Richardson, AK US Coast Guard – Chad Griswold, USCG Base Kodiak, AK DLA – Anthony Fuller, DLA Richmond, VA

#### Heroism

US Army - Fort Leonard Wood, MO Pohakuloa, HI Fort Meade, MD US Navy – Naval District Washington, DC US Air Force – Shaw AFB, SC

## Awards (Cont.)

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## On the Job – Kings Bay



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#### Military Firefighter of the Year

US Army - A1C Kevin Alfonso, JB Elmendorf-Richardson, AK US Navy – ABH1 Kaleb Willi, NAVSTA Rota, Spain US Marine Corps – CPL Brett Massolia, MCAS Kaneohe Bay, HI US Air Force – SSgt Michael Mullis, Malmstrom AFB, MT

#### Military Fire Officer of the Year

US Army - TSgt Luke Rogan, JB Lewis-McChord, WA US Navy – TSgt Matthew Walls, Navy Region Hawaii US Marine Corps – GySgt David Phillips, MCAS Kaneohe Bay, HI US Air Force – TSgt Michael Nalley, Aviano, IT US Coast Guard – DC3 James Kidkerson, USCG Columbia River, OH

#### Fire Service Instructor of the Year

US Army - Robert Simmons, Camp Red Cloud, ROK US Navy – Akinori Chiba, Navy Region Japan US Marine Corps – Junya Miyagi, MCI Japan US Air Force – TSgt John Deese, Goodfellow AFB, TX US Coast Guard – Rebecca Nelson, USCG Base Kodiak, AK

Congratulations to our service component nominees and best of luck in the DoD F&ES Awards competition.

# Mutual Aid Training at Kings Bay

By Assistant Fire Chief Robert Womble



Kings Bay F&ES began an initiative to train on submarine firefighting tactics and strategies, with our mutual aid partners from the surrounding community fire departments. Included in this first training day were firefighters and officers from the St. Mary's (GA) Fire Department, Camden County (GA) Fire Rescue and

Nassau County Fire Rescue. This training allows our mutual aid partners to understand the expectations, complexities and unique variables involved with a submarine firefighting scenario.

The training consisted of a classroom briefing on the fire response plan, a briefing of the Ohio Class Submarine, live fire training and culminated with a familiarization walkthrough on the Ohio Class submarine USS WEST VIRGINIA (SSBN 736).

We would like to thank the Fire Chiefs of these organizations for their attentiveness and support in this endeavor, and we look forward to future joint training sessions

## **Getting Green**

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VADM Bill French

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# Leadership Paramount to Energy Goals

By Vice Adm. Bill French, Commander, Navy Installations Command

Shipmates, I need your help and your engagement.

Simply put, we're using too much energy throughout the shore enterprise and we need to make reducing energy one of our top priorities. Make no mistake: energy usage reduction is a strategic imperative. Why? Every dollar we spend keeping lights on, powering personal coffee pots and refrigerators, or putting gas in government vehicles is a dollar that we can't spend elsewhere on the shore - pier and runway maintenance, CDCs, base security - or, far more urgently, return to the fleet for operations - flying, steaming, and training.

We've made progress - in the shore enterprise, we used a lot less energy in 2013 than we did in 2003. We're also making progress in where we get our energy; in 2013, we were able to make or buy a lot of the energy we used in facilities from renewable sources. That's encouraging, but we're still have more work to do to meet the SECNAV and CNO's goals for reducing energy consumption by 2020.

Although we've made progress, we have a long way to go and I need your help. This is an all hands effort: Sailor, civilian and contractor; flag officer and seaman alike; spouses and families - everyone plays a part.

So, what are we doing and what can you do? CNIC, in partnership with NAVFAC, has invested in highly efficient heating and cooling systems, designing and building energy efficient facilities, special training for energy and facility managers, and advanced energy management systems. Those systems, coupled with smart meters, give us a snapshot of how much energy gets used in a given building and lets us monitor energy use in real time. Monitoring energy helps us see whether we're meeting our energy goals, but actually meeting those goals is going to take hard work and a significant change in culture. It's on both fronts where we need you actively engaged.

We need to turn thermostats down in the winter and up in the summer. We need to charge our personal phones and tablets at home. We need to unplug all the personal appliances in offices throughout the Navy. Just like we employ operational risk management when we embark on missions, we need to employ energy risk management before we plug it in or turn it on.

Another big part of our culture change is engaged leaders and supervisors and a lot of engaged innovation at all levels. Everyone needs to think of - and then implement - their best practices and new ideas to reduce energy usage. I know of a Sailor who buys pizza for his kids when they turn lights off at his house - I can't buy you pizza, but we need to involve everyone; this isn't just a job for the energy managers. Navy Region Northwest is saving significant amounts of energy - and money - by using plasma lighting. These are only two examples but my point is this: we need involvement at all levels and all ideas are worthwhile.

Thanks for what you're doing, stay safe, and remember to think about it before you turn it on!

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## **Parris Island Marine Corps Depot**

Photo and Story by Tom Shand



During the 1970's U.S. Navy and Marine Corps engine company apparatus were based on a common design with several large bulk purchases. Apparatus purchased between 1971 and 1973 continued to favor short wheelbase, tilt cab pumpers built by several manufacturers including Fire Trucks Incorporated of Mt. Clemens, MI and Ward LaFrance Truck Corporation located in Elmira Heights, NY. While these units enjoyed good maneuverability they required the crew to ride on the rear step and over the years many of these pumpers were rebuilt and repainted from the original red livery into various colors of yellow and lime green.

Beginning in 1974 the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps began to acquire some of their first cab forward design pumpers which provided a partially enclosed jump seat area for the crew. During 1975 Fire Trucks Incorporated delivered 52 pumpers to the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps and were among the first units acquired in the new yellow paint scheme.

FTI operated between 1960 and 1988 and produced hundreds of apparatus for all branches of the military in addition to some unique vehicles for local municipal departments. Among some of the more interesting military units was a 1979 model 100 foot tractor drawn ladder with a low profile Pemfab tractor assigned to the naval installation in Yokosuka, Japan and a massive Dodge chassis quad for Hamtramck, MI during 1965.

The new pumpers were built upon a Pemfab two door canopy cab chassis and were powered by a Cummins V-555 diesel engine rated at 225 horsepower. The pumpers had an odd appearance as there was a full width walkway behind the engine enclosure that provided space for tool and equipment mounting due to the short wheelbase when coupled with an automatic transmission. Several installations heavily modified the apparatus including the installation of transverse crosslay hose beds, pre-piped deck guns and high side body compartments.

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Tom Shand

## On the Job -Guam



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The FTI pumpers were equipped with Waterous two stage fire pumps rated at 750 gpm, 500 gallon water tanks and a 40 gallon Class B foam tank. The pump panels on these units were straightforward with the addition of a Rockwood around the pump foam system. Over the years many departments added locally provided warning lights and mounting for master stream appliances such as provided on the Parris Island MCD pumper.

These engines were very primitive when compared to today's apparatus with five body compartments, exposed ladders and hard suction hose and a single top mounted booster reel. The pumpers were classified a FTI model 2500 with property number 263446 assigned to the Parris Island MCD unit.

Many of these pumpers served installation well into the mid 1990's until they were replaced with the newer Pierce Arrow pumpers acquired by the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. Several of these units continue to serve with small fire departments and at least one is operated by the National Park Service at Sandy Hook, NJ.

The experiences gained from these pumpers enabled the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps Fire and Emergency Services to specify custom chassis apparatus for most all future acquisitions and provided the basis for today's modern vehicles.

## Navy Assists Guam FD Extinguish Blaze

From Joint Region Marianas Public Affairs Story Number: NNS140325-04

Navy Sailors and civilian firefighters partnered with the Guam Fire Department (GFD) to extinguish a blaze along Route 17, Cross Island Road, in Santa Rita March 25.

A MH-60S Knighthawk helicopter from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 25 and Engine 2 from U.S. Naval Base Guam (NBG) Fire and Emergency Services (FES) responded to the scene and provided support.

"The team here on Guam relies upon mutually supporting assets across the military and civilian sectors, to be ready day or night to respond to any number of scenarios," said Cmdr. Gregory Leland, HSC-25 commanding officer.

"We have a very, very close tie with GFD," said NBG FES Fire Chief Robert Green. "We have the most seamless mutual aid that I've ever seen; we assist them when they request for it and they support us when needed. Guam is a small island and there needs to be that partnership especially for incidents like this. It's a miracle that we didn't have to evacuate any residents."

Leland added that the incident was a prime example of how the command is trained to respond to an event both here and abroad.

"The syllabus used to train for combat plays well into the skill sets needed to fight fires, rescue people from life-threatening scenarios and be on call for any number of unplanned events," he said. "The Island Knights stand ready with our brothers and sisters in the Coast Guard, Air Force, and Guam first responders to maintain the ability to help those in need."

## On the Job -Japan

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By Frank Jones, Assistant Chief



With the completion of the 2014 class for Ocean Rescue International Rescue Swimmer and Rescue Boat Operator, Marine Corps Installations Pacific Fire & Emergency Services Japan has increased its qualified water rescue personnel by 50%. This year presented some unusual challenges in the form of cooler than normal water temperatures. The beginning of the class on March 10<sup>th</sup>

provided ocean temperatures of 68 degrees Fahrenheit, cool for those acclimatized to Okinawa, Japan. The lead instructor for the training was Joe Mokry from Ocean Rescue International whose credentials include; Instructor Trainer and Course Director- NAUI, EMTNR, US Coast Guard Captain License (100 ton) and US Coast Guard certified instructor- Fast Rescue Boats, and Personal Survival. This year the assistant instructor was Matt Novellino, a member of the U.S. Army Reserve, Special Forces and a former US Coast Guard rescue swimmer who served during Hurricane Katrina rescue efforts. The training included rescue techniques for panicked swimmers and the use of paddle boards, jet skis, and rescue boats.

Rescue techniques involving rigging and conditions of fast water were also covered. The duties and responsibilities of Coxswain and crew were instructed during the boat operator portion of the class. During portions of the training, the participants experienced on shore breakers of up to six feet with winds of 15 knots, gusting to 25 knots; all the while members of the teams practiced the rescue of swimmers from shoreline rocks and seawalls.

The valuable experience gained by the boat operators in maintaining boat position and safety during rescue operations were vital for real world events. Upon completion of the training, students received certifications of continuing education through the Maine Maritime Academy for Rescue Swimmer and Rescue Boat Operator.

Maine Maritime Academy is one of six maritime training colleges in the United States, and one of only two that fields a Navy Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) unit. Ocean Rescue International's training met or exceeded all NFPA 1670 – Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Incidents requirements for Technician level and the Public Safety Rescue Swimmer training program is the same program that is approved by the US Department of Homeland Security and FEMA. The entire course was not an easy one, but will provide benefits for years to come and the teamwork that was displayed and learned during the training will help build confidence; not only on water related events, but on all other events faced by the fire department's personnel in the future.



## Wellness News

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**Reducing** Tobacco Use in DoD

A Letter from Jonathan Woodson, M.D., Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs)

Fifty years ago Surgeon General Luther Terry released the landmark report that conclusively established the health hazards caused by smoking. Since that time, many public health laws and Department of Defense (DoD) and Service policies have been enacted to reduce smoking. It worked. As a Nation, and within the Department, we have made



great progress in reducing tobacco use. Yet, our work is far from over.

Tobacco use undercuts military readiness and harms individual performance. Lung function is reduced, physical capabilities are diminished, hearing loss is increased, and acute medical conditions are more likely. Wounded warriors who smoke suffer from increased risk of surgical complications and delayed wound healing. Additional threats to smokers include higher risk of stroke, cancer and for males, impotency. Smokeless tobacco brings similarly high risks of oral cancers and dental disease. Tobacco use costs DoD an estimated \$1.6 billion annually in medical costs and lost work time.

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death; one-half of smokers will die from a smoking-related complication. For DoD, this equates to an estimated 175, 000 current Active Duty Service members who will die from smoking unless we can help them quit. On average, smokers shorten their lifespan by ten years. Fortunately, they can regain all or nearly all of these lost years by quitting.

The Department must take a leadership role in reducing tobacco use even further. Tobacco use in the military remains higher than in the DoD civilian population and in the Nation at large. Although we stopped distributing cigarettes to our Service members as part of their rations, we continue to permit, if not encourage, tobacco use. The prominence of tobacco products in retail outlets and permission for smoking breaks while on duty sustain the perception that we are not serious about reducing the use of tobacco.

The Military Health System is committed to focusing on preserving wellness. Our military medical leaders have pledged their full support for this effort to reduce tobacco use across the Department. Our goal is to dramatically reduce the use of all tobacco by 2020.

Individual military communities are taking action to curtail tobacco use, but we must develop more aggressive, organization wide reforms. Structural reforms in how and where we allow tobacco purchases to be made; as well as the need to consider tobacco-free installations, are all matters that require our near-term attention.

We appreciate your active engagement and leadership on this issue and look forward to hearing about your successes and best practices.



## Speak Up!

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## **Eight Public Speaking Rules for Success**

By Captain George Burk (ret) United States Air Force

Does the following scenario sound familiar? You're a manager or leader with your eyes on the future. But in groups, discussions and daily meetings you seem to sweat out everything you say. Your voice trembles, and you think everyone else can hear it too. When you speak, people seem bored and inattentive, and you can't wait to sit own. Sometimes, you feel traumatized, your stomach churning; and you're standing there for everyone to see. This is no way to get ahead.

"It's a requirement for most jobs to be a good communicator," says John Bradley, a public speaking consultant. "Communication is not something that's nice to have. It's mandatory of you want to advance in your career."

Many people don't move ahead because they are awkward and uncertain about their public speaking ability. Some do succeed because of other strengths, but still find it torture to get up before an audience.

While in graduate school, I had several courses in organizational management; and I still recall one chapter on public speaking. The author of the text said, "Man's greatest fear is standing before an audience and speaking. Given that choice or walking through a wall of fire, man would choose the wall of fire." At the time, I had been out of the hospital for less than four years; and I remember chuckling and whispering to myself, "Easy for him to say. I've done both and public speaking is a lot easier. There's no comparison."

Many prominent people experience heart palpations, sweaty palms, a shaky voice, and even weird out---of---body experiences. It happens to attorneys, physicians, sale managers and presidents of companies. If you don't get a bit nervous before speaking, that's the time to start worrying. The lack of being a bit nervous may mean you're not as prepared as you should be or that you're losing interest. If you are, it will show and that's a speaker's "kiss of death."

There are strategies to deal with anxiety and ineffectiveness as a public speaker. Some strategies involve harnessing your emotions while others focus on practical methods for connecting with your audience. All of them will make you more confident, and more effective in and out of your job and help you become the kind of speaker audiences want to hear.

#### **Eight Strategies For Better Speaking**

**It's not a big deal.** You may feel like you're going through hell as you try to stammer out what it you're got to say, but the fact is, it's not a big deal — nothing huge is happening. Trust me, one shaky performance won't ruin your life. You'll still be upright, breathing and able to walk and feed yourself. So relax and stop sweating the small stuff. I learned to tell myself, "I know I'm a bit anxious. I've been here before. I'm going to do the best I can. The worst possible thing that could happen to me has already happened." "Successful people talk well of themselves, to themselves."

## Speaking (Cont.)

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**Focus on others, not on yourself.** Don't get caught up in yourself and your sense of ego. Don't think about competing with other speakers or controlling your listeners. It isn't really about you, per se. You are speaking to help your audience. Think about their expectations and needs. A speech or presentation has four basic themes — to entertain, inform, inspire or persuade. If you do all four, then you have given an outstanding speech. Make eye contact with your audience. That will help make everyone in the room feel like you're talking to him or her. Keep your gestures to a minimum and gesture only to emphasize a point. Voice inflections are effective, too.

**Think Vocal, Visual, Verbal.** Your checklist for practical speaking should focus on how you sound, how you look and the words you are using. Do you pause at the right time, using gestures appropriately, and avoid words that are difficult to say and even tougher to understand? "One of the best tricks of the trade is not using a lot of jargon," speaking consultant John Brady says. "You lose them if you do. Keep your language nice and simple." A good technique I have found is to practice your speech and every time you find yourself saying "oh," "um," or "you know," think of that point as a comma or a period and just pause for a moment. That simple process takes many speakers from being unpolished to being polished.

**Use Good Eye Contact.** Don't talk down to your notes, the lectern or your audience. Smile often — an easy comfortable grin, not a goofy grin — and make eye contact with people in your audience. Don't speak at people. Some speakers often assume the listening is there instead of establishing it. How to do this? By not flicking your eyes from one person to another. Don't sweep the room with your gaze. Instead, focus on just one person at a time, not with the whole groups at once. The audience will respond well if you treat them as individuals.

**Breathe.** When you are upset about speaking, breathing becomes erratic and shallow. Practice some deep breathing. This will slow the mind and the body down and the body no longer feels in danger.

**Don't Apologize.** If you make a mistake, just keep moving with your presentation. Don't call attention to the glitch. You are far more sensitive to your flubs than the audience. If you keep rolling, they will hardly, if ever notice. Brady suggests, "Go with the flow and don't worry about being technically perfect."

**Tell A Story.** Abstract facts are hard to follow and absorb. Tell a personal story to illustrate your main point(s), and to make yourself more human. The story can be about sports, a hobby or anything for which you have a passion. I often begin my presentations by telling my audiences about one of my favorite movies, It's A Wonderful Life, and the parallels the movie has to my own life and survival. Like George Bailey in the movie, played by Jimmy Stewart, I had a second chance at life and to see how my life does have meaning. "Look into yourself and your experience and show why your message is important for you and why it is important for the audience," Brady says.

## Speaking (Cont.)

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Capt. George Burk, USAF (Ret)

# FPWG Corner



## **Scholarships**



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**Keep It Short.** Know your time limit and stick to it. There are a few occasions when running over your time is justified, but only a few. If you drag on for too long, you will bore your audience no matter how good you are or how much they were pulling for you. Don't yammer on and on. Learn how to "read" your audience to make sure they are still with you. Patience is on your side. When it no longer is, go to your wrap up — fast. Make no more than three or four points in your speech and make sure you emphasize one overriding principle. Close and then sit down.

"Finally, look for the best in your audience," says Lee Glickstein, founder of Speaking Circles. "Give them the benefit of the doubt, even if they appear to be inattentive, ill-informed in their questions, or augmentative. Speak to the positive and you will be an enthralling speaker." The effective speaker and leader looks for the positive — while the great speaker and leader sees it, no matter what.

Remember, love what you do; don't fall in love with yourself in the process. Now, go hit a home run!

Reprinted by permission. Captain George Burk, USAF (Ret). Vietnam Veteran Plane crash & burn survivor, motivational speaker, author & writer <a href="http://www.georgeburk.com">www.georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://gburk@georgeburk.com">gburk@georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://gburk@georgeburk.com">thtp://gburk@georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://gburk@georgeburk.com">thtp://gburk@georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://gburk@georgeburk.com">gburk@georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://gburk@georgeburk.com">gburk@georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://gburk@georgeburk.com">thtp://gburk@georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://gburk@georgeburk.com">thtp://gburk@georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://gburk@georgeburk.com">thtp://gburk@georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://gburk@georgeburk.com">thtp://gburk@georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://gburk@georgeburk.com">thtp://georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://gburk@georgeburk.com">thtp://georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://gburk@georgeburk.com">thtp://georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://georgeburk.com">thtp://georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://georgeburk.com">thtp://georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://georgeburk.com">http://georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://georgeburk.com">http://georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://georgeburk.com">http://georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://georgeburk.com">http://georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://georgeburk.com">http://georgeburk.com</a> <a href="http://georgeburk.com">http://georgeburk.com</a> </a>

# Whole Building Design Guide

The following web site should be one of your favorite links as an Inspectorhttp://www.wbdg.org/.

As author David Lind noted in the NFPA Fire and Life Safety Inspection Manual; a working knowledge of building and fire codes and knowledge of the various installation standards are tools that will be needed during the inspection process.

The Whole Building Design Guide (WBDG) can be one of those tools of information to assist the inspector in understanding the various building and fire code related aspects that may be needed during an inspection. The (WBDG) web site consists of a collaborative effort among federal agencies, private sector companies, non-profit organizations and educational institutions.

# IAFC Foundation Scholarships

Are you pursuing your degree and in need of some funding support? The International Association of Fire Chiefs Foundation is accepting applications for its educational scholarships from qualified first responders. The deadline is 1 June 2014.

Scholarships provided by the IAFC Foundation help improve the fire service by helping first responders advance their college-level educations so they're better prepared to face the ever-increasing and complex challenges of today's fire service. Contact Sharon Baroncelli at <u>sbaroncelli@iafc.org</u> for more information.

## **SA Matters!**

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If you are a student of near-miss and casualty reports then you know, without a doubt, that flawed communications is a major contributing factor when things go wrong and flawed communications is often a factor when situational awareness is lost.

In fact, flawed communications was the second most frequently cited barrier to flawed situational awareness in my research, second only to staffing issues.

But how do communications get so messed up at emergency scenes? Let's explore some of the barriers to effective communications.

### Defining a situational awareness barrier

For the purposes of my research, a barrier to situational awareness was anything that prevented the development of situational awareness, caused the loss of situational awareness, or prevented the recovery of situational awareness once it was degraded. As you can imagine, that can be a pretty long list. In fact it is a long list. My research uncovered 116 barriers and I'm confident there are even more yet be uncovered and researched. One of the categories of barriers to situational awareness is flawed communications. Here are 19 ways communications get flawed.



Bias is defined as displaying a prejudice for or against someone or something. Biases, as a category unto itself, are a significant barrier to situational awareness and extend far

beyond communications challenges. In the context of communications, a receiver of a message can show bias for, or against, the messenger and this give greater or lesser deference to the message.



Perception is defined as the ability to see, hear or become aware of something through the senses. However, perceptions are not always accurate. When information is

shared in the form of communications between two or more people, the perception of the meaning may not be accurate. Is perception reality? This is a question we discuss during the Fifty Ways to Kill a First Responder program. Many think perception is not reality, but it is. At least it is to the person with the perception. And they'll have no way of knowing their perception isn't reality until reality rears it's ugly head. When a responder communicates his or her observations, they should say "I think this is what might be going on, but I'm not really sure I'm seeing this right." Of course, responders don't say this. If they did, no one would trust anything they say. So, we say things with confidence and people believe us.



Attribution is defined as the explanation people infer for the things they see or hear. Attribution can impact

communications when the message of the sender is not the meaning attributed by the receiver. The problem is neither may know it until there is a consequence that brings it to light.



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Relationships

Humans can give deference in favor of messages

communicated by individuals the receiver has a good relationship with. Equally, messages communicated by individuals the receiver does not have a good relationship can be dismissed or discounted. Why? In a word, trust. We listen to and believe those we



trust more than those we don't. The formal, structured flow, of communications can impact the quality of the message. The more layers of organizational hierarchy a message must travel, the greater the potential for flaws in communications. Think about the third-grade game of telephone. The more people the message has to flow through, the greater the likelihood the message is going to get distorted.



The greater the distance between the sender and receiver the greater the potential for miscommunications. This is especially true when the communications is over the

phone or radio because the voice inflection can be misinterpreted and the sender and receiver do not have the benefit of interpreting the nonverbal communications.



As much as we are all one in the fire service we are all equally unique. These differences can cause miscommunications because terms and phrases that are

commonly understood in one culture may be completely foreign in another. And in the context of this discussion, culture does not refer to ethnicity (although that can be a challenge as well). I am referring to the varying cultures within an existing fire department and from department to department within the same geographical region.



When the message is an expected message, the receiver can tune out the message and the messenger. Parents witness this all the time when having a conversation with

their children about doing homework, or cleaning up their bedrooms, or... (tuning out now). When a responder feels they understand enough about what is going on at the emergency scene, they may tune out the incoming communications.



When the message is so unexpected that it stuns the receiver, additional messages may not be heard or processed. This occurs because verbal messages are

processed first in the auditory processor of the brain and then sent over to the visual processor to have a "sketch" of the image drawn in the mind's eye. If the message is so unexpected that it stuns the receiver, the brain can get bogged down trying to make sense of what was just heard. This can prevent new messages from being processed.

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When a receiver hears two messages that are in conflict with each other a decision must be made. Which message to believe? Alternatively the receiver can go on a search

mission for more information that resolves the conflict. Unfortunately, in the high-stress, time compressed environment of emergency scenes, the receiver may simply jump to a conclusion about which piece of information is accurate. This guess – and it is a guess – may be right or it may be wrong. The lesson is usually apparent based on the outcome. Sometimes the guess can be wrong and luck prevails and the outcome is still ok.



Like it or not, we can find ourselves believing, or not believing, a message based solely on how well we know the sender of the message and how much we value their

knowledge. We subconsciously evaluate the trustworthiness of the messenger. Does this person have enough credibility to be trusted? How well do I know this person? Do I like this person? Do I respect this person? We judge the messenger, and thus, the believability of the message.



This is probably one of the most commonly discussed communications barriers because its among the easiest to understand. Our language is complex and difficult to

understand in the best of conditions. Simile, metaphor, hyperbole, on and on and on. The complexity of the spoken word leads to miscommunications.



In addition to the spoken word, the non-verbal clues and cues send powerful messages. When we are not in physical proximity to see the sender (or the receiver) we

are missing an important component of the communications. In addition to the spoken word, receivers evaluate the inflection in the voice of the sender which can also significantly alter the intended message. "Are you going to paint that car red?" That simple 8 word question can have many meanings depending on the inflection. Look what happens when we inflect (emphasize) one word (noted in the capitalization of the emphasized word:

- **ARE** you going to paint that car red?
- Are **YOU** going to paint that car red?
- Are you *GOING* to paint that car red?
- Are you going to **PAINT** that car red?
- Are you going to paint *THAT* car red?
- Are you going to paint that *CAR* red?
- Are you going to paint that car *RED*?

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When you hear a message it is darn near impossible not to feel some emotion about the message (or the messenger). The emotions, in turn, trigger recalls of

past experiences that bleed into current knowledge. Certain components of messages may contain more emotional triggers than other parts of the message. When something triggers an emotional recall of a past experience, you may, if only momentarily, zone out from the current moment as you're flooded with the recall of a past experience. This may cause you to miss some component of the current message.



We have lots of practice making inferences to messages we receive. In fact, we infer meaning on just about every message we receive. The more we know about the

sender of the message and the better we understand the situation of the sender, the more accurate our inferences may be. To ensure the accuracy of an inference would require a series of questions and responses between the sender and receiver to ensure the message is completely and accurately understood. Rarely is either time or patience in enough supply during an emergency to accommodate this.



The mere volume of information being shared can cause the receiver to suffer from information overload. When this happens, the receiver will start filtering out

information. Unfortunately, the brain is not very good about sorting information on the fly and distinguishing the most important information from the less important information. Rather, the brain is more likely to remember the first pieces of information, the last pieces of information and the information that triggers emotional responses. Unfortunately, none of this may be the important information.



The act of listening requires conscious awareness and a need to pay attention to the message. We cannot multitask the act of listening. What we do instead of

multitasking is we interleave. Interleaving is single tasking in multiple succession. In other words, we listen to one thing, then the other, then back to the first (assuming there are only two communications inputs to listen to). This requires a lot of heavy lifting by the brain, especially in a dynamically changing environment where there are also complex things to SEE.



There are numerous challenges we can face at an emergency scene when it comes to our communications equipment: Broken radios, incompatible equipment,

operating on different frequencies, being on the wrong channel/talkgroup, not being able to reach the repeater, lapel mic not working, muffled modulation through the face piece, feedback from multiple radios too close in proximity to each other, and many others. Our technology isn't perfect and the flaws impact the effectiveness of communications.



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Rich Gasaway, PhD.

# Healthy Recipe



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#### It's no mistake I saved this one for last. Stress is a game Stress changer when it comes to our performance. In some ways stress improves performance. In other ways stress devastates performance. Such is the case for communications. Stress

can cause our senses to go on high alert for danger, increasing your audible acuity. This means you may be able to hear things that you would not normally hear if you were not under stress. This increase in audible acuity may be enough to help you hear the scream of a child trapped in a burning home. On the downside, stress can lead to auditory exclusion. This means that stress can make you deaf. You may simply not hear things, even when those messages are coming through a radio that is just a few inches from your ear.

Richard B. Gasaway is a scholar-practitioner with a passion for improving workplace safety. In addition to serving 33 years on the front lines as a firefighter, EMT-Paramedic and fire chief, he earned his Doctor of Philosophy degree while studying how individuals, teams and organizations develop and maintain situational awareness and make decisions in high stress, high consequence, time compressed environments. Dr. Gasaway is widely considered to be one of the nation's leading authorities on first responder situational awareness and decision making. His material has been featured and referenced in more than 350 books, book chapters, research projects, journal articles, podcasts, webinars and videos. His research and passion to improve workplace safety through improved situational awareness is unrivaled. Dr. Gasaway's leadership and safety programs have been presented to more than 35,000 first responders, emergency managers, medical providers, military personnel, aviation employees, industrial workers and business leaders throughout North America, Europe, Asia and Australia.

# Crunchy Hawaiian Chicken Wrap

<sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> cup light mayonnaise	2 cups fresh broccoli, shredded
1/8 cup white vinegar	$1\frac{1}{2}$ cups fresh carrots, peeled, shredded
<sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> cup sugar	<sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> cup canned crushed pineapple, in 100%
1 tsp poppy seeds	juice, drained
$1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp garlic powder	1 cup fresh baby spinach, chopped
$1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp onion powder	3 cups cooked diced chicken, $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces (1
$1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp chili powder	6 whole-wheat tortillas, 10"

1. In a small mixing bowl, combine mayonnaise, vinegar, sugar, poppy seeds, garlic powder, onion powder, and chili powder for the dressing. Mix well. Cover and refrigerate.

2. Combine broccoli, carrots, pineapple, and spinach in a large bowl. Stir in dressing and chicken. Mix well. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate.

3. For each wrap, place 2/3 cup filling on the bottom half of the tortilla and roll in the form of a burrito. Place seam side down. Cut diagonally. Serve immediately.

### Suggestion:

Filling may be made up to one day in advance. Assemble wraps when ready to serve. Makes 6 servings.

Nutritional values per serving: 308 calories, 6 g fat, 24 g protein, 408 mg sodium, 42 g carbohydrate (5 g dietary fiber), 53 mg cholesterol

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(12 oz)

## Keep On Truckin'

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## LOVERS U

- Ladder
- Overhaul
- Ventilation
- Egress/Entry
- Rescue
- Salvage
- Utilities

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Tweak your approach to truck work based on new fireground research By Forest Reeder and Kevin Milan

Recall Robert De Niro's famous lines in *Backdraft* when he explains fire to a new recruit: "It's a living thing, it breathes—the only way to beat it is to think like it." In reality, it's a laboratory setting—not a Hollywood set—that provides research as to how fire eats, breathes and grows. The interesting thing is that De Niro's statement was right on, and research supports it.

In previous columns we've discussed the importance of incorporating research into training, SOPs and firefighting; we've explained how the term "flow path" is quickly entering our vocabularies and after-action reviews; and we've dedicated a lot of ink to introducing SLICERS as a new paradigm to guide fireground action. In this installment, we discuss the importance of truck company operations. Just as with engine company operations, new research doesn't equal extinction for truck work. The fact is truck work is essential to fireground success, and we've been doing most things right. Now is the time to push the modern evolution to the other side of the house and *"Keep on truckin'.*"

#### **Recipe for Success**

Success on the fireground requires competent and balanced engine, truck and rescue operations under the guidance of a knowledgeable incident commander. The importance of truck work, whether completed by a dedicated truck company or not, is integral to successful operations. Truck company functions occur on every fire incident, and are performed more often than not without the benefit of a dedicated truck company or aerial device. A dedicated truck company can make some functions easier and more efficient, but truck company duties are necessary throughout any incident to support the safe and effective control of the fire.

The new paradigm of firefighting includes a keen awareness of flow path and the importance of cooling the atmosphere prior to entry. Now more than ever, synchronizing your engine and truck company operations is paramount. The integration of these operations must be coordinated by the incident commander and communicated between company officers. Only a handful of departments in the country have the ability to deliver a large number of firefighters and apparatus to the scene within the first few minutes of an incident. When resources are limited, it is especially important to observe the sequential process of the fireground order model SLICERS. Following SLICERS, the **Size-up** sets the stage for the following steps of **Locating** the fire, **Identifying** flow path, **Cooling** the atmosphere, then **Extinguishing** the fire. Taking any of these initial steps out of order can jeopardize the effectiveness of the operation. Only **Rescue** and **Salvage** are items of opportunity that may be completed at any time based on opportunity and need.

Larger departments can often complete many of the SLICERS tasks simultaneously by using members who've had consistent training on the same set of SOPs. But large or small, the department cannot delay having its engine

# Truckin' (Cont.)

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company put water on the fire and reduce the heat from a safe distance. Cooling vastly improves firefighter safety and extends the window of survival for trapped occupants.

#### **SLICERS & LOVERS U**

SLICERS is well and good for engine companies, but what does this new engine jargon mean to the truck company officer, or in the case of most U.S. departments, the firefighters and officers performing truck work without the benefit of a dedicated truck company?

Enter LOVERS U, a helpful way of outlining the tasks of a truck company. LOVERS U stands for Ladder-Overhaul-Ventilation-Egress/Entry-Rescue-Salvage-Utilities (see sidebar). Unlike SLICERS, it is not meant to be sequential or order-driven—the tasks are all actions of opportunity. If this acronym were to be completed in order, Rescue falls much too late and perhaps beyond the savable window for occupants. Completing rescue is a top priority and the first consideration of both truck and engine companies. Remember that SLICERS also directs us to regard Rescue as an item of opportunity, to be performed at any time in the order of operations.

You can think of LOVERS U as a shopping list to remind us what the truck is responsible for. Just as every trip to the market is different, every fire is different. Truck company operations are often intertwined throughout the fireground operation, implemented when the time is right to enhance the safety of firefighters and improve the survival potential for trapped occupants. LOVERS U helps to itemize truck tasks and keep them on hand as the opportunities and needs of each incident evolve.

### Tweaking the Acronym

A few things must change in the modern firefight to adapt the legacy truck functions into the new paradigm. Many existing fireground videos feature aggressive truck companies taking out every door and window on the ground floor, or taking out above-grade windows with ground ladders or aerials. We now understand that this creates flow paths that help an under-ventilated fire grow exponentially and uncontrollably. We probably always sensed that this happens; now we have research to confirm it,1 along with a new vocabulary to assist in training new firefighters and updating the knowledge, skills, and abilities of our experienced members.

While rapid and dramatic ventilation by a truck company may momentarily improve visibility and reduce heat, it does so by allowing fresh cool air to rush inside and lean-out the fire. Improved conditions only last a short time before the environment becomes worse than it was prior to ventilation. The environment quickly becomes un-survivable for advancing firefighters or trapped occupants unless temperatures are reduced. But the probability of having all the adequate and appropriate resources at the right place in this collapsing window of time ultimately makes this legacy tactic risky. In the modern firefight, ventilation may need to be delayed, or limited through antiventilation techniques such as closing doors, until water is applied to superheated areas approaching flashover.

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Forest Reeder



Kevin Milan

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So what about Vent, Enter, Search (VES), a standard tactic imbedded in the very DNA of the American truckie? On the modern fireground, the updated tactic of opportunity of VEIS (Vent, Enter, **Isolate**, Search) should be used in situations where it's highly likely that an occupant is inside or when sound incident recon indicates that occupants are trapped in a specific area. The importance of quickly closing the interior door and isolating the search room is critical, and supported by the research.2 Coming back to the "I" in SLICERS, **Identifying** a potential flow path created by VEIS becomes the hinge pin for proper use of this tactic. Venting and entering without the ability to isolate the search crew from the flow path created by the operation can be a fatal mistake. Size-up for this tactic will include locating windows that are not fully darkened by deadly and flammable smoke. It's no coincidence these rooms will also have a higher occupant survivability profile.

Once the engine aggressively does its job, the truck company functions of ventilation, overhaul, salvage and completion of primary and secondary search can be done more safely. The truck company provides key actions of opportunity by laddering for possible VEIS operations, and making entrance and egress paths for engine companies who will cool the heated environment and extinguish the fire.In sum: the importance of truck company tasks, namely LOVERS U, has never been more important on the fireground than it is today. What has changed is how we execute these tasks in concert with SLICERS. Size-up is the gateway to success. Life safety remains our top priority, and this item of opportunity must find its way into operations quickly if the size-up identifies a survivability profile conducive to occupant survival. If VEIS is determined to be appropriate by locating the fire and identifying the flow path, execute it with a keen awareness of the new flow paths being created.

If entry is appropriate from another avenue, give yourself the best opportunity for success by having the engine company cool the atmosphere prior to entry. Cooling from a safe location also supports aggressive truck work by expanding operational time. Extinguishment completes the final sequential steps in SLICERS, and as Andy Fredricks reminds us, most of our problems go away once we achieve this benchmark.

#### **Embrace the Updates**

Research is not an assault on our traditions or on LOVERS U. Rather, it is a call to action. As the trainer of your crew, your battalion, or your department, you have an increased responsibility in this new truck paradigm. Embrace SLICERS as evolution, a point of operational integration and a way to improve your margin of safety. Coordinated and competent truck work is complementary to engine work on the evolved fire attack. So for increased success and survivability, remember to *Keep on truckin'*.

Forest Reeder serves as a division chief with the Des Plaines (III.) Fire Department. Reeder is the Fire Officer I and II coordinator for the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association, as well as the Eastern Regional Director of the International Society of Fire Service Instructors (ISFSI).

**Kevin Milan** is president of the Colorado Fire Training Officers Association and director at large for the International Society of Fire Service Instructors (ISFSI). He is a graduate of the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program, holds a master's degree in Executive Fire Leadership, and is a doctoral student in the Fire and Emergency Management Program at Oklahoma State University.

## **Fitness Standards**

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lards Physical Fitness Standards in the Fire Service

By Timothy E. Sendelbach

It's a commitment that only a select few are willing to make. It brings with it the greatest of rewards, yet with each passing day come the destructive forces of time, bodily abuse and physiological stresses that compromise our longevity.

Being able to say "I'm a firefighter" is something we all cherish. Unlike the nine-to-fivers who fill the office buildings and cubicles throughout the cities we serve, being a firefighter is not a job; it's a way of life. For many, it becomes an inseparable passion, a force that unconsciously steers our daily lives. Our closets become a sea of blue; the walls of our houses become a storyboard of the fires we've fought, the certifications we've earned and the



brothers and sisters with whom we've served. But with every cherished moment there's an unmistakable truth that's often overlooked: We're one day older and one day closer to passing the baton.

The career of a professional athlete is limited on the basis of their ability to physically perform to the standards their fans demand. For some, careers are shortened by an unexpected injury; others face the consequences of poor genetics or a less-than-disciplined youth. And yes, there are the chosen few who defy all odds and perform beyond their years, but they are few and far between.

In stark contrast to the world of professional sports, the fire service is not faced with a fan base that demands a roster of homerun hitters, three-point shooters or celebrity personalities. Nor are we afforded the opportunity to have an occasional bad day. Firefighters are expected to perform at their highest level, without exception and without excuses, on every call.

At the time of this writing, the American fire service has lost 27 of our brethren so far in 2014; 17 of these losses have been attributed to stress or overexertion, which eventually led to a heart attack or a cerebrovascular accident. As disturbing as it may be, a line-of-duty death (LODD) due to a cardiac-related event is not an uncommon occurrence in the fire service; in fact, it's been the elephant in the room for far too long.

For many, the solution to medical-related LODDs is healthy eating and physical fitness. But it's not that simple. Whether we like it or not, our profession is best suited for a youthful workforce that's absent of physical restrictions and/or limitations. In many cases we can prolong our careers by maintaining a healthy diet and working out regularly, but the fact remains, there are no guarantees. That's why we have an obligation to undergo regular medical screenings—and an equal obligation to step aside when evidence suggests that a health or age-related factor poses a risk to ourselves and therefore a risk to our crew.

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**Timothy Sendelbach** 

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Yet many within our proud profession continue to create barriers to the existing preventive measures that are most likely to promote our own longevity. They refuse to prioritize medical evaluations and mandatory physical fitness standards for fear of sending someone toward a medical disability or an early retirement—forgetting that retirement means nothing to someone who dies in the line of duty.

Equally disturbing are those who see their fitness and health as an individual choice that doesn't have repercussions on others. In a recent conversation, a firefighter told me, "If I died of a heart attack while fighting a



fire, at least I'd die happy." If he'd been a bass fisherman on a small pond, in a boat by himself, that statement might not be so troubling—but as firefighters, we work as a team and when one of us goes down, it jeopardizes the safety of all of us.

As a firefighter who reluctantly admits that my years served now exceed the years I have remaining in my career, it's becoming increasingly clear that I have a responsibility to myself, my family and to those I serve, to maintain my health and fitness to the best of my ability. I have an equal responsibility to subject myself to medical evaluations that allow for the early diagnosis or the intervention of an illness that might threaten my ability to respond to fires—and to act on such information if/when I receive it.

Being a firefighter is ultimately about service. But that service isn't tied to your ability to throw a ladder or stretch a hoseline. There are countless ways to continue to serve your community through the department long after medical or age restrictions prevent you from going on calls. In fact, truly selfless service demands that you do everything you can to ensure you're fit for duty— and pass the baton when you're no longer fit to carry it.

Timothy E. Sendelbach is the editor-in-chief of FireRescue magazine. He is a 28-year student and educator in fire and emergency services.

Sendelbach is the president and founder of TES<sup>2</sup> Training & Education Services, a group of fire instructors dedicated to providing progressive, high-impact, high-energy training for fire and emergency services providers throughout the United States and Canada. He has been a featured speaker in more than 41 U.S. states as well as Canada, Europe and Australia.

A bear, however hard he tries, grows tubby without exercise. - A.A. Milne







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