



Lines & Leads

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

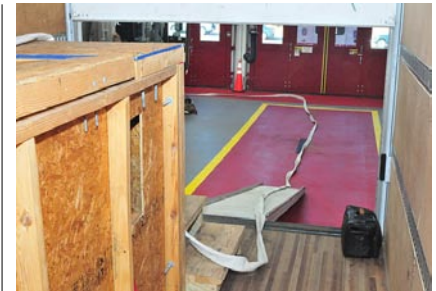
FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES A MOBILE "MAYDAY" SIMULATOR

The Prince George's County Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department (PGFD) has developed and is currently evaluating a mobile simulator for "MAYDAY" in-service training for firefighters. This training was developed in part due to a safety and investigative report (SIT) that reviewed circumstances involving a house fire that critically injured a firefighter. The SIT identified several contributing factors that led to the firefighters injuries, including, lack of training and experience in firefighter survival skills.

The PGFD has continually made available and conducted several training programs including fire ground survival training and other similar programs in an effort to make these survival skills second nature. Typically, in order to simulate an actual fire ground situation, training has been held at the Fire/EMS Department's Training Academy in Cheltenham; located in the southern

portion of the County and is not conducive, geographically, to in-service training programs for a large portion of stations in central and northern parts of the County

The Technical Services Battalion, under the command of Major Adon Snyder, has developed a mobile "mayday" simulator, accompanied by a classroom lecture, which can be easily brought to any Fire/EMS station or training facility. A 40-minute classroom session with power point presentation and practical evolution comprise this training program. The practical portion starts with participants raising their heart rate to about 140, a rate consistent with response and initial activity at an incident scene. It is also the heart rate where decision making could be adversely affected. Raising the heart rate is accomplished by participants donning full personal protective equipment (PPE) and self contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) then



carries a stand-pipe pack for approximately 5 to 10 minutes. The firefighter then places their cloth covered face piece on and begins to breathe air. The firefighter, with no visibility, is then instructed to follow a 100 foot section of hoseline. The firefighter follows the hoseline and is led up a ramp and then up steps to a simulated second floor and then experience a sudden floor collapse.

The mobile mayday simulator was constructed inside of a fire department

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NATIONAL MEDIA TAP PGFD FOR INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



Acting Battalion Chief Grady Valencis conducts interview about the Penn Mar explosion to a production crew from a major TV network.

The Prince George's County Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department recently played a role in media productions, which will air around the country. It is not uncommon for production companies to contact our Department, seeking assistance with their projects. While their reasons vary, always included is that we are a "media-friendly" Department with a diverse roster of personnel, equipment, resources, and incidents.

Over the past several weeks we have worked with nationally-recognized media outlets on two separate projects. A popular cable company is producing a two-hour special that will air in summer 2011. The show will demonstrate how various gadgets have changed our way of life. The Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department was selected to participate in the segment that features smoke alarms and how they have changed since their inception. Acting Fire Chief Marc S. Bashoor provided the main commentary, and firefighters from St.

Joseph's Community Fire/EMS Station brought along the production crew on a neighborhood smoke alarm check.

In May 2009, an explosion destroyed stores and injured several firefighters operating on the scene of a natural gas leak at the Penn Mar Shopping Center in Forestville. A national media outlet interviewed two personnel involved in that incident and will document the Penn Mar incident during a broadcast of this popular show. On Tuesday, February 8, 2011, Acting Major Kenneth McSwain and Acting Battalion Chief Grady Valencis were interviewed about their role on the incident. This show will air sometime during spring/summer 2011.

In December 2010, a production crew from Battalion TV visited Prince George's County and resided with firefighters for a week. They bunked and rode with Branchville Fire/EMS Station 811 and District Heights Fire/EMS Station 826. This web-based series documents activities they encountered during their stay. There will be a minimum of five episodes involving Prince George's County that will be posted over the next several weeks. The first production has been posted and can be seen by visiting <http://www.thebattalion.tv/>.

PRODUCED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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WE ARE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

PRINCE GEORGE'S HIGHLIGHTS: Our Facilities and Equipment

DISTRICT HEIGHTS COMMUNITY FIRE/EMS STATION

Serving District Heights and surrounding communities, Station 826 is one of the newest facilities in the Fire/EMS Department physical plant. The state-of-the-art station opened its doors in October 2008. Under the guidance of Career Station Captain John R. "Robbie" Steele, Jr. and Volunteer Fire Chief 826A Thomas C. Stommel, a total of 30 sworn personnel and 12 active volunteers respond to an amazing average of fourteen thousand calls for service annually from Station 826.

Captain Steele is a 29-year veteran of the Fire/EMS Department. Stommel, currently Volunteer Chief 26A, has served the District Heights community for over 55 years, 44 of those as Volunteer Fire Chief. Stommel just relinquished the lead position to the current Volunteer Fire Chief, Kirk Ingram, in December 2009. Prior to Steele's assignment as Station 826 Commander



in 2006, both committed to meet away from the old station in order to develop a coordinated approach to station management. The personnel assigned to Station 826 credit the two for their accommodating, innovative and coordinated outlook when it comes to combination station leadership.

According to Stommel, "We have developed an extremely cooperative working environment, and I am proud that Kirk is dedicated to continuing that tradition. All of the people here, no matter career or volunteer, fire or EMS, are treated and trained to one uniform standard." Stommel continued, "Many times, day-to-day issues that would normally tend to rise to the Battalion level for resolution elsewhere can be quickly resolved at the station level here." Steele added, "Even with our high call volume, we all manage to work together to get the job done. Everything from pre-planning to multifamily inspections, smoke alarm checks on calls and especially hands-on training, we do it all." Steele continued, "Chief Stommel even presents drills in the evening that are available to both career and volunteer personnel."

For many who have worked at 826 - be it in the new facility or old - there is a common recognition that the station's driver training program is a major focus for both Stommel and Steele. Steele commented, "Due to our extensive driver training program, when you look at the ratio of vehicle accidents compared to total road miles travelled, the number of accidents here at 826 is amazingly low when compared to similar facilities." Stommel added, "Sure, we have set some high standards, but we refuse to bend the rules on that. Safety and operational proficiency come first."

Both agreed that one major benefit of the new station facility is the on-site training tower located in the rear of the building. According to Stommel, "The tower is a useful tool for a number of different training evolutions. It's really come in handy to have it in your own back yard. Most recently, we are utilizing it to conduct timed "mayday" training evolutions."

Both Stommel and Steele pride themselves in the fact that EMS is not treated as a separate entity by the personnel at District Heights. Stommel commented, "EMS is a major component of our response capabilities, and as such, the EMS providers assigned here are integrated in the station structure." Steele added, "Even though our engine and truck may statistically run more calls than the ambulance or medic unit, it is clear to see that we expend more of our personnel hours addressing emergency medical needs in our service community." Steele continued, "The Medics stationed here are without a doubt highly dedicated to their job, and many have become extremely proficient as a result of the high call volume we experience here." Stommel added, "Emergency medical response is a core element of our mission, and it is important for everyone at District Heights to recognize and show proper respect to that component of our service delivery."

Due to the high call volume, assignment to Station 826 can obviously be a taxing assignment. However, discipline and pride are both immediately evident in the work force there. Stommel is especially proud to make one closing observation; "Captain Steele and I like to preach "old school" values here. Rarely is there a time when you can walk in the station and not find it clean." Steele added, "I am extremely proud of my personnel for handling our business in the outstanding manner they do. They show up for work each and every shift an hour early with a positive attitude and ready to roll. They will work until they drop never asking for anything other than an occasional "Nice Job" from myself and the other officers. I try to remember to say that as often as I can. However, they know I expect them to constantly critique themselves and make improvements when needed. That level of dedication on the part of both volunteer and career forces creates a family environment, and that makes it an enjoyable place to work. That is why so many of the people assigned here want to stay."

An upcoming episode of the popular web-based series *Battalion TV* will feature the personnel of Station 826, "D" shift. Scheduling information will be distributed as soon as it is available.



A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

PRESIDENTS' DAY WIND EVENTS - The wind and fire events of Presidents' Day Weekend were unprecedented and truly historic for the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department. At the height of events, our Department had nearly 600 Fire/EMS personnel engaged in operational or support activities from one end of the County to the other. This included nearly 90 mutual aid personnel from the District of Columbia, the Maryland Counties of; Queen Anne, Cecil, Carroll, Caroline, Washington, Charles, St Mary's, Calvert, Anne Arundel, Howard, Montgomery, and Baltimore City; and the Virginia jurisdictions of; Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax, along with private tankers from the state of West Virginia. During this period, nearly 900 calls for service were received by Public Safety Communications (PSC).



These events were responsible for substantial or complete destruction of 12 occupied homes, 12 or more abandoned/unoccupied residential structures, and 10 or more sheds, garages, barns, or other outdoor buildings. The largest wild-fires, scorching nearly 1,500 acres, were the "Chalk Point Fire", the "Van Dusen Fire", and the "Piscataway Fire". Thankfully, we suffered only three minor injuries among the nearly 600 responders – an impressive measure of our collective effort to keep "Safety First". This was indeed a team effort of proportions surpassed by few in their careers. To all who took part in bringing the event to a successful resolution, I wish to say **THANK YOU** for a job well done.

THE FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT MOURNS THE PASSING OF JIMMY HOOK - I was saddened to learn of the sudden passing of former Fire Dispatch Supervisor Jimmy Hook. Hook was a member of the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department (HVFD), serving as the Volunteer Deputy Chief at the time of his death. He had attained his tenth year of membership at the HVFD just this month. In 1990, Hook was hired as a County 911/police dispatcher. He concluded employment with County Government at the rank of Fire Dispatch Supervisor in 2008. Jimmy was instrumental in the transition of Bureau of Fire/Rescue Communications into one integrated agency serving the Police/Fire/EMS/Sheriff Departments, known today as Public Safety Communications. The condolences of the Department go out to Jimmy's family and many friends.

MOBILE RADIO INSTALLATIONS HAVE BEGUN - We are approaching completion of the multi-year radio upgrade and interoperability program with the commencement of the installation of new radios in our vehicle fleet. This is the next step in assuring reliability of our mobile communications and interoperability with our surrounding jurisdictions. The April edition of the newsletter will contain a detailed overview of the program and status report on the progress of the installations.

PGFD TO PILOT MFRI SIMULATOR PROJECT - I am pleased to announce a collaborative agreement has been reached with Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute (MFRI), through Director Steven T. Edwards, for personnel from our Department to pilot MFRI's newly established Simulation Center. This pilot

program forms an exciting opportunity for us to advance our competency measurement, both at the Command and Company Officer levels. Additional information on this program will be released by the Emergency Operations Command in the coming months.

REORGANIZATION PHASE 3: WORK GROUPS AND TASK FORCES: The 3rd phase of the Department reorganization was kicked off on February 24th with the inaugural meeting of the Work Groups and Task Forces. Over 100 Department personnel, representing every segment of the Department (sworn, volunteer, union, commission, association and civilian) gathered at the County Administration Building to kick off the process and get to work. Phase 3 will be a long term strategic look at every facet of the Department's organization and operation. Group Supervisors will provide regular 30-day updates to the program Administrators, Major Paul Cruz and Volunteer Major Jim McClelland. Presentation materials from this session are available for your review on the Fire/EMS Department intranet page. Progress reports and further updates will also be published as available.

CAREER RECRUIT SCHOOL (CRS) # 42 BEGINS TRAINING - On Monday, February 28, 2011, twenty-seven personnel attended their first day of training at the Fire/EMS Training Academy. Twenty-four of the recruits are new hires; 3 are EMS-ready only and will receive basic firefighter training. Thirteen of the recruits are currently experienced as either firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMT) or paramedics who possess appropriate Maryland training certifications. This latter group will attend an abbreviated academy of ten weeks, after which they will be detailed to Fire/EMS stations. The remaining recruits will attend a full training academy allotment of twenty-four weeks. It was my personal pleasure to join with the command staff to attend the recruit's first day at the Fire/EMS Academy to offer words of encouragement. My expectations for this class are high as they have already achieved so much, having passed a nationally recognized Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT). Academically, this group has the advantage of several personnel with advanced degrees. You will also be pleased to know that CRS #43, consisting of 35 additional recruits, is scheduled to also begin their training on March 28, 2011. Please join me in welcoming our new recruits into the Prince George's County Fire/EMS family.


Marc S. Bashoor, Acting Fire Chief

CRS #42 ROSTER

Glenn Joshua Austin	Michael Robert Kirby
Julian Gregory Barnes	Brandy Lee Kreitzer
Michael Britten, Jr.	William Davis McConnell, Jr.
Michael Carlos Brown, Jr.	Christina Marie McNeill
John Michael Calderone	Kashawna Ann Medley
Clint Curry Cardinal	Andrew S. Mika
Rita Leonor Delaroca	Andrew John Mutchler, Jr.
Ryan Wesley Dorr	James Jonathan Redman
Daryel Reginald Dunston	William B. Stein
Ryan Joseph Ferriter	Jonathan Tabias Streat
Samuel Freeman-Martin	Timothy Craig Vanderhoff
John William Hart, V	Kevin Robert Wittmer
Kyle William Hastings	Kyle Patrick Wood
Corey Liberato Ianiero	

OUR PEOPLE: Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

"2010 National Emergency Technician of the Year" Award Belongs to PGFD Fire/Medic Lieutenant George F. Flanagan, III

The Prince George's County Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department received notification that one of our members has been selected to receive a very prestigious award. The Veterans of Foreign War (VFW) chose Fire Fighter/Medic Lieutenant George F. Flanagan, III as their organization's "2010 National Emergency Technician of the Year." Flanagan was selected at the local and state level, as well. This is the first time a member of our Department has won at the national level.

Lieutenant Flanagan is being recognized for rescuing a 4-year-old child from her burning Hyattsville apartment in February 2010. On the day of the rescue, he and several other firefighters were the first to arrive on the scene of an apartment fire on Toledo Place. Crews located and removed the child's father while Lieutenant Flanagan located the young girl and removed her from the apartment that was charged with thick smoke and intense heat. As one team of firefighters worked to extinguish the fire, other firefighters removed the two victims and assisted paramedics in their treatment and transport to the hospital. Tragically, the father succumbed to his injuries; the young girl, however, has since made a full recovery.

The VFW traces its roots back to 1899 when veterans of the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippine Insurrection (1899-1902) founded local organizations to secure rights and benefits for their service. Many arrived home wounded or sick and were left to care for themselves, as there was no medical care or veterans' pension for them.

In their misery, some of these veterans banded together and formed organizations with what would become known as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. After chapters were formed in Ohio, Colorado and Pennsylvania, the movement quickly gained momentum. By 1915, membership grew to 5,000; by 1936, membership was almost 200,000. Annually, the 2.1 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary contribute more than 11 million hours of volunteerism in the community, including participation in Make A Difference Day and National Volunteer Week.

Upon being told of his award, Flanagan stated, "I am honored to have been selected for this award, and I accept it on behalf of my crew that day and for the paramedics who did everything they could do to save the father and daughter. This rescue was a team effort." Fire Fighter/Medic Lieutenant Flanagan will receive his award at a ceremony in March 2011. Fire Fighter/Medic Lieutenant Flanagan is a 10-year member of the Department and is currently assigned to the Berwyn Heights Fire/EMS Station 814.



JUST A REMINDER - from EAP

By Latif Rasheed, EAP Counsellor

Recently, it occurred to me how often we as adults resemble our children. When my children were young and were with me on a trip or accompanying me in running my errands they would ask, "Daddy, where are we going now?" or "Daddy how long before we get there?" My reply to them would often be something like, "Well right now I'm going straight and in a couple of minutes I'll be turning left or right." This answer of course would not be exactly what they were wanting, but it would illicit a big laugh for us all. My children were suffering from the mysterious disorder "Destination Disease".

Until recently, I thought this was a childhood disorder affecting families on vacation and long trips in the car, but I realized that adults can get this disorder as, well. For example, how often have you said, or heard others say: "The people at my job are so negative." "I wish I could get another job, or assignment." "When I get that position, everything will be better." Perhaps this sounds even more familiar: "How long am I going to have to deal with this stress?" "If they could get their act together and stop... or begin to ... then I'll be able to ..." etc.

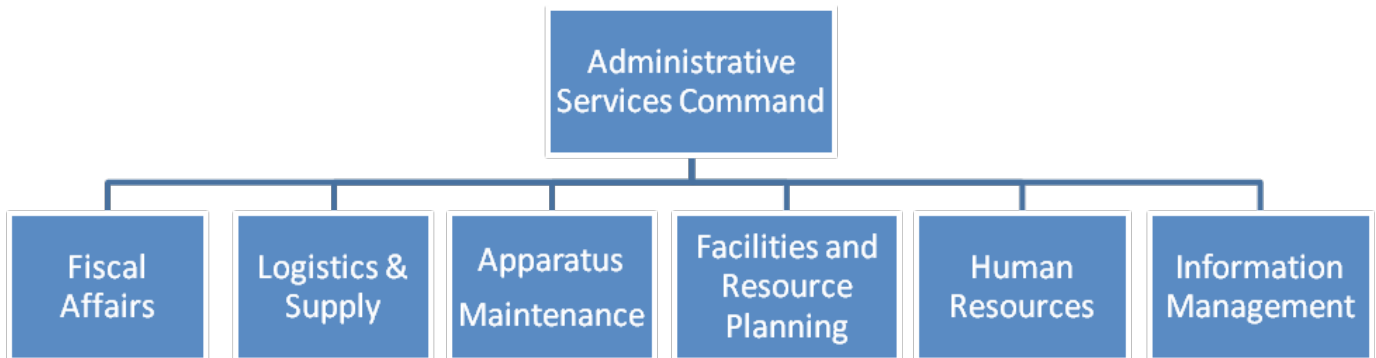
The less-than-ideal job assignment or work environment, ongoing elevated stress levels, dissatisfaction with where life is right this moment are real concerns and not a pretend disease. However, the effects these situations can have on our overall health, happiness and well-being can cripple us just as if we were stricken with a true illness. The focus on how much better life would be if we were only over there instead of here, or had that instead of this, can rob us of the tremendous power we possess in our current, everyday lives.

Each person working for the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department, in whatever capacity, impacts and has the potential to impact the lives of dozens of people daily. Every task, every order, every duty, has a ripple effect. Do your job poorly and multiple people could be compromised. Perform your job with integrity and with excellence in mind and you have a real chance of making a difference during the course of your day.

What you do matters, how you feel is important, how you view life can make or break this moment or an entire career. Do not give your significance or power away to the future, pay attention to what you have within your grasp right now. You are in control of how you function, how you think, and how you feel. We always have a choice as to how we are going to be despite our circumstances. It is definitely challenging to find our personal power when we are surrounded by life stressors, but not an impossible goal.

You always have a choice: you can wish for the future to be now, or you can pay attention to the present and decide what type of person you are going to be in each moment. This is not a mandate, just a reminder...

A COMMAND PERSPECTIVE: Administrative Services Command



Led by Lieutenant Colonel Angela Peden, the Administrative Services Command is one of three commands within the Prince George's County Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department. It is comprised of six unique areas of responsibility: Fiscal Affairs, Logistics and Supply, Apparatus Maintenance, Facilities and Resource Planning, Information Management, and Human Resources.

FISCAL AFFAIRS:

Fiscal Affairs is responsible for managing Fire/EMS payroll, grants, preparing the budget, audits, reporting, and reconciling/monitoring expenditure activity. In addition, the Fiscal Affairs unit prepares forecasts, as well as reports our performance in relation to the Department's goals and objectives. With these duties comes the responsibility to make financial recommendations, suggestions, and provide financial expert advice (based on experience and trends) for current spending and future planning. In addition, Fiscal Affairs is responsible for overseeing the (52) budget for the Volunteers.

LOGISTICS AND SUPPLY:

The office of Logistics and Supply is responsible for ensuring that each sector of the Department is provided with the supplies and/or services necessary to operate efficiently during emergency and non-emergency situations.

APPARATUS MAINTENANCE:

The Apparatus Maintenance unit is responsible for all maintenance and repairs for all apparatus, equipment and Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) within the Fire/EMS Department. The unit works in conjunction with the Fire Commission in preparing and monitoring the volunteer maintenance budget regarding apparatus and equipment repairs. Apparatus Maintenance also prepares and monitors the Career Apparatus Maintenance budget, develops specifications and procures new apparatus as needed and ensures compliance with all County, State and Federal regulations regarding apparatus and equipment.

FACILITIES AND RESOURCE PLANNING:

Facilities and Resource Planning oversees the administrative process of hiring and developing employees so that they become more valuable to the organization. This includes planning and administering recruitment; conducting a hiring process and maintaining the promotional/career development process. This office also oversees the renovation and construction of new Fire Stations, as well as managing Capital Improvement Projects (building maintenance). Facilities and Resource Planning is also responsible for coordinating and administering promotional processes for sworn employees.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT:

Information Management serves as liaison between the Fire/EMS Department and the Office of Information Technology and Communications (OITC) as it relates to the development, enhancement, and maintenance of the Department's software applications and servers. Information Management also has the responsibility of developing, implementing, and administering policies to ensure the integrity, confidentiality, and availability of the Fire/EMS Department's data resources and automated system components. The functional area also serves as the Department's Custodian of Records.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

The Human Resources office is responsible for providing strategic and coherent administrative processes to the organization's most valued assets – its employees, who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of the mission, goals and objectives of the Fire/EMS Department. Human Resources is responsible for entering all personnel actions into the County database. These actions include new hires, promotions, merits, EMT-P and EMT-I certification, transfers, demotions, rehires, resignations, retirements, incentive awards and address and name changes. Human Resources also manages Tele-Staff, updating salary information, address and name changes.

"MAYDAY" - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

utility box truck. The conversion of the interior box of the utility truck includes elements required for participants to ascend steps onto an upper floor landing and a collapsible floor which will allow them to feel the unexpected jolting experience of a floor collapse. The firefighter has been previously instructed to ensure their SCBA and PPE are still in place and then transmit, by way of their portable radio, a correct MAYDAY message.

The drill is designed not only for firefighters, but also incident commanders that will receive the radio mayday message and act accordingly. The mobile mayday simulator has been used at select stations in order to collect data and evaluate the program. The program has received very positive feedback from both evaluators and participants. Acting Fire Chief Marc S. Bashoor stated, "This training will be beneficial to everyone that participates. We will be protecting and saving ourselves. Remember; Safety First ensures everyone goes home."