



What's Happening

Navy Fire and Emergency Services Newsletter
Protecting Those Who Defend America



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Email the Editor:
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The Military Metaphor

By Ronny J. Coleman



The fire service has often been characterized as paramilitary. The reason for this is because the roots of our organizational structure were derived from military origins. The "corps of vigils" the original Roman Fire Brigade was literally a unit of the Roman Army. And we have proceeded forth throughout our history by adding additional components from the military. For example, the European Fire Service has a very strong military construct. The American Fire Service has so many vestiges left over from the Civil War that it literally shaped the language and

vocabulary of the fire service at the turn of the century.

Moreover, almost every generation of the fire service up until fairly recently had a strong element from veterans returning to serve in the fire service after they had military experience.

It is no wonder therefore that we had a tendency to think of firefighting as being the same as military combat. That may be good and it may be bad for us. For while we use many of the military terms in our profession there are certainly significant differences between going into combat and going to fight a fire.

What got me to thinking about this was a recent series of newspaper articles that involved photographs of young soldiers in Iraq accompanied by pictures of major fire losses that had young firefighters in the forefront. In both cases the images had similar connotation; force against force.

Nowhere does this analogy come quite as close to being real as the fact that people die in combat. However, it is not necessary that people die in combat. It is a potential. It is a probability. But it is also fairly true that the side that loses more of its people to injury and death in a war usually loses.

If we wish to continue the military metaphor in the fire service then perhaps we should go back to the military and examine some key questions about how true our methods of operations match one another. For example, in the military you seldom find combat individuals, i.e. those carrying a rifle and/or firing weapons are above the age of 40 years old.



Supporting the Fleet, Fighter, and Family



Clipboard (Cont.)

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Granted for the most part you will find staff NCO's and maybe senior members of those companies that have age but the vast majority of those who are sent into combat are youthful, lithe, flexible and in good shape. Can we honestly say that about the fire service? I have been at a tremendous number of recruit academies and can attest to the fact that we tend to hire people who meet that criteria upon appointment but how long do they stay that way and are they in that condition when they reach the end of their potential useful life as a combat firefighter?

There is a reason that active combat is limited to the young. For one thing there is a tremendous need for the discharge of energy, a directness and endurance that tends to erode over time. So when the fire service talks about its combat fire force in comparison to the military we need to recognize that we have not clearly established the physical aspect of firefighting as something that needs to be maintained up to and including the day a person walks off of the fire ground. We have, consciously or unconsciously condoned the fact that as individuals get more tenure in the fire service they are not held as physically accountable as they had the day they came on the job.

A second interesting concept to me is the idea that in the military there are enlisted people and there are officers. Officers don't come from the enlisted ranks. Generally speaking most officers come from an institution of some kind that provides that person with a broader based education prior to them becoming an officer

candidate. In our delivery system we tend to believe that everybody starts at the bottom including the organizational equivalent of the General; the Fire Chief.

On one hand I tend to believe that the military model doesn't work as well in civilian life for the very simple reason that there is not a categorization of classes between officers and enlisted personnel as there is in the military. Nonetheless there might be a lesson or two we could learn from this idea of treating officers as different from everybody else. One of our means of achieving the same goal is to educate people to the highest possible level before we promote them to officers.

I can almost hear somebody in the fire station saying out loud "education means nothing without experience". I believe an argument can be made to support the idea that what makes experience really relevant is when it relates back to a person's knowledge base. In other words if people know more and more before they experience more and more they tend to learn more from it. Therefore, it may not be an entirely bad idea for us to consider the idea that no one becomes an officer without an adequate education.

And how about this whole idea laying your life on the line. When a military officer looks his troops in the eye and tells them that they are going after an objective there is a high degree of possibility that some of those people are not going to come back.



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David Hackworth one of the most decorated military officers of the Vietnam War in his book, *About Face* clearly articulated the idea that an officer who doesn't plan for and doesn't prepare for the nth degree of safety is going to lose a lot more people than those who actually practice what they really are going to do in reality. In other words, when a military officer tells a young person that they are going to face an enemy they make it really clear that the enemy has to be killed or the battle will not be won. However, it is also true that the enemy is trying to kill you at the same time. That is how battles are lost.

Our analogy on the fire ground is that when we send people forward to do difficult jobs in the fire service they need to know that they could die. That may sound a little bit harsh maybe even outright dramatic but the truth is firefighters do die fighting fire. And some of the reasons they do suffer that kind of tragic loss is the fact that they clearly don't understand that the enemy is trying kill them too.

I have often compared how some people approach the fire ground to a story that was told in Hackworth's book. He witnessed a training exercise one day in which individuals went walking up the hill waving their weapons and firing blanks as if it were a game. When those same individuals got into actual combat many soldiers were slaughtered because they exhibited the same kind of behavior that they had learned under tutelage in the training program, i.e. to treat it as if it were a game. I have seen that same kind of mindset on the fire ground. This is not a game. It is deadly business. If we allow people to treat the training experiences that they have in preparation for going into combat trivially then you can pretty well expect that they are not going to respond appropriately under fire.

I have born witness in more than one case to watching individuals who know exactly what they are supposed to do, do something entirely different because someone has allowed them to get away with it under training. The best example I can give of this is standing up in a super heated atmosphere. I know of at least two cases in which individuals found themselves in a confrontational situation in a fire in which they immediately stood up and placed themselves in absolute jeopardy fully compromising everything they had been told about staying low and moving out of the way.

Upon examination it was determined that in many cases these individuals stood up because that is exactly what they were allowed to do during training fires in which only smoke bombs were being used.

Hackworth says practice doesn't make perfect. He says that practice makes permanent. Therefore, the military analogy is that if we are going to keep our people safe we have to treat every scenario as if it were real and that there are no "wooden guns" and artificiality aspects to our training environment.

Perhaps the last analogy to use between the fire service and the military is the manner in which we approach the battle. The concept of incident command systems was not invented by the fire service. If you look very carefully at the legacy of the process that lead to the creation of incident command within the fire service you will find that it has strong ties back to the military.

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Ronny J. Coleman

The people that planned the invasion of Europe had a very similar model. As a matter of fact in my archives I have quotations from Sir Ira Massey-Shaw talking about the use of the incident command system clear back in the 1880's. The fire service sometimes acts as if we just invented ICS as a result of major catastrophic fires. The truth is that it was invented by others a long time ago and we just finally figured out that it would work for us.

The lesson to be learned from this is to pay close attention to how the military has evolved their method of managing the battleground. But if we are still concerned about the span of control, chain of command and all the other principles of organizational structure on the battle field of the future we should be copying the military model of identifying components of it having to do with technology, data collection, intelligence, and other components that are much more sophisticated than our use of the incident command system as merely a management model.

On the scene of the largest fires that we generally do a fabulous job of putting together that incident command system. However what we do not have is the technology transfer in the fire service that the military has been utilizing to become smarter and smarter in coping with the battlefield.

So far in this article I have more or less alluded to the fact that while we call ourselves paramilitary we still don't have quite that order and discipline that the military has. On the other hand maybe it is also true that the military could learn from the fire service. A lesson that I would like to see the military adopt is that of prevention as opposed to reaction. Because as we all realize whenever wars are fought people are lost. It is interesting that while we remember our forefather's admonition that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure sometimes we forget that lesson ourselves. Our military might has grown over the last 250 years because we faced against some of the world's most malevolent administrations. Likewise the fire service has developed a tremendous amount of combat capability because we faced the harsh reality that fire is an unrelenting enemy of society too.

So the military metaphor may have its place in the fire service. We should continue to adopt those things from the men and women of the military so that the men and women of the fire service can perform their jobs more adequately, more safely and more effectively in the future.

PUNCH'S FANCY PORTRAITS.—No. 15.



CAPTAIN SHAW—THE FIRE-KING.

"Through fire
I do wander everywhere."
Midsummer Night's Dream.

"Oh, did you never hear of a jolly young fireman?"—*Ballad adapted.*

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Last Alarms

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TCoOO Update



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Last Alarms

The USFA has reported 46 line of duty deaths to date in 2019. The following line of duty deaths were reported since we published our last issue:

Scott Neumann ♥
Stuart, FL

Paul Quattlebaum 🚒
Lexington, SC

Paul Rotondaro 🚒
Gustine, CA

Christian Johnson
Okanogan, WA

Dale Jaynes ♥
Burdett, NY

Greg Garza 🚒
San Antonio, TX

Steven Henderson 🚒
Louise, TX

Robert Bush ♥
Homer, NY

Michael Johnston 🚒
Equality, AL

2019 Totals

♥ 24 (52%) 🚒 10 (21%)

♥ Indicates cardiac related death

🚒 Indicates vehicle accident related death

Taking Care of Our Own

There are currently 11 DoD firefighters in the Taking Care of Own program.

Taking Care of Our Own invites all DoD F&ES personnel to donate ONE HOUR of annual leave to DoD F&ES members in need to enable them to focus on recovery rather than financial distress.

Name	Location	Point of Contact
Neil Hogan	Navy Region Southwest HQ, CA	Joyce.Matanane@navy.mil
Christopher Carneal	Fort Carson, CO	Karen.M.Connors2.civ@mail.mil
Dana Carneal	Fort Carson, CO	Karen.M.Connors2.civ@mail.mil
Thomas Maury	NAS JRB New Orleans, LA	Matthew.Spreitzer@navy.mil
Darren Lewis	Fort Stewart, GA	Carolyn.E.Colon4.civ@mail.mil
Mike Lecik	Fort Lee, VA	Demetrice.Mccain2.civ@mail.mil
Rosa Ferreira	Naval Base San Diego, CA	Joyce.Matanane@navy.mil
Timothy Ramsey	Naval District Washington, DC	Christopher.Scully@navy.mil
Jeremy Anderson	Navy F&ES Gulf Coast	Candace.Leslie1@navy.mil
Martin Flores	Fort Carson, CO	Karen.M.Connors2.civ@mail.mil
Chris Bishop	Navy F&ES Gulf Coast	Candace.Leslie1@navy.mil

We recently emailed all the service component chiefs with the proper procedures to enroll someone in the Taking Care of Our Own program. There was a recent trend of people using their own formats and forms which worked okay until the inevitable breach of personal identifying information (PII). We were very concerned about protecting PII when the program was stood up in 2003 and we designed standard procedures and forms to address those concerns.

Please contact your service component chief if you haven't seen this information recently.

Raymond P. Porter

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DoD Hall of Famer Answers Last Alarm



Raymond P. "Chief" Porter, 71, died 12 October 2019, at his home, after a brief but valiant battle with cancer. He was born 20 September 1948, in Lincoln, ME the son of Albert "Tiny" and Ruth (Chatterton) Porter.

Ray graduated from Winterport High School, Class of 1966. Following graduation, he served first with the USAF Air National Guard before joining the U.S. Navy, serving from 1967-1969. Ray furthered his education at Ricker College, Thomas Nelson Community College, Saint Leo University, and Golden Gate University, pursuing numerous degrees in Fire Science.

Ray began his career as a USAF Fire Fighter on 2 February 1970 as a trainee at Loring AFB in Limestone, and retired as Command Fire Chief on 3 November 1998 from Dover AFB, DE. In his 28-year career with the Air Force fire service, Ray served at Loring AFB as a firefighter and then moved on to Assistant Chief, Fire Chief, AMC Command Fire Protection Specialist, and USAFE Command Fire Chief, retiring from Dover AFB DE. In 2014, he was inducted into the Department of Defense Military Fire Fighter Heritage Foundation Hall of Fame.

Robert "Bobby" Vick



Retired Norfolk Naval Shipyard Firefighter Passes



Robert Dell "Bobby" Vick, age 97, passed away on Thursday, 3 October 2019. Bobby was the 13th of 17 children. He was born on 21 September 1922 in Portsmouth, VA. .

Bobby served in the 884th Air Engineering Squadron of the United States Army (1941-1944) and was assigned to the European Transport Command to Germany near the end of WWII. He retired from the Norfolk Naval Shipyard in 1974 after 28 years of service as a firefighter. Bobby owned his own construction company and built many homes in the Tidewater area. He also built

many beautiful homes on the Outer Banks of North Carolina during his retirement years.

Bobby was a lifetime member of the Elks Lodge (BPOE # 82) in Portsmouth and was the first "Elk of the Year" for that lodge. His passion was boating and fishing and entertaining his loved ones and friends. He was an avid Redskin's fan and loved watching his grandson play baseball through college.

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Back in the Day

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Send The Water

Photos and story by Tom Shand

Dating back to horse drawn steamers and hose wagons providing adequate fire streams has been one of the more important aspects of engine company operations. The father of fire service hydraulics is John Freeman, who came from West Bridgton, ME and studied at MIT and witnessed the conflagration in Boston during 1872. Fire departments understood the need for a reliable water supply to protect their communities, but lacked the capabilities to provide adequate long distance fire streams. Producing fire streams using two and a half inch hose with primitive hand held nozzles had limited reach and penetration, resulting in significant blazes and property loss.



During Freeman's first jobs at a local water company and Factory Mutual Fire Insurance he studied municipal water supplies and fire streams resulting in two research papers entitled *Experiments Relating to the Hydraulics of Fire Streams* and *The Nozzle as an Accurate Water Meter*. His later work included the development of data related to friction loss in piping, fire hydrants, hoses and nozzles. He studied the impact of different angles of elevation and their impact on stream reach based upon different nozzle pressures. This research work conducted over 130 years ago impacts today's fire ground hydraulic calculations along with the design of smooth bore nozzles.

In 1881 John Freeman developed the Underwriter's Playpipe a hand held nozzle that was constructed of brass with a red cord wrap around the 30 inch long barrel.

The nozzle had a two and a half inch inlet with an inch and three



quarters male outlet. The beauty of this nozzle was the stream reach, height and distance that could be achieved with little break up of the fire stream. The characteristics of this nozzle design were used in later years when large caliber deck guns, monitors and ladder pipe appliances were developed.

Steamer pumpers of this era were classified with different sizes ranging from sixth size capable of producing 300 GPM up to extra first size with a rating of up to 1150 gpm. Based upon the capacity of each size steamer they could produce one to three fire streams with nozzle diameters ranging from 7/8 inch to 2.00 inches. These hydraulic guidelines were the beginning of standard pump pressures to develop fire streams for hand lines.

During 1869 the first elevated hose tower was produced by Skinner for the Chicago Fire Department that enabled master streams to be produced from a point forty feet above the ground. Different concepts of the elevated water tower were tried, some unsuccessfully until 1886 when Chief E.W. Hale of the Kansas City Fire Department developed a water tower capable of throwing streams from a height of sixty feet. This tower was built by the E.B. Preston Company in

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Tom Shand

Chicago and became the preeminent water tower design used by major departments across the country.



With the development of centrifugal fire pumps that were capable of producing up to 1500 gpm at 150 PSI, the use of fixed master stream appliances on engine company apparatus became more common. Companies such as Samuel Eastman and Morse designed fixed deck guns and wagon pipes that were equipped with long barrel stream shapers and smooth bore nozzles up to 2.25 inches in diameter. These appliances would be supplied with up to four two and half inch hose lines and could provide heavy caliber streams on the fire ground. When compared to today's appliances with portable ground monitors rated at 600 gpm to fixed deck guns capable of 3000 gpm the hydraulic calculations are largely based on the work of John Freeman Back in the Day.



USFA Report



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U.S. Firefighter Fatalities in 2018

The U.S. Fire Administration's annual report on firefighter fatalities in the United States is now available for 2018.

Eighty-two firefighters died while on duty.

- 44 were volunteer firefighters.
- 33 were career firefighters.
- 5 were wildland firefighters.



The 2018 report identifies all on-duty fatalities to increase understanding of their causes and how they can be prevented. Topics covered include type of duty, cause and nature of injury, multiple fatality incidents, firefighter ages, time of injury, and incidents by state.

Click [here](#) to download the report.

On the Job - Korea

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Navy Region Korea

By Thomas Lyszkowski, Fire Chief

A primary mission of Navy Region Korea is to strengthen the relationship between the United States and our ally, the Republic of Korea. Navy Region Korea Fire and Emergency Services are doing their part by actively engaging their ROK Navy and City of Changwon fire department counterparts by sharing knowledge, experiences, and camaraderie through mutual training and full scale emergency training exercises.



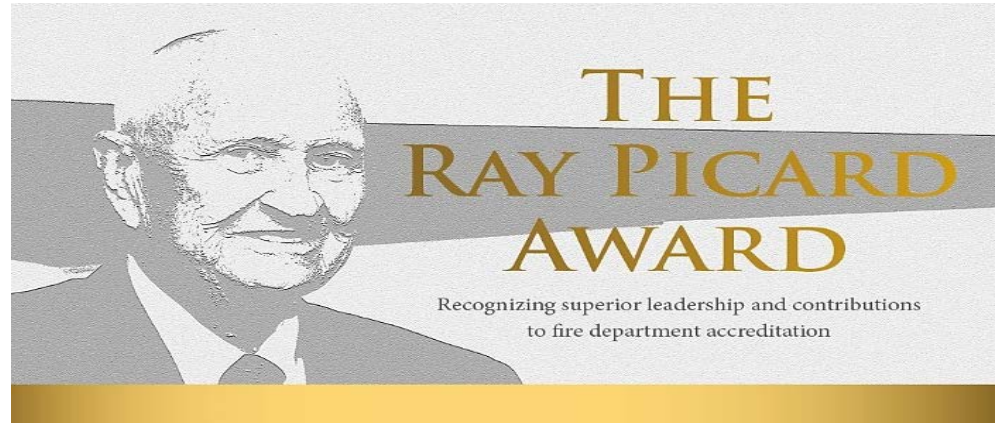
CPSE Award

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Nominations For The Annual Ray Picard Award



Assist CPSE in recognizing the great work of your friends and colleagues by nominating them for the Ray Picard Award.

Nomination packages must be received no later than 16 December 2019 at 5:00 p.m. EST.

This annual award recognizes an individual who exemplifies the ability, character, dedication, leadership, and visionary attributes Chief Picard exhibited. The individual should personify Chief Picard's contributions and exceptional leadership to the CFAI and the accreditation of fire service organizations.

Eligibility:

Any Peer Assessor, individual member of an accredited agency, former CFAI Commissioner, or former CPSE Director is eligible to compete. In addition, individuals who have served in the initial development of the agency accreditation process are eligible for consideration for this award. CPSE staff, contractors and current members of the CPSE board, CPC, or CFAI are ineligible to compete for this award.

Criteria:

Individuals will be assessed for their significant achievements or contributions to the assessment and accreditation process in the following areas:

- Accomplishments (within the accreditation process)
- Initiative (including helping others with the accreditation process)
- Technical competence (including serving as a peer assessor, team leader, or instructor)
- Leadership ability (including spreading the word)
- Additional achievements and contributions

Click [here](#) to download the award criteria and nomination form.

The award recipient will be formally recognized during the opening general session of the CPSE Excellence Conference on 3 March 2020 at the Caribe Royale Orlando, Orlando, FL.

Suicide

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Understanding Suicide & The Fire Service

By Dr. Richard Gist, Vickie Taylor, Dr. Patricia Watson, Frank Leto

There has been a recent surge of concern regarding suicide rates in the American fire service. Suicides are devastating losses that leave a wake of grief and guilt among those who surrounded the victim.

This is felt very deeply in the fire service, where camaraderie, commitment to one another and a sense family connection define the very nature of station life.

Understanding suicide is a critical part of any effort to avert these tragic deaths. Suicide is a complex and difficult problem, our understanding of which remains quite limited. As pressing as it is to do all we can to help, it is important that we first make very certain to fully, critically and objectively understand what we know, what we do not know, what can actually help, and what, despite our best intentions, may not.

Digging into the research

Forbes recently published an article with the provocative headline, “More Firefighters Committed Suicide In 2017 Than Died in Line of Duty.” The article opens by reporting a finding that rates of suicidal ideation (thinking about suicide) and attempts are 10 times those of the general population.

Are these statements really true? What do they really mean?

First, one must understand the statistics here are invariably riddled with complexity. Based on population epidemiology, firefighters—who are still quite predominantly white males with an aging overall demographic—would be expected to experience more suicides than line-of-duty deaths (LODDs). While this indeed means that firefighters are at greater risk from suicide than from LODD, it does not mean or even necessarily imply that being a firefighter is a risk factor for death by suicide.

Suicide rates and patterns vary quite significantly across demographics such as age, gender and race. White males are distinct in that their suicide rate rises pretty much consistently as they age. They are also more prone to utilize firearms in their suicidal actions, resulting in a much greater likelihood of a single, instantly lethal attempt. By the time they reach midlife, suicide becomes an unfortunately frequent mode of death. But is the suicide rate for firefighters significantly greater than that of the demographically comparable population?

This is not a simple question. Death records do not consistently or reliably report occupation, and most U.S. firefighters are volunteers, whose principal occupation would likely be listed as something else. The few studies we hold of solid cross-sectional cohorts, such as a recently reported study of the Philadelphia Fire Department, suggest that rates among active firefighters are no greater than, and may actually be somewhat less than, the demographically comparable general population.



Suicide (Cont.)

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Firefighting might ultimately provide more protection than risk, at least while the firefighter remains active in good standing and hence part of a strong support system. That is important to examine and understand because, if that's true, our first and best defense may be to accentuate and amplify those aspects of the occupation that lend this protection. So what might explain the seemingly radical differences between the Philadelphia study and the survey reported in Forbes? They were actually conducted by the same research program and some of the same researchers. The Philadelphia study looked at what we call a structured Deptor strategic sample of all member deaths within a single, large, metropolitan department across a broad expanse of time. As such, it yielded an excellent cross section of all firefighters in that organization but is limited to that specific organization and circumstance.



The survey reported in Forbes instead utilized what is known as a convenience sample, drawn from persons who chose to visit a set of web pages that dealt with issues related to firefighter behavioral health. As such, it was not conducted on a representative cross section of firefighters in general (called a probability sample) but a sample of persons who, for whatever reasons, were looking for information on these topics and chose to look in one particular place. It is certainly possible—maybe even likely—that their personal interests and experiences might differ from the remainder of the firefighting population. Accordingly, we need to be very cautious about extrapolating responses from either study to the firefighter population as a whole.

There are other reasons to remain cautious. Still another study, again involving the same research group, conducted what is known as a systematic review of studies addressing this question over time. Firefighters are often lumped in these studies into a broader category dubbed “protective services.” While the professions included share certain commonalities, the largest number of individuals included are typically military and law enforcement personnel—populations whose characteristics and exposures differ radically from our own. Their suicide rates and their implications can differ radically as well.

While there has been a sizable number of studies examining law enforcement suicide, even there the rates of suicide are equivocal and do not necessarily exceed those expected in comparable cohorts of the general population. Studies addressing firefighter suicide have been more limited. What few have reported occupationally specific suicide rates have shown firefighters to be at or below rates for similarly situated demographic cohorts. While there is some cause to suggest that firefighters may think about suicide more frequently than others—not necessarily unexpected, given the likelihood that they will confront suicides during their careers—the evidence does not suggest that those thoughts necessarily lead to suicide outcomes and may even suggest that being a firefighter can lend a protective element despite those exposures.

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Moving forward carefully and cautiously

Firefighting is a tough and demanding job and it can add a lot of baggage to a person's life. It also, however, adds immeasurable rewards. We're just beginning to understand this at more serious levels. We must keep in mind that these relationships and impacts can be very complex and very dynamic, often being different between individuals and varying over the course of an individual's career. One very reasonable hypothesis now under scrutiny is that the experience of being a firefighter generates a lot of exposures that remain mitigated by the strong social support and belongingness that the profession provides—but when one is removed from that supportive context by retirement, injury, separation or such, that mitigation might be negated and risk could then become amplified. Perhaps the most important message is this: The problem of suicide is very complex and what data we hold are limited, ambiguous and often misunderstood or misstated. We need to move forward carefully and cautiously while striving to provide all the solid support we can to those who take up this vital protective role in our communities. Overstating or mischaracterizing the problem can risk paradoxical impacts that can be anything but helpful.

It is a natural tendency to overstate a problem when trying to emphasize its importance and stimulate needed action. In this case especially, it should not be necessary. Suicide is a pressing public health concern throughout the population, and it deserves to be treated just as seriously among firefighters, regardless of relative or absolute rates. We should address it because we are committed to our service, our colleagues and our mission of service and protection. It is simply the right thing to do.

We spend a considerable amount of time, money and effort preparing for and dealing with LODDs. It is reasonable that we should. LODDs are devastating, recovery is difficult for both co-workers and their organization, and most are ultimately preventable through behavioral actions. Suicides are similarly devastating, sometimes perhaps even more so, but for far too long we failed to acknowledge or address them in our ranks.

Epidemiologically, we would predict from general population data for similar demographic cohorts that a department would be about thrice as likely to experience this disruption as to experience a LODD in any given year. It is right and reasonable that we give serious thought and attention to how to address these when they occur, how to recognize evolving risk in those around us, how to help prevent that risk from ripening into tragic and irreversible action, and most importantly, how to prevent it wherever and however we can. Building on the supportive factors inherent in the profession may, for now, be the single most effective thing we can do. It is certainly an important first step.



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Resources for help

Resources such as Stress First Aid (available through the First Responder Center of Excellence associated with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation) can help cement those supportive relationships within the daily workings of your department. Resources such as the International Association of Fire Fighters' peer support team training can provide a trusted resource at the station level to bolster resilience and help those in need take the sometimes-difficult step of seeking professional help when necessary. Effective behavioral health or employee assistance programs can ensure that resources are always available to address daily problems in living as well as major disruptions and concerns. They should be a part of every fire service organization.

Still, the things that matter most may well be things that lie at our disposal daily. They are hallmarks of well-structured, well-run, effective organizations: sound, responsive and effective management of the organization and its sub-units; reliable, structured, functional incident command; competent, consistent and compassionate supervision; leadership at all levels. A sound, well-run organization will find its way through even the most challenging of situations and emerge stronger, pretty much regardless of what we do or do not do after the fact. A struggling, dysfunctional organization will fray and fragment after even minor challenges, again pretty much regardless of what we do or do not do after the fact. The best prediction of how you'll be two years after a major disruption, whether as an organization or as an individual, is how you were doing two days before. Build on the basics.

Dr. Richard Gist is principal assistant to the director of the Kansas City, MO, Fire Department.

Vickie Taylor, LCSW, has provided behavioral health consultation to Prince William County, VA, public safety agencies since 1985.

Dr. Patricia Watson has been a senior educational specialist for the National Center for PTSD since 1998.

Capt. Frank Leto is a 35-year veteran of the FDNY and the deputy director of its Counseling Service Unit (CSU).

FIREFIGHTER SUICIDE AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RESOURCES

From The Secret List 9/30/2019 – 2000 Hours www.FireFighterCloseCalls.com:

SUICIDE HOTLINE USA: 1 (800) 273-8255

SUICIDE HOTLINES CANADA: <https://suicideprevention.ca/need-help/>

SUICIDE HOTLINES WORLDWIDE: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_suicide_crisis_lines

NATIONAL ACTION ALLIANCE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION: <https://theactionalliance.org/>

IAFF: <http://client.prod.iaff.org/#page=behavioralhealth>

NVFC: <https://www.nvfc.org/programs/share-the-load-program/>

ROSECRANCE FIREFIGHTER PROGRAM: <http://www.rosecrance.org/substance-abuse/florian-firefighter-paramedic-police-military-treatment-center/>

NFFF: <https://www.everyonegoeshome.com/2017/02/08/prevent-firefighter-suicides/>

FIREFIGHTER PERSONAL SURVIVAL: <http://firefighterclosecalls.com/category/personal-survival/>

SAFE CALL NOW: <http://safecallnow.org/>

FIREFIGHTER BEHAVIORAL HEALTH: <http://www.ffbha.org/>

THE CORDICO GUARDIAN SYSTEM: <https://www.cordico.com/first-responder-mobile-app/>

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Why?

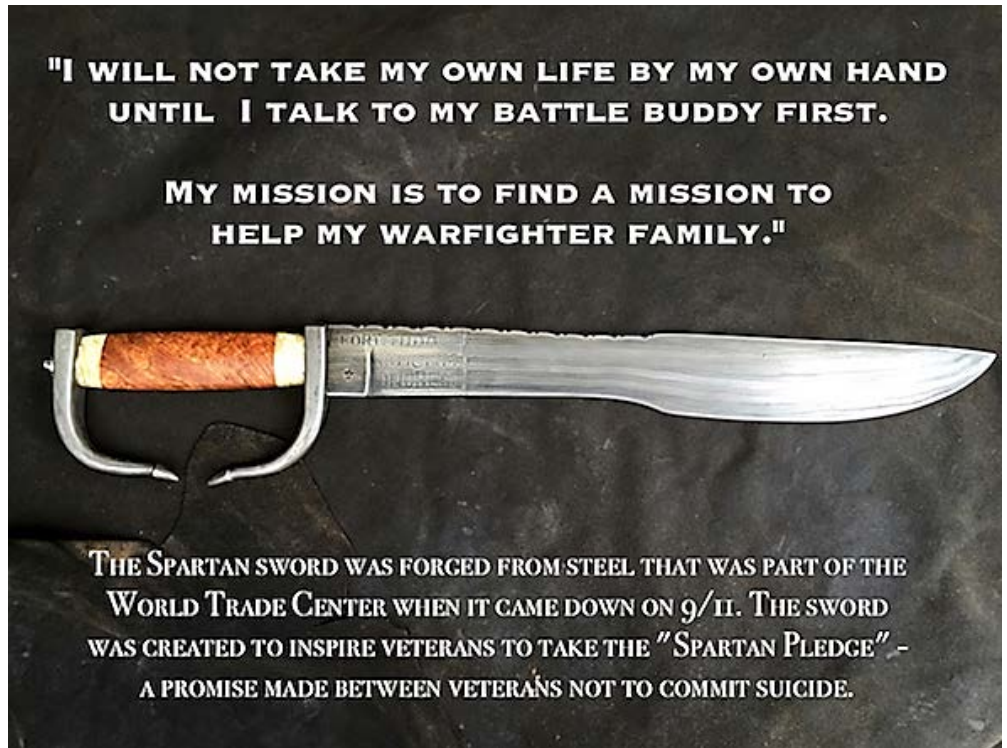


SEEKING HELP IS NOT WEAKNESS. YOUR LIFE MATTERS.

Spartan Pledge



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SA Matters!

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Understanding Stress – Part 4: Hyper Vigilance

By Rich Gasaway, PhD.

Welcome to part four of the series on understanding stress. In the first three segments I talked about the various kinds of stress people in high risk jobs can experience. For seasoned veterans, the information shared likely served as a good review. For newer members, it may have alerted you to the stressors that may challenge your situational awareness.

For the balance of this series I am going to address the cognitive ill-effects of stress on decision making. This is where the proverbial ‘rubber meets the road.’ If the previous installments were in the nice to know category, the upcoming segments are in the critical to know category. Let’s talk hyper vigilance.

What in tarnation is hyper vigilance? Is it a good thing or a bad thing? Should you have or should you avoid it? What in tarnation is tarnation? So many questions, so little time. Let’s jump in.

Hyper Vigilance

Hyper vigilance is a biological response to stress that causes your senses to go on high alert for danger. Like NORAD in a DEFCON 2 alert status in the movie War Games, your body goes on super alert status because it senses there is danger in the area. The hormones trigger biological changes that increase the acuity of your senses.

Stated another way, hyper vigilance can help your eyes see things that they might not have otherwise seen if you were not under stress. Likewise, hyper vigilance can help your ears hear things that they might not have otherwise heard if you were not under stress. And, for the sake of avoiding the annoyance of being repetitive, suffice it to say that all your senses are equally hyper aroused and on high alert. The stress of an emergency scene leads your brain to think there is danger in the area which makes your thinking (and in some cases your actions) primal.

Primal Goal #1: Survive!

The goal of the body and brain in a stress-induced, hyper aroused state is simple. Survive. What is out there that can kill you? Can you kill it? Can you outrun it? Those are the questions your brain is grappling with and your alert senses will help it make that determination. The human body is well-suited (based on genetic adaptation) to deal with these short-term stressors.

It was that kind of stress your cave-dwelling ancestors dealt with every day. Eat or be eaten. It was a pretty simple existence out there on the Serengeti. There were no worries about 401k plans, bad economies, looming mortgage payments or kids not doing well in school. The stresses of your daily lives are very different and in many ways (as I had discussed in Part 2 of this series) far more chronic and cumulative. On the upside, you don’t have to worry about a T-rex eating your kids when they leave the house.

So we’ve established it. Hyper vigilance is a good thing! Well, don’t pop the Champagne corks yet. We’re not done.

SA Matters! **(Cont.)**

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Rich Gasaway, PhD.

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The downside of hyper vigilance

Your brain is a wonderment of science, that is for certain. It can do things that no computer can duplicate. But it does have some limitations. One of those limitations is how much information it can take in, process, comprehend and recall at any one time. That question of just how much information that is intrigued the research community and in 1956 a cognitive psychologist at Princeton University named George Miller provided the shocking answer.

Seven. The average person can hold about seven pieces of information in working (short term) memory, give or take two (for those slightly above and slightly below average performers). Miller's studies have been robustly confirmed in numerous studies since. Coincidentally, it was the results of Miller's research that led to the original seven-digit telephone numbering system.

This is where hyper vigilance can turn ugly in a hurry. Because your senses are hyper aroused, they are taking in more information about your surroundings. If your surroundings are simple and basic (like fighting a saber-toothed tiger in the jungle of the East Savannah (as your cave-dwelling ancestors did), then you didn't have to worry about your brain getting overwhelmed with information.

But, put that brain on an emergency scene with dozens, maybe even hundreds of pieces of data coming at you and you are on the fast-track for overload. Some the data is in writing, some audible, most is visual and nearly all of it is changing rapidly. It is easy to get overwhelmed in a hurry.

Dr. Gasaway's Advice

The solution to this problem was uncovered during the research conducted by cognitive psychologist Gary Klein, also known for his discovery of the Recognition-Primed Decision Making Process. Klein's research involved trying to understand the decision making processes used by fireground commanders. One of the questions to be answered was: How do you make sense of it all? How do you process and comprehend so many clues and cues?

The answer was a stunner and entirely unexpected. The expert-level fireground commanders said they don't try to process and comprehend all the information. In fact, there is just a small number of critical pieces of information essential for making a good decision. Commanders noted if they tried to comprehend it all, it would be impossible.

So what should be on the short list for critical information to capture and process? Obviously the answer would vary for each type of emergency you deal with. For residential dwelling fires I wrote about this previously so instead of rehashing it, I'll simply make this sentence a clickable link to that article.

The take-away lesson is: Stress causes hyper vigilance which increases your acuity. In a complex, fast-paced environment, that can accelerate cognitive overload. Less information, so long as it's the right information, is your best ally. There are a couple more caveats about the information. The more complex the information, the more likely you are to be overwhelmed. The more detailed the information is, the more likely you are to be confused. And the more unfamiliar the information is, the more time you will need because you have to learn what the information means.

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Are You Doing Your Part?

By Rick Lasky

There are those who are into the job and those who are not. Working with those who are into it makes for an incredible experience. Whether it's on your career department or volunteer company, they make the shift, drill night, or monthly meeting fly by. You're almost a little sad when it's over and it's time to leave. You walk out of the firehouse already thinking about your next shift or the next time that pager goes off for a run. Even those who have time on the job will say it's the best job in the world. Hey, everybody has a bad day or month, but there is a reason why little kids look up to you. There is a reason why you're in so many children's books, the reason they point at the fire engine and not the delivery truck, and the reason there is a whole aisle full of toys at the toy store dedicated to you, the firefighter. To a child, you're a hero but more importantly a role model. So, the question is, are you doing your part to live up to that image, that reputation ?

One of the greatest experiences you will have in the fire service is when you surround yourself with people who love the job so much you can't help but admire them. They talk shop; show up early for their shifts, meetings, and drills nights; and get you fired up about being a firefighter without even knowing that they do. It just happens! Their energy is addicting, and it spreads like wildfire, sucking everyone who is willing to love the job just a little into it even more. It is the best job in the world !

Sadly, one of the worst experiences you will have is working with someone who isn't into the job. It's just a paycheck to them, just a job, or they're just there for the T-shirt. You know who they are, the energy suckers. They can suck the positive energy out of the air like a bad case of the flu. You come in to work or show up for that call or drill night, and there they are—miserable, angry at the world, with a bad attitude, and it's always because of someone else. It's never their fault. In some cases, it's a result of something that didn't go their way. They didn't get the promotion, someone hurt their feelings, they got in trouble and were disciplined but are mad at the boss and everyone else, forgetting that they were the one who screwed up. During times like these, the best action you can take is to hang with those who are into the job. Again, surround yourself with those with the positive energy and not those who are miserable and trying to drag you down into their darkness. If not, misery loves company and you'll be in for some hard times. Stay positive and keep those around you the same way. Be one of those whom others want to hang with and work with because you're into the job.

So, where does it start? It starts with taking pride in what you do, pride in your accomplishments, pride in yourself, pride in knowing you are a firefighter—not the pride associated with arrogance. We're talking about the pride associated with ownership! In Lewisville, TX, my daughter's high school were the "Fighting Farmers." I used to take care of the softball field, hold practices for the girls, and coach the varsity fall ball team; all over the campus, you would see banners and signs saying, "Farmer Pride."

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In an effort to define to our girls what “pride” meant and represented, I used the following description to explain where it all comes from. Coincidentally, it serves as a great definition for the fire service as well.

“So, what is pride? You can’t understand it from the outside looking in, and you can’t explain it from the inside looking out. Pride is a personal commitment. It is an attitude that separates excellence from mediocrity. It is that ingredient which inspires us not to get ahead of others but rather to get ahead of ourselves.”

It’s just that, a personal commitment. There is no such thing as a proud team, only a team that is made up of people who work to achieve excellence in their performance. It never has been about being better than another firehouse, company, or department. It’s about you and what you have to do to be better at what you do. That takes training, education, a positive attitude, and a desire to want to be the best. Hard work, dedication, and commitment pay off. Again, are you doing your part?

It’s a Privilege and an Honor

For those who have been lucky enough and blessed to serve as a firefighter, do they remember that it is a privilege and an honor to do so? That the fire service isn’t for everybody and that not everyone can serve as a firefighter? That it takes someone special, someone with a passion to serve others and make a difference in the community that they protect? Again, not everyone can do it. Some have tried and found out pretty quick that it just wasn’t right for them and moved on. And that’s okay, because some are not cut out to be a firefighter. But for those who are, those who make it, those who understand what the fire service represents, they know that it is a privilege and in their heart know that it’s an honor.



Are You Taking Care of Each Other for Real?

Anyone can have your back at a fire, say they’ll stick with you when it gets bad, and never leave your side. To be honest that’s the easy part. Adrenaline helps with that. There is a phrase one of my mentors used to say years ago: “Why do we have to wait for a good fire for us all to get along?” How true. But, those who are into the job, those who love it, know that there is so much more when it comes to taking care of each other for real.

The fire service has finally gotten to a point where educating firefighters about mental health awareness is a good thing. That it’s okay to not be okay and, most importantly, it’s okay to ask for help and talk to somebody. That doesn’t mean you’re weak; it means you’re human. It’s not normal to see what a firefighter sees. And tie that to all the other pressures that life can bring with relationships, finances, children, parents, and a long list of other contributing factors, and a person can reach a breaking point. You don’t have to have kids to recognize the signs that someone’s child is traveling down the wrong path in life. The friends they keep, their grades plummet, their attitude changes, the clothes they now wear, and there can be a darkness about them.

So, why do we miss it with our own people? The firefighter who was always early for shift or drill night. The uniform was proper and clean and they were into the job.

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Then, as time passes, they appear disheveled, uniform dirty, late for shift and drill nights all the time. Their attitude changes and they can come off agitated and confrontational or in some cases the opposite and keep to themselves, quiet and separated from everyone else. Where we fail in the fire service when it comes to taking care of each other is many of us no longer pay attention to each other. Other distractions keep us from looking out for each other the way we used to. What do you have to do to tune up and focus on taking care of each other a little better?

Loyalty

The word loyalty for some is one for which they throw around like loose change. For those who are into the job, it means something much, much more. It means being loyal to the people who gave you a chance to serve as a firefighter. Those who gave you a chance. To those you put your right hand up and swore to protect. That the moment you screwed that fire helmet to your head you became a public servant. That it's not just about the T-shirt or the sticker on your car. That the public has placed their belongings, their businesses and livelihoods, their families, into your hands and are expecting you to do whatever you can to take care of them and protect them from harm. They welcome you into their homes and trust you with those they love the most. It also means being loyal to your fire department, your company, to that patch on your shoulder. That you would never do anything that could tarnish the image of your department and its reputation and to anyone who would, you'd throw them out. Loyalty, honor, duty, and integrity are the tenets that serve as the foundation for those who serve proudly and respectfully.

Your Firehouse!

Do you and the people around you take care of the firehouse as if it were your home? Because it is. It may say "Fire Station" on the marquee outside, but it is a firehouse and our home. A firehouse has served for years as a symbol in a community of what is right and of those who have dedicated themselves to serving and protecting others. It's not just a building; it's a rallying point for those who have dedicated their lives to one of selflessness. That being said, each and every member should do whatever they can to ensure that it is clean and a true representation of the mission of their department. Old or new, it doesn't matter; what does are the people who call it their home and what they do to show the public that they are ready to respond to their needs no matter what they are, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Apparatus That You Ride On

It's one thing to be ready for a parade or when it's time for your Fire Prevention Month open house, but what does your engine, ladder truck, or ambulance look like the rest of the year? Old rigs were new once, new ones will be old sooner or later, but often how they look down the road years later is a direct reflection of the care, pride, and ownership shown by those riding them. We've all seen new apparatus that looks like you know what and old ones that have been ridden hard and put away wet, but age has nothing to do with it. There are fire departments with 20- and 30-year-old rigs that look better than some that are a year or two old.

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Chief Rick Lasky

When you take pride in what you're riding on and know what it represents to the community and more importantly how well they are going to perform en route and while at an emergency, then you find it easy to take care of them. And, yes, the appearance on the outside matters, but just as important are the tools and equipment on the inside. It's the whole package that matters.

That Uniform Represents Something Bigger Than Any One Firefighter

It's one thing to wear that ball cap or T-shirt away from the firehouse, but what about the respect that you show toward the uniform? Our uniform represents so much more than just a badge or patch. It represents those who went before us, those who worked so hard for the image of the fire service we get to enjoy. It doesn't matter if you wear a class A, class B, or polo shirt as your department uniform, it is what the public first sees as you approach them. First impressions are big ones, and it's hard to call yourself a professional when you look like a mess. Be proud of what it represents and wear it with respect. It truly is bigger than any one firefighter. It represent us all.

Your Retirees and Past Members

And while we're on the topic of respect, what do you do for your retirees and former members? Keep in mind this isn't a job that once you leave it you never look back; it's one that many truly miss once they hang up their boots. No disrespect, but I have never seen a factory worker drive by the factory they used to work at and say, "Man, I wish I could go back and work that machine or that press!" I have met very few firefighters who have left the job miserable and glad to be done with it. I feel sorry for those few who do. Don't get me wrong. When you put in your time as a volunteer or career firefighter and it's time for you to hang it up, you deserve it and congratulations! You've accomplished something that many never do. The question is what do you do to remember and recognize those who served and retired? Do you send them off the right way with a retirement ceremony? Do you invite them to outings, to lunch at the firehouse or for a cup of coffee, to your banquets, to your ceremonies? When they show up for a ceremony, do you recognize them and make a big deal about it? You should. You'll be there one day. And one day you'll miss it too. Guaranteed! "Once a firefighter, always a firefighter."

Do you have a means for preserving your department's history? Do you have a history committee that records all apparatus from the newest to oldest to the very first rig your department owned? Do you track the careers of your current members as well as those from the past such as hire dates, promotions, awards, retirements, etc? Interview your past members on camera and have them describe what it was like when they were on the job, about "the big one," and what it was like way back when. And don't forget to record your department's activities, major incidents, newspaper articles, videos, and pictures. Lastly, before you throw something out or send it to auction, remember that it too will be old one day and considered an antique. There are plenty of fire departments who wished they would have held onto a few things that they could proudly display today.

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Open Season

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Get Ready for the Federal Benefits Open Season

The Federal Benefits Open Season begins on 11 November 2019 and continues through 9 December 2019. During open season, you have the opportunity to enroll, change plans or plan options, change enrollment type, or cancel enrollment for the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program and the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) for 2020. You also have the opportunity to reenroll or newly enroll in the Federal Flexible Spending Account (FSAFEDS) Program for 2020. Now is the time to take the appropriate steps to be ready:

Open Season Information

As open season gears up, the Civilian Benefits Center (CBC) will post information to the Office of Civilian Human Resources (OCHR) Benefits portal at

https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/MRA/DONHR/Benefits/Pages/Benefits_Open_Season.aspx.

Health insurance plan brochures will be available in early November. You are encouraged to read information provided to you by your current health provider, as they are required to provide plan changes that will occur in the next benefit year. The CBC cannot advise you on which health insurance plan is best suited for you; this is a decision you must make after reviewing the plans. At this time, the Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) has not announced any changes in the current program – stay tuned for updates!

Review your options

You can access your GRB Platform account at

<https://www.civilianbenefits.hroc.navy.mil/> on a government computer with a “.mil, .edu, or .gov” email address using your Department of Defense Common Access Card (CAC). From the GRB Platform, you can make your benefit elections.

If you need assistance accessing the GRB Platform, please call the Benefits Line at 888-320-2917 from 7:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday - Friday, except on federal holidays. The TTY number is 866-359-5277. Because call volume is typically high from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., the best time to call is before 10:00 a.m. and after 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. During the open season period, the hours of operation are extended to 9:30 p.m. You can also email your questions to the Benefits Line at navybenefits@navy.mil. You must include your full name, pay plan, grade, telephone number, and the reason for assistance. Please do not include Privacy Act or other Personally Identifiable Information such as date of birth or social security number in your email correspondence.

The open season period will be busy – get ready now!

In addition to reading information from your health insurance carrier, connect to the OCHR Benefits portal link above to keep up-to-date on the latest information on the open season.

TSP News

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Savings Funds Make Modest Gains in September

Most of the funds in the federal employee 401(k)-style retirement savings plan made slight gains in September, though one did end the month in the red.

The international stocks in the Thrift Savings Plan’s I Fund boasted the highest gains for last month, at 2.87%. The I Fund was up 13.21% for the year so far.

The common stocks in the C Fund increased 1.87% for September, and had the highest returns for 2019 to date, at 20.54%. Meanwhile, the small- and midsize companies in the S Fund grew 1.06% last month and 17.57% for this year.

The government securities in the G Fund also ended last month in the black, inching up 0.14% for September. The fund was up 1.79% for 2019.

The fixed income bonds in the F Fund were the only TSP offering to lose ground in September, falling 0.54%. The F Fund remained positive for 2019 returns, though, with gains of 8.51%.

All of the lifecycle (L) funds, which shift to a more stable mix of investments as employees near retirement, posted increases for September. The L Income fund, for those who have already started withdrawing money, was up 0.51% last month. The L 2020 Fund was up 0.63%; L 2030, 1.28%; L 2040, 1.5%; and L 2050, 1.69%.

Similarly, the L funds all have grown in 2019. L Income was up 5.32% for the year to date; L, 2020, 6.71%; L 2030, 11.62%; L 2040, 13.5%; and L 2050, 15.08%.



New Navy Rig



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New Tower for First Coast NAS Jacksonville



CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS | CHANGE YOUR BATTERIES
Daylight Savings Time Ends November 3rd

Cancer Risk

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Modifiable Risk: Firefighter Cancer Prevention

By Sara Jahnke, PhD.

Can science tell you exactly how much being a firefighter increases your risk for cancer? In a word, no.

When Dr. Doug Daniels and his team at NIOSH investigated cancer diagnoses and death among firefighters in Chicago, Philadelphia and San Francisco, they found that firefighters were 9% more likely to contract cancer and at 14% higher risk of dying from cancer than the general population.

While these statistically significant findings are important, they only tell the start of the story. When you look at specific types of cancer, the size or magnitude of the relationships vary quite a bit between cancers and even between his study and others.

While Daniels found that firefighters were at a generally lower risk of contracting multiple myeloma compared to the general population, the risk of contracting mesothelioma was more than double that of the general population. While the overall risk estimates for contracting cancer and dying of cancer Daniels describes is across all cancers in general, risk of specific types of cancers vary significantly.

At the same time, different studies have different findings. A 2015 study by Dr. Rebecca Tsai and colleagues exploring the California cancer registry didn't agree with the findings of Daniels. Tsai found the risk of multiple myeloma to be 35% higher among firefighters, rather than lower.

PPE use, health practices factor into cancer risk

So what is your individual risk? No general scientific study can tell you that. It depends on your individual risk factors, genetics and the health choices you make on a daily basis.

For instance, the risk of liver cancer is estimated to be 20-30% higher among firefighters. Obesity, however, doubles the risk of developing the same type of cancer as well as similar increased risks of esophageal, gastric and kidney cancers. So firefighters who are overweight are likely even more at risk compared to healthy weight firefighters.

Consuming more than 3.5 servings of alcohol a day is linked to a 2-3 fold increased risk of developing head and neck cancer and a 50% higher risk of breast and colorectal cancers.

By comparison, heavy smokers are more than 100 times more likely to develop different types of lung cancer compared to non-smokers. Firefighters who smoke face both the exposure risks and the smoking risks. The U.S. Surgeon General estimates that exposure to environmental tobacco smoke in the home increases a non-smokers chances of developing lung cancer by 20-30%.



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Cancer Risk (Cont.)

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Sara Jahnke, PhD.

Even looking specifically at the risk of firefighting likely varies based on the practices, policies and actions of the department and individual. Relationships that were statistically significant overall in the Daniels study were not necessarily significant in each of the three departments. What firefighters are exposed to in a given area, how they decon their gear, how long they wear their bunker gear and SCBAs all can vary.

Effective firefighter cancer prevention

The fact that the relative risk of firefighting is lower than the threat of other risk factors doesn't mean the threat associated with firefighting isn't real. These numbers should not be used to downplay the cancer risk related to firefighting.

Even without knowing what any one firefighters' specific risk is, the data is clear that firefighting leads to increased rates of cancer. Instead, the relative risk of firefighting and other modifiable risk factors highlight the importance of changing the things that can be changed.

Given firefighters are already at risk, it is even more important to avoid tobacco, be proactive about fitness and nutrition, limit binge drinking and follow PPE best practices. For cancer prevention to be effective in the fire service, it has to include all aspects of modifiable risk factors on and off the fireground.



Trailblazer



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CNRJ Training Officer Earns Fire Instructor III

By Arthur Harkum, CNRJ Regional Technical Services Chief.



Commander Naval Region Japan is proud to announce that Mr. Yuuhei Hino, Regional Training Officer earned his Fire Instructor III certification from Alabama Fire College.

Mr. Hino is an invaluable member of the CNRJ team, he goes above and beyond on a daily basis, and is well respected throughout the Region and the local communities. Mr. Hino always tries to challenge himself, and this feat was a major challenge and accomplishment. Mr. Hino is the first Japanese

National employed by the U.S. Navy to earn the Fire Instructor III certification.

Navy F&ES POCs

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Navy F&ES Hall of Fame



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