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## The Mantra

By Ronny J. Coleman

The term mantra may not be part of your day-to-day vocabulary. In fact the concept of a mantra may be entirely boring to you. If your image of a mantra conjures up oriental monks wearing saffron robes repeating in very monotonous tones a series of words, I can understand why it doesn't mean much to you. The concept of a mantra could be interpreted to also cover a particular behavior of football fans.



What I am referring to is the semi-hysterical pattern of behavior demonstrated by fans of specific sport events in which they feel compelled to stand up and shout at the top of their lungs physically gesturing to the sky "we are number 1".

For you see a mantra is a belief. It is manifested best in a set of circumstances that is spoken aloud and affirmed by the behavior of the person expressing it.

So let's give credit where credit is due. There is a mantra that is beginning to be repeated all over the fire service. It begins "everybody goes home". It is the battle cry of firefighter safety. It is a mantra because if you truly believe in it you will behave in a specific way to assure that everybody does go home. If an organization repeats the mantra over and over and engages in counterproductive personal behaviors then the mantra becomes empty and irrelevant.

As supporter of Ron Siarnicki's efforts to reduce the number of deaths on the fire ground I believe the mantra needs to be supported by a few additional expressions of personal belief on the part of fire officers. In other articles I have alluded to the fact that I frequently read military literature to obtain insights as to how officers in the military are successful in leading people in very stressful circumstances. Let's face it, a young second lieutenant who is getting ready to take his squad into combat in Iraq today wants to come home too. What is it about belief that allows a person to be a survivor under highly stressful sets of circumstances?



Supporting the Fleet, Fighter, and Family



## Clipboard (Cont.)

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I found a clue in one of the articles. Actually I have since lost track of exactly who made this quote but I have seen it repeated on bulletin boards and in literature involving the United States Marine Corps. It is a simple statement. It goes like this; every Marine that is going into combat deserves to be; properly equipped, properly trained, and properly led.



What a concept. Every Marine, not just the lucky ones, not just the brave ones, they all have the right to have the right kind of equipment to know how to use it correctly and have somebody who is accountable and responsible for supervising their activities.

Could that same set of statements apply to us in the fire service? I believe so. If every fire company in this country was properly equipped, properly trained and properly led, what do you think that would do to the overall probability of a firefighter failing to go home?

Put yourself in the right seat of a piece of a fire apparatus and ask yourself this question. When the overhead door rattles to a stop and the driver operator puts the vehicle into gear to begin the response to the scene of an emergency are they always properly equipped, properly trained and properly led? Anything less than a yes answer in that trifecta is not adequate. And of course this is where some of the debate may soon rage. What do we mean by being properly equipped? I can simplify it pretty straightforward. Having the right tool for doing the right job. This is a manifestation of a need of a fire department to have proper tools; proper equipment that is based upon the probability that that tool will be used in the context of that firefighting agency. Not having the proper tools is a severe limitation.

Having some tools but having them be antiquated and/or not properly maintained is a liability. Having the equipment and having not met the expectations of the job results in firefighters often trying to do too much with too little and subsequently finding themselves under very unsafe fire conditions.

That leads to my second statement. Just exactly what does it mean to be adequately trained? Is it actually possible to train every firefighter on everything every firefighter needs to know? After being in this business for as long as I have I don't think that is even remotely possible. However, fire departments that do not invest in their training programs have no reasonable expectation that their firefighters are going to know about anything about they are expected to do. And I am not just talking about rookie training where we spend hundreds of hours teaching people how to roll hose and raise a 24-foot ladder. In our business, training is a lifetime activity. If someone were due to retire a year from today in your organization they still have training needs. In fact I would go so far as to say anybody that has got a 24-hour shift left in their fire career before retirement still had some degree of training need.

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There are symptoms of organizations that are properly trained. One of the first clues to me that an organization is adequately trained is that people use their tools appropriately, safely and effectively under those highly stressful set of circumstances.

Adequately trained individuals do not engage in redundant behavior. Adequately trained individuals do not engage in unsafe behavior. Adequately trained individuals express a unique balance between being open in communications with their fellow team members so that everybody knows what is going on but aggressive enough to keep moving forward in the completion of a task without waiting around to be told what to do.

My visual image of what an adequately trained fire company looks like is very similar to what a NASCAR pit crew looks like when a highly celebrated vehicle wheels off at a high rate of speed and comes to a screeching halt in the pits. Everybody that has a job goes to work on it and within seconds that same vehicle now is heading back out on the track going hundreds of miles an hour safely.



The third component being properly led is somewhat more ambiguous but it rests on the shoulders of every fire officer in this country. I can't remember the number of times I have had conversations with people about the lack of leadership skills in some of their company officers. I think that is highly argumentative. Here is my reason. I have seen absolutely outstanding fire ground officers and I have seen those that are downright dangerous. Sometimes they are even within the same firefighting agency. Sometimes they are in the same fire station but on different shifts. Being well led is not something that you can impose on an organization. It is something that is created by the collective moral compass of those individuals who have voluntarily allowed them to be promoted into the role of a fire officer.

Recently in working on a project associated with evaluating fire ground operations, I had a chance to witness a very wide number of fire officers all performing exactly the same skill. What I was taken aback by was the fact that a good officer and a bad officer was not a function of experience. What it was a function of was willingness to take accountability for what was happening on the fire ground. Good officers get it. Bad officers don't. Mediocre officers are making it up as they go along. In the context of this discussion being well led is not based upon the presence of an officer but rather by the performance of that officer.

Again, putting yourself in the role of an individual responsible for what happens on the fire ground can you honestly say that your people are properly equipped, properly trained and properly led? If the answer is yes, I would hope that you would be able to support that by talking about specifics.

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## *Clipboard (Cont.)*

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Ronny J. Coleman

Is your equipment not just available but well maintained? Is your equipment not just available but appropriate for the task at hand. Is your equipment not just available but as close to “state of the art” as you can possibly get? Is your equipment properly being interfaced with the training program?

And so forth – as we ask the question of how well trained our people are, can we honestly say everybody knows their job and moreover does everybody know enough about everybody else’s job so that the team looks like the NASCAR pit crew. The hardest one of these three is this concept of whether or not your people are being properly led.

Returning to the military metaphor, I have read a lot of work by Colonial David Hackworth who was one of the most highly decorated heroes of the Vietnam War. His contention was that he wanted to make sure his troops were so well trained that they performed in combat exactly as they were led to believe that they should perform in the training environment. His mantra was, “don’t practice to make perfect, practice to make permanent”.

However, I am enough of a realist to realize that the fire service and its capacity to perform are on a bell curve like everything else. If we took the total number of fire companies in the United States of America and placed them on a bell curve of being properly equipped we would find some really state of the art fire departments and some that are living in the dark ages. If we attempted to distribute information on how well trained fire departments are we would see a similar bell curve. Trying to determine whether a department is well led to place them on a curve might be really argumentative but the reality is that it is probably there nonetheless. There are fire departments that are well led and there are ones that are not.

If you look at this concept in the context of a standard distribution curve, what it really says is we should be concerned about is exactly what is the middle ground. How well equipped, how well trained and how well led is the average fire department going on the average emergency on the average day?

One of the first observations that I drew by looking at the IAFC’s recently published information on near misses was the fact that one of the most significant contributing factor to a near miss were decisions made by individuals. Well – duh! I wonder how long it is going to take for us to figure out that what makes for unsafe conditions are people doing really unsafe things thinking they are going to get away with it.

The context for all this discussion I would like to link back to the goals of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. We do want everybody to go home. We want everybody who enters this business to retire from it. We don’t need to go to any more funerals. We don’t need to lament the fact that we have lost “another one of our own”. I have no doubt that we will continue to lose people. I would submit to you that in those fire departments that have a high degree of confidence that they are properly equipped, properly trained, properly led, the probability of that happening is going to be very remote.

You know who you are!

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## Last Alarms

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## Last Alarms

The USFA reported 71 line of duty deaths in 2020. The following line of duty deaths were reported since we published our last issue:

**James Brooks Jr.** ♥  
Whitehall, NY

**Richard Todd** 🟢  
Salem, WV

**Edward Minnick** ♥  
Colmar, PA

**Charles Morton**  
Fawnskin, CA

**Ricky Fulton**  
Sterling, CO

### 2020 Totals

♥ 28 (39%) 🚗 7 (9%) 🟢 19 (26%)

♥ Indicates cardiac related death

🚗 Indicates vehicle accident related death

🟢 Indicates COVID19 related death

**Jason Dean** 🟢  
Clayton, NC

**Dylan Cunningham** ♥  
South Holland, IL

**Charles Woods** ♥  
Marion, VA

**Jason Cortez**  
San Francisco, CA



## TCoOO Update



## Taking Care of Our Own

There are currently eight 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
Steve Holekamp	Tinker AFB, OK	Thomas.Trello@us.af.mil
Alfie Soyosa	Metro San Diego, CA	Nicole.Stacy@navy.mil
Andrew Swick	USAG Yuma, AZ	Daniel.P.Goodwin2.civ@mail.mil
Robert Viafranco	NAS Corpus Christi, TX	Matthew.Sedgwick1@navy.mil
Ronald Wells. Jr.	JEB Little Creek, VA	Marc.J.Smith@navy.mil
Patrick Hammer	Kirtland AFB, NM	Joseph.Rivera.33@us.af.mil
Christopher Bishop	F&ES Gulf Coast, FL	Daniel.Chiappetta@navy.mil
Philip Eubanks	F&ES Gulf Coast, FL	Michael.S.Glover@navy.mil

The TAKING CARE OF OUR OWN initiative was launched in October 2004 to provide a support network among DoD Fire and Emergency Services personnel to help members suffering from a personal crisis resulting in a need for leave donations.

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

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## William Albrittain

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## Navy F&ES Hall of Famer Answers Last Alarm

By Kevin D. Grinder, Deputy Fire Chief Naval District Washington Fire & Emergency Services



With great sadness, Naval District Washington F&ES announces the passing of Life Member William Albrittain.

Willie started his fire service career during World War II at age 15 with the La Plata (MD) Volunteer Fire Department in 1943. He was allowed to leave High School to run calls during the day when they heard the town's alarm. He ran calls for La Plata for many years until he joined the Army in 1950.

He served in the Korean War and received a Bronze Star and other medals for his military service. After his Army service he worked at the

Naval Powder Factory in Indian Head, MD. He worked three years as an electrician, eight years in the Navy's Fire Department and then he worked twenty-one years in the Base Safety Department. In total he dedicated thirty-two years of service to the Navy.

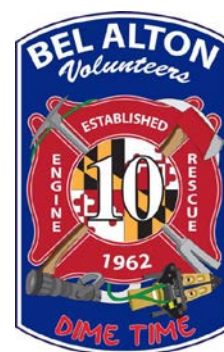


On 31 December 1958, while working for the Navy base fire department he responded to an explosion on the powder line at the Navy base. When he arrived on scene he entered the burning building and pulled a man from the rubble. For these acts of heroism he received the Navy's Distinguished Civilian Service Award. The award read "William M. Albrittain, a fireman for the Naval Propellant Plant at Indian Head, has been recommended for an award for bravery during the recent explosion at the plant. Mr. Albrittain, risking his

own life, entered a burning building and dragged an injured man to safety after he heard the man calling for help."

In 2007 he was inducted into the Navy and DoD Fire & Emergency Services Hall of Fame for the rescue he made back in 1958.

In 1964 he joined the Bel Alton Volunteer Fire Department after moving to the Faulkner area. He became more active in the department in later years after his youngest son joined the fire department and especially after he retired. He was active helping around the firehouse fixing things. In 2001 he received the John E. Frere Award for Distinguished Service to the department. He is a life member and continued to have a passion for the fire department until his death.



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## Back in the Day

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## U.S. Navy Pierreville Rear Mount Ladders

By Tom Shand



The history of U.S. Navy aerial apparatus can be traced back to 1939 when Maxim Motors of Middleboro, MA delivered a pair of 65 foot steel aerial ladder trucks to Naval Air Station Miramar and the Advanced Base Depot in Davisville, RI. Earlier ladder trucks were primarily quad units which were outfitted with ground ladders of various lengths including a two-section fifty foot bangor ladder. During the following years individual ladder trucks were acquired including a Peter Pirsch 85 foot tractor drawn ladder for the Norfolk Naval Base in 1942 along with several American LaFrance JOX model 75 foot midship ladders.

Up through the decade of the 1970's due to replacement intervals no more than three new ladder trucks were placed into service during any given year. In 1974 American LaFrance delivered three, 85 foot midship ladders painted in the new chrome yellow colors to Naval Air Station Keflavik, and Naval Shipyards in Kittery Point, ME and Charleston, SC. These rigs would be among the last midship aerial ladders acquired by the Navy with the introduction of two Seagrave Rear Admiral 100 foot ladders in 1978.

These Seagrave model SR-20756, four section 100 foot rear mounts proved to be popular as they were compact in size when compared to the three section, 85 foot models and were built on a 226 inch wheelbase with an overall height of 121 inches. When compared to today's rear mount quint vehicles with travel heights of 140 inches, these rigs could fit into older stations and were quite maneuverable. For this reason, the FDNY began to specify rear mount ladder trucks on 1969, a trend that continues to this day. These Seagrave rear mounts were assigned to the naval installations at Newport, RI and Pensacola, FL.

The following year Ward LaFrance was awarded a contract to provide three, 100 foot tandem axle rear vehicles using a Maxim steel aerial ladder. These rigs were initially assigned to installations in New London, CT, Norfolk and Pearl Harbor. The tandem axle design provided enhanced braking along with additional compartment space with all ground ladders nested under the turntable from the rear of the apparatus.

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Tom Shand

At that time, one of the largest contract awards for aerial units was completed during 1980 with the delivery of six new rear mount ladders from Pierreville Fire Apparatus. These rigs were built on single axle Spartan Motors model CFG-2042 chassis and powered by Cummins diesel engines rated at 330 horsepower through an Allison MT-643 automatic transmission. With the shorter 215 inch wheelbase chassis, a good portion of the aerial ladder extended over the cab.



Photo by Glenn Vincent

These Pierreville rear mount ladders were placed into service at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Naval Air Station Alameda, Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, Naval District Washington and Yokosuka, Japan. In later years the NDW ladder truck was rebuilt with a Spartan Monarch four door cab with aluminum rescue body compartments and assigned property number 74-00053.

In subsequent years the U.S. Navy acquired several Seagrave single axle 100 foot rear mount ladder trucks, along with a single Peter Pirsch tractor drawn ladder for Naval Station Treasure Island near San Francisco and a one of a kind Pierce Arrow 105 foot tractor drawn ladder for the Norfolk Naval Station. Beginning in 1988 the U.S. Navy began to acquire a number of 50 foot and 65 foot Tele Squirt apparatus to provide additional aerial and elevated stream capabilities at different installations. Back in the Day the Navy operated a unique and varied fleet of rear mount and tractor drawn aerial apparatus at installations across the globe.



## New Navy Rigs



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## New Tender for NAS Key West





## Leadership

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## First Due: The Love that We Share

By Reginald Freeman

Civil unrest and protests have embroiled various cities across our great nation for several months now because of several shootings that involved law enforcement. Family, friends and co-workers alike have had passionate, genuine and emotional conversations about race, policing, social justice and basic rights. For many of us, these conversations took place on the apparatus, in the dayroom and/or at the kitchen table.

My fire service career started 20 years ago in Mississippi as a firefighter/EMT. The racism and discrimination that I was subjected to in Mississippi by my fire department family fueled my drive to one day become chief of the department. I wanted to be in a position to ensure that no one ever had to feel the way that I did just because of who he/she is.

As a service-oriented professional, you must be passionate about people and service if you want to enjoy the privilege of wearing our distinguished uniform. You must accept everyone as they are regardless of whether they are a citizen or they are a fire department brother or sister. You must have the courage to speak up and challenge anyone who makes racist, bigoted, misogynistic, homophobic or belittling statements irrespective of whether they are made in private or in public.

### Family

Although we might come from different walks of life, come from different parts of town, practice different religions or have different beliefs, we have one thing in common: the love that we share for our profession. In some instances, our fire department family is there for us when our family by birth is not. Individuals who aren't firefighters would have a difficult time processing why that is, but we firefighters immediately can answer that question. We have a special bond with our fire department family. We bled together. We cried together. We laughed until our stomachs hurt. We consoled one another after a tough call. We shared a grin and a tip of the hat on scene of a working structure fire through the roar of the diesel engines, pumps and chirping air packs and the unique smell of the structure fire. That is what it means to be a member of the fire service.



It is up to all of us to make sure that we aren't just listening to our brothers and sisters in the firehouse but that we hear everything that they say. It is time for us to have courageous conversations in a healthy manner and listen twice as much as we talk. It only makes sense, right, given that we have two ears but one mouth?

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## Leadership (Cont.)

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Chief Reggie Freeman

I joke, of course, but in all seriousness, as a family, it is incumbent upon us all to not only have one another's back on the fireground but in the firehouse, too. A lot of our fire department family suffer in silence, because they are afraid of being judged, rejected or isolated. That shouldn't be the case in any of the roughly 25,000 fire departments across these great United States. There must be an effort to truly understand other perspectives. When was the last time that you asked a fellow firefighter, who might be emotionally affected by current events in the media that pertain to social justice, "What are your thoughts on this?" or "What is it that I can do to be supportive of you?"

### Teams support each other



I don't care whether it is a single or multi-alarm job: We can't be successful working by ourselves. That same teamwork mindset should be maintained when it is time for us to be supportive on or off duty. The love that we share for our profession and for our fire department family truly is unique. We have more in common than we have different. Let us make sure that we never forget that and that

we stay focused on what is important, which is having each other's back and completing our department's mission.



## New Base Active

### Base Activation and FPW Proclamation Signing

By Fire Prevention Chief Michael Dionne, Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz, Guam



On 1 October 2020, Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Blaz held a flag raising, marking its initial operation capability. MCB Camp Blaz, named after Brig. General Vicente Tomas Garrido Blaz, is the first Marine Corps base activated in 68 years. Fire Chief Robert Wimes, Fire Prevention Chief Michael Dionne, and Fire Protection Inspector Corinne San Agustin, the first three members of

Camp Blaz Fire & Emergency Services, were present for the ceremony, along with representatives from Joint Region Marianas Fire & Emergency Services.

Following the flag raising ceremony, Commanding Officer Colonel Bradley Magrath, in one of his first acts as commanding officer, signed a proclamation declaring the week of 4-10 October 2020 as Fire Prevention Week on Camp Blaz.

As part of Joint Region Marianas, MCB Camp Blaz Fire & Emergency Services will have a total staff of 35 personnel and operate as a CNIC fire department on a Marine Corps installation.

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## SA Matters!

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## Tracking of Personnel

By Rich Gasaway, PhD.

**Accountability:** A critically important component of emergency scene safety when personnel operates in a hazardous environment. From the perspective of situational awareness, accountability plays several roles. The obvious role is personnel accountability facilitates the rapid deployment of rescue teams if something goes awry. Command knows the crew sizes and where they are operating and can send help expeditiously.

Additionally, accountability plays a second role that is critically important to the development and maintenance of situational awareness – predicting the future. The highest level of situational awareness is projection – having the ability to accurately determine what is going to happen as the emergency plays out. Essential to this skill is knowing crew sizes, crew locations, and crew task assignments. The crews, performing the tasks at the emergency scene, are the proverbial actors in the movie the commander is playing in his or her head – a movie that’s looking at the **FUTURE** of the event. The goal when looking into the future is simple: See the bad things coming in time to change the outcome.

But how should a commander (or an accountability officer) track the movement of personnel to ensure the accuracy of the information? That is the topic I will be addressing here.

### Name Calling

How should a crew be addressed over the radio? There are, essentially, four options I can come up with:

Personal identifier: (e.g., Battalion 6, Captain 1, Firefighter 209, etc.)

Vehicle assignment: (e.g., Engine 1, Squad 14, Ladder 9, etc.)

Geographic location: (e.g., Division 1, Roof, Interior Team 1, etc.)

Primary task assignment (e.g., Attack, Vent, Search, etc.)

The goal is to ensure that if something goes wrong, the crew size, their location and the task they were performing can be easily identified. There are, without a doubt, both advantages and disadvantages to any identification nomenclature.

### Ease of Recall Under Stress

When I look at matters like this, admittedly, my view is from one of cognitive neuroscience and sometimes this can run counter to national standards, like NIMS. Until brain scientists and bureaucrats collaborate on the design of national policies and standards, we’ll just have to be content with understanding that what may be determined to be best by one will not be embraced by the other. Such is the messiness we face in life.



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## ***SA Matters! (Cont.)***

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Operating at emergency scenes is stressful. This stress impacts the ability to capture, store and recall information. This fact becomes critically important as you consider the cognitive effort required to maintain accountability. The goal is for the information about crew size, location and task to be readily accessible, both for rescue purposes and for being able to predict future outcomes based on what those crews are doing.

Ease of information storage and recall is the objective. If things go bad, there won't be time to do a lot of information sorting and reconstruction. The accountability records, be they written or simply from memory, should be crisp, clear and easy to comprehend.

### **You Hear With the Visual Processor in Your Brain**

When information is shared audibly, the receiver of the information forms visual images in the mind to aid in the comprehension of the information. For example, if a crew operating on the interior of a structure fire said they were belly-down, on the floor, in zero visibility conditions, every trained responder on the scene who hears that message will form a vivid visual image in their mind of the conditions that crew is facing.

### **Call it As You See It**

In the spirit of brain science that explains how we comprehend what we hear, I offer this recommendation: Identify crews in a way that when they call on the radio, the commander, the safety officer and everyone else operating on the emergency scene will know who is calling, what they are doing, and where they are. Let's put it to the test.

I'm going to provide several examples of radio traffic and you decide for yourself which helps you form the best visual image of what is happening:

A: "Captain 1 to command, our crew is making progress on the second floor."

B: "Engine 1 to command, our crew is making progress on the second floor."

C: "Division 2 to command, our crew is making progress" (don't have to say what floor as Division 2 is the geographic identifier).

D: "Attack Team 1 to command, our crew is making progress on the second floor."

Absent any other information, which statement is the best at helping you understand what's happening?

If the commander only has a few companies working at an incident, what each crew calls themselves may be inconsequential because they'll be easy to track. However, as incidents grow in complexity, the ability to remember what each Captain's assignment is, for example, coupled with where they are operating at could become quite challenging.



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### **Command Has it Easy**

When it comes to managing information, a commander who is properly located (i.e., away from the action and able to maintain a visual fix on the incident) is in the best position to keep track of things. Using a worksheet to write things down can be a tremendous asset for keeping track of personnel.

Crew size, location, task assignments can readily be tracked. But what about all the other crews who are operating hands-on? They are in a far more hostile environment and their ability to keep track of who's where, doing what, is far more challenging, yet none the less important.

When operating at an emergency scene there are, essentially, three types of situational awareness:

**Personal situational awareness:** A crew member's awareness of his or her own surroundings.

**Team situational awareness:** A shared awareness of team members about what is happening in their collective surroundings.

**Incident situational awareness:** A holistic awareness of the big picture and how the actions of teams are complimenting or impacting the performance of each other to the completion of the overall strategic objectives.

Using a structure fire as an example, a firefighter would have personal situational awareness as clues and cues about his or her environment are captured and processed, including incident conditions and information about personal safety and perhaps information about fellow crew member's abilities.

The company would also develop team situational awareness that ensures they are on the same page tactically, they have made similar assessments about the conditions, they have collaborated on goals and they are supporting each other (i.e., behaving as a team, versus a group of individuals).

The incident situational awareness is developed from understanding how individual and team performance impacts the overall incident's strategy and objectives with a keen awareness of the impact and consequence of failure and success.

I share all of this because each individual and team needs to be as aware of what others are doing as they are aware of their own role. With that in mind, put yourself in the role of a company officer, working with your crew in the basement of a residential dwelling fire and, with all the stress and other barriers to situational awareness present, you must try to keep track of who's who and what they are doing. Would that be easier if you were hearing crews being identified using:

- A: Personnel identifiers (e.g., Captain 1, Lieutenant 41, Firefighter 192)?
- B: Apparatus assignments (e.g., Engine 7, Ladder 22, Squad 18)?
- C: Geographic locations (e.g., Roof, Division 2, Interior Team 1)?
- D: Primary task (e.g., Vent, Attack, Search)?

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## ***SA Matters!*** ***(Cont.)***

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Rich Gasaway, PhD.

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If you were belly-down in the basement and there was a considerable amount of radio traffic, which of the above would be easiest for you to identify with that would help you understand whose calling on the radio, what they are doing, and how their goals are supporting your goals?

### **The Gold Standard**

Is there a way to bring resolution to this issue that may address the concerns and needs of everyone? Perhaps there is. What if, for each crew assigned, they actually used multiple identifiers for each radio transmission. Granted, for this system to work there needs to be an element of radio discipline that, quite frankly, is missing in many organizations. This is unfortunate on many levels because flawed communications is ALWAYS a significant finding in every casualty report I have read, no exceptions. What would the communications sound like if multiple identifiers were used? Here are some examples:

Team identifier + crew size + location + update report

Engine 1, crew of 3, on Division 2 Attack. We have a knockdown on the fire.

Personal identifier + crew size + location + update report

Captain 1, with 3, on Attack in the basement. Conditions are not improving.

### **TMI, TMI!**

One of the criticisms I sometimes receive when I make this recommendation is this solution creates too much radio traffic (i.e., Too Much Information – TMI!). I was recently told this while having a conversation with a chief following my review of a radio tape of an incident where things did not go well. The radio traffic at this incident could serve as the poster child for incident communications gone bad. It was horribly confusing and horrendously difficult to track (and I was listening to it with headphones on in a conference room).

When a crew got into trouble, the command didn't have any idea of the crew's size, location or task. Command was overwhelmed. Other crews then started chiming in, asking for information about the crew size and location of the crew in trouble. The incident quickly spiraled out of control because of a Hail Mary effort to develop collective situational awareness about where everyone was and what they were doing. Needless to say, it didn't work well for them and it rarely works well for others. Even if the outcome is good (i.e., no one gets hurt) the potential for catastrophe is tremendous.

### **Dr. Gasaway's Advice**

This issue is important and it's not one that gets discussed often enough. It is critically important to set up communications policies, procedures and standard practices that aid in the development and maintenance of situational awareness.

You only need to go as far as to review the recording of your past 3-5 significant emergency calls to know if your system of tracking, crew identification, and accountability are working well. If they aren't, the time to fix it is now.



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## 5 Not-So-Fun Facts About Federal Retirement

By Tammy Flanagan, Retirement Counseling and Training [www.retirefederal.com](http://www.retirefederal.com)

A couple of years ago, I provided [8 Fun Facts About Federal Retirement](#). This week, I thought I'd go in a different direction and present five not-so-fun facts that you should be aware of. I think it's a safe bet you'll be glad to know these important, sometimes elusive facts about your retirement benefits.

**Survivor elections are considered permanent.** If you're married at retirement, you must obtain your spouse's consent to choose less than the maximum survivor benefit under both the Civil Service Retirement System and the Federal Employees Retirement System. If it is less than 30 days from the date of your first regular monthly payment, you can cancel or reduce the survivor benefit. After the 30-day period has passed but less than 18 months from the beginning date of your annuity, you can change your election only to increase or add a survivor benefit if you elected a single life annuity.

You must also pay a whopping one-time payment of 24.5% of your annual retirement benefit if you change from no survivor benefit to a full survivor benefit, or 12.25% percent if you change from no survivor benefit to a partial one under FERS. For example, if your retirement benefit is \$40,000 per year and you want to add a survivor benefit that your spouse waived at retirement, the penalty would be \$9,800 (plus interest). And this can only be done up to 18 months from your annuity start date. A similar penalty and interest is charged under CSRS. After 18 months, the survivor election will continue until the marriage ends through death or divorce.

It's important to consider the cost and value of this important benefit choice before you file your retirement application. There will be financial consequences for your spouse if you die first. That could happen even if your spouse is in poor health and older than you. If losing your retirement income means your surviving spouse would have to move, you should probably elect a survivor benefit. The reduction to your retirement to provide this valuable benefit also reduces your taxable income. If your spouse dies before you, your unreduced annuity can be restored.

**You'll probably have to pay federal income tax on your Social Security retirement benefit.** If you file an individual tax return and your combined income is less than \$25,000, or if you file a joint return and your combined income is less than \$32,000, then your Social Security benefit will be tax-free. But if your income exceeds this amount, you will pay tax on either [50% or 85%](#) of your benefit, depending on your combined income. Your combined income is your adjusted gross income plus any nontaxable interest and half of your Social Security benefit.

You can ask Social Security to withhold federal taxes from your benefit payment when you first apply. If you're already receiving benefits or if you want to change or stop your withholding, you'll need a [Form W-4V](#) from the IRS.

The good news? [Most states](#) don't tax Social Security benefits.

## Retirement Tips (Cont.)

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**Your retirement estimate may be way off.** It's not really anyone's fault. Sometimes the estimates simply don't estimate what you think they're estimating.

First of all, you may owe state income tax on your CSRS or FERS benefit. The estimates generally only provide a withholding of federal tax. And even that is generally low, since the program doing the estimating doesn't know if you also have income from:

- Part-time or full-time work
- Social Security retirement
- Thrift Savings Plan withdrawals or other retirement savings
- A spouse's income

The IRS has a [tax withholding estimator](#) to help you compute a more accurate estimate of your federal tax withholding. The Office of Personnel Management provides retirees [online access](#) to change their tax withholding.

Second, if you have a service credit issue that might impact your length of service, this might not be reflected on the estimate. Such issues can include:

- Service that may not be creditable
- Changes in work schedule
- Undocumented service
- Changes in retirement coverage
- Unpaid deposits or redeposits

Finally, a FERS supplement, former spouse entitlements and your survivor benefit election could be missing from the estimate. [CSRS Offset](#) estimates might not clearly explain the "offset" that will occur either at retirement or when you qualify for Social Security.

Agency retirement estimates can be a useful tool. But if there's something you don't understand or that doesn't make sense to you in your estimate, be sure to get clarification before you retire with less money than you expected.

Your life insurance coverage may change when you retire. Do you remember the "once in a blue moon" Federal Employees Group Life Insurance open enrollment in 2016? To refresh your memory, here is one of the [open season FAQ's](#):

***Can employees continue new Open Season coverage if they retire or become insured as compensationers?***

*It depends. All regular rules still apply for continuing FEGLI into retirement. This includes the requirement that for any types or multiples of coverage you wish to bring into retirement, you must have that coverage throughout your last five years of Federal service, or your entire period or periods of service if you retire with less than five years.*

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## Fire Attack

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### 5 Things Firefighters Must Know About Nozzles

By Robert Avsec, [www.firerescue1.com](http://www.firerescue1.com)

The nozzle on the end of a fire hose is one of the most important pieces of equipment that a firefighter has at their disposal when combating a hostile fire. It's the business end of what we do.

Understanding the nozzle involves more than knowing if a push or a pull opens the bale and if a left or right twist delivers a straight stream. Here are five nozzle questions whose answers you may not know or have forgotten. Either way, knowing your nozzle gives you an edge over your enemy in a fire attack.



#### 1. How Are Automatic And Conventional Nozzles Different?

Conventional fog nozzles have a fixed or selectable gpm setting. These settings correspond to a particular discharge orifice, or tip size. In order for a conventional nozzle with a fixed opening to operate at the correct nozzle pressure of 100 psi, the proper gpm flow must be supplied. For example, a selectable gallonage nozzle with settings of 30, 60, 95 and 125 gpm will only deliver those flows of 100 psi of nozzle pressure.

There are two possible results when the conventional nozzle is not supplied with the rated or selected flow. First, inadequate flow provides a weak, ineffective stream that fails to reach the seat of the fire. Second, too much water flow creates excessive nozzle pressure making the hose line more difficult to handle and potentially jeopardizing the safety of the nozzle crew.

With an automatic nozzle, the discharge orifice continually adjusts depending on the flow to the nozzle. This sets the flow being supplied to the proper nozzle pressure and correct velocity for maximum extinguishing capability.

#### 2. How Does An Automatic Nozzle Work?

The automatic nozzle uses a principle very similar to that of a pumper relief valve. A highly dependable spring, connected to the baffle that forms the discharge orifice, is balanced against the water pressure in the nozzle.

The pressure-control spring senses any increase or decrease in pressure within the nozzle. It then moves the baffle in or out to maintain a particular tip size necessary to keep the nozzle pressure at 100 psi. In effect, the nozzle is constantly changing tip size to match the water being supplied at that moment.

#### 3. What Pressure Should Be Pumped To Automatic Nozzles?

Automatic nozzles greatly simplify pump operation. Since automatic nozzles are designed to operate at 100 psi nozzle pressure, this becomes the minimum starting point for any operation.

The basic formula for calculating pump discharge pressure is  $PDP = NP + TPL$  — PDP is the pump discharge pressure, NP is the nozzle pressure and TPL is the total pressure loss (that's hose line friction loss plus apparatus friction loss plus elevation pressure).

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## ***Fire Attack (Cont.)***

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Robert Avsec

With an automatic, the nozzle pressure will remain constant and the formula can be rewritten as:  $PDP = 100 + TPL$ . So, for a 200-foot pre-connected 1¾-inch hose, what pump pressure will be required to flow 150 gpm? Friction loss in 1¾-inch hose for 150 gpm is about 28 psi per 100 feet of hose.

The answer:  $PDP = 100 + (2 \times 28)$ ;  $PDP = 100 + 56$ ;  $PDP = 156$ .

To flow 150 gpm in this scenario, a pump discharge pressure of 156 psi is required. The required pump pressure will vary depending on the friction loss produced, the amount of flow desired, and the length and size of the hose lay.

The advantage of using an automatic nozzle is that any flow can be delivered by the pump operator and still be controlled by the nozzle operator. Variable flow, constant nozzle pressure, and nozzleman flow control are three essential elements to successful fire streams and fire attack.

#### **4. Can An Automatic Nozzle Be Used With Foam And Foam Eductors?**

If the eductor manufacturer's recommendations for inlet pressure, maximum hose length and size are followed, the automatic nozzle will adjust itself automatically to the rating of the eductor. With any eductor system, the nozzle valve must be fully open to prevent excessive back pressure on the eductor, which will prevent foam concentrate pickup.

Certain guidelines, however, must be followed. Foam-making is simply the addition of a proper amount of foam concentrate to water. This solution of foam concentrate and water is then mixed with air (aeration) either at the nozzle with aspirating attachments or as the stream pulls air along with it in a non-aspirating application.

#### **5. What Are The Trade-Offs Of Low-Pressure Nozzles?**

Reducing nozzle pressure does account for some reduction in nozzle reaction. But how much reduction in pressure is required to get a significant reduction in reaction? And while reduced reaction may be a positive aspect, what are the negative aspects of choosing a low-pressure nozzle delivery system?

Those advocating for reducing the fog nozzle pressure typically would reduce the required nozzle pressure downward from 100 psi to 75 psi. If the flow is kept constant, the reaction reduction from a 25% cut in nozzle pressure is 13%. It works out this way: a 200 gpm stream at 100 psi has 101 pounds of reaction; cutting the nozzle pressure to 75 psi reduces the reaction to 88 pounds.

Nozzle pressure is directly related to the velocity of the stream. For the given example, instead of a stream speeding through the fire's super-heated gases at 80 mph, it goes through at 60 mph. Which one goes farther? Which splashes more when it hits? Which bores through the wood char to get to deep-seated heat?

Fire departments need to ask if this is really what they want for their primary weapon.

Or consider an example that comes closer to home: how many people wish for a shower with less pressure and how many would think that a shower with less pressure does a better job of getting the soap off?

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## Supervision

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## How To Handle Performance Reviews

By David Hernandez, [www.firechief.com](http://www.firechief.com)

In preparation for taking the fire officer exam, candidates will focus their attention on reviewing department policies, operational procedures, the incident command system, current strategies and tactics, building construction, and a host of other items that are central to fireground operations. These are – and should be considered – the essential subjects that every company officer understands.



In contrast, topics like the importance of understanding human behavior, researching past disciplinary issues, knowing the discipline process of the department, and seeking mentorship for handling personnel issues are often overshadowed. But these interpersonal aspects of managing a crew are just as critical to your success as a fire officer as those fireground-focused topics.

Personnel matters are the single-most difficult issue to handle in the fire service, even by the most seasoned company officer. We, as firefighters, are creatures of habit. We appreciate traditions and dislike change. Our careers are built on significant events that can pass us by in the blink of an eye. The outcomes of these events are determined by the decisions that our members make based on their training, experience and knowledge of the situation. All of these factors are what make performance evaluations so essential – even if it is one of those topics they don't teach you a great deal about in fire officer school.



### Tracking Progress

Tracking events and performances by those you now supervise is paramount in building a comprehensive personnel evaluation. Track and document events in a manner that best suit your needs. It is like buying a new pair of shoes – only you know what you like and only you can wear them with confidence.

There are often events within an event that get overlooked during an incident. Consider this main event: As my crew and I were leaving the station one hot summer day, we came across an elderly man in a wheelchair who was having trouble negotiating the roadway and sidewalk. Recognizing him as a resident in a nearby senior living community, the senior firefighter asked to get out so he could assist him onto the sidewalk and out of the roadway. So, we blocked traffic, and he proceeded to move the gentleman safely out of traffic.

The event within the event came when the firefighter had already taken a bottle of water out of the cooler in preparation to give to the person (great foresight). And then the real event occurred when the firefighter asked for us to follow him five blocks so that he could push the man home while they consumed the bottled water. The firefighter delivered the resident home and assisted them into the facility safely.

This series of events exemplifies crewmembers acting based on their training, their sensitivity to others, and their role as a public servant. That firefighter could have just assisted the person onto the sidewalk and jumped back in the engine, and we could have driven off and accepting the job as complete.

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As the supervisor, I acknowledged the event and the events within the event that made this moment significant for our crew that day. I documented the event in preparation for it to be one of the shining moments to highlight during this member's evaluation period. This firefighter was soon promoted to fire engineer, and I like to think this event had something to do with it.

### **Scheduling Consistent Reviews**

Making an appointment and scheduling to meet with your crewmembers, both as a team and independently, will validate the performance evaluation period when the formal meeting occurs. The timing of these meetings should be centered on documenting what has occurred most recently. For example, a significant event like the one above is a good opportunity to bring the team together to discuss the event and then also follow up on with a scheduled one-on-one meeting.

Tradition is sacred to all firefighters. As a fire officer, you can develop that internal crew tradition of meeting consistently to bring to light the crewmembers' performance and to help them develop as highly respected firefighters and human beings. Take the opportunity to set time aside and talk with those you supervise on a regularly scheduled basis.

### **Using Writing Tools**

We have all read our performance evaluation that sums up our last year in a couple of paragraphs and noticed that it has some obvious grammatical errors and misspelled words. Rather than look back as to why, let us move our vision to the future. Writing is a skill that is developed through mentorship, peer reviews, online tools, and the dedicated time for multiple writing/review sessions.

The performance evaluation training that agencies provide usually consists of the human resources director delivering a PowerPoint session on the finer points on what separates "Excellent" from "Good" and "Good" from "Satisfactory." Once again, the things they do not teach you are how to write a comprehensive performance evaluation that provides a snapshot of the past year and captures these performance levels.

Writing a sincere and descriptive performance evaluation is the responsibility of the fire officer. Taking from notes about the employee over the past year, generating an outline of the year, and creating a draft version are the keys to creating a solid foundation from which to start an evaluation. It's best to use an online writing tool that can check for grammatical errors and misspelled words throughout the writing process.

Next, I suggest following up with a peer review from another respected officer utilizing Microsoft Word's "Comments" feature under "Track Changes." It is also likely your peers have firsthand knowledge of the events mentioned in the evaluation and can provide comments that substantiate or even expand on the details in the performance evaluation draft.

Now you can start on the final draft. This next writing session will provide you with better insight as to what you have previously written. Make sure to give yourself adequate time so that you can focus solely on writing the final draft.

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David Hernandez

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After you have completed the final draft version, you must review it for incident numbers, correct spelling of names, event names, and a host of other specific titles that validate the employee's performance. A word of warning: Resist the urge to send this version directly to your superior, just in case there is a grammar or punctuation error you missed. Best practice is to review your final version and then run it through the online writing tool of your preference. Now you can submit it to your boss for review.

### Delivering The Performance Evaluation

The delivery of the employee performance evaluation should not surprise your crewmember. The evaluation packet should be viewed as a summary of all the (significant) events that the member was part of and their actions. As part of the tradition you have already established, build out an appointment with the employee and make sure that the environment is comfortable – and by all means neutral.

What do I mean by “neutral”? This is a place where you have not delivered any discipline, that is free from distractions, and is soundproof. Fire stations are known to have ears, and it is best that you ensure that what is said in the room stays in the room. Confidentiality is critical to the process and should be taken seriously. Allow the employee to read the evaluation alone. Standing over the employee while they review the information will prevent the member from being able to absorb the information.

### Your Credibility Is On The Line

When you write an employee performance evaluation that is short, subjective, and filled with grammatical errors and misspelled words, you risk eroding the respect your crewmembers have for you. Remember, you have total control over what is delivered in writing and can avoid these types of mistakes.

Setting time aside to talk with crewmembers about significant events, documenting them accordingly, and then getting them into the final draft is the foundation for peer respect. There is no better time to start than now. Write down those actions that were taken by your crewmembers most recently and work back using your logbook as a resource.

You will see that your writing skills will rise to the next level through the process, you will gain respect from your crewmembers, and you will have future company officers seek your guidance in personnel issues.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Battalion Chief David A. Hernandez (ret.) began his career as a volunteer firefighter in Southern California. He was hired as a firefighter in Riverside County where he served in a variety of positions, including fire engineer and captain. He concluded his career with the Victorville Fire Department as a battalion chief. He served with the Riverside Ranger Unit/California Department of Forestry, City of Riverside, and the City of Victorville before retiring in December 2019 after serving over 30 years in public safety. Hernandez graduated with a doctorate in public administration from California Baptist University in 2018 with research centered on the collection of data from adolescent drownings.

## Farewell

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## Progress Made One Retirement at a Time

By Ricky Brockman, MBA, MS, EFO, CFO

And so it ends. I rarely took advantage of my position as editor of this newsletter to espouse my own opinions, choosing rather, to focus on providing a forum for others to add to the F&ES body of knowledge and share a little humor.

But I will take advantage of my opportunity today as I put this, my final newsletter, to bed. I worked very hard to provide a quality product through the years and it has genuinely been my pleasure editing these things. But now the time has come to pass the torch to Gene Rausch and our team and reflect on my career. And that, poor readers, is where you are drawn into my trap. This could be trouble as it will be a stream of consciousness article without the benefit of a structured outline. You have been warned.

Unlike the majority of you, I was not born to be a firefighter; I was born to be a bum. At least that's what I heard most of the time growing up and, when I dropped out of my junior year of high school, it looked like I was right on track. Then Richard Nixon lied (again) and I found myself reading a draft notice even though I had just turned 18 and was told 18 and 19-year olds were not being drafted. Taking my Dad's advice, I enlisted in the U.S. Air Force instead of being drafted into the Army. When basic training ended, we had to choose a career field and, keeping to character, I had no idea what I wanted to do (flying jets was apparently not an option for me).



Turns out I wasn't the only one with that problem and the Air Force was ready to help. I stood in formation with about 20 or 30 others while a "career advisor" walked down each squad pointing to each individual Airman saying, "Airframe Repair", "Security Police" and "Fireman" to every other guy. And that's how I came to firefighting. Pure chance.

Despite the cold, I really enjoyed tech school at Chanute AFB, IL, especially the live structure and aircraft fires. I graduated with honors which was as surprising to me as anyone.

I walked into the fire station at Gunter AFS, AL the morning of 7 March 1972 and around a week or so later I fought the first of many fires in my career. By the time my Air Force career ended in 1991; I was a salty, experienced firefighter confident that my knowledge and skills made me irresistible to municipal fire departments. However, after four or five interviews I quickly learned my mantra; You Don't Know Squat.

So I went back to school and started building my resume' to match the requirements most fire departments were asking for at that time. I was eventually able to catch on with Kellogg, Brown and Root as a contract Assistant Fire Chief in Turkey and was two days away from flying to Incirlik when an early morning phone call offered me a Fire Inspector position for the U.S. Navy at Souda Bay, Crete.

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## *Farewell*

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I absolutely loved my time on Crete. That was a special group of people with the unique chance to build a fire department from the ground up. Had my family been with me, we may still be there today. But fate had other plans and we moved to Southern California where I helped close down the Long Beach Naval Shipyard (a truly sad experience, so much history lost) and eventually found myself in Ventura County.

Starting as the Fire Prevention Chief at Construction Battalion Center Port Hueneme, I was serendipitously chosen to be the Fire Chief. One morning I woke up to find I was now the Fire Chief for this amalgamated organization which would become Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC). Easily the most challenging, frustrating and satisfying experience of my career. We intentionally made a lot of mistakes as we melded three distinct organizations into, what is today, a model of professionalism and teamwork. The pain we suffered in the late 90's and early 2000's was necessary to institutionalize the remarkable department NBVC has today and I could not be more proud of the team out there.



One day in 1999, I was one of seven Fire Chiefs from Navy bases in California and Nevada invited to visit RDML Veronica Froman in San Diego to witness the presentation of an award to the Navy Fire Chief in San Diego. The "visit" was actually an ambush where we were told the Navy Fire Chief in San Diego was now the Navy Fire Chief for the newly established Navy Region Southwest and that the seven of us were now Assistant Chiefs and worked for him. I did not take this well and as things played out it was clear to me times were changing and I had extraordinarily little control of my circumstances.

Then I saw a job recruitment for Assistant Program Directors under the NAVFAC HQ Fire Protection Division in Washington, DC. This was Director of Navy Fire Protection Bill Killen's team and was the place Navy Fire policy originated. My choice was crystal clear; either apply and work where I could make an impact on policy or shut up and color.

So here I am 18 years later and I think I was successful at helping make things better for Navy Fire & Emergency Services. Not that there weren't times of great frustration and growing pains as CNIC matured and our program took some hits. I believe Navy F&ES is in better shape today than it was when I joined the team. I can point to one reason I believe that; our team at CNIC HQ, led by Carl Glover, has never lost sight of who we were working for; the deck plate firefighter, fire inspector and support staff at our installation fire departments. Every decision we made at HQ was framed by the question "how does this help the F&ES member at the installation?" Contrary to some rumors and innuendos we never spent a single minute trying to figure out how to screw over our fire departments. (Carl Glover is a champion's champion and literally loses sleep worrying about your well-being - you need to recognize.)

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I've had a wonderful career, first with the Air Force and then the Navy and have to recognize some of my mentors over all the years. The first person who expressed any confidence in my abilities was Dale Otto, my instructor supervisor and burn chief at the Fire School at Chanute. He showed me what tough love was. When we moved to Kadena AB on Okinawa I found myself under a remarkable leadership team including Art Roberts, Bob McAllister and Charlie Peters. They showed me this job was no joke and that the cream always rises to the top. Wayne Kee and Don Spitzer at Shaw AFB, SC taught me what professional is all about. At Gila Bend, AZ, Gordie Messerschmidt taught me to do the best with what you have, "if all they give you is a wheelbarrow full of wet toe sacks, you do what you can with the toe sacks." Frank DeCicco in Crete literally carried me through the early stages of my Navy career, always displaying confidence in my abilities. Bill Killen and Kevin King took a chance on a rookie Fire Chief and opened the door to many opportunities to improve life for our Navy F&ES. Finally, Carl Glover was never my boss, he has always been and will always be a respected friend and co-worker, easily the best Chief I ever had.

Thanks to all those folks, I feel it's time to pass on some of the lessons I've learned over the years, not exactly a Brunacini text book but I think there is some good advice here.

I told everyone who worked for me that my goal is to put them in a better place when they leave than they are today. I am an obnoxious advocate for self-improvement. The most valuable lessons I can pass on are:

1. Mantras Change. When I retired from the Air Force, I learned I didn't know squat. That was nearly 30 years ago and I've learned a thing or two since then but am still reluctant to toot my own horn. I am learning new things almost daily and have a new mantra; Never. Stop. Learning.
2. Laurels Make Bad Resting Places. When you obtain that new credential or academic degree, understand that is only a milestone and not a destination. There is still much you can learn. Don't be one of those who earns an initial behind their name and thinks that makes them special. The time you spend patting yourself on the back would be better spent helping someone else get better. Those initials are your challenge to pay it forward.
3. Be honest with yourself and your people. My most important tip. Inconvenient truths are part of the job and nothing you do will change them. Don't mess around with this one. Deliver the bad news as well as the good.
4. Let people do their job. "I don't want to hear the labor pains; I just want to see the baby." It's gratifying when the boss gives you a job and lets you do it. On the other hand, nothing is more deflating than being given a job and then being told how to do it step by step. Let your people go.
5. Allow people to make mistakes. Part of letting people do the job is allowing them to learn from their mistakes without being brow-beaten every time. Unless it's a life-threatening decision, every mistake is a learning opportunity. Don't cheat your people out of those.

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6. Face the tough problems head on. “If the job was easy, anyone could do it.” It’s really easy to lead when the road is clear and the weather is calm. Unfortunately, that is almost never the case in the Navy fire service so our leaders must be ready, willing and able to handle the potholes and tropical storms. If you throw up your hands at the toughest setbacks, you are in over your head. We need leaders who don’t mind getting bruised or wet. You may not prevail but you absolutely must stay in the fight and battle on. Your people are depending on you and will be grateful for the effort even when things go sideways. See number 1.

7. Be nice. Alright, I plagiarized this one, but it’s from a good source. We must be nice to our citizens without question. Anything less is simply unacceptable. But we must also be nice to our people and everyone else we deal with, even that jerk comptroller who questions every toilet paper purchase. A positive attitude in the face of negativity can sometimes have surprisingly positive results. If nothing else, it feels better to be nice.

That’s enough from me. Gene Rausch will be taking over as editor of this newsletter next month and I am sure he will continue to provide a quality product. As for me, I am retiring for real this time. I will only be doing what my wife tells me to do and some fishing. I wish you all well and want to leave you with my heartfelt thanks for allowing me to play for this team. Thank you and see you around!

## Combs Cartoon



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## The Retirement Inevitability



**BUT... BUT... IF I RETIRE, WHO WILL PUT OUT ALL THE FIRES?!**



## Navy F&ES POCs

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## Navy F&ES Hall of Fame



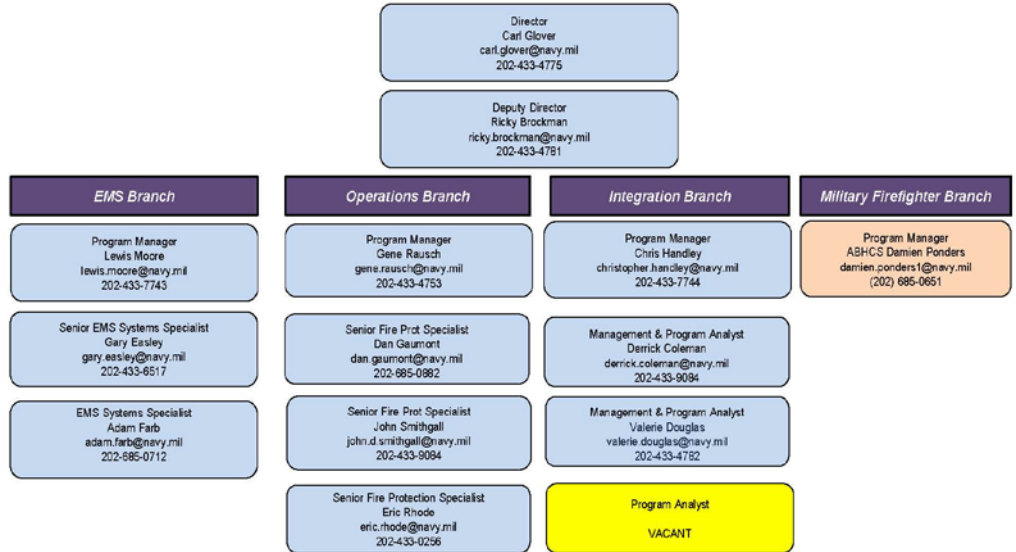
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