

MAY/JUNE 2009

TRUMPET

A PUBLICATION OF THE MOBILE FIRE-RESCUE DEPARTMENT - ESTABLISHED 1888

INSIDE FEATURES

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"Quality Professional Services Delivered with Compassion"

TRUMPET

An official publication of the Mobile Fire-Rescue Department.
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Editor & Publisher
Steve Huffman

The Trumpet welcomes your questions and/or comments. To submit photos, articles or comments call (251) 208-2857 or e-mail: huffman@cityofmobile.org

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Our Mission

The Mission of the Mobile Fire - Rescue Department is to identify and respond to community needs in order to deliver an effective and efficient system of service which minimize risk to life, health, and property from fire, trauma, acute illness, and hazardous conditions.



On the Cover

Captain Walt Riley sets up a burn for training groups in a vacant structure located on Gunn Place.

Cover Photo By: Steve Huffman

Visit Our Website:

<http://www.cityofmobile.org/fire/>

“Brotherhood”

By **CRIS BREWER**
 Division Chief, Training
 Golden Colorado Fire
 Department

Note: In this article I use the term “brotherhood”. The use of this term is not intended to be gender specific and its use should be considered to include both male and female members of the fire service brotherhood.

I don’t know about you, but the only time I seem to be able to sit down and read a book for pleasure is when I am on vacation sitting on a beach or next to a swimming pool. And so I found myself last week on vacation, enjoying the beach, and reading a book. One of the books I read, “3000 Degrees” by Sean Flynn, I would recommend you all put on your summer reading list. This book is about “The true story of a deadly fire and the men who fought it”.

The story is a true account of the Worchester (MA) Cold Storage fire that occurred on December 3, 1999.

Six Worchester firefighters lost their lives at this fire. But the book is not so much about the fire as much as it is about the firefighters. Actually, it’s about family. It’s about the firefighter brotherhood family. It’s about commitment. It’s about firefighters (and their families) giving the ultimate sacrifice while attempting the search and rescue of brother firefighters. It’s about profound sadness and loss. It’s about pride of being a part of this brotherhood. It’s about us.

The book is focused on Mike McNamee who was a District Chief with the Worchester Fire Department at the time of the tragic fire at the Worchester Cold Storage building. Chief McNamee was the incident commander and operations chief during this fire that took six firefighter lives. I attended the Firehouse Expo in Baltimore following this tragic fire and Chief McNamee presented a heart wrenching and emotional account of the tragic events of this fire. Worchester Fire Department could have lost many more firefighters at this fire if Chief McNamee didn’t literally step-up and physically and emotionally restrain additional

firefighters from going into harms way with a very high probability of death to attempt additional search and rescue of their lost and fallen brothers in this huge hellish building that was determined to kill as many firefighters as it could. “Nobody goes up”, Chief McNamee ordered as he physically blocked access to the stairwell. “We already lost six. We’re not going to lose any more”, the Chief deplored to the horde of firefighters positioned at the base of the stairs, ready to ascend into the deadly darkness above them that had already consumed the lives of six of their brother firefighters.

The book is one of the most realistic non-technical portrayals of the fire service I have read. It’s not the Hollywood version of what we do. It’s the honest, down to earth, description of what we do, and who it is that does it, in every city, town, and community across the fire service. Here is the opening of the story:

The smoke banked down like bolts of black velvet, heavy sheets curling and rolling and folding together. A man could lose perspective in such a cloud, the vapor so dense and oily that it carried a physical weight, like tar, hot and sticky and misted into the air. Through the plastic of his face mask, Lt. Mike McNamee could see a dirty orange glow in the haze, brighter when the smoke puffed one way on a searing updraft, then dimmer when the fog closed again. If he trusted his eyes, which he didn’t, the flames might have been forty feet away, or sixty, or maybe only twenty. So he trusted his skin, believed in the warmth pushing through his turnout coat. He was down on all fours, crawling across a wood floor, staying low, ducking under the worst of the heat. Down there, in the coolest inches, he figured the temperature was only 125 degrees, maybe 150. He guessed the fire, burning at the backend of a warehouse storeroom eighty feet deep and half as wide, was about forty-five feet away.

“Lieutenant, you wanna open it up?”

The nozzle man, a lump in the dark barely an arm's reach away, shouted the words. Every man in a firefight had to shout, throw his voice through the mask on his face and the droning thunder of the flames. The sound was muffled, almost slurred to an unpracticed ear.

"Not yet," Mike hollered back. "Let's keep moving. Get up close where we can hit it directly."

There were three of them, creeping across the warehouse floor and dragging a hose two and a half inches in diameter loaded with almost four hundred pounds of water...

Living together, training together, and working together in the constant face of adversity and risk of injury or death, where success is determined by the trust in each other, develops a sense of firefighter brotherhood not known or understood to very many outside the fire service. Having been in the fire service for over thirty years, I have seen and experienced firsthand a fair amount of this phenomenon called firefighter "brotherhood". In my opinion, it is one of the most gratifying portions of being a part of the fire service. It doesn't mean we always agree with each other, or

that we all like each other. Like most families, it doesn't mean that we don't argue or fight or hurt each other from time to time. But what it does mean, is that we trust each other to do whatever it takes to back each other up and at times to risk our lives for each other. We depend on each other for success and literally life itself.

There have been several times over my fire service career that I have doubted or questioned my appreciation for the "job" and wondered if the required commitments were worth it or not. It's the recognition and appreciation of the fire service brotherhood that helps make it all worthwhile for me. Worth the risks required and worth the commitments required. I would recommend we all take an inventory of our fire service debits and credits from time to time and reevaluate our fire service balance sheets to make sure we are still willing and be able to fulfill the requirements and commitments of the fire service as a firefighter or an officer. When you do the analysis, don't forget to include the value of "brotherhood" in the equation and recognize, appreciate, and practice good brotherhood behavior everyday, every incident, every chance.

Be smart. Be safe!



"I think the whole department should get the same training as US&R!"

By SHERRY CRUSH,
Captain

I hear this quite often from a lot of you, especially after an incident or just because you see Training Group 6 at the Training Center practicing a new or old skill. "Why can't everyone in the field have the same training?" I honestly wish we could, but what good would it do to train everyone to the technician level to not be able to maintain their skills. It is a constant struggle to keep our EMT, Paramedic, and Basic firefighting skills up. And even then, as Chief Stringfellow pointed out in the last Trumpet, people will fuss and balk at the idea of having to do more training.

It's not about taking a course and becoming specialists in that field overnight. Any technician level training is a perishable skill and it takes an effort, on your part, to maintain it. It takes constant hands on retraining and calls to reach a true technician level qualification. Not to mention you must have the equipment in order to function. (Take a look at the NIMS typing for further information.)

Then there is the argument, "we need enough training to be of some help on scene and make informed decisions." I couldn't agree more. Now for the shocking part . . . you have this on the MFRD. You are trained to the operational or level I as outlined in NFPA 1006 (2008). This means, in short, you have the knowledge to recognize a specific incident and know that it is outside your level of training or available equipment. You also have the knowledge and training to deny entry, and protect the public from further injury.

A perfect example of the different levels of training at work was last May at the trench collapse. EB22



Please see **USAR** Page 4

USAR

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was first on scene with Capt. Allen who happens to be a Trench Technician; however he knew like anyone else on this job, that he did not have the equipment or sufficiently trained personnel to go into the trench and rescue the man. So Capt. Allen conducted himself and his crew properly. He had them deny entry into the trench, he ensured proper resources were enroute, and then he and his crew assisted with the rescue.



Photo By **STEVE HUFFMAN**

I commend anyone that wants to better themselves and increase their knowledge. There are several websites on line that are free that can increase your knowledge. Take the training that is offered to you seriously, as Chief Stringfellow said, I know there are some things that are not working on the department right now, however some things are. It's what you make of it. If you're still not satisfied, put in a transfer to one of the Homeland Security units and we'll be glad to get you the additional training. However, please understand this will add to you current training requirements.

The right to be heard does not automatically include the right to be taken seriously.

- Hubert H. Humphrey (1911-1978)

Retirements



**Administrative Asst.
Robert Gay
Over 31 Years Service
Retired 02/20/2009
Supply Division**



**Asst. Fire Marshal
Sam Stephens
Over 31 Years Service
Retired 03/31/2009
Bureau of Fire Prevention**



**Driver
Doug Harlan
Over 30 Years Service
Retired 03/31/2009
Engine 12**



**Firefighter
Dean Johnson
Over 31 Years Service
Retired 03/31/2009
Engine 16**



**Firefighter
Teddie Waddill
24 Years Service
Retired 03/31/2009
Truck 10**

Congratulations to you all and best wishes upon your retirement. Thank you for your years of service to the residents of Mobile!



NAILS IN THE FENCE

Make sure you read all the way down to the last sentence.
(Most importantly the last sentence)

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His Father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence.

The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence. Finally the day came when the boy didn't to se his temper at all.

He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper.

The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone.

The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence.

He said, 'you

have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence.

The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. But it won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound will still be there. A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one. Remember that friends are very rare jewels, indeed. They make you smile and encourage you to succeed. They lend an ear, they share words of praise and they always want to open their hearts to us.'

YOU ARE MY FRIEND AND I AM HONORED!

Please forgive me if I have ever left a 'hole' in your fence.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Thank you so much for the flowers sent to my father's wake (Arthur Fleming). Every time there's a request for flower fund money, the emails fly, but it's very nice to think that in your moment of sadness that someone is thinking of you.

Thanks to each of you were able to come to the wake or funeral. I appreciated everyone's thoughts and prayers.

Cheryl Schaffer,
Communications



Maids of Mirth Parade Tribute to Mobile Fire-Rescue February 14, 2009

Photos Provided By George Criminale





Firefighter of the Month

MARCH - Kenny Newman - Firefighter, TC05

Employee of the Year

Tamara Nelson - Supervisor, EMS Billing

Employee of the Month

SEPTEMBER - Patricia Pettway - OA II, EMS Billing

OCTOBER - Lisa Foster - OA I, EMS Billing

JANUARY - Donna Palmer - Sec II, Training Division

FEBRUARY - Mary Jane Price - Sec II, Central

PROMOTIONS



LeAnn Tacon
District Chief



Mack Weaver, III
Captain



Adrien Cordero
Driver



Richard McMillian
Driver

February 10

I don't know who to send this to, but I wanted to let someone know of the great response and professionalism of the ones (RA06 and EA22) that came to our rescue Sunday

from the Mobile Fire-Rescue. We called 9-1-1 on my Mother-In-Law Sunday morning, 2-8, around 9:30 a.m. We thought she was having a heart attack. Her name is Mavis Banks on Monark Drive in Mobile. The unit arrived very quickly after I hung up. The Paramedics were very professional and at the same time calmed everyone in the house. They answered our questions without making us feel stupid. They were very polite and seemed to actually care about the patient.

Again, I could not ask for better service.

Tom Lomenick

February 10

Dear Chief Dean:

On Sunday morning, October 1st a neighbor's cat inadvertently wandered into our backyard and was subsequently treed by our two dogs who wouldn't have known what to do with it if they caught it. Assuming that if the cat was smart enough to go up the tree, it certainly would be smart enough to come down the tree once its perceived threat was gone, and life once again would return to normal at the "House of Gavin". Well, my assumption was totally wrong, the cat stayed treed Sunday night and with the onslaught of freezing weather approaching plus my wife's anxiety over the cat's safety and longevity, I was strongly encouraged, as only a wife can do, to call my dear friend Mr. Steve Huffman, PIO, with the Mobile Fire Department. After explaining the situation to Steve, he indicated that normally the department doesn't get into the practice of rescuing treed animals unless it's a threat to human life and limb, however each case is evaluated and treated on an individual basis.

Steve suggested I call the District 4 Chief David Rose and convey the cat's plight and my predicament to see if the cat could be "de-treed". District Chief Rose reiterated pretty much what Steve Huffman said, but he would send a person to the scene to make a final determination. Fortunately for the cat and me, the determination to rescue the cat was made and the cat, my wife Sonia (Sonny) and I wish to thank the following guys for their incredible community service to our neighborhood:

Jimmy Young, Jim Carter, Wayne Lampe, Leroy LuQuire

At the time of the rescue, I was attending a meeting in another part of town, but my wife Sonny, who was at home when the men arrived, indicated that she was tremendously impressed with the courteous demeanor and professionalism that the men of Mobile Fire Department, District 4-Tapia Station, exhibited in their "**Community Service Rescue.**"

Sincerely,
John R. Gavin

Firefighter Safety

Incident Command



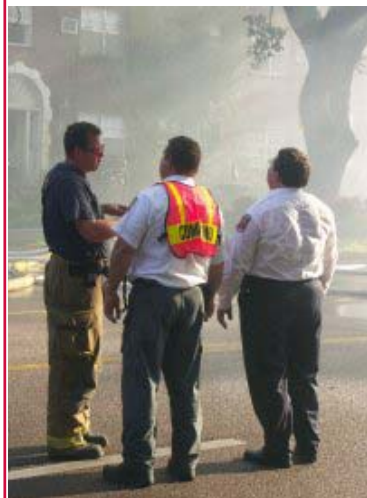
By Thomas Maloney—Maloney, a 24-year veteran of the fire service, currently serves as the fire marshal for Snohomish County, Wash. He is an EFO graduate who holds a bachelor's degree in public administration and will complete his MBA in June 2009.

Case Study: Report #08-243

"While venting the roof, it was noticed that the back part of the roof was falling in and the roof we were on was extremely unsafe. I notified the chief of the main department that if there was an interior attack going on that the roof was falling in. I was told by him that it was fine and nobody was toward the back of the house ... Shortly afterward, that chief and another member climbed to the roof of the front of the house and started to do work while, from a distance, you could see the roof bouncing."

Comments

The safety of all personnel on the fireground depends on clear, concise and timely communication and thorough teamwork. The incident commander (IC) relies on firefighters and incident safety officers to relay feedback on fireground conditions in order to make informed decisions regarding risk vs. gain and offensive vs. defensive operations. The IC develops fireground strategies to support the incident action plan and make assignments based on the availability and expertise of personnel.



Discussion Points

- What are the key factors to evaluate during size-up (life safety, structure type/location, time of day, potential hazards, fire involvement, incident stabilization, etc.)?
- What fireground strategies have been identified by the IC to support the incident action plan and manage the incident?
- What is the importance of continued evaluation of the incident?
- How is your department's accountability system used when operating within mutual aid?

- Does your department survey buildings within your response area?
- What are the structure's construction type and collapse potential?

Tip

The incident command system (ICS) provides a systematic approach to effectively manage emergency incidents. By managing emergency incidents, the IC will ensure firefighter safety, civilian safety, property conservation, unified command structure and effective fireground operations. Using ICS at every incident and training drill will ensure personnel are prepared to use it when it matters most.

The National Fire Fighter Near-Miss Reporting System is a voluntary, confidential, non-punitive and secure reporting system with the goal of improving fire fighter safety. Visit the website at <http://www.firefighternearmiss.com/>



HEALTH TIP

The Most Important Meal of the Day

A 2003 Harvard study found that people who ate breakfast everyday were a third less likely to be obese compared with those who skipped breakfast. Researchers theorize that breakfast helps stabilize blood sugar, regulating appetite and energy throughout the day. Skip high-fat, processed meals, and choose a variety of foods that provide complex carbohydrates, protein and a small amount of fat. Choices can include oatmeal, yogurt and fruit, hard-boiled eggs and even leftovers, such as vegetable pizza.

Stay Hydrated

Did you know that by the time you feel thirsty, you may already be dehydrated? Conducting stressful, physical work in protective clothing and hot environments, firefighters are



highly susceptible to dehydration, which can lead to heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Combat dehydration by prehydrating prior to your shift, and stay hydrated throughout your shift. Check out NFPA 1584: Recommended Practice in the Rehabilitation of Members Operating at Incident Scene Operations and Training Exercises for more rehab information.

Dates to Remember

May 1 - National Day of Prayer

May 5 - Cinco de Mayo

May 10 - Mother's Day

May 15 - Peace Officers Memorial Day

May 25 - Memorial Day

June 14 - Flag Day

June 21 - Father's Day



MOBILE FIRE-RESCUE

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