



THE SECOND ALARM

FEBRUARY 2019
THE SECOND ALARM

A Department Without Limits

CHIEF'S TOPIC OF THE MONTH

It's OK to not be OK

Lt. Jeff Talley – Firefighter/Paramedic – Valdosta Fire Department

Imagine yourself in a nightmare that you are trapped in that is psychologically torturing and emotionally draining. This becomes day to day life where anything can bring you back to the event or events that changed your life forever. This alone makes your daily life a living hell. Add in your other daily stressors and it becomes a chore to even breathe let alone be willing to function in society.

(Dean Goddard)

During my career in both the EMS and Fire Department fields of work, I have been exposed to scenes and situations that would make the average person run away in fear. Those of us who have been in this arena have all been exposed to these experiences at some point and, if you are new to this, you WILL be exposed sooner or later. At some point, you realize that certain calls are affecting you more profoundly than others, or, you find yourself recalling them more often. While this form of self-review or introspection is normal, for some, it becomes more difficult to step away from those feelings until they pervade into our normal daily routine.

At some time, we must realize that the constant replay of these scenes and experiences is not healthy for our continued well-being and must decide that we may need to reach outside of ourselves for help. This is not always easy to do. We are often the first to help others, but the last to seek help for ourselves.

Ultimately, the repeated exposure to these traumas can take a toll on our mental health.

While we may be able to go into a seemingly robotic mode where we shut our emotions off while dealing with these calls, the stress, memories and feelings still accumulate over time. Whether we want to or not, it's something we take home with us. Long after the call is over, we still deal with it. For me, it may be a smell, or a sight that keys a memory. Recently, during a rescue attempt on a pediatric patient, I found

myself staring at his little feet as we worked on him and, suddenly, it was no longer him; it was my daughter's feet I was looking at. Afterward, I was OK but, thankfully, I had the opportunity to talk to a fellow co-worker as well as some of the command staff and express that short exposure and thus, keep from internalizing the stress that scene created for me.

We must, at some point in our lives and careers understand that there are circumstances, emotions and exposures that we can NOT handle on our own. We are very good at helping other people, but we're not so good at receiving help back for the most part. We have become so ingrained in the role of being the rescuer that we sometimes ignore or don't even see that we may need rescuing ourselves. In a culture which is built largely on the values of bravery and pride, it is difficult to ask for help when needed.

According to a new study from the Ruderman Family Foundation, PTSD and depression rates among firefighters and police officers are as much as 5 times higher than the rates within the civilian population. Some of us may be reluctant to even use the term because we feel that, by using it, we are taking away from the men and women in the armed services who have truly struggled to heal from life-altering physical and emotional wounds. While I do agree that active combat comes with its own share of traumatic experiences, the Fire/EMS/Law Enforcement field is not immune. In a study conducted by The International Association of Firefighters of 7000 firefighters across the country, they found:

- 95 percent said they experience critical stress on the job
- 75 percent said it leaves them with unresolved mental issues
- 71 percent have trouble sleeping
- 65 percent are haunted by memories of bad calls

That is a significant number of fire personnel who are exhibiting signs and symptoms of PTSD. As such, we need to recognize when potentially traumatic events occur and seek the support we need in the aftermath. Part of that support in-

volves recognizing the signs of PTSD:

Reliving the event. Memories of the traumatic event can come back at any time. You may feel the same feelings you did when the event took place. You may have nightmares or, you may feel like you are going through the event again. This is called a *flashback*. You may see, hear, or smell something that causes you to relive the event, called a *trigger*. Smells, seeing an accident, or hearing certain sounds are examples of triggers.

Avoiding situations that remind you of the event. You may try to avoid situations or people that trigger memories of the traumatic event. You may even avoid talking or thinking about the event.

Negative changes in beliefs and feelings. The way you think about yourself and others changes. This symptom has many aspects, including the fact that you may notice changes in your personal relationships. You may think the world is completely dangerous, and no one can be trusted.

Feeling keyed up (called "hyperarousal"). You may be jittery or always alert and on the lookout for danger. You might suddenly become angry or irritable. For example, you may have a hard time sleeping or concentrating. You may be startled by a loud noise or surprise.

While this is not a be all end all list of possible symptoms, they can be a good indicator that something is wrong. Sometimes the symptoms may be hard to recognize on our own. If a family member, close friend or co-worker has made observations to you about some of the above issues, it may be time to seek assistance. Additionally, you can ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do upsetting thoughts or memories about the event come into your mind against your will?
2. Are you having upsetting dreams about the event?
3. Do you act or have feeling as though the event was happening again?
4. Do you feel upset by reminders of the event?
5. Do you have bodily reactions (such as fast heartbeat, sweatiness, dizziness, stomach pains) when reminded of the event?
6. Do you have difficulty sleeping?
7. Have you noticed yourself being more irritable or having outbursts of anger?
8. Are you having difficulty concentrating?
9. Do you have a more exaggerated awareness of potential dangers to yourself and others?
10. Are you easily startled at something unexpected?

If you can answer yes to any of these questions, again, talk to someone.

If I can make any impact on you, I would hope that it would be this: There is help and you are not alone. The biggest step is understanding that you may need help. I have personally been there.

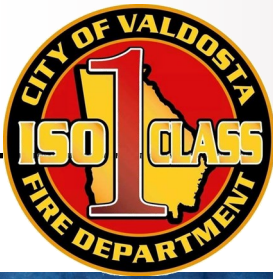
Knowing that you need help but being afraid of what others will think of you should not stop you. All of us carry baggage. We all carry the burden of this career. Ghosts of past calls haunt every one of us and we're not meant to carry this burden alone. Don't think for once that seeking help means that you are weak. I have been there and will always be available if you need an ear or a shoulder...that's what brotherhood is.

SEEKING HELP IS NOT A SIGN OF WEAKNESS



If ONLY IT WAS THIS OBVIOUS...

First Responder, Safe Call Now - safecallnow.org, 206-459-3020
Firestrong online - www.firestrong.org
National Programs on Suicide: www.suicide.org or 1-800-SUICIDE
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255



THE SECOND ALARM



Congratulations!

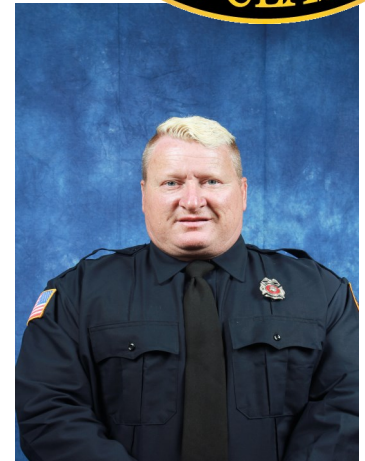
The National Fire Academy's (NFA's) Executive Fire Officer Program (EFO) is a four-year curriculum that provides senior fire officers with a broad perspective on various facets of fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) administration. The courses and accompanying research examine how to exercise leadership when dealing with severe or unique problems within communities. Acceptance into the program is highly competitive.

During the four-year program, Assistant Chief Brian Boutwell completed extensive research in the following areas:

1. Executive Development research- recruiting qualified female firefighters.
2. Executive Analysis of Community Risk Reduction Research- identifying the problems with fall injuries for the City of Valdosta.
3. Executive Analysis of Fire Service Operations in Emergency Management Research- conducting damage assessments for the City of Valdosta.
4. Executive Leadership Research- evaluating PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) in the Valdosta Fire Department.

On December 12, 2018, Chief Broome was notified that Chief Boutwell had completed the U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Academy's (NFA) "Executive Fire Officer Program" (EFO) Program.

Chief Boutwell is the first member of the Valdosta Fire Department to complete the EFO program. The Valdosta Fire Department would like to recognize him for his great accomplishment.



Employee of the Month Nomination:

Lieutenant Chad Roe and Corporal Carl Walker

These two individuals have gone above and beyond in their work on the apparatus committee for the two new aerial trucks. Over the past year, they have spent countless hours researching options to maximize the city's investment to ensure the highest quality equipment possible in the most cost-effective ways. Over the last few months, they spent a considerable amount of time away from their families, with the majority of their work on the committee falling on their off-duty time, ensuring the new aerials met with our exacting specifications of being built for quality, functionality, and longevity. They have traveled to Ohio several times to the Sutphen manufacture to conduct inspections and Williams Fire Apparatus in Alabama for the final inspection.

During the final inspection they mounted tools and equipment, saving the city thousands of dollars. Once the trucks were delivered they spent days training drivers how to operate the trucks. When the trucks were ready to be presented to the community, they thoroughly cleaned and waxed them to a perfection. They exercised great care in their stewardship of city funds, saving the city thousands of dollars, and exemplified the city of Valdosta's ongoing commitment to the citizens of Valdosta through their meticulous attention to detail and exacting standards. During the duration of the process from building the trucks to final delivery, they never received compensation while working on their days-off.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- **Submission to the newsletter should occur before the 20th of each month**
- **Feel Free to submit photos with your submissions**
- **Have a strong opinion about a topic of concern to our fire department? Feel free to submit a piece for review and possible publication in the newsletter.**

CFAA MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2 February 2019

CFAA Reminders / Upcoming Events:

- ♦ CFAA General Meeting
Tuesday, February 19 @ Fire Station 1
Conference Room 6:00 p.m.
- ♦ Adopt-A-Road Clean-up
Saturday, February 23 is the next clean-up at:
N. Forrest Street Time TBA
- ♦ Jr. Fire Marshal's Fun Day
Saturday, March 2
- ♦ Azalea Festival
Saturday, March 9 & Sunday, March 10
- ♦ Jr. Fire Marshal's Banquet
Monday, March 25

Events must be presented at general meetings and approved to be added to the calendar or by special request through the Chief and the VFD.

Need the 411?

If you are not receiving updates and emails or if your contact information has change, make sure to send an email to: cfaavaldosta@gmail.com

Include your name, your contact information and CFA Class #.

You can also sign up for Remind 101 and receive text reminders by:

Texting this message
@vfdc

To this number:
81010

Also, if you have not connected on Facebook, visit here: <https://www.facebook.com/VFDCFA/>

*If you missed the last CFAA newsletter, check the Group Facebook Page or send an email to:
cfaavaldostagmail.com*



LOVE ON YOUR FIRE DEPARTMENT! DROP A VALENTINE, A KIND WORD OR A TREAT TO YOUR CLOSEST FIRE STATION THIS MONTH!

Our Mission

"Our mission is to contribute to the functions of the Valdosta Fire Department while supporting service projects and fostering positive relationships among the community."



The Citizens Fire Academy Alumni (CFAA) are citizens whom have completed the Citizens Fire Academy (CFA) through the Valdosta Fire Department. If you are interested in signing up for the next CFA course, please email Tangela Rowe with the Valdosta Fire Department at: TROWE@VALDOSTACITY.COM

If you have completed a CFA course and would like to receive more information on the alumni, email: CFAAVALDOSTA@GMAIL.COM

CFAA MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2 February 2019

Highlights on Community Outreach Initiatives

Volunteer groups (including the CFAA) participate in District 1 cleanup

On Saturday, January 19, more than 65 volunteers participated in a community clean-up at 215 Chester Street. Volunteers from Prince Hall Masonic Lodge 19, NAACP, Azalea City Women's Club, Crossing Jordan Church, Valdosta Public Works, Valdosta State University, Boy Scouts of America, and Citizens Fire Academy Alumni Association partnered with District 1 Councilwoman Vivian Miller-Cody to clean up a Louise Postell's yard.

Postell has lived in her home on Chester Street for more than 30 years. Due to her age, Postell said she is unable to

keep up her yard. "I am so grateful for the volunteers who came out to help clean up my front and back yard. It looks so nice and clear now. I can see past the shrubs," said Postell.

Crews hauled 2,420 pounds (1.21 tons) of debris from the cleanup site.

"Last week I came out and met Ms. Louise. I knew she needed help with her yard so I reached out to the community to help us give back and be of service during the Martin Luther King Jr. Weekend. With so many people being off this weekend what better way to celebrate the MLK Jr. Holiday," said Councilwoman Vivian Miller – Cody. "We all know one day we will get older and we will want someone to help us. I always like to think that if we serve all mankind, God will give us back blessings for what we have done for others."

Thank you for all who were able to participate!





LET'S TALK FIRE SAFETY

Valdosta Fire Department

Volume 4, Issue 2

February 2019

Address Identification Numbers

Address Facts:

A major concern from emergency personnel is being able to locate a structure in the event of an emergency by using the address numbers.

Many people do not have their address numbers posted on their houses, mailboxes or places of business which can prolong them receiving help due to the fact that first responders cannot immediately locate them.

During a cardiac emergency, seconds count. A delay in receiving help could mean the difference between life and death.

In order for house numbers to be visible from the street, they should be large.

The International Residential Code states that address identification characters shall:

- be legible and placed in a position that is visible from the street or road fronting the property;

- contrast with their background;
- be in Arabic numbers and not spelled out.
- not be less than 4 inches in height with a stroke width of not less than 0.5 inch;
- have a monument, pole, sign or other means to identify a structure that sits away from objects and should be properly maintained;
- Reflective numbers are usually helpful because they are easier to see at night.
- A house number sign should be placed in close proximity to the porch light so it can be seen at night if not reflective.
- White numbers on a black background is an ideal combination of colors when displaying the number on the house, mailbox, place of business, or curb.
- Brass or bronze numbers should be avoided – they don't offer optimum visibility at night.



the roadway or on a private access road;

Always Remember:

- Address numbers should not be obscured by any trees, shrubs, or other permanent

International Association of Certified Home Inspectors or Inter-NACHI

<https://www.nachi.org/house-numbers.htm>

"For there is nothing lost, that may be found, if sought."

— Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene

When posting your address number or a sign on the mailbox, don't use the same colors as the mailbox. Stickers with shiny silver numbers on a black background should be avoided, as well.

There's a chance that you or someone else may park their vehicle in front of the mailbox; in this case, it's suitable to paint your house number on your driveway. The number should be painted on the side of the driveway that faces the moving traffic.

Have a fire safety question you would like for the Fire Department to answer? Please contact Ms. Tangela Rowe at 229-333-1835 or you can send an email to:

valdostafire@valdostacity.com

Solve the Fire Wuzzles

WUZZLES are word puzzles consisting of combinations of words, letters, figures or symbols positioned to create disguised words, phrases, names, places, sayings, etc.

For example, the solution to NOON GOOD is "Good afternoon" and LINE READ LINE is "Read between the lines."

DISCUSSION glibness
DISCUSSION

Answers to last month's wuzzles are tuna and run away with me.

Fire Safety Quiz

1. It is unlawful to use numbers other than the ones assigned to your address by the municipality as your address identification number.
A. True
B. False
2. Address numbers are easier to read when they are displayed_____.
A. Vertically
B. Horizontally
C. Backwards
D. Diagonally

Answers to last month's quiz are 1. A. & 2. C.



Freddie D. Broome, Fire Chief