



**VALDOSTA FIRE
DEPARTMENT**

A Department Without Limits

Editor:
Sgt. S A Miller

BIRTHDAYS:

SGT TIMOTHY STUBBS 03/01

SGT RYAN SEYMOUR 03/04

SGT EDWARD COPPAGE 03/14

FF THOMAS MANUS, JR 03/15

FF CHAD EASON 03/19

LT ANTHONY SOLBERG 03/23

FF REMUS BELL 03/24

BC TOM ROBINSON 03/27

CHIEF'S TOPIC OF THE MONTH

Trust! For a small word, it has a powerful meaning. If I was to ask you to close your eyes, lean backward and allow me to catch you. I wonder how many of you would actually lean back. I wonder how many of you would not lean back. Although the question is rhetorical, my observation of how many would not lean back is based on empirical evidence that is disheartening. Our profession is built around trust. We encounter citizens who trust you with their lives, we provide services to business that give us access to areas where some employees are not allowed. There are even times when we meet strangers who open up and tell us their life stories just because they feel a sense comfort in confiding in us. It is baffling to imagine that we will put our lives on the line for each other during a fire; however,

once the fire is out we would not lean back for that same person that just put their life on the line for you. I read a quote by Johnny Weir, "Love myself I do. Not everything, but I love the good as well as the bad. I love my crazy lifestyle, and I love my hard discipline. I love my freedom of speech and the way my eyes get dark when I'm tired. I love that I have learned to trust people with my heart, even if it will get broken. I am proud of everything that I am and will become." The quote made me realize that maybe you do not trust someone because you do not love yourself enough to trust yourself or anyone else. So the next time you are questioning the trust of someone else, maybe you should look in the mirror and ask yourself,



Freddie D. Broome, Fire Chief

"would I lean back for me?" Thank you for your support and everything you do to make our department, "A Department without Limits."

POINTS OF INTEREST

- Submissions 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

UPCOMING BLOOD DONATION EVENTS



The schedule for the City of Valdosta Blood Drives has been released. Note that the Guns-N-Hoses Blood Drive is scheduled for the end of July, our annual blood donation contest for bragging rights between us in the Valdosta Fire Department and our comrades in the Valdosta Police Department.

April 25th 1000-1500hrs in the City Hall Annex with a goal of 19 units

July 27th 1000-1500hrs in the City Hall Annex with a goal of 76 units (**Guns-N-Hoses**)

October 26th 1000-1500hrs in the City Hall Annex with a goal of 22 units

ATTA BOY—DONE DID GOOD

From the Facebook:

[Kristy Lorey to Valdosta Fire Department](#)

· January 29 at 10:13pm · Hahira ·

Yesterday engine number 2 was in my Aunt's neighborhood putting out a small fire. When he was done my son who is autistic wanted to go see the truck. So we walked over just to say hi and let him see the truck. Well the firefighter (I did not get his name) was kind enough to let my son climb up in the truck and let him explore for a little bit. I didn't get a picture due to my phone not being on me. But I did want to thank the firefighter for being kind and taking time out of his busy schedule and making my son smile 😊☺ We appreciate all you do!!

Kudos to the following Valdosta Fire Department members whose actions got them the following Employee of the Month Nominations:

On December 31, 2016, a young lady with a small infant child stopped by Fire Station 1. She was in need of a car seat. The car seat she owned was broken and unsafe for usage. The mother had an 11 hour drive ahead and was not financially able to purchase a new car seat. Chief Henry contacted several resources trying to obtain a new car seat. Once all efforts were exhausted, Chief Henry and Captain Thibodeau went to Wal-Mart and purchased a new car seat with all the extras. Chief Henry and Captain Thibodeau's humanitarian actions put the mother at ease. The mother was able to drive the 11 hour trip while ensuring her infant child was safely secured in a car seat. This is a perfect demonstration of excellent customer service.

Firefighter Penland was inside his home when he heard someone screaming outside. When he went outside to investigate, he witnessed a citizen on the ground being attacked by a pit bull. He immediately placed himself between the citizen and the dog in an attempt to rescue the female from the attacking dog. Firefighter Penland was able to scare the dog away without any severe injuries to himself or the dog. Firefighter Penland remained with the citizen and provided first-aid care until EMS arrived on the scene. Thanks to Firefighter Penland's quick actions the citizen only received a few bruises and several cuts that required stitches. The dog was retained by animal control.



Congratulations again to Tangela Rowe for receiving a Commendation from Governor Deal for being selected as Firefighter of the Year for 2016 during the 45th Annual Firefighters Recognition Day at the Capitol.



The Valdosta Fire Department was well represented at this year's Firefighters Recognition Day (left to right): Lt. Robert Mercer, Educator Tangela Rowe, BC Johnny Henry, Rep. Dexter Sharper, Chief Freddie Broome, AC Brian Boutwell, Capt. Jeffery Thibodeau, and BC James Clinkscales.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

How firefighting is killing you by Sarah Jahnke

Aside from the well-known firefighting dangers lurks other forces that will reduce your health and possibly your lifespan

It is no secret that firefighting is a dangerous job or that fighting fires can have a negative impact on health. It is well known that firefighting is related to higher rates of several types of cancer, which is clearly linked to exposures on the fireground to the byproducts of combustion.

These byproducts, combined with the physical exertion of firefighting, also are clear triggers linked to the risk of cardiovascular events.

However, dangers of the job extend beyond the carcinogens and physical exertion required to respond to fire and rescue calls. Several factors related to being in the fire service actually lead to increased risk.

For instance, research has found higher rates of being overweight and obese among firefighters than the general population. While it seems this risk is the simple result of personal choices related to eating and fitness, the job itself makes weight gain more likely.

Although there is debate and speculation about the best or worst shift schedule for health, it is clear that the interrupted sleep required by the fire service has a negative impact on health in general.

Shift work that requires an interrupted circadian rhythm (the 24 hour cycle of physiology a body goes through) has been related to several health concerns including increased risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and obesity.

Sleep and mental health

Interrupted sleep also can lead to developing or worsened sleep disorders such as sleep apnea. Sleep apnea, in turn, increases risk for obesity as the body doesn't have an opportunity to fully rest and enter the appropriate sleep cycle.

Shift work and interrupted sleep also lead to decreased levels of serotonin, which, in turn, contributes to an increased risk of behavioral health concerns. This physiologic risk combined with the repeated exposure to trauma fire and EMS personnel face responding to calls leads to higher risk of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress symptoms.

Negative behavioral health outcomes are often related to increased alcohol and substance use and abuse. Research has found rates of binge and heavy drinking among firefighters to be high, which, it has been suggested, can be a response to repeated exposure to trauma.

Binge drinking also carries with it a large number of empty calories that contributes to obesity.

Eating in the firehouse can also be a challenge. Food and eating habits are highly engrained in the firehouse culture with bonding taking place around the kitchen table individual food choices more difficult for a firefighter who wants to make changes on their own.

Busy house food, fitness

Firehouses that are busy also have the challenge of unpredictable eating schedules. While I have never seen any specific research on the issue, it seems that the better the meal is, the more likely it is to be interrupted with a call.

In addition, firefighters have to be ready and fueled to fight a fire on any given night. Often these factors lead to personnel eating large meals fast – more than they would actually be hungry for at a leisurely meal.

Busy houses or trucks often depend on fast food with little nutritional value as staples in their meal rotations.

Fitness, while engrained in some departments, is difficult in others where calls often interrupt scheduled work out time. The crew's focus, and specifically the priorities of the company officer, typically determine the goals and practices of the crew.

Some risk factors – such as interrupted sleep or shift work, the exposures on the fireground, and the physiologic impact of emergency response – are inherent to the job and cannot be changed.

These occupational risks that impede the health of firefighters make prevention and intervention even more important.

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Sara A. Jahnke, Ph.D. is the director of the Center for Fire, Rescue and EMS Health Research at the National Development and Research Institutes. She was the principal investigator on two large-scale, DHS-funded studies of the health and readiness of the U.S. fire service and on a study on the health of women firefighters. She is a co-investigator of several studies focused on fitness, nutrition and health behaviors in firefighters. She completed her doctorate in psychology with a health emphasis at the University of Missouri – Kansas City and the American Heart Association's Fellowship on the Epidemiology and Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease. You can reach her at Sara.Jahnke@firerescue1.com