



**VALDOSTA FIRE  
DEPARTMENT**

**A Department Without Limits**

Editor:  
Lt. S A Miller

**BIRTHDAYS:**

- LT CAROLYN MCMILLAN 07/08**
- FF DAVID JONES 07/11**
- FF DAVID HEETER 07/13**
- SGT WADE BRIGGS 07/14**
- SGT CHARLES TATCH 07/26**
- LT JUSTIN PLY 07/28**
- EDUCATOR TANGELO ROWE 07/29**
- AC BRIAN BOUTWELL 07/30**
- FF DEMARIO FIELDS 07/31**

**CHIEF'S TOPIC OF THE MONTH**

In any given moment we have two options: to step forward into growth or step back into safety. - Abraham Maslow

We all have a comfort zone or safety net that we run to when presented with a challenge or change. Why is it so difficult for us to step outside of our comfort zone? It is often hard for us to believe in things that we cannot see. We often allow our comfort zones to fulfill our need for visibility. In contrary, we often allow our challenges to create impulses of fear.

This week, a family member found himself conflicted as he had to make a decision about accepting a new job. Although excited, there was one problem, the job was outside of the community he grew up in and worked in. He had friends who were trying to convince him that staying was the best option. I reminded him that I made a similar decision

when I left Charlotte to join the Winston Salem Fire Department. I had family/friends who told me to wait and I could eventually get hired by the Charlotte Fire Department. I remembered one important lesson growing up "Doors are often open for us but because it's not the one we are looking for, we often miss out on the blessing that was prepared for us." I continued to explain that I extended my wings and flew through the door of opportunity that was left ajar. My decision to leave for WSFD and not wait for CFD has been a rewarding/blessing experience and doors have continued to open for me for 20 years.

We only live once, why not live it to the fullest. Stop denying your opportunities and start believing in your faith. In the words of Dr. King, "Faith is taking the first step even when



Freddie D. Broome, Fire Chief

you don't see the whole staircase."

Thank you for your support and dedication in make the Valdosta Fire Department "A Department without Limits."

**POINTS OF  
INTEREST**

- Submissions to the newsletter should occur before the 20th of each month
- 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

**WELCOME TO THE FAMILY**



Welcome to the World and Welcome to the Valdosta Fire Department Family, Kastyn Perry Ply (left). She was born to our own Lieutenant Justin and Kayla Ply on the 6th of June, 2017.

Congratulations on your nuptials and Welcome to the Valdosta Fire Department Family to Amber Smith (right), who married our own Sergeant Justin "Cowboy" Smith on the 20th of May, 2017.



## ATTA BOY—DONE DID GOOD



Lt. Ply Honored as June Employee of the Month

Valdosta Mayor John Gayle and Valdosta Fire Department Administrative Chief Johnny Henry honored Training Division Lt. Justin Ply as the June 2017 Employee of the Month at the June 22 City Council meeting. Lt. Ply received a framed certificate and a check for \$200, and his name appears on a plaque displayed in City Hall.

Lt. Ply has been employed for nearly 20 years with the Valdosta Fire Department, where he is responsible for ensuring all VFD personnel hone the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to perform their duties efficiently. He also ensures all employees meet their required Insurance Safety Office (ISO) training hours.

Recently, while attending a promotional assessment in Gainesville, Florida, Lt. Ply was in his vehicle at a busy intersection when he witnessed a domestic-related assault on the side of the street. A man was yelling profanity and threatening to kill a woman, while striking her in the head. Lt. Ply immediately pulled off the road to stop the man from preventing any further abuse and called 911. The man fled the scene, and Lt. Ply stayed by the woman's side until law enforcement arrived and informed him he was clear to leave. Soon after, law enforcement officers caught the man, and he was apprehended.

While the dispatcher said that many had called 911 to report the incident, Lt. Ply did what no other person in that busy area of town did. He offered his intervention, possibly saving the life of the woman. "She deserved to be helped," said Lt. Ply, who is married with three kids, his most recent child born earlier this month. "I just felt compelled to help her."

The City of Valdosta applauds Lt. Justin Ply for his heroic intervention and compassion and for being named the June 2017 Employee of the Month.

From Ronda Vanek, AAS Paramedic and Assistant Chief of Operations and Clinical Training, SGMC EMS:

VPD Sgt. BJ Wheeler and Remerton PD Officer Joseph Pettus arrived within minutes of the call. These officers found the male patient to be pulseless and having agonal respirations. Sgt. Wheeler began chest compressions on the patient. Officer Pettus supplied an AED for use. The AED was applied and delivered a shock to the patient prior to EMS arrival. Sgt. Wheeler continued chest compressions until EMS arrived and moved the patient to the ambulance. In addition, VFD Engine #1 (LT. Coppage, Sgt. Trey Cothran and Firefighter Justin Howard) were on scene offering assistance and rotating out performing chest compressions.

This patient was resuscitated due to the pre-hospital efforts of everyone involved. THIS is a perfect example of teamwork and collaboration between First Responding agencies.

We would like to ask that each member be recognized by their respective agencies for their selfless act of compassion and response to a true emergency where a person's life was saved. Without their quick thinking and quick reactions, the outcome of this patient would have been less than positive. We truly appreciate each and every single one of you and your team members!

KUDOS from SGMC EMS!

### From the Facebook:



Marcus Chico Guerrero added 3 new photos.

4 hrs · 🌐

They said they needed someone to hold their radio while they take a picture. I love good people God Bless Valdosta Fire Dept. This ended Greysons week. Thanks Guys!!!!





## WORDS OF WISDOM—LT BARRY RICHARDSON

After 8 years in the Air Force as a Firefighter and 26 years of fire service with the City of Valdosta, Lt. Barry Richardson is retiring with a fire service career that has spanned over 34 years. Many of us have been fortunate enough to have worked with Lt. Richardson throughout our years at the fire department. And if you've worked with Lt. Richardson much at all, you've been fortunate enough to have shared in his wisdom and experience. In his own words, "I was asked to leave some words of wisdom... I've already left words of wisdom with everyone I've spoken to already."

I asked Lt. Richardson about how he got interested in the fire department in the first place:

"In 1982, my father asked me, 'Son, what you want to do with your life?' and I told him that I wanted to be a fireman. When I was a kid, about seven years old, there was a house fire down the street, and 2 young kids lost their lives in that house fire. I remember seeing the fire trucks coming and on one of the trucks I saw a black firefighter as a seven-year-old kid that was the first time I had seen a black fireman. He walked into the fire (a true smoke eater) and came out with both kids and that's how I got my interest in the fire department and it stayed with me."

"After I told my father I wanted to be a fireman, he laughed. 'There's not many black firefighters in the U.S. Why would you want to do that?' I said to him, 'Because that is what I want to do. I want to be the first from my neighborhood of Columbus, Georgia to do it.' In Columbus, there may have been only three black firefighters that I could see when I was growing up. That's why I started with the Air Force... it was a way to get trained without having to deal with the overt racism in the civilian departments at that time."

First hired in October of 1990, Lt. Richardson made the rank of Sergeant in 1999, and Lieutenant in 2008. As a newly minted lieutenant, I asked Lt. Richardson for some advice:

"You have to take time to establish relationships, it starts with the supervisors buying into the brotherhood. Be the example for your fellow firefighters to emulate. Walk the path and not just preach the path. Promote family, love your fellow firefighters, eat together it unites you and brings you together as a shift and a department. My generation of guys still get together, we visit one another and we check in on

one another. The biggest thing is to love your fellow firefighter. There's good in everybody. You have to learn how to get their light to shine."

"Communication is key, that's our lifeline to success. Good communication on all levels, top to bottom. The better you're informed, the better you can serve. Communication is about 80 percent of our problem. Take the time to communicate, to advise and to inform it makes things run smoother."

"My way of doing things has always been, that when I'm presented with a task and the outcome of that task is not clear,

I ask a question to get clarity. Don't be afraid to ask a question. If there is no answer, get together and find the answer."

And finally, I asked Lt. Richardson what he is going to take away from his career at the Valdosta Fire Department:

"I'm leaving the fire department with a sense of accomplishment, I'm proud to have had a hand in shaping and molding the young firefighters and assisting them with their career growth. But most of all I'm proud to see them reach back and help the generation coming up under them."

"A smart man, as he advances in his career, will always reach back and bring someone with him. The one that he brings reaches back and brings another as well. When you reach the top of the mountain, you're not alone."

As to what I learned from talking to and working with Lt. Richardson... help yourself by helping others. Helping your fellow firefighter to be the best they can be is helping you to be the best you can be. We help each other. And that is what makes everything better.

Lt. Richardson said that he will come to the Christmas Dinner and may still stop by on occasion. So until you greet him again, I leave you with his parting thoughts from the interview:

"I'm thankful for God's grace and mercy, I'm thankful for my family's support and I'm also thankful that I had the support of my brothers and sister in the fire department as I went through my great endeavor. I know that if I didn't have the thoughts, the prayers and the friendships I wouldn't have been able to make it. You made an old man feel good."



## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

### Adrenal Fatigue: Are We Burning Ourselves Out?

by [Jo-Ann Lorber](#)

How many fire service professionals do you know who are attached to their smartphones, iPads, are up all night running emergency calls, then go to their part-time job or jobs after they get off shift? Let me guess...lots! Ladies and gentlemen, we are pushing the envelope day and night. We are trying to do so much to get ahead or stay afloat, that we have forgotten to come up for air. Now our bodies are beginning to pay the price.

Adrenal fatigue is probably one of the most under-diagnosed and under-recognized conditions by physicians and other healthcare providers. However, it is estimated to affect 80 percent of people in the world. Chronic stress and lifestyle affects the body's ability to recuperate from physical, mental or emotional stress. Whether for a short time, or a chronic condition, most people will struggle with adrenal fatigue at some point in their life. As firefighters, we have an increased chance of getting this disease as we are constantly on the go. Our work schedules and the unpredictability of calls wreak havoc on our bodies. Adrenaline soars and dips, our sleep is constantly interrupted, and fatigue eventually becomes something we just live with on a daily basis.

**"...we are pushing the envelope day and night."**

#### Functions of your adrenal glands

Your body has two adrenal glands, located just above each of your kidneys. As part of your endocrine system, your adrenal glands secrete more than 50 hormones, many of which are essential for life. They include:

- Glucocorticoids—(cortisol) helps your body convert food into energy, normalize blood sugar, respond to stress and maintain your immune system's inflammatory response.
- Mineralocorticoids—(aldosterone) helps keep your blood pressure and blood volume normal by maintaining a proper balance of sodium, potassium and water in your body.
- Adrenaline—this hormone increases your heart rate and controls blood flow to your muscles and brain (fight or flight), along with helping the conversion of glycogen to glucose in your liver.

Ironically, although your adrenal glands are there in large part to help you cope with stress, too much of it is actually

what causes their function to break down. In other words, your heart rate and blood pressure increases, your digestion slows, and your body becomes ready to face a potential threat or challenge (i.e. structure fire, rollover crash, high-angle rescue, marine fire, etc.).

While this response is necessary and good when it is needed, many of us are constantly faced with stressors such as: shift work, environmental toxins, lack of sleep, worry, relationship problems, excessive exercise, chronic inflammation, infection, illness or pain, and nutritional deficiencies. Therefore, we are in "fight or flight" mode far too long—much longer than was ever intended from a biological standpoint.

When your adrenal glands become depleted, it leads to a decrease in certain hormone levels, particularly cortisol. The deficiencies in certain adrenal hormones will vary in each person, ranging from mild to severe. In its most extreme form, this is referred to as Addison's disease, a condition that causes muscle weakness, weight loss, low blood pressure and low blood sugar, and can be life threatening. Fortunately, only about four people per 100,000 develop Addison's disease, (which is due to autoimmune disease in most cases, but can also develop after very severe stress). At the other end of the spectrum, as well as in between, lies adrenal fatigue. Though the symptoms are less severe than in Addison's disease, they can be debilitating.

#### Signs and symptoms of adrenal fatigue

Fatigue and lethargy are some of the most common complaints among adult patients. You may have adrenal fatigue if you have a few of the symptoms listed below:

**"...many of us are constantly faced with stressors..."**

- Fatigue and weakness, especially in the morning and afternoon
- A suppressed immune system
- Increased allergies
- Depression
- Cravings for foods high in salt, sugar or fat
- Hormonal imbalance
- Autoimmune disorders
- Low sex drive
- Decreased ability to handle stress

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS—CONTINUED

- Trouble waking up in the morning, despite a full night's sleep
- Poor memory

Many people diagnosed with adrenal fatigue often get a burst of energy around 6 p.m., followed by sleepiness at 9 p.m. or 10 p.m. (which is often resisted). A “second wind” at 11 p.m. is common, which often keeps you from falling asleep until 1 a.m. if not later. To get through our days at work or at home, we rely on coffee, soda, and other forms of caffeine to keep us going until that “second or third wind.”

### Testing

There are two simple tests that either a holistic or functional medicine doctor can do: a blood test or a saliva test. The test that **will** recognize adrenal fatigue in any of its stages is a salivary cortisol test. This is an inexpensive test that you can purchase online and do at home, as no prescription is needed. However, if you suspect you have adrenal fatigue, a knowledgeable healthcare provider can help you with a diagnosis and treatment.

### The road to recovery: a natural and simple approach

First and foremost, remember that it took time to burn out your adrenal glands. As you might suspect, it will also take time to recover.

You can expect:

- Six to nine months of recovery time for minor adrenal fatigue
- 12 to 18 months for moderate adrenal fatigue
- Up to 24 months for severe adrenal fatigue

The good news is that natural treatments are very effective for this syndrome. With time and patience, it is possible to recover.

### A balanced approach

The four areas that require your attention the most, are:

- **Remove stressors:** The most important thing is to remove the stressor from your life or have powerful tools and strategies to address the current and/or past emotional traumas in your life (prayers, meditation, counseling, etc.).
- **Listen to your body:** Rest when you feel tired and sleep in if you can.

- **Exercise regularly:** Use a comprehensive program of strength, aerobic, core, and interval training. I suggest trying yoga as it will assist you in flexibility and mediating (quieting your mind).
- **Eat nutritious meals:** Eating a healthy nutrient-dense diet increases energy, provides your body with essential vitamins and minerals, improves your resistance to illness, and helps you to maintain your ideal weight.

“Treating adrenal fatigue requires a whole-body approach...”

### Help is out there

Treating adrenal fatigue requires a whole-body approach, one that addresses the excess stress and unhealthy lifestyle habits that wore out your adrenals in the first place. While we can't just quit our jobs and lie in hammocks at the beach, we do need to take a step back and take a deep breath from time to time. Figuring out our primary stressors and either eliminating them or reducing

their impact will go a long way toward a healthier and happier you.

### About the Author:

**JO-ANN LORBER** is a battalion chief for the City of Fort Lauderdale, FL. She has been with Fort Lauderdale Fire-Rescue since January 1996. Chief Lorber holds associates' degrees in Liberal Arts and Fire Science Technology, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Management, and a master's degree in Public Administration from Florida Atlantic University. Chief Lorber is a 2006 graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP). She has been awarded Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) designations.

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“...it will also take time to recover.”