

**VALDOSTA FIRE DEPARTMENT**

## A Department Without Limits

Editor:  
Lt. S A Miller

### BIRTHDAYS:

<b>BC JAMES CLINKSCALES</b>	<b>09 / 02</b>
<b>LT KEITH NIEHANKE</b>	<b>09 / 11</b>
<b>SGT ISAAC HARRIS</b>	<b>09 / 13</b>
<b>FF TRAVARUS SANDERS</b>	<b>09 / 27</b>
<b>BC FRANK MCMILLAN</b>	<b>09 / 29</b>

### CHIEF'S TOPIC OF THE MONTH

This month, I decided to write a message for all the Chief Officers and aspiring Chief Officers. It is important to remember that "the ability of a supervisor to hold their employees accountable is the single, most important management skill a supervisor must have!"-Dr. Bob Fazzi. At what point do you consider holding your personnel accountable? At what point do I need to consider holding you accountable? A continuous problem with an employee is no longer considered a "problem employee" it is considered a "problem supervisor." I remembered attending a Chief Officer class and a Fire Chief once said " Every Chief must remember, "No Consequences=No Change." It is imperative to remember that holding an employee accountable is helping the employee identify an area of improvement. As a supervisor, it is our responsibility to develop our personnel into future leaders. If we don't hold our employees accountable, then we are inhibiting their ability to learn and quell their future endeavors.

One often hears that the fire service is no longer about family when an instance occurs that an employee is redirected by their

supervisor. It is often quite comical but yet preposterous to hear the ideology that the Fire Service is no longer about family. When you hear someone reference this ideology, please pose the following questions: Did you and/or do you currently have rules in your family? Did you have rules throughout your educational experiences? These questions are highly relevant to prove that we have been taught since birth and throughout school the importance of self-discipline and accountability. We have learned the importance of family values, self-discipline and accountability from birth to our adulthood. So, I ask again, how is the Fire Service taking away the family tradition? We are only continuing to operate with the entrusted family values and educational core values that were instilled in us. As leaders and supervisors, we cannot be afraid to hold our employees accountable. In the end you can look in the mirror with your head held high with integrity knowing that you did what was right or you can hold your head down with defeat knowing that you have not fulfilled your



Freddie D. Broome, Fire Chief supervisory and leadership roles. If you are afraid of what others might think just remember, "Be yourself. If you water yourself down to please people or to fit in or to not offend anyone, you lose the power, the passion, the freedom and the joy of being uniquely you"—Dan Coppersmith. It's time to take back your power, your passion and give yourself the freedoms and joy of knowing you are fulfilling your due diligence as a leader within our Department and Community. Thank you for your continuous support of the Valdosta Fire Department as we continue to make strides of being "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

## ATTA BOY—DONE DID GOOD



Thanks to everyone who attended the annual GAFC/GAFF district meeting. We had over 100 in attendance; which was the largest attendance for a district meeting in the State this year.

As a department we have nominated personnel for recognition by the **Georgia State Firefighters Association 2017 Awards Program:**

- \* *Life Saving Valor Award: Report of Meritorious Act* – Lieutenant John Herpin for his rescue at 1316 Ponderosa Drive of an 8 year old child.
- \* *Life Saving Valor Award: Report of Meritorious Act* – Lieutenant Justin Ply for his intervention to help an abused woman in Gainesville, FL while at class.
- \* *Firefighter of the Year* – Sergeant Darren Williams for volunteering his skills to renovate the new training center amongst many other construction projects, as well as his other volunteerism.
- \* *Training Officer of the Year* – Training Officer Matt Davis for his selfless devotion to help our firefighters become their best.

Congratulations and Good Luck, guys!

Congratulations to Chief Freddie Broome for being awarded the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) designation by the Commission on Professional Credentialing, an entity of the Center for Public Safety Excellence. Debbie Sobotka, Deputy Director of the Center, sent her congratulations as well, citing that Chief Broome has “demonstrated through your education, leadership and management skills that you possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the fire and emergency services profession.”

Chief Steven Westermann, Chairman of the Commission on Fire Accreditation International, welcomes Chief Broome and the Valdosta Fire Department to “the registered status in our family of excellence”. And so begins the Valdosta Fire Department’s journey to accreditation...

Lieutenant Adam Bembry of the Valdosta Police Department sends his sincere thanks to the Valdosta Fire Department and Lowndes County Narcotics Unit for the assistance rendered at Wal-Mart after the discovery of a mobile meth lab. Engine 5 with Lieutenant Michael Walden, Sergeant Tyshon Reed, and Firefighter Carlton Couch along with Lieutenant Dereck Willis, Captain Jeff Thibodeau, and Assistant Chief Brian Boutwell were our members who assisted at the scene.

Yvette Jefferson, whose husband, Anthony, manages Langdale Kia and Hyundai, sends her thanks to “one of the highlights and most popular vehicle” at a community event on Ashley Street, Valdosta Fire Department Engine 2. Mrs. Jefferson appreciates that Chief Broome allowed Lieutenant Marcus Haynes and his crew to come out and show off the truck and participate in the event.



Thanks for everyone who volunteered and supported this year's Annual Guns vs. Hoses Blood Drive. For the second year in a row, the Valdosta Fire Department was victorious over the Valdosta Police Department. Final score was 24 – 22 in favor of our department.

## WELCOME TO THE FAMILY—RECRUIT EDITION

Please welcome our newest recruits. In order from left to right, the recruits answered three questions: **1)**What do you consider your home town? **2)**What sparked your interest in the fire service? **3)**Why the Valdosta Fire Department?



**Gregory Exum—1)**Valdosta, **2)**My granddads dedication and respect for the organization, **3)**Valdosta is my home town and no better place to support than your home town.

**Adam Casto—1)**I consider Key West my hometown. I spent most of my school years there, **2)**I started volunteering at a fire department and after a few months I realized that I was meant to be in this career, **3)**I was looking for available positions and was informed Valdosta was accepting applications. I did some research into the Department and city and decided Valdosta was somewhere I would fit in and enjoy throughout my career.

**Daniel Carder—1)**I am originally from Commerce, GA I moved to Valdosta in 2002 so I now consider Valdosta my hometown, **2)**The fire service really caught my attention after talking with other firefighters, the chance to help and serve other people and the great opportunities available with the fire service field, **3)**I chose the Valdosta Fire Department because I been a part of the community and worked within the community for the past 12 years. I wanted to continue to be apart and serve and protect the community. Not to mention that the Valdosta Fire Department is at the top of the line when it becomes to fire service and I wanted to learn and be a part of a great fire department.

**Ricardo Garcia—1)**My hometown is the place where I grew up and the people I grew up knowing, **2)**The fire service is interesting to me in many ways. Primary it gives me and others the opportunity to help our community, **3)**I feel that the city of Valdosta is a great place and I want to give back to the city that has given me so much already.

**Mark Schulte, Jr.—1)**Woodstock, Georgia, **2)**Serving my community has always been important to me. The fire service has allowed me to turn my passion into a career, **3)**The Valdosta Fire Department is always striving to be better, and constantly finding ways to improve the services the Department provides. This is one of many examples of why this department stands out from most, and I am thankful to be a part of it.

**Lukenzie Absolu—1)**I consider my hometown to be Miami, FL, **2)**I was drawn to the fire service because I enjoy the thrill and the satisfaction of entering an emergency situation and knowing that I am able to be there for somebody in their time of need, **3)**I wanted to join Valdosta's Fire Department because the department gives op-

portunities for growth, which will allow me to reach my potential. Also, I value the comradery and how embracing the department was and it was then and I knew it was a perfect fit for me.

**Aaron Brown—1)**Cobb County, Ga, **2)**I saw joining the fire service as a great career opportunity. I enjoy helping people and the fire service will allow me to not only help people but also save lives. Every time i get the opportunity to speak to someone in the fire service they tell me it's the best job in the world and i definitely wanted to be a part of that, **3)**The Valdosta Fire Department is always striving to be a better department. They are very community oriented and have much needed community support.

**Cody Healey—1)**I was born at SGMC; however, I went to school in Brooks County. So I consider Quitman, Georgia my hometown. Growing up in such a close proximity to Valdosta, I spent most of my youth in Valdosta so I claim Valdosta as my secondary home, **2)**Well honestly, I started out going to Georgia Military College for Criminal Justice. I got the bright idea that I would become a volunteer firefighter to get some experience responding to calls. I ran my first few fire calls and fell in love with it. I transferred to Wiregrass Georgia Tech to work on a degree in fire science. It's been the best decision I have ever made, **3)**Starting out as a Firefighter in Quitman 4 years ago, I had always heard of the great things that were going on in Valdosta. I finally got the opportunity to see the amazing ways that VFD was doing, as well as the brotherly and sisterly love shared by the members of VFD when I attended EMT school with the VFD guys. They not only welcomed me with open arms, but they showed me firsthand the great lengths they were willing to go to serve the city. And I knew then that I had to be a part of that.

**Genna O'Berin—1)**Valdosta, **2)**Learning about all of the services modern fire departments provide to their communities during the Citizens Fire Academy, **3)**Valdosta is an excellent department which offers an opportunity to learn about and gain experience in a wide variety of fire service aspects. I knew I would be proud to learn from and serve the community beside its members.

**Seabron Williams III—1)**I consider Valdosta, Georgia as my home town, **2)**I like the fact that the fire department will allow me to serve the community, **3)**The Valdosta community really has my heart and I see so much potential here so I will do all I can to make a difference.

## LEADERSHIP NOTES

### How To Deal With Poor Leadership In The Fire House

By : Robert Simmons

Provided with permission from [FirefighterToolbox.com](http://FirefighterToolbox.com)

#### Poor Leadership Happens

At some point in every firefighter's career, we are going to have to deal with poor leadership. This reality can be a struggle for us. I can recall being very frustrated with some leaders I have worked for. However, there are some things we can do that will allow us to thrive, even in times of poor leadership.

We have to make a conscious effort to deal with poor leadership in a positive manner. I have seen too many firefighters lose their passion for the profession because they did not understand how to deal with poor leadership.

Here are three things we can do to deal with this situation.

#### #1 – Focus On What We Can Influence

Steven R. Covey, a popular author, teaches about our circle of influence. This circle looks like a bull's eye and represents what we are concerned with and what we can actually influence. Focusing on what we can influence is the first thing to work on when dealing with poor leadership.

While we may be concerned with the leader's performance, it is difficult to influence them. However, we can influence our own behavior and attitude. Staying positive and motivated while focusing on the things we can change is vital.

#### #2 – Find a Mentor

The officer in your station is not the only source of mentoring in the fire service. This is particularly true in the modern age of electronic communication. Seeking out a mentor is vital to maintaining our motivation and keeping us on track for success. Find someone who is willing to teach and loves the profession. These individuals make great mentors.

Finding a mentor is as easy as finding someone at a different station in your department, or looking for leaders in other departments. This person does not have to be a fire officer. There are some great leaders who are still riding the back seat. All we have to do is look

around.

You can even email one of the leaders here at Firefighter Toolbox.

#### #3 – Stay Motivated

At times, staying motivated can be tough. However, there are a few things we can do to stay motivated in the profession.

Constant training is certain to keep us motivated. Even if our leadership is not willing to train, or does not do a good job with training, they cannot fault us for going outside and throwing a ladder against the fire station. Seeking out new skills and practicing them keeps us hungry.

Focus on being your best. We are in the business of customer service, and providing the best service we can to our customers keeps us motivated. This is where you see the fruits of your training labor pay off.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, stay positive. Having a positive attitude will go a long way in anything life throws at you.

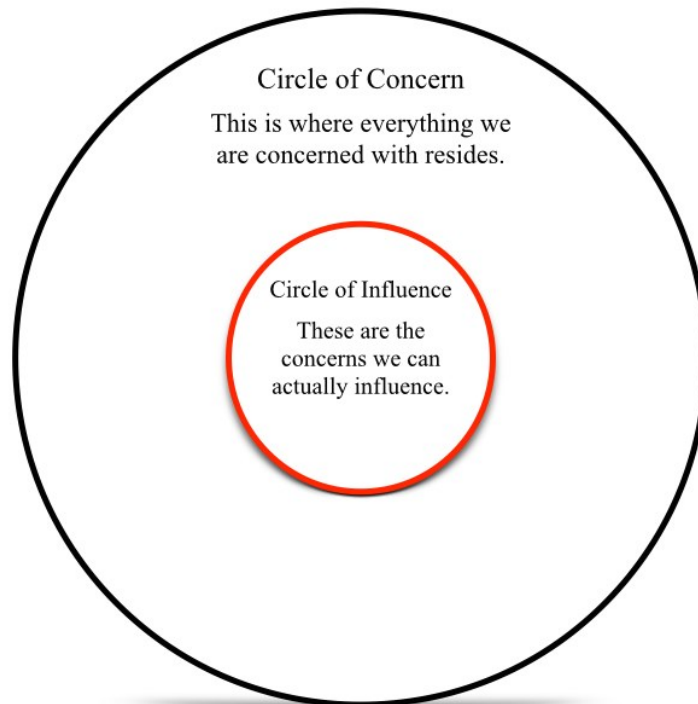
Poor leadership does not have to break us down. Focusing on the things we can influence, finding mentors, and staying motivated allow us to weather the storm.

I encourage everyone reading this to stay hungry and keep doing your best. And, if you are looking for a mentor, I would love to hear from you!

#### About the Author

Robert C. Simmons is a 14 year veteran of the fire service, and he currently serves as an Assistant Chief in the U.S. Army Garrison Red Cloud Fire Department, South Korea where he manages the training division. Originally from AL, he has served as firefighter around the globe. Robert was deployed to Iraq in 2003 and served as a firefighter during the initial invasion of Iraq. After leaving the Army, he became a DoD civilian firefighter where he remains today. He has received numerous awards during his service, most notably the 2004 Department of the Army Firefighter Heroism Award for unit actions taken during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Chief Simmons is a DoD certified Fire Instructor III and has a passion for organizational leadership and developing the fire service leaders of tomorrow.

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# 5K RUN/WALK FOR THE AWARENESS & PREVENTION OF YOUTH SUICIDE

Hosted by Greenleaf Center, LLC in support of  
the Jason Foundation

“Keeping more than dreams alive”



The Jason Foundation, Inc. (JFI) is an educational organization dedicated to the awareness and prevention of youth suicide. JFI provides tools and resources for students, parents and teachers/youth workers to help them identify and assist at-risk youth. This is accomplished through a series of programs including the B1 Project. The purpose of the Project is to educate youth, students, youth workers, and parents on recognizing the warning signs of youth suicide and how to help a friend, family member, or loved one. B1 is designed to be quick, informative and target the most important aspects of youth suicide prevention. Think about it... the 2<sup>nd</sup> most likely thing to take a young person is suicide. Yet, no one ever talks about it until a tragedy occurs. That's why the Jason foundation and Rascal Flatts call youth suicide “The Silent Epidemic” [www.jasonfoundation.com](http://www.jasonfoundation.com)



**SATURDAY  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2017  
MCKEY PARK  
VALDOSTA, GA**

**REGISTRATION:  
7:00 AM – 7:50 AM  
RUN/WALK BEGINS:  
8:00 AM**

**PRIZES, GIVEAWAYS,  
REFRESHMENTS, &  
FUN!**

**RUN, WALK, OR BE A  
SPONSOR**

**REGISTER TODAY!  
[WWW.RUNNINGINTHEUSA.COM](http://WWW.RUNNINGINTHEUSA.COM)**

## **GREENLEAF CENTER**

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Valdosta, GA 31602  
229-247-4357

[www.greenleafhospital.com](http://www.greenleafhospital.com)  
For sponsorship and  
registration information go  
to:  
[facebook.com/B15kfunrun](https://facebook.com/B15kfunrun)



**5K & 1 Mile Run/Walk**

**For the Awareness & Prevention of Youth Suicide**

Saturday, September 09, 2017 | 8:00 AM

Hosted by Greenleaf Center, LLC in support of The Jason Foundation [www.jasonfoundation.com](http://www.jasonfoundation.com)

**REGISTRATION & LIABILITY WAIVER FORM**

*Each participant/ participant guardian must sign this form*

5k Run/Walk  1 Mile Fun Run 12 & under  Ghost Runner

Age Group on Race Day:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

Under 12  13-19  20-29  30-39

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

40-49  50-59  60-69  70+

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

T-shirts are adult sizes---Available to all pre-registrants

T-shirt size:  S  M  L  XL  2X

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail

Sex:  M  F

**LOCATION:** Race will begin and end at McKey Park  
112 Burton Ave, Valdosta, GA 31602

**TIME:** 7:00 – 7:50 AM Registration  
8:00 AM 5K Race Begins

**REGISTRATION FEE:**  \$25.00 Pre-register by August 25<sup>th</sup>  \$30.00 After August 25<sup>th</sup> up to Race day

**RELEASE OF LIABILITY (ADULT)**

Waiver: In consideration of the acceptance of this entry I waive all claims for myself and my heirs against the sponsors, cooperation and coordinating groups and any individuals associated with this event and will hold them harmless for any and all injuries which may result from my participation. I hereby give my permission to the media to use my name and photograph in the newspaper, broadcast, and telecast of this event without limitation or obligation. I certify that I am physically fit for this event and understand the risk involved by participating in this event.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM AND LIABILITY WAIVER**

Participant name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Sex:  M  F

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ grant permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in Greenleaf's B1 Fun/Run/Walk to benefit the Jason Foundation's. As a parent and/or legal guardian, I remain legally responsible for any personal actions taken by the above named minor ("participant"). I agree on behalf of myself, my child named herein, or our heirs, successors, and assigns, to hold harmless and defend the Jason Foundation, its officers, directors and agents, or representatives associated with the activity for reasonable attorney's fees and expenses arising in connection therewith.

Medical Matters: I hereby warrant that to the best of my knowledge, my child is in good health, and I assume all responsibility for the health of my child.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please make checks payable to:  
Greenleaf Center, LLC

Please return Registration & Liability Waiver Form to:  
Greenleaf Center, LLC  
2209 Pineview Drive  
Valdosta, GA 31602

Online registration also available at: [www.runningintheusa.com](http://www.runningintheusa.com)