

# THE RESPONDER

— Dedicated to Our Community, Our Profession and Each Other —

SUMMER 2015



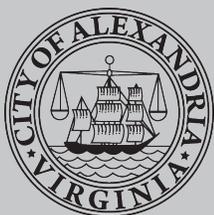
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### Alexandria Fire Department

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This newsletter is written  
 and compiled by the  
 Alexandria Fire Department's  
 Community Services Unit



Top Left: Megan Drane bronze finish in the women's triathlon competition, Top Middle: Asst. Chief Rudy Thomas silver medal finish in bowling at the WPFG, Top Right: Ashley Whisonant competing in the women's bodybuilding completion (Photo: <http://fairfax2015.com>). Middle left: Moriah Anderson competing in flag football at the WPFG (Photo: <http://fairfax2015.com>), Middle right: Glenn Ross competing in the angling completion (Photo: <http://fairfax2015.com>). Bottom right: Sokthean Van competing in the men's basketball at the WPFG (Photo: <http://fairfax2015.com>), Bottom right: AFD men's basketball team at the WPFG.

# Community Engagement

## AFD Members Excel at World Police and Fire Games Competition

By: Hilary Gates

In a variety of sports from basketball to bowling to football to trap shooting, over 20 firefighters from the Alexandria Fire Department participated in the World Police and Fire Games as athletes and volunteers. The competition was based this year in nearby Fairfax County, with public service athletes from around the world arriving in the region to compete.

The games were marred by a tragic accident in the Cycling competition, where a crash during the Road Race event ended in the death of a Brazilian cyclist, Inspector Carlos Silva, and resulted in serious injuries to two other competitors. The race was not completed.

FF Kristina Holt and Captain Jason Wehmeyer both volunteered in the cycling events, as did Lieutenant Dennis Short. Short and Wehmeyer were involved with the planning of the events for about two years. Short also participated in several Cycling competitions, winning the bronze in his age group of the Cycling Time Trial event.

“The [games] were a great experience,” said Holt. “The cycling community is a close group and I was fortunate to be part of that group for the time that I was there.”

Standout performances by AFD members were turned in by Captain Lou Simpson, who won his division in Trap Shooting, and by FF Ashley Whisonant, who won her division in the Bodybuilding competition. Chief Rudy Thomas won the silver in the unisex 18+ Bowling event, and Lieutenant Megan Drane was third in her age group in the Women’s Triathlon.

The diversity of sports offered at the games provided AFD members numerous opportunities to exhibit their skills. Several members, such as FF Jarrett Wood and FF Bill Dunleavy, competed in more than one event. Wood was a member of the Flag Football team and finished third in the Ultimate Firefighter event. Dunleavy both cycled and swam, saying he was

surprised by the level of competition, but happy to have had the opportunity to compete.

“The athletes were really impressive,” said Dunleavy. “I accomplished my goal of staying in the saddle during the cycling hill climb event.”

Wood’s Ultimate Firefighter competition consisted of a course that was mostly a non-stop skill course. The athletes were timed on numerous events, including a hose drag of 3” line, stair climb, dummy drag, ladder throw and Keiser sled. While he was challenged by the events, Wood felt prepared.

“I got to see what I was up against in the practice sessions,” Wood said. “I felt that after the second event, I really had a shot at winning.”

AFD’s Flag Football team made it to the Bronze medal game but lost. Some players felt that their chances at winning were hampered by the small number of athletes on their team. However, they remain proud to have overcome this hurdle.

“For the first two days of competition, we had the least amount of players available of most of the teams,” said FF Sokthea Van. Van also stated that some of the team members played in a spring league to prepare for the games.

In the Team Angling competition, FF Glenn Ross and Lieutenant Ben Haught earned fourth place in the Heaviest Bag division by netting a largemouth bass. The multiple heavy rainstorms that occurred before the competition negatively affected their event.

Ross had scoped out the area during the practice rounds, but was unable to use them due to the damage from the rain and wind.

“Runoff water from the creeks muddied the main river water and made fishing conditions tough,” he said. “We basically had to start from scratch the first day of competition to locate new fishable areas.”

Many competitors began preparing far ahead of time to give them a better chance of success. Whi-

sonant began lifting weights and hired a trainer four months prior to the games. She began weighing her food, counting ounces, and taking pictures of herself in a swimsuit in order to get ready. She said that although there was room for improvement in her performance, she still accomplished her goal.

“I was surprised how disciplined I was and proud that I could persevere,” said Whisonant.

Lieutenant Sean Europe participated in the Toughest Competitor Alive event, which consisted of a combination of a 5K run, shot put, 100 meter sprint, 100 yard swim, 20’ rope climb, bench press, maximum pull ups, and an obstacle course. He placed 14th in his division. Europe swam, lifted and ran to get ready for the competition, even though before this event, he had never swum competitively. Europe appreciated the spirit of the games.

“There was great sportsmanship, with a gentleman-like experience,” said Europe. “Everyone was there to compete, and the feeling was, may the best man win.”

Because of the wonderful experiences that many of the participants and volunteers had, some have already planned to attend the Montreal Games that are scheduled for 2017.

“I look forward to participating in the games in Montreal,” Holt said.

For a complete list of competitors, see the accompanying chart.

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Angling	Ben Haught, Glenn Ross
Basketball	Young An, Pat Evans, Anthony Kelly, Ron Samuel, Chris Smith, Steve Smith, Charles Tyson, Sokthea Van
Bodybuilding	Ashley Whisonant
Bowling	Rudy Thomas
Cycling	Dennis Short, Bill Dunleavy
Flag Football	Moriah Anderson, Durant Cephers, Arash Hematti, Mike Lyons, Rick Muse, Fred Ruff, Ron Samuel, Jarrett Wood, Sokthea Van
Golf	Tom Robinson
Swimming	Bill Dunleavy
Trap Shooting	Lou Simpson
Triathlon	Megan Drane
Toughest Competitor Alive	Sean Europe
Ultimate Firefighter	Jarrett Wood



# TRAINING/ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## *Revisiting Complacency*

### *A first hand account from AFD firefighter Glenn Ross*

Several years ago I wrote an article for The Responder addressing complacency and its adverse effects on a firefighter. I would like to once again, address this potentially harmful and deadly attitude. Complacency is defined by Webster's dictionary as "a feeling of quiet pleasure or security, often while unaware of some potential danger, defect, or the like." Complacency can strike any firefighter at any time. Becoming complacent tends to occur the longer you have been a firefighter. This is due to responding to numerous calls over time of low significance. As firefighters, we need to be aware of the signs of complacency and take measures to stop it. A recent fire event in one of the city's west end high-rises once again stresses the importance of not being complacent with our jobs.

On May 7, 2015, at approximately 10:40 AM, Engine 208 had just completed its weekly checkout. Truck 208 had left the firehouse about 15 minutes prior, to go grocery shopping for the shift meals. As we completed our walk around to return the engine to the apparatus bay, you could hear the familiar alert sound of the MDB receiving a call. "Engine 208, Truck 208-Box 20862 FIRE alarm in a high-rise, 5340 Holmes Run Parkway. For those unfamiliar with Fire Station 208's first due area, this is the high-rise at the intersection of North Paxton Street and Holmes Run Parkway. Once everyone was dressed in their PPE, seated and belted, we proceeded to the call. Now at this point, complacency could have taken hold of the crew. We could have adopted the attitude of "well this is just another fire alarm malfunction that we will have to investigate, and reset or put out of service." Upon arrival, nothing was evident from the alpha, bravo or charlie sides of the structure. We entered the structure wearing full protective clothing with SCBA, high-rise packs and forcible entry tools. We stopped and checked the annunciator panel, which showed a manual pull station on the 6th floor. As we began to proceed up to the 6th floor, a maintenance person for the building came out of the stairwell and said, "Man, it's really coming out of the apartment bad". Engine 208's officer asked "what is

coming out of the apartment?" The maintenance person exclaimed "Smoke! The apartment is on fire!" He told us exactly where the apartment was located. We began to take the stairwell that was closest to the apartment fire; this would be our attack stairwell. As we were in the stairwell, I expected to start smelling an odor of burnt food on the stove. Even though the maintenance person stated that there was a fire, I have been on events where the "fire" was simply a burnt cooking pan on the stove which was producing a fair amount of smoke. As we approached the 6th floor stairwell landing, I could smell that indeed it was a working apartment fire. We slowly opened the door to the 6th floor, and immediately recognized the hallway was untenable. We were greeted with thick brown rolling smoke, and zero visibility. This was a good sign that the apartment door had been left open. We immediately shut the stairwell door. We talked and agreed that a combination stairwell/floor below stretch of the attack line was the best choice for this scenario. I proceeded down to the 5th floor, flushed the standpipe system, and hooked up the gated wye. Afterwards, the "supply pack" was stretched out on the fifth floor and connected to the attack pack in the stairwell on floor 6. The line was charged and bled before entry into the hallway. Good use of the thermal imaging camera made it possible to find the apartment of origin. The crew was met with a living room on fire, and extinguishment was initiated.

The point of this whole story is to never be complacent! Let's ask ourselves a few "what if" questions. What if we did not dress in full PPE? What if we hadn't taken the correct complement of tools and equipment up with us? What if we had taken the elevator straight to the 6th floor, instead of using the stairs? What if we hadn't changed the battery in the TIC each morning?

Never ever be complacent about your job. Always expect the unexpected. Always train and expect the worst case scenario on every call. Never become complacent! Your crew members' safety depends on it; your family and loved ones deserve it and depend on it. Go home safe!

## Incident Safety Officer (ISO) Training

By: Jeff Merryman

During the first week of June, Chief Robert Dubé held a National Fire Academy- Incident Safety Officer (ISO) certification class for 19 members of our department. In addition to the Incident Safety Officer class, Shift Safety Officer training was provided with assistance from the members of our Health, Safety and Risk Management section. Both of these training classes will further increase our department's commitment toward incident safety as well as building depth and provide opportunity for these 19 members to serve as a Shift Safety Officer. Guest speakers for these classes included; Captain Jared Goff (Fairfax County Fire and Rescue-Intelligence section), Deputy Chief Daniel Gray and Battalion Chief Steve McFarland (Fairfax County Fire and Rescue-Health and Safety section), Assistant City Attorney Mary Odonnell, and Cassandria Menefee, from City Risk Management.

Attending the class included; Captain Sam Reyes, Captain Greg Cook, Firefighter/ Medic Julia Jordano, Lieutenant Henry Cook, Lieutenant Chad Lallier, Lieutenant Tim Kunkle, Captain Dave Lukes, Firefighter Rick Muse, Captain Jack Hoffman, Lieutenant Don Lynn, Captain Larry Lee, Lieutenant James Taylor, Captain Gerald Fair, Assistant Fire Marshal James Sullivan, Captain Matthew Craig, Captain Dave Plunkett, Lieutenant Ben Haught, Captain Pat Lyon, Captain Joe Beavan.

Assisting Chief Dubé with instruction; Captain Mark Dalton, Captain Dave Bogozzi, Captain Scott Quintana, Captain Doug McDaniel and Deputy Chief Jeff Merryman.



*AFD members at the incident safety officer training.*

## Hot Shots



*Alexandria Fire Department members drill on heavy lifting w/ simulated victims trapped under concrete.*



*Alexandria Fire Department members doing a basic hose drill.*



*Alexandria Fire Department personnel practicing rope skills.*

# AFD RECRUIT CLASS 41

## **AFD Graduates Recruit Class 41**

By: Roxanne Givens

AFD is pleased to welcome the most recent group of Firefighters and Firefighter/Medics from Recruit Class 41, who graduated on June 18, 2015. There were new modifications and unique “first” for this class, including: the first Firefighter/Medic hires, the first class split into two battalions at different sites, and the first class to graduate under the leadership of Fire Chief Robert Dubé. There was an overall effort of the Training Academy staff to “help the department return to the basic values of the fire service”, according to Lt. James Taylor. Along with Lt. Warner Sherman, heading up the cadre, the stress was on operational proficiency through constant direction, correction and encouragement. Lt. Taylor noted that the Academy’s success was a direct result of the leadership and dedication of FF Moriah Anderson, FF Michael Faber, FF Jeffrey Harrison, and FF Rick Muse. These instructors were the leaders of each Company, and handled daily operations, to include physical training, lecture, uniforms, practical demonstrations, and even assisting with personal issues that arose. They often worked additional hours to reinforce positive results.

There were many standout recruits, including David Haas, who was Valedictorian; he also won the Physical Training Award for combined score from the 1.5 mile run, push-ups and sit-ups. Recruit Alberto Cabrera won the Lou Farri Award, for the recruit who “leads by example, works hard and takes the job seriously, but has a personality to which others are drawn and encouraged.”

From an EMS perspective, the training staff was extremely pleased with the “dedication and enthusiasm” from Recruit Class 41, according to Paramedic Hilary Gates. “I was always impressed with their intellectual curiosity and their perseverance”, she added. Firefighter/Medic Julia Jordano and Paramedic David Fox also contributed to a 100% pass rate for the class on the state EMT exam, and National Registry written test. The EMS training staff was also very grateful to AFD members who assisted with many practical evolutions and labs.

Recruit Class 41 members interviewed expressed many of the same sentiments regarding the importance of the training they have received and the ability to translate it into operational competence, as well as gaining the respect and trust of their new peers. Alex Majano shared a story from recruit school, in which he was performing a search & rescue drill with Devin Velazquez as his partner. Upon locating the victim in a room, Majano was then assisted by Jamar Harrison to remove the victim and the two exited the structure. Majano realized that they had lost contact with Velazquez, who was still searching. He learned from making that mistake in training how important crew accountability is, and we have all had such experiences that change the way we operate from that day on.

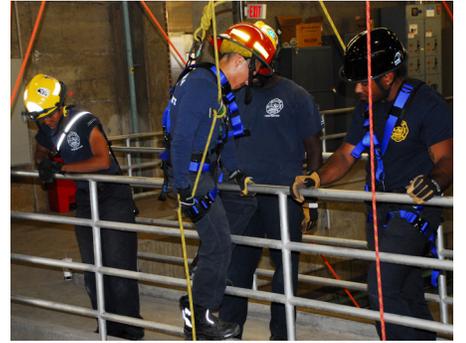
Many from the group expressed the challenge in finding cohesion, in spite of the separation into two battalions, operating daily in training areas. These new firefighters came in with a wide range of experience in Fire & EMS, and Kevin Black noted that, even with his previous experience, he was surprised with how much he learned during recruit school. As a member with no previous experience, Alex Majano said recruit school “exceeded his expectations”, and now being on the streets, even more so that he is “implementing the skills learned”, which is what has really made it all come together from training.

**Welcome Recruit Class 41, keep up the good work!**



*RS 41 graduates and staff on graduation day.*

# AFD RECRUIT CLASS 41





Douglas Ballinger



Kevin Black Jr.



Alberto Cabrera



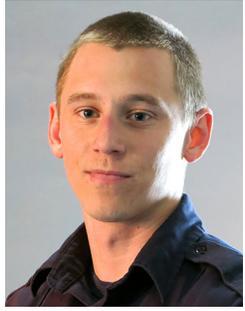
Theresa Carlson



Steven Carper



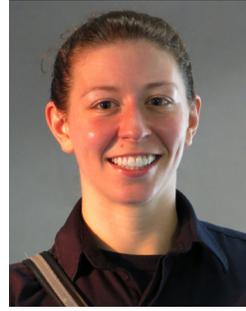
Brian Einsfeld



David Haas



Jamar Harrison



Mary Holland



Peter Hunter



Aria Khodabakhchian



Donald Lynch



John MacKinnon



Alexi Majano



Reginald McCoy



Randal Parker Jr.



Jeffrey Rayman



Harry Robbins



Jason Sharpe



Tyler Smith



Zach Stimart



James Swanick



Devin Velazquez



Howard Weinstein



Esthefanie Zapata

# QUARTER 2 FIRE LOSS REPORTS

## APRIL 2015

*(Please note there was no fire loss for the month of April)*

## MAY 2015

DATE	BOX	ADDRESS	TYPE	CAUSE	VALUE	**LOSS**	STATUS
05/07/2015	20861	5340 Holmes Run Parkway #602	High-Rise Residential	Accidental	\$121,413.00	\$30,000.00	Closed
05/08/2015	20901	3425 Jefferson Davis Highway	Commercial / Restaurant	Accidental	\$58,613,350.00	\$40,000.00	Closed
05/16/2015	20682	4754 Kenmore Avenue #303	Multi-Family Residential	Accidental / Fatality	\$30,216,800.00	\$1,500,000.00	Closed

## JUNE 2015

DATE	BOX	ADDRESS	TYPE	CAUSE	VALUE	**LOSS**	STATUS
06/29/2015	20120	134 North Royal Street	Commercial / Restaurant	Accidental	\$6,311,128.00	\$6,000.00 Closed	

**\*\*LOSS VALUES INCLUDE CONTENTS OF STRUCTURE\*\***

# FIRE PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY TIPS

## FIRE SAFETY TIPS

### Smoke Alarms

Install smoke detectors on every level and in each sleeping area of your home, including the basement. Remember to keep them in working order! Batteries should be tested once a month. Batteries and smoke detectors should be replaced per the manufacturer's recommendation.

### E.D.I.T.H - Exit Drills In The Home

Develop an escape plan of your home and practice it often with every family member; you can survive a home fire if you are alerted and prepared.

#### Plan

- Sit down with your family TODAY and make a step-by-step plan for escaping a fire. Once a fire has started, there is NO time to plan how to get out.

#### Map

- Draw a birds-eye-view floor plan of your home with clearly marked escape routes from each room. Clearly indicate all doors, windows and stairways.
- Mark two ways out of every room, especially sleeping areas.

### Family Meeting Place

- After escaping a fire, immediately go to your family meeting place. This meeting place allows a count of everyone in the household, which then informs the fire department if anyone is missing or trapped inside of the home. Never go back into a burning house for any reason.

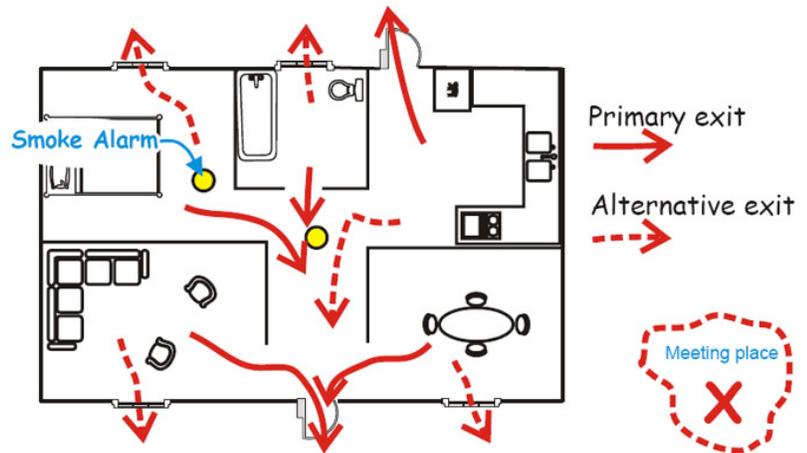
#### Practice

- Speed is vital, so get out quickly and carefully.
- Test doors before opening them. While kneeling at the door feel it with the back of your hand. If you feel any warmth at all, do not open the door and use alternate escape route. If the door feels cool, slightly open the door with caution and proceed to exit.

- As a precaution, sleep with bedroom doors closed. It helps to hold back heat and smoke.
- Remain low to the ground on your hands and knees, crawling low under the smoke as you exit your home. Smoke contains deadly gases and heat rises; therefore, cleaner air will be near the floor.
- If you are trapped, close all doors between you and the fire. Stuff cracks around the doors to keep smoke out. Wait at window and signal for help. If there is a phone in the room, call 911 and report exactly where you are.

### Be Prepared

- Make sure everyone in the household can unlock all doors and windows quickly. Windows or doors with security bars need to be equipped with quick-release devices, and everyone, including small children, should know how to use them.



# Hoarding

By: Andrea Buchanan & Russell Furr

Most of us in the fire service have seen a hoarding condition at one time or another; it is a sight that is not easily forgotten. Hoarding is more than just a mere cluttering of junk or unclean condition as most of us think, the cause is actually a mental condition. Compulsive/ pathological hoarding is a mental disorder marked by an obsessive need to acquire a significant amount of possessions, even if the items are worthless, hazardous, or unsanitary. Compulsive hoarding causes significant clutter and impairment to basic living activities, including mobility, cooking, cleaning, showering, and sleeping.

Hoarding conditions can be encountered anywhere and conditions may exist with little or no exterior indications. Hoarders may go about their lives unnoticed, as some work and lead productive lives with no outward indication. While common in many cases, hoarding is not just found with elderly people. Hoarding can exist among people of any age group, income bracket, education or gender. Most hoarders are unaware that there is anything wrong and living under these conditions is part of their normal life, although some will be suspicious to let anyone inside of their residence. Hoarders are extremely possessive and tend not to be able to dispose of their personal items easily. Items that people hoard range from just about anything to include trash, newspapers, animals, food, car parts, clothing and even weapons.

Safety in hoarding situations is important. The most common safety issue is the presence of an increased fire loading and the potential high volumes of combustible or flammable materials. Additionally, there are increased safety concerns over movement through the environment, the presence of weapons or animals, and the ability to locate and provide care for the resident and structural stability. In multifamily residences, hoarding can also be a significant safety hazard to other residents. Outward indications of hoarding may include signs of structural deterioration and lack of maintenance, odors, overgrown yard and landscaping, and drawn shades or curtains. While usually obvious, interior signs of hoarding include excessive storage and accumulation of material, especially things that most people would not

normally store indoors; odors, lack of utilities, unsanitary conditions and poor overall condition of the resident.

Many hoarders live alone and have limited contact with family or friends. It is important that they receive the proper assistance to abate the condition and to help prevent future occurrences. The City of Alexandria has a hoarding task force that is made up of representatives from numerous agencies, which include Mental Health, Code Administration, City Attorney, and the Fire Marshal's Office.

Hoarding is a violation of the Virginia Maintenance Code (Property Maintenance Code). The Office of Code Administration has primary authority over enforcing the code and correction of violations. If you encounter a hoarding situation, request a Property Maintenance Inspector to respond to the location. PM inspectors work Monday through Friday during normal business hours. If there is no inspector on duty, the request should be forwarded to the Property Maintenance Division by email to [CAMaintenanceCode@alexandriava.gov](mailto:CAMaintenanceCode@alexandriava.gov) The Fire Marshal will respond to hoarding situations, but only during non-business hours and when staff are on duty to address unsafe conditions.



*Photos: Examples of hoarding conditions.*

# ADMINISTRATION & LOGISTICS NEWS



## Congratulations Brian Hricik

*Recipient of the 2015 Regional Award for Excellence in EMS*

This award is given to an individual who exemplifies outstanding dedication to EMS across Northern Virginia and demonstrates commitment to a comprehensive, integrated EMS system throughout the Commonwealth.



*Chief Dubé and AFD staff participating in the Special Olympics Torch Run/Walk.*



*AFD, Deloitte & American Red Cross in the National Capital Region doing a canvassing event.*



*Chiefs Dubé, Morehead and Bonnette representing AFD at the ICMA Public Employee Memorial Scholarship Fund reception.*

# SPRING 2015 RUN STATISTICS

(MARCH, APRIL & MAY)

	UNIT	MEDICAL	FIRE SUPPRESSION	2015 YTD	2014
<b>Station 201</b>	E201	164	199		
	Total			619	1376
<b>Station 202</b>	M202	441	112		
	U202	0	0		
	Total			872	1966
<b>Station 203</b>	E203	166	176		
	T203	57	220		
	Total			1093	2313
<b>Station 204</b>	E204	140	193		
	M204	110	31		
	T204	52	301		
	Total			1705	4486
<b>Station 205</b>	E205	200	269		
	M205	518	146		
	T205	0	0		
	Total			1859	4645
<b>Station 206</b>	E206	246	226		
	M206	526	163		
	RS206	52	132		
	Total			2296	5627
<b>Station 207</b>	E207	144	224		
	M207	405	88		
	Total			1571	4005
<b>Station 208</b>	E208	346	328		
	M208	528	168		
	T208	0	0		
	Total			2381	7291
<b>Station 209</b>	E209	144	187		
	H209	0	0		
	U209	0	0		
	Total		9	621	1636
<b>Station 210</b>	E201	0	0		
	M210	154	64		
	Total			238	0
				Total: 13,255	2014 Total: 33,345