

IN THE LINE OF DUTY

July - September, 2020 Volume 6 – Issue 24



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Professionalism ~ Integrity ~ Compassion

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- Dedicated to our Community, Our Profession and Each Other -



Office of the Fire Chief

By: Kingman Schuldt, Fire Chief

For more than six months, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected our lives, reducing our foot print down to the size of our homes in many cases. Many are working at home, educating our children from home, exercising from home and socializing from home.

Spending so much time at home has made our physical spaces and daily routines much different. This quarantine of life has highlighted the impact that our homes can have on our well-being, our family, and businesses. There are some however, that do not have the luxury of self-quarantine, isolation, or otherwise limiting contact and involvement with others during these unsettled times.



At the tip of the spear our first responders are on the front lines of the emergency response to fight COVID-19. Many are experiencing an increase in call volumes, extraordinary planning efforts, unanticipated expenditures, unsettled customers (civil unrest) and the pressures associated with navigating an already challenged economic environment and politically charged society.

Large group events are discouraged, with many restaurants, theaters and public gathering venues closed. While we should encourage those who can do so to stay at home, we know this is not reality for us. As first responders we cannot just stay home, we cannot isolate, we must walk into the hot zone unabated, at the ready to render aide and assist our fellow citizens in their time of need. We must leave our home, our bubble, our safety zone and place ourselves in direct effect of the invisible intruder. In addition to the typical exposures, this reality means you're faced with the increasing threat of exposure to a new virus that we don't know much about. New protocols, enhanced safety procedures, and modified work forces makes the work harder than ever. But through it all, first responders stand up and exceed the challenge, placing their own well-being, once again in harm's way. I am extremely proud of our members, as they show up to work every day to serve our community, faced with the unknown and the ever-evolving information cycle.

Although we are not yet in the Red Zone, with a full fourth quarter to go, we cannot settle for a field goal. There has been much learned all ready, but I am certain there remains more to learn as the new norm is being calculated. The procurement and use of personal protective equipment has taken new meaning. Heightened facility and personal hygiene practices are common place, physical distancing challenges everyday business practices, and COVID-19 doesn't like our seasoned work force.

This is not the first time the fire service has been involved in a public health or other significant crisis. The fire service always has, and will continue to rise to any occasion and provide the community with compassionate care regardless of the circumstances. For this is certain for one simple reason; our firefighters and support personnel are simply the best. Professionals serving with integrity and delivering compassionate care to our community.

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Public Affairs

By: Charlee Dascani, Communications & Public Affairs Specialist



What is referred to as 9/11, or Patriot Day, marks a defining moment in our nation's history. It was on this horrific day that many great heroes were lost due to a series of four coordinated terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon in Washington, and a farm field in Pennsylvania. Our world was turned upside down, and America still carries the scar of this profound tragedy today.

While each year our hearts remain heavy for the lives taken on that day, we recognize the strengthening of our nation in a time of crisis. America was changed after 9/11. As the nation mourned, citizens found unity within each other and it gave Americans a new appreciation for men in women in uniform. It serves as a reminder of how life is both precious and unpredictable.

This year marked 19 years since the attacks against our nation, for which the members of Greater Naples Fire Rescue participated in the September 11th Commemorative Service hosted by the Golden Gate Civic Association and the Collier County Sheriff's Office. With the American flag proudly waving in the background of the service, and members of the community gathered to take a moment of silence and pay respects, the commemoration provided a heartwarming tribute to the victims of 9/11. The service featured powerful speeches by Lieutenant Gary Martin, Bishop R.L. Neal, Congressman Díaz-Balart, and our very own Fire Chief Kingman Schuldt. Chief Schuldt honored those lost with the powerful line, "To all, who have given their lives for the good of their fellow man and woman. With their tasks completed, their duties well done, their loved ones left behind, their last alarm sounded." He touched upon the sacrifice made every day by men in women in uniform and how it enables our freedoms on a daily basis. Chief Schuldt emphasized that we shouldn't take our safety and security for granted and that we should appreciate our community, freedoms, and loved ones. Another highlight of the service included the bell ceremony which remembers the 9/11 victims through four sets of five rings of the bell. Almost two decades later, it is clear that 9/11 still carries substantial emotion for the nation. The Greater Naples Fire Rescue District continues to honor the first responders who sacrificed their lives, but also the countless civilians who remain in our hearts to this day. May we never forget.



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Planning and Growth Management Section

By: Wayne Martin, Assistant Chief



To say the last few months of 2020 have been ever changing is to say the least. Our front line workers, healthcare professionals, grocery store workers and anyone coined essential are out there every day helping people as this virus respects no boundaries or ethnicities. What it has taught us is to implement strategies both at work and at home to better cope with the disruption of our normal practices because of the fear of contracting the virus, and physical distancing restrictions.

Here at District headquarters, one of the many ways we have changed the way we do business is that we implemented a self-monitoring program to assist in containing further spread of the virus throughout the community. Every day upon arriving to work, our personnel record their temperatures and check the box that they do not have a cough, sore throat or shortness of breath. All our doors are closed to the public and if someone has to enter the building they must wear a mask and are contained in our lobby area. Public meetings and events held on District property remain cancelled until further notice. Our staff personnel are not participating in any outside meetings or events. We are holding our monthly board meetings using Zoom. We are monitoring the use of all PPE and continue to stay ahead by ordering additional PPE & supplies for all our members. The District also held a voluntary COVID testing to all members and other local agencies. Requests for drive by birthday celebrations have been in huge demand.

The positive to come out of this is that we have learned that we can operate cohesively using technology, internet and video while offering remote work schedules to practice social distancing and still be proud to say we did not miss a beat serving our customers and members. We all can't help but wonder when will this all be over? What can we do to be a better, more patient, and caring member of our community for the sake of all? Let us take this time to reflect on the values we hold so dearly as a country and a people – liberty, freedom, equality, equity, peace, justice as well as our own personal beliefs and be optimistic that this too will end. Stay safe out there.

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Chaplain's Corner

By: Jack Strom, District Chaplain



It was 30 plus years ago that I first started wearing a Mickey Mouse watch. I was serving as a facilitator leading a large organization to a new level of success. I strategically planned and facilitated although it took many others, to successfully succeed becoming the winner they wanted to be.

It wasn't that I considered taking a bow for leading this organization to a place and moment of success. But as those of us up-front are sometimes guilty of... I stepped back but was careful to stay close enough to the spotlight so it could spill some light on me.

That week, when my wife Barb and I returned to our home, Barb didn't say much about the victory of what had happened as a result of my leadership (although I gave her several opportunities to do so). Later that week she asked me to go with her to a particular store and she bought me a Mickey Mouse watch.

The message being, that if I thought that I could share in even a little bit of the glory of such a victory, I needed to be guarded that I didn't take all the credit for what others helped to happen... after all... I did wear a Mickey Mouse watch.

For the most part, wearing that watch worked to remind me that I wasn't all that important, but wearing that watch for over 30 years took its toll and the watch needed repairing and besides it was beginning to look somewhat worse for the constant wearing. But I was attached to that particular watch and what it meant to me. I felt badly that it had to be *retired* and left alone in my desk.

A jeweler friend of mine who had worked on that watch several times told me that even though that model was no longer available, he would try and find another watch like it for me. The next week he contacted me and told me he had found one on-line and was bidding for it. Well, he was successful and the next day I picked it up... for somewhat more than Barb had paid many years before.

It is the exact same model as my old watch and brand new (in fact it was still in the original box along with the warranty that expired in 1987) and had never been on anyone else's wrist. Barb was as excited and pleased as I was to have Mickey back on my wrist helping me to keep my attitude of importance in proper perspective.

I trust you have someone to help you to not grab for the credit when it really belongs to others as well as yourself. It is called being a part of the team that we know as GNFD.

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Employee News

Condolences

Our prayers are with the following families:

Rudy Forte Family



Employee Spotlight



Assistant Chief Rob Low
5 Years of Service



Lieutenant Todd Nugent
20 Years of Service



Lieutenant Mike Lowe
25 Years of Service



Finance Specialist Mercedes Carrillo
5 Years of Service

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Employee Spotlight



Fire Inspector Aaron Stewart
5 Years of Service



Fire Inspector Mike Bays
15 Years of Service



Fire Inspector James Cody
5 Years of Service



Lieutenant Robert Mayberry
20 Years of Service



Lieutenant Blaine Brisson
10 Years of Service



Facility Maintenance Tech Charlie Heweker
5 Years of Service

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Light the Night



GNFD participated in the annual event “Light the Night” sponsored by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation to recognize and honor those firefighters who have made the ultimate sacrifice. Each year, citizens light up their communities in red as a tribute to the fallen. We must never forget.

