

INTRODUCTION TO THE SYMPOSIUM

by John Granito Ed.D. Symposium Coordinator

It seems accurate to say that the widespread efforts to reduce line-of-duty firefighter deaths (LODD) and injuries have the strongest unified support the American fire service has ever experienced. Where we saw some disagreement over the creation of NFPA standards 1500 and 1710 in earlier years, we now have very strong, universal fire service concern over the high annual cost in firefighter lives and budgets. Every fire service organization I know of is focusing attention on safer operations. Unfortunately, LODD statistics aren't improving despite individual efforts and the efforts of thousands of departments of all types and sizes that participate in the safety oriented programs which have been operating for several years.

Four years have now passed since the National Firefighter Life Safety Summit and its regional meetings designed the national LODD reduction strategy and the "Everyone Goes Home" theme. Last year, 2007, the nation was impacted by 118 line-of-duty firefighter deaths. Many persons began to judge that we need to identify additional, new concepts about overall safety, leadership and supervision, looking once more at such areas as aggressive interior attack, general suppression tactics, "organizational culture", firefighter wellness, and vehicle operations.

Yet fire-rescue departments still need to respond to emergencies, conduct search and rescue operations, save lives, and protect and preserve property, so the

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very nature of the job must be taken into consideration. PERI has sponsored an annual fire service Virtual Symposium for the past several years, focusing on various aspects of risk reduction, and now is adding this effort toward reducing firefighter LODD and injury statistics.

Because of the importance and pressures of the LODD situation, this Virtual Symposium takes place over 10 days, rather than the usual five, and on most days two expert papers will be released—a total of seventeen, not counting this introduction. And as indicated, the authors come from a variety of specialties. All papers are designed to stimulate, hopefully, new thinking and new concepts. Some may be controversial, but meant to generate continued and creative thinking about actions which will mitigate this challenge. All of the papers are very relevant and interesting, and some are presented, in detail, about subject matter that is quite different from what we typically read when we think of fire service safety. I encourage you to consider them all as carefully as you can, and to copy and distribute special papers to key people in your organization and beyond -- those who normally don't get to learn much about this important problem and challenge to the fire service.

As usual, you are encouraged to print all of the papers, read them, and circulate them among your colleagues and department members as widely as you can. Since you will have the ability to “type in” comments not only to the authors but to the other enrolled participants, we encourage that “computer discussion.”

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The schedule for sending the papers each day to your e-mail address follows:

Day #1, Sept. 22 (today) Introduction to the Symposium by John Granito, Ed.D,
Coordinator

and

Preventing LODD... The Role of the National Fallen
Firefighters Foundation by Chief Dennis Compton

Day #2, Sept. 23 Fast/Close/Wet by Chief Alan Brunacini

and

Understanding Perceptions of Risk and Improving Safety
Management Systems by Chief William Pessemier,
Oklahoma State University

Day #3, Sept. 24 Safe and Effective Fireground Operations by Chief Ben
Klaene

and

Heart Attacks by Cardiologist James Cole, MD, FACC,
Commissioner, MPI Fire Control District, Lee County, FL

Day #4, Sept. 25 Attributes of an Active Safety Culture by Steve Thorne, Fire
Protection Engineer

and

Drifting Into Failure by Chief Bobby Halton, Editor of *Fire
Engineering*

Day #5, Sept. 26 No More Firefighter Safety Lip Service by Chief Paul Stein

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and

Fit for Duty by Michael Krueger, Firefighter Trainer and former U.S. Coast Guard Rescue-Patrol Boat crew member

Day #6, Sept. 29

Contributing Factors to Line of Duty Deaths by Lori Moore-Merrill, Dr. PH, EMT-D, Assistant to the General President. International Association of Fire Fighters

Day #7, Sept. 30

Training and Discipline: Components of a Better Outcome by Commissioner/Chief Michael Lombardo, Buffalo NY Fire Department

and

Reducing Fire Fighter Fatalities-The Knowledge Based Approach by Stefan Svensson, Ph D., Research and Development Engineer, Swedish Rescue Services Agency, Revinge (Sweden)

and

Reducing Firefighter Deaths and Injuries: Changes in Concept, Policy and Practice by Mark Jones, Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Executive, Essex County (UK) Fire Rescue and Service

Day #8, Oct. 1

Some Views on Risk Taking by Psychiatrist Herbert Schulman, MD

and

Soldier's Bravery Is Not the Stuff of Hollywood, the Associated Press release on Brian Wansink of Cornell

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University's forthcoming article for "The Leadership Quarterly."

and

To Die For by Chief Brian Crawford, Shreveport, reprinted with permission from *Fire Chief*, May 2007, courtesy of Janet Wilmoth, Editorial Director

Day #9, Oct. 2

Heart Disease in the Fire Service: Cause For Concern? by Thomas Hales, MD, Senior Medical Epidemiologist, NIOSH, CDC

and

Reducing LODD and Injuries, Leadership and Management Best Practices compiled by Chris Neal, Director, Fire Protection Publications, Oklahoma State University

Day #10, Oct. 3

From the Front Seat by Chief Harvey Eisner, Editor-in-Chief of Firehouse Magazine

and

Where Do We Go From Here? by John Granito, Ed.D, PERI Symposium Coordinator