



# FIRE DEPARTMENT CONNECTION

For and About the Employees of the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department

## 1-18 is Super Sized



Photo by Lt. Eric Prosswimmer

**Congratulations to all members of Recruit Class 1-18 which included 91 firefighters and graduated Feb. 15. Not since the late 1980s has JFRD hired a similar size class. Class 1-18's roster is on page 5.**

## President of Retirees Retires

Some grow the Duck Dynasty style of beard and take control of their schedules like never before. Others relocate, and some retirees launch another career or elevate their second job to a higher priority.

One day you will retire from JFRD, and who knows how well you'll adjust to that phase of life or how much you'll miss the job and those you worked with. But if you ever want to reconnect with your comrades, the Jacksonville Retired Firefighters Association is going strong with more than 500 members.

You can thank Wayne Doolittle for that.

Several decades ago, Doolittle was driving through downtown and was passing by the house of the recently retired Director/Fire



**(L-R) Retirees John Wood and Wayne Doolittle discuss Doolittle's retirement as president of the Jacksonville Retired Firefighters Association during a recent membership breakfast. Wood is the association's new president.**

Chief W.A. "Wink" Jackson. The chief was outside mowing his lawn, so Doolittle stopped to talk. During their conversation,

*Continued on page 2.*

## Chief's Corner

Approximately one third of our department has fewer than five years on the job. We graduated five recruit classes last year, and since 2013, JFRD has hired 15 classes.

Recruit Class 1-18 just graduated. This group is our largest class in modern history with 91 members. How effective they become during their careers is a combination of their efforts and how their officers and peers influence their development. Our Training Academy personnel can be proud that they optimized the opportunity of teaching this large group in a short time. Now the opportunity of grooming 1-18's graduates has reached field personnel.

Our seasoned employees have an immediate influence upon our newest employees. Consider your first few months in the station. No matter how much you absorbed as a recruit, you understood you were subject to the expectations and leadership styles unique to your first officer and colleagues. In general, new hires are eager to learn, so now would be a great time to reinforce the value of wearing PPE properly and for the duration of a fire or HazMat incident, including overhaul. Please teach our recruits how to survive their careers.

Our newsletter has a recurring feature titled "Legendary Leadership." It describes the individual teaching methods that some of our retired officers used when training rookie firefighters about fire service culture and how to work effectively and safely. Their approaches differed, but the common theme is how each officer took strong interest in the new firefighter and how that fostered a successful career path.

These officers believed that they were accountable for their rookies. By taking that responsibility, these lieutenants, captains and chiefs did their best to make our department better one rookie at a time. Given the number of new hires lately, many of us have that same opportunity each shift.

Kurt Wilson, Chief of Department

**Story Ideas & Photos**

Please e-mail [jbracey@coj.net](mailto:jbracey@coj.net)

# Legendary Leadership

## Capt. Bill Langley, Engine 2

A handful of Springfield Deuce patches and two keys to the fire station. On day one.

That's what retired Capt. Bill Langley placed in the hands of each rookie under his wing at Fire Station 2. You might consider the man among the most trusting, and you'd be on the right track. Langley was perpetuating what the late Capt. Billy Ray Sands and others at 2 did for him at just the right time in Langley's life.

"They truly made me part of their family from day one," said Langley, who discovered the fire service at age 16 and learned to love it at Station 2 under Sands' watch as well as the now-retired Larry Peterson and Ray Baumgardner and active duty Capt. Mark Keys, just to name a few. A runaway who fled Indiana and chose Florida for his new life, Langley says he's forever grateful to the crews of Engine 2 and Ladder 2. They kept him fed, in school, then fire school, and even helped him learn a trade skill in case firefighting didn't suit him. They helped with transportation, too.

As a teenager, Langley said he was hungry for direction about life in general, and he found it on the C-shift at 2. As an officer

during his 27-year career, he witnessed that same curiosity in his younger rookies and believes many new firefighters are eager to understand their place in the department and the world. Langley says his mentors at Station 2 demonstrated how personal development requires far more than testing rookies on territory and hydrants.

"They showed me important things in life," Langley said. "How to be a human being, and how to treat others."

Langley often applied the life lessons he learned to his rookies, teaching them as he preferred to be taught: no nonsense. He spoke to them in the same manner: with respect. And in Langley's eyes, the two bangles on his collar didn't exempt him from joining his rookies in some of their duties, like cleaning bathrooms.

Langley tempered his rookies' enthusiasm for early morning apparatus checks and some of the door-slamming that goes with it. He decided the bumper-to-bumper inspection wouldn't commence until 8 a.m. out of respect to the previous shift who may have still been sleeping, and because early morning time was also family time at 2.



**Engine 2's Retired Capt. Bill Langley (center) reunited with one of his mentors retiree Ray Baumgardner (right) during Langley's last shift on June 30, 2017. Lt. David Baumgardner (left) is Ray's son.**

Langley would sit in the bay, enjoy coffee, and talk with his firefighters. Their cell phones were not in their hands or in close reach. In each case, Langley said he got to know his firefighters, and they recognized his investment. They not only discovered their place, they found motivation and purpose — just as Langley did as a teenager.

"I wanted them to have what I had. To feel loved," Langley said. "I decided because of the way I was treated, I was going to make every rookie truly, truly feel like they were part of the family."

*Continued from page 1.*

## John Wood to Lead JFRD Retirees' Association

Doolittle asked Jackson how many firefighters were still inviting the popular chief to lunch at their stations. "Zero," Jackson responded.

"He told me 'When you're retired, you're dead and gone,'" Doolittle recalled. "I went home and stared at the ceiling that night and knew I needed to do something for the retirees."

That something turned into a luncheon at the Jacksonville Fire Museum in the early 1980s. It became an annual tradition that now occurs in the fall at Local 122's Firefighter Hall. Another longstanding tradition is the retirees' breakfast at the Piccadilly restaurant on University Boulevard, close to Fire Station 20.

When Doolittle retired in 1995, he continued caring for retirees, and in 2007, he organized and incorporated the retirees' association. The group is about far more than reuniting for lunch or breakfast. Doolittle's efforts have transformed from fostering fellowship to leading an organization that supports retirees when they cannot

help themselves, that includes widows in its umbrella of care and that ultimately celebrates life beyond active duty.

Doolittle just retired as the association's president. He is turning over the reins to John Wood, who retired in 2002 from Ladder 10. Wood said Doolittle has set the bar high.

"Wayne is irreplaceable. It really is his ministry," said Wood.

Since forming 11 years ago, the association and its members have helped with funeral arrangements and memorials for nearly 170 Jacksonville firefighters. They also coordinate an annual widows' luncheon. Association members have helped retirees in financial crisis and delivered meals to retirees who are homebound. The association also recognizes the department's oldest retired firefighters. And they publish a monthly newsletter. For 36 years, the group has organized an annual fishing tournament, and they have maintained a presence in local parades, using antique apparatus, of course. Dues are \$1 out of each retirement check.

Doolittle will still be active in the group, and that gives Wood comfort. "He truly does it out of concern for others," said Wood.





**Hurricane Irma and the rising tide led to extraordinary flooding in Ortega last September. Station 23's crew was displaced for two months due to water damage. Extra efforts by the crew at 23 helped place the neighborhood station back in service sooner.**

She huffed and puffed and flooded some of Jacksonville's neighborhoods to astonishing levels.

Hurricane Irma also waterlogged Fire Station 23, forcing crews to evacuate long term, and also leaving the Ortega community to wonder when its neighborhood station would re-open. The long road to recovery didn't sit well with those assigned to 23 so they took action. This month's Station Spotlight is about the firefighters who expedited Fire Station 23's comeback.

Long before Irma's torrent, and a few years before he joined JFRD, Lt. James Taylor called Station 23 his second home. "We'd watch 'Emergency' and then go up there and play," said Rescue 23's Taylor who grew up a couple blocks from the station with best friend Andy Hamilton who works for St. Johns County.

Fast forward to Sept. 11, 2017. Taylor wakes up in his officer quarters to the sound of lapping water. Rolling out of bed means trudging through 6 inches of water. Irma and the tide had collaborated to make a massive mess of Ortega. Before long, the

station was surrounded by 2 feet of water. It touched the bumpers of the engine and rescue. The crew gathered their valuables and evacuated to nearby stations.

After Irma passed, Taylor, Capt. Troy Jenschke, Capt. Ray Phillips and numerous others assessed Station 23 and discovered extensive water damage. Irma took her toll on the lockers, cabinets, doors, furniture, kitchen appliances, and the washer and dryer in the bay. One firefighter's car was a loss.

"I felt sorrow to see a place I spent my whole life growing up in ruined," Taylor said. "I learned how to cook there."

Taylor converted his sentiments to initiative and that translated to others at 23. Firefighters collaborated with JFRD Facilities Manager Gary Daly, Eng. Robert Kappelmann, and Public Works to rehab the facility, removing ceiling tiles, painting walls, repositioning furniture, replacing doors and much more. They were back in the station by mid-December, and that wasn't too soon.

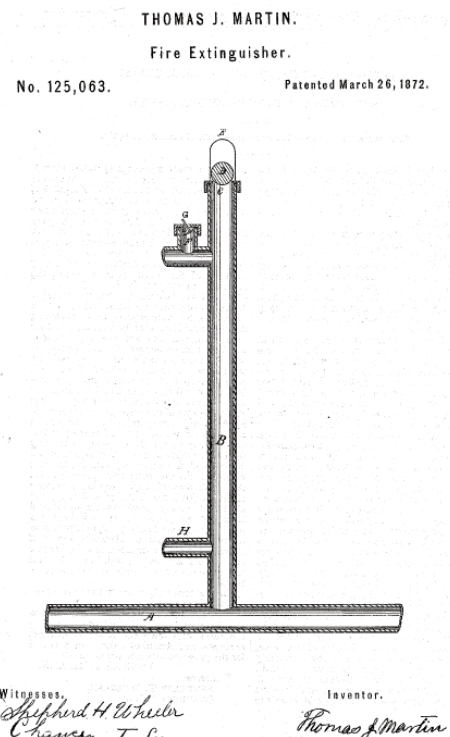
"Until you're in this situation, you don't know how bad it is," said Taylor.



## Black Inventors Were Fire Service Pioneers in 19th, 20th Centuries

February is Black History Month, and *Fire Department Connection* recently learned about two black inventors who made significant contributions to the fire service. In 1872, Thomas J. Martin patented a fire extinguisher that was the early version of a stand pipe and commercial sprinkler system (U.S. Patent 125,063 illustration below).

Several decades later, chemist Percy Julian, while working at the Glidden Company, extracted a protein from soybeans that served as the basis for fire-retardant foam in extinguishers. Named Aer-o-Foam, the product apparently saved the lives of thousands of soldiers during World War II, according to NOVA, a television series produced by WGBH in Boston and broadcast on the Public Broadcasting Service.



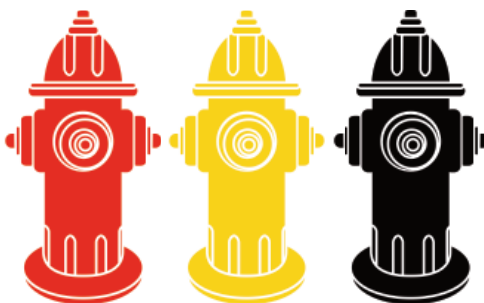
# Fire Prevention's Expertise Can Help With Field Scenarios

It can be quite alarming – that commercial fire alarm that wakes you up again and again because it's malfunctioning.

Or maybe it's your first time to a particular office complex after hours. You arrive at the new business, but there's no smoke showing and apparently no KnoxBox. Even worse, the property owners or alarm company have not provided the key holder contact information to Fire Communications. You hesitate to make forcible entry through the obviously expensive front door, but you really want to access the panel and determine the problem.

Then there's the medical call at a store in your first due. Rescue has the patient on the way to the hospital, but as you leave this familiar location, you notice how that one point of egress in the store has been compromised more and more by merchandise displays. It looks like a problem, but you may be uncertain what to do or who can fix the issue.

JFRD's Fire Prevention Division can help



with these problems and more, including applications of the Florida Fire Code and interaction with business owners to ensure compliance with the law.

"A lot of it's situational, but we can help the field if they let us know about specific issues," said Fire Prevention's District Chief Allen Mason.

That includes malfunctioning hydrants, said Prevention's Capt. Damian Bell. JEA is responsible for the maintenance of the majority of the city's hydrants, but there are times when private hydrants aren't painted the

right color and that leads to confusion about accountability. Prevention has the resources to quickly identify which agency is responsible and work toward a solution.

Bell and Mason also want the field to know about Lt. Sherri Bell's public education offerings. They include fire safety presentations that are different from fire engine or ladder truck stand bys as well as a fire safety house prop for large-scale events. Bell's public speaking offerings include age-appropriate subject matter and extinguisher training for adults.

## Fire Prevention Points of Contact

District Chief Allen Mason... 630-0445

Capt. Damian Bell ... 630-0445

Public Education Contact:

Lt. Sherri Bell ... 630-4942

JFRDPublicEducation@coj.net

## Go365 Wellness Program is Like 'Free Money'

About this time last year, Chief Kim Moreland, JFRD's Communications Manager, was just starting to follow the Humana Go365 wellness program, which is part of the city's employee benefits package.

"I only wanted to lose 30 pounds," Moreland said. "I just developed a lifestyle change and the weight came off."

Now she's 65 pounds lighter. Moreland attributes her weight loss to a better diet, keeping a food journal, and consistently exercising. Go365 helped her focus on each of those factors and stay motivated. The web-based program links to smart phones and fitness devices to track activity and to provide reminders about completing your daily steps and other activities. But that's just part of the program.



(L-R) JFRD Fitness and Wellness Coordinator Tom Fonger and Go365's Jason Matthews help Recruit Class 1-18 register for the wellness program.

Go365 also rewards employees for making healthy choices. Incentives include the accumulation of points through group fitness challenges, individual exercise efforts and managing your health through visits to your

doctor and dentist, even getting a flu shot. Those points can lead to gift cards, movie tickets, discounts on groceries and more.

"It's free money," said Larry Hinton, a Fire Rescue Communications Officer who has lost more than 100 pounds and kept it off for six months. "It counts normal stuff that you're going to do anyway, so why not get the points?"

Hinton's Go365 point accumulation was enough to buy a Kindle device for his wife for Valentine's Day. Hinton started his self-improvement by consulting with Fitness and Wellness Coordinator Tom Fonger. Then he registered with Go365 last spring and linked it to his smart watch. "It's keeping me on track," he said.

About 350 members of JFRD joined Go365 in 2017, according to Bob Blanco with the city's Employee Services Talent Management Division. Combined, JFRD's Go365 participants earned 1,139,550 points last year which represents about \$11,400 in potential rewards or gift cards. Blanco also sits on the city's wellness committee with Fonger and Division Chief of Training Gail Loput. "Their tireless efforts and positive engagement have been invaluable to our successful first year launch of the program," Blanco said.

A recent visit from Go365 Wellness Consultant Jason Matthews to JFRD's Training Academy quickly boosted this year's participation. In less than two hours, Matthews helped register the 90 members of Recruit Class 1-18. To get started with Go365, contact Bob Blanco in the city's Employee Services at [rblanco@coj.net](mailto:rblanco@coj.net) or 630-2275. You can also reach Tom Fonger at the Training Academy.



# WELCOME RECRUIT CLASS 1-18 MEMBERS

Firefighter Robert P. Alvero EMT  
Firefighter Jeremy W. Balderson EMT  
Firefighter Stephen P. Bennett EMT  
Firefighter Tyler J. Bilodeau EMT  
Firefighter Jeremy P. Blackmon RPM  
*Karl "Klif" Kramer Award Recipient*  
Firefighter Tyler A. Brennan RPM  
Firefighter Jonathan R. Bundy EMT  
Firefighter Geoffrey L. Bunk EMT  
Firefighter Jason N. Caffey RPM  
Firefighter Joseph L. Cannon EMT  
Firefighter Mariah K. Carter EMT  
Firefighter Cameron L. Chadwick EMT  
Firefighter John V. Chesser RPM  
Firefighter William B. Cloud EMT  
Firefighter Christopher M. Colvin EMT  
Firefighter Justin A. Cone RPM  
Firefighter Rhett A. Criswell EMT  
Firefighter Jason E. Deronde EMT  
Firefighter Daniel J. Dileo EMT  
Firefighter Kyle K. Dingman EMT  
Firefighter William C. Dixon EMT  
Firefighter Nicholas B. Donev EMT  
Firefighter Jesse A. Dressendorfer RPM  
Firefighter Corey C. Duzick EMT  
Firefighter Bryan E. Edwards RPM  
Firefighter Joseph C. Elliott EMT  
Firefighter Daniel N. Evans RPM  
Firefighter Mark S.A. Flores EMT  
Firefighter Benjamin T. Foreman EMT  
Firefighter Justin M. Garguilo EMT

Firefighter Terrance D. Gary EMT  
Firefighter Matthew G. Gaston EMT  
Firefighter Joel T. Gauthier EMT  
Firefighter Tristan P. Gendive-Beck EMT  
Firefighter Shane G. Goodroe EMT  
Firefighter William R. Gorman EMT  
Firefighter Cody J. Greene EMT  
Firefighter Tamara R. Green EMT  
Firefighter Stephen P. Grover EMT  
Firefighter Richard S. Hale Jr. EMT  
Firefighter Steven L. Hancock EMT  
Firefighter Daniel E. Harvey EMT  
Firefighter Michael A. Hauser RPM  
Firefighter Garrett N. Hays EMT  
Firefighter Patrick L. Hernandez EMT  
Firefighter Brandon L. Higginbotham EMT  
Firefighter Jeremy B. Howard RPM  
Firefighter Scott F. Jaime EMT  
Firefighter Jonathan T. Jones EMT  
Firefighter Bradley S. Judah EMT  
Firefighter Branden K. Langenberg EMT  
Firefighter Dwanye J. Lee EMT  
Firefighter Jeremy W. Leonhard EMT  
Firefighter Carlton G. Maddox EMT  
Firefighter Jarvis I. Manley EMT  
Firefighter David P. Markham Jr. EMT  
Firefighter Daniel J. Martinez RPM  
Firefighter Matthew R. Menzen RPM  
Firefighter Justin Z. Michalman EMT  
Firefighter Robert Moure RPM  
Firefighter Matthew W. Nickerson EMT

Firefighter Travis W. Norvell EMT  
Firefighter Jared A. OBrien RPM  
Firefighter Jack F. Ogin Jr. EMT  
Firefighter David E. Paik EMT  
Firefighter Justin G. Parks EMT  
Firefighter Ryan J. Pendleton RPM  
Firefighter Robert D. Perez RPM  
Firefighter Adrian J. Pogodzinski EMT  
Firefighter Chad M. Poynter RPM  
Firefighter Dexter J. Price EMT  
Firefighter Andres A. Roller Valdes EMT  
Firefighter Mark A. Schellinger EMT  
Firefighter Nicholas P. Schrader EMT  
Firefighter Logan M. Shellhorn EMT  
Firefighter Steven P. Smith EMT  
Firefighter John F. Soltis EMT  
Firefighter Zachery M. Stealey EMT  
Firefighter Zachery T. Sundberg RPM  
Firefighter Anthony D. Tacinelli EMT  
*Academic Achievement Award Recipient*  
Firefighter Christopher R. Tetzl EMT  
Firefighter Mark R. Thibault EMT  
Firefighter Jason H. Tidwell II EMT  
Firefighter Kristen L. Tyrie RPM  
Firefighter Patrick R. Walden EMT  
Firefighter Travis A. Walker EMT  
Firefighter Daniel R. Walters EMT  
Firefighter Adam D. Weinstein EMT  
Firefighter Lawrence L. Wolfe III RPM  
Firefighter Adam R. Young RPM

## Hi-Rise Rescue, Horse Extrication Showcase Skills

The President's Day holiday was a primetime news day for JFRD, and the coverage showcased our skills and ingenuity in real time.

During the 5 to 6 p.m. broadcasts, local viewers could follow live aerial coverage of our Technical Rescue Team in action atop an 18-story building downtown and, just as important, watch the firefighters descend down the side of the building and then carefully pull the two dangling window workers to safety.

About three dozen firefighters responded to the incident on West Forsyth Street, and they successfully completed the rescue in about 30 minutes, according to Battalion Chief Darin Hooten. One of News4Jax's top executives wasn't in town that afternoon, but he followed the story by watching his station's helicopter coverage of the rescue on his phone in the Seattle-Tacoma airport.

"You got a sense just how enormous an undertaking this is ... There was a large group of individuals working in a coordinated and choreographed effort to ensure a positive outcome," said Bob Ellis, vice president and general manager of News4Jax.

Around the same time, JFRD was engaged in an unusual extrication on I-295 North at the I-95 overpass. An MVA involving a horse trailer led to one horse being trapped in the trailer and very rambunctious, and left another horse wandering around the scene. The incident also got considerable media coverage.

According to District Chief Chip Drysdale, crews "essentially dismantled and peeled the trailer away from the horse."

Meanwhile, District Chief Jill McElwee not only used her rescue experience but also her years of tending to horses of her own to handle the incident. She also coordinated the delivery of her personal trailer to relocate both horses, and Eng. Deana Blackburn made contact with Alan Weldon, a veterinarian with Jacksonville Equine who arrived quickly to render care to both horses.

McElwee made arrangements with a friend to house the horses, their owner and the owner's daughter in Jacksonville overnight. The next day, McElwee provided transportation for everyone back to Palatka.