

THE TONE OUT

Emergency Services Quarterly Newsletter

March 2015

Vigilant Guard 2015

Georgetown County Emergency Management

Vigilant Guard 2015 came to a close in Georgetown County on March 12th. The large-scale operation, which spanned nine days and involved thousands of military and civilian participants, many partner agencies, and three states, proved highly successful, and was an incredible tool for building relationships. It also tested response skills in very realistic conditions. Though the exercise



took place in counties across the State, the majority of the activity was centered in Georgetown County. The scenario for the national exercise, sponsored by U.S. Northern Command, was a Category 4 hurricane, which made Georgetown County the perfect location for the exercise. "That's a threat we face every year, and we know it's just a matter of time before one makes landfall," said Sam Hodge, Georgetown County's Emergency Manager.

The fictitious Hurricane Zephyr followed a track similar to that taken by Hurricane Hugo in 1989, leaving widespread destruction in its path. From damaged bridges and stranded victims to hurricane-related building collapses, the hurricane scenario created opportunities for all agencies and groups participating to hone their particular skills. Georgetown County Fire EMS and Midway Fire Rescue practiced search and rescue skills as they worked to extricate victims from an actual rubble pile created at the Northwest Regional Recreation Complex at Choppee. The SC National Guard set up mobile tower operations at the Georgetown Airport, practiced a method for ferrying large equipment over water, and aided County officials in conducting damage assessment using Blackhawk helicopters. Additionally, Carolinas Med-1 set up a mobile hospital unit to treat patients; SC-HART, the SC Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team practiced airlifting victims; and the American Red Cross, The Salvation Army, and the South Baptist Disaster Relief provided support to emergency responders and victims alike.



(Vigilant Guard Continued)

One highlight of the exercise was a visit by the National Guard's Chief, Army General Frank Grass, who is also a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He visited several venues in Georgetown County during the exercise to get an up-close look at joint training between National Guard, Emergency Management, and first responder personnel. He called the operation one of the best he has seen, and seeing him on the site during the operation was a treat for the County and its staff participating in the exercise.



The drill serves to raise public awareness about the serious threat hurricanes pose each and every year, and Hodge hopes the public will be motivated to make their own emergency preparations.

Emergency Services Employee of the Quarter

John (Jack) Lowe, Lieutenant with Georgetown County Fire/EMS

Jack is a very loyal employee to Georgetown County Fire/EMS and is very particular and fair with his role as a Lieutenant. Jack has worked over the past year coordinating training between Georgetown County Fire/EMS and Awendaw Fire Department to aid personnel between the two departments to work together during automatic aid incidents. He has spent many hours working to make sure that training is scheduled and that the initial meetings and training with the departments go seamlessly. He also helped with the writing of the mutual aid agreement that aids the firefighting efforts of those residents in the south east end of the county. He has diligently followed up when there have been issues to make sure that the agreement is

followed correctly.

Jack has also worked with several of the new employees that have come to Georgetown County Fire/EMS. He has made sure that they have a good understanding of the county and the department before being released off probation.

He is very strong on fire incidents and has good knowledge when dealing with fire related incidents.

He also brings a lot of good ideas to the department. Overall Jack is a model employee and the department is extremely fortunate to have him.



Meritorious Action Award Recipients

Shane Kingsford, Firefighter II/EMT of Midway Fire Rescue

- FF Kingsford was hired in 2004
- In 2006 received State Meritorious Award Ribbon for a water rescue on the South End of Pawleys Island, SC.
- FF Kingsford was also the 2007 Firefighter of the Year

FF Shane Kingsford was enjoying a day off and sitting down to eat lunch when construction workers on the roof of the Litchfield Inn yelled out to people around the pool to "call 911, two people are drowning in the ocean". FF Kingsford immediately responded to the call for help to see what was going



on. FF Kingsford observed two elderly victims in distress about 250-feet out in the ocean and immediately ran towards the victims to render aid. FF Kingsford entered the water and swam out and brought in both victims who were exhausted and after being overwhelmed by the RIP current. The victims were an older couple who entered the water and once the wife became distressed, the husband entered the water to help his wife and quickly became a victim of the RIP current as well. FF Kingsford with no personal protective equipment or flotation devices without hesitation immediately responded to rescue the two elderly victims in the ocean. If it were not for the rapid response of FF Kingsford, the two victims may have drowned. FF Kingsford in his actions that afternoon saved two victims. Although I am sure FF Kingsford thinks nothing of his actions that day, it was clear to the other firefighters that responded that the outcome would have been very different had FF Kingsford not been there that day.



Erik Noel, Firefighter/EMT I with Midway Fire Rescue

On January 19, 2015, Firefighter Erik Noel was fishing at a local pond with his family and neighbors. Firefighter Noel noticed a child 4 years old fall into the pond and went under the water. The depth is approximately 12 feet deep. Firefighter Noel instantly jumped in and grabbed the child holding him up so that his wife could get him. Firefighter Noel said the water was frigid and he could barely swim himself because it was so cold. Firefighter Brett Sparks was there as well and helped Firefighter Noel get out of the water. The child sustained no injuries. The quick actions by Firefighter Noel and the assistance from Firefighter Sparks most definitely saved this child's life. The water in January is very cold and had Noel hesitated this outcome may have been very different.

This was a selfless act off duty, on February 26, he was awarded the Meritorious Action Award by Georgetown County Administrator Sel Hemingway at a luncheon held at Bistro 217.

Staying Inspired

Lt. Chris Armstrong, GCFE

What is important to you? And more so, why is it important to you? Maybe we should ask ourselves these questions more often, maybe every day. Every one of us has a story why we chose to do the job we do. Maybe it was something that happened to you or a family member. Maybe it is because it's what your mom or dad did. Maybe it seems like a completely random occurrence. Whatever the reason is, it became the inspiration that carried us into our job. Hopefully that memory is not too far away and keeps you inspired day in and out. However, as time passes things change for all of us, and it can become difficult to motivate ourselves beyond just going thru the motions every day. So ask yourself those two questions put forth in the beginning. In both of them we can find the things that inspire us. And with that inspiration we can find the motivation to each day do something to better ourselves. It could be something as small as reading something every day or practicing a skill. It could be committing yourself to do more physical training or eating healthier. Whatever it is that you decide to do, ask yourself those two questions and use that as motivation to do something to better yourself each day, whether it be mentally, physically or both.

A Little Recognition Goes a Long Way

BC Brent McClellan, Midway Fire Rescue

Everyone enjoys being noticed for a job well done. To know that their hard work is appreciated can be monumental within their career. It is the building blocks to success and the silent gauge of performance. True, some folks don't like the center of attention and don't require a huge party with lights and banners but still everyone likes to feel appreciated.

In our line of work, we don't have the opportunity of leaving a bell at the door of the ambulance for the patient to ring if they feel they received good service. Thanking the firefighters is the last thing on the list of to do's for the homeowner that just sustained damage to their house and rightfully so. Local leaders have a full plate and though they appreciate what we do, they don't always see every response and all of the small things we do on a daily basis.

That is where we can make an impact. We do see, within our own organizations, the everyday, big and small things we do to make our communities a better place. We notice when someone makes a difference. It is up to us to make mention to each other when a job is well done. Again, it doesn't have to have lights and banners, but just a nice "good job" when warranted will be appreciated. We recently held our annual awards banquet and it was great to see so many people honored. To take time and recognize jobs well done is awesome but I know we are not able to recognize them all. There are so many more that maybe don't raise as much attention but are still worthy of noting by those involved. I encourage you to make a difference and let others know when they are doing well. A little recognition goes a long way.

Ethics in the Fire Service

BC Jeff Pifer, Midway Fire Rescue

Discussing ethics can be a boring subject. Ethics a broad category that entails many facets of our daily life and work. Our ethics are challenged in many ways as a firefighter/officer. Firefighters have the privilege of being respected by the community we serve. That is why when a firefighter breaks the public's trust it often ends up in the news.

On the Scene

On the incident scene whether a medical call, motor vehicle accident or structure fire the public that we are serving expects us to serve to a high standard. Not only performing our jobs well but trusting that we are honest and ethical in our service.

As firefighters we are privileged to enter citizen's homes and property. We should be going the extra mile to safeguard all they hold dear and leave their home the same if not better than we found it. It is our moral and ethical obligation to assure that the homes we visit have working smoke detectors. Take the time on each call to assure that the citizens have working smoke detectors in their house. Take time to educate them about fire extinguishers, exit plans, etc.

One of the Midway Fire Rescue units responded to a medical call in a residence. While transporting the patient out the door the tensioner for the door was damaged. When the crew returned to their district after taking the patient to the hospital, they purchased a new tensioner and installed it on the door.

This is what sets the fire service apart.

Behavioral Health in the Fire Service

Lt. Bobby Strickland, GCFE

Behavioral health includes those aspects of health and wellness that involves thoughts, emotions, and behavior, including elements of education, counseling, and therapy intended to promote healthy behavior and ameliorate clinical disorders (Ford, 2012).

There is a vast need for behavioral health within the fire service. This issue has not just appeared overnight it has always been there, but for many years there was great resistance to asking for help or even offering help to those in need due to the fact that most fire service personnel were taught to suck it up and go on and the fact that there was not a lot of training out there to recognize the signs and symptoms. The world we live in is ever changing and so is behavioral health within the fire service. We have become more aware of how our jobs affect us not only on-duty but in our everyday lives as well. We have also become more open about our experiences in our jobs. It should be the department's responsibility to ensure that they have programs available to their employees and they know how to utilize the programs. Behavioral health is just as important to the fire service as training, and physical fitness. With proper training programs on behavioral health we can save more lives (not just talking death) in the fire service as a whole than we can on a scene.

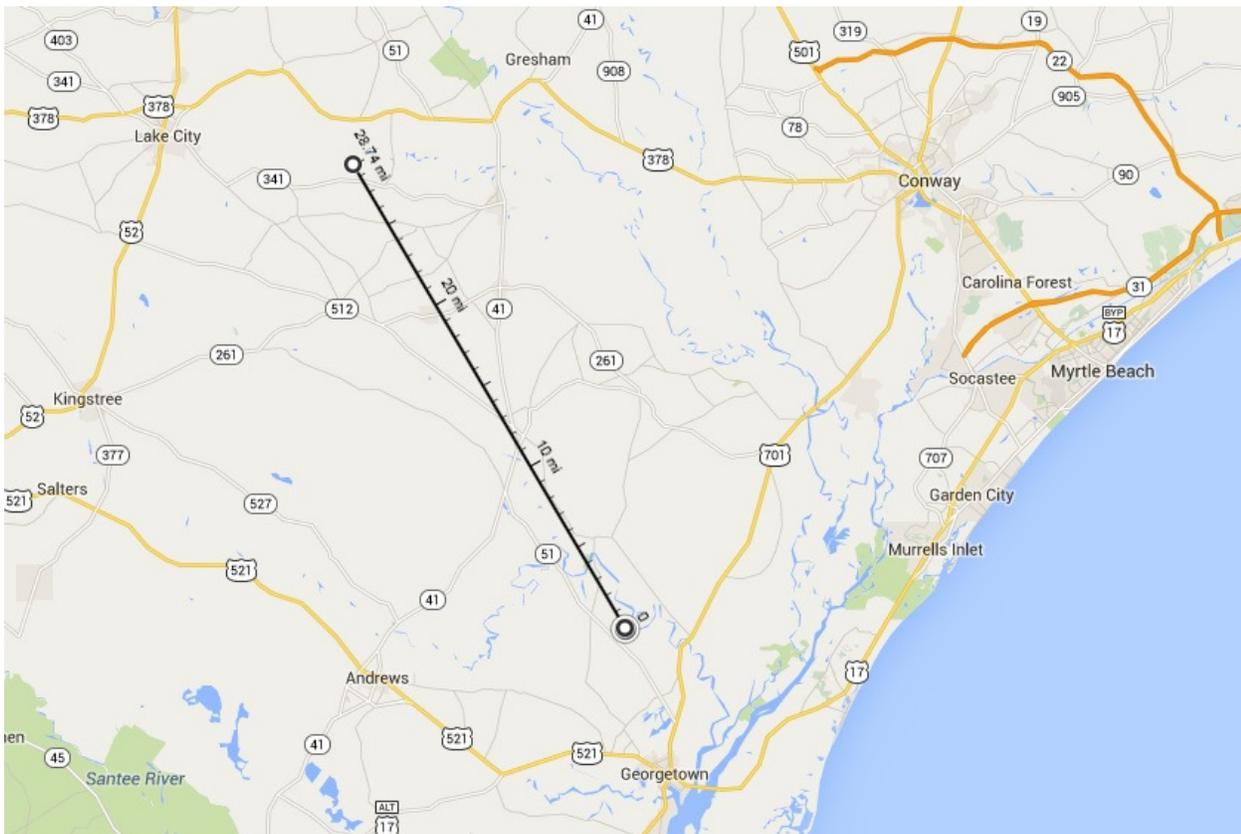
Reference: Ford, T. (2012). *Fire and emergency services safety and survival*. Upper Saddle River NJ: Pearson.

Helicopter Landing Zones

BC Ryan Allen, GCFE

With the addition of pre-designated landing zones we are able to land a helicopter in an efficient and safer manner. Everyone has coordinates and many of us are familiar with scene hazards. Occasionally it may be required to land a helicopter at one of our scenes. One of the most difficult things to ensure initially is that we are giving the helicopter correct coordinates so that they can find the landing zone. With so many ways to get GPS coordinates it's important that we are all using the same format. There are two common but different formats to give GPS coordinates: decimal and Degrees Minutes Seconds (DMS). Due to the way the two coordinate systems are plotted the numbers in our area can appear very similar but will give vastly different locations. Most cell phones and vehicle GPS units are currently using the decimal system to give coordinates while the helicopter companies that service this area are using DMS. If coordinates are given to central and designated as decimal so they can be passed on to air com who can do the conversion into DMS, the helicopter will be able to locate the correct landing zone. However, if you give the helicopter decimal they have no way to convert into DMS so they may have difficulty finding the landing zone. As was said earlier, the numbers will be so similar the helicopter crew may not even know you have given them the incorrect format. It is important that we take the time to learn the correct way to obtain the correct GPS location should we have to deviate from pre designated landing zones so that time is not lost and the best patient outcomes can be ensured.

The picture below shows the same coordinate given in decimal (33.8452 by -79.5769) and DMS (33 degrees, 84 minutes, 52 seconds by -79 degrees, 57 minutes, 69 seconds)



From the Desk of the Fire Chief
Chief Mack Reed, GCFE

I hope that everyone is doing well and enjoying time with family and friends. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every member of the Georgetown County Fire/EMS Department for a job well done over the past months. The following is an update of what has happened since the last newsletter:

BIDS – Procurement – E-One Commercial Fire Rescue Pumper (4) Cooperative Procurement trucks are being built. (Still in the process of being built)

BIDS – Procurement Frazer Ambulance (Still in the process of being built)

BIDS – Procurement of a Ford F-150 (Has arrived and being processed through FVS)

One Percent Sales Tax – 9 substations through out the County and 1 full station in the Big Dam area. I have had a number of meetings with the County Administrator, Public Services and other agencies. The project is in its early stages and moving well. The County has already purchased one site for a substation in the Williams Hill Road area and owns the land for another substation.

EBOLA Virus is not a hot topic at the moment but it is still out there so continue to read all information that was sent out and familiarize yourself with the signs and symptoms, screening procedure, and how to protect yourself against the virus when coming in contact with patients suspected of having the virus. If you have any questions please contact our Infectious Control Officer Lt. Lesley Eastham or AFC Tony Hucks.

Dryer Cabinet: Firefighting members risk their lives every time they enter a structure fire and depend on their equipment to protect them against the demanding and dangerous environment in which they work. The last thing we need to worry about is our firefighter's turnout gear. We recently purchased a 6 gear dryer cabinet for the department and are in the installation process. This should be completed by the end of March 2015.

Please welcome are new members:

James Thomas	12/04/2014
Ethan E McDaniel	01/26/2015
Jeffrey Conley	03/09/2015
Mathew Todd	03/09/2015
Nathanael Lindquist	03/09/2015

I commend everyone who has been responding to the numerous MVA's, structure fires and medical calls that we have had lately. You are doing a fantastic job working together and providing the community with quality care and service.

Heart Safe Community Award

Chief Doug Eggiman, Midway Fire Rescue

It is my pleasure to advise everyone that the International Association of Fire Chief's has awarded the 2015 Heart Safe Community Award for Small Communities (population less than 100,000) to Midway Fire Rescue of Pawleys Island, SC.

The award is open internationally and recognizes two communities (large - population over 100,000 and small - population less than 100,000) each year that have demonstrated creative approaches to improving therapies for patients with Acute Coronary Syndromes and its life-threatening complication, sudden cardiac arrest. These can be through several areas including, but not limited to bystander CPR, AED deployment (i.e., PAD programs, First Response), out-of-hospital 12-lead ECGs, 12-lead ECG advanced notification to the receiving hospital, partnering with local hospitals to improve outcomes from ACS and sudden cardiac arrest, and communication programs to increase awareness and prevention of sudden cardiac arrest and heart attacks.

This is an incredible achievement and one which you should all be proud to have contributed to earning it. It is a testimony to our professionalism and commitment to being the best we can be, and to the support we enjoy from our co-workers and leaders in Georgetown County, County Council, our Board, our hospital partners, and last but not least, the public we serve.

Thank you for what you do.



Emergency Services Birthdays

County Fire/EMS

April		May		June	
Jacqueline Goss	4/07	Theron Alston	5/05	Jenett Aklin	6/01
Matthew Todd	4/08	Joe DiPiazza	5/05	Wayne Hardee	6/04
Faye Washington	4/09	Ethan McDaniel	5/05	Liz Falkenhagen	6/10
Billy Fancher	4/12	Lindy McRae	5/10	Henry Barnes	6/12
Jason Labelle	4/12	David Geney	5/10	Tina Skidmore	6/12
Tabetha Gray	4/12	Alex Roman	5/10	Bobby Strickland	6/15
Chris Avant	4/14	Nathaniel Lindquist	5/16	Charles Alston	6/16
Daniel Young	4/25	Ben Shaw	5/16	Bettie Ford	6/17
Wyatt Cameron	4/26	Mack Reed	5/23	Broderick Reid	6/18
Charles Linnen	4/27	Brian Finleyson	5/24	Jerome Keith	6/28
James Stewart	4/27	Cody Bailey	5/31	Travis Douglas	6/29
Lonna Singleton	4/27				
John McGirt	4/28				
Austin Bren	4/28				
Spencer Hughes	4/28				
Dale Hewitt	4/30				
Jonathan Zimmer	4/30				

Midway

April		May		June	
Cody Clark	4/23	Ron Montgomery	5/04	Joe Ruffennach	6/02
Blake Cute	4/23	Adham Dumont	5/09	Josh Herncane	6/03
Ed Mills	4/30	Carols Mitchell	5/23	Erik Noel	6/03
				Joe Palombi	6/17
				Rick Myers	6/23
				Ryan Crowley	6/26
				Brent McClellan	6/27

Emergency Services/Emergency Management

May		June	
Cindy Grace	5/17	Tracey Howle	6/10