



# WALLED LAKE FIRE DEPARTMENT TRAINING DIVISION 2004 REPORT

**CAPTAIN JASON R. GONZALEZ**

*"In the heat of battle you don't remember very much. You don't think very fast. You act by instinct, which is really training. So you've got to be trained for battle so that you will react exactly the way you did in training."*

*Admiral Arleigh Burke, U.S. Navy*



## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**We must prepare for the unexpected and train for the inevitable.**

## **GOAL**

**To support the mission by providing a realistic training environment from entry level to the most advanced levels of emergency response.**

Training is an essential component to providing effective fire fighting services. The Training Division directs all training for Walled Lake's 25 fire fighters. Captain Jason Gonzalez is Walled Lake Fire Department's Training Officer.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the contributions of the many other members of our fire department who continue to assist with the vitally important task of training our personnel. Captain Matt Salow, Sgt. Karl Brown, Sgt. Kyle Murphy, FF Mary Burd and FF John Shepp.

Practical hands on training are the focus of our programs. Training includes tasks that a firefighter may perform in the line of duty. Topics may include ventilation, vehicle extrication; hose line deployment, master stream set-up, driver's training, pump operations, aerial ladder operations, and hazardous materials responses.

### **Department Training**

Our regular training schedule is the first and third Thursday morning and evening and the fourth Sunday morning each month. The morning Thursday class is the same as the evening for our members that work nights. In addition we also schedule special training sessions when structures or unique educational opportunities become available. In order to ensure our personnel were provided sufficient training opportunities we provided over 60 training sessions in 2004 and Walled Lake Firefighters spent 227.5 hours and over 1800 man-hours in training. Certain mandatory subject areas continue to consume much of our limited training time. These areas include medical continuing education, blood borne pathogens, firefighter and employee right-to-know, emergency vehicle driving and operations, and hazardous materials. Over 35 hours of medical training was offered in 2004 with 26 continuing education credits available.

### **New Members**

Walled Lake Fire hired 5 new members in 2004, all were WLFDD Explorers. Ryan Auger, Jason Baloga, Ashleigh Tillinger, Brandon Daar, and Ashley Murphy.

All new members of the Fire Department are required to attend basic level firefighter training through the state of Michigan Firefighters Training Council. This year 3 firefighters completed Firefighter I and Firefighter II training, by attending Oakland Community College's Basic Fire Academy. This full-time program is an 11- week training program held Monday through Friday for eight hours per day. Probationary Firefighters Ryan Auger, Jason Baloga, and Ashleigh Tillinger graduated in 2004. These members are now enrolled in OCC's Basic EMT academy scheduled in early 2005. Probationary Firefighters Brandon Daar and Ashley Murphy are attending Highland Twp's night fire academy and are scheduled to graduate in the spring of 2005. In addition to the above-mentioned training the new members also participate in WLFDD's own recruit training program.

### **Field Training Program**

The Field Training Program is a Mentor type system that teams senior firefighters (Field Training Officers FTO) knowledgeable in the working of all facets of the department and who look positively toward the future and newly hired firefighters. The probationary firefighters will pair up with their FTO on incident scenes, while covering the station and during training sessions. The FTO may hold additional training drills. The program provides one on one instruction for the probationary firefighter.

### **Hazardous Materials Team**

Walled Lake's six members of the Oakland County West Haz-mat team participated in 35 hours of Technician level training. All members of the team are certified Hazardous materials technicians, this is a 96-hour training course, offered through Oakland Community College.

Firefighter Phil Routhier completed Haz-mat Technician in 2004.

### **Additional Training**

Firefighters participated in over 130 hours of additional training such as:

- Fire Officer training
- Advanced life support
- CPR instructor
- CERT instructor Course
- Fire Department Incident Safety Officer
- Executive Fire Officer Program

### **Physical Education Training**

The fire service has made great advancements in the gear we wear in fires, the tools we use and the air-packs that we get our air from. However, they haven't made a replacement for the firefighter. Firefighting is dirty, backbreaking work, which takes endurance and physical strength. Walled Lake Firefighters do not have a formal PT training program. WLFD members on their own time have averaged over 16 hours per month of on site weight room training.

### **Explorer Training**

Members of the Explorers are required to attend their scheduled Thursday trainings, and are encouraged to attend Department Training. Explorers attend 24 three-hour trainings a year totaling 72 hours a year (not including department trainings). The Explorers are a valuable asset to the fire ground because they free up firefighters from having to do the smaller jobs. Explorer training is similar to that of the departments training. They are taught the basic skills needed to start a career in the fire service. The Explorer program is a positive influence for it's young adults that range in ages 14-18. This program helps to teach them discipline, respect, and responsibility. Explorers are taught and expected to maintain a professional manner while on scene of any call that they attend. Because of their knowledge of equipment location on the emergency response vehicles, they are the "go-getters" for many calls. Firefighter's Mary Burd and John Shepp are instrumental in the smooth operation of the Explorer program.

### **Self- Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)**

The Training Division services the self-contained breathing apparatus that firefighters carry on their backs while fighting fires. This specialized servicing includes monthly inspections and on-site repairs, as well as fit testing. Sgt. Kyle Murphy is a certified Field Level Technician and heads up the SCBA service.

### **Training Of Special Interest**

**Pump/Aerial Operator:** This training enables firefighters to effectively operate the pumps of our fire apparatus and Ladder 1's aerial ladder. This 32-hour course was held in addition to the Dept.'s regular training drills. Members were trained with a combination of classroom and hands-on-practical exercises. Members were evaluated through written and practical testing. Six members participated and passed this course.

**Cert Instructor:** Fire Officer Salow, Sgt. Kyle Murphy, and Firefighter John Shepp participated in the 16- hour CERT instructors course. CERT or Community Emergency Response Team Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. Walled Lake Fire Department has successfully graduated two CERT courses in 2004.

### **Firefighter Survival Class:**

The whole idea behind developing and implementing a fireground survival program is to decrease the chances of firefighters getting into emergency situations on the fireground (PREVENTION) and increase the chances of successfully resolving those fireground emergencies that do occur. In other words, when a firefighter operating on the fireground encounters an emergency, prior training produces instinctive responses that result in the problem being solved and everyone going home. Walled lake Firefighters participated in such training, practicing maneuvers such as:

- o Self Contained Breathing Apparatus Emergencies
- o Entanglement emergencies
- o Wall breach
- o Following a hoseline to safety
- o Emergency radio traffic procedures
- o Procedure for calling a "Mayday"

**Incident Safety Officer Academy:** This two-day Academy has been developed to assist the participant in becoming an effective Incident Safety Officer. The effective Incident Safety Officer can reduce the potential for firefighter death or injury. Further, this course can serve as an excellent tool for training potential Incident Commanders and Company Officers.

Fire Departments around the country have found that an Incident Safety Officer is vital to the safe and successful mitigation of an incident. Often, the Incident Commander will delegate the position of Incident Safety Officer (ISO) during significant incidents. In other cases, a pre-designated ISO responds to the scene to assume this important role. Regardless of the method chosen to establish an ISO, a means for developing individuals is necessary for the ISO to develop the knowledge and skills to be effective. This course attempts to do just that.

In 2004 Captain Gonzalez completed this course and will test for certification as an Incident Safety Officer in early 2005.

**Executive Fire Officer:** The Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) is an initiative of the United States Fire Administration/National Fire Academy designed to provide senior officers and others in key leadership roles with:

An understanding of:

1. the need to transform fire and emergency services organizations from being reactive to proactive; with an emphasis on leadership development, prevention, and risk-reduction;
2. transforming fire and emergency services organizations to reflect the diversity of America's communities;
3. the value of research and its application to the profession; and
4. the value of lifelong learning.

Enhanced executive-level knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to lead these transformations, conduct research, and engage in lifelong learning.

The officers enhance their professional development through a unique series of four-graduate and upper-division-baccalaureate equivalent course. The EFOP spans a 4-year period with 4 core courses. Each course is 2 weeks in length.

EFOP participant must complete an Applied Research Project (ARP) that relates to their organization within 6 months after the completion of each of the four courses. A certificate of completion for the entire EFOP is awarded only after the successful completion of the final research project.

Fire Chief Van Sparrentak completed the Executive Fire Officer course in 2004.

### **Conclusion**

There is much to accomplish each year just to maintain our ability to effectively perform a variety of firefighting and rescue skills and techniques, and we still have to find time to introduce new firefighting and rescue information and technology. It is important that we point out that our

personnel accomplish this in addition to their responses to emergencies, while still working fulltime jobs and fulfilling their family obligations.

Most of what a firefighter does, whether fulltime or paid-on-call is “high risk/low frequency” but the public’s expectation is that the situation will be handled safely, effectively and professionally. Training is our only method of being prepared for any emergency.

## 2004 Training Photos



**Flashover simulator**



**FF survival modified SCBA maneuver**



**FF survival wall breach**



**FF survival entanglement drill**



**Haz-Mat leak monster**