

ON SCENE



FOR AND ABOUT THE EMPLOYEES OF THE JACKSONVILLE FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT

September 2010



REMEMBERING ENG. CLARENCE BAKER, JR.



DEAR FELLOW EMPLOYEE

Over the last several weeks, I heard so many different thoughts on whether or not the union contract would be ratified, it was impossible to predict the outcome.

As of Sept. 24, a majority of employees represented by IAFF Local 122 voted against

the proposed contract – specifically, 53 percent from the Firefighter through Captain bargaining unit. The Battalion and District Chief bargaining unit supported the contract.

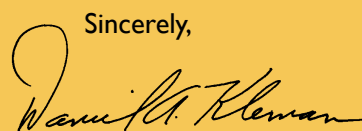
This had to be one of the toughest votes in the history of IAFF Local 122.

Facing a 2 percent salary reduction that would last for 24 months and accepting higher health care costs are issues that understandably come with mixed emotions. With the “no” vote, the membership has effectively chosen to return to the bargaining table in hopes of finding other solutions. I understand the feelings that have led to this vote.

In the absence of ratification, JFRD was directed to move forward with operational changes to ensure a balanced budget for the department. These changes are now being implemented.

This has been a tense time for JFRD and its employees. This has also been an extremely difficult process for everyone in the department who has had direct involvement with these issues. I want to recognize the leadership of Local 122 for its diligence during contract negotiations.

Hopefully, all parties will soon agree upon a solution.

Sincerely,


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Director



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Engine 55's Firefighter Chris Keane returns hose to Firefighter William Cannella (E-55) following an electrical fire in Neptune Beach.

There were no injuries and fire damage was limited to the structure's exterior.

Cover shot: Eng. Tony Ragans and Rescue Division Chief Charles Moreland drape the American Flag over the casket of Eng. Clarence Baker, Jr.

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ENG. CLARENCE BAKER, JR.

1959 - 2010

The Quiet Man

Eng. **Clarence Baker Jr.** was a quiet man, but he was also a very busy man during his time on Earth.

He retired from the U.S. Army Reserves, was deployed twice to the Middle East, worked as a nurse in the Army and at a local adult care facility, founded a local church, was married and was a father and grandfather. He also drove Tanker 34 on the B-shift for many years until his final shift on Aug. 31.

A day later, Baker passed away at age 51.

Continues on next page.



Tanker 34's Eng. Clarence Baker, Jr. passed away Sept. 1.



Station 34 and numerous firefighters attended Eng. Clarence Baker Jr.'s Sept. 10 funeral. He was laid to rest at the Jacksonville National Cemetery for veterans on Lannie Road. The cemetery is in 34's territory.



JFRD's Chaplain Eng. Percy Golden reads a resolution honoring the life of Eng. Clarence Baker, Jr. during Baker's Sept. 10 funeral.

"He had so many hats," said his colleague and long-time friend Eng. **Robert Dausy** (Ladder 34).

Dausy and Baker worked together for more than 20 years, coming on at Station 35 just months apart. As rookies, Dausy said he and Baker were focused on keeping their high-mileage cars running so they could study territory on their off days.

"I'd work on my Volkswagen Rabbit. He had a Ford Tempo," Dausy said.

Eventually, they both wound up at Station 34, and Baker eventually outgrew the Tempo, upgrading to a high-performance pickup truck and a turbocharged Mustang. Both vehicles were extremely fast, a sharp contrast to Baker's low-key demeanor around the station. Though Baker was usually quiet, Dausy said that he was also very approachable, a character trait that made him popular.

"He was more of a good listener than anything else," Dausy said. "If you sat there long enough, you'd probably answer your own question."

It didn't matter if Baker was on duty or off, he was always willing to listen – even if it meant getting out of bed.

"I remember being in my 20s, having something on my mind

and driving to his house at 1 a.m. because I needed to talk to him," said 40-year-old Lt. **Doward Carter** (Engine 26). "I go over there and honk the horn. He had pit bulls in his yard, so you couldn't get to his door. He'd come out and want to know what you were doing out there honking the horn so late, but he'd welcome you in."

When Baker wasn't listening, he was investing most of his spare time in Bible studies, often reading in the bay at 34 or in his pickup, which he always parked in the first spot near the bay because it was shaded. He likely shared his studies with his congregation at the One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism Outreach Ministry, Inc. – a local non-denominational church with about 75 members that Baker launched more than a decade ago. Jewell, his wife of 23 years, now plans to lead the church.

Eng. **Lawrence Hendley, Jr.** (Ladder 44) attended Baker's church for several years. He credits Baker as a spiritual mentor and personal counselor and believes that their meeting was no coincidence.

"Sometimes people come into your life for a season, a short time. God let me borrow Clarence for about 10 years," Hendley said. "I was kind of a hothead, and he helped me to

mellow out. He'd tell me 'You might not be where you want to be right now, but you are where you're meant to be.'"

Growing up, Hendley said he was skeptical of most preachers' sincerity, but Baker's down-to-earth honesty and sound advice captivated Hendley's attention. Hendley and Carter both knew Baker before he launched his church. Carter said he was also "extremely skeptical" of preachers and wondered how leading a church might affect his close friend.

"His demeanor and attitude never changed," Carter said. "He'd come at you the same way."

When Baker wasn't studying the Bible, he would occasionally watch television at the station. Ladder 34's Lt. **James Hazouri** said Baker's TV habits included John Wayne movies,

Westerns and vintage boxing matches dating back to Muhammad Ali's prime. Hazouri said that while Baker may have been quiet, his actions set a good and very noticeable example. Baker didn't complain; he was always full of encouragement.

"He was a 100 percent pure guy who would do anything for you," Hazouri said.

Just about anyone who knew Baker or simply knew of him was aware that he was a minister, but he didn't impose his convictions upon anyone.

"He let his light shine and those who saw it and needed some guidance were drawn to it," said JFRD's Chaplain Eng. **Percy Golden**.



Eng. Tony Ragans embraces Jewell Baker, widow of Eng. Clarence Baker, Jr. Ragans came on the job with Baker in March 1989 and worked with him at Station 34 for a decade. Baker, a pastor, officiated the wedding ceremony of Ragans and his wife Michelle in 2001.

Blood Pressure and Firefighters

We're no strangers to high blood pressure, either personally or professionally.

A person with a blood pressure of 120-139 systolic and 80-89 diastolic is considered to be pre-hypertensive. A person with a blood pressure greater than or equal to 140 systolic and 90 diastolic is considered to have hypertension.

Are you in this range?

Approximately three-quarters of emergency responders have pre-hypertension or hypertension, a proportion which is expected to increase based on the obesity epidemic. Elevated blood pressure is also inadequately controlled in these professionals and strongly linked to cardiovascular disease, morbidity and mortality. Notably, the majority of cardiovascular disease events occur in responders who are initially pre-hypertensive or mildly hypertensive and whose average pre-morbid blood pressures are in the range in which many physicians would hesitate to prescribe medications (140-146/88-92), according to the American Journal of Hypertension (2009).

The extreme environmental stress and intense energy required to combat a fire is what puts unfit firefighters in grave danger. There are certain lifestyle factors that can help to lower blood pressure and increase overall wellness. Nothing is more important to overall health and well-being than being physically fit.

Physical activity generates more muscle in the entire body, including the heart. Being regularly active increases the strength of the heart which makes it easier to pump blood throughout the body. A strong heart can pump more blood with less effort, which is important when trying to conserve energy on scene. Cardiovascular exercise lowers cholesterol levels, triglyceride levels, and blood pressure. Lowering these factors

reduces the risk for developing ailments such as heart disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis.

Another important factor in reducing blood pressure is nutrition. Having a diet that is high in fruits and vegetables and low in fat, salt, and cholesterol will help to reduce or control high blood pressure as well as weight. People who are obese are seven times more likely to develop high blood pressure. Eating well will manage weight and prevent further risk of developing high blood pressure. Re-fueling after a fire is also very important to the safety of firefighters. Dehydration can cause increased tension in the blood vessels which cause the vessels to contract or squeeze blood to vital organs in the body. This condition can become chronic which causes high blood pressure to become chronic as well. Bottom line: proper nutrition in combination with exercise will help to prevent or control high blood pressure.

A fitness assessment is a great way to get on the track to wellness and combat a firefighter's number one health enemy.

Contact JFRD's Health and Wellness Coordinator Tom Fonger to schedule your assessment at tfonger@coj.net.



JFRD's Oldest Living Firefighter George Treadwell Dies at 91

Lt. George Treadwell, the oldest surviving JFRD retiree, passed away on Sept. 4 at 91. He joined JFRD in 1948 and retired in 1968. Mr. Treadwell spent the majority of his career at Fire Station 2 and later became a charter member of the Jacksonville Retired Firefighters Association.



Mr. Treadwell is the father-in-law of retired Firefighter Linda Treadwell, curator of the Jacksonville Fire Museum for the last five years. He was born in Butts County, Ga. in 1919 and settled in Jacksonville in 1945 with his wife Evelyn who passed away nearly 20 years ago.

In addition to his JFRD career, Mr. Treadwell served in the U.S. Navy for eight years, including during World War II. He later joined the U.S. Army and served in Korea.

When to Just Say

NO

An interesting and somewhat valuable memo arrived at JFRD Headquarters last month.

It referenced a group of firefighters who were participating in Fire Boat Operator Training near Blount Island. Training Academy Lieutenants **Tracey Davis** and **Todd Smith** were on

board Marine 2 with Engineers **John Stevens** (Engine 40) and **Charles Johnson** (Tanker 40).

The lesson turned practical rather quickly when Smith and the others aboard Marine 2 got a call to help tow a disabled vessel. This wasn't part of the training, but Marine 2 towed the boat and its passengers without incident to a nearby ramp.

The disabled vessel's operator was so grateful that he offered the firefighters \$20. They all refused, but the man tossed the bill through the cabin window and walked away. The crew even asked the man to return, but he wouldn't. So Smith grabbed the bill, and the next day he penned a memo to the Fire Museum, citing JFRD's rule about Professional Ethics (100.04.05) and how monetary gifts can be donated to the museum. Since the donor wasn't available to do it himself, Smith made sure to include the contribution by taping the currency to the memo.

The money will be deposited in the museum's account.

Jacksonville Hosts Firefighter Games November 1-15

Thousands of firefighters are expected to converge upon Jacksonville during the first half of November for the National Firefighter Games.

It's the first time our city has hosted the National Games, which offers a wide variety of events. Some will test your might, like the bench press or arm wrestling. Others will challenge your mind, such as poker and golf. There are more than 40 different events.

Registration deadline is Oct. 1

Visit www.usffg.com or call 866-233-4263.

You must be a certified firefighter to compete, according to the United States Firefighter Games, the non-profit organization which produces the competition.



Getting to Know ...

Capt. Kevin Kotsis

Assignment: Rescue 21-B, Station 21 Captain

Hometown: Jacksonville, Fla.

Came On: at Engine 13 in 1991.

In 1996: he made Lieutenant on Rescue 7.

In 2002: Kotsis made Captain on Rescue 20.

Happy in Rescue: "I enjoy it more than I ever did combat. In rescue, on almost a daily basis, I change somebody's life."

Work Philosophy: "Coming to work, I plan to be very busy. In rescue, you're going to be busy until the last day you leave."

Most Calls in One Shift: 22 and that's OK. "By the time you realize you're busy, the day is over."

Babies delivered: Eight to date. The first one is still memorable. "I'd only seen the video at that point. I was 20 years old. It was December. It was cold. A little girl."

Work Philosophy Part II: Kotsis doesn't believe in comparing his workload to anyone else's. The only comparison he draws are among his shifts, one trick to the next.

At Station 21: The HazMat Team is truly a team. Kotsis is not only responsible for knowing his apparatus, but also the

Tower Ladder, Engine and HazMat. "We have to know every seat in the station." Rank is respected, but at a HazMat incident "We see the red helmets first."

Riding Up: He's driven in the Chief's Car often. He's also ridden up enough to know he's happier as a Captain.

His Father: Robert Kotsis was a rescue Captain on the job. His last assignment was at Headquarters as the Health and Safety Officer until he retired in 1996. Even if you came on after that, you might know him. The elder Kotsis is an expert at moulage, the bloody and gory makeup which simulates injuries for MCI drills, which are a part of Recruit Training. Came in handy on Halloween, too, according to his son. "I had glass sticking out of my head, bone fragments, too."

Family: Married with three children. Still manages to play some golf.



Call Volumes August 2010

ENGINES (Top 30)

E28	.....381
E30	.....360
E31	.....350
E19	.....325
E21	.....324
E1	.....314
E51	.....307
E22	.....305
E10	.....303
E152	.....282
E25	.....281
E32	.....278
E44	.....278
E18	.....272
E13	.....263
E36	.....262
E9	.....255
E24	.....250
E20	.....246
E4	.....232
E34	.....224

E150221

E2218

E27214

E42208

E17200

E154191

E5190

E135186

E58178

RESCUES (Top 25)

R30358

R19350

R28341

R31339

R1338

R4338

R2324

R36319

R21316

R22313

R5311

R13308

R20306

R17304

R34304

R15294

R7291

R51290

R32270

R24268

R25261

R35255

R50240

R52238

R54238

LADDERS

L28175

L30146

L31144

L10133

TL21131

L44120

L18115

L1114

L32104

L34103

L492

TL973

TANKERS (Top 5)

T3164

T2861

T4256

T5253

T4444

BRUSH TRUCKS (Top 5)

BR5073

BR3269

BR3161

BR4261

BR4354

MARINE UNITS

M313

M110

FIRE PREVENTION

Plans Reviewed 307

Inspections (new) 297

Investigations ...33

FIELD CHIEFS

F3108

F686

R10380

R10474

F971

F470

F758

F557

R10549

F145

F243

F835

MONTHLY TOTALS

EMS7,795

FIRE1,478

NON EMR ...263

Total:9,536