
BOARD FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND RESERVE OFFICERS

December 2001

A Word from the Executive Secretary

Brigette K. Smith

The events of September 11th have made many of us pause for thought and reprioritize things. It has reaffirmed what many of us already knew. Every day, thousands of emergency workers risk their lives to help others around them with little or no thought to their own lives. Bernard D. Dyer, Deputy Chief of the Philadelphia Fire Department, said it well in the April 2000 Edition of Firehouse Magazine. He said, “someone once said that firefighters are ordinary people called to do extraordinary things. I disagree. When a person chooses firefighting as a career or raises a hand to volunteer...he or she leaves the ranks of ordinary people. Firefighters, all firefighters, are extraordinary people who very often do extraordinary things”.

The staggering number of emergency workers lost on that day touched us all. If you are like me, you did make note of the fact that there were no volunteers in the FDNY or NYPD. If you were like me, you also assumed there were no volunteer emergency workers killed in the line of duty at the

World Trade Center (WTC). Like me, you would have been wrong.

Richard Pearlman was only 18 and a member of the Forest Hills Volunteer Ambulance Corps. He first joined the Youth Corps at age 14 and became a dispatcher for the Ambulance Corps. He pulled duty shifts every Tuesday and Saturday. He helped at every fundraiser and every blood pressure check. “Richie” especially looked forward to EMT class in October. On September 11, Richie was in Manhattan on business when the attack occurred. Despite his employer’s order to report back to the safety of the offices, Richie responded on foot to the WTC to begin doing what was right and natural for him. After 4 years as a dispatcher and ambulance volunteer, he knew he could help. Newsweek’s Extra Edition of ***America Under Attack*** shows him helping people. That was the last anyone ever saw of Richard Pearlman.

Richard Pearlman was an extraordinary person who did an extraordinary thing.

Saying Goodbye to Our Own

This year, we have lost two of our own volunteers in the line of duty. Please remember them and their families throughout the new year.

Jeremy Chandler (Grant #5) – Passed away June 18, 2001 while working at a wildland fire. Jeremy was a newlywed with 3 stepchildren. He liked camping, four-wheeling, and collecting baseball cards. He was known for his generosity and always reached out to help others.

Allan “Mac” Marriott (Port Townsend) – Passed away September 8, 2001 while fighting a marine fire. Allan was married with 3 daughters and 2 granddaughters. He always hoped for a grandson and his wish came true only a couple weeks after his death with the birth of Allan MaCrae (named after Grandpa). Despite his death in September, Allan continues to be the top responder in his department for 2001.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 2 | Retirement Questions Answered |
| 3 | BVFF Website |
| 3 | Covered Activities |
| 4 | Board Member Profile |
| 4 | Annual Fees |

Retirement Questions Answered

Retirement Forms

Retirement forms can be requested from our office within a year of the age at which the member wishes to begin drawing his/her pension. Forms can either be requested by the member or by the department.

The members should fill out the notice of retirement. They will be asked to choose whether or not they want the joint survivor option (if available to them) and what age they wish to begin drawing their pension. In the joint survivor section, the spouse's signature does not need to be notarized. Please remind them that they should not sign the forms until they are at the notary's and that they should verify that the service record, birthdate, and social security number are correct. Once their portion is completed, they should then send the papers to the last fire department for which they volunteered.

When reviewing the retirement papers, the local board needs to verify the correctness. To the best of its ability, the board should verify that the beginning and ending dates of service are correct and that the forms have been filled out completely. Once everything is correct, completed, and the certificate of eligibility is approved and signed by the local board, the forms should be sent to the state board.

We will send a confirmation letter to the retired volunteer along with an EFT form to use if they wish have the monthly retirement automatically deposited into a bank account.

Can Retired Members Continue to Volunteer?

Yes and No.

Retired members cannot be active volunteer firefighters! It is not mandatory for members to retire at age 65, so they can volunteer as long as they and the department agree it is ok and safe to do so. A retirement pension cannot be drawn until they leave service, however. If volunteers retire, begin to draw a pension, and change their minds, they can return to active service. In that case, we must be notified immediately to end the pension. If we are not notified and they become active volunteers again, they will have

to pay back all monies that were paid in error while they were both drawing a retirement and volunteering.

Retired members may continue to volunteer only in administrative capacities. As administrative volunteers, the BVFF would no longer provide coverage for them, so they would need to be reported to L&I.

Credit Balances

Some departments have credit balances. These balances are noted on your receipts. Please check your receipts to see if your department has a credit balance. If you don't understand why you have a credit balance or you believe yours is incorrect, please call us. Departments may have balances because of overpayments, refunds when pensions are paid by more than one department, or refunds when a member has made more than 25 payments.

Credit balances may be used to pay fees for new members or pay statutory interest penalties. This is particularly convenient for districts that need add members immediately and can't wait for a warrant to be issued. Balances may be refunded if an invoice voucher is submitted.

New Members

We are often asked when new volunteers should be reported. The easy answer is that they should be reported immediately after becoming members of the department.

RCW 41.24.010 states that a firefighter "includes any fire fighter or emergency worker who is a member of any fire department...". Once a new volunteer is accepted as a member of your department, (s)he should immediately be reported.

Currently, departments have the ability to report new members by faxing us a completed remittance form (our fax number is 360-586-1987) with an added notation that the fees are to follow. We would just need to receive the money within a reasonable amount of time and prior to paying any claims. For those departments that have a credit balance, fees could immediately be deducted from credit.

BVFF WEBSITE

Our website is up and running now. We encourage everyone to make use of it. Many secretaries and clerks have contacted us to tell us how helpful it can be. It is our hope that it will help ease your workload.

One of the website's best features is the Forms Downloads section. Secretaries can currently download Invoice Vouchers, Physical Exam Report Forms, and Remittance Forms. They are MS Word templates. Hopefully this will help with your annual fees, since it can now all be completed by computer, printed, and mailed with your fees.

Also under Forms and Downloads is an on-line postcard. Volunteers no longer have to wait to file a postcard, because it can now be done from their own homes. As we educate volunteers, we have been explaining that they still need to inform the officer in charge of any injury and have added a section to the on-line postcard that requires them to verify that they have made that notification.

The website also contains pictures and biographical information about the board and its staff, contact information, copies of past newsletters, and the policies and procedures manual.

We are always looking for ways to improve our site, so if you see anything while you browse, drop us an email or call. Happy browsing!!

www.BVFF.wa.gov

Accident Statistics for the Year 2001

Top 5 Types of Accidents (out of 216 total accidents)

- 19% - Sprains from falls
- 18% - Back injuries, usually from lifting
- 11% - Contusions and abrasions
- 9% - Lacerations
- 7% - Heat Exhaustion

Top 5 Locations of Accidents

- 30% - At fire scene
- 19% - At aid call scene
- 12% - At the fire station
- 11% - At training academy
- 8% - At Drill

Covered Activities

Drill and Training

Volunteers are covered during drill and training for injuries and/or death. They are not covered for travel to and from training, however.

Emergency Response

Firefighters and Reserve Officers are covered while on the emergency scene. They are also covered while responding in emergency vehicles. Firefighters or Reserve Officers who are called from their homes to respond to an emergency are also covered from the time the dispatch is given to the time they return home. Coverage is not provided if they make any stops prior to returning home.

Work in or About Company Quarters

Volunteer firefighters or reserve officers are covered for injury if they are performing work under the orders of the chief or other officer having authority to order such member to perform such work.

Uncovered Physical Activities

Any competitive sports are uncovered. Since October, competitive drill evolutions will be covered, but only if they are internal, regularly scheduled drill activities that use fire apparatus and/or equipment to build and maintain firefighting skills (such as hose evolution competitions between shifts within the same department). Competitions with other departments, agencies, and organizations, and all competitions that are not part of a regularly scheduled drill night or which could be considered part of a public exhibition are not covered.

Uncovered Social Activities

Injuries incurred while participating in social activities such as dinners, picnics, parties, and banquets are not considered to be received while in the "performance of duty". They are not covered.

You might be a cop if...

*You've ever asked Santa for an automatic
weapon.*

BOARD MEMBER PROFILE



Richard Kistler has been a Board Member since 1995. He is currently a Fire Commissioner with Thurston #7 where he served as a volunteer firefighter for twenty-six years and chief for five. He is also a Board Member with the Washington State Fire Commissioners' Association. For the last 27 years, Mr. Kistler has also been a High School Science Teacher in the North Thurston School District.

Board For Volunteer Firefighters and Reserve Officers
PO Box 114
Olympia, WA 98507

Annual Fees

Annual fees are due January 1, 2002 and are delinquent March 1, 2002. 2002's annual fees are as follows:

Reserve Officers and EMSD's:

\$80.00 for relief (disability)
\$130.00 for pension (\$30 member/\$100.00 municipality)

Fire Departments:

\$10.00 for relief (disability)
\$60.00 for pension (\$30.00 member/\$30.00 municipality)