

**Falls Church  
Volunteer  
Fire Department**



***Annual Report - 2004***

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The mission of the Falls Church Volunteer Fire Department (FCVFD) is to aid in the preservation of life and property. This mission is completed in cooperation with the City of Falls Church government and the Arlington County Fire Department. During the calendar year 2004, the volunteers participated and contributed in a myriad of functions related to the public safety of the citizens of the greater Falls Church community. The following is a summary of the most significant activities for the year:

## **MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS**

### **Hours and Emergency Responses**

Members of the FCVFD contributed over 6,000 hours staffing units and supplementing the career staff during 2004. During these hours, members responded to 1,380 calls for assistance. In preparation for fire department activities, members participated in over 4,500 hours of fire and emergency medical services training. In addition to the actual emergency operations and public service aspects of the Department, members spent over 3,300 hours completing the necessary administrative functions to raise funds, maintain facilities, and perform other basic business tasks.

### **Membership**

The FCVFD ended the year with 84 members on the rolls, including 10 members of the Auxiliary. Approximately 45 of these individuals are operational members serving as firefighters and emergency medical technicians.

## **TRAINING**

### **Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)**

Four members completed the 7 credit hour Emergency Medical Technician – Basic course at Northern Virginia Community College. One member completed the program at Georgetown University. This program provides general instruction in all areas of human body systems and initial care for a wide range of medical conditions. The course includes classroom, practical, and clinical rotations.

### **BLS Provider**

Three personnel completed the 8-hour course required to qualify as an Attendant-in-Charge when staffing a basic life support ambulance. This course is a requirement associated with the volunteer-staffed ambulance that operates within Arlington County and is the adopted standard of the FCVFD for its own ambulance operations. It is in addition to the emergency medical technician curriculum offered by the local colleges. Participants are also required to complete a supervised internship program to complete the process.

### **Emergency Medical Technician Recertification**

Eleven members participated in the 36-hour EMT refresher class in order to recertify as Basic Emergency Medical Technicians. Eight members attended two weekend sessions of training in Winchester, Virginia, sponsored by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, two completed the course at the Caroline County Regional Fire School, and one attended class at the Fairfax County Fire Academy.

### **2004 Virginia EMS Symposium**

One officer attended the four-day EMS Symposium sponsored by the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services in Norfolk, Virginia. He attended numerous sessions focused on assessment and treatment of pediatric patients, response to medical emergencies during large events, and managing psychiatric emergencies.

### **Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support**

Two members completed this 16-hour course at the Caroline County Regional Fire School in April. Attendees learned basic and advanced life support techniques for management of trauma patients.

### **AHA CPR & First Aid Instructor**

One member completed the requirements to become a certified Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and First Aid instructor with the American Heart Association. The requirements for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation instructors include a 16-hour course and a session of supervised instructional delivery to a class. First Aid instructors are required to attend an 8-hour course and also complete instruction of a class under supervision of another trainer.

### **Emergency Vehicle Operator Course**

Nine members completed the 16-hour Emergency Vehicle Operator course in 2004. One attended classes at the Winchester Regional Fire School while the remainder completed a course sponsored by the Arlington County Fire & Rescue Association taught by FCVFD instructors. The course teaches defensive driving tactics for fire department vehicles in both emergency and non-emergency travel. It consists of classroom materials followed by practical evolutions in an obstacle course and on the road.

### **Officer I**

Three members completed the 64-hour class in Winchester, Virginia that included modules on the Company Officer's Role in Challenges and Opportunities, Effective Communications, Organization, Management, Managing Resources, Leadership, Personal Safety, Leading Others, Fire Prevention, Building Construction, Fire Prevention and Investigation, Planning and Readiness, and Incident Management.

## **Instructor II**

Three officers completed the 32-hour course with career and volunteer firefighters at the Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Academy. The course required an extensive group project and homework to develop a training program that culminated in a presentation of a complete course package including lesson plans, budget, and student evaluations.

## **Instructor I**

One officer completed the 32-hour course with career and volunteer firefighters at the Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Academy. The course required an additional 16 hours of supervised internship during which the student had to lead actual training exercises at their home station. Instructor I prepares senior firefighters for conducting certification courses by providing information on teaching techniques, presentation skills, and audience identification.

## **Instructor I Update**

Five officers completed the 8-hour update course to retain certification as Virginia Department of Fire Programs Instructors. Two completed the course in Winchester, Virginia, and three at the Alexandria Fire Training Academy. In addition to the classroom session, a substantial homework assignment required participants to prepare a fictitious firefighter school and complete all of the associated forms.

## **Hazardous Materials Operations Train-the-Trainer**

One officer traveled to Roanoke, Virginia to complete the qualifications to administer the Department of Emergency Management Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations courses. In addition to the 16-hour course, the program required a minimum score on a competency exam prior to attendance.

## **Emergency Vehicle Operator Train-the-Trainer**

One officer completed the 8-hour program to obtain qualifications to administer the recently revised Department of Fire Programs Emergency Vehicle Operator Course.

## **Fire Attack Essentials**

Four recruits traveled to Caroline County to attend the 16-hour course designed to provide a basic knowledge of firefighting skills. Completion of this course enables recruits to meet Department of Fire Programs requirements to participate in live fire training exercises. Topics include self-contained breathing apparatus, portable fire extinguishers, personal protective equipment,

## **Mayday! Firefighter Down!**

Three members completed the 16-hour Mayday! Firefighter Down! Course at the Top of Virginia Regional Fire School in Winchester, Virginia. This physically demanding course requires participants to complete self-rescue evolutions as well as rescue of downed firefighters under simulated fire conditions.

### **Basic Pump Operations**

Five members completed a 16-hour course at the Caroline County Regional Fire School that consisted of classroom theory and practical skills evolutions. Emphasis was placed on calculating proper pump pressures, coordinating multiple hoselines, and water supply techniques.

### **National Fire Academy (NFA) Incident Safety Officer**

One officer completed this 16-hour National Fire Academy course designed to familiarize students with performing the functions of a safety officer within the incident command system.

### **NFA Building Construction - Combustible**

Three members participated in this 16-hour National Fire Academy course that addresses the characteristics of wood frame structures and the hazards they pose.

### **NFA Incident Command System**

Two members completed this 16-hour National Fire Academy course designed to familiarize students with the revised National Incident Management System.

### **HTR Vehicle Rescue**

Seven members completed the 16-hour course at the Top of Virginia Regional Fire School that consisted of classroom and practical evolutions. The course familiarizes students to new hazards associated with today's vehicles. Time is spent on how the laws of physics affect the vehicle and its passengers and the outcome this has on tactical considerations. Emphasis is placed on the development of safe and proficient techniques for vehicle stabilization and lifting, and in the use of air bags and hydraulic systems.

### **Certified Personal Trainer**

Four members completed the requirements to receive certificates in personal training from the National Endurance & Sports Trainers Association. The self-study course required approximately 60 hours to complete the material, successful completion of a written exam, interview, and demonstrations. These members develop and lead fitness programs for other volunteers to help ensure they are ready for duty. They also assist instructors in planning practical training evolutions to avoid personnel injuries.

### **Fireground Operations Simulation**

During the weekend of November 13, the homeowners at 2245 North Nottingham Street allowed the Falls Church Volunteer Fire Department access to their vacant dwelling prior to demolition. Seventeen volunteers participated in fireground simulations and skills stations that included roof ventilation, forcible entry, search and rescue, mechanical ventilation, overhaul techniques, self-rescue through plaster walls, hoseline advancement

and use, and utility control. Low-visibility conditions were created using a theatrical smoke generator borrowed from the Arlington Fire Training Academy.

The incident simulations utilized hose, tools, and equipment from the FCVFD Reserve Engine and Utility. The Reserve Ambulance was also on-site in the event of any medical emergencies.

### **Live Fire Scenarios**

During the month of March, the ACFD used the old Shirlington Library for live fire training. Six FCVFD members assisted the ACFD with staffing the Cherrydale VFD Light and Air unit for two days to provide on-site air cylinder replenishment. Four of these members also participated in the firefighting scenarios.

### **Mass Casualty Drill**

Four members participated in a mass casualty simulation at Reagan National Airport. Two were assigned to triage victims while two drove ambulances transporting patients to local hospitals.

### **Lancaster Fire Expo**

In May, nine members attended one of the largest fire department trade shows in the United States in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Members took the opportunity to research the latest technology in tools, fire apparatus, and ambulances.

### **Indoctrination and Orientation**

Throughout the year, FCVFD instructors conducted indoctrination and orientation training for recruits from Falls Church and the six other volunteer departments within Arlington County. Thirteen FCVFD recruits completed their indoctrination in 2004. Most of the training occurred at the meeting facility at Station 6 using Falls Church apparatus and equipment for practical evolutions. The orientation program consists of a comprehensive 2-tiered system that trains new volunteers in fire and rescue administration and operations. Topics range from cardiopulmonary resuscitation, cultural diversity, and Fire Department Organization to personal protective equipment, stretching hoselines, and placing ground ladders. Recruits must pass both written and practical exams before being permitted to participate in emergency operations.

### **County Drills**

In order to ensure proficiency and comply with government requirements for education, Countywide training is conducted on a monthly basis. FCVFD instructors organized and executed many of the drills. The drills in 2004 consisted of:

- February: Bloodborne Pathogens Refresher

Assistant Chief Evinger instructed two sessions of refresher training on communicable diseases and prevention of infection to responders.

- March: Light and Air 103  
Members placed the various tools and equipment into service given scenarios by Deputy Chief Schomburg.
- April: New ACFD BLS Protocols  
ACFD Paramedic Gorman presented information regarding new basic life support protocols implemented by the ACFD.
- May: New Pre-Hospital Patient Care Reports  
ACFD Paramedic Jackson oriented volunteers to the latest revisions to Pre-Hospital Patient Care Reports (PPCRs) and the newly implemented automated reporting system. PPCRs are used to document patient conditions as well as EMS treatment provided in the field.
- June: Search & Rescue/Firefighter Down  
Chief Clarke and Lieutenant Sisler organized scenarios to test members' search and rescue skills. The evolutions were conducted at the Arlington County Fire Training Academy smoke house using a smoke generator to create low-visibility conditions. In addition to instructors and participants, the FCVFD reserve engine and utility provided hoselines, SCBA, and equipment.
- July: CPR Recertification  
Firefighter/EMT Ingles conducted a recertification course in cardiopulmonary resuscitation for operational members.
- August: Hose  
Deputy Chief Schomburg, Lieutenant Schloss, and Firefighter Schild refreshed members on deploying and repacking attack and water supply hoselines carried on the pumper.
- September: MedStar Helicopter Operations  
Firefighter/EMT Ingles arranged for a medevac helicopter from MedStar to visit Fire Station 2 to familiarize members with landing zone procedures, patient loading, and equipment capabilities. Due to thunderstorms in the area, the crew of the helicopter arrived via automobile to provide the presentation.
- October: Ground Ladders  
Assistant Chief Evinger supervised participants raising and lowering a variety of ground ladders for tasks such as search & rescue and ventilation.
- November: Mark I Kits  
EMT Sheehan, using knowledge primarily obtained in his career, reviewed the contents and protocols for the Mark I nerve agent antidote kits carried on the fire apparatus.

## Company Drills

The FCVFD conducts monthly training meetings to assist members with fire and EMS topics. The drills in 2004 consisted of:

- February: Pre-Connected Hoselines  
Assistant Chief Evinger, Lieutenant Sisler, and ACFD Firefighter Howe familiarized members with the new methods of packing and deploying the various hoselines on the pumper.
- March: EMT Pharmacology  
Lieutenant Schloss reviewed common medications encountered during emergency medical incidents.
- April: Mayday! Firefighter Down!  
Members operating in teams assessed and removed an unconscious comrade via stairways, windows, and ladders. Emergency procedures for self-contained breathing apparatus were also practiced.
- May: Medical Emergencies  
EMT Byron reviewed typical medical emergencies encountered, such as diabetes, heart attacks, strokes, and epilepsy.
- June: Motor Vehicle Collisions  
Captain Holder led members through the removal and immobilization of patients involved in motor vehicle collisions.
- August: EMS Skills Stations  
Lieutenant Schloss, EMT Kirby, and EMT Lahey guided members through skills stations that practiced blood pressure measurement, intravenous fluid setups, and basic spinal immobilization procedures.
- September: Fire Prevention & Public Education  
Captain Fortner and Lieutenant Schloss reviewed basic presentation skills, topics, and techniques of delivering fire safety information to adults and children.
- October: Winter Fire Emergencies  
Deputy Chief Schomburg reviewed standard operating procedures, tactics, and common conditions encountered at carbon monoxide emergencies, chimney fires, and other common fire responses during cold weather.
- November:  
EMS Captain Fortner reviewed patient assessment and treatment protocols for common medical emergencies encountered during cold weather.

## **PUBLIC EVENTS**

### **New Year's Eve**

Three volunteers staffed Ambulance 106 to provide EMS support for the New Year's Eve festivities in downtown Falls Church. There were no emergencies during the event and the unit remained available throughout the night following cessation of activities in Falls Church.

### **Memorial Day 3k Fun Run and Parade**

Eighteen volunteers provided emergency medical services during the annual Falls Church Memorial Day festivities. Members staffed the Utility, Chief's Vehicle, Ambulance, and Reserve Engine throughout the day and responded to 2 medical emergencies during the event. Volunteer units participated in the parade and remained at the festival until the crowd subsided.

### **Clarendon Cup Bicycle Race**

Three FCFVD volunteers staffed Ambulance 101 to provide EMS support for the annual bicycle race in the Clarendon neighborhood of Arlington. The crew treated approximately six injured bicyclists throughout the event, however none required transportation to a hospital.

### **EMS Week – May 22**

In conjunction with national Emergency Medical Services Week, 7 members provided free blood pressure screenings throughout the day to patrons of the Giant Food Store in the Virginia Square area of Arlington.

### **Independence Day – Fairfax City Parade and Competition**

The Falls Church Model T Ford, carrying two members, participated in the annual parade and took home the Best Appearing Antique award. This year, Falls Church fielded two teams for the competitions following the parade. The Falls Church firefighters competed against other departments in the lay-a-line competition. The top Falls Church team placed 4<sup>th</sup>, approximately 20 seconds behind the 1<sup>st</sup> place team with a time of 1:15. Later in the day, the Falls Church teams participated in the battle of the barrel competition with one team finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> after losing to the Burke VFD team in the final round. One of the Falls Church teams was recognized for their outstanding effort during the competitions by receiving the Judge's Award.

### **Independence Day – Falls Church Fireworks**

Nine volunteer personnel staffed Reserve Engine, Utility, and Ambulance 106 for the annual City of Falls Church Independence Day celebration at George Mason High School. Units remained at the school until released by the fireworks contractor following the display.

### **Independence Day – George Washington Parkway**

In addition to the City of Falls Church activities, six FCVFD emergency medical technicians, along with representatives from other departments, assisted the ACFD with emergency medical services along the George Washington Parkway. These personnel staffed one basic life support ambulance and two bicycle EMS teams.

### **Cystic Fibrosis Stair Climb**

In February, two FCVFD members participated in a fundraising event at the USA Today building in Rosslyn. Members donned full protective clothing and breathing apparatus to climb the 30 floors to raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

### **Vienna Halloween Parade**

On October 27, seven members represented the FCVFD in the Town of Vienna annual Halloween Parade with the Reserve Engine, Ambulance, and Model T Ford.

### **High School Varsity Football Games**

The FCVFD was requested to provide emergency medical services by Bishop O’Connell and Yorktown High School at their home football games. Members staffed the Ambulance for 12 games, assisted 2 people, and transported 1 patient to the hospital for further treatment.

### **Marine Corps Marathon**

Six FCVFD members staffed a basic life support ambulance and a bicycle team for 14 hours in support of the Marine Corps Marathon. The Falls Church ambulance transported 4 patients during the event and the bicycle team assisted with approximately 10 medical emergencies.

### **Old Tom Activities**

Throughout 2004, the 1918 Model T Chemical Fire Engine known as “Old Tom” represented the FCVFD at public events. In January, the unit was accepted as a member of the Old Dominion Historical Fire Society. Through the generosity of a private citizen, the unit continues to be housed in a garage in the City of Falls Church. Public events and awards included:

- Town of Vienna Halloween Parade
- Fairfax City Independence Day Parade – *First Place Antique Vehicle*
- Falls Church City Memorial Day Parade
- Colonial Beach Annual Potomac River Festival Fire and Rescue Parade – *First Place Antique Fire Apparatus*
- Winchester Apple Blossom Firefighter’s Parade – *Best in Show among Fire Department Owned Apparatus*

## **MAJOR INCIDENTS – EMERGENCY RESPONSES**

### **Hurricane Charlie**

Six members staffed the FCVFD Utility and Ambulance in anticipation of high call volumes during the storm. The units remained available for approximately 12 hours until the winds passed.

### **Hurricane Ivan**

Six members staffed the FCVFD Utility and Ambulance in anticipation of high call volumes during the storm. The units remained available for approximately 6 hours until it was apparent the storm would pass with minimal impact.

### **High Winds – December 1**

During a period of high winds, the ACFD requested members staff Utility 106 to assist with storm related incidents. The unit responded to one incident in South Arlington and remained on the scene for approximately 3 hours awaiting the arrival of Virginia Power.

### **Structure Fires**

Throughout 2004, FCVFD firefighters responded with the career staff to numerous working fire incidents. During these incidents, members performed a variety of functions with the career crews, including placing ladders, ventilating structures, hoseline management, and overhauling fire areas.

### **Arlington – Falls Church Volunteer Rescue Squad**

The Arlington-Falls Church Volunteer Rescue Squad is an organization formed as a subsidiary to the Arlington County Firemen's Association. The Volunteer Rescue Squad owns and maintains a basic life support ambulance that is staffed on weekends by fire department volunteers from throughout Arlington County. During 2004, Falls Church volunteers performed over 600 hours of service on the Arlington-Falls Church Volunteer Rescue Squad unit. During those hours, the ambulance responded to over 260 calls for emergency assistance. This unit supplements the career advanced life support ambulances by handling less serious emergencies, thus freeing the advanced life support units to respond to more life threatening situations. In addition to staffing the unit, the President, Chief, and Deputy Chiefs of the Volunteer Rescue Squad are FCVFD members.

### **Light and Air 103**

The Cherrydale Volunteer Fire Department owns and maintains a unit to provide lighting and air cylinder replenishment at the scene of major incidents. During an emergency, staffing is obtained by use of pagers to call in volunteer members, including firefighters from the FCVFD. FCVFD members responded to nine significant incidents with Light and Air 103 spending nearly 90 manhours on emergency scenes in 2004. These incidents ranged from greater alarm fires to water leaks to police events. FCVFD members also contributed many hours to staff the unit during training exercises and public events.

## **Canteen 106**

The Auxiliary to the FCVFD maintains a stepvan equipped to operate as a mobile kitchen during extended incidents. The unit is capable of preparing hot or cold food and drinks. It is staffed exclusively by volunteers alerted by pager during large incidents. Recently, the Auxiliary has established a cooperative response with the Arlington Chapter of the Red Cross to assist at emergencies. During 2004, the unit responded to 1 incident and also assisted during two training events.

## **FIRE PREVENTION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION**

### **Career Day at GMHS**

Chief Clarke and Alexandria Paramedic Deborah Katz participated in career day at George Mason Middle School. Deborah Katz was an active member of the FCVFD prior to employment with the City of Alexandria. They spoke to thirty 7<sup>th</sup> grade students about opportunities in both volunteer and career emergency medical services.

### **First Aid and CPR Classes**

Lieutenant Schloss instructed several cardiopulmonary resuscitation courses through Northern Virginia Community College, as well as courses for new FCVFD recruits attending Indoctrination.

### **Scout Troop Education**

Throughout the year, the FCVFD provided fire prevention education to Cub Scouts from Falls Church, Fairfax, and Arlington. Over 100 scouts, their parents, and siblings attended such sessions at Fire Station 6. Volunteer firefighters coordinated activities that included demonstrations of such common household exposures as flammable liquids, cooking, and electrical hazards. The scouts were introduced to firefighter protective clothing, hose lines, home fire escape programs, fire extinguishers, emergency reporting procedures, and fire apparatus.

### **Fire Prevention Week and Open House – October 3-9**

Falls Church volunteer firefighters visited Saint James, Mount Daniel, and Thomas Jefferson Schools in the City of Falls Church to teach approximately 600 children in grades K through 4 about fire safety. In addition to FCVFD personnel, ACFD Battalion Chief Saulnier assisted with the school visit to Saint James. Members also traveled to Pine Springs Elementary School in Fairfax County for a presentation to Brownie Troop 5966.

The FCVFD hosted its annual open house on October 9 to culminate fire prevention week activities. Citizens were invited to visit the fire station and obtain fire safety tips, learn about the equipment, and watch demonstrations of fire and rescue techniques. Volunteers conducted demonstrations that included fire extinguisher use, structure fire attack, vehicle rescue, aerial ladder operations, and turnout gear donning. Displays of fire and EMS

equipment were available for viewing. EMTs conducted blood pressure screenings and demonstrated the use of an automatic external defibrillator.

Also participating in the Open House were officers from the Falls Church Police and Sheriff's Office. They assisted parents with child fingerprinting and demonstrated the skills of the police K-9 units. The Sheriff's Office also provided the use of their traffic control trailer to assist in maintaining an orderly parking lot and traffic flow during the event.

### **Operation Enduring Claus – December 15-23**

Each year, the reserve engine is decorated and a chair prepared for Santa Claus to travel in style atop the hosebed. Santa's travels encompassed the entire City of Falls Church and other neighborhoods on the fringes of the City as time permitted. During the trips, FCVFD members handed out candy canes and fire safety literature to citizens. Dog biscuits were provided for our four-legged friends who frequently come out to visit with Santa too. This year, the FCVFD purchased and distributed nearly 6,000 candy canes and 200 dog biscuits. Thirty FCVFD members donated approximately 270 hours of service during the operation.

### **FCVFD Meeting Hall**

Through a lease agreement with the City of Falls Church, the FCVFD manages a meeting facility on the second floor of the fire station. In addition to being a classroom and meeting room for the FCVFD, public safety agencies, private organizations, and individual citizens reserve the room throughout the year. During 2004, the FCVFD hosted 61 birthday parties for local children and 1 scouting event. Fire safety presentations and tours of the facilities are provided to children and parents during these events. The Arlington County Fire Department scheduled the room for 11 events and the Falls Church Police for 26 events. Additionally, the facility was utilized by the American Red Cross for a blood drive and the Virginia Department of Fire Programs for a two-day exam.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

### **Arlington County Volunteer Appreciation Reception**

Lieutenant Schloss was selected as one of Arlington County's Outstanding Volunteers for 2003. The ceremony was held at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association building in Ballston. In addition to Lieutenant Schloss, several volunteers from the Department of Human Services, Police Auxiliary, Sheriff's Office, and Department of Parks and Recreation were recognized. County Board members presented the awards with approximately 200 people on hand. Eighteen FCVFD members contributing over 250 hours of volunteer service to Arlington County also received certificates recognizing their participation.

## **APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT**

### **1988 Ladder Truck**

In late September, Chief Clarke was assisted by the Falls Church Public Works Department in disposal of the retired vehicle. After three years and multiple attempts to sell the vehicle, a local towing contractor took possession of the unit and removed it from its storage location at the Falls Church Property Yard on Gordons Road.