



THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – **December 22, 2023**

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Remember that:

- **Hard work is a choice**
- **Attitude is a choice**
- **Discipline is a choice**
- **Doing Extra is a choice**
- **Excellence is a choice**

There are no shortcuts to success – you must work for it. Unk

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The Chief's Desk

Merry Christmas!! What an amazing time of year filled with family, friends, goodwill, and National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation 😊
One of the all-time great classic Christmas films.

As I sit down to draft this, I can't help but think of the wonderful gifts I've been given over the years. Not just the Legos or my first deer rifle, but the gift of time with family and friends.

This Christmas I'd like to talk with you about a gift we've all received. We may have lost sight of it somewhere along the way and/or we may take it for granted from time to time. It's tangible, quantifiable, and something for which I'm eternally grateful. Unlike many other gifts we've received over the years, this is a gift we share with a select few across the globe. It's being part of something greater than any individual, part of something that is admired by many, and it's something we wear proudly 365 days of the year. It's the gift of being in the Fire Service. Whether you're on an engine, or providing professional support, everyone here at CAFMA is in the Fire Service.

I'm recovering from surgery, so I have time to reflect – and no, I'm not on any narcotic pain meds. I read an article reposted on social media that was originally written for fire engineering magazine. I'll share the writing as part of this week's *Review*. In short, the author is challenging us to respect our profession, live our interview, and never stop learning. He wants us to remember the excitement of the day we were offered a job, and how it felt to walk into a fire station or fire agency facility for the first time. Yes, we've grown personally and professionally, and yes, we have more slides in our slide deck from the experiences we've had. He's not saying, be the wide-eyed kid with little experience. He's saying, be the person who loved the job and was eager to learn, eager to serve, and eager to help others.

We've all worked with the crusty curmudgeon who's been there, done that, and has nothing left to learn. That's not who or what we need in our tenured members. What we need are members who still respect and understand the gift we've been granted, and those who want to share their experiences, to develop the next generation. As you've heard me say before, the Fire Service is theoretically infinite, while our individual time in the profession is finite. It's what we do with our time that can either sink the ship, or set the agency on a path for long-term sustainability.

Why did I qualify my statement about the Fire Service being infinite with the term theoretically? Because we must change and adapt to meet the changing needs of our community. If we fail to recognize the need for us to change, then at some point we become irrelevant and will likely be replaced.

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Upcoming Events:

Dec 25: Christmas Day – office closed
Dec 26-28: Chief on Vacation
Dec 28: Fire Academy Graduation 1800hrs at CARTA

Board Meeting:

Board Meeting: Jan 22
CAFMA – 1700-1830

Who You Were, or Who You Are?

By: Michael Morse (Originally published in Fire Engineering. I pulled it from social media.)

By the time you are finished with your career in the fire service, everything about you will have changed. You will be old. You will be experienced. You will be confident, patient, and wise. Or, you will be old, disillusioned, angry, and bitter.

The people with whom you started your career won't be the same, either. The friends you made along the way will be retired, on a different group, or in a different position. The ones who knew the idealistic kid who was just starting his life will be replaced by idealistic kids just starting theirs. They will know only what you project. They do not share your experiences or your passions that may or may not still be there. They did not know who you were; they only know who you are.

What you are is a culmination of the experiences that shaped you. The things you did, the things you saw, and the lives saved and lost all had an impact. Yours is not a normal life with a predictable trajectory. The ups and downs of a life in the fire service has ruined many good people and created its fair share of monsters. Fortunately, the firefighting life instills a sense of camaraderie, purpose, competence, and resilience in most of us.

So, who will they remember when your time is through?

The fearless firefighter with his entire career ahead of him, or the tired, old officer who is putting in his time so he can collect his pension?

The kid in the academy, fascinated with every new bit of knowledge obtained, eager to put it to use, or the guy who knows it all, done it all, and isn't impressed?

The first one on the truck, or the old man who makes those eager kids fresh out of the academy wait?

The one who starts housework, or the guy who waits for someone else to pick up a mop?

The one who trained hard, or the one who goes through the motions?

The one who responded to every emergency with the desire to mitigate whatever waited, or the one who looked at the call as more of a problem than an opportunity to create a solution?

The one who wore the uniform, indicative of the person wearing it?

The one who looks back on his career with fondness or contempt?

The answer to these questions is completely up to you. In an unpredictable line of work, one thing is always under your control: how you handle it.

There are no perfect firefighters. Each and every one of us has survived moments we regret. During a long career, there will be times that you question your commitment. Excitement fades, routine sets in, and friends come and go. Politics wear you down, and time away from home becomes unbearable.

To successfully navigate it all, it is imperative to hold on to the person you were before you became a firefighter. Keep that person locked away in a place inside you. Talk to him when things get difficult. You

weren't always burdened with the knowledge that life is cruel; good people die for no reason; and, sometimes, the best you have to offer isn't good enough. The "old" you is actually the real you, just without the baggage. If you can stay connected to him, you will be remembered as the firefighter who showed up, did the job, did it well, and left the job far better than it was before you came along.

[fireengineering](#)

Chief's Desk Cont.

If we look back on the history of the Fire Service and consider the addition of EMS, Hazardous Materials response, Technical Rescue, etc., we see how we've managed to pivot and provide needed services to our communities. What's the next change look like? While I cannot say with 100% certainty, I'd guess that we'll see more focus on low acuity calls, e.g., smaller and more maneuverable units with two personnel working peak hours handling medical calls that wouldn't normally require transport. I see us getting more involved in telemedicine where our personnel in the field connect a patient with the necessary provider from their homes, rather than clogging our emergency rooms.

As lithium-ion batteries continue to become more prominent in a variety of applications, I could see us having to adapt to a far more dangerous fire environment with even lighter weight construction. While the number of fire calls may decrease, the dangers inherent in each one will likely increase. This means an increased level of importance when considering minimum company standards, multi-unit drills, and live fire training.

We'll continue to work on mitigation efforts related to firefighter safety, e.g., cancer mitigation, mental and behavioral health, cardiac issues, etc. As an organization and in concert with our representative associations, we'll have to continue working on sustainable funding for fire districts, as well as working to ensure our federal grant programs remain intact.

I mentioned earlier that I've reached just over 30 years in emergency services. While I've had my ups and downs throughout my career, my commitment to serving has never waned. I knew the schedule, the pay, and the benefits when I accepted each of my positions. I knew that I'd never be independently wealthy, financially speaking. That said, I feel like I've won the lottery on a personal level because I have the privilege to serve others, because I've been able to provide a good life for my family, and because of the friends I've made over the years. Let's be clear, when I first started out, I had to hustle to make enough money to ensure our family had shelter, food, and fuel. But I stuck with it, worked for promotions, took the time to get my education, and sought opportunities to better myself both personally and professionally. Nothing has been handed to me; it took time, effort, and patience.

Through it all, I've always felt that being in the Fire Service is truly a gift. I remember at one point contemplating a move to the private sector because of some circumstances beyond my control within another agency. I also remember looking in the back seat of my staff vehicle and seeing my fire helmet. In that moment, I decided that I wasn't going to leave the profession to which I'd committed my life. I may have had to leave the entity I worked for, but I didn't have to walk away from the Fire Service.

Fortunately, it was only a few short months later that I was blessed with an opportunity here in Arizona - I've never looked back.

Being part of the Fire Service is a calling, a true commitment to others, and an unbelievable gift. If you're here, I would encourage you not to take your gift for granted.

While I rarely wear a fire helmet today, I still look at it with the same feeling of pride I had when I picked up my first helmet so many years ago. I've not lost my passion for this profession, and I truly believe it's one of the greatest gifts I've ever received.
