

**LINE OF DUTY
DEATH REPORT
REPORT SLIDES**



F2021-09

A Military Firefighter Killed and
Two Firefighters Injured by a Wall
Collapse at a Barn Fire – West
Virginia



Summary

- On December 27, 2020, a 30-year-old military firefighter was struck on the head and killed by a falling structural support beam while fighting a barn fire.
- The heavy timber beam fell on the firefighter during the collapse of the barn.

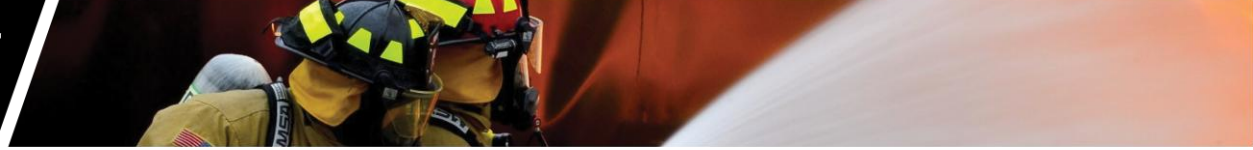


The barn fire that killed a military firefighter and injured two other firefighters. (Courtesy of Statter911.com)



Summary

- At 01:59 hours, stations 60 and 80 along with county emergency medical services (EMS), were dispatched for a barn fire.
- Captain 60 and assistant chief 60 responded in their privately owned vehicles.
- While enroute, assistant chief 60 requested stations 1 and 16 be added to the barn fire call as stations 60 and 80 were already operating on-scene at a nearby residential structure fire.
- At 02:05 hours, station 16 was dispatched with Rescue Engine 16 (RE16) going enroute.
- At 02:13 hours, captain 60 arrived on-scene and reported a fully involved barn fire.



The location of the three-story barn prior to the fire. Note the power pole on the left that provided electrical service to the barn.
(Courtesy of Goggle Earth)



Summary

- Captain 60 established himself as the incident commander (IC) and reported to the emergency communications center (ECC) that a partial roof collapse occurred on Side Delta of the barn.
- He also reported a powerline down on the Side Alpha/Side Bravo corner and requested the local electric company respond.
- Engine 61 responded and laid a 5" supply line from the hydrant located on the road in front of the property to the end of the driveway near the entrance of the barn on the Side Alpha/Side Delta corner.
- Engine 3 arrived on-scene at approximately 02:15 hours.
- The driver/operator spotted the hydrant and the supply line laid by Engine 61.



Summary

- He connected to the hydrant through the front intake, connected the 5" to the discharge, and then sent water to Engine 61.
- Suppression efforts began with the use of the front bumper turret of Engine 61.
- The driver/operator of Tanker 61 deployed a 1¾" hoseline with a combination nozzle from the front bumper of Engine 61 while proceeding to Side Alpha.
- Engine 3's crew deployed a 1¾" hoseline to Side Delta.
- RE16 and Rescue Engine 31 (RE31) arrived on-scene at 02:18 hours.



Summary

- RE31's crew deployed 100ft of 2½" hoseline to Side Delta.
- RE16's crew were assigned to Side Alpha of the barn where they met the Engine 4 crew operating the 1¾" hoseline from Engine 61.
- The nozzle on this hoseline became clogged resulting in reduced flow, forcing the hoseline crew to move closer to the barn for their stream to reach the fire.
- RE16's officer asked if RE16 firefighter 4 (deceased firefighter) could take over the hoseline to get some experience.
- RE16 firefighter 4 was backed up on the hoseline by another RE16 firefighter.



Summary

- Tanker 61's driver/operator then noticed the Side Alpha wall was now unsupported.
- He notified Engine 4's officer and requested that the firefighters on Side Alpha be told to back away from the barn.
- Engine 4's officer acknowledged but stated he would keep an eye on the barn and let the firefighters know when to back away.
- At 02:33 hours, the Side Alpha wall of the barn began to collapse.
- Multiple firefighters yelled that the wall was collapsing, and crews attempted to retreat while an EMS officer called a Mayday.
- The wall fell, striking three firefighters (RE16, Engine 4, and Engine 61) and knocking down seven others.



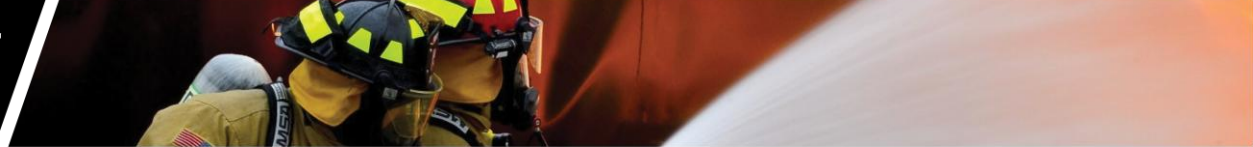
Summary

- One firefighter was struck in the shoulder, and another sustained a leg injury.
- RE16 firefighter 4 was trapped under a large timber frame.
- He was unconscious and not breathing with apparent blunt force trauma to his head sustained from a fallen beam.
- RE16 firefighter 4 was pulled towards the road.
- Firefighters performed a primary assessment and began CPR.
- Fire suppression efforts were halted.
- RE16 firefighter 4 was transported to a local medical center where he was pronounced deceased.



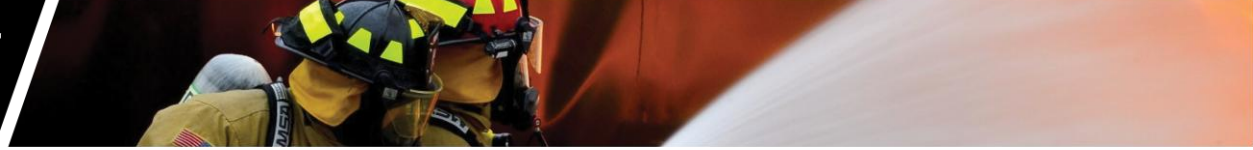
Contributing Factors

- Scene size-up and risk assessment
- Collapse zone
- Hoseline selection and deployment
- Equipment malfunction
- Mutual aid training



Recommendations

- Fire departments should ensure initial and ongoing size-ups and risk assessments are conducted throughout the incident.
- Fire departments should ensure fire officers and firefighters are trained to understand building performance under fire conditions and the potential for structural collapse.
- Fire departments should ensure safety officers with training on structural collapse are utilized for fireground incident management.
- Fire departments should ensure selection and use of appropriate hoseline based on conditions.



Recommendations

- Fire departments should ensure fire officers and firefighters are trained to react appropriately to equipment malfunction.
- Fire departments should ensure firefighters properly flush hydrants before establishing a water supply.
- Fire departments should ensure periodic mutual aid training is conducted.

Contact Us

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