

3E7X1

FES



FES Airmen play a primary role in protecting life and property and minimizing damage from fire that could seriously degrade mission capability.

At Air Force or Joint home stations or contingency locations, 3EX71 firefighters protect people, property and

the environment from fires and other disasters. They are trained in firefighting, rescue and hazardous material responses involving aircraft and facilities and in managing and fighting wildland fires. Most Air Force fire departments have mutual aid agreements with local municipalities that expand their expertise and responsibilities “outside the fence” of their installations.

The first priority for FES Airmen is fire prevention, an important component to the risk management that all installation fire chiefs must do in balancing available resources (manpower and equipment) with the likelihood of an incident. If a fire, HAZMAT incident or other emergency does occur, response time, early intervention, teamwork and speed are paramount. So firefighters train, train and then train again. Otherwise, they’re keeping their equipment — vehicles, hoses, and personal gear — in impeccable order.

Technologic improvements to fire suppression systems and firefighting protective gear, vehicles and tools may have made their jobs safer and more efficient, but not necessarily easier. Running toward a fire or another emergency, firefighters are always going “against the crowd.”

A1C Michael Snipes

Firefighter
628 CES, JB Charleston, S.C.



A1C Michael Snipes, 3E7X1, 3-level
(U.S. Air Force photo/ Staff Sgt. William A. O'Brien)

Snipes entered the Air Force in May 2013 in another career field, but quickly switched to firefighting.

“I wanted to be a firefighter, so it worked out great,” he said. “I think it’s the best career field in the Air Force.”

3-level Apprentice

JB Charleston is his first duty station, and the 628th his first squadron.

“It’s everything I expected and more,” said Snipes. “It’s a great learning and people environment. The camaraderie as a team is phenomenal and I can go to anyone with a question because they make it easy to talk to them.

JB Charleston has seven different fire stations and a little more than 80 firefighters, said Snipes, with about 45 of them civilians and the rest military.

“Because it’s a joint Navy-Air Force base, we do annual sub rescue training, which is pretty different for an Air Force firefighter,” he said.

Snipes’ current goals including finishing his career development courses (he’s one CDC away from getting his 5-Level), getting his associate’s degree in fire science from the Community College of the Air Force, and staying in the service until retirement.

“The Air Force has always been in the family. My dad was in the Navy, but my grandparents and everyone else was Air Force. So, it is kind of a thing I had to do. And, it’s perfect for me. I’m very goal-oriented and willing to do whatever I need to, whether it’s sweeping floors or crawling into a burning building. I will get it done and it will be done right.”

SrA William Hill

**Firefighter, Driver/Operator
366 CES, Mountain Home AFB, Idaho**

Hill was a wildland firefighter before he joined the Air Force in February 2009 with the intention of becoming an Air Force firefighter. Mountain Home is his first duty station.

“My prior training has been useful here,” said Hill. “Although we haven’t had any wildland fires this year, it’s usually a lot of what we do here.”

Hill has deployed as a firefighter twice to locations in Southwest Asia, including a NATO base.

“On my first deployment the base had a German fire department,” Hill said. “It was cool to learn their techniques and teach them ours. Their trucks and gear are very different from ours, and so are their tech schools. Overall it was a great experience.”

Back at home station, Hill credits the close working environment as a job incentive as well.

“I think I’ll stay in,” he said. “The Air Force has been good to me. I enjoy what I do, especially the camaraderie of the department. When you work 48 hours together at a time, you get real close to everyone.”

5-level Journeyman



SrA William Hill, 3E7X1, 5-level
(U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Jessica Smith)

What advice would Hill give a new Air Force firefighter?

“Stay positive and motivated. You probably won’t get a lot of fires right away, but you will. Early on, someone told me when I go on a call to remember the people — it’s not our emergency, it’s theirs, and we’ll be their saving grace. It’s advice I’ve taken to heart and try to pass on.”

SSgt Kyle Dulan

**Fire Protection Crew Chief
100 CES, RAF Mildenhall, U.K.**

Dulan joined the Air Force in September 2004 and recently re-enlisted in a unique way – while rappelling down Mildenhall’s air traffic control tower.

“I’m in it for the long haul,” said Dulan. “Initially I was going to use the Air Force as a stepping stone into civilian firefighting, but 10 years later, I’m here.”

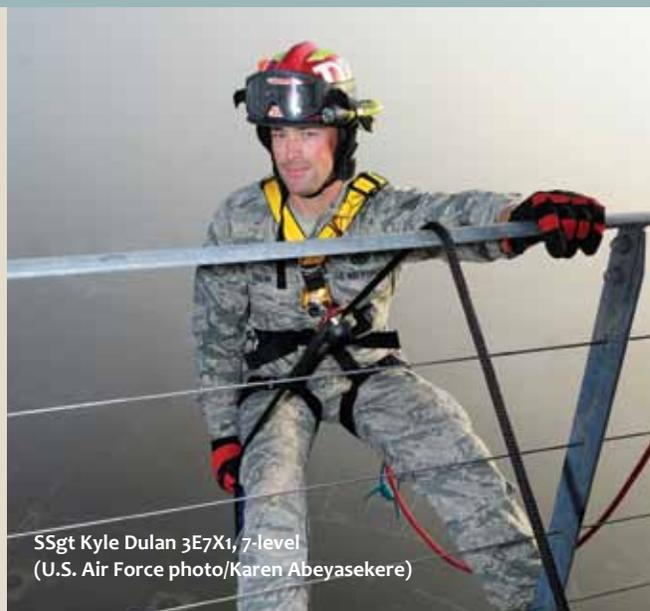
Dulan has deployed as an installation firefighter a total of five times, four times to Southwest Asia and once to Colombia.

“The likelihood of having a significant, large-scale incident is greater downrange,” said Dulan. “On each of my deployments we averaged one or two. That’s when it’s good to have your home station training, because things move fast.”

Dulan’s mother is a health and HAZMAT specialist with the Los Angeles County fire department in California.

“When I was about 12 I got to do a ride-along on a fire truck and knew then it’s exactly what I wanted to do,” said Dulan. “When I entered the Air Force, I was going to get to be a firefighter or I wasn’t going to join.”

7-level Craftsman



SSgt Kyle Dulan 3E7X1, 7-level
(U.S. Air Force photo/Karen Abeyasekera)

As a crew chief, Dulan is a supervisor and says he strives to be a mentor to new firefighters.

“The Air Force has given me a lot of unique experience and I try to pass on the things that I’ve learned,” he said. “Looking back, one of the things I wish I had known more about was just how the Air Force works. New Airmen coming in have to have that good supervisor, but they also need that self-motivation to educate themselves.”