

Origin and Development of FDNY Incident Management Teams--Part I

by Deputy Assistant Chief Ronald R. Spadafora

Brief history of ICS, IMS and IMTs

The Incident Command System (ICS) was developed as a cooperative effort involving all agencies with firefighting responsibilities in California, following the disastrous 1970 wildland fires that burned more than one-half million hectares (one hectare equals 2.471 acres), destroyed 772 buildings, killed 16 people in 13 days and cost \$233 million. Fire managers in California realized they needed a new approach to better coordinate inter-agency operations. A group of aircraft engineers agreed to help the fire managers develop a disaster management strategy based on a "systems approach," common to the defense and aerospace industries.

During the 1970s and 1980s, ICS teams were organized solely for wildland fires. Later, ICS teams were used to manage natural disasters (floods, tornadoes, hurricanes and earthquakes), major oil spills, terrorist incidents, VIP visits, lengthy search and rescue operations and special events. As a result, the ICS concept was expanded to an "all hazards" approach.

The Incident Command System has become the Incident Management System (IMS). The IMS addresses command, operations, planning, logistics and finance issues related to large and complex events. All federal and state emergency response agencies now are mandated to operate in accordance with the Incident Management System.

Incident Management Teams (IMTs) consist of members from a wide variety of federal, state, county and local agencies. IMTs employ the Incident Management System's organization. In

the United States today, there are two types of IMTs in various locations across the country. Sixteen teams are categorized as National Inter-agency Incident Management Teams and labeled as Type 1. Approximately 35 teams are listed as Type 2 Incident Management Teams. Most of the teams are located in the 11 western states that are more prone to wildland fires.

The major differences between the two types of IMTs are the experience/training levels of the members making up the team and the complexity level of the incident or wildland fire they are allowed to manage. Type 1 Incident Management Team Command and General Staff members must successfully complete advanced incident management training. Type 1 Teams manage large and complex incidents, while Type 2 Teams deal with smaller incidents with less complex managerial issues.

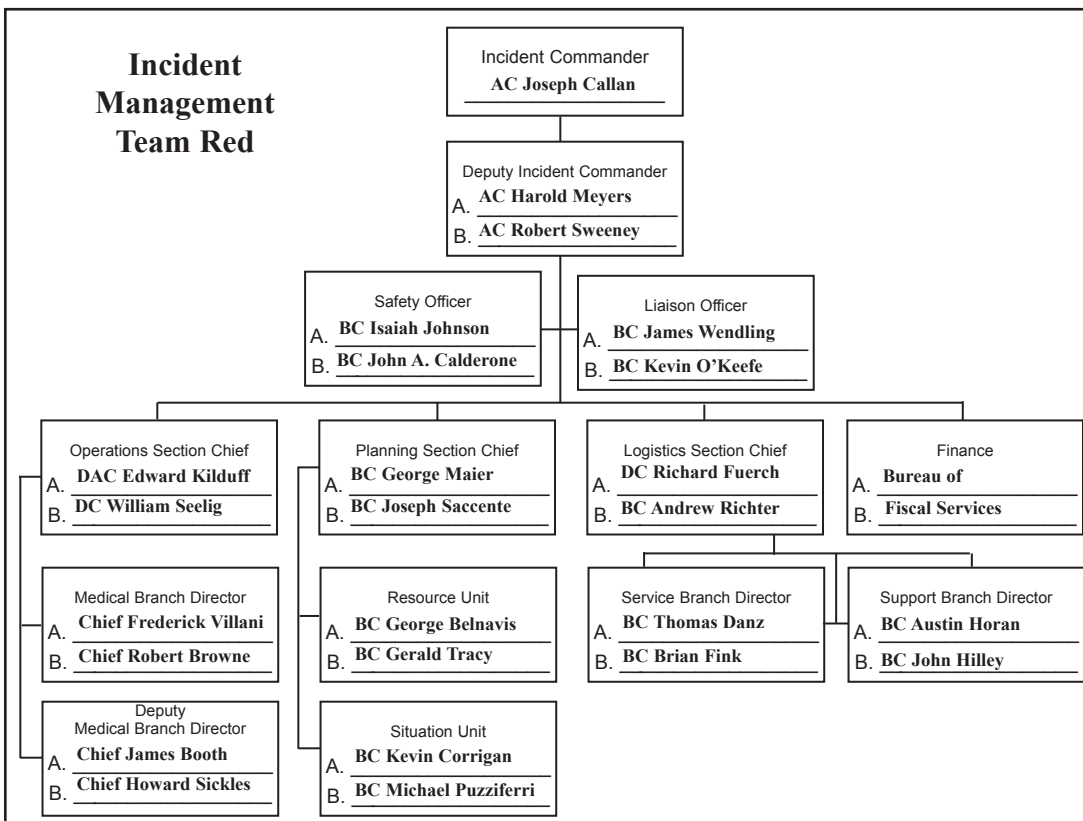
Origin of FDNY involvement in ICS, IMS and IMTs

In December 2001, the Fire Department reached out to the United States Navy (Naval War College in Rhode Island) for help in analyzing the leadership and management capabilities of the FDNY. (See "FDNY/United States Navy Participate in War Gaming," by Assistant Chief Michael Weinlein, in the 3rd/2002 issue of *WNYF*.) Fifty senior FDNY members participated in a two-day training session (war games) at the United States Merchant Marine Academy located at King's Point on Long Island. The exercise was designed to critically examine FDNY leadership/management, as well as command and control issues. Postwar game evaluation recommendations addressed the need

for the FDNY to dedicate resources and funding in developing new ways to deal with large-scale and complex operations.

Following war games training, in February 2002, Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta directed the consulting firm, McKinsey and Company, to evaluate FDNY's performance during the 9/11 rescue and recovery operation. On August 19, 2002, the McKinsey Report, "Increasing FDNY's Preparedness," was released. (See "The McKinsey Report, Implementing Preparedness for the Future," by Deputy Assistant Chief of Operations Joseph W. Pfeifer, in the 1st/2003 issue of *WNYF*.)

Recommendations regarding FDNY's use of the Incident Command System included expanding the use of ICS to provide a foundation for responding to and manag-



ing any kind of emergency and creating Incident Management Teams (IMTs), consisting of specialized, highly trained personnel, who use ICS principles to manage large and complex incidents.

These McKinsey Report findings led the FDNY into seeking a cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in January 2003. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), signed by the Secretary of Agriculture, Ann M. Veneman, and Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta, secured training for FDNY personnel through the USDA's Forestry Service branch to develop Incident Management Team capabilities. The MOU supports President Bush's Homeland Security Plan by readying response organizations to respond to U.S. homeland security threats and natural disasters using the same command system. The FDNY agreed to receive ICS training and, at the discretion of the FDNY, provide trained and certified personnel to assist in responding to complex and/or long-duration incidents *outside* the City.

FDNY IMT development training (phase 1)

From February through April 2003, 70 high level Fire Chiefs and EMS Officers completed two weeks of classroom training in the ICS National Training Curriculum (I-100, I-200, I-300 and I-400 courses) and participated in disaster simulation mitigation scenarios. During this time, an additional 38 FDNY officials attended ICS training sessions for Executives (I-402) and 40 members received basic ICS orientation training (I-100).

The IMT-building exercises were created explicitly for the FDNY by the USDA Forestry Service under the supervision of Assistant Chief Peter Hayden and Deputy Assistant Chief Joseph Pfeifer of the Bureau of Operations, Planning and Strategy Unit. The primary purpose of the training was to lay a foundation for establishing two FDNY IMTs, consisting of 35 members for each team. Assistant Chiefs Thomas Galvin and Michael Weinlein coordinated the two weeks of training for FDNY members with the Forestry Service instructors.

The instructor cadre for the IMT training course, led by Van

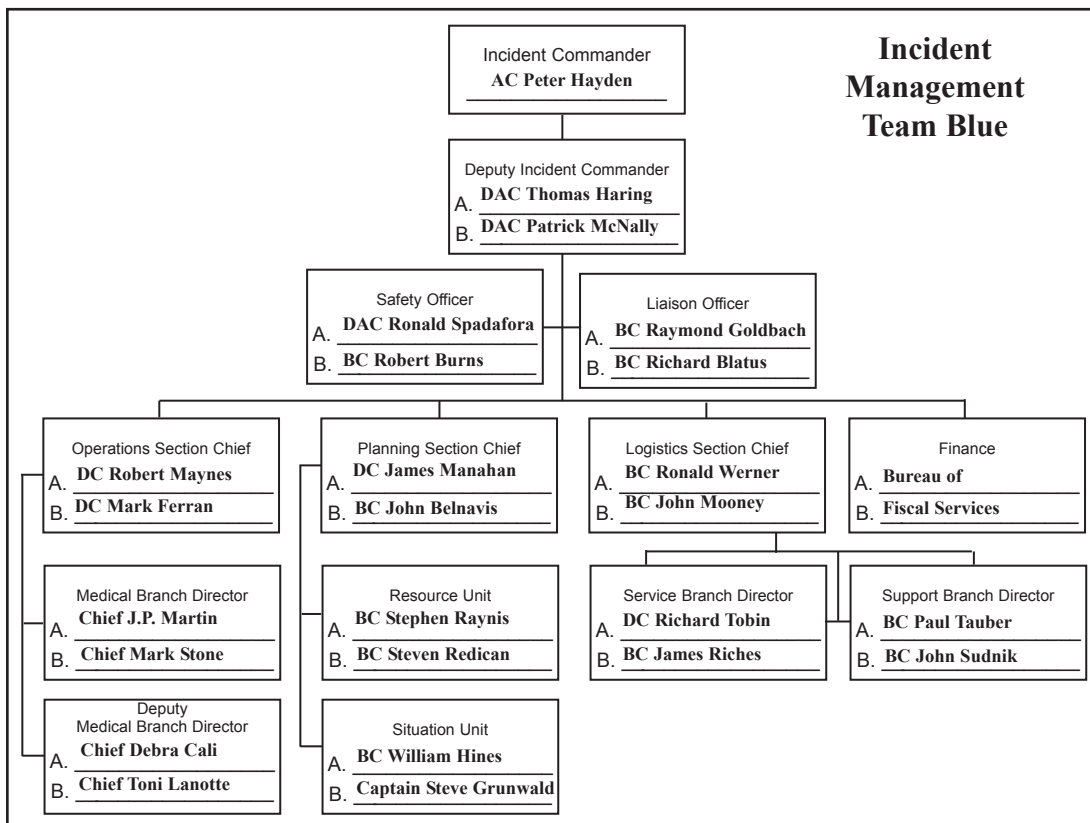
Bateman and Larry Humphrey, was selected by the USDA Forestry Service, northeastern area. The group included members from the Southwestern Type 1 Incident Management Team, who had arrived at Ground Zero a few days after 9/11 to help manage the FDNY's planning and logistics needs during the first five weeks of the operation. The instructors had decades of IMT experience, managing large-scale and complex incidents throughout the United States.

The first week of training dealt with orientation, intermediate and advanced levels of ICS curriculum in the functional areas of command, operations, planning, logistics and finance. The second week focused on functional simulation problem-solving situations for developing Type 2 Incident Management Teams. Command and general staff duties for both real (Port Mobil, Staten Island, and Flight 587, Belle Harbor, Queens) and fictitious (terrorist bombing and train derailment) incidents were practiced and reviewed.

Battalion Chiefs George Maier, Joseph Saccente and Brian White, along with Captain John Ferry and Lieutenant Robert Higgins, coordinated "real world" outside agency interaction roles, played by additional FDNY members. The ultimate goal was to produce an Incident Action Plan (IAP), addressing all the functional areas of the Incident Command System.

FDNY Incident Management Teams are being developed to provide a high standard of efficiency and safety in the management of all FDNY operations. The two Teams will have an Incident Commander and the appropriate general and command staff personnel needed to develop an Incident Action Plan to manage complex and long-duration incidents. The concept of IMTs also will ensure an experienced and organized FDNY response to a major disaster anywhere in the country as directed by the Chief of Department.

Part II of this article will deal with FDNY Incident Management Team phase II development training, specifically shadow training in big sky country (Montana).



About the Author...

Deputy Assistant Chief Ronald R. Spadafora is a 25-year veteran of the FDNY. He holds a Masters degree in Criminal Justice from LIU-C.W. Post Center, a BS degree in Fire Science from CUNY-John Jay College and a BA degree in Health Education from CUNY-Queens College. He is an editorial advisor and frequent contributor to WNYF. He has taught Fire Science at John Jay College as an adjunct lecturer and fire promotion courses for Fire Tech Promotions Inc. He is the designated Safety Officer for Incident Management Team Blue.

