



ALFRED STATION FIRE COMPANY

Alfred Station Firefighter Nearly Struck by Car

January 25, 2007

A volunteer firefighter serving Alfred Station Fire Company narrowly avoided being struck by a motorist last Friday (Jan. 19th) while directing traffic at the scene of a motor vehicle accident that occurred earlier in the morning on Jericho Hill in the town of Alfred. Fire Police Captain David Williams, in spite of injuries sustained when fleeing the approaching car, is in good spirits and "glad to be alive."

Williams was directing traffic through an established emergency scene for a motor vehicle accident that happened earlier that morning on County Road 12 just south of the village of Alfred when the second incident occurred shortly before 10 AM.

According to reports a northbound motor vehicle traveling too fast for road conditions approached the emergency scene and failed to slow in spite of Williams' warning lights and hand held stop sign signaling to the motorist. Williams recognized the impending danger and warned fellow firefighters via handheld radio and began taking evasive measures to avoid being struck himself.

"The car kept coming and was showing no signs of slowing so I believed it was going to continue beyond my position and into the center of the scene where additional emergency personnel were staged. So I called to them on the radio saying, 'Heads up, this is going to be bad!' as I began side stepping to get out of the way." Right after Williams called out the warning he saw the front tires of the vehicle lock and the car began to skid sideways toward his position.

Williams continues, "Once I saw the car begin to skid I started running for the southbound shoulder knowing I would have to clear the ditch on that side of the road to be clear of the rear of the vehicle as it came around. The next thing I saw was the hood of the vehicle headed toward me and I thought, 'it's going to get me' and I jumped to get over the drainage ditch."

As Williams jumped to clear the ditch he felt the front bumper of the car 'brush' his left ankle and he braced himself for the impact as he landed on his feet on the far side of the ditch. "All I could think was, 'how bad is this going hurt?' and 'what about Cathy?' Williams' wife and fellow volunteer firefighter who witnessed the entire incident from the north end of the emergency scene where she too was directing traffic who added, "I thought the Lord was taking Dave from me right at that moment. I heard Dave's warning on the radio and turned to see what was happening and one moment Dave was there and the next moment he disappeared in front of the car. I thought he'd been struck." As did fellow firefighters who witnessed the incident from the same angle.

Remarkably, firefighter Williams was not 'plowed' into the ditch as fellow firefighters feared. Williams found himself on the far side of the ditch and turned to see the car crash just feet from where he landed - narrowly missing him. Williams went on to say, "After I landed, I turned to my right (facing north) and saw the car spin into the ditch rear-end first and I thought, 'he missed me! I'm going to be okay'. So I called on the radio for help saying, 'he didn't hit me but we have a secondary accident up here and I need help!' and as I stood up I saw there were already a half dozen firefighters running toward me from the first accident scene and they'd already covered half the distance to me."

Williams approached the motorist, whose car was straddling the ditch and asked the driver if he was okay. The driver complained of back pain and Williams asked him to remain still and to turn the car off telling him help was on its way. The driver was apologetic and did ask if Williams was okay.

An ambulance was requested to the scene and Williams declined transport after being evaluated, so the driver of the car could be transported, opting instead to have his wife take him (Williams) by personal vehicle to the ER where both patients were treated and released. Williams has since followed up with his primary care physician in Alfred to begin treatment for injuries sustained to his knees and hips during the incident.

A resident of Alfred Station since 1999 and a member of the fire company since 2004 Williams remains, 'Thankful' since the incident occurred and considers himself 'blessed' adding, "there is no doubt in my mind the good Lord helped me that day and I count myself fortunate to be here with my wife, my children and my friends. And I'm grateful to my fellow firefighters both for their rapid assistance and their phone calls offering support since I came home. I'm proud to be a member of such a great team."

The driver was ticketed and Williams hopes that drivers reading this article will "slow down... especially when road conditions are poor so we can all come home safely."