

# **JACKSONVILLE FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT**

## **2020 Blount Island Shipboard Fire - After Action Report**

### **SECTION 1 - Statements in response to basic questions posed**

#### **Engineer Wesley Miller, R37B – RIT**

1. What was your role at the incident? S37 RIT
2. What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? In the stairwell on the entry level.
3. What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? roaring sound of rushing air
4. What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? Pushed into wall, loss of consciousness, I came to and felt intense heat, exit door was blocked by a dog pile of firefighters, I crouched down in corner until heat dissipated. 2nd degree burns on hands with 3rd degree spots, first degree burns on face and ears.
5. What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? fire fighters on the floor
6. What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make? be in full bunker gear regardless of being so far below the fire floor

#### **Chief Trace Barrow, F8C, Marine Ops Chief – Command – Command for subsequent operational periods (statement)**

Can we communicate with the crew? If not, we are literally going in blind.

Based on hours of conversation with the salvage master... I kept trying to get to a simple point that we could go by on different types of vessels and I think this is it. Can you see the fire? If you can safely get to a point on the boat where you can see flames from, you may be able to fight the fire... but if you can't see it you should not go looking for it.

Protecting barriers is an offensive action...in the world of ship fires cooling a fire barrier is offense. We should get a 360 degree view of the vessel with thermal imagers early and often. Use streams to cool the exterior when the steel gets above 300 degrees or so.

Controlling opening is huge. Not only should we be very careful about opening doors and vents we should send crews in early with the intentions of making sure all doors are closed. The crews should do this prior to arrival but it a good idea to verify.

We all know that crews on ships fight their own fires. They're trained to when they're out at sea. However, in port we assume they call 911 immediately. That's not the case. They don't make a mental change from in port or out to sea. They fight the fire, especially a foreign ship. We should

assume they have been fighting a fire for a while and it has gotten out of control before we even know about it.

**Lt. Paul Masci, E49B – RIT and additional**

- 1) Initially RIT then we were tasked with getting kinks out of hose in stair well once on 8th deck attack crew was coming out and Chief Cipriani asked if we wanted to go in which we did.
- 2) 8th deck
- 3) While in deck 8 really hot and loud with car alarms and horns sounding and headlights flashing, not a lot of fire just 2 cars with fire inside like seats burning. We knocked down with hose line but flared back up when we stopped. We were pulled out because firefighter airpack alarm ringing from busted o-ring. Once in stair well my crew went down while I was giving pass down to Chief Jolly of what I saw. After pass down started to walk down following Chief Cipriani.
- 4) Once I started walking down heard a noise I have never heard before that's when we started running down stairwell. I don't know if the pressure was pushing us but it felt like I was jumping stairwells, it was not dark but the heat was intense. It might have only lasted 30 to 45 seconds but felt longer and I remember thinking I'm going to die in this ship.
- 5) Once it was over I noticed that we were on deck 4 I told Chief Cipriani we need to go up to deck 5 to get out, that's what we did.
- 6) From my position at scene better communication for our plan of attack and also there was a language barrier with the ships crew.

**Capt. Schweckendeck, S12B – RIT and additional**

1. What was your role at the incident? S12 Initial RIT
2. What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? On dock
3. What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? Had been hearing multiple muffled booms that we attributed to tires exploding
4. What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? On the dock it didn't seem like an explosion, more like a pressure release. The ship was so massive that it really dispelled the intensity.
5. What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? Only remember hearing L34 Eng. come on air and said something about explosion people coming out door. Then injured FF's began coming out
6. What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make? Have a dedicated ISO that is identifiable on incidents.

**Chief Andy Harrold, F8B – Assisted command**

1. What was your role at the incident?

From my time of arrival to 2037 I served as assistant to the IC. I had no formal command role. From 2037 until 0133 when I left the scene, I was marine section supervisor.

2. What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred?  
I was in the center section of the Comm Van near the entry door.
3. What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event?  
A short period of time before the explosion that injured the firefighters I was outside and saw and heard the first rapid issuance of smoke under pressure. I did not see or hear the explosion that injured the firefighters because I was in the center area of the comm van.
4. What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened?  
I exited the command vehicle to gather info about what happened for the IC.
5. What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event?  
Nothing unusual immediately after, but I did see and hear the third rapid issuance of smoke from the ship a short time after the event that injured the firefighters.
6. What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make?  
We should consider modifying the ship fire SOG to prohibit, except under extraordinary circumstances such as a threat to life, entering a ship to fight a fire that the ship's crew could not put out.

#### **Chief Holsenbeck, F1B – Forward Ops**

- 1) Assisted IC in Com-Van, then assisted with fwd ops on decks 7,8,9
- 2) Was on the entrance (deck 5 at time of event)
- 3) Did not hear anything leading up to the event
- 4) Nothing happened to me, but after the event, I went up as far as deck 9 to ensure all crews had exited.
- 5) After the event, as I was heading up to deck 9 to ensure crew evacuation, only seen crews exiting the ship, heard nothing out of the ordinary
- 6) The biggest problem I personally experienced was the radio traffic, everybody wanted to talk on the radio instead of leaving it to the fwd ops . Was hard getting out, should have been more face to face to facilitate being able to talk to command.

#### **Engineer Shawn Graham, HZ7B – Staged with R21**

- What was your role at the incident? I was split up from my crew and told to stage with rescue 21.
- What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? I was on the dock in staging.
- What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? Pressurized smoke coming from the port aft vent.
- What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? Nothing happened to me as a result of the explosions. The first explosion was more like the vent burping

pressurized smoke. The second explosion was the one that people got hurt and I grabbed the trauma bag off the rescue and made my way to the loading ramp. At that time I started to help the injured doff their gear as they were exiting the ship.

- What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? I was looking for Ladder 7 's crew on the main topside deck to see if they were alright.

What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make? With my knowledge and experience working on many different type of vessels one of the major problems we as a department will face is the different nationality flags that these vessels/companies work under. Vessels other than US flag ships do not have the same safety standards. Therefore everyone entering the vessel should have been on air the moment they stepped on the vessel until they debarked even though the fire was 2-3 floors above the loading deck. I also feel that in this particular incident the decision to hand lay the supply line from the loading deck through and over all the vehicles was a more time consuming and required more manpower. I feel that the mooring deck being a more open deck on most vessels would have been a better option. In my personal opinion I feel that laying the supply line laid across the ladder that was positioned to the mooring deck that was a floor below the fire deck would have been a better tactical decision. Also with foreign flagged vessels communication with the crew is usually a problem. I was told by Ladder 7 after the incident that the vessels crew stretched attack lines but they were never charged. I feel an important tactic would be to make sure the ships fire pumps were activated for a quicker attack option if feasible.

#### **Lt Will Seymour, L34B - RIT**

- What was your role at the incident? RIT
- What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? Staging on the main deck
- What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? No
- What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? Nothing
- What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? No
- What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make? Not sure

#### **FF Nicholas Gettler, E24B - RIT**

1. What was your role at the incident? I was on Engine 24 assigned to RIT during the incident.
2. What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred?  
I was on the lowest level of the ship at the bottom of the ladder well when the explosion occurred.

3. What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event?

Leading up, we were all listening to radio traffic waiting to receive orders. Everything appeared normal. I was looking up the ladder well and there was nothing remarkable going on at the time.

4. What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened?

During the explosion, I instinctively took in a deep breath. I didn't realize at the time how hot the air was when I did so. During the explosion, everything was calm, and all of a sudden it felt like hurricane-force winds of extremely hot air was going by us. I could really only feel it on my face due to the protection from all our gear. I ran out of the ladder well and looked behind me expecting to see fire come shooting out, but luckily it didn't. It looked like the guys that were behind me were being thrown out of the ladder well. It was a big pile of guys as everyone tried to get out as fast as possible through a very small opening.

5. What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event?

Afterwards I heard someone tell us to all get out. I grabbed equipment that I had brought with me and was told to leave it so we could evacuate as fast as possible. I remember hearing my radio saying for us to get out.

6. What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make?

At this point in my career, I honestly lack the experience and knowledge to be able to offer any type of advice for policy and operational changes.

#### **Landon Simmons L7B, Accountability near entry**

- What was your role at the incident? Stairwell accountability, anyone who went up the stairs I was to account for.
- What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? Deck five stairwell landing
- What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? A pressure change just before the explosion and the extreme force of wind and heat.
- What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? I was knocked over as I was trying to make my way out of the stair well.
- What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? A group of firefighters who had fallen over each other making there way out of the stairwell
- What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make? I honestly think In this situation we practiced all of the right strategies we have been taught and no one could have truly prevented the explosion or even predicted it coming.

#### **Lt Jason Crawford, L9B – Fire Attack**

What was your role at the incident? L9 was sent to the 8th floor under the direction of F7 to attempt to locate and extinguish any fire we could find. Upon entering the 8th floor we encountered two smoldering vehicles and only small amount of fire on the port wall. After cooling the cars and putting the small fire out the heat seemed to increase substantially and I decided we

would move back closer to the entry point and continue to apply water to the cars. After making that move the heat continued to increase to the point I ordered my two guys to exit the fire floor.

What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred?

I had just made it out and was taking off my air pack and coat.

What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event?

The best way I can describe it was a loud release of pressure and it looked like steam or very white smoke, that being the first explosion.

The second explosion sounded like a jet engine and dark smoke blew out of vents for 2-3 seconds, much worse than the first explosion.

What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened?

The explosion had no physical effect on me. I walked closer to see if the guys inside were coming out. Answered par on radio.

What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event?

Immediately after the explosion people started moving towards the ship. And RIT crews were moving up the ramp to the entrance 5th floor.

What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make?

Communication between officers and Chiefs about effectiveness of efforts vs. the timeline of the incident.

### **Capt Justin Lacock, E27B – Staging Officer**

What was your role at the incident? Upon arrival, initially assigned as staging officer. That role was taken over by F8. E27 was then assigned as a task unit with E13 with staging 2 1/2" hose on the fifth deck then go as the second team to the eighth deck to locate the fire.

What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? E27 was in rehab getting vitals taken.

What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? I heard the explosion, to look out of the back of the rescue and seeing debris in the air.

What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? Immediately got out of the rescue and assisted others with helping OShell and Chief Jolly.

What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? Seeing the Chief Jolly, OShell, and Chief Cipriani walking down the dock to the rescues.

### **Chief Clements R106B - Rehab**

What was your role at the incident? [Rehab Officer](#)

What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? [N/A](#)

What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? [There was a venting \(dark smoke\), prior to the explosion/event. Not sure of the exact timeline.](#)

What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? **Nothing happened to me/ Evaluated EMS (Rescue) transport resources.**

What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? **Injured firefighters being brought out for transport.**

What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make? **N/A**

### **Lt Josh Montoro, L4B – Fire Attack**

What was your role at the incident? **Officer on L4. We laid a 2 1/2 line to the 8th floor and made entry. We also were RIT when not inside.**

What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? **We were staged next to the ramp of the boat. We just got out of rehab and were staging to get back in the ship.**

What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? **We saw two explosions. The first one is when our guys got hurt. It was a large fast moving white smoke column coming from the top deck. Probably 30 to 40 feet high. It caused materials to be launched off the top deck. It happened after L7 tried to control a hatch above the stairwell. The next explosion was ten times worse and was a large fast moving black smoke column from the top deck. This explosion caused about 50 firefighters outside the ship running for our lives. At least felt that way. Both explosion vented from seemed the same spot on the top deck. I'm assuming the top of stairwell. If anyone would have been inside the stairwell for the second explosion they would have been killed.**

What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? **When the first explosion happened I knew we had guys inside. My crew (L4) and S4 crew went running inside to go get our guys. I went up the stairs to the 8th floor with Chief Holsenbeck and Zack Washington. We found gear all throughout the stairs. I also went down to the fourth floor because I saw a bunker boot and thought one of our guys was down on the fourth floor.. We came out when the par was completed and everyone was accounted for.**

What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? **Only thing I remember is looking back and seeing the rest of L4 crew and S4 crew running in because we heard someone calling for a RIT team. I also saw chief Jolly coming out and falling to his knees**

What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make.

### **Captain Jeff Baker E48B – First Officer on scene**

2. What was your role at the incident? **I was the first arriving officer working an LOA on E-48. Someone stopped by station 48 to report a possible fire on the ship directly in front of the fire station. We bunkered out and I gave a report to fire com asking for a full assignment as we pulled up to the ship. I ran up the ramp into the ship yelling for someone to come out.**

For a few minutes, we could not find anyone around the ship. A few minutes later, a few crew members came running out but did not speak any English. I asked where the captain was and he came out next. He spoke very little English, so communication was a big problem from the start. He had a difficult time answering my questions. I asked him what was burning and he told me that there were vehicles and that it was on one of the upper midlevel floors. He stated that his firefighter crew was not able to get to the fire. I asked him how many crew members were on the ship and to have them all come down to where we were to account for them. Within a few minutes, he stated that all his crew was accounted for and were outside with us. I believe there were about 20 crew members. I then asked him to get us the paperwork/plans layout of the ship. He brought us a roll of papers and that would be passed on to command. He stated that he would seal off the fire floor and discharge the ship's CO2 system. I called for a 2nd alarm and my engineer had E-35 supply us from a hydrant right there on the pier. As the first chiefs pulled up, I walked up to Chief Lundy to pass on the information I had.

3. What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? I was right next to E-48 with my crew just next to the main ramp going up into the ship on the pier.
4. What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? We were assisting my engineer and E-35 with water supply. We watched as crews were being led up the ramp to the fire area. We were next to Chief Lesniak most of this time. We heard alarms going off on the ship.
5. What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? The explosion startled my entire crew. We could see pieces of material blasting out of the top of the ship. We knew that crews were inside, so we immediately began to put our coats and airpicks back on in case we were needed.
6. What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? I heard the radio traffic to see the whereabouts of our guys inside. I then saw them walking our injured guys out down the ramp past us to the rescue units.
7. What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make? I would like to read other statements of those involved and hear what the committee has to say before answering this question.

#### **Lt Shane Ward S4B – RIT then Interior Operations**

2. What was your role at the incident? Initial assignment for S4 was to RIT. As the scene evolved, S4 became interior operations with L4 and F9 (Jolly). After Rehabbing, S4 along with L4 were assigned to RIT once again.
3. What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? S4 and L4 were staged on the ramp at the dock level.
4. What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? Before any of the explosions, alarms started sounding on the boat. Initially nobody knew what these alarms were, but were later identified as the CO system activating on the ship. Leading up to the explosion that hurt our members, there was a smaller explosion that took place that was a loud boom followed by a white cloud that appeared from the stern of the boat, from floors



approximately 6-top deck. The second explosion happened shortly after with intensity in blast and white colored smoke coming from not only floors 6-top deck, but also debris on the top deck launching 50-75 feet off deck.

5. What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? After Second blast that hurt members, S4, L4 and E13 jumped up and masked up and were assisting injured members off the boat and also going back into ship and stairwell to look for anyone lost. Myself and Eng. Skidmore stopped at Chief Jolly, assisted with removing his coat (per his request) and then assisted him to R30 where Capt. Crow took over care. Other members of my crew assisted Chief Cipriani, Eng. Miller, Lt. Lee and FF Banks to awaiting rescue units.
6. What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? The second explosion happened shortly after first blast with intensity in blast and white colored smoke coming from not only floors 6 through top deck, but also debris on the top deck launching 50-75 feet off deck.
7. What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make? I believe we acted to the best of the abilities of what was placed in our laps. Communication with the crew members was almost non existent, so attempts to find ways to "fire floors" was a slow process and handled in a methodical process, but it was also a guessing game. There was no direction provided by boat members.

#### **Chief Ryan Lundy, F10B – Command**

2. What was your role at the incident? Incident Command
3. What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? I was inside the Comm. Van
4. What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event?
5. What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? As soon as the explosion happened I called for a PAR for everyone that was inside the attack stairwell
6. What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event?
7. What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make?
  - Work to eliminate freelancing on incident scenes.
  - Have certain benchmarks for interior firefighting on shipboard fires
  - Have a risk assessment for different type of ships

#### **Chief Kris Jolly, F9B – Safety/Interior Operations**

- What was your role at the incident?
- I was initially assigned to safety. But quickly fell into doing a recon with L30 after all of the misinformation from the crew. Found the stern stairwell made plan of attack and organized getting hose up the ramp, over the vehicles and up the stairwell.
- What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred?

- I was in the stairwell on floor 8
- What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event?
- As I was getting my pass down from Cipriani the fire alarms and CO2 alarms were sounding (which they were not sounding on my first trip in the ship during recon or during the first attempted attack). I heard a huge pressurization of air (whoosh) immediately followed by a blanket of heat that hit me all at once (heat I have never felt before, that I can only imagine what would be similar to standing behind a jet engine).
- What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened?
- Almost simultaneously after I heard the pressurization of air and felt the heat I was blown down the stairwell head first (I feel like I cleared every stair and just landed on the landing?) then I was scrambling down two more flights of stairs head first trying to cover as much ground as I could towards the exit point. (There were six flights between the three floors 5-8...8 is where I was and 5 was where we came in on the ship). I remember hot air blowing by me so intensely as I was scrambling down that I thought to myself if this heat doesn't stop soon I'm going to die in here. It wasn't until I was half way to 5 (I think) that my body even felt the ability to stand up. I am assuming the pressure was so great that I was being forced down? I was then able to stand up and walk out rest of the way, which I don't remember really doing...I only remember walking out of the stairwell onto deck 5.
- What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event?
- Leading from the answer above...I did not pass anyone in the stairwell on my scramble down so I assumed Cipriani and his crews had already cleared the stairwell and missed the blast. At some point before leaving the stairwell I noticed how burned my fingers were and could feel the burning on my face and head. As I walked onto deck 5 I saw two guys who looked disturbed but I didn't notice any injuries nor do I know who they were. I only assumed they missed the blast but had that horrified look on their faces because of their reaction to how I imagined myself looking and/or that they heard the blast and were wondering what it could have been. I should have, but couldn't bare the thought of grabbing my radio because my hands hurt so bad to call in what had happened. I was able to weasel my way between all of the vehicles to the clearing where I saw Chief Holsenbeck. I hollered to him and got a similar look as I did from the two guys on five. He walked me to the ramp and as rescue crews came running I fell to my knees and let them help me.
- What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make?
- Tough question. I don't think anything we did went wrong? As I said at lunch at #8 that day- the best policies and checklists in the world are great but in my opinion we can never be/operate confidently on these types of calls. We can read the smoke all day long but we don't know how any of these ships are truly connected and how that smoke is going to react. It is way different than a building or house. The only thing I can say is that if there is no life unaccounted for then we keep it cool from the outside and let the responsible parties deal with it...but I know it's way more political than that.

**Lt Nate McNamee, R35B - Accountability**

- What was your role at the incident? I assumed the role of accountability officer at the stern of the ship after the request for the position from Chief Drysdale. I assisted Chief Lesniak with assignment of crews for duties that Forward Operations requested. I accounted for time of entry and accountability of crew locations.
- What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? I was midpoint of the aft loading ramp at the stern which had access to Deck 5.
- What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? There was an initial “venting” or smaller explosion prior to the event that injured our members. Smoke emitted under pressure from the top of the stern from my vantage point. Ladder 7 had been assigned to the top deck, deck 12, with the purpose of finding hatches to possibly open for ventilation. When the first explosion took place, Ladder 7 advised that they had open and closed a hatch on the top deck. Ladder 7 advised that all members were accounted for and safe. Chief Lesniak attempted to raise Fire 7 and E49 on the radio, Fire 7 was on deck 8 and E49 was ascending the stairwell to remove kinks from the attack line. With no answer from either, Chief Lesniak asked me to move the RIT to the entrance of the aft stairwell with the instructions of being prepared to deploy within minutes if radio contact with the above mentioned crews could not be established. E24, L34, and S37 were given these instructions as radio calls were continued in an attempt to establish a PAR for all crews. Eng Landon Simmons was tasked with stairwell accountability and a second RIT of E13, E44, and S4 was established at the base of the ramp. Radio communication was established with interior crews prior to the need for the RIT. Ladder 7 was tasked with attempting to “crack” the hatch in and see if that improved heat and smoke conditions. Crews that had previously exited reported little to no fire with extreme heat and smoke on deck 8. It was after this that the second explosion happened. Large amounts of grey smoke emitted under pressure from the top of the stern and from the vents along the starboard side of the vessel. I could not see the port side. It appeared that the smoke traveled from stern to bow.
- What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? I assisted Chief Lesniak with immediately initiating a PAR of all crews and relaying locations and identity of interior crews. When members began to exit the stern of the vessel, I physically helped them out of the vessel and spoke with each and every company officer to ascertain if their crews were intact. At this time all crews were physically accounted for. I advised all standby crews on the berth to assist the injured members and to gather medical supplies. I advised Chief Drysdale, standing on the ramp, that I needed 5 additional Rescue units. He acknowledged and advised he was taking over Medical Branch. Eng Landon Simmons reported to me directly that he was out of the vessel as he was not assigned to a crew.
- What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? See above. Shortly after evacuation, a third explosion of heavy, black smoke emitting under pressure from the stern and starboard side. This explosion was more severe than the first two. In fact it blew vents from the top deck.
- What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make? There seemed to be confusion in who was making decisions for tactics. I also fell short in accountability, in the fact that I knew what crews were inside but not the personnel. Some members had become tired and had switched position with members of other crews. This

occurred when a Squad engineer was replaced with a Rescue engineer. This info needs to be relayed to accountability. I know we have struggled with accountability and I believe it to be our aggressive nature as a department. We also have members who have vast knowledge in this field, whether through military or port experiences, that may not feel comfortable approaching a chief officer or the Command Van on a scene. I know there is no way to document this knowledge but members should be encouraged to speak up if they feel they may be able to help. The worst that could happen is that they were told thanks for attempting to assist.

### **Eng Shawn Oshell, R37B – Fire Attack**

1. What was your role at the incident? I was assigned to E49 and was riding up as the Engineer. After arriving on scene, my crew was assigned RIT, then we were assigned to remove kinks in the hose line which was located in the stairwell. After we removed the kinks, we were asked to enter the 8th deck for fire attack.
2. What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? I believe I was on the 6th deck in the stairwell. I was walking down the stairs to exit the ship when the explosion occurred.
3. What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? I remember hearing a “roar” or a “growl” ...the sound was very loud and I could feel the ship vibrate. Next, I remember feeling a cool breeze that lasted for a second. The cool breeze changed to a super heated blast of air that seemed to last for minutes. I do not remember seeing any fire or smoke.
4. What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? I am unsure if anyone was in front of me when the explosion started. I do remember hearing voices saying “run!”. I am unsure how many steps or floors I ran down. I do remember reaching the 5th deck and made an attempt to exit the door. I remember hearing voices screaming in pain. I remember putting my hands on someone’s back that was in the doorway. I felt them fall to the floor which blocked the doorway. I was unable to exit the stairwell which left me standing by the door.
5. What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? I didn’t hear much after the blast stopped. I remember hearing voices of people talking at the door of the 5th deck. Once people were able to stand up and unblock the doorway, I walked out and exited the ship. I don’t remember how many people were in the stairwell or how many people blocked the doorway.
6. What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make ? I have no idea...I do not know what caused the explosion. I do not know if it was a lack of communication or a lack of knowledge/training.

### **Engineer Scott Abell, E30B – Fire Attack**

1. What was your role at the incident? Company Officer Engine-30

2. What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? The bridge (in staging)
3. What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? We witnessed 3 separate events that I felt were significant. #1- When the first deck hatch was forced, we witnessed the light lazy smoke begin to billow & become slightly more turbulent. This event was brief but remarkable. The smoke remained white in color but was a significant enough event, we heard Chief Lesniak call for (I believe) Ladder-7 (on deck, forcing door) & ask for a status check (I believe he asked "was that you guys?" & followed up with "are you good?"). #2- (This one I believe was when our members were injured) We witnesses what can be best described as a "smoke explosion" or something similar. During this event the smoke change was of short duration with much higher velocity & turbulence. What was also significant was the lack of change in color with traditional smoke explosions. The color remained very light grey to white in color. #3- This event happened shortly after most, if not all our injured members had evacuated the interior of the ship. This event was more significant & violent than the previous. This event can be described similar to Backdraft in nature. (I believe) as the last vent door was forced the beginning of this event took place. A low roar was heard, increasingly worsening, an explosive blast larger and longer lasting than the second (#2) happened projecting metal & pieces of the ship, the smoke color was black/dark grey & billowed out the existing vent holes & open hatches. It was after this event Command ordered all personnel to leave the vicinity.
4. What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? After event #2 (as described above) I instructed my company to don their firefighting gear & be prepared to move up if needed. I made contact with the staging officer (Cpt. Crow) & relayed my companies availability for deployment/tasks, as I was walking back from staging the first few members began to exit the ship with obvious injuries. I assisted Lt. Lee (SQ-37) down the gangplank to awaiting Rescues, my company also assisted FF Banks to an awaiting stretcher before returning to staging before event #3 happened.
5. What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? During event #2 (as described above) there was projectile metal that came from the ship deck. The only thing that sticks with me was as we donned our gear, what little reaction there was from members on the bridge & in staging. Perhaps a sense of disbelief but some people just continued their conversations after the explosion. At this time I believe exterior members didn't realize the magnitude of the blast until interior members exited & it was realized how significant their injuries were.
6. What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make? I have had 3 separate cluster drills/walk throughs with regards to shipboard firefighting in the 16 years with JFRD. This incident was the only live fire experience in 20 years of my fire department service. In my humble opinion (and I truly mean humble) I would like to see a change in prioritization (AFTER all ship/crew members have been accounted for) [The old adage "risk a life, to save a life" being our top priority] that a future JFRD ship board SOG should be limited to & prioritized in a manner which automatically slows the event to protect against injuries suffered from recent events. Priorities to consider AFTER Life Safety: 1) protection of exposures 2) protection of the port or marina 3) protection of the environment. 4) assist with extinguishment

## **Chief Charles Drysdale, F4B – Fire Attack**

What was your role at the incident?

Was Forward Ops until sent to Rehab. Gathered information from Ship Engineer (note: was inaccurate and conflicted information), then coordinated: accountability of evacuated crew, established water supply, advanced attack lines into ship, made interior crew assignments, re-conned all decks from Aft Port stairwell, coordinated setting up electric fans in series to keep stairwell clear of smoke, supervised air monitoring in stairwell. After approximately two hours in full PPE, was directed into Rehab. while in Rehab, explosion occurred and I took over Medical Branch. Directed Rescue Chiefs to manage Treatment and Transport. Also did initial triage of the 8 injured firefighters including notifying FCOM of 5 of 8 as Trauma Alerts, MCI 1, and coordinated with U of H to accept all patients.

What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred?

On Pier in Rehab, hydrating.

What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event?

Felt the Pier shake like a locomotive was coming down the Pier. Heard and felt a rumble start from the bow of the ship and it then ran the length of the ship to the stern. Then heard a prolonged whoosh sound near the stern, and saw the white steam like cloud blow out of the top deck stern area with debris blown out in multiple upward directions.

What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened?

Put my bunker pants on while watching Chief Holsenbeck run up the ramp to the ship. This confused me because I thought there were no firefighters in the ship since the decision that had been made and discussed in the Com Van was that we were in a defensive posture due to my finding a rapid buildup of heat on decks 8 and 9. . When I saw our injured FFs being brought out, I assumed Medical Branch and assigned "Treatment" to Chief Clements, "Transport" to Chief MacDonald, I triaged and Trauma alerted our FFs and called a MCI Level 1. Also coordinated with U of H to handle all of our injured (5 reds, 3 yellows).

What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event?

See above.

What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make?

Task new Training Academy Staff with the development of classes/courses/exercises to prepare, practice, and improve our Field Personnel in not only Land and Marine Shipboard Firefighting, but also Command, Control, and Communications (C3) for the Company and Chief Officers. We are chronically and systemically lacking in training in many areas involving High Risk/Low Frequency and High Risk/High Frequency emergency incidents.

Work on CRM (Crew Resource Management) techniques and skills for all field personnel and Executive leadership. This is critical to preventing future injuries/fatalities and damages.

## **Lt Richard Harman, L7B – Fire Attack**

1. What was your role at the incident? I was working overtime at Ladder 7 at the time of the incident. Ladder 7 was assigned the task of making our way to the top deck to secure the attack stairwell door on the top deck. Ladder 7 found the door open when we got to the top deck. Ladder 7 closed the door and made sure it was closed. We checked other doors on the top deck and they were all closed. After a while, Ladder 7 was asked to make sure the vents on the port and starboard sides were open and flowing. We checked the vents and found them to be open with smoke flowing freely out of the vents for deck 8 and 9. We were then ordered to open any doors to the housing around the vents. The doors on the starboard side were opened without incident. We then received an order to open all vent doors. The vent doors on the port side were opened and the first explosion happened about 1 minute after the doors were opened.
2. What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? The top deck
3. What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? For the first explosion, we heard a loud rush of air and saw smoke blow out several feet from the vent on the port side. For the second explosion, the air and smoke was more intense and one of the panels on the housing shot up into the air.
4. What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? We remained on the top deck after the first explosion. We ran and tried to find cover. We gathered tools and equipment and moved it to the starboard side. During the second explosion a panel from the housing around a vent on the port side shot up into the air. We ran and tried to find cover again. We heard the evacuation order and evacuated the ship via ladder 30.
5. What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? It sounded like a jet engine on the top deck during both explosions. The second explosion was more intense and forceful than the first.
6. What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make? I would like to see JFRD access more information regarding the ship and the ship's systems before making entry. This could come from members of the port or members of JFRD with experience in dealing with these large ships.

## **Deputy Division Chief Mike Lesniak (C2A)**

1. What was your role at the incident? –[Accountability/staging officer on the ramp going into deck 5](#)
2. What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? – [On the ramp going into deck 5](#)
3. What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? [Two alarms \(Fire and CO2\) went off a few minutes prior to the explosion](#)

4. What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? R49 Officer and myself looked up on the 12<sup>th</sup> deck, saw the explosion, and immediately ran into the vessel on deck 5 and began performing accountability of those still inside of the vessel
5. What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? I called for an evacuation of the vessel, called command to initiate a PAR, began performing accountability for those who had not exited the vessel. I saw FF S O'Shell, Chf. C Jolley and Chf M Cipriani exit the vessel with severe burns, Lt J Lee exit the vessel face bloodied and holding his arm. R49 Officer called for additional rescue units up to the ramp.
6. What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make? Consider a Hot-wash of the Incident. After much consultation with Resolve Marine Salvage during days following the initial explosion, consideration of tactical options should we ever face another shipboard incident. Resolves initial evaluation includes assessing #1- Life safety of on board crew, #2 -if there is a possibility of locating the fire on the vessel and being able to put water on the fire no later than 10 minutes after a fire was discovered and #3- possibility of environmental impact. If no life safety issues and it is not possible to locate and apply water within the 10 minute time frame, immediate cooling of the exterior hull until a more precise tactical plan can be implemented.

#### **Lt Tom Crow, R30B - Staging**

1. **What was your role at the incident?**  
Staging Officer (Staged and maintained accountability of apparatus and crews on the pier with assistance from Lt. McNamee)
2. **What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred?**  
I was located on the Loading Ramp on the stern of the vessel when the first and second explosion occurred
3. **What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event?**  
While standing on loading ramp at the stern of the vessel, I saw smoke billowing from the aft port side of the ship. On the starboard side of the ship, the paint on the hull was already blistered and the blistering was continuing to the point that the paint on the hull was flaking off of the actual hull of the vessel itself. L30 had already laddered the aft portion of the ship on the starboard side with the ladder extending over the water and above the blistering portions of paint on the hull. The smoke on the port side aft of the vessel continued to billow out and it was turbulent in nature and grey in color. Prior to the first explosion, the smoke coming from the port side became more turbulent and forceful in nature as it blew out from the ship. I heard what sounded like a jet engine warming up and could feel the ground, (loading ramp), begin to shake. Once I felt the loading ramp shaking, approximately 1 to 3 seconds passed and then the first explosion occurred. The smoke from the aft portion of the ship at that time blew out with such a force that a column of smoke was pushed at least 30 to 40 feet from the hull of the ship and that column was parallel to the water below. I also noticed smoke belching from the ship. During this entire evolution, JFRD members were still being ordered into the vessel.
4. **What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened?**  
After the first explosion, I advised Chief Lesniak, (who was located on the loading ramp), that we needed to get our people out of the ship because that explosion was a warning of what was coming. Chief Lesniak looked at me but did not give an order to evacuate the vessel. I



accounted for all the crews and apparatus that were on the pier, in rehab, and still staging so that the STAGING SECTOR had a good P.A.R. when one was ordered. After completing my STAGING SECTOR P.A.R., I began to mentally prepare for possible injuries to JFRD members that were inside the ship. I began a mental triage of the injuries that COULD happen and how to treat them if the need arose. I accounted for the Rescue Units on scene that would be able to make an egress in order to transport any injured persons.

5. **What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event?**

While still standing on the Loading Ramp and AFTER the first explosion Chief Lesniak looked around and asked "What was that?" Chief Holsenbeck was on the loading ramp and stated that there was a lot of smoke that came from the vessel after that first explosion. Chief Holsenbeck was also on the loading ramp and stated that some of the smoke inside must have cleared out of the vessel. He then gave the order to open the hatch on the topside of the ship, and after that order was given the second explosion occurred which sent a steel hatch into the air as well as other objects from the top side of the vessel. The loading ramp shook again and everyone on the ramp looked up to see the objects flying in the air. Steel hatches and other objects were blown from the topside of the ship and some landed near L30 on the pier. The smoke that had been continuously coming from the aft port section of the ship once again pushed out violently and this time the smoke pushed out violently from the bow of the ship as well. The smoke coming from the vessel on the aft port side and the bow was turbulent in nature and grey in color and was once again parallel to the water below and extended from the vessel approximately 30-40 feet. After the second explosion, I began to walk off of the loading ramp and towards the pier when I heard people screaming. I turned to see FF Shawn O'Shell walking down the loading ramp towards me with his hands extended. FF O'Shell still had his bunker coat on at this time. He walked up to me calling my name, "Tommy, Tommy, Tommy...Oh My God Tommy! So hot...anyone above me is hurt bad or dead Tommy! I'm burning! They are dead if they were above me!!" I began to cut the gauntlets of his bunker coat to gain access to his burned hands and begin treating what I could treat. As I was cutting the gauntlets of his coat, I looked up and saw Chief Kris Jolly walking towards me. He, (Chief Jolly), had both of his arms extended and a blank stare on his face. The skin on his hands and ears was sloughing off, his hair melted to his scalp, and his face had what appeared to be first and second degree burns. He did not respond to my calls of "Chief", but upon me calling his name "Kris" he looked at me and said "I am hurt bad Tom! Tell my wife and kids that I love them and take care of them!" I rapidly triaged FF O'Shell and Chief Jolly and determined that Chief Jolly was the more critical patient at this time. I turned treatment of FF O'Shell over to R37 and took Chief Jolly to R30 for further treatment and transport. I declared a Trauma Alert and began transport to UF Health. Eng Luense and myself were in the back of R30 treating Chief Jolly while enroute to UF Health. I turned Chief Jolly over to the Trauma Center Staff at UF Health, gathered the information that I needed to complete my report, and returned to the ship to reassess crews onscene and to evaluate L30 and E30 crews.

6. **What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make?** Improvements in policy, operations and training is definitely needed and the policies and operational guidelines enforced.

PRIOR to the first explosion, I was on the loading ramp at the stern of the vessel and Chief Drysdale came out of the vessel. He looked at me and told me to set up Staging because we were going to a DEFENSIVE attack. This occurred prior to Chief Lesniak, Chief Powers and Chief Riska arriving on scene. I

acknowledged the set up staging order and the defensive posture for tactics. That was when LT McNamee and I teamed up to take on staging and accountability.

### **Engineer John McMullen L7B**

1. What was your role at the incident? I was driving L7 that day and assigned to the incident as (what I thought to be) a Haz-Mat component. Upon Arrival I got on the phone with TSF making sure they were aware of the incident and preparing them for a possible request for foam. As the incident progressed I was one of 3 HM Techs (Buchanan E7B, Howard L7B, and Myself) sent into the 5th deck of the ship for air monitoring. Eng. Buchanan was sent into the attack stairwell while FF Howard and I were told to only monitor and "clear" the 5th deck. After completion of this roll, the all clear was given to Chief Lesniak and we reassembled with our crews "Attack Teams" outside the main ramp on the dock. Shortly after this, L7's crew was request to go to the roof to provide ventilation. L7's crew entered the 5th deck threw the ramp where we tried to find an alternate access to the top deck. Carrying our Ram fan, we found no other route to the top of the ship other than the attack stair well. So we waited with Sta. 21's crew at the opening of the stairs unit crews were swapped. (There was no room for us to ascend while other crews were operating in the stairs) so I told our guys to wait. Once we began to move up, Chief Drysdale stopped myself and FF Klinger on that I believe was either the 8th deck (Fire floor) or the landing just above. He told us to proceed into the Fire Room behind us, I told him that we were not apart of the attack crew and that L7 had orders to ascend to the top of the ship for ventilation operations. He acknowledged us, an we continued. FF Klinger repeated this when he was also stopped. At this point the stairwell was clear, and if there was any heat it was a very small amount. As we ascended to the 9th deck I unlocked the hatch, felt for heat and slowly cracked the door. As I did and felt no force of air (in or out) I slowly opened the door to see a wall of black smoke about 2' in from the hatch. I shut the door and locked it back. I radioed our findings and continued to the top deck. Once we got to the top, the tp hatch was already opened. FF Kling and myself arrived top side first, followed minuets later by Lt. Harman (a little warn) and FF Howard. These two were apparently held up around the fire floor. Once on the top, we were told (I believe by Chief Drysdale) to secure/shut the top hatch to the fire attack stairwell. I remember being asked several times if this had been completed. I radioed in several times that "Yes the attack stairwell hatch to the roof was secured." At this point we were asked if there were any other openings on the top deck that were open and if there were could we secure them. FF Klinger and myself made our way around the top deck of the ship, finding the Fire Control room, seeing where what appeared to be (manual CO2 pull handles) pulled to discharge. Looing for any openings that could be closed. We found none. Some time went by until we were called by I believe Chief Holsenbeck to open up any vents that we think might help. On the top deck we had already identified the vents labeled with specific vent locations across the ship. To us/me we/I could tell exactly where the fire was because the port/starboard vents forward/aft were telling us that from atop the ship (based on the markings on the vents.) So we began opening up vents on both the dock side and the river side of the ship. These vents were large square boxes with large access doors leading into each one of them, when we were asked to open any/all

vents we could that we thought would help, these doors were it. Each one was secured with a small rope and zip tie. We forced them open slowly again feeling for any forceful pull/exhale of smoke/heat. We felt none. So we began opening them. To my best recollection, about 60 seconds after forcing the vent on the river side front of the ship, you began to hear a loud roar that sounded like a jet engine, the ship began to shake and we all took off. I yelled at the guys to "Run Run Run" as the loudest most violent.....purge of heat/exhaust blew from that vent stack. It only lasted a few seconds and I remember calling back to command who was calling for us (L7) that we were all good just a little shaken. I remember the guys telling me up top before to feel the deck, it was too hot for them to put their hands on. I almost laughed thinking I don't need to touch it, Ill take your word for it. After this a few minutes went by and I remember telling Lt Harman, that I felt like we caused that 1st explosion. We vented the hatch/vent/stack whatever and allowed cool air to get down into the super heated space, when it did. BAM. Again I thought the 60 seconds fit. This was the first explosion to us. We didn't hear, or see anything b4 this. Moments later, Chief Holsenbeck again called for us to try and wedge open the door/vent/whatever we had done b4 because it seemed to help down below. I remember looking over at the guys saying, there is no way for us to wedge this thing open, it's either open or closed. So we again opened the same vent hatch that had moments before blown open. AGAIN about 60 seconds later the sound came back. This time louder. It was the loudest thing I have ever heard, the whole ship was shaking, I looked at FF Klinger and said run (FF Klinger and FF Howard were beginning to force another vent hatch) We all took off again, as I turned over my shoulder I saw the vent stack disintegrate, the door blew apart and I turned and ran. FF Klinger dove down in front of me on the top deck, I remember seeing him and thought "I have to jump on him and cover him otherwise he could get hit" as I ran, the door from the vent stack landed a few feet from his head, I didn't have my helmet on at this point and again thought "I cant cover him, I don't have a helmet." So I ran into the corridor where the top hatch opened up into. I thought this would give me cover, little did I know the top hatch we had been asked to secure had also blown back open and that corridor was nothing more than an exhaust for jet fumes, heat and smoke. I was hit by a ton of bricks, I thought my face was melting off, and couldn't breathe. I turned and ran right as I tucked my head into my coat trying to protect my face. Eventually I bounced my way out of the corridor where I held yelling for FF Howard, I didn't know what state I was in but knew I was up walking. I immediately began calling for FF Howard and found him walking back towards me. He had somehow made it towards the front of the ship. He was ok. We walked back and I immediately told the guys to grab out gear and tools that we were getting the fuck off that ship. I walked over to the front of the ship to try and give a thumbs up to the command staff while I called Arial 30 to swing around, that L7's crew would be coming down Ladder 30. I was concerned for my guys so I told them I would go down first. FF Howard was a little shaken and didn't want to descend the ladder. So was I. Once all of L7's crew was safe on the ground and headed towards rehab, the third explosion happened that emitted dark smoke and completely engulfed the area of the top deck we were operating on and the evacuation point where L30 picked us off.

2. What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? The Top deck for 2 of the 3 explosions.

3. What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? Loudest noise I had ever heard, I thought the whole ship was about to explode. Vibrations, and then a huge forceful venting of heat, and smoke.
4. What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? See above.
5. What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? Nothing that I remember, calm.
6. What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make? SLOW DOWN. Is there an immediate danger to LIFE. If so, fine I'll be the first to go in. Allow us who want to, to not only seek out additional training but allowed to go, and it paid for. June 4th was the only time in my entire life, or my professional career with my 16yrs with JFRD or 18yrs in the Fire Service that I thought my crew and I were done for. We have talked a lot and took L30 the next off day a gift card for some steaks on us. I know they were just doing there jobs, (that's what we would say too) but to us, they saved our lives that day by having that stick up and being there for us. My crew gave me praise days after this happened, I returned it to them. They did their jobs, we all did. I'm just glad were here writing a after action report on it trying to learn, instead of putting on Class A's and going to a church. I am thankful to be apart of such an awesome crew, HM Team and Department. I look forward to this great career and doing my part to help make it better.

#### **Captain Pete Ironside M40B**

1. Officer on M40 (Jake)
2. M40 was pumping into S37 at idle as a secondary water source. Positioned at the stern of the ship.
3. I was on the bow of the Jake. Prior to the event, the port/aft (possible ventilation?) stack doors were opened by a crew topside. I saw a plume of white smoke coming from the port/aft stack. A high pitched noise like a turbine fan was also heard. Then there was a Secondary event with black smoke with debris flying in the air.
4. The order was given to clear the area. M40 disconnected from 5 inch hose and moved to a safe distance.
5. I saw Lt. McNamee assisting a firefighter down the ramp. Injuries to face were noticeable. No radio traffic was heard. We were on the primary B flight and monitoring A10, the channel marine units were communicating on.
6. As always communications continues to be a problem. I don't know what the cure for that is. Early in the incident M40 requested to put water on the port side of the ship, to possibly locate hot areas. We were told not to do this by command. I guess command was concerned about putting water in the ship. I think it would have helped in location and cooling of the areas. This could have been done without putting water into the ship.

#### **Chief Matt Cipriani, F7B – Safety the Stairwell**

1. What was your role at the incident? Safety then moved to the stairwell in a Ops position

2. What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? Between 8 and 7
3. What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? A alarm started sounding about 5 minutes prior but conditions were clear
4. What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? Made a rapid decent down thought about masking up but then it stopped, suffered burns to hands face and ears
5. What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? Nothing
6. What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make? Don't enter a fire of that magnitude. My A crews went in and didn't last 5 minutes. Climbing over cars and never found fire just extreme heat.

### **Captain Sergio Ortiz, L35B – Recon/Stairwells**

1. What was your role at the incident? Recon and helped drag hose to the upper stairwells on initial attack.
2. What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? On deck outside
3. What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? I heard over the radio Ops talking to L7 on the roof about opening a door/vent.
4. What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? Standing on deck, I prepared to act as RIT.
5. What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? I saw a piece of the ship fly into the air and what appeared to be steam coming from all upper level open areas.
6. What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make? Better radio communication and accountability.

### **Lt. Brian Crolley, L30B – Fire Attack**

1. What was your role at the incident? Arrive on scene in L30 and had the engineers deploy the aerial while Lt Crolley and FF Bennett went with Chief Jolly to locate the fire and assess the interior floors of the ship.
2. What level of the ship were you on when the explosion/event occurred? The entire L30 crew was on the L30 turntable.
3. What did you see and hear leading up to the explosion/event? We saw a lot of smoke coming from the air handler on the north end of the ship about 10 mins prior to the explosion in the stairwell. Then prior to the explosion we saw more smoke and heard a whistling noise. Prior to the air handler on the top deck exploding, we heard a loud whistling noise.
4. What happened to you/what did you do when the explosion/event happened? After the stairwell explosion, we left the aerial up for L7 crew to exit the top of ship and then retracted the ladder from the ship. There was another explosion of the air handler on the top ship and we stowed the ladder and removed it from the dock.
5. What did you see and hear immediately after the explosion/event? Nothing that I can recall now
6. What improvements in policy and operations at these types of incidents can JFRD make? Crews need to actually follow orders given to them. I was told by the staging officer he was telling people to stage and stay with their apparatus but some crews did not. They came to the scene

and a Chief just took them in with him as an interior crew. Also, I was told one crew was told to stay on the 5th deck outside of the stairwell as RIT in case of a problem but they decided to go up the stairwell and "help."

**Lt. Alexander Jones, E35B – Exterior/Water Supply**

1. My role at this incident was to first lay a 5" supply line to Engine 48. Secondly my firefighter and I teamed up with the crews from Ladder 30 and 35 to conduct recon.
2. My crew had just finished rehab and we stage at rear of the ship near engine 37.
3. I personally looked up at the top of the ship and noted 2 to 3 firefighters at that level. Within 10 seconds after looking away I heard a loud sound which sounded like a loud roar. I looked up and saw white smoke coming port side of the ship which turned black and brown after few seconds there was metal sheets blown from the top area where I first saw the firefighters standing.
4. When the explosion occurred my crew along with the rest of the firefighters began to get ready to re-enter the ship but we were ordered to evacuate. As we were attempting to evacuate I had my engineer along with myself break connections from Engine 48 and moved Engine 35 to a safe location.
5. After the explosion I saw firefighters exiting the ship injured.
6. My recommendation would be to take more time evaluating what type of fire we are dealing with. Determining what's burning, how long has it been burning and what's our best approach.