

# 'Eagles Dare' lieutenants participate in Firefighter's Challenge

**SPC. BROOKS FLETCHER**

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As the sound of a 9-pound mallet's piercing strike against a 150-pound steel beam echoes throughout, the motivating cheer carries throughout a training academy here.

Lieutenants of the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Air Defense Artillery, held a unique session of lieutenant's time Friday at the El Paso Fire Department Training Academy as they participated in the Firefighter's Challenge.

Lt. Frank Perry, El Paso Fire Department Training Academy, said the Firefighter's Challenge, the brainchild of Dr. Paul Davis, initially started out as the entrance exam for prospective recruits coming into the nation's fire departments.

It was a physical ability test to determine whether a job applicant had the requisite capabilities to perform the essential job functions of a firefighter.

The challenge is made up of five evolutions, or obstacles or tasks, in which firefighters simulate the rigorous physical demands of firefighting while wearing their full turnout gear. The course must be completed in less than seven minutes.

The challenge has gained popularity around the nation and among the media as it has become a competition where competitors around the nation compete. Top competitors do it under two minutes, and it has been coined by ESPN as the "Toughest Two Minutes in Sports."

"It is a full anaerobic workout," said Perry.

Lieutenants of the "Eagles Dare" battalion stepped up to the challenge as a part of lieutenant's time and officer professional development.

For purpose of the exercise, the Soldiers were only fitted with a safety jacket and an empty oxygen tank, with the option of going in full turnout gear. The actual test and competition are done on air in full turnout gear.



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**After making her way through the first four evolutions, 2nd Lt. Khristina Allen drags "Rescue Randy," a 185-pound, life-size mannequin to the finish line.**

The Soldiers began by first carrying a 45-pound hose pack up five flights of stairs to a room where they met their next challenge.

After reaching the top floor, where they laid down a hose pack, participants climbed outside onto a staircase where they found a rope leading back down to the

ground with a 45-pound donut hose pack attached. The lieutenants hoisted the pack up, hand-over-hand, to the fifth floor.

After the hoist was complete, they made their way back down to the first floor; instructors recommended participants pace themselves, catch their breath and ensure they stepped on every stair, which decreased the risk of tripping or falling down the stairs.

Once they exited the building, their arms tired from hoisting, they had to hit a 150-pound steel beam on a Keiser sled with a 9-pound mallet, simulating chopping, driving the beam five feet.

This is where many of the lieutenants said the previous two events began to take their toll.

After what seemed to take the zeal out of the participating Soldiers, they then ran 75 feet through a set of zig-zagged cones, picked up a charged hose line, ran back to where the cones started and simulated spraying a target.

The final evolution of the challenge got the best of many, but not all, as they had to drag "Rescue Randy," a 185-pound, life-size mannequin made to simulate the average weight of firefighter dressed in full turnout gear, to a simulated extraction point, ending the run.

"It was a very difficult, labor-intense task," said 2nd Lt. Derek Walsh. "You use every muscle throughout, and once you get to the last evolution you are completely drained."

Firefighter Kipp Hall, fire suppression technician, El Paso Fire Department Training Academy, said the lieutenants of 3-2 Bn. did really well.

"Coming from training as Soldiers to doing things specific for firefighters, they have adapted very well," said Hall.

First Lt. Eric Ackles said the course was good training and an excellent, complete-body workout.

For information on the Firefighter's Challenge, visit [www.firefighterchallenge.com](http://www.firefighterchallenge.com).



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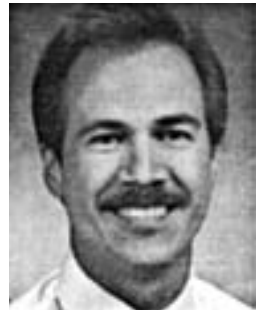
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