

# **ORANGE PEEL**

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## **THE GREATEST JOB**

As the third anniversary of September 11<sup>th</sup> draws near, I'm thinking about the job of firefighter. What makes this job so great? What makes us want to come to work everyday? Why are we drawn to this profession? What drew those 343 brave brothers to the firehouse on that New York morning? Sometimes we forget why we decided to become firefighters in the first place. Sometimes events happen that make us question if this is still the job for us. Sometimes we forget the little things that we once enjoyed about this job that make it fun to be a firefighter. The following is a list of the reasons why being a firefighter is the only job for me. Being a hero and pulling a child out of a burning house is an obvious draw. Included below are also the less obvious things that make me happy and proud to be a firefighter.

This list is full of some small, somewhat insignificant, daily occurrences that when combined make me want to come to work each and everyday. They are listed in no particular order. See how many of these you would include in your own list.

- The Brother and Sisterhood, The Family of the Fire Service
- Fighting a fire where everything went right
- Fighting a fire where everything went wrong
- Fighting *any* fire
- Having smoke boogers in my nose for a week
- Smelling like smoke every time I sweat or shower for a week
- Crying every September 11<sup>th</sup>
- Laughing everyday at the firehouse
- Going on the 9<sup>th</sup> call after midnight while the trucks sleeps
- Going on the 3<sup>rd</sup> fire of the night while the engine sleeps
- Going on the 25<sup>th</sup> call of the day while the engine and truck sleep
- Watching the new kid fight his first fire
- Watching the old salt fight his last fire
- Attending academy graduations
- Attending retirement parties
- Attending funerals to say goodbye
- Water fights in the firehouse
- Beating other engines into their first due for a fire
- Working at 6's
- Playing basketball in 100 degree heat

- Playing touch football in the dorm
- Watching my brothers and sisters on the news trying to look cool while being interviewed
- Eating the ice cream they had to buy for being on the news
- Watching a late night movie with my entire crew
- Eating meals together with my entire crew
- Having my entire crew go home safely at the end of the shift
- Crawling down a hallway, through the heat, under the flames, to get to the seat
- Making the grab
- Getting to use that license plate with “Bull” on it
- My lid
- Remembering those who have passed before us by writing RFB on my lid
- Talking about fire stuff at work
- Talking about fire stuff at parties
- Talking about fire stuff at home
- Talking about fire stuff to anyone who will listen
- Meeting firefighters from all over the world and...talking about fire stuff
- Celebrating births, deaths, birthdays, anniversaries with my brothers and sisters
- Seeing fellow academy mates, that I haven’t seen in years, at drills
- Having the honor of attending Dana Hannon’s memorial service
- Being part of a great crew, house, department, profession
- Learning this job by watching and talking to the best
- Attending promotional ceremonies for those who I learned from
- Striving someday to be a part of one of those promotion ceremonies
- Good meals to savor
- Bad meals to laugh about
- No meals because we’re on a fire and we have to send the medics to Jack in the Box
- Knowing that we would die for each other
- Training, training and more training
- Talking smoothbore vs. fog
- Watching the light bulb go off when another person finally understands why smoothbores are the only way to effectively fight fire *every* time
- FOG’s vs FNG’s
- Watching those old guys try and keep up with the new kid
- Reading a great article written by someone I met at a conference
- Andrew Fredericks, who was tireless in his dedication to teaching the fire service
- Pressler, Ciampo, Dugan, Lombardo, Adams, Baldwin, Hudson
- Little Drops of Water parts I and II, VES, Of Mice and Men, Searching without a handline what would you do, Smoothbore Nozzle Basics, Observations of a Truck Guy
- Being a drill instructor and having the honor of sharing the love for the job
- Being an attic rat, basement rat, and doing whatever dirty job needs to be done, and loving it
- Yelling “Bring It!!” at 0300 while responding to a call for toe pain

- 105 degree days with 30 mph winds
- 28 degree days with tulle fog
- Going code 3 the wrong way down a freeway off ramp
- Going code 3 thru downtown at 1715
- Going code 3
- Watching “Brothers in Battle”
- Wrestling with less than cooperative patients
- Spending Christmas with my second family
- Wondering when I was going to get my first fire
- Wondering when I’m going to get my next fire
- Superstitions
- Being a FOOL
- Reciting lines from Top Gun and Backdraft while overhauling a fire
- Walking thru the pitch black to get back to my bunk after a call
- Those first thirty seconds when I lie back down after a call
- Getting my badge
- Getting assigned
- Getting promoted
- Getting a pat on the back for a job well done
- Learning from my mistakes and nailing the next fire
- Meeting firefighters from all over and knowing they will be friends for life
- Watching 500 people go Bald for Bera
- Being a probie, a rookie, a newbie, a senior jake, a first whip, an old salt, and being a retiree
- The Brother and Sisterhood, The Family of the Fire Service. Everyday we spend working as firefighters should be cherished. This is the best job in the world. Never Forget.