

# **RIVER FOREST FIRE DEPARTMENT**



## **MONTHLY REPORT**

**MAY 2023**



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Matt Walsh  
Village Administrator

FROM: Thomas Gaertner  
Thomas Gaertner  
Fire Chief

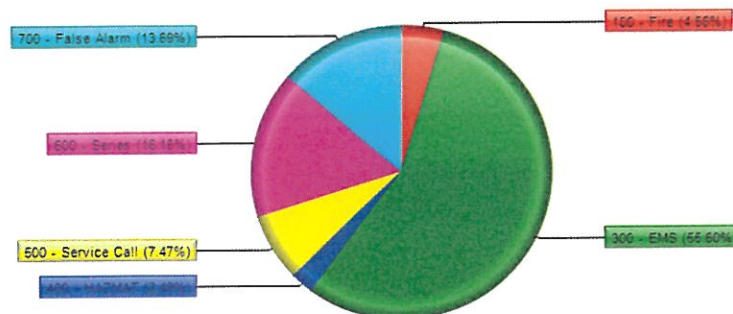
DATE: June 1, 2023

SUBJECT: Monthly Report – May 2023

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The Fire Department responded to 241 calls during the month of May. This is above our average number of calls in comparison to May 2022 where we had 223 calls. Emergency Medical Service calls represent 55.60% of our response activity for the month of May.

Incident Type Group	May 2023
100 - Fire	11
300 - EMS	134
400 - Hazardous Conditions	6
500 - Service Call	18
600 - Good Intent	39
700 - False Alarms	33
800 - Natural Disasters	0
<b>Monthly Total</b>	<b>241</b>





Custom ▾ Jan 1, 2023 - May 31, 2023 ▾

42%

**FIRE**  
Percentage of Total Incidents

58%

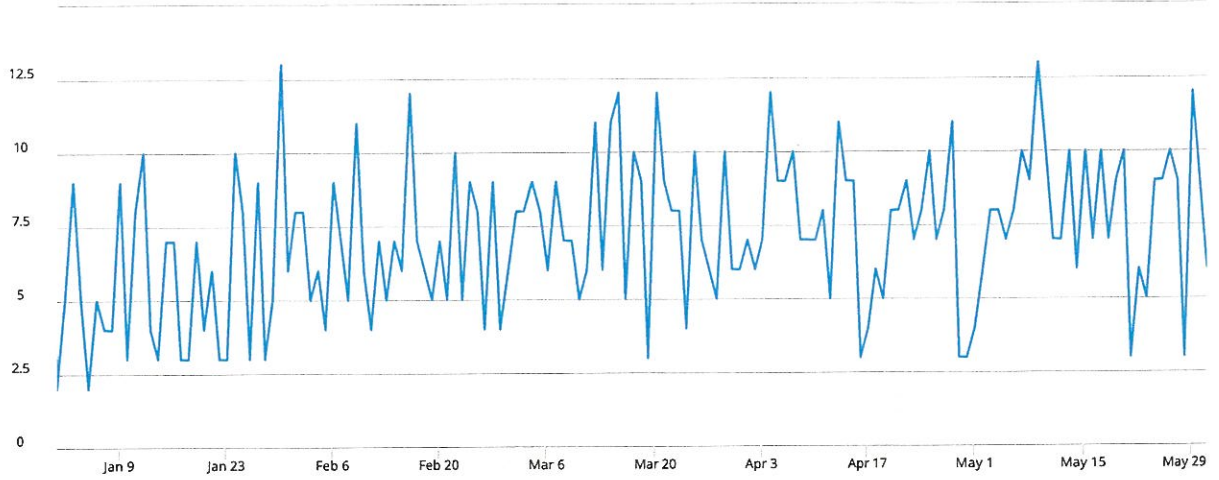
**EMS**  
Percentage of Total Incidents

1,319

**INCIDENTS**  
In Selected Time Slice

151

**DAYS**  
In Selected Time Slice



	Jan '23	Feb '23	Mar '23	Apr '23	May '23	Jun '23	Jul '23	Aug '23	Sep '23	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Total
RIVER FOREST FIRE DEPARTMENT	173	189	237	223	247									1,069
Total	173	189	237	223	247									1,069

Custom ▾ Jan 1, 2023 - May 31, 2023 ▾

42%

**FIRE**  
Percentage of Total Incidents

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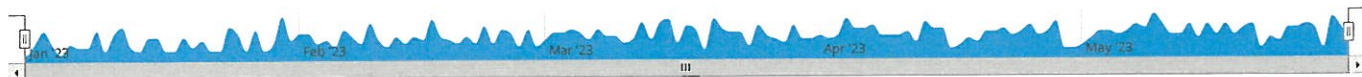
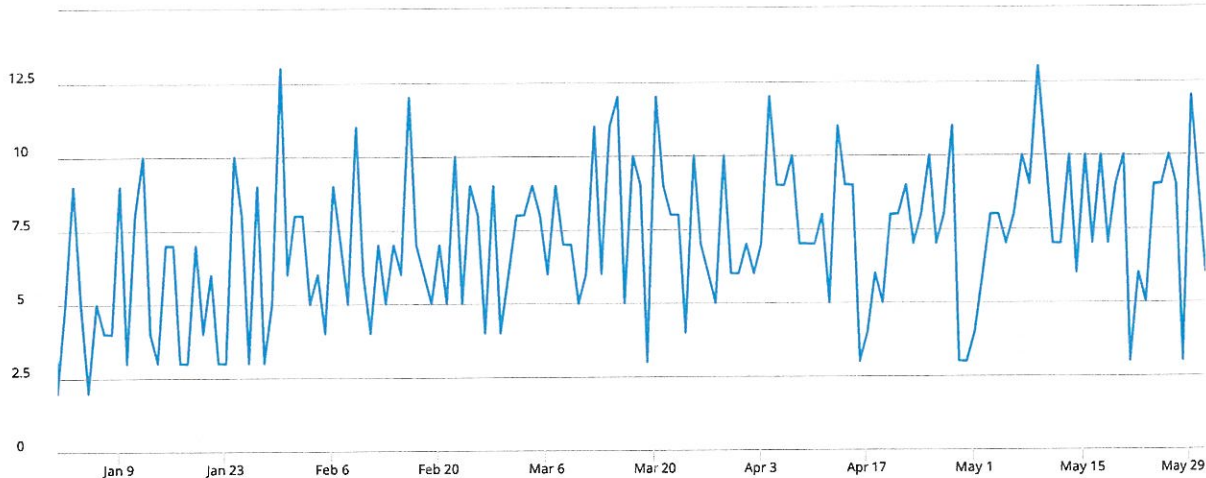
**EMS**  
Percentage of Total Incidents

1,320

**INCIDENTS**  
In Selected Time Slice

151

**DAYS**  
In Selected Time Slice



Counts % Rows % Columns % All

	Jan '23	Feb '23	Mar '23	Apr '23	May '23	Jun '23	Jul '23	Aug '23	Sep '23	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Total
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(11) Structure Fire	4	6	3	7	8									28
(13) Mobile property (vehicle) fire					2									2
(14) Natural vegetation fire					1									1
(15) Outside rubbish fire					1									1
(32) Emergency medical service (EMS) incident	104	111	144	137	134									630
(33) Lock-In				1										1
(35) Extrication, rescue				1	2									3
(41) Combustible/f.. spills & leaks	3	5	1	1	5									15
(42) Chemical release, reaction, or toxic condition	1	1			1									3
(44) Electrical wiring/equipm. problem	2	1	2	1	1									7
(51) Person in distress	3	5	4	3	2									17
(52) Water problem		2	1											3
(53) Smoke, odor problem		1												1
(55) Public service assistance	4	9	12	13	17									55
(61) Dispatched and canceled en route	28	20	34	31	24									137

	Jan '23	Feb '23	Mar '23	Apr '23	May '23	Jun '23	Jul '23	Aug '23	Sep '23	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Total
(62) Wrong location, no emergency found	4	5	4	3	16									32
(65) Steam, other gas mistaken for smoke		1	1	1										3
(71) Malicious, mischievous false alarm				1	1									2
(73) System or detector malfunction	1	2	6	2	2									13
(74) Unintentional system/detect... operation (no fire)	19	20	25	20	30									114
UNK				1										1
Total	173	189	237	223	247									1,069

### **Fire Chief Gaertner Report**

- Attended monthly RFFD Officers meeting.
- Attended the Weekly Village Administrators Staff Meetings.
- Attended the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association General Meeting.
- Attended Swearing-In of Deputy Chief Dave Bochenek, Lieutenant Quentin Boyd, and Firefighter/Paramedic Timothy Kyles.
- Attended the IRMA Wellness Webinar.
- Attended the monthly Statewide Terrorism & Intelligence Center (STIC) webinar.
- Attended the monthly MABAS Division 11 Fire Chiefs Meeting in Forest Park.
- Attended the monthly Metro Chiefs Executive Board Meeting.
- Participated in the IRMA Mental Health Stand-Down the week of May 15-19.
- Attended the RFFD Fall Prevention Breakfast at the Sheridan of River Forest.
- Attended the School District 90 Annual Safety Meeting.
- Attended the Lexipol Orientation Webinar.

### **FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU**

#### **Fire Marshal Kevin Wiley**

The overall inspection numbers for the year are pretty much on track for both the Bureau as well as the shifts, but if you were to look at the monthly number of 5 inspections for the shifts, you may have a concern. The shifts have done 75 inspections to this point in the year compared to 84 for 2022. The fire department has approximately 240 annual company inspections that are divided by the three inspection zones. This translates to approximately 80 inspections per shift for the year, with each shift having approximately six to seven inspections due every month. What the shifts have been doing for the last couple of years is to hit the inspection schedule hard in the colder months thus allowing the warmer months to be used for other responsibilities such as training, hydrant flow checks, hose/ladder testing, etc. With the new Training Prop, we may see a larger shift to having more inspections being done in the colder months. As we discussed in my annual Fire Prevention class, the shifts have 12 months to do the amount of fire inspections in their respective Inspection Zone.

Early in the month the department responded to a dumpster fire inside the ground level trash room of Murray Hall on the Dominican University campus. The fire was held in check by the fire sprinkler system which allowed the fire crews to go in and perform the final extinguishment of the remaining fire inside the dumpster. The fire did minor water and smoke damage to the room as well as some water and smoke damage to the first floor and basement of the building. I returned to the campus the next day to inquire if there was any security video that would show any activity prior to the fire. This trash room is not locked which allows staff and dorm residents access to throw away garbage. Unfortunately, the university did not have any security cameras in

the vicinity of the trash room. This was the last week of classes, and we were lucky as the building was fully occupied at the time of the fire. There were no reported injuries due to the fire.

As previously mentioned, I held my annual Fire Prevention refresher class for the shifts in May. We reviewed several items such as the Inspection Zones, Inspection procedures, the Inspection Reports and associated record keeping. We also reviewed the new and improved 2018 Code Booklet. This booklet is used as a “cheat-sheet” if you will, to better explain each of the boxes on the Fire Inspection Report Checklist that each owner/occupant is given at the end of the fire inspection. I reviewed the 2018 ICC Code series with everyone as well.

Part of the refresher class is an update of Public Education messages that we give to residents at various events throughout the year. Every couple of years the NFPA publishes a Public Education Desk Reference that covers a multitude of subjects in detail. The subjects are then broken down into several subcategories that cover almost every aspect of the subject safety message.

I also introduced the shifts to the new Smoke Alarm Installation Program called “Be Alarmed!”. “Be Alarmed!” is a fire safety education and smoke alarm installation program administered cooperatively between the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance (IFSA) and the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM). The program distributes fire safety education materials and 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms to fire departments in the state of Illinois. The fire departments then deliver the education and install smoke alarms in at-risk homes within their communities while recording data for reporting purposes. Both the educational materials and smoke alarms are provided to fire departments at no cost with the help of funding from both the IFSA and OSFM with additional assistance from Kidde and Menards.

The program was developed to educate Illinois residents on the dangers of fire in the home and how to prevent fires from occurring in the home, as well as to ensure there are working smoke alarms properly installed in homes. By providing 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms, it ensures that the power source cannot be removed from the unit and, if properly maintained, will last the life of the device.

The program seeks to:

1. Educate Illinois residents, young and old, on home fire safety and prevention methods,
2. Reduce the number of fire-related injuries in Illinois,
3. Reduce the number of fire-related deaths in Illinois, and
4. Identify the reason for non-working smoke alarms in Illinois homes.

The first recipient had 5 smoke alarms installed and the obsolete smoke alarms were removed and recycled in the Smoke Alarm bin in the fire station.

May has been designated as Older Americans Month and the Fire Department once again partnered with The Sheridan of River Forest to deliver a Fall Prevention Seminar for Seniors. The event was spearheaded and coordinated by Deputy Chief David Bochenek. DC Bochenek got in touch with the Sheridan to coordinate the Fall Prevention Seminar/Pancake Breakfast that also featured the fire department’s ICE Packet. DC Bochenek designed the ICE Packet several years ago with a grant supplied by the River Forest Township. As you may remember the ICE Packet is a heavy duty, clear plastic envelope with red edges that is designed to be placed in your freezer. The packet contains current medical information that Paramedics can retrieve in the event of a medical emergency where the senior patient cannot verbalize their medical problem or condition. DC Bochenek also employed the help of his wife, Iwona Bochenek to come and give

a presentation on Fall Prevention and what steps seniors can take to avoid a potential fall. Iwona is a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) as well as a Certified Fall Prevention Specialist. She had the audience captivated during her presentation. There were several seniors who had high praise for the River Forest Fire Department for the times they have called and needed assistance.

Chief Gaertner, Deputy Chief Bochenek and I also attended the District-90 annual Safety Meeting. Superintendent, Dr. Edward Condon along with all the school Principals, Assistant Principals and other key District-90 staff, Fire and Police Departments come together every year to discuss school safety and review the schools Emergency Procedures for several events that could possibly occur at the schools. With the Active Shooter training classes that were held this past April, the discussion was lively and a number of new initiatives were discussed.

The month ended with the Fire Department participating in the annual Memorial Day Parade. We were lucky on a couple of fronts this year. 1. We made it through the entire parade without any emergency calls. You may remember last year the first of three emergency calls came 30 seconds after the parade started. 2. The weather was sunny and warm and the Street Dedication of the 400 block of Park Av. went without a hitch.





RIVER FOREST FIRE DEPARTMENT  
 FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU  
 MONTHLY REPORT  
 May 2023

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES	MONTHLY TOTALS		YTD-YEAR TO DATE	
	May-22	May-23	2022	2023
**FPB Inspections	14	15	71	79
**Company Inspections	13	5	84	75
FPB Re-Inspections	1	18	44	41
Company Re-Inspections	1	19	58	42
Special Inquiry - B/L Site Inspections	1	1	8	2
Construction Inspections (Rough/Finals)	2	5	10	18
Inspections with Building Department	1	1	3	1
Inspections with/for State Fire Marshal	0	0	5	4
Permit Inspections (tent, hot work, UST)	2	0	5	0
<b>TOTAL INSPECTIONS</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>262</b>
School/Business Emergency Plans/Drills	2	3	2	6
Violation Notices Issued	15	8	99	78
Violations Noted	46	16	193	208
Violations Corrected	8	46	145	118
Permits Issued	2	1	5	1
**Complaints Received & Investigated	1	0	2	0
Meetings/Consultations	11	6	59	30
Training Activities	1	4	14	20
Fire Suppression/Alarm System Tests/Finals	0	0	0	8
Fire Suppression Hydro's	0	0	1	3
**Plan Reviews and Revisions	17	9	54	26
**Average turn around (Business Days)	8.35 days	5.8 days	7.18 days	4.1 days
Public Education Programs	4	1	9	12
Public Education Program Contacts	134	18	420	166
Misc Fire Prev Activities (See Narrative)	6	7	26	37

\*\* Performance Measures for the Chief

Kevin Wiley Fire Marshal

## **Individual Shift Reports**

### **Gold Shift Report Lt. Howe**

**Activities:** For the month of May the Gold Shift responded to a total of 78 calls. 38 of the calls were fire related, 34 involved emergency medical services and there were 6 service calls.

**Incidents/Events of Note:** On May 2nd, Engine 213 and Engine 222 responded to Dominican University for a fire alarm. On arrival crews discovered an indoor garbage room fire. Crews quickly extinguished fire that was held in check by sprinkler system. After fire was extinguished crew replaced sprinkler head and restored the sprinkler and alarm systems.

On May 17th, while returning from assisting Elmwood Park FD in extinguishing a high-rise fire. Eng 213 responded to 1434 Keystone to investigate an alarm system. On investigation, Eng 213 crew found smoke throughout home and discovered fire in the attached garage. Crews quickly and successfully extinguished fire in garage and ventilated smoke from home preventing further damage.

**Training:** Gold shift had 211 hours of training this month, for an average of 35.25 hours per firefighter. Our monthly fire training included new Zoll Cardiac Monitor training, Care and maintenance of equipment, Hose deployment, SCBA training, live fire training, and Loyola EMS Continuing Education on trauma.

**Inspections:** 0 In-Company fire inspections were completed in May.

### **Black Shift Report: Lt. Carter**

**Activities:** Black Shift had a total of 70 calls. 24 were fire related, 53 were EMS calls and 3 service calls.

**Incidents/Events of Note:** Engine 213 responded to a full arrest on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Engine 213 responded to a structure fire at 717 S. Lombard in Oak Park on May 12<sup>th</sup>. Crew assisted with ladder deployment. RF units responded to a deck fire at 923 Forest on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Fire was extinguished with 1 ¾" pre-connect. Engine 222 responded to Maywood for a structure fire on May 31<sup>st</sup>. Crew performed overhaul.

**Shift Training:** Black shift completed 113.5 hours of fire related training this month and 38 hours of EMS training for a total of 151.5 hours of training. Some of the fire training can be considered cross training between fire and EMS, but for categorization purposes it was placed under fire training. That is an average of 25.25 hours per LT and firefighter/paramedics.

Types of training included Loyola EMS Continuing Education, fire inspections, annual hose testing of all the 1 ¾" hose on rack, completed Fire Rescue 1 assigned training and hydrant flow testing was started. Black Shift attended a live fire training in Cicero. Zoll and Masimo conducted monitor and SpO2 training.

**Inspections:** 1 In-company inspections and 1 re-inspection were completed this month.

**Red Shift Report: Lt. Smith**

**Activities:** For the month of May, Red Shift had 84 calls. 27 of the calls were fire related. There were 48 EMS calls and 9 service calls.

**Incidents/Events of Note:** On May 7th, Engine 222 responded to the structure fire at 2136 76<sup>th</sup> Ave, Elmwood Park. Engine 222 was assigned to the second floor to look for fire extension in the walls and ceiling. Engine 222 performed overhaul using pike poles and axes. Engine 222 assisted the fire attack team with hose movement.

On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, Engine 222 responded to 7722 Madison for the natural gas leak. A construction crew had struck a gas line outside the west wall of 7722 Madison Street. Engine 222 had the owner of the business close a door and a garage door to prevent gas from entering the business. Engine 222 and Ambulance 215 investigated 7722 Madison and 13 Franklin Ave. The crews found natural gas in both buildings. The crews ventilated the two structures. Engine 222 requested NICOR to the scene. NICOR arrived on scene and provided a temporary repair of the gas line. The gas to 7722 Madison was shut off. Engine 222 continued to get 10% LEL of combustible gas in the northwest corner of the dry cleaners. Engine 222 was using two fans to ventilate the structure to get the combustible gas levels to zero ppm. NICOR believed there was a second gas leak under the alley that was leaking underground and into the northwest corner of 7722 Madison. Engine 222 continued to ventilate the building while NICOR crews remove a section of alley to find the second leak.

**Shift Training:** Red Shift had 209.75 hours of fire related training this month and 51.25 hours of EMS training for a total of 261 hours of training. That is an average of 43.5 hours per firefighter. Red Shift training for the month included Loyola CE – Trauma. Red Shift members continued vehicle check-rides. Firefighter Timothy Kyles began his career on May 1<sup>st</sup>. After three weeks of day shifts, FF Kyles was placed on Red Shift on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Red Shift members have been working with FF Kyles with the start of his probationary period. Red Shift went to 1406 Harlem Ave and installed five smoke detectors. FF Basa gave a lecture on fall prevention at 800 Harlem Ave. Red Shift attended the Division 11 live fire training in Cicero. FF Viera attended a forty-hour Vehicle & Machinery Technician class at the Romeoville Fire Academy. Lt. Smith attended a forty-hour Instructor 2 class at the Romeoville Fire Academy. Lt. Smith completed a three-hour fire investigation online class.

**Inspections:** 1 In-company fire inspection were conducted in May.

**Department Training Lt. Carter**

For May 2023 the department participated in various training activities such as:

- Exciting news for the River Forest Fire Dept. We now have a training prop where many evolutions can be performed.
- Loyola CE was held on May 23-25. Subject was Cardiac Arrest
- Shifts continued their assigned building inspections.
- FM Wiley did the annual Fire Inspection Update class for all 3 shifts.
- A representative from Zoll came out and demonstrated new features on the new Zoll cardiac monitors.
- Representatives from Masimo taught an SpO2 class May 24-26
- Lt. Smith attended Instructor II in Romeoville May 1-5
- A Fall Prevention seminar was held at The Sheridan on May 19
- FF/PM Viera attended Vehicle Machinery Technician in Romeoville May 15-19
- All shifts attended a live fire training event at Cicero burn tower May 23-25

**EMS/Paramedic Activity FF/PM Fischer**

During the month of May, RFFD responded for a total of 129 patients. Of the 129 patients, 100 were treated and transported by Ambulance 215, 5 were invalid assists and 24 patients refused care. These 129 patients had various complaints. Below are how the complaints break down:

- No complaint – 0
- Abdominal Pain – 3
- Allergic Reaction – 0
- Animal Bite -- 0
- Assault – 1
- Breathing Problems – 11
- Burns -- 1
- Psychiatric – 5
- Chest Pain – 10
- Cardiac/Traumatic/Respiratory Arrest – 1
- Choking -- 1
- Diabetic – 0
- Eye Problem -- 0
- Fall - 17
- Headache/Concussion – 0
- Hemorrhage/Bleeding -- 2
- Medical Alarm – 0
- Opiate Overdose -- 2
- Pain (Back) – 0
- Pain (General) -- 0
- Patient Assist – 0
- Poisoning / Drug Ingestion – 2
- Seizure – 2
- Sick Person -- 27
- Stroke / CVA – 3
- Special Event Stand-by - 1
- Traffic Accident -- 19
- Traumatic Injury – 5
- Unconscious/Unresponsive – 7
- Unknown Problems – 7
- Weakness - 1

The 100 patients who were transported went to the following hospitals:

- Gottlieb – 8
- Hines VA – 0
- Loyola – 11
- MacNeal -1
- Community First -- 0
- Rush / Oak Park – 79
- Resurrection - 0
- West Suburban – 1

We had 16 calls to other towns for a mutual aid ambulance and received aid from other towns 18 times.

**Vehicle/Station Maintenance    FF/PM Zipperich**

**VEHICLES**

- 200- Nothing Reported
- 201- Nothing reported
- 202- Radiator repair@ Pete's
- 213- Air leak on aft air tank- tightened, Inventory completed, At Fire Service for PM and maintenance
- 214- Fail Safe emergency switch found in "on" position, driver's side inner rear tire repaired
- 215- Rear axle repair
- 218- Nothing Reported
- 219- Interstate replaced air tanks, Lt side rear seat alarm repaired
- 222- Nothing reported

**EQUIPMENT**

- Zoll equipment delivered.
- Face sheet lock box in Lt office
- Pressurized water extinguisher base damaged
- Air One- package delivered-SCBA button and control module replaced/ picked up fitting for return.
- 213 TIC repaired
- Routine maintenance (drained and run) SCBA compressor.
- Training prop delivered.
- Storz adapter for hose testing delivered.
- Staff vehicle keys reorganized.
- O2 ordered and delivered from US gas.
- Cutters Edge saw pull broken and repaired.
- Oil Dry ordered and delivered.

**FIRE STATION**

No report

**MEMORIAL DAY STREET DEDICATION**

## COMMUNITY

# 80 years later, Fred Jannisch honored with dedicated street sign

*River Forest fire lieutenant uncovers story of Bataan Death March casualty*



by Jessica Mackinnon  
May 30, 2023





At the River Forest fire station, the family of Fred Jannisch Jr. and fire fighters, including Susie Crichlow (Fred's niece) and Lt. John Carter (middle), show the honorary street sign. | Jessica Mackinnon

The last letter River Forest residents Fred and Anna Jannisch received from their son, Corporal Fred Jannisch, indicated that he was feeling “pretty good.” Writing from the Philippines, he complimented the Army cooks for making rice somewhat palatable three times a day but complained about the exorbitant cost of cigarettes.

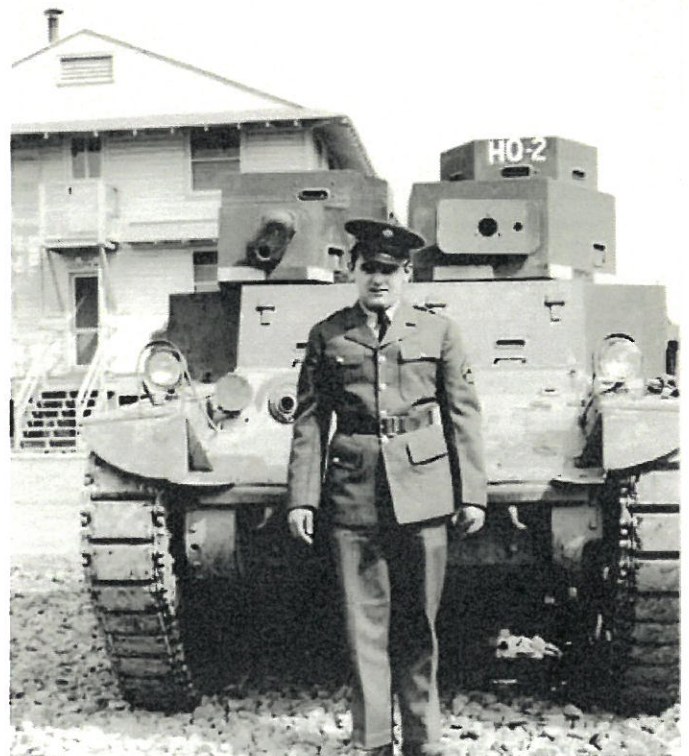
“I don’t know how long I’m going to be here, nor does anyone else for that matter, but we all do know that it can’t last forever and we’re bound to be home sometime and you can bet your life that we’ll all be looking forward to that day,” he wrote.

The Jannisches received the letter, which was written on Feb. 24, 1942, in August, 1942, after an American submarine retrieved a mailbag floating in the Pacific Ocean. Six weeks after writing that letter, Fred was taken captive by the Japanese and forced to endure the infamous Bataan Death March. He survived the march but died on Oct. 14 in a prisoner-of-war camp, 11 days before his 20th birthday. His parents didn’t learn of his death until June 29, 1943.

According to Susie Crichlow, Fred’s niece, her grandmother took to her bed after learning of her son’s death and didn’t leave for six weeks. Her grandfather rarely discussed the circumstances of his son’s death.

“My mother, Dot, Uncle Freddie’s sister, told me that she and her brother and sister were very close. She talked about Uncle Freddie frequently and was proud of his service. She said he was always looking out for his little sisters and was devoted to others as well. She created a framed display of all his medals, including a Bronze Star. Freddie had a short life but he had a large impact on his family,” Crichlow said.

Fred A. Jannisch was born in River Forest on Oct. 25, 1922. His father, Fred J., was a River Forest firefighter and the family lived at 333 Park Ave., just blocks from the fire house. An enthusiastic member of local Boy Scout Troop 15 and a carrier for the Oak Leaves newspaper, Fred left Oak Park and River Forest High School early, with his father’s permission, to join the Illinois National Guard. Inducted into the U.S. Army on Nov. 25, 1940, Fred enlisted with the 192nd Tank Battalion out of Maywood



Fred Jannisch Fort Knox | Provided

and was engaged in intensive training at Ft. Knox, Kentucky, where he became one of the youngest corporals in the Army.

Fred was sent to Louisiana in the summer of 1941 for specialized training. His tank crew engaged in night maneuvers, not knowing that they were being prepared for a build-up of American military forces in the Philippines. In October, the battalion traveled by train to San Francisco and set sail on the U.S.A.T Gen. Hugh L. Scott to Guam, landing in Honolulu, Hawaii on Nov. 2. They docked in Manila, Philippines on Nov. 20 and transferred to Fort Stotsenburg, Clark Field.

On the morning of Dec. 8, men staffing radios in the 192nd Battalion's communications tent learned of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Fred and his tank crew were ordered to the south end of Clark Field to guard against Japanese paratroopers.

According to a comprehensive article in the Bataan Project ([bataanproject.com](http://bataanproject.com)), a site dedicated to the men of Company B, 192nd Tank Battalion, the Japanese bombed and strafed the airfield that afternoon with 54 planes, destroying American planes and killing hundreds of soldiers. They attacked again on Dec. 10 and 13.

After many months of battle, with few supplies and only 25% of his soldiers healthy enough to continue fighting, General Edward P. King made the agonizing decision to surrender to the Japanese on April 9, 1942. The soldiers were told to destroy their remaining weapons and supplies and the tank crews were ordered to use armor-piercing shells to destroy their tanks.

On April 11, the surviving soldiers, including Fred, were ordered by the Japanese to begin the 65-mile Bataan Death March, from Mariveles, at the southern tip of Bataan, to San Fernando. The men who couldn't keep up were shot or bayoneted. Ten thousand men — 1,000 Americans and 9,000 Filipinos — died during the march. At the POW camp, food was scarce and conditions were extraordinarily brutal.

Of the 593 men in the 192nd Tank Battalion who went to the Philippines in October 1941, 328 did not survive. After the war, the American military tribunal tried Lt. General Masaharu Homma, commander of the Japanese invasion forces in the Philippines, and held him responsible for the Bataan Death March — a war crime. He was executed by firing squad on April 3, 1946.

According to war records, Fred was admitted on Aug. 2 to the prisoner camp hospital, suffering from dysentery and malaria, and died on Oct. 14, 1942. Fred's family held a memorial service for him on July 24, 1943 at River Forest Methodist Church. At his parents' request, Fred's remains were interred in 1950 at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in the Philippines, the site of 16,859 soldiers who lost their lives in New Guinea and the Philippines.



“The thing that haunts me is the part in one of his letters where Uncle Freddie writes that he lost and then found the ring that his parents gave him,” Crichlow said. “He wrote that the ring was going to stay on his hand no matter what and that ‘the fellow that tries to take it off will have to cut my finger first’.”

According to Crichlow, before he died, Fred offered a Japanese medic the ring in exchange for medication. He never received the medication — or the return of his ring.

Fred Jannisch’s life and tragic

death resonated with Lt. John Carter of the River Forest Fire Department. He was behind the village’s approval of a resolution honoring Fred’s service and designating the 7900 block of Central Avenue in River Forest as ‘Honorary Cpl. Fred A. Jannisch Jr. Way.’”



Carter has done an extraordinary amount of work to discover details of Fred’s life and service, through research and by tracking down his surviving family members.

“Fred’s father’s photo has been hanging on the firehouse walls forever and I heard stories about his son,” said Carter. “My father was in the Korean War and my son was in the Marine Corps. I just felt it was the right thing to do — to honor this man’s ultimate sacrifice.”