

MARILLA FIREFIGHTER INJURED

At 9:37 am on December 17, 2008 the Marilla Fire Company was dispatched to a possible structure fire. Upon arrival, Assistant Chief George Gertz discovered two vehicles in an open garage fully involved with flames spreading through the house. Neighbors reported hearing coughing inside the structure and not seeing the occupants leaving earlier. With impending immediate life hazard, Assistant Chief Gertz made the decision to start VES (Vent, Enter, and Search) operations.

With the help from an Assistant Chief from Jamison Road, they were able to force entry to the structure. At this time, Assistant Chief Gertz found heavy smoke approximately three feet from the floor throughout the structure. Visible fire was seen throughout the main residence. As he proceeded down the hall to where the neighbors heard the coughing, he heard an explosion. A ball of fire came down the hall he was occupying. He made his way into the living area where the room then flashed over, rendering him temporarily disoriented. Gertz kept his calm and quickly made his way out of the structure where he collapsed.

Outside crews quickly dragged Gertz from the structure to a safe area and treatment began on his injuries. He was then transported to ECMC via Rural Metro Paramedics. All occupants were out of the house. The family did lose two family pets.

Assistant Chief Gertz was admitted to ECMC with Non-Life Threatening injuries which include 1st and 2nd degree burns to his head, ears, and neck. 2nd and 3rd degree burns to his right and left hands, wrists, and fingers.

The Marilla Fire Company wishes to extend thanks for the thoughts and prayers for Assistant Chief Gertz. Thanks also goes out to other members and the fire companies that offered their help. Updates and further information can be attained by contacting Chief Ron Bourgeois Jr. at (716) 913-2933 or chief@marillafire.com.

