



THE BLANKET

THE NEW YORK STATE VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE & RESCUE ASSOCIATION, INC.
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The Quarterly Newsletter
 of the NYS Volunteer
 Ambulance
 & Rescue Association

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A Message from Our President

First, I want to thank everyone who attended PULSE CHECK 2003, the 48th Annual New York State Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Association Educational Conference and Trade Show in Lake George. It was very successful. The Conference Committee worked extremely hard to put together a program that was both informative as well as enjoyable.

Throughout the Annual meeting reports were given that outlined the activities of the Association during the past year. I would like to give you an overview.

1. Our financial condition at this point is stable. Fiscal prudence has been and will continue to be the watchword. Although we are not a wealthy organization, our financial condition has improved over the past few years due to the efforts of the Directors and Officers of the Association. The Officers and Directors are committed to insuring that money is spent appropriately and for the benefit of all our members.
2. On Thursday May 22, 2003 ground was broken for the EMS Memorial that will be located in the Empire Plaza in Albany. Plans are for the formal dedication of the Memorial to be during EMS Week in May 2004. This has been a project and goal of our Association for many years and it was great to see that it has finally become a reality. Details will be made available as soon as they are finalized.
3. This year, the Association was asked by the NYS Department of Health to serve on a Statewide Emergency Mobilization Plan Committee. I, along with representatives of state police, fire, emergency management and federal authorities met to discuss a procedure and formulate a plan for the request and mobilization of EMS agencies and resources in response to a declared large-scale event. Many ideas were exchanged and a plan was developed. The foundation of the plan is that it will not conflict with existing local plans and will be county based. The other point that was emphasized was that no one is to respond until requested to do so. The plan got its first test during the recent blackout when it was implemented to provide additional resources to New York City. Although there were a few problems, the general consensus is the plan worked well.
4. I had the pleasure of representing the Association at the EMS Today Conference in Philadelphia. I was on the faculty as part of the Volunteer/Nonprofit EMS Leadership Academy and had the opportunity to meet and work with volunteer ambulance corps leaders from across the county. It was extremely interesting to listen to people expressing the same issues and concerns that we have in New York.
5. Our Association is represented on the New York State EMS Council by Henry Ehrhardt. I am pleased to announce that Henry has been nominated to the Executive Board of the Council as the Second Vice-Chair. This is a tremendous accomplishment and demonstrates the respect that the State EMS Council has for both the Association and Henry. He is to be commended.
6. Last year, legislation was passed that created the E911 Board. This board is set up to



Michael J. Mastrianni,
 Jr.

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(Continued from page 1) *President's Message*

oversee the distribution of reimbursement funds to municipalities as well as adopting standards for the most efficient and appropriate response by dispatching and responding units. I received a call from Assemblyman Sweeny's office stating that he is recommending to the Speaker of the Assembly that our Association be represented. We are waiting for further information.

7. We continue to have an excellent working relationship with our colleagues in the State Fire Organizations as well as the proprietary providers of EMS. We are consulted regularly by legislators on issues that affect emergency services.
8. There was considerable discussion concerning the decision to hold the 2004 Convention at the Roaring Brook in Lake George. There are three main factors that were taken into consideration when choosing this venue. The first was the cost. Other sites we have used have cost thousands of dollars just for the privilege of using their facility. The convention profit is relatively small and when as much as half of the profit is given to the facility, we needed to find another location. Second, we have the entire facility to ourselves. Third, they have the facilities to accommodate the events that occur during the Convention such as the trade show, drills, banquet, seminars, etc. Food and lodging is included in one price. I would encourage any-

one who is interested in finding another location for PULSE CHECK 2005, our 50th convention anniversary, to do some research and present a proposal to the Board. Contact your Director or the Convention Committee for specific requirements.

As I think you can see, our Association has a considerable voice in EMS. It has come as a result of the hard work of the Officers, Directors and members of this organization. Please remember that our Association has no paid staff. We, like you, are volunteers. Most of us have full time jobs and families. We do the very best we can. The input and participation of everyone is the key to making us successful. For anyone who is interested in helping us grow, please don't hesitate to contact any Officer or Director. I want to thank everyone for the time and effort that they have given to make us the voice of volunteer EMS in New York State. BE SAFE!

Respectfully,
Michael J. Mastrianni, Jr.
President

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Defibrillators on Ambulances in NYS

EMTs as well as CFRs in New York have been trained in the use of semi-automatic defibrillators for a number of years. These days there is an expectation that if you call 911 for a cardiac arrest that the responding ambulance will have a defibrillator. Required ambulance equipment in NY is covered by Part 800 regulations and those regulations have not been changed to require ambulances to carry defibrillators. There are four (4) services in the state that for one reason or another do not carry defibrillators. The State EMS Council has recommended that by January 1, 2005 Part 800 regulations require all ambulances to carry defibrillators that are capable of treating both adult and pediatric patients.

The Council is recommending that any new defibrillators purchased have the capability to treat both adult and pediatric patients. There is some research that suggests adult defibrillators can be used on children but approval for actual field use may not be forthcoming. Current adult biphasic defibrillators can be used on children if child specific cables and pads are used. Older technology monophasic defibrillators cannot be so modified and may have to be replaced or supplemented by adult/child models.

Public Access Defibrillation

Participation is up to 2,600 agencies with 100,000 providers and 11,000 AEDs in place.

Scanable Call Reports

Scanable PCR's are available from the NYS Department of Health for those agencies that wish to use them. Implementation across the state would speed up the excruciatingly slow process by which PCR data has to be manually keyed. Years pass before agencies have statewide, regional and agency specific data to review. NYS, however, has not allocated money to pay for scanning equipment and other expenses.

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Fire Districts
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Pulse Check 2003

STATEWIDE 2003 EMT & CFR DRILL COMPETITIONS

This year there were 5 teams competing in the Ambulance Drill and 16 in the EMT/CFR drills (9 youth teams and 7 adult squad teams).

Ambulance Drill

1st Place...Bayshore-Brightwaters Rescue Ambulance

2nd Place...Mid County Ambulance

3rd Place...Exchange Ambulance of the Islips

EMT Drill

Problem 1

1st Place...Bayshore-Brightwaters Acme EMS

2nd Place...Bayshore-Brightwaters Fallen Angels

3rd Place...Exchange Energetic Mischief Squad

Problem 2 (Tie for 1st Place)

1st Place...Bayshore-Brightwaters Fallen Angels

1st Place...Wantaugh-Levittown Buddah Blues

3rd Place...Wantaugh-Levittown Budah Babes

Overall

1st Place...Bayshore-Brightwaters Fallen Angels

2nd Place...Exchange Energetic Mischief Squad

3rd Place...Wantaugh-Levittown Budah Blues

CFR Drill

Problem 1

1st Place...Bayshore-Brightwaters Ditzzy Revivers

2nd Place...Bayshore-Brightwaters Manic Medics

3rd Place...Exchange Exit Wounds

Problem 2

1st Place...Bayshore-Brightwaters Manic Medics

2nd Place...Bayshore-Brightwaters Ditzzy Revivers

3rd Place...Glendale G-Unit

Overall (Tie for 1st Place)

1st Place...Bayshore Ditzzy Revivers

1st Place Bayshore Manic Medics

3rd Place...Exchange Exit Wounds

4th Place...Manorville Bod Squad 2

ELECTIONS

Officers were elected for 2003-2004 year

President Michael J. Matrianni, Jr. District 1

Executive VP Roy Sweet, District 19

Vice President Henry Ehrhardt, District 4

Treasurer Jean Gourley, District 18

Financial Secretary Tim Ryan, District 12

Secretary Mandy Squillini, District

Congratulations to all the new officers.

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Article V, Section 1 (c) DELETE

The President may be elected for not more than three (3)

consecutive one (1) year terms.

Explanation: The Board of Directors recommended this change. It was felt that the existence of an artificial or arbitrary time-table was not good management and undermined the flexibility and ability of the nominating committee and the ultimately the members in their choice of leadership for the organization.

The Proposed Constitutional Amendment was passed.

AWARDS

EMS Leadership

Cynthia Carol, Huntington Community FAS

EMS Person of the Year

Ferd Newman, Huntington Community FAS

Educator of the Year

John Palmieri, Huntington Community FAS

Unit Citation

Huntington Community FAS – Mark Brenner, Brian Canty, Philip Cimino, Mary Conover, Reeve Conover, Joseph Denmark, Anne Gabriel and Keith Tetrault

Civilian Award

Donald & Lorraine Prisco, CPR Save, Huntington, NY

Special Award

Robert & Elaine Graf Radenberg for support of PULSE CHECK Conferences

VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION MEMBER BENEFITS

The NYS Volunteer Ambulance & Rescue Association offers the following membership benefits:

NEXTEL offers discounts of 27% off phones and 10% off rate plans. Contact Robert McMahon at (914) 755-4526 for details and the best plan for you.

Digitech Computer, Inc. provides billing services and medical transportation software. They offer discounted rates for Association member squads. Contact Ann Marie Cazzoli at (914) 741-1919 ext 238 for details.

Men's Warehouse offers a 10% discount off regular priced merchandise. The Association's VIP Corporate Membership number is 60486.

Liberty Mutual offers a Group Savings Plan on home and auto insurance for Association members. Contact Victoria Smith at (631) 756-2080 ext 208 for more information.

National Income Life Insurance Company. Provides a free \$1,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment benefit, spouse \$500, and each dependent child \$250.

The Association's lead person on member benefits is Alice Wright. She can be contacted at (631) 669-0186 if anyone has ideas or suggestions.

2004 Legislative & Policy Agenda Highlights

EMS TRAINING PROGRAM DEDICATED FUNDING

Continuation of HCRA Funding for EMS is imperative. The Healthcare Reform Act provides funding for EMS training, Regional EMS Councils, Regional Program Agencies, and the New York State Department of Health's Bureau of EMS. It is critical to the maintenance and stability of community volunteer ambulance corps that funding be available for the training and re-certification of Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), Certified First Responders (CFRs) and Advanced EMTs. Homeland Safety and Security begins with a local Emergency Medical Services System that is trained and staffed to be able to respond when needed.

VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Recruitment and retention of Volunteer Emergency Medical Services personnel is critical to the EMS System. Establish a NYS Volunteer Ambulance Recruitment and Retention Program. Such a program could include matching grants for promotional campaign drives, financial support for the Service Awards Program, a statewide recruitment campaign, real property tax exemptions and/or income tax credits, and tuition assistance for volunteer ambulance, fire and rescue squad members.

- COLLEGE TUITION ASSISTANCE – Continued support for the NYS Volunteer Recruitment Services Scholarship.
- REAL PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT FOR VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY PROVIDERS – Continued support for a 10 percent real property tax abatement for volunteer emergency service providers .
- VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICE PERSONAL TAX CREDIT – Provide a personal income tax credit to active volunteer firefighters and Emergency Medical Services personnel.
- CIVIL SERVICE EXAM CREDIT – Provides additional points to any active volunteer ambulance worker or fire personal upon taking a civil service exam.

CELLULAR-PHONE-PRIORITY ACCESS

Insure access to cellular telephones by emergency service personnel during an emergency.

GREEN LIGHT STANDARD REVISION

To revise and update the standard for Green Lights use by volunteer ambulance service members. This would establish parity with the revised standard for Blue Lights used by volunteer firefighters.

VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE SERVICE LICENSE PLATES

Eliminate the annual fee currently charged for VAS (Volunteer Ambulance Service) license plates for members of volunteer ambulance services and rescue squads. Similar to Volunteer Fire plates, there should be a one-time fee with no annual fee.

EMT INTERMEDIATE LEVELS OF CERTIFICATION

Insure that all levels of EMT certification issued by the NYSDOH

are recognized in all regions of NYS. Some regions in NYS do not recognize EMT Intermediate or EMT Critical Care levels of certification. The Association seeks to insure that these Advanced Life Support levels potentially attainable by volunteer services are recognized and meaningfully incorporated in all regions of NYS..



Legislative Committee
Michael Wilhelm, Chair

STATE EMS OFFICE, STATE EMS CONCIL, REGIONAL COUNCILS

The Association believes that the state EMS office, state EMS council and regional councils should emphasize the provision of technical and other assistance to volunteer servicers. Priority areas for assistance include: member recruitment, squad management and development of networking and cooperative agreements between neighboring squads.

VAWBL COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT

Provide for a cost of living adjustment to the benefits received by permanently disabled volunteer ambulance workers under the Volunteer Ambulance Worker Benefit Law (VAWBL). The current level for volunteer ambulance workers was set over 15 years ago.

EMERGENCY SERVICES REVOLVING LOAN MATCHING FUND

To secure additional funds for the Emergency Service Revolving Loan Fund.

UTILITY CHARGES

Requires the New York Power Authority to add volunteer ambulance squads to their list of customers. This would allow volunteer ambulance squads to obtain electricity at a discounted rate as compared to the high commercial rates squads are currently paying. Provide that volunteer ambulance services be charged at the residential rate rather than commercial rate for electric, telephone and gas utility service.

DMV RECORDS SEARCH

Allow volunteer ambulance services to conduct a DMV search on driver and auto records at no cost to the volunteer ambulance service. This would be similar to the provision for volunteer fire departments.

COVERAGE FOR NONJURISDICTIONAL RESPONSE

Establish a fund pool to provide coverage to police officers, firefighters and EMS workers, who in an effort to assist at an emergency while off-duty or outside their area within the state, discharge their primary responsibilities under circumstances requiring their assistance and reasonably consistent with their primary responsibility. Assure that any such coverage does not singularly impact the workers compensation, VAWBL, or BFWBL experience rating and rates of the individual's home service.

NYS EMS Council (SEMAC)

2003 AWARDS HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED

BLS Provider – William Joyce, Monroe Livingston
 ALS Provider – Michael T. Benanati, Hudson Valley
 EMS Agency – Stony Brook VAC, Sufflok County
 EMS Leadership – Chief Robert A. McCracken, FDNY EMS
 EMS Educator – Craig J. Stadelman, Suffolk County
 EMS Communications Specialist – Steve Peterson, Hudson Valley
 Nurse of Excellence – Thomas Sampson, Southwestern
 Physician of Excellence – Dr. Lorraine Giordano, NYC DOH

SEMAC IS LOOKING AT:

Specialty transports: Medicare provides for a separate reimbursement rate for what are called specialty transports. The federal government, however, did not define what this meant but rather left it open for the 50 states establish their own definitions. To justify the higher reimbursement rate, paramedics operating in this specialty environment are supposed to possess advanced training but it is unclear what this means. The Council will be trying to find out what types off specialty transports are being done and what training above the basic EMT-P course is needed and what is being provided.

ET Placement on Hospital Arrival. 600 intubations have been submitted to the study. The initial study period has passed, but the Council wished to encourage continued submission of study reports by hospitals.

QA/QI Studies by Regional Councils. Are there duplications, what is being looked out, what is being found, are there inconsistencies, etc?

Refusal of Care may be the next statewide study topic.

NYS EMS Council

Henry Ehrhardt, NYSVARA Delegate
 December 3, 2003

Announced the retirement of Bill Liddle and Mickey Forness from the council.

Bureau of EMS Report

- Influenza Alert issued by NYSDOH, concern that SARS could be masked. Urged that providers take respiratory protection procedures for any patients with apparent respiratory illness.
- National Data Base has been set up for EMS Disciplinary Actions by State Agencies, NYS data to be included over the next year.
- Finger Lakes Hospice Program – presentation on this programs was made at the last meeting. Advised that paramedics could not participate as it violated both federal medicare and state requirements.
- Letter sent to all service advising on Pediatric AED – services buying new should get one capable of defibrillating all ages. Retrofit for existing AED.
- Vital Signs Conference was the second largest conference, almost 2,000 attended.
- Continued discussion on regionalization issues.
- FEMA WMD Train the Trainer class for teaching the 4 hour WMD awareness "Emergency Response to Terrorism for EMS" held and 20 participants trained. Looking to do another class soon. Contact Gary Tuthill at BEMS at (518) 402-0996 ext 2.

PIER Committee

An appeal from a Decision by Director Wronski by Brighton VAC to include Zhe Zack Zeng on the NYS Tree of Life EMS Line of Duty Memorial. A member of the VAC who was working in NYC on 9/11 and rendered assistance with patient care. His activities were verified and he did not interfere but integrated himself into the response in a positive manner. Motion adopted that the appeal be granted.

SEMAC

- Revised Trauma Protocol will come to council in February
- Spinal Protocol review various protocols related to clearing the spine in the field and reducing the need for immobilization
- Cardiac Advisory Committee of DOH meet with SEMAC to discuss designation of cardiac and stroke centers
- Use of PAD in Schools, attempting to prepare a report Regional Councils are asked to send info.

Education & Training

- On site testing cost will go up to \$35
- Trauma scores are down on EMT exams
- Education QI TAG – survey from out at on site locations, did not get to NYC location
- Letters out to those selected for participation in Regional Faculty Course
- Dr. Cooper has offered assistance to Paramedic Programs seeking accreditation
- EMT-CC to EMT-P bridge guidelines expected from DOH.



**Direct Mail Fundraising
Emergency Services Trading Cards**

Floyd Day

<p><i>Office</i></p> <p>2 New Road, Suite 106 Aston, PA 19014 800-318-6671 www.funddrive.com</p>	<p><i>Home</i></p> <p>1-570-325-3944 1-570-325-5490-fax fday@funddrive.com</p>
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In Memorium

The following were remembered during the memorial Service

District 1

Irene Clark
South Orangetown VAC

District 2

Maurice M. "Joe" Chalk
Peekskill Community VAC

District 4

Tracy Aggerup
Peninsula VAC

Alma Hutton
Peninsula VAC

Felix LeVine
Peninsula VAC

District 5

Loretta A. Simko
Beacon VAC &
Past Secretary, NYSVA&RA
Margaret Sisson
Town of Montgomery VAC

Clifford Webb
New Windsor VAC
District 6

Elsa Greenwald
Mamakating VAC
District 7

Judith Olsen
Huntington Community FAS

Carol Providence
Huntington Community FAS

Gloria Steiner
Huntington Community FAS
District 12

Richard Benatti
Mineola VAC

Edwin Cornetta
Elmont VFD, Rescue 1

James Devlin
Elmont VFD, Engine Co. #2

William H. Essling
Elmont VFD, Engine Co. #3

Joseph Fenn
Elmont VFD, Engine Co. #3

Salvatore C. Lenardi
Elmont VFD, Engine Co. #2

Peter Mirabile
Mineola VAC

James Phair
Elmont VFD, Engine Co. #3

District 16

Veronica "Ronnie" Manchester
Greece VAC &
Director Emeritus, District 16

District 18

Marie Kotuiski
College Point Community VAC

Robert Lockier
College Point Community VAC

Joseph Marsala
College Point Community VAC

Ludwig Neidemhuber

College Point Community VAC

Nicholas Ostuni
Whitestone Community VAS

Henry Pecora
Flushing VAC

Philip Roth
Whitestone Community VAS

Francis Scally
Whitestone Community VAS

Ronald Turner
College Point Community VAC

Theodore Voltz
Whitestone Community VAS

District 20

Donald F. Doney
Black River Ambulance Squad

John D. Gracey
Black River Ambulance Squad

EMS Line of Duty Deaths are Remembered

In May 2004 during EMS Week the NYS EMS Memorial in Albany is to be dedicated. NYS DOH has started assembling information on those who died while on duty over the past years and decades. There have been several volunteers who died while serving their community and city. Those who we can remember include:

Richard Allen Peariman, Forest Hills Volunteer Ambulance, died at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

David T. Hoover, EMT, Astoria Volunteer Ambulance died December 9, 1985. Information provided for the National EMS Memorial indicates that on March 18, 1983 David was attending a patient in cardiac arrest in the back of an ambulance which was en route to a hospital. The am-

bulance was struck at an intersection by a car that had passed three cars, hitting the ambulance, causing it to strike an elevated train pillar. The ambulance was torn apart, catapulting David out of the vehicle. He was found in traumatic arrest and was successfully resuscitated. However, he had suffered a cervical spine injury in the accident. After months of rehab at Rush Institute, David was sent home paralyzed and still with a tracheotomy. Fighting a courageous battle, he passed away on December 9, 1985.

If anyone has information on other New York volunteer EMS personnel who died in the line of duty please contact the NYS Volunteer Ambulance & Rescue Association at (877) NYSVARA or e-mail THEBLANKET@aol.com

Doctor Peter Safar, "Father of CPR" Dies of Cancer

Dr. Safir died on Sunday, August 2, 2003 at the age of 79 in Pittsburg, PA. He was an anesthesiologist credited with combining mouth-to-mouth resuscitation with closed chest compressions to create cardiopulmonary resuscitation or CPR. He was also involved in helping set standards for ambulance design and equipment and the training of EMTs and Paramedics and was an advisor for Army and Navy casualty care research programs. His

later research dealt with lowering the body temperature of resuscitated patients to prevent brain damage.

His career included work at the National Cancer Institute of Peru, Baltimore City Hospital/John Hopkins, University of Pittsburgh MC and helping found the American Heart Association's CPR Committee and the National Research Council's Committee on EMS.

Red Cross Course News

The First Aid Skills Card stock # 656615 has been revised to include more information on the care of burns, signals of and general care for head, neck and back injuries and principles of splinting. Supplies of the old version may continue to be used until exhausted.

The Workplace Training: Standard First Aid course featuring first aid, CPR and AED skills is now available on DVD as stock # 656638.

First Aid for Today's Family is a new 2 hour course in development that teaches families how to prevent and respond to emergencies that they are most likely to encounter. It is geared to adults with children ages 6 and up and children only ages 6 to 11. Any Red Cross instructor whose authori-

zation includes adult CPR and first aid as well as any responsible adult who has a basic level certificate which includes adult CPR and first aid will be able to lead the course. Tentative release date is Fall 2003.

Lifeguard Management was released in 2003. The course teaches participants to effectively manage lifeguards and to create an environment that keeps patrons and lifeguards safe. All current Lifeguarding instructors are required to update their authorizations.

For more information on Red Cross courses contact your local chapter or go to the national web site at www.redcross.com

Suffolk EMS Responses Still Drawing Newsday Attention

A recent Newsday article titled *TEAMWORK HELPS* highlighted the efforts of some EMS providers in Suffolk County on Long Island to meet a county wide goal of a 9 minute response time 90% of the time. Riverhead VAC was the only large squad cited as able to meet the goal. The report, however, did cover how mutual aid is being used in new ways to help. Some squads such as Riverhead and Flanders-Northampton VAC are using combined crews to staff an ambulance and there is more use of first responders going directly to a call with an ambulance following later.

Over the years, Newsday has reported on EMS in Nassau and Suffolk Counties with a series of articles. These reports have been highly critical of calls having to be bounced by dispatchers from one agency to another until a mutual aid VAC or VFD can be found that can assemble a crew and respond. These instances include top priority life threat-

ening emergencies where the response time of a first responder was 30 minutes, another where an ambulance response was 50 minutes and another 42 minute ambulance response time where a dispatcher called the primary responder and then 5 mutual aid squads before getting a crew that could respond to a morning call. Some volunteer emergency service organizations have responded to the concern by hiring staff to cover times of the day when volunteers are just not available as they have been in past years. The county realizes that it would cost millions to supplement or replace a volunteer system but there is a public out there that is expecting something better than what currently exists especially when they are told that in other places in the nation ambulances can respond to a scene in less than 5 to 6 minutes.

Regional EMS Councils Facing Funding Problems

The Central NY EMS Program Agency (CNYEMS) serving Cayuga, Cortland, Onondaga, Oswego and Tompkins Counties in upstate New York had to shut down for a two-week period November 24, 2003 to December 5, 2003 due a lack of funding from the NYS Department of Health (NYS DOH). CNYEMS reopened on Monday December 8th. The Nassau County Program Agency faced a similar shutdown which was averted due to numerous calls to local legislators which freed up state funds.

There are 18 Regional Program Agencies that assist Regional EMS Councils and the NYS DOH to support and help develop regional EMS Systems. The Agencies provides professional and clerical staff that is necessary to implement and support the activities of the Regional EMS Councils and the Regional Medical Advisory Committees (REMAC). The program's role is defined in Section 3003-a of Article 30 of the N.Y.S. Public Health Law.

National Highway Transportation Administration (NHTSA) Study Paramedics

Federal oversight of EMS in the United States is centered with the NHTSA and that organization has set up a group to look at the program. Subcommittees have been established

on scope of practice, core content of the position and education. W. Dan Manz, Director of the Vermont Office of EMS and Injury Prevention is overseeing the group.

Vermont Ambulance Service Seeks Expansion Into Franklin County, NY

Fletcher Allen Health Care of Burlington, VT is reported by Plattsburg's Press-Republican newspaper as proposing to station a transport ambulance on the grounds of Alice Hyde Medical Center in Malone, NY. The unit would be used to transport critically injured or critically ill patients in need of higher level care from Alice Hyde to Fletcher Allen which is a 500 bed tertiary-care facility and Level 1 Trauma Center. The distance between the two hospitals is 105 miles with an estimated one way travel time of 2 hours and 21 minutes. In March 1997 the two hospitals entered into an affiliation to foster greater collaboration in the design, delivery and measurement of clinical care.

Presently, when a transfer need arises, Northern Ambulance, a private AEMT-CC level service in Malone is called or a patient can wait hours for an ambulance stationed in Vermont to be dispatched and arrive. Northern Ambulance is opposed to the hospitals' proposal. Franklin County is served by 15 ambulance services plus 2 first responder services and these services would continue as the primary response agencies providing initial care and transport to local hospitals. Before Fletcher Allen can proceed it must go through a Certificate of Need process involving the Mountain Lakes Regional EMS Council and the NYS DOH.

EMT-I Utilization in New York City

The EMT-Intermediate level is one of four (4) established EMT levels in New York State. The others are EMT Basic, EMT-Critical Care (EMT-CC) and Paramedic (EMT-P). The EMT-I level, however, has not been utilized in New York City. MetroCare Ambulance proposed to use EMT-I's on its contracts for transports of school children who required advanced level

medical care on their way to and from school. The reason was because of a shortage of paramedics and the infrequency they were called upon to render paramedic level care. The NYC Regional Emergency Medical Advisory Committee (REMAC) turned down the proposal by Metrocare. No word on whether Metrocare will appeal.

FCC May Accelerate Narrowband Radio Use by Police, Fire & EMS

The current radio spectrum is becoming more crowded and so the Federal Communications Commission decided to restructure the space allocated to different radio channels. Old technology wideband radios would be replaced with narrowband radios that take up less radio bandwidth to function allowing more users. Non-public safety systems have until January 1, 2013 to complete the migration to new hardware. Public safety systems were given until January 1, 2018 to comply. The FCC, however, has now proposed that applications received after January 13, 2004 to expand ex-

isting systems would only be approved for narrowband operations. In addition, the FCC wants to stop the sale or importation of wideband equipment by 2008, a full 10 years before public safety operators have to switch over.

The financial impact of the FCC proposals could be significant in that switchovers to narrowband equipment might have to take place well before the service life of current wideband hardware nears its end. The State EMS Council is lending its support to petition the FCC to reconsider its proposals.

Third Party Billing Hints by Barbar Tucker, Certified Ambulance Group

The most efficient and fastest way to increase cost recovery return is to be accurate with your ambulance call reports (ACRs). Inaccurate, missing or miscoded information dramatically slows down your return and the billing company's ability to expedite your return. If you can't fill in the information on the ACR or billing form the billing company can't do it. Here are some helpful hints on information that is needed:

Patient information: name, address, date of birth, social security number.

Insurance information: name, address and phone number of insurance company, policy number, claim number if possible, and patient's relationship to policy holder.

Call information: date, time and place of service, how dispatched (emergency vs. non-emergency), location including ZIP Code of patient pickup (never use a PO Box), where was

the patient transported, what was wrong with the patient and the actual loaded mileage with patient on board.

Signature: Without a signature, a bill can only be sent to the patient. This creates a loss of time, and possibly revenue, while a signature request is sent to the patient.

Rescue: For rescue billing, follow the basic rules of patient care documentation but use the car as a reference point to the patient. To justify rescue charges tell what was done such as victim entrapped, used spreaders, rolled dash, etc. and give a list of items expended such as flashlight batteries, flares, speedy dry, etc.

Abbreviations: Use only standard abbreviations as shown in the medical text used in your EMT student manual.

One last thought: elaborate but don't embellish.

Bits from Around the State and Beyond

Annual Reports

District 1 - Rockland County

Meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month except during the summer. Officer elections were held in June with Angela Wanger elected as Chair, Kitty Rooney-Koch, Vice Chair,

Steve Wagner, Treasurer, John Mauro, Secretary and Mandy Squillini, Director. Two local hospitals offer CME credit courses every month on a variety of BLS and ALS subjects. The regional EMS Recognition Dinner was a success with over 300 in attendance. Good Samaritan Hospital presented a full scholarship for an EMT to attend the Paramedic program at Rockland Community College. Nyack Hospital presented monetary awards to EMTs and paramedics for CMEs. The District continues to discuss all issues that impact on the EMS community and continues to strive to provide quality emergency medical service to the community.

District 2 - Westchester County

The District is working through administrative problems, efforts continue to seek out individuals willing to take over leadership positions. The blackout resulted in computer files and data being lost but the information is being reconstructed from paper records and from other sources.

As one result of the above, the independent VACs, squads and fire rescue groups delivering pre-hospital care are fragmented and thus far few have come forward expressing a genuine need for a cooperative effort to reorganize the District. The Director will continue to pursue this effort with help of Association officers.

The newly formed Westchester Regional EMS Council is working with the county's Department of Emergency Services, Fire Advisory Board and Westchester Volunteer Firemen's Association on a combined fire/EMS communication system. Local municipalities are slowly signing on to a mutual aid plan.

District 4 - Brooklyn, Southern Queens & Staten Island

Meetings have been held the second Thursday every month rotated between Brookdale Hospital in Brooklyn and Jamaica Hospital in Queens with the annual trip to Staten Island cancelled due to the blackout. Meetings continue to feature guest speakers most months and the September 11 meeting had a very moving memorial service. The 2nd Annual Volunteer EMS Recognition Dinner in May was very well attended. At the EMS Week ceremony held on board the Intrepid Chair Helen Fries accepted a plaque on behalf of NYC volunteer squads which was duplicated for all District 4 and 18 squads. The District continues to assist with management of the Community EMS Fund.

Elected officers for 2003-2004 were Helen Fries, Chair,

Ryan Gunning, Vice Chair, Nancy Ehrhardt, Treasurer, Frances Serrentino, Financial Secretary, Thomas Meehan, Jr., Secretary and Charles Hummel, Director.

District 5 - Orange County

Letters were sent to state representatives in support of funding for EMS education and training and replies were received from Senator William Larkin, Assemblyman Thomas Kirwin and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver. A bus mock disaster was held with squads from Pine Island, Chester, Goshen and Florida participating. Andrew Hall, a past Chair of the District and Association President in the 1980s was finally located and will be presented with a gold Life member card.

District 7 - Suffolk County

The District has been supportive of the Association with discussions held on how to help raise more money including encouraging squads to remind their members to join as individuals. PULSE CHECK Convention concerns were expressed relative to CME credits, late notice of discounts on registration fee and underage drinking. The District is against removing the 3 consecutive term limit on the office of President but would like to see a two year term instead of one year. A Best Practices Seminar was held in June and was a big success with all Suffolk county fire and EMS agencies attending. Two drills were held in preparation for PULSE CHECK. Newsday carried an interview with Youth Squad Committee Chair Louis Schilling.

District 11 - Suffolk County

The District will be merged into District 7 to represent all EMS squads in Suffolk County.

District 12 - Nassau

Six meetings have been held at the headquarters of member squads and departments. The June meeting saw the election of John Hasset as Chair, Howard Callman as Vice Chair, Tim Ryan as Secretary, Joan Benatti as treasurer and Helen Fries as Director. The annual awards ceremony was at the Nassau Bar Association. Numerous seminars have been held at South Nassau Communities Hospital, Franklin Hospital medical Center, Mercy Medical Center, Winthrop University Hospital, Nassau University Medical Center and North Shore University Hospital at Manhasset and Plainview. The Regional Council held a WMD Train-the-Trainer course which included Mark I Kit training. Coverage was also arranged for the Belmont Stakes in June.

District 18 - Bronx & Northern Queens

Ten meetings have been held. We are working with NYC REMSCO on a program for regional ID cards for all EMS personnel to facilitate identification of authorized responders to

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(continued from Page 10) More Bits From Around the State
MCI and mobilizations. Whitestone VAC offered to participate in a Pilot 911 program whereby the squad would respond to 911 calls within their own territory. FDNY has now raised the requirements to 16 hours a day and proposes to charge for radio and communications equipment over \$20,000 per unit. During the blackout squads were able to mobilize their personnel resources and did respond to direct and some 911 calls but the evening was generally quiet. Members are requesting a change in proxy voting to allow the proxy to list nominations and propositions and to be used as an instruction for those doing the actual voting.

District 20 – Northern New York State

The format of membership cards is a concern. A request was made for advance notice of discounted PULSE CHECK registrations fees. One squad reported a problem with eligibility for state scholarship for EMS volunteers

News From Around the State

DISTRICT 1

Ramapo Valley Ambulance Corps in Rockland County received a \$5,000 donation from Provident Bancorp of Montebello, NY toward the purchase of a new ambulance – a 2003 Ford/PL Custom Gold Medallion Type III on an E-450 chassis. The all volunteer squad operates 24 hours a day serving Airmont, Hillburn, Monsey, Suffern and Tallman. Over 2,400 calls were answered in 2002 using 3 ambulances.

DISTRICT 2

Harrison Volunteer Ambulance, Westchester County was named 2003 EMS Agency of the Year by the Westchester County Regional EMS Council. The squad has six vehicles in service including three ambulances and has an operating budget of about \$1 million dollars a year. 25 to 50 volunteers, a paid director (\$82,000) and assistant director/paramedic (\$51,000) plus other full time and per-diem employees serve together to provide ALS and/or BLS coverage 24 hours a day. Community involvement includes an active Explorer Scout program and courses for the community in CPR, AED, First Aid, Pediatric First Aid, Emergency Oxygen, Blood-borne Pathogens and Childcare & Babysitting Safety.

DISTRICT 4

Members of Glendale VAC and Ridgewood VAC, Queens County, recently completed the NYC Office of Emergency Management's version of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training course and will be moving onto the second phase of the course which will be given by Citizens for New York. This will consist of training on how to organize a CERT team and how to interact with existing CERT teams and emergency services.

Jamaica Estates-Holliswood-South Bayside VAC, District 4, Queens County, once again assisted American Martyrs RC

Church with its holiday toy drive on Monday morning January 15, 2003. Each Christmas American Martyrs collects toys for needy children in other parishes and the Working Organization for Retarded Children (WORC) and presents for a group of retired nuns. This Christmas, 2 ambulances were used to make a delivery to St. Malachy's in Brooklyn and then one ambulance brought presents to the Dominican Sisters Convent and Nursing Home in Amityville.

Park Slope VAC, District 4, Kings County, Chairperson Matthew Pintchik was honored as NY1 TV Channel's New Yorker of the Week. The segment aired on Friday night November 28, 2003.

NYC still lacks high level unified Incident Command. Newsday reported on January 2, 2004 that the NYPD and FDNY still lack an agreement on who will take command at various emergency scenes. "It's in the final stages of review," said one city official on New Year's Eve, speaking of the agreement discussed for months at City Hall. Administration insiders say Mayor Michael Bloomberg has granted wide discretion on such matters to NY Police Commissioner Ray Kelly, whose department has traditionally opposed ceding any command authority. This situation continues despite a long standing NY State directive that requires municipalities in the state to have a unified command structure in place during emergencies.

In addition, the NYC Office of Emergency Management, for the moment, goes leaderless. City officials say the search for a successor to John Odermatt, whose resignation as OEM director became effective at the beginning of the new year, has narrowed to three candidates.

Oswego Fire Department lost a chief's car on Thursday, November 13 during a heavy wind storm when the 165 foot tall steel cell phone tower outside the department's east side station fell on the vehicle, crushing part of it.

Manlius Fire Department, Onondaga County lets new doctors at SUNY University Hospital in Syracuse feel what its like to be a patient and/or rescuer. At an annual training event started over ten years ago, some residents act as patients and others as paramedics. Cars are cut apart and patients are "packaged" with collars and splints and immobilized to backboards. "Uncomfortable" was how the immobilization experience was described. The hands-on training gives the doctors a good feel for what its like providing and getting emergency medical care in the field.

Moyers Corners Fire Department and Onondaga County Sheriff's Helicopter Air-1 held a procedural drill for department members in July. The Flight Medic and pilot reviewed the helicopter and it's capabilities, as well as patient loading, approaching the aircraft and landing zones. Members gained valuable information on the procedures when using a

(Continued on page 14)

Cardiac Arrest Survivability Can be Improved

USA Today in a July 28, 2003 article titled *Six Minutes to Live or Die* reviewed cardiac arrest survival in the nation's 50 largest cities and paints a not too reassuring picture. Despite growing involvement of fire suppression personnel being used as EMS first responders, getting a defibrillator to a scene within five to six minutes is not happening often enough for various reasons. Washington, DC was one city studied and among the reasons cited there was the resistance of firefighters to respond on medical calls. The newspaper reports that the DCFD time to get rolling to a dumpster fire (82 seconds) was substantially less than that to a report of cardiac arrest (124 seconds). Many attribute the resistance problem in DC and elsewhere to poorly integrating the different cultures after a merger of a municipality's fire and EMS agencies saying that if separate command

structures, training regimens, pay and benefit programs are retained the personnel will never see themselves as one organization. Seattle, WA continues to be cited as the place to have a cardiac arrest with its 45% survival rate for those with a treatable presenting rhythm (V-fib) and an emergency services culture that has firefighters and EMS personnel working together under a proactive Medical Director to render the best care possible. Boston, MA is listed a second with a 40% survival rate. New York City is listed as studying V-fib survival data and could not or would not provide data although a 5.56 minute average response time for FDNY CFR-D first responders engine companies was provided. The full article is online at <http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/ems-day1-cover.htm>

NYS DOH Policy Statements

03-08, 09/03/03 RE: EMS PROVIDER CERTIFICATION AND IDENTIFICATION. Provides clear direction to EMS providers, agencies and the EMS community regarding the requirements for the possession and production of NYS issued EMS identification. Sections cover certification period, documents, alteration or forgery of certificates, EMS service requirements, provider identification, ~~lost or destroyed certificates and insignia and patches.~~

09-09, 09/05/03 RE: SURRENDER OF EMS OPERATING CERTIFICATE. There are a number of situations that cause an Emergency Medical Service agency to consider surrendering its Operation Certificate. This may include a severe shortage of available certified EMS personnel, the rising costs of operating an EMS response agency, organizational crisis, etc. As a result of these issues and many other circumstances, EMS agencies, after serious consideration, have found themselves forced to stop providing EMS and close their doors. While we realize the difficulties surrounding these situations, an EMS service should NOT stop operating suddenly and without assistance and consultation from local and regional EMS resources. However, should an EMS agency be faced with the final situation that necessitates stopping EMS response and closing its doors, this policy outlines the necessary steps that an EMS agency must take.

03-10, 10/02/03 RE: EXTENSION OF CERTIFICATION FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL. Outlines the procedure for military personnel being released from active duty to have their CFR/EMT/AEMT certification extended under the provisions of the "Patriot Plan" (Chapter 106, Laws of 2003) signed

into law by Governor Pataki on July 1, 2003. The Commissioner of Health is authorized to extend the certification for EMTs, AEMTs and CFRs who have been ordered to active military duty, other than for training, on or after the 11th day of September 2001 and whose certification will expire during their military duty. The extended certification shall be for the period of military duty and for twelve months after they have been released from active military duty. If certification expires after leaving active military duty, the individual is not eligible for extension of certification under the provisions of this law. The maximum certification extension granted will be for the period of military duty and for 12 months effective from the date of release from active military duty as evidenced by the form DD-214. Form DOH-4281 has been issued for use in requesting certification extension.

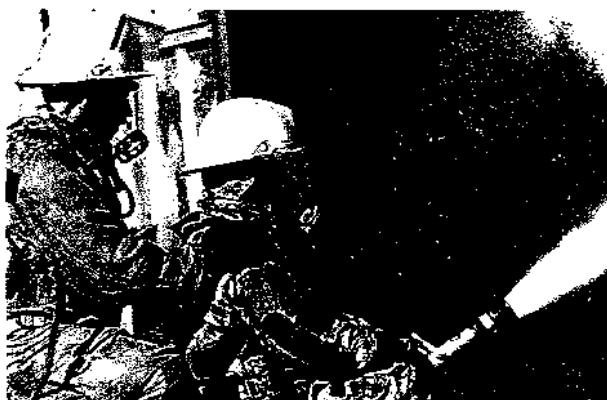
03-11, 12/10/03 RE: Respiratory Disease Precautions. Provides information and recommendations for the transport of patients with potentially infectious respiratory illnesses. Also provides updated guidelines for "respiratory etiquette" and the use of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) as well as recommendations for preventive health care measures for EMS providers.

The full text of all current NYS DOH Policy Statements can be viewed on the internet at <http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/policy/policy.htm>

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Latham, NY

(Continued from page 11)

Medevac.

Elbridge Fire Department, Onondaga County received a citation in late July for storing unregistered vehicles on village land. It did not matter that to the local code officer that the vehicles in question were used for training in automotive firefighting and accident rescues - the department was just being treated like any resident who stored an accumulation of junk vehicles. The volunteer department had 30 days to remove the vehicles or work out an agreement with the town's Code Office.

Onondaga County is considering proposals to allocate \$3.5 million to replace the 1992 Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system in the county's 911 center as well as \$4.5 million to replace and upgrade mobile computers in police, fire and ambulance vehicles. County legislators are reportedly wanting some presentation of alternatives before work on designing a new system is funded.

DISTRICT 16

Greece Volunteer Ambulance, Monroe County is an active and growing squad. They now have six ambulances and two ALS fly cars. Their 30 Explorer Scouts receive EMS training and many become regular members upon reaching age 18. Because of their increased activity, vehicles and

membership they are studying the need for larger quarters.

Rochester has two trauma centers, Rochester General Hospital and Strong Memorial Hospital. Rochester General is presently unable to cover orthopedic surgery 24 hours a day which would cause them to be taken out of the trauma business. An agreement has been worked out with NYS DOH to let Rochester General continue to take patients with penetrating trauma injuries.

DISTRICT 19

Adirondack Rural Health Network has provided a grant enabling EMS organizations in Hamilton County to purchase satellite phones. The county is located north west of Albany in the Adirondack Mountains. Being in a mountainous region, radio and normal cell phone communications are a routine problem. To overcome this, communications have taken a new direction going up instead of horizontal. Since implemented in early 2003 the new phones have performed well needing only a direct sight line between antenna and satellite. The county is served by 10 transporting EMS agencies - 4 FD units and 6 independent ambulance squads. There is 1 ALS service, 6 EMT-CC, 1 EMT-I and 2 BLS services.

LIFENET of NY/Albany Medflight opened a new base of operations in Rome NY on September 15, 2003.

Ambulance Tax District and Independent Volunteer Squads

In many parts of the state there are agreements between municipalities and independent volunteer ambulance corps, rescue squads and fire departments that the municipality raises the money and the squad provides the service to local residents on behalf of the municipality.

The NYS Comptroller has authority to audit local municipalities and their accounts and does this from time to time. One such examination (2001M-59) looked at the Town of East Greenbush Ambulance District. Findings were that there was no written agreement between the town and the organization providing EMS - the W.F. Bruen Rescue Squad. The Comptroller further indicated it was improper for the town to just turn over funds to the squad, have the squad set up checking and savings accounts and disburse funds with checks signed by the squad president and treasurer. The Comptroller's report called for required town meeting to be held to approve an agreement, that the checking and savings accounts be closed and funds turned over to the proper town officials to write future checks, that future ambulance and fly car purchases be put out for competitive bidding as required by the NY General Municipal Law and that town personnel should ensure that all of the financial transactions of the ambulance tax district

are accurately recorded within the town's financial records and reported in the town's financial reports. The report contains other specific findings and recommendations but in general found that the town had turned over too much authority to the volunteer organization's leadership to decide on how to spend funds, buy vehicles, etc.

While the report is specific to one municipality and its relationship to one independent volunteer organization it can serve as guidance to others on how the Comptroller views such relationships should operate. This view is that:

- Appropriate town officials should take a proactive role in administration of tax districts.
- All duties and responsibilities associated with the administrative and financial activities of a town's special tax district(s) should be removed from volunteer organization(s) and placed under the direct control of town government.
- Control of the tax district should be administered in the same manner as other town activities.

A summary of the report as well as a link to the full report is on the internet at <http://nysosc3.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/muni/audits/2001/towns/egad.htm>



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49TH Educational Conference & Trade Show

PULSE CHECK 2004

September 30 through October 3, 2004

Roaring Brook Resort, Lake George, NY

Workshops and Seminars under review for inclusion: The PCR – it's not over until the paperwork is done!; School Bus Emergencies; Pilot Re-Certification Skill Station; Management, Operation and Legal Issues for the Hybrid Squad; Roadside Responder Safety – how to keep you and your team safe, from lights and cones to SOP development; NYSDOH EMS Bureau Update; and Recruitment & Retention. EMS CEU Credits for Workshops & Seminars

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- Vendor Exposition & Trade Show

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2004 CALENDAR

FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE OF NY (FASNY) 22nd ANNUAL EMS SEMINAR, Saturday March 13, 2004 at the NYS Fire Academy, Montour Falls, NY. Registration is \$30.00. Lodging and meals at the Academy is \$80.00 for two nights. For more information call FASNY at (800)2FASNY2 or go to their web site at www.fasny.com.

HUDSON VALLEY REMSCO's 2004 INSIDE EMS CONFERENCE will be held at the Holiday Inn in Fishkill, NY (at Routes 9 & 84) on May 14 and 15, 2004. Event features speakers, seminars and exhibits. For more information call (845)567-6740 or e-mail hvremSCO@hvremSCO.org.

2004 EMS WEEK VOLUNTEER EMS RECOGNITION DINNER sponsored by NYSVA&RA's Districts 4 & 18 on Tuesday, May 18, 2004 at Russo's On-The-Bay, Howard Beach, NY. For information contact Martin Grillo at (718) 474-0680 or e-mail info@emrnyC.com

PULSE CHECK 2004, the 49th Annual Educational Conference & Trade Show of the NYS Volunteer Ambulance & Rescue Association will be held Thursday, September 30 through Sunday, October 3, 2004 at the Roaring Brook Resort & Conference Center, Lake George, NY. Event features seminars, exhibits, awards dinner and the country's only statewide Ambulance, EMT and CFR team skills competition. For information call (877) NYSVARA, (518) 883-4192 or e-mail pulsecheck2000@aol.com

NEW JERSEY STATE FIRST AID COUNCIL 2004 CONVENTION, Thursday, October 14 through Sunday, October 17 at the Nevele Grande Resort & Country Club, Ellenville, NY. For information check the web site at www.njsfac.org.

VITAL SIGNS CONFERENCE 2004, Friday October 29 through Sunday, October 31 at the Buffalo Convention Center, Buffalo, NY. Sponsored by the NYS DOH Bureau of EMS. Includes general sessions, workshops, exhibits and awards banquet. For information contact Donna Gerard at (518)402-0996 ext 3 or web site www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/vitalsigns.

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