



**WHITEMORE**  
FIRE CONSULTANTS, INC.

**July 2, 2013**

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Summer Greetings!

I awoke in a hotel in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin on a Monday morning while traveling to an explosion site to learn of the most recent tragedy that has befallen the fire community. On June 30, 2013 19 firefighters from the Granite Mountain Hotshots in Prescott, Arizona died as the result of a wildland fire near Yarnell, Arizona. Virtually the entire hotshot crew was killed by the fire (with the exception of one crew member who was assigned to move the crew's vehicle). It is the most significant loss of life in a wildland fire in over 80 years.



As you read this note, I suspect that you are preparing to celebrate the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday; possibly with family, friends or community celebrations. This is a time when we pause to enjoy the summer season! I also hope we can all take a moment to remember those that have worn a badge, carried a weapon in serving our military or served our nation as did the brave men of the Granite Mountain Hotshots were doing when they paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Everyone who has served their community, county, state or country at some point has raised their hand and swore to "preserve, protect and defend" the citizens of their respective communities. It is an oath that all who have recited these words take very seriously because as we too often see our best and brightest men and women pay the sacrifice with their lives. As with this most recent case they leave behind families, friends, co-workers, and a grateful nation to mourn their passing.

As a young firefighter wearing a badge or when eventually becoming President of the International Association of Arson Investigators, I have attended or participated in the funerals of colleagues who gave their lives upholding the oath they swore to when they were appointed to their positions. They are some of the most vivid and profound images of my career and I will always carry them with me.

On this July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday I am profoundly grateful for the many blessings in my life but especially for the men and women I work with each and every day. Amy Powell, who is my business manager and my "right arm" keeps the office functioning every day. Jodi Davis and Pam Whitemore who provide critical administrative support that makes Whitemore Fire Consultants what it is today! However, on this day I am especially grateful to the men who work with me as part of my investigative staff; Brian Haag, Doug Noah, Mark McCue and Brian Whitemore. Not only are they some of the most well trained and qualified fire investigators in the business, but each of them have taken the same oath to "preserve, protect and defend". Brian Haag is currently the Chief of the Annandale Fire Department; Doug Noah is a former Chief and current member of the Kenyon Fire Department; Mark McCue retired after almost 30 years serving the St. Paul Fire Department, most recently as Deputy Chief and Brian Whitemore, who was just appointed to the Bloomington Fire Department. Each time they respond to an incident they continue to put their lives on the line for the citizens of their community.

So on this day, this holiday, where we celebrate our nation's independence, I hope you will join me and take a moment to pause and remember the price that our nation continues to pay with our young men and women and extend our profound "thanks" to those that serve. I hope you all have a safe and happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July!

Robert B. Whitemore, CFI