



For Phil Mitchell, there is no “i” in teamwork. “I’m the training officer, inspector, and safety officer for McMinnville Fire Department,” said Mitchell. “It’s all about the safety of these guys and the safety of the citizens of McMinnville. That’s the bottom line. It’s not about me. It’s about protecting the guys who protect the citizens.”

Training varies widely.

“We try to be as well balanced as possible.

That way, we can continue to serve the citizens of McMinnville in the way they deserve. We need everything from water rescue, swift water rescue, high angle rescue, low angle rescue, etc. We have a hazardous materials technician here. Everyone is at least hazardous material awareness certified. We are emergency medical responders. There are 10 of us who are advanced EMTs.”

Mitchell says training is more complex today than it used to be.

“Starting really on 9/11/2001, that’s when the fire department had to become a jack-of-all-trades. Before that, we were looked at as a fire department and emergency medical. Now we have to have knowledge in different areas, different venues to go into. That requires constant training in different areas.”

The department practices what-if analysis.

“We have to look at the what if. What if this happens? We need to be prepared. People don’t call us on a good day. We get called

on probably the worst day of their life or probably the worst time that they’ve gone through. Whether it be medical, car wreck, house fire, or a flood, we get called.”

Mitchell is a former Marine.

“I spent more than 20 years in the Marine Corps. I thoroughly loved the Marine Corps and still do. I’m a member of the Bobby Ray Detachment of the Marine Corps League. What the Marine Corps League does is keep Marines together. It also helps keep the traditions of the Marine Corps alive.”

David “Bobby” Ray was born on Feb. 14, 1945. He graduated from City High in McMinnville in 1963. He became a fleet marine corpsman in the Navy. He lost his life while providing medical attention to injured Marines and was awarded the Medal of Honor.

Bobby Ray Detachment members volunteer in the community and provide education to school-aged children on why veterans’ funerals are significant, the traditions that go into them, and why they should be respected.

Importantly, detachment members are there for each other.

“We try and take care of our own. If someone needs a ride to the VA, one of us provides it. We also pick up any medications. You also enjoy hearing the stories of those that came in before you and those that came in after. We like the comradery.

“With me, I didn’t do anything special in the Marine Corps. I was a Marine and that was special. Just to get the chance to spend time with fellow Marines, is special. We all have something in common. We all earned the title. That makes us brothers for life.”

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