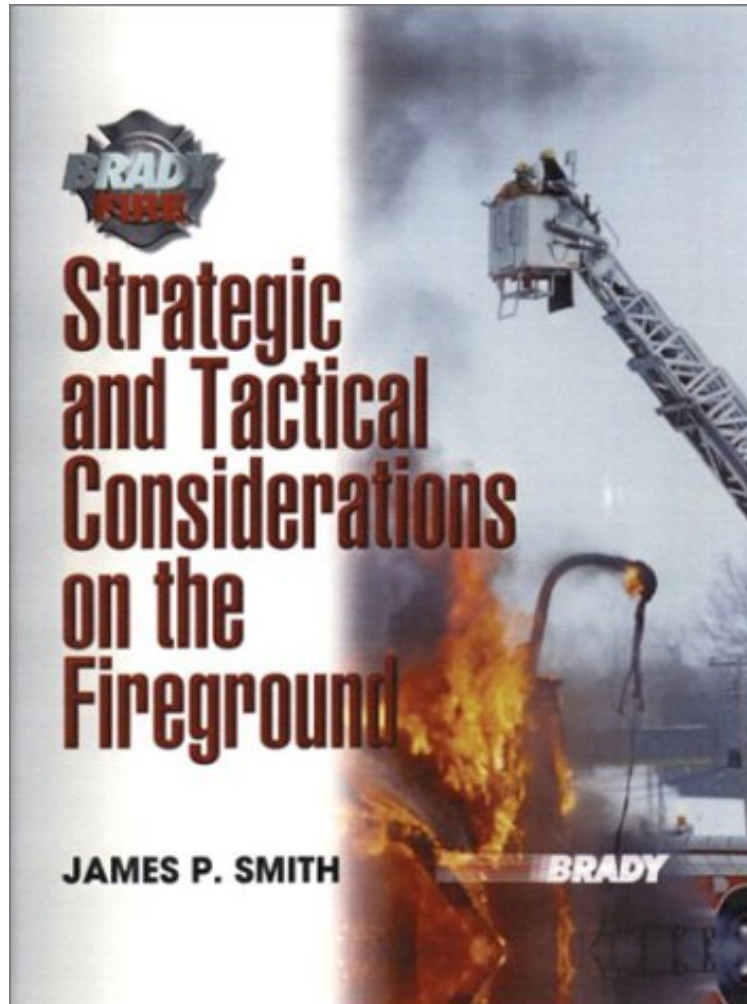


Strategic and Tactical Considerations on the Fireground

Jim Smith

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Jim Smith : Strategic and Tactical Considerations on the Fireground before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Strategic and Tactical Considerations on the Fireground:

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. OKBy J. MillerI found this book to be about the same as all of the other S and T books out there. It is a fine book.

Fireground provides a real-life approach developed from hands-on experience not third party description. The author uses his over 35 years of experience in handling major incidents, coupled with many years of teaching, to explain situations and problems that can confront an emergency responder. It is useful as a handbook at any type of incident or as a reference book, as each chapter can stand alone. This book provides current data, including rapid intervention teams, terrorism, cue-based decision-making and infrared technology. An invaluable aid to an incident commander to

utilize when confronted with a major fire; also can be used by all ranks, including Firefighters, Fire Lieutenant, Fire Captain, Battalion, District, Division, Deputy, Assistant or Chiefs of Departments.

From the Back Cover The author's 35 years of experience contributes to the real-life approach of this text, blending theory with personal experience. Strategic and Tactical Considerations on the Fireground uses a systems approach to guide you through the process of problem identification and solution response. From pre-incident planning to incident scene control, this text provides the tools for response in numerous situations including among others, building collapse, high rise fires, strip malls, and large commercial buildings. Features Include: The command sequence method for problem identification and strategy tactics. Cue-Based Decision-Making, taught by the National Fire Academy, to describe incident scene problem solving. Discussion of building construction the basic types and their strength, weaknesses, fire resistance and collapse potential. About the Author James P. Smith was appointed to the Philadelphia Fire Department on June 29, 1966. He was promoted to lieutenant on December 18, 1972; to captain on December 30, 1974; to battalion chief on August 3, 1981; and to deputy chief on June 27, 1987. Deputy chief is the highest civil service position. Chief Smith reports to the deputy commissioner. He has worked on both engine and ladder companies and in every section of the city. He has served as director of the Philadelphia Fire Academy. In this role, he was the departmental safety officer and responded on multiple alarm fires performing the safety officer's function. Additional areas of responsibility included the research and planning unit. Under his direction, a major accomplishment was a change from three-quarter length boots to the bunker gear concept. This involved a retrofitting process whereby three-quarter length boots and long coats were cut down, and bunker pants were purchased. This proved highly successful and saved the department over \$1 million. This gear concept became a prototype used by many departments. A new position of departmental grant officer was created and proved highly successful. This individual was able to secure funding for many programs that the budget was unable to accommodate. Chief Smith has been associated with the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland, since 1982. He is a graduate of the prestigious Executive Fire Officer's Program and is an adjunct instructor. He has developed and taught many programs. He has lectured throughout the United States on incident management, safety, church fires, building construction, building collapse, strategy and tactics, tank farm fires, and high-rise firefighting. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. In 1985, I started writing articles for various journals. I enjoyed writing and felt that it was a great way of sharing my experiences in the fire service. In 1988, I had the opportunity to write the bimonthly Fire Studies column for Firehouse magazine. In my many years of firefighting, I have made more than my share of mistakes. I have tried through my writing to share these mistakes, along with many positive experiences, that I have learned from over the years. I consider myself fortunate to have been in the fire service during the tumultuous 1960s and 1970s both as a firefighter and a company officer. The reason I say this is that I had the ability to respond to many fires. There were many nights when we went from fire to fire. Many times we would be restoring hose-line and equipment on our apparatus at a fireground and hear another fire being dispatched. We would make ourselves available for service and immediately respond to another working fire. The ability to respond to so many fires permitted us to reach a level of teamwork where companies functioned as well-oiled machines. Another plus was that if we made a mistake, we didn't have too long to dwell upon it before we would respond to another fire and rectify the previous mistake. After a 14-hour night tour we would be dog-tired, but we had enjoyed every minute of it. My friends who were not firefighters could never understand why I did not transfer from these busy inner city areas to a quieter station closer to home. If you have never been in the fire service, you too would have a difficult time understanding. There was the feeling of accomplishment, of being challenged, and yes, on a few occasions of being scared, but the final outcome of controlling a fire and hopefully being successful in making rescues made that feeling of tiredness go away. The hardest things to deal with were the seemingly endless number of children dying in sparse surroundings. Many of them never had a chance. Fires were started by portable heaters being used to keep them from freezing to death or by candles being used because the electricity had long ago been turned off. Along with careless smoking, many fires were started by children playing with matches or by the cowardice of Molotov cocktails being thrown into a structure, stealing the lives of those sleeping within. Seeing rugged firefighters crying as they carried these lifeless children's bodies from the burned out structures is embedded in my brain. **FIREFIGHTERS** The other area that made just as indelible a mark is the loss of life of fellow firefighters. Some were close personal friends, such as Lieutenant Jim Pouliot of Engine 20. Jim was a Minnesota farm boy who, after serving in the U.S. Navy at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, married and settled in Philadelphia and joined the fire department. I had the privilege of working as a firefighter with Jim for close to 7 years at Engine 30. We studied hard together for the lieutenant's test and we both were successful. Jim gave his life rescuing a fellow firefighter from certain death at the deadly Gulf Oil Refinery fire on August 17, 1975. That same deadly fire took a total of eight firefighters' lives, including firefighter John Andrews of Engine 49.1 was transferred as the captain of Engine 49 on that deadly date. What a first day it was! The fire started around 6:30 A.m. and went to 12 alarms, destroying tank after tank of flammable chemicals. It engulfed the firefighters in flames around 4:30 p.m. I arrived on the fire ground with E-49's "C" platoon around 6:15 p.m. to relieve the "D" platoon, I was stunned to learn that at that time over 30 firefighters were reported missing, including 3

members of Engine 49. In the ensuing hours, I received the sad news that John Andrews had made the supreme sacrifice. I had the responsibility of informing John's wife Gertrude, his daughter Patty, and his son John of his untimely death. There is no easy way of telling a family that their husband and dad would no longer be coming home. It is an act that I hope to never have to perform again. That same fire caused career-ending injuries to firefighter George Schrufer of Engine 49 due to burns sustained. The third missing firefighter from Engine 49 was located.

CHANGE IN THE FIRE SERVICE I have seen many changes in the fire service, and many things remain unchanged. We no longer call ravaged inner city neighborhoods ghettos. Today they are referred to as economically depressed areas or empowerment zones. This change is not because of any improvements, in fact many of these areas are incredibly worse due to the proliferation of drugs. The change is only semantic for the sake of the politician who is only seen in these areas around election time looking for votes and making promises that are rarely kept. After the election, only the residents, police, and firefighters can be found. One of the most positive areas of change is the smoke alarm. I feel that it has had the greatest effect in reducing civilian deaths and injuries. The biggest problem to overcome is the indifference of most citizens. When asked their biggest fear, most people are concerned with crime; few fear fire. Today most fire deaths still occur in residential buildings. My experience is that most of these could have been prevented if a smoke alarm had been installed and maintained. The sad part is the great number of deaths that occur with a smoke alarm present but nonoperable due to either dead or missing batteries. This indifference has to stop. We must impress upon everyone the importance of maintaining smoke alarms.

USING THIS BOOK The purpose of writing this book was to share the many things I have been taught or learned the hard way during my career. We as firefighters work in an uncontrolled environment so very different than other occupations. Through training, we are taught the prerequisites needed to perform our jobs. Yet once the alarm is received, there are many factors that can only be learned by experience. Since there are fewer fires today, we must continually train to keep our skills sharp. I hope the information in this book will minimize the number of surprises that you will find on the fire ground. The initial chapter of the book covers preincident factors: training, preincident planning, and the fire officer. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 cover management, decision making, and engine and truck company operations. Chapters 5 and 6 cover building construction, collapse, and incident scene safety. Chapters 7 and 8 cover specific types of occupancies and operations. Chapter 9 covers the actions involved after the incident: critiques and critical incident stress. There are repetitive statements and thoughts throughout this book. This was done intentionally. I hope this will not be a distraction and will be used to reinforce those important ideas. Though many firefighters who purchase a book read it from cover to cover, they will also use it as reference material. I attempted to have chapters stand alone. If a firefighter wanted to look up a specific subject, he or she wouldn't have to constantly reference numerous chapters. There are terms that can be considered regional or parochial. Some areas of the country use the terms incident command system or the acronym ICS; other areas use incident management system or IMS. Sectoring can be alphabetical or numerical. The terms divisions, groups, and sectors can be interchangeable in some command/ management systems and highly restrictive in others. Implementation of a command system and strategy and tactics will be highly dependent upon the number of resources available. I have tried to be generic so that the basic information will be helpful regardless of the terminology. With all of those differences, there is one basic fact. We as firefighters will be called to control and extinguish a fire. The greater the amount of information and preparation we have, the better and safer the overall operation will be performed. The safety of civilians and firefighters alike is an awesome responsibility. It is extremely important for anyone who is assuming that responsibility at an emergency scene to have a plan. This book will assist in preparing a firefighter for that command role.