Press Release

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

Fort Drum firefighters train on Remington Pond for cold-weather rescues

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- The temperature was near freezing when a group of firefighters submerged into the icy waters of Remington Pond for cold-weather rescue training on Jan. 27.

Even neck-deep in water, the dry suits they wore kept their body temperature normal while running through life-saving scenarios.

“All in all, I felt perfectly fine the entire time,” said Fort Drum Firefighter Tim Karg. “The suit keeps us dry, and it’s very buoyant, so that aids you during the rescue procedure. Plus, you have your crew on shore running the rope lines to assist you once you make contact with the victim.”

The firefighters practiced extracting themselves and a victim from the water, using ropes and an inflatable boat to secure everyone to safety.

“This is a good way to keep our skills up because, luckily, this is not something we are called to do all the time,” Karg said. “At the same time, it’s still a skill we must all stay proficient on.”

Deputy Fire Chief Mike Marks said that the drills build confidence in their skills, in their equipment and in each other.

“You want to make sure they are comfortable operating in the suits and are able to effectively rescue someone safely from the water,” he said. “We want them to be proficient with all the equipment we have and be able to put it all together into one operation.”

Karg joined Fort Drum Fire and Emergency Services in April, but he has experienced cold-weather training as a volunteer firefighter in Theresa.

“It’s like riding a bike, or anything else – the more you do it, the more comfortable you feel,” Karg said. “That’s important to have when you’re out there for real. You might have a person in the ice, panicking, and you have to calm them down, reassure them. That person needs to have confidence in you, that you know what to do, and that comes from our training.”

Marks said that once complete, 54 fire personnel will have participated in the training over the course of several days.

“A lot of them have been here on multiple training days, so they are getting a lot out of it,” he said. “Ultimately, everyone touches the water, and everyone gets in a suit and on the boat.”

Marks said that they concentrate on structural fire training year-round, and as spring approaches, they will start wildland fire training.

“Fires and emergencies can happen at any time, so it’s important for us to work on these specialized rescue tasks as well as our regular firefighting training,” he said.

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For photos & captions:

<https://www.army.mil/article/242797/fort_drum_firefighters_train_on_remington_pond_for_cold_weather_rescues>

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