

Introducing Captain Jake: The fire service's Yoda

By Michael S. Williams

Captain Jake has joined the team at the Fire Services Training Institute. Captain Jake has close to 30 years in the fire service. He started as a volunteer firefighter as many of you did in his hometown. After college, he went to work for the Forest Service.

Several years later, he moved over to the state forestry department where he worked his way through the ranks. He is now one of their training officers. Jake has a real passion for training.

You know Jake; nearly every department has a Jake. He is the seasoned veteran of the department, the one who has the longevity and experience to be the best that a wildland firefighter has to offer. Jake is the guy who could have been chief, but decided to stay in the field and mentor probies as they entered the fire service. Jake does not own a class A uniform, a tie, does not polish his boots, his badge has not been polished since the academy, but the center seal is rubbed smooth. Jake is not into the pomp and circumstance of the fire service. He is at home in the dirt drinking day old coffee and eating green baloney sandwiches. In short, Jake is true "old school."

For Jake, it is all business, no nonsense, safety by the book on the fireline. It is his nature. There is no need to show up with all of the hip, slick and cool toys from your favorite fire catalog. Jake will make you throw them away. And don't even think of talking on the radio unless it is talking to you. Jake will be on you like a bad rash, but you can count on him to save your life someday. When others are pointing fingers, casting blame on others, Jake is the stand up guy who everyone can count on. For management, Jake is the kind of guy who is in a glass box like a fire extinguisher. Break glass in case of an emergency.

Jake is the type of supervisor who will jump in your mess kit in short order and call you on your whining ways. Yet, he will also stand up to management as they want to give you time off for some stupid thing you said or did. Jake does not forget, but he does forgive. When the smoke clears, the equipment is cleaned up and you are back at the bam, you can count on him to be the first to compliment you on a job well done.


Jake was introduced to the fire service in 2005 by William Teie in the

third edition of the *Firefighter's Handbook on Wildland Firefighting*, published by Deer Valley Press. Chief Teie is retired from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection after 34 years of service. He was serving as Deputy Director Fire Protection at the time of his retirement.

Chief Teie has released his most recent publication *Leadership for the Wildland Fire Officer, Leading in a Dangerous Profession*. This is an outstanding text on leadership in today's fire service.

Although Jake may be the vision of Chief Teie, it is Dave Hubert who brings him to life on paper. Dave served 27 years with the Orange County Fire Department. He served as a training officer, fire prevention inspector and fire defense coordinator, as well as a Captain at Station 22. Chief Teie says "Dave is a true practitioner who knows the reality of the job." Dave has been a cartoonist for decades. He is best known for his character Hubie who appears in many publications and Dave is the artist for Deer Valley Press.

With FSTI, Jake will be making another step forward as a leader for safety, training and leadership under an exclusive agreement with Deer Valley Press. You will see and hear Jake on the CSFA and FSTI websites and Facebook pages. Click on Jack to hear what he has to say on a multitude of subjects. Jake will also be found in future editions of *The California Fire Service Magazine*.

Captain Jake is not a Jedi Knight, but rather a Yoda. He is graying at the temples and can never keep his shirt tucked in or his hair combed. But he is a teacher's teacher. He knows what he is talking about, so listen well. FSTI is proud to have Captain Jake and Deer Valley Press as part of our team. 

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