

My name is Josh Lipe, and I'm writing today to ask for the help of the Illinois VFW in spreading the news of a unique event for active duty or veterans who are also firefighters, and that same population of active duty or veterans who may be interested in the fire service either as a career or volunteer. A bit of background is in order.

I spent 4 years as a Marine infantryman with a deployment to Iraq and a Purple Heart. After retirement from the Marine Corps, I've spent the last 15 years dedicated to the citizens of Makanda Township in far southern Illinois as a firefighter/EMT, and now also as an instructor for the Illinois Fire Service Institute. There are several reasons vets gravitate to the fire service, as there are a lot of parallels between the two, with service, honor, loyalty, and esprit de corps being but a few.

This day started 2 years ago as a way for vets to connect with each other, to reconnect and open up career/volunteer opportunities to those vets who may not be currently active in the fire service. The training is world class and the camaraderie is second to none.

As far as I know, it's the only one like it in the nation.

The event is on October 11, 2020 from 0800-1700 on the Fire Service's training grounds in Champaign. There is no cost to the participant. All gear and training are provided for those not currently in the fire service. There are many facets to the modern fire service, and we will train on multiple aspects of the fire profession including fire suppression and extrication. Let me tell you, it's a lot easier to breathe in the airpack than it is through a gas mask!

We are also looking at a "dining in" type dinner the night before to connect outside the fireground.

The infographic is attached to this email. My phone number is 618-203-4042, and it is always on. My email is lipe@illinois.edu. I hope to hear back from you, as I think our organizations could have a mutually beneficial relationship both for this event and moving forward in the future.

The link to sign up is [here](#).

Thank you for your time.

Josh Lipe