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**FEBRUARY 18,
2020**

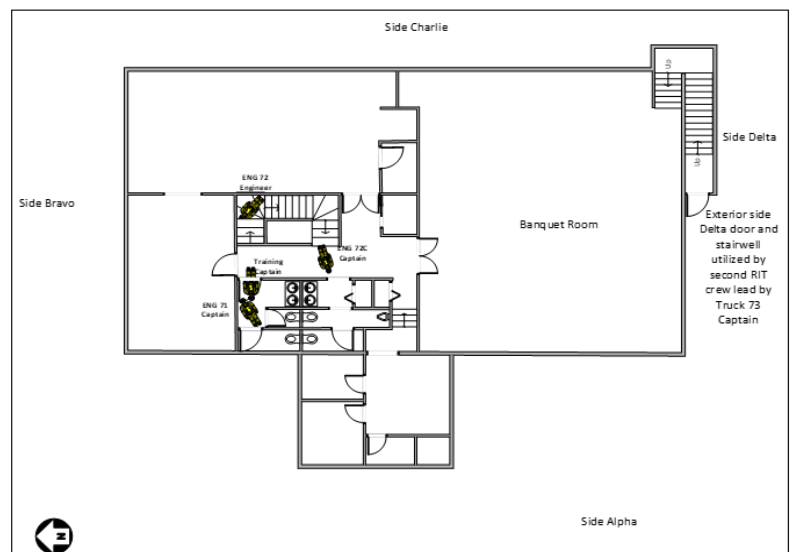
NIOSH FF Fatality Report 2020-10

On **February 18, 2020**, Captain Ramon Figueroa (35) and Firefighter Patrick Jones (25) of the Porterville (CA) Fire Department died in the line of duty while performing a search in an occupied public library.

At 1616 hours companies were dispatched to a commercial structure fire at the library caused by arson. Engine 71 with both Captain Figueroa and FF Jones arrived on scene at 1618 hours and the Captain reported heavy smoke showing from Side Alpha. A bystander told the police that a woman with a walker was on the second floor. The E71 crew entered the building, without a hoseline or informing the Incident Commander.

At 1626 hours fire conditions had worsened, a defensive attack was declared and there was no response to multiple attempts to contact Captain Figueroa on the radio. A Rapid Intervention Team was assembled and made entry to locate the E71 crew. A minute later Captain Figueroa called a MAYDAY from the second floor. He stated that he and FF Jones were running low on air in the banquet room and were trying to locate the stairs. At 1638 hours, the RIT reported no fire but zero visibility in the stairwell to the 2nd floor. They could also hear activated PASS alarms.

Captain Figueroa was found in a bathroom and removed from the building by a second RIT. He was transported to the hospital and later died. Several attempts were made to locate FF Jones but were unsuccessful. Interior efforts were suspended due to the progressing fire conditions and collapse of the building. He was located by an Urban Search and Rescue Team the next day.



Key Contributing Factors

- Air management factors at the task and tactical level
- Risk assessment/size up difficulties
- Primary search without a tagline or hoseline
- Large area search in an occupied structure (public library)
- Ineffective MAYDAY procedures and survival techniques
- Residential tactics in a commercial structure
- Crew integrity lost during search
- Radio communication difficulties
- Lack of sprinkler system
- Rapid fire growth



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