

## ARFF TRAINING



Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

The Mt. Vernon Fire Department took part in Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) training on Friday. The week long training was capped off by a scenario on Friday where firefighters responded to a downed aircraft.

# MVFD takes part in ARFF training

*The training involved a simulation of an aircraft crash*

**BY JOSH JONES**

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — The Mt. Vernon Fire Department (MVFD) capped off its week of Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) training on Friday at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

Airport Director Chris Collins discussed the training that the

MVFD did on Friday.

"This is, as I understand, the practical portion of the 40 hour initial training course and our instructors have combined a lot of different practical elements into this exercise," Collins said.

According to Sentinel archives, the airport board, in an agreement with the City of Mt. Vernon, approved the training for all non ARFF certified firefighters to be trained. The airport requires ARFF certified firefighters at the airport station at all times.

The class consisted of 13 firefighters. Chris Yenne, a captain with the

MVFD, discussed the ARFF training and mindset leading up to the scenario on Friday.

"A lot of going through everything in the ARFF book. We have not had a class in a long time. Since we do have an airport with a 139 certification, we have to have someone out here trained," Yenne said. "Our department is only about half staffed with ARFF personnel."

Fire Chief Kevin Sargent discussed the differences for firefighters when responding to an aircraft incident versus a house fire.

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Sentinel File Photo/JOSH JONES

**SIMULATION —** The Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) training that the Mt. Vernon Fire Department underwent on Friday at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport included extinguishing a fire after an aircraft had an emergency while airborne as well as rescuing the passengers portrayed by life sized dummies.

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“When you have an aircraft coming in for an emergency it is a different dynamic. Number one, as a firefighter on the ground out here, when a pilot declares an emergency that pilot may still be in the air,” Sargent said. “So, we have the ability to respond and stage until that pilot decides if his aircraft is coming in safely or it is coming in on fire or it may have a landing gear problem.”

Collins discussed the scenario the firefighters would be undertaking for their training.

“We are going to radio where we have an airplane that is on a 10 mile final descent with smoke in the cockpit and the indicator lights for the landing gear are not functioning, where the pilots can’t see,” Collins said. “Kevin and I are going to be the pilots and the notification is going to come via the radio into the fixed based operator and then they will pull a crash

rescue phone.

“Then the subject airplane will have landed on runway two three, bounced a couple of times and veered off to the left and into the grass,” Collins said. “So, the firefighters are going to use their training to extinguish any flames, enter the airplane and do the things the teachers have taught.”

Sargent said an important factor that comes into play is the control the pilot has over the aircraft.

“We are not in control, so we have to communicate with that pilot to find out how many souls are on board, how much fuel is on board, all of these different things,” Sargent said.

Yenne noted some differences with responding to an aircraft fire include knowing the location of all of the parts, the extinguishing system and turning the batteries off.

“All of these are different, because this is specialized,” Yenne said. “The fire service has so many different specializations, this is just one of them.”

Sargent noted some issues located inside the aircraft that can pose a prob-

lem.

“The dynamic is, we are dealing with Jet A, which is a highly flammable fuel,” Sargent said. “We are also dealing with components of the aircraft, which are magnesium, that is a different type of fire than what you would see in a house fire.”

Sargent gave his reaction on being able to hold this class.

“We are actually really excited and happy that we were able to get our guys trained locally. Because that has helped to offset some expenses that we would have had had they traveled somewhere else to get the training,” Sargent said. “The partnership with the airport and the city over the last 10 or 11 years has been tremendous.”

“It is very vital that our airport continues to be capable of bringing aircraft in for business purposes, for maintenance purposes and things of that nature,” Sargent said. “If they keep the FAA [Federal Aviation Administration] Certification, which is a part of this, it gives our community more opportunities for development and growth.”

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