

Local Firefighter Badly Injured in Maryland House Fire

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This is slightly older news, particularly if you're a [Statter911](#) reader. Dave's been providing sterling coverage of Friday's house fire in Riverdale Heights, Maryland, that severely injured Buies Creek native and current Bladensburg Fire Department Firefighter Ethan Sorrell. He's shown on the right, with Firefighter Kevin O'Toole. Both were badly injured when a sudden gust of wind created a "blowtorch effect" inside the residential structure that crews had just entered. Sorrell, 21, is a volunteer member of the Bladensburg Fire Department, where he's attending college. Five other firefighters were also injured.

[As this local story reports](#) (FireNews.net by way of a couple sources), Sorrell suffered respiratory burns through his esophagus and down to his lungs. He's presently unable to speak, and communicating with pen and paper. O'Toole suffered second- and third-degree burns over 40 percent of his body. He's scheduled for skin-graft surgery and will be staying at the Washington Hospital Center burn unit for six weeks.



Bladensburg Fire Department photo

Sorrell is a student at the University of Maryland, and a 2009 graduate of Harnett Central High School. His firefighting career began as a member of Buies Creek Fire Department in 2006, followed by Dunn Emergency Services in 2008. He's studying emergency management and fire scenes at the university, and has been a member of Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Company 9 since February of last year. He also has many ties in Wake County, including a brother who is a member of the Fuquay-Varina Fire Department.

Evening update: Sorrell has been released from the Medstar Burn Unit at the Washington Hospital Center, reports [this Statter911 story](#). He was brought back to the fire station on Truck 809, the rig that brought him to the 57th Avenue fire. He is now reportedly back with his family in North Carolina, [updates this story](#). O'Toole is up and around at the burn unit. He'll have a second round of skin grafts tomorrow.

Thanks Mike!!

J.D. - 02/29/12 - 19:33

Hey PGTruckie, I'm thinking of you Brother. I saw the story and couldn't believe my eyes. If you come back to NC for a little, hit me up.

Silver - 02/29/12 - 20:10

Ethan has returned home, as of 7:30pm tonight. He was escorted by a crew from Bladensburg Fire Department and the fire department SUV

back from Bladensburg, Maryland to Buies Creek Fire Department. As of tonight, he was feeling much better and asked that everyone continue to pray for Kevin O'Toole as he remains in the burn center from what has now been ruled as an arson fire. On a lighter note, Buies Creek Fire Department would like to thank Summerville Fire-Rescue, Dunn Emergency Services, Erwin Fire-Rescue and a huge thank you to Bladensburg Fire Department for assisting us in putting on a big welcome home party for Ethan tonight.

BuiesCreek802 ([Email](#)) - 03/01/12 - 00:41

First I would like to thank everyone for continued prayers and support. My guys have told me everyday I was in the hospital and heading south we have people calling from all over. So thank you to the chiefs and officers that called offering support from manpower, to money, to apparatus and food. Thank you to the few that I had as instructors coming through as a junior it was the basic training that saved my life and in turn allowed me to save my brothers life. Special thank you to Michael Swiman from Wake Forest FD it was that rescue 1 & 2 class at JCC when you were teaching us victim removal that essentially allowed me to get O'Toole out. Thanks again for the support and prayers it truly means a lot and please feel free to send cards and letters stop by and visit I have a lot of time in the next few days before I head back to be with my brother. Thank you again and Mike sorry for being the annoying pest that tended to start shit on some of the threads I just like to have reasons why :) no harm intended. Oh and Silver please email me, the guys at the firehouse told me some guy called and said to tell me it was "Silver".

Ethan Sorrell

Bladensburg volunteer Firefighter #18472

Buies Creek volunteer Firefighter #864

PGTruckie ([Email](#)) - 03/01/12 - 02:15

I am sure Ethan will get on here & say something eventually. I know that many people from this state & the Harnet/Wake county areas have been asking and following all the updates on Ethan, Kevin, & the guys from Riverdale & College Park. I can't even begin to say thanks for all the phone calls, emails, facebook messages/posts, cards, & prayers. Ethan has been remarkable in healing. He will be at home for a while before he begins the road of traveling back to MD for follow up visits with the burn center doctors & hopefully can soon start going up there to see Kevin. We held a welcome home for him tonight at Buies Creek & man I think it was hard to find a dry eye when he first got out of the car. He couldn't even get out of the truck before I wrapped my arms around him & hugged him harder than any other time in past 21 years. I had left and returned home on Sunday night & it felt so good to hug him & know he was out of the hospital and home with us (until he heals & goes back up north.) Please if you can get up with him & go by to see him he still needs support and asks that people continue to think of & pray for Kevin who has a longer road to recovery. I just can't believe that since I got the call on Friday night telling me what happened & then I was given the task of leaving work to go notify my parents at 10:30 of what happened, that he is home. By the way I wish that task on no man or woman in the fire service.

On another note he is still a member at Buies Creek & Bladensburg, he serves at Buies Creek alongside his father, grandfather, & myself. Both of these departments/families have been so supportive to my mom, dad, brother, sister, & myself during this ordeal. Also the DC Firefighters Burn Foundation has been awesome in covering all expenses for my family while we were at Ethan's side in addition to the staff at Medstar Burn Unit at Washington Hospital Center giving him the most excellent care he could receive. But back to Ethan's service history, I would have never thought that 5.5 years ago when he joined Buies Creek as a junior firefighter that he would develop into such a excellent fireman (or truckie for the work he prefers.) HE IS my little brother & I have learned so much from him & at times have held his knowledge of the fire service to a degree equivalent with that of a seasoned veteran. Just what an excellent man he has become in such a short period of time.

Again thanks everyone for what you have done in past week you all know who you are! Continue to pray for Ethan & definitely continue to pray for Kevin as he is in a lot of discomfort and has a ways to go. Also, if you have the ability please take a 5 hour drive north & visit this young man it means so much to the family to see all the support from firefighters. They have had visitors over the past few days from as far away as Oakland, CA!!! Everyone in the fire service in the words of my brother tonight "Continue your training, train always, if not for the training I had I would not be here tonight & neither would Kevin."

I love all my brothers & sisters in the fire service and I mean that from the bottom of my heart. Even if I don't know you I promise you that after this past week you are family to me! Stay safe & I will see you on the next run or the next B-shift day in Fuquay!

Also like 802 said thanks to all the departments & family that could make the welcome home event for him tonight. It meant the world to him & showed him that the brotherhood is every where, even in smaller departments & towns down south.

Thanks, Joshua Sorrell

Joshua Sorrell (bcfdtower8) (Email) - 03/01/12 - 02:23

Ethan – I am very relieved your are safe and sound! Josh – you’re a great brother and I greatly appreciate your dedication! God Bless you both and the guys still recovering in PG. Contact me if anything is needed!

A.C. Rich - 03/01/12 - 21:44

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Comment moderation is enabled on this site. This means that your comment will not be visible on this site until it has been approved by an editor.

To prevent spam we require you to answer this silly question

What are the FIRST TWO LETTERS of the word 'fire'?

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Notify: Yes, send me email when someone replies.

Hide email: Yes, hide my email address.

Small print: All html tags except and <i> will be removed from your comment. You can make links by just typing the url or mail-address.