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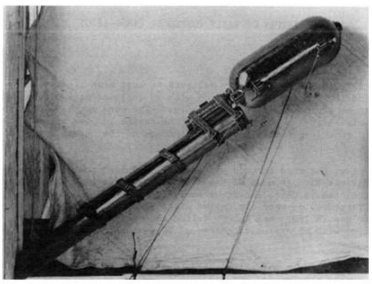
The ***TORPEDO*** that gets to the heart of the fire, so you don't have to!

By: Robert Avsec, Battalion Chief (Ret.)

Ask any firefighter what's one of the toughest fires to get a good fire stream to and the likely answer will be, ***"An attic fire with scuttle hole access."***

And it's easy to see why. The average American is born with a "pack rat gene." We seem to keep and store everything (Any guesses who invented mini storage units?). And we keep a great deal of it in our attics.

All that stuff makes it near impossible for a fully equipped firefighter with a hose line to get up and through the scuttle hole. First, you must bring your own ladder because that fold down ladder installed during construction is an accident waiting to happen when a fully equipped firefighter gets on it (That is in your fire department's SOGs, right?).



The boom or spar-mounted configuration was employed by both the Confederate and Union Navies during the Civil War. The most notable use of the spar torpedo was the sinking of the Confederate ram ALBEMARLE by Lt. W. B. Cushing, U.S.N., at Plymouth, N.C. in October of 1864.—San Francisco Maritime National Park Assoc., *"History of the Torpedo, Part I."*



The TORPEDO A360

OK, so you've got your ladder and your hose line but when you poke your head up through the scuttle hole you can't see a thing because of the heat and smoke. Your TIC (thermal imaging camera) shows a heat signature down around the B-C corner of the attic (Probably where the lightning struck the house which is how the call came in).

But between you and the fire is…stuff. And lots of it.

Boxes, old tricycles and bicycles, baby furniture, pieces from a '57 Chevy (How did that get there?).

All hindering your ability to get a straight shot on the fire with your fire stream. Your exposure to the toxic chemicals, chemical compounds, and carcinogens you encounter on every fire is the #1 threat to your long-term health and wellness. And the only way to truly minimize those risks is to find every means possible to stay out of the smoke and still get the job done.

Remember the last fully involved car fire you handled? Bet you and your buddy waded right into the smoke hitting every square inch of the car's interior with your fire stream as you moved in.

Today's ***TORPEDO*** can dramatically increase your capability to suppress fires, especially in hard to access spaces, and with reduced exposure to smoke and toxic gasses.

Think about how many hundred toxic chemicals, chemical compounds, and carcinogens you were exposed to from all those burning plastics and synthetic materials (most of which are petroleum based) in that burning automobile.

And it's those kinds of exposures that can be eliminated with the ***TORPEDO*** from American Fire Equipment. The ***TORPEDO*** comes with one eight-foot extension tube and one twelve-foot extension tube giving you and your partner twenty-feet of extension for your ***TORPEDO***.

And that length of extension is what would enable you both to stay out of the smoke and still extinguish the fire more safely, effectively, and efficiently.

The ***TORPEDO*** (available in both aluminum and stainless-steel models) can flow 200 GPM from 49 different angles giving a firefighter a spherical water pattern with a 20-foot radius.

All aluminum components are constructed using 6061 T6 structural aluminum (6061 is one of the most used aluminum grades in the world) and then hard-coat anodized for improved strength and durability. Additional extension tubes are available for both models, as well as custom sizes, up to 24 feet long.

WHAT THE TORPEDO CAN DO

The ***TORPEDO*** is not the only nozzle you need in your fire suppression toolbox, but there are several fire scenarios where it could just be the best nozzle you've ever used. How about being able to attack and suppress these fire types from the exterior of the structure?

- Room and contents fires
- Attic fires
- Basement fires
- Crawl spaces
- Mobile home fires

WHAT THE TORPEDO DOES FOR FIREFIGHTERS

Using the ***TORPEDO*** in situations like those above improves the safety, effectiveness, and efficiency of firefighting suppression operations because doing so enables firefighters to—when incident size-up suggests it—conduct suppression operations without direct entry into the hazard area (e.g., entering a structure, getting into the smoke cloud of a vehicle fire). And that one factor means:

- Reduction in the unnecessary exposure of firefighters to fire conditions and heat exposure; firefighters developing hyperthermia (from working in structural PPE) are prone to sudden cardiac events (e.g., heart attacks and strokes).
- Reduction in a firefighter's exposure to the toxic chemicals, chemical compounds, and carcinogens—especially particulates—that is being linked to higher rates of cancer than that of the general population.
- Reduces required staffing for a fire suppression incident. Think of this: a volunteer fire company arrives at a room and contents fire with only two or three firefighters, an insufficient number to make an interior attack. But using a ***TORPEDO*** from the outside would make even a single firefighter a force to be reckoned with, no?
- With no moving parts, the ***TORPEDO*** is simple to deploy and easy to operate.
- Rapid fire compartment temperature reduction when used in a transitional fire attack that quickly improves the environment and the survivability of any occupants.
- Can aid in extending the life of structural firefighting PPE, due to reduced overall wear and exposure to heat and mechanical hazards associated with interior firefighting operations.

Interior structural firefighting has gotten more hazardous with the introduction of synthetics (mostly petroleum-based) and light-weight building construction, both of which mean firefighters are arriving at just about the time conditions are right for a flashover.

Doesn't it make sense to have a ***TORPEDO*** in your arsenal that enables you to address more fire suppression scenarios without enduring unnecessary exposure and risk?

For more information, including how to order your ***TORPEDO***, visit American Fire Equipment online at https://www.afecompany.com/

Battalion Chief (Ret.) Robert Avsec served with the men and women of the Chesterfield County (VA) Fire and EMS Department for 26 years. He's now using his acquired knowledge, skills, and experiences as a freelance writer for FireRescue1.com and as the "blogger in chief" for this blog. Contact him via e-mail, robert.avsec.wv@gmail.com.

"We get close, so you don't have to!"