



FDNY

*Medal Day
2005*





New York's Bravest

PROUDLY SERVING SINCE 1865

FIRE DEPARTMENT, CITY OF NEW YORK

MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG, *Mayor*
NICHOLAS SCOPPETTA, *Fire Commissioner*
PETER E. HAYDEN, *Chief of Department*

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Brooklyn, New York 11201
www.nyc.gov/fdny

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MEDAL BOARD

Frank P. Cruthers
First Deputy Commissioner

Peter E. Hayden
Chief of Department

Salvatore J. Cassano
Chief of Operations

Michael Canty
Battalion Chief

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Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

Dear Friends:

It is an honor to join with you today to celebrate the Firefighters and Fire Officers who have demonstrated unbreakable allegiance to the people of our great City. As we honor today's medal winners, we also pay tribute to Lieutenants Curtis Meyran and John Bellew and Firefighters Christian Engeldrum and Richard Sclafani, who selflessly gave their lives to protect the rest of us.

Since its founding 140 years ago, the New York City Fire Department has put out more than two million fires and saved hundreds of thousands of lives. Today, the Department is home to the most talented, most professional, most courageous Firefighters in the world. Under the dynamic leadership of Commissioner Scoppetta, the FDNY keeps improving even with the additional responsibilities of defending our City against acts of terrorism. Last year, for instance, New York recorded the lowest number of fire fatalities since 1919, despite the fact that 2¹/₂ million more people are living within the City's limits.

On behalf of all eight million residents and the many millions more who come to New York City to work, visit or vacation, I congratulate today's medal winners. You have raised the bar for your peers and you continue to set the standard for fire departments around the world. Best wishes for continued success.





Nicholas Scoppetta
Fire Commissioner

Every year on Medal Day, we get an opportunity to show New York the heart and soul of the FDNY. The pages of this book are filled with stories of daring rescues—from burning buildings, confined spaces and treacherous waters—and with diligent investigation for the cause and origin of fire in the City. The actions of the Department members we honor today continue a legacy of service that has defined the Fire Department for 140 years.

Of course, today's medal winners are the first to acknowledge that their daring feats were not individual achievements. As we all know, firefighting is teamwork. Behind many of these heroic acts were Firefighters operating the line to protect the inside team; ladder company chauffeurs positioning their aerials or buckets as a precautionary egress; and Officers who put their companies' safety before their own.

As we celebrate these achievements, we also must remember the four Firefighters who gave their lives in the line of duty since our last Medal Day. Lieutenant Curtis Meyran, Lieutenant John Bellew, Firefighter Richard Sclafani and Firefighter Christian Engeldrum each made the supreme sacrifice while in the service of others. They put their lives in the line of danger so that others would be spared. There is no greater feat and no higher price.

The heroic actions we honor here today were performed by professionals who carry with them the full knowledge of the risks involved, the memory of those we have lost and the awareness of the potential price to be paid. Yet, day after day, year after year, our Firefighters keep watch over this City. And when duty calls, they answer.

I congratulate all of today's medal winners. I commend their companies. And I thank all members of this Department for doing their part to ensure that the FDNY remains the greatest fire department in the world.

Nicholas Scoppetta





Peter E. Hayden
Chief of Department

This year's Medal Day is a bit unusual compared to past years because the preponderance of medals are being awarded for actions performed at one incident--specifically, December 15, 2004, Queens Box 22-7889. At this one incident, 19 civilians were treated and transported. Seventeen were classified as 10-45s.

This particular fire--caused by an unattended candle and then compounded by the occupants leaving the apartment door open when they exited--was so intense that the "B" stairway wall and hallway were burned down to the brickwork. Firefighters were confronted with panicked civilians escaping down bed sheets in a rear shaft.

As Deputy Chief Mark Ferran, Division 14, said in a letter to his companies and used in an upcoming *WNYF* article, "This was an extremely difficult and stressful job. Firefighters had to brave extreme conditions to rescue trapped civilians above the fire. Engine companies were required to stop assisting with the lines in order to treat the numerous patients who were rescued so quickly."

Chief Ferran concluded by saying, "I am proud to work alongside such dedicated professionals, who, in these trying times for our Department, demonstrate daily their commitment to excellence in our service to this City and to one another."

Had this incident occurred in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan or Staten Island, our members would have performed just as heroically. In fact, all the boroughs are well-represented. Members from the Bronx and Brooklyn performed daring rope rescues. Members from Staten Island operated without the benefit of a protecting hose-line to give a victim another chance at life. A treacherous water rescue from the Hudson River highlights the Marine Division, specifically Marine 1 members operating in Manhattan. And, thanks to quick and thorough investigative skills, a BFI Fire Marshal secured a conviction for felony arson.

Going back to Chief Ferran's quote, I, too, am proud to work alongside such dedicated professionals. I am honored to be your leader. I am extremely gratified by your outstanding efforts as reflected upon in today's ceremonies. Thank you all.

Peter Hayden

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER



FRANK P. CRUTHERS

DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS



MYLAN DENERSTEIN
Legal Affairs



MILTON FISCHBERGER
Technology &
Support Services



FRANCIS X. GRIBBON
Public Information



DANIEL SHACKNAI
Intergovernmental Affairs
& Management Initiatives



DOUGLAS WHITE
Administration

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONERS

CAROLINE KRETZ
Intergovernmental Affairs

MICHAEL VECCHI
Management Initiatives

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONERS

JAMES BASILE
Fleet/Technical Services

JAMES DRURY
Investigations and Trials

KAY ELLIS
Bureau of Fire Prevention

STEPHEN GREGORY
Communications

V. SERENA JOYCE
Family Assistance

PAULETTE LUNDY
Equal Employment
Opportunity

JOSEPH MASTROPIETRO
Facilities

**DONAY J.
QUEENAN**
Human Resources

STEPHEN G. RUSH
Budget and
Finance

DONALD STANTON
Technology
Development & Systems

BUREAU OF HEALTH SERVICES

**CHIEF
MEDICAL OFFICER**



Dr. Kerry Kelly

**DEPUTY CHIEF
MEDICAL OFFICER**



Dr. David J. Prezant

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MONSIGNOR MARC FILACCHIONE

REVEREND STEPHEN HARDING

FATHER JOSEPH HOFFMAN

FATHER CHRISTOPHER KEENAN

RABBI JOSEPH POTASNIK

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Chief of Operations



Michael C. Weinlein
Assistant Chief of Operations



Joseph W. Pfeifer
Deputy Assistant Chief of Operations



Joseph J. Ramos
Deputy Assistant Chief of Operations



John A. Coloe
Deputy Assistant Chief of Operations



James E. Esposito
Deputy Assistant Chief, Bureau of Operations



Ronald R. Spadafora
Deputy Assistant Chief, Bureau of Operations



John Norman
Deputy Assistant Chief, Special Operations Command



Thomas R. Galvin
Assistant Chief, Chief of Training



Allen S. Hay
Assistant Chief, Safety and Inspection Services Command



James Jackson
Assistant Chief, Chief of Fire Prevention



Patrick M. McNally
Assistant Chief, Acting Chief of Fire Prevention



Howard J. Hill
Deputy Assistant Chief, Assistant Chief of Fire Prevention



Louis F. Garcia
Chief Fire Marshal



Richard McCahey
Asst. Chief Fire Marshal

BOROUGH COMMANDERS



Joseph J. Callan
Assistant Chief Bronx



Edward S. Kilduff
Assistant Chief Brooklyn



Harold Meyers
Assistant Chief Manhattan



Robert F. Sweeney
Assistant Chief Queens



Thomas J. Haring
Assistant Chief Staten Island

SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Battalion Chief
James Dalton
Marine Operations



Battalion Chief
Robert Ingram
Haz-Mat Operations



Battalion Chief
William Siegel
Rescue Operations

DIVISION COMMANDERS



Deputy Chief
Richard E. Fuerch
Division 1



Deputy Chief
Thomas M. Jensen
Division 3



Deputy Chief
Kevin Butler
Division 6



Deputy Chief
James F. Mulrenan
Division 7



Deputy Chief
James E. Leonard
Division 8



Deputy Chief
Michael Marrone
Division 11



Deputy Chief
James A. DiDomenico
Division 13



Deputy Chief
John A. Acerno
Division 14



Deputy Chief
Daniel Butler
Division 15

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE COMMAND

CHIEF OF EMS COMMAND



John Peruggia



Jerry Z. Gombo

Deputy Assistant Chief of EMS Operations



John S. McFarland

Deputy Assistant Chief of EMS Operations

CHIEF OFFICERS



Charles Wells

*Division Chief
EMS Operations*



Mark Stone

*Division Chief
Operations & Logistics*



Fredrick Villani

*Division Chief
Operations & Planning*



Mark Steffens

Chief EMS Division 1



Frances Pascale

Chief EMS Division 2



Robert Hannafey

Chief EMS Division 3



Robert Browne

Chief EMS Division 4



Joel Friedman

Chief EMS Division 5



James P. Martin

Division Chief EMS Academy



Jace Pinkus

*Division Chief
Emergency Medical Dispatch*

THE JAMES GORDON BENNETT MEDAL WINNERS

The James Gordon Bennett Medal was established in 1869 and, for years, it was the sole decoration awarded for valor in the Fire Department of the City of New York. As a result of its seniority among medals, it is awarded annually for the most outstanding act of heroism after the consideration and deliberate judgment of the members of the Medal Board of the NYC Fire Department.

- 1869--Lieutenant Minthorne D. Tompkins (L-1)
 Captain Benjamin A. Gicquel (E-9)
- 1870--Lieutenant Charles L. Kelly (E-9)
- 1871--Firefighter Ambrose L. Austin (E-15)
- 1872--Lieutenant Thomas Henry (L-6)
 Firefighter Thomas Hutchinson (L-1)
- 1873--Battalion Chief William H. Nash (Bn-7)
 Firefighter Alfred Conner (L-10)
 Lieutenant Henry Schuck (E-34)
- 1874--Captain William Mitchell (E-10)
- 1875--Lieutenant James Horn (E-11)
- 1876--Firefighter Joseph McGowan (E-6)
- 1877--Firefighter Thomas J. Dougherty (L-1)
- 1878--Captain Daniel J. Meagher (L-3)
- 1879--Firefighter Paul Bauer (L-4)
- 1880--Firefighter John Levins (L-2)
- 1881--Firefighter Michael Connerford (E-12)
- 1882--Firefighter John L. Rooney (L-10)
- 1883--Firefighter William B. Kirchner (E-11)
- 1884--Firefighter John Binns (E-32)
- 1885--Captain Peter H. Short (L-1)
- 1886--Firefighter Michael Brady (E-34)
- 1887--Lieutenant Samuel Banta (L-10)
- 1888--Lieutenant William Quirk (E-22)
- 1889--Firefighter William Reilly (L-12)
- 1890--Captain Thomas J. Ahern (E-5)
- 1891--Firefighter Patrick F. Lucas (E-30)
- 1892--Firefighter Patrick H. Aspell (L-4)
- 1893--Firefighter John Walker (L-6)
- 1894--Firefighter Denis Ryer (L-15)
- 1895--Firefighter William H. Behler (E-35)
- 1896--Firefighter Martin M. Coleman (L-3)
- 1897--Firefighter Patrick Desmond (L-14)
- 1898--Firefighter James Pearl (L-7)
- 1899--Firefighter John Hughes (1) (L-14)
- 1900--Firefighter William Clark (L-14)
- 1901--Firefighter Thomas J. McArthur (E-29)
- 1902--Firefighter Richard Nitsch (E-35)
- 1903--Firefighter Charles F. Douth (L-3)
- 1904--Firefighter James R. McAvoy (L-4)
- 1905--Firefighter Michael J. Stevens (L-4)
- 1906--Firefighter Cassimer C. Wodzicki (E-17)
- 1907--Firefighter Michael Nicklaus (L-4)
- 1908--Firefighter John T. Oakley (L-11)
- 1909--Battalion Chief George L. Ross (Bn-7)
- 1910--Firefighter John R. Harcke (L-12)
 Firefighter Frank C. Clarke (L-24)
- 1911--Firefighter Richard J. Condon (2) (E-12)
- 1912--Firefighter Robert J. Boyle (L-10)
- 1913--Engineer of Steamer Seneca Larke (E-20)
- 1914--Firefighter John F. Mooney (1) (L-4)
- 1915--Captain Thomas W. Smith (E-2)
- 1916--Firefighter James T. Daniels (L-26)
- 1917--Firefighter John Walsh (1) (L-1)
- 1918--Firefighter Patrick R. O'Connor (L-14)
- 1919--Lieutenant Francis Blessing (R-1)
- 1920--Firefighter Timothy F. O'Leary, Jr. (E-15)
- 1921--Firefighter Frank J. Costello (L-12)
- 1922--Firefighter Jacob F. Ferber (E-239)
- 1923--Captain Edwin A.A. Quinn (E-14)
- 1924--Hon. Medical Off. Harry M. Archer, MD
- 1925--Captain Thomas J. O'Toole (E-27)
- 1926--Firefighter William G.R. Mitchell (E-18)
- 1927--Firefighter Michael McInerney (L-12)
- 1928--Captain James A. Walsh (1) (E-234)
- 1929--Firefighter George W. Reilly (L-19)
- 1930--Firefighter Edward V. Conroy (L-1)
- 1931--Captain Albert B. Carlson (E-66)
- 1932--Firefighter Vincent J. Hyde (R-3)
- 1933--Captain Cornell M. Garety (R-1)
- 1934--Firefighter Rudolph F. Musil (L-12)
- 1935--Firefighter George J. Wolken (E-60)
- 1936--Firefighter Joseph E. Smith (2) (E-211)
- 1937--Firefighter James P. Nevin (E-201)
- 1938--Firefighter Charles G. Roscher (L-1)
- 1939--Firefighter Daniel J. Sullivan (L-3)
- 1940--Firefighter Charles A. Merz (L-168)
- 1941--Firefighter Thomas F. Brennan (L-111)
- 1942--Captain John W. Heaney (Hdq.)
- 1943--Firefighter John Colgan (L-2)
- 1944--Firefighter Harvey W. Crook (R-3)
- 1945--Captain George H. Winter (L-3)
- 1946--Firefighter Arthur L. Speyer (L-24)
- 1947--Firefighter Anthony J. Riccardi (L-26)
- 1948--Captain Patrick T. Green (R-1)
- 1949--Firefighter James S. Norton (L-163)
- 1950--Firefighter Wilbur J. O'Donnell (L-111)
- 1951--Firefighter Victor F. Rossi (L-120)
- 1952--Lieutenant John F. McGlynn (L-10)
- 1953--Firefighter Angelo Michelini (E-97)
- 1954--Deputy Chief John T. Oakley (2) (Hdq.)
- 1955--Firefighter Bernard F. Curran (E-92)
- 1956--Firefighter Michael J. O'Driscoll (L-28)
- 1957--Firefighter William Von Diezelski (L-4)
- 1958--Firefighter Nicholas Sharko (L-11)
- 1959--Captain Arthur J. O'Connor (SQ-4)
- 1960--Firefighter William V. Russo (E-254)
- 1961--Firefighter Joseph G. Peragine (L-14)
- 1962--Firefighter Joseph E. Almon (L-35)
- 1963--Firefighter Lawrence F. Duenas (E-59)
- 1964--Firefighter David Crowley (L-14)
- 1965--Firefighter James E. Bowler (R-2)
- 1966--Firefighter Robert E. Farrell (L-31)
- 1967--Firefighter Thomas D. Ferraiuolo (L-28)
- 1968--Firefighter Gene P. Dowling (L-25)
- 1969--Firefighter James N. Tempro (E-217)
- 1970--Firefighter Charles Varner (L-55)
- 1971--Lieutenant Richard R. Hamilton (R-2)
- 1972--Firefighter Steven C. DeRosa (L-102)
- 1973--Firefighter Raymond G. McCann (L-40)
- 1974--Firefighter Gilbert J. Murtha (L-108)
- 1975--Firefighter Thomas J. Neary (L-31)
- 1976--Firefighter Martin McGovern (L-114)
- 1977--Captain Frederick W. Gallagher (R-2)
- 1978--Firefighter James H. Battillo (L-152)
- 1979--Firefighter John J. Pritchard (R-2)
- 1980--Lieutenant Thomas J. Neary (L-28)
- 1981--Lieutenant Howard R. Kennedy (L-154)
- 1982--Firefighter Joseph H. Dirks (L-103)
- 1983--Firefighter Kenneth L. Connelly (L-111)
- 1984--Firefighter Robert Merkel (L-42)
- 1985--Firefighter James A. Sollami (E-62)
- 1986--Captain James F. McDonnell (L-42)
- 1987--Lieutenant William F. Maloney (L-34)
- 1988--Firefighter John J. McDonnell (L-28)
- 1989--Captain Richard Jacquin (L-59)
- 1990--Lieutenant Gerard M. Murtha (R-3)
- 1991--Firefighter William E. Jutt (L-22)
- 1992--Firefighter Michael M. Dugan (L-43)
- 1993--Firefighter Albert J. Gonzalez, Jr. (L-18)
- 1994--Lieutenant John M. Fox (SQ-1)
- 1995--Firefighter Gregory J. Smith, Jr. (L-108)
- 1996--Firefighter Gerard J. Triglia (L-132)
- 1997--Firefighter John K. Duddy (L-28)
- 1998--Firefighter Stan J. Sussina (R-1)
- 1999--Captain John J. Pritchard (E-255)
- 2000--Firefighter Stephen P. Fenley (L-78)
- 2001--Firefighter John F. South (L-44)
- 2003--Battalion Chief James Marketti (Bn-48)
- 2004--Firefighter James F. Mills (L-176)

James Gordon Bennett Medal/ NYS Honorary Fire Chiefs Association Medal

FIREFIGHTER **VICTOR J. ROSA, JR.**

Ladder Company 138

December 15, 2004, 0244 hours, Box 22-7889, 37-52 89th Street, Queens

Appointed to the FDNY on October 19, 1997. Previously assigned to Engines 83 and 293. Uncle, FF George Frey, is retired from Engine 311. Recipient of a pre-hospital CFR-D save; and a Class II rating for this incident. Resides in Massapequa Park, Long Island, with his wife, Melina, and their sons, Victor and Dean.



A rescue is a rare occurrence. How uncommon, then, is it to rescue three victims, especially while operating in dire conditions? Indeed, FDNY members were confronted with 17 critically and seriously injured victims at Queens Box 22-7889 and FF Victor J. Rosa had a direct hand in rescuing three of them.

On December 15, 2004, a cold fall night, at 0244 hours, calls started to come in reporting a fire at 35-43 88th Street in Jackson Heights. The assigned companies initially went to that address, but it was incorrect. The fire actually was in a six-story multiple dwelling at 37-52 89th Street. The fire was started by an unattended candle and exacerbated when the occupants left the apartment door open while exiting. The fire started in apartment 2F on the second floor, involved the apartment and extended out into the public hallway.

Ladder Co. 138, the "Corona Tigers," arrived as the second-due truck, with FF Rosa assigned the outside vent position for the tour. As the OVM, FF Rosa knew he had to get to his position quickly. This was a difficult task. Impeded by a garage in the adjacent yard, he placed a 24-foot portable ladder just to the left of the third-floor window of apartment 3G on the exposure #4 side of the building. A woman was visible at this window and she was calling for help.

Apartment 3G was adjacent to apartment 3F, which was directly above the fire apartment. As FF Rosa climbed into apartment 3G, he told the woman to wait by the window because another Firefighter, FF Steve Muller, Ladder 138's chauffeur, was climbing up and would help her down. FF Rosa proceeded to exit the apartment, which was relatively clear, and entered the third-floor hallway, which had completely different conditions.

Entering the hallway, FF Rosa immediately was forced down onto the floor by the very high heat and heavy smoke. The fire on the floor below, the second floor, had extended beyond the chocked-open smoke/fire door in the middle of the

public hallway. With the fire this far into the hallway, it was also extending up the stairs immediately adjacent to FF Rosa's position.

As FF Rosa was searching in this severely exposed position, he discovered Lena Martinez, an unconscious and badly burned woman. FF Rosa transmitted a 10-45 and dragged Ms. Martinez into the safety of apartment 3G. Once she was in the apartment, FF Rosa then entered the hostile conditions in the hallway for a second time to continue his search.

While searching, FF Rosa found a second unconscious and badly burned female, 36-year-old Flora Pineda. The Firefighter again transmitted a 10-45 signal and dragged the victim into apartment 3G. Once the victim was safely in the apartment, FF Rosa entered the hallway for a third time to continue his search in the hot, smoky and dark environment.

At this time, FF Rosa was still working alone and a hand-line was not yet in position to put water on the extending fire. As FF Rosa resumed his search, with the fire advancing up the stairs only a few feet from him, he came across the unconscious body of four-year-old Alexandra Sandovar. FF Rosa picked up the young child and crawled down the hallway past

the first stairwell--which was filled with fire--hoping to find a second stairwell. He found the second stairwell in this building with wing stairs and removed the girl to the street. She then was transported to the Cornell Burn Center.

The two victims FF Rosa previously had dragged into apartment 3G were removed by other Firefighters. FF Muller removed one victim via a portable ladder and a member of Squad Co. 288 removed the other victim through the interior.

For his courageous and determined actions in entering the hallway three times and discovering and removing three victims--two of whom survived their ordeal--FF Victor J. Rosa is officially recognized for his heroic efforts today. He is awarded the James Gordon Bennett Medal and the New York State Honorary Fire Chiefs Association Medal.--NG



FF Victor Rosa removes four-year-old Alexandra Sandovar. The youngster survived her ordeal.

photo by Joseph Scurto, Fire Line Video Productions



Brooklyn Citizens Medal/ FF Louis Valentino Award

FIREFIGHTER **ANTHONY A. MAIELLO** *Ladder Company 170*

August 15, 2004, 0701 hours, Box 75-2297, 1350 East 83rd Street, Brooklyn

Appointed to the FDNY on July 28, 2002. Father, FF Joseph Maiello, is retired from Ladder 77. Recipient of a Class III rating for this incident. Honored by Firefighter Quarterly Magazine. Attended College of Staten Island. Resides in Staten Island.

The night tour of August 15, 2004, began uneventfully. There were the usual routine responses, but nothing noteworthy. That all changed, however, at 0701 hours, when Ladder 170 and Engine 257 were turned out to 1350 East 83rd Street in Brooklyn for the report of a fire in a private dwelling. It was a hot Sunday morning in August and it was about to get even hotter.

As the Firefighters approached the reported fire location, heavy smoke was pushing out of the first- and second-floor windows of one of the buildings in a row of attached, three-story, brick Canarsie tenements. A car parked in the building's driveway partially blocked the first-floor entrance door, located under the stoop. Ultimately, this hampered placement of the first hose-line.

Fourth-grade FF Anthony Maiello, Ladder 170, was the outside vent Firefighter. His assignment was to get to the rear of the fire building to vent the fire area from the exterior and enter and search for victims. In Canarsie, however, getting to the rear is often easier said than done. The nearest access to the rear was an alley that was six houses from the fire building.

From this starting point, FF Maiello had to scale six four-foot fences, carrying a 24-foot extension ladder in addition to his tools. When he arrived at the rear of the fire building, he forced both the wrought-iron security door and the wooden entrance door to the fire apartment. Smoke boiled out the now-open rear entrance doorway. FF Maiello was faced with high heat and zero visibility just inside the doorway.

Undaunted, he began his search. He first encountered 52-

year-old Marie Nelson lying on the floor, five feet inside the apartment entrance. He transmitted a 10-45 signal and pulled her to the rear yard, where FF Leonard Stromstedt, who had just arrived at the rear door, was waiting.

In spite of deteriorating conditions, FF Maiello returned to the apartment to continue his search. Engine 257's hose-line was operating on the fire from the front entrance and, as a result, conditions in the rear, where FF Maiello was searching, were getting worse. He found 55-year-old Gustave Stsoren on the floor, near a bed, 15 feet in from the rear door. With fire rolling overhead and after transmitting a second 10-45, FF Maiello dragged Mr. Stsoren from harm's way, out to the rear yard, where both victims were attended by waiting Firefighters.

FF Maiello entered the room a third time, but after a short while, the intense heat forced him from the building. As he exited the building, flames were blowing out from the doorway he had just exited.

Both victims suffered second-degree burns to their face and hands and

were in respiratory arrest when rescued by FF Maiello. He made these rescues without the protection of a hose-line and was aware that at any time, Engine 257 members would be advancing their hose-line from the opposite side of the fire, pushing the fire toward him as they advanced, putting him in greater danger.

FF Maiello's initiative, determination and willingness to put himself in danger enabled him to make a life-and-death difference in the lives of both Marie Nelson and Gustave Stsoren. Today, FF Anthony Maiello is honored with the Brooklyn Citizens Medal/FF Louis Valentino Award.--FM



FF Anthony Maiello with members of Ladder 170 after a job.

photo courtesy of FF Anthony Maiello

Hugh Bonner Medal

FIREFIGHTER PAUL MASTRONARDI

Rescue Company 4

December 15, 2004, 0246 hours, Box 22-7889, 37-52 89th Street, Queens



Appointed to the FDNY on July 14, 1996. Previously assigned to Engine 280 and Squad 252. Cousin, Battalion Chief Brian McCulough, is retired from Battalion 6. Recipient of two unit citations; and a Class II rating for this incident. Resides in Bayport, Long Island, and has two children, Paul Vincent and Rosanna.

In residential areas of the City, it is not uncommon to have multiple calls received for the same incident. Frequently, people on opposite streets will see the smoke or flames and call in the alarm. When this happens, units may be dispatched to two separate locations for the same fire, causing the normal response sequence to be out of order. This occurred on December 15, 2004.

Rescue 4 was responding to a location at 35-43 88th Street, but was redirected to 37-52 89th Street, due to additional calls and reports of "people trapped" at that location. The occupants exiting the building told the first-arriving Firefighters that people were trapped on the upper floors. This information was relayed to Rescue 4 when they entered the lobby and that the "B" stair was blocked by heavy fire and the only access to the upper floors was the "A" stair.

Realizing the critical nature of gaining access to the floor above, the inside team of Rescue 4--Captain Daniel DiMartino and FFs Paul Mastronardi and Andrew Gaughan--proceeded up the "A" stair to the floor above the fire. FF Mastronardi, the first member to reach the second floor, experienced high heat and zero visibility. Flames, similar to a blowtorch, were venting through the top of the fire door that separated the two wings. FF Mastronardi continued to advance up the stairs to the third floor. Captain DiMartino and FF Gaughan followed.

As the team reached the third floor, conditions were not much better. The heat and smoke were so intense they had to rely on hand and voice communication. Visibility was non-existent.

FF Mastronardi knew he had to reach apartment 3F (the apartment directly over the fire). On his hands and knees, he began his way down the hall, keeping his left hand on the wall, feeling for door openings. After crawling approximately 30 feet, FF Mastronardi reached the door that separated the two wings. Here he found the heat even more intense and could see the orange glow of fire coming up the open "B" stair.

Crawling on his stomach toward apartment 3F, FF Mastronardi paused momentarily because he could hear a victim crying out. He located the first victim, an adult male (Alex Sandovar), who was barely conscious, and gave the first 10-45 over his radio.

While dragging this victim approximately five feet back

toward the fire door, FF Gaughan joined FF Mastronardi and together, they began dragging this victim back toward the safety of the "A" stair. Realizing this victim was not the one crying out, FF Mastronardi told his partner he would go back for the second victim.

Without regard for his personal safety, FF Mastronardi passed the open stair for the second time. Fire now was extending up the open "B" stair and venting over his head. He crawled toward the sound of the victim, deeper into the hall. FF Mastronardi reached out and grabbed the second victim, an unconscious child. Still hearing the moans of the third victim, but not being able to see anything, FF Mastronardi gave the radio signal, "multiple 10-45s, floor above."

FF Mastronardi pulled the child toward the wall and used his body to protect the victim from the intense heat and fire coming up the open "B" stair. He then dragged the victim to a point past the fire door where another Firefighter removed the child to the safety of the lower floors.

On his third attempt, FF Mastronardi crawled approximately 20 feet down the hall to the front of apartment 3F, where he located the third victim, Carolina Sandovar, a three-year-old child who was crying out in pain. Shielding the girl with his body, he crawled back toward the "A" stair, where he passed off this victim to FF Gaughan, who came back to assist.

FF Mastronardi returned to the point where he found the last victim and continued the search for more victims. By now, the heat in the hall began to subside, but the heavy smoke condition remained. With FF Andrew Fowler, they forced the door to apartment 3E and con-

ducted a primary search of that heavily charged apartment. During this search, they discovered fire extending up from the fire apartment and called for a line.

FF Mastronardi's actions, performed under adverse conditions and without the protection of a hose-line, were in the highest traditions of the Department. His bravery and perseverance saved the lives of three people (Alex Sandovar died a week later) and his quick radio transmissions--which alerted other Firefighters of the multiple victims--impacted on the other rescues that took place. FF Paul Mastronardi is awarded the Hugh Bonner Medal.--JTV



The crew of Rescue Company 4.

photo courtesy of FF Paul Mastronardi



Emily Trevor/Mary B. Warren Medal

FIREFIGHTER JEFFERY G. COOL

Rescue Company 3

June 12, 2004, 1907 hours, Box 75-2334, 851 Bruckner Boulevard, Bronx

Appointed to the FDNY on July 5, 1992. Previously assigned to Ladder 19. Recipient of the Daily News Hero of the Month Award; Firehouse Magazine Heroism Award; two unit citations; and two Class II ratings, one for this incident. Member of the New York Air National Guard and an active-duty Air Force Firefighter for three years. Resides in Garnerville, New York, with his wife, Jill, and sons, Jeffery, Jr., and Dylan.

On the evening of June 12, 2004, an alarm was transmitted for a fire on the top floor of 851 Bruckner Boulevard, a four-story, non-fireproof multiple dwelling. Due to the many phone calls reporting the fire and additional information stating that people were trapped on the top floor, the Bronx dispatcher did not hesitate and started out Rescue Company 3.

On arrival, Lieutenant Kevin Williams, Rescue 3, could see civilians being removed from the front top-floor windows via the aerial ladder. Simultaneously, radio reports from the roof stated there were people trapped at the top-floor windows in a light shaft between the fire building and exposure #4.

Battalion Chief Bart Codd, Battalion 3, directed Rescue 3 to the roof of the fire building through exposure #4. In addition to the Officer, FFs Jeffery Cool, Patrick McKenna, Michael Tierney and Richard Bailey made their way to the roof. They found heavy fire venting from the bulkhead and fire that had spread to a large area of the roof itself.

Lieutenant Williams, hearing screams coming from inside the shaft, looked down into the thick, black smoke to find a woman hanging out the fire apartment window. She was in a panicked state. With thick, black smoke boiling out over her head, she was screaming her intention to jump.

At the same time, there was a man at another window, screaming for help due to the same conditions. He knelt down below sill level, trying to stay below the smoke and heat. FFs Cool and Bailey quickly began to set up for their lifesaving rope rescue operations as FF Tierney tried to calm the victims. Knowing that time was crucial, Lieutenant Williams directed FF Cool to proceed to remove the man and then transmitted an urgent message to Acting Deputy Chief Kevin Corrigan, Division 6, that a lifesaving rope operation was underway on the roof and additional help was needed.

The difficult task of removal was compounded because

the fire now had extended to the area of the roof directly behind Rescue 3's lowering point, eliminating any possible substantial object. With no other options, FF Bailey positioned himself by lying flat on his back, with his feet braced up against the parapet wall.

FFs Louis Schaefer and Thomas Baez of Squad 41 arrived on the roof. They were advised to assist in anchoring FF Bailey. With his preparations complete, FF Cool attached the hook of the lifesaving rope to his personal harness and mounted the parapet in readiness to be lowered down into the shaft. FF Cool then went over the side into the shaft to the window location of a frightened Anthony Perry.

At the window, the Firefighter found conditions rapidly deteriorating as the fire was burning through the door, hopelessly trapping the victim. Frozen with fear, Mr. Perry could not assist with his own removal. FF Cool attempted to pick up the man, who weighed more than 200 pounds. With all of his strength, he was able to lift the victim up and over the sill and then held onto him tightly as he pushed out of the window. Victim and rescuer now were dangling on the rope, four stories above the ground. FF Cool called out to be lowered. Lieutenant Williams gave voice commands to FF Bailey to lower the pair

until they were safely on the ground. A life had been saved due to a highly dedicated individual and a highly motivated company. Mr. Perry then was delivered safely to the hospital.

This rescue was performed under very heavy fire conditions, while another lifesaving rope rescue was being performed simultaneously by FF McKenna, also of Rescue 3. FF Cool operated in conditions that can only be described as placing himself in a position of great personal risk.

FF Cool risked his own life to save another. Today, his actions are acknowledged. It is with great pride, the FDNY honors FF Jeffery Cool of "Big Blue," Rescue Company 3, with the Emily Trevor/Mary B. Warren Medal.--TPW



Rescue 3 members tie off roof rope as fire extends through the bulkhead. *photo courtesy of FF Jeffery Cool*

Thomas E. Crimmins Medal

FIREFIGHTER JOHN B. VEIRUN

Ladder Company 46

November 26, 2004, 0747 hours, Box 75-3567, 3034 Kingsbridge Terrace, Bronx

Appointed to the FDNY on May 17, 1998. Previously assigned to Battalion 27 and Engines 163 and 8. Member of the Holy Name and Emerald Societies. Recipient of a Class II rating for this incident. Resides in Pearl River, New York, with his wife, Margaret, and their children, Megan, Shane and Liam. A new baby is coming in October.



Hollywood has dramatized firefighting in many ways. The special effects are so dramatic and surreal that you sit in the theater seat and say to yourself, "This is just the movies. Nobody really does this." On the morning of November 26, 2004, the movies came to life. Bronx Box 3567 came in at 0747 hours for a fire. The apparatus doors opened and Ladder 46 responded up the hill. Captain Michael McAndrew, commander in the truck for the tour, saw fire blowing out of the upper-floor windows of 3034 Kingsbridge Terrace. He transmitted a 10-75 signal.

The two-family house was unusual because the five-story building was built on the side of a hill that went from Kingsbridge Terrace through the block to West 231st Street. Ladder 46 circled the block and entered 231st Street where the access courtyard was to the fourth floor of the fire building, which was the fire floor.

Ladder 46 quickly reached the fire building and found the badly burned and barely conscious Selena Sanclemente lying in the front yard. Ms. Sanclemente, who was in excruciating pain, gasped out that her two children were still upstairs.

Captain McAndrew and FFs John Veirun (with the irons) and Brendan Fogerty (with the can) made a quick size-up of the scene. Fire was blowing out the front window and door and out the rear windows as they were responding, so the entire first floor was on fire. Heavy smoke was pushing out of the top-front windows. 3034 Kingsbridge Terrace was accessible only by a private walkway from 231st Street. Ladder 46's bucket would not be able to reach the front of the building.

There was no engine company on the scene and it would be several minutes before Firefighters could safely go past the fire with the protection of a hose-line because the usual first two engine companies were at other Boxes. But there was no time to lose, so FF Veirun and the rest of the forcible entry team ran through the front door into the blazing inferno. In the words of witnesses at the scene, "I couldn't believe they ran through that wall of fire." They then found the open stairway leading to the upstairs bedrooms and

ascended the stairs with the fire roaring all around them.

As the forcible entry team reached the top of the stairs, the stairway became completely involved in fire and virtually impassable. But the Firefighters focused on finding the Sanclemente children. The forcible entry team split up, with FF Veirun searching toward the rear bedroom. While searching in the rear hall, he found the unconscious two-year-old Sachiel Sanclemente. Cradling the toddler in his arms, Firefighter Veirun attempted to retrace his steps to the stairway, but was blocked by heavy fire rolling up the stairs and over his head. The Firefighter then headed back toward the rear bedrooms and broke the windows, hoping to find a ladder. As he peered through the enveloping smoke around him, he saw only two engine companies five stories below him, whose members were stretching lines up from Kingsbridge Terrace.

FF Veirun knew his only hope of escape for the two of them was to try to get to a front window. He shielded young Sachiel with his own body and again dashed through the blazing hallway to a front bedroom.

While the rescue in the interior unfolded, quick-thinking FFs Mike Tuohy, the chauffeur, and Paul Ruane, the outside vent Firefighter, placed a portable ladder to the upstairs bedroom. They knew that a ladder would be their comrade's only way out. When FF Veirun reached the front window, the portable ladder was in place and he passed off his precious cargo to his outside team. Fire now was licking around the window FF Veirun was in and he quickly crawled out and down the ladder.

FF Veirun operated in such intense conditions that even though he wore his protective equipment, he suffered burns to his shoulder

and the back of both arms. His bunker gear was burned so severely, the Safety Battalion condemned it. The plastic eye shields on his helmet melted.

Unfortunately, Sachiel Sanclemente ultimately succumbed to her injuries in spite of FF Veirun's daring rescue. Today, FF John Veirun is honored for his heroic efforts with the Thomas F. Crimmins Medal.--CB



Back row--FFs Pagels, Essig and Mancuso, Lieutenant Mulligan, FF Porteus and Lieutenant Coyle. Front row--FFs Novak, Veirun, Brusca, Kavanagh and D'Amato.

photo courtesy of FF John Veirun



Thomas A. Kenny Memorial Medal

FIREFIGHTER **DAVID J. SEGOT**

Ladder Company 40

June 20, 2004, 1547 hours, Box 44-1631, 680 Riverside Drive, Manhattan

Appointed to the FDNY on February 5, 1995. Father, FF Lucien Segot, is retired from Engine 315; uncle, FF Jules Segot, is retired from Engine 69; brother, FF Lucien Segot is a member of Engine 59. Recipient of a Class II rating for this incident. He resides in Bethpage, Long Island, with his wife, Deena.

Making a rescue in a fire apartment is hard enough when a skilled Firefighter is able to crawl beneath the flames and smoke to remove a victim, but going above the fire heightens the danger. FF David J. Segot had experienced his share of danger during his 10-year career with the FDNY, all of them in Ladder 40, but on June 20, 2004, he was called upon to show why he deserved to be called one of New York's Bravest.

At 1547 hours, Manhattan Box 1631 was transmitted for a report of a fire on the third floor of a six-story multiple dwelling at 680 Riverside Drive. FF Segot was assigned the outside vent position and knew that he had his work cut out for him, due to multiple phone calls for this location. His suspicions were confirmed when they arrived second-due and he could see flames lapping out two windows and heavy, black smoke spewing from another on the third floor.

As the second-arriving truck, FF Segot knew he was responsible for search and rescue on the floor above the inferno. His size-up of the building made him aware of a figure at the fourth-floor window, barely visible through the ink-black smoke engulfing the upper floors of the building. He notified the chauffeur, FF Scott Atlas (detailed from Ladder 36), of the victim's location. FF Atlas positioned the ladder at the window adjacent to and one floor above the flames that were lapping out of the fire apartment. FF Segot wasted no time ascending the ladder to remove the victim.

FF Segot realized as he forced himself to pass the high heat and choking smoke that he would be unable to remove the victim using this ladder. With a mighty effort, he made his way up and into the window, where he found the 84-year-old Daisy Wilson panicked, disoriented and choking from the heavy, acrid smoke that filled her apartment. The wind blowing off the Hudson had intensified the blaze to blowtorch proportions and prevented the engine companies on the interior

from moving in to extinguish it.

As the blaze below quickly spread and elevated to what became a four-alarm fire, FF Segot knew he could not remove the victim through the interior and began to look for another way out. He moved the elderly woman, who was normally confined to a wheelchair, to the living room. This gave them access to the fire escape on the side of the building, away from the fire. Unfortunately, the wind was rapidly pushing the fire toward them and it began to vent from the windows below them while they were on the fire escape.

Luckily for rescuer and victim, the chauffeur of Engine 60 saw their predicament and quickly put the Stang into operation. FF Pat Conroy of Engine 59 climbed onto Engine 60 and used the Stang to knock down the fire that already had begun to burn Ms. Wilson's leg and was lapping at their feet. FF Segot's brother, FF Lucien Segot of Engine 59, was detailed to Ladder 30 and assigned the outside vent position. He was being forced off the aerial by the intensity of the blaze.

FF David Segot notified the chauffeur of Ladder 30 to reposition his aerial to a location away from the flames for their escape, as the flames began to intensify. He removed Ms. Wilson to a spot on the third floor of the fire escape, where FF Lucien Segot was able to

quickly ascend Ladder 30's aerial and assist his brother in the removal of the victim as the fire continued to rage out of control on the third floor. When they had removed the woman, she was treated by EMS and taken to St. Luke's Hospital, where she was treated for smoke inhalation and the burn to her leg.

Had it not been for FF Segot's bravery and perseverance in the face of great danger, Daisy Wilson surely would have died in this conflagration. The Fire Department is proud to award FF David J. Segot the Thomas A. Kenny Memorial Medal for his selfless actions.--JT



The brothers Segot (Lucien and Dave, bottom left and right, respectively) remove Daisy Wilson.

photo taken from www.harlemzoo.com

Walter Scott Medal

FIREFIGHTER THOMAS P. MAXWELL

Ladder Company 44

May 28, 2004, 1032 hours, Box 22-2586, 1269 Sheridan Avenue, Bronx

Appointed to the FDNY on August 8, 1999. Previously assigned to Engine 44. Brother, FF Stephen Maxwell, is assigned to Ladder 10. Member of the Holy Name and Emerald Societies. Holds a BA degree in Economics from SUNY at Albany. Recipient of three unit citations; and a Class II rating for this incident. Resides in Northport, Long Island, with his wife, Jessica.



Ask any Firefighter what really gets the heart pumping and each will respond in kind: Report of fire with children trapped. Do what is necessary to get the job done. There's no such thing as can't. That's what FF Thomas Maxwell of Ladder 44 knew as he responded to Box 2586 on the morning of May 28, 2004.

At 1032 hours, Ladder 44 was dispatched first-due to a fire at a six-story multiple dwelling at 1269 Sheridan Avenue. While en route, Ladder 44 was notified of a trapped child in the fire apartment (5H). On arrival, Captain John Sullivan, commander of Ladder 44, and the rest of the forcible entry team, FFs Maxwell (on the irons) and Adam Licardi (with the can), quickly proceeded to the top floor. While climbing the stairs, the members encountered Ms. Evan Reid. The distraught woman confirmed that her son, Andrew, was trapped in the fire apartment.

When they reached the top floor, the forcible entry team encountered fire, blinding smoke and intense heat in the hallway. After donning their masks and crawling to the apartment door, Captain Sullivan determined that it would be impossible to get past the raging fire. Thinking quickly and realizing that if conditions were so severe in the hallway, young Andrew was in grave danger inside the apartment.

Captain Sullivan ordered the forcible entry team to gain entry to the adjoining apartment (5G) and they attempted to breach the adjoining apartment wall. As the members reached the rear of apartment 5G, two occupants were found in the apartment. Captain Sullivan ordered FF Licardi to assist the occupants onto the fire escape. FF Licardi then returned to the hallway and followed Engine 92 into the apartment and searched as they moved in with the hose-line, just in case the breaching operation was unsuccessful.

Breaching a wall to gain access to the rear of a fire apartment is not an action to be taken lightly. Many things can go wrong and endanger those attempting a rescue such as this. First, to gain entry, Firefighters must knock out the plaster

between the two apartments, an action that endangers the adjoining apartment because fire can easily extend to that apartment as well. Secondly, to gain entry to the apartment, the Firefighter has to squeeze between the studs in the wall. If conditions deteriorate, it is extremely difficult to retreat back through the wall quickly.

Captain Sullivan and FF Maxwell squeezed through the hole made by the Firefighter. They were immediately enveloped in intense heat from the roiling fire surging toward them across the ceiling. FF Maxwell crawled to the rear bedroom to search. He vented a window in the bedroom to try to improve the zero visibility hampering his search. With the smoke lifting slightly, he continued. Soon after, FF Maxwell found the unconscious child and immediately transmitted a 10-45 signal. He could not return to the hole because Engine 92 members now were advancing down the hall toward him, pushing heat and smoke in his direction.

FF Maxwell knew that every second three-year-old Andrew Reid was deprived of fresh air was crucial. The rescuer retreated to the rear bedroom, shielded the youngster with his own body and kept his head out the window in the fresh air. FF Maxwell removed his facepiece and held it over Andrew's face to give him as much air as possible.

FF Maxwell waited anxiously at the window, hoping that Engine 92 would be successful in their attack on the fire. He was committed to his position. The fire escape was inaccessible because of the fire in that room. The 95-foot Tower Ladder could not reach them at the window and the hallway was untenable. Shortly afterward, Captain Sullivan joined FF Maxwell and they both waited until the fire was knocked down sufficiently to remove Andrew to the waiting ambulance in the street.

Andrew Reid survived his harrowing ordeal only because of the perseverance, determination and bravery of FF Thomas Maxwell. For these reasons, he is honored today and awarded the Walter Scott Medal.--CB



FF Thomas Maxwell and Captain John Sullivan. *photo by Rick Dembow, NY Post*



John H. Prentice Medal

FIREFIGHTER PATRICK A. MCKENNA

Rescue Company 3

June 12, 2004, 1907 hours, Box 75-2334, 851 Bruckner Boulevard, Bronx

Appointed to the FDNY on October 21, 1990. Previously assigned to Ladder 45. Cousin, FF Thomas McKenna, is a member of Engine 91. Member of the Emerald and Holy Name Societies. Recipient of WTC Ribbon/Medal; a Service Rating A; two Service Rating Bs; two unit citations; and a Class II rating for this incident. Resides in Tappan, New York, with his wife, Patricia, and their son, Liam.

Pride. It is the one single term that speaks volumes about an FDNY fire company. From a personal perspective, it describes a chapter of an individual's accomplishments within that company. So it is with FF Patrick A. McKenna of "Big Blue," Rescue Company 3.

In the early evening on June 12, 2004, at 1907 hours, Rescue 3 received a call to respond to Box 2334, 851 Bruckner Boulevard, in the Bronx for a top-floor fire. The Bronx dispatcher was receiving numerous calls of people trapped on the top floor rear. Lieutenant Kevin Williams and the members of Rescue 3 were going to work.

On arrival, victims were being removed via the aerial in the front of the building. Handie-talkie reports stated there were people trapped at the windows on the top floor in a light shaft on the exposure #4 side. Battalion Chief Bart Codd ordered Rescue 3 to the roof to initiate rescue operations of the trapped victims.

Arriving at the roof level, screams could be heard from the thick, boiling, black smoke rising from the shaft. Looking over into the shaft, Lieutenant Williams could see a man crouched down below sill level, staying below the escaping heat and heavy smoke. FFs Jeffery Cool and Richard Bailey of Rescue 3 were ordered to begin lifesaving rope operations to remove the man.

There was a panicky woman hanging out the window of the fire apartment. She was screaming that she was about to jump. Thick, black smoke was coming out over her head as she desperately cried for help. FF McKenna was given the task of removing Nelly Pacheo using the lifesaving rope. Time was running out quickly. The Officer gave an urgent message to Acting Deputy Chief Kevin Corrigan of Division 6 that lifesaving rope operations were underway and help was needed

on the roof.

FF McKenna teamed with FF Denis McLaughlin of Ladder 42, who already had taken his four turns around a chimney, and was ready to lower FF McKenna. Roof conditions were deteriorating rapidly. Within seconds, FF McKenna was ready and positioned himself on the parapet. One last check of the rope showed that FFs McLaughlin and McKenna were tied off, had control of the rope and were ready to begin the dangerous operation. The order was given and FF McKenna went over the side into the shaft.

As the Officer gave voice commands to FF McLaughlin,

FF McKenna approached the window with the frantic woman. As he reached the woman, he could see that fire had burned through the transom of the room occupied by the woman. Fire conditions were severe. FF McKenna hooked his leg into the windowsill, reached around the woman and held her tight. He lifted her up and then pushed the two of them out the window. They now were dangling four stories above the yard below.

Obscured by the thick, black smoke, FF McKenna called above to be lowered. FF McLaughlin continued to lower them until both the victim and rescuer were safely on the ground. The victim then was quickly transported to the hospital.

Company pride. Individual pride. Its definition stems from acts described herein. FF McKenna operated in conditions that put him in a position of great personal risk. Without him, the victim was going to jump. It was her only option until he put his life in jeopardy to save hers.

With great pride, the New York City Fire Department shows its gratitude and recognizes FF Patrick A. McKenna with the John H. Prentice Medal.--TPW



FF Patrick McKenna (second from left) with Rescue 3 members after a second alarm at East 180th Street.
photo by Matthew P. Daly

Henry D. Brookman Medal

FIREFIGHTER DANIEL R. FOLEY

Rescue Company 3

April 17, 2004, 0808 hours, Box 2447, 526 Drake Street, Bronx

Appointed to the FDNY on February 14, 1999. Previously assigned to Engine 68 and Ladder 49. Brother, FF Thomas Foley, Rescue 3, died in the line of duty at the World Trade Center. Member of the Emerald Society. Holds a Bachelor's degree from Iona College. Recipient of a unit citation; WTC Rescuer Ribbon/Medal; and a Class II rating for this incident. Resides in New Rochelle, New York, with his wife, Carrie, and their daughters, Erin and Kiera.



In the early morning of April 17, 2004, an alarm was transmitted for Bronx Box 2447, reporting a person stuck in a drain. While responding, Rescue Company 3 received additional information stating that a worker had fallen into an underground oil storage tank. FF Daniel R. Foley and the members of Rescue 3 prepared themselves for a confined space rescue.

On arrival, size-up showed that a victim had fallen into the tank and the confined space also was an explosive atmosphere. Ladder 48 had begun to operate and managed to reach the victim with 10-foot hooks. The hooks allowed members to reach into the tank and hold the unconscious victim's head out of the oil and sludge. The victim was in severe respiratory arrest with approximately four breaths per minute.

Lieutenant Kevin Williams began the rescue operation by calling for a tripod to be set up over the tank man-way (access/egress sleeve) to be used as a high point for lowering FF Foley into the tank. Assisted by Squad 41 and Rescue 4 members, they began to set up required equipment that would be needed to effect this removal--meters for air quality monitoring, supplied air system and 4-to-1 mechanical advantage lowering and retrieval system for both rescuer and victim.

After examining the man-way into the tank, a clearance problem for access was obvious. The tank measured 35 feet long by 15 feet wide and 10 feet deep. The tank was seven feet deep and contaminated with oil, sludge and gasoline. The tank was buried five feet below the garage floor. The sleeve, or man-way, measured 23 inches in diameter and four feet down to the tank opening. However, the sleeve was improperly installed and not in line with the tank opening below. This caused the diameter to go from 23 inches down to a narrow opening of only 20 by 14 inches. Removing the sleeve was not an option. Simultaneously, the meters used to monitor the oxygen content were in full alarm, indicating an explosive atmosphere existed inside the tank and the slightest spark would trigger a major explosion.

FF Foley realized that due to the narrow opening, he would not fit down the sleeve with his turnout gear and equip-

ment. Lighting would have to be from above. Communication would be by voice only. Time was quickly running out. Without hesitation, FF Foley prepared to be lowered into the ink-dark tank. With his SCBA tank/harness tied off and suspended by utility rope above him, he was lowered down and squirmed his way through the narrow man-way into the tank below until he was waist-deep in the sludge. He was careful not to disturb the 10-foot hooks holding the man's head above the surface.

In this highly explosive atmosphere, he quickly ensured the unconscious victim's airway, then began to tie a tubular nylon harness around the victim. This proved to be a difficult task while being suspended without any footing and trying to work in the thick sludge. FF Foley rechecked the victim and found that he had stopped breathing. With time extremely critical, FF Foley called up through his mask to Lieutenant Williams above and stated that applying the harness to the victim would be halted and a simple girth hitch would be attached to the 4-to-1 hauling system to expedite the removal.

As the removal began, FF Foley guided the victim, Anselmo Alfaro, from below. Mr. Alfaro's small frame proved



FF Daniel Foley with members of Rescue 3. photo courtesy of FF Daniel Foley

helpful in passing through the restricted passageway. When the victim reached the surface, he was in full respiratory arrest and immediately turned over to EMS, whose members began resuscitation efforts. FF Foley was hauled back up through the tight opening to complete the operation. The victim was trans-

ported to the hospital and after a week of care, he was released. Because FF Foley risked his life, Mr. Alfaro is alive.

The extremely dangerous conditions, limited egress, operating while being suspended, working without his turnout coat in an explosive environment and without any chance of escape if anything were to go wrong is a true testament to the severity of this situation. Performing courageously under these conditions can only be described as an act of great personal risk and in the highest traditions of this Department. It is with great pride that the FDNY recognizes FF Daniel R. Foley with the Henry D. Brookman Medal.--TPW



M.J. Delehanty Medal

Firefighter **Richard P. Donovan**

Ladder Company 51

November 10, 2004, 0320 hours, Box 75-3663, 1178 East 221st Street, Bronx

Appointed to the FDNY on April 14, 1991. Brother, FF Kevin Donovan, is assigned to Ladder 19; brother-in-law, FF Thomas Warkenthier, is assigned to Ladder 32; and brother-in-law, Battalion Chief Michael Keenan, is assigned to Battalion 49. Holds Associates degrees in Business and Labor Studies from St. John's University and Empire State College, respectively. Recipient of two unit citations; and two Class III ratings, one for this incident. Resides in Dobbs Ferry, New York, with his wife, Ivanka, and their sons, Richard and Jason.

It was 0320 hours on the cold winter night of November 10, 2004, when the tone alarm and teleprinter in the Eastchester Road, Bronx, quarters of Engine 38 and Ladder 51 came to life. Frantic civilians were reporting a dwelling fire. As the crews cleared the house, all realized that a reported dwelling fire at this hour of the morning well could mean people sleeping and trapped by the fire.

The fire building was a three-story, balloon-frame multiple dwelling of vintage age with a front stoop that entered directly to the second floor.

As first-due Ladder 51, under the command of Captain Michael Woods, rolled to a stop, heavy fire was blowing out three windows on the second floor. Excited neighbors informed the Captain that an elderly blind woman lived on the third floor and possibly was trapped.

Ladder 51 members entered the front door and found extremely heavy fire conditions on the second floor, with the stairs to the third floor fully involved. Captain Woods ordered his outside vent Firefighter, FF Richard Donovan, to the third floor via the exterior to search for the reported trapped woman. At this time, there was no water on the fire.

Using the fire escape, FF Donovan found a narrow, third-floor window that he cleared. Squeezing through, he immediately encountered zero visibility and extremely high heat conditions. As he started his search, he noticed that the inferno on the floor below had started to burn through the apartment door.

With rapidly deteriorating conditions, FF Donovan passed under the fire--which now was blowing through the apartment

door--and quickly searched the living room and den. Continuing his search, with fire rolling across the ceiling and still without the protection of a charged line, he found 75-year-old Marion Gaines, unconscious on the kitchen floor.

The Firefighter radioed a 10-45 signal and dragged Mrs. Gaines to the window and onto the fire escape, shielding her from the flames with his body. Due to the heavy heat and

smoke venting from below, FF Donovan could not be seen from street level. Realizing it might take some time to get the victim down, he removed his mask face-piece and placed it on her.

After a few minutes, conditions began to improve and the victim started to regain consciousness. FF Donovan now could see a portable ladder at the second-floor balcony and advised Mrs. Gaines that they would have to try to climb down. In a panic,

she screamed she was blind and could not move.

With no help available, FF Donovan picked up Mrs. Gaines and, with great difficulty, carried her to the floor below. Totally exhausted, the Firefighter passed her to a member of Ladder 32, who removed her to an ambulance.

FF Donovan, upholding the highest traditions of the FDNY, operated alone on the floor above the fire in a balloon-frame building with fire rapidly spreading up the interior stairs, through the walls and into the cockloft. For performing this courageous rescue under extremely punishing conditions and without the protection of a hose-line, FF Richard Donovan is honored today and presented with the M.J. Delehanty Medal.--GAA



FF Richard Donovan visits Mrs. Gaines at Jacobi Medical Center a day after rescuing the blind woman from her burning apartment. Ironically, her life-long fear was being trapped in a fire.
photo by Robert Sabo, New York Daily News

William F. Conran Medal

FIREFIGHTER PAUL A. MILLER

Ladder Company 48

April 28, 2004, 1805 hours, Box 2410, Bronx River, Bronx

Appointed to the FDNY on October 27, 1996. His great-grandfather, Edward Lehmkuhl (deceased), was retired from Engine 79. Member of the Steuben Association. Holds an Associates degree from Suffolk Community College. Recipient of two Class III ratings, one for this incident. Resides in Centereach, Long Island, with his wife, Eileen, and daughter, Grace.



When people talk about the Bronx River, visions of boating and recreation don't immediately come to mind. Anti-pollution initiatives implemented throughout the City have changed this vision. Today, one can find many community groups canoeing up and down this winding tributary. Unfortunately, as with any recreational activity, a day of fun can change to a day of horror in a heartbeat.

The night tour had just started on April 28, 2004, and members of Ladder 48 were busy checking tools. Box 2410 rang in at 1805 hours with an unusual message: "swift water rescue." The original location on the ticket was Lafayette and Hunts Point Avenues, but Ladder 48's experienced crew--including Lieutenant Richard Glover and FF George Bodnar, the chauffeur--knew before even leaving quarters that the intersection given was several blocks from any water. Lieutenant Glover immediately got on the radio and asked for a better location. Ladder 48 was redirected to the Bronx River and Lafayette Street.

FF Bodnar, a 20-year veteran of Ladder 48, knew that the best access would be through the Hunts Point Market. FF Bodnar sped through the maze of trucks and loading docks and placed the apparatus just feet from the Bronx River. Members poked through the brush along the bank of the river. They were exactly parallel to 11-year-old Yolanda Sepuvesa, who was clinging desperately to her partially submerged canoe about 90 feet from shore. Yolanda was not wearing a life vest and could not swim.

Ladder 48 members lowered a 20-foot ladder down the steep bank leading to the river. FF Paul Miller and Lieutenant Glover climbed down to the river's edge and attempted to assure Yolanda that she would be all right and they would rescue her. Other members of Ladder 48 were in the process of retrieving the lifesaving ring and utility ropes from the ladder

bed to assist in a safe rescue.

Ideally, a member would have the lifesaving ring secured with a utility rope to shore and swim out to the victim. In this way, the Firefighter could be pulled to shore when reaching the victim and still remain secured to a flotation device. Ideal, however, was not to be the case on this cool spring morning.

The water temperature was 45 degrees. Yolanda was being pushed in the swift current down river, toward the Long Island Sound. And, the element of time was about to turn against the rescuers.

The scared look in Yolanda's eyes turned to sheer terror as her canoe flipped over and she slipped beneath the surface. FF Miller, a former EMT and lifeguard, realized that she was in imminent peril. The Firefighter removed his bunker gear and dove into the frigid water without the lifesaving ring and safety rope. He swam 90 feet to the drowning child and pulled her back above the surface.

Securing her near-lifeless torso in a cross-chest carry, FF Miller swam with a one-armed stroke back toward shore. FF Miller used all his strength to keep Yolanda's head above the water, while

trying to keep his mind off the penetrating cold, which now was enveloping him. FF Miller had just about expended all his energy when he reached the shore. The other members of Ladder 48 quickly pulled both victim and rescuer from the water. The awaiting ambulances transported them to Jacobi Hospital to be treated for hypothermia.

Yolanda Sepuvesa survived her ordeal only because of the extraordinary bravery of FF Miller. To this day, Yolanda occasionally visits the firehouse to show her appreciation to her favorite Firefighter. It is the actions of Firefighters such as Paul Miller who demonstrate the true dedication of the FDNY in any kind of emergency. That is why he is being honored today and presented with the William F. Conran Medal.--CB



FF Paul Miller dries off after water rescue.

photo by Matthew P. Daly



Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia Medal

FIREFIGHTER **BRIAN W. CULLEN**

Ladder Company 138

December 15, 2004, 0244 hours, Box 22-7889, 37-52 89th Street, Queens

Appointed to the FDNY on October 28, 2001. Cousin, FF Paul Viselli, is assigned to Engine 66, and cousin, Lieutenant Peter Girardi, is retired from Ladder 110. Member of the Emerald Society, Ceremonial Unit and the FDNY USMC Association. Recipient of a Class III rating for this incident. Served in the USMC from 1994 to 1998. Resides in North Babylon, Long Island.

On December 15, 2004, in the middle of a cold night, Queens Box 7889 was received for a fire at 35-43 88th Street in the Jackson Heights section of the borough. The assigned companies initially went to that address, but it turned out to be incorrect. The fire was actually in a six-story multiple dwelling at 37-52 89th Street. When the correct address was provided, Ladder Co. 138, the "Corona Tigers," arrived second-due.

The delay caused by the first-due units initially being given the incorrect address allowed the fire not only to fully involve apartment 2F on the second floor, but extend out of the apartment and into the public hallway. The icy winds pushed the fire past the fire door in the middle of the hallway. The fire door, which separated the "A" and "B" stairways, had been chocked open.

FF Brian W. Cullen, Ladder 138's can Firefighter, was directed to assist Ladder 136's can Firefighter, FF Dan Bocian, who was attempting to control the heavy fire just enough so the fire door could be closed. With the efforts of the two Firefighters using their cans simultaneously, Ladder 136's Officer, Lieutenant Ed Ireland, was able to close the fire door.

Closing the fire door provided some protection to stairway "A," which FDNY members were about to ascend. It also had the effect of channeling even more of the heat, smoke and flames up stairway "B," which was closer to the fire apartment. Conditions on the third floor were extreme.

FF Cullen had to ascend through the hot, smoky conditions to reach the third-floor hallway, the floor above the roar-

ing fire. When the Firefighter reached the top of stairway "A," there was no visibility and an intense heat condition, which forced him to crawl. FF Cullen knew that a hand-line was not yet in place to provide protection for him.

Crawling down the hallway, FF Cullen came upon FF Andrew Gaughan of Rescue Co. 4, who was removing the first victim. A transmission was given that there were "multiple 10-45s, floor above." As quickly as possible, FF Cullen dragged this victim to FF Joseph Tarantini, Ladder 138's irons Firefighter.



FF Brian Cullen after a job.

photo by Vic Nicastro

FF Cullen then turned and headed back down the hallway to continue his search for additional victims. While still working in zero visibility, an intense heat condition and without the protection of a hand-line, FF Cullen was forced to stay low as he approached the smoke/fire door in the middle of the hallway.

Immediately adjacent to the door, FF Cullen found 35-year-old Jorge Armito-Aviles, who lay unconscious. FF Cullen dragged this victim 28 feet to the top of the A stairwell and down to the second floor, where he passed him to other Firefighters for removal to the street. The victim was transported to the Cornell Burn Center. FF Cullen then returned to the third floor to assist his company in searching apartment 3F, which was above the fire apartment.

For his bravery and determination in personally removing a man and assisting in the removal of another victim from the floor above a roaring fire, FF Brian W. Cullen is presented with the Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia Medal today.--NG

Chief John J. McElligott Medal/ Fitzpatrick and Frisby Award

FIREFIGHTER **ANDREW T. GAUGHAN**

Rescue Company 4

December 15, 2004, 0246 hours, Box 22-7889, 37-52 89th Street, Queens

Appointed to the FDNY on October 23, 1994. Previously assigned to Engine 61 and Squad 61. Member of the Emerald Society. Recipient of a unit citation; and a Class III rating for this incident. Resides in Greenlawn, Long Island, with his wife, Irene, and their daughter, Sarah, and sons, Matthew and Patrick.



In residential areas of the City, it is not uncommon to receive multiple calls for the same incident. Frequently, people on opposite streets will see the smoke or flames and call in the alarm. When this happens, units may be dispatched to two separate locations for the same fire, causing the normal response sequence to be out of order. This occurred on December 15, 2004.

Rescue 4 was responding to a location at 35-43 88th Street, but was redirected to 37-52 89th Street, due to additional calls and reports of "people trapped" at that location. The occupants exiting the building told the first-arriving Firefighters that people were trapped on the upper floors. This information was relayed to Rescue 4 when they entered the lobby. They also were advised that the "B" stair was blocked by heavy fire and the only access to the upper floors was the "A" stair. Realizing the critical nature of gaining access to the floor above, the inside team of Rescue 4-- Captain Daniel DiMartino and FFs Paul Mastronardi and Andrew Gaughan-- proceeded up the "A" stair to the floor above the fire.

The members of Rescue 4 reached the second floor and experienced high heat and zero visibility. All they could see was the flames, similar to a blowtorch, venting through the top of the fire door that separated the two wings.

Realizing the critical nature of gaining access to the floor above, FF Mastronardi continued to advance up the stairs to the third floor. Captain DiMartino and FF Gaughan followed.

As the team reached the third floor, conditions were not much better. The heat and smoke were so intense, they had to rely on hand and voice communication. Visibility was non-existent. FF Gaughan reached the landing of the third floor seconds behind FF Mastronardi, but the conditions were so severe, he could not see him, but could hear his voice. Crawling approximately 30 feet, FF Gaughan reached the fire door that separated the two wings. Within a few seconds after reaching this location, he heard the 10-45 given by FF Mastronardi and continued crawling on his belly until he reached FF Mastronardi, who was dragging the victim (Alex Sandovar) back toward the "A" stair.

FF Mastronardi told FF Gaughan that there was another

victim down the hall and he was going back for him. This left FF Gaughan with the task of dragging a 165-pound male nearly 30 feet to the safety of the stair. This was not an easy job since the heat forced him to remain on his hands and knees. Making his way to the stair, FF Andrew Fowler of Rescue 4 and another member of Ladder 138 assisted him and took the victim down the stair. FF Gaughan turned and began his second trip down the hall to assist his partner with the other victim.

FF Mastronardi gave another radio transmission of "multiple 10-45s, floor above." Still unable to see due to the smoke condition, FF Gaughan came upon 50-year-old Lucy Rodriguez, who was unconscious in the hall. For the second time, FF Gaughan began the arduous task of dragging a victim who weighed approximately 150 pounds, 30 feet to the safety of the "A" stair.

When FF Gaughan reached the "A" stair, there was no one to assist him and he was forced to drag this victim several steps down to the second floor. Here, a firefighter from another unit relieved him of the victim. Again, while physically exhausted and pushing himself to his limits, FF Gaughan made his way back up to the third floor and down the hallway toward his partner.

Reaching FF Mastronardi, who had found a third victim, three-year-old Carolina Sandovar, FF Gaughan

relieved FF Mastronardi of his charge and began the long crawl back to the "A" stair. After several feet, FF Gaughan gave the child to Captain DiMartino, who removed the girl to the street.

In assisting, then dragging, an unconscious and critically burned adult male to safety, FF Gaughan put forth a super-human effort. He then found an unconscious and critically burned woman and dragged her to safety. He went back a third time to assist in the removal of a third victim.

These three acts were at unusual personal risk since they were performed without the protection of a charged line and past an uncontrolled fire, which was venting up the open stair. His actions were outstanding and he is a credit to his unit, the Department and the fire service.

FF Andrew Gaughan is proudly awarded the Chief John J. McElligott Medal/Fitzpatrick and Frisby Award.--JTV



Firefighters work feverishly on rescued victims.

photo by Joseph Scurto, Fire Line Video Productions



Thomas F. Dougherty Medal

FIREFIGHTER **JOSEPH J. TARANTINI** *Ladder Company 138*

December 15, 2004, 0244 hours, Box 22-7889, 37-52 89th Street, Queens

Appointed to the FDNY on September 14, 1996. Member of the Columbia Association. Recipient of two unit citations; the Firefighter Thomas R. Elsasser Memorial Medal; the WTC Ribbon/Medal; and a Class III rating for this incident. Attended St. John's University and air conditioning and heating trade school. He resides in Whitestone, Queens, with his wife, Diane, and their sons, Phillip and Ryan, and daughter, Alyssa.

On December 15, 2004, on a cold night in the middle of the Christmas season, Queens Box 7889 was received for a fire at 35-43 88th Street in the neighborhood of Jackson Heights. The assigned companies initially went to that address, but it turned out to be incorrect. The fire was actually in a six-story multiple dwelling at 37-52 89th Street.

Ladder Co. 138, the "Corona Tigers," arrived as the second-due truck with FF Joseph J. Tarantini assigned the irons position for the tour. The delay, caused by receiving the wrong address, allowed the fire, which started in apartment 2F on the second floor, to involve the apartment and also extend out into the public hallway. The wind-driven fire was able to extend past the chocked-open fire door in the middle of the hallway.

Ladder 138's can Firefighter, FF Brian Cullen, was directed to assist FF Dan Bocian, the can Firefighter of Ladder Co. 136, in an attempt to push the extending fire back beyond the fire door. Using their extinguishers in tandem, the two can Firefighters were able to push the fire back enough to allow Ladder 136's Officer, Lieutenant Ed Ireland, to control and then close the fire door.

While these actions granted some protection to the "A" stairway, which the members were about to ascend, closing the fire door also had the effect of channeling even more of the heat, smoke and flames up the "B" stairway. The conditions on the floor above the fire were extreme. The "A" stairway was at the far end of the hallway from the fire apartment and the "B" stairway was closer to the fire apartment.

As the second-due truck, Ladder 138 members made their way to the floor above. As FF Tarantini crawled down the third-floor hallway, he was in a seriously exposed position. The fire was roaring in the fire apartment and hallway below, a hose-line was not in place to offer any protection and the fire

doors in the hallway were chocked open. Additionally, the fire began to auto-expose from apartment 2F into apartment 3F on the third floor.

As FF Tarantini was crawling down the hallway, he was met by FF Cullen, who was crawling back toward FF Tarantini with an unconscious and burned man. FF Tarantini took the victim from FF Cullen and carried him down to the second floor, where he passed him off to another Firefighter. FF Tarantini then returned to the third floor and once again, began crawling down the hallway, which still had a high heat condition and was charged with heavy smoke. A hand-line still was not in position to attack the fire.



FF Joseph Tarantini with members of 138 Truck, the "Corona Tigers."

photo courtesy of FF Joseph Tarantini

While conducting his search, FF Tarantini discovered the unconscious, seven-year-old Naomi Siquencia. He crawled back to the top of the stairs, where he placed the child over his shoulder and carried her down three flights of stairs and out into the street. He passed her off to members who were reporting to the scene. The young girl was transported to the Cornell Burn Center.

Once the child was out of harm's way, FF Tarantini again returned to the top of the stairs at the third-floor hallway, where he was met by a Firefighter dragging an unconscious adult. FF Tarantini took this victim, placed him over his shoulder and carried him down three flights of stairs and out into the street where he handed him off to the engine company members who had been directed to assist with the numerous civilian victims. FF Tarantini then went back to the third floor and rejoined the other members of Ladder 138.

For his bravery and determination in personally removing a young child and assisting in the removal of two other victims from the floor above a roaring and smoky fire, FF Joseph J. Tarantini is presented with the Thomas F. Dougherty Medal today.--NG

Albert S. Johnston Medal

FIREFIGHTER VINCENT A. TAVELLA, JR.

Rescue Company 2

June 1, 2004, 2244 hours, Box 75-1093, 47 McKeever Place, Brooklyn

Appointed to the FDNY on October 23, 1994. Previously assigned to Ladder 11 and Squad 270. Father, Lieutenant Vincent Tavella, is retired from Engine 159, and cousin, FF Edward Cowan, is assigned to Squad 1. Recipient of a Class III rating for this incident. Resides on Staten Island with his wife, Carroll, and their two sons, Keith and Vincent.



It was just before 2300 hours, on Tuesday, June 1, 2004, inside apartment 22D of 47 McKeever Place, Brooklyn. Occupant, Jalloh Lagasim, was watching television with his wife and two small children. Suddenly, a strong odor of smoke permeated the apartment, prompting Mr. Lagasim to open his door and see heavy fire and smoke coming from the vicinity of the elevator on their floor. He quickly dialed 911 to report the fire.

At 2244 hours, Rescue Company 2 was special-called to Box 1093 for a fire on the 21st floor. While en route, additional information indicated numerous people trapped at this location. Arriving within minutes of the original Box, Rescue 2 encountered a 22-story, 150- by 150-foot, Class I, irregular-shaped multiple dwelling with a severe smoke condition emanating from the upper floors. As the members of Rescue 2 exited their rig, they could hear cries for help coming from the upper-floor windows.

FF Vincent Tavella, assigned the roof position, immediately was directed by his Lieutenant to proceed to the roof via the interior stairway to ventilate and attempt to calm the civilians who were showing signs of panic at their windows. In full fire-fighting gear and equipment, FF Tavella quickly and tirelessly began his ascent to the roof of this 22-story building.

As he approached the 20th floor, reports of a very heavy fire condition came over his handie-talkie. (Fire Marshals later discovered that someone had set fire to a couch and two mattresses in an elevator car on this floor, creating a blowtorch effect, which warped all the apartment doors on the 21st floor, as well as extending up the shaft onto the 22nd floor.)

FF Tavella made his way past the extreme smoke and intense heat created by this fire condition. Reaching the roof

level, he encountered a civilian who somehow had managed to scale the building and now was hanging onto the roof's edge, 22 stories above the ground. FF Tavella, along with members of Ladder Companies 113 and 132, pulled this individual to safety.

The civilian informed the Firefighters that there were six other occupants trapped inside apartment 22D, including a nine-month-old girl. Looking over the roof's edge again, FF Tavella noticed another male adult attempting to "scale" the building, while holding the aforementioned infant in his arms. Realizing the situation inside the apartment was rapidly deteriorating, causing the occupant to begin drastic and unsafe actions, FF Tavella decided he must be lowered over the roof to the apartment window.

With the help of other FDNY members on the roof, FF Tavella tied himself on the rope and went over the edge to be lowered to the trapped and hysterical occupants. He was lowered the one floor, where he had to physically "push" the panicked occupants back into the apartment.

After getting into the apartment, he untied himself and sent the rope back up so his mask could be tied and lowered back to him. He then used his mask on each of his victims, while re-assuring them that help was on the way. FF Tavella stood by their side until the engine company was able to get water on the fire and other

members of Rescue 2 could reach them.

FF Tavella not only demonstrated courage, coupled with quick and decisive action during a time of chaos, his commanding, yet calming presence, without question, saved lives on that day. For these reasons, FF Vincent Tavella is honored today and presented with the Albert S. Johnston Medal.--
RMcC



Dad's last tour--FF Vincent Tavella, Jr., Lieutenant Vincent Tavella, Senior, and cousin, FF Ed Cowan.
photo courtesy of FF Vincent Tavella, Jr.



Bella Stiefel Medal

CAPTAIN **BRIAN A. BECKER**

Division 13 (assigned), Ladder Company 143 (detailed)

January 3, 2004, 0236 hours, Box 75-6056, 111-09 Liberty Avenue, Queens

Appointed to the FDNY on July 13, 1987. Previously assigned to Engine Company 240, Ladder Company 105 and Engine Company 28. Holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Fordham University. Recipient of a Class III rating for this incident. Resides in Rockaway Beach, Queens, with his wife, Petra, and their children, Thomas, Anna and William, who currently is attending the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut.

The holiday season was fresh in everyone's mind, decorations were still displayed and the joyous spirit of the New Year was prevalent during the night tour that Captain Brian Becker was assigned to work in Ladder Company 143.

When the tone alarm sounded at 0236 hours, Captain Becker and his crew were assigned to respond to a reported second-floor structural fire. As the apparatus made its way toward the three-story, mixed-occupancy building (there was a store on the ground floor and one apartment each on the second and third floors), Captain Becker mentally reviewed what he knew about the area and his company's assignment. The building was under the elevated subway train, a fact that impeded exterior access because of the difficulty in positioning aerial ladders. Additionally, the building did not have any fire escapes to help evacuate residents or permit Firefighter access to the upper floors. As the second-due truck, his company would proceed to the floor above the fire, an extremely dangerous position. Once there, they would have the responsibility of searching for both fire extension and trapped occupants.

Just minutes after receiving the alarm, Ladder 143 arrived on the scene and was confronted with a heavy fire and smoke condition that was being attacked by Engine Company 308. As Captain Becker coordinated his search and rescue plan with the Officer of the first-due truck, Ladder Company 142, civilians informed them that five people had jumped from the second floor of the burning building and other tenants were trapped inside.

Captain Becker gathered his crew and they proceeded into the building. Immediately, they discovered that the staircase to the second floor was burned away. A portable ladder was called for and positioned so they could ascend to the second floor. Captain Becker went past

the fire on the second floor and proceeded to the third floor via the damaged, yet passable, staircase.

The fire had extended to the third floor. The hallway was aflame and cluttered with household goods that had been placed there for storage. Captain Becker made his way to the door of the third-floor apartment and, acting alone and without the protection of a covering hose-line, dropped to his hands and knees to start searching in the hostile environment.

The first room inside the apartment was the kitchen. As he crawled to the far end, he discovered an unconscious male and immediately transmitted this fact via his handie-talkie radio. Captain Becker dragged the 49-year-old out of the apartment and turned him over to the Ladder 143 forcible entry team.

The Captain then retraced his steps, re-entered the apartment and resumed searching. This time, he turned left out of the kitchen, passed through the dining room and, at the entrance to the living room, he found 19-year-old Adrian Katwaro. The young man was unconscious and in need of immediate medical attention.

After transmitting this information via radio, Captain Becker summoned his strength, hoisted up the young man, carried him out of the apartment, down the stairs and out into the street, where he was transferred to the care of EMS personnel. Although physically spent, Captain Becker returned for a third time to the top floor, where he directed his crew in the completion of their tasks.

Captain Becker acted aggressively and without hesitation as he carried out his assignment in an extremely hostile and dangerous environment. His actions

uphold the finest traditions of the Fire Department of New York City. For his bravery and courage, the Bella Stiefel Medal proudly is awarded to Captain Brian A. Becker.--BDG



Captain Brian Becker (left), with members of Engine 314, where he has been covering for two years. *photo courtesy of Captain Brian Becker*

Vincent J. Kane Medal

LIEUTENANT PETER M. LUSENSKAS

Ladder Company 117

January 22, 2004, 0112 hours, Box 33-7434, 12-20 30th Road, Queens

Appointed to the FDNY on December 31, 1977. Previously assigned to Ladder 17. Now assigned to Ladder 162. Brother, FF James Lusenskas, is assigned to the 13th Division. Member of the Emerald and Holy Name Societies. Attended the New York Institute of Technology. Recipient of the Bella Stiefel Medal; and a Class III rating for this incident. Resides in East Atlantic Beach with his wife, Helen, and their daughters, Erin and Eileen.



Dangers associated with firefighting are extremely great for the operating members. The unexpected can happen at any moment. When it does, rank has no privileges. In the early-morning hours of January 22, 2004, in Astoria, Queens, such a situation developed. Fortunately for those involved, tragedy was avoided due to the brave actions of Lieutenant Peter M. Lusenskas of Ladder Co. 117.

At 0112 hours, units were dispatched to a phone alarm reporting a fire in a private dwelling. When companies arrived, members found a heavy fire condition showing on the first and second floors of a 2¹/₂-story, wood-frame private dwelling. Engine Co. 262 initiated an attack with a hose-line on the fire located on the first floor.

Ladder 117, commanded by Lieutenant Lusenskas, worked alongside Engine 262, searching and venting the structure as necessary. The building had a setback in the rear that apparently was added on after the original construction. Fire had extended throughout this area, including the second floor. After Engine 262 had knocked down the visible fire on the first floor, additional fire companies continued the attack upstairs on the second floor.

Lieutenant Lusenskas heard the radio transmissions of the units operating on the second floor, indicating that they were having difficulty reaching the last room in the rear. These fire companies were under the direct supervision of Acting Battalion Chief John Maloney, Battalion 49. Lieutenant Lusenskas had his members attempt to push up the floorboards directly below the rear second-floor room so that Engine 262 could drive water from their hose-line up and directly into the last room.

Due to deteriorating structural and fire conditions, the ceiling joists began to sag. Battalion Chief Robert Papa, Battalion 45, took note of the unstable situation and ordered the members to back out of the room. Suddenly, the horrific sound of a collapse occurred and the second-floor rear area crashed onto the first floor. Confusion ensued, *maydays* were transmitted over the handie-talkies and headcounts began.

In the midst of this chaos, Lieutenant Lusenskas saw a light coming from behind a knee wall directly below a win-

dow. He went to the location and removed a cabinet and the partially burnt remains of a wall. He recognized that the light was from a trapped member, so he crawled into a void created by the collapse.

The trapped member was Chief Maloney. He was muttering, "my leg, my leg." Lieutenant Lusenskas peered down



Ladder 117 in action and Lieutenant Peter Lusenskas with members of 117 Truck.

photos courtesy of Lieutenant Peter Lusenskas

the wood bays and saw that the Chief's ankle was caught between the floor and ceiling

boards at the end of a classic, lean-to collapse.

Lieutenant Lusenskas called for a Halligan tool and tried to pry the boards away from the joists, so that Chief Maloney might be able to pull his foot out of his boot. The Lieutenant's actions worked as Chief Maloney was pulled free with the help of other members who assisted. Chief Maloney was removed to Elmhurst Hospital by EMS personnel for treatment of his injuries.

Chief Papa noted in his report that he observed Lieutenant Lusenskas' actions. He stated that Lieutenant Lusenskas had placed himself directly under the collapsed portion of the floor and successfully freed Chief Maloney's foot. This took place while there was no shoring in place for protection and that the collapsed portion weighed several hundred pounds. Conversely, the Lieutenant wants it noted that special credit should go to Battalion Chief Robert Papa for giving the evacuation order when he did.

Thanks to the initiative and courage displayed by Lieutenant Peter M. Lusenskas, a devastating tragedy was averted. For these reasons, he is awarded the Vincent J. Kane Medal.--AP

Classification of Meritorious Acts



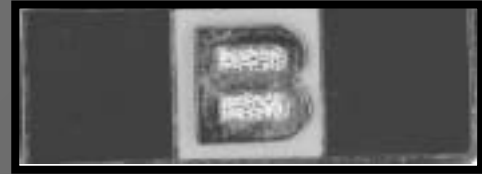
Class I--To entitle a member to a rating in this class, the act under consideration should involve a degree of danger properly to be characterized as *extreme personal risk*.



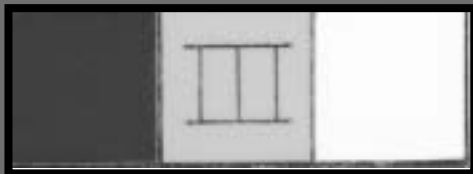
Service Rating A--To entitle a member to a rating in this class, the act under consideration should involve an individual act of personal bravery in conjunction with initiative and capability.



Class II--To entitle a member to a rating in this class, the act under consideration should involve a degree of danger properly to be characterized as *great personal risk*.



Service Rating B--To entitle a member to a rating in this class, the act under consideration should involve an individual act of personal bravery or initiative and capability.



Class III--To entitle a member to a rating in this class, the act under consideration should involve a degree of danger properly to be characterized as *unusual personal risk*.

Ribbons for Unit Citation Winners

To entitle a unit to this citation, the act under consideration should involve an outstanding company operation, dependent upon teamwork and cooperation.



ENGINE



LADDER



RESCUE



SQUAD



MARINE



HAZ-MAT



FIRE MARSHAL



Pulaski Association Medal

FIREFIGHTER RODNEY A. DECUFFA, JR.

Ladder Company 51

April 15, 2004, 0848 hours, Box 75-3665, 3615 Dereimer Avenue, Bronx

Appointed to the FDNY on October 25, 1992. Previously assigned to Ladder 9. Father, FF Rodney A. DeCuffa, Senior; is retired from Battalion 20, and brother, James T. DeCuffa, is assigned to Engine 62. Recipient of the WTC Rescuer Ribbon/Medal; and a Class III rating for this incident. Resides in Hawthorne, New York, with his wife, Patty, and their children, Kyle and Lydia.

As soon as Ladder 51, under the command of Lieutenant William McGee, rolled out of quarters and swung north on Boston Road in the Bronx, the members knew they had a job. Just moments earlier, at 0848 hours, the teleprinter in the quarters of 51 Truck and Engine 38 had ordered them to a dwelling fire at 3615 Dereimer Avenue, Box 3665, a few blocks away.

Now, they could see an angry cloud of billowing black smoke while the dispatcher was reporting multiple calls with people trapped. The Officer of Engine 38, a few blocks ahead, gave a 10-75 signal for a two-story, non-fireproof frame dwelling.

Entering the fire block, Ladder 51 found the street jammed with numerous police cars and a telephone company truck. Lieutenant McGee ordered his inside team to proceed on foot, while the outside team helped position the rig. Reaching the front of the house, heavy fire was observed blowing out every window on the exposure #4 side. Civilians were pointing to a window where trapped people had been seen earlier, but since had disappeared.

Lieutenant McGee and his inside team of FFs Rodney DeCuffa and Mark Schweighardt donned their SCBAs and entered through the front door, which had been left open.

In zero visibility and extremely punishing heat conditions, the team crawled about 10 feet down a hallway, where they found an open doorway with fire rolling out the top. FF Schweighardt, using his portable extinguisher, was ordered to stay behind to try to hold the fire back. There was no charged line on the fire yet.

Lieutenant McGee and FF DeCuffa hugged the left wall, crawled under the fire blasting out the doorway and went deeper into the apartment. FF DeCuffa was able to push a

large bookcase in front of the fire doorway, thus slowing the fire spread and buying a bit more search time for them.

Searching in zero visibility and unbearable heat, they found the bedroom where the victims were believed to be trapped. Lieutenant McGee found an unconscious and burned 45-year-old female, Susan Jackson. Together, Lieutenant and Firefighter dragged her down the hallway, past heavy fire and to the front door.

Now, it was reported that in addition to a well-involved first floor, heavy fire was involving the basement and extending to exposure #4. Knowing this and with complete disregard for his own safety, FF DeCuffa re-entered the apartment, crawled past the fire again and initiated a search for the second victim, all without the protection of a charged line.



FF Rodney DeCuffa, Jr. (right), with Ladder 51 members after a job.

photo by Matthew P. Daly

Sweeping the bedroom floor, he found 13-year-old Marcus Jackson. He picked up the child and gave a 10-45 signal. At this time, Engine 38 had the first line in place and was initiating an aggressive attack. FF DeCuffa, using his own body to shield the boy, made his way past the engine crew and to the front door. On the way down the stairs, the Firefighter fell, injuring his

back and neck, but again protected the victim, whom he handed over to another member.

FF DeCuffa entered the house for a third time to search for another child still missing. As he again reached the bedroom, the child was removed via the bedroom window by FF Kevin Wacha of Ladder 51.

FF DeCuffa performed two rescues and attempted a third by repeatedly putting himself in harm's way without the protection of a charged line. Without his courageous efforts, Susan and Marcus Jackson might not be alive today. It is with great pride that the FDNY today presents FF Rodney DeCuffa with the Pulaski Association Medal.--GAA

Commissioner Edward Thompson Medal

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM T. MCGEE

Ladder Company 51

April 15, 2004, 0848 hours, Box 22-3665, 3615 Dereimer Avenue, Bronx

Appointed to the FDNY on November 12, 1989. Previously assigned to Engine 96 and Ladder 54. Member of the Emerald and Holy Name Societies and City Island Firefighter Association. Recipient of the Albert A. Cinnelli Medal; Battalion Chief Frank T. Tuttlemondo Medal; a Service Rating B; and a Class III rating for this incident. Additionally, he has been honored by Firehouse Magazine. He resides in the Bronx with his wife, Annie.



As soon as Ladder 51, under the command of Lieutenant William McGee, rolled out of quarters and swung north on Boston Road in the Bronx, the members knew they had a job. Moments earlier, at 0848 hours, the teleprinter in the quarters of 51 Truck and Engine 38 had ordered them to a dwelling fire at 3615 Dereimer Avenue, Box 3665, a few blocks away.

Now they could see an angry cloud of billowing black smoke while the dispatcher was reporting multiple calls with people trapped. The Officer of Engine 38, a few blocks ahead, gave a 10-75 signal for a two-story, non-fireproof frame dwelling.

Entering the fire block, Ladder 51 found the street jammed with numerous police cars and a telephone company truck. Lieutenant McGee ordered his inside team to proceed on foot while the outside team helped position the rig. Reaching the front of the house, members observed heavy fire blowing out every window on the exposure #4 side. Civilians were pointing to a window where trapped people had been seen earlier, but since had disappeared.

Lieutenant McGee and his inside team, FFs Rodney DeCuffa and Mark Schweighardt, donned their SCBAs and entered through the front door, which had been left open by neighbors who had unsuccessfully attempted to enter.

In zero visibility and extremely punishing heat conditions, the team crawled about 10 feet down a hallway where they found an open doorway with fire rolling out the top. FF Schweighardt, using the can, was ordered to stay behind to try to hold the fire back. There was no charged line on the fire yet.

As FF DeCuffa moved a large bookcase in front of the doorway to slow the fire spread, Lieutenant McGee continued his search and reached the end of the hallway. Going to the left, he found two doorways, which proved to be closets. Hearing FF DeCuffa say he found a room, the Lieutenant searched to the left, while the Firefighter went to the right.

Sweeping to the left in zero visibility and unbearable heat, Lieutenant McGee found a wheelchair on its side. As he moved past it, he found 48-year-old Susan Jackson, a multiple sclerosis victim, unconscious on the floor next to the bed. He gave a 10-45 signal and with the help of FF DeCuffa, dragged the victim out. As he passed the fire room, the Lieutenant placed his body between the victim and the heavy fire to shield her from any more injury. Victim and rescuers reached the front door and Lieutenant McGee passed Mrs. Jackson to a member of Engine 63.

Hearing Battalion Chief Daniel Willis transmit a second alarm, but knowing that two children still were unaccounted for, Lieutenant McGee re-entered the apartment--again without the protection of a charged line--to resume his search. Passing the fire again, he reached the bedroom where FF

DeCuffa had just found 13-year-old Marcus Jackson. Making sure another 10-45 was transmitted, he assisted FF DeCuffa in removing the victim.

At this point, Lieutenant McGee heard two radio reports: one, a 10-45 signal for a child removed via a bedroom window, and the other, for heavy fire in the basement.

Ensuring that Engine 38 members knew they had fire directly below them, the Lieutenant made his way to the fire doorway and informed Lieutenant Mark Doran of Engine 38.

Lieutenant Doran then advised Lieutenant McGee of a possible third child who still might be in the bedroom. Lieutenant McGee made a quick search, but found no one. Earlier, the third child had jumped from a rear window and suffered minor injuries.

Lieutenant McGee performed this rescue by putting himself in harm's way without the protection of a charged line. For his actions, which were in the highest traditions of the FDNY, Lieutenant William McGee is presented with the Commissioner Edward Thompson Medal.--GAA



Lieutenant William McGee, center, with his men after a fire.

photo by Matthew P. Daly



Columbia Association Medal

FIREFIGHTER **TODD A. FREDRICKSON** *Ladder Company 43*

February 3, 2004, 1439 hours, Box 75-1289, 400 East 105th Street, Manhattan

Appointed to the FDNY on July 15, 1996. Member of the Holy Name and Emerald Societies and the Vikings Association. Holds Bachelor of Science degrees from Plattsburg University and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and a Master of Science from Brooklyn College. Recipient of a Class III rating for this incident. Resides in Manhattan.

Much has been written about the contrast of fire and ice, but the combination usually will make Firefighters remember a particular occasion when they faced both extremes in a short period of time. Every cold spell brings large numbers of New York's Bravest to face this deadly combination and they cope with it with amazing efficiency. February 3, 2004, was such a cold day that no Firefighter was eager to face an inferno, but when Manhattan Box 1289 was transmitted at 1439 hours, the members of Ladder 43 and Engine 53, along with other units, responded with their usual alacrity.

FF Todd Fredrickson was assigned the forcible entry position in Ladder 43 that day. When the company arrived first-due at 400 East 105th Street, members could see heavy, black smoke emanating from several windows on the ninth floor of the 10-story multiple dwelling. In spite of the heavy equipment they were wearing and the tools they were carrying, FF Fredrickson and the other members of the inside team rapidly ascended the nine stories. As he climbed with Lieutenant Tony Montaruli and FF Mark Carpiniello with the can, FF Fredrickson heard that Engine 53 was facing a frozen hydrant, which could impact water supply and the engine's ability to quickly get sufficient pressure from the building standpipe system. FF Fredrickson realized that anyone trapped in the raging inferno had to be removed as quickly as possible.

When they reached the ninth floor, the members wasted no time forcing entry to apartment 9H. They were forced to the floor by the heavy smoke and fire found beyond the door. With no hose-line yet in place, the members had to rely on FF Carpiniello's judicious use of the extinguisher to hold back the blaze as they searched for victims. Scampering as quickly as possible past the flames that were consuming the entire contents of the bedroom, FF Fredrickson was able to reach the bathroom at the rear of the apartment.

The door was locked, indicating that the occupant had

sought refuge from the blaze. Forcing the door, FF Fredrickson found the unconscious body of 61-year-old Ellen Stokes and transmitted a signal 10-45 to alert Lieutenant Montaruli about his discovery. She had been burned before entering the bathroom and then been overcome by the smoke.

As the fire raged behind him, FF Fredrickson was unable to see any sign that she was breathing. He knew that her immediate removal was vital. With no line yet in place, the Firefighter used his own body to shield the woman from the flames as FF Carpiniello continued to wield the extinguisher to fight back the growing inferno. With the help of the other members of Ladder 43, FF Fredrickson dragged the victim from the apartment and to the relative safety of the eighth-floor landing.

Once there, they used the last water from the can to extinguish the woman's burning flesh and worked to establish an airway. FFs Fredrickson and Carpiniello were joined by the members of Engine 22, who brought a resuscitator with them. They then were able to provide Ms. Stokes with lifesaving oxygen. Realizing that her condition was precarious at best, they all joined forces to rapidly, yet tenderly, remove her to the street and the waiting arms of EMS.

As the members from Engine 53 arrived with a hose-line and moved in to extinguish the blaze that had nearly cost Ellen Stokes her life, she was quickly transported to the Cornell Burn Unit. She suffered

from second- and third-degree burns to more than 65 percent of her body. Even with the best medical attention, she faced a long road to recovery, but her journey could not have begun were it not for the great bravery and determination displayed by FF Fredrickson.

For the courage and fortitude required to enter this inferno and remove a woman, with no charged line in place, the Fire Department is proud to award the Columbia Association Medal to FF Todd Fredrickson.--JT



Ladder 43 in action at The Vinegar Factory fire.

photo by FDNY Photo Unit

Susan Wagner Medal

FIREFIGHTER EUGENE F. NICKOLA

Ladder Company 133

May 23, 2004, 0942 hours, Box 75-5372, 114-15 175th Place, Queens

Appointed to the FDNY on February 1, 2000. Holds an Associates degree from Nassau Community College. Recipient of a Class III rating for this incident. Resides in Farmingdale, Long Island, with his wife, Stacie.



The weather was unusually hot and humid on the morning of May 23, 2004, with temperatures in the 80s. The 9-x-6 tour was just beginning for the members of Ladder Co. 133 in South Jamaica when the tone alarm and teleprinter came alive, assigning the truck as first-due on a phone alarm for a reported fire in a private dwelling. As the unit was responding, dispatchers notified members that there was a report of a person trapped inside the burning home.

When Ladder 133 arrived on the scene, members were confronted with a fire condition of blowtorch proportions, emanating from the entrance and first floor. Compounding the situation were window bars installed throughout the building and several hysterical bystanders screaming that there was a disabled person trapped in the front room on the first floor.

Lieutenant James Bert (Engine 314, working in Ladder 133) and FFs Donald Ferguson on the can and Eugene Nickola with the irons made up the inside team. They were preparing to enter the structure to find the helpless victim. The task was difficult because Firefighters had to force their way through a metal gate into the building. Once they entered, they encountered a Collyer's mansion-type condition.

Lieutenant Bert and FF Ferguson made their way to the front room past the engine company's hose-line--whose members were having difficulty advancing--and found furniture, burning clothing and debris piled from the floor to the ceiling. Realizing time was crucial to the victim's survival, FF Nickola informed Lieutenant Bert that he would attempt to get to the rear in case the victim tried to flee in that direction.

FF Nickola faced intense heat, fire rolling over his head and zero visibility, but persisted making his way over the burning debris to locate the missing occupant. He moved through the living and dining rooms and then through a narrow opening leading to the kitchen area. The arduous journey finally paid off when FF Nickola came upon the moaning and badly

burnt body of Leonard Washington, the owner of the house. FF Nickola immediately transmitted a 10-45 code over his radio and made a difficult decision. He heard Mr. Washington gasping for air. Fearing that he soon might expire, FF Nickola removed his facepiece and placed it over Mr. Washington's face with the purge valve open, allowing fresh air to flow.

FF Nickola then placed the facepiece back on his own face and started to drag the injured man back through the tremendous amount of debris and heavy fire. Members of Engine 275 were aggressively continuing to push the hose-line to the injured man's position. After maneuvering Mr. Washington through a small opening into another room, FF Nickola was forced to radio that fire was impeding his path and hampering the victim's removal.

Lieutenant Francis Burke of Engine 275 heard FF Nickola give his radio transmission and he and members of Ladder 133 went to his aid. Engine 275 repositioned their hose-line to protect the victim as the other members cleared a path through the debris, allowing Mr. Washington to be brought out of the house. The injured man, suffering from severe burns to his torso, arms, legs and respiratory system, was transferred to EMS personnel, who took him to Mary Immaculate Hospital.

The severity of Mr. Washington's injuries required further treatment at Weill Cornell Burn Center.

FF Nickola was granted medical leave due to sprains and contusions after the incident. FF Nickola's initiative and actions were in the highest traditions of this Department. He passed a serious fire, through difficult conditions, placing his own escape in jeopardy, to find an injured and trapped victim. He also took the initiative to give his suffering victim some fresh air to breathe, increasing his chances for survival.

For his valorous efforts and actions, the Department awards the Susan Wagner Medal to FF Eugene Nickola.--AP



FF Eugene Nickola with members of Ladder 133.

photo courtesy of FF Eugene Nickola



Steuben Association Medal

FIREFIGHTER JOHN F. HOURICAN

Rescue Company 5

October 9, 2004, 0559 hours, Box 75-0897, 82 Arlo Road, Staten Island

Appointed to the FDNY on February 16, 1999. Previously assigned to Engines 160 and 253 and Ladder 24. Brother, FF Scott Hourican, is assigned to Ladder 168. Member of the Emerald Society. Recipient of a Service Rating A for this incident. Resides on Staten Island with his wife, Trinita, and their daughter, Caitlin, and sons, Patrick and Sean.

Early-morning fires get a head start on Firefighters because they usually grow unnoticed before they are reported. When there is an accelerant involved, it can produce a very advanced fire prior to the Firefighters' arrival. That was the case for FF John F. Hourican of Rescue 5 on the morning of October 9, 2004.

Members of Rescue Companies usually are not called to a fire until the first-arriving units confirm a working fire, but an early-morning blaze at 82 Arlo Road in the Grymes Hill section of Staten Island prompted numerous phone calls. The Box was transmitted at 0559 hours and its proximity to Rescue 5's quarters--as well as the company being turned out on the original alarm--resulted in them arriving as the first-due truck. Flames already were lapping out the front door and several windows by the time they arrived. Civilians on-scene were screaming that a man was trapped in the fire apartment.

Lieutenant Philip Solimeo split his unit, directing his outside team to check the second floor of the two-story multiple dwelling. He entered the fire apartment with his forcible entry team. FF Hourican had the can position. The members crawled under the flames licking at the top of the door frame as they entered the apartment into a heavy smoke condition. Without a hose-line yet in place, they were taking a big risk, but they couldn't afford to waste any time with a life at stake.

As they crawled through the fully involved living room, they could see the flames streaming across the ceiling and starting to work their way down the walls. They crawled along the floor as they fought their way toward the moans they heard coming from the rear of the apartment.

When they reached the rear of the apartment, they encountered a locked bedroom door. Lieutenant Solimeo used his Officer's tool as they forced their way in. With zero visibility in the bedroom and an additional fire burning there, they were only able to locate the victim by the sound of his moans. When they reached 25-year-old Alex Archer, they were able to ascertain that he was the only occupant before he lost consciousness. After transmitting a 10-45 signal, they had to consider their options for his removal.

Because of the additional fire in the bedroom, the Lieutenant decided that removal through the front door was their best choice. FF Hourican grabbed the victim around his upper torso and Lieutenant Solimeo supported his lower body as they dragged him back through the rapidly spreading inferno toward the front door. With the flames rolling over their heads, they were able to remove him from the apartment and transfer him to an EMS crew that was on-scene. At this time, Engine Company 155 moved in to extinguish the blaze.

EMS rushed Mr. Archer to Staten Island University Hospital, where he was taken to the Burn Unit due to the severe burns and smoke inhalation he had suffered. He required a lengthy hospital stay before fully recovering. Were it not for the heroic efforts of FF Hourican and the other members of Rescue 5, he surely would have perished. Before a hose-line was in place, they risked their own

lives to give this victim another chance at life.

For his great courage and perseverance in the face of grave danger, the Fire Department is proud to award the Steuben Association Medal to FF John F. Hourican.--JT



FF John Hourican with members of "Blue Thunder."

photo courtesy of FF John Hourican

Dr. J.W. Goldenkranz Medal

FIREFIGHTER SCOTT M. ATLAS *Ladder Company 36*

August 24, 2004, 0523 hours, Box 75-1772, 711 190th Street, Manhattan

Appointed to the FDNY on July 16, 1989. Brothers, Captain Don Atlas is assigned to Ladder 24; FF Keith Atlas is retired from Engine 35; and Lieutenant Gregg Atlas, assigned to Engine 10, was killed at the World Trade Center. Holds a BS degree in Science from Cornell University. Recipient of one unit citation; one Service Rating A; and one Class III rating for this incident. Resides in Orange County, New York, with his wife, Lynn, and their five children, John, Emily, Rebecca, Caroline and Claire.



Firefighter Scott M. Atlas of Ladder 36 is one of the quiet leaders of Engine Co. 95/Ladder Co. 36 (nicknamed the “Brick House” in memory of FF Thomas Brick, who died in the line of duty in December 2003). The Brick House protects the Inwood section of upper Manhattan, traditionally a busy area for fire duty, which attracts very capable Firefighters and Officers. The best Firefighters speak through their actions and in the early-morning hours of August 24, 2004, Scott Atlas’ performance spoke the loudest.

When Ladder 36 arrived as the second truck company to 711 190th Street at 0527 hours, fire poured out of three windows of a sixth-floor balcony, trapping a 46-year-old woman, who already was severely burned and screaming for help. FF Atlas’ foremost duty as ladder company chauffeur (LCC) was to position the 100-foot aerial ladder to protect life.

This job became even more crucial when the first-arriving truck, Ladder 45, was blocked from using their tower ladder by several trees. Tower ladders are effective tools for removing victims on a stable platform, but that stability comes at the price of slower speed, more bulk and less reach. FF Atlas maneuvered Ladder 36’s more



The brothers Atlas--FF Scott, Captain Don, FF Keith (retired) and Lieutenant Gregg Atlas, who was killed at the World Trade Center.
photo courtesy of FF Scott Atlas

nimble aerial ladder through the thick branches to the balcony railing...well, almost. The fully extended ladder did not completely reach the balcony; it hung 70 feet above the ground, a short distance from the railing.

Ladder 36’s outside vent Firefighter (OVM), FF John R. Cavaliere, worked his way through the branches to the tip of the ladder. FF Cavaliere attempted to remove the victim, but the large woman was slipping into shock and refused to let go

of the balcony railing. With fire threatening the victim and FF Cavaliere, FF Atlas climbed to the top of the ladder, swung around his OVM and leaped onto the balcony. Then, FF Atlas positioned himself between the victim and the fire, shielding the woman from the intense heat.

With fire scorching through his bunker coat, FF Atlas knew that time was running out. In addition to the immediate threat, the engine company’s water stream soon would be driving fire, heat and steam toward the balcony. Even with fire engulfing the balcony, FF Atlas was able to make clear, rational decisions: removal by tower ladder--not the aerial--gave the semi-conscious woman the best hope for survival.

By this time, Ladder 45’s LCC was able to position the tower ladder basket to the balcony railing. FF Atlas, with the help of FF Cavaliere, then was able to lift the heavy woman

over the four-foot railing into the arms of FF Joseph P. Byrne, Ladder 45’s OVM. Through the concerted actions of all the companies in Battalion 13, the fire quickly was contained and extinguished.

Scott Atlas, the unassuming “gentle giant” of Ladder 36, suffered second-degree burns on his forearm and required two weeks of medical

leave. His actions are a great honor to the memory of his brother, Lieutenant Gregg Atlas, Engine 10, who was killed in the line of duty at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

For his heroic actions in the performance of his duties, FF Scott M. Atlas is awarded the Dr. J.W. Goldenkranz Medal.--SN



Uniformed Fire Officers Association Medal

LIEUTENANT JOSEPH R. CILENTO

Ladder Company 168

February 8, 2004, 0410 hours, Box 75-4296, 1615 76th Street, Brooklyn

Appointed to the FDNY on October 21, 1990. Previously assigned to Ladder 149. Member of the Columbia Association. Attended the College of Staten Island. Recipient of two Class III ratings, one for this incident. Resides on Staten Island with his wife, Gloria, and their sons, Joseph and James.

Due to their large size, elaborate construction features and unique internal features, the Queen Anne-type private dwelling presents a far more complex fire problem than the average private dwelling. Fires in Queen Annes are notorious manpower sponges, immediately absorbing every available hand due to the genuine possibility of portable ladder rescues and the number of areas that may have to be entered and searched. On February 8, 2004, at 0410 hours, the members of Ladder 168 and--in particular--Lieutenant Joseph R. Cilento, were reminded just how complex a fire problem this type dwelling poses to the Fire Department.

Firefighters, under the supervision of Lieutenant Cilento, were dispatched for a phone alarm reporting a fire at 1615 76th Street, Brooklyn, the residence of Mrs. Rose Digiovanni, a long-time prominent member of the Bath Beach community. Fortunately for Mrs. Digiovanni, this section of Brooklyn is safeguarded by the members of Ladder 168 and Engine 243.

Arriving at the location, Lieutenant Cilento noticed heavy smoke pushing from several windows of the second floor of Mrs. Digiovanni's wood-frame Queen Anne-type private dwelling. He immediately ordered his chauffeur, FF Joseph Larstanna of Ladder 168, to ladder the front of the building. He also instructed FFs Brian McBride and John Kroon, the outside team of Ladder 168, to ascend the fire escape located on the exposure #4 side of the dwelling.

Purposely heading toward their assigned positions on the fire floor, the inside team, consisting of Lieutenant Cilento and FFs Albert Somma and John Hourican, were alerted to a report of a person trapped. At the second floor, the inside team

was met by heavy, black smoke and high heat as fire had possession of one of the front bedrooms. Significantly, this fire was extending into the main hallway landing toward their tentative position.

Fearing for the safety of his members, Lieutenant Cilento commanded FFs Somma and Hourican to hold their positions



Members of Ladder 168 at fire scene.

photo courtesy of Lieutenant Joseph Cilento

at the half-landing and await the arrival of a charged hose-line. Ultimately shelter-less and without a charged line in place, Lieutenant Cilento began his search toward the rear of the fire apartment. Searching off the left wall in the untenable hallway, he reached the bathroom, which he entered and searched with negative results.

Consequently, returning to the untenable hallway, the Lieutenant proceeded deeper into the fire apartment and arrived at the kitchen door, entering to begin his search. Probing toward the center of the room, he discovered Mrs. Digiovanni, unconscious and in a supine position. Without assistance, Lieutenant Cilento dragged Mrs. Digiovanni 15 feet back down a precarious hallway, shielding her body with his own from the intense heat, to the second-floor

stairway landing. Rescuer and victim were met by the advancing engine company making their assault on the fire. Assisted by his inside team, Lieutenant Cilento carried the victim over the advancing engine company and down the stairs to the street, transferring her care into the hands of awaiting emergency medical personnel.

Due to Lieutenant Joseph Cilento's selfless act of bravery, 87-year-old Rose Digiovanni has recovered from her severe life-threatening injuries and is alive today. He is recognized and presented with the Uniformed Fire Officers Association Medal.--PWB

Edith B. Goldman Medal

FIREFIGHTER BRIAN T. SULLIVAN

Ladder Company 173

September 16, 2004, 1601 hours, Box 1394, Atlantic Ocean,
Beach 123rd Street & Ocean Promenade, Queens

Appointed to the FDNY on January 16, 1994. Previously assigned to Ladder 8. Union Delegate to the UFA. Recipient of a unit citation; a Life Saving Benevolent Association Award; and a Class III rating for this incident. Additionally, he was honored in 2004 by Firefighter Quarterly Magazine. Holds a BA degree in Political Science and Business from St. John's University. Resides in Rockaway Beach, Queens.



Even when off-duty, New York City Firefighters are ready to help people in need. This was the situation facing FF Brian T. Sullivan of Ladder Co. 173 on September 16, 2004, while he was off-duty and at Rockaway Beach in Queens.

At 1601 hours, FF Sullivan was riding his bicycle on the boardwalk at 123rd Street and Rockaway Beach Boulevard when he heard screaming and shouts for help coming from the beach. FF Sullivan saw three people in distress, approximately 50 to 125 yards offshore. They were having a difficult time staying afloat in an extremely rough surf condition caused by the impending arrival of Hurricane Ivan.

Without regard for his safety and without a flotation device or back-up, the Firefighter

entered the ocean and swam approximately 50 yards, where he encountered the first person in need of rescue, Luke Kelvin, a male teenager. FF Sullivan wrapped his arms around the teen and swam him to shore. Once the conscious Kelvin was safely on shore, FF Sullivan re-entered the rough surf in an attempt to rescue the two other people.

Reaching the remaining two victims, FF Sullivan realized that one was unconscious, facedown in the water and the other was drowning and unable to stay above water. FF Sullivan kept the unconscious victim above water. At this time, Kristen Bledsoe, a civilian, had swam out with a boogie board to assist

the lone Firefighter. He placed the unconscious victim face up on the boogie board and ordered Ms. Bledsoe to keep his head above water.

FF Sullivan then let go of the second victim and dove under water, where he found the third victim, who was fully submerged and entangled in the legs of the second victim. FF Sullivan was able to bring the third victim to the surface and placed him on the boogie board with Ms. Bledsoe's help.

At this point, the members of Ladder Co. 137 had arrived on the scene and entered the rough ocean to join the rescue effort. Two members of Ladder Co. 137, equipped with a rescue buoy, swam out to FF Sullivan and Ms. Bledsoe and assisted in the rescue. Three Ladder 137 members entered the ocean to help,

while the other members stayed on shore to pull everyone in after the victims were recovered.

The two teenagers removed from the ocean were Jason Xia, 17 years old, and Aaron Cheung, 15 years old. Xia was transported to Peninsula General Hospital and Cheung was transported to Schneider's Children's Hospital.

For his actions in twice entering a rough Atlantic Ocean and swimming a great distance to rescue three drowning swimmers, FF Brian T. Sullivan of Ladder Co. 173 is officially recognized by the FDNY today. He is presented with the Edith B. Goldman Medal.--NG



Ladder 173 is a 2001 Seagrave 100-foot rear-mount.

photo by Fred Engelmann



American Legion Post 930/ Mark M. Wohlfeld Memorial Medal

FIREFIGHTER JONATHAN HOFFMAN *Ladder Company 144*

November 5, 2004, 1527 hours, Box 22-4628, 162-30 Powells Cove Boulevard, Queens

Appointed to the FDNY on May 5, 2002. Holds a BA degree from SUNY at Albany. Recipient of a Class III rating for this incident. Resides in Astoria, Queens.

In the late afternoon hours of the day tour on November 5, 2004, Queens Box 4628 was transmitted by phone for a fire on the roof of 162-30 Powells Cove Boulevard in the Whitestone section of Queens. Engine Co. 295 and Ladder Co. 144, the "Whitestone Eagles," were assigned to respond first-due to the reported fire on top of the nine-story, fireproof residential building. The building stood 75 feet high and did not have a standpipe.

Arriving at the Box, FDNY members found a heavy smoke and fire condition on the roof, prompting Ladder 144 to transmit a second alarm. There were civilians pointing to the roof, indicating a person sitting on the edge of the parapet while holding on to a fence on the roof. The civilian trapped on the roof was Jan Kolesar, a roofer, who was working on the roof when the fire started.

FF Jonathan Hoffman, Ladder 144's roof Firefighter, wasted no time and went straight to the burning roof to assist the trapped roofer. Once at the roof level, FF Hoffman informed his Officer that he was going onto the roof, even though a charged hose-line was not yet in position.

There was a heavy fire condition on the roof and almost zero visibility due to the very dark and thick smoke from the burning tar and rubber. FF Hoffman made his way past the roaring fire to the roofer, who was on the edge of the parapet.

With the fire now at his back, FF Hoffman convinced Mr. Kolesar to hang on as Ladder 144's tower ladder bucket was placed right below him. The roofer could wait no longer and jumped six feet into the bucket. After he jumped, there were two people in the bucket--the roofer and Ladder 144's outside vent Firefighter.

The fire on the roof now blocked FF Hoffman's path to a safe area. Hot tar was splattering the back of his bunker gear as he was trying to turn from the intense heat.

The Firefighter's situation was made more dangerous because there were three propane cylinders on the roof, two of which already had bled, and a tar kettle.

As the strong winds (estimated at 40 to 50 mph) appeared to change direction, FF Hoffman heard Ladder 144's inside team calling for him. Simultaneously, he also saw Engine 295 knocking down the fire, which allowed FF Hoffman a clear path to a safe area on



The incident for which FF Jonathan Hoffman is awarded the American Legion Post 930/Mark M. Wohlfeld Memorial Medal.

photo by FDNY Photo Unit

the roof.

For his bravery in assisting a trapped civilian to safety from the parapet of a fully involved and smoky roof, FF Jonathan Hoffman is officially recognized by the FDNY today. He is awarded the American Legion Post 930/Mark M. Wohlfeld Memorial Medal.--NG

Arthur J. Laufer Memorial Medal

FIREFIGHTER RYAN R. NORDMAN

Ladder Company 45

January 27, 2004, 0240 hours, Box 75-1758, 116 Pinehurst Avenue, Manhattan



Appointed to the FDNY on July 15, 2001. Served in the U.S. Navy from 1992 to 1996. Recipient of a Service Rating A for this incident. Resides in Floral Park, Long Island.

On a snowy night in January 2004, the story of a mother and her unborn baby would have ended tragically in a public hallway of a Washington Heights apartment building were it not for the aggressive actions of FF Ryan R. Nordman of Ladder Company 45. Engine Co. 93 and Ladder Co. 45, known as the “Big House,” responded to a reported fire at 116 Pinehurst Avenue (building J) at 0240 hours on January 27.

Fires in the early-morning hours are particularly dangerous. While most people sleep, fire and deadly smoke can enter rooms and apartments with deadly results. Even if occupants wake up, many become disoriented and collapse in the acrid smoke while trying to escape, which is exactly what happened to Michelle Shea, a woman who was six-months pregnant.

Ladder 45 arrived first, well ahead of Engine 93, whose members were delayed by snow and parked cars. It was obvious that 45 Truck would have to begin this operation without the aid of a hose-line. When FF Nordman, the outside vent Firefighter (OVM), reached the side of the building, fire was blowing out of two windows on the first floor, endangering a number of tenants exiting the building from a fire escape.

FF Nordman decided to place a 20-foot straight ladder next to the second-floor fire escape to give the tenants another way down to street level, but his plans changed suddenly. As he returned with the ladder, he saw two panicked women at a second-floor window. One woman already was climbing out of the casement window, preparing to jump.

FF Nordman knew instantly that this woman was now his top priority. In a calm, firm voice, the Firefighter gave the women instructions to stay in the apartment and then he placed the ladder to their window. He climbed to the top of the ladder, looked in and realized that the heavy smoke was only collecting at the ceiling level.

He instructed the two women to go back in the apartment and he followed. FF Nordman was about to close the front door to lessen the smoke in the apartment, when he heard screams from the public hallway. FF Nordman’s priorities changed once again. He quickly moved the two women in the apartment to a fire escape and then headed in the direction of the screams.

When FF Nordman made it back to the apartment door, he called down the hallway, but received no reply. He then began his search down the pitch-black corridor. After crawling for about 18 feet, he came to a corner, turned and found an unenclosed stairwell, the conduit of the dense smoke and high heat originating from the first floor.

He continued his search past the stairs another 22 feet to a dead end, where he found Mrs. Shea unconscious. After transmitting his discovery over the radio, FF Nordman started to drag the victim to a clear apartment, but as he passed the stairwell, he was met by FF Eric A. Torres, Ladder 34, and Captain Michael Grogan, Division 6, detailed to Ladder 34, who accepted Mrs. Shea from FF Nordman and brought her to safety. Once again, FF Nordman displayed his ability to adjust to

changing conditions by continuing his search on the upper floors in response to reports of more trapped victims.

FF Nordman’s aggressive actions in the hallway saved not one, but two lives. If Mrs. Shea was not removed when FF Nordman found her, both she and her unborn child certainly would have perished, according to the attending emergency room doctor.

Four-year veteran Ryan Nordman clearly has shown his dedication to the Department in his short time as a Firefighter. For performing heroically at Box 1758, without the protection of a charged hose-line, FF Ryan R. Nordman is awarded the Arthur J. Laufer Memorial Medal.--SN



FF Ryan Nordman explains all the benefits of being a New York City Firefighter to his nephew, Christian.

photo courtesy of FF Ryan Nordman



Emerald Society Pipes and Drums Medal

FIREFIGHTER JOHN V. KROCZYNSKI

Ladder Company 169

May 23, 2004, 0659 hours, Box 75-3144, 2525 Batchelder Street, Brooklyn

Appointed to the FDNY on August 16, 1998. Previously assigned to Engines 65 and 207. Brother, FF Mike Kroczyński, is assigned to Ladder 83. Member of the Emerald Society and the Columbia and Pulaski Associations. Holds a BS degree in Accounting from St. John's University. Recipient of a unit citation; and a Service Rating A for this incident. Resides on Staten Island with his wife, Stacey, and their daughters, Alexa and Gianna.

A fire in a fireproof multiple dwelling can be extensive, extremely hot and--depending on wind conditions and building air flow patterns--very difficult to extinguish. In the past 20 years, many elements have changed that affect FDNY's firefighting capabilities. As a Department, members no longer fight fires in residential buildings where the fire load is natural fiber-based. With the onset of the chemical age, properties of the average residential furnishings are--for the most part--petroleum-based. FF John Kroczyński of Ladder Company 169 experienced firsthand that the fire load has increased tremendously, resulting in higher temperatures and faster-spreading fires.

As Brooklyn Box 3144 was transmitted for smoke from the fourth floor, the responding members of Ladder 169 instantly began to talk up an operational plan, recalling the dangers of indiscriminate ventilation, as well as the potential for rapid fire and extensive heavy smoke development on the fire floor and floors above.

Arriving at the location, FF Kroczyński, who was assigned that tour to the outside vent position because of his experience, immediately and with purpose headed toward his assignment to cover the rear and sides of this large-frontage multiple dwelling. Reaching the exposure #4 side of the building, FF Kroczyński observed heavy smoke pushing from the corner apartment in the rear of the fourth floor.

FF Kroczyński summoned Ladder 169's chauffeur, FF Daniel Gerrity, to a large parking lot on the exposure #4 side of the building, which he calculated would afford him direct access to the windows with the smoke showing. The two

Firefighters set up the apparatus for aerial ladder use.

Ascending carefully, FF Kroczyński, through growing flames and issuing smoke, saw a victim lying on a bed. Weighing his options and considering the victim's certain demise by the consuming fire, FF Kroczyński made a split-second decision.

FF Kroczyński immediately forced the window, exposing himself to searing heat as he made his way into the room toward the bed of Mrs. Jennie Silverman. Now thrust into a fight against an atmosphere that had melted the apartment drapery and burned the paint off the walls, the Firefighter was forced to crawl on his stomach after being driven to the floor by the intense heat.



FF John Kroczyński with members of Ladder 169. photo courtesy of FF John Kroczyński

Once at the bedside, the Firefighter reached up and removed Mrs. Silverman to the apartment floor. He shielded her from the flames with his body and made his way toward the only means of egress--the laddered window. While carefully dragging the victim on the floor, FF Kroczyński fought to get the 78-year-old senior out the window, onto the tip of Ladder 169's aerial, while fire lurked above. He was guided by FF

Gerrity back to the window. He also assisted in getting the victim onto the tip of the aerial ladder. Both Firefighters struggled with the task of removing the unconscious and burned woman safely to the street.

Due to FF John Kroczyński and his selfless act of bravery, 78-year-old Jennie Silverman has recovered from her severe life-threatening injuries and is alive today. For his heroic actions, he is awarded the Emerald Society Pipes and Drums Medal.--PWB

Company Officers Association Medal

CAPTAIN JUSTIN C. WERNER

Ladder Company 147

October 9, 2004, 1546 hours, Box 33-2481, 359 Rugby Road, Brooklyn

Appointed to the FDNY on July 14, 1979. Previously assigned to Ladder 123 and Engine 249. Father, FF Harold C. Werner, Sr., is retired from Ladder 159, and brother, Captain Harold C. Werner, Jr., is retired from Ladder 120. Holds a BA degree from LeMoyne College. Recipient of three unit citations; two Service Rating As (one for this incident); and a Service Rating B. Resides in Rockaway, Queens, with his wife, Ann-Marie, and their son, Justin, and daughters, Annie, Sarah and Charlotte.



On Saturday, October 9, 2004, as politicians nationwide battled in the final weeks of the fall campaign season and the City waited to see if the New York Yankees again would battle the Boston Red Sox in the American League Championship Series, Captain Justin Werner and the members of Ladder 147 once again proved why they are called "Da Pride A Flatbush."

At about a quarter to four that afternoon, Captain Werner and Ladder 147 were called to a reported fire at Box 2481, 359 Rugby Road. Arriving as the first-due ladder company--along with their housemates from Engine 281--they found a 40-by 60-foot, two-and-one-half-story, Queen Anne-type, wood-frame building fully involved. Heavy fire was venting out the exposure #2 windows on all floors, while heavy, black smoke was pouring from every window.

Engine 281 immediately transmitted a 10-75 signal. Captain Werner, after ordering the chauffeur to position the apparatus in front of the fire building, requested an additional truck due to the presence of window bars on the first floor of the building.

As Engine 281 worked to get a hose-line into operation, Captain Werner, accompanied by FFs Brian Gardner and Patrick Higgins, proceeded to the first-floor entrance to begin their primary search. Entering the building, they encountered a heavy smoke condition. During the course of this search (for possible victims and the fire location), Battalion 41 informed Captain Werner via handie-talkie that a civilian was reported missing on the first floor.

Moving quickly and with little regard for his personal safety, Captain Werner moved toward the rear of the apartment where he found heavy fire coming from the left rear bedroom.

With conditions rapidly deteriorating, the Captain informed Engine 281 of the fire's location and continued his search into the right rear bedroom. Through high heat and a very heavy smoke condition, coupled without the benefit of a charged hose-line, Captain Werner aggressively searched the right rear bedroom where he found Kisnasami Ramsami, 78, in an unconscious state and not breathing.



The incident for which Captain Werner is receiving the Company Officers Association Medal.

photo by FF Mike Gomez

Captain Werner immediately signaled a 10-45 code to Battalion 41 via his handie-talkie and began to remove the victim past the fire. At this point, FF Gardner assisted Captain Werner and they were able to evacuate Mr. Ramsami to the street. With the victim now safely outside, Captain Werner re-entered the building to finish the primary search. Mr. Ramsami was rushed to Kings County Hospital in critical condition where he was hospitalized for more than a week before

his condition stabilized.

Had it not been for the bravery and expertise of Captain Werner, the outcome of this incident may have been very different. If the fire had intensified, Captain Werner's primary means of egress would have been cut off. With the bars on the first-floor window, Captain Werner and Mr. Ramsami would have been trapped. In his report on the incident, the Deputy Chief of the 15th Division stated, "Captain Werner's efforts are the only reason Mr. Ramsami survived the fire that consumed his house." Additionally, the Chief noted, "Captain Werner exhibited...bravery and initiative to overcome the obstacles presented to him on this fateful day."

In recognition of this selfless act, the New York City Fire Department is proud to honor Captain Justin Werner today with the Company Officers Association Medal.--DH



Chief Joseph B. Martin Medal

LIEUTENANT PHILIP J. SOLIMEO

Rescue Company 5

October 9, 2004, 0559 hours, Box 75-0897, 82 Arlo Road, Staten Island

Appointed to the FDNY on July 9, 1995. Previously assigned to Squad 1, Ladder 103 and Engines 5 and 154. Brother, FF Thomas Solimeo, is assigned to Ladder 148; brother-in-law, FF Peter Gioia, is assigned to Engine 249; cousin, FF Philip Sabbatino, is assigned to Engine 1; and cousin, FF Anthony Sabbatino, is assigned to Engine 160. Member of the Columbia Association. Holds a BS degree in Electrical Engineering from the New York Institute of Technology. Recipient of a unit citation; and a Service Rating A for this incident. Resides on Staten Island with his wife, Theresa, and their sons, Philip and Timothy.

The members of Rescue Companies usually are not called to a fire until the first-arriving units confirm a working fire, but an early-morning blaze at 82 Arlo Road in the Grymes Hill section of Staten Island prompted numerous phone calls. Early-morning fires usually get a head start on Firefighters, because they grow unnoticed before they are reported. When there is an accelerant involved, it can give the fire a jump start prior to Firefighters' arrival. These were the conditions that tested the bravery of Lieutenant Philip J. Solimeo of Rescue 5 on the morning of October 9, 2004.

The Box was transmitted at 0559 hours. Its proximity to Rescue 5's quarters and the company being turned out on the original alarm resulted in the members arriving as the first-due truck. Flames already were roaring out of several windows and the front door by the time they arrived.

They were alerted by several screaming civilians at the scene that a man was trapped in the fire apartment. Lieutenant Solimeo split his unit. He directed his outside team to check the second floor of the two-story multiple dwelling, as he entered the fire apartment with the forcible entry team, which included FF John Hourican.

The Lieutenant and Firefighters had to crawl under the flames lapping out the top of the door frame as they entered the apartment into heavy, acrid smoke. With no hose-line yet in place, they were at risk, but with a life at stake, they couldn't afford to waste any time. As they crawled through the living room with its contents ablaze, they could see the flames streaming across the ceiling and starting to work their way down the walls.

Hearing moans coming from the rear of the apartment, they crawled along the floor as they fought their way toward the victim's location. Engine 160, quartered with Rescue 5,

had been assigned on a CFR-D run at the time the Box came in, which resulted in a delay in getting a hose-line on the fire.

When they reached the rear of the apartment, they found a locked bedroom door. Lieutenant Solimeo used his Officer's tool to force the door and gain entry to the victim. With zero visibility in the bedroom and an additional fire, the rescuers were able to locate the victim only by the sound of his moans. When they reached 25-year-old Alex Archer, they made sure that he was the only occupant before he lost consciousness.

After transmitting a 10-45 signal, they had to consider their options for his removal. Because the bedroom also was ablaze, the Lieutenant decided that removal through the front door was their best choice.



Lieutenant Philip Solimeo with members of Rescue 5.

photo courtesy of Lieutenant Philip Solimeo

Lieutenant Solimeo supported the victim's lower body and FF Hourican grabbed the victim around his upper torso as they dragged him back through the rapidly spreading inferno toward the front door. With the flames rolling over their heads, they were able to remove Mr. Archer from the apartment and hand him over to an on-scene EMS crew. Engine Company 155 moved in to extinguish the blaze.

EMS rushed Mr. Archer to Staten Island University Hospital, where he was taken to the Burn Unit due to the severe burns and smoke inhalation he had suffered. He required a lengthy hospital stay before he fully recovered. Were it not for the heroic efforts of Lieutenant Solimeo and the other members of Rescue 5, he surely would have perished. Without a hose-line yet in place, they risked their own lives to give this victim another chance at life.

For his perseverance and great courage in the face of tremendous danger, the Fire Department is proud to award the Chief Joseph B. Martin Medal to Lieutenant Philip J. Solimeo.--JT

Honor Legion Medal

LIEUTENANT JOHN M. SPILLANE

Ladder Company 105

July 9, 2004, 0323 hours, Box 75-582, 185 Nevins Street, Brooklyn



Appointed to the FDNY on July 9, 1995. Previously assigned to Engine 234. Father, Battalion Chief John (Jack) Spillane, is retired from Battalion 23. Member of the Emerald and Holy Name Societies. Holds a BA degree in American History from SUNY at Oswego. Recipient of a unit citation; and a Class III rating for this incident. Resides in Staten Island with his wife, Kerry, and their two sons, Brendan and John.

Early-morning fires in multiple dwellings generally are an indication that people are trapped and in need of assistance. Such was the case on July 9, 2004, at 185 Nevins Street, Brooklyn. The building was a 21-story, 100-foot, Class 1, fireproof multiple dwelling.

At 0323 hours on that date, numerous phone alarms were received at the Brooklyn Fire Communications Office for a fire with people trapped in an apartment on the seventh floor at 185 Nevins Street. This information was transmitted to the local firehouses, including Engine 226 and Ladder 105, the first-due units. A fast turnout, quick response and heroic actions would be necessary to lessen the severity of injuries to these trapped occupants. Ladder 105, with its training and experience, was up to the task.

As Ladder 105, commanded by Lieutenant John Spillane, rolled up to the fire scene, members noticed heavy smoke pushing from several windows at the seventh-floor level. Experienced Firefighters realize that extreme heat conditions and thick, blinding smoke are generated from fires in fireproof multiple dwellings. The members of Ladder 105 knew this would be a punishing operation.

Without delay, Lieutenant Spillane and his inside team ascended the stairwell to the seventh floor. At this point, they were forced to don their SCBA because of a heavy smoke condition in the public hallway. While moving along this hallway as a team, they came across the fire apartment (7D) and found the door ajar.

Lieutenant Spillane was the first member to enter 7D to conduct a search and locate the fire for the engine company. He was met by an advancing fire in the living room, directly to the left of the apartment door. He directed a member of the forcible entry team to hold the fire in check with the water extinguisher until a charged hose-line could be put in place.

At this time, the Officer began crawling into the apart-

ment in search of occupants. He was faced with a very hot atmosphere, heavy smoke, no visibility and--adding to the danger--the apartment was filled with a large amount of debris and personal property. Lieutenant Spillane was confronted with Collyer's mansion-type conditions.

The fire was to the Officer's left and the possibility existed that his retreat eventually could be cut off. But, he continued on, crawling over and around debris without the protection of a charged hose-line. He found the first of two victims--Gregory Davis, a 47-year-old male. He was burned and unconscious, lying beneath a window toward the rear of the living room.

While removing this victim, Lieutenant Spillane's leg momentarily became entangled in a hand truck. As soon as he freed himself, the Officer lifted the victim over debris. While exiting the fire apartment, he passed his charge to FF Michael Kehoe, Ladder 105, for removal to the public hallway and awaiting EMS personnel.

Although conditions were deteriorating, the primary search by Ladder 105 was not complete. Lieutenant Spillane moved through the kitchen and located another male victim underneath a kitchen table. Ronald Davis, age 49, also was burned and unconscious.

The Officer began to drag the second victim over the debris and clutter to a safer environment with the assistance of another member. Both victims were removed to Cornell Burn Center after being resuscitated and stabilized by EMS personnel.

Lieutenant Spillane's courage and selfless actions in a dangerous situation without the protection of a charged hose-line gave life to these two trapped occupants. For his initiative, bravery and heroic actions, without regard for his own safety, the Fire Department is proud to honor Lieutenant John Spillane with the Honor Legion Medal.--EB



Lieutenant John Spillane (center) with Ladder 105 members.

photo courtesy of Lieutenant John Spillane



Police Honor Legion Medal

CAPTAIN PETER J. FRONTERA

Ladder Company 113

November 15, 2004, 0327 hours, Box 75-3726, 227 Martense Street, Brooklyn

Appointed to the FDNY on July 11, 1981. Previously assigned to Engine 255, Ladder 157 and Engine 249. Son, Proby FF Ryan Frontera, is assigned to Engine 231. Member of the Columbia Association and Company Officers Association. Recipient of three unit citations; two Service Rating As (one for this incident); and a Service Rating B. Resides in Rockaway, Queens, with his wife, Peggy, and sons, Ryan and James.

In the early-morning hours of November 15, 2004, as the nation settled itself after a tense presidential election campaign and began to look forward to the holiday season, the heroic actions of Captain Peter J. Frontera gave one person the greatest gift he would ever receive.

On that fateful day, Captain Frontera and the members of Ladder 113, "Camp Rogers," received an emergency call at approximately 3:30 a.m. for a fire at 227 Martense Street. Arriving on-scene within minutes, Captain Frontera found the two-story, attached, Class III dwelling, measuring 25 by 50 feet, ablaze with heavy fire and smoke venting out the windows mid-building on the first floor of exposure #4 (front apartment). Heavy, black smoke also was pushing out windows in the rear apartment of the second floor.

Captain Frontera ordered the company's chauffeur to position the apparatus and place the aerial to the roof. He then led the members of the forcible entry team--FFs Brian Murray with the can and Anthony Arcello on the irons--to the first-floor entrance. While working to gain entry through the heavily fortified apartment door, Captain Frontera notified Battalion 41 via his handie-talkie that there were two apartments on the first floor with fire emanating from the front apartment. Due to their training and experience, the team quickly gained access to the front apartment.

Forcing the door, the members were confronted with a heavy fire condition in the kitchen and narrow hallway, blocking any pathway for the occupants to escape the growing inferno. FF Murray immediately opened up with the can to temporarily control the hallway fire, while Captain Frontera and FF Arcello entered the apartment on their stomachs.

Captain Frontera ordered FF Arcello to search left toward the rear of the apartment, while he dove past the fire and

began searching the front room. With zero visibility, extremely high temperatures and without the safety of a charged hand-line, Captain Frontera began his primary search. Moving quickly, Captain Frontera located the unconscious body of Wentworth Robinson on the couch and immediately notified Battalion 41 of a 10-45.

Captain Frontera, with the assistance of his team, then carried the victim out of the burning apartment and to the safety of the street. There, they found Mr. Robinson had burns to his face and head. He also had stopped breathing and the rescuers could not find his pulse. Working feverishly, Captain Frontera began to perform rescue breathing with his pocket mask, while other members of Ladder 113 and Engine 249 began cardiac compressions until they were relieved by EMS. Captain Frontera and the members then continued operations on the first floor.

Mr. Robinson was transported to Kings County Hospital in critical condition and then to the hyperbaric unit at

Jacobi Hospital. He remained there for more than a week.

In his report of the incident, Deputy Chief Peter J. Campbell, Jr., stated, "Captain Frontera performed to the highest traditions of the Fire Department. He put himself at...risk by operating in a heavy fire condition without the protection of a hand-line. His experience and instincts allowed him to take the only viable route to reach the victim in time and allowed Mr. Robinson to have a fighting chance of surviving his injuries. If there had been any further delay in this rescue attempt, Mr. Robinson would not have survived."

In recognition of this selfless act, the New York City Fire Department is proud to honor Captain Peter J. Frontera with the Police Honor Legion Medal today.--DH



Captain Peter Frontera with members of "Camp Rogers."

photo courtesy of Captain Peter Frontera

Firefighter David J. DeFranco Medal

MARINE ENGINEER **JOSEPH C. STARK** *Marine Company 1*

May 3, 2004, 1711 hours, Box 8435, Marine 1, Hudson River, Manhattan

Appointed to the FDNY on September 25, 1982. Previously assigned to Engine 242 and Marine Companies 9 and 6. Brother, Captain John Stark, is assigned to Ladder 27. Brother, FF Jeffrey Stark, assigned to Engine 230, perished on September 11, 2001. Member of the Holy Name and Emerald Societies. Served in the U.S. Navy from 1977 to 1981 aboard the aircraft carrier USS Constellation. Recipient of two unit citations; and a Class III rating for this incident. Resides in Goshen, New York, with his wife, Mary, and their children, Therese, Monica and Joseph.



One of the first lessons that a Firefighter learns is to expect the unexpected. This proved to be especially true in the late afternoon of May 3, 2004.

Marine Company 1's quarters are located in the West Village, west of Little West 12th Street on Pier 53, which juts into the Hudson River. The primary craft, *The John D. McKean*, is moored at the west end on the south side of the pier. Off the north side of the pier is a series of jagged pilings (the remnants of an abandoned pier), which creates a hazard field at least 50 feet wide. Additionally, the water is filled with uneven chunks of concrete and pieces of construction steel rebar. The next closest pier is 200 feet north of Marine 1's berth.

Shortly after he arrived for the night tour aboard Marine Company 1, Marine Engineer Joseph Stark was being briefed by his colleagues regarding the events of the day tour. As he prepared to board the company's vessel to check out the engine room, the company was alerted by NYC Parks Department personnel that there was a person in the water adjacent to Marine 1's location. The unexpected had occurred.

As soon as it was confirmed that a person was in the water, ME Stark immediately went into action. He noted the location of the victim, quickly donned a flotation jacket, climbed onto a four-foot railing and jumped 10 feet into the swirling current. Making the situation more menacing were the time of day--dusk--a water temperature of 48 degrees, the stiff wind, which was blowing against him at 25 knots and a driving rain beating down. In spite of the weather and debris field through which he had to maneuver, ME Stark started swimming toward Ricardo Gonzales, a 39-year-old man.

As ME Stark was making his way toward the victim, Lieutenant James Ahern, the Officer in charge, ordered Marine 1's auxiliary rescue craft to be launched. When ME Stark

reached Mr. Gonzales and grabbed onto him, the victim became extremely combative and resisted any attempt to assist him. As the rainswept seas continued to wash over the two men in the water, ME Stark determined that the victim was emotionally disturbed and both of them were in a dire predicament.

Because of his physical strength, the victim broke free from ME Stark and dove under the waves. The rescuer proceeded to go after Mr. Gonzales, located him among the jagged pilings and, summoning a reserve of strength, held onto him. Finally, with the arrival of Marine Wiper James Donovan--who was equipped with an exposure suit and swam out to where ME Stark and Mr. Gonzales were located--they maintained their position in the choppy water until other members of the company brought the auxiliary craft alongside and assisted in hoisting the combative man aboard. Once on the vessel, the agitated victim had to be physically restrained in order to prevent him from harming himself or members.

Lieutenant Ahern had directed a second auxiliary boat to the scene and its personnel pulled ME Stark and Wiper Donovan from the frigid water. Subsequently, ME Stark was transported to St. Vincent's Hospital, where he was treated for hypothermia and trauma.

Entering the treacherous waters containing dangerous debris and obstacles did not deter ME Stark from springing into action to save a person from a life-threatening situation. He acted without hesitation and regard for the danger in which he placed himself. As Battalion Chief John Jonas stated in his report "...Stark knew the risk of the conditions and put himself into harm's way..." For his display of quick action and courage, the Firefighter David J. DeFranco Medal is proudly awarded to Marine Engineer Joseph C. Stark.--BDG



Marine Engineer Joseph C. Stark in front of his proud craft, Marine 1. photo courtesy of ME Joseph Stark



Lt. James E. Zahn/
Lt. Peter L. Troiano Memorial Medal
FIREFIGHTER **MICHAEL N. COOK**
Ladder Company 41

December 30, 2003, 0646 hours, Box 22-3026, 1435 Glover Street, Bronx

Appointed to the FDNY on August 19, 1990. Previously assigned to Engine 90. Member of the Emerald Society and Steuben Association. Recipient of a Service Rating A for this incident. Resides in Rockland County, New York, with his wife, Margaret, and their daughter, Claire.

Operating above the fire floor is known to be one of the most dangerous positions on the fireground. The heat and smoke on the floor above the fire can be intense and incapacitating. These were the conditions that awaited FF Michael Cook of Ladder 41 on the morning of December 30, 2003.

It had been a busy night for Ladder 41 and they were just taking up from Box 3251. They were urgently directed to respond as an additional truck for a fire at 1435 Glover Street. Ladder 41 members knew they were going to work. The dispatcher was rolling the Rescue and Squad because of numerous phone calls with reports of people trapped. Additionally, Ladder 41 was notified that the second-due truck would be delayed because of a previous response, so they probably would be second-due. That meant Ladder 41 would have the floor above the fire.

Ladder 41 arrived quickly and was confronted with fire at the front door and out the top-floor window of the three-story brownstone-type building. Due to overhead wires and a utility pole, the Tower Ladder bucket was unusable. FF Cook was assigned the outside vent position. Normally, he would operate from the bucket in this type structure, but he had to get to the floor above in another way.

FF Cook teamed up with the chauffeur, FF John Hessler, and they worked to get a 24-foot portable ladder to the rear of the building. There was access to the rear via a narrow alleyway with a five-foot wrought-iron fence. FF Cook climbed over the fence and opened the gate.

On their way to the rear with the ladder, FFs Cook and Hessler found a woman who had jumped from the top floor. She was screaming that her baby was still inside. Undeterred by the chaos around them, the two Firefighters notified their

Officer of the jumper in the side yard, continued to the rear and placed the ladder to the top-floor window. Heavy smoke was pushing out of all the rear windows, which looked like they would burst into flame at any moment.

FF Cook quickly ascended the ladder and crawled through the pulsating smoke pouring from the window. Immediately, he was forced to the floor due to the intense heat surging toward him from the fire raging just beyond the bedroom doorway. He quickly started his search and found the limp, unconscious body of two-year-old Anthony Alecia lying motionless on top of two additional victims.

FF Cook picked up the boy and initially started to attempt an interior rescue, but the stairs were impassable. He retraced his steps to the window and emerged from the billowing smoke-filled window with the toddler. FF Hessler quickly climbed the ladder and descended with young Anthony. He administered CPR until Anthony was safely in the awaiting ambulance.

Meanwhile, FF Cook realized he had more to do. He returned to the other victims lying unconscious on the floor. He was joined by other members who assisted in the removal of 20-year-old Maria Cruz and 41-year-old Brenda Cassanova.

Unfortunately, both Ms. Cruz and Ms. Cassanova succumbed to their injuries. Anthony Alecia, however, was transported to Jacobi Hospital, treated for burns and placed in the hyperbaric chamber due to smoke inhalation.

FF Cook acted quickly and courageously. It is only through his efforts that young Anthony survived. For this reason, FF Michael Cook is being honored today with the Lieutenant James E. Zahn/Lieutenant Peter L. Troiano Memorial Medal.--CB



Ladder 41 in action.

photo courtesy of FF Michael Cook

NY Firefighters Burn Center Foundation Medal

ENGINE COMPANY 298

September 6, 2004, 2339 hours, Box 75-2343,
150-82 87th Avenue, Queens

Lieutenant Michael D. Golini
FF Daniel C. Mandel (Engine 303)
FF James Lagattolla
FF Thomas Carbone
FF Frank R. Tepedino (Ladder 127)
FF Harry F. Schoppmann, III



Coordination and teamwork are key elements of firefighting. During the 6-x-9 tour on September 6, 2004, the members of Engine 298, the "Hillside Hurricanes," proved how important these elements are when they were forced to operate alone at a raging house fire.

At 2339 hours, the engine company turned out, first-due to a reported fire in a private dwelling. Normally, the unit responds from its firehouse along with Ladder Co. 127 and Battalion 50, but on this night, Ladder 127 was out of service. The response assignment for the Box was two engines, one ladder and Battalion 50.

When Engine 298 arrived on-scene, they radioed a 10-75 to Queens dispatchers and reported fire showing from the second- and top-floor windows of a 2½-story private dwelling. Besides the visible fire, the unit was faced with several trapped victims showing at the windows on the upper floors.

Engine 298 did what an engine company does best: get water on the fire to protect trapped victims and allow them to escape. Engine 298's chauffeur located and connected to a nearby hydrant as the other Firefighters stretched a 1¾-inch hose-line.

There were three victims huddled at the front attic window and one victim at the front, second-floor window. Intense fire--mirroring blowtorch-type conditions--was coming out of the windows on the exposure #4 side and seriously threatening the house next door. Engine 298 was faced with this tough situation by themselves, because the responding first-due Ladder Co. 125 was coming from a distance.

Engine 298's Officer, Lieutenant Michael Golini, called out to the trapped civilians in the attic and reassured them that a hose-line would be there shortly. He urged them not to jump. The civilians were out of reach of Engine 298's 24-foot

portable ladder. Lieutenant Golini then guided the man at the second-floor window from the sill where he was hanging. Fortunately, his only injury was a minor laceration.

Simultaneously, the hose-line was charged with water and the Firefighters aggressively attacked the fire that was at the side entrance leading to the second-floor stairs. They made a strong push up the stairs and faced punishing conditions to the

second floor. They operated the hose-line and searched the second floor as quickly as possible. The Firefighters knew it was imperative to get up to the attic to protect the trapped occupants who would have to be rescued via an aerial ladder.

The Firefighters made a tough decision. They had to bypass fire in the rear of the second floor, placing them in danger. Undaunted, Engine 298 members operated the hose-line up the fiery stairs into the attic, making their way to the trapped occupants.

Once again, the Firefighters performed many functions in the attic in addition to operating the hose-line. These functions included forcible entry, searching and ventilating to relieve the super-heated conditions, allowing for final extinguishment. The occupants--including one person who had climbed out and was straddling the roof peak--were removed via Ladder 125's aerial ladder. With tragedy averted, the three victims sustained only minor injuries.

Battalion Chief Charles Clarke of Battalion 50, who witnessed the superb actions of Engine 298, noted in his report "that their speed, coordination and teamwork, while initially operating alone, undoubtedly spared the civilians from death or serious injury." The Department is proud to acknowledge the heroic work performed by the members of Engine Co. 298 with the NY Firefighters Burn Center Foundation Medal.--AP



Engine 298 is a Seagrave 1000-gpm pumper.

photo by Fred Engelmann

Firefighter Thomas R. Elsasser Memorial Medal

LADDER COMPANY 138

December 15, 2004, 0244 hours, Box 22-7889, 37-52
89th Street, Queens



Captain Daniel T. Mundy (Division 14)
FF Steven J. Muller
FF Joseph J. Tarantini
FF Victor J. Rosa
FF Rod J. Ford
FF Brian W. Cullen

It was 0244 hours on a cold Wednesday morning on December 15, 2004. Marcia Zumba and her brother had gone to bed the night before around 11:30 p.m., inadvertently leaving a candle burning on the radiator inside their apartment, 2F, at 37-52 89th Street, Queens. The next thing Ms. Zumba remembers is being awakened by shouts of “fire, fire” and “fuego.”

The curtains above the candle had caught fire and the entire living room was engulfed in smoke and flames. In their haste to escape the inferno, brother and sister left the apartment door open, endangering all those living in the building. Numerous phone calls to 911 were received from trapped occupants of this six-story building.

Captain Dan Mundy and the night tour from Ladder Company 138 were dispatched to Box 22-7889. Arriving second-due at the location, the fire now was outside the apartment and threatening the entire second-floor public hallway.

Ladder 138 was assigned to the floor above the fire, the most dangerous place to be. Ladder 138 members were about to be put to the test on this job. As a result of the smoke door being closed to protect the attack stairway, the dense heat and thick smoke now were being funneled to the floor above the fire, putting the members of the ladder company in a perilous position.

Despite the horrendous conditions, the members, under the leadership of their Captain, crawled through the intense heat and smoke and began a search of the hallway and the apartments that aligned it. The first member of the company to

make it through the heat and smoke was FF Brian Cullen, who had the can. He found an unconscious male in front of the elevator, the first of what ultimately would total 17 10-45 victims. FF Cullen dragged this victim back to the safety of the interior stairway and other Ladder 138 members. He went back into the heat and smoke to recover another unconscious victim and repeat his rescue actions.

Meanwhile, FF Joseph Tarantini, on the irons, began carrying the victims down the three flights of stairs to the safety of members in the street. He, too, returned to the floor above and recovered another victim and brought him to the street level.

Captain Mundy was directing the rescue operation from the third-floor hallway, while continuing his search for victims inside the apartments on this floor. The outside vent Firefighter, FF Victor Rosa, and LCC, FF Steven Muller, had entered a third-floor apartment via the 35-foot ladder, to rescue several more badly burnt victims.

The Ladder 138 roof Firefighter, FF Rod Ford, had teamed up with the roof Firefighter from Rescue 4, to comfort and rescue victims trapped inside their sixth-floor apartment. All these heroic and selfless actions were taking place on the floor above a raging and uncontrolled fire.

The leadership, teamwork and bravery exhibited this day exemplify what the New York City Fire Department is prepared to do every day for the citizens of New York City. It is for this reason that Ladder Company 138 members are presented with the Firefighter Thomas R. Elsasser Memorial Medal on this day.--RMcC



FDNY members tend to one of the numerous victims from Queens Box 22-7889.

photo by Vic Nicastro

Deputy Commissioner Christine R. Godek Medal

FIRE MARSHAL **RICHARD J. GRIGOLI** *BFI, City-Wide Command*

August 8, 2004, 0337 hours, Box 75-1376, 40 West 115th Street, Manhattan

Appointed to the FDNY on September 14, 1987. Previously assigned to Ladders 8, 82 and 20. Uncle, FF Frank D'Aurio, retired and now deceased, was assigned to Engine 238. Member of the Columbia Association and the Fraternal Order of Police. Holds a BA degree in Business from the College of Staten Island. Recipient of a unit citation. Resides on Staten Island with his wife, Deborah, and their children, Gabrielle, Michael and Ethan.



On Sunday, August 8, 2004, at 0337 hours, a fire occurred inside 40 West 115th Street in the borough of Manhattan. Someone had poured a flammable liquid in the public hallway on the ninth floor and then ignited the vapors, causing a sudden fireball, trapping all the occupants inside their apartments.

The raging inferno then extended into the apartments of 9G and 9H, seriously burning the occupants of apartment 9G. Due to the injuries sustained, Battalion 12 transmitted two 10-45 code 3s and one 10-45 code 2 for the following victims--Moriama Valdez, age 19, Leudy Valdez, age 23, and a toddler, Brittany Sepulveda, age 4.

Fire Marshal Richard Grigoli and his partner, FM Raymond Ott--designated Squad 37 Alpha--working the night tour out of the BFI City-Wide Command, had been monitoring the events via the Department radio. They responded immediately on the 10-45 signal. Wasting little time, they began their investigation into the cause of the fire.

While fire operations were still in progress, FM Grigoli and his partner began a canvass of possible witnesses and other residents in the building. During this initial phase of the investigation, they were able to develop a possible "target," identified as the estranged husband of Moriama.

After performing a thorough and complete physical examination of the fire scene, FM Grigoli uncovered a pour pattern, which evidenced that a flammable liquid had been used in the fire. Additionally, there was a strong odor of gasoline in the hallway.

A sample was taken and transported to the NYPD lab for analysis and confirmation. Squad 37 A then responded to the Bronx to locate the suspect. Within hours, they had located the suspect, Alex Cruz, and brought him into the 28th Precinct for questioning. During this time, FM Grigoli directed Squad 34 Bravo to respond into the Bronx to verify the story Mr. Cruz was relating.



FM Richard Grigoli enjoys some quiet time with his children.
photo courtesy of FM Richard Grigoli

During this subsequent investigation, a pair of gasoline-soaked sneakers, belonging to the suspect, were recovered. Additionally, through the process of elimination, the Fire Marshals located a gas station where the suspect may have purchased the gasoline. A review of the security videotapes showed the suspect purchasing a gallon of gasoline shortly before the fire.

Equipped with this evidence, FM Grigoli employed his experience and unique interviewing skills, which resulted in a full confession by the suspect, who, indeed, had committed the heinous crime. FM Grigoli worked closely with the Manhattan District Attorney's Office while making the case against the suspect. The result was a

conviction for felony arson and an eight-year prison sentence for Alex Cruz.

FM Richard Grigoli's investigative skills were in the finest traditions of the New York City Fire Department's Bureau of Fire Investigation and a true testament to the dedication and professionalism of the Fire Marshals of the FDNY. In recognition of his actions, he is presented with the Deputy Commissioner Christine R. Godek Medal.--RMCC



William Friedberg Medal

FIREFIGHTER CHRISTOPHER J. SWEENEY *Engine Company 73 (assigned) Ladder Company 17 (detailed)*

April 19, 2004, 2237 hours, Box 75-2206, 417 East 146th Street, Bronx

Appointed to the FDNY on February 2, 2003. Member of the Emerald Society. Holds an Associates degree in Electronics Engineering Technology from DeVry Institute. Recipient of a Service Rating A for this incident. Resides in New Windsor, New York, with his wife, Kathy, and their daughter, Megan.

Firefighters attending the Probationary Firefighters School are taught all tactics and procedures of firefighting during their training. Despite graduating and being assigned to a particular unit--engine or ladder--they must be able to perform all the duties of a Firefighter at any given moment. FF Christopher J. Sweeney of Engine Co. 73 demonstrated this point one evening in the Bronx, accomplishing the most important task of a Firefighter--saving someone's life.

FF Sweeney was detailed to the "Green Berets," Ladder 17, on this 6-by-9 tour and assigned to the forcible entry position. At 2237 hours, Ladder 17 was assigned as the first-due truck to a reported structure fire. En route to the location, Bronx dispatchers advised the responding units that they were getting reports of children trapped on the third floor.

When Ladder 17 arrived at the location, fire was showing from the third-floor windows and civilians were screaming that two infants were trapped on the third floor. The inside team of Ladder 17 included Lieutenant John Grasso and FFs William Greenberg with the can and Sweeney with the irons. They ascended the narrow stairs and were met with high heat and a heavy smoke condition on the half-landing below the third floor. Fire had burned through the top of the bedroom door and extended from the front bedroom, across the ceiling, toward the rear bedroom.

Under the direction of Lieutenant Grasso, FF Greenberg used the can to darken down some of the fire racing across the ceiling. Pushing up the stairs, Lieutenant Grasso and FF Greenberg proceeded left from the stairs, toward the original fire room.

FF Sweeney advanced to the right toward the other bedroom. Crawling in zero visibility with fire overhead and forced to endure a high heat condition, FF Sweeney proceed-

ed down the hallway to the bedroom, without the protection of a hose-line. He entered the bedroom and felt a bed to his left. FF Sweeney swept his hand across the top and discovered the body of an infant, Jeremy Delgado. He scooped up the baby and immediately retraced his path back to the stairs. As he and Jeremy were descending the stairs, FF Sweeney alerted the other members of the 10-45. They, in turn, notified Battalion 14 via the handie-talkie.

After FF Sweeney exited the burning building, he returned to the street where he removed his facepiece and began to assess the infant's vital signs. Coming to FF Sweeney's assistance was FF Christopher Hill of Engine Co. 73. FF Hill took over care of the infant and began to administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation as he brought Jeremy to an awaiting ambulance. FF Hill continued providing the much-needed care to the infant and accompanied the EMS crew to Lincoln Hospital, where Jeremy was treated for respiratory arrest and burn injuries.

FF Sweeney returned to the fire floor and continued with the rest of his duties, including overhaul of the fire room.

Deputy Chief Richard Tobin of Division 6 noted in his report that "FF Sweeney, with only one year of firefighting experience in Engine 73, acted aggressively and professionally in performing his duties as the irons man in Ladder 17. He placed him-

self at...risk by entering the fire area without the protection of a hose-line under conditions of high heat, with fire overhead and heavy smoke to successfully rescue one-year-old Jeremy Delgado. It is due to the aggressive action undertaken by FF Christopher Sweeney that the infant survived this fire."

FF Christopher Sweeney is recognized for his heroic actions and awarded the William Friedberg Medal.--AP



FF Christopher Sweeney with Engine 73 members.

photo courtesy of FF Christopher Sweeney

Shelly Rothman Memorial Medal

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL SARRO

Ladder Company 117

March 11, 2004, 0641 hours, Box 22-7533, 29-18 Hoyt Avenue, Queens

Appointed to the FDNY on October 19, 1997. Previously assigned to Engines 47 and 219. Member of the Columbia Association and the Emerald Society. Holds an Associates degree in Labor Studies from Empire State College. Recipient of a Service Rating A for this incident. Resides in Queens with his wife, Nancy, and their sons, Ryan and Michael.



Early in the morning of March 11, 2004, Tower Ladder 117 was assigned as the first-due truck for a reported fire in a two-story, non-fireproof private dwelling. Arriving at the Hoyt Avenue address in Astoria, Queens, FF Michael Sarro and the members of TL-117 were confronted with a large volume of fire on the second floor with flames through the roof.

Because of heavy winds, there was fire extension in exposure #2, making the blaze a second alarm. Lieutenant Robert Pino advised FF Sarro that there was a civilian reportedly seen trapped at a second-floor window of the fire building.

Due to the heavy fire conditions on the stairs and second-floor hallway, inside search operations would be delayed. FF Sarro and FF Thomas Healy, the roof Firefighter, ascended to the second-floor window via the tower ladder bucket.

FF Sarro quickly entered the window and found extremely high heat conditions with zero visibility. While FF Healy continued to take the bucket to the roof, the search in the fire apartment was underway. Fire now was involving just about all of the apartment. Fire was burning through the bedroom door to the room that FF Sarro was searching.

As he felt around, he came upon the now-unconscious woman who previously was at the window. As the fire contin-

ued to burn through the door, fire was extending into the bedroom. FF Sarro realized that his only way to escape with the victim was out the window.

Due to conditions, he was forced to stay on his hands and knees. FF Sarro gave the 10-45 and then requested to have the bucket return to the window since this was the only means of escape. When the tower ladder arrived at the window, he lifted the woman up and over the sill and passed her into the bucket to FF Healy. He then finished the arduous task of completing the primary search.

The unconscious victim was not breathing. She was quickly brought down to awaiting Paramedics who began rescue breathing. She was transported to Cornell University Hospital with second- and third-degree burns.

Without the protection of a charged hose-line, FF Sarro performed this meritorious act alone, enduring high heat, zero visibility and fire in the room that held him and the victim. He was directly responsible for saving the life of Celestina Espinoza Soto.

It is in this fine tradition of a company

such as Tower Ladder 117, the New York City Fire Department and the grateful people of the City of New York, that FF Michael Sarro is recognized with the Shelly Rothman Memorial Medal.--TPW



Ladder 117 in action.

photo courtesy of FF Michael Sarro

FDNY Members Called Up for *Operation Enduring Freedom & Operation Iraqi Freedom*

FDNY salutes those members who served and continue to serve in the military.

FF Eugene D. Abramshe, Ladder 146--Army
FF David R. Abreu, Engine 84--Army
FF Armen Baltaian, Engine 260--Army
FF Richard Batista, Engine 76--Marine Corps
FF Jason Braadt, Ladder 122--Marine Corps
FF Daniel Bright, Ladder 46--Air National Guard
Lieutenant Thomas A. Butler, Engine 303--Air National Guard
Lieutenant John Byrne, Engine 293--Coast Guard
FF Edward F. Cassidy, Engine 219--Air Force
Fire Marshal Brian W. Conlon, BFI--Army
FF Michael Corrigan, Ladder 26--Army National Guard
FF John Criscuoli, Engine 230--Marine Corps
Captain John R. Crowe, Engine 28--Coast Guard
Lieutenant John P. Cullan, Engine 235--Coast Guard
FF Keith DeBaun, Engine 283--Army National Guard
FF Chris DeNonno, Engine 90--Army
Lieutenant George Diaz, Ladder 50--Air National Guard
Fire Marshal Leonard E. Draves, Queens Command--Air National Guard
Lieutenant Joseph Duggan, Bn-6--Army
Fire Marshal Ronald Duggins, Bronx Command--Air Force
FF Christopher Dunic, Engine 219--Army National Guard
Lieutenant John Emma, Ladder 118--Army
 †**FF Christian Engeldrum**, Ladder 61--Army National Guard
FF Joseph Farrell, Ladder 160--Army
FF Barton Fendelman, Haz-Mat 1--Army
Fire Marshal Charles Ferris, Jr., BFI--Navy
FF Stephen Finkle, Haz-Mat 1--Air National Guard
FF Brian F. Flager, Engine 298--Army
FF Paul E. Franco, Engine 76--Navy
FF Joseph R. Fullam, Engine 44--Coast Guard
FF Timothy K. Ginley, Engine 94--Air National Guard
FF David Gold, Engine 46--Coast Guard
FF Sean Goodridge, Squad 252--Army National Guard
Lieutenant John P. Gormley, Ladder 34--Navy
Lieutenant Albert Gotay, Bn-41--Navy
FF Robert Grell, Engine 153--Navy
Lieutenant Daniel B. Grogel, Bn-14--Air National Guard
FF Jahmall Hepburn, Engine 225--Army
FF Joseph D. Holtgrewe, Engine 303--Navy
FF Joseph M. Jerovic, Engine 271--Army
FF Hugh Jimenez, Ladder 129--Army
FF James Kanganis, Ladder 14--Army
FF Pearse Kearnes, Engine 42--Marine Corps
Lieutenant Mark Kurtz, Ladder 128--Navy
FF Daniel Ligarzewski, Ladder 18--Army
FF Anthony M. Lombardo, Ladder 170--Marine Corps
FF Armondo Lopez, Jr., Engine 71--Army
FF Gregg Mag, Squad 18--Air National Guard
FF Horacio M. Maldonado, Jr., Rescue 5--Army
FF Glenn M. Malik, Ladder 134--Coast Guard
FF John Martineck, Ladder 116--Army
FF Marques A. Martins, Ladder 39--Army National Guard
FF Brian McCarrick, Ladder 176--Coast Guard
Lieutenant Joseph McMahon, Bn-54--Coast Guard
FF Juan Medina, Squad 1--Army
FF David Melendez, Ladder 9--Army National Guard
FF Michael Merced, Engine 16--Air Force National Guard
FF Nelson A. Merizalde, P.F.S.--Marine Corps
FF Gianni Mirra, Engine 234--Marine Corps
FF Graig Moore, Engine 308--National Guard
FF John J. Murphy, Engine 230--Army
FF Robert A. Murray, Ladder 6--Marine Corps
FF Reynaldo Narvez, Squad 1--Army
FF Joseph Navarra, Engine 55--Army
Lieutenant Patrick Neville, Rescue 1--Navy
FF Herbert Nieves, Ladder 131--National Guard
FF Michael Nigro, Engine 255--Navy
FF Joseph O'Donnell, Squad 1--Navy
FF Jorge L. Pacheco, Jr., Engine 224--Air Force
Marine Engineer Gulmar J. Parga, Marine 9--Coast Guard
FF Jorge Pena, Engine 92--Marine Corps
FF Ronald Pinaud, Ladder 54--Army
FF Steven Porras, Engine 23--Air Force
FF Walter Powers, Engine 45--Marine Corps
FF Jose Prieto, Ladder 144--Navy
FF Josef M. Pruden, Engine 303--Army National Guard
Lieutenant Henry G. Quevedo, Engine 7--Coast Guard
FF Steven Ramos, Ladder 152--Marine Corps
FF Robert H. Ravert, Engine 233--Army National Guard
FF Michael Rehberg, Ladder 172--Coast Guard
Supervising Fire Marshal Eric Rehbien, BFI--Coast Guard
Captain Fred J. Reich, Ladder 6--Coast Guard
Fire Marshal Salvatore Rignola, CWSIU--Marine Corps
FF Neil G. Rochford, Engine 59--Army National Guard
FF David Rodriguez, Engine 6--Army National Guard
FF Stewart Rueter, Ladder 15--Army
FF Brendan J. Ryan, Engine 328--Marine Corps
Lieutenant Peter Salatino, Ladder 78--Coast Guard
 ***FF Michael Scarlard**, Ladder 59--Army National Guard
FF Edward Schiff, Engine 240--Coast Guard
Lieutenant Michael Schimdt, Engine 287--Coast Guard
FF Ian Seagriff, Ladder 3--Army
FF Brian Shea, Ladder 9--Marine Corps
Lieutenant William Simpson, Engine 152--Coast Guard
Lieutenant John J. Sirgant, Bn-6--Air National Guard
Lieutenant Neil Skow, Haz-Mat 1--Army
FF Francesca A. Smith, Ladder 18--Coast Guard
FF Kirk Smith, Engine 60--Army National Guard
FF Thomas E. Smith, Engine 222--Navy
FF Kevin P. Stewart, Ladder 51--Coast Guard
FF Fred Surber, Engine 331--Coast Guard
FF Daniel Swift, Ladder 43--Army National Guard
FF Michael J. Swift, Ladder 12--Army
FF Eric C. Szillus, Engine 227--Air Force
FF Michael Tenteromano, Engine 165--Air Force
FF Radames Torres, Engine 279--Army
FF Patrick Touhy, Engine 230--Coast Guard
FF Alfred Trentalange, Ladder 78--Army National Guard
FF Juan A. Vega, Engine 88--Army National Guard
FF John Vincenti, Ladder 169--Air Force
FF Ralph Vitiello, Ladder 26--Marine Corps
FF Christopher Walsh, Ladder 17--Marine Corps
FF Mark A. Ward, Engine 7--Marine Corps
Marine Engineer Ronnie West, Marine 9--Air National Guard
FF Brent Whittier, Ladder 112--Army National Guard
FF Joseph Wills, Ladder 55--Army

† Killed in the line of duty. * Since retired.

Service Rating A

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| FF Jason A. Anderson, L-30 | FF John F. Hourican, R-5 | FF Daniel O'Keefe, L-43 |
| Lt. Thomas J. Baroz, Bn-57 | Capt. James P. Hurley, Div. 11 | FF Michael T. Potter, L-102 |
| FF Ronald C. Broome, L-112 | Capt. Richard G. Jaques, L-80 | FF Dennis J. Quinn, L-42 |
| FF James P. Campbell, L-156 | FF John V. Kroczyński, L-169 | FF Michael Sarro, L-117 |
| Lt. Peter F. Chadwick, Bn-27 | Capt. Vincent J. Leahy, L-41 | Lt. Philip J. Solimeo, R-5 |
| Lt. Michael J. Conboy, SOC | FF David Leverock, L-105 | FF Christopher J. Sweeney, E-73 |
| FF Brendan Connolly, E-95 | FF Michael A. Marx, L-144 | Lt. Raymond L. Thomas, L-125 |
| FF Michael N. Cook, L-41 | Capt. Michael McAndrew, Div. 7 | FF Eric A. Torres, L-34 |
| FF James Donovan, M-1 | Lt. James P. McCluskey, L-30 | FF James J. Walther, L-129 |
| FF Mark A. Fredrickson, L-55 | FF Thomas F. McGlade, L-14 | Lt. Scott A. Watson, L-129 |
| Capt. Peter J. Frontera, L-113 | Lt. Mark W. McKay, L-45 | Capt. Justin C. Werner, L-147 |
| FF Frederick C. Hess, L-129 | FF Ryan R. Nordman, L-45 | FF Sean P. White, L-37 |
| FF John B. Holzapfel, L-34 | FF Patrick J. O'Grady, L-6 | |

Service Rating B

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Capt. Richard J. Abbott, Jr., Div. 11 | Lt. Daniel P. Donoghue, L-167 | FF William P. McNally, E-283 |
| FF Thomas Bailey, E-282 | Lt. Thomas R. Droppa, E-160 | FF Craig M. Mosia, E-265 |
| FF Daniel A. Baron, R-5 | FF Joseph N. Farinacci, L-101 | FF Brian M. Mullen, E-33 |
| Capt. Thomas J. Brady, E-273 | FF Alfred A. Francis, L-126 | Capt. Ciro J. Napolitano, E-1 |
| BC Barry W. Brandes, Bn-41 | FF Clifford W. Freer, L-174 | FF Joseph Occhiuto, Bn-48 |
| FF Alexander J. Brown, L-170 | FF Brian E. Gardner, L-147 | DC Michael D. O'Keefe, Div. 1 |
| FF Sean W. Brown, L-170 | Lt. John J. Garland, L-148 | FF Stephen J. O'Sullivan, L-3 |
| FF Richard W. Burke, L-54 | FF Kevin E. Gildea, L-48 | FF James E. Reichman, L-119 |
| FF James P. Campbell, L-156 | FF John J. Halleran, L-170 | FF Kenneth I. Roberts, L-107 |
| FF John R. Cavaliere, L-36 | FF Brian T. Healy, E-92 | FF Peter Scarlatos, Jr., L-129 |
| FF John Colabatisto, L-36 | FF Gary J. Heegan, L-48 | FF Jeffrey Sclafani, E-240 |
| FF James G. Cosgrove, E-320 | FF Frederick C. Hess, L-129 | FF Richard P. Sgro, E-285 |
| FF John Davies, L-43 | FF Michael J. Killcommons, L-116 | FF Paul A. Stein, E-293 |
| FF Timothy W. Devine, SQ-1 | Lt. Albert L. Loyola, L-115 | FF Kevin Wacha, L-51 |
| FF Joseph A. DiGiacomo, L-18 | FF Matthew J. McCurdy, L-34 | FF Terrance M. Walsh, L-3 |
| Capt. Daniel DiMartino, Div. 13 | FF James F. McKechnie, L-167 | |

UNIT CITATIONS

Engine Company 152
October 15, 2003 Box 33-8002

Engine Company 69
December 16, 2003 Box 22-1624

Ladder Company 41
December 30, 2003 Box 22-3026

Engine Company 308
January 3, 2004 Box 7-5-6056

Engine Company 67
January 8, 2004 Box 22-1723

Engine Company 58
January 11, 2004 Box 22-1342

Ladder Company 26
January 11, 2004 Box 22-1342

Engine Company 24
January 15, 2004 Box 22-417

Ladder Company 36
January 27, 2004 Box 7-5-1758

Engine Company 93
January 27, 2004 Box 7-5-1758

Rescue Company 1
February 6, 2004 Box 723

Ladder Company 144
February 10, 2004 Box 4624

Engine Company 325
February 13, 2004 Box 7292

Ladder Company 7
February 15, 2004 Box 735

Engine Company 65
February 15, 2004 Box 735

Ladder Company 101
February 23, 2004 Box 1395

Ladder Company 4
February 27, 2004 Box 811

Ladder Company 113
March 5, 2004 Box 7-5-1091

Engine Company 218
March 10, 2004 Box 7-5-296

Rescue Company 5
March 26, 2004 Box 8508

Ladder Company 25
March 29, 2004 Box 33-1267

Engine Company 5
March 31, 2004 Box 471

Ladder Company 156
April 4, 2004 Box 7-5-3227

Engine Company 63
April 15, 2004 Box 3665

Engine Company 233
April 21, 2004 Box 22-841

Engine Company 275
May 23, 2004 Box 5372

Ladder Company 28
May 23, 2004 Box 1624

Ladder Company 44
May 28, 2004 Box 22-2586

Engine Company 92
May 28, 2004 Box 2586

Ladder Company 32
May 29, 2004 Box 22-3656

Engine Company 249
June 1, 2004 Box 7-5-1093

Ladder Company 113
June 1, 2004 Box 7-5-1093

Engine Company 95
June 10, 2004 Box 1796

Ladder Company 42
June 12, 2004 Box 2334

Engine Company 68
June 20, 2004 Box 1631

Ladder Company 137
June 23, 2004 Box 1379

Squad Company 270
July 2, 2004 Box 9662

Ladder Company 142
July 4, 2004 Box 5050

Ladder Company 55
July 7, 2004 Box 33-2517

Engine Company 292
July 14, 2004 Box 7945

Ladder Company 110
August 21, 2004 Box 458

Engine Company 93
August 24, 2004 Box 22-1772

Ladder Company 44
August 31, 2004 Box 2395

Ladder Company 125
September 6, 2004 Box 7-5-4770

Engine Company 298
September 6, 2004 Box 7-5-4770

Engine Company 280
September 13, 2004 Box 1063

Ladder Company 137
September 16, 2004 Box 1394

Marine Company 6
September 17, 2004 Box 2459

Ladder Company 170
September 20, 2004 Box 2199

Engine Company 295
November 5, 2004 Box 4628

Engine Company 38
November 10, 2004 Box 7-5-3663

Ladder Company 46
November 26, 2004 Box 3567

Engine Company 81
November 26, 2004 Box 3567

Ladder Company 127
December 13, 2004 Box 9850

Rescue Company 4
December 15, 2004 Box 22-7889

Ladder Company 138
December 15, 2004 Box 22-7889

Engine Company 316
December 15, 2004 Box 22-7889

MEDAL AND AWARD DONORS

James Gordon Bennett Medal

In addition to the Bennett Medal, first awarded in 1869, the Commissioner Robert O. Lowery Award of \$600 is provided by the late Honorary Deputy Chief Bertram Brummer and his wife, Susie. The recipient also is awarded \$1000, donated by The Kenneth H. Straus Fund of the Fire Foundation of New York. The organization was established in 1968 by a group of prominent New York City businessmen, friends of the FDNY, in the interest of rewarding Fire Department members who perform acts above and beyond the call of duty. (Page 13)

Brooklyn Citizens Medal/ FF Louis Valentino Award

In 1896, a committee of Brooklynites endowed this medal "to be given to the most deserving Fireman in the Brooklyn Fire Department, as he shall be selected by the Fire Department of the City of New York." An award of \$500 is donated by The Kenneth H. Straus Fund of the Fire Foundation of New York. This organization was established in 1968 by a group of prominent New York City businessmen, friends of the FDNY, in the interest of rewarding Fire Department members who perform acts above and beyond the call of duty. The recipient also is awarded the Firefighter Louis Valentino Award, a medal endowed in 1998 by Diane Valentino and the Valentino family. The recipient also will receive a gift of \$300. (Page 14)

Hugh Bonner Medal

Endowed by the Reverend James Johnson, Fire Chaplain assigned to Grace Church, and named in honor of Chief Hugh Bonner, "a stalwart Chief of Department who preferred to rule by example." The medal first was awarded in 1897. In addition, an award of \$250 is made by the Joseph Reich Memorial Fund, a trust fund recognizing "outstanding heroic service rendered by members of the Department." This organization was established in 1968 by a group of prominent New York City businessmen, friends of the FDNY, in the interest of rewarding Fire Department members who perform acts above and beyond the call of duty. (Page 15)

Emily Trevor/Mary B. Warren Medal

These sisters, in their deed of gift, wrote "...for the purpose of encouraging the members of the force in the exercise...of heroic endeavor under circumstances of special danger." Awarded for the first time in 1899. In addition, an award of \$250 is made by the Joseph Reich Memorial Fund, recognizing "outstanding heroic service, rendered by members of the Department." This organization was established in 1968 by a group of

prominent businessmen, friends of the FDNY, in the interest of rewarding Fire Department members who perform acts above and beyond the call of duty. (Page 16)

Thomas E. Crimmins Medal

Mrs. May M. Burke provided in her will for the endowment of this medal in memory of her father, a contractor, builder, loyal New Yorker and the son of a volunteer firefighter. First awarded in 1912. Also awarded \$500, donated by The Kenneth H. Straus Fund of the Fire Foundation of New York. This organization was established in 1968 by a group of prominent New York City businessmen, friends of the FDNY, in the interest of rewarding Fire Department members who perform acts above and beyond the call of duty. Also awarded \$200 by Honorary Deputy Commissioner Dorothy Marks, in memory of the late Jeffrey S. Childs, great-grandson of Thomas E. Crimmins. (Page 17)

Thomas A. Kenny Memorial Medal

Honorary Deputy Chief William F. Kenny endowed this medal in memory of his father, a Battalion Chief who served in the Department, faithfully and conspicuously, from 1876 until 1903. It is given as a "perpetual token of zeal and enduring interest." First awarded in 1918. Recipient also is awarded \$500 by the Honorary Fire Officers Association, a line organization of the FDNY. (Page 18)

Walter Scott Medal

Colonel Walter Scott, a successful New York merchant, was intensely interested in the city's protective forces. In 1920, he endowed a medal for valor bearing his name, to be awarded annually to a member of the FDNY. Recipient also is awarded \$500, donated by The Kenneth H. Straus Fund of the Fire Foundation of New York. This organization was established in 1968 by a group of prominent New York City businessmen, friends of the FDNY, in the interest of rewarding Fire Department members who perform acts above and beyond the call of duty. (Page 19)

John H. Prentice Medal

This medal is the gift of Mrs. Marion Prentice Brookman in memory of her father. The medal is for "an act of intelligent bravery." First awarded in 1921. Recipient also is awarded \$1000. (Page 20)

Henry D. Brookman Medal

Mrs. Marion Prentice Brookman, in making this award possible, wrote, "...to help the authorities in installing into the Department the fact that the service rendered by the firefighters is of a character held in high esteem by the people and to perpetuate the old fealty and admiration held by the late Henry D. Brookman for the FDNY." First awarded in 1921. Recipient also is awarded \$1000. (Page 21)

M.J. Delehanty Medal

The founder and dean of civil service schools bearing his name endowed this medal in 1937, "to be awarded annually to a member of the Department whose distinguished service in the line of duty receives recognition by the Board of Merit of the Fire Department." Recipient also is awarded a \$200 savings bond by Honorary Assistant Chief Harvey Ball. An additional \$200 savings bond is donated by Honorary Battalion Chief James Palozzolo. (Page 22)

William F. Conran Medal

Honorary Chief Conran endowed this medal in 1937. His profession of fire protection engineer enabled him to improve the efficiency of firefighting appliances. Recipient also is awarded a \$500 savings bond, donated by Paul and Dennis Sanner, in memory of Frank Muller, FDNY. (Page 23)

Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia Medal

The Honorable Fiorello H. LaGuardia, while Mayor, frequently "turned out" at large fires. He had a keen interest in the problems of fire prevention and extinguishment. First awarded in 1937. Recipient also is awarded \$400 cash, donated by the Uniformed Firefighters Association (UFA). (Page 24)

Chief John J. McElligott Medal/ Fitzpatrick and Frisby Award

Named in honor of the late Chief and Fire Commissioner, Chief McElligott. He joined the Department in 1905 and retired in 1941 after a long and fruitful career. This medal was endowed by William F. Conran and first was awarded in 1937. Recipient is awarded \$200 cash, donated by Honorary First Deputy Fire Commissioner Brian Mulheren, in memory of his father, Joseph A. Mulheren, a friend of the FDNY. Recipient also is awarded the Fitzpatrick and Frisby Award, a medallion endowed by the Fitzpatrick and Frisby Foundation, in memory of these two firefighters who made the Supreme Sacrifice. Also awarded \$250 cash by the Fitzpatrick and Frisby Foundation. (Page 25)

Thomas F. Dougherty Medal

Chief Dougherty served with the Department from 1888 to 1933 with distinction and honor. In addition to inventing the nozzle that bears his name, he was a colorful member of the Fire College faculty, where he specialized in teaching the technique and efficacy of ventilation. First awarded in 1937. Recipient also is awarded \$100 cash, donated by Honorary Deputy Chief Sidney D. Rosoff. (Page 26)

Albert S. Johnston Medal

Albert S. Johnston was a Captain in the New York Fire Patrol with a record of 50 years of faithful service. Ten years after his retirement in 1927, this medal was endowed by William F. Conran and may be awarded to a member of Fire Patrol. \$100 is awarded in memory of the officers and members of the NYC Fire Patrol who died in the line of duty, donated by Honorary Deputy Chief Edward Pospisil. An additional \$100 cash award is donated by Honorary Deputy Chief Stuart A. Foreman. (Page 27)

Bella Stiefel Medal

In Mrs. Stiefel's 90 years, she came to admire the bravery displayed by firefighters. Her last will and testament provided for this medal, which first was awarded in 1947. Recipient also is awarded a \$200 savings bond, donated by Mr. and Mrs. Warren W. Zorek, in memory of Edward Popper, a friend of the FDNY. (Page 28)

Vincent J. Kane Medal

This medal is named in honor of the late Vincent J. Kane, labor leader and long-time President of the Uniformed Firefighters Association. It was endowed by the UFA before World War II. Also awarded \$400, donated by the UFA. (Page 29)

Pulaski Association Medal

First awarded in 1962 and endowed by the Fire Department Pulaski Association in memory of Casimir Pulaski. General Pulaski organized American cavalry forces during the Revolutionary War. He died as a result of wounds received leading the charge at the Battle of Savannah. Presented to the recipient in recognition for upholding the Fire Department's tradition of valor and service to the citizens of the City of New York. Accompanied by a cash award of \$200. (Page 32)

Commissioner Edward Thompson Medal

This medal, in honor of Commissioner Edward Thompson, was endowed in 1964 by the late Bertram Brummer and his wife, Susie. It is to be awarded to a member exhibiting outstanding courage and fidelity. By endowing this, a second medal, they illustrate their high regard and affection for the Department. A \$100 award also is given. (Page 33)

Columbia Association Medal

Endowed by the Columbia Association since 1966. Also awarded \$1000. Endowed by NY Presbyterian Hospital in memory of Battalion Chief Anthony Mendez. (Page 34)

Susan Wagner Medal

Endowed by the UFA to honor the memory of Mrs. Susan Wagner, wife of the former Mayor of the City of New York, and to perpetuate the high esteem in which she held the firefighters of the City of New York. This Medal is awarded to a member of the Department who has performed an outstanding act of valor. First awarded in 1966. Also awarded \$400, donated by the UFA in memory of the late assemblywoman Eileen Dugan, a prime sponsor of the Cancer Bill. (Page 35)

Steuben Association Medal

Endowed by the Steuben Association in honor of General Frederick Wilhelm Von Steuben. First awarded in 1967. \$500 savings bond donated by the Fire Department Steuben Association Charities, Inc. (Page 36)

Dr. J.W. Goldenkranz Medal

Endowed in 1975 by the late Dr. J.W. Goldenkranz, Honorary Assistant Chief, to honor "the heroic efforts of the officers and firemen, all of whom perform their duties at extreme personal risk." Dr. Goldenkranz was affiliated with the FDNY since 1913 and was president of the New York Firemen's Cycle Club. Also awarded a \$200 savings bond, donated by the late Dr. Goldenkranz, and \$100, donated by Sandy and Terry Sansevero. (Page 37)

Uniformed Fire Officers Association Medal

Endowed in 1977 by the Uniformed Fire Officers Association "for an act of heroism and bravery performed by a fire officer at a fire." Accompanying the medal is a \$500 cash award, donated by the UFOA. (Page 38)

Edith B. Goldman Medal

Endowed by the many friends of the late Honorary Deputy Chief Barney Goldman to honor the memory of both his wife, Edith, and him and to illustrate the high regard and affection he held for FDNY members. First awarded in 1978. Also awarded \$250. (Page 39)

American Legion Post 930/ Mark M. Wohlfield Memorial Medal

Endowed by American Legion Post 930, this medal is in memory of Mark M. Wohlfield, a lifelong member of the Fire Department Post, a colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves and a retired FDNY firefighter. The history of this intrepid warrior's exploits is related graphically in the second and third issues of *WNYF* (1945). After his retirement from the FDNY, he continued to serve his country and his fellow man by working for the Veterans Administration. He died on May 24, 1978, and is interred in Arlington National Cemetery. First awarded in 1979. Recipient also is awarded a \$300 bond, donated in memory of firefighter Eugene "Butch" O'Kane by his family. (Page 40)

Arthur J. Laufer Memorial Medal

The Laufer Medal, presented for the first time in 1980, is named in honor and memory of the late Deputy Chief Arthur J. "Artie" Laufer, who continually showed his love for firefighters and his fellow man through his actions. The recipient of this medal will receive \$400, donated by the UFA, and \$250, donated by the family of Deputy Director of Dispatch Operations, Joseph E. Higgins, Jr. (Page 41)

Emerald Society Pipes and Drums Medal

This medal, endowed by the members of the Pipes and Drums of the FDNY Emerald Society Bagpipe Band, is awarded to a member of the Department who performs an outstanding act of heroism in keeping with the FDNY's highest traditions. First awarded in 1981. Recipient also is awarded a \$200 savings bond, donated by Matthew and Susan Daly, and \$100 is donated by Sandy and Terry Sansevero. An additional \$200 savings bond is donated by retired FM Jim McSwigin. (Page 42)

Company Officers Association Medal

Endowed by the Company Officers Association in memory of Company Officers in the FDNY who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. Medal awarded for the first time in 1982. It is donated in memory of retired Captain Sy Berkowitz. Included is a \$300 cash award from the Company Officers Association and an additional \$300, donated by Honorary Chief James Martin, in memory of Firefighter Francis Esposito and Captain Martin Egan of Ladder Company 79. (Page 43)

Chief Joseph B. Martin Medal

The Martin Medal is endowed in honor of the legendary Assistant Chief Joseph B. "Smokey Joe" Martin, who served the FDNY with "fidelity and devotion" for 47 years. Awarded for the first time in 1984. \$100 is awarded in the memory of Firefighter Anthony D. Buccieri, Engine 75. Also, \$100 is awarded in memory of Firefighter Mike Donnelly of Ladder 33, who died in 1983 after an heroic battle with cancer. A \$1000 donation is made by the Martin Family in memory of Frances B. Martin (1905-1996), daughter of "Smokey Joe" Martin. Also awarded \$200 bond in memory of BC William C. Rinsdale, 19th Battalion, who died in the line of duty in 1971. Donated by Richard Kirrstetter, Ladder 33, and all his Brothers in Ladder 33, Engine 75, Battalion 19. (Page 44)

New York State Honorary Fire Chiefs Association Medal

The New York State Honorary Fire Chiefs Association, Inc., founded in 1950, is an independent, non-profit and tax-exempt organization, dedicated to promoting the interests of the firefighters of the State of New York. The active Association is affiliated with the New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association and is celebrating 50 years of volunteer service to the Firefighters of New York and their families. The medal, which first was awarded in 1984, is presented every year to a firefighter who has performed with valor. This medal is dedicated to honoring all firefighters who have performed with valor. With this medal, a check for \$1000 also is awarded and donated by the members of the New York State Honorary Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. (Page 13)

Honor Legion Medal

The Honor Legion is open only to "the bravest of the bravest," both active and retired. Prerequisites for membership are confined to firefighters of all ranks who have received Department recognition and been granted a Class I, II or III award for deeds of valor performed at imminent risk to their lives. First awarded in 1984. Also, a \$100 savings bond is donated by Joseph

Rodriguez, Founding President, Honor Legion, Ladder 54, retired. Recipient receives a \$200 savings bond, donated by retired FM Jim McSwigin. An award of \$500 is donated by the Grand Lodge of the State of New York Free and Accepted Masons. (Page 45)

Police Honor Legion Medal

The Police Honor Legion Medal is endowed by the New York City Police Department Honor Legion. It was first awarded in 1984. Awarded with the medal is a \$100 savings bond, donated by FM Arthur J. Crawford, a \$100 savings bond, donated by FM Dennis H. Fink, and a \$250 savings bond, donated by retired Detective James K. Burke. (Page 46)

Firefighter David J. DeFranco Medal

In honor of the memory of Firefighter David J. DeFranco for his dedicated efforts on behalf of the Department. This medal, awarded for a water-related rescue, is presented, along with a \$200 cash award, by the David J. DeFranco Memorial Scholarship Fund. Also, a cash award is donated by Honorary Assistant Chief Frank Rooney. Additionally, in memory of Sandra Iorizzo, \$500 is donated by her family. (Page 47)

Lieutenant James E. Zahn/ Lieutenant Peter L. Troiano Memorial Medal

The Lieutenant James E. Zahn/Lieutenant Peter L. Troiano Memorial Medal has been established in honor of these two beloved "Brothers," who laid down their lives for the people of the City of New York. This medal is awarded to a member of the Department who has performed an act of bravery in the protection of life and/or property, either while on or off duty. Also awarded is a \$200 savings bond, donated by the members of Engine 277 and Ladder 112. (Page 48)

New York Firefighters Burn Center Foundation Medal

The New York Firefighters Burn Center Foundation is an organization committed to the goals of quality burn care and fund-raising endeavors. Similarly, the FDNY is engaged in safeguarding and improving the quality of life for city residents. It is this semblance of purpose and collaborative spirit that is deserving of recognition. With this in mind, the New York Firefighters Burn Center Foundation awards a medal to the most worthy of units in appreciation of "a concentrated super effort based on teamwork." Proceeds for this endowment, as well as a \$100 savings bond for each recipient, are provided solely through the generosity of Honorary Deputy Chief Peter Horowitz, in memory of his father, Samuel Horowitz. (Page 49)

Firefighter Thomas R. Elsasser Memorial Medal

Endowed by the Uniformed Firefighters Association, this medal is named in honor of Firefighter Thomas R. Elsasser, a 20-year veteran of the FDNY, whose firefighting career was cut short in 1990 by his untimely death. Firefighter Elsasser was a major contributor to UFA charity sporting events. In addition to the medal awarded to the unit, each member receives a medal and \$100, donated by the Thomas R. Elsasser Memorial Fund. (Page 50)

Deputy Commissioner Christine R. Godek Medal

Established and presented by Honorary Deputy Commissioner Dorothy W. Marks and (now-deceased) Honorary First Deputy Commissioner Shelly Rothman in honor of Christine R. Godek, the first female Deputy Fire Commissioner of the FDNY. Presented annually to an outstanding New York City Fire Marshal for unusual display of initiative, improving techniques, resourcefulness and capability in the investigation of arson. Also awarded \$100 by Dr. Jean D. Pratt, in honor of the Juvenile Firesetters Program. A \$350 cash award also is donated. (Page 51)

William Friedberg Medal

The William Friedberg Medal, presented for the first time in 1996, is named in honor and memory of the late William Friedberg. Bill was a respected and beloved elementary school principal, who spent 33 years working with the children of New York City and six years as a member of the New York State Industrial Board of Appeals. He believed that early education and instruction were key to fire prevention. The recipient of this award will receive \$318, donated by Mr. Friedberg's widow and family. (Page 52)

Shelly Rothman Memorial Medal

The commemorative year for this award, this medal is dedicated to honoring all firefighters who have performed with valor. With this medal, a check for \$500 is awarded and donated by the members of the New York State Honorary Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. Additionally, a \$300 cash award is donated by the Fire Bell Club of New York in memory of Shelly Rothman, a long-time member and Chairman of the Board of Directors. (Page 53)

IN MEMORIAM



Firefighter Christian Philip Engeldrum
Ladder Company 61

*Died on November 29, 2004,
as a result of injuries sustained
while on active military duty
in the service of his country.
Appointed February 16, 1999.*



Lieutenant Curtis W. Meyran
Battalion 26

*Died on January 23, 2005,
as a result of injuries
sustained in the performance of duty at
Bronx Box 33-2997.
Appointed November 12, 1989.*



Lieutenant John G. Bellew*
Ladder Company 27

*Died on January 23, 2005,
as a result of injuries
sustained in the performance of duty at
Bronx Box 33-2997.
Appointed July 17, 1994.*

** Promoted posthumously to the
rank of Lieutenant.*



Firefighter Richard T. Sclafani
Ladder Company 103

*Died on January 23, 2005,
as a result of injuries
sustained in the performance of duty at
Brooklyn Box 22-1770.
Appointed October 23, 1994.*

MEDAL DAY 2005

Nicholas Scoppetta
Fire Commissioner

Francis X. Gribbon
Deputy Commissioner
Office of Public Information

Peter E. Hayden
Chief of Department



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FDNY

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Cover Photo:

**Queens Box 22-7889, 37-52 89th Street,
Jackson Heights, Queens, December 15, 2004.**

FF Victor J. Rosa, Ladder 138, carries Alexandra Sandovar from the burning building. The child survived the ordeal. FF Rosa received the James Gordon Bennett and New York State Honorary Fire Chiefs Association Medals.

*photo by Joseph Scurto,
Fire Line Video Productions*

Back Cover Photo:

**Queens Box 22-4628, 166-25 Powells Cove
Boulevard, November, 5, 2004.**

Scene from the incident for which FF Jonathan Hoffman, Ladder 144, received the American Legion Post 930/Mark M. Wohlfeld Memorial Medal.

photo by Vic Nicastro

Inside Front Cover Photos:

**Brooklyn Box 33-2481, 349 Rugby Road/Cortelyou
Road, October 9, 2004.**

Scene from the incident for which Captain Justin C. Werner, Ladder 147, received the Company Officers Association Medal.

photo by FF Mike Gomez

**Bronx Box 75-2334, 851 Bruckner Boulevard,
June 12, 2004.**

FF Jeffery G. Cool, Rescue 3, passes over roof in very smoky conditions with fire in the background. He received the Emily Trevor/Mary B. Warren Medal.

photo courtesy of FF Jeffery Cool