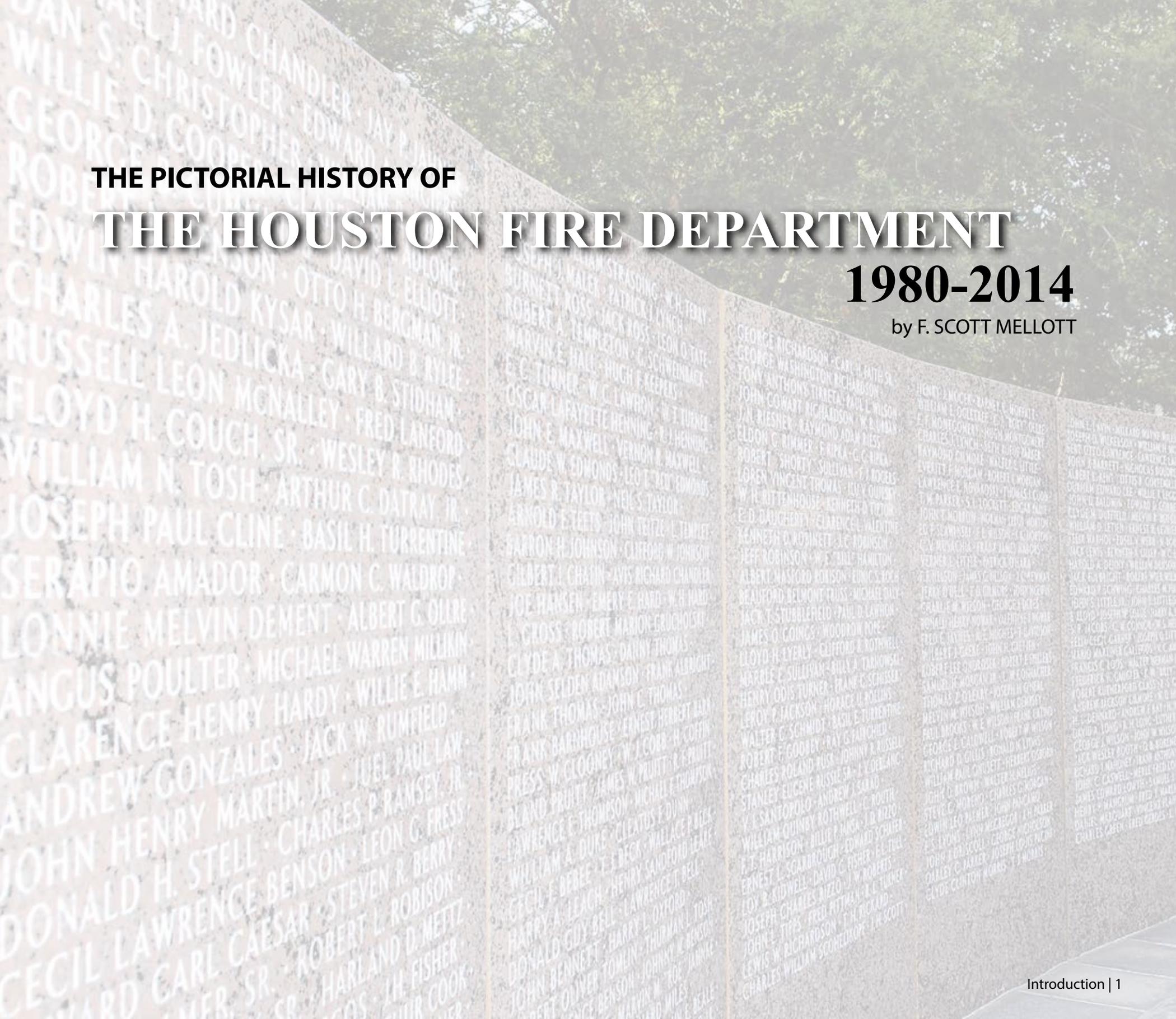


**THE PICTORIAL HISTORY OF**

# **THE HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT**

## **1980-2014**

by F. SCOTT MELLOTT



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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With out the many Houston Firefighters who submitted hundreds of photos for consideration, this book would not have been possible. Several long time Houston fire ground photographers submitted photos as well. They are as follows: Brandon Jacob, Four Alarm Photos, Jo L. Keener, Eric Lundstrum, and John Nguyen, Tac-7 Fireground Photography.

Many thanks goes out to Harold Coats, the artist who painted the photo that now serves as the front cover of this book. The original photo was taken by Mark Williams on March 4, 2010. The fire was in the Third Ward, south of downtown Houston. Seen in the photo are left to right, Ladder 7 Firefighters, Brian Prince, James Morell and Shannon Stryk. Harold is a retired Houston Firefighter who served HFD during the 1970's and 1980's. He is, as you can see, an amazing artist. Examples of his work can be found on his web site at [www.haroldcoats.com](http://www.haroldcoats.com).

All other dust jacket photos were taken by Jo L. Keener. Photo on Page 1 by Herb Kelper.

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# DEDICATION

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My first pictorial history book published in August 2012 was dedicated to Captain Jay Jahnke. The choice was really simple for me. I worked with his dad, District Chief Claude Jahnke at Fire House 28 from 1980 until his untimely death in June of 1984. Jay was a senior in high school when we first met in 1980, he could not wait to follow in his dad's footsteps.

On November 30, 1981 he was proudly wearing the same uniform as his dad and his three uncles. Jay was promoted to captain where he worked at several different fire houses, his last assignment was Captain on Engine 2 "B" Shift in Houston's Galleria area. On October 13, 2001, thirty three days after 9/11, he became HFD's 57th Firefighter to die in the line of duty since the department went from volunteer to paid in 1895. Jay was like a brother to me and I miss his smiling face every day.

In 2013, after many firefighters telling me what good idea it would be for me to do a second book, I made the decision to start the process. For many months I went back and forth whether I really wanted to produce a

sequel. Then, when I was over that I wondered how I would dedicate the next book. On Thursday May 30, 2013, I traveled to the state of Ohio to tour the facilities of a printing company that was highly recommended to me. The next morning, May 31st, I did my tour and headed back to the airport. A short distance from the Cleveland Airport and a short time after the roof of the Southwest Inn fell on our firefighters, friends were calling me with the bad news. While on the airplane heading back to Houston I solved my dedication dilemma.

I am dedicating this book to the four firefighters who made the ultimate sacrifice while fighting a fire in the Southwest Inn Motel on the afternoon of May 31, 2013.

Captain Matt Renaud

Engineer Operator Bobby Bebee

Firefighter Robert Garner

Firefighter Anne Sullivan

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Captain's Badge worn by Drew Campbell King Sr. Captain King, joined the HFD at age 29 and served the citizens of Houston from 1898 to 1936. Captain King spent most of his career at Fire House 7, 2403 Milam Street. .



Chauffeur's badge issued to Joseph Earl "Bull" Connor. "Bull" was the Chauffeur on Water Tower 1, he died in the line of duty January 31, 1951. This badge is now proudly worn by Christopher Cull, son of retired Captain Harry Cull.



Scott Mellott, a native Texan, began his career as a Houston Firefighter in 1975. He graduated from the Fire Academy in Class 74F. His first assignment was at Fire House 8 on the “B” Shift. He was promoted to Chauffeur in 1978 and assigned to Ambulance 3 on the “A” Shift for 18 months. After his time on the “box” he was transferred to Fire House 28 “A” Shift where he stayed for 7 years. He then transferred to Fire House 11 “B” Shift, where he worked for 8 years. Then, his last and best transfer, in 1994, was to Fire House 15 “A” Shift. He drove Engine 15 until he retired on May 2, 2006. He was also a fire house cook for 30 years, with chicken, rice and broccoli as frequent meals. His Captain at Fire House 28, Richard Ford, use to threaten to hurt him if he served rice one more time. Well that did not happen, and Scott continued to serve rice.

Scott had always wanted to be a firefighter since his childhood. He was not able to get accepted into the Fire Academy after high school so he worked for the PTRR Railroad as a clerk until 1974, when he was accepted to the Houston Fire Department.

In 1986, Scott took on the task of researching HFD’s Line of Duty deaths from 1895, when the paid department began. This research was used to produce the Memorial Section for the Houston Fire Department 1988 Yearbook, and again for the 2000 Yearbook. In 2001, Scott obtained a list of the known names of the deceased HFD firefighters from 1895 to 2001. These names were placed on his HFD Memorial website.

Scott started looking for old HFD photos in 2002 and since then has compiled a digital collection of several thousand HFD related photos. In 2011, Scott realized that he had a tremendous number of pictures of the firefighters and fires so he started working on his first book, “A Pictorial History of the Houston Fire Department 1895 – 1980”, which was published in August, 2012.

Written by Susan Mellott

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