



REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN FIRE FIGHTERS

by Scott Mellott, 15/A

LIST OF LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH ANNIVERSARIES FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER:

October 13, 2001 - JAY "JAY BIRD" PAUL JAHNKE,
Captain- Station 2

October 19, 1971 - TRUXTON JOSEPH HATHAWAY, JR.
Fire Inspector - Training Academy

October 31, 1954 - DELBERT HARVEY SHERFY
Chauffeur - Station 17

LIST OF FIRE FIGHTERS WHO HAVE RECENTLY DIED:

BILLY JOE STASNY

Served HFD 1959 to 1981. Died September 19, 2004.

LONNIE LEE KRUEGER

Served HFD 1958 to 1979. Died September 19, 2004.

HAROLD EDWARD GILMORE

Served HFD 1958 to 1982. Died September 11, 2004.

JOHN GILFORD ALFORD

Served HFD 1951 to 1973. Died August 28, 2004.

VINCENT CHARLES MAURO

Served HFD 1942 to 1987. Died August 9, 2004.

LARRY WAYNE STANLEY

Served HFD 1984 to 2004. Died August 5, 2004.

For more information visit my web site www.houstonfirememorial.org. Items include Houston's line-of-duty Fire Fighter deaths, and deceased retired Fire Fighters. For a current list of deceased Fire Fighters, click on: "Recent Houston Fire Fighter Deaths" from the site menu.

Last year, I had anticipated that Jay's mom, Kay Jahnke, would co-write my October article. That did not work out so well because we lost Duke, Jay's uncle, in September. I wrote the October article about Jay's dad and his uncles. Not long ago someone asked me if I could write an entire article about Jay, I answered "with my eyes closed". So here it goes...

Jay's untimely death was exactly 33 days after 343 plus FDNY Fire Fighters died when the World Trade Center twin towers were destroyed by terrorists. After 911, I personally did not think things could get much worse. Of course I was really wrong about that concept. When I arrived at work on the morning of October 13, 2001, I



was told by the B Shift that there was a Fire Fighter missing at a high rise fire in the Galleria area. I had this horrible feeling that it would be someone that I knew very well. Shortly after that, we heard that it was the Captain of Engine 2 and then I knew it was Jay.

My wife, Susan, was a good friend with Jay from the Safety Committee at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. She was on the East Coast teaching a class and would be back in Houston late that evening. I would not be able to talk to her if she had already left her hotel room to go to her class. The second I heard Jay's name, I rushed to the phone to try to reach her. She was gone and I would not be able to contact her until 7:00 that evening.

It was a really long morning and an equally long afternoon. One, I was devastated by the death of a man I knew well and had known since he was in high school. I was equally distraught by the fact that the first thing I would have to tell my wife when she checked in to tell me she had arrived safely was that her "rodeo" buddy had perished in a high rise building fire.

Knowing Jay for 21 years can definitely be labeled an adventure. I never knew what was going to come out of his mouth when I talked to him. I was always happy to see him and visit with him. When I would talk with him, I would always reflect back on the great years that I was able to work with his dad, Claude. Jay's dad died at age 54 in 1984 of a massive heart attack and it really caught everyone off guard. The same question I asked when Claude died was the same question I asked when "Jay Bird" died. "Why him?"

Jay has now been gone from us for three years. There is not a day that goes by that I don't think of him. He is sorely missed by everyone as a friend, father, brother, son, and brother Fire Fighter.

Jay's memorial T-shirts are once again being sold. They are the same navy blue shirts that were sold after his death, his logo on the front and the HFD logo on the back. You can purchase them at Station 2 any shift for \$12 each. They also just ordered fleece jackets with the same logo as the T-shirts. The jackets are \$20 each.

Kevin Kulow memorial 4-4-4 T-shirts are also being sold for \$10 dollars each. For now, all I know is to contact Tom Chavez 6/C or Zach Maher 3/D.