



REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN FIRE FIGHTERS

by *Scott Mellott, Retired*

For the last five years, I have been privileged to travel to New York City to represent our fire department in a 5k Run/Walk in honor of Stephen Siller, a FDNY Fire Fighter from Squad 1 which is located in Red Hook, Brooklyn. This Fire Fighter died at the World Trade Center while saving lives. He was off duty and went to help out anyway. He could have went about his business because he had already left the fire house before the American Airlines Flight 11 struck the North Tower at 8:46 a.m. However, he turned his vehicle around and headed for the World Trade Center and his untimely death.

After Stephen heard on his truck radio that an airplane had hit the World Trade Center, he knew he had to be there. When he arrived at the tunnel entrance to make his way to the WTC complex, he was stopped by the police and told that only emergency vehicle traffic was being allowed to use the tunnel. This did not stop Stephen. He pulled over his small truck, got out and grabbed his

gear (he probably had his gear because he was most likely scheduled to work overtime later that day) and started his journey through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel.

Meanwhile, Engine 239, located in Brooklyn, had been dispatched to the disaster at the World Trade Center. During their journey through the tunnel one of the Fire Fighters noticed a man running in the "Cat Walk" with Fire Fighter gear slung over his shoulder. They stopped the engine and picked him up. Once they got on the Manhattan side of the tunnel, they dropped him off and he was last seen heading for the second tower. The crew that picked Stephen up in the tunnel was able to tell his family how he arrived at the towers and that is how this yearly event got it's start.

The 5k Run/Walk, called "Tunnel To Towers" follows Stephen Siller's footsteps. It starts on the Brooklyn side of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, which is located near the Brooklyn neighborhood of Red Hook, and ends near the lower Manhattan section of Battery Park right across from "Ground Zero."

The Tunnel to Towers 5k Run/Walk this year had about 15,000 participants. The proceeds go to an organization that Stephen helped start called Let's Do Good Foundation. This foundation helps children who have lost one or both of their parents. Also some of the proceeds go the the New York City Fire Department Burn Center.

I will close this article with I few of the pictures that I took during this event.



Starting point - Red Hook, Brooklyn.

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Entrance to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel.



Inside the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel.



The finish line in Manhattan is on Westside Highway - Ground 0 is in the next block on the left.

INFORMATION AND UP COMING EVENTS

The "Secret List"

Don't forget to sign up for the "Secret List." This is an email newsletter from Chief Billy Goldfeder (no email junk, and he does not give out your address, I promise!) that will give you line-of-duty death information from around the country. The newsletter will also give you insight on many safety issues facing this country's fire service. Go to www.firefighterclosecalls.com, the site's menu is on the left, click on "Secret List" and sign up.

Memorial web site-www.houstonfirememorial.org

This is my personal website that is also the Houston Fire Department's official Memorial Site. It contains a listing of Houston's line-of-duty Fire Fighter deaths from when the department went paid in 1895 to 2004. I also list as many Houston Fire Fighters that I have found through research that are now deceased, these are from 1895 to present. A current list of deceased Fire Fighters is always found on the "Recent HFD Deaths" link which can be found on the menu page of my web site.

<<http://www.houstonfirememorial.org>>