



REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN FIRE FIGHTERS

by Scott Mellott, Retired

The morning of September 11, 2001 is still very fresh on my mind, however, I am different than most. It seems to me that a lot of folks have put it aside in their memory bank and not for safe keeping but in hopes of forgetting all about that horrible day. So here is a news flash for those I just mentioned. The memory of what happened the morning of September 11, 2001 isn't going away any time soon, I promise.

Unless you were a small child or in a coma, you remember exactly what you were doing the second you found out that a commercial airliner struck one of the World Trade Center's 110 story towers. If you are my age, you remember exactly what you were doing when the announcement that President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was assassinated. For me I was in the 7th grade third period Mr. Powell's English class. And as well you will remember what you were doing at the exact moment that you received the news of the Discovery disaster, with me, I was getting beat at ping pong by Tommy Erickecon at Fire Station # 28. The memory of all of these events will stay with us forever as will the memory of the terrible day in September.

A few days ago while writing this article I received an email from Chief Billy Goldfeder's "Secret List" reporting that there were several maydays broadcasted from a fire in a high rise building next to "Ground Zero." A few hours later he sent another email reporting that FDNY lost two Fire Fighters at the Deutsche Bank building. This building was severely damaged in the attack of the World Trade Center. The building has been draped in a large black net and was awaiting demolition. Environmental disputes, contactor disputes and a continued search of the building for human remains has slowed down the process. Here is what he had to say.

As Fire Fighters everywhere, especially in NYC grieve the horrific Line-of-Duty Deaths of FDNY Fire Fighters Joseph Graffagnino and Robert Beddia from E-24/L-5 yesterday, it is hard to not see the terrorist murders of 9/11 again extending to the loss of these two Fire Fighters. Fire Fighter Beddia, 53, had been a Fire Fighter for 23 years; Fire Fighter Graffagnino, 33, had been with the FDNY for eight years... both were trapped and ran out of air.

The building is a "war torn" reminder that the USA was attacked on 9/11/01.... and then yesterday, two more FDNY Fire Fighter were killed... in a fire that would not have happened if 9/11 had never happened. But it did - and they died yesterday. Actually, many have died since 9/11, due to 9/11. There are many other Fire Fighters, EMS and Cops who have died due to attack related illnesses, since 9/11. Sadly, the Country doesn't really always seem to realize it... or at least act like it. But yesterday, two more FDNY Fire Fighters, Beddia and Graffagnino, were killed, related to 9/11, adding two more to the numbers.

COMPLICATIONS: While understanding the 9/11 connection, other questions are coming out related to yesterdays fatal fire as well. Fire Fighters faced nasty conditions with plywood sheets

propped up against walls, areas altered, confusing access and boxes of equipment and crap all around. Because the building was under demolition, there was also the issue of asbestos with the asbestos removal going on. The building is also covered in scaffolding and black construction webbing. The building standpipes were not usable as code requires and all lines had to be manually stretched-adding to the complications. Fire Fighter's Graffagnino and Beddia were found on the 14th and 15th floors.

FAMILY: And then there is the nightmare that the loved ones go through... as, for example, another Grandma lost another Grandson. "It's so awful, I don't know what to do. My whole family is distraught," Graffagnino's tearful Grandma Connie Marchisotto, 90, told media. "This is horrible." The grieving grandma said she feared the worst when she saw the fire on TV. "I turned on the news to check on the weather and I saw this breaking news," Marchisotto said. "He was my grandson, so many good memories." The eight-year FDNY vet would have turned 34 this week. FF Beddia, 53, was 23-year FDNY vet and Staten Island resident.

HISTORY: Fire Fighter Graffagnino and Beddia's firehouse is sadly, no stranger to LODD's...they lost 11 Fire Fighters on 9/11. You should also remember that Engine 24 and Ladder 5 was the home of the late Captain John Drennan, Fire Fighter's James Young, 31, and Christopher Siedenburg, 25, who were killed in that fire at 62 Watts Street in Manhattan on March 28, 1994. What I remember most is hearing what Captain Drennan went through...that he lived for 40 days with 4th degree burns over most of his body. His wife Vina, to this day is on a mission related to Fire Fighter survival and she serves on the Board of Directors of the NFFF.

Our sympathies go out to all effected, especially the members of E-24 and L-5...but especially the families of Fire Fighter Graffagnino & Fire Fighter Beddia.



Robert Beddia, age 53,
Fire Fighter - Engine 24



Joseph Graffagnino, age 34,
Fire Fighter - Ladder 5

photos courtesy of FDNY

Take Care-Plan for 9-11-07 now... because in so many cases, if the Fire Fighter's don't, it won't happen.

BillyG

The Secret List 8-19-07 / 1556 Hours
www.FireFighterCloseCalls.com

Remembering To Never Forget

STEVEN SCOTT JAHNKE
Served HFD from 1972 to 2007
Died August 15, 2007

ALBERT LEE ZUBRIK
Served HFD from 1972 to 2002
Died July 26, 2007

DANIEL "DANNY" WAYNE CASANOVER
Served HFD from 1970 to 2002
Died July 25, 2007

MARSHALL ROBERTS, JR.
Served HFD from 1948 to 1980
Died July 20, 2007

LLOYD EARL THYER
Served HFD from 1942 to 1965
Died July 16, 2007

JOHN RILEY VOLLENTINE
Served HFD from 1973 to 1989
Died July 12, 2007

WILLIAM "BILL" LEE WHITE
Served HFD from 1974 to 1976
Died July 10, 2007

MAX HENRY McRAE
Served HFD from 1955 to 1994
Died July 6, 2007

JASON TEAGUE
Served HFD from 2001 to 2007
Died June 21, 2007

HORRACE FONTENOT
Served HFD from 1953 to 1966
Died June 4, 2007

KENNETH JEFF ROBINSON, JR.
Served HFD from 1948 to 1986
Died May 28, 2007

DOYLE DWAYNE JOHNSON
Served HFD from 1981 to 2006
Died May 20, 2007

HENRY HALLIO
Served HFD from 1952 to 1978
Died May 3, 2007

ROY ALEXANDER FOSTER, JR.
Served HFD from 1969 to 2004
Died May 3, 2007

OSCAR FREEMAN WALLACE, JR.
Served HFD from 1970 to 2000
Died May 1, 2007

RICHARD FRANK SMITH
Served HFD from 1978 to 2007
Died April 28, 2007

GEORGE W. WARD
Served HFD from 1945 to 1965
Died April 14, 2007

LARRY JULIAN BLACKMON
Served HFD from 1971 to 1978
Died April 4, 2007

FRANK JACOBS, JR.
Served HFD from 1947 to 1973
Died March 29, 2007

BOBBIE JAMES "BJ" EVANS
Served HFD from 1966 to 2001
Died March 21, 2007

HOMER EUGENE FRANKS
Served HFD from 1961 to 1977
Died March 17, 2007

JOHN TURNER COMSTOCK
Served HFD From 1978 to 1988
Died March 11, 2007

DOYLE SHELTON HOLDER
Served HFD From 1974 to 2005
Died February 25, 2007

CURTIS E. MORRIS
Served HFD From 1962 to 1986
Died February 20, 2007

AUSTIN PEAVY KENNADA
Served HFD From 1956 to 1983
Died February 18, 2007

MAXIE GENE JONES
Served HFD From 1959 to 1979
Died February 9, 2007

WILLIAM RAY YOUNG
Served HFD From 1955 to 1976
Died February 5, 2007

WILBER MARTIN JONES
Served HFD From 1945 to 1966
Died January 21, 2007

JIMMY EARL LILLEY
Served HFD From 1969 to 1991
Died January 20, 2007

LARRY ANTHONY WESLEY
Served HFD From 1979 to 2000
Died January 19, 2007

GEORGE EARL LOWDERMILK
Served HFD from 1950 to 2005
Died January 12, 2007

KENNETH RAY JUDD
Served HFD from 1963 to 1994
Died January 7, 2007

LEE DITTA
Served HFD from 1948 to 1978
Died January 1, 2007

*Total for the year from January 1, 2007
to present - 33 Deaths*

For current information on deceased
Fire Fighters, please go to my web site
www.houstonfirememorial.org
and click on "Recent Deaths"
or email Scott at scottmel@juno.com

LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH ANNIVERSARIES FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER:

September 1, 1982
THOMAS NORWOOD COOPER
Probationary Fire Fighter – Station 1

September 21, 1913
PATRICK O'HARA
Fire Fighter – Station 6

Celebrating 75 Years

1932 to 2007

Houston Professional Fire Fighter's Association, Local 341

As some of you may already know, this publication will be doing a two page picture spread each month for the year 2007. We will focus on the faces of our past and the present membership to celebrate Local 341's 75th year.

Scott Mellott



*(Top Left) Houston Fire Department, Station 26
3815 Broadway - 1947
L to R - J. B. Martin
Mike Latrop
Wilson Snow
Robert Jacobs, Sr.*

Photo provided by the family of Mike Latrop

(Bottom) Houston Fire Department Central Station - 1955

*L-R - Bottom: Edward Angiers,
Robert "Bob" Zimmerman,
George Conway, J. D. Hall,
Harold Ross, Sr., James Pruitt,
Jimmie Boyet,
Edison "Woody" Henline*

*L-R - Top: David Long,
Gilbert Chafin, James Baker,
Doyle Ebel, Willard Prior,
J. J. Pruitt, Charley Burnett,
Victor Scalise, Jack Thompson,
Samuel Morgan, Jr., John Eaves,
Leslie McDuff,
Maurice Williamson,
Robert Henson*

Photo provided by J. J. Pruitt



Celebrating 75 Years

1932 to 2007

Houston Professional Fire Fighter's Association, Local 341



*Houston Fire Department, 1975, Station 33-7100 Fannin
L-R Top: Lonnie Hamrick, Robert Ater, Garnett Young
Bottom: Captain Lee Ditta, Donald Mangum, Jim Hudgens*

Photo provided by Robert Ater



*Houston Fire Department, 1975, Station 28 - 5116 Westheimer
Bottom L-R: Graig Mallett, Royce Gest, Ronald Ray
Top: Gene Guentert*

Photo provided by Royce Gest



*L-R: Bill Whatley, Herman Woolbright
Helena and Grey - 1988*

Photo provided by Local 341



Charlie Jacobs, Station 50, June 1988

Photo provided by Local 341