



# REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN FIRE FIGHTERS

by Scott Mellott, 15/A

## LIST OF LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH ANNIVERSARIES FOR THE MONTH OF JULY:

- July 01, 1940 – “Molly” Walker - Driver - Station 2
- July 02, 1929 – Edgar Grant - Fire Fighter - Station 18
- July 03, 1929 – Harry “Red” Oxford - Fire Fighter - Station 18
- July 11, 1929 – John Little, Sr. - Captain - Station 18
- July 14, 1913 – Clifford Wiese - Fire Fighter - Station 3
- July 26, 1923 – Harry Dodd - Fire Fighter - Central Station
- July 29, 1953 – Joseph “Joe” Solito - Chauffeur - Station 8
- July 29, 1953 – Fidel Chabolla - Firefighter - Station 8

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Recently I was able to travel to New York City to attend a funeral of a New York City Fire Fighter. The fallen Fire Fighter, Keith Maynard, has a twin brother, Kevin, who is a member of the Houston Fire Department.

After the New York Fire Department completed their head count, Keith Maynard was one of the many missing FDNY Fire Fighters on September 11, 2001.

The family held a memorial service for Keith on December 7, 2001 with their loved one still missing. In March of 2002 a recovery was made and Keith’s remains were sent to the New York Medical Examiners Office for DNA testing. A few months ago, Keith’s remains were released to the Maynard family by the Medical Examiner’s Office.

The Maynard family had held out for more than 3 years in hopes that Keith could receive a proper burial. A proper funeral was held on Saturday morning, June 11, 2005. The long wait was finally over 45 months to the day after this brave Fire Fighter and 6 of his crew members lost their lives.

The funeral was held in a neighborhood in Harlem called Morningside at the Church of the Master. The whole block was lined with FDNY members who came to honor the memory of their fallen brother.

Many speakers, including his mother, talked about Keith’s life. They were all great words and each had a flowing account of what an impact Keith had made during his short time on this earth.

Two of the speakers, however, really impressed me!

The first was Paul Washington, who is the current president of the Vulcan society, which is the group that represents the FDNY black Fire Fighters. One of the group’s functions is to help those trying to get through the hiring process to join the ranks of the FDNY. Keith and Kevin both started the process and Paul was the one in charge of them during this process. During the process Paul had found that Kevin was the one that was not sure if he would take the job and Keith was sure that he would take the job if and when it was offered to him.

Paul then spoke of an encounter he had with the twin brothers that always puts a smile on his face. (Please keep in mind that I have talked to several people that knew these identical twins and had a hard time telling them apart).

In June each year, New York City hosts the Puerto Rican Day Parade. The parade attracts a large crowd and there is lots of

fanfare and alcohol flows freely as the parade passes through the streets. As Paul was making his way through the crowd, he happened upon the Maynard twins who were sitting on a bench.

One of the brothers was slouching with shirt unbuttoned and probably under the influence and the other was just the opposite and sitting upright. Paul recalled when he greeted the brothers that he could not tell the brothers apart and had hoped that the upright sober one was the twin that was going to join the FDNY. Well hopefully no one will ever know which twin was which, that is the part that made the story so great.

Now the second speaker that stood out to me was a retired New York City Fire Fighter, Rich Conte. He worked with Keith at Engine 33 in Manhattan. Rich said a few words about Keith then ended his time with a poem that was very fitting for the occasion. As a result, I also will end my article with that same poem.



*Do not stand by my grave and weep,  
I am not there.  
I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow.  
I am a diamond glint on snow.  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.  
I am the gentle autumn rain.  
When you awake in the morning hush,  
I am the swift up-flinging rush  
of quiet birds in circling flight.  
I am the soft star shine at night.  
Do not stand by my grave and cry.  
I am not there.  
I did not die.*