



# REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN FIRE FIGHTERS

*by Scott Mellott, Retired*

The 2007 Annual Memorial Service was held on the usual third Saturday in March. This year marked the 7th time it has been held at the Memorial Garden located on the grounds of The Houston Firefighters' Relief and Retirement Fund. The Memorial Service competes with two major events, that would be St. Patrick's Day and The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

The attendance was acceptable, the weather was exceptional, there was an addition of new LODD Memorial Helmets, and with the help of all the great volunteers, the total of all the above equaled to the 2007 Service being a huge success.

The Memorial Service has slowly improved and grown over the last several years. One of the major improvements was the use of name tags for the attendees. Red for Line-of-Duty family members and gray for those who have a loved one or a friend on the memorial wall. These tags have the name of the Fire Fighter on it. This helps the volunteers and it also helps the families identify each other.

Now to the Memorial Service Helmets. In the past, a generic helmet was used for each Fire Fighter. When the helmet was walked to the Memorial Wall by a Fire Fighter, he or she may not actually know who's helmet they were carrying. That has now changed. Each Memorial Service helmet is custom made for each line-of-duty Fire Fighter with the color being appropriate for their rank and their helmet front indicates where they worked. And when the Fire Fighter steps up to make the trip to the wall, all he or she has to do is look down at the helmet and on the back it will have the name of the Fire Fighter who died in the line-of-duty.

Where is this going? For the past years, there has not been much interest in the Fire Fighters out in suppression coming to the service to carry a helmet. This year the bulk of the Fire Fighters were "cadets." Cadets are ok, I guess, because maybe the guys that came this year got the spirit of the occasion and will come back next year. However, I am respectfully requesting Houston Fire Fighters to take this honor over. That would entail each station with a line-of-duty death send someone to carry the helmet of the Fallen Fire Fighter that was once assigned at their fire house.

Last year and this year we allowed Kevin Kulow's son Kyle, escorted by Kevin's Father Daniel, the honor of carrying his dad's helmet. This year we had a request from Grady Burke's family to have his children carry his helmet. The three Burke Children, were escorted by Cindy and a uniformed Fire Fighter (friend of the family). Jay Jahnke's helmet has been carried for the last three Memorial Services by a family member.

When this issue of the "Houston Fire Fighter" arrives at Fire Fighter's homes, I will be taking requests for anyone who wants to carry a specific helmet during the 2008 Memorial Service. I feel that

in order to enhance the meaning of the service each helmet representing the LODD Fire Fighter should be carried by someone who has some kind of attachment to that Fire Fighter.

Below is a list of each Fire Fighter and his or her assignment at the time of their death. If a name is absent from the list that means a family member has been assigned to that Fire Fighter.

- |                                       |                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>John "Bob" Boyd-Station 1</b>      | <b>H.A. "Ace" Harris-Station 10</b> |
| <b>Frank Catino-Station 1</b>         | <b>James Smith-Station 10</b>       |
| <b>Fidel Chabolla-Station 1</b>       | <b>Charles Rusk-Station 14</b>      |
| <b>Joseph "Bull" Connor-Station 1</b> | <b>Michael Ward-Station 14</b>      |
| <b>Thomas Cooper- Station 1</b>       | <b>Esker Rogers-Station 17</b>      |
| <b>Harry Dodd-Station 1</b>           | <b>Delbert Sherfy-Station 17</b>    |
| <b>Vernon Dorsett-Station 1</b>       | <b>John Adams-Station 18</b>        |
| <b>Robert Glass-Station 1</b>         | <b>Edgar Grant-Station 18</b>       |
| <b>Charley Middlekauf-Station 1</b>   | <b>John Little, Sr.-Station 18</b>  |
| <b>Thomas O'Leary-Station 1</b>       | <b>Harry Oxford-Station 18</b>      |
| <b>Alfred Schutze-Station 1</b>       | <b>D. H. Chandler-Station 19</b>    |
| <b>Claude Hopkins-Station 2</b>       | <b>William Kersten- Station 19</b>  |
| <b>Clifford Wiese-Station 3</b>       | <b>Aaron O'Brien-Station 19</b>     |
| <b>George Bishop-Station 4</b>        | <b>Woodrow Erwin-Station 24</b>     |
| <b>Rufus Templet-Station 5</b>        | <b>Rudolph Hendricks-Station 25</b> |
| <b>Emil Thompson-Station 5</b>        | <b>Ruben Lopez-Station 25</b>       |
| <b>Patrick O'Hara-Station 6</b>       | <b>James Lowth-Station 26</b>       |
| <b>Lonnie Franklin-Station 7</b>      | <b>Charles Jedlicka-Station 30</b>  |
| <b>Robert Milburn-Station 7</b>       | <b>Willis McWhorter-Station 30</b>  |
| <b>Barney Moffatt-Station 7</b>       | <b>Don Contorno-Station 37</b>      |
| <b>Jackie Ludwick-Station 7</b>       | <b>Steve Baranowski-Station 37</b>  |
| <b>Lewis Richardson-Station 7</b>     | <b>James Walls-Station 51</b>       |
| <b>Clifford Johnson-Station 8</b>     | <b>Robert Reyes-Station 62</b>      |
| <b>Frank Medlenka-Station 8</b>       | <b>Lewis Mayo- Station 76</b>       |
| <b>Joesph Solito-Station 8</b>        | <b>Kim Smith-Station 76</b>         |
| <b>Herman Wagner-Station 8</b>        | <b>Stephen Mayfield-Station 92</b>  |
| <b>Harold Denny-Station 9</b>         | <b>Truxton Hathaway-</b>            |
| <b>Horrace Gassoway-Station 10</b>    | <b>Fire Training Academy</b>        |

*If you would like to be assigned an LODD Fire Fighter for next year's service, which will be held on March 15, 2008 (B shift working), email me at [scottmel@juno.com](mailto:scottmel@juno.com).*

# Remembering To Never Forget

**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*

**CHARLES 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*

For current information on deceased Fire Fighters, please go to my web site [www.houstonfirememorial.org](http://www.houstonfirememorial.org) and click on "Recent Deaths" or email Scott at [scottmel@juno.com](mailto:scottmel@juno.com)

*Total for the year from  
January 1, 2007  
to present - 18 Deaths*

**LINE-OF-DUTY  
DEATH ANNIVERSARIES  
FOR THE MONTH OF MAY:**

May 1, 1924

**HAROLD A. DENNY**  
Fire Fighter, Station 9

May 3, 1971

**JAMES LOUIS WALLS**  
Fire Fighter, Station 51

May 21, 1962

**DON J. CONTORNO**  
Fire Fighter, Station 37

May 25, 1912

**HERMAN J. "DUTCH" WAGNER**  
Captain, Station 8

**INFORMATION:**

**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.firefighterclose-calls.com](http://www.firefighterclose-calls.com), the site's menu is on the left, click on "Secret List" and sign up.

**MEMORIAL WEB SITE:**

[www.houstonfirememorial.org](http://www.houstonfirememorial.org)

Please visit my personal website, the Fire Fighter Memorial Website. It contains listings of Houston's line-of-duty Fire Fighters from when the department went paid in 1895 to 2004. We also list as many Houston Fire Fighters (that can be found through research) that are now deceased, from 1895 to present. We have added, because of 911, all the Fire Fighters who died on September 11th and have added a link to FDNY's line-of-duty deaths from 1865 to 2004.

*Scott Mellott*

# *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*



***Fire Trainees  
Early 1950's.***

*Photo furnished by  
the family of W. O. Hunter*



***Fire Station 14 - 12th Street and Yale - February 1960-  
Engine 14. Leo Barr, Peter Willis.***

*Photo furnished by Chief Leo Barr*



***Fire Station 14 - 12th Street and Yale-February 1960-  
Ladder 14. (L/R) Bottom Row: Otto Mueller, Andy  
Sareo, Edmund "Red" McKee. Top row: Leo Barr,  
Billy Simmons, Peter Willis, Benard Thompson.***

*Photo furnished by Chief Leo Barr*

*The picture on the bottom right of this page was ran last month with the wrong station number. We are correcting the mistake this month.*

# *Celebrating 75 Years*

**1932 to 2007**

## **Houston Professional Fire Fighter's Association, Local 341**



***District 5 Apartment Fire - 1980's.***

*Photo furnished by Local 341*



***Station 7 - Carlos Rogriquez - 1980's.***

*Photo furnished by Local 341*



***Warehouse Fire - East Side of Houston***

***Mike Nieto - 1980's.***

*Photo furnished by Local 341*



***Fire Station 28/A Shift - Westheimer Road, 1983 -***

***Scott Mellott***

*Photo taken by Scott's Brother, Gene Mellott*