



REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN FIRE FIGHTERS

by Scott Mellott, Retired

Soon after the death of Jay Jahnke, October 13, 2001, I started talking to Jay's nephew and Houston Fire Fighter, Ryan Johnson, about writing an article about his uncle. I also contacted Jay's best friend, Brad Stewart, about writing about Jay as well.

Several years went by and I never pushed either one because I knew one day I would get a call from both of them. The summer of 2006 I was told by Brad that he would be submitting an article in time to be printed in the October 2006 issue of this publication.

In 2007 Ryan called me to say the he would be sending me "articles" in time for the October 2007 issue. I didn't really know what he meant by "articles" at the time but when he emailed me the computer file it contained articles from 10 different relatives totaling almost 5,000 words.

I was very pleased and had told a friend that the flood gates had opened up and now I did not know what to do because I could not print all of them at once. He suggested to me that I print an article from one person in October and another in November and then repeat the process again in 2008 and most likely 2009. Great solution, thanks Bob!

This month Jeff Jahnke, Jay's older brother, will share with us his memories of his younger brother.

.....

Since Jay left us, there is not a day in my life that goes by without thinking of him. The thoughts are not of sorrow, but of happiness. I felt very blessed and fortunate to have him as a brother. He was so much like my Dad it was incredible.

I cherish the memories of hearing his Fire Fighter stories. From the time he could walk and talk as a baby, he loved the fire department and everything it stood for. I remember that he carried a short wave radio everywhere he went while off duty so he could monitor the calls. One time when he was off duty and we were hanging out, a 3-alarm fire close to downtown came over the radio. He grabbed me and pulled me in the car, and said, "Jump in, let's go".

My favorite story that he told me was the time he made a call to President Bush Sr.'s house. He was riding Captain and when his fire truck pulled up to the guardhouse of the gated community that the President lived in, the guard said, "you can go back (to the station) now, the President said the problem is under control." Jay would have none of that, saying, "I need to check it out - I'm not going to have something go wrong on my watch." He pulled up to the house and President Bush met him in the yard. He got out and checked out the smoke coming out of the kitchen, and set up fans to get the smoke out. As it turned out, the First Lady was out of town, and the President was heating up some chili and forgot about it as he was watching a game on T.V. and the skillet caught on fire. The President said, "Great, with all these trucks, Barbara will find out now." He said they had a great laugh at that, and the President thanked him and the crew.



I think what he enjoyed most about the fire department was working with his best buddy, Brad, and his many other comrades at the station.

I really enjoyed going to the Rodeo Barbecue Cook-off with Jay because for a long time he was involved in a safety position. He seemed to know just about everyone out there - he never met a stranger. We always had a great time.

He was most proud of his family, and was always bragging about his wife, Dawn, and his two kids, Jayne and Hunter. I see a lot of Jay in both the kids - he left a great legacy in those two. Several times, Jay's family would come to Dallas for Jayne's soccer tournament and we would have a great time watching the games and hanging out. He was a very dedicated man. If you ever needed anything, he was there to help.

Whenever I need a pick-me-up during the day, I always think of the times I was blessed with being around Jay. He is definitely missed, but is always close by.

Please visit my web site for recent updates - www.houstonfire-memorial.org. The site contains information on current Houston Fire Fighter deaths, obits, line-of-duty deaths and many other items. There is also information on my memorial t-shirts. If you have any input on this site I would be glad to hear from you, email me at

scottmel@juno.com

Also visit www.firefighterclosecalls.com. Website where my friend and Fire Fighter safety advocate Billy Goldfedder has his information. Also while you are there sign up for his email newsletter The Secret List, where you will get current information on Fire Fighter injuries and deaths around the United States.

More FF info on page 14.

LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER

November 06, 1959

WILLIS NEAL McWHORTER
Fire Fighter - Station 30

November 17, 1959

CHARLES A. JEDLIKA
Fire Fighter - Station 30

November 09, 1959

D. H. "JIM" CHANDLER
Fire Fighter - Station 19

November 23, 1901

FRANK W. MEDLENKA
Driver - Station 8

Remembering To Never Forget

JAMES R. JOHNSON, JR.
Served HFD 1959 to 1994
Died October 21, 2008

LEONARD BYRD
Served HFD 1951 to 1976
Died October 18, 2008

JOSEPH EDWARD HADLEY, JR.
Served HFD 1986 to 2008
Died October 13, 2008

JIMMY FRANKLIN MARTIN
Served HFD 1965 to 1987
Died October 13, 2008

RICHARD DUKE IRWIN
Served HFD 1960 to 1983
Died October 6, 2008

JOHN DIXIE FISHER
Served HFD 1960 to 1990
Died September 20, 2008

RAYMOND NEAL BAILEY
Served HFD 1972 to 2003
Died August 24, 2008

ROY WAYNE DEES
Served HFD 69 to 1981
Died August 21, 2008

BONNIE MORRIS COVIN
Served HFD 1956 to 1976
Died August 9, 2008

DAVID EUGENE ANDERSON
Served HFD 1958 to 1982
Died August 4, 2008

JOSEPH JOSHUA BLACKMON
Served HFD 1964 to 1984
Died July 21, 2008

JOSEPH FLETCHER HOLMAN, JR.
Served HFD 1953 to 1991
Died July 2, 2008

SCOTT STEWART WINTERHALTER
Served HFD 1959 to 1990
Died June 29, 2008

MICHAEL ALLEN MAYS
Served HFD 2002 to 2008
Died June 24, 2008

JOHN CHARLES EAGLIN
Served HFD 1972 to 1999
Died June 18, 2008

ROBERT LOUIS DANBERG
Served HFD 1967 to 1980
Died June 10, 2008

DELBERT LEE WARWICK, SR.
Served HFD 1956 to 2005
Died June 1, 2008

CHRISTOPHER JASON BOISVERT
Served HFD 2008 to 2008
Died May 30, 2008

DWAYNE FRANCES GUILLORY
Served HFD 1996 to 2008
Died May 18, 2008

BILLY ROYCE HESTER
Served HFD 1955 to 1986
Died May 6, 2008

LEON LARA EGUIA
Served HFD 1957 to 1977
Died May 4, 2008

CLARENCE DANIEL BYERS
Served HFD 1951 to 1972
Died May 2, 2008

JOEY SHELDON REED, SR.
Served HFD 1989 to 1993
Died April 21, 2008

MICKEY GENE PATE
Served HFD 1979 to 2008
Died April 17, 2008

OTTO W. MUELLER
Served HFD 1956 to 1982
Died March 26, 2008

ARLON FLOYD DRAKE
Served HFD 1953 to 1973
Died March 9, 2008

RICHARD HENRY DECKER
Served HFD 1961 to 1984
Died March 6, 2008

“WHITEY” LESTER O’NEAL MARTIN
Served HFD 1949 to 1988
Died March 2, 2008

ERIC DEWAYNE BRADY
Served HFD 1980 to 2004
Died February 15, 2008

BRICEY EUGENE CHILDRESS
Served HFD 1959 to 1986
Died February 9, 2008

DAVID LEE NORRIS
Served HFD 1975 to 2003
Died February 1, 2008

TED W. SANFORD
Served HFD 1946 to 1974
Died January 26, 2008

**Total from January 1, 2008
to present - 32 Deaths**

Total for the Year 2007 - 43 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

The Faces of Local 341

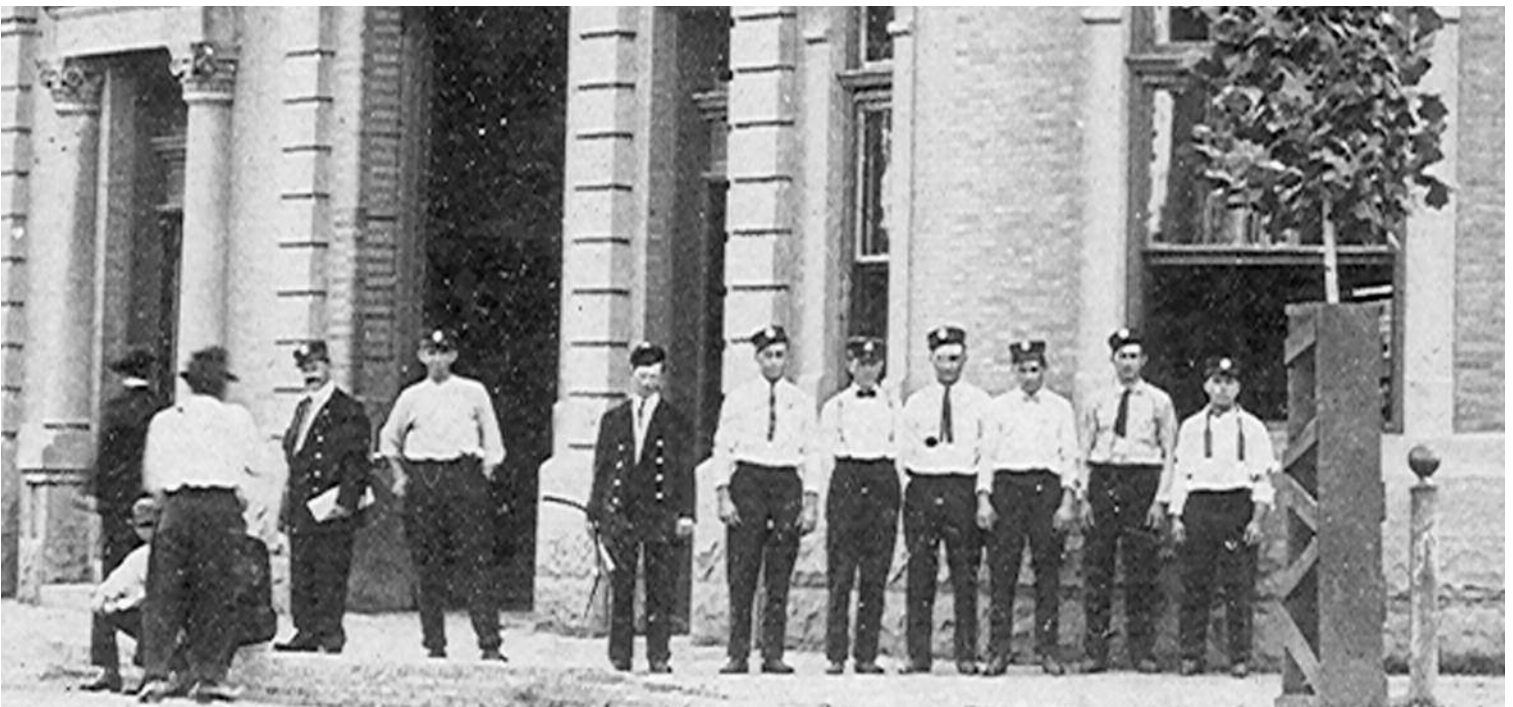
1932 to 2008

Houston Professional Fire Fighter's Association

Photos on this page submitted by Scott Mellott (Retired)



1916 - picture taken from an HFD group shot in front of Central Station - San Jacinto and Texas (there is a church there now). I cut this section out because there are three Fire Fighters who died in the line-of-duty in the picture. Top row fourth man from the left - Claude Edmonds - died 1926 - involved in an arial ladder collapse. Bottom row - third man from left - John S. Little, Sr. - died with 2 of his Fire Fighters when Engine 18 collided with a freight train. Bottom row - fourth man - Frank Catino - died when Ladder 1 collided with a passenger car.



Men of Central Station - 1915

Photos provided by the family of John Little, Sr.

The Faces of Local 341

1932 to 2008

Houston Professional Fire Fighter's Association

Photos on this page submitted by Scott Mellott (Retired)



Station 35 late 1970's - Hobert Hoggard, Clifford Reed
Photo provided by Hobert Hoggard



Rudy Malek - 103 Chief Chauffeur - Station 7, 1970's
Photo provided by the family of Charley Burnett



E/O/P James Johnson and FF/P Howard Shaw - 1977
Ambulance 46.
Photo provided by Michael Bingham



Crew of Engine 6, C-Shift
(l/r) Jeffery Thorton FF, Captain Mark Braswell,
Joe Hernandez E/O, Damon Blank FF
Photo provided by Scott Mellott