



REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN FIRE FIGHTERS

by Scott Mellott, Retired

From time-to-time, I like to give an update on all of my memorial projects. One of the things that I spend time on is researching for articles contained in this column. Producing an article every month for this column is not as easy as it might seem. I try to keep several articles ahead and I'm always looking for ideas.

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One of the main things that I had mentioned in the past January article is that I am pretty much the keeper of the memory of Houston's deceased Fire Fighters. I do this through two main sections of my web site. The first section is a list of the 60 Fire Fighters who died in the Line-of-Duty; the second section is a list of deceased past Fire Fighters. You can find the information on my web site www.houstonfirememorial.org.

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In 1986 I became involved in researching the names of Houston's Fire Fighters who had died in the line-of-duty since the beginning of the paid fire department, August 1895. The only place that contained original names were two memorial plaques located at fire department headquarters (410 Babgy) and the Houston Fire Museum. I began with those names and after 8 months of library time and countless interviews I was able to obtain information on 51 Line-of-Duty Fire Fighters. During the research process, I found a Fire Fighter named Harry Dodd (died 1923) who was not listed on the plaque. He brings the total to 52 Fire Fighters lost from 1895 to 1988. The information on these Fire Fighters were printed in the HFD's 1988 Sesquicentennial Year Book. Since that time, Houston has endured seven more Line-of-Duty deaths and information on one more lost line-of-duty Fire Fighter H. A. Harris (died 1921) was recovered bringing the total to 60 Fire Fighters. I still go back from time-to-time and do more research on these Fire Fighters so it is an on-going project.

I also keep track of the Fire Fighters retired or active who die during the calendar year. I keep a on-going list on the next page from this article that covers from January 1 to December 31 of each current year. The current year's deceased Fire Fighters are also listed on my website in the Houston Fire Department's Recent Deaths section. The names are added each January to the Memorial Wall at the Memorial Garden located on the grounds of our pension office. Each year during the Annual Fire Fighter Mass the names of the Fire Fighters who died since the last Mass are honored. To find more information on the Annual Fire Fighter Mass, please visit their web site www.stfloriansociety.org.

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Now, on to my favorite project, and that would be pictures. I figured out a long time ago that if I was going to document Houston's past Fire Fighters I would have to do more than supply information obtained from public records or newspapers from the library. This process begins with hopefully the original copy of a picture obtained from someone that either I find through research or they find me. Once the picture is in my presence, I scan the picture in a format that will allow me to repair it, improve on it or enlarge it. I also make an effort to identify the year and location it was taken and names, if possible, of the Fire Fighters in the picture. The picture now becomes my digital copy and the original is handed back to its

owner. Once I have the "digital" picture, my work begins. I use a program call Adobe Photoshop and for the past several years I have sat through about 40 hours of classes to be able to improve my photoshop skills. With these skills, I can take an old photo that is worse for the wear and make it good enough that the original owner can now frame it and display a picture of their "Fire Fighter Grandfather" in their home or office instead of the picture sitting in a box in the back closet.

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This past year has been really good for me as far as really great historical pictures. I was able to hunt down a rare panoramic picture that was taken in 1916 of the entire Houston Fire Department in front of Central Station located at San Jacinto and Texas. I am now making arrangements to have several copies framed for display in several fire department locations.

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The week before Christmas I visited a Fire Fighter's widow to look at pictures. When I got there she handed me a box that contained pictures of her Fire Fighter husband and son that had been sitting in a box at the top of her closet for the past 30 years. In this "pile" of pictures were two pictures's that her late husband, who worked at the old Central Station on Preston, found in a trash can in a chief's office. Needless to say, the pictures now about 111 years old survived the year's safely tucked away in the top of a closet. I will close this article by sharing these two pictures that will make a great contribution to Houston's pictorial history.



Remembering To Never Forget

“WHITEY” LESTER ONEAL MARTIN

Served HFD 1949 to 1988

Died March 2, 2008

ERIC DEWAYNE BRADY

Served HFD 1959 to 1986

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 Jan. 1, 2008 to present - 5 Death

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

LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH ANNIVERSARIES FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH

March 1, 1928

GEORGE L. BISHOP

Captain - Station 4

March 10, 1953

CHARLY A. MIDDLEKAUF

Assistant Chief - Central Station

March 12, 1951

RUFUS JOHN “BULOCK” TEMPLET

Captain - Station 5

March 31, 1947

JAMES EDWARD LOWTH

Fire Fighter - Station 26

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.firefighterclosecalls.com, the site’s menu is on the left, click on “Secret List” and sign up.

MEMORIAL WEB SITE:

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

The Faces of Local 341

1932 to 2008

Houston Professional Fire Fighter's Association



Engine 18 prior to a tragic accident that killed three of these crew members and injured several others.

Photo provided by the family of John Little, Jr.



*Station 18 - 5000 Telephone Road - 1940's
"Red" Adams, second man on the left, other men unknown.*

Photo provided by Val Adams, daughter-in-law of "Red" Adams.



*Station 18 - 5000 Telephone Road - 1940's
"Red" Adams driving, other man unknown.*

Photo provided by Val Adams, daughter-in-law of "Red" Adams.

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**Fire Station 28 - 5116 Westheimer - 1980's
Gilbert Bennett**

Photo provided by Gilbert Bennett



Fire Station 28 - 3000 Chimney Rock - 1990

**(l-r) John Slovacek, District 3;
J. D. Fisher; Max McRae, HazMat**

Photo provided by J. D. Fisher



**Command Van - 1980
(right) John Ward, District 7; (top left) "Birdie" Thompson, District 8; (left) Fire Fighter unknown.**

Photo provided by Local 3341



**Woodway Square - July 31, 1979
Chief Dennis Holder**

Photo taken by HFD Photographer William "Butch" Edmonds