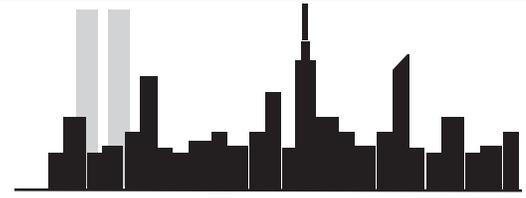


JANUARY 2008

**VIEW**  
FROM  
P O I N T

**9 metro Tech**  
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NYC FIRE DEPARTMENT



# 5-5-5-5

*The FDNY mourns the loss of Lt. John Martinson*



*Thousands of FDNY members lined the streets outside Staten Island's Church of St. Clare on January 8 to pay tribute to Lt. John Martinson of Engine 249.*

The year 2008 got off to a somber start as the FDNY mourned the loss of Lt. John H. Martinson of Engine 249, who made the Supreme Sacrifice after operating at a fire in Brooklyn

on January 3.

The Lieutenant was laid to rest on January 8 after a funeral mass at the Church of St. Clare in Staten Island.

"When he had something to say, you listened," said Captain Thomas Reilly of Engine 249. "He led by example. He was always the first firefighter off the rig and the first one ready for action."

Many said firefighting was in Lt. Martinson's blood. His father, Firefighter John O. Martinson, enjoyed a 31-year career with the FDNY.

"Lt. Martinson modeled himself after the best of the Bravest," Mayor Michael Bloomberg said. "He was a hero who never gave a second thought to putting himself in harm's way to help others."

After working for nearly four years as a police officer for the NYPD, Lt. Martinson joined the FDNY in May, 1993, at Engine 204. He also worked at Engine 80 and Ladder 23 before being promoted to lieutenant in 2002. He joined Engine 249/Ladder 113 in March 2006.

While working at Engine 80, he earned a unit citation for his work at the Hamilton Hotel fire in 2006. He also earned a medal for his police duty in 1991.

"John's time on this earth was much too short, but he took advantage of every moment of it," Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta said.

Lt. Martinson earned the nickname "Johnny Nice Guy" and was described by

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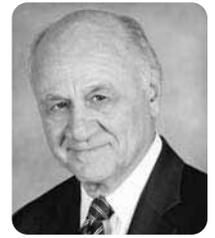
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## Mourning the Loss of Lt. John Martinson; New Initiatives to Further Improve Firefighter Safety



Commissioner's  
— Message

The New Year was only three days old when the Department suffered the tragic loss of Lt. John Martinson, a 15-year veteran, at a fire in the Ebbets Field housing project in Brooklyn.

Lt. Martinson was a true leader in the firehouse. A talented firefighter and a tremendously respected fire officer, his first priority was the safety of the members under his command. He was also a dedicated husband and loving father. I know that the members of Engine 249 and Ladder 113 in particular will miss him terribly, but the whole Department mourns with them. His death reminds us all of the dangers firefighters face every day. It also renews our commitment to safety and ensuring that our members go to work knowing that we are doing everything we can to ensure you come home safely.

As we look ahead at the year to come, we remain a Department committed to firefighter safety. To that end, we will roll out several important new initiatives that will, among other things, enhance training, help us better understand wind-driven fires and streamline the firefighter injury reporting system.

### Construction of High-Rise Simulator

This year we will add a new state-of-the-art training tool at the FDNY Academy. A \$4 million high-rise simulator will train firefighters in combating the complexities of fires in high-rise buildings. The 4,000 square foot structure will feature a variety of real-life functions, including a fire and flashover simulator, a central smoke system and video hookups on each floor for review. Funding for the simulator, which is expected to be operational by early 2009, was provided by generous grants from Leary Firefighters Foundation, the FDNY Foundation and Department of Homeland Security.

### Mobile Training Vehicles

Training is one of the Department's most important priorities. We want to ensure that for our members, training does not stop when they leave the Academy. To that end, we have instituted a new mobile training program with five customized vehicles- one for each borough - deployed daily to bring in-service training to every firehouse throughout the city. Through the new program training will be provided on crucial topics like forcible entry techniques, maze simulator for search and rescue drill and the Personal Safety System deployment.

### Research Project on Wind-Driven Fires

In order to maintain the level of quality and professionalism that the public has come to expect from this Department, it is important that we keep up with research and technology. FDNY and research partners Polytechnic University and the National Institute of Science and Technology will conduct series of wind-driven fire tests in February 2008. Funded by \$1 million grant from DHS, fire chiefs from around the nation will observe series of controlled burns at a building on Governor's Island that is slated

for demolition. This research has potential to revolutionize the way fire departments throughout the nation battle wind-driven high rise fires.

### New Electronic Firefighter Injury Reporting System

Finally, in February we're launching a new computerized injury and exposure report and tracking system for firefighters and EMS personnel. The Computerized Injury Report System (CIRS) will replace the old system of paper forms and duplicates. Not only is the new web-based program easier and faster to use, it is also more useful in documenting injuries, enabling the Department to quickly follow injury patterns and be proactive in recognizing trends that require new equipment and training for injury prevention. Implementation, which begins on February 1, follows a very successful pilot program conducted on Staten Island.

### Expansion of Bureau of Fire Investigations

In December, we opened the new Citywide North Base at Fort Totten, Queens. It is estimated that the new base will result in an estimated 20% increase in investigations by Fire Marshals. These additional investigations are expected to result in increased arrests and improved knowledge of fire trends. Enhancing our understanding of the causes of fire means better fire prevention and better public awareness efforts to reduce the incidence of fires in NYC. And putting more arsonists behind bars means a safer New York.

All these initiatives follow on the heels of some very successful programs that were implemented in 2007.

We launched the most successful firefighter recruitment campaign in Department history, which led to the recruitment of more minority candidates for the 2007 firefighter exam than ever before. We implemented the largest expansion of training for probationary firefighters in Department history, from 13 weeks to 23 weeks. And we reduced average response times by ambulances to life-threatening emergencies with the implementation of Automatic Vehicle Location using GPS satellite technology. Since we started using AVL in August 2006, average citywide response times to the most life-threatening emergencies have decreased 20 seconds, according to the latest statistics.

As we go forward in 2008, we will continue to reap the benefits from these changes. The initiatives that we will roll out this year, and those we have already implemented, will increase firefighter safety, improve training and preparedness, and lead to a much safer New York overall.

# To Help Others

## 274 Probies Graduate from the Academy

The first class of probationary firefighters to receive 23 weeks of training was graduated from the Fire Academy on January 16, amid a packed crowd of family and friends at Queens College.

"We have done everything we can to make sure our firefighters have the skills they need for the 21<sup>st</sup> century," said Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

The 274 probies were the first to receive 10 additional weeks of training as part of the unprecedented expansion of the Fire Academy in 2007. The previous graduating class received 18 weeks of training, up from the 13-week program.

The extra training enables probationary firefighters to learn a variety of firefighting techniques aimed to increase safety, including hazardous materials training, engine and ladder operations, fire prevention, building construction and building inspection.

"This is the most challenging training that any firefighter receives in the country and perhaps even the world," said Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta. "And it has been said that when someone becomes a firefighter, his act of bravery has already been demonstrated."

The class included three probationary firefighters who had a family member die in the line of duty.

Probationary Firefighter Matthew Pujdak's brother, Daniel Pujdak of Ladder 146, made the Supreme Sacrifice while operating at a fire in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, on June 21, 2007.

Probationary Firefighter Scott LaPiedra's father, Captain Scott LaPiedra of Ladder Company 176, died on July 4, 1998, after sustaining critical injuries while battling a fire in East New York, Brooklyn, on June 5.

And Probationary Firefighter Robert Wallace lost his father, Lieutenant Robert Wallace of Engine Company 205, when he responded to the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

All three men said they wanted to be firefighters since they were children and they felt the presence of their lost loved ones with them at the Academy.



*Probationary firefighters who served in the military are recognized during Proby Graduation on January 16.*

"The training was grueling at times, but I knew [Daniel] was there to help me," said Probationary Firefighter Pujdak. "He helped me get through it."

Forty-three others also followed their family members onto the job, including Probationary Firefighter Dennis Moriarty, whose father, Battalion Chief Edward Moriarty, served as the Chief of Personnel.

Probationary Firefighters Michael Abbott, Philip Darcey, Edward Kelly, Gary Schiffmacher and Robert Wallace are the third generation from their families to join the FDNY.

"One thing in this job that remains constant is that it requires someone different than the average citizen," said Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano. "Because you'll always be running in as everyone else is running out."

The class also was hailed for their generosity.

While at the Academy, they volunteered to help cancer patients and military veterans, participated in the bone marrow donor program and raised \$2,000 for the family of Lieutenant John H. Martinson of Engine Company 249, who made the Supreme Sacrifice while operating at a

fire in Brooklyn on January 3. They raised another \$2,000 to help cover expenses for a firefighter assigned to the Academy whose wife is in need of a lung transplant.

Twenty-two members of the class are veterans of the U.S. military, including nine of whom have served in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and/or Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq, including: Daniel Abramowski and Michael Mulhall (Navy); Cody Baker, Joseph Ferris, Anthony Mazzariello, Christopher Muccini and Michael Schmidt (USMC); Dale Catlett, Jeffrey Daniels, Edward Kelly, Adam Matos, Michael Mullins and Oscar Robles (Air Force); Thomas Christensen, Richard Garcia, Kievon Harper, Thomas Herrick and Daniel Walsh (Coast Guard); and Philip Giordano, Kevin Hallinan, Timothy Tamburello and Joel Van Wieren (Army).

Probationary Firefighter Kristopher Grills served as class valedictorian, Probationary Firefighter Michael Liverani was the class salutatorian and the Physical Fitness Award was given to Probationary Firefighter Hugh Barr.

"This isn't a job or a paycheck, it's a calling," said Probationary Firefighter Grills. "This is the best job in the world."

## Life Saver

### Firefighter Uses Personal Safety System, Saves Life

For the first time since it was issued, a firefighter used the FDNY's new Personal Safety System (PSS) to escape a fire on December 31.

The PSS is a hook, 50-foot rope and descender device that is used by firefighters as a last resort to escape a fire.

"This is a great success story," said Battalion Chief Stephen Raynis of the FDNY's Safety Command.

Firefighters responded to a fire in a wood-frame building on 540 Willoughby Avenue at 3:41 a.m.

As firefighters began operations, Firefighter Raymond Pollard of Ladder 102 was venting the fire on the fourth floor by breaking the three windows facing the street with the aerial ladder.

He then climbed the ladder to the window above the stoop on the fourth floor to begin his search for occupants.

After searching the room and entering the hallway, the fire quickly spread up the stairway. It blew over his head and out the window from which he entered the building, blocking his means of egress.

Firefighter Pollard, a 24-year veteran of the Department, then entered the adjacent room and was chased to the window by the fast moving fire.

As he straddled the windowsill, he said that fire was blowing over his head out the



*A firefighter used the FDNY's PSS to escape from a fast moving fire in Brooklyn on December 31.*

window. Since he had no other means of escape, he hooked his PSS to the window frame and escaped outside, where he dangled two feet below the ledge.

Firefighters manning the aerial and bucket ladders saw him and immediately moved their apparatus to meet him and lower him to safety.

"Fire was blowing out all three windows as he escaped," said Chief Raynis. "He's home now because of teamwork."

The fire, which began in the basement,

escalated to a third-alarm at 5:11 a.m. and the roof collapsed into the fourth floor at around 5:50 a.m. The fire was deemed under control at 6:31 a.m.

Firefighter Pollard suffered second-degree burns to his left hand and three other firefighters suffered minor injuries in the blaze.

Fire marshals are investigating the cause of the fire, which they believe to be suspicious.

### Commissioner John Benanti Joins the FDNY

Whether it's taking care of vehicles or firehouses, the new Deputy Commissioner of Technology and Support Services John Benanti is up for the job.

"I'm very proud to be working here," said Deputy Commissioner Benanti.

The newly appointed Deputy Commissioner will be responsible for the FDNY's technologies, facilities and fleet support. He is succeeding Milton Fishberger, who recently retired.

Yet although taking care of the Department's approximately 350 facilities and 2,116 vehicles can seem like a daunting



task, Deputy Commissioner Benanti has the experience to back it up.

He is a 26 year veteran of City government, working for 11 years at the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). There he served as Deputy Commissioner for Administration of personnel management, facilities, office services, purchasing and management information systems.

He was responsible for the administrative functions of more than 7,000 employees with a \$2 billion budget.

"The fleet here are an entirely different animal," he said. "But I'm ready for a

change and a challenge."

While at ACS, he worked closely with Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta for five years when he served as the Commissioner there.

"I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to work with him again," Deputy Commissioner Benanti said.

Before working at ACS, he worked for nearly five years as Agency Chief Contracting Officer for the Department of Aging and Assistant Director of Contract Review at the Mayor's Office of Contracts.

He has a criminal justice degree from St. John's University.

Deputy Commissioner Benanti lives on Staten Island and has three children.

## Brooklyn EMTs Deliver Twins on Christmas

It was a Christmas delivery nobody expected.

EMTs Barkim Covington and Marc Aurelus from EMS Station 58 delivered a set of twins while working in Canarsie, Brooklyn, on December 25.

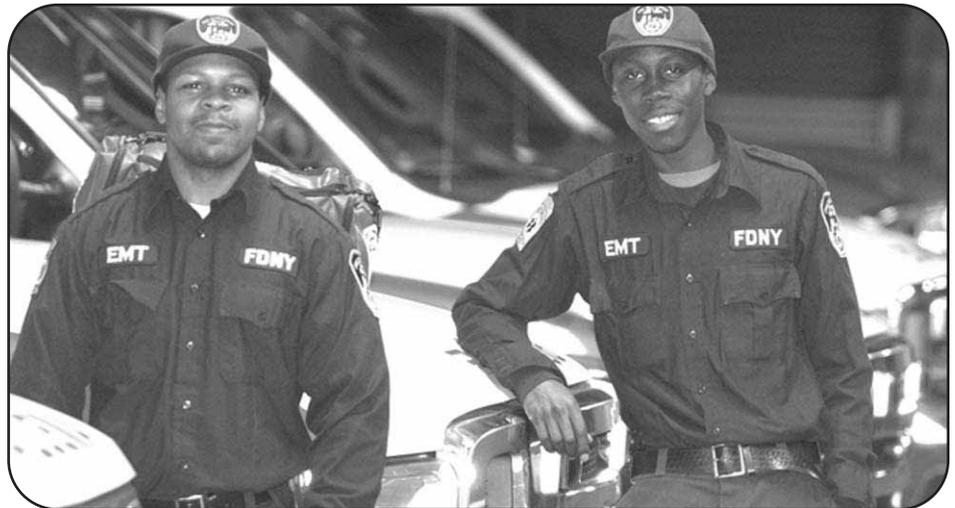
The EMTs were called to an apartment on East 108<sup>th</sup> Street at around 10:15 p.m., to aid a pregnant woman who was ready to give birth.

The woman met the team in the lobby of her apartment building and told them her water broke.

EMTs Covington and Aurelus said they wanted to carry her to the ambulance in a chair, but she said she was unable to sit down.

Clearly in pain, they said she walked down a few steps on the pathway outside her building, but complained she could go no further. So the EMTs lay the woman down and within minutes, a baby was born.

To their surprise, when the EMTs were clamping the cord, the woman indicated that another baby was on its way. Four minutes later, the EMTs delivered the second infant.



EMTs Barkim Covington and Marc Aurelus delivered twins in Brooklyn on December 25.

“We didn’t expect another one,” said EMT Aurelus, with a laugh. “It all happened so fast, we didn’t have any time to think. We wanted to get the babies someplace safe and warm as quickly as we could.”

A man passing by offered his shirt to transport the babies to the awaiting ambulance, and after suctioning the infants – a boy and a girl – they rushed them to the

vehicle.

The EMTs safely transported the mother and newborns to Kings County Hospital in stable condition.

“We were just happy the babies were safe, the mother was okay and everyone was happy,” said EMT Aurelus, who noted that this was his first (and second) delivery in his two years on the job.

## FDNY EMS Members Save Woman in Brooklyn With New Tool

Although most New Yorkers probably don’t know what a Combitube is, one Brooklyn woman was grateful for the device on December 9 – when it helped FDNY EMS members save her when she was suffering from a life-threatening allergic reaction.

EMS members were called to a beauty salon on New Lots Avenue, to aid a woman who appeared to be having an asthma attack at around 2 p.m.

Paramedics William Delaney and Christopher Natoli responded within minutes and found that the woman was having difficulty breathing. They began giving her oxygen and medications, but her condition worsened.

A short time later, as Lt. Lisa Freitag and EMTs Leonid Litovskiy and Diane McLoughlin arrived on the scene, her lips turned purple, she lost consciousness and her heart stopped.

The team began performing CPR on the patient, yet due to obstructions in her airway, the EMS members could not use a normal tube to assist her breathing.

Luckily the responding paramedics recently had been trained on a new breathing tool called the Combitube, and just hours earlier it had been put into operation by the EMS Command.

Lt. Freitag said she was able to insert the breathing tube and force air into the victim’s lungs, saving her life. The victim was transported to Brookdale Hospital.



Lt. Lisa Freitag holds a new device called a Combitube, which helped save the life of a Brooklyn woman on December 9. Photo courtesy of Charles Eckert.

“It worked perfectly, just the way it was supposed to,” Lt. Freitag said. “It’s rare we have to use it, but it’s nice to fall back on when necessary.”

## Home Base

### FDNY Opens Fire Marshal Base in Queens

The Bureau of Fire Investigations (BFI) is celebrating the holidays with one big gift – a new fire marshal base at Fort Totten in Queens.

“This new base is crucial to improving fire safety and protecting the community from arsonists,” said Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta during the ribbon cutting ceremony on December 19. “BFI will now be able to do even more to track the cause of fires in New York City.”

A deputy chief fire marshal, eight supervising fire marshals and 37 fire marshals are assigned to the new Citywide North Command, investigating fires throughout Queens, the Bronx and northern Manhattan.

The new base supplements the Citywide South Command in Brooklyn where fire marshals are assigned to conduct fire investigations in Brooklyn, Staten Island and Manhattan south of 110<sup>th</sup> Street.

“This new base is an asset to the field and to the public,” said Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano. “It is great to know that when there is a fire in New York City it will be investigated by the best fire marshals in the world.”

This new base will allow fire marshals to reduce their travel time and dedicate more time to their critical investigative work.

Chief Fire Marshal Louis Garcia said



(L to R) Chief Fire Marshal Louis Garcia, Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano, Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta, Queens Borough President Helen Marshall and Assistant Chief Fire Marshal Robert Byrnes cut the ceremonial ribbon opening the new fire marshal base at Fort Totten.

that the increase in manpower and the new command base will enable fire marshals to fully investigate approximately 1,400 more fires citywide each year, leading to an increase in the overall number of arrests.

The additional investigations will help fire marshals determine fire trends, such as the identification of serial arsonists and the misuse of common household items.

“Our marshals will be able to do an even better job now,” said Chief Garcia.

The new Citywide North Command is a three-story, 12,000 square-foot building that includes an interview room, holding

cell, kitchen, conference room and office space. It is a recently restored, century-old landmark building that once served as quarters for field grade officers in the U.S. Army.

The new base at Fort Totten, as well as 27 new fire marshal positions and five new supervising fire marshal positions, were created as a result of \$1.4 million included in Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg’s Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2008. More than 130 fire marshals and supervisors are assigned to the FDNY Bureau of Fire Investigation.

### FDNY Fire Marshals Arrest 13-Year-Old Girl for Setting Fire to Her Homeroom Class

FDNY fire marshals arrested a 13-year-old girl on January 8 who ignited a fire inside her sixth-grade homeroom class at Intermediate School 228 in Brooklyn.

After an investigation, the girl was arrested and charged with fourth-degree arson, criminal mischief and other charges.

The fire was first reported at 5:30 p.m. on January 7, when school staff members smelled smoke emanating from a locked classroom.

More than 60 firefighters responded to the four-story building at 228 Avenue S. The fire was under control by 6:31 p.m.

Fire Marshals David Wong and Gary Mazalatis conducted the investigation and interviewed more than 20 students and faculty members.

Fire marshals determined the 13-year-old suspect was playing with a cigarette lighter, lit some loose papers on fire and tossed them inside a large wooden coat closet just before dis-

missal time. The fire eventually engulfed the closet where books and clothes were stored, then spread to the entire classroom. No one was inside the room at the time.

The all-hands fire destroyed the second-floor classroom and injured six people. Two female students, ages 11 and 13, suffered smoke inhalation and were treated at Coney Island Hospital. One adult was treated on scene, and three firefighters suffered minor injuries and were treated at an area hospital.

# No Place Like Home

## Engine 277/Ladder 112 Cut Ribbon on New Firehouse

It was a day five years in the making – and many firefighters said it was worth the wait.

Members of Engine 277/Ladder 112 cut the ceremonial ribbon that officially opened their new firehouse in Bushwick, Brooklyn, on December 13. The new three-story, 16,000 square-foot facility is three times the size of the companies' former quarters.

"This is a remarkable facility that is the result of years of hard work, innovative thinking and spectacular design," said Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta.

The new firehouse includes a double-bay apparatus floor with separate doors for each company, a small interior courtyard, a finished basement and a training room, along with locker and shower/bathroom facilities for male and female firefighters.

It also includes artistic lanterns created by Julian LaVerdiere, the artist who commissions the "Tower in Light" tribute at the World Trade Center each year on the anniversary of the September 11 attacks.

"This is a beacon of the Bushwick community," said Commissioner of the Department of Design and Construction David Burney.

Chief of Department Salvatore Casano added: "This is what a firehouse should be."

The state-of-the-art facility was designed by the architectural firm STV and has been recognized by the City's Art Commission with an excellence in design award. The \$12.5 million construction project began in October 2005 after the completion of the design and land use review process. During the design phase, the City's Department of Education agreed to transfer a portion of the schoolyard at Intermediate School 291 so a double-company firehouse could be constructed.

The City's Department of Design and Construction oversaw the project in conjunction with the FDNY's Bureau of Technology and Support Services. During



Engine 277/Ladder 112's new firehouse was officially opened on December 13.

construction, the two companies were relocated to the quarters of Engine Company 222 in Brooklyn.

"I'm sure the retired members are getting a thrill out of this new facility," said Brooklyn Borough Commander, Chief Edward Kilduff.

During the ceremony, current and retired members reminisced about the firehouse's rich history that spans more than a century. Captain Ronald Carrutue of Ladder 112, who has worked at the firehouse for his entire 38-year career, said he remembered running to five or six major fires each time he worked in the 1970s.

Captain Michael Legge of Engine 277 said he likes the space of the new facility and the fact that the rigs do not need to park "back to back" as they have since the 1970s. Yet, he added, "I'm really just happy to be back. This is where we belong."

Firefighter Elio Castillo of Ladder 112, who has worked out of both Engine 277 and Ladder 112 during his 7-year career with the FDNY agreed. He said he grew up just around the corner from the firehouse and, "the tradition is still here, it's a great firehouse and it's great to be back."



**Rescue from above:** (L to R) Lt. Aldo Adissi, FF Michael Fassino, FF Steven Hardwick, FF James Skelly and FF David Collado of Squad 61 helped save a construction worker on the Throgs Neck Bridge on December 19 along with other firefighters from the Bronx and Queens. The worker was trapped by falling scaffolding as he was standing on safety netting more than 20 feet above the roadway of the Bridge. Firefighters from Ladder 167 extended their aerial ladder to the victim and members from all responding units, including Rescue 3 and Battalion 20, climbed to the victim. Members of Ladder 54 extended their bucket ladder and firefighters lowered him to the roadway safely. EMS members transported the victim to Jacobi Medical Center in stable condition.

## Firefighters Give Holiday Gifts to Fire Victims They Rescued

A family living in Spanish Harlem was devastated on December 24 when the lights on their artificial Christmas tree shorted out and sparked a fast-moving fire that gutted their apartment and damaged all of their holiday gifts.

Although the family said they were just happy that everyone was rescued, firefighters from Engine 53/Ladder 43 helped make their holiday a little brighter, giving two of the fire's littlest victims – Queen, 10, and Zaire, 6 – belated Christmas gifts on January 10.

“We are just happy to help,” said Lieutenant Gregory Prial of Ladder 43. “You’ll have to replace everything, but it could have been a lot worse that day.”

Firefighters gave Queen an MP3 player tucked into a pale blue hat and gloves, and Zaire received a Barbie doll and Hannah Montana toys.

Yet as the girls enjoyed ice cream sundaes, their mom, Shakira Southerland, was able to meet nearly all of the firefighters that responded to the fire and rescued her family.

The fire was first reported at 4:21 a.m. in the family's third floor apartment.

When firefighters arrived on the scene three minutes later, they noticed people hanging out one of the front windows.

“There was a lot of smoke and fire



*Firefighters from Engine 53/Ladder 43 present holiday gifts to Shakira Southerland and her daughters Queen (left) and Zaire. The firefighters rescued the family from a fire that gutted their apartment on Christmas Eve.*

blowing out of the windows,” said Firefighter Michael Kennedy of Ladder 43, the company's chauffeur. “We knew we had to work fast.”

As they extended the 35 foot portable ladder to the window, they noticed a hand reaching out of a neighboring window that was filled with smoke, and called for another ladder.

Firefighters were able to quickly rescue Ms. Southerland and her daughters as well as Ms. Southerland's sister, Tocarra Taylor.

On the other side of the building, firefighters also were working to save Ms. Southerland's parents. They were able to remove their mother from the interior of the building. Yet while her father tried to self-evacuate through a window, he became stuck in the sharp glass as the smoke continued to pump over his head.

Firefighters said he was bleeding profusely, so they did not want to risk further injury by removing the man from the window, so they worked to remove the entire window frame and slowly lower him to safety.

“It was almost like dentistry, you had to be so precise and careful,” said Firefighter Steve McNulty of Ladder 43. “But he remained so poised throughout the whole ordeal.”

Firefighters from Engine 53 were able to get the fire under control in less than 30 minutes.

Yet as she remembered the painful morning, Ms. Sutherland said to the firefighters, “I was really panicking. That was some pretty nasty smoke and I thought my lungs were going to collapse. But I was shocked you guys came so fast, thank you so much.”



**Up, up, up:** Forty-one FDNY members moved up in the ranks on January 3 during a combined Fire and EMS promotions ceremony at New York Technical College. The ceremony included five members elevated to the rank of fire captain, one to supervising fire marshal, 15 to fire lieutenant and 20 to EMS lieutenant. Among the promoted members was Rescue Paramedic Michelle Robbins, who helped save a man who fell more than 40 feet into a trench in Manhattan on November 2.

## FDNY Members Rescue Victims of Bus Accident

**F**DNY firefighters and EMS personnel helped rescue and treat 15 people who were injured when two city buses collided in Brooklyn on January 9 at 6:36 a.m.

One bus crashed into the other from behind at the intersection of Empire Boulevard and New York Avenue in Crown Heights. This pushed the first bus across the intersection and into a tree and traffic light.

When units arrived on the scene, they found one of the drivers pinned in the bus.

The victim was extricated by members of Ladder 113.

EMTs Deo Sukhu and Daniel Almanoz then quickly packaged and transported the victim to Kings County Hospital in serious condition.

The other driver also was transported to Kings County Hospital, as were nine other passengers who were taken in the FDNY's Major Emergency Response Vehicle (MERV) in stable condition.



*FDNY firefighters and EMS treated 15 people for injuries when two busses collided in Brooklyn on January 9, pushing one into a traffic light and a tree.*

Four other passengers were placed on back boards and transported to Brook-

dale Hospital in stable condition.

## EMTs in Queens Save a Newborn Girl Found in a Dumpster

**A**n infant girl in Queens is lucky to be alive today thanks to FDNY EMTs Dana Kozack and Giovanni Caballero and two observant teenagers.

Just after 8 p.m. on December 17, EMTs Kozack and Caballero of EMS Station 46 received a call for 93-18 Lamont Avenue in Elmhurst, Queens.

When they arrived on the scene minutes later, they were directed to a paper bag on the side of the street, with a newborn baby inside wrapped in blankets.

At first EMT Caballero, an 8-year veteran, said he did not believe it. But when he slowly approached the bag and moved the blanket, heard a faint cry.

Immediately EMT Kozack said, "Our adrenaline started pumping and we just wanted to rush her to ambulance right away."

In the ambulance, the EMTs began assessing her vitals and warming her. They also cut her umbilical cord.

They said they were relieved to find her heart rate and breathing were nor-

mal and her airway was open, but they could tell her body temperature was low. They gave her oxygen and rushed her to the Elmhurst Hospital.

Doctors determined that she had a low body temperature when she arrived and immediately put her in a warmer.

"When she was in a stable environment, we were like 'wow, this really happened,'" said EMT Kozack, who has been an EMT for a year and a half.

The EMTs also praised the two teenage boys who discovered the baby when they heard her cries as they passed the dumpster on their skateboards.

"If it wasn't for those kids, this whole situation wouldn't have turned out the way it did," said EMT Caballero.

He added that he was able to give the baby girl her first gift, a pink and white outfit he had purchased just before his shift began for his friends who are expecting a baby girl in the coming weeks.



*EMTs Dana Kozack and Giovanni Caballero (not pictured) saved a newborn baby found in a dumpster in Elmhurst, Queens.*

# The Box that Can Save a Life

## AEDs installed on every floor at Headquarters

There's something new in the halls at FDNY Headquarters and it just might save your life.

Automated external defibrillators (AEDs) have been installed on every floor of 9 Metrotech Center, which could save the life of someone suffering from cardiac arrest.

"It is proven that AEDs can mean the difference between life and death," said Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta.

Each year more than 200,000 Americans die from sudden cardiac arrest and as many as 50,000 of these deaths could have been prevented if an AED had been available for use at the time of the emergency.

AEDs are installed just outside the front desk on floors two through eight, and in the public assembly room on the first floor.

Although there are EMS members from Health Services assigned to respond in the event of an emergency, Chief of EMS John Peruggia said that having this

device on every floor could save time and, as a result, lives.

"It's easy for anyone to use," said Chief Peruggia. "Grab this and you might be able to make a difference."

The box includes gloves, face mask, a bag valve mask (that would be used for giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation) and the AED kit.

The kit gives detailed instructions and graphics that make it easy to follow. It also has a voice prompt that guides the user through the process. It gives the user instructions on how to assess a patient, apply the pads and operate the device.

"It's truly automated," Chief Peruggia said.

He added that the EMS Command is also providing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) lessons for the staff at Headquarters. Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano and First Deputy Commissioner Frank Cruthers were among those taking part in recent classes.



*The new automated external defibrillators are located on every floor of FDNY Headquarters.*



**Off-Duty Bravest:** Off-duty Firefighter James Lee of Ladder 125 heroically ran into a burning building to search for trapped residents during a 3-alarm fire in Brooklyn on December 5. After Firefighter Lee ensured that all residents of the adjacent buildings had evacuated, he said he rushed to the burning building to see if he could help any trapped residents inside. He gained entry to the building by kicking in the door but still had to work past debris in the foyer. After searching the first floor and finding no victims, he said he tried to climb the steps to search the second floor, but the entire level was overtaken by fire. While in the building, he said fire companies arrived on the scene and he relayed the information he had to the responding officers.



**Recognized:** Firefighters from Ladder 140 were honored by Queens Borough President Helen Marshall during her State of the Borough speech at Queens College on January 15. (L to R) FF Patrick Grisafi, FF Albert Barroca, Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, Capt. Thomas Haughney and Division Chief Mark Ferran. In October, the firefighters rescued a man buried in a trench collapse at All Faiths Cemetery in Middle Village.

## Blasting Off

### *FDNY's Blasting Unit Handling Jobs Throughout New York City*

What do New Year's Eve in Times Square, the hit film "I Am Legend," and Late Night with David Letterman have in common?

They all include explosions and pyrotechnics overseen by the FDNY's blasting unit.

And whether it's movies, concerts, Broadway shows or demolition, the FDNY's blasting team is usually involved.

"You name it, we worked on it," Chief Inspector Jim Lauer said with a laugh. "It's always interesting ... and a lot of stress."

In "I Am Legend," the team was part of the special effects crew that blew up cars and trash cans.

Chief Inspector Lauer and his team help coordinate shots in Manhattan and Queens for the film. He noted that many of the car explosions were filmed in Orchard Park in Queens and later edited into scenes set in Manhattan's Washington Square Park.

And, he said, they have worked on many other films, including this summer's "I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry" and "Die Hard: With a



*The FDNY's Blasting Unit: (L to R) Deputy Chief Inspector Neil Criscuolo, Deputy Chief Inspector Robert Brenta, Grace Muldinaro, Chief Inspector Jim Lauer, Supervising Blasting Inspector Mark Cahill and Supervising Blasting Inspector Charles Simmons (Supervising Blasting Inspector John Reilly not pictured).*

Vengeance."

Yet their projects are not always for show. They also oversee blasting for high-rise building foundations and the city's subways, including the extension of the 7 train line on the west side.

"There's always something different going on," said Deputy Chief Inspector Criscuolo.

And every day they are working on three to five different jobs throughout the city. Yet they are not only concerned with blasting regulations and safety. They also need to consider the residents of the neighborhood they are in and ensuring that they always feel comfortable.

They set up seismographs on all buildings surrounding the blast site and work around the neighborhood schedule

– for example, if there is a school nearby, they will not blast when children might be outside.

Recently this was even put into code by the City Council along with notifications of elected officials, community boards and other city agencies.

"The public needs to feel you're taking care of them," said Chief Inspector Lauer. "You have to respect that."

And now they are working on one of the largest blasting sites in New York City history – the water filtration plant in Van Cortland Park. They have overseen the use of 1.5 million pounds of explosives more than 500 feet below ground level for the job.

They are working on one of the tunnels now and expect to finish in 2010.

All of the FDNY blasters have at least eight years of blasting experience and a Certificate of Fitness.

"They have the knowledge and experience to know if something is out of place and we have a very safe record," said Chief Inspector Lauer. "We can't erase our mistakes ... if we screw up, you'll know it."



*FDNY Blasting Unit oversaw the pyrotechnic display at the Plaza Hotel's centennial celebration in October.*



Firefighter John Martinson of Engine 249 is mourned during a service at the Church of St. Clare on Staten Island.

## 5-5-5-5

(Continued from page 1)

fellow firefighters as generous, strong, tenacious and brave. He became legendary for his frequent, witty one-liners and loved good-humored arguments.

He also was handy, rebuilding his home – a house his grandfather built just steps from his childhood home – from the ground up.

But his first love was his family, including his wife, Jessica, and 22-month-old son, John Patrick. His wife is expecting their second child in May.

Firefighters from Engine 249/Ladder 113 said they will continue to support the family and keep the Lieutenant's memory alive by finishing the rebuilding of their Staten Island home.

"My brother was a friend, firefighter, husband, father, son and brother," said Steven Martinson. "He was many things to many people and he will live in our hearts forever."

### The Fire at 1700 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn

Firefighters responded to a call for a fire in a 14<sup>th</sup> floor apartment at 1700 Bedford Avenue on January 3 at 7:14 p.m., a 25-story, multiple dwelling known as the Ebbets Field Houses.

Engine 249 was the first due to the fire.

A second alarm was transmitted at 7:35 p.m. and it was deemed under control at 8:33 p.m.

Lt. Martinson sustained critical injuries while battling the fire. He was transported to Kings County Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Two other firefighters were transported to Kings County Hospital with smoke inhalation and two were transported to Weill Cornell Medical Center with burns.

Fire marshals determined the cause to be a child playing with fire.

Lt. Martinson is the 1,138<sup>th</sup> member of the New York City Fire Department to make the Supreme Sacrifice in the Department's 144-year history.



## VIEW

POINT

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NEWSLETTER OF THE NYC FIRE DEPARTMENT

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A 144 YEAR HISTORY

OF COMMITMENT, COURAGE & COMPASSION