

Record-Breaking Year

Civilian fire fatalities reach historic lows in 2006

It was a good year. In 2006, the FDNY recorded 85 civilian fire fatalities, one of the lowest totals in almost a century.

“I am proud to say New York City is safer now than ever before,” said Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta. “Every member of the Department should be proud of this achievement.”

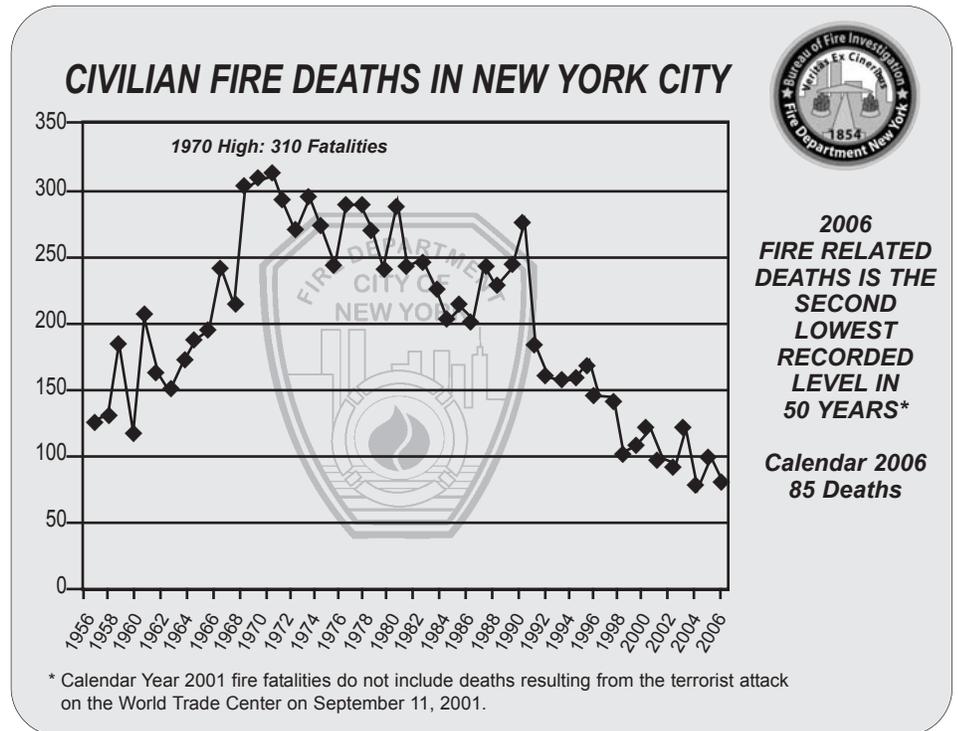
Since the Department started keeping records in 1916, only two other years have marked fewer civilian fire fatalities – with 82 in 2004 and 77 in 1919.

Last year also marked the lowest sustained five-year period on record, with an average of 98 fatalities per year since 2002.

Chief of Department Salvatore Casano listed several reasons for the drop, including the extraordinary bravery of every firefighter and the expanded fire safety education effort.

“The best way to keep civilians and firefighters safe is to prevent fires from occurring,” he said.

In recent years, fire safety educators have increased their outreach in communities where fatal fires have occurred. They explain to neighbors how the fire



started and how it could have been prevented, providing the information in several languages.

“Residents are learning more about fire safety and applying it at home,” said Chief Fire Marshal Louis Garcia.

For example, he said, in recent years there has been a substantial decrease in fires caused by careless smoking.

In addition to the dip in fire fatalities, members also responded faster to emergencies citywide, shaving seven seconds off their response times since 2005.

And this comes as all members are responding to more emergencies than ever before. In 2006, firefighters responded to 484,954 total emergencies and EMS members answered 1,162,059 calls.

Yet although fire-related deaths are

reaching historic lows, Commissioner Scoppetta noted that even one fire-related death is one too many.

“Last year was a historic year, marked with the outstanding courage and commitment of our members,” Commissioner Scoppetta said. “The statistics encourage us to work even harder to keep the public safe in 2007.”

Learn more about the expanding Fire Academy Training Program in this month's Commissioner's Message on page 2



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Expansion of Proby School Training

In what will be the largest increase in firefighter training in the history of the New York City Fire Department, I have authorized the expansion of proby school this year to include 10 additional weeks of the most advanced curriculum anywhere in the world. Beginning in early March, five weeks of rigorous training will be added to the intense program at the Fire Academy on Randall's Island, then an additional five weeks will be implemented in the fall class. This increase to 23 weeks of training - at a cost of \$19 million a year - will help better prepare recruits than ever before and lay a solid foundation for the bright future of this Department for generations to come.

A top priority for this Department has been and always will be to train firefighters and fire officers to the best of our ability. Since 2002, we have instituted dozens of various training initiatives totaling nearly \$60 million. Fire and EMS chief officers have attended management and terrorism training courses, while thousands of firefighters and EMS members across the City have received advanced hazardous materials training to ensure a more effective and balanced emergency response.

At the Fire Academy, we unveiled a \$50 million expansion in 2002, which included the Burn Building, new drafting tank to drill on alternate water supply, and additional classroom space. We've continued to upgrade training since then with new simulators that represent the dangers each of you can encounter on a daily basis - from deadly flashovers to underground crises in the subway system. We also developed a chauffeur-driving simulator and added new classrooms.

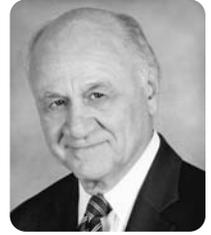
But as our world changes, and our firefighters face new challenges each day, we must continue to do more. Training is what has led our firefighters to set the worldwide standard in firefighting operations, and its necessary expansion will only further that proud tradition. The new 23-week curriculum will allow instructors to focus on several crucial subjects, equipping recruits with more knowledge and

skills than ever before. Among the additions in March are 40 hours devoted to building construction instead of the current eight hours. Different types of buildings, from brownstones to high rises, will be examined and studied - including fire prevention and firefighting tactics specific to each example. Subway extrication training will extend to eight hours instead of two. And our recruits still will spend an additional six hours training with the Personal Safety System. (As per the UFA contract, all probationary firefighters will receive a salary increase after the first 13 weeks of training.)

Starting in the fall, hazardous materials training will be doubled to a total of 16 hours, giving recruits the opportunity to learn about weapons of mass destruction and terrorism preparedness. These courses are vital to the safety of our members and will help us better protect the millions of New Yorkers who depend on us all.

As many of you realize, becoming a member of New York's Bravest today is a very different process than what it was decades ago. During the "war years" of the 1960s and 1970s, probies would attend the Academy during the day, then go to work in a firehouse at night. In the 1950s and 1960s, new members would first work in a company under the guidance of a captain before receiving any formal training.

Throughout its 143-year history, the Department and its training procedures have evolved with an ever-changing world and the growing needs of New York City. Our dedicated members and their predecessors have met every challenge during each unique era, and this time should be no different. The unprecedented expansion of proby school this year reinforces our commitment to training - and our hope for the future.



Commissioner's
Message

New Year, New Leadership

Department promotes 27 veterans to various new roles



Fifteen fire lieutenants take the Oath of Office during the promotions ceremony on January 3.

Fire promotions on January 3 can only be described as momentous.

Twenty-seven members were promoted during the spirited ceremony, including Deputy Assistant Chief William Siegel, who was named the new chief of the Special Operations Command.

"The fact that you are here today is a testimony to your skill, tenacity and dedication," said Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta. "Together we will continue to make this fire department the best in the

world."

One deputy assistant chief, four deputy chiefs, four battalion chiefs and 15 lieutenants were promoted in the ceremony at the Fire Academy on Randall's Island. In addition, two firefighters were sworn in as provisional marine wipers.

"Your knowledge, commitment, dedication and leadership are helping move this department forward," said Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano.

During the ceremony, Deputy Chief



Deputy Assistant Chief William Siegel is congratulated by Commissioner Scoppetta and Chief Cassano

Siegel was named head of Special Operations Command (SOC), taking charge of rescue, squad, marine and Hazmat operations. The post previously was held by Deputy Assistant Chief John Norman, who retired in January.

"I am very excited about this new position of leadership with which the Department has entrusted to me," he said. "The biggest challenge will be to try to duplicate the job of the guy before me."

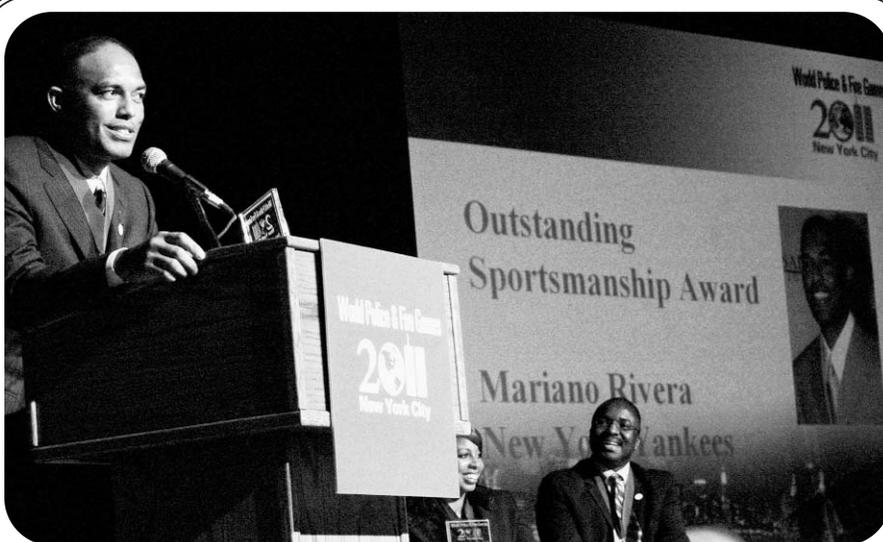
After graduating from proby school in 1968 (with First Deputy Commissioner Frank Cruthers), Deputy Chief Siegel steadily rose through the ranks.

He was assigned to the Marine Division in 2001, charged with rebuilding the Department's fleet following the terrorist attacks. He also planned for the acquisition of two new fireboats to replace *The Firefighter* and *John D. McKean*.

Most recently, he served at the helm of rescue operations for SOC, a position that will now be filled by Deputy Chief William C. Seelig.

"You have proven yourself in the field and learned from the best teacher of all, experience," said Chief Cassano.

During the ceremony, the Department also promoted four new deputy chiefs, including James E. Campbell, James C. Hodgens, Ronald W. Werner and Michael E. McPartland. Collectively they bring more than 108 years of experience to the position.



Let the Games Begin: Yankees relief pitcher Mariano Rivera receives the Outstanding Sportsmanship Award at the World Police & Fire Games dinner on January 11. The dinner helped raise funds for the 2011 games, which will be held in New York.

Family Ties

EMS lieutenants promoted, applauded by family members on the job

The EMS Command has always called itself a family.

Yet they proved it at the promotions ceremony on January 5, when several of the promotees were cheered by their loved ones on the job.

In all, 25 paramedics and EMTs were promoted to the rank of lieutenant during the ceremony at the Training Academy on Randall's Island.

"Self-trust is the first secret to success," said Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta. "You will be forced to trust your training and instincts. Others will now look to you to lead."

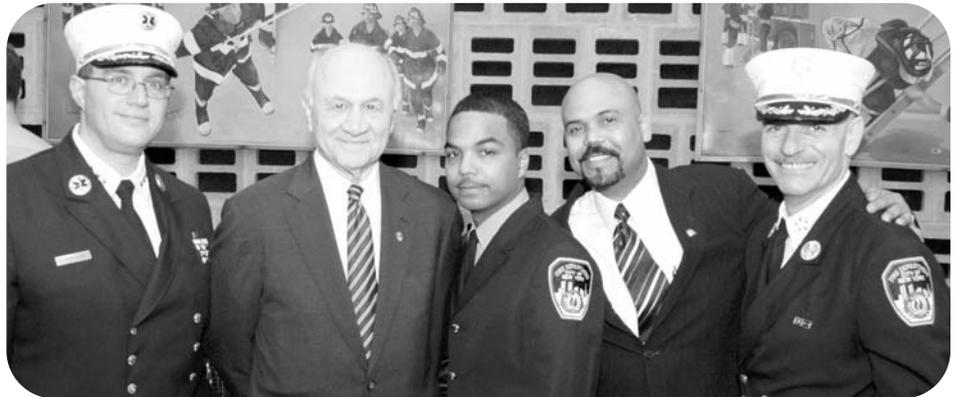
Among the promoted members was Lieutenant Kevin Montgomery, who now joins his wife, Captain Andrea Nanna-Montgomery of Division 2, as an officer in the EMS Command.

The couple met at Station 57 in Brooklyn more than six years ago.

"We both share a love for the job," said Lieutenant Montgomery. "And now I'm following in my wife's footsteps."

Also promoted was Lieutenant Patrick Limage, who says he was inspired to join the EMS Command by his father, retired-EMT Patrick Limage.

These lieutenants moved up the ranks as the EMS Command reported one of its



EMS Lieutenant Patrick Limage is congratulated on his promotion by his father, retired-EMT Patrick Limage (second from right) and Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta, Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano and Chief of EMS John Peruggia.

busiest years ever – recording 1,162,059 calls in 2006.

"You will be busy and you will be in charge of leading a young workforce that's looking for guidance," said Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano.

Chief of EMS John Peruggia added, "These lieutenants represent the dedicated, professional and highly motivated workforce that is EMS. All we ask now is that you continue to do what you do best – save lives and protect those in need."



EMS Lieutenant Kevin Montgomery celebrates his promotion with his wife, EMS Captain Andrea Nanna-Montgomery.

Subway Superman

EMT Daniel Fitzpatrick saves woman from being struck by a subway train

EMT Daniel Fitzpatrick may call himself a regular guy, but many people are calling him a hero.

While he was waiting for the subway at Flushing Avenue on January 12, he saved a distraught woman from being struck by an oncoming J train.

He was on his way home from a paramedic training session at Woodhull Medical and Mental Health Center, when he said someone alerted him to a troubled woman on the edge of the subway platform.

He approached the woman and tried to



distract her, but nothing worked. Moments later, she started climbing onto a utility catwalk near the elevated tracks as a train approached and EMT Fitzpatrick said he knew he had to do something.

"I couldn't let her get too far," he said. "So I ran towards her. I pinned her against the railing."

The woman started fighting him, kicking and trying to squirm away, but he held her tightly, successfully keeping her out of danger as the train pulled into the station. He added that a bystander helped

him as well – holding his head out of the path of the train as it passed.

"It was pretty close," EMT Fitzpatrick said. "It was too close for me, put it that way."

The EMT said he then held the woman in a bear hug until police arrived.

"EMT Daniel Fitzpatrick didn't hesitate to put his life on the line for a complete stranger," said Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano. "He displayed great courage."

EMT Fitzpatrick celebrated his second year as a member of the EMS Command on January 14.

Doughnut Hole

Fire marshals apprehend arsonist who targeted a rival restaurant in the Bronx

It started as an quarrel about chicken and ended in a two-alarm fire on New Year's Day.

Luckily, two quick-thinking fire marshals were on the case.

Kabeer Ahnad, owner of Kennedy's Fried Chicken on Hunts Point Avenue in the Bronx, was angry that the new owner of the Twin Donut shop next door began selling plates of fried chicken for less than Ahnad's store charged.

So just after the doughnut store closed at 4 a.m. on January 1, Ahnad punched a hole in the stores' shared wall and sprayed an accelerant into his rival's store. He then threw a match through the hole and fled the scene.

"This was, very simply, a competition fire," said Assistant Chief Fire Marshal Robert Byrnes of the two-alarm blaze.

Fire Marshals Michael Durkin and Robert Cristadoro already found the hole in the wall and the can of gasoline used to start the fire when Ahnad returned to open his store later that day.

Chief Byrnes said at that time, Ahnad "didn't seem very concerned or upset that his store burned."



Assistant Chief Fire Marshal Robert Byrnes (center) discusses the Twin Donut shop arson investigation with Fire Marshals Michael Durkin (left) and Robert Cristadoro.

After some questioning, fire marshals said he confessed to the crime.

He is charged with arson and reckless endangerment.

"Our marshals are to be commended for apprehending this man so quickly," said Chief Byrnes. "They did an excellent job."

Special Delivery

EMTs deliver colleague's baby on the side of a highway

For Lieutenant Kevin McCabe of Ladder 170 and his wife Patty, the birth of their son was a joyous event ... that happened a little differently than they anticipated.

The eight-pound baby boy was delivered on the shoulder of the Cross Island Parkway on December 28 by skilled EMTs Eileen Hix and Michael Dunne.

The partners were transporting Lieutenant and Ms. McCabe to Long Island Jewish Hospital when they urgently pulled off the highway to deliver the baby at 6 a.m.

"We are extremely prepared, but when you see that baby, it's the real thing," said EMT Hix of Station 50. "You instantly have two patients."

She should know. Since joining the

EMS Command almost 18 years ago, she has delivered 27 babies on-duty, including two sets of twins and one breech birth.

"It never gets old," she said.

EMT Dunne of Station 17, who graduated from the Academy on December 20, was working overtime in Queens when he found himself helping deliver the baby alongside the busy highway.

"I never will forget the experience," he said. "It was a real eye-opener."

EMT Hix added, "It is a great feeling when someone says, 'thank you.' You see the joy in their eyes and it makes it all worthwhile."

EMTs Eileen Hix and Michael Dunne hold the baby they delivered on the side of a busy highway. The baby is the son of Fire Lieutenant Kevin McCabe and his wife Patty.



Photo courtesy of NY Post

Doggone Generous

Firefighters donate to the Smithtown Guide Dog Foundation

It's not often that the VIPs attending a Fire Department event are named Mojo, Stryker, Sparks, Hope and Troy.

But these Labradors, Golden Retrievers and Poodles took center stage as firefighters from Engine 63/Ladder 39 donated a check to the Smithtown Guide Dog Foundation on December 28.

The Foundation trains dogs to provide services and companionship to handicapped individuals throughout the area, including wounded soldiers.

"We want war veterans to know that we're there for them, that this country is there for them," said Captain Michael Buckheit of Engine 63, who coordinated the fundraising drive. "Our soldiers are the true heroes."

The company's apparatus floor was transformed into a dog's playground as more than a dozen of the Foundation's dogs – from puppies in training to working guide dogs – helped celebrate the generous donation.

Captain Buckheit said he once adopted a retired guide dog and also acted as a "Puppy Walker" for the Foundation, acclimating and instructing a guide dog-in-training for about three months.



Captain Michael Buckheit of Engine 63 makes friends with a puppy from the Smithtown Guide Dog Foundation. The captain organized a drive to raise funds for the Foundation, which trains dogs to provide services to handicapped individuals, including wounded soldiers.

He said that he was so impressed with the organization that he decided to organize a fund drive, asking for donations from firefighters throughout the city.

Within a week, he received more than \$1,500 and he is still receiving envelopes

with donations.

"We're delighted that these great firefighters are helping us expand our mission," said Jeff Bressler, Chief Marketing Officer for the Foundation's VetDogs program.

He noted that in January, Stryker, one of the Foundation's dogs, headed to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C. to help a 26-year-old Navy medic who lost an arm and use of his legs while serving overseas. The soldier will be able to rely on the dog for balance and to fetch items.

Another of the Foundation's dogs, Sparks, also will travel to Walter Reed in the coming weeks to act as the first active canine member of their amputee rehabilitation program. His duties will be to act as a balancing aid for wounded members of the military.

"I commend all the firefighters involved for bringing notoriety to this Foundation," said Bronx Borough Commander Assistant Chief James Esposito.



***A Gift of Education:** Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta and Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano on January 3 presented two \$20,000 U.S. Savings Bonds to Debbie Carpluk, the widow of Lieutenant Howard Carpluk, Jr. of Engine 42, who made the Supreme Sacrifice in August 2006. The bonds, sponsored by the Marine Corps – Law Enforcement Foundation, are intended to provide the Carpluk children (Bradley, 14, and Paige, 11) with financial assistance for higher education.*

Like Father, Like Son

Paramedics Michael and Eric Matonis win Unit of the Month award in 2006

Talk about following in your father's footsteps.

Paramedic Eric Matonis of Station 14 not only quit his job in the private sector to start a career with EMS, just like his dad Paramedic Michael Matonis of Station 26, he also won a Unit of the Month citation in December, just months after his father.

The award is presented to crews based on their call volumes, morale, teamwork and professionalism.

"I think my enthusiasm for the job rubbed off on my son," Paramedic Michael Matonis said. "We both love to go to work. It is one of the most rewarding careers you can have."

In the early 1990s, Paramedic Michael Matonis said he grew tired of the high pressure world of Wall Street and traded the job for a career at Ford Motor Company.

A few years later, a co-worker suggested he try his hand at emergency medicine. He tried it on a whim and never looked back.

He joined EMS in 2000 and was promoted to paramedic in 2002. He worked in stations throughout EMS Division 6 before moving to Station 26 in 2004. He said a highlight of his career came in



Paramedic Michael Matonis (right) congratulates his son, Paramedic Eric Matonis, after he completed paramedic training in May 2006. Both men went on to earn Unit of the Month citations within months of each other in 2006.

December, when he helped resuscitate two victims of cardiac arrest in two weeks.

"My father was my first teacher and I try to live up to his example every day," said Paramedic Eric Matonis. "I realize I have some big shoes to fill."

The younger Matonis worked as the

manager of a video store before becoming an EMT in 2003. Then just a few months after he became a paramedic in May 2006, he received Unit of the Month honors.

"I was proud of my son before," said Paramedic Michael Matonis. "This just enhances it."



Graduation Day: Sixty-nine EMTs graduated from the EMS Academy on December 20. Among the graduates was EMT Jennifer Hannafey, the daughter of EMS Division Chief Robert Hannafey and retired EMS Captain Marsha Hannafey. Also completing his training was EMT Michael Dunne, who helped deliver a baby just a week later. The graduates included five military veterans with overseas service. The class valedictorian was EMT Joseph Daly.



HAPPY NEW YEAR!: Firefighters, fire marshals and EMS members joined Ryan Seacrest, host of Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve, to ring in 2007 in Times Square.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Manhattan - Box 1358 - 280 W. 113 Street - December 26, 2006
Firefighters responded to the collapse of a five-story 25x90 brick multiple-dwelling that was being renovated in upper Manhattan. One construction worker died as a result of his injuries in the collapse that occurred around 12:30 p.m. Another worker was saved by firefighters from Rescue Company 1 and Ladder 26 and a third man self-evacuated. Both were transported to St. Luke's Hospital in serious condition.



VIEW

POINT

JANUARY 2007

NEWSLETTER OF THE NYC FIRE DEPARTMENT

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A 143 YEAR HISTORY

OF COMMITMENT, COURAGE & COMPASSION