



Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

Since becoming Mayor of New York City, I have frequently been privileged to work closely with the New York City Fire Department and witness firsthand the dedication, commitment and courage of these brave men and women, who sacrifice so much to protect their fellow New Yorkers. I am proud to join all those gathered for Medal Day, when we celebrate the Firefighters and Fire Officers who make our Fire Department the world's most revered.

Since its establishment more than 140 years ago, the Fire Department of New York has extinguished more than two million fires and saved hundreds of thousands of lives. Every day, New York's Bravest conduct themselves with a professionalism, courage and respect for life that reflect our highest shared values. Today's honorees are the best of the best, public servants who have risen above and beyond the call of duty to serve our residents.

As we celebrate the achievements of today's medal winners, we also honor Lieutenant Howard Carpluk and Probationary Firefighter Michael Reilly--heroes who lost their lives protecting us. And we remain truly thankful that every day, the 15,000 members of the FDNY continue to exhibit the unparalleled heroism that has earned them the respect and admiration of all New Yorkers.

Congratulations to all of today's honorees on receiving this deserved recognition.



Nicholas Scoppetta
Fire Commissioner

In my five years as Commissioner of this great Department, I have continually been awed by the extraordinary acts of bravery performed by our Firefighters. Once again, on this Medal Day, we reflect upon and celebrate the selfless courage and professionalism of New York's Bravest.

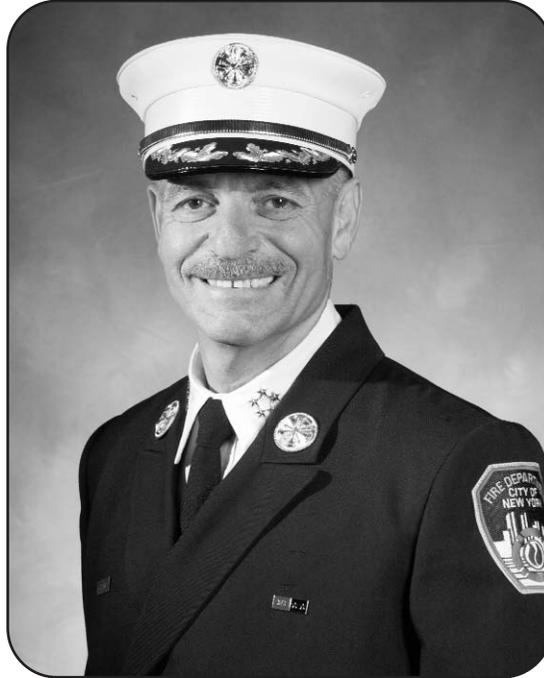
The acts of heroism described in this book are all the more spectacular because they occurred during some extremely perilous situations in the air, on land and in the water.

- Firefighter Joseph Donatelli of Ladder 132 was lowered on a rope from the roof of a high-rise and rescued a woman who had climbed out the window of a 25th-floor apartment to escape a fire.
- Firefighter James Byrne of Ladder 121 faced down zero visibility and extreme conditions to save a downed Firefighter who had become trapped by the flames in a burning building.
- Firefighter Thomas McGlade of Ladder 14 jumped into the frigid waters of the East River to save a drowning man on Christmas Day 2005.

These courageous acts and many others that you'll read about in this book are what the citizens of New York can count on every day. No matter where you live, what language you speak or the color of your skin, when you call for help, our Firefighters respond quickly and will do whatever it takes to save lives.

I congratulate all our medal winners. And I commend the members of their respective units, because as every medal winner will attest, no one gets a medal without an extraordinary effort by the entire team. You all deserve the honor being bestowed today.

Nicholas Scoppetta



Salvatore J. Cassano
Chief of Department

Among the words that define what it means to be a New York City Firefighter are honor, bravery and service. Honor is the enormous commitment necessary to perform the Department's tasks and requires excellence of character. We inspire each other through pride in our company, which is a belief that every action reflects on all the members of the unit, both past and present. Bravery is courage and the foundation of our character. Bravery also is the ability to overcome fear through fortitude, instinct, compassion for others and training. Service is the Department's credo, as its members continue to answer the unwavering call to protect and serve. Each of these attributes is a key part of FDNY's mission statement.

These three characteristics came into play in all of the rescue narratives you will read in this book. As varied as these actions are--rescuing a Firefighter from a wind-driven, fireproof multiple dwelling fire, which is among the most dangerous fires our members battle; performing a lifesaving roof rope rescue under brutally cold and windy conditions; effecting a water rescue near the Triborough Bridge; working in a confined space that resulted from an explosion/fire/collapse to remove a victim; removing trapped residents from fire, often without the benefit of a protective hose-line; investigating a ruthless criminal enterprise that included arson, murder for hire and strong-arm tactics and securing convictions with a 60-year prison term--the honor, bravery and service of our members were the common traits exhibited in each case.

Our members are prepared and trained to handle all of these situations and many others. Much of FDNY's training has been dictated and shaped by the events of 9/11. By the fall, probationary Firefighters will receive 23 weeks of training. Apart from engine and ladder company operations, members receive instruction on weapons of mass destruction, subway evacuation, treating mass casualties, personal ropes, hazardous materials and much more. All of this is necessary, because as the incidents mentioned above prove, it no longer is just about fire.

To all Medal Day winners, congratulations and thank you for being such fine representatives for the FDNY.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Salvatore J. Cassano". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.