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TERRORIST ATTACKS



In a 1984 handout photo, Paul Langone is flanked by his sons, Peter, left, and Tommy, who are missing at the World Trade Center site.

Saving Lives and Keeping Hope

By Eden Laikin
STAFF WRITER

As children, Tommy and Peter Langone grew up in a world where dealing with danger was a family tradition. It made sense that Tommy wanted to be a firefighter and Peter wanted to be a cop.

Along the way, they switched roles.

A week ago, when they disappeared into the smoke and destruction of the World Trade Center, Tommy was the cop and Peter was the firefighter. But they were both following their essential dream — they were trying to save lives.

"This is what they do for a living," says their sister, Joanne Ciborowski. "They live it, they breathe it, they love it. It's what they've always done, both of them."

The Langone family is no stranger to the perils of life-saving. They're all in professions where moments are measured by life and death.

The brothers' father, Paul, was a volunteer firefighter for more than 30 years in Roslyn, where the brothers grew up, as was Paul's uncle before him. Ciborowski and Tommy and Peter's other sister, Rosemarie Langone, are nurses and former ambulance company volunteers in the same community. And Tommy and Peter are members of the Roslyn Rescue Fire Department.

Tommy, 39, is a police officer with New York City's Emergency Service Unit. Peter, 41, is a member of Engine Company 252 in Bushwick, Brooklyn. Neither has been heard from since they responded to the explosion.

But the people who love and pray for the brothers wait and hope for their safe return. They still talk about them in the present tense. Until officers "come to the door" to notify the family otherwise, their mother, Sheila, says, "Nothing is official. We know the chances. We'll hang onto hope."

Their mother says a firefighter from Peter's company visited her home Sunday after a 12-hour rescue shift. " 'We're still digging,' " he told her.

In the midst of their waiting, the family could smile thinking that Tommy, who is also a fire instructor at the academy in Bethpage, is "down there with a piece of chalk talking to everyone, doing a schematic of how to get out," says Ciborowski. "He's always the teacher."

She described both her brothers as "very funny." Tommy has a dry wit and is highly organized. "Peter always tells it like it is," she says. "He's always there to help people. If you needed something done, it would be done and you wouldn't know who did it, then you'd find out it was Peter. He did things without fanfare. You didn't have to ask twice."

Both brothers are familiar with disasters. Both responded to the 1990 crash of Avianca Flight 52 in Cove Neck, and both were at the World Trade Center bombing in 1993. Tommy was sent to Oklahoma City for a week after the bombing there "doing what these guys are now doing for him," according to Joanne.

The brothers Langone and their sisters grew up in Roslyn Heights, where Peter's home is around the corner from his mother. Tommy lives two towns away in Williston Park. Both graduated from Roslyn High School and attended Nassau Community College. Neither one could wait until he was old enough to join Roslyn rescue with their father, who died in 1985. He had been a volunteer for the company for about 33 years, finally becoming chief.

Tommy followed in his father's footsteps by becoming, at 24, one of the youngest chiefs the department ever had.

The brothers have their own families. Tommy and his wife, JoAnn, have two children, Caitlin, 12, and Brian, who turned 10 this month. Peter and his wife, Terri, have two daughters, Nikki, 9, and Karli, 5.

Tommy was riding back to his unit on Queens Boulevard with a sergeant Tuesday when they heard the news. They turned right around and headed for the scene. They suited up, got equipment and went in to rescue survivors.

Peter had just finished his overnight tour and was on the phone with his wife. Then a call came over the radio and he told her that he had to go.

The family says the burnt shell of Peter's fire truck has been recovered.

Joanne and Rosemarie went to the Trade Center site yesterday. The rescue workers were talking about "voids, pockets and airspace," says Joanne. "Then they said, 'You can't give up.' "

Tommy helped establish the emergency medical service in Roslyn, according to Fire Chief Alan Schwalberg. The unit now deals with about 800 ambulance calls a year. Tommy is second assistant chief. Peter is a former captain of the department. Both are considered current, active firefighters.

"The whole family is totally devoted to serving the community, they're very dedicated," says Schwalberg. "We're still hoping for their return."

Sometimes, Ciborowski says, the family considers the grim possibility they won't return. At those moments they take solace in Tommy and Peter's chance to follow a dream.

"God forbid, if the worst is the worst," says Ciborowski, "they certainly were doing what they loved doing."

Family 'Golden Boy' Was Always Perfect

When David S. Berry was a little boy, his older brothers used to joke that he was the family's "golden boy," his father, Charles Berry Jr., recalled. "The joke was, 'We were questionable, but David was always perfect.' "

Handsome, cheerful and energetic, David went to an exclusive private school in Oklahoma City and graduated with honors from Yale and the London School of Economics. He joined the financial firm of Keefe, Bruyette & Woods Inc. in Manhattan and became one of the youngest members of senior management.

As the firm's director of research and an executive vice president, he often appeared on television as a financial expert and was quoted in magazines and newspapers across the country. He and his wife, Paula Grant, lived in a town house with a garden in Park Slope, Brooklyn, and had three sons, ages 9, 7 and 5.

When the first plane hit the north tower of the World Trade Center last Tuesday, Berry, 43, phoned his mother and his father from his office on the 89th floor of the south tower to assure them he was all right. He was talking with his wife when the second plane struck and the phone went dead.

"Everything he went after, he got, and everybody liked him," his father said. "He was a great father, a great son, very happily married."

Berry was in the World Trade Center when terrorists tried to blow it up in 1993. At that time, "the safest thing to do was to sit tight," and that experience may have led him to remain in the building too long, his father said. Authorities told family members that Berry made it down the stairway to the fifth floor, then died from asphyxiation.

— Brian Donovan

A Town Waits For Him to Come Home

Joe Riverso, 34, never wanted to deny his daughter anything.

That's why he worked four jobs, day and night, including one at Cantor Fitzgerald, his friends said. He coached football at a local high school. By night, he tended bar at The Sports Page in White Plains, a local pub where had had worked for 18 years.

"There's a whole town waiting for him to come home," said a friend, Liz Hickey-Murray.

Hickey-Murray and two other friends ventured to New York City on Saturday to bring officials a hairbrush for a DNA sample and to give Riverso's exhausted family a short break.

Riverso, of Silver Lake, has a 7-year-old daughter, his

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