NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

FDNY funeral unit's day of rest

By ADAM MILLER

For FDNY Lt. Walter Dreyer and his men, nothing can dull the pain and heartache — not even a much-needed respite yesterday from the seemingly endless stream of funerals and memorial services for fallen brethren.

Dreyer, 49, is the commander of the department's part-time ceremonial unit, which has planned and attended 186 services so far.

They're little more than halfway through their grim task — 343 of their brothers died in the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

There are three FDNY funerals today — and 11 more tearful tributes tomorrow.

The worst day so far was Oct. 6, when the unit attended 24 services in a single day.

But yesterday, for the first time in weeks, there was not a single farewell to a fallen firefighter.

"We had a break to catch our breath, but the pain and numbness was still there," Dreyer said from the "War Room" at the Fire Academy on Randalls Island, where he normally teaches classes on rope rescues and other skills.

"We cry every day. When you think about all those grieving widows and all of those little kids who lost their daddies, it really hits you," said Dreyer, a 20-year FDNY veteran.

"But we are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel. For the first time, we were able to start preparing for the new class of probationary firefighters, which starts Oct. 29."

Since the Twin Towers tragedy, 60 men have been added to the six-man unit, which in a bad year would bury six firefighters.

Until the World Trade Center disaster, the largest loss the department suffered occurred Oct. 17, 1966, when 12 firefighters died battling a five-alarm blaze.

Four services set for today

Today's scheduled services for heroes lost in the trade center attacks:

NYPD **Police Officer Stephen Driscoll**, Emergency Service Squad 4. At 11 a.m., St. James the Apostle Church, 14 Gleneida Ave., Carmel.

FDNY **Firefighter Thomas Gardner**, Hazmat 1. At 10:30 a.m., St. Anthony's Church, 110 Anchor Ave., Oceanside, L.I.

FDNY **Firefighter Douglas Oelschlager**, Ladder 15. At 11 a.m., St. Philip & James Roman Catholic Church, 539 Clinton Ave., St. James, L.I.

FDNY **Firefighter Vernon Cherry**, Ladder 118. At 11 a.m., Antioch Baptist Church, Northern Boulevard at 103rd Street, Corona, Queens.

Hero cop wouldn't play it 'safe'

By MARSHA KRANES

When Walwyn Stuart learned his wife was pregnant, he decided it was time to find safer work.

So he left his job as an NYPD narcotics cop and joined the Port Authority police.

But safe work wasn't on his mind when terrorists struck Sept. 11.

Stuart, on duty at the PATH station in the World Trade Center, got a trainload of commuters to stay on board for the return trip to New Jersey, and proceeded to evacuate the station.

Then he rushed up into the blazing north tower to save others.

Yesterday, more than 2,000 mourners — many of them NYPD and PA cops — packed the Brooklyn Tabernacle in Park Slope to join Stuart's wife, Thelma, his year-old daughter, Amanda, and Mayor Giuliani in remembering the life and the heroism of the 28-year-old officer.

In Memoriam



PA Police Officer Walwyn Stuart

Survived by wife Thelma and daughter Amanda

Instead of a coffin, a table — holding Stuart's dress cap and gloves, his shield and an American flag — stood in front of the altar. Next to it was an easel with a portrait of Stuart, vibrant, smiling, happy.

Thelma Stuart, a social worker who was just blocks away from the trade center on Sept. 11 and had a "terrible feeling" her husband would be in the thick of things, read a brief autobiographical sketch he had written as part of his PA training.

Then she spoke of how loving he was, of his delight in becoming a father, and of the life they had been building together in Valley Stream, L.I.

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