



ABINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT AMONG THOSE HONORED FOR SERVICE AT SEPT. 11TH REFLECTION AND RENEWAL CEREMONY

ABINGTON – During a special 10th anniversary ceremony to remember and reflect upon the events of Sept. 11th, members of the Abington Township community took a moment to thank the first responders who give their time and sacrifice their safety to keep others out of harm's way.

The anniversary of the terrorist attacks, which claimed the lives of over 300 emergency responders, seemed like a fitting time to honor the commitment and dedication of the firefighters, police, and EMT's who protect the community. Among those who were honored at the emotional ceremony held at Our Lady Help of Christians Church were the five companies that are a part of the Abington Township Fire Department (ATFD). Jenkintown's Independent and Pioneer Fire Companies, and the Rockledge Fire Company were also honored at the ceremony. Certificates of commendation were awarded to Abington, Edge Hill, McKinley, Roslyn, Weldon, Independent, Pioneer, and Rockledge Fire Companies in recognition of their decades-long commitment to providing fire rescue, fire prevention and public education services to Abington and surrounding communities.

The day was one in which firefighters, police and other emergency responders were repeatedly thanked for the multiple ways in which they keep the Abington community safe from harm. Speakers including state Rep. Josh Shapiro, Montgomery County District Attorney Risa Vetri Ferman, Abington Township Board of Commissioners President Carol DiJoseph and others commended police and firefighters for the work that they do and the sacrifices they make on behalf of others.

The day was a special one for the approximately 80 volunteer firefighters who attended wearing their Class A uniforms. While each person who was alive that day likely remembers where he or she was when they learned of the terrorist attacks, for firefighters the Sept. 11th memories hit a little closer to home given the sacrifices made by so many emergency responders.

“What it means to us is we lost 343 of our fellow firefighters that day,” said Augie Falbo, President of the Abington Fire Company. “We were affected to the point that we wanted to hop into our trucks and drive there.”

Chief Engineer Norman Bauer of Edge Hill Fire Company agreed. He recalled watching TV news coverage of the aftermath of the attacks with other non-firefighter colleagues who were commenting on the firefighters who were filmed going into the damaged skyscrapers.

“The people I was watching with said, ‘Those firefighters are absolutely courageous going in there like that.’ And I said, ‘Looking at it from this vantage point, they shouldn’t be going in, but if I was there, I’d be doing the same thing,’” he said.

Chief Chris Bors of McKinley Fire Company agreed, saying, “Any firefighter would have done the same thing.”

The images and news that followed the attacks highlighted the sacrifices made by so many firefighters and called the public’s attention to the bravery of these public servants, said Chief Bors.

“When people discuss your job with you, the events of Sept. 11th invariably come up,” he said. “I don’t know that it’s changed the public’s perception about firefighters, but it certainly increased awareness.”

Mr. Bauer agreed, saying that in the days following Sept. 11th, he recalled people saluting ATFD trucks and clapping for volunteers when they responded to calls. Even recently, he said a member of the public reserved a parking spot for him, and as he got out of the car, the resident thanked him for his service.

Events like the one held on Sept. 11th in Abington represent opportunities to remind people of the many others who are called into service when there is a public emergency, said Mr. Falbo.

“It’s important to keep the community aware of what the armed services do, and what the police and EMS do,” he said.

The ATFD is an all-volunteer force made up of five fire companies all operating within Abington Township. The five companies that form the ATFD are Abington, McKinley, Weldon, Edge Hill, and Roslyn. The service area is made up of approximately 15 square miles of Abington Township and is comprised of residential, commercial, educational, medical, light industrial, and other suburban properties. The ATFD serves approximately 55,000 residents. The ATFD headquarters is located at 1176 Old York Road in Abington. For more information, call (267) 536-1055 or visit AbingtonFD.org.

