



Today is the birthday of FDNY firefighter William McGinn of Squad 18. He was born on June 18, 1958 and would have been 62 years old today. We will never forget the ultimate sacrifice that he made on September 11, 2001.

Lt. William "Billy" Edward McGinn of Riverdale, a former Staten Islander, was a devoted husband and father.

As a member of the New York City Fire Department's Squad 18 based in Manhattan, he was among the first units to arrive at the scene of the World Trade Center disaster.

As part of the day crew, Lt. McGinn had expected to be fully engaged in a day-long training drill on tanker explosions at the Fire Academy on Randall's Island. Instead, Squad 18 was one of the first units from Lower Manhattan to arrive at the scene of the plane crash.

At 8 a.m. on the fatal day, Lt. McGinn called his wife, Dr. Anne Golden McGinn, formerly of Great Kills, to say good morning and tell her not to worry if he was unable to call until late in the day. Dr. McGinn never again heard from her husband.

Sept. 11 was to be memorable for another reason. Lt. McGinn was looking forward to taking part in a charity event he had helped to organize for that evening. Other FDNY officers were to join Lt. McGinn as celebrity bartenders, with proceeds to benefit the New York-Cornell Burn Center.

Three of the four firefighters who were to take part in the charity event died or are still missing.

"Billy was totally supportive through the long years that I pursued my doctoral degree and

encouraged me in my career," said Dr. McGinn, who has a Ph.D. in public health.

"He was devoted, loving, thoughtful and eternally optimistic. He cherished his family, was dedicated to the job he loved, and approached every day with incredible energy."

As the father of Liam, 8, and Cordelia, 6, Lt. McGinn was active in the Parents Association and served on the School Leadership Team at PS 81 in Riverdale. He coached Liam's team in the North Riverdale Baseball League and he was the den leader of Cub Scout Pack 613.

Lt. McGinn scheduled his work hours to spend the most time possible with his children. Their well-being and their education were his greatest concerns, and his deep love for them always was evident. He was a regular fixture in the school yard, the neighborhood pool, and entertained groups of children and adults alike with his firehouse stories and jokes, Dr. McGinn said.

>From his children's first nursery school classes on, each year he came in full turn-out gear to teach their classmates about fire prevention and what to do in case of a fire. Many parents report that their children still talk about "Firefighter Bill," Dr. McGinn said.

Known as the neighborhood "Mr. Mom," he was listed on many a school child's emergency contact card. When a child was hurt, parents would call Billy, often at the child's request, to diagnose or treat the problem, Dr. McGinn said. He also was able to paint, repair, build, or demolish just about anything, and could always be depended upon to assist his family or his friends with their projects, Dr. McGinn said.

Born on Staten Island, Lt. McGinn lived in New Dorp and attended Our Lady Queen of Peace R.C. School, Egbert Intermediate School, Midland Beach, and New Dorp High School.

He graduated with a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from the City College of New York of the City University of New York, Manhattan.

Inspired by his uncle, the late Lt. Kevin McGinn of Richmond, his ambition and dream was to serve as a New York City firefighter. He was appointed to the FDNY on March 5, 1984, and began his career at Ladder Company 11 on the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

After several years, he transferred to Brooklyn and became a member of Squad 1, part of the elite Special Operations Command. He was working in Squad 1 on the day they were called to respond to the WTC bombing in 1993.

He was promoted to the rank of lieutenant on May 5, 1994, and became an officer in Engine Company 56 in the Bronx. Lt. McGinn became an officer of Squad 18 when it was re-established in 1998. As a member of Squad 18, he regularly participated in specialized training in emergency response to extraordinary events, including terrorist attacks.



Today is the birthday of FDNY firefighter Sean Hanley of Ladder 20. He was born on June 18, 1966, and would have been 54 years old today. We will never forget the ultimate sacrifice that he made on September 11, 2001.

Sean S. Hanley heard stories about his grandfather's untimely death battling a blaze, but became a firefighter anyway. He contemplated a second career a few years ago when his three firehouse buddies died in line of duty, but decided being a firefighter was in his blood — no matter what the risk.

On Tuesday, that call to service brought the 35-year-old Bulls Head resident to Lower Manhattan minutes after he signed off for the day. The lifelong Staten Islander finished his night shift as a firefighter with Ladder Co. 20 in the SoHo section of Manhattan and planned to stop by his friend's midtown office. As he drove away in his black truck at around 8:45 a.m., Mr. Hanley flipped on the radio and heard that the Twin Towers were on fire; he rushed directly to the World Trade Center.

Family had heard little about his whereabouts or condition until fire officials confirmed Mr. Hanley's death on Saturday.

"He was a soft-hearted guy who would cry at the drop of a hat, yet he would go and fight for whoever needed it," said his father, Gerald, a retired firefighter from Engine 151 in Tottenville. "He was All-American, just like all the boys who went down."

Mr. Hanley comes from a long line of firefighters. His paternal grandfather, Gerald, died on Dec. 13, 1939, after fighting a fire with Engine Co. 282 in Brooklyn. He wore the shield number of his late maternal grandfather, Sanford Degon, who was also a firefighter with Ladder 20. His brother, Bryan Thomas Hanley, is a retired firefighter from Ladder Co. 101 in Brooklyn.

In addition to his brother and his father, Gerald, surviving are his mother, the former Patricia Degon; two more brothers, Gerald Jr. and Kevin; his maternal grandmother, Ann Degon, and his paternal grandmother, Mary Elizabeth Hanley. Mr. Hanley was set to be an usher in Gerald Jr.'s wedding this weekend, which was postponed.

"We were all suppose to be together this weekend. We were suppose to be having a good time," said Gerald Jr.

Only days before the tragedy, Allan Middleton hosted a party for Mr. Hanley because the FX cable station was airing "Tough Man," a boxing match between the Police and Fire departments in which the six-foot-four-inch Mr. Hanley fought. "He was the funny commentator, giving us a scene by scene of what we didn't see," said Middleton. The two met while students at New York University, where Mr. Hanley took a few classes.

Mr. Hanley was a graduate of Tottenville High School and a native of Annadale. He was a prankster who walked into the firehouse with a set of "Austin Powers" teeth and glasses his first day of appointment and often put shaving cream on the phone receiver before colleagues picked it up.

Mr. Hanley was with the Fire Department for five years, spending some time at Engine Co. 257 in Brooklyn, where three firefighters were killed in December 1998 while battling a high-rise inferno in Brooklyn.

Mr. Hanley had switched shifts with one of the firefighters killed, according to his family, and debated leaving the department.

"He decided to stay with it because he really wanted to help people," said his father. "That is our family tradition."

Mr. Hanley enjoyed boxing and playing basketball at local courts. According to his family, he loved talking on the phone.

"He was a fighter and a lover," said his aunt, Marie Degon.