Fr. Tom Farrell was appointed to the FDNY on October 23, 1994 after he worked as a Police Officer with the NYPD for 5 years. He was working in Engine 90 on September 11, 2001 and they relocated to Manhattan during that horrible day. In the time period after the attacks, Fr. Farrell was detailed to the rescue and recovery effort at the World Trade Center (WTC) site for three months.

Shortly after his efforts at the WTC, he began having lung problems. Fr. Farrell transferred to Ladder 41 and shortly thereafter, he was placed on Limited Service. He retired on September 5, 2003 on WTC disability.

Fr. Farrell was admitted to the hospital on August 27, 2015. He never came home after being admitted. Fr. Thomas Farrell died from his injuries that he incurred at the WTC on March 25, 2016. His death is considered administrative line-of-duty. He was highly respected and well liked. He will be missed. May he rest in peace.

TIP OF THE HELMET TO:
All those who made the 60th Anniversary Plaque Dedication of the, “Third Avenue Collapse” a huge success. Special thanks go out to: Fr. Chris Roberto, Fr. Phil Pillet, Fr. Jerry Joe Maxwell, Fr. Rob Killian, Fr. Brian Smith, Fr. Pat McCarron, Fr. Kevin McCabe, Fr. Luis Bocaletti, and Fr. Marc Viscogliosi. Also, the FDNY Bagpipe Band, the Ceremonial Unit, and EMT John Manning from the Fire Commissioner’s Office were keys to the success of the event.

RETIRED FIREFIGHTER
THOMAS J. FARRELL:

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1892 ANDREWS AVENUE, BRONX:

Around midnight on February 23, 2016, events took place that would test the firefighting expertise of the New York City Fire Department (FDNY).

The fire building was a 6-story “U-shaped” multiple dwelling. It was a corner building, at the corner of Andrews Avenue and West Burnside Avenue. The ground floor had commercial occupancies with steel roll down gates in place. The dimensions were 100’x 114’. It was built of Class 3 (brick and wood joist) construction. The building was built in 1924.

Around midnight, a fire in the dryer vent occurred in the laundromat on the ground floor on the W. Burnside Avenue side. The old dumbwaiter shaft in the building was being used to exhaust the dryers. The dumbwaiter was well protected and sealed with sheet rock. The fire, fueled by dryer lint, went up the dumbwaiter shaft and ignited timbers in the cockloft. The problem is that the fire went undetected and unreported. The Fire Marshals were able to obtain security camera footage that showed smoke pushing out of the roll down gates at around midnight.
At 0214 hours, an occupant in the building across the street from 1892 Andrews Avenue reported smoke coming from the roof of the fire building. Bronx Fire Dispatchers transmitted box 3113. Engines 43, 75, 42, Ladders 59, 33 and Battalion 19 were dispatched. Engine 43, commanded by Lieut. Dan McGinn, arrived at the scene at 0217 hours. There was nothing showing on the exterior of the building. Ladder 59, commanded by Lieut. Mike Culen, went to the top floor to perform an examination. They discovered a smoke condition in apartment 5B and a fire in the cockloft of apartment 5C. Battalion Chief James Doddy of the 19th Battalion arrived at the box at 0220 hours. Upon hearing the report from Ladder 59, B.C. Doddy transmitted a 10-75 for a structural fire at 1892 Andrews Avenue.

Engine 43 stretched an 1 ¾” hand line to the top floor of the “A” wing, assisted by Engine 75. Engine 42 stretched the second hose line to the top floor of the “A” wing assisted by Engine 46. B.C. Doddy of Battalion 19 transmitted the “All Hands” at 0226 hours and the 2nd alarm at 0228 hours.

The forcible entry teams of Ladder 59, Ladder 33, and Rescue 3 operated on the top floor. They removed numerous occupants from the top floor apartments.
Deputy Chief Jay Jonas of the 7th Division arrived at 0232 hours. He received a briefing from B.C. Doddy of the 19th Battalion. At this time, there was fire showing out of two windows and heavy smoke coming out of several others. Fire could be seen at the roof level. It was clear that this was an advanced fire in the “A wing” of the cockloft. At 0234 hours, Battalion Chief Frank Mannion of the 17th Battalion arrived. He was assigned the “Fire Floor Sector” and the “Command Channel” was implemented.

At 0237 hours, Engines 81 and 93 arrived at the fire. B.C. Mannion of Battalion 17 was calling for a third hose line on the top floor. Lieut. Gerard Morrone of Engine 81 started the stretch backed up by Engine 93. Engine 93 was commanded by Lieut. Anna Schermerhorn-Collins. D.C. Jonas told her to send a Firefighter to the Division 7 vehicle to get and bring the “Cockloft Nozzle” to the top floor.
Battalion Chief Brian Mulry of Battalion 27 arrived at 0238 hours. He was ordered to supervise the “Roof Sector”. The “Roof Sector” was a critical location at this fire. Firefighters from Ladders 59, 33, and Rescue 3 were already on the roof ventilating the cockloft. When Squad 41 arrived commanded by Lieut. Bob LaRocco, D.C. Jonas ordered his entire unit to the roof with both of their saws to conduct roof operations.

Ladder 59’s aerial ladder was raised and at the roof of the “A wing” of the fire building. Tower Ladder 33’s apparatus was working on the W. Burnside Avenue side of the building.

B.C. Mulry of Battalion 27/Roof Sector reported that there was fire throughout the cockloft of the “A wing” and it was headed towards the throat and the “B wing”. They were starting to cut a trench in an attempt to isolate the fire. Armed with this information, D.C. Jonas wanted to get a Tower Ladder into the throat of the fire building. Fr. Brian Smith of Tower Ladder 44 was near his apparatus. D.C. Jonas told Fr. Smith that he wanted Tower Ladder 44’s apparatus
positioned so the turntable was in line with the throat. After unsuccessfully trying to reach Ladder 59’s Chauffeur by radio, Fr. Chris Macri and Fr. Pete Kenny of Ladder 56 (FAST Truck) repositioned Ladder 59’s apparatus and placed the aerial ladder to the roof of the “B wing”. Tower Ladder 44’s apparatus was then placed so that the turntable was in line with the throat. Ladder 36’s aerial ladder was then placed at the roof of the “A wing”.

Battalion Chief Joe Jardin of the Rescue Battalion arrived at 0244 hours. He was ordered to supervise the efforts in the “B wing”. The remaining Firefighters from Tower Ladder 44 were already there. B.C. Jardin called for a hose line to the “B wing”. Engine 92 backed up by Engine 72, stretched an 1 ¾ inch hose line to the top floor of the “B wing”.

Engine 79 stretched an 1 ¾ inch hose line to protect the roof. The fire was still expanding and additional hose lines were being called for on the top floor and the roof. Battalion Chief Mulry of Battalion 27/Roof Sector reported that fire had reached their trench cut and they were beginning to cut a second trench cut. Units on the top floor of the “A wing” were performing searches and pulling ceilings for hose line access to the cockloft. The “Cockloft Nozzle” was being used on the top floor and it was knocking down significant fire in the cockloft. At 0246 hours, D.C. Jonas Division 7 transmitted a 3rd alarm.

All hose lines being stretched to the top floor now were being stretched by rope. Units were rapidly becoming fatigued from their arduous fire fight. Relief of units was being conducted. Acting Battalion Chief Jeff Simms of Battalion 26 was the Resource Unit Leader. He and Fr. Chris O’Connell of Division 7 were tasked
with tracking the location of each unit at this massive fire. Available units were becoming depleted. D.C. Jonas Division 7 transmitted a 4th alarm at 0258 hours so that any unforeseen contingencies could be mitigated and units that were operating could be relieved in a timely fashion.

B.C. Mulry, Battalion 27/Roof Sector reported that they had numerous large holes cut in the roof and that he felt confident that the fire would not reach the second trench they cut on the roof. However, the building was constructed with an “inverted roof”. The smaller structural framing of the inverted roof was showing weakness. B.C. Mulry Battalion 27/Roof Sector pulled the operating members away from the fire damaged roof area.
B.C. Mannion, Battalion 17/Fire Floor Sector reported that they had to continue to open up the ceilings on the top floor and they were making good progress. B.C. Jardin, Rescue Battalion/”B wing Sector” reported that fire had not reached the “B wing and there was no smoke condition in his sector.

Units continued operating and extinguishing pockets of fire. The fire was declared “Probably will hold” at 0350 hours and “Under Control” at 0415 hours.

It wasn’t until after the fire was under control that the Fire Marshals determined the cause of the fire. The fire actually more than two hours before the first alarm was transmitted. Occupants on the top floor did not report the fire first. One of their neighbors from across the street was the first to report the fire. The ceilings on the top floor were tight and the smoke did not drift downward or seep through the sealed dumbwaiter shaft. This delayed alarm almost cost the complete destruction of this massive multiple dwelling. If it wasn’t for the aggressive efforts by members operating at this fire, the results could have been the complete destruction of the building.
LESSONS LEARNED OR REINFORCED:

HOSE LINES:

    All hose lines being stretched up a stairway beyond the second hose line, must be stretched by rope.

    Hose lines are stretched in tandem. All efforts to get the first hose line in position and operating should be done before stretching the second hose line.

TOP FLOOR OPERATIONS:

    The cockloft nozzle proved its worth once again. The cockloft is a confined space. If we can get water on the burning fuel in a rapid manner, we will get quicker control of the fire in the cockloft. We will not be able to completely extinguish the cockloft fire with the cockloft nozzle, but it will knock it down. This buys us time and makes the operation on the top floor safer.

    When pulling ceilings at cockloft fires, do not pull too far ahead of the hose line. If you pull the ceilings without a hose line in readiness, the fire can bank down to the area where the ceiling has just been pulled.
When a Ladder Company Chauffeur raises his/her aerial ladder, they are required to be either on the turntable or be able to rapidly return to their apparatus. The Ladder Company Chauffeur must be able to reposition the ladder or the apparatus for rescue or removal of those who are endangered.

At top floor fires in “H-type” multiple dwellings, it is important that a Tower Ladder be positioned so that the bucket can be operated in the throat. This puts the bucket in position to perform horizontal ventilation in the front and in the throat. It also positions the Tower Ladder so that the master stream can be used to cut off the fire if necessary.
ROOF OPERATIONS:

An “inverted roof” (aka raised roof) normally feels like a springy roof. It is put in place on a roof to facilitate drainage. The raised portion of the roof is built out of smaller 2”x 4” timbers. These timbers are not spaced 16 inches on center. The smaller 2”x 4” timbers are attached to the larger roof beams. The roof beams are at the ceiling level of the top floor. These roof beams are of larger dimensions and are spaced 16 inches on center.

When a trench cut is cut and pulled, it is a sound firefighting tactic to have a hose line on the non-fire side of the trench. The trench is not a vent hole, it is a fire break. It is designed to prevent fire travel. It is a defensive tactic. Before a hose line is operated into a trench, make sure Firefighters are clear on the top floor.
COMMAND AND CONTROL:

It is essential that when Officers receive orders, they must go to the Command Board and have it adjusted. Also, Officers must return to the Command Board once they have been relieved to have it adjusted again.

At multiple alarm fires, the “Staging Area” becomes an important facility. It gives multiple alarm units a focal point to report in to. It also helps prevent congestion at the “Command Post” and the immediate fire area. The “Staging Area Manager” keeps the “Command Post” informed as to who is available and when resources are depleted.

Sectoring the fire building improves communication on the fire ground. The sector chiefs had an uninterrupted communication link with the Command Post.

*Thanks to B.C. Brian Fink, B.C. James Doddy, D.C. Vincent Dunn (Ret.), B.C. Brian Mulry, Fr. Chris Roberto, and Fr. Chris O’Connell who contributed to this newsletter.*

*Deputy Chief Jay Jonas, Division 7*