



# The Rekindled Spirit

By Bill Michatek

## First Responders: One Happy Family

We know that police, fire and EMS work together for a common cause: to protect lives and property. We are responding to a basic call to “love our neighbor as ourselves.”

We are a disciplined group having gone through basic training – boot camp, as the military calls it. We proudly work toward our goal of being qualified to stand among the finest. We need one another for our very safety. There are not supposed to be any lone rangers among us. It’s a group effort for all of us on the team. We have chief officers and can be called to task.

We chaplains try to keep alive the comfort of God’s presence and his commandment of love in firefighting. In wartime, the saying was “there are no atheists in the foxholes.” Our common prayer from the Psalms could be, “Be with us Lord when we are in trouble.”

There are tough calls out there. Our training disciplines us to understand our enemy fire and how to act in different situations. There are so many hazards out there that we can’t just go and put the wet stuff on the red stuff as in the past. Health and safety top out our priorities along with practice, aka drills.

As volunteers, we never really know who our crew will be until we hop in the vehicle. That’s why we strive to be a happy family and welcome all. You never know who will be protecting your backside.

I think it is important for first responders to get to know one another. There are traditional gatherings we have regularly. Try to attend. Exclusive groups or cliques can destroy our unity. We are all family. I think of the lad in “Boys Town” carrying his brother saying, “He ain’t heavy, he’s my brother.”

Enough for today’s preaching. I’ve enjoyed my avocation of chaplain and firefighting these many years and am happy to share these thoughts with you. Enjoy the holy days of Easter and Passover coming up. God be with you all.



*Chaplain Bill Michatek is the retired pastor of Holy Trinity Church in Webster, Monroe County, and now lives in Wolcott, Wayne County, on Port Bay. He continues to help on weekends at area parishes and is still active in the Webster Fire Department as Chaplain. He celebrated 50 years as a priest in 2016 and will celebrate 50 years as a firefighter and Chaplain in 2017. In these years, he served actively in six fire departments and four ambulance corps, all of them in Monroe County with the exception of 12 happy years in the Penn Yan (Yates County) Fire Department and Ambulance Corps. He is a Past Chief Chaplain of the New York State Chaplains (1990-1992).*

## In Memoriam: Past Trustee Walter J. Monestere (1941 – 2016)

Walter J. “Spike” Monestere, 75, of Matthews, North Carolina, and formerly of Freeport, New York, passed away December 30, 2016.

Walter was a dedicated member of FASNY for more than a half century, joining in 1962.

He was a Past Trustee of the FASNY Firemen’s Home from 1992 to 2002 and served as President of the Board of Trustees from 1999 to 2001. Walter was the FASNY Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms from 1990 to 1992. He also served on the FASNY Home Capital Projects Committee from 1998 to 2004.

In addition to his lifetime of service to FASNY, Walter was very involved with other firefighting organizations, including statewide, southern New York sectional firefighting organizations and those at the county level in Nassau County on Long Island. He was also a member of the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs. Walter was the Treasurer for the



Southern New York Volunteer Firemen’s Association from 1991 to 1992 and he served as President of the Nassau County Fire Chiefs Council from 1989 to 1991. He was a Past President of the Nassau County Firemen’s Association.

Walter was an ex-Chief with the Village of Freeport Fire Department. He also served as an elected Warden on the Freeport Fire Department Fire Council.

Born in Queens and raised in Freeport, he was retired as an Electrical Supervisor for the Nassau County Police Department.

Walter is survived by his wife, Kathleen; brothers Andrew and Joseph Monestere (Merrill); children Jeanette Darr, Patricia Stortz (Ronald) and Thomas Monestere; grandsons Nicholas and Christopher Darr and Ryan and Eric Stortz; and his great-granddaughter, Ashlyn Marie Darr. He was predeceased by his parents, Florence (Clench) Tucciarone and Andrew P. Monestere, and his brother John Monestere.