

THE Hundred Call

***"The Club
with a Heart"***

**President: Peter S. Carozza, Jr.
Managing Director: James M. Thomas**

**Volume LIII, No. 2
Summer 2022**

Phone: (860) 633-8357 Fax: (860) 633-8350 Email: ct100@hundredclubofct.org Website: www.hundredclubofct.org

Connecticut Law Enforcement Memorial Honors Three More Officers

The sky was grey and overcast as the 34th Annual Law Enforcement Memorial Ceremony was held on Thursday, May 19, 2022. However, the light drizzle that preceded the ceremony stopped for two hours while approximately 200 people gathered on the grounds of the Connecticut Police Academy in Meriden to honor the 148 law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty in Connecticut. Family members of the fallen were joined by active and retired law enforcement officials, cadets from the training academy, and representatives of other public safety services.

The attendees were welcomed by James "Skip" Thomas, President of the Board of the Connecticut Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation and Managing Director of The Hundred Club. Thomas, a driving force behind the Memorial, will step down from his position as Foundation President this month, after serving for 33 years.

Robert Kosienski, the former Meriden Police Chief and Chairman of the Memorial Day Committee, served in his customary role as the Master of Ceremonies.

Dignitaries attending the ceremony included James Rovella, the Commissioner of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Lieutenant Colonel Todd Harbeck, of the State Police, David Sundberg, Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent in Charge, and Chief Patrick A. Ridenhour, Chief of the Danbury Police Department and

President of the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association.

The service began with the arrival of approximately 20 members of the Connecticut Law Enforcement Unity Bikers. This group of active and retired police officers initiated the first Connecticut Law Enforcement Memorial Bike Ride by traveling more than 25 miles from the Hartford Police Department headquarters to the Police Academy. Some of the riders had participated in the Annual Police Unity Tour Ride, ten days earlier, joining others from across the country in biking to Washington, DC for the National Law Enforcement Memorial service.



Members of the Connecticut Law Enforcement Unity Bikers arrive at the Connecticut Police Academy



Honor guard units, representing several Connecticut police departments, post the colors at the Law Enforcement Memorial in Meriden



Law Enforcement Memorial (Cont.)

The ceremony was marked with its traditional activities. The memorial flag, a Connecticut state flag, folded into the shape of a triangle, was removed from its case in front of the stage and carried to a table under the Monument's portico. Detective Kristina Lapak of the Norwalk Police Department sang the National Anthem and Reverend Michael Dolan, Connecticut State Police Chaplain, offered the invocation.

The service's keynote address was presented by Special Agent in Charge Sundberg. He quoted President Kennedy, who in 1963 proclaimed each May 15th as Peace Officers Memorial Day and then recalled the history of our honoring the state's fallen law enforcement officers.

Sundberg noted that in May 1985 the late Groton Long Point Chief, Al Burbank, was responsible for the first statewide law enforcement memorial service for officers, troopers, and federal agents that lost their lives in the line of duty while serving in the State of Connecticut.

Moved by that event, Ridgefield Police Chief Thomas Ronda and members of the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association formed a statewide committee to create a permanent memorial to honor all law enforcement officers who had lost their lives while serving the citizens of Connecticut. In 1989, after four years of fund raising efforts, the first pieces of granite began to arrive at the Connecticut Police Academy in Meriden.

After several months of construction and years of raising the necessary funds, the Memorial was dedicated in October 1989. At that time, the names of 107 heroes were etched on the monument. Today, Sundberg noted, 148 names have been permanently recorded on the honor roll.

Having recounted the history of the Memorial, he then asked rhetorically, "...why, as a people, as a nation, do we build memorials?"

"Memorials are for those still living," he observed.



"They not only give memories permanence, but allow us, as individuals, as families, as communities, and as a Nation, to choose how we remember those whose acts of heroism and sacrifice we revere. Memorials not only allow us to capture history and preserve it, but they also allow us to remember and pass on the most important parts of that history."

Acknowledging the Memorial's location at the Police Academy and the units of municipal and State Police cadets assembled in front it, he said, "It is fitting then, that such a memorial is here, accessible to the public, who owe so much to those whose names were etched here forever. But also, in the direct view of those aspiring to become law enforcement officers, a permanent display of the dedication and sacrifice required of this profession and of the love we have for each other."

Sundberg then recognized each of the three officers whose names were added to the Memorial this year.

Connecticut State Police Sergeant Brian E. Mohl, a 26-year veteran of the department, was killed during the early morning hours of September 2, 2021, as sweeping floodwaters from the Pomperaug River flooded a road in Woodbury. He was supervising the Litchfield barracks' midnight shift as the remnants of Hurricane Ida sweep through the northeast, drenching the area in more than seven inches of torrential rain, and catching his cruiser in swift floodwaters.

Law Enforcement Memorial (Cont.)

New Haven Police Officer Diane Gonzalez died on January 10, 2022, after slipping into a coma following an on-duty crash thirteen years earlier. The accident occurred on September 9, 2008 between Gonzalez and Sgt. Dario "Scott" Apon-
te as they were responding to what at the time was believed to be a life-and-death domestic violence call in the city's Fair Haven section.



New Haven Assistant Police Chief Karl Jacobson (center) greets a family friend of Officer Diane Gonzalez

Preston Constable William Kinney was shot and killed on May 6, 1918, while assisting in a homeowner/tenant dispute. Constable Kinney accompanied the homeowner to serve an eviction notice to a renter. When they arrived at the home, located in the Hallville section of town, the tenant opened fire with a .32 caliber rifle, killing Constable Kinney and mortally wounding the homeowner.



The memorial wreath, with three red roses, is flanked by two State Police trainees

Before closing, Sundberg also added, "I'd like to acknowledge The Hundred Club for its dedication to supporting the members of law enforcement and all the organization does each year. The members of The Hundred Club exemplify the best of us in their work to provide for the families of those heroes we have lost".

Following the remarks by Special Agent Sundberg, a memorial wreath, in the shape of a badge, was placed at the foot of the monument. Three long-stemmed red roses, representing Sergeant Mohl, Officer Gonzalez and Constable Kinney, were affixed to the wreath with black bunting. Each rose was later presented to a family member in remembrance of their loss.

Uniformed officers stood at attention as Chief Ridenhour, Lieutenant Colonel Harbeck, Assistant Chief Karl Jacobson (New Haven), and retired Chief John Gavallas (Watertown), alternated reading the names of each fallen officer, punctuated by the tolling of a bell. The Roll of Honor was followed by a rifle salute and the playing of Taps by bugler Jonathan Worley of American Legion Post 79 (Madison).

At the conclusion of the ceremony, family members were invited to take a flower from the memorial wreath as a token of remembrance.



The memorial flag is retired at the conclusion of the ceremony

Waterbury Social Yields New Members

President Peter Carozza hosted The Hundred Club's first "Meet & Greet" of the season on April 28. Held at the Verdi Restaurant at Waterbury's Western Hills Golf Course, the social attracted more than 75 enthusiastic people from the Brass City and the surrounding area.

The event was sponsored by the Honorable Neil O'Leary, Mayor of Waterbury, who spoke of his admiration and respect for the Club. O'Leary served as Waterbury's



Peter Carozza, James Thomas and Mayor Neil O'Leary (L-R)

Chief of Police from 2004 to 2009 and became familiar with the Club's services when the department lost two officers during his tenure.

Many local members were in attendance, along with their guests – prospective members who had expressed interest in the Club. President Carozza and Managing Director James Thomas spoke about the history and mission of the organization and the direct impact it has on the families of the fallen. Ten new members have joined the Club as a result of attending the event and hearing of its good work!

National Firefighter Registry Seeks Cancer Sources and Prevention

Fighting fires is a dangerous profession, and the danger goes beyond the hazards of running into a burning building.

Firefighting settings are complex and contain various hazardous substances. Firefighters can be exposed to hundreds of different chemicals in the form of gases, vapors, and particulates. Some of these chemical substances are known or suspected to cause cancer. Some of these hazardous substances are byproducts of combustion or burning, such as benzene and formaldehyde. Others come from the materials burning or in the fire debris, such as asbestos from older structures.

Firefighters can come into contact with chemicals by breathing them in, getting them on their skin or in their eyes, or by ingesting them. If protective clothing, known as turnout gear, is not adequately cleaned or stored after a fire response or training event, chemicals on the gear or equipment can contaminate vehicles and the fire station. Reusing dirty turnout gear or respiratory protection can also result in exposures to hazardous substances. These exposures can occur by skin contact with contaminated personal protective equipment (PPE) or by breathing in or ingesting particles from contaminated PPE.

Numerous studies show that firefighters' exposure on the fireground, where smoke and hazardous chemicals are released from burning materials, may increase their risk of cancer and other chronic diseases. While the association between firefighting and disease seems clear, more information about these health risks is needed, especially with regard to the higher risk of cancer among firefighters.

To better understand the link between on-the-job exposure to toxicants and cancer, Congress, through the Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2018, directed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to create the National

Firefighter Registry (NFR).

The NFR will be used to track and analyze cancer trends and risk factors among the U.S. fire service to help the public safety community, researchers, scientists and medical professionals find better ways to protect those who protect our communities and environment.

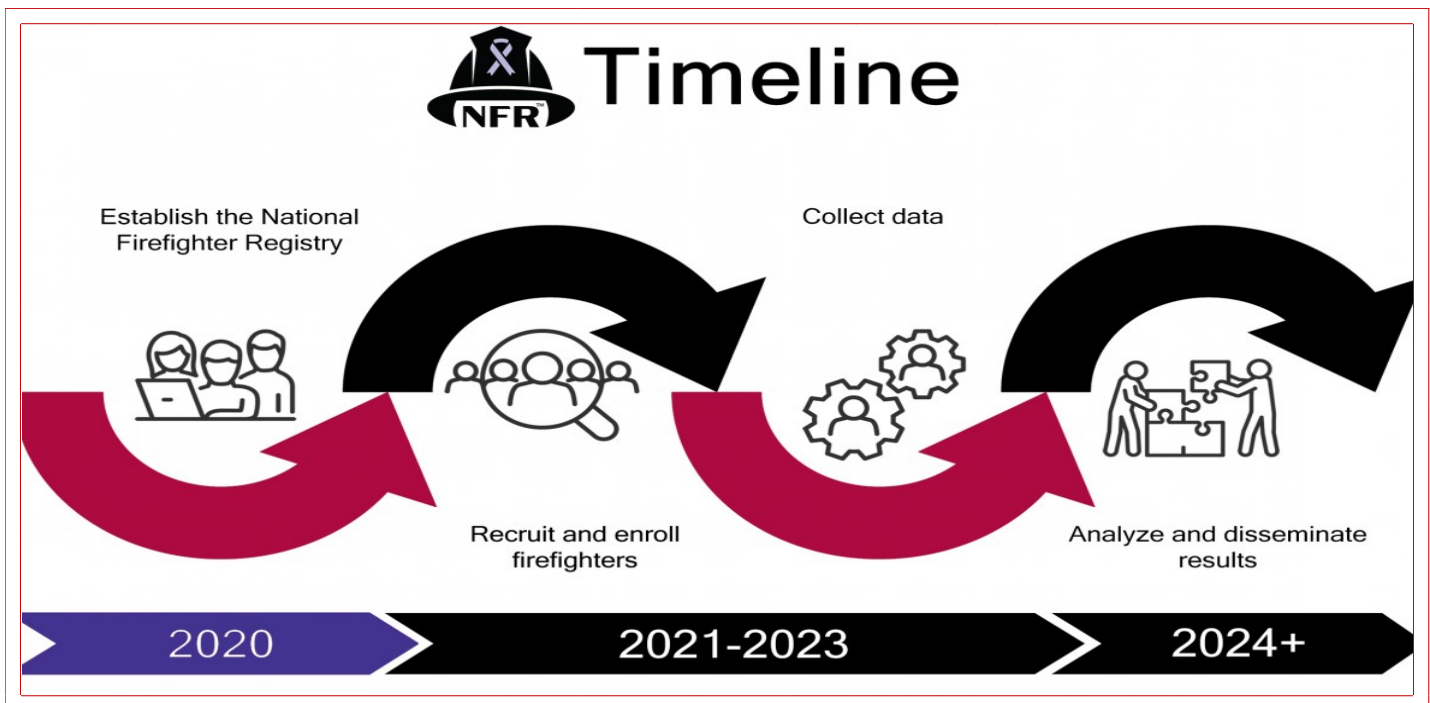
All firefighters—structural and wildland, career and volunteer, active and retired—may participate in the NFR. This includes firefighters who have never received a cancer diagnosis, previously had cancer, or currently have cancer.

Participation in the NFR is voluntary. But by providing vital information about their own health and work experiences, firefighters who register for the NFR will play a critical role in helping to better understand the health risks this profession faces.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), working closely with epidemiologists, clinicians, public health experts, and other stakeholders, has taken the lead on creating and managing the NFR.

After obtaining the consent of each firefighter in the NFR, the NIOSH will collect risk factor information from firefighters through web-based surveys, well-known exposure tracking applications, and from fire department records. Long term, NIOSH will monitor potential cancer diagnoses for firefighters enrolled in the NFR by linking information with state databases of cancer diagnoses, known as state cancer registries.

Over time, data from the NFR will be matched with information from national and state databases to track cancer cases and find out about causes of death among firefighters. NIOSH investigators will use this data to compare the risk of cancer, in its various forms, among firefighters to that of the rest of the U.S. population.



Death of Two Firefighters Deemed Work-Related

It has been established that the deaths of two Connecticut firefighters, one in 2019 and one in 2020, were both caused by cancer, directly attributed to on-the-job exposure.

Westport Firefighter Turker Aksoy

Turker Aksoy, a 13-year veteran of the Westport Fire Department, passed away on November 21, 2019 from an occupational cancer. He worked as a paramedic in Hartford for several years prior to starting as a Westport firefighter.

Born in New Jersey on January 30, 1973, Aksoy was 46 years old. He was predeceased by his wife, Denise, and left behind two children, Tess and Tyson.



Turker Aksoy

Aksoy joined the Westport Fire Department in 2006. He was diagnosed with Stage 4 metastatic colon cancer on May 15, 2014, at the age of 41.

Aksoy spoke to state lawmakers in 2016 on legislation involving cancer and firefighters.

"Every morning you wake up and you got to put your feet on the floor because you have a family looking after you and hopefully, you know, I'll go back to work tonight actually, and then tomorrow I'm back in New York City starting chemo again. You know, and that'll wipe me out for three days until I have to go back to work again. You know, and it's tough on my kids, it's tough on my wife..." he told the lawmakers.

The advance of his disease and the coinciding aggressive treatments made it increasingly difficult for him to work. Regrettably, he and his family suffered another emotional blow in 2019, when his 45 year old wife died unexpectedly. Aksoy took on sole responsibility of raising his children, aged 14 and 12 at the time.

As his condition worsened, the Westport Fire Department, the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 1081, and members of the Westport community rallied to support Aksoy and his children. A GoFundMe site was created to raise money and a fundraiser for the family was planned in Norwalk.

"Turk will always be remembered by his brothers and sisters, and by his community, as a good man," Westport Fire

Chief Robert Yost said. "Turk was strong as an ox. That strength, grit and perseverance were the attributes of how he lived his life."

"Over the last five-plus years I witnessed the fact that Turk truly was a tough man," said Lt. Daniel Mascolo, who gave a teary eulogy at his memorial service, recounting how he had been with Aksoy at the doctor's office to hear his initial cancer diagnosis.

"Occupational cancer has proven to be the new epidemic we face in the fire service, far too many members of the fire service have been lost to this relentless illness," said the union president, Nick Marsan.

Cromwell Fire Marshal Todd Gagnon



Todd Gagnon

Cromwell Fire Marshal Todd G. Gagnon, age 58, passed away on May 22, 2020 at Saint Francis Hospital. He died of lung metastases and squamous cell carcinoma of the esophagus.

Born in New Britain, he lived in Cromwell since 1986. Gagnon joined the Cromwell Volunteer Fire Department in 1989 as a firefighter and emergency medical technician. In 1990 he completed trade school as a licensed Master Electrician. In 1994,

Gagnon was appointed as the Cromwell Fire Marshal, where he served for 26 years. In 2007, he also acquired an Assistant Building Inspector's certification.

LeRoy Brow, the president of the Board of Fire Commissioners, issued a statement on behalf of the district, honoring Gagnon and his service to the district and the community.

In his statement, Brow said Gagnon was not only a valued employee of the district, "but he was my friend for over 30 years."

Brow said, "Todd was instrumental in bringing our fire marshal's office through many changes."

As just one example of those changes, Brow said, "Starting off as an informal one-man operation," the office "progressed to a six-man inspection and investigatory division."

Gagnon left a wife, Margie, five children, and seven grandchildren.

Cancer is the most dangerous threat to firefighter health and safety today.

- Cancer caused 66 percent of the career firefighter line-of-duty deaths from 2002 to 2019, according to data from the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF). Heart disease caused 18 percent of career LODDs for the same period.
- Cancer caused 70 percent of the line-of-duty deaths for career firefighters in 2016.
- Firefighters have a 9 percent higher risk of being diagnosed with cancer and a 14 percent higher risk of dying from cancer than the general U.S. population, according to research by the CDC/National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH).



"The Club with a Heart"

The Hundred Club of Connecticut
119 Oakwood Drive
P.O. Box 419
Glastonbury, CT 06033

Fairfield County Golf Outing a Success

The first annual Fairfield County Hundred Club Golf Outing was held at the Sterling Farms Golf Course, in Stamford on Thursday, May 26th. The outing was sponsored by Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Connecticut and Marsh Private Wealth Services.

The weather was perfect for the 63 golfers who played the beautiful and well-manicured course.

The best score of the day was turned in by the Buscetto foursome, while Tom Franzese won the top raffle prize, a 53" TV and sound bar.

Connecticut Attorney General William Tong stopped by the luncheon to greet everyone. He welcomed The Hundred Club to his hometown and was pleased to know that membership in the Fairfield area is growing, as he saw many familiar faces. He noted his fond memories of working at the city-owned courses when he was young.



Attorney General William Tong (L)
with Club President, Peter Carozza

The entire Sterling Farms staff – from the golf course pro to the caterer – was very friendly and accommodating. The feedback from the event was extraordinarily positive and everyone is looking forward to another golf outing in 2023.

Don't Miss the Ed Funk Memorial Golf Outing

Monday, July 18, 2022; 10:00 am shotgun start

Tunxis Country Club — 87 Town Farm Road, Farmington, CT

There will be coffee and breakfast pastries on the Pro Shop porch in the morning. Lunch and beverages will be available on the course at the halfway house. A social hour will start at approximately 3:00 pm, with dinner at 4:00 pm. The awarding of prizes and the free raffle will precede dinner.

Call the Club office to register! 860-633-8357