

# FDNY's Unyielding Commitment to Duty-- Initiatives Backed by Training and Education

The aggressive interior attack is a hallmark of the FDNY. New York City Firefighters are known the world over for their unflinching resolve. Your response on the morning of September 11, 2001, demonstrated this; more than 25,000 lives were saved, though at a tremendous personal cost to the Department. As we approach the fifth anniversary, the Department's continued unyielding commitment to duty is a tribute to all those who have come before.

It is this unflinching determination that makes us better prepared almost five years later. The Department is better trained, more flexible and able to respond to a wider range of incidents. Additionally, we are at the forefront of developments in equipment, technology and training.

Officers and Firefighters now suit up with the next generation of SCBA, which provides heightened protection for chemical, biological and radiological exposure. We have gone from no SOC Support Ladder Companies in service to 25 SOC Support Ladder Companies, with training and equipment for advanced haz-mat and technical rescues. Likewise, where once there was none, now we have 25 Technical DeCon Engines in service. The number of Collapse Units has increased from one to five, with 10 collapse PODS (point of delivery systems) available for storing and transporting disposable supplies.

On a larger operational scale, Officers and Firefighters are better supported and protected by the Fire Department Operations Center, whose technological and construction upgrades will support information flow, situational awareness and provide capability for off-site incident management. Most importantly, it will assist in the determination of whether Firefighters should respond to event sites.

The FDNY has established a Center for Terrorism and Disaster Preparedness, which provides the Department with the most current information and advanced tools to prepare for future terrorist incidents and other major disasters. The Center serves as the focal point for strategic and preparedness planning, exercise development, risk assessment and education to provide the Department's civilian and uniform decision-makers with the necessary resources to make critical decisions in complex environments.

And, underlining these initiatives is the training and education to maximize their potential. The Fire Training Academy is at its core. During the past five years, new simulators--subway,

flashover, trench cave-in and soon high-rise--have been integrated into training curriculums. The Personal Safety System, designed by Firefighters and fire Officers, is now a part of standard gear. Other programs, such as the Combating Terrorism Leadership Program (taught by West Point and FDNY instructors) and the FDNY Officers Management Institute (FOMI) course, have imparted invaluable management and "think-tank" skills to senior members of the Department.

But more still needs to be done.

We must maintain our capabilities and enhance initiatives, such as the Incident Management Team program. (The FDNY has the only IMT east of the Mississippi River.) We also are looking at technology for the development of a Personnel Tracking System, which would greatly augment Firefighter safety.

The need for enhanced rail response is being researched. The City's transportation networks are extremely vulnerable and desirable targets; we need look no further than London or Madrid for proof. Currently under review are two plans, one for the acquisition of rail transport cars. These are folding units that can be stored on fire apparatus, hand-carried to a platform and quickly assembled at track level. These units would permit Firefighters to transport

heavy tools and equipment to the scene of a serious rail incident, inside tunnels or on elevated structures remote from station platforms. Each unit also could carry two patients in Stokes stretchers back to a platform. The second piece of equipment being researched is for a rail tunnel firefighting rescue vehicle. This vehicle would be a custom rescue pumper, capable of traveling on both highway and rails.

In the same vein, New York Harbor has 65 square miles of inland waterways and 772 miles of direct shoreline. The Marine Division continues to be New York Harbor's only fire protection. The Department of Homeland Security has completely funded a new Marine response craft and provided partial funding for a second.

Our accomplishments have been many. And, while they make the Department stronger and the City safer, our accomplishments also provide firm ground for future generations to benefit from and build on.



*Richard Scappellato*