

REPORT OF MERITORIOUS ACT

3/11/02
Date

1. **BOX** 300 **BOROUGH** Manhattan **DATE** 9/11/01 **TIME** 1030
(highest alarm)
2. **PERFORMED BY:** FF 1st Philip H. McArdle Haz-Mat 1 no
Rank or Grade Name Unit Assigned Detailed
3. **DID ANY OTHER MEMBER PARTICIPATE IN THIS ACT ?** yes
(If Yes) FF 1st Jeffery Borkowski Haz-Mat 1
Rank Name Unit
- Is Meritorious Act Report being forwarded for participating member? yes If not, how did member participate? _____
- 3a. **ARE ANY UNIT CITATIONS BEING RECOMMENDED IN CONNECTION WITH THIS FIRE?** unknown
(If Yes - List Units) unknown
4. **LOCATION OF MERITORIOUS ACT**
- a) If in building: Address n/a
Height n/a Area n/a Construction n/a
Occupancy street Number of apartments in building n/a
Floor where act took place n/a Room n/a
- b) If not in building: Give complete descriptive information so that physical setting can be recreated near corner of West Street & Liberty Street adjacent to World Trade Center Complex
5. **PERSON(S) AIDED:**
- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| NAME | David Handschuh | |
| ADDRESS | 289 Greve Drive | New Milford, NJ 07646 |
| AGE - SEX | age 41 sex male | |
| RESCUE BREATHING | no | |
| EXTERNAL CARDIAC MASSAGE | no | |
| RESUSCITATOR APPLIED | no | |
| HOSPITALIZED | yes | |
| NAME OF HOSPITAL | Bayonne Hospital | |
| DIAGNOSIS | comp. fracture rt kn | torn cartalge lft kn |
| LENGTH OF HOSPITALIZATION | (3hrs.)(4 days) | (1 day) |
6. **MEMBER PERFORMING ACT:** Did he receive any emergency treatment? yes
Specify debris in eyes left eye most severe
Was medical leave granted? no Diagnosis scratched cornea
7. **WHAT SPECIFIC JOB WAS MEMBER PERFORMING AT TIME OF RESCUE?** search
WAS MEMBER ALONE? no (if not, indicate number of fire department personnel in immediate area, and describe their position in #11.
WAS A MASK WORN BY MEMBER DURING RESCUE? no
WAS CHARGED HOSELINE IN POSITION TO PROTECT MEMBER MAKING RESCUE? no
HOW WAS VICTIM REMOVED FROM PREMISE? Carried Dragged Assisted
WAS A LADDER USED IN THIS RESCUE? no If yes, indicate type, size and placement _____

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8. **NAME(S) OF TWO MEMBERS WHO ACUALLY WITNESSED ACT(IF AVAILABLE)**

RANK	NAME	UNIT
FF	Jeffery Borkowski	Haz-Mat 1
Capt	Charles Wells	EMS

9. **NAME(S) OF TWO CIVILIANS WHO ACUALLY WITNESSED ACT(IF AVAILABLE)**

NAME	ADDRESS
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10. **WAS VICTIM REMOVED FROM:** Immediate fire area Directly above fire

Other area (specify in detail):
collapse area

11. **DESCRIPTION OF ACT:**

On the morning of Tuesday September 11 Firefighter Philip H. McArdle Haz-Mat 1 was getting off work early, he was relieved by FF Jonathan Hohmann Haz-Mat 1. The purpose of getting off early was to meet BC John J. Fanning to discuss training issues. Before going to Chief Fanning's office FF McArdle stopped at his wife's job at PS 8 in the Bronx to pick a classroom education system to demo for Chief Fanning. When leaving Mosholu Parkway in the Bronx, FF McArdle turned on 1010 WINS Radio to get the traffic report and heard about the 1st plane hitting the World Trade Center. FF McArdle raced to the Division of Training to meet Chief Fanning.

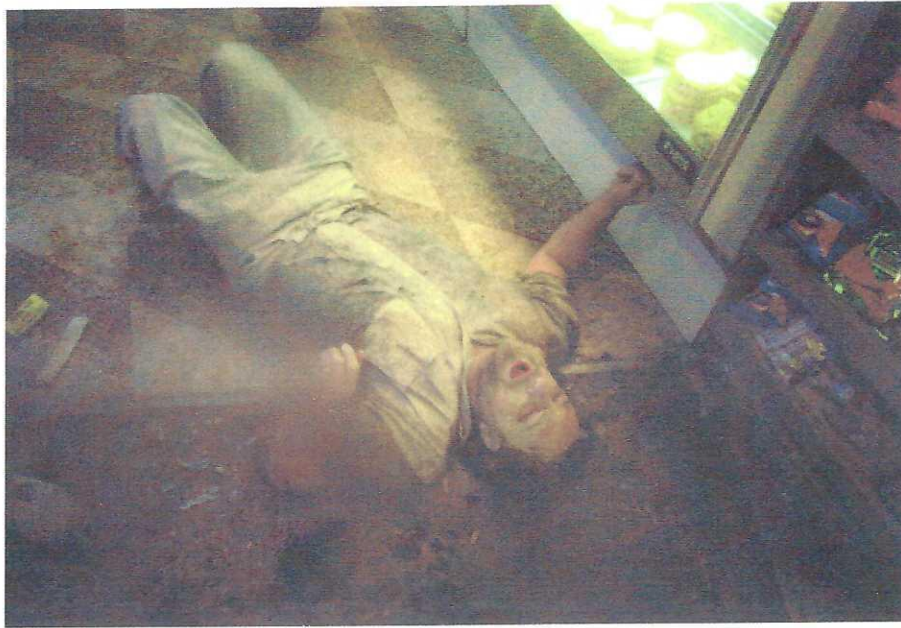
Upon his arrival at Chief Fanning's office, FF Jeff Borkowski was already waiting to tell FF McArdle that Chief Fanning had already left and instructed FF Borkowski that as soon as Firefighter McArdle arrived, they both were to proceed down to the WTC and meet up with him. FF's McArdle & Borkowski loaded up a suburban with SCBA's, Skeds and stokes stretchers. Shortly before or at about the time both FF's were leaving the Division of Training, a second plane hit tower # 2 of the WTC complex. Both firefighters proceeded down the FDR drive under Battery Park and came up from the south onto West Street.

While approaching the scene, the vantage point of the top of the towers was obscured by the roof of the vehicle both firefighters were driving in. Firefighters McArdle and Borkowski could only see a large crowd of civilians and emergency personnel running south on West Street. Firefighter Borkowski stopped the vehicle just short of the corner of West and Liberty Streets. Unknown to both firefighters the south tower was in the process of collapsing and that was the reason for everyone running away. Their vehicle was quickly overcome by smoke and dust in addition to being showered with debris. Simultaneously they could hear the sound of people running into obstacles and falling down injured; visibility was essentially zero. Both firefighters exited the vehicle and donned breathing apparatus. While others continued to retreat both firefighters continued to advance into the scene. Both firefighters found a number of personnel injured and having difficulty breathing, both firefighters had removed their facepieces and given these people several breaths of good air; they then directed them to continue heading south towards safety along West Street. Ignoring their own personal safety they continued into the sight passing several fatalities and rendering assistance in the form of air and directions to the walking wounded.

One civilian in particular that they came across was a Mr. David Handschuh who is a photographer for the Daily News. He happened to be covering the story of the planes hitting the towers. Mr. Handschuh was on his back in a great deal of pain with leg injuries and having some difficulty breathing. (See diagram 12 below)

While communicating with Mr. Handschuh, he expressed a desire to remain where he was until EMS arrived. FF McArdle sensing the urgency of the situation and not knowing the conditions of the surrounding buildings (visibility

was still very poor) felt it was unsafe to leave Mr. Handschuh unattended in such a precarious position. FF McArdle explained to Mr. Handschuh that this was "a combat situation" where his life may be in jeopardy if left there, and that he may not survive subsequent attacks if they were to occur. Mr. Handschuh was then carried by the firefighters along the marked path in the diagram to a safe area where he was left in the care of others. This happened to be a deli located on South End Ave (see diagram in #12 and photo below).



Mr. Handschuh was reassured he would be looked after. Mr. Handschuh was given water, his eyes were rinsed. He was left with other personnel. (The photo was taken by another photographer (Todd Maisel) just after Mr. Handschuh was placed in the Deli and given to firefighters McArdle and Borkowski in February.) After ensuring Mr. Handschuh's safety, both firefighters proceeded back to the north tower. Firefighters McArdle & Borkowski proceeded east on Liberty Street and then north onto West Street. As they were proceeding down the street they were preparing to enter tower #1. The north tower started to break up, firefighters McArdle and Borkowski ran for cover into 2 World Financial Center (indicated by the white callout in the picture) finding protection behind two separate columns.



Each waited while the blast pressure passed, this was followed by intense heat and a period of no breathable air. When the noise and vibration finally stopped both firefighter crawled out the rear of the structure and began to regroup with other firefighters.

Both firefighters continued to operate but became separated when assigned to different survey teams to monitor for WMD agents. Both firefighters continued to work throughout the day & night. Firefighter McArdle was relieved at approximately 0030 hrs. and ordered to report back to the firehouse for duty at 0900 hrs.

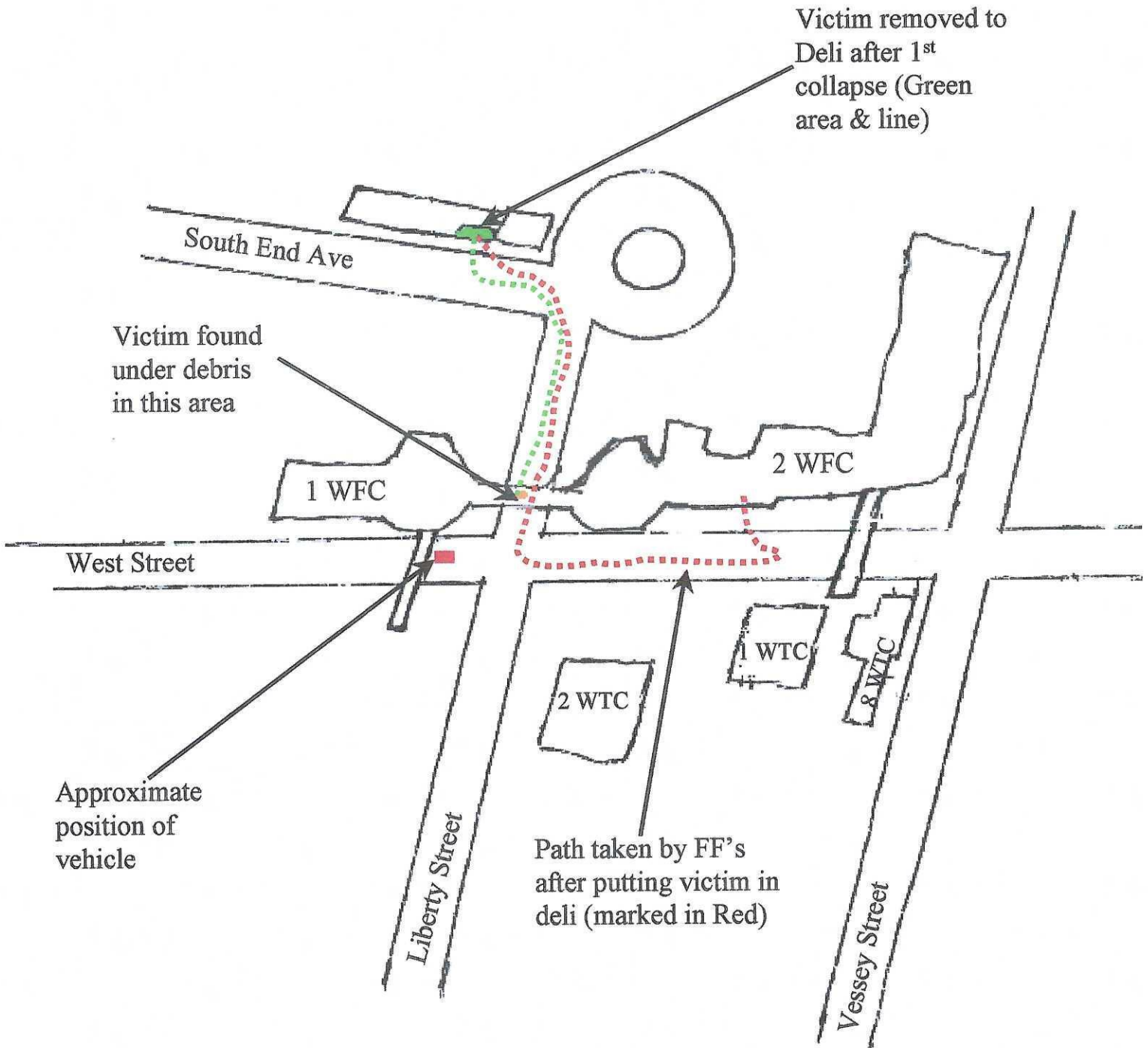
After being relieved firefighter McArdle was treated at the scene by EMS for eye irritation; he returned to his firehouse where he was taken to Elmhurst Hospital for more irrigation of his left eye. He worked the next day and the following night upon being relieved, worked down at the site. That night he again ended up in Elmhurst Hospital with a still worsening eye condition and was unable to see from the left eye. Doctors irrigated the eye approximately 14 additional times and prescribed medication before the eye showed signs of improvement. Firefighter McArdle took great personal risk by continuing into the site while others were leaving; he used personal initiative to remove Mr. Handschuh thereby saving his life. With the collapse of tower 1, the area where Mr. Handschuh was found became completely covered with debris and it is unlikely he would have survived the 2nd collapse. It is for these reasons I recommend that firefighter be considered for consideration of a meritorious award. Supporting documents are attached.

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12. DIAGRAM OF APARTMENT OR AREA FROM WHICH VICTIM WAS REMOVED

- Indicate location of victim by X
- Indicate path of entrance to apartment (or area) by solid line.
- Indicate path of exit (if different than entrance) by broken line.
- Indicate point of origin of fire (if known) by - with floor # inside.
- Indicate area of fire by //
- Indicate location of hoseline by → → → →
- Diagram shall include all means of access to area (doors, fire escapes).



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13. SIGNATURE OF OFFICER PREPARING REPORT:

<i>Stephen J. Bacci</i>	CAPT	HM-1	3/15/02
RANK	NAME	UNIT	DATE

14. BATTALION CHIEF ENDORSEMENT: I was _____ at scene, observed act
 _____ at scene, did not observe act but investigated at scene
 _____ not at scene. Investigated

Conclusion regarding facts of the Meritorious Act.

14. DEPUTY CHIEF ENDORSEMENT:	RANK	NAME	UNIT	DATE
I was _____		_____		

_____ at scene, observed act
 _____ at scene, did not observe act but investigated at scene
 _____ not at scene. Investigated

Conclusion regarding facts of the Meritorious Act.

RECOMMENDATION: CLASS I _____ CLASS II _____ CLASS III _____
 SERVICE RATING A _____ B _____ FILE _____

RANK	NAME	UNIT	DATE
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david handschuh

photographer

Commissioner Nicholas Scopetta
FDNY
9 Metrotech Plaza
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Dear Commissioner Scopetta,

I can truthfully say that I am alive today due to the quick thinking, expertise, skill and compassion of firefighters Phil McArdle and Jeff Borkowski of HAZ-MAT 1. Please excuse the delay in writing. I have been recovering from injuries sustained on 9/11/01 and this should have been said months ago.

For more than two decades I have had the privilege of covering New York's Bravest as a photographer for the New York Daily News. I am honored to have been made the FDNY's first Honorary Photographer by Commissioner Spinatto in 1985. I have witnessed and photographed many heroic life saving efforts. I have been welcomed into firehouses and on rigs. I have documented probies in the academy and retirements of decorated veterans.

I never once thought that the people who I so often photographed would in turn, save my life that awful September day.

When the South Tower of the Trade Center collapsed, I was thrown almost a city block. Buried alive by debris, trapped under a vehicle, I thought that I was going to die, scared and alone in the gutter of a lower Manhattan street.

After being dug out by members of the FDNY, Firefighters McArdle and Borkowski had the presence of mind to pick me up and carry me out of danger. Despite my protests, they realized that I was in the middle of a collapse zone and that any falling debris or subsequent collapse would in all probability lead to my death.

po box 142 oradell, nj 07649 (646) 729-7870 DavidHands Schuh@compuserve.com

Firefighters McArdle and Borkowski carried me to a delicatessen in Battery Park, rendered medical assistance, and continued out to save many more lives. Their service on September 11th rises above the highest of all acts of heroism.

I hope the FDNY can recognize their extraordinary acts of bravery on Sept. 11th, 2001 and honor them during Medal Day with appropriate recognition. I owe my life to these two firefighters.

Sincerely,

David Handschuh
Staff Photographer, New York Daily News



FIRE DEPARTMENT

420 EAST 83RD STREET BROOKLYN, NY 11236
TEL. 718 968-9750 FAX 718 531-5133

EMS DIVISION 3

TO: To whom it may Concern

FROM: Charles R. Wells
Deputy Chief
EMS Division 3

DATE: March 14, 2002

SUBJECT: Rescue of Mr. David Handschuh at the WTC Attack on September 11, 2001

I was dispatched to the WTC incident upon the first plane attacking the North Tower. I arrived on scene with both towers attacked by aircraft and both towers still standing. I reported to the Command Post and was directed to establish a Triage and Treatment Sector at the corner of West Street and Liberty Street.

Once at West and Liberty I initiated EMS Operations. Shortly there after I led a forward Triage Team down Liberty Street to enter the South Tower where FF Timothy Brown of Rescue Co. #3 (currently assigned to OEM) reported to me of numerous casualties in the lobby. We reached halfway down Liberty Street when we began to feel a violent shaking and vibration sensation. We back tracked down Liberty Street and tried to gain access to the South Tower for refuge. We finally were able to access a doorway which we later found out to be the Marriott's Tall Ship restaurant. We became buried in debris and self rescued after approximately 15-20 minutes.

We were able to assist approximately 150 civilians located in the restaurant area to Liberty Street and direct them to the marina.

We regrouped at Liberty Street and West Street. At this time I encountered Lt. Stan Rybak, FF Jeff Borkowski and FF Phil McArdle. The EMS personnel and these members just mentioned were in front of the Southwest World Financial Center of Liberty Street and West Street when we again heard this loud noise and intense shaking and vibration. We then ran to the WFC entranceway and jumped through the broken front windows. We again became trapped for approximately 15-20 minutes following the collapse of the North Tower. FF Borkowski had SCBA and provided buddy breathing to both Lt. Rybak and myself.

We exited out of the WFC after FF McArdle was able to locate a means of egress from the structure and returned to assist Lt. Rybak, FF Borkowski and myself in leading us out. Once

outside I ran across a courtyard to a deli to rinse my eyes and mouth out as we all had ingested and inhaled the debris and wash the debris out of my eyes. I entered the deli where I was able to retrieve some bottled water out of the display case. As I was washing my eyes out a voice behind me asked if I could help him. I said sure and tossed him a bottle of water. He was nearly impossible to see as he was grayed out from the debris on and around him. He was lying on the floor facing the doorway. After a minute he asked me "Are you Charlie Wells"? I said yes, turned around and realized it was David Handschuh, a photographer for the NY Daily News. I told him I would help him. He had a broken lower leg but in otherwise stable condition.

There was no one around to help me so I grabbed him by the back of his shirt and pulled him out of the deli and started to drag him toward the marina. At this time a Police Officer and a firefighter approached and offered assistance. As we carried Mr. Handschuh toward the marina he recounted how he became injured fleeing from the collapsing South Tower. He stated "FF McArdle and FF Jeff Borkowski" pulled him from his trapped location and carried him to the deli for refuge where I encountered Mr. Handschuh.

Mr. Handschuh was subsequently placed on an NYPD Harbor unit and transported to a New Jersey location for transportation to a hospital. Mr. Handschuh called me a week later to say he had been admitted to the hospital for a right leg open fracture of the Tibia & Fibula requiring a titanium rod & screws that required a 4-day stay. In addition he required orthoscopic surgery for a left knee injury repair requiring a one day hospital stay for surgery.

End of Statement.