

F.D. 2

FIRE DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO

JANUARY 15 1984

BATTALION Co. No. 9

Located at 1545 W ROSEMONT

TO: DISTRICT CHIEF JOSEPH BRUNETTO

3RD DISTRICT

FROM: BATTALION CHIEF RAYMOND RICKERT

9TH BATTALION (H.F.S.L.)

SUBJECT: DROWNING INCIDENT

LAKEFRONT AT WILSON AVE (4600 N)

SIR:

ON JANUARY 15, 1984 AT 1445 HOURS, BATTALION 9, ENG. 83, H.F.L. 72, 4-5-3, AMB 6 & AMB 31 RESPONDED TO A SPECIAL DUTY ALARM FOR "PEOPLE IN THE WATER" AT WILSON AVE. AT THE LAKEFRONT.

THE WEATHER WAS CLEAR, BUT VERY COLD (19° AT THE LAKEFRONT)

TWO PEOPLE, TERENCE TONTLEWICZ, 35, AND HIS SON JAMES, 4, HAD FALLEN THROUGH THE ICE INTO THE WATERS OF LAKE MICHIGAN.

JAMES TONTLEWICZ HAD DISAPPEARED BENEATH THE ICE SEVERAL CIVILIANS, INCLUDING AN UNIDENTIFIED CROSS-COUNTRY SKIER AND A CHANNEL 9 NEWS TEAM, WERE ATTEMPTING TO RESCUE TERENCE TONTLEWICZ, BUT WERE UNABLE TO DO SO THEY DID, HOWEVER, MANAGE TO KEEP HIM AT THE SURFACE OF THE WATER UNTIL THE ARRIVAL OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.

ENGINE 83, COMMANDED BY LT CHARLES BRADY (3RD DIST REL) AND HOOK & LADDER 27, COMMANDED BY LT DONALD SVACHULA (3RD DIST REL) ARRIVED AT THE SCENE AND BEGAN TO EFFECT THE RESCUE OF TERENCE TONTLEWICZ.

A 16' LADDER WAS LOWERED FROM THE ROCKS INTO THE WATER AND LT CHARLES BRADY (ENG. 83) AND FF. MICHAEL McSHANE (H.F.L. 72) DESCENDED THE LADDER. EACH HAD ONE END OF THE LIFE LINE TIED ABOUT HIS WAIST, WITH THE OTHER MEMBERS OF BOTH COMPANIES HOLDING THE OTHER ENDS OF THE LIFE LINE.

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FF. MESHANE DESCENDED THE LADDER FOLLOWED BY LT. BRADY. TOGETHER THEY PULLED TERENCE TONTLEWICZ FROM THE WATER.

HE WAS PLACED INSIDE A WAITING AMBULANCE (AMB 31) AND PARAMEDICS, P.O. STEVE BAUMGART AND F.P.M. DAVID WILLIAMS, BEGAN TREATMENT FOR HYPOTHERMIA AS HE WAS BEING TRANSPORTED TO WEISS HOSPITAL

MEMBERS OF ENG 83 AND H/L 22 THEN ADDITIONALLY PLACED A 12' LADDER AND A 38' LADDER INTO THE WATER FROM THE BOOMS. THEY BEGAN SEARCHING THE WATER FOR THE BODY OF JAMES TONTLEWICZ WITH ROPES TIED ABOUT THEIR WAISTS AND HELD BY OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMPANIES, THEY DESCENDED THE LADDERS AND GENTLY PROBED THE WATER WITH PIKE POLES

2-3-9 A KENNETH SOB (ENG 70) WHO WAS HANDLING COMMUNICATIONS AT THE INCIDENT, CONSTANTLY ADVISED THE FIRE ALARM OFFICE OF THE SITUATION BY RADIO FROM THE 9TH BATTALION BUGGY.

THE DIVERS OF AIR-SEA RESCUE 6-8-7 ARRIVED AT THE SCENE (FF PETER TOMASZKIEWICZ AND FF ROBERT WILLIAMS). THE DIVERS QUICKLY SECURED THE ROPES ABOUT THEIR WAISTS AND IMMEDIATELY DESCENDED INTO THE FRIGID WATER. THEY EMERGED SECONDS LATER WITH THE BODY OF JAMES TONTLEWICZ, WHO BY THIS TIME WAS, FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, DEAD AND COLD.

JAMES TONTLEWICZ WAS IMMEDIATELY TAKEN TO AMBULANCE 6. UNDER THE DIRECTION OF E.M.S. FIELD OFFICER GENE MARKS, THE PARAMEDICS OF AMB 6, P.O. DARREL NEMIC AND F.P.M. EDWARD FOSS, ASSISTED BY F.P.M. JOHN MULLEN (4-53) AND FF NICHOLAS FABRIZIO A FORMER PARAMEDIC NOW ASSIGNED TO ENG 83, BEGAN RESUSCITATION AND RESSURECTION PROCEDURES ON THE BODY OF JAMES TONTLEWICZ, WHILE IN

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CONSTANT RADIO CONTACT WITH WEISS HOSPITAL
FIELD OFFICER GENE MARKS, VIA RADIO, WITH THE
COOPERATION OF WEISS HOSPITAL STAFF, COORDINATED
THE EXPECTED ARRIVAL OF JAMES TOOLEWICZ AT THE
EMERGENCY ROOM OF WEISS HOSPITAL, WHERE HE WAS
TAKEN INTO ~~THE~~ THEREAFTER.

EVERYBODY WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS DRAMATIC
RESCUE OPERATION PERFORMED IN AN OUTSTANDING
MANNER, CONSISTENT WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS
OF THE CHICAGO FIRE DEPARTMENT. AND I WOULD MOST HEARTILY
RECOMMEND THAT THEIR PERFORMANCE SHOULD BE
AWARDED THE RECOGNITION THAT IT SO RIGHTFULLY
DESERVES.

RESPECTFULLY



9TH BATTALION CHIEF (H.Q.)