

NOTES FROM BOX 2851

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Former Board Member, Dan Noonan, Honorary MC for 15th Commemoration of 9/11 on USS Midway

by, Stu Sprung

September 11, 2015- Today, former San Diego Firehouse Museum executive board member, Danny Noonan, sat alone peacefully on the flight deck of the legendary USS Midway contemplating the words he would share on the 15th commemoration of the attacks on 9/11/01.

On that day that changed our way of life, every single one of the hundreds in the audience on this sunny, Southern California day had their own personal connection and story. Noonan, as he is simply referred to by those who know him, respected and appreciated that. As a retired FDNY firefighter from Engine 33/Ladder 9 in Manhattan, he had his own. Some years back he had hung up his leather helmet and bunker coat at that firehouse in the Bowery, just north of the World Trade Center, to become, as he says, a “gnarly dude” in San Diego. He even bought former San Diego Chargers quarterback Jim McMahon’s house. True to his roots he quickly discovered a fondness the San Diego Firehouse Museum, which remains to this day.

When the first, then second tower came down, Danny knew...his boys were in there...along with thousands of other first responders and innocent civilians. He instinctively knew this was already the most tragic day in the history of the FDNY, as well as the City of New York.

While most of us firefighters on the west coast wished we could instantly be there to help, commercial air travel was on lock-down. The only way to get to what was already being called Ground Zero was coincidentally, by ground...2,759 miles of it. Without hesitation

PIONEER HOOK AND LADDER FIREHOUSE MUSEUM

Noonan grabbed his old helmet and bunker coat, and embarked from Carmel Valley on what would become a 55-hour response across the country. When he finally arrived at his former firehouse he felt a sense of relief that he had made it. However, as it would with millions in New York City at that time, the sheer magnitude of almost every experience, from digging for his brothers in “The Pile” to simply walking amongst the citizens of Manhattan, would stick with him to this day. The rest is history.

Eventually, a few years later, Danny moved back to New York City...the city he loves most. Now, fifteen years after 9/11/01 to the day, the “gnarly dude” had been invited back to his old home the honorary Master of Ceremonies for the landmark commemoration held on the USS Midway Museum.



MC Danny Noonan Preparing on the Flight Deck of the USS Midway With a Plaque of His Lost Brothers From FDNY E33/L9.

The spirit of Noonan’s speech echoed what memorializing 9/11 has transformed to in the decade-and-a-half since it happened. As he said, our military has picked up the flag “from the smoldering ruins of the World Trade Center” and has fought to this day in the name of that one day. While we maintain our pledge to “Never Forget” those who perished, 9/11 really belongs now to those who have and continue to make the supreme sacrifice, and of course our living Wounded Warriors.

(FDNY Rescue 4) among them, perished on 9/11. So it’s fitting that our annual San Diego memorial concludes on this hallowed ground.

We encourage our members to support, participate, and spread the word to friends and family of this event to help us maintain our promise to Never Forget for years to come. As the years have progressed that sentiment has increasingly been reflected in the audience of the various 9/11 memorials across the county. Brennan Savage and the other FDNY Retirees of San Diego have built a strong connection with veterans and the Wounded Warriors, who were (appropriately) well-represented in the audience on the USS Midway. Aside our humble heroes were Rear Admiral John “Mac” McLaughlin, USN (ret.), the President/CEO of USS Midway Museum, who is instrumental in making the event happen. Also present was local US Congressman Duncan Hunter, who signed up for the US Marines on 9/11 and subsequently served tours as a field artillery officer in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Naturally, the City of San Diego has always been a strong and key supporter of this event, which was evident with the presence of Mayor Kevin Faulconer, Fire Chief Brian Fennessy, Police Chief Shelly Zimmerman, as well as several San Diego city and county firefighters and police. The increasing amount of airline pilots and flight attendants who participate also serve as a reminder of the scope of this day of remembrance.

An important local tradition alongside the USS Midway event is the BBQ at the firehouse museum afterwards. It's hosted by the museum itself, the FDNY Retirees of San Diego, the National City Firefighters', as well as various other volunteers. The intent of it has always been to soften the inevitable somber atmosphere of the memorial and focus a bit on something we do well in the fire service...celebrating life, as so many who have perished would prefer we are sure.

When Noonan first connected with our firehouse museum in the early 1990's he could never have envisioned the role he or it would have in it becoming a de facto West Coast "embassy" for firefighters from across the country... and even the world. He simply wanted to share this paradise he now called home with his brothers from the streets of Brooklyn, The Bronx, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island. He set up the very first "East/West Coast" firefighter's connection in 1995 with a basketball tournament of the FDNY and San Diego basketball teams. (We lost). Some of those who came to the banquet at the museum on that trip, the legendary Durrell "Bronko" Pearsall (FDNY Rescue 4) among them, perished on 9/11. So it's fitting that our annual San Diego memorial concludes on this hallowed ground.

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President's Notes

Captain Kevin McWalters

It's with great pleasure to share with that your Firehouse Museum continues to prosper and expand in many directions. We continue to improve the facility, host numerous social events and participate with the Little Italy community toward improving the district.

Our last event in conjunction with the San Diego retired chapter of FDNY hosted a reception for the 15th anniversary of 9/11. This was an historical event and was attended by many rescue workers, airline crews and fire service members both active and retired. Sharing the stories and events with younger guests and family members is our responsibility toward remembering those who gave their lives rescuing others.

The mission of the PH & L is to preserve the past, capture the present for the future and this is all accomplished by your support and membership. The driving force behind the museum is the "Volunteers". If you or know of someone that has the desire to become apart of our team please contact Mike at the museum.

Additionally we are seeking corporate sponsorship at the museum to assist us with capital improvements. If you have a company or organization that may be willing to support the museum please forward the contact information to Mike.

Until next time stay safe, enjoy the fall and we hope to see you at one of our events! (Christmas Ball is scheduled for December 17, 2016, Hard Rock Hotel)



The Firehouse Museum will serve as the poll location for Little Italy in the November 8th Presidential Election.



Above: Board member Stu Sprung (Ret. SFFD), PHL President Kevin McWalters (Ret. SFFD) and Museum Director, Mike Colafrancesco



1936 Seagrave in San Francisco Fire Department 150th Anniversary Parade along Fisherman's Wharf.



FOR INFORMATION
on membership and/or
these events, visit
www.sandiegofirehousemuseum.com
or contact us at:
phone:
619-232-3473
email:
sdfirehousemuseum@gmail.com

NOTES FROM BOX 2851

Executive Director's Report

Captain Mike Colafrancesco

I hope everyone had a wonderful summer! A lot happened over the summer months at the Firehouse Museum. Pioneer Hook & Ladder President Kevin McWalters, Board Member Stu Sprung, and myself had the honor of representing the museum at the San Francisco Fire Department's 150 Anniversary Celebration in September. Along with SDFD Deputy Chiefs Roger Fisher, Gina La Mantia and Steve Wright; we drove our 1936 Seagrave (old E-10) in their anniversary parade. Our neighbors to the north were very excited about our participation! This newsletter was purposely delayed to include pictures of the event.

A huge thank you to Council Member Todd Gloria and his staff. Through his generosity, the Firehouse Museum received a grant which allowed for the much needed replacement of our roll-up doors. We have another grant in the works to paint the exterior of the building.

I would also like to thank Firefighters Hans Schwing and Kevin French who volunteered their time to re-construct our communications display. Come by the museum to see their work!

Thank you to the San Diego FDNY Retirees and the National City Fire Department who sponsored and coordinated the Annual September 11th Reception at the museum.

Congratulations to four of our museum volunteers who are now members in the SDFD 82nd Basic Fire Academy. We wish them luck in their career endeavors. Volunteers are the backbone of the Firehouse Museum. If you know anyone who would like to volunteer, please have them contact me at sdfirehousemuseum@gmail.com.

Kevin McWalters, long-time Firehouse Museum President, recently retired from the SDFD. He will continue in his role at the museum. Congratulations on a successful career! Thank you for the continued dedication and commitment to the museum. We wish you a long and happy retirement!

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at our Christmas Family Day and Annual Christmas Ball.

SAN DIEGO FIREHOUSE MUSEUM

PROUDLY PRESENTS

CHRISTMAS FAMILY DAY 2016

SATURDAY DECEMBER 3rd 2pm - 5pm
1572 COLUMBIA ST.

COME SEE SANTA & MRS. CLAUS

HOLIDAY COOKIES, LIGHT APPETIZERS,
COCKTAILS AND MORE!

PLEASE BRING AN UNWRAPPED TOY TO
SUPPORT THE SAN DIEGO FIREFIGHTER'S
ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE.

★ FREE FOR MUSEUM MEMBERS! ★

San Diego Firehouse Museum 

San Diego Firehouse Museum Firefighters Christmas Ball

DATE: DECEMBER 17 2016

TIME: 6PM - 11PM

LOCATION : THE EDGE ROOM at HARD ROCK HOTEL SAN DIEGO

ATTIRE: FORMAL/ CLASS A

PRICE: \$100 PER PERSON

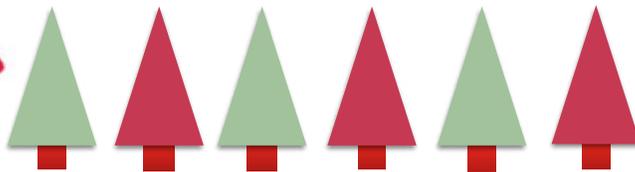
Tickets go on sale **Friday, October 21st, 10 a.m.**

***Guest names will be listed at the door. No printed ticket will be issued.*

DANCING * GOURMET DINNER * NO HOST BAR



TO PURCHASE TICKETS GO TO : www.sandiegofirehousemuseum.com
Questions email: sdfirehousemuseum@gmail.com



San Diego Firehouse Museum 