

# THOMAS E. CRIMMINS MEDAL

*Awarded Posthumously to*

**Battalion Chief FRANK T. TUTTLEMONDO**  
**44th Battalion**

Do not look on this page for a masterpiece of literature, nor for arty attempts to coin great phrases of eulogy on behalf of our beloved brother, Frank Tuttlemondo, so lately taken from us by death. This is merely a simple expression of those who with no pretense voice their regret and expression of common grief. Battalion Chief Frank T. Tuttlemondo gave his life so that others might live. Here is that story.

The dispatcher's voice broke the early morning silence on August 13, 1980, in the Watkins Street firehouse. "The Big House—everybody goes—Engine 231, Ladder 120 and Battalion 44—Box 1672, address 124 Osborn Street, Engine 231?" "Ten-four," came the housewatchman's reply and a moment later, fire apparatus rolled out of the firehouse on their way to a telephone alarm for fire.

Upon arrival, the incoming units were met with an intense fire condition on the second and third floors of a 3-story frame building. F.D.N.Y. operations commenced as a local resident ran up to the officer in command, Battalion Chief Frank Tuttlemondo and informed him that squatters had been known to frequent the premises. Calls for assistance quickly followed. "All hands at work, give me another engine and truck (ladder co.);" Tuttlemondo shouted to his aide. The Department's heavy artillery was being put into operation when another resident advised the Chief Officer that he was certain someone was in there. The neighbor was right. Ismail Hernandez and Pedro Torrez eventually died in the blaze. Chief Tuttlemondo ordered a second alarm transmitted and sent Rescue Company 2 to the building next door. He had already ordered Engine Company 227 to stretch a hoseline and advance into the first floor of the fire building, in an attempt to search for and hopefully rescue any victims trapped therein.

Finding it difficult to determine conditions from the exterior of the fire building, Chief Tuttlemondo accompanied Lieutenant Michael Ramos (E. 227) and the members of Engine Company 227 as they entered the first floor area. The glare from Tuttlemondo's light bounced from the surface with drops of water glistening between the rays. It was 5:12 A.M. and it happened. A tremendous roar and a collapse occurred that unleashed a flaming fury of wood, steel and heavy timbers accompanied by a rain of hot tar. The men fell like puppets that have had their strings cut. The split seconds that were available before the building came crashing down on them were used by Frank Tuttlemondo to save life. He threw his own body on Lieutenant Ramos to shield him from the collapse. As a result of this unselfish act, Chief Tuttlemondo succumbed to fatal injuries he sustained in saving the life of his brother fire officer.

Rescuers worked feverishly to dig their way in to the entombed firefighters. As Lieutenant Mike Ramos regained consciousness, he remembers the first thing he saw upon coming to. His head was cradled by Chief Tuttlemondo's arm. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John XV: 13.



- *Appointed to the Fire Service on December 14, 1957, and assigned to Ladder Company 103.*
- *Pro/notes to Lieutenant on January 6, 1964, and served with Engine Company 225.*
- *Upped to Captain on August 10, 1968.*
- *Served as skipper of Engine Company 245.*
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- *Promoted to Battalion Chief on September 1, 1973.*
- *Assigned to the 44th Battalion on March 30, 1974.*
- *Made the supreme sacrifice on August 13, 1980.*
- *Lived in Brooklyn with his wife Jenny and children, Thomas and Katherine.*

THOMAS E. CRIMMINS MEDAL Mrs. May M. Burke provided in her will for the endowment of this medal in memory of her father. He was a contractor, builder and a loyal New Yorker, and son of a volunteer fireman. First presented in 1912.

THE FIRE FOUNDATION OF NEW YORK Cash award of \$250.00 donated by the Fire Foundation of New York. This organization established in 1968 by a group of prominent New York City businessmen, friends of the New York Fire Department, in the interest of rewarding our Fire Department members who perform acts above and beyond the call of duty.