

Bomb Tech Memorial Dedication

by Jeff Fuller, Region VI



In 1909, a New York City police lieutenant, Guiseppe Petrosino, was killed in the line of duty investigating bombings and murders by the notorious Black Hand Society. Lt. Petrosino was the first of thirteen law enforcement officers to be killed in the line of duty while engaged in bomb work. There had never been a documented list of these fallen officers or a formal memorial to their service and sacrifice - until now.

The National Bomb Squad Commanders Advisory Board (NBSCAB) formed an independent ad hoc committee which was eventually incorporated in 2005 as the Bomb Technician Memorial Foundation (BTMF). The BTMF was granted 501(c)(3) charity status with the stated purpose of erecting and maintaining a fitting memorial to public safety bomb technicians killed in the line of their duties. The foundation was formed and the fundraising began.

NBSCAB immediately stepped up to the plate and made the first donation, which was quickly followed by a group of bomb squad commanders

meeting in Huntsville. Over the next two years, money was donated by IABTI, manufacturers, organizations, individuals, and by special auctions conducted by the HDS staff. A list of major contributors is posted on the BTMF website. While the money was only trickling in initially, a leap of faith was taken. Designs were made and contracts were entered into for a life-size bronze statue of a bomb technician in front of a granite wall bearing the names of those fallen.

There were a few stumbling blocks along the way; mostly in dealing with the bureaucracy involved with such a project. There were a few naysayers about certain aspects of the memorial, including those who did not think scripture was appropriate. However, it was successfully argued, "Where would it be more appropriate!" and so scripture from Isaiah 6:8 was used: Here am I, send me! Most other delays were overcome but a last-minute delay that had everyone worried was the delivery of the actual name plaques. They were not installed until the night before the April 16, 2007 dedication ceremony.

The formal dedication was a somber and touching event, particularly emotionally intensified by that early morning's tragic events at Virginia Tech. The brief ceremony was attended by police officers, firefighters, military EOD personnel, and the families of those honored from all over the United States.

Local politicians, Redstone Arsenal Commanders, HDS staff, IABTI representatives, FBI, ATF, NBSCAB, local newspapers, broadcast media and dignitaries from as far away as England were present. It was estimated that more than 300 people were in attendance.

The highlight of the ceremony were the impromptu remarks of Mrs. Easter Miles, the daughter of NYPD Detective Joe Lynch who was killed by a terrorist bomb in 1940 when she was only ten years old. Her sincere gratitude for the honor being bestowed on her father was articulately given and there were loving tears from attendees when she read a poem her daughter wrote 25 years ago at the age of fifteen.

We are truly grateful to everyone who played a part in this important event. While this will serve as a lasting legacy to those who gave



Danny McGuire (Region 3),
played the pipes for the ceremony



their lives in the line of duty and to the type of work we do each day, plans are being made for future projects by the BTMF. Your suggestions and contributions are welcomed. Please contact your local NBSCAB representative at www.NBSCAB.org or the BTMF directly at www.BTMF.org.



Region 3 Members with Mary Galvin and family



I HAD A GRANDFATHER
 by Francine A. McLean, Age 15
 for her Grandfather, Detective Joseph J. Lynch

I had a Grandfather I've never known,
 I never held his hand,
 I never heard his voice,
 I never saw him smile.

I've never looked into his eyes, 'nor he into mine,
 We've never taken a walk together,
 Never played a game,
 Never shared a secret.

I've never been able to ask his opinion,
 Never heard him tell the stories of his youth,
 Never seen his eyes light up with enthusiasm,
 Never been able to ask his advice.

But as surely as I am alive, so then is he,
 I see him in my face, in the eyes that are so much like his,
 I feel his gentle touch in every kind gesture I have ever made,
 His courage and his spirit in every challenge I have ever faced.

Long ago before I was ever even a thought,
 He made a choice to protect and to serve,
 And that choice took him too young and too soon,
 But that choice also saved so many.



Photos courtesy of Jeff Fuller, Kevin B. Barry and Dan Murphy.