

Remembering

Larry W. Fanning

Garner Volunteer Fire Department — North Carolina

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: August 2, 2006

Age: 57

Larry Fanning suffered a fatal heart attack at home after responding to the station for a medical call.

My father began his 38-year fire service career as a volunteer, starting a career, marriage, family, and legacy in the same year. Dad always had a servant's heart. His years of employment took him through government-subsidized housing, to the mentally challenged and respite care for the elderly. His staff and residents always commented on how he had positively changed their lives, a debt they could never repay but would be forever thankful. His co-workers and fellow firefighters recognized his level of commitment to his community and those less fortunate.

From an early age, Dad would take me and my brother to fire calls in his pick-up truck--sort of a "take your son to work" day. Few people are fortunate enough to grow up in the shadow of "larger-than-life" heroes and, at the time, Dad seemed like a giant moving in and out of the smoke as we sat and watched each battle. We witnessed a few of the close calls and listened to the tailboard stories of the one that got away. His legacy, which took years of trials and my adulthood to understand, was one of uncompensated service, rich in the reward of a job well done. He never presumed to be more than he was; yet

quietly served until his death, quite an example for his two young boys.



As Dad's career took us from town to town, he always joined the local volunteer department. He knew that he had something to give and served as everything from grunt to captain and training officer to president of the board. There are trucks and stations, children and communities that bear his mark today.

One year, while serving as a deacon and speaking to the church congregation, Dad related his firefighting experience to the apostle Paul's description of the full armor of God. As if on cue, pagers tripped, the town siren wailed, and five firefighters jumped from the pews and darted past the pastor. "No brimstone today...apparently just fire," the pastor said.

Dad was a very patient and dependable man who willingly sacrificed his time to help his family. In the autumn of his life, his grandchildren brought him much joy, peace and happiness. His fellow firefighters often remarked on how the grandchildren had given him new life.

Dad was proud to be part of the brotherhood of those who unselfishly put their lives at risk for the benefit of mankind. May God bless this entire people and those of the Pulaski, Dublin, Lebanon, and Garner Fire Departments.