

Lee A. Ielpi

Lee Ielpi is a native of Great Neck, NY where he resides today with his family. Lee is a father of two girls and two boys. Both sons are firefighters with the FDNY. Lee became a volunteer with his local Great Neck Vigilant Fire Department in 1963 where he rose through the ranks to become Chief of the Department. Lee continues to serve as an active member of the Vigilant Fire Department.



In 1968, Lee was drafted and served in the US Army in Vietnam. While serving, he volunteered to be deployed under the Reconnaissance Unit with the Second of the 28 Infantry, First Infantry Division. While serving for his country, Lee earned a Bronze Star for Valor and two ARCOM medals for Valor in addition to being decorated with a Combat Infantry Man's Badge and Air Medals. Lee's first child was born while he was serving in Vietnam in 1970. Lee Ielpi joined the New York City Fire Department in September 1970.

As a probationary firefighter he was trained during one of the busiest periods of firefighting in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, NY. Lee was selected to serve as a member of the elite Special Operations Company, Rescue 2 in 1977. Rescue companies of the FDNY serve to operate at all working fires within their borough, any type of rescue operation, hazardous materials and scuba operation. These companies assist with all rescue equipment for any type of extrication. While serving in the FDNY, Lee Ielpi was awarded twenty-four recognition's of exemplary service ranging from Class 3 metals to Unit Citations from his Rescue Company. The awards included three of the prestigious Class 3 Rescue medals awarded on separate occasions by New York City and the firefighters who witnessed the hazardous conditions under which the rescues were performed. Lee also received a Class B ribbon of honor for service beyond duty.

On September 11, 2001, Lee arrived at the World Trade Center within a half hour of the second collapse and assisted to organize operations until midnight of that evening. Lee returned to Ground Zero daily to assist organization of the rescue operations. Upon the third week, the rescue operations were reclassified by the City of New York as a recovery operation. As is tradition within the FDNY, Lee worked hands on daily for nine months to bring home all that were lost, including his son Jonathan Ielpi, FDNY Squad 288.