

SENSELESS SHOOTING IN NEW YORK KILLS FF/EMT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

Sunday, February 1, 2009-

Volunteer Firefighter/EMT Mark B. Davis, 25, of 172 James St., is being remembered as a "gung-ho EMT" by those who served with him. Mr. Davis was fatally shot while responding to a medical emergency Friday night.

He was serving with the Cape Vincent Volunteer Fire Department when he and two other EMTs responded to a chest pain call at 114 S. Esseltyne St. about 11:30 p.m.

First Assistant Chief William E. Gould II said,



Firefighter/EMT Mark Davis

"He was one of those guys that EMTs was what he lived for."

Mr. Davis was employed part-time by Guilfoyle Ambulance and volunteered with the Cape Vincent and Thousand Islands Emergency Rescue Service squads. He was in his first year of training to become a paramedic at Jefferson Community College, Watertown.

"He loved doing EMS work. He loved helping people," said

David C. Sherman, general manager of Guilfoyle. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family." Mr. Davis and two other EMTs were at the residence of Christopher G. Burke, 25. According to police reports, Mr. Burke became agitated and retrieved a high-powered rifle from the bedroom of the residence. As the EMTs were retreating from the residence, state police said, Mr. Burke fired two rounds, one of which struck Mr. Davis.

EMTs attempted lifesaving measures on the scene and in an ambulance in transit to Samaritan Medical Center, Watertown, where Mr. Davis was pronounced dead.

One of the EMTs tackled and kept Mr. Burke on the ground. Clayton Police Officer Robin Pearce was the first law enforcement officer on the scene and took the suspect into custody with the assistance of Alexandria Bay Officer Jerry Delosh.

Mr. Burke was arraigned Saturday morning in Cape Vincent Town Court on charges of second-degree murder and fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon. He is being held without bond at the Metro-Jefferson Public Safety Building, Watertown.

Clayton Volunteer Fire Department, Guilfoyle Ambulance Service and Thousand Islands Emergency Rescue Service assisted at the scene. Cape Vincent Village Police Department is assisting in the investigation.

Glenn W. Morrison, Jefferson County director of fire and emergency management, recalled only one

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Calling hours are set for Friday, February 6, from noon to 9 p.m. at the Cape Vincent United Methodist Church, 260 E. Broadway St., Cape Vincent (NY).

A full line of duty funeral will be held at 1 pm, on Saturday, February 7, at the Thousands Islands High School, 8481 County Route 9, Cape Vincent.

A procession through downtown Cape Vincent will follow

(Information on the funeral procession route and staging areas can be found at <http://www.ti-rescue.org/>)

previous case in Jefferson County when a volunteer responder was shot and killed in the line of duty. In 1979, Frederick G. Wanerka, an Antwerp volunteer firefighter, was shot and killed while responding to a fire alarm by a man hired by his ex-wife.

"This was a random and senseless act of violence that has torn this small community apart," Mr. Morrison said of Mr. Davis's death.

"This has rocked everybody," Mr. Sherman said. "This is just a huge devastation to the north country and EMS communities."

He said Mr. Davis's mother, Marsha Dickinson, told EMS officials Saturday that she was proud of her son. Mr. Davis lived with his mother and stepfather, Laurence Dickinson, a stepsister, Marisha, and a stepbrother, Brandon.

Brandon works at Aubrey's Village Market on Broadway. Employees there said Mark and Brandon were two peas in a pod.

"Brandon wants to be an EMT like his brother," said Jackie Billings, working behind the cash register Saturday afternoon. "They are a tight-knit family."

Ms. Billings and Janet Carroll said Brandon and Mark "used to go tubing and sledding together." In the summer, they also would drive go-carts in the lot next to Aubrey's and go to garage sales.

"Mark loved to cook," Ms. Billings said. "He made the best wings, and he and Brandon would share recipes."

In Cape Vincent, First Assistant Chief Gould said the volunteer fire department was remembering Mr. Davis on Saturday by "just sitting together, helping each other out." He said Mr. Davis enjoyed the outdoors and the two had been deer hunting together. But EMS was Mr. Davis's focus.

"He didn't really have much time," Mr. Gould said. "He would go to work and be gone for days." Cape Vincent and other area squads plan to hold a fireman's funeral for Mr. Davis and ask for his name to be placed on the state EMS memorial in Albany, which includes the names of those who died in the line of duty.

JCC Program coordinator Jeannine T. Gomiela said Mr. Davis was a motivated and enthusiastic student. "He spent a lot of time on classwork and with the rescue squad," she said. "EMS was his life and his love."

The classes have 54 students in the two-year program.

"He worked well with everyone," Ms. Gomiela said. "He was outgoing, fun-loving — just an all-around nice guy."