



Walter L. Sammis

May 2, 1945 - May 26, 2022

Walter Sammis joins an elite group of members who have demonstrated to each of us what it means to be a volunteer, through his selflessness, sacrifice, and service. These words are the lifeblood of every volunteer, and these words describe completely the man that was Ex-Chief Walter Sammis. Few people come along and have had as large an impact on an organization as Walter Sammis has had here in the Halesite Fire Department. Few members are willing to volunteer so much of their time or offer their guidance. Their hard work is seen only by a few, remains unknown to most, and yet has been central to creating the marvelous experience all of us have come to take for granted. Walter joined Halesite on May 2nd, 1963, and continued a long-standing family tradition as he already had three Uncles, his Father and his Grandfather awaiting his arrival in the Department. At the time, he was unable to join the rest of the family in the Hook and Ladder Co. since its membership quota was full, so he joined the Engine Co. instead, and switched over to the Hook & Ladder Co. in 1964 when a space opened up. While a member, he joined the US Army during the Vietnam War and served as a medic at the Ireland Army Hospital in Fort Knox, KY from 1966-1968.

He served first as Lieutenant and then, from 1971-1973, he served as Captain of the Hook and Ladder Company before being elected Halesite's 3rd Assistant Chief in 1974. He rose to the rank of Chief of the Department and where he served from 1979-1981. His tenure in the Chief's Office saw the purchase of the Department's first heat sensor after a resident called stating she could smell smoke in her home but saw no fire. Then 1st Assistant Chief Walter Sammis went to the home and spent 3 hours searching for smoke and fire to no avail. He was informed that a neighboring Department, Huntington Manor, had just purchased a heat sensor. They were only too happy to lend it to him, and within minutes of searching with the device, Chief Sammis had found an electrical wire burning behind a plastered ceiling. His quick work saved the home and its residents from certain tragedy. While Walter was Chief, he equipped each Assistant Chief with radios. Prior to his term in office, the Chief of Department was the only officer with one. His term as Chief also resulted in the purchase of the Department's Quint Ladder truck; the 1982 American Le France.

Walter oversaw several fires during his tenure. These include fires at the Crescent Club

and house fires on Flower Hill Road, Woodland Drive and Potters Lane. Walter also directed Halesite's firefighters at two mutual aid alarms: one at the Axxin Lumber Yard in Northport and the other at the Long Islander building on Main Street in Huntington.

Ex-Chief Walter Sammis was not satisfied to let his duty to the Department end with his term as Chief. He served as a dispatcher for many years, was promoted to Houseman in 1994, and in 1999 he became the full time District Manager at Halesite FD; a position he served diligently until November of 2014 when he retired.

Ex-Chief Sammis has been a significant part of Halesite's winning sports teams. He played for our Softball team and was a member of the Drill team that saw historic wins where he served as Captain. He took over his Father's firematic business and operated it for 31 years.

In 2013 Ex-Chief Sammis was celebrated for completing 50 years of active service with the Halesite Fire Department. Always modest, he insisted on no separate party for himself, but asked that the Department recognize him at the Annual Installation of Officers that year. He was presented with a special 50-year badge, a flag that had flown over the Capitol, and was honored by his Chiefs and Officers alongside representatives from New York State, Suffolk County, and Huntington Town Council. He continued to serve, acting as a Senior Chauffeur, and was always to be counted on to respond to almost every alarm. He could be found in our ready room catching up on the news of the day, enjoying a cup of coffee with the other members who popped in and out, and would always thoughtfully inquire about his fellow members life outside the fire house. His genuine interest in his brothers and sisters made him the last of a vanishing breed; someone who asks, "How are you?" and actually cared to hear the response.

Walter finally retired from active service in May 2021 when he officially transferred membership from the Hook & Ladder Company to the Lifetime Company. He said his body would no longer allow him to respond to alarms, but in his heart and mind, he would always be alert and running when the sirens went off. In his years, Walter served as a role model to many and a human bridge connecting the older, humbler fire Department to the modern one that it is today. We are all grateful for his lifetime of service to our community. Walter is predeceased by his sister Betty Ann Michta. Loving uncle of Jodi Schmalried-husband Greg. Cherished great uncle of Christie Tostevin- husband Shelby, Jessica Kay - husband Scott Kay, Christopher Simon Jr - wife Julia. Caring great grand uncle of Mikala Teague, Isabella Teague, Tyler Teague, Zoe Tostevin, Chelsea Simon and Emmie Simon.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made in Walter's memory to:

Halesite Fire Department

1 North New York Avenue

Halesite, NY 11743

<https://halesitefd.org/contact-us/donations/>

Cemetery Details

Huntington Rural Cemetery

555 New York Avenue
Huntington, NY 11743

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 1. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

A.L. Jacobsen Funeral Home, Inc.
1380 New York Avenue
Huntington Station, NY 11746
jacobsenfuneral@gmail.com

Visitation

JUN 1. 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM (ET)

A.L. Jacobsen Funeral Home, Inc.
1380 New York Avenue
Huntington Station, NY 11746
jacobsenfuneral@gmail.com

Firematic Services

JUN 1. 8:00 PM (ET)

A.L. Jacobsen Funeral Home, Inc.
1380 New York Avenue
Huntington Station, NY 11746
jacobsenfuneral@gmail.com

Gathering of Family and Friends

JUN 2. 10:00 AM (ET)

A.L. Jacobsen Funeral Home, Inc.
1380 New York Avenue
Huntington Station, NY 11746
jacobsenfuneral@gmail.com

Burial

JUN 2 (ET)

Huntington Rural Cemetery
555 New York Avenue
Huntington, NY 11743

Tribute Wall



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Walter L. Sammis.*



May 28 at 08:32 AM

ES

“ *Dear Jody and Greg,so saddened to learn of Walters passing altho we knew Walter for a week and met him at Long Island Veterans home he left a lasting impact on us. In a short period of time we got to know what a gentle,kind, caring human being he was.we got to share so much of him, his humor,humility,and wonderful caring natur.His niece Jody and her husband Greg were the most giving couple and we respected the care and love they gave him. It was our honor to know all of them. We send you our love and know that our hearts are broken Love to all of your family. Elaine and Bill Spencer*

elaine spencer - May 27 at 08:20 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Walter L. Sammis.*



May 27 at 12:24 PM

SC

“ *Thank you for your service.
With deepest condolences from the Suffolk County Fire District Manager's Association.*

SCFDMA - May 27 at 12:05 PM

EI

“ *Eileen lit a candle in memory of Walter L. Sammis*



Eileen - May 26 at 05:35 PM