AVIANCA FLIGHT 52 PLANE CRASH
**20 YEARS LATER**

Peter M. Hosey, EMT-P, MS
FDNY-EMS DEPUTY CHIEF (ret)

First Responder on the Scene

- Oyster Bay Cove Neck Police Car #258
- Interview with now retired Police Officer Henry (Hank) La Bella
- Routine Patrol on Tennis Court Road near the home of Tennis player John McEnroe
- Entered airplane and began pulling people out of plane, including the pilot/co-pilot
- Requested additional assistance including ambulances.

P.O. Hank LaBella

- As additional resources arrived, patient that were DOA were placed in McEnroe’s back yard with permission
- Some conscious patients were observed hanging from trees including one who was pregnant
- Soon after, the FBI arrived and they were concerned about drug trafficking “mules”
Nassau County Limited Disaster Plan

• Avianca Plane Crash occurred on January 25, 1990
• The Nassau County Disaster Plan at the time was rudimentary and pre-dated what we call today “Incident Command”
• After the flight 52 disaster, Nassau County began working on a new and comprehensive plan

• January 25, 1990
• 2130 hours
• Cove Neck, Long Island
• Remote Wooded/Hilly Area, dense cold/damp fog
• Nearby Homes of McEnroe, Wang and Dolan
• Boeing 707
• 158 Souls on Board
• 73 Souls Died
• 85 People Survived
• Plane Ran Out of Fuel While Attempting To Land at JFK Airport

• 83 Patients Admitted to 14 different local hospitals
• 33% with Head Injuries
• 39% with Thoracic Injuries
• 27% with Abdominal/Pelvic Injuries
• First Patient Removed some 73 minutes after the plane crash
• Last Patient Removed some 240 minutes after the plane crash

• This year, a new Nassau County Limited Disaster Plan is approved
• The last revision was in 1995
• This new plan clearly defines and promulgates who is in charge
• The plan now includes Incident Command as well as being NIMS compliant

• The Limited Disaster Plan is defined as “an incident of significant proportions confined to a geographic area that can not be mitigated through pre planned deployment of public safety resources”
• Declaration of a local emergency by the County or Town executive officer is provided under Article 2B of the New York State Executive Law
EMS PLAN

• First arriving unit establishes the Medical Command Post
• Branches of the Medical Command Post include, but not limited to:
  – Triage Area using NYSDOH SMART system of classification
  – Treatment Areas clearly defined by red, yellow, green and black
  – Medical Staging Areas for additional resources