

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