

Lighthouse Uniform Company
June 2010

9-11 Commemorative Chin Strap™ Story



In the immediate aftermath of the tragedy known as 9-11, the Lighthouse Uniform Company received a phone call from Lt. Jerry Hughes from the Chicago Fire Department. He knew about us from our Fallen Fire Fighter Dress Uniform Program.

Lt. Hughes suggested we make an attempt at getting America's Fire Service to adopt the NYFD Bell Cap as a statement of solidarity with those Firefighters lost.

The idea was explored, but in the end proved too daunting a task. It did, however, lead to the creation of the 9-11 Commemorative Chin Strap™.

Not wanting to capitalize on the moment, the Lighthouse did not market the straps and made them available to only a select group of Honor Guards. Without a public presence, the Chin Strap soon fell out of sight.

Now, almost ten years has gone by since 9-11 and there is a generation of firefighters coming up that do not relate to 9-11 like it happened to them. It is turning into a history lesson right before our eyes and the decision was made to reinvigorate the 9-11 Commemorative Chin Strap Program and use it as a bridge, to create a connection and 'make sure the past stays part of the present'.

Again, not wanting to market the strap, the Lighthouse reached out to State Chief and/or Firefighter Associations for help in disseminating the information that the straps exist.

Over the course of numerous conversations with Association presidents and executive directors, several decisions were made;

1. access to the program would be through the participating state association, there is no strap presence on the Lighthouse Uniform Company webpage
2. there will be only one beneficiary association per state
3. a cash stream will be generated for the designated beneficiary association by purchases of straps in that state
4. **chin strap activity in those states unable or unwilling to participate will be assigned to the NFFF's September 11th Fund**

In the several months the program has been available, over 30 states have chosen to participate. Only a handful of states have failed to respond or have chosen not to participate and the rest are in various stages of decision making.

The way things are going and the momentum that is building suggests the 9-11 Commemorative Chin Strap may very well join the Maltese Cross and the NYFD Bell Cap silhouette as part of Fire Service tradition.

The original target of the 9-11 Commemorative Chin Strap™ Program was to link to State Chief or Firefighter Association websites.

Now, after sharing and receiving feedback from leadership across a broad spectrum of the Fire Service and after interest from the National Fallen Firefighter Foundation, President Jeff Johnson, the soon to be retired president of the IAFC, IAFC Division leadership and several media organizations, we have raised the goal of the 9-11 Commemorative Chin Strap Program.

Our goal now is to have a dress cap with a 9-11 Commemorative Chin Strap™ on every Firefighter in the country in time for them to salute, pay and receive respect at next years 10 Year Anniversary of 9-11.

It is a heady goal. It will take serious 'creative' thinking, considerable effort and fund raising. The sight of every Firefighter, paid and volunteer, all at attention, all wearing a dress cap and 9-11 Commemorative Chin Strap would create an indelible impression on America's collective psyche. It would make a significant statement of solidarity and it would provide a cornerstone for making 9-11 the Fire Service's 'Memorial Day'.

Access to the 9-11 Commemorative Chin Strap Program is through your State Chief or Firefighter Association website or at www.lighthouseuniform.com/commemorative.

We invite you to join us in our efforts to insure the memory of all firefighters lost in the line of duty 'so others might live' stay alive and relevant in our hearts and in our minds.

Thank you very much.

Steve Cohen, Pres.
Lighthouse Uniform Company
Home of the Fallen Fire Fighter Dress Uniform Program