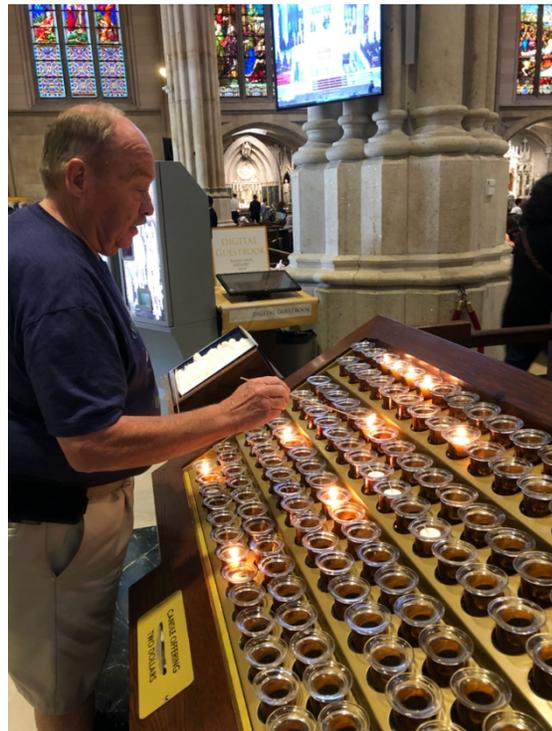




Survivor Story: Brian McQueen
Whitesboro Volunteer Fire Department, Former Chief/Current Captain, Training Division
Diagnosed with B-Cell Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma 2014

"I was that volunteer firefighter who never washed his hood, very seldom washed his turnout gear and helmet, because it was my badge of courage."



My challenge began on December 24, 2014, my life, and the lives of my family, changed forever. Being diagnosed with B-Cell Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma was attributed to my job as a volunteer firefighter and was a message that I had a very hard time understanding. Why, after 37-years in the volunteer fire service helping people, did I feel like a failure?

Yes, I was that volunteer firefighter who never washed his hood, very seldom washed his turnout gear and helmet, because it was my badge of courage. My treatments were completed at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City. I had to live in a hotel five days a week for seven weeks to be sure the treatments were properly completed. Laying under the Intensified Modulated Radiation Therapy machine for

Our Vision: To be the global leader in firefighter cancer support, awareness, and education.

Our Mission: To assist firefighters and EMS providers and their immediate families diagnosed with cancer by providing badge to badge support, training and guidance.



45-minutes a day and wondering if the cancer would enter into remission was a horrible nightmare. Cancer will change you. It will shape you and set your course in directions you never have imagined. But in the end, it will not crush, consume, or destroy you.

I was lucky to have received phone calls of support from Tony Cruz and Jerry Owenburg from the New York FCSN Chapter. They rebuilt my spirits when they were low and encouraged me to never give up. Tony sent me the FCSN Toolkit which provided some great information for my wife, who walked this walk with me each and every day. In the state of New York, in 2014, we had no presumptive cancer law for our volunteer firefighters. But through a joint effort of Firemen's Association of New York and the state's firematic and cancer organizations, this became law in 2018.

There still are days when I see that IMRT therapy pass over me while quietly laying in my own bed and it brings back some unwanted memories. I've seen very close friends of mine since 2014, suffer through a cancer diagnosis and treatments, only to have the luck that I have had. My mission now is to give my all so that no one has to suffer from firefighter occupational cancer again. But through organizations such as the Firefighter Cancer Support Network, National Volunteer Fire Council, Volunteer Combination Office Section and the National Firefighter Cancer Alliance, our firefighters now have a choice to make.

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