

Gerald Leduc - Aug 3, 2008 – Tiverton, Rhode Island

Tiverton Firefighter Dies While Attempting Water Rescue

<http://www.abc6.com/news/rhodeisland/26227984.html>

Aug 3, 2008 **Tim Martin**



ABC 6 News has learned that a Tiverton Firefighter has died while attempting a water rescue in Stafford Pond.

The firefighter was one of the divers out searching the waters of the pond looking for a man that went missing, when he lost his own life. Fire Officials tell ABC 6 news that it was around 7 p.m. Sunday night telling them that a man had fallen into the water.

Shortly after 8 p.m. one of the rescuers was taken away from the pond by ambulance. Fire officials are not releasing the name of the rescuer that has died at this time.

ABC 6 reporter Parker Gavigan has more...

Services set for Tiverton firefighter

http://www.eyewitnessnewstv.com/Global/story.asp?S=8781463&nav=menu20_3

Aug 5, 2008

TIVERTON, R.I. (WPRI) - Funeral arrangements are set for the firefighter who died while trying to find a missing boater.

Fire Chief Robert Lloyd says Gerald Leduc, a 25-year veteran, died Sunday after running into difficulty while diving in Stafford Pond for the missing man.



The search began Sunday when emergency officials received calls from people on shore who heard a woman screaming for help.

Rescue crews raced to the pond but were unable to locate the missing man, Joseph Traficante. Lloyd says he's sad for Leduc's family and planned to meet with them Tuesday.

Firefighter Gerald Leduc, 53, died Sunday evening while diving for a missing boater, who fell or jumped from a fishing boat during a storm and is presumed drowned.

Meanwhile, emergency officials have resumed their search of the pond for Traficante.

A wake for Gerald Leduc will be held Thursday from 4 until 9 p.m. at the Auclair Funeral Home, 690 So. Main St., Fall River. The funeral mass will be held on Friday at St. Theresa Church in Tiverton at 10 a.m..

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Gerald Leduc Memorial Fund, c/o any branch of Bank of America.

Search for missing boater continues

<http://www.turnto10.com/northeast/jar/news.apx.-content-articles-JAR-2008-08-04-0002.html>

Monday, Aug 04, 2008



TIVERTON, R.I. -- Emergency crews continue to search for a missing boater from Rehoboth.

Crews are searching Stafford Pond Tuesday in Tiverton, just south of Route 24 and west of Route 81.

Firefighter Gerald Leduc, 53, died Sunday evening while diving for 39-year-old Joseph Traficante, who fell or jumped from a fishing boat during a storm and is presumed drowned.

The accident happened Sunday while Traficante and his girlfriend were fishing, said Deputy Chief Kurt Blanchard of the Environmental Police. After Traficante went into the water, his girlfriend went in but could not locate her boyfriend.

Leduc, who lives near the pond, was off-duty. He drove a watercraft to the scene after hearing a report about the missing man, said Denise deMedeiros, who was with Leduc and saw him enter the pond with his diving gear. "It didn't seem like he was in distress," she told The Newport Daily News.



Divers from Westport, Mass., soon spotted Leduc motionless in the water.

He was taken to St. Anne's Hospital in Fall River, Mass., and pronounced dead. An autopsy will be done to determine the cause of death.

Dozens of firefighters gathered around the shore Monday while four dive teams searched the pond for Traficante, Blanchard said.

RI firefighter dies while trying to rescue boater

<http://www3.whdh.com/news/articles/local/BO84055/>

TIVERTON, R.I. -- Tiverton authorities have identified an experienced firefighter who died while searching for a missing boater.

Fire Chief Robert Lloyd says Gerald Leduc, a 25-year veteran, died yesterday after running into difficulty while diving in Stafford Pond for the missing man. The search began yesterday when emergency officials received calls from people on shore who heard a woman screaming for help. Rescue crews raced to the pond but were unable to locate the missing man, Joseph Traficante. Lloyd says he's sad for Leduc's family and planned to meet with them today. Meanwhile, emergency officials have resumed their search of the pond for Traficante.

Veteran firefighter dies in attempted rescue

Body recovered, believed to be that of missing boater

<http://www.eastbayri.com/detail/76703.html>

By Tom Killin Dalglish and Jill Rodrigues

TIVERTON — A veteran Tiverton firefighter, Gerald R. Leduc, 52, lost his life Sunday night while searching for a missing boater in a tragedy at Stafford Pond that began at 7 p.m. Sunday when the missing man was reported to have gone into the water from his boat as it was heading back to shore.

About 11:50 a.m. Tuesday, a body, believed to be that of the missing man, was recovered from the pond in 20 feet of water, 100 to 125 yards off the western shoreline on the pond. The body has been turned over to the medical examiner for positive identification, and the family has been notified, said Tiverton Police Chief Thomas Blakey.

An immediate search for the missing man, Joseph Traficonti, 38, of Rehoboth, Mass., was



Gerald R. Leduc, seen here in an early photo, served 25 years with the Tiverton Fire Department.



By 11:00 a.m. the Stafford Pond boat launch area off of Old Stafford Rd was closed off to only family, friends and rescue workers
Photo by Christine Hochkeppel

launched Sunday after he left his boat and disappeared, with multiple emergency personnel and nearby boaters involved. The search continued all day Monday, ceased for the night about 7 p.m., then resumed again Tuesday morning at 7:30 a.m. It was discontinued around noon when the body was recovered.

Gerald R. Leduc
One of those searching Sunday night was Mr. Leduc, who lived near the

pond. Mr. Leduc was a certified scuba diver and emergency medical technician, and after hearing about the missing boater, joined in the search just getting underway by emergency personnel.

A Tiverton Fire Department spokesman, Lieutenant Mark Reimels, said Monday morning that Mr. Leduc went into cardiac arrest at some point Sunday evening while diving during the search and was transported thereafter to the hospital, where he passed away.

Lt. Reimels said Mr. Leduc's death was believed to be "the first line-of-duty death the Tiverton Fire Department has ever had." Mr. Leduc had been "a certified diver for many, many years," he said. Lt. Reimels said Mr. Leduc "was a happy guy, always willing to help. He was involved with the Tiverton Fire Department for many, many years. That's what he did, what he loved."

"He's going to be missed. The department is not going to be the same without him," Lt. Reimels said. "We all worked together."

Mr. Leduc started his career with the department as a volunteer over 25 years ago. He has two sons, ages 19 and 22, one of whom is a EMT.

A wake in his honor is scheduled for Thursday evening, with funeral services set for Friday morning, followed by a funeral mass at 10 a.m. at St.



Tiverton Firefighter Gerald Leduc died Sunday night while attempting to rescue a boater who went overboard on Stafford Pond.

Theresa’s Church, with a processional thereafter to Notre Dame Cemetery for burial.

The search for the missing man



“The firefighter who died is just breaking our heart,” said Joan Traficonti, the mother of Joseph Traficonti, the missing man. The now-ended search for Mr. Traficonti had involved a massive effort since it began on Sunday — six dive teams from nearby communities, a helicopter, an estimated six to eight rescue boats in the water at various times, special underwater cameras and probes, with the state police and state office of

emergency management and an estimated 50 to 75 search personnel all participating.

The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) was lead agency in the effort and has custody of the boat Mr. Traficonti was operating at the time the incident occurred.

Mr. Traficonti was accompanied in his boat, a 10 to 11 foot craft with a six horsepower outboard, by Brandi Hurst, 31, of East Providence. The two had just become engaged last Sunday, said Ms. Traficonti, Mr. Traficonti’s mother. “He went out fishing and was very happy,” said Ms. Traficonti. Lt. Reimels confirmed the couple had packed a lunch and were



fishing, something that Mr. Traficonti had done before at Stafford Pond, said his mother.

For reasons that are unclear — whether to swim or due to a storm accompanied by rain that officials said had blown through about that time — he left the boat as it was heading back to the dock where it had put in at Old Stafford Road. Mr. Traficonti's mother said his girlfriend "tried to save him with all her might."

Lt. Reimels said Ms. Hurst called 911, then put on a life jacket and went into the water to look for him. "She did some heroic work," said Mr. Traficonti's mother.

Mr. Traficonti was known as an avid fisherman; "he went fishing all the time," said a friend of 20 years, Thomas Rose, 36. Mr. Rose said Mr. Traficonti operated a business known as "Joe Traf's Truck Repair." Mr. Rose said he took a call on his cell phone about 3 p.m. from Mr. Traficonti, though the two did not talk.



Christine Hochkeppel
A Dartmouth rescue boat trolls Stafford Pond in search of the missing boater on Monday.

Mr. Rose said Mr. Traficonti "treated all his customers like friends. They were important to him." He said Mr. Traficonti "was my best friend, always there to lend a helping hand. He'd just call to check in to see how your day was going." He said Mr. Traficonti loved motorcycles, camping, fishing, and being with friends.

Mr. Rose said Mr. Traficonti has a sister and two nephews under ten years old — "those kids were his world."

Stafford Pond is about 700 to 900 acres in size, and about 20 feet deep, said Sergeant Steven P. Criscione of the Department of Environmental Management police, which has jurisdiction over the scene and is investigating the accident. "Visibility is bad" in the water, he said.

Statement from Tiverton Town Administrator James C. Goncalo:

It is with great sadness and regret that I have to report that the Town of Tiverton has lost Firefighter Gerald R. Leduc as a result of a tragic accident. The accident occurred on Sunday evening August 3, 2008.



Christine Hochkeppel

Rescue boats troll Stafford Pond in search of the missing boater.

At approximately 7:56 p.m., the Tiverton Fire Department received a 911 call for two persons in the water on Stafford Pond. Upon arrival one person was removed from the water at the surface and a second victim was reported under the water for an undetermined amount of time.

Divers were dispatched and put into the water and within a few minutes

a distress call was received from a rescue boat that one of the responding divers was in distress. That diver was Gerald R. Leduc, a senior member of the Tiverton Fire Department with 25 years of service. He was removed from the water, given advanced life support and transported to St. Anne's Hospital where he was pronounced dead. The incident and the circumstances surrounding the firefighter's death are still under investigation. Efforts to recover the person in the water are continuing.

Services honoring Gerald R. Leduc

- Wake: Thursday, Aug. 7, 2008, 4 to 9 p.m., Auclair Funeral Home, 690 South Main Road, Fall River (508) 673-4366.
- Funeral Service: Friday, Aug. 8, 2008, 8 a.m., Auclair Funeral Home, 690 South Main Road, Fall River.
- Funeral mass: Friday, Aug. 8, 2008, 10 a.m., St. Theresa's Church, 265 Stafford Road, Tiverton (401) 624-8746.

Processional and burial: Friday, Aug. 8, 2008, beginning at 11 a.m. (approx.) from St. Theresa's Church, to Notre Dame Cemetery, 1540 Stafford Road, Fall River (est. distance two miles).

RI firefighter dies while trying to rescue boater

http://www.boston.com/news/local/rhode_island/articles/2008/08/04/tiverton_firefighter_dies_during_rescue_1217845198/

August 4, 2008

TIVERTON, R.I.-Emergency crews continued to search Stafford Pond for a missing boater Monday, one day after an off-duty firefighter died while trying to save the man.

Firefighter Gerald Leduc, 53, died Sunday evening while diving for 39-year-old Joseph Traficante, who fell or jumped from a fishing boat during a storm and is presumed drowned. A cause of death has not been determined. "Everyone is hurting," Fire Chief Robert Lloyd said. "Everyone is trying to sort out their feelings."

The accident happened Sunday while Traficante and his girlfriend were fishing, said Deputy Chief Kurt Blanchard of the Environmental Police. After Traficante went into the water, his girlfriend went in but could not locate her boyfriend.

Leduc, who lives near the pond, was off-duty. He drove his jet ski to the scene after hearing a report about the missing man, said Denise deMedeiros, who has with Leduc and saw him enter the pond with his diving gear. "It didn't seem like he was in distress," she told The Newport Daily News.

Divers from Westport, Mass., soon spotted Leduc motionless in the water. He was taken to St. Anne's Hospital in Fall River, Mass., and pronounced dead. An autopsy will be conducted to determine the cause of death. Dozens of firefighters gathered around the shore Monday while four dive teams searched the pond for Traficante, Blanchard said.

One resident, Joseph Arruda, watched from his van parked near a boat ramp. Arruda credited Leduc with saving his life in 1982 by tying a tourniquet on his leg to stop the bleeding after a car accident. "If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be here today," Arruda said.

Fallen Tiverton Firefighter was Known as Good Neighbor, Great Friend

<http://www.abc6.com/news/26253099.html> VIDEO

Aug 4, 2008 John Eagan

The American flag flies at half-staff Monday outside the Tiverton Fire Department and at the home of veteran firefighter Gerald Leduc.

52-year old Leduc died Sunday night after going into cardiac arrest while he was searching Stafford Pond with several other divers, looking for a missing boater.

Neighbors say he was known as a good neighbor and friend who could fix almost anything and was always there when you needed him. Fellow Tiverton firefighters are coming to terms with the loss of the 24-year veteran, the first firefighter killed in the line of duty in the town's history. ABC 6 reporter Jennifer Gannon has more on Leduc's legacy...

To the end, firefighter spent his life trying to help others

http://www.projo.com/news/content/leduc_08-05-08_KLB40F5_v49.403fbad.html

August 5, 2008 By Amanda Milkovits Journal Staff Writer

TIVERTON, RI - Sunday was Gerald Leduc's day off from the Tiverton Fire Department, so he was zipping around Stafford Pond on his jet ski when he detoured over to his best friend's dock, barely a half-mile from his own.

Leduc and Philip Godek had known each other going way back to when Leduc was a young volunteer firefighter. He'd been eager to become a certified scuba diver in case the department formed a dive team and needed to search for people in the water. Godek, the owner of Pisces Diving Services in the north end of town, was Leduc's instructor, and they became best friends.

The old friends chatted for a while, and then Leduc, 52, jetted home. And then his pager went off. Someone was in trouble in the pond. They were calling in dive teams from Little Compton and Fall River.

Tiverton had never formed a dive team, but Leduc was still certified. He called his fire chief and volunteered to join the search. He grabbed his diving gear and was gone.

A little while later, a neighbor noticed sirens and lights down at the end of the pond and called Godek. "We'll call Gerry and find out what's going on," Godek told his wife.

Someone else answered Leduc's cell phone. He'd had a heart attack as he prepared to dive in search of a missing Rehoboth fisherman.



Members of the Tiverton Fire Department come to shore after searching Stafford Pond yesterday for a missing boater. At right is Tiverton Fire Chief Robert Lloyd. The Providence Journal / Bob Breidenbach

Godek was one of the first at the St. Anne's Hospital emergency room in Fall River, where Leduc had been taken Sunday night. "I spent 45 minutes holding his hand last night," Godek said yesterday. "It doesn't seem real. It never does."

The flag outside Leduc's home at the edge of Stafford Pond was at half-staff yesterday, while across the pond, divers from four different agencies continued to search for the body of 38-year-old Joseph Traficante. Divers carefully dodged stumps and rocks, but the murky water didn't yield any sign of the missing man.

The flag at Fire Station 4, where Leduc had worked, was lowered. Black bunting was draped over the doorways of Fire Station 3, a short distance from the pond. The Fire Department that he'd served for 36 years, as a volunteer and paid firefighter, was planning his funeral yesterday afternoon. Fire Lt. Mark Reimels said he believed that Leduc was the first Tiverton firefighter to die in the line of duty. Leduc died of an apparent cardiac arrest soon after he'd gotten into the water, he said.

Leduc had joined the department at age 16 and then was hired in 1984. Godek was there at Town Hall when Leduc was sworn in. Back then, his friend had the nickname "Lucky Leduc," Godek said, though the reasons for it have vanished in time.

Leduc was one of the indispensable people in this small town, where he was 1 of just 32 paid firefighters. He wore his Fire Department pager all the time, just in case he was needed, Godek said. The circumstances of his death -- volunteering to save someone -- were characteristic of him. "He was just one of those guys who just wanted to help people," Godek said.

Leduc was close to his sons, Michael, 22, who is studying to be a paramedic, and Jonathan, 20, who loves computers. "He was really the kind of father who would do anything for his kids," Godek said.

Leduc was divorced and was dating Denise deMedeiros, the School Committee chairwoman, whom he'd met when she was a nurse at the emergency room at St. Anne's Hospital. DeMedeiros declined to speak at Leduc's home yesterday.

He had many friends, Godek said, and he was known for his sense of humor, and for his love for hot tubs, especially his own eight-person tub installed on a pavilion at his house.

Some stories combine both humor and hot tubs. Leduc loved staying at Loon Mountain -- he didn't ski, but he loved the hot tub there. He was in the hot tub when a stranger asked him about the ski trails, Godek remembered. Leduc made up some good stories about conditions on the trails, until deMedeiros called his bluff, and the stranger scurried away in confusion.

Leduc thought it was " Godek remembered. hilarious. "He said, 'I really had that guy going!'

Godek spent yesterday pacing inside his quiet shop, alone with the dive equipment and fire extinguishers from his other business, Tiverton Fire and Safety, which he'd bought from Leduc about 25 years ago.

They'd worked together for years on jobs filling and fixing fire extinguishers for clients in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and southern New Hampshire, always staying at hotels with hot tubs. Leduc was using his scuba-diving skills to work on pool drains for a friend's pool company. Godek teased him about scuba diving in swimming pools.

On Friday, Leduc had spent the day at Godek's shop working on 40 fire extinguishers. He told Godek he'd be back on Monday to finish the remaining 25. All day, Godek waited, unable to work, believing somehow that his best friend would walk in the door.

The wake for firefighter Gerald Leduc will be held Thursday from 4 to 9 p.m. at Auclair's Funeral Home, 690 South Main St., Fall River. A procession will leave the funeral home at 8 a.m. Friday to St. Theresa's Church, 265 Stafford Rd., Tiverton, for the funeral Mass at 10 a.m. The funeral procession and Mass were originally scheduled at 10 a.m., and noon, but were changed to the earlier times. Burial is at Notre Dame Cemetery, 1540 Stafford Rd., Fall River. A memorial fund has been set up in Leduc's name at all Bank of America branches.

With reports from staff writers Chloe Thompson and Gina Macris.
amilkovi@projo.com

Searchers mourn firefighter, find no trace of missing man

http://www.projo.com/news/content/FIREFIGHTER_DIES_08-05-08_3TB3SMI_v25.403ca9f.html

August 5, 2008 By Chloe Thompson Journal Staff Writer

TIVERTON -- As they mourned Sunday's death of a veteran firefighter and dive team member in the search for a missing boater on Stafford Pond, searchers yesterday found no sign of the missing fisherman despite an all-day effort.

Firefighter Gerald Leduc, 52, of 95 Forand Lane, a certified diver who had participated in several Fire Department dive operations, died of apparent cardiac arrest after entering the water, according to fire Lt. Mark Reimels. Reimels said he believes Leduc's death is the first in the line of duty at the Tiverton Fire Department.

"I don't think it's really hit us yet," he said at a morning news conference as the search continued for Joseph Traficante, 38, of Rehoboth. As the search went on for Traficante after Leduc's death, Reimels said, "That's what he was doing, that's what we're continuing today."

Searchers have "one area of significant interest," believed to be where the boater was last in the water as reported by his girlfriend, Brandi Hurst. Traficante and Hurst were fishing from an 11-foot boat Sunday when a storm passed through, according to Sgt. Steve Criscione of the state Department of Environmental Management.

The search was suspended around 6 p.m. and is due to resume today at 8 a.m. Criscione said the storm produced "heavy rain and some wind." The water in the pond is around 82 degrees, he said.

Officials couldn't say why Traficante left the boat, but they didn't believe he fell overboard due to the storm. However, the boat was headed back to the ramp where they had launched it, presumably to get away from the storm, he said.

When Traficante did not reappear in the water, Hurst called 911 and put on a life jacket to jump in the water after him, officials said. Six dive teams, underwater cameras and underwater probes were employed yesterday afternoon to aid in the search for Traficante. "It's a big body of water to search," Criscione said, estimating the water to be 20 feet deep in some places. The pond is a popular fishing spot that spans about 700 acres and is stocked by the DEM with trout. Underwater visibility is bad more than 50 feet offshore, he said.

Divers from Fall River, Westport, Portsmouth, the Rhode Island State Police and Dartmouth, Mass., all worked on the search. They would go into the pond for hour-long stints before breaking because of fatigue. Officials said the murky water is full of stumps and rocks that slow the process. Leduc worked at Station 4, on East Road, and had been a firefighter for 25 years. He began as a volunteer when he was 16, and at least one of his two sons has followed in his footsteps as an EMT.

A memorial fund has been set up in memory of Leduc, called the Gerald Leduc Memorial Fund. Contributions can be made at any Bank of America. cthompson@projo.com



Lt. Mark Reinels, of the Tiverton Fire Department, addresses the media yesterday on the search for a missing boater on Stafford Pond. The Providence Journal / Bob Breidenbach

Body found in Tiverton pond

<http://www.turnto10.com/northeast/jar/news.apx.-content-articles-JAR-2008-08-05-0012.html>

Aug 05, 2008

TIVERTON, R.I. -- Rescuers searching a Tiverton pond on Tuesday found the body of a Rehoboth man who was reported missing over the weekend.

Gail Mastrati of the state Department of Environmental Management said searchers recovered the body of Joseph Traficante, 39, at about noon in 20 feet of water at Stafford Pond.



The search for Traficante began Sunday when he went into Stafford Pond from a fishing boat. Officials said Traficante left the boat on his own, perhaps to swim. He never surfaced, and his girlfriend called for help.

Meanwhile, the family of firefighter Gerald Leduc, who died during the initial rescue effort, is planning a funeral Mass on Friday at St. Theresa's Church in Tiverton.

Leduc, who was off-duty, put on scuba gear to assist with the search. He was soon spotted motionless in the water and rushed to a hospital, where he di

Body recovered on Stafford Pond; services planned for fallen firefighter

http://www.heraldnews.com/police_and_fire/x436049115/Body-recovered-on-Stafford-Pond-services-planned-for-fallen-firefighter

Aug 05, 2008 By Will Richmond **Herald News Staff Reporter**

Tiverton — Fire departments across the northeast will help the town mourn the loss of fallen firefighter Gerald R. Leduc. Judy Ferreira, an administrative assistant for Fire Chief Robert D. Lloyd, said a processional march has been scheduled for Friday morning.

The march will begin after a 10 a.m. funeral Mass, at St. Theresa Church, 265 Stafford Road. It will end at Notre Dame Cemetery, where Leduc will be laid to rest. "From what I'm hearing, there will be a couple of fire departments from out of state, and we do expect the turnout to be quite large," Ferreira said Tuesday.

She asked that members from participating fire departments gather Friday

morning at the New Harbour Mall in Fall River no later than 8:30 a.m. From there participants will be bused to the church.

Ferreira said the mood around the Fire Department remained somber as preparations were being made for Leduc's services. "I still think everyone is kind of working to prepare and everyone is trying to deal with their emotions right now," Ferreira said.

Leduc died Sunday evening from cardiac arrest after attempting to locate a man who fell from his boat on Stafford Pond.

The search for Joseph Traficonti, 39, of Rehoboth, appears to have come to an end Tuesday afternoon. Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management spokeswoman Gail Mastrati said a body was found in Stafford Pond shortly after noon. She said the body was found in an area 120 to 125 feet off of the pond's western shore and about a quarter-mile north of the Stone Bridge Fire District water treatment plant, which was being used as a staging area during the search efforts. Mastrati said the body was located in an area about 20 feet deep and was in the prime search location.

A spokeswoman for the Rhode Island Medical Examiner's office said Tuesday afternoon that no positive identification has been made on the body.

Deputy Chief Kurt Blanchard, of the DEM's law enforcement unit, said the search for the missing body was complicated by underwater conditions. "The difficulty was due to the visibility under the water," Blanchard said. "Typically, that pond is pretty clear, and I don't know if it was because of recent weather or what but the conditions were quite murky. But through the use of a camera and continual diving, we were able to locate the body."

A woman identified as Traficonti's girlfriend, Brandy Hurst, was rescued from Stafford Pond Sunday evening.

Investigators said Hurst called 911 before attempting to find Traficonti, who went overboard as the couple attempted to return to a boat ramp on Old Stafford Road as a fast-moving storm moved through the area, dumping heavy rains.

A 25-year veteran of the town's Fire Department, Leduc began as a 16-year-old volunteer who along the way earned certification as a scuba diver and as an emergency medical technician. He was also treasurer of the Tiverton Firefighters Local 1703.

Leduc, who is believed to be the first Tiverton firefighter to die while in the line of duty, is survived by his sons Michael and Jonathan Leduc, his parents, Shirley Grota and Romeo Leduc, a stepsister Linda Adams and his companion, Denise DeMedeiros.

A funeral for Leduc will be held Friday at 8 a.m. at the Auclair Funeral Home, 690 S. Main St., Fall River. Visitation hours will be held Thursday from 4 to 9 p.m.

A memorial fund has also been established in Leduc's name. Donations to the Gerald R. Leduc Memorial Fund can be made at any Bank of America branch.

E-mail Will Richmond at wrichmond@heraldnews.com.

Missing boater's body found in pond

http://www.projo.com/news/content/body_found_08-06-08_59B4C6N_v8.86e5a8.html

August 6, 2008 By Brandie Jefferson Projo.com staff writer

A search team yesterday recovered the body of a man who went off his boat into Tiverton's Stafford Pond Sunday, according to Gail Mastrati, spokeswoman for the Department of Environmental Management.

Joseph Traficante, 38, of Rehoboth, was on the pond fishing with his girlfriend when a storm rolled in. As they headed back to the dock, Traficante somehow ended up in the water, according to investigators.

Authorities say that at about 7 p.m. on Sunday, Traficante went into the water. They do not believe he fell, but they do not yet know why he left the boat. His girlfriend, Brandi Hurst, called 911 when Traficante did not emerge from the water. Then she put on a life jacket and went in after him, but could not find him.

Tiverton firefighter Gerald Leduc died of a heart attack during the initial phase of the search. Leduc, 52, was a certified diver and had conducted similar rescue operations in the past. He had worked with the Tiverton force in various capacities since he was 16.

Traficante's body was in the vicinity of a specific search area that was narrowed down with help from Hurst. The body was found shortly after noon yesterday in about 20 feet of water, according to Mastrati. The body was about 100 to 125 yards off the west shore of the pond, and about a quarter-mile north of a water treatment facility.

The state medical examiner's office took custody of the body for an autopsy. bjeffers@projo.com

Body of missing RI boater found in pond

<http://www.eyewitnessnewstv.com/Global/story.asp?S=8796669&nav=F2DO>

Updated: Aug 6, 2008 07:26 AM CDT



TIVERTON, R.I. (AP) - Rescuers searching a Tiverton pond have found the body of a boater who went missing there this weekend.

A spokeswoman for the state Department of Environmental Management says searchers recovered the body of 39-year-old Joseph Traficante yesterday in 20 feet of water at Stafford Pond.

Leduc, who was off-duty, put on scuba gear to assist with the search.

The search started Sunday evening when Traficante went into the pond from a fishing boat. Officials said Traficante left the boat on his own, perhaps to swim.

He never surfaced, and his girlfriend called for help.

Meanwhile, the family of firefighter Gerald Leduc, who died during the initial rescue effort, is planning a funeral Mass on Friday in St. Theresa Church in Tiverton.

Leduc, who was off-duty, put on scuba gear to assist with the search. He was soon spotted motionless in the water and rushed to a hospital, where he died.

Firefighters bid farewell to a brother, Gerald R. Leduc

http://www.projo.com/news/content/FIREFIGHTER_FUNERAL_08-09-08_G1B5QAE_v26.3a45be3.html

August 9, 2008 By Gina Macris Journal Staff Writer

TIVERTON — The Fire Department radio crackled: "Last call to roll call number 14."

Mourners heard the broadcast at the gravesite of Lt. Gerald R. Leduc. While Leduc's family and fellow firefighters gathered around his casket in Notre Dame Cemetery, across the state line in Fall River, a dispatcher formally recalled the rescue effort that had begun at 6:56 p.m. last Sunday with an order to "respond to Stafford Pond for a man drowned."



Tiverton firefighter Lt. Mark Reimels, center, joins others at the graveside service for Lt. Gerald R. Leduc. Providence Journal / John Freidah

"With regret, the Tiverton Fire Department announces the death of our brother, Gerald R. Leduc," the dispatcher continued. "His efforts will be an inspiration to us all," the broadcast concluded.

A bell pealed a total of 40 times, twice repeating the traditional signal for a fallen firefighter, which had been included in the broadcast, "Five five, five five. Five five, five five. 55-55."

For hours yesterday, Fire Chief Robert Lloyd had led an honor guard of a dozen men in precision movements as they accompanied Leduc's coffin from the Auclair Funeral Home in Fall River to a funeral attended by a thousand people in Tiverton, and then to the gravesite.

One last time, they removed the flag-covered casket from a 1942 fire truck that had been loaned by the Providence Fire Department.

After setting the coffin down, the honor guard folded the flag. Lloyd knelt and presented it to Leduc's elder son, Michael, 22, who is training to become a paramedic.

Another member of the department presented Michael with a ceremonial firefighter's hat bearing the number 14 and the rank of lieutenant — a posthumous promotion.

After the bagpipe players' rendition of "Amazing Grace" had faded to a whisper, after the last tone of the bell, firefighters from Tiverton and elsewhere, filed by the casket, leaving white gloves in their wake. Then it was over. And Lloyd and his men broke down, sharing their grief in embrace after embrace with each other and with firefighters from other communities. All week, preparations for the pageantry of Leduc's funeral had given members of the Fire Department a focus to distract them from the void left by death.

More than 500 firefighters — some from Boston, New York and as far away as the state of Georgia — showed up at St. Theresa Church at Stafford and Eagleville roads. The turnout would have been larger had not many firefighters already begun traveling to a convention that begins on Sunday, according to George Farrell, chief of the Providence Fire Department.

Farrell, walkie-talkie in hand, coordinated logistics as one school bus after another disgorged uniformed men, and a few women, in front of the church. One of them was Bill Carreira, a captain in the fire department of Kingsland, Ga., who had worked side by side with Leduc in the former Stone Bridge station in Tiverton. "He helped me get where I am today. I wouldn't miss this for the world," said Carreira as he waited outside the church for the funeral procession.

Col. Brendan Doherty, the superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police, pulled up. Rhode Island Attorney General Patrick C. Lynch walked into the church. U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy followed. Members of the Town Council, the School Committee and other local officials were already seated.

More than an hour earlier, two fire trucks had pulled into the parking lot, raising their ladders in an arch over the entrance to the church.

When the cortege arrived, in a procession from the funeral home about three miles away, Leduc's casket passed beneath a huge American flag that had been suspended between the ladders.

St. Theresa's pastor, the Rev. Peter Andrews, and one of Leduc's colleagues, Douglas Busse, eulogized him in remarks heard inside the church and outside in the parking lot.

Leduc, 52, was on his day off last Sunday, jet-skiing on Stafford Pond, when the pager he wore signaled that there was a missing boater in the area. Leduc, a 24-year veteran of the department and a certified diver, suffered an apparent heart attack after donning his gear and getting into the water. "There's not a moment he didn't stop offering himself to this town," said Father Andrews.

He said Leduc found his fulfillment in enriching the lives of others and setting an example for those he leaves behind. "He called on us to be better than we already are," said Father Andrews, who led prayers for all firefighters who risk their lives. Busse said that at Christmas time, Leduc arranged for Santa to ride on the back of a fire truck to bring cheer to local children. In his mind's eye, Busse said, he could see Leduc presiding over a clambake at his home, going back and forth to make sure his guests had all they needed. "He tried to take care of his boys," Busse said, referring to Michael Leduc and his younger brother, Jonathan, who both lived with their father.

When he was afraid, Busse said, he took his strength from Leduc, who was so in tune with his job that he had a sixth sense about emergencies. More than once, in the middle of the night, Leduc, half dressed, would wake him, before an emergency call ever came in, Busse said. "I'm glad I knew him," Busse said. "I'm grateful for the memories," he said.

As the funeral concluded, firefighters who had followed the ceremony on outdoor loudspeakers lined up behind a couple dozen flag bearers and stood at attention. In the crowd was Shadow, a Dalmatian belonging to the East Providence Fire Department. "He kind of brings a smile to people's faces on a sad occasion," said East Providence Battalion Chief Robert Jobin. Dalmatians, the traditional mascots of firefighters, used to protect the horses that drew fire wagons before the advent of the gasoline engine, Jobin explained.

As the funeral cortege moved from the church to the cemetery, more than a mile away, stillness fell over the procession, despite a helicopter overhead and the gentle hum of the vehicles, including 10 motorcycles in the lead. People lined Stafford Road to watch.

Some homes, with flagpoles in the yards, flew the American flag at half staff.

One woman held up a sign that said, "Thank you, Gerald R. Leduc."

— With reports from staff writer Chloe Thompson gmacris@projo.com

Tiverton honors a fallen firefighter with a "last call"

<http://www.eastbayri.com/detail/76837.html>

8/9/08 [By Tom Killin Dalglish](#)

Funeral ceremonies imbued with symbolism, firefighters' sense of brotherhood

TIVERTON — A trumpet sounded the broken notes of taps at 12:49 p.m. on Friday, August 8. Minutes later, still piping a refrain from the lament "Amazing Grace," a lone bagpiper walked towards the crest of a hill in Notre Dame Cemetery in Fall River, away from his pipe and drum band and the mourners gathered graveside for the burial of Tiverton firefighter Lieutenant Gerald R. Leduc.

Funeral ceremonies for Lt. Leduc, who died last Sunday evening in the line of duty in a rescue effort at Stafford Pond, were drawing to an end.

A symbolic "last call"

A dispatcher's voice then broke in over fire department radios nearby, with a symbolic ceremonial last call. "Fire alarm to Roll Call 14. Fire alarm to Roll Call 14," the dispatcher said. "Roll Call 14" was Lt. Leduc's badge number. There followed an all stations tone, then an alert burst, as the dramatic re-enactment continued. The dispatcher's voice broke in again. "This is WPMC 283, the Tiverton fire department announcing Signal 5-5-5-5. All units stand by for department message." After a 10 second pause, the message was repeated.

("WPMC 283" is the radio call signal for the Tiverton Fire Department, an official later explained, and signal "5-5-5-5" is code, widely used throughout the country, announcing a line-of-duty death.)

From a script, the radio dispatcher then read the following message twice to the assembled mourners.

"Fire alarm announcing the recall of still box 1295 [the incident number], transmitted on August 3, 2008 at 1865 hours, to respond to Stafford Pond for a possible drowning victim. The signal 5-5-5-5 has been transmitted, the



**Tiverton Fire
Department Chief
Robert Lloyd
embraces Fred
Almeida after the
burial ceremony for
Sgt. Gerald Leduc
Photo by Christine
Hochkeppel**



At graveside, Tiverton firefighters (from front) Jason Andrade, Paul Volaro, Peter Manchester Jr., and William Paniccia hear the dispatcher read "The Last Call."

Photo by Christine Hochkeppel

message is as follows: with regret the Tiverton Fire Department announces the death of our brother Lieutenant Gerald R. Leduc of Station 4, appointed to the department May 9, 1984. His efforts are an inspiration to us all."

Minutes later the burial ceremony ended. Among the final honors, Tiverton Fire Chief Robert D. Lloyd presented the folded American flag, that had covered the casket, Lt. Leduc's helmet bearing the number "14," and the medal of valor and the medal of honor that had been awarded posthumously to Lt. Leduc,

to Lt. Leduc's two sons, Michael 22, and Jonathan, 19.

As a closing gesture, Tiverton's firefighters all placed their white gloves atop the casket, never to be used for another purpose and intended to be interred with the casket. Mourners embraced and consoled each other.

In all the details — in the appearances, staging, sequence of events, words and music, and the presence of what police estimated were about 2,000 to 2,500 fire and safety personnel from out-of-state — the bonds that hold firefighters together were everywhere evident. It was an occasion filled with symbolism, tradition, and sadness, and it clearly left an imprint. "That was one dedicated fireman," said one graveside mourner, Marie Lewis, as the burial ceremony began. "We lost a good man there."

Lieutenant Leduc, a certified diver, died from apparent cardiac arrest last Sunday evening shortly after a diving search had gotten underway for a missing boater on Stafford Pond. He is believed the first ever firefighter in the town's 300 year history to have died in the line-of-duty. He was a veteran of over 25 years with the department.

The body of the boater, Joseph Traficante, 38, of Rehoboth, was recovered from the pond Tuesday around noon.



Pallbearers carry casket holding Lt. Gerald R. Leduc from St. Theresa's Church following funeral mass. Photo by Christine Hochkeppel



Antique firetruck serving as caisson, carrying casket of Lt. Gerald R. Leduc, passes Tiverton Station No. 2 (headquarters) for last time, as firefighters from Wakefield and Portsmouth salute.

Photo by Tom Killin Dalglish

The ceremonies and procession

Preparation for the elaborate and ritualized funeral ceremonies in honor of Tiverton's fallen firefighter was a week-long endeavor by Tiverton officials. Procession routes were planned and changed. The town council met in special session Wednesday night. Pall bearers from Tiverton's honor guard, and members of the police color guard, practiced their moves. Stafford Road, the route to be traveled on foot from St. Theresa's church to the cemetery, was cleaned and swept.



Lt. Leduc's bunker pants and coat hang from back of Engine No. 1, the fire truck (his "piece") to which he was assigned. **Photo by Christine Hochkeppel**



Captain Bob Bradley, of the Central Falls Fire Dept., adjusts the pipes of a fellow bagpiper. The Rhode Island Professional Firefighters Pipes and Drums, rehearsed at Winnisimmet Plaza while waiting to join procession from the funeral home to St. Theresa's Church. **Photo by Christine Hochkeppel**

A wake for Lt. Leduc was held Thursday evening at Auclair Funeral Home at 690 South Main Street in Fall River. A funeral service took place at the same location on Friday morning at 8 a.m..

While the Friday morning service was taking place, the nearly 2,000 or so firefighters and other safety personnel from other towns and states were gathering at Harbour Mall in Fall River. From there they were bused to St. Theresa's Church, where they mustered in rows to await the procession of



In front of St. Theresa's church flag hangs between ladder trucks, ladders fully extended. **Photo by Christine Hochkeppel**

vehicles coming from the funeral home— with the caisson carrying the flag-draped casket.

After the funeral service, the vehicle procession from Auclair's in Fall River to St. Theresa's in Tiverton for the funeral mass followed a route that, by intention, lead it past Tiverton Fire Station No. 2 at 85 Main Road (fire department headquarters). The cortege was led by a 10 motorcycle escort, and

included 56 personal cars of family and fire department members and 4 police cruisers.

Engine No. 1, to which Lt. Leduc had been assigned (referred to as his "piece" by firefighters) was draped in black. At its rear on hooks were hung the fallen firefighter's bunker pants, coat, and his helmet (#14).



An estimated 2,000 firefighters from in and outside the state mustered, some with flags, in front of entrance to St. Theresa's church.

Photo by Christine Hochkeppel



Westport Fire Department Chief William Tripp salutes as Lt. Leduc's coffin is carried into the church **Photo by Christine Hochkeppel**

Behind and following Engine No. 1 was an antique fire truck — Tender No. 7, a 1942 General Motors truck on loan from the Providence Fire Department Honor Guard — that was serving as a caisson and carried the casket, flanked by six standing Tiverton firefighters.

As the caisson passed Tiverton Fire Station No. 2, firefighters temporarily staffing the station from the Wakefield and Portsmouth Fire Departments, mustered in line out front and saluted.



The procession presses on to the cemetery in Fall River.
Photo by Christine Hochkeppel

After the last passing of Station 2 on Main Road, the cortege turned east on Hooper Street, then went north into Fall River on Mariano Bishop Boulevard to William Canning Boulevard, then returned south to Stafford Road. At Winnisimet Plaza on Stafford Road, at Chester Street, a short distance down from the Fall River line, the cortege stopped briefly.

There it was joined by the Tiverton Police Department color guard and the bagpipe and drum marching band, which took up position in the lead of the caisson, behind which were assembled members of the Tiverton fire department, all marching on foot in formation for the last several hundred yards to the church. After them followed the 56 vehicle cortege.

Along the way a scattering of townspeople lined the roads, some with flags, some holding their hands over their hearts as the procession went by.



Bagpipers lead fire truck caisson carrying casket to graveside. Photo by Tom Killin Dalglish



Caisson firetruck carrying casket enters Notre Dame Cemetery after funeral mass. **Photo by Christine Hochkeppel**

The placement of the caisson and the firefighters was symbolic, said Lieutenant David Homen, one of those involved in coordinating the occasion. "We're protecting our fallen members," he said.

At St. Theresa's Church the entire cortege was met by the mustered firefighters from out of town and state, arrayed in an estimated seven long rows that ran the length of the church parking lot.

The funeral mass



Lt. Leduc's sons at graveside, Michael, 22 (left), with medals, and Jonathan, 19, with helmet and flag, and Lt. Leduc's mother Shirley Grotta at right. **Photo by Christine Hochkeppel**

"Today we say farewell, but we do not say good-bye," said St. Theresa's Reverend Peter Andrews to the guests that filled the church, and firefighters under tents outside who were listening on loudspeakers.

Reverend Andrews lauded Lt. Leduc's commitment to service, saying the one thing he'd heard again and again people say about him was "there was not a moment he didn't stop offering himself." "If Gerry were standing before me," Reverend Andrews said, "I believe he would be

honored by what is happening today."



At graveside, Tiverton firefighters (from front) Jason Andrade, Paul Volaro, Peter Manchester Jr., and William Paniccia hear the dispatcher read "The Last Call."

Photo Christine Hochkeppel

Douglas Busse, a senior firefighter and close friend of Lt. Leduc's of many years, said "if you knew Gerry intimately in any way, you'd know he was a good man." Mr. Busse said "Gerry would arrange for Santa Clause to ride on the back of a ladder truck,"

and he spoke of Lt. Leduc's clambakes, often attended by many people. "I came to respect Gerry, and although I'll miss him, I was so glad I knew him," Mr. Busse said. "It's hard to give our life for someone else. That day like any day Gerry went out to help."

Graveside

From St., Theresa's the police motorcycle escort, Engine No. 1 and the caisson proceeded on Stafford Road to Notre Dame Cemetery, one of the largest in Fall River with about 76,000 burials since 1888 and covering an estimated 40 to 50 acres. Lt. Leduc's burial site is a little over a mile east into the cemetery on a gentle western-facing slope just in front of a new mausoleum.

Shortly before reaching the burial plot the motorcade was joined again for the last few hundred yards by the bagpipe band, the color guard and fire department members. Following the burial mourners and guests were invited to White's Restaurant in Westport.



Firefighter David Haddad carries Lt. Leduc's helmet (#14), later presented by Tiverton Fire Chief Robert D.Lloyd to Lt. Leduc's two sons, Michael and Jonathan.

Photo Christine Hochkeppel



Tiverton Fire Department Chief Robert Lloyd embraces Fred Almeida after the burial ceremony for Sgt. Gerald Leduc

Photo by Christine Hochkeppel