

1-17-2011 Pretoria S. Africa - Henry Knox – FF Flood Rescue Kayak

Come on Knoxie, not today! - frantic rescuers

<http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Come-on-Knoxie-not-today-frantic-friends-20110117>

2011-01-17 Fanie van Rooyen, Beeld

Pretoria – Experienced, exhausted rescue workers from the Tshwane fire brigade cried openly and hugged each other on the banks of the Hennops River in Irene, Centurion, on Monday morning after a colleague died trying to save flood victims.

Henry Knox, 42, was pinned underwater by his kayak after it capsized.

Rescue workers tried for 45 minutes non-stop to revive Knox with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

Knox, who was based at the Wonderboom fire station, was declared dead on arrival at the Unitas hospital after being flown there in a police helicopter.

The pent-up emotion started to show after the rescuers had loaded him onto a stretcher and into a police helicopter.

“It is a very sad day for us,” Johan Pieterse, spokesperson for the Tshwane fire brigade, said on Monday.

“Henry has been a fireman for nearly 24 years. Everyone knew him. He's the first fireman from Pretoria to die while on duty. Many a grown man is in tears today (Monday).”

According to him, Knox was a highly experienced fireman.

Search called off

Knox and his colleagues, as well as several police divers were searching on Monday for seven people who, according to a witness, were swept away by



**A despondent Tshwane firefighter after all attempts to resuscitate his colleague, Henry Knox, failed.
(Deaan Vivier, Beeld)**

floodwaters after heavy morning rain.

Pieterse said the fire brigade saved another seven people from the floodwaters in Centurion and Irene and at least three vehicles were swept off a bridge.

"A young man in a VW Golf was swept away by the Kaal River, a tributary of the Hennops River and came to a stop near the Glen Road (M18) bridge over the river, south of Irene," said Pieterse.

The man's car had turned over onto its roof in the water and as a result he had to spend three hours standing on the chassis and holding onto a tree before he could be brought to safety.

"He told us that, while he was stuck, he saw seven people being swept past him by the deluge, which is why we started the search."

Late on Monday Pieterse said the search for these seven people was called off because no family members had come forward to report missing persons.

Taken away by helicopter

Beeld's reporters moved down along the riverbank, thick with brush, and saw rescue workers trying to resuscitate Knox, who had been pulled from the water onto an island.

After several minutes the firefighters threw a rope from the kayak to the reporters so they could bring their friend to the shore.

Once on the river bank they started mouth-to-mouth resuscitation again as rescue workers repeatedly told their friend: "Komaan, Knoxie! Nie vandag nie ou pê!" (Come on, Knoxie! Not today old pal!)

Paramedics from Netcare 911 emergency services arrived on the scene and put Knox on a ventilator before he was taken away by police helicopter.

Earlier on Monday two people had to be rescued from an island and a further two from high walls in the Centurion golf estate.

At the bridge over the Hennops River in Nellmapius Road in Irene a woman was saved from the roof of her Mercedes-Benz, which had been swept along by the deluge.

Tshwane firefighter drowns

<http://www.eyewitnessnews.co.za/articleprog.aspx?id=57278>

1/17/2011 Barry Bateman

Monday will be remembered as the first day a Tshwane firefighter has ever died in the line of duty.

Henry Knox drowned while searching for flood victims believed to have been washed down a river in Irene.

Large parts of Centurion have been hit by flooding with reports of seven people being washed away, but no missing persons cases have been reported.

Knox saved lives for more than 25 years and died trying to save more.

Emergency services spokesperson Johan Pieterse said his colleague was an experienced firefighter.

"The search and rescue teams are all well-trained and qualified. They go for follow-up courses," he added

It is understood that Knox was trapped in rolling rapids when his canoe collapsed.

Other rescuers used an oar to free him but it was too late.

After 45 minutes of resuscitation he was airlifted to hospital where he died.

(Edited by Lisa Bartlett)

Tshwane firefighter was in line for medal

<http://www.eyewitnessnews.co.za/articleprog.aspx?id=57365>

1/18/2011 Barry Bateman & Gia Nicolaides

Eyewitness News has learnt that the fireman who was killed in the Centurion floods was in line to receive a medal for rescuing victims caught in the December floods.

Henry Knox drowned on Monday while searching for flood victims when he was swept away in raging rivers. He was the first Tshwane fireman to die in the line of duty.

The Tshwane metro council management paid their respects to Knox's family on Tuesday.

His fiancée, who did not want to be identified, said he was committed to his job.

"His work was his everything," she said. "He just completed 24 years of service...and he bragged about it."

His sister Renda Gouws said she was proud of her brother.

"He lived for his work. I think he was a legend for what he did yesterday," she said.

Meanwhile, community safety head Daniel Manganye said Knox's death was a big loss to the service.

EMERGENCY SERVICES REMAIN ON HIGH ALERT

Meanwhile, despite the situation stabilising, emergency services' Johan Pieterse said they would remain on standby until weather conditions changed.

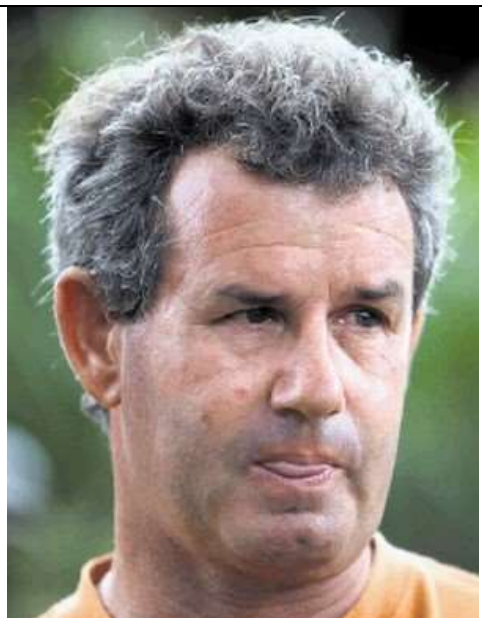
"We had some downpours but not that serious," he said. "So I suspect the streams and the rivers are still manageable at this stage."

Praises for brave fireman

<http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/article859001.ece/Praises-for-brave-fireman>

Knox honoured by friends, family

Jan 19, 2011 12:42 AM | By HARRIET MCLEA and KEVIN SHALVEY



TRAGIC LOSS: Henry Knox drowned on a rescue mission

Late firefighter Henry Knox was the second partner that his wife-to-be had lost in an accident at work.

Francis van Vuuren, 47, wept bitterly at her home in Akasia, north of Pretoria, about Knox's death.

"I'm not strong enough at the moment," she said.

Knox, 42, died at the Unitas hospital in Centurion on Monday after his boat capsized while he was trying to rescue flood victims in Centurion.

Van Vuuren's first husband died at work five years ago as a result of an electric fault.

She said she and Knox talked about getting married in November. They went to get married in Madagascar in December, but marriage paperwork stopped them from tying the knot on the island.

"He said he would put on a big party when he was married," said Knox's sister Irene van der Walt, 54.

Knox, an experienced firefighter from the city's northern fire station in Wonderboom, had served for five years as part of the Swift Water Unit, a specialised squad of trained divers.

He put a boat into a bulging Hennops River in Centurion on Monday morning and began searching for people who had been swept away in flash floods.

But his boat turned over in a vortex of water and he was sucked under the torrent.

Divers saved him from the water and he was airlifted to Unitas Hospital, but he died shortly after arriving there.

Knox's son from his first marriage, Dylan, 14, as well as his children Joeroelle, 10, Hermalou, 8 and Henso, 7, from a second marriage, are currently with their mothers.

A teary Van der Walt managed a smile as she described her brother as the "naughty one" in the family who was "a very good swimmer and diver".

Knox's fire fighting partner Ian "Makkie" MacMillan said that Knox was a hard worker who "lived for his job".

"We were best buddies for 25 years," he said.

The two worked together and would go fishing together.

The pair had saved many lives, MacMillan said proudly.

"We went to accidents and rescues, but even our social life as well, we'd do drag racing - he was my assistant when I was driving," he added.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer JC van der Sandt worked closely with Knox.

"He kept you on your toes," he said. "When you were at work, it was always 'Where is Henry?' If you didn't see him, he was getting ready for a joke. So we were always looking out for him."

MEC for Public Safety Dikeledi Lehobye and the department's Brigadier General Mahlomola Manganye went to pay their respects to the grieving family yesterday.

"We've lost a brave, brilliant angel," said Manganye.

The sentiment was shared by Ané Bruwer from Tshwane disaster management.

"It's not everyone who goes into the river, only specially trained people can," she said.

"Knox's death is really a big loss for the city and a real tragedy."

Knox's funeral will take place on Friday at 11am at Charis Christian Church, Wonderboom.