Firefighter Oliver McDonagh

In the summer of 2016, Squad 72 responded to sounds coming from beneath a Philadelphia street indicating a man was trapped in a storm sewer. Firefighter McDonagh began the rescue by entering a nearby storm drain, but that vantage point did not work. Next, the Philadelphia Water Department attempted a second rescue by way of a manhole, but that effort also failed. By this time, Firefighter McDonagh was more determined than ever. He entered the small sewer pipe on his hands and knees and traveled 15 feet. Once through, he entered an even smaller section of piping and crawled an additional 15 feet on his elbows. To complete the rescue, Firefighter McDonagh had to encourage the man to crawl towards him, as he himself crawled out of the sewer backward.