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Northport man responding to Centerport motorcycle crash finds brother

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The call for "heavy rescue" from the neighboring Centerport Fire Department at first seemed routine to Northport volunteer firefighter William Varese.

It turned out to be anything but routine.

"I rolled up. I thought there was something weird about it," said Varese, 22. "I looked at the bike quick."

That bike involved in the Tuesday morning crash looked strikingly familiar, he recalled thinking. And suddenly, he realized the damaged motorcycle belonged to his older brother and fellow firefighter, Charles.

"That was probably one of the most horrible things I've seen in my whole life," William Varese said, choking back tears the day after his brother's death.

Charles Varese, 25, was struck and killed by a drug-impaired driver while riding his motorcycle on Route 25A in Centerport, Suffolk police said. His 2004 Yamaha was struck by a 2004 Nissan driven by Jason R. Curry, 33, of Stony Brook, shortly after 7 a.m. Tuesday, police said.

It was the second motorcycle fatality on Long Island in the past week. On Sunday, John Frazier, 44, of Roosevelt, was struck and killed in that community. The driver of the car, Jacqueline Harris, 41, of Roosevelt, was charged with driving while intoxicated.

In the Centerport accident, police said Curry, who was charged with driving while ability impaired by drugs, drifted over the double yellow center line and crashed head-on into Varese.

Curry, who finished a year-sentence in 2006 for selling drugs, was jailed on \$250,000 cash bail, according to the Suffolk Sheriff's Department.

In honor of Varese, bunting has been placed outside the Northport firehouse on Main Street and the station on

Waterside Road, department spokesman Jim Mahoney said. Flags are at half-staff, as they are on many village buildings.

By any definition, the Vareses are a firefighting family.

Charles and William Varese's grandfather was a firefighter in Northport. And their father, a retired New York City firefighter, is chief of the Northport Fire Department. Their uncle, who responded to the scene of Tuesday's crash, is chief of the Centerport Fire Department.

So it was no surprise that Charles Varese, a heating and air technician, would be a volunteer firefighter in the department where his family roots went deep. Even his mother, Lorri, is an emergency medical technician.

Yesterday morning, Mahoney and others recalled how Charles Varese, a seven-year veteran, was awarded a meritorious medal for his actions one night in the fall of 2004. Walking on Main Street, Varese smelled smoke and saw flames burning a local deli.

Though he was not wearing any protective gear, Mahoney said, Varese ran into the building and helped evacuate the upstairs apartments.

And, as a final act of service, Varese's family had hoped to donate his organs, said his father, Robert, the fire chief known in the community as "Beefy." But the young man's injuries from the crash were so extensive that they couldn't.

"He just got so beat up that they weren't of any value," Robert Varese said. "He just got so beat up on us. Imagine?"

Services for Charles Varese, who is survived by his parents and three siblings, will be held tomorrow night at the Nolan & Taylor-Howe Funeral Home in Northport. Services are Saturday at St. Paul's Lutheran church in East Northport.

Staff writer Carl MacGowan contributed to this story.

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