



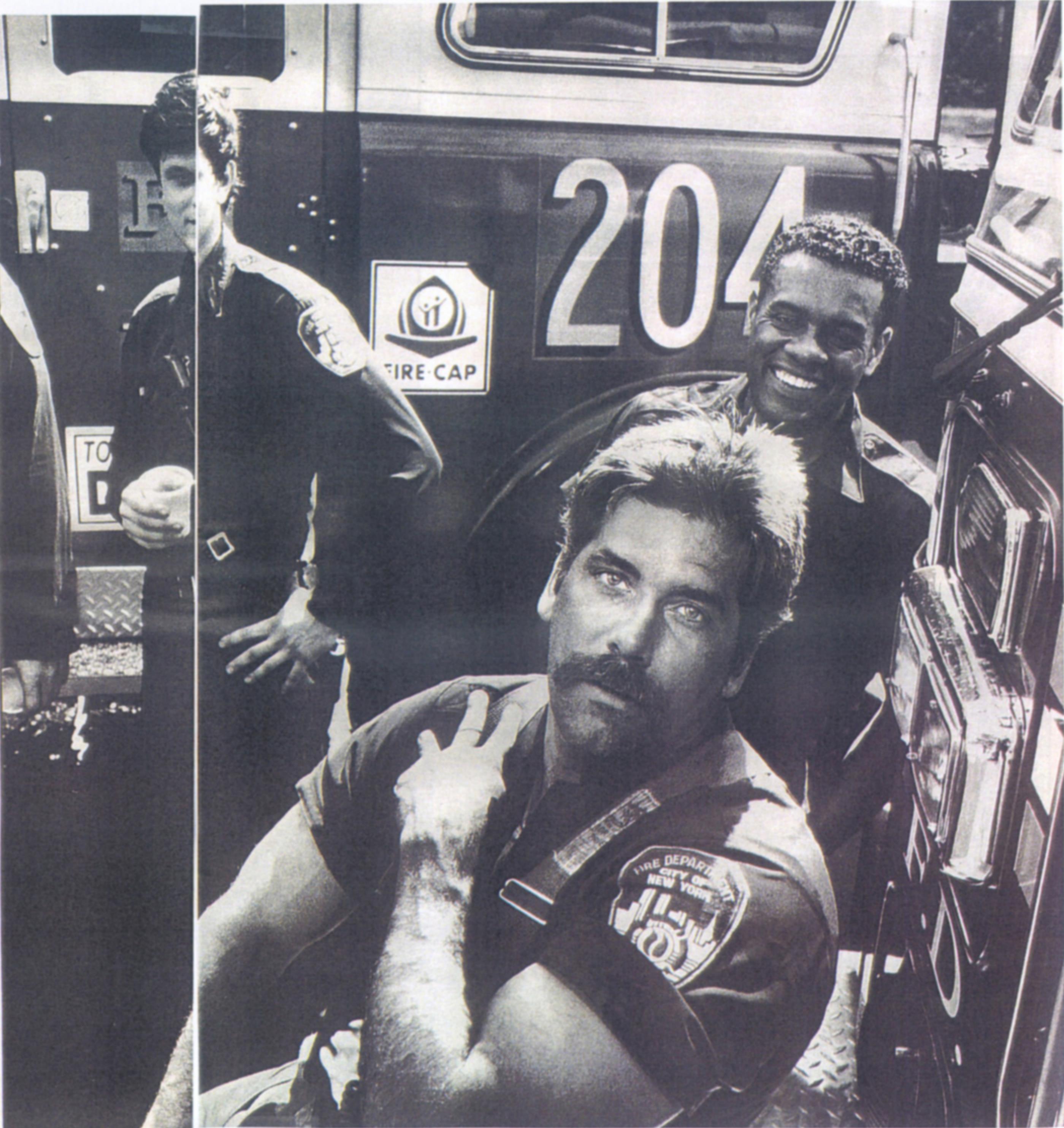
Left: 'probationary' firemen at New York City's Fire Academy posing for a final photograph, and, right, the trainees relaxing between drills. The Academy is on Randalls Island in NYC's East River and is known to firefighters as 'The Rock'

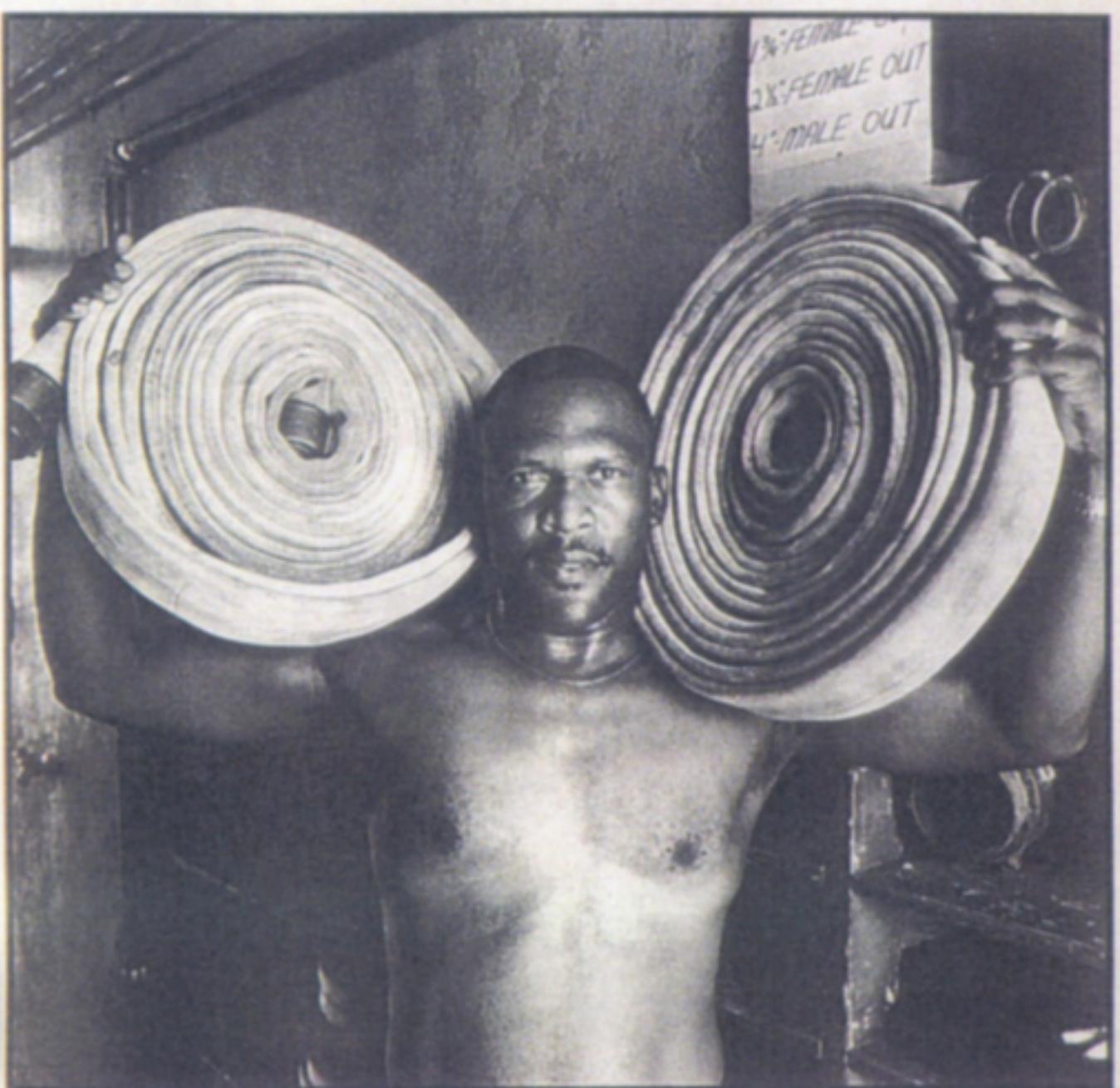
NONE BUT THE BRAVE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GIORGIA FIORIO

For eight months in 1997, the intrepid Italian photographer Giorgia Fiorio recorded the lives of firemen across the United States, regularly travelling to conflagrations and sometimes even living in the firehouses of New York City, Philadelphia, New Orleans and Houston.

The project was part of a larger work entitled "Men", begun in 1990, examining "closed communities of men" with "codes, rules and traditions that have not been touched by the overwhelming changes that Western societies have encountered over the past decades". Groups studied in the project include the Foreign Legion, bullfighters and the boxing community of New York. In this company, firefighting distinguishes itself as perhaps the only pursuit of undimmed relevance in the late 20th century, which makes it all the more strange that the pictures on these pages could have been taken 10, 20 or 30 years ago. While there are some female firefighters, the profession is still almost completely male, a tight fraternity based on a deep trust and a common enemy. Despite technological advances and improved safety equipment, the battle remains dangerously basic, fought in the main with hoses and axes. In the major cities of America firefighting is still very much a family calling, and no family is untouched by tragedy. Unlike the matador, the boxer and the Legionnaire, our image of the fireman is uncompromised by modern standards - he remains an iconic hero. As one firefighter put it, "We're not the cops. People like us."





Clockwise from left:
firemen learn the basics
of fighting fires aboard
ship during an annual
exercise at the Delgado
Fire School in New
Orleans; a fireman
stores the heavy furled
hoses in a Houston
stationhouse; and the
men of Brooklyn's
Ladder 176 crew



Clockwise from top left:
students at the Brayton
Firemen Training Camp in Texas are given
special instruction in
tackling industrial and
chemical blazes; an
instructor yells orders
to students during a
ship-firefighting drill at
Brayton; and firemen
John Duddy of Ladder
Co 28 and John J Moran
of 23 Truck in a burnt-
out Harlem tenement





Clockwise from left: two veteran firemen of Number 23 Truck relax in the kitchen of a Harlem stationhouse whose residents style themselves 'The Vinegar Hill Gang'; members of Battalion 44 in Brooklyn take advantage of the firehouse steam-room; and New Orleans fireman Juan Manuel passes yet another long night in the sleeping quarters of Engine 26 station

These photographs are taken from Garry Flax's book *American Firemen*, published, like the others in her 'Men' series, by Marval, 7 Place Saint-Sulpice, 75006 Paris (tel: 00 33 1 43 25 33 33, price 24.95 francs approximatly)

