

# THE OLDE FIRE BELL



SUMMER 2011

GULFCOASTSPAAMFAA.ORG

SINCE 1975

## SPAAMFAA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Syracuse.... the birthplace of SPAAMFAA! The 2011 National SPAAMFAA Convention and Muster was held from August 3rd through August 6th in Syracuse, New York. The Central New York Chapter of SPAAMFAA and sponsored the event. Chuck Buschardt from the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter was in attendance to photo capture the event.

The muster site was at the Long Branch Park at Onondaga Lake, the same place as the last four musters. On Thursday, the group journeyed to 1000 Islands at Alexandria Bay. On the way, the tour stopped to visit Clayton Fire Department, responsible for fire and EMS protection of the Bay area. Their new fire boat was on hand for a tour (see page 6). Uncle Sam's tour boat provide lunch and transportation to the islands. It included a trip to the Boldt Castle, a beautiful stone castle dating to the Gilded Age.

On Friday, there were tours of both active and past Syracuse Fire Department Stations. For



Linda and Ted Elder from Apple Creek, Ohio

others, there was an excursion to Turning Stone Casino. The "mini muster" and National Membership Meeting were held later that Friday; there were 34 Chapters represented with 253 members present. On Saturday, there was a parade through Liverpool to the muster site. That evening at 7:00 PM, the National Banquet was held at the host hotel, the Holiday Inn.



Ahrens Fox, Registration 935, Model N-S-4, Alexandria Bay, New York, Delivery Date 12-2-22

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## CALENDAR

- Future meeting dates: Monday at 7 PM on October 17 and November 21 at the Community National Bank on Bellaire Blvd. No meeting in December.
- East Texas Historical Fire Society, Tyler TX, October 21- 22, 2011.
- Houston Thanksgiving Day Parade, November 24, 2011.
- Friendswood Christmas Parade, Saturday, December 10, 2011.

## UPFRONT

The Texas Gulf Coast Chapter of SPAAMFAA is pleased to present the Summer 2011 Edition of the *The Olde Fire Bell*. Despite the sweltering temperatures, the Chapter members found ways to beat the heat and have another productive quarter. However, everyone is really looking forward to a cooler line-up in the coming months.

*The Olde Fire Bell* welcomes its newest member, Luke Garrett, of Joaquin, Texas. Luke's late grandfather retired from the Houston Fire Department.

October marks one of the busiest

months for the Chapter: Fire Prevention Week, Wings Over Houston, East Texas Historical Fire Society Muster, Houston Fire Museum Fire Fest, to name a few. And reserve your calendars for The 62nd Annual Holiday (Thanksgiving) Parade on November 24th presented by H-E-B. The Streets of Downtown Houston will come alive with music, dancers, floats, performance groups, vintage cars/trucks, and other unique entrants for one of the best Thanksgiving parades in the country. The Texas Gulf Coast Chapter has been a faithful entrant for many years.

Bill Wilcox was recently hospitalized while in Colorado, and underwent minor surgery. Please keep his continued recovery and health in your prayers.

The September 2011 Issue of The SPAAMFAA Silver Trumpet was recently mailed to all National Members. Editor Mike Britt did an excellent job!

*The Olde Fire Bell* thanks members for submitting material for the Summer 2011 Edition. This Newsletter is made possible by your contributions. Check the Chapter website periodically for additional information sharing.

## CHAPTER MEETING SUMMARIES

BY STEVE DALPE

The following is a summary of the Summer 2011 monthly meetings:

**July:** Luke Garrett of Joaquin TX submitted his application to join the Chapter. Kathy and Bill Wilcox distributed the porcelain signs with the Chapter Logo signs that had been ordered by several members. A motion was approved for the Chapter to pay for two signs for Teresa & Clinton Johnson and Harvey Trigg, in recognition for their years of service. Chuck Buschardt reported the Braniff shop property is for sale again. Tom McDonald reported on the 22nd Annual Fire Museum National Seminar in Ypsilanti MI. He also discussed the upcoming Fire Museum Casino Night and

Fire Fest. Motion was made to hold the next meeting at The Humble Inn in Humble Texas.

**August:** A great turnout of 20 members and friends to recognize the Johnson's and the Trigg's for their years of dedication to the Chapter. Trina Falk from the Texas Fire Museum in Dallas was in attendance. Chuck Buschardt gave a presentation featuring photos from his recent trip to Jackson MI, highlighting Ken Soderbeck's facilities and current restoration projects. Tom McDonald reported the Houston Fire Museum's Fire Fest would be on October 22nd. Following the general meeting, several members proceeded to Moonshine Hill's Station #1 for additional ca-

maraderie.

**September:** Fifteen members packed the Community National Bank meeting room. Vice President Ken Paradowski filled in for President Jim McGee, and lead a discussion about upcoming events, starting with Deer Park Fire Prevention Parade on October 8<sup>th</sup>; Clinton Johnson was seeking drivers for his vehicles. Clinton and Chuck Buschardt plan to attend Wings Over Houston on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Jason Barnett said he would check on potential sites for a fall muster. Chuck recommended compiling a history of the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter from its roots in the America '76 Hose Company and IFBA.

*The Olde Fire Bell*

*The Olde Fire Bell* is the official quarterly publication of SPAAMFAA Texas Gulf Coast Chapter, issued in March, June, September, and December.

The mission of the newsletter is to highlight SPAAMFAA National initiatives, to spotlight events of the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter, to foster a spirit of friendliness and of cooperation among its members, and to increase public involvement in the preservation, restoration, and operation of equipment in fire service

*Acknowledgements*

*The Olde Fire Bell* is continuously seeking input from members and guests for future editions. The editor wishes to recognize the following contributors for making this issue possible:

Karen Witt   Mark Turvey   Clinton Johnson  
Kim Stellhorn   Chuck Buschardt

Please send information to the webmaster at GULFCOASTSPAAMFAA.ORG, or send to editor at the address on the newsletter back page

## AROUND THE CHAPTER

### RED COMETS FOR SALE



I have two Red Comet grenades for sale. They are in excellent condition; both still in original boxes, one has not even been opened. Based on other red comets I purchased at the same time, I'd guess these are late 40's from the Littleton, CO facility ..... both are for sale ..... contact Kim Stellhorn if interested.

### HELMET COLLECTION

My Russian helmet came into my collection by a visit by my sister to a Russian fire station in their town. On the day of her visit they were kind of suspicious of her wanting to take pictures, because this was within less of a year from the fall of communism in Russia. She shot all kinds of pictures of what they would allow her to and when she got them developed she found out that the camera had not been working. During a return trip to the U.S. she told me of her visit and the poor equipment and shortage of equipment and money, the mayor in town made \$15.00 a month.



I ended up shipping some leather gloves, hood, and magazines to my sister who contacted the mayor who contacted the fire chief, both could not believe anyone from the U.S. would send them anything. The fire department set up a special open house day for my sister and brother in law; they moved all of the trucks out, demonstrated foam, water and put on demonstration of breathing equipment and all kind of stuff and allowed them to take pictures.

After my sister presented the fire chief the items I sent, she said she could see in their eyes a want for a fire so they could try the gloves and sock hood out, their gloves were more like handmade army duck material and their hoods looked like winter ski hoods.

The fire depart. gave her an award banner they won at a contest in St Petersburg, a leather belt, axe, nozzle, gloves, hood, helmet, 01[911]emergency plates, magazines pictures, etc. Besides all that stuff I collected some 18-20 various Russian fire trucks, some of the early ones still had the USSR flag printed on the boxes. Submitted by Kim Stellhorn

### SPAAMFAA WINTER NATIONAL

Make your reservations early for the Winter National SPAAMFAA conference. An invitation packet was mailed with the latest Engine!~Engine! Newsletter, or you can register on the web at <http://cnyspaamfaa.com/>. The conference will be from February 1 - 4, 2012 in historic Gettysburg, PA. The four days are packed with all kinds of exciting tours. If you're a Civil War buff, you definitely can't miss this one!



### ALF TILLERED AERIAL

*The Olde Fire Bell* recognizes Greg Barrilleaux and Andre' Pellerin of The Cajun Fire Museum, Breau Bridge, LA, on the purchase of this 1947 ALF tillered aerial for \$300. All wood ladders with ALF logo included. We hope to feature this truck in future newsletter.



### WELCOME NEW MEMBER

*The Olde Fire Bell* welcomes the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter's newest member, Luke Garrett, of Joaquin, Texas. "My late grandfather retired as a Junior Captain of the Houston Fire Dept. and because I always looked up to him I have an interest in fire fighting equipment. I recently purchased a 1939 American LaFrance fire truck that I am in the process of restoring. It has a V-12 engine." Welcome to the Chapter!

### HAVE A SEAT

Another milestone for the 1941 American LaFrance restoration currently being undertaken by member Steve Dalpe. The cab seat was in dire need of reupholstering after 70 years of service and recreation. The seat was totally re-done here in the Houston area with new leather to match the original. This fall, the restoration will focus on painting the exterior truck panels. You can see the truck "as purchased" on the back cover page.





## HUMBLE INN RESTAURANT

BY KAREN WITT

"Oh Lord, it's hard to be..." beat the Humble Inn that is! If Mac Davis would have been there, I am sure he would agree. The monthly meeting was anything but ordinary as it was held at Harvey Trigg's Humble Inn Restaurant. The evening started out with good food and good company. Harvey himself was even in the kitchen working to ensure that the food was scrumptious. Thanks to Clint Johnson and Charlie Womack for turning another year younger, we all enjoyed delicious birthday cake for dessert. The highlight of the evening was when Harvey Trigg and Clint Johnson were awarded Texas Gulf Coast Chapter SPAAMFAA signs for their many years of hard work, dedication, and service to the club, thus starting the meeting off with a bang.

President, Jim McGee led the meeting off by introducing visitor Katrina "Trina" Falk who joined us from Dallas, Texas. Trina is the current president of the Texas Fire Museum/North Texas Historical Fire Society. She is also their webmaster, newsletter "Spotlight" editor, and restoration manager. Trina is very active in their events and did a lot of planning for the SPAAMFAA National that was held in Dallas this past winter. She also owns a couple of trucks and travels to many SPAAMFAA events. Trina brought along pictures to share from her recent trip to the SPAAMFAA National Convention and Muster in Syracuse, New York. "I had a great time last night at the meeting! Thanks for having me. I'm really looking forward to our Chapters getting together."

The meeting progressed with a discussion of October's events starting with the Deer Park Parade on October 8th which kicks off Fire Prevention Week. Then on Tuesday, Oc-



tober 11th, the Johnson Space Center will be holding a Fire Prevention Parade. Wings Over Houston Airshow will finish up the week and takes place the weekend of October 15-16. The biggest discussion was about the East Texas Historical Fire Society's Annual Muster in Tyler, Texas and the Houston Fire Fest both taking place on October 22nd. Treasurer, Tom McDonald

explained that this date was selected because it is the last weekend before the cadets graduate on October 27th. Lastly, November 24th was mentioned as the date for the Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Finally, Chuck Buschardt went on to share his pictures and commentary from the GLIAFAA Annual Muster in Frankenmuth, Michigan. This wrapped things up at the Humble Inn as Harvey was starting to close up for the day. The evening continued with about ten "die-hard" members at Clint Johnson's Moonshine Hill Involuntary Fire Department Station #1. Upon arrival someone immediately tripped Clint's homemade burglar alarm system (tin cans on a string). It worked quite well! With the bay doors up and a fan blowing, members gathered around as Clint showed Trina Falk's pictures from Syracuse. The slide show contained quite a cornucopia of fire trucks. Following the slide presentation, remaining members conversed awhile as they took in the ambiance of this one-of-a-kind, "state-of-the-art" station.

Many thanks to Harvey Trigg for hosting the August monthly meeting at the Humble Inn, and to Clint Johnson for the after party at Moonshine Hill. Thanks also to Trina Falk for sharing photos from Syracuse.



Left: Clinton Johnson (left) and Harvey Trigg are presented Chapter logos for their many contributions. Right: On the bench are (left to right) Eric Bergman, Karen Witt, Chuck Buschardt, and Trina Falk reviewing photographs of the Syracuse National.



## NATIONAL CONFERENCE PHOTOGRAPHS

BY CHUCK BUSCHARDT



Macks were present in large numbers at the muster events and other static displays. Top left: Tunbridge, Vermont, White River Valley Fire Department, Model B-95 Thermodyne-powered, preparing for pumping exhibition. Above: 1946 Mack Type 75, Watervliet Arsenal, owned by Sal "Tootie" Pitruzzello of Portland, CT. Left: NYC Mack CF Model. Bottom Left: Harvey Ekhart's Quad Cab Mack. Below: Canopy-top Mack C Model, ex-Green Pond Fire Department, Engine 571. Bottom: Veranda Green Minoa, New York, Type 85.





## NATIONAL CONFERENCE PHOTOGRAPHS

BY CHUCK BUSCHARDT &amp; TRINA FALK



Top left: Clayton Fire Department's new fire boat to service 1000 Island area. Top right: Mack and Ahrens Fox competing for water drafting rights. Left: Boldt Castle was constructed from 1900 until 1904 until the untimely death of Mrs. Boldt. The building lay prey to the elements until 1978 when the Thousand Islands Bridge Authority assumed ownership. Bottom left: Unbelievably loaded and well preserved 1954 American LaFrance 700 Series open cab. Below: 1923 Seagrave, 1000 GPM, 6 cylinder Seagrave Type F motor, chain driven rear wheels, rear wheel mechanical brakes.





## WILD FIRE SUPPORT

BY CLINTON JOHNSON

Texas is currently facing the worst drought and wildfire disaster in the history of the state. Fed by strong winds and fueled by sun baked vegetation, wildfires continue to rage in and about Harris County claiming hundreds of acres and forcing numerous evacuations. At the time this article was written there have been 484 wildfires burning a total of 174,317 acres just in the last 7 days. During this time aircraft spent 137 hours in the air making 431 air drops using 344,230 gallons of water and retardant.

This is the last 7 of now 300 straight days of wildfire activity in Texas. Over the last 7 days there has been an influx of out of state assistance arriving to take some of the pressure off local responders. Prior to that, local fire services and the Texas Forest Service have borne the brunt of the fire fighting effort. Fire fighters in Texas have been overwhelmed.

Four antique apparatus belonging to TGCS mem-



bers have been pressed into service over the past week to fight fire or stand by for residential area protection. Chuck Buschardt and his 1976 Mack Engine assisted Aldine Fire Department fighting a 125 acre fire just north of Bush Intercontinental Airport. His engine operated on the fire for several hours until it was

brought under control.

Bill Lofton re-equipped his 1953 American bumper pumper and placed it in his neighborhood. Wildfires burned on his neighborhoods north border for four days and re-kindles are more a probability than a possibility. Clinton Johnson's 1948 Mack Engine and 1964 Alf Ladder were made available to Harris County CERT members responding as support for local emergency services. At this time there is no weather related relief in sight. It is likely we will see more retired apparatus on scenes throughout the state.



Bill Lofton (left) and Brock Foster check out Lake Lealauau Engine 26 housed at the Moonshine Hill Involuntary Fire Station for it to go into service protecting their neighborhood. Local Community Response Task Force members use MHIFD apparatus during training. Later that day they checked out Ladder 1 and Engine 1 in preparation for deployment as support at local wildfire locations.

## IFBA CONVENTION AND 9/11 REPORT

BY TOM McDONALD



The International Fire Buff Associates, Inc. (IFBA) held its annual convention at the Hilton in Hasbrouck Heights, NJ on September 6-10, 2011. The Sunday after was the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks of 2001. Many of the convention attendees attended ceremonies in the greater New York area to recognize that anniversary.

The convention was very enjoyable, with plenty of opportunities for apparatus photos as well as to see sights unique to the greater New York area. More than

100 attendees were registered. Many of them were also SPAAMFAA members.

On Wednesday night that week, most of the attendees boarded a harbor dinner cruise ship for three hours on the Hudson. The captain took the vessel around the lower tip of Manhattan and up the East River. Returning after the sun had gone down, the group was pleased and surprised to see the famous Ground Zero twin beacons turned on. The spotlights are only illuminated once a year on the anniversary of 9/11, but apparently a test was taking place as the ship passed the 9/11 site with the twin lights shining brightly into the foggy sky. The hosts said it was done for us. Right!

The next day the group was given a very special treat, an up close look at the FDNY's newest and largest fire boat, the "343," named for the number of members killed on 9/11. The vessel docked at the port of Elizabeth, NJ for the close look. Officially called "Marine 1," the 50,000 gallon-per-minute boat has been in service for one year and cost the city \$27 million.

**Top Left:** The Ground Zero



area was shrouded in fog when the IFBA group toured New York harbor Wednesday evening, September 7. Unexpectedly, though, the spotlights that are only turned on once a year to commemorate the twin towers lost on 9/11 were turned on for a test that night when this photo captured the twin light spires and the new "Freedom Tower" under construction to the left.

**Top Right:** Friday, the group visited Jersey City's monument that commemorates the 9/11 attacks. The unique perspective gained from the Jersey side of the Hudson River enabled designers to create two parallel walls that point directly at Ground Zero and when viewed from the proper angle appear to replicate the lost twin towers. The names of every New Jersey resident killed on 9/11 are engraved on the interior of the walls.



**Left:** The FDNY's newest addition to its Marine Unit is the leviathan "343," the largest fire boat in the department's history, named in honor of the number of FDNY members killed on 9/11/01. The IFBA group got a close look at the vessel when it docked at the Elizabeth, NJ docks on Thursday for a demonstration.

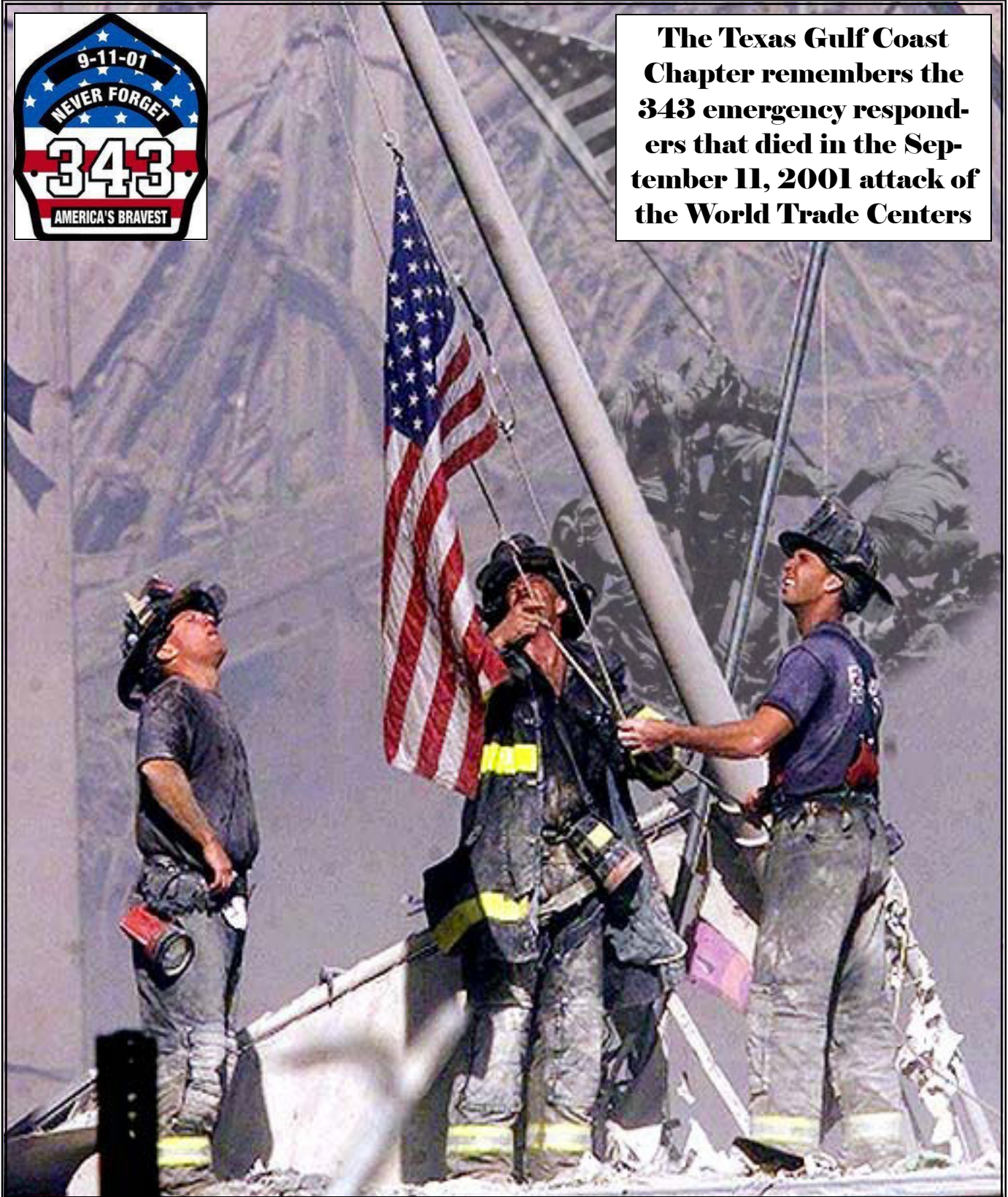


9/11 TRIBUTE

BY MARK TURVEY



**The Texas Gulf Coast Chapter remembers the 343 emergency responders that died in the September 11, 2001 attack of the World Trade Centers**





## BEAUMONT REUNION

FROM BEAUMONTENTERPRISE

Every body loves a story with a happy ending. Well, this happy ending is really just the beginning of a remarkable reunion and a future restoration for The Fire Museum of Texas in Beaumont

The year is 1931 and a new apparatus is introduced to the firefighting community, courtesy Beaumont, Texas. This intriguing apparatus doesn't carry any water, hoses, ladders, or extinguishers of any kind. Only illumination - and lots of it! The Search Light Truck, as it was known, is the first-of-its-kind in the department, and possibly the nation. The Diamond Reo cab transported five 1500 watt, Crouse Hinds floodlights, and another 2000 watt for a total of 11.5 kilowatts. It was designed by Johnny Southwell, Superintendent of the Electrical & Mechanical Division of the BFD and constructed by department employees. Shown are the department members that contributed to the project in front of the old downtown fire station on Walnut Street that now serves as the museum.



It admirably served for 32 years lighting the night of many fires. Like many apparatus, though, time and technology would necessitate a change. In 1963, the now obsolete cab was replaced with a newer 1958 Chevrolet body, comprising 283-cubic inch V-8 engine. The Diamond Reo cab was sold, and it eventually



ended up in the hands of fire truck collector Sam Castner in New York. Time and distance would separate the two - cab and body - for nearly 50 years.

That would all change on Monday, July 25, 2011. Fire Chief Jack Maddox had worked diligently to see its return, and on that day the Beaumont Fire Museum staff and interested personnel greeted the 1931 BFD Light Truck's original cab when it arrived from Dundee, New York. Sam Castner had decided to reduce his collection by one! With the help of several, the 1931 truck cab was rolled off the transport vehicle in front of the old downtown fire station, the same building it was housed during its 30-year life with BFD.



It looked a lot different than it did when it was used in the creation of the department's first light truck. However, there was adequate information to substantiate its authenticity. On the doors of the cab were the words Beaumont Fire Department. And the previous owner also had the title that showed it had been sold by the city of Beaumont, Texas.



The cab is undoubtedly a welcome addition to the museum. The department still has his blueprints for the apparatus that was constructed in the firehouse. It also still has the movie theater generator and light rig that had been bolted to its frame. It just didn't have the cab. The museum is planning to reunite the Diamond Reo cab and the body, and restore to its pre-1931 condition.

*The Olde Fire Belle* congratulates the Beaumont Fire Department and the Fire Museum of Texas on their happy reunion.

Read more about this occasion at <http://www.beaumontenterprise.com/news/article/Original-1931-truck-cab-returns-to-Beaumont>, Dave Ryan, The beaumontenterprise, July 26, 2011. Photos courtesy beaumontenterprise website.



Application for Membership

TEXAS GULF COAST CHAPTER  
Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of Antique Motor Fire  
Apparatus in America  
(SPAAMFAA)

Please mail this application with \$20 dues made payable to:

Texas Gulf Coast Chapter of SPAAMFAA

PO Box 697

Bellaire TX 77402

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Street or Box No. \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Nine Digit Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Business: \_\_\_\_\_ Pager: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about us? Web page \_\_\_\_\_ Friend \_\_\_\_\_ Publication \_\_\_\_\_ Muster \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Interests: Collecting Fire Equipment \_\_\_\_\_ Photography \_\_\_\_\_ Attending Musters \_\_\_\_\_ Parades \_\_\_\_\_

Restoration Activities \_\_\_\_\_ Helmets/Gear \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Department or SPAAMFAA Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

If you own a piece of firefighting apparatus that is at least 25 years old, please provide the following information. Attach separate sheet if multiple vehicles. Ownership of apparatus is not required to join Texas Gulf Coast Chapter

Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Make: \_\_\_\_\_ Type: (Pumper, Aerial, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Mfg. Model: \_\_\_\_\_ Mfg. Serial #: \_\_\_\_\_

Pump Make: \_\_\_\_\_ Pump Size GPM: \_\_\_\_\_ Tank Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Owner and History of Rig: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership in Texas Gulf Coast Chapter is open to all upon application to the Board of Directors and payment of annual dues. Join today and share in the preservation and appreciation of fire fighting and antique fire apparatus.

All new members are also encouraged to join the National SPAAMFAA Chapter. National SPAAMFAA provides additional resources for restoration and insurance for all sponsored events. National Membership is mandatory for Officers of the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter

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*To stimulate and cultivate interest in the restoration, preservation,  
and operation of antique fire apparatus*

## TGCC HALL OF FLAME: 1941 AMERICAN LAFRANCE



Member  
Steve Dalpe  
is restoring  
this 1941  
American La-  
France Scout  
500 Series  
Registration  
L-1468, ex-  
Middletown  
PA