Tucson Fire Department
1995 — 1999 Graduations

2/2/1995

GRADUATING CLASS OF FEBRUARY 2, 1996 (CLASS 95-1)

Front Row Seated Left to Right:
Bert Oxnam, Ron Caballero, Andy Yeoh, Jon Black, James Sprenger II

2ND Row Standing Left to Right:
Capt. Mark Wallace, James Passarelli, David Acosta, Paco Nieto, Rob Lewis, Ms. Diane Lewis, Capt. Brad Olson

3RD Row Standing Left to Right:
F.F. Mentor James Kearney, F.F. Mentor Kathy Mazur, Capt. James Kress, Brian Hudson, Chris Bryant, Richard L'Heureux, Matthew Oppel, Ed Hackett, Chief William Ross

4TH Row Standing Left to Right:
Hector Carpio, David Buser, Dave Watson, Tony Scaduto, Jeff Backherms, Gabino Nunez, Rodney Turner, Mario Rivas, Mike Rosio, Capt. Alan Moritz (Hiding)

1996-1

Top Row L-R:
Rudy Rivera, Richard Hutton, Steve Anderson, Sharon Hollingsworth, Tom Clark

Middle Row L-R: Stacey Barnett, Arned Hernandez, Lewis DuPont, Mike Bishop, Debbie Carrasco (Kramer)

Bottom Row L-R: Troy Larkin, Erik Vail, Audy Amos, Ray Dashiell, Ken Upton, Secretary Diane Lewis

January 4, 1996, *Arizona Daily Star*:

It will get a lot hotter than this

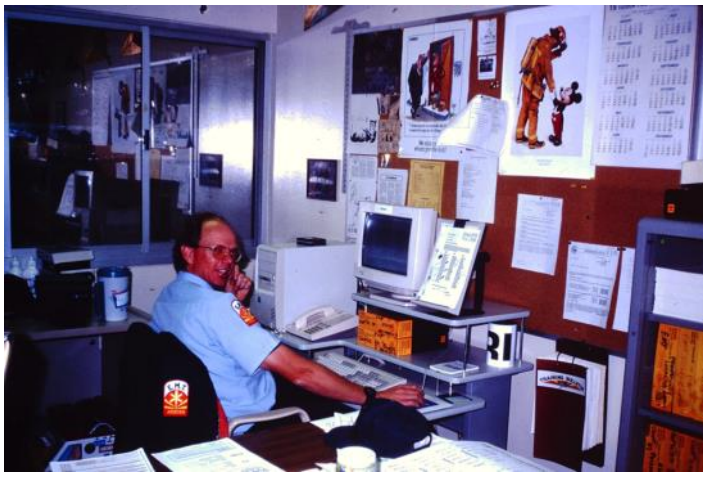
With a training captain, center, to show them the ropes, two Tucson Fire Department recruits wade toward a fire born of natural gas and diesel fuel. The training exercise was conducted yesterday at the fire station at South Park Avenue and East Ajo Way. Twenty-three recruits are undergoing 16 weeks of training.

Benjie Sanders, The Arizona Daily Star

January 29, 1996, a captain takes recruits in to meet The Dragon, TFD—

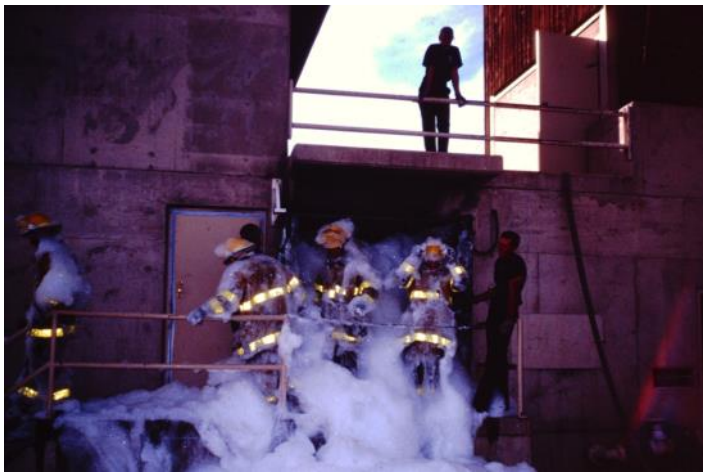
1996-1

January 1996, Recruit Class:



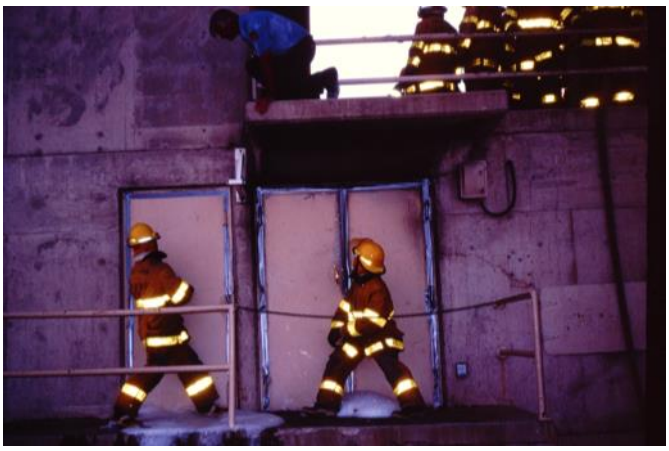
1996-1

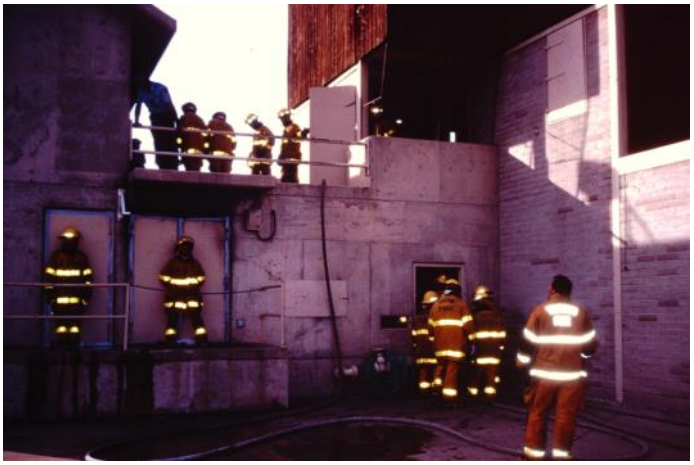
January 1996, Recruit Class:



1996-1

January 1996, Recruit Class:





1996-1

January 1996, Recruit Class:

1996-2 November 18, 1996 No Photo

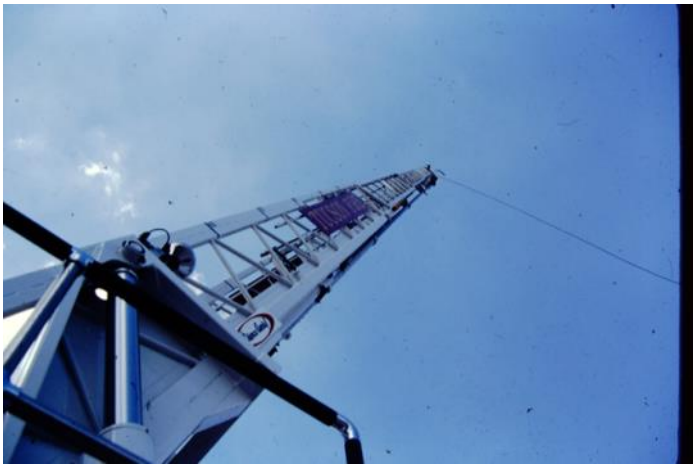
Eliot Anderson
Chantengco Demostenes
Walt Engelenburg
Carlos Lopez
Jesus Montiel
Shawn Ryan
Molly Uberuaga
John Valenzuela
Darin Wallentine
David Wiegand

1996-2

August 1996, Recruit Class:

1996-2

August 1996, Recruit Class:



1996-2

August 1996, Recruit Class:

1996-2

August 1996, Recruit Class:

1996-2

August 1996, Recruit Class:

1996-2

August 1996, Recruit Class:

1996-2

August 1996, Recruit Class:

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

Recruits at Hazmat truck

Captain Steve Ellis

District Chief Al Moritz

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

Captain Steve Ellis

Foam drill

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

Captain Mark Wallace with recruits

PSA site with tower under construction

PSA site with tower under construction

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

Repelling drill

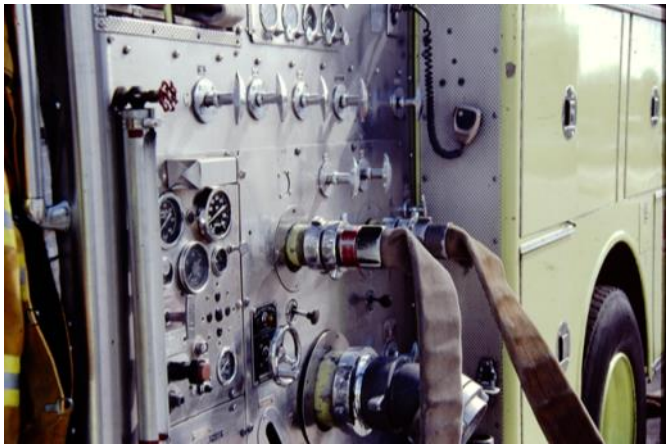
1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

Tank car prop

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:



Pump panel

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

Training staff

Training tower

Recruits and kids at foam drill

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

Recruit cutting drill

Unknown at Dragon

Recruit Inspection

October 1996, Recruit Class:

PM Frank Pedraza, Captain Pat Quinn in blue shirts, with recruits

Recruits with life net

The notorious paper work

Training Captains, Al Moritz, Mark Wallace, unknown, unknown, Steve Ellis

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

Captain & recruits

Captain Ellis, recruit Arned Hernandez

Hazmat class

Recruit class-center Sharon Holingsworth, Arned Hernandez

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

Dummy prop

Extraction class

FF J. W. Davis filming recruits

Hoisting class

Recruits in tower

1996-2

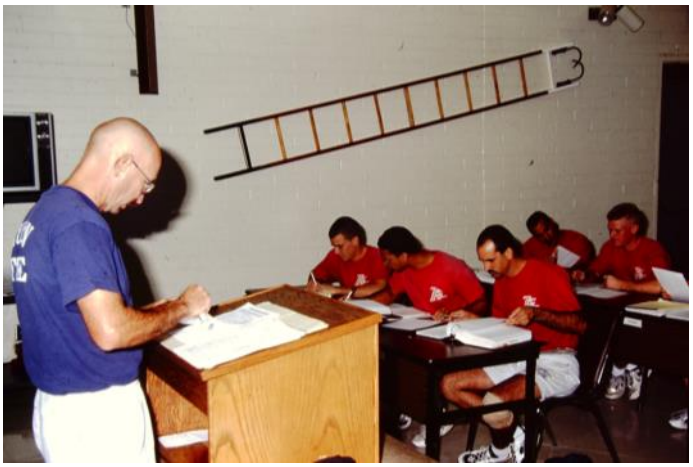
October 1996, Recruit Class:

Cutting drill

Tower on Ajo

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:



1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

1996-2

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1996-2

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1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

1996-2

October 1996, Recruit Class:

7/21/1997-1

The photo from the 1997 Class (7/21/97) are as follows:

Front Row L-R: Mike Garcia, John Gulotta, Jenny LaCoss, Wes Lemburg, Cassandra Oberdank, Brian Cobb, Sue Rizzi, Jimmy Catano, Walt Engleburg, Ed Stevens, Ariel Hernandez

Middle Row L-R: Captain Jim Critchley, Bob Oppel, Brian Tobler, Ben Witt, Josh Campbell, Gary Young, Dan Wahl, Mario Carrasco, Mike Ward, John Bezel, Nate Webber, Tom Zvitvay, Deputy Chief Al Moritz, Diane Lewis, Captain Steve Ellis

Back Row L-R: Engineer Mike Bishop, Paramedic Debbie Kramer (Carrasco), Captain Mike Coyle, Captain Jim Napier, Captain Mark Wallace

7/21/1997

1997 TFD Recruit Class 1, TFD—

July 23, 1997, *Arizona Daily Star*:

Touching a cloud

Bruce McClelland, The Arizona Daily Star

Susan Rizzi climbs to the top of a 100-foot ladder during the second day of class at the Tucson Fire Department training academy. She is one of 29 recruits expected to graduate in December.

7/21/1997

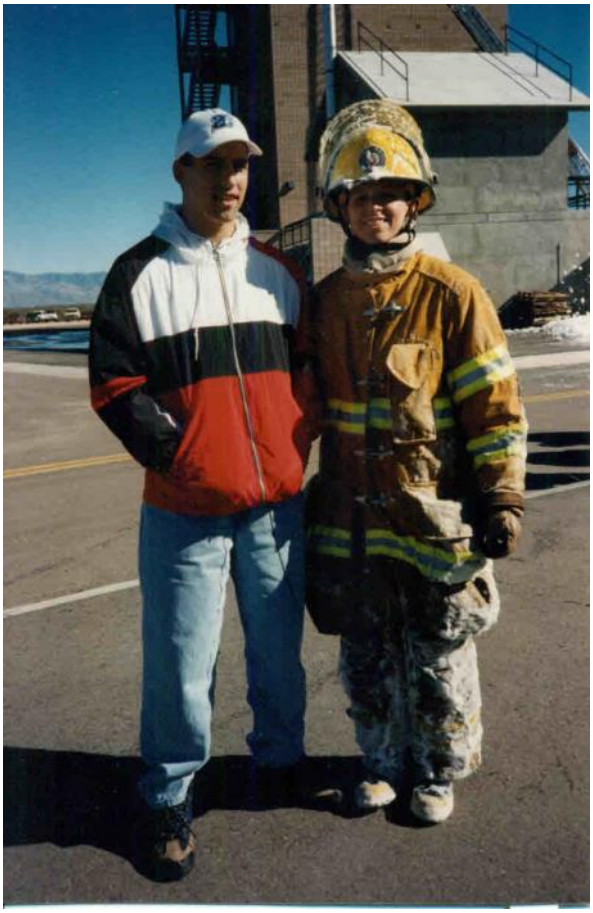
TFD Graduation Day, 12/21/1997, courtesy Jenny LaCoss:

7/21/1997

TFD Graduation Day, 12/21/1997, courtesy Jenny LaCoss:

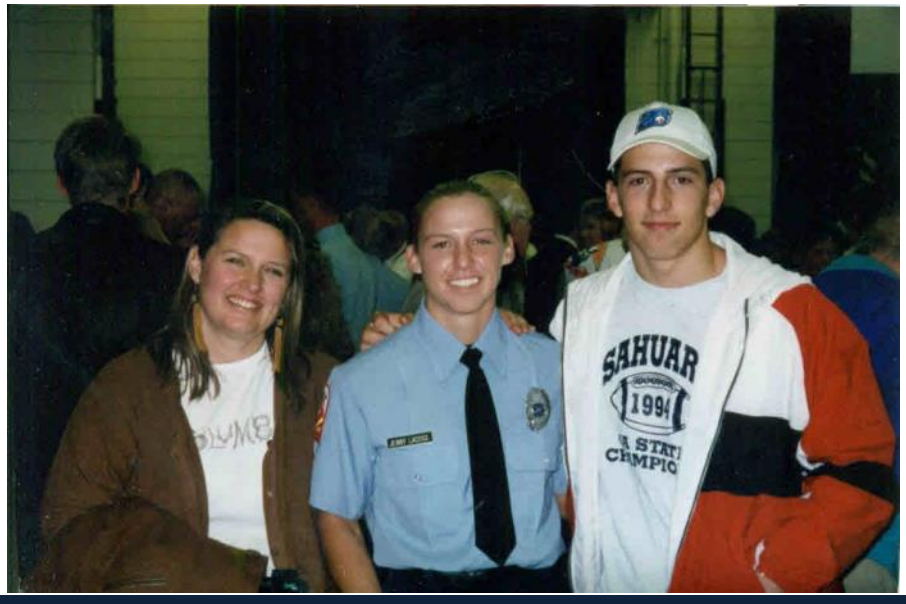
7/21/1997

TFD Graduation Day, 12/21/1997, courtesy Jenny LaCoss:



7/21/1997

TFD Graduation Day, 12/21/1997, courtesy Jenny LaCoss:



7/21/1997

TFD Graduation Day, 12/21/1997, courtesy Jenny LaCoss:

7/21/1997

TFD Graduation Day, 12/21/1997, courtesy Jenny LaCoss:

7/21/1997

TFD Graduation Day, 12/21/1997, courtesy Jenny LaCoss:

7/21/1997

TFD Graduation Day, 12/21/1997, courtesy Jenny LaCoss:

11/20/1998

TUCSON FIRE DEPARTMENT
CLASS 1998-1 (11/20/98)

Row #1 Left to right: Chief Moritz, Capt. Martinez, Mitzi Sloan, Andrew Pashos, John Poe, Ruben Rojas, Diane Kisiel, Lori Kraemer, Capt. Napier.
Row #2 Left to right: Steven Ruetz, Capt. Parks, Jeffrey Mayhew, Matthew Redding, Linda Wekenborg, Michael Murphy, Casey Justen, Michael Carsten, Ben Williams, Jonathan Grimes, Capt. Thompson.
Row #3 Left to right: Rick Thompson, Garland Parris, Lewis Harris, Angelo Romeo, Craig Orozco, Jacki deHaro, Denise Comby, Travis Sutterley, Eric Rotter, John Vincent, Capt. Critchley.
Row #4 Left to right: Eng. Dave Cox, Eric Perry, William Womack, Bill Tylutki, Brett Welander, Chris Jurvig, Brandon Menke, Jose Olivares, Ronald Valencia, Michael Kerwin,

11/20/1998

1998, TFD Recruit Class 1:

11/20/1998

1998, TFD Recruit Class 1:

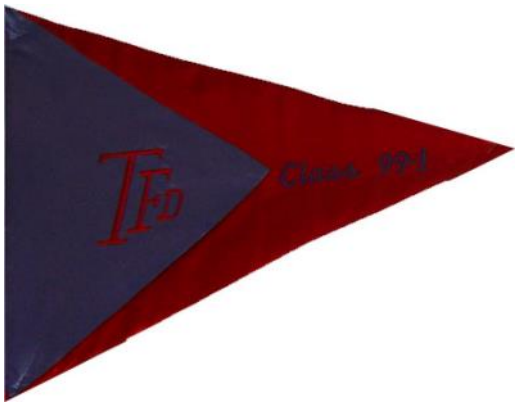
7/6/1999

Class of 7/6/1999

Front Row
Josh Walker, Tony Pierotti, Joseph Noriega, Cheryl Perry, Marni Plaster, Arianne Joyce, Jeff Shipley, Mike Carreon, Jason Lewis

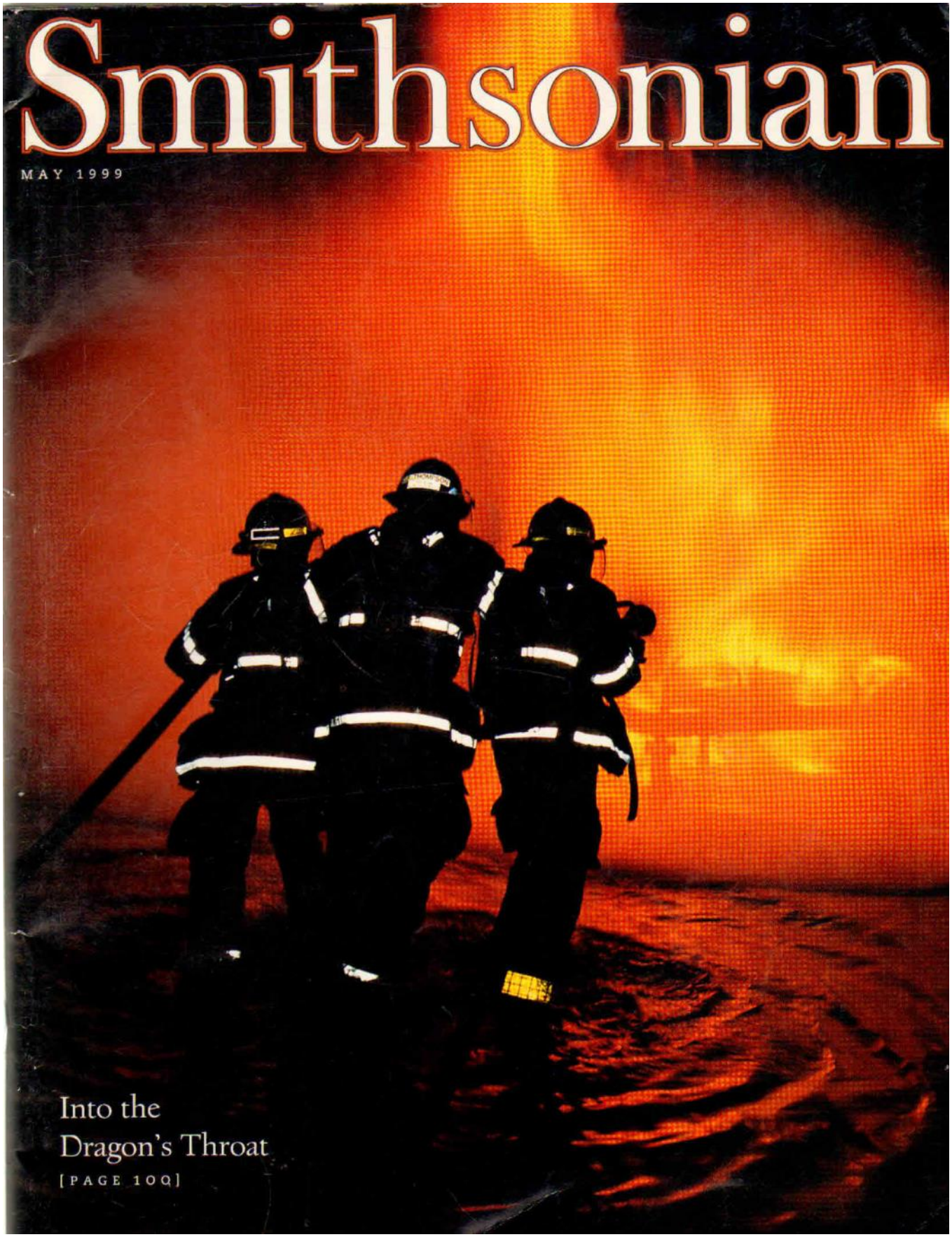
Middle Row
Jim Heal, Greg Chmara, Daniel Woods, Vera Wuerfel, Mike Castoro, Donnie Webb, Brad Chilcote, Ernie Felix, Nelson Thompson, Jason West, Cody Comer

Back Row
Captain Jim Critchley, Engineer Dave Cox, Tommy Campuzzano, Captain Jeff Thompson, Mike Canfield, Sheldon Giles, Aaron Snyder, Todd Thompson, Franchot Opela, Scott Billings, Deputy Chief Al Moritz, Brian Elam, Bob Schact, Robert Synesael, Keith Cubberly, Greg Warren, Diane Lewis, Captain Ron Lopez, Captain Rick Raimondi, Captain Paul Baxter, Paramedic Sharon Hollingsworth



7/6/1999

May 1999, *Smithsonian*:

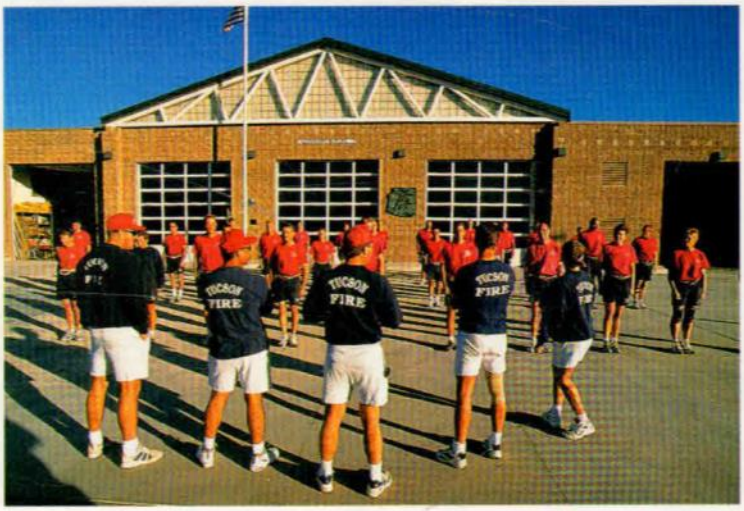


7/6/1999

May 1999, *Smithsonian*:

Hooked to the top of a 105-foot aerial ladder, Recruit Bryce Womack will have his hands free to work. Right: The entire class prepares for another round of the all-important physical training.

May 1999, *Smithsonian*:



TUCSON RECRUITS LEARN THERE'S A LOT MORE TO FIGHTING FIRE THAN JUST "PUTTING THE WET STUFF ON THE RED STUFF"

Training to Slay the Dragon

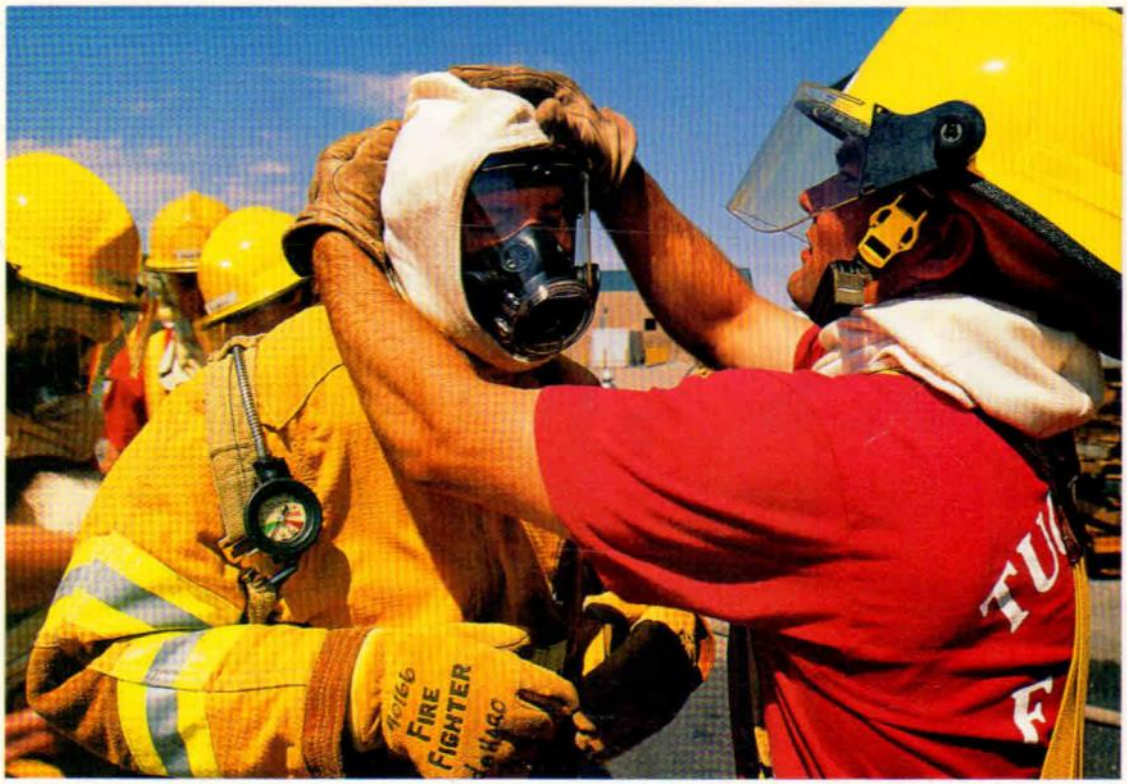
WHEN I THINK OF FIRE, I SEE campfires under cold starlight, or Moses chatting with a burning bush. When my brother, one of the nation's 276,000 career firefighters, thinks of fire, he sees an upside-down river of gold streaming across ceilings, pooling in high niches just as water pools in depressions, and pouring up walls like inverted, glowing waterfalls: since heat rises, firefalls cascade upward. "We see things," he says, "both beautiful and terrifying, that people in other professions will never see." In Tucson, Arizona, where my brother works, Fire Chief Fred Shipman remembers the beautiful dark eyes of the small girl he carried 100 feet down through smoke and screaming to safety. Battalion Chief Alan Moritz remembers finding another child curled up in a closet; the body was so blackened and disfigured that it took him awhile to realize what he was looking at.

Most of us will stare mesmerized at tamed fire by the hour, but we are all hard-wired to flee fire's touch. In a cynical world, the firefighter remains one of our ideal figures of bravery and heroism. What makes certain

BY JENNIFER LEE CARRELL

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TERRENCE MOORE

May 1999, *Smithsonian*:



One recruit helps another put on her fire-resistant hood. The protective gear is not actually fireproof, so she will have to act accordingly.

es, between a quarter and a third of those who started have given up or been let go.

Week by week the strain will mount as the recruits face a barrage of skills tests and written exams; failure to pass any one subject will result in automatic firing. Meanwhile, the physical training and endless drilling will increasingly strain as well as strengthen their bodies; injuries that require too much downtime will also trigger automatic dismissal. With lives and property teetering on the edge, a firefighter cannot respond to a command by saying, "Oh, I failed that test," or "I missed practicing that skill because of a sprain." Up in his office, Capt. Jim Critchley makes somewhat different sense of all this rigor. "My goal," he says, "is not that they all survive this academy. It's that those who do graduate all survive to retire."

About a hundred firefighters die in the line of duty every year in the United States. The best way to better their odds is to train them well. Training scenarios can never quite be real, because firegrounds are true chaos, but the closer these recruits can come to realistic disasters, the better for them, for their partners and for us, the trusting public. It's this tried-and-true wisdom that makes this new campus, a firefighter's cross between Disneyland and a movie set, worth all the money.

Beyond the cavernous apparatus bay, housing three engines and an ambulance, curves an array of firefighting props including a fireable gas main, trenches and sewer pipes; a flammable liquid pool; burnable cars; a roof sitting on the ground; collapsible concrete floors; and the Burn Room, a squat concrete building that can become anything from a fiery car-cluttered garage with an apartment above to an empty warehouse. At the far end rises the six-story tower with a working elevator and rooms that can simulate offices, apartments, even a movie theater; artificial smoke can be pumped into any floor.

After a month of training, the captains decide the recruits are ready to enter a burning building. In the entryway to the Burn Room, the recruits seal themselves into their protective yellow Nomex suits called "turnouts" and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatuses, or SCBAs, which look like diver's tanks and make the wearer sound like Darth Vader. In the gloom, the reflective tape on their turnouts glimmers like the silvery trails of deep-sea animals. Four recruits sink to their knees along a charged hose line. Briefly, it looks like a prayer meeting, but then the iron door swings open, and following their captain, they crawl forward, dragging the hose with them into the darkness.

Hollywood likes to imagine firefighters bursting at a run into rooms draped with golden flame. In real life

May 1999, *Smithsonian*:

Recruits walk down into a suds-filled Burn Room, where visibility is zero. Some at first find the loss of vision overwhelming.

that it slithers to the ground, then hoist it onto a shoulder and run so that it spills behind in neat lines, ready for water. Working in full turnouts under an angry sun is like lifting weights in a sauna.

In the coolness of the classroom, the recruits learn theory. The nozzles class leaves a herd of algebraic equations describing water flow and friction loss trailing across the board. In the building construction class, they learn how all kinds of walls and roofs go up, so as to better understand how, and how fast, fire will make them fall down. EMT classes force-feed them anatomy, physiology, pathology and pharmacology. Ron Valencia, a big, bearish man who has dreamed of being a firefighter all his life, says: "It's a lot of studying, a *lot* of studying. But you have to get it right, or people die."

They also learn something corporate folks might call stress management. When I ask Capt. Alex Martinez what it looks like to go into a real fire, he says, "Close your eyes." For the recruits, the captains create more elaborate simulations. One morning, Jeff Mayhew and Linda Wekenborg don face masks blacked-out with tape, and the captains lead them deep into the Maze, an ingeniously variable labyrinth with a grid system built into its ceiling, allowing plywood walls to be slid into different patterns. As the recruits kneel at the nozzle end of a hose, Captain Thompson sets the scene: inside a big warehouse fire, Mayhew's alarm has just gone off, signaling that he has no more than five minutes of air left; lung-searing temperatures and poisonous gases mean that for firefighters, running out of air is equivalent to running out of life. "Got to get out, Sir!" cries Wekenborg. "Get out!" yells Captain Thompson, and the game is on. The means of escape is as old as Theseus' exit from the Minotaur's lair: having dragged a hose in, it is now the recruits' Braille trail out. I join the captains in making an unholy din, but Mayhew and Wekenborg ignore us, fumbling hand-over-hand along the line, bumping into furniture and walls but never letting go of the hose or each other. With only a few seconds to spare, they tumble out into open air.

Captain Martinez pushes Steve Ruetz and Ron Valencia through a similar scenario. At first they are fast and sure, but right near the door Ruetz unwittingly lets go of the hose leading out and picks up another. After a quick exchange, they turn and crawl back inside; Captain Martinez shakes his head but says nothing. When their five minutes are up, he calls, "Lie down, you're both dead."

The recruits' next acquaintance with disorientation is trial by foam. In the morning they learn the chemistry

May 1999, *Smithsonian*:

Finally all the recruits make it through the suds and back out into the daylight, looking like they've been in a whipped-cream fight.

and physics of using foam to smother flammable liquid fires that water would only spread—jet fuel on runways, for instance—as well as fires in confined spaces too dangerous to enter, such as basements or tanker cars. When the captains fill the Burn Room to the ceiling with specialized suds, however, it's not to quench fire but to produce a suffocating atmosphere akin to a smoke-filled room. The first time the recruits descend into this lacy darkness, panic erupts at the bottom of the stairs and they scramble back up, retching and coughing. But the captains lead them relentlessly down again into the suds. In stubborn lines they trace their way around the walls until they reach the door and emerge like ragged snowmen. For the first time, they catch Captain Thompson cracking a smile.

The academy is an emotional roller coaster, and monthly inspections produce more strained faces, as Chief Moritz moves down taut rows of recruits, firing questions. Everything they've learned is fair game, from the care of axe heads to the problems of fighting combustible metal fires so hot they pull water molecules apart into hydrogen and oxygen, turning water into fuel.

The hardest of all the long, hard drills is decidedly old-fashioned: ladders. The recruits have to be able to raise and climb every ground ladder the department owns. Although the hydraulics of the ladder truck raise the 105-foot aerial ladder, the recruits have to clamber quickly to the top, hook themselves into the rungs with one leg and let go with both hands, ready to work. Most punishing of all are roof ladders, which have to be hauled up another ladder onto a roof and then pushed even farther, to hook over the roof's peak. One of Linda Wekenborg's finest moments comes when Captain Thompson watches her put up a ladder and says simply: "Good job."

Drilling continues, with a difference: now, says Mitzi Sloan, "it's not essentially 'How do I do this evolution?' You're asking 'How can I do this better?'" The scenarios grow more complex, from high-rise fires in the tower to car fires that must be approached from uphill and upwind to avoid gas tanks that are bombs and bumpers that are missiles poised to go airborne. Video footage of a firefighter in flames, tumbling down an aerial ladder, makes Sloan blanch and look away.

By mid-October, what was once a motley, bumbling crew is becoming a highly skilled, well-drilled unit. Rather than announcing their confidence, however, the captains show it: they put their lives into the hands of the recruits.

The prop called the Dragon simulates a gas main on fire; when it roars, flames shoot up 50 feet in huge

May 1999, *Smithsonian*:

After graduation, the firefighters (they are no longer recruits) move a 1910 steamer back to the building where it is displayed.

orange balloons, and cyclones of fire spin off into the night. Suited up like yellow astronauts about to walk into the sun, Jeff Mayhew and his partner open their nozzles, and glittering cones of water lift hissing before them. A mere quarter-inch thick, this shield of water is all that stands between the recruits, their trusting captain and flash-roasting. Captain Napier puts a hand on each recruit's shoulder, and they strain toward the thundering tower of fire, the pressurized water driving the heat and flames before them. One bobble on the part of the recruits, and the fire will rush back to devour all three of them. As they reach the fire-breathing pipes, Captain Napier suddenly pitches forward as though to turn the valve at the base, shutting off the gas.

Not until they have backed into safety does the fire begin to die: up at the control booth, Engineer Dave Cox has finally turned down the gas. The valve at the main is a dummy, but there's nothing fake about that fire, and whoops of triumph clash in the night as the recruits shed their masks and airpacks.

The following week it's EMT practicals that make for a violent day at the academy. Brett Welander has become a bar-fight victim, his guts slipping through a slash across the belly; Linda Wekenborg lies moaning in a smashed car, white bone glistening from a gash in her thigh. Another recruit stretches unconscious with a bullet hole in his forehead, and still another spills blood from slashed wrists. K. D. Corcoran, the beloved EMT instructor who has taught Tucson's firefighters for more than a decade, has made up a few of the recruits with ghastly realism, to give their fellows a chance to practice responding to trauma.

Acting honors go to Recruit Andy Pashos, whose problem is not guns, knives or cars, but bees. His face and neck grotesquely swollen, he's wheezing and heaving as Ron Valencia and Bryce Womack arrive; calm and amused as ever, Paramedic Sharon McDonough calls out the effects of their actions, altering Andy's vital signs and symptoms according to what they do. Watching them, Capt. Max Parks tells me about his worst day at work, when despite all their efforts, his crew lost six people, including a young mother with an allergic reaction and a 5-year-old hit by a truck that plowed into his living room. "How do you go away from that day?" he says, still filled with disbelief. Paramedic McDonough talks about watching a little girl die after the glass table she was playing on shattered, slitting her throat. Parks shakes his head. "How do you tell these guys, Look, this is going to happen to you? We're not Supermen. You can't save everybody. People will

May 1999, *Smithsonian*:

die. But try hard. That's what this is all about: trying hard."

The graduation ceremony is impressive and emotional, as Chief Shipman tells the recruits that once out in the field they will do things that will make them laugh, see things that make them cry and witness events that shock them to the core. But every day, he says, "you're going to have the satisfaction of knowing that what you do makes a difference. There's no more honorable profession."

That night, at the party in the Union Hall, they finally cut loose, shoot some pool, dance, have a cigar and maybe even a beer. Casual greetings from captains startle them: "Hi, Bryce," says Jim Napier, and a wide-eyed Bryce Womack glances over his shoulder to check out the possibility that someone else with his name, a captain maybe, is standing nearby. All night the new firefighters pool and eddy in small groups, reliving their adventures with each other and the captains. They've been split up among Tucson's three fire shifts, one of which is always on duty. As a result, they will never all be together in one room again, until they have all retired. Recruit Bill Tylutki puts it into words, his brown eyes roaming the room: "It's hard to imagine not being with these people. It's the only thing that got you through, this group. Especially on bad days: you could take refuge in the group, and they'd pull you along, no matter how bad you were feeling or how bad you messed up."

Two days later, the new firefighters are out in the field. Steve Ruetz heads over to Station 8, one of the busiest in the country, under the command of Capt. Scott Krause. As the "boot," or junior member of the crew, it's Ruetz's job to clean, polish and nearly sterilize the station and its apparatus bay, make the coffee and do the shopping; he answers the phone in about half a ring.

Neither the studying nor the drilling is finished. As soon as the chores are done, Krause and the rest of the crew—Engineer Darrell Alexander and my brother, Bill Carrell—set Ruetz through familiar paces, laying hose, sliding quickly into his SCBA and putting up those inescapable ladders. They hurry to get through by lunchtime, because by traditional belief, it's the stroke of noon that ushers chaos into their corner of Tucson. Sure enough, at 12:03 there's a click, fluorescent lights glare and a sound like the trumpet of a lovesick electronic elephant fills the station house. "Engine 8; Medic 8," says the disembodied voice of the dispatcher, and we're off.

There's a click, fluorescent lights glare and a sound like the trumpet of a lovesick electronic elephant fills the station house. "Engine 8; Medic 8," says the voice.

Call after call, the engine wails down the street in a storm of whirling red-and-blue lights. I watch in wonder as we part seas of traffic, scattering everything from bicycles to semis, but Ruetz is busy pulling on gloves or strapping himself into his SCBA. We visit a scared and lonely old man, a young man who'd like morphine, a diabetic whose blood sugar soars after she's charged with shoplifting, and a brushfire ignited by tires exploding off a truck. At a freeway accident, Ruetz puts a bandage on a woman's finger while she proclaims she's not going to pay for any of this. Later, the crew gathers about the bedside of a woman dying of lung cancer, waiting for the ambulance that will take her on her last ride to the hospital. She's full of grace as well as fear, and as the ambulance doors close, she blows the crew a kiss.

A few days later, Ruetz is crawling into his first house fire. Despite everything he learned at the academy, the thick, claustrophobic darkness amazes him: he can't see *anything*. Right behind him, Bill leaves him no time for wonder, shouting: "Go on! Go on! Look for the glow." They bump forward until Ruetz sees a glimmer of orange, and then a golden line of flame rolls toward them across what turns out to be the surface of a burning bed. After they knock this fire down, Ruetz gradually realizes he's been baptized: he's really a firefighter now. As with every "first" for every boot across town, he'll be buying ice cream for the house.

In this first, Ruetz is fortunate, for there was no one in that bed, no shadow of death over this rite of passage. Bill Tylutki is not so lucky. On his first shift, he encounters the seared and cracked body of a man melted into his recliner.

Back at Station 8, I find Ruetz hunched over his books in the study. Then he smiles and wraps up his experience with two spiraling words: "anticipation" and "fulfillment." All the anticipation, he says, has finally arrived at fulfillment—only to stretch into anticipation again, as he and his classmates hurtle toward beautiful and terrifying experiences.

Click. The lights flick on, the alarm sounds. Amid reality at its messiest, the learning goes on . . .

Jennifer Lee Carrell last wrote for SMITHSONIAN *on the popularity of Shakespeare in the Wild West. Terrence Moore photographed the Mesa Verde story in our February issue.*

Greater Tucson Fire Foundation

Thank you for taking an interest in Tucson Fire Department history —

This is one of many sections that contain information, documents, letters, newspaper articles, pictures, etc. They have been collected and arranged in chronological order or by a subject. These items were collected, organized and entered into a computerized database by Dave Ridings Retired Assistant Chief Tucson Fire Department, Al Ring friend of the department, Greater Tucson Fire Foundation and with the help of many friends and fellow firefighters.

All graphics have been improved to make the resolution as good as possible, but the reader should remember that many came from copies of old newspaper articles. This also applies to other items such as documents, letters, etc.

Credit to the source of the documents, photos, etc. is provided whenever it was available. We realize that many items are not identified and regret that we weren't able to provide this information. As far as the newspaper articles that are not identified, 99% of them would have to be from one of three possible sources. The *Arizona Daily Star,* The *Tucson Citizen* and the *Tucson Daily Citizen,* for which we want to give a special thanks.

Please use this information as a reference tool only. If the reader uses any of the information for any purpose other than a reference tool, they should get permission from the source.

Should the reader have additional information on the above subject we would appreciate you sharing it with us. Please see the names and contact information on the 1st. TFD Archives page right below this paragraph.

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