



Tallahassee Fire Department

2026

WELCOME TO THE TFD MUSEUM



The City of Tallahassee Fire Department Museum is Fully Committed to preserving the history, service, and legacy of the fire service in Tallahassee.



FULLY
COMMITTED

WELCOME

On behalf of Fire Chief Gene Sanders, welcome to the Tallahassee Fire Department Museum. This museum preserves the history of the fire service and honors the men and women who have served our community through fire protection, emergency response, and public safety.

Born and raised in Tallahassee, Chief Sanders began his career with the Tallahassee Fire Department in 1997 and has served in every operational rank, including Firefighter, Fire Marshal, Deputy Chief of Operations, and Fire Chief. With more than 25 years of service, he has overseen emergency operations, fire prevention, training, emergency medical services, and special operations.

The exhibits within this museum reflect the legacy of service, leadership, and innovation that continue to shape the Tallahassee Fire Department. We invite you to explore and learn more about the department's history and commitment to the community.



Fire Chief Gene Sanders

2023 - Present



This Museum is dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of firefighters and the fire service. Through the acquisition, documentation, research, exhibition, and preservation of firefighting heritage and equipment, with emphasis on the Tallahassee Fire Department, the museum educates the public and honors the legacy of fire service in our community.

MUSEUM MISSION



MUSEUM FOUNDING



The Tallahassee Fire Department Museum was founded in 2009 by Senior Fire Plans Examiner Maurice Majszak (Retired) (left), with the assistance and support of Lt. Billy Fox (Retired) (right).

TALLAHASSEE FIREFIGHTER MEMORIAL

The Tallahassee Firefighter Memorial honors all firefighters who passed away while serving with the Tallahassee Fire Department. The memorial was dedicated on Wednesday, January 29, 2025.



LINE OF DUTY DEATHS



Lewin R. Spear
November 30, 1930



Christopher Thurman
January 1, 2016



Jeffery G. Atkinson
December 15, 2017

FIRE SERVICE MEMORIAL PLAQUES



The plaque on the left honors the men who served with the Tallahassee Volunteer Fire Company, established on September 24, 1902. This marked the beginning of continuous organized fire protection in Tallahassee.

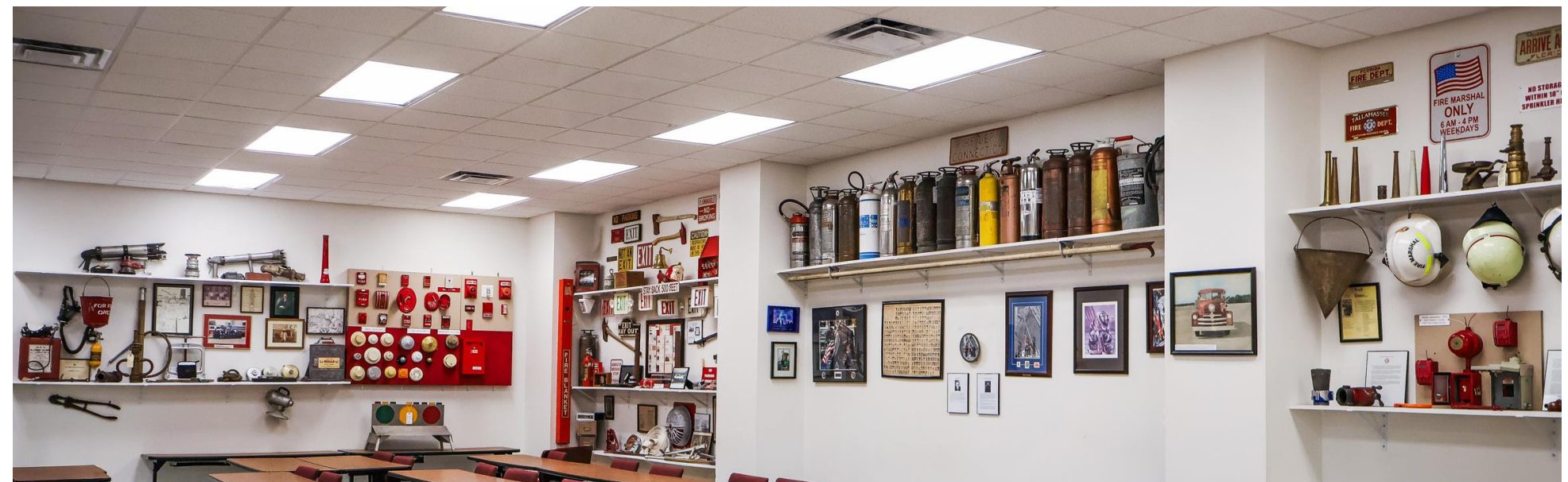
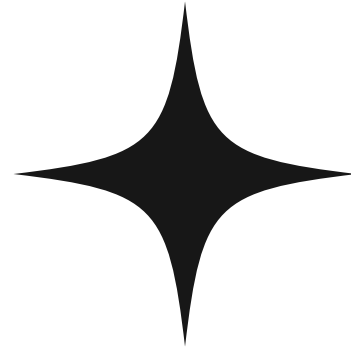
On May 1, 1930, the organization transitioned into the Tallahassee Fire Department, consisting of six full-time firefighters and six additional members who were compensated only when training or responding to fires.

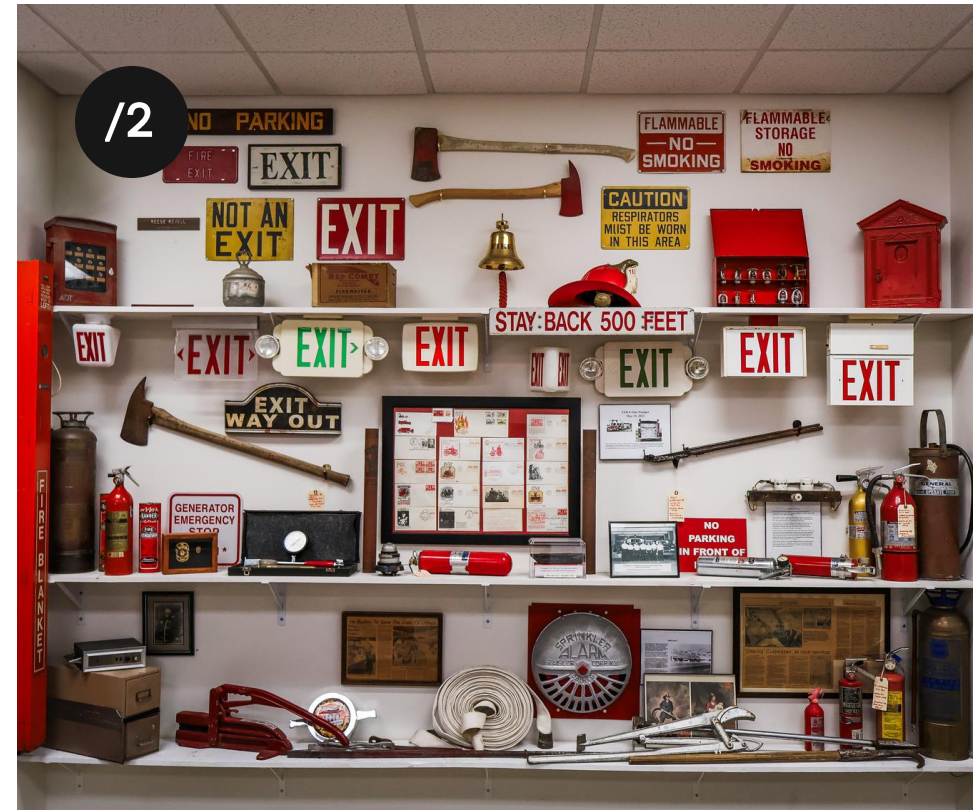
The plaque on the right honors firefighters who served with the Tallahassee Fire Department after this transition and who are no longer with us.



MEMORIAL WALL: HONORING THE FALLEN & SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

MUSEUM OVERVIEW



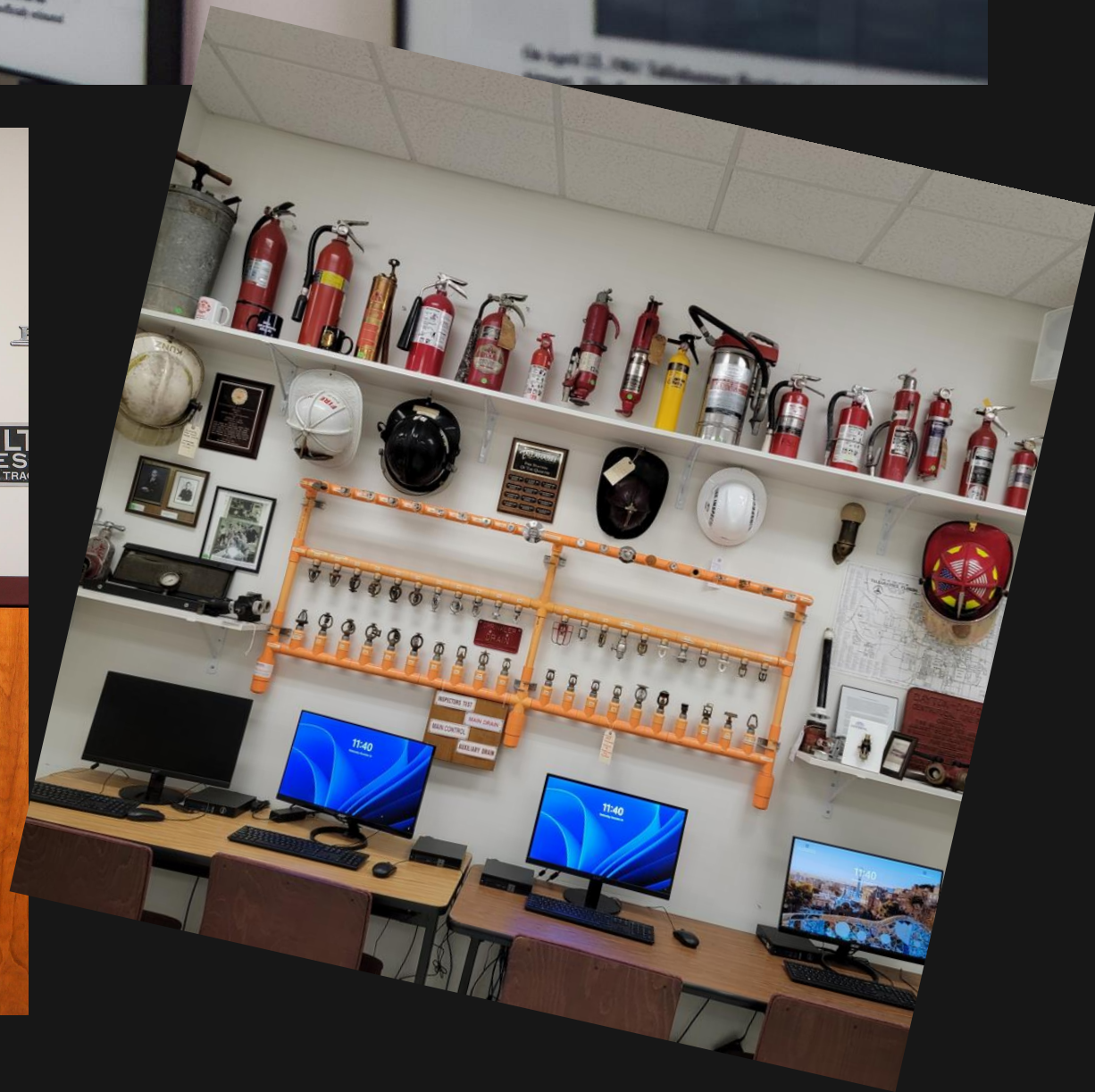


/1 Note the yellow marking at the base of the hose nozzle and the green and red markings above the hose couplings. These colors were used to identify the engine from which the equipment was assigned.

/2 Exit signs, a framed collection of early and commemorative fire service postcards donated by Claude Tennison, and newspaper clippings of the public safety service of Horrie Culpepper Jr. The fire alarm shown originated from McCrory's Department Store and dates to the 1940s.

/3 This display includes a collection of historic hose nozzles, including a tall gold nozzle from Young's Hotel in Boston, 1860. The V-shaped fire buckets were used by bucket brigades so they could not be set down and were less likely to be stolen.

/4 The top shelf displays ARFF equipment from Station 5, our airport station. The lower shelf has a collection of photographs donated by District Chief Tommy Edwin Roberts Sr. The bottom right items are heat detectors, circa 1950, that activated an alarm and were manually wound to reset.



FIRE BADGES



FIRE BADGE COLLECTION

This collection of fire badges was donated to the Tallahassee Fire Department Museum by Mr. Jim Spalding. Mr. Spalding served as a Captain of Oceanside, California, Fire Department before a back injury forced his retirement.



TFD RESERVE PROGRAM BADGES

These badges were donated by Engineer Roger Bynum (Retired). The Tallahassee Fire Department Reserve Program was designed, developed, and implemented by Captain William "Terry" Byrd. The program began on December 24, 1988, lasted for 10 years, and resulted in at least 87 reservists being hired by the department.

DEPUTY CHIEF JAMES HOWARD CURETON, JR.

Deputy Chief James Howard Cureton, Jr. served just under 30 years with the Tallahassee Fire Department. During World War II, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for exceptionally gallant service while performing his duties as a driver to his commanding officer under enemy fire. These items were donated by his family in honor of his service.



T.P. COE'S MEMORABILIA

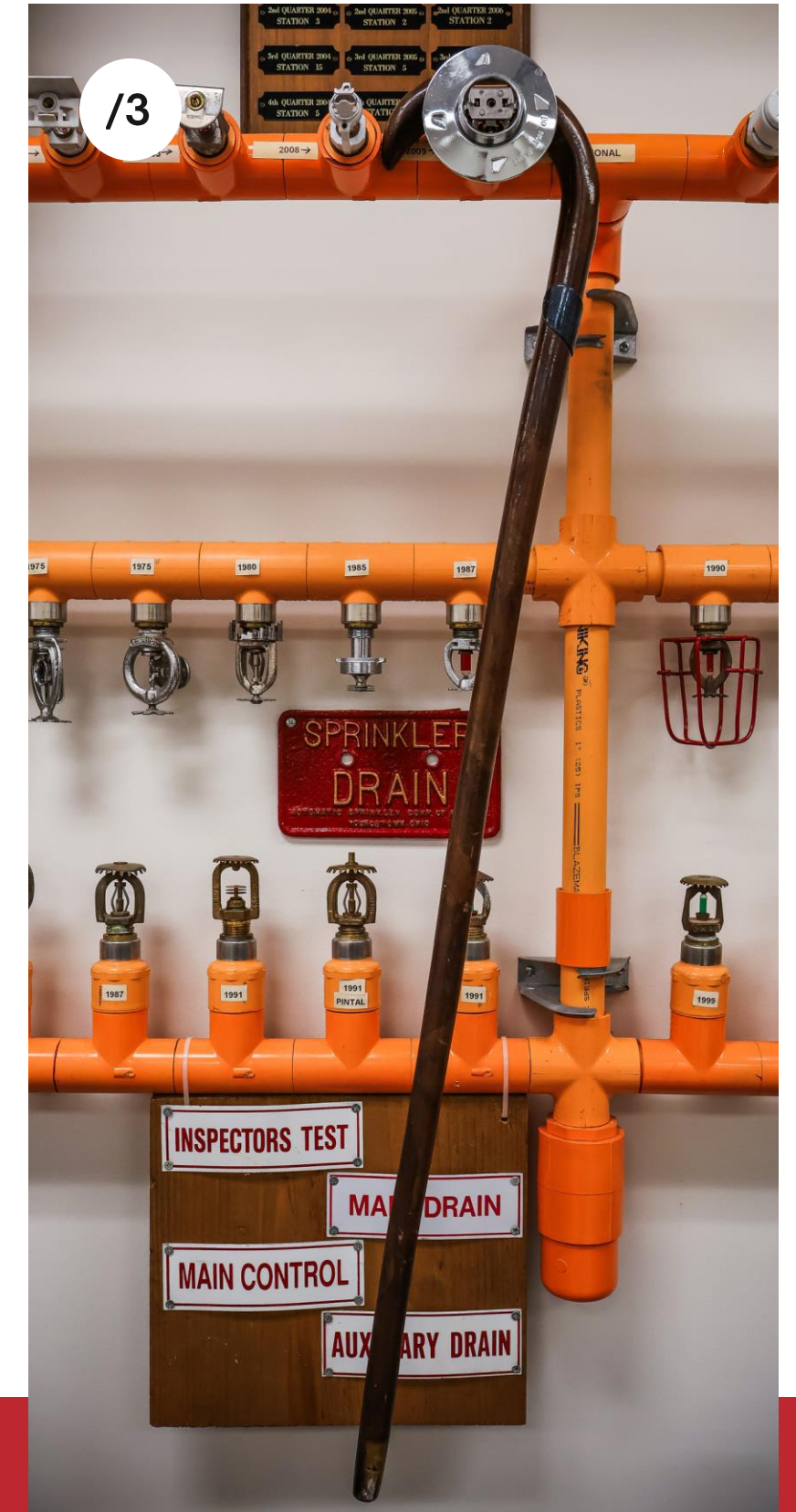
/1 This fire badge belonged to Fire Chief T. P. Coe and reflects his rank and authority while serving the Tallahassee Fire Department.



/2 These conference ribbons belonged to Fire Chief T. P. Coe and reflect his professional involvement and participation in fire service conferences.



/3 This cane was presented to Fire Chief T. P. Coe as a Christmas gift in 1921. The inscription reads, "To Chief Coe from the boys xmas 1921."



/4 This desk is believed to have been used by Fire Chief T. P. Coe at the department's first fire station located at 212 South Adams Street in the Market Place building, and later at 109 South Adams Street.



/5 This hat badge was worn by Fire Chief T.P. Coe. All badges/ribbons pictured were donated by Mrs. Dorothy "Dot" Coe. She was married to Assistant Chief Ridgway Coe, T.P. Coe's son.



ARTWORK

This piece was painted by Charles Boyer in 1993. The Disney Tribute to Firefighters print is unique in several ways that had never been done before by Disney.

Mickey Mouse is typically shown standing above others on a pedestal, not below them. Second, Mickey is depicted shaking hands with a firefighter; while Mickey has appeared touching others in two previous prints, this is the only instance in which he is shown shaking hands. Third, Mickey is shown looking upward, a departure from his traditional portrayal of looking downward or at eye level.

These deliberate artistic choices were made as a tribute to firefighters and reflect Disney's well-known attention to detail.



Pictured above is the former main fire station located at 109 South Adams Street, painted by Captain Bernard “Bernie” C. Guedry, who served with the Tallahassee Fire Department from August 22, 1949, until his retirement on January 31, 1977.

Prior to joining TFD, Captain Guedry served in the United States Marine Corps from 1938 to 1948, earning a Presidential Citation. He moved to Tallahassee from Charleston, South Carolina, and worked as a painter for Florida State University before entering the fire service. During his career with TFD, his roles included firefighter, inspector, and Captain of Fire Safety Prevention. He was also known locally for hosting a children's television program in Tallahassee titled *Uncle Bernie's*.

ARTWORK

These paintings were created by James Edad and were donated to the museum by Mr. Jim Spalding.



FIRE EXTINGUISHERS





/1

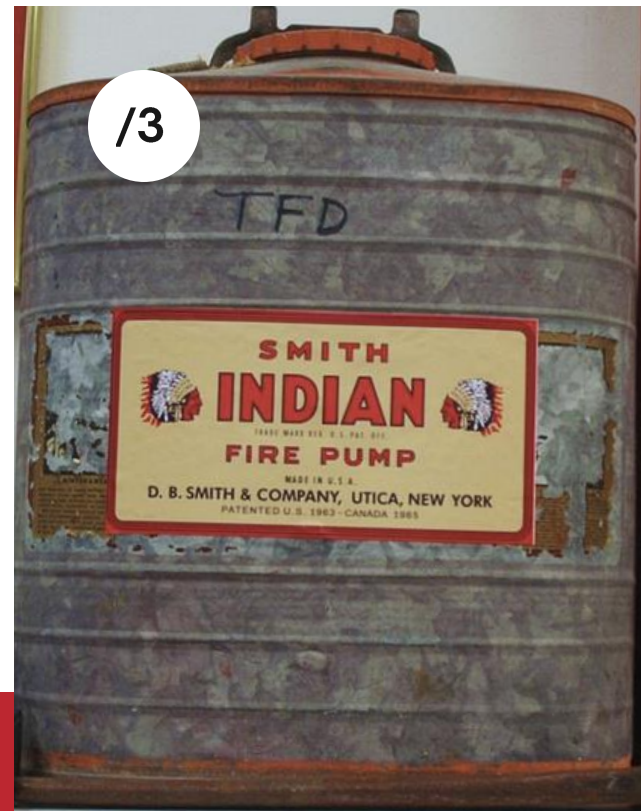


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- /1 General view of many of the fire extinguishers in the museum.
- /2 This Bicentennial fire extinguisher was manufactured for one year only. It was donated to the museum by R&R Fire Equipment.
- /3 The first recorded use of an Indian fire pump by the Tallahassee Fire Department occurred in 1940. This item was donated to the museum by Lt. Billy Fox (Retired).
- /4 American LaFrance is one of the most influential names in fire apparatus history. Founded in 1832 by John F. Rogers in Waterford, New York, the company produced fire engines, bunker gear, and other firefighting equipment. Production moved to Virginia in 1985, and after decades of declining sales, the company filed for bankruptcy and closed in 2014.



/2



/3

/5 In 1881, Frederick Grinnell developed the first sensitive automatic sprinkler system using a fusible link to detect heat and activate water release, revolutionizing fire safety. In 1892, he founded the Grinnell/General Fire Extinguisher Company to further advance fire protection technologies.

/6 This Seminole fire extinguisher is unique to the City of Tallahassee. The illustration at the top of the extinguisher is marked “Chief Osceola.”

/7 Babcock fire extinguishers were the first documented extinguishers purchased by the City of Tallahassee. Six were bought on March 26, 1873, at a cost of \$61.00 each. Donated by Ron Czaplicki, retired Fire Chief of Oakland Park, Florida.

/8 This Red Star fire extinguisher is the only extinguisher in the museum’s collection that was in service with the Tallahassee Fire Department. It was donated to the museum by retired firefighter Bill Creamer.



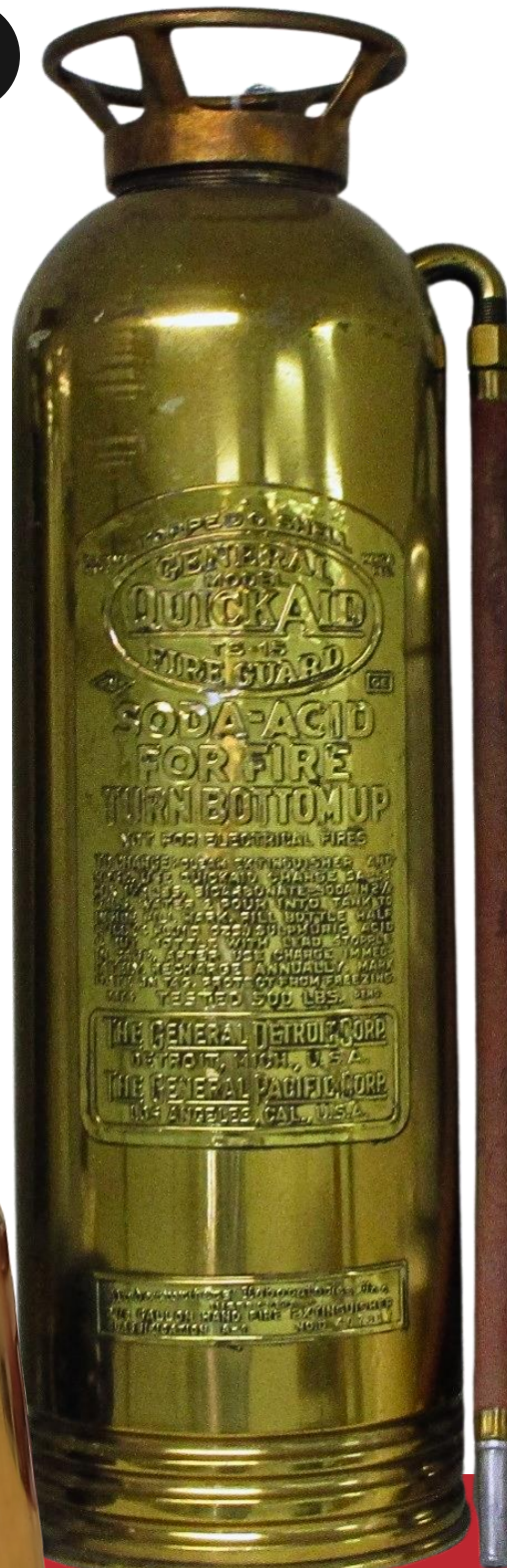
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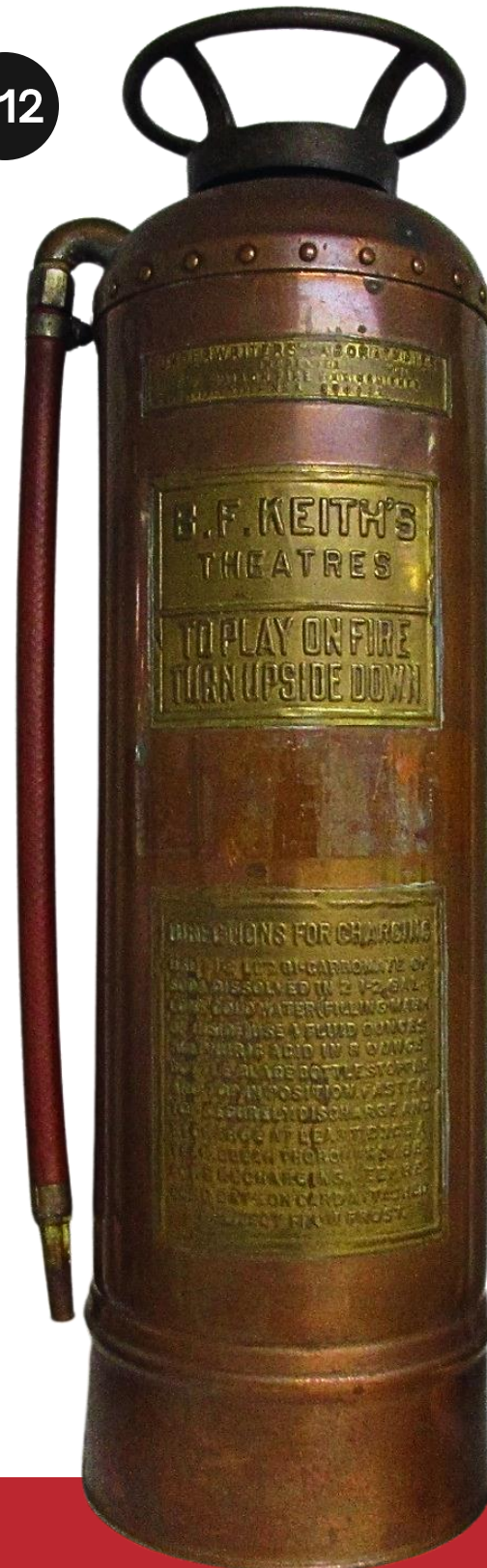
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/9

The Pyrene fire extinguisher is rare. The plate is stamped with patent dates of November 11, 1913, and September 21, 1915, while other extinguishers were not stamped with dates.

/10

This Shur-Spray fire extinguisher was removed from the Old Florida State Capitol during renovations in 1947.

/11

This fire extinguisher is known as a "Torpedo" extinguisher because it has no riveted seam running from the top to the bottom on the rear of the cylinder.

/12

The oldest fire extinguisher in the museum's collection is from the B.F. Keith Theatre, which operated in Boston from 1896 to 1924.



FIRE HOSE CARTS

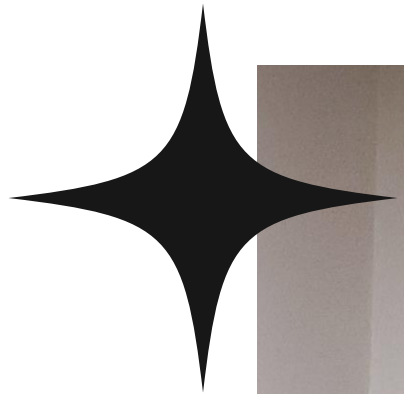
Hose carts were first used in Tallahassee in the early 1890s. On April 19, 1890, the City Council of Tallahassee unanimously approved the purchase of 1,000 feet of fire hose, two hose carts, and three additional play pipes as part of an ordinance establishing a two-mill tax to support water works and fire protection. This action marked an important step in the city's early organized firefighting efforts.

The two hose carts displayed on the left were later recovered from a former plantation in Leon County and were donated to the museum by Lt. Jimmy Byrd (Retired).



In 1897, the Fire Department arranged for hose reels, previously drawn by hand, to be pulled by horses through agreements with two local livery stables. The cost for this service was \$10.00 per year per stable.

FIRE HOSE NOZZLES



TALLAHASSEE FIRE HOSE NOZZLE

On the right is an example of a Tallahassee Fire Department fire hose nozzle. Notice the threaded exterior, which helps prevent firefighters' hands from freezing to the metal in cold conditions while operating the nozzle.

The smaller nozzle to its right is a U.S. Navy straight stream and fog nozzle. This nozzle was once assigned to TFD Truck 4 and was donated to the department by Lt. Robbie McKenzie (Retired).

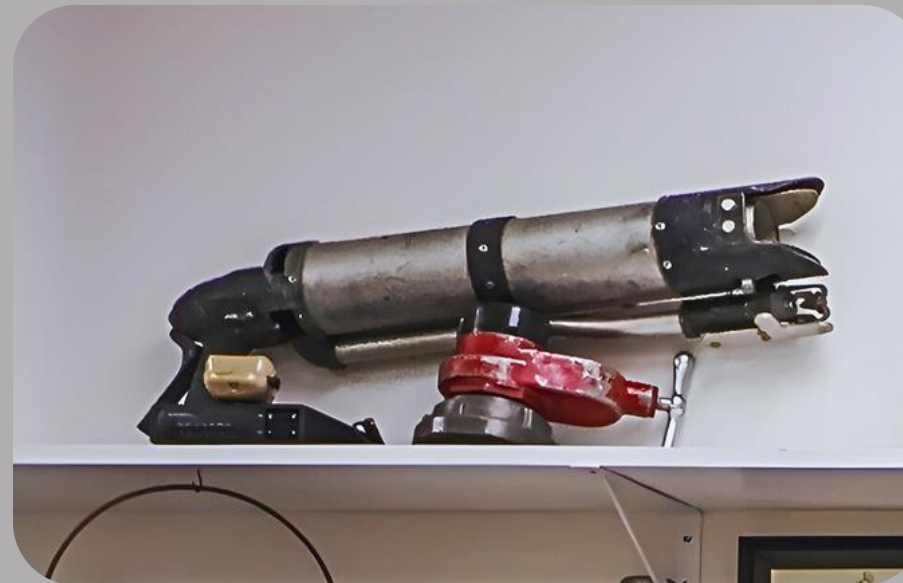


AIRPORT EQUIPMENT



Crash Truck Hose Nozzle

This 19-pound hose nozzle was part of the firefighting equipment used by the Tallahassee Fire Department's former Airport Unit 7. This artifact was donated by Lt. Robbie McKenzie (Retired).



Blabber Mouth Turret

The blabber mouth turret was a high flow firefighting device designed to deliver large volumes of water rapidly. Used primarily on crash trucks circa 1950, it allowed firefighters to apply water quickly during aircraft and fuel related fire incidents.



Airport Unit 7 Apparatus

Airport Unit 7, pictured, was a Ford apparatus that served as the department's second crash truck. The unit was equipped with a blabber mouth turret capable of flowing approximately 450 gallons per minute and was used for rapid fire suppression at the airport.



EISENHOWER JACKETS

Eisenhower jackets were issued to all fire department personnel in the fall of 1949. The image shown includes the longer style jacket that had previously been worn by firefighters prior to the Eisenhower-style uniform.

The Eisenhower jacket displayed at the museum was issued to Ridgway Coe in the fall of 1949 and was donated to the museum by the Coe family. Assistant Chief Ridgway Coe joined the Tallahassee Fire Department on November 17, 1941, at the age of 20. He was promoted to Lieutenant on November 1, 1952, Captain on January 19, 1963, and Assistant Chief on June 13, 1969.

Assistant Chief Coe retired on January 3, 1984, after 42 years, one month, and 18 days of service.

FIRE GRENADES

/1 In the late 1800s, fire grenades became a popular firefighting tool in homes, factories, and even trains. These devices were designed to suppress small fires quickly and without hoses.

/2 This Red Marvel fire grenade extinguisher was acquired from a sewing machine factory on 28th Street in Miami, Florida. It was donated to the museum by Maurice Majszak.

/3 Fire grenades were filled with carbon tetrachloride and encased in glass orbs. When thrown into a fire, the liquid would vaporize and help smother flames.

/4 While effective on small fires, exposure to high heat could cause carbon tetrachloride to convert into a carcinogen, which is toxic to humans. At the time, firefighters did not have self-contained breathing apparatus for protection.



FIRE SPRINKLERS



This display features upright sprinkler heads on the bottom row, pendant sprinkler heads on the middle row, and sidewall sprinkler heads on the top row. The sprinkler head rack was made and donated to the museum by Bobby Wester at Inter-State Fire Equipment.



After its retirement in 1967, the RMS Queen Mary was permanently moored in Long Beach, California, and retrofitted for public use as a museum. Significant renovations were completed prior to its opening in 1971. The sprinkler head pictured here was removed from the Queen Mary during this renovation period and was donated to the museum by Mr. Tom Hickman on December 7, 2010.

FIRE HELMETS



Olin L. Greene's Leather Fire Helmet →

Olin L. Greene began his fire service career with the City of Miami Fire Department and later worked in the Fire Prevention Bureau, where he learned fire codes before advancing to Deputy State Fire Marshal in South Florida. In 1973, he was appointed the first Director of the Division of State Fire Marshal in Tallahassee.

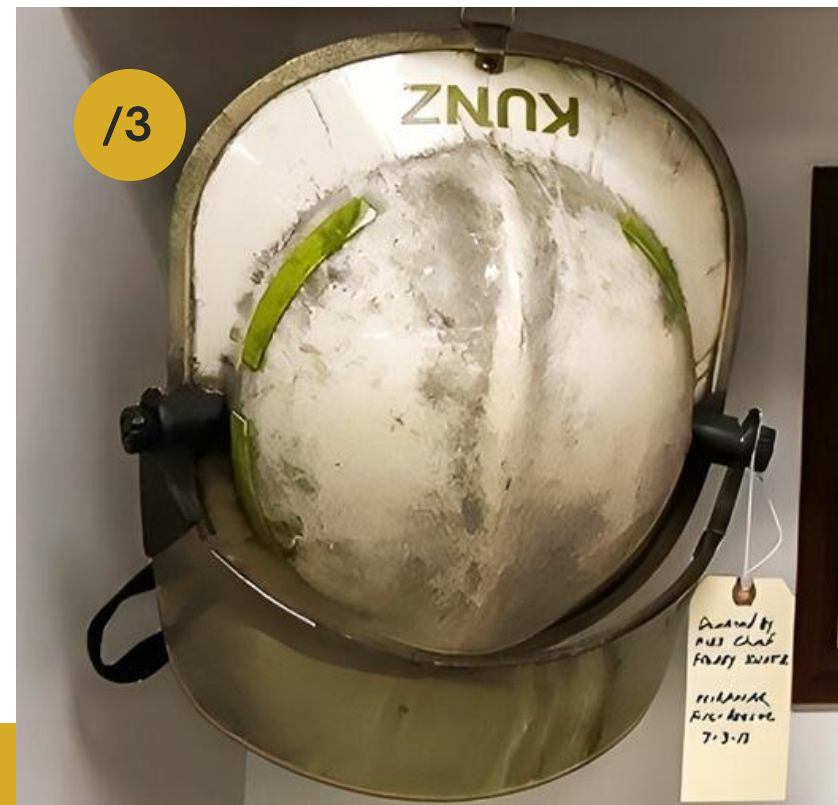
In 1983, Greene moved to Oregon and served as State Fire Marshal for six years. In 1989, President George H.W. Bush appointed him United States Fire Administrator, making him the first state fire marshal to hold the nation's highest fire safety position. He served until 1993, then joined the National Fire Protection Association, where he spent 15 years as a regional manager overseeing 26 states. Donated by Lourdes Greene.



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- /1 This helmet is a Lieutenant's helmet from the United States Air Force Fire Department at Patrick Air Force Base. It was donated to the museum by a helmet collector.
- /2 This helmet was donated by David L. Loveless, President, Boston Whaler, Inc. While the company did not operate a fire department, the helmet represents industrial safety practices of the time.
- /3 This helmet was donated by Fire Chief Freddy Kuntz of Miramar Fire Rescue.
- /4 This helmet belonged to Olin Greene during his service as a firefighter with the City of Miami Fire Department. It was donated to the museum by Buddy Dewar, former State of Florida Fire Marshal.
- /5 This hard hat is from Florida State University and was donated to the museum by Maurice Majszak.





FIRE MARKS

Fire marks date back to the earliest fire insurance companies, beginning in 1682. In 1736, Benjamin Franklin established the first fire department in America, and by 1752 he had founded an insurance company known as the Philadelphia Contributionship. Insured property owners were issued a fire mark to display on their homes, identifying them as policyholders.

When a fire occurred, fire companies prioritized extinguishing fires at insured properties by labeling them with fire marks, as payment for services was guaranteed. Neighboring buildings without fire marks were often addressed only after insured properties were protected. As fire insurance expanded, other companies adopted the use of fire marks.

The museum's collection includes several well-known fire marks, including the Hands Fire Mark, Tree Fire Mark, Home Fire Mark, F & A Fire Mark, F.I. Engine Fire Mark, Fireman Fire Mark, Lorillard Fire Mark, U.F. Fireman Fire Mark, and U.F.I.C. Fire Mark.

Valiant Hose 2 and Eagle Hose 2 are not fire marks. Valiant Hose 2 is based on the Currier and Ives print *Rushing to the Conflict*. Eagle Hose 2 is a reproduction loosely based on the INA Fire Mark issued around 1800.

FIRE HYDRANTS



M&H Fire Hydrant

M&H began manufacturing fire hydrants between 1862 and 1920 and continues to produce hydrants today, making the company one of the longest-standing hydrant manufacturers.



Fill or Flush Hydrant

This hydrant is known as a fill, or flush, hydrant. It is installed at the end of a water line and is used periodically to flush the line and maintain water system integrity. Donated by Allen Shepard, Talquin Water Services.

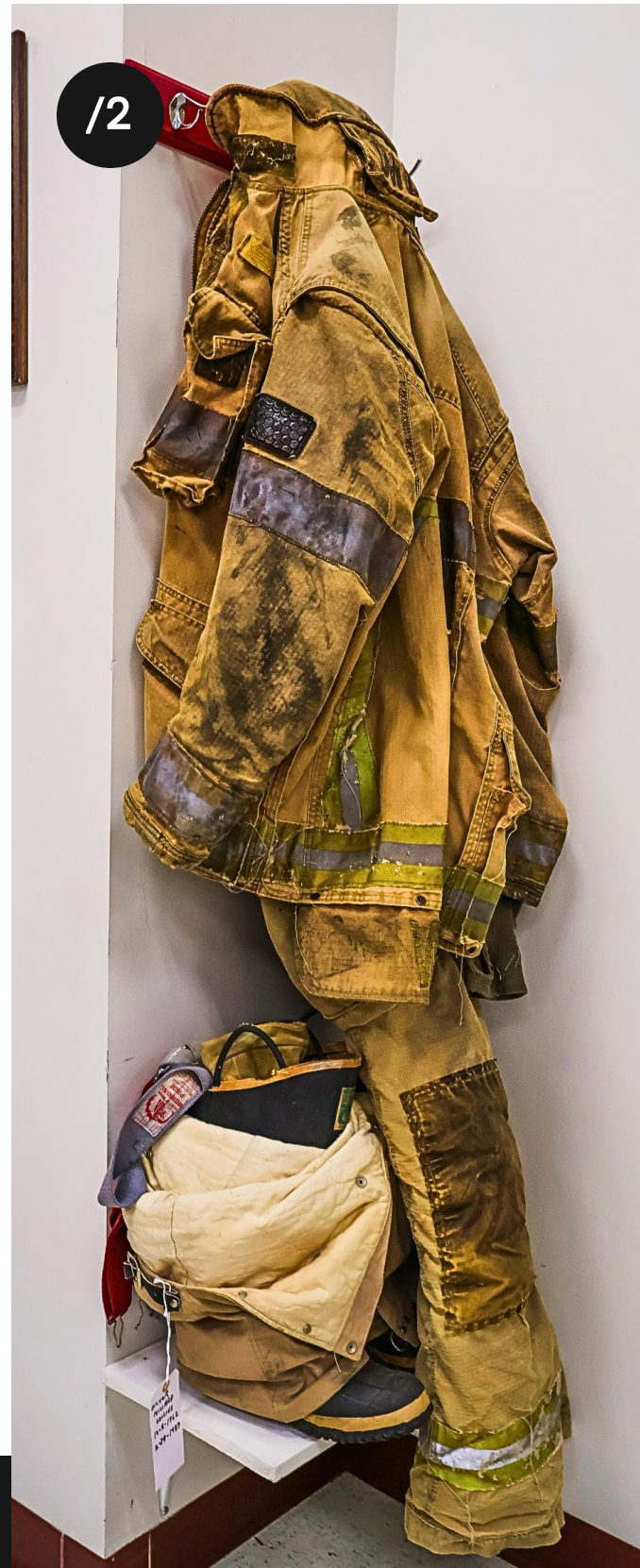


“The Cory” Hydrant

“The Cory” hydrant was manufactured by the Rensselaer Valve Manufacturing Company in Troy, New York, from 1880 until 1969.



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FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT



/4

/1 This axe belonged to Fire Chief T. P. Coe and is believed by Assistant Chief Ridgway Coe to have been kept in his father's city vehicle. Ridgway Coe served more than 42 years with the Tallahassee Fire Department.

/2 Typical fire department bunker gear worn for protection during firefighting operations.

/3 The firefighter pictured is Chief Eddie Earl Roberts. The CO₂ fire extinguisher shown was manufactured prior to 1949 and was donated to the museum by Mr. Ed Vasco.

/4 This gated-Y was made by Guy Raines in the former Tallahassee Fire Department shop behind the original Station 2, located at 224 East 6th Avenue. Raines retired as an Assistant Chief with more than 34 years of service. Note the Tallahassee threads, measuring three and one-half per inch.

Tallahassee Fire Department

2026

/5 Before the introduction of the Jaws of Life, extrication was performed using tools such as the “Porta Power.” The first Jaws of Life used in Tallahassee were owned by civilian Horrie Culpepper Jr., who frequently followed fire apparatus and allowed the department to use his equipment. He became known as “Tallahassee’s best-intentioned Good Samaritan.”

/6 This pressure gauge is from a 1926 manually operated Worthington fire pump installed in the Ingram Building in downtown Miami. The pump was later replaced because it was not automatic.

/7 This 150-pound BC fire extinguisher was manufactured by Kidde and once served in a City of Tallahassee power plant. It was donated to the museum by Lt. Jay Kessinger (Retired).

/8 When Hotel Duval in downtown Tallahassee removed fire hoses from its corridor cabinets, the valves were also removed. Two of these valves were donated to the museum and are displayed here.



THE POMPIER LADDER



Prior to the invention of ladder trucks, fire departments commonly relied on ground ladders and pompier ladders. Pompier ladders were introduced in the United States in 1877 and were used for climbing and rescue in multi-story structures. Pictured here is a Tallahassee Fire Department pompier ladder, along with an example of a firefighter using this type of ladder.



TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT

Wood backboards were once used by the Tallahassee Fire Department to transport medical patients. Following a 1988 agreement with Leon County, all firefighters assigned to county stations were required to be EMS certified, which ultimately led to the entire department becoming EMS certified. Because fire engines had no dedicated storage for backboards, they were often carried on top of the hose bed.

These wooden backboards were prone to cracking or breaking under patient weight and could not be reused once contaminated with blood. For safety, they were replaced by plastic backboards around 2000. To ensure they could not be reused or distributed, hundreds of wood backboards were cut in half and destroyed by firefighters. Firefighter Charles Dery (Retired Battalion Chief) personally spent an entire shift sawing the unusable boards in half to remove them from service.



Pictured left is a Ferno-Washington Inc. Scoop Stretcher, Model 65, manufactured on April 11, 1988, in Wilmington, Ohio. This stretcher was assigned to Station 5 at the airport and was used alongside backboards for patient transport.



ENGINE & TRUCK EMBLEMS

Displayed above is the collection of Tallahassee Fire Department engine and truck emblems donated to the museum by Division Chief Tim Shealy (Retired).

VEHICLES



1916 American LaFrance Type 12

The 1916 American LaFrance Type 12 triple combination fire engine pictured above, affectionately known as “Old Betsy”, was the Tallahassee Fire Department’s first mechanized apparatus. It was placed in service at 3:30 p.m. on March 18, 1916, and retired in 1952 after 36 years of service. It carried hose, pumped water, and a chemical tank used to produce foam.



1949 Sea Grave Pumper

The 1949 Sea Grave pumper was placed in service on December 23, 1949. It carried 1,000 gallons of water, featured a 1,250 GPM pump, and was equipped with 1,400 feet of hose. The canopy-over-cab design allowed firefighters to ride inside while responding. Pictured are Lieutenant Peter Maige and Driver Tommy E. Roberts. The painting was created by Captain Bernard Guedry, likely in the rear of Station 4, and was donated by retired District Chief Tommy Edwin Roberts Sr.



Brush 3: 1961 Ford F-250

Brush 3 is a 1961 Ford F-250 with a skid package that originally came to the Tallahassee Fire Department from the U.S. Navy in Pensacola through the Civil Defense Act. It was later converted into a brush truck in the shop behind former Station 2 at 224 East 6th Avenue. The vehicle was purchased by retired Oakland Park Fire Chief Ron Czaplicki in 2016 and donated to the Tallahassee Fire Department Museum in February 2018.



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THANK YOU.



FULLY
COMMITTED

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