**Report from Past Chief**

**Rev, Jim Van Houten**

**January 1st 2021 till March 31st 2022**

January began working with the Finance committee to find a new Treasurer for our Association. Several interviews were held, meeting with candidates via zoom.

January 31st attended our Board of Directors meeting. Worked with Past Chief Bill Mayo on nominations

February 3rd Dave Quinn accepted the position as our new Treasurer.

February 11th Zoom meeting of Nominating committee with Past Chief Bill Mayo

March 15th and 19th worked with Bob Ruston on Chaplains manual.

March 27th Met with the family of firefighter Jared Lloyd following his Line of Duty death in Spring Valley New York. I offered our condolences from our Association and assured them of our prayers.

April 18th attended our Board meeting

During the months of May, June and July I worked weekly with local veterans who are firefighters, many are suffering from deep depression. I also visited the families of several FDNY members who died from the affects of the 9/11 rescue and recovery,

August 15th to 18th I attended our annual conference at Watertown via zoom. The training was wonderful, but I missed the fellowship.

In the months to follow I attended Fire Council meeting via zoom and I continue my work with the veterans (I’m chaplain of both the VFW as well as the American Legion post.)

September 11th wrote four services for area departments and one for the Village of Walden. I conducted services in Ridgeway, CO. For twenty years I carried the weight of the weeks and months that I spent on the piles and later the pit, there in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains I handed that weight over to the Lord.

October, I attended our Board of Directors meeting in Albany and the following day I attended the memorial service at the egg.

In November I began meeting twice a month with retired members of FDNY rescue #3 as we continue to strengthen our brotherhood. They lost members from their house on 9/11 and several since from cancer related illnesses dating back to 9/11. I worked the pile with them 20 years before.

December through the ministry of my church and my fire department we provided Christmas gifts, (3 for each child) to over 500 kids. We call our program Operation Dalmatian.

On January 12th I conduced the Line of Duty death services for firefighter David Green. Dave died from cancer contracted while working with our Walden team beginning on September 11th and in the weeks which followed. Dave held the rank of Assistant Chief in the Enterprise Steamer Company #2 in Walden, he was 62.

February 6th, I attended our Board of Directors meeting at Montour falls. I was honored to bring a devotional.

February 7th completed our board meeting and worked with our nominating committee with Past Chief Bill Mayo putting together the slate of officers for our election in April.

The rest of February and the month of March I have been working with First Deputy Tom With serving on his conference committee. Tom’s conference will be held July 17th to July 20th at the comfort Inn in East Green Bush, New York,

As one of our Associations historians I’d like to conclude my report with these thoughts:

For years no one in our Association seemed to really know where Rev. Robert Field got the idea to begin our Association. Interviews with past members shed little light for our journey. I remembered years before, when I was a student at Nyack Missionary College, I had attended a Lutheran church whose pastor was Rev. David Arnold. I recalled he had announced on a Sunday morning that he had joined a new Chaplains Association which was just formed.

Rev. Arnold recalled that Rev. Field had been at Temple University and had gone to visit the chapel of the Four Chaplains. That visit and their sacrifice changed him and from that moment on he envisioned that type of chaplaincy for the fire service. I conveyed that information to Father Brennan and two other charter members who said, yes, Rev. Field did mention those four chaplains. The mystery was solved!

We are the oldest Fire Chaplain’s Association, which I can find on record in our country.

We are the only one in this country to be founded upon the friendship shared, the common purpose of ministry and the sacrifice which was demonstrated by Rev. Fox, Rabbi Goode, Rev. Washington, and Rev. Poling. These four Chaplains became the cornerstone upon which our Association was founded. What touched the heart of Rev. Field was that these four Chaplains willingly gave their lives to save others. They put John 15: 13 into practice, “Greater love hath no man then this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

Tom With, as our new Chief Chaplain has chosen these four Chaplains who served on the Dorchester, to be the theme of his conference. I believe that when their story is shared, when their memory is honored at our Memorial Service and that when their deeds are recalled that the hearts of our members will be touched, like Rev. Field’s. And that the ministry of all our members will be forever changed.

End!