The greatest complaint heard from antique apparatus buffs when attending parades of late concerns the lack of vintage fire engines and trucks. Too often such displays of departments’ pride end up being dubbed “Pierce Parades.” An exception to the expected norm was the West Paterson (Woodland Park) Centennial Parade held on May 14. Although not actually a departmental parade, of the approximately 24 fire companies participating in the majority brought at least one piece of antique apparatus, with some bringing two. Privately owned apparatus often paraded along with municipally owned or in-service rigs. Included among the participants were one or two engines that were new to the circuit.

West Paterson Company Number 2 maintains this 1930 Ahrens-Fox pumper. Wayne’s Fox also participated in the parade.

AN ABUNDANCE of ANTIQUE APPARATUS
The host community’s three departments paraded with three antiques, two owned by fire companies and one privately owned. These included Company 2’s 1930 Ahrens-Fox piston pumper. An ex-Paterson rig, the engine has a 1,000-gpm pump and carries 100 gallons of water. The Ridge Runners Company 3 followed with their closed cab 1941 GMC/Yellow Body, currently designated as Engine 12. This rig features a 500 gpm pump and carries 200 gallons of water.

Accompanying the West Paterson rigs was a 1960 FWD open cab pumper that served Company 1 until its retirement in 1982. This rig has a 750-gpm pump and carries 500 gallons of water. It is privately owned by Kyle Broadfield and is undergoing restoration.

Another former West Paterson pumper appeared along with that community’s Department of Public Works. Built for Company 3 by Hahn in 1982, this formerly white-over-red rig is now “school bus yellow” with a white cap. The former 1,250-gpm pumper with a 500 gallon tank is now a stake truck. All body work, including the pump, has been removed.

The parade unit featuring apparatus from neighboring Little Falls produced a bit of a surprise. One of the antiques was a 1954 open cab GMC General pumper. It carried elaborate gold leaf that proudly said it belonged to Enterprise Company No. 2, the busiest department in Little Falls. AFANJ members will remember this rig from our past musters when it was owned by West Paterson’s Company No. 3. The 750-gpm pumper with a 250 gallon tank was returned to its original owner, Enterprise, in 2012. It has since been refurbished and has received elaborate gold leaf at the hand of Ed May.

The most interesting antique in the parade was a 1956 Jeep “Commando” fire truck lettered for Frenchwoods. Unfortunately details on this privately owned, white-painted closed cab rig were not available at the end of the parade. It may have served Pilot Knob, New York.

It is known Willys dealers began marketing Commando Fire Trucks in 1955, a year before this rig was built. The fire engine version of the 4 wheel drive Jeep truck featured a 6-226 Super-Hurricane engine with its own series of serial numbers. It is not known how many of these Willys Comandos were built during the 1950s, but there was a run of 83 built in 1960. These fire trucks were available with closed or open cabs. Most were fitted with either 400- or 500-gpm front-mounted pumps. Some were equipped with smaller pumps rated at 250-gpm.

(Below) The Willys Commando Blitz Buggy that participated at West Paterson.
Other equipment on the “factory” produced fire trucks was installed by a number of fire apparatus manufacturers. The list of outfitters included American Fire Apparatus, W.S. Darley, Oren Roanoke, Howe, General-Detroit, Blitz Buggy Company, and Valley Fire Truck.

The Willys Commando appearing at West Paterson was manufactured by The Blitz Buggy Corporation, a builder located in Old Forge, New York. During the 1940s and ’1950s W. Lewis “Army” Armstrong and Lewis G. Armstrong were incorporated under various names including Army’s Fire Service, the Hi-Pressure Fog Equipment Company, and The Blitz Buggy Company. The latter produced diminutive fire apparatus on Chevrolet, Dodge, Ford, GMC and Willys Overland 1-to 1-1/2 light truck chassis. Marketed to small town fire departments, industrial sites, and airports, the apparatus carried various brand names including Blitz Buggy, Little Demon, Jet, Saginaw, and Little Mo. According to company records, 11 Willys Commando chassis were built.

The rig appearing at West Paterson was unusual in that it was fitted with an overhead ladder and hose rack normally found on the Universal Jeep Fire Engine. Blitz Buggy also retained the angular rear fenders of the Willys pickup.

Another rare rig on display came from River Edge, NJ. Maintained by Company 2, it is a 1962 70th Anniversary Series pumper with an open cab. Not unusual? Consider that it lacks the conventional cab doors. The white-painted engine features a 1,200-gpm Seagrave 2 stage pump. It also carries 500 gallons in its booster tank. It is powered by a 265 horsepower Detroit 6.71 diesel. The engine was retired in 2006.

Production of the 70th Anniversary Series began in 1951. These rigs are easily recognized by the siren-in-nose feature. More than 1,600 pumper and aerials were built in the United States and Canada. The Anniversary Series enjoyed the longest production run of any previous Seagrave model. The introduction of a cab forward model in 1959 reduced the long-nosed rig’s sales and led to its demise.

The origins of an American LaFrance Series 900 pumper paraded by the Passaic County Fire Academy weren’t immediately known. The dark red painted rig looked familiar and was formerly Engine 2 of the Prospect Park Fire Company. Now the Academy’s Engine 5, it was former Engine 702. It has a 1,000-gpm pump and carries 500 gallons of water.
Another American LaFrance participating at West Paterson was Caldwell Fire Department’s 1937 Type 450. This open cab pumper is SN L-903 and features a 500-gpm pumper and carries 100 gallons in its booster tank. The rig has participated at our Fall Muster in the past.

Four other vintage rigs paraded at West Paterson. They were Franklin Lakes Fire Department’s 1926 Seagrave Suburbanite with a 500-gpm pump, Don Simmons Jr.’s Dodge, Community’s Ahrens-Fox, and Pink Heals 1984 Mack CF-600 with a 1,500-gpm pump. This engine served both Haledon and Bloomingdale.

Congratulations to West Paterson/Woodland Park on their 100th anniversary.

**2014 NEWARK MUSTER REPORT**

The Newark Fire Department’s Historical Society held its annual muster at Washington Park in Newark. As has been the recent trend, attendance was down. Seventeen rigs, not counting Newark Fire Department’s units, were on display in bright sunlight. The majority of those attending were familiar to those who regularly attend this event. Two newcomers were the 1960 FWD pumper, described above, and a 1955 American LaFrance series 800 pumper. This 750-gpm rig with a 350 gallon tank spent its firefighting career protecting Newport, Vermont. As at past musters, photographers were provided with an opportunity to pose rigs.

**AHRENS-FOX REUNION REMINDER**

Mark SATURDAY, June 21 on your calendar. The Tri-State muster at Jamesburg will include an Ahrens-Fox reunion. As of June 1 a total of twelve Foxes were pre-registered.

**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

Thanks to Chief Lou Rosa and the Madison Fire Department for hosting our May meeting. Geraldine, their recently re-acquired Ahrens-Fox, was on the apparatus floor with her engine out for rebuild. It will be great to see her up and running again.

This month our meeting will be in Stanhope. Mike Foote has secured rent free office space for us. Come and check it out.

As noted above, Tri-County Fire Association’s muster will feature several Foxes. They also have a parade thru town and drafting. I am sure there maybe a Fox or two that you have not seen.

Hope to see you soon.

**SAM ROBINSON – PRESIDENT**
NEWSLETTER

Peter T. Eisele
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Chatham, NJ 07928
973-635-4661 or highseased@aol.com

Please send any information about local apparatus, fire department activities, news clippings, or anything else that you might think may be of interest to members.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Membership to the Antique Fire Association of New Jersey is open to all individuals. Fire Departments and organizations interested in the preservation restoration, and appreciation of vintage fire apparatus and memorabilia and preserving the history of the American fire fighting profession. You need not own apparatus to be a member.

THE AFANJ IS THE NORTHERN NEW JERSEY CHAPTER of S.P.A.A.M.F.A.A.

Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of Motor Fire Apparatus in America.
P.O. Box 2005, Syracuse, NY 13220-2005

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Vice-President: Mike Foote – 973-886-0429
Secretary: Sandy Burdge - 732-741-5562
Treasurer: Irv Loveless - 973-747-8076

TRUSTEES

Robert Kane – 2014
Ed Burdge – 2015
Peter Eisele - 2016

THE ABOVE OFFICERS & TRUSTEES MAKE UP AFANJ's 2014 BOARD of DIRECTORS

AFANJ MEETING LOCATIONS

3rd Wednesday of each Month at 7:30 p.m.

AFANJ Meeting Locations are Needed. Please call Sam Robinson, Pres., at (908) 623-0284 if you have a meeting site.

2014 MEETINGS CALENDAR

June 18 – 10 Furnace Road, Stanhope, NJ
July-August – No Meetings
September 17 - TBA

2014 FIREMATIC EVENTS CALENDAR

June 21 – Ahrens-Fox Apparatus Show – Tri-County Muster @ Jamesburg, NJ
July 25-28 – SPAAMFAA Convention – Columbus
July 12 – Harrisburg, PA – Muster
July 19 – Maybrook, NY - Parade
August 3 – Pensauken, NJ – CLFA Muster
August 9 – Goshen, NY - Fire Cats Muster
August 9 - Circleville, NY – Leider Open House
August 16 – Warren, NJ – Parade
August 17 – Wheaton Village – Muster
August 23 – Mahopac, NY – Parade
September 13 – Wildwood, NJ – Convention
September 20 – Litchfield, CT – State Parade
September 28 – Hamburg, PA – Hahn Reunion
October 4 – White Horse, NJ – Parade
October 19 – Philadelphia, PA – Muster
October 20 – Sussex County, NJ - Muster

Check individual websites for additional details and information.
(Top) Prospect Park’s 900 Series American LaFrance is now Engine 5 at the Passaic County Fire Academy. (Above) This 1982 Hahn may qualify for a “cruelty” award. It is now a Public Works stake truck.

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