George Larrimer interview conducted by Anthony G. Potoczniak 2012-08-01

[0:25] George Larrimer, born in Jefferson City, MO, lived in Columbia, MO until 6 years old; father forced to join the service again to pay for hospital bills of deceased wife; later moved to San Antonio, TX, stationed at Fort Sam, moved to Ethiopia for 2 1/2 years. Describes time spent in Ethiopia, father loved boats, spent two years building 16-foot boat.

[2:58] Life in Houston: attended Robert Lee High School in Baytown, Texas; later joined the US Coast Guard. Describes several early assignments.

[3:53] Shares first impressions of visiting the fireboat "Captain Cortty," at the Port of Houston [POH]. GL joined as a marine firefighter. Served on the f/b "Farnsworth," and other f/bs.

[5:03] Outlines the historical development of the POH Marine Fire Dept., and evolving firefighting technologies: from "put the wet stuff on the red stuff" to the introduction of a new HazMat unit: in the days when I came on, the solution to pollution was dilution.

[7:57] Describes early training of marine fire fighters; recounts his transition from a US Coast Guard to a marine fire fighter.

[10:09] Shares a terrifying experience in the U.S. Coast Guard: you only see two things: sky and water...you don't see the horizon

[13:13] Recalls his first fire at the Houston Ship Channel: an explosion at the Goodpasture Grain Elevator (Feb, 1976).

[15:47] Describes story about a fire on the Philippine ship Corregidor, which had on-board unexpected cargo of small arms ammunition; underscores firefighting philosophy: Can we put water on this?

[18:08] Describes the typical day at the marine fire station: much of the time spent servicing and maintaining the f/b Farnsworth.

[20:03] Explains the growth of the fire dept.: from one boat to three, and why it was necessary to have the minimum of two fireboats servicing the ship channel at all times.

[22:51] Describes other POH organizations and their collaboration during accidents and fires, such as at the Intercontinental terminal. It's a maritime thing -- you're there to help each other.

[27:33] Outlines the typical day at the firehouse.

[31.37] Shares marine firefighters' story of patrolling the channel and discovering a potentially disastrous fire: It's a matter of timing [...] bad things could have happened.

[33:21] Details the challenges of responding to a call and getting to a fire in the channel: quoting Wild Bill Hickok: at a gunfight you take your time as fast as you can. The same thing [with fighting fires at the Ship Channel]. Whenever we get a fire, we pretty much pull out the stops right there.

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[38:35] Explains the practice of securing a fireboat during hurricanes.

[40:57] Compares the other fire departments and how they work together, and the function of the US Coast Guard.

[45:02] Describes the work schedule of marine firefighters: 24 hours on/ 48 hours off.

[49:11] Describes his hobby of creating maritime woodwork, how he began making and selling his artwork, and how he first became interested in maritime art after visiting the Maritime Museum in Mystic Harbor, Ct. Recalls first artworks sold.

[58:05] History of the f/b Captain Farnsworth, which was built in 1973, and how GL restored the pilots wheel house: The Farnsworth needed a facelift and we gave it to her.

[1:01:55] GL describes decision to become a marine fireman, and how his career developed.

[1:03:55] The historical formation of fire stations and their locations on the Houston Ship Channel.

[1:05:26] Overview of the staffing and work schedule at a fire station. Most calls are HAZMAT related.

[1:10:34] Describes all-nighters, when an emergency goes beyond a 24-hour shift.

[1:15:00] Explains mixing the pie: a common practice of borrowing firefighters from other stations.

[1:18:13] GL compares the career opportunities for today's firefighter.

[1:23:22] Recounts the day-to-day activities of the MFD and the function it performs.

[1:27:42] Conclusion.