

Travel Report

Program Nashville, Tennessee 2019

Monday, May 6th 2019

On this Monday, early in the morning, it is time to head out to Brussels airport for the start of an adventure for all of us. All of the participants arrive in time at Brussels airport. Some with family, some with friends to wave them off. We have planned plenty of time for check-in and soon it is time for the last goodbyes and head for the gate of our flight. Lucky for us, we have a single flight on the schedule today from Brussels to Atlanta. A flight that takes about 9 hours. As most of the participants are from different fire departments throughout the country and even from the Netherlands, the flight allows the group to get to know each other a little better. We are 10 in total with fire;fighters from Belgium and the Netherlands. We also have a nurse and a 911 calltaker with us.



Once arrived in Atlanta International Airport, we head out to pickup our rental cars and after the usual discussions with the rental car agency about additional services, we don't need, we are on our way for a 250 mile car ride to Nashville. Along the way, we stop at a Cracker Barrel for dinner and arrive at our hotel just outside of Nashville later that night. Most of us, turn in for the night.

Tuesday, May 7th 2019

As usual most of us are up very early, some at 4AM already, due to the time difference. Today is a big day. We are starting the ride along program with Nashville Fire and are expected at 10AM at HQ to meet the Fire chief and executive staff.

We also meet our chaperone of the week, which is Capt. James "Jimbo" Nelson a good friend of ours, that also chaperoned us back in the 2013 program.





After a quick tour of HQ, we head out for lunch and a visit to the Firefighter memorial downtown for a salute. Shortly after we head out to drop our group off at the various fire station that we are assigned to. We have been assigned to stations 2, 9, 13 and 17 where we will be staying for the next 7 days and 7 nights.

Wednesday, May 8th 2019

With the group settled in and having spent the night at the stations, most of us did not get a lot of sleep and were out on calls. Today we have an activity planned with some of the crews. We will be doing some extrication training on car wrecks together with the crews of station 13 and 19 at a salvage yard.





After a great training in the not so great heat, we head out for lunch at a local Firehouse Subs and head back to station 13 for a demo of their hazmat equipment. In the afternoon we drive back to our fire halls to continue our ride alongs.

Thursday, May 9th 2019

Today is another day of training with the NFD. After breakfast at the halls, we are expected at the Training Academy for a day of training together with several crews that are on shift today. On the schedule is a class room training of about an hour about fire management in high rises, followed by several practical training sessions on site about forcible entry and finding victims in buildings with limited sight.



After lunch we are invited to see the crews in action in a hospital building where they will be conducting more practical training in suppression techniques in complex buildings and finding and evacuating



In the late afternoon, it is time to head back to the halls for another exciting night of ride along

Friday, May 10th 2019

Almost weekend, which promises to be busy as usual for all the fire crews. On the schedule today, we only have a visit to the Communications Center, which is planned for after lunch. So everybody can sleep in and enjoy the morning with the crews. Just before lunch we are picked up by Jimbo to head to Station 14 for a quick visit and lunch in a nearby pizza place, that according to the locals servers the best pizza in town.



Tonight is the group's night out downtown. For the occasion, Jimbo managed to surprise us with a treat. He had booked a ride on a "party fire truck" for us to take us on a ride through the downtown area for a couple of hours. We then ended up in some great bars on Broadway before heading back to the halls.



Saturday, May 11th 2019

Rise and shine, for an early wakeup call as after our night out. We are heading to Lynchburg, Tennessee today to visit Jack Daniel's Distillery. We need to be there early to be able to visit the fire brigade of Jack Daniel's.





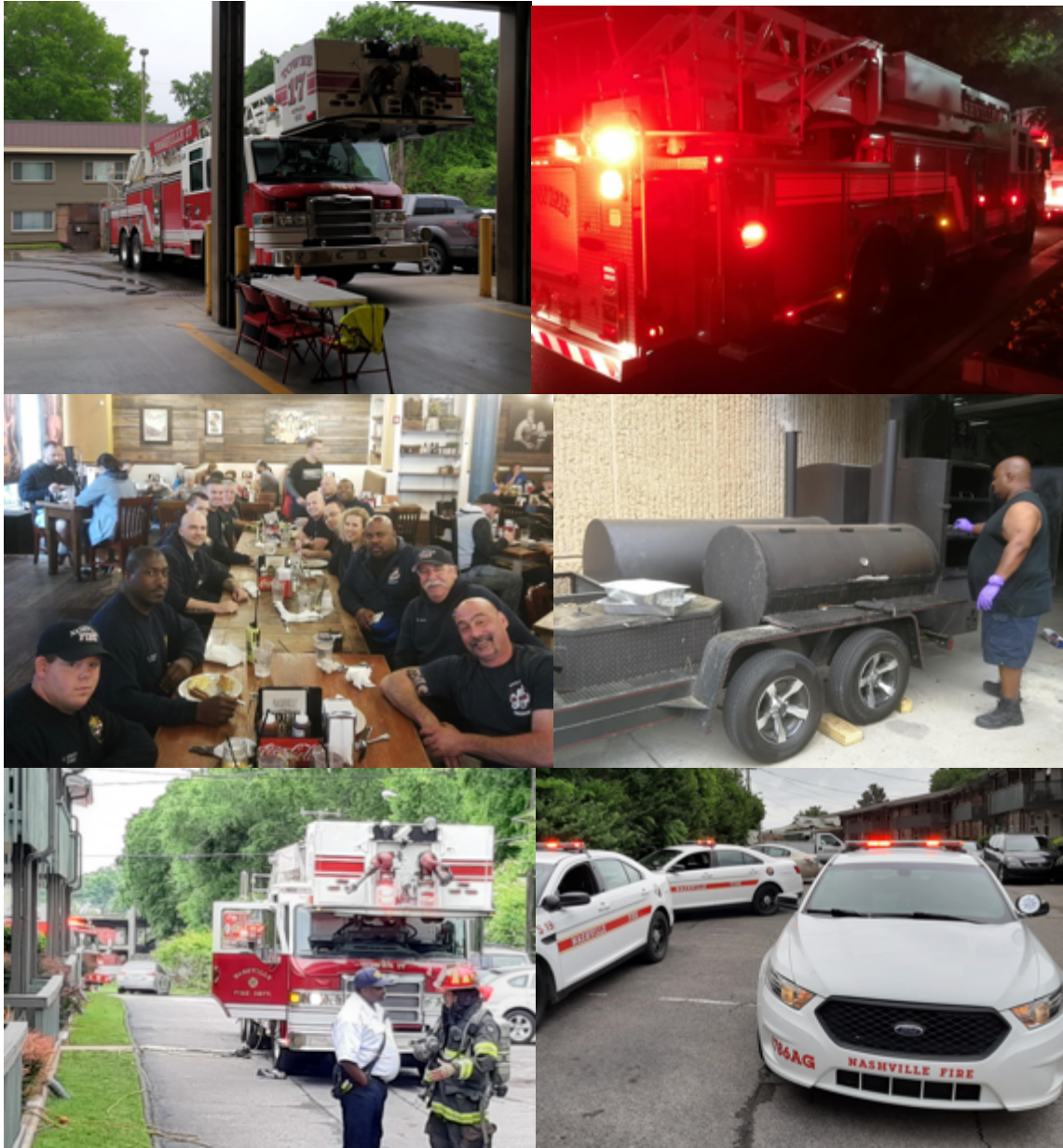
After a tour by the assistant Fire Chief of the station and the training grounds, we drive back to the distillery to tour the distillery itself



After the tours, we hit the town of Lynchburg for some great barbecue at the best BBQ shack in the greater area of everywhere and do some shopping in the local stores. We get back to the fire halls in Nashville in the late afternoon

Sunday May 12th 2019

Calls, calls and nothing but calls. That is the schedule for today. There are no activities planned for the group today, so everyone can enjoy an entire day of ride along with the crews at their stations. This means a lot of fun, good food and great times for all.



Monday, May 13th 2019

The weekend flew by and on this Monday we are visiting Lifelight, a private company that provides medical transportation with ambulances and helicopters and operates out of

Vanderbilt University hospital. We get to visit their operations center and the flight deck on top of the hospital.



Shortly after lunch we are already back at the halls to enjoy our last day and night with the crews.



Tuesday, May 14th 2019

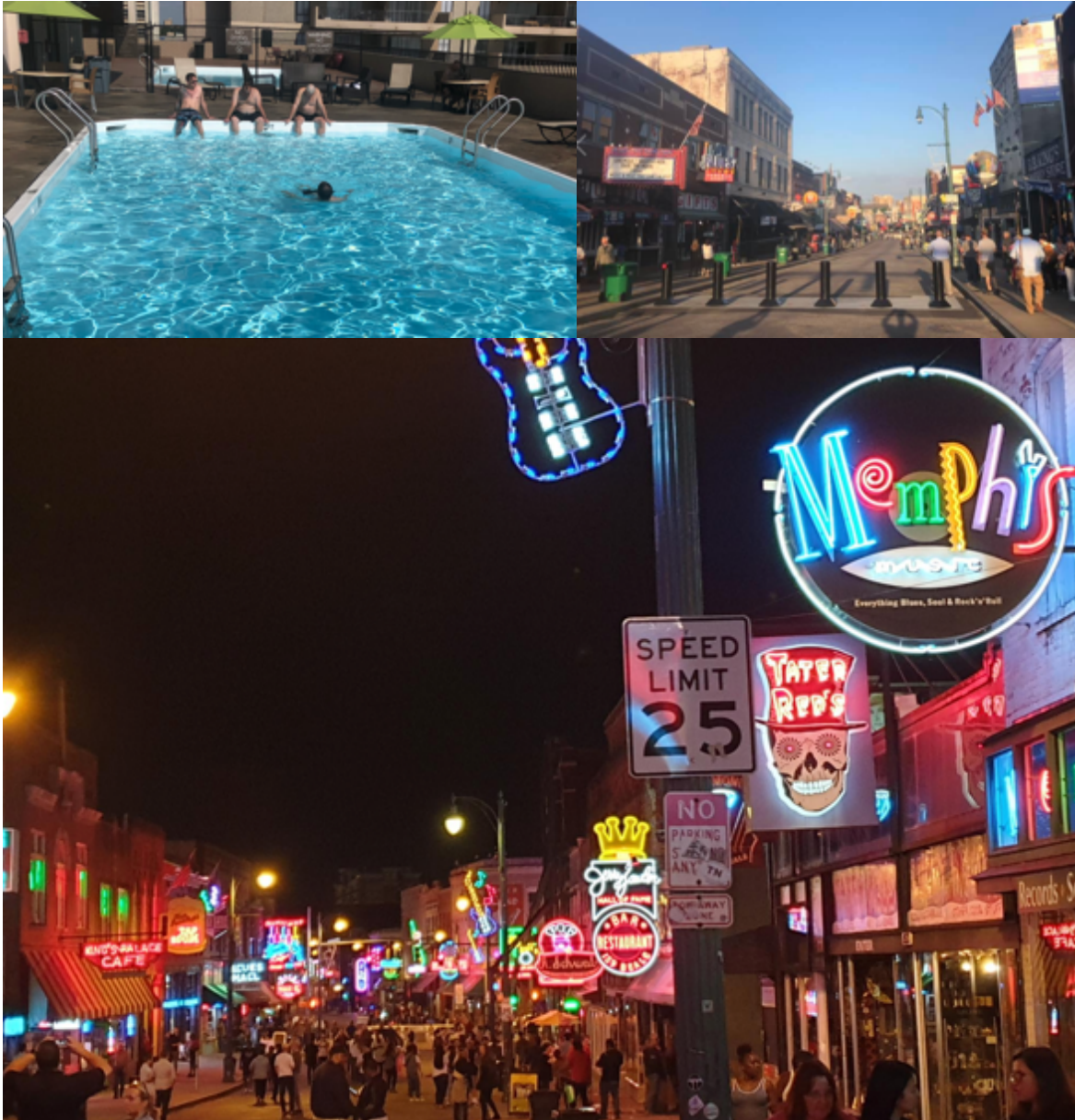
A mixed feelings day for a lot of people in the group. Today we say goodbye to our brothers of the NFD after a great time. However, the trip isn't over yet and there is still a lot to come to look forward too. We head out of Nashville and stop for a hearty breakfast with our chaperone Jimbo to thank him for all he has done and made possible for the group.



A big thank you, Jimbo! As usual you were wonderful!

After breakfast, our road trip and vacation time can begin. We start out with a trip to Memphis Tennessee, a 3 hour drive out of Nashville. As expected it is very quiet in the cars. Once arrived in Memphis we visit a local fire station and decide to spend the rest of the afternoon at the pool in the hotel, before heading towards Beale street





We have dinner at the famous BB Kings blues club and shortly after we stroll down Beale street. It is a quiet night tonight and we decide to head back to the hotel.

Wednesday, May 15th 2019

After our first good night of uninterrupted sleep, we head out Graceland, the home of Elvis Presley and after that to the National Civil Rights museum and the Memphis Fire museum. This day, packed with visits to museums is completed with another night out in Beale Street. This time around, it is more crowded than the night before.



Thursday, May 16th 2019

We continue our road trip today with a long drive down, across the states of Mississippi and Louisiana to New Orleans for a touch of “Laissez les bon temps rouler”



After a long drive, there is nothing much left to do today, than head out to the French Quarter for dinner and a great night out. New Orleans is definitely a lot busier than Memphis, even for a Thursday night.

Friday, May 17th 2019

Another day in New Orleans. We have booked a river cruise with lunch on the Mississippi river on the famous Natchez steamboat. After the cruise we enjoy a stroll down the French Market and head into the French Quarter again for dinner and another great night out



Saturday, May 18th 2019

And the road trip continues. Time to leave New Orleans behind us. Today we are heading to Mobile, Alabama. Only a 2 hour drive out of NoLa. We stop for some breakfast at a local Ihop and drive up to the Battleship Memorial Park in Mobile to visit the USS Alabama.



After the visit, we decide to head to the hotel, enjoy some pool time before going for dinner at an Olive Garden.

Sunday, May 19th 2019

Another day, another state. The destination for today is Pensacola Beach, Florida. Not that far of a drive and plenty of time to stop at the US Naval aviation museum in Pensacola. This museum is located on a US Navy military base and is one of the most beautiful aviation museums in the country.

We spend several hours and lunch at the museum before driving to the hotel in Pensacola Beach.



At the hotel, it doesn't take long for the group to head to the beach and the beach bar. The night is finished of with dinner at one of the seafood restaurants and a night out in a local joint across the hotel for some drinks.



Monday, May 20th 2019

Final destination of our road trip today which takes us back where we started this journey: Atlanta, Georgia. After breakfast at the hotel we have a long drive ahead of us. It takes about 6 hours to drive to Atlanta. When we finally arrive at the hotel, the majority of the group decides to stay at the hotel for some drinks and pool time. A couple of people head out to see the Georgia Aquarium right across the street.



Tuesday, May 21st 2019

Final day of the trip. The group is divided in two groups. One group heads out to the Georgia Aquarium and the other group chooses to visit World of Coca Cola.



After the visits, it is time for a last lunch at Johnny Rocket's before we head to the airport to fly back home.

Wednesday, May 22nd 2019

After an 8 hour flight out of Atlanta, the group arrives back in Brussels where they are awaited by friends and family. The trip has come to an end and everyone returns home with great memories.



A big thank to the Nashville Fire Department for having us and see you guys back in on of our future programs.

Program participants (left to right):



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|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Luc Maes | – HVZ Kempen – post Balen |
| Ken Peeters | – Noodcentrale 112 Antwerpen |
| Sammy Kneuvelds | – HVZ Fluvia – post Waregem |
| Jan Van Cauwenberghe | – HVZ Centrum – post Melle |

Lennerd Verbeeck	– HVZ Taxandria – post Beerse
Henry Scholte	– VR Ijsselland – post Zwolle
Thomas Wandels	– HVZ Vlaamse Ardennen – post Kruisem
Fleur Lathouwers	– HVZ Rand – post Oostmalle
Dirk Van den Berghe	– HVZ Centrum – post Merelbeke
Sven Verhoeven	– HVZ Antwerpen

Travel report created by door Dirk Van den Berghe