

# Travel Report

## St. Louis, Missouri 2018

**Monday May, 21**

Today is the day everybody was waiting for. The first leg of our journey is a non-stop flight from Brussels Airport to Chicago. The meeting point is at Starbucks in the departure hall, where everybody is anxious to leave.

After a pretty smooth passing through Customs we got to pick up the cars and go to our first hotel. This hotel near Grant Park was the perfect base to explore Chicago. After a visit to Lou Malnati's Pizzeria, famous for it's Chicago style deep dish pizza's we started our tour of the city. We ended our day with an evening walk through Grant Park.

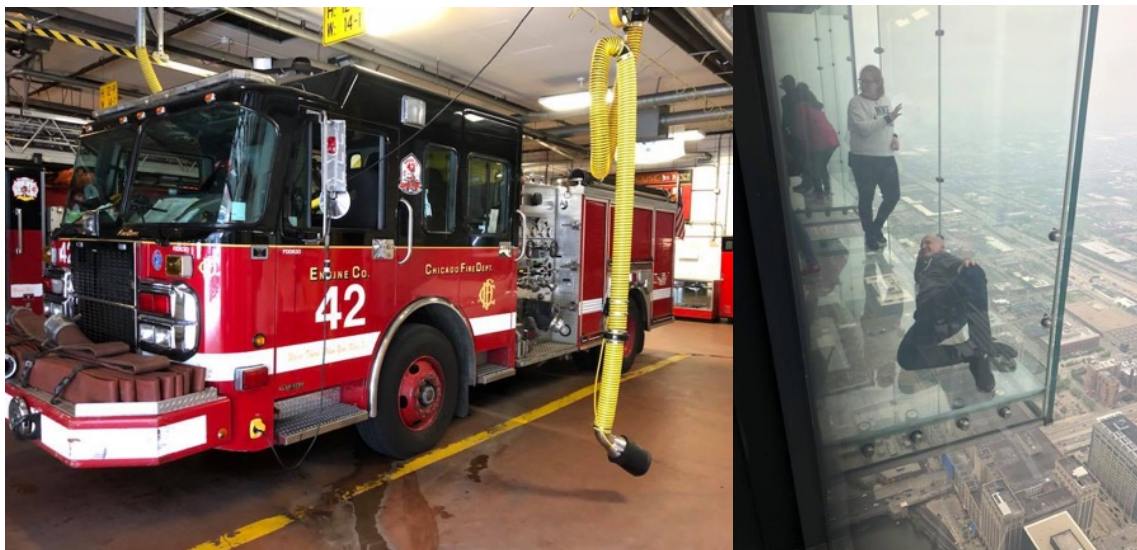


**Tuesday May, 22**

After just a few hours of sleep thanks to the 7 hour time difference, most guy's woke up around 5am. Some went for a morning walk or –run.

Today we've scheduled a trip through Chicago with a walk through Grant Park, Millennium Park, a boat ride on the Chicago River, and a walk along the Magnificent Mile. We then visited the observation deck on Willis Tower and dinner at Bubba Gump on the Navy Pier. Chicago lived up to it's name as the windy city with cloudy sky's until late afternoon.

Of course a visit to a few Chicago Fire stations was mandatory. Time for a photo-op and buying the first t-shirts.







**Wednesday May 23**

Again a night with not much sleep. Today we leave Chicago and head for St. Louis. A 450 km (300 mi.) trip. First stop was Lotties Bar (Molly's) and Firehouse 18 (Firehouse 51) of the Chicago Fire Department.

This bar and fire station are locations from the TV show Chicago Fire.



At Fire House 18 the battalion chief gives us the grand tour.

About half an hour later we stop for brunch at Cracker Barrel. After that it's on the road again with a small delay due to a flat tire. Once we made it to St. Louis and got checked-in at the hotel it's time for a dip in the pool and supper-time at TGI Friday's.

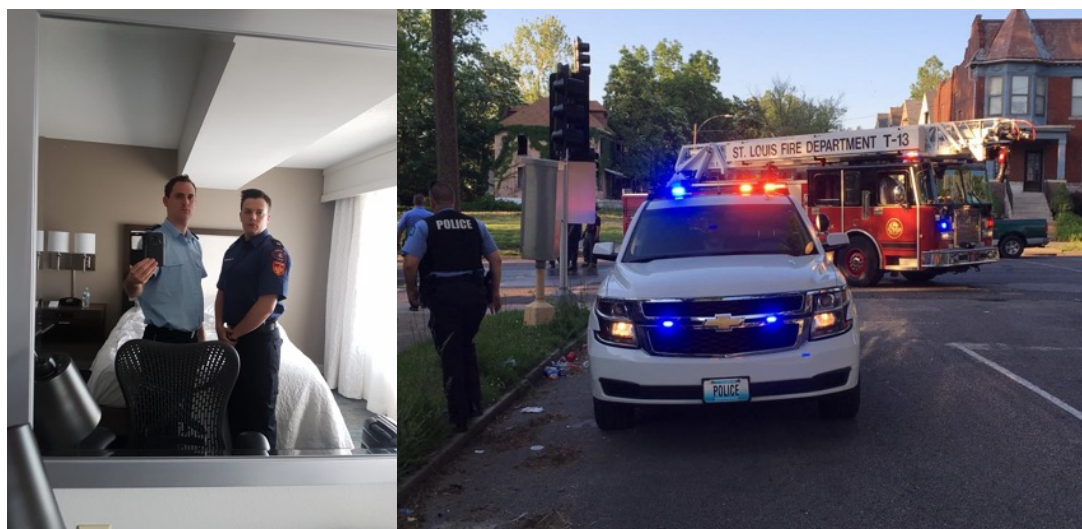
Tomorrow starts our program with STLFD.





## Thursday May 24

First day of our Ride-along-program. After breakfast it's time to suit-up and head for St. Louis Fire HQ where we meet Capt. Garon Mosby and members of the staff. The whole ceremony is livestreamed and can be viewed in all stations. After a tour of the fire museum and a short visit to the training center it's time to go to the Engine houses.



Donald and Quinten will be staying in Engine House 2, Jan and Nico in Engine House 17, Christof and Dave Engine House 32, Willem and Dennis Engine House 28 and Tim and Dirk in Engine House 26. It only takes minutes for the first calls to come in.

**Friday may 25**

After the first night in the stations we meet at Engine House 2 for a tour at Sprinkler Fitters Local Union 268 where they train installers and fire departments. Next up is a tour at the two fire stations at St. Louis Lambert International Airport. These are the home of a couple engines and ARFF units. We participated in a training along the runways. We end our day in the engine houses for a busy night.





## Saturday may 26

Over the weekend our schedule was empty which meant a lot of time spent at our stations and running a lot of calls . This Memorial Day weekend STLFD raises money for the Mathews-Dickey Boys & Girls Club to benefit their summer camps. All engine houses go to supermarkets, museums or gas stations to 'Fill the Boot'.

During that night STLFD responds to a first alarm house fire. 3 children were injured. 3 guys of our group also responded with their units.





**Sunday may 27**

Today theres no fire related visits but time to explore St Louis as a tourist.  
We did the public tour of the Gateway Arch, and visited the Anheuser-Busch brewery, known for its Budweiser. And yet another busy night in the stations.





**Monday may 28**

A whole day of ride-a-long. Time to bond and run a lot of calls.



Tuesday may 29

Last full day of ride-a-long. And again it was a busy one. Medic 26 responded for a baby delivery. Other units for small fires and fire-alarms and a variety of medical calls.



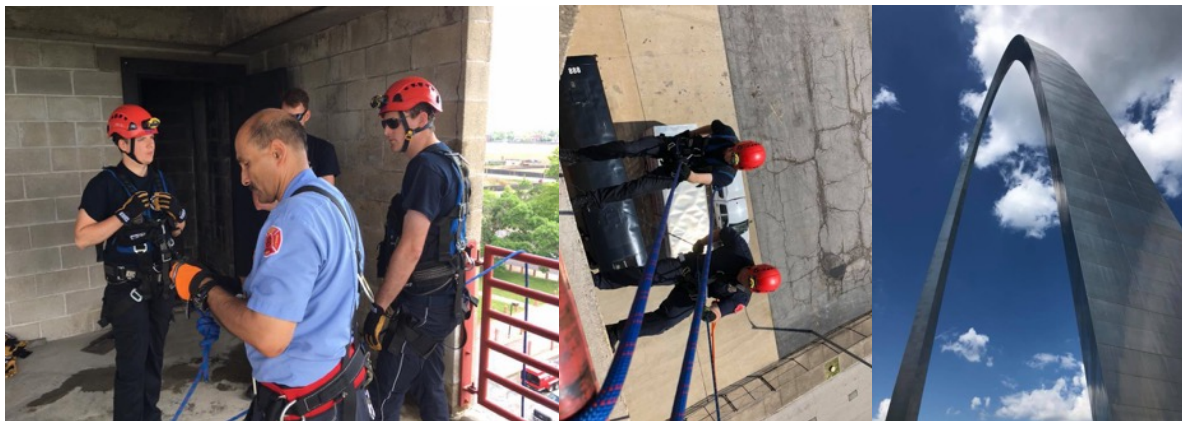




### Wednesday May 30

Rescue Day. Today we do a repelling exercise and a behind the scenes tour of the new visitor center and the Gateway Arch.

Under the watch full eye of Capt. Mario Montero from Squad 1 we got to descend the 6 story training tower. After that we got a behind the scenes tour of the Gateway Arch guided by the Park Rangers and somebody from the Fire Marshall's Office. We got a look of the unique fire extinguish installation and the trams that take people up top.



After lunch it was time for the official farewell and a meeting with Fire Chief Dennis Jenkerson.





**Thursday May 31**

Time to say goodbye to our new friends with the STLFD. We meet at Engine House 2 for the last time and start our road trip to Nashville, TN. After a quick stop at Station 18 of the Nashville Fire Department we head for the hotel. Time to get cleaned up and go to Broadway of Music City Nashville. Country Capital of the world.



## Friday June 1

An early morning start for our trip to Lynchburg, Tennessee home of the Jack Daniel's distillery. We first visited their Fire Brigade and took the tour of the distillery. For lunch we went to the Barrel House BBQ restaurant "downtown" Lynchburg. In the afternoon we took time to max-out the credit cards at Opry Mills Mall and we ended our day downtown Nashville.

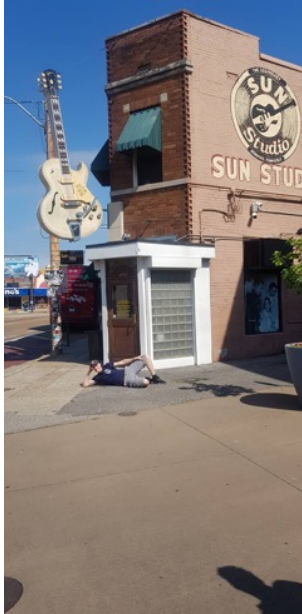




## Saturday June 2

Memphis, Tennessee! The next stop on our roadtrip. First up : Graceland. The home of Elvis Presley. We end our day on the famous Beale Street and a nighttime walk through downtown Memphis and the Lorraine Motel.

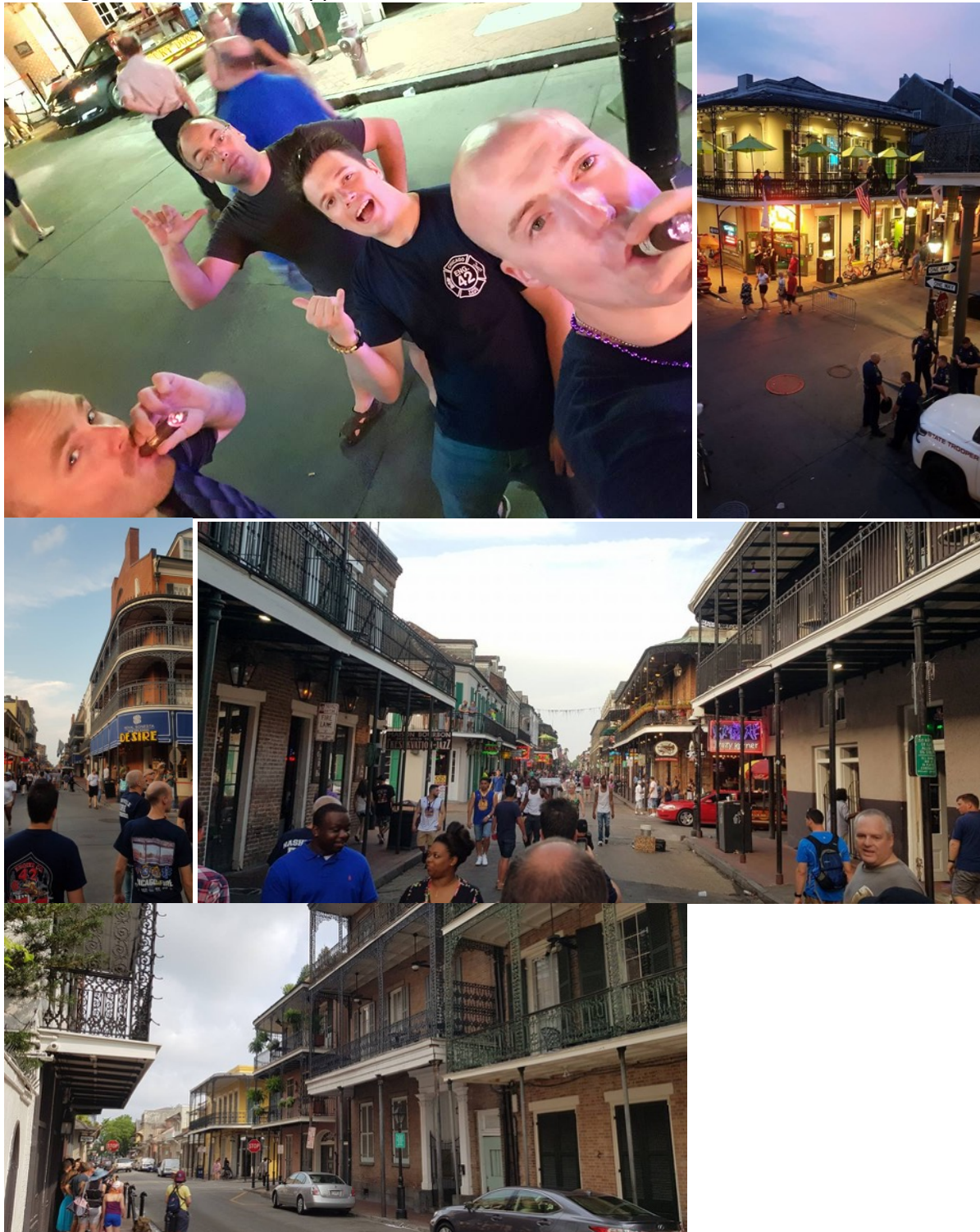






## Sunday June 3

The road trip is coming to an end with the longest leg of our journey. A 600 km (395 mi.) trip crossing the state of Mississippi to our final destination New Orleans, Louisiana.



## Monday June 4

Time for a hike through New Orleans. The Cemetery's, French quarter, French Market and the Riverwalk. We end our stay in the United States on Bourbon Street.



### **Tuesday June 5**

Fly-day. Last weight check. Some bags are too heavy... Thank God for the little spare room in the carry-on or another guy's suitcase. At the airport TSA was wondering what a fire-axe and all those helmets were about...

An easy flight from NoLa to Brussels (via Newark) ended this program. It's one for the books

😊





### **Participants (f.l.t.r.):**

Christof De Meyer	– HVZ Centrum – post Zelzate
Donald De Bock	– HVZ Centrum – post Merelbeke
Tim Van De Cavey	– HVZ Rand – post Malle
Willem Van Onderbergen	– HVZ Fluvia – post Ledegem
Dennis Vanhove	– HVZ Zone1 – post Oostkamp/Ruddervoorde
Quinten Cornelis	– VR Zeeland – post
Dirk Van den Berghe	– HVZ Centrum – post Merelbeke
Jan Van Cauwenberghe	– HVZ Centrum – post Melle
Nico Peeters	– HVZ Vlaams Brabant West – post Lennik
Dave Souwen	– HVZ Vlaame Ardennen – post Ronse

Travelreport made by Dirk Van den Berghe  
Translated by Jan Van Cauwenberghe  
Checked by Tom Curtis