

National Fire Heritage Center Honors Chief Kuk with Benjamin Franklin Writers Award

CUMBERLAND, MD – July 10, 2024 -- The National Fire Heritage Center (NFHC) proudly announces that Michael Louis Kuk, Chief Emeritus, author of an [“Army Firefighter in Vietnam, 1970-1971,”](#) has received the 2023 [Benjamin Franklin Writers Bronze Award](#). This prestigious honor acknowledges authors who have made outstanding contributions to preserving the written history of America’s Fire Service.

Chief Kuk's remarkable book offers a vivid and compelling account of his experience as a combat firefighter in Vietnam, serving with the U.S. Army. Through its compelling narrative, readers gain insights into how a small contingent of soldier-firefighters stationed in a combat zone tirelessly supported the war effort.

“It wasn't a glamorous war-hero position,” Chief Kuk writes. “But it required bravery and courage to face and overcome other hazards the war could present. A misstep would result in serious injury and/or death if these soldier-firefighters did not perform to the highest standard so required.”

The chair of the NFHC review panel, Retired U.S. Army Lt. Col. Glenn Dorner, commended the author’s work for offering “the fire service a unique perspective of military firefighting in a combat zone, a subject that has not been previously explored. The book resonates with readers, shedding light on the sacrifices and challenges faced by these unsung heroes.”

With nearly half a century of firefighting experience and having served as the Senior Fire Chief for the Department of Defense/U.S. Army, Dr. Kuk brings unparalleled expertise to

this subject. He holds a Ph.D. and has authored over 100 peer-reviewed articles and 18 books.

Ben Franklin, recognized as the “Father of the American Fire Service,” left behind a rich legacy of written works that encouraged writers to express their beliefs and observations. Building upon this historical tradition, the NFHC strives to inspire today’s fire writers to create valuable historical narratives for future generations.

“We are delighted to present this well-deserved recognition to Dr. Kuk,” remarked Lt. Col. Dorner. "His book not only honors the heroic actions of soldier-firefighters in Vietnam but also contributes significantly to preserving America's fire service history."

For media inquiries or further information, please contact:

Lt. Col. Dorner, Chair of the Benjamin Franklin Award Committee,
glenn.dorner@gmail.com

Note to Editors: About the National Fire Heritage Center: The [National Fire Heritage Center](#) (NFHC) is a nonprofit fire service history group dedicated to preserving and promoting the rich heritage of the fire service. Through its various initiatives, including archival preservation, educational programs, and exhibitions, the NFHC ensures that the courageous men and women who have served in the fire service and related disciplines are

Photo



President Robby Trahan, the Southwest Louisiana Mutual Aid Association, presents the Benjamin Franklin Award to Chief Michael Kuk (left). Chief Trahan commands the Ward 1 Fire Protection District 1 in Lake Charles.