

Good morning.

Retirement speech.

28 January 2005

Do you remember when it took five minutes for the TV to warm up? Nearly everyone's Mom was at home when the kids got home from school. When a quarter was money. You would bend for a penny. Mom wore nylons that came in two pieces. Male teachers wore neckties and female teachers had their hair done every day and wore high heels? No one asked where the car keys were because they were always in the ignition, and the doors were never locked. Stuff from the store came without safety caps and hermetic seals because no one had yet tried to poison a perfect stranger. With all the progress in the world wouldn't it be nice to be able to slip back in time and live some of the slower pace and share it with the children of today. The principal's office was nothing of a threat when compared with the fate that waited at home. Our parents and grandparents were a much bigger threat! But we survived because their love was greater than the threat. Mistakes were corrected by simply exclaiming "Do it over!" "Race issue" meant arguing about who ran the fastest. Having a weapon in school meant being caught with a slingshot. Taking drugs meant orange flavored chewable aspirin. I am looking back and saying to myself was it worth it, I must be old, it is time to retire. Life has most certainly been worth it. There have been changes in the world since those days when I grew up. To become a fireman today, you must be educated. The days are gone when the main qualification was a strong back and an endless need for checker games. Today firefighters find the fire hydrants themselves and no longer carry a dog on the truck to find them for them. Brings back the retirement occasion of the old fire chief, every thing is done in numbers of alarm in the fire service. First alarm a truck and an engine with a chief officer, second and third more equipment and finally fifth which usually means burning is beyond control. The guys had decided to send the old man off in style so they fixed him up with a kind young lady. The old chief did everything by alarms so when they were in the room he muttered first alarm, second alarm was when he kissed her,

third alarm he muttered when they got in bed, fourth alarm he wheezed as they undressed and fifth and last alarm when things got real serious. A little bit later the young lady whispered in the old Fire Chiefs ear sixth alarm. Sixth alarm what is that said the fire chief. Chief honey. We need more hose and closer to the fire.

**Captain Laughton thank you very much for the praise and good words you have spoken.** To all of you gathered here I extend my deepest gratitude. I am honored by your friendship. My wife Erla and our children are here I would like them to rise so that you can see them, Ragnar Sólveig Jóhanna, Haraldur and Ingibjörg María. We are very proud parents. Give flowers to Erla and Kiss her. Family is very important and I am fortunate to have a family that has always been there for me in spite of my many faults. Erla has been unbelievably tolerant, special and good friend throughout our 48 years in marriage. I treasure her and I am looking forward to many more years with you. I love you. 50 years with the same employer is a good chunk of a life time. My career began as a medic and ambulance operator with the 1400<sup>th</sup>. USAF hospital in the early spring of 1955 and 49 years I have been a firefighter. It has been a very rewarding time, I have had good opportunities to grow and excel in the hands of the greatest employer anyone could ask for. Success has been the trademark for us for many years as is well known and I don't need to elaborate on that. However, it is not possible to leave this position without saying thank you to all of the men and women who have supported their Fire Dept. Chief with excellence and made their Dept. second to none consistently for decades. Their record will long be remembered. I thank all of you the men and women of Fire and Emergency Services for the time we have enjoyed together. I remember so many people who are dear in my memory, when I look back, both military and civilians who have helped me to get where I am. They are people without whom I would not have become who I am. The Co's who I reported to like the late Rich Goolsby. Tom Butler, Bob Blake, Admiral Hall, and Eric McVaden to name just a few. All the fine

Xo's like Whatley and Harry Thomas. Some of the people out in the big world who personally helped me the late Mr. Bill Bairdain Tony Less CNO Frank Kelso, Dun Levy, Ready and Johnson I could go on and tell you about the deals we handled together but it is probably best to leave that alone. Captain Laughton I thank you very much for the good thoughts and help and my good friend JJ is embedded in my thoughts. All of the members of the FES deserve to be remembered all in their own way because each and every one of them has contributed something special to our success story. My Deputy for many years Astvaldur Eiriksson and now Siggi Arason and Hjörtur our world known Snow king. When you reminisce and want to thank everyone it is best done by saying thank you all for everything. To the organizations of NAS I say thank you for being so nice to us. Safety. Einar Þorbjörnson. Lynn. Chaplains. HRO officer Guðni Jónsson I treasure your advice and intelligence, very few people of your caliber have been in my path in life thank you my friend. Þórður Einarsson former HRO officer deputy thank you for all you did for me and especially for the men and women of FES when the going was tough in labor issues. Supply Air Ops security, NBS White Falcon, PW, Marines, Comptroller, MWR Housing thanks for helping keep the family safe. All the flying squadrons who trained FF. on their airplanes for rescue. The tower operators and the airport management who worked so hard with us through bad weather and life threatening situations. Ielandair we thank you for being so diligent in your aircraft safety programs keeping operations fire free and helping the Fire Fighters learn the rescue procedures and precautions necessary to perform emergency services in aircraft. I thank all of my colleagues the Fire Chiefs with whom we have a mutual aid program Reykjanesbær, Grindavík, Sandgerði. Fire commissioner of Iceland Björn Karlsson and his staff for their excellent support through the years. My committee companions on the Building and Planning Committee for agreed areas for the last 19 years thank you for the effort you have extended to make sure life safety and fire preventive standards were always met. Keflavik Contractors and

IPC thank you for the support you have always given us with special mention of our Fire House chapel. It is a symbol of good will and everlasting friendship. It shows again the great spirit of the men and women who serve FES on Kef Int. Airp. And NAS. All my friends and colleagues in FES and Airf. Ops. I am very proud of you and I am going to miss you but life goes on, thank you Siggí for salvaging and rebuilding two rolled TAU crash trucks, thank all of you people for keeping our community fire free for many years and no fire deaths for the last 28 years. Thank you for winning awards for great, excellent and superior service consistently for over 40 years and for being the best Navy and DOD FES. Thank you for the awards that I am authorized to carry on my person. Thank you for helping me save more than \$10 million dollars for our employer in the last 19 years.

The list of individuals deserving special thank you is quite long proofing that all have contributed to the great success of our department again thank each and every one for your special dedication.

People need people to succeed. People persons are the ones who become greater than average. I would like to say at last. Remember where you came from and how you got where you are and treasure the memory of all the people who helped you along the way. FES. Be it tall or be it small do it well or not at all. Thank you again for everything.

Fire Chief

Haraldur Stefánsson

Naval Air Station, Keflavik International Airport Iceland