

Wilmington 1979 Chevy/E-One Midi-Pumper (and Questions)

05/24/14 78 W, 2 I - + 10 - 7

Found for sale on eBay, here's a 35mm slide scan showing a 1979 Chevrolet/Emergency One maxi- "midi" pumper. Complete with seller watermark. Don't know the truck's history and how it was used. Hopefully readers can help. Click to enlarge:



Next question, who else operated midi-pumpers back in the day? Here's Squad 5 from Greensboro, a "quick response vehicle" that's also a Chevy/E-One.



Lee Wilson photo

There were a series of articles in Fire Chief by Donald Loeb during the early to mid 70s on mini pumpers and such. Syracuse NY had a system of mini's and maxi's. The mini pumpers were on 1.0 and 1.25 ton chassis, while the maxi's were 1750 gpm pumpers with 55' Telesqrts. There was another department that he wrote about (I think in PA) had a maxi pumper, sans the elevated stream, and two 'midi' pumpers that were similar to the pumpers pictured here.

These trucks (like the ones in the pictures) were popular for a while. Jacksonville (FL) had a bunch of them. Building these type of trucks is what put Emergency One (now E-One) in the market. The idea was that this truck and two people could handle 85+% of all calls without wear and tear on the big trucks (at a time when those trucks were expected to last 30+ years).

Several departments 'down east' had mini pumpers (one ton 4x4 with 250-475 gpm pumps). Properly spec'd, they were pretty capable but they had their limits.

Of the mid range pumpers like the ones pictured, seems like Tarboro was getting one or thinking about it, Parkwood and Bay Leaf had one, not sure who else.

DJ - 05/24/14 - 20:25

From Fire Geezer

<http://www.firegeezer.com/2012/02/14/wha..>

stretch - 05/25/14 - 11:44

The Wilmington Rig was "Squad 1" I believe. The city's first if I recall correctly. I might can dig up a bit more info.

MCNelson - 05/27/14 - 14:00

Town of Nashville (Nash County) FD had one. 750 pump/500 Tank on a Chevy (or GMC, can't remember) chassis. I believe it was an 86 or 87 model. Purchased around the time they hired their first duty crews. They just have gotten rid of it in the past few years. It was a great short wheelbase rural truck.

PBM - 05/27/14 - 15:03

Greensboro purchased three of these units which were the start of their "rescue" company responsibility within the city. I think all three rigs were involved in major accidents over the first couple years of service and eventually they realized that they were trying to respond to too many calls all across the city to be practical. The crew I think was seen as spare personnel to supplement the aerial and engine companies on working fires, etc. As for the Wilmington unit, the same concept was tried there with this responding as a backup to all of the engine companies and thus a 60" CA body with 300 gallons of water rather than the 84" CA on the Greensboro units

BARRY SLAGLE ([Email](#)) - 05/29/14 - 12:16

One of Greensboro's Midi-pumpers eventually was picked up by Liberty FD in Randolph County. It was replaced several years ago due to the rig being top-heavy and did not serve the needs of a rescue in Liberty.

BFD1151 - 05/31/14 - 00:24

DJ's correct, Parkwood did operate one. I think it was a 1978. It was Parkwood 3 and was the first out fire unit on all fires with the concept that you could get 2 personnel there quick with more volunteers arriving on a full engine with 1000 gallons to back it up. Shifting attitudes and paid staff led to its replacement, first being moved out of the first out role and then ultimately was replace by a 75' Quint.

D.Cates - 06/12/14 - 00:03

Wilmington's was named Emergency 1. The back end was removed aft of the cab around 1990 and a rescue style box was added that allowed two more firefighters to ride behind the cab, and rescue equipment was carried on the sides and in the back. It was also renamed Service 1. It was running out of Firehouse 5 in 1995. They were only dispatched to fires and rescue calls.

The first squad was a 1997 hackney that replaced Service 1. Wilmington annexed the Eastwood and Landfall area then and the smaller service truck was put back into service as Squad 2 and ran out of Firehouse 3 for a short bit before being moved downtown as Squad 1.

Ryan - 06/13/14 - 09:31

Thanks Ryan. Combined with this prior post, <http://legeros.com/ralwake/photos/weblog..>

And we have a pretty good history of Wilmington's rescue units. I'll have to update that posting with the information from this thread.

Next question, what's the history of the ambulance(s) that WFD operated back in the day?!

Legeros - 06/13/14 - 09:43

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preferred)

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To prevent spam we require you to answer this silly question

What are the FIRST TWO LETTERS of the word 'fire'?

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Notify: Yes, send me email when someone replies.

Hide email: Yes, hide my email address.

Small print: All html tags except and <i> will be removed from your comment. You can make links by just typing the url or mail-address.