The Shoreline Journal

Proud to Feature - Great Village Fire Brigade 85TH ANNIVERSARY

Great Village Fire Brigade
Celebrates 85TH

Great Village & District Fire Chief Dave Lundie congratulates Terri-Lynn Spence on her 10 Year Service Award.

Jeff Layton (left) joins his parents Robert and Meredith Layton following the Great Village and District Fire Brigade's Annual Banquet, where Robert was honored for 65 Years of Service to the Brigade. Jeff read a poem about the Brigade's history titled "The Fire Hall". See "Robert Layton – 65 Years Service" on page 13.

Great Village and District Fire Chief Dave Lundie presents Joe Slack with the Fire Officer of the Year Award, while Deputy Chief Roger Roode looks on.

Great Village & District Fire Chief Dave Lundie presents Pat Flemming with the Most Improved Fire Fighter Award.

By Linda Harrington

Despite losing their hall and two trucks in separate fires, the Great Village Fire Brigade is still going strong after 85 years.

The Great Village Fire Brigade was organized in February, 1925 after a year of planning and fund raising. An engine, pump, tools and accessories, plus several hundred feet of hose were the beginnings of fire protection in the area. The fire gear was thrown into the back of Layton's half tonne truck whenever needed and Brigade membership was extended to everyone in the Village who wished to help out.

The first Fire Chief was E.G. McCullough, with James Peppard as First Assistant Chief and Alfred D. Gould as Second Assistant Chief. Engine Men were W.D. Kent, Fred Peppard and Arthur Patriquin with T.D. Murray and R.A . Spencer as Ladder Men, H. B. Layton as Foreman of Salvage Operation and R.A. Spencer as Secretary & Treasurer.

The first "Annual Banquet" was held by Mrs. McCullough and her daughters in their dining room, following the organizational meeting.

The Elmonte Hotel and five barns were destroyed by fire on March 21st, 1931. The firemen did what they could to save adjacent buildings while coping with frigid temperatures that kept freezing nozzles, hoses and their own hands and feet.

Mr. James Peppard became Chief sometime around 1932. Records are scarce for this period.

The name "Great Village Fire Brigade" was changed to "The Air Raid Protection and Fire Protecton" from January, 1942 until 1945. Citizens were concerned about the possibility of an air raid on Camp Debert and went to work preparing bandages and stretchers, taking First Aid courses, and setting up First Aid Stations.

Improvements to firefighting equipment came in 1945 with the addition of more suction hose, improvements to the pump and the purchase of 200 feet of hose.

On April 15th, 1946 it was agreed to buy a Fire Pump and 1000 feet of hose. At this meeting it was agreed to revert back to the old name of Great Village Fire Brigade. Norman Bowers was elected Chief, with Max Layton as Deputy Chief.

In 1951, 500 feet of 1 ½ inch Wajaz hose was purchased at a cost of $34.50 per 100 feet.

New hosemen were appointed at a meeting on Jan. 29th, 1958- with C.W. Nelson as Pump Captain and hosemen Robert Layton, David Lundie, Arnold Hatfield, Edward Adams, Claude Adams, John Akerman and Logan Spencer. It was decided to go outside the area to fight fires.

In 1964, the Brigade inventory is listed as two pumps and 2000 feet of hose.

A public meeting was held on January 19th, 1965 in the Legion hall for the purpose of re-organizing the Brigade. Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade's Chief Keith Hamilton and Deputy Chief Teed came to the meeting to offer suggestions about the organization. The new Fire Chief was Douglas Adamson, with Deputy Harry Totten.

The Great Village Fire Brigade's coverage area was expanded at a public meeting on Feb. 4th, 1965 to include Glenholme, Highland Village, Londonderry Station and Londonderry Mines. The name was changed to Great Village and District Fire Brigade. It was decided to purchase the Texaco Service Station in the Village for $2000. The Brigade had one E.M.O. Reserve Truck on loan for a year, 4 portable pumps and 600 feet of new hose had been donated.

"This was the year we went mobile," laughs 65 year member Robert Layton. "Before this we just had a pump and hose, now we had a real fire truck."

The first meeting in the new Fire Hall was held on Oct. 5, 1965. A siren was donated by David Lundie, Sr. for the top of the hall to alert local members. The school bell and Church bell had been used to alert members, as well. The first fall auction was held on a Saturday afternoon.

The first fire truck was purchased on April 6th, 1966 from Goodspeeds Ltd. for a total cost of $1,792 and a new Hale CBP Pump was purchased for $1550. A fire pond was constructed at the Old Mill pond site. This pond became a popular skating area with the younger crew cleaning the ice and a fire pumper used to spray the surface. Skating parties were held on Saturday nights, with bond fires and roasted hot dogs. Many times there were over a hundred people in attendance.

A total of 23 fire calls were answered in 1966, with an estimated damage of $4,400.

Training sessions were held with CFB Debert Fire Dept. in 1967. The first Firemen's picnic was held that year, with a profit of $649.90. Members of the Brigade designed a unique crest for Great Village & District Fire Brigade based on the historical background of the four main communities. The Church representing Glenholme, is the oldest Presbyterian Church in the area; Londonderry was represented by the Iron Mines; a railroad represented Londonderry Station and a schooner represented the ship building in Great Village.

Folly Lake was added to the fire protection area in 1968, with some portable equipment stored in that area to help control fires until the truck could arrive. The tax rate was set at $1 per dwelling and Sunday fire duty was started during the grass burning season.

The first Ladies Auxiliary was formed in October, 1968.

A devastating fire destroyed the Fire Hall on Christmas Eve, 1968, including the truck and all the firefighting equipment. Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade responded to the fire which resulted in a loss estimated at over $20,000.