

# Debert Fire Brigade Celebrates 40<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary

By Linda Harrington.

A committee was formed on Feb. 9th, 1967 to investigate the possibility of starting a fire brigade for the Debert area- members included Shep Scott, Frank MacMichael, Sid McCully and Wendell Barnhill. Until this time, fire protection had been provided by D.N.D, out of Camp Debert, but by 1972 the armed forces could no longer provide this service. Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade agreed to provide interim coverage.

Following two rate payers meetings, held at the Debert School, the first official meeting of the Debert Fire Brigade was held on March 19th, 1972 with 15 men in attendance. The first slate of officers were: Chief- Ronald Totten; Deputy- Ronald Hoyt; Captain- Wendell Barnhill; Treasurer- Aubrey Gamble; Secretary- Ken Spence and Chaplain- Rev. Dunfield.

A canvas of the community resulted in \$3,405 in cash and a pledge of \$720. The first truck was purchased on May 9th, from Windsor Fire Dept., a 1951 International L 180 Series Chassis equipped with a LaFrance pump. The Debert Community Council provided a building to use as a Hall and the Brigade was registered under the NS Society act using a constitution modeled after Onslow Belmont's. Dues were \$2 per year. 53 men joined the Debert Fire Brigade.

The Debert Fire Brigade Ladies Auxiliary was formed at a meeting in May, 1972. Local telephone operator, Elva Geldart agreed to notify fire fighters in case of a fire.

By summer the Brigade had purchased a 50 gpm Homelite pump, Victor Gillie had donated a 1-ton Ford truck and Elmer Adshade had donated a 200 gal. tank to be used as a water supply.

A decision was made in Nov. to levy a fire tax of 10 cents per \$100, to cover operational expenses.

The Brigade answered 9 calls in their first year, the most serious was the Salt Silo in East Mines on Oct. 31st, with \$10,000 damage.

Raffle tickets were sold on an afghan made by Mrs. Altie Geldart and a quilt made by Mrs. Mildred Newton, helping to raise \$6,345.66. Expenses for the first year were \$4,939.03.

In 1973, 4.5 acres of land was purchased jointly by the Brigade and Debert Community Council from Walter Geldart. Building #106 was used as a Fire Hall.

New equipment included additional hose, a Hale 9 H.P portable pump and a Chev truck from Brookfield Creamery. A tank was donated and the men constructed the #3 truck, with a capacity of 1400 gallons.

A total of 24 calls were answered in 1973, a mobile home fire at Jim Adshade's was the most serious.

C.B. radios were added in 1974, with a total of 31 calls answered. Altie Geldart was awarded Fireman of the Year and George Hingley was the first Honorary Firefighter.

Construction of the new fire hall began in November, 1975 with a loan for \$35,000 and an L.I.P grant for \$25,000.

Members were trained in St. John Ambulance by Dorothy Glen in 1976. The new Fire Hall was officially opened on July 9th, 1976. Over \$23,000 was raised through June Ball, Field Day, raffles, dances, bingos, auctions and donations with \$10,771 transferred to the building fund.

A used Ford van was purchased in 1978, to be used as an equipment truck. New radios and a 1974 Scot truck were purchased, as well.

A 1973 Scot truck was purchased from Kent Homes in 1980. 48 calls were answered- the largest was a fire at the home of Harry Thompson on Reid Road, damages were \$40,000.

The first Annual Banquet was held on Jan. 16th, 1981 with the Debert UCW catering. New aluminum doors were installed at the Hall. Pagers were leased and two hand held radios were purchased. 1981 was a bad year for fires, with a total of 49 calls and close to \$250,000 in damages. The largest fire was at Burge Bros, a total of \$200,000 damage.

The Chev Tanker was sold in 1982 and an Akron foam inductor was purchased. Fire officer and Firefighter of the month were recognized. A fire at Dave Stiles' barn totaled \$71,000 in damages.

The exterior of the Hall was painted.

The Auxiliary finished a meeting room, renovated the kitchen and painted the washrooms in 1984. Pagers were purchased and new tile was added to the auditorium floor. The stair railing was completed and a 3000 watt generator was purchased.

A new Chev 4x4 (Truck #6) was purchased and outfitted in 1985.

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Charter Member Frank MacMichael (left) received his 40 Year Service Award from Chief Wade Jennings.



Charter Member Royce Totten (right) received his 40 Year Service Award from Chief Wade Jennings.



Bob Davis (left) received a 25 Year Service Award.



Gordon Myers received his 10 Year Service Award.



Deputy Chief Don Geldart presents Chief Wade Jennings with a 20 Year Service Award.



Chief Wade Jennings presents 5 Year Service Awards to Colin Jennings (left) and Brandon Slack.



*Congratulations to Debert Fire Brigade  
on the occasion of your  
40th Anniversary!*

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