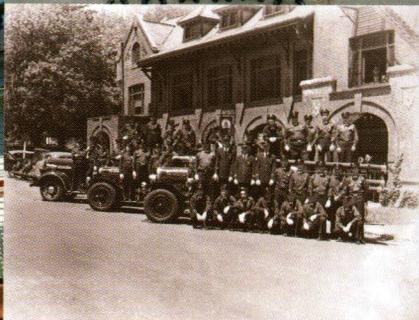




1902-2002



CENTENNIAL

The Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department

*Written by John O'Malley
For the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department Centennial Committee*

Centennial
The Norfolk
Volunteer Fire Department
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PROLOGUE

by Arthur S. Rosenblatt
President, Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department

As the time of the millennium approached, some thought a catastrophe would occur. When it did not, interest began to quicken in the Norfolk Fire Department about the celebration of its centennial. The subject was formally raised at a departmental meeting, and it was agreed that planning could not start too soon for such an event. First Assistant Chief Leo F. Colwell, Jr. stepped forward and volunteered to chair a Centennial Committee, charged with planning a celebration appropriate to the occasion.

Leo tapped a few reliable workers on the shoulder and thus began an ongoing effort that took more than two years of regular meeting. They started out monthly, then every other week, then weekly, and down to the wire there was a part of every day devoted to what was planned for July 6, 2002.

Under the direction of Richard Byrne, segments of the formal history of the department began to appear. They served as a reminder of the tradition of the NVFD, the achievements, and the integrity of the men and women who have served the community over the century. It furthered the Centennial Committee's resolve to provide the community with a gala celebration and to do those firefighters proud at the same time.

At this writing, plans for the 6th of July, 2002 call for a parade that will wind its way in front of Town Hall, down Greenwoods Road and on to the firehouse. This will be followed by a community block party in the closed-off center of town where John J. Curtiss Road and Station Place come together. Parade prizes will be awarded and a few words of celebration, dedication and honor to the NVFD will take place. The band will play for dancing, and food and beverages will be available. For the adventurous, games of chance and skill will also be open. More importantly, opportunities for exchanging memories will abound.

At 9:30 p.m., a spectacular fireworks display will burst forth from the field adjacent to Meadowbrook Senior Housing that can be witnessed from vantage points throughout the town.

When the display is over, the work of the Centennial Committee — the meetings, phone calls, personal visits, discussions with public officials and suppliers; the designing and printing and purchasing and distribution of Centennial-related items; the poring over old records, the pitching of new ideas, and the endless discussions — all that will be over.

What is left is the grateful thanks from the community for a job voluntarily and nobly done. That, too, will undoubtedly take place.

April 2, 2002

Centennial Committee

Leo F. Colwell, Jr., *Chairman*

Richard Byrne, *Archivist*
Sandy Evans, *Vice President*
Barbara Kelley, *Historian*
Judy Ludwig, *Designer*

Ken Ludwig, *Secretary*
Hartley Mead, *Activities*
John O'Malley, *Wordsmith*
Martha Rochelle, *Treasurer*

Arthur Rosenblatt, *President*
Dan Wouri, *Past President*
Ron Zanobi, *Parade Chairman*

INTRODUCTION

The final act of the centennial celebration will be a display of fireworks at the Meadowbrook field. Now fireworks are used for ceremonial occasions, but originally they were designed to replicate the conditions on the battlefield of the great war. The thunder of bombs bursting in air, the brilliant lines of tracer bullets, and the cascade of a multicolored display of explosives were meant to create such a fear in a spectator that he would say: War no more, war never again.

On this occasion fireworks are celebratory. But once the show is over, darkness settles in and the event — evanescent — passes away.

The Centennial Committee, however, was determined to have a lasting tribute to the 100 years of service of the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department to the town and to its communities. So it commissioned its history to be written, printed, and published as a permanent tribute to the gallantry of the men who have served and who are serving in the year 2002.

The primary source for the history of the department was the minutes of the meetings, which, for the most part, were kept meticulously. The archivist of the department, Richard Byrne, translated the minutes into a rich and ready source for the text. The historian of the department, Barbara Kelley, kept voluminous public records of the department's affairs. Byrne and Kelley wrote the music, some sad — some glad — and John O'Malley put words to their melody.

In some instances newspaper accounts were used to corroborate the details of the recorded minutes. The Waldecker history of the town gave context to this history as did personal reminiscences of members past and present.

The choice to use the minutes of the department as the principal source of information gave prominence to the chiefs and to the officers at a cost, perhaps, of an account of the men and women who have served so valiantly over the years. And with that emphasis, many routine activities of the department were left out of the telling. Perhaps on another similar occasion the verbatim minutes will be published for the full accounting of the department's doings in all of its grandeur and some of its misery.

The Centennial Committee commends this story to the people of Norfolk, trusting that it will provoke other stories known only to the readers. In that way, the real and complete story will be told. For the moment, however, the department expresses its deep gratitude to those who shared their help and memories about the history of the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department — Margaret Cusick, Edwin Kelley, Anne Moses, Peter Mulville, Kevin O'Connor, Martin O'Connor, Patrick O'Connor, Stephen Janssen, Toby Raymond, William Vaun, Mr. & Mrs. Ted Wuori, and Robin Yuran.

Fire and heat provide modes of explanation in the most varied domains, because they have been for us the occasion for unforgettable memories, for simple and decisive personal experiences. Fire is thus a privileged phenomenon which can explain anything. If all that changes slowly may be explained by life, all that changes quickly is explained by fire. Fire is the ultra-living element. It is intimate and it is universal. It lives in our heart. It lives in the sky. It rises from the depths of the substance and offers itself with the warmth of love. Or it can go back down into the substance and hide there, latent and pent-up, like hate and vengeance. Among all phenomena, it is really the only one to which there can be so definitely attributed the opposing values of good and evil. It shines in Paradise. It burns in Hell. It is gentleness and torture. It is cookery and it is apocalypse. It is a pleasure for the good child sitting prudently by the hearth; yet it punishes disobedience when the child wishes to play too close to its flames. It is well-being and it is respect. It is a tutelary and a terrible divinity, both good and bad. It can contradict itself; thus it is one of the principles of universal explanation.

Gaston Bachelard
The Psychoanalysis of Fire



THE FIRST TEN YEARS: *Edmund Brown and the Founders*

“What the hand dare seize the fire?”

William Blake

The townsmen of Norfolk gathered at the Town Hall in response to this circulated public notice: “A public meeting of the citizens of Norfolk is called for Friday evening, June 20th (1902) at 7:30 o’clock at the Town Hall to consider the advisability of forming a volunteer fire company.” With Mr. F. J. Crissey in the chair, the town meeting voted the formation of a volunteer fire company. The founder of the Norfolk Water Company, Frederick M. Shepard, was instrumental in shaping the public’s opinion that the era of the bucket brigade was over, and a new age of disciplined fire service was in order. Equally instrumental was Mrs. Henry H. Bridgeman, a married Eldridge sister, who rallied public support for the fire department which would, according to the *New York Herald*, make Norfolk safe for the hundreds of New Yorkers arriving for their summer stay. The impact of the Eldridge sisters on the town has been significant. Most notable is the gift of the town’s library, the center of village cultural activities.

In quick succession the meeting unanimously elected Edmund Brown as the Chief of the nascent company, accepted an ad hoc committee report that William O’Connor be named as First Assistant and Warren C. Corbally be named as Second Assistant, and that any other needed officers would be appointed by the chief and his assistants. Edmund Brown was the owner of a lumber and coal firm whose offices occupied the location of the currently vacant hardware store in the center of town. Warren Corbally was the superintendent of the Bridgeman estate, a personable individual, a thespian of note, and quite possibly the legate of the lady of the manor to the fire department.

The next order of business was a discussion as to a suitable building. The moderator-chair was charged with appointing a committee of four to research the topic and report at a future meeting. Named to that committee were H.H. Bridgeman, H.E. Stevens, M.E. Snow, and M.F. Mulville.

As a final order of business, the town meeting charged the officers of the company to address the issue of an alarm system.

Thus it was with admirable efficiency the town of Norfolk established its first fire company that was to endure for the next 100 years and beyond. The newly-formed company was established with a nature and character and community support that has allowed it to become an integral part of the town culture, sustain itself in periods of internal and external disturbances, and to serve the residents of the town creditably for a century.

Just five days after being formally established, the Fire Company held its first meeting under the direction of Chief Brown. The first item on the agenda was to establish the official name of the organization, to wit, The Norfolk Volunteer Fire Company. The members of the company determined that its officers were to be elected by ballot. Following that protocol, the chief was

elected as the first President, E.H. Johnson was elected Secretary, and the Treasurer was A. B. Collar. A distinction was made in this meeting between the work of the chief, a technical office, and that of the presiding officer of the organization even though the person holding the respective offices was the same.

As the presiding officer, Brown proceeded to affirm the highest priority of the company, namely, to draft the rules and regulations that would govern the company thenceforward. To that end he appointed a committee of five, himself included, to assume that task. R.B. Stoeckel, E. C. Stevens, Joseph Selden, and M. E. Snow were asked to serve on that committee and they did so.

Financial support for the fledgling Fire Company was the next order of business. A committee of seven was named to make all the arrangements for a benefit ball at an early date. Community support was in full evidence. The Norfolk Electric Light Company, which had been established by Erastus Johnson just five years before and had lit the streets electrically, donated the use of the lights for the ball. The Village Hall Association offered free use of the hall for this seminal event.

The Village Hall Association was a group of Norfolk women who banded together to raise funds to build a village hall or, as it soon came to be called, the Norfolk Opera House. The architect, whose name is not known, effected a building with Japanese features such as variegated bands of shingles, and asymmetrical arrangement of windows and ornamental details like quarter-fans and a crescent moon. The hall housed a secular meeting place and an auditorium where dances, lectures, and plays were staged. Today it is the home of the Greenwoods Theatre and the Gundlach Book Store. This magnificent building joined other majestic structures in the town center surrounding or near the village green, all then and now under the vigilant eye of the volunteer fire department.

Perhaps of the greater moment was the example of Mrs. F. S. Dennis who furnished the hose for the use of the company. Through the years, benefactors of the caliber and generosity of Mrs. Dennis made incalculable contributions to the efficacy of the company and department. Mrs. Dennis was the wife of the prominent New York doctor, Dr. Frederick S. Dennis, who authored the well-regarded book *The History and Development of Surgery During the Past Century* as well as *The Norfolk Village Green* published in 1917. Their property was willed to the state and is now Dennis Hill State Park.

In the latter part of July of the founding year, Mrs. Dennis also used her influence to bring Dr. Archer of the New York Fire Department and Chief Bronson of the Larchmont Fire Department to Norfolk to address the officers and members. These two gentlemen described what was then the purpose, organization, and duties of a "modern" fire department, thus inspiring the Norfolk firemen to see themselves as part of a larger brotherhood and one dedicated to the latest advances in the technology of fire-fighting.

A suggestion made by Larchmont's Chief Bronson, which was acted upon immediately, was to disband the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Company and to reorganize as the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department consisting of two companies, viz., Hose Company No. 1 and Hook and Ladder Company No. 1. In consequence and following earlier procedure, Edmund Brown was unanimously elected as Chief Engineer, William O'Connor as First Assistant Engineer, and Melvin Snow as Second Assistant Engineer. The word "engineer" appears for the first time in the titles of the department's officers emphasizing the technical character of their responsibilities.

Of even greater moment was Bronson's gift of a model constitution and set of By-Laws to the

department. The newly elected engineers were charged with adapting these organizational principles to the Norfolk enterprise. They did so and their documents were unanimously adopted by the members in an early August meeting. Apparently this new document was in harmony with the rules and regulations for the department that had been developed earlier by the Stoeckel Committee.

In mid-winter of 1903, less than a year after the establishment of the volunteer company - department, the minutes of the organization read laconically: "J.H. Thompson reported that they had obtained a horse to help draw the Hook and Ladder Truck." And so a Hook and Ladder Truck was, by implication, a first piece of equipment for the department. No mention was made as to who owned the horse, where it was barned, and how it was fed. Perhaps in those early days, practical matters like these were just apportioned among the members by general agreement without the need for formal discussion. Or it may have been stabled in the town's livery.

In September of the same year, 1903, the new Hose Carts arrived and the department was called for a drill. Even at this early stage, the department recognized that drill — training and education — was to be an integral element of this organization.

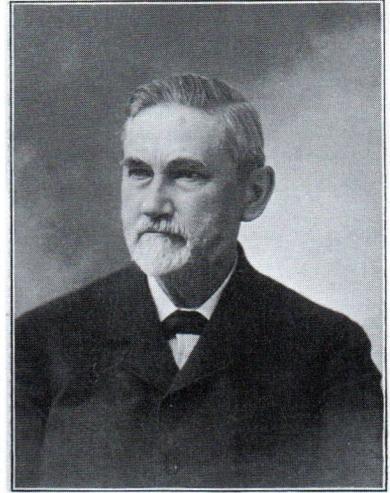
In the following May, the department voted to be incorporated under the laws of the State of Connecticut as soon as possible. With great perspicacity, the department took this action to firmly embed the organization in law as well as in fact, and, satisfied with the performance of its officers, determined that they be the officers of the new corporation. Once again the department reiterated the distinction between the corporate officers and the officers of the fire department and its practical mission while affirming that the same individuals could serve in those dual roles.

At the departmental meeting of October 5, 1907, a letter from F. M. Shepard addressed to Chief Brown was read. This letter invited the department to a banquet at the Norfolk Inn to celebrate the installation of a new fire bell. At this meeting the new bell was rung for the first time at one o'clock PM. Now the volunteers were to be notified of an emergency by the ringing of the bell whose sound reverberated throughout the town. The bell bears the inscription: Presented by Frederick M. Shepard to the Norfolk, Conn. Fire Department, AD 1907. It was struck by the Meneely Bell Co., Troy, NY in 1907.

The bell is currently positioned in front of the "new" firehouse on, appropriately, Shepard Road. It has been there since 1975. It came from the Town Hall but was most prominent in the Arcanum bell tower in the early years when the Arcanum housed the department.

At the junction of Greenwoods Road and North Street, a memorial fountain in local stone was erected to honor the memory of Shepard, a great benefactor of the department, the town, and the Episcopal Church. The main stone is simply inscribed.

Frederick M. Shepard
1827-1913



Frederick M. Shepard

HISTORY OF NORFOLK 1744-1900

(The town walkways have shifted and the fountain has fallen into disrepair. The water no longer flows in the fountain and the pool is filled with pine needles, leaves and debris.)

Shepard, a native son, was the most prominent supporter of the fire department in a very tangible way. He was instrumental in securing ownership of the Bellows Block on the corner of Greenwoods Road and Station Place. As a major stockholder, he had the block demolished and the Arcanum Building erected in its place in 1905. On the ground floor he created space for the fire department, had the bell placed in the cupola, and arranged, a tad later, to have the suite of rooms on the second floor used by the Firemen's Club. On the third floor were the meeting rooms of the Wangum Council of the Royal Arcanum, a fraternal society from whom the building took its name. The logo of the department is still prominently displayed on the front of the Arcanum. The letters NVFD are intertwined.

In September 1907, the department took another step in laying down a solid plank in building community relationships. By a unanimous vote, it elected to incorporate the gentry of the town who had been supportive of the establishment and development of the department to be Honorary Members of the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department. So named:

Mr. And Mrs. Crissey	H. H. Bridgeman
R. I. Crissey	The Misses Eldridge
Mrs. K. J. Haddock	Dr. I. L. Harnaut
Dr. A. W. Pinney	Dr. J. C. Kendall
Joseph Seldon	M. F. Grant
Carl Stoeckel	Rev. W. F. Stearns
Rev. P. Keating	A. Schoff
M. N. Clark	G. R. Bigelow
A. S. G. Taylor	H. W. Carter
M. Cowles	C. K. Northway
F. Spring	R. P. Paine
G. W. Scoville	Prof. M. I. Pupin

Five years earlier, Dr. Frederick Dennis had been chosen as the first honorary member.

On April 2, 1912, ten years minus two months to the day of the establishment of the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department, the members formally elected a slate of officers to serve for the coming year. The two companies, the Hose Company and the Hook and Ladder, were to be led by a "foreman" and "assistant foreman," terms new to the lexicon of the department.

Chief: Edmund Brown
First Assistant Chief: William O'Connor
Second Assistant Chief: Melvin E. Snow
Foreman – Hose Company: John L. Blow
Assistant Foreman – Hose Company: Winthrop Cone
Foreman – Hook and Ladder Company: Warren C. Corbally
Assistant Foreman – Hook and Ladder Company: H. E. Blanchard
Wardens: C. H. Caul, E. E. Demars
Treasurer: C. H. Caul
Secretary: Warren C. Corbally

With the election, the first chief of the department, Edmund Brown, was to serve as the chief executive officer of the Norfolk Fire Department during its first ten years of existence. The following year, a new chief would be elected, but the work of Brown in presiding over the new department set a benchmark for future officers to emulate. With an almost intuitive grasp of organizational science combined with a fine understanding of leadership, he brought this young department to a level of professionalism and discipline that would characterize the department for the next ninety years and, presumably beyond. On the occasion of the centennial, the Norfolk Department and the citizens of Norfolk pause to pay tribute to a leader of the community who was always there and one who made a difference — a magnificent difference.



NORFOLK HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Sept. 1889: Mr. Plumb Brown & Family

From left to right: Mr. Plumb Brown, Sr., Mrs. J. C. Scoville (Sarah), Plumb Brown, Jr. (standing), Mrs. Benj. Brown, Benj. Brown, Mrs. J. Horton (Mabel) (standing), Mr. Edmund Brown, Sr., Mrs. Edmund Brown, Sr.

At this point in time, the departmental meetings were no longer being held in various locations throughout the town, but were being called to order at the firehouse and the Norfolk Club. The centralization of the department in one place prompted the establishment of a committee to solicit funds toward the installation of a fire alarm system in the town. It also prompted a resolution to have the Hook and Ladder taken to all fires in the future.

A spirit of camaraderie prevailed at the meeting at which the officers were elected. The minutes of that meeting record that spirit, quite characteristic of a fraternal organization, in this fashion: "Meeting adjourned after which refreshments were served and games of Pool, Billiards and Cards were enjoyed until a late hour."

Edmund Brown stepped down as chief after ten years of service. The members gave him a rising vote of thanks for his "efficient services." Even though he remained active in the department in the ensuing years, traces of his administration continued to be felt after he left his post. For example, membership was high, and in April, 1913, twenty-three members pledged to uphold the Constitution and observe the By-Laws by signing their names to those documents. This Brown-introduced practice continues to the present day. Of the twenty-three who signed on that April day, the names of Fields, Christinat, Curtiss, Sylvernale, Blanchard, Whiting, and O'Connor are familiar still at the centennial.

Although he was lauded for his "efficient services," by the members, they did not recognize the full measure of his leadership nor the fact that he presided over the department during a period of good feeling that was almost paradisaical. And that period was soon to change. Turbulence was about to ensue. Philip Byrne, the chronicler of the fire department for *History of Norfolk, 1900 to 1975*, stated, with admirable restraint: "The history of the fire department was not always peaceful and quiet."¹



THE SECOND TEN YEARS: *Schism and Unrest*

*“Time is the school in which we learn,
Time is the fire in which we burn.”*

Delmore Schwartz

At the annual meeting in April of 1913, the following officers were elected for the coming year:

Chief: Philemon W. Johnson
First Assistant Chief: William H. Smith
Second Assistant Chief: William B. Dyer
Wardens: Charles H. Caul and Charles DeMars
Foreman Hose Company: Andrew J. Dodd
Assistant Foreman Hose Company: Frederick Camp
Foreman – Hook and Ladder Company: John Hollister
Assistant Foreman – Hook and Ladder
Company: John Seiller
Treasurer: Charles Caul
Secretary: Harry Gidman

Except for the names of Caul and DeMars a whole new set of members had taken over the leadership of the department. Perhaps in retrospect that evolution in the changing of the guard was a portent of things to come.

At first all seemed well. At two special meetings in a row, matters of normal concern were addressed. In the first special gathering, the members listened to Ex-Chief Brown who counseled the members on the value of harmony and cooperation between the Hose and Hook and Ladder companies. He emphasized the necessity of each company having a thorough understanding of the apparatus of the other.

The second special meeting was an exercise in team spirit so necessary for a fire department. This time it was incarnated in the formation of a baseball team, the purchase of uniforms and the selection of a captain, Thomas J. McEnroe, and a manager, Harry J. Root.

Even more important was the determination to join the State Firemen’s Association. Though the cost was minimal, six dollars per company per year, the import was not. The department was allying itself with other companies throughout the state for mutual communication and cooperation.

According to the recorded minutes in 1913-1914, the snake in the garden appeared to be the purchase of an Auto Chemical Truck. That action precipitated a series of events that Byrne said, in retrospect, could have caused “a total reorganization and the inevitable turnover of the department property to the town.”²

On September 1, 1913, Chief Philemon Johnson reported at a special meeting that the Auto Truck Fund had accrued \$3,650.00. The members voted to purchase an Alco truck with the original vote being Alco 27, Pope-Hartford 2, American La France 1. In a subsequent revote, the Alco truck was selected unanimously.

The truck was purchased from the American Locomotive Company in Providence, Rhode Island. The company entered the truck market in 1910, and, although its product was a quality one, the firm discontinued truck manufacture in 1913 in favor of railroad locomotives. The year that the Norfolk truck was purchased was the year the company went out of the truck business.

Although the company produced four models, the one selected by the department was probably the two-ton, chain drive vehicle similar to the one purchased by the Schenectady, (N.Y.) Fire Department. It had a cab-over design with a 112-inch wheelbase using a four-cylinder 32.4 hp engine. Its high speed was 17.86 mph, reverse speed 4.47 mph, and intermediate speed 9.33 mph. The company touted the truck as being more economical than horses.

Chief Johnson detailed twenty-five of the members for Auto Chemical Truck duty until a special company could be organized. (The number of men in this detail was remarkably similar to those voting for the Alco truck on the first ballot). There were some concerns, one of which was to determine if the segregation of the men for chemical duty would jeopardize membership in the State Firemen's Association. Despite this reservation, the membership voted to establish a Chemical Truck Company that would be on a par with the Hose Company and the Hook and Ladder Company.

Despite some internal rumblings, the wider community greeted the arrival of the new truck with festivities. Mrs. F. S. Dennis gave a banquet for seventy members of the department on November 22, 1913 at the Wangum Restaurant in celebration of the truck's presence in town. At the banquet Miss Isabella Eldridge furnished the music — the "Grath Brothers Mandolin Trio" — while Axel Lindstrom created an informal ladies auxiliary, ten young ladies who served food and drinks to all the guests.

Other members of the community supported the advent of the new truck. W. H. Thompson provided gasoline and A. P. Curtiss purchased new fire hose for the equipment.

With the addition of the Chemical Truck Company, the By-Laws were amended to allow a maximum membership of ninety-five in the department.

The enlarged membership was riven with dissension over the course of the next year. Prior to the annual meeting in April 1915, Chief Philemon Johnson let it be known that he would not stand for reelection. He had other plans in mind after serving but two years, plans that would soon become evident.

At that meeting, W. B. Dyer was selected on the first ballot to be the chief. With some heat he declined to accept the office. On the seventh ballot, he was again chosen, but he immediately resigned when no one would accept the office of First Assistant Chief. Fred Lange and Henry Dwyer secured a majority of votes, but both refused the office. At an impasse, the meeting was adjourned. The annual meeting was again called to order on the 20th of April. So serious was the dissention, a motion to disband and to distribute the goods of the department to the town was placed on the agenda. Forthwith is the verbatim call of the meeting.

"An adjourned meeting of the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department will be held in the

rooms of the Norfolk Club, Tuesday evening April 20th, 1915 at 7:30 o'clock. Said meeting to consider to act upon the following motions —

First. A motion to turn over to the selectmen, the tax collector, and the town clerk, of the town of Norfolk all fire apparatus and other property in the possession of and properly belonging to the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department, including money in hand and in banks.

Second. A motion to disorganize the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department, for the purpose of effecting a re-organization of said department. Also, to consider and act upon any other motion or motions relating to the above motions, or any motions proper to be put before said meeting.

Henry C. Gidman
Secretary N.V.F.D.

Norfolk, Conn. April 16th, 1915"

The motions were not acted upon, but the members sensing that there was some glimmer of hope proceeded to try to elect a slate of officers.

First they went with the tried and true (Brown). Failing in that endeavor, they finally crafted a slate of officers that would bring the department back to normalcy.

Edmund Brown was nominated and elected on the first ballot but he refused to accept the position a second time. Finally the following officers were elected:

Chief: James Kennelly

First Assistant Chief: John Hollister

Second Assistant Chief: William F. Whalen

Secretary: Stephen A. Selden

Treasurer: A. Burton Collar

During the course of the annual meeting, the secretary noted in the minutes the pregnant action taken by the gathering: "Mr. Johnson was obliged to leave the meeting at this point." Johnson did indeed leave the meeting then. In effect he also left the department, taking with him a cadre of members and the chemical truck which they housed in a garage on Maple Avenue.

Within a month, Chief Kennelly began to address the issues that were tearing the department apart. He called a special meeting to appoint a committee to look into the charge that departmental monies had been diverted illegitimately into the Auto Chemical Truck Fund. With that resolution set in motion, Kennelly acted to stem the flood of resignations and to impose discipline upon the use of the club rooms — rekeying the locks and setting a curfew — as well as keeping a sharp eye on money matters.

The By-Laws had been violated by the taking of equipment entrusted to the department. The trust necessary to the proper functioning of the department was violated. The fabric of the organization was torn and the members were, understandably, irate. The Chemical Truck issue continued to plague the department for the next four years. There were moderates within the department like A.B. Collar and William O'Connor who counseled reconciliation. Their efforts came to naught. There were also hard-liners who wished to use the law and coercion to retrieve the lost truck and company.

First the State Firemen's Association was asked by the department to mediate the dispute between the department and the renegade chemical company. The Association refused to intervene. In the second attempt at remediation, an attorney by the name of Manchester was engaged to investigate the legality of the "truck taken from the Norfolk Fire Department by the Chemical Company." His advice was not satisfactory, his bill was paid, and he was discharged.

Certain members also devoted considerable time in investigating the chemical truck matter. Joseph Carroll, W. A. Tierney, William G. Wilcox, and William Curtiss were enjoined to bring the matter to a definitive resolution, but their efforts came to naught as well.

Finally on June 18, 1918, the department engaged the services of an attorney from New Hartford, Frank B. Munn, and charged him to bring suit for damages against the Chemical Company. A committee composed of the departmental officers became disenchanted with Munn's lawyerly dithering, reported the same to the membership at large almost a year later, discharged the counselor, and dropped the matter once and for all, finally and forever.

Perhaps something should be said on behalf of the cohorts who decamped with the Chemical Truck up to Maple Avenue. There appears to be no records extant to explain their behavior and motivation. We shall thus have to continue to rely on the stalwarts of the department who depict the runaways as intoxicated with the speed of a fast truck and a belief in better firefighting through chemistry.

Despite the recurring irritation of the Chemical Truck issue, the department, under the guidance of Chief Kennelly, Chief Calvin Hill (elected in 1917), and Fred Hollister (elected 1921) regained its stature in the community and reasserted its mission to serve the town of Norfolk in its fire fighting capacity.

Among the matters that the three chiefs attended to was to institute policies and procedures of fiscal austerity and financial responsibility. They sought to raise funds through benefits like a minstrel show that was presented under the auspices of Reginald Mitchell.

During this period as well, the officers of the department perfected a system for notifying the department by having a dedicated telephone line installed in the janitor's room. They also installed an electric ringing device attached to the fire bell to alert the volunteers to gather for an emergency. When the device proved erratic, William Wilcox was charged to monitor the system.

Twenty years after the inauguration of the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department, a new chief, John Griffin was elected. He was to serve for the next twenty-four years entering another era of prosperity and service. The previous ten years, despite significant developments, were marred by discord, animosity, and fragmentation. In the end, the department survived the hard times handsomely and, under Chief Griffin, it would prevail.



THE JOHN B. GRIFFIN ERA: *The Golden Age*

Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

I Corinthians 3:13

John B. Griffin was elected as Chief of the Department in the annual meeting held for the purpose of electing officers in April 1922. He was the first assistant to Fred Hollister during Hollister's one-year term as chief. With the turmoil that had infected the department in the previous years — the Brown years excepted — the chiefs did not hold office for very long, two years at the most. There was little reason to believe in 1922 that Chief Griffin would remain in that position for twenty-four years. There was little reason to believe that the membership would give him a vote of confidence each year for nearly a quarter of a century. What natural talents he brought to the position were either not evident or were not set forth in any records of that period. The gifts for leadership — intelligent leadership — that he brought to the position were paralleled by those of Edmund Brown, the very first chief. The first formal recognition of his talents and gifts came after he had served ten years as the chief executive officer of the department. At the June 1, 1931 meeting, William O'Connor entered a motion calling for a unanimous vote lauding Griffin's faithful and efficient service.

John Griffin in his twenty-four years as chief had a profound and lasting influence on the department. The principal features of his terms of office were to revise and rewrite the Constitution and By-Laws when changes were necessary and appropriate, to establish policy and procedure to ensure the proper functioning of the organization, to monitor the fiscal health of the department, to safeguard the health and welfare of the members, to guarantee a sound communication system, to provide an environment for members' healthful activities, and to act as intermediary between the community, the state, and the region.

From a practical standpoint, Griffin understood that the soundest underpinning for any fire department was good, safe, and reliable equipment. To secure what was needed, he teamed up with Captain Edward C. Farrington to persuade the town to generate the money for two pumpers. The first pumper, a Seagrave with a 350 gallon capacity tank, was purchased in 1925. The second pumper, also a Seagrave, with a 500 gallon capacity tank, was purchased in 1927.

Chief Archer of New York City remained an advisor to the department from the time of his initial visit in 1902. He may have influenced the decision to purchase Seagraves because they were and remain the pumpers of choice for the NYFD. Archer returned to Norfolk in 1931, almost thirty years from the beginning of the department.

(At the World Trade Center collapse on 9/11/01, fifty-four fire trucks were destroyed. They were all Seagraves and they will all be replaced by Seagraves.)

Policy and Procedure

Chief John Griffin is an interesting study in the art of leadership and the science of governance. His career with the fire department could well be recommended as a case study for students pursuing an MBA program at UConn or another comparable institute.

He understood, and understood well, the literal meaning of the Constitution and the By-Laws that provided the context for the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department. Yet every organization needs to develop policies and protocols not envisaged by the writers of the primary documents. That these policies and procedures should be developed in a democratic fashion is another *sine qua non* in governance. Griffin was a master of observation of trends in the department, good and bad, and he could and did articulate policies and procedures that the membership deemed necessary to the productive and efficient operation of the department. Here are some of the policies and procedures central to the efficient operation of a professional fire department that saw the light of day because of Griffin's inspiration.

When he chaired the monthly meetings, he spoke with conviction and emotion. Yet each member was heard and when a vote was taken and the majority spoke, all assented because the chair had wielded his authority with grace and with respect for the dignity of each member.

Early on it was agreed that the ladder truck would follow the pumper to and from all fires except in the case of a concomitant emergency or by order of the officer in charge. A policy was instituted that made sense, precedence was established, and exemptions to the rule were recognized. He also requested, with the force of a command, that all members remain until a fire was knocked down and the apparatus left the scene to return to the firehouse.

Given his concern for discipline on the way to and at the fire scene, Griffin proposed and the members agreed that the members' cars should follow the first truck. The driver of the second truck, whoever he might be, was instructed not to pass the firemen's cars. However the cars of the chief and the two assistant chiefs were given the right to pass the second truck, the firemen's cars, and the first truck in case they got a late start. The chiefs would then be first on the scene to gauge the situation, take command, and direct the efforts of the firemen.

On July 6, 1931, a policy was implemented to establish Fire Police. George Carr was appointed Chairman of the Fire Police with the authority to appoint eight men as assistants. The Fire Police were not to be considered an independent unit but were to remain under the supervision, albeit indirect, of Chief Griffin.

In order to insure that the spectators at a fire recognize the authority of the Fire Police, the membership voted to purchase nine police badges. A committee was established to get the badges, and the sample, shown to the members at the meeting in September 1931, by Chief Griffin, was chosen. The department paid for the badges, and each member of the fire police had to pay for his own badge when he was pinned. The dollar charge emphasized the fact that though the department was voluntary, each member had to pay his own way.

Perhaps of greater moment was the decision to reassert the regulation that only firemen were allowed to ride on the trucks. To discourage adolescents and thrill seekers, a sign was printed and placed in the firehouse to that effect. To discourage hangers-on, a list of members, active and associate, was also placed in the firehouse and club-room.

On October 23, 1925, the department voted to respond to a call of fire within a radius of ten miles. Although the goal was noble and inspired by the public service mission of the depart-

ment, some of the implications were not foreseen. One implication was the necessity of a proper supply of water in the outlying districts. A Mr. Lyford composed a letter describing in detail the problems and a potential solution. The letter was duplicated and mailed to residents within the ambit of the department's stated mission (ten-mile coverage). The residents were to seek out sources of water available in their vicinity in case of a conflagration. In like fashion, the secretary was instructed to write to the Selectmen of Colebrook to advise if a suitable supply of water could be arranged to fight fires in the center of that town.

After a particularly harsh winter, the department realized that in addition to fighting fires, it had an obligation to educate the residents of the town about ways to prevent fires and to assist the firemen. Accordingly the wardens were instructed to inspect and notify property owners to clean hatchways of snow. They were also concerned about the safety of oil burning furnaces which many residents were buying to replace their coal-fired furnaces.

In the fall, Chief Griffin played Scrooge to the residents who loved the smell of burning leaves. He saw the open burning of fallen leaves as a potential source of house fires. Both he and Assistant Chief Blanchard were especially solicitous of the water system in town, access to hydrants, and alternate plans when repairs to the system were taking place at Canaan Mountain.

He was just as solicitous about the members of the department when they were engaged in their duties. He cautioned the members of the danger in carrying the stream of water across a street elevated in such a manner that it might come in contact with the high tension electric wires.

Let it be said that Chief Griffin was a conservative. He exercised caution and prudence in a dangerous profession not merely for himself but also for the department. A firefighter himself, he understood the adrenaline rush that comes with responding to an emergency in a fast truck with flashing lights and a wailing siren. At first he simply asked any member driving the trucks that they not exceed a speed of 35 miles an hour. In the following year with his original instruction being violated, he again asked the drivers not to exceed 35 miles per hour when responding to a call.

The drivers heeded his admonition for some time. But with newer and better equipment and with the memory of the chief's annoyance fading, speed began to creep up again. Aware of the danger to pedestrians and to the firemen themselves, Griffin grew clearly angry and told them that fast or reckless driving of any piece of apparatus would not be tolerated. This time his voice was heard clearly when his fierce anger trumped his cordiality.

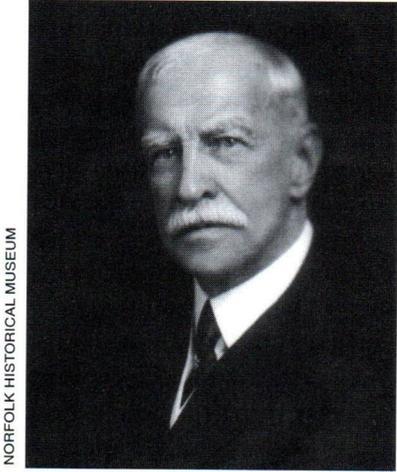
In his last year as chief, Griffin was exercised about attendance — attendance at meetings and attendance at fires. He was concerned that lax attendance at meetings would affect the cohesion and fellow-feeling so necessary among fire fighters. He instituted a system whereby books were to be placed on each truck and the members who attended the fires were to sign them. Even in his last days as chief, he felt compelled to act the disciplinarian. Twenty-four years of service had not worn thin where safety and good order were paramount.

Frederick Dennis, M.D

In the fall of 1913, Mrs. Frederick Dennis gave a banquet for the members of the department to celebrate the arrival in town of the Auto Chemical Truck. It is widely assumed that her interest in the department was more than just underwriting the cost of the banquet. It is

more than likely that she felt a proprietary interest in the truck because her family contributed to its purchase price.

What is truly known is that Mrs. Dennis furnished the hose for the department shortly after it came into existence. She was also instrumental in bringing a fire department officers from New York and from Larchmont to advise the department as to the proper mode of creating a professional fire fighting organization.



Dr. Frederick S. Dennis

As the years progressed, interest in the department passed from Mrs. Dennis to her husband, Frederick S. Dennis, the noted surgeon and resident of Norfolk and New York City where he had his practice. His rapport with Chief Griffin was sincere and enduring. From time to time he arranged lectures by members of the prestigious New York Fire Department. In conjunction with these events, parades and dinners were held to mark the occasions.

His beneficence continued through the years. The department was not unmindful of his largesse. A motion from the floor at a meeting was made in December 1930 calling for a letter of appreciation to be drafted and sent to the good doctor in recognition of his many gifts to the department.

At the annual meeting in 1934, the members of the department had a very sad duty to perform. A resolution had been drafted and presented for approval. It was a simple resolution speaking of the deep regret felt by the membership at the passing of Dr. Dennis. The resolution was sent to his nephew, James Bell.

Seven years later the department gathered to pass an equally melancholy resolution. It read:

"With the death of Eliza Dennis Bell on November 20th, 1941, the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department sustained a real loss. The interest that Mrs. Bell and her brother, the late Doctor Dennis, maintained in our department was more than ordinary. By counsel and financial aid, they both did much to make our fire work more efficient and easier. We will miss her greatly. Resolved: That these simple resolutions be inscribed in the minutes of the department, and a copy be sent to her son, Mr. James Christy Bell. Dated at Norfolk, Connecticut, this first day of December 1941."

Thus it was with dignity and affection that the department mourned the passing of the family of Dr. Dennis who, like Frederick Shepard, played such a normative role in fashioning and sustaining the Norfolk department.

Boy Scouts and American Legion

The members of the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department were active in athletics and were interested in sports on a local, regional and national scale. As an expression of the interest, the department formed the Sports Club to be the focus and center for all sports activities. When a plan was submitted to the department to sponsor a Boy Scout troop in 1931, the matter was referred to the Sports Club. Members of the Sports Club looked askance at the plan and it died.

The matter came up again in a seminal way when the Chief gave a talk to Troop 18 of the Boy Scouts of America. After this lecture, Griffin gave the troop a tour of inspection of the department, its meeting space, and the equipment. David Goodman, the scribe of the troop, wrote a glowing letter of praise for the presentation.

Later that year, Griffin was appointed by the members as a committee of one to meet with representatives of the Boy Scouts and the American Legion to discuss plans to form a drum and bugle corps. The corps was established and, as an earnest of its support, the department sent \$25.00 to the Boy Scouts to assist in the purchase of instruments.

Late in 1940, the issue of the sponsorship of a Boy Scout troop came up again. Chief Griffin invited Byron Roberts of Canaan, a Scout Commissioner of District #3, to speak about scouting at the November meeting. He in turn was followed by Chief Palmer Liddle of Torrington, a chief Scout executive from northwestern Litchfield County, who urged the sponsorship of the local troop. Influenced and persuaded by the caliber of the scout representatives and their arguments, the department voted to sponsor the Boy Scout troop for one year. As the meeting continued, Chief Griffin met with the scout executives to work out the protocol for sponsoring the troop. The troop was sponsored for a year, but since little enthusiasm was generated, the sponsorship was not renewed.

One of the traits of Boy Scouts, individually and collectively, is persistence. The Northwestern Litchfield Council of Boy Scouts, not to be denied, sent another representative two years later. His name was Dalton and he sparked a lengthy discussion among the membership about the merits of sponsorship. A local chap, James Johnston, volunteered to be the scoutmaster. Johnston was asked to meet with the Sports Club at the Town Hall later to assess the situation. Whether the meeting was held or not, whether the outcome was negative or not, is lost to history. For the nonce, a Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department — Boy Scout relationship became moot.

The ongoing relationship between the American Legion and the department, on the other hand, seemed to be characterized by a spirit of cooperation. From the 1930's, the American Legion was asked to provide three Color Guards to the department at parades and other civic events, and they did so willingly and handsomely.

Sports, Athletics, and Entertainment

In the final years of Edmund Brown's service as chief, the meetings of the department were held in the Royal Arcanum, either in a space adjacent to the firehouse on the first floor or in the room designated for the Norfolk Club. In the first quarter of the year 1914, there was a strong sentiment for a club room that would be under the exclusive control of the membership.

Accordingly a committee who had been charged with the purpose of finding a suitable location was instructed to get a room formerly occupied by the telephone company. The members were not spendthrifts however. They put a provision on that instruction, namely, that they would accept that room at a cost of not more than two dollars per member. That two dollars was in addition to the one-dollar dues. And so the club room came into being.

But just one year later, as a result of some fractious behavior on the part of the members, a set of stringent regulations was put into effect. It was voted that the department be kept locked with non-members being admitted only on Thursday nights, that eleven o'clock be the stipulated closing hour, and that the old lock be removed and a new one put in its place. It was also

stipulated that the number of keys would be severely restricted and that a key would be left with the telephone operator in case of fire.

Ten years later, the department, now under the direction of Chief Griffin, voted to accept the offer of moving to the third floor and taking the place of the Arcanum Club. To smooth the transition, the meeting voted to incorporate the members of the Arcanum Club, who were not firemen, into the department as associate members.

For a while the use of the club rooms seemed to go along quite well. Then abuses began to creep in, and the minutes began to reflect a growing unease about the use and misuse of the club rooms by members and non-members alike. Once again the restrictions that had been mandated back in 1914 were resurrected and put into place once again.

In 1939 another move of the club rooms was contemplated. The Norfolk Club was beginning to show signs of folding, and their rooms on the second floor of the Arcanum became available. The department chose to move into those quarters. But before the move took place and to ready the members for a new regimen, a committee was formed to stipulate the rules governing the use of the new club rooms that were set forth in accordance with the By-Laws. The rules were quite stringent.

On the Thursday after December 16, 1940, the members gathered to move the old furniture from the third floor down to the new club rooms on the second floor. The behavior of the members when in convivial session did not, however, seem to improve. Perhaps it was just the boisterous horseplay of the young male animal heedless of his surroundings, but it certainly irked the officers of the department.

Probably what irked the officers more than anything else was the fact that there were plenty of activities sponsored by the department to siphon off the energies of the young bucks. Bowling was a popular sport and as far back as 1928 there was some talk about the department taking over the bowling alleys in the Town Hall. The issue of the control of the bowling alleys was not decided until 1941 when Harold Higgins offered a set of pins to the department if they would take over the bowling alleys.

The department decided to do so, and Chief Griffin announced to the members that that deal had been struck. They immediately voted to reduce the price from 15 cents to 10 cents a string so long as that was feasible.

Lacking other pursuits, the members decided to impose some responsibility on themselves. They empowered Frank Wuori, the mechanic, to call on any member of the department to wash, oil, grease, polish and, in general, care for the apparatus. They even put teeth in this obligation giving Wuori the right to report any recalcitrant member to the Chief and the Council.

Every year a banquet committee was formed and a banquet was held. That was one of the more significant social events of the year for the town. And, similarly, a field day was planned and held each year. The American Legion, which ran the Memorial Day Parade, asked the department to participate each year and the department responded willingly.

In 1929, the members even distinguished themselves by being either participants or spectators. For the field day that year they selected the most athletically talented to take active part in the various contests while the others were to cheer them on to victory.

The department secured a lease on Case Field primarily for the use of the baseball team which

it fielded. But they let other organizations use the field as well. But the facility became so popular that they had to schedule a meeting of representatives of all the teams at the field to straighten out schedules, times, and upkeep. (Case Field was on the flats on Westside Road where the road race starts.)

The members permitted the use of the club rooms for other affairs. In the mid-forties, for example, there was a stag party for Carmen Zanobi on the premises. Surely some members were in attendance.

Card playing was popular at that time in the town's history. It was especially popular among the members in the club rooms. In 1931, the game of choice was "45". The members voted to organize a "45" Club with Charles Hotchkiss and Fred Shields as the prime movers. They selected their own assistants.

An element of competition soon set in, and it was not long before a "45" series was set in motion. The dark winter nights were highlighted by this diversion.

Drills and Training

In 1933, the matter of training came to the fore. In May of that year it was voted that a drill-night be held weekly if possible. The Foreman and Assistant Foreman in each company were to select ten men from each company to act as drillmasters. The appointed time was set for Monday nights at 7:00 PM.

Setting in place a procedure and time for drills was one thing. Getting the members to attend and to participate was another. Over the years Chief Griffin had to continually chide the members and encourage better attendance. His main concern was that the new equipment and apparatus was not being handled properly.

In the same vein, the department accepted an offer from the Aetna Insurance Company to show its films of various fires and the methods used in fighting them. The "motion pictures" were so good that members from neighboring departments were invited to attend the showings.

In the meeting of October 7, 1940, the members voted to add another component to the drills. That decision was reached after a lengthy discussion which concluded that the trucks were not to leave the firehouse without a qualified operator on the truck except in the hydrant district. The qualified operators were told to report to the firehouse before going to the fire as well as to serve as instructors for those members who wanted to become qualified to drive.

Since the area around Norfolk is so heavily wooded and since the department responded to calls within a ten-mile radius, the department arranged a lecture and demonstration by a Mr. Brooks, a Forest Fire Warden stationed at Peoples Forest. Evidently his presentation made a significant impact.

Chief Heinz of New Haven came to town and showed motion pictures to the members in 1945. So taken were the members by the relevance of his movies and his talk that they named him an honorary member of the department.

The members of the department were indeed capable of mischief. But more often than not they were also capable of directed and purposeful activity with high seriousness. But that did not prevent them from kicking back and taking their leisure. When Douglas Stearns, Jr. gave them a box of cigars, the minutes record that "they were much enjoyed by the members."

Communication

On January 15, 1926 Chief Griffin and Edward Brown were voted a committee of two to contract with the telephone company for the best system for calling officers to a fire. Service on this committee sensitized the chief to the importance of fast and accurate reporting of fires to the officers and to the men. That sensitivity was a hallmark of his tenure as chief.

He worked closely with the telephone company and its operators who occupied space in the Arcanum Building. The telephone company was aware of its importance in communicating emergencies to the proper authorities. The company developed a "telephone code" which was made known to the chief who, in turn, made it known to the members.

The telephone company had made great strides since its inception in 1894. The company was started by Erastus Johnson in that year. He was also the owner of the electric company which he established about the same time. Electricity was generated from a station on Shepard Road with a 13.5 horsepower gasoline engine.

The first telephone exchange was also located on Shepard Road in a small room on the second floor of the Holleran home now owned by Ted Wuori. Edward R. Stevens reported on the primitive character of the first company.

"On the first exchanges they did not have any protection from lightning running in on the wires during a thunderstorm, with the result that the operator could receive a very uncomfortable shock. To offset this, a switch was mounted on a pole outside the exchange. A rope was tied to the switch and at the other end at a convenient place for the operator. When a thunderstorm came up, the operator would simply pull the rope, which drew the switch and that was the end of the service until the storm was over."

Eventually Johnson sold his telephone business to the Southern New England Telephone Company for \$17,700. That company moved the exchange to the Arcanum Building and set up a panel equipped with breakers that allowed the operators to call the fire department when there was a fire caused by a lightning strike.

The staff of the telephone company were important to the fire department. And the chief and the members of the department knew it. They sent a letter of thanks to Miss Sylvernale, the Chief Operator, and her assistants for handling the alarms. (Miss Sylvernale was the sister of Ellis Sylvernale, the chief who would be elected to follow Griffin. So there was a telephone connection, a professional connection, and a family connection, all in one.)

In wartime the chief was especially solicitous about the siren on the Arcanum Building. When it began to malfunction in 1942 he had it repaired immediately. The siren on the building was supplemented by one on top of the Old Stone Mill, a siren put there by the Norfolk War Council. The Old Stone Mill was built by the Norfolk Manufacturing Company in 1852. The General Electric Company took over the building and began operations in 1943. The siren on the GE — Stone Mill was given over to the department after the war was over.

The siren still is the well-understood mode of alerting the officers and the firemen of an emergency call. The telephone is still integral to the proper functioning of the communications system.

World War II

The first indication that the department would be seriously affected by an imminent war came in a November meeting about a year and a month before the bombing of Pearl Harbor on De-

ember 7, 1941. Chief Griffin lectured the members on the defense program and how local fire departments could help this cause. He suggested, among other things, the development of a cadre of 20 men who could be ready to go to any other town at few moments notice. Perhaps it was felt that Winsted or Canaan or even Great Barrington could come under attack and the intrepid 20 would help repel the invaders. Griffin also suggested that every fireman be at the ready and look into the firehouse once in a while to see that the equipment was in good working order. Apparently, the fear of sabotage was part of the mindset of the day.

At the same meeting, Dr. Frank Ursone, the departmental physician, talked about the First Aid Course sponsored by the Red Cross. He recommended that each member of the department take the course. In that fashion he would have a band of paramedics available to help him with potential casualties on the home front. The Casualty Station was the Old Stone Mill.

This meeting and its content were the first indications that war, a world war, was in the offing, and preparedness was the order of the day. The following month, Griffin again alerted the department to the nascent national defense program and how it would affect the department.

Isolationism was not a popular attitude in Norfolk prior to the war. In August 1941, the Norfolk Defense Council was established under the State Council. Once hostilities began involving the United States, the name was changed to the Norfolk War Council. Its headquarters was on Station Place. Each of the members of the Council, in one way or another, had experience with the fire department and so were qualified to deal with the war emergency.

Edward C. Farrington, *Chairman*

Mrs. Joseph J. Cassidy
Secretary and Treasurer

George E. Carr
Asst. Secretary & Asst. Treasurer

John J. Curtiss
Mrs. John E. Searle

George J. Dyer
Abel I. Smith, Sr.
Frederic C. Walcott

Mrs. Almon W. Pinney
Robbins B. Stoeckel

Committee Chairmen

Agriculture – Henry LaGier

Air Raid Warden – Willis Calder

Civilian Mobilization – Mrs. John E. Searle

Emergency Water Facilities – Ernest Blanchard

Emergency Welfare Service and Evacuation – George E. Carr

Fire Functions – John H. Griffin

Veterans Adjust., Rehabilitation and Advisory – Rev. J. H. Potter

Medical – Dr. F. D. Ursone

Motor Vehicle Transportation and Police – Reginald M. Lewis

Motor Corps – Mrs. Reginald M. Lewis

Personnel Officer – Harold W. Higgins

Salvage – Edward A. Lucier

Volunteer Officer – Mrs. John Dyer

War Gardens and Canning – Mrs. Abel I. Smith

War Records – Mrs. Mary M. Hall

Identification Issuing Officer – Joseph R. Carroll³

Four months after Japan precipitated American involvement in World War II, Griffin again spoke about the National Defense Program with a greater sense of urgency and with more specificity. For example, in the event of an air raid over Norfolk, the defense alarm would sound. The alarm would be three single calls on the day alarm. Although the details were yet to be worked out with the telephone company, the alarm system would be published in local newspapers and members would be notified by mail so they could distinguish it from a fire alarm. Griffin also announced that the state police could use the inhalator in an emergency.

Most importantly, the Volunteer Fire Department made plans to handle fires that were the result of explosives or incendiary bombs.

Though he had an Irish name, Griffin was an Anglophile when it came to the war effort. He promoted the idea that the department should help raise donations for a kitchen unit for the firemen of England who were beleaguered by frequent bombing. This was one occasion when the department reneged at a chiefly recommendation and said that more information was needed.

However the members relented to a degree two months later and agreed to donate \$5.00 to the British-American Canteen Fund.

In the latter part of December, the department invited John Dyer, an official Air Warden for Norfolk, to address the issue of the duties and responsibilities of an air warden. Dyer told the assembly that an air wardens' school was to be established in Falls Village, a school that would service the town of Norfolk. Dyer communicated a sense of purpose and was well received by those present, leading Griffin to urge every member to attend the air warden school.

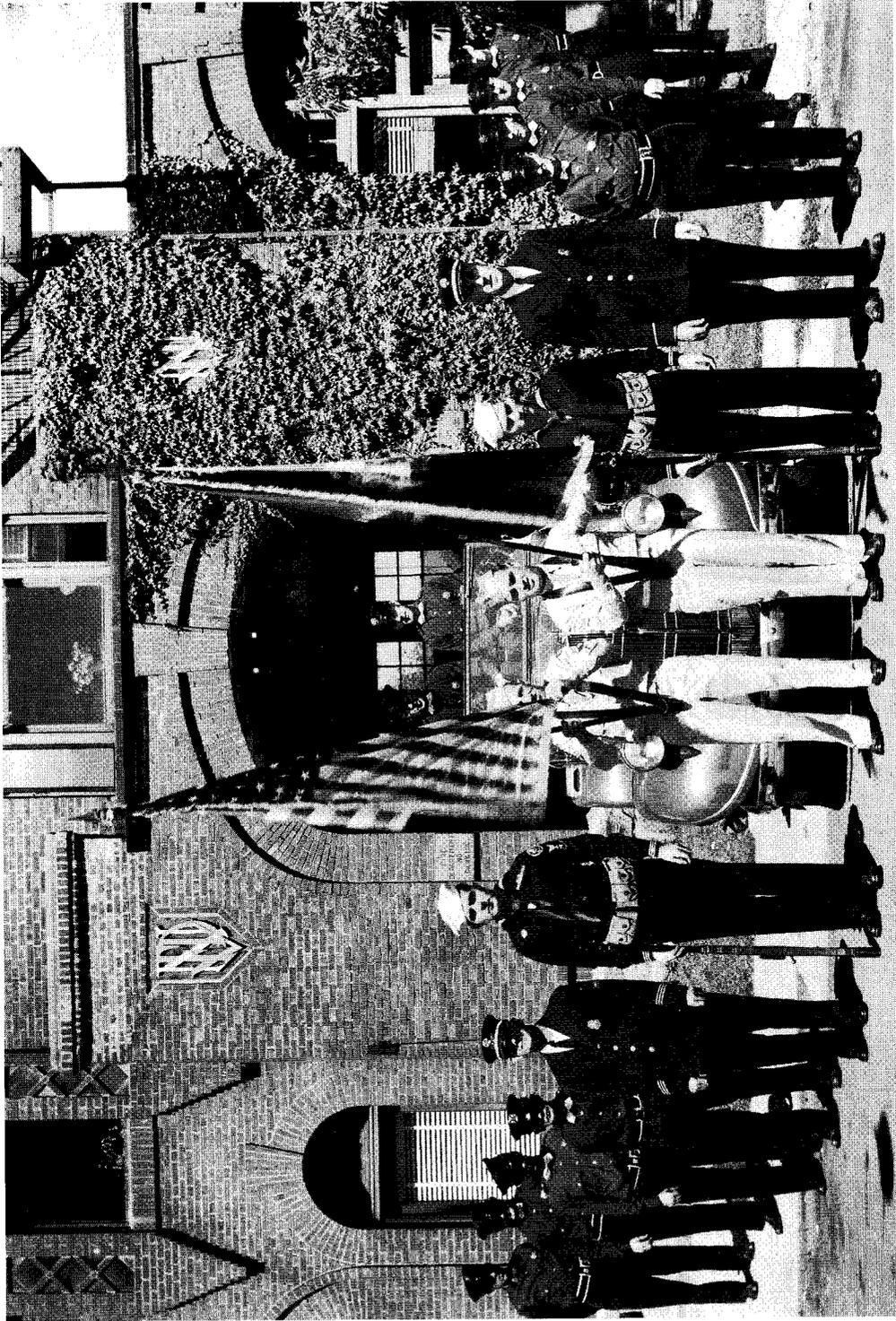
Under the defense plan, every community was to have blackouts when all lights in private homes, commercial buildings, factories, and streets were to be turned off at the sound of the alarm and remain off until the alarm sounded again. There were two sirens in the town. The first was on the roof of the Arcanum Building which was used to call the firemen. The War Council mandated a second siren to be put atop the Old Stone Mill so as to alert the townsfolk in West Norfolk. There were three locations for air spotters, each manned twenty-four hours a day: Dennis Hill, the top of Terrace View and the Stoeckel Meadow. The remnants of the Terrace View site are still visible.

The first blackout was held in Norfolk on Sunday evening, March 1, 1942. The members were integral to making it a success because, as Griffin said, they performed admirably.

The effect of the war soon began to be felt by the department. Every able-bodied man over the age of 18 was classified 1A and was soon drafted into the army if he had not already enlisted in another service. Needless to say, this action depleted the ranks of the department whose mainstay was the youth of the town, fearless and vigorous, two qualities also prized by the military. The department was proud of its members who had gone into the armed forces, and George Carr called for the department to display a service flag as a symbol of their sacrifice.

The loss of so many men to the service created a need to supply for them. After having attended a seminar on the matter at the Norfolk School, Griffin proposed the formation of an auxiliary fire department. To generate interest, he planned to take the truck down to Hoover's Pond for a demonstration on Friday evening, July 10, 1942, at 7:30 PM.

All of the defense units in the town gathered on the second Sunday in August, 1942. The gathering was a practice session and a training session. The fire department was considered as a defense unit with multiple responsibilities. For example during blackouts some members served



NORFOLK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

1946 Color Guard

Standing, l to r: Bob Hannafin, Tim O'Connor, John Zancobi, Sam Chattlen, Chief Jack Griffin, James Casey, Howard Kelley, Fred Kelley, Edwin Kelley, Asst. Chief Ellis Syvermale, Willas, Calder, William Tierney, Dick Curtiss, Wally Hotchkiss. Seated, l to r: Vinny Christinat, Howard Caul

as neighborhood wardens requiring strict adherence to the blackout rules. All other members reported to the fire house.

Because of the multiple responsibilities assumed by the remaining men of the town, the monthly meetings of the department had to be reduced to one every other month. In addition, the department chose to make a financial contribution to the war effort by buying a defense bond.

A communication was received from the Connecticut War Council offering local fire departments an auxiliary pump for the department. The department opted for a trailer-type pump and made application. The application was approved, and a little over a year later the pump was delivered to the fire house under the aegis of the Office of Civilian Defense.

The Meneely Bell Company of Troy, NY wrote to the department asking if it could buy back the bell that it had made and that was presented to the department by Frederick Shepard in 1907. There was a shortage of metal during the war, and the assumption was that the bell would be melted down for shell casings. The department turned down the request, however, noting that if power were to be disrupted by a saboteur, the bell could be rung to signal a fire.

Members of the fire department lost their membership when they left town to go into the service. Of course they were quickly reinstated after they were mustered out.

Almost all the returnees rejoined the department, largely, it is felt, because the department kept contact with them while they were engaged. The most prominent source of good pleasure on the part of the department was sending Christmas packages around the world where the men were stationed. The packages were well received, and cards and letters of appreciation came in to the department shortly after the holidays.

At one meeting thank-you notes were read from Carmen Zanobi, George W. Nash, Joseph Whalen, George Zecker and William O'Connor. At another meeting notes were received from Edwin Master, Charles Hotchkiss, Clarence Card, and George Christinat.

After VE Day, but before the Japanese surrendered on the deck of the Missouri, William O'Connor learned about the fire-fighting equipment in army camps that soon would become surplus and available at little cost for civilian use. Warden Roland Robichaud volunteered to find out about the purchase of such equipment but nothing is known about the success of his efforts. The siren atop the Old Stone Mill was donated to the fire department.

Thus did the Norfolk department survive the war and then prospered as the returning airmen, marines, soldiers, and sailors rejoined the department.

Finances

Early on, the department was volunteer in financial character as well as being volunteer in terms of contributions of time and energy by the firemen. The three revenue streams were the dues of the members, outright contributions on the part of philanthropists, and benefit events held for entertainment and to generate money for fire-fighting purposes.

In January of 1924, the department voted to accept an extinguisher from Mrs. S. Caul valued at five dollars. At the same meeting, the members voted to buy four new extinguishers from their own resources, bringing to a total of 12 the number of extinguishers owned by the two companies.

An anomaly occurred in fund raising on March 18, 1929. The annual banquet was being discussed. This banquet had now become well established in departmental tradition. In today's

terms it was an evening for bonding - bonding among the members in a spirit of conviviality and bonding of the members with the townsfolk in an atmosphere of camaraderie. It was also an evening for raising money with proceeds from tickets going to the department's coffers after expenses were paid.

Miss Cora Brown, owner of a boarding house on the village green, offered to take care of the expenses, i.e., she volunteered to provide the banquet. But her offer, mysteriously, was turned down. Why was Miss Brown's offer deemed inappropriate? One can only speculate. But one thing is certain. In the annals of the department, that mistake was never made again. No other gift was ever turned down.

On the expense side of the budget, there was the salary for the mechanic. Since the treasurer's reports are no longer extant, the amount of the salary is unknown, but the mechanic was given a raise of \$5.00 a month because of the added care of the new truck (the Seagrave). The department may have shunned the generosity of Miss Brown, but it cared for the 'care' of the trucks.

The monies that were generated by dues were important to the department. It adopted a rather draconian measure to insure that dues were paid and in a timely fashion. If payments were not made, the members were dropped from the rolls. Such a measure argues that income from dues was important and, equally, that there was a pool of potential members to replace those who could not or would not pay up. Departmental membership had become a badge of honor and belonging.

In the early 30's, card parties and dances were held that raised the munificent sum of \$1,300.00. Some of that money was spent on a subscription to the magazine Fire Engineering so that members could keep up with the latest trends in the field.

The coffers were enriched to the tune of \$1,000.00 by a bequest from R.C. Burr whose estate had just been probated by the court. At the same meeting when this bequest was made known, it became apparent that expenses were exceeding income, so the members voted to try for another and more stable revenue stream, namely, support from the town. A letter to the selectmen was drafted asking for a stipend of \$200.00 per month or \$2400.00 per year from the Town of Norfolk.

On the expense side, the department voted at about the same time to purchase a nozzle to fight oil fires. Perhaps purchases of this character demonstrated to the town fathers that money would be budgeted for essential items, not frivolous ones. And certainly, it demonstrated that the department was cognizant of the dangers inherent in the increased use of petroleum and petroleum products in homes, vehicles, and in local businesses.

Another expense adopted by the department at Chief Griffin's recommendation regarded the Old Age Assistance Tax, a forerunner of the Rooseveltian Social Security. At the November 30, 1936 meeting, it was moved and seconded that the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department pay the 1937 Old Age Tax Assistance Tax for each member of the department whose dues were paid.

The motion was carried by a unanimous vote demonstrating the popular support for a "pension program" and providing another incentive for members to pay their dues.

In 1937, the department racked up another expense, the purchase of new windshields for the trucks. It was an expense that might not have been necessary if the drivers heeded Griffin's insistence that trucks not exceed his speed limit of 35 miles per hour.

At the annual meeting in the same year, the members adopted another salary expense, voting

to pay the Secretary and Treasurer \$25.00 per year. At a later meeting, a major expense was reported, the cost of a new squad car. Buying a squad car had been debated for some time and its necessity was confirmed by the disbursement of funds for the purchase price. The new squad car was a 1937 Studebaker assembled in South Bend, Indiana. The model was the J1562, the SII was J15-2933 and the engine #IT18882. It had a wet weight of 11,500 pounds. This car was purchased for its long life. Its promise was borne out; it still is in reasonable shape at this centennial.

The department continued to be the recipient of many gratuities and chose, with characteristic grace, to recognize these gifts. For example, Mrs. Carl Stoeckel was singled out for her financial and philanthropic support of the department. A resolution was read at the annual banquet in 1938 citing her generosity and the department's gratitude together with the wish that she would continue to enjoy good health and implicitly a long life. Naivete has its purposes.

The department could be generous as well. It furnished refreshments at the meeting of the Fire Chiefs Emergency Plan and gave \$25.00 to the Boy Scouts to help buy musical instruments. There were necessary expenses. Hose worth \$600.00 had been destroyed at the Roughland Realty fire and perforce had to be replaced.

Later new hose was purchased at the cost of \$367.50 less a 2% discount. Dues were raised from \$2.00 to \$3.00 for members so that a new club room could be readied. This increase agitated the members, and they suggested additional fund-raising events so that dues would become unnecessary. The department also voted to pay a bill of \$5.00 for taking a horse-drawn vehicle to Lakeville for its field day.

In 1942, the members voted to buy six tires and tubes for the rear of the pumpers. The cost was \$198.00. It was not recorded whether or not they were Firestones.

In terms of repairing equipment, the department was ever ready to spend in order to keep everything in A1 condition. When the gasoline tank was needed on the Seagrave, it was ordered posthaste. When the hose showed signs of wear, 250 feet of 2-1/2-inch hose was purchased. These items were procured during the war years when preparedness was the watchword.

Another expenditure during the war years was the money spent for Christmas packages for the "boys in the service." Not only were these packages well received but those who acknowledged the gifts also returned to the department as reinstated members after the armistice was twice declared.

In 1946 as Chief Griffin closed out his final term of office, two hundred more feet of 2-1/2-inch hose was purchased together with a fog nozzle for the hose on the booster tank.

At the annual meeting on September 9, 1946, Ellis Sylvernale was elected to replace John Griffin. As a tribute to the former chief the department voted a final and crowning expenditure to Griffin's tenure - a sum of \$50.00 was taken from the treasury to pay for a testimonial dinner to be held at Ye Olde Newgate Coon Club on October 7, 1946.

A Retrospective

It would be difficult to enumerate all the benefits Griffin brought to the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department. Not only did he secure a fine professional department, he made it a model and exemplar for other departments throughout the state. He not only served admirably as the chief, he represented the department equally admirably on the state level, the regional level, and on the local level.



1937 Studebaker, 1925 Seagraves, 1927 Seagraves, circa 1940s

NORFOLK HISTORICAL MUSEUM

In 1925, he oversaw the purchase of the Seagrave pumper.

In 1927, with Edward Farrington he secured another Seagrave pumper.

In 1933, he was elected Vice President of the States Firemen Association.

In 1935, he recommended the building of a new firehouse.

In 1935, he began proceedings to secure a squad car for the use of the department.

In 1937, he was instrumental in founding the Litchfield County Fire Chiefs Emergency Plan and became its first president.

In 1938, he began a relationship with the Boy Scouts.

In 1939, he appeared before the Legislative Committee of the State of Connecticut urging the passage of bills supported by the Firemen's Association. These bills would bring relief and benefits to all the departments throughout the state, voluntary and paid.

In 1941, he was a central figure in the Norfolk War Council.

Perhaps the most telling achievement was his appointment to a committee of three to assist at the Pet Parade at Case Field on September 17, 1938. He served with Blanchard and Sylvernale. Nothing was above him; nothing was beneath him.



Chief John Griffin

John Griffin worked his whole life for the Connecticut Light and Power Company. When he realized that his work would keep him away from town during the day, he offered to resign. The members rejected that suggestion by a unanimous vote. When he was ten years into his years of service, the members gave him a resounding vote of confidence and support.

At one juncture, a motion was offered to the membership to the effect that the chief be continued in office without the necessity of an annual election. The motion, though well intentioned, was misguided. It was meant as a tribute to Chief Griffin. But it would have made him an autocrat. He did not favor the motion because he was, in every way, a small "d" democrat. The members voted the motion down, matters carried on as before, but a grand tribute had been paid to a master.

Even after he ceased to be chief he remained active in the department. His wisdom and counsel were constantly sought. He continued to urge some of his favorite themes: fiscal security for the department, fire prevention, and new and updated equipment.

A lifelong bachelor, Griffin resided in rooms in Mrs. Maloney's boarding house on Shepard Road. On a fall morning in 1950 at ten o'clock, his landlady asked Frank Wuori to check on Mr. Griffin because he had not come down for breakfast. Five minutes later, Frank Wuori returned and said: "He's dead." To paraphrase scripture, a great tree had fallen in Norfolk. The chief had answered his final alarm.



THE ELLIS SYLVERNALE YEARS: *Television, Technology and Trucks*

*“And fire and ice within me fight
Beneath the suffocating night.”*

A.E. Housman

In March of 1940, Lynn Deming passed away. Lynn Deming was the chief of the New Milford Fire Department. In 1937 he and John Griffin were the prime movers behind the establishment of the Litchfield County Fire Chiefs Emergency Plan. They became the first administrators of the plan with Griffin serving as the first President and Deming serving as the first Vice-President.

Deming and Griffin were good friends as well as colleagues. Through Griffin, he became a friend and a resource for the Norfolk Department. He was so well liked by the members that they were deeply moved by his demise and paid their heartfelt respects at his funeral.

That funeral had a deep impact upon Griffin. He became more aware of his own mortality and began to prepare gradually for his own leaving as the chief executive officer of the department. Like a rare but precious administrator, he prepared for his successor by grooming Ellis Sylvernale for the position.

Veterans of the department recall that when Griffin became the chief, that was the title that the members conferred on him. They called him “The Chief.” In his middle years, he began to be referred to by name — Chief Griffin or John Griffin. In his last five years the members started calling him “Jack.” That the members regarded him with the greatest respect and affection was told by William O’Connor, a local merchant with a store in the Village Hall. He served as toastmaster of the “going-away” dinner at the Coon Club in front of the members, the townsfolk, and the local clergy. Of course, Griffin did not in fact go away. He served with distinction under the newly elected chief wearing the ring they had given him as a token of their admiration.

And so it was at the annual meeting on September 9, 1946, that the membership elected Ellis Sylvernale as their chief.

Chief – Ellis Sylvernale
1st Assistant Chief – Ernest Blanchard
2nd Assistant Chief – Howard Caul
Treasurer – Edward Driscoll
Secretary – Wallace Hotchkiss, Jr.
Engineer – Frank Wuori
Physician – Dr. Frank Ursone
Auditors – Jack Griffin
Donald Hannafin
Timothy O’Connor

The transition was seamless. The contrast between Sylvernale and Griffin was not great. The former was a traditionalist, choosing to emphasize the policies and procedures that have made the department so well regarded in the northwest region. If there was a contrast to be made, Sylvernale was the chief of the *Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department* while Griffin was the chief of the *Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department*.

Just one month and a day after being elected, Sylvernale presented an agenda to the members at a regular meeting with two topics that were of ongoing concern: communications and a new firehouse. Sylvernale spoke about the function of the new siren system. He cautioned that the siren should not be shut off too soon by the first person arriving at the firehouse. The members, aware that there were pranksters, voted to box in the switches of the new system. The desirability of a new firehouse was discussed but was finally tabled for further action at another meeting. At that later meeting in February, Chief Sylvernale appointed a committee to look into the matter of a new firehouse in depth and in detail.

Named to the committee were Howard Caul, John Barry, Donald Hanafin, Charles Hotchkiss, Frank Wuori, Reginald Lewis, Harold Colwell, and John H. Griffin.

On July 7, 1947, Griffin reported to the members on the research and deliberations of the committee. The report said that the proposal for a new firehouse was not advisable at the present time. The operative phrase was "at the present time." The report was accepted largely because money was not available for such a significant expense. The meeting ended with a discussion on establishing a fund for this purpose.

The members deputed Chief Sylvernale to look into the faulty siren that was on the roof of the GE building, a location now housing the New England Miniature Ball, Co. Two years later he reported that repairs were necessary. The members instructed him to write to the company to check on whether a repair could be made and how much it would cost.

The factory said that the siren was not repairable. The department ordered a new one. It came and was installed. It did not work. It was sent back to the factory for repairs. Finally it was put into operation.

That the siren would be helpful in notifying members of the department who lived in West Norfolk was a given. But the need for a working siren also became important because once again world events beyond the town of Norfolk were having an impact upon the department.

In the latter part of June 1951, President Truman ordered the Air Force and the Navy to Korea. Three days later he ordered ground forces in and air strikes to begin. The Office of Civil Defense was revitalized and the department allowed the use of its clubroom by the local Civil Defense Committee. The repaired siren was used once again for an air raid test.

A bit earlier the nation was shaken by a terrific explosion at a pier in Texas City. A ship in the harbor loaded with the fertilizer ammonium nitrate blew up, causing the death of 576 people. Sensitive to the catastrophe and its effects, the department sent a donation to support relief efforts.

On a less serious note, boxing was a sport that captured the nation's attention. Nor did it escape the attention of the members of the department. Joe Louis dominated the heavyweight division for twelve years in the late thirties and forties. Listening to his fights on the radio was almost as compelling as listening to Red Sox games.

But the boxing matches that stirred their imagination most were those between Sandy Saddler

and Willie Pep. First Pep was the Featherweight champion, then Saddler came along and took the title away. Pep fought back and retook the title only to lose it once again to Saddler who kept it for seven years.

When that rivalry was at its peak, one of the more crucial bouts was being televised. Through the courtesy of James Casey, a television console was set up in the club room for that Friday night fight. Casey took the set back the next day, but the television era had begun.

Even under Sylvernale, the clubrooms were treated pretty harshly. The members voted at that time to write to the Norfolk Realty Company, its landlord, asking them to re-decorate the rooms. Nothing came of that request.

At one point Chief Sylvernale spoke about gas being stolen and the trucks being tampered with. So upset was he about these matters that he had the department offer a reward for information leading to the apprehension of the vandals. The members voted to change the lock on the firehouse door. These restrictions plus the dilapidated condition of the clubrooms led to a decreased use of the clubrooms. Members were staying away, and the chief now became concerned that the lack of coming together in good spirit would hurt the morale of the department. So \$150.00 was spent to refurbish the rooms.

By implication there was another factor in the lessened use of the clubrooms. Television was becoming popular and the men stayed home with their families to watch Milton Berle and Bishop Sheen. To lure the men back to the clubhouse, William Tierney put a brand new, handsome, 21" Admiral set in the rooms, and the members voted to purchase it.

There is no doubt that the advent of television dramatically altered the way people spent their leisure hours. But there were other trends that began to appear that affected the department as well. The women's movement began to be felt. The department's reaction was ambivalent.

It started when Rita Tierney wrote to the department about its participation in a revival of the Norfolk Fair. Miss Tierney wrote as the official representative of the Norfolk Business and Professional Women's Association (BAPWA). The chief urged the department to put on a demonstration during the fair and to help out with traffic duty as well. The members agreed.

When Rita Tierney followed up with another request, namely, that the department select from its members a candidate for Mr. Norfolk to be chosen at the fair, the members demurred. That apparently would be going just too far.

Communications

Another innovation which impacted the department was the decision on the part of the telephone company to replace the operators at the switchboard with a dial system. Formerly the department depended on the telephone operators to take a call about a fire or emergency and communicate that information in person to the department. Now the operators were to be replaced by automation.

A council meeting was called to order on Monday, February 16, 1953 at 7:30 PM to hear a representative from the telephone company report on the new fire alarm system to be used when the dial system went into effect in the fall. The changeover was slated to go into effect on October 11th in Norfolk.

Chief Sylvernale reported this technology at the annual meeting in August. The fire dial number was 2-5521 and it would ring in three locations in addition to the firehouse. In this way calls

could be fielded twenty-four hours a day. The three other places were the home and office of Dr. Frank Ursone, the drug store, then and now the center of information, as well as Ann's Nursery. Naturally, the firemen would still have to go to the firehouse to find out where the fire was.

The first test of the new system took place on October 25th and worked well. The chief pointed out that the person taking the call had to write the location of the fire on the blackboard. Eventually the blackboard was placed outside the firehouse so that members could see where the fire was without getting out of their cars.

In 1947, two years after the end of World War II, the economy of the nation as well as the local community, was strong. Accordingly the members, who in harder economic times had voted to suspend the payment of dues, agreed to start collecting annual dues again. The times were good and the *esprit de corps* was so strong that a great number of young men and veterans were applying for membership. To adjust to the changing circumstances, the council amended the By-Laws so as to increase the numbers of men in each company, forty instead of thirty-five, thus raising the membership to 80 instead of 70.

The reinstatement of the dues may well have been an act of enlightened self-interest. When it was voted to have the annual outing the following year at the Old Town Farm, it was understood that individual members could attend gratis, but non-members would be welcomed for a fee of \$2.00.

Although the '48 outing was cost free, the members did not get off scot-free when it came to other expenses. When it came time to identify members' cars going to a fire and parking near the place of the blaze, the members sought to have F. D. markers prominently displayed on their cars. A motion was made and accepted that the department would purchase 48 signs carrying the insignia of the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department, but each member would have to pay for his own. A couple of years later, Sylvernale distributed applications for blue lights that could be affixed to one's car or pick-up. This, of course, made the members' vehicles much more identifiable and facilitated their responding to a call with dispatch. The cost of the blue lights was apparently borne cheerfully by the members.

Donations and Other Income

In addition to the monies generated by the paying of dues, another source of income seems to have generated spontaneously from people who benefited from the services of the fire department. In May of 1949, Mrs. Seeley and Harry Fields sent checks along with notes of appreciation for the department's assistance at the fires in their respective homes. The Canaan Fire Department wrote a letter of gratitude for the assistance of the department at the fire at the East Canaan store on January 27, 1950. Mrs. Louis Anstett had a chimney fire so she responded with thanks and a check to the department for \$10.00. Later the S.W. Childs Corporation wrote to the department and thanked the members for their assistance at a recent fire. That epistle also contained a check for \$100.00. Similarly Brendan Gill sent a note of gratitude for help at his recent fire and also enclosed a check as a token of his appreciation. So did Mary Holbrook (\$20.00).

There was a flood in the midwinter of '49-'50, so the department was called upon to pump out cellars. Harold Higgins, an insurance agent and member of the department, thanked his colleagues by sending them a check for \$10.00. Mrs. Harry Atwood thanked the members and also enclosed a check for an undisclosed amount. These were only a few of the households that

were served in this fashion after that flood. What it did was generate additional income, but it also generated a rather lengthy discussion as to whether the department should be in the “business” of pumping out cellars or should stick to its original mission to fight fires.

The amount of income that came to the department as a result of battling fires or pumping cellars was welcomed and appreciated, but it was not sufficient to satisfy the expenses incurred by the department. It was also, of course, sporadic and dependent upon the occurrence of disasters, natural and man-made. Accordingly in September of 1948, the department felt compelled to ask the town for an additional allotment of \$50.00 a month so that it could meet its budget. For better or for worse, the town-department relationship became one of a more firmly established interdependence.

Fire Truck

The matter of financing a new firehouse was put, as they say, on a back burner. It seemed to be of lesser importance than the purchase of a new fire truck. That issue came up at the annual meeting on September 18, 1950. The resolution at that meeting was to refer the matter to the next Council meeting which was held eleven days later. At that meeting John Barry, Howard Caul, Charles Hotchkiss and Ellis Sylvernale were asked to pursue the matter with all deliberate speed and with a sense of urgency.

The committee did its work. One year later, they determined that the department could not afford the expense. The money would have to come out of the town budget. The council committee lobbied to have the matter of the purchase of a new fire truck be placed on the agenda for the next town meeting. Politically astute as they were, they also saw the wisdom of a joint committee to focus the energies of the department and the town to this end.

Both efforts were successful. The town meeting considered the matter and set up their part of the joint committee — non-firemen Joseph Carroll, Thomas Keiller, and Jerry Torrant. Chief Sylvernale appointed Dr. Ursone, George Carr and Earl Smith to that group. (Smith was shortly replaced by Ernest Harrington.)

In mid-1952, the committee had met a number of times and formulated a report that was filed with the selectmen. A copy of the underwriters’ report was also filed. This report became public at a special meeting of the department in early fall of 1952 when William O’Connor announced the recommendation that the town purchase a Dodge, 600 gallon rated capacity truck, for \$12,988.73. The committee recommended as well that the sum of \$2,217.00 be spent for the purchase of equipment suggested by the fire insurance underwriters in their report. The selectmen approved these recommendations *in toto*.

And so it was that in November, Chief Sylvernale announced to the membership that the new fire truck would arrive in the middle of January, 1953. That the fire truck would come was warranted. That the fire truck would be delivered in mid-January was not warranted. Chief Sylvernale had been carried away by his optimism.

When the truck did not come by the end of the month, William O’Connor was dispatched to Palmer, Massachusetts to discover the whys and wherefores. The company officials told him that the pump had been installed on the new truck and that the piping test had been done. But they could give him no assurance as to when the trucks would be delivered to Norfolk. True to their word, the delivery of the truck continued to be fudged.

Finally, the new truck arrived in town on a Saturday. The following day, Sunday, May 10, 1953, the members gathered at the fire house to inspect the new vehicle and to transfer equipment from the old truck to the new one. Leading the “seminar” were Edward Tobin, Joseph Garrity, and Sebastian “Busty” Giansiracusa who had motored to the Palmer plant a week earlier to receive instructions in the operation of the pump. During the next six months, the members of both companies familiarized themselves with the operation and functioning of the Dodge pumper.

While Chief Sylvernale dedicated a lot of time and attention to getting a new truck for the department and ultimately for the benefit of the town, he was no less solicitous about retrofitting the equipment already in use by the department and supplementing that equipment when the need arose. Early in his term, he got council approval for the purchase of lanterns to be mounted on both trucks, a fog nozzle for the booster tank on the small truck, an electrically operated siren for the small truck, and a CO₂ fire extinguisher to be mounted on one of the trucks. Shortly thereafter Sylvernale and his mentor, past Chief Griffin, urged the purchase of a portable pump out of departmental funds. They also requested the town purchase additional hose. Both the pump and hose were acquired.



NORFOLK HISTORICAL MUSEUM

L to r: 1925 Seagraves, 1927 Seagraves, 1937 Studebaker. Frank Wouri, Harold Higgins, Fred LaMothe, Tom Barry, Harold Colwell, Russell Priestley

Early in the decade of the 50's, the rank and file asked the chief to write to the firm that made the Seagrave about the cost of putting four-wheel brakes on the little truck. The following year, the Chief continued to pursue the matter with the Seagrave Company, even asking about the possibility of repairing the large truck. After reading the response letter from the company, the members decided to have the Chief arrange with a local mechanic to check the pumps and motors of both trucks and then advise the department as to the best course of action. After the trucks were checked out, the Chief reported that the large pumper could be repaired and would be out of commission for a few days. He also said it would be foolish to do anything with the small pumper because it was so old.

While the truck was out of commission for repairs, Harris Hunt lent the department his fire truck during that time. As an expression of gratitude, the secretary was instructed to send him a letter of thanks and to enclose a membership card for 1953.

The Chief was also instrumental in replacing the boots and raincoats which, according to the minutes, "...have disappeared from the firehouse."

On April 5, 1954, Walter Lambertson, among others, was accepted into the department. Lambertson brought more than interest in fire fighting to his membership. Just seven months later, Chief Sylvernale determined that both the squad car and the old fire truck needed to be repainted. Lambertson was tapped to do the job, and he completed the work a month later. (In an unintended *quid pro quo* Lambertson was indebted to the department for quickly responding to his garage fire some two years later. Regrettably his garage was totally destroyed.)

Another individual whose membership proved advantageous to his employer as well as the department was Russell Priestley. After a short hiatus, Priestley was reinstated as a member on March 6, 1949. He was an executive with the General Electric Company assigned to the Norfolk plant. Presumably he was a fine manager and administrator for GE. Indubitably he was an excellent member of the department. In addition to rising through the ranks to be elected as the Foreman of the Hook and Ladder Company, he made the GE facility available to the department for a presentation during Fire Prevention Week. He also played host to the department's members at the open house celebrating GE's first ten years in town.

Fire Chiefs Association

When the secretary of the Litchfield County Fire Chiefs Association notified the department that the association would originate and monitor a radio hook-up among all the departments in the county, the department needed to do two things. The first was to generate the money to equip the department with a radio and the second was to select a company to provide the technology.

The Motorola Company in the person of Gerald Noble made a presentation to the department about a two-way radio system. Motorola had come into prominence during World War II by supplying the communication system for the military and so was a strong contender for the business.

The General Electric Company of Windsor Locks sent Ralph Barnard and George Kemp to make a presentation to the department on the same topic but at a different meeting. A committee was empowered to choose between Motorola and General Electric. The committee, quite likely because of the local connection, chose GE.

The Committee consisting of William Tierney, Gus Curtiss, Joseph Garrity, “Busty” Giansiracusa, and Joseph Zanobi was given the green light to sign a contract with GE for the radio. The town had appropriated the sum of \$2,900.00 towards this cause and the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department was now in immediate contact with its counterparts in Litchfield County.

Joseph Garrity, Vincent Garrity, William Tierney and Dominic Zanobi went to school to learn the intricacies of the new equipment. They passed on their new-found expertise and Tierney along with Francis Hull, the Fire Marshall, were appointed as dispatchers who would operate the base station during a fire or other emergency.

Extracurricular Matters

Sylvernale’s tenure was marked by his devotion to maintaining the equipment and the department in the finest condition possible. But the mission of the department seemed to broaden during the fourteen years he spent at the helm of the department.

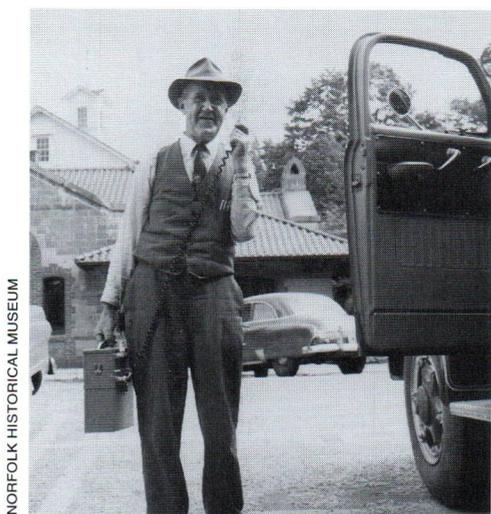
The mission of the department was captured in the very first paragraph of the original constitution: “The Volunteer Fire Department of Norfolk, in order to maintain perfect discipline, define duty, and promote the objects of saving life and property when endangered by fire, for which purpose the department was organized...” Even a strict constructionist could agree that this mission statement could incorporate fire prevention as well as fire-fighting especially in light of the duties of the Warden spelled out in the By-Laws.

A significant debate began in the department as a result of the flood of the winter of ’49-’50. The pumping out of cellars by some firemen was a cause for concern among others. The purists maintained that pumping out cellars was beyond the scope of the

department, a challenge to its integrity. Others in the department felt that the only equipment in town equal to the task was that of the department. They further argued a debt to the community since taxes had bought and paid for, in large measure, the equipment under the supervision of the department. They were not unmindful either of the contributions made to the coffers of the department in gratitude for the pumping.

The debate simmered for about five years until the great flood of 1955. This flood, unlike the previous one, was truly catastrophic. The whole array of businesses on the banks of the Blackberry River was decimated by the raging waters. Notable to the fire department was the blacksmith shop of John Blow which was washed away in the torrent. That shop was where the first Hook and Ladder truck was crafted according to the department’s archivist. Blow himself was an original member of the department and later an elected officer.

One might surmise that quibbling about the role of the department in coping with the widespread destruction and efforts to alleviate distress by pumping out cellars would make the dis-



Chief Ellis Sylvernale with new 1953 Dodge Pumper and GE portable radio

inction moot. But one would surmise wrong. The purists carried the day in the annual meeting when they secured an agreement that all money donated to the department as a result of pumping out cellars would be turned over to the Bargain Mart for flood relief. In this way victims of the flood could be served while the integrity of the mission of the department would not be sullied by accepting money for the service.

In the end a total of \$241.50 was received in donations, and this amount was turned over to the cause of flood relief. And so, tender consciences were salvaged.

But there were other tasks that were undertaken under Sylvernale's aegis that did not seem to concern the members of either stripe. For example the Chief asked for volunteers to be on duty at the concert to be held at the Music Shed on Sunday afternoon, May 27, 1951. Sufficient volunteers responded.

Members of the department were invited to attend a first-aid course sponsored by the Lions Club on Tuesday evenings in 1953 at the Congregational Chapel. Members attended. When the Norfolk Fair was held yearly, the members assisted with traffic duty.

On August 23, 1954, Augustus Curtiss, Chairman of the parade committee, asked that as many firemen as possible report to the firehouse in uniform on Saturday morning at 10:00 o'clock to help out with the pet parade at the Norfolk Old Country Fair.

At the annual meeting on September 12, 1955, a letter was read from the State Police in Canaan thanking the department for helping out in the search for Samuel Chatleton. At the same meeting, a letter was read from the Norfolk Board of Education thanking the members of the department who helped out at the graduation exercises at the Music Shed in late June.

On August 26, 1957, a communication was delivered to the members from Mary Hall who said she was deeply appreciative of the help of the department at the Norfolk Horse Show.

In January of 1958, member Francis Hull spoke about the winter carnival to be held that month on Haystack Mountain. The members voted, in response to the Hull proposal, that they would render *any assistance* they might be called to do. In June of the same year, William Manning, Principal of the Norfolk Center School, thanked the department for helping out yet again at graduation in the Music Shed and also for cleaning the sand off the schoolyard.

On May 7, 1960, Chief Sylvernale expressed his gratitude to the 20 men who were called by phone to assist in the search for some missing Girl Scouts.

In this context, suffice it to say that Chief Sylvernale saw the department as a community organization dedicated to community service. The members agreed with him, mostly. A significant and vocal group said nay to pumping out cellars.

At this time there continued to be a stream of new members. On August 23, 1954, Wesley Clements and Leo Colwell made application at the annual meeting. Their names were sent on to the Council who confirmed them in membership three months later. Three months after that the minutes record that the members voted to let the committee for Leo Colwell's stag party use the club for card playing following the dinner. New members joined and solid traditions were maintained.

Retirement

At the Council meeting on August 15, 1960, Sylvernale announced reluctantly that he would not stand for reelection. After his fourteen years of steady service in the leadership position, the

members were confronted with finding among their number a suitable replacement — no easy task.

It is not difficult to characterize Sylvernale's contributions to the department and to the community. He was cut from the same mold as Edmund Brown and John Griffin. But he left his own distinctive stamp upon the Norfolk department.

First of all he was a consummate fireman. Though a volunteer, he was a thorough professional. He knew that firefighting was dangerous and he embraced that peril. He also knew limits and embraced prudence. He insisted, for example, that any man going into a burning house wearing a gas mask should also have some sort of a line, either a hose or rope, to ensure his safety.

Ellis Sylvernale was also a man's man. He thoroughly enjoyed the male companionship that membership in the department afforded. He was not immune to the pomp and circumstance of a well-turned out company on parade.

The Chief was well respected in the town and the community. The people of Norfolk realized the department was in good hands and had a solid future. They invested in the department — their good will and their money. Bequests were made like the one from Mabel Cowles Collar who left the sum of five hundred dollars "...to be used for the general purposes of said department." To the chief and to his assistants were left the choice specifics, so much faith did Collar and others like her have in them.

Sylvernale looked to the future of the department. He put his and the department's best foot forward when fire drills were held at the Center School. The early impressions that the fireman made he knew would produce firemen and auxiliaries in the coming years. He also oversaw an essay contest on fire prevention and praised the winners: Grade 8, Orson Benedict and Richard Benedict; Grade 7, William Moersch and Daniel Ostapko; Grade 6, Brian Madison and Sally Carr; Grade 5, Sandra Reid and Sylvia McLellan; and Grade 4, Deborah Marchand and Maureen Collar.

Sylvernale was a fraternity brother, not in the collegiate sense, but in the sense that familial bonds had to unite the firemen so they could trust one another with their lives when their "profession" proved only too dangerous. He promoted the teamwork of the two departmental baseball teams and praised their victories at a party in celebration. He knew instinctively that his men needed to be thanked for their duty so he sought every opportunity to parade the companies before the public so that they could be applauded for their work and their sacrifice. In this regard, he led his men every year in the Memorial Day parade in Norfolk and even traveled to Pittsfield annually to receive the plaudits of a larger audience.

In the same context, there was one event, which gave him particular pleasure, and that was the annual outing held in late August at the Norfolk Downs Shelter. When more than 100 members and guests attended, he was in his element. (Norfolk Downs was a country club founded by the Eldridge sisters whose father was the local minister. The Downs was closed on Sunday because they considered it bad form to play on Sunday. Another group in town with a more liberal lifestyle created a new country club next to Norfolk Downs. The latter survived handsomely; the former has fallen victim to time and undergrowth).

When it came to duty though, Ellis Sylvernale was tough. He banned Christmas trees in public buildings, allowing only live trees with root balls attached. He reprimanded the members

for not turning out in sufficient numbers for a fire in Canaan. He was embarrassed for himself and for the department because the Canaan Fire Department had earlier sent 15 men to help out at the Dave Curtiss fire. He was so furious at non-members chasing the fire apparatus to fires that he arranged for the secretary to write to the Chesire Reformatory about plates for members' cars. He had to settle for a commercial company because the reformatory only made plates for the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles.

He was a prideful man, never more proud than in the year of his retirement when Ellis Sylvernale, Jr. joined the department together with Philip Byrne and Kevin O'Connor.

No more fitting and splendid tribute could be paid to Chief Ellis Sylvernale than the one penned by his daughter, Carol Sylvernale O'Brien. Those who served with him and under him share her sentiments.

If anyone should ask me when my father, Ellis Sylvernale, became fire chief of Norfolk I would have to say I have no idea.

He was always a volunteer fireman as far as I know except during World War I when he left Norfolk to serve with the United States Army until he returned to Norfolk where he spent the rest of his life.

He had joined the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department as soon as he was old enough. He once told me that one of his first paying jobs, writing Norfolk news for the daily Winsted Evening Citizen, ended abruptly when the editor learned he had been so busy fighting a fire that he had neglected to call the paper.

By the time I was midway through Norfolk Center School, I had become, sometimes embarrassingly, aware that he was chief.

At that time fire destroyed an abandoned farmhouse in South Norfolk. As firemen fought the blaze it came under question as to whether the tall chimney would fall. My father reportedly said "Aha, that chimney won't fall."

But it did although causing no harm.

Many of my classmates' fathers were firemen and I can only speculate the chimney must have been a hot topic around supper tables that night. The next day and for many days thereafter, some classmate would chant, to subsequent laughter, "And the chief said 'That chimney won't fall'."

My father was fire chief for many years after that. He loved the camaraderie of the department, the card games in the club rooms in the Arcanum Building, the rallies, the parades and the annual firemen's picnic at "The Shelter" on the Old Norfolk Downs golf course.

His frequent attendance at the annual Fourth of July Firemen's Muster in Pittsfield at times caused him to miss the annual picnic of his wife Evelyn Bruey Sylvernale's family in South Norfolk attended by descendants of her father, prominent dairy farmer Frank Bruey.

The seriousness of my father's job as fire chief was never far from him. His firefighting raincoat and boots were always by the back door.

Every winter snowstorm or predicted storm meant a trip to the firehouse to make certain the trucks had chains on.

One extremely cold winter night firemen were called to a house fire on the west side

of town. As always, my father answered the alarm. About an hour later he returned covered with ice from head to the toes of his boots. With my mother's assistance, he removed some ice on the back porch and then climbed into a tub of hot water to remove the rest. He then dressed in dry clothes and returned to the fire where he stayed through the night.

Dad remained fire chief until his eyesight began to leave him. He resigned as chief and as an active fireman. However, his interest in all things to do with the volunteer department never waned.



GARRITY, O'CONNOR, WOMENS AUXILIARY: *A Paradigm Shift*

"I will follow the right side even to the fire, but excluding the fire if I can."

Montaigne

The Norfolk History (Waldecker) tackled the manufacturing history of the town at one point. It said that the only plant left from the 1800's was the GE site. It also mentioned that one of the larger manufacturing concerns started in 1850 was the Norfolk Woolen Mill which was "...located where the Garritys now live." In 1975, the home of the Garrity family was well known and so became a marker for the readers who had no idea where the Woolen Mill was located. It seems that the author did not realize that, some twenty-five years hence, some readers would not know the Garritys and those that did could but dimly recall a family, who at the time, made a deep impact on the town and its culture.

John Blow, blacksmith and farrier, had a shop just off Blackberry Place. His daughter Katherine married John Garrity who inherited the smithy from his father-in-law. He in turn trained his two sons, Vincent and Joseph, in the trade. There is also another aspect to his family tree. John Blow was an original member and officer of the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department, and he passed on the tradition of membership and service in the department especially to his grandsons.

Katherine Garrity was thoroughly involved in important town affairs. She, along with Mary Hall, directed the annual horse show on the John J. Curtiss land on Lover's Lane. She was an accomplished and versatile pianist who played for the minstrel shows when they were politically correct and also accompanied local songstresses who performed in the Village Opera House. She was a charter member of the Norfolk Cancer Committee who assisted townspeople who were afflicted with the disease.

Not only was Katherine Garrity a pianist of distinction, she often sang at affairs put on by the Catholic Women's Club and was a soloist in the church. When she sang the Ave Maria at High Mass in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, hearts would melt. This testimony came from a parishioner not easily moved. The Garrity Orchestra with Katherine at the piano and John playing the fiddle and doing the calling performed at square dances throughout the region. They were especially popular over the state line into New York.

Although the Garrity boys inherited their father's business, they did not share their parents' deep involvement in music. Joseph inherited his father's athleticism and became a stellar third baseman for Winsted in the Tri-State League. There was a settled conviction in town at this time that Joe could have played in the major leagues had his father, a strict disciplinarian, allowed him to try out for the Red Sox. Even after his playing days were over, Joe continued to coach in the Babe Ruth League. Ed Kelley still reports with awe young Garrity's prowess at bat and in the field.

It might be trite to say that Fenway Park's loss was Norfolk's gain. But sometimes banalities disguise the truth. In fact and in effect, Joseph Garrity was chosen by the department to become

the chief and follow in the footsteps of Sylvernale, Griffin and Brown. The question was: would he be in their league?

The election of Garrity to be the chief was by no means a foregone conclusion. At the August 19, 1960 meeting, a great deal of time was spent putting together a slate of officers for the coming year. With the stellar example of Sylvernale's tenure fresh in their minds, the members used his accomplishments as the criteria for the next set of officers. Just three days later at the annual meeting, the elections were held and the elected slate was made public.

Chief – Joseph Garrity
1st Assistant Chief – Howard Caul
2nd Assistant Chief – Wallace Hotchkiss
Secretary – Ellis Sylvernale
Treasurer – Thomas Barry
Engineer – Vincent Garrity
Physician – Dr. Frank Ursone

With this election, Howard Caul was to begin his final year of service as an assistant chief in the department. Since he proved to be another example of distinguished longevity in the department, Francis Hull, the Fire Marshall and successor to Russell Priestly at the GE Plant, called for a rising vote of thanks from the members in honor of Caul when this dedicated fireman finally put his uniform in the closet.

Garrity took the department back to the fundamentals before impressing it with his distinctive stamp. He was instrumental in proposing Joseph Zanobi, Thomas Barry and Ellis Sylvernale to serve on a committee to prepare a revised set of By-Laws. He announced that a training session would be held at the Fire School in Burrville in the spring of '62. He reported on the installation of a new siren in early fall of the same year. He led the discussion in September on the condition of the 1927 Seagrave. The discussion reached agreement that the three chiefs draft a letter to the Selectmen to have the matter of a new truck placed on the Call of the Town Meeting.

He led a team who volunteered to attend a Radiological Survey School in Torrington. In addition to himself, the team consisted of Martin Andrews, Harry Brogen, Jr., Robert Nay, Dave Moore, and Paul Zucco.

Perhaps the two most significant achievements of Joseph Garrity as chief were his interest in securing a new fire truck for the department and his involvement in the plans for a new firehouse. The need for a new firehouse was a constant in previous administrations, but it became absolutely critical during Garrity's tenure.

He first addressed the issue of a new firehouse by brainstorming a session as to means of securing sufficient money to construct a building that would meet the department's needs. These suggestions were made: an auction, a raffle, a beneficiary of the town Planning Commission, Urban Renewal, and Plan 701. And as usual, a committee was established to do a feasibility study. On that committee sat Chief Garrity, Joseph Zanobi, Wallace Hotchkiss, Donald Hannafin, William Tierney, and Peter Mulville.

Perhaps Garrity's most signal achievement was spearheading the move to acquire a new truck. The call for a new fire truck was placed on the agenda for a town meeting at which Garrity persuaded the townsmen and the selectmen of the need for a new truck. The town funded it, the

department drew up the specifications, the contract was let, and in the course of time (1963) the new truck was delivered. It was displayed to the townspeople on September 7, 1963. It was the American La France. There was an immediate need for a shelter for the La France because the newly-acquired truck would not fit in the Arcanum firehouse.

The La France was put in an old barn belonging to the Brown Company located at the corner of John J. Curtiss Road and Emerson Street, the foundations of which are still in evidence. But it was still a barn, and being a barn, was unheated. So the committee was given a newer and lesser charge, to wit, to plan for a heating system for the "new firehouse." The committee followed up on that charge.

Of course the firehouse in the Arcanum Building was retained. Actually the subsidiary building was serendipitously placed. When the siren sounded, the truck pulled out of its corner location up to the front of the Arcanum where the firemen had gathered and there they climbed on board.

Needless to say, the department was very proud of the La France. Shortly after it was acquired, the members, conscious of some past neglect, voted to have the truck inspected twice a year. The department was mindful of the appearance of the truck and the fact that it would have to endure for some time. They arranged for Colonel Day to take pictures of the new truck. Day contributed the pictures of the truck to the department and the members.

Not merely satisfied with the appearance of the new truck, Garrity instructed the members to drain all the pumps after each fire so they would not be damaged by freezing. He fielded complaints from the members and led the discussion resolving two of the three burning issues. The first complaint had to do with the drivers being precipitous; they left for a fire too quickly stranding some members at the station. Agreement was reached that the truck would stop after pulling out of the firehouse so the firemen could get on the truck. The norm was to be that the truck could not leave for a fire without at least five firemen on board.

The second complaint came from the officers. It seems there was some recalcitrance at the fire scene. So it was resolved that when an officer gave an order at a fire, the men were to respect that order and carry it out.

The third complaint that Garrity fielded from both the officers and the men was the perennial complaint that non-firemen were rushing to the fire scene and impeding the efforts of the department. No solution could be found.

Like Sylvernale, Garrity made sure that the equipment was always in good order. When the Dodge showed signs of wear and tear, he had it taken down and returned with a new tank and springs. When a problem arose with Ann's Nursery and the siren, he dispatched Francis Hull up to Terrace View. Hull conducted a class for the staff and the difficulty was cleared up. When the radio system began to grow obsolete, he saw Mr. Leach about getting matching funds from the Civil Defense for a new radio. He maintained the drills for the members to keep them up to speed.

A variety of other issues came before the department and Garrity exercised leadership in dealing with them judiciously. There was, however, one exception to the direction he imparted to the department. There was agitation for a Women's Auxiliary. Formerly the department had relied on the American Legion to provide coffee and other sustenance when fighting a fire went into a long and bitter night. Most members preferred this *quid pro quo* with the department

reciprocating by marching in the Legion-sponsored Memorial Day parade. (The bonds with the American Legion were strong. John Garrity was a charter member of the Legion, Ellis Sylvernale was its first adjutant, and J. Vincent Garrity was an officer as well.)

On April 6, 1964, a resolution was placed on the agenda of the department's meeting calling for the establishment of a Women's Auxiliary for the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department. The resolution was soundly defeated. Women's participation in the affairs of the department was not an idea whose time had come, at least not on Station Place. Garrity could not be credited with breaking the gender line.

A new doctor came to town, a Doctor Joseph Vance, who took up residence on Colebrook Road. He was actively interested in the Fire Department and volunteered his services. There was some delicacy in availing themselves of his offer because Dr. Frank Ursone had been such a staunch member and officer for a long period of time. The department decided to tread lightly until events would obviate the need for diplomacy and tact.

Garrity saw to it that the clubroom could be used by the Norfolk Trout Club, thus cementing relations with that segment of Norfolkkians who fished the town's streams.

At the meeting of May 3, 1965, Wallace Hotchkiss reported that the department would attend parades during the summer months at the following towns: Norfolk, New Hartford, Litchfield, Canaan, Sharon, and Falls Village.

It was at this same meeting that Martin O'Connor, who had let his membership lapse, was reinstated.

While Garrity was chief, he made it clear that expenses made by the department for essential items should, in his mind, be paid for by the town. In early 1965 he signaled his intention to purchase new hose for the trucks but said that this purchase would have to go to the town's Board of Finance for approval and funding. The following month the Board gave that approval. It now became obvious that the department was growing more dependent upon the township for covering expenses while reserving its own monies against the erection of a new firehouse.

Retirement for Garrity

During the five years that Joseph Garrity served as chief he maintained the solid traditions that were firmly established by Brown, Griffin and Sylvernale before him. Although he was not by nature or necessity an innovator, he did keep a fairly steady hand on the tiller.

He looked askance at kids in the clubroom. He made sure that the members continued to be well trained using the facilities in Burrville and at Bradley Field.

He was particular about equipment securing, for example, a bell for the Scout Pack. He promoted the participation of the department in parades whether on Memorial Day in Norfolk or in neighboring towns.

He oversaw some significant fundraisers, namely, a circus, a horse show, and a number of raffles. The object of the fundraisers was, of course, to further a cause that was nearest to his heart — the building of a new firehouse that would house the trucks, the equipment, a repair shop, and a clubroom.

He approved Sid Toomey's recommendation to the department. Toomey's wife was named, delightfully, Merry. He was the resident trooper and longtime fireman. He said the drivers should obey laws of the highway and set an example for the other drivers on the road.

When his terms in office were over and Wallace Hotchkiss, his first assistant, took over, Garrity continued to play a role in the department as did his brother. Vincent was also a committed fireman serving as an officer, dues collector, and supporter of his brother's policies and practices.

Those who knew Chief Garrity liked and admired the man, especially the members of the department. Townspeople still speak of his extracurricular activities like coaching the Norfolk Babe Ruth Team. They speak of his being in his element on the diamond and how he would take the players for ice cream after practice and after games.

But there was something melancholy as well about his department. Perhaps because he was never able to test his skills in major league play, he was left with a residual sadness. It could be that he had a Hamlet-like dissatisfaction with life as he found it. Or maybe he just had a sense of foreboding about the end of it all.

The historian of Norfolk tells how his mother was a founder of the town's Cancer Society. She too was prescient. Not only did she die of this disease, so did her husband and so, with deep regret, did Joseph and Vincent some years later. Neither left survivors.

At the annual meeting on August 22, 1966, the following slate of officers were elected:

Chief: Wallace Hotchkiss, Jr.
1st Assistant Chief: William Adrian Tierney
2nd Assistant Chief: Edwin Kelley
Treasurer: T. L. Barry
Secretary: Kevin O'Connor
Engineer: Joseph Garrity
Physician: Dr. F.W. Ursone
Hose Company Foreman: Donald Hannafin
Assistant Foreman: D. Zanobi
Secretary: Larry Hannafin
Warden: Ed Wuori
Hook and Ladder Foreman: J. Martin
Assistant Foreman: Vincent Garrity
Secretary: George Christinat
Warden: Fred Currier

Curiously enough, the meetings of the department were called to order by the presiding officer, first assistant Chief W. Adrian Tierney, in October, November and December. The meeting in January was called by Second Assistant Edwin Kelley. There was some question as to whether Hotchkiss was equal to the responsibility he had assumed but the members determined to allow him to stay on as chief.

Hotchkiss did preside at the meeting in March of 1967, but he had to report that the Board of Finance was not willing to assume the cost of the rental of the clubrooms nor the expense for the new hose. So the department had to tap its own funds. George Carr suggested that the clubroom in the Arcanum be vacated and offered the use of a Brown Company building for \$50.00 a month in its place. He thought too that the department could use the Town Hall for meetings at no cost to the department.

Although there was a motion made at this meeting to take the money made from the circus (\$607.00) and put it into a special building fund, it was voted down but the issue was joined.

The Arcanum was inadequate and too expensive. Another site had to be found and a committee was established to look into the feasibility of building a new firehouse and clubroom.

At the same meeting, dissatisfaction with the officers surfaced. A motion was made and seconded that a Board of Trustees be appointed to reorganize the department. Appointed to that Board were Francis Hull, Joseph Zanobi, and Henry Dodd, three roundly respected members of the department and citizens of the town.

The Board was also instructed to oversee the present officers of the department but were not to take action against any member without first reporting to the membership at large.

This shot across the bow seemed, in general, to have a beneficial effect. The matters routine to the department were carried out. For example, Ann's Nursery was having another problem with the fire phone and Phil Byrne and Ed Kelley were deputed to attend to it. The wardens were reminded to take care of the equipment and after each fire to check the trucks to see that everything was in a state of readiness for the next call. Joseph Pallone was enjoined to buy paint for the men to paint the clubrooms.

One unfortunate result of the unsettled conditions was the resignation of William Adrian Tierney as first assistant chief. His services were important and he was importuned to withdraw his request and the members tabled the matter until the next meeting. Eventually Tierney's request and resignation were honored.

(William Adrian Tierney died ten months before the centennial could be celebrated. In his latter years he ran the Flower Box, the town florist shop. Before that he was a merchant selling radios and televisions. In addition, he was a charter member of the Lions Club. As an outstanding and prominent member of the community, his presence is sorely missed.)

Hotchkiss was well intentioned but was over-extended and could not keep up with the demands of the department, his other activities, and his work. So he gave up the post after one year.

O'Connor Elected

In 1967, Martin O'Connor was elected to succeed Hotchkiss. Ted Wuori was elected as second assistant chief and Mike Mulville took over Joe Garrity's slot as engineer. Here is the full slate of officers officially recorded:

Chief – Martin O'Connor
1st Assistant Chief – Edwin Kelley
2nd Assistant Chief – Ted Wouri
Treasurer – Thomas L. Barry
Secretary – Kevin O'Connor
Engineer – Mike Mulville
Physician – Dr. Frank Ursone

February 5, 1968 was a red-letter day for the department. Richard Byrne was voted in and his beneficent influence on the affairs of the department is felt to the



NATHAN TSUKROFF

Chief Martin O'Connor

centennial. In just two years time, he became a Warden.

Just two years into the time of Chief O'Connor, the department suffered a grievous loss. Early

in 1969, Dr. Frank Ursone, who had served the department sociably and selflessly, passed away. There were two quick reminders of his worth. His widow asked that the fire phone be removed from her house and Philip Byrne had to call upon Dr. Vance to conduct the physical appointments for the members.

The relationship between the town's doctors was always profound. The benchmark was established by Frank Ursone who was a regular officer of the department. As has been noted, he had a phone placed in his home-office to field fire emergency calls. Dr. Vance who lived on Colebrook Rd. was similarly committed. When Dr. Nason Hamlin set up practice in the mid-seventies, he agreed to supply physicals to new members of the department, free of charge. That valuable service he continued to provide as long as he was in practice. Later still, physicals were given by a Hutterite doctor.

Scandal

In the third year of O'Connor's tenure, a scandal happened when an officer, between audits, "borrowed" money from the department's treasury. Once again the members of the department were outraged because the basic trust that should be inviolate among the members of a fire department had been violated.

After the matter of the missing funds had been discussed and the town auditor had reviewed the books, Philip Byrne entered a motion, seconded by Peter Mulville, that the department would prosecute but would recommend leniency to the Court if the monies stolen were returned in a cash payment within sixty days of the meeting. That resolution, firm if not fierce, represented the anger of the department. The leniency provision argued of course for the humanity of the department.

Slightly over two months after this resolution was passed, word was received that the matter could be resolved. The Chief was deputed to authorize a release that would be delivered upon receipt of a valid check to the amount of \$2,260.99 payable to the department. The check was received and the release was issued. The matter was thus brought to closure, but it left scars on the department. Not only had the fabric of trust been breached, a matter of principle, but the money embezzled had been destined for the fund for the erection of the new and desperately needed firehouse on Shepard Road. When that building was completed, there would no longer be a need for the members to shovel out the La France in its Emerson Street barn nor for Joseph Pallone to shovel out the Dodge. Winter storms, then and now, create problems for the department.

Firehouse

In 1969, the selectmen decided to build a new firehouse to house the equipment and to provide a meeting place for the firemen. They were motivated to do so because "a reorganization of the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Company (sic) has been carried out, and it is now under vigorous new leadership."

In a letter to the townspeople, Robert H. Mead said that the firehouse would be designed by Russell Coffin Childs and would be economical, "no frills," and with a distinction that would spring from the simplicity and ingenuity of its design.

The letter also said that the cost of the firehouse — seventy-five thousand dollars — would

not be added to the tax burden but would be by public subscription. The fund raising committee was a cross section of influential members of the community:

Robert H. Mead, *Chairman*
Walter Allyn, *Selectman*
A. Eugene Billings, *Citizen*
Ernest Blanchard, *Fire Department Trustee*
John J. Curtiss, *Selectman*
Francis M. Dooley, *Counsel*
Vincent Garrity, *Selectman*
Edwin Kelley, *Fire Department Member*
Martin O'Connor, *Fire Department Chief*
Edward J. Quinlan, *Counsel*
Abel I. Smith, Jr., *Citizen*
Earle Smith, *Citizen*
Ellis Sylvernale, *Fire Department Trustee*
Jeremiah J. Torrant, *Citizen*
Edward Wuori, *Fire Department Member*
Joseph Zanobi, *Fire Department Trustee*

In an interim report to the townspeople, Mead mentioned that half of the money, forty thousand dollars, had been raised including three thousand dollars raised by the firemen themselves. He urged the citizens to come forward, be generous, and contribute another forty thousand for what he described as “this vital civic improvement.”

Eventually the total amount was realized, but the money that the firemen raised had not found its way into the coffers of the Building Committee. Because it had served its purpose, the building committee was dissolved and, in the opinion of the selectmen, the administration of the remaining funds reverted to the selectmen.

To extract the \$3,700.00 from the department, Robert E. Barrett, Chairman of the Finance Board, wrote a brisk letter to Chief Martin O'Connor calling for an immediate transfer of that money to the town treasurer.

The only ameliorating facet of the letter was the last sentence saying they could make “suggestions” regarding the disposition of that money. Quite obviously, the department was hoping to sequester that money and spend it on unanticipated expenses for the new firehouse, but it was found out by the sharp-eyed finance board.

In any event, the new fire house came into being on a plot of land belonging to the town at the north end of the Town Meadow on Shepard Road. It was a simple building, flat-roofed, unpretentious — a barn for the men and the trucks.

On October 9, 1967, with O'Connor in the chair, a letter was read from the Brass City Detachment asking the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department to participate in the support of “our men in Vietnam.” Strangely, unlike WWI, II and the Korean Conflict, this was the only mention of the impact on the department of the tumultuous sixties. The other order of business for that meeting seemed anticlimactic. It notified the members that on the first of October, all firemen would be covered by Workmen's Compensation.

At a meeting on October 8, 1968, a motion was made and seconded that the department accept a 1953 Dodge Tanker from the Dodd Oil Company. It was not immediately obvious to the officers and members that this vehicle had been hard used for thirteen years. Rather they were hopeful that this truck would satisfy a need. That this decision was another triumph of hope over experience became painfully evident the following April when the garage submitted its estimate cost of repairs. The "new" tanker truck was too expensive to be fixed.

The first evidence that Martin O'Connor was gaining a firm control of the department came in June of 1970. Less than three years after being first elected, O'Connor sponsored a motion that all active members of the fire department be required to attend ten of the twelve regular meetings and/or monthly practices or the members would be subject to suspension. He was reasserting a provision in the By-Laws which had fallen into disuse.

This motion passed and it signaled a sea change in the department. Rigor and discipline were to be the order of the day and conviviality was to find its proper place.

Four years into his term of office, the issue of sponsorship of the Boy Scouts came up again. And again, at a regular meeting, the department saw no need to respond to that request and turned down the onus as well as the benefits of a youth group involved with the department. In a similar vein, the department held a discussion on forming a Women's Auxiliary. The discussion remained a discussion, never rising to the level of a motion with an aye or nay vote. Unlike the matter of Boy Scouts, which was viewed negatively, the matter of the Women's Auxiliary was left in limbo. Opposition was softening.

A rather nebulous entry in the recorded minutes for the meeting held in September 1971 tells of a letter read by Chief O'Connor from the Director of the Yale School of Music. The first part of the letter detailed the insurance coverage of the Yale School property. The second part of the letter recounted "...the lack of efficiency of the Fire Department's response to the siren." The third part of the letter was a request from the director asking that he meet with the department regarding the placement of Plectrons in the homes of firemen. Such details as the cost of these primitive electronic devices were not contained in the letter, but an alternative to the siren was being proposed. Those details were worked out and just two months later it was decided that Plectrons would go into the homes of firemen who lived outside the center of town.

In 1970 Alan Redford joined the department. Just one year later he was handed the responsibility for developing a system whereby the drivers of the equipment would fill out applications and take the tests to secure their truck driving licenses from the State Motor Vehicle Department. O'Connor was quick to recognize willing and talented members like Redford and give them responsibility for the effective running of the department.

The Auxiliary

The membership under O'Connor was alert to opportunities as well. Living in the downtown environs of Norfolk was the Society of Brothers (Bruderhof). A significant number of strong and thoughtful men appeared to be likely candidates for membership in the department. An advantage of having them on board was that they would be in town and available during the day. So an invitation to the Society of Brothers was extended and a few of their brothers joined and participated. True to their religious convictions, they were willing to serve but not to be honored by



L to r: Mary Janssen, Polly Millard, Barbara Kelley, 1976

office or preference. The outreach to the Brothers was real and significant. Even more real and significant, and as later history would prove, another outreach action was taken of even greater import. With great simplicity the minutes recorded this momentous decision: "Motion was made to invite the women to form an auxiliary, motion seconded, some discussion followed, and all present voted in favor of the idea."

From this day forward and at the very outset, membership in the Women's Auxiliary was to be no sinecure merely serving coffee and other comestibles to the firemen at the fire scene. They were uni-

formed, they were fundraisers, they organized, and they marched in parades. Their vital presence as an integral part of the department became a constant through the years — culminating in their slightly changed status at the time of the centennial.

On September 11, 1972 letters were sent to former chief Joseph Garrity (1921-1980) and to his brother, Vincent, placing them on the veterans' list. This action was symbolic. An older order was passing away.

Early in December 1971, Ron Zanobi's application for membership was approved — a good omen. The Zanobi family tradition was to continue. An even better omen was a topic that was raised for discussion, namely, a lowering of membership age from 21 years to 18. In March of 1973 that earlier discussion bore fruit. A resolution was passed to change the membership age down to the threshold of eighteen. The membership committee was cautioned to closely monitor the applicants from that young, three-year age group.

The effect of the determination was to encourage new blood into the organization. As a result of what some construed as a draconian decision, membership in the department was halved in a matter of a couple of months. The decision by O'Connor to ban fermented beverages from the clubroom caused forty plus members to resign. The mass defection did not dismay O'Connor. He saw it transforming the organization from a club to a department, a lean but not mean department, and one which would exhibit the discipline and training of a professional fire-fighting unit.

Ambulance and Department

A recurring issue related to fire trucks and members cars surfaced again during O'Connor's period as chief. A fire at Mike Mulville's and the traffic congestion there sparked a discussion as to where the men should park their cars. The chief said a motion and formal vote was not needed. Rather he requested that all the members agree and abide by a consensus to park on the same side of the street.

In the winter of 1981, David Godding was sent as a delegate to a meeting with the ambulance squad. He told them that the fire department now had a policy of rolling on all auto accidents

and requested that ambulance squad to roll on all structure fires. They agreed. They also agreed to abide by the fire department's policy to park on the same side of the road at the scene of a fire or accident. In like fashion, the fire police gave traffic preference to the ambulance.

The Norfolk Lions Club in 1951 adopted as its principal mission the establishment of an ambulance service for the town. From that time it has purchased the ambulances and provided a budget for their maintenance as well as ancillary expenses. The ambulance corps members also raise money to complement the Lions Club contributions.

The ambulance service existed cheek by jowl with the fire department over the years enjoying independent existences and frequent cooperative ventures in a spirit of harmony. This spirit is quite unlike that of the relationship that exists in other towns which not infrequently degenerates into a spirit of rivalry.

For example, the Lions Club made a request to the fire department for use of a bay in the firehouse for the ambulance while renovations were being made to the ambulance garage. This request was approved by the firemen on August 2, 1976. Three years later the ambulance was still in that bay and Steve Janssen made a motion, which was approved, to request the Lions Club to remove its ambulance from the fire department premises. The overstayed welcome strained the relationship but did not cause a divorce.

In 1979 the members voted to respond to all car accidents. That resolution took effect immediately and a truck would join the ambulance at the scene of the accident. The fire department also joined the ambulance crew at Campbell Falls to rescue people who had fallen while climbing the rocks. Edwin Kelley found the firemen's efforts to be lacking and called for more training on rescue. Kelley's plea did not go unheard. Early the next summer, the department agreed to pay for any and all volunteers to take a professional course and to pay as well for five members of the ambulance corps. There was a handsome number of volunteers and Dave Byrne reported on the effectiveness of the course to the members at the next monthly meeting. Dave Byrne was not a member of the department but was the medium through which the program was obtained.

During the O'Connor years and at his urging the members became very conscious of the need for training. They were persuaded to willingly attend classes at the Burrville Training School and to participate in the departmental practice sessions held each month. Some members even seized the advantage of extra classes being held in neighboring fire departments.

Mail

To catch the flavor of the O'Connor years, it might be useful to sample some of the mail that arrived in the department during that time. The variety of demands upon the officers and men is illustrated by this correspondence.

December 11, 1970. A copy of a letter sent to the Board of Selectman from Vollmer Associates signed by Russell C. Childs detailing the expenditure of funds in excess of the proposed basic cost figure of \$79,000 for the erection of the new fire house. Extra work under the contract from contingency funds amounted to \$2,229.92 while extra work beyond the contract amounted to \$574.92.

January 28, 1971. A letter from attorney Francis M. Dooley seeking closure to a case involving maladministration of funds.

October 14, 1972. A note of appreciation from the secretary of the Canaan Fire Company "...for the help your men extended to us on the Canfield Hotel fire." Robert B. Finney went on to say that "...had it not been for Mutual Aid, I don't think we could have held the fire."

August 16, 1974. A copy of a letter of intent sent to the Oren Roanoke Corporation by John J. Curtiss informing that company that with the approval of a town meeting the town will authorize the purchase of an Oren Model R-300 Custom Canopy Cab Forward Triple Combination Pumping Engine.

August 6, 1975. Three copies of Disability Claims lodged with the Connecticut State Firemen's Association on behalf of Stephen R. Christinat, Philip C. Byrne and Gregory H. Quinlan who suffered injuries during a training exercise at the Botelle School. Quinlan's claim reads as follows: "At a training session on an aluminum ladder with two (2) other members and a charged hose. Nozzle became stuck. Training officer proceeded to climb ladder. The ladder collapsed when he climbed over me halfway up the ladder." Byrne's claim notes that he fell approximately twenty-five feet landing on the asphalt and suffering a severely fractured foot.

June 29, 1977. A note, addressed to "Dear Marty," from Mrs. Edward (Pat) Quinlan, a director of senior housing in Norfolk. She said that some tenants at Meadowbrook have a fear of fire and asked the chief to schedule a fire drill at the complex.

November 15, 1976. A letter to the "Fire Chief" from Allen R. Johnson of the law offices of Tate, Capasse and Johnson in Westport who was representing the Aluminum Ladder Company in connection with a claim filed by Philip Byrne. The letter contained a list of demands made of the fire chief and was composed about eighteen months after the accident. The lawyer closed his letter by calling on the fire chief for an "...early response to this letter."

Shortly after the accident, O'Connor responded to a reporter's question about the liability and expense associated with the incident by saying: "The insurance will take care of everything. We will just have to get another ladder. This is one of those things that happen." O'Connor's cavalier response surely suffered reconsideration when he received the Johnson letter for this letter called upon O'Connor to help determine "...the nature and extent of any and all repairs that may have been made to this ladder," to assure the attorney whether or not the ladder had been subjected to intense heat from its use in any fire, and to prepare the department's records for inspection by the lawyer of his representative concerning the use of the ladder from the time it came into the department's possession.

February 11, 1977. A "Speed Letter" from Timothy Cocker, a representative of the insurance firm Crawford and Company who were the adjusters for Aetna. The letter was sent to Chief O'Connor (sic) asking him to call and set up a date for the inspection of the ladder from the 1964 American La France fire truck involved in the accident some twenty-one months earlier.

March 25, 1977. Another "Speed Letter" from Timothy Cocker to O'Connor asking the name of the lab in East Hartford where the ladder had been sent or the whereabouts of the ladder so that it could be inspected.

January 18, 1977. A letter addressed to Fred Lang, secretary of the NVFD, asking for an estimate of the cost to replace the ladder involved in the training accident similar in size and quality. The letter was signed by Laurence Hannafin, a representative of the Higgins Agency on Beacon Lane in Norfolk.

May 23, 1975. A letter from William F. Russell of Moss Hill in Norfolk addressed to "Martin"

telling him that he was enclosing copies of a regular letter and a speed letter from Clarke A. Palmer, the representative of Gowans Knight Co., Inc. The copies inform Russell that the Oren Roanoke Corporation has deleted the no-spin rear axle, for a savings of \$250.00. The axle designation would remain the same — Timken Rockwell R-140, 24,000 lb. capacity, single reduction. The contract price now came in at \$61,360.00.

Although Palmer also requested lettering information for the truck, he did not have a delivery commitment date.

June 28, 1975. A note was received from the Kelemen family commiserating with the chief about the accident at the school and enclosing a check for fifty dollars "...to make the lives of the injured members from this accident a little more cheerful."

October 23, 1975. A letter addressed to Philip Byrne from John L. Rutledge of Laurel Way Extension in Norfolk having to do with what he termed a rather serious woods fire. "Although most of the fire area was on land of Happy Hamilton Egler," he went on to say, "about 4 acres of my woods were burnt." By way of appreciation he enclosed a contribution to the department.

October 16, 1972. A letter from John Pozzi, Plant Manager of Pfizer located on Daisy Hill Road in Canaan, enclosing a check and acknowledging the role that the Norfolk Department played in extinguishing the fire at the plant. "Without the prompt response and good thinking on the part of the firefighter," he said, "we undoubtedly would have lost the production facilities housed in the main building." (Pfizer now makes an expensive, very popular, blue pill.)

By the time the letter was written, the trauma of the fire must have worn off because Pozzi concluded with some gentle joking. "It was good to know that volunteer fire companies, who we normally get to know as competitors, can really join in concerted effort to do the job they're trained for. That night (of the fire) your efforts were coordinated."

January 11, 1977. A resolution from the Board of Directors of the Norfolk Senior Housing Corporation (Meadowbrook) which called for "(thanks to) be spread upon the minutes of the meeting...and a copy thereof be sent to the Norfolk Fire Department for their prompt response on December 14, 1976, to the emergency created by the bursting of the large water main in the basement, and for their devoted efforts in removing the water and thereby saving the Corporation from possible damage to the boilers and elevator as well as preventing further damage to property of the tenants."

July 12, 1977. A letter addressed to the "Firemen" from Mary Ann McGourty that conveyed a verbal "pat on the back." Mrs. McGourty wrote, "Last Saturday night I witnessed your performance in fighting the fire at Mrs. Green's barn, and I was most impressed. I know how quickly you answered the call (seven minutes from alert to arrival), because the alarm was sounded by a passing motorist who stopped to use our telephone."

(The "seven minutes" did not mean that the truck broke the speed limit. A recent test showed that with two minutes to get the truck rolling, it was five minutes from firehouse to fire averaging 40 miles per hour.)

July 10, 1977. A note from Marion Q. Green addressed to "Chief Marty" with gratitude to the department. She said that the work they did in saving her home was really a miracle.

July 22, 1977. A letter from Keith Wilson, Director of the Yale University Summer School of Music and Art that thanked the chief and his crew for the prompt and effective action they took when smoke was discovered at the Music Shed. Wilson continued: "As you well know, the Music

Shed is an irreplaceable building and one which has meant so much to so many people for over seventy years. It is inconceivable to those of us who have been around for many years to think of our School without the Music Shed for concerts.”

March 12, 1978. A letter from Lyn Patrick, President of the Norfolk Cooperative Nursery School, asking the gentlemen of the department for permission to use the fire house for a benefit tag-bake sale in case of rain — or snow.

March 3, 1979. A note of gratitude penned by G. Marion Marshall, Secretary of the Canaan Fire Department, for responding to that company's call for help on the day of the Pfizer fire.

May 29, 1979. A letter from Kingsley H. Beecher, Mayor of the Town of Winchester — City of Winsted, to Mr. Martin O'Connor expressed sincere appreciation for the assistance rendered by the NVFD “...in containing the recent disastrous fire at the Winsted Furniture Store.”

September 1983. A note written from the top of Terrace View to the Norfolk Volunteer Firemen from Millie and Paul Hosch which said in its entirety: “Thank you for rescuing our kitten ‘Mittens’ from the tree!”

Fire Calls

At the annual meeting of 1967, Secretary Kevin O'Connor reported on the fire calls during the past year. His taxative list was not unrepresentative of the calls to which the department responded in past and future years. That listing is included in the annual reports submitted to the town each year.

Here is the 1967 listing:

Oct. 6, fire on Route 44 near Brookside home, car fire; Oct. 26, dump fire; Oct. 30 dump fire; Nov. 21, brush fire in West Norfolk; Jan. 26, brush fire on Winsted Road; Jan. 27, wire down near Gabelmann's house, Litchfield Road; Jan. 25, fire in tree near Currier's house; Feb. 5, called to Canaan, fire at Federal Homes; Feb. 26, fire at O'Toole house, Greenwoods Road; Feb. 27, recalled to O'Toole property; April 29, truck fire, Windom Road; May 21, Richard Leach home, fire in partitions; May 28, Garside home on Old Goshen Road; July 6, fire at Alford home on Litchfield Rd.

A fire at the Bernard Polinsky home on Route 272 (Litchfield Road) was a marker during the tenure of Martin O'Connor as chief and played a significant role in the town and the town's governance.

While Bernard Polinsky and his wife, owners of the Norfolk Hardware Store, were in Aruba on a short vacation, their three children were in the care of their paternal grandmother, Mrs. Samuel Polinsky of Jewett City. The fire was spotted at about 2:30 AM on Sunday morning by Elihu Naeem Ford-Rey, his brother, and a cousin. These three teenagers were returning to Norfolk from Torrington. Stopping at a neighbor's house, the boys called the State Police Barracks at 2:38 AM where a trooper sounded the Norfolk alarm and called the Polinsky house to verify the fire. The phone call alerted the grandmother who woke the children, got them dressed, and hustled them out of the house where the temperature was 12 below zero and the winds were 30 to 40 miles per hour.

When Chief O'Connor arrived at the house, he sounded a second alarm according to reporter Joseph O'Brien of the Hartford Courant. The Canaan Fire Department sent men and equipment

JANICE GABLEMAN



Three Belles Farm Fire #1

JANICE GABLEMAN



Three Belles Farm Fire #2



NATHAN TSUKROFF

Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department — June, 2001

Front Row (l to r): Martin O'Connor, past Chief; Brian Hutchins, Lieutenant;

Jeff Towle, Second Ass't Chief; Steve Osborne, Chief; Jody Zeller, Captain;

Ben Ludwig, Lieutenant; Steve Janssen, past Chief.

Seated. David Gomez; Arthur Rosenblatt, President.

Second Row: Hartley Mead, Martha Rochelle, Sandy Evans, Richard Byrne, John Barbagallo,

Ed Kelley, Todd Miller, April Spear, Lorraine Preece, Al Preece, Mat Ludwig, Ken Ludwig,

Daniel Wuori, Ron Zanobi, Leo Colwell, Paul Padua, Ted Hinman.

Third Row: Barbara Kelley, Angela Jennette, Bobbie Jo Towle, Russ O'Connor, Jr., Richard Osborne,

Al Redford, Peter Mulville, Edward Wuori, Frank Janssen, Steve Cristinat, George Dyer, Phil Byrne,

Fran Colwell, Leo Colwell, Sr., Dominic Zanobi, John Dyer, Keith Byrne, Tim Ayers, Ken Towle.

Back Row: Scott Padua, Chad Gomez, Alan Colwell, Steve Hutchins,

Gary Bottum, Tyler Marchi, Heather Hoffman.



1937 Studebaker Squad Truck



1953 Dodge Pumper



1952-53 Armstrong Brush Truck



1957 International Tanker



1963 American La France Pumper



1974 Ford Van



NORFOLK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

1981 International Tanker



1976 Oren Pumper



1984 Pierce 4 wheel drive GMC-Pumper



1995 Dodge Ram Utility Truck



1989 Ford Brush Truck



1996 4-Guys Pumper



1999 Freight Liner Tanker

at three in the morning. O'Connor thought they had the fire under control when the top of the hydrant broke, and they had to move to another a thousand feet away. Though much of the furniture was saved, the house was totally destroyed and the Dodge Fire Truck froze during the sub-zero temperatures causing the housing on the pump to crack. (The truck was quickly repaired in Watertown.)

Carol O'Brien (nee Sylvernale), a reporter for the Winsted Evening Citizen, reported another hydrant failure almost two weeks after the Polinsky debacle when the Norfolk Department was called to a fire in the lacquer room of the Society of Brothers. Conscious of the unreliability of hydrants in town, O'Connor had the men go to a nearby brook for water.

Hydrant Problems

On the Thursday following the Bruderhof fire, Chief O'Connor blasted the Norfolk Water Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Bridgeport Hydraulic Company, for its lack of maintenance in the water system and hydrants in the town. The O'Connor criticism got some verbal action a week later when Charles Horsfall, president of the company, reported that all the hydrants had been checked and were in working order. When asked about the hydrant failure at the Brotherhood fire, he said, "The nozzle fell off...we don't know why."

Horsfall's report was curious and richly ironic. He did not want the fire department to check out the hydrants because then the anti-freeze would spew out and have to be replaced. Yet he said that if the firemen would tell company representatives when they have a hydrant that is not working properly, "we will get on it immediately." That statement was cold comfort, to coin a phrase, to the Norfolk and Canaan men who fought the Polinsky fire. To suggest to the firemen who respond to a significant fire and find a hydrant inoperative that they should call the water company for repairs was disingenuous at best.

In a tangential matter related to the Water Company, some 200 Norfolk residents filed a petition with the Public Utilities Commission to withhold the petitioned for rate increases be held up until the iron content was lowered and sediment reduced. Accordingly, the PUC approved these increases: 32% in flat rate billing, 55% in metered billing, 34% in private for private fire protection, and 35% for public fire protection.

Despite the assurances of the officials of the water company, the firemen continued to check hydrants. When the members of the department found a hydrant frozen on Stoeckel Field, they examined other town hydrants and discovered six others that were frozen and inoperable. This inspection took place in early February 1976.

Chief O'Connor was irate and small wonder. He also represented the anger of the people of Norfolk.

On Tuesday evening at 10 PM some two weeks after the Polinsky fire, the department was called to the residence of Brendan Gill, a *New Yorker* staffer, where it found a blaze in the attic and roof portion of the house. The firemen only had to remain at the scene for two hours because the hydrant on Laurel Way was functioning well.

A month before Christmas (1974), the firemen were called to another fire on Laurel Way, this time to the house of H. Lee Green and his family. When the thirty men arrived shortly after midnight, they found flames shooting high into the air from the wooden shingled roof. A Winsted

fireman, Roger McKie, who happened to be in Norfolk as the alarm sounded, volunteered his services and is credited with helping set up a makeshift trough of tarpaulin which diverted the water outside instead of going down to the lower floors. That action and the saving of "irreplaceable portraits and photographs" kept the house from total destruction.

Despite the number of fires in the homes of prominent residences of the town the hydrant issue continued to be in the forefront of the department's consciousness.

In 1976, the selectmen established a blue-ribbon committee to do a feasibility study on the need for a new fire truck. With William Russell in the chair and Francis R. Dooley designated as recorder, the committee set about its work by doing some significant research on the matter. Russell contacted the Insurance Services Office in Boston because it provided information about the types of fire trucks recommended by insurance underwriters for a town the size of Norfolk.

As a result of Russell's inquiry, the office sent a group of representatives to Norfolk to do a survey of the firehouse, all its equipment, the construction of the building, and the fire hydrants.

Six hydrants in the commercial district were tested. According to the office, the required flow in this district ranges from 2,000 to 4,500 gallons per minute. The actual flow from the six hydrants ranged between 420 and 575 gallons per minute.

Two hydrants in the residential district were tested. The required flow was 500 gallons per minute, but the actual flow was recorded at 130 and 335 gallons per minute.

The last time an inspection of the town was done by insurance underwriters was in 1937, some forty years earlier. At that time the town was given a seventh class rating, a rating used to establish basic property insurance rates. In 1977, the Insurance Services Office, having completed its inspection and examination, wrote a letter to the selectmen raising Norfolk's rating to sixth class, thus providing a slim basis for reduced insurance premiums.

It was the considered opinion of Chief O'Connor and that of Fred Lang, the department secretary, that the condition of the hydrants prevented the town from securing a higher rating, a much higher rating, in the classification system and an even greater reduction in insurance rates.

If there was any doubt that Norfolk deserved the appellation "Icebox of the North," it was dispelled by the problem of the freezing hydrants in the frigid winters.

The Siren

Those frigid winters also played havoc with the siren, which was mounted on a peak of the roof of the Town Hall on Maple Avenue. After the siren froze seven times one winter rendering it inoperable, the members devised a remedial plan. Instead of continuing to climb a metal ladder on the steep roof and rotating the unit inside by hand, a process that sometimes extended over two days, the department contemplated asking the town to build a cupola and a commodious platform for the siren. (The siren was owned by Civil Defense but was maintained by the members.)

The plan to have the town solve the siren situation died aborning. A better plan was then devised, namely, to move the siren to the roof of the firehouse. The only problem with that plan was that the move would be expensive and seemed prohibitive. But reconsidering the matter in the summer month of June, the members voted to have the siren taken down from the town hall, checked out, and remounted on a telephone pole at the fire house.

The following month even that plan was changed. Chief O'Connor led a discussion on the

purchase of a new siren (price: \$1,865.00) and a generator. Selectman Lyle Bruey said the old siren would be taken down and placed in storage for Civil Defense. The Telephone Company agreed to set a pole on which to mount a new siren. The whole project met with unanimous approval and the order for a new siren was placed.

As winter came on, a discovery was made to the effect that a vertical siren, in stock, could be purchased for the one that had been ordered at a cost saving of \$200.00. And so the siren that had been ordered was cancelled. The saga of the siren of course, did not end with this resolution. The off-the-rack siren arrived in January but without a pole-mount bracket.

Paul Adamson stepped up to resolve the latest problem by mounting the new siren himself, even though he could not place it on top of the pole. With the siren in place, a generator was ordered so that the siren could sound and the firehouse operate in case of a power failure. The cost of the generator was \$3,350.00. When the generator was delivered it was housed in a shed adjacent to the firehouse, a shed built by Jim Curtiss and other volunteers.

On March 5, 1974 a press conference was held to showcase a new deep-red Econoline van jointly purchased for \$4,075.00 by the department and the women's auxiliary. The department contributed \$3,014 and the auxiliary \$1,500, allowing for the cost of the vehicle and the installation of lights and equipment. The van would be used to pump out cellars saving the fire trucks for more important missions.

At a special meeting held on March 17, 1976, the sole item on the agenda that St. Patrick's Day was to consider the purchase of a 1920 Model T Ford fire truck that was for sale in Rhode Island. The asking price was \$2,800.00 and the truck was reported to be in excellent condition. The owner represented the truck as originally coming from Norfolk, but there was no second party verification. There was a lot of sentiment for owning the truck, but financial considerations prevailed over emotion and, after a lengthy discussion, the department voted not to purchase that bit of memorabilia.

Just four years later, a resolution at another special meeting called for the consideration of the purchase of a 1957 International tanker owned by the Putnam Company and used for twenty-three years to water tennis courts. David Godding was the godfather of the project and laid out in detail what would have to be done to get the truck in working condition. The Putnam company wanted a thousand dollars for the truck, that amount was donated, the price was right, the resolution passed, and the department acquired a new tanker.

The 2500-gallon tanker needed professional welding to modify the housing for the portable pump, and it had to be painted. But most of the work was done by the members themselves. They installed new horns, sirens, lights, a permanent radio, and new brakes.

Then the rehabilitated truck went on line; it joined the 1964 La France with its 1000-gallon tank. All told, the department now had a 4250-gallon capacity for water storage, no mean advantage for a rural fire company. What pleased Godding and the members most was that this addition to the department came at no cost to the taxpayers of the town.

A New Pumper

On July 30, 1973, the selectmen led by John J. Curtiss appointed a citizens committee to study the needs of the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department and to report to the Board of Selectmen whether the purchase of a new fire truck be recommended. From among its appointees —

John C. Bazzano, Jr., Francis M. Dooley, Michael Mulville, Alan C. Redford, William J. Russell, and Joseph T. Zanobi — the members chose Russell as the chair.

In their report the committee noted that the town owned three pieces of apparatus:

1. A 1937 Studebaker hose wagon, interesting as a ceremonial vehicle, but having no practical value for fire fighting,
2. A 1952 Dodge pumper of limited capability and questionable reliability,
3. A 1963 American LaFrance pumper well adapted to conditions in the town, although inadequate in terms of full coverage of first line fire protection requirements. It had an estimated remaining life of ten years.

The committee also delved into the history and capacity of the town's water system. The current system dated back essentially to 1897 when its primary purpose was to provide for domestic and household needs. Since fire protection then was an incidental consideration, it did not meet current standards for fire fighting either in volume or pressure. And since a reconstruction of the Norfolk water system was unlikely, logic required that the fire department, "...must be equipped to furnish a significant portion of the water necessary to the fulfillment of its mission."

If that conclusion were true regarding the area within the ambit of the hydrant system, it was even more true in outlying areas.

On the surface, the committee made what appeared to be tangential remarks but which, in sum, get to the heart of the matter. "Training activities are conducted to an extent of which the non-departmental members of the committee had been unaware and it is the judgement of the committee that this lack of awareness extends to a considerable portion of the community. If that judgement is accurate, it reflects a regrettable situation."

Then the committee went on to laud the women of the department:

"Further in this connection the committee feels called upon to comment favorably on the too frequently overlooked support rendered to the fire department by its Ladies Auxiliary. This organization is regular in its attendance at fires...frequently under conditions of appreciable discomfort..."

In effect, the committee was so taken with personnel considerations, that its recommendations became a foregone conclusion.

The committee found:

1. That a new pumper conforming to the provisions of Standard 19 published by the National Fire Protection Association (Automotive Fire Apparatus, 1973) is requisite to proper fire protection for the Town of Norfolk.

2. That Norfolk is handicapped by a water supply inadequate to modern fire protection needs (a situation typical of small rural communities) and that consequently a motor tanker with the customary auxiliary equipment should be provided, and

3. That the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department is manned by interested, enthusiastic, and purposeful individuals who are willing to prepare themselves to exploit the potential of improved apparatus.

The report, which was compelling in its argumentation and its conclusions, received a rather tepid response from the selectmen. In a letter to the citizens of the town, Curtiss, *et al.* described the report as "useful" and informative. They asked the committee to continue its work in order to

produce “more specific proposals.” They also termed the costs as set forth in the report as “highly tentative and subject to considerable revision.” Then in terms of the bottom line financially, the selectmen warned the citizens that this project is “. . . a major, long-term capital investment.”

The signature of first selectman John J. Curtiss was written in a shaky hand and probably signaled his intention to retire and avoid a protracted debate about raising taxes.

Eventually reason and sound politics prevailed, and a letter was sent to the Oren Roanoke Corporation authorizing the purchase of the Oren Model R-300.

Women’s Auxiliary

If there was any question that the Women’s Auxiliary were distinctive and vibrant, that question was answered by a letter sent to Martin O’Connor by Bernard Williamson, Secretary-Treasurer of the Connecticut Parade Marshall Association. That letter composed half of fractured prose and half of sheer delight announced that the Norfolk Ladies Auxiliary had been chosen for a special award to be presented at the Woodbury Fire Department Headquarters.

Some of the letter read:

“Fire Chief Martin O’Connor
Norfolk Fire Department
Norfolk, CT 06058

“Dear Chief O’Connor:

“Every so often, one happens to run across a happening or a sight, which restores ones faith in human nature, and in the idealistic dream of sacrifice for a cause.

“Such was the case this summer when our judges took the street at various parades to judge the competing units, one of which was the Norfolk Ladies Auxiliary. The judges were impressed by the thought and the spirit of your ladies who, we presume, knew full well that they would be penalized under the parade rules in that the uniforms were not the “same in style and color.” Any auxiliary unit cannot afford to knowingly forfeit points in a parade and expect to win. This is the spirit that the judges referred to in your ladies unit.

“The judges thought so highly of this spirit that they recommended to the executive board of this association that a special award be made to the Norfolk Ladies Auxiliary in recognition of that spirit in this, the Bicentennial year of our country. . .

“Sincerely,
Bernard Williamson”

While debates about financing and acquiring a new fire truck were going on, the Women’s Auxiliary was busy about many things. They were prolific fundraisers for the department. Not only did they raise significant sums of money for the department, they took a proactive stance as to how the money was spent. When the department sent the auxiliary a letter requesting funds for the purchase of a K-12 saw, Sharon Zanobi, the secretary, wrote to the Chief inviting him to the next meeting “. . . to discuss the particulars of the saw such as the price, what it will be used for and so on.” There was to be no pig-in-a-poke for the auxiliary.

A couple of months later Sharon Zanobi informed O’Connor that the auxiliary had deter-

mined to buy tables for the firehouse and wondered if there would be any objection.

When Madeleine Byrne became the secretary, she wrote to Martin O'Connor and told him that the Anniversary Ball had netted a profit of \$1,951.00. In a rather astringent tone, she asked for a priority list of needs and told him to submit the list to President Polly Millard.

At its next meeting the members had to scramble and conduct a long discussion before coming up with a priority list. When Jo Ann Gundlach became secretary, she adopted a more conciliatory tone telling "Marty and Men" to order the pump for the brush truck and send the bill to the auxiliary.

At another time Sandra M. Lang, the president, wrote to Marty O'Connor about the annual picnic at the Norfolk Downs Shelter. She said the auxiliary would underwrite the cost of the picnic and so would eliminate any "entertainment" type expenses from appearing in the town report. Lang was very sensitive to public opinion and potential criticism. But then she added a tart little aside:

"We will still need to depend heavily on the firemen to pick up the shelter prior to the picnic, to get the grill, cook the hamburgers and hot dogs, and to help with clean-up. The ladies will line up all the other food and handle publicity and calls, and OF COURSE help the gentlemen with their responsibilities."

At another juncture, members of the department had been calling on members of the auxiliary to man, so to speak, the phones and the radio. The members of the auxiliary were affronted and conveyed their displeasure to the chief and the members in a letter written by Bea Scott.

"Perhaps this is a good time to say that at last night's meeting a policy for the Auxiliary was formulated whereby no member of the Auxiliary is to man the Fire Department's radio, phone or any phase of fire-fighting operations, because our services have not been requested in any of those areas, and primarily, we have no training to work effectively in those areas.

"There is not one member of the Auxiliary who wants to drive a fire truck or man a hose at a fire, but we are proud of the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department, and we are here and happy to help you in any way that you need and want us.

"Thanks."

Remarkably this testy letter was answered by the Assistant Chief Philip Byrne. In just the right tone, he wrote:

"Dear Ladies,

As you probably all realize the manpower of the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department is limited during the hours of 7 AM and 5 PM. This limited manpower makes it difficult for us to perform our duties efficiently and, therefore, once again, we would like to ask for your assistance.

"It is a fact that a woman's voice carries over the radio system much better than a man's voice. If some members of the auxiliary would be interested in volunteering their services as radio dispatchers we would appreciate it greatly. We need you during the above mentioned daytime hours and possibly during some other emergencies.

"Several training sessions will be set up at times most convenient for your volunteers.

These sessions will teach the proper procedures and techniques needed in order to assist us properly.

“We would all like to thank you for the fine job you have done for us at the scene of fires as well as through your most successful dances. We most especially appreciate and thank you for the one thousand five hundred dollar (\$1,500.00) donation made by the Auxiliary toward the purchase of our new equipment van.

“With heartfelt thanks from all the members of the NVFD,
Philip Byrne, Assist. Chief”

One implication of this letter was that men went off to work each day and women stayed at home, a situation that would change in the coming decades. But the urgency was very real for the department. During the hours from 7-5, many of the volunteer firemen were out of town. That was the reason that members of the auxiliary ever asked to assist during these times. It was also the reason for trying to tap the manpower of the Society of Brothers who were at work and at worship and at home around the clock.

The Presidency

In June 1980, member Bill Kelley proposed a change in the By-Laws to include a president. The motivation was Chief O'Connor's threat to resign if he were not relieved of his administrative responsibilities. When the department next met it acted on Kelley's suggestion and set up a reorganization of the department into two divisions of responsibility. At the annual meeting in 1980, the members voted to inaugurate a structural change in the governance of the department. They adopted a duplex system of executive officers and line officers. The executive branch would be headed by a president, which would be responsible for all administrative activities including the budget. The line branch would consist of the officers headed by the Chief which would be responsible for all fire fighting and training operations. At the same meeting, O'Connor was reelected as chief and Alan Redford was elected as President.

O'Connor strongly supported this By-Law revision and called for its passage partially because fire fighting and training was his forte and partially because fire work had become so complex. No less complex were the administrative functions, which required a different set of skills. Curiously, the department did not deign to notify Lyle Bruey, the first selectman, of this radical change in departmental affairs until two years later. By this time Alan Redford had had his fill of administration and announced his intention not to stand for reelection as president. (Incidentally, the department's budget for the year 1980-1981 was \$18,315.29. The town contribution \$9,328.50 and the remainder was generated by fund-raising events sponsored by the department and auxiliary.)

From the very beginning of the NVFD, the governmental structure was purposely hierarchical. In times of emergency such as a fire where coherent and directed activity is essential, a single commander is necessary. Each chief, in his own way, emphasized and reemphasized that when orders are given, they are to be carried out limiting individual judgement.

The downside of such a system is that, without term limitations, some firemen and more officers are unable to aspire to become chief even though they have the knowledge, experience, and leadership skills. Opening up the presiding and other administrative offices to the member-

ship offered a window of opportunity for service in a capacity other than chief but, perhaps, only a little less important. This change, though considered an innovation at the time, actually harked back to the Brown era where the governance distinction was made but the chief occupied both offices — rendering the difference moot.

O'Connor's Waning Years

On the second Monday of September 1976 a dinner was held at Ye Old Newgate Coon Club that was planned and presented by the department. Actually, the dinner-banquet was not for the department but rather for the Litchfield County Fire Chiefs Emergency Plan. Most of the attendees were from participating departments. It was at that dinner that Chief Martin O'Connor was inaugurated as president of the association, a signal honor for O'Connor and for the Norfolk Department.

On June 14, 1979, a letter was read from Leon B. Czerwonka inviting Chief O'Connor to serve as the Grand Marshall of the Winchester-Winsted parade to be held in August. As an interesting sidelight and a thoughtful gesture, that neighboring department invited Mrs. O'Connor to sit in the reviewing stand. Presumably she applauded her husband's position in the parade march, as did the onlookers. The work of O'Connor had gained recognition wider than the environs of Norfolk.

At the annual meeting in August of 1982, the announced intention of Martin O'Connor to retire as chief became official. Steven Janssen was elected to replace him. Replacing Redford as President was Ron Zanobi. Zanobi's first act as president was to praise O'Connor's fifteen years service as chief. The membership concurred with the Zanobi sentiments by giving O'Connor a rousing round of applause. Janssen took the floor to praise O'Connor as well and that generated another show of gratitude on the part of the members.

The most telling speech of the evening was made by O'Connor himself. He told the members that he thanked them for their support. He asked that they give the same support to newly elected Chief Janssen. Then he told the members that it was through them and not him that the department was a success. On that note of grace, the meeting adjourned.

When O'Connor left the chief's post after fifteen years, he was a changed man, for the better, not for the worse. Early archival pictures show him to be young, on the severe side, with heavy black-rimmed glasses giving him a bookish appearance. His retirement photo, taken in front of a pumper, shows him with a half-smile, open shirted, wearing contacts rather than glasses and buff, tanned and fit.

A more formal ceremony took place on Wednesday, October 13, 1982, at the Coon Club. Members of the department and firemen from the surrounding towns gathered to honor the resigned chief. Chief Janssen presented his predecessor with a plaque of service recognition and President Zanobi injected a lighter note. He presented the "man" with a caricature of himself signed by the fifty officers and men who had gathered for the dinner-event.

When O'Connor's resignation became public, he was sought out by Lyda Philips, a reporter for the *Winsted Evening Citizen*. In a candid interview, he recounted the main points of his term as chief. He represented in his comments the ancient Greek philosophy that the beginning of wisdom was self-knowledge.

He recounted the strengths of the department achieved under his tenure. He cited the centralized, new firehouse as a primary good for the town and the department.

He was proud that his stricture against spirits reduced the number of members from 75 to 45 because the fewer numbers were dedicated to fire fighting and not socializing. This O'Connor mandate is often cited as being the occasion for his reforming the department. Actually the seventies was a time of cultural turbulence and O'Connor, perceptively, took advantage of this paradigm shift in manners and morals to reinvent the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department.

He was pleased that the department had become a team under his leadership. He was equally pleased that the team members were highly trained and disciplined.

He regretted the Polinsky fire because "there was no need for it." He recounted the circumstances of the Green house fire, calling it "one of the biggest" but also one of the best for the department because "we controlled it."

He remembered the training accident at the Botelle School in which men and officers were injured. The trauma of that event was still with him. He rejoiced in the fact that in his fifteen years at his post, only one person in Norfolk had lost his life in a fire.

O'Connor did not need a third person to evaluate his fifteen years of charismatic leadership. His own words and actions were telling enough. In the pantheon of chiefs of the Norfolk department he stood tall.



THE MODERN AGE: *Janssen, Kelley and Osborne*

His thesis was that everyone purports to know what fire is, but nobody really does, because we're too seduced by our first experience with it.

Colin McEnroe

At the annual meeting in August of 1982, Steven Janssen was formally elected and installed as chief. His assistants were David Godding and Ron Zanobi. Zanobi was also elected president replacing Alan Redford.

With the election of Janssen, the last twenty years of the centennial were inaugurated. Rather than segregate the account of these two decades by the actions and reactions of the respective chiefs, the account will be by themes which run through the administration of Janssen, Kelley, and Osborne. Such an approach will not diminish the importance of the contributions of each of these men and leaders. Each of them was distinctive and made significant impact on the department.

But the department itself, the system itself, the organization takes precedence in a modern setting. And the system, now well established, functioned handsomely in the next twenty years.



NATHAN TSUKROFF

Chief Steven Janssen

Political Science

At the annual meeting in August of 1982, Ron Zanobi was elected President and immediately presided over the rest of the meeting. He continued to preside over the monthly meetings for a year and issued the call for the annual meeting on August 22, 1983. He called the meeting to order, conducted the election, and in the course of the balloting was succeeded as President by Richard Byrne.

At the annual meeting (1989), the election of officers was held with all the primary positions being contested. The minutes for that meeting recorded the results:

All voting for elected offices was done by paper ballot.

CHIEF: Steve Janssen vs. Richard Byrne

Steve Janssen elected by 27 to 12 vote

1ST ASSISTANT CHIEF: Ronald Zanobi, John Hutchins, Paul Padua and Dave Godding all nominated for office. Ron Zanobi elected.

Zanobi 17 Hutchins 8

Padua 5 Godding 8

2ND ASSISTANT CHIEF: Richard Byrne, Paul Padua, John Hutchins and Dave Godding nominated. Hutchins and Padua withdrew their names.
Richard Byrne elected by 23 to 14 vote.

In 1990 the By-Laws committee made its recommendations to the body and their proposals, generally, met with favor. There were some motions made from the floor regarding those who were qualified to vote in the elections of officers at the annual meeting. In order to enhance the involvement of veterans of the department and to broaden the voter base, Philip Byrne moved to allow veteran members to vote for line officers. His motion died for the lack of a second. Then Chief Janssen moved, with Kelley seconding, to allow associate members to vote for line officers. That motion failed by the close tally of 10 to 9.

In 1991, the election of officers also featured some significant contests. Even the lieutenant slots were sought-after positions. In the presiding race, Padua ousted incumbent Dan Wuori.

The elections went as follows:

Chief: Nominees – Janssen, Byrne; Winner – Janssen 24 to 16

1st Asst. Chief: Nominees – Kelly, Byrne; Winner – Kelly 26 to 14

2nd Asst. Chief: Nominees – Osborne, Byrne; Byrne declined. Winner Osborne

Captain: Nominees – Godding, Dauphinais; Dauphinais declined. Winner – Godding

Lieutenant: Three positions, the mail in nominees were Hutchins, Colwell, Macafferty, Currier and Villeiux who needed and got a second from the floor.

Round one – Hutchins 22, Macafferty 9, Colwell 7, Currier 1, Villeiux 1.

Round two – Macafferty 19, Colwell 12, Currier 8, Villeiux 1.

Round three – Colwell 20, Currier 15, Villeiux 4

President: Nominees – Padua, Wuori and Kenney who needed a second and got it.

Winner: Padua 24, Wuori 14, Kenney 2.

By-Laws – Officers Limits

Late in 1991 during Paul Padua's presidency, changes in the By-Laws were passed which established term limitations for the department officers both line and administrative. The new provision basically set a seven consecutive year limit for the same elected position. There were the obvious loopholes. A person, with a brief hiatus, could qualify for another seven-year period, and he could run for another official position in a similar grouping of individuals.

The possibility of three one-year extensions was also built into the new additions to the By-Laws but they were very stringent.

The wording of Article IV, Section 10 is murky but seems to imply that a member can not be an executive officer and a line officer at the same time, nor, for that matter, hold two offices of any kind simultaneously. Whatever the intent of the new legislation, that was its effect.

A Muster, A Woman Firefighter Et Alibi

A team of stalwarts headed by Hartley Mead rode over to the Riverton Fairgrounds for the second annual muster of the Frontier Radio Association. The event began at 12 noon on Sunday, September 21, 1986. It was not until three years later that the Norfolk team came out on top. Steve Eckel was jubilant about the first place finish of the department largely because the NVFD finally managed to beat the Canaan Fire Company with their Reo Speedwagon pumper. The first

place finish in the pumping competition put them in first place. They moved their truck into position, primed its pump, and knocked a bucket off a ladder in 1:00.15 seconds. No mean feat.

There was a quiet but signal event in the history of the department. Ms. Jeri McKenzie was voted into the fire department. She was the first woman and the vote of acceptance was overwhelmingly in her favor. Apart from the change in cultural climate that allowed this application to proceed to approval was the awareness that no special provisions had to be made to the Constitution or to the By-Laws. The original framers of the Constitution had not contemplated women becoming firemen but, by the same token, had not written language into that document excluding them.

Lorraine Preece followed McKenzie into the department. Perhaps because of the factor of self-selection, no woman who has applied for membership has been turned down. Another unforeseen consequence of the McKenzie initiative was that many members of the Women's Auxiliary have been accepted as general members of the fire department, thus blurring the distinction between auxiliary affiliation and departmental affiliation.

In 1976, the personnel from the Underwriters Insurance did a thorough inspection of the American La France. It passed, as the men said, with flying colors. It was not until February of 1983 that Chief Janssen appointed a truck committee to study the replacement of the La France. Although the committee report has been lost, no action was taken on retiring the La France. Rather some two and a half years later it was given to complete overhaul with the springs replaced, the pumps serviced, and the brakes relined.

The relationship between the ambulance corps and the fire department continued on its professional path. That relationship which could have soured on many occasions was salvaged by a continuous flow of communications. For example, the following motion carried in 1990.

A motion was made by John Curtis and seconded by Steve Osborne that response to Motor Vehicle Accidents would be as follows:

1. The Norfolk Ambulance will be formally requested to dispatch the F.D. as soon as possible using the fire radio and calling L.C.D.
2. In the event that the F.D. becomes aware of an accident prior to the ambulance request, the F.D. will automatically dispatch itself.
3. The fire police will watch for responding EMTs and not hold them up when stopping traffic at the corner of Shepard Rd. and Rt. 44.

The motion was passed unanimously.

The Norfolk Ambulance will be advised that they need not wait to be requested by the F.D., but may respond to structure fires, chimney fires, brush fires, and other such emergencies where they think they may be needed.

During the early days of the O'Connor period, the selectman of the town approved the building of a new firehouse on 20 Shepard Road on the site of the former Center School. When erected, the building was bare-bones utilitarian but welcomed by the department because it meant moving from cramped quarters in the Arcanum Building and a semi-converted barn.

Some twenty years later, the deficiencies of the building began to be felt with a vengeance. The flat roof of the original design had not aged well in the severe weather changes that afflict Norfolk. It began, as the men often said and as the cliché has it, "to leak like a sieve." In addition to the roof problem, the Dodge utility vehicle could not be accommodated in the '72 building, so a

new bay became necessary. An addition to the original building for this bay was designed — 60 feet long and 14 feet wide.

What carried the day for the plans for a renovated building was an unusual “contract” between the selectmen and the firemen. The contract called for the town fathers to appropriate \$30,000.00 for materials and for the firemen to supply the sweat equity. With that agreement in place, the firemen — carpenters-plumbers-electricians — built the addition in record time on weekends and at night. They even gabled the roof. The rehabbed building was ready for Open House on Memorial Day.

An enlightened motion passed in 1985. The department had considered sponsorship of a Boy Scout troop, but learned that the insurance premiums would be too costly. Instead they determined to sponsor an Explorer Post whose meeting place would be the firehouse, whose age range would be 14-18, and would have the counsel of firemen advisors. To be precise, the department sponsored the Junior Firefighters, an Explorer Post, whose charter came through the Boy Scouts of America.

The Explorer Post, once established, thrived. It provided invaluable service in necessary but routine tasks around the trucks and firehouse, it acclimated the members to the rigors of fire fighting, and it provided a pool of candidates for departmental membership.

Although the Explorers are adolescents, their duties from the beginning and to the present are adult in character and demanding by nature. At the scene of a fire, they direct traffic, replace air packs for firefighters, open fire hydrants, put down water hoses, and man the generator that powers lights and smoke ejectors. They can discharge all these responsibilities because they are rigorously trained in twice-a-month practice sessions. Though they may not enter burning buildings, they can and do repack hose and wash the trucks after a fire.

In the waning months of his terms of office, O'Connor raised the issue of purchasing a Hurst tool and sharing the expense with the ambulance corps. The issue lay dormant for over two years when it became the subject of a special meeting at which the proponent of acquiring, operating, and maintaining an extrication tool, Chief Janssen, explained that the Fellow Craft Club of the Western Star Lodge of Masons offered to pay \$5,400.00 for that piece of equipment if the fire department would accept the responsibility for it. The members voted to do that and be trained so that the “jaws-of-life” could be used when a person was trapped in a vehicle involved in an accident.

Accountability

In one fiscal year in the mid-eighties the following expenses were incurred on an as need basis:

Additional 4" hose	Increase stipends for mechanics
Pierce sent for repairs	Six new sets of gear (coats, helmets, boots)
New ropes for portable tank	Radio for tanker
New tarpaulin for portable tank	Microphone for Chief's portable radio
Buy battery for La France	Six radios
La France serviced	Small pair of boots for new member
Set of chains for Pierce	Dual frequency radio
Brackets and covers for air packs – van	Front doors and electric door openers
Install line from generator to radio	200 feet of 2½" hose

Pipe for dry hydrant
Cones for 4" hose
Repairs to Badger chemical cart
Repair to alarm encoder

Log hooks
Two air bottles
Quick water dump for tanker

A problem began to be perceived that the member recommending a purchase or moving a repair expense was generally enjoined by the department to follow through and secure the item or items. What was democratic in practice ended up being chaotic from a financial accountability point of view. The very real financial constraints imposed by the town allotment as well as fund raising were being jeopardized. The department sensed this problem and designated purchasing agents for the department. In addition, the following policy crafted by Wuori and Zanobi was enacted on April 3, 1989.

Policy to cover expenditures of the Norfolk Vol. Fire Department

To insure the proper use and control of expenditures, the Board of Trustees of the Norfolk Vol. Fire Department should take an active part in issues involving expenditure.

- 1.) The Board of Trustees should be in charge of the budget process as stated in the By-Laws of the Norfolk Vol. Fire Department.
- 2.) The final revised budget should be approved by the membership at a regularly scheduled monthly meeting. All items on budget should be purchased during the year by the purchasing agents or their designees. The membership should only vote again on items to decide when to buy items during the year.
- 3.) All purchases must come to membership for vote except for emergency spending and necessary routine maintenance and repair of equipment and firehouse.
- 4.) Emergency spending must be presented to the Board of Trustees by the chief for 2/3 approval.
- 5.) All proposed purchases that are not on budget should go to membership for vote and then to purchasing agents for them to purchase.
- 6.) Mechanics, Warden, Firehouse committee can spend up to \$300 a month for necessary routine maintenance and repair of equipment and firehouse. Any one item over \$50 and under \$300 must be approved by the chief. Such expenditures must be reported at next monthly meeting.

The concern about accountability did not stay within the department. It reached into the discussions of the selectmen who were demanding to know how the money granted to the fire department was spent. Two years from the time that the department enunciated its fiscal policies, Lyle Bruey, the first selectman, said that the governing board wanted the department to send monthly bills itemizing repairs and purchases, and the dollar amount would be paid from the town coffers. Previously once the town budget had been finalized, the fire department was sent its portion in twelve equal monthly installments with no accompanying paper work. The departmental budgets for 1989, 1990, and 1991 averaged about \$30,000.00 per year.

A Budget

In every organization, the budget for the coming year is central to the effective running of the operation. In 1993, the officers devised a budget to present to the members for criticism and alterations. As a result of departmental review, the finalized budget was voted upon, cast in its

proper form and sent on to the town's selectmen and Board of Finance. Even part of the budget for '93 demonstrated that the NVFD needed significant money to operate and each year expenses escalated.

<u>Equipment Update –</u>	
Two airpacks @ 1600	\$3200.00
Four spare bottles @ 400	<u>1600.00</u>
	\$4800.00

<u>Replacement Equipment –</u>	
12 pairs of gloves @ 24	\$ 288.00
12 faceshields @ 25	300.00
replacement hose	<u>700.00</u>
	\$1288.00

<u>Turnout gear update – 5 complete sets of gear</u>	
5 coats @ 300	\$1500.00
5 bunkerpants @ 200	1000.00
5 pairs of boots @ 70	350.00
5 pairs suspenders @ 10	50.00
5 helmets @ 75	<u>375.00</u>
	\$3275.00

Truck maintenance	
Tires for Oren	\$ 500.00
2 cases of oil – LaFrance	45.00
anti-freeze – 15 gallons	53.00
Flammable liquid storage cabinet	475.00
Two batteries	240.00
Pump service	350.00
Filters, etc.	100.00
Chains for Oren	350.00
Miscellaneous (lights, gauges, etc.)	<u>87.00</u>
	\$2200.00

Fiscal Matters

The relationship between and among the selectmen, the Board of Finance, and the Fire Department is a complex one. The selectmen are charged with common good of the town with especial attention to its infrastructure which includes the public service provided by the department. The Board of Finance is charged with maintaining the financial integrity of the town. Its byword is fiscal austerity and it is especially sensitive to the town taxpayer. The fire department is charged with the mission to protect the lives and property of the citizenry and so paramount is that charge that financial considerations take a distinctly second place in its estimation. In such a dynamic, there is bound to occur some friction and even some serious disagreements.

In his annual report to town for the 1988-1989 fiscal year, Chief Janssen raised a specter. He

called for the selectmen to initiate an incentive program for the firemen, citing the demands on their time and the cost to family and domestic harmony. Although he did not spell out any of the specifics of an incentive program and one that would attract and retain young people as members, he did spell out the alternative. The alternative was to pass from a volunteer department to a paid department costing the town over a million dollars a year in salaries and benefits alone. He made this assertion objectively having no doubt that “manpower” could be a significant problem. This was no bargaining ploy for meeting with the Selectmen and the Board of Finance.

Whether his assertion was on solid ground, the evidence at hand was incontrovertible that demands on firemen’s time were extraordinarily severe. An active fireman, then and now, spends a minimum of 220 hours a year in training in addition to the twelve practice sessions. That is merely the background for the fire calls, the monthly meetings, and the fund raisers.

In addition preplanning is an important component of a fireman’s work. Preplans are in place for Meadowbrook, the center of town, Ann’s Nursery, C.A. Lindell & Son, and the Botelle School. The preplan for the Botelle School was made complex by the fact that the hydrant serving the school and its environment only pumped out 255 gallons a minute. The alternative, built into the preplan, was to have the department hook up to a hydrant on Laurel Way and to lay another line to the brook behind the school. It was only a decade ago that the Bridgeport Hydraulic Company improved the flow to 1300 gallons per minute.

The hours spent in training are not just important, they are absolutely necessary. With the sophisticated equipment, a fireman would appear to need a degree in engineering to fight a fire or man the controls on the panel at the back of the pumper:

- All discharge controls
- Vernier engine throttle, electronic
- Pump pressure control
- Primer control
- Tank fill
- Tank to pump control
- Master Pressure gauge and test tap
- Master Vacuum gauge and test tap
- Stop engine/check engine warning lights and audible alarm
- Engine oil pressure gauge
- Engine water temp. gauge
- Pump Hourmeter
- Auxiliary cooler control
- Tachometer
- Half engine speed outlet
- Individual pressure gauges
- Water level indicator

There was a time when any fireman knew how to drive the truck. But with the new trucks, only truck drivers with commercial licenses can handle the newer trucks. That the trucks are bigger and harder to handle was demonstrated unequivocally at Doolittle Lake when the Oren was put out of commission for months when it rolled off a narrow unpaved road.

Fundraising too became an imperative for the department. Just for communications alone the department had to approve a \$20,000.00 expense to upgrade the portable radios to two channels, to purchase six new portables, two mobile radios, and a repeater.

In terms of training and preparation, the department had felt the heavy hand of federal OSHA requirements. In the past ten years meetings on hazardous materials (HAZ MAT) have been held on the proper manner of handling those materials as well as protecting the health and safety of the firemen. Another concern, addressed just as seriously, was the danger of blood borne pathogens.

The department felt the weight of the OSHA requirements in HazMat matters. Equally demanding were the regulations coming from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT).

Pat Vosburgh spoke to the members about the necessity of getting Hepatitis B shots in Winsted. Thirty members wanted the shots but were disheartened to learn that the town was reluctant to pay for that medical service.

These pressures of modernity were felt by the department members, and they felt they should receive a sympathetic and positive hearing from the town officers. They were not sanguine however because their experience led them to believe that the Board of Finance made ill-informed and “star chamber” decisions about the fire department budgets without proper consultation and representation. When the department learned that the Freedom of Information Act did not require the filing of minutes and agendas with the town, they ceased to do so. They felt that the minutes, written in cryptic fashion, led the Board of Finance to draw unwarranted conclusions. They also felt that the spirited and open discussions would be chilled by the board’s hearing about the brainstorming and free flow of opinion.

The meeting of the Board of Finance with officers of the department over the proposed new truck is often recalled. An emotional Paul Padua excoriated the Board of Finance for patronizing the members. The chief, at the same meeting, said he had reviewed the video of the last meeting and pointed out that the board was simply wrong when it asserted that a tanker was not needed in the hydrant district.

In turn the board noted that the money it had to spend was finite, that there were other town expenses that had claim on that limited money, and that taxpayers were exerting enormous influence in calling for frugality. In a kind of tit-for-tat response, the department said that while the board’s obligation was to the taxpayer, the department’s obligation was to the townsfolk *in toto* who were on their side as evidenced by their enduring support of the department in every regard but especially in fundraising.

To offset some of this rancor, the board designated one of its members to serve as a personal liaison with the department even as the Board of Education had a liaison. John Calder, a selectman, was the first liaison and was present at departmental meetings to allay the ill will that had grown up.

Equipment — Old and New

In 1984 a retirement community for equipment, the Connecticut Antique Fire Apparatus Association, received a donation from the NVFD, namely, the 1937 Studebaker. The donation, or rather long-term loan by the department, was advantageous in every respect. The museum, located near Bradley Airport, would maintain the hose truck and make it available for parades. Perhaps more importantly, the gift to the museum opened up a bay for the acquisition of the new truck in the following year.

That new pumper was driven into the bay at the firehouse on May 31, 1985. The truck was built by Pierce Manufacturing of Appleton, Wisconsin for a cost of \$83,000.00. The town appropriated \$73,000.00; the department raised \$10,000.00 and planned to raise \$10,000.00 more to properly equip this new piece of apparatus.

Two years later there was another truck parked behind the firehouse awaiting adaptation for fire fighting purposes. The 1980 International was purchased for \$18,500.00 from a truck firm in Jericho, VT. In the Green Mountain State, the tanker was used to haul milk from farms to the creamery. It came equipped with a diesel engine, unlike its predecessor which used gasoline, and had been used to water tennis courts when they were covered with grass. The tanker had two advantages: it had a 3,000 gallon tank, and its heft did not endanger the bridges in the territory.

Eight years later, another piece of equipment was driven onto the tarmac of the firehouse, a 1995 Dodge Ram designated as Utility 50. The eight years had been spent in large measure raising the \$53,000.00 purchase price by the department, no mean feat in a town of 1600 souls. The Ram is properly called a utility vehicle. It had a cellular phone, a winch, an air compressor, a portable pond, oxygen tanks, air packs, and the extricator tool. All the add-ons to the "stripped-down" body were put on by the firemen-mechanics themselves.

On May 7, 1990, the department was galvanized to establish and people a truck committee. From the very beginning it was destined to achieve and not to vamp its mission.

The committee was chaired by William Kelley, an inspired choice. The members were the veterans Hutchins, Collins, Godding, McCafferty, Byrne (*pere*), Dauphinais, and Janssen. Standing by in a consultant role were the Mulvilles, Pete and Mike, as well as John Bazzano.

The committee gathered and made the first report to the membership. They reported that they had developed the specs for the new truck, which included an enclosed cab, an automatic transmission, a diesel motor, and a 1,000 gallon water tank.

These specs were sent out and meeting representatives from companies began. Kelley talked to the man from Grumman. With that consultation as a background, the committee did a comparative analysis with the pumpers in Torrington and Drakesville.

About three years after the committee had been charged and its deliberations on the nature and caliber of the truck were established, it began to experience serious discouragement. Their efforts went unrewarded politically because the town fathers would not commit. They were told to reappear and resubmit in the following year. They did.

Shortly after Christmas in 1995, the department received delivery of a 4 Guys pumper from its production site in Meyersdale, PA. The delivery of the truck was a triumph for Chief William Kelley. By dint of personal charisma and perseverance, he brought this dream to reality.

When it was placed in service, it became the department's primary attack truck with a 1,000 gallon tank and a capacity for pumping 1,250 gallons per minute. It stood to replace the 1963 American La France.

In February 1996, the chief and other officers appeared before the town's Board of Finance with a list of items needed for the new truck: 950 feet of various sizes of hose, two nozzles, a ladder pad for the back of the truck, tire chains and a deck gun. With these accessories the cost of the new vehicle, ready to roll, approximated \$225,000.00.

Kelley and Zanobi were particularly taken by the deck gun. Speaking to a reporter, Zanobi said the deck gun made the pumper just a step below an aerial truck, one not needed where buildings do not exceed four or five stories. The operator of the elevated deck gun stands at a control panel and can view a fire from both sides of the pump, a distinct advantage for a quick

response. Since OSHA regulation no longer allowed firemen to ride on the back of the truck, the cab was designed to accommodate six fire fighters with air packs built right into the seats.

As an indication of the careful planning that went into the acquisition of this truck, all the bids that had been solicited were opened on Wednesday, February 8, 1995. All bids were rejected and the specifications were revised. New bids were received with the Connecticut Fire Apparatus dropping out of the running. Though it was not the lowest bid, 4 Guys was awarded the contract over Seagrave, New England Fire Equipment Company, and the Northeastern Fire Association.

Late in 1996 it became obvious to the men on the front lines that significant repairs needed to be made to the former milk tanker. Rusting out tank mounts called at least for a new chassis and that option was seriously considered.

Sue Dyer, the chairperson of the finance board, was persuaded by the strong evidence of the need for a new truck rather than a rehabilitated older truck. Her support was recognized later after the specifications were drawn up, the bids were put up, the selection was made, and a 1999 Freightliner was delivered. She was given a queenly ride around town in the new handsome tanker.

The cost to the town was \$90,000.00 buttressed by a donation from the Dahl estate verging on \$30,000.00. The remainder was generated by the department and its auxiliary.

The truck is powerful; it can carry a full load, 3,000 gallons, up an 8% grade at 35 miles per hour. Outside the hydrant district its mission is to supply water to a portable pond that the pumper uses to supply its hoses.

Memorial Road Race

The members of the department were and are not unaware of the largesse of the Norfolk community in supporting the work of the firemen. To express in a tangible way their gratitude to the townsfolk, the firemen yearly sponsor a road race on Memorial Day. This road race has become Norfolk's version of the Boston Marathon.

But five mile in length, the race begins in the flats next to Case Field and ends at the Sanford White fountain on the village green. Prizes are awarded to a series of firsts: the first overall, the first woman, the first fireman, the first senior, and the first of junior entrants. Each year the number of runners increases, peaking at about three hundred.

Under the practiced eye of Ron Zanobi, the festivity ends with the participants splashing in the portable tank. The village green is the place for post-race tale-telling. And most important of all, the money that is collected goes to non-need-based scholarships for the younger set of Norfolk students.

Women's Auxiliary

As summer approached in 1990, the Ladies Auxiliary met for a planning session. They agreed to split their numbers and their duties at the Memorial Day open house. Most would serve refreshments at the firehouse on Memorial Day while others would sell hamburgers on the green during the road race.

The members had decided to hold their annual dance in mid-June and needed some assistance with the set-up.

The following month they planned a family picnic at the firehouse on July 22, 1990. The men of the department were to supply the beer, soda and ground round. They also had on their calendar a spaghetti dinner in September as well as another dinner-dance-raffle in November. Rounding out the year's end, they contemplated a talent show fund raiser.

In the middle of this schedule of events, the auxiliary wanted the department to give them the use of the firehouse for a Chippendale-style fundraiser. Zanobi was outraged and led the department to deny the request. Another member said that if the performance were held the NVFD should distance itself from the event. It was not held. Some of those who remember the incident say that the auxiliary was merely twitting their male colleagues with this request. Others said that they were serious, and the members were always ready for some raucous fun.

There was a special meeting of the Ladies Auxiliary held on September 9, 1991. As usual social affairs and fund raising events were prominent on the agenda. The dance for the auxiliary was set for 10/12 and matters routine were disposed of. A Christmas coop sale on the evening of the 25th was agreed upon and details were worked out. Then there was a change of tone. The firemen's wives, not the members of the auxiliary, were thought to be the people who should be setting up for the open house on Memorial Day. Though there would undoubtedly be overlap, there was a clear message that the auxiliary was withdrawing from one of its traditional occasions. The last item to be discussed was caused by the difficulty they had hearing each other during the meeting. With some asperity, they made a formal request for "less noise" from the department members during the women's meetings. Clearly the relationship between the department and the auxiliary was becoming frayed.

To merely say that the auxiliary were "prolific fund raisers" would be to misrepresent the hours spent in planning and carrying out all the activities that generated enormous sums for the department. No one has yet sat down and calculated that exact figure, but roughly estimated it would be staggering.

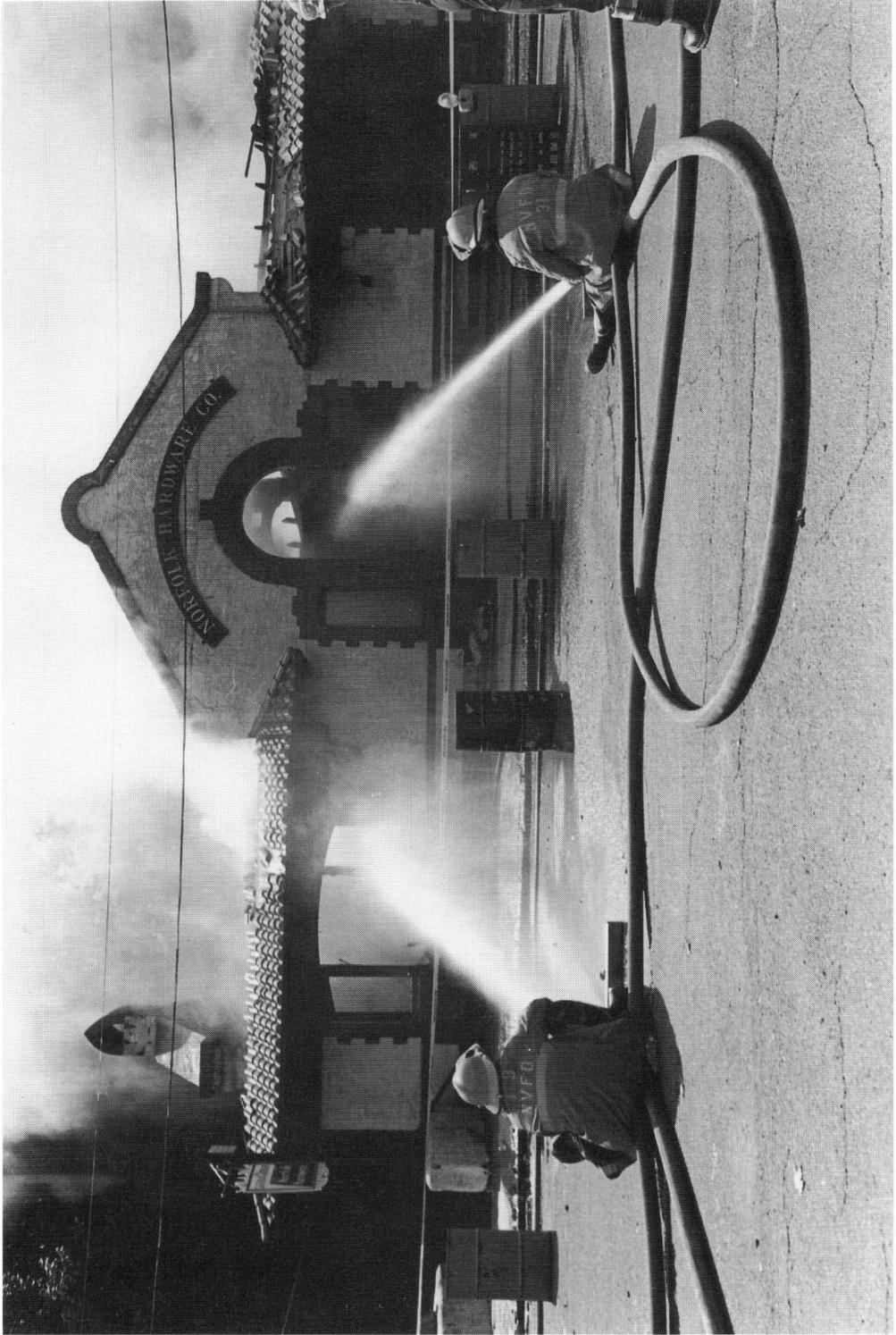
Perhaps, because the department itself was doing fundraisers on its own behalf for a new truck, the auxiliary began to feel beleaguered. Morale was low and they wondered about their usefulness. So they sent a letter to the department asking whether the department wanted them to disband or not and, if so, what the members wanted the auxiliary to do with the money left in their treasury. A similar contretemps occurred early in the Janssen years and an emissary was sent to repair the damage and to reestablish a good relationship. In the Kelley years no such emissary was sent, but the auxiliary continued its good work.

Fires and Accidents

In mid-May of 1990, a barn on Windrow Road in Great Mountain Forest burned. In addition to equipment, lumber, and an antique outrigger canoe, the loss entailed a never-to-be-replaced structure of historical import. A week after the fire the owner wrote this sad but graceful letter to the local paper:

"Editor of the Register Citizen:

"Since 1820 the rambling complex of post and beam barns on Windrow Road weathered storms, lightning, and the ravages of time. Built by Norfolk's historic Crissey family, it was the last remaining edifice to stand in testament to their quality craftsmanship and concern for future generations. In its latter years, as agricultural



Norfolk Hardware Co. Sept. 1987

MICHAELA ALLAN MURPHY



Norfolk Hardware Co. Sept. 1987

MICHAELA ALLAN MURPHY

pursuits have given way to tree farming, the Crissey Barn sheltered specialty lumber, assorted equipment, and countless barn swallows, skunks, woodchucks and other small rodents and reptiles. On a rainy Mother's Day afternoon, standing alone at the end of the dirt road, the Crissey Barn, with all its agricultural antiquities inside, disappeared in flames of unknown origin.

"I am writing to thank the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department who raced to the scene in order to contain the destruction. The selfless dedication of neighbors and friends, who worked late into the night to quench the intense fire and acrid smoke, closed the final chapter on a structure which had been built with the same spirit of community cooperation.

Starling W. Childs
Norfolk"

At three in the morning early in September 1987, a fire was discovered in the Norfolk Hardware Store located on Station Place in the center of downtown. Three hours later the building and its contents were declared totally destroyed even though the fire continued to burn fitfully in the basement area some hours later. Fifteen years earlier there was a fire in the residence of Bernard and Marsha Polinsky on Litchfield Road but there is no evidential connection between the two conflagrations. When the firemen entered the building, they were met with an intensely hot blue flame that forced them to withdraw. For the next three hours they poured about 4,000 gallons per minute on the fire. The following day the Department of Environmental Protection warned farmers to keep their livestock out of the Blackberry River for fear that it was polluted with contaminants.

The firemen constructed a wall of water between the two adjacent buildings, a majestic barn to the rear and the Norfolk Pharmacy to the right. As a result these two buildings emerged virtually unscathed.

What did not emerge unscathed was the downtown section of Norfolk. The hardware store had been housed in a gem of a building that was listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. The building, strangely enough for a New England town, had a Mediterranean motif created by its stucco walls and red tile roof. It was eighty-four years old when it was lost to posterity.

Late in May 1988, the fire department was called to the residence of John and Eve Thew at two-thirty in the morning. A bolt of lightning had struck their satellite dish and traveled along the wire and into Thew's shop. The lightning fused some copper that he used to make weather vanes and other sculptures. A pile of rags was ignited making a visit from the firemen necessary. The only other damage that Chief Janssen could see was some gutters that were torn from the roof by the force of the lightning.

Late in February of 1989 the Mountain Road house of James and Ann Laughlin was seriously damaged by fire. The Fire Marshall, Ralph Hazen, credited the Norfolk firemen with a quick knockdown of the flames and saving the house. The first man at the scene attacked the fire from the front while other firemen hooked the main attack pumper to a hydrant 800 feet away. Laughlin and an unidentified woman were slightly burned when they attempted to beat out the fire with blankets. They had to resort to blankets because their fire extinguishers had been sent out to be recharged.

On the last day of May 1991 a tanker truck carrying 2,500 pounds of dry ammonium nitrate and 10,000 pounds of ammonium nitrate mixed with fuel oil flipped over on Route 44 spilling its contents on the road and over an embankment. The truck was coming from the Allyndale Limestone Corporation in East Canaan when the accident occurred. The owner of the truck company later issued a blithe denial of the danger involved but the firemen from Norfolk may well have been cognizant, rightfully, of the explosion of that mixture which devastated Texas City. In the year 2000 it was used to destroy the federal building in Oklahoma City.

Just before noon on a hot July day in 1997, a barn on the Three Belle Farm on Litchfield Road caught fire. Assistant Chief Leo Colwell said the alarm came in at 11:02 and that he soon called in mutual aid from half a dozen companies. Seven hours later Chief Osborne said that the barn, uninsured, and its contents were totally destroyed — leaving the farmer, Richard Fellows, desolate and unsure about his future.

On an April afternoon in 1998, the department was called to an automobile accident on Route 44 near the town's border with Canaan. Two women from Torrington in their late seventies were killed when their car collided with a van. Both women had to be extricated from their Buick and flown by Lifestar helicopters to Hartford Hospital.

Life Star

Perhaps it was a subconscious thing, but the department has always chosen secretaries who are sober and serious. Their writing style tended to be clipped and brisk — almost telegraphic. Never, with one exception, does humor or levity creep into the minutes. On September 1, 1992 Secretary Gordon Christinat noted that Life Star had sent a letter to the department requesting an updated version of a map of Norfolk. Christinat then continues: “Chief Bill will try to find out if any thing has changed in Norfolk in the last hundred years and send them a new USGS.” (United States Geographical Survey)

Less than a year later, the department was called to the scene of a pickup involved in a rollover. Those who responded recognized the serious injuries to the two men in the truck and called in Life Star for transport of the victims to Hartford Hospital.

Two weeks later Kim Wishart, Life Star flight nurse, sent a letter to the department affirming the fact that this was an appropriate Life Star call. She said the extent of the injuries was such that “both men are fortunate they were taken to a Level I trauma center.”

Wishart then went on to detail the injuries:

“Patient #1 was the passenger who sustained right open tib/fib fractures and closed left humerus fracture and facial lacerations. He was taken to the OR for his orthopedic injuries and was discharged to home in good condition on May 26, 1993.

“Patient #2 was the driver, a 35-year old male who was unable to move anything from the neck down immediately following the accident. His injuries include C4-C5 sublux, C4 fracture, central cord syndrome. He is able to move his lower extremities but not his upper extremities. He does continue to improve.”

This incident – accident dramatized that careful planning with the ambulance corps and Life Star was necessary for the department to fulfill its mission. One “event” like this would justify the sacrifices of the members and the financial outlay of the town. Fortunately and unfortunately there are many similar “events” that supply the “raison d’être” for the department and its members.

Kelley Dies

Early in February of 1996, the town of Norfolk was enormously saddened by the death of William S. Kelley, the chief of the department. The funeral cortege was led by Engine #30, a truck that Kelley had worked for four years to secure for the department and the town. His obituary notice was crisp and succinct but it conveyed the grief of the department and the town that he had served so well.

“NORFOLK — William F. Kelley of Norfolk, husband of Mary La Claire Kelley, died Feb. 2, 1996 at Winsted Memorial Hospital.

“Mr. Kelley was born in Winsted March 23, 1953, son of Barbara (Miller) Kelley of Norfolk and the late Frederick Kelley. He was a 1971 graduate of Northwest Regional High School in Winsted and a 1978 graduate of the University of Hartford.

“He worked for 18 years for the Southern New England Telephone Company. He was a member of the Norfolk Fire Department since 1977 and served as chief for the last four years. He was a coach of the Norfolk Little League and a past member of the Norfolk Curling Club.

“In addition to his wife and mother, Mr. Kelley is survived by a daughter, Lisa Marie Kelley and two sons, Jeffrey Frederick Kelley and Peter Justin Kelley, all in Norfolk; three brothers, Robert Kelley and David Kelley, both in Colebrook and Richard Kelley in Winsted; two sisters, Nancy Cooper of Denton, Texas and Susan Godding of Norfolk; and by many aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews.

“A Mass of Christian Burial preceded by a parade of firefighters from Norfolk and adjacent towns was held Feb. 5 at Immaculate Conception Church in Norfolk. Memorial contributions may be made to the Children’s Fund, in care of the National Iron Bank, Norfolk 06058.”



THE NORFOLK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT: *In Retrospect and in Prospect*

“Each person shines with his or her own light. No two flames are alike. There are big flames and little flames, flames of every color. Some people’s flames are so still they don’t even flicker in the wind, while others have wild flames that fill the air with sparks. Some foolish flames neither burn nor shed light, but others blaze with life so fiercely that you can’t look at them without blinking and if you approach, you shine in fire.”

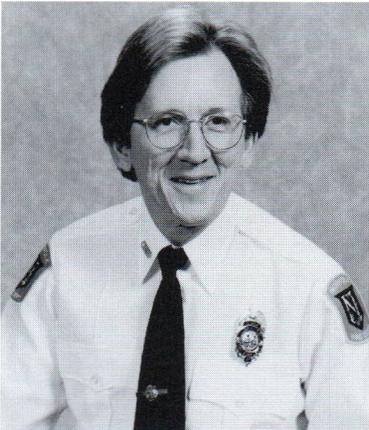
Eduardo Galeano

The author John Mortimer, who is approaching the century mark in age, was asked how he felt. He said: “I feel neither old nor in any way incapacitated. Everything is perfectly all right.” Chief Steven Osborne could well echo these sentiments when he is asked about the health of the department as it approaches the century mark: “The department in every respect is young and vigorous. It is at the best it has ever been in terms of community support, being manned by well-trained firemen and fully equipped with up-to-date trucks. Everything is perfectly all right.”

If there is a theme to the annual reports that Osborne submitted to the Finance Committee and then published in the town’s Annual Report, it is the readiness to serve the town and it environs in a broad-based way. The culture of the department had long ago dictated that fire fighting alone was not enough; the department would serve the people of Norfolk in time of need in any way. Coupled with that cultural conviction was the host of rules and regulations and mandates that issued forth from OSHA, the state of Connecticut and the associations calling for a readiness to serve and to serve well in emergencies.

Given that cultural and regulatory mandate, Osborne has made it a hallmark of his administration that the men be trained in a disciplined fashion so as, in his words, to be “...ready for every emergency.”

In this context he singled out the department’s involvement in the search for the missing girl along the banks and waters of the Housatonic in Great Barrington. He noted that the cold-water rescue suit was used for the first time, a suit that had been purchased and stored and then used against such an emergency.



NATHAN TSUKROFF

Chief Steve Osborne

He stressed the power of the duality of trained men and modern equipment. He cited as an

example the fire on the tower of Haystack Mountain on the evening of July 3, 2000. When lightning struck the town's most prominent landmark, the trucks rolled in the dark of night. The members had to walk and hand lay hose from the upper parking lot to the tower. While people gathered in front of the post office to see the spectacle, the firemen did their work, justifying the time they had spent in staying fit, in training for such fires, and using the tanker to its perfect advantage.

In the combined chiefships of Janssen, Kelley, and Osborne the number of calls over a ten year period has increased by 37% and the number of automatic alarms increased by 89%. The number of fire calls (brush, structure, car and chimney) amounted to 98 or 11% of the total.

An analysis of the calls made by the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department during the past ten years as found in the town records indicates that the leading number is in response to automatic alarms. During the past twenty years and at a growing rate, homeowners in the town

Table I – Fire Calls by Year

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	*1997	1998	1999	2000	Total	%
Automatic Alarms	23	16	22	14	36	28	31	34	41	43	288	32
Motor Vehicle Accidents	20	11	22	15	16	19	8	20	20	22	173	19.4
Mutual Aid	16	13	9	8	8	13	13	13	16	16	125	14
Brush, Grass Fires	5	7	1	5	2		4	3	7	2	36	4
Power Lines Down	6	3	6	9	4	7	20	7	1	25	88	10
Structure Fires	5		2	4	1		1	4	4	2	23	2.5
Car Fires	1	4	4	1	1	1	3	2	1		18	2
Chimney Fires	2	1	2	2	7	2	2		3		21	2.4
Life Star								2		2	4	1.4
Rescues	1					1		2			4	1.4
Miscellaneous	7	11	8	7	6	8	20	8	13	11	99	11
HazMat Spills				2					2		4	1.4
Search	3	1			1						5	.6
Downed Plane	1	1									2	.2
	90	68	76	67	82	79	102	95	108	123	890	
* No Annual Report Filed in 1996.												

are subscribing to this service partially as a result of two working adults in the family and a sustained advertising campaign by the companies that provide this service and, presumably, security.

From 1990 to 1991, Chief Janssen served as president of the Litchfield County Fire Chief Emergency Plan. In his annual report in 1992, Chief Janssen said that over 25% of the yearly calls were from false alarms from Automatic Alarm Systems. Over the ten year period defective alarm systems account for 32% of the calls. Janssen called for homeowners to service their systems on a yearly basis so as to obviate the need to respond to false alarms, but that level of dysfunction continued and even increased despite his plea.

Motor vehicle accidents which required the presence of a fire truck and firemen accounted for the next highest number of calls, 19% over the ten year period. Added to that number were eighteen car fires which then made "motor vehicle" calls account for over 21% of the department calls. The presence of main routes 44 and 272 through town put that kind of burden on the department.

Fourteen percent of the calls came through mutual aid. Some of these, relatively few, were for stand-by but most of them, obviously, were fires of some magnitude like the Canaan Train Station and included structural fires.

Structural fires within the town of Norfolk only accounted for 2.5% of the calls to the department. That low number appears to be significant however.

The efforts of the fire marshall and the department in waging a campaign of fire prevention seem to have had an effect and a good one. The residents of Norfolk are house proud; their homes are well-maintained and their lawns are well groomed. In addition there are a host of dwellings and buildings that are magnificent in design and historical in value. Many of them are the work of Alfredo Taylor, the famed architect, and detailed in a recent Garside book. Half of his 35 buildings are listed on the Historical Register. Most if not all the town buildings are vulnerable to fire and continue to need the constant protections of a well-equipped fire department.

A certain element of neglect still prevails in home management and that has to do with chimney fires. The charm of the fireplace is real. So there are over two chimney fires on average in town each year.

In a town that suffers the ravages of severe winters, it is no surprise that 10% of the calls have to do with downed power lines. The records show that averages do not prevail in this category. Rather there are two spikes in the data, 20 calls in the year '96-'97, and 25 calls in the year '99-'00. Not only is the severity of the weather a factor in this regard, but the level of preventive maintenance by state road crews plays an important part.

Although they are relatively rare, Haz Mat spills, Life Star landings, and search and rescue missions are part and parcel of the department's responsibility. A plane down in Wangum Lake, for example, was a challenge to the firemen and ambulance workers responding to that call.

Eleven percent of the calls were in the miscellaneous category. This category included dryer fires, corralling a loose pig, and the traditional cat in the tree.

Prospects

It is significant that the most important fire that was knocked down by the department under Chief Osborne was the Haystack Tower fire.

It seemed to validate the prophetic words of the poet:

*If there's fire on the mountain
Or lightning and storm
And a god speaks from the sky
That means someone is hearing
The outcry...*

Seamus Heaney

The someone who has heard the outcry for the last hundred years has been the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department. And if the gods continue to speak, the outcry for protection for life and property by the people of Norfolk will be heard for the next hundred years and beyond.

But in order to achieve that goal the department will have to live a paradox. The social commentator and observer of contemporary culture, Marshall Fishwick — Professor of American Studies at Virginia Tech — said: “Now we don’t like or trust one another. That lack of trust shows itself in many ways — the decline of civility, the lack of manners, the lack of respect for other people’s authority, race, gender. We don’t know about camaraderie.”

Camaraderie is at the heart of a well-functioning fire department. It is that special bonding that takes place among people who collectively are enduring great stress and great peril. It is felt by actors performing *Macbeth*, it is felt by policemen on mean streets, it is felt by soldiers on the field of battle, and it is felt by firemen at the scene of a catastrophe. It is not familial. It is not friendship. It does not permit failure. It does not allow for a weakness of will. It is camaraderie.

Camaraderie is the fusion of discipline, character, and dedication. Camaraderie is what has characterized the department for one hundred years. And even though it is countercultural, it is the only thing that will make the department endure and prevail in the next hundred. With good fortune it exists in a town whose commitment is to the virtues of community living and where the word volunteer is a byword.

Most recently, the department through mutual aid responded to a call when the Canaan Depot was in flames. It helped contain the blaze.

The owner of the depot, Paul Ramunni, reflected after the fire was over on the import of it all. This is what he said:

“Sure, they will pay for what they have done but can we talk about rehabilitation here or is this just a disposable society? My question is, What led four very young children, who don’t live next door to the station, to go out at 1 AM, to bring materials, and to start that fire? I just think, ‘Holy smokes, what have we got out there; what went through their minds?’ These are not bad, bad kids, but, buildings aside, right now I think we have a crisis with our kids. My heart goes out to their families. I can just imagine what they are going through. There is tragedy all around us. My focus is, this is bad, how do we make it better?”

The NVFD will respond to the Ramunni challenge by continuing to socialize the young into public service, into volunteerism, and into good works — simply because it is good.

The principles of longevity are there — the department resembles a grand oak growing and sheltering the town of Norfolk. On this centennial, it is not just the branches and leaves that are perceived but all the rings beneath, one hundred of them, alive and existing simultaneously.

End Notes

1. Alice V. Waldecker (ed.), *Norfolk, Connecticut 1900-1975* (Winsted, CT: Winchester Press, 1976), 251.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, 206.

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- Hartford *Courant*, *passim*.
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- Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department, *Archives 1902-2002*. (Unpublished).
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- Town of Norfolk, *Annual Reports 1990-1995, 1997-2000*. (Unpublished).
- Winsted *Evening Citizen*, *passim*.
- Winsted *Journal*, *passim*.
- Waterbury *Register Citizen*, *passim*.

List of Officers

1902-1912

Edmund Brown	Chief
William O'Connor	1st Assistant
Warren C. Corbally	2nd Assistant

1913-1914

P.W. Johnson	Chief
W.H. Smith	1st Assistant
Wm. B. Dyer	2nd Assistant

1915-1916

James J. Kennely	Chief
John Hollister	1st Assistant
William Whalen	2nd Assistant

1917-1920

Calvin Hall	Chief
George O'Connor	1st Assistant
Fred Hollister	2nd Assistant

1921

Fred Hollister	Chief
John B. Griffin	1st Assistant
Samuel Curtiss	2nd Assistant

1922-1930

John B. Griffin	Chief
George O'Connor	1st Assistant
Joseph Carroll	2nd Assistant

1931-1933

John Griffin	Chief
George O'Connor	1st Assistant
Ernest Blanchard	2nd Assistant

1934-1945

John Griffin	Chief
Ernest Blanchard	1st Assistant
Ellis Sylvernale	2nd Assistant

1946-1959

Ellis Sylvernale	Chief
Ernest Blanchard	1st Assistant
Howard Caul	2nd Assistant

1960

Joseph Garrity	Chief
Howard Caul	1st Assistant
Wallace Hotchkiss, Jr.	2nd Assistant

1961-1965

Joseph Garrity	Chief
Wallace Hotchkiss, Jr.	1st Assistant
William Tierney	2nd Assistant

1966

Wallace Hotchkiss	Chief
William Tierney	1st Assistant
Edwin Kelley	2nd Assistant

1967-1971

Martin O'Connor	Chief
Edwin Kelley	1st Assistant
Edward Wuori	2nd Assistant

1972-1973

Martin O'Connor	Chief
Edwin Kelley	1st Assistant
Philip Byrne	2nd Assistant

1974

Martin O'Connor	Chief
Alan Redford	1st Assistant
Philip Byrne	2nd Assistant

1975-1978

Martin O'Connor	Chief
Philip Byrne	1st Assistant
Alan Redford	2nd Assistant

1979

Martin O'Connor	Chief
Philip Byrne	1st Assistant
Steven Janssen	2nd Assistant

1980

Martin O'Connor	Chief
Philip Byrne	1st Assistant
Steven Janssen	2nd Assistant
Alan Redford	President

1981

Martin O'Connor	Chief
Steven Janssen	1st Assistant
Ron Zanobi	2nd Assistant
Alan Redford	President

1982

Steven Janssen	Chief
David Godding	1st Assistant
Ronald Zanobi	2nd Assistant
Ronald Zanobi	President

1983-1984

Steven Janssen	Chief
David Godding	1st Assistant
Ronald Zanobi	2nd Assistant
Richard Byrne	President

1985-1989

Steven Janssen	Chief
Ronald Zanobi	1st Assistant
Richard Byrne	2nd Assistant
Richard Byrne	President

1990

Steven Janssen	Chief
Ronald Zanobi	1st Assistant
Richard Byrne	2nd Assistant
Daniel Wuori	President

1991

Steven Janssen	Chief
William Kelley	1st Assistant
Steven Osborne	2nd Assistant
Paul Padua	President

1992

William Kelley	Chief
Steven Osborne	1st Assistant
David Godding	2nd Assistant
Daniel Wuori	President

1993-1996

William Kelley	Chief
Steven Osborne	1st Assistant
John Hutchins	2nd Assistant
Daniel Wuori	President

1997-1998

Steven R. Osborne	Chief
John Hutchins	1st Assistant
Leo Colwell	2nd Assistant
Daniel Wuori	President

1999

Steven R. Osborne	Chief
Leo Colwell	1st Assistant
Daryl Byrne	2nd Assistant
Daniel Wuori	President

2000-2002

Steven R. Osborne	Chief
Daryl Byrne	1st Assistant
Jeff Towle	2nd Assistant
Arthur Rosenblatt	President

List of Members

Adamson, Paul	7/11/83	Bridgman, H. H. – Honorary	10/9/07
Ahern, Rev. John	6/9/89	Brinkmann, Hans	4/12/74
Allen, Charles	1940	Brown, Benjamin	10/9/07
Allen, Jacob	1940	Brown, Edmund – Chief	
Allen, Paul	1940	1902-1913	6/6/02
Andrews, Dale	1961	Brown, Seth	1940
Andrews, Martin	10/6/58	Browne, Neil	1974
Anstett, Lester	1940	Browne, William C.	9/24/62
Anstett, Terry	11/4/91	Bunel, Jules	1940
Ayres, Tim	8/4/86	Bunnell, Todd	
Bachman, Donald	3/19/68	Burke, Luke	8/4/86
Barbagallo, Jonathan	1993	Burke, Mark	8/4/86
Barron, Leslie	10/4/71	Burke, Ross	5/5/75
Barry, John	1940	Byrne, Daryl – Asst. Chief	6/10/88
Barry, John M.	8/15/60	Byrne, Keith	10/90
Barry, Sean	1988	Byrne, Philip – Asst. Chief	5/6/61
Barry, Thomas	1931	Byrne, Richard – Asst. Chief/	
Barstow, Dr. Richard I. –		President	2/5/68
Honorary	9/13/48	Calder, John P.	2/26/66
Bauchet, Paul	4/3/18	Calder, Lewis	1930
Bayliss, Kimberly	4/7/86	Calder, Willis	8/3/42
Bazeley, Philip	10/4/71	Caldwell, Harry	4/2/51
Bazzano, Anthony	12/3/56	Camp, Fred	1940
Bazzano, John	11/3/97	Camp, Fredrick	1913
Bazzano Sr., John		Canfield, George	8/6/79
Bell, Clifford	6/6/77	Cantinelli, Angelo	
Benavides, Louis		Capocefalo Jr., John	5/30/56
Benedict, Earl	1940	Card, Clarence	12/29/41
Benedict, Gifford		Carr, George	1931
Benedict, R. Joseph	7/1988	Carroll, Joseph R. –	
Benedict, Richard J.	9/24/62	Asst. Chief/Honorary	10/9/07
Bennett, Edward	9/12/55	Carroll, William – Honorary	9/13/48
Bigelow, G. R. – Honorary	10/9/07	Carter, H. W. – Honorary	10/9/07
Black, Hugh	4/7/14	Carvallo, Manual	1996
Blanchard, Earnest – Asst. Chief	4/5/21	Casey, James	9/9/46
Blanchard, Paul	4/1/13	Casey, James – Honorary	3/6/49
Blow, John L. – Foreman	1912	Cassidy, Rev. H. F. – Honorary	1940
Bottum, Gary	4/7/86	Catinelli, Angelo	4/5/48
Bowles, Richard	2/5/68	Caul, Charles H.	1912
Brayen, Harry	9/10/01	Caul, Howard – Asst. Chief/	
Brazey Jr., Harry	8/24/59	Honorary	1945

Cavaio, Manuel		
Charron, W.	1935	
Chasson Jr., Wilfred		
Chattleton, Grover	4/1/13	
Chattleton, Samuel	1940	
Christinat, Edward (Ted)	1940	
Christinat, George	1940	
Christinat, Gordon	2/3/64	
Christinat, Irving	1940	
Christinat, John	4/1/13	
Christinat, Steven	5/5/75	
Christinat, Vincent	4/7/38	
Christinat Jr., George	1/5/59	
Clark, M. N. – Honorary	10/9/07	
Clements, Wesley	8/23/54	
Coccomo, Frank	6/5/59	
Coe, Mike	10/5/81	
Coleman, Jeff	1/1994	
Coleman, Mike	1/1994	
Collar, A. Burton	6/25/02	
Collar, Fred S.		
Collar, Russell	1940	
Collar, Walter W.	1940	
Collins, Donald		
Collins, James	9/2/82	
Colwell, Francis	2/2/81	
Colwell, Leo	4/23/54	
Colwell Jr., Harold	10/6/47	
Colwell Jr., Leo – Asst. Chief	10/1985	
Colwell Sr., Harold	1938	
Cone, Winthrop	1902	
Conklin, Ray	8/24/70	
Cook, Henry – Honorary	7/5/43	
Cook, Robert	4/1/57	
Cook, Robert	8/17/80	
Corbally, Warren C. – Asst. Chief/ Foreman	6/20/02	
Costello, Thomas	4/7/14	
Cowles, M. – Honorary	10/9/07	
Crissey, Mr. & Mrs. – Honorary	10/9/07	
Crissey, R. I. – Honorary	10/9/07	
Crunden, Douglas	6/8/70	
Currier, Fred		
Currier, Joe	11/3/86	
Curtiss, Alfred	4/5/21	
Curtiss, Augustus	12/3/53	
Curtiss, Francis	1/7/63	
Curtiss, James	2/7/77	
Curtiss, James	9/9/46	
Curtiss, Jeff	9/11/00	
Curtiss, John	1/3/83	
Curtiss, Louis	1940	
Curtiss, Peter		
Curtiss, Philip – Honorary	1932	
Curtiss, Richard		
Curtiss, Richard V.	2/4/46	
Curtiss, Robin P.	11/4/74	
Curtiss, Samuel – Asst. Chief	1921	
Curtiss, Willaim H.	4/1/13	
Curtiss Jr., John	4/1/13	
D., George	1945	
Daapp, Max	4/1/13	
Dallas, Alvin	1997	
Dallas, Alvin J.	1997	
Dauphinais, Larry	8/4/86	
Dauphinais, Ronald	6/19/90	
deCaprio, Patrick	1940	
Deloy, Leon	3/6/49	
deLulio, Albert	4/2/51	
DeMars, Charles	1913	
DeMars, Clarence	4/7/14	
Dennis, Dr. Fredrick S. – Honorary	7/31/02	
Denny, Robin	1993	
Denny, Rowland	1994	
Derby, William		
Deularm, Joseph sp	2/16/73	
Dodd, Andrew J.	1913	
Dodd, Henry	1944	
Dodd, Martin B.	10/9/07	
Dougherty, Cindy		
Dougherty, Donny	1999	
Driscoll, Edward	1940	
Driscoll, William	4/5/65	
Dudley, James	7/5/43	

Durgin, Paul	1986	Gomez, Chris	1/3/00
Dusek, Roscoe	6/3/74	Gomez, David	6/2/97
Dutcher Jr., Mulford	4/12/16	Gourley, David	
Duval, Brandon		Gracewski, Travis	
Dyer, Cecil – Honorary	4/5/21	Grant, M. F. – Honorary	10/9/07
Dyer, George	8/2/76	Gray, George	4/5/54
Dyer, John	4/5/21	Green, George	1/7/63
Dyer, William B. – Chief 1915	1913	Green, Joe	9/2001
Dyer Jr., John F.	1/8/47	Griffin, John H. – Chief	
Dziedzic, Suzie	11/3/97	1922-1945	1922-1945
Eckel, Robert	10/6/82	Grith, Frank	4/2/79
Eckel, Spencer	9/14/82	Gritman, DelRoyh	
Eckel, Steve	10/15/87	Gunsalys, George	4/1/13
Eckworth, John	8/24/53	Haddock, Mrs. K. J. – Honorary	10/9/07
Egzo, Carmen	1930	Hall, Calvin – Chief	
Eldridge, Misses – Honorary	10/9/07	1915-1917	1915-1917
Evans, Sandy	11/6/00	Hall, Howard	1940
Farington, Edward C. – Honorary ...	9/13/48	Hall, Kenneth	8/26/57
Farnsworth, George	4/3/72	Hall, Thomas	3/6/49
Fields, Eugene	4/1/13	Hamlin, Dr. Nason – Honorary	6/19/90
Fields, Harry – Honorary	4/5/21	Hamlin, Seth	
Flink, Robert	6/4/51	Hannafin, Donald – Veteran	1940
Fransham, John		Hannafin, Lawrence	1940
Frask, Walter	4/5/21	Hannafin, Lawrence L.	10/6/58
Funchion, Matt	1995	Hannafin, Lester – Veteran	1940
Gabelman, Robert	5/7/77	Harless, Joe	2/5/68
Gagnon, Mark	1/7/85	Harnaut sp, Dr. I. L. – Honorary	10/9/07
Garfield, Richard	5/1972	Harrington, Charles – Honorary	4/4/55
Garrapy, Leo	12/3/53	Harrington, Ernest	4/2/51
Garrapy, Tom		Hayes, Michael	1940
Garrity, Joseph R. – Chief		Heneage, Cameron	6/5/59
1961-1965	2/4/46	Herviex, Dougals	12/7/87
Garrity, Vincent	9/9/46	Hester, Franklin	12/3/56
Giansiracusa, Edward	12/15/49	Hester, Thomas	4/5/54
Giansiracusa, Paul	1940	Higgins, Harold	1940
Giansiracusa, Sebastiano	10/6/47	Higgley, Louis	6/6/85
Gibb, Robert	11/3/97	Hildebrand, Joseph	4/7/13
Gibbs, O. E.	10/9/07	Hinman, Edward	9/8/86
Gidman, Harry	1913	Holleran, Daniel	1940
Gidman, Verner F.	4/1/13	Holleran, Joseph	1940
Godding, David	9/3/75	Hollister, Frederick L. – Chief	
Gollan, Graham	9/9/74	1921-1922	1921-1922
Gomez, Chadd	1999	Hollister, John – Asst. Chief	1913

Hollister, William	4/7/14	Kelley, James C.	7/26/76
Hopkins, Edward	9/8/47	Kelley, Mike	9/9/74
Hotchkiss, Charles	4/1/13	Kelley, William – Chief 1992-1996	1988
Hotchkiss, Charles E.	1940	Kendall, Dr. J. C. – Honorary	10/9/07
Hotchkiss, David	2/3/64	Kennedy, Thomas	10/9/07
Hotchkiss, William	1940	Kennelly, James – Chief	
Hotchkiss Jr., Wallace – Chief 1966	1940	1917-1921	1917-1921
Hotchkiss Sr., Wallace	1940	Kenney, Brian	5/7/90
Hull, Francis	6/4/51	Kiminker, Arnold	12/4/61
Humphy, John	4/1/13	Knowlson, George	9/8/47
Hunt, Harris	6/2/53	Koger, John	3/6/49
Hunter, Perry	3/5/73	Kurtz, Jonathan	3/5/90
Hurst, Joe	9/9/74	Lambertson, Walter	12/15/49
Hurst Jr., William	12/6/71	LaMothe, Fred	1940
Huss, Julius L. F.	1941	Lang, Fred	4/7/75
Hutchins, Brian	2/1998	Larson, Chris	
Hutchins, John – Asst. Chief	2/2/81	Larson, Everett	7/1/85
Isabell, Peter	7/23/74	Lawrence, John	2/6/50
Jackman, Francis	3/6/49	Lawrence, Morris	4/5/21
Jackman, William	4/1/13	Lazzaro, Larry	10/1/01
Jacobs, Harold	1940	Leahy, Thomas	4/12/16
Janssen, Frank	2/27/81	Leonard, Thomas	2/25/74
Janssen, Louis		Levi, James S. – Asst. Chief	6/20/02
Janssen, Steven – Chief 1981-1992 ...	5/1/72	Lewis, Reginald	1943
Jennings, Woody		Linsky, Charles	12/3/56
Johnson, Arnold	3/6/44	Loomis, Winthrop	1940
Johnson, E. H.	6/25/02	Lovetri, Charles	3/6/49
Johnson, L. N.	10/9/07	Lovetri, Salvatore	1940
Johnson, Philemon W. – Chief		Lovetri, Service	1930
1913-1915	1913-1915	Lovett, George	9/12/55
Johnson, Roy		Lucier, Edward P. – Honorary	1940
Johnson, Victor E.	1/8/45	Ludwig, Ben	1/17/95
Johnston, Richard		Ludwig, Judy	11/6/00
Jordan, John	1940	Ludwig, Ken	9/1999
Kaiser, Paul	10/4/71	Ludwig, Matt	10/1996
Kane, James E.	10/9/50	Lufkin, Ezra – Honorary	1940
Keating, Rev. P. – Honorary	10/9/07	Luke, Charles	6/6/77
Keiller, Ralph	9/8/47	Lutisi, Robin P.	10/9/74
Kelemen, Pal	10/9/39	Lyford, George	1940
Kelley, David	7/7/75	Lyford, Ted	9/10/45
Kelley, Edwin – Asst. Chief	12/4/50	Mahoney, Malcolm	
Kelley, Fred	8/19/60	Mahoney, Robert	
Kelley, James	4/5/21	Mahoney, Wayne	10/29/74

Maloney, Joseph L.	2/4/46	Mulville, Mike	1967
Manning, John	2/6/50	Mulville, Peter	3/6/49
Mannion, James	2/3/64	Mulville Jr., Maurice F	1940
Marchand, Eugene	4/7/14	Nash Jr., George D.	1940
Marchi, Bob	11/3/00	Nay, William C.	12/3/79
Marchi, Peter	2/14/83	Nay Sr., Robert J.	9/24/62
Marshant, Jerry	10/4/71	Newell, Edwin	11/1/43
Martin Jr., James – Honorary	12/15/49	Northway, C. K. – Honorary	10/9/07
Masters, Edwin	5/3/43	Ocain, Chris	3/24/79
Mathis Jr., Peter	10/4/71	O'Connor, Edward – Honorary	4/1/13
Matula, Frank	1940	O'Connor, George R. – Asst. Chief/Honorary	1917
McAllister, Damean		O'Connor, Harold	1940
McCafferty, Bruce	2/5/88	O'Connor, James	12/15/49
McCarthy, Eugene	4/1/13	O'Connor, John	12/1/58
McCarthy, John	9/8/47	O'Connor, John – Honorary	1940
McCarthy, Joseph	2/4/46	O'Connor, Kevin	5/6/61
McCarthy, William	3/6/49	O'Connor, Martin – Chief 1967-1976	12/1/58
McCarthy Jr., Joseph	10/9/50	O'Connor, Patrick	3/6/49
McEnroe, Thomas J.	6/16/13	O'Connor, Richard	12/1/59
McKenzie, Jeri – 1st female firefighter	7/6/84	O'Connor, Russell	1940
Mead, Hartley	10/7/85	O'Connor, Thomas	1940
Mecre, Dave		O'Connor, Timothy P.	2/4/46
Mercouchoff, Sergi	3/7/77	O'Connor, William R. – Asst. Chief	6/20/02
Millard, Keith	6/4/73	O'Connor Jr., Edward	1942
Miller, Michael		O'Connor Jr., Edward	6/1/41
Miller, Roland – Honorary	11/4/91	O'Connor Jr., Russel	
Miller, Skook		O'Connor Jr., William	4/5/21
Miller, Todd	1988	O'Donnell, F. A.	10/9/07
Mitchell, Regiald – Honorary	3/13/46	O'Dywer, Henry – Honorary	1940
Moersch Jr., William	8/24/59	Oen, Robert	3/3/78
Monroe, Mike		Osborne, Richard	1975
Moore, David	4/5/54	Osborne, Steve – Chief 1992-Present	8/6/84
Moore, James	11/1/54	Overdorf, Charles	4/12/16
Moore Sr., John E.	1931	Padua, Paul – President	9/14/81
Muller, Kerry	1993	Padua, Scott	12/4/01
Mulville, Carroll	1970	Paine, R. P. – Honorary	10/9/07
Mulville, Edward	1940	Pallone, Joseph – Honorary	8/24/53
Mulville, Gerald	1940	Pallone, Robert	9/14/82
Mulville, John	4/7/13		
Mulville, John D.	1940		
Mulville, John V.	1940		

Papas, Mike	1991	Seiller, John	1913
Patenaude, Kurt	1999	Selden, Joseph – Honorary	10/9/07
Payman, Robert	3/4/74	Selden, Stephen A.	1915
Peterson, Chris	4/1/91	Shields, Fred – Honorary	1931
Peterson, Robert	8/5/85	Shrope, William	8/24/53
Pinney, Dr. A. W. – Honorary	10/9/07	Sieller, Joseph	1924
Pinney, J. S.	10/9/07	Sieller, Pierre – Honorary	1940
Pinto, Fabio	3/5/90	Smith, Alton – Honorary	1940
Pixley, Harry	10/9/07	Smith, Charles	8/24/53
Platt, Curtiss	10/6/58	Smith, Earle V.	1/8/45
Podhajecki, Beth	9/11/00	Smith, Edward	1940
Potter, Rev. James H. – Honorary	9/13/48	Smith, Frank	4/5/21
Preece, Albert	6/3/91	Smith, William H. – Asst. Chief	1913
Preece, Edward	6/3/91	Snow, Melvin E. – Asst. Chief	1902
Preece, Lorraine	11/4/91	Sorenson, Carl	1940
Preston, Fred	4/5/21	Spaulding Jr., William	4/1/13
Priestly, Russell M.	3/6/44	Spear, April	11/6/00
Pritchard, Dewey	1940	Spring, E. – Honorary	10/9/07
Pupin, Prof. M. I. – Honorary	10/9/07	Standard, Horace	4/7/21
Quilges, Louie		Stearns, Rev. W. F. – Honorary	10/9/07
Quinlan, Gregory	6/3/74	Steeves, Ray	11/3/97
Redford, Alan – Asst. Chief/ President	8/24/70	Stevens, W. Friske – Honorary	1940
Reynolds, Arthur	1940	Stoeckel, Carl – Honorary	10/9/07
Riiska, John (Jack)	9/9/46	Stotler, Jamie	3/5/90
Robbins, Roger	3/3/53	Sverni, Paul	6/2/58
Roberts, Alfred	1940	Swan Jr., Clayton	4/5/48
Roberts, Clarence	4/5/48	Sweeney, David	
Roberts, Skook	2/2/81	Sweet, Henry	4/1/13
Robichaud, Rolland L.	3/6/44	Sylvernale, Ellis	5/6/61
Rochelle, Martha		Sylvernale, Ellis – Chief 1946-1959	1931
Root, Harry J.	6/16/13	Sylvernale, Neil	4/1/13
Rosenblatt, Arthur		Tallon, Jim	7/1/68
Roulin, Wesley	3/3/47	Taylor, A. S. G. – Honorary	10/9/07
Roy, George	10/9/07	Thompson, J. H.	1902
Rubdie, Joseph C.	8/24/53	Thurston, William A. – Foreman	1902
Russell, William – Honorary	12/2/74	Tierney, Donald	1940
Schmeltz, Fred	4/7/21	Tierney, Francis L. – Elm Court	1931
Schoff, A. – Honorary	10/9/07	Tierney, George	3/3/53
Scott, John	3/5/73	Tierney, Timothy	5/5/75
Scott, Richard	3/7/77	Tierney, William	4/7/13
Scoville, G. W. – Honorary	10/9/07	Tierney, William – Asst. Chief	1966
		Tierney, William A. – Honorary	2/4/46

Tierney Jr., Francis – West Side	1940	Whalen, Bill	11/4/74
Tierney Jr., William	5/3/75	Whalen, John F	1940
Tobin, Edward J.	4/5/48	Whalen, Joseph – Honorary	1940
Tobin, William	4/1/13	Whalen, Malachi – Honorary	8/24/59
Toomey, Sidney	9/8/47	Whalen, Malachi L.	10/9/07
Toomey, William	1940	Whalen, Richard W. – Honorary	3/13/46
Toumin, Carmen	1940	Whalen, William R. – Asst. Chief	1929
Toumin, John	1940	Whalen III, Malachi J.	3/4/74
Toumin, Joseph	1940	Whalen Jr., Richard J.	1940
Tourruanice, Joe	1930	Wheeler, Glenn	1/1988
Towle, Jeff – Asst. Chief	5/7/90	Whiting, Irving	4/1/13
Towle, Kenneth	4/7/80	Wilcox, Will G.	1921
Transhan, John	1974	William, Russell – Honorary	
Trask, Robert	4/7/13	Williams, John	3/3/53
Travaglin, Thomas	9/9/74	Wolcott, F. C. – Honorary	9/13/48
Treat, Carl	1906	Woodward, Raymond	4/1/57
Tsukroff, Nathon	2001	Woodward, Richard	9/12/55
Tucker, E. L.	4/1/13	Wouri, Dan – President	9/14/82
Ursone, Dr. Frank D.		Wouri, Frank – Honorary	3/6/49
Ursone Jr., Frank	8/24/53	Wouri, Ted – Asst. Chief	1966
Van Buskirk, C. W.	4/1/13	Zani, Larry	11/2001
Vance, Dr. Joe – Honorary	1969	Zanobi, Carmen	3/14/46
Veileux, Don	8/9/88	Zanobi, Dominic	3/14/46
Victory, James	8/24/53	Zanobi, John – Honorary	3/14/46
Voigt, Owen	1942	Zanobi, Joseph – Honorary	3/14/46
Voigt, Owen	8/19/42	Zanobi, Ronald – Asst. Chief/ President	12/6/71
Wadhams, James	1940	Zecker, George	1943
Waldecker, Louis	1940	Zeller, Jody	4/5/93
Washington, Ron	8/24/70	Zimmerman, Charles	1974
Webb, Harold	9/1971	Zucco, Paul	8/15/60
Webb, Kevin	10/1/01		
Weber, John W.	10/9/50		

Ladies Auxiliary

Anderson, Helen 1971	Millard, Polly
Anderson, Kelly	Moreau, Sharon
Ash, Marilyn	Moses, Anne 9/4/73
Bachman, Catherine 1971	Mulville, Barbara 1971
Benavides, Audrey 5/12/72	Mulville, Margaret
Benedict, Barbara	O'Connor, Fran
Burke, Liane 10/6/87	Osborne, Mary 10/1/74
Byrne, Madeleine 1971	Padua, Teri
Byrne, Ann	Palone, Betty
Christinat, Alice 1971	Patnoe, Betty
Conway, Carolyn 1988	Perkins, Carolyn
Crunden, Cynthia 11/12/71	Peterson, Mary
Deloy, Dot	Peyman, Connie
Deveay, JoAnn 1/19/73	Pilbin, Catherine
Evans, Sandra 1998	Polinsky, Marsha 3/6/73
Godding, Bobbie 4/14/72	Sackett, Evelyn 10/3/78
Gundlach, Joanne	Scott, Beatrice 9/4/73
Hall, Mary	Spencer, Betty 2/9/78
Harrington, Peg	Storti, Sarah 11/12/71
Hester, Lucy	Tehietle, Angela 1992
Hinman, Suzanne	Tierney, Erin 2001
Hutchins, Donna 9/1/81	Towle, Martha 9/1/81
Janssen, Mary 9/4/73	Webb, Elaine
Kelley, Barbara 1971	Wheeler, Donna 4/1/90
Kelley, Theresa 1971	White, Bobbie Jo Sep-95
Kenny, Theresa 1971	Williams, Ethel
Lang, Sandra 4/11/75	Wuori, Anne 1971
Ludwig, Shannon 1998	Wuori, Debbie 11/1/83
Ludwig, Judy 1998	Zanobi, Sharon 9/4/73
Lyon, Sally 1971	
Marchand, Elaine	
McLaughlin, Ann 11/12/71	
	Count of Last: 61

APPENDIX

1. The Genealogy of Chief Edmund Brown

Edmund Brown, Esq., a prominent man for many years in all the affairs of the town was born in Manchester, Conn.; when about twelve years of age came to Norfolk and lived with his uncle, Edmund Brown, who had no children. When a young man he started for himself, buying the farm on the west road in Norfolk, where he built, and for most of his life, operated a saw-mill, manufacturing a great amount of lumber, cleared and made productive land of the rocky, primeval forest, and made an attractive home, where he and all his children spent their lives. He was for many years the acting justice of the peace, held nearly all the prominent offices of the town, and represented the town in the state legislature. He was a man of great energy, and of marked integrity and unusual force of character, of excellent judgment, a great reader of books requiring deep thought. At his funeral, Dr. Eldridge remarked of him in closing his address, "Seldom shall we find a man the like of Edmund Brown." He married Mabel Holt Norton, daughter of Ebenezer Norton of Norfolk. Their three daughters, Sarah, Abigail and Harriet were ladies of education, refinement and rare Christian character and worth, who spent their lives, unmarried, on the old homestead. Ralph, the eldest son, was like his father, a thoughtful man, a deep reader, an honored citizen who represented the town in the state legislature, and held many of the prominent town offices. He never married, and spent his life upon the old homestead. Plumb, the younger of the two sons, had many of the marked traits of his father; was a man vigorous of mind and body; held many of the important town offices and positions of trust, and represented the town in the state legislature more than once. He also spent his life on the old homestead. He married Olive E., the only daughter of Benjamin W. Crissey. Their sons, Edmund and Benjamin are now prominent in all the affairs of their native town.

Adapted from Alice Waldecker, *History of Norfolk, 1900-1975*.

2. Litchfield County Fire Chief's Emergency Plan

The Plan held its first meeting at the Torrington Fire Department on Water Street December 3, 1937. Chiefs from nineteen companies of the county met to elect the following officers. President, Chief John Griffin of Norfolk, 1st Vice President, Chief Lynn Deming of New Milford, 2nd Vice President, Chief Robert Henderson of Thomaston, 3rd Vice President, Chief William Mow of Sharon, Treasurer, Chief Allyn Fuller of Canaan, Secretary, Captain Wesley Billings of Thomaston.

The Plan membership at first was made up of chiefs and line officers. At Bantam in 1945 it went on record admitting all firemen of local departments. Later attendance at meetings was reflected in this change. At Washington in 1949 the Plan met with one hundred and thirty-six members and thirty-six visitors from twenty companies being present. For several years an average of eight applicants were received for membership to the Plan at each meeting.

Education

In the first decade of the Plan volunteer firemen were receiving training elsewhere. For example, in 1945 members attended regional schools held by the Connecticut Fire Instructors Association at the New Haven Fire Training School and at Bradley Air Field.

Organization

The by-laws of the Fairfield and New Haven Associations were the guidelines for the Plan through 1939. Then a new set of by-laws was adopted for the next two decades. Hoarace Squire then headed a new by-laws committee that presented amended by-laws adopted at the Plan meeting in Burrville of 1961. They are presented to every new member received into the Plan. At the East Litchfield Fire Hall in July 1960 it voted to be incorporated.

The first gavel for the Plan was made by Frank Miller's father. It was made in the shape of a nozzle and presented at the meeting in Kent in 1941. The banner was presented by the Fairfield County Association, and the American flags by the New Haven Association.

The order of business included the Pledge of Allegiance at the April 1962 meeting. The Plan voted to use it at all meetings thereafter. In June 1962, an invocation was added. The Reverend Lewis Tillson, Episcopal minister was appointed Plan Chaplain. He served as chaplain until his resignation November 1968. At the Plan meeting at the Burrville Volunteer Fire Company the Reverend Vernon Firme United Church of Christ minister was elected the Plan Chaplain. Each meeting begins with the realization the Plan lives under God's sovereignty and serves its country.

Major Projects

The Plan has been the source for greater cooperation between the local fire companies in Litchfield County. It relates the firemen to other organizations: Connecticut State Fireman's Association, State Fire Marshall's Association, Connecticut State Fire Chief's Association, Connecticut Fire Instructors Association, and the Civilian Defense introduced to the Plan in 1951.

The concern for Mutual Aid was noted in a meeting in 1948. Up to 1951 there was no radio committee. At Warren in March of 1952 it was discussed. A Mr. Glen Hold, representative of the Motorola Radio Company was present at the meeting at Pine Meadows April 14, 1953. He explained requirements, and equipment, and cost of a countywide radio communications system.

The county base station was located in the Litchfield Jail about 1957. The radio committee chairman, Chief August Mahieu contacted the City of Torrington to re-locate the base station at the Water Street station. Official approval was given in 1964 and subsequently the base station was located there. The relay station was moved from the Litchfield Jail to the Training School by June 1965. It is the nerve center for effective communications in the county.

The origin of the Training School began with the Plan at Warren on September 15, 1959. A motion was passed favoring the Burrville site, which was formerly a CCC Camp. A new site up on the hill was provided later by the state.

The building committee was appointed in January 1960 by President Horace Squires. It consisted of: William Canty, Chairman and John Noble, John Mullen, John Gibb, Leslie Kilmer, Allan Bowkett, August Mahieu and the president. On September 3, 1961 the new training school including the classroom building, tower and small smoke house was dedicated. A plaque has been placed on the classroom building listing all persons involved in the first venture.

The first training course was conducted by Chief Henry Rougeot in May 1962. Deputy Chief Frank Yanok had conducted the schools of training for about one decade. William Canty was named the director of the school in 1962, a position he holds to the present time. At least some sixteen hundred firemen have participated in the worthwhile training programs.

The development of the school to its present stage of buildings and equipment has been due to the following and their interest. They are William Canty, Victor Clement and Deputy Chief Frank Yanok. The total value of the school property is \$156,609.00.

The Plan is observing its 35th Anniversary in 1972. The thirty-five years of history tells of a genuine concern and sacrifice on the part of all its members and supporting companies in the county. The future usefulness of the Plan is dependent upon the fullest cooperation of all companies in the county.

Thirty-Fifth Anniversary
1937-1972
Litchfield County Fire Chiefs Emergency Plan
Adapted. Courtesy of Edward Wuori.

3. The Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department

HONOR ROLL Of Norfolk Firemen Engaged As Soldiers or Sailors of The United States In the Great War

John E. Moore	Harry DeMars	Joseph W. Benbow
Paul E. Blanchard	G. Leverett Clark	Perry Sylvernale
Neil Sylvernale	Harry E. Root	Eugene McCarthy
William S. Tobin	Richard E. Curtiss	Thomas Costello
John J. Curtiss	Edward Costello	George A. B. Green
Richard J. Whalen	Joseph P. O'Connell	William H. Curtiss

(This citation was recently discovered behind a picture on the walls of the department.)

The names of the honorees are inscribed on a monument in the memorial triangle. The list of the men of Norfolk who served in the war to end all wars was prefaced by these words:

*In honor of those who gave and those
who offered their lives for liberty
The People of Norfolk have built
this monument and crowned it with
The Liberty Bell
in the faith that it will ring the
knell of war
and proclaim the brotherhood of man*

*The bell was donated by Mary Eldridge.
It is a careful reproduction of the
original Liberty Bell in Independence hall.*

*Dedicated November 11, 1921
Monument Committee*

<i>John O. McDonald</i>	<i>Richmond P. Paine</i>
<i>Alfredo T. C. Taylor</i>	<i>Architect fecit</i>

4. Constitution and By-Laws 1902

The Volunteer Fire Department of Norfolk, in order to maintain perfect discipline, define duty and promote the objects of saving life and property when endangered by fire, for which purpose the department was organized, do enact the following for their government:

ARTICLE I

NAME

Sec. 1. This organization shall be known and designated as The Volunteer Fire Department of the Town of Norfolk, Conn.

ORGANIZATION.

Sec. 2. The Department shall consist of two fire companies, to be designated as follows:

Hose Company, No. 1.

Hook and Ladder Company, No. 1.

LIMITATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Sec. 3. Active membership in the above named companies is limited as follows:

Hose Company, 40 men.

Hook and Ladder Company, 30 men.

ARTICLE II

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

Sec. 1. The officers of the department shall consist of a Chief Engineer, First and Second Assistant Engineers, and one Warden from each company, each of whom shall be elected for a term of one year.

ARTICLE III

COUNCIL

Sec. 1. The Council shall consist of the Chief Engineer, First and Second Assistant Engineers and the Wardens, and shall have full power to make and prescribe such laws, ordinances and regulations not inconsistent with the laws of this state or the ordinances of the town, as shall be by them deemed necessary for the proper management of the affairs and the disposition of the funds of the department, and shall have power to appoint all meetings, both regular and special, except the annual meeting of the department; and may also designate one or more days in each year as days of Public Exercise, Inspection and Review: and shall also pass upon all neglect of Departmental duty on the part of members, and upon all delinquencies and infringements of these By-laws, and make and prescribe penalties therefor. They shall have power to remit any or all penalties, if, in their opinion, a sufficient excuse has been made to them by the delinquent, either personally or in writing; and to act in all such other matters as appertain to the business and purposes for which said Department is organized. Three members of the said Council shall constitute a quorum.

DEPARTMENT FINES

Insubordination, \$25 or expulsion.

Ringling false alarms, \$25 or expulsion.

For failure to answer to an alarm of fire, \$1.

For failure to properly observe the provisions of Article II, Section I, of the By-laws, \$3.

For failure to appear at Departmental Inspection, \$5.

For failure to appear at Departmental Drill, \$1.

Any member failing for 30 days after receipt of notice, to pay any fine imposed by the Council, shall be suspended until such fine is paid.

VALID EXCUSES

Serious sickness or death in the family of a member, or personal sickness, shall be deemed a sufficient excuse for neglect of duty, but no excuse will be accepted from any member for failure to answer an alarm of fire, who, at the time, is in the Town of Norfolk.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

Sec. 1. There shall be two kinds of membership: Active and Associate. The active membership is limited to seventy (70) men, as stated in Article I, Section 3, of this Constitution.

ACTIVES

Sec. 2. Any person eligible to Active Membership must be at least eighteen years of age.

ASSOCIATES

Sec. 3. Any person who shall be elected by the company to which he has applied for membership, may be enrolled as an Associate Member. Such Associate Member shall not be liable for duty, shall not hold office, nor be entitled to a vote, nor liable to any of Department fines, except when such member reports to the commanding officer for duty.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

Sec. 4. Any person who has served the time required by law as an Active Member, and received his Certificate of Service, may, upon his own request, become an Exempt Member and shall also be amenable to Article 4, Section 3.

EXEMPT FIREMEN

Sec. 5. Any member who has served the time required by law, may, upon his own request, receive an Exemption Certificate thereby terminating his membership in the Department.

ARTICLE V

Sec. 1. No part of this Constitution shall be altered or amended unless by consent of five members of the Council, at a meeting held for the purpose.

BY – LAWS

ARTICLE I

ELECTION OF COMPANY OFFICERS

Sec. 1. Each of the several companies whose members constitute the Fire Department of the Town, shall hold an annual meeting on the first Tuesday in April in each year. At such meeting the members of each company shall elect by ballot from their number, a Foreman and an Assistant Foreman, who must be approved by the Council of the Department, and a Warden. The terms of office of the Foreman, Assistant Foreman and Warden shall be one year, respectively, and any vacancies occurring in any such offices shall be filled by election in like manner.

CHIEF ENGINEER AND ASSISTANT ENGINEERS

Sec. 2. The Chief Engineer and the First and Second Assistant Engineers of the Fire Department shall each be a member thereof and an elector of the town, and shall be elected by ballot at the annual meeting of the Fire Department. The terms of office of the Chief Engineer and the First and Second Assistant Engineers shall be one year, respectively, and any vacancies occurring in any of such offices shall be filled by election in like manner.

Sec. 3. In case of a failure to elect officers as provided in previous section, the persons then in office shall hold over until successors are elected.

COUNCIL OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Sec. 4. The Chief Engineer, the Assistant Engineers and the Wardens of the several companies constitute the Council of the Fire Department. The Council shall meet on the first Tuesday in April of each year and choose from its own number a Secretary, a Treasurer and a Collector of the Fire Department, who shall hold their respective offices for one year unless sooner removed by the Council. A vacancy in the office of Secretary, Treasurer or Collector shall be filled by the Council at its next meeting for the balance of the unexpired term.

ARTICLE II

DUTIES AND POWERS OF CHIEF AND ASSISTANT ENGINEERS

Sec. 1. The Chief Engineer shall preside over all meetings of the Council and of the Department, both regular and special, shall attend all alarms and have exclusive control of the entire Department at all fires, inspections and reviews, or whenever on duty; shall have charge of all Department houses, and all apparatus entrusted to the care of, or belonging to the Department; shall have authority over all members while on duty, and shall hold them strictly to account for any neglect of duty, and may suspend or expel them at any time subject to the approval of three members of the Council at a regular or special meeting. He shall also issue, through the Secretary, upon application, a certificate of the time of service of any member of the Department, providing such time shall have been granted by the Council, and shall give to the officers of the Council, immediately after the election at the annual meeting of the Council, or at any special

meeting of the Council, or at any special election, a certified warrant of their election, countersigned by the Secretary.

In case of the absence or retirement of the Chief, all his powers and duties shall devolve upon the First Assistant, and in case of the absence or retirement of both the Chief and First Assistant, upon the Second Assistant Engineer.

ARTICLE III

DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY

Sec. 1. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to issue notices of all meetings at least three days prior to the date thereof, and in case of special meetings to designate the business for which it was called; to call the roll at every meeting and keep a record of the same; he shall have charge of the seal and all books and papers pertaining to his office.

ARTICLE IV

DUTIES OF THE TREASURER AND COLLECTOR

Sec. 1. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to keep the accounts, receive all monies, pay all bills approved by the Council and preserve proper vouchers thereof.

Sec. 2. It shall be the duty of the Collector to collect all fines imposed by the Council, paying the same over to the Treasurer and taking his receipt therefor. It shall also be his duty to report to the Council the names of any members who may be thirty days in arrears for fines.

ARTICLE V

DUTIES OF THE WARDENS

Sec. 1. It shall be the duty of the Wardens, in addition to the duties already defined under Article 3, Section I of the Constitution, to note all defects in buildings in course of erection or completed, which will be likely to cause fire; to recommend the removal of anything stored or located so as to endanger property; to protest against the placing of buildings so as to increase the chances of conflagrations, and in every way to secure the co-operation of the public in reducing the chances of fire to a minimum; provided the same shall not conflict with any town ordinance.

ARTICLE VI

REQUIREMENTS OF COMPANY OFFICERS

Sec. 1. It shall be the duty of the Foreman of any company to furnish the Chief Engineer at any time with such information as he may require respecting the condition of his company, its equipment or any other matters appertaining to the company. The books, papers and accounts of the company shall be open for inspection by the Chief. The officers of the various companies are to have the apparatus of their companies kept in order and repair at all times for immediate use in case of fire, and are to see that no part of the apparatus is removed except for the purpose

defined in the By-laws of the Council, except by permission of the Council of the Department.

It shall also be the duty of the Foreman of each company in this Department to report to the Secretary of the Council immediately after an alarm of fire, a General Drill of the Department, a Department Parade of Inspection, the names of all the members of his company who fail to answer to their names at roll call after such alarm, drill, parade, or inspection.

COMPANY MEETINGS

Sec. 2. The Foreman of each company may call month meetings of his company.

ARTICLE VII

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Sec. 1. Regular monthly meetings of the Council may be held on the first Monday of each month at 7:30 o'clock p.m. When such Monday is a legal holiday, may be held on the following Monday at 7:30 o'clock p.m. Three members shall constitute a quorum. Special meetings shall be called by the Chief or upon written request of three members of the Council.

ARTICLE VIII

DEPARTMENT MEETINGS

Sec. 1. The annual meeting of the Department shall be held on the first Tuesday in April of each and every year at 7:30 o'clock p.m.

Sec. 2. Meetings of the Department may be held at the discretion of the Chief, and shall be called upon the written request of fifteen members.

QUORUM

Sec. 3. Fifteen members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any Department business.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Roll call.
2. Reading of minutes.
3. Report of committees.
4. Communications.
5. Treasurer's report, (annual meeting).
6. Report of company officers to include names of members elected or retired for any reason whatsoever since the last meeting.
7. Report of wardens.
8. New business.

In case of argument as to order and debate, the parliamentary rules, as set forth in Cushing's Manual, shall govern.

ARTICLE IX

NAMES OF MEMBERS

Sec. 1. The names of all members after election in any of the companies must be presented to the Council in writing by the secretary of the company to which they belong, for confirmation. All members shall be required to sign the Constitution and By-laws.

LAPSE OF MEMBERSHIP

Sec. 2. Whenever anyone shall cease to be a member of a company, the Council shall be immediately notified thereof in writing by the secretary of his company, with the reasons therefor.

ARTICLE X

ALARMS

Sec. 1. Upon the actual knowledge, or upon information and belief of the existence of a fire within the limits of the town, and alarm shall be sounded on the fire bells.

Members may also be summoned in a like manner to aid in extinguishing fires in outlying districts or other towns; but no such aid is to be given or apparatus removed without the consent of the Chief or his assistants.

FALSE ALARMS

Sec. 2. Any member giving a false alarm on the bell, or by crying fire, may be fined \$25, or expelled.

ARTICLE XI

ORDER AT FIRES

Sec. 1. Upon an alarm of fire, the members of the different companies shall report immediately to the Department Headquarters and proceed to the place of fire, with the Department apparatus, in charge of their Foreman or assistants. In the absence of any Foreman or assistant, the member first arriving at the house shall take charge of his company's apparatus with full power until the arrival of his officer. No part of the apparatus shall be left at the house because of the absence of the members of the company to which it belongs, provided there is sufficient help in the other companies present to take it to a fire and they are not actually needed on their own machines. A member having knowledge that his company's apparatus has left the house, shall immediately join his company by the nearest route without reporting to the house.

APPARATUS

Sec. 2. No company, or its apparatus, shall leave the place of fire, except by consent of the officer in charge of the fire. Each company shall, when so excused, remove its apparatus to the house and put it in as good condition as possible to respond to an alarm, and answer the roll call.

CONDUCT

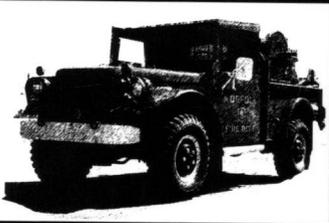
Sec. 3. Members while on duty shall avoid all unnecessary noise or confusion, and any one who shall at such a time be guilty of mutinous conduct, or shall attempt to excite mutiny or insubordination in the Department, or in others, or obstruct, or attempt to obstruct, the workings of the Fire Department, or the execution of the orders of the proper officers, shall be immediately disciplined by the officer in charge, and for each offence forfeit and pay the sum of \$25, or to be expelled from the Department.

ARTICLE XII

AMENDMENTS

Sec. 1. No part of these By-laws shall be altered or amended unless by consent of five members of the Council, at a meeting held for that purpose.

Sec. 2. These By-laws, or any one or more of them, may be suspended at a meeting of the Council by unanimous vote of the members present; such suspension must expire with the meeting at which it is ordered.



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