

## Introduction

The New Ross fire department has a rich history including when and why the department was built, the changes that have been made in between 70 years ago and now, messages from the chief, a very famous call, and more.

The NRVFD is located at 4927 Hwy 12 in New Ross, NS. It holds five trucks and a first response vehicle. The department also has a kitchen, a conference room, two bays, a storage area and of course washrooms. There is an auxillary, responsible for organizing all fundraisers (with Chief Lyle Russell's help too).

### Why you are learning about the New Ross Fire Department

I chose to look at the New Ross fire department for heritage fair this year because this year (2016) is their 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Another reason is because my dad is in the fire department (in New Ross) and I've always wanted to dig deeper and find out more about the department. As long as I've been living, the department has changed quite a bit, but I was interested in finding out in the past also. Why was the fire department built? What happened when people had emergencies 80, 90, 100 years ago? I know that the fire department has been done for heritage fair in the past by many other people but I was interested in seeing what I could uncover when it comes to the fire hall. As I mentioned before My Dad is the fire department so I have had lots of tours and even got to ride in the fire truck during a parade in Waterville. This department has been a second home to me at some times when my dad had gone on calls on we had to stay at the hall. I treat most of the other volunteers like family (most of them actually are my family). These are the reason I am looking at the fire department.

### The History of New Ross Fire Department

#### **Where it all began**

In 1946 a meeting was held by the farmers' association. A fire hall for the New Ross area was an idea that was brought up. They continued to brainstorm the idea and eventually, new Ross' first fire hall was built. Only to hold their original equipment. The building was 20 ft. x 30 ft. it couldn't hold any fire trucks. Some simple equipment and a hose were bought for a cost of \$254.27. 3 sets of rubber boots were bought for \$5.00, a step ladder and 30 fire buckets were acquired. Purchases were made from the War Assets Board

## **Looking for volunteers and getting a truck**

In 1948 there still were no trucks in the department. Phil Barkhouse wrote a letter to the War Assets Board, wondering if any type of vehicle could be assigned to New Ross. The board was able to get a hold of a 1945 Ford for the department to use on calls. In 1950-1955 the lack of interest in the department caused the department to be virtually nonexistent.

## **Up and running**

In 1967 the New Ross fire department fought a hard battle against an old hotel burning to the ground. The department used teamwork and training skills to fight it. That night was very windy and many New Ross citizens had to relocate and quickly get all the Anglican Church's belongings out before the fire spread to the building across the road. The fire made many newspapers and the fire fighters that fought it were famous and were interviewed many times.

In the later 1900's a lot of the men in the community were involved in the department as it was volunteer. The training requirements were a lot shorter and easier back then, mostly because of the lack of equipment. The department trains year round, even in the winter (practicing ice rescues). 70 years ago the department was only notified when there was a fire or someone needed rescuing, if there was a situation where someone was sick, the doctor would make a house call. Today the department has a special medical response vehicle and treats the patient as best they can until an EHS ambulance comes to transport the patient to the hospital (if needed).

## **Women?**

When the department was first running there were no women. One of the first women to join was Linda Long Meister, who is now deceased. Joanne Reeves, Theresa Keddy, Sarah Gates, Jessica Flake and Tina Elliott were other women who were in the department. The training requirements were the same between men and women. Joanne Reeves quoted "because the department is volunteer, anyone that joined was able to choose what training they took and how they contributed to the department based on what they thought they were capable of doing" Joanne also said "I was in the department for 19 years and enjoyed every single minute of it".

## **Conclusion**

Today, there are over 100 annual calls, within the community that the New Ross Fire Department responds to. Calls include car accidents, fires rescues, medicals and all other miscellaneous emergencies

The NFRD provides our community with lots of other services, like information and public safety training. The department annually visits the New Ross Consolidated School during fire prevention week for presentations and demonstrations.

Our community will recognize that all of us will face even more challenges over the next few years. Our volunteers work hard to provide these services to our community. We are all very proud of our community, the people who live here and the way we continuously try and preserving our way of living.

The lives of New Ross' citizens has been changed and definitely affected by the decision made in 1946. The New Ross fire department has certainly changed drastically over the years. The department has gone from a half ton ford to 6 vehicles

## Bibliography

<http://newross.ca/organization/new-ross-volunteer-fire-department> (Mon, Jan, 4/16)

Evelyn Hiltz

I also had help from my teachers Ms. Gates and Mr.Sweetman

Joanne Reeves (interview)