

Fifteenth Year

By Les Kent, PWvFD

The annual installation dinner of the Fire Medic Company of the Port Washington Volunteer Fire Department this year was an occasion with special significance. The men and women of the company, past and present, celebrated fifteen years of service to the community, for it was in March, 1979 that the Fire Medic Company was formed and began operations as a separate company of the Fire Department.

Heretofore, the emergency medical services to the community had been provided by individuals in the Fire Department with a succession of minimally equipped small ambulances used primarily for transport of the sick or injured to local hospitals for treatment. (Transport vehicle, _____ army surplus _____ was purchased in 1927.

Today, the Fire Medic Company operates three state-of-the-art ambulances with the capability of supplying basic and even advanced life support treatment right in the ambulance, with constant contact with the hospital and medical center consultation through telemetry, so that the patient's medical needs are met immediately as the ambulance arrives, rather than only after the trip to the emergency room.

With the relatively recent move of the Fire Medics to their Harbor Road location, centrally located in town, the average time of response to an emergency call anywhere in Port is now about three and a half minutes... which is not to denigrate, however, the speed with which the dedicated old rescue squad members of years past served those in need, when communications and equipment were nowhere near the sophisticated methods now in use daily.

And the Fire Medics do serve the community daily, and then some! ...last year these highly skilled dedicated volunteers (many EMTs and AMTs with hundreds of hours of formal training) answered a total of 1,874 emergency medical and fire calls of all types in the 12 month period...and

average of five per day.

A brand new ambulance to replace the oldest of the three will be put into active service shortly after Memorial Day...the better to serve our town's residents, visitors, police and firefighters and anyone else who requires emergency medical attention at any hour of the day or night, every day of the years to come.

The officers who were installed on Sat. April 23rd, to lead the Fire Medic Company in 1994, all highly qualified for their important roles are: Captain, Gregory Robertson; First Lieutenant, Lawrence Bergun; Second Lieutenant, Donald Meyer; Engineer, Edward Oldak; First Asst. Engineer, Bill Reahl; Second Asst. Engineer, Bobby Jo Oldak; Third Asst. Engineer, Dick Borelli; Fourth Asst. Engineer, Steve Laber.

President, David W. Pfister; Vice President, Lorie Borelli; Treasurer, Marian Girardin; Recording Secretary, Carol Swiacki; Corresponding Secretary, Nancy O'Reilly; Financial Secretary, Lois Western; Steward, Pamela Monfort; Sgt.-at-Arms, Ann Levitt.

The Board of Directors: Tommy Akam, Lesley Culp, John Oldak, Beverly Reese, Pamela Saunders and Philip Spinnato.

Special recognition was given to several members: the outgoing Captain, Lorie Borelli and outgoing president Philip Spinnato; and the Fire Medic Recognition Award, a.k.a. the "Fire Medic of the Year", to Beverly Reese, one of eight charter members still in active service. They are: Lesley Culp, Pete Davern, David Fenton, Steve Laber, Pamela Monfort, Frank O'Grady, Beverly Reese and Carol Swiacki.

A highlight of the evening, as well, was an award of appreciation to James Caparella of Atlantic Hook and Ladder Company who, along with the recently deceased former Chief Edward Piccardo, was for many of those early years half of that only two-man team who volunteered to run the ambulance service in addition to their fire-fighting duties.