

Featured department...

Gilmanton Fire Department



Chief Kenneth K.G. Lockwood
Gilmanton Fire Department

09 — Gilmanton Fire Department

Fire Chief: K.G. Lockwood
Address: 1824 NH Route 140
Gilmanton Iron Works,
NH 03837
603-364-2500
firechief@gilmantonnh.org

Office Hours: **Iron Works Station:**
7-7, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday
Corners Station: 7-7
Monday, Wednesday and Saturday

Officers: Asst. Chief Joe Hemphill
Capt. Brian Boyajyan
Capt. Dana Middleton
Lt. Frank McClary
Lt. Joe Cotton
Lt. James Beaudoin
Lt. Randy Perkins
Lt. Mark Sawyer

Shift Coverage: 7 days a week, 7 to 7

Apparatus: 4 Engines
2 Ambulances
2 Forestry Vehicles
1 Rescue Boat
1 Staff Vehicle

HISTORY

Gilmanton Fire Department has an interesting history, as does the town itself. It was a Gilmanton native, Nehemiah Bean, who developed the first steam self-propelled fire engine for Amoskeag Locomotive Works in Manchester. The first unit was sold to Boston Fire Department in 1872 after its capabilities were ably demonstrated at the devastating Boston fire that year.

In 1930, the Gilmanton Hill Improvement Association was incorporated to "...advance the interests of the inhabitants of the town of Gilmanton...by establishing and maintaining a fire department with the equipment, a place of special meeting and other...improvements within said town." A 1933 roster of the fire company shows 20 officers and members who were eligible for benefits in the NH State Firemen's Association.

Several years later, on April 2, 1935, the Gilmanton Hills Improvement Association signed a note for \$800 to buy a parcel of land to build a new fire station in Gilmanton Iron Works. That sum was paid by A.L. Perry, A.F. Chase, M.S. Bennett, Roy C. Edgerly, Cora F. Young, Alma S. Lathrop, Florence C. Bordeaux, Edwin F. Nelson and James Lowery — truly a neighborhood effort. The next day this same group signed a note for \$800 for a new pumper! This was paid in full by Oct. 8, 1937.

In 1939, the name of the department was changed to Gilmanton Hills Fire Department.

During the 1930s and 40s, there were two fire departments in town: The Gilmanton Hills Fire Department and the Peaked Hill Fire Department. The Peaked Hill station was located at Gilmanton Corners and is still in use today. It is now the Gilmanton Corners Station. This station was unique in that the upstairs was used as a school house for many years.

In 1962, the Gilmanton Hills Fire Department underwent another name change — it was now the Gilmanton Iron Works Fire Department. The site of the current Iron Works station originally was home to the Iron Works School, which was turned over to the fire department for demolition in the early 70s. Groundbreaking for the new station was held on June 5, 1972, with Chief Ralph G. Forsyth turning over the first shovelful of ground. "Shares of Confidence" were sold to residents to help fund the project, with shares costing \$10 each. On July 8, 1973, the new station was dedicated and remains in use today.

Not long after the dedication of the Iron Works Station, Peaked Hill Fire Department changed its name to Gilmanton Corners Fire Department. This department continued offering service out of the same station/school house.

On December 5, 1988, the Gilmanton Iron Works and Gilmanton Corners fire departments merged by a unanimous vote of both department's members. At the

time, Norm Skantze was the Chief and Deputy Chiefs were Carl Morehead and Joe Hempel III. Chief Skantze was the first fulltime chief in the newly-formed Gilmanton Fire Department, with Carl Morehead being the first fulltime deputy chief.

Since that time the department has remained in the same buildings with upgrades to both the buildings and apparatus. Yearly runs have increased from 305 in 1996 to 511 in 2008.

TODAY

Gilmanton Fire Department currently has 27 active members plus nine officers. There are four fulltime people and, as of April, there were three students. Usually the department has six students, but three have graduated and moved on.

The town spreads across 65 square miles and is full of dead-end, narrow, dirt or Class VI roads. It can take as long as twenty minutes to travel from either station to some parts of town. Residents are remarkably understanding about the time it may take for a response and the fire department is constantly working to create plans whereby these response times can be cut down. Adding to the issues with roads is the fact that many former seasonal camps are now year-round residences, many of which are on narrow dirt roads that wind in around the numerous lakes in town. All of this adds a challenging



Gilmanton Fire Department – Corners Station

dimension to emergency response within Gilmanton.

The Gilmanton Corners Station is manned Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. The other four days the Iron Works Station is manned. On the surface this may seem somewhat arbitrary but statistics bear out the reasoning. By staffing both stations on busy days it is hoped to cut down response time to the busiest areas.

RECENT MAJOR EVENT

On Monday, April 13, the statistics were once again proven correct. The Corners Station was being staffed when a call came in for a motor vehicle accident on Route 106 in the town of Gilmanton, near the A.E. Mitchel gravel pit. Upon arriving at the scene, the Chief

found three vehicles involved: two vehicles had hit head-on and a motorcycle carrying two people was unable to avoid the ensuing accident. In the end, nine patients were treated. Injuries were serious and eventually, four people were med-flighted to Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, two from the scene and two from area hospitals.

This incident showed the value of mutual aid and of knowing the capabilities of and equipment in surrounding towns. Before the day was over, five towns had responded with ambulances, EMTs, EMT-Is and paramedics. There were no fatalities.

Chief Lockwood says incidents like these are handled well because “we train together, we work together,” referring to mutual aid training sessions. This accident came one day after Gilmanton was involved in the 14-alarm fire in Alton at the Alton Bay Christian Conference Center – another example of mutual aid at its best and biggest.

LONG FAMILY HISTORY IN FIREFIGHTING

Chief KG Lockwood has twenty-nine years in the fire service. Both his father and his grandfather were fire chiefs in the Tilton-Northfield Fire Department, where KG began

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Gilmanton Fire Department – Iron Works Station

Employee Spotlight...

Douglas M. Aiken



Douglas M. Aiken became Chief Coordinator of Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid in April 1997. He grew up in a “fire family” in Manchester, NH where his father was initially a call fire fighter and eventually became a career Battalion Chief. He spent much of his early years in the city firehouses and “helping out” at numerous fire scenes.

After college, where he obtained a degree in engineering, Doug went

into broadcasting, working for two large regional broadcasting companies. He was one of four engineers at RKO General in Boston that built the studios of Channel 7, WRKO radio and WROR-FM. He also designed and built the first automated FM stereo radio station in NH – WZID in Manchester. Eventually he started A&H Productions, providing sound and lighting services for stage shows working with many celebrities including Duke Ellington, BB King, Ella Fitzgerald, Victor Borge, James Taylor, Carly Simon, Livingston Taylor and traveled with Ronald Reagan during two presidential campaigns. Through these years, he continued to be

interested in the fire service and on August 2, 1974, he joined the Manchester Fire Department. After several years in the Fire Alarm Division, he became the Deputy Emergency Management Director for the city which included the oversight of the department’s EMS paramedic program. Later, he was promoted to Chief of Communications. After 21 years with the fire department, he moved to LRMFA to become Chief Coordinator.

When he began his new career, the communications center was still in the basement of the Belknap County Courthouse. One of his first assignments was to find a new home for the system and in 2000 LRMFA moved to its current state-of-the-art facility. Other changes over the last twelve years included a move to a high band radio system, bringing staffing levels up to national standards and, most recently, a system-wide wireless public fire alarm reporting system.

His future vision includes a broadband network to support communications including high speed data, improved personnel safety on the fireground and a variety of enhanced applications that will transform how we provide services to the citizens of the Lakes Region. In addition to his years in the fire service, Chief Aiken spent many years in the NH Air National Guard, retiring as a full Colonel in October 2007. He spoke with a recruiter in 1966 at what was then known as Grenier Field in Manchester. When he joined in the Spring of 1967, the Air National Guard had moved to Pease AFB,

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service in March 1980. While working at TNFD, he spent ten years with the New Hampshire Forest Fire service. In December 1999 he went to work for Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid. In July 2008, he left LRMFA to begin serving as Fire Chief in the town of Gilmanton.

KG enjoys working in Gilmanton, saying it reminds him of the Tilton-Northfield area he grew up in before it grew to its current size. He likes the small town rural atmosphere.

THE FUTURE

When asked what his plans were for the future, he said his number one priority is a new station at the

Corners. The current station is old and its size limits what can be stationed there. Over the years, Route 140 has been paved and built up enough that the angle coming out the doors puts further height restrictions on what can be garaged in the building.

Once that priority is realized, the next priorities include upgrading equipment: A new engine and two new ambulances to replace the aging ambulances currently in place.

Chief Lockwood says Gilmanton residents are very supportive of their fire department. The department does a lot of work within the community, including a strong pres-

ence during EMS week and Fire Prevention week. GFD works with the children in the community, educating them in fire safety. They also work with other town agencies, making themselves available and visible to the folks in town.

MEETINGS

The department meets the first Monday of the month at the Iron Works station. The second Monday is spent doing fire training; the third Tuesday is EMS training; and the fourth Monday is the officers’ meeting. If you are interested in becoming part of the fire department, plan on attending a meeting or stop by the station for more information. 🚒