

Ridge Fire Department History

- 1940 -

A small group from within the community informally organized the Ridge Fire Department.

A parcel of land and a 2-car garage was donated to the cause by Carl Heyser, Jr.

- 1941 -

The Ridge Volunteer Fire Department was incorporated with the State of New York.

Housed in the two-car garage was the first truck, which was purchased used for one hundred dollars from a neighboring fire department. The members spent months of long hours overhauling the truck.

December 7th. Pearl Harbor the United States enters into World War II.

In the fall the Department responded to its first alarm for a house fire. The house was actually a bungalow located on Medford Road and the alarm was dispatched via telephone chain. Working with a limited water supply, brooms and shovels, the volunteers were only able to protect surrounding homes and the bungalow was lost to the fire.

- 1943 -

The Ladies' Auxiliary was organized.

- 1943-45 -

War years yielded decreased activity.

Due to the war the Department's activities were almost non-existent. Funds were also limited and the Chief had to solicit donations from residents in order to keep the fire house heated and lighted.

- 1946 -

Severe brush fires on Labor Day weekend.

The first ambulance vote defeated.

A fire watch started to maintain heat in the firehouse.

Following the war the Department's activities began to increase

and fund raisers were held to improve the financial situation of the Department.

- 1947 -

Due to poor equipment and lack of interest, thought was given to reorganize.

Activities were few and this proved to be a bleak year for the Department. Heavy snowstorms and freezing weather raised havoc with the equipment stored in the often-unheated firehouse. At times the only piece of fire apparatus was rendered useless due to lack of maintenance.

- 1948 -

First Christmas party sponsored for local children. Seventeen children attended.

The Department reorganized and elected new officers.

- 1949 -

In May, the first new truck ordered; International brush truck with 650-gallon tank and 500 gpm front mounted pump.

In July, with the aid of a \$200 donation from the Ladies' Auxiliary, the firehouse was enlarged by 10 feet to house the new truck. The extension to the firehouse was completed in a weekend of hard work by Department members with the help of workers from the Baier Lustgarten Nursery.

In August, the dedication of the new Ridge Post Office on August 1st gave the Department the opportunity to display this new piece of apparatus to the community. In preparation for the occasion the members purchased their own fire hats for \$3.00 and went to work modernizing the original brush truck, the Departments first piece of equipment. Fender skirts and metal compartments were installed and a new coat of paint applied in an endeavor to give it the "New Look". On this day the Department staged Ridge's first Firemen's Parade. The line of march started at the firehouse and proceeded along Route 25 to the Post Office, just west of Ridge Road. Fire departments from Middle Island, Manorville, Coram, Medford, Wading River, Port Jefferson and Riverhead were invited.

Following the dedication ceremony, everyone was invited back to the firehouse for refreshments, initiating a tradition of hospitality to the community.

Fund raising events were successful this year and members voted to purchase the piece of land to the west of and adjacent to the firehouse for \$900.

- 1950 -

Firemen received 35 cents per hour by Conservation Department to fight brush fires.

The first manual alarm system, made from steel rims from the wheels of steam locomotives was installed at three locations in the area.

In mid-winter the Department received a report of a missing plane that possibly had gone down in Lake Panamoka. Members chopped through the ice and frogmen from the United States Coast Guard searched the lake bottom, but nothing was found.

- 1951 -

Two walkie-talkies were purchased, thus making the Department one of the few to employ radio communications at that time.

It was a record year for brush fires on Long Island and Ridge was no exception. The Department responded to numerous brush fires in Shirley, especially near the railroad tracks. To reach these fires the Department had to pass through the old Camp Upton.

A large brush fire north of Route 25 required the first call for mutual aid assistance, apparatus from Medford, Middle Island and Coram responded.

- 1952 -

The Ridge Fire District was established on June 18, 1952 and the Brookhaven Town Board appointed five temporary Fire Commissioners to set up the district. The initial budget was \$3,025.00. The district's population at this time was 750-1000.

After numerous brush fires witnessed by the community last year and again this season, the taxpayers approved a \$15,000 appropriation for a new brush truck.

In October unit 5-22-2, a 4-wheel drive 1952 Ford with a 500 gallon tank and a 500 gpm front mounted pump, was ordered. Its price was \$14,018.00

The first Fire District election was held in December and a Board of Fire Commissioners Was elected.

Eight brush fires in succession one memorable Sunday, heralded the arrival of the District's first arsonist. He was later apprehended in Rocky Point's district.

- 1953-

Unit 5-22-2 was delivered in May. It was our first truck equipped with a radio. It also was equipped with helmets, coats, boots and

all the necessary equipment to fight brush and house fires. The first alarm system consisting of crank phones was installed in August with stations located in Ex-Chief Frank Mooney's home and the Ridge Post Office.

- 1954-

The first inhalator was purchased to assist in medical emergencies until an ambulance arrived. At this time the Department did not have an ambulance of it's own.

A Fire Police Company was formed.

Large brush fire endangers Lake Panamoka; mutual aid was called in from several departments.

- 1955-

The Department bought a 1949 International pick-up truck for the sum of \$100. It was purchased from the Telephone Company and was used as a utility wagon. The members installed cabinets on both sides and benches inside the body. It was also used to transport firemen throughout the area.

After two defeats, the taxpayers approved the construction of a new firehouse by a six-vote margin. The construction cost was to be \$30,000.

- 1956 -

First Installation Dinner was held.

In July the Department began holding its meetings at the new Ridge Elementary School (presently called the Ridge Main School) on Ridge Road.

One day in the fall many hours were spent by members of the Ridge and Middle Island Fire Departments searching for a lost child in Middle Island. Happily, the little wanderer was found just at dusk. The Department would be called upon many times in the future to search the vast woodlands in and around the district for lost children.

The month of September saw the long-awaited groundbreaking ceremony for the new firehouse.

On December 2nd the Department responded to its first fatal house fire. Upon arrival the members found the house fully involved in fire.

- 1957 -

Getting off to a fine start, the Department took occupancy of its new firehouse in January. However, in the rush to demolish the

old house many records were lost or destroyed. A 100 Point Award was instituted. In addition, a policy of awarding a star for each five years of service was adopted' this insignia was to be worn on a member's (dress) uniform sleeve.

The membership adopted a fireman resident of the Firemen's Home at Hudson, N.Y.

- 1958-

January saw the inauguration of monthly officers' meetings.

The Department became a member of the Brookhaven Town Fire Chiefs' Council.

A 1959 American LaFrance Class "A: pumper (Unit 5-22-3) with a 1000 gallon tank and a 750 gpm midship pump was ordered for \$25,000.

Probationary fire fighter badges were introduced.

An official mutual aid agreement was made with Rocky Point, Wading River, Middle Island and Manorville.

- 1959 -

Early in the year the Department hosted the newly formed Brookhaven Town Fire Police Association.

Unit 5-22-3 was delivered and placed into service.

July found the Department playing host to the public at its first barbecue held on the firehouse grounds.

Officers and members of the Department helped celebrate the opening of the Suffolk County Fire Training School at Yaphank.

Ridge Fire District joined the Association of Fire Districts of New York State.

- 1960 -

A mutual aid agreement was formulated with the Grunman Aircraft Corporation at Calverton. Members had received training at the facility in the past.

The Department joined the Fire Association of the State of New York.

A new truck, a 1961, 2800 gallon Ford tanker with a 500 gpm front mounted pump, Unit 5-22-5, was ordered.

First edition of the "Blaze", an occasional Departmental publication, was issued.

- 1961 -

Unit 5-22-5 arrived in August and was placed into service.

During this year the first fire prevention drill was held for residents.

- 1962 -

On February 17th a testimonial dinner was held for Ex-Chief John Austen in recognition of his outstanding service to the Department.

The first edition of the Ridge Runners News was printed. The paper was published in order to keep the district residents up-to-date on the Department's activities.

The Department mourned the loss of their adopted fireman at the Firemen's Home in Hudson, N.Y. A donation was made to the home in his memory.

In a district vote a proposed addition to headquarters was defeated.

- 1963 -

A gold badge bearing the inscription "Friend of the Ridge Fire Department" was presented to Herbert ("Herbie") Wagner for his caring help around the firehouse.

During the summer the Department purchased a new home alert system (plectrons). Alarms were now activated by Yaphank Fire control, greatly improving response time. A new siren system was also installed.

- 1964 -

In April, the taxpayers voted favorably on an addition to the firehouse at a cost of \$50,000. The new addition was to be known as Fireman's Hall. Construction began immediately and was completed in time for the children's Christmas Party. Three hundred children attended, receiving toys from Santa, ice cream and other goodies.

A scholarship fund in memory of the late John F. Kennedy was established by the five fire departments within the Longwood School District. The scholarship was to be awarded to the senior graduating from Longwood High School who best exemplified the ideals of the late President regarding citizenship. This \$1000 award was to be granted each year for five consecutive years.

Early in the year the Department staged a "burn down" of a large

barn known as "Heyser's Folly" which was located on Route 25 east of the firehouse. Apparatus from Yaphank, Coram, Wading River, Middle Island and Gordon Heights participated in the drill. East Quogue issued a call for mutual aid to which Ridge responded. To date, this was the farthest mutual aid call received.

- 1965-

In this year the Department answered calls to 63 fires and two call for oxygen. This was the largest numbers of calls in any single year to date.

- 1966 -

Tragedy struck the Department on March 27, 1966. Chief John Sedlak was killed in an automobile accident on Route 25 in Ridge.

The Department purchased additional land on Lakeside Trail and on Smith Road for future substations.

New York State widened Route 25 in the area of the firehouse. The construction took 60 feet of our frontage leaving the firehouse with 12 feet of frontage on Dew Flag Road. The firehouse was no longer located on Route 25 which presented many problems. During the long period of highway construction access to the firehouse was cut-off. All fire trucks had to be relocated temporarily to the driveways and streets in front of firemen's homes.

Ex-Chief Francis Mooney celebrated 25 years of service to the community, in the Ridge Fire Department.

- 1967 -

Tragedy continued to plague the Department when Second Deputy Chief Donald Dickhoff was killed in an automobile accident in Ridge.

An order was placed for a 1968 International Heavy Rescue Truck (Unit 5-22-4) complete with oxygen, bunks and an assortment of rescue and salvage equipment. This truck would also be equipped with a 300-watt generator for lighting and would be capable of transporting four patients to the hospital.

Fire fighter Frank Burke celebrated 25 years of service to the community, in the Ridge Fire Department.

- 1968-

Unit 5-22-4, the Department's first Heavy Rescue Truck, was received and placed into service.

An order was placed for a 1969 Ford High Pressure All Purpose Pumper (Unit 5-22-6) with a 500-gallon tank.

- 1969 -

Charter member, Ex-Chief and Commissioner Francis Mooney passed away in February. In his honor the road in front of the firehouse was re-named Francis Mooney Drive.

The first Chief's car, a 1969 Ford Station Wagon, was purchased and equipped for first response to all alarms. This vehicle could also be used to transport a patient to the hospital if necessary.

Unit 5-22-6 was received and placed into service, several members of the Department attended the John Bean School in Indiana to learn how to use this new piece of apparatus and the new concept of using small amounts of water at extremely high pressure to extinguish fires.

The Department adopted another fireman at the Firemen's Home in Hudson, N.Y.

Additional land was purchased on Carnation Drive in Shirley for construction of a new substation, which would improve response and fire protection for the south end of the fire district.

- 1970-

Early in the year the Department responded to another fatal house fire. A flooded kerosene stove had exploded and was the cause of the fire.

A Donkey Baseball game was staged on the Longwood High School athletic field in July. It was obvious by their riding ability that none of the firemen came from the Wild West or had ever won a prize in a rodeo; the antics of the competing firemen had the audience in an uproar. Since the event was such a success it was repeated again several times in the future.

The Department formed an old-fashioned drill team to compete at fire department tournaments.

Construction of the new substation in Shirley was completed and a dedication ceremony was held on August 9th. Company 2 was formed with 17 members and reported to the new Station #1.

- 1971 -

On April 23rd of this year the Department, along with some fifty other departments, battled two outbursts of fires in the Brookhaven Town area. Described by many of the fire chiefs as the worst brush fires in years, the blaze ravaged a 20 square mile area. Flames fanned by the prevailing winds and fostered by the over-dry scrub leaped across roads in the burning of two swaths from Medford to Brookhaven hamlet and from Ridge to

Manorville. Along with vast woodlands the "Big Fire" also consumed a boat, several sheds and a house in Manorville. After a

full day of fire fighting, setting back fires and cutting firebreaks, the fire was finally contained in the early evening hours at Chapman Bld. in Manorville.

In appreciation of their tireless efforts in protecting homes and property during one of the worst brush fires in years, Chief James Roesler and the officers and fire fighters of the Department received plaudits and thanks from a long list of Shirley residents. As a direct result of their outstanding performance, the Suffolk County Fire Service received the New York Daily News Vamp Award.

In October the residents of the district voted favorably on two bond issues. The first authorized the purchase of a new 1000 gpm pumper; the second authorized the purchase of the Department's first ambulance for the sum of \$20,000.

December saw the delivery of this ambulance - a 1971 fully equipped Cadillac. In celebration of this event the Board of Fire commissioners held an open house for district residents. Members of the newly - organized Rescue Squad were on hand to demonstrate its capabilities.

The Rescue Squad had some 43 charter members and in its first month of existence, December 1971, they responded to 6 calls per assistance.

- 1972 -

The Department held its first mail fund drive, which was quite successful.

Fire fighter Harold Jones celebrated 25 years of service to the community, in the Ridge Fire Department.

An order was placed for a 1973 Class "A" Pumper with volume and high pressure pumps (to be the new 5-22-1). This diesel, automatic transmission truck would have a 1000-gallon tank capacity and a maximum flow of 1000 GPM. A maximum pressure of 800 psi would also be obtainable.

Additional land adjacent to the firehouse was purchased, adding needed parking space.

Two trucks were sent to assist the Patchogue Fire Department in battling the "Old Lace Mill fire. Over 30 fire departments assisted in fighting this famous Long Island fire.

This was also a particularly bad year for brush fires. In several cases fire fighters worked for six to ten hours fighting the fires. These fires also required the help of mutual aid from neighboring departments. The largest of these fires consumed many acres of the State Park land directly across from the firehouse.

- 1973 -

In March Unit 5-22-1 was delivered and placed into service. From this point forward the Ridge Runner decal (running fire fighter) was placed on all trucks.

An additional piece of land was purchased on Panamoka Trail and in the latter part of the year construction began on a new substation (Station #2)

The Department organized a Junior Fire Department.

- 1974 -

A 35th anniversary committee was established.

Construction was completed on the new substation of Panamoka Trail. The members responding to this station were part of Company 1.

The Department made donations and assisted in fund-raising events for the restoration of the old Ridge School house.

Following the purchase of a piece of land including a house on the east side of the firehouse, the house was renovated to provide office space for the Board of Fire Commissioners.

The 1959 American LaFrance Pumper, Unit 5-22-3 was converted to diesel.

- 1975 -

Received a new 1975 Ford Chief's car.

The Department responded to and extinguished a fire at the Ridge Lumber Barn located at the present site of Randall Square.

A new edition of "Blaze" started.

During its fourth full year the Rescue Squad answered 279 calls, providing valuable assistance to the community.

- 1976 -

Ridge Fire Headquarters was equipped with a new emergency generator to provide power during storm emergencies.

The Department celebrated its 35th Anniversary. To mark the occasion a Firemen's Parade was held on September 5th, with over 35 units participating in the march through town. All of the Department's fire fighting apparatus was on display for the community including a 1958 army truck, soon to be converted to a brush truck.

- 1977 -

First Hurst tool for use in motor vehicle extrication was purchased and put on the heavy rescue truck, 5-22-4.

In August, while responding to a planned drill in Manorville, the Ridge Fire Dept. came across a working warehouse fire (signal 13.). We were therefore the first unit on the scene in Manorville's district.

The first "stump jumper" (A brush truck capable of going through the woods to reach a fire and able to knock down trees if required), unit 5-22-12, was designed by a department committee and put into service in November. 5-22-12 responded to its first brush fire at Lake Panamoka.

A new type II modular ambulance was ordered and received, Unit 5-22-17. This now provided the district with the protection of two ambulances.

Ex-Chiefs Jack Austen and John Szomomers celebrated 25 years of service to the community, in the Ridge Fire Department.

Company 3 was formed on Dec. 15, 1977, with 17 members reporting to Station 2, located on Panamoka Trail.

- 1978 -

On an evening in May, R.F.D. responded to a call to assist the Rocky Pt. F.D. in extinguishing a major fire at a squab farm located on Randall Rd. Several other area departments were also called in.

In August a new class A pumper was placed on order. This pumper would be the largest to date, capable of carrying 1000 gallons of water and pumping at 1500GPM. This would also be the first truck in the Department to have a top mounted pump panel - this giving the pump operator the safety of being out of the traffic lane and elevation allowing him to see what is going on all sides of his truck.

Heavy snowstorms during the winter months resulted in stand-by's that lasted for days. The Departments brush trucks and pumpers were used to rescue residents and stranded motorists who took shelter in the Departments fire houses. Medical emergencies were also responded to with fire apparatus and in one case a woman in labor was transported to the hospital in a fire truck, as ambulances were unable to get through the snowdrifts.

- 1979 -

Unit 5-22-7, the new class "A" pumper arrived and was put into service in January.

The Department responded to a gasoline tanker truck which rolled over on the William Floyd Parkway at the L.I.E. Five departments, Grumman and Westhampton Air Force Base were called in for assistance and foam supply.

In September the Department responded to assist the Yaphank Fire Department in an evacuation of the Suffolk County Infirmary. On the same evening the Department responded to multiple alarms at the Woodstock Reunion Concert held at Parr Meadows.

- 1980 -

A new tanker truck was placed on order. This truck was to replace the old unit 5-22-5 and would be capable of carrying 2250 gallons of water to a fire.

In July fire destroyed a barn and carriage house at the historic Smith Estate. The building had been constructed in the early 1800's and the fire was determined to be arson. Several area fire departments assisted Ridge in battling the late night blaze (see photo on back cover).

A public vote was held and passed for an addition to the main headquarters building. The addition was to include three drive-through bays, a new radio room and a second floor with meeting rooms and offices.

In August members of the Department delivered the first baby. The proud members were pictured in several local papers. This event was to repeat it self several times in the future.

In November the new tanker truck, unit 5-22-5 was received and placed in service.

A second stump jumper was purchased, used, from another department and was re-outfitted to meet the needs of the Ridge Fire Department. This truck was placed in service as unit 5-22-11. Being a smaller truck than 5-22-12 it was more maneuverable in the woods.

Following the Departments Annual Christmas party on a cold night in December fire broke out at the Kogel Lumber Yard in Middle Island. Ridge along with fire departments from as far away as North Sea were called and worked through the night and into the following day to extinguish the blaze.

- 1981 -

In April fire fighter Larry Piazza celebrated 25 years of service to the committee, in the Ridge Fire Department.

On Memorial Day there was a major brush fire near Lake Panamoka requiring the assistance of approximately 92 Long Island fire

departments as well as numerous private companies to provide adequate water and pumping equipment (tankers, tree sprayers...) An extensive evacuation of the Lake Panamoka area was conducted. There was no loss of life and serious property damage was kept to a minimum. However, the Department lost unit 81 5-22-11 to the fire while it was protecting homes along Panamoka Trail.

Groundbreaking ceremony for the addition to headquarters was held in September.

The Commissioner's building was moved from headquarters to Company 3 and used as an extension of the existing building. The Fire Commissioners will have offices located in the new addition to the headquarters building.

- 1982 -

A new class A pumper was ordered to replace the old 5-22-3. This truck would be a Mack with a top mounted pump panel. Because of the increase of fire hydrants in the area combined with improved mutual aid availability the tank size of this truck would be 750 gallons, 250 gallons less than the older pumper it was replacing.

A maximum water flow of 1500 GPM would be possible and the truck would be equipped to handle 5" hose if necessary.

Following a boating accident, which resulted in a double drowning in Lake Panomoka, the Department sought ways to improve its water rescue capabilities.

In order to protect the growing community of Lake Panamoka, the Department purchased a rescue boat and equipped it for ice and water rescue.

A new ambulance was received and put into service in July. This modular vehicle replaced the 1971 Cadillac ambulance, Unit 5-22-16, which had served the district for 11 years.

In August the Department participated with other local departments in a mutual aid drill/training session at the Shoreham Nuclear Power Station.

Unit 5-22-8, a small, pick-up type brush truck was purchased from the Coram Fire Department in December and refurbishing was begun. This unit was placed into service shortly thereafter.

- 1983 -

The Ridge Fire District established the Bureau of Fire Prevention in January and appointed four fire fighters as the first fire district fire inspectors.

In February the Department responded with a half dozen other agencies to extricate a truck driver trapped in a jackknifed tractor-trailer truck for almost 4 hours on the L.I.E.

The Suffolk County Fire Service Academy's "Maze / Composite" - a search and rescue operations drill - was finished and our Department was the first to complete the training course successfully.

Due to lack of enrollment the Fire Police was disbanded in February.

In May, the addition to headquarters was dedicated with an Open House and "Wet Down".

In June, a new Mack pumper, unit 5-22-9, was delivered and placed into service.

On June 2, 1983 a drill with S.A.D.D. (Students Against Drunk Driving) was held at Longwood High School. The purpose of the drill, which took place shortly before prom time, was to demonstrate graphically the dangers of drinking and driving.

- 1984 -

The Department started a softball team, which participated in the Town of Brookhaven Fire Department League.

In the summer we hosted a mutual aid picnic for the Wading River and Middle Island Fire Departments.

Unit 5-22-1 was completely refurbished and repainted lime green.

Faced with a significant increase in ambulance calls, particularly daytime calls, and declining response, the Department was pressed to take corrective action. A committee of officers from Ridge and the surrounding departments began meeting regularly to address the issue.

Many changes were made that greatly reduced response times. A formal mutual aid agreement in which ambulance crews from different departments would be combined if necessary to get an ambulance to an emergency scene faster.

- 1985 -

The 50th Anniversary committee was established. Made up of Chiefs, Ex-Chiefs and representatives of the three companies, this committee was given the task of laying out the events to take place during the Departments 50th Anniversary and running fund raisers to support those activities.

In February, the Fire District purchased a mainframe computer system. The computer would be used for both District and Department needs as well as to provide vital information during alarms (all locations in the district including private residences would eventually be at the finger tips of the radio operator)

The Racing (Drill) Team was disbanded in June due to lack of participation. The Department's athletic efforts were now being centered on the newly formed softball team.

In September, Ex-Chief Jack Austen was elected President of the N.Y. State Fire District Association. This is the highest position of the volunteer fire service in the state of New York. Hurricane Gloria stormed Long Island in late September. During this time Department members were on stand-by at all three stations, which provided refuge for area residents. In the days following the storm the Department made fresh water available to the community.

In October, a major brush fire struck the area. The fire was started in Wading River by an arsonist and raged out of control feeding on the downed timbers from Hurricane Gloria. After burning through the state park land, the fire was finally stopped at Route 25 by an estimated 800 volunteers from dozens of Suffolk County Fire Departments, which lined the highway. Over 100 families were evacuated from the fires path. A tragic consequence of this fire was the critical injury of a Manorville fire fighter.

An air bag rescue system was received to be used in extrications and heavy rescues. This system could lift objects as heavy as a train to get at trapped victims

Also in October, the Department voted to create the new position of 3rd Assistant Chief. It was felt that this was necessary in order to better protect the increasing needs of the growing community.

- 1986 -

A new pavilion was constructed at the main firehouse by Department members and dedicated to the memory of firefighter, Joe Curcio.

Ex-Chief, Jim Roesler celebrated 25 years of service to the community, in the Ridge Fire Department.

- 1987 -

In July, Ex-Chief, Ronnie Jones answered his last alarm while an active member of the Department.

A new membership committee was started to battle the problem of decreased enrollment and shorter retention of volunteers.

- 1988 -

A new Type III modular ambulance was commissioned as 5-22-17. This unit replaced the older unit 17, which had been in service since 19 and became tired.

Ex-Chief, Bill Kaspereit Sr. celebrated 25 years of service to the community, in the Ridge fir Department.

In April we participated in a multi-departmental drill at the Suffolk County Infirmary at Yaphank.

The fire district was faced with tremendous growth, both residential and commercial. With some of the Departments apparatus getting older and the number of calls increasing it was time to purchase new equipment. The residents of the fire district also realizing this passed a vote for a new pumper and rescue truck.

A Pearce pumper was ordered with a 750-gallon water tank and a 1500 GPM pump. This truck would also be equipped with a 40 gallon foam tank and would be capable of producing foam from any outlet on the truck. Also for the first time the truck would have a 10 man crew cab eliminating the need to have fire fighters ride on the rear step.

A Pearce rescue truck was also placed on order. This truck would be fully equipped for almost any type of emergency. Among the many items on board would be; a 36' light tower, 110 V electric system, 125' heavy duty winch an electric Hurst Tool set-up with all of the necessary rescue equipment, over 1500' of electric line & hoses, and a new type of torch capable of cutting through even concrete. The unit would also have a 10-man "command" cab and could be used as an incident command post if needed.

In addition to the Departments own membership committee a five-department committee was formed in order to recruit new members and improve retention rates of existing members. The committee was called REVAMP which stands for "Recruitment of Emergency Volunteers And Membership Program". The five departments that made up this committee were; Ridge, Middle Island, Yaphank, Gordon Heights, and Coram - all from within the Longwood School District.

One of the major accomplishments of the committee was that, with the help of a local news service, they produced three professional television commercials that aired from October to March of the following year.

During the summer the Rescue Squad responded to a reported drowning and successfully rescued an infant from a swimming pool.

A Long Island newspaper ran a series on the volunteer ambulance service in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. For many months a group of reporters ran on ambulance calls and watched every move of both ambulance corps and fire department ambulance companies. When the highly falsified series was released Ridge had been singled out as being one of the worst on the island. Several members of the Department that had interviewed with reporters were mis-quoted and Ridge was accused of screening ambulance calls a practice that has never been done in the history of the Department.

Following the series dozens of residents from within the District called and wrote to both the Department and other newspapers telling of their dissatisfaction in the series and of how grateful they were of the professional service provided to them in the time of need. Other newspapers and local television also combated the series in special reports.

- 1989 -

In May a brush fire hit the Lake Panamoka area once again. Over twenty other departments were needed to bring it under control. REVAMP gave a presentation to the senior class at Longwood High School. The purpose of the presentation was to make them more aware of the volunteer emergency services as well as to inform them of the benefits and career opportunities that can be obtained by being a volunteer. The program resulted in several new recruits for each of the departments in the school district

Unit 5-22-3, the new pumper was received in June and placed in service soon after.

This was a bad year for departments providing assistance to Ridge. Both Middle Island and Shirley Community had ambulances involved in accidents while responding to assist Ridge.

Unit 5-22-4, the new heavy rescue truck was received in September and placed in service soon after.

A public vote was held to adopt a service award program for the volunteers. The program, which works similar to a pension program, was recently permitted under state law. Residents of the fire district voted to accept the program, which would be in effect January 1, 1990.

The Rescue Squad was awarded a plaque of appreciation for dedicated service from St. Charles Hospital and Rehabilitation Center.

A group of members were trained and certified by New York State in wilderness search and rescue. Not only were the members given the training to perform efficient searches in the vast woodlands in and around the district but they now could be called upon to assist in searches in other parts of the state as well.

A mutual aid disaster drill involving a school bus and several cars was hosted by Middle Island F.D. in November. Cub Scout Pack 187 of Ridge participated as the victims, rescued by the five participating fire departments.

A new type III modular ambulance was ordered and received. This ambulance replaced Unit 5-22-16 which was renumbered as 5-22-15 and used as a back-up ambulance. This measure allowed the Department with the ability to serve the district with tree ambulances.

- 1990 -

This was the first year of the service award program and members worked hard to maintain the required percentage of alarm responses and activities.

A wet-down ceremony for 5-22-3 and 5-22-4 was held on March 25th with the Middle Island and Manorville F.D.'s having the honors.

A 5k Run was held at HQ on Memorial Day. There were 181 participants who ran the course, which threaded through surrounding streets. Prizes were contributed by local businesses. Many successful fundraisers were held to help support our 50th anniversary celebration.

Both the softball and the drill teams were extremely active this year. The drill team won its first trophy for sportsmanship.

Many plans for the 50th anniversary celebration began to take shape this year.

A district vote for a new substation in Shirley was held on October 31st and the proposition was approved. The new station was needed to replace the older (temporary type) metal building that was in disrepair. Additional space was also need to house fire apparatus.

During this year, in addition to the usual brush fires, there was a rash of fatal motor vehicle accidents, two of which involved motorcyclists and deer.

- 1991 -

Due to a dramatic increase in the number of heavy rescue calls responded to, the Department ordered and received a second Hurst Tool (hydraulic heavy rescue device). This piece of equipment was located at company two (N. Shirley) because of its proximity to the Long Island Expressway, which runs through the Ridge Fire District.

Ex-Chief John Austen was the first member of the Department to receive a Service Award check.

A monument was placed at fire headquarters in memory of those who have served and in honor of all of the past, present, and future volunteers. On the top of the monument stands the fire bell, which was once on the original 5-22-3. The monument was dedicated with the public on hand following the Memorial Day Parade.

The Department battled a rash of suspicious fires some of which were determined to be intentionally set. Experts believed the problem was at least partly due to the poor economy on Long Island.

THE RIDGE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT PROUDLY CELEBRATES Its 50th ANNIVERSARY WITH MANY EVENTS INCLUDING A PARADE AND CARNIVAL STARING ON AUGUST 8th AND ENDING ON AUGUST 11th.

Note: This is the first 50 years of our history as it was compiled for our 35th and 50th Anniversary Journals. Department members are compiling our history through the present time as well as collecting additional details on our first 50 years. Please check back for updates.