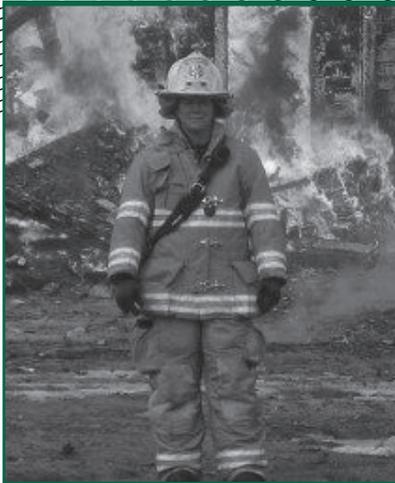


UP CLOSE & PERSONAL *In the Field*

The Up Close and Personal- In the Field column is designed to give readers a closer look at staff from New Hampshire municipalities. In this issue, we hope you enjoy meeting Eleanor Mardin, Fire Chief in the Town of Holderness.



Eleanor Mardin



T&C: What are your duties and responsibilities as Fire Chief?

EM: I joined the Holderness Fire Department (HFD) in October of 1988 after serving in the US Navy for 5 years. I am the 4th generation firefighter in my family. I was voted in as Captain in 1993 and appointed Chief in 2007. As fire chief, I am responsible for the 30 members of the HFD and for the well-being of the Town of Holderness. Changes in the fire service happen every day which is why our members are nationally certified EMTs and/or firefighters. We train monthly to keep up with constant changes.

T&C: What is your biggest challenge in performing your duties?

EM: One of the biggest challenges for a volunteer department is the response to calls. All our members have full-time jobs so it is difficult for them to leave their job to respond to a call. They make far less money coming to a call than if they stay at their job. This dilemma affects some members' ability to respond to evening and overnight calls because they have to take care of personal and family obligations during these times. I'm not sure we are any different than other call departments, but this is a big challenge for me.

T&C: How has NHMA helped you to do your job?

EM: In 1993 a Holderness fire truck was involved in a fatal crash while responding to a call. The crash caused the death of our Deputy Chief. This was the start of vehicle response classes put on by NHMA. NHMA uses our accident to instruct other departments on how to respond safely and to explain the liability of the driver and the department. NHMA also started a class on the use of truck air brakes and funded many of the driver operator classes that several of our drivers have taken.

T&C: How does the public perception differ from the reality of your job?

EM: Being the chief has a tremendous amount of responsibility. I make decisions that affect people's lives, without them even knowing it. I may have to inspect furnace installations, or work with the Holderness School and Plymouth State University on construction and inspection of their buildings or determine the safety of buildings as it relates to fire codes. I don't think the public has a very good understanding of all the tasks that a chief has to do.

T&C: What lessons about human nature have you learned in your role?

EM: A gratifying part of my job is when I show up for medical or fire calls at homes of people who have lived in Holderness for a long time. They knew my dad (who was chief for 18 years before me) and often remark how thankful they are that I took the time to help them. It is comforting for them to know someone and I'm happy to play that role.

Do you know someone who deserves to be profiled in a future edition of *New Hampshire Town and City* magazine?

If so, please contact the New Hampshire Municipal Association at 800.852.3358 ext. 3408 or townandcity@nhmunicipal.org.