

# ROSTER

## Of Fire Companies in Rural Delaware

### New Castle County

Good Will Fire Company .....	New Castle, Del.
Aetna Hose, Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1 .....	Newark, Del.
Volunteer Hose Company, Inc. ....	Middleton, Del.
Cranston Heights Fire Co. No. 1 .....	Marshallton, Del.
Five Points Civic Association Fire Department .....	Richardson Park, Del.
Brandywine Hundred Fire Company .....	Bellefonte, Del.
Holloway Terrace Civic Association Fire Department .....	Holloway Terrace, Del.
Minquas Fire Company .....	Newport, Del.
Christiana Fire Company .....	Christiana, Del.
Odessa Fire Company .....	Odessa, Del.
Elsmere Fire Company .....	Elsmere, Del.
Minqua Fire Company .....	Minquadale, Del.
Mill Creek Fire Company .....	Marshallton, Del.
Claymont Fire Company No. 1 .....	Claymont, Del.
Delaware City Fire Company .....	Delaware City, Del.
Talleyville Fire Company .....	Talleyville, Del.
Townsend Fire Company .....	Townsend, Del.

### Kent County

Citizens' Hose Company No. 1 .....	Smyrna, Del.
Clayton Fire Company No. 1 .....	Clayton, Del.
Robbins Hose Company No. 1 .....	Dover, Del.
Camden-Wyoming Fire Company .....	Camden-Wyoming, Del.
Hartley Volunteer Fire Company .....	Hartley, Del.
Magnolia Fire Company, Inc. ....	Magnolia, Del.
Harrington Fire Company No. 1 .....	Harrington, Del.
Carlisle Fire Company .....	Milford, Del.
Cheswold Volunteer Fire Company .....	Cheswold, Del.
Houston Fire Company .....	Houston, Del.
South Bowers Fire Company .....	Bowers Beach, Del.
Frederica Fire Company .....	Frederica, Del.

### Sussex Conty

Seaford Volunteer Fire Department .....	Seaford, Del.
Georgetown Volunteer Fire Company .....	Georgetown, Del.
Delmar Fire Department, Inc. ....	Delmar, Del.
Lewes Fire Company, Inc. ....	Lewes, Del.
Laurel Fire Department .....	Laurel, Del.
Ellendale Fire Department .....	Ellendale, Del.
Bridgeville Fire Company .....	Bridgeville, Del.
Greenwood Fire Company No. 1, Inc. ....	Greenwood, Del.
Rehoboth Beach Fire Company .....	Rehoboth Beach, Del.
Selbyville Volunteer Fire Company .....	Selbyville, Del.
Milton Fire Company .....	Milton, Del.
Millsboro Fire Company .....	Millsboro, Del.
Frankford Fire Company .....	Frankford, Del.
Blades Fire Company .....	Blades, Del.
Millville Fire Company .....	Millville, Del.

## A Brief History of the Seaford Volunteer Fire Department



The history of the Seaford Volunteer Fire Department is very much like that of any other small town Volunteer Fire Department. Years ago, as Seaford and the community grew in size and population, it became apparent that some form of organized fire protection was necessary. This realization on the part of the citizens naturally led to definite action.

On the evening of November 14, 1901, a group of public spirited citizens was called together for the purpose of discussing the advisability of a fire department for the town. Mr. W. H. Miller was Chairman of this meeting, and after a general discussion, it was decided to meet one week later for the purpose of organizing a permanent Department. On November 21, 1901, the Department was really born, having as its regular officers: W. H. Miller, President; W. T. Wallace, Vice President; Emanuel Greenbaum, Treasurer; Leon S. Hurley, Secretary; E. M. Scott, Chief, and a charter member list of forty-nine. A short time after organizing, a fire house was erected and several hand drawn hose wagons were purchased. Great rivalry existed between the different wagon crews, which led to much enthusiasm and interest. The Department established a reputation for its quick responses to alarms, and this same reputation exists today throughout the State.

The Seaford Department was particularly fortunate in having a real organizer to not only lay the foundation for a successful Department, but one who devoted a great part of thirty years in the building up process which is so essential in a volunteer organization. The Department is proud to have had such an active and progressive founder as was Mr. William H. Miller. He served the Department faithfully until on account of ill health he was compelled to ask for retirement from office. Much to the deepest regret and sorrow of the members, he passed on to the great beyond in December, 1933.

R. A. Steward, who is now Secretary, succeeded Mr. Miller as President, and served a term of two years. He was succeeded by James K. Phillips, Jr., who served a term of five years, and had previously served as Secretary for a period of seven years. In January, 1936, M. C. Orr was elected President and is serving in that capacity at this time. Almost without exception the officers of the Department have been men who had had experience of long standing and were elected to the various offices as a result of their qualifications.

Seaford's enviable low loss fire record has been made possible by the efficient directing of its Fire Chiefs. During its existence of thirty-six years, the Department has elected ten Chiefs, namely: E. M. Scott, J. H. Twiford, Ernest Fields, C. E. Marvel, R. H. Gordy, J. Woodie Marvel, Joseph H. Cox, C. B. Favinger, R. W. Gordy, and C. H. Marvel, Jr.

In 1921, a Seagrave triple combination 600 gallon pumper was acquired. Finding that it was too heavy for country work, a Seagrave Suburbanite 400 gallon pumper was purchased in 1926. This last piece of apparatus was completely re-conditioned and a 100 gallon water tank installed in 1933. Having a total of 2,000 feet of first class 2½ inch hose and two modern pieces of fire equipment, the Seaford Department can boast of being one of the best equipped Departments in the State.

As a result of having this modern equipment, and an efficient body of firemen to man it, the fire insurance rates have been reduced to the point where Seaford citizens enjoy a minimum of expense for insurance protection. This proves that money invested by a town in fire equipment, eventually reverts back to the citizens in the form of smaller fire losses and lower fire insurance rates.

In February, 1935, an ambulance was purchased through popular subscription. This piece of modern equipment, manned by the First-Aid Squad, consisting of six members of the Department, has rendered invaluable service to the community.

For a number of years the Department supported itself financially by means of annual carnivals. These were discontinued several years ago, due to public disapproval. There is now an arrangement with the Town whereby the Department can exist without resorting to carnivals and other means of raising funds.

Plans are being made for a new fire-house and community building, which will give the Department a new modern home. The Town and community is in back of the movement and it is hoped that it will be approved and work commenced some time during the early Fall of this year.

The Officers and members of the Seaford Volunteer Fire Department as well as the citizens of the town, are pleased and proud to have the honor of entertaining the sixteenth annual convention of the Delaware Volunteer Firemen's Association.

The present officers of the company are:

Malcolm C. Orr—President.  
Joseph A. Boswell—Vice-President.  
Reuben A. Steward—Secretary.  
Isidore Stephany—Treasurer.  
Charles H. Marvel, Jr.—Chief  
O. E. Wright—First Assistant.  
James Wheatley—Second Assistant.  
H. J. Records—Chief Engineer.

# Fire dept.'s centennial marked in stone

By Glenn Rolfe  
Staff writer

SEAFORD — There is now concrete evidence of Seaford Volunteer Fire Department's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

A historical marker obtained through set-aside state funding from Rep. Tina Fallon, R-Seaford, was set in cement Friday and officially put in place at the fire station.

The Seaford Volunteer Fire Department celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2001.

Located near the King Street entrance of the fire

station, the marker briefly tells of the birth of the fire department on Nov. 14, 1901, and makes note of the first "First Aid Squad" in 1933.

It also pays closing memorial tribute and remembrance to the "spirit" of the New York City Fire Department and its members who died in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center.

"It's kind of special," said Ron Marvel, department spokesman and a past Seaford fire chief. "It was within in two months. We were '11-14' and this was '9-

11."

Seaford Fire Chief Doug Butler, fire department officers and past chiefs joined Rep. Fallon and Seaford Mayor Dan Short in the ceremonial commemoration.

Rep. Fallon said besides being the home for fire protection, the station is one of many buildings in Seaford with special significance.

She remembers the days when Jimmy Dorsey and other Big Band-era groups performed the fire hall.

"I've been pursuing this, and it's exciting when you

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Staff photos/Glenn Rolfe

A historical marker commemorating the Seaford Volunteer Fire Department's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2001 was put in place last Friday outside the fire station. Pictured from left are: Ric Marvel, Barry Calhoun, Seaford Mayor Dan Short, fire department president John Stevens, past chief Steve Mayer, chief Doug Butler, State Rep. Tina Fallon, ambulance captain Mike Vincent, past chief Ron Marvel and department treasurer Ken Tull.



## SEAFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

On November 14, 1901, a group of concerned citizens met in the Seaford town council room for the purpose of discussing the organization of a fire company. By the end of the month, over 50 persons had volunteered. The company was formally named the Seaford Volunteer Fire Department. W. H. Miller was elected president, and T. H. Scott was chosen to be the first chief. During the early years, the Department's equipment consisted mainly of ladder trailers and hand-drawn hose reels. The first motorized vehicle was a new Seagrave engine, purchased in 1921. Since that time the Department has continued to upgrade and modernize its equipment, adding aerial and rescue trucks to its fleet of engines. A "First Aid Squad" was organized in 1933, and the first ambulance was purchased the following year. For many years the Department was housed in a frame building at this location. The present structure was completed in 1950 and expanded in 1972.

Today, over one hundred men and women continue to serve the Seaford community, providing fire fighting, rescue, and ambulance services.

*Dedicated to the spirit of the N.Y.F.D.  
in remembrance of 9-11-01*

Delaware Public Archives - 2002

SC-164

The Seaford Volunteer Fire Department's 100th anniversary historical marker includes a special memorial tribute to the fire fighter in New York City for their bravery and sacrifice during the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. The local fire department's centennial anniversary was Nov. 14, 2001.

## Marker

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really get it done," said Rep. Fallon. "I'm very concerned about this because this is

how we teach the history of our city and the good things that have happened."

"You see the pictures and you read the articles. And then you start to think, and that makes you study other things." Rep. Fallon said.

# Seaford Fire Department Celebrates 100 years

The Seaford Volunteer Fire Department is celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding. On Nov. 10 1901, a group of concerned men met in Seaford's town council room to discuss ways and means of organizing a fire company. It is apparent from early minutes that some informal fire fighting was supported by the city of Seaford before that time but by the end of November over 50 members had volunteered to form a fire Department. W.H. Miller was elected president and the company named the Seaford Volunteer Fire Department. According to A History in Flames, The Story of the Volunteer Firemen of the State of Delaware by Bonnie Baggett, Seaford was the 13<sup>th</sup> organized fire department outside of the city of Wilmington and the 3d in Sussex County, following Lewes in 1796 and Laurel in 1899. A motion was adopted to ask the Town Council for permission to use the city's equipment and members were assigned to investigate appropriate new equipment that might be needed.

The department elected its first chief, T.H. Scott, on Dec. 0, 1901. The first fire was fought on Dec. 18, 1901 in a building used as both a store and home of R.C. Trice on High Street. After an hour of fire fighting, the damage was estimated as \$375, more than half of the value of the building.

Early minutes of the Department show that rules were quickly established. Members were expected to answer all alarms and the fine for missing a fire without a good excuse was set at 50 cents. The same fine applied to missing the annual meeting or speaking disrespectfully to an officer. More serious was the use of alcoholic beverages at a fire or meeting, which could result in a \$1 fine or expulsion from the department. The same penalties were enforced for smoking in a meeting.

Seaford used hand drawn hose reels and ladder trailers for the first 20 years of its existence. In 1921 the first fire truck was purchased. According to department records, bids were solicited from several companies with American La France and Seagraves being the two major competitors. With the aid of state and city funding, the first engine purchased was a 1921 Seagraves. This engine has recently returned to the city of Seaford after years of private ownership and is currently undergoing complete renovation. A second Seagraves Suburbanite Truck was purchased in 1925 at a cost of \$6,500. Today the department maintains 4 Pierce fire engines as well as a aerial truck, 2 ambulances, rescue truck, brush truck, utility truck and van. Old "Number 4," a 1948 Seagraves is maintained for fire prevention programs.

Besides engines, aerial and rescue trucks have been part of Seaford's fire equipment. The first Seaford aerial truck was an 85-ft. Seagraves purchased in 1952. This was replaced by an LTI aerial in 1976, which is currently scheduled for replacement in 2002. A Reo Civil Defense truck from the 1950's was replaced by a Ford/Swab Rescue in 1969. In 1986, this was replaced by a Pierce Arrow/Saulsbury Heavy Rescue.

In 1933, Seaford Fire Department formed a "First Aid Squad" and in 1934 a Ford ambulance was purchased for \$1,500. Money was raised by public subscription and "shares" in the ambulance squad were sold. A number of Ford, Chevrolet and Cadillac ambulances were owned over the years until truck based "box" ambulances replaced them in the 1980's. Today two modern box ambulances served the Seaford Community. The 1990s also brought the first paid members of the department, as first one and now four paid ambulance attendants were hired. Currently paid attendants cover 6 AM to 6 PM with volunteers covering evenings, nights and second alarms.



Today over 100 men and women serve the Seaford community, providing fire fighting, rescue and ambulance service.

To celebrate its anniversary, the Department plans a banquet on Sat. Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> to kick off a week of activities. A Less formal member social on Wed. Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> will unite old and new members of the department, the Ladies Auxiliary and their spouses for an evening of fellowship.

The firehouse will be open to the community on Sat. Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> from 1 PM until 5 PM. There will be a variety of tours, displays and demonstrations for all to enjoy.

The grand finale for the week will be one of the largest parades Seaford has every hosted on Sunday Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>. Bands and fire departments from Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and New York are expected to attend. The parade is scheduled to begin at 1PM.



## Fire Department

The Seaford Volunteer Fire Department is one of the most outstanding and active civic organizations of its kind on the Eastern Shore. Comprised of approximately 40 active members and 20 active reserve members, this organization has and is rendering an invaluable service in keeping our fire losses at a minimum.

Its modern, spacious building houses an 85-foot aerial and pumper (750 gpm) truck, one 750 (gpm) pumper truck for town use and 2 trucks (750 and 500 gpm respectively) with 750 gallon tanks for either town or country use. A Rescue and Disaster truck, an ambulance, 3 portable light plants and an auxiliary pump that can be handled by two men make up the balance of its fire-fighting first aid and life-saving equipment.