

The new Tally-Ho
firehouse built in 1918.

BROTHERS FOR 100 YEARS

By Steve Grogan, Lynbrook Fire Department

Two fire companies, formed as one over 100 years ago on Long Island and split into two when village boundaries were formed in the early 1920s, have continued to maintain a friendship over the years that exemplifies the true meaning of the words "brother firefighter."

The story of this friendship began in 1910 when a fire destroyed the Tally-Ho Inn in Lynbrook due to the lack of fire protection in a sparsely populated area at the time. The inn was a three story hotel, or rooming house to some, and bar, that stood on the corner of Merrick Road (then called Old Plank Road for the wooden planks laid over the dirt roadway), and Horton Avenue, at the border of the communities of Lynbrook and Valley Stream on the south shore of Nassau County.

In the early 1900s, the horse-drawn "Tally-Ho" stagecoach, which carried upwards of 20 people, traveled from Brooklyn to Jamaica and out to Freeport, a busy fishing and shipping community. One of the stage stops was the Tally-Ho Inn.

After the inn was rebuilt in 1911, eight community-minded residents of Lynbrook and Valley Stream who allegedly frequented the inn joined together to form a new fire company to cover the surrounding area which lacked fire protection. The eight held their first meeting on March 24, 1911, and called themselves, what else?, the Tally-Ho Chemical Fire Engine Company No. 3. The company was incorporated by the State of New York one year later on March 25, 1912.

Their first engine was a four-wheeled chemical fire cart that the firefighters pulled to fire calls for many miles around. They stored the fire cart in a "dilapidated building" next to the rebuilt inn. In 1916, Tally-Ho joined the independent United Fire Department with Malverne's Norwood Hook and Ladder, and Franklin Hook and Ladder of Munson.

In 1918, after raising monies from dances and other events and the "personal contributions" of the members, and using land owned by a member, a two-story firehouse was built on Horton Avenue just down the block from the inn and on the Lynbrook side of the street. By this time they also had their first motorized fire engine. Today, the company is still in the same firehouse which has been rebuilt and expanded over the years. It's one of only two firehouses in Nassau County that has a fire pole from the second floor to the apparatus floor.

In 1922, the Incorporated Village of Lynbrook, and then three-company Lynbrook Fire Department, extended its boundary to include Horton Avenue. Tally-Ho, sitting on the border between the two municipalities, and still independent, was ordered to close its doors or join the Lynbrook Fire Department. The Lynbrook residents could join, but, the Valley Stream members could not because they lived outside the boundaries of the department and the Village of Lynbrook. The vote of the Tally-Ho membership was evenly divided by the 38 active members. Tally-Ho's chief cast the deciding vote and the company joined the Lynbrook Fire Department.

As part of the agreement between the members, the Valley Stream residents were given Tally-Ho's then newly re-furbished 1922 GMC fire engine and the Lynbrook residents kept the firehouse. The Valley Stream firefighters then formed Engine 2 of the Valley Stream Fire Department about a half-mile away.

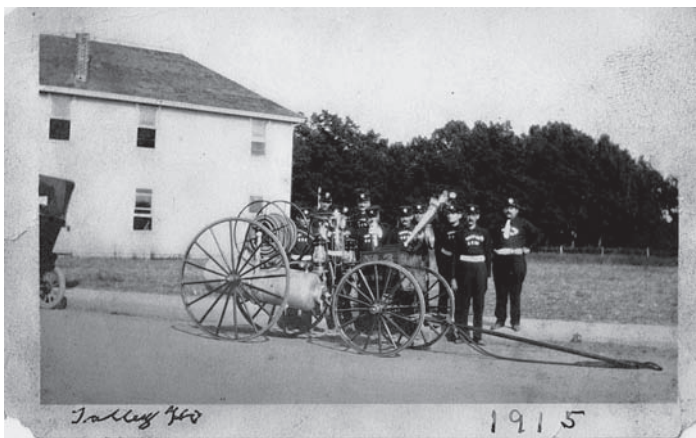
At ceremonies at the firehouse in March marking the 100th anniversary of Tally-Ho, the Mayor of Lynbrook, in remarks to those gathered, including Engine 2 members, mentioned the split and how Tally-Ho got the firehouse, and jokingly said, "Never make a deal with Tally-Ho!"

Although Tally-Ho got the better of the deal back in 1922, it has never hurt the relationship that exists between the two companies. The camaraderie and friendship these firefighters shared when Tally-Ho was one company still exists today. Each company supports the other in all endeavors. In 2005, when Tally-Ho Ex-

Captain Jeff Wiener was killed in action in Iraq, the members of Engine 2 stood side by side as if we were once again one company. On Memorial Day, which the companies always celebrate together, a joint company t-shirt is made to remember Ex-Captain Wiener.

Each week Engine 2 members are at Tally-Ho or vice versa. And there are occasions over the years when members of both companies have fought fires side by side when called on mutual aid to help the other's respective department. In March those brother firefighters from Engine 2 celebrated with the Tally-Ho members, past and present, the 100th anniversary of the official incorporation of Tally-Ho Chemical Fire Engine Company No. 3, as if they had never left.

Still brothers 100 years later.



Tally-Ho firefighters from Lynbrook and Valley Stream in 1915 with the rig they pulled to fires.



Tally-Ho firefighters from Lynbrook and Valley Stream in 1919.



Valley Stream residents when they accepted Tally-Ho's pumper in 1922. This was obtained from Engine 2 archives.



Tally-Ho's lime green rig and Engine 2's red rig on the ramp of the same Tally-Ho firehouse at their 100th anniversary celebration.



The drawing for our 100th anniversary.



About the Author: Steve Grogan is a 43 member of Tally-Ho. He is the Lynbrook Fire Department's Public Information Officer, spokesperson, and an Ex-Captain. He is a Vietnam-era veteran, a former Lynbrook Village Trustee, and a retired federal agent.