

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE: PHILIP LeBLANC

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A desire to serve the public and contribute to the common good has taken Phil around the world and back to New Hampshire.



**P**hilip LeBlanc is Deputy Fire Chief for the Londonderry Fire Department in New Hampshire. He began his fire and rescue services training in the United States Marine Corps and has risen steadily through the ranks since joining his hometown fire department in 2006. In addition to several citations, he was awarded the Firefighter of the Year Award in 2010 and 2014. Phil received his Bachelor of Science in Business Management degree from Rivier in 2021.

### **How did you start your career in fire service?**

**Phil:** *I wanted to do something where I interacted with the public in a positive manner and came upon firefighting. I had planned to go to the tech college in Laconia, New Hampshire, for an associate degree in fire science. Ultimately, I joined the military, and as a Marine, I was able to get more training and certifications to become a firefighter than if I'd gone to the tech college.*

### **How did your military service support your career?**

**Phil:** *I received all my fire certifications in one year and became a reservist. I was deployed to Iraq three months later. When I returned in 2005, I completed my EMS certification and got on the Call Department in Londonderry. It was a part-time position; I joined the Fire Department full-time in 2006.*

**In which roles have you served?**

*Phil:* Firefighter, Lieutenant, Battalion Chief, and currently Deputy Fire Chief. I've served as the Department's Community Relations Coordinator and on Londonderry's Senior Citizen Resource Committee. I'm also on the Board of the New Hampshire Fire Service Committee of Merit.

**How has the focus of your service changed over the years?**

*Phil:* My role is more administrative now. I manage the business aspects of the Department – payroll, payables, facilities management, and recruitment for our three stations. My job is much more proactive than reactive. There is a major focus on planning for the future and enhancing efficiencies. I'm working to anticipate needs, secure the necessary resources, and best serve the public.

**How has your Rivier experience supported your success?**

*Phil:* I was an adult when I started my degree at Rivier. I knew the education would allow me to move up in the Fire Department and help me develop a tangible skillset if I got hurt or couldn't be a fireman anymore. My business degree has been a huge asset in my ability to understand the complexities of the administrative side of the Fire Department and to handle a lot of different moving parts in real time. Dr. Mark Meehan helped me to understand the importance of leadership—that people are your biggest assets, and you need to support them to achieve their greatest success.

**How do you view your leadership role?**

*Phil:* I am fascinated by people, people's stories, what makes people tick, and their backgrounds ... it's finding what they're good at, showing them that they're good at it, and then getting them to do it. From a business standpoint, if you get people to like their job and do it well, your business is going to succeed. And if your business succeeds, you're profitable. And if you're profitable, you've obtained the end goal, right? My 'profit' is the health and safety of the town of Londonderry.

**What are your biggest challenges now?**

*Phil:* Public service is always a challenge. For the Department, our biggest challenge now is hiring; the pool of applicants is small. There is a trickle-down effect to having open positions. I need to fill the roster to ensure members get to go home and regenerate before returning to work, keep overtime at a minimum, and maintain the budget.

**Why is public service important to you?**

*Phil:* People matter. Everyone matters. When people thank me for my military service and what I do, I struggle. I look at it this way, everyone is good at something. Whether you're a nurse, a teacher, or a firefighter, everybody has the ability to do something and no one thing is more important than the other. Because without one, the others don't work; so, it takes all kinds of people who are good at all kinds of things to make the world go round. I couldn't do what I do if there weren't a million other people doing other things.

**What's next for you?**

*Phil:* I'd like to get a master's degree and become an adjunct professor when I retire from the Fire Department. I would enjoy teaching leadership. I enjoy learning and showing people what understanding leadership and being a good leader can do for them and for others. ■