

# WHAT IS A FIREMAN?

He's the guy next door - a man's man with the memory of a little boy.

He has never gotten over the excitement of engines and sirens and danger.

He's a guy like you and me with warts and worries and unfulfilled dreams.

Yet he stands taller than most of us.

He's a fireman.

He puts it all on the line when the pager goes off.

A fireman is at once the most fortunate and least fortunate of men.

He's a man who saves lives because he has seen too much death.

He's a gentle man because he has seen the awesome

Power of violence out of control.

He's responsive to a child's laughter because his arms have held too many small bodies that will never laugh again.

He's a man who appreciates the simple pleasures of life -

Hot coffee held in numb, unbending fingers - a warm bed for bone and muscle compelled beyond feeling - the camaraderie of brave men -

The divine peace and selfless service of a job well done in the name of all men.

He doesn't wear button or wave flags or shout obscenities.

When he marches, it is to honor a fallen comrade.

He doesn't preach the brotherhood of man.

He lives it.