

Box 52 Association



The Line Box



I·F·B·A· Member club since 1955!

Vol. 17 No. 2

Well, here we are the last Line Box of 2020. Who would of believed when reading last year's December issue, the Country and for that matter the world would be in the middle of a worldwide pandemic.

2020 only has a few more weeks to go. Let's hope that 2021 brings us all a better year and that we will soon be back to meetings in person and reconnecting with friends!

Onto the issue! It is jam packed with stories and photos that we are sure that our readership will enjoy!

This issue would not have been possible if Association members had not answered the call for information, interviews, photos and a host of other requests from the Staff to get this issue together. The members are listed in each area that they helped with.

I must take a moment and thank Retired Chief Walter Murray of the Fredrick County Maryland Fire and Rescue for sending us the Engine Squad equipment list. Belated thanks chief!

Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas and fingers crossed for a happy, but more importantly a healthy 2021!

Everyone take care, stay safe, stay healthy and wear ya mask!



A BFD Family Tradition 3 Rescues Box 1671 2020, 1985, 1958 The Pero Family

On Wednesday December 2nd Wayne Alarm's Central Station received a fire alarm activation for a building at 68 West Newton Street in Boston's South End. Central Station Operators notified the Boston Fire Alarm Office. Fire Alarm quickly transmitted box 1671 Shawmut Ave. and West Newton Street at 0804 hours. As the box was beeping over channel 1, Engine 22 was reporting 4 story brick heavy fire showing first floor, going into fast attack mode. Both Ladder 4 and 26 reported available via radio and were directed to respond. Engine 33 and Ladder 4 were assigned as the RIT.

Arriving on scene was District 4 with District Chief Mulane. He reported on scene going out on channel 2. At 0810 hours he reported "4 story brick heavy fire alpha side extending, smoke all floors, occupied brown stone. Strike a second alarm." Tenants were using the fire escape to exit the upper floors.

On the fourth floor tenant, Alicia Soto and her two children were alerted to the fire alarm sounding by bright lights flashing in her apartment. Soto is hearing impaired and Wayne Alarm had fitted the apartment with several special devices to alert her of a fire alarm activation. One other device is a "bed shaker" which shakes the bed when the alarm sounds waking the sleeping resident.

As Ladder 4 pulled down West Newton Street, they had perfect position to throw the stick to the Soto family and make the rescue. Firefighter Liam Pero, a fourth generation Boston Firefighter climb the aerial and brought the 5 year old girl down first, followed by her infant sister and finally, using hand signals Pero was able to communicate with Soto and she was brought down the aerial safely. All were un-injured.

The fire on the first floor was quickly knocked down with only heavy smoke damage to the upper floors. The fire displaced 6 adults and 2 children.



The Soto family awaiting rescue on the 4th floor. BFD photo



FF. Liam Pero Ladder Co. 4 carrying a child down the stick at 1671



Damage to first floor apt. Photo courtesy of Wayne Alarm

1985

On Monday evening October 28, 1985 at just about midnight, box 1671 was transmitted by the Fire Alarm Office at 2341 hours for the address of 425 Shawmut Avenue. An inside fire was being reported at the Cassa Myrna Vasquez Shelter for Battered Women.

Once again Engine 22 rolled out of quarters. Made the short run to Shawmut Avenue and ordered the Working Fire at 2342 hours. Rescues were made via the interior stairways and over ladders.

Firefighter William Pero of Ladder Company 4 rescued a woman and brought her down the aerial of Ladder 4 in a mirror image of his son thirty five years later.



Two residents died in the blaze which was ruled arson and a suspect was later arrested. District Chief Shea was in Car 4, C6 Div. 1 Dep. Chief (and Box 52 member) Kevin Mochen. Due to the deaths C1 Commissioner Leo Stapleton also responded.

1958

BFD General Order No. 8 Feb. 12, 1958

IV. HIGH COMMENDATION

1. "At 6:22 a.m., January 19, 1958, the Department responded on a still alarm for a fire in a tenement building at 413 Shawmut Avenue, Boston. Box 1671, (3 Alarms), was struck for this fire

During operations at this fire, Fire Fighter William E. Pero of Ladder Co. 3 was ordered to ventilate the roof of the building via an aerial ladder. As he passed a front dormer window he heard moans emanating from within. He climbed up the sloped roof and removed the skylight over the stairway and also cleaned out windows in a cupola in the roof. Being unable to enter the dormer window because of fire conditions, he once again climbed to the roof across the ledge and down to a rear dormer. From this point he got to a fire escape, cleaned out the window and entered a large size attic bedroom. He searched the bedroom and then opened a door leading to a hall opposite the stairs. However, he was driven back by the volume of heat, smoke and gases. He made a second attempt, entered the stair hall and groped his way to the front of the building where he came upon an unconscious man in the bedroom. He attempted to drag the person to the front of the building, but became exhausted and left his victim momentarily to get his wind back. Upon returning to locate the unconscious man,

he encountered a second person who was in a semi-conscious condition. He brought the later to a window, lifted him to the sill onto the aerial ladder outside. As he started to carry the victim down the ladder, he called to another fire fighter, on another aerial swinging into the building, that there was another man in the room. Because of the severe bodily punishment to which Fire Fighter Pero was subjected, he was taken to Boston City Hospital.

Because Fire Fighter Pero performed the rescue work under very hazardous conditions cause by heat, smoke and gases, and without any thought of his own safety, the Fire Commissioner is pleased to highly commend him and his case is referred to the Board of Merit for further consideration.

**JOHN E. FITZGERALD MEDAL FOR
MOST MERITORIOUS ACT**

is hereby awarded to

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM E. PERO

A Member of Ladder Company 3



For the extreme personal risk to which he was exposed in the performance of his duty as a firefighter during operations at Box 1671, three alarms, January nineteen, nineteen hundred and fifty-eight, for repeated attempts to enter a building heavily involved in fire, for successfully entering the building and removing an unconscious man from a burning bedroom to safety, and during this rescue warned other firefighters that another victim was trapped, and being under such severe strain due to heavy concentration of flame, heat and gases that he was taken to Boston City Hospital.

Firefighter William E. Pero was highly commended by the Fire Commissioner in General Orders No. 8, series of 1958, for his heroism.

Because he performed the rescue work under very hazardous conditions caused by heat, smoke and gases, and without any thought of his own safety, the Board of Merit recommends that Firefighter William E. Pero be awarded the "John E. Fitzgerald Medal For Most Meritorious Act."



METRO-FIRE JOBS

These fires will cover the period October 1st through November 30th. They will not list company responses but just date, address, building type, box and alarm times. Full reporting will start with any fire reaching a fifth alarm or above.

Thanks to Members Joe Hourihan, Ed Morrissey, Dave Parr, Jay Pozark, and Mike Sullivan for providing information on these multiple alarms.

Date	Time	Box	City	Address	Building
10/02	0245 0251 0316 0335 0413	51 2-51 3-51 4-51 5-51	Wakefield	18 New Salem St.	1 story commercial
10/02	0608 0614 0640	1885 2-1885 3-1885	Boston	34 Stanley St. District 7	3 story wdfrm dwelling
10/03	2131	2-135	Chelsea	255 Central Ave.	East Pointe Nursing Home
10/07	0524 0546 0554	59 2-59 3-59	Cambridge	34 Buckingham St.	2.5 story wdfrm dwelling
10/27	1528	2- 356	Lynn	19 Porter St.	3 story brick vacant Marshall School
11/03	0532	2-6146	Quincy	98 Edward St.	1.5 story wdfrm dwelling
11/05	0839	2-544	Winchester	195 Pond St.	1.5 story wdfrm dwelling fully involved
11/05*	0216	2-3412	Boston	1740 Dorchester Ave. District 8	1 story commercial "Taxpayer"
11/06	0856	2-314	Lynn	11 Seymour Ave.	3 story wdfrm dwelling
11/07	1239 1241 1256 1324	Still 3239 2-3239 3-3239	Quincy	92 Liberty St.	2 story commercial
11/08	0423	2-13	Revere	632 Washington St.	
11/12	1146	2-314	Newton	346 Cherry St.	Large 2.5 story wdfrm dwelling
11/17	1033	2-289	Cambridge	173 Columbia St.	3 story wdfrm rear porch
11/20	0503 0508 0517	3144 2-3144 3-3144	Boston	36 Robinson St. District 7	1.5 story wdfrm "Carriage House" extended to a 3 story wdfrm dwelling
11/21	0746	3396	Boston	16 Nightingale St	3 story wdfrm dwelling

	0748 0752 0814	2-3396 3-3396 4-3396		District 8	2-3396 Orders of L-29
11/22	0142	5238 2-5238	Boston	41 Hooker St. District 11	3 story brick OMD middle unit of row of similar type buildings

**Engine 52 involved in a serious motor vehicle accident responding to 3412, which resulted in the rig smashing into the Bank of America at intersection of Washington St. and Talbot Ave. A full Tech. Rescue response was dispatched. R2 was cleared from 2-3412 and responded. Both Rescue Companies operated at the scene. Building Department requested and the crew of Engine 52 was transported to the hospital. All with non-life threatening injuries. The party in the other vehicle involved was also transported*

Friday, October 2, 2020

Wakefield 5-51 1 New Salem Street

McLellan Concrete Co. Inc. - (Formerly Wakefield Ready Mix Concrete)

At 0245 hours a passerby noticed the fire and called 9-1-1 to report a building fire. Box 51 was transmitted and the first alarm assignment under the command of Captain John Walsh rolled out of their quarters and headed for the box. On this night Wakefield Engine 2 was out of service and they were running with Engine 4.

The fire building was a one story 50 X 100 feet with a front section made of corrugated metal and the rear section concrete block. The main use of the building was for a fleet repair garage, storage and employee locker rooms, etc. The fire originated in the front, corrugated metal section of the building. The fire load including flammable liquids and gases and the building being very difficult to access resulted in a labor intensive exterior attack. There was also a serious water problem as a result of the exterior defensive attack using multiple 2 ½" handlines, deck guns, and ladder pipes. Multiple alarms were ordered by Chief Sullivan due to the inaccessibility but also the need to relay pump from distant hydrants. There were several concrete mixer trucks in the building that were heavily damaged. Damage estimates are over \$ 1 million dollars, cause of the fire is under investigation

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladder	Comments	Cover Assignments
0245	51	1, 4	1	C3	
0251	2-51	Read 3, Ston. 2. Mel 2	N.Read 1	Orders of C3, Capt. Walsh	Sau E3, Wob E2, Lynnflid Twr 1
0316	3-51	Sau 3, Wob 2	Lynnflid Twr	Orders of C1 Chief Sullivan	Mal E2, Mid E2, Mal L1
0335	4-51	Mal E2, Mid E2	Mal 1	Orders of C1 Chief Sullivan	Win E2, Lynn E9, Burl Twr
0413	5-51	Win E2, Lynn E9		Orders of C1 Chief Sullivan	Rev E3, Pea E7, Rev L2, Burl Twr at Greenwood station

Thanks to Members David Parr and Michael Sullivan for this information.

**From the Archives of Box 52
Fire Engineering Archives
Vol. 69 No. 1**

Box 52 Association, Boston, Christmas tree

The Christmas meeting and entertainment of the Box 52 Association of Boston, held at the Engineers' Club on December 15th 1920 was largely attended by members and guests. Among those present were Fire Commissioner John R. Murphy, Chief Peter E. Walsh, of the Boston fire department; Deputy Chief Henry Fox, Deputy Chief Walter McLean and Superintendent Henry Thompson, of the Boston Protective Department. Many other fire officials from Boston and nearby towns were in attendance. The program included a Christmas tree, vocal and instrumental musical selections, an illustrated lecture on "Milestones in Telephone History," and a buffet supper. President P. Hildredth Parker, of the Box 52 Association, presided. He was assisted by Vice-President Theodore Grant and the members of the executive committee, W. F. Lehman, H. Belknap, W. E. Dolan, Nelson Whitney and E. H. Milliken. Honorary membership pins in the shape of a miniature fire alarm box were presented to three new honorary members of the association, Superintendent Thompson and Deputy Chiefs Fox and McLean.

Old fire prints and photographs of fire fighting in Boston, New York and other cities were on view. A realistic looking Santa Claus handed out gifts to all present. The numbers of the fire alarm boxes sounded during the evening were posted on a large blackboard in accordance with the usual custom at the Box 52 Association meetings.



**Gould Building Fire Main & Pleasant Street
4-13
November 12, 1960
Article from the Box 52 Archives
December 1960 Newsletter**

Fire totally destroyed the interior of the 3 story Gould building at the corner of Main and Pleasant Streets in Malden Square. The building was constructed of brick with wooden floors and was accessible from the front street and the rear roof of other buildings. Damage was estimated at \$ 300,000.00 (*in today's dollars damage would be \$ 2,639,000 –Editor*).

Firefighters responded to a call for a fire in the "Place of Sweets" an ice cream shop on the first floor. A strong odor of smoke was present , but its source was not discovered until other stores in the block were investigated. Upon the opening of the Army & Navy store fire fighters were greeted by heavy smoke. A second alarm, was sounded with all incoming companies ordered to join those companies there in rescue work of the occupants on the third floor apartments. Some eight persons were carried down over ladders, mostly aged persons.

The fire extended to all stores on the first floor: a gift shop, ice cream shop, Army & Navy store and a jewelry store. The fire then worked its way up thru the building and eventually through the roof.

Several fire fighters were injured including Capt. Vatoor of Everett and Lt. Austin of Malden.

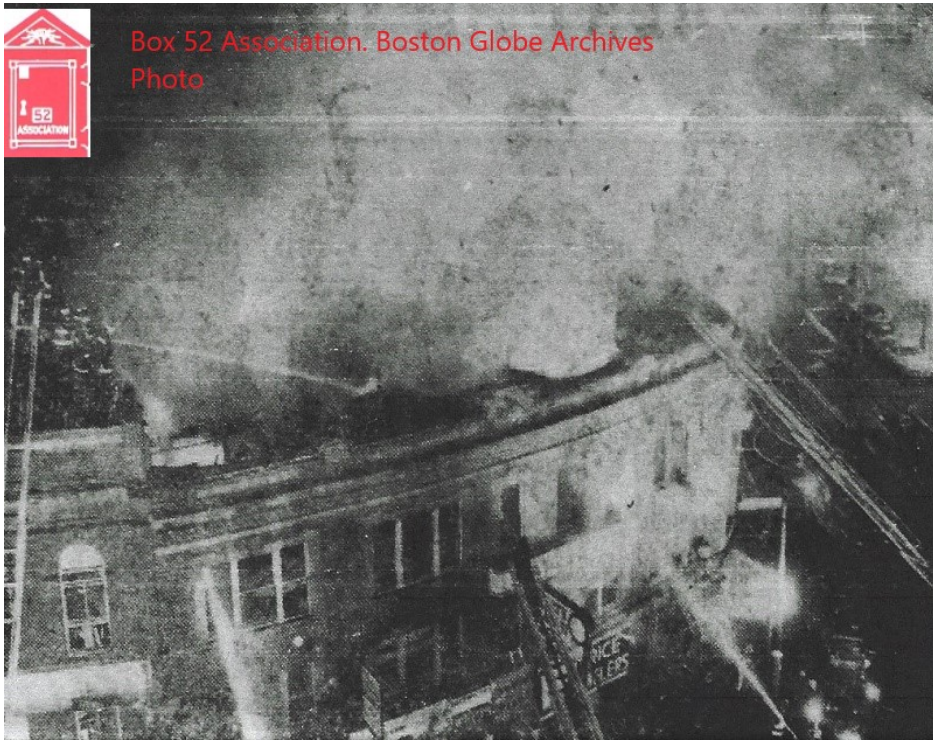
At the height of the blaze the adjoining Granada Theater was evacuated as a precaution.

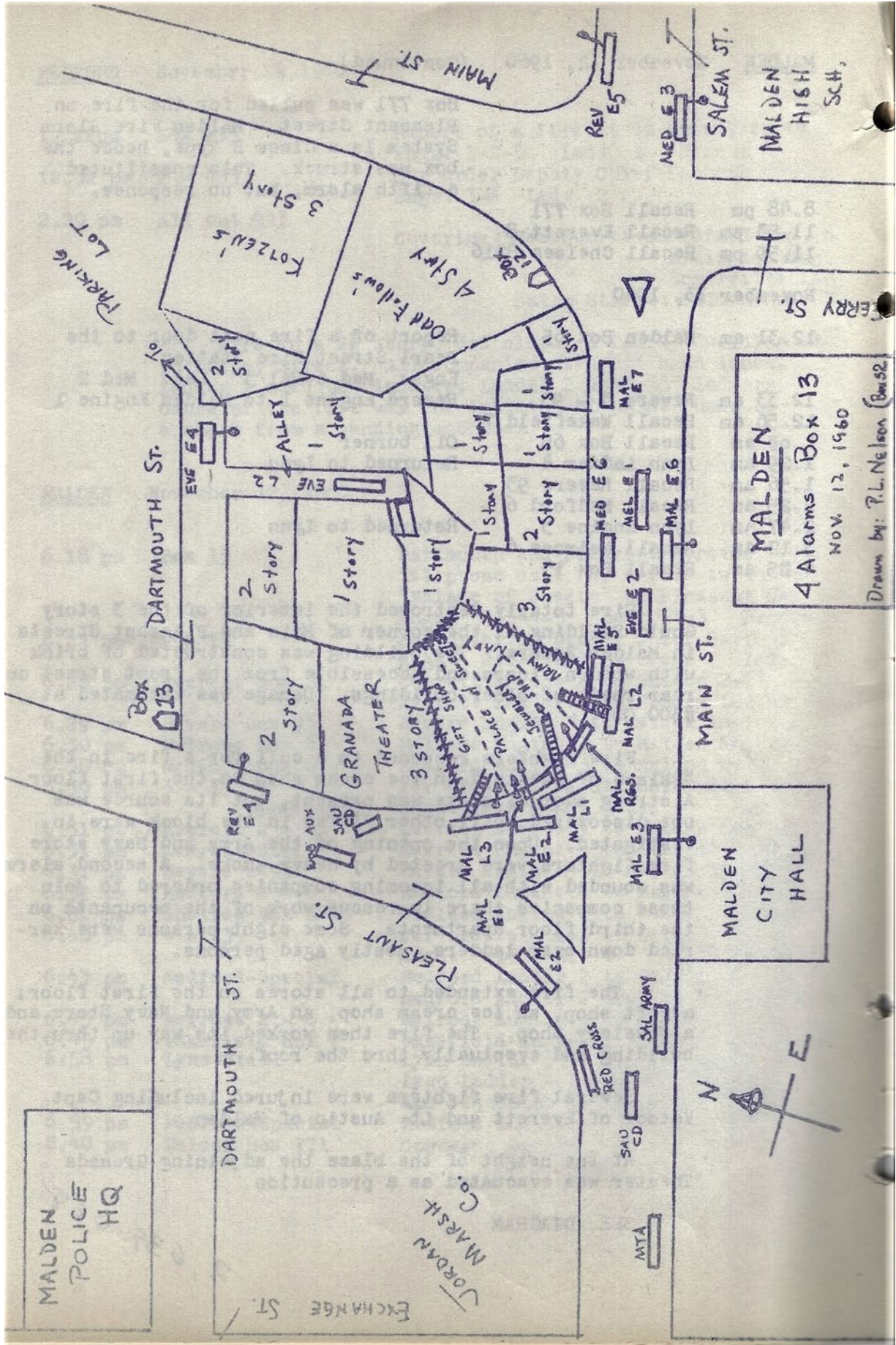
All times have been changed to 24 hour format.

Time	Box	Engine	Ladder	Rescue	Comments
1818	13	1, 3, 4, 5	1, 3	1	Telephone alarm for a fire in the Palace of Sweets
1827	2-13	2, 6, 7, Med. E3, Eve. E2	2		Orders of Deputy Chief Garrity
1828	81	Eve E2	Eve. L2		Everett box 81 E2 to Malden 2-13 L2 cover Malden L1
1829	93	Rev. E5			Revere box 93 E5 cover Malden E2
1830	6	Mel. E1			Melrose box 6 E1 cover Malden E1
1830	6	Med. E3			Medford box 6 E3 to Malden 2-13
1830	3-13	Mel. E1, Rev. E5, Med. E6	Eve. L2		Orders of Deputy Chief Garrity
1831	2-81 Still	Eve. E4			Everett box 2-81 E4 to Malden E1 Everett E3 to cover Everett E2
1831	2-93	Rev. E4			Revere box 2-93 E4 to cover Malden E2
1831	2-6	Med. E6			Medford box 2-6 E6 to Malden 3-13
1831	8216	Che. E4			Chelsea box 8216 E4 to cover Everett E4
1840	4-13	Eve. E4, Rev. E4	Med. L2		Orders of Chief of Dept. Cronin
1843	Med.		Med. L2		Medford-Special L2 to 4-13
1845	2-6	Mel. E3			Melrose box 2-6 E3 to cover Malden E1
1845	7	Wake. E1			Wakefield E1 to cover Melrose E1
1858	Lynn	Lynn E3	Lynn L4		Lynn Still alarm E3 to cover Malden E2 L4 to cover Malden L2 Aid requested by Malden Fire Dept.
1859	Med.	E4			Medford Special E4 to cover Malden E3
2040	771				Malden box 772 Converse Square. Box 771 was pulled for the fire on Pleasant Street. Malden Fire Alarm System is a Class B Type, hence the box was struck. This constituted a fifth alarm, but no response
2048	771				Recall box 771
2353	8				Recall Everett box 8
2359	8216				Recall Chelsea box 8216
0031	65	Med. E6, Mel. E3	Med. L2		Report of a fire next door to the Pearl Street Fire Station. Problem with an oil burner.
0033	3-93	Rev. E1			Revere box 3-93 E1 to cover Malden E1
0056	7				Recall Wakefield box 7
0103	65				Recall box 65 oil burner
0129	Lynn		Lynn L4		Returned to Lynn
0156	93				Recall Revere box 93
0225	6				Recall Medford box 6
0247	Lynn	Lynn E3			Returned to Lynn
0312	6				Recall Melrose box 6
0425	13				Recall Malden box 13



Box 52 Association. Boston Globe Archives
Photo





New Turn Table Ladders to Hit London's Streets

New aerial ladders that are more responsive to drive, faster to set up and with greater rescue capabilities are soon to hit the streets of London as we continue to improve its ability to deal with high rise incidents.

Twelve new 32 meter (*about 105 feet – Editor*) appliances known as turntable ladders are part of the aerial replacement project and have many improvements on the existing fleet, the biggest being that the ladder articulates, allowing for greater maneuverability. The articulating top section means that down London's narrow streets the turntable ladder can now set up closer to the building than previous aerial appliances. The reach obtained can also mean that the machines can be placed further away and overcome obstacles which would have been problematic previously.

The new turntable ladders are swift and responsive to drive and can reach their top working height within a minute from the moment of arrival at an incident. Other features include a detachable thermal imaging camera, improved stretcher capabilities all of which will enhance our operations at height. They will also improve our capabilities for lighting and observation of emergencies from above, giving incident commanders greater knowledge from the sky.

London Fire Commissioner Andy Roe said: "Our new aerial ladders are more responsive, quicker to set up and improve our ability to fight fires and rescue people from height. Our determination to get these working on London's streets despite the challenges Covid-19 has given us shows our commitment to improve our response, especially at high rise incidents."



Box 52 Association. Photo courtesy of the London UK Fire Brigade

Revere's Busiest Night Tour

December 13th 1990 1800 hrs – 0800 hrs December 14th 1990

Across the Metro District the night crews had relieved the brothers on the day shift. Gear was placed by riding position, tanks checked. Crews were enjoying the first sips of coffee waiting for the 1800 hour signal for roll call. Officers were going over the rosters and checking what hiring had to be done for the next day shift. It was the same in all 33 cities and towns in Fire District 13. Everyone was hoping for a quiet Thursday night, the Fire Gods had other plans.....

In Revere stations Group 2 was coming on duty under the command of C5 Deputy Fire Chief Daniel Doherty. At 1753 hours the warning blow hit in what would be the first of four fires they would fight this night. The last one would be the last conflagration of the 20th century! Mutual Aid companies from both Chelsea and Lynn would be responding into Revere multiple times during the tour. These two cities, who themselves faced conflagrations in the late 20th century, would soon find themselves involved in yet another!

Revere Fire Alarm received a 9-1-1 call reporting a bedroom fire at 57 Harris Street. Box 29 was transmitted and Engines 4, 1, 5 and Ladder 2 along with C2 Deputy Doherty. Engine 4 turned into Harris Street and reported smoke showing and people hanging out a window on the second floor. Ladder 2 with Engine 4 assisting, wasted no time in throwing ground ladders and racing up to rescue the trapped children. Two children and one infant were brought down safely with no injuries. Engine companies started lines in to the dwelling and the fire was found to be a room and contents job in a second floor bedroom. It was found that the fire started in an altar in the fire room. The alarm was delayed as the occupant attempted to extinguish the fire.

The fire was in a three story wood frame 3 family dwelling. The fire was brought under control using three inch and ¾ attack lines. Damage was estimated at \$ 25,000.00 and one firefighter was injured. Malden and Chelsea Engines covered Revere E4 and E1 stations.

Companies returned to quarters, re-packed hose, cleaned tools, changed air bottles and topped off booster tanks. The crews settled in and relaxed turning on the Bruins vs the Hartford Whalers game for the 2nd and 3rd period and were treated to a third period featuring 82 minutes of penalties including 1 game mis-conduct, 5 fighting majors, 2 mis-conducts and one unsportsmanlike conduct. This was one of the classic old school hockey brawls. The Bruins won the game 8-2. Here is a link to the YouTube video of the brawl <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udpFFN88tXU>

The next job would prove to be a stubborn one with lots of grunt work opening walls and chasing fire throughout a three story wood frame six family OMD. The fire started in the basement and got into the walls and pipe chases and it extended to the roof. By the time this job came in, the temperature was 35 degrees and the wind blowing at 5 to 10 mph.

At 2345 hours a 9-1-1 call was received reporting smoke in the building at 51 Centennial Avenue. Box 34 Franklin Ave & Walnut Ave was transmitted. The first alarm companies of Engine 1, 5, 3 Ladder 1 and C2 headed for the address.

Arriving companies had smoke showing and quickly swung into action. This would be the second first due fire of the shift for the crews on Engines 1 and 5. The main body of fire was located in the basement, but as crews searched the upper floors they had both smoke and heat on the second and third floors. Deputy Doherty ordered a second alarm bringing Revere Engines 4 and 2, Boston Engine 56 and Revere Ladder 2 to the fire along with Chief of Department James Connery. As these companies raced to the fire, other companies moved up into the vacant Revere houses: A Malden pump covered Walden Street. Chelsea Ladder 2 and Engine 3 made the run up Broadway to Central and Lynn Engine 9 covered Freeman Street.

The slug fest had begun and the first and second alarm crews were taking a pounding. Every wall and void they opened, fire spewed out. Both Chief Connery and Deputy Doherty knew they needed more help and the third alarm was sounded with a request for an additional Ladder. Boston Ladder 21 was dispatched along with Engine 50 who was the third pump on the box from their own quarters. Boston Fire Alarm transmitted a second alarm on mutual aid signal 8214. The Chelsea and Malden companies headed out of the cover assignments for the fire. An additional Malden pump was dispatched to cover at Walden Street with an Everett Engine and Truck moving up to Central. Lynn Engine 9 was still at Freeman Street.

34 FRANKLIN AVE & WALNUT AVE																																				
REVERE FIRE DEPARTMENT						ALARM RESPONSE CARD																														
TO FIRE						TO COVER																														
ALARM	ENGINE			LADDER		ENGINE			LADDER																											
1	1	5	3			1		to	to	to	to	to																								
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<table border="1"> <tr> <td>1—Walden St. Station</td> <td>B—Boston</td> <td>W—Winthrop</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2—Point of Pines Station</td> <td>C—Chelsea</td> <td>S—Saugus</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3—Beachmont Station</td> <td>E—Everett</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4—Central Station</td> <td>L—Lynn</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5—Freeman St. Station</td> <td>M—Malden</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>						1—Walden St. Station	B—Boston	W—Winthrop	2—Point of Pines Station	C—Chelsea	S—Saugus	3—Beachmont Station	E—Everett		4—Central Station	L—Lynn		5—Freeman St. Station	M—Malden		6			<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Master Box</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Auto. Sprinkler</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fire Detect.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Aux. Fire Alarm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>School</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hospital</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Conv. Home</td> </tr> </table>						Master Box	Auto. Sprinkler	Fire Detect.	Aux. Fire Alarm	School	Hospital	Conv. Home
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Copy of the Running Card in use for Box 34 in 1990. Photo courtesy of the Revere Fire Department

This fire injured two firefighters who were transported to the hospital. Crews used two aerial ladders with an additional 220 feet of ground ladders. Attacked the fire with four big lines and six 1 ¾ inch lines.

Let's take a moment before we get to the next two fires and take a look at the Revere Fire Department in 1990. At the time they were running with five engine companies and two ladder companies from five stations. 131 Officers and men were on the roster. The closing of Engines 2 and 3 was still some six months away. Manning on the apparatus was a company officer and three firefighters. This could drop to one and two for vacations, sick days, etc.

The City is 6.0 square miles and at the time of the fires the population was 42,641 persons. These four fires all occurred in a neighborhood that was home to a large South East Asian immigrant population, Revere, like its two neighbors Chelsea and Lynn was a very congested City with numerous three story wood frame dwellings that were designed as either three family or six family duplex. They were designed with one family living on each floor. As we all know these are called "three deckers".

And now we present Fire # 3!

While all the Revere companies were still heavily involved on Centennial Avenue. Call back C3 Deputy Chief Robert Eydenberg was covering the City with three mutual aid pumps and one ladder.

At 0144 another 9-1-1 call was received reporting smoke in the building at 14-16 Nahant Avenue. This address was directly behind the Walden Street Fire Station. Box 312 was transmitted for another three story six family wood frame. This building had one apartment vacant on the first floor at the time of the fire.

The temperature was now hovering just around freezing and the breeze had increased slightly. Malden Engine 6, Lynn Engine 9 along with Everett Engine 2 and Ladder 2 turned into Nahant Avenue and were greeted with a light smoke condition. Companies entered the building and started to evacuate the residents, while Everett Ladder 2 and Malden Engine 6 searched for the source of the smoke. When the interior cellar door was opened a wave of smoke washed over the crews. They made it into the basement and found a mattress had been set on fire and was burning along with other debris. Engine 6's pump charged the line and the 1 ¾ inch line made quick work of the fire without the need for a supply line. The building was vented. It was found that an unknown party had dragged the mattress from the vacant apartment to the basement and set the fire. The fire caused smoke damage throughout the entire building and the fans of Everett Ladder 2 were used for approximately 20 minutes to vent the smoke. Deputy Chief Eydenberg estimated damage at \$ 500.00, labeled the fire suspicious and requested the Arson Squad and RPD to respond. The Allout was sent at 0222 hours. The companies went back to their covering assignments.

Some of the companies were in the process of being released from the third alarm on box 34. In exactly 19 minutes the Revere Fire Department would battle the last full-fledged conflagration of the twentieth century!

And now the final fire of the shift: ***The Revere Conflagration!***

At 0243 Firefighter Anthony Capoccia on duty in Fire Alarm received a single phone call from a female resident of Highland Street reporting a building fire in a vacant house at 34 Highland Street just off Shirley Ave. At this time then temps were now 25 degrees and the wind was blowing at 20-30 mph and gusting to 35. This combined to make a wind-chill of below zero.

Once again the Voc. Alarm announced the address and box 313 was transmitted. The crews of Malden Engine 6, Lynn Engine 9, Everett Engine 2 and Ladder 2 with C3 Deputy Eydenberg headed for Highland Street. As the Deputy Eydenberg crested a hill about a quarter mile from the address he saw he had a three decker well involved with fire showing from all three floors in the rear. Companies arrived just two minutes after the box and Deputy Eydenberg struck a second alarm on arrival. The fire building was vacant, but the fire was overlapping occupied three deckers on the exposure 2 and 4 sides with only a ten foot alley way separating them from the fire building.



First photo of the fire. Looking down alley between 34-36 Highland and 38-40 Highland. Time of the photo is 0244 hrs. Official RFD photo by Captain E.W. Doherty

Deputy Eydenberg's first priority was to protect the exposures and evacuate the tenants. Companies were getting both big lines and master streams into operation. First alarm companies were trying to do the work of a third alarm in just a few minutes! The companies were able to evacuate 15 people from both exposures. An attempt was made with 1 ¾ lines to get inside the exposures and protect them as the big lines and master streams were played into the alley ways.

It wasn't to be. Within five minutes of arrival, both exposures were now involved their asphalt "gasoline" shingles, coupled with the winds made the positions untenable. At the same time the original fire building was now fully involved.

Third alarm was ordered by Deputy Eydenberg just seconds after the deuce was sounded. Companies were cleared out of Centennial Avenue as fast as they could and headed for the new fire. Chief Connery arrived and established his main command post and placed each of his four Deputy Chiefs at strategic positions around the fire.

Revere Deputy Chiefs and radio call signs
C2 George Taglieri (Box 52 Member)
C3 Robert Eydenberg
C4 Arthur Anderson (Box 52 Member)
C5 Daniel Doherty

Firefighter Capoccia was all alone in Fire Alarm and was multi-tasking between radio messages, phone calls and trying to keep some order to the chaos that is a multiple alarm fire. Off duty Lieutenant Kenny Vitieri rushed into the FAO to lend a much needed hand.

As the fire continued to consume the exposures, several problems came up:

- 1.) Large size flying brands, some estimated the size of a football were being borne by the wind after being lifted up by the thermal updraft from the fire. The brands were then falling onto other three deckers farther away.
- 2.) Water supply was becoming an issue, there wasn't enough in the mains to supply all the incoming pumps grabbing hydrants and dropping four inch LDH (*large diameter hose-Editor*). The municipal water system was being over taxed. Calls went out to the Revere DPW's Water Department to start opening gates and try and increase flow.
- 3.) The asphalt shingles were quick to ignite when exposed to the brands.
- 4.) The language barrier with residents caused problems.



Over all shot looking down into the fire.

Anyone who remembers the Chelsea Conflagration of October 1973, knows that these were the exact same conditions, and they were occurring again, seventeen years later, in a contiguous community!

Fire alarm was calling the Command Post every few minutes with new reports of roofs, rear porches or buildings east of the main fire. At this point Chief Connery ordered the fourth alarm at 0253, only ten



1st shot member Bill Noonan shot at fire. Looking through to Highland St

minutes after the first alarm was transmitted. Companies were placed on brand patrols out four blocks to the east from the fire.

Mutual Aid firefighters stated that the brands the size of footballs were coming down as if it were a snowstorm! Brand patrol in these conditions with narrow congested streets with cars parked on both sides was a challenging assignment for the companies. They got into a street and then couldn't maneuver where they had too. Many companies dropped a feeder and ran lines from the stationary pump and worked the area as best they could.

Box 52 member Paul Boudreau arrived a few minutes after the second alarm was sounded. He was walking up Franklin Street and found Chief Connery checking the rear exposures on Hichborn Street, the street in front of Highland. He was impatiently waiting on the mutual aid companies to arrive. The fire was spreading on Highland and onto Thornton Street in the rear. Boudreau ran back to Chief Connery and told him what he had seen. Boudreau was asked by Connery to advise Fire Alarm to tell Metro Fire and advise them he had the makings of a conflagration, and to send all available help. Boudreau repeated back the message and asked "Chief do you want me to use those exact words?" Chief Connery said "yes". The message was relayed from Engine 3's radio to Revere FAO. Firefighter Capoccia was surprised by the message, but relayed it to Metro Fire. *(The first ever conflagration ordered by radio was by Chief Herbert Fothergill for the Chelsea Conflagration Oct. 14th 1973. The next was Lynn in Nov. 28th 1981 and Revere would be the last in 1990-Editor)*



Box 52 Association. Photo by member Peter Aloisi

The main goal the Revere and Mutual Aid Chiefs tried to implement was to get in front of the fire. The Command Post was moved to a hill upwind from the fire near Bell Circle which was chosen for the staging area. Alan Alpert, the City of Chelsea Emergency Management Director brought their mobile Command Post to the scene. This allowed Chief Connery and his staff to coordinate tactical firefighting decisions to stop the blaze.

The fire was creating its own wind as it sucked fresh oxygen. The fires being ignited by the brands and now these conditions were being driven by this wind, and with radiant heat. The stage was set for this to become a conflagration. Chief Connery's fear in his radio message to Metro Fire mere minutes ago, was coming true!



Command ordered 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th alarms in rapid succession. Units were assigned to relieve some of the early alarm companies or respond to the new fires. By this time, just past 0320 hours, nine buildings on Highland Street were involved, on both sides of the street and buildings on Thornton Street were being threatened. The 9th and 10th alarms were sounded at 0408 hrs. Metro Control advised Revere that all available Metro apparatus was either at the fire or covering. Additional calls would come from Beverly Control, the next control point to the north.





Chief Connery along with several other Chiefs knew from experience with both the Chelsea and Lynn conflagrations that they needed to get in front of the fire with massed streams and at the same time push the fire back on the flanks and rear. As additional companies were arriving on the higher alarm levels they were directed into Thornton Street and ran both big lines and set up master streams. Water supply was still an issue and additional pumps were being called 3 and 4 at a time to establish a water supply.

Water mains in the area were only six inches in diameter and with so many pumps on this main that they started to report that they were drawing vacuum. Companies couldn't pull any additional handlines off and were unable to hit fires in the early stages of involvement. In coming engines were directed to respond to Ocean Avenue, which was several hundred yards to the east of the fire and tie in to the 24 inch main, and with other pumps in line of four inch supply lines into the fire. This move provided the badly need water. Pumps were now able to fill the lines off and the streams started to bore into the flames.

Lexington Engine 2 from Headquarters responded on the 10th alarm was directed into Thornton Street, where they were ordered to pull a big line off another pump and lay it down an alleyway into a rear yard facing Highland Street. The line was charged and the crew noticed that theirs was not the only line in operation. Several 2 ½ inch big lines with straight stream nozzels were boring into the inferno on Highland Street. *(This was the 3rd conflagration that the Lieutenant of E2 had responded to, he had made Chelsea, Lynn and now Revere. He is well known in the Fire Service for having compiled the NFPA's annual Line of Duty report for many years, his name Lt. Arthur Washburn-Editor)*

With master streams, big lines and the companies on brand patrol, the fire was halted, contained and extinguished.

For those readers interested, here are the basic facts of the fire:

- 62 Engine companies, 16 Ladder Companies, 30 support vehicles either responded to the fire or were used in covering assignments. 30 Metro Fire Departments sent aid.
- 8 Firefighters suffered injuries.
- Ten alarms were transmitted. Total personnel on scene 343.
- Hose used 20 4" feeder lines laid, 40 2 ½ inch big lines, 20 1 ¾ inch lines and 15 1 ½ inch hand lines deployed. 12 portable or deck mounted deluge guns used.
18,000 feet of 4 inch hose, 22,000 feet of 2 ½ inch hose, 8,000 feet of 1 ¾ inch hose and 3,000 feet of 1 ½ inch hose used.
- 5 aerials used for ladder pipe operations, 312 feet of ground ladders were raised.
- Total gallons of water flowed 2,205,000.
- 9 three story wood frame buildings were either destroyed or suffered damage.
- 119 persons were evacuated with no injuries.
- All the fires were within a half mile radius of the Highland Street fire.
- Three of the four fire were deemed suspicious.

Another interesting fact is that the Revere Fire Department was heavily engaged in early action at both the Chelsea Conflagration October 14th, 1973 and the November 28th, 1981 Lynn Conflagration. Lessons learned in those fires paid off in Revere this night and kept the fire to a much smaller area.

List of address involved in the fire:

1. Building of origin 34-36 Highland Street a vacant 3 story wood frame with six apartments. Total loss.
2. 30-32 Highland Street number 2 side exposure, 3 story wood frame similar building. Total loss.
3. 35 Highland Street 3 story wood frame across the street from # 34-36 Highland Street. Total loss.
4. 26-28 Highland Street heavily damaged 3 story wood frame exposure fire.
5. 29-31 Highland Street 3 story wood frame on opposite side of the street suffered moderate fire damage.
6. 19-21 Highland Street 3 story wood frame on opposite side of street, damage caused by flying brands. This structure was located up the street from the original fire buildings.
7. 26 Thornton Street this was the rear street to Highland. 3 story wood frame, fire started by flying brands. Heavily damaged.
8. 20 Thornton Street 3 story wood frame suffered exposure fire damage
9. 30 Thornton Street 3 story wood frame suffered moderate exposure fire damage.

"A Study of the 1918 Pandemic & the Boston Fire Department"

By Member Kevin Mochen

Retired Deputy Chief Boston Fire Department

"I had a little bird and his name was Enza

I opened the window and

In-flu-enza."

During recess, after school, at playgrounds and on the sidewalks from Bunker Hill to Wellington Hill, girls jumped roped to "enza."

During this centennial year of the "Spanish Flu," which claimed millions of lives worldwide Influenza sickened an estimated ¼ of the population of Bostonians in late 1918. Misnamed the "Spanish Flu," it killed mostly the young and healthy. The Fire Dept. was a microcosm of the epidemic that swept the City and the State during the waning days of WW I.

The Athens of America was in patriotic fever as Wilson's War effort dominated all. Daily the papers told of the exploits of the Yankee Division. It is difficult for us today to grasp the mood of the Nation. The War infected every aspect of life: girls saving pennies to buy thrift stamps; boys eating peaches then drying the pits for gas masks filters; Liberty Bond Drives; attending parades; meatless, wheatless & heatless days; rationing of food and gas; young men volunteering or being drafted; men flocking to the big cities of the east to work in newly opened shipyards; wives and mothers sewing Red Cross bandages; everyone doing his part to bring down the Hun.

As the leaves began to change color, the Hub was optimistic. News from the trenches brought Hope that it would be over soon, over there. Beantown was awash in activity. Nowhere was this bustle more pronounced than on the docks and piers. Ships of all sizes and cargoes docked at "T" wharf, Long Wharf and India Wharf. Naval vessels departed & embarked from Commonwealth Pier as hundreds of mere boys left and returned from the killing fields of Europe. Relieving the tension of everyday life was the diversion of the home town heroes with the Bambino leading the team in hitting and pitching. As the boys of summer were about to duel the Chicago North Siders, Dante Inferno was unleashed on the waterfront.

These days were extraordinary for the City and the men of the Fire Department. High Cost of Living, as inflation then was known, was especially hard on the families of Firemen. Real Wages did not keep up with the cost of basics. They cast their eyes around their neighborhoods. What they saw deepened frustration. The men in the Charlestown Navy Yard, longshoremen and construction workers were receiving more than twice what the full paid firefighter received. The war brought prosperity to many families but firemen lagged behind-- still working long, long hours, 72 straight hours on and then 24 off with 3 meal hours each day.

In an effort to placate the men Mayor Peters implemented token benefits but it was too little, too late. In early 1918, he reduced the hours from a day in four to a day in three, (48 on & 24 off) necessitating the hiring of more men. Despite the hike of a dollar-fifty a week the pay was still only 21 bucks (about nineteen cents an hour) for a 112 hour work week and out of that measly sum, one had to purchase his uniform, fire coat and boots. Only the helmet was issued. God forbid if you lost it. Firehouses were old, dirty, and cold with unsanitary bunk rooms. Ladder 4 was built before Roxbury was annexed to Boston in 1868. It was over 100 years later that a new building housed Ladder 4. It was not unique. Even today Engines 50, 30 & 5 to cite a few are well over 100 years old.

Discipline was harsh. Captain Florence Sullivan, Engine Co.1, received an Official Reprimand for allowing a man to leave Quarters a few minutes early to catch the trolley heading home for breakfast.

Discouraged the men looked to the newly formed IAFF to address grievances. The Union granted Charters to both officers and firemen. The Police Strike of 1919 broke the back of the Labor Movement. In the wake of Gov. Calvin Coolidge's edict the men relinquished their association with the International and returned the Charters. It was not until WW II that the Union and the men were reunited.

The years preceding the roaring twenties saw great changes for the Fire Dept. Motorized apparatus were rapidly replacing the horse. Hose wagons with booster tanks eliminated the need for chemical companies.

A Chronological Summary of Events

1918

July 26 Secretary of War Newton D. Baker orders that Major-league Baseball end the season on Labor Day, Sept 2. The World Series will commence immediately after the end of the season.

Aug 24 In Chicago, the Cubs beat up on Brooklyn winning both ends of a twin bill pulling 11 ½ games in front of the Giants and clinching the National League Flag.

Aug 27 Two sailors from a Navy ship at Commonwealth Pier reported to sickbay with the first cases of the flu in the City.

Aug 28 "Boston Post" reports that the Cubs will play the Series at Comiskey Park, the home of the White Sox, because Wightman Park (Wrigley Field) the Cubbies' Park's capacity was ½ of the south side field.

Aug 31 Babe Ruth pitches a three hitter, bangs out two base hits and scores a run, as the Sox clinch the pennant with a 6 to 1 drubbing of the A's in the first of two at Fenway.

Sept 2 Labor Day. The Red Sox split a double header with the Yankees at the Polo Grounds ending the shortened season with 75 wins and 51 losses finishing 2 ½ games ahead of the Indians. Due to war time travel restrictions for the first and only time the Series schedule was modified with the first three games in the Windy City and the next four scheduled in Back Bay.

Sept 3 A civilian is admitted to City Hospital with the Spanish Flu.

Sept 5 After a rain out yesterday the Babe held the Northsides to six hits as McInnis knocked in Shine in the top of the fourth for the only marker of the contest. For the first time in World Series' history at the 7th inning stretch nearly all of the 20,000 joined the band in a tumultuous strain of the "Star Spangled Banner." From that moment at every World Series Game, the National Pastime & the National Anthem have become inseparable. Boston & Chicago papers coverage of the War relegated the Series to secondary status on their front pages.

Sept 6

GENERAL ORDERS

HEADQUARTERS FIRE DEPARTMENT

NO. 97.

BOSTON, SEPTEMBER 6, 1918

III. WORLD'S SERIES – FENWAY PARK

1. The members of this department who have volunteered their services at Fenway Park will report on their respective days off to District Chief Gaffey not later than 9:30 A. M., at the baseball park.

By Order of the Fire Commissioner;

Peter F. McDonough,

Chief of Department.

Sept 9. Dan Fennessey, a 26 year old Hoseman from Engine 48, appointed only 5 months before, died from the flu at his home on Garfield Ave, Hyde Park. Nearly all of the men died at home during the worst of the epidemic since all of the hospitals were over run with patients. The men were cared for by their parents, wives and family.

Sept 10 Strike! With the Sox needing only a victory in game 5 to win it all, the players went on strike but were coerced to play. The rift, between the players and the owners which sowed the seeds that sprouted with the Black Sox in 1919, had its genesis at Fenway when the cheap owners spitefully refused to pay the winning players 2,000 dollars promised. Anti-climatic: Cubs 3, Home town 0

Sept 11. Engine 48 suffered another loss as another young man only 6 months on the job succumbed.

Sept 12 Edward Martin a "Globe" sportswriter reported, "Boston is again the capital of the baseball world." Yesterday, the Sox beat the Chicago Nine 2-1, to be crowned for the fifth time, World Champs. Harry Casey from the "Record" penned, "The Red Sox never provided the Cubs with any breaks." The rescheduled series had a major impact on the death rate from LaGrippe in the Hub. (see Oct 3)

Sept 15 On July 12 Edward Kaine was appointed as a Provisional Fireman. A member of Ladder 29, Eddy died this date after two months of service. There were so few applicants willing to work the long hours for the short pay it became necessary to make provisional appointments until civil service examinations could be held.

Sept 16 Two Dorchester men died today. Craddock from Eng 20 who had over 12 years of service & Provisional Walter Walsh of Engine 46 in Peabody Square at age 24 having been appointed on July 5, this year.

Sept 18 Another member from 46 appointed in 1912 at age 29, died. Frank Redddington, like many of the Irish Catholics, was a member of the K of C.

Sept 21 Due to the distance men had to travel for meal hours, firemen were assigned to a company near their home consistent with operational needs of the Department. One man who was not assigned close to his residence was 25 year old Jimmy Hastings of 28 Engine, a fireman for only 6 months. Another Provisional, sick for only 5 days, he died at home in the South End. Following his wake, Captain Gavin and the other members of 28 escorted his remains to St James on Harrison Ave.

Sept 23 While men of the Department were sick & dying, the grippe ravaged the City. Nearly 600 deaths were recorded in a ten day period. Today in Charlestown, pneumonia claimed John Harvey, his wife and John's brother, James. The John Harvey's left 4 orphans, ages 7 months to 7 years.

Sept 24 In the next 6 days, nine more men perished including another from 43. The reduction of a day in four to a day in three affected the on duty strength. In addition to the number of men drafted and volunteering for the Armed Services the staggering number of sick further depleted the firefighting force. Normally rookie firemen attended drill school during the day and reported to their assigned companies at 6 PM. Chief McDonough thought it prudent to cancel drill school and beef up the strength available for fires.

Sept 25 Members of Eng 5, 43 and Ladder 31 in Oak Sq. died today. The Supt. of Schools cancelled all classes until Oct 21. Yesterday 109 died & today 105.

Globe Headline: Two Turk Armies Destroyed.

Sept 26 Liberty Loan Parade cancelled. Today should have been the opening of the World Series at Fenway. 156 died; how many more if the games were played? His Honor, the Mayor, ordered all public places closed and this would have shut down the contest. With no series perhaps the Black Sox would not throw the 1919 games. Frazee may have held on to Ruth and there would be no Curse. Would we have had to wait 86 years to win another? The events of this sad year had a vast impact on the history of the game.

Sept 27 A third member of 48 Engine died. Headline: "Americans Crush Hun Line." Among the precautions recommended was this one cited in "Everybody's Business," a column in the "Globe," "Call it a closed season on kissing." The Phone Company placed the following notice in newspapers. "The Telephone Company has been impaired due to the number of operators sick with the flu. Please no unnecessary phone calls. No special appeals to Chief Operators."

Sept 28 Another black day as 144 died and a black day for the Dept. as three more members succumbed. Another helpful hint was issued by the Health Authorities, "Keep out of dirty restaurants."

Sept 29 Frank D. O'Brien of Ladder 13 contacted pneumonia and passed away at his home in Forest Hills. Frank was appointed in 1907 as a Chief's Driver. A Chief in the horse and buggy days was assigned an 18 year old boy to be his aide. Among his duties the teen had to feed and groom the horse, handle the buggy responding to an alarm, and be able to communicate by telegraph from the box to the

Fire Alarm Office. Naturally he had to be physically fit. O'Brien was appointed a permanent man when he turned 21.

Sept 30 The Boston Elevated, posted signs: "No Smoking on subway or El Trains." It was hoped that this drastic measure would help stem the tide of deaths.

Oct 3 Billy Condon, a South Boston native, assigned to Ladder 18 less than two months ago, succumbed to pneumonia. Another helpful hint was circulated, "Don't let the waste products of digestion accumulate." Ed Martin, a "Globe" Sportswriter, age 34, died today, his wife died yesterday. Harry Casey of the "Record," also in his 30s, was dead before Christmas. All were victims of LaGrippe.

Oct 4 After the flu caused so many deaths and so many were sick, the Dept. finally took note and issued its first precautions against further spread among the fireman sleeping in bunk rooms.

General Order No. 130

1. Care of Quarters

3... "Beds formerly occupied by men who are now on sick leave; the sheets and pillow cases should be sent to the laundry and the blankets aired for at least 48 hours."

Oct 7 Angus McDonald, USA, died at Fort Meade, Maryland from LaGrippe. On Independence Day, 1918 he enlisted in the Army. McDonald, a member of Ladder 3, received a High Commendation for his rescue of civilians Brown & Watson at Box 1621 on January 18, 1918. The death rate at Army Containment Centers was astronomical.

Oct 10 Pneumonia was a leading cause of sickness in the early 1900s, but this pneumonia was a killer. Victims coughed up blood; it poured from eyes, ears, nostrils. Then the patient turned blue because oxygen could not be transferred from the lungs. It was only pneumonia but this was an exceptional lethal pneumonia. And it resulted in a very painful and horrible death. An East Boston man, Willy Keen, Engine 5, was found dead at his home on Princeton Street with a gunshot to his head and the symptoms of pneumonia. At 39, he was the oldest to die.

Oct 17 Another Order from Hq. on Bristol St. was promulgated reminding Company Commanders they were responsible for the safe guarding of fire stations. "Members assigned to Light House Duty shall close the doors when apparatus responses to alarms." How these actions improved the health of the men remains a mystery. Men returning from sick leave but not well enough to perform fire duty were assigned to Light House Duty.

Oct 19 The youngest to die, William Connolly of Ladder 4, was a mere 22. As was policy, 16 men were detailed under the direction of a District Chief to act as a funeral escort. Then, as even today, the man's company was relieved from duty to attend. After the Requiem Mass, he was buried at St Mary's Cemetery, West Quincy, in an unmarked, mass grave.

Nov 12 !!Armistice!! Yesterday at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month it was over, over there. Boston had exported influenza, it moved on carried by soldiers & sailors by rail, by ship to the rest of the country. The worst was over but not entirely over, many more would die. Downtown a million

turned out for the Victory Parade. Coughing and sneezing the crowd spread more sickness & death. As the troops passed in review the kids sang:

“Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching
I spied the Kaiser at the door
And we’ll get a lemon pie and we’ll squash him in the eye
And there won’t be any Kaiser anymore.”

Dec 12 Thomas McAndrews of Engine 26/35 died. He was a member of that proud firehouse on Mason Street. In July he was appointed from the Protective Dept. The Insurance Patrol had a special relationship with the Department. The Protective had a compliment of 40 and were affectionately known as the 40 thieves. They were members of the Relief Assn. It was considered an honor to be appointed from the Protective and to be assigned to 26/35. It was the only funeral that the entire company was not relived. This double engine company was relied upon for fires in the high value district, thus only a few men could be spared.

Dec 18 Of the men who died, none were officers and most were in their 20s or early 30s. Why was this? In 1890 a wide spread but less lethal virus hit New England. A study of 1890 death benefits of the K of C shows that many flu deaths occurred including their Founder, 38 year old Father Michael McGinney. 28 years later the older generation had immunity and left 20 & 30 year olds particularly vulnerable. So was the case of Herb Symes of Chemical 14 who died today at age 29. He was the last to die in 1918.

1919

Jan 9 This New Year brought its own set of problems for the discouraged men. Sickness & death continued. Labor unrest culminated in the Police Strike further depressing the 1201 firemen. This date saw the first death of the New Year when Jackie Dwyer of Ladder 14 died.

Jan 15 LOD 3rd Engineer George Layhe of Engine 31 died in performance of his duties at the “Molasses Flood” in the North End.

Jan 22 Ladderman Twigg, Truck 13, died today. Both he and Fireman O’Brien were Highly Commended Posthumously in GO 19 a few days after Twigg’s death for their rescue of many civilians at Box 1662 on Bunker Hill Day 1918. Twigg had been a fireman for only 10 days.

Jan 31 Influenza claimed John Patrick Dowd who had enlisted in the Navy a year before. A Navy Radio Operator, born in Ireland, assigned to Engine 28, he was appointed exactly 6 years before his death. The Navy returned his body to South Boston and his funeral was held at St Augustine’s. In 1922, two fireboats were rechristened. Engine 47 as “John P. Dowd,” & Engine 44 was dedicated, “Angus J. McDonald” to commemorate these two members who died on active duty during the Great War.

Feb 6 Another Provisional answered his Last Alarm, Warren Chase of Engine 16 appointed June 1918.

Feb 15 Another LOD. Thomas Stevens, also born in Ireland, appointed a Chief’s Driver in 1905 died today from injuries suffered in the Line of Duty on Feb.13 while a member of Ladder 11. He was one of the many men who contracted the flu but returned to duty. Was it because of his weakened condition that he was unable to recover from his internal injuries?

March 19 Ladder 4, that highly decorated company, suffered another loss as Henry Keenan succumbed and his Mass was celebrated at St. Vincent's in lower Southie. After Keenan's death the Dept. has seen the worst. But the toll keep mounting as a three more died in the months of the new decade. These men had contacted pneumonia, returned to duty, suffered a relapse and died. Their names are recorded in "Deaths." Keene's brother's body was returned from France where he died in the Great War and they were interred side by side, awaiting the resurrection.

THE DEAD

1918

Date	Rank	Name	Age	Company	Date Appointed
09/09	Hoseman	Daniel F. Fennessey	26	Engine 48	04/05/1918
09/11	Hoseman	John E. Fitzgerald	29	Engine 48	02/06/1918
09/15	Ladderrman	Edward J. Kaine	33	Ladder 29	07/12/1918
09/16	Hoseman	Walter F. Walsh	24	Engine 46	07/05/1918
	Hoseman	John Craddock	35	Engine 20	05/11/1906
09/18	Hoseman	Frank J. Reddington	29	Engine 46	06/14/1912
09/21	Hoseman	James M. Hastings	25	Engine 28	03/01/1918
09/24	Hoseman	Charles A. Hanson	24	Engine 43	01/30/1918
09/25	Ladderman	Daniel F. Daley	38	Ladder 10	02/09/1907
	Hoseman	William H. Boodro	25	Engine 43	01/11/1918
	Hoseman	Henry T. Hooper	28	Engine 5	05/13/1913
09/27	Hoseman	William H. Free	28	Engine 48	09/09/1918
09/28	Hoseman	Maurice M. Flavin	33	Engine 43	05/03/1909
	Ladderman	Joseph P. Morrissey	31	Ladder 31	04/05/1918
	Hoseman	George F. Beattie	27	Engine 14	12/28/1917
09/29	Ladderman	Frank D. O'Brien	30	Ladder 13	04/14/1911
10/03	Ladderman	William G. Condon	32	Ladder 18	08/16/1918
10/07	Ladderman	Angus J. McDonald	30	Ladder 3	02/24/1913
10/10	Hoseman	William A. Keen	39	Engine 5	03/29/1910
10/19	Ladderman	William R. Connolly	22	Ladder 4	02/01/1918
12/12	Hoseman	Thomas McAndrews	32	Engine 26/36	06/07/1918
12/18	Hoseman	Herbert F. Symes	29	Chemical 14	02/01/1918

1919

01/09	Ladderman	John J. Dwyer	33	Ladder 14	04/27/1917
01/22	Ladderman	Edward J. Twigg	35	Ladder 13	06/07/1917
01/31	Hoseman	John P. Dowd	31	Engine 28	01/31/1913
02/06	Hoseman	Warren A. Chase	27	Engine 16	06/21/1918
05/19	Ladderman	Henry H.F. Keenan	30	Ladder 4	01/18/1918

1920

01/31	Hoseman	John H. Belyea	34	Engine 8	03/15/1918
12/06	Ladderman	William Cox	36	Ladder 29	07/26/1918

1921

06/21	Hoseman	Charles Shepard	41	Engine 33	12/08/1905
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Epilogue April 17, 2020

The writer issued this report in 2018, the one hundred anniversary of the Pandemic.

At this time he thought it appropriate to reissue the article since it may shed some light on the situation of the Coronavirus. Remembering the "yearly flu" in this country has killed some 14,000

since September last. The Chinese government has not been forthcoming with the extent of this virus.

The first reported Spanish Flu sickness in this City occurred on August 27, 1918. One month later on the 28th of September, 144 died including 3 fireman. No doctor or the CDC really knows what will occur.

However, this story points out just how difficult viruses are controlled.

Just to reiterate the policy of the Department. ***"Company Commanders shall order Members on Light House Duty to close the apparatus doors and also ordered to air blankets of members on sick leave"***. By so Ordering it is hoped that the virus will be eliminated.

May God protect all members who respond to Medical Emergencies!

The Real Hallmark Model for 2020 Ornament



This is a photo taken by Indiana Fire Photographer Frank Wegloski in 2008 of the St. Henry Vol. Fire Departments Engine 1140 a 1996 Ford F-800/Emergency-One 1250/1000.



Apparatus Update By Member Michael Boynton

To wrap up 2020, I thought it might be interesting to look at the colors of the rainbow. Yes, you guessed it, almost anything goes when it comes to the color of your fire truck these days. It's clearly not just the traditional "all red" scheme anymore. White over red, gray over red, white, yellow, black, green and even orange and blue are colors or rigs today, led by the now very common black over red. Here's a look at what the camera has captured in 2020 (and a few 2019 PA shots too!)



Norwood Engine 5 2020 Emergency-One Cyclone II 1500/730/50 gallons class A foam.



Framingham Engine 2 2020 Pierce Enforcer 1500/750/100 gallons class B foam.



Palmer Engine 1 2020 Spartan/Smeal "Sirius" 1500/1000/20 gallons class A foam.

Mike sent a venerable smorgasbord of apparatus photos, 27 to be exact. Due to space limitations, we can only run a limited number in this issue. The Editor plans to release an all photo issue during the week between Christmas and New Year's in a supplemental issue. Believe me, it is worth the wait!

Malden Grave of Firefighter Killed at Great Boston Fire Box 52 November 9, 10 1872

Malden Chief and current Box 52 applicant, William Sullivan who sent along the below photo of Malden Fireman Walter Twombly of Hose Company 2 grave, who was killed by falling walls during the conflagration. The photo was taken by Chief Sullivan in November when decorating his grave.





AMTRAK BACK BAY STATION CRASH

December 12th, 1990

3-33-1546

145 Dartmouth Street

All photos by Member William Noonan

On Wednesday morning December 12th, 1990 Amtrak Train # 66 struck MBTA Commuter Train # 906 just prior to the Back Bay Station platform. This is the story of that wreck and the following firefighting and rescue operations.

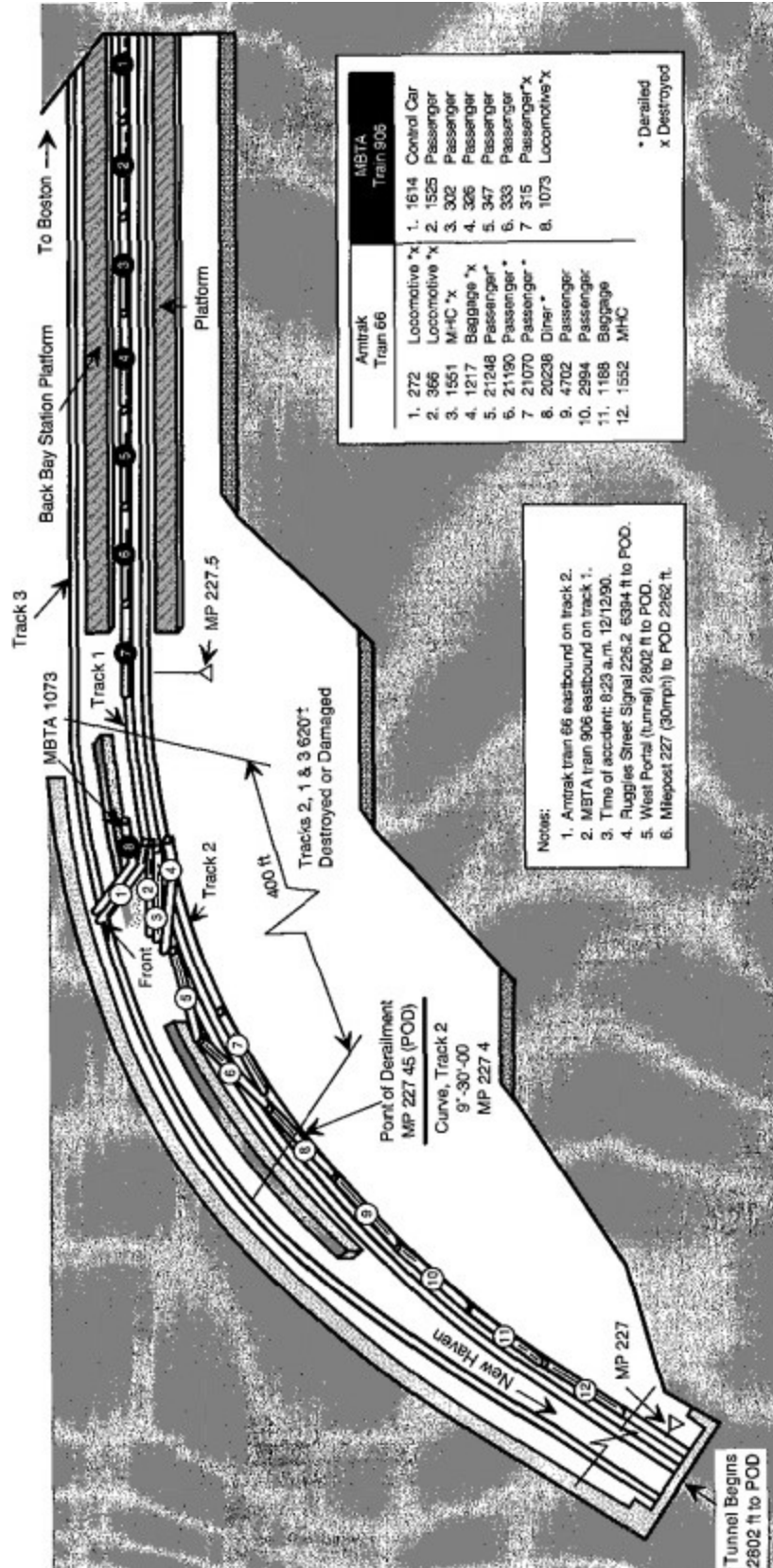
At 2230 hours on December 11th 1990 Amtrak Train #66 "The Night Owl" departed from Washington DC's Union Station enroute to Boston via Amtrak's North East Corridor. The consist of the train was two Material Handling cars (MHC), 2 baggage cars, 5 passenger cars and a Lounge car. The train consist was put together in the following order: Locomotive(s), MHC # 1551 made by Thrall Corporation, the car had a length of 60 feet Next was Baggage car # 1217 this was in Amtrak's Heritage class of cars given to Amtrak in 1971 from railroads whose passenger service had been taken over. 1217 was built by the Budd Company in 1954 and had a length of 46 feet. Next came the passenger coaches and two additional MHC's carried the markers on the rear of the train. Powered by electric locomotives to New Haven, Connecticut where the electrics were swapped out for diesel power for the run to Boston. At 0430 hrs Amtrak Diesels (F40ph models) # 272 and 366 were cut in. A new crew boarded and took over the train. The crew consisted of a locomotive engineer, apprentice engineer making his first run, a conductor and two assistant conductors with 43 passengers. The train departed New Haven on schedule at 0525 hours. The train made an unscheduled stop in South Attleboro MP (milepost) 192 to pick up passengers. Its next scheduled stop was the Route 128 station.

On Wednesday, December 12th MBTA Commuter Rail Train #906 inbound to Boston from Stoughton departed its station stop at approximately 0745 hours with a crew of one locomotive engineer, one conductor, 3 assistant conductors and 391 passengers. The train was operating in push-pull mode with MBTA locomotive #1035 on the rear with five passenger cars and a Cab Control Car in the lead. By the time 906 had made all its scheduled station stops on its way to South Station it would be carrying in excess of 800 morning rush hour commuters.

At 0800 hours shift changed occurred in all of Boston's fire, police and EMS stations. In a mere 23 minutes what should have been a typical weekday morning would be become a major mass casualty and fire incident!

As Train 66 departed Route 128 it accelerated to 94 mph. As 66 approached the Ruggles Street station (MP 226.5) the apprentice engineer began to slow the train. He moved the throttle from run 5 to run 1 position and made a 15 psi brake application. The train did not react properly to the brake application and was not slowing. A full 32 psi brake application was made as the train approached the tunnel at MP 227 on track 2. The engineer 'dumped' the emergency brake application as the train entered a 9 degree 30 minute curve with a speed restriction of 30 mph.

The locomotive started to tip near MP 227.4 about 200 feet from the derailment site. Both Amtrak engineers stated that the engine had entered the curve 'hard'. The other Amtrak crew members on board either heard or felt the brake application. The locomotive continued to tip towards track 1 and the rear of # 906.



Not to Scale

The engineer of 906 was standing in the Cab Control Car and was knocked to the floor by the impact. 906 was pulling into the station and was traveling at approximately 10 mph. He got to his knees and grabbed the radio and called the Boston Train Dispatcher and reported "emergency at Back Bay hold all trains". At the same time of the radio message the track control board in the Train Dispatchers Office lit up an indicator light that Track 3 was occupied. No trains had been given clearance on Track 3. Part of #66's consist had piled up and fouled that track as well.

The Night Owl had smashed into 906 at an estimated 76 mph. Both Amtrak locomotives derailed and 272 rolled over onto its right side. The diesel tank on MBTA 1035 had been torn loose by the impact was leaking diesel fuel onto the tunnel floor which was covered with combustible debris, it found an ignition source and quickly ignited. The tunnel was soon filled with thick oily diesel smoke mixed in with years of dust and diesel soot shaken loose from the impact.



For the 800 some rush hour passengers on board 906 it was as if a bomb had gone off! Immediately upon impact passengers were thrown the about in their cars, all power was lost both on the trains and in the tunnel. 906's passengers found themselves in darkness stumbling for the exits. The crews on both trains being dazed by the crash grabbed flashlights and began to get the passengers off both trains and leading them towards the station platform.

Many of the passengers were able to get out of the train themselves and started to stream up the stairs to Dartmouth Street. A passenger who escaped from 906 reached the station platform dialed 911 at 0824 hours and reported the crash. The call was routed to all three of Boston's emergency services, Fire, Police and EMS. Crews from both the T and Amtrak in the station on other duties immediately radioed in for help.

On board Amtrak 66 the scene was much the same. It felt like an explosion had gone off, followed by the bumper car bouncing effect as the coaches slammed together and passengers and crew being thrown about. The lights went out and in total darkness illuminated only by the crews flashlights. All were successfully evacuated with only minor injuries

Fire Alarm received the call and not knowing the full extent of the stalled out Car 4, Engine 7, Ladder 17 and Rescue 2. At 0825 hours Car 4 (Acting Chief Delvental) arrived and found smoke showing from the

vents and a stream of injured passengers come up from the lower level platform. He ordered the box, Fire Alarm transmitted 33-1546 and Engine 22, 33. Ladder 15, the Tower, Rescue 1, H1 and C6 were all responding and fighting their way through the morning traffic with sirens and air horns blaring. They were joined by BPD units from District 4 and BEMS ambulances and Supervisors all pulling into Dartmouth and the surrounding streets.

First arriving companies had to fight their way down to track level against the stream of passengers come up. Engine 7 was dragging a line with them, not really knowing what they would find. Ladder 17 made their way to the tracks and started to search for victims. Train crews were leading passengers out with flashlights till they met up with the Companies. Officers radioed Car 4 that all the power was out and the tunnel was pitch black and they could see fire along the tracks. The heavy oily smoke further reduced the visibility. Passengers and train crews were having trouble breathing. The fire was spreading along the roadbed following the trail of leaking diesel fuel and the wall of the tunnel.

Boston Police shut down traffic around the station and started to open up "ambulance" lanes to get EMS vehicles in and out quickly. Boston EMS supervisors arriving quickly set up Triage and radioed in to Dispatch in the Turret to activate the Citywide hospital disaster plan.

On board 906 was Amtrak employee Joseph Burgess 'deadheading' (*Deadheading movement of railroad personnel riding a train to get to their place of work – Editor*) riding in the second commuter coach. After the impact he assisted passengers out of the car. As he entered the vestibule entry area of the car he found several dazed passengers and removed them to the station platform. He then ran to the Amtrak Ticket Office and grabbed the large emergency hand light and headed back down into the dark tunnel. He reentered cars on 906 and searched for more trapped passengers. He was still going through the coach's when the engine and truck crews made it into the tunnel.

Engine 22 grabbed a hydrant and the crew started down into the station dragging a big line with them. Engine 33 also got on a hydrant and 33's crew was soon humping another big line into the station and the black abyss in the tunnel. The big lines made a quick knock down of the flames. Two lines were shut down and the crew started to assist with search and rescue operations. Engine 7 keep their line at the ready for any flare-ups. The search for trapped or injured passengers and crew was now underway. The powerful tunnel vent fans were activated and the smoke lifted. Crews located the two Amtrak engineers located in the lead engine # 272 and radioed back for more assistance. At 0849 hrs. C6 Deputy Chief (Box 52 member) Kevin Mochen after receiving calls from the tunnel that more help was needed, ordered the second alarm sounded. And advised Fire Alarm to special call four additional Ladder Companies and to have them "bring their Trauma kits" down to the wreck.

Crews were searching both the Amtrak and Commuter Rail cars for trapped victims. On board 906 a female was found pinned against the side facing seats. She was conscious and suffering only facial lacerations. Rescue 2 and Ladder 15 worked to free her and she was evacuated to street level.

Meanwhile Rescue 1 had their hands full trying to extricate the two Amtrak Engineers who were pinned in the wreckage of the twisted F40 locomotive. One was suffering only minor injuries, but the other was seriously injured with a broken back. As Rescue 1 went to work they hampered by the position of the locomotive on its side. Both men had been thrown to the Fireman's or the right side, which was now lying on its side across Track 3. The only way that Rescue 1 had to reach the two trapped men was by dropping down from the top into the cab. The interior of the cab was smashed and there was barely room to work. The apprentice engineer was removed first. He was on top of the senior engineer. Once he was removed the crew went back to work to extricate the other man who was suffering from a broken back.



As 0900 hours approached, the searches were still going on. Ladder Companies ran portable lights into the tunnel to provide much need illumination, as well as bringing in ground ladders to gain access to the wreckage. As Amtrak and MBTA emergency crews arrived more lighting was made available and the scene as describe to Deputy Mochen, by K7 Bill Noonan "It's a mess down there Chief, it's like some kid crashed his trains together"! At 0903 C6 ordered a third alarm for more manpower to the scene.

Searches were still underway, most all the passengers were on street level, were being checked out by EMS at the triage area. Some of the passengers just wandered off and would seek medical aid on their own. There were only a few serious injuries.



Up on Dartmouth Street BEMS along with the BPD, MSP, Amtrak and T police were getting the situation under control. Everyone was looking at a strange bump in the street. They had no idea what had caused this and the BPD summoned the DPW to check it out. Those crews down in the tunnel could have told them, it was the Amtrak baggage car which upon impact had ridden up over the trailing locomotive #366 and lodged itself against the tunnel ceiling, causing the bump.

Car 4 reported to C6 that the primary searches of both trains was complete, the fire was out and vent fans were operating. He advised that the companies were about to start a secondary search of the wreckage.

With the passengers and crews evacuated from the tunnel, crews turned their attention to the damage that occurred to the tunnel structure. They found that several support columns had been torn out and several feet of tunnel wall had also suffered damage. Amtrak and T crews found that all three tracks and the road bed had suffered extensive damage. Repairs to the infrastructure would take months.

As the day wore on, companies were released and by mid-afternoon only the first alarm assignment was being held. Crews were standing by as the removal of undamaged cars were pulled from the scene.

Rail crews were now using torches to cut the twisted metal that was once locomotives, head end cars (baggage, mail cars. In days gone by this would have included a Railway Post Office and on many a New

England train, milk cars-Editor) and passenger coaches. The damaged cars were removed to the Yard and would be gone over inch by inch as part of the NTSB investigation.

The NTSB investigators would be working alongside investigators from Amtrak and the MBTA and several State Agencies to determine the exact cause of the accident *(for those interested, I will include a link to the full NTSB report at the end of this article-Editor)*.

The rear facing locomotive on Train 906 # 1035 had absorbed much of the energy of the impact. The weight of each of the Electro-Motive Division F40ph was 260,000 pounds, or 130 tons. Between the three locomotives the combined weight was just over 390 tons! Each engine had a diesel fuel capacity when full of 1,500 gallons. Had all three tanks burst into flames on impact, the loss of life may have well exceed that of the Coconut Grove!



Firefighters and Railroaders agreed that the locomotives on both trains and the two head end cars on 66 acted as a buffer, taking the brunt of the damage and sparing the passenger coaches.

It took several months for the tunnel and track to be repaired. In the meantime Amtrak trains were routed off the North East Corridor and onto the Dorchester Branch of the MBTA's Commuter Rail.

That evening just about 1800 hours, a trespasser was struck and killed on the tracks by one of these NEC trains running on the Branch.

It was a Christmas Miracle that no lives were lost! The allout signal on 33-1546 was ordered at 2140 hours.

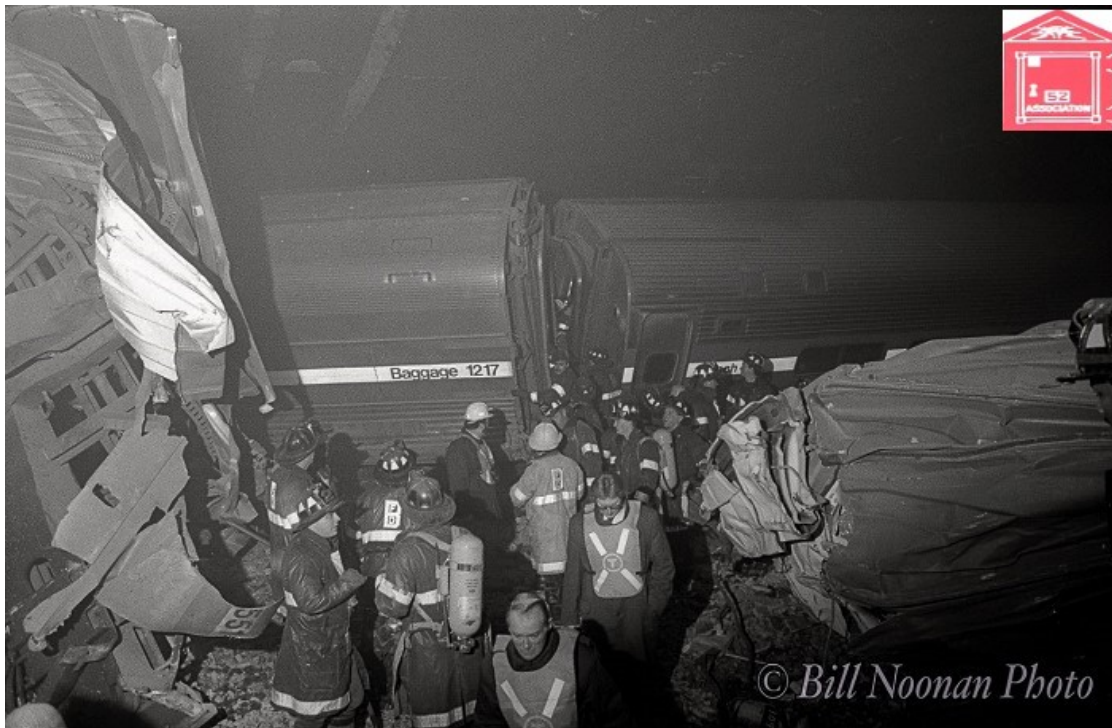
Box 33-1546 145 Dartmouth Street Back Bay Station, Lower Level

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Rescue	Chiefs
0824	Still	7	17	R2	Car 4
0825	33-1546	22, 33	15, TC	R1	Div. 1, H1
0849	2-1546	3, 14, 39, 10	4, 24		
0903	3-1546	37, 29	16		C1, K1, S1



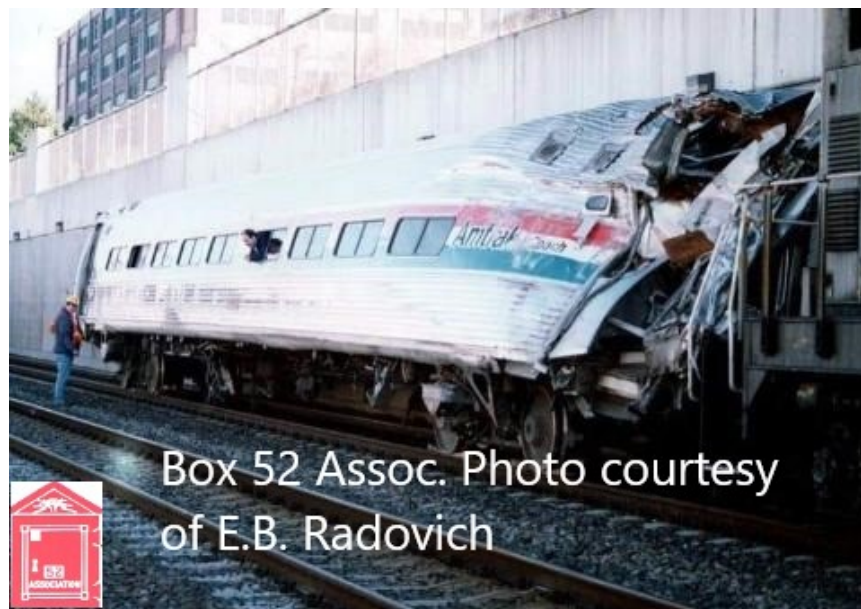








Acting Chief of Department John "Red" Harrison, and C6 Deputy Chief Kevin Mochen.
Note the old BPD Mobile CP Winnebago in the background-Editor



Removal of Amtrak Coach # 21248. Photo courtesy of E.B. Radovich

<https://www.nts.gov/investigations/AccidentReports/Reports/RAR9201.pdf>

Special thanks to Box 52 Members Paul Christian, Kevin Mochen, Bill Noonan
Amtrak: Joseph Burgess, E.B. Radovitch



Neat photo by Joe Brooks of the FAO of the 5 Commissioner/Chief of Department
 Top row: Martin Pierce, Paul Christian, Joseph Finn
 Bottom row: Leo Stapleton (age 97), Present Commissioner John Dempsey
 Photo courtesy of Joe Brooks

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah, Happy Holidays to all our readers from the staff of the Line Box.

