

BOX 52 ASSOCIATION



THE LINE BOX

Vol. 14 No. 2

Happy Holidays and welcome to what has become our Trains & Hoses issues. We have packed a lot of great stories into this issue, we hope you enjoy it!



Norfolk Southern's Altoona Shops painted this EMD SD-60E locomotive to honor first responders. It is posed with the former Shops Engine 7, a restored 1948 L-85 Mack 750 gpm pump. Engine 7, 8 and 9 were all located on the grounds of the sprawling Pennsylvania Railroads Junitia Shops complex and they all had first and multiple alarm assignments with the City of Altoona Fire Department. Photo courtesy of Norfolk Southern

Boston & Maine Red Wing Wreck Harvard Street Medford November 19, 1957

The Boston & Maine Railroad's Passenger Train# 30, the Red Wing ran between Boston and Montreal Quebec on a daily schedule. On Tuesday November 19th, 1957 the train had reached the half point in its south bound run and had left White River Junction, Vermont at 05:00 AM and was due into Boston's North Station at 08:35 AM. The consist of the train was diesel locomotive 4224A and 4224B coupled in multiple-unit control, 2 milk cars, 1 Railway Post Office (RPO), 2 baggage cars, 1 sleeping car, 1 buffet-sleeping car and 2 coaches in this order.

In Medford the Harvard Street Bridge, which carried the tracks above Harvard Street was under repair by Boston & Maine crews from the Engineering department and a new track alignment plan for southbound trains into North Station was placed in effect for the duration of the construction. According to the train order bulletin No. 28 dated November 14, 1957 'that the old southward passing siding will become the southward main track. The north end of the siding will be thrown into the Southward main track and normal position of the south end switch will be reversed for duration of this bulletin. Engineering Department will be engaged in repairs to the Harvard Street Bridge. A temporary Speed restriction of 15 MPH will be in effect and temporary slow boards will be erected.' The train was running two minutes late as it passed Winchester at 08:24 AM. It barreled into the work area at 57 mph per the locomotives speed recording device. The messenger in the baggage car went to signal the engineer of the speed just as the train left the rails.

The locomotive derailed, but its wheel sets known as 'trucks' continued on the tracks, the first six cars along with the B unit derailed. Unit 4224B and the first milk car slammed into the Converse building on Boston Ave. The first locomotive came to rest on the abutment to the bridge. Parts from the wrecked train flew in all directions, barely missing children walking to St. Clements Parochial School. Some of the debris did strike cars along Harvard Street and Boston Ave.

Calls were flooding the Medford Police and Fire Alarm switch boards. Medford fire transmitted the box and Engines 1 and 5, Ladder 1 and Rescue 1 were on the way. Upon arrival they were met with an incredible sight of a passenger train with people injured and trapped. The crew from Ladder 1 entered the locomotive and found both the Engineer and the Fireman dead from their injuries. The Rescue crew entered the demolished RPO car. Engine 1 brought two hose lines up to the wreck if they were needed. Engine 1's crew then joined forces with Engine 5 and started a search of the wrecked cars from front the back.

As the scoop of the incident became clear calls went out for additional Rescue Companies and ambulances from surrounding communities, Arlington, Malden and Somerville's Rescue Companies responded on the first call. This was followed in short order by Rescues from Winchester, Belmont and Lexington. Ambulances were summoned from the local areas.

Ladder 1's crew crawling over the bags of mail and packages in the wrecked RPO car found two seriously injured RPO clerks. They called for stretchers and removed to waiting ambulances. The third postal clerk was injured by stayed at his post until Postal Inspectors arrived when he was then taken to the hospital.

As the crews from the mutual aid rescue companies arrived they were quickly put to work in search the wrecked cars for injured.

Numerous Police ambulances responded to the call. The M.D.C. Police responded to the call by sending 15 'Ambulette' cruisers. Many of the injured were transported to the Lawrence Memorial, Winchester, Somerville City hospitals and to the Mass. General.

All injured and non-injured were removed by the rescuers in just one hour!

The scene of the accident was near St. Clements Church and five priests ran to the scene to give aid and comfort to the injured. Father Matthew Coughlin climbed into the wreck cab and gave Last Rites to Engineer Harold Danforth and his Fireman George D Murphy.



Wreck crews get ready to clear the remains of diesel # 4224. Photo courtesy of Railnet.com

Many of the passengers suffered broken bones and many were knock unconscious by the force of the crash. Fifteen 'stretcher cases" were transported, with many of the passengers with minor injuries were also transported via police cruisers.

After the accident the investigation began before the wreckage was removed. It was found that south bound slow order board had been removed about 4:00 PM the day before the accident. From that time until the time of the accident a total of 26 southbound passenger trains and 6 northbound freight trains had had operated over the temporary southward main track. None of these crews reported the missing board as required by the rule book. After the accident a thought search was conducted and the missing slow board was found three days later in the brush west of the southward track in the vicinity

of the its original location, a freshly dug hole was found 7 inches deep and 70 feet north. It was removed by unknown party who appears to have been trying to replace it.

Hundreds of spectators gathered in the rain to watch the wreck crews clean up the derailment sight. Many thought that this accident was very similar to the wreck that occurred three years to the date on November 12, 1954 at the Nashua, NH railroad station.

The B&M made a request to the Medford Fire Department for emergency lighting units so that the crews could work into the night to clear the wreck. Civil Defense Aux. lighting units from Medford and Somerville responded.

The cause of the accident that killed two and injured 60 was found to be excessive speed.



The Rescue Companies That Responded.

All photos collection of Member Frank San Severino



Medford Rescue 1 1956 Ford/Lacey



Arlington Rescue 1 1945 Mack/Lacey



Malden Rescue 1 1956 Mack B/Lacey



Winchester Rescue 1 1954 Ford/Lacey



Norfolk Southern's safety train will have made stops in 23 cities during 2017 as part of its Operation Awareness & Response (OAR) program, which provides first responders with training on how to respond to a railroad incident.

The OAR safety train is composed of a rebuilt EMD GP38-2 2,000-horsepower, 273-ton locomotive painted in honor of emergency responders carrying road number 5642. Two boxcars converted into 30-seat classrooms; four styles of tank cars: DOT-105, DOT-111, DOT-112, and DOT-117; and two 89-foot flatcars used to transport intermodal containers.

Each four-hour training session includes classroom instruction and hands-on training inside a locomotive and on rail cars. The sessions are recommended for representatives of fire and law enforcement departments, emergency medical services and hazmat response teams, military and homeland security personnel, and railroad customers and suppliers.

"We're committed to moving all materials on our railroad safely," said John Irwin, Norfolk Southern assistant vice president safety and environmental. "Important components of our safety culture include building relationships with first responders in the 22 states where NS operates and providing in-person educational opportunities like the OAR train."

During 2016 Norfolk Southern provided training for about 5,600 emergency responders, government officials, and others in 18 states. The training included classroom seminars, hands-on sessions with rolling stock, table-top simulations, full-scale drills, and exercises at training centers operated by NS and the Association of American Railroads. Norfolk Southern also was instrumental in developing the AskRail™ mobile app, which provides real time rail information to first responders.



NS OAR Train in Altoona, PA in April of 2017. Photo courtesy of Norfolk Southern



RRPictureArchives.NET Image Copyright Tim Darnell

NS OAR Tank Car 490111 set up for a class. The car is designed to carry 30,194 gallon capacity. Photo courtesy of Tim Darnell. RRPicturesArchives.Net

Halifax, Nova Scotia Explosion Thursday December 6th, 1917

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the largest non-nuclear explosion ever recorded. Much information is available about this incident, but for this report we are going to concentrate on the actions of the Halifax Fire Department that fateful day. The explosion claimed nine firefighter's lives and wrecked several pieces of apparatus.

At the time of the explosion, Halifax harbor was busy as World I was still raging in Europe. Two ships left Bedford Basin headed down the harbor. The ships were the Norwegian steamer SS IMO who was carrying supplies for Belgium Relief. The other steamer was the French steamer SS Mont Blanc. The Mont Blanc was loaded with TNT picric acid, the highly flammable fuel benzole, and guncotton. At approximately 8:45 AM the ships collided. The IMO sliced a hole into the number 1 hold of the Mont Blanc which immediately caught fire. As the fire grew in intensity the crew abandoned the freighter and made for the Dartmouth shore yelling warnings to all to run.

The now abandoned Mont Blanc was sending out huge clouds of flames and smoke and was drifting towards Pier No. 6. Along the Halifax Waterfront hundreds paused to watch the fire not realizing the danger they were in. Others watched from windows in their homes.

Someone pulled the fire alarm box 83 at Roome Street and Campbell Row for the fire at Pier 6 and as Chief Edward Condon arrived he saw that the Mount Blanc was now against Pier 6 and both were well involved. He ordered a second alarm from box 83, bringing the entire Halifax Department to the scene.

At the time of the fire the Halifax Fire Department had six steamers, 2 ALF motorized pumpers, 8 hose wagons, 3 chemical engines, 1, combination wagon and 2 ladder companies. The firefighting force was 123 men under command of Chief Condon and Deputy Chief William Brunt.

The fire on the Mont Blanc was growing and much of the ship was now involved when at 9:04:35 the out of control fire reached the high explosives and set off an explosion. The ship was blown apart. The blast wave travelled at 3,300 feet per second and the shock wave was felt over 130 miles away in Cape Breton. Temperatures reached over 5,000 degrees, the blast created a tsunami that tossed the IMO onto the Dartmouth shore.

Arriving first due to the box from the West Street Fire Hall was the "Patricia" an ALF motorized pump and the first motorized apparatus in the fleet. Eight men made up the crew. They were getting into action to fight the fire at end of Pier 6 and were joined by Hose Company 4 from the Islington Station. At the time of the explosion the pump operator, William Wells who was making the hydrant connection was thrown a distance away from the rig with all his clothes ripped off. He was the only member of the crew of 8 to survive.

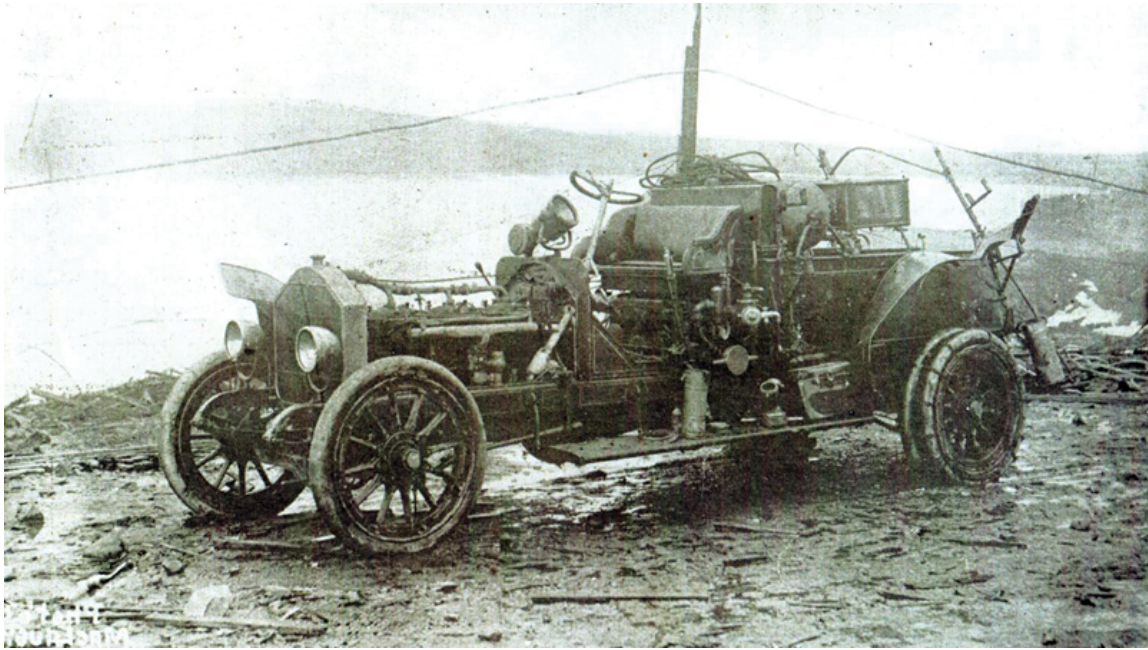
The blast leveled buildings and started numerous fires. The dazed crews picked themselves up and turned to the grim task of trying to fight the fires and help what survivors they could. The task was overwhelming. The heaviest damage was in the Richmond section which was leveled for 2.5 miles in all directions. Houses, stores, factories and all types of buildings were destroyed.

Aid was quick to respond to both Halifax and Dartmouth. The Intercontinental Railroad made special trains available that brought firefighters, apparatus, doctors and nurses to the stricken City.

As the day wore on the weather took a turn for the worst and a blizzard added to the problems in the City.

In Boston, word reached the City by mid afternoon and relief trains loaded with medical supplies, relief supplies doctors and nurses boarded special Boston & Maine trains for the trip to Halifax.

As a token of appreciation the City of Halifax sent Boston a Christmas tree in 1918. Today, the Province of Nova Scotia still sends Boston a tree, which has become the official Christmas tree of the City in gratitude for help one hundred years ago.



The wreck of the ALF pump "Patricia". Photo courtesy of the Archives of Nova Scotia



Patricia, on her delivery day. Photo courtesy of Halifax Magazine



Hose Company 4. Photo courtesy of Halifax Magazine

Died in the Halifax Explosion



Chief Ed Condon
December 6, 1917



Hoseman John Spruin
December 6, 1917

Captain William Broderick
December 6, 1917



Deputy William Brunt
December 6, 1917



Hoseman Frank Leahy
December 31, 1917

Captain Michael Maltus
December 6, 1917



Hoseman John Duggan
December 6, 1917



Hoseman Walter Hennessey
December 6, 1917

Hoseman Frank Killeen
December 6, 1917



This is an interesting video on the relief efforts <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PlmhLMxTXc>

2017 Hallmark Fire Brigade Ornament

This year's Hallmark fire truck ornament is the 15th in the Fire Brigade Series. It is a 1979 Ford/Bruco 750/300 pump that belongs to the Forestville Volunteer Fire Company of Prince Georges, Maryland. Forestville is Company 23 and is located on the D.C side of the County and is in the third battalion. As with our tradition, one ornament will be raffled off at the December meeting.



Photo courtesy of Hallmark



Prince Georges Co.,Md.
Engine 233
"Forestville VFD"

Photo courtesy of "Hungry Bus"

Five Alarms Congress and A Streets December 23, 1917

The building at 381-389 Congress Street was a five story occupied second class mill type construction. At the time of the fire, the first two floors were occupied by the Crucible Steel Company, third and fourth floors housed the Boston Scale and Machine Company, which at the time of the fire was making rifle parts for the U.S. Government. The fifth top floor was occupied by the Westinghouse Company and was used for bulb storage. These bulbs were packed in excelsior paper cartons.

On Sunday morning December 23rd a harsh gale force wind was blowing off the harbor and the temperture was around zero. Patrolman Fallon of Division 16 was pounding his beat trying to stay out of the wind as much as possible, He started down Congress St and saw smoke pouring from the upper floors of a building further down Congress Street. He ran and found that the fire was at the corner of A Street, he pulled box 7112. The Fire Alarm Office received the box at 0417 hrs. and it was promptly sent out over the tappers.



Arriving first due from their quarters at 344 Congress Streets Engines 38 and 39 were getting into action as Ladder 18 arrived along District 3, Chief Steven Ryder. The fire had a good head start on the Companies. Chief Ryder transmitted a second alarm at 0421 hrs. a few seconds after that the first of three back drafts rocked the building and the fire was now in full posesion of the upper floors. The third was transmitted at 0423 hrs. as several more back drafts rocked the building and the fourth floor collapsed in the rear.

At the time of the collapse, both Engines 1 and 43's crews were trying to get lines to the top floor via the fire escape. They had a narrow escape during the collapse and quickly retreated over the aerial of Ladder 8 working at the rear of building..

Companies tried to get lines into the upper floors via interior stairways. Engine Company 39 along with Chief Ryder were nearly trapped on the third floor when flames got into the hallway and them off from the stairway. They fought their way back to the stairs and were able to get out of the building.

Engines 7, 25 and 38 made four attempts to get lines up the main stairwell and each time they were driven back. Wooden aerials had to be swung away from windows as they were in danger of burning.

Chief McDonough ordered the 4th alarm to be sounded at 0447 hours and the fire was attacked from the outside. Crews were taking a beating from both the fire and the weather. Ice was forming on the wooden aerials and the water towers. Crews were coated with ice. Chief McDonough realized that they were losing the battle to save the building. As he ordered the 5th alarm at 0512 hours the fire was still raging. The top floor had a heavy fire load as Westinghouse stored there bulbs in wooden boxes filled with the stringy fibrous material excelsior material.

The fire was brought under control just about 0630 hours. Engine Company 1's 1917 Seagrave performed well at the fire. In addition to Engine 1, 19 other engines were on scene along with six ladder trucks, three fire boats, 3 water towers, a chemical engine and the Rescue 1. The crews from the boats tied up at piers, but were too far away to provide lines. Their crews operated as land engines at the fire.

Damage to the building was to the three upper floors. Local, state and federal investigators were on scene by 0800 hours. The all-out was sounded at 0937 hours with a detail still on scene. The cause of the fire was unknown, damage was estimated at \$ 150,000.00 and 500 people were left jobless.