



APPARATUS UPDATES

By Michael Boynton, all photos by the author

Wow! The Metro Departments have had a bunch of early Christmas presents delivered of late, and Santa is busy in his Fire Truck Factory making more as well!! Here is what is new from the North Pole since we last visited.....

BOSTON & METRO-FIRE

Boston has placed three 2017 E-One Metro-Sticks on Cyclone chassis in service at Ladder Companies 15, 26 and 28. Also, Engine 22 has placed in service a 2015 KME Severe Service 1500/750/30 gallons of class A Foam.





Braintree has placed a 2017 E-One Typhoon in service with Engine 4. It is equipped with a 1500 gpm pump, 750 gallon tank and carrier 30 gallons of class B foam.

Brookline Ladder 1 is now running with a 2017 KME Serve Service 109 ft. RMA.

Chelsea has taken delivery of a 2017 Pierce Saber Walk-Around model Heavy Rescue. It is lettered for Rescue 1. Ladder Company 2 has taken delivery of a 2017 Pierce Arrow XT 105 ft RMA.





Lexington has taken delivery of a 2017 E-One Cyclone 110 ft. RMA for Ladder 1.



Milton Engine 4 is now operating with a 2017 E-One Typhoon equipped with a 1500 gpm pump/750 gallon tank/30 gallons of class B foam



Quincy Engine Companies 1 and 5 are now equipped with sister rigs. Both are KME Serve Service 1500 gpm pump and 750 gallon tanks,



Waltham Tower 1 is now running with a 2017 Seagrave Marauder II 95 foot Aerial Scope.



Weymouth Engine 1 has taken delivery of a 2017 Pierce Enforcer 1500/750/30 gallons of class B.



OTHER MASSACHUSETTS APPARATUS



East Bridgewater – Engine 1 – 2017 E-One Typhoon 1500/750/30B



Hanover – Tower 1 – 2017 E-One Cyclone 2000/300 100' RMA



Leominster – Engine 4 – 2017 Pierce Arrow XT 1500/675



New Bedford Engines 5 & 9 – 2017 Pierce Arrow XT 1500/500



Northbridge – Engine 3 – 2018 Pierce Arrow XT 1500/1000/30A



Plainville – Tower 1 – 2017 Spartan ERV 2000/300 100' RMA



Plymouth – Engine 6 – 2017 E-One Cyclone 1500/1000/30A



Sharon – Ladder 1 – 2017 Pierce Arrow XT 105' RMA

\$200,000 Fire in B & M Yards

General Alarm East Cambridge Jan. 5, 1918

The first weekend of 1918 was filled with wind and a blast of cold air. In the freight yards of the Boston and Maine Railroad a hostler engineer was moving an engine into the Round House when he spotted flames shooting out of the Car Repair Shop over in yard 3. He blew the fire signal on the locomotive whistle. All the workers in the yard dropped what they were doing and ran towards the Car Shops.

The building was fully involved! The Shop was 170 feet long with two tracks and was able to handle four cars at one time. As the fire gained headway driven by a strong wind, it was spreading to 15 passenger coach's, 6 flat cars and 3 Railway Post Office (RPO) cars parked on adjacent tracks. As the fire grew it went opposite of the wind direction and soon the Machine Shop was fully involved.

Cambridge fire alarm received box 13 at 2315 hours. East Cambridge Companies were first due and they knew where the fire was by the angry glow in the eastern sky. Deputy Chief Vose arrived he skipped the second alarm and transmitted the third at 2319 hours.

As companies went to work, they found low pressure in some of the yard hydrants and other were frozen. It was the same story with some of the municipal hydrants close to the yards.

Railroad crews were busy trying to move cars out of the way of the fast moving flames as the firefighters struggled to get their lines into position. They were forced to climb over rail cars after having dragged the hose lines through the Round House to get close to the fire. Deputy Vose had the companies mass on Bridge Street and bring the lines into the yard. He ordered the General Alarm transmitted at 2353 hrs and requested that Somerville and Boston respond to the fire.

As the CFD crews battled the fire, many members were injured by slipping and falling on ice covered pits and rails. Embers were raining down over the yards and the East Cambridge neighborhood. Combination 2 (now Engine 9) was kept busy chasing the embers.

Somerville Engine 1 and Boston Engine 27 arrived at almost the same time and joined in the battle. The fire was still raging when just after midnight exploding illuminating gas spread the flames to the Power House and more cars.

Engineers were able to get 40 locomotives out of the Round House and away from the fire before the power was lost. The movement of the locomotives made it dangerous for the firefighters to move around. Several lines were cut as the engines passed over them. Another problem was that the whistles of the locomotives was causing confusion as the steamers were whistling for more coal.

Cambridge Engine 4's 1917 American La France triple combination pump was pumping near its capacity of 750 gallons per minute. Ladder Companies were ordered to take up hose lines to try and stop the spread of the fire.



The remains in daylight. Photo from the Leslie Jones Collection, Digital Commonwealth

A large group of spectators was drawn to the scene. Rumors quickly went through the crowd that the fire was arson and maybe it was caused by German Saboteurs. The investigation into the fire found that a hot coal from a passing locomotive had landed on the Repair shop roof and was the cause of the fire.

As daylight broke on Saturday the 6th, the fire had been brought under control. Numerous firefighters suffered minor injuries. Damage to the Boston & Maine Property was: Repair and Machine shops destroyed, along with a total of 24 various railroad cars. Damaged in the fire was the Power House, several out buildings and other various railroad cars and equipment.

The Cambridge Fire Department did excellent work in checking the spread of the flames and saving more of the Railroad said R.P. Whitcher General Foreman of Yards 3 & 4.

From the Archives via the Boston Globe

November 11, 1925

DR ARCHER PRAISES BOSTON'S FIREMEN

New York Official Guest of Box 52 Association

Oil Fire Pumper and New Alarm Station Excel All Others

The membership of the Box 52 Association and guests to the number of nearly 200 jumped to their feet at the Hotel Westminster last night, and cheered as Dr. Harry M. Archer, honorary Deputy Chief of the New York City Fire Department was sworn in as an honorary member of the Boston Fire Department by Commissioner Theodore A. Glynn.

Then President William F. Lehman pinned the badge of the association on Dr. Archer's coat and he was introduced as an honorary member of he later described as "The best Fire Fan's Club in the United States".

Dr. Archer was the chief guest and speaker at the 13th annual dinner coming from New York for the occasion. He also wanted to inspect the new fire alarm station in the Fenway, the fame of which has travelled all over the country.

Dr. Archer said the general belief of firemen and persons interested in firefighting in this country is that the New York Department believes it is the only one in the world. He said that this is a mistaken belief, because the officers and men fighting fires know that other departments exist and Boston has one that is well and favorably known.

He said the only thing superior about New York is its size but Boston has something that the New York department cannot boast and that is a Foamite pumper for oil fires. A number of experiences he told of thrilled his hearers as he described hair-breadth escapes and rescues.

He described the New York department ambulance with every convenience for operating. All surgical work is performed at the scene of a fire, and never has a case of infection been recorded.

Commissioner Glynn thanked the members of the Box 52 Association for services rendered to the Fire Department since he has been Commissioner.

Chief Daniel F. Sennott explained some of the details of his new Foamite pumper and informed the chiefs of Greater Boston that this machine is ready for their call any time they have an oil fire to fight.

Supt. George F. Frickett of the fire alarm branch invited the members to be his guests when the new fire alarm station is placed in commission.

Among the other guests were Col. A. Everett Asstin U.S.A Medical Corps, Supt. Henry Thompson of the Boston Protective Department: Ass't Chief Henry A. Fox, Deputy Chief Alfred Caulfield of the Boston Department: Chiefs James E. Casey of Cambridge, Seldon R. Allen Brookline, David DeCoursey Winchester, William Mahoney Peabody, William Daily Brockton, Harold Hill Belmont, Daniel Tierney Arlington and John O'Hearn Watertown.

Southern California Wildfires

Here are some stats from the three largest fire currently burning in Southern California:

The Thomas Fire in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties has become the fifth largest fire in the history of California. Fire started at Dec. 4 2017 @1828 hrs at intersection of highways 150 & 126 in Santa Paula. It

is 20% contained and as of Dec. 12th it has burned 234,200 acres. 794 structures have been destroyed and 187 damaged.

Total fire personnel: 6,397, Engines 856, 115 Fire crews, 27 Helicopters, 67 Dozers and 48 Water Tenders.



Photo courtesy of L.A. Daily News

The Creek Fire

Fire started on Dec. 5th at 0344 hrs 4 miles east of Sylmar in LA County. As of Dec. 12th this fire is 98% contained. 3 Injuries have been reported. Fire has consumed 15,619 acres destroyed 60 residential structures and 63 other types of structures. Damaged 55 residential structures and 26 other types of structures.

Total fire personnel: 330, 40 Engines, 2 Water Tenders, 6 Dozers, 5 Hand Crews and 2 Helicopters



Photo courtesy of the L.A. Dailey News

The Lilac Fire

Fire started on Dec. 7th at 1115 hours at Old Hwy 395 and Dublin Rd in Bonsall San Diego County. As of Dec. 12th the fire has consumed 4,100 acres and is 92% contained. 151 Structures have been destroyed and 56 damaged.

Total fire personnel 1,659, 140 Engines, 29 Water Tenders, 17 Dozers, 33 Fire Crews, 11 Helicopters



Photo courtesy of L.A. Times

BFD Faces Tough Pin Job

All Photos Leslie Jones Collection, Digital Commonwealth

Thursday October 13th, 1932 started the same way as most days in the fire stations of the BFD. Day shift was on duty, house work was being finished and the crews were getting set for what the day had in store for them.

At South Station the morning rush hour was winding down. Commuter train No. 274 pulled in to its assigned track at 0940 hours and the passengers headed about their business. Engine No. 312, a product of the Schenectady Locomotive Works was one of ten 'Suburban Tank Engine' ordered by the Boston & Albany for its commuter service. The engine and tender were all one unit. The engine was facing into the station. After the mid-morning express train No. 73 pulled out for its run to Albany.

The crew went to the last car of the train, now the lead car and manned the back-up pipe. This was a device that operated the brakes when the train was making a reverse move. The crew made a air brake test both at the engine and on the back-up pipe. Signals were lined and they started for the Dover Street Coach Yard. Trainman Kearns was manning the device

Coming from the Huntington yard near Switch Tower 6 was freight switch engine no. 57 running tender first and hauling three box cars to the Kneeland Street Yard was on track 4. In the freight locomotive cab was Conductor Madden, Engineer Wallace Smith and Fireman Michael Madigan. As the freight train approached Switch Tower 5, it was stopped to wait for the passage of the Express on track. After it passed the switches and signals were lined for the freight to move from track 4 to track 2. At the same time train 274 was making about 20-25 mph. Trainman Curry yelled to Kearns to "stop". Kearns shoved the pipe over into Emergency and the train began to slow. At Tower 5 Operator Mahoney heard the click of switch machinery indicating that train 274 had just passed signal number 0.73. He looked up and saw that it was traveling at a high rate of speed as it passed the Arlington Street Bridge. He saw that it would not stop and signaled the freight to stop. The freight train was stopped and just 800 feet past Tower 5. Train 274 lead passenger coach slammed into the tender of engine 57. The force of the impact caused the tender to telescope into the cab of the locomotive, the frame of the tender swung around at a right angle to the track. The lead passenger coach after striking the tender rolled onto its right side onto track no. 1. The leading end of the second passenger car derailed and was smashed by the swinging tender frame. The time was 0951 hrs.

In the freight locomotive Engineer Smith's leg was pinned by the heavy steel of the dislodged firebox door. He was trapped and severely injured. Fireman Madigan was buried under a ton of coal in the tender. Operator Mahoney called in the crash to the Dover Street Yard Master. As he was making this call, a passer-by above the incident on St. Charles Street ran to fire box 1524 and pulled the hook. Fire Alarm Operators sent it out. Engines 22, 26, 35 and 15, Ladders 13 and 17, Rescue 1 and Water Tower 2 were on the way. District Chief 7 Samuel Pope was also responding (Dist. 7 was quartered with Engine 22 on Warren Ave).

Arriving first due Engine 22 and Ladder 13 found a below grade railroad accident with one passenger car on its side. At the time they didn't know if the passenger train was filled with trapped victims. As Ladder

13's crew was grabbing what equipment and Engine 22 was looking for access to the wreck. As the rest of the first alarm companies arrived and set to work. Rescue 1's and Ladder 17 began checking the passenger cars. They found Brakeman Eben Currie in the overturned car suffering from two serious leg fractures.

Conductor Madden told Chief Pope that two men were trapped in the locomotive. Chief Pope ordered a ladder thrown to the cab and with Ladder 13's crew they found one victim in the tender buried under a massive amount of coal and another victim pinned by the fire door. The officer of Rescue 1 arrived in the cab and a plan was formulated to get the victims out. Ladder 13 was working on the fire door with hand tools with no success. Chief Pope gave the order for Engine 35 and 15 to stretch a big line into the cab and then he ordered Fire Alarm to special call Rescue 2 and 3.



Access in the cab and tender were limited as Ladder 13's crew went to work on removing the coal that had buried Madigan, they found that he was trapped by steel support rods. Rescue 2 was ordered to bring their oxy-acetylene cutting torch to the tender and burn through the rods. The hose line was charged and made ready in case the coal ignited. In the cab, Engineer Smith was conscious and in great pain. Rescue 1 was now joined by Rescue 3 and both companies were working in tandem to free the Engineer.

Ladder 17's crew was assisting with moving coal and laddering the right side of the locomotive. During this time crews from the Boston & Albany's Wreck crew arrived with their equipment. The heavy steel of the fire door pinning the leg of the engineer was thick and the supply tanks of the torches was running low. Rescue 1 switched to the torch brought in by the wreck crew. Chief Pope who was holding the head of engineer Smith out the cab window yelled to the Captain of Engine 26 to call Fire Alarm and have the supply of oxygen and acetylene tanks brought to the scene.



At the tender crews realized that Madigan had suffered serious internal injuries and BPD officers on scene were told to get a Priest. A Patrolman ran to the nearby Our Lady of Victory Church and told Father Cyr of the situation. Father Cyr upon arrival climbed up into the tender and administered Last Rites to Madigan. He was removed to Boston City Hospital where he was placed on the "Danger List".

Dr. Matthew Norton had arrived on the scene with a BCH ambulance, which was common practice to have a doctor go on calls in the ambulance. He was in the cab checking on Smith. The effort to free him was now going on 30 minutes and the Rescue Companies were making little headway in cutting the steel fire door. Dr. Norton after checking the on Smith again realized that he would not survive more than a few more minutes. He conferred with the Rescue Officers and it was decided to amputate his leg. With a jack knife of one of the firefighters, Smith was given a local anesthetic and with Chief Pope still holding his head the trapped leg was removed. Engineer Smith was removed to the BCH where he received several blood transfusions.

All three injured men recovered. This rescue was made using hand tools, cutting torchs, jacks and other tools then in use.

The cause of the accident was blamed on Trainmen Kearns and Curry for faliure to observe signals and disobying the speed restriction rule.



Engineer Smith being removed after his leg amputation.



Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and a very happy 2018!

The Line Box Staff