



Box 52 Association

*Season's
Greetings!*

*December 2023
Newsletter*

Box 52 Association



The Line Box



I.F.B.A. Member club since 1955!

Vol. 20 No. 2

Welcome to our second issue of our twentieth year. First, I would like to thank all the members who either emailed, texted, or called about the Chelsea Conflagration issue. It was greatly appreciated as were the comments about things they did not know about the fire or the LODD in Boston.

This issue is full of our usual fire stories and stories involving railroads. We know you are going to like it. So, break out the Christmas cookies and the Hood's Eggnog and enjoy.



Annual Hallmark Fire Brigade Ornament

2023 marks the 50th anniversary of the Hallmark collectible ornaments. It is also the 20th anniversary of the Fire Brigade Series. The 20th ornament is a pumper based on a 1956 Dodge chassis. Our resident expert modeler member Charlie Tentas will do the rig up as Wakefield Engine 4

Remember, this one of a kind ornament will be raffled off at the December meeting. You must be in attendance at the meeting to be eligible to win this ornament.



2023 Hallmark Fire Brigade ornament customized for Wakefield Engine 4 by member Charles Tentas.

**TRIMOUNT PLASTICS
December 25th, 1958
3-552 78 Dudley Street
Arlington**

By Frank San Severino – Line Box Editor

Christmas Day 1958 dawned clear and bitterly cold. In the three Arlington stations, it was a relaxing day. There had been one call for a faulty oil burner in the east end of town at 10:46 AM. The shift had settled in for the rest of the day and after a traditional roast beef meal at Headquarters and a full ham dinner with all the fixing's at Highland, Ladder 3 came down the hill and joined in on the meal at Highland. The leftovers were put away, dishes done and a fresh pot of coffee put on. The waiting began for the night shift to arrive. Deputy Chief Francis Doherty decided the quiet afternoon was a good time to get caught up on the pile of paperwork he had been putting off. The minutes ticked by slowly towards the 6 o'clock shift change.

Two tenths of a mile from the Highland Station, was an address that was well known and feared by the entire Arlington Fire Department..... 71 Dudley Street Trimount Plastics. This firm was housed in a one-story concrete block building. It had a two-hundred-gallon ether tank on the first floor. An exposure, less than 2,000 feet away was the Dudley fuel company with its twin 50,000-gallon underground oil tanks. This was not an address you wanted to respond to. The company owned by Mr. Arthur Braverman of Brookline was known as being very safety conscious and worked closely with the AFD's Fire Prevention Bureau.

Somehow near the lunchroom in a paper storage room a smoldering fire began hours before the alarm was sounded. Next door, only 20 feet from the factory was the home of Mr. & Mrs. P.J. Boudreau who were playing with their infant granddaughter when they smelled smoke and called the AFD emergency line Mission3-4000 and reported the odor of smoke in their home. The warning blow was struck followed by the vocal announcement of a house fire at 67 Dudley Street. Box 532 was transmitted Brattle & Dudley Streets. The assignment called for Engines 2, 4, Ladder 2, Rescue 1 and C2. It was 4:46 PM with a temperature of 16 degrees and a stiff wind blowing out of the northwest.

At Highland, the first due companies of Engine 2 and Ladder 2's crews pulled on boots and Alb rubber coats with either beach or engineer coats underneath for warmth. Drivers started the big Seagrave V-12 motors of the matched 1952 70th Anniversary rigs. They roared to life. They rolled onto the ramp, turned right onto Mass. Ave. for the short run to Dudley Street and they were shocked to see a large black column of smoke mushrooming into the clear cold sky. Instantly they realized this was no house fire!



First due Engine 2 1952 Seagrave 1,000 GPM. 19Photo by Applicant R. Washburn collection of member F. San Severino

At Headquarters, Deputy Doherty was out first with Engine 4 and Rescue 1 right behind. In the center, the Route Man stopped the light traffic at Mass. Ave. and Medford Street and waved the apparatus through the intersection as they continued up the Avenue and passed the high school they all could see the thick dark smoke loom up.



Engine 4 1954 B Mack 1000 GPM. Photo by applicant R. Washburn, collection member F. San Severino



Rescue 1 1958 Mack B / 1945 Lacey body, Collection member F. San Severino

Engine 2 turned right onto Brattle Street and a quick right into Dudley Street. Heavy fire was pushing out the windows and through the roof of Trimount Plastics and the flames were leaping towards Boudreau's home. Engine 2 dropped a supply line and the crew ran a big line and got it into action between the factory and the Boudreau's to protect the home. The smoke was blinding and choking. Ladder 2 was evacuating the Boudreau's and the operator was swinging the 65 foot aerial to the roof of the single story concrete block building.



Ladder 2 1952 65 foot Collection member F. San Severino

Engine 4 grabbed a hydrant and was dropping dual supply lines down Dudley Street. Rescue 1 was forcing the doors of the building. Deputy Doherty was not even out of the car when he ordered the second alarm at 4:49 PM. At Park Circle Ladder 3's quint started down Park Ave to Appleton Street and onto Mass Ave. At Headquarters, Engine 1 and Ladder 1 crews were on the apparatus floor in the watch room listening to the radio and heard the order for the second alarm. Both were out the door before the second alarm was striking on the bells. The quiet of Christmas Day in Arlington Heights was shattered by screaming sirens.



Engine 1 1954 B Mack Photo by member F. San Severino



Ladder 1 Seagrave delivery photo, collection member F. San Severino

Engine 4's crew using their All-Service masks dragged a big line through the front door and emerged moments later unable to push in due to the heat and the thick black plastic smoke. Rescue 1 was ordered to mask up with SCBA's and try and take over Engine 4 hand line and get access into the building. They made a few feet further than Engine 4 did and the crew was forced out by the intense heat.

Ladder 3 arrived first due on the second alarm pulled and was positioned to use the aerial if needed. Deputy Doherty yelled for them to get a big line off of Engine 2 and get into action at the rear of the building.

Belmont, Cambridge, Lexington, Medford, Somerville, and Winchester all had received box 532 over the mutual aid circuit. On the second alarm Belmont Fire Alarm dispatched Belmont Engine 3 to the fire. On arrival, they were ordered to come down Grove Street to Dudley Street and take a hydrant and then take another big line into the rear of the factory and assist Ladder 3.

The wind was now pushing the fire towards the Dudley Fuel Company's filling racks. Arlington Engine 1 got a big line into action covering the loading rack. Medford Engine 2 had dropped dual feeder lines from a hydrant at the corner of Grove and Dudley Streets and fed Engine 1 and then pulled off a second 2 ½ inch line and went to work on the fueling racks. The 500 gallons a minute protected the racks and fuel delivery trucks from the flames. In short order all were buried under ice from the lines.

The first and second alarm companies were taking a pounding from the thick acrid smoke and were not making any progress trying gain entry. Both Ladder 2 and Ladder 1 crews had gone to the roof and were not surprised to find heavy heat, flames and thick acrid choking smoke belching skyward. Acrid smoke was pushing out and upwards over the entire neighborhood. The officers ordered their crews down off the aerials.

The smoke column was visible for miles, but not many people ventured out on Christmas afternoon to watch the fire. Arlington Police later estimated the crowd at less than one hundred people.

Chief of Department Thomas Egan arrived on scene a few minutes after the second alarm was transmitted. After conferring with Deputy Doherty and seeing the conditions getting worse, he pulled everyone from the building. He ordered all apparatus at the front of the building re-positioned in case of a collapse and once this was done, he ordered that Ladder 2 prepare their ladder pipe and then ordered the third alarm on 532 at 5:14 PM. This brought Cambridge Engine 4, Somerville E6, Winchester E1 and Somerville L3 to the fire.

The third alarm engines were ordered to take hydrants and lay their own supply lines and then get big lines into operations. Somerville Ladder 3 was directed to pull another big line off Arlington Engine 2. Ladder 2's crew was able to take two lines off Engine 4's 1954 1,000 gpm B Mack and supply the ladder pipe.

By 5:30 PM, ten big lines and one ladder pipe were hitting the fire pouring thousands of gallons into the factory. Ice was forming on every surface and Dudley Street had become a skating rink. Numerous firefighters were slipping and falling. The DPW was called to spread sand in the area and to supply gas and oil to the rigs.

After a four hour battle the fire was placed under control at 9:00 PM and mutual aid companies were being released. Only one firefighter was injured, suffering a severely lacerated wrist. He was transported to Symmes Hospital in a police cruiser.



Seagrave delivery photo Ladder 3 1949 quint 750 GPM 65 foot aerial. Collection member F. San Severino

The fire investigation began on the 26th and involved the AFD, APD and State Fire Marshals Office. The cause was never found, but it was determined that the fire had started in the paper storage room. The building and contents were destroyed and within a few weeks the building was razed. The loss was estimated at \$ 150,000.00.

Alarm	Time	Engines	Ladders	Rescue
532	4:46 PM	2, 4	2	1
2-532	4:49 PM	1, Bel. E-3	3, 1	
3-532	5:14 PM	Camb. E-4, Som. E6, Med, E-2	Som. L3	

Covering Companies:

Headquarters: Medford Engine 1 and **Ladder 1**

Highland: Winchester Engine 1

Park Circle: Lexington Engine 2



It's Not Christmas without Electric Trains!



Set 6-21753 Lionelville Fire Company Rescue set from 1998



Set 6-31715 Fire Rescue Set from 2003



Set 6-30108 American Fire Rescue set from 2010



Original # 52 fire car from 1958



Original Firefighting Instruction Car number 6530. It was cataloged from 1960-1962



First Fifth Alarm in Brighton Sunday September 23rd, 1962

Autumn came to New England at 8:35 AM on a cool rainy day. The Red Sox were in Washington to play the Senators after a 4-3 loss the night before. The front page of the Globe pictured the Boston Celtics getting ready for training camp to chase their 5th NBA title in the picture were: Sam Jones, Tommy Heinsohn, Bill Russell, Frank Ramess, K.C. Jones, and Bob Cousy.

MIT Meteorologist Dr. Hurd Willett, was quoted that the coming winter would not be an easy one with abnormally cold temps and above average snow fall.

On Page 3 on top of the fold was an ad announcing that RAGU Old World Style Spaghetti Sauce was introduced to Boston.

On Lincoln Street near the Beacon Park freight yard of the New York Central Railroad sat a vacant 600 foot long single story brick warehouse that was formerly owned by the NYC subsidiary railroad the Boston & Albany which provided freight and through passenger service to western Massachusetts and on into Albany, New York. The building had been sold several years earlier to the Thurston Distributing Company, which had moved to Watertown in August. The Railroad decided to raze the building and at the time of the fire it was undergoing demolition.

Weekends the area of Lincoln Street and Braintree Street were deserted. The area was made of up of warehouses and other commercial buildings. The proximity to the rail yard made it ideal for receiving and shipping of goods via rail and by truck.

A fire of unknown origin started in the section of the warehouse that was partial demolished, and within minutes the fire had spread through the entire structure.

At 1746 hours the Fire Alarm Office transmitted Box 5246. Arriving first due companies found heavy fire conditions from the warehouse and burning railroad ties. Flying embers from the burning warehouse were igniting buildings on Braintree Street. Twenty four minutes from the sounding of 5246, the first fifth alarm in Brighton would be transmitted!

The heat from the fire had ignited another warehouse at 55-57 Braintree Street that housed the L.J. Shulman and Sons Toy Distributors and the Thomas and Durkee Plumbing Supply house. Owner Louis Shulman stated that they had "just received stock of over \$ 68,000 in product for the coming holiday season".

Despite the attempts by the BFD to stop the spread of the fire, with the heat from the original fire building it was only a short time before 55-57 Braintree Street was fully involved. Businesses at 41, 43, and 47 Braintree Street also saw damage from flying brands. These roof fires were quickly knocked down by fourth and fifth alarm companies.

The fire was sending up a smoke column several miles and attracted nearly 5,000 spectators to the scene overwhelming the Boston Police assigned to District 14 and help was requested from the M.D.C. and State Police for crowd and traffic control.

Acting Chief of Department William Terrenzi stated that the fire was under investigation and the State Fire Marshal's Office would be assisting in the investigation. Damage was estimated at over \$ 200,000 dollars. One firefighter suffered minor injuries as did one ambulance attendant. Eight year old Joseph Millisei of Franklin Street Alston fell 30 feet from a roof where he was watching the fire with other boys. He was transported to the BCH with a broken ankle and a concussion. He was held at the hospital for several days.



Remains of original fire building. Photo courtesy of Boston Fire Historical Society.



Remains of L.J. Shulman & Sons. Photo courtesy of Boston Fire Historical Society

Time Line

Alarm	Time	Engines	Ladders	Other/Comments
5246	1746	41, 34	L14, 11	District 11
W.F.	1748	13		Orders of District 11
2-5246	1752	29, 51, 33, 37	15, 26	Division 2
3-5246	1756	10, 8, 26, 39	3	Orders of Division 2
4-5246	1758	53, 3, 21, 56		Orders of Division 2 C4 Clougherty
5-5246	1810	32, 42, 43, 20		Orders of C4 First 5th alarm transmitted for Brighton

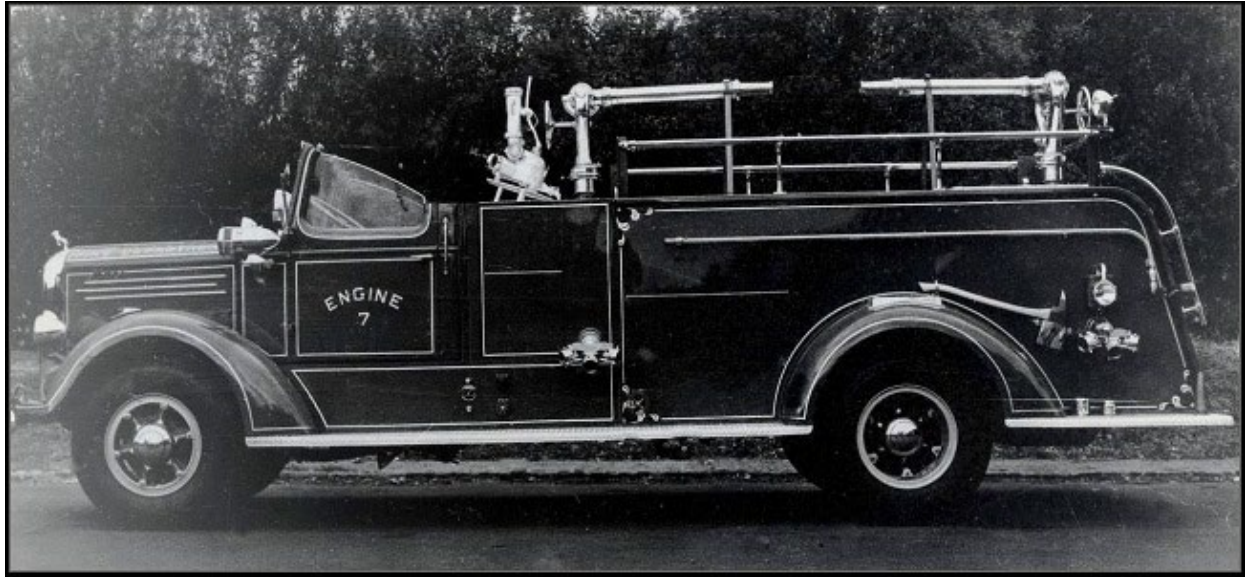
Special thanks to Retired Commissioner and honorary member Paul Christian
 Boston Fire Historical Society
 Boston Globe Archives.



Hose Wagon #300

By William F. Noonan

All photos from author's collection



In the late 1940's the apparatus roster of the Boston Fire Department was typical of most American fire departments: because of World War II, apparatus had not been purchased for years. The average first line apparatus was over 20 to 30 years old and was very tired. After the war ended the City of Boston began a much needed rebuilding and upgrading of the apparatus fleet. A variety of new pumpers, hose wagons and ladder trucks were purchased in 1947 and 1948 from various manufactures. The newly elected Mayor, James Michael Curley and the new Fire Commissioner Russell Sturgis Codman, Jr. he had just appointed and had asked to modernize the Fire Department,

Among the apparatus purchased during 1947 were two Mack High Pressure Hose Wagons, (Model 85LS) both were equipped with large 2000 gallon per minute McIntyre deck guns, a portable deck gun and 150 gallon booster tanks .They were assigned to Engine Co. 7 on East Street near South Station and Engine Co. 25 in Fort Hill Square.

(Engine Co. 7 Model 85LS-1163 and Engine Co. 25 Model 85LS-1162 and the price of each wagon was listed at \$13,279.82) At this time there was a Mack dealer on North Beacon Street, in Brighton where all the Macks were delivered before being accepted by the B.F.D.

Engine Co. 7, on East Street was assigned the new Hose Wagon on November 20, 1947, and it was assigned the department Shop Number 300. Nothing is normal in the Boston Fire Department and rumor had it that soon after it was assigned there was a slight accident and the new rig received some damage, the Fire Commissioner was not pleased and ordered the new wagon re-assigned to Engine Co. 26 at 194 Broadway on December 2, 1947. Engine Co. 26 had a very good assignment card and they moved on just about every multiple alarm in the city and also responded on several Mutual Aid alarms. It was common sight to see the Mack Wagon at the front of a fire building with one or both and even all three of the deck guns operating.

The next fire was one of the most spectacular fires to hit the city in years. The fire occurred in the 5 story 2nd class building at 23-27 Sleeper Street in South Boston. A fire was discovered in the basement which was caused possibly by a discarded cigarette. One of the workers found the fire and attempted to extinguish it without success.

The first notification of any trouble was when the Fire Alarm Office received and transmitted Boston Automatic Signal 416-8 (222-416-8) at 1248 hours which indicated a fire in the basement. Box 7115, Congress and Sleeper Streets was transmitted at 1249 hours. Engine Co. 39, Ladder Co. 18 and District 3 responded on the Boston Automatic Alarm.

The building was occupied by the Armour Leather Company and was fully stocked with plenty of leather and other highly flammable products. The 2nd alarm was ordered at 1258 hours, the 3rd alarm was requested at 1308 hours, the 4th alarm at 1313 hours and the 5th alarm at 1332 hours. The fire spread from the basement to the upper floors very quickly and within one hour very heavy smoke billowed from all of the windows on the Sleeper Street side and at the rear of the building near the Fort Point Channel. The fireboats, Engine Companies 44 and 31 tied up as close as possible and the supplied extra lines of hose to the land companies.

Engine Co. 26 responded, this was a deck-gun job, and soon after both guns were going and continued through the night. By morning everything was covered in ice. I'm not sure how long they operated here but it was enough time for the ice to form, probably at least 12 hours.

On September 18, 1954, while responding to separate alarms of fire, the Hose Wagon of Engine Co. 26 and the apparatus of Ladder Co. 20 collided at the intersection of Albany and Dover (East Berkeley) Streets in the South End. Ladder Co. 20 was responding from their quarters in Andrew Square with Firefighter Francis Cady driving and Firefighter Charles Vogel tillering. Ladder Co. 20 was operating with their regular assigned apparatus, a 1949 Pirsch 85 foot wooden aerial ladder truck. Engine Co. 26 was responding from their quarters at 194 Broadway with Firefighter Malcolm Foley driving. Because both of their sirens were in operation, neither company heard the other approaching. The wagon of Engine Co. 26 hit the apparatus of Ladder Co. 20 broadside, Firefighter Vogel was thrown from the tiller seat and he never returned to duty. The apparatus of Engine Co. 26 was severely damaged and had to be towed to the Department Repair Shop.



Engine Co. 26 was returned to service after repairs were made, a new front bumper, head lights and a painted radiator shell on November 15, 1954. Sometime before the accident a "Mars" light was added to the driver's side and remained throughout the career of the rig. A "Stokes Basket" was also added eventually to the side of the apparatus and it remained there for years.



On December 9, 1965, Engine Co. 26 responded to a major fire in a large warehouse on Medford Court in the South End. Box 1614, Shawmut Avenue and Dover Street was sounded and eventually 5 alarms were needed to control this fire. Engine Co. 26 took a position in an alley and operated both deck guns but while they were operating there was a partial collapse and the wagon was nearly buried. Despite the damage the gun continued to operate and when daylight broke the damage was evident. It was fortunate that no firefighters were killed or seriously injured in the collapse. Again the wagon was towed to the Repair Shop where repairs were accomplished and after nearly six months the wagon was returned to service but looked somewhat different. The Mack fenders were gone and replaced by the shop made "Diamond Plate" fenders.



December 1965 Medford Court & Briggs Place, under a wall with gun still going!

The Mack wagon remained in service until October 3, 1970, when it was replaced with a new Ford-Maxim Squirt Wagon. After another trip to the Repair Shop for modifications a chrome radiator shell was installed along with Mack fenders and it was re-assigned to Engine Co. 7. The wagon ran with Engine Co. 7 until it was re-assigned to





Engine Co. 8 in July 1975. Hose Wagon 300 remained with Engine Co. 8 until 1979 when it was re-assigned as a reserve or spare rig until it was disposed of in 1981. The long career of the Mack Hose Wagon 300 was finally over. The B.F.D. never disposed anything before it's time.

But part of the apparatus continued to serve the city, the two large deck guns were removed and retrofitted to one of the 1979 Ford-Sutphen pumpers. Several other old McIntyre guns were removed from the old Mack apparatus and five were installed on the fireboat "Firefighter" where they remain in service today (2008).

When the fireboat, "Firefighter" was removed from service the guns were removed, where they are I have no idea, this in 2011.

Hose Wagon #300





Feb. 1967 E-26 wagon operating at C. Crawford Hollidge Fire





Thanks to the late District Fire Chief John Patrick Vahey for firsthand information about the Ladder Co. 20 accident and to retired Fire Lieutenant James P. Teed for other pertinent information.



Apparatus Update

By member Michael Boynton

All photos by the author

Deliveries and rehabs continue across Massachusetts, but clearly the issue around apparatus orders continues to be the time delay in receiving new rigs, as much as four years. Planning ahead for vehicle replacements is more strategic than ever today.

In Metro, Boston, Dedham, and Winchester have received new rigs since our last update, while Malden has received the former Nashua Engine 5 to become Malden Engine 4.



Boston Engine 24 2023 Emergency-One Typhoon 1250/560/30 gallons class A foam. One of 3 delivered others at Engine Companies 10 and 42.



Dedham Squad 3 2022 Ford F-550/1st Priority light duty rescue.



Malden Engine Company 4 2010 Pierce Arrow XT 1250/750. Former Nashua, N.H. Engine 5.



Winchester Engine Company 1 2023 Pierce Enforcer 1500/750/30 foam.

EASTERN MASS.



Boxford Engine 1 2023 HME Ahrens Fox 1500/2400/30 foam.



Chelmsford Rescue 1 2023 Pierce Saber Walk-Around.



Dunstable Squad 1 2018 Ford F-550/Ahrens Fox Mini-EVO 4x4 1500/400/50 CAFS. Former Manchester-By-The Sea. Obtained 2023.



Fairhaven Engine 2 2023 Emergency-One Typhoon 1500/1000.



Foxborough Tower Ladder 25 2001 Emergency-One Hurricane 1500/300/95 foot RM. Former Naperville, IL. Truck 5. Obtained 2023.



Hamilton Squad 5 2022 Ford F-550/CET 4X4 250/300/10 foam.



Marlborough Truck 1 2023 Pierce Enforcer 2000/300/100 foot RM Tower.



Peabody Reserve Ladder 2 1996 KME 105 ft RMA. Former Newburyport Ladder 2, obtained 2023.



Plymouth Engine 1 2011 Emergency-One Cyclone 1500/750/30 foam. Rehabbed by Greenwood Fire Apparatus 2023.



Raynham Engine 4 2023 Emergency-One Typhoon E-Max 1500/1000/30 foam.



Salem Ladder 1 2023 Pierce Arrow XT 100 foot RMA.



Tewksbury Rescue 1 2022 Ford F-550/Pierce 4x4 Light Duty Rescue



Walpole Engine 1 and 2 received identical 2023 Emergency-One Typhoon e-Max 1500/530 pumps.



Worcester Engine Companies 11 and 13 received 2023 Emergency-One Typhoon's equipped with 1500 gpm pump, 500 gallon tanks and 30 gallons of class B foam.

The Brighton Ethyl Acetate and Rolling Railroad Tank Cars Fire
Friday October 25th, 1963
5-5276

Ethyl Acetate

Ethyl Acetate is colorless, sweet smelling and highly flammable. It has a flash point of 24 degrees Fahrenheit. Its vapors are heavier than air will spread along the ground. It is primarily used as a solvent and is easily ignited by heat, sparks or flames. It carries UN Placard number 1173.

Today the DOT Emergency Response Guide states the following using Guide # 129: Highly flammable, vapors may form explosive mixture with air and travel back to a source of ignition. Isolate spill or leak area for 150 feet in all directions. If fire involving a rail car or truck isolate for at least ½ mile in all directions. Large fires fog spray or alcohol resistant foam. Avoid use of straight or solid streams directly onto product. PPE wear positive pressure SCBA. Structural firefighter's protective clothing provides thermal protection ***but only limited chemical protection.***

In 1963, none of this information was available and the Boston Fire Department fought this hazardous materials fire with fog streams, 3% mechanical foam, and their issued turnout gear and saved the area from a far greater fire and chemical incident.

Background

Standard Storage Company was engaged in the business of 'public warehouseman,' storing chemicals for fifteen or twenty different companies. One of these companies was Union Carbide for which Standard stored chemicals, including highly flammable ethyl acetate. Standard did not own, buy or sell any of the materials. It merely stored the property of others. Union Carbide owned the ethyl acetate involved in the accident. It owned or leased railroad tank cars in which chemicals were delivered to Standard. Some Union Carbide chemicals were delivered to Standard by truck. Standard was the only warehouse used by Union Carbide in Massachusetts at or about the time of the accident; and truckers would come to Standard to pick up ethyl acetate for delivery to Union Carbide customers.

Roy Bros. Inc. was in the business of 'general freight,' picking up both liquid chemicals and dry freight. It had been a 'certified carrier' for twenty years. Roy owned about twelve tractors and about twelve tanks. Roy picked up only Union Carbide chemicals at Standard; but it also picked up liquid chemicals for delivery from various other depots in Massachusetts, including those of Monsanto Chemical, Dewey & Almy, Reichhold Chemicals, Gulf, Esso, and Shell. Standard was one of three places at which Roy would pick up flammable liquids. Roy was one of several truckers which came to pick up chemicals at Standard. Roy had been hauling ethyl acetate, a 'red label' item and a dangerously flammable liquid, for four or five years before the accident. The driver of the truck involved in the accident, knew that ethyl acetate was highly flammable. He had been given no special instructions or training in handling it.

At Standard, the usual procedure was to pump ethyl acetate from the railroad car into the tank of the trailer by using a pump on the truck and the hoses which came with the trailer. The Roy truck which was involved in the accident consisted of a tractor with a gasoline engine and a tank trailer. On the tractor just forward of the rear wheels was a pump powered by the tractor's gasoline engine. This pump had been installed on the tractor by Roy. At the time of the accident Roy was using two types of hose with its tank trucks, a hard hose reinforced with wire and a more flexible soft hose. Roy was in the process of 'phasing out' the use of the soft hoses and replacing them with hard hoses which locked into place and would not 'kick out' of a compartment when liquid was pumped through them.

Roy was the only trucker who came to Standard with soft hoses. About six months before the accident Standard's foreman came to the manager of Roy and told him that Standard objected to soft hoses which might come out of the compartment during loading. Roy's manager said he would take care of it.

Friday October 25th, 1963

It dawned as a splendid Indian summer day. Temps were in the upper 70's with hazy sunshine. The morning edition of the Boston Globe carried headlines that Hurricane Ginny was headed towards the Carolina's. Mercury Program Astronaut's Alan Shepard and Russell Schwerckart were attending M.I.T. studying navigation model guidance system for use in the Apollo program. Vice President Lyndon Johnson had been in town on Thursday and had spoken out on why the U.S. must win the space race. And on the very top of page 1 above the Globe herald was a story titled "Why Ike Refused to Dump Nixon". Turning to Sports, the Bruins came up short on Thursday night against the New York Rangers 2-0, making for the Bruins 6th straight loss in the young season. Yogi Berra was quoted as saying "he laughed at the Red Sox offer" to become manager and signed with the hated New York Yankees.

On the spur track leading into Standard yard, a New York Central yard crew had shoved in five tank cars, uncoupled them and went about their other switching chores. A tanker from Roy Bros. pulled up next to a tank car that contained the ethyl acetate to begin the unloading. The driver was ready to start the pump. Standard employee William Stewart climbed to the top of the tanker with the soft type hose to control the transfer and tell the driver when to shut off the pump.

During the loading process, Stewart's attention was diverted by what several witness's described as a "loud roaring noise". He let go of the hose which then kicked back out of the tanker soaking him in ethyl acetate. Almost immediately there was a flash of fire towards the front end of the truck and then his clothing was on fire. Co-workers rushed to his aid stripping off the burning clothes. Other workers ran from the area as the tank truck was fully involved sending skyward a large fire ball followed by smoke. Box 5276 was transmitted at 10:54 AM. As emergency vehicles responded, an ambulance took Stewart to St. Elizabeth's Hospital with second and third degree burns over much of his body.

The fire had now involved the railroad tank car that was being off loaded. The discharge valve quickly burned away and flaming product soon began flowing downgrade out onto Holton Street and into many of the nearby industrial yards on the street. At this point the brakes gave way and the cars began to roll across Holton Street spreading fire as it went. Workmen Frank Baisle and Edward DiDuca saw the rolling cars and started to roll into their complex which was a 5 story brick commercial building. They started to throw metal bars, planks and anything else they could in front of the rolling cars to get them to stop, their efforts did stop the cars. The burning tank car was now on the spur track almost in the middle of Holton Street, with flaming product creating a large ground fire.

At Engine Company 34's quarters at 444 Western Avenue, less than a half mile away from Holton Street the crew saw the fire ball roll skyward and raced for their 1948 Ward La France 750 pump. They were pulling on gear as box 5276 started to bang in over the station bells. They were out the door in moments. Engine 41 along with Ladders 11 and 14 and District 11 with District Fire Chief Donahue in command were all headed for the scene.



View looking up Holton Street towards Litchfield St. Official BFD Photo. Collection of member William Noonan

As Engine 34 came down Holton and entered Standard's yard they stopped and radioed that Holton Street was blocked by the flowing fire. Engine 41's pump and wagon came up Holton Street from Everett Street and set up on the fire side of the tracks and getting lines into operation. Both Ladder trucks came down Holton from Litchfield Street (*please see attached apparatus placement map drawn by late member L. Murray Young as it appeared in the November 1963 Newsletter for orientation to the scene – Editor*).

District Chief Donahue was unable to get a clear view of the fire as he could only see what was in front of him and not the entire scene. At 11:14 AM he ordered a Working Fire bringing Engine Squad 29 and Engine 13 to fire. Along with Deputy Chief Breen of Division 2 and responding from Headquarters were C4 Ass't Chief Clougherty and C2-A Acting Chief of Department William Terrenzzi.

Chief Terrenzzi, after conferring with Chiefs Doherty and Breen, ordered a third alarm transmitted skipping the second alarm at 11:20 AM. Another major concern for all of the public safety agencies on the scene was that at the corner of Holton and Everett Streets was St. Anthony's Parochial school, which housed grades 1-8 and was in session at the time of the fire. According to retired Lexington Assistant Chief Timothy Flaherty's memory, then in the first grade, they were all kept in school during the fire as the nuns thought it safer.

Companies were arriving on either side of the fire and getting lines into operation to protect the exposures and try and contain the fire while getting foam generators into operation. At 11:29 AM Chief Terrenzzi skipped the fourth alarm and transmitted the fifth alarm. The Cardox Unit stationed at Engine 9's quarters in East Boston was special called early in the fire. It was not used.

Standard's Foreman Bill Williams asked the Chief if he could try and climb to the top of the blazing tank car and close the valve. Chief Terrenzzi was quoted in the Globe "we were in a most severe situation until that guy climbed aboard the flaming tank car and shut off the flowing ethyl acetate."



A new almost brand new 1962 Ward La France pump hooks up to a hydrant and prepares to get their gun into action on Holton Street. Official BFD Photo, collection of member William Noonan

After conferring with railroad officials it was decided that a crew of five men would crawl under the tank cars and try and un-couple the burning tank car and pull the other cars away from it. The plan was given the go ahead. Three engine companies were ordered to use their Navy All Purpose nozzles (*These were three position lever nozzles having off-straight stream-fog-Editor*) on big lines. This provided the crew cover keeping the fire away and cooling the area. The crew crawled under were able to pull the pin, opening the coupler and the switch engine given the signal to reverse and pull the two un-involved tank cars out of the area. The total flow covering the railroad crew from the three big fog lines was almost 750 gallons per minute.

Companies now started to blanket the area with 3% protein foam and the fire was soon controlled and then extinguished fully.

The BFD prevented the fire from involving any structures and fought a difficult battle controlling a rapidly spreading ground fire.

In the court battles which followed, two experts gave two different explanations on the cause of the fire. One stated that the most likely cause was the vapors coming in contact with heat or spark from the truck motor or pump. The other stated that the cause was from static discharge of the product into the tanker creating an ignition source for the vapors.

The allout was sounded at 1:19 PM with many companies remaining on the scene for hours. It was estimated that 6,000 gallons of ethyl acetate product had leaked and burned.

Time Line

Courtesy of Honorary Member Paul Christian, Retired BFD Commissioner

Alarm	Time	Engines	Ladders	Chief	Comments
5276	1054	34, 41	14, 11	Dist. 11 Doherty	
W.F.	1116	E.S 29, 13		C4 Ass't Chief Clougherty C2-A A/Chief Terrenzzi	Orders of Car 11
2-5276		51, 37, 337	26		2 nd skipped
3-5276	1120	8, 10, 39, 3	15		Orders of C2-A
4-5276		53, 21, 56, 32			4 th Skipped
5-5276	1129	42, 43, 20, 22			Orders of C2-A

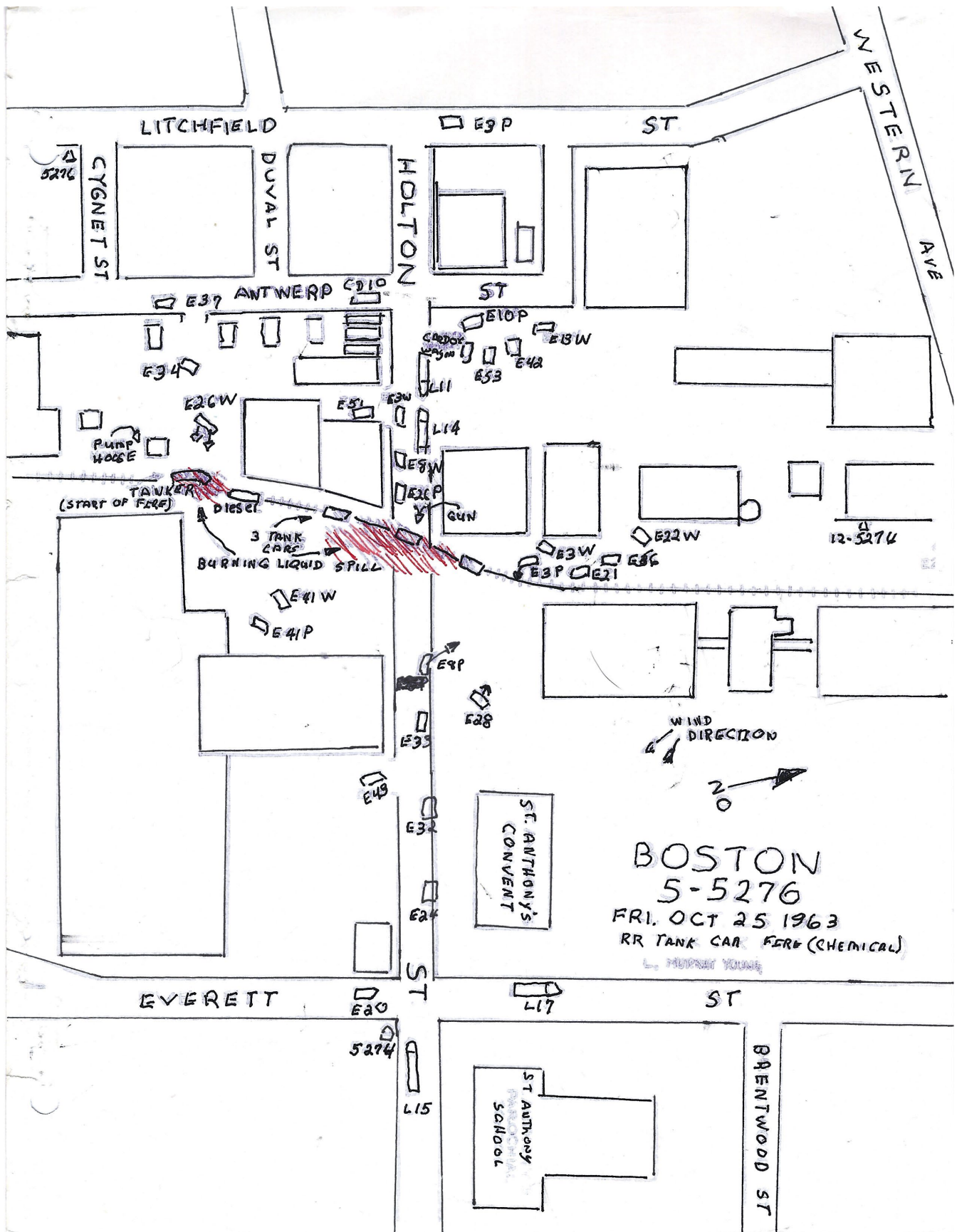


Looking down Holton Street towards Everett Street. Official BFD Photo, collection of member William Noonan.



Shop Number 382 1930 American La France Cardox Unit. Photo by member William Cahill, collection of member Frank San Severino

Shop # 382 was a 1930 American La France hose wagon that was assigned to Engine 5 from 1930-1950. It was transferred to Engine 18 and served as the hose wagon from 1950-1954. It entered spare service from 1954-1956 when the Shops rebuilt the rig into the first special unit in the BFD. It was equipped with a large amount of CO₂ and dry chemical (Ansul) powder. It was placed in service at Engine Co. 40 from 1956-1958. It was then transferred to Engine 9's quarters where it remained in service from 1958-1970, when it was scrapped.





Tonka Fire Trucks

Many of us who are Baby Boomers remember having Tonka trucks to play with. I am sure we remember playing with any type of Tonka trucks, but their fire apparatus was something special!

The first piece of fire apparatus that Tonka made was the number 700-4 tiller aerial with a Ford tractor. It was equipped with a swing away tiller seat and the aerial was equipped with two wheels to elevate and extend the aerial. It also had two ground ladders that measured 10 ½ inches. The model had a siren mounted to the roof and was lettered for the M.F.D. This was the Mound, Minnesota Fire Department where the factory was located.



The tiller truck was the only fire truck produced until 1956 when the # 46 Suburban Pumper was introduced. This was a great hit. The truck came with its own hydrant which attached to a garden hose via 6 inch hard suction hoses. Water would then flow from the black plastic booster hose. It was also equipped with a 10 ½ inch white ground ladder. The rig was 17 inches long and sold for \$ 8.98.



Also introduced in 1956 was a white emergency truck based on a delivery van design the right door could slide open along with the rear doors. It had great graphics, a siren on the front bumper and a red warning light on the roof. It was produced for only one year and is highly sought out by collectors. It measured 12 inches long and cost just \$ 4.98.

Also, in 1956 the lettering on the rigs was changed from M.F.D to the now well-known T.F.D. Company No. 5 graphics.



In 1954 Tonka started to sell sets. They issued their first Fire Department set that had the pumper, aerial ladder and the rescue van in 1956. The set also had a metal fire chief's badge. It carried number 900-6 and was sold from 1956-1957 with a cost of \$ 29.95



In 1958 the entire line was re cast using a more modern Ford type cab. The # 46 Suburban pumper got a remake as did the tractor for the aerial. The aerial ladder was changed to number # 48 Aerial Ladder truck.



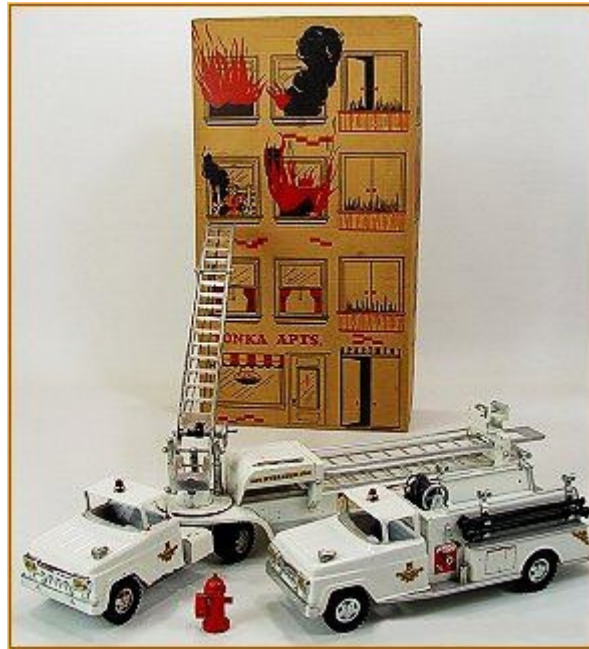
In 1958 Tonka released the very unique B-213 set which contained the metal chief's badge, the pump and aerial and a white fire tanker. The price for this set was still \$ 29.95.



In 1959 Tonka released the # 46 Suburban Pumper in a white paint scheme. It had all the graphics found on the red pumper. It was only produced for one year.



A surprise Fire Department set was released in 1959. It has the white pumper but featured a white aerial ladder truck the box had a printed fire scene that the rigs could respond to. It was produced for only one year and carries number B-213. As you can imagine it is highly sought after by collectors.



The new decade saw the white trend in apparatus continue with the release of the number 105 Rescue Squad. This rig was a square box mounted on the new Ford style cab. It came equipped with a boat on the roof, opening rear doors and a metal ground ladder. It was 13 ¾ inches long sold for \$ 3.98. It was produced for two years, 60-61.



1963 saw the introduction of a new style pumper on a Jeep chassis. The firefighting unit was mounted in the back of the vehicle with the garden hose hook up at the rear. No hydrant was provided. The hose was pulled out through the top of the rig. It also had a roof top ladder mounted, with a warning light on the Jeep hood. It was only produced for one year.



The aerial ladder and pumper remained unchanged until 1965 when the most of the truck models were redesigned with a more futurist flat front. Several items were left of the new molds for the fire apparatus. These included warning lights and sirens. On the aerial ladder the tiller seat was removed and the two ground ladders now hung on the sides rather than under the aerial bed.



The number 998 Aerial Ladder was produced from 1965 until 1967. The model was brought back into the line with the same number in 1968 and stayed until removed in 1970. The rig was 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches long. No changes were made to this run of the model and it is nearly impossible to tell them apart.

The new style pumper could still play water and came with the garden hose hydrant with wrench and still flowed water through the booster line. It carried Tonka number 926.



In 1968 the pumper was restyled with the booster line removed and replaced with a plastic deck gun and roof mounted dual red lights. This pumper remained in the line until 1970 and measured 17 1/8 inches and carried two numbers when first released in 1968 it was 2826 and then in 1969 it was changed to 2820 till discontinued.



In 1969, Tonka released a new fire apparatus model known as the Snorkel Pumper number 2950. This became one of the most successful pumper since the Suburban pumper model. The articulated boom could be placed in any number of positions. The bucket was equipped with a monitor that sprayed water using the hydrant to garden hose successful method. It was equipped with 2 lengths of 6 inch hose, one plastic ground ladder and the hydrant with wrench. The rig would stay in the line until 1975. It measured 17 1/8th inches long.



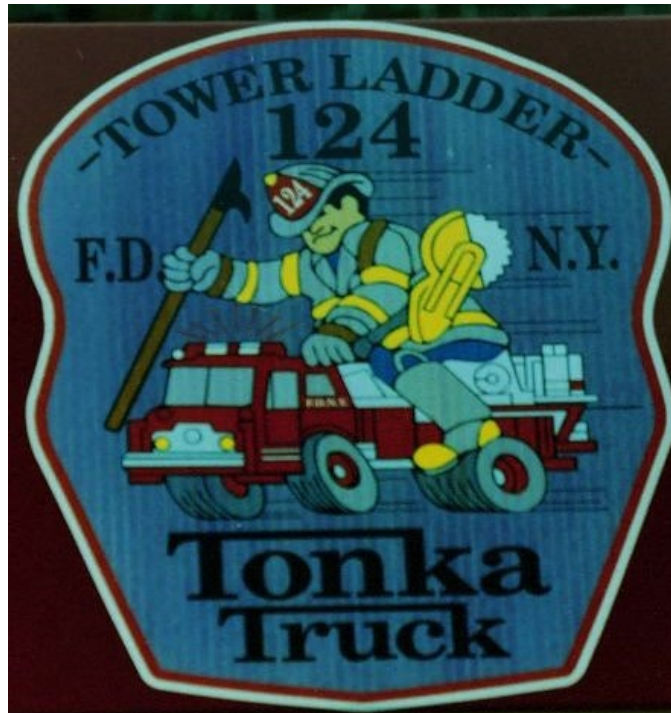
Model 2960 was released in 1972 and was an open cab model of a rear mount aerial ladder. This stayed in production to 1975. This rear mount along with the snorkel were the last metal fire apparatus toys made by Tonka spanning 21 years.



I hope that this article brings back some memories of finding a Tonka fire engine under the tree!

The REAL Tonka Truck!

The FDNY in the mid-1970 was still in its 'war years'. Company pride ran deep and was encouraged by the top brass of the Department. It was during this time that Ladder Company 124 of the 28th Battalion based in Brooklyn received a Mack Cf/Baker 75 foot Aerial Scope. The Company lost no time in coming up with a nickname for the rig...TONKA TRUCK. A copy of the present day Tonka logo, first used in 1978 adorned the boom of the rig.





Each new rig was similarly adorned with the Tonka logo and the company patch. As we go to print, 124 Truck is operating with a 2010 Seagrave with a 75 foot boom. Photo by Michael Martinelli, courtesy of Fire Apparatus Journal.



Drawing of TL-124, collection of member Mark Roche

Tonka clicks for '56
**Tonka
Toys**



**big, realistic
AERIAL LADDER**

Heavy, rugged and true-to-life in appearance and action. This scale model of the popular "Hook 'n' Ladder" is loaded with details. Aluminum ladder is raised and extended by simulated hydraulic controls to big 36 inch height. Ladder base revolves full 360°. Truck carries 2 extra, auxiliary ladders. Length, 32½"; height, 7½"; width, 6". Packed 4 to a shipper, weight, 41 lbs.

No. 700-6

\$1495



NEW!

**TONKA FIRE
DEPARTMENT**

Highly detailed, 3 vehicle fire department, all in one package. Aerial Ladder and Suburban Pumper (described in detail at left and below) plus special Emergency Rescue Squad Truck and metal Fire Chief's badge. Rescue Squad Truck: length, 11¾"; height, 7"; width, 5½". Set dimensions: length, 33"; height, 6"; width, 17¼". Set individually packed, weight, 21¼ lbs.

No. 900-6 \$2895

NEW! **SUBURBAN PUMPER
with real hydrant**

A sensationally different toy because it actually shoots a continuous stream of water supplied by its own, operating hydrant. This scale model of the most versatile of all fire engines connects to a miniature hydrant (included) that connects to any standard garden hose for real operation. Valve control on hydrant permits young firefighters to regulate water flow through pumper and out fire hose. Beautifully detailed truck carries a removable ladder and two, 6 inch rubber, hydrant-connecting hoses and a 40 inch fire hose, wound on a reel. Fire hose is equipped with a hook for attaching to top of Aerial Ladder, if desired. Length, 17"; height, 6½"; width, 6". Packed 4 to a shipper, weight, 23½ lbs.

No. 0950-6

\$898



Hydrant connects to garden hose...pumps water!