

OBox 52 Association



The Line Box



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

Vol. 17 No. 4

IT'S HERE!

After a longer delay in getting this LINE BOX to you, it is finally done and delivered!

We hope you like our last issue of what must be the craziest year in the history of the Association. We went through a pandemic, creation of virtual meetings and the amazing thing is that we have added new applicants to the Waiting List!

In this issue we feature:

- The Plymouth Rubber Plant Fire in Canton from 1942
- Our feature story on the five alarm fire aboard the SS Laila in 1937
- Multiple alarm record and fire duty reports
- Metro Fire & Boston Fire updates
- Boston new 10 alarm running card
- Apparatus Report
- Metro Fire in 1857

Have a great summer, be safe, be healthy and we will see you all in September in person!



MULTIPLE ALARMS

February 1st – May 31st 2021

This fire report looks like it could have come out of a Box 52 Newsletter during the War Years! Twenty seven fires required transmitting a second alarm. Third alarms equaled 11. With one each fourth, fifth and seventh alarm fires for a grand total of forty-one jobs!

SECOND ALARMS

Date	Time	Box	City	Address	Building Type
02/10	1723	461	Stoneham	34 Country Club Road	2 story wdfrm dwelling
02/16	0933	641	Woburn	14 Federal Street	2 ½ story wdfrm OMD
02/19	2202	3547	Boston	34 Fessenden Street	3 ½ story wdfrm OMD
02/22	1259	1775	Boston	127 Magnolia Street	3 story wdfrm OMD
02/22	1929	413	Everett	40 Lewis Street	2 ½ story wdfrm dwelling
02/23	1546	1542	Wakefield	26 Crystal Street	2 story wdfrm dwelling
02/24	0430	1662	Somerville	Great River Way	Parking garage 4 th level 4 autos involved
02/27	0829	2978	Boston	5081 Washington Street	2 ½ story wdfrm dwelling
03/02	2329	624	Lynn	14 Murphy Avenue	3 story wdfr OMD
03/07	0522	173	Dedham	947 Providence Hwy	1 story mercantile
03/08	2149	2371	Boston	59 Pontiac Street	3 ½ story wdfrm OMD
03/13	0540	4323	Quincy	40 Springfield Street	2 ½ story wdfr dwelling
03/13	0808	3649	Boston	41 Clarkwood Street	3 ½ story wdfrm OMD
03/15	0149	622	Lynn	41 Linden Street	2 story wdfrm dwelling
03/15	1109	47	Lynn	545 Essex Street	3 story wdfrm OMD
03/15	1654	3276	Boston	9 Sunnyside Street	2 ½ story wdfrm dwelling
03/18	1158	2-124	Woburn	124 Dragon Court	Large detached garage building
03/19			Randolph	37 Lafayette Street	2 story wdfrm Group Home
04/02	1944	4632	Waltham	200 Trapelo Road	Chapel on Fernald State School Property
04/14	2018	256	Brookline	50 Adams Street	2 ½ story wdfrm dwelling
04/23	1529	544	Lynn	48 Whittier Street	3 story wfrm OMD
04/24	1649	2658	Boston	61 Cliffmont Street	2 ½ wdfrm dwelling
04/29	0944	51	Arlington	633 Mass. Avenue	3 story ordinary mercantile
05/01	1727	622	Brookline	33 Ranglely Rd	2 story wdfrm swelling
05/02	2320	4167	Boston	17 Allston Street	2 ½ story wdfrm Condo
05/11	0948	2199	Boston	31 Nazing Street	2 ½ story wdfr dwelling
05/15	0642	3641	Boston	120 Hazleton Street	2 ½ story wdfr dwelling
05/22	0017	31	Everett	7 Bellingham Street	2 ½ story wdfr dwelling

THIRD ALARMS

Late Sunday evening on February 7th, **Revere** Box 118 transmitted at 2347 hours for a reported building fire at 242 Mountain Avenue for a fire in a 3 story six family wood frame multiple dwelling. Fire Dispatch reported receiving calls. Engine 4 arriving first due reported fire showing. C4 transmitted the Working Fire at 2350 hrs. Ladder 2 struck the second alarm after reporting heavy fire on 'C' (rear of the building) at 2351 hrs. C4 transmitted the 3rd alarm at 2359 hrs. Just after the third alarm was ordered C4 ordered the building evacuated and commenced exterior operations. The roof collapsed into the third floor and the building was rendered uninhabitable. One firefighter was injured.

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Other
2347	118	4, 5, 1	2	C4
2350	W.F	3	1, Che. L1 RIT	C1 M1
2351	2-118	Che. E3, MassPt E1 Bos. E56		
2359	3-118	Mal. E4, Eve. E3, Wint. E1	Mal. L1	



Early Sunday morning February 28th, **Malden** Fire Alarm received a call for a house fire at 30 Baldwin Street. Box 154 was transmitted at 0209 hrs. Responding C2 reported a smoke condition at the intersection of Walcott and Baldwin. This was followed by the report of a Working Fire at 0211 hrs. Heavy fire conditions were in the cockloft, eves and roof area. Three alarms were transmitted with two special calls for an extra ladder and then an engine for water supply. The building was a large 2 ½ story wood frame 3 family dwelling. At the time of the fire, Engine 4 was out-of-service mechanical.

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Other
0209	154	2, 1, 3	1	C2
0211	W.F.	Mel. E3	3	
0220	2-154	Eve. E2, Med. E4 Lynn E9 RIT	Eve. L2 Lynn L2 RIT	C1
0235	Sp. Call		Med. L2	Special call to the fire
0307	Sp. Call	Som. E2		Special call for water supply
0310	3-154	Rev. E3	Rev. L2	

On the afternoon of Monday March 1st at approx. 1630 hrs. **Boston** Fire Alarm transmitted Box 2157 Warren & Maywood Streets for a reported building fire at 25 Southwood Street at the corner of Edgewood. Arriving first due Ladder 23 reported smoke showing from a 3 story wood frame dwelling. Car 7 reported fire on the third floor of an occupied building and ordered a second alarm transmitted at 1639 hours. Two minutes later the order went out to evacuate the roof. At 1645 hours D7 ordered an engine and ladder to replace RIT companies who had been put to work. Engine Co. 17 and Ladder 29 were dispatched. Car 7 ordered the building evacuated at 1646 hours and struck the third alarm. Engine 17 was put to work and additional RIT Engine was ordered to the scene, Engine 4 responded. The fire was in a three story wood frame 6 family OMD. All residents were accounted for and one firefighter was treated for minor injuries.



The afternoon of March 2nd **Quincy** Firefighters battled a fully involved 2 ½ story wood frame house at 85 Safford Street. Cold temps coupled with a strong biting wind conditions at the time of the fire impeded operations. Fire Alarm transmitted Box 5624 @ 1413 hours. Quincy C2 reported smoke showing. Crews started to make an aggressive interior attack, but after 15 mins. Deputy Chief Symthe ordered the building evacuated and commenced defensive operations. Three alarms were sounded in a half hour.

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Other
1413	5642	2, 4, 1	5, 2	R1, C2
1421	2-5624	5, 7	1	C1
1438	3-5624	3, 6		



Box 52 Assoc. Photo by L. Lowe
courtesy of WATD News

During the late morning of March 6th **Stoneham** and mutual aid companies would battle a stubborn house fire at 24 Hersam St. Twenty five 9-1-1 calls flood dispatch reporting the fire in the large 2 ½ story wood frame containing three apartments. First arriving companies found heavy fire and smoke showing from the third floor. A Second alarm was sounded on arrival. Firefighters tried to make an interior attack to the third floor but were driven back by heavy fire conditions. The building was evacuated and defensive operations commenced. The third alarm was transmitted and the battle raged into the early afternoon. The house was a total loss. One firefighter suffered a minor injury. All occupants were accounted for and crews rescued a dog from the fire.

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Other
1116	631	2, 3, Win. E2 RIT	1	SFD E5 with callback crew
1118	2-631	Wake. E4, Read. E3, Sau. E1	Wob. Twr. 1	C1
1119	3-631	Med. E6, Wilm. E4, Burl. E3	Mal. L3	
1135	Sp. Call	No. Read. E2		From cover assignment



Box 52 Assoc. Photo by member
Peter Aloisi

On Thursday March 18th a fire broke out in a large detached garage building at 124 Dragon Court on the Reading/Woburn town line. **Reading** transmitted three alarms and **Woburn** transmitted a second alarm on their box 414.

Reading Dispatch struck Box 245. Arriving first due Engine 2 reported smoke and fire showing. Woburn Engine 2 arrived at the same time and commenced the primary search. Reading Engine 2 conducted the search on the Bravo side with the exposure. Three alarms were transmitted and the bulk of the fire was knocked down at 1237 hours with some extension into the exposure. Companies quickly knocked down the fire on the 1st & 2nd floor of the exposure building and commenced extensive overhauling. No injuries were reported.

Mutual Aid assignments for both communities were confused. Here is the breakdown of the apparatus movements:

Stoneham E5 responds to Reading on a second alarm. Ladder 1 responds to Woburn on the second alarm.

Wakefield Engine responds to Reading on a second alarm. In Woburn they are assigned as coverage on a second alarm.

Winchester Engine 2 is the RIT Company for Woburn.

North Reading Engine 3 is assigned as a covering company in Woburn on a 3rd alarm. Ladder 1 is assigned as the second alarm ladder to Reading. It was returned by command and then Engine 3 requested to respond.

Burlington Engine responded to Woburn on the second alarm. They are also assigned as a second alarm covering engine in Reading on a second alarm.

Melrose Engine is assigned to cover Woburn on a third alarm and in Reading they cover on the second and respond to the fire on the third alarm.

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Special	Chiefs
1156	414	2, 4, 5, Win E2 RIT	Twr. 1	R1	C3
1158	245	2, 1, Wob	1	Rescue 1	C1, C2
1208	2-414	Burl. E2		R2 Spc. Haz H1	C1, C2, C4, C14 Motor Squad
1213	2-245	Sto. E5, Wake. E4			C5, C8
1246	3-245	Mel. E2, NRea. E3		DFS Rehab BSA A-10 Arms, BLS & ALS EMS	

Woburn response in italics

Station Coverage

Reading: Saugus Eng. 1 @ HQ, Andover Engine @ HQ, Lawrence Engine 9 in place of Lawrence Ladder 4 @ HQ

Woburn: *Lexington E2 cover Stat. 5 usual third alarm coverage, Arlington E2 second alarm cover to E5, Medford L2 cover station 1 on second alarms*

During the early morning hours of March 23rd the **Milton** Fire Department was called out to a fire in the former Milton Hoosic Club at 193 Central Street at the corner of Columbine Road. The building was under renovation for conversion into a school building for the Goddard School. Arriving companies found a construction fence around the entire area and light smoke showing. A second alarm was transmitted. Firefighters found a heavy fire condition in the entire attic. Companies were withdrawn and a defensive attack started. The building was a large 1 ½ story wood frame 88 year old structure that was a fixture for events in Milton since being built in 1933. The building was a total loss. No injuries were reported and the fire is still under investigation.

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Other
0129	1 st	1, 2	1	
0133	2 nd	4, Canton E4	Rand. Twr. 1	C1
0151	3 rd	Bos. E16	Bos. L29	Bos. Car 7



Saturday April 3rd just around noon time in **Somerville**, a fire broke out in a house undergoing major renovations. The Fire Alarm Office began receiving calls for a building fire at 195 Morrison Avenue. About a mile away Engine 6 and Ladder 3 called available from a call and Engine 6 reported heavy smoke showing from a distance, before the box was even transmitted. Box 479 was transmitted for Morrison Ave & Morrison Place. C3 still responding ordered the Working Fire. Engine 7 pulled down into Morrison Ave and reported heavy fire throughout a 2 ½ wood frame dwelling undergoing extensive renovation and ordered a second alarm.

The second alarm was transmitted on 479 and C1 responding to the fire reported heavy fire conditions and ordered a third alarm. Morrison Avenue is a congested neighborhood of large 2 ½ story two family dwellings. C1, Chief of Department Breen called on arrival which coincided with the ten minute mark of the fire and gave the following progress report: "C1 in Command, 1 building fully involved and collapsed. Fire in two exposures and threatening a third." The two exposures on fire were the Bravo exposure at 201 Morrison Ave. and the Delta exposure at 191 Morrison Ave. Second and third alarm companies were now getting into operations. Big Lines and master streams were working to hold the fire in check. It was now reported that there were heavy fire conditions in the Bravo exposure. With this information Chief Breen ordered the fourth alarm transmitted.

The Alpha exposure across the street from the original fire building at 196 Morrison Ave had its entire front vinyl siding melted off!

Hard work of the 13 engine companies, 5 ladders, 1 Rescue and a Squad kept the fire from wiping out the entire neighborhood. Exposures Bravo & Delta suffered heavy damage from fire extension. Charlie exposure suffered moderate fire damage.

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Special	Chiefs
1219	479	7, 6, 1	3, Twr. 1	R1	C3
1221	W.F.	2			C2
1221	2-479	3, Camb. E4, Med. E5	2	Camb Sq 4	C1, C5, Camb. D2
1228	3-479	Camb. E5, Arl. E2, Bos. E32	Camb. L1 Med. L1		Bos. D4
1234	4-479	Che. E1, Bel. E2, Mal. E3	Che. Twr 1		Bel. Car 2



A repeat performance was requested of the **Reading** Fire Department during the early morning of April 13th. Once again they were responding to Box 6811 for the Meadow Brook Country Club at 292 Grove Street. The Club House was being rebuilt from a 3rd alarm that had gutted the former building nearly a year before on April 17th, 2020. The first arriving companies found the building fully involved. Three alarms were sounded in quick succession summoning mutual aid companies to the box. No injuries were reported and the cause of the fire is under investigation.

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Special	Chiefs
0457	6811	1, 3	1	RES	
0505	2-6811	Sto. E5, Wake. E2 Wob. E2	Nrea. L1		C1, C2, C8
0544	3-6811	Mel. E2, Burl. E1, Wilm. E	Lynf. L1	DFS rehab	



On Patriots Day Monday April 19th both the **Cambridge** and **Somerville** Fire Departments would have a very interesting afternoon! Cambridge Dispatch started to receive calls for a fire at the rear of 9 Meacham Road. Box 723 was transmitted and the first alarm companies were on the way Engine 4 and Squad 4 were first due from their Porter Square quarters. Squad 4 go out first and pulled to a stop on Meacham and reported "heavy fire showing spreading in both directions, strike a second alarm." Squad 4 then ordered a Blitz gun into the rear of the building. The original fire building was a 2 ½ story wood frame dwelling that had been converted into condos.

Companies were stretching big lines to stop the spread of the fire. The fire had spread into the Bravo exposure at 7 Meacham, which was another 2 ½ wood frame duplex dwelling which had also been converted into condos.

Command ordered that a third alarm be transmitted at 1451 hours. By this time Somerville Engine 6 responded to the fire on the line box and was operating a big line in the rear yards. The third brought Somerville Engine 1, Tower 1 and C3 to the job. All occupants were accounted for and no injuries were reported.

At 1455 hours, only four minutes after the third was transmitted for Cambridge, **Somerville** Fire Alarm received a call reporting a basement fire at 2-4 Adrian Street. Box 299 was transmitted. Engine 3 arrived first due and reported smoke showing. C2 arrived and reported a three story wood frame undergoing renovations. With three companies operating on Meacham Road. Somerville had three engines, 2 ladders and the Rescue for their fire. The fire was found to be in the basement utility room and workmen were still on scene as the companies arrived. Cause of the fire is still under investigation.

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Special	Chiefs
1432	723	4, 8, 1, Som. E6	4, 1	R1, Sq.4	Div. 2
1436	W.F.	6	2	Sq. 2	Div. 3
1437	2-723	9, 5	3		C1
1451	3-723	3, 2, Som. E1	Som. Twr		Som. C3

Somerville

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Special	Chiefs
1455	299	3, 2, 7	2, 3	R1	C2
1506	W.F	Bos. E32			Bos. D4



On Saturday afternoon of Memorial Day weekend a fire broke out in the kitchen of a two family 2.5 story woodframe dwelling in **Arlington**. Dispatch began receiving calls reporting a house fire at 30 Egerton Road in East Arlington. Box 26 was transmitted at 1615 hrs. Engine 1 along with Ladder Tower 1 and C2 arrived first due and found heavy smoke and fire showing from the rear of the dwelling. Second and third alarms were quickly transmitted and hard work by all companies kept the fire from extending to other exposures in the tightly packed neighborhood. Cambridge Ladder 1 using spare Ladder 5 backed into a driveway on Melrose Street and was able to bring its ladder pipe into operation. The cause of the fire is under investigation and the fire left 3 adults and 2 children homeless and they are being assisted by the Red Cross.





Fifth Alarm

Another early afternoon fire occurred on Thursday May 20th and caused extensive damage to several buildings in **Revere** on Endicott Avenue in the Beachmont section of the City. The Regional Dispatch Center began receiving numerous calls for a fire in the rear of 139 Endicott Avenue. Box 46 was quickly transmitted. A firefighter on a paid detail on Ocean Avenue reported that he could see heavy smoke and fire from his location approximately 1 mile away. Engine Company 1 arriving first due reported smoke showing and ordered a Working Fire. Engine 1's Officer then reported he had heavy fire conditions on the third floor in the rear and ordered a second alarm.

The fire was extending towards the exposures on all sides of the fire building. At the front of the building Revere Ladder 2 was getting their ladder pipe ready. Revere Engine 1 had two lines off and was getting them into operation at the rear of the fire building. A third alarm was ordered and companies were ordered to come in from Bellingham Ave. side.

The progress report on the third alarm from C1 was "having water issues. Heavy fire conditions in a three story wood frame multiple dwelling. Fire extending to the Bravo and Delta exposures".

The main fire building was located at 141-143 Endicott Ave. Revere C5 reported that he had another fire burning on a side porch at 104 Bellingham Ave. On this report the fourth alarm was ordered and the fourth alarm companies directed to respond to Bellingham Ave.

Water supply issues were becoming problem. The engine company feeding Revere Ladder 2 reported they had 50 pounds pressure and a soft supply line. The Water Department was requested to respond to the Command Post. A relay pumping operation was set up from a hydrant on Dalton Ave using a Chelsea and Cambridge engines. Hydrants were taken on Winthrop Parkway to establish additional water supply lines.

The fire caused heavy damage to the main fire building at 141-143 Endicott Ave and damage to five other buildings. The investigation found that the cause of the fire was careless disposal of smoking materials. 48 persons were displaced and aided by the Red Cross. Dollar loss was estimated over 2 million dollars.



Box 52 Assoc. Photo by member Peter Aloisi

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Chief/Other	Comments
1408	46	1, 5, 4	1		
1409	W.F.	3	2 Che. L2 RIT		Orders of Engine 1
1409	2-46	Che. E3, MassPort E1-RIT	Che L2	C1, C5	Orders of Engine 1
1420	3-46	Mal. E4, Eve. E2, Wint. E1 Lynn E9-RIT	Mal L1	Bos. D1	
1432	4-46	Med. E4, Camb. E5, Mel. E1	Lynn L1	Camb Div 2 Camb. Sq. 2	Orders of C5 for 104 Bellingham
1504	5-46	Som E2, Stone. E1, Wake E	Med L2		

Seventh Alarm

Another late morning fire struck the area on Wednesday May 26th in the Roxbury section of **Boston**. A few minutes after 1100 hours, Fire Alarm began receiving calls reporting a building fire on Fayson Street. Box 1783 @ 144 Quincy Street was transmitted. Engine Company 21 pulled into Fayson Street and found heavy fire on the rear porches of 84 Fayson and spreading to surrounding exposures. The Company Officer on Engine 21 ordered a second alarm and a minute later ordered the third alarm. The fire was spreading quickly and within ten minutes of the box being transmitted the fourth alarm was in. At 1145 C2 discovered a fire on the third floor of 207 Quincy Street and the 6th alarm was ordered and the 6th alarm company were ordered into Quincy Street.

The fire caused heavy damage to 82, 84 and 86 Fayson Street. Minor damage was suffered by two other houses one on Mascoma Street and the 207 Quincy Street house. All involved buildings were three story wood frame three deckers. 48 people, including 18 children were left homeless.

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Rescue	Chief	Comments
1107	1783	21, 14, 17, 42 RIT	4, 29	R2	D7, D9	
1108	RIT		7 RIT TL 10		H1, D4	
1110	2-1783	24, 52, 22, 20	6, 23*		C7, D8	Orders of Engine 21
1111	3-1783	18, 37	18		C1, C5	Orders of Engine 21
1117	4-1783	39, 53, 28	19		C3	Orders of Car 7
1125	5-1783	50, 33	16		C2	Orders of C7
1145	6-1783	7, 49	14			Orders of C1
1149	7-1783	30, 8, 3	26			Orders of C1

**Ladder 23 was training at Moon Island and responded on the second alarm, but was delayed. Editor*





Box 52 Assoc. Official BFD Photo



Boston Doin's

New Boston 10 Alarm Running Card

In Special Order 26 dated April 15th, 2021 a new ten alarm running card was placed in service on April 20th, 2021 at 0800 hrs on a trial basis in Districts 1 and 11. Other districts will have the new running cards implemented in the near future.

The new card is designed to send the closest companies to an incident and/or cover assignment.

The new format specify a RIT Engine on the first alarm and a RIT Ladder on a report of smoke showing. District Chiefs responses and assignments will be listed as well.

Box #

Box Location

RESPOND TO FIRE

COVERING ASSINGMENTS

Alarm	ENGINE	LADDER	SPEC.	CHI	ENGINE	LADDER
1st	Eng, Eng, Eng Eng-RIT	Lad or Twr Lad or Twr	Resc	Dist		
Smoke Showing		Lad-RIT	Twr or Lad	RIT-Chief Safety Chief		
2nd	Eng, Eng	Lad, Lad		Dep. Chief Chief-2A Chief-Acct.		
3rd	Eng, Eng	Lad				
4th	Eng, Eng				Only Metro cover	Shown below
5th	Eng, Eng	Lad			Brkl. E1-28, Camb. 2-33, Qui 4-18	Brkl.L2-14, Qui. L5-E20
6th	Eng, Eng				Need. E3-30, New. E6-51, Som. E2	
7th	Eng, Eng	Lad			Ded. E1-48, Wint. E1-56	Camb. L3-15
8th	Eng, Eng				Wat. E1-37, Eve. E1-8, Mil. E1-16	
9th	Eng, Eng				Mal. E3-10, Rev. E3-5, Wal. E2-41	
10th	Eng, Eng					
Total # of apparatus	22 Engines	8 Ladders	1 Resc. 1 Twr	1 Deputy 4 District		

The order also contained information on RIT Companies that also went into effect on April 20th at 0800 hours.

The order states that Incident Commanders shall not assign RIT companies to fire ground duties unless:

- A multiple alarm has been ordered
- The fireground duties assigned to the RIT company are necessary to save life and/or property.

When an Incident Commander determined they must use a RIT company to save life or property, Fire Alarm shall assign a replacement RIT company from companies responding on the second or subsequent alarm. Additional alarms shall be ordered when the need for additional help is identified whether it be for the RIT or other fireground duties.

The assignment of a RIT company shall be an initial consideration of Incident Commanders on the fireground and a RIT should be continually assigned throughout the incident. When the need to use a RIT company on the fireground duties arises, the Incident Commander shall make an effort to maintain one assigned RIT company on scene at all times.

On April 30th Car 9 and Engine Co. 42 have been relocated from their temporary quarters on Atherton Street. Car 9 has been relocated to Engine 37's quarters and 42 has moved Engine 14's house.

Engine 3 and Special Unit were moved to Engine 39's house while the station on Harrison Avenue underwent an industrial cleaning. They have since returned to their sparkling clean quarters.

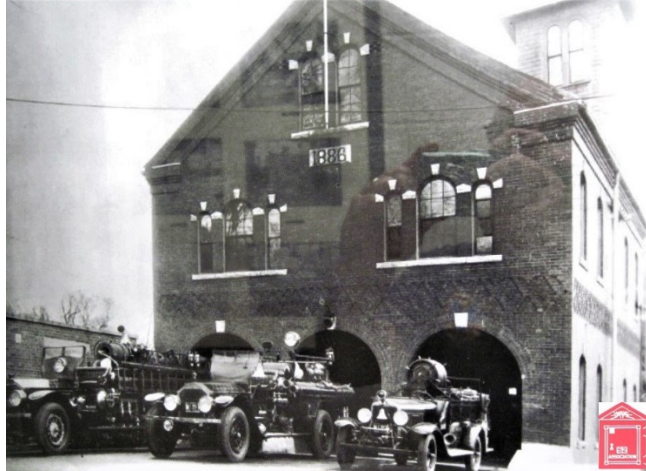
The first of the six 2021 E-One METRO sticks should start arrive by the end of the summer.

An additional nine E-One pumps have been ordered and delivery has been spread out over the next three fiscal years. The schedule is as follows; FY 2022 three pumps delivered in June of 2022. Three more will follow in June 2023 and the final three in June of 2024.

PLYMOUTH RUBBER COMPANY FIRE
CANTON, MA. WEDNESDAY APRIL 2ND, 1941
By Editor F. J. San Severino

In 1941, the Norfolk County town of Canton was a small manufacturing hub with numerous diverse industries located in town. Many of these manufacturers had sprawling plants covering several acres. One such plant was the Plymouth Rubber Company off Revere Street, fronted by Mill Pond and in the rear by a branch of the Neponset River. At the time of the fire the plant had just over 500 hundred employees and was producing several government contracts.

The Canton Fire Department in 1941 responded from two stations under the Command of Fire Chief William Curtis. The CFD was a combination of paid and callmen responding from two stations. Headquarters was located in the Center of town on Bolivar Street and housed Engine 1 a 1926 American La France 750 gpm pump. Ladder 1 responded with a 1926 City Service American La France. The substation located in the Ponkapog section of town was unmanned and housed a 1928 Reo chassis with a 1917 hose body. The newest rig was Forestry 7 a 1939 GMC/Farrar brush unit with a 350 gpm pump.



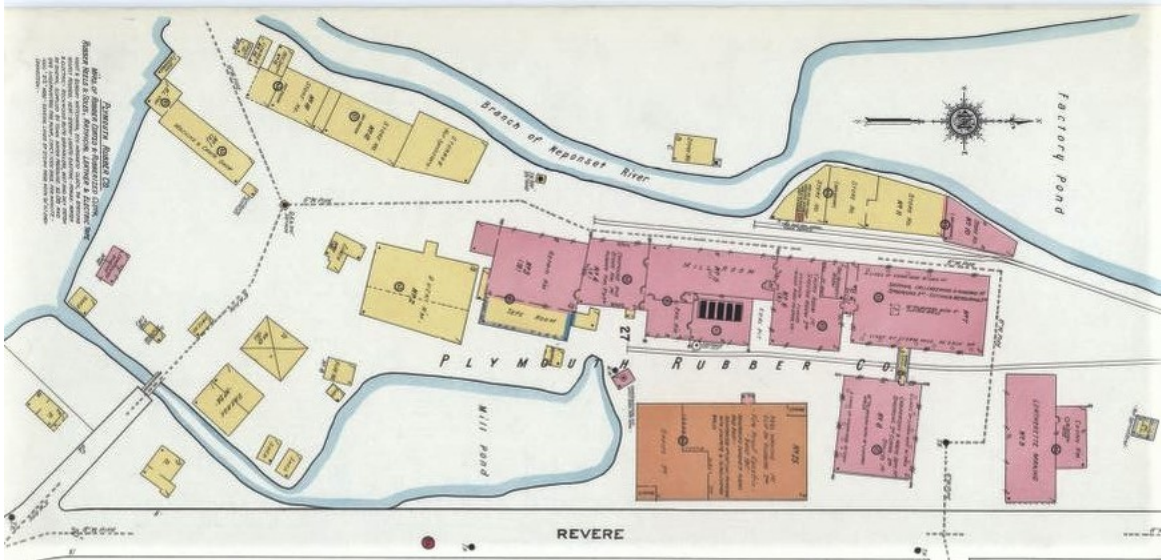
Canton Fire Headquarters circa 1941.

April 2nd 1941 dawned a cloudy day with temperatures in the mid 40's by afternoon and a light wind from the west at 5 knots. The *Morning Globe* headlines told of several strikes around the Country, including the Ford Motors large Rouge River Works where some 20,000 Union workers hit the bricks, effectively shutting down production. There was another strike at the large Allis-Chalmers Plant in West Allis, WI. Striking workers battled with police using bricks and rocks as Police responded with tear gas and fire hoses. 48 persons were injured, 8 seriously, and were taken to General Hospital. Workers hurled stones at Governor Julius P. Heil and broke all the windows in his automobile as he left the scene.

Local news reported that Governor Saltonstall and Attorney General Bushnell had announced an investigation into the Boston Elevated Railway Company stock that had been built up for shareholders by some 20 million dollars according to an audit by the Boston Finance Commission. Meanwhile the Bruins were headed into a deciding game 7 with the Toronto Maple Leafs in the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

The Plymouth Rubber Company was a privately owned corporation. Mr. I. M. Hamilburg was the President and the firm had been located in Canton for decades. At the time of the fire the facility was operating around the clock with three shifts. The Company had been awarded several Army contracts for rubberized fabric tarpaulins and raincoats.

The second or evening shift had been at work for a few hours. The fire started on the third floor of the 'key' building which was brick and wood construction 190 x 80 feet. At the time that the fire started some 75 employees were in the building. The curing process used a mixture that was 66% gasoline and 34% carbon tetrachloride. Somehow friction sparks developed and created a fire which flashed into the curing machine. The machine was equipped with a sprinkler system which immediately activated. But, this was apparently shut off during the early stages of the fire. Workers then attempted to control the blaze using soda-acid, CO₂ and carbon tetrachloride extinguishers. Workers fought the blaze for twenty minutes before calling the Canton Fire Department and this call was only to request gas masks for the fumes from the carbon tetrachloride and the smoke. This call was made about 1715 hours.



A Deputy Chief gathered several all-purpose masks and headed for the plant. Upon his arrival he made his way to the third floor and was immediately driven back by smoke and fumes. It was now nearly 30 minutes since the blaze had started and the fire was out of control. The Deputy called for a box alarm to be sounded, it was now just about 1730 hours.

Chief Curtis arrived with the first due engine and ladder and immediately sounded a second alarm. He was shocked to see that heavy fire was showing from the "cutting" building and he had a major exposure problem. For not 15 feet away were several storage tanks holding nearly 75,000 gallons of Naphtha, gasoline and other solvents. Chief Curtis made a quick decision and had two deluge guns placed in action to protect and cool these tanks by the first alarm engine companies. A few minutes later the General Alarm was sounded summoning aid from Foxboro, Norwood, Sharon, Stoughton and Walpole.

Norwood Engine 1's 1940 Maxim 750 gpm was assigned to come in from the railroad yard and it made its way to the fire and brought two big lines into action to protect the large warehouse and shipping building. Their work was in vain as the fire jumped the 20 feet and ignited both of these exposures. Plumes of thick, acrid smoke billowed skywards and was visible for miles around. Incoming mutual aid companies had to fight their way through crowds to get to work. As the fire progressed, the engine companies were able to get big lines into operation.

Plant Engineer William Armando stayed at his post in the Pump House and was able to keep sufficient pressure in the yard mains and hydrants using the plant's 1,500 gpm pump that was able to supply eight big lines. Chief Curtis also had several companies draft from both the Mill Pond and the Neponset River.

As the fire progressed several explosions were reported in the three buildings, now well involved. As crews were able to get more and more lines into operation, they were able to push the fire back from the storage tanks. Once this was accomplished Canton Ladder 1 threw ground ladders against the tanks and lines were dragged up and played into the "cutting" building.



Box 52 Association. Photo courtesy of the Fire Engineering Archives

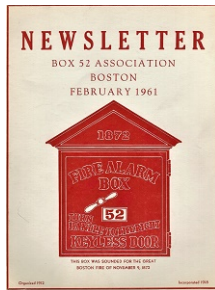
After a stiff fight, firefighters gained the upper hand and by 2100 hours the fire was placed under control. Firefighters had deployed 18 big lines and two deluge sets to bring the fire under control. Three buildings were destroyed: the main processing building, warehouse and the shipping building.

Since Plymouth Rubber held several government contracts the investigation began as the fire was still burning. The ignition source was thought to have been a discharge of static electricity. The investigation was not able to find who shut down the machine sprinkler. Several workers were questioned about it.

The major causes of the fire's intensity were the delay in turning in the alarm, instead attempting to fight the fire, the shutting down of the sprinkler system and the wrong proportion of carbon tetrachloride to render the gasoline non-flammable. Another cause was the CFD should have responded when the first phone call for the gas masks was received.

It was estimated in a report by the Eastern Underwriters Inspection Bureau that these mistakes gave the fire at least a 30 minute uncontrolled burn time and doomed the processing building. No injuries were reported to any firefighters, plant employees or spectators. Damage was estimated at half a million dollars in 1941 dollars. Today's dollars the loss would have been over nine million dollars or exactly \$ 9,236,667.00.

The Underwriters also made note that this was the twenty third fire at the plant requiring the services of the Canton Fire Department since 1914. This fire was classified as another plant fire working on defense contracts according to the June 1941 issue of the NPFA Fire Journal.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

In the November 1958 Newsletter there was a listing of Boston, Charlestown and Roxbury Fire Companies and their address. I decided to build this up and take a look at METRO-FIRE 164 years ago!

1857

Belmont

Fire Company	Station Address (if known)
Enterprise No. 3	
Olive Branch No. 4	Brighton St near Pleasant

Boston

Mazeppa Eng. Co. No. 1	Broadway South Boston
Perkins No. 2	Broadway South Boston
Eagle No. 3	Washington near Dover St
Cataract No. 4	Foot of Mt. Vernon St.
Extinguisher No. 5	East St.
Melville No. 6	Wall St.
Tiger No. 7	Purchase St.
Boston No. 8	Commercial St.
Maverick No. 9	Sumner St. East Boston
Dunbar No. 10	Meridian St. East Boston
Barnicoat No. 11	Court Square
Tremont No. 12	Warren St.
Webster No. 13	East Boston
Miles Greenwood Steam Fire Engine	City Stables Harrison Ave
Washington Hydrant Co. No. 1	Salem St.
Union No. 2	Hudson St
Franklin No. 3	Wall St
Suffolk No. 5	Shawmut Ave.
Deluge No. 6	Paris St. East Boston
Warren Hook & Ladder No.1	Friend St.
Washington No. 2	Paris St. East Boston
Franklin No. 3	Harrison Ave., near city Stables

Brighton

Butcher Boy No.1	
Charles River No. 2	

Brookline

Vigilant	
Norfolk shared with Roxbury	
Hook & Ladder No 1	

Cambridge

Cambridge Engine Co, No. 1	Church St.
Union No. 2	Main St. corner of Windsor St
Niagara No. 3	Cambridge St. East Camb.
Hydrant No. 4	Western Ave. & River St.
Daniel Webster No. 5	North Ave.
Pioneer No. 6	Pioneer St.
Hunneman No. 7	Church St.
Franklin Hook & Ladder No.1	Main St

Charlestown

Hancock Engine Co. No. 1	Main near Walker St.
Bunker Hill No. 2	Main St. at the Neck
Howard No. 3	Elm St.
Warren No. 4	Common St.
Washington No. 5	Harvard St.
Franklin No. 7	Corner of Bunker Hill & Tufts Sts.
Red Jacket Hose Co. No.1	Winthrop St.
Harvard Hook & Ladder No. 1	Winthrop St

Chelsea

Torrent Engine No. 1	Broadway & Park St
Washington No. 2	Pearl St
Native No. 3	Carmel St.
Hamilton No. 4	Central Ave.
American Hose Co. No. 1	Pearl St
Suffolk Hook & Ladder No. 1	Pearl St

Dorchester

Fountain No. 1	
Protector No. 2	
Torrent No. 3	
Alert No. 4	
Independence No. 5	
Tiger No. 6	
Mattapan Hook & Ladder	

Jamaica Plain

Fountain No. 1	
Salamander No. 2	
Jamaica No. 3	

Lexington

Adams Engine Co. No. 1	East Village
Hancock Engine No. 2	Waltham St

Lynn (Nahant, Saugus & Swampscott all part of Lynn)

Relief No. 1	South Common & Vine
Despatch No. 2	Federal St over the canal
Reliance No. 3	Broad St east of Liberty Square
Tiger No. 4	Maple St. Glemere
Empire No. 5	Chestnut near Union Sts. Woodsend
Enterprise No 6	Went to Saugus when that Town succeeded in 1815
Atlantic No. 7	Went to Swampscott when that Town succeeded in 1852
Volunteer No. 8	Ash St and Elm St
Niagara No. 9	Essex St. behind City Hall
Silver Gray No. 10	Lewis St. near Lafayette Park
Hook & Ladder No. 1	Mulberry St
Hook & Ladder No. 2	Western Ave. near Center St

Malden (Everett)

Alert Engine Co. No. 1	
Volunteer Engine Co.	
General Taylor Engine Co.	Everett
Daniel Webster Engine Co.	

Medford

General Jackson No. 2	
Washington No 3	
J.Q. Adams No. 4	
Washington Hook & Ladder No. 1	

North Chelsea (Revere & Winthrop)

Putnam Engine Co. No. 1	
-------------------------	--

Quincy

Niagra No. 1	
Tiger No. 2	
Granite No. 3	
Vulture No. 4	

Native American No. 5	
-----------------------	--

Roxbury

Warren Engine Co. No. 1	Corner of Dudley & Warren Sts.
America No. 2	Centre St.
Torrent No. 6	Eustis St.
Tremont No. 7	Ruggles St.
Cochituate Hose Co. No. 1	Washington St
Washington Hook & Ladder No. 1	Corner of Dudley & Warren Sts.

Somerville

Somerville No. 1	
Mystic No. 6	

Stoneham

General Worth Engine Co. 1	
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Wakefield

Yale No. 1	Church St. west of Main Street
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Waltham

Independent Hose Co. No. 1	
Boyden Engine Co. No. 2	
Neptune Engine Co. 3	
Hook & Ladder C0. No. 1	

West Cambridge (Arlington)

Eureka No.1	Charlestown St & Franklin St
Howard Engine Co. No. 2	Arlington Ave



For anyone who enjoys playing computer games, here is a pretty cool one from Rosenbauer Fire Apparatus. It has been getting some great reviews!

Just Released Firefighting Simulator “The Squad” Game Features Local Firetruck Manufacturer’s Products Exclusively



Lyons, SD (November 26, 2020) – Rosenbauer America is excited to announce the release of “Firefighting Simulator The Squad” an interactive gaming experience. In collaboration with Astragon, a video developer based in Germany, Rosenbauer is the exclusive fire apparatus manufacturer to partner. The game is now available for download on the Steam platform.

In **Firefighting Simulator – The Squad** players slip into the role of a US firefighter in order to experience first-hand what it means to fight fires as a team of firefighters in a large US city with more than 30 varied operation sites.

In exciting missions, the team members will proceed to action with a selection of 5 officially licensed firefighting vehicles by Rosenbauer America – such as the TP3 Pumper® and the T-Rex® Articulating Platform - to extinguish fires and save people from the flames. While single players take control of their AI-controlled colleagues with the help of the intuitive command interface in order to give them instructions on how to proceed, in cooperative multiplayer mode up to four players can take action together as a team to prove their team spirit and skills in the field of firefighting.



Firefighting Simulator – The Squad for PC is now available as a digital download on Steam™ for 24.99 USD.

Firefighting Simulator – The Squad on Steam™
<https://store.steampowered.com/app/420560/>

Please visit us at:

Homepage: <http://www.firefighting-simulator.com>

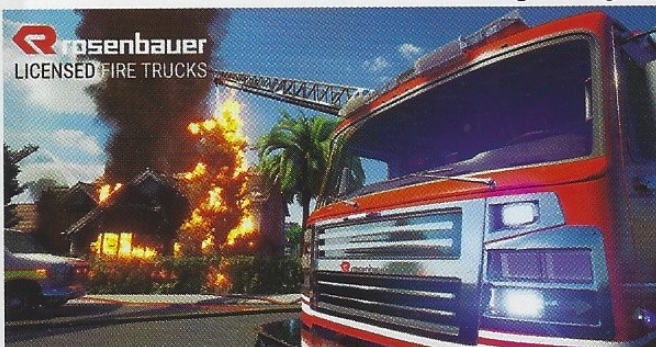
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Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/firefighting_simulator/

Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/FirefightingSim>

FirefightingSim

Rosenbauer has become the world’s leading manufacturer of firefighting vehicles and equipment. In North America, Rosenbauer incorporates the international strength and innovation of a global company with top American manufacturing firms. For more information, please visit the company website at www.rosenbaueramerica.com



AND NOW OUR FEATURE PRESENTATION!

**Disaster at the Mystic Docks
Fire on the S.S. Laila**

March 10th, 1937

By Frank San Severino – Line Box Editor

In 1935 the Directors of the Danish shipping company Johannes Lauritzen drew up plans and specifications for a new small class of cargo ship. The keel was laid in late 1935 at the Helsingør Værft Ship Yard in Copenhagen. The ship was christened S.S. *LAILA*. She was equipped with a 12 cylinder compound steam engine with an LP turbine. She had a single screw and her top speed was 12.5 knots. She was 291 feet in length with a beam of 41 feet and was listed at 2900 tons.



She set sail for South America on her maiden voyage in February of 1937. She stopped at various South American ports and was loaded with her main cargo of sodium nitrate with sugar and other miscellaneous cargo. The sodium nitrate was nick named “Chile Salt Peter” and was used in the manufacturing of fertilizer and explosives. It was carried in bulk and the rest in gunny bags weighing 100 pounds each.

When fully load she set sail for Boston under the command of Captain Ulick Jensen, who was on his last voyage before retirement. It was reported that the voyage had been smooth and that all the cargo had arrived in good condition and the gunny sacks of the sodium nitrate were dry.

Wednesday morning March 10th 1937 started in the usual way, breakfast, kids off to school, Dads off to work and Mom left to do shopping and house work. The morning papers headlines had news that F.D.R. was calling on the nation to preserve the Constitution from Court (Supreme Court – Editor) acting as “Super Legislature”. Another story was the appointment of Joseph P. Kennedy by FDR to head the newly created Maritime Commission. Local news reported that Judge Phillip S. Parker was re-elected as Moderator of the Brookline Town Meeting. In South Boston an elevated bus spinning its wheels broke a piece of concrete and flung it through the window of a grocery store at 134 West 6th Street and injured a passerby. Another big story was the construction of the Newburyport Turnpike with its twin 44 foot roadways “planned for needs of the next 50 years”! In sports the Bruins beat the Red Wings 6-1 with all the goals coming in the 3rd period. Bruins goalie Tiny Thompson shut down the Red Wings powerful Barry, Lewis, Aurie line.

At the Mystic Terminal Docks of the Boston & Maine Railroad's Pier 45 along the Mystic River in Charlestown, Longshoremen had been hard at work unloading the Laila. Approximately 10:20 AM, a water boat came alongside the open hatch # 3. Smoke from the tenders stack blew directly into the hold. Foreman Bernard Lamb yelled for the water boat to drop aft, which was done immediately. Lamb then checked the position of the boat and was satisfied with its position, which was in the way of the closed after hatches. Lamb then went out to the pier.

In the hold with Lamb at this time were two gangs of stevedores, just about 40 men in total. By this time about half of the loose sodium nitrate had been unloaded using iron buckets which were filled by the shovel full and then hoisted up to the pier and then moved inside the B&M warehouse for storage before shipments all over New England for use as fertilizer.

Almost immediately, the tender at the number 3 hold yelled to Lamb that there was a fire in the way of his hatch.

Lamb ran back aboard and down into the hold, where he found a small fire about 18 inches in diameter on the top of a bag of nitrate. This was about 30 feet from where the loose nitrate was being loaded into the buckets. Lamb grabbed the 100 pound gunny sack to try and dump it into the iron bucket to be hoisted out. The bag broke spreading the fire about the top of the cargo. At this point the Laila's 3rd mate came below. He and the stevedores attempted to stomp out the fire, and then to smother it by covering it with another sack of nitrate, all of which failed to put out the fire. Several of the crew ran a hose line off the ship's fire main into the hold and water was turned upon the fire. According to the 3rd mate's account, at this time the fire was no more than six feet square. He further stated that the fire seemed to be deep seated and coming up between the bags of nitrate.

The effect of the hose line was to spread the fire. All hands were shortly driven out by the fire, which spread over the entire hold from boiler room bulkhead to the forepeak bulkhead. It was reported that the fire may have started at the after end of fore hold, just forward of the boiler room bulkhead.



As the stevedores and crew made for the pier with the cry of fire echoing up and down pier 45, wharf superintendent Phillip Sheridan ran to the fire alarm box and sounded the alarm. The alarm was received by Automatic Fire Alarms' Central Station and quickly transmitted to the Fire Alarm Office. At 10:17 AM the still alarm was transmitted to Engine 36 and Ladder 22. House Watch hit the bells and yelled out the location and both Companies pulled out of their Monument Street quarters heading for the pier. As they cleared quarters the FAO transmitted Box 4191 199 Chelsea Street. District Chief Michael Aylward of

District 2 responded to the box from Engine 27's quarters. Engines 50, 27 along with Ladder 9 and Rescue 3 were responding. Engine 47 the *John P. Dowd* had steam up cast off from her berth in East Boston and started across the harbor towards the *Laila* and the plume of smoke rising from the pier.

Time out for a short chemistry lesson.....stop that groaning!

- *Sodium Nitrate is a white crystalline substance. Noncombustible but accelerates the burning of combustible materials. If large quantities are involved in fire or the combustible material is finely divided an explosion may result. May explode under prolonged exposure to heat or fire. Is considered an oxidizing agent. Presently carries UN Number 1498 hazard class 5.1.*

And now back to our feature!

Captain Collins of Engine 36 arriving first due, ordered a big line be stretched to the hold and Ladder 22 to assist with the line.

This is part of Chief Aylward's official report that appeared in the April 1st, 1937 issue of **Fire Engineering** "I responded from quarters of Engine Company No. 27 in an automobile and reached the scene in three minutes. Upon arrival found that the fire had control of No. 3 Hold in the steamship. Had lines laid from wharf hydrants to vessel by Engine Companies Nos. 27, 36 and 50 and operated into hold. Ordered second alarm. Had Fireboat (Engine No. 31) operate gun. An explosion in the hold and a rush of flames drove us off the vessel. Ordered a fourth alarm. The flames issuing from the hold ignited the shed of Pier 45. Lines of hose were used to protect the shed. The fireboat (Engine No. 31) was ignited and had to leave its position alongside the vessel Lines were laid to portable guns on roof of the shed and operated into the holds of the ship. Chief Pope assumed command upon his arrival and had the vessel moved to an open pier 300 feet away. Explosions spread the fire to the first and second holds and also to the crew's quarters and bridge."

The second alarm was transmitted at 10:28 AM, the third alarm was skipped and the fourth alarm ordered at 10:37 AM. The battle to save the *Laila* was on. By now all three fire boats were on the scene and operating. Land companies had to divide their operations between the ship fire and the now burning warehouse.

Plumes of thick brown smoke were now coming out of the forward holds as the nitrate started to burn. As the heat and fire on the sodium nitrate grew, frequent explosions were occurring that blasted more fire skyward and prevented companies from getting on the ship.



Box 52 Assoc. Photo collection of member
William Noonan

Engine Companies 31, 44 and 47 came up on the starboard side forward on the *Laila* and shoved their bows into the burning ship and once in position opened up with their forward guns. As they did so, frequent explosions continued to send fire balls about a hundred feet above the holds. These explosions were felt all through Charlestown and caused much panic among the residents.

Chief of Department Samuel Pope had arrived on scene and after meeting with the Chiefs and his own view of the scene he ordered that the 5th alarm be transmitted. Fire Alarm transmitted 5-4191 over the system at 1057 hours,

Chief Pope also directed that Water Tower No. 1 be brought onto the pier, set up and using the mast nozzle aim it into the hold.

Land companies working on the burning warehouse were making some progress in keeping the fire confined to one exterior corner. Several big lines were in operation to protect this exposure. Ladder Companies 9 and 1 were in the process of laddering the warehouse and forcing doors up and they were shocked when they realized through the smoke that they had several hundred pounds of the loose sodium nitrate in piles on the floor. This information was passed on to Division 1 Acting Deputy Chief Boutiler, who immediately ordered several more lines be brought into action to create an effective water curtain over Pier 45.

The explosions continued and a little past 1145 hours a series of continuous explosions occurred. The erupting fireballs engulfed Engine Company 44 the *Matthew Boyle*. For a few minutes it was feared that the entire crew had been killed. The bow section and pilot house were on fire. The *Angus McDonald* and the *John P Dowd* quickly swung their guns around and hit the fire and saved the Boyle. All members of the crew were injured. Captain William Marshall suffered serious burns about the face and neck. Fireman/Radioman Thomas Keenan suffered burns and exposure. Capt. Marshall ordered the boat to reverse and head out into the harbor to assess the damage and tend to the injured crew. The men stayed at their posts and after a brief period to check the boat out, she steamed back into her place in the battle line.



The fire was proving to be one of the toughest battles in the annals of the BFD's Marine Division. For the first time four harbor tugs of the Boston Tow Boat Company used their firefighting monitor pipes. The tugs were the *William H. Clark*, *Ares*, *Orion* and the *Jupiter*. US Navy and Coast Guard craft were also working at the fire.

On board the *Laila* her number 1, 2 and 3 holds were open at the time the fire broke out. Now, these holds were being flooded with thousands of gallons of water. This was causing her to list to port. However, as more water poured into her holds she righted herself and started to settle to the bottom of the Little Mystic.

Police had their hands full with traffic trying to get to the scene and there was gridlock on the Chelsea Bridge. BPD officers worked frantically trying to clear the bridge, fearing a serious explosion on the ship would kill hundreds on the bridge and on both sides of the Little Mystic in Charlestown and Chelsea.

Boston Police Superintendent Edward W Fallon was on scene with 75 officers, 10 patrol cars and a dozen ambulances.



Both Pope and Fallon agreed that the fire threatened to be one of the worst catastrophes in recent memory for the city.

By 1530 hours Chief Pope had placed the fire under control and was starting to make up companies. He had arranged for a fire watch of ten firefighters and one fireboat



Boston Fire Chief Samuel Pope

The battle was over, or so thought the members of both the Fire and Police Departments. As the firefighters' and police officers' uniforms and skins were covered by a thin coating of the sodium nitrate, this would cause serious skin irritations that would resemble and feel like a burn injury.

BPD Chemist Frank Stratton was so fearful of the devastating effects of the inhalation of the smoke from the sodium nitrate he had Superintendent Fallon authorize radio messages and teletypes to all BPD stations and to be shared with the Fire Department.

This message was blunt and terrifying. It stated "recovery following exposure to such fumes can bring about pneumonia and the collapse of the lungs". The message ordered officers to watch those who might have coughs and if they ask for help, they are to get medical attention immediately. The problem with the inhalation of these fumes is that it takes several days to appear. Chief Pope issued orders to all officers to watch any of the men who fought the blaze for developing signs of a cough the first symptom of the deadly inhalation of nitrous fumes into the lungs.

All Boston hospitals were advised of the situation and were on a watch and equipped with Ammonium Carbonate to combat the inhalation injuries should the need arise.

As for the *Laila*, she was nothing like the glistening new ship that entered the harbor the day before. She was now a burned hulk. Her forward sections heavily damaged by the fire and the officers' quarters also suffered damage. Her hull was intact and she would be towed into dry dock and repaired. She would sail on under different companies and different flags. By 1969 her name had been changed to *Gold Adorer* and she was owned by the Seven Seas Transport Ltd and she was registered in Panama. On February 27th, 1969 she went aground and foundered. She was sold for scrap in 1970.

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladder	Rescue	Chiefs	Comments
1017	Still	36	22			AFA alarm
1018	4191	50, 27, 47	9	3	D2	
1028	2-4191	32, 8, 6, 10, 35, 31	1, 18, W.T. 1		C2 Div. 1 D4, 1	C2 Chief Pope
1037	4-4191	38, 15, 13, 34, 26, 39 9, 21, 42, 12, 16	3		D7, 9	3 rd alarm skipped
1057	5-4191	37, 19, 51, 53, 1				

Baltimore, the Prequel

Fire on the S.S. *Gisla* Fire

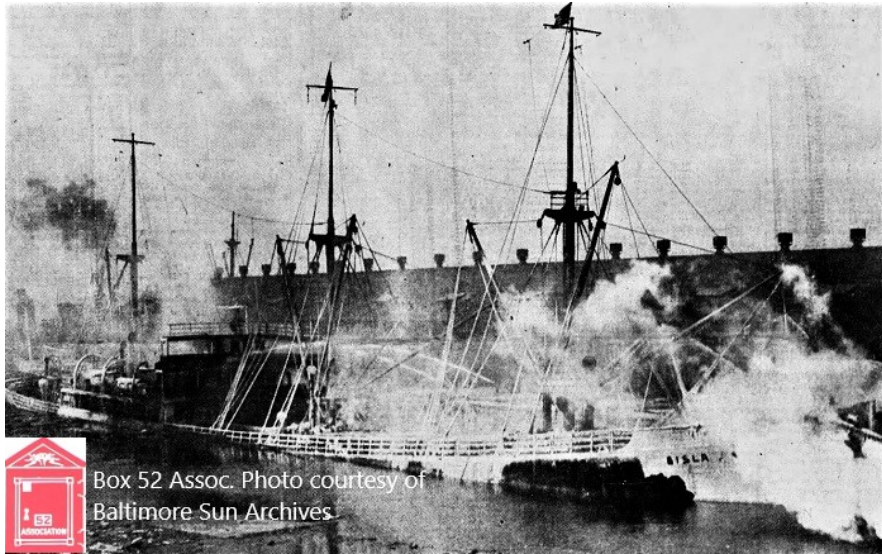
February 21st, 1936

One year and 18 days prior to the *S.S. Laila* fire, a dress rehearsal was held in Baltimore.

On February 21, 1936 the Norwegian Steamship Company's cargo ship *S.S. Gisla* was berthed alongside Pier No. 8 of the Canton Railroad. The Canton Railroad was known as a terminal railroad that was jointly owned by the Baltimore & Ohio and the Pennsylvania Railroads (*The Canton still exists as a terminal switching RR and connects with both CSX and Norfolk Southern – Editor*). The *Gisla* was loaded with five thousand tons of sodium nitrate.

The *Gisla* was built in 1924, was rated at 3,625 tons, and powered by two 12 cylinder diesel engines, dual screws with a top speed of 9 knots. She was 360.5 feet in length and had a beam of 51 feet. She was sunk during World War 2 by gun fire, killing 27 on board on Jan. 20th, 1942.

Box 1841 was transmitted by the Fire Alarm Office at 1715 hours. By the time the fire was out, the *Gisla* was sunk at the pier, one firefighter was killed and 23 injured.



Box 52 Assoc. Photo courtesy of
Baltimore Sun Archives

Joseph Zeman, a manager with the Campbell Company, who were the ship's agents turned in the first alarm from an automatic alarm station located on the pier. He was in his office and ran towards the ship after the first, of what would be hundreds of large and small explosions. Flames were blowing skyward from the holds as he transmitted the alarm.

Fifth Battalion Chief Clarence W. Smith with Engine Co. 5 and Truck Co. 14 arrived first due. Chief Smith led the men forward towards the burning *Gisle*. The second-sixth alarms were transmitted in rapid succession as the fire spread throughout the ship.

The Fire Boat *Torrent* arrived and opened up a full broadside with all her deck guns. Multiple explosions some small and some large were occurring with great frequency. Fire Department officials would put the count in the hundreds. Landside companies stretched lines down the pier and hose wagons bounced over railroad tracks to get into position to get into action.

Just like Boston, thick brown nauseating smoke belched from the ship. Tongues of flame leaping skyward. The crews from Engine 5 and Truck 14 were still at the end of the pier operating, when a large explosion occurred. Clouds of smoke and nitrate fumes engulfed the pier, trapping the crews who were trying to escape towards shore. Battalion Chief Smith was coming up last. He heard a scream for help and went back into the fumes and smoke and groping his way forward he stumbled over the body of Fireman Charles Kulp of Engine 5. He managed to raise Kulp into a sitting position, which saved his life. Smith was yelling for help before he succumbed to the fumes. The smoke cleared for the briefest moment and saw the body of Fireman George J. Reif of Truck Co. 3 detailed to Engine 5 lying face down in a pool of water. Chief Smith stayed with the men, continuing to yell for help. By the time rescuers with masks arrived, Reif had died and Kulp and Smith were seriously injured from inhalation of the fumes.

It was later learned that both Kulp and Reif were struck by the bow pipe from the *Torrent* that swung from the force of the explosion.



The battle raged throughout the night and into the next day. Thousands of gallons of water flooded the *Gaisa* and she settled her keel onto the harbor bottom, her decks awash.

In total seven firefighters were treated for severe inhalation injuries and another 15 from a combination of factors including, frostbite and minor cases of inhalation injuries. It is unknown how many later developed pneumonia from inhalation of fumes while working at the fire.

Fireman Rief was 39 years of age and had 12 years of service.

Boston's Fire Boats

7.25.1923 Fire Engineering Archives

By Harry Belknap

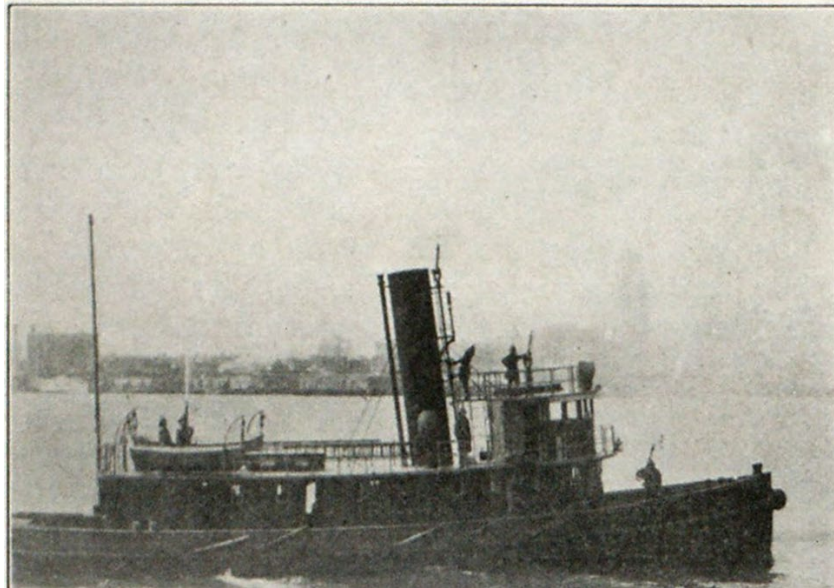
THE city of Boston, Mass., has three fireboats to guard the waterfront of the city proper, South Boston, Charlestown, and East Boston and to furnish protection to the institutional buildings located on various islands in the lower harbor. These boats, which are steam propelled, are known as Engine 31, Engine 44, and Engine 47. They are shown in the illustration herewith. Two of the boats are at present stationed in East Boston and one at the Northern Avenue draw-bridge.

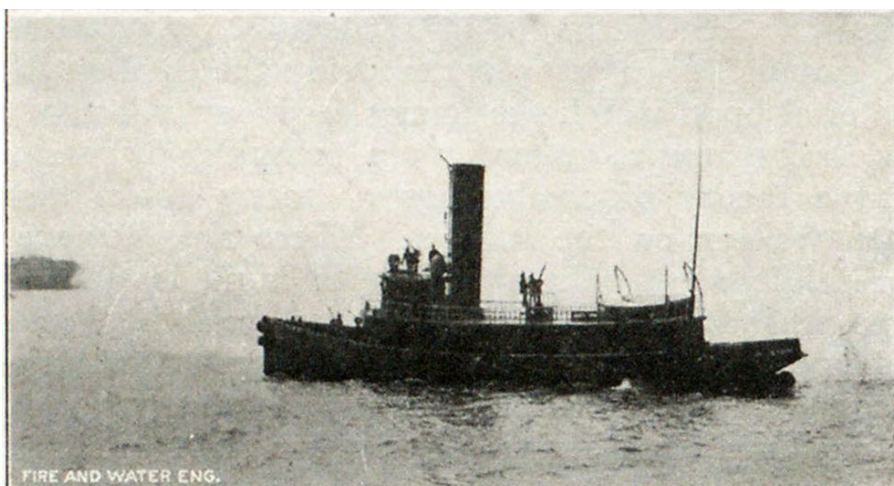
Engine 44 is 107 feet, 9 inches long with 27 feet beam and 10 feet, 4 inches draft. The boat was built by Brooks at East Boston in 1895 and is the oldest of the three vessels. She registers 178 tons and has two sets of pumps which were made by the American-LaFrance Fire Engine Company. Her capacity is 6,000 gallons of water per minute.

Engine 47 was built in 1909 by the Bertelsen & Peterson Engineering Company at East Boston and is 111 feet, 7 inches long with 27 feet, 4 inches beam, and 10 feet, 3 inches draft. She registers 179 tons and has two sets of pumps made by the G. F. Blake Mfg. Company. Her capacity is 6,000 gallons per minute.

Engine 31, the newest of the three boats, was built in 1914 by the Bertelsen & Peterson firm and registers 104 tons. She is 94 feet, 1 inch in length with 24 feet beam, and 8 feet, 7-inch draft. She has a 3,000-gallon pump made by the G. F. Blake Mfg. Company.

Three years ago, a 110-foot sub-chaser was obtained from the navy department and plans were made for converting it into a fireboat, but with a change in administration of city affairs the idea was abandoned and the boat returned to the navy department.





FIRE AND WATER ENG.

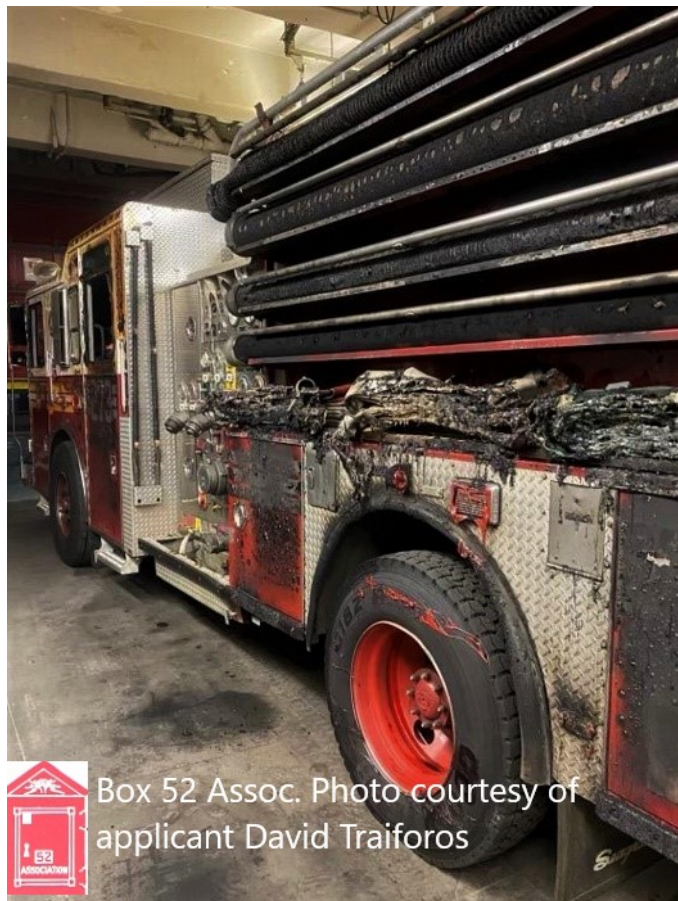


**Queens Box 4400 Prince Street @ 40th Road
Tuesday April 27th, 2021**

This fire occurred in an outside dining area on the sidewalk in front of a restaurant and is a result of Covid-19.


The box was transmitted at 0147 hrs. Arriving first due companies, Engine 273 and Ladder 129 arrived and found heavy fire conditions on the sidewalk temporary structure. The 10-75 and 10-70 were quickly transmitted. Engine 273 trying to reach the hydrant suffered fire damage. The MPO was burned and another firefighter in fully PPE had to get to the cab and move the rig.

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Special	Chiefs
0147	4400	273, 274, 289, 316	129, 138, 130 FAST	R4 Sq. 288 RAC-4	Batt. 52, 46 Div. 14



Box 52 Assoc. Photo courtesy of
applicant David Traiforos

This is the report on the Unusual Incident filed by the OIC of Engine Company 273

	FDNY	FIRE DEPARTMENT
		ENGINE COMPANY 273
To:	John Hodgens Acting	Chief of Operations
From:	John G Norton	Lieutenant
Date:	April 27, 2021	
Subject:	Unusual Occurrence Report Queens Box 4400	

On 04/27/2021 at 0140 Hrs. Engine 273 recieved a ticket for Box 4400 - Prince St & 40 Rd - For a Non Structural, single unit response reporting an outside rubbish fire. Upon arrival at the intersection of Prince St. & 40 Rd members observed a small pile of garbage openly flaming adjacent to an outdoor dining structure. The ECC proceeded to pull past the area of open flame and take a position on a nearby hydrant. The ECC found the hydrant partially covered and blocked by trash placed for curbside pickup. While the ECC worked to clear this obstruction the remaining members stretched and prepared to operate an 1&3/4" handline from the front bumper. The fire began to spread to the outdoor dining structure and grew very rapidly in size. The ECC returned to the pump panel to charge the 1&3/4" handline but was unable to complete the final step of opening the gated valve due to experiencing burns to his left upper arm area from the intense radiant heat now coming from the structure. The ECC was forced to retreat to a position of safety while the backup firefighter, wearing full PPE and SCBA, was able to complete the task of opening the gated valve and supplying water to the 1&3/4" handline. Lt. Norton notified the Queens dispatcher with an Urgent message to transmit a signal 10-70 and 10-75 for box 4400. The fire in the outdoor dining structure had spread so rapidly and grown so intense that two nearby buildings had become exposures. Fire had begun to extend to the window frames of 135-05 40 Rd and the roll down gate drum and awning area of 40-09 Prince St. The intense radiant heat from the fast moving fire had also begun to compromise the position and servacibility of Engine 273, which had initially been placed ahead of and away from the small rubbish fire condition found upon arrival. Once the handline was properly supplied, the members of Engine 273 operated quickly and aggressively to knock down and extinguish all visible fire in the outdoor dining structure and on the exterior of both exposures. Searches of the two exposures were negative for occupants or fire extension inside either structure. The ECC side doors, windows and pump panel of Engine 273's apparatus, SP09031, sustained damage from the proximity to the radiant heat at this fire. The rig was taken back to quarters, stripped and taken by Fleet Service for evaluation and possible repairs. The ECC was transported from the scene by EMS to NYU Cornell Burn Center, where he was treated for second degree burns and released. It was later learned that the NYPD and FDNY BFI have video evidence of an unidentified person intentionally starting this fire. The possible use of a trailer and accelerant and its role in contributing to the intense and rapid growth of this fire remains under investigation at this time.

Thanks to Applicant David Traiforos for providing the information for this article.



APPARATUS UPDATE

By Michael Boynton Line Box Staff

All photos by the author.

The apparatus activity in Boston, throughout Metro, and across the State continues going strong. Several new rigs have recently been delivered, including Boston's new Mothership 1....the new Mobile Command Center. Other departments are awaiting deliveries, such as Melrose & Wakefield with new Seagraves, Randolph with a new E-One Tower, Cambridge with a Pierce pumper, and so on. Here is a look at some of the new rigs delivered since the last edition.

BOSTON



Mobile Command Center – 2021 Freightliner M2/LDV

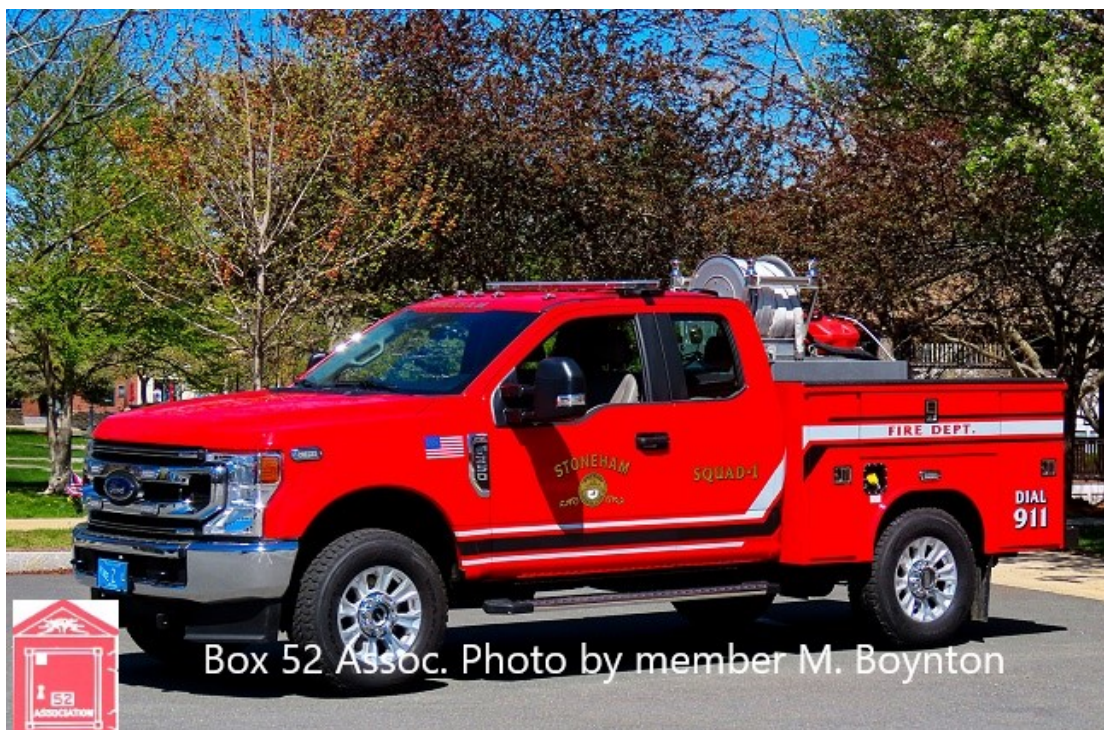
METROFIRE



Chelsea Engine 2 – 2021 Pierce Enforcer 1500/750/75F



Newton Ladder 4 – 2005 KME 100' RMA (reserve) (former Cottage City/Colmar Manor VFC, MD {Prince Georges County} Truck 55)



Box 52 Assoc. Photo by member M. Boynton

Stoneham Squad 1 – 2020 Ford F-350 4x4 125/200



Box 52 Assoc. Photo by member M. Boynton

Weymouth Engine 3 – 2021 Pierce Enforcer PUC 1500/750/25F



Box 52 Assoc. Photo by member M. Boynton

Weymouth Engine 5 – 2021 Pierce Enforcer PUC 1500/750/25F



Box 52 Assoc. Photo by member M. Boynton

Weymouth Ladder 1 –2021 Pierce Enforcer 100' RMA

MASSACHUSETTS APPARATUS UPDATES



Attleboro Engine 1 – 2021 Pierce Enforcer 1500/750/20A/30B



Charlton Engine 1 – 2021 Pierce Enforcer 1500/1250/30A



Chicopee Ladder 5 – 2021 KME Severe Service 2000/300 101' MMA



Falmouth Ladder 26 – 2021 Pierce Arrow XT Ascendant 107' RMA



Hopkinton Ladder 1 – 2021 Pierce Enforcer 2000/575/25F 100' RMA



Hull Ladder 1 – 2021 E-One Cyclone LTH-100 Metro 100' RMA



Joint Base Cape Cod Foam 405 – 2021 Oshkosh Striker 3000 6x6 2000/3000/420AFFF/500lbs. Dry Chemical



Joint Base Cape Cod Forestry 422 – 2021 International CV/Rosenbauer 4x4 250/300/30A CAFS Type 6



Box 52 Assoc. Photo by member M. Boynton

Marion Tanker 1 – 2021 Peterbuilt/E-One 1000/2500



Box 52 Assoc. Photo by member M. Boynton

Monson Engine 2 – 2020 Pierce Enforcer PUC 2000/1000/30A



Plymouth Engine 4 – 2021 E-One Cyclone 1500/1000/30A



Rowley Engine 2 – 2021 E-One Typhoon 1500/780



St. Louis Chemical No. 1

The adage in the fire service “that what’s old, is what’s new” is very true. In late 2020 the St. Louis, MO. Fire Department took delivery of a highly specialized unit. The unit was paid for by the electric utility company Ameren Missouri after a two year design period. The rig was specifically designed to fight electrical underground fires. Ameren Missouri engineers even developed a special nozzle the CO2 hose line that would fit their underground equipment.

The apparatus is built on a 2020 Spartan chassis with body work by Alexis Fire Equipment. The cost was over one million dollars. The unit responded to several small underground electrical vault fires over the winter, but its real test was on April 29th, 2021 when numerous mutual aid units responded to Affton, MO. for a major fire in the Manor Chemical Plant, a manufacturer of aftermarket automotive paints and other products. Chemical No. 1 supplied several foam lines, assisting in the extinguishment of the fire.



Some features of the rig: 2,000 gpm pump, 300 gallon water tank, 800 gallon foam tank. An Amerex 500 pound dry chemical skid mounted system. 4,000 pounds of CO2 using a TOMCO delivery system.

Thank you for your patience waiting for this season ending issue. We all thought that it could come together quickly, none of us expected the amount of fires that we would be reporting on!

The other issue that caused a bit of a larger problem was that Covid-19 decided to visit your editor and laid him out for a good 3 weeks in May.

The issue you have in front of you would not have been possible to produce without the large amount of help we needed and the amount of information requests we made. We are fortunate to have a remarkable membership and friends of the Association who came through with all the requests for photos, information and just answering questions that came up.

First up the staff on the Line Box: Michael Boynton, John Galla, Mark Roche, David Parr and John Pozark Jr. They all deserve many, many thanks for their assistance in getting each issue produced with the high quality that the membership has come to expect.

Member Bill Noonan and Honorary Member and retired BFD Commissioner Paul Christian who never say no to any request for information, photos, or help on stories.

Member Edward Morrissey who can always find just the right info needed for anything Cambridge related. Somerville District Chief Frank Lee always keeps us updated with the latest multiple alarm records or SFD info.

The "Revere Gang of Four", members Frank Barry, Chris Bright, Jim Cullen and Mark Wolfgang who never say no to any request we ask of them. And I can't forget the "Dynamic Duo" next door in Malden of members Len Dunn and Bill Sullivan who have no problem pulling decades old log books, or checking computerized records looking for whatever is needed.

To the following friends of the Association who assisted with the extensive multiple alarm record: Comm. Dempsey and his staff at the BFD, Chief Kelly in Arlington, Chief Spillane of Dedham, Reading Chief Burns, and Woburn Lt. Ken Robishaw.

Our faithful Baltimore connection, Retired Fire Captain Donald Crusse Retired, who dug out info on the S.S. Gila fire and keeps us updated on Charm City news.

To our numerous member photographers that I keep pestering for photos – thank you for always coming through for us. Your photos bring life to the Line Box.

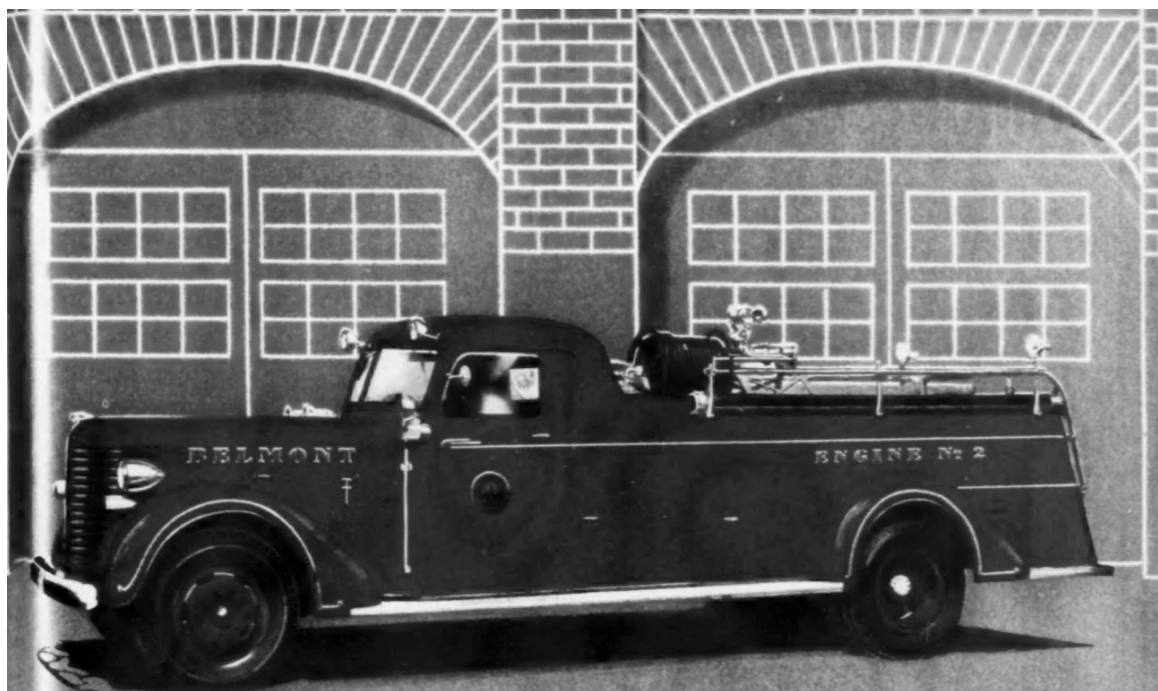
And finally the two unsung Heroes and the two strictest English Grammar proofreaders ever....President Richard Conway and Treasurer William Wilderman. They have fun filled job of tearing apart and fixing all our authors stories, so our writing makes sense.

Everyone have a safe, healthy and fun filled summer. The summer Line Box will be out in August.

Keep an eye on the FaceBook page and your email as I learn of firematic events they will be passed on.

See you all in *PERSON* in September!

Frank



Buffalo Type 750 G.P.M. Triple Combination recently delivered to the city of Belmont, Mass.

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