



2024 Newsletter Of The Year
BOX 52 Association

Box 52 Association The Line Box

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

Vol. 22 No. 3

Welcome to the third issue of the Line Box. We have made some changes to the style of typeface that is used for both article headlines and body text. We think that it gives the Line Box a more old time newspaper feel. Please let us know what you think.

This is another jam packed issue with a host of articles and photographs by both our Staff and members and in one case a soon to be applicant!

We know you will enjoy each and every page!



As many communities spent days digging out from the Blizzard of '26. Here is one of Cambridge's famed 1966 IH/Farrar hose wagons during the Blizzard of '78. See our story on these small wagons that saw much fire duty during the War Years. Photo collection of member Edward Morrissey.

*The Summer Wind
Warm Summer Wind
Mmm, the Summer Wind*

**By member Kevin Mochen
Chief of Operations, retired
Ex-Firefighter, Ladder Company 4**

“Ladder 4 to Fire Alarm (FA) -- Urgent Message”:

FA: “Answering Ladder 4”.

Ladder 4: “We’re going to the BCH. Shots are being fired at us. The Lieutenant has been hit”.

FA: “We have that Urgent Message. Attention All Companies Ladder 4 reports shots fired at Box 2141”.

Fifty-Nine years ago the warm summer wind came blowing in.

At 10:15 PM (2215) Saturday, June 3, 1967, the FAO received Box 2141, Warren St. at Rockville Park. The Office transmitted the Box over the circuits. Ladder Company 4 had just returned to Quarters from Box 1787, pulled for a dumpster fire near St John's Church on Lawrence Ave. Ladder 4 was first due at 2141. On arrival at the Box, they reported nothing showing. The officer wound 2141 and climbed aboard the officer's side. Just as Lieutenant Donovan grabbed the door handle of the Seagrave Truck, several shots rang out. A bullet struck the Officer. He immediately fell to the pavement and lost consciousness. Firefighter John Gaddis jumped off the apparatus and dragged Donovan to the other side of the piece. Firefighters Walter Austin and William Pero lifted the Officer to the District Chief's Buggy and raced to the City Hospital less than a mile away. Ladder 4 also went to the Hospital to make sure that no one else was injured. The District Chief issued the following orders by Radio to the FAO “Send All Out 2141, notify the BCH and the Cops, alert all companies to stay away from Warren St”. Deputy Chief George Paul in Division 2 reported that companies were being bomb barded with bottles and rocks. “I'm heading to the BCH”. said Deputy Paul.

Chief of Department Clougherty arrived at the Hospital and asked what had occurred. FF John Gaddis reported what had happened to Lt. Donovan. "Chief," he told the Brass, “This run was another false alarm. We have been out straight. False alarms, a couple of dumpsters and car fires along with the worker up in Grove Hall.”

The Lieutenant was admitted directly to the Hospital from the Emergency Room where it was determined that the bullet entered his wrist near his hand, traveled through his wrist and hand and tore off the tips of three fingers. After an operation, the doctors moved him to the ICU, his name on the danger list. He was in severe pain and was sedated. The bullet was not to be found. Later it was pried from a cab door of the 85-foot aerial.

Joe's mother was watching, of all things, Gunsmoke, at her home in Dorchester when suddenly the program was interrupted by Breaking News. The newscaster quoting a spokesman at the hospital,

reported that Fireman Joseph Donovan, assigned to Ladder 4, had been shot and is now at the BCH. You can imagine her anxiety not knowing whether her son had received minor or life-threatening wounds or was God forbid, dead. It was and still is the Department's policy's to never issue names until the family is notified. But this was June of 67.

None of the other five firefighters assigned to Ladder 4 were injured. Deputy Chief Paul questioned each member if he wanted to remain on duty or to be relieved. Although everyone was stressed, in the finest tradition of the Service, the answer was obvious.

On Sunday, the papers interviewed Donovan. A WWII veteran and he recalled that he was reactivated back to the Navy during the Korean Conflict. "Never was I hurt in the Service or on the job, only a few cuts and bruises with a couple stitches."

Before this incident, the Civic Leaders thought that the riots were lessening and some calm was restored. Tensions rose again after this shooting; all police officers were called to duty. However, after the shooting of Lieut. Donovan, this hopeful calm was reversed. Sunday was wild; shootings, stabbings, looting and fires. Tensions rose again and the Police were instructed to avoid trouble at almost all cost, fearing more trouble.

The Department responded to many, many fires and other Incidents. There were working fires and multiples in Districts 4, 5, 7 & 9 and a legitimate fire in East Boston. It would be a fair statement to say Roxbury was burning. The author of this report remembers that only four or five tours before that Saturday, all of us in that small cramped kitchen were discussing the unrest in many cities. We could not believe the reports of firemen under attack. This rake man inquired of Lt. Donovan what Headquarters was planning to do if we were subjected to riots. "Nothing has come down as of yet," he said, "Maybe they hope like us guys, that nothing will happen."

In late afternoon some days after the shooting, to underscore just how busy the companies were stretched, we were returning from an incident near the Children's Hospital, a long way from Quarters when---Box 2254--- was transmitted. The FAO tried to get at least one Engine Company to fill out the card. FA calling 42, available? No. -- Engine 24: -- No.--Any company in District 5? No response. Any in 9? Again, the radio was silent. How about in Division 2; any company available? No response. FA to any Engine, City wide. "Engine One is available." "Respond to Box 2254, Wash. & Guild Streets, Ladder 4 reports fire showing". This writer recalled that we ran a big line directly from a hydrant and attacked the fire by operating between the three deckers. We could not raise the stick due to the elevated trains running along Washington St. While it seemed like an eternity, Engine 1 arrived in about ten minutes. There were now two 3 decker's going. After a battle, the fire was out and we returned to Quarters to await another run.

Finally on June 4 & 5 the Command Staff issued Special Orders governing operations during these unprecedented times. All companies were to run with extra manpower with safety being the prime concern. Signal 10-17, 'Period of Unrest', was established. Ladder 4's crew were to relieve at Ladder 7's Quarters. We would leave the House, travel the length of Dudley Street and then to Meeting House Hill and return with the new crew following the same route. The whole procedure was confusing and time consuming. Captain Hawe, Lad. 4, had that part of a Memo rescinded. Signal 10-18 was established indicating a "Riot Condition Exist," with GO# 29 issued on July 7. GO# 27 was issued on June 27, Item VIII, High Commendation for the three Firefighters who came to the aid of Lieutenant Donovan. The Commissioner William Fitzgerald forwarded their names to the Board of

Merit for consideration. The Board concurred with the Commissioner and after reviewing the circumstances, the Deputy Chief, awarded Firefighter John Gaddis, the Walter Scott Medal of Valor and Firefighters Walter Austin and William Pero, A Roll of Merit.

Lt. Donovan's hand and wrist were never the same. He lost feelings in his hand due to nerve damage and was disabled. I recall the Lieut. wearing a mitten in Spring, Fall and Winter. Donovan's injuries prevented him from returning to fire duty, his true love. Remaining on the Job, he did not want to retire and was assigned to Maintenance and finally the Training Division where he retired years later. I can attest that he was a first-class firefighter, a competent company officer and a real gent.

Many incidents cited are from the memory of this writer. No member assigned to the single house at 198 Dudley Street during the summer of 67 is still alive, except of course, the author.

Lt. Donovan had been appointed to the Service in January 1953 and assigned to Ladder 25. Promoted in 1964 and was transferred to Engine 25 in the High Value District. Later he was reassigned to Ladder 4. Retiring in the summer of 88, he passed away a few years later. Donovan is the only member shot in the line of duty in the long history of the Department. It is my opinion that the name of Lieutenant Joseph J. Donovan ought to be included with the names of members who died in the Line of Duty.

This writer had some conversations with Joe at the Maintenance Division. We chatted about family members who were on job. His brother, James, was a District Chief in 9, a very busy area. Chief Donovan was an efficient officer and a no-nonsense Chief. Their sister's husband, a Lieutenant on Ladder Co. 6, died in the Line of Duty from a heart attack while at an alarm. Joe told me, "Then on October 1, 1964, Lt John Geswell relived me for a night tour at Lad 4 and was killed along with 5 others at Box 1651, (4 alarms,) due to the collapse of a building on Trumbell Street," At this fire several guys assigned to Ladder 4 were badly injured. His brother-in-law, Frank Misner was a FA Operator and I believe was on duty that fateful night. I knew Frank well from being on the same group.

A strange coincidence after a night tour, Lt. Donovan went to cash his pay check at a bank in New Market Square, a short hop from the fire house. While there in line two young thugs robbed the bank. FBI agents went to Headquarters to look for Donovan. Headquarters being Headquarters told them he was at assigned to Engine 25. No, he's not here at 25 but has been reassigned to Ladder 4 on Dudley St. Roxbury. They went to the fire house on Dudley Street. "He is not here," said the Captain, "he is detailed to Engine 12 up the street. The frustrated Agents went to Engine 12. Again, no Donovan. The Chief gave him a day off for some reason and another Lieutenant didn't know why. "He will be at Ladder 4 on Thursday." Off they went. On Thursday, they both showed up and one of the agents (I was there) said "my brother is a Chicago fireman and if he wasn't, I would put the cuffs on you." It turned out that one of desperadoes lived a few doors up the street from me. They weren't too bright. With the money they stole, they booked a cruise to the Caribbean.

Notes:

The song "*Summer Wind*", was recorded by Frank Sinatra. (Recording date May 16, 1966 – Editor)

The Police conducted a thorough investigation. They found 9 spent casings in the area where the shots were fired but to no avail. No one was ever charged with the crime.

Some records of this assault were found at 115 Southampton. (Headquarters)

Information found in General and Special Orders and are enumerated as mentioned.

The "Boston Globe," was researched and indicted that the shooting caused an increase in the unrest and other info about Lt. Donovan.

Interview with Lt. Donovan

***They go on and on
Through the Nights that Never End
My Fickle Friend, the Summer Wind***



Ash Street & Lowell Nashua, NH.

**Nashua Fire Rescue
6th Alarm Fire - Box 2416
Ash Street at Lowell Street
December 2, 2025
By member Kevin Kerrigan
All photos, author's collection**

In the early morning hours of December 2, 2025, Nashua Fire Rescue companies were dispatched to what would rapidly escalate into a six-alarm, multi-building fire in a densely built residential and mixed-occupancy area near downtown Nashua. The Nashua Fire Alarm Office (FAO) began receiving multiple calls reporting a structure fire at 115 Vine Street, and Box 2416 was transmitted at 06:26 hours. A full first-alarm assignment was dispatched, including C-4, Engines 2, 4, and 1, Engine 5 (RIT), Ladders 1 and 2, and ALS-10.

While companies were en route, FAO advised that visible fire could be seen from the Fire Alarm Office itself. Vine Street is located only eight blocks from first-due Station 2 headquarters companies and just three blocks from FAO, highlighting the extent of fire involvement at an early stage.

At 06:32 hours, the Engine 2 officer, Lieutenant Curtis Buxton, reported that the fire was actually located one block over on Ash Street and redirected incoming companies. He transmitted an initial report of heavy fire showing from the rear of a three-story building and advised that Engine 2 was stretching a 2½-inch handline to the rear porches off Lowell Street. Due to the volume of fire and the immediate threat to adjacent structures, a second alarm was requested.

The second alarm added Engines 6 and 3, Ladder 3, and the Special Hazards Unit, committing all six Nashua engine companies and all three ladder companies to the incident.



C-4 Deputy Chief Kevin Kerrigan arrived shortly thereafter and reported heavy fire in a three-story, occupied, multi-unit residential building at 108 Ash Street, with fire already extending into the rear exposure at 115 Vine Street. The exposure was a mixed-occupancy building with commercial space on the first floor and residential units above. At 06:33 hours, Deputy Kerrigan ordered a third alarm due to rapidly deteriorating conditions and multiple buildings involved.

Building Construction and Fire Conditions

The fire originated in rear porches located in a narrow alley off Lowell Street. Eleven vehicles were parked between the two buildings, with four vehicles fully involved on arrival, significantly increasing radiant heat and accelerating fire spread. Both sets of rear porches were heavily involved.

The original fire building was an H-style, three-story wood-frame structure, approximately 75 x 50 feet, with two sets of rear porches. The rear exposure was a three-story brick-and-wood structure, approximately 100 x 75 feet, with apartments above commercial occupancies.

Initial Operations

Engine 2 and Ladder 2 positioned on Ash Street at the A/B corner of the fire building. Ladder 1 was positioned on the D side in a narrow alley between the exposure building and an adjacent auto repair shop and was supplied by Engine I. Ladder 3 was assigned to protect D-side exposures approximately 15 feet away and positioned at the AID corner on Ash Street, behind Engine 2, with Engine 3 laying a feeder line to supply Ladder 3's aerial master stream.



Engine 4 secured a hydrant on Nevada Street and advanced a 2½-inch handline to the D-side exposures. Engines 5 and 6 established additional supply lines and stretched multiple 2½-inch handlines and Blitzfire appliances to the rear of the buildings in an effort to stop further extension.

Despite aggressive operations, heavy fire continued to spread into the rear exposure. With all Nashua companies committed and additional resources required, Deputy Kerrigan transmitted a fourth alarm at 06:41 hours, just eight minutes after the third alarm.

Command and Alarm Escalation

Chief of Department Steve Buxton arrived shortly thereafter. Following a face-to-face briefing, Chief Buxton assumed command of operations on the Ash Street side, while Deputy Chief Kerrigan established and managed a Rear Division focused on the exposure building. This division-based command structure improved span of control and allowed effective management of two active fire buildings simultaneously.

Additional Division assignments were created as off duty Chief Officers reported to the scene. Acting Deputy Chief Scott Mobley was assigned the Bravo Division and Deputy Chief Nate Armstrong was assigned the Delta Division. RIT Teams were established for each of the buildings. Captain Glen Nielsen was assigned as the Safety Officer for 115 Vine Street. Lt Rob Dungan was assigned as Safety Officer for 108 - 110 Ash Street.

The third-alarm response added Merrimack Engine, Hollis Engine, and Hudson Ladder. The fourth alarm brought Tyngsborough (MA) Engine, Manchester Engine, and a Manchester ladder company.

Operating as Rear Division Supervisor, Deputy Kerrigan assigned incoming companies to reinforce exposure protection and water supply operations. Hudson Ladder and Tyngsborough Engine were directed to the Vine Street side of the exposure building, with Hudson Ladder positioned on the A/B corner and prepared for aerial master stream operations. Hollis Engine was assigned as the Rear Division RIT Company. Merrimack Engine supplemented water supply to Ladder 2 on Ash Street. Manchester's ladder company was positioned at the *AID* corner of Lowell and Vine Streets, supplied by a Manchester engine.

As conditions continued to demand expanded operations, Chief Buxton ordered a fifth alarm at 06:48 hours, followed by a sixth alarm for staging (located at the former Elm Street Middle School) at 06:53 hours. The fifth alarm added Londonderry Engine, Lowell Engine, and Dracut Ladder, while the sixth alarm brought Windham Engine, Pelham Engine, and a Milford Ladder.

Fire Control and Aftermath

With both buildings fully surrounded, five ladder pipes, numerous 2½-inch handlines, and multiple Blitzfire appliances were placed into operation. These coordinated efforts ultimately halted the fire's progression and protected remaining exposures.

At 09:07 hours, Chief Buxton declared the fire under control. Crews remained on scene for several hours conducting overhaul, mop-up, and primary and secondary searches. All occupants from both buildings self-evacuated with assistance from Nashua Police and first-arriving fire companies. There were no fatalities or major injuries, though 25 occupants were displaced.

Because the incident occurred near shift change, Nashua Fire Rescue implemented group call-back procedures. Approximately 50 additional firefighters responded, including incoming shift personnel and call-backs, to support sustained operations.

Mutual-aid companies from Lowell, Pepperell and Westford, Massachusetts, Amherst, Bedford, Derry, Litchfield and Salem, New Hampshire covered Nashua stations during the incident.



Phosphorus Trichloride Spill

Somerville, Massachusetts

April 3, 1981

By Frank Lee, Somerville FD (Ret.)

All Photos Author's Collection

At approximately 9:00 a.m., a westbound freight train of 38 cars was traveling at 4 mph as it left Boston & Maine (B&M) Railroad Yard 8 on the South Division of the Boston & Lowell line. At the same time, a switching locomotive pushed two tank cars along the Mystic Valley branch for staging, then dropped them off and departed. Unbeknownst to anyone, the lead tank car had drifted slightly past the clearance point, fouling the main line. The car, with a capacity of 13,000 gallons, was loaded with phosphorus trichloride (PCl_3) and destined for Monsanto in Everett. Minutes later, the lead car of the westbound freight train struck the parked tank car. It pierced the 7/16-inch-thick steel container, causing what would become the largest chemical incident in Massachusetts up to that date. The accident site is exactly where the MBTA's Green Line East Somerville Station is today.

Weather conditions at 9:00 a.m. were temperature 47°F, northwest winds averaging 7 mph and clear skies. By 1:00 p.m., the wind had shifted to 14 mph from the southeast, with the temperature rising to 51°F. Conditions were mostly cloudy by 8:00 p.m. and 43°F.

Tank car, TLDX 113009, had sustained a 16-inch gash, the highly toxic, corrosive, water-reactive chemical was leaking at an initial rate of 75–100 gallons per minute. The product was flowing across three tracks and down a 12-foot embankment toward Joy Street. Upon contact with moisture in the air or ground, PCl_3 produced dense white clouds of hydrochloric acid and phosphorous acid, creating a hazardous plume that drifted with the shifting winds. The U.S. Department of Transportation classifies PCl_3 as a corrosive liquid. It is a clear, colorless to slightly yellowish, highly volatile liquid used in manufacturing phosphites, gasoline additives, plastics, dyestuffs, and as a chlorinating agent in water purification. Its vapors have a pungent odor and are severely irritating to eyes, skin, and mucous membranes. Skin contact can cause burns, especially in the presence of moisture such as perspiration. PCl_3 is heavier than water, and its vapors are five times heavier than air. This was the first reported PCl_3 spill to the DOT.



At 9:12 a.m., the B&M RR notified Somerville Fire Alarm of a tank car accident with leaking product. Immediately after the railroad's call, Box 125 was pulled at Washington Street opposite Tufts Street. Fire Alarm also began receiving reports of a large white cloud with a noxious odor. The initial response—Engine 3, Ladder 1, and Car 302, with Deputy Chief John Brosnahan and aide Bob Wilker—was quickly upgraded to a full box assignment of three engines and two ladders. Upon arrival, Engine 3 encountered a rapidly expanding white cloud spreading throughout the Brick Bottom area and heading toward Lechmere Station. Shortly after Car 302 arrived, Deputy Chief Brosnahan assumed command. He met with B&M personnel, reviewed the bill of lading and shipping papers, then directed railroad crews to use payloaders to dig a containment pit. Observing the plume and seeing product entering storm drains, he ordered an immediate evacuation of the surrounding area. Chief of Department Charles Donovan (Car 301) and Somerville Civil Defense Director John McInerney (Car 312) were notified and responded to the scene, along with notification to Massachusetts Civil Defense and the U.S. Coast Guard.

An initial attempt to knock down the vapor cloud with a fog handline worsened the situation and was immediately stopped. Firefighters wearing demand-type SCBA, long rubber boots, and Nomex or older rubber coats used shovels to dike storm drains. After brief SCBA training, B&M heavy equipment operators donned SCBA and began digging the pit. As personnel sweated inside their gear, fumes reacted with skin moisture to form hydrochloric acid, causing severe burns, irritation, and breathing difficulties. This marked the beginning of numerous transports of firefighters and civilians to area hospitals.

Upon his arrival, Chief Donovan ordered the evacuation area expanded to a third of a mile radius. During the next hours, all remaining Somerville apparatus were eventually special called to the scene, along with many mutual aid companies. Somerville Police, assisted by Metropolitan Police

and State Troopers, used loudspeakers and door-to-door notifications in residential areas to evacuate. The Holiday Inn, East Somerville Community School, and Pope School were also evacuated. Hundreds of evacuees were sheltered at Somerville High School on Highland Avenue.



The three hazmat reference guides available to the Somerville Fire Department offered conflicting advice. The 1978 DOT guide highlighted fire, explosion, health, and pollution hazards but did not warn of the massive vapor cloud that flooding a large spill with water – as it suggested – would produce. The Bureau of Explosives guide offered similar warnings but advised against using water directly on the material. The NFPA guide warned of violent reaction with water yet recommended flooding the entire spill. The EPA requested that the fire department apply water spray downwind of the pit to scrub hydrochloric acid vapors from the air.

When newly installed Mayor of Somerville Eugene Brune arrived on the scene, he commented: “When I got to the scene of the accident, I thought that I was on a movie set. I saw smoke billowing all over the sky, police cars, ambulances, fire engines from several cities, civil defense cars, bulldozers and, sad to say, firemen being treated. It really looked like a made-for-television movie, only it was real. I said to my staff, ‘It looks like we have much to do and we’d better do it right.’ The press was after me to make a statement. I knew that first I had to meet with my fire chief Charlie Donovan to find out the facts and exactly where we stood at that point. I also needed to find out all that I could in just minutes about just what kind of toxic chemical ‘phosphorus trichloride’ was. We called a press conference at my office soon after I got myself organized. Every television and radio station in the State was at City Hall. I explained what had happened and the status of where we were at the present time.”

Unable to reach consensus amid the persisting chemical cloud, Mayor Brune formed a technical advisory committee. There were representatives from the shipper (Monsanto), the carrier (B&M), the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and federal agencies. He instructed the committee to reach unanimous agreement on mitigation and disposal.

A special call to Boston brought Rescue 1, a district chief, the department chemist Dr. Edward Clougherty, and Commissioner George Paul (C-1). By 11:15 a.m., the tank car had emptied to the level of the gash, leaving a few thousand gallons still fuming inside, along with a pool more than two feet deep in the containment pit. The SCBA cascade unit at the Lowell Street station struggled to keep pace with all the air bottles. Seventeen communities had apparatus at the scene or covering, bringing additional SCBA units and cascade refill systems. A special call via Massachusetts Civil Defense brought hundreds of additional air bottles from as far away as Worcester County, Plymouth County, and southern New Hampshire. Frank San Severino found in a Lexington Log Book: "Mutual Aid signal 339, Rescue 1 to Somerville with air bottles @ 1033 ret @ 1650." Ironically, United Divers, a SCUBA equipment supplier, is located just a few blocks away on Washington Street. They provided invaluable service refilling bottles and repairing equipment.



Chief Donovan met with more than 30 local, state, and federal safety representatives at the command post at 2:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m. to discuss recovery operations. During the 2:00 p.m. meeting, EPA representatives again recommended a downwind water curtain to scrub vapors and provided Chief Donovan with a sketch for deck gun placement. Despite strong objections from the fire department—based on earlier observations—the tactic was reluctantly attempted. The fog streams rapidly expanded the vapor cloud. When the wind shifted, water struck the pit directly, generating massive additional clouds. Streams were immediately shut down. Seeing the increased plume, Mayor Brune ordered the evacuation zone dramatically expanded to include all of East Somerville, over to the Cambridge line along Beacon Street, and up Highland Avenue through Central Hill, including Somerville High School and City Hall.

Evacuees already at Somerville High School had to be moved again. The expanded zone now included four elderly high-rise buildings. Boston and Cambridge also began evacuations along the Somerville border. Many evacuees were bused to the Armory and Tufts University buildings in West Somerville. The massive cloud produced by the water application exposed more people but also provided critical new information about the material's behavior—information absent from all reference guides. This hard-won experience heavily influenced subsequent decisions.

State Fire Marshal Joe O'Keefe ordered the State Police to close I-93 in both directions. The MBTA Green Line was halted at North Station, and the Callahan and Sumner tunnels were closed.

Experts from state, federal, and industry sources proposed three disposal options for the remaining product:

- A) Backfill the pit with sand.
- B) Drown and dilute the product with water.
- C) Neutralize the product with limestone or soda ash.

Nearly ten hours after the spill, the advisory committee unanimously selected backfilling with sand followed by gradual water addition as the safest approach, given the greater uncertainties of the other options. After 7:00 p.m., backfilling operations began—exactly what Deputy Chief Brosnahan had wanted from the start but had been overruled by state and manufacturer representatives—with 10 to 15 trucks delivering 60 loads of sand to the pit. Small amounts of water were applied from 7:30 p.m. to midnight. At 1:30 a.m. on April 4, officials allowed residents to return home. An estimated 13,000 persons had been evacuated in Somerville, with an additional 10,000 to 12,000 evacuated in East Cambridge and Charlestown. At daybreak on April 4, B&M crews spread four tons of soda ash around the area to neutralize any remaining product on the ground.



Asked about the effect of the spill on the City of Boston, Fire Commissioner George Paul said, "If

it had been a humid and still day, we would have had major problems, but the fumes were up at about 600 feet by the time they got to downtown and had a mile or two to dissipate, so we were all right.” In the aftermath, approximately 23,000–25,000 people were evacuated. More than 700 people were treated at area hospitals, and four firefighters were admitted. Most firefighters and others on scene experienced elevated liver functions for years afterward. Three members never returned to duty due to lung damage and burns. Bob Wilker spent a week in MGH with burns, He said when he got home, and he found the change in his pocket had corroded. Dozens of SCBA units were rendered unusable due to deteriorated rubber components and corroded metal parts. Most of the boots and coats had to be replaced. All Somerville apparatus suffered severe paint discoloration and metal corrosion, requiring body work and repainting. Dozens of lengths of hose had to be discarded.

While the major incident was ongoing, of course something else would hit. In the early afternoon, covering companies responded to a building fire at 225 Pearl St., a three story, twelve unit vacant that went to a Working Fire.

Personal note from the author: I was a nineteen-year-old who had been appointed to the Somerville Auxiliary Fire Department just four days earlier. This was my first run. I spent from 3:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. at the scene on Lighting Plant 410A. When we returned to quarters, decontamination consisted of pulling up our collars, shutting our eyes, and being washed down with a 1½-inch fog line. The D-rings and clips on my brand-new Nomex coat were rusted when I took it off. Welcome to the fire service!

Following the NTSB investigation, the root cause was determined to be human error during switching operations—specifically, failure to ensure the tank car was fully clear of the main line track. Negligence was attributed to the freight train’s locomotive engineer (for failing to adequately control speed) and the head-end brakeman (for not complying with Boston & Maine operating rules), resulting in disciplinary action.

This benchmark incident exposed critical gaps in 1980s hazmat preparedness and directly influenced national standards. It also served as the impetus for establishing statewide hazmat response teams in Massachusetts.



Engine 2's Wagon 1973 Diamond Reo Maynard 300GPM 300 WT before the spill covering ARL HQ (credit to photographer)



Engine 2's Wagon 2 weeks after spill
Frank Lee photo

Saugus Massachusetts Mack Fire Apparatus By Staff Writer John Pozark



Part 1 Engine 2

The Saugus Fire Department was formally organized in 1888. From that time until the nineteen teens the Town of Saugus relied on hoselines stretched direct off the hydrant and using straight tip nozzles to put wet stuff on red stuff. Three hose companies ran from firehouses in "The Center", "Clifftondale" and "East Saugus" at the bridge. When they needed a pumper at the fire, by special agreement, Lynn would send a Steam Fire Engine or until 1919 or so a Motorized Fire Pumping Engine.

The first actual pumper owned solely by the town (There was a "Shared" with Lynn hand tub in the early 1800's) would come in the Motorized Era. Debate at Town Meeting for the purchase of a motor pumping Engine began in 1913 with the issue frequently being tabled indefinitely. In 1919, a Seagrave double combination hose & chemical wagon would be purchased and placed in service as Combination 1. It was recommended that a 750 GpM pump be retrofitted to the Combination to give it pumping capability and become a triple combination apparatus. This was done sometime during 1921 or 1922 and the apparatus was re-designated Engine 1.

During the 1930's a new firehouse would be built in The Center. The new station opened in 1935, and all companies would be consolidated there. A second fire station was built in 1965 on Essex St. at the railroad tracks. All the Mack's would see their service from these two locations.

Frequently, there is some question when describing the date of a piece of apparatus. The apparatus may be ordered in one year and delivered in another. It may not even be placed in service until the following year. Years given here are the delivery or in service year, unless otherwise noted.

Engine 2, the first Saugus Mack

In 1928 the Saugus Fire Department Apparatus consisted of: Engine 1, a 1919 Seagrave former Double Combination retrofitted with a 750 GPM pump; Combination 2, a 1922 Dodge/Seagrave Chemical Engine; and a motor, service type ladder truck, an ALF Type #14 as Ladder 1. The Chief recommended the purchase of another 750 GPM, Triple Combination pumping Engine. Article #7 at Town Meeting was proposed, a Question to appropriate \$12,500.00 to purchase a new pumper was made. It was voted to form a committee to study the purchase of a new pumper.

At a Town Meeting in 1929 Article #42 was put forth for appropriation of \$65,000.00 for a new Fire Station and Article #62, \$12,500.00 for purchase of new 750GpM Triple Combination Pumper, not recommended.

During 1930, debate was made for purchase of a new pumper. Article #11 at Town Meeting, was to consider appropriation of \$6,500.00 for purchase of 600 GpM Triple Combination pumper. Initially, it was not recommended. Article #12, was a question to appropriate \$50,000.00 for new fire station on land adjacent to town hall, also not recommended.

During 1929 the Dodge Combination, reported by the Chief as only being in fair condition, while responding to a telephone alarm of fire, one of the rear wheels collapsed causing it to turn over. Two of the Firemen responding were injured. One quite seriously. For 1930 the Chief asked for another small piece of apparatus to be purchased to replace the Combination. The ladder truck was reported in poor condition needing an overhaul and painting.

Again the issue was brought forward and now, the purchase of a new 600 GpM Pumper was recommended. The sum of \$17,000.00 was voted for the fire department including \$8,700.00 for the purchase of a 600 GpM Pumper. Vote for a 750 GpM Pumper was indefinitely postponed. Also purchased with the Engine were 3 Gas Masks and 2 Life Belts. A new Mack 600 Gpm Triple Combination Pumper was delivered and designated Engine 2. This would be the first piece of apparatus for Saugus built from the beginning as a pumping Engine. The Era of Mack Fire Apparatus in Saugus began.

Also delivered in 1930, a new American LaFrance Type #31, City Service Ladder Truck with Booster Pump and 100 Gallon Water Tank, a Davis-Bullard Inhalator and a Baker Two Inlet Water Gun.

Big splurge!

Engine 2 was a Mack "B" Model. Yes Frankie, I mean Virginia, there was another "B" Model Mack.

In the 1920's Mack developed a chassis for the Medium Duty Market. The first generation or V1.0, "B" Model was introduced in 1927. These were equipped with several different horsepower engines and designated B. The series would include models from BB to BX. More than 15,000 units were built through 1941.

Delivered in 1930, Saugus Engine 2 was a Mack, Type 90, Model BK pumping Engine.

During 1931, its first full year of operation Engine 2 travelled 952 Miles and was reported to be in Good Condition. The 1922 Dodge Combination, however, was deemed unsafe for driving and replacement was recommended.



From 1932 to through 1934 Engine 2 was reported in good condition travelling between 700 and 1000 miles a year.

On Monday afternoon, July 29th, 1935, there was an explosion and fire at the Town Yard on Woodbury Ave. across from the Center Firehouse. The call of FIRE! was heard and Fire Chief Mellen R. Joy responded on foot with a hand extinguisher. Chief Joy called for another Extinguisher and a Chemical Line to be stretched. Moving with the Chief were Firemen Norman Hull and Warren Newhall. Fire Lt. George Drew and Firemen George Tarbox and Harold Atkinson went back and brought the other equipment. An Acetylene Tank ruptured. An explosion rocked the town and blew out the windows in the Firehouse across the street. Chief of Department Mellen R. Joy, (Formerly of the Boston Fire Department and Captain of Engine 38-39) and Firemen Hull and Newhall were enveloped in flame and thrown about or knocked to their feet. DPW workers on site were also injured. A General Alarm was transmitted, and help was called from Revere and Lynn. In the worst tragedy to strike the Saugus Fire Department. Chief Joy would die a few days later in the hospital from injuries sustained in the Line of Duty. Firemen Hull and Newhall received disabling injuries. Fire Lt. Drew and Fireman Tarbox were treated at the scene and continued operating. There is no specific information on damage to the fire apparatus but in the annual report for the year the Fire Chief was a recommendation to Repair Engine 2. During 1935, Engine 2 Travelled 1369 Miles and was reported in Fair Condition.

Some repairs were made during 1936. While Engine 2 was out of service being repaired, a spare Mack Pumper was on loan from the Mack Co. and traveled 19 miles.

From 1937 to 1940, Engine 2 travelled about 500 Miles a year and was continuously reported in Fair Condition.

For an unstated reason, in 1940, Engine 2 only travelled 292 Miles but was still in Fair Condition. From 1941 to 1945 engine 2 would travel between 250 and 750 miles a year. This during a time of deferred maintenance due to the shortages of World War 2 it remained in fair condition.

In 1946, Engine 2 did 433.6 miles, but only 292 miles in 147. Both years it was reported in Good Condition.



In the 1948 Annual Report Engine 2 Not Specifically Mentioned but over the next couple of years it shows a decline in response and in 1949 it was rated as "Relatively Old and Inefficient". In 1950 there may have been some repairs or reconditioning done because while 21 Years old it was now reported to be in "Good Condition".

During 1951 the Engine 1 Seagrave was transferred to Civil Defense along with a Buffalo Trailer Pump, Lighting Trailer and other equipment. Engine 2 was reported in good condition, but the elimination of Engine 1 placed an additional burden on Engine 2 there being only two pumping Engines in the Town now.

By 1952, Engine 2 was 23 years old and considered to be in good condition for use as a spare. A year later in 1953 with its pump still being rated at a 600GpM as a Class "B", it had become, "not too dependable except for use as a spare and for use at woods and grass fires". By 1954, Engine 2 needed a complete motor and general overhaul to make it capable of working as a spare or woods fire apparatus.

During 1955, Engine 2 was being retained as a reserve apparatus but was still important enough to be equipped with a radio. In 1956, the Chief rated it as unreliable. A year later it was "In Very Poor Condition", used as a reserve and Special Detail apparatus. In 1958, in his Annual Report, the Fire Chief said the Mack Engine 2, "Should be scrapped as cost to place in excellent repair is not advisable".

By 1960, the Mack was 30 years old and, "No Practical Value". Sometime during 1961 it was removed from the department roster.

Our Feature Story

Peterborough Street
By Editor Frank San Severino
All Photos by member William Noonan Collection
5-2341
March 31st, 1971

Box 2341 banged out over the bells in every Boston station at 0033 hours on Wednesday March 31st. First due Ladder 15 arrived to find fire escapes full of fleeing residents, residents at windows screaming for help and some residents out clinging to narrow ledges!

This is the story of a fire that left eight dead and the conditions that lead up to the tragedy. This was the 16th and last fire in the building since 1927!

The Building

Built in 1912 as one of Boston's finer "apartment hotels" named the Park Chambers. It was six stories and fronted on both Peterborough and Jersey Streets. It was 113 x 63 feet of ordinary construction. Interior walls and ceilings were wood joists and lathe covered by plaster.

As the years passed the building went through many changes in its fifty nine years. By the time the decade of the 1970's arrived, the building was home to the elderly, college students, young couples and immigrant families.

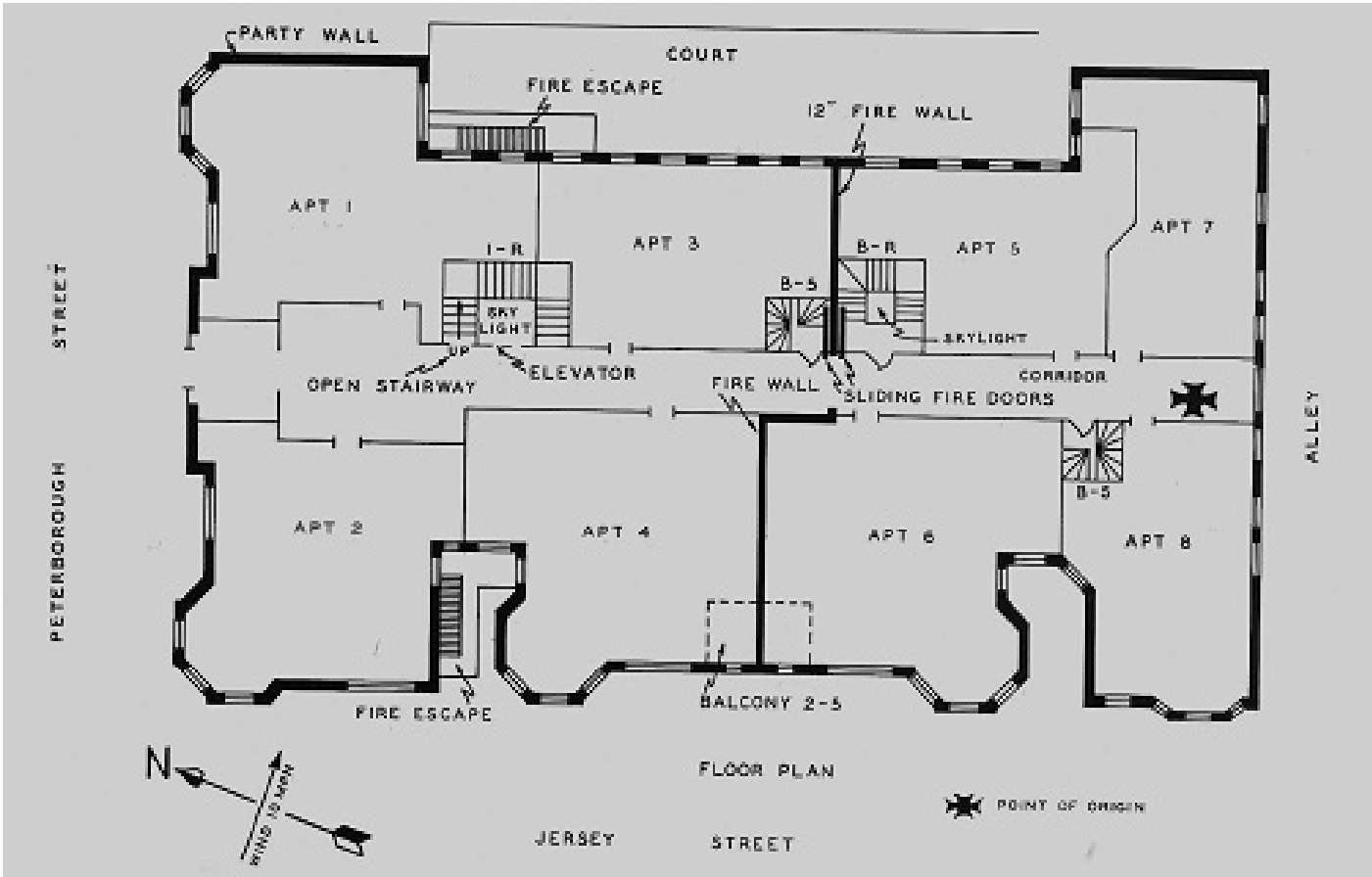
The night of the fire, ceilings had been remodeled to a suspended type leaving an 18 inch gap between the two. On the first and second floors the walls had been ¼ inch plywood paneling. Floors three to six still had the original plaster walls.

In 1922 a partial sprinkler system had been installed covering the basement and first floor. The system was not equipped with a FDC (*Fire Dept. Connection – Author*), nor was it equipped with an exterior water motor gong, that would sound when the system activated. And it was not a supervised system.

Each apartment was equipped with wood panel doors. Three enclosed stairways and one open stairwell. All were made of combustible construction materials. Two enclosed stairwells ran from the basement to the fifth floor. The other went to the roof level.

Skylights were located over the elevator shaft and the stairwell that ran to the roof level. Fire escapes were located one each on the east and west sides of the building. Additionally, there were balconies on each floor of the west side of the building.

There were ten automatic fire doors each equipped with a fusible link that were set to 135 degrees. The links would melt and swing the doors shut.



The Fire

On the night of Tuesday March 30th into the next day Wednesday there were 80 occupants residing in thirty-seven apartments.

Around 0030 hours on the 31st a resident was coming into the front door of the building on the Peterborough Street side. He spotted a fire at the opposite end of the hallway. He began pounding on first floor apartment doors and yelling for the resident to get out. He then ran outside and pulled box 2341. He returned to continue warning residents to get out.

Many of the occupants had been awakened by all the yelling and opened doors into smoke filled corridors and realized that their only escape route was either a window, the fire escape or the balconies.



The building's janitor lived on the first floor in apartment 3. He opened his door, looked to the rear of the hallway, and saw an orange glow. He sprinted from the building and ran to the BPD call box and pulled the "Citizens Alarm". The alarm sounded in the "Turret" at police headquarters on Berkley Street. A sector car was dispatched. He then ran to 2341 and pulled the hook again. The janitor ran back to the building to help residents and saw flames in the first floor corridor windows. A resident on the 5th floor dialed the BFD's emergency number Kenmore 6-1500 when he first smelled smoke, but was driven out the apartment before he could complete the call.

At some point a flash over occurred in the corridor and it sent flames into the open elevator shaft. As Fire Alarm struck 2341 at 0033 hours, the fire had made it to the top floor and roof and mushroomed across the entire top floor. The fire had already burst through the skylight over the elevator shaft.

The building was filled with the roar of the fire and the screams of residents. Sirens of first alarm companies could be heard approaching, but for some residents it was already too late.



2341 was located in Division 2 and was in District 5. First arriving company was Ladder 15 with Engine 33 right behind them. Captain Leo Wisentaner reported a Working Fire while still enroute and a minute later ordered a second alarm. They pulled up on the Jersey Street side. The chauffer threw the aerial to the 5th floor windows as members were throwing ground ladders as fast as they could. One member rushed up the aerial and started pulling residents on to the ladder. They were assisted off at the turntable. The aerial was repositioned to the fourth floor and then the third floor. Meanwhile Engine 33 ran a big line into the first floor opened up on the fire made a search of apartments and then pushed the line up to the second floor.

Arriving second due, Aerial Tower 2 put the tower up to the 5th floor on right side at the rear of the building. The crew threw every ground ladder they had as fast as they could. Residents were still at windows, the balconies and some clinging to ledges all yelling and screaming for help.



District Chief William Kenneally of District 5 stated in his report quoted Captain Wisentaner: "Upon arrival assumed command, found severe life hazard existed with people in windows, on balcony fire escapes and sitting on window ledges on all floors on the Jersey Street side and the buildings rear waiting for rescue. Fire was showing through the roof in the center of the building and also windows in the rear of all stairways were showing fire. Fire also was seen on the 4th floor rear left and showing on the 4th floor right side. I could see fire entering the 1st floor apartments from the hallway. Upon entering the 1st floor hallway the same was fully involved, ordered second alarm".

Chief Kenneally ordered a third alarm at 0039, six minutes from the first pull on 2341. Arriving Working Fire, second and third alarm companies arrived to a scene of chaos! Companies trying to get into operations, people screaming, radios blaring, sirens screaming as more and more police and ambulances arrived already overflowing the narrow streets. Scores of residents from other buildings in the neighborhood stood on the sidewalks watching in horror. Some offered shelter to those who escaped the inferno and were not injured.



Ambulance crews and police officers manning wagons and "ambulettes" (station wagon cruisers equipped with a stretcher and blankets) took care of the injured, transporting to area hospitals when needed.

As the clock ticked to 0045 hours the fire was still consuming the building and the conditions on the interior continued to deteriorate. Division 2 Deputy Chief Magoon struck the fourth alarm for

box 2341 summoning another four engine companies to the fire. C2 Chief of Department George Paul responded on the 4th alarm. Upon his arrival on scene he conferred with Deputy Magoon, District Chief Kenneally and the second alarm district chief Comfrey who served in Car 13, the Special Service Chief. After being briefed he ordered the fifth alarm.



In the time leading up to the sounding of the 5th alarm there were two special calls for two additional ladders and two extra engines to the box. Companies were still trying to make aggressive interior attacks on all floors of the fire building. Most engine companies were operating lines from inside the building and from ground ladders.



Ladders 15, 4, 13 and Tower 2 were still making rescues and making searches of the building. About 0130 hours Ladder 4 located three residents' bodies on the second floor. They were removed from the building where police to charge of the bodies and transported them to the BCH.

It soon became apparent that the building had become too dangerous for interior operations and all companies were withdrawn and companies went to work with deck guns, the Sqrut wagon of Engine Company 26 operated its fifty foot boom on the upper stories. Aerial Tower 2 opened up its two bucket guns into the roof area of the fire.

The fire continued to eat away at the building. The upper floors collapsed into the 3rd floor rendering the building extremely dangerous.

Chief Paul reported the fire knocked down and turned command over to Division 2. A fire detail of two engines and two ladders was ordered. Companies began to make up and were released back to quarters some after working over six hours at the fire.

Overhaul was out of the question due to the condition of the building. The Building Department Inspectors had arrived and issued an emergency demolition order on the building. The John Duane Company was contracted to tear down what was left of the Park Chambers.

Chief Officers only allowed four firefighters into the building at a time to search for bodies. The BPD were receiving calls from family members who could not locate their loved ones who had lived in the building. During this phase of the fire, detail companies located several more bodies in the wreckage.







These bodies of residents were burned beyond recognition. They were removed and handed over to the BPD for transport to the Southern Mortuary on Albany Street opposite the BCH Emergency Room.

The allout on 2341 was ordered at 0700 hours on March 31st. Aerial Tower 1 was called to the scene on April 1st and was used to remove several bodies found on the top floor. The fire detail was terminated on the orders of District Chief Marino of District 5 at 1800 hours on April 4th, 1971.

The Aftermath

The investigation began early on the morning of the 31st with the Arson Squad, BPD Detectives, State Fire Marshal's Office and Fire Protection Engineer Rex Wilson from the NFFA. City Fire Marshall Dolan was in charge of the investigation.

Investigators sifting through the debris found that ten sets of Fire Doors did not work. The doors are designed to close automatically when temps reach 135 degrees. One set of doors is only 25 feet from where the fire is believed to have started. Fire doors held open by a wire attached to a fusible link that when melted the doors closed. They stated that the fire moved so rapidly flames and smoke could have been passed the door. They also stated the other doors should have operated properly and closed.

Arson was not suspected, samples of wood from the first floor were sent to a lab to check for any trace of accelerants.

The Duane Company brought in a large crane with a "clam shell" bucket. It was used to pull debris from the building where it dropped into waiting dump trucks where firefighters would comb through it looking for additional bodies.

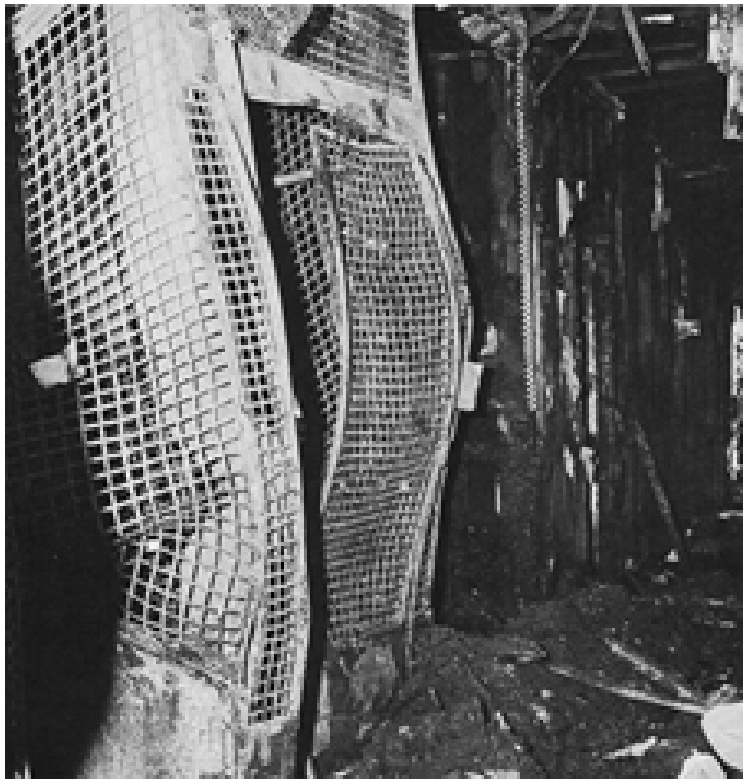
On April 1st at the Thursday City Council meeting, Deputy Building Commissioner Leo Martin stated that the building had a "satisfactory" number of exits.

Meanwhile, up on Beacon Hill State Senator John Parker (R – Taunton) called for a senate committee to investigate the fire.

Five years after the fire in 1976, the Boston Phoenix newspapers B.A.D. (Boston after Dark) section did an in depth article on the civil law suits brought in Suffolk County Superior Court for the victims of the fire.



Fire point of origin on the first floor hallway. Photo Courtesy of the NFPA



Open elevator shaft on the second floor. Photo courtesy of the NFPA

Legal Battle

By the time that Buster Duane's wrecking company had leveled the site, several lawsuits on behalf of victims were brought in Suffolk Superior Court.

Lawyers for the victims found that this was the 16th fire since 1927 in the building. It was bought in 1944 by a Mr. Maurice Gordon. The civil suits were settled out of court for four million dollars. By settling out of court, the defendant avoided a jury trial and was able to put an end to all legal enquiries into the fire.

Gordon family heir's attorneys (Maurice having died in 1973) stated that the bulk settlement will be paid by insurance. Victim's attorneys stated that the blaze resulted from negligence on the part of the Columbia Corporation, a Gordon family firm managed by son Robert Gordon. His attorneys had argued that the fire was due to tenant negligence and "tenants accepted risk when they moved into the building".

It was learned that some of the tenants has accepted and signed waivers absolving the Gordon Family and Columbia Corp. for 50% of what they sought in damages. The settlement would also be a significant benefit to the Gordons. It would allow the family to achieve its announced goal of selling off its vast Boston property holdings. This action became public in August of 1974, when the Boston Globe broke the story when the Gordons, who had moved to the greater Miami, Florida. Sold off 12 downtown office buildings, 500 apartments and three parking facilities to an agent for Kuwaiti Investors. The Peterborough law suit had become a major road block to the sale due to a Superior Court attachment on Columbia Corporation properties as possible payment should a jury verdict go against the Gordons.

Maurice Gordon's real estate empire once totaled 6,000 rental units in every neighborhood of the City. They still had 3,000 rental units, eight office buildings and corporate assets totaling some 37 million dollars.

The settlement, providing generous benefits for the fire victims, will also shut down any attempts for a full legal inquiry into the fire had it gone to a trial. Plaintiffs' attorneys were going to produce code violations dating back to 1923 only some eleven years after the Park Chambers was built!

The building had been condemned twice to the wrecking ball, but had been spared by the City reprieves. In 1967, one tenant wrote to the Building Department citing the following problems: inadequate fire escapes, poor sprinkler system, exposed wiring and piled up rubbish. No action was taken.

In 1970 BFD Fire Prevention Inspectors sent warnings to the Building Department about the condition of the fire doors.

The media yelled about the city Council “white washing” the matter. But, the Council had difficulty because of the refusal of City Departments heads to answer questions.

The Final Chapter

The Gordons and their Company were no strangers to major multiple alarm fires. This second fire lead to four deaths under ironic and eerie parallels between the Peterborough St blaze and a fire eight years earlier in the Gordon owned Sherry Biltmore Hotel at 146 Massachusetts Avenue, five alarm box 2321. The two fires were separated by a mere eighth of a mile!

As a result of the flammable plywood, it was recommended that Maurice Gordon face manslaughter charges. The charges were dropped to the lesser charge “failure to post two watchmen outside the hotel”. He plead “No Contest” paid a \$ 500.00 fine and left court a free man.

Maurice, lost both his father and stepmother in the Coconut Grove fire.

Son Robert and his family started new real estate ventures in Florida.

The family leaves behind in Boston a legacy of controversy and subpar apartment rentals.

As for the Boston Fire Department, despite the amount of rescues made no member was placed on the Role of Merit. Instead in General Order 13 dated April 2nd Commissioner Kelley and Chief Paul issued a commendation to all officers and firefighters who worked at the fire.

A total of 802 feet of ground ladders were thrown. Two deck guns, 26’s Sqrut boom and Aerial Tower 2 two bucket guns were used in addition to multiple big lines

Box 2341

50 Peterborough & 108 Jersey Streets

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Rescue	Chiefs
0033	2341	33, 37, 14	15, AT2		D-5
0034	W.F by L-15	22, Rescue Pumper			Div. 2
0035	2-2341 by L-15	10, 26, 39, 3, 42	13, 4		D-13 (SS Chief)
0039	3-2341 by D-5	8, 43, 25, 53, 11			
0040	Sp. Call		30, 18		
0046	4-2341 By C7	21, 32, 55, 20			C-2
0100	Sp. Call	40, Brookline E-1			
0102	5-2341 by C-2	51,34, 24, 41			
0122	Sp. Call	12			

Box 52 Member Recollections:

Paul Christian. “Engine 43 was assigned on the 3rd alarm. We could see the fire coming down Westland Ave.”

Kevin Mochen "Came in for the day shift and Captain Hawes told me they threw every ladder But a 28 ft and the 'Baby Bangor!"

Special thanks to members Paul Christian, William Noonan, Kevin Mochen, William Wilderman and the NFPA Library for their assistance in with preparing this article



**Cambridge Fire Department
International Farrar Hose Wagons
By member Edward Morrissey
Photos from the author's collection**

The Cambridge Fire Department like many cities ran two piece Engine Companies. The Companies consisted of a pump and a hose wagon. The concept started in the era of the Steamer which carried no hose and required a separate hose carriage.

When motorization of fire apparatus began CFD continued running hose wagons until May of 2000 when Engine 4, the last two piece company placed their Wagon out of service ending the tradition.

In 1966 Chief Cremins ordered a fleet of new wagons to replace all nine 1948 and 1949 GMC/Robinson hose wagons. The wagons were International chassis with hose body by Farrar.

They were equipped with a booster pump and 175 gal of water and a deck gun. The first 5 were delivered in July 1966 and assigned to Engines 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7. The final 4 were delivered in July 1967 and assigned to Engines 4, 5, 8 and 9.

Engine 7 wagon was the last in service it was replaced in June of 1985.

Serving the City through the 60 s 70 s and 1980's.



Engine Company 6's 1966 Wagon



Engine 4's wagon at a third alarm in Lechmere Square.



E9 wagon laying in from the pump. The wagons had two beds of 750 feet of 2 1/2 hose on each side.



Engine 3's wagon at work in Somerville.

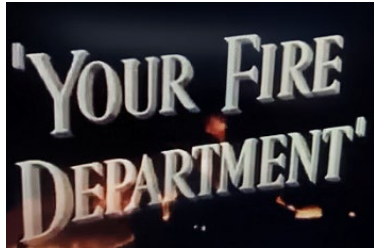
Assignments and Years' service

- E1 July 1966 - July 1977
- E2 July 1966 – Jan. 1982 transferred to E9 Jan 1982 to Dec 1982
- E3 July 1966 – Dec. 1982, transferred to E9 Dec 1982 -April 1984
- E4 July 1967 - April 1984 transferred to E9. April 1984 - Dec 1984
- E5 July 1967 - July 1979
- E6 July 1966 - March 1981
- E7 July 1966 - June 1985 (Last IH/Farrar in service)
- E8 July 1967 - June 1979 transferred to E5 -June 79- Feb 1982
- E9 July 1967 – Jan. 1982

A Sad End!



Engine 4's 1967 awaits disposal. It is battle worn and tired after hard service of 17 years.



LINE BOX PROFILE

City of Quincy

**By: Line Box Staffers Dave Parr and Mark Roche and
Box 52 member and Quincy Fire Lieutenant Chris Barry**

Photos courtesy of Mike Boynton and Mark Roche

Quincy is a city in Norfolk County, Massachusetts, and it is the largest city in the county. Quincy is part of the Greater Boston area as one of Boston's immediate southern suburbs. The population in 2025 was 103,919, making it the seventh-largest city in the state. Known as the "City of Presidents", Quincy is the birthplace of two U.S. presidents—John Adams and his son John Quincy Adams—as well as John Hancock, the first signer of the Declaration of Independence and the first and third governor of Massachusetts.

First settled in 1625, Quincy was briefly part of Dorchester before becoming the North Precinct of Braintree in 1640. In 1792, Quincy was split off from the Town of Braintree and was incorporated separately as the Town of Quincy; the new town was named after Colonel John Quincy, maternal grandfather of Abigail Adams and after whom John Quincy Adams was also named. Quincy became a city in 1888.

For over a century, Quincy was home to a thriving granite quarrying industry; the city was also the site of the Granite Railway, the United States' first commercial railroad. Shipbuilding at the Fore River Shipyard was another key contributor to the city's economy. In the 20th century, both Howard Johnson's and Dunkin' Donuts were founded in the city. Today, Quincy has developed into both a vibrant immigrant destination and a suburban business hub, and is considered attractive due to its safety, relatively large housing stock, and extensive connections to Boston.

Quincy shares borders with Boston to the north (separated by the Neponset River), Milton to the west, Randolph and Braintree to the south, and Weymouth (separated by the Fore River) and Hull (maritime border between Quincy Bay and Hingham Bay) to the east.

Quincy Bay, within city limits to the northeast, is part of Boston Harbor and Massachusetts Bay. There are several beaches in Quincy, including Wollaston Beach along Quincy Shore Drive.

Located on the western shore of Quincy Bay, Wollaston Beach is the largest Boston Harbor beach. Quincy's territory includes Hangman Island, Moon Island (restricted access, and all land is owned by the City of Boston), Nut Island (now a peninsula), and Raccoon Island in the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 26.9 square miles, of which 16.8 square miles is land and 10.1 square miles is water.

Although Quincy is primarily urban, 2,485 acres or fully 23 percent of its land area lies within the uninhabited Blue Hills Reservation, a state park managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. This undeveloped natural area encompasses the southwestern portion of Quincy and includes the city's highest point, Chickatawbut Hill.

The Quincy Fire Department is a full-time career fire department under the command of Interim, Chief Gary Smyth. The department is staffed with a total of 280 personnel split between line and staff positions. The Fire Suppression Division prevent fires and extinguishes fires should they occur; initiates technical rescue when necessary; responds to hazardous material incidents; performs in-service inspection and pre-fire planning; maintains first responder-staffed fire companies to respond to emergency medical calls and performs any other emergency services required throughout the city. The department intends to stand up its dive team during the summer of 2026.

To deliver these services, 13 fire companies manning eight engines, 4 ladder trucks, and a heavy rescue are housed in eight fire stations. The assigned personnel totals for the Fire Suppression Division are 4 Deputy Chiefs (Shift Commanders), 13 Captains, 43 Lieutenants, and 203 Firefighters. The Training/Safety Division is located at 115 Crescent Street on the campus of the St. Mary's Parish, and is staffed by 1 Captain, 2 Lieutenants – one of which is the department's Hazardous Materials Officer, and 2 firefighters. The Fire Prevention Division is located at the Public Safety Building at 1 Sea Street, and is staffed by a Deputy Chief, 1 Captain, 3 Lieutenants and 5 firefighters. The Fire Alarm Office is staffed by 1 Lieutenant and 12 firefighters. The Fire Alarm Maintenance Division is staffed by a Superintendent, a Foreman, and 1 Electrician. The Apparatus Maintenance Division is located at the Fore River Shipyard and is staffed by the Master Mechanic and 1 Motor Repairman.

The department works a 42-hour work week using 4 work groups or platoons. Suppression personnel work 24 hours on, 48 hours off, 24 hours on, 96 hours off (1-2-1-4). Fire Alarm Operators work a Day/Night, Day Off, Day/Night, 3 days off schedule. Firefighters are represented by Local 792 of the International Association of Firefighters. (IAFF).

The city operates a Gamewell Class A – 100 mil fire alarm box system, maintained by the Fire Alarm Maintenance Division. Fire alarms and 911 emergency calls are received and dispatched by firefighters operating out of a dispatch center located at Quincy Fire Headquarters at 26 Quincy Avenue. Quincy operates on a radio frequency of 483.5875 PL 131.8.

Typical response to alarms is one engine to still alarms; 1 engine and 1 ladder to street or master box alarms, and 3 engines, 1 ladder, the rescue and Deputy Chief Shift Commander to structural fires. The Deputy Chief is assigned an Incident Command Technician (ICT)

The QFD responded to 11520 runs in 2024. The busiest companies in 2024 were: Rescue 1 (2825 Runs), Engine 1 (1807 Runs) and Ladder 1 (1733 Runs). Along with protecting the City of

Quincy, the Quincy Fire Department is part of the MetroFire Association, a group of 38 Metropolitan Boston fire departments that entered into mutual aid agreements to provide fire and life safety protection to an area covering 351 square miles and serving 30% of the state's population. The department also provides mutual aid through Norfolk and Plymouth County Control as well as the Metro-Boston Homeland Security Region (UASI).

STATION LOCATIONS AND APPARATUS ROSTER

Headquarters Station – 40 Quincy Avenue (1938)

Engine 1 – 2017 KME Severe Service 1500/750

Ladder 1 – 2012 E-One Cyclone II 110' RMA

Rescue 1 – 2020 KME Severe Service Walk-In Heavy Rescue

Car 2 – 2025 Chevrolet Silverado 4x4 – Shift Commander



Atlantic Station – 311 Hancock Street (1963)

Engine 2 – 2021 KME Severe Service 1500/750

Ladder 5 – 2014 KME Predator 109/ RMA

Quincy Point Station – 615 Washington Street (1941)

Engine 3 – 2025 Spartan FB-94/Fouts 1500/1000



Special Hazards {H-2} – 2005 International/Hessco

Wollaston Station – 111 Beale Street (1900)

Engine 4 – 2025 Spartan FB-94/Fouts 1500/1000

Ladder 2 – 2019 KME Severe Service 101' TDA



West Quincy Station – 182 Copeland Street (1939)

Engine 5 – 2017 KME Severe Service 1500/750

SSU 2 – 1999 Ford F350/Omaha 150/300/AF

Hough's Neck Station – 1082 Sea Street (1951)

Engine 6 – 2007 E-One Typhoon 1500/500-Former E-4

Ladder 4 – 1992 Pierce Lance 1250/0 105' RMA (*former Two Rivers, WI*)

SSU 2 – 1999 Ford F350/Omaha 150/300/AF

Squantum Station – 86 Huckins Avenue (1943)

Engine 7 – 2007 E-One Typhoon 1500/500

Germantown Station – 126 Doane Street (1974)

Engine 8 – 2007 E-One Typhoon 1500/500-Former E-3

Maintenance – East Howard Street {Former Quincy Shipyard}

Fleet Services – M-1 2015 Chevrolet 2500HD 4x4 Utility

Fleet Services – M-2 2013 Ford Explorer

Fleet Services – Department Fueller-1995 Ford F350

Other and Spare Apparatus

Engine 9 - 1992 E-One Hurricane 1250/750 (*Reserve*) (*former Peterborough, NH*)-
Currently on-loan to Massport Logan Airport Fire Rescue

Engine 10 - 2003 Pierce Saber 1250/500 (*Reserve*) (*former Cambridge E-6 & E-10*)

Engine 11 - 2005 E-One Typhoon 1500/500 (*Reserve*) (*former E-1 & E-7*)

Engine 12 - 2002 Pierce Saber 1250/500 (*Reserve*) (*former Cambridge E-4 & E-8*)

Engine 13 - 2005 E-One Typhoon 1500/500 (*reserve*) (*former E-5 & E-6*)

Chief of Department – C-1 2020 Chevrolet Tahoe

Operations Chief – C-3 2025 Chevrolet Equinox

K-Deputy Vehicle: 2019 Chevrolet Silverado 1500

HazMat Officer – H-1 2025 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 Crew Cab

Car 15 – 2016 Ford Transit Van-Supply and Air Unit

Training and Safety Division – 2014 Ford F-250 4x4

Training and Safety Division – T-10 2020 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 Crew Cab

Training and Safety Division – T-12 2014 Ford Explorer

UTV – 2017 Kubota RTV

Prime Mover Unit – 2015 Ford F-250 4x4 – UASI Support

Tech Rescue Trailer

Mule – 2019 Kawasaki Mule Pro DXT

Fire Prevention:

2 - 2017 Chevrolet Malibu sedans

2020 Chevrolet Bolt

2022 Chevrolet Equinox

2 - 2025 Chevrolet Equinox

Quincy was known for having their apparatus painted all white during the 1950's and 1960's. They eventually switched to all-red apparatus in the 1970's and 1980's. Then in the 1990's, Quincy again switched their color scheme to white over red. They are now in the process of changing to the black over red concept.

ON ORDER AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- **3 Pumper and 2 Ladders on order from KME.**
 - **1 Engine and 1 Rear-Mount Ladder currently at mid-point with builder visit/inspection scheduled for late February 2026. Engine is a KME Severe Service, 750/1500 Waterous Pump (1 of 3). Aerial is a KME Tuff Truck, 103' Ladder. Tractor Tiller Aerial on order without delivery date at this time.**
 - **The 3 pumpers will likely go to Engines 5, 1, and 3 with Engine 3's Fouts Brothers going elsewhere (likely engine 6, 7 or 8).**
 - **The rear mount will be going to Ladder 5 and the TDA to Ladder 1-assuming the new headquarters project is completed as it will not fit in the existing building.**
- **Also: the former Harwich Ladder 66 that was running as L-1 was as totaled in a motor vehicle accident.**
- **New Fire Headquarters to be built on Quincy Avenue opposite current Headquarters**
- **Addition to West Quincy Station**

Past Apparatus



Engine 5 1964 1,000 foam equipped. Photo by member R. Washburn



Engine 7 1961 Seagrave 1000/400 on display at the 1962 IFBA Boston Convention. Display held at BFD Training Academy on Moon Island. Photo by late Bill Ryan, collection of member Michael Boynton



Ladder 3 1969 Maxim 85 ft. MMA. Photo by Byron Hurst, collection of member Michael Boynton



Rescue 1's 1973 Ford C/Providence Body. Photo by member John Pozard

The Famed Quincy Engine Company 'B' By Staff Writer Mark Roche

Quincy "Engine B" was a 1972 Ward La France 1000gpm pumper. It was placed in service on February 9, 1973. Engine B replaced "Hose 1", a 1952 Seagrave Hose & Deluge wagon.



Photo collection of member Mark Roche

The first Company Commander of Engine B was Captain Edward O'Connell

It is believed that Engine B received the "B" designated by former Chief Edward F. Barry who served as Chief of Department from 1967-1975.

In later years, Engine B was pre-designated Engine 9 before being disbanded

During its first year in service, Engine B responded to Chelsea on October 14, 1973 at 1633 hours and operated their deck gun at Spruce & Elm Streets, while using their booster line to protect the engine from extreme heat and flying brands. They were later forced to retreat further down Elm St at Everett Ave. After operating for a long period of time, they were sent to the Texaco Terminal on Marginal St to refuel. Once refueled, the company was ordered to stage in the parking area of St Rose Church until released at 0030 hours on October 15.



The famous Engine B 1972 Ward La France S/N #80-738. Photo by member John Pozark.

More Information on the Q.F.D.

For more information and photos on the Quincy Fire Department, please check out members

John Galla's Firenews.org site link <https://www.firenews.org/mass/p/quincy/quincy.html>

Mike Boynton's Massfiretrucks.com link <https://massfiretrucks.com/MASS%20Q.htm>


Boscawen, NH
2nd Alarm
December 1, 2025
All photos by member Jay Heath

2-Alarm fire in Boscawen NH where the Concord crews made a second attempt to rescue an occupant and was found. He did not survive but the crews put themselves in grave danger to find him.





'Jeep' *FIRE TRUCK*

A red Jeep fire truck is shown from a side-rear perspective. It has a ladder mounted on the roof and various firefighting equipment. Three firefighters in dark uniforms and helmets are visible: one is standing on the back of the truck, another is seated in the driver's seat, and a third is partially visible behind the front seat. A red banner is attached to the side of the truck.

STURDY, EFFICIENT
MANEUVERABLE
ECONOMICAL
LOW IN COST

POWERED BY THE WAR-PROVED 'JEEP' ENGINE