



THE LINE BOX

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Boston Multiple Alarms February – April 2014

Date	Box	District	Address	Building Type
02/01	7-1583	D-4	31 Mass. Ave,	6-8 story brick OMD
02/04	2-1535	D-4	553 Boylston St.	4 story brick OMD
02/27	2-319	D-7	24 Freeman St.	2.5 story wood frame
03/04	7-2142	D-7	124-126 Warren St.	1 story wood commercial
03/15	2-6164	D-1	132 Bennington St	2 story brick tax payer
03/25	2-3638	D-8	44 Deering Rd.	3 story wood frame
03/26*	9-1579	D-4	289 Beacon St.	4 story brick/wood OMD
03/28	2-5428	D-11	40 Bayard St.	2.5 story wood frame
04/01	2-7423	D-6	51-52-53 Thomas Pk.	3 story brick dwellings
04/09	8-6172	D-1	81-85 Lexington St.	2.5 & 3 story wood frames
04/16	3-3624	D-12	27 Hansborough St	2.5 wood frame dwellings Gas explosion
04/20	2-219	D-9	55 Brookledge St	4 story brick OMD
04/26	2-1382	D-3	119 Charles St	4 story brick mercantile/OMD above

** Lt. Edward Walsh E-33 and FF. Michael Kennedy L-15 killed in the Line of Duty*

Box 1579 298 Beacon Street

Anybody who was listening to their scanner radio thought that this was going to be a regular job for the BFD. How wrong we all were.....A mere eight minutes into the box first due Engine 33 reported a "**MAYDAY**!" The next few minutes had some of the most harrowing radio transmission on a BFD channel in many, many years! Just two minutes after the transmission of the **MAYDAY**, District 3, who was assigned on the box as the RIT Chief, reported a **Back Draft** had occurred and he skipped the third alarm and struck the fourth alarm.

The fire building was 4 and 5 story brick and wood apartment house. At the time of the fire, the temp. was 16 degrees and the wind, gusting off the Charles River up to 60 MPH.

The fire claimed the lives of Fire Lieutenant Edward J. Walsh of Engine 33 and Firefighter Michael Kennedy of Ladder 15, detailed to Engine 33.

Despite the tragic loss of two members, the Boston Fire Department acted in the most professional manner during and after the fire, and in so doing served with the highest traditions of the Fire Service.

Time line for the fire

1442	Box 1579 E-33, 7, 22 L24, 26 R-1 District 4
1445	By FAO RIT & Rehab E-37, L-17, TL3 , RHU, H-1, D-3 (RIT)
1448	2-1579 b/o D-4 E-3, 4, 39 L-15 , SU, ASU, TaC, A-65, A-10, D-6, D-7, C-6
1450	MAYDAY! By Engine 33 E-29, L-21, R-2 D-9(RIT), C-7(RIT)
1452	BACKDRAFT! Reported by District 3
1453	3-1579 b/o D-3 E-10, 17, L-18 4-1579 b/o D-3 E-24, 42
1457	5-1579 b/o C-6 E-29, 42, L-14 , C-1, C-2, K-1
1508	6-1579 b/o C-6 E-5, 55 7-1579 b/o C-6 E-32, 28, L-4
1510	Spec. Call b/o C-6 1 extra engine E-2
1513	8-1579 b/o C-6 E-30, 2 9-1579 b/o C-6 E-21, 49
1528	Spec. Call b/o C-6 1 extra ladder L-16
1549	Spec. Call b/o C-6 1 extra ladder TL-10
1631	Spec. Call b/o C-1 1 extra engine E-16
0740	All out 1579
1000	Signal 10-15 transmitted for Lt. Walsh & FF Kennedy



Rear of the building. Photo by Member Douglas Boudrow

BFD Doin's

In the City, all of the KME Foam Pumpers have now been delivered, and as of this date Engines 3, 5 and 41 are in service. Also in service is the former Boston Haz Mat truck, now serving second life as the Department Collapse Unit. Within the next few months, Boston's new KME Tower Ladder is expected to arrive at the dealer, and we should also know what manufacturer will be awarded the contract for the new Rescue 1.



Boston Engine 4



Collapse Unit. Both photos by Member Michael Boyton

Apparatus News

By Michael Boyton

Metro Fire communities have also been active with new deliveries in recent weeks and months. Waltham and Lynn have placed their new Seagraves in service. Waltham Engines 1 and 8 and Lynn Engine 1 are now on the streets of their respective communities. Woburn has received the first Pierce Dash CF pumper in Massachusetts and assigned it as Engine 2. This assignment is expected to be the first step in a redeployment plan for Woburn apparatus & personnel. Engine 2 replaces the Ladder 2 company, with Ladder 2 now becoming a spare aerial for the City. We will watch for additional changes as they occur in the next several months. Elsewhere in Metro, Needham's new Engine 3 has arrived. It is a 2014 KME Quint with a 79' RMA. It replaces the 1994 E-One Quint. Weston has taken delivery of a 2014 E-One Typhoon E-Max pumper as Engine 3.

The current E-3 will be reassigned as E-1, with E-1 to E-2 and E-2 to E-4. Lexington also has received an E-One Typhoon for Engine 4. Coming soon to Metro include new rigs for Brookline (KME Pumper), Quincy (KME Ladder), Newton (E-One Light Rescue), and Malden (Pierce Pumper).

MetroFire

Boston - Rehab Collapse 1 - 1997 Freightliner/Hackney (Former HazMat Unit)

Lexington - NEW Engine 4 - 2014 E-One Typhoon 1250/500/30F

Lynn - NEW Engine 1 - 2013 Seagrave Marauder II 1750/750/30F

Needham - NEW Engine 3 - 2014 KME Predator 1500/300 79' RMA

Waltham - NEW Engines 1 & 8 - 2014 Seagrave Marauder II 1250/500/30F

Weston - NEW Engine 3 - 2014 E-One Typhoon E-Max 1250/750/30F

Woburn - NEW Engine 2 - 2013 Pierce Dash CF 1250/750

Outside Of Metro Boston

Framingham - NEW Engine 1 - 2014 Pierce Arrow XT 1500/750/100B

Dudley - NEW Ladder 1 - 2014 Sutphen 100' MMA

Hanover - NEW Squad 1 - 2013 Ford F-550/Fire-1 4x4 250/200/15F

Kingston - NEW Engine 1 - 2014 Ferrara Igniter 1500/750/30F

Tisbury - NEW Squad 641 - 2014 Ford F-450/Fire-1 4x4

Westport - NEW Engine 3 - 2013 E-One Typhoon 1250/1100/30F



Lynn Engine 1



Needham E-3 Quint



Weston Engine 3



Framingham Engine 1

Fire Duty!



Quincy Companies going to work on Clement Terrace. Photo by Member Michael Worley



South Shore mutual aid working at a 3 bagga in Cohasset.



Cambridge job on Mass Ave Central Square, both photos by Member Peter Aloisi



This 3 bagga at Suffolk Downs heavily damaged a building. Photo by Member Douglas Boudrow

Box 52 report on the fire as published in the September 1964 Newsletter

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BELLFLOWER STREET FIRE.

"THE FOLLOWING BELLFLOWER STREET FIRE REPORT IS A COMPOSITE OF THE OFFICAL BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND TIMES RECEIVED FRM MR. WILLIAM WERNER, THE NOTED BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN.

THE EDITOR GREATFULLY ACKNOWLDGES THE KINDNESS OF BOTH ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF JOHN E. CLOUGHERTY, AND MR. WILLIAM WERNER FOR PERMITTING THE 'NEWSLETTER' TO PUBLISH THIS REPORT."



Photo from collection of member W. Noonan

THE INITIAL ALARM

1.) On Friday, May 22, 1964 at 1:38PM, Boston Fire Department Fire Alarm Personnel, experienced in the ways of frightened persons, reacted smoothly when a woman's voice telephoned and reported a fire in the rear of No. 26 Bellflower Street and the hurriedly left the instrument saying, - - "I've got to get out of here!" Mrs. Salvatore Sabella residing at No. 24 Bellflower Street made that call as a result of chatting with a neighbor on the street when the neighbor suddenly exclaimed, "look, Mrs. Walsh's house is on fire!" Mrs. Sabella hurried across the street to her apartment and immediately telephoned the fire department.

Fire Alarm Operator Frank Leahan on the switchboard receiving the call at 1:38 PM.. teamed up with Operator Frank Whelan on the Fire Alarm Radio (KCA-591), 33.70 Mc.) to transmit the still alarm assignment to E-21 (642 Columbia Rd. corner of Annabel St.) which had just left quarters on in-service inspections approximately one-half mile from Bellflower Street and to Ladder 20 in their quarters (900 Massachusetts Avenue) one mile away. Simultaneously, Fire Alarm Operator Edward Burke, as a result of this call, had set up and was transmitting Box 7251 over the tapper and gong system, even before the still alarm notification had been completed.

District Fire Chief John Greene of District 6 (Car 6) was leaving the quarters of Engine 39 at 344 Congress Street and promptly notified the Fire Alarm Office by radio that he was responding to box 7251 – Dorchester Avenue and Dorset Street. With the striking of the box Engine 43 and Ladder 7 immediately responded to complement the initial still alarm response.

INTRODUCTION

2.) The general location in which the fire occurred is in an area of Boston known as Dorchester near its division with south Boston and is the approximate center of triangularly shaped section bordered by Dorchester Avenue and Boston Street with Mt. Vernon Street at its base. Dorchester Avenue and Boston Street meet at Andrew Square to form an acute angle with both streets bridging the Southeast Expressway, 1 6 lane divide highway running from the north to south and through the City and located in excess of 300 feet northeast of the fire area. Roughly paralleling Mt. Vernon Street at the base of the triangle, are Harvest, Dorset, Bellflower, Howell, Washburn and Rawson Streets, each diminishing in length, and each communication between Boston Street and Dorchester Avenue. After Rawson Street, this communication is interrupted by the bridge arrangement over the Southeast Expressway.

For the most part, the structures within this triangle are well kept, three story three family frame with a few one or two family dwellings interspersed. The general ages of the building is approximately 60 years old and were constructed when industrial and mercantile requirements brought about housing for workers and reduced transportation needs from private to public. With a lessening of these requirements for employees and greater mobility engendered by motor vehicles and highways, it might be readily assumed that there was a gradual deterioration in areas of this type. This was not the case, for it was extremely well-kept and well cared for neighborhood. Construction features were similar, box-shaped structures 25 feet in width, of depth averaging 50 feet with a 7 foot porch extending almost the entire width of each, almost without exception, the buildings were separated by narrow passageways of 12 to 15 feet, on each side with yards to the rear and were on lot sizes averaging 35 X 100 feet. Exteriors were shingles, asphalt, insul brick, asbestos, or clapboard sidings. Street widths, including the sidewalk approximated 40 feet. Rubbish barrels, in keeping with usual practice, were stored under or near rear porches at ground level. Friday, May 22, was a rubbish collection day in the area.

METEOROLOGICAL FACTORS

3.) For a period of several days preceding the fire, the Boston area experienced cool, pleasant weather with temperatures averaging 67 degrees on May 19th, 60 degrees on the 20th and 50 degrees on the 21st. On the day of the fire the following conditions were recorded:

	<u>12 Noon</u>	<u>1 PM</u>	<u>2 PM</u>	<u>3 PM</u>	<u>4 PM</u>
Temperature	68	76	76	77	78
Wind Direction	WSW	WSW	WSW	SW	WSW
Wind Gusts	19	21-31	19-30	17-30	22-31
Humidity	53%	37%	37%	36%	38%

It is interesting to note that similar conditions had prevailed in the area for several days before the fire/ What is more significant is that the strong winds combined with the 8 and 10 degree increase in temperature had caused a reduction in the humidity of 16% in a period of one hour, which no doubt contributed to the further drying out of materials exposed to this weather combination. This drying out process had been taking place for a lengthy period preceding the fire for no rain had fallen since April 26th.

WATER SUPPLIES

4.) Boston Street, Dorchester Avenue and Bellflower Street were supplied with twelve inch water mains; Washburn Street and eight inch main, Dorest and Howell Streets with six inch mains. Hydrant arrangements and distribution for the area is normal. No hydrants were reported as inoperative, The Metropolitan District Commission was advised early in the fire of the anticipated need to assure an adequate supply of water available. The estimated fire flow called for during the fire was 19,300 GPM the total amount of hose utilized to move this water to the fire area totaled 43,450 feet. A breakdown follows:

<u>NUMBER OF LINES</u>	<u>TIP SIZE</u>	<u>DISCHARGE VOL.</u>	<u>TOTAL GPM</u>
42 Handlines	1 inch	250 GPM	10,500
12 Heavy Appliances	1 ½ inch	600 GPM	7,200
16 1 ½ inch Handlines	Variable	100 GPM	1,600

In analyzing the volume discharge per minute at this fire, the efficiency of handlines as compared to heavy stream appliances or compared volumetrically. Per unit would be as follows: 10,500 GPM is to 42 handlines as 7,200 GPM is to 12 heavy stream appliances. This appears to indicate heavily in favor of heavy stream appliances, except that the factor of mobility of lines was extremely important for as the fire moved, which it did in an area of two acres and changing shape as it progressed; firefighters moved with it to meet it at every extension and exposure. It becomes very apparent as a result of this fire, that mobility of water streams is a concept not previously accorded its rightful importance in the case of a conflagration.

CIRCUMSTANCES PRECEEDING THE FIRE

5.) On the day of the fire, rubbish collections were in progress in the area and in fact on the street where the fire originated. Rubbish barrels had been moved to the street fronts for pick up. Mrs. Lloyd Reutinger, resident at No. 26 Bellflower Street attempted to enter her apartment (top floor) as did Mrs. Walsh (first floor), but the rubbish collectors, noting the speed the fire was moving, entered the building and evacuated the occupants, in one case dropping the tenant from the second floor front porch into the arms of other rubbish collectors in the street. Several fire alarm boxes in the area were pulled after the transmittal of the nearest box and the first due engine and truck were proceeding to the scene.

THE FIRE

<u>Time</u>	<u>Box/Still/Other</u>	<u>Engines</u>	<u>Ladder</u>	<u>Other</u>
1:38 PM	Still	21	20	Car 6
1:39 PM	Box 7251	(21) 43	(20) 7	(Car 6)

At 1:40 PM Fire Lieutenant James D. Kennedy of L-20 arriving with E-21 at Boston Street turned the corner into Bellflower Street and notes the huge volume of fire erupting from the second and third floor fronts of 24 and 26. He immediately ordered the transmittal of a second alarm. He directed that Ladder 20 be backed out of Bellflower Street to permit E-21 and E-43 responding on the box to gain proximity on what appeared to be the path the fire most likely follow, Ladder 7 entered Bellflower Street from Dorchester Avenue side and approached the fire buildings. Ladder 20 was advised that there were people in No. 26 Bellflower St. and that a woman was lying on the sidewalk between numbers 26 and 28. The woman was located and promptly removed from the scene, however it was impossible to attempt search and rescue in the buildings involved for every effort was bent on then getting water to the scene of the fire.

Engine 21 proceeded to set up a gun to operate in numbers 24 and 26 Bellflower St. Engine 43 recognized that a heavy stream appliance required time to connect, ran a 2 ½ handline from their pumper to the scene of the fire and started operating on the fire. Ladder 20 using a hose line from Engine 21, ran a second 2 ½ handline and carried down the alley between 26 and 28 Bellflower Street into the backyards to operate on the rear of number 26m but the heat was so intense and flames threatening to engulf them at this point they were forced to drop the line and escape down the alley between 28 and 30. With the now learned knowledge that No. 26 was doomed, Ladder 20 was forced to back towards No. 30 and direct their efforts to stop the spread of fire toward No. 28. Ladder 7 was on the southeasterly side of Bellflower Street evacuating occupants of buildings in the fire's path.

At 1:42 PM, District Chief Greene (Car 6) arrived at the corner of Bellflower and Boston Streets and reported "off at 7251." Quickly noting the volume of fire, wind directions, the congested character of the neighborhood, the heat, intensity and the many things visible to his trained eye, directed that a third alarm be transmitted.

The Acting Chief of Department John E. Clougherty (C-2A) had been advised of the striking of the second alarm by radio. Deputy Chief Fred Claus of Division 1 (C-6) had advised Fire Alarm that he was preceding to 3-7251 at 1:44 PM. District Chief Greene, upon leaving District 6's car, hurried up Bellflower Street to better appraise the fire's extent. Noting that it was extending by radiated heat to the rear of buildings on Dorset Street and racing with the wind in a general northeasterly direction, immediately proceeded to Ladder 7 and ordered a fourth alarm be transmitted.

At 1:45 PM Chief Greene directed Fire Alarm "have 3 engine companies come into Bellflower Street by way of Dorchester Ave. and run three big lines for heavy stream operations." Upon looking northwesterly towards Boston Street, Chief Greene realized that he could not return on Bellflower Street for the fire was even then jumping across the street and involving structures on the odd numbered side. Rapidly accelerating his appraisal of the situation, he continued to use Ladder 7's radio to order a fifth alarm, but radio traffic due to instructions being transmitted to companies enroute to the fire was so heavy, he could not break in although he proceeded his call with the words, "Urgent!, Urgent!"

At 1:45 PM Deputy Chief Claus reported off at 7251 and hurrying to the command car (the District Car becomes Communications Center) was furnished with a rapid briefing of what had preceded, quickly evaluating the situation he ordered the striking of the fifth alarm.



Photo from Collection of Member W. Noonan

The fire had now reached conflagration proportions. The situation was critical although all the decisive commands to forge a defense ring had been given by 1:48 PM, the element of time was now to determine the success or failure of the entire effort. The buildings involved had grown to include No's 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 Bellflower Street and 25, 29, 31, 33, 37, 41 Dorset Street. The heat wave being generated was being transmitted by high winds and whipping through the alleys between the buildings creating a force like driven vortex of fire which appeared to cause materials with which it contacting to disintegrate and thus add more substance to those sparks and fire brands being carried through out the area.

The Acting Chief of Department re-appraising the situation knew that:

- 1.) The edges of the fire must be compressed to reduce the length of the fire front.
- 2.) Heavy stream appliances would be necessary to overcome radiant heat on Dorset Street
- 3.) The severest exposures had to be protected.
- 4.) Both heavy streams and handlines would be necessary to extinguish once confinement had been accomplished.
- 5.) That time and more help were needed.

The All-Out was sounded 8 hours and 18 minutes after the original still alarm assignment. At the height of the conflagration when the specter of disaster was visible on every side, the Boston Fire Department called for Mutual Aid assistance. Without hesitation, neighboring cities and towns from as far north as Lawrence 30 miles away, Norwood 15 miles away to the west, Holbrook 20 miles to the south and almost every municipality and military installation within a 15 mile radius of Boston responded and was represented in the movement of apparatus into the actual fire area or into covering assignments in Boston or as escalated by mutual aid assignment. At the height of mutual aid response, covering companies accounted for 75% of the engine company strength in the City. Every Boston fire district was staffed with only one Boston Engine, all others being mutual aid companies.

CONCLUSION

7.) It is an interesting point that the fire which originated at No. 26 Bellflower Street, originated in an asphalt shingle clad building. Of the number of buildings involved, the

majority were clapboard covered, three were asphalt shingle clad, and some were asbestos shingle clad, it is the considered opinion of the members of the Boston fire Department that the asphalt shingled buildings contributed materially to the intensity of this fire. All buildings burned with great rapidity as the fire gained momentum regardless of the type siding, but it should be pointed out that two of the buildings adjacent to the fire area are still standing, whose exterior were asbestos shingled, even though some damage was suffered they were not destroyed. In retrospect, the Bellflower Street fire saw the greatest accumulation of apparatus and personnel in the City of Boston in this century meet a challenge and emerge the victor.

RESPONSE TIMELINE

All times are PM unless otherwise noted

Time	Response
1:38	Still alarm 26 Bellflower St Engine 21, Ladder 20 , Car 6
1:39	Box 7251 transmitted Engine 43, Ladder 7
1:40	2-7251 B/O Ladder 20. Engines 1, 17, 12, 7 Ladders 3, 4 Rescue C6
1:43	3-7251 B/O Car 6 Engines 3, 24, 25, 37
1:44	4-7251 B/O Car 6 Engines 10, 53, 56, 39
1:46	5-7251 B/O C6 Engines 50, 20, 34, 40
1:48	Signal 10-41 Reduced assignments in effect
1:50	Special Call by C6 5 extra engines. Engines 16, 42, 55, 32, 5
1:53	Special Call by C6 6 extra engines. Engines 13, 45, 26, 9, 51, 33
2:00	B/O C2-A " Send everything available to the fire!
2:02	B/O C2-A "Send Mutual Aid to the fire and all available help to the fire!"
2:19	Special Call by C2-A 3 extra engines. Engines 2, 28, 52
2:29	Special Call by FAO 3 Ladders for brand patrol 13, 18, 29
2:45	Signal 10-21-67 Groups 6 & 7 to return to duty
2:49	Special Call by C2-A 3 extra engines. Engines 18, 41, Quincy E-2
9:56	All Out 7251

MUTUAL AID COMPANIES TO THE FIRE

Arlington E-1	L-2
Belmont E-2	
Cambridge Engines 1 & 5	
Chelsea E-2	
Everett E-5	
Hanscom AFB Engine 1 & 13	
Holbrook	L-1
Lawrence	Rescue 1
Lynn E-4	
Medford E-1	
Needham E-3	
Quincy Engines 2 & 4	
Revere E-4	
Waltham E-2	
Watertown	L-1
Wellesley E-3	
Weymouth E-2	
Winchester E-2	
Winthrop E-2	
Woburn E-4	

MUTUAL AID COMPANIES COVERING

Belmont E-3 at Engine 34
Brookline E-1 at Engine 37, E-7 at Engine 42
Cambridge E-2 at Engine 10. E-3 at Engine 26
Chelsea E-1 at Engine 9
Dedham E-3 at Engine 55
Everett E-3 at Engine 50
Hingham E-2 at Engine 20
Lexington E-1 at Engine 25
Melrose E-3 at Engine 8
Milton E-1 at Engine 16
Navy Yard at Engine 39
Newton E-1 at Engine 28, E-8 at Engine 51
Norwood E-2 at Engine 30
Quincy E-5 at Engine 17, E-7 at Engine 52
Reading E-2 at Engine 7
Somerville E-2 at Engine 32
Watertown E-2 at Engine 41, E-3 at Engine 33
Weymouth N.A.S at Engine 18
Winthrop E-3 at Engine 56

COMING EVENTS

June 1st Fall River Fall River Fire Museum 's 6th Annual Truck Show

June 14th Wakefield Muster

June 20-22 New England Fire Chief's Show at the Big E in West Springfield

June 22 Rhode Island Antique Fire Apparatus Society's 10th Annual Show

July 3 Annual Night Before the 4th Fire Parade

July 12 & 13 Wareham, MA 275th Anniv. Including fire parade and Fire Muster

July 26, 2014 5th Annual Silver City Fire Fest in Meriden, CT.

September 4th thru 7th IFBA Convention in Dallas