

# BOX 52 ASSOCIATION



## THE LINE BOX

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Vol. 14 No. 4

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Welcome to the fourth edition of this years LINE BOX. In this issue we complete the BFD Riot Procedures with the third and final installment covering the apparatus protection.

Next we move on to the historic Town of Lexington where we cover five multiple alarms from Box 7 for the same building starting in 1929 and ending a week before the building was to be razed in 1971.

Next up is a story of the Summer Street Bridge fire in May of 1968 with some great photos courtesy of member Bill Noonan taken by Boston Fire Alarm Operator Al Bowers.

And as usual a few surprises along the way.



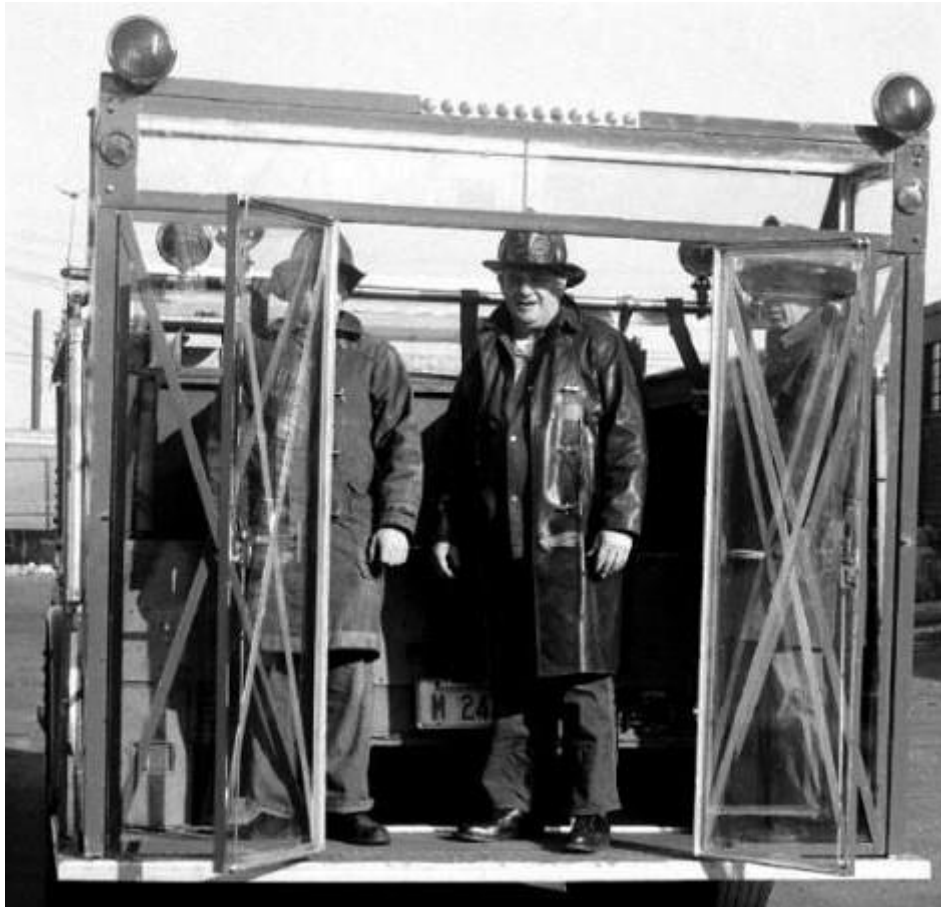
New Boston Tower Ladder 3 photo by member Michael Boynton

### **BFD Riot Procedures Part 3 Member Protection**

In 1967 the majority of the apparatus fleet was open cab. It would not be till 1968 with the delivery of the Ward La France pumps and the American La France tillers would there be closed roofs over riding positions.

After the sniper attack on Lt. Joseph Donovan of Ladder 4 during the Welfare Riot in June of 1967. Chief of Department John Clougherty meet with shop personnel to develop some type of protection for members riding out in the open on the apparatus. After some discussion plans were drawn up for a simple but effective means of protection.

The Shop swung into action and using angle iron steel and heavy plexi-glass they were able to offer the firefighters some rudimentary protection from the rocks, bottles and bricks being hurled at the apparatus as they responded. The early design on pumps featured a folding door along the back step.



Members of Ladder 20 posing with the new folding back step doors. Photo courtesy of member W. Noonan.

The doors proved impractical and were removed. The crew was still protected to the top and sides. The cab was also protected all around as well



Engine 24 using a spare 1957 B Mack, shows the back step. Photo courtesy of Tom McLaughlin Boston Fire Dogs.



Boston E-5 pump 1948 Mack. Photo by member F. San Severino





Ladder 29's junior aerial with the 'Phone Booth' on the side. Photo by member F. San Severino

The Shops gave this protection to as many rigs as they could. However, as 1968 arrived the BFD took delivery of closed cab apparatus directly from the manufacturers of American La France and Ward La France. Now for our younger readers, the term 'closed cab' meant a roof over the seating area. If you were riding in the jump seats you had head and side protection. If it was raining you got soaked with the water coming off the roof!

American La France delivered 4 100 foot tractor drawn aerials with fully enclosed tiller seats to Ladder Companies 4, 7, 20, 23. Another three of these rigs were delivered in 1970 and assigned to Ladders 4, 7, and 30



Ladder 30 1970 ALF 100 Ft. TDA. Photo by Member F. San Severino

At the same time 13 Ward La France pumps were received and assigned to Engines 12, 14, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 26, 37, 42, 52 and the RPU. These pumps saw years and years of hard service and wound up serving all over the City. The front windows of these rigs were made of heavy plexi-glass.

The next group of apparatus purchased were the 1970 Hahn's followed by deliveries of Maxim aerials from 1971-1973. These apparatus were equipped by the Shops with the plexi-glass windshield protection and this was also included on the windshield of the tiller seat.



Ladder 4 shows off its plexi-glass on its 1973 Maxim, Photo by member F. San Severino

After the delivery of the Maxim's, which included three pumps. The next apparatus purchased in 1976 were five Ward La France pumps and ten Seagrave tillers all of which were the first fully enclosed cab apparatus in the Boston Fire Department.



Engine 16's 1976 Ward La France pump with enclosed cab and the familiar plexi-glass covering. Photo by Member F. San Severino

Now in 2018, all apparatus features fully closed cabs offering protection to the crews, a far cry from the Shop built protection.



**Summer Street Bridge Fire**  
**Tuesday May, 14<sup>th</sup> 1968**  
**Fire Photos by Albert Bowers Jr. Collection of Member William Noonan**

In 1968 that area of the Fort Point Channel and the Boston Wharf Company was still a thriving area various industries, printing plants, manufacturing of various items. Engine Company 39 and Ladder 18 stood guard against fire in the congested area from their quarters at 344 Congress St.

Just past the loft buildings, was the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad's First St, Yards. Here, were located many freight houses and mazes of tracks serving the still bustling waterfront and the South Boston Army Base. The New Haven also interchanged with the Union Freight Railroad, knick-named 'The Railroad that come out at night'.

New Haven RR freight sheds Numbers 6 and 8 carried the address of 395 and 397 Congress Street. Were on opposite sides of the tracks and extended under the Summer Street Bridge. Freight House # 8 was a three story brick freight house 50x75 feet with a one story wood and tin addition of the same dimensions. Freight house # 6 was a one story brick 50x300 feet structure on the far side of the bridge. The summer Street Bridge was a four span steel bridge with a wooden under deck and an asphalt roadway.



New Haven's First Street Yard with the Summer Street Bridge in the background. Photo by Edgar Gunea  
Courtesy of the Cornell University Library/

The crew at the fire house were standing outside enjoying the spring night, It had been a great day with temps in the low 70's and at 2200 hrs it was still 66 degrees with a light breeze from the south east at 10 to 15 mph. They were watching the parade of trucks up and down Congress Street and watching the Railway Express Agency mechanics work on trucks in the large garage opposite the station. The talk was of the Sox's win in the tenth inning when Ken Harrelson hit a sacrifice fly ball that allowed Carl Yaztremski to score the winning run in a 5 to 4 against the Washington Senators. In the background the sounds of the freight yard could be heard.

Meanwhile across the City in the Fire Alarm office the circuits started to bang out box 711 Summer and A Streets. As the rounds of the box were still coming in, the phone lines lit up reporting that the Summer Street Bridge was on fire!

At Engine 39, they didn't need the house patrol to tell them where the box was, they could see it! They came out of the doors and headed for the box. Ladder 18 reported a Code 8 breakdown and the crew ran to the fire. Fire Alarm sent the next due truck, Ladder 17.



Lt, Montague of Engine 39 wasting no time ordered the Working Fire. It was three minutes from the time of the box! Car 6 and C6 with both assigned on the box and were on the way. Car 6 with District Chief Greene and C6 Acting Deputy Chief McCarthy.

As C6 was coming down Congress Street couldn't believe what he was seeing...the girders on the Summer Street Bridge were glowing red! He ordered a second alarm at 2303 hours. Both Chiefs arrived and after a fast look around Chief McCarthy ordered the third alarm at 2305 and a minute later the fourth alarm was ordered. Railroad workers shouted that a tank car loaded with propane and two trailers loaded with chemicals under the bridge had exploded from the heat of the burning freight sheds.

Companies responding were getting in to action as fast as possible. Companies started to advise C6 that water pressure in the area was getting low. Chief McCarthy assigned District Chief McLaughlin of District 12 who was responding on the second alarm as the water supply officer. C2 Chief of Department Clougherty arrived, quickly conferred with Chiefs Greene and McCarthy and then ordered the fifth alarm.

The fire continued to burn everything in its path. It was out of control, companies were having water problems. The Chiefs realized that even with the fifth alarm and the 20 engine companies already working, he needed more lines and heavy stream appliances. The first of what would total nine special calls for an additional 21 engine companies, along with both fireboats to respond to supplement the water supply.

The special calls for engines weren't the only ones, four additional Ladders were also special called. At the height of the fire all but four Boston engines were working at the fire! The fire raged out of control for nearly three hours before the battle turned in favor of the BFD. The flames and

smoke plume could be seen for miles around and many spectators flocked to the scene and quickly overwhelmed the Police. Sailors and Marines from the Fargo Building and provided assistance with traffic.

As the Companies worked to contain the fire, multiple lines were run off the Engine 31 and 47 who were pumping at near their 6,000 gpm capacity. They had tied up near Commonwealth Pier and relays were set up with many of the special called pumps. Chief Clougherty had also requested the Water Dept. to boost pressure in the area.



With the water supply problems finally solved the Department renewed its efforts to try and contain the fire. Heavy streams appliances were now able to pound the fire and numerous companies with big lines were hard at work. Even with the herculean effort the fire was still raging out of control at 0300. Heavy fire conditions and toxic punishing smoke still permeated the area.

Meanwhile as the fire fight was going on, Fire Alarm was fighting their own battle to ensure that the City had proper fire coverage. As a result Fire Alarm made the its first special coverage call above the normal fifth alarm coverage was for Engine 18 to cover Engine 1 and CD-10 to cover Engine 43 at 2324 hours. The first call from special mutual aid was made at 2354 for Brookline Ladder 2 to cover Ladder 15. As more special calls were made for additional companies it became apparent that extensive mutual aid coverage would be needed. The recently enacted riot procedure mutual aid was quickly put into place and by 0600 35 mutual aid engines and six ladders companies.

As morning broke over the scene, the weary Jakes were wet and exhausted and counting the minutes till the reliefs got to the scene. The day crew was in for a very long day at the fire. 1800 hours came and the beat day crew turned the fire over to the night platoon. Companies had been released back to their quarters to get them in service as





fast as they could. Thousands of feet of dry hose was needed, the wet hose to be dried, equipment found and cleaned and if lost replaced. During the afternoon Chief Clougherty ordered a crane to the scene to knock down what was left of Freight House Number 8 so that crews could get to the pockets of fire.

As the sun started to set at 1930 hours nearly 19 hours after box 711 was transmitted over 26 fire companies under the command of Division 1 and Car 6 were still on the scene and wetting down the hotspots. With the exception of Ladder Company 8 the second due truck on the box, all other first alarm companies were still working.

Companies remaining on scene were: Engines 1, 2, 3, **7**, 9, 21, 24, **25**, 26, 28, 34, 37, **39**, 42, 43, 48, 50, and 53. **Ladder Companies 13, 17, 18, Rescue**, Lighting Plants 1 & 2, Command Post 4. *(Companies in bold face are first alarm companies – Editor).*

Mutual aid was still covering the following stations: at Engine 42 was Brookline E7, Cambridge E2 was at Engine 39, Charlestown Navy Yard E4 was at Engine 2's house, Malden E6 was covering E-25's Fort Hill Square station. At Engine 43 was Needham E7, Newton E3 was covering the South End from E-3's house on Harrison Ave and Somerville Aux. E9 was covering at Engine 1.

At 2200 hours, just 58 minutes shy of 24 hours C6 called for the first fire detail of five Engine Companies: 5, 8, 30, 32, 51, and 52.

These detail companies were relieved at 0300 hours on May 16<sup>th</sup> when another five engines were assigned. Engines 11, 20, 29, 36 and 45 stayed at the scene until relieved by the third and last detail at 0800 hours by Engines 2 and 42. The allout had been transmitted at 0725 hours on May 16<sup>th</sup> after 32 hours and 27 minutes.

The dollar loss for the fire was a total of 3 million dollars, 2 million for the loss of the Summer Street Bridge and another million for all other properties. These included 17 various railroad cars, 15 of which were empties, 16 trucks and tractor trailers and the two freight houses which were reduced to rubble.

With the exception of Engine 54 on Long Island, only four Engine Companies did not respond to the fire until summoned as detail companies, they were Engines 29, 30, 45 and 52. A total of 41 mutual aid companies covered vacant Boston stations.



Today, the area bears no resemblance to the railroad yards, freight sheds that dotted the area. New construction has brought to the area new construction and venues such as Seaport Hotel and the Boston Convention Center. No matter how you look at the Summer Street Bridge fire it remains one of Boston's biggest fires during the War Years.

**Tuesday May 14, 1968**  
**395-397 Congress St. 399 Congress St. Summer Street Railroad Bridge**  
**Box 711 Summer and A Street**

Time	Alarm	Engine Comps	Lad Co's.	Other	
2258	711	39, 25, 7	<b>18, 8</b>	<b>R-1</b> , Dist. 6, C6	
2300	711		<b>18</b>		Code B, crew o fire on foot
2300	Sp. Call		<b>17</b>		In place of L-18
2301	W.F 711	2		LP-1	B.O. E-39
2303	2-711	3, 43, 8, 21	<b>19, 4</b>	CP-4, LP-1, Dist. 12	B.O. C6
	Cover	24/3, 50/25, 53/43, 56/8	<b>15/17</b> <b>23/19,</b> <b>29/23</b>		
2305	3-711	10, 50, 24, 42		C-2, C-4	B.O. C6
	Cover	34/10, 40/25. 55/42			
2306	4-711	40, 53, 34, 37			B.O. C6
	Cover	20/43, 32/25, 51/3 Brkl. 1/37, Camb. 2/10, New. 8/51, Qui. 2/20, Som. 2/32, Win. 2/56			
2319	5-711	32, 56, 20, 55			B.O. C2

	Cover	5/8, 16/43, Brkl. 7/42, Che.. 1/5, Ded. 2/55, Eve. 3/50, Mil. 1/16			
2322	Sp. Call	1, 16(43), 22			B.O C2
	Cover	18/1, CD-10/43			
2324	Sp. Call			Dist 3 & Dist 7	B.O. C2
2326	Sp. Call	1 8(1)	<b>1</b>		B.O. C2
	Cover	11/1, 14/39	<b>4/8</b>		
2328	Sp. Call	31 (Fireboat)			B.O. C2
2332	Sp. Call	47 (Fireboat)			B.O. C2
2336	Sp. Call	26, 5(8), 17, 14(39)			B.O. C2
2337	Sp. Call	51(3), 33, 41, 4			B.O. C2
2345	Sp. Call	12, Cd-10			B.O. C2
	Cover	49/24			B.O. C2
2350	Sp. Call	11(1)			
	Cover	RPU/1			
2352	Sp. Call	36, RPU(1)			B.O. C2
2354	Cover		<b>Brkl 2/15</b>		
2355	Cover	48/1			
0008 May 15			<b>23(19), 4(8)</b>		B.O. C2
	Cover		<b>20/19</b>		
0010	Cover	49(24)/1, 52/RPU			
0015	Cover		<b>16/20</b>		
0017	Sp. Call		<b>20/19</b>		
<b>0020</b>	<b>Cover</b>				<b>See Attached Page</b>
0022	Sp. Call	48(1), 49(1)			B.O. D-7
0045	Cover		<b>22/8</b>		
0055	Cover	Camb 2 (10)/39			
0158	Sp. Call	Camb. 2(39)			To fire for Baby Bangor Ladder then ret. To E39
0345	Sp. Call			D-2	B.O. C2
0629	Sp. Call	9, 28			B.O. C2
0630	Cover	Che. 1(5)/9			
2200	Detail	30, 51, 52, 8, 5, 32			
0300 May 16 <sup>th</sup>	Detail	36, 11, 20, 29, 45			
0725	Allout 711				
0800	Detail	2, 42			

### Covering

Arlington E-1	E-22
<b>Arlington L-2</b>	<b>L-1</b>
Braintree E-1	E-20
Brookline E-1	E-37
Brookline E-7	E-42
<b>Brookline L-2</b>	<b>L-15</b>
Cambridge E-2	E-10, then to E-39, to the fire, back to E-39
Cambridge E-3	E-33
Charlestown Navy Yard E-4	E-2



Chelsea E-1	E-5, then to E-9
Dedham E-2	E-55
Everett E-3	E-50
Framingham E-6	E-41
Hanscom AFB E-11	E-14
Holbrook E-1	E-24
<b>Holbrook L-1</b>	<b>L-4</b>
Lynn E-10	E-11
Malden E-6	E-25
Medford E-1	E-26
<b>Medford L-1</b>	<b>L-22</b>
Milton E-1	E-16
Milton E-4	E-21, then to E-18
Natick E-4	E-12
Newton E-3	E-3
Newton E-8	E-51
<b>Newton L-3</b>	<b>L-3</b>
Needham E-7	E-43
Peabody E-1	E-25
Quincy E-2	E-20, then to E-17
Revere E-1	E-36
Reading E-6	E-7
Saugus E-4	E-40
Somerville E-4	E-32
Somerville E-9	E-1
Wakefield E-3	E-10
Watertown E-2	E-34
Wellesley E-3	E-51
Weston E-1	E-48
<b>Weymouth L-2</b>	<b>L-19</b>
Winthrop E-2	E-56
Woburn E-3	E-4





## **TWO YORK, PA FIREFIGHTERS KILLED IN COLLAPSE ON THURSDAY MARCH 22, 2018**

The City of York, Pennsylvania is located 100 miles south of Philadelphia and 52 miles north of Baltimore, Maryland. The City is listed as the 14<sup>th</sup> largest in Pennsylvania and is a combination career and volunteer fire service. There are 56 career and 45 volunteer firefighters responding from four stations and covering 5.26 square miles with a population in 2016 43,889.

The Weaver Piano & Organ Company occupied a full block at the corner of North Broad and Walnut Streets. This large brick and wood frame factory that was built in the 1880. On Wednesday March 21<sup>st</sup> during a snow storm, a call was received by York County 9-1-1 reporting a fire in the factory by workmen who were converting the building into apartments.



First alarm companies arriving on Wednesday. Photo courtesy of the York Daily Record

Companies arrived to find smoke showing the first floor at the front of the building and quickly went to work. The fire quickly escalated to three alarms and a partial collapse happened 15 minutes into the fire.





Photo courtesy of The York Dispatch

After an all-day fight sections of the building collapsed making it difficult to get at the burning debris.



This Thursday photo shows the prior collapse of the building. Photo courtesy of The York Press.

On Thursday afternoon March 22<sup>nd</sup> four firefighters were working on the collapse pile searching for hot spots and the possible area where the fire started. Assistant Chief Greg Altland was leading firefighters Ivan Flanscha, Erik Swanson and Zachary Anthony. As they worked around



the pile without any warning a section of wall collapsed trapping all four members. MAYDAY was quickly transmitted along with a second alarm response to assist in the rescue. Firefighters aided by police, EMS and workmen worked quickly to remove the debris off the men. All four members were quickly located and transported to the hospital by EMS. Firefighters Flanscha and Anthony were pronounced dead on arrival. Chief Altland and FF Swanson were admitted with serious injuries.



Victims are removed from the rubble. Photo courtesy of WGAL Channel 8 News.



Over view of the collapse areas of the factory. Photo courtesy of The York Dispatch.

**Lexington Fire Alarm Box 7 Massachusetts Avenue & Meriam Street  
Five Multiples, Same Building  
1929, 1948, 1956, 1968 and 1971**

Every community large or small has its target hazard buildings. You know the one you *know* will have a fire in, yet you pray it won't happen.

In Lexington Center stood such a building it was a three story block long wood frame structure built in 1880 that dominated the north end of the Center diagonally across the street from the famed Lexington Battle Green of the first battle of the American Revolution. The upper floors contained apartments and the first floor was devoted to mercantile spaces.

The C exposure from the time it was built till 1947 was Lexington's Center Fire Station. This location was to prove very handy on the night of Feb. 5, 1929.



Center Block Mass & Meriam Streets the fire house is to the right of the building. Photo by E.B. Worthen  
courtesy of the Lexington Historical Society

### **The First Fire**

Tuesday February 5, 1929 had been a fair day with little wind and temps hovering around 35 degrees during the afternoon. By 6:00 PM the temps had dropped to just about freezing and the evening rush hour was in full swing with Boston & Maine commuter trains arriving and departing every half hour. Chief Edward Taylor and Captain Selon A. Cook entered the station to check on a few things before heading to a meeting at the Town Hall later that evening. It was just 6:34 PM. The duty crew had settled in for the night under the command of Capt. Cook's son, Captain Roy A. Cook with Pvts. Denham and Woods.

Suddenly a young boy pulled open the door and yelled the Central block is on fire! Everybody hit the apparatus floor and were out the door in seconds and on scene. Private Woods grabbed a soda acid extinguisher and ran to the building. The man on watch set up Box 7 in the transmitter and hit the start button. The tappers in the homes of the permanent and callmen went off as did the whistle on the Town Hall, it was 6:40 PM.

Woods made it to the second floor on the Meriam Street side, residents were running down the stairways to escape the smoke. Woods was driven back by the heavy smoke now banking down on the second floor. As the apparatus arrived they found heavy smoke pushing up from the basement of the Unity 5 & 10 cents Store. At the rear they found heavy fire coming from the cellar

windows. Smoke had quickly made its way to the upper floors and firefighters helped families down smoke filled stairways. Over fifty persons were evacuated without injury. Chief Taylor on his size-up skipped the second and transmitted a third alarm at 6:45 PM summoning an engine from Arlington and Waltham. These two pieces arrived on the scene at the same time after having a near collision at the intersection of Mass Ave and Waltham Street in the Center.

Companies from the East Lexington station were ordered to the rear of the building and to get lines into the basement. Companies made good progress and with the entire LFD working along with the mutual aid companies it was a quick knock down. Chief Taylor sound the allout at 8:15 PM.

The fire was started in the basement of the store by an unknown cause. Other mercantile occupants were: Rudd's Market, Bently Wallpaper, the tailor shop of Julius Seltzer, the Lexington Employment Bureau and the Exchange and Benefit Shop operated by the Florence Crittenton League, all suffered smoke and water damage. The only injury was to Firefighter Bernard Belcastro of Combination A was overcome by smoke. Total damage amounted to \$ 500.00. According to the local newspaper. The fire was hardly extinguished before the fire two fire and smoke sale signs appeared in the employment exchange and the Benefit Shop.

Captain Cook died of injuries sustained in a fire at the Hadley Press on Feb. 8, 1933 and passed away in April of that year. His son went on to serve as Chief of Department from 1947 to 1959. He was replaced by Bernard Belcastro who was Chief from 1959 till 1966

Box 7

6:40 PM	7	E-2, Comb. A, Hose 1, Hose 2	L-1
6:45 PM	3-7	Arl. E-2, Wal. E-2	

### **The Second Fire Thursday September 9, 1949**

A commuter heading for the inbound Boston & Maine commuter train happened to look up at the massive Central block. He did a double take as heavy flames were pouring from two rear second floor windows! He quickly dialed the operator and reported the fire. Box 7 was transmitted at 6:44 AM. Apparatus quickly turned out from the months old new fire headquarters station on Bedford Street. As companies were arriving that saw the Police officers were in the process of rescuing a 73 year old male who they carried to the waiting LFD ambulance.

In the rear companies found heavy overlapping fire from the second to third floor. Chief Roy E. Cook directed Call Firefighter Donald Pring (*a long time buff and member of the old Tapper Club –Editor*) to call in the second alarm to Fire Alarm. The second alarm was transmitted once again summoning aid from Arlington and Waltham. Companies quickly ran lines into the building and were able to knock the fire down and prevent it extending to the entire structure. Eight families were assisted out of the building by firefighters. Mercantile occupants on the first floor suffered some water damage. The allout was sent at 8:06 AM. Chief Cook reported that the fire started on a trash barrel in an ell on the second floor roof.

Box 7

6:44 AM	E1, 2, 3, 4	L-1	Spec. Service, Amb.	Cover
6:56 AM	Waltham E-2	Arl. L-2		Arl. E-2 @ HQ

### **The Third Fire December 29, 1956**

On Saturday December 29, 1956 an employee of Minute Man Auto Parts discovered smoke in the basement near the boiler room. He ran upstairs and quickly pulled box 7. Again the members of the LFD prepared for another stiff battle. Companies quickly arrived on the scene and found a heavy smoke condition pushing out of the rear basement windows and doorways. Ladder 1's crew entered the building and along with police started to evacuate residents on the second and third floor.



Arlington E-2 along with Waltham E-2 and Ladder 1 had now joined the battle. Lines were advanced into the basement by crews wearing either All-Service Masks or SCBA's. Several of these big lines made short work of the fire. Work then turned to salvage of the inventory of auto parts and other merchandise in the basement. The allout was in and all companies back in service two hours after the box hit!

Box 7

7:05 AM	E1, 2, 3, 4	L-1	Spec. Service,	Cover HQ
7:15 AM	Arl. E2	Wal. L1		Wal E2

**The Fourth Fire  
Jan. 11, 1968**

It had been twelve years since the last fire in the building. The building had seen mercantile and resident changes over the years. It was beginning to show its age and the owners were not too quick about making repairs. The block occupied a great location in Lexington Center and rumors were flying that the owners wanted to sell to the highest bidder.

A recent cold snap had led to frozen pipes all over town. In the Lexington Liquor Mart had a storage room which adjoined the storage rooms of the Minute Man Auto Parts. Pipes had frozen in the auto parts store and a blow torch was being used to thaw the pipes. A fire quickly started when a wooden wall behind the pipe ignited and then spread into the walls and ceiling extending into the Liquor Mart.

Another telephone call to the LFD emergency number of Liberty 2-0270 reporting the fire sent the crews once again to the building at 1:15 PM. Arriving companies found heavy smoke pushing from the two store fronts and Chief Spellman in Car 20 ordered the second alarm at 1:17 PM. Firefighters quickly evacuated and searched the upper floors for residents. As the companies started to go to work, they brought lines in from both the front and rear and working with Lexington Ladder 2 and Waltham Ladder 1 they were able to get the walls and ceilings opened so the engine crews could cut the fire off. The fire caused \$ 15,000.00 from smoke damage which permeated the entire building. The Liquor Mart's liquor storage was deemed totally destroyed by smoke and heat. Chief Spellman in the Lexington Minute Man newspaper praised his men for their aggressive work during the fire and their saving the building.

7	1:15 PM	E1, 2, 3, 4	L-2	R-1, Ambulance	Cover
2-7	1:17 PM	Arl 2, Wal 2	Wal. L-1		Bed. E1 @ HQ Bel. E2 @ E. Lex

**The Fifth Fire, and Its Gone!  
February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1971**

By 1971 age had caught up with the Central Block. The second and third floors were now vacant. The building had been sold and was scheduled to be razed the following week. Only a few mercantile properties still called the building home. This fire would be the first General Alarm ever sounded in the history of the Lexington Fire Department.

As with the past several fires, out story opens inside the Minute Man Auto Parts store. It was just coming up on 1:00 AM and Mr. James Sanford was inside the Auto Parts Store was packing up stock heard a window blow out in the rear of the Freaque Boutique located at 1849 Mass. Ave. He looked to the rear of the store to see what had happened and he saw smoke. He grabbed the phone and dialed the Operator who quickly connected to the call to the Lexington Fire Department. The call was answered by Firefighter McCarron who had the desk duty. He quickly struck Box 7 and once again the LFD mobilized for another battle in the Central Block. Engines 1, 3, Ladder 2, Rescue 1 and Car 21 with Acting Deputy Captain McGilvary left Headquarters for the

short run to Meriam Street. In East Lexington the crew on duty under the command of Lt. McDonough rolled out with Engine 2 and 4.

An explanation of the responses is needed. Certain boxes in Town would get a heavier engine company response than the usual two engines. Each box was color coded in blue, yellow and pink (*These colors were still on the box locations when your Editor started in 1978*). Also, the town had placed two four gated hydrants on either side of Depot Square on what would be the Delta side of the building. There was plenty of water for the coming fight!

Captain McGilvary transmitted a second alarm at 1:04 AM summoning Arlington Engine 2, Waltham E-2 and Ladder 1 to the Fire. Bedford Engine 1 was to cover at Headquarters and instead went to the fire and the officer called back for Ladder 1 to respond.

Chief Spellman in Car 20 coming up the Avenue from East Lexington could see the plume of dark smoke against the cold night sky. He hadn't even gotten out of the car and he ordered a third alarm at 1:09 AM. It was clear to all the firefighters on the scene that the Red Devil was going to win the battle for the building this time!



Front of the building after transmission of the third alarm. Photo by Ray Barnes

Arlington Engine 2 found itself in the rear of the building and was taking a tremendous pounding from the smoke. Conditions at the front were no better and the fire was tearing its way through the center of the buildings dried wooden interior.

As the third alarm companies arrived including Lexington's spare 1947 Pirsch Ladder responded. Ladder 1 nosed into the building near Depot Square and threw its wooden stick to the roof. Chief Spellman grabbed Arlington Engine 2's officer and told them to get a line up the fire escape. By now the off duty members and the Callmen had arrived and several helped Arlington with the stretch. As they started up, the fire escape pulled away from the building and they quickly retreated. Chief Spellman now realizing that entry to the building was unsafe, and switched from an offensive attack to a defensive operation.

Special calls quickly went out to Arlington for another engine and truck to the fire. Belmont Engine 2 covering at East Lexington was sent to the fire. Callback crews quickly got Engine 5 to the scene and tied into a hydrant on Bedford Street and prepared to feed master streams devices. Conditions continued to deteriorate and even with more special calls for apparatus and manpower it was clear the battle to save the building was over. The fire had full possession of the center core of the building. To prevent the fire spreading to other buildings, Chief Spellman special called the Woburn Snorkel to the fire at 2:50 AM. Engines prepared big lines to feed the Ward La France 85 ft. Snorkel and were ready when it arrived on the fire ground. It was brought

into action quickly and was able to knock down much of the fire along with the ladder pipes of Lexington Ladder 2, Arlington Ladder 2, Waltham Ladder 1 and Bedford Ladder 1.



Arlington Companies working at the rear of building. Photo collection of Member Frank San Severino





Lt. Cataldo and FF Paul Huoppi clearing out windows.



Lexington FF John Fradette operates a deluge gun on the Meriam Street side of the building. Both Photo courtesy of Lexington Minute Man

7	1:00 AM	Engines 1, 3, 2,4	<b>Ladder 2</b>	<b>Rescue 1</b>
2-7	1:04 AM	Bed. E1, Wal. E2	<b>Wal. L1, Bed. L1</b>	
3-7	1:09 AM	Arl. E2	<b>Ladder 1</b>	CD-LP
Sp. Call	1:30 AM	Bel. E2		
Sp. Call	1:40 AM	Arl. E4	<b>Arl. L2</b>	
Sp. Call	1:47 AM	Eng. 5		
Cover	1:50 AM	Wob. E3 Cover E. Lex.		
Cover	1:50 AM	Conc. E1 Cover H.Q.		
Sp. Call	2:45 AM	Conc. E1		
Sp. Call	2:56 AM		<b>Wob. Snorkel</b>	
Cover	3:00 AM	Wal. E8 Cover H.Q.		

By day break a shell was all that was left of the building which had given two generations of Lexington Firefighters nightmares.



Rear and front of the of the building the day after. Photo by E.B. Worthen courtesy of the Lexington Historical Society.



The building was re-placed by a modern one story building that is home to some of Lexington's trendiest merchants. There have been a few minor All Hands in the building over the years, but nothing like the Central Block. But who knows how that will change in the next 25 years!



The Central Block April 2018. Photo by Member Frank San Severino

## Los Angeles City Fire Department SOBER UNIT

The Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) unveiled a long-gestating pilot program to lessen the strain on the 911 system and its associated emergency medical technicians (EMTs) by devoting a special unit that will transport publicly intoxicated individuals to a sober center.

The LAFD Sobriety Emergency Response (SOBER) Unit, which was officially launched on January 5 at a news conference attended by Mayor Eric Garcetti, among others, was created in an attempt to cut down repeated emergency calls for chronic alcohol and drug dependency issues that have increased the workload for the city's firefighting and EMT units, some of which are required to wait up to six hours for an individual to be admitted to an emergency room.



Photo Courtesy of LAFD

According to LAFD data, some 40 individuals, or "super users," are responsible for approximately 2,000 911 calls every year.

The *Los Angeles Times* noted that the SOBER Unit, which is based at Los Angeles Fire Station 4 on Temple Street, located in the city's Skid Row area, has transported approximately 100 people since its initial launch in November 2017. The majority of these individuals were homeless and publicly intoxicated in the downtown area, though the unit can also respond to calls in Hollywood and South Los Angeles.

According to city officials, the SOBER Unit includes an ambulance crew comprised of an EMT, a nurse practitioner and a caseworker from the David L. Murphy Sobering Center on Skid Row. When fielding a 911 call, the unit members will perform a medical clearance exam to determine if the individual needs transportation to an emergency room. If the patient is cleared of any issues, he or she is brought to the Sobering Center, where they are monitored until sober and can then receive detox services and transitional housing.

The program's primary goal is to provide an alternative means of treating individuals with consistent issues regarding public inebriation while also reducing the considerable strain placed on the 911 and health system. Those suffering from chronic alcohol and drug dependency issues, including the "super users" identified in LAFD data, were traditionally taken by ambulance to a hospital emergency room, where they were administered, and according to the LAFD data, often refused testing.

In many cases, the individuals returned to the same hospital after being discharged, reducing not only the availability of EMTs and medical staff but also firefighters, who were unable to respond to other 911 calls for up to six hours while waiting for the individuals to be admitted. "That's six hours that an EMT isn't responding to other calls of other Angelenos," said Garcetti at the news



conference. "The SOBER Unit will save time, it will save money, but most importantly, it will save lives."

According to LAFD Chief Ralph Terrazas, the fire department receives more than 1,300 emergency calls a day, most of which require some form of medical service.



FDNY Rescue Co. No. 1 circa 1945. Photo via the Internet.

## COMMAND VEHICLES By Mark Roche



The Boston Fire Department continues to upgrade their Command Vehicle fleet with the delivery of additional 2018 Chevrolet Suburban's. The BFD utilizes a mix of Chevy Suburban's, Ford Expedition's, and a few remaining Chevy Tahoe's for the 9-districts, 2-Divisions and the Safety Operations Chief. (Photos by member Mark Roche)



## **New Haven Fire Whitney Fire Station Has a well done supper!**

**Information and photo courtesy of Conn. Fire Photographers Association.**

On Friday March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 Engine 8 and Squad 1 responded from quarters to a structure fire on Nicols Ave. At approx.1750 hrs a passing police unit noticed smoke and flames pouring from the second floor of the fire station. The alarm was radio in and Companies were soon on the way. Engine 8 and the Squad headed for the home box. First due companies found heavy fire on the second floor of the station. The fire was quickly knocked down and the second floor suffered extensive damage. The investigation found that the fire started in the kitchen

As a result of the fire, Engine 8 and Squad 1 have been relocated to other stations: Engine8 relocated to the quarters of Engine 6 and Truck 4 at 125 Goffe Street and the Squad relocated to Central running with Engine 4 and Tower 1 at 952 Grand St.





## **Member Michael Feinberg and Nahant Fire Chief Provides Successful CPR Rescue on Vacation!**

The Nahant Fire Department is pleased to announce that Chief Michael Feinberg helped revive a man while vacationing at Bretton Woods earlier this week.

On Monday, April 9, at approximately 3 p.m., Chief Feinberg was on a skiing trip with his wife and two children at New Hampshire's Bretton Woods when a skier ahead of him in line for the lift collapsed from sudden cardiac arrest.

Chief Feinberg quickly reacted and put his professional training to use by administering CPR and using a defibrillator to revive the 43-year-old victim, who was alert and responsive as a result of the chief's efforts.

"It just goes to show that those of us who are who are firefighters or police officers are never truly off duty," Chief Feinberg said. "I'm glad I was able to help in that moment, and I hope that he will make a full recovery."

The man was subsequently airlifted to a Boston area hospital and is continuing to recover.

## **Water Department Emergency Squads By Jay Pozark All photos courtesy of Digital Commonwealth**

The National Board of Fire Underwriters rated a communities ability to maintain and restore service of the water supply. As part of a survey the Fire and Emergency Service of the water department would be examined. It was recommended that a response be made to fire calls and major fires.

In High Value areas a vrew shpuld respond on the box alarm. Average hazard areas would get the response on a working fire. A management lvel person such as the a superintendeent oar his assistant should respond to major fires.

The water department was expected to maintain a supply of pipe, valves, sleeves and fittings for emergency repair.

An emergency crew was expected to be at least on call. The crew should consist of a foreman and one or more gatemen and laborers. Speciality skills would include tradesman such as caulkers. Typical tools included hammers, chovels, prybars, wrenchs and gate keys to operate valves and street cocks. Also included coule be tools and supplies for brazing and caulking. Opening and closing gate valves could be labor intensive and time consuming. Depending on the size of the balve one or more men would have to turn the water key. For large valves this could involve men walking in a circle resenbling weighing anchor with a capstan on a sailing ship.

The advent of motor vehicles improved the reponse time of emergency crews. The engine of the auto-truck could be adapted to power a device to mechanoically open and close valves. This was and item the N.B.F.U. surveying engineers looked for.

A fleet of well equipped and staffed emergency trucks was an importants part of the fire insurance grading schedule.



Metropolitan Water Dept Emergency Truck 1 & 2 circa 1916



Truck 2 showing the automatic valve under driver. Circa July 1916



Truck 2 with the device in place for operation.



Seats raised showing tools



## **Summer Fire Musters and Meets**

Sunday May 20<sup>th</sup> Tri-State Muster Memorial Beach Park Webster, MA

Saturday June 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Lynnfield Muster

Sunday June 24<sup>th</sup> Fall River Muster 140 Commerce Drive

Saturday July 14<sup>th</sup> Gardner Hand Tub Muster 1200-1500 hours 538 Clarke St.

Saturday July 21<sup>st</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Silver City Muster Meridan Ct.

Saturday July 28<sup>th</sup> Newbury Hand Tub Muster 1200-1500 hours High Rd & Hanover Street

Saturday August 4<sup>th</sup> Salem Hand Tub Muster Salem Willows 1200-1500 hours

Saturday August 4<sup>th</sup> SPAAMFAA Summer Convention Muster Cherry Hill New Jersey



### **International Fire Buffs Association Annual Convention**

The annual IFBA Convention will be held in Racine, WI August 19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>

Here is the link to the pdf convention information packet

<http://www.racinefirebells.org/2018-Convention/041718-2018%20IFBA%20Convention%20Registration.pdf>

From the Staff of the Line Box have a great and safe summer and, please take lots of photos for you to share with the membership via the Line Box!

