

# BOX 52 ASSOCIATION



## THE LINE BOX

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Vol. 14 No. 1

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Welcome to our 14<sup>th</sup> year of publishing **The Line Box**! I would like to thank all our members and followers who had told the staff how much they enjoy reading our little news magazine!

Our first issue of the year has a couple of stories that we thought were going to be pretty straight forward. And in what has become a theme through our research on stories for the last few issues, this one took us in a totally unexpected directions.

The feature story was to be on the Morgan Memorial Fire on Saturday October 12, 1963. We found that this was the largest multiple alarm fire that day and that a total **EIGHT** multiple alarm fires occurred in the twenty-four hours of that Saturday! So now we feature the Morgan Memorial fire along with reports on all the fires!

The second feature was going to be a story on the USS Leyte Aircraft Carrier fire and explosion on Friday October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1953. Then I remembered that the MV Black Falcon was a couple of weeks later, so we researched that one. And, in the course of our research we found the BFD had battled four ship fires in 19 days!

And part 2 of our BFD Riot Story, BFD Riot Procedures

So, sit back, settle in with a nice hot apple cider, or better yet a nice cold glass of Hood's Golden Egg Nog (Yup, it's out already) and enjoy this latest issue of the Line Box!

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 12, 1963**  
**All photos Collection of Member William Noonan**

As we started to research the Morgan Memorial Fire by pulling old copies of the newsletter, I discovered that in the middle of this 13 alarm fire there was a third alarm on Washington Street in Dorchester. Then Malden decided to join in and transmitted 3 alarms after a brush fire extended to a factory. After further reading, I found that a total of eight multiple alarms were recorded in the Metro District from midnight to midnight.

The weather had been dry with low humidity and a ten inch rain shortage. The winds had been blowing at 15-25 mph out of the north/northwest with temptures in the low 60's. Departments all over New England had been running brush fires for nearly a week. Ten years and two days later, in 1973, this weather pattern would repeat itself with the Chelsea Conflagration.

The first multiple alarm of the day happened in Boston for a fire at 3 North Munroe Terrace. Companies had been dispatched to a small outside fire on Neponset Avenue and spotted this fire. They ordered box 3242 Pope's Hill & Houghton Street at 0132 hours, and went to work. The fire was in an occupied dwelling. At one point during the fire, two firefighters were trapped on the roof and were quickly rescued via aerial ladder. Five firefighters suffered minor injuries. The second alarm was sounded at 0134 hrs. And the allout at 0305 hrs.

The next fire occurred in Everett at box 45 Norwood and Liberty Streets for a large barn type garage in the rear of 43 Liberty Street and extended to the rear porches of number 43. Three alarms were transmitted in rapid succession.

**Box 45 Norwood & Liberty Sts.**

|      |      |   |                 |
|------|------|---|-----------------|
| 0427 | 45   | E1,3, 2                                     | <b>Lad 1, 2</b> |
| 0430 | 2-45 | E4, 5, Mal 4                                | <b>3</b>        |
| 0434 | 3-45 | Som 2, Mal. 1,<br>Rev. 4 Che. 5,<br>Bos. 32 | <b>Som. L2</b>  |

After a lull of almost eight hours, one of the most spectacular fires of the "War Years" occurred on Shawmut Ave. The fire known by buffs as the Morgan Memorial Fire destroyed nine buildings, including a church, 2 piers and caused heavy damage to 15 other buildings and two bridges.

Many of these buildings had been taken by Eminent Domain by the Mass. Turnpike Authority and the Boston Re-development Authority for the planned Mass Turnpike Extension from Weston at Route 128 to the Central Artery. The fire started in one of these vacant loft type buildings under going demolition at 27-29 Corning Street and quickly rose to conflagration portions.

The fire injured 30 firefighters and resulted in one of the largest apparatus movements in history of the BFD. It had been suggested that this fire saw more apparatus than the Great Boston Fire of November 9, 1872.



First Alarm companies getting into action on Broadway Bridge. Boston Globe Photo by Ollie Noonan Jr.

Just about 1137 hours the Fire Alarm Office began to receive calls and boxes around the area of Shawmut Avenue near Broadway for a building fire. The Operators quickly transmitted box 1611 Shawmut Ave opp. Ohio Street. At the Big House on Broadway, the companies hit the street for the short run. As they turned into Corning Street, they were shocked at the amount of heavy fire that greeted them. District Chief Robert Kenneally ordered a Working Fire coming out of quarters and as he saw the heavy fire condition, he skipped the second and transmitted the third alarm at 1139 hours. By 1142 hours the fifth alarm was in and the fire had the upper hand

The Box 52 Newsletter Staff did a great job with the run down and all the mutual aid and still alarms transmitted. Please keep in mind that this fire and the upcoming third alarm in Dorchester and mutual aid from Boston to Malden for their 3<sup>rd</sup> is a big chess game played by the Fire Alarm Operators of all the communities involved.

*(Note: On the Time Line Highlighted in yellow is box 5-161, green is box 3-3346, and red is BFD mutual aid to Malden. – Editor)*

Photos from the Broadway Bridge











Companies working on the Church of All Nations.



Fort Point piers burning

As the fire raced towards the Fort Point Channel and the piers, a special call was made for the Departments SCUBA divers. Upon arrival, they were directed to hit the pier fire from underneath. This action prevented the fire from spreading into South Boston.

| Time Line Box 1611 |           |                                |  |                          |             |
|--------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------|-------------|
| Time<br>Special    | Box/Still | Location                       | Engines  | Ladder                   |             |
| 1137               | 1611      | Shawmut Opp, Ohio              | 7, 26, 3   | 17, 3                    | Car 4       |
| 1138               | W.F       |                                | 22   |                          | R, Div 1    |
| 1139               | 3-1611    | 2 <sup>nd</sup> skipped        | 43, 10, 12,<br>8, 24, 25, 37   | 13, 8<br>15              | Motor Squad |
|                    |           | Covering                       | 2/43, 53/12, 34/37, 40/25,<br>56/8, 21/26, 42/22, 55/42                                | 23/13.<br>19/23<br>30/17 |             |
| 1140               | 4-1611    |                                | 21, 2, 29, 34  |                          |             |
|                    |           | Covering                       | 20/43, 32/26, 51/3 Bkl.1/37,<br>Cam. 2/10 New. 8/51, Qui<br>2/20, Som. 2/32, Win, 2/56 |                          |             |
| 1142               | 5-1611    |                                | 32, 42, 20, 40   |                          |             |
|                    |           | Covering                       | 5/25, 16/43, 50/26, 55/22,<br>Bkl. 7/42, Che. 1/5, Ded.<br>1/55, Eve.3/50, Mil. 1/16   |                          |             |
| 1144               | 10-41     | Reduced Assignments            |  |                          |             |
| 1148               | Sp. Call  | 3 extra Engs. to 1611          | 56(8), 5, 50   |                          |             |
|                    |           | Special cover                  | 55/26  |                          |             |
| 1150               | Sp. Call  | 1 eng to Harrison &<br>B'way   | 51(3)  |                          |             |
| 1152               | 1531      | Park Plaza & Charles           | 33   | 23(13)                   |             |
| 1155               | Sp. Call  | 1 extra Ladder                 |  | 30(17)                   |             |
| 1157               | Sp. Call  | Elevated Structure<br>Wash. St | 20 from 1611   |                          |             |
| 1159               | Sp. Call  | Shawmut & Herald               | 55(26), 16(43)   |                          |             |
| 1202               | Sp. Call  | B'way & Shawmut                | Cam 2(10, 33, Eve.2  |                          |             |
|                    |           | Covering                       | Bel. 3/33  |                          |             |
| 1205               |           | Covering                       | 13/26  | 20/17                    |             |
| 1206               | Still     | Albany & B'way                 | 6,   | 23(13)                   |             |
| 1211               |           | Covering                       | New. 1/26, New. 3/25, New.<br>4/22   |                          |             |
| 1212               | Sp. Call  | Wash & Herald Sts              | 13(26)   |                          |             |
| 1214               | Sp. Call  | Wash & Herald Sts              | 55, 50, 20   |                          |             |
| 1215               |           | Covering                       | 9/3, Win 2(56)/22, Rev.1/56<br>Cam. 3/4  |                          |             |
| 1216               | Sp. Call  | B'way & Wash.                  | 56   | 20(17)                   |             |
| 1217               | Sp. Call  | B'way Bridge                   | 6, 56  |                          |             |
| 1220               | Still     | Tolman St                      | 18   |                          |             |
| 1225               | Sp. Call  | B'way opp, 26 quarters         | 4  |                          |             |
| 1226               | Sp. Call  | B'way Bridge                   | 12, 40   |                          |             |
| 1226               | Box       | New. Line box 126              | New. 8(51)   |                          |             |
| 1228               | Still     | Gall Blvd & Hallet             | Qui 2(20)  | 27                       |             |
| 1229               |           | Covering                       | Qui. 4/21  |                          |             |
| 1229               | 2511      | Custer & Goldsmith             | 28   | 10                       |             |



|      |          |                       |                                  |              |  |
|------|----------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|--|
| 1230 | Sp. Call | Wash. & Herald        | 9(3), New. 1 (26), CD-5, HAFB 13 |              |  |
| 1233 | Sp. Call | B'way Bridge          | 53(12)                           |              |  |
| 1233 | Sp. Call | B'way Bridge          | 1                                | 19           |  |
| 1235 | Sp. Call | B'ay Bridge           |                                  | 4            |  |
|      |          | Covering              | Eve. 5/50 (Eve 3 OOS)            |              |  |
| 1238 | 7412     |                       | 17                               | 7            |  |
|      |          | Covering              | 53/13                            |              |  |
| 1240 | Still    | Neponset Drive-In     | 18, Mil 1(16)                    |              |  |
| 1242 | Still    | 4611 Washington St    | 45                               | 16           |  |
| 1245 | Still    | Off Barry St          | 52(13)                           | 29(23)       |  |
|      |          | Covering              | 41/10                            |              |  |
| 1246 | Still    | W. Roxbury Prkwy.     | 30                               |              |  |
| 1248 | Still    | Howell St             | 17                               | 7            |  |
| 1249 | Sp. Call | Dover St. Bridge      | 6 See 1313 hrs. -Editor          |              |  |
| 1252 |          | Covering              | Mil. 4/16                        |              |  |
| 1259 |          | Covering              | Som. 3/43                        |              |  |
| 1302 | Sp. Call | Dover St. Bridge      | CD-10                            |              |  |
| 1303 | Still    | 30 Radnor Rd.         | 29                               | 11           |  |
| 1304 | Still    | Off Intervale St      | 52(13)                           | 29(23)       |  |
| 1306 | 10-43    | Scuba Drivers report  |                                  |              |  |
| 1307 |          | Covering              |                                  | Win.1/17     |  |
| 1309 | Still    | 984 Columbus Ave      | 14                               |              |  |
| 1311 |          | Covering              | 4/1                              | Arl. 3/3     |  |
| 1313 | Sp. Call | B'way & Curve St      | 4, 5, 50, 6                      | 15, Arl 3(3) |  |
|      | Covering |                       | Cam, 4/7, Wat 3/41               |              |  |
| 1323 | 6195     | Neptune & Loveall     | 11, Che. 1                       | 21           |  |
| 1326 | Covering |                       | 42/26                            |              |  |
| 1328 | Sp. Call | B'way Bridge          | 5, New. 1, Eve. 2                |              |  |
| 1329 | Still    | Off Taylor St         | Qui. 2(27)                       | 27           |  |
| 1337 | Still    | Prescott St           | 11                               | 21           |  |
| 1342 | Sp. Call | Dover St, Bridge      | 40(W)                            |              |  |
| 1342 | Still    | 20 Vinland St         | Wat. 3(41)                       | 14           |  |
| 1342 | Covering |                       | 56/11                            |              |  |
| 1345 | Covering |                       |                                  | 15/17        |  |
| 1347 | Sp. Call | Wash & Herald St      | 40                               |              |  |
| 1347 | 6181     | Glendon & Condor      | Che. 1(5) Rev. 1(56, 47          | 2            |  |
| 1348 | Covering |                       | New.1/26                         |              |  |
| 1352 | Still    | Mass & Boylston       | Bel. 3(33)                       | 26           |  |
| 1401 | Covering |                       | 42(26)/1                         |              |  |
| 1408 | Sp. Call | Harrison Ave. Bridge  | New.1(26)                        | 15(17)       |  |
| 1413 | Mut. Aid | To Malden 3-515       | 32, 56                           | 9            |  |
| 1413 | Still    | 85 Cliffmont St       | 48                               |              |  |
| 1414 | 2177     |                       | 52(13), Brk. 7(42)               | 29(23)       |  |
| 1414 | Still    | Off Ward St           | Brk. 1(37)                       | 26           |  |
| 1415 | 3446     |                       | 18, Mil 1(16)                    | 6            |  |
| 1417 | Sp. Call | B'way & Albany St     |                                  | Arl 3(3)     |  |
| 1418 | 3446     | Working Fire          |                                  |              |  |
| 1418 | Still    | 159 W. Springfield St | New. 4(22)                       | 20           |  |
| 1419 | 2-3446   |                       | 17, 21, Qui. 2(20)               | 27, 7        |  |
| 1419 | Covering |                       |                                  | 18/20        |  |
| 1421 | 3-3446   |                       | 16, 37, 42, 24, Mil. 4           |              |  |

|      |          |                         |                     |        |  |
|------|----------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------|--|
| 1421 | Covering |                         | 25/24, 49/52        |        |  |
| 1424 | Emerg!   | 479 W. B'way            |                     | 18     |  |
| 1424 | Still    | 115 Warren St           | 14                  | 26     |  |
| 1427 | Sp. Call | To 3-3446               | 20 from 5-1611      |        |  |
| 1428 | Still    | Rear 18 Welles Ave      | 4                   |        |  |
| 1430 | Covering |                         | 9/17, 34/52, 40/18  |        |  |
| 1434 | Sp. Call | To 3-3446               |                     | 3      |  |
| 1434 | Still    | 70 Brookledge Sr        | BKL. 7 (42)         |        |  |
| 1435 | Covering |                         | 55/1, 50/26         |        |  |
| 1437 | Covering |                         | 49(52)/48           |        |  |
| 1441 | Sp. Call | To 3-3446               | 25(24), 40(18)      |        |  |
| 1446 | Still    | B.U. Bridge             | Wat. 3(14)          | 14     |  |
| 1450 | Still    | Longwood Ave & Riverway | Brk.1(37)           |        |  |
| 1455 | 3681     | Kennebec & Canaan       | 45                  | 16     |  |
| 1455 | Covering |                         | CD-10/18            |        |  |
| 1459 | Covering |                         | 51/41               |        |  |
| 1501 | Covering |                         | 10/16               |        |  |
| 1510 | Still    | Hancock Village         | 30                  | 25     |  |
| 1511 | Still    | Woodrow Ave             | CD-10(18)           |        |  |
| 1511 | 3343     | Washington & Erie       | 52                  | 29     |  |
| 1514 | Still    | Congress St Bridge      | 55(1)               | 18     |  |
| 1517 | 2684     | Alpheous & Jeffries     | 48                  | 28     |  |
| 1520 | Covering |                         |                     | 23/7   |  |
| 1523 | Covering |                         | 5/39, 40(3-3446)/25 |        |  |
| 1526 | 2797     | Washington & Liszt      | Ded.1 (55)          | 16     |  |
| 1538 | Covering |                         | 25(3-3446)/24       |        |  |
| 1541 | Still    | Prescott & Saratoga     | 11                  |        |  |
| 1543 | 3131     | Columbia & Geneva       | 13                  | 29(26) |  |
| 1544 | Sp. Call | Wash & Corning Sts      | New. 8 (51)         | 11     |  |
| 1544 | Still    | 2 Murdock St            | 29                  |        |  |
| 1546 | Still    | End of Stanley St       | New. 8(51)          | 11     |  |
| 1549 | Still    | Neponset Drive-In       | Cd-10(18), 34(52)   | 29     |  |
| 1549 | 2361     | Parker & McGreevey      | Brk.1(37), 6        | 26     |  |
| 1551 | 6324     |                         | Rev.1(56)           | 21     |  |
| 1551 | Covering |                         | Qui. 2(3-3446)/20   |        |  |
| 1553 | Still    | Off South St.           | 53                  |        |  |
| 1559 | Still    | 2033 Columbus Ave       | Brk. 7(42)          | 30     |  |
| 1601 | Still    | Hawthorne St            | 14                  | 4      |  |
| 1603 | Still    | 1135 Morton St          | 10(16)              |        |  |
| 1612 | Covering |                         | 5(39)/9             |        |  |
| 1614 | 6157     | Border near Maverick    | 11                  | 2      |  |
| 1621 | 6123     |                         | 11                  | 21     |  |
| 1630 | Sp. Call | B'way Bridge            | 7                   | 15     |  |
| 1631 | Still    | White Stadium           | 42                  | 30     |  |
| 1633 | Still    | Rear 32 Princeton St    | 5(9)                | 2      |  |
| 1637 | 3113     | Columbia & Geneva       | 13                  | 23     |  |
| 1638 | 2913     | Clement & Stratford     | 55                  | 16     |  |
| 1640 | 1778     | Quincy & Magnolia       | 21                  |        |  |
| 1643 | 3721     | Ramsdell & Clarke       | 45                  | 28     |  |
| 1646 | Still    | Suffolk Downs           | Rev. 1(56)          | 21     |  |
| 1652 | Still    | Off River St            | 10(16)              |        |  |
| 1652 | Covering |                         | CD-10/18            |        |  |

|      |        |                        |                      |    |  |
|------|--------|------------------------|----------------------|----|--|
| 1701 | 4142   | Monument & Winthrop    | 36                   | 22 |  |
| 1703 | Detail | To 3-3446              | 49                   | 10 |  |
| 1705 | Still  | 34 Elgin St            | 45                   | 16 |  |
| 1708 | Still  | 117 Woodbole Ave       | CD-10                |    |  |
| 1709 | Still  | Rear 80 Spring St      | Ded. 1(55)           |    |  |
| 1720 | 2756   | Walter & Symmes        | 53                   |    |  |
| 1729 | 287    | Baker St & Baker Place | 30                   | 25 |  |
| 1733 | Still  | Off Stimson St         | 55                   |    |  |
| 1735 | 3577   | Standard & Manchester  | CD-10                | 29 |  |
| 1741 | 3764   | Fairmount & Highland   | 48                   | 28 |  |
| 1745 | Still  | 146 Mass Ave           |                      | 15 |  |
| 1746 | Still  | 173 Columbia Rd        | 13                   | 23 |  |
| 1746 | 3113   | Columbia & Geneva      | 13 (Both from still) | 23 |  |
| 1754 | Allout | 3-3446                 |                      |    |  |

As Boston companies were heavily involved at their fire, a few miles away in Malden, a wind-driven outside fire quickly spread to a 2 story building occupied by the Aluminum Window Company, Royal Battery and United Rent-All and United Tool Rental. As companies arrived, they found the building well involved and spreading towards several houses and a junk yard in an urban redevelopment area on Eastern Ave along Short, Cross and Maple Streets. The storage yard of the Ryan Barrel Company on Maplewood Street was heavily damaged.

**705-711 Eastern Ave. 2 story factory and a junk yard.**

|      |                |                           |          |    |
|------|----------------|---------------------------|----------|----|
| 1313 | 515            | E1, 2, 6                  | L-2      | R1 |
| 1316 | Melrose Box 6  | E1 to Dist. 2             |          |    |
| 1332 | Medford Box 6  | E3 to Dist. 1             |          |    |
| 1343 | 2-515          | E3, 4                     | L-3      |    |
| 1346 | Stoneham Box 8 | E1 to HQ                  |          |    |
| 1351 | Lynn Box 826   | E-7 to Dist. 2            |          |    |
| 1354 | Lynn Box 821   | E3 to Revere E5           |          |    |
| 1354 | Lynn Box 2-821 | E6 to Revere E4           |          |    |
| 1403 | Saugus         | E1 to 2-515               |          |    |
| 1408 | 3-515          | Lynn 7, Stoneham 1, Lex 1 | Med. L-2 |    |
| 1409 | Everett Sig. 5 | Unable to respond         |          |    |
| 1455 | Melrose 2-6    | E3 to 3-515               |          |    |
| 1509 | Boston         | E32, 56 to 3-515          |          |    |
| 1523 | Bedford        | E1 to Dist. 1             |          |    |

As the BFD was gaining the upper hand on Shawmut Ave, and Malden had just transmitted the third alarm, Boston Fire Alarm was receiving calls reporting a building fire on Washington Street and Brent Road. Arriving first due Engine 18 had fire and smoke showing from a three story mixed occupancy building at 650 Washington Street. Checking around back, heavy fire conditions were found and the fire was extending to houses on Brent Road. The two engines and one truck on the first alarm could do nothing to stop this inferno. The officer on Engine 18 wasted no time in striking the second alarm knowing that help was coming from either covering assignments, or the fifth alarm. The fire caused heavy damage to 650-658 Washington Street and damaged homes at 7-9, 18, 17-19 Brent Road.

**Box 3346 Park & Washington Streets**

|      |          |                        |       |  |
|------|----------|------------------------|-------|--|
| 1415 | 3446     | 18, Mil. 1 (16)        | 6     |  |
| 1418 | W.F.     | No response            |       |  |
| 1419 | 2-3446   | 17, Qui, 2(20), 21     | 27, 7 |  |
| 1421 | 3-3446   | 16, 37, 42, 24, Mil. 4 |       |  |
| 1424 | Sp. Call | 20 from 5-1611         |       |  |
| 1432 | Sp. Call |                        | 3     |  |
| 1435 | Sp. Call | E25(24), 40(18)        |       |  |

Not to be outdone, another wind-whipped fire started in a vacant dwelling at 361 Essex Street in Lynn and this fire quickly extended to an occupied dwelling at 9 Essex Place. Companies arriving found heavy fire conditions in a vacant 3 decker and a second alarm was transmitted on arrival.

**Lynn: Box 415 Essex and Rockaway Streets.**

|      |         |           |              |    |
|------|---------|-----------|--------------|----|
| 1535 | 415     | E5*, 13   | L1, 3        | R1 |
| 1536 | 2-415   | E3, 4, 12 | 4            |    |
| 1545 | Rev. 94 |           | Rev L2 to L2 |    |

\* reduced assignment on the box.

As the afternoon turned into evening, the night crews had arrived relieving the Brothers who were exhausted. In Boston both BFD and many mutual aid companies were relieved at either their covering assignments or at Box 1611.

The night crews in Malden had just gotten dry hose packed, tools cleaned and had checked the apparatus. Crews had settled in to watch "The Lieutenant" on Channel 4. At 1940 hours. Box 473 began banging in on the bells in all Malden stations for Salem Street corner of Clarke Street. The companies rolled out of quarters and were shocked to see that the "A" exposure from the earlier third alarm was now heavily involved. Companies had cleared and the allout sounded at 1856 hours. The first alarm companies were just getting into action when Box 59 Eastern Ave at Maplewood was pulled for the same fire.

These companies joined the other companies and the equivalent of a second alarm was soon working on the fire in a 1 ½ story mercantile building directly in front of the third alarm fire building.

**Box 473 Salem St. corner of Clark St.****Box 59 Eastern Ave. at Maplewood Street**

|      |     |         |     |     |
|------|-----|---------|-----|-----|
| 1940 | 473 | 5, 1, 4 | L-1 | R-1 |
| 1942 | 59  | 2, 6, 3 | L-2 |     |

The last fire of the day occurred in Quincy

At 2247 hours Quincy Fire Alarm began receiving calls and a pull on box 1743. The box was set up and transmitted. At Engine 6 and Ladder 4's house on Sea Street in the Hough's Neck section the man on patrol hit the lights and bells and yelled out "building fire on Chapel St." The Seagrave motors on both companies roared to life and out they rolled. They made good time and pulled into Chapel Street where a three story wood frame storage building was fully involved. Engine 6's officer reported heavy fire showing. The Deputy, knowing the building was owned by the M.D.C and loaded with all types of materials, wasted little time striking the second alarm.

**Box 1743 Chapel St.**

|      |        |                 |          |                          |
|------|--------|-----------------|----------|--------------------------|
| 2247 | 1743   | 6, 1, Hose<br>1 | <b>4</b> | <b>Spec.<br/>Service</b> |
| 2250 | 2-1743 | 4, 3            | <b>1</b> |                          |

Grand total of apparatus movements to each of the fires **NOT** counting covering assignments, was an astounding 119 engine companies, 45 ladder companies and 6 rescues that were moved about the giant fire chess board! Of these jobs, the fifth on 1611 resulted in 60 engines working alongside 22 ladder companies and the Rescue!

**One Hundred Years Ago This Month  
Information gathered from the Boston Globe Column "Among the Firemen"  
And 1917 editions of Fire and Water Magazine.**

Compiled by Jay Pozark

**Apparatus News and Other Events**

On September 29th, Engine Company 40 was responding to a fire on Maverick Street in East Boston. The engine was struck by a locomotive of the Boston, Revere Beach and Lynn narrow gauge railroad at a grade crossing. The impact caused the engine to overturn. The three horses were thrown on their backs, and one was so seriously injured that police officers on scene had to shoot the animal to prevent it from suffering anymore. The driver John McPhee was injured and taken to the East Boston Relief Station in a passing automobile.

Witness stated that the crossing gates had not come down. Neither the train engineer, nor McPhee could see each other due to buildings. The steam pumper was heavily damaged. The fire it was responding to was extinguished without damage.

The Nahant Fire Department has purchased a Motor Triple Combination Pumper. Also in Nahant, the Massachusetts State Fireman's Association held a meeting with three days of programs from September 26th to September 28th.

Hudson Massachusetts purchased a motor combination hose and chemical car.

Nashua N.H. ordered three pieces of motor equipment including a motor pumping engine.

The towns of Framingham and Billerica in Massachusetts received new motor pumping apparatus. However, the Town of Billerica needs a station to put it in.

Lexington Mass. has received a new ALF Type #14 City Service Ladder Truck.

The Three Rivers Fire District in Palmer Mass. received a Brockway chassis, motor combination wagon.

The annual inspection of the Worcester Fire Department will take place on October 6th.

The City of Malden Mass. appropriated \$24,000 for motor fire apparatus including one Ahrens-Fox 750 GPM pumper, one Booster combination car and a Couple-Gear, Gas-Electric Drive, Double Bank Ladder truck with 373' to 501' of ladders.

The City of Quincy will be putting a powerful auto pumping engine in the central fire station. The machine is equipped with battleship pumps and was built by the Fore River Yard Employees. It will carry 1500 feet of hose and deliver 1,200 gallons per minute and can develop 125 horsepower.

The new central fire station at New Bedford will be the largest, best arranged and most modern in New England. There will be two engines, two hose wagons and a truck in quarters, each motorized, and each permanent man will have a room.

William Bowen, a 25 year veteran of the Boston Department has been named Fire Chief of the Charlestown Navy Yard Fire Department. The inside department will be composed of men working in the yard, Naval Reserve men stationed on base and the Marines of the Marine Barracks.

### **Fire News**

October 8th Rockland Mass., a fire starting near the furnace in the basement of a wooden grammar school did \$6,000.00 dollars of damage. Four hundred pupils were successfully evacuated in 2 minutes under the direction of Principle Baldwin and ten teachers. The fire swept up the main air shaft and the children had barely escaped when the whole school was in flames.

Stoughton Mass., the Panther Rubber Co. was destroyed by a large fire which did an estimated \$600,000.00 of damage. Mutual aid was requested from other towns to battle the blaze.

On Saturday, October 20th, Box #35, in the Town of Wellesley Mass., was transmitted at 2200 hours for a fire at the R.T. Sullivan Co. Mills in Wellesley Lower Falls. This company was making Khaki Cloth under government contract for the U.S. War Department. The fire building was a Mill Complex of 1 and 2 story, brick and wood construction. The complex covered roughly one acre of land. Responding on the box were Fire Chief John P. Doyle and his department, consisting of a GMC Motor Combination Wagon and a horse drawn Combination City Service Hook & Ladder Truck with two 25 gal. Chemical tanks. This location is a Line Box for the City of Newton. Newton sent a Knox Combination Wagon. Altogether, 27 firemen responded. The fire started on the second floor in the blowers of a dry room. The fire then extended, via the ventilation system, to the roof. Chief Doyle and the other responders stretched 2000' of 2 ½" hose from four hydrants. Hydrant spacing was about 200' apart and the pressure was 110 Psi. The estimated value of the building and contents was \$82,000.00 and the loss estimated at \$1000.00.

Although the United States had been manufacturing arms and supplies for the Allies since the beginning of The Great War, the U.S. officially became a belligerent in the spring of 1917. The country now ramped up not only to supply the Allies but to build its own fighting machine and send it "Over There". All over the country, training camps were being built. The Army, Navy and Marines were being trained. Food and supplies, particularly arms and munitions were being shipped overseas.

At Camp Devens in Ayer, Shirley, Harvard and Lancaster Massachusetts, a serious, early October Fire, destroyed \$8,000.00 worth of soldier's personal effects. During the last week in the month a second serious fire damaged the Camp. An oil stove at the base hospital exploded around 0215 one morning and burned for 40 minutes. The Receiving Ward Building was destroyed. The building and contents, valued at \$5000.00, were a total loss but 250 patients were successfully removed. The Camp Devens Fire Department, later to be designated the 301st Fire Truck & Hose Company, put six good streams to work on the fire and protecting exposures. Brands from the structure fire started many spot fires. A serious forest fire was averted by the regular line "Doughboys", who made quick work of extinguishment.

New England industry was an arsenal of democracy. It is the birthplace of American arms making. The Port of Boston was an outlet for these goods to the desperate allies in Europe. All along the waterfront, the railyards, piers and wharves were overloaded with beans, blankets, bullets and Brownings shipping out.

On October 26th, a series of explosions ripped through the Quincy Cold Storage buildings. Lt. Swendeman of the Harbor Police had barely recovered from the first explosion when a second one occurred and turned the building into an inferno. Box 1241 for Constitution Wharf was

received at the Boston Fire Alarm Office on Bristol St. At 2103 hours, Fire Alarm transmitted the box sending 4 engines (including a fireboat), 2 trucks, a chemical company, a district and a deputy fire chief.

Constitution Wharf was owned by the Quincy Cold Storage Company. The pier was topped by a one story wooden shed with metal cladding and doors. The pier shed covered an area of 81,000 square feet. Adjacent on Battery Wharf, was a similar pier shed, containing a large amount of military goods and supplies for the War Department, as an exposure.

District Fire Chief Edward J. Shallow, upon arriving, found a serious fire in progress and ordered all first alarm engine companies to run 2 big lines each. He sent his aide to transmit a second alarm, received in the F.A.O. at 2106 hours. Engine #31 moved into the North Basin, operating Deck Guns, using 1 ½ inch to 2 ½ inch tips, to set up a water curtain. Senior Deputy Fire Chief J.O. Taber had a third alarm transmitted at 2106 ½ hours. This sent an additional 8 land Engines, 2 H&L Trucks, 2 Water Towers and Fireboat Engines #44 & #47.

Responding companies found a pressure of 56 PSI on the hydrants, not great, but adequate.

Engine Companies #44 and #47 moved into the South Basin, throwing water at the fire.

Arriving after the 3rd alarm had been struck, Chief of Department McDonough transmitted a 4th Alarm at 2121 hours. Three more Engines, one more Truck Company and four Fuel Wagons were sent to the fire. Deputy Fire Chief J. Mulligan and 5 District Fire Chiefs also attended the fire. Responding to the fire the two horse hitch on Engine 4's hose wagon were struck by falling debris from the elevated railway structure and killed.

From the water side, fireboats hit the fire with streams from Deck, Stack and Pilothouse Guns. Land companies assisted by crews from Engine #44 & #47 moved in to cut off and confine the fire to the Southwest corner of the shed. Many 2 ½ inch handlines were stretched and operated. As companies advanced, they found the roll down metal clad doors were blocked open by the stored materials. During the fire attack, 2 Chiefs and 8 men from Engine Co.'s #7 and #39 became trapped when several bales of hemp collapsed. Some were seriously injured and had to be removed to the Haymarket Relief Station by ambulance for treatment. The operating units stopped the fire from entering exposures. The property was valued at \$2,000,000.00. Loss listed as \$100,000.00 and the impact on the war effort. The cause of the fire was believed to be a short circuit in the electric service going into the building. The Boston Fire Department used 5,000' of 2 ½ inch, 4,000' of 3 inch and 1000' of 3 ½ inch hose.

### **Boston Fire Department Battles Four Ship Fires October 16<sup>th</sup> – November 4<sup>th</sup> 1953**

During the 19 days between October 16<sup>th</sup> and November 4<sup>th</sup> Boston Firefighters battled four ship fires. These fires killed 46 persons and injured 41. Over 50 firefighters suffered injuries. Two of these fires are very well known to Buffs.....The USS Leyete and the MV Black Falcon, which suffered two fires just days apart. The other two fires did damage to the USS William Wood and a Dept. of the Interior Fisheries research trawler Delaware.

#### **Friday October 16, 1953 South Boston Naval Annex**

Crews of workmen along with the crew of the aircraft carrier USS Leyete CV-32 were making progress on the conversion of the Essex Class carrier to an Anti-Submarine Carrier. The Leyete had been ordered to the reserve fleet on August 1<sup>st</sup> 1953. On August 8<sup>th</sup> she was retained and re-designated AST-32 and headed for the Boston Naval Annex for conversion. She was berthed at the North Jetty and was made ready for her re-fit.

The Leyete was commissioned April 11, 1946, late for World War 2 service. She saw action in the Korean Conflict. Her aircrews flew some 3,500 sorties against North Korea. On December 4, 1950 the fighters of Fighting Squadron 32 were supporting the Marines in their retreat from the



Choosin Reservoir. One of her pilot, Ensign Jesse L. Brown flying an F4U Corsair was shot down by Chinese troops. He crashed his plane on a mountain top where the aircraft burst into flames. His wingman Thomas Hudner Jr. made a crash landing in an attempt to rescue Brown from the burning aircraft. Brown succumbed to his wounds and Hudner was also wounded. Brown was the first Afro-American naval Aviator, and the first to be killed in action. A Knox Class Frigate was named in his honor in 1972. Brown was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Hudner was award the Medal of Honor (*Mr. Hudner lives in Concord, Mass. – Editor*).



USS Leyte CV-32 during the Korean Conflict. US Navy Photo

As the work day turned into mid afternoon workmen were in the Port side catapult machinery room located on D deck installing new equipment at just about 1515 hrs an explosion ripped through the space causing the entire carrier to shudder. Smoke began pushing out of the space into passage ways and compartments. The thick oily smoke was being sucked throughout the entire ship by the ventilation system. Along the Jetty, buildings facing the Carrier had their windows blown out showering workers with glass.

On the bridge, the Officer of Deck felt the shudder and the explosion and before he could order General Quarters the Bosun Mate had already yelled over the 1MC for all hands to man battle stations. As the Klaxon blared, Damage Control crews raced to their repair lockers as GQ was still sounding. They donned OBA masks and hose lines were quickly advanced into D Deck where they were stopped by thick smoke that limited visibility to a just 6 inches and unbearable heat! Workmen and sailors in the Yard heard the explosion followed by the klaxon and knew it meant trouble.

At the North Jetty, Workmen on the pier had heard the explosion turned and ran towards the Carrier, one pulled box 45 Naval Annex North Jetty. No box was needed to tell the Navy Yard Fire Department, their station was located about 200 yards from the ship. Engine 3's MPO FF. Edward Carpenter had been at the open door watching the workmen. He felt the explosion and saw the smoke, He yelled into the station and the crews raced for the apparatus. Deputy Chief Harold Manchester jumped into his seat beside Carpenter, checked the rear step men and out the door they rolled. Base Fire Chief Dominic Noone ran for his car and pulled Boston box 7525. E-3's crew got two lines into operation, but could make little headway against the smoke. As they were working in the smoke a second explosion rocked the ship.

Workmen and crewmen were climbing up the ladders to the open hanger deck dragging injured and the dead with them. Captain Thomas A. Ahroon had taken command of the Leyete less than

a month before, now found himself trapped in his sea cabin by smoke. He was able to grope his way to the bridge and he took command of the battle to save the ship.

Boston Fire Alarm transmitted the box at 1516 hours. First due Engine Company 2 under the command of Captain Fred Willet roared through the Main Gate. The loom up told them where the fire was. Upon arrival, he ordered Hosemen Francis Hurley and William Hurley to put on All-Service Masks and make their way up to the Hanger Deck. After checking with Chief Noone, who advised Captain Willet that crew members and workers were trapped below in the thick smoke, Willet led his men down towards D Deck. They made it down one deck level. The heat was unbearable and they were forced to retreat back up to the Hanger deck. Along the way, they located two bodies and brought them up to the Hanger deck for medical aid. The crew located an 1 ½ inch line and they stretched the line down a gangway in order to extinguish the fire or to dissipate the extreme heat. About this time, Hoseman Francis Hurley reported he was having trouble breathing. He went towards the gangway and collapsed. He was carried to the Hanger Deck by sailors in a Damage Control party. Captain Willet sent Hoseman William Hurley to get a Chemox mask and return. Hurley again descended into the smoke to get to Captain Willet. Hurley was accompanied by Lt. Robert Crawford of Engine Company 39. During this time Captain Willet experienced a malfunction with his all service mask which had become clogged. Hurley and Lt. Crawford managed to get Captain Willet to the Hanger Deck where all three members of Engine 2 were taken to the hospital suffering from smoke inhalation. Other firefighters were donning Chemox masks to try and penetrate the thick smoke and punishing heat to get to men trapped below decks. Hoseman Lawrence White of Engine Company 26 wearing a Chemox mask descended with other company members down two decks below the Hanger Deck to locate victims. They found a crewman in a small room off a passageway and Hoseman White entered the room to assist in placing the victim in a stretcher. Working in tremendous heat and smoke White soon became exhausted and collapsed. Other members of Engine 26 assisted him to the Hanger Deck for oxygen where he was then transported to the hospital for exhaustion.

At Battery Wharf, Engine Company 31, The *McTighe* headed down the harbor to the Navy Annex. The crew of Engine Company 47 had come out to help get the *McTighe* underway looked down the harbor and saw the smoke. The crew quickly jumped aboard the *Joseph Luna*, had the engines running, cast off and were edging out into the harbor, knowing the they were on the second alarm. They didn't have long to wait! The second alarm was sounded at 1524 hours. Within 5 minutes both Fireboats were entering the battle.

Chief of Department Stapleton had arrived on scene and took command. After speaking with damage control officers and Capt. Ahroon, it was decided, that one damage control sailor would accompany firefighters as they attempted to get to the fire. All would be wearing either OBA or Chemox masks. Chief Stapleton advised all Companies to respond to the Hanger Deck and to bring their Chemox masks with them. Crews were told that the all-service masks would be useless in the smoke filled atmosphere below deck. The crews were linked together by short lengths of cable and dragging a lifeline and hoses with them they would enter the smoke in an attempt to effect rescues and try and get lines to the fire.



BFD Chemox Mask Apparatus



USN OBA-Oxygen Breathing



MSA All-Service Mask

Engines 31 and 47 were directed to hit the hull of the ship with their full monitor battery in an attempt to cool the metal and to try and give some relief to the interior crews. They were joined by two Navy tug boats using their guns. It was estimated that the Boats were throwing almost 15,000 gallons a minute at the hull of the great ship with little effect.



Injured being removed to ambulances. Photo courtesy of the Leslie Jones Collection

Sailors tried to reach their shipmates trapped by the heavy smoke. Many acts of heroism were performed this day. Firefighters made repeated attempts to get their lines into position to hit the fire. Chief Stapleton special called Rescue Companies and Rescue 1 and 2. Once they arrived, all three were ordered to set up their smoke ejectors and try and remove some of the smoke. This had some effect and both BFD crews and DC crews got lines into the fire area. One of the major problems crews encountered was that the steel decks were radiating heat to other compartments and spaces on all sides including the top and bottom were now burning.

Other Companies were removing bodies to the hanger deck and to Sick Bay. Both military and civilian doctors worked alongside Hospital Corpsmen and Chaplains and clergy from South Boston who raced to the scene and worked to aid and comfort the injured. Boston City Hospital had sent ambulances and surgeons to the ship. The first casualty arrived at the ER a few minutes after 1600 hrs suffering severe burns. The victim was a Naval Officer who later succumbed to his injuries. The injured were taken to Mass General, Boston City Hospital, and the Carney. Service members were taken to the Chelsea Naval Hospital.

Helicopters were ferrying medical supplies from the Chelsea Naval Hospital to the flight deck and then into the hands of the doctors struggling in ankle deep water on the hanger deck. The noise on the ship was deafening, men yelling, roaring of fire hoses the beating of the fireboats guns against the hull along with orders being given over the 1MC loud speaker system and add to this the oily smoke that was everywhere made for a scene out of a WW 2 attack!

The fire was not fully extinguished until nearly 2000 hrs. Companies and Navy crewmen were on scene well into Saturday searching the ship for more victims.

The human total was 38 dead and 28 injured. Close to 25 firefighters were either treated at the scene or transported to hospital suffering from smoke inhalation and exhaustion.



Smoke pours from the USS Leyte, photo Leslie Jones Collection

#### Box 7525 Naval Annex Fire Station

|      |          |                   |        |        |              |
|------|----------|-------------------|--------|--------|--------------|
| 1516 | 7525     | 2, 25, 39, 31     | 8, 18  | R3     | LP-2         |
| 1524 | 2-7525   | 38, 26, 35, 3, 47 | 17, 20 |        | LP-1<br>WT-2 |
| 1530 | Sp. Call |                   |        | R1, R2 |              |

One of 24 Essex Class Carriers Built at Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Company Norfolk, VA.

Laid down: 21 February 1944

Launched: 23 August 1945

Commissioned: 11 April 1946

Decommissioned: 15 May 1959

Fate: Scrapped in 1970

General characteristics

Class and type: Essex-class aircraft carrier

Displacement: As built: 27,100 tons standard

Length: As built: 888 feet (271 m) overall

Beam: As built: 93 feet (28 m) waterline

Draft: As built: 28 feet 7 inches (8.71 m) light

Propulsion: As designed: 8 × boilers: 4 × Westinghouse geared steam turbines

4 × shafts 150,000 shp (110 MW) Speed: 33 knots (61 km/h)

Complement: 3448 officers and enlisted

Armament: As built:

4 × twin 5 inch/38 caliber guns, 4 × single 5 inch/38 caliber guns, 8 × quadruple Bofors 40 mm guns 46 × single Oerlikon 20 mm cannons

Armor: As built: 4 inch belt, 2.5 inch hangar deck, 1.5 inch protected decks, 1.5 inch conning tower Aircraft carried: As built: 90–100 aircraft

### **MV Delaware Fire October 23, 1953**

The MV Delaware was undergoing an overhaul at Lockwood Basin in East Boston. The Delaware was a side-rigged North Atlantic "Beam Trawler" 140 feet in length. She was built at Bath Iron Works for Boothe Fisheries of Boston and launched on Feb. 25, 1937. She was taken over by the Navy in March of 1941 and converted into a Coastal Mine Sweeper at the East Boston yards of Bethlehem Steel and renamed the USS Flicker AM-70. She was returned to Boothe in March of 1945. In 1950 she was purchased by the Federal Fisheries of the Department of the Interior. She was used for various research tasks in the North Atlantic. She carried a crew of 17 and four scientists.

At the time of the fire, she was undergoing a re-fit to conduct experiments in freezing fish out on Georges Bank. Workmen were aboard and an electrical fire started and quickly extended to construction debris and supplies. Workers fled the vessel and called the BFD. Fire alarm received the call at 1045 hrs and quickly transmitted box 6152 Sumner and New Streets for 61A Sumner Street.

East Boston Companies headed for the box, they could see smoke swirling up over the boat yard. Chelsea Engine 1 pointed the nose of their 1947 American La France 700 Series pump down Meridan Streets. Once again, the McTighe and the Luna cast off and dashed across the Harbor. Companies went to work and the recent lessons from the USS Leyte fire were quickly remembered. Car 1 ordered all companies to use their Chemox masks. This made entry to the below deck area in and around the fish holds easier. Truck companies and the Rescue were able to open the holds and vent the smoke. The second alarm was struck bringing additional companies to relieve the first alarm units. The fire caused \$ 75,000 in damage to the ship.

#### **Box 6152 Sumner and New Streets 61A Sumner Street**

|      |        |                           |       |   |              |
|------|--------|---------------------------|-------|---|--------------|
| 1045 | 6152   | 9, 5, 40, 31, 47, Che. E1 | 2, 31 | 3 |              |
| 1111 | 2-6152 | 56, 25, 6, 50             | 21, 1 |   | LP-1<br>WT 1 |



MV Delaware. Photo Leslie Jones Collection



## **U.S.S. William Wood**

The third ship fire occurred aboard the U.S.S. William Wood at the Charlestown Navy Yard on October 25, 1953.



USS William Wood DD-715, US Navy Photo

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1953, the USS William Wood a Gearing class destroyer was de-commissioned and sent to the Charlestown Navy Yard for conversion into a Radar Picket Ship. Work had been on going for several weeks. On the afternoon watch, the crew stationed in Fire Room No. 2 was having a problem with one of the boilers. As they worked to correct it the boiler blew back and started a fire. The crew dragged several injured crewman out compartment as the Petty Officer called the Bridge and reported the explosion. They shut the water tight doors and waited for the fire parties. On the bridge the Officer of the Deck sounded General Quarters and the Yard Fire Department was notified and as they rolled out of their quarters heading for the destroyer. Smoke could be seen coming up out of the stacks. The Navy Yard crews went on board and were told that the Damage Control crews were down at the Fire Rooms trying to make entry but where having trouble due to the heat. The crews donned their masks and headed below deck. They encountered heavy smoke and heat. The chief ordered box 4214 struck and bringing help from the Boston Fire Department. The box was received at the FAO a little past 1230 hrs. Car 2 along with Engines 36, 32, 50, 47. Ladders 22, 9 and Rescue 1 were soon on scene and a co-coordinated attack on the fire was made. Fire Room 2 was entered and using fog streams the fire was knocked down. Boston Companies were back in-service with in the hour and the allout was sent at 1343 hours, The Navy listed damage at \$ 8,000.00. The ship was re-designated DDR-715 William Wood on June 3, 1954. She went on and served the fleet until her de-commissioning on December 1, 1976. She was sunk off Puerto Rico as a target ship in March of 1983.

By the end of October the firefighters of the BFD were becoming experts in shipboard firefighting. Many a firefighter figured "hey it comes in three's, so we're home free, right?" Wrong the worst was yet to come!

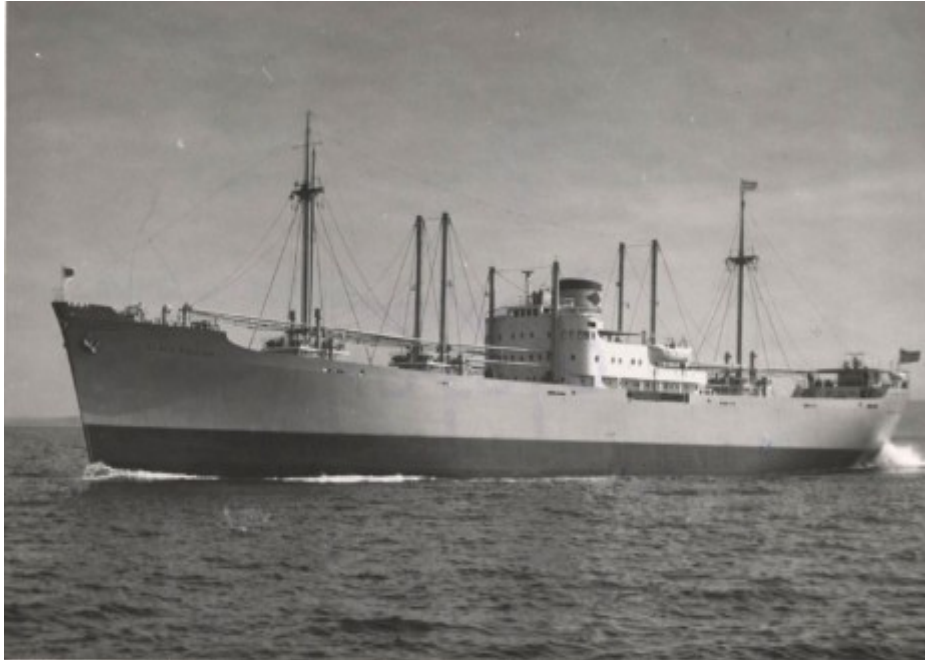
## **MV Black Falcon**

Along with the U.S.S. Leyte and the Pia Costa fires, the one that most buffs remember is the Black Falcon explosion and fire at the South Boston Army Base. It killed 8 longshoremen and injured another 13 and sent 45 Boston Firefighters to the hospital to be treated for acid burns and



smoke inhalation. Because, as we will see, this was not a fire in a cargo hold but a full blown hazardous materials incident!

The Motor Vessel Black Falcon was built in Oslo, Norway and launched on June 7, 1949. She was 440 feet in length, had a fifty seven foot beam, a crew of 43 and five cargo holds.



MV Black Falcon, photo courtesy ARKIV Shipping

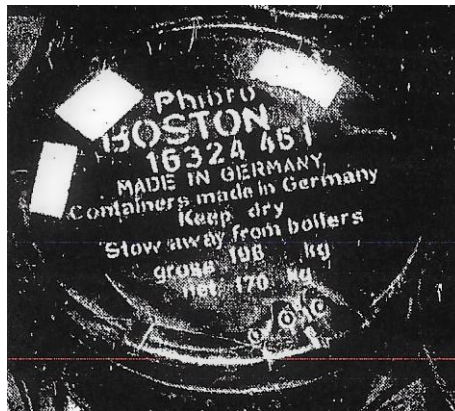
The Black Falcon was sailing for the Black Diamond Shipping Lines as she set sail for her 32<sup>nd</sup> voyage under Captain Kaare Langballe and Second Officer Eric Elstad. Her journey started on October 6<sup>th</sup> as she departed Hamburg, Germany. Her ports of call would bring her to Bremen, Germany, Antwerp, Belgium and Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Her cargo included steel, industrial chemicals, furniture, rugs, paints, glass, baled wood, Bauxite ore and food stuffs in her cold storage hold. The industrial chemical she was carrying was 140 drums of Sodium Peroxide for delivery to American Gelatin in Woburn. When the Black Falcon arrived in the port of Antwerp, the local Black Diamond Shipping Agent ordered that the drums of chemicals be shifted to the bottom of the hold. This was the beginning of the chain of events that led to the explosion in the hold.

*In 1953 chemical information was not as readily available as it today. So, before we continue with our story, let us pause for a quick chemistry lesson. Sodium Peroxide  $\text{Na}_2\text{O}_2$  is a yellow-whitish granular substance; it reacts violently with water and in large amounts is explosive. It is a corrosive and when burning gives off toxic gases.*

*Today, if this incident happened the OIC would call for a full Haz-Mat response, grab his DOT Guidebook and look it up. He would find it was an oxidizer and use Guide # 144. No water would be used; all crews would be wearing SCBA and full protective gear.*

*In 1953 the BFD was wearing rubber turnout coats and rubber  $\frac{3}{4}$  length boots, the best breathing apparatus at the time where the cumbersome Chemox Masks. But in true fire service tradition they did their best to save lives and prevent further damage. Class over, back to the story.- Editor*



Sodium Peroxide Drum from the Black Falcon, Photo courtesy of the Boston Globe

The Black Falcon departed Rotterdam on October 17<sup>th</sup> heading for New York City. After an uneventful crossing she reached Ambrose Light on October 30<sup>th</sup> and waited for a NYC Harbor Pilot to take her to her berth. She sailed the next day and reached Boston on Friday Halloween night. She was berthed at the South Boston Army Base Pier F, just 200 yards away from the U.S.S. Leyte.

On Monday November 2 the unloading commenced and Longshoremen were making quick work of the unloading. They were unaware of the ticking time bomb in hold number 4. As the morning turned into afternoon the crews were still at it. One of the drums spilt some of its contents and a yellowish choking smoke began to form. As the Sodium Peroxide hit the damp wet deck, at 1440 hours an explosion rocked the entire base. Flames and smoke blew out of hold 4. Many of the Longshoremen didn't even have time to react. For the second time in three short weeks, windows were shattered in the buildings facing the pier. All over the yard men ran to help. Again the firefighters roared out of quarters and were faced with another inferno. Boston Fire Alarm was receiving calls about the explosion and transmitted box 7124 at 1441 hours,

On board the Black Falcon, the crew and the Longshoremen ran hoses and tried to get down into the hold but were driven back by the smoke and the fumes. The Base Fire Department knew they would need all the help they could get from the Boston Companies whose sirens could be heard screaming in the distance.

On board the first due pump, the crew had a sense of déjà vu as Engine 2 roared through the main gate and headed for Pier F. They didn't need to be told how to get to the ship. They laid in and dragged a 2 ½ inch big line on the ship and donned the Chemox masks. The balance of the first alarm assignment including four companies that were first due to the Leyte fire were quickly on scene and in the battle. Again, lessons learned from the U.S.S. Leyte and the MV Delaware fires were put into place. The big one being don't bother with the all-service masks, just grab the Chemox!

On arrival of Car 6 the District Chief William Jeffries wasn't even out of the buggy when he ordered a second alarm. Division 1 with Deputy Chief John Pettit was hot on his heels and the third alarm was transmitted at 1448 hours only 7 minutes from the box! The Chiefs meet Captain Langballe on the main deck and plans were quickly developed for attacking the fire and the rescue of any injured victims. The Business Agent for the Longshoremen was contacted for a count of men working in the hold. He reported twenty one men were in the hold and none had been seen since the explosion.

Chief of Department Stapleton arrived and special called two additional Rescue Companies. As the Chief gathered to figure out the best way to deal with the fire, companies were trying to get

into the hold but were driven back by the heat and toxic smoke. Companies when dragging lines out stumbled across the unconscious body of Base Fire Prevention Officer William Blake, who had attempted to get into the engine room and start the fire pumps. Due to the smoke and heat he couldn't make it. The ship's fire mains were never charged. He was brought up on deck and taken to the hospital.

Companies found that they could not enter the hold and hit the fire. The lines were backed out and lines were played into the hold. The two fireboats added their main battery to the fight and before long the ship started to list. Chief Stapleton fearing the worst with the ongoing explosions, summoned five tugboats to the scene, in case the Black Falcon needed to be towed out of the harbor. Companies were able to rescue 13 badly injured men and they were brought out and quickly transported area hospitals. It was found that eight were still missing.



Photo from Leslie Jones Collection



Leslie Jones Collection

As the lines were poured into the hold, a new hazard emerged. The Bauxite ore dust was being blasted up by the streams and the dust was covering the hands and faces of the firefighters manning the lines. As the water spray hit the ore dust it created an acid that was burning the firefighters. Forty five members needed medical attention for these burns.

As the afternoon turned to evening the tide had turned and now the grim task began of searching for the eight un-accounted for victims. Once the Rescue Companies made entry into hold 4, they were met with a ghastly sight that none would ever forget! They found the remains of the eight, burnt beyond recognition, all that was recognizable were there heavy work shoes. The remains were carefully removed from the hold hoisted up to the deck and removed to the Southern Mortuary for identification.

Ambulances rushed to the scene carrying both doctors and life-saving plasma. 4 came from Boston City, 3 from the Carney and one each from every police district in the City.

The cost of the Sodium Peroxide for American Gelatin was valued at \$ 3,500 dollars and it killed eight men, seriously injured 13 more. The firefighters who entered the hold would never forget the nightmare scene they encountered when recovering the bodies of those killed.



Bodies being removed, Leslie Jones Collection

#### Box 7124 Army Supply Base

|      |          |                        |       |      |            |
|------|----------|------------------------|-------|------|------------|
| 1441 | 7124     | 2, 7, 39, 31           | 8, 20 | 1    |            |
| 1444 | 2-7124   | 25, 43, 26, 36, 47     | 19    |      | LP-2, WT-1 |
| 1445 | Sp. Call |                        |       | 2, 3 |            |
| 1448 | 3-7124   | 33, 13, 12, 32, 42, 10 | 18, 5 |      | LP-1       |

The Coast Guard wasted no time in conducting an inquiry into the disaster. On Wednesday November 4<sup>th</sup> as the inquiry was being held, aboard the Black Falcon a fire had started in the cork insulation of the cold storage room, one deck below the main deck. Again the Base Fire Department arrived and they transmitted box 7124 at 1613 hours.....again. And again the Boston Companies responded. This was a more standard type fire to fight. The Ladder Companies were opening up the walls to expose the burning cork and the engines hit with there lines. The fire was knocked down quickly, but the overhaul took a few more hours.

At the Inquiry, Captain Langbelle was told of the fire and left the hearing and headed back to his ship.

It was found that the Sodium Peroxide was loaded incorrectly in Antwerp when it was placed on the bottom of the hold and against a bulkhead of the engine room.

These four ship fires in 19 days tested the Boston Fire Department. They left 46 persons dead, 41 injured, sent nearly 65 firefighters to the hospital. Property damage was in excess of one million dollars.





## **APPARATUS UPDATES**

**By Michael Boynton, all photos by the author**

As we approach press time, the following apparatus deliveries (and changes) have occurred in the Metro area, and throughout Massachusetts:

### **BOSTON & METROFIRE**

Boston – Engines 17, 21, 28, 42 & 50 – 2017 E-One Typhoons 1250/560/30A

Everett – Ladder 2 – 2017 E-One Cyclone Metro 100' RMA

Woburn Auxiliary – Engine 8 – 2000 Pierce Dash 1500/750 (former WFD E4 & E5)





### **OTHER MASSACHUSETTS APPARATUS**

Berlin – Truck 6 – 2017 Spartan/Smeal/LTC 110' RMA

Concord – Engine 4 – 2017 E-One Typhoon 1250/510/20A



Groveland – Ladder 1 – 2016 Rosenbauer Commander 2000/300/75' MMA Tower

Hyannis – Tower 829 – 2017 Pierce Arrow XT 1500/300 100' RMA

Lawrence – Engine 9 – 2017 KME Severe Service 1500/750

Westwood – Engines 2 & 5 – 2017 Ferrara Igniter MVPs 1750/750/30A

Worcester – Rescue 1 – 2017 E-One Cyclone Heavy Rescue Walk-In

Yarmouth – Engine 43- 2017 Pierce Dash CF PUC 1500/500/30A/50B









Also at press time, Metro-Fire rigs awaiting delivery at the dealers are two (2) KME Severe Service pumpers for Quincy Engines 1 and 5, an E-One Cyclone aerial for Lexington Ladder 1, an E-One Typhoon for Milton Engine 4, a Seagrave Marauder II Aerialscope for Waltham Ladder

1, a Pierce pumper for Weymouth, and a Pierce Arrow XT for Chelsea Ladder 2 and a Pierce Saber Heavy Rescue walk-around for Chelsea Rescue 1.

## **BFD Riot Procedures Part 2**

In Part 1 of our Riot series we covered the Boston Fire Departments responses to the so called 'Welfae Riots'. The procedure that was in place at that time have been put in service in 1965.

Boston, like most major urban cities was undergoing radical changes during the 1960's a combination of anti-war protests and the building of the civil rights movement were catching cities off guard.

This would come to light as the Nation watched the events in Los Angeles's Watts neighborhood on TV from August 11-16, 1965. The Boston Fire and Police Command staffs knew that a Riot Procedure was needed. The first reference to a Riot Procedure was in GO. 32 dated August 27, 1965.

The Riot Procedures are re-produced from BFD General Orders, You can see how they expanded from the one page of 1965 to the multi page procedure and mutual aid listing in 1968.

Part 3 in the December Line Box will be a photo feature of the riot protection built by the Shops to protect the responding firefighters.



GENERAL ORDERS  
NO. 32

*Special Order  
August 3, 1967*

HEADQUARTERS, FIRE DEPARTMENT  
BOSTON, AUGUST 27, 1965

EMERGENCY SIGNAL

1. Effective immediately, Emergency Signal 10-18 is established within this department and shall be added to Card Q of the Instruction Cards.
2. When this signal is received over Fire Department tapper, it indicates that a "Riot Condition" exists. In most cases this signal will be followed by the nearest fire alarm box to the scene of the incident. When this signal is received followed by the box, it indicates that the first alarm apparatus will respond in the usual manner to the location and will also alert the entire department that a "Riot Condition" exists. ("Riot Condition" defined as three or more persons assembled together in doing some lawful or unlawful act in a violent or tumultuous manner causing great terror to the public).
3. If, upon arrival at the scene, a fire is in progress, the department will go to work in the usual manner to contain the fire. The officer in charge will seek necessary assistance from the police for the protection of department personnel.
4. If no fire exists upon arrival, the officer in charge will report to the superior officer in charge of the police at the location and be governed by his instructions as to the deployment of fire department personnel. In the event that more assistance is needed at a location as outlined above, multiple alarms will be sounded in a similar manner as first alarms with the necessary prefix denoting the multiple alarm, and apparatus response will be in accordance with the regular running card assignment. The Deputy Chief on duty as well as the Assistant Fire Chief assigned to respond during that period will respond to the scene and coordinate the operations of the department.
5. The lighting plant shall respond in each instance during the hours of darkness when this emergency signal is struck.
6. There may be instances where a still alarm of apparatus is requested by the Police Department to handle minor incidents or to assist the police in some manner. In these instances, the Fire Alarm Office, in addition to notifying the still alarm companies, will transmit this information to the district fire chief.
7. In addition, the Fire Commissioner and Chief of Department will be notified when any of the above conditions exist.
8. Additional instructions will follow.

BY ORDER OF FIRE COMMISSIONER THOMAS J. GRIFFIN

*John E. Clougherty*  
Assistant Fire Chief  
Acting Chief of Department

The next issue of Riot Procedures is contained in General Orders No. 29 dated July 7, 1967. It is interesting to read in this order, that it lists task forces.

RIOT OPERATIONS PROCEDURE

1. Effective immediately, this order rescinds and supersedes General Orders No. 32 (1965) and Special Order - Urgent, dated June 3, 1967, and the supplements thereto dated June 4, 5, 1967.

2. Emergency Signal 10-18 is established within this department and shall be carried on the Instruction Cards as an emergency signal for "Riot Conditions."

This signal shall be struck on orders of the Chief of Department or Acting Chief, or if either is unavailable, the Deputy Fire Chief in the area where the incident has occurred. When this signal is received over fire department tapper, it indicates that a "Riot Condition" exists. A "Riot Condition" is defined as, "Three or more persons assembled together in doing some lawful or unlawful act in a violent or tumultuous manner causing great terror to the public."

3. With the striking of Signal 10-18, the department shall be governed by the following procedure:

A. The area within which an incident occurs within the definition of a "Riot Condition" shall be bound as rapidly as possible by the Deputy Fire Chief on duty in this area and this information furnished Fire Alarm for transmission to the department.

B. Command Post No. 1 shall be established at Fire Department Headquarters under the direction of the Chief of Department and/or Senior Officer present.

C. Command Post No. 2 shall be established at a fire station of this department located on the opposite side of the trouble area as determined by the Deputy Fire Chief on duty in that Division. The location of Command Post No. 2 shall be transmitted by the Fire Alarm Radio to department stations. Its location is subject to change as conditions may require. Ordinarily the Senior Deputy Chief present shall exercise command and shall maintain close liaison with Command Post No. 1.

D. Upon the bounding of the critical area, all fire companies located within the defined area will evacuate their stations and report to the Command Post as designated herein. Any other companies in the critical area will report to Command Post No. 2, if in Division 2; or Command Post No. 1, if in Division 1. Fire stations should be securely locked prior to departure.

E. The following chief officers and fire companies shall report to the indicated Command Post for assignment to the Task Force and thereafter shall operate as a Task Force.

(1) The Task Forces assigned to Command Post No. 1 are designated by the odd numbers: 1-3-5-7-9...



The Task Forces assigned to Command Post No. 2 are designated by the even numbers: 2-4-6-8-10...

Command Post No. 1 - Headquarters - C2, C3, Div. 1 & Aides GA7-4391

|  |                           |          |
|--|---------------------------|----------|
| Task Force No. 1                         | Engines 56-26 & Ladder 9  | Dist. 2  |
| Task Force No. 3                         | Engines 40-43 & Ladder 8  | Dist. 5  |
| Task Force No. 5                         | Engines 32-25 & Ladder 20 | Dist. 6  |
| Task Force No. 7                         | Engines 10-34 & Ladder 26 | Dist. 12 |
| Tentative Call up Assignment, if needed. |                           |          |
| Task Force No. 9                         | Engines 3-2 & Ladder 3    | C6A      |

Command Post No. 2 - As designated - Div. 2, C4, C5, C7A & Aides

|  |   |         |
|--|---|---------|
| Task Force No. 2                         | Engines 12-16 & Ladder 16                 | Dist. 8 |
| Task Force No. 4                         | Rescue-Pumper Unit, Engine 48 & Ladder 23 | Dist. 9 |
| Task Force No. 6                         | Engines 24-14 & Ladder 4                  | C4      |
| Task Force No. 8                         | Engines 42-53 & Ladder 30                 | C5      |
| Tentative Call up Assignment, if needed. |   |         |
| Task Force No. 10                        | Engines 30-21 & Ladder 6                  | C7A     |

(2) Additional Task Forces will be made up from other companies in the department, as necessary, to handle conditions. Fire Alarm will request Mutual Aid companies to cover stations outside of the critical area only. Only fire companies of this department will be expected to operate within the defined critical area.

(3) Lighting Plant 2 will proceed to Ladder Co. 26's quarters and will respond from there as needed.

F. The Fire Alarm Office will handle all alarms or calls outside of the defined trouble area in a normal manner. All boxes or calls within the defined area will be relayed to Command Post No. 1 or Command Post No. 2, whichever is closer to the reported incident, and to the Boston Police Turret. Dispatching of apparatus into the defined area will be strictly controlled by the Command Post.

G. Upon notification of a box alarm from the Fire Alarm Office, the Command Post will assign one of the Task Force Chiefs to proceed to the location. Two police officers will ride in the Chief's car and accompany him to the scene. The Chief will report conditions back to the Command Post via radio. If necessary, he shall call for his Task Force to handle the situation. In those cases where only a chief is sent to check a location, the Task Force personnel assigned to him shall be alert and stand by apparatus so that there will be no delay in response. The Task Force consisting of the assigned two engine companies and one ladder company when dispatched into a defined trouble area will respond, operate and return as one unit to the Command Post, except as herein noted. In every case, the Task Force Chief will report via radio when it leaves a location.

Upon receipt of Still Alarms from the police or civilians that a building fire exists, the entire Task Force will respond with the Chief.



Multiple alarms will not be struck in the defined area. The Task Force Chief will order additional Task Forces from the Command Posts as needed.

The Arson Squad (K-4) and the Department Photographer (K-6) will be accompanied by police officers when responding into the critical defined area.

When a chief officer is assigned to duty with a Task Force, in the event of a fire in the absent chief's district, the Fire Alarm Office will dispatch a district chief from the next adjacent district.

H. Communications: All communications will be via Channel 2 as much as possible. In those instances where this channel is not available, Channel 1 will be utilized. There is no restriction on the use of telephone, if necessary, and/or more convenient.

I. Precautions: All personnel and fire companies assigned to report for Task Force duty will be governed by the following precautions:

- a. Remove axes or secure under seats.
- b. Remove all other exposed tools, fittings and equipment and place in compartments or other safe places.
- c. Conceal anything which is removable under canvas in order not to provide unwittingly missiles to rioters.
- d. All fire chiefs will wear black rubber coats and fire hats. All personnel assigned to Task Forces shall affix the protective life rings to their fire helmets.
- e. When operating in the critical defined area, red lights on roofs of chiefs' cars and emergency warning lights on apparatus should not be utilized unless absolutely necessary for they provide targets for snipers.
- f. When operating in a critical area, sirens should not be sounded unless absolutely necessary, for in many cases this sound increases the excitement in the area and gives perpetrators the results they desire from sounding an alarm of fire.

J. When Emergency Signal 10-18 is in effect, the department personnel should be alert to the possibility that the recall signal may be sounded.

BY ORDER OF FIRE COMMISSIONER WILLIAM J. FITZGERALD

John E. Clougherty  
Chief of Department

The next changes and additions in the Riot Procedures, now includes mutual aid coverage and how it was planned to keep the suburban companies out of the riot area. General Order 22 was published on May 17th, 1968 and replaced G.O. 29 issued July 7, 1967.

GENERAL ORDERS  
NO. 22

HEADQUARTERS, FIRE DEPARTMENT  
BOSTON, May 17, 1968

RIOT OPERATION PROCEDURES

1. Effective immediately, this order rescinds and supersedes General Orders #29, dated July 7, 1967, and all previous orders relative to Riot Operation Procedures.

2. Emergency Signal 10-18, having been established as the signal for Riot Conditions, shall continue in force and be carried on Instruction Cards for said conditions.

This signal shall be struck on the orders of the Chief of Department or Acting Chief, or, if either is unavailable, the Deputy Fire Chief or Senior Chief Officer next in command in the area where the incident occurs. When received over fire department tappers, it shall indicate that a Riot Condition exists. A Riot Condition is defined as "Three or more persons assembled together in doing some lawful or unlawful act in a violent or tumultuous manner causing great terror to the public."

3. With the striking of Signal 10-18, the department shall be governed by the following procedures:

- a. The area within which an incident occurs within the definition of a "Riot Condition" shall be bounded as rapidly as possible by a Deputy Fire Chief or Chief Officer next in rank on duty in the area. This information shall be furnished to the Fire Alarm Office for transmission to the department over Channels 1 and 2
- b. Upon the bounding of the critical area, all companies located within the defined area will evacuate their stations and report to the Command Post as designated herein. Any other companies in the critical area will report to Command Post #2 if in Division 2 or to Command Post #1 if in Division 1.
- c. Fire stations within the critical area shall be secured and locked prior to departure. In evacuating stations, the companies will take journals and the fire fighting clothing of members not on the working tour. Companies shall be alert for further orders via radio while enroute to Command Posts.



4. Command Post Locations:

- a. Command Post #1 is established at Fire Headquarters under the direction of the Chief of Department and/or the Senior Chief Officer present.
- b. Command Post #2 is established at Engine 42's quarters on Columbus Ave. The Senior Fire Chief Present shall exercise command and shall maintain close liaison with Command Post #1.
- c. Command Post #3 is established at Engine 25's quarters at 123 Oliver St. The Senior Fire Chief present shall exercise command and shall maintain close liaison with Command Post #1.
- d. Command Post #4 is a mobile command post established within the department. The duties and location of Command Post #4 shall be governed by the orders of the Chief of Department and/or the Senior Chief Officer present at Command Post #1.

If Command Post #4 is actuated, it shall, if possible, be located on the opposite side of the troubled area as it has been defined by the Chief in command of that division. The location of Command Post #4 shall be transmitted over Channels 1 and 2 by the Fire Alarm Office to department stations because its locations will vary according to condition requirements in the area involved.

5. The following chief officers and fire companies shall report to the designated command post for assignment to a Task Force and shall operate thereafter as a Task Force.

The Task Forces assigned to Command Post #1 are designated by odd numbers: 1 - 3 - 5 - 7 - 9 -

The Task Forces assigned to Command Post #2 are designated by even numbers: 2 - 4 - 6 - 8 - 10 -

- a. Command Post #1 - Headquarters - C-2, C-3, Division 1 and aides
  - Task Force #1 - Engines 56-26 and Ladder 9                      District 2
  - Task Force #3 - Engines 40-43 and Ladder 8                      District 6
  - Task Force #5 - Engines 32-25 and Ladder 20                      District 12
  - Task Force #7 - Engines 10-34 and Ladder 26                      C-6A
  - If needed:
  - Task Force #9 - Engines 3-2 and Ladder 3                      District 4A
- Command Post #2, as designated, C-5, Division 2, C-7A and aides
  - Task Force #2 - Engines 12-16 and Ladder 16                      District 5
  - Task Force #4 - Rescue Pumper, Eng. 48, Lad. 23                      District 8
  - Task Force #6 - Engines 24-14 and Ladder 4                      District 9
  - Task Force #8 - Engines 42-53 and Ladder 30                      C-7A
  - If needed:
  - Task Force #10 - Engines 30-21 and Ladder 6                      District 7A

5. b. Additional Task Forces will be made up from other companies in the department, as necessary, to handle conditions. In the event a command post cannot be used, companies will be ordered by radio to another command post location. Ordinarily, Task Forces in Division One shall report to Command Post #1 and Task Forces in Division Two shall report to Command Post #2.

c. All personnel assigned to Headquarters, Training and Fire Prevention shall on receipt of Signal 10-18 report to their respective units for further assignment.

d. Lighting Plant #1 will remain in Command Post #3. Lighting Plant #2 will report to Command Post #2. K-3, K-4 and K-6 will report to Command Post #1, and they will be accompanied by police officers when responding into the defined critical area.

6. The Fire Alarm Office will handle all alarms or calls outside of the defined critical area in a normal manner. All boxes or calls within the defined critical area shall be relayed immediately to Command Post #1 or to Command Post #2 or other activated Command Post which may be closer to the reported incident and to the Boston Police Turret. The dispatching of apparatus into the defined critical area shall be strictly controlled by the Command Post.

a. Upon notification from the Fire Alarm Office of a box alarm the Command Post will assign one of the Task Force chiefs to proceed to the location. Two police officers will accompany the chief in the district car to the reported incident location. The Chief will report conditions to the Command Post via radio immediately. If necessary, he shall call for his task force, stating in each case, whether or not the services of a ladder company is required to handle the situation. In those cases where a chief only is sent to check a location, the Task Force personnel assigned to his group shall be alert and stand by the apparatus so that there



- 6 a. will be no delay in response.
- b. The Task Force consisting of the assigned two engine companies and one ladder company, when dispatched into a defined critical area, ordinarily, will respond, operate and return as one unit to the Command Post except as herein noted. In every case, the Task Force chief will report via radio when the Task Force leaves a location.
- c. Upon receipt of still alarms from the police or civilians that a building fire exists, the entire Task Force will respond with the chief.
- d. Multiple alarms will not be struck in the defined critical area; the Task Force Chief will order additional Task Forces from the Command Post, including ladder companies, if necessary.
- e. When a chief officer is assigned to duty with a Task Force, the Fire Alarm Office will dispatch a district fire chief from the adjacent district in the event of a fire in the absent chief's district.

7. Communications

All communications in the critical area will be via Channel 2 as much as possible. In those instances where this channel is not available, Channel 1 will be utilized. This is no restriction on the use of telephones, if necessary, and/or more convenient. Task Force communications when away from the Command Post shall come from the chief in charge of the Task Force. There shall be no use of individual company numbers except where absolutely necessary.

8. Precautions: All personnel and fire companies will be governed by the following:

- a. When Emergency Signal 10-18 is in effect, the department personnel should be alert to the possibility that the Recall Signal may be sounded.

8 b. Remove axes or secure under seats, remove all exposed tools, fittings and equipment and place in compartments or other safe place. Conceal anything which is removable under canvas in order not to unwittingly provide missiles to rioters.

c. In the event apparatus in the Task Force becomes disabled in a defined critical area, all personnel shall leave on other apparatus assigned to that Task Force. If possible, remove radio microphone handset and turn off radio before abandoning apparatus.

d. In the event of an attack on a Task Force while entering or operating in a defined critical area, report conditions via radio and withdraw Task Force from the scene until such time as it is secured by police or other law enforcing agency.

e. Two pumpers shall be connected to each hydrant where feasible. In no case shall pump operators be left alone. Hydrant wrenches shall be immediately removed from hydrants and kept under the control of the pump operator in order that they may not be taken and used as weapons by rioters.

f. Members should be alert for open hydrants to prevent unnecessary water loss in fire areas and immediately close same. Members should be alert that they do not expose themselves to incidents while performing these duties.

g. When working in Housing Project areas, apparatus and personnel shall be so placed that they will not be bombarded by objects from rooftops by rioters.

h. Companies shall keep apparatus on main street, avoiding dead end streets or alleys where personnel and/or apparatus may become trapped.

i. Ordinarily under riot conditions fires originate on main streets. It is extremely important in these cases to get lines to the rear of buildings in order to prevent extension of fire to buildings in the rear. Lines should also be placed at



- i. extreme sides of fire as quickly as possible to prevent extension. It will be found in some cases that the main fire itself cannot be supplied with sufficient lines to extinguish same. Overhauling operations may also have to be abandoned where there are numbers of fires burning simultaneously.
- j. When deck guns are to be used, they should be, if possible, employed at ground level with the apparatus behind the men for protection as conditions permit.
- k. Engine companies shall drop two lines at fire locations where there is heavy fire and smoke showing.
- l. Reports from bystanders that there is a person trapped should be treated in the following manner: The informant should be requested to accompany fire department personnel and show where the trapped person is. Many times this is a ruse used by rioters to separate forces.
- m. Avoid, if possible, oral or physical contact with people in the defined critical area.
- n. No attempt should be made to extinguish burning gas mains in critical areas.
- o. Chief officer's shall wear black coats and fire hats, all personnel shall wear protective face and head rings attached to helmets.
- p. In a defined critical area, red roof lights and warning lights on apparatus should not be used unless absolutely necessary, as they provide targets for snipers. The use of sirens should be limited as they increase excitement and give perpetrators the results they desire when used.
- q. Under no conditions are members to report to a defined critical area on their own initiative.

9. Mutual Aid

The Fire Alarm Office will request Mutual Aid companies to cover stations and operate outside of the defined critical area only in accordance with the Mutual Aid Plan set up for riots. Only companies in this department will be expected to operate within the defined critical area.

a. Company commanders will assign a company member to stay behind when apparatus is moved out to a critical area. (This does not apply to companies housed within the defined critical area). This man will serve as a pilot to guide Mutual Aid apparatus until such time as he is relieved by a member from Headquarters. He shall then rejoin his company unless they are operating in a critical area, in which case, he shall report to the officer in charge of his Command Post.

b. Mutual Aid companies shall have all messages transmitted either through chiefs' cars or ladder companies in this department in order that all messages may be received immediately at the Boston Fire Alarm Office.

c. When Special Signal 10-26 is struck during this period, two-unit companies shall divide into single units. Single unit companies having a reserve piece of apparatus in quarters shall place it in service as a second unit. In each case, the Fire Alarm Office shall be notified when companies are ready to operate in compliance with the above. Fire Alarm Office shall in turn notify the Command Posts to which a company is assigned that the second piece is available for service.

10. The following equipment, organization and service will be a component part of a Command Post:

a. 2 1/2" hose and nozzles, strictly for replacement of hose lost or destroyed during riot conditions.

- 10 b. Gasoline tank trucks for refueling apparatus at command posts.
- c. Ambulance service for transportation of injured personnel from Command Posts to hospitals or other emergency station.
- d. Cots, blankets and necessary facilities for rest will be provided.
- e. Spare tires for apparatus.
- f. In the event of curfew, depending on its scope and area involved, arrangements will be made for the transportation of personnel from the Staging Area. Present plans call for this area being set up at Columbus Park, South Boston.
- g. Arrangements will be made for the feeding of personnel as conditions require.
- h. A chief officer shall be assigned to the Police Turret and to White Stadium to facilitate communications between Fire Alarm Boston Police and various Command Posts.
- i. When Special Signal 10-21 (All Members Remain on Duty) is transmitted, this shall include chief officers and company officers.

11. Public Utilities

Request for Edison, Boston Gas or Telephone will be transmitted to Command Post #1 and re-transmitted to Police Command Post via Hot Line for their action.

12. Police Aid

Two policemen will respond in each chief's car. Notification to the Police Turret of fire location will bring 6 to 8 more policemen with a Sergeant in Charge. If further aid is needed, the Sergeant will request same.

Police and National Guard personnel will operate in unison and supplement the police as necessary.

When a fire company at any time is subject to harassment or trapped in an area, a radio announcement shall be made from the area "Fire Company in Trouble" giving location. This call will be immediately transmitted to the Fire



Alarm Office who in turn will transmit the message to the police turret. It will then be entered in the Fire Alarm Log. These calls will receive the highest priority.

13. Schools

Use of schools in any part of the City by the Fire Department shall be granted upon request to Deputy Saia of Police Headquarters.

14. Hospital Aids

Doctors will be assigned to Command Post #1 and #2 on request by telephone to Dr. Tabenhause, Administration Department, City Hospital.

Ambulance service will be provided from Command Post #1 and #2 by this department. Civil Defense vans will be used as they are equipped for ambulance work. Under ordinary conditions, one van shall be at Fire Headquarters and the other at Engine Co. 21. Each vehicle will be tested twice weekly by turning over motors as well as a short road test.

15. Supplemental information and guidance

| <u>Command Post #1</u> |                   | <u>Command Post #2</u> |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Task Force 11          | Engines 5 and 39  | Task Force 12          | Engines 37 and 20 |
| Task Force 13          | Engines 7 and 11  | Task Force 14          | Engines 52 and 48 |
| Task Force 15          | Engines 4 and 9   | Task Force 16          | Engines 17 and 45 |
| Task Force 17          | Engines 33 and 8  | Task Force 18          | Engines 41 and 49 |
| Task Force 19          | Engines 22 and 36 | Task Force 20          | Engines 28 and 51 |
| Task Force 21          | Engines 1 and 50  | Task Force 22          | Engines 18 and 29 |

## Assignment of Mutual Aid Companies in Event of Riots or other Emergencies

| Community   | BFD Cover |
|-------------|-----------|
| Arlington   | Engine 7  |
| Belmont     | Engine 41 |
| Braintree   | Engine 17 |
| Brookline   | Engine 37 |
| Burlington  | Engine 36 |
| Cambridge   | Engine 10 |
| Canton      | Engine 53 |
| Chelsea     | Engine 9  |
| Danvers     | Engine 11 |
| Dedham      | Engine 55 |
| Everett     | Engine 50 |
| Framingham  | Engine 33 |
| Hanscom AFB | Engine 34 |
| Holbrook    | Engine 21 |
| Lexington   | Engine 22 |
| Lynn        | Engine 2  |
| Malden      | Engine 32 |
| Medford     | Engine 3  |
| Melrose     | Engine 22 |
| Milton      | Engine 16 |
| Natick      | Engine 28 |
| Needham     | Engine 30 |
| Newton      | Engine 51 |
| Norwood     | Engine 48 |
| Peabody     | Engine 39 |
| Quincy      | Engine 20 |
| Randolph    | Engine 45 |
| Reading     | Engine 8  |
| Revere      | Engine 1  |
| Salem       | Engine 5  |
| Saugus      | Engine 40 |
| Scituate    | Engine 43 |
| Sharon      | Engine 49 |
| Somerville  | Engine 32 |
| Stoughton   | Engine 52 |
| Wakefield   | Engine 4  |
| Waltham     | Engine 33 |
| Watertown   | Engine 41 |
| Wellesley   | Engine 29 |
| Weston      | Engine 29 |
| Weymouth    | Engine 18 |
| Winchester  | Engine 26 |
| Winthrop    | Engine 56 |
| Woburn      | Engine 25 |

## Baltimore City Second Alarm

On Monday Sept. 17, 2017 Baltimore Fire Dispatch started to receive calls shortly before 0645 reporting heavy smoke in the area of 1026 East Patpsco Avenue in the Brooklyn section of the City. Dispatchers transmitted fire box 35-14. Companies would still be on scene of this fire until October 1<sup>st</sup>.

The fire was in a 94,000-square-foot warehouse, owned by the secondhand textile company Whitehouse & Schapiro LLC, contained toys, clothing and packing supplies. The loom-up of the heavy black smoke could be seen for miles.



Two alarms were sounded for the fire, but special calls went out for 13 additional engine companies from both Balto. City and Anne Arundel County. In the middle of the fire, with the limited hydrants. Companies ran out of water. From the looks of it was a 'cocker'!

We were sent the responses, but not the times.

| Alarm           | Engines                | Trucks     | Rescue | Other                 |
|-----------------|------------------------|------------|--------|-----------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | 2, 26, 58, 47          | 23, 1      | 1      | Medic 9, BC-2, BC-6   |
| W.F.            | 55                     | 8          |        | AF-1, Car 5           |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 30, 14, 6              | 16         |        | BC-3, EMS 26, Medic 5 |
| Sp. Call        |                        | AA. Twr 26 |        | WT-1                  |
| Sp. Call        | 50                     | 6          |        |                       |
| Sp. Call        | 36, 51, 5, 8, 33       |            |        |                       |
| Sp. Call        | 52, 53, 20, 27, AA.311 |            |        |                       |
| Sp. Call        |                        | AT-31      |        |                       |
| Sp. Call        | AA 32, 21              |            |        |                       |

Companies were detailed to the fire until October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Thanks to our Baltimore Friends and fellow buffs: George Erman (E-23 ret), Captains Don Crusse and Mark Platek of the Fire Alarm Division for supplying us with the info,



### Weymouth Apartment Fire

On September 4<sup>th</sup> fire destroyed an apartment complex under construction at Union Point off Trotter Rd. The fire started on the second floor and quickly engulfed the entire building. Thanks to Robert Myers for sending along these photos!

