

Gelinas, John

From: Gelinas, John
Sent: Wednesday, January 06, 2010 2:23 PM
To: Gelinas, John
Subject: Company Journal - Issue 53



The Company Journal *and "The Feederline"*

Fire Department News
Cambridge, Massachusetts
A Class 1 Fire Department

From the desk of
Chief Gerald R. Reardon

Issue #53
Winter – Thursday, 7 January 2010

What's New

Per General Order No. 37, series of 2009 and effective Thursday, 19 November 2009 at 0700 hours
Engine Company No. 1 will become a Paramedic Engine Company.

Engine Company No. 1 will be staffed and equipped appropriately to supplement Rescue Company No. 1, Squad No. 2, and Squad No. 4 in their mission to provide enhanced and tactical Advanced Life Support services to the City of Cambridge.

Engine Company No. 1's response protocol has been amended to reflect this change to Paramedic Engine Company status.



Cambridge Ladder 5 (pictured above) has been sold to the Chelsea Fire Department.

The truck is shown here lettered and numbered as Chelsea Ladder 3.

This is the end of the era of tractor-drawn aerial apparatus in Cambridge. At one time, Ladders 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were all tractor-drawn.

Today Ladders 1, 3, 4, and 5 are 105' Pierce rear-mount aerial ladders. Ladder 2 is a 95' Pierce mid-mount tower-ladder.

- photo by **DFC Gerry Mahoney** (EPAC)

Who's New

The following members have been appointed to the Cambridge Fire Department and have been assigned to the Recruit Firefighter Training Program at the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy on Monday, 30 November 2009, with scheduled graduation of 26 February 2010.

Brian D. Gallant
Darryn DeGrace
Paul C. Enos
Silvio S. Estrada
Kenneth B. Flibotte
Michael F. Lencki
Jose T. Lora
Robert P. McCarthy
Peter M. Melo
R. Nicholas Menard
Ian S. Moynihan
Kyle M. Schweinshaut
Jeffrey C. Keefe

The following members, previous graduates of the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Recruit Firefighter Training Program and Certified Firefighters I/II, have been appointed to the Cambridge Fire Department and have been assigned to the Training Division, starting 30 November 2009, for one week:

Peter M. Benevides
Gary W. Plunkett

All Companies Working

Second Alarm Box 2-12: A Second Alarm was ordered for the fire at 241 O'Brien Highway on 4 December 2009. Time of the box was 2319 hours. The working fire was ordered at 2329 and the second alarm was ordered transmitted at 2330 hours. Seven engines, 4 trucks, 2 squads, the Rescue Company, 2 division chiefs, and staff and support units operated to contain this fire in a 2 story, concrete and metal clad structure, occupied by an auto repair business. Following several 911 calls, and arriving with fire and smoke showing, engine companies established water supplies and quickly advanced 2 ½" attack lines to contain the fire while simultaneously the trucks opened up and the rescue and squads completed searches. During the primary search, members of the Rescue Company found a cat who had taken refuge under the hood of a car in the repair shop. The very-frightened cat was removed to safety by the Rescue and left under care of Professional Ambulance members. After receiving O2 and a quick medical evaluation by PRO, the cat appeared to be in good health and none the worse for the experience. Acting **Deputy Fire Chief Edward Morrissey** was the IC. Group 1 was on duty.



Box 2-12 was Ladder 1's first fire (the 2009 Pierce 105' rear-mount)



It was also Ladder 5's last fire (the 1989 Maxim tractor-trailer)

- photos above by *Ed Morrissey, Jr.*



Exposures were protected, searches were completed, and the fire was quickly knocked down by operating members at Box 2 -12.



Engine 2, group 1: **FLt. Ron Gomes, FFs Steve Ortiz and Meg Carrigan**

- photos above by **Owen Carrigan**

Working Fire Box 45-343: The Working Fire was transmitted on 4 November 2009 for the fire in construction materials and hi-pressure steam pipe insulation below grade IRO 405 Memorial Drive. Companies arrived with heavy fire and smoke showing and reports of people trapped. The fire was quickly contained and knocked down and searches were completed. Any endangered occupants were quickly removed to safety. The box was transmitted at 0825 and the working fire signal 45 was transmitted at 0830. Four engines, 3 trucks, 2 squads, the Rescue Company, and 2 division chiefs operated under command of **Acting Deputy Fire Chief Mark Cunningham** of Division 1. Group 2 was on duty.



The fire involved insulation and construction materials and threatened the adjacent hi-rise exposures. ECC received multiple calls for this fire, including reports of people trapped inside and on the roof. One person, although in no immediate danger, was successfully rescued from the roof.



The fire extended below grade into construction materials and insulation of a hi-pressure steam transmission pipeline.



A 20# propane tank was an additional exposure.

- photos above **by FLt. David Walles** (Training)

Working Fire Box 45-791: The working fire was ordered for the fire in the 2 ½ story, wood-frame dwelling at 44 Harvey Street on 11 December 2009. The box was transmitted at 2353 hours and the signal “45” was transmitted at 0007 hours. Arriving with heavy fire showing from the “Charlie” side, the assigned 4 engines, 3 trucks, 2 squads, the rescue, and 2 division chiefs operated to protect exposures, complete searches, and contain and knock-down the fire in this congested North Cambridge neighborhood. **DFC Leonard** was the IC. Group 3 was on duty.



Flt. Robert Walsh (Engine 8) advises IC **DFC Leonard** (Division 2) on progress of interior firefighting progress.



FCapt. Brian Gover (Engine 1) prepares to advance 2 ½" attack line



Truck 2: RIT (rapid intervention team) standby



FF Hugh Devlin (Squad 4)

- Photos above by **Ted Pendergast**



Engine 2 arrives at an automobile fire on Windsor Street on 31 December 2009.
Engine 2 and Truck 3 were assigned to the Still Alarm.

- photo by A/DFC Ed Morrissey (Division 1)

Faces of the Fire Service

Members are shown operating at Working Fire **Box 45-343**:



FLt. Michael Francis (Engine 1)



FF Todd Koen (Engine 1)



FF David Puopolo (Rescue 1) and Ryan DeCourcey (Truck 3)



FF Bill McGovern (Engine 5)



FF Bob Walsh (Engine 5)



FF Gene Myrttil (Engine 5)



FF Nathan Jarvi (Engine 1 detailed to Rescue 1)



FF Robert Crooker (Engine 4 detailed to Rescue 1)



Cause and origin investigation: **DFC Michael Morrissey** and **FLt. David Pierce** (FIU)

- photos above by **FLt. David Walles** (Training)

Multi Agency Drill



DFC Lester Bokuniewicz, FLt. Steve Brown, FLt. Steve Landry, and FLt. David Pierce



Cambridge Fire Marine Unit 1 and divers participated in the simulated commercial airplane crash drill in Boston Harbor.

This was a multi agency drill coordinated by Logan Airport/Massport Fire Department. Marine 1 is shown here at the Black Falcon Terminal in the former Boston Naval Annex.

- photos above by **Tara Bithia**

Out and About



FLt. John Ruffing (Engine 5 – retired), **FF Kurt McLaughlin** (Rescue 1), and **DFC Gerry Mahoney** (EPAC) take in the Patriots/Dolphins game at Land Shark Stadium on 6 Dec 2009: New England Patriots lost to the Miami Dolphins 22 – 21.



Post game analysis was held at the Village Pump in Lauderdale by the Sea, Florida.
FF John Ruffing (Engine 5 - retired), **DFC Gerry Mahoney** (EPAC), **FF Bob O'Neil** (Engine 9 – retired), and **FF Kurt McLaughlin** (Rescue 1)



The **Currier Family** celebrates Halloween 2009 – **Bob** (Rescue 1 retired) is second from the right.

From the archives



The intrepid **Firefighter Bob Carrier** (Rescue 1 – retired)
Bob retired in 2002 after 32 years on the job. He was assigned to Rescue 1 for 29 of those years.



FF Paul Campbell (resigned), **FF Kurt McLaughlin** (Rescue 1), **Fire Captain John O'Donoghue** (retired as Chief of Operations), and **FF James Bergin** (now Engine 4)
Rescue 1's apparatus is the 1979 Chevrolet Kurbmaster/Wolf Coach

- Photos above by **Insp. Ed Fowler** (FIU, deceased)



Ladder 4 circa 1987

FF Joe Thorp (retired), **FF Walter Grace** (retired), **FF Bill Morrison** (deceased), **FF Bob O'Leary** (retired), and **FLt. Tom Kotowski** (now FLT., Engine 6).

The apparatus is the 1980, 100' Pirsch tractor-trailer. This 1980 Pirsch was in service from 24 Oct 1980 until 14 December 1992

- From the collection of **FF Walter Grace** (Division 1 – retired)

Box 3-693: Three alarms were transmitted for 98 Raymond Street, the fire in the large 2 ½ story, wood-frame, dwelling. The date was 12 April 1994.



FFs Dennis Vigilante (now Rescue 1) and **Jules Albert** (Ladder 4 – retired)



Chief Engineer Kevin J. Fitzgerald and **Deputy Fire Chief (now Chief) Gerald Reardon** are seen in front of the fire building.



Roof work by the members of Ladder 4 and Ladder 3

- photos above by **FF Walter Grace** (Division 1- retired)

Parting shot

Firefighter Joe Johnson retired following 35+ years on the Cambridge Fire Department. Joe most recently served on Truck 2 in East Cambridge. Friends and family gathered at the Polish-American club on 13 Nov 2009 to honor Joe and his faithful service to the City of Cambridge Fire Department.



Joe and his wife Donna



- photos above by Tara Bithia

Firefighter Bill McGovern worked his last tour of duty on 30 December 2009, finishing his tour at 0700 hours on 31 Dec 2009. Appointed on 6 March 1983, Bill has been a member of Engine 5 since he finished recruit training on 17 April 1983. Throughout the evening, numerous friends and colleagues stopped by to wish him well.



Group 2, Engine 5: **FCapt. Mark Cunningham**, **FFs Bill McGovern**, **Gene Myrttil**, and **Bob Walsh**

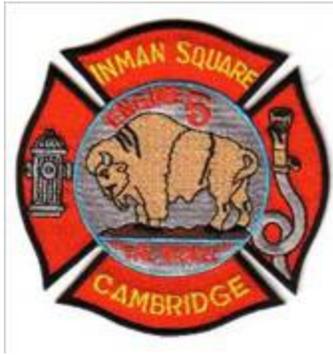


Recruit Training classmates: **DFC Lester Bokuniewicz** (Division 1), **FF Bill McGovern** (Engine 5), and **DFC Gerry Mahoney** (EPAC)



FF Bill McGovern and **DFC Frank Murphy** (retired)

- photos above by Tara Bithia



Congratulations

Congratulations to **FF Laura Prunty** (Engine 4, group 3) and **FF Al Coipel** (Rescue 1, group 1) on the birth of **Halle Evelyn Coipel**. Halle was born on 16 Nov 2009 at 2324 hours. She weighed in at 7 pounds 4.9 ounces and was 20 inches long. Halle joins siblings **Connor**, **Declan**, and **Kiley**.



- photo by **Tara Bithia**

MDA

Cambridge Firefighters collected more than \$6038 for MDA this year. A huge **THANK YOU** to everyone that helped with the Fill-the-Boot and other MDA activities for this tremendous accomplishment. This amount is over a thousand dollars more than the \$5000 goal we set for ourselves last year!



FF Andrew Carrigan (Engine 5)



FF Stephan Jeffres (Engine 3) and FF Richard Feliciano (Truck 2)



FF Matthew McDonald (Engine 8)

- photos by **FF Howie Smith** (Truck 1)

Transfers and Assignments

Per General Order No. 32, series of 2009 and effective Sunday, 18 October 2009 at 0700 hours:

Fire Lieutenant Thomas F. Cahill from Rescue Company No. 1 to **Acting Fire Captain** Fire Prevention

Acting Fire Lieutenant Christopher S. Haynes from Ladder Company No. 2 to Rescue Company No. 1

Fire Lieutenant Brandon M. Hugh from Engine Company No. 3 to Engine Company No. 5

Fire Lieutenant Steven J. Landry from Engine Company No. 8 to Engine Company No. 4

Acting Lieutenant Robert A. Golden from Engine Company No. 3 to Squad 2

Fire Lieutenant Stephen J. Boyle, Jr. from Squad 2 to Ladder Company No. 2

Acting Lieutenant Raymond E. Vaillancourt from Engine Company No. 4 to Engine Company No. 3

Acting Lieutenant Kenneth J. Albert from Engine Company No. 5 to Engine Company No. 8

Firefighter Brian D. Albert from Ladder Company No. 3 to **Acting Lieutenant** Engine Company No. 9

Firefighter Paul Marinelli from Engine Company No. 8 to **Acting Lieutenant** Engine Company No. 3

Transfers and Promotions

Per General Order No. 34, series of 2009 and effective Sunday, 18 October 2009 at 0700 hours:

Acting Fire Lieutenant Robert A. Golden promoted to **Fire Lieutenant**, Squad 2

Acting Fire Lieutenant Christopher S. Haynes promoted to **Fire Lieutenant**, Rescue Company No. 1

Acting Fire Lieutenant Raymond E. Vaillancourt promoted to **Fire Lieutenant**, Engine Company No. 3

Transfers

Per General Order No. 35, series of 2009 and effective Sunday, 15 November 2009 at 0700 hours:

Firefighter Joseph A. Hallissey from Engine Company No. 8 to Engine Company No. 1

Firefighter Andrew F. Mello from Engine Company No. 1 to Engine Company No. 4

Firefighter Wayne P. Ferguson from Engine Company No. 1 to Engine Company No. 8

Firefighter Peter J. Mickiewicz from Engine Company No. 2 to Ladder Company No. 1

Promotions

Per General Order No. 39, series of 2009 and effective Saturday, November 28, 2009 at 0700 hours:

Acting Fire Captain Frederick B. Ikels promoted to **Fire Captain**, Engine Company No. 8

Per General Order No. 40, series of 2009 and effective Saturday, November 28, 2009 at 0700 hours:

Acting Fire Lieutenant Kenneth J. Albert promoted to **Fire Lieutenant**, Engine Company No. 8

Assignments

Per General Order No. 42, series of 2009 and effective Sunday, 6 December 2009 at 0700 hours:

FF Peter M. Benevides to Engine Company No. 1

FFOP Gary W. Plunkett to Engine Company No. 1

Resignation

Per General Order No. 43, series of 2009 **Fire Lieutenant Brian P. Higgins** has resigned from the Cambridge Fire Department effective 1700 hours on Monday, December 21 2009.

Lieutenant Higgins has accepted a position with the ATF (the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives) and has been assigned to the Boston area. In his service to the City of Cambridge, he has been commended numerous times. He has also defended our country in active military service, including deployment to Iraq.

We thank Fire Lieutenant Brian P. Higgins for his 14 years of dedicated service to the City of Cambridge Fire Department and wish him well in his new position.

Through the Lantern Lens



Through the Lantern Lens

by Mose Humphrey

It seems like we are responding to more Hazardous Materials incidents than fires, but they can be just as dangerous. Imagine, if you will, the following story which happened in Boston 91 years ago this January.

About 2 million gallons of raw molasses burst from a storage tank at the corner of Foster and Commercial Streets (in the north end) about noontime on January 15, 1919. The stored molasses was awaiting transfer to the Purity plant situated between Willow Street and what is now named Evereteze Way in Cambridge.

The black wave of sticky substance was anywhere from 8 to 15 feet high and traveled the streets at 35 mph. It was so powerful that it knocked buildings off their foundations and killed 21 people. The wave broke the girders of the adjacent structure and lifted a train off the tracks. Nearby, buildings were swept off their foundations and crushed. Several blocks were flooded to a depth of 2 to 3 feet. People "were picked up by a rush of air and hurled many feet" and a truck was thrown into the harbor.

The Boston Fire Department responded to Box 1234 and a few minutes later a 2nd alarm was struck including another box (Box 1211). They tried valiantly to rescue people and animals from the mess, most victims were crushed or drowned. The fire department used large hydraulic siphons to drain the molasses from cellars. Boston fireboats pumped salt water onto the mess, which slowly cut the

molasses and eventually caused it to disappear. The odor of the molasses lingered over the city for a week and Boston Harbor was brown for five months.

Residents still claim that on hot days, one can still smell the molasses. One firefighter, George Layhe, age 38, was killed in the line of duty when the wave hit the quarters of Fireboat/Engine Co. 31. Twenty one civilians were killed and 150 injured. The disaster created 125 lawsuits (something not common at the time!), with 3000 people testifying over 300 days. The owners of the tank, Purity Distilling Co., and its parent company, United States Industrial Alcohol Co. paid more than \$1million in settlements.

An investigation revealed that the tank was poorly constructed and insufficiently tested. The builder neglected to check for leaks when the tank was built and instead of fixing leaks, the tank was painted brown to hide the leaks. It is also believed that the sudden increase in temperature that day created an immense buildup of carbon Dioxide inside the tank that resulted in the explosion.



From the Archives



The apparatus and members of the Headquarters Companies - circa 1949

Engine 1 Wagon: 1948 GMC/Robinson
Engine 1 Pump: 1940 Pirsch 1000 gpm
Ladder 1: 1946 Pirsch 100' aerial
Rescue 1: 1949 GMC/Lacey
Fog Unit 1 (second piece of Rescue 1): 1943 International
Chief's Buggy



Ladder 1 – 1946 Pirsch tractor-trailer 100' aerial ladder

- photo above from the collection of **FF Howie Smith** (Truck 1)



Box 3-79: Three alarms were transmitted for the fire in the taxpayer at Massachusetts Av. and Dudley Street in North Cambridge.

The time of the alarm was 2215 hours on 22 February 1948.

The temperature at the time of the fire was 12 degrees.

Engine 7's wagon and Ladder 4 are pictured above nose-to-nose IFO the fire building.

While this fire was in progress, **Box 541** was transmitted for the fire at 48 Brewer Street. Because the entire Cambridge Fire Department was operating at the block of stores at Box 79, mutual-aid companies (many from cover assignments in Cambridge) were dispatched to Box 541. Unfortunately 2 adults and 4 children perished in the fire on Brewer Street.

*- photo from the collection of **FF Howie Smith** (Truck 1)*

Signal 10-15

The Chief of Department regrets to announce the death of **Firefighter John C. Flynn** of Ladder Company No. 4 - retired. Firefighter Flynn was appointed to the Cambridge Fire Department on 9 January 1966. His assignments were as follows:

9 January 1966	Ladder Company No. 2
4 January 1970	Ladder Company No. 4

FF Flynn retired on 23 December 1992. He died on 26 December 2009. He was born on 3 January 1932.

We regret to announce the death of **Mario J. Aliquo**, Cambridge Fire Alarm operator - retired. Mr. Aliquo died on 14 Oct 2009. For many years, Operator Aliquo was the "Brooklyn" voice of Cambridge Fire.

Condolences to:

- **FLt. Robert Bell** (Engine 4) on the death of his mother-in-law, **Margaret B. Doherty**
 - **Glenn Turner** (Tech Services) on the death of his father-in-law, **Arthur Norgaard**.
 - **FF Stephan Ryan** (Engine 9) on the death of his mother, **Mrs. Hope Ryan**. Mrs. Ryan was the wife of the late **Fire Captain Martin P. Ryan**.
 - **DFC Lester Bokuniewicz** (Division 1) on the death of his uncle, **Herbert Joyce**.
 - **FF Michael Franks** (Engine 1) on the death of his mother, **Mrs. Sylvia Franks**.
 - **FF Adam Shuman** (Rescue 1) on the death of his father, **Mr. Charles H. Shuman Jr.**
-

Letters

October 30, 2009

Chief Gerald Reardon
Cambridge Fire Department
491 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Chief Reardon,

On Wednesday, October 21, the carbon monoxide detectors in my house on Kinnaird St. went off. I was out of town on business, and my wife, who is 8 months pregnant, immediately called the Fire Department.

My wife, the baby, and our small dog are fine, and this is due in no small part to the prompt response of the men and women of Ladder 3 to the scene. They were extremely professional, while at the same time courteous and supportive and helped not only to determine the source of the leak, but quickly get the city inspector and NStar to the scene to help resolve the problem. Just as importantly, they took great care of my wife, ensuring that her CO level was normal, and that there was no danger to her or the baby.

This was a very scary situation for our family, and because I was hundreds of miles away, there was no way I could have helped. But she speaks glowingly of how Ladder 3 helped her during this incident, and I sincerely thank you for their professionalism and kindness.

Best regards,

David Murdoch
Kinnaird St.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Editor's note: Group 3 was on duty for this incident, I# 9004322, which occurred at 1135 hours on 21 Oct 2009.

*Ladder 3, Rescue 1, and Division 1 were assigned. Operating members included:
Ladder 3: **FLt. Ian Massiah, Firefighters Shawn Flanagan, Nathan Dubovsky, and Brian Joyce;**
Rescue 1: **FLt. James Drewicz, Firefighters Kenneth Souza, Steven Kelley, and Adam Shuman;**
Division 1: **DFC Michael Morrissey and Tactical Firefighter Daniel Maloney***

The incident above was one of 35 carbon monoxide responses during the month of October, 2009.

Eight of these incidents proved to have actual carbon monoxide contamination within the structures.

*The following letter was received by **Chief Reardon.***

Dear Cambridge EMTs,

On Dec 7th, you came to my aid @ Lesley University after I had been shocked by my AICO for VFib. Your response was swift, thorough, patient, professional, and kind. For many reasons, I am in much better health because of your care.

I don't exactly know how to thank you, but I heartily want to do that. I hope I never need your services again, but, if I do, I shall trust you implicitly and will know that I am in good hands.

I hope you will also extend my gratitude and appreciation to the ambulance EMTs – I think it was Professional. They took me skillfully from your care to that of the Mass General.

I wish you all a peaceful Christmas and a New Year full of happiness and health.

Best wishes,

Marianne Galvin
Westwood Road
Somerville, MA 02143

Editor's note: Group 1 was on duty for the above incident, I#9005969, which occurred on 7 Dec 2009 at 0922 hours. The location was 29 Everett Street.

Truck 1, Squad 4, and Professional Ambulance Paramedic 3 were assigned. Operating members included:

Truck 1: **FCapt. Sean White, FF Kenneth Cunningham and FF Michael Dwyer**

Squad 4: **FLt. Michael Donovan and FF Matthew Wood**

Professional Ambulance Paramedic 9: **Paramedic Jeremy Gartland and Paramedic Rachid Sbay**

October 2009
Truman Apartments
25 8th Street
East Cambridge, MA 02141

Dear Chief Reardon,

Some people seem to specialize in doing thoughtful deeds. They help because they want to. They make the world a better place by practicing the art of reaching out to others.

Thank you so much – May you always be as happy as you make others!

Thank you and your staff for answering the call!

Susan LaPorter Allen

Editor's note: Group 3 was on duty for this incident, Incident # 9004140, at 1656 hours on 16 October 2009.

Boston Engine Company No. 10 and Professional Ambulance Paramedic 9 were assigned and successfully provided emergency medical care to this woman. Boston Engine Company No 10 was covering Engine 3 due to a second alarm structure fire in progress on Ash Street.

Operating members included:

*Boston Engine 10: **FLT John Forristall, FF Brian Kirk, FF Michael Goggin, and FF Thomas Connelly***
and

*Professional Ambulance PM9: **Paramedic Jeremy Gartland and EMT Daniel O'Brien***

Stats for Calendar Year 2009

**Cambridge Fire
Annual Totals - Calendar Year 2009**

	<u>Runs</u>	<u>Bldg Fires</u>
Engine 1	2205	53
Engine 2	3002	49
Engine 3	1531	20
Engine 4	1554	26
Engine 5	1979	52
Engine 6	1312	55
Engine 8	1261	28
Engine 9	1027	21
Truck 1	1972	67
Truck 2	1223	32
Truck 3	2184	62
Truck 4	1613	41
Rescue 1	2587	69
Squad 2	3230	55
Squad 4	2265	53
Special Units	295	
HazMat 1	38	

Incidents	13,555
Div 1 Incidents	7801
Div 2 Incidents	5754
Responses	32,357
EMS	6276
Building Fires	91
Inside Fires	846
All Fires	952
HazMat	219
CO contamination	60

Working Fires	5
2nd Alarms	4

			3rd Alarms	1
Division 1	1583	59	4th Alarms	1
Division 2	1286	45	5th Alarms	0
Mutual Aid Units	210			
TOTAL	32357			

Veritas

Veritas, the motto of Harvard University, is the Latin word for **truth**.

Harvard University was founded in 1636 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and since its founding, Cambridge Fire companies have responded to tens of thousands of fire and other emergency incidents on Harvard University property. Although the Cambridge Fire Department was organized in 1832, prior to that time the city (and Harvard University) was protected by call and volunteer fire companies.

Veritas also aptly applies to the Cambridge Fire Department. **Truth**, integrity, and duty to service is imbedded in our mission to protect the lives and property of the people of Cambridge from fires, natural and man-made disasters, and hazardous materials incidents; to save lives by providing emergency medical services; to prevent fires through prevention and education programs; to provide defense against terrorist attacks. Truth, integrity, and duty are critical to our family helping your family.

America's Heroes

Colonel Lewis L. Millet



- *Army Historical Foundation photo*

By Adam Bernstein
Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, November 18, 2009

Lewis L. Millett, 88, a career Army officer who was briefly and somewhat misleadingly court-martialed for desertion during World War II and went on to receive the Medal of Honor for leading a bayonet charge during the Korean War, died Nov. 14 at a veterans hospital in Loma Linda, Calif. He had congestive heart failure.

Col. Millett, who sported a red handlebar mustache, cut an audacious and unconventional path during his 35 years of military service. He led daring attacks in two wars and was instrumental in starting a reconnaissance commando school to train small units for covert operations in Vietnam.

He also was an Army deserter. He later said he had been so eager to "help fight fascism and Hitler" that he left an Air Corps gunnery school in mid-1941 -- months before the U.S. entry into World War II -- to enlist with the Canadian army and go overseas. He manned an antiaircraft gun during the London blitz before rejoining the U.S. Army, which had by that time declared war and apparently was not being overly meticulous in its background checks.

As an antitank gunner in Tunisia, he earned the Silver Star after he jumped into a burning ammunition-filled halftrack, drove it away from allied soldiers and leapt to safety just before the vehicle exploded. Not long after, he shot down a German Messerschmitt Me-109 fighter that was strafing Allied troops. Col. Millett, who was firing from machine guns mounted on a halftrack, hit the pilot through the windshield.

He had fought his way through Italy, participating in the campaigns at Salerno and Anzio, when his paperwork caught up with him. A superior officer told him that he was being court-

martialed for his desertion to Canada and that his punishment was \$52. He also received a battlefield promotion for fearlessness in combat.

His letters back home were unfiltered epithets aimed at the chain of command. "Letters were censored in World War II, and the next thing I knew I was standing before the battery commander," he told the journal *Military History*. "He told me that the War Department had ordered three times that I be court-martialed. They finally did it to prevent someone from really throwing the book at me later. Then a few weeks later they made me a second lieutenant! I must be the only Regular Army colonel who has ever been court-martialed and convicted of desertion."

During the Korean War, he received the military's highest awards for valor, including the Medal of Honor and the Distinguished Service Cross, for two bayonet charges he led as a company commander in February 1951.

"We had acquired some Chinese documents stating that Americans were afraid of hand-to-hand fighting and cold steel," he told *Military History*. "When I read that, I thought, 'I'll show you, you sons of bitches!'"

He was awarded the Medal of Honor for leading a charge up Hill 180 near Soam-Ni on Feb. 7. When one of his platoons was pinned down by heavy fire, he placed himself at the head of two other platoons and ordered the men to charge up the hill.

According to his Medal of Honor citation, he bayoneted several enemy soldiers and lobbed grenades in their direction while rallying his men to fight. Grenade fragments pierced Col. Millett's shin, but he refused medical evacuation.

"Despite vicious opposing fire, the whirlwind hand-to-hand assault carried to the crest of the hill," the Medal of Honor citation read. "His dauntless leadership and personal courage so inspired his men that they stormed into the hostile position and used their bayonets with such lethal effect that the enemy fled in wild disorder."

Charles H. Cureton, director of Army museums at the U.S. Army Center of Military History, said that Col. Millett's intimidating, close-combat bayonet charge was "very unusual. By the time you get to the Second World War, the range of lethality of weapons is such that a bayonet charge is very hazardous."

Lewis Lee Millett was born Dec. 15, 1920, in Mechanic Falls, Maine, and grew up with his mother in South Dartmouth, Mass., after his parents divorced. After his Korean War service, he went through Ranger training at Fort Benning, Ga., and was assigned to the 101st Airborne Division as an intelligence officer. He later was sent to Vietnam as a military adviser to a controversial intelligence program called Phoenix, which killed thousands of suspected Viet Cong and their sympathizers in an effort to destroy the Viet Cong infrastructure in towns and villages.

He said he retired in 1973 because he was convinced that the United States had "quit" in Vietnam. He championed the return of U.S. prisoners of war from Vietnam and then worked as a deputy sheriff in Trenton, Tenn., before settling in the San Jacinto Mountains resort village of Idyllwild, Calif., across the street from an American Legion post.

His first marriage, to the former Virginia Young, ended in divorce. His second wife, Winona Williams Millett, died in 1993. Survivors include three children from his second marriage, L. Lee Millett Jr. and Timothy Millett, both of Idyllwild, and Elizabeth Millett of Nevada; three sisters; a brother; and four grandchildren. A son from his second marriage, Army Staff Sgt. John Millett, died in the 1985 airplane crash in Gander, Newfoundland, that killed more than 240 U.S. service members returning from a peacekeeping mission in the Middle East.

Reflecting on his career, Col. Millett once told an interviewer: "I believe in freedom, I believe deeply in it. I've fought in three wars, and volunteered for all of them, because I believed as a free man, that it was my duty to help those under the attack of tyranny. Just as simple as that."



*The above narrative, written by **Adam Bernstein**, is from **The Washington Post**. Thanks to **Firefighter Bill Noonan (Boston K7)** for sending the narrative.*

Information

Please submit any information, photographs, or narratives for inclusion in the **Company Journal**.

E-mail list

If any retirees or friends of the Cambridge Fire Department wish to be added to the **Company Journal** e-mail list, send us the e-mail address!

Websites

Visit the Cambridge Fire Department website at www.Cambridgefire.org

Check out Cambridge Firefighters Local 30's website at <http://www.cambridgelocal30.org/>

Visit the Cambridge Retirement Board website at <http://www.cambridgeretirementma.gov/index.asp>



“Carelessness about our security is dangerous; careless about our freedom is also dangerous.”

- Adlai Stevenson, 1952

REMEMBER THE MEN AND WOMEN SERVING IN OUR ARMED SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.
THEY ARE PROTECTING OUR COUNTRY, OUR LIBERTY, AND OUR FREEDOM.
THANK OUR VETERANS!



**Brothers and Sisters,
STAY BRAVE!
STAY VIGILANT!
STAY SAFE!**

-jjg

*John J. Gelinas
Chief of Operations
Cambridge Fire Department
491 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02138
617-349-4970*