ENGINE 65 100 YEARS OF SERVICE TO TIMES SQUARE AND MIDTOWN

Department General Order Number 2 dated May 27, 1898, placed Engines 65 and 66 in service on June 4, 1898. Engine 66, the fireboat “Robert A. Van Wyck” was placed in service at the foot of Grand Street in the East River. Engine 65 was located in a new building at 33 W. 43rd Street in the Midtown section of Manhattan.

Ten years earlier West 43rd street had become a service area with car and horse stables. By the 1890’s this area of Manhattan was becoming a very fashionable section of the City. The Theater District had started moving north from the Union Square area to Midtown around this time. W. 43rd Street between 5th and 6th Avenues contained three very exclusive clubs along with the N. Y. Bar Association, and the Royalton Hotel. As new buildings were being built the need for additional fire protection was also felt. Engine 65 would fill this gap in fire protection and was surrounded by Engines 2, 8, 21, and 54.

The City of New York acquired the lot through condemnation procedures, which were started on October 18, 1894, and were completed on July 25, 1895. The lot measures 25 feet by 100 feet and cost $36,564.00 to acquire. The owner of the lot was Isaac Townsend, the president of the Racquet and Tennis Club. The lot had a small frame building that was being used by Taggart Stables, as a stable for the Racquet and Tennis Club.

This site when picked for a fire company location was not a popular choice with the local residents. In fact the October 5, 1894 issue of the New York Times, front page was an article titled “Noisy Neighbor for Clubs”. The article goes on to state the members of the Racquet Club, the Academy of Medicine, and the Century Club had discussed this issue thoroughly and regarded this as a nuisance and an affliction to the neighborhood. The biggest complaint was the loud clanging of the bells and gongs at all hours of the day and night. Most people did agree that a firehouse was needed in the area but not on this street which is quiet and residential.

Engine 65’s quarters were designed by Francis I.V. Hoppin and Terence A. Koen and built by E. D. Colony and Son. It was started on July 12, 1897 and cost $23,449.00 to build. The front of the building is Indiana limestone and buff brick with terra cotta trimmings. The first floor and sidewalk vault is composed of steel I beams and brick arches with the apparatus flooring of cork brick. All ceilings are of stamped steel. The second and third floors and roof have wooden beams with flooring of wood and walls of brick. The building is 25 x 80 feet on a lot of 25 x 100 feet.

Engine 65 was placed in service with a crew of twelve at 8 A.M. on the 4th and assigned to the 9th Battalion. The first members were Foreman (Captain) Richard J. Norris, Assistant Foreman (Lieutenant) John F. Higgins, Engineers of Steamer Joseph Connolly and James Foley, and Firemen James J. Convey, Edward Keegan, Edward Page, Herman W. Oppe, Robert Paul, Timothy Donovan, Edward T. Tracy, and James G. Darling. They were assigned to 202 alarm stations, 43 first alarm, 52-second alarm, 69 third alarm, 31 fourth alarm and 6 special boxes.

The first run for the new Company came at 6:20 P.M. the first night when they responded to a second alarm at 351 8th Avenue. They responded to a hydrant in front of 252 W. 28th Street. Deputy Chief Edward F. Croker ordered Engine 65 back to quarters without doing any work. The next run was later that night at 8:56 P.M. to 205 W. 38th Street and like the first run they didn’t do any work. The first fire run for Engine 65 was on June 17th at 50 W. 43rd Street in a building being used as a storehouse. It turned out to be a still alarm with Firemen Keegan and Oppe walking across the street and putting the fire out with a pail of water. The apparatus stayed in quarters for this run and there was no damage to the contain of the building.

The first major fire was on August 25th. The second alarm fire was at 206 through 212 E. 55th Street. Engine 65 took four minutes to hook up the horses and to respond. They used 200 feet of 3-inch hose to extinguish the fire. The line was laid through 211-213 W. 54th Street and operated in
the rear of the fire building. Engine 65 pumped 79,000 gallons of water and worked 4 hours and 35
minutes.

The life of a fireman was a hard one, both physically and on one’s personal life. A fireman worked
24 hours a day with three 24-hour leaves per month, plus two 12-hour leaves that could not be
added to the 24 hour leave. He could go home for meals each day for a total of three hours in any
combination of three 1-hour breaks, 2 hour and a half breaks or one 3-hour break.

The horses were kings in the fire department during this time. On a cold winter’s night after fighting
a fire for five or six hours the first thing a fireman would do once back at quarters is take care of the
horses. They would be watered, rubbed down, dried down, and fed before any fireman would
change his wet clothes. The horses had an ambulance many years before the firemen did.

Because of Engine 65’s location in Times Square it has always been a show company. It was one
of the first companies to try rubber tires on the hose wagons in 1899. Because of the success of this
addition, a smoother ride and lower maintenance cost, every company would soon have rubber
tires. Other firsts included; the first 1000 gpm motorized pumper (1927), the first piece of apparatus
with pneumatic tires (1927), the first diesel powered apparatus (1965), and the first lime green
colored apparatus (1981). Also because of its location many probationary firemen passed through
the doors in 100 years.

Engine 65’s quarters were built for just one company and was spacious for the twelve men. Over the
years as the working conditions improved the building became cramped. By 1939, the three-
platoon work chart was installed in all companies and the W. 43rd Street quarters became very tight
with twelve more men being assigned. On July 19, 1957 Battalion 8 relocated from 165 E. 51st
Street while that house was torn down and rebuilt. On March 2, 1960, Battalion 8 moved to 203 E.
50th Street, a temporary house. On May 1, 1960, Rescue 1 would be relocated from 243 Lafayette
Street when that house was closed adding another twenty-five men. The Rescue would stay until
February 1, 1973 and then move to 530 W. 43rd Street. This building was the former quarters of
Engine 2, which had been disbanded the day before.

In 100 years of service five members of Engine 65 paid the supreme sacrifice with their lives.

On December 26, 1915, Fireman Matthew J. Ward was detailed to Ladder 21 for the day. The
weather was brutal with a full blizzard blowing. Ladder 21 was responding to Box 461, 6th
Avenue and W. 37th Street. While crossing Broadway at W. 36 Street, Ladder 21 was broadsided by a
southbound trolley car. Fireman Ward was caught between the trolley and the ladders. He died a
few hours of later from his injuries. The motorman reported not hearing the siren or bell above the
noise of the blizzard.

The second member to lose his life was Fireman John J. Frein on January 4, 1918 while operating
on the third floor of 305 E. 43rd Street. On the fifth floor was a 6 ton safe resting on fire damaged
timbers. This caused the fourth and fifth floors to collapse to the third floor. The company was
pinned in the collapse. Fireman Frein was killed instantly in the collapse which also injured the rest
of the crew.

Three members of Engine 65, Lt. John H. Cosgrove, Firemen 1st Grade Thomas Finn and James
Greene were killed along with four other firemen on August 1, 1932. A fire had started in the paint
locker of the Hotel Ritz at Park Avenue and 57th Street. Before this minor fire in the paint locker of
the sub-cellar was out, it would take the lives of seven firemen and injure 31 other people. Engine
65 had placed a 35-foot ladder down the sidewalk elevator shaft and had been operating the line
for less than three minutes when a terrific blast ripped through the paint locker. The explosion blew
the first floor storefront windows out into the street along with $100,000 worth of gems from a jewelry
store window. The fire was out in twenty-five minutes. The four other firemen killed were; Lt. James
Harnett and Firemen Louis Hardina of Ladder 16, Peter Daly of Engine 39, and William L. Pratt of
Ladder 7, detailed to Ladder 2 for the day.
Three members of Engine 65 received medals for going above and beyond the call of duty in making rescues. Captain Patrick J. Boylan received the William F. Conran Medal along with a Department Medal for a rescue he made on December 21, 1945. Lieutenant Joseph W. Brochu was awarded the M. J. Delhanty Medal on June 15, 1961. The last medal was given to Firefighter 1st grade Donald E. Clark. He received the Mayor LaGuardia Medal for a rescue while off duty on January 24, 1991.

On October 2, 1990, The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission honored Engine 65 by designating the firehouse as a New York City landmark.

In one hundred years of service, 528 firemen have proudly worn Engine 65 on the front their helmets. If the walls of this firehouse could talk, we would a much livelier book of stories. It was these 528 men who have made this engine company a premier company over the years. During the past one hundred years Engine 65 has always been in the forefront of fire technology for this City. No matter what types of run Engine 65 as been assigned to, they have done it with exceptional pride and dedication. Let the next one hundred years be just as grand as the first one hundred.
WHEELS OF ENGINE 65

HORSE DRAWN APPARATUS
1898 LaFrance 1st size steamer #395, June 4, 1898.
1898 Gleason & Bailey 1st size hose wagon, #57, June 4, 1898.
1907 American Lafrance 1st size steamer #3135, 1907.
1907 Rech-Marbecker 1st size hose wagon #134, 1907.
1915 Chrystie front drive tractor replaced the horses on September 1, 1915.

MOTORIZED APPARATUS
1914 Ahrens Fox 700 gpm pumper #804, November 1, 1916.
1927 Ahrens Fox 1000 gpm Pumper #744, June 4, 1927.
1929 Four Wheel Drive hose wagon #162, January 18, 1929.
1930 Seagrave hose wagon #245, July 1, 1930.
1933 Seagrave hose wagon #251, May 19, 1933.
1933 Ahrens Fox 1000 gpm pumper #4003, May 24, 1933.
1938 Ahrens Fox1000 gpm pumper #3432, June 25, 1938.
1938 Ward LaFrance hose wagon #266, January 9, 1943.
1947 Mack 750 gpm pumper #1148, June 27, 1947.
1938 Ahrens Fox 1000 gpm pumper #3423, April 30, 1951.
1936 Mack 1000 gpm pumper used as a hose wagon #1002, February 9, 1954.
1965 Mack 1000 gpm pumper #1316, March 17, 1965.
1954 Mack 1000 gpm pumper #1099, July 30, 1966.
1971 Mack 1000 gpm pumper #MP7108, October 18, 1971.
THE BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE

Captain Patrick J. Boylan

William F. Conran Medal & Department Medal

Captain Patrick J. Boylan earned the William F. Conran Medal and a Department Medal for the removal of a man from a sewer at the intersection of Madison Avenue and E. 43rd Street on December 21, 1945. During snow removal operations the sewer cover was removed from the sewer so snow could be placed down the sewer. A man fell down the sewer, which had four feet of running water. Captain Boylan and Engine 65 was the first company on the scene and Captain Boylan was lowered by a rope into the sewer. While in the sewer, water continued to pour down from the street drenching Captain Boylan. He was searching in total darkness for the man and could not locate him until he received a flashlight. Finally the man was located and was brought to the surface with the help of members of Ladder 2. Captain Boylan was partially overcome by sewer gas, and the chilling effect of the cold water had to be hoisted up with help from above.

Lieutenant Joseph W. Brochu

Medal

Lieutenant Joseph W. Brochu received the M. J. Delehanty Medal for the rescue of a 11 year old from a stalled elevator at 730 5th Avenue on June 15, 1961. The weather was very hot with high humidity and electrical power was lost in this 26-story office building, trapping many people in the elevators. Engine 65 responded under the command of Lieutenant Brochu and was told several of the elevators had people in them and they were removed. The only light was from the flashlights the members were carrying with them. An 11 year old boy was still unaccounted for in one of the elevators. The Company went up to the 14th floor the last known location of that car and forced the doors to the shaft to here faint cries from below. Lieutenant Brochu slipped into bowline-on-a bight on a roof rope and slipped into the darkness below. He was lowered six floors before coming upon the stalled car. Once on the roof of the car he forced the escape hatch lowered himself into the car. Stephan Nevaro was lying on the floor of the elevator, prostrated with heat and fear. Lieutenant Brochu untied the rope from around himself and retied them around the boy, who was then raised up to the 14th floor. Several minutes later the rope was lower and Lieutenant Brochu was brought up from the car.

Firefighter 1st grade Donald E. Clark

Mayor LaGuardia Medal

Firefighter 1st grade Donald E. Clark was awarded the Mayor LaGuardia Medal for the off duty rescue his next door invalid neighbor living at 190 Cebra Avenue, Staten Island on January 24, 1991. As Donald was getting ready for bed he heard the neighbors yelling “FIRE!” Rushing outside he found the house next door having an orange glow and smoke pushing out the windows. After notifying the Staten Island Dispatchers of the fire he entered the building. He knew an elderly bedridden invalid occupied the fire apartment. Donald entered the building without any fire gear only to be hit with a blast heat and heavy black smoke. Crawling about thirty feet to the fire apartment he forced the door to find fire in the front part of the apartment. Hearing his neighbors moaning, he crawled into the apartment looking for him. He found Mr. Tony Deeds on the floor covered with burning debris. He pulled Mr. Deeds out of the burning apartment, down the hallway to fresh air outside.

UNIT CITATIONS

Oct. 23, 1963, 1487 Broadway, Box 4-4 786
Sept. 7, 1966, S.S. Hanseatic, Pier 84, Box 5-5-817
Dec. 15, 1967 341 9th Avenue, Morgan Post Office Box 5-5 676
Sept. 4, 1968, 277 Park Avenue, Box 2-2 827
Feb. 25, 1969, 595 5th Avenue, Box 3-3 839
Nov. 16, 1975, 250 W. 42nd Street, Box 3-3 786
June 14, 1979, Macy’s Herald Square, Box 4-4 714
Sept. 8, 1979, 25 Vanderbilt Avenue, Box 3-3 812
Nov. 3, 1979, 35 W. 43rd Street, Box 2-2 795
Apr. 17, 1981, 401 7th Avenue, Box 5-5 689
THE FALLEN MEMBERS OF ENGINE 65

5-5-5-5

Fireman Mathew J. Ward
December 26, 1915

Fireman John J. Frein
January 4, 1918

Lieutenant John H. Cosgrove
August 1, 1932

Fireman Thomas S. Finn
August 1, 1932

Fireman James F. Greene
August 1, 1932

6-5-2

Captain Henry O. Laboda, Jr.
March 10, 1929

Captain William J. Fiala
March 3, 1932

Fireman Arthur J. Banger
February 24, 1934

Fireman Harold F. Coote
Oct. 16, 1934

Fireman Emanuel Parker
February 8, 1982

HEADQUARTERS FIRE DEPARTMENT, CITY OF NEW YORK
BUREAU CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT
May 27th, 1898.

General Orders,

No. 2.

1. It is announced to the Department that Eng. Co’s. No. 65 and No 66 will be organized, and that Engine Co. No. 43 will be transferred from the 4th to the 10th Battalion, to take effect from and after 8 A. M. on the 4th Proximo.

Eng. Co. No. 65 will be located at No. 33 West 43rd Street, assigned to the 9th Battalion, and the Company District will be as follows: 6th Avenue from 40th Street to 59th Street to Park Avenue to 42nd Street to 5th Avenue to 40th Street to 6th Avenue.

The Company Districts of Eng. Co’s 8, 21, and H. & L. Co. 2 will be altered to read as follows:

Eng. Co. No. 8 - Park Avenue from 50th Street to 59th Street to East River to 50th Street to Park Avenue.
H. & L. Co. No. 2 - Park Avenue from 42nd Street to 50th Street to East River to 42nd Street to Park Avenue.
Eng. Co. No. 21 - 5th Avenue from 34th Street to 42nd Street to East River to 34th Street to 5th Avenue.
Eng. Co. No. 65 will be assigned to duty as follows: (Stations marked # are first due and for fuel)


Class "3" Stations 138, 162, 191, 365, 382 and 384.
Class “10” Station 215.

First Alarm Station Locations

457 - 7th Ave. & 38th St. 518 - Broadway & 44th St.
458 - 7th Ave. & 35th St. 519 - Broadway & 47th St.
459 - Broadway & 34th St. 521 - 6th Ave. & 46th St.
461 - 6th Ave. & 37th St. 522 - 6th Ave. & 43rd St.
462 - 5th Ave. & 35th St. 523 - 5th Ave. & 45th St.
463 - Park Ave. & 37th St. 524 - Lexington Ave. & 45th St.
476 - 8th Ave. & 36th St. 525 - Lexington Ave. & 47th St.
477 - 7th Ave. & 40th St. 535 - 8th Ave. & 51st St.
478 - Broadway & 42nd St. 536 - 8th Ave. & 50th St.
479 - 5th Ave. & 42nd St. 537 - 7th Ave. & 51st St.
481 - 6th Ave. & 40th St. 541 - 6th Ave. & 5th St.
482 - 5th Ave. & 38th St. 542 - 5th Ave. & 48th St.
483 - Lexington Ave. & 43rd St. 543 - 5th Ave. & 52nd St.
485 - 3rd Ave. & 40th St. 544 - Madison Ave. & 50th St.
486 - 2nd Ave. & 42nd St. 557 - 8th Ave. & 55th St.
487 - 1st Ave. & 41st St. 558 - Broadway & 53rd St.
488 - Madison Ave. & 41st St. 559 - 7th Ave. & 59th St.
489 - Madison & 45th St. 561 - 6th Ave. & 52nd St.
492 - Lexington Ave. & 39th St. 562 - 5th Ave. & 55th St.
493 - 3rd Ave. & 42nd St. 563 - Madison Ave. & 54th St.
516 - 9th Ave. & 47th St. 574 - 6th Ave. & 58th St.
517 - 9th Ave. & 44th St.
100 YEARS OF RUNNING
RUNS & WORKERS

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The Company responded to 124,971 alarms and 60,546 workers.
The day is a Saturday and the temperature is in the low 70’s.

The Spanish American War is being fought and in Cuba the Collier Merricac is sunk to blockade the mouth of Santiago Harbor. The Spanish Fleet is now bottled in the harbor and prevented from escaping and engaging the U.S. Fleet. The Spanish Admiral claims the boat was torpedoed, while the U.S. Navy it had been sunk on purpose. The crew of eight sailors was captured.

U.S. Troops are mobilizing at Jacksonville, Florida for an invasion of Puerto Rico.

The Manhattan & Bronx School Boards are asking the Corporate Counsel if it can pay school teachers who are serving with the military during the war.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Red Cross Society, steps will be taken to have a penny collection taken in the schools before they adjourn for the summer for the War effort.

Between $1000 and $2000 was stolen from a money box at the Brooklyn Heights Railroad station on Halsey Street, Brooklyn, on Thursday night. The police are anxious to interview Frank Smith, the night starter, who left work early and has reported for work since.

The 23rd annual commencement of the N.Y. City Training School for Nurses was held yesterday afternoon at the Charity Hospital on Blackwell’s Island. The 37 nurses will be assigned to Gouverneur, Harlem, Fordham, and Maternity Hospitals.

One worker was killed, two others injured and fifty families are homeless after an explosion in the basement of the Prince Street paint store. The three workers were pouring turpentine into smaller containers in the basement. They were using a lighted candle to work by when the explosion happened. The fire was out in 15 minutes.

The auxiliary crusier “ST. PAUL” has arrived at Tompkinsville yesterday morning. The big vessel will take on coal and provisions and set sail in three days.

Two contestants in a Waltzing match for a $70.00 diamond ring will appear in the 5th Municipal Court Monday. The dancers will exhibit their powers before Judge Goldflge. The musicians stopped playing and one of the contestants stop dancing thinking the contest was over. The other continued dancing while the onlookers started whistling.

The Queens Budget Committee failed to adopt the $500,000 budget for the County. The Long Island City Taxpayers Association is questioning the budget. It had to pass before Sunday night.

President McKinley discussed the question of Hawaiian Annexation with several representatives today. He told them of the importance of prompt action by the two houses. The vote should be taken next week and should pass.

The New York Herald Newspaper Daily & Sunday $10.00 for the years.

In Baseball, the New York Giants are in 4th place, 22-15. Yesterday the Giants beat the Cincinnati team 16 to 10. Cincinnati is still in first place with a record of 27-10.

June 14, opening day for a new sailing season. Pleasure travel on the Great Lakes aboard the Northern Steamship Company. Passage from Buffalo to Duluth Minnesota is $29.00 round trip Price of berth and staterooms are extra. Northern Steamship Company offices are at 375 Broadway.