

ANNUAL REPORT
of the
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
(CHICAGO CIVIL DEFENSE CORPS)

January - December, 1961

Richard J. Daley,
Mayor of Chicago.

Robert J. Quinn,
Acting Director,
Chicago Civil Defense Corps

FIRE & RESCUE HDQRS.
CHICAGO CIVIL DEFENSE CORPS
1244 North Wells St.,
Chicago 10, Ill.
SU 7-5771 - 5772.

HOW DID IT ALL START?

Four years ago, on New Year's Day, 1958, the Fire and Rescue Service was officially "put in service" under the direction of Fire Commissioner Robert J. Quinn, Acting Director of the Chicago Civil Defense Corps. Prior to that, a meeting had been held in 1957 between the Commissioner, ^{Mayor} Richard J. Daley and Mr. Charles J. Johnson, a devoted Chicago 'fire buff'. At that time, it was decided to form an organization of civilians to serve as a trained auxiliary force to assist at disasters and augment the Fire Department with specialized equipment and manpower should the need arise.

After that meeting in the fall of 1957, volunteer citizens joined together to put six heavy duty Civil Defense Rescue Trucks, which had been in "moth balls", into top-notch operating condition. And on that first day of 1958, the newly-formed organization responded to a lengthy 5-11 alarm fire in a cold-storage warehouse in near-zero weather and performed its duties in what was to become 'typical' fashion. Now, four years later, the Chicago Fire and Rescue Service continues to show the Nation that an organization of this type can prove invaluable in its service to the public.

1961 MEANT "COMING OF AGE" TO THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The year 1961 was an important one for the young Fire and Rescue Service of the Chicago Civil Defense Corps for it threw several vital challenges at the organization. 1961 brought with it many tests - including four of the most tragic disasters to hit Chicago in many years -- the Hubbard Street fire in which nine heroic firemen lost their lives - the Tornado that struck Chicago without warning one Saturday night showed the real value of this organization - the crash of the Constellation air plane in Clarendon Hills causing 73 deaths and the jet crash at O'Hare Field taking 37 more lives. At each of these emergencies, the men and equipment of the Fire and Rescue Service stood up to the test and performed their various jobs well, earning praise from many persons in authority.

1961 saw the units of the Fire and Rescue Service respond to a record number of fire and special duty calls - 753 in all - meaning over two per day as the average. And, of course, the corresponding vital statistics went up, working time by members, numbers of men responding and total man-hours expended. The Service met the increased "call to duty" with even more efficient and dedicated service than before.

And finally, 1961 was the year in which President Kennedy issued a call for Americans to face up to the increased importance of Civil Defense. The Service met this challenge by recruiting new members from all age groups and walks of life, trained them into effective volunteer workers and moved onward with more and better equipment and techniques with which to be of service.

This report will attempt to chronicle the 'Coming of Age' in 1961 of the Fire and Rescue Service of the City of Chicago.

WHAT DOES THE SERVICE DO? - A REVIEW OF THE YEAR.

Undoubtedly the quickest and best illustration of the wide scope of activities of the Fire and Rescue Service is to present a brief resume of the year's highlights. The panorama of fires, disasters, special calls, public service jobs and educational functions will explain more clearly the 'mission' of the Fire and Rescue Service.

JANUARY: The tragic Hubbard Street Warehouse fire which cost the lives of nine firemen found Fire and Rescue members digging alongside firemen to save as many buried victims as possible. Beside clearing debris by hand, members utilized their power saws to cut timbers for shoring of tunnels and used their cutting torch to cut through an overturned trailer truck blocking rescue efforts. The Service's Light Wagon provided illumination at the scene as rescue work went on into the evening hours.

At a loop office building fire, members used their Porta-Power tools and cutting torch to remove bars from the burning buildings' rear windows and permit access by firemen. Water from this fire flooded the basements of several other buildings and the Service's Air Compressor pumped water from one charity institution for 18 continuous hours.

The Winch on the heavy-duty rescue truck was used at a southside factory fire to pull a box car out of the way of fire equipment in the rear of the building, thus enabling Snorkels to get in close to the fire.

FEBRUARY: The Winch again proved useful in pulling down the dangerous walls of a burning lumber yard. Here members used bolt cutters to open paths through a wire fence. C. D. sound-powered telephones provided communications between fire officials at the wide-spread premises. Our air hammers were used at a stockyards fire to cut large holes in a brick floor, and our portable resuscitators were used to give oxygen to three workmen at a smoky factory fire.

MARCH: An extra-alarm blaze in Michael Reese Hospital gave our Air Compressor a stiff workout, as air hammers were used to punch holes in both walls and flooring, while the air mover removed smoke from the basement area. Our air pump was utilized at the Congress Hotel fire to pump water from the basement and elevator shaft.

The Tornado that struck Chicago without warning one Saturday night provided the Service with an opportunity to be of real value to the City. Over 80% of the members spent the entire night and part of the next day working at various tasks. All eight trucks of the service were at the scene within minutes of the Tornado's striking and members worked first to clear major streets by chopping trees with power saws and axes and later winched pieces to the side. Then, members checked for dangerous wires down and helped remove hanging cornices, damaged chimneys and other danger obstacles.

Three workmen were trapped in the collapse of a building they were razing and much of the Service's equipment was utilized in the 18 hours before the only living victim was safely removed. Winches pulled out pillars, fire escapes and parked cars; our torch cut metal beams; our generators and floodlights lit up cramped quarters for rescuers; and our saws, Porta-Power units, bolt cutters, air hammers and recip-ro-saw were used by firemen and members to aid in the operation.

A tavern explosion just half a mile from Service Headquarters found members removing victims to Ambulances and Squadrols. Later, the Light Wagon provided light for the Police Bomb Squad in making a thorough investigation of the wrecked building.

APRIL: One of several major bowling alley fires during the year found members using the Winch to pull concrete panels from windows, while other members opened floors with the circular saws and some cut ceiling rods with the recip-ro-saw.

Many patients were aided to safety by members at an extra-alarm blaze in Grant Hospital, where oxygen was given to 12 people. Our air movers cleared the basement while our air pump drained it of water. Later in the month, trucks were winched to safety from a burning garage by members.

MAY: During this month, units and members participated in the dedication of the fine new Fire Academy and the Service resumed its part in the weekly neighborhood Fire Prevention demonstrations by the Fire Department. Over Memorial Day, the Service provided its customary "holiday patrols", with trucks patrolling beaches, parks and public areas broadcasting various fire prevention, clean-up and civil defense messages over the public address systems mounted on each unit.

At a paper warehouse fire, the Service's new Super-Vac exhaust fan was used to empty a burning box car of acrid smoke and permit firemen to enter and extinguish the fire. Our Winch was utilized to pull bales of waste out of the box car. Later in the month, our winches pulled a trailer-truck out of the side of a building after an unusual crash.

JUNE: The Super-Vac fan was again used along with Chemox Masks at a smoky loop fire, and our Air Compressor pumped some 30,000 gallons of water out of another loop building after a waterflow. The air pump was used to keep a sinking \$15,000. Chris-Craft afloat in the Chicago River. Units removed many fallen trees throughout the city after heavy wind storms.

When a light plane crashed in Lake Michigan near Evanston, our units provided underwater lights for the fireboats searching for the wreckage and survivors. Units responded to an "L" wreck and removed victims in stokes baskets and stretchers, beside providing lights and Generators to guide passengers walking along the tracks to stations.

JULY: This month proved unusually busy for the Service - 74 responses in 31 days. A spectacular 5-11 + 4 specials, at the old McCormick Works found members cutting fences and gates with bolt-cutters and others using hand-pumps to put out small fires caused by blowing embers. At another fire, members dug a trench under railroad tracks for hose lines to enable train traffic to continue.

At an unusual special duty assignment, our unit acted as First Aid Stations for an American Legion Band competition on one of the hottest days of the year. Over 40 band members were treated after fainting. Many had to be revived with oxygen. Others were removed to hospitals in fire department ambulances.

AUGUST: Severe wind and rain storms brought the Service out to provide a variety of work, ranging from pumping out basements of hospitals, the TB Institute, an Outer Drive underpass, and other buildings to sandbagging river banks in suburban Alsip.

Our Winch was used to 'overhaul' a junkyard fire and several air tools were put to good use at a stubborn basement fire in the Sears main offices. Another "L" wreck found the Service's Light Wagon reaching its telescopic light poles some 35 feet up to light up the tracks.

SEPTEMBER: This was the busiest month in the Fire and Rescue Service's four-year history showing 77 runs in the 31-day period.

Standing out above all other responses were those of the two disastrous plane crashes, which came within ten days of each other. Units were dispatched immediately by the Fire Alarm Office and the first members on the scenes assisted in covering, staking and tagging the bodies of the victims. Our Light Wagon was used to light up the scene of the first crash in Clarendon Hills. Members took an active part in the removal of victims at both sites. Their actions were praised by the Cook County Coroner, local fire and police officials and other authorities.

OCTOBER: Even though the explosion in the Helene Curtis plant took place during a 'work day', members were on the scene almost immediately to help victims to safety and assist others in loading ambulances. Members assisted firemen by providing gas masks and Chemox breathing masks. Later, door-to-door canvasses of the entire surrounding neighborhoods were made to search out other victims and remove such hazards as hanging glass fragments.

At a Southside "L" accident, members assisted in removing victims and cleaning up debris. Units participated in the yearly Fire Prevention Week activities in Chicago and suburbs.

NOVEMBER: An extra alarm fire in City Hall found members using portable lights, spreading canvas over valuable records in lower floors, and operating the exhaust fans to clear the dense smoke.

Our Air hammers were used to break through crusted magnesium at a fire in a railroad car, and units took part in a disaster evacuation rehearsal at the Illinois Research Hospital.

DECEMBER: Winding up the year "doing business as usual", the Service responded to Cicero, as part of Chicago's mutual aid, for a roaring bowling alley fire. Our saws, tools and winches were put to good use at this fire. Our cutting torch was put into action at a store fire to cut through the metal rear door.

When several workers were trapped and unconscious at the bottom of a 65-foot caisson excavation for a superhighway, units were summoned to the scene. The portable lights were utilized, as the Air Compressors' Air hose was dropped into the hole to pump in fresh air and dispel the poisonous gas while rescue operations went on.

T R A I N I N G

With the ever-increasing importance of its duties and the greatly increased number of responses, the Fire and Rescue Service continued its vigorous training program during the year. New systems were utilized when the President's call for more Civil Defense personnel brought new, untrained men into the organization. Placed on 'candidate' status until the completion of the first stage of their training, these men were given a First Aid Course to start. After completing this advance course, the new members were assigned either to the active main body of the Service and made regular squadmen, responding to all calls, or were designated as 'reserve members', to be called out in major disasters and emergencies. Through careful instruction, the new men were familiarized with the equipment carried on the Service's units and were given proper training in the actual use of all tools. They are thus able to take their place alongside the veteran members of the Service in rapid time.

The year-round training program is broken down into three parts:

1. Classroom work,
2. Practical Exercise,
3. On-the-scene Training.

Formalized classroom work teaches and refreshes members in basic Civil Defense Rescue Techniques, First Aid and various Fire Department evolutions. These subjects are alternated, with many Fire Department instructors teaching classes on related subjects at the new Fire Academy. This indoor work is supplemented by drill with the actual equipment and tools, providing the squadman with the opportunity to test what he has learned in the classroom. Actual 'disaster problems' are frequently set up in abandoned buildings, using a buried 'dummy' as the supposed victim to be rescued. Thorough critiques are held enabling members to learn

what was done properly and what could be improved upon. And finally, the actual responses to fires and other emergencies provides the members with the chance to use their training under actual 'battle conditions'. The men are under constant supervision at all fires and calls and the regular emphasis on personal safety has continued to pay off for the Service and members.

FIRE DUTY

The review of the year gave a comprehensive picture of the types of fires and what equipment was used at the scene. Basically, the Service's job is to support the Fire Department and act as auxiliary manpower; thus the units respond automatically to all extra-alarm fires (2-11 and up), plus still-and-box alarms at airports, hospitals, schools, hotels and public buildings.

Members performed many basic duties at the 441 fire responses during the year; assisting engine companies in laying hose lines to snorkels, high-pressure wagons or jeep pressure units; replacing broken lengths of hose; helping set-up ladders; and in general, assisting the Fire Department in all non-hazardous jobs at the fire scene. Also important is the use of the special tools and equipment carried on the various trucks of the Service. Members are trained to use this equipment themselves or equip firemen to use it in more dangerous situations.

During the winter's inclement weather and below-freezing temperatures, members performed several valuable jobs. One is that of spreading salt in the fire area to give footing for firemen and prevent freezing of hose line connections. The greater safety record and lack of fall injuries at fires during the past four years may be attributed to this special task. Sewers are uncovered so that water may drain rapidly. Members also report cistern locations to the Chief Fire Officer in the event more water is needed.

SPECIAL DUTY

The 312 special duty responses in 1961 by the Service encompassed everything from the plane crashes with their terrible loss of life to fire prevention activities, including parades. The Service is generally called out for any disaster or emergency at which its heavy equipment can be put to use. Of course, this includes the "L" wrecks, plane crashes, boat sinkings, building collapses, construction accidents, and the like that unfortunately occur regularly in every large city.

But the educational part of fire prevention and civil defense are also part of the Service's special duty assignments. During the warmer months, units take part in weekly neighborhood demonstrations with the fire-department to educate the public. Out-of-town demonstrations and parades also took place during the summer months. Members helped demonstrate their equipment to Fire Department Officers and men at regular sessions during the year so that they would be familiar with the specialized equipment available to them at fires and disasters.

During the year, Mr. Frank Ellis, National Director of the Office of Civil Defense Mobilization, visited Chicago and reviewed the men and equipment of the Service. His remarks were highly complimentary to the organization and the members appreciated his recognition of their services.

EQUIPMENT AND HEADQUARTERS

The great variety of work performed by the Service during the year was done with eight vehicles. Six of these are heavy duty rescue trucks equipped in accordance with Civil Defense specifications. They carry some 400 different items of rescue equipment with many of the tools complimenting each other so that a rescue problem can be attacked in several different ways. Many of the tools were first tested by the organization in actual emergency situations before being adopted for full-time service.

The two other vehicles are the Air Compressor Truck and the Light Wagon and Power Unit combination, both of which were 'built' from surplus government equipment, mounted on donated chassis, with finishing work done by members. Both units saw heavy service during the year, as witnessed by the yearly review preceding. At present, members are converting a surplus Air Force truck into a bigger and more powerful Power Unit to carry a 15 KW Generator which will supplant the 5 KW unit.

New tools and equipment are constantly being obtained by the Service. An outstanding addition during 1961 was the Super-Vac Exhaust Fans which proved to be highly portable and yet powerful enough to exhaust heavy smoke from enclosed areas or direct fresh air into cramped quarters.

Early in 1960, the Service was given an abandoned fire house by the city to serve as its headquarters. This enabled the organization to set up a regular 'watch' crew of three men who man the house from 7 P. M. to 6 A. M. every night of the year. With this system, and direct notification

of alarms from the Fire Alarm Office, units can be on the street heading for emergencies within seconds. The Headquarters Building, which was completely renovated by the members themselves, contains space for five vehicles, a boat, a complete shop area for maintenance, a kitchen, large bunkroom, classroom and locker space.

The other vehicles of the Service are stationed in regular fire stations in various parts of the city. If the fire is near one house, a driver can be dispatched by telephone to "take in" the alarm directly from the closer location. The other members of the Service are notified by a "chain call" system when an alarm comes in, and they respond directly to the scene in their own cars.

During the year, many Fire Chiefs, Officials, Firemen, Civil Defense Officials, fire buffs and individual citizens stopped at the Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters at 1244 North Wells Street to examine the equipment and learn the full story of this unique organization. Groups from surrounding communities came in to find out how they might organize comparable Rescue Services in their own towns. Everyone who visited the Service Headquarters was given a warm welcome and a full tour of the premises. A sincere invitation is open to all who care to come in.

MUTUAL AID

It has always been the policy of Commissioner Quinn and Chief Supervisor Johnston to offer the assistance of the Service to any city and town requiring it, regardless of distance. During 1961, all units helped perform vital jobs at fires in Cicero and Forest View, Illinois, at the plane crashes in Clarendon Hills and Bensenville, Illinois and at the floods in Alsip, Illinois. Members took units of the Service to many surrounding communities at their invitation to demonstrate the equipment including: Aurora, Calumet Park, McCook, LaGrange Park, Lyons, Dolton, South Chicago Heights, Forest View, Calumet City, Maywood, Northlake, DesPlaines, Crete, Lombard and Blue Island.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

1961 again showed that the Fire and Rescue Service of the Chicago Civil Defense Corps is of great value to the citizens of Chicago, the State of Illinois and our Nation. Having proven already that "Citizens Can Do It", the Service will be reminded by its motto - "WE NEVER GO BACKWARDS", that it must continue its progress - and thus its value - in 1962.

ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 1961

RESPONSES:

Fire	441
Special Duty	<u>312</u>
Total	753

WORKING TIME:

Fire	1,078 hours, 5 minutes
Special Duty	<u>1,007 hours, 0 minutes</u>
Total	2,085 hours, 5 minutes

MEN RESPONDING:

Fire	2,282
Special Duty	<u>1,156</u>
Total	3,438

AVERAGE WORKING TIME PER RESPONSE:

Fire	2 hours, 26 minutes
Special Duty	3 hours, 13 minutes

MAN-HOURS EXPENDED:

Fire	6,741 man-hours
Special Duty	<u>4,445 man-hours</u>
Total	11,186 man-hours

MILEAGE:

Total number of miles traveled by all eight vehicles - 14,724 miles

Respectfully submitted,

Robert A. Benker,
Deputy Supervisor.

Approved:

Charles J. Johnson,
Chief Supervisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Fire and Rescue Service would like to express its deep appreciation to the following:

The Fire and Police and City Departments with whom most of our work is done shoulder-to-shoulder;

The Press and Television who informed the public of the work and activities performed by this organization;

The City, County and State Departments and Agencies whose assistance helped make this, our fourth year, a year of service surpassing our previous three;

The Public, which we are a part of and which we gladly serve, for its appreciation of our job.

OUR GOAL IS TO KEEP
ALIVE THE MAXIMUM
NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO
SURVIVE ANY DISASTER.