

FEARLESS BOSTON FIREMEN

Who Take All Kinds of Chances

A SERIES OF PERSONAL STORIES.

CAPT AVERY B. HOWARD ENGINE 26

"In my 23 years of service with the Boston Fire Department I think the experience that gave me my greatest thrill was at a fire on North st, Feb 17; 1906. I was a lieutenant of Chemical 1 at the time

"When I arrived at the fire I found it had got a good start on us and was going to be a stubborn blaze to fight. The building was of granite and five stories high. I took my line in and up to the second story, where I found several members of Engine 8 playing their line.

"We tried to fight the fire from this position for several minutes; the flames would shoot at us and drive us all down stairs. The smoke by this time was very dense, after being driven down stairs three times, I made one desperate effort and gained the head of the stairs again.

"I had been there only a short time when suddenly a few puffs of hot air and a sheet of flame shot along the ceiling and I heard a warning cry, 'come out.' It was from Chief McDonough, but it was too late. In a moment there was a terrific explosion that shook the building from cellar to the roof.

"A wicked sheet of flame caught us and we ran downstairs to make our escape, only to find the outside door closed and we were unable to force it open. The flames by this time were on us, burning my clothes, face and hands.



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"The explosion had caused a heavy skid to fall directly across the door, and we would never have gotten out alive if James Trainor, my driver on the chemical, had not taken in the situation quickly and forced the door with a bar from the outside, releasing us. We were nearly dead when we got out.

"I was burned so badly that it necessitated my going to the City Hospital for four weeks, and it was two months before I resumed my duties again."

Capt Howard was appointed to the department Dec 13, 1873; lieutenant, April 18, 1902; captain, Sept 5, 1910.