

Case of Captain William M. Phelan, Ladder Company 31, fire, Still Alarm, 9:26 A. M., May 10, 1940, 149 Bennington St., East Boston:

At 9:26 A. M., May 10, 1940, Engine 5, Ladder 31 and District 1 responded on a Still Alarm for a fire at 149 Bennington Street, East Boston. Lieutenant William C. McCarthy and Hoseman Arthur W. Howard of Engine Company 5 ran a booster line through the first floor to the cellar entrance. Lieutenant McCarthy then left to assist in laying a 2½" line. Hoseman Howard who carried a gas mask attempted to don it on the cellar stairs. While doing this, Hoseman Howard either missed his footing or was overcome by smoke and heat and fell from the stairs to the cellar floor being stunned by the fall and unable to help himself. Captain William M. Phelan of Ladder Company 31, who was on the first floor, heard Hoseman Howard's cry for assistance. He immediately groped his way down the cellar stairs through smoke and heat and found Hoseman Howard in a semiconscious condition about five feet from the fire. He carried Hoseman Howard up the cellar stairs, through the first floor and thence to the street where Hoseman Howard was revived.

This heroic act by Captain Phelan undoubtedly prevented serious injury to Hoseman Howard and perhaps even the loss of his life, and he was highly commended by the Fire Commissioner in General Orders No. 25, Series of 1940.

Because of the great personal risk to which Captain William M. Phelan exposed himself in performing this rescue work, due to the presence of smoke, heat, illuminating and carbon dioxide gases from ruptured pipes in the building, the Board recommends that his name be placed on the ROLL OF MERIT.