

*"Walter Scott Medal"*

LIEUTENANT-AIDE TO COMMISSIONER

WILLIAM H. BELL of Headquarters

Box 2761 was sounded at 1:25 A.M., February 20, 1949, followed by 2nd alarm at 1:37 A.M. and 3rd alarm at 2:08 A.M., for a fire at 1-9 Corinth Street and 22-26 Belgrade Avenue, Roslindale. The former Fire Commissioner, Russell S. Codman, Jr. and the Chief of Department responded to this box.

During the course of operations, the building was ordered vacated because of the large amount of fire, and severe smoke and gas condition. The danger of an explosion was present. It was rumored that Hoseman John A. Abbott of Engine Co. 26 had failed to vacate the basement. The Commissioner and his Aide entered the building in order to warn Hoseman Abbott to vacate. The Commissioner covered his Aide with a line while he searched through the basement. (It was later found out that Hoseman Abbott had left the building.)

After several minutes of investigation, Aide to Commissioner Bell proceeded to leave the basement. On his way out he stumbled across the body of a person who proved to be the Fire Commissioner. He had been overcome from inhalation of smoke and gases due to a clogged gas mask. Aide Bell lifted and dragged Commissioner Codman to the outside where he collapsed. Both were taken to the Boston City Hospital and treated. Aide to Commissioner William H. Bell displayed great courage and was subjected to intense heat and smoke, involving personal risk, while effecting this rescue.

The Board of Merit is pleased to recommend the awarding of the "Walter Scott Medal" to Lieutenant-Aide to Commissioner William H. Bell.