

★ BOSTON HEROES ★

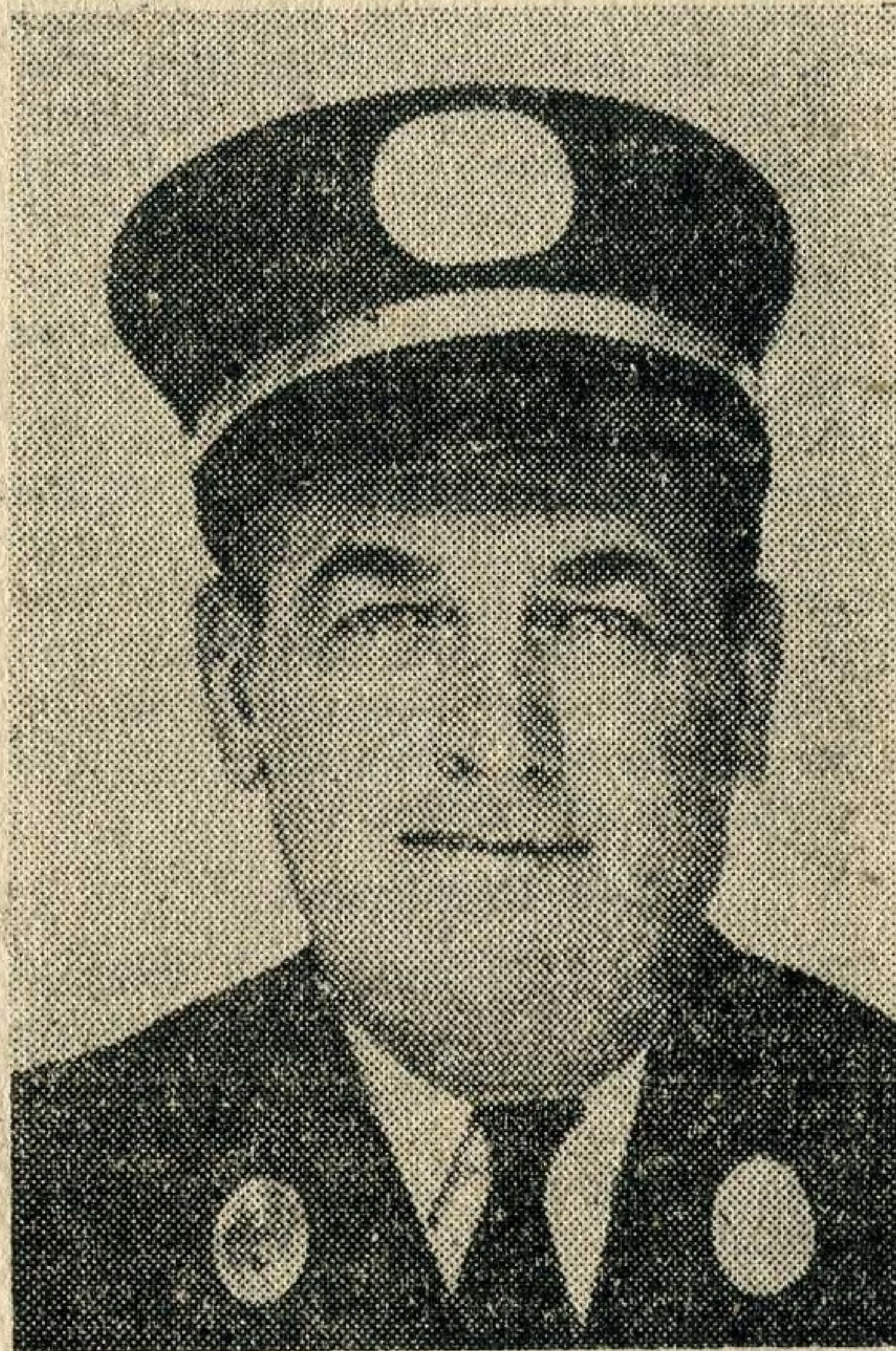
Winners of the WALTER SCOTT MEDAL *for* VALOR

Lieutenant Thomas J. Clark during his long service in the Boston fire department has won commendations for diverse deeds of heroism and yet some of those he likes to remember have been least noted.

On a Fourth of July morning some eight years ago, for example, he heard the frightened screams of small children and hurried to the scene to find a seven-year-old girl whose clothing had caught fire as she celebrated the holiday. He picked her up and smothered the flames in his arms, but it took eight months in a hospital for her frightful burns to heal. He saved her life, and she is one of the many friends who now visit him occasionally.

At the opposite pole of dramatic flaming ruin on a large scale was the \$500,000 fire in Neponset in 1928, of the wooden factory of the Coffin Valve Company, for which four alarms were sounded. With terrifying swiftness the flames had mounted till they were bursting from every window of the structure. Neighboring lumber and coal companies were imperilled but more frightening in its potential for appalling disaster was the huge tank filled with thousands of gallons of gasoline, in front of the blazing structure.

Intense effort was directed to prevent the flames from reaching it. Horror was added with the explosion of an acid tank within the building. Within 30 minutes the building containing nearly \$400,000



No. 21—Lieutenant Thomas J. Clark, Scott Medal for 1945, awarded by the Boston Fire Department.

worth of intricate machinery was totally destroyed.

It was in the spectacular rescue of fire apparatus, trapped by the rapid spread of the flames from one side of the building to the other that Thomas J. Clark of Ladder Company 27 proved his daring and devotion, along with the engine crew, who under a curtain of water plunged into the flames and hauled out the threatened engines and

other apparatus. For this he was one of those specifically commended by the then Fire Commissioner Eugene C. Hultman.

Two years later another fire was quenched in the vicinity of this ladderman. It was a blaze in a heap of dried leaves in a yard, to which came the apparatus responding to an alarm—sirens shrieking, bells clanging and firemen cheering, as they charged into the wedding reception of their pal.

But the act which won the Walter Scott Medal for Valor for Lieutenant Thomas J. Clark was his rescue of a woman in a second story window of a blazing dwelling house on Rockne ave., Dorchester, on Christmas morning, 1945, at 2:31 o'clock. She was seen at the window and civilians and another fireman had been unable to save her. Clark climbed up and in the face of the fire and smoke, suffering severely in the intense heat, he reached through the small window to her slumped body three feet below the sill, and by sheer will and main strength managed to drag her up and out. He was highly commended in a general order in the series of 1946.

Lieutenant Clark has had many commendations in the course of his career. One was for saving a youth from drowning who had been plunged into the water by the upset of a canoe, and was struggling with a broken arm. Clark dived in and swam to his rescue.

He is now a member of Engine Company 20.