

FEARLESS BOSTON FIREMEN

Who Take All Kinds of Chances

A SERIES OF PERSONAL STORIES.

CAPT MARTIN F. MULLIGAN ENGINE 17

"I have had many close calls and experiences replete with thrills during my career as a member of the department, but the impression the Chelsea fire left upon my memory can never be effaced.



CAPT MARTIN F. MULLIGAN.

"I was lieutenant of Engine 15 and was in command of the company when we received orders from Headquarters to proceed to the conflagration in Chelsea.

"Upon arriving at the scene we connected our lines to a hydrant outside a brick apartment house several stories

in height, which was a mass of flames. We were there but a short time when the rear wall gave way and toppled with a terrific roar, causing sheets of flame to leap out which actually enveloped us. We were almost blinded from the heat, smoke and dust.

"We were in a peculiar situation at that fire. Buildings on three sides of us were ablaze and going at a fast rate. The only means of egress we had was narrow, and blazing debris heaped high blocked most of it. Thus, with the fire completely surrounding us, we were hemmed in like rats in a trap. Yet the men stood it unflinchingly.

"Suddenly the front wall of the big brick block began to sway gently to and fro. I knew the inevitable had come, and I called my men together to help rush the engine away from the building. For, as was the custom, the horses had been unhitched from it.

"Stationed as it was, in an old-fashioned gutter constructed of cobblestones, we were unable to budge it an inch. Seeing that the wall was liable to topple any second, I told the men to abandon the engine and flee for their lives. We had just started to run when, with an unearthly crash, the wall fell, crushing the engine into a twisted mass of junk.

"None of the men was injured, though most of us were struck with flying brick and timber. We rushed through the narrow exit, then a furious blaze, and reached safety. We passed through this ordeal unharmed and thankful that we escaped so luckily from what seemed a certain death."

Capt Mulligan was born in New York city in 1863, entered the department in 1887, was made lieutenant in 1899 and captain in 1908.