***Manhattan Health Club***

***Pool Chemical Storage Fire***

***(FF Bob Ingram & FF Phil McArdle)***

As Hazardous Materials Company # 1 arrived at the New York Health and Racquet Club in Manhattan the occupants of the building were being evacuated. A chemical reaction had taken place in the basement swimming pool storage area and a vapor cloud filled the basement.

FF' s Ingram and McArdle, the Entry Team of Hazardous Materials Co. 1, immediately donned chemical protective suits and made their way down to the pool area. There they entered vapor cloud and conducted a search of the pool area.

Assured that all occupant􀀣 Dad vacated the area both members searched for the source of the reaction.

In a large storage area adjacent to the pool, they located numerous containers of hydrochloric acid, lime, various oxidizers and other chemicals, some of which had spilled on the floor. In an attempt to stop the chemical reaction, they began separating the various chemicals. As they were doing this, a steam pipe melted several plastic containers of hydrochloric acid that were placed against it, spilling the acid among the other chemicals. The reaction began to intensify out of control.

FF' s Ingram and McArdle returned immediately to the entrance to the basement and notified Captain Fanning and other members of Haz/Mat #1 to evacuate the basement immediately as a runaway reaction was occurring. Captain Fanning told both members to leave along with them. They informed Captain Fanning that they wanted to make a last attempt to stop the reaction but it had to be done immediately. Knowing that there was not time to evacuate the entire building as the situation worsened both members, without hesitation, immediately reentered the hot zone as the other members, not wearing chemical protective gear, left the area.

FF's Ingram and McArdle reentered the storage room and, knowing the source of the problem, removed the hydrochloric acid containers and the other chemicals away from the steam pipe with their hands, separating what they could and spreading soda ash on the reacting chemicals to neutralize them. The heat from the reaction at this point was igniting wood and other combustibles in the immediate area and in close proximity to live open electrical panels. After a determined effort they succeeded in stopping the reaction.

Both members then quickly left the storage area waving their hands to indicate the heat of the reaction was penetrating their chemical protective gear. A

member of the Safety Team used a hose line to wash the chemicals from their gloves and suits and cool their hands, etc. Both members were then assisted to the street.

These actions were performed ·by FF Ingram under severe conditions inside a cloud of acid vapors. He performed this procedure, disregarding his own safety, within restrictive environment of a chemical protective suit decision to reenter the /hot zone at the height of the reaction in order to protect the occupants of the building and his fellow firefighters was in the highest traditions of the Fire Department.