

The Twin Parks North West fire: Jan. 9, 2022

By Deputy Assistant Chief Frank Leeb

On the morning of Jan. 9, 2022, shortly before 1100 hours, the FDNY responded to what would become one of the worst fires in New York City's history. Yet, at the same time, the fire would result in a historic number of rescues and lives saved, testing the training, dedication, professionalism and resolve of FDNY members.

Tragically, 17 lives were lost at this horrific Sunday-morning fire in the Bronx. We are all profoundly impacted when we are unable to save one victim, no less an unimaginable and heartbreaking 17. For this reason, the FDNY is dedicated to learning all we can from the fire. It is why this article focuses on the actions of each unit who operated at the historic fire.

While mourning the loss of so many lives, we must also acknowledge the FDNY members from fire and EMS who put forth a heroic effort to rescue and save nearly 100 occupants from the Twin Parks North West building. FDNY members play to win, saving lives at all costs. This FDNY "play to win" mindset on every run of every tour, every day, was evident on this day, at this fire. It is the winning mindset of the FDNY and our members' dedication to training that prepares and positions them to perform under even the most demanding conditions, such as those confronted at the



A view of Exposure 1 during the fire. Smoke is emanating from the 15th-floor windows, indicating the severe smoke spread in the fire building because of a chain of open apartment and stairwell doors. (Photo credit: Anjali Singhvi, James Glanz, Weiyei Cai, Evan Grothjan and Mika Gröndahl © 2022 The New York Times Company)

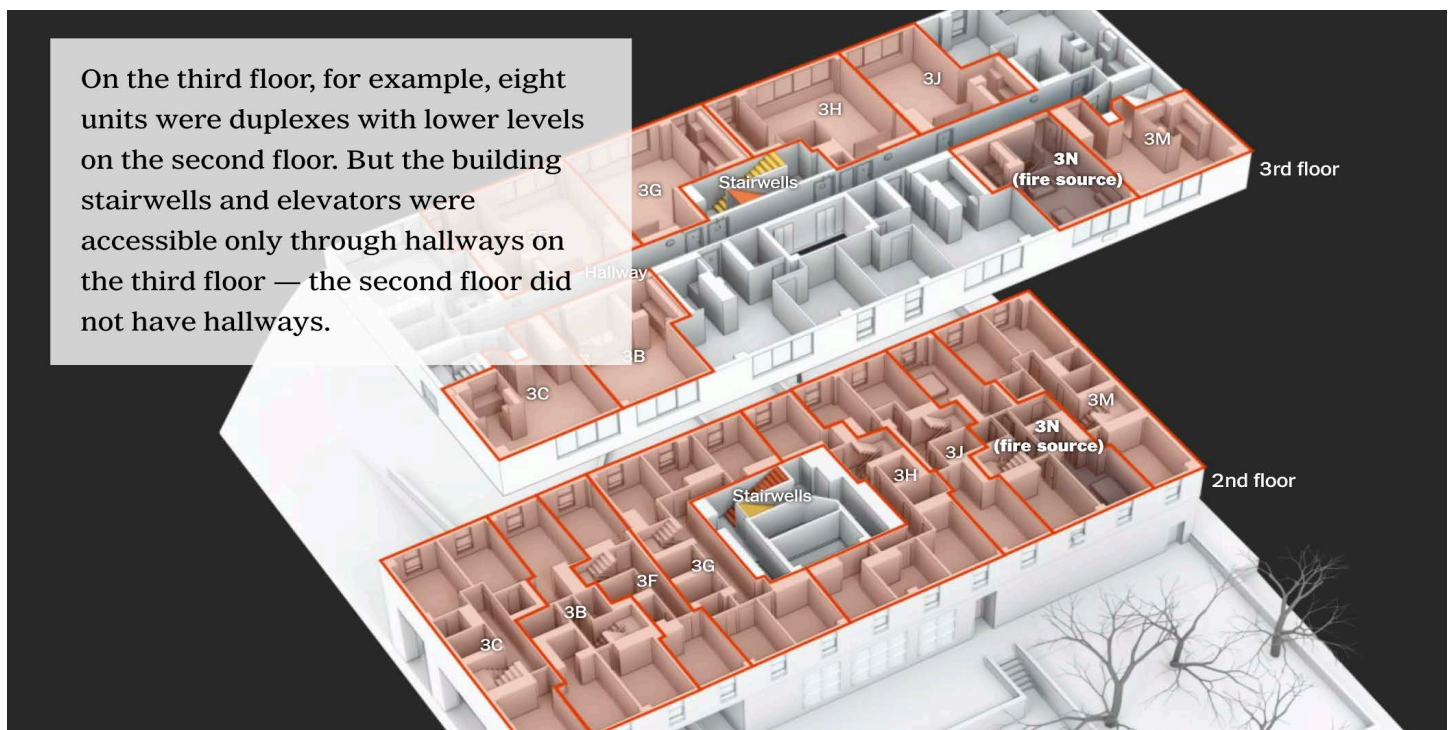
Twin Parks North West fire.

The fire

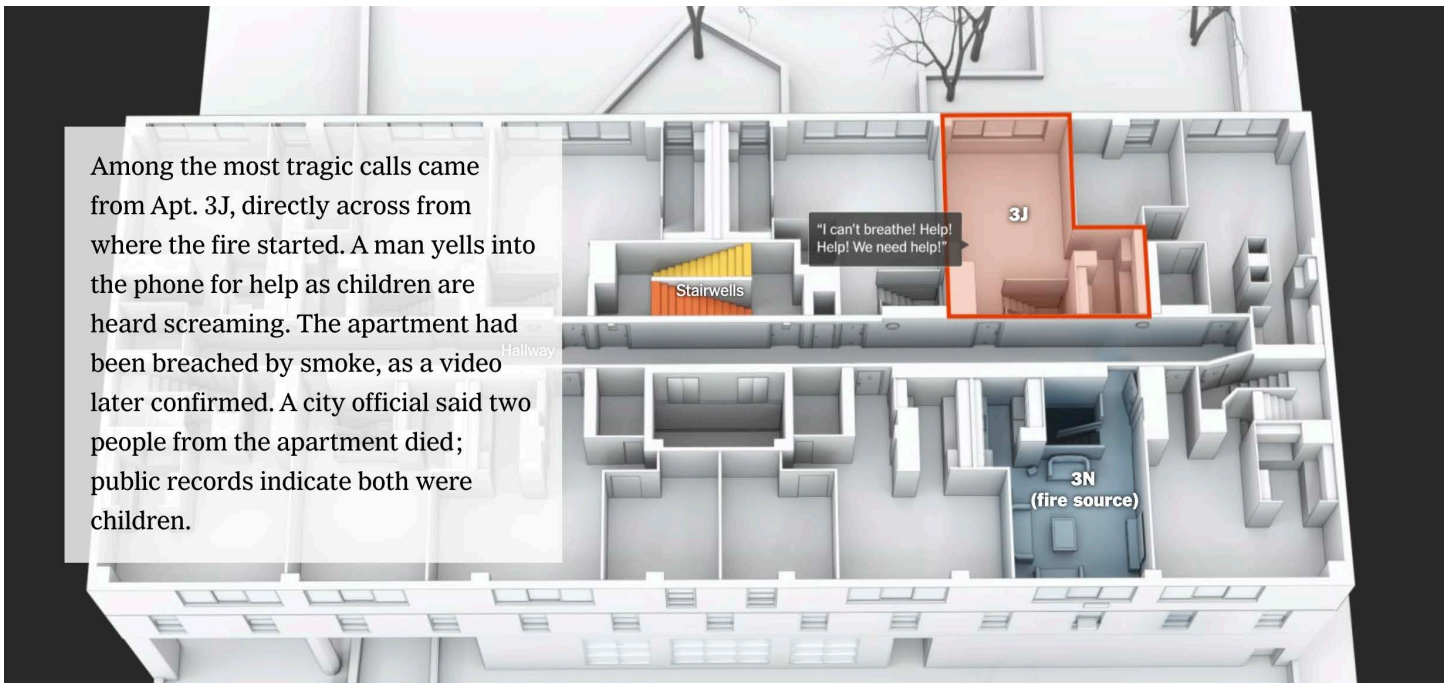
The fire began in Apt. 3N, a duplex apartment on the second and third floors of the 19-story residential apartment building located at 333 E. 181st St. Constructed in 1972, the building is known as Twin Parks North West. The entrance to 3N was on the third floor, and a stairway inside the apartment descended to the second floor ("duplex down"). The fire, which was caused by an electric space heater, began in a bedroom on the lower level—the second floor.

The fire area at the Twin Parks operation was extensive, consisting of both levels of Apt. 3N (the apartment of origin), Apt. 3J (across the hall from 3N) and the third-floor public hallway. With the doors open to both 3N and 3J, both apartments and the public hallway quickly became part of the fire area. Given the science of fire dynamics (including flow path and the stack effect), it is clear that high pressure within Apt. 3N moved fire, heat and smoke toward lower-pressure areas on the third floor and vertical stairwell shafts.

However, an integral part of the story was a chain of open doors that allowed



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Among the most tragic calls came from Apt. 3J, directly across from where the fire started. A man yells into the phone for help as children are heard screaming. The apartment had been breached by smoke, as a video later confirmed. A city official said two people from the apartment died; public records indicate both were children.

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smoke to permeate the building. The open door to the fire apartment, open stairwell doors on numerous floors and open doors to apartments on several floors above the fire floor allowed deadly, toxic smoke to quickly spread to apartments throughout the structure. Video evidence shows that as the Fire Department was arriving, smoke had already reached the 19th (top) floor. This left precious little time for rescues, requiring a fifth-alarm assignment and herculean FDNY effort to save lives in imminent peril.

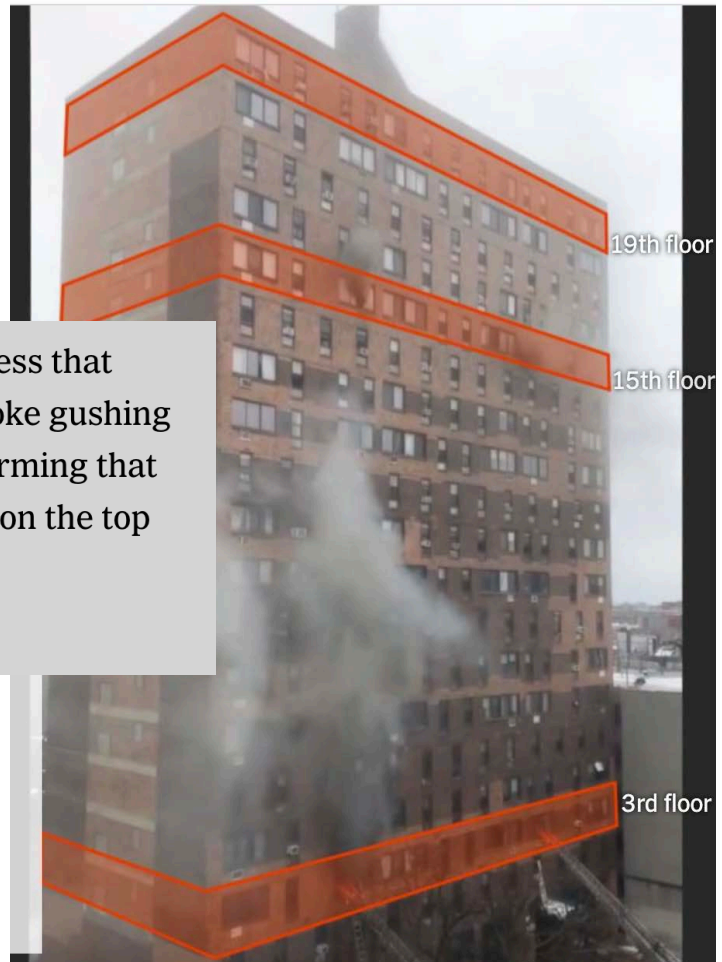
In total, there were more than 60 fire victims (10-45s), and FDNY members removed more than 30 victims from the structure in cardiac arrest. Seventeen people succumbed to their injuries, including eight children. A majority of the victims who died were at least 10 floors above the fire—nine of the fatalities were found in stairwells on the upper floors, far from the fire. All of the deceased died from smoke inhalation.

Video captured by a witness that morning shows thick smoke gushing out of the 15th floor, confirming that compartmentation failed on the top floors, experts said.

Source: Video via Citizen

Both Fire and EMS members performed many courageous actions inside and outside the fire building. While this article focuses on fire operations, the heroic, lifesaving contributions of our brothers and sisters in EMS operations cannot be overstated. They are a critical part of the FDNY team, and their efforts at this fire are worthy of department recognition. Without their dedication, professionalism and grace under fire, many of the heroics of firefighters inside the building would not have resulted in lives saved.

What follows is an analysis of the fire based on the accounts of members who operated at Bronx Box 3162. The analysis is broken down by engine, ladder, special operations/special units and chief officer operations. Much of the account is from



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FDNY firefighters treat a fire victim who was removed from the Twin Parks North West building. (Photo credit: Lloyd Mitchell)

unit officer reports of their company operations, interviews, the post-incident after-action reviews and the FDNY Bureau of Fire Investigation's (BFI's) exhaustive, detailed investigative report. Without the BFI report, many details of this fire simply would not be known. The dedicated work of BFI on the fire is truly worthy of recognition.

These reports and accounts have been combined, cross-referenced and modified for clarity, brevity and better understanding. It would be nearly impossible to capture every action of every unit in this article, and that is not the intent of this account. Rather, the aim is to highlight the extraordinary and lifesaving efforts of the FDNY at this tragic fire.

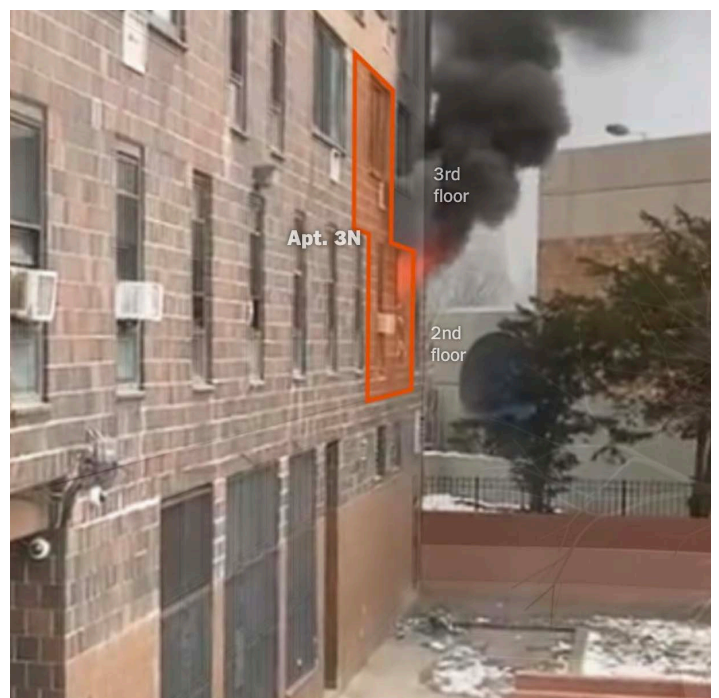
Engine operations

The first hoseline: Engine 48 and Engine 75

Engine 48 is located in a firehouse not far from the fire building and was on scene (first due) in less than 3 minutes. Seeing smoke emanating from rear of the building, Engine 48 transmitted a 10-77 indicating a fire in a high-rise residential structure.

Walking from the rig in the street to the building, members witnessed panicked residents screaming for help from windows on many different floors of the 19-story building. Engine 48's chauffeur strategically took a position near the front of building and radioed to Engine 75 (the second engine) to let them know that Engine 48 needed to be supplied with water because their closest hydrant was not in service.

As Engine 75 was in the process of supplying Engine 48 with



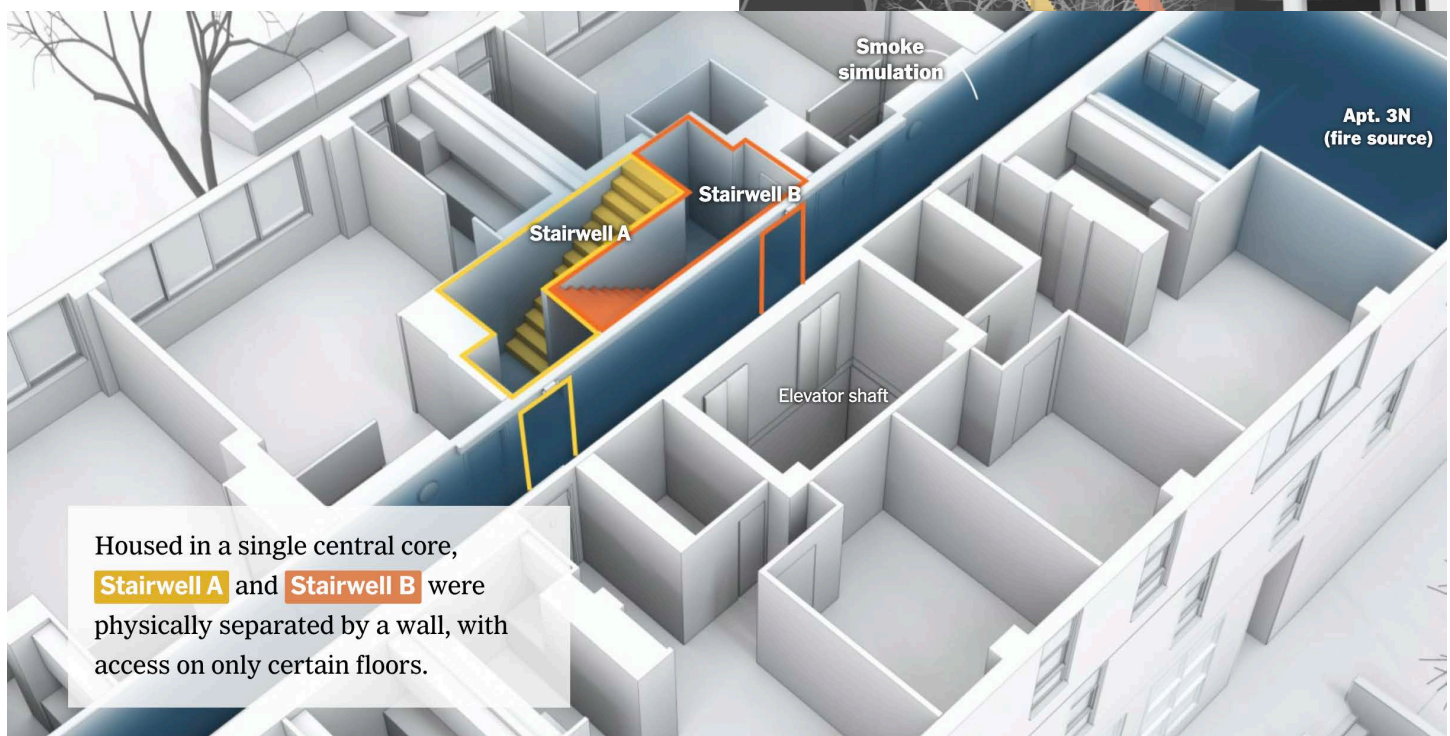
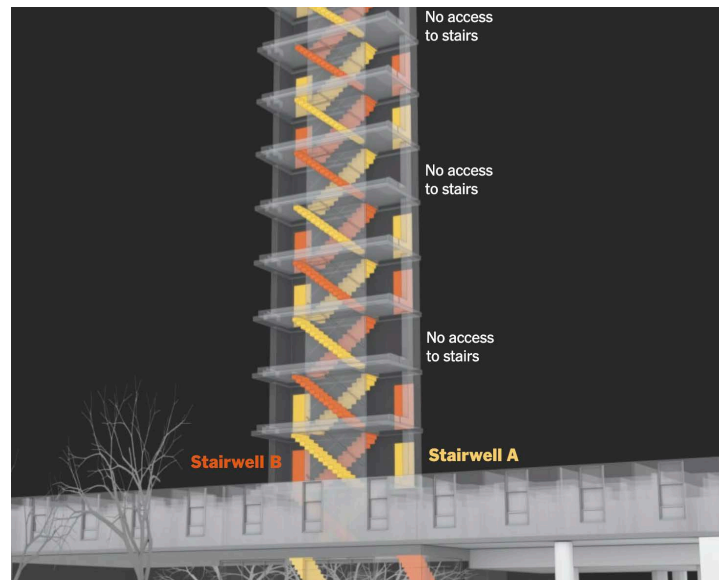
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water, the chauffeur quickly stretched three lengths of 3 ½-inch hose to supply the standpipe siamese located in the front of the fire building. He communicated with Engine 88's chauffeur to charge the supply line to the building, and then he went into the building to activate the fire pumps.

Designating the attack stairwell: stairwell B

After a review of the CIDS information about the building on the response ticket and communication with Ladder 56's officer, the "B" stairwell was designated the attack stair. When Engine 48's officer arrived on the third floor—the first level reached from the lobby due to the duplex-apartment configuration—thick, black smoke was pulsing from around the stairwell door-jamb with a medium smoke condition in the stairwell on the third floor. The volume and color of the smoke made it evident that the fire-apartment door had been left open.

Engine 48's officer decided to connect and operate their line from the standpipe outlet located in the lobby of the "A" stairwell. Recognizing the need for additional lengths of hose, Engine 48's nozzle team and members of Engine 75 connected



Housed in a single central core, **Stairwell A** and **Stairwell B** were physically separated by a wall, with access on only certain floors.

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their lengths of hose together in the lobby just outside stairwell A at the lobby level. Members of the nozzle team had a difficult time maneuvering their hoseline across the lobby to stairwell B due to the overwhelming number of fleeing residents exiting the upper floors, 10-45s (fire victims) and FDNY members entering the attack stairwell.

Engine 48's officer decided to charge the hoseline in the "B" stairwell as members of Ladder 56 searched for the open door to the fire apartment. Engine 48 contacted Ladder 56's officer to establish their location and the location of the fire apartment, which was a left out of the stairwell door and 15 feet down the hallway on the left side. As members of Engine 48 entered the third-floor hallway, they were met with thick, black smoke, zero visibility and high heat conditions as they worked their way down the hallway. Based on the conditions encountered, the

Engine 48 officer radioed the incident commander for a second handline to be stretched to the fire floor.

As Engine 48 advanced in the public hallway, the nozzle firefighter opened the line to cool the extreme heat and push the products of combustion away from the advancing nozzle team. Engine 48 persistently advanced to Apt. 3J, providing protection for Ladder 56. Ladder 56 had come across an open apartment door diagonally across from Apt. 3N, the origin of the fire, and immediately discovered six unconscious victims.

Conditions continued to deteriorate rapidly in the hallway as a large volume of fire began rolling along the ceiling from the fire apartment (3N) into the public hallway. Apt. 3N was located across the hallway and 8 feet farther than Apt. 3J. Once the unconscious victims had been addressed, Engine 48 advanced to the fire apartment, reaching the entrance to Apt. 3N around



The door to Apt. 3J, which is across the hall from Apt. 3N (fire apartment) and several feet closer to the attack stairway. Six 10-45s, including two children who perished, were located in Apt. 3J. (Photo credit: Bureau of Fire Investigation)

the same time the nozzle team began to run low on air, causing their Vibralerts to activate.

Engine 48's officer immediately called command and the fire sector for relief on their line. Engine 48's nozzle firefighter then handed off the nozzle to Engine 48 backup, who continued to operate the line at the entrance of the fire apartment, knocking down as much fire as possible to a point where members were nearly out of air. The nozzle team crawled down the fire-floor hallway, following the line until all members reached safety in the stairwell.

Engine 75 arrives as the second engine

Engine 75 arrived second-due to back up Engine 48. The chauffeur took a good hydrant on East 181st Street near Valentine Avenue. He assisted in supplying water to Engine 48, who had an out-of-service hydrant. The officer and the remaining members of Engine 75 entered the building and assisted Engine 48 in getting the first hoseline into operation. Due to the duplex design of the building, they needed to go down to the first floor (lobby) and hook up in the "A" stairwell. There was a delay in getting the first hoseline in place, in part due to multiple victims ending up on top of the hose. The obstacles were overcome, and Engine 48 began their attack on the fire.



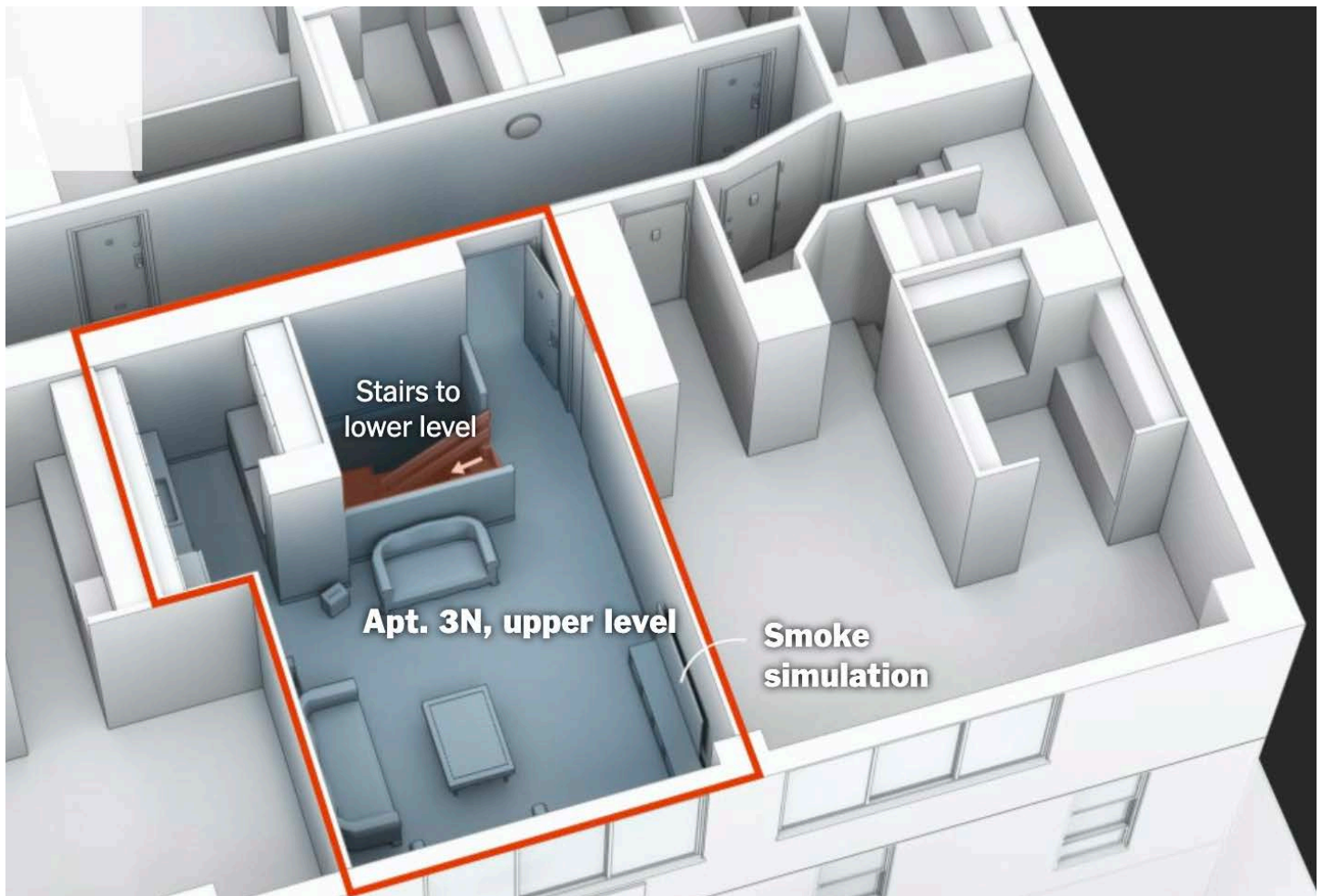
The third-floor public hallway. (Photo credit: Bureau of Fire Investigation)

Due to the heavy smoke, high heat and intense fire conditions, Engine 75 needed to help facilitate the advancement of the first hoseline down the hall and into the apartment. Therefore, we were unable to conserve as much air as we would have liked to. Once Engine 48 was out of air and needed to leave the fire apartment, the members of Engine 75 moved up on the line and continued the attack on the fire, with roughly 25 percent of our air remaining. Once we were out of air, we left the fire apartment and exited the building. We were relieved by Engine 62. Upon exiting the building, members of engine 75 saw their chauffeur performing CPR on a young boy. With this being a mass-casualty incident, my members immediately began assisting EMS with patients as well as bringing Skeds into the building in order to facilitate the removal of more patients.

The second hoseline: Engine 88 and Engine 46

Engine 88 arrived as the third-due engine. Members assisted in getting the first line hooked up in the "A" stairwell and assured water flow in the first line. The members then stretched a 2 ½-inch handline from Engine 48 into the lobby and stood fast while the officer attempted to gain a clear path to facilitate getting the line into position to back up the first line. This second line was stretched to the fire apartment on the third floor. Engine 88 operated the line into apartment 3N (the fire apartment) and then down the duplex stairs. The members held the fire in the stairwell from extending up the duplex stairs and into the apartment and public hallway. After all members had exhausted their air supply, Engine 46 took over the line.

Engine 46 arrived as the fifth-due engine and assisted Engine 88 in stretching a backup 2 ½-inch handline from Engine 48's apparatus to the fire floor. Members of Engine 46 also assisted other companies in the removal of several 10-45s in the attack stairwell as they continued to assist Engine 88 in stretching the line up the stairs in order to advance to the fire floor. As members of the first-, second- and third-due engines required relief after running low on air, Engine 46 moved up on the line and operated it within the fire apartment. They were able to advance it to the base of the down duplex stairs within the fire apartment, where they were met by fire in two separate rooms. They maintained this position and extinguished visible fire until they ran out of air and were relieved by another engine company. As they made their way off the fire floor, they encountered several 10-45s in the process of being removed down the attack stairwell. Members of Engine 46 assisted in the removal of multiple 10-45s to the lobby, and members performed CPR with EMS on a victim in cardiac arrest.



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The door to Apt. 3N, the fire apartment, from the third-floor public hallway. (Photo credit: Bureau of Fire Investigation)

The CFR-D engine: Engine 42

Engine 42 was assigned fifth due on the 10-77 as the CFR-D engine. Upon arrival, Engine 42 observed heavy fire showing in the rear of the third floor and was immediately assigned to assist with the many occupants attempting to evacuate, many of whom needed Fire Department assistance. Engine 42 operated

in the evacuation stairway (stairwell A), assisting conscious victims and carrying down unconscious victims.

The Engine 42 officer assigned one member to maintain a position in the lobby, at the entrance to the evacuation stairway, throughout the operation to assist any members bringing down critical patients and to help transfer them to EMS operations or another CFR-D trained member outside the building. It did not take long before the firefighter was making a positive impact in the lobby. Two members of Ladder 59 emerged from the stairwell carrying two unconscious children down from the ninth floor. All three firefighters swiftly moved outside the building to transfer the victims to EMS, where they continued to assist with CPR, and—together with EMS (Unit 26C and 18B2)—they were able to revive both children before they were transferred to the hospital.

Simultaneously, Engine 42's officer and two members operated within the evacuation stairwell from the lobby to the 15th floor, both searching for victims, and assisted with removing multiple victims to EMS outside the building.

Engine 81 was assigned as the high-rise nozzle company. Upon their arrival with their nozzle, fittings and hose at the command post, they observed with other members what appeared to be a separate fire on an upper floor. After consulting with Division 7, they took the high-rise nozzle, hose and fittings and attempted to get to an upper floor. After receiving confirmation on the handie-talkie that the fire was confined to floors two and three and not on an upper floor, Engine 81 returned to the com-



The “duplex-down” staircase in Apt. 3N, the fire apartment. (Photo credit: Bureau of Fire Investigation)



An exemplar photo of a “duplex-down” staircase in an unburned apartment, similar to the staircase in the fire apartment. (Photo credit: Bureau of Fire Investigation)

mand post and secured their high-rise supplies, as they would not be needed.

Engine 81 was then assigned to perform ladder-company duties and assisted with searches on many floors, primarily working on floors five through 11 under the command of Battalion 20. Engine 81 assisted numerous victims attempting to exit the building.

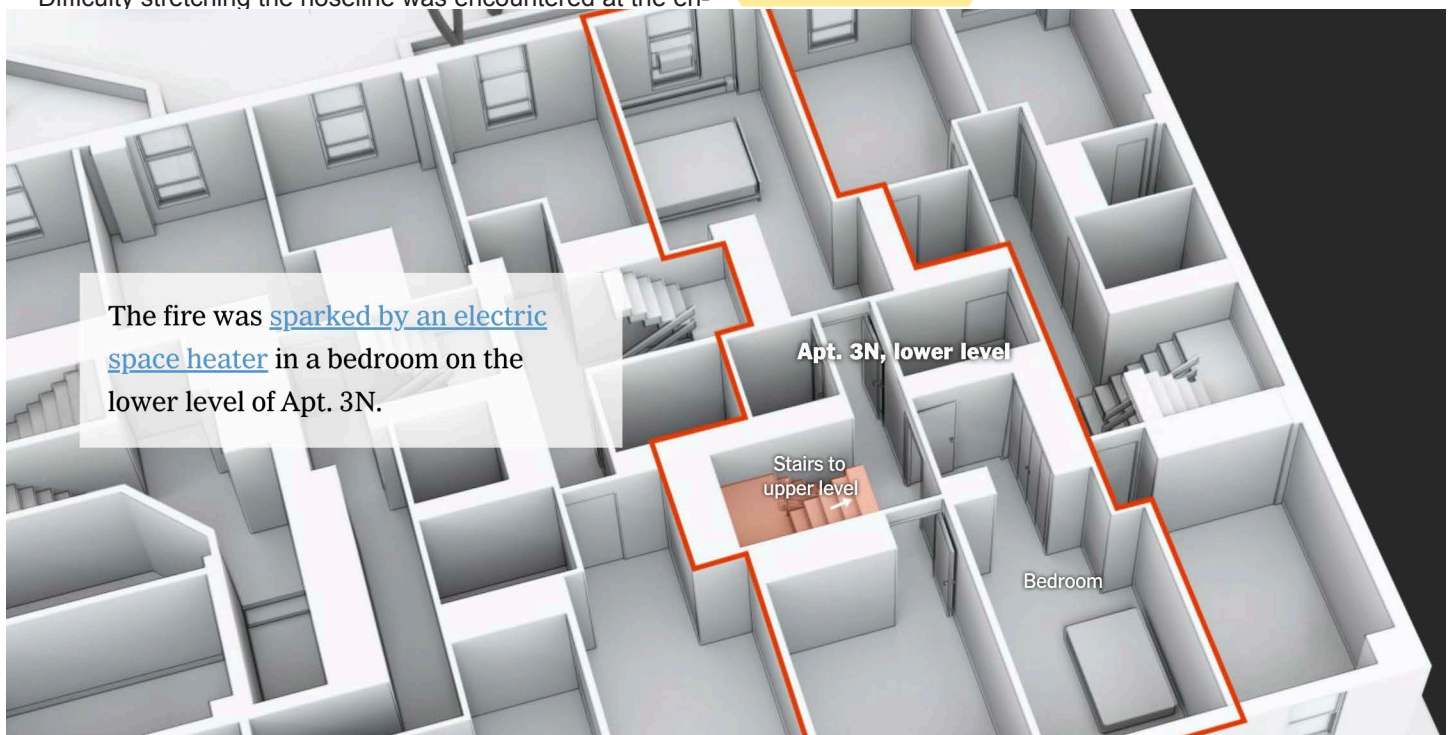
Second-alarm engines

Engine 79 arrived as the first engine on the second alarm. After connecting to a working hydrant on Folin Street, Engine 79 proceeded to the command post with their roll-ups and standpipe kit. On orders of Division 7, Engine 79 was to stretch a line to the floor above the fire (fourth floor). After a quick search revealed that there were no available standpipe outlets below the fire floor, the decision was made to hand-stretch a hoseline from Engine 48 with assistance from Engine 92.

Difficulty stretching the hoseline was encountered at the en-

tranceway to the building and stairwell due to the numerous exiting victims, as well as the assisting firefighters and firefighters mounting an attack on the fire. With great perseverance, however, the hoseline made it to the floor above. However, the line did not operate since the fire did not extend to the floors above.

While standing by with the precautionary hoseline on the floor above, Engine 79 assisted ladder companies with secondary searches on that floor and assisted members and victims coming down the stairs. Once it was determined that their assistance on the floor above was no longer needed, the battalion chief operating on the floor above ordered them to drop down to the fire floor and help where needed. On the fire floor, Engine 79 assisted with secondary searches and then relieved Engine 50 on the hoseline inside the fire apartment. Engine 79 stood by with the hoseline while Hazmat assessed and overpacked lithium-ion batteries.



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The living room on the upper level of Apt. 3N, facing the apartment door to the public hallway. This room is on the third floor. (Photo credit: Bureau of Fire Investigation)



The living room on the upper level of Apt 3N, facing the exposure 3 windows. This room is on the third floor. (Photo credit: Bureau of Fire Investigation)



The FDNY Bureau of Fire Investigation officially determined that a space heater in a lower-level bedroom (exposure 3 side) of Apt. 3N caused the fire. (Photo credit: Bureau of Fire Investigation)



The lower-level bedroom where the fire originated in Apt. 3N. This room is on the second floor. (Photo credit: Bureau of Fire Investigation)

Engine 43 arrived as part of the second-alarm assignment. Engine 43 reported to the command post and was ordered to stretch a hoseline to the rear of the building. Assisted by Engine 50, Engine 43 proceeded to stretch a 2 ½-inch line to the rear, supervised by Battalion 18. Engine 43 charged the line and protected members on a 35-foot ladder who were removing occupants via the ladder. Engine 43 was then directed to operate the hoseline from the outside into the second-floor window, hitting the ceiling to knock down fire.

Upon conclusion of the exterior hoseline operation, Engine 43 gathered their CFR-D supplies and returned to the command post. There, Engine 43 was reassigned to assist with the removal of victims in the fourth-floor “A” stairwell, and with secondary searches of the upper floors, under the supervision of Battalion 45.

Engine 92 was assigned second due on the second alarm. Engine 92 assisted Engine 79 with the third line, which was ordered to Apt. 4V on the fourth floor, directly above the fire apartment. This 2 ½-inch hoseline was stretched off of Engine 88’s rig. With no fire extension found in Apt. 4V, Engine 92 was reassigned to assist occupant evacuation and conduct secondary searches on the third floor.

Engine 50 arrived as part of the second-alarm assignment. Engine 50 reported to the command post and was initially ordered to assist with victim removal of numerous rescues being made via aerial ladder on the exposure 1 (front side) of the building. Engine 50 was then ordered by Battalion 19 to assist Engine 43 with stretching a 2 ½-inch line to the rear of the building. Once the line was in position, members of Engine 50 assisted firefighters in raising a 35-foot, portable ladder to the fire floor to assist in the removal of numerous victims. Engine 50 then reported back to the front of the building for reassignment and was directed by Battalion 19 to attempt to gain access to the second-floor level of a duplex apartment and remove trapped occupants who were hanging their heads out of a smoke-filled window. Engine 50 entered the building and attempted to ascend the attack staircase to reach the victims, but they were soon met by multiple firefighters removing 10-45s down the staircase. Engine 50 members provided relief to the firefighters and removed the victims to lobby level. After transferring the victims to EMS members, Engine 50 reentered the attack stair. There, they were met by Battalion 18 and the Rescue Battalion and temporarily stood fast until ordered to relieve Engine 62 on the lower level of the original fire apartment, where they

completed final extinguishment of smoldering debris and wash-down until relieved by Engine 79.

Note: Engine 62 had relieved Engine 48 (the first engine) and was then relieved by engine 50; Engine 50 was relieved by Engine 79. The order of the engines that operated the first line in the fire apartment was E-48, E-62, E-50, E-79.

Engine 263 was assigned as the communication unit. They arrived at the command post and were ordered to stand fast. While at the command post, members began assisting in the removal of numerous 10-45s exiting the building. Members of Engine 263 performed CPR on several victims while assisting others to ambulances for transport.

Engine 72 and Satellite 2 reported to the command post and were immediately assigned to assist with the removal of unconscious victims in the stairwells of the building. After assisting with the removal of two unconscious victims from the "A" stairwell at the fifth floor, Engine 72 was ordered to remain outside the building in order to assist EMS with CPR on subsequent victims who were removed from the building. Simultaneously, Engine 72 assisted EMS members in removing victims by stretcher to awaiting ambulances. In some cases, the ambulances were located several blocks away due to the street congestion from responding units.

Engine 39 and High Rise 2 were assigned on the second alarm and reported into the command post with ventilation equipment and CFR equipment, as instructed by the dispatcher. While Engine 39 was initially instructed to stand fast until needed to perform ventilation, they were quickly assigned to assist in front of the building with the transfer of 10-45s to EMS. This included two members of Engine 39 assisting EMS with CPR en route to the hospital. With the receiving hospital nearby, the two members promptly returned to the scene. Engine 39 (assisted by Ladder 51) was then put to work as a ventilation unit and set up sequential ventilation of the building.

Engine 45 arrived at the command post and was quickly directed by Division 7 to assist the units in front of the fire building. Engine 45 helped carry victims down from the aerial ladder, assisted members exiting the building with victims and also assisted the victims on the ground in front of the fire building. Engine 45 members also performed CPR and rescue breathing on infants and adults. There was no time to identify the victims, as they moved as fast as possible to get them on the ambulances.

Engine 45 was later directed to assist with searches of apartments on floors 3–11. In third-floor apartment 3G, Engine 45 discovered a teenage girl with burns on her arm and side. Members were informed that she had been in the fire apartment and had been taken from it by her father. She—as well as other occupants in some of the third-floor apartments—was assisted out of the building by Engine 45 members.

Engine 95 responded on the third alarm. Once on scene, Engine 95 staged in front of the fire building within verbal communication of the command post and awaited orders. Soon after, Engine 95 was ordered to assemble as many Skeds and backboards as possible from nearby rigs and proceed to the upper floors to assist with the removal of 10-45s.

Upon arrival at the upper floors, Engine 95 members assisted multiple ambulatory residents out of the fire building and to the street. All of the non-ambulatory residents were removed from the building by the time Engine 95 reached the upper floors. After removing victims, Engine 95 assisted with secondary searches of all apartments from floors 15–18.

Engine 82 arrived on the scene and assisted in evacuation/rescue, along with patient care, on the first floor and outside the

building.

Engine 93 initially operated in the stairwells between the third and fourth floors to assist in the removal of victims from the stairways. Engine 93 was then directed by the fire sector chief to proceed to the 15th floor while checking the stairways for occupants and making contact with battalions at sectors on the upper floors on the way. Engine 93 arrived on the 15th floor and was directed to perform secondary searches on floors 12–15 by Battalion 20. Engine 93 reported that all secondary searches were complete and negative to Battalion 20 before exiting the building and checking in at the MERV before leaving the scene.

Engine 62 responded on the fourth alarm and was ordered by Battalion 18 to relieve Engine 48 in the fire apartment. Most of the fire was knocked down by Engine 48 on the fire floor and floor below. Engine 62 extinguished pockets of fire on the floor below and was relieved by Engine 50.

Fourth-alarm engines: ordered to bring CFR equipment to the command post

Engine 90 operated as a CFR-D engine, assisting EMS with removal of victims from the street to ambulances while doing CPR on numerous 10-45s.

Engine 71 arrived as part of the fourth-alarm assignment. While responding, Engine 71 was ordered to report into the front of the building with their CFR-D equipment. Realizing the multitude of fire victims, Engine 71 members canvassed every engine company they passed while approaching the fire building for additional supplemental oxygen supplies and BVMs to bring with them to the scene. Engine 71's chauffeur initially assisted with traffic control to facilitate the movement of ambulances in and out of the scene before meeting back up with the company to assist with CPR in front of the building. Engine 71 members administered CPR to five separate individuals (three adults, two children) during the operation.

Engine 94 dispatched on the fourth alarm and was ordered via the Bronx dispatcher to report to the command post in front of the building with CFR-D equipment. Upon arrival at the command post, Engine 94 was put to work assisting with the removal of about 12 10-45s from the A and B stairwells, as well as some transported later via the B elevator. The victims were packaged on Skeds, stretchers and backboards; in most cases, CPR and rescue breathing were initiated. Engine 94 members then transported victims to casualty collection points (CCP) in front of the building, where they were handed off to EMS. In many cases, due to the number of patients and the critical condition of most of them, Engine 94 members assisted in transporting victims some distance away from the scene to an ambulance. At one point, the number of patients overwhelmed the number of ambulances on the scene. This required all Engine 94 members to perform CPR at the CCP in front of the building. Command was notified that Engine 94 was unable to return to the lobby. As more resources arrived on scene, Engine 94 members were relieved of their CPR duties. A short time later, Engine 94 was sent to an adjacent building for "difficulty breathing." Upon arrival, Engine 94—along with EMS—treated and transported three 10-45s who had taken shelter away from the fire.

Engine 326 responded to the staging area at E. 182nd Street and Webster Avenue, where members were directed to the front of fire building with their Skeds and CFR-D equipment. The chief at the command post directed Engine 326 to assist with CPR if any additional 10-45s were brought out of the building, but no additional patients requiring CPR were brought out. Engine 326 remained at the command post until relieved from

the scene.

Engine 84 was initially relocated to Engine 43 and later responded on the fourth alarm as a CFR-D engine. Engine 84 operated in the lobby and exterior of the building, assisting EMS with multiple patients being removed from the building.

Engine 38 reported to the staging area. They were later reassigned to the command post with CFR-D equipment. At the command post, Engine 38 assisted EMS in providing medical care.

Engine 23 assisted EMS with patients in front of the fire building.

Engine 274 was special-called to the incident to deal with the lithium-ion batteries in the fire apartment. Engine 274 assisted Hazmat 1 in searching for battery cells post overhaul from a scooter inside the door of the fire apartment.

Engine 76 reported to the staging area with CFR-D equipment. They were later reassigned to the command post, stood fast and were not given any assignments.

Engine 97 was relocated to Engine 81 and responded on the fifth alarm. Engine 97 stood fast at the staging area and was then reassigned to the command post. Engine 97 was ordered by Battalion 32 to assist with taking up hoseline from the fire apartment; it assisted and was released from the scene.

Engine 4, acting Engine 95, reported to the staging area and stood fast.

Engine 24 reported to the staging area and stood fast.

Engine 96 responded for a watch line at 1426 hours. It arrived on scene, hooked up to a hydrant and stood fast until relieved by Engine 89.

Ladder operations

Ladder 56 arrived as the first-due ladder company. While its inside team proceeded to the third floor, the officer of Engine 48 (the first-engine officer was already on the third floor) contacted Ladder 56's officer to coordinate and confirm that the "B" stairwell would be the attack stairwell and the "A" stairwell the evacuation stairs.

Lights-out conditions on the third floor

Engine 48's officer also notified the Ladder 56 officer that conditions on the third floor were "lights out." Upon arrival at the third-floor landing, Ladder 56's forcible entry team masked up. During the same time, the officer of Ladder 56 made entry into the hallway to survey conditions and use the thermal imaging camera in an attempt to locate the fire apartment. The lights-out conditions were an indication that the fire apartment door was open. The Ladder 56 officer attempted to use the thermal imaging camera to locate the fire apartment with the open door. However, due to the heavy smoke condition, the thermal imaging camera was ineffective, even when placed directly onto his SCBA facepiece.

The Ladder 56 officer returned into the landing area and rejoined his inside team. He informed the can and forcible entry firefighters (forcible entry team) of conditions and instructed them to go left out of the stairwell and take the left wall in search of the open apartment door.

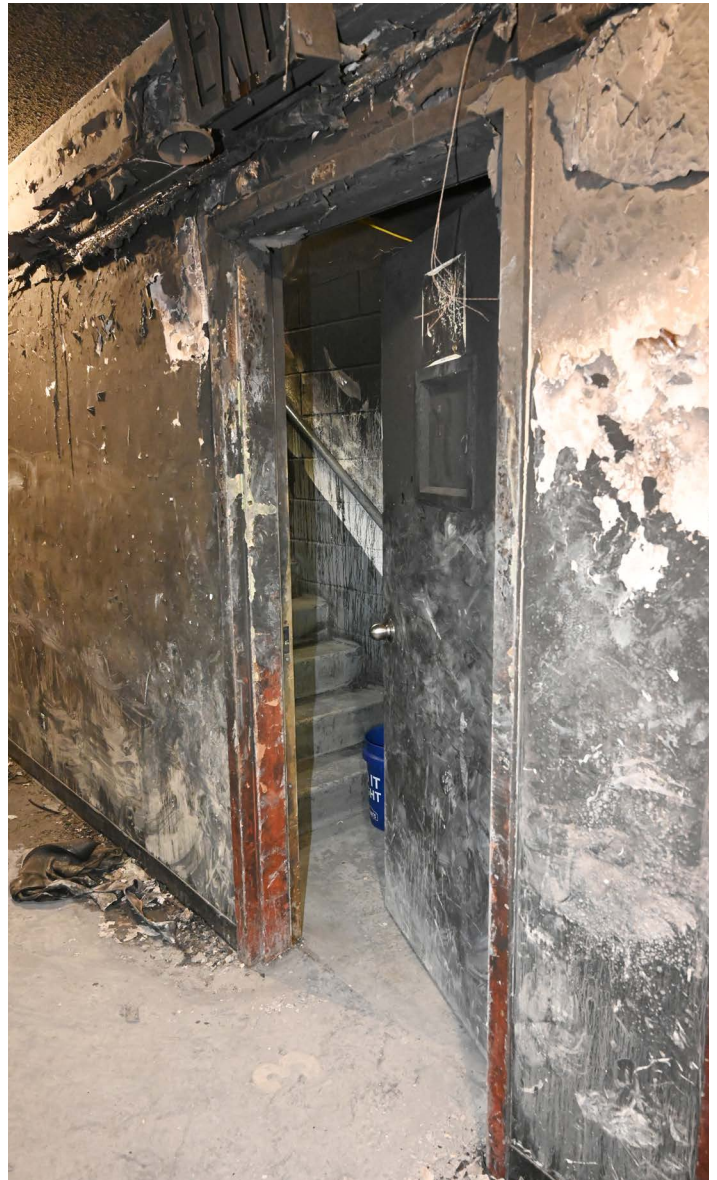
As the Ladder 56 forcible entry team worked its way down the hall, the heat conditions began to increase in intensity. As the members reached the third apartment door from the "B" stairs, Apt. 3J, they found the apartment door partly open—about 2 feet. Ladder 56's officer quickly gained control of the door by closing it. With the open door now controlled, the Ladder 56 officer radioed to Engine 48 that the apartment was about 15

feet from the stairwell on the left side of the hallway.

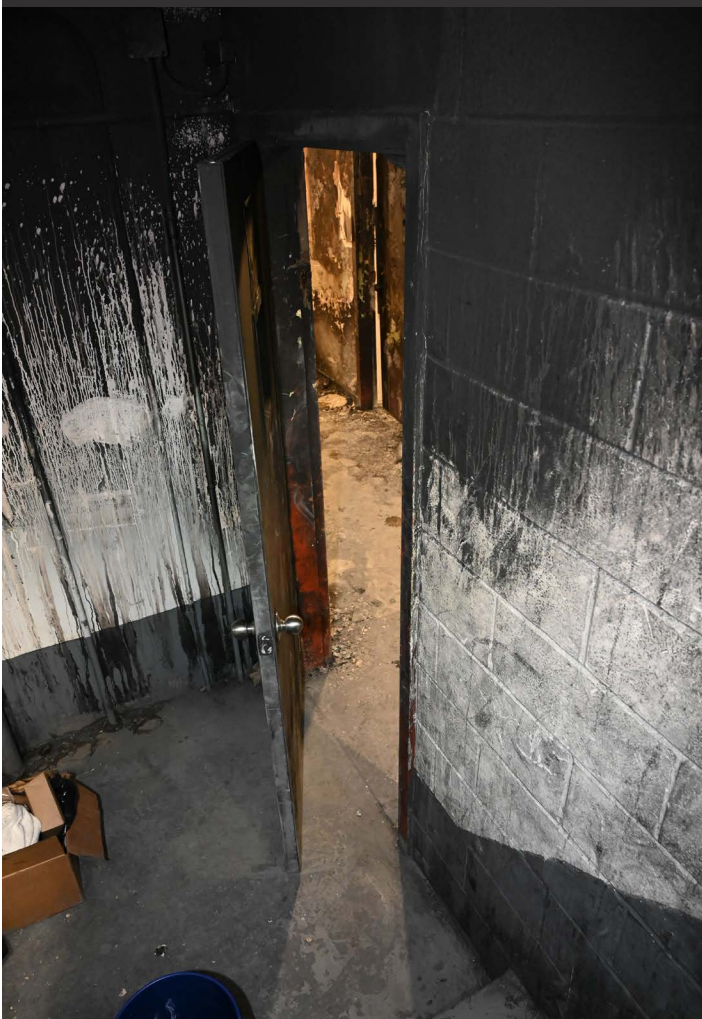
The first victim is located

The Ladder 56 forcible entry team reopened the door to enter Apt. 3J and search for the fire and victims. They were hit with a blast of high heat. The intense heat radiating off the walls and ceilings made it difficult to determine the original fire apartment. The officer of Ladder 56 decided to position the can firefighter at the door to wait for the engine and maintain control of the apartment door. The officer and forcible entry (FE) firefighter immediately began searching the apartment. The FE firefighter began his search to the left, and after traveling approximately 10 feet, he found the first of many victims.

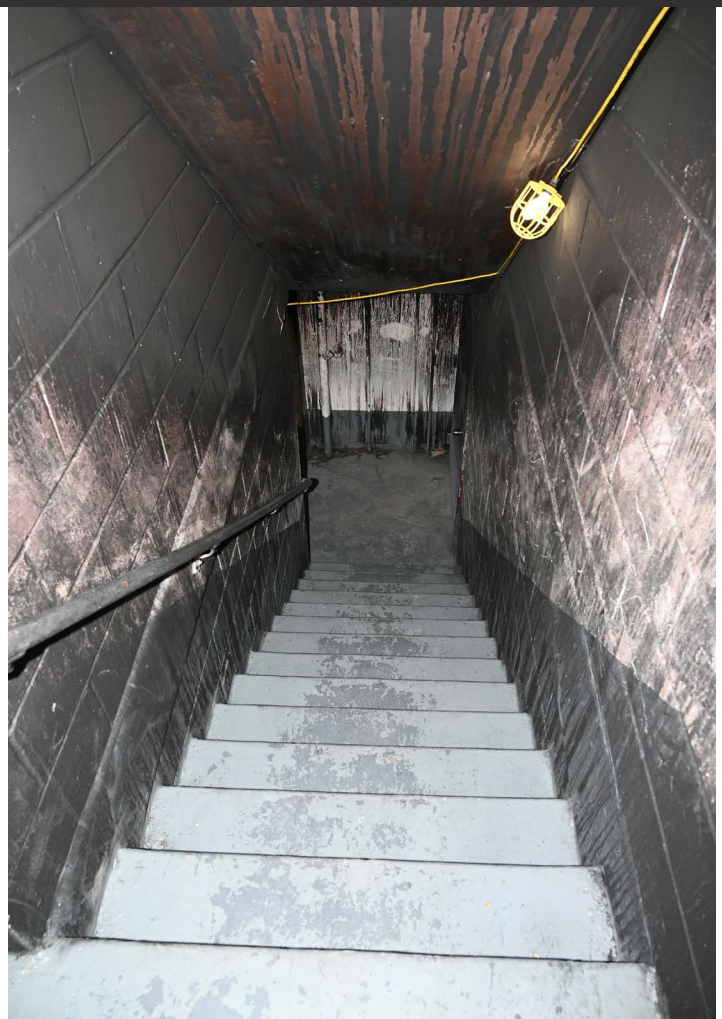
At the same time, the Ladder 56 officer went to the right and down the stairs to the lower section of the duplex apartment, where he noticed a drastic drop in the heat condition and found



The doorway to Stairwell B (attack stairs) on the third floor. In the photo, the stairwell door remains partially open, a condition that allowed smoke to enter the stairwell during the fire. (Photo credit: Bureau of Fire Investigation)



The doorway to Stairwell B (the attack stairs) on the third floor from inside the stairwell. The black soot stains on the wall indicate the severe conditions in the stairwell during the fire. (Photo credit: Bureau of Fire Investigation)



Stairwell B (attack stairs) looking down from the fourth floor to the third floor. (Photo credit: Bureau of Fire Investigation)

no evidence of the fire. He returned up the duplex stairs from the lower level and met up with the FE firefighter, who was now moving the 10-45 toward the apartment door with the assistance of the can firefighter.

While Ladder 56's inside team searched and removed unconscious victims inside, the outside team was setting up. The ladder company chauffeur (LCC) and outside vent position (OV) teamed up and worked together.

Multiple ladder rescues on the exposure 1 (front)

The outside team quickly and strategically positioned the apparatus so that the LCC could position the aerial for optimal access—through several trees partly blocking access to a partially open third-floor window where the OV firefighter had noticed people's faces. While the LCC maneuvered the ladder to the window, the OV firefighter grabbed the 35-foot ladder and, with the help of several civilians, was able to get it to another window on the third floor.

When the OV firefighter climbed onto the turntable of the ladder, the trapped people at the window disappeared. With heavy smoke now venting from the partly open window, the LCC used the ladder to vent the window while the OV firefighter quickly ascended the aerial and entered the apartment. The LCC followed the OV firefighter up the ladder and operated at the tip

of the aerial, using a Sawzall to cut and remove the remaining window frame.

Ladder 56's officer returned from the lower level of the duplex apartment and again met up with his FE firefighter. They continued searching, proceeding in different directions still in search of the fire. The Ladder 56 officer came upon the second 10-45 inside this apartment. The Ladder 56 officer radioed command that they had multiple 10-45s. The officer of Ladder 56 began to drag the fire victim towards the door.

It was at this time that Engine 48 arrived with the hoseline. The conditions in the apartment soon become untenable. The officer of Ladder 56, seeing the line come into the apartment, ordered the nozzle firefighter to open the line on the ceiling. Engine 48 continued to operate their hoseline until a change in conditions was observed.

There was a sound of glass breaking as the aerial of Ladder 56 came in through the front window. Engine 48's operation of the line helped break up and cool the untenable heat condition, which enabled members to see the fire above the firefighters coming in the apartment door from the hallway. Engine 48 was able to turn the line around, extinguish the fire and push the heated gases down the hall, away from the members. At that time, Ladder 56's FE firefighter was able to remove the first 10-45 down the hallway with a member of Rescue 3 to the hallway door, where he handed him off. Ladder 56's OV firefighter entered the apartment through the window and found a third

10-45.

Ladder 56's FE firefighter returned and continued the search with the can firefighter, finding three more victims. By that time, conditions in the public hallway were severe, which eliminated the public hall as a removal option for the five remaining victims from the apartment. The ladder officer determined that the best route would be to evacuate them down the aerial ladder. The outside and inside teams worked together to move the remaining five victims out of the apartment and down the ladder. At this point, most members of Ladder 56 were completely out of air. Members of Rescue 3 helped evacuate the last two victims down the aerial.

Concurrent to the other Ladder 56 rescues and removals, the roof firefighter of Ladder 56 made his way to the floor above the fire floor, where he encountered a similar smoke condition. He forced several doors to gain access to the floor above the fire apartment and conducted a quick search of the apartment. Following his search, he met up with another firefighter who needed assistance carrying a victim down to the front of the building.

Two open apartment doors

Ladder 56's initial operations were in Apt. 3J, the apartment across the hall from the fire apartment of origin (Apt. 3N). The fire had extended into 3J because of the open doors in the fire apartment and the apartment across the hall. Ladder 56 immediately encountered victims near the entrance to the open apartment as well as inside 3J. Ladder 56 operated until all victims were removed and the door to the original fire apartment was controlled. Ladder 56 was relieved by Ladder 19. In total, Ladder 56 assisted in the location and removal of seven victims at the fire.

Ladder 33 arrived as the second ladder company and quick-

ly commenced second-due operations for fires in fireproof multiple dwellings. Ladder 33's LCC positioned the apparatus in front of the address in an attempt to gain full building coverage (scrub area). Ladder 33's inside team and roof firefighter entered the fire building and located the attack staircase. On the half landing of the third floor, it was decided that Ladder 33's inside team would be divided: The can firefighter was instructed to begin a primary search of the public staircase for five floors above the fire, and the FE firefighter and officer would enter the public hallway for primaries of the public hall. Ladder 33's inside team and roof firefighter donned their SCBAs and began to operate. Ladder 33's can firefighter ascended the staircase in zero visibility and located a 10-45. After notifying his officer, the can firefighter, with the assistance of Ladder 33's roof firefighter, brought the victim down to the lobby and handed her off to another FDNY unit. Meanwhile, the officer and FE firefighter entered the public hallway and began searching. In addition, they assisted Engine 48 in advancing their charged hoseline down the hallway.

After removing the victim to the lobby, Ladder 33's can firefighter and roof firefighter immediately went back to their assignments; the can firefighter completed his assignment searching the stairway for the five floors above the fire floor, while the roof firefighter made his way to the apartment above the fire. The roof firefighter completed his assignment, reaching the apartment above with zero visibility in the hallway. He completed a search of the hallway and the apartment above the fire apartment.

Multiple ladder rescues on the exposure 3 (rear)

On arrival and simultaneous to his company's operations, Ladder 33's OV began a size-up around the perimeter of the building. Upon arriving in the rear (exposure 3), he relayed pertinent information regarding the location and volume of the fire to the IC. In addition, he positioned a 35-foot portable ladder and made multiple removals of fleeing occupants in the apartment adjoining the fire apartment and above.

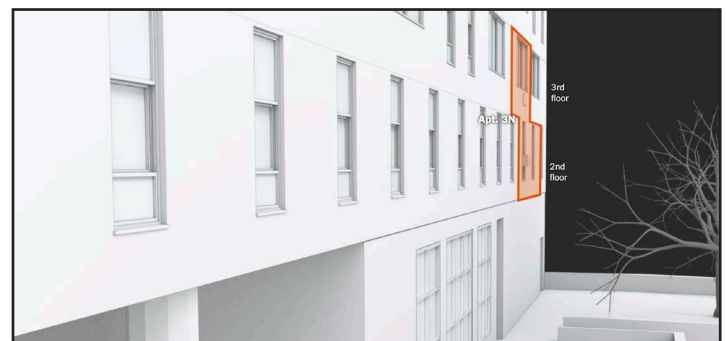
Ladder 33's LCC began the difficult task of getting to the top (19th) floor to vent the attack stair roof-level bulkhead. At the bulkhead, he was confronted with a heavy smoke condition in the stairwell and on the 19th floor. He vented the stairway bulkhead and then conducted a primary search of the public hallway on the top floor. While operating there, he instructed many occupants to stay inside their apartments and shelter in place.

Ladder 27 arrived as the third ladder company on the 10-77. Ladder 27's LCC maneuvered the apparatus in reverse, onto the sidewalk in front of the building, in a perpendicular approach



Stills from videos by Citizen

A review of other video showed flames coming out of Apt. 3N's upper level several minutes after appearing to have died down on the lower level, compounding the flow of smoke.



Graphics Credit: Anjali Singhvi, James Glanz, Weiyi Cai, Evan Grothjan and Mika Gröndahl © 2022 The New York Times Company

that placed the aerial closer to the building and in an optimal position for life-saving aerial-ladder operations. He used the aerial to remove multiple endangered occupants from third-floor windows.

Ladder 27 operated as a unit on the floor above the fire. However, while making their way to the floor above, some of the members began removing a 10-45 that was brought to the “B” staircase by an unknown firefighter. The remaining members made their way up to the fourth floor, searching the hallway and apartments there. They ensured the stairway doors were kept closed on the floor above and continued to search all apartments on the fourth floor. They extinguished some minor fire extension with the can in apartment 4V and operated until they ran out of air. Ladder 27 exited the building and assisted in victim removals on the ground level for the remainder of the operation.

Ladder 37 arrived as the fourth ladder company, filling out the 10-77 assignment. Upon arrival, Division 7 ordered Ladder 37’s inside team to go to the fire floor. There, they assisted with removal of victims and searched both the public hallway and

adjoining apartments. After depleting their air supply, they also assisted with the removal of victims coming down the interior stairs. Ladder 37’s outside team assisted with the removal of victims via portable and aerial ladders, and the LCC also made his way to the roof while searching upper floors.

Ladder 38 was assigned as the FAST Truck. Ladder 38 reported to the command post and was stationed in the lobby until relieved by Ladder 41. After being relieved, Ladder 38 was reassigned to the fire floor under the supervision of Battalion 38. There, the members completed secondary searches of the fire floor.

Ladder 17 was assigned as the Ventilation Support Unit on the transmission of the 10-77. The IC instructed them to assist with setting up a roof-rope rescue from the roof level. After determining that a roof-rope rescue was not viable at the time, Ladder 17 began to search the stairwells and upper floors and assisted in removing victims from the building.

Ladder 59 was assigned to investigate a heavy smoke condition on the upper floors. Working as a unit, they ascended



Fire emanating from the third-floor exposure 3 windows of Apt. 3N (upper level).

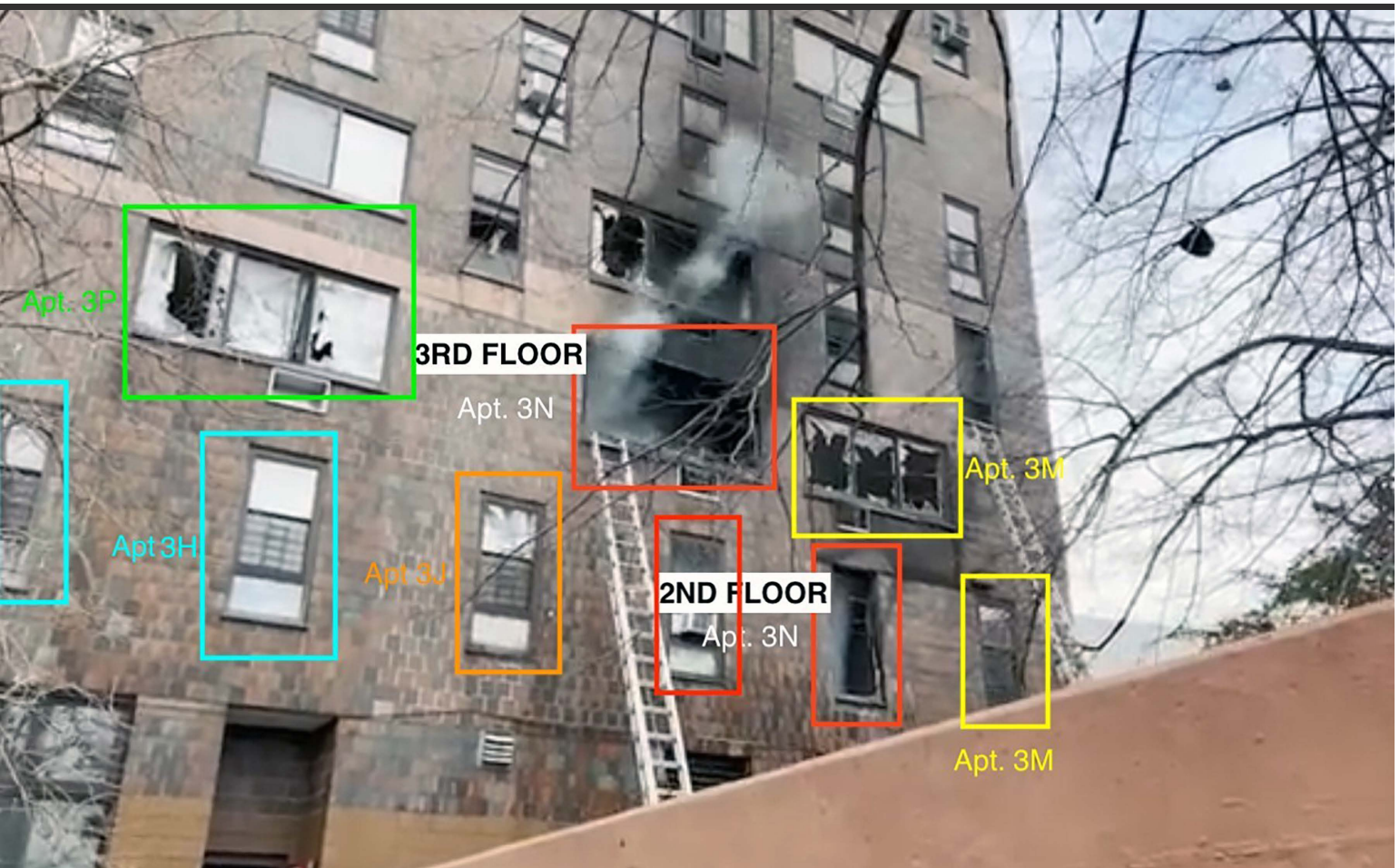


Diagram of the window layout on the exposure 3 side. Note that the (orange) window on the second floor is associated with Apt. 3J, which is accessible from an apartment door across the hallway (exposure 1) on the floor above (third floor), making it nearly impossible for firefighters on the exterior to identify the apartment layouts.

the attack stair to get to the 15th floor. En route, they came across a woman and three children in the stairwell on the ninth-floor landing. The FE and can firefighters each carried one child down and out of the building, while the woman and other child were able to follow and self-evacuate. The two firefighters moved outside the building to transfer the victims to EMS. They continued to assist with CPR along with a firefighter from Engine 42, and together with EMS (unit 26C and 18B2), they were able to revive both children before they were transferred to the hospital.

With heavy smoke and reports of people trapped, the remaining members of Ladder 59 completed a primary search of the ninth floor, finding two occupants in distress and nearly overcome by smoke. Ladder 59 removed them from the hallway and back into their apartment. Upon returning to the stairwell door, Ladder 59 came upon an unconscious victim in the hallway. The victim was removed by the remaining members of Ladder 59. After transferring the victim to EMS, Ladder 59 reentered the building and again began their ascent to the upper floors.

Ladder 59 again encountered two unconscious victims who were not breathing. They began CPR and, with assistance from Ladder 36, removed both victims to the front of the building via the stairwell. Ladder 59 also assisted in primary searches in various apartments and with removal of other non-ambulatory victims.

Ladder 46 arrived as the second ladder company on the second alarm and operated on several floors, removing multiple

victims and assisting with rescues.

Ladder 61 arrived on the third alarm with instructions to report directly to the command post. While walking up Folin Street from Webster Avenue, Ladder 61 witnessed an occupant (adult male) jumping from a second-floor window at the end of the building (exposure 1/2 corner). The members of Ladder 61's inside team secured portable ladders from surrounding apparatus to rescue the remaining occupants (two adults) at the window. Ladder 61's outside team used another portable ladder to remove occupants (two adults, one child) from an adjoining apartment. The third window where Ladder 61 operated (toward exposure 1/4 corner) had approximately 14 people in the apartment. There was no smoke condition in the apartment at the time, and the occupants were advised to shelter in place.

Upon completion of portable ladder operations on the second floor in the front of the building, Division 7 requested that Ladder 61 assist in the rear as necessary. Upon return from the rear, Ladder 61 was reassigned to assist on the upper floors and report to Battalion 20. With many 10-45s being removed from the building in the stairwell, Ladder 61 split up and went to the upper floors to check the 11th and 12th floors, while remaining members assisted with victim removal in the stairwell.

Ladder 36 responded on the third alarm. The inside team was sent to the sixth floor for searches, while the outside team was directed to check the stairs and floors above as the dispatcher relayed more reports of trapped occupants to the incident command post. Ladder 36 removed numerous victims;

some were in cardiac arrest, while others were ambulatory and only needed assistance moving through the smoke-filled halls and stairway. Ladder 36 assisted Ladder 59 in performing CPR on two of the victims while they removed the victims to the front of the building.

Ladder 44 responded on the third alarm and was dispatched to operate on the floor above the fire. The members worked together as a unit in zero visibility and heavy smoke conditions. Soon after arriving at their assigned location on the floor above, they found two occupants crawling in the hallway and removed them to the evacuation stairway. Ladder 44's LCC and OV firefighter assisted the two occupants down below the fire floor to the lobby, while the officer and the FE, can and roof firefighters worked in two teams to force apartment doors, perform searches, vent and remove multiple occupants.

Ladder 19 arrived as part of the third-alarm assignment and was assigned to relieve Ladder 56, the first-arriving ladder company. Ladder 19 operated in the lower level of the fire apartment, performing overhaul and completing the secondary search. Ladder 19 was then ordered to conduct secondary searches of all apartments on the fourth floor, all of which were negative.

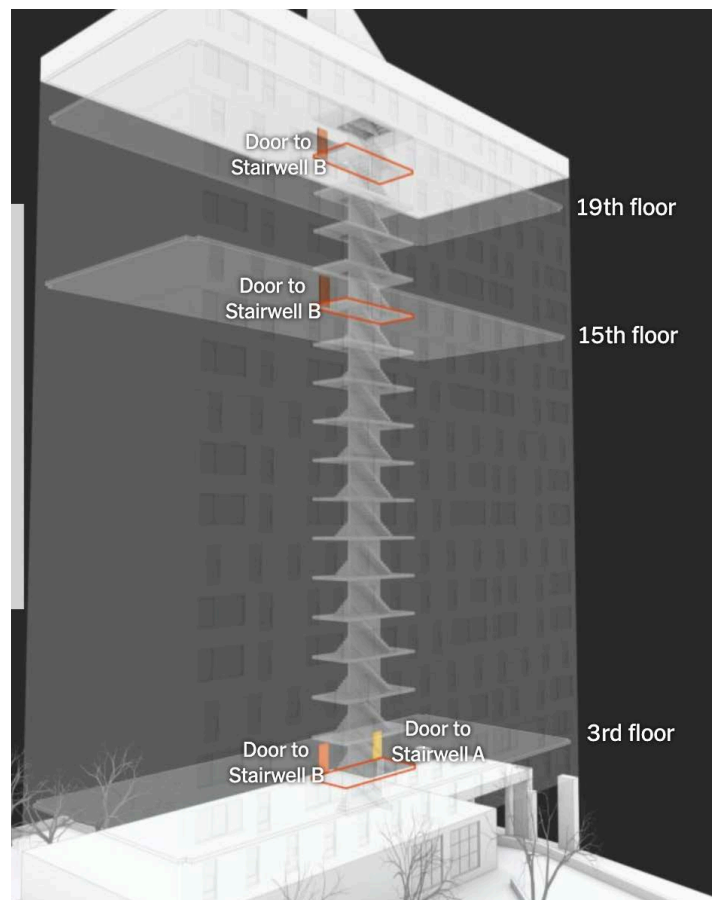
Ladder 48 acting Ladder 37 was assigned to the box immediately after entering Ladder 37's response area and was instructed to report to the command post. While approaching the command post, members noticed a woman attempting to drop a child from a second-floor window. Ladder 48 grabbed a portable ladder off a nearby rig and removed the occupants of apartment 2M, who were in a state of extreme panic.

After removing the occupants, Ladder 48 was assigned to conduct primary searches on the 15th and 16th floors. While making their way up to 15 via the "A" stairwell, members assisted in the removal of several victims. Once on the 15th floor, Ladder 48 worked with Battalion 17 to conduct primary searches. One victim was located in the public hallway and removed via the evacuation stairs. Several other victims were found in Apt. 15J.

All other occupants were instructed to shelter in place where possible. The LCC from Ladder 48, realizing a need for the elevator to help transport the large number of victims from the upper floors, made his way up to the 19th floor, forced open the stranded "B" car, placed it in service and staffed the elevator for the remainder of the operation. He went on to make multiple trips, transporting many victims from the upper floors to waiting members in the lobby. Previous to this, neither elevator had been operational.

Ladder 31 arrived as part of the fourth-alarm assignment and reported to the command post. Ladder 31 was immediately assigned to search the top four floors, 16–19. The members conducted primary searches on all four floors, including in hallways and stairs and inside each apartment. Many doors were forced, with heavy smoke conditions in some apartments. Three victims were found in one apartment (possibly 19V): a baby, a child and a woman, all three of whom were unconscious. The victims were immediately taken to the roof for fresh air. The woman was then brought to street level by Ladder 31's OV firefighter, and the baby and child were given to a firefighter on the roof—possibly an aide. Members then continued the search of the assigned floors until relieved.

Ladder 23 acting Ladder 33 arrived as part of the fourth alarm and reported to the command post. They were assigned to go to the roof based on reports of civilians sheltering there. They made their way to the roof via the evacuation stair and,



THIRD COMPARTMENTATION FAILURE

There's evidence that the stairwell doors on higher floors malfunctioned. A city official confirmed that the doors to Stairwell B on Floors 15 and 19 appeared to be open or partially open for a majority of the fire.

Graphics credit: Anjali Singhvi, James Glanz, Weiyi Cai, Evan Grothjan and Mika Gröndahl © 2022 The New York Times Company

upon arrival, found five victims with minor injuries and one victim in cardiac arrest. Members from Ladder 23 quickly removed the victim in cardiac arrest to the top floor, where a battalion notified members that an elevator was in service and available.

Once on the top floor with the victim in cardiac arrest, Ladder 23 firefighters placed the victim into the elevator with the Ladder 48 LCC and other firefighters tending to the victim. Ladder 23 then returned to the roof, where five victims remained. The victims were removed via the evacuation stair by the LCC and OV and, once in the lobby, transferred to EMS units.

The remaining members of Ladder 23, under the direction of Battalion 3, proceeded to assist in the searches of public halls and apartments on floors 4–19. Ladder 23 came across three victims with minor injuries on the fourth floor. The members carried one non-ambulatory victim the remaining flights and turned



Stairwell B (attack stairs) looking down from the eighth floor to the seventh floor. (Photo credit: Bureau of Fire Investigation)

over care to EMS in the front of the building.

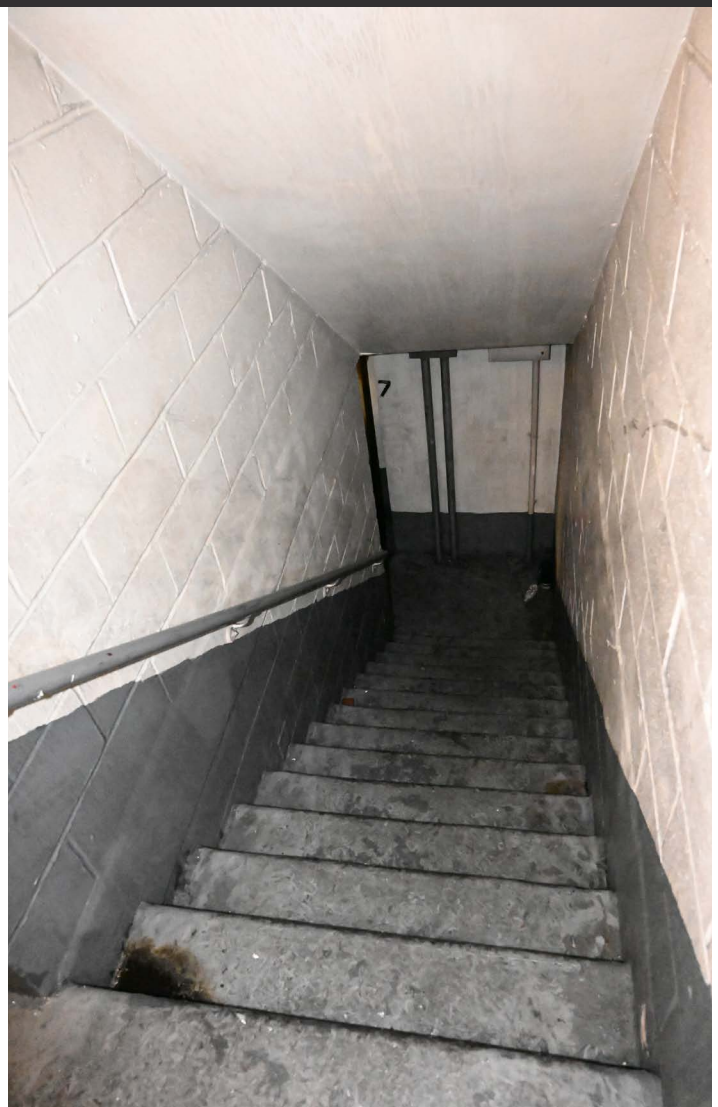
Ladder 45 arrived as an extra truck above the fourth alarm and was assigned to the upper floors to assist with search and removal. At the seventh floor, they were met by numerous units carrying victims down the attack stairway. Ladder 45 split up; half the company assisted the units carrying victims, and half continued up the stairs. They made contact with the SAE sector and were instructed to search all apartments on the upper floors and report their findings. Ladder 45 conducted the searches as requested and reported back to the SAE sector.

Ladder 58 operated on the 12th and 13th floors, searching multiple apartments. The company removed three unconscious 10-45s to the lobby and transferred the victims to EMS. They continued to assist with searches following the removals.

Ladder 32 arrived as an additional unit on the fourth alarm and was assigned to conduct secondary searches of apartments on floors 3–13, with negative results.

Ladder 41 arrived as part of the fifth alarm and assisted companies outside. Ladder 41 was then assigned to relieve Ladder 38 as the FAST unit, and it remained the FAST unit for the remainder of the operation.

Ladder 49 arrived as an additional truck on the fourth alarm. Ladder 49 reported to the command post and was ordered to



Stairwell A (evacuation stairs) looking down from the eighth floor to the seventh floor. Note the lack of soot stains in the evacuation stairwell as compared to the attack stairwell on the same floor, indicating more favorable conditions in the evacuation stairwell. (Photo credit: Bureau of Fire Investigation)

the 15th floor to assist with searches. Members operated under the SAE sector and performed secondary searches of all apartments on floors 19, 18, 16 and 15; both stairwells from floor 15 up; the roof; and the elevator room. All results were negative.

Ladder 115 arrived as part of the fifth alarm, conducted secondary searches on fire floor and assisted fire marshals in the fire apartment once the fire had been placed under control.

Ladder 55 was special-called after the fourth alarm and reported to the staging area staffed by Battalion 14. They were ordered to report to the command post. Ladder 55 was assigned to assist in victim removal on the 14th floor, but when they reached the 14th floor, all victims had already been removed. Ladder 55 was then reassigned to complete secondary searches on the 13th through 15th floors as well as the first through third floors. All secondary searches were negative. While conducting secondary searches, Ladder 55's OV was directed to assist with the operation of the elevators.

Ladder 51 responded as a Ventilation Support Unit and operated in the evacuation stairwell. Ladder 51 operated vent fans and teamed up with Engine 39 to sequentially vent, and also

assisted with the evacuation of civilians.

Ladder 130 reported to the staging area, where it was held in reserve and not put to work.

Ladder 116 responded from relocation to Ladder 59. Ladder 116 reported to the command post and stood fast until relieved.

Ladder 162 was special-called to the staging area and released. The unit did not operate.

Ladder 10 was on fire watch and stood fast to make sure there was no rekindle.

Ladder 30 responded as a watch line company from 1800 to approximately 2100 hours.

Special operations units: rescues, squads and Hazmat

Rescue 3 was directed to the fire floor and floor above by Division 7. Rescue 3 split into two teams: an inside team and a floor above team. Because of the severe smoke and heat, Rescue 3 also positioned the can firefighter in the public hall as a guide for egress and to assist other members.

The officer and FE firefighter worked together to search the hallway and assist other operating units in the hallways and third-floor apartments. Rescue 3 members discovered the open door of Apt. 3N, with fire venting from the open door into the hallway. With the fire controlled in Apt. 3J, the first hoseline was directed to continue to Apt. 3N.

Concurrently, Rescue 3's floor-above team encountered multiple victims in the "A" stairwell and removed them with the assistance of other units, including Squad 41. They then rejoined with the Rescue 3 inside team and continued operations on the fire floor.

With members of the first line (Engine 48) almost out of air and still advancing their line—several members now burned—members of Rescue 3 assisted in advancing the line and extinguishing fire while assisting the line into Apt. 3N, the apartment of fire origin.

Once the fire was knocked down, the Rescue 3 officer instructed firefighters to remove the wall in Apt. 3J to relieve the public hall of smoke by allowing smoke to vent through the already searched apartment. Throughout the fire operation, Rescue 3 helped fill several operational gaps caused by the overwhelming number of victims encountered by the first-arriving units. This included victim removals, hoseline advancement and guiding firefighters out of the IDLH environment who were exhausted, injured or out of air.

Squad 41 was ordered to conduct searches on the floor above. Upon entering the building and verifying that the "B" stair was the attack stair, Squad 41 started up the "A" stair. At the second floor, two civilians were coming down the stairs, at which time two members of Squad 41 assisted them to the lobby. Upon reaching the third floor, Squad 41 notified Rescue 3 that they were going above. At that point, all members had to don their facepieces, as the stairwell was filled with smoke and



An FDNY member after operating at the Twin Parks North West fire. (Photo credit: Lloyd Mitchell)

high heat. Division 7 called Squad 41 and notified them of a person hanging out a window four floors below the roof.

Squad 41 members headed up to reach the distressed civilian. Around the 12th floor, they found three unconscious victims in the stairwell and began removing them to the lobby. The victim being removed by the officer was handed off to another firefighter around the eighth floor. With the remainder of his firefighters assisting with the removal of victims, the officer of Squad 41 ascended to the roof level and ensured that both bulkhead doors were opened. Next, he proceeded down four flights of stairs to find the distressed civilian. The officer entered the 15th-floor hallway, banging on doors and telling everyone who answered to stay in their apartment, close the door and stay by the window. This continued until he was out of air. Meanwhile, the Squad 41 firefighters continued to assist in the removal of multiple victims. They soon rejoined with their officer and continued to assist until all victims were removed.

Hazmat 1 was assigned to the incident after an e-bike powered by lithium-ion batteries was discovered in the fire apartment near the main-entrance doorway. Lithium-ion batteries were not the cause of the fire but may have added to the fire load, intensifying the fire. Hazmat 1 searched the fire apartment for visible battery cells, collecting and overpacking them into a drum. During this process, Engine 79 stood by with the hose-line.

The drum was placed in front of the building to be collected by the Sanitation Department. Later, during the overhaul stage, more battery cells were located. Hazmat 1 was reassigned and returned to the scene and overpacked the additional cells in another drum.

Field Communications Unit 1 responded on the second alarm and reported to the command post upon arrival. Field Comm 1 monitored all Department and HT communications and

Tips from training - 333 E. 181 St.



Today, we pause and reflect on the tragic fire yesterday in the Bronx. We reflect on the value of our members and their dedication. We also reflect on their training—the foundational cornerstone which prepares and positions our members to perform under even the most demanding of conditions.

There were many heroic and amazing actions inside and outside the fire building by both fire and EMS members.

Outside our members were removing victims from the tip of a 35-foot ladder in the rear, they had perfectly positioned aerial ladders enabling multiple rescues in the front, all while many others were rendering patient care and performing CPR on an unimaginable number of children and adults.

Inside, our members overcame several obstacles while locating and extinguishing the fire and searching for occupants. Immediately, our members encountered multiple victims in need of removal. Simultaneously, we searched the numerous apartments with only one elevator for most of the time.

Dispute our Herculean effort, sometimes the results don't

match the intensity, dedication, training and absolute effort of our members. This day—at this fire—was one of those occasions.

We are the FDNY—we play to win. This winning mindset entails many small tactical nuances executed proficiently to position us to achieve the greatest possible outcome. This includes the following which were executed and evident with great skill in the Bronx:

- Exceptional apparatus positioning in front of the building.
- Proactive and timely request for additional resources.
- Proper use of our PPE.
- The FAST truck being ready to go to work with proper tools.
- Efficient, effective and proper use of portable ladders.
- Employing life-saving vent enter, isolate and search (VEIS) tactics even under extreme conditions.
- Units promptly reporting into the command post.
- Fire CFR units and EMS units working together to save lives. ■



An exemplar photo of an apartment door at Twin Parks that was stuck open in an unburned apartment. The black scuff marks on the floor indicate that the door was contacting the floor. This can occur if additional floor tiles are installed over the original flooring. (Photo credit: Bureau of Fire Investigation)

assisted the resource unit leader with accountability of members at the scene. Field Comm 1 also maintained the command board and transmitted progress reports, additional alarms and messages as requested. The unit was released from the scene when the fire was placed under control.

RAC 3 was assigned on transmission of the 10-77. The two RAC firefighters arrived within minutes and positioned their rig close to the command post but out of the way of responding units. Due to the extreme circumstances and the number of people showing at multiple windows, the firefighters made their way to the command post and asked Division 7 what assistance was needed. Division 7 tasked both members to assist with life-saving operations via aerial and portable ladders. They immediately began to assist with repositioning aerial ladders and positioning portable ladders. Upon positioning the ladders, both members began using them to rescue civilians who were leaning out windows and struggling to breathe. The two firefighters assisted in the rescue and removal of multiple victims, often moving from location to location to assist as needed. The firefighters of RAC 3 continued to assist until all civilians were



A spring-loaded hinge on the self-closing door to Apt. 3N. This door failed to close as occupants fled the fire apartment. (Photo credit: Bureau of Fire Investigation)

cleared from the windows.

Chief officers

Battalion 19 was the first-arriving battalion—and initial incident commander—for a report of smoke on the third floor of a 19-story, Class 1 residential building, one known by members to be confusing. While responding, Battalion 19 heard Engine 48 give a 10-77 for a fire in a high-rise residential building. While approaching the building on foot, Battalion 19 was confronted with smoke pouring from the front of the building and numerous people hanging out of their windows in obvious distress. As companies began initial duties, Battalion 19 communicated with occupants, convincing them not to jump and reassuring them that firefighters were going to get to them with ladders. Ladder 27's LCC was able to position his apparatus on the sidewalk with the rear closer to the building, perpendicular to the building, by maneuvering through the vehicles on the street and a CitiBike rack on the plaza in front of the building. This started to put some of the residents at ease. By this time, Division 7 had arrived on the scene and was exchanging information with Battalion 19, trying to determine the fire apartment and assigning companies to various locations. As the IC received reports of numerous people fleeing the building, additional alarms were transmitted. There was never a shortage of assignments for the incoming units. Battalion 26, the resource unit leader (RUL), arrived and set up the command board, allowing a better picture of where units were operating, who was available and where they could be assigned. Many orders were issued face to face, as radio traffic was extremely heavy. Deputy Assistant Chief Leeb arrived on scene and assumed overall command. He assigned Battalion 19 to relieve Battalion 27 as the fire sector supervisor, as Battalion 27 had sustained an injury. Battalion 19 operated on the fire floor until the fire was under control. At this time, Battalion 19 returned to the command post, conferred with Chiefs Leeb and Facinelli and began collecting information regarding victim totals, classifications and locations; the cause and origin of the fire (space heater in the lower-level bedroom of Apt. 3N); Hazmat operations for the lithium-ion battery removals; and general report preparation. A conference was called in the adjoining school, where all agencies on scene had representatives. Battalion 19 represented Fire Operations and remained on scene until the watch line was established.



Aerial photo of exposure 1 showing apparatus placement and street management. (Photo Credit: FDNY Command Tactical Unit drone)

Battalion 27 operated as the fire sector supervisor. Engine 48 and Engine 75 operated the first line and extinguished fire. Engine 88 and Engine 46 operated the 2nd line as a backup line due to large volume of fire in hallway and apartment. Ladder 56, Ladder 33 Ladder 37 and Rescue 3 all operated on the fire floor for searches and removal of victims. Battalion 27 was relieved by Battalion 19.

Battalion 18 was assigned by Battalion 19 to the fire floor to confirm the fire apartment. When Battalion 18 reached the fire floor, Battalion 27 confirmed that he was with the first-due companies at the fire apartment and confirmed the apartment. They were requesting a backup line to assist the first line. A member was positioned at the evacuation-stair doorway at that time to maintain control of the door on the fire floor.

Battalion 18 returned outside and ordered Engine 43 to stretch a hoseline to the rear of the building for a possible exterior hoseline operation. The order was completed with the as-

sistance of another engine company. Battalion 18 went to the rear of the fire building to confirm the line was in position. Other companies were placing portables and assisting civilians down the portables. After the line outside was in position, Battalion 18 went back to the fire floor to assist.

Battalion 17 responded as the safety officer and was assigned to operate above the fire as the search and evacuation (SAE) group supervisor. At the command post, the IC notified Battalion 17 that multiple distress calls were being received from the 15th floor. Battalion 17 managed the SAE group, removing fire victims from the floors above the third floor with an emphasis on the 15th.

As the Battalion 17 aide controlled the evacuation stair door on the fire floor, the Battalion 17 chief, along with Battalion 3, ascended the evacuation stair (stairwell A), where they encountered many victims who were either being rescued by fire officers and firefighters or lying unconscious in the stairway. This

delayed them from reaching the upper floors.

Upon reaching the 12th floor, the Battalion 17 chief found an unconscious woman and baby on the stairway landing and gave a 10-45 radio transmission. The baby had a weak pulse, so Battalion 17 carried the baby down the stairs and passed her to a firefighter from Squad 41. The Battalion 17 chief then continued to the 15th floor, where he encountered a blinding, heavy smoke condition in the 15th floor hallway and no fire units yet operating on that floor. He crawled down the hallway using a thermal imaging camera and found an unconscious woman with no pulse on the stairway landing of the attack stairs (stairwell B).

As he continued down the charged hallway, Battalion 17 also found an unconscious woman and child in the hallway between Apt. 15H and Apt. 15J. As Battalion 17 moved the child down the hallway, he was joined by his aide. Both assisted in removing the victim to the evacuation stairway, where Battalion 17 instructed his aide to remove the child from the building as he returned to rescue the second victim in the hallway. As he removed the adult victim, he was helped by a member of Ladder 48 whose unit had arrived to assist with search operations on the 15th floor.

The victim was brought to the evacuation stairway and passed off to the OV firefighter of Ladder 48, who removed the victim from the building. With the officer and remaining firefighters of Ladder 48 conducting the primary search on the 15th floor, Battalion 17 was then able to coordinate the search of additional apartments on various floors above the fire sector.

During the search of Apt. 15J, members of Ladder 48 found and removed multiple victims. After conducting operations as the SAE group supervisor, Battalion 17 was relieved by Battalion 45. Battalion 17 oversaw and assisted with multiple rescues and removals from the upper floors.

Battalion 26 was assigned as part of the second-alarm assignment and designated the resource unit leader. Battalion 26 operated at the command post as the RUL for the duration of the incident.

Battalion 3 was assigned as the top-floor sector by Division 7. Ladder 48, Ladder 31 and Ladder 23 worked under Battalion 3 to search and evacuate all apartments, starting at the 19th floor working their way down to the 15th.

Battalion 13 was ordered to respond as the victim tracking coordinator. Upon arrival, he conferred with DAC Leeb. Battalion 13 then linked up with an EMS deputy chief. Throughout the operation, Battalion 13 worked with the EMS deputy chief to track and report accurate patient counts.

Battalion 14 operated as the staging area manager. The staging area was established at East 182nd Street and Webster Avenue.

Battalion 45 was assigned on the fifth alarm and relieved battalion 17, who was operating as the search and evacuation chief. Ladder 43, Ladder 49, Engine 43 and Engine 95 operated under the command of Battalion 45, completing secondary

searches on floors 12–19. Units under Battalion 45's command also assisted occupants in leaving the building after searches were complete and the fire was under control.

Battalion 12 acting Battalion 17 supervised secondary searches on floors 11–19.

Battalion 38 relieved Battalion 18 as the fire sector operating on the fire floor. Engine 38, Engine 79, Ladder 55 and Ladder 115 operated under the command of Battalion 38, completing secondary searches on the second and third floors. Secondary searches were negative.

Battalion 20 responded on the third alarm and was assigned to supervise removal of victims and search all apartments on floors 6–12.

Battalion 15 arrived as part of the fourth-alarm assignment. Battalion 15 was assigned by the incident commander as the floor-above sector and supervised secondary searches on several floors above the fire floor (floors 4–10). Engine 45 and Ladder 32 were assigned to work with Battalion 15. All secondary searches on these floors were negative.

Safety Battalion 1 monitored radio transmissions while en route. Safety Battalion 1 checked in with the incident commander upon arrival and was assigned to monitor operations for safety concerns.

Rescue Battalion (RB1) reported to the command post and assisted with command and control of the operation before being assigned by DAC Leeb as the attack chief. On the fire floor, RB1 assisted in coordinating relief of companies in order to ensure sustained attack on the fire. Once visible fire was extinguished, RB1 returned to the command post.

Hazmat Battalion supervised Hazmat 1 and Engine 274 with the removal of lithium-ion batteries found at the top of the stair area of the fire apartment. Approximately 40 burned batteries were removed.

Battalion 6 stood fast with Engine 96 and Ladder 10 from 1500–1900 hours, performing watch line duties.

Battalion 11 responded on the fifth alarm and stood fast at the command post until relieved.

Battalion 4 assisted victims with obtaining EMS services.

Battalion 52 supervised watch line duty until relieved.

Division 7 arrived on scene and exchanged information with Battalion 19. After the exchange of operational information, Division 7 became the incident commander and Battalion 19 became the deputy incident commander.

Car 15A (Command Chief - DAC Leeb) responded from the Fire Academy on the transmission of the second alarm and arrived shortly after the transmission of the second alarm. ■

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About the author

Deputy Assistant Chief Frank Leeb has served in the FDNY since 1992. He is the acting chief of training, responsible for the training of the FDNY's 17,000 employees. He holds a bachelor's degree in fire service administration from SUNY Empire State and a master's degree in security studies from the Naval Postgraduate School, Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS). He has served as an advisory panel member for UL Firefighter Safety Research Institute's (FSRI) "Study of Coordinated Attack in Acquired Structures" and is a principal on the NFPA Technical Committees 420, 1585 and 1710.