

REPORT OF UNIT CITATION

HM#1

Unit

2/19/91

Date

6. DESCRIPTION OF UNIT OPERATION:

See attached sheets and diagram.

MEMBERS RESPONDING

RANK	NAME	UNIT	ASSIGNED TO
COB.	John Patis	HM#1	
PR.	Kevin Smith	HM#1	
PR.	Jeffrey Sotomayor	HM#1	
PR.	Richard Gindoff	HM#1	
PR.	Larry Gagliardi	HM#1	
PR.	Thomas Kavan	HM#1	
PR.	Gunnis Seaman	HM#1 (ORO)	
PR.	Charles Kozov	HM#1 (ORO)	

ARE ANY OF THESE MEMBERS BEING RECOMMENDED INDIVIDUALLY FOR MERITORIOUS ACT IN CONNECTION WITH THIS FIRE? (If yes - list names) NO

LOCATION OF UNIT OPERATIONS:

a) If in building: Address 33 Ave W. Rochester

Height 3 Area 30X30 Construction WBP

Occupancy MD Number of apartments in building 4

Floor(s) 2nd Room Apt 1 Railway Yes

b) If not in building: Give complete descriptive information so that physical setting can be located.

PERSON(S) AIDED:

7. RECOMMENDATION:

	NAME	PERSON(S) AIDED
	ADDRESS	
	AGE - SEX	
	RESCUE BREATHING	
	EXTERNAL CARDIAC MASSAGE	
Deputy Chief	Division	Date
		HOSPITALIZED
		NAME OF HOSPITAL
		DIAGNOSIS
		LENGTH OF HOSPITALIZATION

On Saturday January 31, 1991 at 0309 hours Hazardous Materials Company 1 was special called to Manhattan Box 0435 by Battalion 4 (Chief Rittmeyer) to investigate a strong odor in a multiple dwelling at 93 Avenue B . Upon our arrival the HAZ-MAT OFFICER (Capt. John Fatta) and the ENTRY TEAM of Firefighters (Jeff Borkowski E-1 and Kevin Smith E-2) reported into the command post. At the command post the battalion was conferring with the First Division (Chief Corcoran) which had arrived earlier. Chief Corcoran conducted the briefing and advised us that the building was evacuated and that in addition to the civilians, Firefighters had been driven out of the building by the odors. Chief Rittmeyer was able to isolate the area, evacuate, and place the civilians in an area to protect them from the possible hazards which would later prove to be a excellent tactical move. Based on the information gathered from the Battalion and the Division, it was decided to question the residents who provided further information. Level B Chemical Protective Clothing seemed like the best option; given the information gathered. Capt. Fatta and the ENTRY TEAM donned Level B Chemical Protective Clothing with the assistance of the DECON TEAM (Firefighters Dennis Scausco Engine 319 D-1 and Kotov Engine 319 D-2) and entered the building to begin the primary Haz mat search for the odor.

While the search was planned and concentrated on the second floor with the ENTRY TEAM, other members did not remain idle. The BACK UP TEAM (Firefighters Richard Gimbl B-1 and Thomas Nouza B-2) staged on the second floor landing with additional equipment to support the Entry Operation and rescue if necessary. The DECON TEAM conducted a search of the perimeter area while waiting to do their primary mission of decon; this saved a tremendous amount of time, considering it would have taken several hours had the ENTRY TEAM been required to conduct the search alone. The RESOURCE MAN (Firefighter Larry Singletary) was busy calibrating additional monitoring devices and making telephone notifications to the appropriate agencies.

The conditions on the second floor were less than favorable for detection equipment. A film processing lab was located in the front apt. and access was accomplished through a door located between the two apts (see accompanying diagram / top view). The ENTRY TEAM began a systematic survey of the containers to determine condition, and to see if the product was being released. Decomposing rodents were found in traps in the apt; and were ruled out as the source of the odor; (their decaying odor was inconsistent with the type of odor that was being reported). Housekeeping in the apt was poor which hindered the detection of the odor and search

for a possible source. Sophisticated metering devices calibrated for the types of odors likely to be found in apts included the gx-4000 which monitored for flammable and explosive atmospheres, oxygen deficient atmospheres, asphixants such as carbon monoxide as well as sewer gases / hydrogen sulfide was used by Entry - 1. A photoization detector was brought in to search for any organic vapors in concentrations as small as 1 part per million (.000001%) by Entry - 2. All site analysis proved negative. Based on the information gathered to this point and as a result of the negative readings Capt Fatta ordered the ENTRY TEAM and the BACK UP TEAM to vent the 2nd floor. All members of HAZ-MAT were ordered to report to the command post from their assigned positions for a de-briefing. Capt. Fatta Briefed the 4th Battalion and the 1st Division; it was decided to wait several minutes to give the air a chance to circulate; at which time Chief Rittmeyer and Capt. Fatta would check to see if the product had in fact dissipated.

Entering the building Chief Rittmeyer and Capt Fatta proceeded to the second floor when they were met with a stifling odor; they withdrew immediately. While it may seem unprofessional, there are times when a calculated risk has to be taken in order to determine our goal of making the area safe for civilians to re-enter the building. It is physically as well as economically impossible to carry every metering device available to monitor for every unknown situation. We sometimes take this calculated risk after using all available monitoring instruments with negative readings; venting the suspect area; and waiting a reasonable amount of time and exhausting every possible effort to find the source. Capt. Fatta realized it was no ordinary gas and it was going to be extremely difficult to find the source because no survey instruments previously used gave any indication of a presence of hazardous materials; The odor of the product was so offensive it would have been impossible to operate even for a short time without a mask. After Chief Rittmeyer and Capt Fatta investigated the second floor; the members of Haz-Mat questioned the residents to try and gain additional information. It was based on this information that a thorough visual search was organized by the members of Haz-Mat to concentrate their efforts near the second landing area. Firefighter Jeff Borkowski was checking the second floor rear bathroom area when he noticed a small access panel that had been covered with debris. This panel when opened gave access to the area underneath the stairs. It appeared to be a storage area for memorabilia much of it dating back some 60 years. While moving through the material he came upon a small cylinder which he attempted to retrieve; but because of the bulkiness of the Level B protective clothing he was unable to reach the cylinder. He called for assistance Firefighter Richard Gimbl came to his aid and was able to retrieve the cylinder. The cylinder was removed to the street for identification.

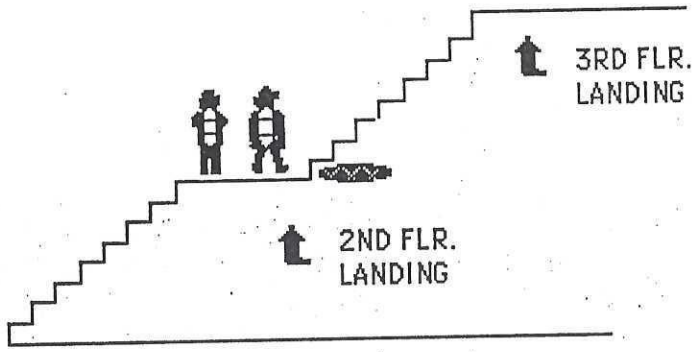
All Haz-Mat members examined the cylinder and began to use different resources to identify the cylinder's contents. Since the cylinder had no relief devices it was assumed that the product was extremely toxic. Based on the size and dimensions, it was assumed to be lab demonstration or a research bottle. It also was in poor condition and obviously leaking. We had a partial name so colorimetric drager gas detection tubes with the same letters were pulled in the hope it could be identified. The cylinder tested positive for phosgene gas in the 75 parts per million range (.000075 %). At that point Firefighters Kevin Smith and Thomas Nouza had already assembled all the equipment necessary to identify the leak and take corrective action. While the leak sealing was being accomplished Firefighters Larry Singletary and Kotov E 319 assembled a containment vessel for the cylinder. Firefighter Scauso assembled the necessary toxicological data and gave it to EMS for the treatment of the residents.

Phosgene is a poison A gas that is extremely toxic and was used extensively as a chemical weapon in World War 1. It's used in resins and pesticides. The odor and irritation are not sufficient warning properties. Once the product comes in contact with the lungs in very small amounts, it mixes with the moisture in your lungs to create hydrochloric acid. This condition could be fatal. The permissible exposure limit (PEL) for this product is 1 part per million. Members at the scene were exposed to numbers exceeding the PEL by a significant amount. This resulted in the members being placed on medical leave for the remainder of the tour by the medical officer.

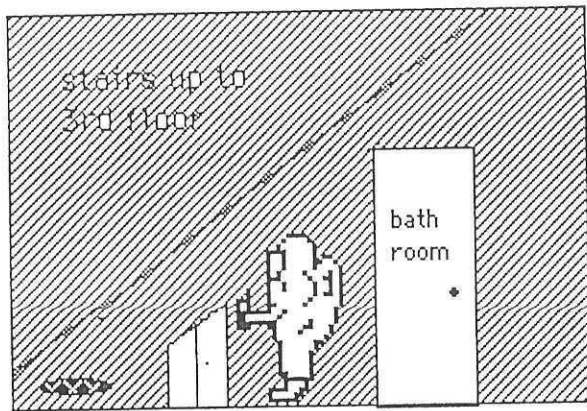
The Members of Haz-Mat operated in a very professional manner. Through their determination, dedication, training and teamwork the incident was brought to a safe and successful conclusion. Without their training, skill and perserverance this incident could have had disasterious results for both civilians as well as FDNY members. Even after this cylinder was found Capt. Fatta and his members had to act above and beyond because of the nature of this gas and the threat it posed on the residents and the community. For their skill and determination I request they be considered for a unit citation.

Respectfully submitted

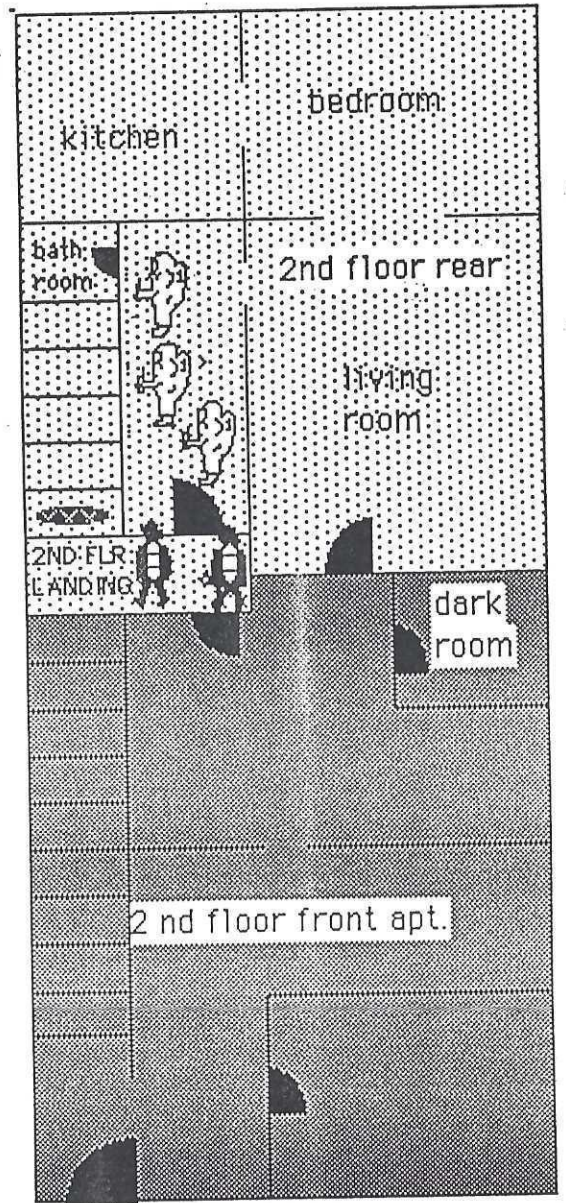
CAPTAIN HAZ-MAT 1 GROUP 14



SIDE VIEW



FRONT VIEW



TOP VIEW





FIRE DEPARTMENT • CITY OF NEW YORK
 Supplement to Department Order No. 76 ☆ Issue No. 62



June 25, 1991

2.1.1

BOARD OF MERIT

The following information records the action of the Board of Merit at a meeting held June 10, 1991:

APPROVED

Date of Act 1991 MERIT RATING CLASS III

Feb. 3 FF. Brian J. Fink, L. 33
 25 FF. Daniel R. Forland, L. 124
 25 FF. William R. Croak, L. 124
 Apr. 5 FF. Gareth S. Nielsen, L. 157

Date of Act 1990 SERVICE RATING "A"

Dec. 27 FF. Terence J. Tobin, L. 26

Date of Act 1991

Jan. 2 FF. John G. McCann, L. 26
 Feb. 3 FF. Gerard P. Schrang, L. 33
 8 FF. Michael G. Omerza, L. 102
 8 FF. Richard P. Radziewicz, L. 102
 8 FF. Gregory L. Picconi, L. 132
 11 Lt. Jeffrey W. Lever, E. 58
 11 FF. John G. McCann, L. 26
 14 FF. John Hussey, L. 159
 18 FF. Terence J. Tobin, L. 26
 Mar. 2 Lt. Stephen J. Geraghty, E. 41
 19 Lt. James W. Fitzgerald, L. 79
 Apr. 12 FF. Brian F. Bender, L. 107
 12 FF. Michael E. Marisico, E. 62
 May 7 FF. Gregory A. Haynes, L. 123
 9 FF. Michael P. Dougherty, E. 75

Date of Act 1991 SERVICE RATING "B"

Jan. 1 FF. Anthony J. Accardo, L. 105
 Feb. 11 FF. Neil B. Vaillancourt, L. 169

Date of Act 1991 SERVICE RATING "B"

Feb. 9 FF. Michael Donovan, L. 43
 28 FF. Steven R. Jaeger, E. 277
 Mar. 2 FF. Harry J. Wehr, E. 23
 10 FF. Kevin R. Calhoun, L. 112
 11 FF. James E. McMahon, L. 32
 13 FF. Steven Calzolano, L. 102
 22 FF. Thomas V. Bruno, L. 85
 23 FF. William E. Woodlon, E. 39
 31 Lt. Lawrence J. Elliott, L. 37
 Apr. 4 FF. Phillip R. Bryant, E. 73
 15 Capt. James Briody, D. 3
 23 FF. Kevin J. McGeary, L. 31
 23 FF. Daniel J. Reeber, L. 31
 30 FF. Michael J. Devlin, E. 212

Date of Act 1991 MERITORIOUS ACTS CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

Feb. 2 FF. John B. Borice, L. 155
 17 FF. Mark S. Stehl, E. 209
 23 FF. John M. Jacobs, D.O. #14
 Mar. 15 Lt. Charles R. Knowles, E. 1

Date of Act 1991 FILED

Mar. 11 FF. Larry R. Nelson, R. 5

Date of Act 1991 VOLUNTARY DUTY CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

Jan. 18 FF. David J. O'Donnell, E. 271
 Apr. 14 FF. Roger W. Sakowich, E. 44
 14 FF. John J. Nikeo, L. 150

2.1.2

BOARD OF MERIT

The following information records the action of the Board of Merit at a meeting held June 10, 1991:

UNIT CITATIONS

LADDER CO. 37—January 9, 1991
 Box 22-3526, 1717 hours
 3004 Perry Avenue, Bronx
 Lt. Robert Witteck B. 18
 FF. Frank J. Bazzicalupo
 FF. John F. Ginley
 FF. Robert Cleary
 FF. Kevin D. Finneran
 FF. Richard B. Van Hine

LADDER CO. 28—January 13, 1991
 Box 22-1644, 1149 hours
 248 W. 149th Street, Manhattan
 Capt. Robert Morris, D. 5
 FF. Robert Dillon
 FF. Archie G. Booker
 FF. John A. Reich, Jr.
 FF. John K. Duddy
 FF. James P. Cash

HAZ/MAT 1—January 31, 1991
 Box 0435, 0309 hours
 93 Avenue B, Manhattan
 -Capt. John Fatta
 -FF. Kevin J. Smith
 -FF. Jeffrey B. Borkowski
 -FF. Richard J. Gimbl
 -FF. Larry Singletary
 -FF. Thomas Nouza
 FF. Dennis Scause, E. 319
 FF. Charles Kotov, E. 319

ENGINE CO. 235—February 8, 1991
 Box 75-968, 1218 hours
 12 Downing Street, Brooklyn
 Lt. Robert F. Sweeney
 FF. Kevin E. MacBride
 FF. Kevin J. Steininger
 FF. Philip J. Scarfi
 FF. Robert W. Doyle
 FF. Anthony J. DeRubbio

LADDER CO. 122—February 16, 1991
 Box 22-1269, 2320 hours
 351-7 9th Street, Brooklyn
 Lt. John Concannon
 FF. Decoursey Welch
 FF. Robert Wakie
 FF. James Sweeney
 FF. Joseph Mascali
 FF. Michael Martorana

LADDER CO. 77—February 22, 1991
 Box 450, 1830 hours
 76 Parkhill Court, Staten Island
 Lt. Thomas J. Gallahue
 FF. Edgar B. Wooley
 FF. Gerard J. Burgo
 FF. Steven Pantozzi
 FF. Robert S. Tobias, E. 153
 FF. Kenneth Hansen

