

Another chapter in the history of Squad companies began on July 1st, 1998, when Department Order 68 established Engines 18, 61, 252, 270 and 288 as Squad Companies.

D.O. No. 68, June 29, 1998, 2.1

Establishment of Squads 18, 61, 252, 270 and 288:

Effective July 1, 1998, Engines 18, 61, 252, 270 and 288 are designated as Squad Companies. They

are assigned to the Special Operations Command. All administrative paperwork will be forwarded to the Special Operations Command, with the exception of required Fire Prevention reports that will continue to be forwarded through the previously assigned battalions. The Squads are equipped with ladder company tools and are trained and equipped to operate either as a ladder company or engine company. They will continue to respond to their assigned first-alarm boxes. In addition, they will respond to 10-75s and multiple alarms as per alarm assignments from the Bureau of Communications. These units will operate utilizing the team concept mode, paragraph 1 of AUC 275, Addendum 1, dated November 15, 1997; identifying company terminology will be used for Squad team positions.

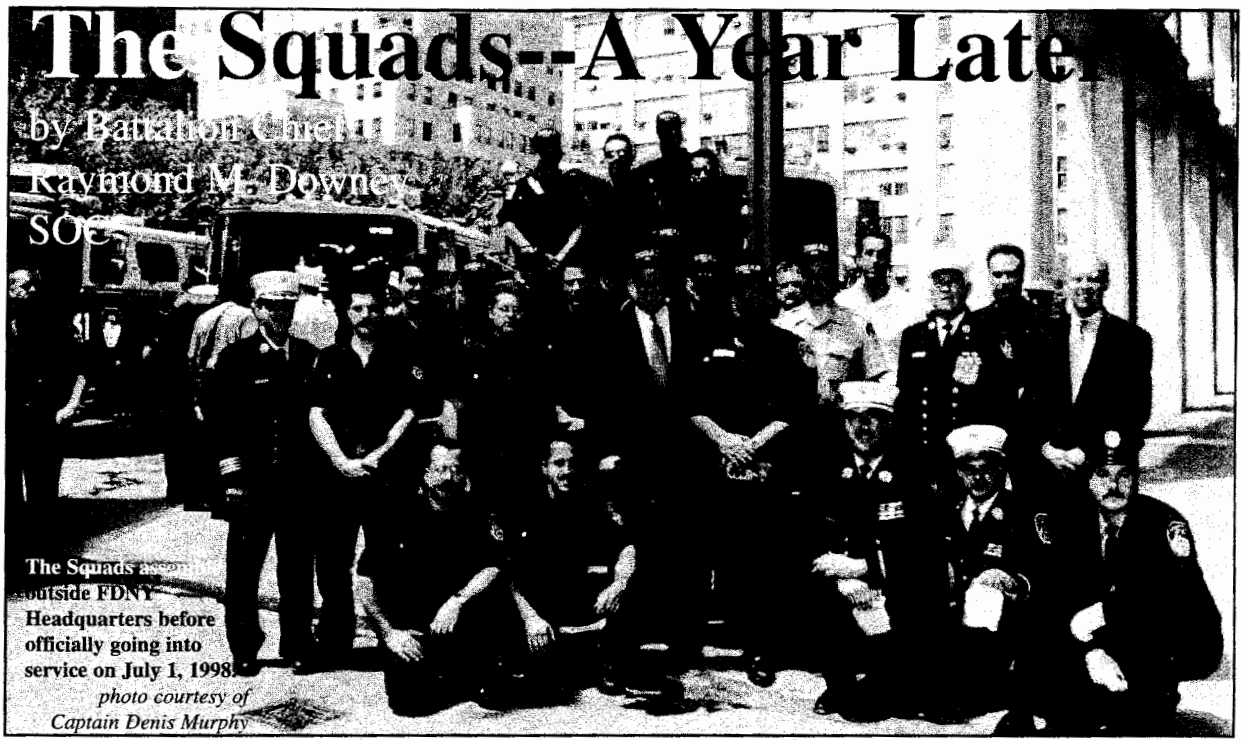
Effective August 1, 1998, they also will be Haz-Mat Technician Units, equipped with a second apparatus and equipment for responses to haz-mat incidents. Additional information will be published on a future Department Order.

Chief Officers shall be cognizant of the versatility and enhanced capability of these units. They shall utilize them whenever operationally indicated, not only as engine companies, but also for any other functions for which they are trained and equipped. The Commissioner's message in the April 1998 issue of *FireWorks* highlights many of the reasons why these new Squads will be so important to our Department:

- Responding to incidents of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.
- Finding ways of improving our response to "routine" hazardous materials incidents.
- Upgrading our training and equipment to meet new guidelines and regulations required by OSHA and NFPA.
- Assuring that we are doing everything possible to fulfill our mission and improve safety for all of our members.
- If and when NYC ever is subjected to a chemical or biological terrorist attack, FDNY would be the agency responsible for rescue, mitigation of the hazardous materials and decontamination of those affected.
- To do this job, we need properly trained and equipped, strategi-

The Squads--A Year Later

by Battalion Chief
Raymond M. Downey



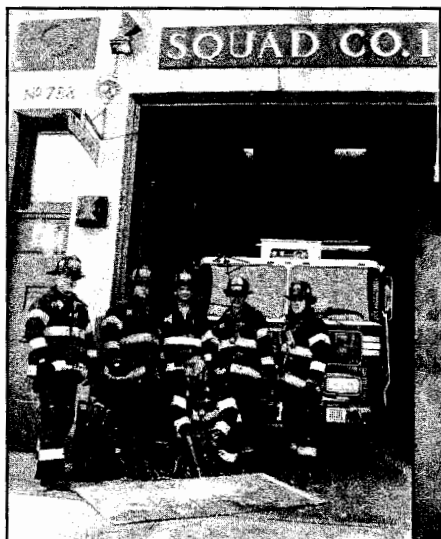
The Squads assembled outside FDNY Headquarters before officially going into service on July 1, 1998. photo courtesy of Captain Denis Murphy

cally located units, capable of reaching the scene quickly and initiating whatever actions are necessary to save lives and assist both civilians and other emergency responders.

- Quick response by highly trained personnel is the key to successful operations.

In the 1st/99 issue of *WNYF*, Battalion Chief John A. Calderone's article on "Special Apparatus--The Squads," provides a history of the Squads during WW I, WW II and the '50s, '60s and '70s. In December 1977, when Squad 1 was reorganized, the concept of Squad operations during the '50s through the '70s was expanded. For a short period, Squad 1 relocated to Brownsville and East New York every tour from 1800 to 2400 hours to relieve the workload of a few engine companies in these areas. Upon

return to their own quarters, they resumed response to first-, second- and third-due boxes and 10-75s in selected battalions. Manning a fully equipped pumper, they also



(Above) Squad Co. 1 members in front of quarters, with FF operating arc air torch. (Right) Squad 1 operates at Box 22-1320, 1320 Third Street, Brooklyn, on February 26, 1999. photos by FF Mike McGevna



had the tools/equipment to operate as a ladder company and were used in both capacities at working fires.

The Squads of the '90s have taken that a step further and, in addition to having a fully equipped pumper and ladder company tools/equipment, they are trained as Hazardous Materials Technicians. Each Squad is equipped with a second apparatus to carry the haz-mat equipment.

The beginning

The announcement on Department Order 34, March 31, 1998, noted that the Department was in the process of designating and training six additional engine companies located throughout the city as Squad companies. "These companies will respond to 10-75s, hazardous materials incidents, decontamination operations and other emergencies requiring specialized equipment and manpower. The training process involves more than 300 hours of haz-mat and rescue training."

Interested members were invited to the orientation and familiarization sessions held at the Bureau of Training. This afforded interested members the opportunity to get an idea of the tools/equipment, training requirements and types of work to which they would be subjected as a member of a Squad company. Upon completion of these sessions, the company officers and firefighters were selected.



On July 1, 1998, Engines 18, 61, 252, 270 and 288 became Squads 18, 61, 252, 270 and 288. Training continues on a regular basis and the specialized training is not expected to be completed until early 2000. Members of



(Top) Squad 18 members demonstrate use of air-driven chisel, powered by the Air Source Cart.

photo by FF Peter Connolly



(Middle) Squad 41 members display their variety of tools.

photo by FF Peter Connolly

(Bottom) Squad 61 members practicing operating with the arc air torch.

photo by FF John Strandberg

(Right) Squad 252 members and friend. (Below) Members practice with the new Hurst Tool.

photos by FF Peter Connolly



these units have completed the Hazardous Materials Technician's course and have been assigned a second apparatus to serve as a haz-mat tender. They are known as

Hazardous Materials Technician Units. Some of the functions of the HMTUs include:

- Augment and support Haz-Mat Co. 1.
- Provide response coverage to haz-mat incidents when HMC-1 is not available.
- Respond with other units in the Haz-Mat Response Group to large-scale haz-mat incidents and provide for mitigation and mass decontamination. (See The FDNY Hazardous Materials Response Group chart on page 6, WNYF, 1st/99.)
- Reduce response time by technician-level response units city-wide.

Teamwork is an essential ingredient in the make-up of Squad companies. Members of these units come from engine and ladder companies. Training centers around developing well-rounded Squad companies, capable of operating as either engine or ladder companies, depending upon the circumstances.

Starting with all the basic operations of both engine and ladder companies, training sessions were held at the Bureau of Training on a daily basis. The training was directed at familiarizing members with all the tools/equipment to be assigned to each Squad. Sessions involving truck company operations afforded all members (especially those coming from engine companies) the opportunity to raise ladders, climb aerials, perform forcible entry, use the Hurst Tool and practice roof and saw operations, as well as search, victim removal, lifesaving rope operations, etc.

Conversely, engine company operations gave members (especially truckies) the opportunity to practice stretching hand-lines, operating 2 1/2-inch lines and performing large-caliber stream and standpipe operations.

Squad 270 members performing air bag drill.

The mask

photo by FF John Leavy



HERO OF THE MONTH

In March, the *Daily News* recognized FF Gregory Haynes of Squad Company 270 as the "Hero of the Month." FF Haynes, an 18-year veteran of the Department, formerly of Ladder Co. 123, rescued seven-year-old Nyema Davis from her fully engulfed house in the borough of Queens.

When Squad 270 arrived at the scene of this fire, the Incident Commander informed the officer of the report of a missing child and ordered the Squad to perform a search of the entire building. The fire had started in the basement and quickly spread up to the first and second floors. Squad 270 members first attempted to enter the second floor from the porch, but were stopped when fire blew out the windows. They then went to the first floor, where they were able to access the rear door and begin a search. An engine company was advancing from the front of the building. Fire and heavy heat and smoke conditions were spreading throughout the first floor.

During the search, conditions became unbearable and FF Haynes began to retrace his steps. As he was making his way to the rear, he continued his search. Crawling on hands and knees, he found the small foot of the child. He quickly removed her from the bedroom and retreated out the rear door. Turning her over to another firefighter, he attempted to re-enter the building to search for other victims, but was stopped by fire that had engulfed the entire apartment. Because of FF Haynes' heroism, a little seven-year-old girl is alive today.

A super job by a super firefighter and a credit to the entire FDNY--especially Squad Company 270.

confidence course, confined space familiarization and building collapse rubble pile orientation also were important training sessions for the Squad members, who eventually will be exposed more often to these kinds of incidents.

This type of team training in the various functions is important since the Squads will be operating at working fires and be expected to perform a variety of duties. Specialized training includes the 45-hour Hazardous Material Technician's Course, 80 hours of Rescue/Squad technician orientation, 40 hours of confined space training, 40 hours of collapse operations, 40 hours of heavy lifting and rigging and 40 hours of high-angle rescue. (This training should be completed by early 2000).

Additionally, as the inventory of specialized equipment increases, so does the training. The ultimate goal is to qualify each member of the Squads as a Rescue Technician. Currently, members of Squad 1 and 41 are qualified Rescue Technicians, as are all members of the Rescue Companies.

All of the Squads' first pieces have been modified with the addition of diamond-plated compartments to store additional equipment. In addition to all the standard engine and ladder company tools,

Members of Squad 288 practice technique with air bags (top). Apparatus in front of quarters in Queens.

photos by Captain Denis Murphy



Squads are equipped with a Hurst Tool, air bags, Partner and chain saws, Sawzall, whizzer saw, paratech air gun, cutting and exothermic torches and gas-operated pavement breakers.

In the future, thermal imaging cameras will be purchased for each Squad. Only Squad Co. 1 has a thermal imaging camera at this time. (All the Rescue Companies and Haz-Mat Company 1 already have them.)

Squads 1 and 41 have custom-built apparatus called rescue pumpers. All the other Squads have standard pumpers, with Squads 18 and 61 awaiting delivery of new pumpers. (See WNYF 1st/99, "Special Apparatus--The Squads.")

The Squads are located strategically throughout the city. Squad 18 covers the Battery to the upper East and West sides. Squad 41 covers North Manhattan and the South Bronx, while Squad 61 covers the North Bronx. Squads 270 and 288 split the borough of Queens, with a similar setup for Squads 1 and 252 in Brooklyn. In Staten Island, Rescue 5 has the additional duties as a Hazardous Materials Technician Unit.

Note: From Department Order 102, dated July 23, 1990:

Engine Company 41 was re-established on July 1, 1990, as an "enhanced" engine company. This is a new concept, which we believe will maximize the effectiveness of this unit. In addition to the hose and fittings normally carried on engine companies, Engine Company 41 is equipped with ladder company tools, a Hurst Tool, air bags, cutting torch, pneumatic hammer/chisel, Partner saw, resuscitator and first-aid kit. All assigned members have been trained and are qualified in the operation of this equipment. Engine Company 41 responds as an engine company to its assigned first-alarm boxes. In addition, it responds on 10-75s and multiple alarms in selected Battalions in the Bronx and Manhattan. Chief Officers shall be cognizant of the special equipment and the enhanced capability of this unit. They shall utilize it whenever operationally indicated, not only as an engine company, but for any other functions for which its members are trained and equipped.

On July 2, 1998, Engine/Squad 41 officially was designated Squad 41.

The Squads of the '90s have more expanded functions and duties than their predecessors. They respond:

- first-, second- and third-due as an engine company.
- as certified first responder, CFR-D engine company.
- on all 10-75s and greater alarms, per Dispatchers Directive 98-07.
- to haz-mat operations in their response area and as part of the Haz-Mat Response Group.
- to 10-60 signals.
- to confined space incidents.
- on special calls, to augment other SOC units.

The Squads, with their intense formal and specialized training, additional equipment (both specialized and haz-mat) and versatile capabilities, have added another dimension to the FDNY. These enhanced resources are a welcomed asset for the Incident Commander.

About the Author...

Battalion Chief Raymond M. Downey is a 37-year veteran with the FDNY and heads up the Special Operations Command. He is a Contributing Editor for Fire Engineering, the author of *The Rescue Company*, a regular contributor to WNYF and a frequently requested speaker and instructor throughout the country. He holds an AAS degree in Fire Science.

