

Durham Adds Auxiliary Trucks - Fire Engineering, 1942

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Found for sale on eBay is an excerpt from *Fire Engineering*, about a pair of "auxiliary trucks" (my words) added in Durham during the war years. These were a pair of one-ton trucks that were placed in service to handle "small fires in residential areas." Such as car fires, chimney fires, and grass fires. Run cards were updated for "straight fire alarms." Instead of two "big pumpers" and a ladder truck, they'd dispatch one pumper, one ladder truck, and one "small truck."

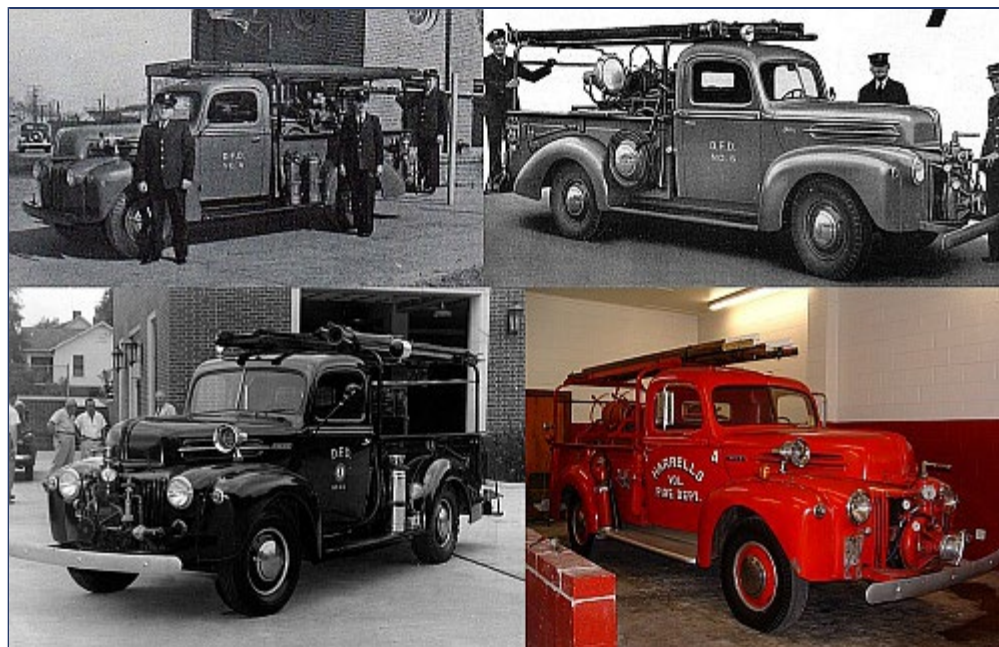
The change was made after they analyzed their runs for 1941. They found that "ninety-eight percent of fires in Durham could've been handled adequately with the ladder truck, one small truck, and ten men." Sound familiar, anyone? Such as the midi-pumper concept of a few decades later? (The war also likely inspired the program. Material restrictions prevented many fire departments from adding or replacing apparatus. This placed a premium on existing trucks. Using "auxiliary trucks" such as this, departments saved wear and tear on the larger and often older rigs.)

Here's what they carried:

- 900 feet of 2 1/2-inch hose
- two 2 1/2-inch controlling nozzles
- one set of reverse couplings
- one hydrant wrench
- three hose spanners
- three hose straps
- one crowbar
- two hand lanterns
- one hose clamp
- one tarpaulin
- two axes
- two soda and acid extinguishers
- one 24-foot extension ladder
- one 12-foot roof ladder
- two brooms
- one 65-foot hand line
- one light plant including generator, 200 foot cord, floodlight with 500 watt bulb
- one hand operated spotlight
- one pike pole
- 120-gallon booster tank equipped with 250 feet of 3/4-inch hose with the following type nozzles:
 - one 1/4- inch straight tip, one garden hose tip, one spray nozzle
- one 20-foot length of 3/4-inch suction hose with strainer.

The Durham Fire Department might've been the first in the state to implement this concept. Greensboro, Raleigh, and Wilmington also operated "squad trucks." Read [prior blog posting](#). See also [another posting](#) with a vintage ad about the Durham truck.

As for Durham's trucks, one was sold to Garner in 1952 as their first fire truck. Then the thing was sold to Harrells Fire Department in Sampson County. Here are [pictures of mine](#) from 2004, of the truck at the Harrells fire station. (What sort of modifications might've been made to the truck, while it served in Garner and/or Harrells? Don't know.) Click to enlarge:



Now, notice the top two photos. Upper left is 1942, upper right is 1945. Same truck, but with front pump added? Or two different trucks? To be determined!

Meanwhile, enjoy the full article. Click once or twice to enlarge:

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FIRE ENGINEERING

Correspondence

Defense Activities of Durham

To the Editor:

The Durham, N. C., Fire Department has added two custom trucks, fully equipped to handle small fires in residential areas, such as chimney fires, glass fires, automobile fires, etc.

The oil lanterns are the ones formerly used on the last horse-drawn steamer in Durham.

I have noticed from a number of publications that advice is being given to bring garden hose into play, especially during the emergency. We are recommending this in residential areas and buildings. In Durham, in residential property especially, they do not have threaded spigots for this use. I have conceived a little idea for an adapter for the four most commonly used

It is fine to tell folks what to do, but most things we tell them to do cost money. Therefore, they do not care to spend the money. That is why this is working out so well here.

This adapter has been demonstrated a number of times at the University of North Carolina to representatives from cities and towns throughout the State, and has met with much favorable comment. In addition to this, numerous demonstrations have been made to citizens of Durham. Approximately five thousand people have seen this appliance.

Very truly yours,
FRANK W. HENNEY, Chief
Durham, N. C.

One-Ton Truck Used to Handle Small Fires

In order to meet this emergency the fire department running card has been changed. For example, when responding to straight alarm fires under our set-up prior to the emergency we answered with two big pumper and a ladder truck. As the running card now operates, one pumper, one of the smaller one-ton trucks and the ladder truck answer. Not only has this given us larger pumps in reserve, but it has reduced our dollar and cents running \$11,000.00.

Fire department records for 1941 show that ninety-eight per cent of fires in Durham could have been handled adequately with the ladder truck, one small truck and ten men.

These small trucks are equipped with 500 feet of 2½-inch hose, two 2½-inch controlling nozzles, one set of reverse couplings, one hydrant wrench, three hose spanners, three hose straps, one crowbar, two hand lanterns, one hose clamp, one tarpaulin, two axes, two wads and acid extinguishers, one 24-foot extension ladder, one 12-foot roof ladder, two brooms, one 45-foot hand line, one light plant including generator, 200 foot cord, floodlight with 500 watt bulb; one hand operated spotlight and a fire pole. In addition it carries a 120-gallon booster tank equipped with 250 feet of ½-inch hose with the following type nozzles: one ½-inch straight tip, one garden hose tip, one spray nozzle; one 20-foot length of ½-inch section hose with strainer. The trucks have been in service for two months and have relieved the larger pumps of many runs. Equipment such as ladders, fire poles, lanterns, etc., has been saved during the past years and used to equip these trucks. Nothing of this nature was bought.

spigots, namely, bath tubs, lavatory and kitchen sink. These things can be bought for approximately twenty cents and can be purchased at hardware, dress stores and plumbing shops. The adapter consists of the following: one four-inch piece of garden hose, one male garden hose connection and one hose clamp.

Demonstration Board Showing the Garden Hose Adapter

Two Die as Auto Collides with Fire Engine

The first fatality among Paterson's (N. J.) civilian defense workers was listed when William G. Conklin, an auxiliary fireman, died from injuries he received in a crash between an automobile and a fire engine, aboard which, as part of his training as an auxiliary fireman, he was responding to an alarm.

Fireman August Schneider, a member of Engine Company No. 4, who received a fracture at the base of the skull, died the next evening.

Engine Company No. 4 was on its way to a rubbish fire at the time of the crash. The fire engine was almost across the intersection at Mill and Grand Streets, the firemen going north on Mill Street, just a minute after the alarm was turned in.

The car struck the rear end of the fire engine, cutting the rear left tire and rear platform. Conklin was riding in the "basket" on top of the hose, while Schneider was on the side platform of the truck. Conklin was tossed from the "basket" and Schneider was knocked from the running board.

The biggest change I have seen from DFD to GVFD to HVFD is the movement of the Sireno siren to the oppisite fender and the placement of a siren-light on the left one. I saw this truck in Garner at a fireman's day parade many, many years ago. Both sirens were functional. A close review of the pictures does not reveal any other changes, aside form the lettering.

DJ - 02/17/15 - 23:52

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preferred)

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Comment moderation is enabled on this site. This means that your comment will not be visible on this site until it has been approved by an editor.

To prevent spam we require you to answer this silly question

What are the FIRST TWO LETTERS of the word 'fire'?

[\(Register your username / Log in\)](#)

Notify: Yes, send me email when someone replies.

Hide email: Yes, hide my email address.

Small print: All html tags except and <i> will be removed from your comment. You can make links by just typing the url or mail-address.