

Portland Firefighter Memorial Plaza News

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The Portland Firefighter Memorial Plaza is a place of tribute to Fallen Fire Chief David Campbell combined with a memorial wall sharing the names of all Portland Firefighters who have given their lives in service. The public plaza will be a place of remembrance, reflection, and interpretation of the vigilance of Portland Fire & Rescue's service to Portland.

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Dates of Importance

May 2, 1911—On this day in history, the first motorized fire engine would be put into service for Portland Fire. An American LaFrance triple-combination pumper would debut as Engine 9 in the Belmont District. The second would follow a few weeks later. By April 1920, the horses were out to pasture

Captain Fred May

Captain Fred May of Engine 8 died at Station 8 on April 22nd. The reason this did not make headline news is because it happened in 1920. Yet it was only recently discovered, 103 years after the fact.

Fred May began his career with Portland Fire in 1881. Fred was with Tiger Engine Company #5, located at 1724 SW 4th Avenue. Tiger Engine 5 was founded in 1873. In 1883, with the advent of the Portland Paid Fire Department, Fred transitioned into the paid agency and was assigned to Engine 2, and later Truck 3. Fred would become Captain of Engine 8 in 1914.



On the evening of April 22, 1920, Fred stood watch in Station 8. A crew member would always stand vigil in the watch room to monitor the telegraph system. The Watchman would capture the calls from Fire Alarm Telegraph and look up the call location when the station would be “tapped out.” At 7:30 pm, Fred was

discovered by his crew members, apparently having suffered a stroke. Before they could take action to transport him to a hospital, he died. It isn't known why Fred's death was never recognized. Recent research found Fred's obituary and the explanation of his demise.

This was not a rare situation. Fred joins five other members who died of a stroke while on duty, three of which were attributed to their service because they happened on duty, at a fire station, or at an emergency scene. Health-related deaths have been the leading cause of Portland Fire's service-connected deaths, making up 45 of the 76 firefighter deaths.

Fred will be added to the roll call of Portland's Fallen Firefighters. He is recognized as the 76th Portland Firefighter who has given their life, in service, to the citizens of Portland. This year's memorial service will be held on June 26th at the David Campbell Memorial.

Is That Fencing?

If you've traveled past the David Campbell Memorial and the future site of the Portland Firefighter Memorial Plaza, you may have noticed something new. Fencing has been placed around the Messenger Bell. The pandemic years have not been easy on the site. The shelter of the

Messenger Bell had caused it to become a haven for illegal activity being conducted on the site. Thanks to Commissioner Mingus Mapps, his staff, and his crews at PBOT, we have now safeguarded the Bell until work begins on the site renovation. It will be removed for the June 26th Memorial Service at the site.

Albina Neighborhood And Portland Fire

While the Portland Firefighter Memorial Plaza will be located in the Goose Hollow Neighborhood of Southwest Portland, a tribute to Portland's Fallen Firefighters touches every neighborhood in the city. Recent headlines in Portland have highlighted the revitalization of Albina, which lost its identity and many residents when Interstate 5, the hospital, and other significant changes were made many years ago.

Portland Fire had a presence in Albina starting in 1891. By 1957, this would effectively end (although response coverage from surrounding areas was adequate to serve the community). Station 8 would begin service in 1891 at the 2600 Block of N. Borthwick. In 1903, a new station would be built at 45 NE Russell Street, with Engine #8 and Truck #5 being co-located in the station. They would remain until 1957 when both companies would move to a temporary station until their new quarters at 7134 N Maryland was completed. Their service remains there today.

Being completed in the early 60s, I-5 was likely a factor in the station move. But other factors were involved too. By 1956, 30% of Portland Fire's apparatus fleet was over 18 years of age. Also, the fire alarm telegraph system had aged over 32 years and was in desperate need of updating. The last time station locations were considered, and new stations constructed, was in the early 1920s. City growth and changing demographics meant a review of fire station locations was also in order. All of this resulted in a \$3 million facility and equipment bond measure that would update equipment and fire stations. Voters passed it in 1958 and implementation of the bond would take 4-5 years to complete. This included closing the station in Albina and constructing the new facility on N. Maryland.

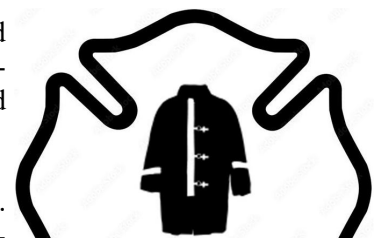
The Fred May story in this newsletter reminds us that Fire Station 8 sat in the heart of Albina for over 50 years. Fred served as Captain at the station from 1914 until his untimely death at age 54. He died while standing watch during his duty shift. Fred was not the only Portland Firefighter to die in that station. Firefighter Clement Kemmer would succumb to a heart attack at Station 8 on April 21, 1933. At age 42, this was unforeseen for Clement. On March 31, 1947, Battalion Chief Marion Stark, while on duty, died in his sleep at the station. Marion was 63 years old. Further, on June 26, 1933, Gustave Stephan died in the Albina neighborhood during a fire inspection, taking ill and passing before help could be given at 68 NE Stanton Street. Captain Daniel Shaw would die of an unnamed illness while at a fire scene at 432 NE Russell Street. Daniel, who was scheduled to retire in two weeks, died on April 24, 1949.

All of these firefighters are represented on the roll of Portland's Fallen Firefighters, having died in service to the citizens of Portland. Their stories are unique and important. The Portland Firefighter Memorial Plaza will exist to remember these Firefighters, their stories, and their sacrifice. While it will not be located in Albina, it demonstrates how each part of town carries threads that connect Portland Fire to every neighborhood.

To Learn More...

The development of the Portland Firefighter Memorial Plaza continues to grow and evolve. You can find additional information on the "David Campbell Memorial Association" Facebook Page. This also includes other important information about safety and health issues faced by today's firefighters.

The David Campbell Memorial Association web site is another source of information. Find it at DavidCampbellMemorial.org. And to speak to a member of the David Campbell Memorial Association, contact Don Porth, President, 503-805-8482 or Don@PreventThink.com



**DAVID CAMPBELL
MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION**