



# CIVIL DEFENSE

**ROBERT J. QUINN**

*Director  
Civil Defense Corps*

On January 1, 1958, Fire Commissioner Quinn, as Director of the Chicago Civil Defense Corps, placed into service, the only fully manned, full time, Civil Defense Fire and Rescue Service in the United States. Since its conception, this unit, made up of some 100 volunteers, has proven itself extremely valuable at many, many occasions of fires and other emergencies. On its very first day of operation, the valuable power saws, hammers and other tools were put to use at a 5-11 alarm fire burning within an eight story cold storage warehouse just north of downtown Chicago. Using air hammers and jacks, the members of the Fire and Rescue Service were able to punch holes in the walls enabling firemen to get water into areas where it was needed to extinguish the burning cork insulated walls.

The volunteers of the Fire and Rescue Service man six units, all stationed in various locations throughout the city. One unit responds to a 2-11 alarm, a second on a 3-11, two more on a 4-11 and a fifth unit responds on the 5-11 of fire. The members of the service are not permitted to perform any duty considered hazardous. Upon arriving at a fire scene, if they are not required to perform any special duties, they are required to assist the firemen lead out their hose lines and set up various apparatus such as high pressure units, snorkels, smoke ejectors or any other unit ordered into duty at the fire scene.

Other duties of the fire and rescue members include the hauling of gasoline from the department's gas trucks to apparatus at the fire scene to insure that all pumbers are kept in operation and that no unit would run out of gas at a fire scene. Also, in extreme cold weather, members of the Fire and Rescue Service spread salt throughout a fire area to keep freezing water to a minimum.

The Chicago Civil Defense Fire and Rescue Service is under the direction of Mr. Charles J. Johnson who organized the corps for Commissioner Quinn. Mr. Johnson devotes a great deal of time and effort in not only organizing the service, but in training these volunteers to be completely efficient in methods and operations of the many useful tools and equipment carried on the Civil Defense trucks. The training provided these men has been most effective.

In November, 1958, a Trans World Airways Constellation aircraft, fell some two blocks short of Midway Airport's runway, plowing into a number of homes and spraying some 11,000 gallons of burning high octane gasoline over nine homes. Extinguishment of the fire was quick and most efficient. However, because of the time of the accident, five-thirty a.m., many persons were sleeping, as a result, with walls knocked down, and the four engines of the aircraft within the huge piles of

debris, Civil Defense Fire and Rescue service was immediately called upon with their powerful wenches to start clearing the debris to see if any victims had been trapped by the accident. Unfortunately, there were persons trapped under, but the quick movement of the tons of debris enabled the rescuers to reach the trapped persons very quickly.

In a number of cases, the Chicago Fire and Rescue Service was called upon to perform its duties outside the city of Chicago. On a number of occasions they assisted other fire departments in times of emergency. Such an instance was the crash of another TWA four engine Constellation in Clarendon Hills, Illinois where 78 persons lost their lives. Chicago's Fire and Rescue Service provided blankets and stretchers used by the many fire departments in removing the bodies of the persons aboard the ill fated airliner.

Since its origination in 1958, many cities throughout the country have sent representatives to Chicago to study the operations of the Civil Defense Fire and Rescue Service and have gone back to their respective cities and organized similar units. This being a fitting tribute to the hard work and extreme efficiency of the 100 volunteer members of the Chicago Organization.

Commissioner Quinn, as director of Chicago's Civil Defense Corps has the responsibility of maintaining the Civil Defense Program in Chicago. During the recent Cuban Crisis, Civil Defense was placed on an alert. Immediately, Commissioner Quinn called his Civil Defense staff into operation and all the necessary precautions were undertaken to prepare Chicago for any further emergencies which might have arisen as a result of the crisis. In the few hours that followed the announcement of the emergency by the President, Chicago was ready and able to carry out a most effective program of civil defense for the city.



One of the Civil Defense Fire and Rescue Trucks stands by at a 4-11 alarm fire in the Stock Yards. Four units of the CD Fire and Rescue Corps respond on such an alarm bringing to the fire scene such valuable tools as air hammers, power saws and hammers, jacks and other emergency equipment which has been put to use by the Fire Department on many, many occasions.



Fire Commissioner Robert J. Quinn, who is also the director of Chicago's Civil Defense Corps confers with former Governor Leo Hough, who at the time of this picture was Director of the Civil Defense Corps for the U. S. Government. This picture was made when a cargo plane crashed into seven homes on the south side of the city.

Members of the Civilian Defense Corps meet at the Chicago Fire Academy just after President Kennedy announced the United State's policy in regards to the Russian Missiles in Cuba. Along with high ranking members of the fire department, the other agencies within the city government, representatives of public utilities and other emergency organizations make up the bulk of the Civil Defense Corps executive committee.







