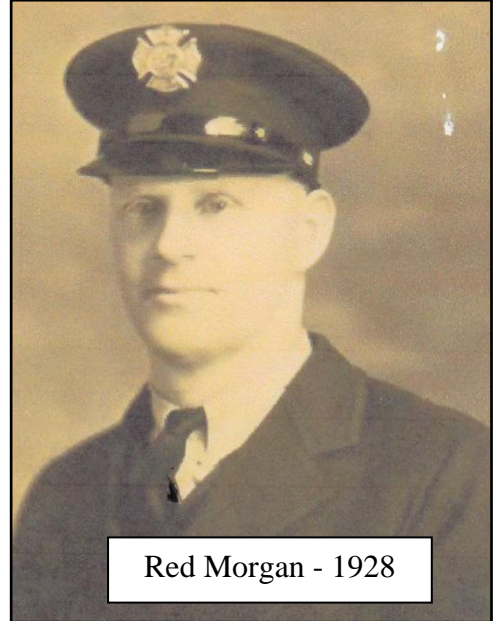


# The "Red" Morgan Story

*Compiled by Don Porth*

Oro Monroe "Red" Morgan was born on June 24, 1891 to Monroe Gus Morgan and Laura Fadelia Nichols.

Red worked for Portland Fire for two different terms, however it isn't known why. On May 17, 1913, Red would be hired and assigned to Engine 20 in the Sellwood Neighborhood. It was located at 8210 SE 13th Avenue. An old Portland Fire Station occupies that address, but the station he worked in was razed and replaced in 1921. Red would resign on March 18, 1918. This was a time period when a significant number of Portland Firefighters resigned. It was in protest to the work schedule that required firefighters to work 6 (24 hour) days in a row, then have one day off. Adding a second platoon (shift of firefighters) was being demanded by firefighters but it required a vote of the citizens to make the change. An initiative to voters failed on June 4, 1917. However, continued efforts by firefighters and unions finally saw it pass on November 5, 1918. Red may have been one of the firefighters who resigned in protest.



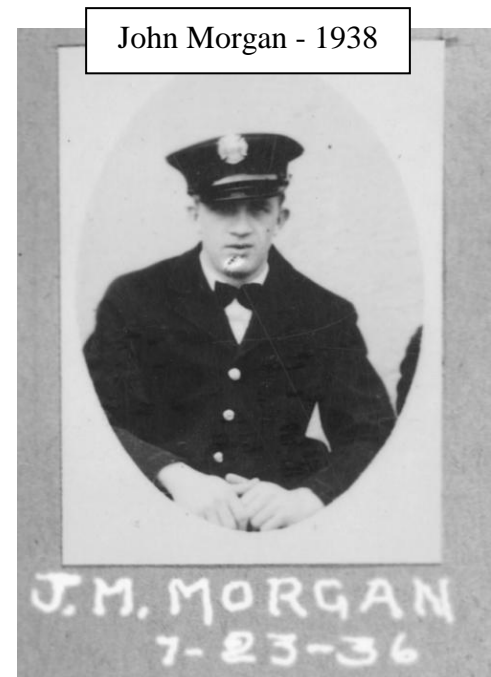
Red Morgan - 1928

Red was hired again by Portland Fire on February 2, 1928, he was 36 years old and listed as "unmarried" with two children. One son, John M. Morgan, would become a Portland Firefighter as well. He was hired on January 23, 1936 and at the time of his marriage on February 9, 1942, listed his address as Fire Station 8 at 45 NE Russell Street (this was not uncommon during this time period). John would resign as a Portland Firefighter on May 27, 1942 with no explanation in his personnel file.

Upon hire, Red would be assigned to Engine 33, located at 10803 NW Front Avenue, in Linnton. Linnton is a small suburb of Portland on Highway 30, the road to Scappoose and St. Helens. The building no longer exists.

Red would be transferred to Truck 3 on May 31, 1928. Truck 3 was located at 1425 NW Glisan Street. The building still remains and has served as a restaurant for many years since it closed as a fire station.

Red would remain at Station 3, alternating between the Engine 3 and Truck 3 for three years before being transferred to Truck



John Morgan - 1938

1 on June 26, 1931. Truck 1 was located at 905 SW 4th Avenue. That station no longer exists.

On July 16, 1935, Red would leave Station 1 for Engine 15 in Portland Heights, 1920 SW Spring Avenue (Station 15 is still a Portland Fire Station today). Five months later, he would be transferred back to Truck 1, then on March 31, 1936, he would return to Engine 15 for the remainder of his career.

On May 30, 1930, Red and his crew at Truck 3 would respond to a fire at the Stelwyn Apartments, located at 166 St. Clair Street (approximately 20th and W. Burnside by today's addressing system). The fire was well advanced by the time crews arrived and many people were in peril. Every fire station on the west side of Portland, and half of those located on the east side, would respond to the incident.

The fire, which started in the basement, quickly advanced vertically. then throughout the building. Some occupants fled while other became trapped. Most of the 70 apartment units in the building would be impacted by the smoke or flame.

One resident, 25 year old Mehl Imhof, was overcome by smoke within her apartment. Red found her and carried her to safety under difficult conditions. Miss Imhof was taken to the hospital and treated for smoke inhalation but would survive the ordeal. Five firefighters would report injuries during the fire. At one point, firefighters had to retreat to the edge of the roof when part of it fell in, causing a flare up and the production of thick smoke. One firefighter lunged out a window onto a fire escape when conditions deteriorated on the fourth floor.

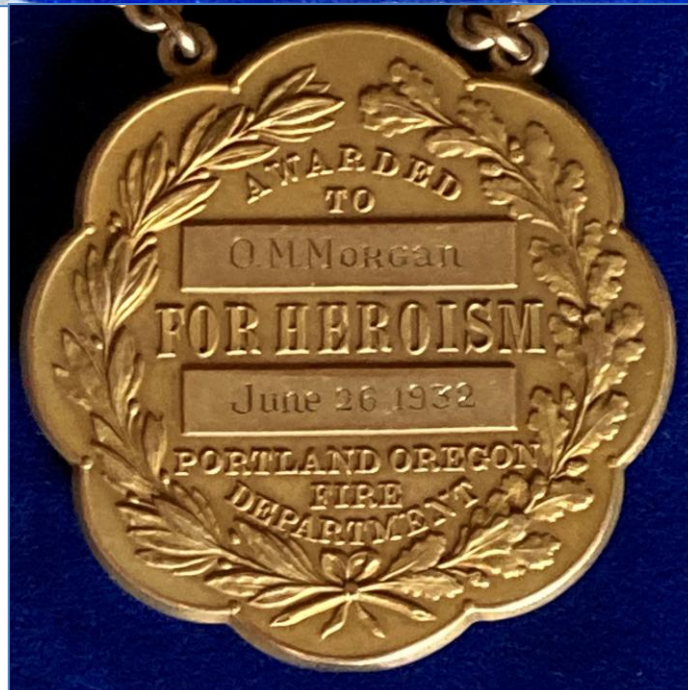


For his heroic work, Red would receive the David Campbell Gold Medal of Valor at the 1932 service of remembrance for Portland's Fallen Firefighters. Red would be the second Portland Firefighter to receive the Gold Medal of Valor recognition. Only three times since 1911 has the Gold Medal been awarded.

Red would retire on November 30, 1951. A note in his file also lists an Occupational Service Pension, but offers no details. This means he had some kind of illness or injury that was related to the job that may have limited his ability to perform his work. Over the course of his 23 year career, Red Morgan proved to be the finest example of what makes a Portland Firefighter. His family should be proud of his record of service and accomplishment.

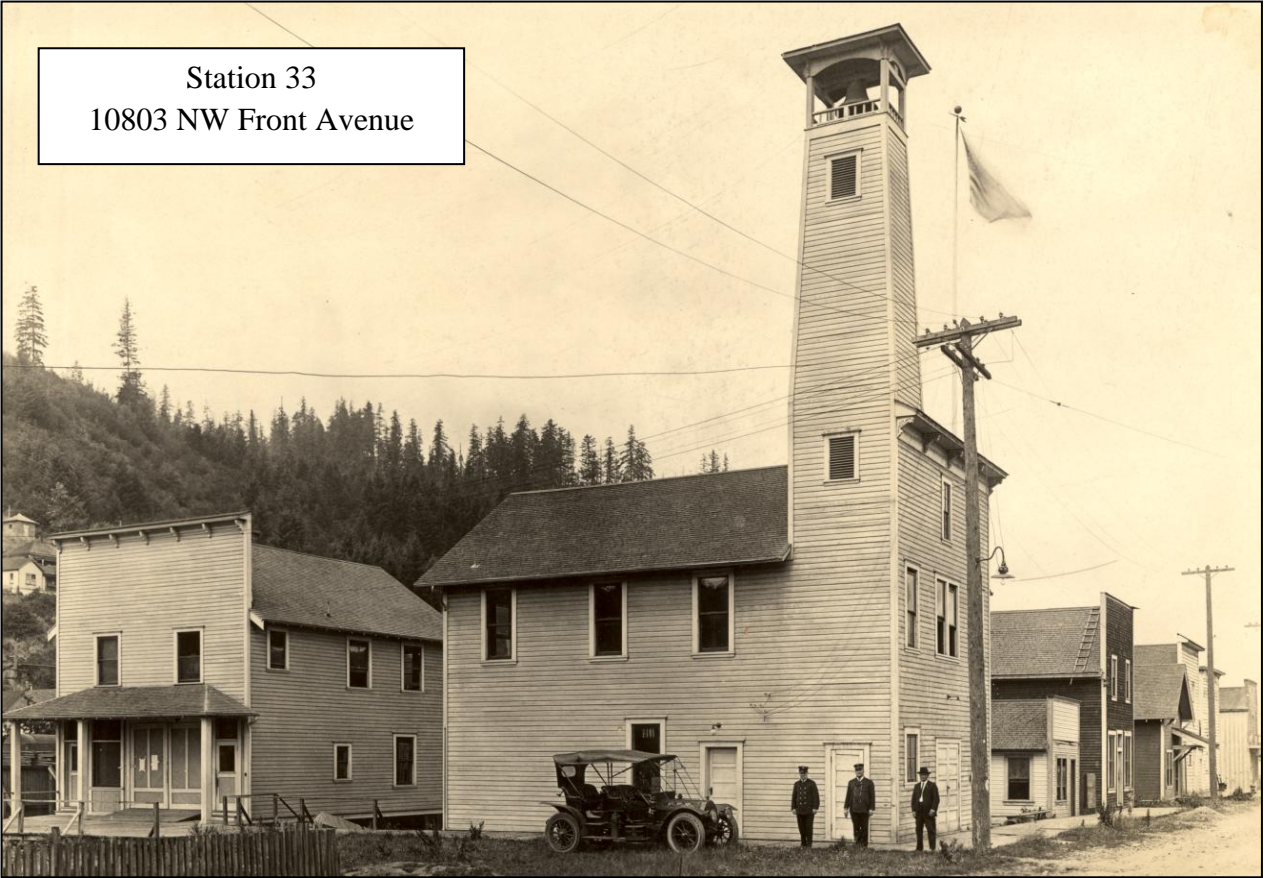
Red Morgan - 1938

Red Morgan's Actual "David Campbell Gold Medal of Valor" Returned to the Possession of Portland Fire





Station 33  
10803 NW Front Avenue



Station 3  
1425 NW Glisan Street



Station 1  
905 SW 4th Avenue



Station 15  
1920 SW Spring Avenue

#END#

[www.PortlandFireHistory.com](http://www.PortlandFireHistory.com)  
[www.DavidCampbellMemorial.org](http://www.DavidCampbellMemorial.org)