



Museum of Fire

Articles on Historic Firefighting Equipment

MEDAL: Edinburgh Gallantry and Long Service of the Association of Professional Fire Brigade Officers:

Lieutenant J Grinton

Edinburgh 29th June 1911-at a meeting of the Plans and Works Committee, the following representation by the Firemaster recommending that Superintendent Allan and Lieutenant Grinton be awarded the corporation medal for saving life at the fire at the Empire Theatre, on 9th May 1911, was submitted:-

Fire Brigade, Edinburgh, June 29 1911.

"I respectfully beg to recommend for the consideration of the Plans and Works Committee that Superintendent Allan and Lieutenant Grinton be awarded the McFarlane Medal for gallantry in saving the life of a theatre artiste named Moore, at the recent fire at the Empire Theatre".

The circumstances under which the officers did their duty are as follows:-

"After the engines were got to work, and during the fiercest part of the fire, it was reported to me that several members of the company who were last seen running off the stage were missing. It was then impossible to effect an entrance to the stage, which, with a portion of the dressing-room block, was then well alight. I directed Superintendent Allan and Lieutenant Grinton to get some men together and try and search the dressing-rooms before the fire got a complete hold of that portion of the building. No spare men being available, the two officers without delay entered the theatre by the dressing-room corridors, which were then full of smoke and heat from the fire below. They found two dead bodies of employees who had been suffocated on the stairs; proceeding further in their search they came to the head of the stair leading to the stage which was full of black smoke that Lieutenant Grinton fell from the top to the bottom and was seriously hurt. Superintendent Allan called him and receiving no answer proceeded down the stair and searched the dressing-room on the stage level, which the fire had not reached, and there was found the man Moore in an unconscious condition. The man was lifted on to Superintendent Allan's back who carried him to the street, and he was dispatched to the Royal Infirmary where his life was despaired of for several days, but where he ultimately recovered".



"When it is considered that the rescue was effected only after several flights of stairs, long corridors, and groping over scenery and stage properties full suffocating smoke and heat, and over which their steps had to be retraced carrying the man, and Lieutenant Grinton being severely bruised and shaken, I am of the opinion that the conduct of the two officers is worthy of the Committee's commendation.

Medal presented by Mrs J L Grinton, 6 Ivanhoe Crescent, Edinburgh