

Occasionally, I see a fire truck labeled "Flying Squad" flying through the streets. Just what do these squads do? — F.D., Chicago

Just about everything but fly. Specifically, everything from cutting too-tight rings off fingers (a service anyone may avail himself or herself of just by stopping in at one of the squads' stations, thus saving \$15, the usual cost of such a service in hospital emergency rooms) to extricating victims from train wrecks; most of the city's flying squads helped in the rescue work at the Illinois Central train wreck in 1972,



Flying Squad 6 (2322 W. Foster): Equipment, from left: chain saw for cutting through metal; breathing apparatus; on ground, "Hurst tool" power pack and "jaws" for spreading a car body apart; ax; compressed-air tanks; utility bar, and powerful quartz light for working at night. And in the truck—nearly 300 more emergency tools.

hoisting cars with powerful hydraulic jacks they carry. Chicago has seven flying squads, and they are at 8701 S. Escanaba, 330 W. 104th St., 2236 W. 69th St., 1915 S. Damen, 3542 W. Fullerton, 2322 W. Foster, and 4835 N. Lipps. Other work for which they are summoned is to extricate victims from mangled autos, winch autos out of lagoons, extinguish fires caused by a rare gas or chemical, breach walls, and open locked or stuck doors (such as to free a child from a bathroom). In all, a flying squad carries some 300 items of equipment, and squad members spend three hours a day just training with them and studying about them. We don't yet know what rescue-work dramatic series the TV networks may be planning for the 1976-77 season, but if a series were to be called "Chicago Flying Squad," the raw material for it would be as plentiful and tensely exciting as any.