



TARHEEL FIREFIGHTER



AND CAROLINA RURAL FIREMAN

VOL. 10 NO 7

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JULY, 1973

These Feminine Firemen Say Heck With Female Lib

REEDS — Rhetoric mongers, breast beaters and lingerie burners for women's lib will have to take a back seat to this one.

In Reeds, a small crossroads community west of Lexington, four women have been indispensable members of the volunteer fire department. And their role as "firemen" — as they insist upon being called — didn't spring out of a frustrated need to express themselves.

It was just a response to a definite need in the community.

"Chief Wood just asked us if we would," says Mrs. Jeannie Craver, who serves as captain for the four-woman brigade. "All the men work during the day, so he asked if we would serve."

Former Chief Joe Wood has since retired, but his female recruits, Mrs. Craver, Mrs. Josephine Michael, Mrs. Elsie Myers, and Mrs. Pat Lanier have stayed on.

"They really used to give us that look," recalls Mrs. Craver, who keeps an eye on the station from her post behind a counter at nearby Farabee's Store. "Now most people are accustomed to it."

The women's primary responsibility is to handle fire calls during the day. Sometimes that can mean a pretty full day away from home.

Take their very first day on the job. A routine brush fire in the

morning was quickly followed by a large forest fire which brought out fire departments from all over the county. That meant a six-or seven-hour day the very first day on a volunteer job.

It also provided Mrs. Michael,

"I got a real bad sunburn out there that day," she said.

With that strenuous introduction to firefighting, the distaff brigade has gone on to earn the respect of their firefighting colleagues.

they go in there to fight a fire."

Even though they have the respect of their local peers, they still admit to uncomfortable moments in the company of firemen they haven't met before. Usually that occurs at large fires

all over. The novelty of the job wore off long ago, however, and the women have been honing their skills as fire fighters. But they are not without their lapses.

Mrs. Craver has the dubious distinction of causing the only



Firefighters (L-R) Mrs. Jeannie Craver, Mrs. Elsie Myers and Mrs. Josephine Michael

the pert mother of two, with a scorching lesson. Never show up to fight a fire in a sleeveless blouse.

I'll tell you," says present fire chief Forrest Michael, "They're good. And they don't mind messing up a Friday hairdo when

where several different departments send trucks. Inevitably someone will give that "What duh...?" look before it is

accident in the company's 18-year old history. After returning from a fire, she forgot to put the See FEMININE FIREMEN, Page 3

Fireman's Life Never Really Routine

Is there a man alive who at one time or another did not dream of someday becoming a fireman?

That dream has become a reality for 64 men in Eden, 10 of them full-time employees at Eden's three stations. All 64, in fact, find fighting fires as much a part of their lives as getting up in the morning (sometimes at unusual hours).

What kind of life is it to be a fireman?

Eden Fire Chief Larry Rhodes, when asked recently about a "typical" day in the life of a fireman, claimed that "there isn't any such thing."

"Today you're just doing routine work and tomorrow you may be running all around."

The chief noted that fighting fires is not all that is involved in a fireman's work. However, he claimed that fire prevention "is a 24-hour a day operation."

Although there is no typical day for an Eden fireman, there are certain duties which must be performed by the department's full-time employees. These men are kept busy on a 24 hours on, 48 off basis.

"When they are not fighting fires, they must keep all the

equipment in top shape and ready to go on a call," Rhodes said.

Then, too, there is the ever-important duty of the dispatcher. He is the man who is always waiting for the red emergency phone to ring—yet hoping it wouldn't.

"We usually get a call about every three days, occasionally more often in the winter months," the chief notes. "Most of the time, the alarm is nothing but a routine call or small auto fire. But we never may know when something big is coming."

Rhodes noted that false alarms are also a big problem for the department, "but a good method of practice."

The firemen, as any other professional person, is constantly striving to improve himself and his performance.

Eden firemen are no exception as Rhodes notes that even the veterans must undergo special training and practice sessions twice a month (two-hour drills nightly).

In addition, as is the case in many departments, the local fireman may go out-of-town fire fighting training sessions dealing with various phases of the

profession.

The chief himself is currently working on a fire department administration course.

Rhodes, who has only been chief since October but a member of the Eden Fire Department since before the three towns and stations were combined, claims many changes have taken place in fire fighting over the years.

The changes in equipment, methods of fighting various fires, and even the types of fires a fireman faces have been among the major ones.

"Chemical fires are the big thing today," Rhodes said.

However, with little real need for such specialized equipment locally, Rhodes said the main concern is not in this area.

"Basically, we are striving to upgrade our overall rating and to improve the water system available to us here," he said.

Rhodes is not sure what there is about being a fireman that pulls more people into the profession but he claims it "must be something you want to do."

"Why do you want to be a newspaperman—or a doctor?" he asked. "Why does anyone do what they do. It might be the

excitement of it all. Some people love fighting a fire. Some like to think they are helping their neighbor. It's really an individual thing."

As an afterthought, Rhodes noted that he was pulled into the profession because he always went with the department to local fires.

"One of the men approached me and I was unavailable in the daytime because of my other duties. They needed nighttime help

and I wanted to help them."

Such is the method by which a local fireman—in this case, the chief joined the profession. But how may another person join the department if he is so inclined?

"For full-time paid firemen, we have a procedure," Rhodes notes. "First, we accept applications and review them. Then, the candidates are selected and interviewed."

See ROUTINE, Page 3

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Editorial

Some time ago I received in the mail, a complimentary copy of a publication, new to me, but possibly familiar to you, however, I feel that a good many of you

may perhaps be yet unaware of it, and since our two fields of endeavor are so closely related, I feel sure that those of you who have not already subscribed to it,

will be interested in writing for it. The name of the publication is the North Carolina Rescue News, an official publication of the N.C. Association of Rescue Squads.

The format is very similar to ours and provides most interesting news and other related information. I know that often the Firemen and Rescue Squads work together in needed situations and since the subscription is relatively small, feel sure that a good many of you would like to have your name on their mailing list.

I have to admit, although very interesting, true and vital for us to see and know of these events, in order to bear in mind that it COULD happen to you no matter how careful a driver you are, some of the photos and stories sent a distinct chill up my spine. Since I do a lot of driving, on all kinds of roads, and I am sure that when I am in a hurry, I sometimes forget to watch that speedometer as closely as I should, I do, however, try to keep one eye on the road and other drivers, and the other on the rear view mirror, and exercise caution. While it is true that sometimes that other driver cannot be avoided, due to conditions, I'm going to do my best to be alert enough to try!

I have occasionally heard of accidents befalling firemen, in their haste to get to the scene of a fire, so this caution applies to all of us, I might say, especially to emergency vehicles, since they are on the way to try to save a life or property, or both, and it is most important, not only for their own sake, but for the others they are trying to help, that they arrive at their destination intact!

While I am on the subject, what has happened to the law about pulling over and stopping for a flashing red light or a siren? Assuming that it is still in effect, I always do so, but time after time, I am either the first to do so, or the only one who does. I realize that with air - conditioners and radios, one might not hear a siren until it is quite close, but certainly they should be watching traffic closely enough to see a flashing red light in front of them or in their rear soon enough to pull over, but I see people all the time just blithely driving along their



EMILY H. KING

way, ignoring the emergency vehicle as though it is just another car, often impeding the vehicle, so that they have to dart in and out

of traffic, slow down, etc. and I see this so much, I wonder if the law is still in effect? If it is, it seems to me a Police car or Sheriff's Dept. vehicle should follow the emergency vehicle a few times just to pass out a few tickets to those who do not stop or pull over. I venture to say, if this was done a few times, people would start getting out of the way a little better! This is especially true, I have noticed in the larger towns - almost no one gives way or seems to pay much attention, but I notice they always manage to crowd around the scene of an accident or fire, when they get there, so surely if they have time to stop and look, they have time to get out of the way, in the first place, so the emergency vehicle can get there sooner.

Now for the address to write for subscriptions, I am not certain which one that is given is the proper one since they give it this way: Send change of address to: N.C. Rescue News, P.O. Box 553,

Greenville, N.C. 27834; Send news and pictures to: Graham Johnson, 115 Texas St., Elkin, N.C. 28621. Since Graham

Johnson is the Editor, I assume you would send for your subscription through him.

I hope that a lot of you will support this publication as well as ours, and when you have pictures in which you and the Rescue Squad in your area work in coordination, it would be a good idea to submit them to them. I am sure they would appreciate it, and I feel that any organization in our state that is in the same category as ours deserves your recognition and support.

Emily H. King

Emily H. King

Fire Chief Explains Home Fire Detectors

LIBERTY -- Liberty Fire Chief Charlie Martin over the past few weeks has received several inquiries for information on home fire protection devices.

Chief Martin states a number of persons are now selling various types of these devices in the Liberty area and many local residents have become concerned as to just how effective some of these are.

The following information from the National Safety Council explains most of the questions people have been asking, Martin added.

A white cobra slowly uncoils on your living room sofa and rears up, swaying back and forth in the darkness.

Up, up it stretches, twisting lazily, until it brushes against the ceiling and starts to reach out, out and into the rest of your house.

But just then the clouds break and a shaft of moonlight reveals that it isn't really a snake at all but something far deadlier - smoke. Smoke from a smoldering cigarette dropped between the sofa cushions.

Yet nobody sees it and nobody smells it because you and your family are asleep.

And because everybody is asleep, the next few minutes will determine whether you and your family will live or die. It is during these crucial moments that a fire must be detected and action taken.

Hostile fires in the home most often start in the smoldering stage. When open flaming occurs, the fire grows more rapidly and produces less smoke. As oxygen is used up, more smoke is produced and the fire continues to grow, but more slowly. The time to escape is before oxygen depletion starts.

The human body can sense fire in several ways. You can see flame, you can feel heat, or you can smell smoke. The human eye is a marvelous detector. It can readily distinguish between light from a flame and a different light source. Your skin can feel the heat of a fire if you're close enough to it. And your nose is a magnificent smoke - sensing instrument. It can detect hostile smoke in your home at the very low level of about two parts per million.

The nose most often comes into play in detecting fire, since smoke spreads farther and faster in both the smoldering and the open - flaming state.

When a person is awake, alert and standing erect, the nose is

usually between five and six feet from the floor. Smoke generally starts building up in the higher levels of a room, moving gradually toward the floor. In an alert person there is a clear path from the nose to the alarm center in the brain.

When you are asleep, however, your nose is less than three feet from the floor. So more smoke builds up before you have a chance to smell it. Then, when smoke does reach your nose, the alarm has more difficulty getting through to your brain because of your sleeping state. This normal thin curtain of sleep that fogs up the detection system becomes denser from drink and sleeping drugs. That's the reason why most

people who burn to death in bed while smoking do so while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Most fires that cause multiple deaths in the home occur during the sleeping hours -- 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. During those hours the family's nostril detectors are close to the floor and less alert. Fire gets a foothold before anyone awakens. Then time for escape is short -- sometimes too short.

Fortunately, there are other sensors to back up the slumbering sentinels of the human body. Like the body's sensors, manufactured detectors can "see" flames, "feel" heat or "smell" smoke. But unlike people, they never sleep.

Because detectors that "see" the fire are expensive, difficult to adjust and limited by line of sight, they are not easily adapted for home fire detection.

Thermal detectors also have disadvantages for residential use. They can "feel" a fire but only from a short distance away. The fire must be big enough to give off a lot of heat.

To feel a fire in the early stages, the heat detector must be in the room with the fire. This means a detector in almost every heat - confining area -- each room, hall, closet, crawl space. If the detector is not nearby, you need a bigger fire to activate one farther away, and by then it may be too late to escape. The normal house usually requires more than 20 detectors.

Gambling on where the fire is going to start is like playing Russian roulette.

The wired heat detector system installed by an electrician costs between \$300 and \$400 for the 20 - 30 detectors the average home requires. The price tag on units sold door - to - door may be two, three or even four times as much due to the extra selling

expense. These are commercial - type devices that have been adapted for home installation. Often, door - to - door salesmen will try to convince the homeowner that he needs fewer than the 20 to 30 heat detectors usually necessary for protection.

Not all heat units require wiring. Some provide all the equipment in one package. These "single station" units ring a mechanical bell or trigger a gas - operated horn. Again, about 20 or 30 of them are required for adequate protection in a typical home.

Because smoke spreads out from the initial fire (whether it starts in the smoldering stage or the open - flaming stage) much more rapidly than the heat, smoke can be smelled long before heat can be felt. So it is with detectors that are activated by smoke. It takes fewer detectors to sense fire and give warning in time for escape.

There are two kinds of smoke detectors. The optical type, originally designed for commercial use but adapted for the home, requires a light - free chamber. That means the unit must include an intricate labyrinth of baffles to screen out light. Thus it is more difficult for smoke to make its way to the inner chamber than in the ionization type.

Also adapted from a commercial version, the ionization detector does not require a light - free space. The chamber is open to the surrounding atmosphere.

Both the optical and ionization smoke detectors come in wired version. But battery - operated models also have been produced for home use that do not require the expense of connection to house wiring. The batteries that power the unit are self - supervising; a signal sounds when they get too weak. The warning tells the homeowner that he must replace the batteries.

To date, only one self - supervising, battery - operated, ionization - type smoke detector has been introduced at a price that could make it attractive for widespread home use.

Compared with wired smoke systems that cost about \$250 to \$1,000, this handsome ceiling unit has received fire - testing laboratory approval and sells for under \$50. However, there are other battery smoke detectors presently available in the \$200 range that permit remote stations and features that add to cost.

While complete safety would See HOME DETECTOR, Page 4

Department Set To Go

CHOCOWINITY -- The Chocowinity Fire Department went into operation recently according to Chocowinity mayor W.T. Barnes.

Barnes, in speaking on the facility which will service the surrounding township as well as the city of Chocowinity, stated, "I'm really pleased with what we have already and feel like we've accomplished something."

Approximately 20 men have been training under the supervision of Washington Fire Department assistant chief, Hugh

Sterling.

The project to establish a fire department has been carried on for several years. The fire department building, completed about a year ago now houses a 1953 Ward LaFrance engine and an oil tanker. Both were acquired under the Excess Property Program through the Civil Defense Agency. \$3,000 worth of firefighting equipment was also acquired.

An order will soon be placed for a second truck so the unit will have one engine to operate inside

the city limits exclusively and another allowed to go into the township.

After the second engine is purchased, the fire department plans to eventually replace the Ward LaFrance with a more recent model.

Until this winter, all expenses, including the erection of the building, were covered by the town of Chocowinity.

Last February, however, an election was held concerning the creation of a fire tax district for See SET TO GO, Page 5

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Finally, the choices are made and all this is between the city manager and myself."

The situation is slightly different for volunteer firemen. Candidates are selected by a vote of members of each of the three stations. When a vacancy comes up, a man's name is submitted from a waiting list.

If a majority of the company decides to allow the candidate in the department, he becomes a volunteer, subject to duties and training the 54 current volunteers must undergo.

This is a fairly recent procedure compared to the method by which Demus Agee joined the department. He was one of the organizers of the Spray fire department and is therefore a veteran of the combined department.

"I had the desire to serve the community," he said. "When I heard they wanted to form a new department, I wanted to be a part of it."

So he was. A volunteer when the Spray department was formed in 1950, he became a fully paid employee 10 years later and is still going strong.

"I guess since I was burned at 18 months old, I have had the desire to try to prevent the same from happening to others," he said.

--- FEMININE FIREMEN ---

Continued from page 1
truck's parking brake on. When she climbed out, the pumper slowly rolled out of the station, across old Highway 64, and into the building housing Tyree's Camper Sales.

"It crushed in the fender, that's all it did," recalls Mrs. Craver. "I took a bit of kidding on that."

Other than that the women's brigade has been right there for the daytime fires, frequently handling the smaller fires themselves. Wrestling hoses, trenching fields, fighting the heat See FEMININE FIREMEN, Page 4

Agee also feels that fire fighting techniques - along with equipment - have changed considerably over the years.

"Used to be, we thought we had to drown the fire. Now we just put it out and we have become more effective," he says.

"But in all that has taken place, we know that we are learning something new everyday. No two fires are the same. No two ways of fighting the same fire are the same. We all can learn something new and do something different from day to day."

All that learning must have done some good. For in 23 years, Agee notes that the Spray station has never had a loss of life from a fire.

He says the most critical fires he has seen in 23 years were the Knight Oil company fire, a Fieldcrest fire and one of the Boulevard theatre during the 1960's.

What is racing through a fireman's mind when he goes to such a fire?

"Of course, you never know how serious it is going to be," Agee says. "Your main thought is what you're going to do the minute the pumper stops - the hose you're taking, the hydrant you go to, and everything else. You have to know the town and the area pretty well to think about this ahead of time."

"After the fire is out, that is when the fun begins," he noted, indicating the work involved in breaking hoses down.

And when the fireman is away, it is the wife's turn to be anxious.

"It's still very exciting and you don't know what he's going into," Agee's wife noted. "The main thing is, you don't know whether or not he will come back alive."

Excitement and danger are by-words in a fireman's life. And there can be no doubt that millions of dollars worth of damage is prevented and an uncountable number of lives are saved annually by organizations such as the Eden Fire Department. - The Eden News by Don Trausheck



While at a fire, the word is always "go, go, go." In these photos from the Eden News files, two firemen appear to be rushing away from the flames while they are analyzing the situation and a third checks out the situation from the steps (top) and then Rex Hurley, left, and H.C. Pace III began to break down the hoses after everything is clear (bottom).



Not all the time at a fire is bad as some fighters have a chance now and then to relax. In this old News Photo, station chief Glenn Simpson (since retired), left, and the Rev. Herbert D. Garmon, former local volunteer, discuss how next to attack the blaze.

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---FEMININE FIREMEN---

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and flames, and then returning to the station house to start cleaning up the trucks and possibly getting another call in a few minutes doesn't phase them.

"It's pretty strenuous," admits Mrs. Craver. "But it hasn't helped my weight a darn bit."

In fact, they point out that women firefighters are going to become the thing of the future more and more. They said several other counties already have women fire fighters.

So-called female squeamishness seems to have been forgotten in order to get the job done. Even things like overcoming a fear of heights.

"Climbing that pole, I like that the least," says Mrs. Craver. "Elsie can climb it." She was referring to a pole outside the station from which hoses are hung for drying.

"I don't especially like climbing it, but Joe (Joe Wood, former fire chief) needed a hose hanged up there, so I climbed," Mrs. Myers said.

So Reeds' most famous "firemen" keep making their contribution to the community, oblivious to things like women's lib.

"Women have always been liberated," asserts Mrs. Michael.

"If women want to be in the business world, let 'em. If they are smart enough, they can have it. I

have a super husband and wouldn't have it any other way. The heck with women's lib.

"I'm just happy doing something for the community and its gratifying to know that I may be saving life and property," adds Mrs. Craver. — Greensboro Daily News by David Newton

Mt. Pleasant Fire Officials Elected

MT. PLEASANT -- Mount Pleasant was added to the list of Wilkes communities with fire departments when some 60 residents assembled and organized a fire department recently.

Officers elected were: Max Baugass, president; Bill Wood, vice president; Howard Triplett, secretary - treasurer; Billy Joe Parsons, James Bobby Church, Jack Hayes and Jim Holbrook, directors.

Decision was reached by the new organization to petition the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners in July meeting to accept the fire department and to call an election in a district within

require one smoke detector in each smoke - confining area of the home, one should be installed on each floor of the house, particularly in a hallway immediately outside the bedroom areas or at the top of the stairway.

If you have an elderly person in the house, or an incorrigible

a four - mile radius of the fire station site at Mount Pleasant. The election will be on a proposal to levy a tax to support, maintain and operate the fire department.

Clay Blackburn, Wilkes Civil Defense director, was present at the meeting to assist in the organization and to explain operating procedures for a fire department.

The Mount Pleasant Ruritan Club had been aiding in the movement for a fire department and was instrumental in obtaining a site for the fire station across the road from Mount Pleasant School. The site has been graded and is ready for construction.

---HOME DETECTOR---

Continued from page 2

smoker - in - bed, wisdom would dictate that a detector be placed in that bedroom also.

A basic installation will require two, three or four detectors. The average mobile home can be protected by a single unit; in mobile homes with two separate large rooms, two detectors may be needed.

How effective are smoke detectors? One independent study of single - family home fires fatal to 342 persons showed that there is five times more life - safety effectiveness from smoke detector systems with one detector on each floor than there is from a heat detection system with a detector in the room of origin.

"What we are saying is, if you want the better protection, you must use smoke detectors instead of heat detectors," Chief Martin said.

"You can easily be overcome by smoke and depletion of oxygen before the heat detector alarm goes off unless the fire occurs at the detector", Martin added.

For more information send a self - addressed stamped envelope to "Detectors," Family Safety, National Safety Council, 425 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611

Cramerton Chief

GASTONIA -- Clarence Morris was elected president of the Board of Directors of Cramerton Volunteer Fire Department recently at a dinner meeting of the organization.

The combination steak supper and business meeting was held in the Supervisor's Hut on Lakewood Road in Cramerton.

Paul Hudson was elected secretary-treasurer Claude Hughes was named chief and Jerry Brendle and Danny Cochran were given the titles of assistant chiefs at the meeting.

Jim Austell, manager of the Galey and Lord Division of Burlington Industries, Albert McGinnis, Gaston County fire marshal and Mayor C.M. Michels of Cramerton were guests at the dinner meeting.

Council Votes

ST. PAULS -- St. Pauls councilmen voted recently to give compensations to the members of the town's volunteer fire department for services rendered to the community.

Each member will receive a fee according to the time of the fire. Compensations for fires, drills, etc. attended on Sundays, nights, and holidays are \$4 and pay for daytime fires, drills, and each time a fireman attends a fire school is \$3.

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—SET TO GO—
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financing a township fire department to operate in conjunction with the one being set up for the town of Chocowinity.

Two-thirds of the population voting favored the bill and the tax, up to 10 cents on \$100 property value, was passed.

Mayor Barnes, speaking on the tax voted by the township, said "This way, everybody will pay a little bit."

In the past, Chocowinity has had to depend on the service of the Washington Fire Department in emergencies. Since there is only one fire truck in Washington department allowed to go outside the city limits, there has always been the fear of two fires breaking out simultaneously and those

occurring too far away from the Washington station to be helped.

Jennis Crisp, president of the Chocowinity department, said that the unit will "make us more independent" and "increase our image."

According to Crisp, officials from the city board and directors of the township met recently to make final settlements on the conjunction of the two firefighting systems.

Other officers for the Chocowinity department include Charles E. Hickman, Jr.; vice-president; Terry E. Alligood, secretary; Max A. Jones, treasurer.

Charles E. Hickman, Jr. also serves as chief of the all volunteer fire department. — Washington News by Kerry Cox



Modern Building Houses Department -- Washington News Photo

Canton Gets New Diesel Fire Truck

CANTON — The town of Canton now has three fire trucks, with the arrival of a shiny, red 1973 Ford diesel pumper.

The new truck will pump 1000 gallons of water per minute and

Bennett Directors Elected

BENNETT -- Nine directors for the Bennett Fire Department were elected at an annual meeting held recently.

Named to the board for the coming year were Wayne Phillips, Wayne Jones, Ely Sewell, Leon Brady, Bernard Purvis, Gene Caviness, Ed Welch, Leadford Brady and Bernard Routh.

Phillips was named chairman of the group.

Year-end reports characterized the business meeting.

Bernard Purvis as assistant chief. Allen Brady and Tommy Brown are captains.

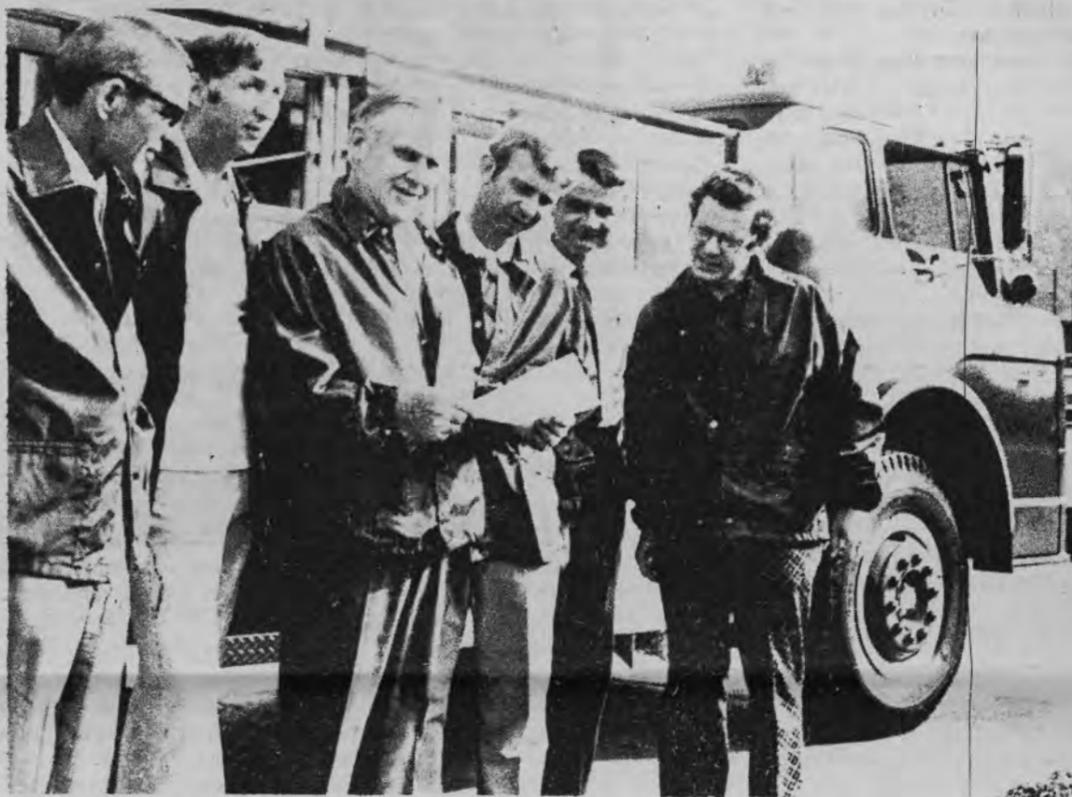
carries 500 gallons on board, with an adequate supply of fire hoses and ladders.

Canton Mayor F.B. "Bill" Shull said the new truck is "a step forward" toward modernizing our fire department. We feel sure that this fire apparatus will prove to be a very valuable asset to the Canton community."

Town manager Bill Stamey said the truck cost approximately \$30,000 and was purchased with federal revenue sharing money.

The truck, built by Jack Cocks and Co., Inc. of Mobile Ala, joins a 1947 American La France. The new truck is powered by a Ford V-8 diesel engine, built by Caterpillar Co.

Lee Valenti, a JACO delivery engineer, drove the truck to Canton from Doraville, Ga. recently and remained in town a few days to help mount equipment and instruct the firemen in operating the new fire fighting equipment.



NEW FIRE TRUCK — Canton town officials gathered to check out the specification sheet on the 1973 Ford diesel fire truck. Left to right, Tom Hemphill, alderman; Ted Woodruff, alderman; Mayor Bill Shull; town manager Bill Stamey; Captain Fire Chief Leo Cayton and Dr. Charles Duckett, alderman.

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DURHAM — Twenty-five years ago 23 young men stood on City Hall steps with right arms upraised and were sworn in by City Clerk Elsie Jones as fledgling members of the Durham Fire Department.

In the quarter of a century since then, all but seven have stayed with the department. And they've seen a lot of changes since they were rookies.

The team of 23 was the largest group of firemen ever appointed in Durham at one time. Present for the ceremony were City Manager Robert W. Flack, Mayor William F. Carr, and other city officials.

All of the appointments were made on the recommendation of Fire Chief Cosmo Cox, who was present that July 15.

Eight men were assigned to the new county truck which was scheduled to arrive the latter part of July 1948. The additional men were added because the city council had just approved a 72-hour work week for the fire department. Firemen previously worked approximately 80 hours a week.

The rookie firemen were addressed by City Manager Flack, Mayor Carr, each member of the city council, Chief Cox, Assistant Chief Claiborne H. Lawson and Fire Capt. C.H. Turner.

The city manager wished them well and praised the fire department. Mayor Carr told them the path they had chosen "does not lead to riches, but you can be rich in your service to the city and its people."

Capt. Turner told the new men that "you are starting on a life that makes your personal life a second consideration." He offered assistance and said the war against fire "is a continual war."

Chiefs Cox and Lawson told the men they would have to work hard and study on the outside if they were to be good firemen.



In July 1948, City Clerk Elsie Jones, left, gave the oath of office to the largest group of men ever to join the Durham Fire Department at one time. They were: Sidney Levy, Clifton Harris, Brown Bailey, Johnny Rose, James Eubanks, Leonard Jackson, Cecil Chandler and Johnny

Pendergrass. Second row, Herbert Allen, Raymond Hunt, Noah Davis, Leland Wheeler, Ernest Wilkie, Robert Browning, Al Bryant and Willie Murray. Third row, Curtis Cannada, Charles Blake, Sherrill Smith, Erwin Dillehay, James Daniel, Henry McDade and Wade Andrews.



SIXTEEN IN GROUP STILL AT IT -- Al Bryant is absent, but the other 15 still in the fire department showed up for a Silver Anniversary picture. They are, from left, Raymond Hunt, Clifton Harris, Sidney Levy, Henry McDade, John Pendergrass, Johnny Rose, Robert

Browning, and W.H. Murray. Standing are James Eubanks, Erwin Dillehay, Curtis Cannada, Cecil Chandler, Noah Davis, Leland Wheeler and Sherrill Smith — Durham Morning Herald Photos

Chief Cox promised, "You're going to see a lot of us." And he praised the comradeship in the department.

The 23 newcomers brought the total membership in the fire department to 88, its highest in history.

Sworn in were: Ernie Wilkie, Ernest Davis, Curtis Canada,

Brown Bailey, Herbert Allen, Leonard Jackson, Wade Andrews; James Daniels, Charlie Blake, Sidney Levy, Willie Murray, Raymond Hunt, Henry McDade, Alvester Bryant, Sherrill Smith, Cecil Chandler, Johnny Rose, Cliff Harris, John Pendergrass,

Leland Wheeler, James Eubanks, Erwin Dillehay, and Robert Browning.

Missing today are: Wilkie, who as an assistant chief died in an accident in the line of duty; Bailey, who died in 1972 while serving as a fire chief in Florida; Allen, who resigned and is now a Durham County rabies inspector; Jackson, now a trucking firm employee, Andrews, who left several years ago to take a job with the county; Daniels, who retired in April because of disability; and Blake, who resigned several years ago and is now an employee of Nello L. Teer Co.

Still on duty are: Levy, now a driver; Capt. Hunt; driver Henry McDade; Capt. Alvester Bryant; Assistant Chief Smith; Capt. Cecil Chandler; Capt. Johnny Rose, driver Cliff Harris; Murray; driver John Pendergrass; Capt. Ernest Davis; driver Curtis Cannada, Assistant Chief Wheeler, Capt. Eubanks; Capt. Dillehay, and Browning, now the chief mechanic.

In a recent interview Capt. Hunt said, "we've been fairly close during all these years. We have a pretty good spirit. We've stayed here pretty good."

See FIRE FIGHTERS, Page 7

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—FIRE FIGHTERS—

Continued from page 6

In 1948 the top pay was \$228 a month. Some of the World War II veterans were working under the GI Bill. Others had already taken advantage of the bill.

"The money we received from the city totaled \$130 and was supplemented through the GI Bill to add up to a total of \$228," Levy said.

In January, 1948, there were just four fire stations: No. 1 at 212 N. Mangum St., No. 2 at Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co., No. 3 on East Main Street at Elizabeth Street; and No. 4 on McMannen Street.

Now the department has 117 firemen, including a chief, five assistant chiefs, 22 captains, five inspectors, and three state-certified instructors.

The chief of the department now is Joe Letzing, who took over last year when Cosmo Cox retired.

"When we came on we had nine trucks and no reserves. Today we have 13 trucks and three trucks in reserve," said Hunt.

In 1948 there were no black firemen but today there are 11.

All of the four fire stations have been replaced and three new ones have been added.

During the 25 years the

department has acquired better and safer equipment including asbestos gloves, wash and wear uniforms, and special boots. Truck engines have been replaced with diesel units. Physical fitness requirements are now higher, and physical standards in the schools are much higher.

Fire fighting is more scientific, and on the average there is less damage in house fires in the city, firemen say.

Annexation has expanded the city and firemen have more territory and property to cover.

Although numerous men have been injured during the past 25 years only one, Assistant Chief Wilkie, has been killed.

Said Levy: "Our over-all working conditions are now

better. This would be hours worked, salaries, fringe benefits and a longevity program."

Murray expressed the opinion that most of the 25-year veterans would remain fire fighters until they reach retirement. "I like to think that we are all dedicated men who know our job and have a love and interest in this community," he said. — Durham Morning Herald by George Laugee

Fire Chief Lee Honored

CHARLOTTE — Charlotte Fire Chief John E. Lee has been elected second vice president of the Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs.

The association is made up of about 600 fire chiefs from 10 southeastern states. Its annual

convention was held in St. Petersburg, Fla. recently. It is one of six divisions of the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

Lee came to Charlotte from Oak Ridge, Tenn., about two years ago.

R.C. Moore Honored

NEW BERN -- July 2 was Royce Clayton Moore Day in the City of New Bern.

The observance was declared by Major Cecil King to honor Moore for his 26 years as a fireman, 12 of them as a department Captain.

In addition to the proclamation the firemen gave the retiring officer a supper at the fire station.

Moore while captain attended several schools on fire fighting including: pump school, officer training school, arson investigation school, firearms and explosives school, and fire and rescue training.

Moore said that he plans to fish "most of the time".



OLD AND NEW -- Royce Clayton Moore (right) is retiring after 26 years of service, he is being replaced by Robert Boyd. --The Sun-Journal Photo

Gas Can Blamed For Fire

NEW BERN -- A spare gas container being carried in the rear of a car is blamed by Wilmington Fire Department officials as being a cause of a spectacular fire recently in a four-car crash on Princess Place Drive.

Officials said that the container of gas probably overturned and caused a gasoline fire following a traffic accident. The fire caused the car's main gas tank to rupture sending flames "as tall as the power line wires."

Firemen report no injuries.

The four-car chain reaction crash was reported at 6:10 p.m. on Princess Place Drive between Barkley Hills Drive and Market

Street.

Police report that a car failed to stop and struck a vehicle halted at the stop light on Market Street. A chain reaction followed, according to police, in which two other halted vehicles were involved in the crash.

The first vehicle hit suffered the fire, according to fire department officials. The vehicle was reported driven by Arnold Sweat, 19, of 715 Swann St.

Two other halted cars were driven by Julius Jackson, 65, of 5 Lynn Ave., and Marian S. Daniel, 61, of 2214 Plaza Drive, according to police records.

Police identify the driver of the

vehicle which failed to halt as Terry L. Millard, 18, of 239 North 26th St. He was cited for following too close by police.

Engine Company 2 and 3 of the fire department responded to the fire.

"Flames were 20 - 30 feet high," said one fireman. "We were mighty lucky."

Police estimate total damages at \$3,200.

Crush all smokes dead out in an ash tray. Careless smoking costs countless lives and millions of dollars in fire loss every year.

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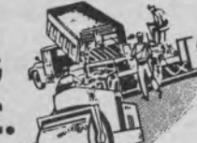
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