



THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

FINAL

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These Are The Faces Of Firemen Hurt Fighting Blaze, Blast



Capt. C. J. Baldwin



Asst. Chief G. L. Barnett



Fireman R. L. Blackwelder



Fireman A. B. Caudle



Fireman L. G. Caudle



Fireman L. Q. Ferguson



Fireman G. L. Greene



Fireman T. C. Harliee



Fireman J. R. Jamison



Fireman F. L. Killian



Fireman R. C. Manies

Heavy Rains Trigger Explosion Injuring 13

Firemen Are Sought In Abandoned Building

By JOHN KILGO and EMERY WISTER
News Staff Writers

Rain from tropical storm Cindy was blamed today for a fire and explosion which rocked southern Charlotte yesterday and sent 13 men to the hospital.

The blast came as firemen tried to subdue a fire at The Charlotte Chemical Laboratories at 210 Templeton St. All of the injured except fireman George L. Greene were either in satisfactory condition or had been released from the hospital today.

The heroic rescue work of fireman Jim Jamison was credited with saving Greene's life. He is in fair condition. The fire injured more persons than at any time since August, 1929, when 21 were injured in a Belk's basement fire. The city's worst blaze occurred in 1914 when dynamite exploded in a barn, killing two and injuring seven persons.

\$20,000 DAMAGE
Officials estimated damages in the 4:10 p.m. explosion from \$15,000 to \$20,000. In addition, it is thought that as many as 200 automobiles parked in the area of the blast will require repainting.

Cause of the terrific explosion, firemen said, was the rain which touched off sodium hydroxide stored in vats.

G. W. Gilchrist, president of the Charlotte Chemical Laboratories, owners of the abandoned building where the explosion occurred, said the heavy rain cut through a protective coat of kerosene on top of the vats.

BEING TORN DOWN

The plant, abandoned for new quarters about three years ago, was in the process of being torn down. Only the walls remained, leaving the vats exposed to the rain.

The men injured are: Capt. C. J. Baldwin; George L. Greene, in fair condition; R. C. Manies; Al Caudle; F. L. Killian; Luther Caudle and R. L. Blackwelder, in satisfactory condition.

Treated and released were assistant chief G. L. Barnett, L. Q. Ferguson, Thomas C. Harliee and P. R. Jamison, firemen; policeman L. E. Greenwall and bystander Floyd N. Fowler Jr.

The hospital reported most of the men suffered burns to the upper portion of their bodies.

"All of the sudden she blew up," Asst. Fire Chief George L. Barnett said. "I just thank God that no one was killed. It's a miracle."

Greene and fireman Richard Harliee were injured.

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They Never Finished

He Played The Six—And Alarm Rang

By JULIAN SCHEER
News Staff Writer

There were eight men in Station No. 2 and it was 4:08 p.m. on a rainy day.

It had been a quiet day. Engine No. 2 had gone to an R. Morehead St. fire. Nothing big.

Engine No. 2 and Ladder No. 2 had gone to an apartment fire on E. Blvd. Minor.

It was drizzling outside now. W. C. (Bill) Brown Jr. sat at a card table in the upstairs lobby. He looked over at L. Q. Ferguson opposite him and smiled. It had been a rough game of hearts, but now Bill was ready. He led the six of spades. He had the queen backing him up. Then he'd get started on a string of diamonds, the two, three, four, five, six, eight, nine, king and queen.

BELLS RING

Bill Brown dropped the six—and two bells rang out. Ferguson, a wavy-haired, graying man, sat across from Brown. On Brown's right was George Green, his wife and glasses in front of him. On Brown's left was Frank Knight. The radio was tuned to the reconstruction of an old baseball game and they didn't pay much attention to it.

Downstairs on the main floor, Luther Caudle sat in the glass enclosed alarm room. Just outside the room was Capt. F. D. Alexander, a balding, stocky fire veteran with 25 years of service. He was walking from the back of the station to the alarm room when he was approached by J. K. Jamison. He stopped to talk.

GRABS PENCIL

Two bells rang—the alert from headquarters. Caudle snapped erect, grabbed a pencil, wanted to write the address from the radio report from headquarters.

Capt. Alexander moved to

the alarm room, just a few steps.

Jamison ran to the front of the station to Engine No. 2.

T. C. Harliee jumped to his feet. He had been watching television on a large set in the rear of the main floor. He moved swiftly to Engine No. 2.

Brown's card hit the table and the two bells rang. He jumped up and ran to the pole in the back hall of the second floor. It is out of the house first. Brown took the alarm room drop to get the alarm—300 block Templeton.

HITS POLE

Ferguson hit the pole in the lobby next to the card table. He drives the ladder. Green and Knight were next on the drop from the lobby.

Brown got the address, ran to the engine. Jamison had the engine started. It was 4:08—and the engine was moving out of the building. Jamison drove, Brown sat next to him. They pulled on their rain gear. Green and Harliee clung to the back of the engine, rain hitting them seconds later as the truck pulled completely clear of the building.

Ferguson had Ladder No. 2. See PLAYED on Page 2A

Playwright's Binge Corked By Police

By EDDY GILMORE

LONDON (AP)—Irish playwright Brendan Behan ended a wild three-day binge in a police cell this afternoon. The police charge was:

"Found drunk in a public place."

He will be brought to court tomorrow. His spree was a noisy non-stop performance of public and private gaudy singing, shouting, dancing and cursing that his alarmed wife said is sending him to an early grave. Behan drinks just about anything and everything. Only yesterday his wife Beahon pleaded over the telephone from Dublin:

TV Influence Jury Dismissed

WASHINGTON (AP)—The jury in the Richard A. Mack-Thurman A. Whitehead conspiracy case was discharged today after deliberating for more than 20 hours without reaching a verdict. U. S. District Judge Burnita S. Matthews discharged the jury from further deliberations after receiving a note from the foreman, Robert A. Bunker, in which he said the jury stood 11-1.

Mack, former member of the Federal Communications Commission, and Whitehead, a Miami lawyer, were accused of conspiring to rig award of Miami TV channel 10 to Public Service Television Inc.

"Please stop risking your life when you are so ill."

His father-in-law, artist Cecil French Salfield said:

"Brendan is a very sick man. His complaint is not all due to alcohol. Even the slightest drop of the stuff makes him very ill. To buy him a drink is a form of manslaughter."

Behan—author of two plays, "The Hostage" and "The Quare Fellow"—arrived in London Wednesday from Ireland where he had been dying out in a hospital. At London Airport he began sipping up drinks and shouting. With friends he breezed into downtown London and marched on the theater where "The Hostage" is playing. He

Long To Sue Time For \$2 Million

WINFIELD, La. (AP)—Louisiana Gov. Earl K. Long said today he will file suit Monday for damages in excess of two million dollars against Time Inc. for what he claimed were "slandering articles and pictures in Time and Life magazines." He said he expects his attorney, Joe Arthur Sims, to file the suits in 19th District Court in Baton Rouge. The announcement was telephoned to Mrs. Margaret Dixon, managing editor of the Baton Rouge Morning Advocate.

There was no comment on what material in the magazines Long referred to, but two of his legislative leaders—state Sen. B. B. Rayburn and state Rep. Jesse McClain—were upset last night when they read this week's issue of Life magazine.

They were particularly critical of a picture which showed the governor on the edge of a bed in a Corvair, La., motel last week in bed clothes and without his false teeth.

In a further comment on his planned vacation in the west, the 62-year-old governor said he would leave his Winfield farm for Shreveport, La., Saturday and then catch a plane for Fort Worth, Tex.

When he's sober or drunk, to listen to him talk, sing, recite is an unforgettable experience. Words and phrases pour from him in a bright torrent. Then he'll interrupt himself with:

"A drink or I'll die." That could be his epitaph.

Rocky River Leaves Banks

Special to The News
NORWOOD — Rocky River should be called Big Muddy today.

Heavy rains yesterday have caused reddish water to rise at much as 10 feet over their banks in some areas.

Low land areas are flooded, but no great damage has been done by the waters.

Asst. Police Chief Delma Sullivan said the townspeople are not worried about the flood, although the waters are still supposed to be rising. Town Clerk Dorothy Teeter reported the waters are the highest since Sept. 1946.

But long time residents can remember when the river was over the bridge two miles below town. There is no danger of its rising to that height now.

In Wadesboro Rocky River was 12 feet above its normal level in the northwest corner of Anson County late this morning.

At least one bridge on N. C. Highway 742 was under water, it was reported here. Highway 742 connects Wadesboro and Oakboro.

Our Weather

Fair and warm this afternoon, tonight and Saturday.
Low tomorrow morning 69
High today 90
Low today 69
High tomorrow 90
Sunrise today 5:15 a.m.; sunset today 7:40 p.m.
More Weather on Page 2A

He Went In, Saved His Pal

By JOHN KILGO
News Staff Writer

"You've seen pictures of an atom bomb going off . . . That's what this was like, only worse." Billy Brown—young, nervous and a fireman—told today yesterday's explosion that injured 11 firemen.

"It was a great ball of fire and it mushroomed and then there were great clouds of white smoke."

EVERYBODY SCARED

"I was scared. Everybody was. I was working the pump on the truck and the door was open and I dove in."

"We radioed back to headquarters. Send more trucks and ambulances, we yelled."

Jim Jamison, a fireman who was working with Brown, told of the explosion that injured his friend in these words:

"The thing exploded and the smoke was so thick you could have cut it with a knife."

"I went into the building because I thought I might be able to help someone."

"I yelled. 'Who's here? Who's here?' I couldn't see but I kept on hollering."

"At first no one answered. Then I heard someone in a weak voice, 'I'm here. I'm here.'"

"I still couldn't see but I told the boy to keep on hollering that I would find him."

FOUND HOLE

"I felt my way around and came to this hole in the floor. 'George Greene was in there. He couldn't see and he was weak. I got down under there with him and started crawling out with him.'"

"It was slow. Real slow. The smoke was still thick and you could hear people hollering for help. It was a weird feeling."

"I finally managed to make it to the door with George and then someone helped me get him out."

"When I got outside Luther Caudle, another fireman, was hysterical. His young brother, Al, was somewhere and we did not know where."

"He had been fighting the fire inside the building. 'Luther was hurt and he hollered: 'Al, Al. Somebody get in there and look for him. Where's Al?'"

"I went back into the building. Jamison continued. And looked for Al for what must have been five or 10 minutes