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On our desk is a recent issue of Cross Talk, a newsy trade publication that Carolina Telephone and Telegraph Company prints for the benefit of its many employees.

Among other things in the issue at hand is the story of how four of the firm's directory advertising salesmen were credited with saving the lives of three men at Atlantic Beach on June 12. The youths are John Byrd, Don Collier, Ed Lee and Bennie Harker.

The story carries their photographs, and the thoughts of this newspaperman went rushing back through the years — six years to be exact — as we spied Bennie's smiling likeness in the publication.

We'll never forget young Harker, nor will he forget us. Call it a coincidence, a miracle, a God intended thing, or whatever you like, Bennie will tell you that he is undoubtedly alive today because unusual circumstances which neither of us can explain in mortal terms came about.

The writer will simply detail the events, and let you decide whether a guiding hand directed the actions of this newspaperman on a tragic afternoon. We've never spent much time on tales of the supernatural, nor are we inclined to pay homage to superstitions. Even so, there was something exceedingly strange about the incident we're going to relate.

On the afternoon referred to, we were walking up Broad street — just as we had walked along that thoroughfare thousands of times before. As we got directly across the street from Kafer Memorial Hospital, something told us to cross over to enter that institution.

To say the urge was unusual is an understatement. Never before, so far as we can recall, had we ever visited the hospital without a definite purpose in mind. Occasionally we went there to see some friend who was ill. Almost always it was to cover a news story — usually a serious accident that the writer already knew about.

This time we didn't have the slightest inkling of an accident. As if drawn by a magnet, we crossed over, climbed the steps and entered the big front door.

Then, and not until then, we discovered that Bennie Harker had been in an automobile accident. His chest was crushed, and his condition was so desperate that he wasn't expected to live. We were told he needed the attention of specialists at Duke Hospital in Durham, but that he probably wouldn't survive an ambulance trip if one were attempted.

Forgive us for believing, if we need forgiveness, that God had placed us in the right spot at the right time. Thinking with clarity that isn't always typical of us, and probably wasn't of our own doing, we made the most of precious minutes.

Getting approval from the youngster's relatives and the attending physician, we called the control tower at Cherry Point and got through to the high command. Hurriedly we informed them of the dire situation here, and requested a mercy flight to Durham from New Bern's municipal airport.

A flying boxcar took off from the Marine Corps Air Station at once. It was large enough, of course, to accommodate a stretcher and attendants on the scheduled trip to Durham. Bennie was hurried to the airport in an ambulance. Another ambulance and a Highway Patrol escort was arranged for at Durham.

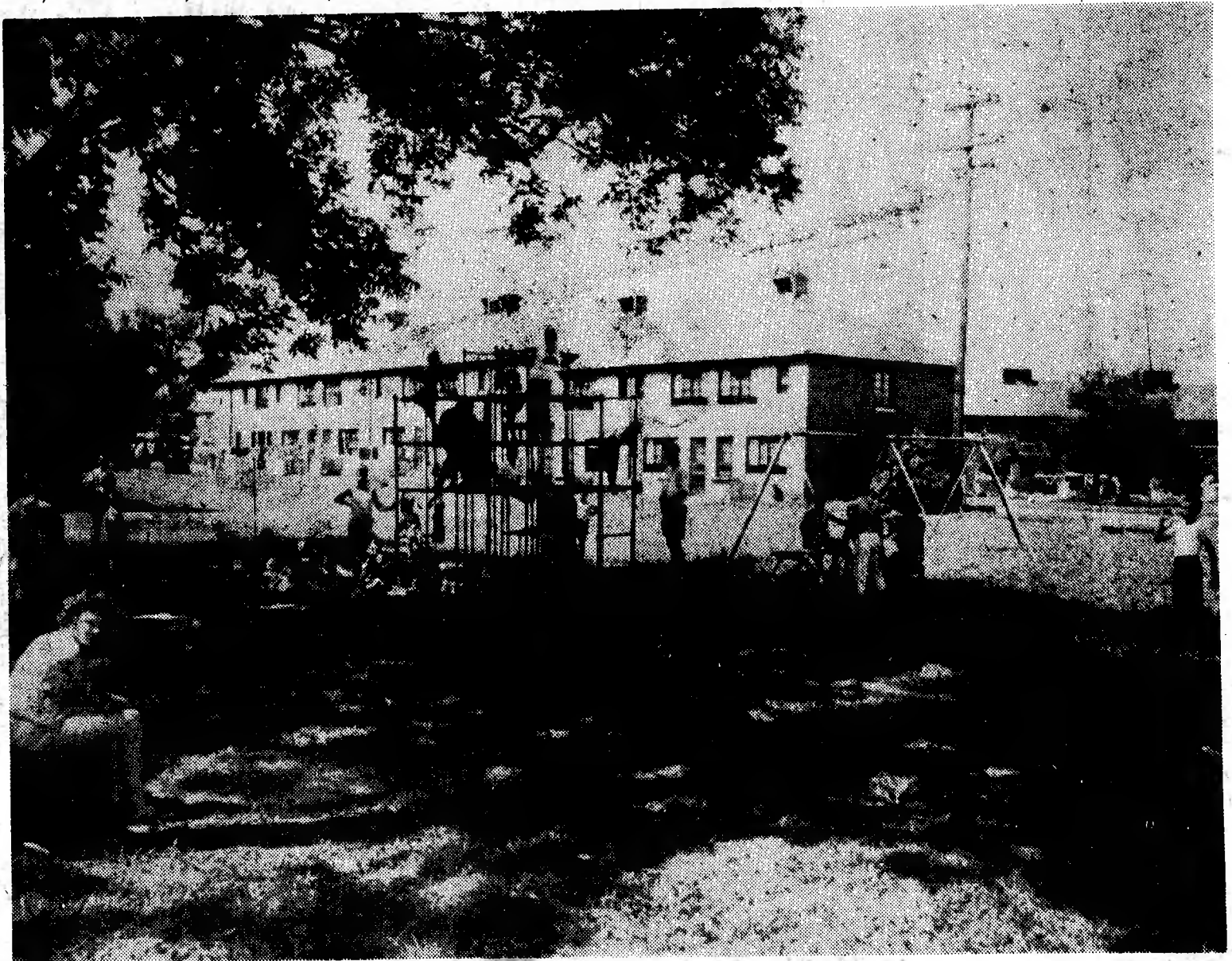
In a matter of minutes from the time we walked into Kafer Memorial Hospital, for no apparent reason, he was on his way. A surgeon was waiting when he reached an

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SWEET MISSES—New Bern always has emphasized history in its parades, and this float is a typical example of that emphasis. We'll let you guess how long ago this photograph was taken, after you identify Elizabeth Nunn, Betsy Warren, Martha Hurst, Florrie Gibbs, Martha Waters, Catherine

Waters, Rachel Raynor, Sallie Pat Kafer, Annie Kinsey Whitford, Cecil Lupton and Catherine Matthews. Our thanks to the countless Mirror readers who have expressed delight at these pictorial excursions into the past.



LOADS OF FUN—Pictured here is the Trent Court summer playground provided for happy youngsters by the New Bern Recreation Department. John Anderson has been its director, and did a fine job. Equally efficient at the other

local playgrounds in their roles as directors were Carolyn Nelson, Eloise Reel and Shirley Rogers. The season ends today, but the memories will linger much longer.—Photo by John R. Baxter.