



Firemen Battle Currin's Warehouse Blaze Saturday Night

(Staff Photo)

Warren Warehouse Destroyed By Fire; Firemen Are Injured

By KAY HORNER
News Editor

In the aftermath of one of Warrenton's worst fires in recent years, Warren County fire officials yesterday began to assess the damage from a fire Saturday that completely destroyed Currin's Warehouse, injuring six firemen, one seriously.

The injuries all occurred when a wall of the 60,000-square-foot building, owned by W. J. Renn of Epsom, collapsed, trapping the firemen.

W. Dennis Harris, Jr. with the Warrenton Rural Fire Department yesterday was listed in stable condition in the intensive care unit of Wake Medical Center in Raleigh with burns, broken bones, and a punctured lung, according to Walter Gardner with the department.

Also injured, but treated and released from Warren Immediate Care Center, were Ronald Rivers, David Proctor, and Roy Pat Robertson, all with the Warrenton Rural Department, and Danny Bland and Samuel Ross with the Churchill/Five Forks Department.

Firefighters from the county's 13 departments, along with those from Littleton and Cokesbury, and departments from Vance County, and South Hill, Va. fought for more than eight hours to control the blaze, which posed an imminent threat to neighboring homes, the Doug Cockrell Mobile Home lot and stores in Hall's Spring Shopping Center.

Because the town's water system could not simultaneously supply hydrants the amount of water needed to keep a fleet of 11 tankers operating, water had to be brought in from the Hal Connell pond on the eastern outskirts of Warrenton and from hydrants at Cochrane Furniture Company north of town.

According to Gardner, the tankers, some making as many as 20 trips, hauled at least 275,000 gallons of water to the site.

A "quick dump system" in which trucks relayed water into holding tanks provided a ready supply of water for firefighters on the scene.

Firemen at first hoped to contain the blaze to the original portion of the building, used as a tobacco warehouse, but flames quickly spread to a newer addition where between 20,000 and 30,000 used tires and tire casings were being stored by Tar Heel Tire of Warrenton.

"That still depresses me," Gardner commented. "I thought we had the fire stopped, but then it broke through."

By the time the fire got to the tires,

the original part of the building had been leveled by the fire, Gardner said.

Gardner said arson is suspected in the fire, which started in the southeast corner of the building, and the SBI was in Warrenton yesterday afternoon investigating.

Considerable time and effort were spent to prevent the fire from spreading to an abandoned building nearby that at one time housed Warrenton Cotton and Fertilizer Co.

The N.C. Forestry Service brought in equipment to plow a border on the southern side of the warehouse to protect woods leading to residences on Halifax Street.

The losses from the fire were being compiled this week by O. L. "Butch" Meek with the County Fire Commission.

"Some of the departments are almost disabled as a result of equipment loss and injuries," he said. "Some of the departments did a year's worth of firefighting in one night. They were really pushed to the limit."

Warrenton Rural Department lost an estimated \$3,000 in equipment when a wall collapsed and other departments are reporting trucks with malfunctioning clutches and brakes and flat tires.

While area gas suppliers opened credit lines to supply trucks with gas, Meek said several departments were expecting gas bills between \$200 and \$300.

The coordination of firefighting activities among the estimated 250 firemen on the scene has been credited with containing the fire to the warehouse. Several local firemen this week said the Warren County Fire Association had been instrumental in providing training that led to the orderly and efficient use of men and equipment.

"The association has brought about unity in the departments in the county and a closer working relationship which includes countywide training," Gardner said.

In addition, local merchants and community volunteers banded together to provide food and beverages for firefighters.

"We are indebted to the stores which provided food and to those who took the time to prepare sandwiches for the firemen," Warren County Commissioner George Shearin, also chairman of the Fire Commission, said Tuesday. "So many citizens helped in various ways. It was truly a community effort."

Estimates of total damage to the building and its contents were

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Annual Pow-Wow Plans Outlined

The Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe has scheduled the 20th annual Pow-Wow for Friday and Saturday, April 19-20, at the Haliwa-Indian School at the Old Bethlehem Crossroad in Warren County, according to Chief W. R. Richardson.

Guest speaker for the event will be Ruth Dial Woods, assistant superintendent of the Robeson County Board of Education.

Registration for the two-day event will be held at 4 p. m. and 9 p. m. on Friday. The first dance is planned for that day at 7 p. m., and the Grand Entry will begin on Saturday at 11 a. m.

Trader booth space, available to Indians by invitation only, will be offered at a cost of \$40 for both days.

Prizes totalling \$700 will be awarded in dance competition.

Camping space will also be available.

Clark Promoted To Major's Rank

Secretary Joseph W. Dean of the North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety and Col. Jack F. Cardwell, commander of the State Highway Patrol, have announced the promotion of Robert A. (Bobby) Clark from the rank of captain to that of major.

Clark was promoted in ceremonies on April 3.

He started his career with the Highway Patrol with a 17-year stint as a trooper in Warren County beginning in March, 1960.

At the time of his promotion he was commander of Troop C in Raleigh and is now with zone operations in the patrol headquarters in Raleigh. Other duty stations have been in Hertford, Alamance, Buncombe, Catawba and Wake counties.

Clark is married to the former Rebecca Hundley, the daughter of Mrs. A. J. Hundley and the late Mr. Hundley of Norlina.

Nominees Sought For Wildlife Post

The term of office for District 3 Wildlife Commissioner David Allsbrook of Scotland Neck expires on June 30, and a public meeting will be held to choose nominees for the post.

The meeting will take place on Tuesday, April 16, at 7:30 p. m. at the

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Warren Guardsmen To Take Part In May Mobilization Exercise

The 87 National Guardsmen of Warrenton's Company C (-) 505th Engineer Battalion will join most of the state's 13,000 Guardsmen in a statewide mobilization training exercise in early May. "Hickory Response 85" scheduled for May 3-5, is the first statewide exercise of its kind in North Carolina Guard history.

Station Owner Is Recovering

Warrenton service station owner Forrest Richard Knisely is recovering from an injury sustained late Saturday afternoon when the bar on a tire changer came off and hit him in the face.

Knisely was back at his R & H Service Center Tuesday afternoon but emphasized that his work was confined to supervision due to the skull fracture, cuts, and bruises resulting from the accident.

Knisely was taken to Veterans' Hospital in Durham on Saturday when the accident occurred. He was treated there and released on Sunday afternoon. Knisely noted that he will not resume his normal work routine for several more days.

Warren Sales Tax Exceeded \$39,000

A recent report from the State Department of Revenue showed net collections totalling \$39,142.15 from the one and one-half percent sales tax in Warren County for the month of February.

Similar collections in neighboring counties were as follows: Franklin, \$90,618.60; Granville, \$122,121.98; Halifax, \$228,225.73; and Vance, \$182,480.63.

move Army guardsmen to Fort Bragg on Friday, May 3, for the three-day exercise. They will undergo processing for overseas replacement conducted by active duty personnel at Fort Bragg.

Air guardsmen will move to the main Air Guard Base at Charlotte's Douglas International Airport for combat loading on C-130 aircraft.

Governor James G. Martin will be among the officials observing the National Guard in

action. Governor Martin will visit Fort Bragg on Saturday, May 4, to observe guardsmen being processed for overseas replacement. Several Department of Defense observers will also be present.

The exercise is designed to test the ability of the Guard to respond quickly and effectively in the event of an actual call to federal duty. The 80th Division Maneuver Training Command, an Army Reserve unit headquartered in Richmond, Va.,

will evaluate and critique the exercise.

"Hickory Response 85" is believed to be the largest peacetime mobilization of reserve forces ever staged in the nation.

Two Chosen Here For Girls' State

Two high school juniors from Warren County have been selected to attend Girls' State at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro June 9-12.

Miss Amy Lynn Whitmore of Warren Academy and Miss Jennifer Paige Burton of Warren County High School are sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary for the week-long exercise in state government.

Miss Whitmore is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Vernon N. Whitmore of

Manson. At Warren Academy, she is a member of the cheerleading squad, softball team, Monogram Club and newspaper staff and is editor of the school annual. She is a member of the Young Memorial Presbyterian Church in Drewry.

The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Tommy Burton of Norlina, Miss Burton is a member of the Eagle Chorus and National Honor Society at Warren County High School. She is a member of the Zion United Methodist Church.



MISS WHITMORE



MISS BURTON



Members of Ridgeway Volunteer Fire Department are shown above with one of several holding tanks set up on the lot of Doug Cockrell Mobile Homes to

store water for fighting the warehouse fire that began shortly after 7 p. m. Saturday.

(Staff Photo)