

Rescue

Volunteers with the Hoke County Rescue Squad spend long hours with no pay, 'just because they care'

By Sherry Matthews

A good cause makes a strong arm
God befriend us, our cause is just.

-Shakespeare

The Hoke County Rescue Squad members could very easily use this as their theme because many believe that the cause they are devoted to and the service they perform is just.

According to John Melton, squad commander, the cause they are devoted to is "serving the people of Hoke County."

"It is not only our job and our responsibility to serve the people; it is, for most of us, our only reason for joining the squad," Melton said.

The rescue squad, which was established back in 1962, now has 14 members.

"We would like to have more, but it is hard to find someone who wants to give up a lot of their time to the squad," Buddy Dunn, a rescue squad member, said.

The members we have are both qualified and dedicated to their "second job", Dunn added.

"The squad operates on an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) level," Dunn said.

Of the 14 squad members, five are EMT's and three are ambulance attendants.

"Those guys who are ambulance attendants are just as important as the EMT's. They can operate any emergency vehicle and ride in the back with an EMT," Melton said.

Besides the EMT's and the ambulance attendants, the squad has four certified underwater divers.

According to Melton the divers are a very dedicated group of men.

"The divers pay for their own training and buy their own equipment. Nothing is provided for them," Melton said.

The divers, however, are not the only dedicated members of the squad.

"Each and every member is devoted to this cause," Dunn said.

"We are all in the business of helping people, and we take that very seriously," Kemp Crumpler, dive master for the squad, added.

The squad members put in a lot of hours in their efforts to do justice to the cause of "serving the people".

Each of the members maintains other jobs but according to Dunn their jobs don't suffer because of the squad.

"If we get a call during working hours, we will leave immediately," Dunn said.

Other jobs, families and spare



READY TO ROLL - The rescue vehicles stand ready to roll at a moments notice.

time don't get in the way of the squad doing their job.

"It doesn't really create any problems for us because we are doing what we want to do, and the ones close to us understand that," Dunn said.

But even with the skill and dedication, the squad does their job for no pay.

"There is no charge to those we serve, and there is no salary for the squad members. Our pay is the knowledge that we have helped someone who needed it," Melton said.

How then is the rescue squad able to service the community?

According to Melton the funds for the rescue squad come from several different places.

"We receive \$11,000 per year from the county; \$4,000 per year from the city and approximately \$1,200 from United Way; the rest comes from the donations we get from the people themselves," Melton said.

The squad adheres to a tight budget and decides as a group where the money should go.

"We do all the plumbing work as well as any mechanical or electrical work that we can. If we know how to do it, we do it," Dunn said.

Even with a tight budget, the members maintain one of the best equipped squads in the state, Dunn added.

"We are well equipped, and we are devoted and for those reasons

we do a good job on every call," Crumpler said.

Doing a good job is very important to the squad.

"We answer every call we get and are dispatched within one to two minutes after we receive the call," Melton added.

"Anything we can help with we don't mind doing, whether it's sweeping up glass after a wreck, assisting at a fire, or helping a heart attack victim," Crumpler said.

These are just a few of the calls the squad receives.

They also go out of the county to help other squads involved in search parties and drownings.

"Our squad works together as a team on every call. If we don't, then the squad is really worthless," Melton said.

According to Dunn, the squad is not worthless.

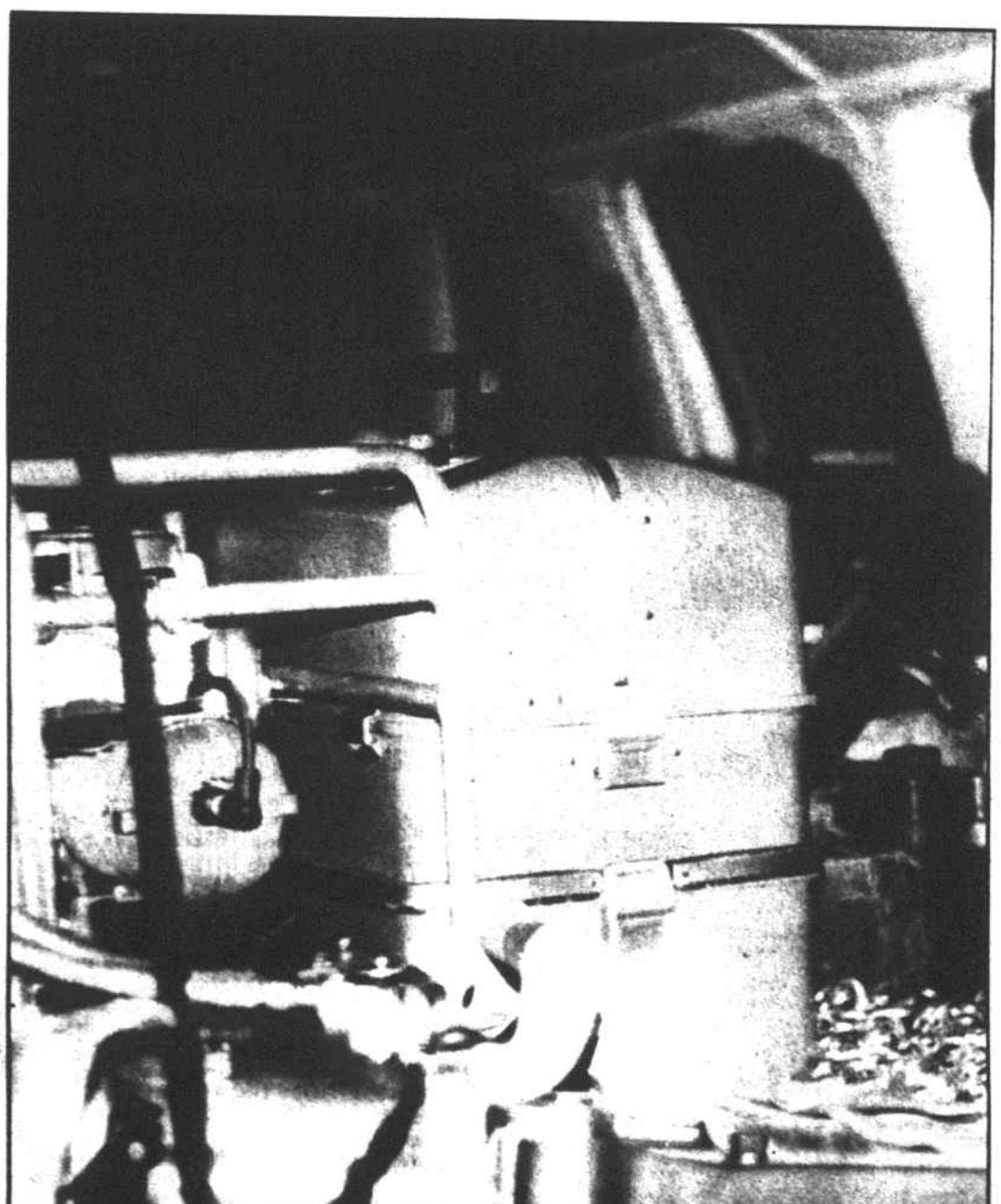
"I believe we provide a valued service to the community or at least we put forth every effort to do so," Dunn said.

"We dedicate lots of time to the community and to the squad itself and love every minute of it," Melton added.

"We have found our cause, and we are determined to serve that cause to the best of our abilities," Dunn said.



SHOWING OFF: Jim Wade, a member of the Hoke County Rescue Squad, shows off some of the equipment in one of the rescue squad vehicles.



LOADED DOWN: The back of this rescue vehicle is loaded with equipment used in rescue efforts.