

Fireman Harrison Dies Of Injuries Suffered In Gasoline Truck Blaze

3 Other Men In Critical Condition; *Times*
Coroner Will Not Charge Driver

JUN 16 1961

Robert G. Harrison, 62-year-old fireman burned Saturday when a gasoline truck caught fire and exploded on the Anthony Wayne Trail near Vinton Street Saturday died last night at 9:20 in Mercy Hospital. Mr. Harrison lived at 552 Lodge Ave.

Three other firemen are still listed in critical condition in Toledo Hospitals.

Dr. Harry Mignerey, coroner, said last night he would not bring a manslaughter—or any other—charge against the driver of the tandem gasoline truck that caught fire, exploded and set fire to four homes.

Cites Call To Firemen

He said the driver, Edward Baum, 49, Swanton, called firemen and that he cannot be blamed for injuries sustained by the firemen. He said the injuries were purely accidental and in the line of duty.

Mr. Harrison, a fireman with No. 5 Fire Station, Broadway and Logan Street, was one of the first at the fire scene Saturday. He was pulled from the edge of the fire by Charles Burns, 3161 Winston Blvd., fireman with No. 9 company.

Mr. Harrison had been with the fire division since Sept. 1, 1920, and last Wednesday received a pin for 40 years of service with the city.

When he first joined the division, Mr. Harrison served briefly at No. 10 and No. 11 stations and on Nov. 21, 1920 was assigned as hook and ladder driver at No. 5 station, a position he held until his death.

Served At Great Lakes

In 1942 Mr. Harrison joined the U.S. Navy and served as a fireman specialist at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station, Ill. In 1945, he returned to the fire division.

He was a lifelong resident of Toledo and attended Newbury School. He was a member of the Damascus Lodge, Scottish Rite, South Side Post of the American Legion and the Firefighters union.

Mr. Harrison is survived by his wife, Ida; sister, Mrs. Grace Lake, and brothers, Joe, Patterson, Warren and Charles, all of Toledo.

The body will be in the Coyle Mortuary, Broadway, next door to No. 5 Fire Station, where Mr. Harrison served most of his 40 years as a fireman.

Officials Defend Use Of Water On Truck

Firemen followed proper procedure by pouring water on the truck, local and state fire officials said yesterday.

Chief Arnold Papenhagen discounted the theory that the water touched off the series of explosions that spread fire over a wide area of the Trail-Vinton Street vicinity.

Water is advised as the only method to fight a gasoline fire by the petroleum companies themselves, the chief emphasized. He said company manuals specifically state that water should be used for cooling purposes to cut down the pressure of escaping fumes.

Explains Use Of Foam

The use of chemical foam is not recommended in the early stages of a gasoline fire, Chief Papenhagen added. Foam was used in later stages of the blaze Saturday on the Trail, he said.

Gasoline tankers are not supposed to explode, he said, and it is the purpose of an investigation now being conducted by the fire division and Standard Oil Co., to find out why it did. The truck that exploded was a Sohio vehicle.

The chief was supported by Joseph Guitteau, deputy state fire marshal, who said he is "100 per cent in accord with the way the fire was handled by the Toledo fire division."

"I'm sick and tired of hearing from all of the Monday morning quaterbacks," Mr. Guitteau remarked in reference to criticisms voiced about

the fire
T
Un
Cu
of
Wa
exp
to
U
by
lar
vol
Inv
A
que
sha
ves
eng
pre
A
his
sal
for
the
als
me
ing
Fi
Or
F
of
ret
Me
hat
list
De
T

of Injuries ck Blaze

the use of water on the tanker fire.

The National Board of Fire Underwriters was cited by Mr. Guitteau as endorsing the use of water on gasoline fires. Water must be used to eliminate expansion of fumes which lead to explosions, he said.

Use of foam was discounted by Mr. Guitteau because of the large volume of gasoline involved.

Invited To Join Probe

Mr. Guitteau said he was requested by the state fire marshal to take part in the fire investigation along with company engineers and the Toledo fire prevention bureau.

A preliminary report sent to his superiors, Mr. Guitteau said, includes a commendation for Toledo firemen for the way they "went in after the fire," along with praise for policemen, hospital and anyone taking part in the tragedy.

Fireman Genson Back On Critical List

Fireman William Genson, 39, of 2466 Scottwood Ave., was returned to the critical list in Mercy Hospital yesterday. He had been removed from the list earlier in the day.

Also in critical condition are Deputy Chief Ewald Bode, 59,

of 3410 Westbrook Dr., in St. Vincent's Hospital, and Glenn E. Carter, 27, of 3158 Ravenwood Blvd., Maumee Valley Hospital.

Sixteen other persons still in hospitals are reported in conditions ranging from fair to good.

Money Proposal Due

City Council Monday will be asked to authorize advancing money to pay hospital bills for firemen and policemen injured in the blast until their claims can be processed through the Bureau of Workmen's Compensation of Ohio.

Engineers from Standard Oil are now evaluating their findings, Chief Papenhagen said. It will probably be more than a week until the joint investigation produces concrete facts.

Police have reported that the accident apparently resulted when the rig jackknifed as the driver rounded a curve on the Trail near Vinton Street and that sparks from the skidding vehicle touched off the fire.

Microfilmed,
1980

Times

Burns Fatal



—Blade Photo

ROBERT G. HARRISON
Veteran fireman