

THE PENSACOLA NEWS

WEATHER FORECAST
Considerable cloudiness
with scattered thundershow-
ers through Tuesday. High
82-85. Low 70-73.

37 Are Dead After Blaze Near Milton

Prison Camp Fire 'Set Deliberately'



Shrouded Bodies Await Transfer to Morgue



Ashes Sifted for More Victims

★ ★ ★ Death List

BERRYDALE — The 37 dead in the fire that swept State Road Camp 12 Sunday night included nine white men and 28 Negroes, the State Division of Corrections said this morning.

The Negro victims and the county from which they were committed were:

1. Charles Edward DeLain, Orange.
2. Eddie B. Gable, Escambia
3. Earl Evans, Escambia
4. Johnnie Simmons, Escambia
5. Isac Robinson, Escambia
6. Drell Rivers Jr., Escambia
7. Felix Randall, Escambia
8. Charles Palmer, Palm Beach
9. Jesse Osburn, Gadsden
10. Lee Andrew Mitchell, Dade
11. Reginald Milton McGuire, Brevard
12. John Lee McFarlin, Escambia
13. Willie Nelson Leslie, Dade
14. Jesse Gray, Escambia
15. Bobby Lee Hall, Bay
16. Charles James Blossom, Pinellas
17. Archie Lee Chister, Martin
18. Lester Cleves, Dade
19. James Cunningham, Levy
20. Eugene Hamilton, Pinellas
21. James Hill, Volusia
22. Albert Ivery, Osceola
23. Mack Laster, Dade
24. Johnny Lewis, Broward
25. Tommy Day Smith, Gadsden
26. Albert Truluck, Jefferson
27. Ruben Williams, Gadsden
28. Joseph Wynder, Jackson-Calhoun

The nine victims identified as white were:

1. Vincent B. Dovico, Broward
2. Thomas Eugene Ard, Escambia
3. David Franklin Cole, Escambia
4. Donald Wayne Harper, Okaloosa
5. Ronnie Nichols, Escambia
6. Robert J. Henn Jr., Escambia
7. Earl Frank Hoffman, Leon
8. Harrell Arthur Harp Jr., Dade
9. George Edward Hall Jr., Dade.

Says Berrydale Guard

'They Panicked, There's No Doubt'

By BILL DINGWALL
News Staff Writer

BERRYDALE — "They panicked — there's no doubt about it!"

So explained Prison guard D. C. Nelson after a blazing inferno swept through the barracks-like prison compound and killed 37 inmates Sunday night.

Nelson was one of three guards on duty when the fire broke out minutes after a brawl erupted between a Negro and white prisoner.

Nelson said he believes the prisoners panicked when flames engulfed the compound.

"The door was open and we yelled for them to come out," said Nelson. "Some of them did, but most of them didn't."

Nelson said he heard a loud commotion in the compound around 9:30 p.m. as he was making his routine rounds.

He sprinted back to the compound and yelled for them to quiet down.

"But they kept raising cane and I guess they didn't hear me," he said.

Meanwhile guard A. O. Lovett was working the wicket (security enclosure) inside the compound.

"I knew he (Lovett) was having a tough time trying to calm them down," said Nelson. "So I walked back to the office and phoned for some help."

A short time later he emerged from the prison office and saw flames shooting from the windows of the compound.

"I ran back to the office and tried to phone for the fire department," said Nelson. "But the phone was dead, probably shorted out when the flames burned the electrical system around the barracks."

Nelson said a neighbor's phone was used to notify fire units at Whiting Field, Milton and nearby Jay.

Nelson, still shaken from the ordeal, said he watched as several prisoners poured out of the compound.

Some could walk; others couldn't.

Two inmates managed somehow to crawl out of the compound and later died a short distance away.

Nelson said he herded those who were able to move to a spot about 30 yards away and kept guard over them with a shotgun and pistol.

"That's my orders," he said. "Whenever there's a fire or anything, I'm supposed to march them down below the flag pole and put them in a circle."

Kirk Orders Investigation Of All Camps

By BILL PRIME
and ANNE SAUL
News Staff Writers

A fire that Sunday night took the lives of 37 convicts at the State Road Camp 12 near Berrydale, 20 miles north of Milton, was set deliberately by at least three prisoners, Louis Wainwright, director of the State Corrections Division, said late this morning.

Six other prisoners were severely burned and eight others made their escape outside the blazing inferno. The latter, officers said, made no effort to escape and were later taken to the Santa Rosa County jail at Milton.

Wainwright discounted possibility that the holocaust had been started during a racial disturbance at the recently in-

More prison camp stories are on Page 4B.

tegrated prison camp. Sixteen of the 51 convicts at the camp Sunday were white men brought there two weeks ago when prison officials integrated the facility.

Nine of the dead were white, 28 Negro, authorities said.

Earlier reports indicated that a Negro man and a white person had been fighting and that guards on duty had gone for guns to quell the disturbance when the fire began its tragic sweep through the ancient 40 by 91-foot building.

Wainwright arrived shortly after midnight with members of his staff and immediately began questioning survivors to determine cause of the fire.

Later this morning, Gov. Claude Kirk Jr. stepped into the picture by ordering Wainwright not only to probe the fire at the facility eight miles east of Jay, but also to extend the investigation into conditions at the state's 32 other road camps.

Kirk also sent his private Wackenhut investigators to the scene today.

Wainwright was told to make his complete report to the governor's office within 10 days.

Whether the fires were deliberately set to set the stage for an escape attempt or whether some of the disgruntled prisoners were using the arson as a basis for transfer to more elaborate confinement conditions such as the state prison at Raiford or elsewhere was not immediately known.

The building was moved to the site, prison officials said this morning, in 1940 but had been constructed a number of

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Only 14 Survive

'The Rest Are in There'

By BEN POOLEY
News Staff Writer

BERRYDALE — Scorched flesh filled nostrils as I shoved through a crowd of firefighters hurriedly but methodically bringing out remains of 37 prisoners who had perished in the flaming barracks that housed them only a few minutes earlier.

Twisted hands protruded from under white sheets as if still trying to escape searing heat that had just killed 37 of 51 white and Negro prisoners of the small state road camp eight miles east of Jay and 50 miles north of Pensacola.

Shock spread on the face of

Capt. Clarence Acree as he was told by Asst. Warden G. E. Mayne Jr.:

"Captain, eight are in the county jail, six at the hospital in Century and the rest are in there." He pointed at the smoking ruins of the prison barracks.

Dazed duty guards were unable to answer questions shortly after the disaster.

Coker Nelson, duty guard who had just completed his nine o'clock round, said it was less than eight minutes from the time the fire began until the building was gone.

He said: "The guards were

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Tony Knight's

Good Evening

Early risers claim they feel a fall note in the air! 'n would you believe that fishermen over the weekend had to put on sweaters 'n jackets to ward off the cool morning air?

Kinda kooky but nice.



Two Pensacolians, William M. Parker 'n Bob Thompson, are among the Aviation Reserve Officer Candidates now takin' trainin' at Naval Aviation School Command.

Parker is the son of the Ed Parkers of Star Lake 'n is married to the former Marsha Lawlis.

Thompson is the son of the F. P. Thompsons of Navy Point. They'll be commissioned ensigns on the completion of their training.

Drug domo John Harrell went to Atlanta on business 'n stayed at the new Regency Hyatt hotel which is attractin' nationwide attention.

He reports it's really something — you walk into the lobby 'n look up 32 stories to the sky.

There's a glass elevator to ride the guests up 'n down.

"Moose" Harling is back at his desk but he looks almost like a stranger in the editorial office.

He's been coverin' the Tallahassee political scene since the first of April.

Motor company "gal Friday" Mrs. Dee Dee Mathis is vacationin' in Chicago for a couple of weeks.

Remember TK chided the gals for wearin' their hair in curlers 'n wondered where they were headin' that was so important that they didn't care how they looked when out in public.

Well, one "completely happy wife and mother" wrote she was going to cook hamburgers on the patio with her husband.

She said she liked to look her prettiest for him cuz he brought her coffee to bed every a.m.

The happy wife said he came rite home 'n didn't stop for a brew with the boys or even play golf 'n she wanted to look her best for him.

TK salutes you happy housewife but we still

Turn to GOOD EVENING — Page 2A

War Is 'Stalemate'

Conduct of War Scored by Sikes

By DALE PULLEN
Washington News Bureau

WASHINGTON — U.S. Rep. Robert L. F. Sikes fired a loud salvo on the House floor today aimed at U.S. conduct of the Vietnam war.

The high-ranking member of the Military Appropriations Subcommittee and a major general in the Army Reserve listed five criticisms:

1 — If proper use was being made of combat forces already in Vietnam, there would be no need for additional U.S. troops.

2 — The coastal and delta regions in South Vietnam must be taken and held.

3 — War costs can be cut significantly.

4 — The war is a stalemate

contrary to claims by Gen. William C. Westmoreland, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara.

5 — The U.S. fights over the same ground too often.

Taking the salvo points in order:

Use of forces — Sikes said the U.S. has nearly 500,000 troops, the South Vietnamese (Army Republic of Vietnam) 600,000, Korea almost 50,000.

"But something is wrong either the training methods or with the leadership of the ARVN forces. We must find a way to effectively use the ARVN, perhaps in integrating them with U.S. units as we successfully did the Koreans in the

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Instant Editorial

THE FAST gun from the LBJ Spread is pretty quick on the trigger when the action is in the Congo. But in seven months, he and his Congressional cohorts were unable to figure out how to head off a railroad strike in the good ole U. S. of A.

Fort Walton Area

Mini-Mine Search Continues

By HAROLD KENNEDY
News Staff Writer

FORT WALTON BEACH — About 100 men continued today to search along the Gulf Coast from the Walton County line to Santa Rosa County for 14,000 quarter-sized military explosive devices reportedly dropped in Choctawhatchee Bay Saturday by an Eglin AFB plane.

Okaloosa County Sheriff Ray Wilson said about 1,000 of the bomblets with the exploding force of a large firecracker have been found thus far.

Reports said the "mini-mines" were being developed by the military to be scattered around posts in Vietnam in hopes the explosions, if touched off, would warn of anyone trying to sneak into the area.

A military spokesman said security on the devices had

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INSIDE

THE NEWS

● THE NATION'S biggest railroad strike in 20 years ties up commuter traffic. The White House says the strike already is cutting the flow of Vietnam war supplies Page 10B

● THE BLOODY rioting by Negroes in Newark, N.J., apparently has ended after five days of violence that left 24 dead, hundreds injured and destruction estimated at more than \$5 million. A policeman is killed in racial strife in nearby Plainfield Page 10B

● AMERICA'S SURVEYOR 4 spacecraft may have landed heavily on the moon. The spacecraft hasn't been heard from Page 10B

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HAZARDS IN CHOCTAWHATCHEE BAY

... an estimated 14,000 of these mini-bombs were jettisoned