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The South's Oldest Daily Newspaper

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Full Picture

Coverage Of
Fire On Pages

2-A and 3-A

Deep-Freeze Cold Grips Dixie; Fire Destroys Three Buildings

Five Hurt In Blaze

By RUDOLPH A. PYATT JR.
Staff Reporter

One of the worst fires in the history of Charleston destroyed three brick buildings on King Street yesterday.

Firemen braved 11 degree temperatures in a successful and heroic effort to prevent flames from spreading through an entire block in the midtown business area.

The three buildings, forming a triangle at the southeast corner of King and John Streets, were heavily damaged in the blaze reported to firemen about 8:25 a.m.

Destroyed along with several apartments, some of which were occupied, were the Capital Credit and Loan Co., Larry's Beauty Salon, the VIPs Lounge, a warehouse owned by Goldberg's Furniture Co., Crosby's Barber Shop and an empty store.

All except the barber shop fronted on King Street.

NEAR CHURCH

The buildings in the block bounded also by Meeting and Hutson Streets are about 150 yards from the St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, destroyed by fire Jan. 13, 1965.

Charleston Fire Chief Fred J. Snokes, terming the blaze one of the worst in the city's history, said he was unable to make an immediate estimate of damage but predicted it would run into the tens of thousands of dollars.

Despite extremely hazardous conditions under which the fire was fought, only five firemen required treatment for injuries. They were released after receiving treatment at the Charleston County Emergency Room.

CAUSE OF INJURIES

Bitter cold and icy pavement were direct causes of three of the injuries and a fourth resulted when one of the firemen suffered minor face burns from a flash flame.

Treated for overexposure and exhaustion was James Fryer; a sprained ankle, Herbert Hollins; strained elbow, Daniel Ennis; burns, Roy Evans; and pierced buttock, Calvin Cook.

Immediate cause of the blaze which threatened to wipe out an entire city block had not been determined last night.

Charleston City Police and fire inspectors continue to comb the immediate area of the fire in search of persons who might shed some light on the origin of the blaze.

Much of their investigation is

(See FIRE, Page 2-A)



(Staff Photo by Brinson)

RED-MASKED FIREMAN HENRY RICHARD PAUSES FOR COFFEE DURING KING STREET BLAZE

State Weather Claims 2 Lives

From Wire and Staff Reports

Record low temperatures in the Lowcountry coupled with snow and ice in the Piedmont and Pee Dee shocked South Carolinians for the second time within a week yesterday.

At least two deaths were attributed to the freezing temper-

atures. Robert Thames, 43, was found dead outside his home at Manning. Sheriff T. J. Jackson said Thames apparently froze to death. Manley Miles, 28, of Calhoun County, was found frozen to death near his home outside St. Matthews.

There was no let up in sight, according to the U. S. Weather Bureau.

Although the threat of snow and rain has subsided, the state experienced temperatures below zero in the Piedmont and below the teens in the lower regions yesterday. Temperatures started their skid downward again shortly after dark last night.

A Weather Bureau spokesman said low temperatures today would range from zero or below in the Piedmont and Pee Dee to 5 to 10 degrees along the coastal areas.

Brilliant sunshine and stiff winds were prevalent yesterday as the state remained locked in the grip of bitter cold temperatures that didn't get above freezing all day.

As a result, driving on most roads in the upper third of the state was hazardous without chains. The Highway Patrol reported late yesterday that all major routes were open to traffic.

Attached to the ladder by a safety belt, White manually operated the up and down motion of the hose. On the truck, another fireman mechanically moved him back and forth across the fire.

Snow and freezing rain ended in most of the state Saturday afternoon and early Saturday night, but by then coatings of ice already had formed on most roads. Only slight thawings occurred Sunday despite the bright sun.

In the coastal action, the 1st Cavalry troops established that the enemy blocking forces there were a combination of main force Viet Cong and the 18th Cavalry losses were 270 killed and 600 wounded.

The tempo of an Allied lunar new year offensive quickened elsewhere. U. S. 1st Infantry Division troops opened Operation Mallet 20 miles southeast of Saigon and South Vietnamese government forces launched nine new search and destroy operations in a variety of places.

In the coastal action, the 1st Cavalry troops established that the enemy blocking forces there were a combination of main force Viet Cong and the 18th Cavalry losses were 270 killed and 600 wounded.

Roads from Charleston to Columbia were splotched with ice most of the day making driving dangerous. The highway patrol reported that from Columbia west and north, roads were solid ice in the earlier part of the day.

From one to two inches of snow fell after midnight in the

Pee Dee area around Florence, Dillon, Bennettsville and Darlington.

Part of this area was still crippled from Tuesday's ice storm. Dillon was still without power at schools as well as in rural areas as was parts of Marlboro County.

The general snow area, while

concentrated in the northwest part of the state, spread eastward to the coast in the upper portion bordering North Carolina.

Eastern areas got only a light coating, but this caused many back country roads to become hazardous.

Schools in Darlington County

were closed today. School officials said the holiday was called because of the condition of school bus roads. Some schools in Chesterfield and Marlboro will also be closed.

Other schools were expected to follow suit but did not plan any announcements until this morning.

It was extremely doubtful if schools would be open in the Dillon area. It was reported that some buildings still were without power.

Many upstate schools were ordered to remain closed today until road travel is less hazardous.

The Weather Bureau forecast temperatures in the upper 30s for Monday in a large part of the state, and the highway patrol said this should enable the sun to thaw out most of the roads.

The patrol said it had reports of only a few minor road mishaps due to weather, with an occasional slide into a ditch by a skidding auto. Patrolmen said big trucks were moving all day (hitting 30 miles an hour) and 10-degree temperatures.

At least one fire hydrant had its water freeze. Firemen thawed it out by piling light

ing kerosene over the wood and lighting a little bonfire.

On April 19, 1925, six buildings and several private apartments here yesterday was the most destructive blaze for the King Street shopping district since 1925, City Fire Chief Fred C. Shokes declares.

Yesterday's blaze will long live in memories of Charleston firemen.

"I've been in the fire department for 41 years," Chief Shokes declared, "and this was the coldest and most hazardous battle I've ever waged against a fire, due to the high velocity wind (hitting 30 miles an hour) and 10-degree temperatures."

This fire in 1925 raged for five hours before being brought under control.

Yesterday's blaze, only a couple of blocks south, from the scene of the 1925 blaze, was re-

(See SHOKES, Page 11-A)

Tempo Picks Up In U.S. Offensive

SAIGON, South Viet Nam Vietnamese division, a U.S. (AP) — U.S. 1st Cavalry, Air Army spokesman in Saigon reported. This is the same division regulars at Bong Son on the bloody fighting at Ia Drang central coast Sunday and B52 Valley in November. The division has three regiments.

A 1st Cavalry spokesman said a 1st Cavalry spokesman said troops counted 232 Communist dead after three days of sharp fighting. He added, however, that as many as 475 Communists may have been killed in combined land, air and artillery attacks. The Americans captured 77 Viet Cong, the spokesman said.

The 18th Regiment, the spokesman said, has between 900 and 1,000 men.

In Ia Drang Valley, about 110 miles west of Bong Son, the North Vietnamese lost about 1,300 dead, U. S. official say. The 1st Cavalry losses were 270 killed and 600 wounded.

For Fireman White 'It Was The Worst'

By F. W. BARNES JR.
Staff Reporter

Amid the bitter cold and raw wind, fireman Charles E. ("Buddy") White III climbed 65 feet up a truck-based ladder to shoot water down on yesterday's King Street fire.

He was the first to ascend the ladder. It was less than an hour since he had reported for duty at the Compton Street hook and ladder station.

Attached to the ladder by a safety belt, White manually operated the up and down motion of the hose. On the truck, another fireman mechanically moved him back and forth across the fire.

Snow and freezing rain ended in most of the state Saturday afternoon and early Saturday night, but by then coatings of ice already had formed on most roads. Only slight thawings occurred Sunday despite the bright sun.

(See WHITE, Page 11-A)

Shakes Calls Fire Worst Since 1925

By LAURENS H. IRBY
Staff Reporter

A fire that damaged at least five businesses, two empty buildings and several private apartments here yesterday was the most destructive blaze for the King Street shopping district since 1925, City Fire Chief Fred C. Shokes declares.

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