

## Volunteer Rescue Squads Here Perform Outstanding Service In Times Of Disaster Or Emergency

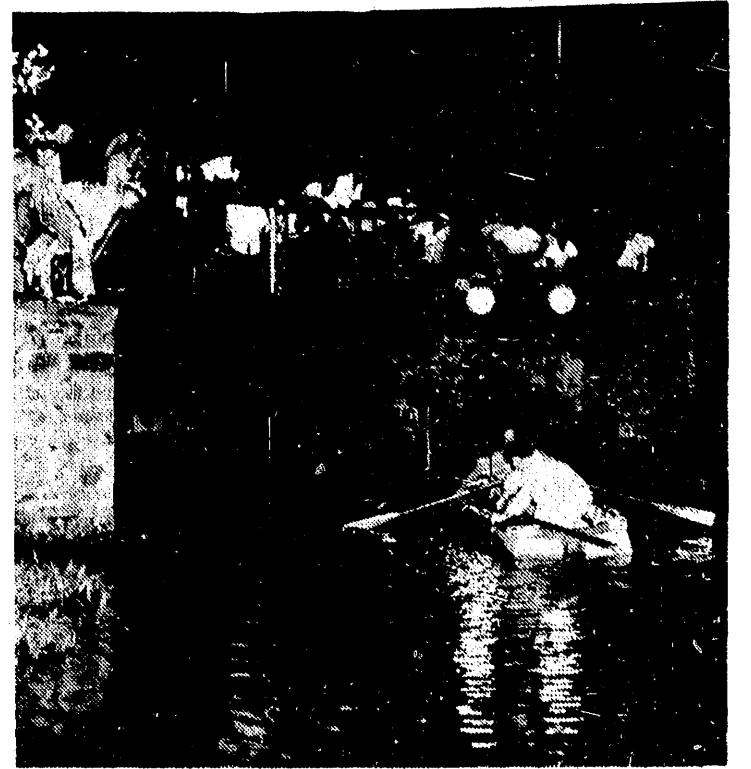


From a \$350 to a \$35,000 investment in equipment in nine years tells the story of how Liberty Rescue Squad has grown. Some of the major pieces of equipment are shown above with members of the squad. Altogether Trenton's squad has two ambulances, a mobile hospital and tow truck, a rescue truck

with boat trailer, and a power plant truck that has been on the scene of every major disaster in the area. The squad has a reputation for its work during the South Amboy explosion in 1950 and the Woodbridge train wreck in 1949. Most of the money for the equipment has been donated by Trenton residents during the squad's annual drive in August.



Testing communications between a walkie-talkie radio set and their Union Rescue Squad truck are left to right, John Zallis, James Abbott, Morgan VanHise and Stanley Harbort. Abbott, a divisional chief in the Inter-State Marine Association, is considered to be one of the best water rescue men in the volunteer business. He and VanHise were the heroes in rescuing four boys trapped in river ice at Trenton a year ago last February.



This scene at Baker's Basin is the all too familiar picture of rescue squad operations at the scene of a drowning. Unless the victim is taken from the water within six or seven minutes, the operation becomes the grim search for the body. The search may last for hours or days although local squads have developed know-how in finding submerged bodies with underwater lights, dyes, diving equipment and a better knowledge of underwater currents.

## Rescue Squads Ready To Go At Any Hour Of Day Or Night

### With Nearly 400 Units, New Jersey Has More Life-Saving Workers Than Any Other U. S. Area

"Thanks, you saved my life." For fewer words than that more than 7,000 of our friends and neighbors across the state jump out of bed at all hours of the night, drop work or play, and often risk their necks on storm-lashed roads, flooded streams or ice-covered canals and rivers.

They extricate mangled bodies from the ever-increasing number of highway crashes, become blood-soaked themselves as they expertly work against the seconds that mean life or death, or spend the chilly night hours crouching in a boat, their arms aching from rocking the grapping iron they hope will bring up the body of a drowning victim.

At the same time most of them have been called upon at least once to rescue a cut from a tree, assist in childbirth on one of their routine hospital transportation calls, or maybe, like one local squad, to fish an abandoned artificial limb from the canal.

These things are all in a day's, or night's, work for New Jersey's nearly 400 rescue and first aid squads which we've come to take for granted during the past 20 years.

### N. J. Leads Nation

New Jersey now has more of these organized squads than any other state — one reason why most hospitals in the state no longer maintain ambulances.

The decentralized squads can arrive at an accident scene faster to save the minutes that may be the difference between life and death and mean fewer moments of agony for the injured. Some boast they can reach an accident within a mile of their station within three minutes.

At the same time, the squads linked by telephone and often by short-wave radio, can concentrate an impressive array of equipment and manpower at the scene of any major disaster within an hour.

Over the years they have compiled an enviable record for such large scale cooperation. Volunteer first aiders had a temporary hospital in operation by the time the first boatload of survivors reached the beach when the Morro Castle burned off the New Jersey coast in 1934. They did good work at

the Hindenburg crash at Lakehurst, the South Amboy explosion, the Woodbridge train wreck and the Elizabeth airplane crashes.

### Belmar Was First

Belmar takes credit for organizing the first squad in the state and the New Jersey State First Aid Council dates from 1928 when it functioned along the Jersey coast with five first aid squads.

The State Council has by this time become the coordinating agency for 235 of the squads, about 7,500 first aiders and the more than 8,000 members of their auxiliaries — an impressive total about the size of an infantry division.

Several thousand of these first aiders will converge on Trenton two weeks from today for the annual meeting of the State Council. The all-day program of lectures, demonstrations and exhibits will begin at 10 a. m. and last until 6 p. m.

### Trenton To Be Host

They will come from all 13 districts into which the state has been divided. The Trenton area which comprises the 9th District will be host to the meeting.

Last year the state organization, which has its headquarters in South Plainfield, totaled up the following statistics compiled by its member squads:

Altogether they answered 24,675 emergency calls, made 42,069 transportations and responded to 9,888 miscellaneous calls, cared for 103,759 patients and traveled 1,308,833 miles. It is estimated they have nearly \$9,000,000 invested in buildings and equipment.

That multi-million dollar figure is impressive but it doesn't mean that the first aid and rescue squads are rolling in wealth. On the contrary most of them lead a set of hand-to-mouth existence dependent on the annual fund raising drives they conduct in their communities.

### Ambulance Costs Up To \$25,000

Their wealth is in the shiny ambulances, the squad trucks, resuscitators and oxygen equipment that can ring up the \$25,000 sign almost before the first aiders can check through their list of "needed" equipment. Almost all of them

have an unending "want list" of equipment they feel might help them to do a better job. It's just their nature and they make no apologies for wanting the best for their communities.

All of them started with a whole lot less than \$25,000. Take two local rescue squads—which usually have all the equipment of a first aid squad plus the additional equipment for water rescues—for example.

### Liberty Squad

Trenton's Liberty Rescue Squad was organized in 1947 by two members of the Police Department and two others who chipped in to buy a 12-year-old ambulance for \$350. The man who drove the ambulance usually paid for the gas.

Today Liberty owns around \$35,000 worth of equipment—two ambulances, 1948 and 1955 models; a 24-foot trailer that serves as a mobile hospital unit, a panel truck to tow the trailer; a power plant truck that has been used to supply power and light to hospitals during emergencies; and a marine rescue truck that tows two 14-foot steel boats with outboard motors, plus the smaller items that go with each unit. The insurance on members and equipment, alone amounts to \$2,000 a year.

Union Fire Company Rescue Squad at Titusville has had an equally spectacular growth since it was organized in 1943. At its first meeting it boasted a set of grappling hooks donated by the county and a portable generator. It lacked transportation until a local resident sold the squad his one-time meat delivery truck at nominal cost. Although painted fire engine red, the truck was still familiarly known as "the meat wagon."

When members found a boat during high water, the rescue squad was set to operate as planned. By this time the squad has a 1953 ambulance, a special rescue truck to tow its boat trailer and the latest types of life-saving equipment.

There are close parallels in the histories of the other 10 squads in the local district. In most instances it is a case of a few determined men seeing the need for first aid facilities and the community pitching in with funds and very often donations of time and labor to help build the necessary facilities.

### Other Squads

That is currently happening in Pennington where land has been

### Liberty And Union Perform Notable Services Here

donated for a garage for the American Legion First Aid Squad, the materials are being furnished at cost and local builders are donating their efforts.

Lawrence Township Emergency First Aid Squad is currently conducting a drive to buy an auxiliary ambulance to save wear and tear on its larger vehicle. The 23-man squad which has built its own headquarters in the rear of the Lawrence Road Firehouse also is asking help to enlarge the garage.

Allentown Rescue Squad is the third squad in the 9th District equipped for marine work. Other first aid squads are: Rusling Hose in Hamilton Township, Pennington Road, Wrightstown, New Egypt, Hightstown Fire Company, Princeton No. 1 Ambulance Corps and Hopewell Fire Department's Ambulance Company.

The 11th Ward Ambulance Corps of Trenton performs similar work within its area, but like more than 100 independent squads in the state, is not affiliated with the State Council.

The Lambertville Ambulance Association with one ambulance and the Lambertville, Rescue Squad with two ambulances belong to the 10th District of the State Council.

### Munder Heads Liberty Unit

John E. Munder Sr., chief of Liberty Rescue Squad, is vice president of the 9th District and as such represents the local squads on the State Council headed by William A. Mathews of Fanwood.

Malcolm R. Joiner of the Washington Crossing-Pennington Road, captain of Union Rescue Squad, is the district chairman.

Both Munder and Joiner chose police work as their main occupations and both played a leading role in forming their respective squads.

A member of the Trenton Police Department for 30 years next month and an officer for the past six, Munder is now a desk lieutenant at Second Precinct Headquarters. Both his sons—John Jr., assistant chief of the Liberty squad, and William J., an active member—also are members of the police department and form the only father-son trio on the force.

### Pooled Funds To Start

Munder, who lives at 1124 Lambert Street overlooking the Delaware River yacht basin; LeRoy Fischer, a Trenton fire alarm operator, William Worthington and Joseph Burton were the four Trenton residents who pooled their resources in 1947 to start Liberty Rescue Squad. They realized the city was sadly in need of an organization which could provide equipment and trained assistance in saving lives along the waterfront.

The squad purchased its first ambulance from the Bucks County Rescue Squad and kept it along with its boat and other equipment at Worthington's garage at Parkside and Homan Avenues. More recently the squad has purchased a large lot near Munder's home where it parks its mobile hospital. Other equipment is now garaged in the Switlik building of Stokely Avenue.

Like others who find time to devote to first aid squads, Munder has plenty of other things to do. He had to resign as welfare chairman of the Trenton Civil Defense

### Sunday Thoughts

It is never safe to look into the future with eyes of fear. — Harriman.

Let us walk in the light of the Lord. — Isaiah 2:5.

Never despair, but, if you do, work on in despair. — Burke.

One thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see. — John 9:25.

The secret of success in life consists in knowing how to change men's minds. — Crane.

Council "simply because there aren't enough nights in the week." In addition to his police and rescue squad uniforms, he has a uniform for Crescent Temple's safety patrol. He also is a member of Ashlar Lodge No. 76, F & AM; Trenton Forest, Tall Cedars of Lebanon; Trenton Consistory of the Scottish Rite, and Advent Lutheran Church.

### Joiner, Too, Is Busy Man

Chief Joiner also has to stop and think which cap he's wearing at any given time. In addition to his squad captain's cap, he also is capped as Hopewell Township's chief of police and dog catcher, township chairman of civil defense, deputy director of Mercer County Civil Defense and Senior Ranger at Washington Crossing State Park.

Before the days of Union Rescue Squad, Joiner was able to save a young girl's life because of his knowledge of artificial respiration. The girl had been pined out of the canal at Washington Crossing by her swimming companions.

From that time on Joiner campaigned for life-saving equipment and trained personnel to operate it, but it took three successive drownings in the Delaware River during the Summer of 1943 to bring community action.

### Bucks Squad Helped

On one occasion the community was completely unaware that a drowning had taken place in front of the Titusville Elementary School. The Bucks County squad arrived from Croyston and started the search. By 2 o'clock in the morning two members of the squad exhausted from hours of rowing went to Bud Holcombe's house to see if they could borrow a motor for their boat. Holcombe notified a neighboring fireman, Frank Cooper, who wanted to sound the local fire siren to bring help.

"No thanks, we'll have a fresh crew of trained men here for the morning shift," said one of the Croyston men, who also said he was surprised at the absence of the usual crowd at a drowning.

About a month later the Washington Crossing and Titusville firemen were taking steps to organize the first rescue squad in Mercer County. The Bucks County squad was helpful with advice. And three years later the Union men gave a helping hand to the new Liberty squad.

Both squads are members of the Inter-State Marine Association which can summon 37 pieces of equipment from both sides of the Delaware for an all-out emergency.

### Have Saved Many Lives

Organized to save lives, the local squads have done that many times. One of the most spectacular rescues probably was the one a year ago last February. Two members of the Titusville squad chopped a path through 1,500 feet of river ice to rescue four boys marooned in a boat off the Trenton shore. Nearly 2,000 persons watched their efforts in the sub-freezing weather after a National Guard helicopter was unable to effect a rescue.

It was dark before James Abbott and Morgan VanHise reached the stranded boys. They were recommended for Carnegie medals for their heroism that day, but many lives are saved with far less drama. A motorboat conks out, a boy becomes panicky as his boat heads for rapid water and a boat from the rescue squad arrives in time to avert what might have been a tragedy. A boat upssets and the occupants are brought ashore by the rescue squad. Sometimes those rescues go almost unnoticed.

### Must Act Fast

Although several squads may reach the scene of a river drowning within minutes after they are alerted, their efforts usually become a grim search for the body of the victim or victims.

This is true because of a fact the general public doesn't realize—a body under water for longer than six or seven minutes is generally considered beyond reviving. If persons at the scene can recover the body in less time than that, then there is a fighting chance that the resuscitators and oxygen equipment with which the squads are equipped can save a life.

Chief Munder points out the first aiders attempt to restore

breathing if a victim's body has not become rigid. "But frankly, that's more for the benefit of the survivors than the victim, if the body has been in the water over the time limit."

Chief Joiner, who always refuses to give up hope until a medical doctor has pronounced the victim dead, concedes that he has never succeeded in reviving a victim immersed beyond the time limit.

"But there's at least one case in our records that must have been pretty close to the time limit," he says. That occurred in the Summer of 1950 when a train struck a car at Titusville's lower canal bridge and knocked the driver into the canal. Minutes elapsed before his body was found and brought to shore and the Rescue Squad's resuscitator put to work. But the victim lived.

### Rescue Techniques

The squads have developed a number of techniques in locating the bodies of victims.

Liberty uses bags of surplus Navy yellow and green stains to indicate the probable direction in which a body may drift.

"There are certain parts of the river where the surface water travels in one direction and the water on the bottom in another. And in Rancocas Creek, for example, you have to remember that the flow can be in either direction, depending on the tide," says Munder.

Other factors the veteran rescuers take into consideration are the type of clothing the victim was wearing (air trapped in buttoned clothing will partly support a submerged body and cause it to drift farther), what and when the victim ate, the time of year and temperature of the water.

### Abbott Is Expert

Titusville's "Jimmy" Abbott, who literally grew up on the river and who has become well-known locally as a motorboat enthusiast, is generally conceded to be one of the best in the business when it comes to locating a body. He is a divisional chief in the Inter-State Association and usually takes charge of river rescues between Trenton and Lambertville. More often than not he takes his own boat to the scene.

After several squads had worked for more than an hour at one drowning scene, Abbott arrived with the Titusville squad, studied the situation for a minute, then said: "I think you'll find the body there." And that's where it was found a few minutes later.

Although all members of rescue squads are trained in the various phases of rescue work—

(Continued on Page 10, Part 2)

## On Job During Flood



Liberty Rescue Squad's 24-foot trailer which serves as an emergency hospital unit became familiar to hundreds of residents in Trenton's western section during last August's flood. The trailer was in operation as a first aid station at Clearfield and Mt. Vernon Avenues for nine days straight. Squad members taking part in a practice session above are: Benjamin Falkenberg, squad president; Miss Elizabeth Lakatosh and Mrs. Beatrice Preston, two of three registered nurses on the squad; Henry Merovich and, on the litter, Anthony Pugliese.

Hooking their boat trailer to the special tow truck, these three members of Union Fire Company Rescue Squad at Titusville are Charles Bright, foreground, Olaf Harbort and Robert Miller.



Always on stand-by status at the New Jersey State Fair, members of Liberty Rescue Squad thought they had the real thing here. The performer who blew himself out of a metal box with dynamite—all part of the act—was knocked unconscious by the blast. He responded quickly to treatment.

## Experts In Saving Lives



There are 18 active members on the Liberty squad's roster. Most of them appear above. They are, left to right: Front row, Mrs. Beatrice Preston, Chief John E. Munder Sr., assistant mobilization director for the New Jersey State First Aid Council, and Miss Elizabeth Lakatosh; second row, Joseph Burton, secretary, Henry Reese, Guile Hawkyard, George Morris, Joseph Di-Giorgio and Henry Merovich; third row, Benjamin Falkenberg, Donald Bohner, treasurer, Anthony Pugliese, Earl Hillborn, Richard Docie, vice president and Jack Holneck. All members of the squad except Reese, the mechanic, and Mrs. Munder Sr., its veteran dispatcher are qualified in first aid work and most of them are trained to work underwater with diving equipment.