

The Cameron

H A Smith 20may38

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EMPORIUM, PA., THURSDAY

SIX LOSE LIVES IN FOREST FIRE

Squad From Cameron Camp Trapped When Wind Shifts Flames. Foreman's Heroism Saves Many. Three in Hospital

COURT CONTINUES REST

Five Die In Fire, Sixth Dies In Renovo Hospital This Morning

Tragedy Occurs Yesterday

Trapped in a rapidly moving forest fire yesterday afternoon shortly after three o'clock in the First Fork region near Sinnamahoning, a Forestry Squad leader and four enrollees from the Cameron CCC camp met death in a horrible manner when a high wind suddenly swung a fire line around and hemmed them in. A sixth man died in the Renovo Hospital shortly after four o'clock this morning.

Three other CCC boys are in a serious condition in nearby hospitals but are expected to recover. Two are in the Renovo Hospital and one in the Andrew Kaul Memorial Hospital in St. Marys.

The dead are: Gilbert Mohney, 36, Ridgway, Squad Leader; John F. Boring 18, Johnstown; Basil Bogush, 17, Connemaugh; Andrew Stephanic, 18, Twin Rocks; Howard May 18, Erie; Ross Hallobaugh, 18, Rimersburg, all from Pennsylvania. Hallobaugh died in the Renovo Hospital this morning.

The seriously burned enrollees in hospitals are: George Vogel, 16, New Kensington; Peter Damico, 17, Wendell, Pa.; and Stephen Jacofsky, 18, Johnstown.

According to stories brought in by the survivors, Leader Mohney was the first to be trapped and it was through his shouting and directing that the rest of the boys were able to make the outside in safety. The squad had been fighting a particularly fierce brush fire when the wind suddenly shifted and swept the fire to the rear of the squad. It burned with such rapidity and intensity that the boys were hemmed in before they were aware of the danger. The woods were tinder dry and a high wind fanned the flames with bellow-like force.

Heroism was displayed on the part of other fire fighters in attempts at rescue and in getting the bodies out of the fire area.

Five bodies were brought into the Rishell morgue last night about eight o'clock. The bodies were horribly burned, burned so badly that identification was only made with difficulty. Bodies were prepared for burial last night and will be ship-

HERE IS GOOD NEWS

The local plant of the Hygrade Sylvania Corporation is at the present time enjoying a miniature boom. Increased orders have made it necessary to add considerably to the labor roll. At the present time there are approximately 40 percent more people employed than last Spring.

Officials were unable to make any predictions as to the length and duration of the present upturn, but of course local citizens hope that it will continue indefinitely.

Rain last night came as a distinct relief to forestry authorities. The first of the week a bad fire was extinguished in the Jerry Run section and another in the Whitehead area. Watchers had been posted on these fires when four fires broke out almost together near Sinnamahoning. These fires were located in Bronson Run, Lick Island, where the men were trapped, Ellicott Run and one just across from the town of Sinnamahoning.

The scattered fires made it necessary to press every available man in the county into service.

The country where the boys died was a typical scrub country filled with brush and second growth. This is big game country with bear and deer feeding grounds.

According to statements made by officials at the Cameron Camp, Gilbert Mohney, the squad leader in charge of the boys and who lost his life in a desperate attempt to save his charges, was well qualified for the work. He had been in forestry service for years and was thoroughly versed in wood lore. His home is in Ridgway, but it is said that he has a wife and child somewhere in West Virginia.

A pall of sorrow hangs over the Cameron Camp today. Five buddies died in the line of duty and the boys are going about their tasks down there with heavy hearts. All of the dead boys were popular and officers state that they all were splendid, willing and ambitious lads.

An investigation is now underway by Washington and Harrisburg officials aided by Lock Haven and Indiana Central office men. District Attorney Edwin W. Tompkins and

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