

49

R E P O R T
OF THE
BRITISH GUIANA FIRE BRIGADE AND AMBULANCE SERVICE
FOR THE YEAR 1961.

FIRE BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS,
Water Street,
Georgetown,
BRITISH GUIANA.

21st September, 1962.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit for the information of His Excellency the Governor the Annual Report of the British Guiana Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service for the year ended 31st December, 1961.

1. STRENGTH

The strength of the Brigade at the 31st December, 1961 was:-

1 Chief Fire Officer
1 Deputy Chief Fire Officer
2 Station Officers
6 Sub Officers
10 Section Leaders
27 Leading Firemen
139 Firemen
2 Class II Clerks
2 Clerical Assistants
1 Barrack Labourer.

2. STATIONS

There are three fire stations in the city of Georgetown (two land stations and one river station), and one in the town of New Amsterdam.

There is need for new stations in Georgetown, but up to the present time little progress has been made in this direction. The new station for New Amsterdam should be ready for use towards the end of 1962.

The Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Home Affairs,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.

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3. APPLIANCES

The appliances held at the end of the year were:-

GEORGETOWN

- 6 Dennis Water Tenders of 600 g.p.m. capacity, each equipped with V.H.F. radio;
- 2 Austin Champs (Firefly) of 350 g.p.m. capacity each;
- 1 Pump of 900 g.p.m. capacity;
- 3 Hathaway Light Pumps of 150 g.p.m. capacity each;
- 1 Fire Boat of 2700 g.p.m. capacity, equipped with V.H.F. radio;
- 1 Fire Boat of 2300 g.p.m. capacity, equipped with V.H.F. radio.
- 1 Fire Boat of 500 g.p.m. capacity;
- 1 Bedford Utility Truck;
- 3 Morris Commercial Ambulances and 1 Land Rover type Ambulance, each equipped with V.H.F. radio.

NEW AMSTERDAM

- 1 John Kerr Water Tender of 600 g.p.m. capacity, equipped with V.H.F. radio;
- 1 Self-propelled Pump of 300 g.p.m. capacity;
- 1 Austin Champ (Firefly) of 350 g.p.m. capacity;
- 2 Trailer Pumps of 250 g.p.m. capacity each;
- 1 Morris Utility Van;
- 1 Morris Commercial Ambulance and 1 Land Rover type Ambulance, each equipped with V.H.F. radio.

4. MAINTENANCE

All vehicles and appliances have been maintained in good order by the workshop staff. More workshop space is needed if the efficiency of the staff is to be maintained.

Extensive repairs were effected in seven cases to vehicles which were involved in accidents during the year.

5. HYDRANTS AND WATER SUPPLIES

During the year twenty-four new hydrants were installed as follows:-

Two in the open area east of Lodge Village Housing Scheme, two in East La Penitence (south), eleven in East La Penitence (north), two on the East Bank Public Road, and seven in the Industrial Site east of the Continental Biscuit Factory. This now makes the total number of hydrants in the city and its environs 1,158.

/The...

The last of the nine pipelines, to allow the fire boats to pump water quickly into high risk areas, was completed during the year.

In New Amsterdam five new hydrants were installed in the Stanleytown area, making a total of 113 hydrants situated in the town of New Amsterdam. It is essential that New Amsterdam hydrant system be standardised so that all hydrants be of the same pattern as that used in Georgetown.

6. EQUIPMENT RECEIVED

The following equipment was received during the year:-

- 1 Land Rover Ambulance
- 1 Marconi V.H.F. radio set
- 3 Hydrant testing and cleaning sets
- 16 Double male instantaneous adaptors
- 16 Double female instantaneous adaptors
- 50 2-gln. pressurised water/air extinguishers
- 80 2-gln. Nu-Swift air foam extinguishers
- 15 Quart-size Nu-Swift C.T.C. extinguishers
- 25 Ajax Streamform branchpipes
- 8 Safety Belts
- 8-8' lengths 4" BSS suction hose
- 1 Light alloy extension ladder
- 1 Ford V-8 reconditioned engine
- 20 Lengths 75' superflex delivery hose
- 1 Featherweight Coventry Climax Pump
- 5 Porton Resuscitators
- 4 Super-Fog Trigger nozzles
- 1 Pye Transmitting/Receiving Set
- 5 Mark II Self-contained compressed air breathing apparatus sets
- 27 Noble jet-spray branches
- 1 Du-flash siren with amber flashing light
- 2 Hand-priming systems for Hathaway pumps
- 1 Super Beacon Ray
- 100 Nu-Swift air foam charges
- 1 Compressed air circular saw.

7. HOSE

A total of 26,325 feet of hose was held by the Brigade: 21,450 feet in Georgetown and 4,875 in New Amsterdam. The hose is in reasonably good condition for fire-fighting purposes, but a reserve is needed.

8. FIRE CALLS

The Fire Brigade responded to a total of 580 calls, an analysis of which is given hereunder.

GEORGETOWN

Actual Fires	...	325
Late Fire Calls	...	42
False Alarms (Good Intent)		22
False Alarms (Malicious)		98

NEW AMSTERDAM

Actual Fires	...	56
Late Fire Calls	...	12
False Alarms (Good Intent)		16
False Alarms (Malicious)		9

Causes

Boiling over of fats, oils etc.		5
Spontaneous Combustion	...	1
Careless burning of rubbish		17
Careless disposal of cigarette ends or matches	...	170
Coal-pots and fire-places		7
Children playing with matches		24
Ignition of inflammable vapour or substances	...	8
Domestic oil or gas stoves		34
Electrical appliances		12
Oil lamps or candles		7
Malicious setting of fires		11
Unknown		25

Welding	...	3
Motor vehicle faults	...	11
Re-ignition	...	3
Electrical faults	...	97

Method of Extinguishing

By occupants or other persons using buckets of water or extinguishers before the arrival of the Brigade	...	139
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B.G. Electricity Corporation		86
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By the Brigade using:-

(a) Hand Appliances	...	19
(b) Hose reels	...	60
(c) One jet from pumps		110
(d) Two jets from pumps		17
(e) Three jets from pumps		1
(f) Four jets from pumps		1
(g) Six jets from pumps		1
(h) Seven jets from pumps		1
(i) Twenty-seven jets from pumps		1

Methods of Calling Fire Brigade

GEORGETOWN

Central Exchange	...	433
Police Direct Line		7
Running Calls	...	38
By Private Fire Alarm Systems		5
Radio Communication	...	4
	...	

NEW AMSTERDAM

Central Exchange	...	54
Police Direct Line		2
Running Calls	...	14
Private Alarm Systems		23

Number of buildings destroyed or seriously
damaged by fire.

GEORGETOWN

Buildings destroyed

1. One wooden building of two floors, measuring approximately 376' x 181' with galvanised roof, known as the Colonial Bonded Warehouse, situated at Lots 1 and 2 Water Street, Werk-en-rust, and owned by the Government of British Guiana. (11.3.61: 11.07 p.m.)
2. One two-flat wooden building measuring approximately 20' x 12' with galvanised roof, situated at West Ruimveldt Housing Scheme and owned by Mr. G. Prowell of 757 West Ruimveldt Housing Scheme. (12.5.61: 1.40 a.m.)
3. One two-flat wooden building, measuring approximately 40' x 40' with galvanised roof, situated at Lot 32 High Street, Werk-en-rust, and owned by Mr. A.O. Fung-Kee-Fung of the same address. (5.9.61: 5.25 a.m.)

Buildings seriously damaged

1. A two-storey apartment building with concrete ground floor and galvanised roof, measuring approximately 150' x 24', situated at 90 Laing Avenue, Ruimveldt, owned by the Government of British Guiana and occupied by 12 families. About 20% of the building damaged, roof completely destroyed, and about 50% of contents destroyed by fire or damaged by water (24.11.61: 1.47 p.m.)

NEW AMSTERDAM

Buildings destroyed

1. One corrugated galvanise-sheeted building measuring approximately 75' x 60' and covered with galvanised roof, known as Mara Rice Mill, East Bank Berbice, and owned by Mr. Purendra Naryan of Pln. Blairmont, West Bank Berbice. (27.5.61: 12.05 p.m.)
2. A two-flat wooden building measuring approximately 40' x 25' with galvanised sheeted roof with shingle ceiling, situated at Church Street, Backdam, New Amsterdam, Berbice, and owned by Mr. Bachan Panday of Church Street, New Amsterdam, Berbice. (30.10.61: 10.14 a.m.)
3. A wooden building measuring approximately 15' x 10' with a flat galvanised sheeted roof, situated at Edinborough Village, East Bank Berbice, and owned by Mr. Thomas Reynolds of Edinborough Village, East Bank Berbice. (26.12.61: 4.15 p.m.)

Building seriously damaged

- A two-flat wooden building measuring approximately 42' x 30' with galvanised roof, situated at Church Street, Backdam, Berbice and owned by Mr. Bachan Panday of Church Street, New Amsterdam, Berbice. About 100 sq.ft. of western wall and 20 sq.ft. of the under portion of second floor burnt. (30.10.61: 10.15 a.m.)

/Rural Areas...

RURAL AREAS

Building destroyed

A wooden building measuring approximately 10' x 12' with galvanised roofing, situated at Craig Village, East Bank Demerara, and owned and occupied by Mr. Sookraj. Building and contents completely destroyed. (26.11.61: 1.32 a.m.)

Building seriously damaged

A timber-framed shed with corrugated galvanised sheets on walls and roof, measuring approximately 135' x 27', situated at Vreed-en-Hoop, West Bank Demerara, used as boiler room, owned by the Guiana Match Factory Ltd. One boiler damaged; also a large quantity of packing cases, wheel-barrows and part of boiler room roof and walls partly destroyed by fire. (24.1.61: 8.51 p.m.)

10. DEATHS BY FIRE

During the year the following persons died as a result of injuries caused by fire:-

Mrs. H. Achaia of 38 Cummings Street, Alberttown, Georgetown.	31. 8.61
Charles Watts (2 year-old) of Church Street, New Amsterdam, Berbice.	30.10.61.

11. SPECIAL SERVICE CALLS

The Brigade carried out 209 special services during the year, in addition to responding to fire calls and ambulance calls. These services are classified as chargeable and non-chargeable; humanitarian services being non-chargeable, and all other types being charged at the approved standard rates.

Summary of Special Service Calls attended by the Brigade during 1961

Salvaging vessel in the harbour and at sea	23
Filling tanks and vessels	73
Standing by at Public Entertainments	39
Resetting couplings and charging extinguishers	22
Destruction of Cinematograph films	15
Flushing out kokers	8
Rescue of persons and vessels adrift at sea or in the harbour	10
Miscellaneous	19

During the year the sum of \$6,848.79 was collected from Special Services rendered:-

	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Deposits</u>	<u>Total</u>
River Appliances	\$2,153.51	\$ 418.00	\$2,571.51
Land Appliances	2,756.99	1,520.29	4,277.28
	<u>\$4,910.50</u>	<u>\$1,938.29</u>	<u>\$6,848.79</u>

12. LEAVE

Casual:

A total of 2,396 days casual leave was granted to personnel averaging 12 days taken per man.

Vacation:

Thirty-nine men proceeded on vacation leave, and the total number of days vacation leave granted was 3,300, an average of 84.6 per applicant.

Sick:

A total of 1,672 days sick leave was granted to personnel, making an average of 9 days per man.

13. DISCIPLINE

Thirty-three cases of discipline were dealt with resulting as follows:-

Fines awarded	...	3
Reprimands	...	16
Confinement to Barracks		3
Admonished	...	6
Found not Guilty	...	5

14. PROMOTION EXAMINATION

A qualifying examination for promotion to the rank of Section Leader was held during the year. Four men sat the examination and three were successful.

15. RESIGNATIONS, RETIREMENTS AND DEATHS

During the year one Section Leader and three Firemen retired on pension. In addition, five Firemen resigned and one died.

16. TRANSFERS

One Sub Officer and four Firemen were transferred from Georgetown to New Amsterdam Unit to replace one Sub Officer and four Firemen transferred from New Amsterdam to Georgetown.

17. PROMOTION

During the year one Leading Fireman was promoted to the rank of Section Leader.

18. AMBULANCE CALLS

The number of ambulance calls attended during the year was 10,680, of which 9,742 were emergency calls. The ambulances travelled a distance of 67,500 miles.

Chargeable Cases

In Georgetown 172 chargeable ambulance cases were undertaken, and 16 in New Amsterdam, deriving an income of \$323.10.

Mental Cases

One hundred and fifteen mental patients were conveyed by ambulance from the Georgetown Hospital to the Transport and Harbours Department special ambulance car, thence by steamer and ambulance to the Mental Hospital, Berbice.

Atkinson Field

Ambulances responded to calls from Atkinson Field on 68 occasions for the purpose of conveying to the Georgetown Hospital cases arriving by 'plane from the Interior.

19. GENERAL ALARM SYSTEM

During the year three switches were installed in the Control Room at Central Fire Station, Georgetown, for the purpose of actuating the General Alarm sirens at Kitty, Alberttown and Brickdam Police Stations by remote control. These sirens were formerly operated independently by control switch at each of the three Stations named.

20. TRAINING

The training of the Brigade personnel has been well maintained throughout the year, and included practical drills with appliances and equipment, together with special training in the use of breathing apparatus and resuscitators. In addition, advanced training of two squads of men was also undertaken.

The training of personnel of the Auxiliary Unit has continued. Special mention must also be made of the keenness and interest with which members of the Unit continue to perform their duties. The sacrifice made by them in giving of their own time to attend training classes and drill parades is certainly worthy of high praise.

In addition, the system of training certain members of the Brigade to use more initiative and judgment by encouraging them to actually perform the functions and duties selected and thereby give them first-hand experience has been progressing steadily, but not without risk, for the past four years. The year 1961 has shown promise of a "break through" in this long term and sometimes embarrassing form of training, and its value has risen out of all proportion to the work involved. It is hoped that the "pilot's seat" can be safely vacated for longer periods and within the next year the Brigade completely controlled by those Guianese officers who have been gradually trained for the responsibility.

21. FIRE PREVENTION

During the year a Fire Prevention Campaign was launched on all Government buildings in Georgetown and New Amsterdam. A fire appliance and crew under the supervision of a Fire Prevention Inspector inspected each building and gave advice on general fire protection measures. A directive dealing with the care and maintenance of fire equipment was sent to each Department, and the response, generally, was satisfactory.

/Under...

Under the terms of the Fire Prevention Ordinance, No.19 of 1954, 10,260 inspections were made throughout the Colony. These included 760 full-scale, 2,450 special and goodwill, and 7,050 routine and follow-up visits. Proposed new buildings and alterations to existing buildings were also inspected. Fifty-one legal notices were served and twenty owners complied with the requirements. Legal proceedings were instituted against one, and the remaining notices were unexpired at the end of the year. Lectures and drills in the use and operation of fire equipment, and measures to be adopted for evacuating buildings were carried out on 2,160 occasions at Hospitals, Schools, Hotels and business premises. On each occasion the attendance was satisfactory, and the process of evacuation was performed smoothly.

Inspections were also carried out at new industrial concerns and at the Demerara Bauxite Company at Mackenzie with a view to advising on fire protection measures and the organising of volunteer fire fighting units. A special course of training was undertaken by the Demba Constabulary who showed a very keen interest throughout the programme.

Fire equipment was allocated as follows:

Fire Extinguishers

2-gln. Foam	92
2-gln. Water CO ₂	11
2-gln. Water Pressure	44
2-gln. Soda Acid	9
Quart-size C.T.C.	16

Buckets 52

Wall Valves 3

Wilkinson Fire Alarm Bells 6

Branches 4

Fire Extinguisher Charges

Foam	354
Water CO ₂	74
Soda Acid	60
C.T.C.	14

Fire Protection Works in Government Buildings

The whole question of fire protection works in Government buildings with particular reference to outstanding recommendations was the subject of a meeting at the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics held in October, and it was agreed that the Chief Fire Officer and the Architect should confer on the fire protection requirements of new buildings. This is, indeed, a step in the right direction, as such a course would tend to eliminate recommendations of a structural nature being made after construction work is either in progress or completed. The Chief Fire Officer also accompanied the Minister and his staff on a tour of inspection of the Georgetown Hospital and held on-the-spot discussions with respect to outstanding recommendations. It was agreed, however, that in view of the limitation of funds and the magnitude of outstanding fire protection works, only the most urgent needs would be given priority. Consequently, funds will be made available at an early date for providing four metal chutes, nine quickfix ladders and resiting the carpenter's shop.

A new featherweight Coventry Climax Pump has arrived and will be installed in the Land Rover appliance recommended for the Fire Prevention Branch. This Pump will be very useful in fighting fires in the rural areas.

Mazaruni Prisons

The diesel fire pump recommended for the Prisons has been installed and is working satisfactorily. It is hoped, however, that the new pipeline scheme recommended will be implemented in 1962.

Suddie and Charity

The automatic priming system on the two Hathaway pumps stationed at Suddie and Charity has been changed to a manually operated system. This system is less complicated and can be operated without much mechanical knowledge.

Welding Shops

Since the Fire Prevention Inspectors have been checking on all welding shops after the three-year period which terminated on the 7th January, 1961, it has been found that very few of the welding shops have complied with the Regulations. Consequently, in the majority of cases action has been taken under Regulation 5 to remove the names of the offending welding shops from the Register and cancel all certificates issued under the Regulations. This has been the cause of considerable comment which resulted in a petition signed by 63 welders and forwarded to the Secretary of the Fire Advisory Board. Facts and figures concerning the welding shops in Georgetown reveal:

(a) Total number of welding shops which are registered	...	58
(b) No. of welding shops not registered but now revealed as welding shops as a result of the petition	...	<u>14</u>
		72
(c) No. of welding shops complying with the Regulations	...	<u>9</u>
		<u>63</u>

Out of the remaining 63 welding shops which do not comply with the Regulations, 31 are under dwelling houses etc., 19 are welding shops contained in larger buildings such as garages, sawmills etc., and the remaining 13 are either separate buildings or lean-to sheds. There has been, therefore, 100% response to the petition by the 63 welding shops which do not comply with the Regulations.

Records for the past seven years i.e. 1st January, 1954 to 31st December, 1960 have shown that 12 fires or explosions have occurred directly contributable to welding operations. Out of these 12 only three have been in welding shops; the remaining 9 were fires caused by welding on location i.e. welding on buildings and ships etc.

The Welding Shops Regulations were first mooted due to explosions in welding shops mainly caused by acetylene generators locally constructed and badly operated. In one case part of a

/generator...

generator was blown right through the ceiling of a welding shop up into a house above, and did considerable damage on its passage through the floor.

As a result of these facts, the whole matter was referred to the Fire Advisory Board to be further discussed at a higher level with a view to giving due consideration to the recommendations and to the wishes of the 63 petitioners. No legal action was taken against anyone under the Welding Shops Regulations.

Publicity Propaganda

Fire Prevention slides continued to be projected on the screens of cinemas in Georgetown and New Amsterdam.

Public Relations

Fire Prevention booths were on display at Fairs sponsored by the Uitvlugt Community Council and the League of Coloured Peoples. Pictures depicting various aspects of Fire Prevention were exhibited, and a practical demonstration in tackling fires involving oil stoves was given at Uitvlugt.

The Fire Prevention Branch in New Amsterdam also held displays at Canje, Rose Hall, Mission Chapel, New Amsterdam and Albion, Corentyne, through the invitation of the Community Centres. On each occasion a large number of people attended and showed a keen interest in the proceedings.

On the invitation of the Personnel Department of Bookers Group of Companies in Georgetown, two lectures were given to their Fire Leaders on training procedure, and Fire Prevention slides on various aspects of Fire Prevention were projected. Great interest was shown and those present expressed their appreciation and satisfaction at the completion of the series.

22. PRESS CONFERENCES

The good relations between the Press and the Brigade continued. Three Press Conferences were held during the year, and among matters discussed were the accessibility of fire appliances in Laing Avenue Housing Scheme, and oil stoves. The Press co-operated generously and gave publicity to the various points raised.

23. VISITS

Organised groups of school children, Police recruits and members of Youth Clubs visited the Fire Station and Fire Prevention Branch. They were also taken on a tour of the Fire Boat Station, and a lively interest was shown by them all. Several groups from the Boy Scouts Movement were trained, and certificates issued for the Fireman's Badge.

24. MORALE

The Brigade continued to display a commendable fighting spirit with the courage and tenacity so necessary when dealing with fires in a wooden city.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,

Joseph T. Atkinson
Chief Fire Officer,
British Guiana Fire Brigade.

The Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Home Affairs,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.

75

EXPENDITURE - BRITISH GUIANA FIRE BRIGADE

1961

Head 18 - FIRE PROTECTION

o. of b-Head	Title of Sub-Head	Expenditure
	<u>GEORGETOWN</u>	
1.	Personal Emoluments	\$311,427.62
	<u>Other Charges</u>	
2.	Transport & Travelling	14,106.87
	<u>Fire Engines and Ambulances</u>	
3.	Maintenance & Running Expenses (Fire Engines)	6,266.43
4.	Appliances, Auxiliary Equipment & Hose	4,805.63
5.	Miscellaneous	1,377.94
6.	Maintenance & Operation of Ambulances	7,283.45
	<u>Fire Boats</u>	
7.	Maintenance and Running Expenses	4,875.40
8.	Docking Charges	5,882.38
9.	Equipment and Hose	2,661.04
	<u>General</u>	
10.	Uniforms	23,690.71
11.	Auxiliary Fire Service	1,707.36
12.	Funeral Expenses	-
	Total, Other Charges	\$ 72,597.21
	<u>EXTRAORDINARY</u>	
13.	Purchase of Equipment	\$ 27,364.89
13a.	Fire Protection, Commercial Area	802.67
	Total, Extraordinary	\$ 28,167.56
	<u>NEW AMSTERDAM</u>	
14.	Personal Emoluments	\$ 63,418.55
	<u>Other Charges</u>	
15.	Appliances, Auxiliary Equipment & Hose	1,701.33
16.	Miscellaneous	332.16
	Carried Forward ..	2,033.49

No. of Sub-Head	Title of Sub-Head	Expenditure
	Brought Fwd...	\$ 2,033.49
	<u>Other Charges (cont'd)</u>	
17.	Maintenance & Running Expenses (Fire Engines)	969.50
18.	Maintenance & Operation of Ambulances	1,610.99
19.	Uniforms	2,831.74
20.	Funeral Expenses	93.22
	Total, Other Charges	\$ 7,538.94
	<u>PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS</u>	
21.	Auxiliary Fire Equipment etc. for Government Buildings	8,824.78
	<u>SUMMARY</u>	
	<u>GEORGETOWN</u>	
	Total, Personal Emoluments	\$311,427.62
	Total, Other Charges	72,597.21
	Total, Recurrent Vote	\$384,024.83
	Total, Extraordinary	28,167.56
	Total, GEORGETOWN	\$412,192.39
	<u>NEW AMSTERDAM</u>	
	Total, Personal Emoluments	\$ 63,418.55
	Total, Other Charges	7,538.94
	Total, NEW AMSTERDAM	\$ 70,957.49
	Total, GEORGETOWN	\$412,192.39
	Total, NEW AMSTERDAM	70,957.49
	Total, PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	8,824.78
	Total of HEAD	\$491,974.66