

# Patrolman Dies; Third Crash Victim

## Two Firemen Killed Instantly As Fire Truck, Police Car Hit

By JAMES EWELL

A Dallas policeman became the third victim of a prankster's false fire alarm early Tuesday when a fire truck answering the alarm and a police car slammed together as they crossed paths at Zang and Davis. Two firemen were killed instantly.

The squad car driver, Patrolman Ray Allen Underwood, 26, of 4620 Silver Lake Drive, died

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3½ hours later while undergoing surgery in Methodist Hospital.

Two members of Truck Company 15, Bishop and Davis, were knocked out of the 46-foot-long aerial ladder truck and crushed to death under the rear wheels. They were Capt. W. J. Jones, 39, of 1720 Springlake, Mesquite, station commander, and second driver J. H. Jones, 37, of 3328 Seevers. They were not related.

Patrolman L. B. Kirkpatrick, 33, of 709 SE Third, Grand Prairie, the most critically injured of the crash survivors, waged a life-or-death battle in Methodist Hospital Tuesday night.

The fire department sent all available arson squad men on a search for the prankster.

The tragic collision shortly after 12:40 a.m. was followed by two other traffic accidents which left two persons dead.

Police called the toll of five traffic deaths the worst since 1956 for any single day.

Fire officials called the police car-fire truck crash the worst involving personnel responding to an alarm in 18 years. The worst on record

claimed three firemen in 1945 as they raced to a trash fire.

Police and fire officials described the tragedy as "senseless . . . a waste of lives." Adding to the agony was the disclosure that the police car, racing to assist another squad in pursuit of a speeder, did so without proper clearance from police dispatchers.

Police said Kirkpatrick and Underwood were using an unmarked police car to carry out a special assignment in a high-burglary area of Oak Cliff.

The squad car proceeded north on Zang without notifying dispatchers—apparently to intercept a speeder being chased across Houston Street Viaduct into Oak Cliff by another squad, police said.

At this time, the 5-man aerial truck company roared out of the station house on Bishop to answer a pull-box alarm to the east at Denver and East Sixth.

Three blocks from the station house, the fire truck, sirens wide open and warning lights flashing, entered the intersection from the west on Davis. Seconds earlier, another fire company had cleared it.

The police car topped a hill on Zang and raced north toward the intersection at the foot of the rise.

Motorists waiting for the fire equipment to pass watched horrified as the police sedan knifed into the right side of the fire truck, scattering firemen like bowling pins. The big truck fishtailed a block down Davis before driver A. E. Chesney, 32, of 2661 Wilburn could halt it.

Police said the squad car overturned on the already crushed bodies of the two firemen.