

Port Vamps Rescue 2 In Wildwood Fire

Early Wednesday Morning, June 3, at 2:09 a.m., the Port Washington Fire Department under the direction of Chief James Murray, responded to a general alarm at 24 Wildwood Gardens.

On arrival of the first truck the firemen were informed by Patrolmen Ronald Pinckney, Anthony Pasioka and Sergeant Robert Bilyeu of the Port Washington Police Department that most of the occupants had been evacuated by them. But due to the heavy smoke and heat they were forced to leave the building

before being able to warn or evacuate all of the occupants.

Assistant Engineer Thomas Murray, Jr. of Flower Hill Hose Co., and Fireman Peter Downes of Protection Engine Co., were informed by Patrolman Pinckney that due to the heavy smoke and fire in apartment No. 1-G,

their attempts to rescue the occupants were unsuccessful.

Murray entered the smoke filled hallway followed by Downes and Thomas Tobin, none of whom was wearing a smoke mask. Upon crawling to apartment 1-G, Murray found the door closed, giving it a kick forcing the door open. At which time he and the other two firemen were forced to the floor by the heat and flames of the fire.

Murray then observed Mrs. Bernadette Foley trapped in the living room by flames that cut off her exit from the apartment. With no regard for their own personal safety Murray entered the apartment, passing the flames, took hold of Mrs. Foley bringing her back through the fire and handed her to Downes, who had moved into the apartment doorway to back up Murray. Downes, Tobin and Murray then removed Mrs. Foley from the heavy smoke filled hallway to safety.

In the meantime firemen had entered other parts of the apartment house in search of other possible occupants. Deputy Chief John Edmundson, Firemen Peter Zwerlein and Edward Baker, Jr. forced the door open next to Mrs. Foley's apartment. The occupants had been evacuated by the police.

On the second floor, Captain Fred Smith of Flower Hill Hose Co. and Fireman Dick Wood of Protection Engine Co., found an apartment occupied by Douglas Weiss, who was still inside. Because of the heavy smoke condition in the hallway, Captain Smith took off his smoke mask and put it on Mr. Weiss. At this time Captain Smith and Fireman Wood led Mr. Weiss down the stairs and out of the building.

The fire was confined to apartment 1-G, causing considerable damage to the apartment and smoke damage to the rest of the apartment house.



HERO HAILED: Port Washington Fire Chief James Murray (r.) presents to Engineer Thomas Murray, Jr. a plaque which reads: "In appreciation of his heroic contribution to his community and to the Port Washington Fire Department on the morning of June 3, 1970. Presented by the officers and members of the Port Washington Fire Department." Murray rescued a woman from a burning apartment in Wildwood Gardens on that date. (Photo by Everitt J. Hehn.)