

FORECAST: City: Sultry, Patchy Rain and Thunder, Cooler Later. Afternoon Temperature in the 80's.

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THIRD DAY OF DISASTER IN BUSH FIRES



FOUR DEATHS, 200 HOMES DESTROYED OUTER SUBURBS HIT

VICTORIA'S tragic bush fires swept into crowded suburbs within 12 miles of Melbourne last night after leaving a trail of destruction throughout the Dandenong Ranges and the Great Divide.

It was the third, and worst, day of the great blaze; It killed four people, destroyed more than 200 homes, sent hundreds of people to hospitals and casualty stations with burns, and took a shocking toll of property, vehicles and equipment.

The Chief Commissioner of Police (Mr. Porter) has been appointed by Cabinet to co-ordinate the State-wide fire-fighting effort. Officers on his staff said at midnight: "Without rain, we face greater tragedy. But rain might save us."

Ninety deg. heat and acute fire danger is forecast for early today. However, rain and thunder storms are expected from the west.

The main fire threats late last night were centred on:

- WARRANDYTE—More than 50 homes destroyed in an early evening flare-up. Officials describe this fire as the worst of the three-day crisis.
MITCHAM-RINGWOOD — At least seven homes destroyed by a blaze which threatened heavily populated areas at 6 p.m. and burned a 12-square-mile swathe in an hour.
OLINDA-SASSAFRAS — More than 40 homes, a hospital and thousands of pounds worth of vehicles and equipment destroyed in a flash-fire which cut off the towns for an hour and forced mass evening evacuations over an area of 25 miles.
WOORI YALLOCK — Four people died after being trapped by fire and a dozen homes were in ruins. The fire is now reported under control.
APOLLO BAY — Twenty homes are reported destroyed between Apollo Bay and Wye River. Apollo Bay is being evacuated.

The Federal Government late last night authorised the Victorian Government to requisition the armed services to help fight the bush fires.

The Treasurer (Mr. Holt) said the Government was appalled at the magnitude of the fires. It was doing everything it could, but speed was essential.

The Government had, therefore, authorised the Victorian Government to cut through red tape and requisition any of the personnel or equipment of the services, as needed.

Victims

Victims of the Woori Yallock tragedy were: LESLIE OCKWELL, 63, of Dalry Road, Woori Yallock. LINDA OCKWELL, 60, same address, and their grandsons, RONALD OCKWELL, 14, and GEOFFREY OCKWELL, 10, of Middleborough Road, South Blackburn.

The two boys had been spending the holidays with their grandparents. Mr. Ockwell was a hero of the tragic Black Friday fires in 1939, when he led 37 fighters through the flames to safety.

Areas immediately adjacent to the burnt-out towns and districts are choked with evacuees, injured and weary fire fighters.

Red Cross and other organisations are mounting a major effort to cope with battlefield conditions. From vantage points in the suburbs, thousands watched late into the night as the crimson glow in the north east drew closer to the city.

Olinda Surrounded

Olinda and Sassafra, in the Dandenongs, were almost surrounded by fire late last night. Mass evacuations were made in a 25-square-mile area including Olinda, Sassafra, Kallista and Kalorama.

The only way out of Olinda was through Kalorama and Monirose—a change of wind could cut that road. Fire ravaged hundreds of acres near Woori Yallock and destroyed at least 12 homes.

At St. Andrews 300 fire-fighters were trapped for two hours as a 30 ft. wall of flame ringed the township. They were saved by a change of wind.

About 32 homes in St. Andrews district were destroyed and only the hall, the school and the store were left standing.

1000 Hold Blaze

At Wandin North last night about 1000 fire fighters, and Army and Air Force personnel held back a fire which threatened to leap across the Warburton road.

Three farm houses were burnt to the ground as the blaze raced out of control through Wandin North and Seville districts.

At Healesville most outbreaks were under control last night. One of the biggest fires in the area was sweeping from Mt. Riddell towards Mt. Juliet.

Another large fire at Yarra Glen was still burning fiercely and local fighters said more volunteers were urgently needed. Four firemen were

Acute Fire Danger May Ease Today

An acute fire danger will exist throughout Victoria early today, but is expected to ease later with the arrival of patchy rain and thunder storms from the west. Gusty, north winds are expected to moderate during the day. The temperature is not expected to rise above the low 80's. The maximum temperature in the city yesterday was 104 at 2.40 p.m.

STOP PRESS

Rain Brings Respite

Rain began falling in the Dandenongs about 1 a.m. today and was still falling steadily at 2 a.m. It saved Monbulk where the residents were about to evacuate the town before a new fire threat. At Fern Tree Gully all fires were reported to be under control and the Olinda area was declared "fairly safe." Rain was also falling at Warrandyte, Mitcham and other fire areas.

Let your driving reflect your maturity.

Indonesians Say: "We'll Retaliate!"

DJKARTA, January 16. — An official statement commenting on yesterday's sea battle between Dutch warships and Indonesian torpedo boats said "the Indonesian Government will immediately take measures to avenge these Dutch assaults."

The announcement came today in Indonesian waters. In the neighborhood of Aru Island, 100 miles south of New Guinea, and that the Indonesians were attacked in the open sea.

General Jani said the Dutch force consisted of one destroyer, one frigate and one aircraft. He said the attack was sudden.

Emerging from a hurriedly called meeting of the operations staff, over which President Sukarno presided, he warned that the Indonesian Government was taking steps to counter the Dutch attack.

Major-General Achmad Jani, head of the newly created Indonesian New Guinea operational staff command, said today that yesterday's conflict between Dutch and Indonesian naval vessels lasted an hour.

One Story The Dutch said the Dutch patrol ships caught a small flotilla of Indonesian torpedo boats off New Guinea, sank one and possibly a second. The Indonesian version

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WITH FLAMES roaring down on them, these two girls (above) frantically loaded their father's truck with bedding from their house, in Butler's Road, Lower Fern Tree Gully, yesterday. LOWER: A fierce fire was raging last night half a mile from Olinda, silhouetting fire fighters who, at this stage, were helpless to stop it.



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Large Iron Ore Find in Russia. MOSCOW, Jan. 16. Over 4000 million tons of ore deposits—with an iron content up to 65 per cent.—have been found in the Kirsk magnetite anomaly. The Kirsk magnetite anomaly is an iron-ore region about 50 miles long by 10 miles wide in the central Russian uplands about 300 miles from Moscow.—A.A.F.—Reuters. BALLERINA STEREOPHONIC RADIOLAGRAM The most exciting Stereophonic Radiogram ever!

Pictures—Pages 3, 6 and 7

# 50 Homes Go in One Hour at Warrandyte

**F**IRE destroyed at least 50 homes in one hour over four square miles at Warrandyte. After a lull, wind whipped up new fires about the surviving houses, and forced returning householders to flee again.

The fire roared into North Warrandyte in late afternoon, driven by a 30-mile wind.

Twelve houses in streets near Warrandyte bridge were razed in the first 10 minutes.

Late evacuees in cars clogged the road towards Melbourne, and as smoke rolled across the thoroughfare there were several minor collisions.

Mr. Gordon Kirkbride, of Everard Drive, Warrandyte, spotted the fire swinging towards his area from a rooftop ladder and his telephone call brought two truckloads of men to the rescue.

"Fire teams drove in opposite directions as officials tried to keep pace with the changes of wind," Mr. Kirkbride said.

Mr. Kirkbride chased a sheep in the paddock behind his house and beat out its burning wool.

Burning debris swept

through the air to land and start new grass fires 300 yards further on.

Nearly every house in the town had grass fires right up to the porch, stamped out at the last moment by quick-moving volunteers with beaters and knapsacks.

Mr. Max Flagstaff, 32, piled his furniture in the drive of his ranch house before running down to the Yarra to sit on a rock in a damp blanket.

When he returned, the furniture had burned, but the house survived—one of few left in Albert Road.

Tramways buses ran through the streets evacuating elderly people before the fires swept through.

Two first-aid volunteers, Mr. Clem McPherson and Mr. Tom Peart, who had just come from a shift as waterside workers, treated 30 fire fighters for superficial burns and eye trouble.

While Yvonne Mitchell, 21, was serving drinks to fire fighters outside the Warrandyte Hotel, her family's stone house on the slopes of Albert Road was burned to the ground.

Told the house had caught fire, she went on serving drinks.

On Stony Creek Road, Mr. Wally Hess, 35, from Germany, stayed in the house he had built himself and beat off the flames while neighboring houses were engulfed.

One hundred yards away, Mr. Frank Tresize carried his daughter, Mary-Anne, five, to sit in Stony Creek in bikinis for an hour.

Their house survived—"third time lucky," according to Mr. Tresize, who had lost two previous houses in bushfires, one of them in the Black Friday, 1939, fires.

Mr. Lionel Cowden, garage proprietor, of Warrandyte, saw his two-story house destroyed in minutes.

## Freak Escapes

Freak escapes were common as the fire weaved through gullies and winds kept changing.

Bearded Mr. Jack Jensen, a Dane who with his wife fought fires on The Boulevard, Warrandyte, learned two hours later that flames had raced completely under his residence, which is on stilts, and carried on without claiming the house.

Blackberries six feet high around his garage disappeared, but the garage was untouched.

A fire official said most fire trucks had trouble finding a way in on the dirt roads and often arrived too late.

"We could have saved one house, but a gas cylinder left on the outside wall exploded," he said.

## Goats Save Home

After fighting on another front, Mr. George Aston and his son Graham, 20, were ordered by police to leave their car when they tried to get to their own home on Stony Creek Road.

They were trudging down the last hill when they saw their house which had taken eight years to build, explode in flames.

Hundreds of people huddled after dark in the shallows of the Yarra River and Stony Creek.