



British Guiana

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

BRITISH GUIANA FIRE BRIGADE AND AMBULANCE SERVICE

FOR THE YEAR

1960.

(Printed by the Authority of His Excellency the Governor).

GEORGETOWN, DEMERARA, BRITISH GUIANA.

1961

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R E P O R T
OF THE
BRITISH GUIANA FIRE BRIGADE AND AMBULANCE SERVICE
FOR THE YEAR 1960.

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

9th June, 1961.

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, 1960.

1. STRENGTH

The strength of the Brigade at the 31st December, 1960 was:

1 Chief Fire Officer
1 Deputy Chief Fire Officer
2 Station Officers
6 Sub Officers
10 Section Leaders
28 Leading Firemen
132 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, but up to the present time little progress has been made in this direction.

/3...

The Hon. Chief Secretary,
Chief Secretary's Office,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown.

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 Self-propelled pump of 700 g.p.m. capacity.
- 1 Pump of 900 g.p.m. capacity.
- 4 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:
- 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:
- 2 Morris Commercial Ambulances, one of which is equipped with V.H.F. radio.

Approval for the purchase of one Land Rover type ambulance was given in 1960.

4. MAINTENANCE

All vehicles and appliances have been maintained in good order by the workshop staff, despite the difficulties under which they are required to work. If the efficiency of the staff is to be maintained and full use made of it, more workshop space is needed.

Repairs were effected in ten cases to vehicles which were involved in accidents during the year.

5. HYDRANTS AND WATER SUPPLIES

During the year six new fire hydrants were installed in the La Penitence area. This now makes the total number of hydrants in the city and its environs 1,134.

Another of the nine pipelines, to allow the fire boats to pump water quickly into high risk areas, was completed in Water Street, leaving one more to be completed.

In New Amsterdam twelve new hydrants were installed in the Savannah Park Housing Scheme, making a total of 108 hydrants situated in the town of New Amsterdam.

6. EQUIPMENT RECEIVED

The following equipment was received during the year:

- 1 Water Tender:
- 1 Land Rover type Ambulance;
- 1 Hydraulic Jack.
- 2 Mark II 4" Ejector Pumps.
- 3 Neil Robertson stretchers:
- 16 Cots with 12 mattresses;
- 1 Bench grinder:
- 1 High pressure grease gun:
- 6 Life saving jackets;
- 6 Lifebuoys;
- 2 Pairs 7'6" Dinghy oars;
- 1 Nife Daylight signalling lamp with 3 red and 3 green signalling disks:
- 1 7 x 50 Naval Binocular:
- 2 Liquid filled grid steering compasses:
- 2 Liquid filled prismatic pocket compasses;
- 11 Surpans spanners;
- 24 G.E.C. life saving torches;
- 2 6" Ex AM Dividers:
- 3 Douglas Protractors:
- 1 Ex AM illuminated chart reader;
- 4 8' lengths 4" BSS armoured suction hose;
- 68 Nu-Swift foam fire extinguishers;
- 10 C.T.C. extinguishers:
- 30 Air foam charges;

- 114 Soda Acid charges;
- 23 CO₂ charges;
- 34 C.T.C. charges;
- 50 Chemical foam charges.

7. HOSE

A total of 23,100 feet of hose was held by the Brigade: 18,225 feet in Georgetown and 4,875 feet 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 332 calls, an analysis of which is given hereunder:

GEORGETOWN

Actual Fires	...	220
Late Fire Calls	...	33
False Alarms (Good Intent)		11
False Alarms (Malicious)		25

NEW AMSTERDAM

Actual Fires	...	32
Late Fire Calls	...	6
False Alarms (Good Intent)		5
False Alarms (Malicious)		-

Causes:

Boiling over of fats, oils etc.		6
Spontaneous combustion		3
Careless burning of rubbish		4
Careless disposal of cigarette ends or matches		87
Coal-pots and fireplaces		6
Children playing with matches		7
Ignition of inflammable vapour or substances	...	11
Dirty chimneys	...	2
Domestic oil or gas stoves		40
Electrical appliances		5

Leaking of inflammable liquids	4
Oil lamps or candles	4
Malicious setting of fires	10
Unknown	8
Welding	5
Motor vehicle faults	19
Sparks from furnace	1
Electrical faults	69

Method of Extinguishing:

By occupants or other persons using buckets of water or extinguishers before the arrival of the Brigade: 128

Demerara Electric Company 51

By Fire Brigade using:

- (a) Hand appliances 17
- (b) Hose reels ... 40
- (c) One jet from pumps 44
- (d) Two jets from pumps 5
- (e) Three jets from pumps 3
- (f) Four jets from pumps 2
- (g) Nine jets from pumps 1

Methods of Calling Fire Brigade:

GEORGETOWN

Central Exchange	253
Police Direct Line	6
Running Calls	26
By V.H.F. radio	1
Gen. Fire Station Switchboard	2
Mobile	1

NEW AMSTERDAM

Central Exchange	31
Police	3
Running Calls	5
Private Fire Alarm Systems	4

Number of Buildings destroyed or seriously
damaged by fire:

GEORGETOWN

Buildings Destroyed

1. One four-floor wooden building approximately 50' x 60' with asbestos corrugated roofing, situated at 40 High and Harel Streets and owned by Messrs. Ahmad, Ishanally and McDoom Ishmael. (11.1.60: 12.43 a.m.)
2. A one-flat wooden building measuring approximately 30' x 24' with sheeted galvanised roof, situated at 39 Norton and Bishop Streets and owned by Miss E. Richards of 183 Charlotte Street, Bourda. (1.12.60: 1.10 p.m.)

Buildings seriously damaged

1. A wooden building of three floors, measuring approximately 20' x 75' with galvanised roof, situated at Regent and Wellington Streets and owned by Mr. F. Kawall of 112 Laluni Street. The first and second floors were used as living quarters while a Dry Goods Store was on the ground floor. A small quantity of dry goods and a portion of a counter were destroyed by fire, and much of the remaining stock suffered water damage. (21.1.60: 4.45 p.m.)
2. A one-flat wooden building measuring approximately 20' x 12' with galvanised roof, situated at 78 Adelaide Street, property of Mr. G. Silas of 42 Broad and Adelaide Streets and occupied by Mrs. A. Aaron and family. The floor, walls and roof were badly burnt. Furniture, clothing and other household effects were completely destroyed. (13.9.60: 2.22 p.m.)

NEW AMSTERDAM

Buildings destroyed

1. A one-flat wooden building measuring approximately 30' x 18' with galvanised sheeted roof, owned and occupied by L. Bovell and family of Sir James, West Coast Berbice. (5.3.60: 8.20 p.m.)
2. A wooden one-floor building measuring approximately 35' x 15' with galvanised sheeted roof, situated at 53 Stanleytown, New Amsterdam, Berbice and owned by Mr. Hansraj of 40 Stanleytown, New Amsterdam, Berbice. (29.12.60: 1.35 a.m.)

Building seriously damaged

A two-flat wooden building measuring approximately 24' x 22' with galvanised sheeted roof, owned and occupied by Sancharrie of Adelphi Village, Canje, Berbice. The building housed a grocery, parlour, sewing room and dwelling house. A portion of about 80 sq.ft at the bottom of the first floor was badly burnt. (27.3.60: 2.18 p.m.)

9. DEATH BY FIRES

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

Patsy Cornelius of the Ritz Hotel, High and Harel Streets.	11.1.60
Unidentified person.	11.1.60.

10. SPECIAL SERVICE CALLS

The Brigade carried out 202 special services during the year, in addition to responding to fire calls. These calls are classified as chargeable and non-chargeable; humanitarian services being non-chargeable, and all other types of special services being charged at the approved standard rates.

Summary of Special Service Calls attended by the Brigade during 1960.

Salvaging vessels in the harbour and at sea ...	28
Filling tanks and vessels	79
Standing by at public entertainments	42
Resetting couplings and charging extinguishers ...	18
Humanitarian service ...	6
Rescue of persons and vessels adrift at sea or in the harbour	16
Destruction of cinematograph films	13

During the year the sum of \$5,443.05 was collected from Special Services rendered:

	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Deposits</u>	<u>Total</u>
River Appliances	\$2,047.15	\$ 565.40	\$2,612.55
Land Appliances	1,444.04	1,386.46	2,830.50
	<u>\$3,491.19</u>	<u>\$1,951.86</u>	<u>\$5,443.05</u>

11. LEAVE

Casual: A total of 2,239 days casual leave was granted to personnel, averaging 12 days taken per man.

Vacation: Twenty-eight men proceeded on vacation leave, and the total number of days vacation leave granted was 3,563, an average of 127.3 per applicant.

Sick: A total of 2,031 days sick leave was granted to personnel, making an average number of 11 days taken per man.

12. DISCIPLINE

Twenty-eight cases of discipline were dealt with resulting as follows:

Fines awarded	...	10
Reprimands	...	8
Extra Fatigue	...	3
Confinement to Barracks		6
Admonishment	...	1

13. PROMOTION EXAMINATIONS

Qualifying examinations for promotion to the ranks of Leading Fireman and Section Leader were held during the year. Seventy-one firemen sat for promotion to the rank of Leading Fireman and ten were successful. Fifteen Leading Firemen sat for promotion to the rank of Section Leader and six were successful.

14. RESIGNATIONS, RETIREMENTS AND DEATHS

During the year two Leading Firemen and two Firemen retired on pension. In addition, two Firemen resigned and one died.

15. TRANSFERS

Six Firemen were transferred from the New Amsterdam Unit to Georgetown, and six were transferred from Fire Brigade Headquarters, Georgetown to New Amsterdam.

16. PROMOTIONS

The following promotions were made:

- 1 Leading Fireman to the rank of Section Leader:
- 4 Firemen to the rank of Leading Fireman.

Auxiliary Unit

- 1 Sub Officer to the rank of Station Officer:
- 1 Acting Section Leader to the rank of Sub Officer:
- 3 Leading Firemen to the rank of Section Leader:
- 6 Firemen to the rank of Leading Fireman.

17. AMBULANCE CALLS

The number of ambulance calls attended during the year was 10,395, of which 8,169 were emergency calls. The ambulances travelled a distance of 45,641 miles.

Chargeable Cases

In Georgetown 231 chargeable private ambulance cases were undertaken, and 46 in New Amsterdam, deriving an income of \$490.60.

Mental Cases

Ninety-four 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

An ambulance responded to calls from Atkinson Field on 121 occasions for the purpose of conveying to the Georgetown Hospital cases arriving by 'plane from the Interior.

18. 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 to this, two members of the Brigade attended courses of training in the United Kingdom.

The training of personnel of the Auxiliary Unit has continued, and duty crews have manned appliances on drill nights for the purpose of attending fires (in addition to the normal attendance) in order to promote interest and gain practical experience.

A weekend exercise was held from the 7th to the 10th October at Atkinson Field. Two Water Tenders were manned entirely by members of the Auxiliary Unit. The exercise was voted a great success by those who took part. In addition to pumping practice the men gained excellent experience in fire exercise and fire ground communications.

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

19. FIRE PREVENTION

During the year under review an extensive survey was carried out in rural areas, including Interior districts. All Government buildings, cottage hospitals, schools, factories etc. were inspected and lectures given in the use and operation of fire equipment. Much stress was laid on fire prevention and commonsense methods to be adopted in the event of a fire. Transportation posed a difficult problem and much inconvenience was suffered by Fire Prevention Inspectors in getting from one place to the other. It has been proposed that a more convenient means of transportation be provided in 1961.

Evacuation exercises continued to be conducted at schools, both Primary and Secondary. A total of 16,955 children took part, along with Headteachers and Assistants who were very co-operative in the process. Two hundred and ninety-one schools were inspected and recommendations made in respect of the means of escape from fire. Lectures in the use and operation of fire extinguishers were also given to the children.

Under the terms of the Fire Prevention Ordinance, No.19 of 1954, 6,478 inspections were made throughout the Colony. These included 915 full-scale, 1,212 special and goodwill, and 4,311 routine and follow-up visits. Proposed new buildings and alterations to existing buildings were also inspected. The response to recommendations submitted was good, and people generally showed an awareness of fire prevention and fire protection.

Lectures and drills in the use and operation of fire equipment, and measures to be adopted for evacuating buildings were carried out on 1,045 occasions at private hospitals, convents, hotels and business premises. On each occasion the attendance was satisfactory.

During the month of December a circular letter was addressed to 550 owners and occupiers of business premises. This letter dealt with various aspects of fire prevention, including means of escape in the event of a fire.

Inspections were also carried out on all the sugar estates throughout the Colony, and advice was given with respect to the organising of volunteer fire fighting units on each estate. A special course of training for selected members of the staff of all sugar estates was undertaken.

Fire equipment was allocated as follows:

Fire Extinguishers

2-gln. foam	88
2½ gln. La France	5
Quart size C.T.C.	4

Buckets 99

Axes 2

Fire Extinguisher Charges

Foam	133
Water CO2	46
C.T.C.	17
Soda Acid	115

Fire Alarm System

The fire alarm telephone systems installed at the Palms, Queen's College and the Government Spirit Warehouse are now satisfactorily linked up with the communication system at Fire Brigade Headquarters. A daily test of each system is carried out to ensure efficient operation, and it is hoped that in the near future other Government buildings will be afforded a direct fire alarm system.

Commercial firms have also been encouraged to provide such a system, and the firms of Bookers and Sandbach Parker have taken the lead in that their fire alarm systems are now connected up to Fire Brigade Headquarters.

Metal Chutes

The metal chutes recommended for the Georgetown Hospital, Palms and Mental Hospital were not provided, but it is hoped that provision will be made in the Estimates for 1961 for the recommendations to be implemented.

Mazaruni Prisons

Approval for the purchase of a new diesel fire pump for Mazaruni Prison has been given, and it is expected that the pump will be installed in 1961.

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, League of Coloured Peoples, Lusignan Community Council and St. Alban's Church, Belladrum. Pictures depicting various aspects of fire prevention were exhibited and practical demonstrations given in tackling fires involving oil stoves. At St. Alban's, Belladrum, a pump and crew gave a display on actual fire fighting, and as an added attraction films were shown.

The Fire Prevention Branch in New Amsterdam also held displays at Skeldon and Rose Hall, 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 Principal, Technical Institute, a series of lectures on Fire Prevention was given to students and practical demonstrations held on the use and operation of fire equipment. A tour of the Fire Station and Fire Prevention branch was also arranged, and students showed a keen interest and expressed their appreciation and satisfaction at the completion of the series.

20. PRESS CONFERENCES

The good relations between the Press and the Brigade continued. One Press Conference was held during the year and among matters discussed were oil stoves, with special reference to the careless handling of them. The use of candles and oil-lamps during load shedding periods was also discussed. The Press co-operated generously in giving publicity to the various points raised and stressed the serious consequences that can accrue when basic fire prevention measures are not appreciated.

21. VISITS

A lively interest continued to be shown by various Youth Organisations who arranged visits to the Fire Station and Fire Prevention branch. Several groups from the Boy Scouts Movement were trained and certificates issued for the Fireman's Badge.

22. 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 F. Atkinson
Chief Fire Officer.

The Hon. Chief Secretary,
Chief Secretary's Office,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown.

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EXPENDITURE - BRITISH GUIANA FIRE BRIGADE

1960

Head 18 - FIRE PROTECTION

ad	Title of Sub-Head	Expenditure
	<u>GEORGETOWN</u>	
	Personal Emoluments	\$269,801
	<u>Other Charges</u>	
	Transport & Travelling	12,911
	<u>Fire Engines and Ambulances</u>	
	Maintenance & Running Expenses (Fire Engines)	4,079
	Appliances, Auxiliary Equipment & Hose	3,649
	Miscellaneous	1,519
	Maintenance & Operation of Ambulances	5,792
	<u>Fire Boats</u>	
	Maintenance and Running Expenses	4,284
	Docking Charges	5,734
	Equipment and Hose	2,560
	<u>General</u>	
	Uniforms	21,150
	Auxiliary Fire Service	1,489
	Funeral Expenses	50
	Total, Other Charges	\$63,217
	<u>EXTRACORDINARY</u>	
	Purchase of Equipment	41,590
	Fire Protection, Commercial Area	3,570
	Total, Extraordinary	\$45,160
	<u>NEW AMSTERDAM</u>	
	Personal Emoluments	57,059

/Other Charges...