

# VIOLENT BLAST HITS TORRANCE RESIDENCE

### Couple, Baby Escape Injury In Explosion

Three persons including a small child miraculously escaped serious injury yesterday afternoon when a gas explosion rocked the hilltop community of Seaside Heights doing several thousands of dollars damage to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Carl W. Dahlman, 5221 Vanderhill road.

Receiving only a small cut over the left eye as a medicine cabinet blew out of the wall like a champagne cork striking her in the face was Mrs. Dahlman. The blast was believed to have occurred as the housewife switched on a light in the bathroom.

#### GAS IN WALL

Fire Chief J. J. Benner of the Torrance Fire Department theorized that escaping gas had penetrated the cavity in the wall between the bathroom and the kitchen.

Mr. Dahlman, sitting in a chair in the front room, was pitched onto the floor.

The couple's small child Nancy, 2½, was asleep in a crib adjacent to the bathroom and was uninjured in the blast.

#### CREWS AT WORK

Emergency crews summoned by the Southern California Gas Company late last night were still attempting to locate the source of the leak. It was believed that the explosion, which occurred at 2:42 p.m., stemmed from a leak in the natural gas line which under ground paralleled the sewer line. The gas is believed to have followed the cavities in the loosely-packed earth around the sewer and under the house, infiltrating the space between the walls. Force of the blast pushed the bathroom kitchen wall outward in both directions.

Broken dishes cluttered the floor like the backstop pit in a shooting gallery. The top of the stove was blown off. A metal sink and drainboard were pushed into the middle of the kitchen.

### Ring Identifies Navy Vet

# BIG TRAIN CRASH KILLS LOCAL MAN

### Two Children Not Told of Rail Tragedy

Initials in a wedding ring worn by one of the victims killed in the Wyoming crash of two streamliners Monday brought the force of the tragedy close to home this week when the ring helped identify the body of a Torrance Navy pilot and father of two children as one of the 20 persons killed in the wreck.

Dead is 31-year-old John R. Cooper of 5216 Wintlock drive.

Assisting in the identification of the victim was John V. Baldwin, his father-in-law, who described his son-in-law's clothing and other effects to help those in Evanston, scene of the two-train crash, identify Cooper's body.

The victim, a Naval Reserve fighter pilot, was decorated a year ago for pulling a victim from a flaming plane crash in San Fernando Valley.

Cooper was aboard the City of Los Angeles when it was rammed by a sister Union Pacific train, the City of San Francisco during a snow storm on Monday. He was enroute to the east for North American Aviator Company, for whom he worked as a designer. His 13 years of employment at North

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JOHN R. COOPER Dies in Crash

### Mayor Haggard Seeks Deferment For James Hall

Sweating out a report on his physical examination taken on Monday is City Attorney Jim Hall, who received orders this week to report for duty as a Lieutenant Commander in Washington, D. C.

If the city official's physical examination is favorable he is to report to Washington by January 7, of 1952.

Hall served with Naval Intelligence for four years during the last war.

Acting with Hall's approval was Mayor Bob L. Haggard, who wired Washington, asking Hall be deferred because of his position as legal advisor to the city.

"I feel that Hall's usefulness to the government can best be served where he is. His familiarity with the many legal problems which have arisen concerning the city and its numerous industrial plants engaged in defense work certainly puts a higher price tag on his services here rather than in Washington."

He lives at 5404 Sharynne Lane with his wife Christina. They have two children, Jimmy 5, and Glenda, who is three years' old today.

### Walterian Hurt In Collision

Arthur James, 44, owner of a Walterian plumbing establishment, was hurt Friday in a traffic accident at Hawthorne and Sepulveda boulevards.

Officers said that James' truck was involved in a collision with an auto driven by George E. Lelsey, 38, of Palos Verdes Estates.

### Herald Moves Deadlines Up For Next Week

Next week's issue of the Torrance Herald will be published on Tuesday instead of Thursday—Thanksgiving Day.

The issue, carrying many money-saving bargains offered by local merchants, will be published two days early to enable local housewives to prepare for the Thanksgiving festivities.

Carrier boys should report to the Herald at the same hour Tuesday morning that they usually report on Thursday.

Classified and display advertising deadlines and the news deadline has been set at 5 p.m. Saturday, November 17, for the holiday issue.

### Council Plays St. Nick

The Torrance City dads played Santa Claus Tuesday night and gave \$1000 to support four Christmas kid parties to be held in various sections of the city.

### Residents Invited to Dedication

While the entire community of Torrance was this week invited to attend the dedication rites of the new YWCA building on Sunday another 1000 special invitations were mailed out to those individuals and firms who contributed to the \$30,000 community project.

Mayor Bob L. Haggard, who was instrumental in obtaining the site for the building, will be on one handle of the scissors when the ribbon is cut marking the official opening of the building at 3 p.m. Queen Pat Merola, Miss Torrance of 1951, will share the ribbon-snipping honors with the mayor.

A plaque inscribed "Building Today for a Better Tomorrow" (Continued on Page 3)



BLAST SCENE . . . Mrs. Norma Dahlman holds the medicine cabinet which blew into her face late yesterday and looks at her husband, Carl, through the hole in the wall.—Torrance Herald photo.

### Operation Pancake:

## Army Cooks to Aid YM At Good Neighbor Feed

### 2 Shell Stations Hit by Burglars During Week End

Two Shell service stations were knocked over by burglars during the weekend with results ranging from fair to lousy so far as the take was concerned.

Heavy loser was Dave Figueredo, owner of the station at Crenshaw and Torrance boulevards. Reported missing was approximately \$20 in cash, four fires, a battery and an electric toaster.

Lee Allen, owner of the station at Carson street and Cabrillo avenue, was the luckier of the two. He reported missing: \$14.53 in credit cards, \$1.50 in pennies, and

A borrowed cash register. The cash register later showed up at 237th street and Eshelman avenue, where the thieves apparently had abandoned it after breaking into the cash drawer.

Allen said he had borrowed the register from a cash register repairing firm while his was being repaired.

Allen discovered his place of business had been burglarized when he opened Sunday morning. Figueredo discovered his station had been broken into when he opened Monday morning.

### Council Acts to Form Seaside Sewer District

Passed by the Torrance City Council Tuesday night was a resolution recognizing the need for a sewer system in Seaside Ranchos.

The action paved the way for the formation of an assessment district and the financing of the installation of sewers in the district.

Members of the YMCA "Good Neighbor" breakfast committee were alerted this week to prepare for the largest invasion of hungry residents yet to attend a pancake feed in Torrance.

R. J. Plomert Jr., chairman of the board of strategy which has been setting up "defenses" for the invasion on Saturday, claims that the YMCA has a "secret weapon" which will quickly dispel the long lines which characterized earlier pancake feeds.

Plomert's "secret weapon" is a battery of Army field kitchens which will be manned by Army cooks from Ft. MacArthur. The Army, under Capt. C. E. Bowers, food service supervisor at Ft. MacArthur, will establish its front lines outside the Civic Auditorium.

A guest of the YMCA who will appear at the breakfast at 9 o'clock, is Jules Strongbow, former heavyweight wrestling title holder and currently an announcer for KTLA's Long Beach wrestling show. Strong Bow, although planning no special program, will saunter among the breakfasters and talk wrestling with anyone who is a fan of the sport.

Meanwhile, nominations for the title of "A Good Neighbor" continued to come in this week—one from the wife of a local serviceman in San Diego.

Said Mrs. Jack C. Dean, wife of the former Torrance High School, pole and vault champion:

" . . . We are just one of the 25 service people that Mrs. Russell M. Paxton, 1301 Crenshaw boulevard, takes time to write to each week. She sends a letter full of news of our town and a copy of our church bulletin, a very welcome sight to a serviceman away from home. I guess she understands how they feel, as she has a son of her own in the Army in Japan."

The Good Neighbor breakfast is being staged by the YMCA for two reasons. First, the youth organization hopes to encourage a feeling of neighborliness among all the people in Torrance.

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### Council Denies \$90,000 Claim For Damages

Denied Tuesday night was a claim for \$90,000 damages presented to the Torrance City Council by Truman Browne, new-home tract developer.

Browne claims that the city, in failing to provide one of his new-home tracts with water, has prevented him from selling the new homes and has resulted in the damages claimed.

He suggested the city post the necessary funds to cover the installation of water mains to serve the tract on Sepulveda boulevard, west of Hawthorne boulevard. He further suggested that 70 per cent of those funds be refunded to his company within 18 months.



TABLE TALK . . . Making final arrangements for the battery of Army field kitchens which will be set up Saturday to feed the expected throng at the YMCA-sponsored Pancake Breakfast are (left to right): B. T. Whitney, Captain C. E. Bowers, Cpl. Ray Taylor, L. Milton Lebell and T/Sgt. Forrest Brown. Captain Bowers will supervise the feeding Saturday. (Herald photo).

### Train Rammed by Small Auto Escapes Uninjured

Scarcely injured Wednesday morning was a Pacific Electric freight train which was rammed by a Crosley car at the crossing of 208th street and Denker avenue.

Faring not quite so well were the occupants of the pint-sized auto Robert J. Lamson, 39 the driver, and his daughter Barbara B. Both live in Hermosa Beach.

Jewell Sproul, motorman, paced off 116 feet from the point of impact to where the auto finally came to rest. As the small auto was being dragged along the tracks it was sandwiched between the 15-car train and a power pole.

The injured father and daughter were treated at the Wilmington Receiving Hospital for cuts and bruises, and released.



THE QUEEN SALUTES . . . Responding to the cheers of the large crowd at last Friday night's Homecoming Football game at Torrance High School is pretty Shirley York, voted by students at Torrance High School to be their queen and official hostess at the festivities. Shirley is a senior. (Herald photo by Dick Palmer.)