

# Beard, Captain Of County Fire Company, Killed On Crossing

Worthington Miller Beard, captain of the Augusta County Fire department, was killed instantly this morning when the truck he was driving to a county fire collided with a Norfolk and Western passenger train at the grade crossing in Stuarts Draft. Clifton Southard, another fireman, was injured.

The truck was answering a call to the D. V. Hyden farm a few miles southeast of Stuarts Draft when the accident occurred. It was dark at the time—7:18—and Dr. C. P. Obenschain, county coroner, expressed the opinion that Beard had come in sight of the fire and was paying more attention to it than he was to the railroad crossing. He evidently saw the train and applied the truck brakes, but it was too late. Tire marks showed for nine feet on the highway.

## Thrown From Truck

The locomotive engine struck the front of the truck and knocked the vehicle around, throwing Beard about ten feet from his machine. The coroner, who visited the scene, said the victim received a fractured skull and many other fractures.

Beard, who was 29 years of age, was a son of Mr. and Mrs. O. B. Beard of Middlebrook.

A few minutes after the accident occurred, word was sent to the Staunton fire department, which sent a fire truck and the first aid truck to the scene. Southard, who is a son of Mrs. Leo J. Burnicke of this city, was put in the emergency truck and brought to King's Daughters' hospital. He received a head injury and was reported by hospital attaches to be "still in a daze" early this afternoon.

John Hemp, about 17, a third fireman on the truck, received only minor hurts.

Hemp, who was riding in the cab with Miller, said that the driver had stopped for the first set of railroad tracks and had just gotten the front wheels of the truck on the second set when he stopped the vehicle, but it was too late to avoid the collision. Southard was standing on the rear platform of the truck.

Damage to the truck was estimated to be as much as \$3,000.

By the time the county truck became involved in the accident, the farm house was nearly destroyed, and when the city truck reached Stuarts Draft the house had burned down and the truck was taken no further. The house was owned by Mack East, father of Mrs. Hyden. Practically nothing was saved from the building and a small outbuilding was also destroyed. The blaze was discovered by Justus Cline, who lives across the river.

In the collision, the front of the truck was demolished, but little damage was done to the cab and body. The engine was knocked loose, fenders, headlight, and grill were knocked off, as was the left front wheel. The right front of the locomotive was somewhat damaged.

One freight car was on a siding this, together with the depot, have contributed to the acci-

## COUNTY PEOPLE SHOULD CALL STAUNTON FIREMEN

Until Augusta county is able to restore its fire department to service, all rural people who have need of assistance in case of fire are advised to call the Staunton Fire department, phone 101; or simply ask the telephone operator for Staunton fire headquarters. Announcement to this effect was made this afternoon by the Board of Supervisors.

ment and chief county truck driver since the department was organized in 1938. He lived at 162 Greenville avenue.

Mr. Beard, who was single, is survived by his parents, three sisters and two brothers.

Funeral arrangements had not been completed this afternoon.

## Did Not See Train

Trooper Numa Helsabeck said that Beard apparently did not see the train until too close to avoid the accident. The front of the truck engine and the cowcatcher hit, knocking the vehicle around, with the side of the locomotive causing the damage, the trooper said. One of the trainmen said that this passenger train usually makes about 65 miles an hour over the crossing unless it slows down for mail, and it was reported to have been moving "right fast" this morning. The trooper estimated that the train ran about 800 yards before being brought to a stop.

City Manager W. L. Hall said that some arrangement would probably be made with the Board of Supervisors this afternoon whereby the city would provide fire protection for county property until the county truck can be repaired or a new one bought.