

WEATHER

Forecast for Tucson: Windy showers; cooler temperatures. Temperatures Yesterday: HIGH 53 LOW 39 Year Ago: HIGH 72 LOW 39 U.S. WEATHER BUREAU

VOL. 126 NO. 352

Entered as second-class matter Post Office, Tucson, Arizona

TUCSON, ARIZONA, TUESDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 19, 1967

622-5855

THIRTY-SIX PAGES

The Arizona Daily Star

An Independent NEWSPaper Printing The News Impartially

FINAL

TEN CENTS

Plane Plows Into Tucson Shopping Center

15 FEARED DEAD IN FIERY CRASH

New Storm Threatens Navajos

By HOWARD GRAVES

WINDOW ROCK (AP) — Air Force helicopters reached a couple of small, isolated bands of snowbound Navajo Indians Monday, but a new storm dimmed hopes of carrying immediate relief to thousands of others.

Aircraft were grounded after only a few, brief aerial survey flights.

Two Navajo deaths blamed on exposure to the freezing cold — a 2-year-old boy and a 60-year-old crippled shepherd — were confirmed and tribal officials said they feared for the safety of others.

Navajo Tribal Chairman Raymond Nakai tried to reach Vice President Hubert Humphrey with a personal plea for more, and larger helicopters to help reach stranded livestock when the weather permits flights.

About a dozen helicopters and several cargo transport airplanes already in the area were grounded by the new storm.

The Weather Bureau said the reservation could expect increasing snows and wind

through Monday night and early Tuesday, with continued freezing temperatures.

Nakai said about 60,000 of the tribe's 110,000 population were affected by the week-long storm that covered much of the 25,000-square mile reservation with snow drifting to depths of four feet and more. He said an estimated 1 million head of sheep, cattle, horses and goats were caught in the storm, described by Nakai as the worst in the tribes' modern history.

The tribal chairman used a Navajo radio broadcast Monday to tell his people of efforts to reach them.

The tribal leader said the average Navajo family living in the Indian dwellings known as hogans on remote areas of the reservation usually build up a good supply of food and wood for heating fuel in early winter months.

"The Navajo police are trying to get into the critical areas such as Pinon and Forrest Lake," in the central reservation area, Nakai said.

Navajo Police Supt. Al Adams said the new storm that struck Monday could make things much more serious.

"We may be going back to the beginning," he said.

There still was no word about a band of pinon nut pickers in the Forrest Lake area northwest of Chinle, where earlier reports indicated about 150 Navajos were trapped last week. Navajo police were reluctant to confirm that figure Monday, but indicated the lack of communications made it difficult to say just how many were in the band. The only ground access to the area is over snow-blocked wagon trails.

One helicopter took food to 24 Navajos, most of them children, jammed into a hogan near the Wood Springs Trading Post about 60 miles west of Window Rock — the Navajo tribal headquarters village near the New Mexico border.

U.S. Public Health Service hospitals at Fort Defiance, Winslow, Tuba City, Keams Canyon and Gallup were on emergency alert in case any Navajos were brought in for emergency treatment.

Tribal officials said it was preparing more than 3,000 food packages for air drops. More than 2,500 bales of hay were unloaded at Window Rock and Chinle for aerial drops to hungry livestock, which provide many Navajos with food, clothing and transportation.

Nakai said one of the vice

(Continued on 2A, col. 5)

5 SHOPPING DAYS TO CHRISTMAS

15 Persons Snowed In At Lodge

The vicious snarl of the winter's first major storm was still being heard in the Tucson area yesterday.

Fifteen persons are snowbound for the seventh day this morning at the Mt. Lemmon Inn in the Santa Catalina Mountains, rescue workers are edging closer to a snowbound housewife at a lonely ranch house and the weatherman predicts more rain and snow for today.

The stranded at the inn are Mr. and Mrs. Tony Lebold and their two daughters, Mr. and Mrs. George Sheldon and their two sons, Sgt. Al Larose, lodge owner Anita Green and her daughter and four men from Trico Electric Cooperative.

Electricity has been out on the mountain since early Wednesday. Mrs. Lebold said they had enough wood for about two more days, but no milk.

The ranger station reported plenty of fuel, but not much food for the four adults and three children there.

People are also believed stranded in middle Sabino, Marshall Gulch, Mt. Bigelow and the radar base.

Pima County Sheriff's officers said a team of men composed mostly of Search and Rescue workers were continuing their climb up the reverse slope of the Santa Catalina mountains in their efforts to reach a stranded woman in her ranch home.

The crew, using an Army surplus "Weasel" (a tracked personnel carrier) began their trek Sunday night, fighting six-foot snow drifts to get to the home of Mrs. Ralph Wheeler, 54. Mrs. Wheeler lives 12 miles south of Oracle, on the north side of the Santa Catalina.

Tucson expects more showers today from a Pacific Coast cold front. Tomorrow's rainfall probability will drop to 30 per cent from today's 60 per cent. It will be cooler today with a high in the high 40s and

(Continued on 2A, col. 4)



Scene Of Pre-Christmas Tragedy

The first city firemen to arrive at the Cactus Shopping Center E. 29th St. and S. Alvernon Way, battle to save adjoining businesses, top photo, as Food Giant No. 10, a supermarket is engulfed by a fireball fed by volatile JP-4 fuel from a U.S. Air Force F4D that crashed at 5:38 p.m. yesterday. Wreckage of the plane is framed by a patio wall at a home to the

rear of the supermarket. Bright flame shooting above the wall to the left is burning gas from a ruptured gas line and flame in foreground is blazing jet fuel. Fifteen persons are believed to have perished. (Photos by Jack Sheaffer and Harry Lewis)

Only 'Lucky Ones' Remember

Instant Sea Of Flame Recalled By Survivors

By JOHN L. MAHER

When the Food Giant Market became an inferno of flaming jet fuel last night an estimated half a hundred home-bound shoppers were in the store, according to witnesses.

Dazed survivors, the lucky ones, stumbled from the building. One woman with her clothes on fire, was aided by Marty Hassett, 5426 E. Lee. Hassett said he and another motorist wrapped the woman in a blanket and his suit coat to smother the flames. She was picked up by ambulance minutes later.

John B. LaDue, 4200 Benson Hwy., was inside the store. The blast knocked him to his knees and as he went out the front door he looked back on a "ceiling of flame."

LaDue said Sam Des Jardins, a meat cutter in the market was the luckiest man in the world. Sam had just gone into the walk-in cooler when the blast blew the door shut. He looked out on a "sea of flames," slammed

med the door, and escaped through another exit.

James O. Palmer, 49, 3541 Monahan Str., was waiting for his wife in the parking lot when he heard "a hell of an explosion." He saw people running from the store. His wife Victoria was not among them. He waited in the car with his little dachshund for two hours before police took him home.

Norma Rees, 4141 E. 29th St. was standing at the checkout counter. She dropped to the floor when she heard the explosion which she thought was a tornado.

"Glass was flying everywhere," she said. "A man grabbed me and told me to get out of there, if he hadn't I'd probably still be there."

She said the man who rescued her was worried about a handful of candy bars he hadn't paid for.

"Everything rocked like an earthquake," said J. Uribe who lives behind the store at 1842 S. Winstell. "It seemed like all the houses were on fire — I heard a man yell, 'My baby,

my baby, she's still in there.'"

Uribe who lives 75 yards from the houses that were destroyed said, "I'll be moving out of the neighborhood, that's for sure."

Mr. and Mrs. Warren Bennington ran from the "big ball of fire at the rear of the store," and made it out the front door with about ten other persons.

Fred H. Cirillo saw the crash from his service station across the street. He said he saw a po-

liceman running toward the front of the building get blown back when the windows exploded.

Two employees of the nearby Thunderbird Marine, H. A. Seamounts and John J. Abbs, described the ball of flame as resembling an A-Bomb blast. They agreed it was half a city block wide and rose more than 200 feet in the air. They could see two parachutes descending near the end of the Davis-Mon-

than runway in the light from the fire.

Tony Dalla Visat, 26, of 1802 S. Baxter Pl. said the heat was so intense it could be felt clear across Alvernon Blvd.

David Johnson of Madera Canyon said he ran to the rear of the market, saw two houses in flames and heard a girl's screams coming from them. He kicked in a window but was unable to get inside.

The hysterical father was in front of the house, according to Johnson.

Shortly after the crash, KEVT, the Spanish language station in Tucson was authorized to go on the air extralegally by the city attorney's office in order to warn Spanish speaking persons to avoid the disaster area. The station had ended its regular broadcast day.

The 10,000 square foot store and its stock and fixtures were valued at \$150,000 when it was built in 1960.

It was the fourth in a locally owned chain of 11 Food Giant Markets started in 1956 by Bill Sharp.

2 Homes Razed By Falling F4D Near Airbase

By KEN BURTON

Fifteen persons were believed killed last night and at least a dozen injured when a U.S. Air Force F4D jet crashed into the rear of a Food Giant store at the Cactus Shopping Center at E. 29th St., and S. Alvernon Way.

Capt. Ellis Franklin of the Tucson Fire Dept., said at press time this morning that he feared the death toll might reach 15.

Eight of the deaths were confirmed as still more bodies were being removed from the gutted store and homes to the rear of the market.

At last two houses to the rear of the shopping center complex were also destroyed as a fireball of JP-4 aviation fuel engulfed the area, creating a holocaust.

Air Force officers said the two-man crew, Flight

A Red Cross plea for blood to aid the injured in last night's tragic air crash turned out so many Tucsonans that a traffic jam developed. More than 100 persons swamped the blood center at 222 S. Cherry tying up traffic in the area from 9 p.m. on. Donors were still arriving as the Star went to press.

Lt. Jack R. Hamilton of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), the pilot, and U.S. Capt. Gary L. Hughes, the navigator, were able to parachute from the plane before it crashed.

Tim Oned, of 3810 E. 32nd St., was standing on S. Winstell Ave. when the plane hit the ground shortly after 5:30 p.m.

"I saw two planes heading north above me," said Oned. "They were flying side-by-side, when two objects shot out of the eastern aircraft . . . I realized later these were parachutes."

Witnesses, including Oned, said the aircraft then turned on its side and descended upside down. Oned said when it hit, "It exploded like a bomb you see on television."

Another witness, 15-year-old Roswell Burk, of 1802 S. Baxter Pl., said he was just blocks away from the supermarket when he saw the jet approaching.

"When the plane came over, it tipped a little and it looked like a wing caught on one wall — and it just blew up," Burk said, explaining how the craft slammed into an alley directly behind the store.

The plane was loaded with more than 16,000 pounds of volatile JP-4 aviation fuel, which it had taken on prior to leaving Davis-Monthan AFB. The plane was based at Nellis AFB, Nev.

The fuel exploded across houses and ripped a fiery path through the grocery store, which was dotted with holiday shoppers and employees.

Ernest Sanchez, a Tucson Gas & Electric Co. employe who was driving by the store when the crash occurred, stopped his car and ran inside to help men, women and children escape.

Reports indicated that between 20 and 30 persons escaped before the fire completely engulfed the store's inside.

Aby Mogy, a self-employed truck driver who runs Mogy's Towing Service, was helping a stranded motorist some 300 yards from the supermarket when he saw the plane fall.

Mogy said he heard "a thud," saw "not more than 20 people" run out, and immediately got on his two-way radio in his wrecker and called for the fire department. He was credited with the first alarm.

More than 85 city firemen — 50 regulars, plus 35 off-duty men called back to work — responded to the three separate alarms that sent a total of 10 pieces of fire and rescue equipment to the tragedy.

Firefighting teams also rushed to the blaze from Davis-Monthan and Air National Guard headquarters. D-M also sent several ambulances and teams of medics.

Some 100 city policemen and other officers from South Tucson, the Arizona Highway Patrol, the Pima County Sheriff's Office, plus Civil Defense teams, the Sheriff's Search & Rescue Unit and the Red Cross—all rushed to the crash site.

"We've got every law enforcement and rescue agency in the city and county out here fighting this thing," said one city patrolman. "I don't think we've missed anyone."

Residents in the block behind the market said it

(Continued on 1B)

Today's News Index

Arizona House approves 14-point tax program, 2A.	
Death toll in Ohio bridge collapse reaches 19, 8A.	
YMCA-YWCA drive officials named, 7A.	
Copper strike negotiations resume tomorrow in Douglas, 4A.	
George Cornell's series on kinsmen of Jesus begins today, 8B.	
Arizonan to be named Tucson water department director, 10A.	
Pima County approves facelifting job for Old Tucson, 10C.	
Bridge 6B	Financial 6-7C
Comics 8-9C	Horoscope 6A
Crossword 6B	Radio-TV 9C
Editorial 8D	Mostly Hers 1-4C
	Sports 1-3D
	Weather 8A