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# Some escaped by a narrow margin

A woman who left her home minutes before the fire melted her Volkswagen is lucky to be alive.

Mrs. Jim Rogers, and her children left their apartment above Baker's Lumber Yard, a few moments before the explosion. She took her two daughters, Susan, 10 and Wendy, 8, to their grandmother's house while her 13-year-old son, Jimmy, remained behind to sort his newspapers.

Two minutes after Jimmy left the apartment to deliver his papers he was rocked by the blast which destroyed his parent's home. He started to run and was later found by his mother who feared he was still in the house.

Mr. Rogers, an employee of Kimberley Clark, away on a hunting trip, returned about 4:30 p.m. The family received food and clothing from the Red Cross.

Mrs. Rogers, a student at Lakeshore Teacher's College, lost all her books as well as her clothing and car.

### MRS. BEARD

Mrs. Sharon Beard narrowly escaped death when she fled from her burning apartment with her one-year old baby and 8-year-old boy, Gary Gilbert, a neighbor.

Mrs. Beard, alone in an apartment above the hardware store, grabbed the two children and ran out into the street. She burned her legs and arms before she was rescued by a firefighter.

William Gilbert, 27, an employee of Kimberley Clark, was returning from

Toronto via Highway 27 when he saw the fire. He arrived in Malton to find his wife and son safe.

Mr. Gilbert said he had no insurance and that he and his family were receiving clothing and food from

the Red Cross. They are staying with relatives.

### FOLEYS

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Foley, Dunrankin Dr., were ordering hamburgers in Pat's Steak on the Bun at 3:08 p.m. when all the lights went out.

The doors and windows started to melt while restaurant staffers and Mr. and Mrs. Foley and their children, Jimmy, Kisandra and Dale watched in horror. The children started to

panic so Mr. Foley, and friend, Muco Hasani kicked down the rear door and guided the group to the yard. They knocked down a four foot chain link fence which they scaled.

Mrs. Foley's coat caught fire and four-year-old Kisandra suffered a severe burn on her arm.

They arrived at the Malton Medical Centre where Mrs. Foley collapsed at the entrance. All were taken to Peel Memorial Hospital for scalp burns.



Bent on saving his home, this Malton youth turns his back on the blazing gas and

sprays water over the walls and roof, while behind him hydro wires melt and droop in the heat. Several other homeowners climbed onto the roofs of their homes to leave hoses running water over the buildings before they evacuated the scene.

## Eyewitness view

"I had to cover my face with my hands, the heat was so great and I was two blocks away," said Mike Fisher, who was on his way through Malton with a car load of groceries when a

natural gas main erupted in a thunderous ball of flame.

"I stopped the car and started to walk back. Flames were shooting hundreds of feet in the air. I couldn't get near it."

### - LIGHT -

(continued from page 1)

permit alternate routes while construction was taking place. Airport Rd. was to be rerouted east of its present alignment and around the area.

Mr. McKechnie said the Malton Businessmen's Assoc. hoped to have an early meeting with county council to discuss possible revision of the planned road pattern.

Mr. Fisher delivered his parcels to his home in Bramalea, picked up his four-year-old son, and returned to the scene immediately.

"I was looking down Airport Rd. and watched buildings catch fire one after the other. Cars in the street would begin with their tires. First they'd start to smoke then they'd burst into flame and the whole car would be engulfed."

Mayor Bob Speck agreed that the town should reconsider another use for the northwest corner rather than "have the businessmen rebuild only to have to tear it down again."

"Firemen were crouching behind buildings on one side of the road and spraying water on buildings across the street. They couldn't get any closer. It was the most fantastic thing I've ever seen in my life," said Mr. Fisher.

### - BLOW -

(continued from page 1)

their homes — many with only the clothes they stood in — as the 1,500-degree heat seared through the area.

Cars and windows melted at the onslaught of the intense heat. The roar of the burning gas was deafening. Screams and shouts could hardly be heard amid the racket.

Malton was chaos.

It looked like a war scene. Several people thought a bomb had dropped. Most thought a jet had crashed. Over 300 children were

evacuated from nearby Lancaster School where they had been watching a Walt Disney show at the time of the blast.

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