

SMITHFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF CHIEF

64 FARNUM PIKE

GEORGIAVILLE, RHODE ISLAND

REPORT OF DOUBLE DROWNING AT LOWER SPRAGUE RESERVOIR OFF TOTEM POLE TRAIL,
SMITHFIELD, R.I. DECEMBER 10, 1968.

- 3:50 P.M. Radio call from Smithfield Fire Station 1 was monitored at the Smithfield Police Station to the effect that rescue equipment from that Fire Station was responding to the report of a drowning in the Lower Sprague Reservoir off Totem Pole Trail. Sgt. James H. McVey dispatched Patrolman Norman G. Vezina to check. Patrolman Saverio E. Serapiglia who was in the station at the time was also dispatched to assist.
- 3:58 P.M. Radio call was received from Patrolman Saverio E. Serapiglia who stated that Patrolman Vezina was under water and requested a rescue boat right away. Patrolman Serapiglia was advised that the boat was on the way.
- 3:59 P.M. Patrolmen Robert A. Lachapelle and William F. Cunningham who had reported to the station for duty on the 4:00 P.M. to 12:00 Midnight shift were also dispatched to assist at the scene. Patrolmen Joseph Larkin, also dispatched to assist.
- 4:01 P.M. Request from Patrolman Serapiglia, that Chief Arthur E. Gould, come to the scene.
- 4:01 P.M. REPORT OF PATROLMAN S. SERAPIGLIA, AT SCENE.
Upon arriving at the scene, Patrolman Serapiglia, was informed by Pvt. G. Gillmore, Rescue 1, that Patrolman N. Vezina, was in the water. An unknown man was throwing a rope, to Patrolman Vezina.
Patrolman Vezina, came to the surface, than sank out of sight. Patrolman Vezina, again, came to the surface, than sank out of sight, the last time.
Rescue boat from station 1, arrived on scene and was immediately launched in an attempt to recover the bodies of the child and Patrolman Vezina.
- The body of Kenneth Firby, age 5, 5 Deer Run Trail, Smithfield, was recovered at approximately 4:07 P.M., immediately transported by rescue 1, to Our Lady of Fatima Hospital.
- 4:10 P.M. Chief Arthur E. Gould, arrived on scene.
- Rescue 1 boat relaunched with Patrolman J. Larkin and Special Officer G. Kelly, in an attempt to recover Patrolman Vezina. At this time, Rescue 2 arrived on scene, and the boat was immediately launched, Patrolman W. Cunningham and Lt. M. Corey, /Smithfield Station 2/ were in this boat.
Both boats proceeded with dragging operations.
At 4:34 P.M. the body of Patrolman Vezina was recovered and placed in Smithfield Ambulance.

4:50 P.M. Father Geddiss, St Philip's Rectory arrived and administered the last rites of the church.

4:55 P.M. Dr Simone, /medical examiner/ arrived on the scene, viewed the body and pronounced him dead, due to accidental drowning and gave permission to release the body to the family.

The body of Patrolman Vezina was then transported to Station 2, in Smithfield Ambulance, escorted by Patrolman S. Serapiglia, per order of Chief Arthur B. Gould, and to standby at station 2 until body is picked up by the undertaker.

FIRE ALARM REPORT-

3:49 P.M. Call from Mrs Crino, Totum Pole Trail, person in water.

3:50 P.M. Rescue on way.

3:52 P.M. Brush 1 and boat on way.

3:53 P.M. Rescue 1 on scene, reported two (2) under water.

3:54 P.M. Brush 1 and boat on scene, also request ladder 1.

3:58 P.M. Tank 2 and boat and ladder 1 on way.

4:01 P.M. Called RISP.

4:07 P.M. Ambulance 2 requested--rescue 1 on route to Our Lady of Fatima Hospital.

4:10 P.M. Tank 2, on scene with boat.

4:12 P.M. Ladder 1 and ambulance 2 on scene.

4:15 P.M. Rescue 1 at Our Lady of Fatima Hospital.

NOTE: At a meeting of the Smithfield Town Council on the night of December 10, 1968, Patrolman Vezina was promoted posthumously to the rank of Sergeant by said Town Council.