

# One Killed, Three Hurt as Platform Falls 100 Feet

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## Torrance Herald

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# JINXED FAMILY ROUTED BY FIRE

**A Penny for your thoughts**

"What did you do on your vacation this summer? This is the question for today's Penny For Your Thoughts column. Your HERALD photographer asked the six people pictured below this question and their answers are recorded here.

**Mrs. Gertrude Harris, YWCA clerk:**  
"I stayed home this summer and did not take a vacation away from home. My daughter, now Jeanette Rogers, was married recently and this kept me busy taking care of details for the big event."

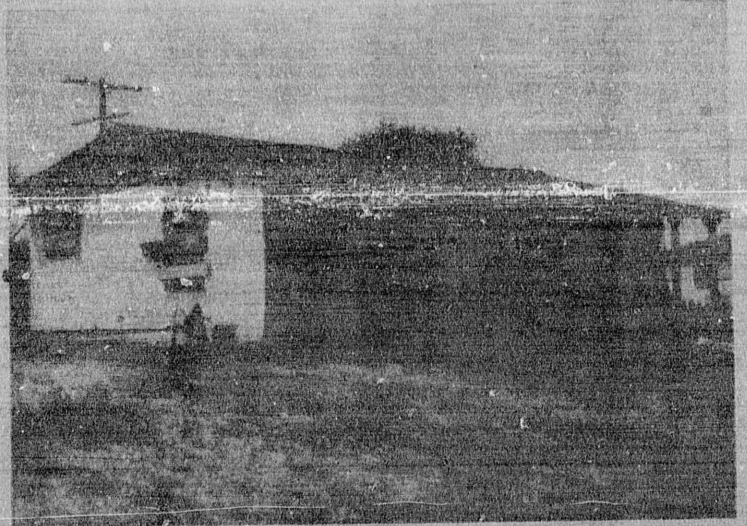
**J. Woodford Smith, Rolling Hills, aircraft executive:**  
"My wife and I went to Honolulu on our vacation last month. It was our first trip to the islands and we really enjoyed our visit there. We did everything tourists do while there."

**Mrs. Cora Dodson, 25075 Gavelin, Welteria, housewife:**  
"I went to Portland, Ore., on my vacation and visited my son and daughter-in-law. I had a wonderful time up there and it was like old times being with them."

**Vincent Cornell, Los Angeles, private detective:**  
"I am here in Torrance on business and business has been so good for me I haven't taken any time off. I do hope to get away for some fishing later this month. Fishing means Colorado for me."

**Mrs. Ted Weyer, 23025 Pennsylvania, Lomita, legal secretary:**  
"We had a backyard vacation this year. My husband and I and the children of course, put in a barbecue in our patio. We had fun doing it and cooking our first steaks outdoors."

**Frank Teibert, Fort Worth, Texas, cattle buyer:**  
"I am coming home this year and I am sure you will be glad to see me. I guess you might say I missed you on vacation. I have an old buddy on the Riviera and spend a lot of time looking down at the bay."



**HOME DESTROYED . . .** The modest home of the Gene Offutt family at 944 Milton St. was gutted by flames late Wednesday night while members of the family were attending a meeting at the Torrance Moose lodge. Lodge members are opening a campaign to rebuild the Offutt home. (Herald Photo)

### Flames Sweep House

By BOB WILTON  
Herald Staff Writer

A young Wisconsin family of five that came to the West a few months ago hoping to shake a jinx that had plagued them for several years were wondering today if the jinx hadn't followed them.

The Milwaukee locale they left held mixed memories for the couple—Mr. and Mrs. Gene Offutt—who were married there 10 years ago.

The Offutts and their children, Charles, 9; David, 6; and Sue Ann, 3, came to Torrance last January and moved into a home at 944 Milton Ave. The house needed repairs but Gene was handy with tools and his wife, Rita, a good homemaker.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT a fire gutted their home while they attended a program at the Torrance Loyal Order of Moose lodge. All of their worldly possessions were destroyed—including the puppy and little Sue Ann's only doll. The Offutts were homeless, but a sister, who has 10 children of her own, came to their aid and took the destitute family into her overcrowded home.

Hard luck hit the Offutts shortly after their third child was born. Gene received his lay-off notice where he worked as an expediter in Milwaukee and Rita lost her part-time job shortly after the recession moved over the country. Months went by and neither could find work. Their meager savings were gone, but not their smiles. Things would get better soon.

A DOCTOR WIPED the smiles off their faces with the heart-rending announcement: "Your daughter Sue Ann has spinal meningitis!" Jobless, broke, and now faced with additional medical bills, was a situation that all but floored the plucky couple.

The Offutts tightened their belts and hunted day and night for work. Odd jobs and the sale of their furniture and other possessions raised money for medical care for Sue Ann and she recovered from the dread disease with only a slight weakness in one of her legs.

THE FAMILY THEN sold what was left of their belongings.

## National Guard Prepares To Take Over Nike Sites

California National Guard personnel are gradually counting out all the radars, super-sonic missiles and the nuts and bolts that make up a U.S. Army Nike site in preparation for the turnover of the site to them on next Sunday.

Inventory time, one of the final phases of the site-turnover program, is now going on at the four guided missile batteries that will be manned by Los Angeles National Guardsmen.

THE FOUR NIKE sites which California's 720th Missile Battalion will soon operate are located at Long Beach, Torrance and Playa del Rey. The Department of the Army has already announced that the turnover of the sites to the National Guard units will take place on Sept. 14. Although the sites will remain under operational control of the Army's

## Council to Meet Wednesday Night

Because Tuesday is Adjourn Day and a legal holiday in California, the Torrance city council has postponed its regular Tuesday evening meeting and will meet instead at 8 p.m. Wednesday. It was announced here yesterday.

Leading the Wednesday agenda will be a hearing on a proposed ordinance declaring dairies of Torrance to be a nuisance and outlawing them as of Jan. 1, 1959.

The hearing has been rescheduled automatically following a 90-day period of investigation which was ordered at an earlier hearing this summer.

Another hearing has been scheduled on the planning commission's motion to rezone a large area near the new Del Amo Shopping Center to permit an apartment house development and a commercial zone. The area bounded by Madrona, Carson St., Maple Ave. and the extension of Monterey St. would be rezoned to R-3 for multiple dwellings with a controlled commercial zone along National.

Other matters include a recommendation from City Manager George Stevens that \$6000 be made available from



**INSPECTING FALL SCENE . . .** Workers and police investigators inspect the bottom of the elevator shaft where one man was killed and three others injured Friday when a temporary elevator tumbled 100 feet during construction at the Del Amo Shopping Center. (Herald Photo)

## 100-Ft. Fall Fatal to One

A tumbling elevator platform brought death to one man and injuries to three others Friday morning at the Broadway Department Store construction project near Hawthorne Ave. and Sepulveda.

Declared dead on arrival at Harbor General Hospital was Anthony Stavros, 30, of San Pedro, an Otis Elevator Co. mechanic.

The injured were identified as John Hopton, 36, El Monte; Greg Dussault, 35, Los Angeles; and William Ashbaugh, 30, of Inglewood.

Ashbaugh received a fractured foot and the others minor injuries. Hospital officials said all were transferred to other hospitals after treatment at Harbor General Hospital.

WORKERS ON THE top of the three-story structure on an elevator platform inside the building when a beam holding the equipment broke.

## Missile Goals Explained to Rotary Club

Goal of the Air Force ballistic missile program is to set up a curtain of defense behind which we may pursue our way of life, Col. Otto Ledford, a member of the Air Research and Development Command, presently assigned to the Ramo-Woolridge technical center in Inglewood, told Torrance Rotary club Wednesday.

Col. Ledford, a resident of Palos Verdes, was introduced by William Moss, program chairman for the day.

Col. Ledford admitted a lag in the country's missile program in the period from 1945 to 1953 but convinced his listeners in word and by motion pictures that scientists are rapidly catching up with every hope of eventual success.

"We are now at the Model T stage in our progress or about where we were 20 years ago with aircraft," he declared. "We have had failures but these are not failures in the minds of scientists who learn from such failures."

## Petition Lacks Signatures

Petitions to block the city's new civil service ordinance or bring it to a vote of the people were declared insufficient by Deputy City Clerk Gale Whitacre this week after they were found to have fallen far short of the required signatures.

Citing a report from County Registrar of Voters Ben James S. Rife that Torrance had 39,931 registered voters as of Aug. 31, 1958, the petitions were filed. Whitacre said the 400 signatures were insufficient, 100 per cent of the voters must sign the petition to have force.

The petition was circulated after the council adopted its ordinance changing the mode of office and method of appointing civil service members.

**READY TO START . . .** Construction is scheduled to start Thursday on the new Sears, Roebuck & Co. store on the Del Amo Shopping Center at Hawthorne and Sepulveda. The architects, Stiles and Robert Clements,

have designed the building to include all of the latest facilities for shopping ease and comfort. Construction will take about a year, officials say.