

Firemen handle a call a week

By JOHN A. VIGNOLI

The 25-man Bradford volunteer fire brigade handled all the calls during 1971, Fire Chief Harold "Baldy" Boyd reports.

That's almost one fire a week, and while most of those flames were of the minor variety, they kept the men busy.

In addition to practicing Bradford and part of West Chatham, the Bradford firemen also participate in one practice a week, every Monday evening.

The weekly drill includes

fire extinguishing practice, services, and lectures on new fire fighting techniques — all designed to keep the men abreast of the new technology.

The department is equipped with four trucks, a 1963 pumper truck, a 1969 pumper, a 1973 water truck, a 1968 rescue van, all crammed with the latest equipment including power jacks, rams, ladders and thousands of feet of hose.

Last year the men also acquired eight communications units, eliminating the

need for radio handsets and ensuring that every fireman gets the fire call.

Chief Boyd said that when someone detects a fire and calls the emergency number, 734-2111, a switchboard operator pushes into the pager system, will immediately call the firemen.

According to Chief Boyd, one of the major causes of fires in Bradford is careless smoking and he urges families to "all sleep, and give a route of escape when there is a fire."

He said not enough people

give for such an emergency, and therefore they need to be reminded to rehearse their lines.

He had a special message for Bradford residents who live in high-rise apartment buildings.

If you detect fire, sound the alarm. If you are in your apartment and you hear the alarm, first feel the hot door. If it is hot, don't open it.

If smoke begins to trickle under the door, stuff wet rags under it.

The chief said the most

dangerous part of any fire is the smoke, which actually causes the majority of the fatalities.

In his 41-year career with the Bradford fire department, Harold Boyd has seen a lot of fires, but his recollection of February 11, 1964, lives on in his mind.

"That was a rough one," the chief recalled. "It was so cold, we had to get buckets of hot water from the hospital to thaw the equipment."

That fire destroyed the entire block of stores between Evans and Howe in the old Bank of Commerce building.

It took the men all afternoon and most of the night to extinguish it.

The Bradford fire department was well-equipped to handle that blaze, and now, it stands like Chief Boyd said, it is better equipped and trained than ever.

It's a comforting thought.

