

In the aftermath of the twisters ...

The cleanup begins — so does looting

WICHITA FALLS—Residents struggling to recover from the ruins of the state's worst tornado in a quarter century Thursday cleared city streets of twisted autos and the mangled remains of their homes while trying to protect their property from looters.

Some city officials predicted it would take a decade to recover from Terrible Tuesday — the day five tornadoes killed at least 56 people in Texas and Oklahoma, injured 600 others and caused perhaps as much as \$300 million in damage.

Forty-two of the victims died in Wichita Falls. Eleven others were killed in nearby Vernon and Harrold. Three more people died in Lawton, Okla., an hour's drive to the north.

With many city officials fearing more bodies might be hidden beneath the mounds of debris, the final death toll might not be known for days.

For the first time since the vicious twister struck, most residents had power and water in their homes Thursday, lessening

the danger that fire would sweep through the rubble.

Looting had been reported citywide, most of it immediately after the twister struck, and authorities hoped patrolling National Guardsmen and curfews until 6:30 a.m. would help. Scattered traffic was reported on the streets until midnight but the promised sentries at each intersection were nowhere in sight.

After the dark funnel was gone the black night descended on the ravaged city, and with it dark figures that lurked outside destroyed homes — hanging back until they could tell if anyone was alive within.

"I stayed here the first night and there were people walking around who didn't belong," said Randolph Duke, sitting with a shotgun in the rubble of his home to protect what little was left of it.

"Wednesday night the police came by and told me the Guard was walking the streets, patrolling the whole area. My neighbor thought that was all right and he left. Then sometime last night somebody came and got his boat trailer."

Duke said he would stay at the house as long as necessary because he lacked confidence in local security.

City officials said looting began within minutes of when the tornado lifted back off the ground Tuesday. Emergency ordinances were passed and extra police patrols were put on duty. The National Guard was mobilized to walk the damaged areas.

Even those patrols, however, didn't stop all the looting.

Down the street in his hard-hit middle class neighborhood, Duke said one man searched the rubble of his home and found a priceless gun collection. He said he left the collection and a television outside his home and walked up the street to get a pickup.

While families guarded their homes from the immediate problem of looters, the city already was warning citizens of the next band of thieves they could expect.

"Citizens in the disaster area should be aware that persons from outside Wichita Falls will be coming into the city shortly,"

an official statement said. "They will offer all kinds of assistance, from minor roof repair to buying property and settling with insure companies.

"All people should deal with people they know or with people with credentials."

The mammoth storm — which weather forecasters said measured a half mile at its base — likely will become the state's most severe tornado in terms of dollars. Gov. Bill Clements toured the devastated area Wednesday and proclaimed the damage exceeded all his expectations.

"Clements has estimated the damage at \$200 million to \$300 million," said Jim Stewart, regional director for the Insurance Information Institute. "I can't attest to the credibility of that figure, but I'm sure that it's close."

The National Weather Service reported 48 tornadoes were spotted Wednesday in "tornado alley," stretching from Texas to the Great Plains and the Midwest. The NWS said the area was likely to experience more violent weather.

Donations accepted for ravaged cities

Aggies have a chance to help tornado victims in Wichita Falls. KTAM-AM and KORA-FM, two local radio stations, are accepting donations to help the victims of the tornado that struck North Texas Tuesday.

Lynn Nemece, secretary at KTAM and KORA, said the stations are trying to gather goods for a shipment to Wichita Falls early Sunday morning. They are working in conjunction with the Red Cross and the First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls.

Canned food, bottled water, clothes, blankets, sleeping bags and other essential items are needed there, she said.

Items can be dropped off at Fort Shiloh, Ken Martin's Steak House, Pepe's Mexican Food, the Ridgecrest Shopping Center on Texas Avenue, Rother's Book Store in the Southside Shopping Center, Absolute Advertising at E. 209 University Dr. and at the KTAM-KORA studios, 1240 Villa Maria.

Goods may be left at the radio studios and restaurants until 8 p.m., at the shopping centers until 5 p.m. and at Absolute Advertising until 6:30 p.m.

Nemece said cash donations may be made at Citizens Bank in Bryan. Checks should be made payable to Wichita Falls Relief Fund. University National Bank in College Station also has a box for donations, she said.

First State Bank of Hearne also is a drop-off point for goods and is accepting cash for the relief fund.

Nemece said a pick-up truck left for Wichita Falls Thursday afternoon with some supplies.

Ben Downs, operations manager of KORA, and Louis Nemece, station manager of KTAM and KORA began the relief effort Thursday morning, she said.

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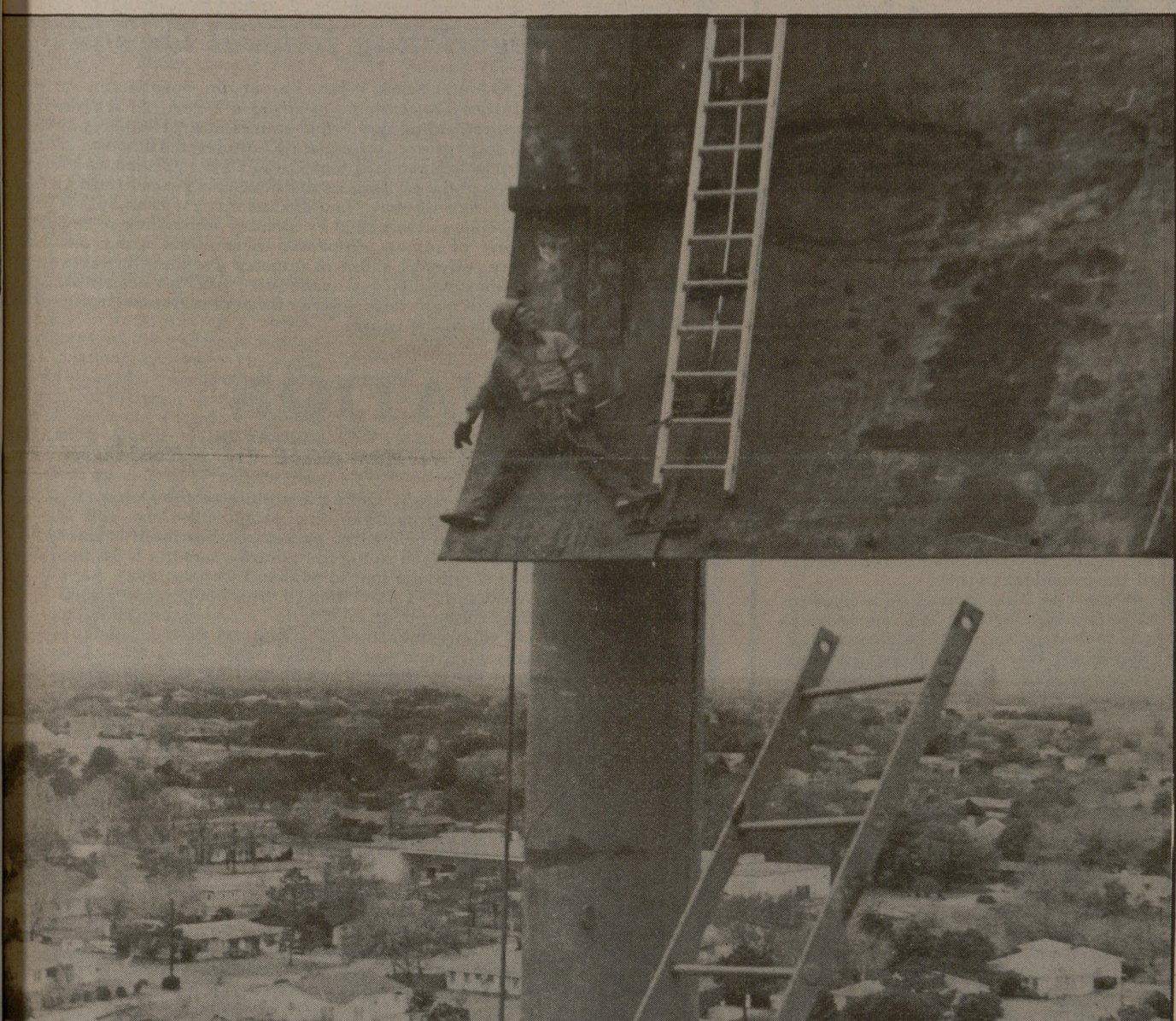
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Ag to run at Boston

Scott Myers, a 20-year-old pre-vet student at Texas A&M University, will join 3,000 other official entrants and about 1,000 other runners Monday in the Boston Marathon. A serious runner for only a year, Myers has run a 2:56:19 marathon. See page 5.

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Tank worker Craig Sutton surveys his handiwork as he supports himself on two small pegs 160 feet up. He does have a safety rope, however, tied to the

ladder. Sutton has been working on water towers since he was 16. This photo was taken last December in the earlier stages of construction.

Battalion photo by Lane Williams

Building job on water tower 'a challenge' for young worker

By BECKY LEAKE
Battalion Reporter

In the dim light of early morning the incompleting water tower stands as a silent spectator to the approaching day's activities.

Car doors slam and sleepy voices mingle with yawns as work belts are buckled, hard hats secured, and work gloves are pulled on in preparation for hard work.

The welders climb the ladder for their high-wire welding performance while the crane operator and the ground crew take their places. The dull ring of a hammer on the side of the water tower signals the welders' readiness for another day's work on Bryan's new water tower.

Construction on the water tower, located on Luza street in Bryan, began last September and was scheduled to have been completed near the end of January, according to construction supervisor John Deltenre.

Deltenre said that bad weather and a shortage of skilled labor accounted for the delay. Construction should be complete around the first of next week.

The water tower is being built by Hydrostorage, Inc., and when completed will stand 185 feet tall, measure 105 feet in diameter and have a capacity of two million gallons.

Working 160 feet in the air is not a job for just anyone.

For 24-year-old Lane Williams it's a challenge.

"It's neat to talk with a person and tell them what you do and watch the expression

on their face," said Williams.

"It makes me feel like I'm doing something a lot of people can't do."

Williams had been welding commercially for five years before applying for a job with Hydrostorage building water towers. He said it took him about two months to get accustomed to the height and feel comfortable with the job.

"Although many people try out for the job, few have the nerve to stick it out," Williams said.

Unlike Williams, 21-year-old Craig Sutton is part of a family that has been involved in the construction of water towers for three generations.

Seven of Sutton's uncles are still involved in construction of water tanks and his father is presently vice president in charge of construction for W.E.B. Co.

Sutton took time off from college for a year to help finance the rest of his education and plans to continue his studies in pre-law this fall.

According to Williams, the main reason for being a "tankie" are the good pay and the opportunity to travel. The pay for a good construction worker averages from \$9-13 an hour, but though the pay is high so are the risks.

Most tankers are single men in their 20s, though there are a few women working as welders now.

"It's a very demanding job physically and it definitely keeps you in shape," said Williams.

So far, there have been no serious injuries or accidents during the construction

of Bryan's water tower.

"We have a very safety-conscious foreman and that helps," said Williams, speaking of construction supervisor Deltenre.

Deltenre, who has held that job for 17 years, holds a safety meeting every Monday morning to check equipment and give the crew an opportunity to talk about any improvements or changes they feel should be made.

Williams said the best way to ensure safety is to think ahead and keep your mind on the job.

"You can't really be safe if you have your mind on being scared," said Williams.

He said that scared people are dangerous because they endanger others' lives as well as their own.

Though he says he has no real fear of falling, Williams does have great respect for his working conditions.

"When you're up there and just an inch away are thousands of inches of nothing, you just can't be careless," said Williams.

Depending on how difficult a job is, the crew moves to different locations throughout the state and nation about every four or five months to construct water towers. One of the problems that face tank workers is finding places to stay while they are in town.

"The cost of living for someone as transient as we are is really high," said Sutton.

Despite the hard work, disadvantages, and the risk involved, for the most part the tankers say they like what they are doing and are looking forward to their next job in Chickasha, Okla.

South Africa expels 3 U.S. embassy officials

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — South Africa expelled three U.S. Air Force personnel on charges they were spying with the ambassador's plane. Washington did not deny the charges, but suggested the South Africans needed a "scapegoat" to draw attention from its own explosive domestic scandal.

Prime Minister Pieter W. Botha, in a special television address apparently designed to embarrass the United States, said Ambassador William B. Edmondson's personal Beechcraft plane was fitted with a high-speed camera for spying sweeps over "strategically" important areas of the country.

Botha ordered the expulsion of Air Force Col. Alvan M. Crews, the defense attache; U.S. Air Force Maj. Bernard

McConnell, the assistant U.S. air attache, and crew chief Master Sgt. Horace E. Wyatt.

In Washington, the State Department was officially mum on the charges, but one senior official said, "With the current domestic scandals, the South African government needed a scapegoat, and it chose the biggest one around."

The official was referring to what South Africans have come to call the Muldergate scandal, after former Information and Interior Minister Connie Mulder, accused of masterminding a \$73 million slush fund to buy foreign support for South Africa and its racial policies.

"You can figure out several reasons for the timing," a senior State Department official said, "but the one that seems to make the most sense is that this is domestic poli-

tics. The South African government is in real trouble because of their scandal, and they need a foreign scapegoat."

Botha said Edmondson's \$900,000 Beechcraft Super King Air, a twin turboprop plane with a maximum range of 1,250 miles, had a high-speed aerial camera fitted under the copilot's seat for the spy missions.

Citing unnamed sources and evidence, the United States had voiced its suspicion in 1977 that the South African government was moving toward testing nuclear weapons in the Kalahari Desert.

The South African government denied the nuclear test charges and assured the United States in an exchange of notes that it did not intend to produce nuclear weapons.

Davis trial moved back to its source, Fort Worth

HOUSTON — Unable to find another jurist to take over the T. Cullen Davis murder-for-hire case, the presiding jurist is shipping it back to where it began, Tarrant County.

For weeks, state District Judge Wallace Moore has been trying to find another

judge to preside in the retrial of the murder solicitation case, but judges in several areas have said they want no part of it. Corpus Christi District Judge George Hamilton said Thursday he'd take the case later in the year, but defense and prosecution lawyers couldn't agree on the move.

So Moore announced he was going to return the case to Tarrant County — where the millionaire industrialist resides and where he was arrested last August for allegedly trying to hire the murder of his divorcee judge.

The case was moved to Houston after it was decided Davis could not receive a fair trial in Fort Worth, the county seat, but a

Houston jury was unable to reach a verdict and a mistrial was declared in January.

"I'm going to change the venue on the court's own motion and I'm going to transfer venue back to the 213th District Court in Tarrant County, Texas," Moore said.

"In all probability, it (the case) will be moved again," Moore told reporters. "But I've tried to move it and I can't. I'd rather send it back where it came from and let them do their own thing."

The move back to Tarrant County satisfied defense lawyers Phil Bursleson and Mike Gibson, but Assistant District Attorney Jack Strickland objected strenuously.

Auto insurance rates may drop by 7-8 percent

AUSTIN — A new rate formula could cut auto insurance rates by 7 to 8 percent, the staff of the State Insurance Board reports, and industry representatives aren't overly happy with the idea.

The state agency's staff said if actual expenses were used to figure rates instead of so-called "budgetary allowances" for what it costs to sell policies and operate a company, auto insurance rates could be reduced.

But industry representatives bristled over the prospect of changing the set allowance in the rate formula for so-called "acquisition costs" such as agents' commissions. They did, however, agree the set figures for "general expenses" are too high.

Doyce Lee, general counsel to the three-man insurance board, outlined arguments for and against the way the board has calculated rates in the past.

New member Lyndon Olson said he wants more information about how the rate setting formula works before he makes any decisions on what numbers to use.

"It's an extremely complicated equation that you put together to determine rates," Olson said. "I just want to know what's in the equation."

David Irons of Dallas, attorney for the Texas Automobile Insurance Service office, questioned the legality of substituting actual data for a budgetary allowance in the formula for acquisition costs if figures are included on companies that sell policies directly and do not pay commissions to agents.

Gaylon Daniel, staff actuary, said using actual figures for both expense items in the ratesetting formula would have saved consumers 7 to 8 percent on current auto insurance premiums.

Monarchs begin 4-month journey

UVALDE, Texas — Scientists in south Texas have spotted the first adult monarch butterflies of spring now that the majestic species has begun its four-month trek from Mexico to as far north as Canada.

"South Texas is just one of the many stops on a four-month exodus that ranges from Central Mexico into the northernmost regions of the United States," said Dr. J.W. Stewart, an entomologist for the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

Stewart is among scientists who have been intrigued by the ability of the beautiful international wanderer to migrate from the tropics to North America.

The regal monarchs began appearing in the Rio Grande Valley last month, appeared in the Winter Garden area of south Texas last week and are expected to be moving through Texas the rest of this month.

Stewart said their movement through the state each spring coincides with the south-to-north emergence of the lowly milkweed, whose 108 species each year offers a movable feast for the nomadic butterflies.

"The challenge for this tiny tropical dweller has been to rack the climatic barrier," the scientist said. "Only the

monarch among milkweed butterflies has succeeded so far."

The butterflies lay their eggs only on milkweed, and in Texas there are 30 species of the weed from which to choose, Stewart said. After the eggs hatch, the caterpillars feed insatiably on the milkweed leaf while passing through five larvae stages in two weeks.

Stewart said scientists have studied the migration of the monarchs for a half century, and have developed a featherweight tag which can be stuck to the butterflies' forewings, does not interfere with their flight and withstands all types of weather conditions.

He said the longest known flights by an adult monarch was 1,870 miles between Ontario, Canada, and the winter nesting grounds in Mexico. A butterfly was recaptured 129 days after it was tagged, showing it averaged 14½ miles a day on the flight across three nations.

"In the Wintergarden area now, the monarch will continue its northward movement through the area until late April," Stewart said.

He said if Texans miss seeing the flocks of monarchs this spring, they can begin looking again during October and November because that's when the butterflies will be passing back through south Texas on their way to their winter home in Mexico.