Two are critically injured in I-35 chain reaction accident

By SALLY ELLERTSON
Burleson Star Editor

Two people were critically injured and four others were transported by ground ambulance Tuesday afternoon following a chain reaction accident on I-35W.

Southbound traffic on I-35 was shut down from Renfro Street to FM 917 for approximately four hours on June 13.

Firefighters were cleaning up a tractor/trailer fire that had I-35W shut down *(see story, Page 1A)* when a second 18-wheeler caused the chain reaction accident that involved at least five vehicles.

The 18-wheeler that caught fire occurred at 1:30 p.m. The second accident occurred at 3:10 p.m. in the 1100 block of I-35 in the vicinity of White's Collision and the SPJST Lodge.

According to Burleson Police Capt. Doug Sandifer, a tanker truck, that had been hauling gasoline but was empty at the time of the collision, was traveling southbound on I-35W when it struck a Ford Mustang. The Mustang went off on to the right shoulder and struck a Toyota RAV4, which was also pushed on to the right shoulder. The RAV4 struck a Jeep Cherokee and a flatbed pickup truck.

"According to the witnesses, the cars had slowed down, and the semi came up and slammed into one," Sandifer said. "The semi went through the median and ended up on the southbound service road."

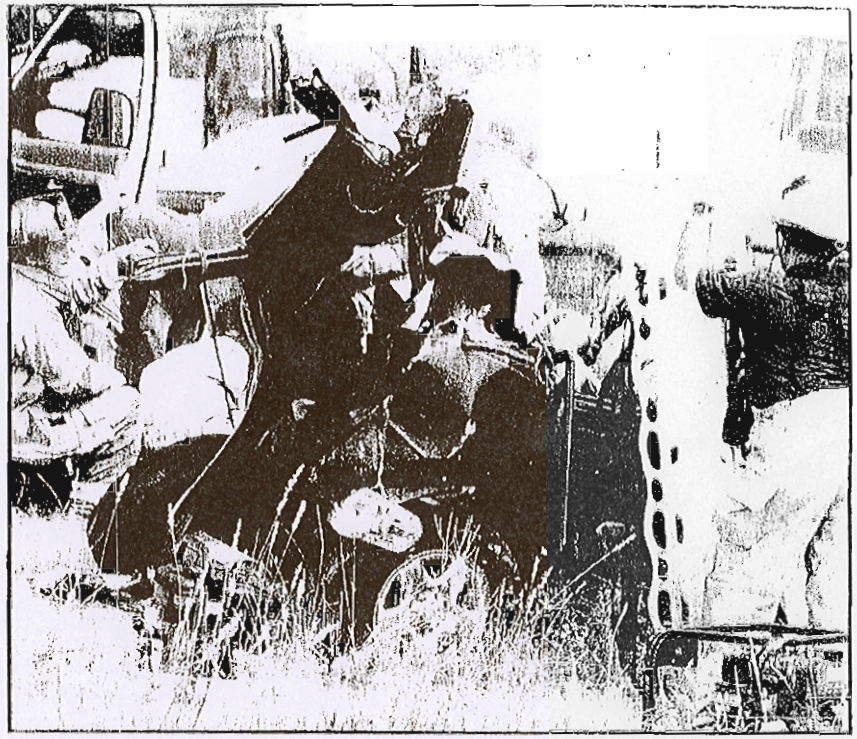
Two victims from the RAV4 were transported by air ambulance to the hospital. Four other victims from the four vehicles were transported by ground ambulance. The driver of the tanker truck was not injured.

Initial reports were that as many as 10 vehicles were involved and that three were critically injured, with two needing extrication. The extrications were from the RAV4 and the Mustang.

Several firefighters were treated for heat exhaustion in the nearly triple-digit temperatures.

Officers rerouted traffic to the service road, which only had one lane open since the semi was blocking the second lane.

The accident is still under investigation by the Burleson Police Department.



Pictures by Michael Rayburn/Star Group

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