

Two elderly men survive late night crash into creek

Found by Franklin Firefighter on way to work

On a chilly November night in rural Williamson County, two elderly gentlemen spent several hours buried in hay, trying to stay warm while they waited for help after their vehicle crashed into a creek. They were grateful when they were found by Franklin Firefighter James Fox on his way to work at Station 4 (Fieldstone Farms).

One of the men was 83-year old William Reed, a retired farmer from Bethesda. His friend who survived the ordeal with him is also in his eighties. Reed and his daughter, Nora Adcock, called Franklin Fire Administration recently to express their appreciation to James. Adcock recounted their story for the City Insider:

“Every Monday night they (Reed and friend) go up to Flat Creek Senior Center for potluck supper and they play Pedro,” said Adcock. “They had been up there and were on their way home. According to daddy it was probably 9:30 or 10:00 o’clock.”

Adcock said they were on Cross Keys Road when one of the front tires on Reed’s pickup truck blew out, sending them crashing through a barbed wire fence and over an embankment. The vehicle landed on its passenger side, about five feet below the road, where they found themselves perched in tree limbs just above Boone Creek.



This was the site of the wreck on Cross Keys Rd. in rural Williamson County.

The vehicle was totaled but amazingly the men, who were not wearing their seat belts, were not seriously injured. Worrying about the threat of fire or the vehicle shifting, they knew they needed to get out quickly.

Reed, who was driving, was able to climb out through his door then he helped pull his friend through the pickup truck’s sliding back window. They had to crawl up the embankment on their knees and go through the barbed wire fence to get to the road.

Neither man owned a cell phone, so they couldn’t call for help, and they were too far to walk to the nearest home. Adcock said, “There was a tree down on the side of road. They set there for a couple hours waiting for somebody to come by.” One car eventually passed by but didn’t even slow down.

Reed lives alone, so no one was aware he was missing. His friend is married but his wife went to sleep before he got home and did not realize he was also missing.



Franklin Firefighter James Fox

It wasn't raining, but as it started to get later and colder (according to the Old Farmer's Almanac the low temperature that evening was 44 degrees), they realized they needed to find shelter. They walked about 150 yards toward an outside light on a post beside an old barn where there were round bales of hay.



This is the barn where they found the round bales of hay.

Adcock said, "Daddy being a farmer said when he was a little kid they used to make beds out of straw for hogs to keep their babies warm." She said he used his pocketknife to cut the string and made a bed of hay for himself and his friend so they wouldn't be on the cold ground, and they covered themselves with more hay. "I just thank God the temperature was above freezing," said Adcock. "But they did get cold."

James Fox was on his way to work when he drove past the scene of the accident about 4:30 the morning of November 8. Seeing an open truck door, he said he thought it looked like the wreck had just happened. "Something just struck me as wrong," said James. He turned around and went back. He got out with his flashlight to investigate and started yelling. "I yelled out several times and finally got an answer," said James.

In fact, the spot where James had pulled in and turned around was the very spot where Reed and his friend were covered up with hay. Reed had taken out his hearing aids – he said he didn't want to lose them in the hay, and was fast asleep. James' headlights woke Reed's friend, and he walked back down to the site of the wreck and flagged James down.

James helped the man into his vehicle and they went back to find Reed. "We woke him up," said James, "I was amazed to see him crawl out of the hay." With the severity of the wreck, James was surprised the men were not seriously hurt, although they did have several cuts and bruises. He said, "I kept asking them, 'How in the world did you guys get out of there?'"

Both men insisted they were fine and did not need an ambulance. They just wanted to go home, so James drove them to Reed's house. Reed, who is a diabetic, sought medical care later that day. Adcock said that Reed could have been in serious trouble if his sugar had gotten low. She said, "I know the Good Lord was with him."

She said that both men have recovered and are doing well today. And they both now have cell phones. "They didn't go for a few weeks but they're back to playing cards," said Adcock. She said they are all very thankful to James for stopping to help.

James admired their resourcefulness and tenacity. "It was dark and they were weak from the wreck. There's a farmer down the road but it would have been hard for them to walk in the cold and reach him," said James. "They did exactly what they should have done." He added, "They taught me a lesson."