

Wake Forest Rescue Squad

Northern Wake Rescue Squad

Northern Wake Rescue & EMS

Wake Forest EMS

Research notes by Mike Legeros
Last updated January 28, 2024

Pre-History

See main Wake County rescue squad history document.

Early History

1952 – **Wake Forest Rescue Squad** organized.

- August 23, 1952, article in News & Observer reports that a rescue squad is being organized by “the local fire and police departments” to “operate a resuscitator on victims of drowning and smothering.”
- Police Chief notes that three deaths by drowning have occurred in the area, during the year. And though the fire department has a “respirator” purchased through the contributions of local citizens, recovering the victims to revive them has been hindered, because “a boat had to be obtained” in most cases.
- Article adds that a 14-foot boat has been purchased for use by the squad, and a special trailer is being built, to carry “the boat, the respirator, an extra tank of oxygen, and blankets.” It will also be equipped with two oars and a searchlight. Donations amount to around to \$100 have been received from citizens, to pay for the boat and trailer. More money is needed, with the cost of all equipment about \$200.
- July 2, 1954, article in News & Observer mentions that the Wake Forest Rescue Squad was called to the Neuse River, to search for a drowning victim.
- April 23, 1957, article in News & Observer mentions the Wake Forest Rescue squad, in context of a drowning.
- December 23, 1960, article in Wake Weekly mentions the rescue squad in a story about a teen who fell through ice into a pond.

The original incarnation of the squad operated until at least 1957. By 1965, they had stopped operating. Gene Baker, an organizer of the 1965 squad, recalls that he wasn’t aware of an earlier version of the squad, when the 1965 incarnation of the squad was organized.

1964 - **Wake Forest Rescue Squad** re-organized.

The squad was re-organized by October 1964, when members were reported as attending training classes in the Wake Weekly on October 16, 1964.

Articles of incorporation filed on January 19, 1965

- Legal name Wake Forest Rescue Squad, Inc.
- Corporation purpose: “To acquire and own rescue apparatus for use by the corporation in the protection and rescue of persons from injury or loss of life; to own and acquire land and to construct buildings for use by the corporation in connection with the housing of rescue apparatus and for the providing of a place for meeting for the members of the corporation; to sponsor or hold rescue schools; to engage in any and all types of activities not prohibited by law which shall be for the betterment of the community, county and state”
- Initial Board of Directors:
 - Robert F. Christoph – 225 W. South Street
 - Gene S. Baker – N. Main Street
 - Clinton Vaughn – Ready Mix, E. Elm Ave.
 - Rodney Bright – 405 S. Main Street
- Incorporators:
 - Robert F. Christoph – 225 W. South Street
 - Gene S. Baker – N. Main Street
 - Jerry Warren – 621 N. Wingate Street
 - I. D. Wheeler – Wilkinson Trailer Park
 - A. C. Hall – 305 N. Main Street

From News Clippings

- By November 6, 1964, squad members were attending first aid classes on Thursday nights at the town hall. Reported temporary chairman Gene Baker in the Wake Weekly on that date, “During the last meeting we were watching first aid films when we heard the ambulance go to ‘Shorty’ Joyner’s house for an emergency. We rushed to the house to offer our assistance and to help calm members of the family.”
- Also, the squad wasn’t officially organized yet. Noted Baker in the above article, the squad would “not be an ambulance service, but a rescue squad, trained to give first aid, to free injured people from trapped cars, unusual falls, and to aid the injured at fires or commotions.”
- Also, plans were being made to get a truck and equipment. They hoped to charter their organization by January and be fully operating.
- From January 22, 1965, Wake Weekly, the squad sponsored a barbecue meal at North Main Restaurant as a fundraiser on January 30. The money would be used toward purchase of a panel van and equipping the truck.
- Also, the squad was an “absolutely free 24 hour service” and they would not be sponsoring [their own] ambulance service. The officers were Captain Gene Baker, Lieutenant Clinton Vaughn, Training Officers Robert Christoph, MD, and A.C. Hall Jr., First Instructor.

- By February 12, 1965, reported the Wake Weekly, the squad had acquired a “partially equipped service truck” and had painted the truck. Lettering on the truck was painted by Jim Holmes, who donated his services. The remaining equipment had been ordered and should arrive in about two weeks. The squad had enough equipment to provide first aid and rescue service.
- Also, the squad met every Thursday night at the Wake Forest courthouse. Interested people could attend, until the squad reached a maximum of 26 people.
- Also, to request rescue service, people called the Wake Forest Police Department, and they would call the squad, if needed.
- Members of the squad were “Red” Wheeler, Charles Edwards, Phil Pearce, A.C. Hall Jr., Captain Gene Baker, Boyce Medlin, Secretary-Treasurer Rodney Bright, Jerry Warren, Dick Newlan, Dr. Robert Christoph, Maynard Hardwick, Edward Perry, and Civil Defense Director M. P. Bridge.
- On April 9, 1965, the Wake Weekly printed this list of rescue squad procedures:

Captain Baker Lists

Rescue Squad Procedures

The rescue squad in Wake Forest have been organized for about 6 months. Captain Gene Baker reports: We now have about twelve members most of whom have completed the standard first aid course. We have also had some training in other areas of rescue operation."

Baker has released the following standing operating procedures (SOP) for the Wake Forest Rescue Squad for publication so that the public might know what could be expected of the Rescue Squad and how they co-ordinate services to other agencies:

Purpose: To Rescue, give First Aid & Assist in the saving of life in cases of sickness, accident, & emergencies.

Plans for various areas of Rescue Squad Operation

1. Civil Defense —
 - Director/Mack Bridge
 - A. To assist C. D. Director in carrying out planned evacuation
 - B. To aid injured
 - C. To assist in traffic control

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
 NOTICE OF SALE
 TAX S. D. NO. 14473
 NORTH CAROLINA
 WAKE COUNTY
 WAKE COUNTY & CITY
 OF RALEIGH
 Plaintiff(s)

vs.

MATTHEW JONES AND WIFE,
 MRS. MATTHEW JONES

2. Fire-Chief — Albert Perry
 - A. To report when called
 - B. To assist police as directed
 - C. To assist chief as directed
 - D. To aid injured
3. Auto Accident —
 - Police chief—Harvey Newsome
 - A. To report when called
 - B. To assist police as directed
 - C. To aid injured
4. Accidents (General Public) —
 - Poisoning — Wounds — Falls — etc.
 - A. To take charge of situation
 - B. To rescue, aid, and administer first aid to trapped or injured
5. Major Catasphries (explosions — Fires — Wrecks — etc.)
 - A. To coordinate with all other agencies and person in charge of location or premns.
 - B. To rescue, aid, and administer first aid to trapped or injured
6. Drownings or Water Accidents
 - A. To take charge of recovery or rescue
 - B. To aid injured
 - C. To recover body
7. Missing Person — Harvey Newsom — Police Chief
 - A. To aid in search
 - B. To give first aid when needed
8. Riots & Commotions
 - A. To assist police as directed
 - B. To administer first aid when needed

S.O.P. For
 WAKE FOREST RESUE SQUAD

Without alarm

1. Call received by police station or member
 - A. person receiving call then calls a Rescue Squad member in order shown on list until one is reached.
2. B. the member reached then calls or has someone call next man on list, repeat until all notified.

WITH OR WITHOUT ALARM

2. All members after hearing alarm or receiving call
 - A. Report to Town Hall for instruction
 - B. First two qualified members get vehicle and report to scene in a safe manner
 - C. Other members report to scene likewise
3. Captain will be in charge of squad operations
 - A. Lieutenant will take charge in Captain's absence
 - B. Any coordinating with other agencies will be done by those in charge
 - C. Squad will concern itself primarily with any rescue of persons and administering first aid until injured turned over to Doctor or Ambulance
 - D. Record of call and reports to press will be made by captain only

Page 8, The Wake Weekly, Wake Forest, N. C., April 9, 1965

- By May 21, 1965, reported the Wake Weekly, the squad's "drive for contributions" received that week a "citizens band radio base and mobile unit," a used boat trailer, a 7 ½ HP motor, and about \$30 cash.
- On January 7, 1966, the Wake Weekly reported that the squad had been approved on Monday by county commissioners to receive a \$25 monthly appropriation from the Civil Defense budget. The squad had 17 active members and \$1,500 worth of tools and equipment.
- By September 28, 1967, the squad had a fully equipped ambulance, a 1960s Pontiac formerly used by the US Air Force and purchased through Civil Defense by fund-raising

projects. The squad also had a 1960s Chevy panel van and a boat with trailer and outboard motor. The ambulance would be used “for emergencies only” and not “take the place of regular ambulance service,” reported the Wake Weekly. To reach the squad, people called 556-3176.

Early Memories

From the 1965 re-organization and later:

- First located at 132 Dunn Avenue.
- Later at 149 E. Holding Avenue.
- One-story building with 2,016 square-feet, built 1940.
- One of the first squads to purchase a Hurst tool in the 1970s.

- Randy Bright (WFFD board and Bright funeral home) and Buddy Willis (Willis' hardware downtown Wake Forest) were charter members.
- They used to respond using the funeral home hearses.

- Gene S. Baker was the first Captain.
- He operated the Glen Royal Café and Gene Baker Insurance in town and was a co-founder of the Wake Forest Jaycees.
- Baker remembers buying an old ambulance to get started.

- Early calls included:
 - April 2, 1965, Tuesday before, land search for a teenage boy. Source: Wake Weekly, April 2, 1965. Possibly their first call.
 - May 11, 1965, see below.

- One of their first calls was May 11, 1965, for the drowning of Raymond Ellington, who drowned while fishing in the Wake Forest Reservoir. From the Wake Weekly on May 14, 1965, the incident also brought rescue units from Raleigh, Louisburg, Wendell, and Falls of Neuse [?], along with the Wake Forest Fire Department.
- Ellington drowned about 6:30 p.m. when his small fishing boat overturned and sank during an electrical storm. His body was recovered about 10:15 p.m. by Louisburg Rescue Squad, about 50 yards from shore and in about 15 feet of water. He was 55 years old and was fishing with Billy Harper, 49, who was unable to save him after their boat overturned.
- The incident drew “a large number of spectators” to the scene and they “caused several near wrecks on Highway 98.”

- By October 8, 1965, reported the Wake Weekly, squad members had contributed over 761 service hours, excluding regular weekly meetings:
 - 330 training hours, with
 - 260 hours of first aid
 - 20 hours of lectures

- 50 hours of practice
- 165 hours of workshops
- 266 hours of rescue duty and standbys, with
 - 75 hours for lost children
 - 63 hours for drowning
 - 100 hours for four events at Holly's park
 - 28 hours for two events, horse shows.

Early articles in the News & Observer, via NewsBank archives search results:

- 1/4/66 - Funding approved by county
- 1/29/67 - Sick dancer transported by squad
- 5/11/69 - Drowning
- 8/13/74 - Derailment
- 10/20/74 - Mentioned in feature on emergency dispatching [?]
- 3/24/75 - Water rescue
- 5/27/75 - Drowning

1970s

1970, September – Squad starts fundraising campaign to raise \$10,000 for a new building. (WW, 9/24/70)

1972, September – Squad will receive part of \$42,600 of a grant from the Governor's Highway Safety Program, which will fund communications equipment and 50% of the cost of one vehicle for each squad: Apex, Cary, Fuquay-Varina, Wake Forest, and Wendell. The squad will buy a new "completely equipped van-type truck" which will also serve as a second ambulance for the squad. The organization will also receive two mobiles ones, one base station, and four pagers. There will also be a private radio frequency for county squads, and the radio units will be equipped with a "dial system" so they can talk with other squads in the state, hospitals, and the "Wake County Fire Net." The radio and vehicles are expected to be in operation by December 31, 1972. (WW, 9/14/72)

1973, March – Squad is raising money to buy a new rescue vehicle and need about \$2,000. (WW, 3/1/73)

1973, April – Squad fails to respond to a fatal collision on Highway 401 on April 8 apparently due to lack of communication. The squad hoped to have its [first?] radio coming as soon as they received their license from the FCC. (April 19, 1973)

1973, June – New ambulance will be delivered before July 6. Ordered after a lengthy fund drive but delivery was delayed by factor problems. Next needed items for members are more pagers. The squad has four, and those members must telephone other members. All rescue calls are

handled by the town police department, which relays the calls to the squad members. (WW, 6/28/73)

1973, July 30 – Squad participates in 200-man search for an elderly Youngsville woman, reported missing since Saturday night. She’s found on Monday after and rescued by a National Guard helicopter, after rescuers spot her sitting at the edge of a field, about 1.5 miles from her home. The 93 year-old woman is not injured. (Durham Herald Sun, 7/31/73)

1974, April 28 – Squad holds circus fundraiser, with Sells & Gray three-ring circus performing for one performance only in a tent erected on the elementary school ballpark. (WW, 4/25/74)

1974, August 11 - Amtrak train derailed on curve behind Athey Products plant at about 8 p.m., minutes after passing through Wake Forest Eight cars of the Silver Star, traveling from New York to Miami, jump the track, injuring 28 of 270 passengers. Rescue squads respond from Wake Forest, Youngsville, Franklinton, Bunn, Zebulon, Louisburg, Cary, New Hope, as well as ambulances from Raleigh and Wake Forest. Only one of the injured passengers is hospitalized. The cause of the derailment is not immediately known. (WW, 8/15/74)

1974, June – Squad received a new 14-foot, tri-hull fiberglass rescue boats in the last week of June. Industrial Plastics donated 26 boats to rescue squads in Wake, Johnson, and Franklin counties. (WW, 7/4/74)

1974, December – Squad has fourteen members. All are training or have completed training to be certified as Emergency Medical Technician. The squad averages about a call a day, but the calls are often concentrated on the weekend. In addition to the squad, two funeral homes in town also provide ambulance service. (WW, 12/12/74)

1975, March 23 – Squad is called about 4:00 p.m. on a Sunday after empty boats were spotted in the “swift Neuse River” upstream about a quarter mile from the Falls dam. Two men were discovered in the middle of the “racing river” and the squad couldn’t launch a rescue boat because of the swift current. They were also stranded in an inaccessible area. They called a Cary Rescue Squad official, who requested a helicopter from Fort Bragg. The helo with a crew of four arrived about 5:30 a.m. After circling a few times, it landed in the middle of the Neuse River Bridge and rope and a Stokes stretcher were loaded. Both the rescued men wore life jackets and their boat “apparently went on down the river.” (WW, 3/27/75)

1975, April – Squad has 14 members and recently elected new officers: James Lentz as Chief, Milton Jones as assistant chief, William Miller as training officer, Kevin Wilson as secretary-treasurer, Max George as public relations director. Medical advisors are Dr. A. N. Corpening and Dr. James Moseley. The squad recently purchased “badly needed” equipment, including a Laerdal Suction Unit, a Cardio Beeper by Survival Technology, a Black Hawk Porta-Power, and five Regency car radios. The squad is dispatched by both the town police department and Raleigh Rescue Communications Central.

1975, December 31 – Squad answered 356 calls and logged over 3,000 man hours, ranging from emergency responses to standing by at high school sports events. (2/5/76)

1976, January – Wake Weekly editorial recommends suggests that creating a board of directors could benefit the organization, which might help with their financial problems, such as seeking additional funds from the town to cover what they cited as a deficit in their budget for operating costs, and subsequently requested by the town to meet with the town Finance Committee and furnish a financial statement. They suggested implementing a board like the rural fire department has. (WW, 1/15/76)

1976, January – Squad served 650 plates of barbecue pork and chicken as a fundraiser on the Saturday before January 19. (WW, 1/29/76)

1976, May – Squad received their long-awaited Hurst tool, the first that will be available in northern Wake County or Franklin County. The squad has a crash truck, two ambulances, and a boat and motor, in addition to the Hurst tool and other equipment. They also have completed payments on their building. Member training for a day on Saturday. (WW, 5/27/76)

1977, February 28 – Squad conducts annual elections. Milton Jones named Captain, Willie Ferguson named First Lieutenant, and Purvis Perry named second Lieutenant. Wallace Denton named treasurer, Mike Ryan named secretary, and Bob Ellington and Jimmie Young named members at large. The squad will soon kick off this year's fundraising campaign to re-roof and expand the squad building on Dunn Street. (WW, 3/10/77)

1977, May – Snapshot of answered calls:

- May 9 – Route 4, Zebulon. Medical emergency, transported to Wake.
- May 10 – Route 1, Zebulon, severe chest pain. Transported to Rex.
- May 10 – Route 3, obstetrical case. Transported to Wake.
- May 11 – North Allen Road, subject fell, contusion to head. Transported to Wake.
- May 12 – Route 2, farm accident, subject run over by tractor. Transported to Wake.
- May 13 – Route 2, emergency transport, from Northern Wake to Wake.
- May 14 – Highway 1, Plantation Inn, subject fell, contusion to head. Transported to Wake.
- May 15 – Walnut Street, assault, multiple abrasions. Transported to Wake.
- May 15 – Neuse River at Raleigh Beach, assisted Wendell Rescue with dragging for drowning victim.
- May 15 – Auto accident at Neuse Crossroads, both subjects with minor injuries. Transported to _____.
- May 18 – Highway 1, Homestead _____. Youth aspirated treated pool water. Transported to Wake.
- May 19 – N. _____, Obstetrical. Transported to Wake.
- May 19 – Highway 1, subject fainted, respirator used. Transported to Wake.
- May 21 – Transport from Northern Wake to Wake.
- May 21 – Stand by, Rolesville Raceway.
- May 22 – NC __ at __ Forks Road, auto accident. Transported to Wake.
- May 22 – NC 98, _____ accident. Unit called, no injuries.

1980 to 1989

1981 - **Northern Wake Rescue & EMS** created, renamed from WFRS.

1981 – New ambulance.

- 1981 Chevrolet Silverado/Swab SE-120.
- Build #4141.
- Ordered August 1980.
- Built February 1981.

1984, April 11 – Squad participates in search at Falls Lake with close to 60 people, including local sheriff's departments and local rescue squads, looking but failing to find a Creedmoor man thought to have fallen off his boat while fishing. Crews searched the shore by foot and the lake by boat and helicopter. (N&O, 4/12/84)

1985, July 3 - Multi-patient incident at the high school stadium at the "the largest fireworks display in the Southeast," honoring Vietnam veterans. Some 10,000 people in the stadium--and several thousand more on lawns and in parked cars--were watching when a 150-pound shell exploded some 50 feet above the ground, instead of between 800 and 1000 feet. Seven people were transported to Wake Medical Center with minor injuries, while about another ten were treated at the scene. The explosion also broke a plate-glass window in the stadium. The event was overseen by two pyrotechnicians and the 24-inch shell was made in Japan. (N&O, 7/5/85)

1986 – Squad wins first-place in first-aid competition at North Carolina Association of Rescue Squads' 30th annual convention in Raleigh, October 3 and 4. The competition is sponsored by NCDOT's fire and rescue division and is held at Dorton Arena. Twenty-two teams from across the state compete in the event, which involves "two separate first-aid simulations." (N&O, 10/15/86)

1986 – Squad chief is Benny L. Moody. (N&O, 10/15/86)

1989 – New ambulance.

- 1989 Dodge/Swab SE-120.
- Build #4141, remount of 1981 body.
- Chassis built March 1989.
- Ordered October 1988.
- Order #44685
- Built March 1989.

1989, June 24 – Ambulance collides with a wrecker about 10:30 p.m. on a Saturday night at New Bern Avenue and the Beltline. Five squad members are injured and treated at Wake Medical Center. The driver of the wrecker is not injured. (N&O, 6/25/89)

1989, November 26 – Squad responds to a pond near Rolesville, after a Wake Forest man jumps into the water to escape law enforcement officers, following a police chase that started about 2:30 a.m., when a Rolesville officer attempted to stop the car, the officer thinking he recognized the vehicle from a DWI arrest made several months, and who thought the drivers license was revoked. The suspect entered the 2.5 acre pond and struggled in the center. By the time the squad arrived with the boat, the suspect sank had drowned. (N&O, 11/27/89)

General memories:

- In its heyday, Northern Wake Rescue and EMS operated two stations: one in Wake Forest and one in Rolesville.
- The Rolesville station was the old fire station.
- They basically served the entire northern area of Wake County from Falls Lake in the west, to Buffalo Road in the east.

1990 to 1999

1990, January – Stan Wilson appointed Chief. (N&O, 7/4/91)

1990, April – Squad member Gary Barners is recognized as outstanding EMT by the 4th annual EMS awards program by the Triangle Council of Governments. Eight people and organizations in a six-county area received awards. (Durham Sun, 4/20/90)

1990, June 2 – Summerfest '90 in Rolesville is sponsored by the squad along with Rolesville VFD, the town's parks and recreation commission, and the NC Narcotics Officers Association. Organizers hoped that the all-day music festival would draw 10,000 people from across the state and region. (N&O, 3/29/90)

1990, August – Squad Chief Stan Wilson discovers that about 300 reports, with detailed information on rescue calls, are missing from his office. All but six later surfaced. The Rolesville police chief said there were three suspects and possibly a fourth, but “he couldn't think of a reason” why someone would steal them. (N&O, 9/13/90)

1990, October – Squad advertises their annual “picture fundraiser”. Donations are \$15 and donors will receive an 8x10 family portrait. (N&O, 10/21/90)

1990, December – The Wake Forest public safety committee recommends a no-parking zone on the north side of East Holding Avenue, between South White and South Main street. One resident plus the squad complained to the town last month, about cars blocking their driveways during worship services at nearby St. Catherine's Catholic Church. The squad also offered to let worshippers park on a vacant quarter-acre lot near the station. The law took effect on February 15, 1991. (N&O, 12/5/90, 1/17/91)

1991 – Nine volunteer rescue squads in Wake County abandoned the tradition of free ambulance service and begin charging fees for transporting patients. The squad begins selling their memberships the following year [correct?] and by November 1 has sold 1,856 of them, each

costing \$35 and entitling holders for free ambulance calls. Non-members are charged more than four times that amount per call (N&O, 6/10/91, 3/19/92)

Snapshot of rescue squads, from September 10, 1991, News & Observer:

Rescue Squad	BLS fee	ALS fee	Lifetime Membership	1990 Calls
Northern Wake Rescue and EMS	\$148	\$178	\$35	1,400

1992 – **Northern Wake Rescue & EMS** votes to reorganize in June.

Timeline of events:

- June 1991 – For several months, squad members have engaged in “internal squabbling,” resulting in contentious membership meetings, prompting some squad members to quit, lowering squad morale, and damaging their customers’ confidence in the squad. The infighting prompts county commissioners that month to suspend the squad’s authority to charge fees for services, to force the squad to fix its problems. Initially, the “acrimonious exchanges at membership meetings” continued. Then “efforts to mend the rift began in earnest,” with a committee of three board members and three squad volunteers meeting to consider changing the bylaws. In “happier times,” the squad had more than 50 volunteers.
- July 1991 – Reports the News & Observer on July 4, 1991, the squad’s customers are worried. At least a half-dozen of the volunteer members have quit, “blaming the management style of squad leaders.”
Some “blame jealousy from a deep-seated rivalry” between the two towns, Wake Forest and Rolesville, which jointly fund the squad’s two stations. Also noted as a “hot point of content” are the policies and management style of Chief Stan Wilson, which “some blame for driving members away.” His critics, “mostly Rolesville volunteers who accuse him of favoring Station 1 in Wake Forest, have asked him to resign.” Chief Wilson denies playing favorites and says “he has no plans to quit.”
“There has always been bickering between the two stations” says Wilson, who is a Wake Forest native. His son, Stan Wilson Jr., says the conflict is a power struggle. “There are too many people who want to be chief and not enough Indians, in my view.” Others say the Rolesville volunteers are “being contrary.” And “whatever action [the chief] takes is [said to be] unfair. They dig their heels in and won’t do it.” She adds “it’s like the Hatfields and McCoys.”
Residents have contacted county commissioners with their concerns. Merrie R. Hedrick, commissioner, says she received three letters in one day alone.
Partly to “quell residents’ concerns about service,” the board recently voted to ask the county to “provide paramedics to Northern Wake” [e.g., paramedic-level medics to ride the NWRMES units? Or deploy WCEMS units? TBD.]
- August 1991 – Believe the “rift” is mending, county commissions reinstate the squad’s ability to “levy membership and service fees.” The squad ranks begin to grow, with people volunteering, and replenishing “squad ranks thinned by resignations of some veteran members.”

- September 1991 – In news reports, the squad leaders’ management style was to blame for the conflicts, say some of the half-dozen veteran volunteers who quite earlier in 1991. Others cite a “deep-seated rivalry between Wake Forest and Rolesville, which jointly support the squad’s two stations.”

The squad’s board, which numbers eleven members, is expected to vote on eighteen proposed amendments next month. They include a provision for creating a grievance board that meets, whenever a volunteer feels they have been wrongly suspended. The board would meet within seven days of a suspension. If the suspension was determined as unjust, it would end immediately. Squad members had previous complained about “the lack of resources in those situations.” Other changes “clarify members’ and leaders’ roles and attempt to improve communications between the two groups.” Another change “spells out the makeup of the squad board.” Two other changes call for “posting board meeting minutes and other information, such as squad audits, at each station.”

Also changing is the institution of fees, as a “reliable source of money” to “pay for better equipment and more training for volunteers.” Starting November 1, residents will have the option to pay annual membership dues of \$35 and “receiving free ambulance calls.” Those who opt-out will pay \$148 per ambulance call involving basic EMT service, and \$170 per call requiring EMTs with “advanced life-saving training.”

The Board also plans to approach the county “about posting paramedics at squad stations.”
- March/April 1992 – After the “squabbling” resumes, the squad’s board removes Stan Wilson as Chief and replaces him with Charles O. Brown Jr., a Stony Hill native. The membership, however, restores Wilson to a “leadership role,” voting to appoint him as Assistant Chief. He’s appointed in early March. (N&O, 3/19/92)

Some of the problems preceding the changes are cited in a May 21, 1992, news story, noting that the squad began “losing volunteers and drawing negatively publicity” last year, after members “began airing their grievances in public.” Some members complained that Chief Wilson “enforced squad policies inconsistently and played favorites,” charges he denied.
- Spring 1992 – Despite the new leadership, “volunteers continued to argue with each other and board members at meeting.” And at one board meeting “in late spring, a fistfight broke out.”
- May 1992 – Effort by some of the squad’s board members to reorganize the squad fails on a tie vote and angers some squad volunteers early last week, reports News & Observer on May 21, 1992.

On Monday night, May 20?, with about 30 volunteers “warily looking on”, the board charges a committee with “restoring unity and improving district in the squad’s district.” The committee is composed of board Chairman Buddy Willis, board member A. Taylor Wiggins, and Chief Charles O. Brown Jr. They will propose a plan to the board next month.

The panel will consider consolidating the squad’s two stations into a single location, dividing the shared district into two districts managed by the same board, or having Wake County EMS serve the area. Or, they will leave things as they are and “hope our personnel problems go away,” which, he says, “I think we’ve seen they won’t.”

Brown is serving his second month as Chief, since the “outster” of Stan Wilson.
- Effort by some of the board members to reorganize the squad “failed on a tie vote.”

- June 1992 – Squad receives letter from county commissioners “urging them to end more than a year of infighting among members.” The letter notes that in recent months they had been “inundated with calls from squad volunteers and residents” in the squad’s district of Wake Forest, Rolesville, and surrounding areas. The letter is signed by Chairman Vernon Malone, who says the controversy has caused the squad’s customers to “doubt they were getting good service.” The commissioners tell the squad’s board to “reach a solution ‘as expeditiously as possible.’”

After receiving the letter, the board votes to reorganize. They set July 31 as a deadline to “retool the squad’s bylaws” and board Chairman A. Taylor Wiggins appoints a committee to propose changes. He says “In the past, I think we lacked a clear definition of who was running what. I think we’re taking care of that now.”

They also approved an agreement with “county rescue personnel” serving the Northern Wake district “if the squad finds itself short of volunteers.” Under the agreement, the county will serve the area no longer than 90 days.

- Sources: N&O, 9/19/91, 5/21/91, 7/4/91, 7/23/92

1992, August 1 – Wake County EMS begins providing primary paramedic service squad’s district.

- EMS 10 is stationed at Wake Forest fire station.
- They run first-duty calls for the district, while Northern Wake runs second-duty at a reduced level (non-paramedic) of service.
- Sources: Oral history, N&O, 2/4/93, WCEMS News.

1992, August – Squad chief Charles Brown resigns from position, noting that the job takes too much of his time and energy. He remains a volunteer member. Brown worked as an emergency dispatcher in Durham. (N&O, 8/27/92)

1992, September – Horace Macon appointed Chief. (N&O, 2/4/93)

1992, November – Squad sells 1972 ambulance to Rolesville family doctor H. C. Wood for \$2,000, who plans to fill it with medical supplies and drive it to the Gabriel Garcia Civil Hospital in Patzcuaro, Mexico, which always needs equipment. He visited the hospital 14 years ago while on vacation and has since returned each year to bring them donated medical equipment. (N&O, 11/12/92)

1993 – Squad turmoil is over, reports News & Observer on February 4, 1993. Board meetings, “once marked by acrimonious exchanges between squad leaders and volunteers, have become more businesslike.” Local officials are longer receiving complaints about service from townspeople. Says Chief Horace Macon, the “volunteers are working together better than they have in a long time.” At the request of the board, county commissioners are “keeping county EMS paramedics in the area” and “expect to provide service countywide by 1994.” Meanwhile Macon is “poring over the squad’s finances, figuring out how to boost lagging membership sales, improving the squad’s record-keeping, and attending to routine maintenance.” (N&O, 2/4/93)

1993 – Horace Macon takes charge of squad and “turns it around.” They have twelve EMTs then, but June 1993 they have thirty-five, with plans for more than dozen to be paramedics within a year. Operating with one of the area’s leanest budgets, he transformed \$10,000 in debt to a \$25,000 surplus. He changed the response criteria for the “crash truck,” no longer dispatching to every collision and instead waiting for a scene report from county paramedics or police. He got rid of one of the squad’s two post office boxes, quit paying someone to cut grass at both stations—members now cut it themselves—and even canceled their newspaper subscription. He planned to resign from the role and a successor had not yet been named. (N&O, 6/2/93)

1995 - **Wake Forest EMS** created, renamed from Northern Wake Rescue & EMS. Name change filed August 28, 1995.

- When squad resumes service, they provided second-duty, non-paramedic (?) unit in Wake Forest.
- Wake County EMS 10 continues to serve as first-duty unit. Circa 1996, it moves to old Northern Wake Hospital. Dedicated county EMS station opened on South Franklin Street in Wake Forest in 1998.

1995 or earlier– Rolesville rescue station closed, building donated to newly formed Rolesville EMS. (N&O, 3/16/95)

1998 - **Wake Forest EMS** disbands on/by March 31, 1998. The town is left with only one “county ambulance” to serve the area. (N&O, 2/3/98) In April, town commissioners endorse a request by the squad board of directors to give the county control over EMS services in the area. The director of the squad is Horace Macon. (N&O, 4/23/98) The corporate dissolution is filed November 25, 1998. The county plans to buy land this summer to build a two-bay ambulance station on the south side of town. (N&O, 4/23/98)

See also Rolesville EMS history document.

Help Wanted!

This document is part of a project to research and record the history of rescue squads and EMS providers in Wake County.

You can help in any number of ways, including:

- Read this document and visit the project web site, www.legeros.com/history/ems
 - What’s good about what we’re doing?
 - What could be improved?
 - What haven’t we thought of?
- Proofread this document as casually or extensively as desired:
 - Misspelled names?

- Wrong makes or models of vehicles?
 - General timeframes that seem off?
 - Etc.
- Supplement this document with things that you remember, or stories you've heard.
 - Jot your thoughts in an e-mail.
 - Send a long, detailed e-mail.
 - Write things down on paper and send via postal mail.
 - Talk to the project organizers in person, at your convenience.
 - Etc.
- Share any scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, old photos, or old documents that you have, or can find.
 - Want some blasts from the past, to help you remember?
 - Visit <https://www.facebook.com/WakeEMSHistory>
- Suggest particular people that we can contact, for more information.

Contact Mike Legeros or Jeff Hammerstein at any time. Thank you in advance!