

BOUND BROOK EVACUATION 2007



In a scene reminiscent of the aftermath of Tropical Storm Floyd, thousands of New Jersey residents were evacuated from their homes following a powerful nor'easter that dropped torrential rain across the state for three straight days in mid-April, 2007.

Among the hardest hit communities was Bound Brook, Somerset County, scene of epic flooding during Floyd in 1999.

The Fanwood Rescue Squad was among dozens of EMS, fire and law enforcement units from across central and northern New Jersey to assist Bound Brook with evacuations, 911 call responses, flood control, security and health care at evacuation centers.

Squad Training Officer Jim Baxter joined the state EMS Task Force on Monday, April 16, to help construct the command center. Squad Second Lt. Tom Kranz and EMT Robert Levine spent Wednesday, April 18,

covering EMS needs at several evacuation centers with rig 78.

The largest of the centers, Bound Brook High School, housed up to 500 evacuees (above left) including children of all ages. They slept on cots and ate food donated to the Red Cross, which operated the shelters. Many left their homes with only a few possessions.

By the third day, multiple cases of vomiting and digestive distress caused by drinking contaminated water, and a case of scabies, a parasite-borne rash that is contagious, forced a massive decontamination of the high school gym.

The Squad treated and transported three evacuees-- a diabetic woman who had been without her insulin for four days, a 5 year old girl with a rash across her abdomen and a 5 year old boy who fell onto his two front teeth while playing outside the local Presbyterian church. All cases were transported to Somerset Medical Center where the ER staff was remarkably professional and pleasant despite the huge volume of cases they had seen over the past four days.

Radio communications were initially conducted over the JEMS 3 VHS frequency, which meant utilizing the older, low-band radios which we still carry in the rigs. Later in the day, due to interference on JEMS 3, all visiting squads were issued radios to operate on a Somerset County emergency frequency.

The ICS command system was in play and made for a very smooth operation.

Food and beverages at the command center were supplied around the clock by the Salvation Army.

