



John Harrison

At the beginning of the night shift on March 6 1969, Number Two Station responded to a fire in the A. C. Foster Leather Goods Store at 321 Bank Street. The fire in the back of the store quickly spread and soon became a multiple alarm fire. The Incident Commander Anthony McCarthy called in a second District Chief to assist with the fire. District Chief Wesley Chatterton responded from the Eastern District to assist. His driver was John Harrison who had just returned to duty after being off duty for an injury from a falling ceiling six weeks earlier. It was a bitterly cold night and fire fighter Harrison was assigned to an exterior attack team operating at the front of the building. The attack team moved from the street location into the shelter of the entranceway. A mezzanine holding office equipment collapsed trapping John Harrison a number of fire fighters immediately commenced with freeing of the trapped fire fighter. A second collapse occurred trapping Platoon Chief McCarthy, Lieutenant Herbert Love and fire fighters Ian Downs and Edward Hartley. More fire fighters joined in the rescue and were able to get everyone out except for John Harrison who had been pinned by a piece of material through his leg pinning him. Further rescue attempts were futile when a large pile of debris ten feet high completely covered fire fighter Harrison. Recovery was made shortly after the fire was extinguished.

Fire fighter John Harrison was thirty-two years of age and left behind his parents and two daughters Cynthia and Wendy. He had joined the Ottawa Fire department on April 16, 1956 John's funeral was held on March 8, 1969 and his body laid to rest in Beechwood cemetery.