

History

Fire Station 25, Rincon

Lloyd Bowman was the first person to work at the Rincon Fire Station. In 1932, Lloyd became a volunteer fireman at the Ventura Avenue Fire Station which, at that time, was the busiest station in the county.

On February 23, 1942, a Japanese submarine fired twenty-five 4 and 5 inch rounds at the Bankline Oil Refinery on the coast, twelve miles west of Santa Barbara. Today, this location is the Sandpiper Golf Course. The attack caused only slight damage and no fires. This was the first attack on the United States mainland in World War II. The attack probably motivated the opening of a fire station on the Rincon to protect the oil fields.

On September 1, 1942, Avenue Captain C.D. Little appointed Lloyd as a regular fireman to man the Rincon fire station as soon as it was opened. Lloyd's own house and part of his service station was moved out to the Rincon and located on Highway 101. The fire station became the living quarters for this family and an engine room. Members of the department laid the foundation for the one-man station on the beach. The station was officially opened on Thanksgiving Day, 1942 to protect the oil fields during the war years and after.

During the war years, the station was painted olive drab and the windows facing the ocean were covered with blankets. A loaded 30-60 rifle was carried at all times on the engine as the fires Lloyd responded to might have been set for signals or sabotage and he never knew what to expect upon arrival.

The following is the actual account taken from Station 25's log and Captain Bowman's 1943 yearbook:

December 9, 1943 was a rainy wet day

08:32 - the ocean is coming over the sea wall and on to highway 101 and into station.

09:23 - winds are getting stronger by the minute, up to 35 & 45 knots.

09:40 - phone call reported the trees and telephone poles and lines are down.

10:35 - army beach patrol stops at station 25 and reports a bushfire at La Conchita, Engine 25 responds, one man. Captain Bowman on way picks up three oil field men and a few volunteers.

01:24 - fire station windows just blown in, wind has gone up to 80 to 85 knots.

01:27 - Oil well rig just blown over.

Captain Bowman became known as the Mayor of Rincon as he worked for many years without a day off. At one time, he worked for four months without a day off. Then, times got better and he was relieved for 8 hours every two weeks and finally once a week. The mayor retired from the county and Station 25 in 1966.



1976 Photo of Rincon's
First Fire Station
That Serviced the County
From 1942-1989

In the early 1970s, the 101 Freeway was built behind the fire station on what was previously the Pacific Ocean. The old highway in front of the station became a quiet county road. In 1989, the present Fire Station 25 was built on the same property. The rear parking lot, that was once the ocean, is leased from the State of California on a long-term basis.