

# Tram burns after collision with truck



This is the burnt-out shell of the tram after its collision with a semi-trailer yesterday afternoon.

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## Quiet heroes drag driver from flames

By Robert Parsonage

Two quiet heroes yesterday risked their lives to save a trapped tram driver after the tram and a semi-trailer exploded in flames after colliding in Thornbury.

The driver, Mr. Bill Armitage, 42, was unable to free himself as flames quickly enveloped his crushed cabin and the front compartment of the tram.

Two men, hearing his cries of "save me, save me," ran through the blazing passenger compartment to open the driver's door and pull him clear.

Four other men played fire extinguishers on his burning uniform as they dragged him from the tram.

The two rescuers, drenched and blackened, then quickly left the scene without giving their names to police.

Mr. Armitage, who suffered a broken right leg and arm and severe burns to most of his body, was in a critical condition last night in Preston and Northcote Community Hospital.

The semi-trailer driver, Mr. Brian Carroll, 25, also received burns as he struggled to free him-

self from his burning cabin.

He threw himself onto a nearby grass strip to extinguish his burning clothing. He was in a serious condition in hospital last night.

The only passenger in the tram, an elderly woman, was sitting near the rear and escaped with a shaking. She was helped from the tram by the conductor, Mr. Ted Clark, about 35, who was also uninjured.

### Derailed

The collision occurred about 2.35 p.m. as the Preston-City tram was travelling south in St. George's Road and the truck was travelling west in Normanby Road.

The impact derailed the tram, pushing it across St. George's Road.

The trailer's prime mover broke its couplings and rolled onto its side. Its rear wheels smashed a hole in the side of the tram, wrecking several seats.

Both vehicles burst into flames as the semi-trailer's petrol tank exploded. Two jerry cans of fuel also burst into flames when they were flung to the roadway by the impact.

The blaze burnt out the front half of the tram before it was brought under control.

Mr. Dudley Callahan, 43, a sales engineer at the nearby Standard Telephones and Cables building, said he heard a loud explosion and someone yelled: "The tram's on fire."

"I called on several of the boys to grab fire extinguishers and follow me," he said.

Three young employees, Ron Pearce, David Smith and Ted Fisher ran 100 yards to the tram and played eight fire extin-