

Morro Castle Hero Held in Bayonne Blast That Injured His Superior on Police Force

BAYONNE, N. J., March 11.—The man who sent the S O S fire record and see if unit will work. It should get warm." The blazing Morro Castle when burned Sept. 8, 1934, with a loss of more than 100 lives, was arrested here today in connection with explosion of a bomb in police headquarters March 4. The prisoner, George White Rogers, former chief radio operator aboard liner, gave up the sea after disaster and became a Bayonne policeman.

Specifically, he was charged with atrocious assault and battery attempting to kill his superior, police Lieutenant Vincent J. Doyle who has charge of the police communication system and who now in Bayonne Hospital recovering from injuries he received when bomb Rogers is suspected of having manufactured exploded in radio repair room over the garage at headquarters. Doyle's left hand was broken and three fingers were blown off his left hand.

Rogers, who is 41 years old, six feet tall and slightly gray, denied any knowledge of the bomb when he was arrested after a week of intermittent questioning. He was locked up in a cell in the basement of headquarters and held for arraignment tomorrow before Recorder Raymond Cuddy in Police Court. Cornelius O'Neill, Chief of Police, ordered him stripped of his shield and service revolver.

Rogers's request that he be allowed to keep the pipe he smoked while he tapped out his calls for help from the radio room of the Morro Castle was granted.

Chief O'Neill refused to disclose any of the evidence that led to the radio operator's arrest and declined to discuss the suspected motive for the crime. Rogers, whose salary was \$1,000 a year less than Lieutenant Doyle's \$3,200, had been regarded as a close friend of his superior. Both men are married and exchanged calls at each other's homes.

On the afternoon of March 4 Lieutenant Doyle and Rogers left the radio room at Police Headquarters to drive home together in the lieutenant's car. On the way out Rogers reminded Lieutenant Doyle that there was a package for him in the police garage.

On a ledge in the garage Lieutenant Doyle found a package with a typewritten note attached. The note read:

"Lt. Doyle: This is a fish-tank

heater. Please install switch in line cord and see if unit will work. It should get warm."

Unwrapping the package, Lieutenant Doyle found a metal cylinder, five inches long and about three-quarters of an inch in diameter, with an electric cord attached. Doyle and Rogers climbed the stairs to the repair shop and Doyle started to test the tube. Rogers recalled a letter he was carrying and at the suggestion of Lieutenant Doyle went out to mail it.

Downstairs, Rogers stopped for a drink of water. While he was there a blast shook the building. He ran upstairs and found Doyle lying injured.

Rogers was appointed to the Bayonne Police Department in June, 1936. In 1935 he received a medal from the Veteran Wireless Operators Association for the heroism he showed in the Morro Castle disaster.