



Emergency crews survey the damage to a rail car after a dump truck collided with a VIA Rail train yesterday near Limehouse.

## FAST FACTS

- VIA train 88 originated from Union Station in Toronto, leaving at 7:50 a.m.
- Stopped in Georgetown at 8:39 a.m. Was scheduled to pick up three passengers
- Consisted of engine and four double-decker Amtrak passenger cars
- Was carrying 37 passengers and four crew members
- Was destined for Chicago, with Canadian stops in London, St. Marys and Sarnia
- Jointly operated by VIA Rail and Amtrak. The engineer was a VIA Rail employee based out of Toronto. The crew consisted of three Canadians and one American

# Eleven hurt in crash

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and plowed into a slight embankment on the south side of the track, tearing off part of the undercarriage. The rear three passenger cars remained upright on the track, their wheels off the bent rails. All the passengers were in the rear two cars.

Crew member Gilbert Guerra was in the last car when the train hit the truck. He said he heard and felt two loud bumps and then a third, at which time he knew the train was off the track. Guerra was thrown backwards against a refrigerator.

"(The passengers) were very calm," said Guerra, who has been involved in four derailments in a 27-year career. "These people should be commended."

The truck was torn in two by the impact of the collision. The truck's gravel box lay parallel to the tracks while the rest of the vehicle lay twisted about 40 feet away down a small embankment.

"It was just ripped apart," said Rob Van Ravens, who was working at a neighboring home at the time of the accident. "We just peeked in. The driver was upside down and we just saw his legs scrunched up."

Most of the passengers had left the train when the Halton Hills Fire Department arrived approximately 10 minutes after receiving the call but several remained inside.

"We did a thorough search of the train to make sure all of the people were safely off," said Halton Hills Fire Chief Bill Cunningham. "Because of the nature of the injuries, we stabilized some of the passengers and brought them out on stretchers, which was a bit of a challenge with the train being a double-decker."

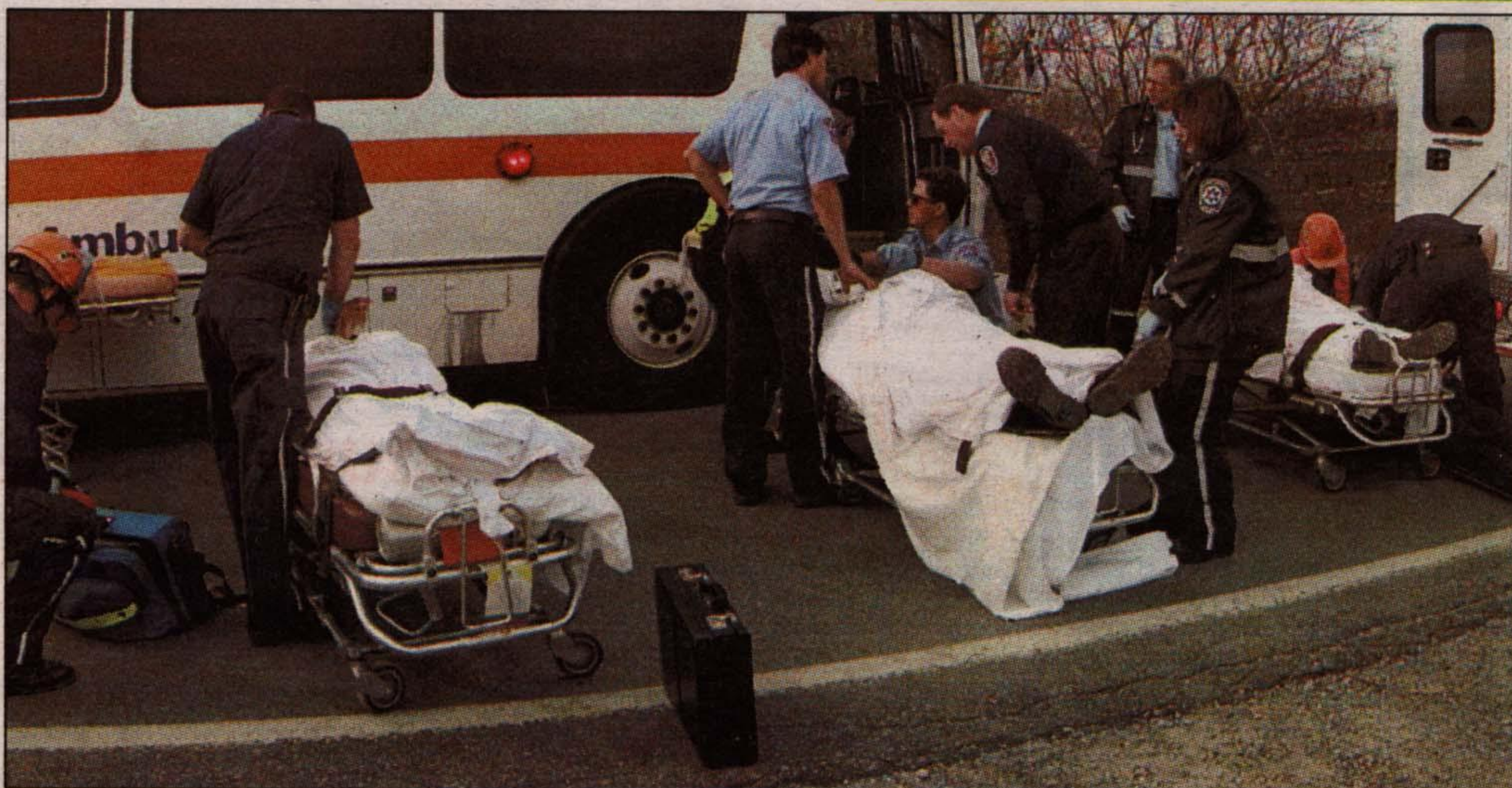
Don Trant, vice-president of Patients Programs at Georgetown Hospital, said passengers were treated for head, neck, chest and knee injuries.

"I was just sitting there and heard a big bang, when we hit. There were some people who landed on the floor, but I was still in my seat. I was actually surprised, I thought it would have been worse. I guess we were lucky, since we sat in the back, away from the crash," said Britt Grant of Toronto.

Bob White, acting fire captain, said people appeared shaken up and very disoriented. White said some of the seats in the train car were twisted.

Regimbal said speed limits for trains are 70 mph, but drop to 45 mph where the accident occurred. He said that rail line carries mostly freight traffic and is seldomly used for passenger trains. He expected the line to be shut down for five to six hours but the cleanup had not even begun by 1 p.m.

Anyone with inquiries about passengers should call 1-877-747-7070. A hospital inquiry line (1-905-873-0111 ext 275.) has also been set up.



Three injured passengers are treated before being taken to Georgetown Hospital in an ambulance bus following Tuesday's truck-train crash on Fourth Line. (Below)

Halton Hills firefighters take an injured passenger from the train on a stretcher. Eleven people were treated in Georgetown Hospital.

## 'I heard a bang'

"All of a sudden there was big crash out in front and the train car tilted over to the side.

—Robert Dietrich, 79, of California

"I was asleep at the time, but woke up just seconds before the crash. There was a huge bang, and I felt the car shake and bounce around a bit. There were some people crying, and lots of noise, and some people landed on the floor, but I stayed in my seat."

—Nikola Dukovac of Kapuskasing

"It was bound to happen sooner or later. I'm sure if it was barricaded, then this wouldn't have happened."

—John Barrett, who lives next to the crossing

"I heard a bang and came out and saw the train. From here it just looked like it had stopped. Then within a couple of minutes the police and the fire department were here."

—Heather Arnold, who lives by the crossing



Stories by Herb Garbutt (with files from Lisa Tallyn) Photos by Ted Brown



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