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TORNADO PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

1.	DATE AND TIME	May 31, 1985	16:15 EDT
2.	LOCATION OR PATH (attach map)	Alma, Ont.	
3.	PATH LENGTH	<input type="checkbox"/> NOT KNOWN	<input type="checkbox"/> <1mi; <input type="checkbox"/> 1-4mi; <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10mi; <input type="checkbox"/> 11-50mi; <input type="checkbox"/> LENGTH IF >50mi
4.	PATH WIDTH	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. TORNADO PART OF SQUALL LINE? <input type="checkbox"/> YES; <input type="checkbox"/> NO; <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN:
6.	ANY UNUSUAL COLORATION?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES; <input type="checkbox"/> NO; <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN	
7.	ANY UNUSUAL SOUND?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES; <input type="checkbox"/> NO; <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN	
8.	IF ANSWER TO 6 OR 7 YES, ELABORATE;		
9.	LIST ANY ASSOCIATED PHENOMENA (Such as hail, vivid lightning heavy rain, no rain, etc.)		
10.	TOTAL DAMAGE ESTIMATE	\$	11. TOTAL DEATHS
12.	TOTAL INJURED		13. TOTAL HOMELESS
14.	LIST ALL REFERENCES		
15.	SUMMARIZE REMARKS PERTAINING TO (a) FUNNEL; (b) INTERESTING OR CAPRICIOUS EVENTS.		

b) 1 house destroyed, 4 extensively damaged; 10 barns and outbuildings destroyed.

T.O. 175 39000
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L.O. 175 72050
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Brampton family recovering from fateful 'date with destiny'

By JULES XAVIER

Life around Jim Irvine's home hasn't been the same since his family experienced the wrath of a tornado -- one of a devastating series which tore its way through several central Ontario towns more than seven weeks ago.

"It's a miracle we were all alive," Irvine said from his home, where he's recovering from injuries sustained as a result of the May 31 tornado.

Irvine's wife Brenda attributes her family's survival to luck. "We had a date with destiny...and miraculously we survived."

Irvine, a 42-year-old Brampton resident, was travelling north with his family to spend the weekend at his trailer (bought the week before) at Highland Pines Trailer Camp in Bellwood, Ont. when the tornado hit.

"(The tornado) was just like a picture...we saw a black funnel with blue sky on either side," Irvine recalls. "As the tornado got closer it got darker. Hailstones the size of baseballs were hitting the roof of our

car."

And as Irvine's 1974 Comet turned into the trailer camp's driveway the tornado suddenly veered and followed, too. Irvine didn't have a chance to remove Brenda, three children (a fourth family member was at home) and two dogs to safety before the force hit them.

He recalls: "I wasn't in the driveway 10 seconds before we were hit. I had gotten out to see if we could run to a nearby house, but all I heard was the sound of the tornado. I jumped back into the car and buckled my seatbelt just as it hit."

The force of the tornado lifted Irvine's car and sent it hurtling through the air, striking a tree before finally coming to rest upside down on another vehicle. In all, about 15 seconds elapsed between the time the tornado hit and the car finally came to rest.

"It felt like an eternity," Irvine said. Before he blacked out, "everything seemed like it was moving in slow motion. It was like being in outer space...the tornado sucked the breath from you and everything was silence.

"When I woke up I heard birds singing, blue sky...it was as though nothing had happened."

"(The tornado) was like a vacuum cleaner inside our car," Brenda added.

"The kids' shoes were sucked off their feet. I couldn't figure out why they didn't have shoes on, but that's what must have happened.

"As well, when I found a bag of chips (vacuum sealed package) that hadn't been opened inside the car, it was as though the air inside had been sucked out."

Meanwhile, the various injuries Irvine and his wife suffered were more a result of a tree branch piercing the car rather than the force of car being dropped when the winds subsided. His youngest daughter's whiplash, however, was caused by the car being upended. The two dogs and Irvine's daughter Kelly, 15, were unhurt while his seven-year-old son needed three stitches to

close a cut.

Brenda suffered a black eye, while Irvine bruised his lung, suffered numerous lacerations, fractured his sternum and a rib, and had his chin slashed. He required plastic surgery to reattach the chin, which was nearly severed when the branch struck him in the face.

In the wake of the destruction, Irvine was trapped inside the car by a large tree branch. Despite the weight of the branch, Brenda Irvine managed to remove it herself.

"I remember lifting it," she recalls. "But at the time it didn't matter about the weight."

Although the extent of Irvine's injuries wasn't known at the time, he managed to walk away from the car under his own steam when he detected gas leaking from his car and feared it might catch fire. "The smell of gas makes you move."

Following three weeks spent recovering in various hospitals, Irvine was allowed to come home. Although he's beginning to regain his strength and doesn't need a wheelchair any more, he realizes the psychological scars will need more time to heal.

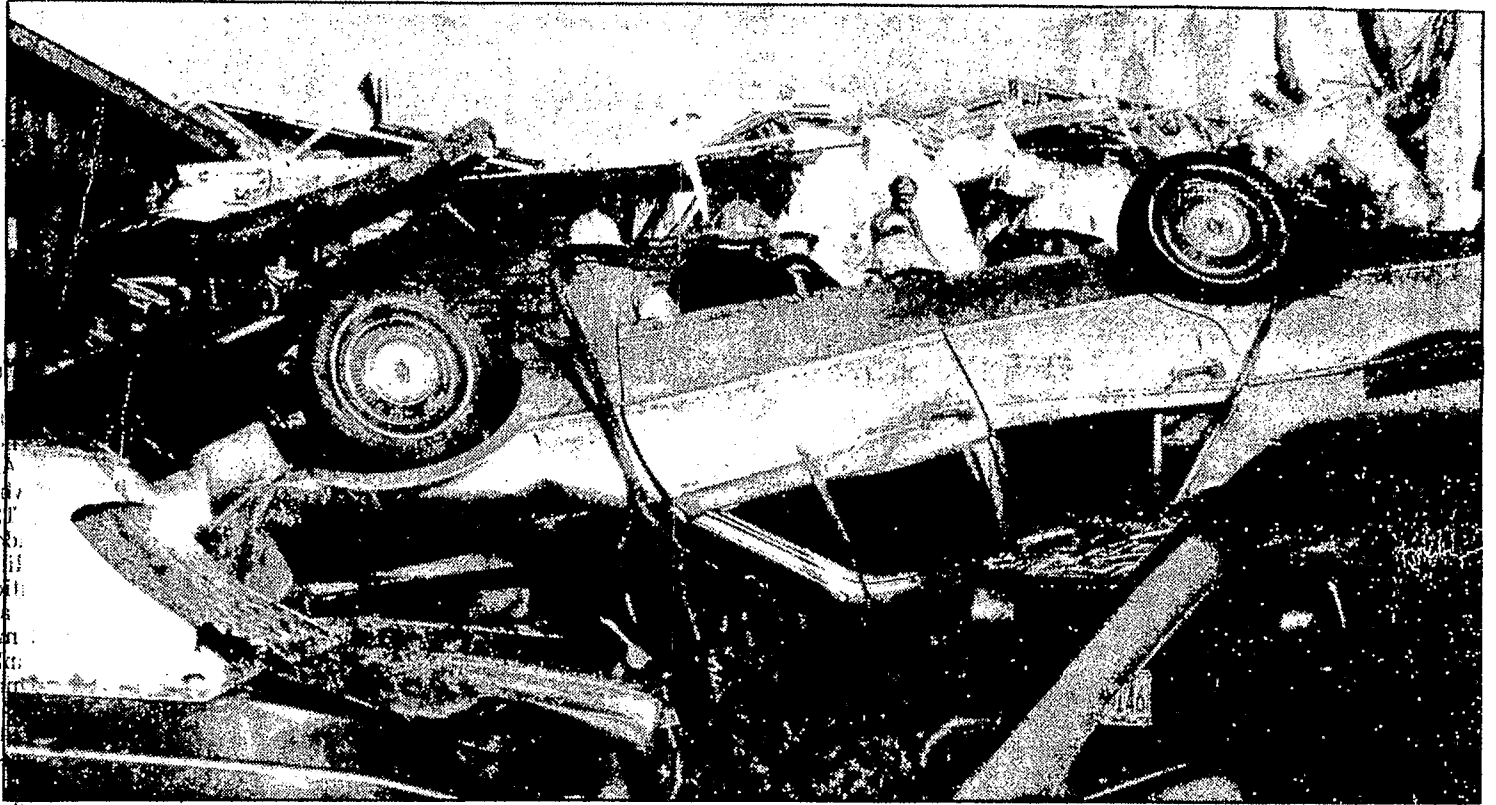
"Every time I hear thunder or the skies turn dark, it starts all over again," he said. "I begin reliving the whole ordeal."

Irvine's family has experienced similar post-tornado trauma. Daughter Kelly was never scared of thunder until the tornado. Now, she says, "I start crying when I hear it because I get scared."

Irvine says sleep is difficult. He dozes off for about two hours, but nightmares and the injuries in his chest make it difficult to sleep for longer periods. Similarly, dreams cause Brenda some anxiety, which she's trying to cope with. She, too, says it'll take time before she can put the tornado aside and forget about it.

Still, the members of the Irvine family have grown closer, and are working to help each other through the traumatic times following their 'date with destiny.'

THE GUARDIAN, BRAMPTON JULY 24, 1981



It's a miracle that no one was killed when Jim Irvine's Comet was picked up and hurled through the air by a recent tornado. The Brampton man, his wife and three of their children had taken refuge at a trailer

camp in central Ontario but the tornado followed them, destroying the car and injuring various members of the family.

THE GUARDIAN, BRAMPTON
JULY 24, 1935

Photo by The Fergus-Elora News Express