

Page

2



Borough President Guy Molinari, left, Assistant Police Chief Eugene Devlin, right, and City Councilman John Fusco, at right background, hold a news conference at the scene where a bomb was found on a gas pipeline in Willowbrook.

ADVANCE PHOTO ■ FRANK J. JOHNS

Bomb

FROM PAGE 1

The Houston-based Transcontinental Gas Pipeline Co. operates the pipeline, which supplies Brooklyn Union Gas. The bomb was placed on the ground near a truck-sized steel frame used in trench work for a sewer installation project on Willowbrook Road.

At a police press briefing last night in Manhattan, Police Commissioner Howard Safir described the device as primitive, something out of "Basic Bomb 101."

He said detectives have a "number of leads" in the case. He refused to discuss a possible motive.

Police have no formal suspects, but told the Advance they are reviewing a bizarre Dec. 7 incident at the Young Israel temple. During the incident, an apparently deranged man disrupted the Saturday service, claiming he is God. According to witnesses and police, he also made references to possessing fertilizer, a bomb-making material, and to "blow-

Still, police took no chances.

From the time the device was discovered at 6:58 a.m., authorities regarded the object as a real bomb and worked to prevent a possible catastrophe.

Initially 40 homes on Willowbrook Road and Crafton and Woolley avenues were evacuated. A few hours later, police expanded the safety perimeter and evacuated another 80 homes, spilling scores of residents into the streets.

More than 900 students at PS 54 were ushered out of the Willowbrook Road school and bused to Susan Wagner High School for the day. Young Israel and the Elizabeth Connelly SIDDSO center were closed.

Police ordered emergency personnel and a growing crush of journalists in the area to refrain from using two-way radios, guarding against the threat of the device being activated by a radio signal.

About 75 cops, a dozen fire trucks and

able to shut the pipeline down.

The gas — which is not liquefied — is normally transported at up to 600 pounds per square inch, said Transcontinental spokesman Chris Stockton. After learning of the threat, officials bled the pressure down to 60 pounds per square inch before releasing the remaining gas into the air along an 8-mile-long section of pipe.

Stockton said the gas made a loud noise and had a foul odor as it was released, but that it posed no danger. He could not say how much gas was let go.

The company opened the pipeline again yesterday afternoon. The interruption had no effect on consumers.

The gas main runs across the Island from New Jersey to Brooklyn. It is considered a "lateral" pipe that branches out from a major gas line in New Jersey that originates in Texas, Stockton said.

Another pipeline several blocks away that carries jet fuel from