

Good Child
N.F.S.

FIREWOMEN'S MAGAZINE

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EDITORIAL AND NEWS

So many stories have come in about Christmas Parties and toymaking that our limited News space was swamped. It was decided, therefore, to pick out the salient features and give a composite story. So here is:—

Christmastide in the Fire Forces:—

Leading off with the N.F.S. College (Brighton), where the Instructional Staff had 40 small guests whose ages ranged from 5 weeks to 14 years. A Clown, Punch and Judy, and Santa Claus were also there, the last named arriving on the "Two-man mannuel" (18th century pump), from which presents were distributed as well as from a Christmas Tree. The grown-ups had a party the same evening, when the Women's Wing staged an amusing item, "Pages from our Magazine."

At III/7/H.Q. the Social Club arranged a tea before all personnel proceeded to the village hall for games and dancing to A Div. Band. The "Beetle Drive" caused much laughter; so did a competition for "Undreamed of Talent" when "The Mountains of Mourne" was well and truly murdered by 3 of the staff. In III/9 B Div. H.Q. the leading question was: "Do Officers make good waiters?" when it was found that all such from D.O. to Coy. O. intended to wait on firemen and women. A hilarious night—the most exciting "incident," the rescue of the turkey from under the kitchen table by 2 perspiring officers in shirt sleeves. Meanwhile Christmas Day at III/9/C.4's Women's Hostel provided a merry lunch for those men who couldn't get home. This was followed by listening to the King's Speech before embarking on a party which lasted into the wee sma' hours.

A, B and C Divs. of V/34 all had a happy time. B Div. dinner ran for 2 days so that all Watches could take a share in it, parties were held on all 3 days of the weekend, and drinks in the bar were free all that time! On January 1st a Children's Party and Dance was held in aid of B Div. Sports Fund. Smith's Works Fire Brigade made



The C.W.F.O.,

Miss CUTHBERT, O.B.E.

From the painting by Maurice Codner, exhibited at the Autumn Show of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters, Burlington House, 1913.

and presented all the toys, gave the Christmas Tree, sweets, and a 2s. 6d. National Savings Stamp to each child. At B.3.Z's dinner Col. O. French expressed the thoughts of all Divs. by saying he hoped there might be re-union dinners when the war is over. V/37/A.1.Z also had prolonged festivities. D.O. Cleaver led the revels, and also appeared in a side-splitting sketch, with Col. O. Bell, Coy. O. Short, and Coy. O. Reading (Salvage Corps), called "A.1.Z Control Room as we see it." "The Trailers" Dance Band was more than popular, and a talent-spotting show found a star in Pm. Ben Betts, rendering songs at the piano. This well-known caricaturist member of the Firemen Artists' Committee has since presented the station with some amusing sketches of "Christmas, 1943."

Father Christmas arrived in a jeep at the Children's Party given at VI/16/D.1.Z, and in addition to toys made by the firemen, a film show entertained the kiddies. On New Year's Day personnel had their own dinner, dance and entertainment which last included piano accordion solos.

A dinner and party was held at VII/18/H.Q. on 3rd January, when special praise was registered for the Catering Staff and cooks. Col. O. Woodger was M.C., for a gay time which concluded with community singing. VII/39/H.Q. had an hour's entertainment following the dinner. The highlight was a sketch by S. Coy. O. Phillips and S.L.'s Newman, Nutley and Stick, who demonstrated "The life of 3 Firewomen at a Millionaire's Mansion." Musical items included xylophone, drum and saxophone solos. The New Year's Party at VII/39/B Div. H.Q. included a moonlight tour of the grounds, conducted by D.O. Philpott, which ended by everyone having to "Walk the plank."

X/43/H.Q. had a dinner, games, dancing, and even a Treasure Hunt, in which everyone, including the F.F.C., joined. In Scotland, as elsewhere, the children were the first consideration, and in XI/E all spare time went to making toys, and personnel also willingly gave up their own sweet coupons for the youngsters. XI/E/Sub-Div. C.2 Dumfries also provided a conjuror and Santa Claus.

N.F.S. College.—The New Year's Honours List announced the award of the King's Police and Fire Service Medal for distinguished service to our new Director of Studies, which pleased us all very much. On the other hand, we regret that our Commandant is away on sick leave—for the first time after 2 years and 4 months' strenuous work. We miss him very much and hope he will make a speedy recovery.

On 21st December, ten volunteer Junior Officers attended a special A.T.S. (W.O.S.B.), two being Instructors from the College, A.G.O.'s Daws and Hamilton. On returning to College after the Christmas break we gave our heartiest congratulations to the first-named, who went straight from the W.O.S.B. to Harrogate to be married. This was a "uniform" wedding as her husband, Mr. G. S. Bolam, is in the Navy.

Mrs. Stoneham, the Supervisor of Women's Studies, sends her best wishes for 1944 to all past students, and extends a cordial welcome to those who are coming in the future.

I. M. H.

I/Northern Region.—In this first issue of 1944 we should like to take this opportunity of extending to all subscribers to the Magazine our very best wishes from No. 1 Region for a happy New Year, with the hope that peace will not be very far away now.

Firewomen have taken advantage of the Christmas and New Year season to swell their Welfare Funds by holding "Bring and Buy" Sales in various parts of the Region and ensnaring those in search of presents! Details of all these are not available but one held in F.F. 2, which was opened by Mrs. Mardon, wife of the F.F.C., raised the magnificent total of £80, and another in F.F. 1, opened by Mrs. Bruce, wife of the Acting F.F.C., raised £30. Congratulations to those responsible for making them such a success, not only financially but socially.

B. C.

III/9.—For the past few months we have been conspicuous only by absence from these columns. But we cannot overlook the challenge of F.F. 12 (see September-October issue). At the Annual Tournament held in Northampton, Div. D Stores gained the Trophy in the Women's Light Trailer Pump Competition (time, 18 seconds), a P/T firewomen's team from Daventry, 9/D/1.X, being second (22 seconds). Firewomen from D.H.Q. won the Hydrant Drill Competition in 58 2/5 seconds, which included replacing one burst length of hose. Daventry's part-timers were again second (29 seconds).

Div. D can also beat Region I (see November-December issue). Their "Bring and Buy" Sale and Tea Dance raised £66, having been inspired by Div. A (Leicester), who made £50 at their similar function. Proceeds on both occasions were for the purchase of tools and materials for toymaking.

The F.F.C., Mr. W. Thomas, gave a grand New Year Party to "show his appreciation of the work done by the operational staff at F.F.H.Q." The cooks excelled themselves, and a good time was had by all.

We have entertained on several occasions our neighbours, "the gallant lads in hospital blue" and their nurses. Matron declares that after a visit to the Women's Area Training School, Keythorpe Hall, the N.F.S. is the main topic of conversation until the boys leave the Convalescent Home.

III/9/C.—The firewomen of Sub-Division 1 Control held a very successful dance on January 12th. £11 was raised and the money will be spent on "Comforts" for the Firewomen's Hostel. This was the first Social effort of the firewomen and the Committee worked very hard to make it a success. Music was provided by the N.F.S. C Division Dance Band, and a good time was enjoyed by all.

January 2nd marked a special occasion in Kettering, when whole and part-time personnel supported the Divisional Padre on his first Anniversary as Minister of the Fuller Mission Church, Rockingham Road, by parading to the Church for the morning Service. The firewomen were complimented on their smart appearance and marching.

W. U.

III/9/C Sub-Div. 4.—Discussion Groups have been started in our Sub-Div. and great interest has been shown by all. We have had several Groups but the most interesting, I think, was by Frau Litten. The next speaker will be a P/T F.M., who has travelled widely. When we look back after the war is won, our memories will see clearly the "Discussion Group" of the N.F.S., combined with toymaking and nice cups of tea.

K. M. W.

III/10.—Div. A regretted the loss of A.G.O. Cliffe as a whole-time A.G.O. in Sub-Division 1, but heartily welcome her back as A.G.O. (Part-time) for the Division.

Region IV.—Mr. W. H. Benton, formerly F.F.C., No. 34 Area, has taken up his appointment in this Region as C.R.F.O. and we wish him happiness in his new post. We also extend a greeting to Mr. A. Dixon, who has been appointed as Chief Clerk at Regional H.Q.

IV/11/A.3.Z.—I read with interest in the September-October issue of the good times put up at Letchworth and Cambridge in the Light Trailer Pump Competition. But these were beaten by a similar Competition at 11/A on October 17th, when a firewomen's crew from Sub-Div. 3 put up the exceptionally good time of 37 4/5 seconds, with no penalties.

R. Collis.

IV/11/C Div.—A very enjoyable Party was held at Div. H.Q. on the 23rd December, at which were present the Divisional Officer and his wife. A grand time was had by all. Members of the staff at Div. H.Q. contributed suggestions for several highly amusing games. In spite of the food restrictions the Catering Officer did his best.

Two further netball matches have been played by C Division against B Division. The first one resulted in a win for B Division, the second match showed C Division again the victors.

D. O.

IV/12/F.F.H.Q.—Since our last issue, F.F.C. W. E. Norwood has been appointed to the important command of No. 1 Area (Newcastle). Personnel of No. 12 wish him a full measure of success and happiness in his work up North, and extend a warm welcome to his successor, F.F.C. E. R. T. Stanford (late Home Office Fire Service Department Inspectorate).

S. E. J.

IV/11/Area Women's Training School, Lexden.—On November 15th, F.F.C. Garon, M.C., G.M., opened the first co-educational Training School in the Area. By this I do not mean that women had escape or hook ladder drill, but their course runs as far as

applicable in conjunction with the men's messing and recreation being mixed.

The women students of this first Course called themselves "The Pioneers," a title they deserved in many ways especially as they were there in the coldest period of the winter up to date. The mobilising rooms, for instance, were unheated (they have electric fire yet they appear to enjoy these most of all) worked ar with zest the Cou display



at a final concert. (Their picture accompanies these notes.)

On the instructional side we are determined to make each Course better than the last, and endeavour to make each student interested, efficient, and conscious of the Service she is in.

A.G.O. Gascoigne.

V/Regional H.Q.—On November 29th and December 14th parties of officers and ratings of H.M.S. *Royalist*, the warship adopted by the N.F.S., of V Region, were entertained at Regional H.Q. Displays by agility teams, and pump and T.T.L. crews were given for them in the yard. The men followed the performances with great interest and appeared to enjoy themselves thoroughly.

A. G.

V/34/London Women Officers' Training School had a very cheery Christmas, with an impromptu party organised by the students. A Quiz was held between the squads and there was a great fight for the finals. C.O. Tichner, of Regional H.Q., was the Question Master.

During the last course, there have been some very interesting lectures and discussions. Stephen Spender opened a discussion on "Should all classes have the same opportunity for education," which gave great scope for ideas and opinions. A talk on "Economics" and "Money and its meaning," was given by Mr. Pascoe, who besides being an authority on the subject, is the Assistant Commissioner, National Savings, for Hampstead. Another interesting talk on "Ruined buildings and churches damaged in the Blitz," illustrated by lantern slides, was given by Mr. Dabb. Apart from the interest of the lecture, the slides shown on the screen were of extremely fine photography and will most certainly be an invaluable record in years to come.

L/Fw. Lowenthal.

V1/14.—A Sale of Work, organised by L./Fw. Bird and Fw. Theobald at 14/A. 3Y (Part time station) on November 24th, 1943, produced £102 4s. 6d. for the N.F.S. Benevolent Fund. Toys, dolls, leather goods, etc., were made by them and their friends, who are to be congratulated on their remarkable achievement.

VII/18/H.Q.—On December 25th a party of girls from the Exeter Fire Service were invited to a "Supper Dance" by the U.S.N. Officers, The Golf Club, Exeter. The supper included luxuries such as turkey and ice-cream and was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

Immediately after supper dancing commenced to music provided by an American band and the party soon showed the usual Xmas spirit. Throughout the evening we were shown typical American hospitality which included drinks and food *ad lib*. We left at 12 o'clock, having really enjoyed our evening of "Anglo-American" co-operation. A letter of thanks to the Chaplain was sent by Area Officer Willoughby.

P. Maister.

During the last few weeks many enjoyable evenings have been spent by the personnel at F.F. Headquarters and by a small detachment of the Army, who were neighbours for a short period. N.F.S. personnel were invited to several ENSA shows and social evenings. Table Tennis and Dart Competitions were most entertaining together with other party games. On several occasions the Army came into our recreation room for dancing.

In addition to the 237 toys sent to the Regional Toy Exhibition, 166 toys were collected in the Area and distributed to War-Time Nurseries for Christmas.

VII/39/Div. H.Q.—A Netball Team has been started at Div. H.Q. All of us were very "green" when we commenced, but through the kindness and keen coaching of a games mistress at a local school we are showing quite good form. A few matches have been played, and although at the only "away" match played so far we were badly "mauled," this was very greatly mitigated by the splendid team work and the excellent work of the opposing team. Instead of returning with our tails between our legs, we came back "full of beans" and of great admiration for the girls whom we played. We hope at the return match to make a much better show.

IX/24.—This Area has started a Drama Competition for firewomen, each Div. competing with one another. There is a choice of 3 plays, and one team will compete from each Div.; the 4 Divs. scoring the highest marks will compete against each other in the Semi-Final, and the 2 plays scoring the highest marks will compete in the Final. Already great enthusiasm has been shown.

Firewomen taking part in Fitness Training are now being equipped with trunks and shirts in a standard pattern, throughout the Area, with coloured stripes on the shorts to denote the Div. they represent.

Amongst the Senior Officers presented to the Princess Royal on her recent visit to the Fire Wastage Campaign Exhibition at A.I.Z, Birmingham, was Area Officer Mrs. Wilkes. H.R.H. showed great interest in a display of soft toys made by the personnel in F.F. Control and congratulated the firewomen on their work.

E. B.

X/26/E Div. H.Q.—Before G.O. Orrell left us for the City H.Q., C Div., we were able to make her a presentation of beautifully bound and embossed volumes of chosen classics, as a token of our regret at losing her. Since then we have welcomed G.O. Magee, rumoured to be the youngest of her rank in the country. She will find this Div. a busy and an alert one, of which there is plenty of proof in our latest activities.

For instance, after-lunch Quiz parties are very popular just now; our S.L.'s and L.F.'s have been forming committees to devise "Brains Trust" questions; and the Discussion Groups are now established features which solve (?) many knotty problems. On the sports side interest centres in netball, swimming, dancing and squad competitions.

A. L.

X/28/H.Q.—Rumours had been circulating at F.F.H.Q. for some weeks that there was to be a pantomime at Christmas. Curiosity was increased when an artistic poster went up, announcing the performances for 22nd and 23rd December.

Arriving in the Recreation Hut we saw it had already been decorated for Christmas and there was a stage complete with scenery and footlights. Each guest was presented with an attractive programme and we found we were to see Cinderella or Exercise Columbine. Loud applause and much mirth were heard during the entire show and some of us could not but feel "any resemblance to any living person is purely intentional" as stated in the programme, was intended to let us see how others view our actions.

The costumes were mostly gay and much ingenuity had been used. Perhaps the outstanding one was that worn by Fairy Foam Branch. At the conclusion of both performances, the F.F.C., expressing the feelings of all present, warmly thanked all who had taken part whether as authors, actors, producers, or off-stage helpers—with a special word for the Group Officer's Mother who had made the piano take the place of an orchestra.

R. M. S.

X/29.—Everyone in this Area wishes success and happiness to G.O. Ogden, E Div., on her appointment as A.O. 21 Area, as from January 17th, 1944.

Exercises run entirely by part-time firewomen have proved exceedingly successful and commendations have been made by Senior Officers on the ability shown. Those members lucky enough to attend the No. 26 Area Physical Training Course have returned with aching limbs but feeling much benefited by their experience.

M. J.

X/43/A.—After the festivities of Xmas and New Year we start work in 1944 hoping this may be the year of Peace. The interest in toymaking resulted in a good number being forwarded to the Regional Competition, and we congratulate L/Fw. Brown on winning the prize for the best toy in the Area. On return most of the toys were distributed to various institutions.

The interest in the Area Mobilising Competition was rewarded by excellent results, and Sub-Division 1 were proud to receive the trophy, a mounted axe, from the F.F.C., on 29th December.

Social activities continue in the Division and dances have been arranged at all four Sub-Divisions during the coming weeks.

X/43/B.—We heartily congratulate L/Fw. M. Nuttall (43/B/1) on gaining the Bronze Life-saving Medallion.

We are also proud to acknowledge the good work done by our firemen at Station 1/V in the supplying of renovated books and toys to local institutions and hospitals this Christmastide.

"Steely."

XI/E.—G.O. Mansie, of Eastern Area No. 4, has joined the staff of F.F.H.Q. as Assistant Area Stores Officer in place of G.O. Calder, who has returned to South-Eastern No. 3 Area.

XI/E/H.Q.—A Dance was held on 11th January, 1944, under the auspices of the Area H.Q. Welfare and Recreational Committee when a pleasant and happy evening was spent by 150 lucky people.

XI/E/A Div.—Soft toymaking was in full swing during December and numerous gifts were given to Children's Homes and Hospitals; also 1 toy was gifted to each child attending the Xmas parties.

XI/E/B Div.—A top line Variety Concert was presented in Perth Theatre on Sunday evening, 16th January. Organised by the Area

Welfare Officer it was a splendid example of the spirit of co-operation which is being fostered between the three Divisions in No. 4 Eastern Fire Force.

This effort, of which the proceeds will be devoted to the purchase of Band uniforms for the N.F.S. Pipe Band in A Div., was given in B Div. by a Concert Party from C Div. It was a tremendous success, except from the point of view of the hundreds who were unable to obtain admission! and considerable financial benefit will be derived by the Pipe Band.

This opportunity is taken to record sincere appreciation to D.O. McIntyre, Col. O. Taylor, S.L. Bennett, L/Fm. Shand and Crawford, and the personnel of B Sub-Div. 1, who so ably assisted in the organisation and supplied the ushers, box office clerks and attendants. Sincere thanks are also due to D.O. Moore, A Div., D.O. Simpson and the Concert Party from C Div., who with their whole-hearted co-operation combined to make this "Variety" such an outstanding success.

XI/E/C Div.—A most enjoyable Whist Drive and Dance was held on Friday, 14th January, 1944, in the Canteen, Victoria Road, Kirkcaldy, under the auspices of the Works Fire Brigade and the N.F.S. About 200 were present. Music was provided by Harry Robertson and his band. The proceeds of the dance were for the Red Cross. At the close of the evening, D.O. Simpson of the N.F.S. addressed the company with a few remarks on the happy co-operation between the Works Brigade and the N.F.S.

N. C.

THEY ALSO SERVE

The Story of the Red Cross Rest House, by One who has been there

Situated in the lovely pine-covered district of Hindhead and Haslemere, in the little woodland village of Headley, is a charming old house called "Oaks" hiding behind its avenue of tall trees. This is the Red Cross Rest House for men and women officers of the National Fire Service, and belongs to Mrs. Townley-Parker who is resident there and who shows a very great interest in the guests.

How do we get to this peaceful haven of rest, this place we have dreamed of for many long months and which is now available for us to enjoy?

Well, first we make our way to Haslemere Railway Station (which is the nearest central station to Headley), where we board a No. 18 bus to Headley Green. Here we are greeted by a cheery smile, and the sight of a dark green saloon car parked near the bus stop ready to convey us to "Oaks." At the door we meet Miss Moore, the warden in charge, who is waiting to welcome us. Miss Moore is a very charming and understanding person who makes us feel completely at home as she shepherds us into the luxurious lounge for a cup of delicious tea before the fire. "Simply ripping, after our journey," we agree. Our hostess then collects our Emergency Ration Cards which we have remembered to bring with us, and inspects our Medical Cards.

We have a look around. There is accommodation for 10 people, and we find men and women from different parts of the country all eager to make the most of the excellent facilities offered for both physical and mental rest. No long list of "do's" and "don't's" greets us at every corner, only a few simple rules on the notice board in the hall. Punctuality for meals is important, but that is no difficulty as we always have such healthy appetites, and the food is really "tophole." "A week in this marvellous place, how glorious!" we think as we settle down in a deep settee with an interesting book chosen from the number and variety made available to us; finish that jumper which we started knitting such a long time ago; or play the games which we find in the drawer of the carved mahogany table nearby. What a golden opportunity to mend that pile of stockings which has recently grown to immense proportions, and listen to the wireless at any time of the day with our normal responsibilities far away.

So it goes on, this peaceful homely life which is so greatly appreciated. One day we visit the historic Devil's Punch Bowl at Hindhead, and have tea at "The Golden Hind" on the way back. Nor do we forget that magnificent piece of English countryside, Waggoners Wells, which is well worth a visit at any time of the year: or that Guildford is a good shopping centre!

Our friend Miss Moore tells us that we shall have conveyance to the bus stop on our return journey, when we shall go back to our duties feeling completely rested and ready for anything, helped by many happy memories of our stay at "Oaks."

And all in exchange for one form—a Red Cross Medical Certificate which we fill in and have signed by our doctor.

Special Notice

III/9/B Div. H.Q., announce with deep regret the sudden death of Fw. Treen in Loughborough Nursing Home, after a short illness. Fw. Treen, leaving her two tiny children with her parents, set out from her native land—Sweden—in November, 1940, reaching this country in March, 1941. Her objectives were to be with her English husband, and to serve his country. This latter she did most faithfully, taking intense interest in the N.F.S. which she joined in July, 1942. She will be greatly missed by many and especially by the friends with whom she worked.



"OUR OTHER LIVES"

No. XXVIII

MISS MURIEL E. HADDELEY

Every firewoman will be interested to learn that a woman Staff Officer has been appointed to the Headquarters Fire Staff at the Home Office with the special duty of supervising women's Fitness Training throughout the Fire Forces. The National Fire Service is to be congratulated on having secured the services of Miss M. E. Haddelsey—in view of her distinguished record in the world of women's sport and physical training.

Miss Haddelsey gained her diploma as a gymnast at the Bergman Osterberg Physical Training College, and in addition to wide experience of every branch of physical training suitable for women

she has also won distinction as a county player and selector for women's cricket, hockey and golf. She has held the position of lecturer in physical education at Birmingham University and at Nonington College, and a further proof of her exceptional qualifications is provided by her having been awarded the Silver Medal of the Royal Life Saving Society.

It was due to the vision of the Chief of Fire Staff that Fitness Training was originally introduced in the women's branch of the Service, and Miss Haddelsey's appointment, with the rank of Area Officer, sets the seal of success on the Fitness Training policy inaugurated by the Fire Service Department with the generous co-operation of the C.C.R.P.T. Assistant Group Officers have now been appointed to supervise Fitness Training in each Fire Force, more than 400 leaders have been trained, and results are so encouraging that Fitness Training for firewomen is rapidly becoming part of the normal station routine.

It is generally realised that in a Service, such as the N.F.S., one of the special concerns of the officers is to maintain the health and morale of their personnel. Firewomen have given heroic proof already of their qualities under blitz conditions, and the type of cool sustained courage needed to fight a fire blitz is one of the results achieved by physical fitness.

Area Officer Haddelsey is assured of a hearty welcome from the women of the N.F.S.

Reflections

Of a Mobilising Officer whilst awaiting an answer from the Watchroom on the Telephone.

With apologies to Patience Strong. But no apologies to the Firewomen!

Wait, says "Reason," in a voice that's calm and cold and clear. But Oh my heart is so impatient, waiting for you here.—Reaching out to touch the things that lie beyond my view.—Wishing, wanting, hoping, praying.—All the time for you.

I must walk where duty beckons: and the path is plain.—But sometimes memory plucks at my sleeve.—And I recall again the lost delight, the music of the forgotten years.—Moving me to swift rebellion, my heart to tears, my mind a whirl, when I recall a fire brigade without a girl.

Dw. M.O., V/37/A D/c.

PARODY COMPETITION: Poems which won a 2s. 6d. National Savings Stamp each.

The Charge of the Fire Brigade

(With apologies to Alfred, Lord Tennyson)

Half a year, eighteen months, a couple of years backwards,
All in the shadow of doubt,
Stood the Fire Service.
Merge all the Fire Brigades!
Have a new name, they said:
National Fire Service.

Pumps to the right of them,
Pumps to the left of them,
Company Officers hollered and blundered,
Stormed at to do the drill,
Hundreds of forms to fill,
Changing a Service till
All the world wondered.

Change the ranks, and the rules . . . Mobilisation . . .
Standardisation pervaded the Nation.
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs just to do or dye
Curtains for Station.

When can their glory fade?
Oh! the big change they made
When it was wanted.
Honour the change they made:
Honour the Fire Brigade:
Ever undaunted.

M.M. Thorpe, A.G.O., IV/13/C Sub-Div. 1.

Sock Fever

(With apologies to J. Massfield.) (Tune: "Sea Fever.")

I must go down to the shop again where the woolly garments rest,
For a long pin, and a strong pin, and a skein of Baldwin's best,
For a stout heart, and a fat hope to knit sans stopping,
With a purl here and a plain there, and stitches dropping.

I must go back to the shop again to gather in my stock:
For a blue yarn, and a true yarn to make a mighty sock,
For a crochet hook, a direction book the proper method showing
How to turn the heel, how to make it real, and the long sock growing.

Hilda Pitcairn (P/T) Region V.

"An Even Odder Ode"

(With apologies to Mr. Cyril Fletcher)

Dreamin' of thee, dreamin' of thee,
A bloomin' clerk in the N.F.S. I be.
I sit there drawing lines all day on Clothing Coupon cards,
The other day the G.O. came and gave me quite a start,
She said as I was dozin', which upset my apple-cart,
For I was only dreamin' oh my darlin' love of thee.

Dreamin' of thee, dreamin' of thee,
This is my fatigue day, woe is me.
I stand 'ere peelin' spuds and washin' lettuce by the score,
For all the hounds to eat up when they come and yell for more,
And the cook screams "Get a move on there," but really I don't care,
'Cos I'm dreamin' oh my darlin' love of thee.

Dreamin' of thee, dreamin' of thee,
This is kit inspection day, ah me.
I'm sewing bits of tape on just as fast as I can go,
I know I'll get stuck on a charge when I see the G.O.,
She'll say "Now, Bates, get up them stairs, your gear I wish to see,"
But that won't stop me dreamin' oh my darlin' love of thee.

But when this blinkin' war's won and the fire watching's done,
I'll leave this bloomin' outfit and go out and have some fun.
I'll hand them back their clobber with a word on where to go,
And whether they go up or down I won't want to know.
I'll creep into some quiet spot with a nice big cup of tea,
And still go on a-dreamin' oh my darlin' love of thee.

Fr. R. V. Bates, V/36/F Div. H.Q.

N.F.S. Driver's "If"

(With many humble apologies to Rudyard Kipling.)

IF you can keep your car in good condition
Fulfilling daily Routines A and B,
And, scorning dirt and broken nails and backache,
Really get down to it with C and D.
IF you can respect your own car's strength and weakness,
And learn to know and use what tools you've got;
IF you can clean your plugs and change your fuses,
IF you can cope with punctures on the spot,
IF you can watch mechanics' filthy fingers
Cover your precious car with grease and oil,
And know that thirty minutes in the workshops
Means days and hours of unremitting toil
To bring the polish back to wings and bonnet,
Brush mud and cigarette ash off the floors,
Shake fluffs and cake-crumbs out of the upholstery
And wipe the dirty handmarks off the doors.
IF you can fill your logbook in correctly
And keep a check on gallons, pints and miles;
IF you can extract from O/C Stores some polish,
Dusters, a leather and a sponge, with smiles,
IF you can speed with safety in the blackout,
Nor be completely curb-bound in a fog;
IF you can ride through busy streets at rush hours
Nor use your horn for every child and dog,
IF you can work and understand the wireless,
IF you can keep the fire kit clean and bright,
IF you can back your car into its garage
As well in darkness as in broad daylight.
IF you can keep your licence free of blemish,
And find the Part-time stations after dark;
IF, having dropped your Boss at club or restaurant
You know an unobtrusive street to park.
IF you can overhear a conversation
On highly confidential matters—yet
Resist the overpowering temptation
To pass the information on, and get
Reflected glory from your omniscience
Regardless of your careless talk's effect.
IF you can hear of possible promotions
Yet pass no hint to those it may affect.
Though used to staff cars—if you're not too haughty
To try your hand at tenders, nor despise
To battle with and man a Mobile Kitchen,
Or petrol lorry, should the need arise.
IF you can take a left-hand-drive Canteen Van
Through blacked-out England to some burning town,
Nor let the lack of sleep and warmth and water,
And general sordid chaos get you down.
IF you can find the way without the signposts,
Report on time prepared for any job,
In spite of weariness have hot drinks ready
And cheery back-chat for the grimy mob.
IF you have got an ostrich's digestion—
Can bolt your food or skip it for a day;
IF you can work on bully-beef and hard-tack
And tepid cocoa brewed while on the way.
IF you can send a "Stop" back on the Gamewell
And know the sites of major risks in town;
IF midnight sirens find you still unflustered
With engine running while the bells go down.
IF you can fill in time and not go crazy
When never ordered out for days on end;
IF you're all this, then you're no Learner Driver,
And what is more, you're worth your pay, my friend.

P. B. L. D., V/Regional H.Q.

The Visit—Nine-Tenths A Fairy Story

It was very peaceful in the Control Room at F.F.H.Q. Of the three Fireladies on duty, one was asleep, one was writing a letter on a message pad to her latest young man, while the switchboard operator was engrossed in knitting a natty little affair patriotically designed in shades of red, white and blue. Eventually she paused, since the Regional direct line appeared to be demanding some attention.

"Listen, what d'you think you're doing?" a voice at the other end demanded nastily. "O.K., Blossom, calm yourself. What d'you want?" said the F.F. operator, amiably.

"I might have known it was you!" said Region, and continued in tones of interest, "what are you knitting now?"

Fire Force eagerly plunged into details, but these were cut short by Region, who suddenly remembered that business was on hand.

"A call from the Home Office for your Area Officer. Bung it through, will you?"

"Lor!" murmured Fire Force, slightly awed, and made the desired connection, after which she continued with her knitting and intelligently listened in to the ensuing conversation.

A minute later, she dropped a couple of stitches, and five minutes afterwards, she was frantically communicating with the Divisions. By the time she had reached "F," she was in an exhausted state.

"Fire Control, Division 'F,'" a muffled voice announced.

"That you, Tooty?" Fire Force inquired agitatedly. "Latest bulletin—the Home Office Inspectorate is on us on Monday!"

There was a choking sound from "F," as she struggled with the combined difficulties of emotion and a piece of apple which had consequently become stuck in her throat, and Fire Force, leaving her to it, sat back with the air of one whose duty is well done. By now word should be flashing round from Sub-Divisions to Stations, and in the course of time even the Leading Firewomen and A.G.O.s might get to hear of it.

During the next two days, it was common knowledge throughout the Force that the Inspectorate was (a) terrifying; (b) not too bad. (Fw. Timkins from the next Region had told her cousin in the adjoining Fire Force, who was friendly *via* the switchboard with our own heroine, that she had once seen the Gestapo in question dimly, before vanishing round the nearest corner, and that they had had quite kind expressions on their faces—but this information was rightly received with some doubt.) Further collective knowledge indicated that this particular Inspectorate was hot on gas drills; that they didn't bother with gas drills, it was First Aid; that it was neither, Logs were the thing; no, not Logs, but Records.

By Monday everyone had given it up. The whole thing was finally accepted as something sinister to be somehow endured, and two firewomen in Division "E" went off sick on Sunday, while a firewoman in "F" collapsed on the Monday morning. (In the light of subsequent events this was rather a waste of time, as neither "E" nor "F" were visited.)

The dreaded Inspectorate duly descended upon the trembling Force, spent four days among their firstly dazed and secondly charmed victims, and by the time they left, seventeen smitten firewomen had put in for a transfer to the Home Office, including our heroine, who said that she was prepared to follow and learn from anyone who could dash into a Control at 0001 hours and Look as Fresh as That.

After all, we said it was nine-tenths a fairy story, and all fairy stories have happy endings, isn't it?

M. B.

Divisional Un-Control in X/29/B

There were four of us in it originally until one backed out—"Too risky," she said—hadn't the nerve. But with the rest of us it smouldered and grew until it became an obsession. Why should HE get away with it? HE had been boss for a year and we had been expected to attend his every whim, but at last there had appeared a chance for revenge. Revenge! How sweet that word sounded. How pleasant to watch him squirm even as we had squirmed many times in the past.

In a burst of confidence we outlined the plan to the Group, but she would have none of it—even forbade us putting it into operation, but her warning was too late. It was neck or nothing now.

And at last the day! All three of us suffered from nerves during the morning of the 24th and I realised miserably that without something to give us confidence the plot would flop. So, after lunch we slipped out and each had three quick ciders (neat). It worked! We were ready for anything. My fingers trembled as I drew for the chance to be the one to do the actual deed and my cheeks burned feverishly when I found I was the winner. And now to find HIM. It proved easier than we expected for, when we returned he was standing in the doorway of the dining room. He was talking easily and smiling a little. How fitting that he should be quite unaware of what was coming to him. Someone gave me a nudge as I moved towards him—I finished the last few steps with a rush and seized his unsuspecting figure and then I did it—

Kissed him bang underneath the mistletoe!

Toy Triumphs in the Regions

Is this a record? III/9/A Div. made and distributed 1,348 hard and soft toys between September and the New Year, though closely pressed by B Div., whose total was 1,000. All went to hospitals, nurseries, and orphanages. Public and private exhibitions were held and the Regional Commissioner, Lord Trent, when he opened one of the shows, said that even in the big London stores in peace-time he had never seen a finer collection.

V/37/A.1.Z gave themselves only 2 weeks to make enough toys for their children's New Year Party. When the day came everything was arranged in age groups and numbered. Children's names were called, the child drew a number, and then claimed the corresponding toy. Incidentally, the little guests also received sweets, an apple, and a National Savings Stamp.

A.O. Miss Willoughby sends an account of Region VII's Toy Exhibition at Exeter, following shows at Bristol and Swindon (to which F.F. 18 alone contributed 226 items). It lasted 8 days, was crowded at all hours, and raised over £150 for the N.F.S. Benevolent Fund before travelling on to Plymouth, Bath, etc., *en route* to Homes and Nurseries. A draw was held each day for toys made at the Exhibition by Fm. Clark and Gammon who gave daily demonstrations. There was also a "Guess the doll's name" Competition for dolls presented by well-known people, including one from Queen Mary.

Firewomen at VII/39/B Div. have adopted the National Home for Children, Ebley, and had great pleasure in helping to distribute the toys they made for it at Christmas. They have also undertaken to repair toys broken by the children. Stations in this Division also made toys for a Christmas Party for the firemen's children. VII/39/B.1 made toys for two hospitals (the City General and Longford's Children's Home) and an Orphanage in time for Christmas. Prior to this the toys were on exhibition in Gloucester. All were made under difficulties owing to the shortage of materials; and of staff, due to sickness. Though permission was given to work in day duty hours, the vast majority were made on night duty or on leave days. 107 toys resulted; and in addition the firemen made wooden toys for the boys, and numerous books were collected to distribute.

X/26/E also achieved much success in toymaking. Firemen and women made their toys with an eye to the future—remembering that even when Peace comes toys will be scarce and every bit of wood will be needed for re-construction work of the better world-to-be. X/29 arranged a splendid exhibition of toys, made by the personnel of the Area, and held at F.F.H.Q. on December 2nd. Over 1,500 hard and soft toys were on view, and all these have now been distributed to the Day Nurseries on whose behalf the effort was made. The dolls and toys were of a very high standard. The Exhibition was opened by Mrs. Blackstone (wife of the F.F.C.), whose 10-months-old little daughter was present also and thrilled by all the lovely exhibits.

So popular have N.F.S. Toy Exhibitions become, that during London's "Salute the Soldier" Week at the end of March, no less than 21 exhibitions of 200-300 toys each, staffed and run by N.F.S. personnel, will be open to the public.

Leap Year Chance

The Editor has received a message from a Fireman Artist (replies should be marked "confidential") and sent to her to forward:—

"All I need is the love and devotion of a wife. Can you find me one thru' your Magazine. Fw. preferred."

Answer to "What am I?" in last issue: TELEPHONE.

"Bells down, Christmas Eve."
Drawn by L.Fw. Lowenthal,
V/34/E.Div. H.Q.



Marriages

- 16th August, 1943.—Fw. J. Morris, VII/18/A Sub-Div. 2, to Cpl. V. Briffa, R.A.F.
 2nd October, 1943.—L/Fw. C. B. Finch, VII/18/A Sub-Div. 3, to Fm. C. Collyer, VII/18/A.3.W.
 9th October, 1943.—Fw. G. Gill, to Fm. F. Shiner, both of VI/16/D.4.Z.
 17th October, 1943.—G.O. Pearson, VI/16/B Div. H.Q., to D. I. Scanlan, Co-ordination of Supplies Officer, Malta.
 25th October, 1943.—Fw. Boyack, XI/W.2/A.1, to J. Weir, R.A.F.
 26th October, 1943.—A.G.O. Allan, VI/16/B.2 Sub-Div., to F/O N. R. McGregor, R.C.A.F.
 15th November, 1943.—Fw. J. Truran, VII/18/A.2.T, to Cpl. J. Ramage, R.A.F.
 4th December, 1943.—Fw. H. Clutterbuck, V/37/F.3.Z, to Pte. A. E. Gooch, First Class Army Fire Brigade.
 5th December, 1943.—Fw. M. Kerry, V/Reg. H.Q., to L/A C. Brazier, R.A.F.
 6th December, 1943.—Fw. D. V. Langley, IV/11/C Div. H.Q., to Lieut. E. Bland, R.N.V.R.
 9th December, 1943.—Fw. S. Bolton, V/Reg. H.Q., to Cpl. F. A. Nicholls.
 11th December, 1943.—Fw. J. Saunders, IV/11/C.1.Z, to Acting P/O I. W. Griggs.
 14th December, 1943.—L/Fw. Sleight, III/10/B Div., to Cpl. A. Schwartz, U.S.A.A.F.
 18th December, 1943.—Fw. M. McCormack, VI/14/A.H.Q., to Mr. J. R. D. Forest.
 22nd December, 1943.—Fw. R. Callingham, VI/14/A.4.Z, to L/Cpl. J. Heath.
 22nd December, 1943.—A.G.O. Lamont, XI/W.2/A.T.S., to Sapper T. E. Walker.
 25th December, 1943.—Fw. Eve, V/38/F, to Gunner Benson, R.C.A.F.
 27th December, 1943.—Fw. J. M. King, X/43/A.3, to P/T Fm. Nicholson, X/43/A.3.Z.
 28th December, 1943.—L/Fw. Rogers, X/29/C. H.Q., to Sgt. J. Hesketh, R.A.F.
 29th December, 1943.—Fw. S. Brechan, X/43/A.H.Q., to Pte. T. W. Littlewood.
 29th December, 1943.—Fw. Dye, XI/W.2/C.2, to Flt./Sgt. M. C. Jones, R.A.F.
 30th December, 1943.—L/Fw. Roach, III/Grimsby, to Sgt. R. Wray, R.A.F.
 31st December, 1943.—L/Fw. N. McClymont, XI/W.2/A Div., to D. Harrigan, R.N.
 1st January, 1944.—Fw. Thurgood, V/37/A.2.W, to Mr. J. Haward.
 1st January, 1944.—Fw. A. Mallany, XI/W.2/A Div., to E. McManos.
 6th January, 1944.—Fw. F. Jowett, XI/W.2/F.F., to H. Lander, R.N.
 15th January, 1944.—L/Fw. Marsden, X/43/A.4, to A.C.1 F. Airey.

Engagements

- G.O. E. Compton, III/10/A Div. (ex-Area H.Q.), to Sgt. Treece, R.A.
 L/Fw. D. E. Hatfield, III/10/A Div. H.Q., to Pte. Eddyshaw, Sherwood Foresters.
 Fw. Bedford, IV/11/A.1.Z, to Leading Seaman Roy Caton, R.N. (ex-N.F.S. IV/11/A.2.Y).
 Fw. V. E. Jarvis, V/Reg. H.Q., to Mr. T. A. Sullivan.
 Fw. S. Matthes, V/Reg. H.Q., to Fm. J. McBain, R.T.F. H.Q.
 Fw. Bennett, V/37/A.2.Z, to Mr. K. Pragnell.
 Fw. Bullen, V/37/A.1.Z, to Rifleman W. Hall, K.R.R.C.
 Fw. Pantony, V/37/E./Z, to Fm. J. Game, V/37/D.3.Y.
 Fw. I. Cane, VI/14/H.Q., to Pte. L. H. Underhill, Canadian Army.
 Fw. H. Finden, to D.R. Wright, both of VI/14/H.Q.
 Fw. James, VI/14/H.Q., to Mr. R. Bird.
 Fw. B. W. Stevens, VI/16/Div. H.Q., to Lt. Gene Alexander, U.S. Army.
 Fw. Green, VII/18/A Div., to Fm. Chard, VII/18/A.1.V.
 A.G.O. Holding, VII/18/A, to Mr. T. B. Firth, B.V.Sc., M.R.C.V.S.
 Fw. Holman, VII/18/A, to Gnr. R. Drake, R.A.
 Fw. J. Hosken, VII/18/A Sub-Div. 2, to Cadet H. Collins, R.A.F.
 L/Fw. Peat, VII/18/Area Stores, to Fm. Iley, VII/18/A.1.V.
 Fw. Salter, VII/18/H.Q., to L/Cpl. Roberts, R.M.
 Fw. Whittaker, X/29/B.H.Q., to Cpl. G. C. W. Clement, R.A.F.
 Fw. D. V. Appleby, XI/E/Area H.Q., to L/Fm. D. G. R. Duncan, XI/E/A.2.W.
 Fw. H. Bond, XI/E/Area H.Q., to Sub-Lt. V. S. Lowden (A), R.N.V.R.
 ex-L/Fw. M. Dick, XI/E/Area H.Q., to Fm. R. Duncan, XI/E/Area Transport.
 Fw. (Dvr.) M. Phin, XI/E/Area H.Q., to Fm. E. Falconer, XI/E/Area Transport.

Births

- 3rd November, 1943.—To Mrs. Eagles (ex-P/T Fw. Thompson, IV/12/D.1.Z), a son—Jeffrey Charles.
 1st December, 1943.—To S/L. Read (V/Reg. H.Q.) and Mrs. Read (ex-L/Fw. Cooper, V/Reg. H.Q.), a daughter.
 5th December, 1943.—To C.O. Gaskarth (X/29) and Mrs. Gaskarth (ex-Fw., X/29), a son—Neil.
 12th December, 1943.—To ex-Fw. Parry (X/29), a son—Michael Stuart.
 18th December, 1943.—To Fm. Jessop (III/10/A Div.) and Mrs. Jessop (ex-Fw. Jessop), a son—John Arthur.
 18th December, 1943.—To Snr.C.O. and Mrs. McGregor (ex-Fw., IV/14/H.Q.), a son—Ian Douglas.

NOTICE.—Items for March-April issue must reach the Editor, 5, Regent's Park Road, Gloucester Gate, London, N.W. 1, by 20th March.

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