

N. F. S.

FIREWOMEN'S MAGAZINE ..

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No. 25

MARCH—APRIL, 1943

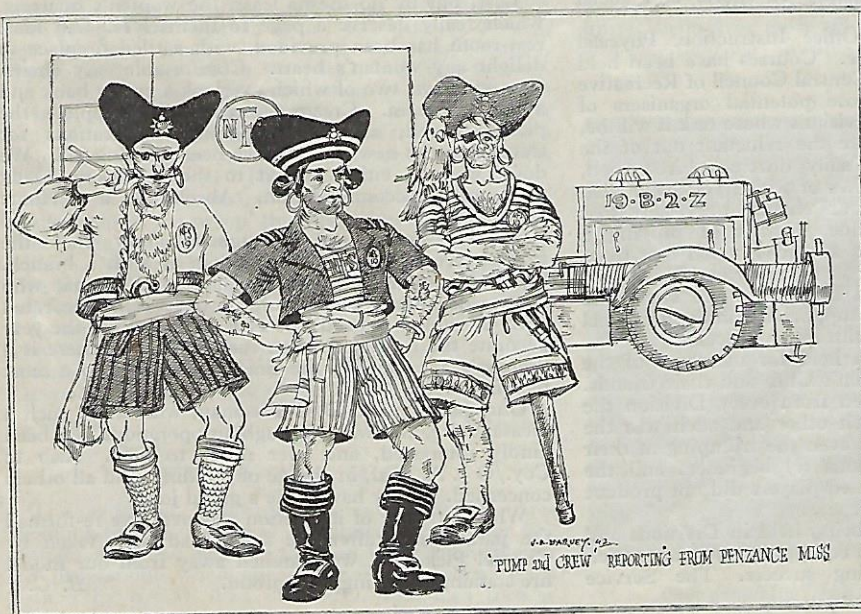
Price 4^d.

Calling all Contributors

Attention is called once more to the few rules which must be observed by would-be contributors. News items, articles, poems, etc., must be typed and only one side of the paper used. Drawings and crossword puzzles must be in Indian Ink. Amateur photographs should be as sharp as possible. Every item submitted should clearly state the author's name, Region, Fire Force, etc. Articles (except when specially arranged) should be limited to 1,000 words, but 800 is a more useful number. Items for the May-June number

should reach the Editor, N.F.S. Firewomen's Magazine, 5, Regent's Park Road, Gloucester Gate, London, N.W.1, not later than 25th May.

Please remember, everything cannot get in! Also, some good items have to be held over to a later issue. We try to get as many Regions represented as possible but sometimes matter submitted is too "local," and sometimes everyone seems to hit on almost exactly the same subject. You see our difficulties . . . "What would you do, Chum?"—**The Editor.**

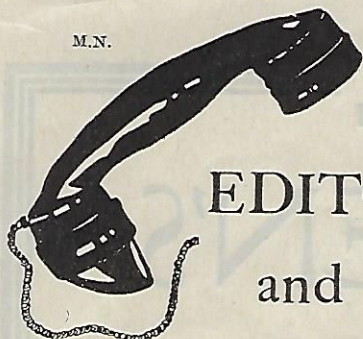


See
page 8
for Special
Article by
the C.F.S.

*Local tradition "gets"
our Penzance crew.*

*Drawn by
Fn. V. R. Harvey,
Region VII, F.F. 19.*

M.N.



EDITORIAL and NEWS

"Wings for Victory" Week in London called forth wholehearted response from the Fire Service. The efforts of all ranks were smiled upon by "those in authority over us," and as a result everyone "jumped to it," from those who had the excitement of working among the throngs in Trafalgar Square, to those who pursued their tenacious way among their own station's personnel or set up a table on the pavement and cajoled the public with smiles, jokes, and megaphone entreaties. The combined target was £10,000: the amazing result, £93,970. 4s. 6d. The figures per Fire Force were as follows: River Service Formation, £1,556. 0s. 4d.; 34, £33,096. 19s. 8d.; 35, £27,840. 6s. 3d.; 36, £8,409. 17s. 0d.; 37, £9,298. 15s. 7d.; and 38, £13,768. 5s. 6d.

Diplomas, personally signed by Lord Kindersley, President of the National Savings Committee, are to be awarded in each Fire Force Area to the Group showing the highest takings per head during the Week, as recommended by the Regional Committee of F.F. Savings Representatives. The Fire Force Commander will eventually make the actual presentation.

London has certainly given a good lead to Fire Forces all over Great Britain, and news of other results will be welcomed for our columns.

No. 1 (Northern) Region

News this month is mainly of sports and social activities.

In response to Home Office Instruction, Physical Training is well to the fore. Courses have been held under the direction of the Central Council of Recreative Physical Training to choose potential organisers of Physical Training in the Divisions whose task it will be, among other things, to lure the reluctant out of the Control Rooms for their daily dozens. Firewomen, what about those extra inches of which you have been complaining? Now is your chance to regain that sylph-like figure! The fine weather is proving a faithful ally at the moment, and it is hoped that there will not be much difficulty in arousing enthusiasm for this activity. Netball and hockey (where sticks are available) is receiving great support and inter-Divisional matches are being played with much success.

Whist drives have been held for members of the No. 1 Fire Force Firewomen's Club and their friends. These have given firewomen from every Division the opportunity of meeting each other and such was the happy spirit prevailing that even the trumping of their partner's aces by the zealous (?) beginners and the earnestness of the more skilled players did not produce the usual frosty atmosphere.

Social evenings are still being held in Divisions and the efforts to raise funds for equipping rest rooms, etc., have met with encouraging success. The Service

helps those who help themselves, is the fervent hope of many enterprising firewomen, and it is the aim of those embarking on the seas of the 48/24 hour system to make their quarters, as far as possible, a home from home. Great credit is due to those who have used their initiative in this respect and made the rooms not just comfortable, but homely.

F.F. 2 "C" Division

The climax of a watchful sixteen weeks in 2 "C" Division was reached on Wednesday, March 17th, when our new Station 1.W was officially opened by Colonel C. J. Pickering, Deputy Regional Commissioner, No. 1 Region. At 14.15, firemen and firewomen from the whole Division assembled at Station 1.Z, where the parade was martialled. At 14.30, we moved off, headed by the Regional Bands (both brass and pipe) and marched through the town to Brook Terrace, where our new station is situated.

Colonel Pickering declared the station open by pressing a button on the table in front of him. Immediately six doors flew open, and out came six appliances—a most effective opening ceremony. After speeches by our C.R.F.O. Breaks, the Mayor of Darlington, Councillor B. Jackson, and Fire Force Commander Mardon, tea was served to officers and guests in the dining-room, and to personnel in the appliance room, after which we proceeded upon a tour of inspection.

Built entirely by firemen, our new station is (to quote the C.R.F.O.), "The finest example of a war-time fire station I have yet seen." Needless to say, we all agree. Decidedly a utility article, simplicity is the key note. Facing on to the road is the appliance room, accommodating nine appliances, and opening from it, the Control Room, next to which is the Station Officer's room, all very neat and compact. Behind the appliance room are the living quarters. First the kitchen, light and roomy, and containing everything necessary in a kitchen. Then the dining-room, again with lots of light and space, and with a floor of coloured cement, red, polished to within an inch of its life. Next are the sleeping quarters, with ample accommodation for everybody, and extremely modern shower-baths.

Last, but by no means least, the women's quarters, which really deserve a page to themselves. An ideal rest-room has been provided, with a tiled fireplace to delight any woman's heart. Comfortable easy chairs, four windows, two of which overlook a grassy bank and a small stream. Cream-washed walls complete the picture: and, since the opening, applications for transfer to the new station have been pouring in! We don't wonder, either. Next to the rest-room, really nice toilet accommodation. Absolutely a "Home from home."

Interior decorations throughout show that the firemen are as handy with a brush as with a branch. The dining-room fireplace was made by a fireman who is by trade a monumental sculptor, but it is *not* decorated with cherubs. Instead, the N.F.S. badge and the year decorate the centre, and, on each side panel there is a fireman's axe, putting the finishing touches to a most pleasing room.

Our thanks go to D/O Freeman, who chose such a pleasant site, and who, throughout operations, has been kindly interested, and ever ready to help. Also to Coy/O J. A. Bird, in charge of building, and all others concerned. They have done a grand job.

When our tour of inspection was over, we re-formed the parade and, after the salute had been taken by Colonel Pickering, we marched away from our model fire station, all feeling very proud.

B. C.

Region II

Hockey in F.F.'s 5 and 6

It was with great trepidation that we decided to try and raise an Area hockey team to challenge No. 5 Area. There was great excitement as the day drew near and we collected an assortment of players together, wondering what kind of a team they would be. The excitement was equally as high in No. 5 Area as they too formed a team.

The match was played at Bridlington on the 27th March, the two teams being entertained at the No. 6 Area Women's Training Centre. We were blessed with a beautifully sunny day, and to mark the occasion of the first inter-area sports venture of the women, the Fire Force Commander of No. 6 Area was present with Area Officers Hubbard and Diamond of Nos. 5 and 6 Areas respectively. It was unfortunate that the Fire Force Commander of No. 5 Area was unable to be present owing to a prior engagement.

It was a fine, fast game and as the teams were fairly evenly matched, the spectators enjoyed it as much as the players. At half-time the score was 1-0, No. 6 Area leading. There were some brilliant bits of play by individual members, and considering that they had not played as teams together previously they all did remarkably well. The final score was 3-0 to No. 6 Area team. Of course everyone is keenly looking forward to the next occasion on which the teams can meet, and already a return match is being fixed when No. 5 Area hope to reverse the decision. No. 6 intend, however, to look to their laurels!

"Goags," Region II, F.F. 6.

Region III

F.F. 7

By way of an Anniversary Party, the Staff at Fire Force Command Headquarters, were invited to a Social Evening on February 28th. All tastes were catered for by a concert, conducted by National Fire Service personnel. It was astonishing to find so much talent in the area; monologues, songs and piano solos were given. A firewoman from "B" Division danced, but this was cruelly burlesqued by a L/Fireman, appropriately dressed for the part. Half way through the evening came an interval, when one and all were invited to the Canteen, where an attractive buffet awaited. The remainder of the concert consisted of a sketch by members of the Maintenance and Stores Departments, entitled "Repairs to L."

After the concert, chairs were pushed back and willing hands helped to sweep the floor for dancing. The "orchestra" for this consisted of an electric guitar and a piano. Before the National Anthem was played, the Fire Force Commander proposed a vote of thanks to the two members of the Service who had untiringly supplied the music for the dance, and the members of the Staff wholeheartedly showed their appreciation. This brought another enjoyable evening to a close, and "a good time was had by all."

A. O., F.F.H.Q.

F.F. 10, Area H.Q.

The series of Concerts held fortnightly at Area Headquarters, Louth, has continued throughout the spring. One one occasion the staff was responsible for the programme when one of the items was a sketch written by S.C.O. Van der Vord, who also took a

leading part. The scene was laid in a Control Room, the part of a "dopey" telephonist being taken by Area Officer Bartlett. The sketch was timed to take eight minutes, but owing to hilarious laughter took about double its time on the programme.

Field Telephone Units

A "Gamma" Exercise was held in Lincoln on the night of 20th-21st March, during which the women of No. 10 Area played a very prominent part. Control Vans and Wireless Cars were manned efficiently, but the outstanding feature was the keenness and ability of two women's crews on the Field Telephone Units. These firewomen were on the spot, and as soon as the communications failed, set to work with a will and laid cables through the main thoroughfare of the town, which necessitated the fastening of cables to roof tops and telegraph poles. In all they laid some 4½ miles of cable, and by 00.45 (2½ hours after communications had ceased) had put lines into operation from Division and Sub-Division controls to three stations, secondary controls and A.R.P. Centre. Their work was a revelation to the umpires attending from other Areas in the Region.

M. S.

Training School, Louth

Our photograph was taken at the entrance to "Craiglea," No. 10 Area Training School, Louth, which was opened in February by the Chief Regional Fire Officer of No. 3 Region, Mr. T. H. Patrick. The Deputy Regional Commissioner, Mr. Keene, was also present on that occasion. Area Officer Bartlett, Mr. Thomas, previously F.F.C. No. 10 Area, now F.F.C. No. 9 Area, Leicester, and Group Officer Crompton are all in the picture.

The first Course held in the new school was for Leading Firewomen, and the photograph also includes A.G.O. Gorbett and A.G.O. Goodman, who were promoted following this Course.

After the examinations at the conclusion of each Course, parties are held on the final evening, when the firewomen display their talent in songs and sketches and prove themselves most efficient hostesses. The cooks also play their part towards very enjoyable evenings.



Photograph by L/Fn. Lawrie, Lincoln F.F.

Region V

Farewell to Major F. W. Jackson

Wednesday, February 10th, 1943, saw a large gathering assembled in the Lecture Hall, at Lambeth, to bid farewell to Major F. W. Jackson, C.B.E., D.S.O., on relinquishing the position of Chief Fire Commander of the Region.

Mr. C. J. Wright, then Fire Force Commander of No. 38 Area, presided and in his address paid eloquent tribute to the services rendered to the London Fire Brigade, and later to the National Fire Service, by Mr. Jackson. Mr. Wright said that the "Chief" had been loved by all the men under him—both L.F.B. and A.F.S. alike, and it was with very great regret that they had heard that, at the request of the Government, he was to leave them for a higher post. He had the honour, and the great pleasure, to hand him a Silver Salver as a mark of their esteem and affection, coupled with their best wishes for his future.

Mr. Jackson, speaking with obvious emotion, thanked Mr. Wright for his kind remarks and said how sorry he was that he was severing what had been an almost lifelong connection. He had enjoyed every moment of it in spite of the many difficulties which he had had to surmount. He greatly valued their expression of appreciation and would prize the Salver as a memento of many happy days.

Assistant Group Officer Fitzgerald then presented Mr. Jackson with a gold Cigarette Case from the women of the N.F.S.

The Salver, which was on exhibition prior to the presentation, had the L.F.B., A.F.S., and Sports Association badges engraved on it, together with a quotation from Ovid, reading:—

"The deeds of the leader shall live and
the hard won glory of his exploits."

J. K.

Regional H.Q.

A Social Club for firemen and firewomen has been started at Regional H.Q., Lambeth, and bids fair to be a great success.

Its aim is to provide entertainment for personnel during their stand-by times, two or three times a week.

The opening dance on 17th March was very well attended and was enjoyed by all. During the week which followed a Brains Trust Session, a Darts Match, and a "Social" were held, so an active beginning has been made.

A. G.

F.F. 34, "A," "B" and "C" Divisions

There have been many dances and socials throughout the three Divisions since the last issue of this magazine, but I think the main news is about "Wings for Victory Week." Congratulations to all, it certainly was a very successful effort on everyone's part. "B" Divisional H.Q. set up a stall outside the station and aimed at a target of £100; the result was £1,200. 14s. od. B.1 Sub-Division on Friday, 12th March, held a very successful dance; no admission fee was charged but each visitor could purchase Savings Stamps or Certificates from a selling booth in the entrance. The N.F.S. band played excellently and the Forces were well represented. Six prizes of Savings Stamps were awarded during the evening, raffles of Certificates and new laid eggs were won by a member of the R.A.F. and at the conclusion of the dance A.G.O. Hugo auctioned a pair of hand-knitted socks. It was due mainly to the efforts of

Fw. Whitfield that the target figure of £150 was quadrupled (£603. 1s. od.). B.1.Y Station stationed one of their pumps outside the "North Star," where they attracted the public by selling Savings Stamps, etc. The total sum raised by the N.F.S. at B.1 Sub-Division was £2,474. 8s. 4d.

An interesting event took place at Berridge House, one of Hampstead's First Aid Posts, on February 6th, when the W.R.N.S. played the Civil Defence at netball. It was a most exciting match; two firewomen were represented in the Civil Defence team which won 17-15. Firewomen and leading firewomen from the "B" Division acted as stewards. Mrs. Hicks made a speech to the team in the interval after which a collection was made in aid of the Red Cross. Among the spectators were Admiral Sir Edward Evans, Miss Oddy, Mr. Swindlehurst, the Deputy Regional Controller and his wife, Mr. Essex, O/C of Control Centre, A/O's Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Perris, Miss Bentley and Miss Davis. A very sumptuous tea was enjoyed after the match, the guests being served by the stewards, who themselves enjoyed a well earned meal. The proceedings were arranged by Mrs. Blankenberg, who is well known in the N.F.S. for her lectures on Physical Culture.

J. H. L.

F.F. 37, A.1.Z

All in F.F. 37 were sorry to lose F.F.C. Mr. Bitten but join in wishing him the best of luck in his new appointment at the Home Office. In his stead we welcome F.F.C. Mr. McKinnell.

To us at A.1.Z the chief interest of the month was the final of the "Mobilising Quizzes," the finalists being F.F. Control, A.1 S/D Control and "D" D/C Control. The excited audience at the Sydenham County Schools (37 D.2.W) included Mr. McKinnell, Miss Oddy, Miss Davis, Mr. Shapcott, Mr. Thompson and our D/O Mr. Cleaver. Mr. Simpson from the Home Office, performed the opening ceremony and then all listened with bated breath as one by one the questions were put to each competitor. It was amazing to hear the straightforward answers to what sounded—to most people present—very complicated questions. Myself, I could not help but be sorry that the team from my Division (A.1) lost a very hard fought match. They were only 2 points behind. Congratulations, however, must go to F.F. Control on winning the beautiful cup, presented by Miss Oddy, after our new F.F.C. had expressed praise and admiration of the whole event.

A celebration dance had been arranged but unfortunately a "warning," followed by gun fire, caused us all to "make up and get away home" midst plenty of noise, with flak falling round us. There is not space to detail the teams, but special praise goes to Fm. Whitmee of A.1 S/D, who did remarkably well to get full marks considering he has had such a short time in the Control Rooms, and also to S/L Clark of F.F. Control, who also gained full percentage.

E. R., A.1.Z.

Firewomen's Squad Drill Final

The crowds which assembled at Regional H.Q., Lambeth, on Saturday, 27th February, for the finals of the Firewomen's Squad Drill Competition, included Admiral Sir Edward Evans, Mr. Delve (Chief Regional Fire Officer) and Miss Oddy (Regional Fire Woman Officer).

The competing Squads represented all Fire Forces in Region V. It was a thrilling moment for us all as each team was announced, marched out through the garage

doors, and was put through the routine of the competition drill by its Instructress. When the competition was over, teams were marched out in the order of their appearance and lined up before the Officers mentioned above to hear the result. The winning team was from F.F. 36 with a score of over 300 points; our team (F.F. 37) were the runners-up with 250 points; followed by F.F. 35, 38 and 34. Admiral Evans then made the presentation of a very handsome cup and shook hands with each of the Instructresses. In an excellent speech he congratulated all the competitors on the high standard and promised to arrange a further competition at some future date, on that occasion with the W.R.N.S.

The teams were then marched out to the Albert Embankment, and back on to the drill ground by way of Black Prince Road, this time in the order of marks. Thus, led by the winners, there was a grand march past Admiral Evans, who took the salute.

*A.G.O. Hammond, E.I.Z.
Fw. E. Robinson, A.I.Z.*

Discussion Group Notes

As announced in the last number of the Magazine, Miss Rachel Ferguson, accompanied by Miss Campbell Thomson, gave us a talk at A.I.Z., Southwark. Miss Ferguson let us into the secrets of writing a novel from the first rather vague conception of one's characters to all the snags and pitfalls of the "law of Libel." It was a comprehensive and amusing insight into the difficulties a novelist has to meet. Miss Campbell Thomson then gave us the other end of "this writing business" as a literary agent. She was able to take us behind the scenes and show us what happened to a manuscript before publication. Miss Ferguson offered to consider and advise on any script members of the audience cared to submit, thus giving the budding author the benefit of twenty years' experience. (If anyone avails themselves of this kind offer, don't forget to put in the postage for return.) Many questions were put to the speakers, and a crop of new novels can be expected in the near future!

On March 7th, Mr. F. Graham, M.A., B.C., L.L.B., Barrister-at-law, gave us a talk entitled: "Is English Law Sensible?" Judging by the questions, the audience did not think so!

On March 28th, S/L Laidlaw Dickson is due to speak on "News-hunting in Europe," and early in April we are going to run a "General Knowledge and Intelligence Quiz." This should cause some laughter. In April also, I hope to have two big names in Religion and Education speaking at Southwark.

Fw. Roberts.

Region VI

A Physical Fitness Course was held at the Women's Regional Training Establishment, Glen House, Sarisbury Green, near Southampton, under the direction of



the Central Council of Recreative Physical Training, from 8th to 13th March.

Miss Docking and Mrs. Mulford of the Central Council, who were in charge of the Course, worked unceasingly on a very well arranged and interesting syllabus, comprising "Daily Dozens," Health Education Talks, Games, Table Construction, Skipping, Teaching, etc., and I am sure were amply rewarded for their efforts by the remarkable progress made by the 19 students from No. 6 Region at the end of the week.

The weather was glorious and all the games were taken out of doors, and a good many of the lectures also, in the delightful garden surrounding Glen House, now a mass of colour from spring flowers. It was no wonder that everybody would have liked another week of such an invigorating course given with such efficiency and charm and under such ideal conditions. The smiling faces in our photograph are proof of this.

G/O E. E. Gardener.

F.F. 16, "B" Division

Congratulations and good wishes go to recently promoted Leading Firewomen:—W. Hall, E. Townley, J. Gautrey, J. Perry, B. Vickers, B. Bailey, D. Zebedee. Also P/T Leading Firewomen V. Davies and L. Day. It is hoped that the firewomen under their immediate supervision will benefit much from their leadership.

At Divisional H.Q. a women's meeting is held every month. The two A.G.O.'s are in the chair (two chairs of course), and both administrative and operational staff have an opportunity of airing their grievances (if any?) and giving helpful suggestions which, when acted upon, enable all to be happier and more efficient in their work.

I offer a suggestion for those who would find it practicable at their headquarters. All administrative staff are placed on a rota—in pairs—and act as hostesses for the day. It is their duty at meal times to keep a watchful eye on requirements of other members of the staff. No one else is allowed in the kitchen (except, of course, the immediate kitchen staff). It is their duty to attend to the tidiness of the cloakroom, reporting any detail which might need further attention to the A.G.O. These duties are not allowed in any way to interfere with one's routine job—far from it. When it is impossible for the hostesses of the day to perform such duties because of pressure of departmental work, then a substitute must be found. On Sundays, in the absence of administrative staff, the control room staff do their share.

Our "Comforts Fund" is increasing rapidly. We adopt various methods for raising money, i.e. talking "Shop" at meal times, raffles, and, er—rather strong language. It would be unwise, methinks, to reveal by which means the most money is made.

H. E. P., "B" D.H.Q.

Region VII

Quite quietly, without any fuss or excitement, Area 18 Training School opened on January 31st.

Disappointment had been bitter, when the original choice (which seemed ideal), was taken by the firemen for the same purpose, and we were left with the Mission Hall!!! The very name sounded depressing, but it's amazing what enthusiasm, bright charts, and a few rugs, etc., can do, and we were quite proud of it on opening day. At any rate, things went with a swing from start to finish, a very happy atmosphere prevailed and it was with quite a pang of regret that we parted.

The course was comprehensive and included P.T.

(oh! the aching backs those first few days, what bitter memories!), and squad drill. We caused quite a sensation when marching through the town on our way to and from the drill ground. Such remarks as "Smart, aren't they?" "Who are they?" and "That's what we pay our Income Tax to keep up!" fell on our ears.

One afternoon was spent in visiting a station where the firemen demonstrated the Turntable Ladder, and different appliances. We then died a thousand deaths watching a display of rescue work. (The firemen, incidentally, seemed puffed up with pride at having a large feminine audience admiring them!)

Our fortnight finished with instructors and students visiting the Pavilion to see a show on the last night. (The breaking up party usual in Training Schools we felt might fall a little flat, as it is not a mixed school!) Anyway, if the first course is a foretaste of things to come, our Area School should be a happy one.

A.G.O. K. J.

Region IX

F.F. 24, "A" Division

We feel very honoured to make our first appearance in the *National Fire Service Women's Magazine*, and as this magazine has only recently come to our notice, it has been met with great acclaim by all the firewomen. Although we have our own magazine on the Area, it is a magazine shared by firemen and firewomen, and we are only too pleased to see one devoted to firewomen only.

Recently at Station A.I.Z we have had many visitors from different Regions, staying for the duration of various courses and we feel sure we shall follow with great interest any notes from their Divisions that appear in the magazine.

We are very busy at the moment in our spare time (if any), commencing to make toys for the firemen and firewomen's children for next Christmas, which seems such a long way ahead. We are all hoping that the Christmas parties next year will be Victory parties.

Amongst our more recent visitors were A.G.O. Kelly and A.G.O. Johnson from the National Fire Service College, and we hope this visit will be the first of many.

G/O M. O. Ferris.

"D" Division

In No. 24 Area, we are all very keen and busy trying to arrange practice games of netball, which is not so easy with annual leave, etc.

We have to play off our Divisional matches by the end of this month and then compete with other Areas for No. 9 Regional Netball Cup. Possibly in the next issue we shall be able to name the winners.

Recreative and Physical Games have commenced on most Divisions; these, coupled with the netball, are bound to help the firewomen to keep fit and contented.

I. M. H.

Region X

F.F. 27

We were very thrilled to see ourselves in print last issue, and to share the pleasures of reading the *Firewomen's Magazine*. It is always interesting to know of the happenings in other Regions and Areas, and we hope that by the next issue of the magazine we will have ready some news for publication.

Congratulations to Group Officer Rapaport, whose game, "Fun of the Fire" is having a success, following

its demonstration at the Home Office and at Brighton. It is based on the well-known game of "Lotto," is amusing and instructive, and just the thing for all members of the Fire Service to play in their "stand-by" or with their friends at home.

Price 5s. (inclusive of purchase tax), it is intended to give a rebate of 6d. per copy on all orders of 50 or more, this to be applied for the benefit of all firemen and women for their quarters and recreation rooms. Orders should be addressed to G/O Rapaport, Women's Area Training School, St. Joseph's, Longsight, Manchester, 13. (Postage will be paid on orders of 20 or more copies.) In F.F. 27 (where the game originated), the scheme adopted is for the Group Officer in each Division to obtain the orders and send them through in bulk with the covering monies. She receives the rebate cheque, if one is due, and in conjunction with the D/O spends the amount thus gained for the benefit of their personnel. Other Fire Forces should indicate, when ordering, if they are adopting this scheme, or prefer orders to be sent direct.

C. M. J.

F.F. 28

Firewomen at Fire Force are now beginning to prove their prowess in the athletic field. They have deigned to go in for sport. Some one suffering from too much energy suggested a Rounders Team, although the F.F.C., when giving us the field, pointedly remarked that only Rounders and the milder form of games could be played there. Having two energetic A.G.O.'s it didn't take them long to cajole the weaklings into promising to join, and these poor things sacrifice their spare time in becoming fit, and any free time they have at work in practising hitting a ball, while the aforementioned A.G.O.'s by the names of Gaydon and Bowker, look on with piercing eyes, determined to stop any poor firewomen from making daisy chains in between running from second to third base. Oh! the fruits of being a firewoman!

A great spirit of rivalry exists between the two admin. pump crews who can be seen daily doing their drill during their luncheon break. The typists, after their last exhausting effort, have retired gracefully. Possibly due to the fact that they will find it too strenuous on their new hours, although it has been secretly whispered abroad that they are frightened of spoiling their hose (fully fashioned, coupon variety), but we must admit that the last show they put up was indeed a credit to the Pool, proving that even typists could be firewomen.

Of course, we must not forget the Recreation hut, wherein you can see fire-flies (I mean women) floating around the dance floor with the ease of professionals. We have of late been provided with a radio gramophone by S.C.O. Haselden (Area Welfare Officer), and are determined to get the best use possible out of it. So each day the nymph-like forms of our firewomen sway to the strains of "My Mamma don't told me" or "Anniversary Waltz," taking their daily relaxation in "Three Minutes of Heaven."

Fw. O'Byrne.

F.F. 29

No. 29 Area regret the transfer of Fire Force Commander J. Clitherow, M.B.E., to No. 26 Area, but wish him the best of luck in his new sphere. Mr. G. V. Blackstone, G.M., has taken up his new duties as Fire Force Commander to No. 29 Area and a hearty welcome is extended to him.

All firewomen in the Area are daily becoming more efficient, thanks to the excellent training which is

available to all members both whole and part-time. The social side throughout the Area has been active during the past month, special efforts in all Divisions being held recently in aid of Dr. Barnardo's Homes, a very worthy cause. Congratulations are due to the firewomen of "A" Division who gained distinction at the Area Training School, and we hope this will be an example to those who follow. All good wishes to Fw. Hesmondhalgh of A.I.Z. on the occasion of her recent marriage.

"B" Division are hoping to give a Physical Training display by their firewomen during Preston's "Wings for Victory" week. The Division are sorry to lose A.G.O. Pallett, but congratulate her on her promotion and transfer. Toy-making activities have been revived in "C" Division and they are producing some noteworthy results which will eventually benefit National Children's Day Nurseries. A grand dance was held on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th, and all personnel interested in the terpsichorean art enjoyed a good time. Another social event of a novel nature was the twenty-first birthday party given by a dispatch rider who attained her majority on the 7th March last. The Group Officer of the Division presented the "hostess" with her many gifts and also rendered "birthday" selections on the piano. One of the part-time stations in this Division has established a splendid record in the War Savings Drive, having raised over £915 to date. It is their intention to increase this figure by £1,000 by the conclusion of Blackpool's "Wings for Victory" week in April.

The training of both whole and part-time women personnel in "D" Division is proceeding apace. Social events have included Table Tennis Tournaments with the WAAF, and also between teams representing the Area Training School and Divisional H.Q. Dances have become a regular weekly feature and are well attended. One in aid of the Benevolent Fund is arranged for March 26th, 1943, at the Ashton Hall, Lancaster, and promises to be a highly successful affair.

The last month in "E" Division has been one of "Hellos" and "Goodbyes," both the Divisional Officer and Group Officer being new to the Division. A Divisional Dance and Presentation to Ex-Divisional Officer Stuttard was held at the Mechanics Institute, Burnley, and was enjoyed by all who attended. The netball team has had great success in the matches played against the Municipal College, winning by an easy margin each time.

Variety is said to be the spice of life, and "F" Division is having its share, as they have served under no less than four Fire Force Commanders and three successive Divisional Officers. The departure of D/O Lunt was regretted, but good wishes go with him on his appointment as Senior Instructor at Brighton College. A hearty welcome is extended to D/O Hands, M.C., his successor. A highly successful dance was held at the Cambridge Hall, Southport, on February 26th, 1943, and this was attended by the F.F.C. Mr. Blackstone. Squad Drill instruction is now in full swing in this Division, and the two firewomen responsible for the training have recently passed the Instructors' Course at the Area Training School. "F" Division are hoping shortly to challenge another Division to a Squad Drill Competition.

M. L. J.

F.F. 43

At 43 Area H.Q. the social spirit is being fostered by a series of weekly social evenings held jointly with the staff and trainees of the Regional Training Establishment, which occupies part of the same building. In

addition staff dances are held each month and have proved to be an enormous success. By kind permission of the Fire Force Commander and the Mayor of Barrow, an Area Ball was held at Barrow on February 15th, and a most enjoyable evening was held by all present. The proceeds of this Ball were devoted to the Benevolent Fund.

Lectures and discussions have recently been introduced and are appreciated by many members of the resident staff. With the approach of spring, it is expected that the staff will take advantage of the beautiful surroundings and explore the countryside—hiking promises to be a very popular pastime.

"A" Division. The weekly whist drives and dances held in Sub-Division 1 are well attended and greatly enjoyed by members of the Service and the general public and Sub-Division 4 have recently held the first of a series of fortnightly dances in aid of the Sub-Divisional Welfare Fund. The dance was attended by the Fire Force Commander and Mrs. Hall and the Divisional Officer and Mrs. Williams, and the proceeds were handed over to the above fund for the purchase of comforts, etc.

"B" Division has again been setting the pace, firm believers in the saying that "all work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy," they have organised two successful dances, in addition to concerts and social evenings, which have been voted a great success by all.

N. C. C.

Region XI (Scotland)

Eastern Area (Dundee)

"A" Division. The Dance Club is now in full swing. The new Welfare Hall was officially opened by Fire Force Commander Pratten on 24th February, 1943. A dance is to be held in the new hall on 2nd April. It is also the intention of the Divisional Welfare Committee to organise a badminton club. A number of whist drives and dances have been held in the rural districts of the Division, including one at Forfar, which was attended by the Fire Force Commander.

"B" Division. Station IX held a dance on 18th March, 1943, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all present.

"C" Division. By special request a repeat performance of the pantomime "Babes in the Wood," was given in Kirkcaldy on 10th, 11th and 12th March, 1943, by the Spitfire Concert Party, whose members are mainly made up of N.F.S. personnel. Dances were arranged and costumes designed by L/Fw. Pillans and Fw. Torrance. Music was supplied by orchestra under the direction of L/Fm. Foster. The proceeds were in aid of Kirkcaldy Hospital and Victoria Nursing Association, and the sum of £140 was realised.

Area Headquarters. The fortnightly social evenings are still in progress at Area H.Q., and the programmes are somewhat varied as a different committee is responsible each evening. A table tennis tournament is being held in the near future in aid of Red Cross Funds. A library has been started with Fw. Chapman in charge.

M. H. MacNab.

Western No. 2 Area (Paisley)

Our late appearance in the magazine seems to uphold our reputation as "canny Scots," but our pleasure in joining you now is none the less sincere. We enjoyed very much our first issue of the magazine. We felt that reading it was like having "a good gossip" with neighbours whom we didn't know as well as we'd like to!

"JOB ANALYSIS" OF A JUNIOR WOMAN FIRE OFFICER

The term "job analysis" is one used by the Army Officers' Selection Boards, and means "What type of woman do we require for our junior officers?" Here are some ideas of mine on the subject.

It goes without saying that she must—our ideal woman officer—have a fine moral background: that is indispensable.

She must, of course, be a leader, but time prevents my doing justice to that enviable quality.

She must know that her women will watch her and take their cue from her. If she is slack or untidy or undisciplined, then those in her charge will be apt to follow suit.

She must have cold courage—she must not turn a hair when bombs fall close. She must inspire confidence and coolness in her team.

Should an I.B.E.N. land on the control room floor, it will be she who gives the order, "Still," while she takes it up and deposits it outside!

She must be tough enough to be sent on a reinforcing expedition and possibly go with very little sleep over a number of nights.

She must have the gift of sympathetic understanding, but without being fussy with it. She must be able to help those under her to be proof against the boredom of waiting. She must be the ideal welfare officer without being conscious of it.

She must have the art of working successfully

Extract from an Address given at the National Fire Service College on 26th January, 1943, by Commander A. G. N. Firebrace, R.N. (ret.), C.B., Chief of Fire Staff.

with men; must realise that, coming into a Service whose doors have only just been opened to women, she is doing pioneering work, and that always means hard, difficult work. She must win a position for herself and her rank by sheer character and ability. She must make allowances for the fact that there are still a few men who are early Victorian in their ideas on women and who may not be immediately ready to place on women the responsibility they are quite capable of exercising.

Should the women in her care, through inadvertence or otherwise, be required to work in unsuitable surroundings, lacking amenities even up to the "Markham" standard of "Spartan decency," she must show the gift of improvisation, while she mixes firmness with tact, and patience with importunity until "something is done about it."

She will remember the line from the "Laws of the Navy" which reads, "Do your growl with a smile on your lips."

She must have sound operational knowledge of the many and varied tasks that firewomen have to do—welfare is but a part of her job.

And if our woman fire officer measures up to the standard I have laid down, then I should say that she deserves well of a Service in which to-day she plays a not unimportant part.

News—continued

We have no outstanding items of news to contribute to this issue. We are working hard on training (although we have as yet no Area School for women), but we find time for lots of dances and whist drives. Any profit on these generally goes to the Welfare Fund, which we hope will, in turn, provide us with much-needed sports equipment. But charities, too, such as the Red Cross Penny-a-Week Fund and Dr. Barnardo's, are well supported, and the schemes for the painless extraction of cash from the pocket are legion. The resounding "banging" of "saxpences" would, we are sure, astonish our English friends and perhaps dispel our unwarranted reputation for parsimony!

Four of our girls have successfully completed a Physical Training Instructors' Course in Glasgow, so now we shall be having "Health and Beauty" Culture organised throughout the Area.

So far no literary or artistic genius has appeared amongst us, but perhaps by the next issue the West of Scotland will be represented in that line too!

D. Reid.

Region XII

Region XII held their Physical Training Course at the Fire Force Area 32 new Area Training Centre,

West Byfleet, the week commencing March 1st.

The weather was very kind so nearly all the practical side of the course was done out in the sunshine, and the wholehearted enthusiasm of the girls was a great delight to their instructress, Miss M. A. Jackson, of the Central Council of Recreative Physical Training.

To wind up the week a social and dance was held on the Friday night, when the girls taught their partners some of the group dances which they had learned in the Course. When I left, frantic notes were being taken by the men so that they could introduce these dances at their own station and Divisional dances.

W. B.

Faux Pas

What! wear fawn stockings with shoes that are black!
I fear you are sailing upon the wrong tack.
Yes, I'll help man a pump or a watchroom 'phone,
Or climb a T.L., like Garbo, alone.
I'm sure I'd be thrilled up so terribly high,
Near the pilots and Spitfires up in the blue sky.
I'll handle a branch and put out the Blitz,
But that, No! My mother would have forty fits
That her daughter good breeding and taste did so lack
As to wear light fawn stockings with shoes that are black.

Fwmm. Rowberry, Region VII, F.F. 39, A.I.W.

"OUR OTHER LIVES" No. XXIV.

MISS E. M. BLOTT,
Regional Woman Fire Officer, Region IV



I was born and educated in Cambridge and had just started my teaching career at the outbreak of the war of 1914. My main piece of war work then was teaching Serbian boys to speak English—we had no common language, and our efforts, using the direct method, caused considerable mirth at times, but after three months some of the older ones were able to take engineering lectures at the University: they were very gifted linguists. The smaller boys recovered boyish ways during the months I helped with them, though when they arrived one wondered if the tragic little faces would ever look young again. The present state of Europe often brings back to my mind those boys and what they had endured.

During my teaching career, I have taught in girls', boys', and co-educational schools in England, Scotland and Wales, but for the most part, I have been in resident girls' schools.

During the first year of this war, I was in charge of one of the houses of an evacuated Edinburgh school. We moved to the borders, and the house I ran was a typical and lovely old Scotch house at the end of a moorland road, framed by hills and fir woods, with rolling lawns intersected by mountain burns, which tumbled in and out through the gardens. The generous owners of the house visited us frequently, and if I lost my flock of thirty, I knew they had been spirited away by the host or hostess to the woods, where they built brushwood bonfires and the like.

There too, I found my dream cottage, for which I had collected antiques for many years.

That winter was the coldest I have ever known, and at the end of that road we were cut off from supplies for two and a half days on two occasions, by drifts of snow five feet deep, and frozen so hard that the men had to tackle them with pickaxes.

Finally, our water supply (a private one from the hills) froze, and we were driven to melting snow for breakfast, but no one flickered an eyelash when a few sycamore fruits appeared in the middle of the porridge! The children lived an ideal life, out of doors most of the time, and they became as tough as young ponies.

My next bit of war work took me into the Censorship, and of this I must disclose nothing, though I cannot let it pass without saying what admiration I feel for a large section of humanity—their pluck and sense of humour shone from their letters.

The strain of constant reading was too much for my eyes, and I next found myself in a Regional Office of the Ministry of Labour. Here I had a thorough insight into the registration and interviewing of women, and my special job was the A.T.S. recruitment for the Ministry. This work gave me access to a number of camps, and an opportunity to study the conditions in them.

In March, 1942, I joined the N.F.S.

Prior to the war I spent my holidays travelling, often in France, Switzerland and Italy, the last-mentioned being my first love. Other than travelling, my relaxations are music, all types of art, gardening, and reading. My great interest, though, will always remain, Education, in the sense of it being "the handmaid of the art of living."

MARCH PAST, REGION IV

And can they march! Look at the feet of these girls of Luton F.F., and you'll realise how smartly they went by when inspected by Area Offr. Barry. Group Offr. Lester is leading them.



Photograph by courtesy of "Luton News."

The aim of Discussion Groups is for men and women of the Fire Service to get together, under the chairmanship of a Leader with some adequate information and a great deal of enthusiasm for his or her subject, and discuss current problems. My first introduction to these Groups was last spring, when a Leader came to my station. I remember feeling afterwards that the hours which we in the N.F.S. must spend idle at our posts need not be wasted, that there remained something immediately useful for us to do. We could read and talk together, and help each other in our efforts to find some explanation for the trials we are now facing in common.

Later I was asked if I would like to become a Discussion Group Leader. My first impulse was to refuse. I am no expert on any given subject, and I had no experience of speaking. I did not then realise that Discussion Groups in no way pretend to substitute for University education, but have behind them the democratic idea that talking clarifies thought, and that many people discussing a common problem may arrive at a solution. Talking does not necessarily get you anywhere, but no action has ever occurred in the human world except as the outcome first of thought and later of discussion. At my first two or three meetings, only the talkativeness of my audience saved me from being revealed as a truly speechless chairman! But this phase died a natural death as soon as I became more interested in the ideas of others than in my own shortcomings as an orator. I mention this to encourage firewomen with misgivings similar to mine, to become Group Leaders. They will then attend excellent courses at the City Literary Institute—that is to say, if like myself, they are in No. 5 Region—where they will learn about economics or psychology or any other subject that particularly interests them.

I have taken part in Discussions ranging from China, Russia, Democracy and the Rights of Man, to Pig-keeping and the Destruction of Vermin. I can better endure the monotony of the Watchroom for thinking of the violence of Stalingrad; I reason with my Station Officer for more short leave on the basis of "to each according to his needs, from each according to his capacity." I brighten my sleeping quarters with maps of London Replanned, and I know more than I care to about the lives of rats and what they may be up to in the drains outside our station yard.

Discussion Group Leaders agree that whenever

there are women among the members of the Groups, discussion is enlivened and new ideas introduced, for men and women often see the same problem from different angles, and women, once they decide to hold forth, are obstinate arguers.

In addition to Discussion Groups run by members of the Service, there are many lectures given in connection with the Groups by Ministry of Information speakers. Recently at a Hampstead (London) fire station, Dr. Julian Huxley took part in an International Brains Trust which included speakers from a number of European countries. My own subject is Housing and Town Planning and I have spent many lively evenings wrangling with firemen and firewomen over the relative virtue of houses and flats, country and town, and what kind of planning we may expect in the cities of the future. In one London area a firewoman interested in Discussion Groups approached the Workers' Educational Association and arranged for weekly lectures to take place at her station. Similar ventures are on foot in a number of areas, and if any who read this article would be interested, I should be glad to give information on Discussion Groups and to hear of any subjects which they may think of particular interest to women in the N.F.S.

Women are taking on an increased share of what was once known as man's work, and as they do this they take on also an increased responsibility for what was once known as man's world. This is true for us in the Fire Service as well as for our sisters in the other Services and in industry. The war is our opportunity to break down the last lingering prejudice in the male ego. We shall prove our equality to men, not only by the smooth running of the watchroom, but outside it also by showing our interest in all that concerns the world of which any fire station is a representative part.

Roll of Honour

By enemy action on 9th February, 1943:—

Fw. D. M. Kerley.

Fw. D. M. Lay.

Fw. S. L. Young.

all of Region VI, F.F. 16 B, D.H.Q.

"At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We shall remember them."

"No Medals for Miss Mo"

Mo, the unemotional, sighed audibly as the return of "Z-1" from George Street ushered in the fifteenth hour of her lone battle with the switchboard, the five Logs, and that ancient—though not honourable—institution, the firegrate.

With an agility born of practice not confined to that particular date, Mo restored the tallies to their normal positions on Sub-Division and Station boards in what appeared to be almost one movement, despite the fact that a leap on to the "message table" was involved. Mo's knees might be expected to cry out in protest at such ungente treatment, but scrubbing brick and concrete floors is an excellent way of hardening the skin—and Mo manipulated a "scourer" almost as soon as she learned to distinguish sugar from soap.

The Service had quite a spot of bother in wresting Mo from her peace-time employers. She was known in trade parlance as a "stitcher" and the matter had to be "taken further" before it was finally conceded that the job of Control Room telephonist might be regarded as "of national importance." There was something in the nature of a victory celebration when she arrived one morning to make up the quartet of firewomen allocated to Station and Sub-Division.

In normal circumstances, Mo would have been on her way home after a mere twelve hours, but the "mobiles" called in to deputise for the five "locals" on the sick list would not arrive until after 22.00 hrs. So without comment, Mo proceeded unostentatiously with the job (it included two fires

By Hybrid, Region IX, F.F. 25.

in four hours)—eternally lifting and replacing receivers, writing and logging messages from Station to Sub-Division and Division, and *vice versa*; booking the "ins" and the "outs"; checking the boards; and so on, and so on.

And when things went quiet for a minute or two Mo, with characteristic imperturbability, partially satisfied her domestic urge by relieving everything in sight of the fine ash for ever billowing from the out-moded range, whose maw she carefully fed with lumps of coal from a metal receptacle bearing the legend "Summer grade."

In between times she managed to get a "cat-lick" at the sink in the corner, and to wash up half-a-dozen veteran cups. Then followed a mysterious tapping on the ceiling which somehow transported the battered kettle to the gas ring in the men's "Rest Room" overhead. Mo carefully avoided the re-plastered section of the ceiling through which some weeks before there had suddenly appeared the foot of a fireman who had taken an unwary step.

There was only one function that the ever-practical Mo did not find time and opportunity to perform. In any case, she reflected, that "trip across the yard" was a ticklish business in the blackout and conversations in the adjoining premises were inclined to be a little too much to the point after 22.00 hrs. Discomfort did not prevent Mo from smiling at the recollection of one adventurer who essayed the journey and finished up in the "inspection pit" which was unfortunately full of water.

With the penultimate fire report transmitted to Division, Mo returned to the serious task of organising a "brew."

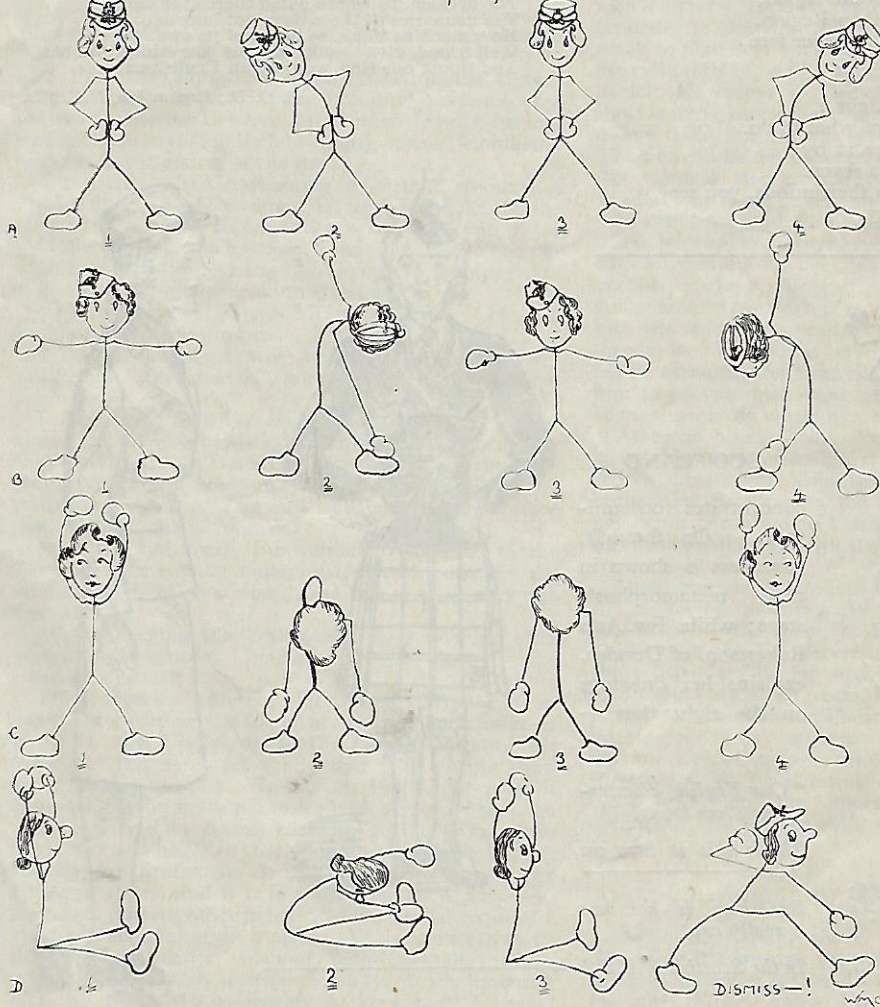
Another weird signal brought in the kettle, cups and one saucer appearing as if by magic, and when a grimy and smoke-ridden "Column" arrived, the tea had only to be poured. Whoever marries Mo will never lack a good cup of tea at the moment when its beneficial influence is most needed.

To the suggestion that it was time she "booked off," Mo replied in her usual manner—by saying nothing. With a final glance around the room, she opened her attack on the battery of Logs, pen scratching vigorously across the pages without pause until strange voices in the passage announced the arrival of the reliefs. Only then did Mo look towards hat and coat, hanging neatly behind the door.

With a cheery "Good-night" Mo walked briskly through the Appliance Room and began her two-mile tramp through inky streets to home and invalid mother.

No, there's nothing of heroism under fire, or even of special effort, demanded by the "warbling note." In other small towns there are other Mo's, all ordinary people, who accept without question, and without the prospect of recognition, the "exigencies" of the Service.

COME ON FIREWOMEN—DO THIS EVERY DAY AND LOSE THAT "CONTROL ROOM SPREAD"



"P.T."

Drawn by
L/Fw. Cushing,
Region II, F.F. 5,
E Div., 2.T.

Our Sub 2

At D.H.Q. we're on the run
From morning until set of sun,
You may not think it, but it's true,
It's caused by Sub-Division 2.
They keep us busy here, you see,
With pump availability.

Of pencil, paper, chalk and board
We used to have a decent hoard.
But that's all gone and we're just able
To scratch the figures on the table.
They feed us, breakfast, dinner, tea,
On pump availability.

We haven't time till day is done
To deal with Sub-Division one,
And then it takes us half the night
To get squared up and put things right.
If we sleep, we dream you see,
Of pump availability.

We can't get out to have a meal,
No doubt you'll know just how we feel.
The messages we get are legion,
We must be busier than Region.
It gets us down, we're never free
From pump availability.

If we get Major 8 Light 2,
We really don't know what to do.
If this comes in at 12.11 by
12.13 it's dropped to seven.
They can't make up their minds, you see,
On pump availability.

Their Mobilising man no doubt,
Oft wonders how we stick it out,
But if you find a corpse one day,
You'll know it's him we've had to slay.
We're absolutely sick, you see,
Of pump availability.

S. L. W., Region II, 5A, D.H.Q.

Have You Considered ?

Have you considered friend, when passing by,
How much we owe for blessings, you and I ?
When we sit down to eat our every meal,
Do we some sign of thankfulness reveal ?
Or when within our beds we're safe and sound
Do we think nought but of the daily round ?
Or then again, if things do not go well
Do we to others all our troubles tell ?
Or, do we rather think in other ways ?
And render just and well deserved praise
For those who bring our food from lands afar,
Through waters where the darkest dangers are ?
For those as well, who in the skies on high
Have fought for us and saved our liberty ?
Our soldiers too, to them some credit give,
Prepared to die for us, that we might live.
Forget not, whilst you're thinking of these things
The firemen, to whose name there ever clings
The memories of those days not long ago.
How much to them, so many of us owe.
Well friend, give thanks for this now whilst you can
And thank our God, you are an Englishman.

E. G. D., Region VI, F.F. 16.



A sweet little Scot took the fit
To set about doing her bit ;
So she put off her kilt
And her braw kneesy lilt,
For the N.F.S. blue is now IT.

Anon.

SCOTLAND

concentrates on uni-
form. On the left,
Inverness is shown in
the metamorphosis
stage; while Fw. Ann
Robertson, of Dundee,
explains her drawings
on the right thus :—

*" Our English counter-
parts, we know,*

*Think this is how we
dress —————→*

*But here is how we
really are,*

In the Scottish N.F.S." —————→



From a Control Room Diary

In the darkness of her bedroom, a certain Firewoman W. leaps up in bed and cries wildly, "Mother, I've overslept—I shall be late for duty!" And from the adjoining bedroom, a startled mother replies tartly, "Go to sleep—it's only ten past two."

This being, for once, a welcome order, Firewoman W. gratefully subsides in bed, and sleeps soundly until a kindly mother calls her for breakfast at 07.15, again at 08.00, and still again at 08.15, at which time Firewoman W., becoming fully conscious, decides to rise and commence a twenty-five minutes' toilet. This bringing the time to 08.40, Firewoman W. realises that she really is late—and the neighbours are treated to the spectacle of a firewoman forgetting the dignity due to her uniform and making a frenzied dash for a 'bus, which, by a combination of quick work and good luck, brings her to the Control Room at Divisional Headquarters just as the Section Leader commences Roll Call.

This reveals that Firewoman W. is posted to the job of Divisional Mobilising Board Operator—a position she accepts somewhat grudgingly. At 09.05 the business of the day commences properly with the arrival of Firewoman K. in the Control Room for a deep conversation on the subject of dates, past, present and future, with special reference to their joint activities on the previous evening. This conversation is reluctantly broken at 09.12 because Sub-Divisions 1, 2, 3 and 4 require a board check, Fire Force Headquarters is tartly asking for certain information, and there is the brooding presence of a somewhat hostile Leading Firewoman from Catering, who demands to know how many meals Mobilising requires in the course of the day.

Ultimately, after transacting a certain amount of Service business, Firewomen W. and K. shake off the dust of the Control Room and proceed for a cup of tea (N.F.S. blend), which they, if no one else, consider well earned. This, naturally, brings a continuation of the absorbing conversation (see 09.05).

"He was lovely," sighs Firewoman W. "He has such a nice way with him . . ."

"Yes, I knew his wife before he married her," comments Firewoman K., with a touch of the eternal feminine.

It transpires that Firewoman K. spent part of her evening at the local Palais de Danse, before proceeding to a certain N.F.S. rendezvous at the sign of the Blue Boar, where she honoured a Fireman N. (P/T) by consuming (at his expense) several sherries before dashing off home to mother.

After the tea break, Firewoman W. returns to the Control Room and contemplates with dismay the accumulation of messages requiring entry into the General Log.

"After keeping this confounded Log, looking after Gabriel's Doomsday Book would be easy!" she comments bitterly.

The messages entered, Firewoman W., head in hands, broods over the lot of firewomen, and thinks of J. F. H. and Co. going to the Grand Theatre this evening. Her short leave and that of K. being from 16.00 to 18.00 hours, W. hits on the bright idea of approaching the Section Leader with a request that the rota be altered to permit them to go out from 20.00 hours to 22.00 hours so that they can take in the Grand. Politely, but firmly, the Section Leader points out that a rota is a rota, and if it is altered for such purposes, what is to prevent other people making similar requests? For the remainder of the morning, W.'s conduct towards the Section Leader, without being actually insubordinate, is distinctly unfriendly, and over the luncheon table his refusal to co-operate is the subject of frigid comment.

*By E. H., Divisional Control, "A" Division,
Fire Force 28, Region X.*

"He's a miserable devil—won't alter our short leave, and he knows we want to go to the Grand!" K. and W. mutter in unison.

Hereabouts, Leading Fireman L. appears, along with another Leading Fireman (called Shorthouse by those in the know), and they are immediately called in as a court of appeal which can be persuaded to intercede with the Section Leader on the subject of short leave.

In response to this appeal, Shorthouse runs around in circles and dashes hither and thither, only to admit failure to the firewomen, whom he comforts by offering tea at the Odeon between 16.00 and 18.00 hours. Half a loaf being better than none, W. accepts on behalf of K. and herself, and there is a slightly more cheerful resumption of duty at 13.00 hours. In between deep conversations on such vital matters as dates, four-day leaves, shortcomings of officers, and so on, some attention is given to N.F.S. matters until 16.00 hours arrives.

This being the magic hour when White Watch goes off duty to stand by, it is vexing when a fire call is signalled at 15.59 to be answered by Firewoman K. with a sweet "Hold the line, please," while she appeals generally to the Control Room with "Is Red Watch ready to take over—it's time for us to go, and there's a fire call on this line!" Finally deciding to take the call herself, K. annoys W. and Shorthouse by delaying the short leave so much that Shorthouse decides to go ahead, telling them that he will save them places at his table. The fire call being disposed of, W. and K. depart from the Control Room, pointedly ignoring the Section Leader, who is not having one of his best days.

There is peace in the Control Room until 18.00 hours, when K. and W. return, accompanied by Shorthouse, who is beaming all over his face—apparently he feels gratified at the privilege of paying for tea and acting as escort around town while facing the prospect of meeting his wife and being called upon to answer awkward questions. W. and K. have equally beaming faces, for beside extracting tea from Shorthouse they have squared him to provide tea, sugar and milk for unlimited cups of tea during the all-night watch.

At 23.00 hours White Watch returns to duty, and when the Section Leader, still very much in disgrace, retires shortly after midnight, there is in progress an indignation meeting on the raw deal of firewomen in not being permitted to change leave times. W. is the principal speaker, K. is in the chair, and Shorthouse is a compulsory audience.

Night marches on—and before going on stand-by the following morning, W. condescends to reopen speech with the Section Leader, saying somewhat acidly that she has ascertained that she will have a short leave on Friday evening from 20.00 hours to 22.00 hours in sixteen weeks' time, and that she proposes to go to the Grand Theatre without hindrance or interference from anyone. Very diplomatically the Section Leader agrees, thinking it best not to upset Firewoman W. by pointing out that this date will be Good Friday and that, therefore, the Grand Theatre, unlike the Fire Service, will not be carrying on business as usual.

"Fires Were Started"

Do not miss seeing the Crown Unit film with this title when it comes to your district. An amazing and exciting record of just one "incident" of the blitz and the spirit of the London Fire Brigade, the A.F.S., and the W.A.F.S.

Marriages

- 28th December, 1942.—L/Fw. Mary Rowe, Region VII, F.F. 18, A Sub-Div. 3, to Fm. Leslie Smaridge, Region VII, F.F. 18, A.3.Z.
- 7th January, 1943.—L/Fw. Allen, Region X, F.F. 43 B Control, to L/Sgt. S. H. Atkinson, R.A.
- 20th January, 1943.—Fw. L. Larkham, Region VII, F.F. 39 A, D.H.Q., to Sgt. Dennehy, R.A.
- 12th February, 1943.—Fw. M. Jukes, Region X, F.F. 29 F, to Sgt. Ronald Ball, R.A.F.
- 20th February, 1943.—Fw. E. Dunn, Region III, F.F. 10 A, C.I., to A.B. J. Pixley.
- 20th February, 1943.—Fw. M. Matthews, to Section Leader Nurse, both of Region VII, F.F. 39, B.1.Z.
- 22nd February, 1943.—Fw. Mary Barrett, Region VII, F.F. 18, A Sub-Div. 2, to L.A.C. F. Beckett (of York).
- 6th March, 1943.—Fw. Thornton, Region X, F.F. 29, E.1.Y, to Mr. Kenneth Clark (munitions worker).
- 8th March, 1943.—Fw. M. Gaskarth, Region X, F.F. 43, A Div., to L/Cpl. R. Calvert, R.E.M.E.
- 9th March, 1943.—Fw. Hesmondhalgh, Region X, F.F. 29, A.1.Z, to Mr. R. Feist (of Strood).
- 13th March, 1943.—L/Fw. Prothero, Region VII, F.F. 39, B.H.Q., to Mr. Peter Tilstone.
- 16th March, 1943.—L/Fw. D. E. Cooper, to S/L J. Read, both of Region V, Regional H.Q. Staff.
- 17th March, 1943, Double Wedding.—Fw. Arrandale, to S/L Waterman, both of Region X, F.F. 27, Area Finance; also her twin, Driver Arrandale, R.A.S.C. (late of Region X, F.F. 27 D), to Pte. Watson, R.A.P.C.
- 20th March, 1943.—Fw. E. D. Walker, Region III, F.F. 7 H.Q., to Fm. W. H. Wood, Region III, F.F. 7, A.1.X.
- 20th March, 1943.—Fw. Betty Chivers, Region VII, F.F. 39, A Div., Sub-Div. 3, to Cpl. Dan Jones, R.A.S.C.
- 27th March, 1943.—L/Fw. Ewers, Region IV, F.F. 11, A Div. Control, to L/Fn. S. A. R. Patrick, Region IV, F.F. 11, A.1.Z.

Forthcoming Marriages

- 3rd April, 1943.—Fw. Hacker, Region IX, F.F. 24, A Div., to A.P.O. F. J. Rumsey.
- 15th May, 1943.—L/Fw. James, to C/O Burman, both of Region IX, F.F. 24, A Div.

Engagements

- Fw. H. Charaton, Region V, Regional H.Q. Staff, to Major S. V. Walker, R.C.A.
- Fw. Dillon, Region IX, F.F. 24, A Div., to Mr. J. H. Mulroy.
- Fw. P. Smith, Region IX, F.F. 24, A Div., to A.C.1 L. Timmins.
- Fw. Snade, Region IX, F.F. 24, A Div., to Cpl. F. Hipkiss, King's Shropshire L.I.
- Fw. N. Halton, Region X, F.F. 29 B, to Cpl. C. Shaw, R.A.F.

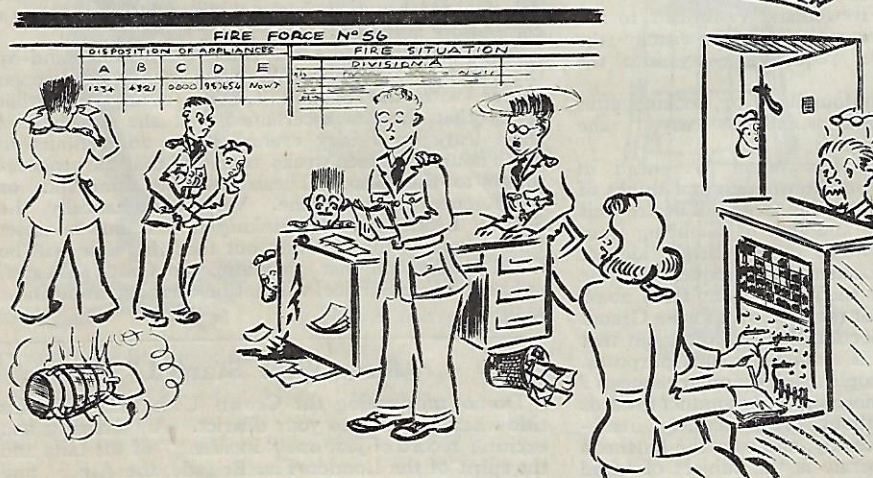
Births

- 24th February, 1943.—To Mrs. W. Fletcher (late Fw., Region VII, F.F. 39, B.3.Z), a daughter—Jennifer.
- 3rd March, 1943.—To Mrs. Sutcliffe (late Fw., Region X, F.F. 29 E, D.H.Q.), a daughter.

Three in One

This new procedure of the N.F.S. Has made us in a frightful mess, General Log and Fire Log too. We really don't know what to do. We rack our brains from morn till night, But we must admit it's an awful plight, For us there's quite a lot to be said As first of all we are Station Z. Added to this we are Sub-Div. 2, Which makes it quite a "How d'you do." Secondary Div. is the last stage here, For this we give a hearty cheer. We hope and pray we stay the course, In case they make us Fire Force. Mobilising is the one big snag, Otherwise it's "in the bag." The D.O. comes and checks our boards, We cross our fingers and pray the lords That all is well, for if it's not Of the D.O.'s wrath we will get the lot. We learn by our mistakes they say, So here's hoping for that dawn of day When efficient firewomen we shall be. Hats off! Thumbs up for Division "D"!

Red Watch, Region VI, F.F. 14, Sub-Division 2.



"JUST A YEAR AGO"

Seven days in advance, the personnel of 4.Z had been informed that the station was changing over from eight-hour watches to the 48/24-hour system, and we prepared accordingly.

At 09.45 on Monday, April 13th, the first arrival was seen "staggering" up the street towards the station. Blankets (that had been home to be washed) over one arm, case, knitting bag, etc., clutched in the other hand; steel helmet and respirator on back, pillow on shoulder; hot water bottle, carrier bag, and all bundles, etc., that couldn't be held in position by any other means hung by string on any odd spare button that was available on the tunic. Sixteen in all—leading firewomen and firewomen, arrived in pretty much the same manner; some had large cases, some had small ones, some had big bundles, others had little ones. Some carried hot water bottles, others clutched woolly bedsocks, while one leading firewoman arrived with a cycle arrayed out like a travelling junk shop! Most of the male personnel were pump cleaning outside, and a running commentary was given by them on the approach and progress of each "victim" along the street, and guesses were given as to the probable contents of the various cases, parcels, etc.

What a day! Scrubbing, polishing, curtain hanging, mobilising exercises, fire calls, and relief duties, but at 23.00 hours the White Watch were despatched to bed. This sounds like the end of a perfect day, but oh no—in the first place we were to sleep in three-tiered steel bunks, the bottom bunk being 6 inches off the floor and the top one 18 inches off the ceiling. The bunks were long, but not long enough for No. 2, who is almost six foot and had her heels hanging out, after being hoisted up by No. 3, who is small and slight, only to discover that her nightdress had been sewn up—and who was it that made the leading firewoman an apple-pie bed? To say nothing of stuffing her pillow with tennis balls!!!

For a while the holiday atmosphere prevailed, but

Change Over, April 13th, 1942

By Fwmm. I. B. Harris, Area 9, A.4.Z.

soon we settled down, and the silence was broken only by the musical snores of No. 3 and the sonorous deep breathing of No. 5, who also found it necessary to turn over and twist about so many times that the other occupants of the bunk complained of sea sickness!

Alas!—this peace was rudely shattered, for "Wailing Winnie" trilled her song. The first wail was hardly complete when the bunk rocked, there was a rush of air and then a thud (the leading firewoman had got out of bed, shaking the shoulders of the other occupants while in transit). The door slammed, a loud knock was heard on every door in the corridor, a terrific clatter downstairs.

Leading firewoman No. 1 is already on duty. (Yes! Respectably clad. It's a mystery to us but she does it every time.) Meanwhile the other four are dashing round endeavouring to get dressed. Uniforms had not yet been issued—there was no time to take curlers out, everyone was charging against someone else and our respective belongings all got mixed up. But at last we descended to report for duty. The White Watch was truly magnificent to look at that night . . . green pyjamas, pink ones, blue ones; mauve and turquoise ninon nighties, veiled by dressing-gowns of every conceivable colour and design, while No. 3 disguised her curlers with a marvellous turban complete with bow in front. Tin hats were worn at a becoming angle, respirators at the alert! Such a sight has never been seen at 4.Z either before or since that auspicious occasion. Fortunately the All Clear sounded soon, and afterwards as we partook of the inevitable cup of tea, each member of the White Watch solemnly vowed her intention never again to retire to her bunk without performing the nightly ritual of slacks and sweater in a convenient position to be donned on "Winnie's" first wail.

48/24 is now firmly established and enjoyed by all—but *how* we wish we could live down that first night!

A Watchroom Tale

The Station personnel are jolly, the C/O very nice. Yet sometimes in the Watchroom, the atmosphere's like ice. When things go wrong, as things will do, no matter how you try.

You breathe a silent prayer to Heaven prepared to do or die. With men on sick and rota leave your Station strength has dropped.

And then from Sub-Division, the fateful question's popped—"Your strength Z, X?" You give it back, in joyful satisfaction.

That you at least are quite alright, no need for drastic action. The Section Leader's on the prowl, and you repress a groan. You wish it were your day on leave and you were safe at home.

"Squad Drill this afternoon," he says, while you conceal a grin.

Laughter bubbles up inside, you dare not look at him. But he is rather nice, you know, he helps you when he can. With him it's duty first and last—'tis after comes the man. The day wears on and so do you, pin pricks come and go. Until at last it's time to leave, you shout hurrah and so you tidy up in hope and joy and gladly say goodnight. Then in the din of changing guards, you find your bed's just right.

But in the quiet hours of morn, your bell Rings out its warning. You scramble up and grab the 'phone, Another day is dawning. But I must pack this tale up And get back to my Station, Drop this into the basket, Its proper DESTINATION.

"Nil Desperandum,"

Region IV, F.F. 11, A.Y, Canvey.

Lament

Never in my life have I
Attributed to the public eye
Tremendous powers of observation.
In case you think my accusation
Original, you have perhaps
Not fallen into any traps
Akin to mine—by that I mean,
Ladies have with smiles serene
Fumblingly produced their pence,
Insisting that at two stops hence I
Ring the bell for them, as they
Expect that they will miss their way.
Stations too, have their vices—
Enquiries as to trains and prices of
Railway tickets to unknown towns
Very often lead to frowns,
If I can give no information.
Concerning times we leave the station;
Expressions of disbelief appear
Upon the face of the old dear.
N.F.S.—I repeat my tale—
Indeed! I thought you dealt with mail!
Feeling that I, after this oration am
Over sarcastic to my nation
Remember! This is my contention,
My hat was not my own invention.

J. S., Region VII, F.F. 17, "B" Division.

Representatives

Region 1

Group Offr. B. G. Calderwood, Northern Regional H.Q., Fire Department, Eskdale Terrace, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2.

Region 2

Fw. Kirke, F.F. 3 Area H.Q., Red House, Moorgate, Rotherham.

A.G.O. J. Booth, F.F. 4 Area H.Q., "Quarry Dene," Weetwood Lane, Leeds, 6.

Fw. W. Smith, F.F. 5 Area H.Q., Ashburnham Grove, Bradford.

Group Offr. Miss G. Swift, F.F. 6, "A" Div. H.Q., 108-110, Westbourne Avenue, Hull.

Region 3

A.G.O. Stewart, F.F. 10 Area H.Q., Eastfield House, Louth, Lincs.

Region 4

Fw. J. McCormick, N.F.S., Eastern Civil Defence Region, St. Regis, Montague Road, Cambridge.

Fw. B. Clarkson, F.F. 11 H.Q., 33, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea.

A.G.O. Mrs. S. C. Johnson, F.F. 12 Area H.Q., Whitney Wood, Stevenage, Herts.

Fw. Howe, N.F.S., F.F. 13 H.Q., Whitegate, Hethersett, Norwich.

Region 5

Regional H.Q.—Fw. Good, Whitgift House, Lambeth, S.E.1.

F.F. 34 Area (A, B and C)—L/Fw. Lowenthal, Div. H.Q., Queen Mary's Home, Heath Street, N.W.3.

F.F. 34 Area (D, E and F)—Fw. W. Merchant, Central Fire Station, Uxbridge Road, W.13.

F.F. 35 Area.—Asst. Group Offr. Miss E. Fox, N.F.S., D.2.Z Station, Suffolk House, Hartford Road, Enfield Highway.

F.F. 36 Area (part)—L/Fw. Compton, Fire Station, Tabernacle Street, E.C.2.

F.F. 37 Area (H.Q. and A, B, C and D)—L/Fw. E. Robinson, Fire Station, 94, Southwark Bridge Road, S.E.1.

F.F. 37 Area (E and F)—A.G.O. N. Smith, Fire Station, South Street, Bromley, Kent.

F.F. 38 Area (A, B and C)—Group Offr. Miss Crips, Fire Station, Old Town, Clapham, S.W.4.

F.F. 38 Area (D)—Mrs. Thomas, 108, Edenfield Gardens, Worcester Park, Surrey.

F.F. 38 Area (E and F)—Group Offr. Miss Young, Fire Station, Park Lane, Croydon, Surrey.

Region 6

A.G.O. Miss M. Wardroper, N.F.S., F.F. 14 Area H.Q., Wintershill Hall, Dursley, Bishop's Waltham, Hants.

L/Fw. N. Oppenheimer, F.F. 15 Area H.Q., White Place, Taplow, Bucks.

Fw. Marchant, N.F.S., F.F. 16 H.Q., Parkhill, Lyndhurst, Hants.

Region 7

Group Offr. Mrs. Brewer, N.F.S., F.F. 17 Area Training School, 2, Downleaze, Stoke Bishop, Bristol, 9.

A.G.O. Miss Jenkins, N.F.S., F.F. 18 Area H.Q., Crossmead, Exeter.

A.G.O. Miss V. F. Weeks, N.F.S., F.F. 19 Area H.Q., St. Vincent's, Yelverton, Devon.

Group Offr. Miss Taylor, N.F.S., F.F. 39, "B" Div. H.Q., Southfields, Park Road, Stroud, Glos.

Region 8

A.G.O. Miss D. M. Burnett, N.F.S., F.F. 8 Regional H.Q., Coryton, Whitechurch, Glam.

Region 9

L/Fw. Parker (Regional Rep.), N.F.S., Regional Training School, Carpenter Road, Birmingham.

Fw. Irving Jones, N.F.S., F.F. 23, Bever Manor, Bever, nr. Worcester.

Group Offr. Miss Haskins, N.F.S., F.F. 24, "D" Div. H.Q., The Cedars, Gravelly Hill, Erdington, Birmingham, 23.

Group Offr. Miss Iremonger, N.F.S., F.F. 25, "B" Divisional H.Q., Belvedere House, Burton-on-Trent.

Fw. Dodwell, N.F.S., F.F. 40 Area H.Q., Merridale, 124, Compton Road, Wolverhampton.

Region 10

Group Offr. Miss R. W. Wood, N.F.S., F.F. 26, Women's Area Training College, 27, Aigburth Drive, Liverpool, 17.

A.G.O. Miss Jones, N.F.S., F.F. 27 Area Pay and Finances, The Hollies, Circular Road, Withington, Manchester.

A.G.O. Miss M. Bennett, F.F. 28 Central Fire Station, Bolton, Lancs.

Area Group Offr. Mrs. M. L. Johnson, F.F. 29 Area H.Q., "Haslemere," Garstang Road, Broughton, nr. Preston, Lancs.

A.G.O. Miss N. C. Carson, F.F. 43 Area H.Q., Sedgwick House, Sedgwick, nr. Kendal.

Region 11

Fw. Isabel F. Sutherland, N.F.S., Northern Area H.Q., Kingsmills House, Kingsmills Road, Inverness.

Group Offr. Miss R. Hartnell, N.F.S., North-Eastern Area H.Q., 96, Queen's Road, Aberdeen.

L/Fw. Hamilton, N.F.S., South-Eastern Area H.Q., Woodcroft, Clinton Road, Edinburgh, 9.

A.G.O. Miss M. H. MacNab, N.F.S., Eastern Area H.Q., Bracknowe, 430, Blackness Road, Dundee.

Group Offr. Miss D. Reid, N.F.S., Western (No. 2) Area, "A" Div. H.Q., Johnston Street, Paisley.

Region 12

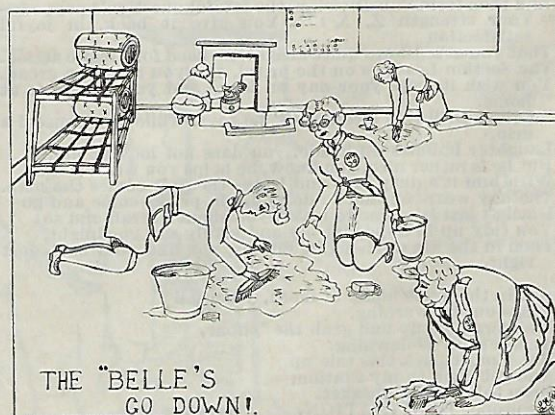
Group Offr. Mrs. E. Hide, F.F. 31 Area Div'l. H.Q., Preston Circus, Brighton.

A.G.O. Miss Hibbert, N.F.S. Collège, Saltdean, nr. Brighton.

"P.B.X."

On the switchboard when it's busy
Makes you feel so very dizzy,
Plugging in and pulling out,
'Specially when you get a shout.
All Sub-Stations ring, ring, ring,
They don't think there's anything
In just sitting in a chair—
Calling "Switchboard! Are you there?"
Officers who think they should—
Section Leaders if they could—
Get an answer on the dot
("My!" we mutter. "Wot a lot.")
"Might have been a fire call, Miss."
"Sorry, Sir," we quietly hiss—
Only got one pair of hands
Though we carry many cans!
Oh my goodness! Can that be
My O-in-C is calling me?
One plug left—it's just as well,
Otherwise there might be H—!
Five o'clock! Oh, heavens be—
Thank goodness for a cup of tea!

Fwmn., Region V, F.F. 38, A.2.7



"N.F.S. Terms illustrated."

No. 1. Drawn by "L. E. R.," Region VII, F.F. 39.