

N.F.S. FIREWOMEN'S MAGAZINE

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Sanctuary

A world at War
Brought German planes in hordes across the sea,
Seeking with fire our City to destroy.
Night after night the bombs screamed down, and we
Saw things that from our hearts wiped all the joy.
But time has passed and London carries on,
And through the battered streets I went one day,
And found a Church untouched by what had gone,
Its open door inviting all to pray.

Shaped as a cross
The Altar of our mercy at the Head,
The Font our entrance portal at the feet,
The arms for many centuries outspread,
Pleading to all mankind with gesture sweet,
That they should come within that wide embrace
And resting there awhile where troubles cease,
Should contemplate His mercy for a space,
And, in the midst of War, should be at peace.

L/Fw. D. N. Gilson, V 36/A.3.X.

EDITORIAL AND NEWS

Welcome to Northern Ireland from whence comes a first contribution—news from the Belfast Area. We are also pleased to include in this issue two excellent items from Scotland. We hope we may have many new contributors from these Regions.

Which reminds us of a letter received from Region VII. This says: "I have received complaints at the low standard obtained in the Magazine. Cannot some improvement be made?"

Now, first, this surprises us as there have been many letters (too numerous to quote) praising all recent issues. Secondly, it is an extraordinary complaint to come from that particular quarter. Other parts of Region VII used to submit some good items, including drawings. But none of the latter have come since March, 1943; and no other items at all (save News or Marriages, etc.), since July, 1943. Furthermore, the Area making the complaint *has submitted nothing at all since January, 1943*, when we published their one and only effort—an account of the opening of the Training College. If these critics want improvement their best plan is to show how this is done, namely, by submitting high standard items! It's up to you, Region VII!

I/Northern Region.—News received this month has been mainly of efforts to raise money for the N.F.S. Benevolent Fund. Each Div. is out to reach its target figure and judging by some results a very good start has been made. F Div. No. 1 F.F. raised £205 at a "Bring and Buy" Sale and No. 1 Area H.Q. £305 at a "Bring and Buy" Sale, Whist Drive and Dance, organised on the occasion of the opening of the new centralised H.Q. by the Deputy Regional Commissioner, Colonel C. J. Pickering.

We had a visit this month from Miss Evans, Technical Adviser to the Central Council of Physical Recreation, during which she saw Fitness Training in both Fire Forces under the supervision of the Fitness Training A.G.O.s and Divisional Leaders.

II/6.—A.G.O. Statters, who has been in the Service since May, 1940, was awarded the British Empire Medal in January, 1944, for meritorious service and unflinching devotion to duty under severe recurrent raiding conditions since the inception of raids on Hull. She has been attached to a Control situated in a highly vulnerable and dangerous area, consisting mainly of dockyards, and has set an example of undaunted courage and diligent loyalty to the firewomen who work with her.

Extract from the Hull Daily Mail, 26th January, 1944, with acknowledgments.

Hull Firewomen's Gift.—A smart group of women members of the N.F.S. paid a visit yesterday afternoon to the Hospital Supplies Depot in Wright Street, not to deal with a fire, but to present a cheque for £177. 5s. 0d. on behalf of their comrades of A and B Divs. of Area 6 for the Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund. They were accompanied by their A.O., Mrs. Diamond.

The firewomen were selected by the other members of their sections to represent them and were: L/Fw. Mason, Area H.Q., which raised £41. 4s. 6d.; L/Fw. Holby, Hull Control, £12. 6s. 3d.; L/Fw. Franklin, A Div. H.Q., £23. 10s. 0d.; L/Fw. Houghton, Central Fire Station, £15; L/Fw. Clarke, B Div. H.Q., £40. 13s. 3d.; and Fw. Baston, East Hull, £44. 11s. 0d.

Many of the women members of the N.F.S. are wives of men in the Forces, and they had entered with zest into the work, which was begun shortly before Christmas. They organised dances and "bring and buy" sales, at which many of the toys and other goods sold were made by themselves and showed excellent craftsmanship and ingenuity.

The presentation was made by L/Fw. Houghton, and Mrs. H. M. Harrison, J.P. (chairwoman of the Hull Hospital Supplies Committee), thanked the donors for the splendid gift and assured them that the committee would indeed be glad to hear of so good an addition to the fund.

IV/Regional H.Q.—On 20th January, the C.R.F.O., Mr. Benton, and R.W.F.O., Mrs. Hicks, with members of the Regional Fire Staff, were entertained at a New Year's Party as guests of the Deputy Regional Commissioner, Major General and Mrs. Fuller. Dancing, games and a Cabaret made the evening most enjoyable. *M. H.*

V/Regional H.Q.—Mr. J. H. Simpson paid a tribute to the Chief Regional Fire Officer for the London Region on Thursday, the 17th February, when he said that the morale in the Service had never been higher than at the present moment. This, he added, was very largely due to the driving force of Mr. Delve, who had been quick to support and promote every form of welfare activity within the Region—not merely as an incentive to efficiency but also from the human interest side.

The occasion arose at the inaugural Council Meeting of the N.F.S. No. 5 (London) Region Welfare Fund when Mr. Delve was elected Chairman. "There is no one more fitted for the position," said Mr. Simpson. Sir Ernest Gowers, the Senior Regional Commissioner, who is President of the Fund, supporting the motion, confirmed Mr. Simpson's remarks.

The Fund will provide facilities for recreation, entertainment and education of the personnel in London, and will help other and smaller welfare organisations by donations. It hopes to run large functions covering the Region as a whole: at the moment a boxing show at the Royal Albert Hall is under consideration.

A distinguished party of Russian officials, including high-ranking Red Army and Naval Officers, were entertained at London F.F. Regional H.Q. on 26th January. A full scale demonstration of fire-fighting appliances was held in the drill yard, after they were shown over Fireboat "Laureate," and the F.F.C.'s control boat, "Flying Fish." At midday the visitors were given a lunch cooked in one of the mobile kitchens, and after this they inspected the control room and were also shown a display of fire films taken during the 1940-41 "blitz" period.

On February 14th a similar entertainment was given to officials of the Polish Government in London.

V/34/A.—There has been very little news from the old A, B and C Divs. The reorganisation and moving of all personnel has halted a great deal of the usual activities. During the previous weeks before the change-over, farewell parties were the main feature of almost every station.

An all-Star Concert was held at the Kilburn Empire in aid of the N.F.S. Benevolent Fund and the 34 Area Welfare Fund, the show being organised by members of the old B Div. The concert was a great success and £600 was raised. Among the variety artists who appeared were Jack Hulbert, Rawicz and Landaur, Hal Monty and others.

We were very sorry to lose G.O. Watson from our Div., but it is very nice to know that she is still our "Guardian Angel" at F.F.H.Q. We welcome G.O. Lott to the new A Div. *L'Fw. Lowenthal.*

VI/16 C.—An innovation has been introduced in this Division in the shape of a series of route marches, headed by the Divisional Brass Band.

The first march took place on March 19th, in the Poole district, when about 30 firewomen attended together with approximately 100 men. There was a small shower of rain during the morning, but apart from that the weather was kind. The firewomen certainly had to put their best feet foremost in order to keep up with the longer strides of the men, but they thoroughly enjoyed the outing, which seemed to excite great interest among the public.

It is thought that extra rations will have to be provided by the Catering Department if appetites increase after the future marches as they did after this one!

G. A. Cross, G.O.

VIII/Wales Region/21.—We have much pleasure in welcoming into our midst as A.O., Miss G. Ogden, who comes to us from Region X. Her splendid reputation in the Fire Service has preceded her, and even on such a short acquaintance, we feel sure that she will quickly settle down with us and become guide and sponsor to the happy personnel of this Fire Force.

We have great pleasure also in welcoming G.O. Langham to B Div. She came to us on the 15th February, 1944, from the N.F.S. College, Brighton, and has already settled down amongst us and is very happy. We welcome back to A Div. A.G.O. Ashton, who for the past four months has been Acting G.O. at B Div. H.Q., Carmarthen. She has already made her cheerful presence felt amongst us.

Keen enthusiasm is shown in the attendances at St. Gabriels Hall at the weekly Open Club Nights, when Stations in turn are given an opportunity to show their talent in organising Whist Drives, Dances and various games competitions. Invitations are extended to all members of the Service, and to branches of H.M. Services.

L/Fw. Thomas, Instructor at the Area T.S., has taken on a new job as she is now Secretary of the School Pig Club. Every night she may be seen surrounded by pamphlets on the "Raising of Pigs," and her latest worry is the providing of these pigs with suitable names. Our first suggestion is "Kitty Keep Fit," in honour of our "Keep Fit Instructor."

IX Region.—We take this opportunity of sending greetings to our former firewomen now scattered far and wide. Messages received show that they were warmly welcomed in their new Areas. We are glad that they are settling down happily, but we hope they will not forget Region IX.

The many friends in the Region of Area Officer Thorne and Divisional Officer Kohn congratulate them on the announcement of their engagement and join in wishing them every happiness.

The Region, and particularly Area 25, are delighted to welcome Area Officer Alderson, who has now taken up duty in this Area. We hope she will be very happy here, and we shall do all we can to ensure this.

(See also pages 10 and 11.)

X/28/H.Q.—There was great disappointment when we heard that our A.O. was to be transferred to 13 Area.

A.O. Scott (affectionately known as Scottie to us) held the respect of all from the F.F.C. down to the newest firewoman. Particularly do the firewomen in 28 Area offer thanks to Miss Scott for all the work she did while she was here. Her understanding and sympathetic nature won for her a loyalty that is only given freely to a good leader. The team spirit that exists in 28 can largely be attributed to Miss Scott's unfailing enthusiasm, which was a wonderful example to us all. We take this opportunity of wishing well to A.O. Scott and tender the hope that she is happy in her new environment.

Fw. O'Byrne.

X/29.—It is with regret that 29 Area records the departure of A.F.F.C. J. McKenzie, who has been transferred to 26 Area. We all hope that he will be happy in his new sphere. A hearty welcome is extended to his successor, Mr. A. Wray, who comes to us from 42 Area.

Farewell parties have been the "order of the day" in all Divs. owing to the number of firewomen who have been transferred to other parts of the country.

A mobile school is now in full swing, complete with all necessary qualified instructors. It is run under the supervision of G.O. Kenyon, to whom we wish much happiness on the occasion of her recent marriage.

Splendid efforts in aid of Dr. Barnardo's Homes were made throughout the Area in January. This included dances, "Bring and Buy" Sales, Concerts, etc.

W. L. Johnson.

X/43/H.Q.—43 Area H.Q., A and B Divs. extend their sincere thanks to the members of the various Commands, who on transfer, received our personnel with such graciousness. To the ex-members of 43 Area, let your cheery dispositions continue and create a spirit of reciprocated friendship in your new surroundings.

X/43/B Div.—The most important piece of news from 43/B is the fact that we have lost D.O. Lonsdale. The firewomen of this Div. wish him the very best of luck in his new Area. Our loss is certainly their gain.

Liaison in the Div. with the R.A.F. is well to the fore. The women have been invited to Dances and Concerts regularly, and it is hoped that in the near future we will be able to reciprocate. Fitness Training has commenced in real earnest, in addition to which rounders matches are held at Div. H.Q. each Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, on the "White Elephant's Grave Yard," otherwise known as the Transport Officer's Paradise!!! The number of balls which have been lost in these redundant (or should I say repugnant) vehicles is beyond count, the fitness training invariably concludes with the women diving under some Hillman or the like for the very elusive ball, and in the majority of cases with a "Nil" return.

XI/Eastern/F.F.H.Q.—Fw. L. Smith has left H.Q. to take up her new appointment as G.O. in No. 1 Western Area, and we wish her happiness and success in her new post.

N. Ireland.—C Div. heartily congratulate G.O. Percival on her recent promotion and wishes her every success in her new post at B Div. H.Q., Belfast.

Our Sunday "Route Marches" are proving a success with an excellent turn-out of both whole-time and part-time firewomen. They are to be complimented on their smart appearance and marching.

The members of the N.F.S. (N.I.) Club had a most enjoyable "Musical Evening" recently. They hope that this is the forerunner of many such events.

This year the firewomen expect to give a "Keep Fit" Display at the Annual N.F.S. Competitions in June. They are very hopeful that they will again succeed in winning the Cup for Squad Drill.

N.F.S. College, Brighton.—There have been a number of changes in the Instructional Staff since the last magazine came out. Miss Amies and Miss Hibbert have both left to take up appointments as Senior Staff Officers in No. 7 and No. 12 Regions respectively. G.O. Haskins is now in No. 14 Fire Force and A.G.O. M. P. Hamilton in No. 1 Fire Force. A.G.O. Langham is a Group Officer in No. 21 Fire Force.

We offer our congratulations to Mrs. Shannon and Miss Kelly, both of whom have been appointed Senior Instructors in the College. We are also very pleased to welcome back G.O. Villiers after her long period of sickness. Other recent promotions include A.G.O. Brett and Huggins to Group Officers, while G.O. Edwards has been seconded to No. 4 Region as Staff Officer to R.W.F.O. Mrs. Hicks, for a period of three months.

Three new arrivals are A.G.O.'s Davies, Hill and Pugh.

An entirely new type of course has just been concluded; this is one for Mobile Instructors. The course lasted two weeks and included a considerable amount of practical work. A further two courses have been arranged for the next session, which will, also, include two 5-day courses for P/T Women Officers.

A parade was held on Wednesday, March 8, 1944, when the Lord Lieutenant of the County, Lord Leconfield, came to the College to present the Director of Studies with the King's Police Medal. Representatives from both the men and women students formed the parade together with the Staff attached to the particular courses selected for the parade.



Firewomen of F.F. 12 Headquarters.

G. H.

An Incident in My Life

Until 1937 my home was in China. At the age of 12 I went to an English boarding school in the North. My home was in Shanghai, and I travelled to and from school by sea.

It was January, 1936, when the incident of which I am writing occurred. My brother and I had been home for the Christmas holidays. At last the day dawned when we were to return to school. We boarded the S.S. *Tungchow*, together with about 65 other children and a few teachers. With heavy hearts we returned to school; we probably wouldn't see our parents again for six months. Slowly the ship steamed down the Wangpoo River (a tributary of the Yangtze) and the group of mothers and fathers on the jetty grew smaller and smaller and gradually faded into the distance.

By this time it was growing dark. The smaller children—nicknamed the Preppies—were having supper in the saloon, and the rest of us were out on deck. I decided to go to my cabin for something, and just as I got half way along the deck towards the saloon door, a Chinese man rushed past me in a dressing gown. He grabbed hold of one of the preffies who was standing just outside the door. "Well," I thought, "I didn't think R— would get into trouble and have one of the crew after him." It was all very strange—there seemed to be a lot of noise coming out of the darkness. Then suddenly it dawned on me—PIRATES! I fled to my cabin.

It was true. The pirates had booked passages in the Chinese quarter, and when the *Tungchow* had got safely down the river, they banded together and overcame the Russian Guards, killing one of them and wounding a British officer. Very soon the ship was taken over. We were all ordered into the saloon and had to stand there for about half-an-hour with our hands up, while the masters and officers tried to make terms with the pirates. At last they reached some agreement, and we were sent to bed, feeling very subdued and frightened. The pirates made themselves at home in the saloon, which was only a few yards from the girls' cabins.

I was in a cabin with three other girls. We were so upset we forgot to shut the door. After a while we realised this, but we were too scared to do anything about it in case we drew attention to ourselves. We had, fortunately, drawn the heavy curtain across the door, but all night long we could see the pirates strolling up and down the corridor through a gap in the curtain. It's a good thing we were children or heaven knows what might have befallen us.

Breakfast next morning was rather an ordeal. We were lined up in the corridor and marched to our places in the saloon. There was a pirate (with pistol) at each door, and our mistress-in-charge had to sit through the meal with a pistol pointing at her back. But we soon got used to the new routine. The pirates, fortunately, left us alone. They had a soft spot, however, for the small boys and their mechanical toys; they played with them for hours and gave them oranges which they had rifled from the hold. But they were suspicious of the older boys, and guarded them closely.

In a few days the *Tungchow* was entering Bias Bay, a well-known pirate lair. The ship had been disguised as a Japanese maru (ship) so that it would not arouse suspicion. Instead of sailing north when we reached the sea, we had turned south towards Hong Kong. The pirates had apparently made a mistake. The *Tungchow* wasn't the ship they were after—in fact, they were rather annoyed when they found the ship carried only oranges, children and unsigned bank notes, which were, of course, no use to them. Their one thought was to make a good get-away. This was the moment we feared. Would they shoot us as a parting gesture? Would they take some of us for hostages? We locked ourselves up in a cabin, pulled down the shutters, and hoped for the best.

First of all the pirates commandeered a junk (fishing boat) by firing at it as we sailed past. Our anchor was dropped and the junk came alongside. They had all got into it, except two, when suddenly a plane flew over. This threw them into a panic. The pirates in the boat pulled away and sailed off, leaving the two behind. These two started shouting and shooting wildly. A lifeboat was lowered, and some Chinese passengers and the Wireless Operator were bundled in as hostages, and this time they got away.

We were mad with joy and relief, and bursting out of our cabins, boys, girls and teachers rushed on deck. We saw the lifeboat reach the beach and the two pirates run over the hill, leaving the hostages behind. We were free!

Incidentally the plane that had flown over had been searching for us, in conjunction with the British Navy, which was combing the China Seas. When the pilot discovered that it was the *Tungchow* below, he radioed the news, and soon some British destroyers were escorting us to Hong Kong. After that we had a marvellous time. The people of Hong Kong treated us to parties and outings during the two days we were there, and then we went back to Shanghai to spend another two days at home before sailing again to school.

Fw. H. Heal, V/38/D Div. H.Q.

Corrections

We regret, that owing to a printer's error, some of the copies of January-February issue delivered to Areas gave the name of our C.W.F.O. as Miss Cuthbert. It is, of course, Mrs. Cuthbert.

With reference to the article "Toy Triumphs" in our last issue, it is pointed out that it was III/9/Div. D which made 1,000 toys and not Div. B.



"OUR OTHER LIVES" No. XXIX

MRS. M. McILQUHAM,

R.W.F.O., No. 1 (Northern) Region

The story of the "other life," especially if that life has colour and movement, if the eyes have seen far and wide and the mind has been thereby well stored and broadened, is a very important part of the ideal conception of a Senior Woman Officer in the Fire Service.

When in February, 1942, Mrs. McIlquham was appointed to be Regional Woman Fire Officer for the No. 1 (Northern) Region, she had a Fire Service record of service, enthusiasm and initiative going back to the outbreak of war. She had since that time been a part-time member of the Fire Service. In a community deprived by war of its men, she and a number of other women undertook the responsibility for the fire protection of that community with its scattered risks. She organised and led what may well be found to be the first Women's Fire Brigade that grew from the need for women to play the part of men. The fame of Bamburgh's Women's Pump Team became known far beyond the confines of its own district, and on nationalisation their manual pump was exchanged for a light trailer pump.

That brief reference to Mrs. McIlquham's pre-N.F.S. career enables an impression to be gained of her as a firewoman and as a leader of firewomen.

A native of Bamburgh, Mrs. McIlquham was born actually within the historic walls of Bamburgh Castle. Between the day of her birth in that small village on the North-East coast of Northumberland and the day when the firewomen, under her direction, were called upon to defend it from the dangers of fire, Mrs. McIlquham had roamed far and wide in space and experience and had achieved ambitions that well up in the hearts of many but remain unfulfilled. Early in her life she displayed a singular aptitude for tennis, and as a tennis player her exploits have been known to many. Playing at times with her brother, who after the Dunkirk evacuation was reported "missing," she collected many County Championships. From these successes she went to Wimbledon and there achieved the height of the ambitions of the world's tennis players and tennis lovers. Not only did she achieve conspicuous success amongst the world's greatest players, but she penetrated to the "holy of holies," the famous "Centre Court."

During the years that she was known to Wimbledon the high spots of her sporting career were the occasions upon which she fought through to the semi-finals of the Women's Open Singles and with her partner to the finals of the Women's Open Doubles. In the finals of the latter she faced the incomparable Suzanne Lenglen and Miss Ryan and it is notable that these finals were reached after a memorable triumph in the semi-finals over the world-famous Helen Wills and her partner. In the Women's Open Singles she was defeated by the redoubtable Helen Jacobs.

Having established her reputation amongst the great players, Mrs. McIlquham was chosen to represent Great Britain and played for her country in such far distant parts of the world as Bermuda, Holland, the West Indies, Belgium, America, France, Hungary and South Africa, where she remained for nearly a year.

After giving up representative and competitive tennis, Mrs. McIlquham returned to her native Bamburgh and in partnership with a friend became a woman of business, embarking upon the running of a Tea Garden.

With the outbreak of war, the call of duty and the open air directed Mrs. McIlquham into agriculture. For six months she worked on the land handling a tractor. Then, becoming a forewoman "lumberjack," under the Timber Control Board, she was employed as a forewoman in charge of a mixed gang responsible for tree felling operations.

This, then, is the picture of the woman who in February, 1942, was appointed as a Regional Woman Fire Officer. The wisdom of choice has been amply demonstrated in the

N.F.S. Control Beatitudes

- BLESSED is she who writeth her Roll and Manning after the manner laid down, for she shall be counted among the chosen few.
- BLESSED is she who writeth her Occurrence Book entries in full, and in the past tense withal, for she is rare among Fire Service Handmaidens.
- BLESSED is she who signeth her Book upon the ceasing of her watch, and who procureth the signature of the officer in charge, both for the Watch and the Roll, for she is too good for Station Control.
- BLESSED is she who saith her piece without blush, hindrance, or error, upon the arrival of Big Bug or his Headman, for she is indeed lucky.
- BLESSED is she who handleth the tabs upon her board with assurance and dexterity, and who useth her chalk with rectitude, for she shall sit upon the right hand of the M.O.
- BLESSED is she who heedeth the laws of salutation, and speaketh even into the telephone mouth, as becometh a woman of the tribe, for she shall be created a Deputy Acting L/Fw.
- BLESSED is she who knoweth her Phonetic Alphabet even as she knoweth her onions, for she can say N for Nuts to the Col. O.
- BLESSED is she who taketh to squad drill as a duck taketh to water, for thereby she loseth her waddle and getteth not all behind.
- BLESSED is she who understandeth all these things, and is not confounded, for hers is the honour, and ours the astonishment.

L/Fw. Deas, XI (Fife).

Ten Commandments for Control Operators 32 "B" Div. H.Q.

I am the Div. Mob. Off. who brought thee out of the calm of Reigate and into the house of bondage.

1. Thou shalt not eat, drink, smoke, read, knit, sleep, dance or breathe in the Control Room—at least while the L/Fwmm. is looking.
2. Thou shalt not take the name of thy Mob. Off. in vain.
3. 48 hours shalt thou labour and do all thou hast to do—24 hours shalt thou be relieved—within the exigencies of the Service.
4. Honour thy Group Officer—for long may she rule above you.
5. Thou shalt not scandalise, "back-bite" or grouse, for remember "Life out here is only what you make it."
6. Thou shalt not take a bath between the hours of 00.01 and 23.59.
7. Thou shalt not scrimp, fitch or surreptitiously remove another firewoman's blankets, pillows or mattresses—she might find you out.
8. Thou shalt not "pass the buck," but faithfully take the blame.
9. Thou shalt not yell "Wait" when Stores says "48."
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's lunch, for long has she laboured, and long must she wait 'til supper.

If any firewoman should follow religiously the above Commandments, she is a better girl than I am—I give in . . .

J. E. F., Region XII, Area 32, "B" Div. H.Q.

With Apologies to Milton

When I consider how my time is spent
In polishing and washing-off a car
Which hardly leaves its garage; in a war
When every man and girl is pledged, and bent
To give their utmost. Weekly I present
Myself for unearned pay; and in my ear
Friends and Temptation whisper "Quit! A far
More worthwhile job awaits. You were not meant
To waste your energy and those few brains God gave
As a mere driver. Pack it up, and go
Where you are needed!" As I waver, Fate
Sends a Blitz, with bombers wave on wave,
And once again content, though tired, I know
They also serve who only stand and wait.

P. B. L. D., V Region.

Continued from page 6.

organisation, high efficiency and unrelenting attention to welfare revealed in the women's branch of the service under her direction in No. 1 (Northern) Region. In the university of life she had received a thorough grounding in all the qualities of sympathy, understanding, judgment and leadership that combine to make a successful leader of women.

Anon.

A Duty Night at Sub-Division

Each time our duty night comes round,
We leave the office with a bound,
The other clerks look up, aghast,
And think our watches must be fast.
We hasten home to have a snack,
Our supper then we carefully pack,
Which must not on "Control" be had
Because the D.O. will go mad.
With polished shoes, and haversacks,
And uniform, complete with slacks,
(Though some prefer to wear a skirt!),
We then report, to do our part
At 19.30 hours sharp.
We scan the Boards, as we are told,
And always something fresh behold
Put up there for our information,
Its meaning is a revelation.
Our separate places then we take
And for "Events" in patience wait.

The Log Book's a most wondrous scheme,
And is the Column's favourite theme.
The writing goes this way and that,
A Chinese puzzle, so compact!
The entries are intriguing, and
Abbreviations are quite grand;
For here you read of "Insuff. crew,"
Of "Lg." and "Lgt." and "Sp. apps."
too.
The Section Leader's very kind
But sometimes things escape his mind,
He well intends to sign the book
But when the G.O. comes to look,
His name to find in vain she tries,
The Leading Firewoman sighs.
The whole book is a work of art
And dear to everybody's heart.

Fire Service "If"

(With apologies to the late Rudyard Kipling.)

By 880743 and 880153, Region XII, Area 32, A.3.Z.

If you can eat our canteen buns,
And still retain your teeth,
If you can subscribe each week
To wedding gift or wreath.

If you can talk with Officers,
And not lose the "Fireman touch,"
And get "Red" with the rest of 'em,
Not too little, not too much.

If you can keep your temper,
And be polite to all,
And never get all "het up"
When taking a "fire call."

If you can take a message,
And make your writing plain,
And not mind one little bit,
When your soap goes down the drain.

The Switchboard is a source of joy,
A truly fascinating toy;
But when six calls come all at once,
You sort of feel a kind of dune.
Division asks, with courtesy,
To have availability,
And Stations Z and Y and X
(It is enough a saint to vex),
Report "1 Large is on the Run"—
You visualise a race begun
And wonder who will come in first,
Or if the red-hot tyres will burst.
Then Firewoman So-and-So,
With injured tone, demands to know
The reason "why she was kept waiting,
It was extremely aggravating."
A Fire call completes the six,
To chimney, house or barley ricks.
You'll find the switchboard is great fun
If you should be the favoured one.

When all is still we make the tea,
The Leading Fireman's on, you see.
He always likes to have a cup,
It somehow seems to cheer him up;
His pals are round at "17"
And all the Station is serene.
0001 we go to bed
To wait for "Air Raid Warning Red."
Bells down at 0645,
"Control" at once becomes a hive;
With brushes, dusters, mop and broom
We soon transform the tiny room.
We book the pumps off, one by one—
This time we're told they're "Off the run."
Then having booked ourselves off too,
We take our goods, and say "Adieu."
(Founded on fact!)

FF. 16.

If you can smile when, late at night,
D.H.Q. come through,
With "Send 1 Pump to A.I.Z."
And an "F.U. to A.2."

If you can do the squad drill
Out in the wind and rain,
And all your lovely curls come out,
But you never once complain.

If you can listen with delight
To a Fireman's "Corny" jokes,
And not blush when—"Have a go!"
Is yelled by all the "blokes."

If you can do all this—and grin,
And really "take it on the chin,"
Then lady, "you're no Firewoman,
YOU'RE A BLINKING MARVEL."

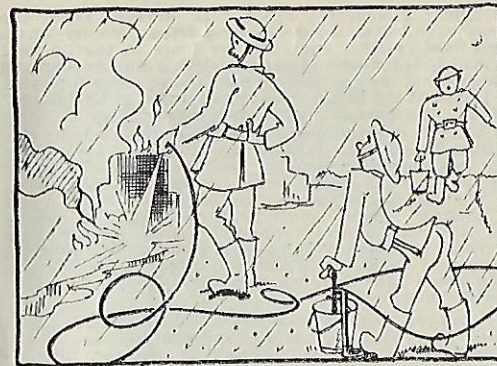
Firemen Artists for Oxford

The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, is to be the setting of a special Exhibition by Firemen Artists from June 15th to 30th inclusive. This exhibition is intended to show the University city what a severe air raid could do to it. Paintings of bombed or burning historical buildings will therefore be a noticeable feature of the show.

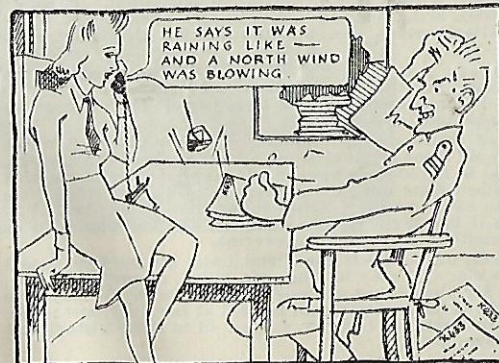
Unfortunately, the gallery at the Ashmolean is not a large one. It has space for about 80 pictures only, but as a result an even higher standard of work than usual will obtain, all paintings, of course, being of a fire service nature.

Oil paintings, watercolours and drawings will be received at the Firemen Artists Headquarters, N.F.S. Station, Southwark Bridge Road, London, S.E.1, on May 17th, 18th and 19th. As there are a number of regulations regarding framing, etc., all would-be exhibitors are advised to write at once to the Hon. Secretary, Firemen Artists, at the foregoing address, for full particulars.

In the meantime, friends of Fm. Ben Betts will join in congratulating this popular caricaturist and his wife Denise (both well known to many Fire Forces through last year's touring Exhibition), on the acquisition of a baby son, Antony.



A 5 min. job.



A 5 hrs. job.

E. M.

1X/B/D.H.Q.

J. J. N.

Increasing Your Sweet Ration

Here is a simple recipe for making chocolate truffles. The ingredients required are three tablespoonfuls of dried milk; two of sugar; and one of cocoa powder (better still, chocolate powder if you are lucky enough to get it).

Mix these ingredients thoroughly, dry, so that they are perfectly even. A fork will be found better than a spoon for this purpose.

Then add, almost drop by drop, boiling water. The smallest quantity should be added each time, and thoroughly worked in so as to form a *very* firm paste (still using the fork). When this is a nice even dark brown and so stiff you can hardly move it round in the basin, put some dry cocoa or chocolate powder in the palms of your hands, take a small lump of the mixture out of the basin and roll in your palms to a ball. Then set on a piece of grease-proof paper to dry off. The truffles should be perfect in a few hours.

To make a large amount, just increase the ingredients in the same proportions.

M. P.

(N.B.—The Editor will be pleased to receive other simple recipes for home-made sweets.)

Donors of
H.Q. Staff,
Worcester.



"We Serve" No. 12. THE GIFT

By Anon, P/T, Region V.

When I agreed to be a Blood Donor I confess I was a little nervous about the "operation." The preliminary test some weeks earlier—a drop from my ear—was a mere nothing, but when I was eventually called and took my place in the queue I wondered what would happen. I had heard stories of people fainting but, encouraged by the presence of another part-timer, I hid my qualms and even conjured up a pitying smile for a white-faced youth who jibbed at the last moment and refused to be "done," despite the cajolings of his companion. His fears, like mine, were groundless.

Soon P. and I had our tunics off, our left sleeves rolled up, and were lying side by side on high flat beds. A bandage was wound rather tightly above my elbow, and I was given something to clasp. Then my arm was sponged with spirit, and the famous Dr. Janet Vaughan approached and punctured it—just the merest prick. A Red Cross nurse then held the transmitting tube in place, chatting brightly while about three-quarters of a pint of blood passed from me into an adjacent bottle—which I could not see! A dab of cotton wool was placed on the spot, then came a brief rest on another bed followed by a good hot cup of tea and the injunction not to overwork the arm that day and to drink plenty of tea or water during the next 24 hours. And that was all! As far as I was concerned, no stiffness even. A few hours later there was scarcely a sign to show that I now deserved the honourable title of Blood Donor.

A simple thing for anyone to do. And practically anyone can do it! As long as one is fit enough to spare the amount of blood—which is made up to one in 24 hours by the extra liquid imbibed—that blood can be of service. No infections of one's own illnesses are passed to the ultimate recipient, so there is really no excuse for anyone to withhold this gift from those who need it.

In Godfrey Talbot's broadcast talk a few weeks ago he mentioned that "10 per cent. of all men who are wounded need blood transfusion." Nowadays it is given on the battlefield, immediately behind the lines, and in ambulances en route to casualty stations and base hospitals. Not a day goes by without blood transfusion being used. To quote again: "I have watched transfusion being done in forward areas—and as the blood dripped down the tube into the patient's veins, you could actually see life and strength coming back to the man."

From Dr. Vaughan I learned that "several thousands of bottles were used in the North African Campaign; that plasma was taken on by the assault parties in Sicily and Italy, and it is reckoned that blood transfusion has saved more lives in the present war than anything else, except the sulphanilamide drugs."

Science has found the means of transforming liquid blood into "plasma" which remains "good" indefinitely. Liquid blood retains its properties for about three weeks, and a large proportion of that held in liquid state goes to our hospitals, saving the sick and under-nourished and the maimed from our blitzed areas. "On an average," we are told, "it takes nine donors to save one life." How many lives could the N.F.S. save if every man and woman in it became a regular donor? The call comes to us approximately once in every six months. It is worth answering.

I am now expecting my third call, but as I left the Blood Bank for the first time I had a thought which remains with me. "I may be run over, killed, on my way home. But part of me will still be alive. My blood—just given—will go forward. It may save the life of a mother, or young child; a fellow firewoman injured at her duty post; or a man I have never seen, wounded in a strange country, torpedoed in some distant sea. Surely, that is the best gift I have ever given."

(Editor's Note.—The foregoing article was crowded out of our last issue. Now by a strange coincidence, photographs are to hand of Blood Donors in IX/23/H.Q. (Worcester). Also the news that within 24 hours of personnel giving their blood it was transported to a town which had that night suffered a heavy air raid.)

"Homes for Heroes," 194—?

Does this interest you? Yes!!! The firewomen of Buxton at the inauguration of "Discussion Groups" were also greatly concerned.

What did they want? Modern homes with gardens, built in quiet lanes away from busy thoroughfares; large airy rooms, wide windows to catch sun and light; built-in cupboards. Homes to be designed by the women who are going to live in them.

Do you want this? Or have you other views? If you have, why don't you air them on your station by starting a discussion group?

Our women are going to discuss further at these groups, not only the homes they wish, but also the education and well-being of the people who will live in them. The enthusiasm shown is great indeed; they have asked for more discussions and we shall jolly well see that they get 'em.

So is public opinion made. Do you want to share in the making of public opinion? We know you do. Then start your discussion group without delay. For it is from such discussions that the needs of the many will be known to the few who will be entrusted with the rebuilding of post-war Britain.

Fw, Almond, III/7/B.3.Z.

Progress

(With apologies to the Battery Sergeant Major) by
L. Fw. Anne Strachan, XI/E/A Sub-Div. 1



When I became a firewoman in 1941, All nature seemed to tell me How low a rank was mine. The Officers, Olympians Were miles beyond my ken, The Leading Firemen and S.Ls. Were more than mortal men. They drilled me and dragoned me And drove me when I failed, As for the Company Officer, The Station Company Officer, Before the Company Officer I bowed my head and quailed.

And then in 1943 I rose to Leading Firewoman. And somehow life was brighter, Held something more than fear. Officers overwhelmed me I'm willing to confess, And here and there an S.L. Appalled me rather less. The A.G.O.s and Groups Referred to me as "blitz," But still the Company Officer, The Station Company Officer, Alas! The Company Officer Could scare me into fits.

But since I've been promoted Life's worn her rosiest hue, Amazing what a difference Comes with a stripe or two! Two G.O.s pinch my pen nibs, The Column called me "Peg," Even the gilded Area Officer Is civil when we meet. The D/Rs. and the firewomen Stir at my slightest breath. As for the Company Officer, The Station Company Officer, Well, yes, the Company Officer Still frightens me to death.

A member of IX 23/H.Q. Staff giving blood—
and very happy to do so!

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

Marriages

- 23rd December, 1943.—Fw. O. M. Baker, IV/Reg. H.Q., to Mr. D. L. Bainbridge.
 26th December, 1943.—Fw. Hacche, VIII/21, to Mr. F. J. Kiley.
 10th January, 1944.—Fw. N. Peace, VI/16/C.4 Sub-Div., to Cpl. L. D. Logan, R.E.
 15th January, 1944.—G.O. Foulkes, X/29/H.Q., to Petty Offr. N. Kenyon, Fleet Air Arm.
 15th January, 1944.—L/Fw. J. Scorgie, XI/S.E.3/C Div. H.Q., to F/O J. L. Asserud, R.C.A.F.
 22nd January, 1944.—Sen. L/Fw. F. Howe, IX/23/Area T.S., to L/Fn. Cartwright, IX/23/Area Workshops.
 29th January, 1944.—Fw. Molly Ayrton, X/29/H.Q., to P/O W. C. Cambus, R.A.F.
 7th February, 1944.—Fw. Sheila Matthes, V Reg. H.Q., to Fw. J. McBain, R.T.F.
 7th February, 1944.—Fw. M. Morse, VIII/21/A Div. Control, to A.B. Holland, R.N.
 16th February, 1944.—A.G.O. McNab, XI/E Area T.S., to Stoker 1st Class R. Y. Robertson, R.N.
 17th February, 1944.—Fw. McNicol, XI/S.E.3/F.F.H.Q., to Lieut. Falls, M.N.
 24th February, 1944.—Fw. Corfield, IX/23/H.Q., to L.A/C G. Parkes, R.A.F.
 24th February, 1944.—Fw. B. Lowe, XI/E/A Sub-Div. 1, to Gunner T. Buchan, R.A.
 24th February, 1944.—Fw. M. Mill, XI/S.E.3/F.F.H.Q., to P/O Jeffs, R.A.F.
 28th February, 1944.—Fw. (Driver) M. Phin, XI/E/F.F.H.Q., to Fw. E. Falconer, XI/E/Area Transport.
 4th March, 1944.—Fw. B. W. Stevens, VI/16/D Div. H.Q., to Lieut. Gene Alexander, U.S. Army.
 7th March, 1944.—Fw. A. Birkinshaw, X/29/F.F.H.Q., to P/O J. J. Lynch, R.A.A.F.
 10th March, 1944.—Fw. A. Ross, XI/E/B Sub-Div. 1, to Sgt. A. Tulloch, R.A.C.
 11th March, 1944.—Fw. G. Richards, VIII/21, to Cpl. A. Gates (of Burton).
 11th March, 1944.—P/T Fw. Scaife, X/43/A.1.W., to Pte. W. Sloane, Airborne.
 11th March, 1944.—Fw. Barnett, XI/23/Area Stores, to Sgt. W. Tomlinson, R.A.F.
 15th March, 1944.—Fw. B. Cairns, XI/E Sub-Div. 1, to Pte. W. Edge, R.C.A.

Engagements

- Fw. D. O. Vaughan, to Col. O. A. Le Sueur, both of VII/Reg. H.Q.
 Fw. P. Bines, VIII/21/A Advanced Control, to P/T S.L. Woolley, VIII/21/A.2.Z.
 A.O. Thorne, IX/23/H.Q., to P/T Div. Offr. Kohn, IX/Reg H.Q.
 Fw. Curral, IX/23/Area Stores, to Col. O. Downie, IX/23/H.Q.
 Fw. D. Hewlett, IX/23/B Div., to Mr. D. Hadley.
 L/Fw. Tyrell, X/43/A.1.Z. Control, to Sgt. W. Butler, Canadian Army.
 Fw. Holliday, X/43/A.1.Z. to Fw. Flood, X/43/A.1.X.
 Fw. Anne Robertson, XI/E/F.F.H.Q., to P/T D/R W. H. Davidson, XI/E/A.3.Z.
 Fw. Macdonald, XI/E/Sub-Div. 3, to P/O J. Lancaster, Fleet Air Arm.
 A.G.O. McCreadie, XI/W.2, to C. H. Hislop, R.A.F.
 Fw. C. Cunningham, to Coy. O. J. Miller, both of XI/W.2 F.F.H.Q.
 Fw. C. Dewar, XI/W.2/A Div., to P. McLaren, R.A.F.
 Fw. Johnston, XI/W.2/A.1, to J. Lewis, R.A.F.
 L/Fw. Whitelaw, XI/W.2/A.4, to G. McLaughlin, R.A.F.
 Fw. A. Craig, XI/W.2/A.4.Z, to M. Guthrie, R.A.F.
 Fw. M. McFarlane, XI/W.2/C Div., to L.A/C M. Nevison, R.A.F.
 Fw. M. Gilbertson, to Fw. Lennox, both of XI/W.2/C.2.
 Fw. E. Mullin, XI/W.2/C.2, to Mr. Hugh McChesney.
 P/T Fw. M. Johnson, XI/W.2/C.3.Y, to L.A/C M. McNaughton, R.A.F.
 P/T Fw. A. Templeton, XI/W.2/C.3.Y, to Signm. A. Edgar, R.C. of S.
 Fw. E. Black, Belfast C Div. H.Q., to L/Fn. McDavid, C.1.Z.
 L/Fw. McHugh, Belfast C Div. H.Q., to Fw. T. Brown, C.1.Y.
 Fw. M. Stevenson, Belfast C Div. H.Q., to Marine B. L. Holmes, R.Mi.

Births

- 8th November, 1943.—To Mrs. Brown (ex-Fw., IV/11/A.2.X), a daughter.
 8th November, 1943.—To Mrs. Emberson (ex-Fw., IV/11/A Div.), a son.
 7th February, 1944.—To Mrs. Blackie (ex-Fw., XI/W.2/F.F.), a daughter—Wilma Ann.
 8th February, 1944.—To Mrs. Coleman (ex-Fw. Jones, XI/23/A.2.Z), a son—Roger.
 20th February, 1944.—To Mrs. Benyon (ex-L/Fw., VIII/21/Establishments), a daughter—Judith Victoria.
 25th February, 1944.—To Coy. O. Barnes (IX/23/B Div.) and Mrs. Barnes (P/T L/Fw., IX/23/B Div.), a daughter—Ann Elizabeth.
 28th February, 1944.—To Coy. O. D. G. Gordon (VI/16/C Div. H.Q.) and Mrs. Gordon (ex-L/Fw., VI/16/C Div. H.Q.), a son—Ian Richard.
 2nd March, 1944.—To Mrs. Hazel (ex-Fw., XI/W.2/Area T.S.), a son—John Edward.
 3rd March, 1944.—To Mrs. A. Harrison and Staff Offr. Harrison (IV/Reg. H.Q.), a son—Philip Winston.
 16th March, 1944.—To Mrs. A. Blackwood (ex-P/T L/Fw., XI/W.2/C.3.Z), a son—William Ross.
 —To Mrs. Leadbetter (ex-A.G.O., IV/11/A. Div. H.Q.), a son.
 —To Mrs. Shuttleworth (ex-Fw., IV/11/Sub-Div.), a daughter.