

N.F.S. FIREWOMEN'S MAGAZINE

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Christmas, 1943

The Editor has particular pleasure in printing below two CHRISTMAS MESSAGES. The first is from the Chief of the Fire Staff, and the second from an Officer who wishes to remain anonymous :—

“ ‘The Firewomen's Magazine’ with this issue completes its fourth year of usefulness in bringing entertainment and interest to its readers, and I would like to congratulate Miss Pitcairn and all who write for it, on its success.

To all firewomen—and that word covers equally all women who are entitled to wear the N.F.S. uniform—I send this message :—

We are on the last lap of a great fight, and as everyone knows, a last lap is the hardest lap. Stick it out! Good fire fighters—and you are, of course, fire fighters—are always good “stickers.” Defeat suggestions of boredom—in some ways harder to endure than bomb-dom. And look to the welfare of those around you, for welfare is a vital part of warfare.

The Service is proud of its Women's branch which continues to progress, to demonstrate efficiency, to improve its status. It has had and still is having no soft comfortable time.

I wish you all a happy Christmas ; may it be the last war Christmas that the world will know. The topmost peaks of experience are already glistening with the sun of Peace which is majestically and inevitably rising behind them, and soon its triumphant, beneficent rays will flood the world with its light.”

A. N. G. Firebrace.

“On Christmas Day was born Him who showed us, if we interpret his teaching rightly, how to find the way to pure spirituality and so to perfect happiness.

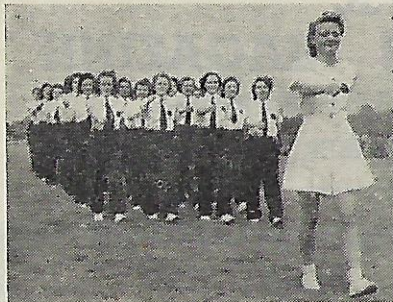
Christmas Day should be a day of giving, not only a giving of material things but also the giving of kindness, sympathy, understanding and cheerfulness to those about us. This day should be a feast of the ideas of the Spirit—and not just of the things of the table.

The gray monk in Whittier's poem, ‘The Mystic's Christmas,’ said :—

‘But judge not him who every morn
Feels in his heart the Lord Christ born.’

So let us every day, and not just on Christmas Day, express the Christ Spirit in the measure that we have it, to all those around us, and if that were done I need not wish you a happy Christmas and New Year, for they would be yours already.”

A member of the N. F. S.



EDITORIAL AND NEWS

A Happy Christmas to all Magazine Representatives, Contributors and Readers. And thanks, too, for messages of appreciation received throughout the year.

Good News! The Paper Control has granted a small additional supply for circulation purposes, so Fire Forces can increase their orders. But the four extra pages planned for our Anniversary issue were not allowed, so several items are held over.

My picture shows the picked Physical Training Team of Fire Forces 1 and 2. They look so jolly that I have chosen them to bear my good wishes for the New Year to you all. Let us hope that they are marching forward "with smiling morning faces" to that lasting Peace which is the heart's desire of the whole World.

The Editor.

1/Northern Region.—Since the last issue Miss Macdonald, from Region III has taken up her appointment as Area Officer in F.F.2 and we wish her every happiness and success in her new post.

On 2nd October, firewomen attached to Regional H.Q. held a "Bring and Buy" Sale to obtain funds for equipping their new billet, and they found this a very lucrative method of raising money. Expenses were practically nil and the amount raised was over £46, which everyone felt was well worth the effort involved in organising it. Firewomen F.F.2 are holding a similar sale this month and it is hoped that it will have the same success.

A Concert was given by the F.F.1 "E" Div. Concert Party at the beginning of November in aid of the No. 1 F.F. Firewomen's Fitness Training Fund which has been started to cover expenses involved when arranging inter-divisional matches for netball, etc. The Party, which included a number of part-timers, gave a very good performance and their efforts helped to swell the Fund by quite a considerable amount.

B. G. C.

III/7/H.Q. have had some interesting lectures recently, given by members of the Allied Forces, who have drawn vivid pictures of their life in occupied country and exciting experiences of their escape. We have also been fortunate enough to listen to the experiences of a young repatriated prisoner of war, and a Polish nurse. At the end of the lectures the speakers have been kind enough to answer questions, creating a "discussion group" atmosphere.

We are looking forward to yet another of these interesting lectures and hope there will be many more to come.

III/8.—This F.F. has just received from the Nottinghamshire Services Comforts Fund a quantity of games, including dart boards, playing cards, draughts, etc., for the benefit of firewomen in the Area. Sincerest appreciation of this generous gesture is expressed throughout the Area: this timely gift will be utilised to the full.

W. S. V.

III/10. Speakers from the Ministry of Information, including Professor Jessop and Major Ney, have visited the Area, and a further series of talks and lectures, which are followed by discussion, have been arranged for the winter months.

M. S.

IV/11C.—Two very enjoyable games of netball have been played in the current season by "C" Div. against "A" Div. and "D" Div., both resulting in a win for "C" Div. A good fixture list has been made for this season and we are all out to win the Netball trophy.

Divisional Officer.

IV/12 Area Training School and Reinforcement Base, Welwyn Garden City.—The opening ceremony of the above establishment was performed by the Deputy Regional Commissioner for Fire, Major General Fuller, on 23rd September, 1943.

This Base, which was constructed by personnel of the Area, is ideally situated to receive reinforcements from the North and South, and comprises 15 large huts. Full facilities are provided for the accommodation and training of both men and women.

A conducted tour of the premises was followed by a parade of appliances and series of displays which included a demonstration by the Area Despatch Riders, hook ladder drill, fighting of oil fires, use of Breathing Apparatus, repair of steel piping, etc., the firewomen's performance in both the Physical Training and Squad Drill being especially commendable. Following "dive-bombing" from an aeroplane, a realistic and instructive display was given by the Fire Guards in conjunction with the N.F.S.

Those present on the above occasion included the C.R.F.O. and R.W.F.O. of No. 4 Region, also the F.F.C. and A.O. of F.F.12.

S. J.

V/Regional H.Q.—On 10th November, H.R.H. the Regent of Iraq visited us and witnessed a display by units from the London Areas. He was received by the C.F.S., Commander Firebrace, Sir Ernest Gowers, Mr. Simpson, and C.R.F.O. Delve.

At the First Aid Competition held here on 6th November, 34 Area carried off both the cups, namely, the Taylor Cup for women and the Maxwell Cup for men. Each competitor received an illuminated address.

M. G.

V/34. London Women Officers' Training School.—October 25th marked a special occasion at the Training School, when at the end of the 9th course the new N.F.S. standard was raised, the C.R.F.O. Mr. Delve, being present at the ceremony. The fact that the mast had been made and erected by men of the River Service gave added interest.

The 10th course had the pleasure of a visit from Mrs. Stonham of Brighton College and those firewomen who had worked with her during the Blitz were pleased at the opportunity of seeing her again.

On November 9th, Leading Firewomen and A.G.O.s spent a very pleasant afternoon on the occasion of the reunion of the 5th course. It was interesting to meet ones fellow students again and hear news of each other. Mrs. Miller, Mr. Delve and Mr. Simpson were among the guests. After tea the F.F.34 String Quartet gave a short concert of light music; they are always welcome and have recently been giving Lecture Concerts during each course.

During the recess the staff had the opportunity of visiting the River Thames Formation, going through the control and ending with a trip up the Thames as far as Chaney House, altogether a most enjoyable outing.

J. H. L.

V/34, A, B and C Divs.—Most of the Divisions are getting Christmas minded and preparing a happy time for those who are on duty over the holidays. B Div. H.Q. are making toys for the children's party so that each child will have a present off the tree. Congratulations to A Division for heading the list of National Savings for the month of October; B came a good second.

The F.F.34 Netball Team have added to their score of wins by beating the A.T.S. and Eberites in a League Match. Quite a number of dances have been held in the Divisions, some unfortunately interrupted by the siren just as they were getting into full swing.

Firewomen at C.4.Z, under the inspiring leadership of Fw. Websdale, were successful in winning the much coveted Regional Cup for First Aid at Regional H.Q. on 6th Nov., 1943. Their total marks were 251 out of 300. They deserved to win as they put in a great deal of intensive training under their very capable instructor Fm. Shepherd. The cup was brought back to the station in triumph, to be duly christened (it was a large cup and held quite a lot!), at an impromptu party given that evening in honour of the victorious team. A.O. Mrs. Miller and A.F.F.C. Mr. Tobias came along. 34 Area felt pleased with itself, as the men's First Aid team from B.4.Z won the Regional cup for the men on the same day, so a double victory was celebrated.

L/Fw. Lowenthal.

V/35 C Div. held a very successful Halloween Party. Among the guests were members of our gallant 8th Army, convalescing at a neighbouring hospital. Despite the disadvantages of their injuries they succeeded in winning a number of games and competitions. A good time was had by all and we were glad of the opportunity of thus expressing some of our gratitude to these "boys."

Our P-T Fw. are increasing in number. D. Div. has started a Sunday Fitness training class, and plans for one evening a week as well.

E. F.

V/37/B "Flashes."—Considerable improvement in savings. B.1.X recently had a "Special Effort Week" getting £220 from personnel. FLASH: Girls in the Docks—For the first time since the "Blitz" girls are manning B.2.W Island Yard, centre of Dockland. Also on the Island they now hold a weekly dance at the Community Centre for Prisoners of War, Red Cross, etc., and one was held for Repatriated Prisoners of War with excellent results. FLASH: Christmas spirits are soaring—B.2 held a party for Sheila, their little adopted girl. Lots of fun was had by all and Sheila went home with Music Case and Handbag made by the "boys."

That's all for now folks and a HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL.

E. M.

V/37/C.—On 12th Nov. our P-T Fw. held a very successful dance which raised £20 for the N.F.S. Benevolent Fund. This first social effort of volunteer and directed personnel provided a grand opportunity for them to meet each other, their full-time comrades and many full-time and part-time Officers, including Miss Davis, A.O. C. Div. Dance Band, directed by Nat Derfield, added to the enjoyment of all.

L/Fw. Burton.

VI/14.—The first A.G.Os. Course to be held in the Region was run at F.F.14 Training School, The Glen, Salisbury Green, under the very able direction of A.O. Bury as Director of Studies and G.O. Capon (F.F.15) as O/I/O. It was an extremely helpful course, most of the lectures being given by visiting Officers from all three Fire Forces, and we had a splendid opportunity of hearing Miss Curtis, Superintendent of the W.R.N.S., Portsmouth, and Chief Commander Horrocks, A.T.S., who gave us a very good idea of life in the W.R.N.S. and A.T.S.

One particular item of interest was the Brains Trust, consisting of members of the Regional Staff. This, besides being very amusing, proved to be most constructive. On the last evening, a Social and Dance was held, including an hour's entertainment by the A.G.O.s, which, it was very obvious by the applause from the audience, was much appreciated.

On concluding we were very reluctant to leave the School and the acquaintances we had made, even though we had been in some trepidation at the commencement of the Course.

M. W.

VI/15 F.F.H.Q.—Congratulations are going in this Area to Bolton of the Area Training School, and to Oppenheimer of F.F.H.Q., on being the first firewomen in F.F.15 to obtain the rank of Senior Leading Firewoman.

IX/40.—The great event for October was the formal opening of the new Area Women's Training School at "Greenhills," about four miles from Wolverhampton. The weather was kind and the autumn colouring of the trees and flowers enhanced the very picturesque garden.

Amongst the guests were the Countess of Dudley, wife of the Regional Commissioner, who kindly declared the School open; Mrs. Cuthbert, O.B.E., who talked to us all on progress in the Fire Service; and Mrs. Stonham, M.B.E., who was welcomed for a second time as she had visited us in the days before classes commenced. In addition to senior officers from F.F.40, we were delighted to see Major Dennison, the Deputy Regional Commissioner; the C.R.F.O., Captain Westbrook, C.B.E.; and R.W.F.O., Mrs. Marshall; also F.F. Commanders and A. Officers and Officers in charge of Training Schools from other Areas in the Region.

After an inspection of the School (thoroughly approved of by all) a display of Fitness Training was given by twenty-one of the students who were attending on a basic course—and as they had learnt all the various evolutions during the course of their morning "daily dozen," their leader is to be heartily congratulated. The new coupon-free costume devised for Area 40 must have inspired them! We hope to illustrate this in the next issue: in the meantime, here is a picture of the firewomen of F.F.40 Control.

F. D.



X/29.—On the 30th October, a Drill Competition Display and Concert was held at St. Joseph's Buildings, Manchester, and firewomen from No. 10 Region took part. A very interesting afternoon resulted, the drills being of a high standard of efficiency.

An extra effort is being made by personnel in 29 Area with regard to Toy Making for the Children's Day Nurseries and an Exhibition is to be held at F.F.H.Q. on 2nd December. A Regional Exhibition to follow later in December.

Production work is also being carried out throughout the Area and results are most satisfactory.

Training of personnel in the new Mobilising in relation to the Fire Guard Plan has been much to the fore during the past month, officers and firewomen alike taking the same course.

Firewomen were prominent in parades on Mayors' Sunday and they are to be congratulated on their smart appearance.

Firewomen who have returned from reinforcement duties with the Mobile Unit have now settled down again and send Best Wishes to their friends in F.F.31. They have hopes of an exercise "Columbine" (with apologies to a certain Column Officer of F.F.38—whom we hope may notice this!).

Most Divisions are taking a renewed interest in netball, and inter-divisional matches are anticipated.

The training of part-time firewomen is well under way, and week-end courses are found to be most beneficial. Congratulations are extended to (Area) Group Officer Johnson on her promotion to Assistant Area Officer (P/T). She has been a voluntary member of the Fire Service since February, 1939. Congratulations are also extended to L/Fw McCormack on her promotion to A.G.O. (P/T) as Area Training Officer (P/T). M. J.

X/43 H.Q.—The beautiful hills surrounding us have already had a coat of snow. However, the optimism is apparent, several members of the Staff having surveyed the fells to determine the best "take-off" for a ski-ing exhibition, the only snag being lack of necessary equipment. On the opening of our Area Training School on 27th Sept., we were visited by the R.W.F.O., who expressed appreciation at the start of yet another Training School.

X/43 A.—Keen interest has been taken by all Control Room Staffs in the Area Mobilising Competition, and results are anxiously awaited.

Dancing continues to be a favourite recreation, and the regular Friday evening dances in the canteen well patronised. Social activities at Div. H.Q. include plans for the Xmas Party on 22nd Dec. A very amusing Beetle Drive was held on 15th Nov., some of the efforts looking almost like Walt Disney characters.

Sub-Div. 1, intending to make good use of Stand-by Periods, have purchased a sewing machine, so the order for the day will soon be: "Fall in for Sewing Class."

X/43 B.—Toymaking is in full swing, and we hope to have a record number of toys completed for distribution at Christmas.

Steeley.

XI/N Area.—During the season our Women's Relay Team did exceptionally well. They participated in 4 large Inter-Services Sports Meetings, each time taking first place in the Relay Race. They had several teams of W.A.A.F.s., W.R.N.S.s., and A.T.S. competing against them each time. The N.F.S. team consisted of: A.G.O. MacLean, Fw. Reid Wemyss and MacRae.

I. F. S.

XI/W.2.—Four months of the Area Training School have amply justified expectations, and both whole-time and part-time personnel have benefitted very considerably from general instruction, Fitness Training and a sense of *esprit de corps*. On his second visit to Scotland, Commander Firebrace, C.F.S., paid the school the compliment of a visit, a high privilege for the students, staff and officers.

Badminton and social evenings throughout the Area help to give relief to the duties of the day and keep the personnel in happy mood.

Group Officer Edridge, Divisional Clerk of "B" Division has left us to take up her duties as Area Officer in Eastern Area No. 4.

A.C. M. S.

XII/31/A. B.E.M. Award.—At a recent investiture at Buckingham Palace, at which she was the only N.F.S. woman, Part-time A.G.O. Sadler was decorated by His Majesty the King. This award was given for Devotion to Duty, and Exemplary Conduct, during her period of Part-time service for the London Region, from February, 1938–June, 1943. Since then she has transferred to 31/A Division, and is now in charge of 360 Part-time Firewomen all of whom are very proud of their A.G.O.s award, and every one of 31/A Division extend to her their heartiest congratulations.

E. H.

N.F.S. College Notes.—On Sept. 29th the College celebrated its 2nd birthday with a concert in the evening. The Entertainments Committee had collected a number of very good items, one of which, the "Potted Review," produced by the Advanced Training Course, gave the large and enthusiastic audience great delight, especially such numbers as the comic ballet and a topical song by six members of the Course. The Instructional Staff put on a sketch called "Tactical Tact," which was a burlesque of a tactical table demonstration of the Fire Guard plan, written by Coy.O. Wilson Dickson with D.O. Eardley as comper.

We were all very sorry to say goodbye to Mr. Paramor, our Director of Studies, who had held that position for more than two years. He is now F.F.C. of F.F.16. At the same time we extend a hearty welcome to Mr. Bennisson, from F.F.1, who has come to take his place.

Another departure was Mrs. Wade, who has become the head of the women's side of VII Regional Training School at Lee Mill. We congratulate her on her one silver stripe and wish her all success in her new venture.

G. H.

Parody Competition

Some clever entries were received for this. Competition was generally so close that an additional 2s. 6d. prize was awarded (through the kindness of a non-Service reader of this Magazine). These were won by R. V. Bates, 36/F.H.Q.; P. B. L. D., V/Reg. H.Q.; Hilda Pitcairn, V/P.T.; and M. M. Thorpe, A.G.O., IV/13/C. Sub-Div. 1, all of whose parodies will appear in our next issue.

The Judges awarded a special prize of 5s. Savings Stamp to L/Fw. Oppenheimer for a parody which they considered outstanding and which appears below :—

"Sweeten the Bitter Mock"

*Written apropos the excess of a Certain
Fruit at school, before the days of points.*

(Henry V, Act III, Sc. 1.)

Once more unto the prunes dear Friends, one more :
And make your hunger temper your dislike.
When full there's nothing so distasteful as
The thought of endless prunes with syrup black.
But hear the "blasts" that shock the tender ear
As hungry mouths perforce must swallow them.
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
Disguise grimaces with a sickly grin,
Then lend the teeth a will of iron and
Let them clamp their sadly passage through
The endless prunes, let your dentals crunch them
As fearfully as doth a galled rock
Cut up and churn the foaming ocean
Playing with tiger leaps about its feet.
Then work your teeth and pinch the nostril fast,
Hold hard the breath and bend up every spirit
To his full height. On, on, you wretched schoolgirls
Whose futures hold an endless chain of prunes;
Prunes that, like many other of their kind
Have on these plates so often been displayed.
We sheath our spoons for lack of appetite.
Dishonour not digestions, now attest
That that which is called iron is worth its name.
Copy your neighbour, if she shirks a bite,
Teach her the way a prune should meet its fate
And wrap it in your hanky, show her well
The mettle of your pasture, let her swear
That you are shirking duty, which I doubt not,
For there is none of you so weak and frail
That hath not many whiles at your dispose.
I see you tuck the cursed fruit away
In mouth, up panties, on the floor, in slips,
Straining your brain to work. The game's afoot,
Count up your stones, if "rich man's" coming, "soon,"
SAY, THERE'S ONE POINT IN FAVOUR OF A PRUNE . . .

L/Fw. Nanette Oppenheimer, VI/15/F.F.H.Q.

National Savings—London F.F. Cup

A monthly competition has been organised in F.F.34 Area among all Station Savings Groups, based upon the highest investment per head. The prize is a Silver Cup, held by the month's winner; the diploma, presented simultaneously, is retained for the station's "archives."

The first month's competition was won by V/34/E.2.V (Great West Road, Brentford), with the figure of 15s. per head, the runner-up being E.2.Y with 14s. 11d. The winning station's premises were too small for the presentation ceremony, so they were invited to E.2.Z, who entertained their prize-winning comrades to a social and dance in true sportsmanlike fashion. The presentation was made by F.F.C., F.F.34 Area, Mr. W. H. J. Benton, who was accompanied by the Mayor of Chiswick and Brentford, and Mr. Charlton, Chairman of the local Savings Committee.

For the second month the Cup was won by V/34/F.2.S (Staines) with the excellent total of 16s. 7d. per head; and October's winners were V/34/F.2.W (Sunbury), who achieved the high figure of 29s. 1d. per head.

Any F.F. interested and desiring help in organising a similar competition should write to G. W. Smitherman, Regional Organiser National Savings, London F.F.s, London Regional Fire H.Q., Albert Embankment, S.E. 1.

A Fairy Tale for Firewomen—continued from Sept.-Oct. issue

Five minutes later the Group Officer, with kindly concern in her eyes, watched two Leading Firewomen escort the typist away. Then she opened her Sick Record Book, wrote the date by Firewoman Roberts' name, added "Nervous Debility," and took a cat nap for half an hour until the bells went down announcing the commencement of the Tactical Exercise. She then drifted down into the cellar, through a gathering of firewomen, drivers and despatch riders who were standing by hopefully awaiting orders, and into the Control Room, where the D/O was prowling around. He greeted her with a dismal smile, and she divided her attention between the Control Room and cellar, extremely bored, for half an hour, while the exercise built itself up to impressive proportions, then wandered off towards the Engine House just as the turntable ladder swung out.

A few minutes later, the Fire Force Commander descended upon the Division, uprooted the D/O from the Control Room, and took him along to see how things at a supposedly ten-pump fire were progressing. When they arrived there, it could be seen that, apart from the fire, things were not progressing at all. On the contrary, one fireman was helping another to descend from the turntable ladder, and the Commander summoned the Officer-in-Charge for an explanation. The O/i/c, looking harassed, muttered that the man at the top had telephoned down to say that he couldn't carry on, because the Group Officer was hanging on to the monitor with one hand with the rest of her gently swinging in mid-air, and was leering at him. The officer added that he himself didn't think that a person like their Group Officer was even capable of such a thing as a leer; the Commander said a few sharp words, and he hurried away; while the D/O said nothing, but turned his coat collar up against the high wind and possible wrath to come.

The brunt of the raid was presumed to have fallen upon this Division, reinforcements had arrived, and were expected upon the scene at any moment. A quarter of an hour passed by, and the only arrival was the Group Officer, who emerging apparently from nowhere, was greeted pleasantly by the Commander, who considered her to be the most efficient Group Officer in the Fire Force, and remarked conversationally that the reinforcements must have got lost and that it was a cloudy night, wasn't it?

Both officers looked up at the sky, for want of anything better to do, while at a short distance away from them the pumps frantically battled with the imaginary flames.

"What," said the Commander, suddenly peering intently, "was that, coming out of a cloud?"

The D/O and the Group Officer followed his gaze, but saw nothing. Then the D/O pointed, and said, "There, sir!" and they all beheld several shapes rapidly swooping out of the clouds towards the earth.

"Enemy 'planes!" shouted the Commander, above the wind, and hurled himself to the ground, while the forms drew nearer and nearer. The D/O, however, thought that if they were 'planes one could have heard them by now, even above the wind, and stood staring. It appeared to him that the descending objects were quite unlike 'planes. They were long and narrow, widening at the end, with something rising up from the centre.

"Like broomsticks," murmured the Group Officer in his ear. "A reinforcement of witches' broomsticks for you!"

The D/O stood transfixed as the broomsticks, ten long ones, with a pump's crew astride each, led by a small one with a solitary rider, sailed down to earth. A Company Officer dismounted from the first one, saluted smartly, and announced, "Reinforcements, sir!"

"Of what?" stuttered the D/O, noticing that the Company Officer's eyes had a slightly glazed look.

The Company Officer blinked, the Group Officer made a slight gesture, he blinked again, then said, "Why, of pumps, sir!" and pointed to where, behind him, ten pumps were getting to work.

"Horrible!" groaned the D/O, and the Commander, who had decided that he

Then—And Now

A reader suggested it would be interesting to hear what had happened to some of the women who were full-time in the Fire Service when this Magazine started, but who have since resigned. So instead of the usual feature, "Our Other Lives," here are some notes on those who have now taken up other work:—(N.B.: Original W.A.F.S. Ranks are given in each case.)

Mrs. KOSTER.—Chairman of the first Magazine Committee, joined the W.A.F.S. in 1938 with the official number of 12. Became Deputy Commandant and since she resigned in 1940 has seen many of her ideas put into practice. Runs a highly successful business as a technical journalist specializing in women's interests in conjunction with her partner, Mrs. STEWART MURRAY, who joined the W.A.F.S. at the same time and also resigned in 1940. Joint authors of several popular books on knitting ("Practical Knitting Illustrated," "Knitting for All," etc.), and now collecting material for an authoritative volume on International Knitting.

Miss D. N. BLAKER was the first to appear in our series "Our Other Lives." She joined the W.A.F.S. in January, 1939, as a driver and became Group Commander B District. Left the Service in 1940 for a hush-hush job in Paris. Is now Organiser of Special Activities, Red Cross Agriculture Fund with the official title of Lady Divisional Superintendent. The famous "Victory Calf," which has brought in over £15,000 to the Fund, has been one of her varied interests.

Miss D. E. POSTER served on the original Magazine Committee as Publisher in charge of the first issues circulated to the London areas. Joined the W.A.F.S., September, 1939, as a telephonist, and was attached first to Whitechapel and later to Knightsbridge, attaining the rank of Acting Section Leader. On leaving the Service in 1940 travelled the country for a well-known manufacturing firm, but has now returned to her pre-war work in Advertising. Firewatches on the roof of Southwark Cathedral with her friend, Miss MOIR (also ex-W.A.F.S.).

Mrs. GIFFEY joined the W.A.F.S. in 1938 being officially numbered 9. Was Staff Officer to Miss Blaker, and followed her as Group Commander B District. Resigned in 1943 and now lives in her cottage on the Pilgrim's Way and acts as Salvage Officer for her locality.

Miss M. R. CROWDY joined the W.A.F.S. as a driver in 1938 and was later Staff Officer in Mrs. Giffey's office. From thence she travelled to Highgate to look after Clothing Stores. She resigned in 1943 and is now a part-time clerk at the War Office.

BARBARA BEAUCHAMP and NORA JAMES joined the W.A.F.S. as drivers in August, 1939—and such good drivers that when they resigned in 1940 to join the A.T.S. they took convoys of lorries throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain. Miss Beauchamp now holds the rank of Senior Commander, and is senior A.T.S. officer in the Public Relations Directorate at the War Office in which capacity she has lectured several times at the N.F.S. College, Brighton. Miss James was Junior Commander in the same department but has recently been invalided out. Both are novelists but while Beauchamp has not had time to write anything since "The Paragon" (which came out while she was in the Fire Service) James' books have come out yearly, her latest being "Two Selfish People."

Mrs. LEILA NICHOLL joined the W.A.F.S. in April, 1938, among the first half-dozen, and was closely connected with recruiting. She held officer's rank from the outbreak of war and it was while attached to her station at Cannon Street that Mary Pitcairn originated the Magazine. Mrs. Nicholl resigned in 1943 and became Lady Supervisor in charge of welfare for a London firm on essential Government work. Now in charge of a hostel for trainees with another essential works firm in Bedfordshire.

MARY PITCAIRN joined the W.A.F.S. in April, 1939, as a driver; when war was declared was "loaned" by Clerkenwell to Cannon Street. In November, 1939, went to Southwark as Staff Officer F District, and ran all-night canteen there throughout the Blitz. Took over Editorship of Magazine in February, 1940. Reverted to part-time N.F.S. 1941 and is Assistant Commissioner National Savings for three London Boroughs. Sunday mornings drives midwives attached to Royal Northern Hospital; is closely associated with Firemen Artists; runs a double allotment in spare time.

P.B.X.

continued from page 7.

must have been mistaken about the 'planes, and had risen in time to see the pumps in action, took one look at him and sent him straight home with his car and driver.

"Over work," said the Group Officer softly, and went to the nearest telephone box, where she called up his wife and said more or less the same thing very sympathetically. Afterwards she conversed amiably with the Commander for a while, then returned to Headquarters, where she went into her office, added the D/O's name to her Sick Record Book, wrote "Nervous debility" beside it, sent one of the firewomen to fetch her a deck scrubber, and at ten minutes to nine, sprang on to it and neatly sailed through her window.

M.B.

"We Serve" No. II. *The Story of the Firemen Artists told by Mary Pitcairn*

The conclusion of their Third Annual Exhibition at Burlington House seems an appropriate time to tell the story of the Firemen (and Firewomen) Artists, how they started, and what they have achieved.

This means going back to 1940, when Fm. Rudolph Haybrook sold three pictures from his one-man show to the London County Council—under whose auspices the A.F.S. and W.A.F.S. then functioned—and thus became the first Fireman Artist to be recognised as having something definite to contribute to War Records. While the Blitz on London was still in progress Haybrook suggested and organised "Fire of London, 1940," an exhibition by artists in the London Fire Brigades.

It was held in March, 1941, at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, and caused considerable press excitement, and much emotion among the 22,000 people who saw it during the three weeks concerned. Indeed, it was no rare thing to see tears pouring down the faces of visitors from the country and outer London areas who had never fully realised what London proper had endured until they saw these vivid portrayals of fire damage and firemen's valour. These pictures could have been sold over and over again, but all were reserved for a tour of Canada and the U.S.A., to which they eventually went (and Haybrook with them) and where they still are.

In August of the same year a more ambitious exhibition was arranged at the Royal Academy, Burlington House, by courtesy of the President and Council who have been good friends to the Firemen Artists. The attendance totalled 66,404, and a large number of paintings were sold. All were scheduled for tours, however, half the Exhibition being earmarked for Canada and America, where it went, accompanied by Matvyn Wright, and where it remains for the moment. The other half should have gone to Australia with "Bob" Haines attached, but was stopped from sailing at the last moment by events in the Pacific.

Two further exhibitions have been held in these world-famous galleries; and there have been shows at Lloyd's, the Royal Exchange, and Rootes' Showrooms, Piccadilly—the last two in aid of Red Cross Funds. Another, held at the Cooling Galleries in conjunction with the Civil Defence Artists, was taken over in its entirety by the Museums Association for a provincial tour which extended to 15 months. Ben Betts was in charge, and assisted by his wife he showed in 14 towns, to more than 150,000 people, and brought in over £500 to the N.F.S. Benevolent Fund.

At all exhibitions in this country the public have been admitted free, but generally there has been a collection for the Benevolent Fund, which has thus received more than £4,300, and in addition between £600 and £700 as part sales of pictures in Canada and America. In England alone over 339,000 people have visited the shows, the attendance figures for the Overseas tours (still in progress) exceeding by many thousands the home total.

The majority of exhibitors have been members of the London Fire Forces, but this latest show included works from Bournemouth, Brighton, Bristol, Folkestone, Manchester, Margate, Plymouth and Torquay. Firewomen exhibitors have always been in the minority but in this Magazine it will not be out of place to list them:—Enid Abrahams, Julia Lowenthal, Mary Pitcairn and Prunella Pott were in the first show of all and are still among the "regulars," save for the last-named, who has left the N.F.S. Others are Sylvia Adburgham, Elizabeth Bridge, Bessie Byrne, Joan Miller, and Winifred Townshend. Works by Enid Abrahams, Paul Dessau, Bernard Hailstone (now an Official War Artist), W. S. Haines, Rudolph Haybrook, Norman Hepple, C. J. Pearce, Leonard Rosoman and E. Boye Uden have been bought for the Nation's War Records. The foregoing, and in addition Ben Betts, T. P. Butler, Stanley Froude, and A. E. Morley, have also found

purchasers in many public bodies and for numerous Art Galleries, among them being: Art Alliance, Philadelphia; Cincinnati Museum; Columbus Museum; English-Speaking Union, Chicago; Bradford and Reading Art Galleries. The Rt. Hon. Vincent Massey purchased works for Canada; and Sir William Rooses two for presentation to Canterbury Art Gallery. The N.F.S. College, Brighton, has also bought some, and this collection will be increased shortly as Commander Firebrace, C.F.S., bought last month for presentation to the College, Reginald Mills' "East End, 1940."

Among the publications which have been illustrated by reproductions of Firemen Artists' pictures are: "Ordeal by Fire"; "The War Illustrated"; "London's Hour"; "Fire and Water"; and "Jim Braid" (published this November). Then too, there was Ben Betts' popular book of his cartoons, entitled "Heroes with Grimy Faces"; "The Fire Fighters of London in Action" (published in America); and Messrs. Raphael Tuck purchased many works for reproduction. The visiting public have faithfully followed the careers of the Firemen Artists, and among those not already mentioned for whose pictures they look eagerly are F. T. W. Cook, Brian Gilks, J. Kingsley Sutton, Norman Manwaring, Francis Nichols, A. E. Turpin, E. G. Turner and those laughter-getters, Betts and "Maroc."

The judges most closely connected with the shows have been Sir Walter Russell (Keeper of the Royal Academy), Mr. Thomas Dugdale, R.A., and Mr. J. B. Manson, long connected with the Tate Gallery. The first Chairman of the Firemen Artists' Committee was Haybrook, who has been followed by Betts and Rosoman. Its first Hon. Secretary was Mary Pitcairn, the present one being R. E. S. Coram, who is ably assisted by his wife.

This then is the story of the Firemen Artists. It is impossible here to assess the value of the work done by them, other than the concrete contribution to the Benevolent Fund. Overseas their pictures startled visitors to their shows and helped to make them realise the dangers that might lie ahead. There, and here, they have been an asset to Civil Defence work, helping to arouse the public conscience to the need for fire-fighters; they have raised the status of firemen in the eyes of the public; and have provided for all time a record of the devastation and havoc wrought by air raids, as well as the discipline, courage and heroism of the firemen themselves.

Nor should it be forgotten that these pictures are the work of men who have had their ordinary Service duties to carry out. Often rocking with fatigue, still covered with dust, with eyes smarting from smoke, and with hands still stiff from grasping branches, they came from high duty to their fellow-citizens, to serve posterity by their personal talents. Some were artists before the War. Some have become such by the inspiration of war-time conditions and scenes. But all at this time are, first and foremost, Firemen—and Firewomen—in a National Service.

Engagements

Fw. Pat Clent, VI/15/F.F.H.Q., to Mr. C. J. Howard (to be announced officially on Christmas Day).
Fw. Stella Bolton, V/Reg. H.Q., to Cpl. S. Nicholls, R.A.C.
Fw. Thomas to Fm. Thomas, both of VII/17/R.22.
Fw. Phyllis Cooper, V/Reg. H.Q., to L/Cpl. J. Cloke, D/R, R.A.S.C.
Fw. I. Cane, VI/14/H.Q., to Pte. L. H. Underhill, Can. Army.
Fw. H. Finden to D. R. Wright, both of VI/14/H.Q.
Fw. Birkinshaw, X/29/H.Q., to P/O J. J. Lynch, R.A.A.F.
Fw. Fenton, X/29/C, to Mr. W. E. Kelly.
Fw. Stewart, X/29/H.Q., to 2nd Offr. B. Crabtree, M.N.
G.O. F. J. MacDonald (Area Admin. O.), XI/N/8, to Paymaster Lieut. K. J. MacSween, R.N.V.R.
Fw. J. H. Young to L/Fm. S. Stewart, both of XI/N(6)/A.I.Y.
Fw. M. Adamson, XI/W.2/F.F.H.Q., to N. D. Lock, R.A.F.

Births

25th September, 1943.—To Mrs. Audrey French (late Fw., VII/17/C.4.W.), a son—John.
—October, 1943.—To Mrs. Noblett (late Fw. X/29/B), a daughter.
—October, 1943.—To Mrs. Thompson (late Fw., X/29/B), a son.
14th November, 1943.—To Mrs. Smethurst (late A.G.O., X/29/C), a daughter.

Marriages

5th June, 1943.—Fw. Arnell, II/6/B.1, to Mr. N. Robinson.
3rd July, 1943.—Fw. Street, V/34/A.5.Z., to Mr. A. P. Musgrave.
29th July, 1943.—A.G.O. Waites, II/6/B.1, to L.A.C. Connell, R.A.F.
1st August, 1943.—Fw. Walpole, II/6/B.1, to Mr. G. Leeman.
14th August, 1943.—Fw. A. M. Styles, IV/11/C.1.W., to Fm. G. Carr, IV/11/C.11.
25th August, 1943.—A.G.O. Clarke, XI/W.2/B Div. Control, to Gunner E. Liddell.
11th September, 1943.—P/T Fw. Toop, VII/17/C.4.W., to Sgt. Colton, Pioneer Corps.
18th September, 1943.—Fw. Curwen, X/29/C, to Fm. Cowell.
18th September, 1943.—L/Fw. Middlebrook, X/29/H.Q., to Pte. G. Cotter, R.A.P.C.
25th September, 1943.—Fw. Waddieor, X/29/C, to Mr. Harold Astley.
28th September, 1943.—Fw. Cross, X/43/F.F.H.Q., to Mr. Alan Jackson.
14th October, 1943.—Fw. Exton, X/29/2, to Chief Petty Offr. Hull, R.N.
20th October, 1943.—Fw. G. Dighton, V/34/A.5.Z., to Sgt. R. Smith, R. Can. Army.
23rd October, 1943.—Fw. Swindlehurst, X/29/B, to L.A.C. Perfitt, R.A.F.
25th October, 1943.—Fw. Lindsay, X/29/H.Q., to Cpl. Gygg, R.A.F.
27th October, 1943.—A.G. O. Fieldwood, III/10/H.Q. to Lieut. G. M. R. Warner.
30th October, 1943.—Fw. Moss, X/29/C, to L.A.C. Bush, R.A.F.
12th November, 1943.—Fw. L. Kingston, VII/17/B.2.X., to Sgt. J. Porter, Bedfordshire Regt.
20th November, 1943.—Fw. Phillips, X/29/C, to Mr. W. Sloan.
11th December, 1943.—L/Fw. Robinson, IV/11/C Div. H.Q., to Mr. D. Robinson (of Wallington).



What Is It?

My first is in tender, but not in pump.
My second's in ladder, but not in jump.
My third is in lorry and also in lift.
My fourth is in watches, but not in shift.
My fifth is in pipe-line, but not in hose.
My sixth is in hat and also in clothes.
My seventh's in bomb, but not in plane.
My eighth is in breakdown and also in crane.
My ninth is in effort but not in goal.
My whole can be found in any Control.

Fw. Williams,
VI/15/D.H.Q.

Specially re-drawn for The Firewomen's Magazine by MARC from his cartoon in the recent Exhibition by Firemen Artists at the Royal Academy.

The Third Factor

A "Fire" story of olden days

By Fm. H. Blake, IV/5/V/Baldock

"You should have thought of that before!"

Selincourt glowered at me. I had never really liked the fellow, in spite his superficially charming manner. Our antagonism had been brought to a head by my recent marriage to Diane. He himself had possessed a passion for her. At the Club, of which we were fellow-members, I had tactlessly told him some unpleasant truths. Selincourt's face had turned white with anger. Why are libertines so sensitive about the fact? He left Boodles' without a word, but I saw the devil in his eyes. It boded me no good. Selincourt had a reputation as a dangerous man, a duellist suspected of several killings. What steps would the scoundrel take to harm me? I was soon to know.

Early next morning one of Selincourt's cronies brought me a brief missive. The inevitable one. An invitation to settle our quarrel in the manner of gentlemen: to wit, pistols for two. I was riven by conflicting emotions. On the one hand, desire to come to grips with the sneering blackguard, on the other, anxiety on Diane's account. I might be slain—Selincourt was reputed a crack shot; yet, I could not refuse to meet him. My reputation as a gentleman was at stake. I could never tolerate the imputation of being a coward. I sighed deeply and with trembling hand penned him a curt acceptance of the challenge.

A day later we met as the dawn rose above the fields and woods of our rendezvous. I endeavoured to reason with Selincourt. "I am only thinking of Diane," I said; to which my enemy vouchsafed the remark which opens my story. He was a hard man beneath his polish, unforgiving in what he regarded as an insult.

Our seconds, a few paces away, spoke together in low tones whilst they examined our duelling pistols for any defects. Bob Terry, good chap, drew me aside for a final word before the dread ordeal.

"Humphrey," he said, "mark your man well, and don't fire too hastily. Bear up, lad, it had to be."

I thanked him. "If I am unfortunate, break the news gently to Diane," I requested. Bob nodded, and shook me warmly by the hand. His heart was too full for him to utter platitudes appropriate to such an occasion.

"Ready, gentlemen!" cried Selincourt's aide. My reply came through parched lips, Diane! Bob handed me my pistol. My foe and I stood back to back in the traditional manner preparatory to walking the prescribed paces. Not another word had passed between us. Selincourt, for his part, seemed bored, as befitted a buck of his known prowess. He felt confident of the result. I felt very much the reverse. At twenty paces we turned and fired. I don't know what could have been the cause—perhaps Providence in the form of a sudden breeze—but Selincourt's bullet went wide, merely whistling by my ear. Selincourt himself gave vent to a gasping cry and spinning on his heel thudded to the turf, his pistol flying from his grip. My head went awl. Bob hurried to my side and steadied me with his arm.

"It looks as though he has come out second best," he remarked.

"My God!" I muttered hoarsely.

We hurried to where Selincourt's second knelt by the body. "Dead," he said gravely, "though I don't yet know where he was hit."

I turned to Bob. "I must flee England with Diane. There is no time to lose. I will take the barouche, and send it back for you. We must leave Dover by the packet to-night!" We shook hands, and I hurried to the carriage. Whipping up the pair I drove at a furious rate from the awful scene.

Let us skip the intervening period—even to-day I shudder at its memory. Suffice it to say, that I reached home, my body bathed in moisture. On gaining breath, I told my loved one the main facts: that I had killed Selincourt and was thus a murderer in the eyes of the law. Hurriedly my wife and I packed valises. There was no time to lose for Selincourt's death would, perforce, soon be public knowledge. I only breathed freely as we seated ourselves in the family coach and took the road to Dover.

We had travelled but a few miles when we heard the rattle of hooves behind us and the call to stop. I turned ashen. Could this be the Bow Street runner come to arrest me? Tom, the coachman, whipped up the horses and we tore hell-for-leather along the highway. The pursuing horseman was soon but a blur in the distance. Then by some strange chance and a grinding of wheels Tom took a corner at hazard and landed us in a ditch.

Unhurt, we scrambled out and Diane cried: "Flee, Humphrey! It's your only chance!"

Then, as the horseman was almost upon us, I started in surprise. It was Bob! He dismounted and ran towards me. Could he be bearing a warning?

"Are the runners abroad already," I asked faintly. Bob grinned.

"Runners!" he cried. "Humphrey, you are saved, Selincourt died of heart failure!"

NOTICE.—Items for January-February 1944 issue must reach the Editor, 5, Regent's Park Road, Gloucester Gate, London, N.W. 1, by 20th January.