

# N.F.S. FIREWOMEN'S MAGAZINE

(Original Title: W.A.F.S. Magazine.)

No. 34. SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 1944 Price 4D.

## Tribute to London

They do not fight with swords clasped in their hands,  
Nor yet a weapon to defend themselves.  
Their spur, an urge to see the battle won  
And Victory the prize for everyone.

They sweat and toil men's life blood to preserve—  
Then let us not forget the honour they deserve,  
Let us hold forth a lantern, shining bright,  
To give them courage in their darkest night.

For there before them gleams a treasured prize,  
The cross of Victory shining through the skies.  
Their fortitude and courage all confess  
And tribute pay to London's N.F.S.

*Fw. Betty Watkins, VII/39/B.I.Z.*

## Our Own Fund

*Broadcast Appeal for the N.F.S. Benevolent Fund  
made by Fm. Peter Blackmore on Sunday, 17th September, 1944.*

It was in 1941 when the Blitz was at its height. There had been a very heavy incendiary raid and a great pall of smoke was rising from countless fires. We were trying to master one which was fast gaining control of a warehouse. Luckily most of us were in the street, but one fireman was on the roof directing a hose jet down into the very heart of the fire. You can imagine our feelings when the main wall of the building collapsed and the roof caved in, throwing him somewhere down inside the burning warehouse.

We managed to get him out. At first we thought he was dead, but then slowly he showed signs of life. They kept him in hospital for nearly three years, nine months of which he was on his back in plaster of Paris. Fortunately he had a tremendous will to live. He and the doctors between them won through in the end—not a complete win, perhaps, because his injuries were serious and he remains paralysed from the waist down. In civilian life he was a lawyer's clerk, supporting elderly parents. Now here was a man who needed help and fortunately it was forthcoming. He was visited regularly, assisted financially, given a special bed and a motor-propelled chair. Now with tremendous courage, he is doing part-time work for his old firm once more.

Through all this difficult time he was helped by the National Fire Service Benevolent Fund. They are helping him still, for a specialist has suggested that there is hope of his recovering the use of his legs, and everything must be done to forward this possibility.

This is only one of many hundreds of cases aided by this entirely voluntary fund, and recently the flying bombs have added many more to the list of men and women needing urgent and continuing help. The fund not only assists firemen themselves, but widows and orphans as well.

Doesn't the Government do anything about them? Yes, of course it does. There is a sick pay scheme and a pension scheme, but there's a limit to what can be done with taxpayers' money, and beyond that limit is where the National Fire Service Benevolent Fund comes in. Incidentally you will no doubt be interested to know that the only expenses incurred by the fund are postages and stationery.

Although we hope that incendiary raids are a thing of the past, you mustn't think that

*Continued on page 7.*



## EDITORIAL AND NEWS

The Editor wishes to call attention to the fact that the end of the War will also mean the end of this Magazine: indeed, if firewomen continue to leave the Service at the same rate as during the recent months, this paper may arrive at its final issue before Peace is declared! Furthermore, there is a possibility that it might have to close at short notice and while some Annual Subscriptions are still running. It is proposed that all such subscriptions should go automatically to the N.F.S. Benevolent Fund. Representatives are asked to explain this when accepting new or renewed Annual Subscriptions. If, however, any Subscriber will definitely want the outstanding balance returned to her, she should let her Representative know at once so that a special record can be made.

It is noted with pleasure that all Regions, including Scotland and Ireland, save one, are represented in the News for this issue. We hope the absentee, who is more often silent than otherwise, will help us to reach 100 per cent. next time.

**I/Northern Region.**—During the last two months the No. 1 Region Women's Fitness Training Team, composed of firewomen from both Areas, has been very active and has won the admiration of those in and out of the Service for their performances. Displays were given in connection with the N.F.S. Weeks held at Newcastle and Middlesbrough during the "Holidays at Home" Campaigns in these towns.

The opening ceremony was performed by the Regional Commissioner, Sir Arthur Lambert, who was introduced by the Mayor of Middlesbrough. Others present were the Deputy Regional Commissioner, Colonel C. J. Pickering, C.M.G., D.S.O., C.R.F.O. Mr. T. A. Varley, O.B.E., R.W.F.O. Mrs. M. McIlquham, F.F.C. Norwood, No. 1 Area, Deputy F.F.C. L. Corbrick, No. 2 Area, and A.O. Macdonald, No. 2 Area. We were also very proud to have as a guest on this occasion, Company Sergeant-Major Hollis of Middlesbrough, who has recently been awarded the V.C.

The yearly inter-divisional and inter-area Netball matches were played with much enthusiasm during the above weeks. F Div., the winners of the No. 1 Area Competition, played C Div., the winners of the No. 2 Area Competition, for the Regional Cup presented by the Fire Brigades Union. It was a keenly contested match and F Div. finally won the Cup for the second year in succession. The spirit of competition among the Netball enthusiasts is still running high as the first rounds of the National Netball Tournament are being played. We echo the challenge of IV/11/B—look out for No. 1 Region!

**II/6.**—The members of F.F. 6 held a Garden Fête in the grounds of Talbot Lodge, Hessele, on 12th August, for the Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund. The fête and sale, attended by over 600 people, was opened by Mrs. W. Harrison, J.P., supported by A.O. Mrs. N. Diamond (President) and D.O. and Mrs. Cuthbert. The Fire Force Commander was unavoidably unable to attend.

All the articles were made by the whole-time and part-time firewomen and the wooden toys by the firemen. Stallholders and helpers were:—Leathercraft, Fw. Langford and L.Fw. Frost; Arts and Crafts, A.G.O.s Statters, Connell, and Tindall and Fw. Higgs; Cakes and Sweets, A.G.O. E. Howton, Fw. Larvin and Brill; Toys, A.G.O.s G. Howton and Fisher; Minerals, G.O. Gore-Brown; Flowers, A.G.O. Bond and Fw. Barnaby; Vegetables, L.Fw. Mason; Glass and Stationery, L.Fw. Hill and Johnson; White Elephant, S/L Fw. Witty and Fw. Stow; Sideshow, A.G.O. Casson.

Four hundred pounds resulted from this effort and the pleasant ceremony of handing over the cheque to Mrs. H. M. Harrison, Vice-President East Riding of Yorkshire Branch B.R.C., took place at the N.F.S. Women's Hostel, "Craiglands," 1,082, Holderness Road, Hull, on 25th August. In presenting the cheque the Area Officer expressed her appreciation of the willingness and enthusiasm of the workers who made the Fête such a success, Mrs. Diamond and A.G.O. Bond, who is in charge at "Craiglands," escorted visitors over this hostel, which houses 24 firewomen. Among those present were Mrs. Benno Pearman (Vice-President of the Red Cross P.O.W. Committee), G.O. Warrington, L.Fw. Wilks and Mason, and Fw. Barnaby and Langford, all of whom were members of the Garden Party Committee.

**III/H.Q.**—The Regional Commissioner's staff organised a successful Garden Fête on 26th August, at Nottingham, in aid of the R.A.F. Benevolent Fund, in which N.F.S. personnel took a very active part. Beautiful soft toys and handicrafts were made by the firewomen from all parts of the Region, making the N.F.S. Gift Stall look colourful, and bringing great joy to the children, who were able to buy them at nominal prices. The total amount raised at this Stall was £100—a magnificent effort. The officers and firewomen from No. 8 Area (Nottingham) and Regional H.Q., worked exceedingly hard at the various side-shows and stalls, including the Penny-on-the-Square, which raised £13, and the Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Stall, where some almost unobtainable fruits were for sale, thanks to the generosity of N.F.S. personnel throughout the Region.

The children's corner, also manned almost wholly by firewomen, was a great delight to the children. There was a Punch and Judy show; Bran Tub; and pony rides, as six had been loaned for the occasion, two by the C.R.F.O., Mr. T. H. Patrick. Firewomen all over the Region will be delighted to hear that their efforts raised well over £1,000 for the R.A.F. Benevolent Fund.

**III/7.**—Once again Fire Force 7 have reason for being very proud of their women, having won the coveted Radford Trophy for Women's Squad Drill at the Regional Competitions held on 19th August, Sir Arthur Dixon being among those present. The team was comprised of Area H.Q. staff from Allestree. Their success was particularly gratifying inasmuch as it meant they had emulated the feat of the part-time women attached to Division A, Derby, who, as reported in a previous issue of this magazine, won the Rowley Cup at the Regional Part-time Competition held at Leicester a few weeks ago.

Whilst it is often considered undesirable to single out individuals for special mention, the whole of the team and their supporters would wish us to take this opportunity of congratulating their Instructress, L/Fw. Warren, on the excellent manner in which she handled her team.

In accordance with tradition, the Cup was filled on 25th August, when A.O. Holt entertained the team and their friends to an excellent dinner to celebrate their success. F.F.C. Galloway was the chief guest at this function, and in proposing the toast of "Fire Force Headquarters Squad Team," the Commander paid glowing tribute to the keenness and hard work which had been displayed.

**III/9.**—On 12th August, the Area Competitions and Displays were staged in brilliant sunshine at D.I.W. Franklins' Gardens, Northampton, a fitting climax to the various successful competitions held throughout the three Divisions during the previous two months.

The distinguished visitors included the Regional Commissioner, Rt. Hon. Lord Trent; the Deputy Regional Commissioner for Fire, Councillor C. R. Keene, J.P.; C.F.S. Commander Firebrace; C.W.F.O. Mrs. Cuthbert; C.R.F.O.s Patrick, Benton, Westbrook and Hoare; R.W.F.O.s Radford, Hicks and Powrie; Mayor and Mayoress of Northampton, and representatives of other Area 9 local authorities. A large holiday crowd also assembled to pay tribute to the N.F.S. and contribute to their Benevolent Fund.

The firewomen, whole and part-time, were well to the fore. Div. C won both the women's events, a team from Thrapston 9CIN winning the Light Trailer Pump Drill in 40 3/5ths seconds, and a Peterborough team, 9C Sub-Div. 2, winning the Hydrant Drill (replacing one burst length) in 1 minute and 2 3/5ths seconds. Three women D/Rs took part in a daring and spectacular display of trick cycling. 12 firewomen from Div. A (Leicester) gave an exhibition of Squad Drill, and all competitors took part in the March Past, when the salute was taken by Commander Firebrace. The women's marching, as usual, brought forth a burst of applause.

The surprise item and star turn of the afternoon was undoubtedly the Fitness Training Display by 24 operational and administrative firewomen, trained and led by A.G.O. Garner, the Area Fitness Organiser, who was afterwards congratulated by the C.F.S. on a very fine performance.

Space will not permit for details to be given of the excellent performance put up by the men, and the splendid times made, nor of the assistance given by all ranks behind the scenes. It warranted a party being given this month by F.F.C. Thomas as his way of saying "Thank you" for the fine co-operative spirit shown, which alone enabled the 12th August to be an undisputed success.

**III/10/H.Q.**—The 23rd August saw the official opening of our Area Training School, which ceremony was performed by the Rt. Hon. Lord Trent. Many other guests were present, including the C.R.F.O., Mr. T. H. Patrick; the R.W.F.O., Mrs. Radford; F.F.C.s Strong and Thomas; A.O.s Holt and Toplis. The programme consisted of a demonstration of Fire Service Appliances, Women's Physical Training under the direction of A.G.O. Lawson, Men's Physical Training and Squad Drill by the winners of the Area Finals—C Division, Boston. After a very substantial tea, which was enjoyed by all—including the wasps—the elimination match of the Area Finals of the Women's Netball Tournament was held. Dancing, fun and games completed another of No. 10's social activities.

The actual Finals of the Area Netball Competition were held on 13th September, B Division, Grimsby, being proclaimed the winners. This was followed by the Fire Force men versus B Division men in a Rugger/Netball match, which resulted in a small number of casualties.

**IV/11.**—Two of the most popular members of "The Firebrands" Concert Party, formed by A Div. F.F. 11 last February, are A.G.O. Doris Wheatman, soprano, who is in charge of a local hostel, and Fw. Joyce Cannon of 11/A Div. Control, pre-war member of Hughie Green's Radio Gang, whose clever impressions of Gracie Fields are particularly enjoyed by the boys in battledress when this talented little company performs for the troops.

To date "The Firebrands" have given over 40 two-hour troop shows in



Southend and district. 32 of these were staged on isolated sites where Tommy Atkins is normally cut off from "live" entertainment.

In addition, "The Firebrands" have assisted in "Salute the Soldier" weeks; have appeared at several local cinemas which run variety entertainment; recently gave a show at Southend Bandstand in aid of the Red Cross; and have amused their own comrades on the various N.F.S. Stations. The party boasts its own rhythm orchestra.

**IV/13/F.F.H.Q.**—The Regional Competitions were held at Lexden, Colchester, on 19th August, and were honoured by the presence of Miss Ellen Wilkinson, the Regional Commissioner, C.F.S., and Mrs. Keith of the Home Office Fire Staff.

Two events were held for women—Squad Drill and Light Pump Drill. No. 13 Area carried off both cups, as well as the cup presented by Major-General Fuller, Deputy Regional Commissioner, for the highest points gained by all Squad Drill teams, both men and women. The winning teams were from C Div., Ipswich, in Squad Drill, and A/12, Norwich, in the Pump Drill—both having been the winners of the Area Competitions.

An outstanding event for F.F.H.Q. was a Garden Fête held on 9th September. The Divisional Officer, A Division, kindly allowed this to be held at the Hostel in Norwich. Side-shows, races and Fancy Dress Parade for children, together with a produce show were the chief events. Gifts of all kinds had been made and these were successfully auctioned by the Area Stores Officer. The success of the Fête, both as an afternoon's enjoyment and a money-raising effort for Area Welfare and Benevolent Funds, was due to the enthusiasm of a small Committee headed by the Area Stores Officer.

**IV/13/D2.**—I would like, through the columns of our magazine, and on behalf of the firewomen of this Sub-Div. Control, to pay a farewell tribute to A.G.O. Cummings, who after a short but sweet stay of 6 months at 13/D/2 has now left us for 26 F.F.

We regretfully bid her farewell and sincerely wish her the best of luck and a successful time in her new surroundings. A.G.O. Cummings will be greatly missed by the firewomen of this Sub-Div., to whom she endeared herself during her time amongst us; her understanding and sporting nature won for her the love and respect of us all and we will treasure happy memories of happy days spent amongst us. We trust A.G.O. Cummings will not forget us and will reserve a special corner in her thoughts for us.

*Fw. F. E. Thurston.*

**IV/Part-time Divisional School (Stopsley).**—The School is adapted from a part-time Station and Reception Base just outside Luton. It consists of two prefabricated huts—one used as a dormitory sleeping 24 students, a large lecture room, mobilising room and office; and the other consisting of a dormitory for 18 students, mess room (complete with wireless loaned by the D.O.), well-equipped kitchen, showers, etc. We have a Fireman Mess Manager and two cooks, and they do us well, not forgetting the messengers, who help with directing the students from the 'bus stop to the school, waiting at table, and "motherly" help in the kitchen. The School is open for 8 weeks covering a 4-weekends syllabus.



*The "Firebrands."*

The first weekend there were 34 students, and on the next 50 students arrived. These girls really got together and on their next visit one student decided to become 21 years of age! She and her newly-made friends brought cake and cream tarts, not forgetting a large cardboard key complete with ranks and markings, abbreviations, tallies, and analogy—lectures which were given the previous weekend.

These are jolly weekends at which Fitness Training goes with a swing.

The new recruits are issued with two blankets, one pillow-slip and overalls, which are worn in class. Respirators are issued and fitted by Gas Instructors A.G.O. Marshall and L/Fw. Durrant—the last-named having earned herself the title "Tuck-your-chin-in-Durrant."

*S/L/Fw. Horton.*

**V/38/C.**—No. 38 Area Summer Camp which Fw. have been allowed to attend has been a great attraction, and many of the Fw. have spent a very jolly week under canvas in beautiful surroundings, with swimming, cycling, etc.—a welcome change from Buzz-Bomb activity.

The offer of hospitality from other Regions has been very much appreciated, and full advantage has been taken of it. All who have been, have returned full of praise for the kindness shown to them, and all ask if they can go again.

The firewomen of C Division would like to take this opportunity, through the medium of the FIREWOMEN'S MAGAZINE, of thanking the Fw. of Fire Station, Mersey Square, Stockport, for looking after one of their ex-Croydon fireman colleagues, who was unfortunate enough to be injured in Italy.

*J. R.*

**VII/17/C.**—On 1st July the Divisional Sports were held at Ilminster and two teams of part-time firewomen competed in the Divisional Light Trailer Pump Competition for women. The team representing Sub-Div. 1 was from Bridgwater, and that representing Sub-Div. 2 from Glastonbury.

The winning team was Bridgwater, with a time of 45 seconds, and the 4 members of the crew were presented with a Diploma by D.O. Blower.



*Bridgwater Winners: Fw. J. Le Page, C. Roberts, J. Baxter, and L/Fw. J. Cross.*

**VII/18.**—Much has happened in 18 Area during the last 3 or 4 months. A.O. Willoughby has left the Service and A.O. Rowell from the Home Office Fire Staff is now here. G.O. Guy, Group Officer A Division, has also left the Service, and in her place we have G.O. Villiers from the N.F.S. College.

Parades, Part-time Training Courses and Netball Matches have kept us very busy. The Sunday Courses for part-time firewomen have been particularly successful. Some part-time firewomen have played for their Divisional Netball Team in the National Tournament. Netball in this Area has really "caught on." Cricket too has been played, matches having been arranged between firewomen and the A.T.S. and W.A.A.F.s.

Now the firewomen are busy knitting jumpers for the European Clothing Relief Scheme. It seems that there will always be work for firewomen to do, and in this respect the firewomen of 18 Area are always ready to do their bit.

*M. C.*

**VIII/(Wales) Region.**—The Annual Competitions and Fire Fighting Display were held at Cardiff Castle Grounds on September 2nd, 1944, a large crowd being present. An excellent fitness training display was given by Area 21, and 5 women attached to Regional H.Q. took



part in a motor cycling exhibition which included formation and trick riding. A thrilling display was given by the women's pump crews of Areas 20, 21 and 22, the winners being B Division, F.F. 21.

Congratulations are also extended to 22/A/Y Flint, on winning the "Foster" Trophy for the most efficient station in the Region.

The trophies were presented by Lady Bruce, wife of the Regional Commissioner,\* who was also present. Amongst others present were the Deputy Regional Commissioner, Alderman Percy Morris; Mrs. Keith, Home Office, representing the C.W.F.O.; C.R.F.O. G. V. Blackstone; and R.W.F.O. Miss M. Foster.

A.G.O. Burnett.

**IX/27.**—Firewomen from Area 24 are busy with an N.F.S. Benevolent Fund Week at present. Dances, garden parties, and other social activities are being arranged with a view to raising large sums of money for this very deserving cause. One of the outstanding items is the "Hartopp Highlights," a concert party, and we take off our hats to the producer, A.G.O. Cobb, and all the Area H.Q. personnel taking part, for such an original and highly successful show.

Netball practices are being held with a view to entering for the National Netball Tournament, and Fitness Training is still going with a swing under the supervision of A.G.O. Ferris, the Area Fitness Officer.

D. W.

**X/29.**—Our good wishes go with F.F.C. Hall, who has been appointed to the Fire Service Selection Board; also to A.O. Wright, transferred to No. 26 Area. We welcome A.A.O. Elias, who comes to 29 Area from Region V. Congratulations to Part-time G.O. Davey on her new appointment.

During the month of August, No. 29 F.F.H.Q. was honoured by a visit from the C.F.S., Commander Firebrace, and the C.W.F.O., Mrs. Cuthbert.

A five-day course at Sedgwick House in August for part-time firewomen was well attended and proved very successful. Many enquiries have since been received regarding future courses, and I hear (on good authority) that many of these enquiries came from part-time firewomen who were attending a course at the same time. The social activities arranged during the week were evidently appreciated!!!

Assistance in the Evacuation Scheme in the Reception Areas has been very willingly given by firewomen in all Divisions.

A Regional Squad Drill Competition is now being prepared and already many teams, including a good proportion of part-timers, are practising for the preliminary Area Competition.

Part-time women officers were well represented at the Regional Weekend Course at 26 Area Training School on the 16th/17th September, and the promoters made the effort a great success in every way.

M. L. J.

**Scotland XI/Eastern/Div. A.**—They who laugh last laugh longest! So said the four happy members of the Women's Light Pump team of A Div. after a victorious day on 29th July. When they started out on training most people were sceptical, women's crews being a decided novelty in our Fire Force. Trial runs were held in the morning of the great day, and A Div. team, having made the best time, were presented with Savings Certificates by A.O. Edridge. So having been chosen to represent the Fire Force in the Eastern Area Industrial trials, it was very gratifying to all that they made very good time—and no penalties, making them the winners of the day. They just had to make it, they said, after what their instructor, L.Fm. Duncan, had promised them if they didn't.

At a Garden Fête held in aid of the Benevolent Fund in the grounds of Station A.2.W. the display given by the team was of great interest to everyone; also at the Birthday Celebrations of the N.F.S. in Dundee another display was given to the Lord Provost and his lady and the members of the Town Council. Later on in the month a party was held in Station A.1.Z to celebrate the victory, but the programme was rather held up by the bells going down just as everyone sat down for supper—the women's team was not on the first attendance!

A.G.O. Bussell.

**XI/N-E/F.F.H.Q.**—Our Annual Sports were held on 12th August and proved a great success, all firewomen and firemen taking part thoroughly enjoying the afternoon.

The Cup was presented by Deputy F.F.C. Ross to Station A/27. Our firewomen ended by having a joint Champion, namely Fw. I. Sharp and Fw. A. Brown, both of whom are attached to F.F.H.Q.

I take this opportunity of thanking all personnel who assisted in making the day such an unqualified success.

M. M.

**XI/S-E.**—A successful Garden Fête opened by the Rt. Hon. Joseph Westwood, M.P., Joint Under Secretary of State for Scotland, was held in the grounds of George Heriot's School, Lauriston Place, Edinburgh, on 2nd September, in aid of the N.F.S. Benevolent

Fund. F.F.C. W. B. Muir, M.B.E., was in the Chair and the distinguished guests included Sir Gilbert Archer, Civil Defence Commissioner for the South-Eastern (Scotland) District, Treasurer A. H. A. Murray, Chairman for the National Council, Mr. C. C. Cunningham, Assistant Secretary of State for Scotland, Mr. A. B. Craig, Principal Fire Staff Officer and other Scottish Home Department officials.

The outstanding attraction was Tommy Trinder, the well-known comedian, who liberated the Pigeons after the Opening Ceremony, judged the "Ankle Competition" and entertained generally.

The stalls were tremendously popular and included Arts and Crafts, Gifts, Produce and Home Bakery, and Flowers and Vegetables. The many events which helped to make the day such a big success were the Dog Show, Rabbit Show, Baby Show, Highland Dancing, Novelty Swimming in N.F.S. Static Water Tanks, Boxing and numerous Side Shows. A first-class Concert Party entertained during the afternoon and the Fête concluded with a Grand Dance, over 300 enjoying the music of the R.A.M.C. Dance Band.

Although the final total has not yet been announced, a figure of approximately £1,250 has already been raised.

M. P. H.

**XII/S.-Eastern/H.Q.**—31 Area have distinguished themselves by winning the Women's Fitness Training Competition, Squad Drill Competition and at the same time, the Men's Squad Drill and Trailer Pump Competitions, all of them Regional contests.

The other Areas put up a splendid show, and all events were thoroughly enjoyed by large and distinguished audiences.

M. H.

**Northern Ireland, H.Q., Belfast.**—We wish to take this opportunity to congratulate A.O. Lowry on her promotion to this rank. The appointment is a most popular one as Mrs. Lowry has been a member of the N.F.S. (N.I.) since its inception, and was a firewoman in the Auxiliary Fire Service prior to nationalisation. During her service she has gained the esteem and friendship of the entire personnel and we wish her every success in her new duties.

G. O. B. L. Doak.

**C. Div., Londonderry.** This Division congratulates G. O. Lowry on her recent appointment to Area Officer, and wishes her every success.

The Charity Dance run by the firewomen of this Division proved a great success, raising £135 for the Red Cross and St. John Prisoner of War Fund. They also organised competitions and a Dutch Auction for the same fund.

We look forward to organising similar functions in the future.

A.G.O. V. I. Byes.

**N.F.S. College.**—Several changes have occurred since last the College Notes appeared. Probably the most notable change is that the administrative side of the College is now entirely uniformed. Consequently, there have been many new arrivals, although a great many of the former members have joined the N.F.S. All appear to have settled happily.

Two Swimming Galas have been held, to one of which H.M.S. Vernon were invited. Some of their members did well in the open events, but although they entered a relay team and a water polo team against the N.F.S. resident at the College at the time, the N.F.S. won both events. An entirely new race in the same gala was the "Rabbits' Race"—distance one width of the bath—in which entries were limited to those who could not swim a length. This race, open to both men and women, was won by A.G.O. Gregory, but we feel we must congratulate the runner up, who had only learned to swim during his course at the College.

Courses held lately have been that for Senior Officers; Group Officers; the last of the Mobile Instructors' Courses; and a number of Part-time Women Officers' Courses. Several of the part-time officers have shown their enthusiasm by giving up their holidays to take advantage of the last mentioned.

G. H.

*Continued from page 1.*

The fireman's job has ended. In Southern England they have worked hard during the recent flying bomb raids and then there are the normal civilian fires all over the country, of which there are many thousands every year.

It is a dangerous job, that of a fireman, and when he's been injured or his family is in need, we want to be able to help. We can only do it with your assistance. Many of you may have reason to be grateful to the firemen for their actual help, but many more might like to send a thankoffering for having been spared the dangers of fire. Please do send all you can to me, Peter Blackmore, National Fire Service Benevolent Fund, Shoreditch Fire Station, London, E.C.2. Have you got that—Peter Blackmore, National Fire Service Benevolent Fund, Shoreditch Fire Station, London, E.C.2.

Good-night, and we shall be most grateful for your help.

(At the time of going to press £1,464. 4s. 5d. has been received.)



## Mobile Training (Not quite according to plan.)

Some weeks ago, it was proposed to institute a new system of training by which Mobile Instructors would visit Stations and train the Control Room staff on the spot. Way down South, they are said to possess six firewomen per watch, though we are quite prepared to admit that this may be mere optimistic rumour. Up here, we have one per watch—if lucky! Anyway, our Star Reporter, Group Officer Gormless, has been carefully considering the matter, and this is what she thinks will happen.

*SCENE: A Station Control, wherein a Firewoman is observed, busily writing in one of the Logs. Enter, with due solemnity, three Mobile Instructors. The Firewoman looks up and sees them, but as they are merely two S/L Fw. and a L/Fw., she naturally doesn't rise, not being that kind of Firewoman. It is, in fact, only with the greatest reluctance that she rises for her Group Officer, while as far as A.G.O.s are concerned, her views regarding them are still pre-G.F.F.I.*

*Fw. (casually):* Good afternoon.

*1st Ins.:* Good afternoon to you! We have come to instruct the Control Room staff. Will you call the others, and book us through to Sub-Division?

*Fw. (ignoring this last request):* There aren't any others.

*2nd Ins.:* What do you mean, there aren't any others? *(The 1st Ins. goes to the telephone and deals with the booking-through problem herself.)*

*Fw. (rapidly):* One off duty, one off sick, and me—and I'm busy! *(The telephone rings, and she goes to answer it.)*

*3rd Ins. (to others, while telephone conversation is going on):* This is ridiculous! Fire Force Order No. 1809/44, based on N.F.S.I. No. 30/44, says that we have to instruct the Control Room staff, and so *(pointing to Fw.)* we'll have to instruct it. *(The Fw. finishes her telephone conversation.)*

*2nd Ins. (heavily):* The purpose of our visit is to have, firstly, a little chat with you about *(consulting N.F.S.I.)* when you joined the Service, what your duties have been, what training you have already received, and so forth. *(Looks at N.F.S.I. again.)* That's got to last for half an hour.

*3rd Ins.:* Then we shall demonstrate an exercise.

*1st Ins.:* And then you shall repeat it.

*Fw. (wearily):* O.K., if you insist. I really am pretty busy, I've got to bring some Attendance Cards up to date, and then the Coy.O. *(she pronounces it as it is written)* wants some typing doing, but I'll do my best. How about this? *(She produces three hats from behind the table and puts them on in turn.)* I am Fw. Brown. *(Changes hat and strikes an attitude of happy vagueness.)* I am now Fw. Green. *(Changes hat again and becomes very brisk.)* And now I am Fw. Blue. Which of us will you have first?

*2nd Ins.:* Fw. Brown, please.

*Fw. (changing hat):* Right. *(She pushes imaginary person to one side.)* Excuse me, Firewoman Blue—Oh, would you man the 'phone for me for a few minutes, Firewoman Green? *(Changing hat.)* Yes, dear. *(Changing hat again.)* Carry on!

*1st Ins.:* How long have you been in the Service?

*Fw.:* According to the Educational lectures which I've been attending lately, you ought to have said, "for" how long, but never mind, it could have been worse—you could have placed the preposition at the end of the sentence. Anyway, if you really want to know—for long enough! . . . Look out, you're standing on Firewoman Blue's foot!

*(The Ins. jumps back, startled. The telephone rings. The Fw. changes her hat and answers it.)*

*1st Ins. (to others):* Perhaps it would be better if we went on to the demonstration.

*3rd Ins.:* Or shall we let her demonstrate first, then we can find out what they can do?

*2nd Ins.:* Agreed. *(To Fw., who has finished telephone conversation.)* We think you'd better run an exercise for us now, Raid Period.

*Fw. (taking off hat):* O.K. *(She rushes out of the room, and returns wearing a Fire Guard helmet.)* I am now a Fire Guard. *(She hands a message to herself, then becomes Mobiliser, Telephonist and Dispatcher in turn, going through all the appropriate actions in dumb show, and, at the last, hands a message from herself, as the Dispatcher, to herself as Officer-in-Charge of an appliance, for which latter purpose she wears a Leading Fireman's helmet. The Instructors make notes while she repeats this process with variations, and just as she is dashing out for the third time, the telephone rings and she returns to answer it.)*

*Fw.:* Station Y. *(But she pronounces it "Why?")* Oh, yes, A.G.O. Blossom? Yes, right away. *(She puts the telephone down, and addresses the Instructors, who are consulting with one another.)* So sorry, but the Fitness Training A.G.O.'s just rung through to tell me that it's time for my P.T. *(She again dives behind the table, and produces a skipping rope, which she proceeds to employ rather dangerously. The Instructors thereupon close their notebooks and make a hasty exit.)*

And so will our Star Reporter, if we suffer from any more bright ideas like this!

Anon., Region X.

## Time Marches On!!!

There was a young woman from Tiryberth  
Who longed to help War efforts all she was worth,  
But a husband had she, and a little home too,  
With a garden, a dog, and of cats there were two.  
Now she couldn't desert them by day and by night,  
But she'd heard Churchill's call to each woman to fight  
And to give of their utmost—and more—but no less;  
But what could she do? . . . Ah! She'd join N.F.S.

Eight hours a day worked she then, in three ways.  
When on mornings it seemed like a week's holiday.  
The nights and the afternoon shifts were the worse,  
But even these weren't too much of a curse.  
A proud woman was she in her uniform blue,  
For—when it came—it showed one red stripe too.  
And in between duties her home got a fair deal,  
The felines were tended, her man got a meal.

Then came the bombshell in year '42.

"They" said, "A TWELVE-hour tour you must do."  
"But I can't leave my home for so long," she replied;  
Then on second thoughts said, "I'll not give up till I've tried."  
Now the months passed away as all months can,  
Praps her home wasn't looking quite so spick and span,  
Still, what did that matter during "The Fight"?  
After "Victory Parade," she'd soon put that right.

But worse was to come—FORTY-EIGHT/TWENTY-FOUR—  
Well, she had done her best, she couldn't do more.  
Still, could she give up now, when the end seemed so near?  
Could she—"by heck"—her way was quite clear.  
But this meant that hubby'd to cook his own din!  
And as time went on, he became rather thin!  
But when Hitler's Army we finally disrupt  
And this War is over—she'll soon fatten him up.

In due course another red stripe there appeared,  
And this in its turn meant more hours, she feared.  
She was right—SEVENTY-TWO was the number this time,  
But by now she could take all that came, in her stride,  
From EIGHT hours to SEVENTY—well, "they" couldn't ask more—  
But they could—and they did—in June '44.  
DUTIES CONTINUOUS! But this time who cared?  
For, by now, Old Man Hitler must be getting quite scared.

Now this young woman from Tiryberth,  
Has long reached the stage when she knew it was worth  
Every effort it took to answer each call,  
And if more are made, then she'll answer them all,  
Yes—she grumbled at times, when she felt rather blue,  
But this is free country, and haven't you grumbled too?  
Still she knows that when the time comes to rest,  
She'll have pleasant memories from the N.F.S.

Fw. P. Hayes, VIII/20/C H.Q.

## Vocational Training

A party from Fire Force went  
forth to a Hall,  
In response to a very—a most  
urgent—call,  
To help do our bit in the  
Evacuation Plan,  
Which was needing the help  
of each woman and man.

While our aim was not gaining  
of medals and bars,  
At least we can count our-  
selves now first-class "chars"!  
A.G.O., IV/13/F.F.H.Q.





*Ed. Note.—This subject has brought in so much information, of such a varied type, that it has been decided to divide it into two parts. Consequently, Part 2, "Then," will appear in the next issue, while Part 1, "Now," is given here, and starts, appropriately enough, with :—*

**V/Regional H.Q.**—"Once upon a time" there were quite a number of separate Messes here—Officers, Firemen, Training School, and so on. About a year ago they were merged into one Cafeteria, and though the Officers have their meals in a small room leading out of the larger Mess all are fed from the one kitchen—and well fed too.

Eight to nine hundred meals are served here daily. They start with breakfast at 7.30 hrs. and end with a Good-night snack, the doors finally closing at 22.15 hrs. Perhaps not necessarily "finally" for should emergency arise on the lines of the bad old Blitz days, undoubtedly A.G.O. Mrs. Lynfield and her staff would be on the job. There is a Management Committee which meets about once in two months, but the main responsibility falls on Mrs. Lynfield, whose N.F.S. catering experience before taking on her present work began with canteen vans (in which she has travelled all over the country), thence by way of Food Stores to a short, intensive Course at the National Training College of Domestic Subjects, whither go also the majority of her cooks, though these take the six-week Course.

Planning of menus, coping with points, or a sudden temporary increase for lunch or supper is not the end of Mrs. Lynfield's responsibilities. All the Official Functions must be reckoned with if catering is included—and it generally is! In the week in which this article was written, on six additional occasions meals were wanted, thus totalling 1,000 extra. Small wonder that the Catering Officer regards her emergency store as a particularly important item in her work.

M. P.

**Northern Ireland.**—When the Fire Service was nationalised here, owing to the Catering Scheme then in force, each Station was responsible for purchasing their own food under the authority of a Station Officer or a Station Mess Committee. The snag in this system was the fact that the Firewomen who acted as cooks were not trained in cooking and were unable to plan a balanced diet from war-time materials.

Accordingly, other schemes were studied and it was decided to adopt the method of a Central Kitchen. This Central body is responsible for the purchasing and cooking of all food for the entire Service, with the exception of milk and bread, which is bought by each Station Mess Committee. It was also realised that vegetables could not be cooked centrally owing to the impossibility of transporting them when cooked, so expert Firewomen cooks are attached to all Stations to prepare the vegetables, and re-heat the food.

By this method the best advantage is taken of the rationed and points goods which are available to the Service. Another very important point in favour of the Central Catering Scheme is that a reserve of food has been built up for any emergency which may arise.

A.G.O. Maynes.

## On Cooks and Caterers

by L/Fw. E. Norton (cook), N/13.

As kitchen staff we make our bow.  
Although we're in the kitchen now,  
It has not always been our lot  
To handle just a kitchen pot.  
It's wartime work we're out to do—  
It may not seem the same to you—  
But, although we do not push a pen,  
Or type out letters now and then,  
Or even at the switchboard sit,  
Meals must be cooked, you will admit.  
We are not really cooks by trade,  
But only what the War has made;  
So if we fail, don't think us duds,  
Just step right in and view the spuds!!  
And then, if grieved for us you feel,  
We can give you some to peel.  
Now, may we add one final line?  
If you should see our noses shine,  
Don't comment, 'cos, though hard we try,  
Our powder we cannot apply.  
So never mind about our looks—  
We are *just trying* to be Cooks.

by Fw. Evelyn M. Wilson, X/43/A.

Of all Departments in this Service,  
I think this is the worst,  
Sometimes I feel that we poor beings  
Must surely have been cursed.

From morn till night the cry goes on:  
What's for Breakfast, Dinner, Tea?  
Sausage again! Oh! Saints preserve us,  
No more of that old stuff for me!

We run about the whole day through,  
We do our best to please,  
But it doesn't seem to matter,  
Complaints do not decrease.

Catering is a thankless task,  
On that there are no questions,  
But we carry on and feed the crowd,  
And here end my reflections.

Firewomen at No. 18 Area Headquarters think they have the best Hostel in the country. It is in the heart of Exeter (making evening activities comparatively easy) and is a Regency house built, as far as local history books can tell us in 1790. Its terraced gardens slope down towards the River Exe, and from its bedroom windows and covered terrace can be seen Haldon Moor and Belvedere Tower, as well as the river-side walks and walkers.

The rooms are large and the official furniture together with the quilts and cushions supplied by the Civil Defence Comforts Committee give it an air of homeliness, in fact its atmosphere of "home" is a remarkable feature of the Hostel and supports the opinion often expressed that houses retain something of the spirit and happiness of those who live in them.

The opening party was attended by F.E.C. Winteringham and Mrs. Winteringham, R.W.F.O. Mrs. Marshall and A.O. Miss Rowell, as well as the Deputy F.E.C. and officers, men and women from Area H.Q. Since then, Colleton Villa has been honoured by two visits from the C.W.F.O. Mrs. Cathbert. On her first visit she met the residents of the Hostel, on her second visit she was a member of an official party that inspected the Hostel. This also included Miss Ellen Wilkinson, the Regional Commissioner, Sir Hugh Ellis, Lady Ellis, the C.R.F.O. Mr. Johnstone, as well as the R.W.F.O., our own F.E.C. Mr. Winteringham and A.O. Rowell. Miss Wilkinson and Lady Ellis both remarked on the cheeriness and usefulness of the house, and on the fact that it seemed to be a "home."

Life at the Hostel is certainly homely, the kitchen is often the hub of its universe and Fw. Iabbett (or "Flo" as she is unofficially called) acts as Mother, and woe betide anyone who goes in or out without having a word with her.

The washing of smalls is catered for in the spacious basement and the lines in the backyard are rarely empty. Neither is the telephone still for long and many names have become telephone legends as they are called or breathed huskily over the 'phone, for example:—"Bill," "Randy," "Carnell," "Johnny," "Freddy," "Gerry," and on one particular evening a voice was even heard crooning "I'll get by."

Since the ban has been lifted many parents and friends have visited the Hostel and have been amazed at the comfort attained in such a short time. The women themselves are beginning to feel sentimental about it, thinking that the day may soon come when they will have to leave Colleton Villa and the friends they have made in Exeter. They will miss the happy homely life, and those from the Midlands will miss also the call of the seagulls which perch perpetually around the Hostel. But when the War is over and the N.F.S. no longer occupy Colleton Villa, A.G.O. Strachan, the Officer-in-Charge of this Hostel, and the firewomen who have lived there during the last few months, will know that they have added much to the store of happiness which pervades its rooms.

Anon.

## Firemen Artists' Winter Exhibition

Novelty attaches to the show planned to run from 27th October to 3rd December, at the Royal Academy, as a "two-way" scheme has been adopted. Thus the catalogue will show that one of the special objectives of the Exhibition is to ram home the fact that Fire Prevention, carefully studied and followed, would do away with 75 per cent. of full-period fires.

The other feature of this Show is to be the re-exhibiting of a certain number of paintings which have been seen at earlier Shows. This should prove a popular attraction especially as this may well be the last opportunity for seeing the collected works of the Firemen Artists. As usual, the N.F.S. Benevolent Fund will benefit by the Exhibition which will be officially opened by Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P.



"Er—is this stuff  
alright for removing  
stockings?"

Specially drawn for  
the Magazine by—

BEN BETTS

**NOTICE.**—Contributions for November–December issue MUST reach the Editor, 5, Regent's Park Road, Gloucester Gate, London, N.W.1, by 20th November.



## Marriages

- 16th May, 1944.—P/T Fw. Lane, IX/23/B Div. H.Q., to Sgt. Pilot Beer, R.A.F.  
 29th May, 1944.—A.G.O. Wood, XI/N-E/Sub-Div., to Mr. J. Wood.  
 6th June, 1944.—Fw. Black, C.I.Z (Londonderry), to Fm. T. Brown, C.I.Z.  
 17th June, 1944.—Fw. M. Ross, XI/N-E/Div. H.Q., to Cpl. W. A. Nixon.  
 5th July, 1944.—Fw. P. Wood, XI/N-E/A, to Mr. G. Christie.  
 24th July, 1944.—Fw. F. M. Seal's, V/R H.Q., to Cpl. Sainsbury, K.R.R.C.  
 12th August, 1944.—Fw. E. Boulton, IX/23/H.Q., to Cpl. W. Barnard, R.A.F.  
 12th August, 1944.—P/T S/L Fw. Warner, IX/23/B Div. H.Q., to F/O Boddison.  
 12th August, 1944.—A.G.O. Woodward, X/29/B, to Lt. R. E. Swindlehurst, R.M.A.  
 26th August, 1944.—Fw. D. M. Patten, IV Reg. H.Q., to Mr. R. L. Kitchener.  
 9th September, 1944.—Fw. S. Betts, V/37/A.1.Z, to Sgt. V. Swaine, E. Surrey Regt.  
 16th September, 1944.—Fw. Joan Caddington, IV/12/C Div. H.Q. (att. Transport), to Coy.O. "Tug" Anslow, Finance Officer.  
 18th September, 1944.—L/Fw. McHugh, C Div. H.Q. (Londonderry), to L/Fm. McDaid, C.I.Y.  
 1944.—Fw. P. Smith, III/10/H.Q., to F/Sgt. Gibson.  
 1944.—G.O. Crompton, III/10/A.2, to Sgt. Treece, R.A.  
 Correction (as per last issue).  
 4th May, 1944.—Fw. Winder, X/29/B Div. H.Q., to D/R Broad, X/29/H.Q. (now serving for Overseas Contingent).

## Engagements

- Fw. B. Lilley, IV/11/A Div. H.Q., to Ldg. Sig. K. Illingworth, R.N.  
 Fw. K. Glover, IV Reg. H.Q., to F/O J. R. Bennett, R.C.A.F.  
 Fw. Woodward, IV/11/A.3.Z, to ex Fm. Maurice Emery (now working in the coal mines).  
 Fw. Sansom, VI/14/A Div. H.Q., to Pilot Offr. R. Douglas, R.C.A.F.  
 Fw. Smith (863617), VI/14/H.Q., to Tpr. Pickering, Royal Tank Regt.  
 Fw. S. J. Streeter, VI/14/H.Q., to Major W. J. Fillis, R.A.S.C.  
 P/T Fw. Salisbury, IX/23/B Div. H.Q., to J. Mason, R.A.F.

## Births

- 18th July, 1944.—To Mrs. Allen (ex-Fw., V/R H.Q.), a son—John William.  
 19th July, 1944.—To Mrs. Wilkinson (ex-Fw., V/R H.Q.), a daughter—Carol Ann Norman.  
 23rd July, 1944.—To Mrs. Heawood (nee Senior, attached V/38/C.4.T), a daughter—Janet Susan.  
 10th August, 1944.—To ex-Fw. Moore (IV/11/A.1.Z), twin girls.  
 11th August, 1944.—To Mrs. Fowkes (ex-L/Fw., V/36/C.6.Z) and Fm. Fowkes, a son—Robert Anthony.  
 10th September, 1944.—To Coy.O. (III/10/H.Q.) and Mrs. Frayne, a daughter—Patricia Mary.

## Hoggsnorton-in-the-West-Countree (i.e., Somewhere in 17)

I spent my annual leave down in the West Country and happened to arrive in the middle of a "Holidays at Home" week. I scrounged a programme and just missed N.F.S. Area 17 Swimming Gala and Dance by one day. However, I soon learned that the Local Lads were doing some "stunts" one evening, so I duly arrived to watch events.

Firstly, they put up a splendid show of the "Hoggsnorton Town Brigade," and amidst shouts of laughter from all the children present they proceeded to save Mrs. Entwistles' husband from a burning building, only to drop him during the "carrying down" process. Valiant efforts were then made to rescue Mrs. Entwistle (the local Section Leader with all sorts of padding under his simply ravishing gown!), but they all failed, and finally Mrs. "E" succeeded in rescuing the Noble Officer himself. Whilst all this was happening the Mayor arrived and promptly fell over the despatch rider's scooter which was clattering up the roadway. He did manage to decorate them all with "tin-lid medals" but never in the correct place! The up-to-date appliance they used was the one which has been found so useful to water the plants with—a stirrup pump. No doubt their two-man manual was at a fire, the tender having rushed up the road about an hour earlier.

The next event was a handball game against the A.T.C. boys. The N.F.S. won, needless to say, but I put it down to the fact that they were wearing the Football Club's left-off green and yellow jerseys.

The heavy-weights of the Home Guard then marched on to the field and I realised that a Tug-of-War was about to take place. I felt really sorry for the firemen, as they were beaten by the Home Guard by two straight pulls, but it was very funny to see the Section Leader lose his footing and slide along the ground! (I do not think this was really meant to happen.)

For the final event the men all dressed up as women and really got down to extinguishing an imaginary fire. Mrs. "E" again appeared (still complete with padding) and on many occasions managed to fall into the dam, always contriving to get someone else wet as well. A battle royal commenced with the men turning the hoses on each other—you should have seen them run! They seemed to enjoy this as much, if not more, than the spectators. The show finished at 21.00 hrs., presumably to allow Mrs. "E" to have a "quick one" before returning to duty. She can probably confirm this, as I was not present at this "ceremony."

A.G.O., IV/12/H.Q.