

AUGUST  
(Vol. 2. No. 7)

# THE JET



OFFICIAL JOURNAL  
of THE NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION



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# THE JET

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF

## The National Fire Service Officers' Association

VOL. II No. 7

AUGUST 1945

4 Redland Court Road,  
Redland, Bristol, 6.

*It is encouraging to note that the fundamental keynote of articles submitted for publication in this Journal, almost without exception, link up with post-war reconstruction. Since its inception, the Association has always stood for improvements in conditions of service, a policy which is closely related to the future development of steady efficiency within the Service.*

*At this critical period in its history, the N.F.S. is red-hot news. Everyone is wondering what will be its future. Notwithstanding disparaging statements appearing in the press and certain journals, there can be no doubt that all the experience gained through five years of emergency organization will materially affect the post-war Fire Service. The Home Secretary's letter (which appears on page 11) points towards a certain measure of Home Office control even under local authority administration. The whole question must undoubtedly await final legislation by the new Government.*

*The years which lie ahead will demand greater evolution in fire-fighting technique than ever before, keeping pace with entirely new methods in industry and transport—particularly by air. Not the least of these demands is the vital necessity for a higher standard of fire prevention, forming an integral part of the Service and with the Irish aim of extinguishing the fire before it occurs.*

*The various views expressed in this Journal will, I feel sure, convince readers that members of the N.F.S.O.A. are genuinely concerned that the post-war British Fire Service should be modelled on sound, progressive lines.*

Yours sincerely,

*W. Bennett*

Editor



# The Association—Current Topics

Members will be interested in this summary of the principal items which have received the attention of either the National Council or Executive Committee :

## Election of Women Representatives

Miss M. E. Oddy, O.B.E. (No. 5 Region) and Miss A. A. Macdonald (No. 1 Region) have been elected to serve on the National Council.

## Co-option of Part Time Representatives

Mr. W. E. Whitehouse and Sir Eric Studd, Bt., have been co-opted on the National Council to represent Part Time Members.

## Revision of Rules

This matter has been left in abeyance pending more definite information on the future of the Service.

## Part Time Officers

Suggestions have been received from Regions regarding the benefits which can be derived through membership of the Association, and these have been referred by the Executive Committee to Mr. W. E. Whitehouse, who will submit his report to the National Council.

## Pensions

Regions have submitted their proposals, and the N.F.S.O.A. is pressing for the acceptance of the "two for one" scheme by the Department (i.e., each year of war service to be counted as two years for superannuation purposes).

## Pensions and Injury Allowances

The General Secretary has written to the Department stating that as the pay and conditions of service of temporary policeman have now been assimilated with those of the Regular Police Force, the Association is anxious that similar action be taken in respect of non-regular firemen.

## Retention of Interest by Past Members of the Service

Following up Miss Hammond's motion at the Annual General Meeting regarding the retention of interest by past members of the N.F.S., the Executive Committee are considering this matter and would welcome suggestions.

Associate Membership of the N.F.S.O.A. (10/6d.) might include social functions which would enable officers to keep in touch with fellow members. Consideration may also be given to an annual reunion at the time of the next General Meeting, and it is hoped that as much as possible will be done to arrange suitable functions at Regional level.

## Delays at Departmental Level

A full statement has been prepared and the Department written on this matter.

## Annual Leave

The Association is still pressing the Department to meet its full proposals, viz :

F.F.C's, A.O's and above	..	..	..	5 weeks
D.O's, A.A.O's and above	..	..	..	4 weeks
Col. O's, S. Coy. O's and G.O's	..	..	..	24 days
Coy. O's and A.G.O's	..	..	..	21 days

## King's Police and Fire Services Medal

The Police Federation of England and Wales have turned down the proposal that there should be separate medals for the Police and Fire Services. It may be mentioned that before such a matter can be considered, Dominion consent would have to be obtained.

# The Association—Current Topics

## Police War Bonus

All Police Brigades have been circularized (N.F.S. Circ. 5/1945) asking them to signify their assent to the Police War Bonus as applicable to ex-regular firemen being made pensionable.

## Income Tax Allowances—Shirts and Collars

The Association have written to the Board of Inland Revenue putting forward a strong case for an allowance for expenditure on shirts and collars.

## Acting Ranks

The case of a Company Officer, who was reduced from the acting rank of Senior Company Officer after only one day's notice (having held the acting rank for almost 2 years), has received the National Council's attention.

In reply the Department agreed that where acting appointments had been held for long periods, it would be reasonable to give more notice, and that the point would be brought to the notice of Chief Regional Fire Officers.

## Cost of Living Bonus

Those Brigades whose Cost of Living Bonus has not been pensionable (e.g., L.C.C., West Ham, Birmingham, Leicester, etc.) have been asked to agree to this being made pensionable.

## Accommodation for Entitled Officers

The Home Office have been written to ask whether there has been any change in the Department's attitude regarding the requisitioning of premises for entitled officers. So far no reply has been received.

## Post-War Fire Service

The Executive Committee has asked Regional Committees as a matter of urgency to forward their proposals on conditions of service for Officers under a Local Authority set up. This matter has arisen as a result of the Home Secretary's letter to Local Authority Associations and the L.C.C., which is printed in full on page 11.

## Reassessment of Officers

The Association has taken strong exception to the context of the circular letter which has been sent to downgraded officers.

The Department have been asked to revise the wording of this circular to read in a manner that will not reflect detrimentally upon the officer's individual efficiency.

## Widow's Pension

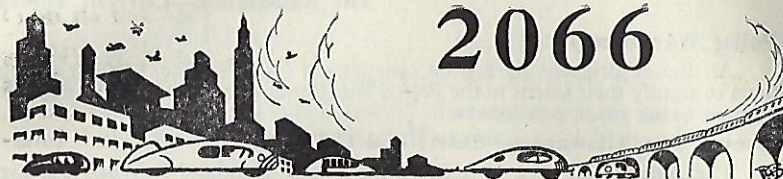
The Council are taking up the case of an Officer in No. 1 Region who died on duty at a fire. His widow was awarded only a very small pension under the Police Pensions Act of 1921, and every possible effort is being made to obtain an increase.

## Executive Committee

As a result of the ballot held at the May meeting of the National Council, the following members have been elected to serve on the Executive Committee :

Commander Sir AYLMER FIREBRACE, C.B.E. (President), M.I.Fire E., R.N. (Retd.)	
F. W. DELVE, Esq., C.B.E., M.I.Fire E. (Vice President and Chairman of the Council)	
A. E. KAY, Esq., F.C.C.S. (Vice President)	
J. REES-JONES, Esq. (Honorary Solicitor)	
N. PORTER, Esq., A.C.I.S. (Honorary Treasurer)	
R. READER HARRIS, Esq. (General Secretary)	
A. W. PARAMOR, Esq. (Region 6)	
A. A. I. GALLOWAY, Esq., M.I.Fire E. (Region 3)	
A. S. PRATTEN, Esq., O.B.E., M.B.E., G.M., M.I.Fire E. (Region 2)	
W. E. WHITEHOUSE, Esq. (Representing Part Time Members)	
Miss M. E. ODDY, O.B.E. (Woman Representative)	





*and all that?*

**W**HAT is to be the future of our Service? How many thousands of hours are being spent all over the country by persons both within and without the Service discussing its future? How much would some of us give for a glimpse into the minds of the Minister—Sir Arthur Dixon—or the Chief of Staff, Sir Aylmer Firebrace!

This article, supplying another “angle” on the “Future of the Fire Service”, would not, I know, meet with universal approbation—managements of Insurance Companies included. I am not, however, concerned with criticism from without the Service, any more than I hope the Minister is with the “childish” reminders he has received from local authorities for their “toys” to be returned to them.

#### **Private Interest for Private Gain**

If we examine the history of the Army and the Navy we would find that at one time they were maintained, and in one case even “promoted”, by private interest for private gain. It took experience and foresight to prove that these two essential Services must be State maintained, and not only for the reasons that they were weapons capable of making war.

I think it would be correct to say that the Air Force was born during a war, and was, therefore, a child of the State from its birth, although we have reason to believe that a succession of governments allowed, during the years of questionable peace, private interests to supply this vital Service with what was later to prove the life blood of the nation.

#### **Police and Local Control**

The Police Service, born of the State, was from its inception allowed to develop locally within prescribed limits; like the Fire Service it has suffered the vicissitudes of local control and prejudice. Expert Police Officers, like their Fire Service colleagues, have had to rely on the good humour of butchers, bakers and the like, whose duty it was (while doing part-time work on a Council) to select and recommend candidates for vacancies that existed in a Service of which, in detail, they knew little.

#### **A Humanitarian Service**

In my opinion the Fire Service shares, with only two other organizations, the honour of being internationally a humanitarian Service—irrespective of colour, race, creed, politics, war or peace.

2066 and all that?

The words which could appropriately surround our cap badges (*Vitam Remque ut Servemus*) are the same (at least, so far as the first part is concerned) as the organizations to which I refer—the Red Cross and St. John. How, therefore, can such organizations be other than “International” in character and construction?

#### **The Vital Point**

When we attend a fire, and by our work and effort restrict damage (in cash value) to shillings instead of pounds, to pounds instead of hundreds of pounds, to whose financial benefit are we labouring? If the property is uninsured, the taxpayer, but in by far the majority of cases we are working to the financial benefit of the Insurance Companies.

By our effort the amount Insurance Companies have to pay out is reduced. As a result their profits in this branch are greater, and may be the means of making an indifferent dividend an attractive one.

#### **State-Controlled Fire Insurance**

It has often been said, when discussing the merits of an efficient Fire Service, “The trouble is that it is a non-revenue producing organization—it is a dead loss to the rates, or almost so.” To employ more men—to buy more efficient machines—to build better stations—means an immediate increase in the rates and the ratepayers won’t stand for it. What is the answer? In my opinion there is only one—State-Controlled Fire Insurance, and, having regard to shortage of houses, labour and materials that there is bound to be during the next five years, it must be compulsory.

How will this affect the taxpayer? Very little—the majority of landlords and tenants to-day pay fire insurance; by paying it to the State, who in turn will provide science and service to prevent and minimize fires, they will get their money’s worth—they might even get cheaper insurance, which the following *estimated* figures will reveal :—

To-day the average fire insurance premium is, I believe, 2/- per cent for contents, and 1/9d. per cent for structure. Rates for business premises, factories and special risks will, of course, differ. Estimating total housing in the country post war at 15 million, and average value of house and contents at £1,500, premiums assured from residential property alone would come to 22½ million a year. Adding say another 30 million from premiums in respect of factories, houses of entertainment, ships, aircraft, airports, business premises, vehicles, forest and common land, etc., etc., gives a total income of 52½ million.

This year’s fire losses will, in all probability, amount to 12 million. Add to this another 12 million for providing a peace-time Fire Service, and we have a liability of 24 million, having 28½ million on the credit side to be used for Fire Colleges and Training Schools, Salvage Squads, periodic replacing of equipment, sending officers and men to other countries to add to their experience, providing compensation to voluntary



2066 and all that?

and retained firemen, maintaining a Cadet Corps, reducing premiums, and, finally, why not subsidizing a National Fire Service Superannuation Scheme?

## Administration

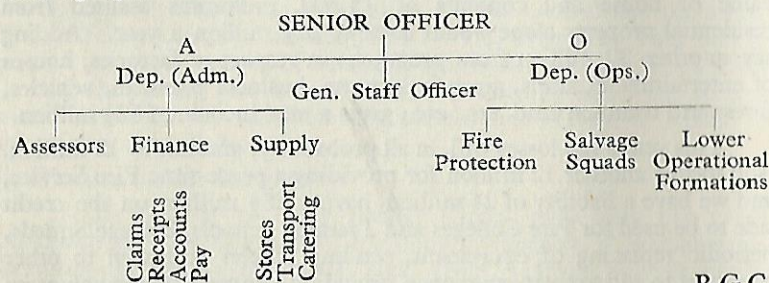
There is no reason why the scheme should not be administered by the Uniformed Administrative Branch of the Service, enlarging it as necessary, locally, with civilians to do the work speedily and efficiently. In a peace-time Service our Administrative system would require drastic revision; the elaborate system of check and counter-check, necessary during war, must not prevail in peace. Let us, therefore, design our internal administrative procedure on commercial lines, and use the consequential surplus labour to administer the State Fire Insurance.

## Fire Prevention the Keynote

The reader might justifiably say, "Why on earth should the Fire Service become involved in State administration not directly concerned with the running of the Fire Service?" To such a critic I say that the Fire Service wants to, and indeed must, become involved in every phase of national life relating to the word "fire." We must have, amongst other things, a strong professional and highly-skilled Fire Prevention Branch, for such a service is half-a-century overdue. What a dream for a Fire Prevention Officer! The knowledge that (1) all premises and machines used by human beings *must* be insured against fire, (2) that his branch of the Service will be consulted before Certificates of Insurance are issued, (3) after any fire a press on the button will produce his opposite number from the Salvage Branch, the Operational Branch, the Administrative Branch and, if necessary, the Research Expert, plus *all* relative correspondence revealing the complete history of the object which has been fired.

## A Service for the People

By providing such an organization as I have outlined, our country would give, in peace as in war, the lead to the world by providing a powerful instrument to wage ceaseless war against the plague of fire—at the same time maintaining the true spirit of democracy for which our men are fighting—a Service provided by the people, of the people, for the people.



R.G.C.

# PERSONALIA

On the 29th May, 1945, No. 31 F.F.H.Q. (Brighton) said good-bye to **Mr. J. K. BUTLER, M.B.E.**

Mr. Butler, who has served as deputy to Fire Force Commander Birch, O.B.E., since the inception of the National Fire Service, commenced service with the A.F.S. in 1938.

He was Region 12 Secretary since 1941, a member of the National Council and the General Purposes Committee. There is no doubt that Area 31 will sadly miss the presence of an invigorating personality.

\* \* \* \* \*

His many friends were delighted to hear that the King had approved the award of the Police and Fire Services Medal to **Mr. THOMAS CARSON.**

Mr. Carson joined Glasgow Fire Brigade in 1920, and in 1941 had attained the rank of Superintendent.

On Nationalization he was appointed a Divisional Officer in the Western (No. 1) Area of Scotland, a rank he retains after reassessment. He was Chairman of the Scottish Region Branch during 1943-44, and served on the National Council.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Mr. L. CORBRICK**, who received the M.B.E. in the Birthday Honours, joined the Newcastle-on-Tyne Fire Brigade in June, 1933.

Following the outbreak of war he was promoted to Divisional Sub-Officer and, in July, 1940, was seconded to the Scottish Home Department as Fire Brigades Inspector for the Western Scotland Division. Early in 1941 he was transferred to No. 1 (Northern) Region as Senior Fire Brigades Inspector.

On Nationalization he was appointed Senior Regional Staff Officer at No. 1 Region Headquarters, and in March, 1943, was promoted Assistant Fire Force Commander in No. 2 Area, with Headquarters at Stockton. In the same year he was selected to represent this country on an important mission abroad.

**Mr. E. G. DIMMER**, the Regional Treasurer of the Southern (No. 6) Region Branch, left the Service in July of this year.

A Senior Company Officer, Mr. Dimmer has been a pillar of strength in the activities of the N.F.S.O.A.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Mr. G. DRURY** joined the Fire Service as a fireman in 1911, and eventually rose to the rank of Chief Officer at Kingston, London, in 1931, where his father was Chief before him.

From Kingston he joined the Home Office Fire Advisory Staff in 1939, and served in this capacity in many parts of the country.

In 1941 he was appointed Chief Officer of the Plymouth Fire Brigade and upon Nationalization Fire Force Commander of No. 19 Area.

Mr. Drury was awarded the M.B.E. for services rendered in November 1940 at Bristol, and also received commendation from the Home Secretary for his services at the Falmouth fire in April, 1944. No. 19 Area have felt particularly honoured by the recent announcement in the Birthday Honours List of the award of the O.B.E. to Fire Force Commander G. Drury.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Mr. E. B. EASTLAND**, who received the King's Police and Fire Services Medal in the recent Birthday Honours, is the son of a London fireman who served under Sir Eyre Massey Shaw.

A.F.F.C. Eastland joined the London Fire Brigade in June, 1920, and was promoted to the rank of District Officer in September, 1940, when he attended many large enemy action fires in London, Manchester and Liverpool.

Upon Nationalization he was appointed to the rank of Divisional Officer and attached to No. 34 Area, being transferred in September, 1942, to No. 12 Area, "D" Division, Cambridge.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Mr. R. M. EASTON**, of No. 19 Fire Force, has been released from the Service at his own request to return to civil occupation—Petroleum and Explosives Officer for the City of Plymouth.

One of the original whole-time members on the formation of the



## Personalia

Plymouth A.F.S., he served during the "blitzes" throughout No. 19 Area, including Exeter, Torquay, etc. Mr. Easton, who was appointed Senior Staff Officer to Fire Force Commander Drury (March, 1942), volunteered and was accepted for No. 7 Overseas Column in 1944.

Appointed as Part-time Column Officer of Sub Area "A", No. 19 Fire Force, on 12th March, 1945.



**Mr. J. H. FARMER**, who was awarded the King's Police and Fire Services Medal in the Birthday Honours, joined the Leicester Fire Brigade in 1914, and served there for nearly 30 years.

Upon Nationalization he was appointed Deputy Fire Force Commander of No. 9 Fire Force, with the rank of Divisional Officer, and in June, 1942, was promoted to the rank of Assistant Fire Force Commander and transferred to No. 17 Fire Force.

He is naturally a strong supporter of the Institution of Fire Engineers, which had its birth in Leicester, because as Secretary to Mr. Neal, Founder and First President of the Institution, he played a very active part in its inception.

On the 30th April, 1945, one of the best-known Senior Officers in East Anglia retired from whole-time duty, namely, **Mr. PERCY G. GARON**.

At the outbreak of war he immediately undertook whole-time Fire Brigade duty, and under the Home Office scheme was appointed a District Officer. On Nationalization he became Fire Force Commander in charge of No. 11 Fire Force.

During World War I, Commander Garon served in the Royal Army Service Corps, obtaining the rank of Captain and receiving the award of the Military Cross in German East Africa.

For service in this war he received the George Medal and, as a fitting tribute to his sterling qualities, the award of the King's Police and Fire Services Medal in the recent Birthday Honours List. Although he has retired from whole-time duty, Mr. Garon is to continue in a part-time capacity without change of rank.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Mr. W. W. GAYTON**, previously Deputy Commander of No. 23 (Worcester) Fire Force, has been promoted to the rank of Assistant Fire Force Commander and posted to No. 20 Fire Force, Cardiff.

He joined the Birmingham Fire Brigade in June, 1920, after serving in the Royal Artillery during the first World War, and was in charge of many major fire operations in the city during the "blitz."

On Nationalization he was posted as Divisional Officer to "A" Division of No. 23 Area, and later appointed Deputy Fire Force Commander.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Mr. T. B. GOODMAN**, Deputy Fire Force Commander of No. 30 Area, received the King's Police and Fire Services Medal in the recent Birthday Honours List. This well-deserved honour was a result of gallantry displayed at a fire involving a ship laden with petrol, an incident that occurred in the Channel during the invasion of Europe.

\* \* \* \* \*

On 31st May, 1945, **Mr. NEVILLE HANDS** of No. 29

Area relinquished his position as a whole-time Divisional Officer and returned to his home town in the Midlands. He is, however, retaining his rank in a part-time capacity, thus continuing an association with the Fire Service which commenced as far back as 1913. That year he enrolled as a volunteer in the Rugby Fire Brigade.

In 1941 Mr. Hands was appointed a whole-time Divisional Officer, and in 1943, as a result of re-organization in No. 9 Region, was transferred to No. 10 Region, where he has operated from Headquarters at Southport and Preston.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Mr. H. HICKS, B.E.M.**, of the Portsmouth Sub-Area, whose retirement was reported in the June issue of *The Jet*, has been awarded the King's Police and Fire Services Medal in the Birthday Honours.

Mr. Hicks attended a Farewell Dinner at Fire Force 14 Headquarters on 27th June, when many N.F.S. Officers who had served under his command in Portsmouth congratulated him upon the award.

In Mr. Hicks many Fire Service Officers are losing a good colleague whose name will live in the Southern Region as an example of "a man's man."

\* \* \* \* \*

**Mr. E. T. J. ISAACS**, who has served for over two years as Divisional Clerk of "A" Division and Sub Area "A", No. 17 Area, has left the Service to return to local government.

Prior to his Bristol appointment, Mr. Isaacs was Deputy Commandant of the Exeter A.F.S.

A lively personality, he quickly made friends in Bristol, his numerous activities including Hon. Secretaryship of the No. 17 Area Branch of the N.F.S.O.A., membership of the No. 7 Region Council, and *Jet* Correspondent. He also put in excellent work as Treasurer of the No. 17 Area Recreation and Welfare Club.

His election to the Home Office Committee on Administrative Procedure indicated the high regard in which his capabilities were held in official circles.

## Personalia



His many friends will be interested to learn that **Mr. W. J. H. PATON** has been appointed Sub Editor on the *Swansea Evening Post*.

He joined the A.F.S. at Haverfordwest before the outbreak of war, and was eventually drafted to Cardiff, where he served as a Staff Officer at Regional Fire Headquarters until his discharge.

Keenly interested in sport, Mr. Paton represented Wales on the N.F.S. Sports Council. He was also Hon. Secretary and Treasurer of the Regional Council of the Benevolent Fund.

His contributions to *The Jet* as Regional Correspondent included the "Sporting Chatter" column, under the nom-de-plume of "Old Guard", a feature which has proved extremely popular.

\* \* \* \* \*

A Farewell Party was held at No. 19 Fire Force Headquarters to mark the occasion of the departure of **Mr. JORDAN**, Senior Company Officer, who has been discharged the Service at his own request.

In spite of his position as Area Catering Officer, he was a popular member of No. 19 Area, and best wishes of all members go with him.



## Personalia

The award of the M.B.E. to **Mrs. V. M. MOORE**, Regional Woman Fire Officer of No. 6 (Southern) Region, gave considerable pleasure to her many friends.

Mrs. Moore was appointed Regional Woman Fire Officer in January, 1942, having previously served in the London Region. She has done much to promote the efficiency and welfare of the women's branch of the Service.

\* \* \* \*

Members will be particularly pleased to note that the King's Birthday Honours List included the award of the O.B.E. to **Mr. A. S. PRATTEN**, who has already received the M.B.E. and George Medal for "gallantry and leadership", in 1941.

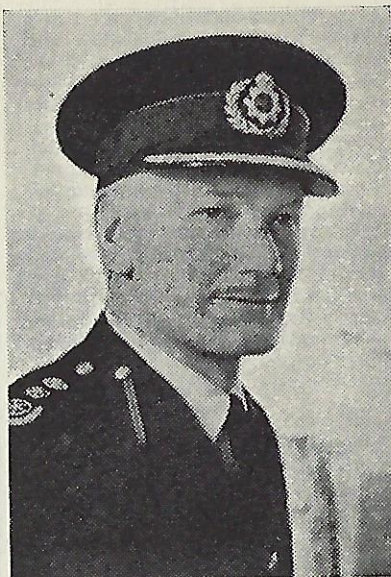
His varied career began with the Bristol Fire Brigade, where he served in his home town from 1926 to 1934. The following year Mr. Pratten was appointed Chief Officer of the Whiston R.D.C. Brigade and organized this local authority's first fire brigade.

After service with Malden and Coombe and the Burgh of Greenock (where he fought blitz fires at Clydeside), he was promoted Fire Force Commander of the Eastern Area of Scotland in 1941.

Mr. Pratten has always been keenly interested in the Association's activities, being first secretary of the Scottish Branch and Chairman in 1944 and the current year. A member of the I.F.E., he obtained first place with distinction in the Associate Membership examination.

\* \* \* \*

**Mr. J. WHITESIDE**, Assistant Director of Studies at the National Fire Service College, has been transferred to No. 27 (Manchester) Fire Force as Assistant Fire Force Commander.



**Mr. A. V. THOMAS** was seconded from the Bristol Fire Brigade to become a Regional Inspector in No. 8 Region at the inception of the Regional Fire Brigades Scheme. When Nationalization came, he was appointed Divisional Officer at No. 20 (Cardiff) Fire Force Headquarters, where he subsequently became Deputy Fire Force Commander and latterly Assistant Fire Force Commander.

During the period of heavy raiding Mr. Thomas served through many 'blitzes' on both sides of the Bristol Channel, and was awarded the George Medal for gallantry at the Pembroke Dock Oil Fire.

With promotion to the rank of Fire Force Commander, he is now posted to the Home Office Fire Staff.

## "N.F.S. May Become F.B. Again"

The above headline appeared in the Press as a result of the Home Secretary's letter to Local Authority Associations and the L.C.C. (complete text of which appears on the opposite page).

There is evidently a subtle difference between calling the N.F.S., and summoning the Fire Brigade.

## POST-WAR FIRE SERVICE

In view of the somewhat garbled versions which appeared in the press at the time, we print below the full text of the Home Secretary's letter to the Local Authority Associations and the London County Council on the subject of the future of the Fire Service.

"The Government have considered the views on the future of the Fire Service which have been expressed by the representatives of the Local Authorities, and have authorized me to continue the consultations on the footing that Parliament will not be asked to sanction the retention of the National Fire Service on a permanent footing against the express desire of the Local Authority Associations to have the Service transferred to Local Authority control. They consider it, however, essential to frame the Service, in matters of organization, equipment, training, size of units, etc., so as to take advantage of the experience gained during the war in the operation of the Fire Service over wide areas, and to secure the highest possible efficiency on the part of officers and men.

These requirements have been discussed in general terms in the course of the conferences which have already taken place, from which it would appear that, though ways and means have not so far been worked out, there is a large measure of agreement as to the objectives which should be the aim. It is very important that concrete measures should be worked out and, if possible, agreed between us, so as to put an end to the present uncertainty in the minds of all concerned, and I hope that your Association will agree to participate in further discussions, to be opened as soon as possible and carried forward with all practicable speed, on the following footing:—

- The Fire Service to be under local, as against Home Office, control, but subject to a measure of Home Office supervision as regards standards of efficiency, conditions of service, etc.
- The organization to be such as to provide local fire services appropriate to the degree of risk in every area.
- The administrative and operational machinery to provide for the employment of the available fire-fighting resources to the best practicable advantage, irrespective of the details of local boundaries.
- Provision to be made for meeting the requirements mentioned, and accepted in principle in the course of the discussions which have already taken place.

If agreement can be reached between us upon a scheme for establishing the post-war Fire Service on a footing of this kind, I, for my part, should be prepared, and I hope that the Government would be prepared, to adopt it for the basis of legislation to be submitted to Parliament in due course."

Home Office,  
27th June, 1945

DONALD SOMERVELL,  
Home Secretary

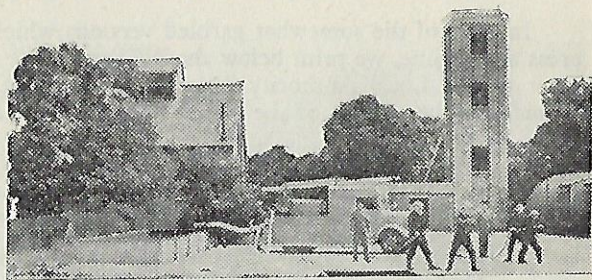
## WISHFUL THINKING !





## Junior Arm of the Senior Service

Royal Naval  
Fire Fighters  
Exercising at  
Chatham  
Dockyard  
Fire School



## The Royal Naval Fire Force

By D. J. LAIDLAW-DICKSON

So many peace-time Fire Brigades recruited almost entirely from ex-Naval personnel that the traditions of the Navy have inevitably played a large part in the foundation of the National Fire Service. Indeed, the very slang heard at the mess table at any fire station where ex-regulars may be smacks of the sea. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the Royal Naval Fire Force, though its youngest unit, has nevertheless quickly achieved a standard of efficiency worthy of the Senior Service. It is essentially a wartime unit and, like all such units, suffered the difficulties and inconveniences of wartime formation.

### Rumours of War

To discover the real background, it is necessary to begin during the dark days before Munich, when rumours of war first made themselves heard. The Admiralty were, even then, fully alive to the shortcomings of the existing fire-fighting arrangements against air attack, and in July 1938 appointed a Fire Precautions Officer—Commander W. Walmsley, O.B.E., R.N., who is to-day the senior fire officer in the Service. His duties were to assess the fire risks at all Naval and civil Establishments in the country and to allocate the necessary fire cover. Heads of Departments also arranged a high degree of decentralization so that stores of all kinds were widely dispersed throughout the country.

In these early days personnel were made up from Royal Marine Police, augmented by civil employees and ratings from Naval Establishments.

Mr. Birch, then Chief Officer of Brighton Fire Brigade, now Fire Force Commander, No. 31 Area, gave practical assistance by arranging instructors' courses at his local training school. Similar help was given in other parts of the country, where local authorities' Fire Officers were equally willing to co-operate.

### First Steps Inadequate

But the inadequacy of these first steps was brought home painfully and forcefully by a fire in August, 1940, involving a fuel depot, which burned for over three weeks and cost the Navy millions of gallons of precious fuel oil. An assistant to help Commander Walmsley was then appointed, and professional fire officers seconded to act as Chief Fire Officers to the Home Commands and Singapore. Two of these officers are still with the R.N.F.F.: one was killed on duty at Devonport, while the others have returned to take up senior ranks in the N.F.S. C.F.O. Lawson, who was in charge at Singapore, escaped after some stirring times, and eventually made his way to Colombo where he served until the autumn of 1944.

Wisely enough, no attempt was made to recruit for the R.N.F.F. by drafting in possibly unsuitable men, but in 1940 an Admiralty Fleet Order was promulgated inviting applications from men with fire-fighting experience. The response was fairly good. Ex-firemen were rated up to Leading Stokers—fire-fighting ratings below to the Stoker Branch—and ex-fire officers were

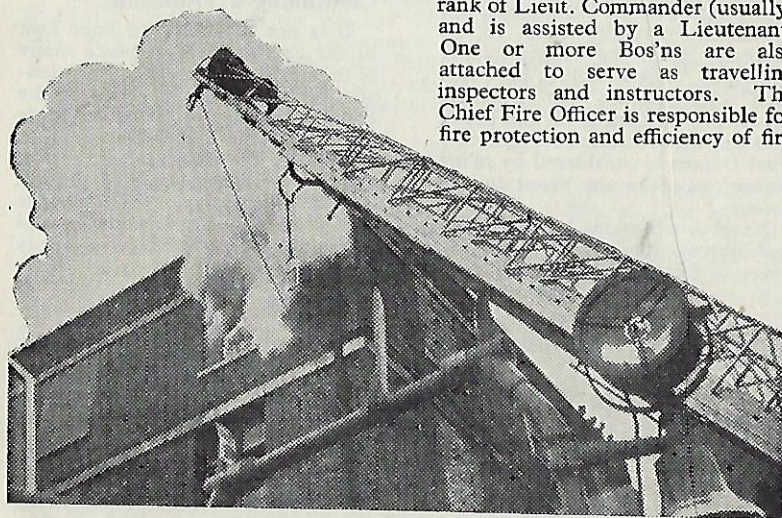
made Petty Officers. These men were drafted to the major fire risks throughout the various commands, and their job was to impart their knowledge to others and to assist in shaping the organization. Most of these men are still serving, and form the backbone of the R.N.F.F. as it is to-day.

### Training Schools Opened

During this period of re-organization it was anticipated—and, in fact, provisionally agreed—that the care of Naval Establishments should ultimately come under the control of the newly-formed National Fire Service. Manpower considerations would not allow of this, however, and naval training developed apace. Schools were opened in Portsmouth, Plymouth and the Nore Commands for basic and advanced fire-fighting training. Attacks on these and other establishments gave trainees their "blooding", so that when, in February 1942, the Admiralty decided to form an official Naval Fire Force, the nucleus of a really good team was already in being.

The approved complement at that time was made up as follows:—

Officers	..	61
C.P.O's and		
Petty Officers	..	151
Leading Hands	..	982
Stokers (F.F.)	..	2,017



H.M.S. "VERNON", PORTSMOUTH

## The Royal Naval Fire Force

In addition, a further 992 men, made up of personnel drafted for periods of six months only, completed the strength. This complement was responsible for manning:

Self Propelled Units	..	63
Major Trailer Pumps	515	
Light Trailer Pumps	219	
Fixed Heavy Pumps	57	
Turntable Ladders	..	3
Fire Boats	..	22
Auxiliary Drifters (fitted		
Fire Float appliances)	17	

### N.F.S. Organization Copied

The liaison between the R.N.F.F. and the N.F.S. has always been of the closest. It was never intended that the Naval units should act as an independent force, but as a Service so interlocked with the N.F.S. as to become to all intents and purposes part and parcel of it. Equipment, training and control room procedure are all identical to N.F.S. practice, while the similar outlook of officers and men has already been stressed. Furthermore, N.F.S. Training Schools, Brighton College and the Liverpool Salvage Corps courses have all been made available to R.N.F.F. personnel. Each Command is organized on a basis similar—in skeleton—to N.F.S. Regional level. A Chief Fire Officer is attached to the staff of the Commander-in-Chief, with the rank of Lieut. Commander (usually) and is assisted by a Lieutenant. One or more Bos'ns are also attached to serve as travelling inspectors and instructors. The Chief Fire Officer is responsible for fire protection and efficiency of fire

Turntable Ladder Drill



## The Royal Naval Fire Force

personnel throughout the Command. His main reference is to assess the requirements for given risks and see that they are adequately covered, the duties being mainly of an administrative nature.

### Dockyards as Sub-Commands

The main risks are in the Naval Dockyards and Oil Fuel Depots. A typical Dockyard, which would be termed a Sub-Command, and roughly approximate to something between a Sub-Area and the old Sub-Division in N.F.S. parlance, might be under the control of a Lieutenant, R.N.V.R., assisted by two Boatswains. Appliances would, perhaps, include six S.P.'s, three major pumps with towing vehicles, and three extra-heavy Stationery pumps, all manned by Naval personnel. In addition, he might have the assistance of from a dozen to twenty major and light pumps manned by civilian employees. Each S.P. carries B.A. and foam gear. Special appliances would probably include hose-laying and ramp lorries. The Fire Control at Yard Headquarters is run at what approximates to the former N.F.S. Sub-Division, and exactly mirrors N.F.S. procedure at that level. It is connected by direct lines to the nearest fire station and N.F.S. Sub-Area Headquarters. Similar arrangements exist at Fuel Oil Depots, but appliances naturally tend to be devoted more to foam-making apparatus. The R.N.F.F. have had such opportunities for practical experience in fighting oil and petrol fires that the protection at Admiralty Fuel Depots is considered by many authorities to be the finest in the country.

Naval Air Stations both at home and abroad require adequate fire cover. Specially - selected men

undergo crash-tender courses at the Fleet Air Arm School at Eastleigh, Hants, to provide the necessary crews for such risks.

### "D Day"—A Knotty Point Solved

It must be agreed that such a force would be incomplete without firemen afloat. Apart from the home complement, four boatswains are serving with the Eastern Fleet, while Officers and men are also attached to fleets and squadrons as widely separated as Iceland, Gibraltar, South Africa and Ceylon. Fire boats of R.N.F.F. sailed with the invasion fleets on "D Day," and credit is claimed by one of its officers for solving a knotty technical point when pumping out concrete caissons in Mulberry Port.

So many N.F.S. Officers have enjoyed the hospitality of R.N.F.F. establishments that it seems almost superfluous to comment on the Naval welcome. Recently, as a result of co-operation on more serious incidents, a fine spirit of friendly rivalry has sprung up between Naval and National Fire Service personnel that is finding its outlet in competition drills. It is no idle compliment to say that on such occasions R.N.F.F. crews are more than capable of holding their own.

### Continuing a Tradition

It is not too much to hope that in the coming days of peace many of them will continue the professional fire brigades' old tradition by coming in via the Navy, bringing with them the valuable experience gained in the Royal Naval Fire Force to enhance the Fire Service of the future, however it may be constituted. When that day comes they may be assured of a hearty welcome.

## HOW DOES ONE QUALIFY?

The General Secretary has received a letter bearing the following heading :  
"COST OF LOVING BONUS, LONDON FIRE BRIGADE"

Evidently a domestic matter, but one is prompted to enquire how many years marriage bliss provide the necessary qualifications! Perhaps Mr. Beveridge will oblige.

# REGION *by Region.*

## NORTHERN (No. 1) REGION

A meeting of the No. 1 Regional Committee was held in Newcastle on 29th May, 1945, and a full agenda was discussed.

A resolution was passed assuring the National Council that any lack of effort to prosecute matters affecting Pensions and recognition of War Service would have serious repercussions on the Association.

It was also resolved that the Committee consider the action of the Council premature in putting its proposals to the Home Secretary on the Post-War Fire Service, and reiterates that it would have been wiser to have waited until such time as the Association had been asked for its views.

The meeting expressed its pleasure that Mr. Bennett had offered his services as Editor of *The Jet*, and it was agreed to write Mr. Kay and thank him for his efforts on behalf of the Association.

The question of the unsatisfactory position of Widows' Pensions was also discussed and a complete report of a local case was being sent to the National Council for their consideration.

These, and other matters, were the subject of very lively discussion, and a profitable meeting resulted.

## EASTERN (No. 4) REGION

A Meeting of the No. 4 Regional Branch was held at Chelmsford on Thursday, 21st June, 1945, under the Chairmanship of Mr. L. O. Goddard.

The Chairman urged the necessity of members keeping in touch with Part-Time Officers: it was also agreed to invite part-time members to the Branch Meetings.

In connection with the War Gratuities Scheme, it was agreed that the Executive Committee of the National Council should be asked to draw up a case for presentation to the Department in the following terms:—

"Ex-regular Firemen who had six or eight years to serve before they completed their pensionable period should be granted an additional year for each year of war service (e.g., two for one)."

### Stand-down Parades

#### No. 11 AREA

At Le Cateau Barracks, Colchester, the Regional Commissioner, Sir Will Spens, C.B.E., inspected 450 part-time members of No. 11 Fire Force on Saturday, 19th May, 1945. The occasion was the official good-bye to part-time personnel of the Fire Force, and the Regional Commissioner conveyed to them his own thanks and those of the Home Secretary for their services.

The Essex Fire Force Silver Band provided music for the march past, the Regional Commissioner taking the salute. Among those present were the Mayor of Colchester (Ald. A. W. Piper), Col. Asgood and Captain Epstein (U.S. Army Air Force), the Chief Regional Fire Officer (Mr. W. Benton, O.B.E.), Regional Woman Fire Officer (Mrs. J. Hicks, O.B.E.), Fire Force Commanders Mees and Garon, M.C., G.M., Assistant Fire Force Commander Harrison, Area Officer Williams, Divisional Officers W. H. Woods, Swansborough, Cartwright, Stonham and Herring.

#### No. 12 AREA

The stand-down Parade for part-time personnel in "A", "B" and "C", and the Bedford Column of "D" Division of No. 12 Area took place on the Luton Town Football Ground on Sunday, 20th May, 1945.



## Region by Region

Speaking to part-time personnel, the Regional Commissioner expressed his appreciation of the many services rendered by men and women of the N.F.S. Their job had been well done and now, with the conclusion of the European War, they could honourably accept their stand-down from active service. Unfortunately, owing to the inclemency of the weather, the Commissioner was unable to inspect the Parade.

With the Regional Commissioner were several representatives of the Local Authorities, including the Mayor of Luton, Alderman Lady Keens, accompanied by the Deputy Mayor, Alderman J. Burgoyne; Town Clerk and Chief Constable of the Borough of Luton; Sir Thomas Keens, Chairman of the Bedfordshire County Council; Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Bedford; Chairman of the Harpenden U.D.C. and Councillor Currall, representing St. Alban's City Council.

N.F.S. Officers present included the C.R.F.O., Mr. W. Benton, O.B.E., the R.W.F.O., Mrs. J. Hicks, O.B.E., F.F.C.'s Stanford and Garon, M.C., G.M., Divisional Officers Sheat, McMorrow, Malster, M.B.E., Eastland and Herring.

Assistant Fire Force Commander Smith was in charge of the Parade, assisted by the following part-time Officers—Column Officer Woodhouse, Senior Company Officers Keens, Mason and Ryman.

Approximately 1,100 part-time officers, men and women assembled for this stand-down parade, and there is no doubt that had the weather been favourable the whole spectacle would have been most impressive.

### No. 13 AREA

#### Victory Party

On Friday, 18th May, 1945, a Victory Party was held at No. 13 Fire Force Headquarters, "Whitegates", Hethersett, when the whole of the Headquarters Staff were the guests of the Fire Force Commander and his Deputy.

After tea, during which the Officers acted as waiters in the General Mess, there was a fancy dress parade. In the evening a dance was held, during which the Fire Force Commander made a presentation of a barometer and set of steel fishing rods to Column Officer Baker, Area Establishments Officer, who is leaving the Service to return to his civilian employment.

#### Stand-down Parades

On Monday, 21st May, 1945, the stand-down of N.F.S. part-time formations in Norfolk and Suffolk was marked by parades held at Norwich and Ipswich.

The parade at Norwich, in charge of Divisional Officer Collow, was attended by about 1,000 part-time personnel, followed by a meeting at the Carlton Cinema, where the Regional Commissioner, Sir Will Spens, C.B.E., the Lord Mayor of Norwich, Mr. E. F. Williamson, Fire Force Commander Barrett and Senior Part-time Officers addressed the gathering.

The Regional Commissioner paid tribute to a job of work well done, and conveyed to them his personal thanks and those of the Home Secretary.

The ceremony concluded with a short thanksgiving service conducted by the Rev. W. Bateman, the National Fire Service Chaplain, and Mr. W. A. Gibbs played the National Fire Service March at the Cinema Organ.

A similar parade took place at Christchurch Park, Ipswich, in charge of Divisional Officer L. O. Goddard, and was attended by the Regional Commissioner, the Lord Mayor, Civil Dignitaries and Senior Officers of the National Fire Service.

After a short thanksgiving service in the open air, the Regional Commissioner took the salute at Sub-Area Headquarters, Valley Road, Ipswich, which was formerly the Headquarters of the Overseas Column.

### SOUTHERN (No. 6) REGION

A Regional Committee Meeting of the Southern Region Branch was held at Reading on Thursday, 5th July, 1945. Mr. A. W. Paramor, O.B.E., took the Chair for the first time as the newly-elected Regional Chairman, and matters under review included the financial position of the Regional Branch, the recruitment of Part-time and Retained Officers to the Association, and the

## Region by Region

proposals to negotiate for each year of war service to be counted as 2 years for superannuation purposes.

It was decided to approach all serving members with regard to outstanding subscriptions, and report to the Honorary Treasurer that the Regional Branch would not revert to the Imprest system in view of the balance in hand being within the neighbourhood of £30.

With regard to benefits which could be offered to Part-time Officers, stress was laid upon the conditions of service, including rates of pay, scale of issue of uniform, injury allowances, compensation for remunerative time lost and the standard of accommodation on Retained Stations.

Company Officer Edwards of No. 15 Fire Force has been nominated as a co-opted member of the Regional Committee. Mr. Edwards is a Fire Officer with many years retained service in Berkshire, and should prove very helpful to the Regional Committee in its work for Part-time Officers.

### SOUTH WESTERN (No. 7) REGION

#### Appointments

Consequent upon the centralization at Regional level, the following members have received appointments as under:

Fire Force Commander J. Y. Kirkup, M.B.E. (No. 17 Area)—Deputy Chief Regional Fire Officer.

Column Officer F. H. G. Potter (No. 19 Area)—Divisional Officer, Finance.

Column Officer T. G. Bickle (No. 17 Area)—Deputy Finance Officer.

Column Officer A. P. Youles (No. 18 Area)—Divisional Officer, Stores.

Column Officer W. G. Holman (No. 19 Area)—Deputy Transport Officer.

S. Coy. Officer B. N. Martin (No. 17 Area)—Column Officer, Accommodation.

S. Coy. Officer F. J. Phillips (No. 39 Area)—Column Officer, Deputy Establishments Officer.

### No. 19 AREA

A Civil Defence Stand-down Parade was held at Truro on 27th May, 1945, the salute being taken by Col. Bolitho, Lord Lieutenant of the County, supported by Mr. H. M. Medlyn, Deputy Regional Commissioner. The National Fire Service from all parts of Cornwall contributed to a very smart parade.

Later in the week a Stand-down Dinner was arranged for the city, at which over a thousand personnel were present. Divisional Officer Cassini proposed the toast of "The Civil Defence Services."

Quarterly meetings of all members of the Association have been inaugurated in No. 19 Area, and the first was held at Sub Area "C" Headquarters on 24th June, 1945, with Divisional Officer Smith of Sub Area "A" in the Chair.

This meeting turned out to be one of the most interesting that had been held for some considerable time, and lively discussions took place on all subjects affecting the welfare of Officers.

### MIDLAND (No. 9) REGION

A meeting of the Regional Committee was held on Friday 18th May, 1945, at Corporation Street, Birmingham, with Mr. Lucas in the Chair.

The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed, and the Chairman enlarged one or two points from the minutes.

He was able to tell the Committee that, owing to the very successful efforts on the part of the Association, an increase in Annual Leave is now a certainty. This Committee is still pursuing the question of special leave for Officers prior to leaving the Service on grounds of redundancy.

Various other points that have been brought up from time to time were discussed and progress reported, and the Chairman gave the Committee a full report of the May meeting of the National Council.

One of the most satisfactory items discussed at the Regional meeting was the very successful effort on the part of the Secretary in contacting local M.P.'s with reference to gratuities for ex-regulars.



## Region by Region

### NORTH WESTERN (No. 10) REGION

A meeting of the Regional Council was held in Manchester on 22nd May, 1945.

Severe criticism was made of publications appearing in the Press as to post-war conditions of service, and it was agreed that publicity should be given to the correct version and that this proposal should be brought to the notice of the various Authorities who are now considering the Home Secretary's proposals.

The indifferent attitude adopted by Home Office towards National Fire Service Officers' Association matters was deplored, and it was suggested that this could be overcome by writing to local M.P.'s asking for questions to be raised in the House, or by co-opting an M.P. to the National Council.

Mr. Drage indicated in a report of the National Council meeting that Regions are to submit to the General Secretary ideas of what can be done for Part-time Officers, both volunteer and retained, together with potential members.

Mr. Hampson was welcomed as *The Jet* Correspondent in place of Mr. Roberts, who had left the Service.

It was thought that there was a lack of enthusiasm and insufficient publicity, particularly with regard to future policy. It was proposed that Mr. Drage be instructed to raise the question of falling membership and bad payment of subscriptions at the next meeting of the National Council, and ask for guidance as to how to deal with the problem. No. 10 Region are of the opinion that this is caused by the long delay at Home Office on the question of major policy.

A Branch of the Westminster Bank had informed a member that free banking facilities were only available to members of the Officers' Association in the London County Council, and in consequence Mr. Tyson was carrying the matter further.

Sincere appreciation of the work put in by Mr. Kay was expressed, and it was felt that the Association will lose one of its strongest supporters.

Discussion took place on the question of difference in pay and conditions of A.F.S. men and ex-regulars.

It was proposed and carried that the following resolution be sent to the National Council from No. 10 Region Branch:—

"That the Department be approached with a view to standardizing pay and conditions of service in the National Fire Service to remove the present inequality and anomalies during the transitional period".

### No. 27 AREA

*Committee Meeting, 6th June, 1945*

The main subject discussed was:

Ex-Regular Officers—2 years Pensionable Service for each completed year of War Service—and it was proposed that the following points be forwarded to the Regional Secretary:—

- Ex-regular Officers have had no advantage over A.F.S. Officers during the war years.
- The question of pensions should not be a deterrent against pressing for two years service for one.
- Promotions under present conditions are almost nil.
- Only recently has an Officer's expenses been acknowledged.
- General loss of privileges throughout the war, such as leave, emoluments, etc.

## Region by Region

### SCOTTISH (No. 11) REGION

The Regional Branch Committee met in Glasgow on Monday, 16th June, 1945. Mr. A. S. Pratten and Mr. T. Carson were congratulated on behalf of all the members on their figuring in the recent King's Birthday Honours. Among the matters dealt with were the following:—

1. Re-assessment of Officers and the resultant chaos from dealing with the different ranks in a staggered manner.
2. Private purchase of ALL uniforms by Officers.
3. Interest of Part-time members.
4. Additional travelling expenses for ranks of Divisional Officer and upwards.
5. Post-War Service—control and scope.
6. Reduction in membership due to reassessment.
7. Appointment of Mr. G. M. Boyd as representative to serve on the National Council.

It was resolved to ask the Council to consider allowing the Region to approach the Scottish Home Department on matters peculiar to Scotland, as it was felt that personal contact, as existed in London with the Home Office, was much to be desired.

### SOUTH EASTERN (No. 12) REGION

Everyone throughout the Region was pleased to hear of the honour His Majesty had conferred upon Mr. A. A. Davies, the Chief Regional Fire Officer—O.B.E. in the recent Birthday Honours List. It is with particular satisfaction that the Senior Officer in the Region has been so recognized. From the start of the war No. 12 Region has received the full measure of the enemy's hate. Not only did the first bomb fall in Kent, but the dubious honour of receiving the first flying bomb and also the last rocket is claimed by No. 12 Region. Another particular species known only to the South Eastern Region was shelling from the fall of France until the recapture of Cape Gris Nez. The honour the Chief Regional Fire Officer has received reflects credit on everyone who has been associated with No. 12 Region.

#### Appointments

A number of promotions and appointments have recently been made under the new Centralized Administration Organization.

Divisional Officer Steed—Assistant Fire Force Commander, Senior Administrative Officer.  
Column Officer Geldart—Divisional Officer, Regional Finance Officer.  
Column Officer Paine—Divisional Officer, Regional Establishments Officer.  
Divisional Officer Ansell—Divisional Officer, Regional Transport Officer.

### No. 32 AREA

Members will have read that a severe ammunition dump explosion occurred at Algonquin Camp, Witley (near Godalming) on the night of Sunday, 17th June, 1945.

A number of explosions followed the original "big bang", and the N.F.S. enhanced its good name in this part of the country by prompt attendance and the manner in which it dealt with the incident. Apart from the risk of exploding ammunition, there was a considerable risk to personnel from the chemical warfare dump, but the conduct and spirit of the firemen attending, including many part-timers, received high commendation.

*It is the aim of this journal to encourage the fullest freedom of opinion and expression within the Association. Unless the fact is expressly stated, therefore, views put forward in these pages, whether in the Editorial columns or in articles, should not necessarily be regarded as expressing the considered policy of the Association.*



# Communications—Post War

## *Despatch Riders and Messengers*

THE question is now arising as to whether Despatch Riders and Messengers will be counted as an essential part of the Post-War Fire Service.

During the present war time emergency these two bodies have proved in many instances that events would have gone badly without them, for often the normal means of communication at various fires and incidents have been nil. The peace-time Fire Brigade was always handicapped by the absolute minimum of personnel and the number of Stations available. To-day Government and Local Authorities should see the benefit and wisdom of retaining a larger Fire Service personnel with an increased number of Stations.

### STATIONS LINKED BY D.R.

With an additional number of Stations comes the need for some personal link between them, other than the normal telephone and postal methods. For speed and efficiency, Despatch Riders are the answer.

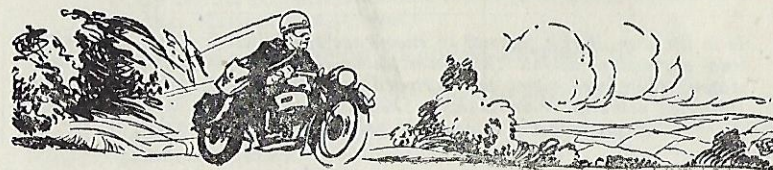
The various town planning schemes afoot throughout the country all tend to spread and cover a greater area, which means that fire appliances will, generally speaking, be called upon to travel greater distances away from their Stations, especially where rural districts and country areas are covered and where telephone instruments are less-frequently available.

### PRINCIPAL FUNCTION—FIRE MESSAGES

When arriving at a fire the officer-in-charge finds that more appliances are required. It is obvious that a member of a crew already in attendance can ill be spared to search around for the nearest telephone or police box and send back the make-up message, whereas if the appliance is accompanied by a Despatch Rider, the complete crew can carry on with their work. Even if the nearest telephone is a considerable distance away, it could soon be reached by the D.R.; he would also be available for "stop" and "informative" messages. This would comprise his principal work, but in addition there are all the various routine despatches connected with the Station.

### A FIRE SERVICE CADET CORPS

With regard to Messengers. These would not be required as such, taking into account the type of work performed by them during war-time conditions, but an excellent scheme for replacing retiring



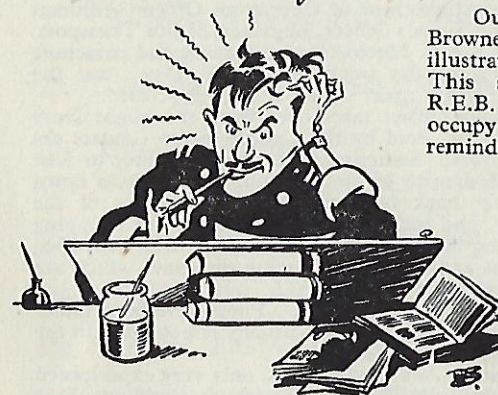
## Communications—Post War

members of the Fire Service could be adopted. A Fire Service Cadet Corps could be formed. Three or four Training Schools could be set up in various parts of the country, enrolling a certain fixed number of youths from the age of 16 years, and training them in the art of fire fighting and various educational subjects, including a trade. All vacancies in the regular brigades to be filled by a Cadet from the Training Centre in that Area or Region.

Cadets would be medically examined before enrolment and certain educational standards required. The number of cadets enrolled would not exceed that of estimated requirements at a time when they would have reached the age of 20 years. Pay and conditions would be such that a superior type of youth would be attracted to the Service.

Taking all points into consideration, both Despatch Riders and Messengers could be retained in the Post-War Fire Service with advantage.

## *Introducing—*



Our versatile artist, Mr. R. E. Browne, thirsting for brain waves to illustrate in the next issue of *The Jet*. This self-portrait explains itself. R.E.B. craves for humorous items to occupy his pen, and readers are reminded that they merely have to utter the word to rid him of this worried frown and set the wheels of artistic temperament in motion and draw the characters from the inkpot.

One of the remaining members of the No. 17 Area Artists Dept., Mr. Browne is to be congratulated on the clever drawings in this Journal, which have received high praise from many sources.

Why not send him *your* ideas?



# WOMENS' *Page*

## THE WOMEN OF THE AIR TRANSPORT AUXILIARY

If you were to see a woman officer walking by in a becoming dark blue uniform, with wings up and gold markings of rank on her epaulettes, you would probably be right in assuming that she was a member of the A.T.A. These letters convey little to the majority of people, and it may be of interest to women officers of the N.F.S. to know something of what their fellow officers have been doing in this Service.

The A.T.A. was first formed in 1939, with communication flying as its objective. Since this did not materialize, its members responded to a request by the R.A.F. for assistance in ferrying aircraft.

In January, 1940, nine skilled flyers were the first women to join the A.T.A., among them being such people as Pauline Gower and Winifred Crossley. For six months they were allowed to ferry only light training 'planes, but after a course on *Masters* and *Oxfords*, took on the flying of these types of machines, eventually progressing through further training to the piloting of all Service types until, by May 1943, they were ferrying four-engined bombers.

From the original women's Ferry Pool at Hatfield, two Pools were formed—one in the south and, later, one in the Midlands. The former may be taken as a typical example of the job done by the women of the A.T.A., all of whom hold officer rank.

All members of the Pool are under the supervision of the Commander, a woman whose duties range from responsibility for general efficiency to such personal matters as keeping a keen eye on the individual health of her flying staff. The ferrying of a *Wellington*, for instance, in possibly poor flying conditions, is no job for anyone who is not feeling entirely fit.

The Pool, at its peak strength, contained some thirty-four women, with an approximate ratio of two ground personnel to one pilot. The latter have to attain a high standard before being enrolled into the A.T.A., a larger percentage of applicants being rejected than accepted.

Duties of the ground staff include those of Operations Officer, Adjutant and Assistant Adjutant, Maps and Signals Officer, Engineer, Motor Transport, clerical and canteen services, W.A.A.F. Meteorological Officer, and parachute packers. The Pool operates a seven-day week, and "V.E. Day" was the first day during five-and-a-half years upon which it entirely closed.

Each morning the Operations Officer takes over from the Night Duty Officer, and aircraft allocated to the Pool by the Central Ferry Control are allotted by her to the various flyers. Sometimes there may be three or four jobs in one day for a pilot—a *Hudson* to go to Scotland, a *Barracuda* down to Cornwall, and a *Beaufighter* back to near Base. The duties of the Operations Officer are exacting, and include the arrangements for dropping pilots at collection points, picking them up after the craft has been delivered, returning them to Base, and the anxious one of tracing machines which are late or which fail to arrive at their destination.

The A.T.A. has not been without its casualties. Pilots have been under the disadvantage of flying without wireless, which usually is not fitted to the 'planes until after delivery at the fighting Base.

*Ansons*, carrying nine passengers, are used as taxis, only very experienced pilots being allowed to fly them fully loaded. *Fairchild's*, holding three passengers, are also flown for this purpose.

## Birthday Honours

Apart from the actual flying of her machine, the pilot is responsible for checking the weather route forecast, airfield serviceability, and so on, before setting out. A pilot is graded from Class 1 to Class 6, starting by flying trainers, and going on to *Spitfires*, *Mustangs*, *Typhoons* and *Tempests*. Then, after a period of ferrying, it is a case of "back to school", and conversion on to *Oxfords*. More ferrying, then more schooling for heavier types, such as *Hudsons*, *Wellingtons* and *Beaufighters* before she is experienced enough to tackle *Halifaxes*, *Lancasters*, *Yorks* and *Fortresses*.

These women have done a grand job—and they still go back to school in order to keep on top form. After all, it's the kind of work at which you generally don't have a chance to make a mistake twice.—M.B.

## BIRTHDAY HONOURS

We have pleasure in printing below the names of members of the Association who are included in the King's Birthday Honours List, to whom are offered our sincere congratulations.

### O.B.E.

- Mr. T. H. PATRICK (Chief Regional Fire Officer, No. 3 Region)
- Mr. A. A. DAVIES (Chief Regional Fire Officer, No. 12 Region)
- Mr. A. S. PRATTEN, M.B.E., G.M. (Fire Force Commander, Eastern Area, No. 11 Region, Scotland)
- Mr. G. DRURY, M.B.E. (Fire Force Commander, No. 19 Fire Force, No. 7 Region)

### M.B.E.

- Mrs. V. M. MOORE (Regional Woman Fire Officer, No. 6 Region)
- Mr. L. CORBRICK (Assistant Fire Force Commander, No. 2 Fire Force, No. 1 Region)
- Mr. G. S. OSCROFT (Column Officer, No. 8 Fire Force, No. 3 Region)
- Miss R. M. SCOTT (lately Area Officer, No. 13 Fire Force, No. 4 Region)

## KING'S POLICE AND FIRE SERVICES MEDAL

### For Gallantry

- Mr. T. B. GOODMAN (Assistant and Deputy Fire Force Commander, No. 30 Fire Force, No. 12 Region)

### For Distinguished Service

- Mr. P. G. GARON, M.C., G.M. (formerly Fire Force Commander, No. 11 Fire Force, No. 4 Region)
- Mr. E. B. EASTLAND (Divisional Officer, No. 12 Fire Force, No. 4 Region)
- Mr. J. H. FARMER (Assistant Fire Force Commander, No. 17 Fire Force, No. 7 Region)
- Mr. H. HICKS, B.E.M. (Divisional Officer, No. 14 Fire Force, No. 6 Region)
- Mr. T. CARSON (Divisional Officer, Western Area, No. 11 Region, Scotland)





# “Putting It Over”

### A TALK ON STATION LECTURES

1400 hours. All men will report to the Recreation Room for lecture. Reluctant feet slowly climb the stairs unwillingly to school; apathetic faces gaze about, waiting for the doleful ordeal to begin. “Another . . . lecture.” Drably, the officer-in-charge begins “My talk to-day is . . . mumble, mumble, mumble . . .”

Why do many Officers, able to face practical work with equanimity, quail when a spell of bad weather forces them to give theoretical training in their stations? Why do so many firemen dread the restful atmosphere of a station lecture?

With present reductions in establishment, it is obvious that station training, both practical and theoretical, is increasing in importance. The following suggestions on lecturing are offered in the belief that they can help to make the station lecture no longer an ordeal, but an occasion of real value to officers and men.

### The Lecture Room

First, consider the room itself. Are you going to stand with your back to the only window in the room? If so, you will appear as a dark silhouette to the class and, being unable to watch your face, they will soon lose interest.

Are you using any apparatus in your talk? If so, see that it is ready in the room in the order in which you will want it. Much unexpected light relief can be caused by a lecturer not preparing his apparatus beforehand. If an experiment or demonstration should inadvertently go wrong, join in the laughter by all means—but remember, you will still have to give your practical proof later.

Is the blackboard in the right place? Can everyone in the room easily see the writing on it? Is its surface shiny to the men in one part of the room? Have you a duster and plenty of chalk?

Have you a pointer? This is very useful when talking about a diagram, or a lantern slide. In some schools for children it has other uses—but see Code of Discipline Part I, paragraph 3!

Have you considered using a diascope during a lecture? Do so whenever possible. It should be possible to borrow one in your district.

Are the ventilation and heating of the room to your satisfaction? If not, adjust them before the talk is due to start.

These points may seem trivial in themselves, but attention to such details will tend to remove any diffidence you may feel and will materially assist your efforts to hold the interest of your men.

### The Class

Now consider the class. Remember that you start your lecture with a very great advantage over the Instructors at Area Schools or at the National Fire Service College. You know your men and you have a fairly good idea of the extent of their knowledge on any particular subject.

Psychologists state that there are several ways of learning. Cater for these different ways in your lecture. This is where knowing your men will prove invaluable.

Firstly, let us consider the man who remembers best by listening. Help him by making the main points of your talk slowly and distinctly. If necessary, repeat them to impress them on his memory. At the end of your talk sum up briefly, using the identical key phrases you have employed earlier. This is one advantage to be gained from making a summary on the blackboard as your talk proceeds.

## Putting it Over

Make use of aids to memory—the mnemonic—to help this man, e.g. “I like currant pasty”, to recall the initial letters of the four types of wounds.



Secondly, we have the man who learns best by seeing a written statement. He may prefer to make his own notes, but if he is unused to the science of note-taking, help him by a carefully-planned blackboard summary. If necessary, use chalks of different colours to distinguish between headings and sub-headings.

Thirdly, we have the man who learns best by the actual handling of equipment. All types of men learn by this method—let your theoretical training be as practical as possible—but for the man we are considering this is the only successful method. Dismantle the B.A. set or the primer before his eyes; let him handle each part, telling him its name and function. If possible, let him dismantle and re-assemble the apparatus himself.

And so your class sits before you. How are you going to reach your audience? How are you going to put your talk over to them?

### Yourself

It will be necessary to take several factors into consideration. Let us divide them up.

(i) *Your voice.* Speak quietly but clearly.

If it is difficult to make yourself heard owing to poor acoustics or outside noises, increase the movements of your lips. Do not start to shout. You will not be able to shout for the whole lecture. Aim at being clearly audible at the back of the room. Guard against speaking too rapidly; remember the note-takers. Remember, too, that not all men grasp an idea with equal ease. If you are speaking too quickly some will lose interest.

Vowels and consonants should be carefully pronounced, especially consonants at the end of words. Above all, avoid a dull, monotonous delivery. Slight variations in the pitch of the voice give pleasure to the audience. They do more—they help to keep the audience awake!

(ii) *Your Manner.* Officers of the Fire Service are able, by their uniforms, to avoid many of the pitfalls which confront civilian speakers. We all have pleasant memories of some distinguished speaker on a public occasion, whose dress and personal appearance detracted from his lecture.

But there are sometimes personal mannerisms which distract the attention of the squad from more important matters. Are you inclined to walk about while talking? Try to stand still for at least five minutes at a time. Do you stand firmly rooted behind the desk for the whole lecture? Move occasionally into a fresh position. Do you stare at the ceiling, the windows or your notes when talking? Look at your students. You should not need more than a very infrequent glance at your notes.

(iii) *Your Notes.* It is one thing to know your subject; it is quite another matter to be able to plan how to talk about it. Here a word of warning is necessary. All too frequently, words or phrases are used which are the everyday speech of the Instructor, but which are almost a foreign language to the students. Be on your guard when deciding what is known by your men. Phrases such as “This centrifugal pump with a reciprocating primer” or “Foam compound is induced into the suction pipe”, need careful attention. Have you given an explanation to your men or have you merely said something which still needs to be explained?

Start your notes, then, with your introduction, basing it upon your men’s present knowledge, and linking up past talks with to-day’s subject. Following this should come the various main headings of your talk, each with its various sub-headings, if these are necessary. You should be able to dispense with sub-headings during the actual talk. In order to help the less-intelligent members of your squad, it will be advisable to have at least two intermediate revisions, with a final revision to hammer home the main points of your





## Putting it Over

discourse. Both when revising and when leading on to your next heading or sub-heading, question your class.

The question might be asked "Why write out lecture notes when there is an Operations and Training Note on the subject?" The reading of any official publication to students creates a very bad impression in their minds. They think that if the lecturer cannot remember his subject, how can they be expected to take it in? Mention the Operations and Training Note or the appropriate page in the *Manual of Firemanship* by all means, but be careful that interest is not stifled by too lengthy extracts from books which can be read by the men themselves.

## The Blackboard

This is most necessary to a successful lecture, especially in Fire Service work. We are dealing with men who frequently have done very little study since they left school. The blackboard should be used both to aid their visual memory and to assist them in the taking of notes.

A word or two about writing on a blackboard. Use a fairly short piece of chalk and write with fingers and wrist almost rigid. Writing with chalk involves the whole arm moving free from the shoulder. If you are unable to acquire a satisfactory standard of blackboard writing (although there is no reason why you should fail, provided you are willing to practice), try printing on the board.

Next, a point which will assist you in holding the attention of the class. Get into the habit of writing while standing at the side of the board. By doing this, not only are you able to talk to your men while writing, but also they can follow your work as you put it on the board.

What should be written on a blackboard? Obviously here is the place for the main headings of your talk, which you have already prepared in your notes. Write these headings on the board as your lecture develops; rub them off before the final revision and then re-write them as you proceed with your final summing up.

There is another important use for the blackboard in enlarging the diagram of some item of equipment or in demonstrating a point in the tactics of firefighting. All too frequently manufacturers' diagrams contain far more detail than the average man can readily understand. Build up your own diagram step by step, explaining each part as you go. Here coloured chalks have their uses.

Thus, somewhat sketchily, we have constructed some suggestions for improving lecture periods in stations. Who should give these lectures? What topics should be discussed? When can the talks be fitted into the daily routine, etc. . . . These are matters which do not come within the scope of this article. The final decision is in your hands.

Whoever gives the lectures, and whatever they are about, I am certain that a careful study and translation into practice of the foregoing hints and suggestions will stimulate interest in them and so enhance their value.

"COMMANDANT"

## TRAINING SCHOOL HOWLER

Artificial respiration is what they bring people back to life with when they've only been dead for a little while.

# FIRE ALARMS

A CHALLENGE TO  
POST-WAR PLANNERS

By R.G.C.

In the April issue a member wrote on the question of Fire Alarms and invited comments on his views. I am criticizing this article, with, I hope, some constructive result, and additionally, with the prospect of being even more severely judged myself. The subject matter is a thorny one: perhaps through the medium of our Journal we might be able to bring our combined views to the notice of the Post-War planners with some tangible result.

## No Axe to Grind

I am not financially interested in any firm manufacturing Fire Alarms! I am a Fire Alarm enthusiast—yet I have spent many an uncomfortable hour in the early morning in wintry weather trying to locate faults, and have taken my turn with frozen hands trying to make "live" the reluctant corpse of a Fire Alarm Box with its complicated intestines. As a pre-war driver I have answered hundreds of calls from Fire Alarms, and, finally, have known the sensation of being awakened from a disturbed sleep by the insistent clanging of the "gongs". I claim, therefore, not to be influenced in my remarks by the idle dreams of perfection in the "poor man's telephone"!

## Calls Traced Rapidly

Firstly, a delayed call can seldom be laid at the door of a "call by Fire Alarm." It is true, of course, that some callers show a marked reluctance to stay and see the result of their own handywork; on the other hand, in the daytime a genuine call by the F.A. is traced very rapidly and, in any case, more speedily than had the same call been made by the average type of T.E. call. At night it is a little more difficult, but to counterbalance this difficulty I consider a night fire is more easy to find than a day-time one. One of the things I vividly remember when a driver was the "smell" of a night time fire, even before I could see it. In any case, one must not condemn a system for the incorrect application of the few.

## Never had a Fair Chance

Secondly, in my opinion, the full development of the F.A. system was never reached—in one respect alone it never had a fair chance. The average citizen had not the vaguest notion of how they worked, and as a result was reluctant to operate them. I can remember scores of cases where F.A.'s, which had been in existence for years, had been bypassed by a caller in getting to a 'phone. I would agree that in rural districts their economical value has not been established, and even operationally they are difficult to justify on statistics. Nevertheless, in built-up, business and factory areas, the direct calling system, either by F.A. or private wire, cannot be matched for speed and accuracy by public exchange lines, however favourable these may be.

## F.A. versus T.E. Call

"N.I.C.K.'s" criticism of calls from F.A.'s going to the right station mechanically, but wrong geographically, can, and does, apply to calls received by T.E., but I submit can be corrected more easily. The idea of recasting stations based on the existing telephone exchange areas can be effectively squashed, and silently so, by one glance at the maps of the average Fire Force compared with the corresponding maps of T.E. areas. Station boundaries must be decided primarily, particularly in the provinces, by the location of *existing* stations, in some cases part-time, but in the majority whole-time—these are unalterable *at the moment*—other factors therefore must be subordinate to this main consideration.

## Few Faults Experienced

The member must have gained his experience in F.A.'s with a somewhat difficult system—my experience relates to one comprising 80 points spread over 4 closed circuits, and our faults were really very few—in fact, I can honestly say they were very few more per year than mechanical faults on our very excellent and modern appli-



## Fire Alarms

ances. The faults which did occur were usually the result of G.P.O. wiremen working on public service cables lying close to our own.

This difficulty, like many others in our Service, should not be used to criticize the machine, but to improve by constant effort the human element involved. With every machine we must accept an irriducible minimum of faults, caused by "Acts of God", wear and tear and the human factor.

### Telephone's Disadvantages

We all, I think, agree that our telecommunication system has been magnificent, but obviously over-worked. Contrary to general belief, I consider that it will not improve greatly with the advent of peace. In the Post-War period more and more people will want phones. During the war many have become used to, and rely upon telephones more than ever before, and (as we well know from our administrative colleagues !) the habit dies slowly. Even allowing for the transfer of Military, Air Force, Naval, N.F.S. and C.D. lines to the "open market", the traffic in peace-time will tax the resources and patience of the G.P.O. and staff, with consequential delays. There are still a very high proportion of manual exchanges in the country—in important areas too. There are also many kiosks without the emergency button, although the latter is, of course, capable of adjustment in many areas.

## The Obvious Answer

Wireless, although it will have its limitations, even in peacetime, is the obvious answer to calls for assistance. I would even express the hope that before 1960 we may be able to walk into a control room and see, through a television, an Officer controlling and directing several fires at a time from his office.

## Scientific Research

It is hardly likely that, even with a Post-War Administration favourably disposed towards F.A.'s, that there will be time, labour and money to spare to extend and/or improve old circuits, much less to build new ones. I personally regard F.A.'s as

a refinement of a civilized and progressive community rather than a necessity. I would at this stage recommend a research into the Fire Alarm system by scientific and practical experts, with the idea of producing a standard, cheap but efficient mechanism to be made under Government licence.

### Venue and Allocation

In densely built-up areas F.A.'s should be erected at suitable spots, i.e. cinemas, tube and railway stations, police boxes, bus depots, well-known cross-roads, hospitals, institutions, etc., with a general idea of spacing every 300 yards. In good-class residential areas, one at each end of roads or one to every given length of road; in poorer-class districts the allocation would be more generous. Factories and schools over a certain size would require to have them installed immediately outside the main entrance to the building.

## Punishment for False Alarms

System should be developed on the speech and gong—tape principle. Lines to be underground, but in separate cables from G.P.O. circuits, although within the same conduit. Separate sets of jacks set on their own with their own meters, if indeed it is necessary to run into G.P.O. buildings. Legislation to provide for heavier punishment for persons convicted of wilful and deliberate false alarms.

Provision to be made, when designing pillars for the interior, to be used as Control Points, and lighting at night time. Doors on the Boxes spring-loaded on ball catches, *without glass*.

### A Refinement

I have said I regard F.A.'s as a refinement of a civilized community, but only to the same extent as new fire appliances and new stations, all of which must wait until we are well on the way to housing our homeless people. Luxury civic buildings, post offices, beautiful schools, lavishly-ornamented public parks, new piers at seaside resorts and so on must move with, and not ahead of, our needs to make the Service a credit to our National life.

# WATER PROBLEM

*"In how long would how many firemen remove 5 million gallons of water, and how would they go about it?"*

This poser was set by the officials of a Bolton Factory in a rural area who were storing valuable war-time commodities. They had to get rid of the water in their reservoir so that repairs could be carried out to a faulty valve some 20 feet below the normal water level, and which was interfering with the water supply to the premises for heating and general purposes.

A diver had tried in vain to dislodge an obstruction in the valve, and in desperation the firm appealed to the National Fire Service.

The reservoir was in an elevated position, surrounded by woods and fields inaccessible to wheeled traffic. Indeed, it looked hopeless. But the officers who previewed the task observed a brook flowing adjacent to and some 40 feet below the reservoir, and a happy thought struck them simultaneously—*Siphons*!—and siphons it was.

A small stream feeding the reservoir was diverted by works personnel, and in eight days, using six firemen per day, the whole of the reservoir was emptied. Area Stores had a shock when they received a request for "as much as possible of the biggest suction you have", but they responded nobly, and three siphons were finally in operation, each comprising approximately 200 feet of 4-inch suction.

Various methods of priming the siphons were tried, but the most successful was found to be by hose lines at pressure from a major trailer pump sited across the river and feeding a collecting head loosely coupled to the lower end of each siphon.

The petrol consumption was negligible compared with the magnitude of the task. The siphons, once primed, ran for upwards of 24 hours at a stretch, and then only ceased because of obstructions in the form of stones, leaves, etc. As the reservoir was in private grounds it



## Water Problem

was possible to leave the siphons running unattended at night, thus achieving a considerable saving of manpower.

### Footnote for Anglers!

There was not one fish to be seen in the reservoir. Why, we don't know—unless the Catering Officer was advised on the sly!

H. T. H.



## ELECTION NEWS

Members of the Association will be interested to learn that the General Secretary, Mr. R. Reader Harris, has contested the Central Hackney Parliamentary Election as National Conservative candidate.

The success or failure of his contest will not be available at the time of going to press, but I feel sure that everyone, whatever their own political views, will wish him success in this venture.

Mr. Reader Harris is the grandson of Reader Harris, K.C., the well-known religious and social reformer and Treasurer of Gray's Inn. He is a Barrister, director of a Building Company, and an expert on social work, particularly with regard to the development of educational and club activities for young people.

Our Secretary joined the A.F.S. early in 1939, and was called up for whole-time service as a fireman at Bishopsgate on 3rd September, 1939. He fought fires in the City and Docks throughout the "blitz", and in 1941 became a Column Officer in the National Fire Service.

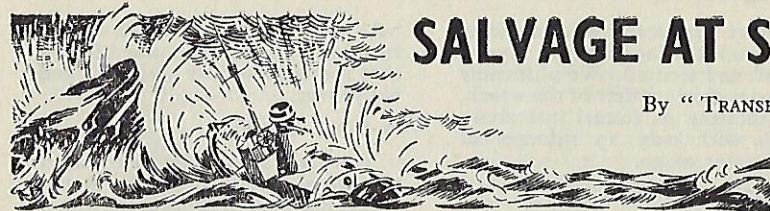
The same good wishes go to Mr. John H. Franklin, Company Officer of No. 10 Fire Force Headquarters, who has contested the Louth Parliamentary Division as a Labour candidate.

*As far as I am aware, these are the only members of the N.F.S.O.A. who have launched out in the political sphere during this election.*

Editor

## SALVAGE AT SEA

By "TRANSFEE"



### A PERILOUS SPECIAL SERVICE CALL

It has long been known within the Service that a fireman must be ready to meet any contingency that might arise, and since the commencement of the present emergency many and varied have been the duties which the N.F.S. has been called upon to perform. That these duties are sometimes fraught with a certain amount of hazard is revealed by the following experience.

My Division has a moderately-large coastal area, where tides run swiftly, hidden rocks abound and sudden fogs are not unknown. It is in connection with this portion of the Division that I recount this story.

#### Tug Runs Aground

In October, 1944, the local Press contained a report of a tug running aground upon a well-known reef with the loss of five lives. Some days later a request was received from the American Port Commander to the effect that he desired the use of a sea-going fireboat to assist the United States Army authorities in salvaging the tug which had gone aground on the . . . Rock and was lying in approximately 1½ fathoms, about one cable's length off the Rock. The reef, which has been the graveyard of many a fine ship, lies approximately a mile off shore and 1½ miles from the nearest harbour.

#### Five Pumps and a Raft

There followed several conferences with the various authorities and it was decided to employ a fireboat for the salvage operations, which were to consist of pumping out the vessel and thus refloating it. Following a gale, which raged for five days, another difficulty arose. The Naval Authorities decided against the wisdom of risking this fireboat in the vicinity of the Rock,

especially as there was a heavy swell at the time. Yet another conference, and this time arrangements were made for a section of pumps to be sent to the nearest harbour to the wreck and there embark upon a 300-ton steel raft provided by the U.S. authorities. The raft was to be towed by launches to the scene of the wreck.

#### Difficulty follows Difficulty

All seemed set fair for what was hoped would be a successful day's operations. The weather was perfect with a slight off-shore breeze and a gentle ground swell, but it was quickly discovered that no provision had been made for placing the pumps upon the raft, and that the crane upon the quayside was useless for this purpose. It was found necessary to use a slipway in the outer tidal harbour, and eventually the trailer pumps were run down the slipway, manhandled aboard the rising and falling raft, and secured. The raft was taken in tow, and after several more mishaps, was tied up outside the harbour to await the arrival of two American Salvage Tugs from further down the coast.

#### Propellor Fouls Tow-Rope

It might be thought that we could now safely proceed upon our way, but further delay was to be experienced. The Salvage Tug skipper, after consulting with the American Officers upon the raft, flatly refused to go near the Rock, but after a great deal of persuasion he agreed to make the attempt. During this argument one of the tugs had fouled its propellor in a tow-rope and was *hors de combat*.

The tow started, but after forty minutes of slow progress against a swiftly-ebbing tide, the tow-line parted from the one remaining tug,



## Salvage at Sea

and there were a few wild moments until another line was put aboard the raft and secured. We ultimately arrived within 100 feet of the wreck, now showing its funnel just above water, with only 15 minutes of slack water to go.

### Beaten by Strong Tide

It had been planned that the raft should be manoeuvred into position alongside the wreck, and be held in position by two launches which had accompanied us. This was actually carried out, but the launches failed to hold the raft against the strong tide, and the raft eventually landed upon the boat deck of the wreck, damaging a mast and the funnel. In addition, the towing bridle of the raft fouled the wreck and, in seeking to free this obstruction, a launch fouled its propeller. The now rising tide, however, lifted the raft clear of the wreck, and we commenced to drift away. It was now obviously impossible and useless to continue the operations, and the raft was taken in tow by the tug. After making plans to return to the task upon a more favourable occasion, we split forces. The personnel upon the raft were transferred to the launches, and the tug with the raft in tow went off in the direction of the port further down the coast.

### Launch Breaks Down

The launches headed back for the harbour from which we had first embarked, but upon arrival it was impossible to enter the harbour on account of insufficient water. After an hour's wait outside, we commenced to move through the darkness, but one of the launches broke down, necessitating the transfer of personnel to the one remaining launch whilst others were left behind upon another raft which lay outside the harbour. Taking the broken-down launch in tow, we succeeded in entering the harbour after some wild gyrations. The Commanding Officer of the launch then requested us to transfer to the broken-down launch while he returned for the men upon the raft. A handline was passed ashore with the intention of towing this o/c launch to the quay wall steps in order to tie up and land the person-

nel. The launch was taken in tow by shore hands, and we all felt that a strenuous day was well and truly over.

### A Final Thrill

Towing a heavy launch by hand is a slow business, and with the laudable intention of speeding things up, the American Officer in Charge attempted to start the motor. From where I was sitting upon the hatch combing, I heard the whirr of the starter and almost instantaneously a violent explosion which threw me to the deck. I picked myself up in the light of sheets of flame which illuminated the vessel from end to end. I knew that the vessel carried 700 gallons of petroleum spirit in its tanks, and realizing the possibilities there followed some minutes of intense activity. The blaze appeared to have originated in the stern, and every effort was made to get it under control by the use of chemical extinguishers. Our efforts were hampered by the fact that the C.O.2. extinguishers were rendered inaccessible because of the flames, and the C.T.C. type were not full.

### Men Leap Ashore

The people ashore now made frantic efforts to get the launch to the quay steps, but were continually frustrated by a steel hawser which was fouling the mast of the launch. The vessel was, however, taken near enough for the men to leap ashore one by one, but this was a slow business. The steel hawser, acting like a spring, kept forcing the launch away from the steps. In the meantime the alarm had been passed to the nearest fire station, and land appliances were upon their way.

### Ablaze from Stern to Stern

The second launch had also turned back, and from this an extinguisher was borrowed and got to work. The blaze was almost under control when, with a roar, the fire broke out afresh and the hull was almost immediately ablaze from stern to stern, with burning petrol running from the craft and spreading itself over the surface of the water. From the quay wall the sight was reminiscent of Dante's

## Those Antiquated Cinematograph Regulations

Inferno. I saw that the position upon the launch was hopeless, and gave orders for everyone still aboard to evacuate the vessel and get ashore.

### Stop for Fire

Land appliances were now arriving and foam branches were got to work to extinguish the fire, attention also being paid to the necessary measures for the protection of other craft in the harbour. There followed a two-hour duel with the flames, but at last the fire was extinguished, and we were now able to call it a day.



*The time has come, the walrus said, to think of many things.* Let us hope our new parliamentary walrus, whilst not forgetting Belsen, will remember our own crematoria masquerading in many small towns as 'super' cinemas. Perhaps crematoria is not quite the word, since it is usual for the fire brigade to secure some sort of access even when the exits are blocked with the suffocated, and extinguish the fire before the corpses are actually incinerated. A grim picture perhaps, but not unduly exaggerated nor outside the experience of some fire officers.

Of course, the Cinematograph Regulations are not entirely to blame; we must remember the apathetic neglect of their enforcement by many of the smaller licensing authorities, a little matter we hope to see corrected in the post-war world.

It is the duty of the Government first to revise or replace the present antiquated regulations. During their 22 years' existence disasters have occurred, experience has been gained and understanding of public safety increased. Despite this, the

What had happened to the other party? They had also had their share of trouble, for on their way down coast a thick fog had set in, and whilst feeling their way slowly through it, the tow-rope had parted, and some time was spent in locating the raft and fixing up the tow again. They eventually arrived safely at their destination.

Negative results perhaps—time wasted through no fault of our own. But, nevertheless, the story of this Special Service Call reveals the extent to which a fireman must be prepared to meet any emergency.

## Those Antiquated Cinematograph Regulations

only amendment to the regulations was not made until 1930, after the tragedy at the Glen Cinema, Paisley, when 70 children lost their lives.

With changing conditions, many of the regulations (e.g. those relating to the use of acetylene) have become like palaeographic exercises to the uninitiated.

### Home Office Manual lacks Force of Law

My chief criticism of the Cinematograph Regulations is that they are vague and evasive. It is easy to enact that "adequate" exits shall be provided and leave it at that. To remove doubts of this nature, the Home Office in 1934 issued the *Manual of Safety Requirements in Theatres and other Places of Public Entertainment*. This Manual is a valuable guide to those licensing authorities who have troubled to read it, but is not normally legally enforceable. It is true that in granting a licence under the Cinematograph Act 1909 the licensing authority may impose such conditions (not at variance with the Regulations made under the Act) as



## Those Antiquated Cinematograph Regulations

they think fit. Licensing authorities can thus give legal effect to any of the requirements and conditions of the Manual which are applicable to cinemas, by their inclusion in the conditions of the licence. But this is a circuitous way to give legal effect to conditions which should be included in the Cinematograph Regulations. It is a way justifiably resented by the licensees, who may reasonably contend that safety conditions are a National concern, and that those governing a cinema in Aberdeen should be the same as those applicable at Penzance. Safety conditions should be similar in all parts of the country. There will be minor differences of opinion among individual licensing authorities. Some may, for example, refuse to allow standing in cinemas, but a reasonable latitude is already provided in such matters in the existing regulations. These local differences of opinion need not disturb the broad stream of agreement which exists in the principal matters at issue.

### Some Desirable Amendments

(1) **Exits.** Nobody doubts that the prime safety requirement in a place of public entertainment is an adequacy of well-placed exits, together with suitable gangways, passages and staircases. The Manual of Safety Requirements provides an excellent guide to the provision of adequate exits in all circumstances. This is based on the known rate of travel of audiences vacating a building, i.e. 40 persons per minute through a unit exit width of 22 inches. It would not be difficult to draft regulations applicable to new cinemas defining the minimum exits to be provided in any building.

Appalling risks caused by poor design exist in passages and staircases, even in cinemas of quite recent construction. In a cinema I recently visited there were from the circle two emergency exits each of 8 feet in width, the means of egress narrowing via enclosed staircases



and passages to exit doors to the street each of only 4 feet in width. It is hardly necessary to stress the dangers of such design. They were grimly demonstrated in 1927 in the loss of about 80 lives in Montreal, where a staircase and corridor only decreased by 8 inches. Again, more recently, in the Bethnal Green tube shelter disaster, where the entrance was wider than the staircase. The tragedy is that such construction does not infringe the Cinematograph Regulations, and there is nothing to prevent the erection of such death traps in post-war cinemas.

(2) **Staff.** Adequate exits are valueless unless the audience can be persuaded to use them in emergency. It is well known that members of an audience seek to leave by the route they have entered and will not use the emergency exits unless authoritatively directed. To this end the existing Regulations require a "sufficient staff of attendants"—a most indefinite requirement. Once again, the Manual provides guidance by suggesting the number of male and female attendants desirable on the basis of the number of persons accommodated in the building. These figures should be enforceable at law by their inclusion in the Cinematograph Regulations.

Even when sufficient attendants are provided, they can do little unless they are at the exits when the emergency arises. It is neither desirable nor economical to post an attendant at each exit during the whole of the performance, and from this follows the desirability of their receiving an advance warning of fire in order to allow them time to reach the exits before the audience is on the move. No provision is made in the regulations for a warning to be given. The passing of a code word between attendants or the playing of a pre-determined gramophone record are both open to serious objection. The Manual suggests a system of signal lights, so placed as to attract the attention of the attendants but not that of the audience, in new buildings seating over 1,000 persons. This system is effective and the installation adds only a modicum to the cost of a building. Its provision should be legally enforced.

## Those Antiquated Cinematograph Regulations

(3) **Fire Appliances.** Very few licensees are parsimonious in the provision of first-aid appliances. Only too often is a surplus provided in the pious hope that their presence will mitigate the neglect of other precautions, or at least draw the wool over the eyes of the inspector from the licensing authority. It would be well for the Regulations to stipulate a specific minimum standard of appliances for the building generally, as is already stipulated in the case of the enclosure. The adequacy of the regulation appliances in the enclosure is a matter of much controversy. Since the issue of 1923 Regulations, automatic devices for the extinguishing of fires or the cutting of the film in the gate have been installed on some projectors. It is perhaps too soon to suggest that licensees should be compelled to provide such devices, although where the licensee desires their provision the licensing authority would be wise to encourage their installation.

(4) **Unnecessary Inflammable Material.** The present Regulations forbid the presence of unnecessary inflammable material in parts of the building in which films are kept. Most inspectors for licensing authorities very wisely forbid the presence of upholstered chairs, soft wood stands, clothing and similar articles in the enclosure. These inspectors are, however, exceeding their strict legal powers, since such articles, although combustible, are most certainly not inflammable. The law should give effect to that which has by experience been found wise.

Perhaps the most striking omission from the present regulations relates to the keeping of film. Apart from a general regulation that persons responsible and employees shall abstain from any act which tends to cause fire, there is nothing

to prevent the storage of film in the passages and landings or, in fact, in the auditorium itself. The regulations should specifically forbid the keeping of film other than in the

enclosure, rewinding room or (to cover excess storage) in a suitable storage place, the construction and situation of which should be defined.

(5) **The Enclosure.** Too much latitude is allowed in the regulations relating to the enclosure to ensure safety. An enclosure constructed of asbestos sheets on a steel frame would conform, but would not satisfy a fire officer. The construction should be specified for all new buildings and could well be 9-inch brick or 6-inch reinforced concrete, or other material of equal strength and fire resistance.

The present vague indication of the size of the enclosure should be rescinded, and minimum sizes prescribed in accordance with the number of projectors and effects in use.

The edict that the entrance shall be "suitably placed" is a particularly puerile provision. Beyond giving a vague impression that entrance through the floor or roof would not be the best arrangement, this regulation conveys nothing.

The regulation that the openings through the enclosure shall be constructed to prevent "so far as possible" the escape of smoke to the auditorium is weak. The danger of smoke entering the auditorium was amply demonstrated in the Paisley disaster, and the enclosure should be constructed to make this impossible. The covering of the projection openings with the thinnest sheet glass satisfies the existing regulations; the use of armoured glass should be prescribed.

### Early Revision Desirable

This article is not intended to be a comprehensive statement of the desirable revisions of the Cinematograph Regulations. Rather has the object been to indicate the most obvious and serious shortcomings in the hope of arousing interest in the early revision of the existing legislation. Moreover, we should remember that any new regulations will need revision from time to time in order to keep in step with new experiences in regard to public safety. The present Regulations were excellent in their time, but are to-day about as valuable as Noah's Ark would have been at the Battle of Jutland.—"W.O.G."







By N.G.S.

**L**ORRY contains dynamite. A fire message received by a station shortly before "D Day" contained this somewhat alarming statement. In view of the fire being in a country district, a Mobile Dam Unit was despatched in addition to Major Pumps.

### Frequent Explosions

On arrival at the scene the vehicle was found to be of military type and containing various categories of ammunition. The load, rear tyres and a nearby telegraph pole were blazing furiously, accompanied by frequent explosions which flung equipment high into the air. Fortunately the driver had been able to move his vehicle away from some houses. In anticipation of more violent explosions occurring, the Fire Service Officer requested the Police to evacuate houses over about 100 yards radius, and this was effected. It was not considered necessary to approach the vehicle and use a jet, as the risk to surrounding property now appeared much less than that to which personnel near the vehicle would be subjected. A length of hose and jet were thereupon laid from the Mobile Dam Unit, and personnel stood by to attack other fires, if any, that might result.

### Disposal of Explosives by Burning

A number of Land Mines, without detonators, were now being flung away from the vehicle, over a radius of about 15 yards. These were burning with a roaring flame similar to a blow lamp, which reminded the officer in charge of his studies regarding "The disposal of Explosives by Burning", a matter which previously he had been apt to question. The explosions now decreased in frequency, and advantage was taken of the protection afforded by a bank at the side of the road to direct a jet on the fire. Small arms ammunition was exploding and the whine of bullets was continually heard.

### Firemen had to be Restrained

When eventually the vehicle was approached and examined, a number of unexploded mines and anti-personnel bombs were seen, and firemen, who were eager to turn over and damp the contents, had to be restrained. The body, which was of all-metal type, was ripped by the explosions, the most serious damage having occurred at the rear of the driver's seat, where a hole about two feet in diameter was seen. The chassis frame had sagged downwards, and the rear tyres were a charred mass.

Definitely an unusual and interesting fire.

## VACANCIES AND APPOINTMENTS

The following details have been received of vacancies circulated and appointments made by the Fire Service Department during the period 1st May to 30th June, 1945 :

### *Applications invited for the following posts :*

1. FIVE FIRE SUPERVISORS UNDER BRITISH OVERSEAS AIRWAYS CORPORATION in Middle East, India and Burma, South Africa and Central Africa, West Africa and Iberian Peninsula, and U.K.—invitation issued 2nd May, 1945 to all ranks.
2. FIRE OFFICER TO THE PRINCIPAL SEA TRANSPORT OFFICER, India, under Ministry of War Transport, with Headquarters at Bombay—invitation issued 3rd May, 1945 to Coy. Officers.
3. SENIOR INSTRUCTORS AT NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE COLLEGE, with rank of acting Divisional Officer—invitation issued 8th June to Divisional and Column Officers. INSTRUCTORS AT NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE COLLEGE with rank of (acting) Senior Company Officer or (acting) Company Officer—invitation issued 8th June, 1945 to Senior Company, Company Officers and Section Leaders.
4. FIRE STAFF OFFICERS AND INSPECTORS GRADE II AT HEAD-QUARTERS—invitation issued 9th June, 1945 to Divisional and Column Officers.  
FIRE STAFF OFFICERS GRADE III AT HEADQUARTERS—invitation issued 9th June, 1945 to Senior Company and Coy. Officers.
5. SHORTHAND TYPISTS GRADE I AND GRADE II with the Public Safety Branch of Control Commission for Germany (British Element)—invitation issued 16th June, 1945.
6. CIVILIAN CLERKS IN THE FOLLOWING TEMPORARY CIVIL SERVICE GRADES :—Civilian Staff Officer Grade III, Temporary Clerk Grade II, Grade III, and Copy Typists, with the Public Safety Branch of Control Commission for Germany (British Element)—invitation issued 19th June, 1945.
7. SENIOR WOMAN OFFICER, No. 12 REGION, salary £400 and rank of Area Officer ; also for similar vacancies which may occur in other Regions—invitation issued to Area Officers and Group Officers (who are prepared to continue in the Service for at least six months) 26th June, 1945.
8. REGIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS OFFICER, No. 4 REGION, with rank of Divisional Officer—invitation issued to suitably-qualified officers 26th June, 1945.

### *Posts filled :*

1. SENIOR STAFF OFFICER, REGION 10 HEADQUARTERS (item 3 of January list), A.F.F.C. rank. Mr. A. A. Chalmers, Divisional Officer of No. 10 Region, appointed 1st May, 1945.