

FEBRUARY

(Vol. 2. No. 4)

# 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. 4

FEBRUARY 1945

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

### PRELIMINARY AGENDA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Association will be held at the Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.2. on Tuesday 10th April, 1945 at 1100 hours. Lunch will be served at 1300 hours to which The Right Hon. Herbert Morrison, P.C., M.P., Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security, has accepted an invitation and will address the Members present. Mr. Morrison will be accompanied by Miss Ellen Wilkinson, P.C., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Home Security.

R. READER HARRIS,

*Honorary Secretary*

### AGENDA

#### 1. MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 23rd May, 1944.

#### 2. REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

To consider and approve the Annual Report of the Council for the year 1944, and the Annual Statement of Accounts.

#### 3. NOTICES OF MOTION

##### (A) ALTERATION OF RULES

On behalf of the National Council the Chairman of the Council will move, pursuant to notice of motion, that the Rules be amended as follows—

- (i) "Rule 9 (a) (i) substitute the words 'one representative' for 'Two representatives.'"
- (ii) "Rule 9 (a) (ii) substitute the words 'one representative' for 'Four representatives'."
- (iii) "Rule 9 (a) (iii) substitute the words 'one representative' for 'Two representatives'."

An amendment will be moved by Region 7 as follows :—

"That the first four sub-paragraphs of Rule 9 (a) be amended to read :—



## Annual General Meeting

- (i) One representative elected annually by the members on each Region.
- (ii) One woman member of the Association.
- (iii) One part-time member of the Association.
- (iv) One co-opted member."
- (iv) "Rule 9 (a) add a further paragraph number (vii) as follows :—  
'The General Secretary if eligible for membership under Rule 4 or elected a member under Rules 5 or 6'."

An amendment will be moved by Region 7 as follows :—

"That the list of Officers specified in Rule 12 (a) be amended to read :—

- (i) President,
- (ii) Vice-President,
- (iii) Treasurer,
- (iv) Solicitor,
- (v) "Rule 24 (b) substitute the words 'one representative' for 'two representatives'."
- (vi) "Rule 25 (b) delete the word 'four'."
- (vii) "Rule 27 (d) to be deleted and the following substituted :—  
'The Council may either return to a Regional Committee a proportion of the subscriptions collected from members in the Region to enable the Committee to meet its expenses and those of Area Branches, or else institute an imprest system for the same purpose'."

An amendment will be moved by Region 7 as follows :—

"That Rule 27 (d) be amended to read :—

'That a sum equal to twelve-and-a-half per cent of the subscriptions collected from members in the Region shall be returned to each Regional Committee to cover its expenses and those of the Area Branches'."

### (B) QUESTIONS OF POLICY—TIME LIMIT FOR DISCUSSION

Region 10 will move :—

- (i) "That this Association, being so strongly representative of the Officers of the National Fire Service, should insist to the Department that in any matters of policy, so much affecting the future of members of the Association, adequate time should be given to allow for full discussion thereon by all Branches of the Association."
- (ii) "Illustrative of the above, this Regional Branch strongly deprecates the lack of time allowed to the members of the Association on the major issue 'Redundancy of Officers of the National Fire Service'."

## 4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

To elect the following Officers for the ensuing year :—

- (i) President.
- (ii) Two Vice-Presidents.
- (iii) Hon. Treasurer.
- (iv) Hon. Solicitor.

## 5. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

# National Council Meeting

10th JANUARY, 1945

THE COUNCIL devoted most of its time at the Quarterly meeting held on 10th January to the problem of economizing in the routine management of the Association, in anticipation of a contraction in membership as a result of the demobilization of the National Fire Service.

## New Year Honours

The proceedings opened by a unanimous vote of congratulation being passed to Sir Aylmer Firebrace, the President, upon the receipt of a Knighthood, and also to Mrs. Hicks who was awarded the O.B.E., and Messrs. Botten and Butler upon being awarded the M.B.E. The Council also decided to congratulate the other members of the Association who were awarded Honours in the List.

## Budget, 1945

The following decisions were arrived at with the object of materially reducing expenditure during the ensuing year :

(a) That Regional representation upon the National Council should be reduced from two members to one per Region ; that there should be only one representative of women members on the National Council instead of four ; that there should be only one representative of part-time members instead of two.

It was hoped thereby to reduce the cost of travelling expenses and subsistence allowances which at the moment is fairly substantial.

(b) That the Conditions of Service and General Purposes Committees should be discontinued, and their place taken by a small Standing Committee which would meet monthly, and which would consist of the Honorary Officers of the Association plus six members elected by the Council.

(c) That *The Jet* should be limited to six issues of 32 pages each per annum.

(d) That the present office in London be discontinued, and that the Honorary Secretary be paid a sum by way of expenses to cover rent, telephone, clerical assistance, typing and honorarium.

The effect of this last decision was that the Association would be relieved of the expense of finding an office, a typist and the cost of a telephone. Mr. Reader Harris, who was a Barrister, would carry on the Association's work from his chambers.

It was also decided to recommend to the Annual General Meeting an alteration to the Rule which provided for 25% of subscriptions to be returned to the Regional Branches. The position at the time was that there was nearly £600 lying relatively idle in Regional accounts. Experience had proved that such a large proportion was not required for the purposes of running a Branch.



### Redundancy of Officers

The previous day the Home Office had invited the Hon. Secretary to discuss the problem of redundancy of officers as a result of demobilization. It appeared that the Home Office wanted to take immediate action to tidy up the redundancy problem, and it asked that the Association should put forward its proposals as to how best this could be carried out. It was, however, felt impossible to give an answer on this important subject immediately, and a reply was, therefore, sent to the Home Office stating that while the Association favoured action being taken immediately to relieve the present unsatisfactory position, it would be necessary to give further consideration as to how best it could be done. The matter was then referred to the Conditions of Service Committee.

### Alternative Remedies

The Council decided that representation should be made to the Committee on Alternative Remedies, and accordingly authorized the Hon. Secretary to make certain points as a result of which the following letter was sent:—

15th January, 1945

Dear Sir,

I have to thank you for your letter asking this Association to submit a memorandum at the earliest possible opportunity and set out herewith the points which the Association wish to make. May I say that this document does not go into the matter in very great detail at this stage. It will be easier to do that when your Committee have come to some conclusions and are prepared to discuss them with us.

Briefly then may I say that the Association is anxious that as a general rule common law rights may be retained by the fireman. The proposals set out in Part II of the White Paper on Social Insurance make admirable provisions for all sorts of contingencies, but there is always the unpredictable occurrence which may give the employee the right to greater compensation than he would get under the Industrial Insurance Scheme because of the negligence of the employer.

The Association is, of course, aware that under the Fire Brigades Pensions Act, 1925, those firemen who are subject to the Act must take the compensation laid down by the Act, and have no common law rights; although there are few instances of dispute between firemen and local authorities being settled in Court, it is nevertheless felt that the right to commence litigation in the High Court of Justice should not be denied anyone.

Secondly, the Association is anxious that nothing should be done which shall prevent a member of the Fire Service from claiming and receiving damages from third parties in appropriate cases.

Finally, in making these recommendations the Association is anxious to do no more than perpetuate the principles upon which justice has been built up in this country over a great many years. It is, of course, glad that steps are being taken to modify and expedite the procedure connected therewith, but is equally anxious that the democratic principle of what may be broadly termed the Rule of Law should be adhered to rather than that justice should be left to the final decision of an already powerful bureaucracy.

Yours faithfully,

R. READER HARRIS

The Secretary,  
Committee on Alternative Remedies,  
Home Office, WHITEHALL, S.W.1.

## Where's that Tiger? By "OLD JIM"

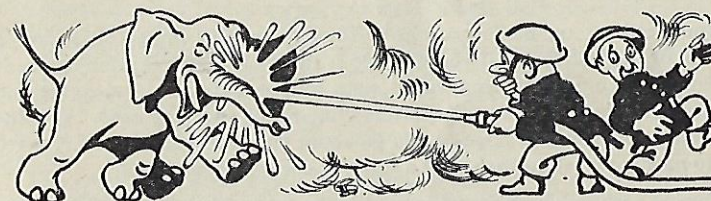
NOW that the general topic seems to be 'Post War,' probably a little 'pre war' Fire Service would be acceptable to the readers of *The Jet*. I do not claim this to be a technical paper, but I assure you that it is as near the truth as memory will allow.

It was a bright Friday afternoon in a large industrial city, and the writer was then a young recruit, fresh from training school and acting as the Senior District Officer's bodyguard whilst wages were being collected. A call came into the watchroom; the bells went down; the indicator board dropped. *Fire at Great Carmo's Circus!!*

I was ordered to proceed with the District Officer to the fire. The roads leading to the site where the tents were pitched were filled with running crowds. As we reached the ground it could be seen that the largest tents were on fire. Orders were given to get to work from hydrants. The fire was spreading rapidly, and the cries of the animals were pitiful to hear.

Lions, tigers, elephants, zebras and monkeys were all mingled together. Speed was essential, and it was a case of every man to a job. I was detailed to a branch to assist a senior fireman and we were to try and prevent the straw and some cages of animals from catching alight. Slowly but surely we fought our way through the smoke, fearing the lions and tigers more than the flames.

Suddenly my helpmate yelled above the din, "What the . . . is that?" A large grey shape loomed out of the smoke and steam, squealing as it came. "My Sainted Aunt, an elephant." My fellow branch holder shouted, "Watch me stop it with this jet."



A well directed shot met the animal squarely, and for a moment its squealing stopped. Only for a moment though, then with a high, awesome note it walked deliberately toward us. We backed slowly as it advanced; then it trotted and we trotted back; then it ran and we ran, abandoning the branch. We had never been taught what to do in a case like this, and I thought my days were numbered.

We managed to let it slip past us and we returned to our post, hoping that no-one had seen us commit the unpardonable crime of leaving a branch unattended.

Our troubles were not yet over. We had now to search for the branch among the straw and debris and as we searched several snakes slithered away. I prayed that they were harmless! We eventually located the branch and proceeded to carry on with our job.



Where's that Tiger?

Then amongst the smoke we saw an act of bravery that made us really ashamed of ourselves. In the centre of a broken, partially-burned cage, a coloured lion tamer, Togare, was breaking eggs into a bucket and applying the result to the burns the lions had sustained, murmuring to them all the time in a strange language. We were fascinated.

Many a time since that day I have wondered if any other Fireman ever had a similar experience, or if there is any formula for determining the pressure and quantity of water required to stop an elephant!

I agree with Gamble when he writes in "Outbreaks of Fires", that there are never two fires alike and experience is essential to a good Fireman . . . . This was an experience!

★ ★

## SERVICE,

### OR A THOUGHT FOR THE NEW YEAR

If in your heart there exists a sincere desire to have lived for a worthy purpose, a genuine longing to help make this world a better place in which to live, it is within your power to make a substantial contribution toward that goal.

You need set up no fellowship or foundation, nor must you endow a cathedral or institution. All you need do is make the most of each day as it is given unto you. Guard your mind, your tongue and your hand to the end that they will reject the false and evil and cling to the good and true. Become a missionary of faith and hope as you go about your everyday tasks . . . Go forth to meet your fellow men with a spirit of cheer and good will.

During each day look for opportunities to serve others rather than yourself. Adjust your sense of values and don't let little unimportant things destroy your peace of mind; see if you can't be just slightly more thoughtful, a trifle more considerate, a little more kind. Work at it sincerely and you will be amazed how it pays dividends in mental, physical and spiritual improvement, for you are sowing seeds that yield a harvest of peace, health and happiness and, in giving the best of yourself to others, you'll find your own blessings multiplied many times over . . . In your hands, and in those of all your fellow men who inhabit this earth, lies the power necessary to insure for all time "on earth peace, good will toward men." We already have it in our hearts, but we shall never know it ourselves until we unselfishly give it to others.

RUSSEL KAY in Clermont Press, Florida

# WOMENS' Page

## THE BARBARIC TRAMWAY SYSTEM

A senior woman officer who has come up to the North from the South thinks little of the climate, and even less of one of our methods of transport. She has decided that she may possibly survive the former, but is, by now, convinced that she and the latter will never come to an understanding. She has, in fact, gone so far as to remark that the tramway network reminds her of the Roman Catacombes, and other unpleasant labyrinthian systems. Defensively, we have said that the Underground is far more difficult from our point of view, but she has retorted that at least the Underground says what it means, whereas our trams don't, while as regards the tracks themselves . . . !

Upon the last occasion that this subject arose, her Staff Officer, feeling the ancient call of "The North versus the South," firmly shut the office door (having, with the last two available drawing pins in the building, put an "In Conference" notice upon it) and settled down to battle.

What, she wanted to know, was wrong with any of the trams in the area which her Chief covered? From a purely travelling point of view, they ran more frequently than the buses; it was true they might be rather noisy and possibly slower, but at least they could, she added with impassioned truth, still run when all other transport had retired during the fogs which descended in the autumn and winter months.

There was a slightly-strained atmosphere while the Chief said what she thought of the fogs which she had recently experienced during the autumnal months, the fogs which she was at present meeting during the winter months, and the fogs which she presumed (bitterly) would still be with them in what the calendar stated to be the spring months—though she doubted if the Northern climate took any notice of the calendar.

The Staff Officer, who hadn't, as yet, dared to mention the worst aspects of spring in the Industrial North, decided that it would be better to revert from the subject of fogs to that of trams, and foolishly asked what her Chief meant by referring to the Underground stating the destination of its various trains, whereas the trams led one astray. Could the Chief give her one instance?

The Chief immediately gave her several. She named one Division alone in which, she stated, it had been her unhappy lot to travel by their "revolting tram system." Could the Staff Officer explain why, when a tram had the letter "N" sign in its window, it meant that it was going to a terminus in a town the name of which started with the letter "H"?

The Staff Officer could, and triumphantly informed her that, although the terminus might be in a town the name of which began with "H", the route mainly ran through what was known as the "New Road"—hence the letter "N."

The Chief allowed this, but unkindly inquired why the letter "O" meant that the tram was running to the penny stage alone, on the same route.

The Staff Officer tried to cover this by referring vaguely to "Only Penny Stage," but under pressure admitted that as well as a New Road, there was also an Old Road from which the trams had been withdrawn; therefore, she added brightly, the Old Road trams had been transferred to the New Road route, but one had to use the old signs up, hadn't one?

After her Chief had intimated a failure to follow, as a comparative stranger to the town, the peculiar logic of both her Staff Officer and the local authorities, the Staff Officer decided to discuss the subject from another angle.



What, she demanded, was wrong with the actual trams themselves? Within three days she found out, as the Chief forthwith took her out for a few station visits. They toured ground which enclosed three Divisions, and a good deal of it included night driving. Trams which were apparently proceeding on a straight and narrow way suddenly did a *pas a gauche* without warning as they went onto a double track from a single one; trams coming from the opposite direction went into reverse procedure just as one was about to swing out to pass a slow-moving lorry; trams going along in an apparently peaceful manner swung out into a coy curve which effectively blocked all on-coming traffic. When one had passed beyond the modern limits of the trams themselves, their unwanted, but as yet unremoved, tracks still remained, conducive to skids, rather in the manner of those whose services had been dispensed with, but who are conscious of being able to cause subsequent trouble. It was, in fact, a tour containing some thrilling moments, with the air more than somewhat tinged with blue, or, alternatively, filled with exclamations of horror as the Chief tried to cope with the wierd evolutions caused by the system.

After they had arrived back at their H.Q. in a slightly-dazed state of mind which was supplemented by surprised acknowledgment of their safety, the Chief said "Well?"

The only thing which the Staff Officer could think of was to say, in defensive tones:

"Drive in Birmingham, Madam, and there you will find signs which say, 'Keep Left,' 'Keep Right' and 'Go Both Ways,' or 'Go Either Way': but at least we provide variety in that one never knows which of the four ways our trams will choose."

And she went off to practise her Eric Coates.

M.B.

## ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

By Area Officer HOLT—No. 7 Area

I have read with some considerable interest the letter signed "T.R.2" in the November issue of *The Jet*, and would like to endorse the suggestion put forward to the effect that the time is long overdue for the Home Office to define clearly some order of status for Women Officers of the National Fire Service. In addition to this, I would venture to take the matter a stage further and ask if the Department has reached some decision regarding the question of salaries paid to Women Officers.

The recent increase awarded to male officers above the rank of Company Officer has evoked some considerable feeling amongst their equivalent(?) ranks in the women's Service, who claim, with some justification, that they have been entirely overlooked.

It is assumed that the recent increases in pay have been based on the increased "cost of living", proportionate with the responsibility carried during the past years. Surely it can be said with assurance that women officers have shouldered their responsibilities with the loyalty and disregard for personal considerations exhibited by their male colleagues.

It is often argued that women should be paid less because of their smaller domestic responsibilities. People who argue like this never seem to realize what a heavy load of responsibility often rests on single women, in the shape of dependant parents, brothers, sisters and relatives. At the present time, when a large number of married women are working, including the wives of Fire Service Officers, this is a particularly ridiculous argument, as the woman who leaves her home and goes out to do a job may thereby entail heavy expenses, either in the form of domestic assistance at home or meals which have to be taken outside the home, thus increasing living expenses. All this, however, is beside the point: salaries are not paid in the Fire Service in proportion to people's needs and family commitments; they are paid in accordance with the responsibility which the man or woman bears. There is, therefore, no reason at all why women's salaries should remain so very much lower than men's when for them the cost of living is rising and the expenses that result from their senior rank are the same as male officers.

It is stressed that the lower ranks of the women's service have received some tangible acknowledgment of their services in the form of Service pay and post-war credits, but the senior women officers with their increased responsibilities have, apparently, not been considered.

As a member of the Association I have noticed from the reports of the National Council, which from time to time have been presented to our Regional Branch, that this question of salaries has been broached, and we have heard it rumoured that the issue has been presented by deputations attending before the Department.

I am very appreciative of the Association's efforts on behalf of women officers, but would suggest that the time has come when the whole question of status and salaries should be reviewed. It is suggested that there should at least be some monetary form of recognition for women officers parallel with the increases which have recently been awarded to our male colleagues, and so we are looking to the Association.

## REVIEW OF THE WOMEN'S BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE BY HER MAJESTY, THE QUEEN, 6th DECEMBER, 1944

A wintry sun shone cheerfully as her Majesty, accompanied by Princess Elizabeth, entered the Drill Yard of London Region Fire Headquarters—her car preceded by two women despatch riders.

The parade of 700 women, drawn from all Regions (50 representatives from Scotland), which had marched on in admirable style, presented an impressive picture. Mrs. Hicks, Deputy C.W.F.O. now acting as R.W.F.O., No. 4 Region, was in command.

Her Majesty was received by the Home Secretary, who presented Sir Ernest Gowers, Sir William Brown, Sir Arthur Dixon, Sir Frank Newsam, Commander Firebrace and Mrs. Cuthbert.

The Home Secretary then conducted the Queen to where all R.W.F.O.'s had fallen in. Each R.W.F.O. was then presented, Her Majesty addressing a few words to each.

Next, a block of some 40 Area Officers was inspected, the Queen stopping to speak to a number of them. Her Majesty and Princess Elizabeth, with the Home Secretary, Commander Firebrace and Mrs. Cuthbert in attendance, then walked round the women's crews of assembled vehicles and the front rank of the women's parade.

In the Regional Control Room the Queen displayed great interest in the six-bay switchboard manned by women, the observation post plotting room, the teleprinter room, the wireless room, and, of course, the mobilizing side.

From seats on the first floor balcony the Royal party—on their right, the Home Secretary and Mrs. Cuthbert: on their left, the Chief of the Fire Staff and Sir Ernest Gowers—watched squad drill movements ably carried out by firewomen under the command of Group Officer Gascoigne of No. 4 Region. This was followed by a display of fitness training, which was equally remarkable for its design and the élan and grace with which it was carried out by 152 women from Nos. 4, 5, 6 and 12 Regions. Miss Haddelsey, Fitness Training Expert, is to be congratulated on the way this display was produced. A.G.O. Stacey was in command.

An exhibition of firewomen's work was next inspected, and Her Majesty spent a considerable time at each of the stalls, asking questions of the firewomen in charge. The work included a display of hose repairing, a model mobilizing set up, productive work of various kinds, knitting for children in the occupied countries, discussion group work and toy-making.

The lecture room in which this exhibition was held was tastefully designed and decorated by No. 5 Region.

The review concluded with a march past of a thousand firewomen by companies, Her Majesty taking the salute with Princess Elizabeth on her left.

Favoured by sunny weather, the day was a great success, and it was obvious that the Queen was thoroughly interested and favourably impressed by what she saw. Those privileged to take part in the review will remember all their lives the gracious charm and spontaneity of interest expressed in such a natural way to everyone by the Queen.—A.N.G.F.



## A POSER

*Afterthoughts on the  
Photographing of 500 Men*

THE thing is done. It is all over, and nobody was killed or injured. I am extremely surprised and, in a way, a little disappointed. Not that one is a sadist or a Himmler. But the occasion was so charged with high drama, so pregnant with the possibilities of death and destruction, of frightful chaos and utter ruin, that one is left with a sense of flatness now that it has passed without incident—or almost without incident, anyway.

They told me it was simple. "We want to photograph the whole Column together," they said to me. "There will be about 500 all told. Ten ranks of 50 is what you want to aim at. Get a fatigue party and rig up some sort of tier arrangement with towing vehicles and tables and forms and things. Then all you have to do is fall the lads in, size 'em off and march them into place."

It sounded alright. I accepted the assignment blithely enough, and went away to do some simple arithmetic. After twenty minutes of this, in the course of which it became apparent that I had to dispose approximately 34 tons of fireman in a space of roughly 85 ft. by 14 ft. on a "tier arrangement" consisting in the main of just such rickety and spindle-legged tables and forms as I was at that moment performing my calculations upon, the first faint forebodings began to creep into my mind.

Next morning, with 24 hours to go, we got to work. Our first job, obviously, was to test our "equipment." Using Leading Fireman Brown, our local man-mountain, and a party of other "oversize" firemen, we weight-tested the roofs of the five T/Vs we proposed to use for the back rows. With twenty men aloft, clinging a trifle apprehensively to each others belts, buttons, arms or ears, whichever came handiest, all passed the test with flying colours. With some doubt and misgiving we then set up the first table for test and, packing it to capacity, stood well back to view the result, while the bored and self-conscious mass of humanity thereon swayed perilously about, cursing and muttering among themselves. To our intense surprise it did not disintegrate, although the middle sank about six inches below the ends. After further tests, we decided this was safe enough; but it introduced unexpected complications in the matter of sizing-off in the two middle rows. The forms gave us the same result, except one, which slowly spread its trembling legs, screamed like a banshee and precipitated its yelling load in all directions — fortunately without injury.



Testing completed, we laboured for six hours in a bitter wind, arranging, re-arranging, lashing, unlashng, strutting with steel scaffolding and bridging the gaps between the T/V roofs caused by the cabs and bonnets. The weird-looking result stood up well to a final test, but I slept a little fitfully that night.

## A Poser

Next morning, perched on the cat-walk of table-tops and 30 ft. ladders we had built along the roofs of the T/Vs, my sense of impending calamity was in no way lessened at the sight of the impressive army lined up across the car park almost as far as the eye could see. It was impossible that we could get them all safely ensconced on this crazy and contraptious grandstand. Something was bound to happen. Some fool right in the middle row, or on the roofs, would scratch his head or sneeze, or something, and bring the whole pack of cards down in crashing and catastrophic ruin.

However, promptly at the advertised time of 1100 hours, we started.

At, or about, 1120 hours, when, after considerable cajoling and muttered cursing on our part, and not a little unsuspected good-humoured banter from the troops, we had positioned approximately 200 on the lower tiers, and a further 100 or so were milling about on the roofs of the T/Vs, with all that happy nonchalance and disregard of their own or anybody else's safety which characterizes the fireman once he leaves the ground—it happened. With a horrible crunching thud, the roof of the end T/V and the ladder on it collapsed.

The ensuing hour is, fortunately, a blank in my memory.

Miraculously, no one was hurt, or even scratched—though we had a nasty moment when we saw them lowering somebody tenderly from the wrecked roof. But anxious enquiry elicited the fact that it was merely Fireman Jones who, having risen from the sick-bed with an injured leg so as to be in the photograph, had not thought to point out his infirmity and secure himself a safe position on the ground, but had laboriously engineered himself into the thick of the melee up top. Incredibly, when we had repaired the wrecked portion, he succeeded in repeating this performance, undetected until too late.

At 1200 hours we were ready once more. And this time all went well. Tables creaked, forms groaned. Men tottered sickeningly for a heart-stopping second, then miraculously recovered their balance. Somehow, by the skin of their teeth and their eyebrows, they stayed where they were—and, while the world stood still, and even the barracking crowd of factory girls who, all the time, had hovered in the offing with ready advice and comment, sank into an awestruck and expectant silence, the photographer "did his stuff."

Yes, the thing is done, thank God.

And all the advice I have to offer on the subject of posing large numbers of people in one group for a photograph is—call in a reputable firm of Bridge-building and Constructional Engineers. Then take that week's "Annual" that is due to you!

H.V.R.



# PERSONALIA



**Mr. W. H. BARKER, M.I. Fire E.**, who is in charge of No. 10 (Lincoln) Fire Force Area, served in the Royal Naval Air Service in the Great War. Saw service in the Eastern Mediterranean and was attached for some time to the original *Ark Royal*, the first plane carrier. He joined the London Fire Brigade in 1923 and was stationed at the Red Cross Street Station. He was there for 7½ years until appointed Deputy Chief Officer at Finchley, and later Chief Officer at Dagenham.

Before the outbreak of war, Mr. Barker was appointed Chief Officer at Bournemouth, and was later District Chief Officer for that part of the South Coast in and around Bournemouth. On the Nationalization of the Fire Service he was appointed to take command of No. 15 Area, remaining there until his secondment for special duties in the Middle East in connection with Oil Storage. Whilst abroad, Mr. Barker made a tour which included Egypt, Palestine, Iraq and Persia, for the purpose of advising on Fire

Prevention and Protection of Oil Storage Depots.

One of the outstanding developments during Mr. Barker's command of No. 10 Area has been the introduction of basic training, the building up of which is embraced in the three-word phrase which he has so aptly coined "Explanation, Demonstration, Operation."

Although competent firemanship has been the primary consideration, Mr. Barker has not been neglectful of the other side of the fireman's life. He has been the first to see that adequate recreational facilities have been made available, even in the most distant parts of his command. No mean athlete himself, he has taken a delight in participating in the numerous sporting events which have been prompted, largely as a result of his thoughtfulness.

Vast improvements have been made in the accommodation available for firemen and firewomen. New stations have been opened in busy boroughs and also in rural areas, much to the delight of part-time personnel, the value of whom have always been fully appreciated by Fire Force Commander Barker.

No one was more concerned than the Commander at the somewhat primitive facilities provided for part-time firemen. Nevertheless, they willingly responded to all demands on their time and appreciated in their turn the improvements affected by him.

**Fire Force Commander D. W. BATES**, No. 37 Area, was recently honoured by his former Area (No. 21) by being asked to present certificates of merit to the members of the winning teams in the 1944 Regional Pump Drill Competitions. Mr. Bates made a special journey from London for the purpose. Opportunity was taken to bid him a formal farewell and extend him best wishes in his new Force. Mr. Bates suitably replied and expressed his thanks to all ranks for their loyalty and devotion during the thirteen months he had been in command of the Area.

**Mr. E. A. BUCKLAND, B.Sc.**, Senior Staff Officer at No. 20 Fire Force Headquarters, has left the Service to resume his appointment as an electrical engineer with Messrs. British Thomson Houston, Ltd., Rugby. Mr. Buckland first joined the Service as a part-time fireman in the Rugby A.F.S. in 1938, and on Nationalization was posted to No. 20 Area as Senior Staff Officer. His professional experience enabled him to design and build the first Radio Control Unit in the Service, on which he lectured at the Fire Service College. He has placed his technical knowledge and experience fully at the disposal of the personnel of the Service, mainly as visiting lecturer to the Fire Force School.

Before leaving Cardiff for Coventry, his colleagues held a farewell party in his honour.

**Mr. CRIMBLE**, of No. 12 Regional Headquarters, has returned to his automobile engineering business, which is engaged on the maintenance and servicing of essential road transport. Mr. Crimble will be remembered by many as Chief Officer of the Staines Fire Brigade, and after Nationalization as a Home Office Inspector, when he visited all Regions in England and Wales. He was later transferred to the staff at No. 12 Regional Headquarters, and in this capacity has visited numerous stations throughout the Region. He is remaining in the Service in a part-time capacity.

**Mr. E. L. DAWE**, who has been awarded the King's Police and Fire Services Medal for distinguished service in the New Year's Honours List, has been in charge of the Weymouth Division of No. 16 Fire Force since Nationalization, and was formerly Chief Officer of the Weymouth Fire Brigade. He was recently commended by the Regional Commissioner for the Southern Region for personal gallantry at an ammunition fire.

**Miss M. T. A. EDRIDGE**, Area Officer of the Eastern Area of Scotland, who has been released from the Service, was a very active member of the Association, and in

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addition to being Area Branch Secretary was also a member of the Regional Committee. Her highly-valued contributions at Committee and other meetings will be greatly missed.

**Mr. A. ELLIS**, No. 21 Area Fitness Training Officer, has suffered a bereavement in the death of his father in Somerset. Sympathy is extended to him in his loss.

**Mr. B. GENT**, of Blackburn, has been released from the Service to take charge of the Ambulance Service at Chorley. He joined the Fire Service of that town in 1910 and was Chief Officer from 1929 until Nationalization.

**Mr. GEORGE HUTCHINSON** (Area Chief Clerk, No. 2 Area) has been appointed to succeed Mr. Mardon as Regional Chairman until the next annual general meeting.

Demands of industry have robbed Area 25 Headquarters of a popular figure in the person of **Company Officer P.M. "Pip" JOHNSON**. There were few activities, official or otherwise, which did not bear witness to "Pip's" energy and enthusiasm, and a fitting tribute to his work was paid by D.F.F.C. J. H. Jeffs at a social gathering at Area Headquarters. Keenly interested in all matters connected with the Service, Company Officer Johnson is to continue as a part-time member.

At its Committee Meeting on 7th November, 1944, the No. 1 Regional Committee accepted with much regret the resignation of their Chairman, **Mr. W. H. MARDON, M.I. Fire E.** (Fire Force Commander of No. 2 Area).

Mr. Mardon began his Fire Service career at Middlesbrough in 1919, leaving in 1929 to become Chief Officer at Todmorden and returning 6 years later as Chief Officer. During his service in the town he made the Middlesbrough Council thoroughly fire minded, reorganized the Brigade, and shortly before the war moved it into a new Fire Station which is undoubtedly



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one of the finest in the country. He visited both Germany and France to study Fire Service conditions and earned himself a national reputation as a keen, progressive Officer well versed in A.R.P. matters. Under the "district scheme" prior to Nationalization, Mr. Mardon was Divisional Officer in charge of No. 5 District, Northern Region.

Whenever the interests of the Service and his fellow officers required, he has given freely of his time and, in addition to being a prominent member of the Institute of Fire Engineers, was Chairman of the North Eastern Branch of the Professional Fire Brigades Association and was elected to the Governing Council of that body. On the brink of nomination for the Presidency of the P.F.B.A., an honour to which all aspired, he was compelled in 1943 to resign from the Governing Council owing to the difficulties imposed by our own war-time duties. The National Fire Service Officers' Association owes him special thanks as a founder member of the Chief Officers' Association, from which our own Association evolved.

\* \* \* \*

**Mr. J. PARKER**, of No. 30 'E' Division, has left the National Fire Service to accept an appointment with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in Persia. Mr. Parker spent the blitz years at "Hell-Fire Corner." It is understood that in addition to his fire-fighting responsibilities in Persia he will have charge of a section of the Company's Security Patrols, which combine sabotage and police duties with the primary function of fire-fighting.

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**Mr. N. PORTER**, A.C.I.S., Honorary Secretary of No. 10 Regional Branch and Honorary Treasurer of the Association, has been transferred to London where he becomes Deputy Regional Finance Officer.

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**Mr. W. A. RAMSAY**, who was in charge of 'B' Division, No. 2 Fire Force, has been appointed Port Fire Officer—Middle East, and expects to take up his new duties very shortly. After 10 years in the Merchant Navy he commenced his

fire-fighting career in the L.F.B., being stationed firstly at Southwark Bridge Road Headquarters and subsequently at Islington, Bishopsgate and Deptford where, as Sub-Officer and subsequently Station Officer, he took his share of the heavy raiding of 1940-41. He will doubtless be remembered as an enthusiastic "hooker" with the London Fire Forces Rugby Club at that time.

After Nationalization he was transferred to No. 1 (Northern) Region Headquarters as a Staff Officer, and later was appointed to the Division he has just left.

On his departure he will leave many friends behind, both in London and the North-East, but will carry with him the good wishes of all with whom he has served.

\* \* \* \*

It is with much regret to the Association and the Service that **Miss R. M. SCOTT** has been released on compassionate grounds at her own request. She joined London A.F.S. in 1938 and took charge of a happy band of drivers. She played a great part in their exciting life and responded to many blitz calls outside London when the larger provincial cities were receiving attention from the enemy.

London's loss was No. 28 Fire Force Area's gain, when "Scotty", as she was affectionately known by all, was transferred under Nationalization to No. 28 Area. Her forcefulness and drive were soon apparent, and she was subsequently transferred to No. 13 Area to organize the women's section of a strategically important "blue area."

Her untiring work for the women's cause was fully appreciated and her great sense of fairness and outspoken manner were soon felt. She quickly became endeared to all and certainly championed the cause of the firewomen. "Scotty" will be sadly missed by the Service.

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In opening his farewell speech to the officers of No. 27 Fire Force, prior to his departure to take up command of No. 40 Fire Force, **Mr. WILLIAM SMITH, B.E.M.**, mentioned that some fifteen years ago the High Sheriff of Yorkshire had sent him to Lancashire to

improve the stock. Although all who had gathered to wish him goodbye and good luck doubted the veracity of that claim, they agreed, without exception, that his Yorkshire humour, intense enthusiasm and unflagging drive would be sorely missed in the county of his adoption.

It was in March of last year that Mr. Smith was posted temporarily as deputy to No. 27 Area, following the merging of his previous command (No. 42 Area) in which he had laboured unceasingly from its inception to its somewhat premature decease. He enjoyed a well-deserved popularity, not only with the men and women he commanded, but with many and varied organizations outside the Service.

To many he will be remembered as a senior officer of the Manchester Fire Brigade and later as Assistant Fire Force Commander in the Manchester area, where his mental dexterity proved of inestimable worth in coping with myriad problems, and his ready wit a never-failing tonic to spirits which at times were liable to become jaded and depressed.

We congratulate Staffordshire on its good fortune in procuring an excellent Commander who, but for the accident of birth, might have made a good Lancastrian!

\* \* \* \*

**Mr. R. J. TICKNER**, formerly Officer in Charge of the Winchester Division in No. 16 Area, has been transferred to the Southampton Division. Mr. Tickner joined the Coulsdon and Purley Brigade in June, 1930, and in October 1940 was appointed an Assistant Regional Fire Brigades Inspector in the Southern Region, being appointed to the Winchester Division upon Nationalization.

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**Mr. J. B. VICKERY**, Regional Fire Staff Officer in the Southern Region, has been transferred to operational duties in the Winchester Division of No. 16 Area. Mr. Vickery was formerly a member of the Portsmouth City Police Fire Brigade.

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**Mr. R. C. WELCH, M.B.E.**, Assistant Fire Force Commander, No. 11 (Southend) Fire Force, has been transferred to No. 34 (London) Fire Force as an Assistant Fire Force Commander.

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**Mr. GEORGE A. V. WEST**, Regional Fire Risks Inspector at No. 9 Regional Headquarters, who was awarded the King's Fire Service Medal in the New Year's Honours List.

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**Messrs. ERNEST SMITH and FRANK WILKINS**, No. 17 Area, who were recalled from retirement at the outbreak of hostilities, resumed retirement in December last. Both formerly held the rank of Sergeant in the Bristol Police Fire Brigade.

\* \* \* \*

**Mr. L. WILLS**, one of the oldest members of the staff at No. 12 Regional Headquarters, has left to return to his pre-war occupation as a director of a well-known shipping firm. At the moment it is understood he is somewhere in America. To many he will be remembered as the



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Lionel Wills of early speedway days and trials fame. Speedway enthusiasts will recall him at Stamford Bridge and other speedways, when he introduced the sport to England with other Australian experts. He has devoted his skill and knowledge to furthering the efficiency of the Despatch Rider Service, which was his particular reference, throughout the Region.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. L. A. WOOD, formerly Assistant Director of Studies at the

N.F.S. College and member of Headquarters Inspectorate, with the special reference of training, has been transferred to No. 16 Area. Mr. Wood began his career in the London Fire Brigade in July, 1928.

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Mr. J. P. WOODS, Assistant Fire Force Commander, No. 34 (London) Fire Force, has been transferred to No. 10 (Manchester) Region as Assistant Fire Force Commander.

## New Year Honours

At its last Meeting the National Council decided to offer its congratulations to those members of the Service who were included in the New Year's Honours List, and we have pleasure in printing below a full list of the Honours.

### KNIGHTHOOD

Commander A. N. G. FIREBRACE, C.B.E., R.N. (Retd.) *President.*

*O.B.E.*

Mrs. J. S. HICKS (No. 4 Region)

*M.B.E.*

Miss K. BATES (No. 2 Region)

Mr. V. W. N. BOTTEN (No. 38 Area)

Mr. J. K. BUTLER (No. 31 Area)

Mr. T. B. ROBERTS (No. 9 Area)

Mrs. THYNN (South Eastern Area, No. 11 Region)

*B.E.M.*

Mr. L. C. MILES (No. 39 Area)

Mr. J. A. YOUNG (No. 1 Area)

### KING'S POLICE AND FIRE SERVICE MEDAL

Mr. G. A. BAINBRIDGE (No. 20 Area)

Mr. W. H. BARRETT (No. 13 Area)

Mr. E. L. DAWE (No. 16 Area)

Mr. C. P. KITCHIN (No. 30 Area)

Mr. C. W. B. STONHAM (No. 11 Area)

Mr. T. A. VARLEY (No. 1 Region)

Mr. G. A. V. WEST (No. 9 Region)

# Post-war Planning for Fires

*By a Senior Company Officer*

AMONGST the many articles which confront the reader in these days, surely the most numerous are those which deal with "Planning." Planned Kitchens, Planned Houses, Planned Villages and Planned Towns. Even the green fields of England, one gathers, will be Planned.

In how many of these learned treatises, however, has one seen mention of that humble, but necessary person—the Fireman?

Although methods of construction have changed and are likely to do so to an even greater extent after the war, it is hard to imagine a building in which a fire cannot occur. The fireman, therefore, must keep up-to-date and be conversant with the general knowledge of building construction, because it helps him to foresee weakness in structure and, if consulted in time, puts him in a position to be able to assist in post-war planning.

### FIRE-RESISTING MATERIALS

Building construction in the past has been governed by local conditions. In Scotland we find buildings of granite, in Lancashire and Yorkshire cast iron has been used to a great extent in factory construction, whilst in certain southern districts stone and flint have been extensively used. From these records it is observed that each kind of material has different standards of efficiency from a fire resisting point of view.

Before any materials can be considered fire resisting, they should possess the following qualities:

1. They should not be consumed or disintegrated by the action of heat or flame.
2. They should not expand excessively, which causes damage to the construction.
3. After heating, they should not cool so as to cause the material to fly, again weakening the structure.
4. Materials chosen for industrial buildings should be able to resist chemical action, where such chemicals are likely to be in use.

Continued research has now been made to reach the ideal materials for post-war construction, and it has been discovered that asbestos, silica, sand, terra cotta, etc., are to date among the best known fire-resisting materials on the market.

While I think it is hardly necessary for the fireman to remember the fusing temperatures of metals and the compression or tensile strength of building materials, a general fundamental knowledge will assist him in what we know as Fire Prevention, which will undoubtedly play an important part post war.



## Post-war Planning for Fires

Of course, new materials are constantly being introduced, and although most of these are fire resisting, there are very few of them which are not affected by heat to some degree. For example, steel is most likely to be used to a great extent for partition doors: while it is clear that these will check the spread of fire within a building, the action of heat may cause expansion and warping, with possible jamming of doors rendering escape or access more difficult.

### AIR INSTALLATIONS AND ELECTRICAL DEVICES

There is every indication that air installations are likely to be provided in a greater number of buildings than hitherto, with the consequent inclusion of flues and ducts which can act as fire carriers from one part of a building to another. Also, the multitudinous electrical devices which we are told are to be in common use are all possible sources of hidden fires unless they are carefully supervised during construction. Specified cable only should be used to prevent overloading, and switch gear properly installed particularly where electric motors are concerned. In fact, in post-war construction all electrical devices will have to be rigidly governed by the Institute of Electrical Engineers Rules to a greater extent than ever before.

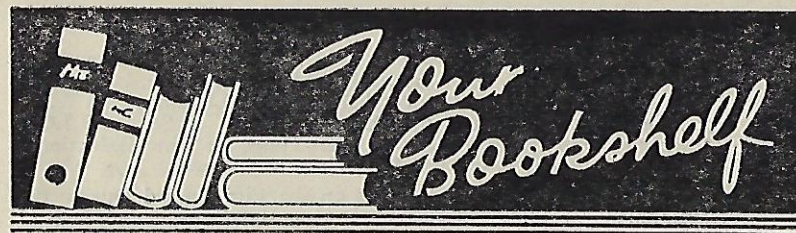
### PLANNING FOR THE FIREFIGHTER

It would appear, therefore, that it will still be necessary for the Fireman to enter new buildings to fight his old enemy. Is it too much to ask that the responsible authorities consider his convenience in advance? Why not have recognized "fire entrances" for high buildings? These to be clearly-marked doors in the external walls at high level, provided with an outside landing against which a turntable ladder could be reared to give rapid access to communicating corridors within. The elimination of "dead ends" in the planning, so that the circulation of traffic within a building can be continuous, would prevent trapping, and where metal screens are used, quick-release panels could be fitted in case of door jamming.

Then there is the question of access to the buildings themselves. Has this been given sufficient consideration? It has been authoritatively stated that during the fire blitz on Moscow effective fire stops were made, and it was not found necessary to reinforce the Fire Services during their most difficult days. This was due, no doubt, to the wide thoroughfares which provided easy access and approach to buildings for fire appliances.

High buildings could be provided with access from at least two sides, with sufficient space for operating appliances effectively. Again, if such buildings were planned around courtyards, entrances to these courtyards from the main thoroughfares should be provided of sufficient size to admit a turntable ladder, which could then be manipulated with maximum efficiency.

A few rules of this character introduced at an early stage in the consideration of programmes for rebuilding would do much to make the Fireman's lot a less unhappy one.



### "OUR FIRE FIGHTERS"

(SIR HUMPHREY MILFORD—*Oxford University Press*) by John Anderson

In a straightforward and attractive style the Author has sketched for us the evolution of organized fire prevention and fire fighting methods from the days of the curfew through the development of fire insurance brigades in Queen Anne's time to the present complex organization unified and standardized in a National Service.

Whether unwittingly or with a grim and salutary intent, Mr. Anderson has drawn attention to that basic weakness in the British character, a phlegmatic lack of imagination and foresight. He illustrates with clarity and realism the tardiness with which fire fighting measures and organization have lagged far behind the needs for them, needs which so frequently had to be demonstrated by a national disaster such as the Great Fire of London or by the calamitous destruction of life and property by air attack in the absence of both mains and emergency water supplies.

The most avid reader of adventure stories could scarcely require anything more thrilling than the graphic description of attendance at a big fire and the Author's method of describing the use and significance of a Fireman's tools is very well conceived and executed.

To Firemen as well as to the general public this book presents an interesting survey of the modern Service and of its allied branches. Its treatment of the technical side of fire fighting, whilst clearly intended to have an interest—rather than an educational—value to the profession, convincingly presents to the lay mind an absorbing picture of technical progress and achievement justifying every confidence in the present organization.

If the fate of the post-war Fire Service rests finally with the public vote, this book, widely read, would surely tip the balance in favour of a post-war organization on a National basis. It will certainly help materially to break down in the short-memoried public mind any stupid prejudices which still exist against a National Service which has never had an opportunity of self-justification in the public eye by extending itself in spectacular blitz-fire achievements.

The essence of the Service's aim is illustrated by an apt quotation from the wisdom of Shakespeare: "A little fire is quickly trodden out which, being suffered, rivers cannot quench."

Mr. John Anderson has written a book which deserves and may possibly achieve a place on everyone's bookshelf. The English price is 3s.—D.M.A.L.

### I.F.E. COLLECTED PAPERS

The Technical Committee of the Institution of Fire Engineers have prepared a series of booklets containing papers originally published in Annual Reports, now out of print. The papers have been brought up to date and Volume 1 has been published in six parts, viz.:—

PART I (Fire Prevention and Extinction)—"The Fire Protection of High Buildings," by S. G. Gamble, F.S.I., A.M.I.C.E.: "The Fire Protection of Oil Properties" by J. C. Fitzhenry, Grad. I. Fire E.: "Fire Protection of Aerodromes and Aircraft" by E. E. C. Desborough, M.I. Fire E.

PART II (Hydraulics)—"Water Supply to Fire Engines in Relation to Hose Diameters and Nozzle Pressures," by Arthur Pordage, O.B.E., M.I. Fire E.: "Hydraulics applied to Fire Engineering" by A. G. Webb, B.Sc. (Eng.), A.C.G.I., A.M.I. Mech. E.



## Your Bookshelf

PART III (Chemistry)—“Chemicals and Noxious Gases encountered by Firemen,” by A. M. Cameron, B.Sc., F.R.I.C., Hon. M.I. Fire E.: “Calcium Carbide, Acetylene and Metal Cutting” by W. C. Freeman: “Combustion” by A. J. Jinkings, B.Sc., A.R.I.C.; “Principles Underlying the Use of Inert Gases for Fire Extinction,” by A. M. Cameron, B.Sc., F.R.I.C., Hon. M.I. Fire E.

PART IV (Electricity)—“Some Notes on the Fire Hazard Due to the Development of Static Electricity During the Storage and Use of Inflammable Liquids,” by A. M. Cameron, B.Sc., F.R.I.C., Hon. M.I. Fire E.: “Automatic Fire Alarms” by P. G. F. Orchard: “Report of Tests Made at the Croydon Electricity Station on May 5th, 1933, to Determine the Risk to Firemen Operating with a Branch and Jet of Water in Close Proximity to 132 kv. Overhead High Tension Grid Cables”: “Fire Protection and Extinction in Power Stations and High Tension Switchgear, with Particular Reference to the Fire at Brimsdown Power Station in September, 1935” by A. H. Johnstone, O.B.E., M.I. Fire E.

PART V (Building)—“Building Materials in Relation to Fires” by T. E. Smith, M.I. Fire E.: “Some Features in the Planning and Construction of Buildings from a Fire-Risk Standpoint,” by J. A. Clarke, F.R.I.B.A., A.I. Struct. E., P.A.S.I.

PART VI (Organization and General)—“Visit to Safety in Mines Research Station, Harpur Hill, Buxton”: “Address on the Report of the Home Office Departmental Committee on Fire Brigades Services,” by Sir Arthur Dixon, C.B., C.B.E.: “Comparisons between the British, Australian and American Fire Brigade Services,” by Edward A. Weir, A.M.I. Fire E.: “The Examinations of the Institution of Fire Engineers,” by J. W. Dane, B.E.M., M.I. Fire E.: “Coming of Age of the I.F.E.,” by Arthur Pordage, O.B.E., M.I. Fire E.

Each part is sold as a separate pamphlet and may be obtained from the Secretary of the Institution, 2 Millbank House, Great Peter Street, London, S.W.1. Price 1s. 2d. (including postage).

### FIRE SALVAGE OPERATIONS

This small booklet was first issued by the London Salvage Corps in 1942 after the decision of the Home Office to provide salvage tenders and equipment for the use of National Fire Service personnel.

It is a survey in brief of salvage operations during and after a fire. The subject is prefaced by a reference to the history of the London Salvage Corps in a form so condensed that more than one hundred years is covered in five short paragraphs.

The booklet was written by a salvage specialist and, although it does not go into the details of equipment, it deals with general salvage operations in a concise and practical manner.

The introduction of salvage operations in the training of National Fire Service personnel has created a keen interest in this specialized work and a more comprehensive volume on the subject would undoubtedly be well received, although it may not be possible to publish such a book under present conditions. A chapter in Part 6 of the Manual of Firemanship in course of publication by H.M. Stationery Office is to be devoted to salvage and that may meet the case.—J.H.F.

### FIRE PROTECTION AND A.R.P. YEAR BOOK 1944-45

*Lomax, Erskine & Co. Ltd. 7s. 6d.*

The sixth edition of this Year Book contains 300 pages and is similar in style and layout to its predecessors. The lists of Officers, Regulations, Publications, etc. have been revised and the 8 sections are indexed with stiff cards.

The book will be useful to all Fire Officers and at least one copy should be available at all Divisional, Area and Regional Headquarters.—D.O.N.

## IS THIS YOUR POST-WAR JOB?

ONE of the less pleasant aspects of life in any Service is the possibility of being transferred elsewhere unwillingly and at short notice. This feeling that one's fate is in someone else's hands and, more recently, the spectre of redundancy with consequent discharge or down-grading, have bred in many officers, both men and women, the desire for a more settled existence, an existence of which it can be said “This is my job, and I can concentrate on it without the fear of being suddenly uprooted.”

The fact that 70,000 new teachers will be required to implement the new Education Act has received wide publicity in the newspapers and on the wireless, and must have led many members of the National Fire Service who are anticipating release in the near future to read the first section of General Fire Force Instruction 15/1944 (Emergency Recruitment and Training of Teachers) with more than a passing interest.

The leaflet issued by the Board of Education gives only the barest outline of the method of selecting and training recruits from the Forces and, until a more definite policy is formulated, would-be teachers from the Service will be well advised to keep an open mind on the subject and, in the meantime, to examine the teaching profession from every angle.

Let us consider, for a moment, a few aspects of a life which, to the layman, seems to consist of short hours, long holidays, and good pay; a pleasant existence provided one has a sound knowledge of class subjects and is endowed with a plentiful supply of a quality vaguely referred to as “patience.”

For those who desire it, the teaching profession certainly offers security. Only very serious offences are punished by dismissal, while involuntary transfer is not a frequent occurrence. On the other hand, prospects of promotion are very limited. After about ten years' service application can be made for headmasterships. These go to the lucky or meritorious few, usually after several years of fruitless application, followed by occasional interviews. Hereafter promotion ceases, except for a possible move to a bigger school with a small increase in salary. Strangely enough, a headmaster very rarely becomes an inspector or obtains a high executive post with an Education Authority. More rarely still does a teacher progress from an Elementary to a Secondary school. Between the two a great gulf is fixed.

The monetary rewards are small, and are graded in scales known as the Burnham Scales. Teachers in country schools receive less than teachers in cities, while the highest salaries are those paid in London and Middlesex. A convenient and illuminating comparison is afforded by setting the pay of fully-qualified Elementary school teachers against the pay received by various ranks in the National Fire Service.

An assistant teacher begins his career at roughly the same pay as a Fireman, and on reaching the maximum in 15 years he will receive the pay of a Company Officer. This includes war bonus. As a head-



### Is this your Post-war Job ?

master his salary varies from a Senior Company Officer's to a Column Officer's. Women's salaries are lower than men's, ranging from that of a Leading Firewoman to that of a Group Officer. These are the present rates. Revised scales are under consideration and, if adopted, will increase salaries by approximately one third.

On paper the hours of duty are attractively low, but although extraneous duties are not compulsory, the teacher wishing to avoid disfavour will find himself compelled to sacrifice a portion of his lunch period to the supervision of school meals, and to give up many evenings and Saturday mornings to lecture courses, school football, cricket, boxing, youth clubs, hobby clubs and other forms of activity. All this, in addition to preparing lessons and keeping up-to-date with a mass of marking, as endless as a squirrel's race round a revolving cage.

Working conditions vary. A number of excellent new schools have been built, but many of the older buildings, especially church schools, are gloomy, cold and badly ventilated.

As to the teaching itself, it is quite useless to compare it with that of one's own schooldays. The past two decades have brought a great wave of new theories and experiments. Many of these have proved themselves good ; others have failed and have been rejected, while the unfortunate human guinea pigs on whom they have been tried have suffered accordingly. An endeavour to broaden the child's education has made the schoolboy's life vastly more interesting, but has led to a lowering of the standards in the basic subjects at which previous generations excelled. Hence the frequent complaints received from employers. Unfortunately, teachers have realized that window-dressing is necessary in order to catch the eye of authority and to accelerate promotion, and this has tempted many to indulge in a series of "stunts" which look impressive but are of doubtful educational value.

The effect of all this on the schoolchildren of the past 15 years has not yet made itself fully felt. The spirit is there. The Battle of Britain, El Alamein and Arnhem give ample proof of that, but only the post-war years will show whether this spirit is reinforced by the more substantial and prosaic qualities that sound educational methods develop in the youth of a nation.

What the teaching profession needs is an infusion of new blood. True, the frumpish spinster and snuffy pedagogue types have almost died out. Teachers are no longer "different." The younger generation of teachers does not go around with "School Teacher" writ large across its clothes, features and mannerisms, and the attitude of the general public is ceasing to be a mixture of respect for learning and good-humoured contempt for a class who, in ideas, conversation and interests are not quite as other men.

At the same time, all teachers suffer from the limitations imposed by a life spent from earliest childhood to retiring age in a scholastic atmosphere. This detachment from the hurly-burly of life outside has a somewhat emasculating effect. Additional burdens are accepted

### Is this your Post-war Job ?

in a spirit of meek resignation and, although teachers' organizations often protest vigorously, a flat refusal to be imposed upon is unheard of. It is considered undignified and is just not done.

We need an influx of enthusiastic, intelligent men and women whose experience in the Services and in the business and commercial world has given them a broad and realistic outlook on life. Let us have done with this "man among boys and boy among men" slur which has hitherto contained more than a grain of truth.

The path of the recruit will not be easy. To control and guide forty young minds and wills calls for a tremendous output of nervous energy, and recruits who have been able to exist in civil life and in the Service for a year without a holiday, will find that the deceptively-generous long week-ends and holidays are vitally necessary for recuperation.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the life is a lonely one, with few opportunities during working hours for contact with mature minds. There is no easing up for a few words with a colleague ; in fact, a teacher who eases up for any reason is apt to lose his grip on the class. Once that has gone, life is intolerable until the situation is restored.

One similarity between the teaching profession and the Fire Service is the periodic visits by inspectors. Some teachers regard them as a bugbear, but the Board of Education species is no worse than the Home Office variety.

It should be borne in mind that the conditions referred to above are those that obtain at present. Far-reaching reforms have been promised and, unless these promises prove to be of the "pie-crust" variety, life in the future in what has always been the Cinderella of the professions should be more congenial than it has been in the past. Whatever the conditions, there is always the consolation of knowing that the moulding of character and the development of young bodies and minds is not just another job of work. Teaching, like the church and medicine, is more than a trade or a profession : it is a vocation, demanding unceasing labour and whole-hearted devotion. The true extent of success or failure is not always apparent and the tangible rewards are few ; but the knowledge that one is making a positive contribution towards the development and consequent happiness of future generations is, in itself, an incentive that will enable the would-be teacher to surmount all the difficulties and disappointments that inevitably await him.—N.H.

## GRADING OF DIVISIONAL CLERKS

The Association has been advised by the Department that in response to its representations three Divisional Clerks who were down graded to Company Officer ranks are to be paid as Senior Company Officers for the period from their down grading until they were subsequently given the higher rank.



# SPORTING Chatter

By "OLD GUARD"

## Resignation

Sportsmen in the Service and outside will regret to hear that Company Officer B. C. Knott (No. 5 Region) has tendered his resignation as Secretary of the N.F.S. Sports Council and has returned to civil life. Some months ago he underwent an operation at a London Hospital from which I am glad to state he has made a good recovery. His resignation was received with regret at a meeting of the Sports Council in January and tribute was paid to his splendid work as the first secretary. A vote of appreciation was unanimously passed and best wishes extended to him for the future. Capt. E. H. Hebbert, Fitness Training Officer on the Fire Staff, Home Office, has been appointed to succeed Mr. Knott, and in view of his all-round experience of sport the choice is certainly a happy one.

\* \* \* \*

## Popular Competition

The National Netball Competition, which has proved so popular amongst the women personnel, has now been completed. I understand that part-timers figured prominently in the teams. This is all to the good of the Service. It can be truly said that team spirit has been fostered throughout the competition which, after all, was the principal aim of the sponsors—the N.F.S. Sports Council and Chief Woman Fire Officer, Mrs. Cuthbert, O.B.E., who kindly offered to present a cup. The semi-finals and final were played at Leicester at the end of December, and after some exciting games the coveted trophy was won by No. 5 Region.

## Water Polo

Wales has always enjoyed a reputation for water polo, and a number of Officers and men who have secured International honours are to be found in the Service. Nowhere is the sport more enthusiastically taken up than in Swansea, where Divisional Officer Wade is a "leading light." The Swansea N.F.S. team, which includes an International in Leading Fireman Reynish, has met with considerable success, and, although the season is regarded as "closed", the enthusiasm of the Swansea swimmers is such that they still pursue this popular pastime. Incidentally, Divisional Officer Wade was formerly attached to the Blackpool Fire Brigade, and on the outbreak of war was Chief Officer at Rhyl, North Wales. It has been suggested that Inter-Regional water polo matches might be arranged.

\* \* \* \*

## Rugby Win

No. 7 Region visited No. 5 Region to play off a seasonal Rugby fixture, and with the same team that won against the London Region last year were again victorious, winning by a goal to a try after a strenuous sporting tussle. The visitors were entertained after the game, spending an enjoyable evening and staying overnight.

\* \* \* \*

## Inter-Regional Soccer

No. 7 Region were at home to No. 6 Region in the first round of the Southern Section of the Inter-Regional Competition. No. 7 Region, who were last year's finalists in the National Competition, won by six goals to one. Conditions were adverse, but some good football was seen. Although several members of last season's successful side are no

longer available, Region 7 appear to have an equally useful side.

In the same competition No. 8 Region entertained No. 5 at Cardiff, a keen game resulting in a win for No. 5 by two goals to one.

\* \* \* \*

## Police Beat Firemen

The only representative Football Match arranged for the National Fire Service this season was played on Saturday, 21st October, 1944, on the Crystal Palace Ground. Both sides were strongly represented, the Police playing an all-professional side, and the National Fire Service, with the exception of Bownes, the Norton Woodseats Amateur, also played all professionals.

The score at half-time was two goals to nil in favour of the Police. In the second half the Firemen fought back hard and had the satisfaction of reducing the deficit through a goal scored by Small, the West Ham United centre-forward. Near the end of the game the Police broke away and scored their third goal. Result: Police 3 (Thomas 2, Thorley), N.F.S. 1 (Small).

\* \* \* \*

## In the North

Sport has not been a strong feature in the No. 1 Region, but prospects for the future are bright. Under the chairmanship of C.R.F.O. Varley a Regional Sports Committee has been inaugurated and has already "got cracking." Column Officer Noakes (No. 2 Area) is the Vice Chairman, Company Officer Milligan (1G Division) the Regional representative on the N.F.S. Sports Council, and Section Leader Tennant (Regional H.Q.) the Regional Sports Secretary.

\* \* \* \*

## Some Enthusiasm!

The enthusiasm in the north is not all on the male side. Leading Firewoman Clark (1F Division), in the National Netball Tournament, led her netball team to victory over

## Sporting Chatter

No. 2 Region by 18 goals to 16 on her wedding day! At least, it was to have been her wedding day, but such was her enthusiasm that she postponed the happy event in order to play. Her fiancée's views on the matter will not be promulgated!

\* \* \* \*

## Upholding Welsh Tradition

No. 21 Fire Force (Wales Region) Rugby XV are going great guns this season. So far they are undefeated in the Service. Their best performance to date was the 6 points to 3 victory over London Fire Force at Beckenham in December. C.R.F.O. Blackstone, G.M., one of the founders of the London Fire Force team, has, since his appointment as C.R.F.O. for No. 8 Region, taken a particularly keen interest in the No. 21 Area team which is certainly upholding the fine Welsh rugby tradition.

\* \* \* \*

## Shooting Firewomen!

No, not firewomen in the line of fire, but in the firing line! Three times a week enthusiastic firewomen from Area 31 Headquarters meet for target practice during the lunch hour and now, out of a total of 17 members who have qualified for the 75 and over class, 8 are women. They have got their eyes on a selection of targets—the *Daily Mail* and *News of the World* Certificates prior to aiming for the *News of the World* Challenge Cup. These firewomen had the unique opportunity of "shooting" their Officers last week, but were held at bay by a leading score of 13 points. The Women Officers are not unrepresented in this gallery of sharpshooters, but results so far have pointed to the old familiar phrase "the higher the fewer (bullseyes)." Meanwhile, a specially-padded "fold-flat" is being prepared for the super-marksfirewoman as she finally pulls, or should we say, squeezes her way to the top.





# In Praise of Laziness

*I divide my Officers into four classes. The clever, the stupid, the industrious and the lazy. Each Officer possesses at least two of these qualities. Those who are clever and industrious are fitted for high staff appointments. Use can be made of those who are stupid and lazy. The man who is clever and lazy is fitted for the highest command. He has the temperament and requisite nerve to deal with all situations. But whoever is stupid and dangerous is a danger, and must be removed immediately.—Col. General Baron Kurt von Hammerstein-Equord.*

This statement, attributed to a German General, is not without some truth and has before now found its way into a Fire Service journal. To us in a new Service it is well that we examine the lesson such a statement might have. Of course, this is not the whole truth, because "character" and "personality" do not appear of much account in the view of this particular German. But there is enough truth to make us think and to make us look at the word "industrious" from another point of view.

Is it a virtue to be industrious? All of us from childhood must have had drilled into us the virtue of industry. It is not a virtue in itself; it is, in effect, but a means towards the achievement of two objects. Firstly, the more efficient performance of the machine or organization one is serving and, secondly, the formation and exercise of one's own personal character. It is in regard to the former that industry may become a danger.

It sometimes requires great moral courage not to be industrious. The keener we are on our work, the more exacting our ideas are likely to become, and the more difficulty we shall have, therefore, in allowing subordinates to do things we can probably do so much better ourselves. All students of organization preach a doctrine of decentralization, but how many of us can sit back and hold the proverbial "can" whilst others issue the orders? The more industrious we are, the more difficulty there is. The most industrious Officers are notoriously bad decentralizers and seldom bring the best out of their juniors.

Our Prime Minister is reported to have advised a young man at school to avoid clogging his brain with useless details, but to fashion it like a rifle so that it could fire other peoples' bullets. Wise advice. Let the industry of subordinates manufacture the bullets and the cleverness of the Commander use them. He is an able Commander who can use his subordinates' brains. The work of many is better than that of one overworked brain. A Commander is then free to throw the whole of his weight in wherever it may be required with an energy not sapped by months and days of ceaseless toil. In a Staff Officer industry is a most valuable virtue, probably the most valuable, but for a Commander, industry, unless it is used in the exercise of personal character, can be a positive danger.

Many of us in the Fire Service work too hard. Perhaps it is one of the teething troubles of a new Service, or perhaps it is the fear of

## In Praise of Laziness

letting anything go wrong. It is a fault all of us in senior positions might do well to guard against. The strength and efficiency of the Service depends upon the initiative and skill of the junior officers in charge of our stations. This is best fostered by the inspiration and encouragement given to these officers by senior officers. We should aim to give them the feeling of importance that is their due and the trust which comes from freedom to exercise their own initiative.

The vast majority of us are conscientious, industrious and rather stupid, and we must be taken as we are. There are many hopeless cases who will overwork themselves wherever they are put. This should not necessarily tell against them, but all of us in senior positions should endeavour to reduce our work to a little less than can be done in a normal working day. In short, instead of being harmfully industrious, we should apply our industry in trying to save ourselves, and other people, work. The ingenuity required for this will make us less stupid; the less stupid and less industrious we are, the more valuable shall we be.

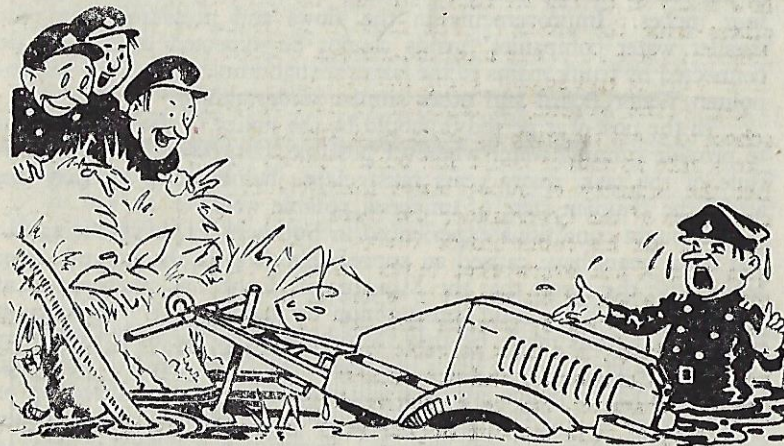
K.N.H.

## N.F.S. Factualities, No. 2

"Obtain the shallowest possible suction lift—position your pump as near the water as you can."

With these remarks the Company Officer at the Training School impressively dismissed his class from the lecture room and led the convoy down to the riverside. The Instructor, obviously keen to demonstrate the effectiveness of bringing the pump as near the water as possible, not only completely submerged the pump and suction but covered himself with glory in the shape of slime and duckweed!

This was carrying the lecture too far, and the Company Officer was obliged to add "As near the water as possible, but without totally submerging the suction eye."





# E.W.S. IN RURAL AREAS

## A PLEA FOR THEIR RETENTION

By E. F. H. (L.R.I.B.A.)

**W**ATER SUPPLIES for fire-fighting in rural districts must always be considered in conjunction with domestic mains supply, inasmuch as this water can be supplied under pressure, and is—or should be—always available. It is well known that in a considerable number of rural district areas domestic water supplies are distributed by private water undertakings, or water undertakings whose incomes are low because of the limited number of properties they serve. It can be appreciated that their mains are generally of small diameter and in many cases tuberculation seriously restricts flow. Limited capital available prevents replacement of these inefficient mains and hinders the development of schemes to cover outlying districts. Until such time as a Government subsidy is provided, progress generally will be negligible.

The Fire Authority, in most cases the Local Authority for the time being merged in the N.F.S., is responsible for the inspection and maintenance of hydrants, but, unfortunately, present labour problems have led to the neglect of this necessary routine supervision. For the same reason the washing out of mains has not been regularly effected. All this tends to have a deleterious effect on the mains, and it may be some appreciable time before new mains are laid or new schemes evolved.

### LINKING-UP MAINS SUPPLIES

It is, perhaps, worthy of note that the Ministry of Health, during the present emergency, has endeavoured to link all systems of water undertakings. It must be realized, however, that undertakings can connect only at the extremities of their boundaries, with the result that replenishment is restricted to a meagre 250/300 gallons per minute, owing to the limited size of the mains which rarely exceeds three to four inches. Improvements in the flows and pressures from the smaller water companies' mains cannot be expected until they are connected by trunk mains to the larger distributors, such as the Metropolitan Water Board and other similar undertakings.

In the post-war period it should be the policy of the Government to provide running water wherever possible, but, owing to the magnitude of the task, many years must elapse before rural districts can attain the Utopian state of universal potable water.

Drought conditions experienced in Southern England during the last three years have caused an appreciable drop in the natural water table, with the result that the Ministry of Health has taken stringent steps to control domestic consumption of mains water. As a result of representations made by that Department the use of hydrants by N.F.S. personnel for wet drills has been drastically reduced. Natural supplies, such as ponds, streams and rivers, have either dried up or have become so low that they cannot be considered, or are not even accessible for Fire Service pumps. Experience has shown that in

## E.W.S. in Rural Areas

some districts, especially on the Wealden clay belt, 80% of the natural supplies have become seriously lowered or are entirely dried up.

The geological formation in some country areas makes it necessary for the domestic consumer to be supplied either by an artesian bore or rainwater filtered into storage tanks. These supplies are limited in their capacity and cannot be relied upon to any great extent to provide water supplies for fire-fighting.

### PROTECTING PROPERTY AND PRODUCE

In the interim period of reconstruction, reserves of water for fire-fighting should be available in rural districts, not only to cover residential property, but also farm buildings and produce such as hay, unthreshed corn, straw, beans and flax stacks, all of which are so essential to the life of the community. Statistics show that approximately 10% of the total fires dealt with by the N.F.S. are stack fires, and these remain a high fire risk under any conditions.

Forests laid down by private owners or the Forestry Commission, particularly those of the coniferous type, are a tremendous asset to the country at the present time, and efforts to increase the acreage under cultivation will certainly be made. So much home-grown timber has been felled to replace loss of overseas supplies that re-afforestation must receive consideration in the post-war period. A forest fire in these sapling trees in certain weather conditions can cause considerable damage, and ample water supplies should be placed strategically to enable crown or undergrowth fires to be extinguished quickly in the initial stages.

The N.F.S. have erected rectangular and circular steel dams as temporary water cover during the war. Although a useful purpose has been served, these basins, being composed of short-lived materials which need considerable maintenance and frequent repair, cannot be regarded as permanent fixtures. Reservoirs or basins should be constructed of more lasting materials, such as brick or concrete. Brick basins reinforced with mild steel bars and rendered watertight by the colloidal grouting process have given very satisfactory service in certain districts. Quickness of erection, which can be carried out by semi-skilled labour, and a structure which needs no maintenance are other points in their favour.

Clay-lined pits have not proved successful as E.W.S. Continual inspection and maintenance is necessary to obviate cracking of the lining due to evaporation, and consequent exposure of the clay-edges to the heat of the sun. Vegetation is also known to create fissures in the clay with eventual loss of the water contained.

### BEAUTY AND UTILITY COMBINED

New basins could be designed and incorporated in the post-war development of any village or country town. There is no doubt that a sheet of water planned to harmonize with local buildings could add to the charm of any layout. Supplies might take the form of shallow ponds, with stone-faced internal walls and small pockets laid in the base for deposits of earth in which to grow suitable water plants.



Sumps for draining and for use by the N.F.S. could be guarded by a removable iron grille. It might be more sanitary to replace certain village ponds with such basins, which could be easily cleaned and cleared of rubbish dumped there by mischievous children. Also, topping up from the mains could be effected without fear of water running to waste in the sub-soil.

The retention of all static water basins erected by the N.F.S. in rural districts is recommended. Extra supplies should be pressed for in the post-war planning scheme, even at the risk of spoiling rural amenities or, for the time being, detracting from local beauty spots. All these supplies to be retained until such time as an adequate and efficient water system is available throughout the land.

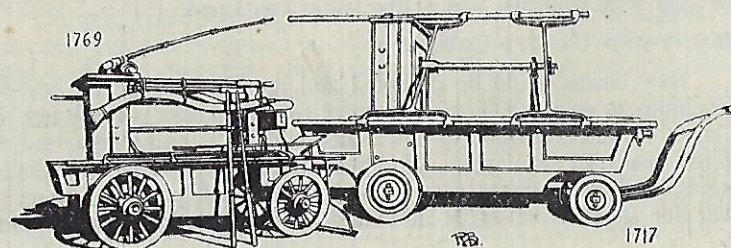
## FIRE ENGINES ON RAIL

*Reminiscences of a Hampshire Brigade*

LONG-DISTANCE reinforcement calls are now accepted as part of the functions of the N.F.S., but it is interesting to listen to the reminiscences of a former Chief Officer of the Andover Fire Brigade, Hampshire. In the days of the horse-drawn steamer, two large fires occurred at Basingstoke and Salisbury, but owing to the distance it was impracticable for horses to be used. The method of reinforcing then was for a special railway tender and truck to be placed at the disposal of the Brigade, and the engine was shipped onto the truck and met at its destination by horses ready to take it to the fire.

The summoning of the Brigade in the 'Nineties' was a noisy affair—the Town Hall bell which normally tolled for the Andover Market sounded the alarm during the day. At night all calls were received by the local butcher, who hurried round the streets sounding the hooter which, to this day, hangs in the Andover N.F.S. Station.

For over 200 years Andover has had a Fire Brigade, and at the local library there is exhibited an old manual dated 1717 with some of the original leather buckets. Within a stone's throw of the modern N.F.S. self-propelled appliances, there still stands in the Council Yard a manual bearing the inscription *Sun Fire Office* and the date 1769. The illustration below is taken from photographs of these ancient appliances.



## The Mystery of the Turntable Ladder

WHILST working on a large lull-period fire in the North-West recently, I had the experience of witnessing a most unfortunate, and what may have been, tragic accident—that of a Turntable Ladder, working as a water tower, overturning into the building with a fireman perched on the platform operating the branch.

Several theories and explanations of the accident have been expressed, some ludicrous and some good, but as one who witnessed the drama from start to finish, allow me to describe just exactly what happened, without discussing the merits of whether this or that should have been done.

The ladder was a Leyland Metz 100 ft. all-steel appliance. It was positioned parallel to the wall of the burning building on good, solid ground, the ladder elevated and extended at right angles to the length of the chassis, termed, I believe, in T.L. operators' circles as the "L" formation.

Water was supplied by a 500 g.p.m. Coventry Climax through twin lines of 2½" rubber-lined hose, each of 5 lengths, which were collected at the foot of the ladder into one line of 2 lengths of 2½" rubber-lined hose. The pump was working on the same plane as the chassis of the ladder, and was supplying water at approximately 150 lb. per sq. in., the monitor being fitted with a 1½" nozzle. The actual extension and elevation I cannot give, but a rough estimate of the extension would be 75 ft.

May I state that this was a fire with an attendance of 30 pumps, all of which were working at full strength, in order that the reader may conceive some idea of the noise and turmoil which would be taking place,

Water was turned on, and the operator depressed the ladder until the danger light showed; then he brought her back to just within the safety limits. This state of affairs continued for 30 minutes, without any adjustment or alteration being made other than the manipulation of the monitor by means of the hand control actuated by the fireman on the "step", and interrupted only by the bursting of a length of hose half-way between the ladder and pump.

The T.L. operator, rightly or wrongly, left his ladder to inform the pump operator what had happened, and he conscientiously assisted in replacing the burst length, leaving instructions at the pump to turn "water on" slowly.

It was at this point that I observed that the T.L. jet was not operating, and I approached the scene of operations to enquire into the reason.

Whilst I was discussing the matter with the Section Leader in charge of the T.L., who, incidentally, was not the operator, I observed the head of the ladder appear to be in the process of depressing; my eye quickly travelled down the steel structure to the table, and then, to my dismay and amazement, I realized that the whole structure was on the move. Never in my life have I experienced such a complete feeling of utter helplessness. The distance between myself and the



## The Mystery of the Turntable Ladder

appliance was such that I was unable to reach the controls, or line of hose which was now charged, in sufficient time to prevent the catastrophe occurring.

By the grace of God I am able to state that the Fireman was quickly removed with apparently slight superficial injuries, although nervous reaction put him off on the sick list for a time, two weeks later.

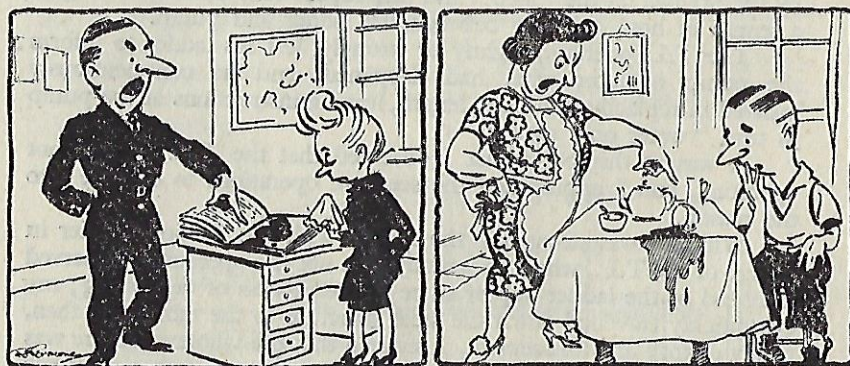
This is my theory for the cause of the overturning.

Whilst the pump was operating there would be a continued weight of water passing in the hose up the ladder, to the extent of 156 lb. avoirdupois. This would, of course, have a tendency to weight the ladder down in the direction of the fall; counteracting this would be an upward lift due to the velocity of 280 g.p.m., plus jet reaction, which would amount to approximately 283 lb.

When the hose burst these three factors would, of course, be lost; but on the replacing of the burst length and the turning on of the water at a slow rate, one, and one only, of these factors would return—that of the gradual building up of the 156 lb. weight of water in the hose line or the ladder. In my opinion the pitch of the ladder was such that, with this additional weight applied without the jet reaction, the chassis was unable to counterbalance and the obvious result occurred.

"What do you think?"

W.R.



ON

AND

OFF

# REGION *by Region.*

## NORTHERN (No. 1) REGION

Following meetings held by Area Groups in No. 1 and No. 2 Fire Forces, the No. 1 Regional Committee held its meeting at Durham on 7th November, 1944, when the Committee accepted with regret the resignation of Mr. W. H. Mardon as Chairman due to ill-health. Many members expressed in most appreciative terms their indebtedness to him for services rendered, and it was resolved unanimously to place on record the Committee's deep appreciation of the valuable services which had been rendered by Mr. Mardon in the cause of the Fire Service, the Officers of that Service and the Association.

Mr. G. Hutchinson was elected as Chairman for the remainder of the year.

The memorandum of the Post-War Fire Service Committee was discussed, and it was decided to propose that the Executive Body should include specialists or technicians as well as serving uniformed members of the Service. Further, that the Home Secretary should be advised without delay that the Association desired the constitution of the Post-War Fire Service to be settled and that it wished to be consulted by the Home Secretary on any proposals he proposes to put before Parliament in connection with the Post-War Fire Service.

The Treasurer's report showed 100% subscriptions paid, and in order to increase interest and obtain suitable articles for *The Jet* it was decided to organize a monthly competition with a prize of £1/1/- for the best article received from members in the Region.

## NORTH EASTERN (No. 2) REGION

There has been no change, unfortunately, in the constitution of No. 2 Region. Nos. 4, 5 and 6 Areas have not yet developed, but it is confidently expected that they will.

The members of No. 3 Area are showing a lively interest in the Association, and the issue of *The Jet* to each member has had the effect of provoking arguments and general discussion on items of topical interest.

### No. 3 AREA

A meeting of the Branch Committee was held at Sheffield on the 31st October under the Chairmanship of Mr. J. H. Thomas to discuss the proposals of the P.W.F.S. Committee.

The Committee considered that paragraph 4 of the Report on the P.W.F.S. would lead to difficulties if adopted in its present form; the employment of women should only be permitted if suitable disabled men were not available and the proposals for representative machinery were deferred pending further information.

Mr. A. E. Troy also reported on the recent meeting of the National Council.

## NORTH MIDLAND (No. 3) REGION

A Regional Meeting was held in Nottingham on the 4th November under the Chairmanship of Mr. C. H. Wilkinson, M.B.E. Among the various matters raised, keen interest was displayed in the proposals for a Post-War Fire Service. The members present also listened with interest to the report of the deputation to the Home Office in October last.

During the meeting, two resolutions were moved by representatives of No. 10 Area. Members had expressed most emphatically their opinion that



## Region by Region

officers who ceased to be members of the Association should not be re-elected as members again at any future date until they had paid their outstanding subscriptions, and a resolution on these lines was submitted to the Regional Meeting. After considerable discussion, this view was upheld.

The second proposition—to reduce the annual subscription—provoked an interesting discussion, but was not carried.

### No. 9 AREA

The Annual Supper-Dance for Officers of No. 9 Fire Force and their wives was held on 19th December, 1944, at Lancaster Hall, Leicester, and among those attending were the Lord Mayor of Leicester, Alderman J. Minto and the Lady Mayoress; Chief Regional Fire Officer Patrick and Mrs. Patrick; Councillor C. R. Cooper, J.P., Chairman of the Wigston U.D.C.; and Regional Woman Fire Officer Radford, M.B.E. Fire Force Commander Thomas was Chairman.

After an excellent entertainment, dancing followed to the accompaniment of the No. 9 Area Dance Band under the direction of Fireman Wilkinson.

### No. 10 AREA

A capital array of talent was forthcoming from members of the staff of Area Headquarters, when No. 10 Club staged Christmas festivities. All ranks combined to produce a series of original sketches, which caused much merriment. Games, competitions and dancing completed a spirited programme which was well handled by Mr. W. A. Sanderson, the M.C. This event coincided with the birthday of Fire Force Commander W. H. Barker, who was accorded musical honours.

During a recent visit of Mr. F. Merson to the Area an informal dinner was provided at Fire Force Headquarters. The President of the Mess, Mr. W.H. Barker, was in the Chair, and during the evening he made a presentation to Mr. Marshall Webster, Area Headquarters, to mark the occasion when he took all ten wickets of No. 9 Fire Force Cricket XI for six runs.

Returning thanks for the gift—the ball used for the feat, suitably mounted and bearing an inscribed silver plate—Mr. Webster praised the fielders who had enabled him to wreak such havoc.

## EASTERN (No. 4) REGION

Mr. H. R. Davies of No. 11 Area has agreed to act as Legal Representative to No. 4 Region Branch.

Due to transport difficulties it has not been possible to arrange a Regional Branch Meeting this month.

The growth of membership in each of the Fire Forces suggests that the convening of Area Branch meetings would considerably overcome travel difficulties, and the matter is receiving the attention of the Regional Committee.

## LONDON (No. 5) REGION

A full meeting of the London Branch was held on the 22nd November, 1944, with Mr. E. G. Kirage in the Chair, when a report on the National Council Meeting held on 25th October was presented. Members were informed of the excellent financial position of the Branch and that the membership had now risen to the record figure of 520.

The main item on the agenda was the discussion of a draft report from the National Council on Post-War Organization. After lively discussion, the draft clauses were accepted with various amendments, with the exception of Clause 8 "That provisions similar to those contained in Police Act, 1919, regarding the Police Federation, be applied to the Fire Service", which clause was unanimously rejected. It was interesting to note during the discussion that there was a strong dislike of the possibility of women continuing on operational duties in the Fire Service after the war, but that they would be acceptable in administrative posts.

## Region by Region

### Redundancy of Operational Officers—24/24 hours duty system proposed

A complaint was made that under the reorganization of the London Region, Company Officers who were fully qualified by long experience to be fire fighters were being taken from Stations and placed on day duties. It was suggested that to absorb redundant Officers at Stations, the 24/24 hours duty system should be extended to officers up to and including Column Officers.

A resolution to this effect was passed by a considerable majority.

## SOUTH WESTERN (No. 7) REGION

### No. 17 AREA

#### 'A' Division Dinner and Dance

Principal guests at the first Dinner and Dance for Officers of 'A' Division (Bristol) were Mr. A. H. Johnstone, O.B.E., Mr. J. Y. Kirkup, M.B.E., Mr. B. A. Christmas, M.B.E. and Mr. J. H. Farmer, together with their wives.

Mr. J. Y. Kirkup, proposing the toast of "N.F.S., 17 'A' Division", mentioned that the Division had produced: 1 Fire Force Commander, 2 Assistant Fire Force Commanders, 10 Divisional Officers, 17 Column Officers, 14 Senior Company Officers and 43 Company Officers.

Mr. W. Redman and Mr. W. R. Howells, Port Fire Officer, responded.

Other toasts were "Our Guests" and "The Ladies", the Dinner being followed by a Dance and Cabaret with music provided by the Area Dance Band.

## WALES (No. 8) REGION

A lively topic of discussion at a meeting of the Regional Branch on 29th November, 1944, at Cardiff, was the question whether Regional Branches should account to the Honorary Treasurer for the 25% paid to Regional Branches under Rule 27 (d). There was a diversity of opinion on the matter, but as it was down for discussion on the agenda for the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee, it was decided that the Regional representative should take forward the various views which had been expressed and see how they compared with those of other Regions.

### Post-War Officers' Association

Discussion also took place on the question of a Post-War Officers' Association, and a recommendation was put forward from No. 22 Area Branch that the Regional Secretary should make enquiries from other Regions as regards their views.

It was agreed, however, that no action should be taken at present, as the question of a Post-War Association was being explored by the National Fire Service Benevolent Fund. As far as the present association was concerned, if this still remained, adequate cover was provided for ex-members of the Service by Associate Membership.

### No. 21 AREA

It was reported from Area 21 Branch that Mr. D. W. Bates, an active member of both the Area and Regional Branches, had now been transferred to No. 5 Region, and that Mr. F. Wade had been appointed Chairman of the Branch in place of Mr. H. Bleasdale, who had now left the Service. A letter of appreciation had been sent to Mr. Bleasdale for the good work he had done for the Association.

### No. 22 AREA

A change in officers had also taken place in No. 22 Area, where Mr. C. Ball, M.B.E., had been elected Vice-Chairman of the Branch.

## MIDLAND (No. 9) REGION

The Annual Meeting of the Regional Branch will be held at Corporation Street, Birmingham on Monday, 12th March, 1945.



## Region by Region

The Regional Committee met on 15th January, 1945, under the Chairmanship of Mr. H. R. Lucas. The election of 12 new members to the Regional Branch was confirmed, bringing the Regional membership up to 153 members.

The Hon. Secretary reported that, after discussion by the General Purposes Committee, the Insurance Scheme for members sponsored by this Region was found to be impracticable and, therefore, no further steps would be taken in the matter.

The Chairman explained (1) the report on the Post-War Fire Service, which had been drawn up by the Sub-Committee appointed and forwarded to the Home Office for observations, and (2) the report made by the Sub-Committee on expenditure. It was agreed that the Branch should waive the return of 25% of subscriptions.

Other matters discussed were the status of Officers formerly employed by local authorities as non-uniformed members of the Auxiliary Fire Service; the Reinstatement in Civil Employment Act; Redundancy of Officers; Minutes received from other Regional meetings.

### No. 24 AREA

A General Meeting of all members of the Area Branch was held on the 24th November, when Mr. Lucas was in the chair and a good representative gathering was present.

The activities of the Association were explained to the members and also the objects that had been carried to a successful conclusion (i.e., increases in salaries and individual purchase of uniforms), also the aims of the Association that were still under discussion at the Home Office, including such items as Hospital treatment comparable with that afforded to members of H.M. Forces, First Class travelling facilities, Accommodation for Officers serving away from their homes, Gratuities upon dismissal and other items.

The aims of the Association with reference to the revised hours of duty and proposed annual leave formed an interesting subject of discussion. The second issue of *The Jet* was considered to be an improvement on the first one, and it was suggested that the size be reduced in order that a copy might be conveniently placed in a jacket pocket. Also, that advertisements should be accepted in order to reduce cost of production; the money saved would then be available towards expenses of the proposed insurance scheme.

### Officers' Club

There was an innovation in Area 24, when Mr. H. W. Coleman declared open the No. 24 Area Officers' Club at 'A' Division Headquarters on the 27th October, 1944.

In his opening speech Mr. Coleman spoke of the need for such a Club, a need for accommodation where officers might meet and have a chat and light refreshments that had seemed apparent in the days of the old Regular Brigade. The Club is housed in one of the vacant flats at A.I.Z. and two lounges are available, all suitably furnished, and a wet canteen. All officers are automatically members of the Club, and funds are supplied by voluntary donations from Members, augmented by games fees.

Approximately 40 members were present at the opening ceremony, and the evening was thoroughly enjoyable, not the least part of this enjoyment being aided by Mr. H. R. Lucas, who encouraged the general friendliness by handing round refreshments.

### No. 40 AREA

An Officers' Dinner was held at 'D' Divisional Headquarters, Darwall Street, Walsall, on 1st December last. Those present included the Chief Regional Fire Officer, Captain B. A. Westbrook, C.B.E., Fire Force Commander G. T. Hill and Miss Powrie, Regional Woman Fire Officer.

Following a most excellent dinner, during which the keynote was an address by Commander Scaife, R.N., Official Observer to the Ministry of Information on "The British Navy before—and after D Day", the company were entertained to light music by members of the American Armed Forces.

## Region by Region

### NORTH-WESTERN (No. 10) REGION

A meeting of the Regional Committee was held at Manchester on 21st December, 1944, under the Chairmanship of Mr. J. Mackenzie.

It was reported that Mr. W. Smith (Vice-Chairman) had been transferred to another Region, and Mr. Taylor was unanimously elected to act in this capacity.

Due to his appointment as Deputy Regional Finance Officer, No. 5 Region, it became necessary for Mr. N. Porter to offer his resignation as Honorary Secretary of the Regional Branch. The Chairman in reporting this matter said that it was regrettable but inevitable that the meeting must accept his resignation. It was unanimously agreed that a vote of thanks be passed to Mr. Porter for the splendid work he had carried out on behalf of the Association in the Region. After a vote, Mr. Tyson, the Regional Treasurer, was elected to the position of Secretary and Treasurer.

The Treasurer's report showed a further improvement on the June position, and membership had increased to 171, compared with 74 at the last meeting.

Mr. Tyson gave a comprehensive report of the proceedings at the recent National Council Meeting. Some discussion took place on the matter of the N.F.S. Selection Board and the Chairman reported that he proposed to view the Course from 10th to 13th January, 1945.

Considerable discussion took place on the matter regarding the promulgation of resultant reports on Officers who had attended the Course, and the following resolution was carried unanimously:—

"No. 10 Regional Branch requests that the National Council approach the Fire Service Department with a view to ascertaining why the Course is limited to Company Officers and Senior Company Officers with an age limit of 40, when there are personnel holding ranks considerably senior to the before-mentioned under the age of 40. It is also unanimously requested that the results of the Board should be promulgated at the earliest possible moment to those attending the Board. Where a man has lacked qualities which can be developed, a further opportunity should be given to him after a period of 12 months to reappear before the Board." Area Secretaries reported on their Areas and in each case good progress was in evidence.

The Chairman informed the meeting that he had received notification that it had now been decided that additional travelling expenses and free fares home for Officers will be confined to Third Class fares. The following proposition was put forward:—

"The recent decision that reimbursement of additional travelling expenses incurred by Officers shall be confined to Third Class railway fares is deprecated, and this Regional Branch asks that the National Council shall make immediate representations on this matter to the Fire Service Department."

### No. 26 AREA

A meeting of the Branch was held in Liverpool on Thursday, 19th October, 1944, under the Chairmanship of Mr. J. Mackenzie, when the draft report of the Association's P.W.F.S. Committee was discussed. It was decided to propose that the Service should be administered on a district basis by a Joint Committee of Local Authorities, who would receive Exchequer grants towards expenditure. Also, that Local Authorities should be represented on the Executive Body *pro rata* to population and rateable value. The employment of disabled men was preferred to women, but if the latter were employed they should be treated as civilians. Paragraph 8 of the draft report was not approved.

### No. 29 AREA

A meeting of No. 29 Area Branch was held in Preston on Thursday, 19th October, 1944, when Miss F. M. Openshaw was elected to serve on the Area Council in place of Mrs. B. Taylor, who had left the Service.

The Committee decided to ask the Association to raise the question of taxation of quarters occupied by ex-regular firemen with the Fire Service



## Region by Region

Department. Also, that in the interest of the Post-War Fire Service, candidates attending the Officers' Board should be given the results in detail in order to give them an opportunity of rectifying any faults they might have. Further, that a 12 months' period should be set for re-appearance before the Board.

The Regional Correspondent explained to the meeting the type of material required for insertion in *The Jet* and appealed to all present to support their Journal. Membership in the Area was reported as still increasing, the figure to date being 73 members.

### Post-War Fire Service

The above item again took up the major portion of the time at the meeting. The draft report of the Post-War Fire Service Committee was dealt with item by item. Very lively discussion took place and the proposals were substantially approved in principle, except that it was considered (1) that Local Authorities should not bear any of the cost of its upkeep, the Fire Service being run entirely by the State; (2) the principle of employing women in the post-war organization was not supported, it being decided unanimously that there was no need for women in the Post-War Fire Service, except in administrative departments; (3) Special consideration should be given to the employment of suitable disabled ex-Servicemen, including disabled Civil Defence Servicemen, for work on jobs which may otherwise be occupied by women; (4) Paragraph 8 should be deleted as the interest of the Officers' Association may otherwise be jeopardized, and (5) the Discipline Code should be reviewed and a right to appeal should be allowed in all cases.

## SCOTTISH (No. 11) REGION

A meeting of the Regional Committee was held in Edinburgh on 11th January, 1945, when a full report on the many matters presently engaging the National Council's attention was given. It was agreed that the Annual General Meeting of the Region should be held in Perth on Wednesday, 14th March, 1945, at 2 p.m. It was resolved that the election of Regional Office-bearers should be by postal ballot, and the Secretary was asked to invite nominations from the Area Branches to reach him not later than 28th February, after which every member would receive a ballot form.

### EASTERN AREA

A very well attended meeting of the Eastern Area (Scotland) Branch was held in the White Swan Hotel, Methil, Fifeshire, on 17th January, 1945, five members from the neighbouring North Eastern Area Branch also being present as guests.

After lunch a visit was paid to Wellesley Colliery, through the courtesy of the Wemyss Coal Co., Ltd., and their agent Mr. D. C. Gemmell, who gave a short address on the history of coal-mining in the district. Members were very interested to hear that authentic records still exist of coal being mined almost on the site of the present workings as long ago as the 15th century. Mr. Gemmell also read an excerpt from a diary written almost 300 years ago by Lord David Wemyss, then proprietor of the colliery. This recounted how, in 1676, an underground fire was extinguished by means of sealing up the affected section with clay after the burning small coal had been removed in creels by the miners, whose number in those days probably included women and children.

The party, by this time attired in overalls, rubber boots and pit helmets, was then conducted over the surface workings and many interesting things were seen and explained. Before being taken down the pit the male members were issued with safety lamps. The journey underground was made in the "cage"; for most it was a case of "first time down" and it was an exciting and strange experience, especially for the ladies, to be lowered into the bowels of the earth at express speed.

On arrival at the "pit bottom" an inspection was made of the pumping machinery and haulage gear and the party was taken down a "steep brace" at the coal face. The height of the roof in this section did not average more than 3 ft., and it was a case of getting down to it. This tunnel, however, if

## Region by Region

it may be described as such, was unlike the one which many Officers have heartily cursed at Hendon, inasmuch as it was bone dry.

Unfortunately time did not permit for a visit to the "sea mine", which extends for a very considerable distance under the waters of the Firth of Forth.

Several members carried away small pieces of coal from the coal face as mementoes of the occasion and, who knows, this may prove to be very useful in these days of coal shortage, or when the heating ban descends upon us—probably weeks too early for the "frozen north" as usual!

One came away from Methil feeling that the day had been well spent. The visit to the pit, quite apart from being exciting, educative and interesting, gave one a very good idea of the ingenuity and toil required to win from the earth these priceless "black diamonds" which are such vital necessities for the successful maintenance of the country's war effort.—"SCOTIA."

### NORTH EASTERN AREA

At a meeting of the members in the North Eastern Area held in Aberdeen on Thursday, 2nd November, 1944, it was decided to form an Area Branch. The meeting was attended by Mr. G. M. Boyd, the Regional Secretary, who explained the objects and activities of the Association.

Mr. W. Porter was appointed Chairman, Mr. J. T. McLennan Secretary, and Mr. D. McBeth as Treasurer.

An invitation was then extended to non-members to join the meeting and a large number accepted and took part in a general discussion on Service affairs. Before the conclusion of the meeting twenty-one Officers submitted names to the Secretary as possible new members.

The newly formed Branch has got off to a flying start and the membership is now 98% of the possible. Is this a record? A highly-successful Dinner Dance was held on Boxing Day in the Caledonian Hotel, Aberdeen. The company present numbered almost 60 and the evening was voted an outstanding success by those present.

At the meeting of members held in Aberdeen on 19th December, 1944, the following resolutions were adopted:—

1. Prior to, or immediately following, discharge, members should be assisted in their return to a satisfactory position in civil life.
2. Further representation should be made regarding Coupon allowances for the purchase of shirts, collars and ties by all Officers, while allowances for Women Officers should include stockings.
3. Greatcoats should be issued to all A.G.Os and a second pair of shoes to all Women Officers.

### SOUTH-EASTERN AREA

The usual regular meetings have been held. Satisfaction with *The Jet* was expressed by the members, and it was suggested that publication should be monthly and include more photographs if possible. The Women Officers requested that further strong efforts should be made to secure an increase of women's salaries.

### WESTERN (No. 1) AREA

The Committee has been meeting regularly. Subjects dealt with have included *The Jet*, Post-War Policy of the Association and the Post-War Fire Service. Mr. A. A. Forrester of 'C' Divisional Headquarters has been appointed Area Correspondent.

## SOUTH-EASTERN (No. 12) REGION

The Regional Committee met on 18th January, 1945, under the Chairmanship of Mr. C. Birch, O.B.E., at Tunbridge Wells. Among the business discussed was the appointment of Part-time Representatives to the Regional Committee, and it was decided to ask Area Committees to appoint one Part-time Officer to serve from each Area.

The membership in the Region stands at 206, and a number of new members was accepted.

The Annual Meeting of the Regional Branch will be held on 21st March, 1945, at a venue to be decided.



## Region by Region

### No. 30 AREA

The atmosphere created by the wettest October on record was not relieved by the news of the impending disbandment of the No. 12 Overseas Column which had been located and administered since its inception by No. 30 Fire Force, and which by its ready and prompt attendance at "incidents" and martial bearing had won the pride of the Force. One of the last jobs undertaken by the Column was appropriately enough helping to remove the barbed wire anti-invasion defences from the shores of "south-east England" (in News Bulletin parlance).

The Area welcomed Mr. R. J. Stepney, the Officer Commanding the Column, to 'D' Division in place of Mr. L. Denne, who has been released from the Service to return to his peace-time employment.

#### *Overseas Officers Say Goodbye*

Mr. A. A. Davies was the guest of honour at a Farewell Dinner given by the Officers of No. 12 Overseas Column on Tuesday, 14th November, 1944. Among other guests were Mr. Ray Smith, also of Regional Headquarters, Messrs. Goodman and Traylen and other Departmental Officers. Captain Emerson, Officer in Charge of Military Cadre, proposed the health of the National Fire Service and spoke feelingly of the manifold services rendered, which his association with the Overseas Column during the past seven months had helped him to appreciate more fully than ever. Mr. Davies in his reply paid tribute to the Column in their, perhaps unspectacular role, during their existence, but felt they had more than justified their creation. The high spot of the evening was the spontaneous presentation to Mr. R. J. Stepney of a tankard, suitably inscribed, by his brother Officers. He promised to make full use of this unexpected gift, which was subsequently passed round as a loving cup.

#### *Service Marriage*

Mr. F. M. McCayna, formerly of 'A' Division, late of the Overseas Contingent, and now attached to 'D' Division (Broadstairs), was married on the 18th November, 1944, at Horton Kirby Church to another Officer, Miss Wales of 'C' Division. This is a true Service romance, as the happy couple first met when the bride was transferred to this Region under Colour Scheme arrangements.

#### *Inter-Services Trailer Pump Competition*

In a three-cornered contest between the Royal Navy, National Fire Service No. 30 Fire Force and No. 12 Column Overseas Contingent, held at the Royal Naval Barracks, Chatham, on the 4th November, 1944, for a handsome silver trophy value £40, the N.F.S. won both Major and Light Pump events. Successful crews came from that well-known competition-minded Division 30 'D', whose Area and Regional successes spread over a number of years. They were closely followed home by the Royal Navy and No. 12 Column O.C. in the respective events. The Admiral of the Nore presented the trophies, and Officers were afterwards entertained by the Navy.

#### *Appreciation of "The Jet."*

Tributes to *The Jet* continue to be paid. There is no doubt that the creation of a special journal for N.F.S.O.A. has done as much to increase the status of that body as any other single policy. It is believed that members are being attracted by this feature as one of the main benefits of membership.

### No. 31 AREA

The Area was sorry to lose Mr. A. F. Walters, who has returned to Birmingham after a period of duty as Port Fire Officer at Shoreham. Miss Knott, who had only been a short time in 'B' Division, is also leaving the Area after having made herself very popular.

At the same time Messrs. G. C. B. Titcombe, C. F. Bashford and F. Furlong have been welcomed back from the Overseas Contingent.



## The Story of "Hell-Fire Corner"

By JOHN PARKER

"HELL-FIRE CORNER" was the name given by German airmen during 1940 to the coast of Kent from the North Foreland to Dungeness and its hinterland. The reason for the adoption of this name was because at that time a heavy anti-aircraft barrage was directed against the enemy aircraft whenever they crossed the coast. Attention is drawn to this because the recent publicity given to the shelling of this part of the country may have tended to create an unbalanced picture of life in South-East Kent during the past four years. It has, in fact, experienced every form of attack of which the enemy was capable.

The first bombs to fall on England in this war were dropped at Chilham, near Canterbury, on 10th May, 1940, and from that date until 30th September, 1944, when the capture of the last German long-range guns at Cape Gris Nez was announced, "Hell-Fire Corner" experienced almost continuous enemy action of one kind or another.

During the summer and early autumn of 1940 much of the Battle of Britain was fought out in the skies over Kent. Our convoys in the Straits and Dover Harbour itself were dive-bombed and the coastal towns and villages were attacked with bombs, mines and machine-gun fire. Divisional Officer Harmer (now of No. 29 Fire Force) and Column Officers C. W. A. Brown and A. Campbell (both of No. 30 Fire Force) received the George Medal for bravery aboard a burning supply ship during one of the early dive-bombing attacks on Dover Harbour, and Company Officer G. W. Fry (No. 30 Fire Force) received the British Empire Medal for the rescue of children from a wrecked house at Folkestone during the same period.

The defeat of the Luftwaffe at the hands of the fighter pilots of the Royal Air Force put an end to heavy daylight bombing, but sporadic raids continued, both by day and by night, until the spring of 1944. The daylight raids were largely carried out by formations of not more than twenty fighter-bombers, which bombed either from roof-top height or from about 20,000 feet, the low-level attacks being usually accompanied by machine-gun and cannon fire. The night attacks were generally the work of small numbers of bombers.

These raids, particularly those carried out from a low level, produced some remarkable results owing to the manner in which the bombs ricocheted and bounced, and there were several instances in which a bomb entered one side of a building, passed horizontally through it and exploded in the open air beyond.



## The Story of "Hell-Fire Corner"

The advent of the flying bomb added yet another to the list of enemy weapons experienced by the people of "Hell-Fire Corner." The bombs first appeared during the night of Monday, 12th June, 1944—during a heavy artillery bombardment—the main attack commencing on the night of Thursday, 15th June, and continuing until the last week in August. Comparatively small attacks by air-launched bombs have recently been experienced.

During the first few weeks of the attack, fighter aircraft played a major and successful part in the defence. From about the middle of July, however, a great concentration of anti-aircraft weapons of all kinds was sited along the coast and the bombs were met by a barrage of unprecedented intensity, the fighters continuing to operate a few miles out to sea and inland. These defences destroyed very large numbers of bombs, which either exploded in the air or were shot down.

This period was one of the most trying for the people of "Hell-Fire Corner", especially the stretch from Dover to Dungeness. The almost constant gun-fire made rest impossible and much damage was done, not only by the bombs, but also by shell splinters, unexploded shells and, in a few instances, by cannon shells from our own aircraft. Many country villages were particularly hard hit, and at one time so many isolated farms and hamlets were wrecked that it seemed almost as if some evil power were at work guiding the stricken bombs to places where they could cause damage. Over 600 flying bombs were destroyed in the near vicinity of Folkestone alone.

Very few noteworthy fires were caused by the bombs, but the National Fire Service was able to assist in rescue work, in helping the people to clear up their damaged homes and giving assistance in the form of first-aid repairs.

The trials so far mentioned are those which "Hell-Fire Corner" shared with other parts of the country. It had, however, one which, mercifully, was not shared—long-range artillery fire from the coast of France.

The first shells to be fired into Britain by land batteries fell in Folkestone on the morning of the 12th August, 1940. Ten days later a convoy passing through the Straits was continuously shelled from a point off Dungeness to another east of Dover. From then onwards South-East Kent became all too familiar with the brilliant muzzle flashes of the enemy guns, followed about a minute-and-a-quarter later by the vicious crack of the exploding projectiles.

After the initial shelling of Folkestone, the enemy turned their attention to the Dover area, which includes wide stretches of open country around the town and also the harbour and the Straits, and for the next two years it received, with a few single exceptions, all the shells fired from the French coast.

In October, 1942, the shelling of Folkestone was resumed, and at about the same time shells began to fall in Deal and Ramsgate, the attacks on all these towns continuing at varying intervals until the capture of the enemy guns. During the few days immediately prior to the capture of Cape Gris Nez, when the shelling reached its climax, Hythe also was shelled. It is generally agreed among the people of

## The Story of "Hell-Fire Corner"

"Hell-Fire Corner" that of all the forms of enemy attack, shelling is the most hateful. This is probably due to the fact that, as distinct from other missiles, a high-velocity shell gives no audible warning of its approach and the human organism has no time in which to brace itself for the shock of the explosion. Moreover, to live in an area within artillery range of the enemy is to experience a constant tension, for no matter how long the lull since the last attack—and it was often several weeks—one is at all times aware that it may be broken at any moment without warning.

The guns used varied in calibre from about 8-inch to 16-inch, and the attacks caused considerable damage. Dover suffered by far the worst, but as the town possesses a splendid system of cave shelters, some of which were dug from the chalk by Fire Service personnel, the number of casualties was kept at a minimum. The writer had occasion to pass through the Market Square at Dover on a recent Saturday morning shortly after the shelling warning had sounded, and the only visible signs of human activity were two deserted barrows, one bearing fish and the other fruit, looking peculiarly forlorn among the surrounding desolation. In Folkestone reliance had to be placed on shelters, mostly of the Anderson and Morrison types, which saved many lives.

Among the buildings struck by shells were the principal Fire Stations of Dover and Folkestone, the latter on two occasions, when women personnel distinguished themselves by their coolness. The shells started numbers of fires, most of them small, and the N.F.S. was also able to assist with rescue work and first-aid repairs.

So much for the bare outline of the attacks. No words can, however, fully describe what all this has meant to these dauntless people, whose courage throughout has remained as strong as the rock of their own white cliffs. The ever-present danger resulted in a constant feeling of tension, of quickened reactions, which will undoubtedly leave its mark on many. At the same time "Hell-Fire Corner" knew that it was in the front line, and that knowledge has sustained its people in their fortitude and accounts for the absence of that feeling of frustration which has been so common elsewhere.

On a sunny afternoon in July last, the writer stood with an old man of Kent in his farm-yard and looked round at his home and most of his possessions, wrecked by a flying bomb. The writer groped for some words of sympathy, but the old man sighed and spoke first. "Ah well," he said, "It is better here than among the houses in London." It is to such people that this small tribute of a Lancastrian who is proud to serve them is dedicated.

## POLICE SUPPLEMENTARY ALLOWANCES

The Association has been advised by the Fire Service Department that the appropriate Regulations are to be amended to enable these allowances to be treated as pensionable pay.



# BY DISCUSSION TO KNOWLEDGE

## SHIP FIRE PROBLEMS.

IN the penultimate paragraph of the article concerning the s.s. *Stikine* fire and explosions at Bombay entitled "Bitter Experience" (Vol. 2, No. 3 November issue of *The Jet*), it is suggested that if executive orders for the enforcement of a properly-evolved plan of action had been forthcoming, it may have been possible to avert the tragic results of this fire. The opening paragraph contains two sentences of considerable import—"it is easy to be wise after the event", and "we should not make the mistake of failing to learn from the tragic mistakes of others."

We can neither be "wise after the event" nor "learn from the mistakes of others" without giving due thought to the problems with which those others were faced and the measures they took, or might have taken, to overcome what at first sight would appear to be insurmountable difficulties.

Ship fires, like all other fires, are different in some particular feature, but almost invariably retain similar individual features to which one can apply the unwritten rules of procedure which are almost a sinecure, being based on long experience and practice of officers well-versed in fire fighting on ships. Without the advantage of advice or opinion from a number of experienced officers, any plan of action must necessarily be confined to the limited experience and opinion of the individual officer in charge of operations. Because of this limitation, I feel that it is desirable to propound a plan of action, evolved after discussion by several officers with considerable experience of ship fires, which may be of some instructional value to less-experienced officers who may be faced with a similar problem.

For the purpose of discussion, these officers accepted that a hypothetical cargo vessel of 7,000 tons, the s.s. *Sea Transport*, on fire in the lower hold of No. 2 hatch and proceeding to a north-west port, informs the Port Authority by wireless of her predicament and they in turn notify the Fire Service to stand by to board ship as soon as she anchors. It is known that a large quantity of high explosives is included in the cargo, and therefore an anchorage which will not jeopardize the safety of port installations or other shipping is decided upon. By this provision, the Fire Officer, Port Authorities and Master of the ship are concerned with one problem only, i.e., the extinction of the fire to ensure the safety of the ship and its crew.

On receipt of the fire call from the Port Authorities, the Fire Service Officer is firstly concerned with mobilizing suitable appliances and equipment to deal with a 7,000-ton ship fire involving the lower hold of No. 2 hatch and containing cotton, timber, oil and explosives. Types of appliances and equipment will, of course, have been predetermined, although the method of dispatching such gear to a ship at an anchorage will vary from port to port according to the arrangements agreed between the Port Authorities and the Fire Service.

In the port concerned with this hypothetical ship fire, the procedure would be almost automatic. Fireboats would be mobilized to the anchorage. The Port Authority, on the request of the Fire

## By Discussion to Knowledge

Service, would order one or more (as available) of their sea-going salvage vessels to stand by to take aboard land appliances and fire-fighting personnel to augment their own fire-fighting equipment. Other heavy appliances, emergency tender, foam battery units, B.A., cutting gear, revolving branches and special equipment designed for use at ship fires, would be transported by luggage ferry steamer to the anchorage to tie up alongside the ship.

Communications between fireboats, Harbour Authority vessels and shore stations could be maintained in any circumstances by virtue of the several frequencies and the three wavebands available.

It was accepted that all the above mobilizing arrangements applied to the hypothetical incident under discussion, so that a plan of action could be formulated as from the time the Senior Fire Officer boarded the s.s. *Sea Transport*.

The first duty of the Fire Officer after giving his junior officers instructions to prepare to get lines of hose and special equipment aboard the vessel, is to contact the Master of the ship with whom he should confer, together with the Port Authority officials and the Chief Engineer. The Captain may not at first be too receptive, but the regulations governing the harbour will probably have considerable bearing on the discussion, as in some instances the Port officials have paramount authority in respect of ships on fire within the precincts of the Port, and any decision agreed by the Port Authority Officer and the Fire Officer will result in executive orders emanating from them being put into effect.

It is essential that the ship's manifest and loading chart be requested from the Captain so that the stowage of the hold involved can be readily envisaged. A sectional plan of the ship will prove of great assistance when seeking information from the Chief Engineer in regard to methods of entry into the hold through trunk hatchways, position and nature of fixed fire-fighting equipment, such as steam injectors, which may be used to advantage. The Engineer will be able to advise on measures which will ensure the stability of the vessel and the methods of trimming the ship in the event of it being necessary to direct large quantities of water into the ship's hold.

The manifest and loading chart of the s.s. *Sea Transport* are of such nature as may give rise to alarm if the information contained therein is generally broadcast to the personnel, and as no good purpose is attained thereby, it should only be necessary to disseminate this information to junior officers deputed with a particular operational responsibility. Cool-headed conduct of operation is essential, and whilst cognizance must be given to the fact that the cargo includes ammunition and explosives, this factor should not be so pre-eminent that all other considerations go by the board.

In the initial examination of the fire situation it is found that the crew, after having been driven out of the hold by intense heat and dense fumes, are directing water jets from weather deck level through the open hatch into the lower hold, where, it is stated, the fire originated amongst the bales of cotton. The branches in use are coupled to the deck wash lines and are entirely ineffective.



# MANIFEST AND TRADING CHART

S.S. SEA TRANSPORT 7,142 TONS GROSS

Nº.1. HOLD	Nº.2. HOLD	Nº.3. HOLD				Nº.4. HOLD	Nº.5. HOLD
A AMMUN OIL	D EXP OIL	H EXP OIL				J AMMUN GEN	M OIL
B TIMBER	E TIMBER		BUNKER	BOILER ROOM	ENGINE ROOM	K COTTON	N TIMBER
	F COTTON	I OIL				L DEEP TANKS EXP	O COTTON
C SULPHUR	G AMMUN						P RICE

A Ammunition, Oil in Drums, Dried Fish	H 70 Tons Ammunition 214 Drums of Oil
B 13,000 Pieces of Timber 1,400 Bales of Cotton	I 3,435 Large Drums of Oil
C 9,000 Bags Sulphur	J 270 Tons Ammunition Parcel of Commer- cial Cargo
D 230 Tons Ammunition 1,089 Drums of Oil 31 Boxes of Gold	K 2,164 Bales of Cotton
E 11,000 Pieces of Timber	L 523 Tons Ammunition
F 4,109 Bales of Cotton	M 6,200 Drums of Oil
G 187 Tons Ammunition	N 12,000 Pieces of Timber
	O 1,045 Bales of Cotton
P Parcel of Rice and Seeds	

SHADED PORTION SHOWING ORIGIN OF FIRE

By Discussion to Knowledge

The conference with the Captain and the Chief Engineer has elicited that the lower hold is stowed in the wings to within six feet of the 'tween deck, the cargo in the lower decks comprising, in the main, explosives and drums of oil, whilst there is also a quantity of explosives below the cotton cargo in the lower hold. The primary action demanded by the circumstances is therefore very evident, and that is to take the most effective measures possible to avoid an explosion taking place as a result of either conducted heat or the direct application of fire. If the excessive heat and smoke in the cargo spaces makes it physically impossible for the firemen to descend either into the 'tween decks or lower hold, even when equipped with B.A., it is fallacious to entertain any idea of working out the 'tween decks explosive cargo into lighters, even if the heat upcast from the lower hold is controlled. Many hours of toilsome work would be required to clear such a quantity in small packages.

It is obvious that the general heat condition of the entire compartment must be reduced without delay, for two reasons : (1) To obviate the possibility of an explosion in the 'tween decks explosives, resulting from heat conduction through the 'tween deck plates as distinct from exposure to flame, even though the position appears to warrant immediate flooding of the compartment, and (2) To enable Fire Service personnel to descend into the 'tween decks and lower hold equipped with B.A. to direct effective branches into the heart of the fire.

The cooling properties of direct jets from  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch and 1-inch nozzles operating from the weather deck through an open hatch are almost negligible. The main body of water passes through the upper compartments in a narrow stream and, even when broken up by impact on the cargo in the lower hold, there is a very limited area covered by reason of the restriction of angle created by the lower hold hatchway.

To effect any substantial cooling of the atmosphere it will be necessary to apply approximately ten branches fitted with diffuser nozzles. Two or three should be lowered to a point below the 'tween deck head to provide wide angle sprays at good pressure and so form a rapid heat-absorbing agent. The 'tween deck should be flooded to the level of the hatch combing to form an insulating water seal on the 'tween deck plates, and for this purpose open ends should be directed into the 'tween decks. Numerous sprays, subjecting the compartment to constant cooling, will permit of the descent of firemen to a position from which they can directly apply jets into the heart of the fire, whereas if flooding of the hold is resorted to without controlling the heat upcast, serious fire spread will ensue before flooding is completed and result in the fired cargo rising *en masse* as illustrated in Sketch No. 2, with a consequent increase in the temperature of the upper compartment and the 'tween deck plates.

The lower hold will require a still more effective dispersal of spray water, and for this purpose the use of revolving branches fitted with small-bore nozzles, or, alternatively, diffuser nozzles, is advocated. Recent experiments with  $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch nozzles fitted to revolving branches working at 100-120 lb. per sq. inch have proved very effective in

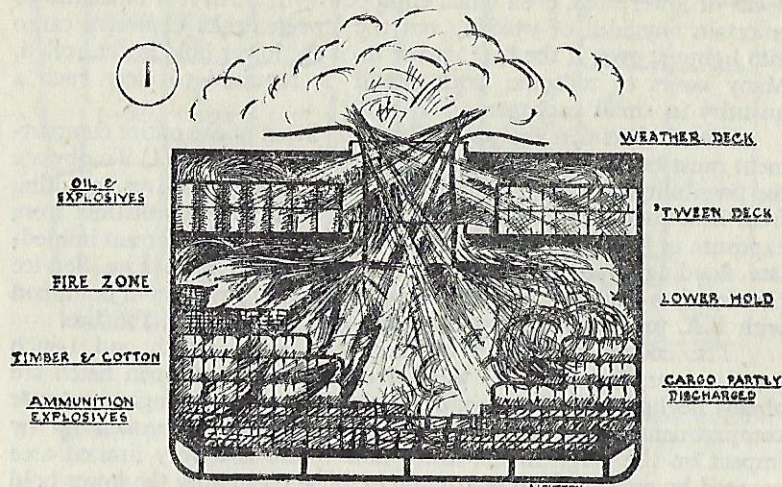


## By Discussion to Knowledge

providing a widely-dispersed spray with rapid heat-absorbing tendency.

The main body of water from the several diffuser nozzles and revolving branches will reach the fire in the form of heavy rainfall, whilst that which is directed into the 'tween decks will, in addition to absorbing heat, help to form the water seal on the 'tween deck plates provided primarily by the open ends.

Other measures which can be used to advantage are described in Figs. 25 and 26, Chapter 48, pages 130/131 Part 8 of *The Manual of Firemanship*. The method of operation advocated is illustrated in Sketch No. 1.



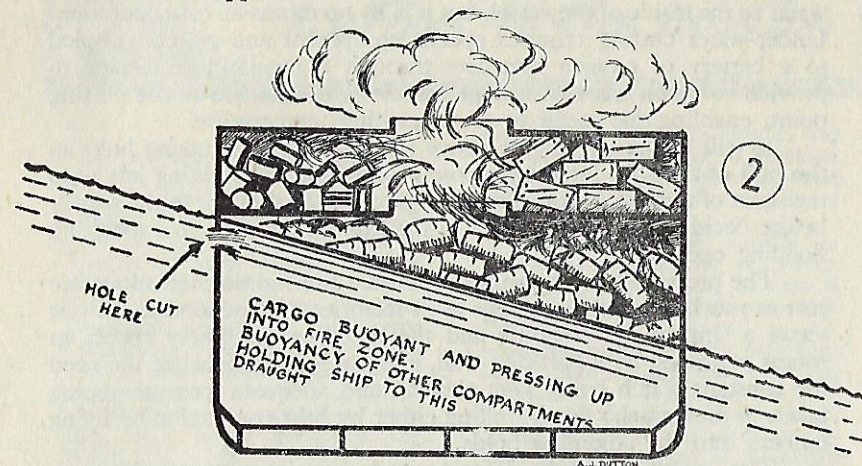
Rapid flooding of a ship's hold is not so simple as may be imagined, and when the difficulties attached to this operation are considered it becomes more and more evident that every endeavour should be made to get to the heart of the fire without resorting to flooding.

If flooding is decided upon it will be extremely difficult to estimate how far the ship is likely to settle, and to what angle she will incline during flooding operations without considerable knowledge of ship stability statistics and ship management. In addition, there are other considerations, such as the water-tight bulkheads of other compartments providing the vessel with sufficient buoyancy to prevent effective flooding of one compartment, the impracticability of counter trimming in the ballast tanks speedily enough to prevent listing or reduction of heel. The latter operation may result in capsizing, which can occur even though there is little water below the ship's keel, as was evidenced in the case of the French liner *Normandie* in New York Harbour.

The effect of listing is illustrated in Sketch No. 2. The water seal applied in the 'tween decks cannot be held; the fire which prior to the list was confined to the deep side has not spread to the high side because of the list, and the main body of the fire is now out of reach of

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direct branches. The heat conductivity of the 'tween deck plates is unrestricted because the incline angle causes the water to flow away as soon as it is applied.



Cutting holes in the ship's side for the purpose of inserting branches directly onto the fire has frequently been a successful means of getting to the seat of the fire, but to cut holes for the purpose of flooding a compartment will almost inevitably result in listing unless speedy counter-trimming can be effected. It should be noted also that the nature of the cargo must be taken into consideration before deciding on flooding, whether by cutting holes in the ship's side or otherwise, as well-bonded cargoes are apt to rise *en masse* resulting in the whole fire zone being lifted hard up against the underside of the 'tween deck, a condition which prevails until the hold is completely filled with water.

Flooding devices on ships, with the exception of naval craft and specially-fitted ships, are comparatively rare. Although fiction makes frequent reference to the opening of the sea cocks to scuttle ships, it is well to note that the term "sea cock" applies very often to a 1½-inch cock fitted in the shell of the ship in the machinery spaces to draw sea water for cooling down tank tops in the boiler room and damping down hot ashes. Such cocks are of little use when flooding operations are being carried out, especially when one considers modern ship construction whereby a ship is usually divided longitudinally into several water-tight compartments (e.g., in a ship of 500 feet length there may be seven or eight compartments forming the cargo holds and the machinery spaces, each one of them fitted with water-tight bulkheads). If any particular compartment was to be quickly flooded, it would probably necessitate also the part flooding of every compartment to overcome the overall buoyancy of the vessel, and this may mean cutting new holes in the ship's hull to flood the several cargo spaces, with the ever-present danger of capsizing in the absence of efficient counter-trimming.



Further difficulty will be met if the cutting gear operators are inexperienced or if under-water cutting is required. Normally an experienced operator can cut a plate from the dry side to permit the entry of water to the inside of the vessel, but it is by no means an easy operation. Under-water cutting requires special equipment and cutters coupled to a battery of oxygen cylinders through a manifold connector to provide so much gas that a large bubble is maintained at the cutting point, enabling the metal to reach melting temperature.

It will be seen from the above that, apart from cutting holes in the hull of the ship for the purpose of inserting fire-fighting jets onto the heart of the fire, it is necessary to give serious thought to the matter before deciding on cutting holes in the hull with a view to expediting flooding operations.

The precautionary measures of normal fire-fighting technique are just as much applicable in ships as in factories or warehouses. If one views a ship as a warehouse and the holds or machinery spaces as rooms separated by a partition wall, one can readily visualize the need for constant watch being kept thereon and adequate measures being taken to prevent the fire travelling either by heat conduction or flying embers into the adjoining holds.

The extent of study, learning and experience required by an operational fire officer, whether posted to a seaport or an inland industrial risk, is not generally recognized by the man in the street or officials not directly concerned with operational matters. If the operational officer is to remain on top of his job, he must not only learn from the experience of others, but be willing to give of his own knowledge for the benefit of those acting for him or under his command. If officers of experience in specific types of fire fighting (e.g., ship fires, chemical fires, oil fires, cotton warehouse and cotton mill fires, etc.) could form discussion panels with a view to formulating a code of rules of procedure and their findings be promulgated for the benefit of less-experienced brother officers, our Service will undoubtedly progress "By Discussion to Knowledge."—AD MANUM.

*Readers interested in the technique of Fire Fighting on Ships should note that a complete book dealing with this subject is to be published shortly by Messrs. Brown, Son and Ferguson Ltd., Nautical Press, Glasgow. The author, Column Officer Reannev. A.M.I. Fire E., has made a close study of the subject over a long period of service on Merseyside, and we are assured by the author of the above article that its publication is awaited anxiously by many ships' officers, as well as officers of the Fire Service on Merseyside.*



Sir,

#### PRESS RELATIONS

I am keenly interested in the article "The N.F.S. and the Press" published in the November issue of *The Jet* and other efforts "to make John Citizen wise about the N.F.S.", but I was astonished to find that Provincial newspapers had published the enclosed news photo. This at a time when great battles are raging on the Continent (Note: the photograph illustrated an outsize doll's house made by the N.F.S.).

I am convinced that by such publicity we, the N.F.S., are screwing down the lid of our own coffin. What must be the feelings of the general public when they open their newspapers and find that, whilst their menfolk are fighting, the N.F.S. can find time to build a children's bungalow of this type?

I do not suggest that the N.F.S. should not make toys, etc., but I do feel that it is bad publicity to display such photographs to a public who do not understand the organization of the Fire Service, and who will make hasty and thoughtless conclusions.

If we must have pictures in the newspapers, let us see that the pictures are connected with our job—extinguishing a fire, or effecting a rescue—work for which we are paid.—W.S.H.

Dear Sir,

With reference to the article "The N.F.S. and the Press", in the November issue, the writer does not appear to know or ignore the fact that PROs have been appointed at all levels to handle Press matters for the Service.

Many of these men are properly-qualified journalists who know their jobs, and could easily improve our relations with the public through

the medium of newspapers in the Provinces, if allowed to organize comprehensive and efficient Press and Public Relations Services at Area levels.

Unfortunately, the attitude at this stage of the war of certain provincial high-ranking officers is that it is a waste of time to encourage PROs to "get cracking" on any schemes as they will not have time to get them working before the end of hostilities. So, unless the PRO happens to already hold a rank, he stands little or no chance of promotion or of having any of his bright ideas or well-laid plans adopted.

What these people fail to realize is that, if, as we have heard, the Service is to be shortly reduced and reorganized, perhaps even de-Nationalized, these PROs can perform valuable service during the coming crucial months in interpreting the new arrangements to all sections of the public. These men can be good friends to the Service if properly recognized, given reasonable powers and, where necessary, adequate rank at Area level which, in my opinion, should not be less than Company Officer. Yes, and the job should be a whole-time one; not just a reference for some already busy Staff Officer, who hasn't the slightest qualifications for the work, or some Welfare Officer with his hands already full in other directions.

Yours faithfully,  
"PUBLICIST"

Sir,

You published a very interesting article in the November issue of *The Jet* under the heading "The N.F.S. and the Press", and once again that long-suffering buffer piece—the Company Officer—is blamed for this lack of liaison. Why on earth L.A.T. chooses to pick on him entirely passes my comprehension.



Firstly, if the Press happens to be at the fire in its early stages, the officer in charge is far too busy to answer questions put by a non-service questioner.

Secondly, certain ex-Police Brigades prior to Nationalization gave definite instructions to A. F. S. officers that they were not to pass information relating to fires to the Press. This, coupled with the rigid security orders in force, tends to make any officer in charge of a fire inclined to be reticent with regard to the passing of information which was not entirely obvious; the result being that reporters are apt to gain the impression that information is being withheld deliberately, whereas the Company Officer concerned is in all probability being as helpful as he can with due regard to the aforesaid "restriction and red tape."

The Press requires the news to be "hot." Is there any reason why the "Stop cum Informative" message received back at Control cannot be passed on immediately to the Press? This could be followed up with further details for later editions of the Provincial Press.

Unfortunately, it is only too true that the Service receives poor write-ups, and I feel that such phrases as "considerable damage was caused by fire and water", or "the fire was extinguished in two hours although plenty of water was available," are unnecessary and do not foster good liaison. It would be more pleasant to read that "a quantity of merchandise was saved by the prompt action of the N.F.S. in preventing the fire from spreading." At a recent fire the only reference in the local press was that the occupant's dog saved the family by barking. We are not told if the N.F.S. attended.

Lastly, I would suggest that Column Officers call their Company Officers in at least once a month to read the current N.F.S.I's to them.

Yours faithfully,

A. AITCHELL

Sir,

#### COUNTRY FIRES : AN URGENT NEED

A Fire Station in a country town is often responsible for attending all fires in the surrounding villages.

Although the firemen at such a Station have a good knowledge of their district, it is impossible for them to know the names of all farms and large houses in enclosed grounds. There are occasions when fire appliances are driven past narrow drives or cart tracks without the drivers realizing that they lead to the fire. Consequently, valuable time is lost when part of the journey has to be retraced.

It would be of advantage, both to the fireman and the property owners, if all entrances, such as driveways, lanes and cart tracks to farms were fitted with neat directional boards, and the cost to the owners would be negligible.

If County and Rural Councils, or periodicals such as "Country Life" and "The Farmer and Stock-breeder," could be prevailed upon to inform farmers and other property owners of this need, it is certain that those who are fire-minded would do this to help themselves. The painting of the name on a gate which is often left open is useless. Any board erected should be so arranged that it can be seen, approaching from either direction.

J.H., Coy.O.

Sir,

#### HOURS OF DUTY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

Now that operational Officers and other ranks have been granted a reduction in hours of duty, it seems reasonable to suggest a substantial reduction in the prescribed minimum hours for administrative staffs.

The final criterion of judgment must, of course, be the practicability of shorter hours, given existing staffs and existing volume of work; and no doubt the arbiters of destiny in Whitehall feel that as 'slack times' cannot be admitted to exist—and therefore, of course, do not exist—no change is possible. Clockwork humanity needs good administration and the deduction is good logic.

But you have one particular factor: that the present administrative hours are too long for the

well-being of the majority of the staff, resulting in reduced efficiency at work and increased liability to sickness—especially as the large staffs concentrated at a Fire Force Headquarters are mostly obliged to undertake lengthy and tiresome journeys to and from their work.

And the general human factor: that concentration on work in hand, seemingly absolute, has a surprising elasticity subtly related to the co-efficient of time and work (essential work, the volume of which varies greatly from day to day, really is done, and yet essential work is being done all the time).

It would be reasonable and practicable to reduce administrative hours to 0900 hours to 1700 hours (0900 hours to 1300 hours on Saturdays) without undue strain. Tea might then satisfactorily be abolished—to save time and certainly relieve the distress of officers torn between refreshment and the despatch of correspondence.

Surely the parity between ourselves and other administrative staffs employed on Government work which would thereby be produced is long overdue?

*Tempora mutantur*

Sir,

#### WELFARE

I wonder if we, as a Service, despite the N.F.S.I. issued on the subject, fully appreciate the true meaning and implications of the word "Welfare." As one who has had a great deal officially and in a purely honorary capacity to do with this matter on a Divisional basis, I venture to express certain opinions which are based on experience and observation, perhaps with a view to obtaining other persons' views.

In other Services a great deal of attention is paid to all aspects of Welfare officially. I may mention in passing that I have been impressed with the degree to which certain aspects are catered for in the U.S. Army from a personal contact with a U.S. Padre on whom this reference devolves; but my general impression is that if everything is provided officially and, for instance, by E.N.S.A., a great deal of pleasure to the personnel and much of the consequent appreciation and team spirit is lost.

In our own case, it is perhaps regrettable that provision of recreational equipment and social amenities has not had more official and financial backing, but it is easy to understand that this was more or less impossible. The matter, therefore, has had to grow from small, somewhat parochial, but none the less praiseworthy, efforts, and in my view that is the better way for such things to evolve. It is easy to form, say, a Sub-Divisional Committee from a group of Stations who have already made individual efforts to get recreational and social activities on an organized basis, and from this Divisional Committees and so on become practicable and even essential.

From these observations you will see that the particular aspect of Welfare that I am interested in discussing is the social life of Stations and groups of Stations geographically situated to encourage combination, and the provision of equipment and finances to enable this life to flourish. The point I wish to make, particularly as affecting Officers, is that unless the Company Officer or Station Officer takes an active interest and part in the Welfare activities of their command, then as a rule the effort will fall flat and eventually die. Another point is that unless you have one or two "willing horses" with some organizing ability, and what is much more important, enthusiasm and drive, you will find that although many activities are mooted very little ever comes into being. It is, in my view, a very important part of officership (that word which is so difficult of definition) for all officers right up the chain to enter into Welfare activities and, although it becomes a great tie and sometimes means many boring evenings with long blackout journeys, the presence of a senior officer at a small station function does an enormous amount to foster all kinds of effort and keep these in the right direction, to say nothing of helping maintain morale and *esprit de corps*. I think that far too few officers fully realize this point, whilst, of course, I fully appreciate the tremendous number of other calls on their time and energy.



## Letters to the Editor

I cannot, in this letter, more than touch on the fringe of this large subject, but I have been amazed at what can be, and indeed has been, accomplished by small isolated stations with a little official encouragement, plus the enthusiastic leadership of their Station Officer.

I must not trespass on your space further but, in conclusion, I would again emphasize that the interest and active participation of Officers in the Welfare activities of their respective commands is of incalculable value both to themselves in the effective carrying out of their duties, and also promotes such an excellent spirit among all ranks that difficult situations are often eased by the mutual understanding and respect thus engendered.—Yours faithfully,  
Hon. Sec., alias "Doormat."

Dear Sir,

### OPEN COTTON STORAGE SITES

I have perused with interest the November issue of *The Jet*, and one article in which I was particularly interested, namely, "Open Cotton Storage Sites" and methods of Attack in case of fire, has given me considerable food for thought.

I am particularly interested from the point of view of prospective examinees for the examinations of the Institution of Fire Engineers, many of whom are junior officers who will read this article with interest.

Under the section "Methods of attack," three main points arise. The statements by the author:

- (a) That the possibility of laying hose and positioning diffuser branches in order that the fire can be attacked against the wind should be one of the first considerations;
- (b) That all branches brought into operation should, in the first instance, have diffuser nozzles, and jets should not be used unless some special situation arises, and
- (c) It will be appreciated that jets tend to blow particles of burning cotton all over the site, and thereby contribute to the further spread of the fire.

Before commenting further on the above items, I feel that, whilst diffuser branches are obviously necessary within the sphere of operations, the article is loosely worded, and gives the impression that jets as such should not be used except when special situations arise. I would have welcomed amplification of "special situations."

With regard to (a), obviously the fire must be isolated so far as possible; precautions must be taken in the surrounding area, and the fire attacked as speedily as possible, but if it is the author's intention to suggest that diffuser branches should be used to attack the fire against the wind, this is obviously impracticable, as under wind conditions a diffused jet would be all the more easily dissipated.

Regarding (b), this in my opinion is rather too pedantic. If precautions have been taken to protect the surrounding area, and diffuser nozzles are used on the burning stack, or stacks, the impression is at once gained that by spraying the outside of the stack the fire is well under control, when exactly the reverse is the case.

Although the exterior of the stack is blackened by water spray, the interior (at the bale edges) is an incandescent mass, and will remain so until the stack is broken down.

A diffused jet will penetrate the stack to only a small depth, creating at the same time air induction, which assists the rate of burning. A solid jet, however, directed between the burnt bale edges, will reach much further, be broken in the stack and often issue from the opposite side.

(c) Particles of burning cotton from a stack on fire will in any case be carried on upward air currents, to later fall on surrounding stacks, irrespective of wind conditions or the application of solid jets. If, as stated above, precautions have been taken, the combined use of diffusers and jets is the obvious practical answer to extinguish a fire of this nature.

My reason for communicating with you about this article is mainly because, as Chairman of the No. 5 Regional Branch of the Institution of Fire Engineers, I am anxious

that our students should get the right perspective about these matters.

Prior to this war, cotton storage of this nature was unknown, and was obviously brought about by a desire on the part of the Ministry to accumulate huge stocks in order to satisfy trade requirements, and, as this is a topical matter and not one that has been, like most Fire Service subjects, well discussed over years, you will realize my desire for it to be presented in a lucid manner.

My comments above are drawn from practical experience at cotton fires under all conditions over a period of twenty-four years, and in particular with regard to open cotton storage sites, of which there are a large number in and around the Manchester area, where I formerly served as a fire officer.

I do not know the author of this article, but it is obvious that he is aware of the general procedure carried out at fires of this nature. In fact, when reading the latter portion of the article, I could almost believe that he was quoting from procedure adopted at the largest open cotton storage fire that has taken place in this country.

Yours faithfully,

J. E. FARRELL, O.B.E.,  
M.I. Fire E.—Chairman, Institution  
of Fire Engineers.

Dear Sir,

### POST-WAR PROSPECTS

Replying to "Group Officer," Scotland—Women's Page (Nov. issue)—let us be entirely practical (as I feel women usually are) and face the fact that women can take a very small part indeed in the Post-War Fire Service. I foresee that their services will be used only in sections that have been opened up as a result of expansion or amalgamation, and where it has been proved over 5 years' experience that firemen can be more usefully employed. We shall see this happening in hundreds of factories as stand-downs occur. Let us consider, from Home Office angle, what vacancies may occur. I suggest they will consider switchboard operators and a few drivers, also administrative workers, mainly shorthand typists, the latter employed at higher levels only.

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As these women will not be "directed" but "selected", the best in each category can be employed and, if the conditions of service are good, there will be no dearth of applicants, although I consider it essential to put each one to some form of entrance examination. For those women selected I believe that employment on a service basis to be much more attractive than on a civil service one, granted that all present amenities plus pension rights are allowed them.

The natural outcome would be a small establishment of women officers and, as I put the figure at approximately 12 to 15 Firewomen per Area, one officer per Region with a junior officer for each Area would suffice.

To sum up, the salient points of the conditions that I suggest should be as follows:

1. Retain our present uniform, which is both practical and smart (Why should it be unpleasant, whatever one's age, to wear the uniform of a Service you liked to work for?). Retain the present rank markings (Why quibble about comparable status? This strikes me as sex-consciousness).
2. Allow pensions — in fact, put the women on a "regular" basis.
3. Allow 2 weeks paid leave (and 2 weeks leave without pay if required), yearly.
4. Allow proficiency pay in all branches and long service recognition irrespective of ability.

For employment to differ from the 9 to 6 daily and 1 on Saturdays would be a welcome change to many women who already like a rota system of duty.

I can imagine that with the above suggestion in force it might become quite a coveted job—a position in the post-war National Fire Service!

P.A.L.

Dear Mr. Editor,

### "ROYAL" FIRE SERVICE

Being an ex-military man with Colour Service and an interested and keen Military Historian, it has struck me very forcibly why the



## Letters to the Editor

Fire Service has not received recognition for its services during World War No. 2.

Many serving and ex-service soldiers will have experienced the thrill when orders are posted stating that their Regiment is entitled to place "Royal" before its name. This is an honour to which officers and men can share equally.

Why not allow the officers and men of the Fire Service to share in the honour and glory which they have so nobly shared during this War, notably during the "Battle of Britain" and again during the fly-bomb attacks on this country.

May I suggest a few titles at random which may bring answers and discussions through *The Jet*?

"Royal Fire Service"

"British Royal Fire Service"

"Royal Fire Fighting Corps"

I am sure it will prove interesting to hear readers' views and other ideas on the subject.

C.H.H.

Dear Mr. Editor,

### VACANCIES AND APPOINTMENTS

Of all the useful items for inclusion in *The Jet*, I am sure that none will be more welcome than the proposed section for the advertisement of vacancies and up-to-date information regarding appointments filled. From the formation of the National Fire Service, I have always considered that lack of information regarding one's application for vacancies (either with or without interview) has been one of the weak links of the Service, and most likely to engender lack of enthusiasm for putting in for posts.

Has it not been the experience of every one of us to hasten with hopeful petition to Fire Force not later than the umpteenth instant, only to find that week after week passes without result until one is certain that one's attractive application could never have been ignored—it must have been lost in the "channels."

Or, worse, one is peremptorily ordered for interview, usually on a leave day which one gladly alters with such rosy prospects of promotion in view. The ordeal is

gone through with emotions peculiar to our especial temperaments (certainly it never leaves us as it found us). But what happens? Nothing, more often than not, precisely nothing, until one day, months after, when the whole incident is quite forgotten, you are told "Oh, didn't you know? Old so-and-so got that job going at so-and-so." And one marvels, as one always does, at what the other had that you didn't have, and more especially, WHY?

Now, it was suggested to me by a Home Office official some time ago, while discussing this very problem, that what was needed was a personal letter to each applicant, informing them (I presume in terms calculated to improve and soothe rather than give rise to heat and argument) the reasons for their inability to secure the position. But this appeared to me a too complicated, not to say, dangerous proposition and one which, if carried out, would require a whole new department to deal with. The idea was therefore put forward that a simple cyclostyled note to each applicant was all that was necessary and courteous, stating that their application of such a date for such a post had not been successful, and that the position had been filled by a certain officer who would be taking up his appointment on such a date.

However, I am still to find out whether this idea has blossomed into actual fact. Meanwhile, we are informed by hearsay, by our Area routine orders (where we have enterprising establishment officers) or through the Press, if we're lucky. So, in making space for this important feature, *The Jet* will be rendering a first-class service to officers and making good an official omission. Thank you, Mr. Editor.—Yours truly, P.L.

Dear Sir,

P. W. F. S.

I would express the strong hope that the report appearing in No. 2 issue of *The Jet* of the Special Council Meeting held on the 6th September, 1944, does not represent the full views of the Association, and that its detailed proposals make pro-

vision for retaining in the Service the best of the officers who wish to remain, and for safeguarding the rights of officers so far as circumstances permit.

Particularly would I like to see the principle of Nationalization realized in practice. At one stage in the development of the Service there were redundant officers, and presumably efficient officers, in one part of the country, while in another there was a shortage of officers which was met by promotion from the ranks. This latter course is desirable only if there are no officers to fill the vacancies. This refusal to treat the Service nationally appears to be because it was dealt with within Regions.

Are we to have the same position now of redundant officers worthy of retention in the Service being cast aside or reduced in their present rank, whilst in other Areas officers are receiving promotion?

Let the Service make full use of the personnel in it, and treat this necessarily painful matter of redundancy over the country as a whole.

Yours faithfully, "NATIONALIST"

Dear Sir,

### POST-WAR SET-UP

In order that a correct viewpoint of the suggested set-up for the Fire Service after the War shall be obtained, it is necessary first to examine pre-war arrangements.

As I see it, the pre-war arrangements could be broken up as follows:

- (1) Large Towns with large whole-time Brigades.
- (2) Smaller Towns with Police Brigades.
- (3) Urban districts and backward towns with retained Brigades, with or without a whole-time Chief Officer.

Number 1 arrangement proved, of course, to be the most efficient, and with a progressive Local Authority it was found that the Brigade could cover a very wide range of activities from fire prevention, inspection of public buildings, supervision of new buildings and giving advice on same, through rescue work to normal fire extinguishment.

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The second arrangement was mainly able to concentrate only on fire extinguishment but, here again, unless the fire was considerable, the efficiency of the turnout and fireground work was almost as high as under the previous scheme. With less or even no inspectional and advisory fire prevention work being carried out by Police Brigades, there was a consequent greater fire hazard on their areas, so that there was always the greater risk of large conflagrations at which outside assistance would be required.

The last arrangement was, of course, the least efficient, proving to be only a stop-gap arrangement between the occupier with his buckets of water and the outside large towns who frequently had to be called in to assist. This meant that frequently large fires were allowed to develop which were almost invariably burn-outs. Owing to the nature of the scheme where men had to be called from their homes or work to a job, it could not prove efficient and catch every fire in its incipient stage. Hence, greater damage by both fire and water at all (even small) jobs. Due to the almost complete lack of supervision of public buildings, a very grave risk is run with regard to these, so that what the Local Authority save in rates by having only a retained Brigade, they make up for in risk to life and property. And, in many instances, local works, etc., have themselves been forced to maintain private brigades of their own, quite often large in size, in order to cover the risk to their own property—a risk which should have been covered by the Local Authority.

From this brief survey, therefore, it is plain that the only efficient post-war set-up will be whole-time brigades covering as much as possible of the country. These need only be small. At night, part-time or retained men, performing a rota of, say, 12 hours per month and paid a small retaining fee (after reaching a certain stage of efficiency), could be used for cover.

Local Authorities or districts should be in charge of a competent officer, and numbers of these districts (depending upon local conditions) should be controlled from one



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point and in charge of a more senior officer, very much as Divisions are set out at the moment. The Divisions could, if they were kept small, be retained banded together into Fire Forces, though if Divisional boundaries as they are at the moment were considerably expanded, then Fire Force Areas would no longer be necessary.

Instead of Areas (which at the moment appear to serve only as main administrative centres), a rank of Inspector or Controller should be made to take the place of the present Commanders, and these Inspectors, serving directly under the Home Office, would be responsible for the operational efficiency of several Divisions. Regional Control should be completely cut out, this only being introduced to counter the possibility of invasion.

The administrative work of the Service should be completed by Local Authorities, who would work to Home Office schemes for this purpose.

Finance of the Service should work through normal Local Authorities, each being able to claim certain large allowances from the Government (even as high as 90%), in order that expenditure should be spread as evenly as possible over the entire country. Large factories, etc., with high risks would be compelled to bear a higher proportion of these costs. In fact, a scheme of compulsory insurance should be instituted by the Government as the most fair means of raising this additional money.

With further regard to personnel, more of the men will have to be trained in Inspection and Fire Prevention work. I can foresee this developing into possibly the most important branch of the Service, until such a stage is reached where all fires are prevented and not extinguished. They must all be fully trained in rescue, ambulance and work of this nature, while each man should be given a specialized subject and training at the highest possible level.

Present mobilizing schemes should be the foundation for a free move-

ment of appliances and personnel as and where required all over the country. This free movement (controlled at Divisional level) would enable cover to be effected with fewer men. This, coupled with the use of retained personnel at nights, would greatly reduce the general cost of the scheme to the country as a whole.

Under this scheme there would be no longer any opening for Firewomen. A man can, in my opinion, perform the duties carried out by women during this emergency in a very much more efficient manner. This is certainly so of Watchroom duties, and in addition there is the psychological point that a person reporting a fire will always receive greater satisfaction and comfort in reporting to a man.

The type of man recruited will, of course, have to be of a very high standard, and pay will be in proportion to his ability and responsibility. No longer will the country tolerate the old "fifty-bob-a-week" fireman, who, in addition to his fire duties, is also the local ambulance driver, steam roller man and park attendant, and only holding to these jobs because he has not the ability to apply for better ones.

Broadly speaking, the post-war scheme as I see it should be:

A set-up very similar to the present scheme controlled operationally by Home Office, leaving local officers a much freer hand and allowing Local Authorities to have a certain amount of say in Service matters. Always subject to Home Office approval and complete satisfaction of Commanders or Inspectors (who should be entirely responsible to H.O. for their operational areas). All Administrative work to be done to a certain scheme and carried out by Local Authorities.

A possible slight expansion of whole-time strength above 1939 levels, but a great increase in part-time or retained men.

A swing over to fire prevention instead of fire extinction, and a much more highly-trained personnel.

COMPANY OFFICER

## WORLD'S HOTTEST FIRE SERVICE

N.F.S. Officer's  
Experiences in  
Iran



Training personnel and organizing a fire protection scheme in what is reputed to be one of the hottest inhabited places in the world—with a shade temperature of 132° F. This has been the experience of Senior Company Officer Douglas E. Burge, formerly of No. 19 Fire Force, who left this country to join the Anglo-Iranian Fire Service in March, 1944, with 12 other members of the National Fire Service.

Senior Company Officer Burge has forwarded to the Editor his impressions of the Fire Service in Iran. They are illuminating to say the least, and running through the narrative is a sense of humour that adds colour and interest to the story.

Although the party which embarked from this country numbered 13, the men were not the least superstitious and they arrived safely in April, 1944, where they were met by Divisional Officer Partridge, Chief Fire Officer to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co., Ltd., in Abadan. For a time the party had to live in large tents which they were glad to leave after three weeks and settle down in the more comfortable surroundings of a large bungalow with nine separate rooms, central corridor, communal showers and usual conveniences.

After a week's tour of the Area, a meeting was held and five of the party—now termed "Fire Officers"—took over a station each with similar strengths of approximately 50 men and 10 pumps, together with an additional two or three special appliances. Five of the party volunteered for security work known as "Property Protection" because the Company Security Department is also controlled by the Chief Fire Officer. Two others filled the post of administrative clerk and stores officer respectively, whilst an additional Fire Officer was placed at the main fire station for training purposes. As was anticipated, the language problem presented some difficulty and the newcomers were all sent to school three times a week for one hour.

### N.F.S. Ranks Recognized

The fire stations are laid out in a spacious and simple manner with a good office and conveniences for the European officer. The personnel are divided into two crews working on an 8-16 hour shift system, and in charge of each watch is a Section Leader and two Leading Firemen. It may surprise readers to learn that the recognized National Fire Service ranks are used out there, but that is not all—they wear the standard N.F.S. epaulette markings.

A senior Section Leader on day work only is attached to each station, and these men have been carefully selected for their outstanding all-round ability and it is useful that in practically all cases they speak and understand some English. The standard N.F.S. drills are taught and the men understand all the main orders, such as "Fall In", "Close up", "Water on", etc., and they repeat these orders in English. Their pronunciation is, of course, not too good in many instances, and it is common to hear during drills the order "Knock up and Make off" shouted in guttural fashion! The general detail of the drill is given in "Farsi" and we can all now manage to give such instructions in something like their own language.

The equipment, like the main orders, is taught and known to them in English, and whilst this is probably the only English they know and has been learnt by simply repeating "parrot fashion" the words from the instructors,



### World's Hottest Fire Service

it proves of great assistance. The Senior Section Leader was the instructor in the early stages, having been taught by the European officer, but to-day the Leading Firemen and even selected firemen are becoming quite proficient.

Their present summer uniform consists of blue single-breasted tunic, uniform cap, short trousers and puttees with black boots. This winter they will wear blue battle dress with ankle puttees, uniform cap and black boots.

The men are of normal physique and good, fearless workers, but their excitable nature demands a firm controlling hand and a careful observance of their pump operation and jet positioning. It is doubtful if they could stand the strain of almost endless hours of hard fire fighting that the N.F.S. were subject to during heavy and constant "blitzing."

#### Several "Calls"

The English party's stay has not been without incident. They have had several "calls," some of them dangerous and exciting. One of the officers spent a month in hospital following a job which taxed all the resources of the Service, and his colleagues paid daily visits to the hospital for several weeks.

It is of interest that the two types of trailer pumps used are Coventry Climax and Dennis, whilst a number of Sulzer S.P. Heavy Units are also available. No ladders are carried, and the towing vehicles are Chevrolet 15 cwt. trucks with canvas-covered bodies.

Senior Company Officer Burge, who is carrying out a job at a Company depot, is at the moment stationed at Andimeshk, which is about two hundred miles from Abadan. His task is to intensify the training of seventy personnel and to organize a general fire protection scheme for the area. This place is considered the hottest inhabited place in the world, and in 1944 a shade temperature of 132° F. was registered. There are only eighteen Europeans, all living as "bachelors." Their wives are not allowed here. In Abadan the highest shade temperature has been 121° F., but 115 is registered constantly during the summer with a sun temperature up to 160. As Senior Company Officer Burge aptly states, "It's mighty warm at times, and when the sticky South wind comes it's leakers all day and night." Salt tablets are the order of the day during these periods. An abundant supply of ice-cooled water is available at numerous points in Abadan and it is to be noted that the water is really good. The beer ration has varied from seven large (pint) bottles per week to NIL, and for the past few weeks it has been NIL. The only European women in Abadan are wives of permanent Company employees.

An excellent outdoor and indoor cinema is available, also a swimming pool which is admirably cared for by the Company. A Boat Club and Golf Club are also available, together with ample opportunities for indoor and outdoor sport.

Mr. Burge sums up as follows:

"It is not possible to reveal the nature of the property the Service safeguards, but one day when the ban is lifted I feel sure all will say we have done our bit. On the whole one might say things are a lot worse in other places than Abadan, but like folks in those other places we shall be glad to see this war over in order that we can return to the United Kingdom, which is home—there's no place like it. Some of our party may return to continue their career here, whilst the rest of us will become civilians again and take our part once more in the post-war world."

*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.*

## VACANCIES AND APPOINTMENTS

The Home Office (Fire Service Department) and the Scottish Home Department have agreed to furnish the Association with monthly lists of vacant posts to be filled by them for which applications have been invited from Officer ranks, together with the names of the successful candidates for such posts when known, subject to the omission of any particular vacancy or appointment where this may be considered necessary.

The lists for December and January are given below.

1. PORT FIRE OFFICER WITH MINISTRY OF WAR TRANSPORT, MIDDLE EAST. Divisional Officer W. A. Ramsay appointed as from 1st January, 1945.
2. FIRE STAFF OFFICER, GRADE II AT HEADQUARTERS—invitation issued 2nd December, 1944 to Divisional Officers and Column Officers.
3. FIRE STAFF OFFICER, GRADE III AND INSPECTOR GRADE III AT HEADQUARTERS—invitation issued 2nd December, 1944 to Senior Company Officers and Company Officers.
4. AREA CHIEF CLERK, No. 4 FIRE FORCE (Divisional Officer rank)—invitation issued 11th December, 1944 to Divisional Officers and Column Officers. Column Officer M. E. Turner of Region No. 2 appointed, 29th January, 1945.
5. AREA CHIEF CLERK AT FIRE FORCE NO. 15 (Region No. 6) and FIRE FORCE No. 40 (Region No. 9)—invitation issued 13th January, 1945 to Divisional Officers and Column Officers.
6. SENIOR STAFF OFFICER FOR PORT FIRE OFFICER AT BOMBAY—invitation issued 16th January, 1945 to Divisional Officers and above.
7. SENIOR STAFF OFFICER (with rank of Assistant Fire Force Commander) Region No. 10—invitation issued 23rd January, 1945 to Assistant Fire Force Commanders and Divisional Officers.