

"WATER OFF"

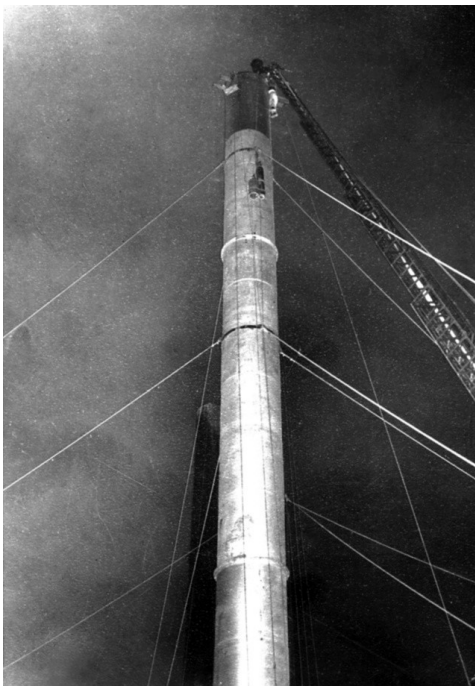
NEWSLETTER OF THE
RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS'
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
(VICTORIAN BRANCH) INC.



August 2017 Vol 21 No 3
Inc/No: A16839F

Valour Medal Recipient Passes On

The death of Alan Stirling revived memories of a significant rescue from a Bacchus Marsh industrial chimney stack.



Alan was MFB's fourth ever Valour Medal recipient. His story is part of MFB's "Life Under the Bells" and two of his descendants LFF Emily Trimble and LFF Jessica Keller are in the job.

Valour Medal details:

Police on the 7th July 1959 requested Brigade assistance to rescue two riggers, one of whom had collapsed, from the top of a 100-foot chimney at the Lifeguard Milk Products factory at Bacchus Marsh.

The Brigade dispatched the 126-foot Leyland Metz Turntable Ladder. On arrival it was determined that one rigger was suffering from exposure and the other was dead.

Sub-Station Officer Stirling under hazardous and difficult conditions due to high wind velocity, ladder head movement and a restricted work area, successfully effected the rescue of the surviving rigger and the recovery of the deceased's body.



Images; Top left, Age Newspaper photograph of the rescue in progress at Bacchus Marsh.

Lower left; Alan as one of the gym team clowns at the annual Royal Children's Hospital Christmas Day party.

Above; Alan displays his Valour Medal.

Images; Courtesy B. McCumisky

“GENERAL MEETING”

Notice is hereby given that the next General Meeting will be held at the CFA Station Corio
Birdwood Ave. (Melway's 441 K 2)
1030 Hours, Wednesday 16th August 2017

AGENDA ITEMS.

Minutes of last General meeting
President's Report
Secretary/Treasurer's Report
Guest Speaker;
General Business

Allan Roberts
SECRETARY/TREASURER
Address all correspondence to:
The Secretary
50 Cameron Parade
Bundoora Vic 3083
Phone:- 0433 007 720
email: rfavic1@gmail.com

Please come along, bring your partner and have your say in the running of the Association. Join in the fellowship of your old friends and make new ones.

Lunch available.
All wives and partners welcome
Please join us!

Non financial Members

Members be advised if your newsletter has an expiry date of 2/1/2016 that means you have not paid your subs since 2015 therefore if no remuneration is received by the 2/1/18 your name will be automatically removed from the mailing list. If, for whatever reason any member is unable to meet this request please do not hesitate to call the secretary, (confidentiality is assured)

OFFICE BEARERS

President: Alex Shepherd
Vice President: Colin Harris
Sec./Treasurer: Allan Roberts

General Committee:
Arthur (Sam) Capes
Mike McCumisky
Ian Geddes
Kevin Hede

Auditor:
Mike Enticott

**“Water Off”
Editorial Staff**
Colin Harris
John Laverick

Diary Dates 2017

Wed. 16th August General Meeting Corio CFA
Sat. 19th August Bunning's BBQ
Wed. 15th November; Annual General Meeting

Bunnings BBQ will be on 19th August 2017
Help required
Contact Alex Shepherd on 0416 930 529

Valē

Dave DaFonte
Keith Dumas
Ray Farrow
Fred Goldsmith
Brian Hopkins
Ken Hopper
Roy Huggins

Peter Kennedy
Jack Moore
Arthur Rogers
Alan Stirling

We offer our condolences to the families of these members who have gone on to a higher duty.

SICK LIST (* In Nursing Home)

John Bellis
Don Brennan
Bob Brunning
Stan Cameron
Huew Campbell*
Harold Connell
John Cotter
Stan Devlin
Ian Fowler
Barry Gavin
Jim Gibson
Eddie Gilbertson
Bob Horgan

Jack Hookey
Lindsay McCurdy
Archie McLachlan
Harry Mitchell
Dick Prendergast
Gary Spicer
Trevor Reed
John Schintler
Alan Sugg
Bob Tottle]
Laurie Trewin
John Williams
Tom Williamson

Note: If you know of any member who may be ill please notify a committee member.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Remember a time when we could walk to the corner shop and buy 2 bobs worth of broken biscuits straight out of the tin, no packets in them days or 5 pennies worth of lollies would last a week and 15 pennies would get us into the pictures and some ice cream to boot and we would have no ads.

Do you remember we would keep our doors open day and night and have no fear of anybody coming in and bashing us up and getting away with it? Times have changed and it seems for the worst but we have to look after one and another cherish our loved ones and keep remembering we are still the lucky country and nobody will change that.

We will remember the past with fond recollection but always look to the future with hope.

Alex Shepherd

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

I would like to thank the Committee, John Berry, John Howe, and John Laverick for the support and great work and time committed to keep the RFA in good stead. I would like to acknowledge the continued support of Barbara McCumisky who supplies many of the photographs that appear in "Water Off".

Alex Shepherd attended Retirement Seminars held at Burnley Street to MFB Members that are looking at retiring.

Don't forget the RFA web Site: Lots of info. www.rfav.com

As Secretary of the Retired Firefighters Association, I would like to express my thanks and gratitude for the support that MFB Burnley staff collectively provides to the RFA members at our Meetings, including the most appreciated BBQ following all of the Meetings.

Also the CFA Firefighters and Volunteers at Corio Fire Station for use of the Training room

The RFA appreciates all current MFB staff for supporting the Retired Firefighter Members.

VISITING STATIONS.

The Retired Firies really enjoy being treated to a cup of tea whenever they knock on the door of their local fire station and have a chat.

The Retired Firefighters have a wealth of "hands on" knowledge and are always glad to share this information with current Firies.

We have had several new members joining us in the last Year.

YOU AND YOUR PARTNERS ARE MOST WELCOME TO ATTEND THE MEETINGS.

PLEASE NOTE:

Fire Rings: Available FIRE & RESCUE VICTORIA. \$85.00 Each.

CUFF LINKS TIEBAR SET: F & R. \$85.00 Each.



TREASURERS REPORT.

Closing Balance: As at the 30TH June 2017 Running account S1 = \$2586. 89.

Fix Term 6 Months L1 Account = \$6953.47.

Alan Roberts

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STORIES FROM THE JOB.

From Les Napper

One story that stands out in my mind involved TICHEY RENWOOD.

He was stationed at the old Hoddle street Fire Station. He let it be known that he was off to England whilst on his annual leave and whilst travelling he might stop over in Rome and go to the Vatican and see the Pope.

He mentioned this to a colleague on my shift, a man who was always on the straight and narrow, who stated "Mate, the Pope would never want to see you Tichey".

The Chief Officer Mr Patterson heard about it also and confirmed the previous statement to Tichey.

After being away a time on leave, Tichey came back with a photograph of him side by side with the Pope, with Tichey's arm on the Popes shoulder.

Chief Officer Patterson and my colleague nearly fell over with shock of this happening and thought Tichey had seen the light of the lord.

Unknown to them, Tichey went to Madame Tussaud's in London, climbed over the rope where the wax model of the Pope was, put his arm on the model, and his wife took the photograph of them both.

This story went around the job like wild fire as everybody knew Tichey's reputation of being a Larrikin.

From Doug Jensen.

In my 36 years of service it was, at this time, very serious, but in retrospect it was one of the funniest days I had in the Fire Brigade, you just had to be there.

I would like to share a storey which includes a very good friend of mine, the late Michael Ford.

Mike and I were stationed at church street Richmond fire station and told that we would be attending drill at the Victoria Street Training Complex, I think from memory a 4 day period.

On arrival we were told there would be no drills conducted, instead we would be parading for Emergency Week, in front of Chief Officer Osborne and the Minister for Emergency services and members of the public.

The day came and after falling in and sizing ranks Drill Instructor Basil Smith took charge:- Michael standing next to me

Said Doug and I don't know anything about drills so I will follow you. I replied "don't worry Mick, she will be OK".

After marching into position in front of C/O Osborne and dignitaries, Drill Instructor Smith gave the following order.

"Squad - 2 passes to the rear and 2 passes to the right march". As this order was implemented I did the opposite followed by Mick, this put Mick and I one foot eye to eye in front of Chief Officer Osborne, Emergency Services Minister and Dignitaries. As to what seemed an eternity only broken by Mick saying

softly out of the side of his mouth. "What the "F" have you done Doug" "What the "F" have you done, to which I said "don't worry Mick we will be right".

After a period of time Drill Instructor Smith in true army style **Bellowed**, "Front rank only 2 passes to the rear and 2 passes to the left march", which was performed correctly followed by Mick.

Having completed the order then came the command "Quick March" was given and later the squad was dismissed.

I thought I would have been invited for tea and biscuits with the Chief Officer, but heard nothing more about it.

Prior to the brigade I was a good friend of Ernie Osborne. Attending the same school and playing football with his brother Jack, Ernie did not play football. I don't know but I think this may of helped my case.

Volunteers Required
The Fire Services Museum needs
past fire service members to
assist on an occasional basis at
the Museum
Please contact
Mike McCumisky on:
9662 2907

Minutes of RFA Meeting – 17th May 2017, Burnley Complex

Meeting started at 1035 hours. Members present 43 with 11 written apologies.

President welcomed all present and any new members.

Apologies: Laurie Lavelle and Brian Thompson
New Members: Alan Hunter and Gary Wright
Previous Minutes of last meeting – moved Ken Heddle and seconded by Fred Laverick

President Alex Shepperd mentioned the Buntings BBQ at Hopper's Crossing that volunteers are required to assist in this worthwhile fund raising activity.

Correspondence: Secretary Allan Roberts reported that he had sent out bereavement cards to various people and welcoming letters to new members.

There was a newspaper tribute to the late Fred Goldsmith which was read to the members.

Correspondence accepted – moved Don Brennan and seconded John Berry

Financial Status: Secretary Roberts reported the financial status of the association. Moved Gary Wright and accepted Dave Nicholson.

Almoners Report: By Ian Fowler – Don Brennan sick and due for a check-up in hospital next week. Bob Tottle is ill and confined to a wheel chair. Max McGraw has cancer and recently a stroke and is having re-hab at home. We wish these members a speedy recovery.

General Business: Mentioned that Jim Martin who had his car stolen has had it recovered. Sam Capes informed the members that Bernadette Maxwell (Don Maxwell deceased) has recently passed away.

Leon Trembath from RMD mentioned the up and coming lawn bowls and lunch at the Fitzroy Bowling Club, on 27th June 2017 at 1030 hours. Parking available in club and on the street. A meeting of members will be held and Peter Marshall will be present. \$15.00 per head for a BBQ lunch. Lawn bowling in flat shoes will follow the meeting and lunch.

Don & Nancy Brennan's birthday celebration was held recently and it was a wonderful success with 125 people turning up to celebrate with the Brennan family.

From RFA member Fred Kerr that \$16,000 was raised by past and present MFB members for the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal.

Secretary Alan Roberts mentioned to members the

availability of RFA apparel for sale including the fire rings and aprons.

Ian Fowler mentioned the gathering reunion of past members of fire services held each year in Queensland on the Gold coast. Information about accommodation can be found by contacting Gail Fagerness on 07 5522 4321 or 0431 485141. Check May Water Off.

Rod Knowles reported that MFB/UFU EBA was ongoing. Rod also mentioned the morning tea which was held at the Credit Union for the family of the late Fred Tyson, founding member of the Firefighters Credit Co-op.

Sam Capes mentioned the 35 Station reunion was on again later this year.

Gary Wright mentioned the World Police and Fire games were to be held in Los Angeles on 6th August this year.

Guest Speaker: David Whyte

David spoke about the Firefighters Credit Co-operative and the many benefits associated with being a member. This includes all past MFB co-op members and their families.

Main benefits of being a member, include the following:

- Small banking service to members

- Personalised attention

- Home visit from a staff member to assist with your finances

- A range of different accounts to assist individual's requirements

- Competitive home and personal loans

- Mortgage and personal insurance via QBE

- Government guaranteed for first \$250,000

*David mentioned that the on-line banking links (web page) have changed. To fix any problems, Google Firefighters Credit Co-op which will reset links to your computer.

Prior to lunch, with a few minutes spare, Fred Kerr took to the floor and spoke about Alzheimer's and how older people could help themselves by taking up a musical instrument, learning a new language or reciting poetry. Fred then recited many words from Banjo Patterson's Man from Snowy River. It was brilliant! Well done Fred!

Professor blames lack of support for high elderly suicide rate

A leading Monash University professor this week said a lack of support and a feeling that they were a drain on the country's healthcare resources was behind the high suicide rate of elderly men in Australia.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, men aged over 85 have the highest suicide rate in Australia, more than double the rate of teenagers.

The suicide rate for men aged 85 and older was 39.3 per 100,000 people. In women of the same age, it was 5.7.

Professor Paul Komesaroff, from Monash University's health sciences department, told the ABC's PM program that a lack of support was partly to blame for poor mental health in many elderly Australians.

"Elderly people have often been blamed for soaking up disproportionate quantities of our healthcare resources," he said.

"There's been a reduction in the support that has been made available for elderly people."

He said many older Australians had a mindset that not being as productive as they once were meant they had little to live for.

"They may well express to their doctor the view that they don't want care to be prolonged," he said.

"Not because they fear losing their capabilities or their capacities, but because they don't want to impose on the rest of society. It's their sense of responsibility.

"And of course, that's a terrible tragedy because these are the people who have actually created the wealth."

Rhetoric around pension perpetuating suicide problem

The high suicide rate of men over the age of 85 is a shocking statistic, but it is even worse when you consider that part of the problem is the way the older generations are made to feel about their impact on society.

The elderly have contributed so much to make this country great and they are still highly valued by most members of society. However, recent discussions surrounding the pension do little to show how much we value the elderly.

Earlier this year, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chief Executive Kate

Carnell suggested that the Age Pension should be treated as a loan repayable when the family home is sold. She claimed that Australia risked a 'Greek-style' debt crisis if so-called 'runaway' spending on the Age Pension was not reined in.

Then we had the chair of the Abbott Government's Commission of Audit Tony Shepherd saying that Australia risked being crippled by pension spending.

It isn't only big business, the Government tries at every opportunity to paint the picture of the pension as an increasing cost that can no longer be afforded, referring to welfare dependency as 'poison' and persisting with a push to extend the retirement age to 70.

With this constant source of negative feedback on the contribution of the elderly, it is no wonder that so many seniors get the feeling that they are a drain on society. It is time for the Government and big business interests to consider the social cost of their arguments and the effect on the mental health of elderly Australians before they trot out lines designed to make people feel unwanted and unloved.

An investment in more resources for mental health support services targeted at this age group would also go a long way to helping redress these terrible figures.

Source; Ben Hocking, Your Life Choices

Peer support is available to Retired Firefighters and Associated Members

Sandy Hearn – Peer Coordinator -
shearn@mfb.vic.gov.au – 0417 538 289

Fairlie Morgan –Employee Assistance
Coordinator - fmorgan@mfb.vic.gov.au –
0407 665 174

Scott Darcy – Peer Coordinator –
sdarcy@mfb.vic.gov.au – 0429 771 849

Assistance Required

Preservation of our state's Fire Service History is important to us all and Glenn Jennings is embarking on a monumental task to record some of CFA's career firefighter history. The recording of names in all CFA's recruit courses from the first in 1973 is no mean feat, but with your assistance it may ease the burden.

To Quote an adage; To know where you are going..... you must know where you have been!

I am trying to put names against all CFA recruit courses. Below is a photo of the first CFA recruit course with names attached. If you can assist with names and dates, please forward via email and will adjust my list accordingly.

Editor's note; Glenn has compiled a list of all CFA Career Recruit courses from 1973. The list is too extensive for us to publish in "Water Off", but we are sure if you contact Glenn at the address below he would appreciate your assistance.

Many Thanks & Safe Driving

Glenn Jennings Operations Officer – State Driving Coordinator

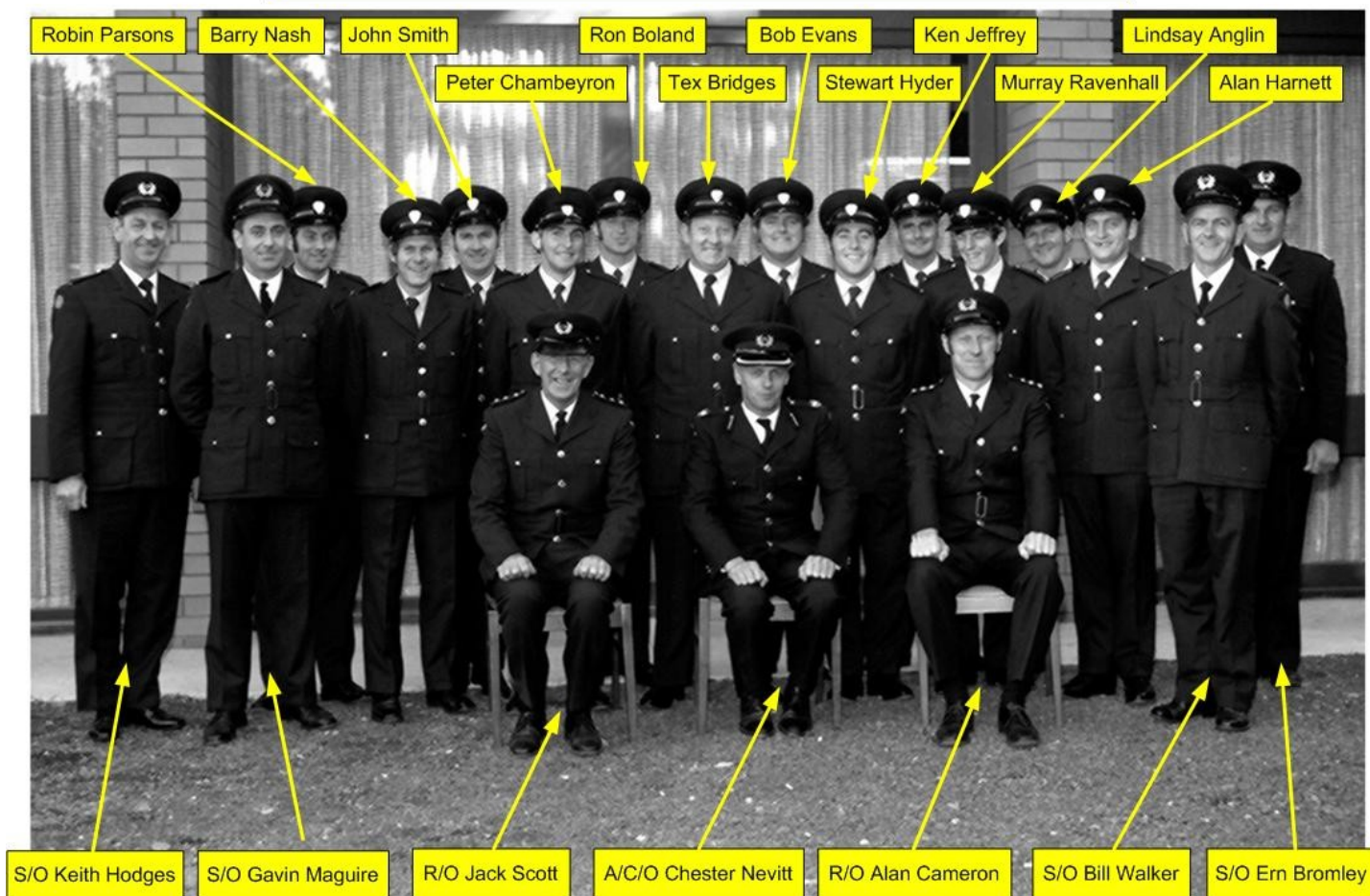
Country Fire Authority Training

C/- 61-65 Separation St, North Geelong, 3215

P. O. BOX 586 North Geelong, 3215, Victoria, Australia

Tel: 61 3 5240 2792 M: 0419 361 053 E: g.jennings@cfa.vic.gov.au

CFA Recruit Course No. 1 - 1973



A Word From CFA Chief Officer Steve Warrington

I would like to publically acknowledge the work and effort of Operations Officer Glenn Jennings in pulling this together. Glenn has become somewhat of a custodian of CFA's proud history and I am sure you would join with me in thanking him for his passion and dedication in preserving our history.

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Kenneth Leslie HOPPER

Kenneth Leslie HOPPER, Reg No 0275, was an Electrical Fitter living in Brunswick when he was appointed to the MFB on 28 October 1949 at the age of 25. L.P. Whitehead was the Chief Fire Officer at that time.

Ken started his career as a 4th Class Fireman at Fire Station FS01, Eastern Hill, as was customary at that time. He was already a successful footballer, having played 17 games for Carlton in the VFL from 1945 – 1946, then 66 games for Hawthorn Football Club from 1947 - 1951. He kicked a total of 17 goals in his VFL career and was President of the Committee of the Hawks Past Players Association for 5 years.

On 18 November 1955 he was promoted to Senior Fireman and one year later to Sub Station Officer (SSO at that time). In July 1963 he was promoted to Station Officer and in March 1967 District Officer. In April 1971 he became Superintendent and in June 1977 he was promoted to Divisional Superintendent.

Ken was promoted to Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) in April 1980, at a time when few Officers were promoted to that level.

During his career, Ken served at FS21 in Surrey Hills, FS18 Hawthorn, FS20 Box Hill, FS01 Eastern Hill, FS32 Wheelers Hill, FS02 at 199 William Street, Melbourne, FS10 in Hoddle Street, Abbotsford, FS04 Brunswick, FS47 Footscray, FS03 in Swanston Street, Carlton and the Training College in Abbotsford.

Ken retired on 7 August 1981 after 31 years of service. Ken Hopper passed away on 29 June 2017 at the age of 93.

Obituary; Mark Carter



Ken Hopper.
Image B. McCumisky

Jack Moore

John Thomas Leslie ‘Jack’ MOORE was born in 1930 in Preston. He was living in West Preston working as a fitter and turner when he was appointed to the MFB on 21 April 1952, under Chief Leonard Paton (L P) Whitehead. This was a turbulent time within the MFB. The fifty-six-hour week had been implemented on 1 January 1950, then the forty-hour week on 31 March 1950.

Jack was first appointed to FS01 at Headquarters, as was standard at that time, then went on to FS12 Preston, in High Street, FS09 North Fitzroy, FS10 in Hoddle Street, Abbotsford, FS35 Prahran, FS29 Glenhuntly, FS04 Brunswick, returning to FS01 a few times during his career.

Jack was promoted to Sub-Station Officer in 1960, to Station Officer in 1963, to District Officer in 1968 and Superintendent in 1977.

Because Jack’s niece suffered from a disabling disease, he developed a lifting device to assist in moving disabled people and wrote an article about it for the MFB’s “Wordback” magazine in 1981.

He spoke of the ...”support and assistance from friends like Alan Roberts, John Coverdale and John Franklin” in making the idea a reality.

Jack left the MFB on 19 July 1985, at the age of 55 after 33 years of service.

He and his wife Linda celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary just days before he passed away on 14 July.

Obituary; Mark Carter



Jack Moore.
Image; B. McCumisky

Keith Dumas

Keith Euan Dumas was born in 1939 and living in Alphington when he was appointed to MFB on 6 April 1962. He had been a “Commercial Traveller” and arrived when W T Aldridge was Chief Fire Officer.



Keith had also completed his National Service and had worked at Eastern Hill (FS1), West Melbourne (FS2), Carlton (FS3), Brunswick (FS4), Broadmeadows (FS5) and

Northcote (FS13) on D platoon over a 39 year period, but spent most of his time at Eastern Hill.

In 2001 when he was rostered to another station he wrote a memo requesting that he be retained at Eastern Hill “in a familiar environment with shiftmates that I have worked with over many years, rather than being rotated”. He stated that he intended to retire in 2002 when he had attained 40 years of service, however he went on to work for another nine years. In fact, in 2010 Keith Dumas' retirement was mentioned on the radio 3AW ‘Rumour File’ as he and Graeme Danby vied to be top of the Seniority List.

Keith passed away on 6 July at the age of 78.

Image; B. McCumisky. Obituary; Mark Carter

Brian Hopkins

James Brian (known as Brian) HOPKINS was born in January 1935 in Northcote and was living in Northcote when he was appointed to the MFB on 24/7/1959, under Chief Fire Officer W T Aldridge, with future Chief Jack Paterson as his Deputy.

Brian had been a "Paper Checker" at the Commonwealth Bank Note Printing Branch in Fitzroy and was interviewed by Jack Paterson when he applied.

Brian served at FS46 Yarraville, FS44 Sunshine (on the corner of Hampshire and Hertford Roads, now a Tobin Brothers establishment), FS01 Eastern Hill, FS47 Footscray, FS51 Keilor, then back to FS44.

In July 1969 Brian was promoted to Sub-Station Officer and in November 1970 to SO2. In 1985 he was promoted to Station Officer.

In 1974 Brian was transferred to FS30 Templestowe (in Foote Street), and in the 1980's he completed his career at FS21 Surrey Hills, FS27 Nunawading and FS19 Kew. He had moved house to Doncaster, probably in the 1970's.

Brian undertook an Officer's Refresher Course in 1978 and a Salvage Rescue Course in 1984.

In 1988 he wrote a quaintly-worded memo to the Chief ... "I hereby tender my request for permission to retire as of 0800 hours, Friday July 1 1988."

Brian did retire on 1/7/1988, having enjoyed very nearly 33 years at the MFB. He died on 18/6/2017, aged 82.

Obituary; Mark Carter

Arthur Rodgers

Arthur Rodgers was a MFB Fire Stationed at Sandringham (36Stn) during the 1950's during that period of time he resigned and headed for QLD where he joined the Brisbane Metropolitan Fire Brigade.

He became Secretary of the QLD UFU Branch during the 1960's and subsequently was elected to the position of National UFU President in 1969.

During the early 1970's he and National UFU Secretary Bill Webber toured the length and breadth of QLD signing up, to the UFU, most of QLD's career firefighters who were employed by over 80 Fire Boards and were members of the AWU.

He made the QLD Branch the force it is today, he left the UFU in about 1985 and worked for a QLD Industrial Superannuation Scheme.

He was champion of the working class,
He will be sadly missed

Obituary; Rod Knowles

Peter Hugh KENNEDY

Peter Hugh KENNEDY was appointed to the MFB on 30/4/1956, under Chief Officer L P Whitehead, while living in Mordialloc. Born in Wagga Wagga in 1933, he had been a "Radio Mechanic", an electronics whizz who was very good at fixing radios and televisions.



As a 4th Class Fireman, Peter was appointed to FS01 Headquarters (East Melbourne), then FS29 Glenhuntly, FS24 Malvern, FS33 Mentone, FS34 Moorabbin, FS25 Oakleigh, the new FS31 Wheelers Hill, and FS37 St Kilda (which was reputed to be haunted). His career ended at FS36 Sandringham in 1988, just 2 years before it closed.

Peter retired on 30/4/88, having served the MFB for 32 years. As he was not yet 60 years of age, this was classified as 'early retirement'.

Image; MFB Media. Obituary; Mark Carter

David Leslie John DA FONTE



David Leslie John DA FONTE was not quite 20 years old in 1966 when he was appointed to the MFB as a '4th Class' Firefighter. An "Electrical Technician" born in Armadale and living in Frankston, David ("Dave") was appointed under Chief Jack Paterson.

Dave was first stationed at Eastern Hill, then onto FS36 Sandringham, FS33 Mentone ("33 by the sea"), FS31 Wheelers Hill, FS34 Moorabbin, FS32 Brighton, finally ending his on shift career at Sandringham in 1986, not long before it closed.

Dave sustained a couple of injuries and was put on light duties. He first joined Fire Prevention, then Fire Protection, where he worked until he resigned on 12/1/1990 with 23.5 years of service at the rank of Senior Firefighter.

During his life, Dave had amassed a huge collection of fire service items - about 5,000 badges, stickers, medals and other items which will soon be transferred to the Fire Services Museum.

Ron Barker OAM, Museum volunteer extraordinaire roomed with Dave Da Fonte when they both attended the World Police and Fire Games in New York in 2011.

Dave was a keen golfer.

Dave passed away on 2 June

Image; MFB Media

Obituary; Mark Carter

“THE DON” (is good!)

Well, a quick trip out to the green pastures of “Manor Lakes” I drove the silver 2 door Pug out on the Princess Highway on a sunny May morning 2017, to visit the Don (Brennan) and his lovely wife Nancy to conduct an interview about his interesting and dynamic life, however, more importantly his MFB life over 28 years starting in 1959. (Bloody hell! I was only a boy of only 8 years of age!) These were the days of brass helmets and an MFB brass band and 2 on the carriage.

Nancy met me at the front door and escorted me to the “Don”. He was comfortably seated on his throne in the living room awaiting my arrival. A firm handshake, a generous smile and after the pleasantries, I asked the **HARD** questions and we were on our historic journey into the past.

Don was born in Willaura on the 9th April 1937. Now where was Willaura I asked? Well says the Don emphatically, “it’s at the foothills of the Grampians”. (I suddenly thought of olive groves, beautiful mountains, walks and the Stawell Gift, Stawell not being too far from the Grampians. And don’t forget the beautiful wines from Avoca and Great Western). Retired M.O, Dr Upjohn owns a farm at Willaura. What’s really interesting, is that Nancy is from Dunkeld (foothills of the Grampians!)

After Don Left school, he learnt carpentry under the guidance of his father. They were working in the Ararat area as builders. Don didn’t complete an apprenticeship, however he gained the necessary skills to compete with the best of tradies in the building industry.

Don had a cousin (Peter Brennan) in the MFB who encouraged him to join the MFB family at the age of 22. Don rolled up to Eastern Hill and was interviewed, met Jackie Patterson, was measured up and off to the brigade medical officer (Dr Maher), to start weeks later as a new recruit. The chief fire officer of the day was W.T. Aldridge. The late S/FF Fred Goldsmith was allocated to look after Don and show him the ropes. Just like the editor of this fine magazine, Don missed the bells on his first day when the Leyland ladder was called to go on to a fire/incident or was it a false alarm? After 6 weeks training, Don was rostered to Carlton fire station for about 12 weeks. Don continued his fire-fighting duties until the time was right, Don decided to become an officer (Sub Station Officer or SO 2).

Don’s journey as an officer started when he was rostered back to Carlton (No.3 Stn) and was rostered on the “meat wagon” as it was called. That is to say, it was the salvage van (now called a rescue unit). This appliance was only one of two salvage vans which had to cover the metropolitan area of Melbourne. In those



days, road accidents with trapped victims was a constant every weekend and usually involved intoxicated drivers. Don worked for 6 years on the salvage van at Carlton as the SSO.

We move on now to Don completing the station officer’s course (SSO) and working at various stations around central district. Don worked further up the chain of command and became a district officer and started work on the 2nd floor at No.1 station. Don completed many rolls as a district officer and after 28 years he decided to hang up his boots. Don retired in 1987 and he had loved the job!

At this point of the interview, it’s time to mention the many associations Don was involved with when he was an employee with the MFB. Some of the following he was involved with: MFB cricket club life member, (secretary of the mid-week competition), the MFB football club, mid-week competition. Don became a life member of the UFU, life member of the RFA, helped start the annual cricket competition between South Australia fire brigade and Victoria fire brigade (MFB).

Some of the many fellows he enjoyed working with are as follows: Lionel Rose, Bill Bates, Arthur Cowban, Jack Moore, Laurie Lavelle, Len Sixsmith, Jim Hunter, Ray Wellard, John Upjohn (BMO), Peter Holton, George White and Frank Churchill and of course there were many others.

Don attended many large fires over the years including, Bowater Scott in Box Hill, a high school in Ashburton, a major three semi trailer accident in Ballarat rd outside the Footscray gardens. Whilst cutting into the cabin of the second semi the sparks set the spilt diesel alight with the fire flowing down the road. Quick work by DO Laurie Lavelle extinguished the fire. Unfortunately, 2 of the semi drivers were killed. When the Tullamarine freeway opened, Don attended the first major fatal car accident on the freeway, where two people died as a result of a nasty accident. Another vehicle accident he attended, was on the Boulevard in Richmond where 4 people died in a speeding GT Falcon.

After Don's retirement, he and John Berry decided to build some units north of Melbourne. Further on in his retirement journey, Don and Nancy have been on many cruises around the world, 45 years of caravanning around Australia, crossed the ditch to New Zealand five times and have been to Russia, Germany, Canada and many other countries, too many to mention. Other

activities Don has enjoyed in retirement have been fishing, golfing and of course watching the mighty "Bombers" playing Aussie rules football.

OK! Enough about The Don! Now, who's the most important person in Don's life? Well, of course it's his wife Nancy! Nancy lost her independence when she and Don married in 1970 after meeting at a wedding in Port Augusta (S.A.) in 1969. Two children later they have sustained a wonderful partnership and have just celebrated their 50 years of marriage this year.

Nancy has been involved with many fund-raising activities for many charities within the community. Two of these are the Country Women's Association and "Do Care" – (Wesley Mission) for a total 36 years in total.

Nancy has been a big part of a team effort with Don and we in the RFA hope that this loving relationship between them continues for many years to come.

"Well done Don and Nancy"!

Col Harris

A STORY FROM THE PAST

We are indebted to Jeff Peirce for taking the time to record the memories of 95 Y/O retired fire Gordon Winch.

I refer to the first article by Gordon WINCH in the May, 2017 Water Off Newsletter and advise that Gordon's Registered Number is **313**.

Gordon spent the majority of his service at Kew Fire Station, with a number of relief duties and drills/training at Eastern Hill Fire Station.

The Kew Mental Hospital was widely regarded as a potentially serious fire hazard and Gordon became very familiar with every nook and cranny of its layout. He often guided Senior Officers through the maze of the facility and provided orientation training for new firemen. The Kew Fire Station and the Hose Carriage held Pass Keys to enable access to the Hospital.

On one occasion, Gordon was instructing new recruit, Ray ROBINSON, on correct procedures during the Monthly testing of the auxiliary alarm systems, when his practical joker nature rose to the fore. He locked ROBINSON in the Female Ward at the Hospital for some minutes, until he relented to the distress calls of "let me out", and "unlock the door". When the door was opened, ROBINSON exited in a shaken and abusive mode, however, relieved to be released. Gordon and Ray have reminisced about this incident with intense jocularly. Ray still refers to Gordon fondly, as his "father figure".

On one occasion, Gordon was directed to "present yourself at the Ringwood Fire Station at 8.00 a.m. tomorrow morning". Victoria was amidst a General Transport Strike at the time, so Gordon set out early to hitch-hike to Ringwood, as he did not own a Motor Vehicle at the time. He realized during transit, that he was going to be late, so rang Ringwood Station accordingly. He subsequently arrived approximately 1 hour late for duty, this being the second time in his lengthy career that he was late for duty.

Some days later, Gordon received a written instruction to report to Chief Officer WHITEHEAD, at Eastern Hill Station. The Chief Officer questioned Gordon about the circumstances that led him to be late for duty. Despite the extenuating circumstances, WHITEHEAD summed up the interview by concluding "Your lateness is becoming a bit of a habit". Gordon maintains that he was never late for duty again.

GORDON WINCH, Reg. No. 313, retired from MFB 1979.

Regards,
JEFFREY A. PEIRCE
Gordon's Son-In-Law and Full Time Carer.

The RUM Project

New research by Griffith University reveals that around 40 per cent of Australians have expired medicines in their homes, while 20 per cent keep unwanted medicines.

The leading reason participants kept expired or unwanted medicines was in case they needed to use them again in the future.

The expiry date of medicines is generally based on the known activity of the medicine up to that date and, in most cases, medicines kept beyond the expiry date become less active and not as effective.

According to the head of the NSW Poisons Information Centre, Jared Brown, medicines don't generally become toxic after the expiry date.

One of the main risks of keeping expired medicines involves children accidentally ingesting them. More than 5000 children are admitted to hospital with medicine poisoning each year.

The use of expired medicines to treat serious medical issues, such as ineffective heart medication or adrenaline for anaphylactic shock, is also a significant issue.

The Federal Government has set up a new initiative, Return Unwanted Medicines, to help with the safe disposal of old or expired medicines and to



minimise the risk of accidental poisoning and medication mismanagement.

Do you currently have expired medication in your house? Will you consider disposing of this older medication after reading this article?

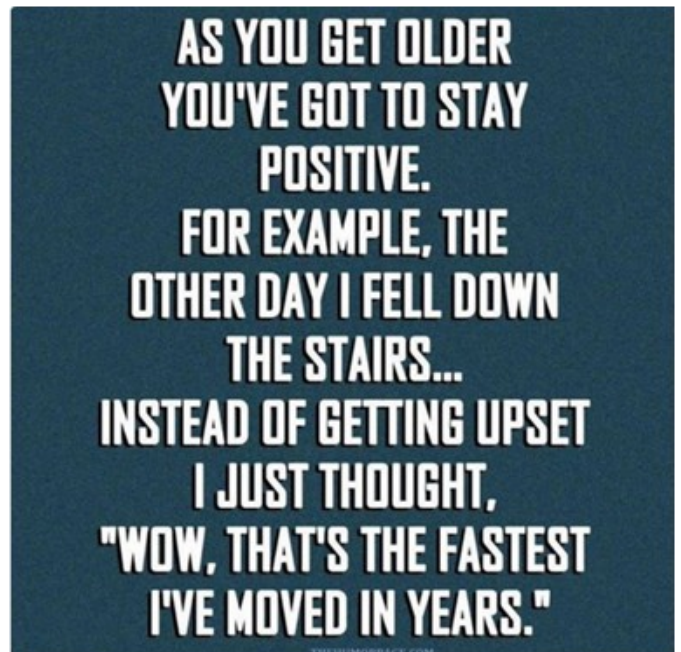
Australia has a free service for people to dispose of their unwanted medicines safely via pharmacy. Return Unwanted Medicines (or The RUM Project) is a national scheme whereby anyone can return their expired and unwanted medicines to any community pharmacy for safe and environmentally-friendly disposal.

Go to your home medicine area and read the labels of your medicines and check expiry dates. Remove any medicines that are expired or you no longer need and place them in a container or bag. Return your unwanted medicines to your local pharmacy. Your pharmacist will put them in a secure bin for safe disposal. It's that easy!

Source; Your Life Choices

FIRE RESCUE RINGS

The committee have ordered Fire Rescue rings and these have arrived. Please contact Allan Roberts to arrange for pickup.



Copy deadline for Water Off Magazine for November issue is October 20th 2017.

Nine Health Tips Men Shouldn't Ignore

Guys are notorious for not seeing doctors. I mean, who knows us better than us, right? We can barely ask for directions when we're lost let alone depend on someone to tell us if we're going to die or live for another few years.

Men are the most misguided creatures on the planet. Our self-perceived indestructibility coupled with our all-encompassing knowledge of everything around us make us quite possibly the worst patients imaginable.

But you know what fellas? We die too. So, to make it a little more difficult for Father Time to take us before our well, *time*, here are seven health tips you should not ignore.

Don't tempt fate

I'm going to start with the most obvious one: don't tempt fate. If you drink and drive, you are a bloody idiot. Smoking does kill. Gambling, speeding, drinking too much and generally being the 'big man' is just bad for your health. So, think twice about the risks you're taking and weigh up whether they're necessary or not. Chances are, they're not.

See your GP

If you can't book in to see your doctor twice a year, then make sure you see a GP at least once a year. Having scheduled, regular visits with your doc is the best way to keep your health on track. Think of your body as you do your car and get regular checks and services.

You can have a heart attack at any age

You don't have to be old to have a heart attack, but the older you get, the more likely your chances. If you have heart disease in your family or you haven't looked after yourself as best you could have, now is the time to take better care of your ticker.

See your GP if you have ED

Erectile dysfunction can be a cause for concern in the bedroom, but it may also be a sign of something more insidious than not getting lucky that night. The main cause for ED is a lack of blood flow to the penis, which could mean your heart is in trouble. So, if you have ED, see your GP.

Know your flow

You should probably pee between six to 10 times a day. Eight times is the sweet spot. If you pee more than 10 times a day and get up twice or more each night to pee, you may have an enlarged prostate, weak or overactive bladder or some form of cancer.

Don't drink more to feel better

One in eight men will experience depression at some point in their lives and one in five will have anxiety in some form. Many will turn to alcohol to feel better. Mistake. Alcohol may provide a short-term 'bandaid' but the wound will fester. If you show any sign of depression or anxiety, speak up. It's better out than in.

Don't hit snooze on the snore

Aside from the health risks associated with keeping your partner up at night, hardcore snoring could actually be something called obstructive sleep apnoea. This means you may stop breathing in your sleep and it's linked to heart disease and high blood pressure. So, don't ignore your snoring.

Slip, slop, slap

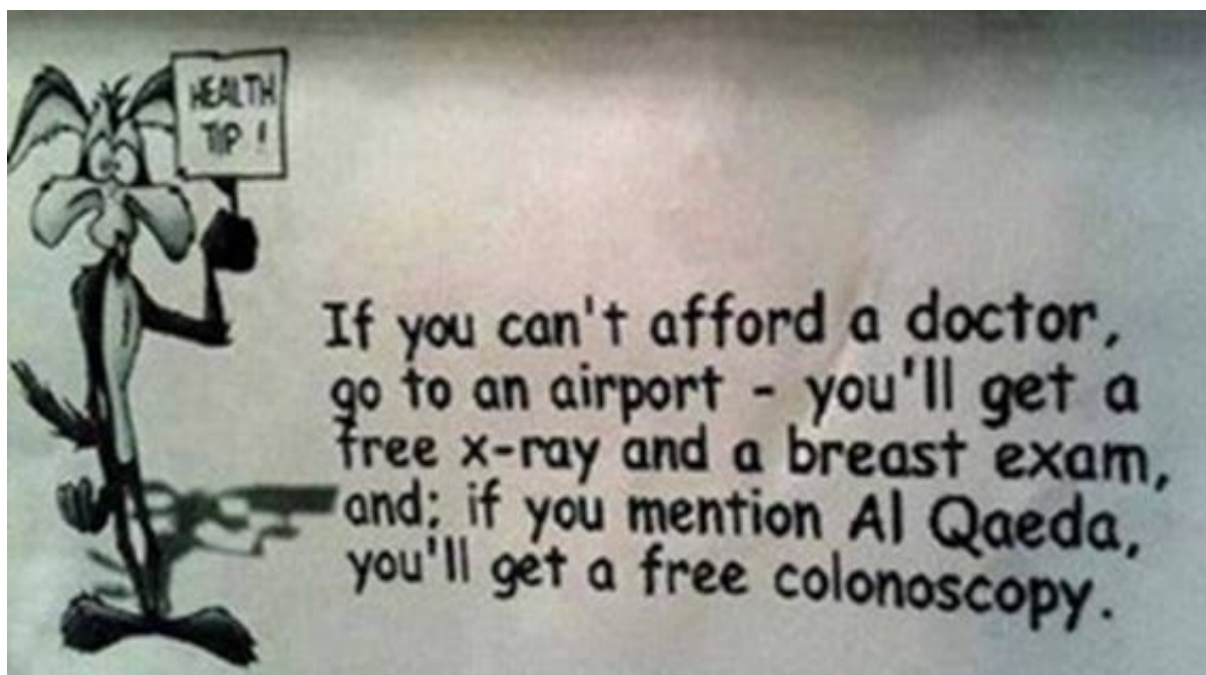
Skin cancer is a leading killer of men. In fact, melanoma is the third biggest cancer killer and around 14,000 men are expected to be diagnosed in 2017. There's a quick way to minimise your chances of skin cancer: put on sunscreen. That includes your arms, hands and face. If it's exposed, get it covered.

Don't detour the dentist

It's probably more common for women to see the dentist. But a routine dental check-up may not only safeguard your teeth and oral health, but it can also help with early detection of diseases such as diabetes, Crohn's disease, lupus and leukaemia.

There are more medical mistakes that men make and you can read about them at [WebMD](#).

Do you make any of these medical mistakes? Do you know of any others? Do you have any health tips for our members?





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Download the new VicEmergency app

The new VicEmergency app was launched recently and will replace FireReady this summer. The VicEmergency app is now available to download from the App Store or Google Play and Victorians are encouraged to download it ahead of the summer season. The VicEmergency website has also been upgraded and a new emergency hotline released. The VicEmergency app and website will provide warning and incident notifications about floods, storms, fires, earthquakes, tsunamis, beach closures, shark sightings and more.

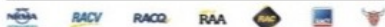


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To those members with easy access to email and would like to have their copy sent by this system, please send your email address to John Laverick. "Water Off" will be sent out in a PDF format.

John's address - -
retfire@bigpond.net.au

Before you send your email, click on 'tools' at top and click on 'request receipt'. This will reply to you and verify both email addresses are working correctly.

UFU RETIRED MEMBERS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Pier 14, Central Pier - Docklands

Saturday, November 11th 2017

11.30 AM. - 4.00 PM.

A reminder:

If you have accepted the invitation to the luncheon and through illness, or some other circumstance, find you are unable to attend, please notify the Union Office A.S.A.P.

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