

**CHANGE OF VENUE FOR  
RETIREE'S CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON**

**Malvern Town Hall**  
Cnr. Glenferrie Road & High Street Malvern  
11.30am. Saturday 19th November

Due to circumstances beyond the control of the UFU Social Committee the St Kilda Town Hall is unavailable for the dates required. However, notices of the change will be sent to all eligible retirees in due course.

PRINT POST No. PP333964/0020

RFA Newsletter  
If undelivered return to;  
The Secretary  
6 Wingara Ave.  
East Keilor 3033

**SURFACE  
MAIL**

**Postage  
Paid  
Australia**



**THE EXPLOSION ON THE SHIP MAHIA PART 2**

As reported by *The Age* and *Argus* newspapers August 8 & 9, 1947

This is the continuation of the report on the explosion and subsequent fire on board the ship *Mahia* at Victoria Dock. The disaster left ten painters and dockers dead. At the end of Part 1 of the report, the firefighters and ship's crew had been ordered to abandon the ship under the threat of her capsizing. Only the Captain and a few officers remained aboard.

Thirty minutes later the firefighters had to return to the ship, as the fire, fanned by a strong wind, gathered new strength. To counteract the heavy list to port, caused by the water from the fire hoses flooding the holds, a series of holes were cut in the side of the ship. As the oxy-acetylene torches pierced the *Mahia's* plates, the spectators on the wharf saw an inferno of red hot melting steel.

Two hours after the water had started to flood the ship through the holes in her side, she began to right herself. When almost upright, the *Mahia* lurched suddenly and plunged in the opposite direction - towards the wharf - in a steep starboard list, and the stern sank.

Water flooded into the burning holds. Derricks crashed to the decks and firefighters, engulfed in clouds of steam, darted to safety between lashing heavy cables. Many received minor injuries.

The cargo in both Nos. 4 and 5 holds of the *Mahia*, a Shaw Savill & Albion freighter, was destroyed. It comprised huge rolls of newsprint, match timber and Belgian tapestries.

**REFLOATING THE MAHIA.**

Salvage operations were begun on August 8, the day after the explosion and fire on board the 10,000 ton



**Above:** The Harbour Trust's giant floating crane, the largest of its type in the Southern Hemisphere, placed a number of high pressure pumps on board the stricken ship, in readiness for the refloating attempt.

freighter *Mahia*. In charge was Captain Williams, who had had a leading role in the salvage of gold from the *Niagara* in 1940. Two divers spent most of Friday and part of the night repairing the holes cut in the ship's side to prevent her capsizing.

Of the ten men killed in the explosion of sodium chlorate which had been inside drums on the deck, only six bodies had been recovered. Police suspected that the other four were deep inside the ship's holds, which were flooded with 30 ft. of water.

Also during Friday, the Harbour Trust's giant floating crane, the largest of its type in the Southern Hemisphere, placed a number of high pressure pumps on board the stricken ship, in readiness for the refloating attempt. No estimate of damage to the ship and her cargo had yet been given, but it was expected to amount to many thousands of pounds.

(Continued on page 7)

# “ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING”

**Notice is hereby given of our next Annual General Meeting to be held at the  
Carlton Football Club Social Club,  
(Melway 29 G12)  
1030 Hours, Wednesday 16th November 2005**

**AGENDA ITEMS.**

- Minutes of last Annual General meeting.**
- President’s Report.**
- Secretary/Treasurer’s Report.**
- Election of Office Bearers**
- Guest Speaker:**
- General Business.**

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 and beverages available.

**JOHN BROWN  
SECRETARY/TREASURER  
Ph: 03 9336 2492**

## OFFICE BEARERS

**President,** Mike McCumisky  
**Vice President,** Ian Fowler  
**Sec./Treasurer,** John Brown

**General Committee;**

John Laverick  
Ken McGillivray  
Bob McNeil  
John Schintler  
John Wallace  
**Auditor;** Theo Teklenburg

### Diary dates 2005

16th November: Annual General Meeting  
19th November Luncheon, Malvern Town Hall  
27th November UFU Picnic

## Valē

Ross Broadby (MFB)  
Syd Inglis (MFB)

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

## SICK LIST

Jim Casley	Clarrie Hart
Ron Cass	Ron Kennedy
Jack Cleave	John McLoone
Bruce Gee	Graeme Simpson
Ernie Goodall	Neville Smith
Terry Harman	Kevin Sullivan

We wish these members a speedy recovery

**Note:** If you know of any member who may be ill please notify a committee member. We endeavour to keep you informed, but can only do this with your help.

## APOLOGY

To all those members who have missed out having their articles published in this issue. Due to the limited space, the coming annual general meeting and the unusually high number of submissions, we find that we have a number of worthy articles that we can't fit in. Two in particular, **Bill Bailey and Eric Daffy**, sent us two excellent articles that will be published in the February issue.

Do not be disheartened if your article is not published in the current issue, it will be placed in the following publication. Please keep those stories coming in, they do create a lot of interest.

**The Editorial Committee**

### 2005 Annual General Meeting – Wednesday 16 November 2005.

#### Nomination For Positions on The Committee.

Nominations are called for the following positions on the Committee of the Retired Firefighters Association of Australia, Victorian Branch Inc.: -

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Ordinary Member of Committee, Six (6) Positions

Each position will serve for a term of one (1) year.

Please note that according to the Rules of the Retired Firefighters Association of Australia, Victorian Branch Inc, only financial members may nominate for any of the above positions and any member nominating must have been a member for at least one (1) year.

Nominations must be in writing on the form below, signed by the Proposer and the Seconder and accepted by the Nominee. Completed nomination forms must be returned to the Secretary at the address shown below **no later than 17:00 hours (5.00pm) on Tuesday 8 November 2005.**

### Retired Firefighters Association of Australia, Victorian Branch, Inc.

We, the undersigned, being financial members of the Retired Firefighters Association of Australia, Victorian Branch Inc. hereby nominate:

Return by Tuesday November 8, 2005, to:  
The Secretary  
Retired Firefighters Association of Australia  
Victorian Branch Incorporated.  
6 Wingara Ave. East Keilor 3033

For the position of: .....

Proposed by (signature) ..... (Print name) .....

Seconded by (signature) ..... (Print name) .....

Nominee Acceptance (signature) ..... (Print name) .....

Date .....

## *Fire Services Museum of Victoria Inc*

(Inc. – A0044465F)

A.B.N. 32 047 130 364

### **SITUATIONS VACANT**

#### **Registered Motor Mechanic**

Familiar with vintage and veteran vehicles, registered on CH plates.

To carry out inspections on a number of vehicles once a year for roadworthiness so that they can operate in compliance with Vic Roads and Association of Motoring Clubs requirements.

Re-numeration to be negotiated with the Committee.

Location:-

**FIRE SERVICES MUSEUM -- WORKSHOPS**

Champion Road, Newport.

Main working day is Tuesday or alternative days are Thursday or Saturday.

For further information contact Mike McCumisky on:-

H. 9808 1659      Mobile 0408 305 831

Written response to be addressed to:-

The Secretary,

**Fire Services Museum of Victoria Inc**

39 Gisborne Street,

East Melbourne Vic 3002

or by Fax (03) 9662 2907

### **ICE YOUR PHONE**

Telstra is encouraging mobile phone customers to ICE their phone. ICE stands for 'In Case of Emergencies'. The idea is to create an entry for ICE in your mobile's phonebook. It's the name and number of a family member or friend who can be contacted 'In Case Of Emergencies' (ICE).

ICE was developed by the East Anglian Ambulance Trust in the UK, and gained international attention in the London bombings.

Ideally, your ICE contact should know your basic medical information, such as blood type and allergies, and be able to help emergency services make decisions if necessary. That could be a family member, close friend or even your doctor.

Having ICE in your mobile phone can make it quicker and easier for emergency services workers or passers by to give you the right help if you ever need it. So take out your mobile now - and ICE it.

### **GEELONG REUNION**

&

#### **Christmas Lunch**



**Tuesday 29th  
November, 2005**

**11.30 onwards**

**Shell Club  
Bacchus Marsh Rd.**

**Corio**

**Drinks at bar prices**

**Contact: Bill Icke 5244 1822**

**John Wallace 5278 4734**

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Welcome again to our RFA Magazine. To those on the sick list, we wish you a speedy recovery.

The August meeting at the Carlton Football Social Club was very well attended. A special thank you from the Committee to John Berry, who as usual keeps his ear to the ground, and arranged for Det. Sen. Constable Nick Farr to be our guest speaker. We were given a very interesting insight into his expedition with fellow colleagues to the summit of Mount Everest.

Comments heard later were that it was a very interesting and professional presentation, a credit to Nick for giving us his time after a night shift. It was very good public relations for Victoria Police, their efforts to help with the "Make A Wish Foundation" and the "Sherpas" who make such an adventure possible.

The sale of raffle tickets to help their fund raising for the "Make- a - Wish Foundation" realised over \$400 from RFA members and families. The winners were

advertised with **1st prize to Gardenvale, 2nd prize to Bricksly NSW, 3rd prize to Rowville.**

Thanks to Peter Lang and Bob Coombs both retired CFA members in arranging transport on the day for Nick's father Allan who lives down Clifton Springs way.

Just a reminder, that at the November Annual General Meeting, the positions of the whole Committee come up for election. Those interested in becoming involved are welcome to apply on the form provided on page 15. The number of applicants, will determine if any ballots are required. If there is no voting required, and providing the existing committee members are willing to continue for another year, they will need to be confirmed by the members at the meeting.

I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting. In the meantime travel safely.

**Regards,  
Mike**



### **SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT**

The August meeting had as our Guest Speaker, Snr. Detective, Nick Farr. Although coming straight off night shift, Nick, with the aid of visual aids, gave a graphic account of the Police Team conquering Mt. Everest. As his lecture took over an hour and we had to clear the room by 1200 hours. Questions were limited to a short period. Thanks go to Nick's Dad, former M.F.B. Architect, Alan Farr and also to John Berry who arranged it all.

We warmly welcomed Bruce Gee to our meeting. Bruce is handling his illness very well as is Jack Cleave, who has the same illness.

Neville Smith came down from Queensland to have major heart surgery in Melbourne. He is back in Queensland now, still placing huge bets on horse racing (no wonder he had heart problems). He said, "he now feels like a nineteen year old and is looking for young female company.

Loris Cass rang me to tell that her husband, Ron Cass worked the long hours (120 hrs per week), there may be others, let us know.

It was a great shock to both Jean and myself to hear of Rhonda Harrison's passing. We spent time with her and Ted on the Gold Coast last year. She was a lovely, bubbly person who enjoyed life to the fullest and will be sadly missed by all who knew her. The large attendance at her funeral said it all.

Several years ago at a R.F.A. Re-Union Day at the Training College, we were watching Sydney and Collingwood play. Roy Treverton, a former South Melbourne player was urging on his old team, I asked Roy "Did he think the Swans could win a Premiership", his reply was "That he hoped they would before he died". He missed their win by a couple of years. When they won, I was thinking of you mate.

After many, many years involved with the Fire Museum, Fred Kerr is standing down as President. Fred and his team were familiar faces at funerals with the Eight-pump, knowing Fred, he will stay involved in some way.

Work has started on the new M.F.E.S.B. Training College, completion date is expected to be in August, 2006 and occupancy, hopefully, will be September, 2006.

D.C.F.O. David Nicholson is to retire January,2006. Dave approached me one day and asked me "What sort of job the Fire Brigade was". I told him "It was a great job", now 30-years later after an illustrious career, Dave is calling it quits. We wish him all the best for the future and I will be sending him a R.F.A. application form.

The First Responder is still continuing to save lives and the total lives saved is now over 50, it goes to prove that the M.F.B. is the first to respond to emergencies.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

PLEASE NOTE: DUES ARE PAYABLE ON THE 1st JANUARY EACH YEAR It would be appreciated if you paid then - as it takes a lot of time to make out notices and place them in "Water-Off". If you fall three years behind, you will be taken off the list.

**Funds as at 30.9.05**

Access Account: \$2996.68  
Term Deposit: \$4430.51

**JOHN BROWN**  
**SECRETARY/TREASURER**

**RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA****VICTORIAN BRANCH**

Reg.No. A16839F

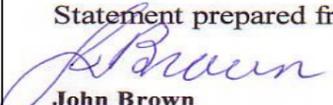
**Statement of Income and Expenditure for year ended 30 June 2005**

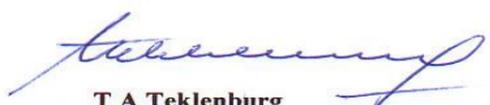
	2004	2004
	\$	\$
<b>Income</b>		
<b>Opening Balance Credit Union 1 July 2004</b>	<b>6,261.74</b>	<b>5,335.05</b>
Members' subscriptions	3,427.00	3,237.70
Sale of promotional items	48.00	74.00
Donations	5.00	-
Socials	560.95	474.30
Joining fees	80.00	115.00
Transfers	-	-
Interest received	213.65	197.31
	<u>10,596.34</u>	<u>9,433.36</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Postages and telephone	931.28	881.37
Reunion Day & catering	1,059.93	929.75
Magazine expenses	99.90	193.59
Computer upgrades & software	159.00	655.00
Affiliation fees	-	-
Promotional material	-	-
Donation	-	-
Stationary	-	-
AGM and meeting expenses	217.94	327.00
Sundries	-	125.51
Government & Credit co-op fees & charges	44.60	59.40
	<u>2,512.65</u>	<u>3,171.62</u>
<b>Closing Balance Credit Union 30 June 2005</b>	<b>8,083.69</b>	<b>6,261.74</b>
	<u>10,596.34</u>	<u>9,433.36</u>

**Bank Reconciliation****Bank balance as at 30 June 2005**

Main account 3,710.48  
Term deposit 4,373.21  
**8,083.69**

Statement prepared from information supplied.

  
**John Brown**  
Treasurer

  
**T A Teklenburg**  
Auditor

**ATTENTION ALL FIREFIGHTERS...PAST AND PRESENT!**

**This is a request to all firefighters regardless of which fire service you belong to.**

At the present time the Fire Services Museum of Victoria (FSMV) is endeavouring to increase its photographic and news clippings collections. Over the years firefighters and their families periodically donate images and newspaper clippings books to the FSMV and these are catalogued and archived. They all help to make the histories of the various fire brigades more complete.

Only just last week a retired MFB District Officer loaned the Museum his news clippings book for copying. His collection covered the 1960s, '70s and '80s. Looking through the many articles, we were delighted to discover the newspaper reports and photos that go with a couple of photos taken by one of our members "sometime during the 1960s", but he couldn't remember the details of the fire, except that it was in Swanston St. City. Thanks to the retired District Officer we now have the details as well as the images.

We have raised the subject of photo, negative, slide and clippings collections with firefighters on numerous occasions before, and have been given all manner of excuses as to why the collections are not forthcoming.

The single most repeated reason is that the owners don't want to lend their collections for fear of them getting lost. This is a very valid reason and we have a policy in the Museum where we don't loan original photos.

We have urged the people to bring their collections in so that we can see what they have, but reasons stated against that idea are that there is no parking near the Museum, there are little kids running around that distract from the enjoyment, the Museum staff are too busy to show the visitors around etc. etc.

The Photographic and Research Group who take care of the Museum's collection have looked at all the above and have taken steps to address the concerns that have been raised. The Museum now has a photocopier and the computer, scanner and printer have all been

upgraded. What this means to you, is that we can now do everything on site. You can see what is going on and take your collections home with you.

So now we would like to invite you to bring in your collections, photos, slides, negatives, and/or clippings. With your approval, we will make copies for the Museum and then you can take your original collections home again. They need never be out of your sight.

**In appreciation of you allowing us to copy your collections we are offering you the following:**

**Free on-site parking in the Museum yard (Saturday only)**

**Free admission to the Museum for you and your immediate family**

**Your own tour guide**

**Morning or afternoon tea, depending on the time of your visit.**

As the Museum is not open to the public on a Saturday, you will have full freedom to move around and photograph our displays if you wish. For those of you travelling long distances from the country, lunch could be arranged instead of morning or afternoon tea.

While you are touring the Museum another FSMV member will be copying your collection. You will be able to visit the office and check on what is going on any time you wish during your visit. Your collection will be safely returned to you before you leave.

To book your special visit on a Saturday (commencing mid October 2005) all you have to do is ring: **9808 1659**

or email: [firechaser@optusnet.com.au](mailto:firechaser@optusnet.com.au)

giving us three possible dates and brief details of your collection.

The FSMV Photographic and Research Group look forward to meeting you soon.

**LETTERS**

I applied to join the M.F.B. in 1954 facing up to Tom Draper. On the day after, while building a house in Watsonia, I got involved with a grass fire and met the late Ray Watt, who was in-charge of Heidelberg Fire Station No. 14. commonly called Rosanna at Lower Plenty Road, Rosanna. Today there is still singed timber in the scantling of the house. Some time later while stationed there, I was rostered to No. 16 Station when P/P's were available. Often when turning out on my own, with radio contact to V.K.N.S. my shiftmate was Max Jarrod on alternative days.

The Senior P.P. Arthur Snow, a Senior with the Harbour Trust, Bruce Ellingsein, Ron Curran and the fourth person I cannot remember his name. The other at No. 14 Station was at the time Charlie Ring.

Other men who shared my experiences were: E.Howard, J.Locke, R.McVilly, L.Trewin, W.Shanks and Stand-by's

The Officers at No. 14 Station attended a Drill one Night a Week at No. 16 Station for which the P/P's got paid.

**A good question for old timers, where was the first Greensborough Fire Station?**

**Yours sincerely, Jim Holmes**



## TRAVELLING WITH SILVER

Below are some interesting pieces of information with regard to the Fire Dept. New York.

First, there are a lot of our Firefighters who would be pushing to carry this amount of weight in equipment. Some I know couldn't carry a tattoo.

Further to the New Orleans disaster, friend, Captain Danny Sheridan from F.D.N.Y. who stationed on the Bronx, is sent by the Dept. to train firefighters in all parts of Sth. America. He has just returned from Costa Rica and received a phone call at 2300 hrs to join 300 Fire Dept. volunteers to go to New Orleans. They will be housed in nursing homes.... More later.

To George McLennan. It's just as well Hurricane Katrina didn't hit when we were there, we were fairly well marinated and would have still been there ...Floating!

In January, six firefighters, trapped on the fourth floor of a Bronx building by a flare-up in the fire they were fighting, saw their options for escape evaporate. Four jumped from a window; two died. Two others used a length of rope to lower themselves part of the way, but with nothing to slow their descent, they too tumbled to the ground and were seriously injured.

The calamity prompted calls for the Fire Department to resume issuing individual safety ropes, which it had stopped doing in 2000, citing complaints about the added weight.

Last week, the department announced plans to outfit firefighters with a new state-of-the-art escape system, including steel hooks, Kevlar ropes and a modified rock-climbing device to slow firefighter's descent.

The kit weighs about six pounds, including a harness that wraps around the hips and legs, and is worn at all times since there is no time to put it on in an emergency.

Six more pounds may seem a minor inconvenience for a life saving system designed to get firefighters out of a building in under 10 seconds. But the weight will be added to an already cumbersome array of protective clothing and gear that has grown heavier in recent years and is worn in extreme heat. Officials say they will affix the rope device to the harness in a pouch, with the weight balanced, but still may have to issue stronger suspenders for the pants.

In a typical ladder company, four firefighters enter or approach a burning building to look for survivors, unlike engine companies, which respond with hoses to put out a blaze.

### Happy Travelling, Silver.

P.S. Remember, before you criticize someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes.

That way, when you criticize them you are a mile away and have their shoes!!



HELMET  
6 pounds

BREATHING APPARATUS  
27 pounds

LIGHT  
4 pounds

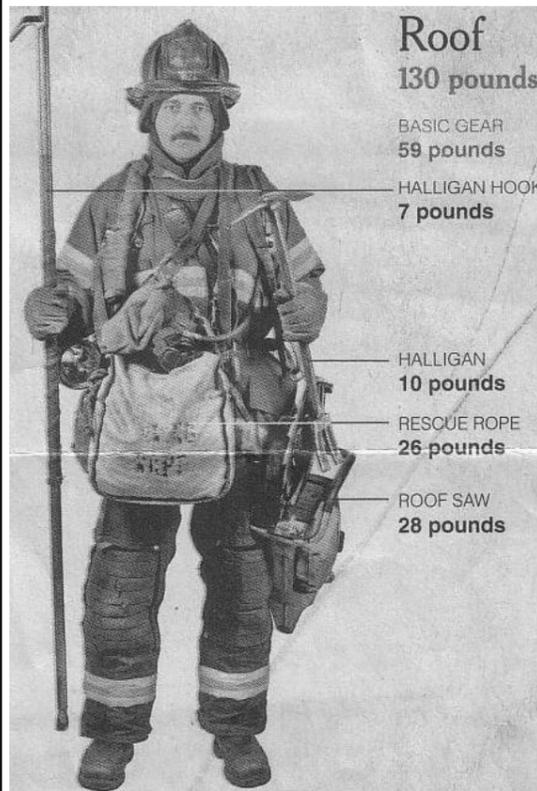
BUNKER GEAR (boots, pants, coat, radio, gloves, personal hand tools)  
22 pounds

### The Burden.

New York Firefighters carry a huge range of gear that reflects the types of fires they are faced with, which are unique to their city.

We are unable to show the whole range of gear but these pics illustrate the basic equipment on the left weighing 27Kg.

On the right, showing the gear, weighing 59Kg, they carry to the roof in order to perform a search and rescue.



Roof  
130 pounds

BASIC GEAR  
59 pounds

HALLIGAN HOOK  
7 pounds

HALLIGAN  
10 pounds

RESCUE ROPE  
26 pounds

ROOF SAW  
28 pounds

## HONOURS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

Chairman: CFO A Murphy

Please be advised that this Committee has reviewed the process for naming appliances and developed clearer criteria for nominations of appropriate persons. A copy of these criteria is attached for your information.

I would also encourage your members to give thought to former members who would be suitable nominees for this honour. It would simplify the process if nominations were forwarded to us via your Committee rather than a number of individual submissions. As the Honours & Awards Committee judges all nominations against the criteria it is essential that sufficient documentary evidence be provided to enable us to make the proper decision and ensure the integrity of the process is maintained.

Cmdr. Ian D Hunter AFSM. Honours & Awards Committee.

### CRITERIA FOR THE NAMING OF APPLIANCES

The following criteria have been developed for the naming of appliances

1. Chief Fire Officers, Chief Officers and Valour Medal recipients will have their names on an appliance in perpetuity.
2. In addition to 1 above, appliances may also be named in recognition of employees who have given a **Significant Contribution** to the Board.

**NOTE: Significant Contribution** is defined as zealous and faithful service that is **above and beyond** the discharge of Normal or Ordinary service as determined by the Honours & Awards Committee, following a review of evidence submitted in the nomination.

3. Appliances named in accordance with 2 above will be for the life span of the appliance.

4. Appliances may be named after both uniformed and non-uniformed staff.

5. Nominations for an appliance to be named will be submitted to the Director – Operations for consideration by the Honours & Awards Committee and approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

6. To be considered for such recognition the nomination must present evidence in detail to demonstrate that the nominee clearly meets the criteria set out below:

A. The Nominee is a former employee of the Metropolitan Fire & Emergency Services Board.

#### AND

B. That during their career the Nominee had exhibited the following:

I. A significant contribution to the function of the Metropolitan Fire & Emergency Services Board

#### Together with at least one of the following criteria -

II Was a role model for diligence, professionalism and work ethic and who had the respect and trust of their colleagues over a sustained period of time, and /or

III. Was instrumental in introducing change or innovation that contributed to the future direction of the organisation, and/or

IV. Demonstrated leadership of the Fire Service in improving community safety in Victoria and/or

V. Enhances the standing of the MFB within the community of Victoria

**NOTE:** Appliances may be named posthumously.

## Your superannuation death benefit

You might assume that your will controls how all your money will be divided up when you die.

That's not necessarily enough to decide what happens to money in your super fund, even if you've started drawing on your super as part of your retirement, for example through an allocated pension. In fact, special rules control how your super fund trustees are allowed to distribute the money, and how that money will be

taxed. Under those rules, various people may be entitled to claim a share of your super benefits.

Your fund can pay your death benefit either to your 'dependants' or to your estate. For the fund's purposes, your dependants include your spouse, your children and 'other persons' financially dependent on you. In the case of 'other persons', fund trustees must have evidence that your relationship involved financial dependency.

Knowing how the rules work can help you make things easier for those who will be financially affected by your death.

## MFB Charity Running Club Non Stop Relay Run from Canberra to Melbourne April 2005

**WHY** To generate support for the RSL and to commemorate the anniversaries Gallipoli - 90 years, World War 11 - 60 years, Vietnam 30 years.

**WHO** Paul Ritchie, Secretary MFB Charity Running Club, Leading Firefighter, Windsor Fire Station and others recognised that this event would provide an ideal opportunity to reinvent the MFB Running Club and to recognise the significant sacrifice made by all personnel who engaged in world conflict.

In March 2005 I was contacted by Paul Ritchie to facilitate the involvement of the Fire Services Museum of Victoria in the proposed run in April 2005.

Our first assignment was to parade with the old 1914 Hotchkiss Hose Carriage suitably resplendent in brass helmets and old uniform, to have a group photo taken for circulation on a magnificent poster.

After a few meetings before departure day it was decided that our role (4 members of the FSMV - Fred Kerr, Harry Purcell, John Schintler, Glen Bullen) would be to put the Hotchkiss on the Museum's Leyland tray body, go to Canberra and then at strategic towns or cities on the way home perhaps 3 times a day we would unload the Hotchkiss, don our helmets and tunics and do our public relations thing with the dignitaries and towns people.

Our route would be Canberra, Cooma, Bega, Eden, Cann River, Lakes Entrance, Bairnsdale, Traralgon, Warragul, Korumburra, Wonthaggi, Cowes, Pearceedale, Frankston, Dandenong and Melbourne.

On Wednesday we set sail for Canberra, our contingent of Leyland Tray and Hotchkiss and my Discovery as support vehicle, accompanied by MFB Pumper, Campervans and other support vehicles.

On arrival we were welcomed by Canberra RSL who provided sleeping **accommodation, showers and a BBQ.**

We also met some members of the Canberra Fire Museum who promised two old fire engines to support the Hotchkiss the following day.

Thursday at the Canberra War Memorial saw us being fed by Subway (very enjoyable and wholesome food and a great sponsor of the run) and a line up of fire engines, firemen, runners and

helpers being photographed and farewelled by the locals.

About 5 kms from Canberra we paid a quick visit to the Fire Museum, loaded the Hotchkiss and said our goodbyes. Our next PR outing was at Merimbula for lunch the next day.

By now we had established a good teamwork for on and off with the Hotchkiss. Whilst the ramps were placed in position, I would "prime" the old girl by flooding the carburettor with petrol, set the spark and throttle and when the two dogs and chains were released and cleared, I would roll the Hotchkiss down the ramps, engage third gear and roll to start it. (None of us are fit enough to hand crank these days).

On return, I would reverse the appliance up the ramps, chock it and chain it and turn off the petrol. As mentioned this was our routine which we became quite proficient at.

Whilst John and Glen were travelling in the Leyland, Harry and I in the Discovery would go ahead and select unloading spots and importantly, beds for the night. We had to arrange our own beds for Thursday until Sunday night, the meals were provided by Subway or the various RSL clubs.

The entourage consisted of:

Team A	8 runners	5 helpers
Team B	8 runners	5 helpers
Team C	9 runners	5 helpers
2 photographers and 4 members FSMV.		

The organisation had to be seen to be believed, meals had to be set up and arranged, runners had to be picked up and dropped off at set times, campervans had to be at certain spots at certain times, sleepers had to be woken and a host of other procedures that we were not privy to because we had our end to keep up.

If I can give one example:

Team A Roster	
Thursday 21 April	2.30pm - 8.30pm
Friday 22 April	8.30am - 2.30pm
Saturday 23 April	2.30am - 8.30am
Saturday 23/Sunday 24 April	8.30pm - 2.30am
Sunday 24 April	2.30pm - 8.30pm

All teams Monday 25 April ANZAC day. At 8.30am everybody ran from Dandenong to Frankston. Finish 11am Eastern Hill, run a lap of honour MCG 1.12 pm, before Essendon v Collingwood AFL game.

## Fire Museum Calendar on Sale Now.

For the first time ever the Photographic & Research Group of the Fire Services Museum of Victoria have produced a wall calendar for 2006.

The calendar format is A4 landscape and it contains twelve images of fire appliances, fires and incidents, most in full color. It also contains a full color shift calendar, one month per page. There is enough room to jot down important dates and events. Public and school holidays are also marked in different colors. This calendar will make an ideal and affordable Christmas present for family and friends both at

home and overseas. The cost is \$14.95 from the Museum shop in the old Eastern Hill Fire Station. It will also be on sale at the Museum sales table at the UFU Retired Furies Lunch on November 19. If you cannot get to the Museum or the UFU Lunch, please ring 9808 1659 or email [firechaser@optusnet.com.au](mailto:firechaser@optusnet.com.au) and we will organise to get one (or more) to you.



## BUTTON BANGER UNCOVERED

The piece of equipment shown in the August edition of "Water Off" is a highly sophisticated machine known as the "Incredible Button Banger."

**Used** to keep the Supervisory Unit quiet at night so that the S.O. sleeping upstairs was not disturbed. It also allowed the furies to do their work at night without constantly being interrupted, (all the old furies will remember the days when they were not allowed to sleep at night). The Brigade was the ultimate winner as the furies were able to get more work done on night shifts.

**Constructed** from an alarm clock with glass removed. A cardboard insulated face ring was laced radially at ten minute spaces with 5 amp fuse wire and glued to the clock face. A fine length of wire was attached to the face ring and terminated with a soldered-on smooth woman's hair clip. A short piece 15 amp wire was attached to the minute hand and was angled to lightly brush the cardboard face ring.

**Operated** by winding the clock, setting the alarm to remind the man on the front to put the jug on for tea for the now weary furies. The clock was then placed in an open Gladstone bag on the floor along with the watchman's lunch. The clips were then attached to the wires that protruded from the back of the press button.

If needs be, a slight tug on the wires dropped the lot into the Gladstone bag which was then clipped shut.

**Action** of the minute hand allowed the attached wire (called the striker) to trace a path around the cardboard face ring. When the striker contacted a radial face wire a circuit was completed and the Super-unit would reset. The operation would continue until the clips were removed.

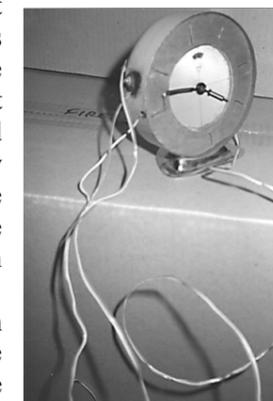
**Maintenance.** The machine must be handled carefully to avoid bending the hands and to keep the striker in light contact with the cardboard face ring. It was then placed in a small cardboard box with lid, wrapped in two blankets and stored in a locker. The two blankets were required to ensure no ticking could be

heard. This was to prevent people thinking it was a terrorist's bomb.

**Note.** A more streamlined "Incredible Button Banger" was constructed about Christmas time 1951, but I can't say by whom.

In those days, had N.A.S.A. known about this device, I'm sure it would have now been installed in the Space Shuttle as it's record for reliability is far better than their shuttle.

**Cheers**  
**Bernie Bishop**



## WHO, WHERE & WHAT?

In the last edition we ran three photos which produced some very interesting answers, though unfortunately not all were correct. However we did get three winners. Their names are announced below. We continue the series of "Who, Where & What?" with three new photos. We won't tell you who, where or what they are until the next issue of 'Water Off'. We are asking you.

What you can send us is something about the history of the subject; a different photo of the same subject; or a story (humorous or serious) about the subject. It is up to you.

We will then print the best replies that we receive in the next issue (space permitting), assuming of course, that the photos are identified correctly.

Many thanks to all those who responded to the last "Who, Where & What?" and we look forward to hearing from you again.

**If you think you can identify any or all of the photos, you can either ring:**

The 'Water Off' Editorial Committee  
03 9808 1659

or send an email to:  
[firechaser@optusnet.com.au](mailto:firechaser@optusnet.com.au)  
**FOR THE WINNERS.**

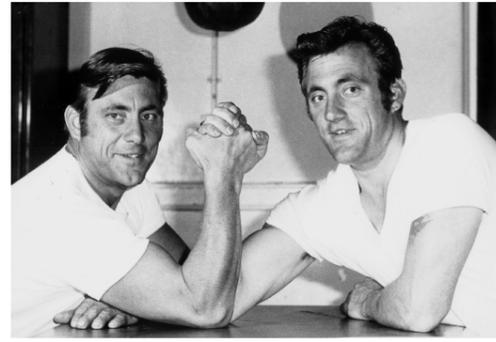
The Editorial Committee of 'Water Off' has produced a certificate for all those who correctly identify the photos in the



**What is this?**

"Who, Where & What?" segment. The certificate is in color, in approximately A4 size and is frameable. It includes the name of the winner, the month and year.

**Good luck!!!**



**Who are these two fighters? To win, you have to correctly guess who is on the left and who is on the right.**



**Where is this fire?**

### Answers to Who, Where & What? from the last issue.

Our images in the "Who, Where & What?" segment in the last edition of "Water Off" created a lot of interest. There were a number RFA members who missed winning by only one incorrect answer.

**There were three winners: Reg Carey, John Chambers (the first to score a 'hat trick') and Eric Daffy. Congratulations!!!!!!**

Your certificates will be presented at the RFA AGM on November 16, 2005

#### The answers:

**Who is this firefighter?**



He was Fourth Officer Fred Young. John Chambers wrote that Fred came from England and was former boxer. To Fred, everyone was known as "Johnny". It was easier that way as he could never remember peoples' names.

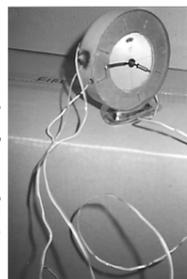
**Where is this fire station?**

It is the old FS 14 in Rosanna. It had the unique distinction of being one of only two stations in the MFB to ever change numbers but was still the same building remaining on its original site. When the new FS 14 opened in Bundoora, the Rosanna station's alarms were still in use and a pumper was still turning out, so for a short time it became FS 17. The other station which had a change of numbers but stayed on its original site was the old FS 35 in Windsor. Originally it was FS 27, but in 1959 it was renumbered FS 35 when the new FS 27 was opened in Nunawading.



**What is this piece of equipment?**

John Chambers and Reg Carey both said that it was one of those ingenious inventions created by firefighters. It operated the push button system installed by the MFB to keep the watchroom attendants awake at night.



Monday 25, all helpers and most of the runners attended the Dawn Service at Frankston RSL just as the runners came through. The FSMV crew then drove to Dandenong, unloaded the Hotchkiss and waited. At 8.30am we were joined by the runners and commenced our run to Melbourne. Dandenong CFA escorted us to Springvale CFA and then Oakleigh MFB Pumper and two extra vehicles from the Museum joined in.

All of the return journey we welcomed MFB Pumpers from the various stations. We arrived at Eastern Hill at 11 am and were welcomed by a huge crowd with many Senior MFB Officers, on and off duty Firemen, families and girlfriends. After a great lunch provided by Subway we made our way to the MCG for the "lap of honour".

Whilst every member of the team was absolutely thrilled and proud of the very successful run there were some very tired bodies just waiting for the end so they could

get home, enjoy a soak in the bath and then REST.

On Wednesday 15 June 2005 an ANZAC Run morning tea rundown was held at the Fire Museum. Peter Akers, Keith Adamson and John Deighton, CEO of the RSL, thanked the runners and helpers for their contribution in the very successful run and mentioned that they had brought great credit to themselves, the Running Club and the MFB. From the old museum firies' point of view we were overjoyed and so proud to be invited to join forces with this extraordinary group of MFB firefighters.

During the run someone christened us "The Three Stooges and Manager." The name has stuck and quite often I am greeted with a slap on the back, (not the ribs) "Ow ya goin' Mo."

**Fred Kerr**

(Continued from page 1)

### The Mahia Explosion

It was anticipated that it would take close to six months to repair the ship and there was some doubt as to whether it could be done in Melbourne. The Mahia's beam was 62 ft. 6 inches, and the Duke & Orr Dry Dock, the only large dry dock in the port of Melbourne, was 62 ft. 11 inches wide. Concerns were raised when it was realised that such a narrow margin would only leave 2½ inches between the sides of the ship and the dry dock walls.

During salvage operations when the inside water level fell below the emergency plates placed in position by the divers, a welded plate was secured over the hole on the inside of the hull to make the ship safe. All the lifeboats on the starboard side which were damaged by the explosion had been unloaded ready for repair.

High praise for the salvage work accomplished by the United Salvage Co., which raised the vessel and pumped her dry within 30 hours, was expressed by the Mahia's master, Capt. Hart, and the General Manager for the Shaw Savill Line, Mr. W. Donaldson, who flew in from Sydney after the disaster.

### THE MAHIA IN DANGER AGAIN.

On Sunday, August 10, there were further anxious times when the Mahia began sinking again, soon after her holds had been pumped dry.

Holes cut in her side to prevent her capsizing had not been properly sealed, and water once more poured into the burnt out holds. Divers were brought back and strong iron plates were securely re-welded over the holes. The high pressure pumps that were still in the holds, removed nearly 8,000 tone of water in about four hours pumping time. By Sunday night, the Mahia, although still slightly down on the stern, was almost on even keel again.

The bodies of all ten men killed by the explosion had been recovered, six on Thursday, three on Saturday about midday, and the final one on Saturday night.

A stop-work meeting was held by the Painters and Dockers Union on Monday, August 11. The port workers demanded greater safety in the harbour area. Some Union members who narrowly escaped being trapped in the Mahia's burning holds, demanded that in future, similar cargo be unloaded at a safe anchorages.

**Barbara McCumisky**

## WANTED

Retired male firefighters to form a "Barber Shop Quartet"

This is a genuine attempt to raise a quartet to entertain on a volunteer basis. If you would like to be a part of this for fun and entertainment please contact:

**John Schintler, Ph. 9772 2305**



## OBSERVATIONS

*This article could be called amalgamation of information gathered by an old bloke's observation starting at the last meeting and finishing on a little trip starting the next day.*

For those that were unable to attend the last meeting of the RFA for whatever reason, missed out on an enthralling presentation by Alan Farr's son Nick, member of the successful Police team conquest of Everest. I know the President and Secretary will give a more detailed report of the lecture.

I want to mention Nick's emphasis on the importance of the Sherpas in their conquest, in particular the positioning of their ladders, showing visually the difficulties they faced. I observed in the row where I was sitting, a number of our members who we could (with the help of the government) send over to Tibet to teach the indigenous folk scaling ladder drill. (NOTE: To non MFB members or partners, scaling ladders are a set of small ones that can be used for a multitude of tasks).

The personnel I am referring to are Clarrie Guthrie (instructor), 3 man team Arthur Mears, Ted Osland and John Howe. Imagine a 3 man drill, Osland would have filled the female end of the ladders with water to trap someone before they start. Mears, in his laconic way, would lift the first length too high for Howie to connect the second length. Howie would start cracking funnies, Guthrie would be trying to restore order and in the end burst out laughing. I know, as a P.R exercise for the country, it would be a winner, in fact, the late Benny Hill could not make it any funnier as a TV sketch, oh the joy of memories.

The next day the wife and I left on a small trip interstate. Of course before we left we discussed the best way to go, with the travelling guru's Don & Nancy Brennan. I must tell you I got more and better information than I could get from any motor club or Internet.

We headed off down the Princes Highway, our first stop was at Ted Harrison's boyhood area Bairnsdale, and my neighbour told me I must call into "Bairnsdale Electrics" in the main street. Now listen all you blokes, if you want to go to Aladdin's power tool cave, this is it. The prices are better than I have seen in the city. After sending the wife for a walk I spent an hour or more in the shop salivating, I just had to buy something. I finished up purchasing a mitre-saw stand for my sliding compound saw, I probably would have spent more if I had the room in the car.

Whilst waiting for the item at the counter I started talking to a local, he enquired what did I get, when I told him his reply broke me up, he said "mate" you don't need that, that's what you have son's backs for! His son standing next to him replied he's not joking mate!

The next stop on the journey was a restaurant in Orbost where we had a lovely meal. We then pushed

on to Merimbula for the next four days, and the last time we were there for any time was over thirty years ago. I must tell you the changes we observed there and in the surrounding area are amazing it has almost lost its country feel.

After our time there we headed off over Browns Mountain through the snow down into Cooma (part of the country we had not been to before), lovely area. The next stop was the nation's capital I know the old cliché the best thing about Canberra is the road out. **Well, I must say it is not true.**

We have not been there for 47 years and our visit of four days was nowhere near long enough, in fact we now plan to go back again, this time for at least a week or more. We had booked into Rydges on the Lake hotel, great location on Parkes Way, staff great, good buffet breakfast, accommodation starting to need upgrade and cost a bit high when compared to Melbourne.

Observations showed the locations of most of the important buildings all seemed to be within easy reach either by car or public transport, if you stay in town many are within walking distance. Time required at each, at least half a day, exception to this from the ones we visited most certainly is the Old Parliament House, suggest you take the guided tour before exploring the building, a good meal at the dining room there.

The other is the Australian War Memorial. You can spend a day or two there and still not see it all properly. They have a new sound and light show, nice restaurant and Australian service records/ National Archives area where the staff are very helpful.

The guided tour of the memorial is a must do, it is very, very good. The emphases by the guides are not one of celebration of war but one of remembrance to all those lost in war. The guide in charge of the tour we went on made a comment at the end, which I thought, was very relevant, and I quote, "This is the soul of the nation and if you stand at the front of the memorial and look down Anzac Parade you will see the head of the nation".

I stated earlier we have not been here for 47 years and I must say the difference in the memorial alone made the visit worth while. There is no doubt if the memorial does not show you where this country's strength comes from "nothing will"

Earlier I mentioned we could walk to some of the attractions, and one we went to was the National Film and Sound Archive, well worth a visit. Also used their library to find out what the English translation of "Nessun dorma" was and what opera it came from. I know it shows I am just an uneducated fool, I have listened to the recording for years with no idea what it meant.

One other I feel is worthwhile having a look at is Mt Stromlo Observatory. OK, I know it was burnt out during the firestorm of January 2003 but it is well worth a look, if nothing else but to see the effectiveness of external sprinkler systems and the rebuilding going on. The staff at the restaurant and public theatre very pleasant, light meals good.

I'd better close or the editor will have my "G" for gaiters. In closing I must mention about the meal we had one night. Well, not having ever been to Queanbeyan before, we decided to go have a look and stay for the evening meal. Well we finished up at a Greek restaurant, you know, the one like most country towns used to have. Great food and coffee, unfortunately the meal was that large it would have fed a platoon of troops and it was supposed to be a light meal. "I should have known from the size of the chef". Hope I have not bored you with my observations. "ANT"

**PS.** I have been advised by the Editor to explain the information we found in our research on *Nessun Dorma*.

**Nessun dorma**...No one sleeps, the famous tenor's aria sung near the beginning of act 3 from Puccini's *Turandot*. The beautiful cold-hearted femme fatale princess who lures love-struck princes to their death.



He only ordered the light meal!

## Life!

*When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day are not enough, remember the mayonnaise jar and the 2 glasses of wine .....*

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly, he picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous "yes".

The professor then produced two glasses of wine from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

"Now", said the professor, as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your

life. The golf balls are the important things – your God, family, your children, your health, your friends and your favourite passions – things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house and your car. The sand is everything else – the small stuff.

If you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children, Take time to get medical checkups. Take your partner out to dinner. Play another 18. There will always be time to clean the house and fix the disposal."

Take care of the golf balls first – the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand".

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the wine represented. The professor smiled. "I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of glasses of wine with a friend".

Please share this with a good friend. I JUST DID.

Regards