

"WATER OFF"

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



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Lionel Rose accepts invitation to speak at next R.F.A. meeting.

August 21, 1030 am. At the North Melbourne Football Club Social Club, Fogarty St North Melbourne.

Lionel had a brilliant boxing career having first taken out the Australian Amateur flyweight Championship in 1963. Turning pro in 1964, he moved up a division and took the Australian Bantamweight Title in 1966 and then the World Title from "Fighting Harada" in 1968. His first title defence was in July that year against Takao Sakuri then Jose Madal in August. Another title defence against Chu Chu Castillo closely followed.

It was a big year in 68, as he was awarded the "MBE" then "Australian Of The Year," and nominated "Sportsman of the Year" by the prestigious American Sports Illustrated, a real honor, for it is rarely given outside of the USA.

July 69 Lionel defended the title against Allan Rudkin followed by a non title bout with De La Cruz in Hawaii. Finally losing the title to Ruben Oliverez but certainly not disgraced.

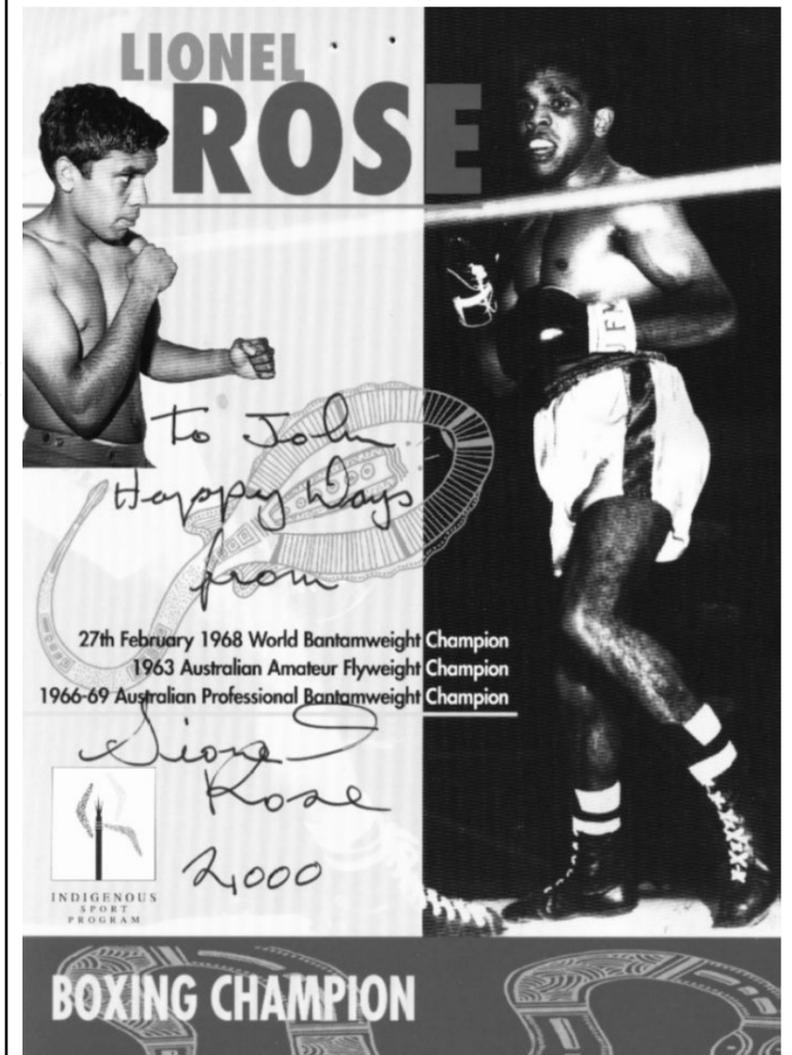
After moving up to the Junior Lightweight Division in 1971 he went into semi retirement for 4 years.

In 1975 fought a bout supporting Mohammed Ali in the main event. He became a good friend of Ali, a friendship which has continued since.

A double sided gold record, "I Thank You" by Lionel held the top of the charts for longer than any other artist in the world. Finally, Lionel was inducted into the World Hall of Fame in the USA in 1995.

A true champion in every sense of the word!!!

Guest Speaker Coupe for the R.F.A.



“GENERAL MEETING”

Notice is hereby given of our next General Meeting to be held at the North Melbourne Football Club Social Club, Fogarty Street North Melbourne

(Melway 43 B4)

1030 Hours, Wednesday August 21, 2002

Special Guest Speaker:

World Champion Boxer LIONEL ROSE

AGENDA ITEMS.

Minutes of last General meeting.

President's Report.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report.

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 will be provided as usual. @ \$4 per head.
Drinks at bar prices.

JOHN BERRY
SECRETARY/TREASURER
Ph: 03 9431 2880

OFFICE BEARERS

President, Don Brennan
Vice President, Ian Fowler
Sec./Treasurer, John Berry

General Committee;

John Laverick
Bob McNeil
John Schintler
John Wallace
Auditor; Theo Teklenburg

RFA 2002 Calendar

August 21st: General Meeting
November 20th: Annual General Meeting
November ?: UFU Annual Luncheon
(ST Kilda T/H)

VALE

Lauris Dyble Ray McMurray
Ross Medwin Jeff McTeare

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

SICK LIST

John Finkelde Bill Scriviner
Arthur Graham Jack Sexton
Clarrie Hart Kevin Sullivan
Harry Plant Peter Hornsey

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.

MEMORIES OF “THE WATCHROOM”

Recently, I visited the old watchroom at No1 Stn. This brought back memories of scrubbing the marble stairs, operating the “Junior Board” and finally, doing the all night at No1.

I had no trouble with the marble stairs, but on my first day shift after the drill squad I was one of two detailed to operate the Junior Board. This was the first switch-board I had seen and my co-operator, who had some previous experience, had to give me a crash course in how to operate it.

There were red indicator lights on the lines connected to the executive officers and these calls had to be given priority. I don't doubt that these officers had many worthy qualities, but patience was not one of them. Despite the fact that I was doing my best, I was berated on several occasions for being too slow in answering. I finished the shift with a headache.

On subsequent occasions, when I was detailed for the duty, I managed to stay out of trouble. This may have been to increased efficiency on my part, or it may have been good luck. Either way I very much doubt if it was an increase in the tolerance levels of the Executive Officers.

There are stories that when the D.C.O. was unhappy with the service he was receiving, he would march up to the watchroom, give the operators a blast, inspect the board to make sure the C.O. was not connected and then place his arm behind the leads and disconnect everyone. Before returning to his office he would inform the operators, in no uncertain terms, of

the level of service that was due to him.

In 1960 I was promoted to the rank of Sub-Station Officer and stationed at 44Stn. At the time the officers lived in quarters at the station and were rostered for 48 hrs on duty followed by 48 hrs off duty, starting and finishing time was 0700 hrs.

On a regular basis you were detailed to do the “All Night” at No1 Stn. You arrived at No1 some time before 2300 hrs and in theory you were in charge of the watchroom for the night shift. In actual practice, the man on the senior board ran the watchroom and you were there to get the kick in the backside if something went wrong. Your most important duty was to ensure that everyone (including yourself) stayed awake.

All the senior operators I knew were models of efficiency, with everything at their fingertips. I can remember the names of some of these men—perhaps someone can recall all the names and give them a mention in “Water Off”.

The “All Night” duty was always given on the first day of your 48 hrs of duty. Normally, provision would be made for you to have a sleep before you departed. On one occasion during the grass fire season, I attended calls right up to the time I left for No1 Stn. When I returned the next day the same situation applied until I booked the roll for the coming night shift. Fortunately, there were no calls for the next 8 hours.

Phil Dunn

TUNCURRY TALES

Well, once again the year is just racing past. Not much has happened up here except that the fishing seems to be getting better and better.

In the last issue of “Water Off” page 11, the picture of “Three Les Girls,” I would say that the guy in the centre is Bill Bayley who was at No1 during the sixties.

The passing on of Miss Sturrock, (ex General Office). What a lovely lady she was and many a fireman tried to win her over the phone because her voice sounded so young and lovely.

Reg Carey

Editor's note: Reg, thanks for the information on the May issue page 11 photo, we still have to identify the other two standing beside Bill. Your reference to the late Miss Sturrock is spot on, she was a lovely lady and I had the pleasure of speaking to her on the phone several times.

Finally, as some of the angling types down this way are turning green with envy, we must request that you cease from any further reference to the state of the fishing up there!

Photo Mystery

Regarding your request for further information re photo (circa 1970) of the three cross dressers in the last issue of “Water Off.” I can positively affirm the central character is a former officer of the MFB, (birthplace England) who once resided at Clunes but now lives at Ballarat.

The other two were acquaintances from the Mother country, one of whom would have (or should have) been on the stage. For in front of the large Xmas party he gave a description of his honeymoon on a barge in a canal system in England.

One night he pulled into a town to berth and visited the local chemist for whatever but was dismayed to find the attendants were predominately female. At the end of the honeymoon he wound up with 15 tubes of toothpaste.

Anonymous (for fear of retaliation)

ANOTHER "MR. LOFTY TALE"

A product of the 1950 strike, Mr Lofty created a reputation for himself and there are many stories to be told. This one had a strange twist that nearly brought his antagonists undone!

It was 1500 hrs at No3 Stn and Mr Lofty was the S.O. taking the muster. After turning the watchroom radio off he began to call the roll when Fm Smith turned the radio on again. S.O. Lofty turned it off. Fm. Smith again turned the radio on.

S.O. Lofty charged Fm Smith with disobeying a lawful order and was suspended. The Union and the Union lawyer attended the station instructed four other firemen in what to say when they "Front the Chief." The Union lawyer said, "When you front the Chief (Chief Officer Whitehead) he will dismiss the charge." But it didn't quite go to plan and after hearing the statements from the witnesses, the Chief said, "I will see you all in court."

About six weeks later we all attended the Russell Street Court with Judge Mohr, Deputy Chief J. Paterson J.P. and Sfm. Moffat J.P. on the bench. The Brigade barrister, a QC, had all the witnesses removed from the court then one by one they were called in. Each time the Police Constable came out to

call a witness he would say, "Another fireman has perjured himself."

The Brigade's QC, in his summary of the case, told the court exactly what occurred. Judge Mohr called Fm Smith back to the stand and said he was guilty of the charge and did he have anything to say? Fm Smith said, "It must have been 'Foo.'" Judge Mohr said, "Case dismissed."

Judge Mohr then lined up the four witnesses in the court and said, "The four firemen were guilty of perjury and will be sentenced to six months gaol." Mr. Paterson then had to talk to Judge Mohr for fifteen minutes to have the perjury charge dismissed.

During the war, Fm. Smith fought in Africa and on the way home was taken prisoner in Singapore. He spent his time as a P.O.W. on the infamous Burma Railway and joined the Brigade after the war. After this incident he didn't want to stay in the Brigade and joined the Tramways.

L. McCurdy

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Queensland Reunion

Victoria.

The 2002 reunion was held at South Port Yacht club on Thursday 25th July. 39 passed members and their spouses attended the annual get together.

Apologies were received from: Jeff and Margot Jones, Alan and Pat Hawkless, Ted and Rhonda Harrison, Ross Broadby and Jack Sexton. Arthur Henning at 86 was the oldest member present followed by Ian Heath at 80.

People attended from Harvey Bay, Brisbane, Gold Coast and of course Melbourne and Country

Thanks to June and Peter Coulson for arranging the day which was enjoyed by all present. Pens were given to Queensland and country RFA members. The new baseball caps went quickly.

The reunion will be held again next year as usual on the last Thursday in July.

Don Brennan

VALÊ ROSS FERGUS MEDWIN

It is with regret that we announce the passing of one of our longest serving Committee Men.

Ross Fergus Medwin passed away at his home on 24th May 2002. Ross spent 30 years with the MFB at 1, 4, 11, 12 and 13 Stations, spending many years as a Z shift man. Ross was a family man and had many interests including football, basketball, fishing, pigeon

racing and Go Karting. The funeral service was held at Epping with some 400 in attendance. A guard of honor of past and present members taking part.

Ross was a willing worker for the RFA and would always make himself available to help put the "Water Off" together. We will certainly miss his jokes and stories from years past.

To Betty and family, the Members and Committee pass on their deepest sympathy for your loss.

Don Brennan

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT



The next meeting is on the 21st August and one of the Committee members (John Schintler) has organised for the members and their partners who attend, the opportunity to hear, see T.V excerpts and meet the great, if not the greatest, indigenous pugilist this country has had. The person I am talking about won the **World Bantam weight title** Tokyo, Japan, on the 27th February 1968 when he defeated **Fighting Harada**, then less than four months later he successfully defended his title again in Japan against **Takao Sakuri**. Then in March 1969 he successfully defended his title against **Alan Rudkin (U.K)** outdoors at the Kooyong Tennis stadium, this man is not only a gentleman but also a great ambassador for the country. I am talking about "Lionel Rose". So come along and meet the great man and his stories. Lionel, a friend of

John's has also agreed to autograph a poster to use as a lucky door prize.

In regard to the U.F.U Social Committees Christmas Luncheon

The function will be held at the St Kilda Town Hall, Saturday 23rd November 2002, members who are invited should note that to help offset the increased cost of the day the Committee has contacted us to advise the price of the fund raising raffle (Helmet) will be increased to \$2.00 dollars per ticket (books of ten). I must say that even if every book of tickets were sold this would cover less than 50% of the expenditure for the day. Therefore, if we don't sell all our tickets, this great day could finish up the same way as the Dodo bird and cease to exist. Remember this is still one of the cheapest and most enjoyable days on the calendar. (Cont. over)

Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance

Most members would have read in the daily tabloids the impact this is having on Community groups etc. Well from our investigations with the M.F.B Insurance experts and the Insurance Industry this will have a major effect on our group and may cause us to have a total review of our future plans.

Report on results to members at the August Meeting.

Caps and items of gratitude for guest speakers

In accordance with the directions of the members we have placed an order to purchase 30 Caps (baseball type) and 30 Gift Items. The caps are available to members for the cost we paid for them, \$11.00 dollars. They are of a good quality and have our logo embroidered in gold on the front with the words RETIRED FIREFIGHTER below it. The items of gratitude for guest speakers (Acrobat Calculators) has the LOGO and the words IN APPRECIATION in black on a grey background they are also available to members for the same cost we pay for them. (Mail cost to be added if required) Items will be exhibited at August meeting. (Contact secretary regards price etc)

7th World Firefighter Games New Zealand

The games from the 26th of October to the 2nd of November will have finished by the time of our next newsletter therefore, this will be the last chance to wish the competitors, committee, supporters and everyone involved, bon voyage, god speed and every success in the forthcoming competition, including a safe return to whence you came.

Report on General Meeting 15/5/02.

Item.1. President welcomed the members and their partners and gave his opening remarks.

Item.2. Apologies, Ken Clinkaberry, Colin Brown, Royce Adams, Ken McGillivray, Mike McCumisky, John Laverick, Jim Nevins, John Schintler, Alby Smith and Ken Wilson.

Item.3. Sick list, Bill Scrivener, Jim Holmes, Lindsay Lyons, Clarrie Hart, Lionel Rose and Harry Plant.

Item.4. Minutes of previous meeting 20/2/02 were read and confirmed Moved G. Butterworth, Seconded, E. Osland, Carried.

Item.5. Secretary exhibited to the meeting caps,

gift items etc, in accordance with the motion moved at the meeting 20/02/02 and selected the type to order.

Item.6. Correspondence: 4 Letters out, 3 Letters in.

Item.7. Secretary/Treasurers report Moved B. Jackson that this meeting of the RFA accept the current amounts in the Firefighters Credit Co-operative as a true reflection of the accounts I1 \$4,716.98, S1 \$2,158.61, Seconded G.Payne, Carried.

Item.8. Presidents report on the 2003 spit roast.

Item.9. General Business, R. Medwin raised the question if the RFA have a ceiling on the amount of funds held in the I1 account, The Secretary advised the meeting the constitution whilst in accordance with the Office of Fair Trading and Business Affairs it did not specifically cover reserve ceilings.

The Secretary reported to the meeting that we have been given a used Photo Copier from the Keighery family (Rhonda & Ted Harrison's daughter and son in-law) for our use.

F. Churchill moved that this meeting of the RFA request the secretary to investigate Public Liability insurance etc for the RFA Seconded R. Knowles, Carried.

D. Brennan moved that this meeting of the RFA reimburse J. Laverick for his out of pocket expenses incurred in his role as editor of the newsletter seconded G. Butterworth, carried.

Meeting closed at 1115 hours.

President welcomed the guest speakers, Don Cameron member and Mike Enticott Loans Manager from the Firefighters Credit Co-Operative, both were invited to join us for lunch.

Hope to see everyone at the next meeting.

J. Berry.

THANK YOU

Betty Medwin, and Shirley McMurray, wish thank all members who attended the respective celebrations of the lives of their late husbands.

Both Betty and Shirley are thankful for the support offered to their families during their time of grief and are sorry they were unable to thank everyone personally on the day.

People You Meet!!!

Seen in a poshy restaurant in down town Colac, a well known RFA member (we will call him "Dasher"), his good lady and some other family members having lunch. When he spotted our informant he greeted him with his usual opening line, "G'day Dash."

Knowing that "Dasher" amassed his fortune by not frequenting such establishments our informant enquired as to the reason he was dining in such splendor. It turns out that a Grandson was shouting and "Dasher" could not refuse the offer and if he ate enough at lunch he wouldn't have need for dinner that night!!!

Voices

Out of the gloom a voice said to me, "smile and be happy, things could be worse."

And so I smiled and was happy, and behold — things did get worse



RACING TIPS

From My Mate's Cousin

The last we heard from our man he was leaning on a couple of walking sticks. Well things haven't improved in that department because he stubbed another toe on the leg of his bed. He was wandering around in the dark getting a drink of water after waking up from a recurring nightmare about a crocodile having a chew of him.

As he tells it, he was up in Darwin a few years ago and took up an offer from an expat Canadian for a bit of Barra fishing. When they arrived at the river he described the boat as "a sardine tin with an outboard big enough to propel the Queen Mary," far too big for the little tinny.

The craft was launched and our man sat up front to balance things up a bit. He reckons this Canadian would get lost on a Bourke Street tram, sure enough, they got lost and to top it off, they ran out of petrol.

Fortunately, another group turned up and towed them back to their camp. As they pulled in they struck a bit of mud so our man, being in front, jumped in to waist deep water to drag the boat to the bank.

One of the locals asked them how they got their boat over the mud and our man said that he'd jumped in and dragged it over. The local said, "If you did that—you're a very lucky man." He picked up some of the remains of the barra they were cleaning and threw

Baby Sitter for Hire

Our Secretary has got this baby sitting and housework beat. As pictured below he shows that you can feed the kids and the dog the same meal in the same bowl. This demonstrates an economy of effort and reduces costs in groceries and washing up.



them toward the river behind the boat and before it hit the water the biggest crocodile of all time jumped up and took the fish.

To say our man just soiled his underwear would be an understatement — hence the recurring nightmares.

Let's forget the crocodiles and have a look at something that would sooner eat your money than you.

Beach Symphony:

People find music in crashing waves and seagulls squawking over a dead fish — this one's the whole brass band. Our man has been crooning about it doing well up in the sticks for some time and now it's being trained by Steve Richards at Flemington. Hock your euphonium for this one.

Casino Boy:

The name conjures up thoughts of poker machines, blackjack tables and roulette wheels. Make no mistake, this ones out to encourage the punters away from the bright lights back to the turf and break the bookies. Trained by Bart Cummings at Flemington.

Hit The Spot:

The owner bought this horse after becoming independently wealthy working in a Chinese laundry as a spot spotter and finding pickings in the pockets. C. N. Goggin trains this one down at Geelong

A Pampered Protected Pedigree Pussy In Peril

"What's new pussy cat?"

During the 1960's it seemed that the most wealthy occupants of the mansions in St Georges Road, Lansell Road etc in Toorak knew an MFB Board member. This was most opportune when the pampered pet became stuck in a downpipe or lodged in a tree. And so it was one wintry evening in 1963 at Windsor Fire Station.

The Chief Officer, J Paterson, Esq, JP told District Officer Bob Wynd to turn out the Combination Ladder to effect a rescue of a cat on the roof of a 3 storey home in Toorak. I had not long been promoted to Sub Station Officer and I was "catching" the Comb with two newly arrived lads from England, Gerry Scott and Vic Self. I had been instructed to proceed with all haste but no bells or red lights - and stop at all red traffic lights. As we turned left into the driveway from St Georges Road we spied the modest little 30-roomed 3 storey "bungalow" through the trees.

The gravel drive wended its way for approximately 200 yards and was surrounded on both sides with hanging gardens, fountains, shrubs, ferns. In fact, the Botanical Gardens, South Yarra, would have been envious of the quantity and quality of the flora and fauna. One of the Poms remarked "Gor Blimey Guvnor, this joint would employ more gardeners than Buckenham Palace."

As we braked to a halt outside the front door, Lord and Lady Filthy Rich and two children were waiting anxiously. "Mr Fireman" the kids screamed out, "Toby is caught up on the roof" and indeed he was. Toby, the pedigreed Siamese cat was meowing frantically three storeys up at the front of the house.

The Comb Ladder was quickly removed from the appliance and elevated and extended into position, a canvas bag (an old PMG Mailman's bag) carried for such a purpose was procured. A volunteer was required, I was quickly outfoxed by the Poms, they both locked on to the large wheels, "to stabilise the ladder" they said.

As I mounted the ladder I wondered if the cat would come quietly. Then I remembered these cats were bred in Siam to guard the temples and could be quite ferocious. As I got closer I had visions of this pussy launching itself from the roof onto my chest and sliding with claws extended towards that papery part of my anatomy that swings not necessarily in tune with the rest of the body.

Ha, my fears were groundless, I enticed the cat into the bag by making a noise like a piece of meat

(well, its my story ain't it) and I descended.

The cat freed and handed over, the gear made up, thank you's all round, "A glass of champagne old chap?" "All part of the job mate".

The driver had to reverse the appliance between a glass hot-house and a fernery and with shades of Stirling Moss he did it too quickly. He braked severely, locked the wheels into a four-wheel drift on the loose gravel and just missed the glass house.

The breath that I had just sighed in relief was simultaneous with a scream from one of the children and a piteous mournful meow from the rear of the comb ladder. Silence, not a sound, for a few seconds anyway, will we just drive out and pretend everything's OK or will we face the music? We stayed. Yes, we had just flattened the bloody rescued cat, a long wide deceased cat which overlapped the shovel when we separated it from the rear tyres and the gravel.

Apologies seemed futile but were offered. "Toby always went to the fernery when he was upset, if only you had reversed slowly" said the Lord. We laid Toby to rest that evening even though he looked like a pizza with hair.

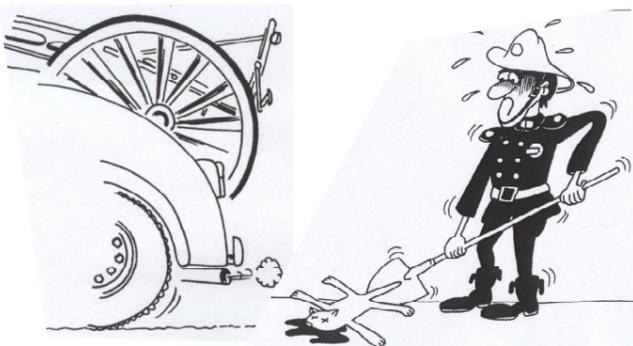
Upon return to station the Station Officer, George Tanner, enquired how we went? "OK George" was the reply, the shit will hit the fan soon enough I thought then all of the MFB will know.

As the days passed by I waited for the command to "front the Chief". Nothing, not a word, my transgressions have been accepted and pardoned, I thought. For the next six rosters, I was transferred throughout D District, both station and shift, even spending one roster at 51 station before returning to my beloved 35 station. A coincidence, surely.

"It's the way we have in the Fire Brigade"
F C Kerr



These cats were bred in Siam to guard the temples and could be quite ferocious!!!



We had just flattened the bloody rescued cat— it was like a pizza with hair!!!

DO YOU REMEMBER?

On Sunday, 22 December 1968 at approximately 0230 hours., an explosion and fire occurred in a Shoe Shop located in Maude Street, SHEPPARTON.

The severity of the explosion was such that these premises and the adjoining shops either side had to be demolished and some thirty eight other premises in the vicinity incurred damage.

The arrival of the Fire Brigade and Police located a badly injured man, who had suffered 40% burns, in the enclosed secured yard of the adjoining premises at the rear.

It was later ascertained that the Shoe Shop was in financial decline, all the shoes were removed from the shop, and sold at the Victoria Market, the empty boxes were left in place on the shelves.

The services of a "Torch" were engaged and it was arranged that a key to the shop would be left at a designated location and there would be four 5 gallon plastic drums of petrol left within the shop.

The Hired Torch found himself in the Remand Yard at Pentridge, being resourceful he engaged an acquaintance who was about to be released to undertake the contract. It was agreed that the fee would be split, each would take half.



Above: Rear of the shop showing fence and barbed wire the Torch was propelled over by the force of the explosion.



Above: Front view of the shop. Extensive damage to the surrounding shops led to their demolition. Thirty eight other premises incurred damage.

The Interchange Torch travelled to Shepparton, obtained the key to the Shoe Shop, entered the shop through the front door and located the four plastic drums of petrol at the rear of the Shop. He fortunately opened the back door of the shop and proceed to douse the shop with the petrol. He had emptied three of the drums and was standing in the rear doorway undoing the cap off the fourth drum when the explosion took place. The force of the explosion propelled him over the corrugated iron fence, which had barbed wire along the top, into a tree in the secured yard at the rear. His fall from the tree removed the remnants of clothing that was not burnt off and when the Fire Brigade and Police arrived he was down to his jocks and literally pleading to be locked up.

Using the old rule of thumb that one pint of petrol when correctly applied will detonate with the force of one pound of T.N.T. and that one gallon of petrol will produce twenty five cubic feet of vapour and subsequently two thousand cubic feet of vapour/air explosive mix, the explosive force of this explosion can be fully appreciated.

Investigation concluded that the ignition source came when the refrigerator operated, thus igniting the explosive vapour/air mix within the Shoe Shop.

Peter Lang

ACTION'S CHARACTER COLUMN

How often have we heard the question from members, friends and relatives, "Do you remember your first fire?" The answer (for me) is yes and even after all these years, I remember as clearly as if it was yesterday and why not?

This was no longer sitting in an office, or just out of Nasho. Not working on the car—this was a fire and all that we had been training and waiting for What will it be? My first was most unexpected and a lot earlier than anticipated.

Having joined the Brigade in June 1962, I was eagerly awaiting for the end of recruits some months later. All this time I watched with envy the mad rush down the stairs of old No1 every time the bells went on and wondering, "What are they heading to?"

Recruits finished at 5pm. and during this time one of my mates was in St Vincents with a broken leg suffered from football and my daily routine was to visit him each night. Visiting hours were quite strict and not knowing the power of the uniform I diligently waited in the mess room till 6pm.

This particular afternoon in early July, the bells went on about 1715hrs. for a fire in a five story building in Russell Street between Flinders Street and Flinders Lane. I just wandered downstairs to watch but then quickly saw this was more than the usual. The Leyland ladder with other gear was disappearing and I could hear many animated voices in the watchroom.

Then, down the marble stairs came Ron Moran and in his usual calm and quiet way, asked would I like to go to a fire..... Would I? Well just grab the nearest gear and jump on the pump.

So, here I was, lights, bells and heading to whatever had caused this commotion. Little did I know it was the "Brooks's Building," a name that was to be remembered by both Brigade and public for many a long day.

On arriving I was confronted by the glow of fire and smoke appearing from every orifice of this five story building. But, more concerning to me was the ambulances lined up like tramway buses on the other side of Russell St. and the likes of Roy Treverton, John Lawson, Norm Sturge and others being carried out and off. Little did I know that the floor had collapsed.

All I knew was that I had picked the wrong job and I was going to resign as soon as I returned. These guys might be tough, but to me, they were mad..... No, I'm going to walk back to the station and resign now.

Before I could do that, I noted many observers pointing to different areas at roof level and although I did not know it at the time, it was a worker trapped on the roof and running from point to point. In the street using the ladder was Tom Draper trying to rescue this person, but each time he positioned the ladder the person disappeared only to appear again in another spot.

Old blue caps were used to silence the bells and all safety features were ignored. Even this was not enough and tragically this person subsequently died in the fire.

Whatever my thoughts were then it was too late, as 48's carriage pulled up and out stepped D.O. Jack McKimm. "Here give a hand lad," he called. "We'll take this tray of hose up to the top floor of a seven storey building in Flinders Lane behind the fire. We struggled to get the hose, four men and two (2) only (I will never forget two (2) only) hand torches into the lift and as the door was closing there was a bang and all the power went off. We'll carry the tray to the top floor," said the D.O. and we finally made it after some time.

Well what happens now I thought, and with that the D.O. started to smash out a wire reinforced window overlooking the fire. After connecting a line to a millcock and poking it through the window he said to me, "Could you handle this lad?" I said yes and the next minute he disappeared with all the men and the two (2) bloody hand torches.

Here I was, five weeks into recruits, never having seen a fire in my life, looking into the burning



Above: Firefighters relentlessly attack the city's biggest fire in years. One man died and several firefighters injured.

BROWN'S BITS

From the roving correspondent of the north-west of our fair city.

Our multicultural society is one of the most diverse on the face of this planet and makes it not only a very attractive place to live but the envy of many mono-cultural societies that surround us.

But it has issues that may threaten unrest amongst our inhabitants. Some issues seem to be too difficult to tackle by our politicians for fear of being branded racist. The situation in this story is an example of a legal requirement being overruled for the fear of the racist finger.

A fellow golfer told me this one.

A relation of his is in charge of a Vic Roads depot. Along comes a Muslim lady in the attire they wear, her face covered and presents herself to have her photo taken for her drivers licence.

He informed her that she had to remove her head covering so he could see her face. She refused, stating that it was against her religion to reveal her face. He informed her that it would cost him his job if he took the photo with her face covered. She again refused, so no photo was taken.

A few hours later his phone rings, it is his superior, and the following conversation took place.

Superior; "I believe you have a racist problem here."

He; "No, we have no racist problem here."

Superior; "I've had a complaint that you refused to take a Muslim lady's photo."

He; "I didn't refuse, I told her that it would cost me my job if I took her photo with her face covered."

Superior; "Well, let me put it this way, it will cost you your job unless you take her photo."

The lady returned and had her photo taken with her head covering on.

Now, my friend's argument is that you can't enter a bank wearing a motor cycle helmet. What's to stop somebody wearing Muslim women's attire entering a bank and robbing it?

A.A.A.D.D.????

I have recently been diagnosed with A.A.A.D.D ---- Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder.

This is how it goes:

I decide to wash the car; I start toward the garage and notice the mail on the table. Ok, I'm going to wash the car. But first I'm going to go through the mail. I lay the car keys down on the desk, discard the junk mail and I notice the rubbish bin is full. Ok, I'll just put the bills on my desk and take the rubbish bin out, but since I'm going to be near the mailbox anyway, I'll pay these few bills first.

Now, where is my cheque book? Oops, there's only one cheque left. My extra cheques are in my desk. Oh, there's the coke I was drinking. I'm going to look for those cheques. But first I need to put my coke further away from the Computer, or maybe I'll pop it into the fridge to keep it cold for a while. I head towards the kitchen and my flowers catch my eye, they need some water.

I set the coke on the bench and uh oh! There are my glasses. I was looking for them all morning! I'd better put them away first. I fill a' container with water and head for the flower pots.

Aaaaaagh! Someone left the TV remote in the kitchen. We will never think to look in the kitchen tonight when we want to watch television so I'd better put it back in the family room where it belongs. I splash some water into the pots and onto the floor, I throw the remote onto a soft cushion on the sofa and I head back down the hall trying to figure out what I was going to do?

End of Day:

The car isn't washed, the bills are unpaid, the coke is sitting on the kitchen bench, the flowers are half watered, the cheque book still only has one cheque in it and I can't seem to find my car keys! When I try to figure out how come nothing got done today, I'm baffled because I KNOW I WAS BUSY ALL DAY LONG!!! I realize this is a serious condition and I'll get help, BUT FIRST I think I'll check my e-mail... Please send this to everyone you know because I DON'T REMEMBER WHO I'VE SENT THIS TO!!!

Don't Eat the Dough!!!

Fiscal, European kind, that is. Irish *Consumer Choice* reported earlier this year on a warning from Eugenio Solans - a member of the European Central Bank that the new euro poses a risk of toxicity. Apparent[y, the printing ink may cause illness if you eat around 400 of the new notes...

DARWIN AWARDS

Named in honor of Charles Darwin, the father of evolution. The Darwin Awards commemorate those who improve our gene pool by removing themselves from it.

Russian Roulette has always been a breeding ground for natural selection, but the men involved in this story deserve extra consideration for their unique approach to this self-destructive game.

On New Year's Eve, Antonio and his friend were befogged by a traditional Brazilian liquor called pinga, when they began playing Russian roulette with holiday fireworks. Their version of the game consisted of lighting fireworks, and holding them in their mouths

to see who could delay longest. The man who discarded the explosive closest to the point of detonation was the victor in this battle of wills.

Their blatant disregard for personal safety was matched only by their foolish bravery. Antonio was the winner, holding one of the fireworks in his mouth a bit too long, and thereby earning praise for his "courage" at his funeral.

70% OF AUSTRALIANS AT RISK OF STROKE

What is your risk factor?

Are you at risk of stroke? The July/August issue of CHOICE Health Reader reports that most Australians have at least one risk factor, and some are seriously at risk.

Stroke is the third-biggest cause of death in Australia (after heart disease and cancer). Each year, more than 40,000 Australians have a stroke - a third of these people will die within a year, and half will be disabled.

Though it's commonly thought of as a brain disorder, the disease itself is caused by a build-up of fatty deposits in the lining of the walls of medium-sized and larger arteries in the body.

When this process - called atherosclerosis - occurs in the arteries of the brain, it interrupts blood flow to brain tissue. If the reduction in blood flow is extensive or sudden, brain tissue can die, causing a stroke.

Atherosclerosis is especially common in people who have one or more risk factors: a family history of the disease, smoking, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, or having a higher than normal blood cholesterol level. Other factors include being a male, drinking alcohol to excess, physical inactivity and stress.

Worryingly, a recent study of 16,148 people aged 30 or older found that 70% had one or more risk factors for stroke, and 34% had two or more.

The most prevalent was high blood pressure - an alarming finding because this, the researchers say, is the most important risk factor of all. Next most common were high blood cholesterol (43%) and smoking (17%). The good news is that stroke is preventable - if you're concerned, see your doctor and discuss ways of reducing your risk. Your doctor may advise you to:

- Lose weight.
- Stop smoking.
- Make sure your blood pressure is controlled.
- Put yourself on a low-fat diet.
- Drink less alcohol.
- Exercise regularly.
- If you're a woman over 30 taking oral contraceptives, consider another form of contraception (the pill is associated with a higher risk in older women).
- If you're diabetic, make sure your blood sugars are as controlled as they can be.
- Also in this issue of *Health Reader*:
- Mondayitis can kill: more people have a heart attack on a Monday than any other day of the week - especially if it's cold, or early in the day.
- In July CHOICE, we highlighted research linking folate consumption and reduced risk of Parkinson's disease. New research suggests regularly eating foods rich in folate, as well as vitamins B6 and B12 could also reduce the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Source: *Choice Magazine, August 2002 edition*



bowels of a five storey building, with visions of the man on the roof top, now standing on my own in the dark. Boy, were thoughts racing and adrenalin pumping. Who knows I'm here, is this building below me on fire? I don't know. Not comforting thoughts for a lonely rookie. I remember it went on for many hours.

Many say, "how can you remember your first so well," Wouldn't you?

Action Jackson

Right: Roy Treverton is assisted to an ambulance by Chief Fire Officer W. T. Aldridge and Ambulance Officer John O'Keefe.



OLD TIMER PART OF LIVING HISTORY



← Joseph with the axe and key plaque presented by ACFO Adamson and representatives from the SA Fire Brigade

"Joseph dedicated close to thirty years of his life to serving and protecting Melbourne"

from the Brigade, he became a fire marshal at Mobil Oil in Yarraville. "It was much more dangerous when Dad was in the Brigade because they didn't have the sort of equipment they have now," she said.

On Friday 15 March 2002, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade helped celebrate the 100th birthday of Mr Joseph Fothergill - our oldest living firefighter.

Joseph, now a resident at Mortlock House in Westbourne Park SA, joined the MFB in 1923 as a part-paid firefighter at Newport fire station in Metbourne's western suburbs after emigrating from Scotland. His 29-year-long firefighting career also saw him stationed in East Melbourne, Footscray, Yarraville and Williamstown.

Reminiscing about the good old days at the MFB during his birthday party, Joseph said "when that bell went in the middle of the night and you were in your pyjamas, flying across the street to catch those engines, sometimes you missed pulling your pants up as you go. Them were the days".

Joseph's daughter, Ms Margaret Ellis, said that her father loved being a firefighter and after retiring

MFB Director of Corporate Relations and Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Keith Adamson, joined Joseph and his family and friends at this milestone celebration where on behalf of the Brigade he presented a mounted axe and key two historical pieces of firefighting equipment once used by Mr Fothergill.

"We celebrated not only a birthday but also the fact that Joseph dedicated close to 30 years of his life to serving and protecting Melbourne. It was very fitting that we had this wonderful opportunity to honour his distinguished service.

We like to recognise milestone's like Joe's 100th birthday because he is still part of our family," said ACFO Adamson.

Joseph was overwhelmed by the well wishes from the MFB on his loath birthday. "Well, I could cry my eyes out. But seeing all of you people around here, I'll try and pull myself together," he said.

Source: *FIREMARK, June 2002 edition, reprinted with permission*



TRAVELLING WITH SILVER

This is just a short one to wind up "Ground Zero." Besides that, the Editor has lowered the boom and says he wants the article early.

The end is now in sight and as the City of New York prepares to announce the official close to the non-stop recovery and clean up effort at the World Trade Centre site, I have had the following details passed on to me of the unprecedented challenge for the last 8 months at "Ground Zero."

Days of labour: 242
 Hours of work: 5799
 Victims: 2823
 Death Certificates issued with a body: 1027
 Unidentified victims: 1796
 Body parts recovered since Sept. 11: 19,435
 Bodies recovered (during May): 0
 Tons of debris removed: 1,399,659
 Tons of structural steel removed: 190,568
 Truck loads of rubble removed: 106,301
 Peak daily workers at Ground Zero: 3,500
 Current daily workers at site: 700
 Firefighters who have worked at site: 10,000
 Average number of Police Officers at site daily (NYPD): 412

Peak number of Port Authority cops at site daily: 400
 Man hours of labour by construction workers: 3 million
 Free meals served by the Salvation Army volunteers: 3,320,935
 Red Cross and Salvation Army volunteers: 64,179
 Anchors sunk into "Bathtub Wall" (retaining wall): 860
 Pieces of glass replaced in perimeter buildings: 11,500
 Respirators distributed: 132,036
 Injuries that resulted in 1 or more lost working days: 35
 Life threatening injuries to workers on site: 0
 Hard hats handed out: 17,200
 Miles of trenches dug for electrical lines: 9
 Feet of new electrical cable: 610,000 (183,000 Mtrs)
 Pounds of telephone cable strung: 325,232 (147,832kg)

That, hopefully, is the end of this saga, but I'm afraid it will not end in our time. All we can do is not let it change our way of life too much and fight it to the end.

Next article will be from Surfers Paradise and incorporating a visit to the Retired Firefighter's meeting at Southport Yacht Club.

**Happy Travelling
 Silver**

"It's Over"



The gear's made up and packed away, time to take a last look and reflect on what you achieved over the last 10 months. Time to remember brothers who could not be seen — but you knew they were at your side while you tore, scraped and heaved at the enemy.

SUPERVISORY UNIT REVISITED

In our May issue of "Water Off" we made an appeal on behalf of Fred Kerr and the Fire Museum, for information on the Supervisory Units installed in MFB watchrooms and the ingenious devices used to get around them. We had a good response to that appeal with one coming complete with wiring diagrams and an offer to actually build one for the Museum. Please keep them coming in. Below are two examples.

Dear Fred

The story about the button pushing machine at No 37 Stn. St Kilda came about in 1957 when I was first stationed there and met Sfm. Geoff Walton.

After a couple of months sitting up and pushing the button Geoff said, "We have to do something about this, working days off and pushing this bloody button has got to stop."

Before joining the MFB I had done an apprenticeship as a Auto Electrician. So, after thinking about it, I gathered a few bits namely, a 12 volt windscreen wiper, clock and some bent iron rod that, when set up, would work off the battery charger.

The first set-up (minus the dipper switch) worked good, but it pressed the button as it passed over the point between 16 & 19 times each ten minutes.

So I thought about it and finally came up with the idea of a dipper switch which changed the power to the next point every ten minutes. This meant you would hear the motor start up, push the button, return and push the dipper switch then shut down for approximately ten minutes then restart for the same procedure.

S.S.O. (Tanglefoot) Perry, who lived in the quarters right above the watchroom, could not believe how well he and his family slept when we were on duty. He came down the inner stairs one night and caught us asleep and stood there watching the machine operate. Next day he said, "Keep up the good work boys."

I left 37 Stn. in 1959 and went to Nunawading and it was still working then. What happened to it after that is a mystery.

If I could get the parts I would make one for the Museum. I would also like to say hello to all the men at 37 Stn who benefited from it.

E. Hahir Reg. No. 1266

In a recent "Water Off" magazine that we receive at FS 24, Malvern, (which we find very interesting) there was a small section requiring some information on firefighters that had used the Supervisory Units fitted to the MFB station watchrooms.

Whilst at the old 37 Stn. (St Kilda) as a young 4th and 3rd class firefighter, I was taught by the older firefighters the very secretive way we used to silence the bells cutting in from the officers. (They did not want to know anything about it but imagine they knew anyway.)

Fortunately, in this out-station, the button to be pushed every 15 minutes was down low on the alarm board. So, a wet cell battery flare was taken off the Morris Commercial (and later the International KB3) hose carriage and placed on the shelf. Then we used an old windscreen washer and wiper electric motor from a car with the arms removed leaving the oscillating stump exposed from the motor. Alligator clips were attached to the wet cell battery from the electric motor by wires, enabling the electric motor to function. The exposed button would go back and forth as it oscillated and so pushed the button. It always worked perfectly.

When a phone call came for a Fire Call, the watchroom man would hurriedly disconnect the wires from the battery, wrap the electric motor up in a blanket, hide it behind the alarm board and place the flare back on the hose carriage, give two quick jabs on the muster button and then turn on the alarm bells. Removal of this would only take a few seconds to a well practiced watchroom man.

This would only be one of the ingenious ways of silencing the Supervisory Units.

An older MFB electrician once said, "If only all this untapped ingenuity could have been put to more productive ways honestly by the Brigade."

I read the magazine with interest and look forward to joining when I retire!

Les Napper, FS 24C

ENRON SHARES....Still making money!!!

Feeling left out because you haven't lost money in the Enron flameout?

There's still time, according to "Consumer Reports,"... Frame-A-Stock, a company that sells "truly unique gifts to give for a baptism, wedding, anniversary or any other occasion", offered framed Enron shares for US\$39.95, Plus US\$10.95 for shipping - something of a mark-up from the 26 cents they cost on the last day of trading.

A unique gift, perhaps, for a marriage destined for failure?