

“WATER OFF!”

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

AUGUST 98

VOL. 2 No. 3

DIMELOW & GAYLARD'S FIRE - Nov. 1906

Barbara McCumisky continues with her historical series of significant fires that occurred during the formative years of the MFB. - Page 11.



CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE FACES?

Who are they and what was their claim to fame? See page 5 for the answers.



**EMERGENCY SERVICES
SUPERANNUATION
SCHEME**

WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

The ESS Board invites all former contributors of the Scheme to invest their superannuation benefits into the ESSS Beneficiary Account or Allocated Pension facility.

The ESS Board sees this as an exciting opportunity for all former contributors to again be a part of the Emergency Services Superannuation Scheme.

The ESSS Beneficiary Account and Allocated Pension are facilities to invest your superannuation benefits.

BENEFICIARY ACCOUNT

The Beneficiary Account is an ideal investment vehicle to safeguard your benefits for the future. Earnings on your benefits accumulate, enjoy significant taxation advantages and withdrawals can be made at anytime. The Beneficiary Account offers a choice of managed products.

ALLOCATED PENSION

The Allocated Pension allows you to receive regular income from your superannuation benefits. It offers generous tax advantages and gives you the flexibility to decide how much pension you wish to receive. The Allocated Pension also offers a choice of managed products.

To investigate this window of opportunity please contact John Kilkenny on (03)9698 6444, so that

“GENERAL MEETING”

Notice is hereby given of our next General Meeting to be held at the Fitzroy Bowling Club, 1030 Hours, Wednesday August 19, 1998

AGENDA ITEMS.

- **Minutes of last General meeting.**
- **President’s Report.**
- **Secretary/Treasurer’s Report.**
- **General Business.**

Please come along 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. @ \$3 per head.
Drinks at bar prices.

JOHN BERRY
SECRETARY/TREASURER
Phone 03 9431 2880

OFFICE BEARERS

President, Don Brennan
Vice President, Ern Tamme
Sec./Treasurer, John Berry

General Committee;

Ian Fowler
John Laverick
Bob McNeil
Ross Medwin
John Wallace

Auditor; Theo Teklenburg

VALE

Frank Hodges
Bert Woolmer
Graeme Hartney
Leon Fievez
Athol John (Lou) Lamont
Dave Prentice
Brian Sutherland
Ian Robert Finn

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

SICK LIST

Kevin Kennedy

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

As mentioned in a previous edition of “Water Off”, the late Peter Holton was awarded a posthumous Life Membership of the RFA. When we put our last edition together at my residence we invited Peter’s Widow, Barbara along to present her with his Life Medallion. Barbara thanked the committee members in attendance and stated that Peter would be

proud of his medallion
Recently, Ron and Loris Cass celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary and this was acknowledged in the Herald Sun which published a photograph of the happy couple. Congratulations to you both for a job well done and hope you have many more anniversaries together.



SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

In this August edition of the newsletter I would like to maintain the positive theme I have been encouraging in previous issues, this time by

reflecting on the endeavours of many members of our association.

The R.F.A. has amongst its members people who work tirelessly on the behalf of the less fortunate in our community in a voluntary role. The diversity of the areas involved is very large as the following examples will show: Aged care, Emergency Services, Historical Societies, Injured personnel, Legacy, Prisoners family support, Sporting Clubs, Religion, Youth Support, Charities etc. I will not identify the people involved as I know they would be embarrassed, as they are not looking for accolades for their efforts. However, I must say on behalf of the Committee, Members & Community we thank you and as I have stated previously I am proud to be an Australian and to be associated with people of this ilk.

Since the last newsletter I have attended on your behalf, meetings of the Combined Council of Associations of State Retirees of Victoria (Inc) and the U.F.U. Social Committee. At these meetings a number of interesting and important points were discussed.

Combined Council Meeting

Following an article in the morning Age regarding Public Superannuation Funds holdings of Crown Casino shares, an invitation was given to Mr. Robert Welsh, Chief Executive Officer of Victorian Superannuation Board to address the 25h May quarterly meeting. Mr Welsh who is an economist and a chartered accountant gave a very informative presentation, which as one of the Executives of the Council stated put an end to the wild speculation that masquerades as news in some sections of the media. In fact, the fund does have in its spread of portfolios shares in Crown, approximately 0.30% of total investment, (less than one percent) and when you consider total investment return has been around 12.3% the loss in Crown is not significant.

At present very few of our members are involved with the State Superannuation Fund. I have addressed a letter to the E.S.S.S. fund to ascertain if it is effected or not. Private fund

investors will need to check with their own investment managers' etc.

Another interesting item was the response to a letter previously forwarded to a like body in New Zealand on the G.S.T.

The response letter came from the Government Superannuitant's Association of N.Z. (Inc). The following is an overview of the responses to the questions we raised on their G.S.T:

- When introduced in N.Z. there was no compensatory adjustment on pensioners or superannuants.
- Tax was originally introduced at 10% then increased to 12.5%.
- Lower income groups now pay a higher proportion of their income in combined taxes than higher income earners.

As voters we need to become fully conversant with government propositions in relation to tax changes (no matter what your political persuasion is)

(Note: N.Z. spelling of superannuitants is different to our superannuants).

One other item of interest was the Welfare Sub-Committee's prepared paper on Welfare benefits for retirees, also the advice available from the Aged Care Branch, Department of Human Services, G.P.O. Box 4057, Melbourne, 3001.

(note this information may not be suitable for all states)

U.F.U. Social Committee Meeting; IMPORTANT

Retired U.F.U. Members Annual Dinner St. Kilda Town Hall

Saturday, the 21st November 1998

- Members invited to this day should be aware of the following:
- Cost of the day which is funded by Union members is \$30 per head so buy/sell as many raffle tickets as possible to help offset the cost to the current members of the Union.
- Members be aware of the following motion from the meeting which was carried;

That this Committee invoke the following:

- Any member who has not returned his or her invitation for the last two (2) years will not be invited to the dinner this year.
- The same caterer as last year, submitted the

Items of interest from the last R.F.A. meeting 20/5/98

Item 1: Numbers in attendance was again high, in fact better than previous meeting. The President and Committee would like to thank you and invite members to spread the word and see if we can beat the numbers at the August meeting.

Item 2: The Agenda was covered as identified in the last newsletter.

Item 3: Correspondence 24 Letters in 20 letters out.

Item 4: Financial status S.1 \$583.81 T.1 \$4,365.16

General Business

Item 5: Fred Kerr President Fire Museum and member of the R.F.A. spoke on the proposal of the Annual General Meeting being held at the Museums Newport Restoration area.

A motion was moved and seconded that this meeting have the proposal investigated by the Committee and report back to the next meeting. CARRIED

Item 6: A motion was moved and seconded that this meeting approve a donation of \$500 to the U.F.U. Social Committee to assist in meeting the cost of the Union picnic. CARRIED

Item 7: After debate on a proposal to allow active members of the respective EMERGENCY SERVICES to become Auxiliary members of the R.F.A.. The motion was not put due to lack of a seconder.

Item 8: A motion was moved and seconded that this meeting of the R.F.A. request the Committee to have guest speakers at each general meeting. LOST

Item 9: Frank Churchill (Executive of Firefighter Credit Co-operative Ltd) gave a detailed report on the changes in the Co-op Management Structure and future proposal etc.

Item 10: A member spoke on the possible need to change the financial criteria for the R.F.A. Reunion Day, i.e. (Members as well as partners be charged) after some debate the

member did not put the motion.
Meeting Closed 12.15

TRAGEDIES REQUIRE AID

Again the inhabitants of this great little continent have been required to assist people in need. In this case those affected by floods in areas in Victoria and N.S.W., also our near neighbours to the north P.N.G. devastated by a tsunami.

I call on every member to show the true Australian spirit and assist, if not physically then financially to the various appeals. We may be no longer part of the impact stage, but we certainly can assist in the post impact stage of these disasters.

X FILES

The following is a point of interest from one of our inaugural members, regarding similarities between career services throughout the world.

In the last newsletter I made mention of an altercation involving firies at a social function. Well this intrepid Newshound member saw an article in one of the morning papers that reported firefighters involved in a ruckus at a social function and the Chief of the Department had a similar name (Dutch Origin) to an Ex-Chief of the M.F.B., this incident however took place in America. One may ask, have they been transported to another time and place, should we call in Mulder & Scully. The intrepid newshound is Jim Flemming (Alias the Count)

We printed an article in the last newsletter regarding Tulips responsible for market collapse!

Well I believe you better keep your eyes on the markets again, I have just been advised that D. O. Basil Smith (Retd) M.F.B. is going to sell the Kingswood next year. Be warned

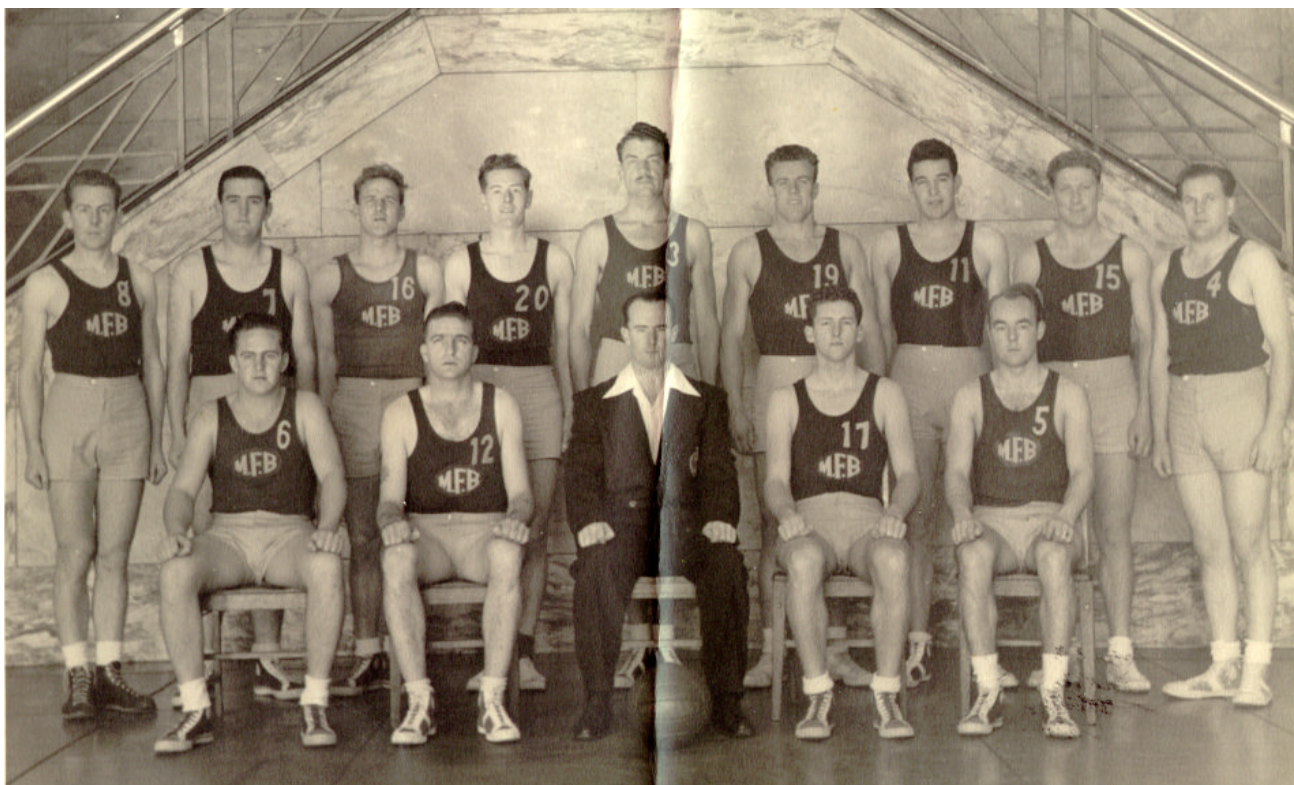
LASER EYE SURGERY

For some people it has the potential to deliver 20/20 vision. But there are risks, side effects and uncertainties - so proceed carefully if you're considering laser eye surgery.

There have been complaints within the ophthalmology community about the manner in which laser eye surgery is being promoted. Critics

have focused on advertisements which suggest that people will never have to wear glasses or contact lenses again. Given all the risks and side effects associated with laser eye surgery, such claims clearly aren't telling the whole story. "The advertising overwhelms informed consent and creates a climate of unrealistic expectations" a leading ophthalmologist said. "These procedures are good and effective, but there are risks".

NBL CONTENDERS?



*Back Row L-R: Tom Williamson, Noel Abrahams, Alan Stirling, Bill Cruchley, Ted Martin, Gary Sharp, Alan Boyd, Roy Treverton, Jack Gallop.
Front row: Jack Hancock, Les Uncle, Stan Richards, Jim Jones, Albert Burt.*

The above photograph of the MFB Basketball team was taken in 1953, not long after it was formed.

Time has dimmed the memory of some of the survivors of this rugged looking lot, but it seems that it was formed in 1952 by two experienced players in Jack Hancock and Albert Burt and were part of the Olympics competition.

Apparently, this comp was put together to develop players and the game in general with a

view of fielding a world class team to compete in the forthcoming 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

The early games were played at the Kensington Town Hall then the Melbourne Showgrounds and later they moved to a more salubrious venue in the Albert Park Basketball complex which was purpose built for the Olympics. They enjoyed moderate success but it is unclear if any of the above made the Olympic side. The team was disbanded in 1958.



RACING TIPS

From "My Mate's Cousin"

It seems that our man is doing very well these days with the populace of the Swan Hill TAB, (keeping in mind his last tip "The Hind" won the Adelaide Cup).

He is so revered up there they have placed him on the same level as the Deli Lama. His followers bring him gifts of food in the hope that he may favour them with a winner at the local gallops.

It's not what you know but who - even the Deli Lama has to appeal to a higher authority. So the last bag of pumpkins were strapped to the

pillion seat of the vespa and brought to Mecca (Melbourne) to bribe -er- appease the gods of racing.

The gods recommendations are;

Quality Kingdom - from the banana state but trained by G. Searle of Mornington!

Mister Thomas - a Tasmanian and trained by a fellow called "Lomasney". With names like that and they can swim the distance they may have something going for them!

Niagra - from the state that gave us a big coathanger and a bunch of sails. Trained by Gail Waterhouse and (providing there are no

ENDURING POWER OF ATTORNEY & MEDICAL POWER OF ATTORNEY

As our population ages it is becoming increasingly possible that we may be asked to accept the responsibility of these powers and make decisions on behalf of someone close to us.

Why do I need a Power of Attorney?

Given the speed with which financial transactions are made these days, some actions often need to be taken with urgency. A prime example was the stock market crash of 1987 when fast actions were necessary to cut losses. In these circumstances, some would think a Power of Attorney essential. It can also be important simply to empower a trusted relative or friend to legally act on your behalf in case of illness.

What sorts of Powers of Attorney are there?

While there are a variety of PoAs, the Enduring Power of Attorney is probably most suitable. It comes into effect once it's signed and allows the 'donee' (the person you nominate) to carry out personal business on your behalf. As you can see from the words used in the Enduring PoA, the donee is authorised to do anything lawful that you would do yourself, only they do it for you! Only give them a copy at time of signing if you intend them to use it immediately. Otherwise, make sure they know where you keep it.

This kit contains two types of Enduring Power of Attorney: one to provide for a single Power of Attorney-the other provides for appointing two attorneys. Discard the one you don't need.

In the case of a Medical Power of Attorney in Victoria, it only comes into effect once the donor loses capacity.

What does a Medical PoA do?

important though it is, an Enduring Power of Attorney does not extend to allowing your Attorney to make decisions regarding your medical treatment.

In Victoria, the Medical PoA allows the donee(s) to make decisions regarding medical procedures and treatment on behalf of an incapacitated donor. In Victoria, this power has been extended to allow the donee(s) to refuse medical treatment which can include such measures as terminating life support.

It is important, however, for you to understand that it doesn't mean somebody who is both named in your will and has Medical Power of Attorney can arbitrarily have life support turned off - it is more complex than that and all sorts of safeguards are in place. If you have concerns regarding this power, please speak to your solicitor or doctor. The Health Care Directive is separate but you can attach it to the Medical PoA if you wish.

Who can give a Power of Attorney?

There are some restrictions-and these are meant as a safeguard for everyone. What is most important, however, is that you take steps early rather than later. Then 'Murphy's Law' is less likely

to apply. There are some awful stories around of people who haven't taken these basic steps and have major problems when it is too late to rectify the situation.

People who are deemed to have a limited ability to give a valid Power of Attorney are those lacking the necessary mental capacity to complete the procedure, someone heavily intoxicated at the time and a bankrupt.

Please note that legal requirements may vary from State to State,

Who can witness an Enduring Power of Attorney?

Two witnesses are necessary, neither of whom are the donee. It is a good idea not to have relatives of the donee witness the PoA either. However, if you organise things properly, the people who witnessed your Medical PoA could also witness the Enduring PoA at the same time.

Revoking an existing Power of Attorney.

If you decide to revoke an existing Enduring Power of Attorney, it is important that you serve a notice in writing on the former attorney that the power has been revoked. It's important you keep a notice of the revocation with the new Power of Attorney.

Death automatically revokes any PoA and in the case of a Medical PoA, the mere completion of a new one revokes any previous ones.

Who can witness a Medical Power of Attorney?

Most of you will be able to access one of the following quite easily:

1. A Justice of the Peace or Bail Justice
2. A Notary Public
3. Any member of the police force.
4. A councillor of a municipality.
5. A registered medical practitioner within the meaning of the *Medical Practice Act 1994*.
6. A dentist.
7. A Veterinary surgeon.
8. A pharmacist.
9. A principal in the teaching service.
10. The manager of a bank.
11. A minister of religion authorised to celebrate marriages.

This list is not the complete one (44 classes of people are actually authorised) but these are perhaps the easiest to approach. Certainly in the case of a medical power of attorney, it could be a good idea to discuss it fully with your doctor and then ask him/her to witness your signature.

If in doubt about any of this information, please seek professional advice.

We acknowledge, with thanks, the R.S.E.A. (The

AAMI one of the larger property insurers in Australia has compiled fire statistics from an analysis of their reported household fire claims in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland, South Australia and the ACT. The information is distributed through a publication called FIRESCREEN. It lists the most common causes of fire around the home and the times of day you are most at risk from these causes.

We cannot escape from the fact that the biggest cause of fires are -

Figures compiled by the national insurance giant, AAMI, show that about one in three (36%) reported fires start in the kitchen.

Human error was the predominant cause of kitchen fires.

The AAMI figures show that cooking and inattention were the key ingredients for kitchen fires.

They also show that Australia-wide six in 10 (60%) reported kitchen fires were caused by oil and fat igniting. In South Australia the figure was 58.3%, in New South Wales 61.3%, and in South Queensland and the Gold Coast, oil and fat fires totalled 67% and 66% of all kitchen fires. In Victoria the figure was 35% and in Tasmania it was 23%.

Inattention by the cook was the reason for all these fires. Serious fire hazards were caused when the person cooking left the kitchen for a short time while boiling fat or oil. AAMI insurance claim files show that kitchen fires often went further out of control when people tried to dispose of a flaming pot by carrying the pot through the home, spilling burning oil on the floor or furnishings and, even worse, onto themselves.

In these cases, the fire could easily have been doused with a fire blanket or fire extinguisher before it got out of control.

Despite increased consumer awareness and precautions, which have helped to reduce the frequency of household fires, the AAMI figures showed that fashionable new products were creating new fire dangers.

Popular aromatic candles and oil burners, for example, have increasingly become causes for household fires. AAMI statistics show that these products are a common cause of fires which usually begin in the bedroom and lounge. In South Australia, for example, the state which has one of the highest percentages of fires starting in the bedroom (16.7%), candles are an extremely common cause of fires. Undiluted aromatic oils left burning unattended can also overheat and explode.

Another popular product, wheat filled heat packs used for muscular relief, can smoulder and ignite from overheating and with excessive use. Wheat packs also can be potentially dangerous when used as bed warmers. Fire safety experts emphasised that wheat packs should not be reheated unless they are cold or they can become a serious fire hazard.

Food - what's been added?

HAVE YOU EVER READ A FOOD LABEL AND MADE NO SENSE out of the numbers given for food additives in the product? Subscribers ask us regularly about a 'code breaker'.

While manufacturers are obliged to identify on the product label any additives used in a food, they don't have to be listed by name - food additive numbers and class names are legally sufficient. So it's more common to find listings such as *food acid* (330) than the name of the actual ingredient: *citric acid*, for example. If you're sensitive to certain additives, this can be a problem. You need to know what the numbers on the packet mean.

We can't list all the food additives approved in

Australia the list is too long; but the Australia New Zealand Food Authority has produced an updated version of its booklet 508 *What's that? Identifying food additives*, which lists the internationally established food additive numbers in numerical order. (Incidentally, if the number you're looking for has the prefix 'E', it simply means the additive has been approved by the European Union.) The booklet is free, and available from Australian Government Bookshops in all capital cities. Look in your White Pages.

If you suffer from asthma you should be wary of foods containing high levels of sulphites or sulphur dioxide, to which some people are sensitive. Look out for additive numbers 220-228, particularly in foods such as fruit juice or drink, wine, dried fruit and delicatessen meat.

REFER Mr. STOCK!

How many of us can remember entering the above phrase on a fire report after attending a fire that was thought to be of electrical origin? To me, as a young firefighter, it was all a mystery, a black hole where fire reports disappeared, only to be seen by some white haired old bloke who had this uncanny power over officers, there was no argument, what Mr. Stock said was law. Fred Kerr was searching through the Fire Service's Museum archives and came across this pen portrait on Bert Stock that was published in the 1967 edition of the old "News Review". It has shed some light on the more human side of the man who had possibly the longest association with the Brigade in it's history. The author of the article signed himself as J.S.

M.F.B. "News Review" 1967

Mr. W. H. (Bert) Stock, M.I.Fire E. J.P. is our subject for this months News Review.

Mr. Stock was born in quarters at the South Melbourne Fire Station where his father was a fireman-engine driver. His father drove a steamer to the famous Craig Williamson's fire in Flinders street in 1897 and worked the steamer for forty eight hours before being relieved. The steamer of course, like all horse drawn steamers of that era, was a steam driven reciprocating pump.

Old timers have often stated that by the time a steamer in full gallop got as far as Swanston Street it would have steam up. Fires were always set ready at the base of the boiler and when ordered on a man lit the fire and tended it on the way to the job.

Back to Mr. Stock Senior, he was promoted from foreman-engine driver to District Officer and later founded and started the Electrical Department and was in charge of that department until his retirement in 1928.

So much for the father. Bert Stock started his working life in the M.F.B. Electrical Department in 1916. During his early service he attended night school at the Workingmen's College (now R.M.I.T.) and completed a Diploma course in electrical engineering.

On his fathers retirement Bert Stock was appointed Chief Electrical Engineer in charge of the electrical workshops.

In 1934 he was appointed electrical advisor to the Fire & Accident Underwriters Association, a position he still holds. He represents the Underwriters on numerous committees and affiliated Associations covering wiring rules, lighting protection, static electricity, wires and cables and electro -medical equipment etc. He also represents the Underwriters on the Electrical Approvals Board of the S.E.C. and is Chairman of the Federal committee which examined and tests electrical equipment in explosive and dangerous atmospheres. This of course takes him to all States of Australia.

He has specialised in ventilation and in the use of flammable solvents in industry such as spray painting drying ovens, flow coatings electrostatic deposition and oil fuel installations. A.C.O's and D.

O's are regular callers at his office when wanting advice as to how many air changes per hour is required when making recommendations for fire protection in industrial ovens and rooms that may harbour vapours.

So it is easy to understand how his rulings on electrical problems are accepted throughout the Commonwealth.

When asked about Brigade achievements in the electrical field Mr. Stock stated that there has been nothing revolutionary but there has been a constant improvement in the fire alarm field such as new line relays, continuous coding alarms and improved framing in the alarm and of course much better station boards. His father invented sprinkler D.B.A's but as the son says, that too has been improved over the years.

Primarily this article is about the man and not his department but it is worth knowing that the Canberra, Darwin, Mawson (Antarctica) R.A.A.F bases and some Indonesian towns have out street fire alarms and fire alarm boards,

About 300 D.B.A's are made yearly and auxiliary alarms are supplied to Western Australia in addition to hose carriage bells.

The new metal fire alarm board is a brainchild of the Electrical Department having been designed by the "shops". But equipment is only a part of the job; there is enough maintenance work to keep Mr. Stock and his staff of forty electricians fully occupied.

Walter Herbert Stock and his wife Alicia have a son Allen, who is chief chemist and technical ,director at A. W. Allen Ltd., and a daughter Jean a widow of a young doctor, who is a double certificated nurse with her own practice as a qualified. chiropodist.

The Stocks are blessed with six grandchildren. Bertie Stock is a playing member of the Melbourne Bowling Club as well as being a Life Member. He is also a Trustee and past President. To say he barracks for the "Bloods" is an understatement,. When pressed he will agree to the proposition that South Melbourne is the best team in the League.

"It's the way we have in the Fire Brigade"

F. C. Kerr.

Editor's note;

DO YOU REMEMBER?

On Saturday 22 March, 1969 at approximately 2000 hours an explosion occurred on the Motor Vessel "WESTERN SPRUCE". At the time the vessel was tied up at the Port Welshpool Jetty in Corner inlet taking on supplies, liquid oxygen and diesel fuel.

As a result of the explosion and subsequent fire three men received fatal injuries, seven crew members suffered severe burns and some crew members had to be rescued by boat when they were isolated at the end of the jetty by the subsequent fire, the vessel became a total loss and the jetty facilities incurred severe fire damage.

Fire Brigades from Welshpool, Toora and Foster responded and were confronted with a fire involving the Vessel and Jetty. Oxygen

cylinders were being projected into the sky like missiles then exploding, showering the area below with shrapnel.

It was also necessary for Brigade Members to reverse both the liquid oxygen and diesel fuel tankers from the fire area, a distance of one kilometre along the Jetty to the shore, before appliances could be brought onto the Jetty

The vessel was engaged in seismographic survey work in Bass Strait in the development of the off shore oil fields.

On the midship deck located on the port side was a liquid oxygen tank and on the starboard side a propane tank.

These two gases were used in 'Aquapulse Guns', these guns are rubber bladders (described as being like an indestructible condom) filled with fifty parts oxygen and twenty parts propane for each charge.

Briefly these are placed approximately twenty feet below the surface of the water, four are placed in the water at a time, two at the front of the vessel, beyond the midship deck, and the two at the stern near the winch reel. These are fired together by a relay device, which sets off a spark inside the bladder. The explosion

expands the bladder (hence the term "having a bang") and after about ten seconds the bladder is automatically refilled with gas and is exploded again.

This procedure follows until the run is completed and the shock waves from the explosions are recorded.

On the stern was located a winch reel containing approximately two miles of recording cable, this cable was towed behind the vessel during the seismographic operations to record the impulse readings from the shock waves generated by the "Aqua Pulse Guns"

The cause of the explosion and subsequent fire was established as being a faulty valve on the liquid oxygen tank, the retaining collar on the valve spindle had sheared off allowing the

spindle shaft to leave the valve assembly, thus allowing liquid oxygen to discharge through a half inch orifice in the gland nut.

The discharge of liquid oxygen embrittled the deck resulting in the, steel decking shattering like plate glass when the subsequent explosions occurred.

Ignition occurred resulting in two major explosion taking place, the first on the deck area and the second in the crew quarters.

The escaping liquid oxygen developed into a *Thermic Lance* which consumed steel in the discharge area.

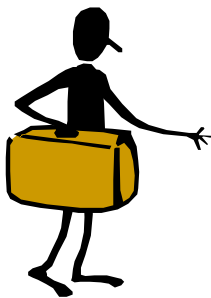
Following the initial two major explosion there were some thirty subsequent explosions when the oxygen cylinders and the propane tank became involved.

The subsequent Inquest found that the Vessels Captain was qualified to operate only in the inland water of New Guinea and parts of Torres Strait, the Engineer had unsuccessfully completed two years of a panel beating apprenticeship.

When the loading and decanting of liquid oxygen took place, it was necessary to have an abundant supply of hot water available to apply



Fire Investigator Peter Lang on the damaged wharf inspects one of the 20 or so oxygen cylinders that exploded during



TRAVELLING WITH SILVER

San Diego

San Diego is not nearly as well known to Australians as San Francisco yet it is California's second largest city after Los Angeles. What's more,

meteorologists have voted it the only area in the U.S.A. with perfect weather having an annual average temperature of 21deg. Celsius. The American magazine "Sports Illustrated" stated that for sheer numbers of participants it must rate as the sports capital of the U.S.

It has 160K. of spectacular coastline, a large number of parks, recreation centres, lakes, canyons, valleys, hang-glide, sky-jump, land-sail and one of the best hotels in the world - the "Dell Coronado" with Mexico on the doorstep.

San Diego has 70 golf courses and for \$12 or so clubs and electric buggies are yours. Just east of the city the pine tree covered "Laguna Mountains" reach 2000 metres into the sky.

Northern San Diego County is totally different, antique shops, horse ranches, avocado farms, citrus and nut groves and beautiful beaches with whale watching in season. A two month period from mid December to mid February the annual migration of California grey whales are to be seen as they travel from Alaska's Behring Sea to the warm bays of Baja California. The whales pass only 1 or 2Ks off shore. Helicopters and boats are available to get a closer look. A harbour cruise of San Diego (a day trip) is also a must.

The San Diego Zoo is on a 100 acre tropical garden and is a must see, we took a 40 minute, 6K guided safari. Also in competition is the wild animal park where 2500 wild animals roam free on 1800 acres. "Visit Nairobi" village and Tropical America" section which is a jungle habitat.

All this is in the San Pasqual Valley and you can see it all by an open air monorail for 10K which takes 50 minutes.

Probably one of the best sights is Sea World, located on Mission Bay, having six major shows a day. There is also a \$10 million polar exhibit.

Presideo Hill was the home of the first Spanish settlers. On the hill overlooking Mission Valley is the Junipero Serra Museum with walls 1m thick and a tower 30m high. As more settlers arrived the Presideo became overcrowded and by 1820 or so many had moved down the hill to build homes and gardens that eventually became "Old San Diego Town", the first European settlement in California. Today "Old San Diego Town" is one of the most visited attractions in San Diego.

During my early formative years as some may remember, I was known to favour a dram or two of the nectar of the gods. In "Old San Diego Town" I decided it would be good for Australian/American

relations to try the local firewater. I tried a Super Margaritta, it came in a round fish tank and after two I found I was becoming quite chemically excited. I can always tell because I start talking to complete strangers, winking and nodding and telling more lies than Jack Neville and Alan Boyd combined, and that's plenty.

San Diego's newest National Historic District is the Gaslamp Quarter offering the sights and sounds of a Californian waterfront town of the 1890's. Guided walking tours are the way to go if you want to see everything. To make shopping a more pleasurable experience all sorts of mime acts, jugglers and barber shop quartets are great to see.

The Spanish village in Balboa Park is an arts and crafts paradise with over 40 studios and more than 100 working artists giving daily demonstrations in painting, pottery, glass blowing, glass staining and fusing to metal.

Mexico

After doing all this there is a change of pace by jumping the trolley (light rail) and head for Tijuana in Mexico. Tijuana is a free port and the U.S. Customs allow you to bring back \$400 U.S. of duty free items.

Bargaining is the norm in the clusters of small shops in a bazaar style atmosphere. Along the streets vendors sell anything and everything but give the Tamales a miss unless you have a very strong stomach. Photographers stand on street corners with donkeys painted to look like zebras to take tourists photos.

Other entertainment in Tijuana includes horse and greyhound racing and I bet they're honest just like Jack Neville. Bullfights are on every weekend but I personally don't go for this, I always want the bull to win.

One thing to remember before you head for Mexico is to make sure you have a multiple re-entry visa to get you back into the U.S.

Take a taxi from the border down town to the shops along Avenida Revolucion. I bought John Danby a T-shirt at Plaza Rio Tijuana and the Mexican guy wanted to know if he worked in a circus - I said he had for the last 25 years.

The Tijuana Trolley costs 50c to \$1.50 depending where you board and the trip lasts 40 minutes covers 35K and has 18 stops, a great day trip.

Speaking of days, go in the day time, if you go at night and stick to the well lit areas. This is the place where they taught Fagin!

Happy Travelling Silver

DIMELOW & GAYLARD'S FIRE

RICHMOND - NOVEMBER 10, 1906

From the Richmond Guardian, Nov. 17, 1906 edition.

Situated in Swan street, Richmond, Dimelow & Gaylard's was a drapery store run by a Mr. Jeffries. It was a two storey brick building which extended along Green Street to the railway line, having been added to considerably since Joseph Britten had erected it some 28 years before. Britten originally started on this site in 1853.

The alarm for fire was raised at about 7.30 P. M- on Saturday night, November 10, with the streets crowded with shoppers, They noticed that the goods in the Green Street window were on fire. Fed by flimsy summer materials and millinery, the flames sped along to the front windows, and soon they were two sheets of solid flame. The employees' efforts to extinguish the blaze proved futile. The fire spread rapidly to the centre and rear of the building, then to the upper floor and finally the roof.

By the time F/Stn. 17 (Lord Street) and other firefighters arrived, the building was one roaring mass of flames. Supt. Catt directed the fire fighting operations and police kept the large crowd under control. Within forty minutes of the outbreak only the walls of the building remained. A south westerly gale saved the four adjoining small wooden shops from destruction-

The fire was thought to have been caused by the fusing of an electric light wire in the Green Street window- Several customers and all the employees lost valuables in their hurried evacuation. The imported stock was insured for 11,300 pounds and the building for 4,450 pounds with the National Union Insurance. but this was quite inadequate to cover Mr. Jeffries who had stocked up for the Christmas trade. He said that a portion of the building would be rebuilt as soon as possible, so that business

I SWEAR IT'S TRUE!

Sometime during the late 1960's, a lady was walking past a fire station and was upset by the coarse language emanating from within. I hasten to assure readers that this could not happen today as the ruffians of those days



have long since retired and have been replaced by men, and women, who converse on a loftier plane!!

Back to the 1960's. This lady was so incensed she wrote a letter of complaint to the C.F.O. The C.F.O. of the day, being a fearless man of action, directed one of his Executive Officers to visit all stations and to instruct all members to moderate their language. This particular Exec. Officer expressed himself in a manner which can best be described as blunt, - not only did he call a spade a spade, sometimes it was a f..... shovel.

On arrival, he outlined the position and relayed to us the orders from the C.F.O. regarding bad language. Apparently he was unhappy about the task he had been given and did not have a high opinion of the C.F.O. His last words before leaving were, "I have been sent around to tell you this by that fool upstairs, so remember, this f..... swearing has got to stop".

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?

If you do, let's hear about it. We don;t want your life story, but if you have an anecdote, be it serious, amusing, or just something you want to share with us. If you think it would be of

interest to our members, send it in.

Don't worry about your spelling or grammar, none of us are Rhodes Scholars, we can tidy it up on the computer. If you have a photograph to go with the story, we can scan it and send it

RETIRE ED UPDATE

Members of the Retire Ed program have, since it's inception, received numerous awards for the community service they perform, not only for the Retire Ed but for other organisations as well. The work of volunteers is often undervalued and unrecognised. Below are two achievers who have been outstanding in their work as volunteers and have been appropriately rewarded.

BASIL SMITH

R.F.A. member, Basil Smith, one of the MFESB's RETIRE ED lecturers, was the recipient of an inaugural Deakin Community Australia Day Award. Basil was recognised for his contribution to his local community,



Basil Smith proudly shows his award to Commander Wayne Bradborn and Sharon Landers

predominantly as a result of his work with RETIRE ED. Phillip Barresi, MP, Federal Member for Deakin presented the awards, at a ceremony at the Whitehorse Town Hall in January.

Basil is an inaugural member of the RETIRE ED program and has delivered over 60 lectures to approximately 5000 senior citizens, most of whom live in the Deakin electorate. He has also become a familiar face at the Seniors Expo held each year during Senior Citizens Week and at Council Open Days, speaking to

people about fire safety. Basil also narrated a video on Fire Safety for Seniors which is used by all of the retired fire officers in their lectures. He, along with other members of the program, has received a Chief Fire Officer's Commendation for his work, a Fire Awareness Week Award for Community Service, a United Firefighters Union of Victoria Award, a Confident Living Award and the International Association of Fire Chiefs Award for Excellence.

Congratulations to Basil for his recent award.

WELCOME JOHN CANNON

John Cannon has recently joined the RETIRE ED team and has already been put to work at the Seniors Expo and delivering a number of lectures to groups in the Pascoe Vale area, where he lives with his wife Margaret.

John spent most of his Fire Brigade working life in Northern and Western Zones. The last seven years prior to his retirement in 1988 were spent at Deer Park Fire Station.

Since his retirement, John has been heavily involved in volunteer work for St. Vincent de Paul. He was honoured by an Order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem for his work with VACRO, the Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, assisting families of people in jail. It was a big thrill for John and his family when he realised that he was being knighted at the same time as the

FIRE SAFETY AND THE ISOLATED ELDERLY

Last winter was a particularly bad fire season for the MFB, with three elderly people dying in fires in the period of four days. Each of these people lived alone and was over the age of 75.

As a result of these fatalities, our attention has been drawn to the need for specific fire safety programs for elderly members of our community who live alone. We have approached a number

of agencies that provide care services for these people and are developing programs in partnerships with these agencies. We are working with Do Care and Whittlesea Council on training their carers to be more aware of fire dangers around the home and to take appropriate action to correct any potential fire hazards. The RETIRE ED Officers will be assisting with our training program for Do Care. They will also be conducting lectures via a telephone link up as part of Do Care's Telelink Program which allows people to access

information and chat groups via the phone in their own homes.

In taking on these new initiatives, we are looking for new recruits for the RETIRE ED Program. If anyone is interested in volunteering their time and expertise to the program, please contact Sharon Landers in Fire Prevention on 9420-3908.

FIRE AWARENESS WEEK

Fire Awareness Week will be held from October 25 - November 1, 1998.

Sharon Landers

BROWN'S BITS

From our roving correspondent of the North West of our fair city:

All jobs have their characters, and the MFB is no exception. Duffy Plummer was one of those people who could put a smile on your face or have you quaking in your boots if the situation warranted it. A brash sort of bloke, Duffy was not only a legend on the football field (back pocket player for the Bombers during the 40's) but his many exploits around the MFB stations were

Duffy, who was living in quarters at 52Stn. was doing a favour for a friend by cutting their lawn with a cylinder mower. As there was a fair bit of onion weed in the lawn - the mower was just bending it over and springing back.

Opposite to where he was mowing was a Service Station ran by his good friend and former team mate, Bill Hutcheson. Duffy went over to Bill and asked to borrow his Victa mower. Now as you know the early Victas had



The wild and dangerous Victa was known for its sneak attacks on the feet. But in typical Duffy manner, no grass eating, boot munching, piece of scrap iron frightened him.

no safety skirt, so Bill warned Duffy how dangerous they were. In typical Duffy manner he told Bill he knew what to do. Bill started the mower for Duffy and went back to attend to his customers.

Bill said that the next thing he heard was Duffy yelling and hopping around on one leg. Bill ran over and found Duffy with his shoe split in half and blood pouring from his toes. A trip to the doctor ensued where several stitches were inserted in his big toe.

After a couple of weeks off duty and getting around with a slipper on his injured foot, he decided to repair a pair of his kids shoes. His shed (which was in clear view of the station watchroom) was equipped with a short length of steel railway line which Duffy was using as a shoe last and as he reached over to grab something he knocked the line over onto his injured toe, splitting it wide open again. The yelling brought the boys in the watchroom to his assistance. The District car was summoned and transported him to the B.M.O. which resulted in a further couple of weeks off.

Now, you'd think that would be the end of it, but, there's more.

When the soreness eased and he could get a shoe on again he found himself home alone one Saturday (Myrtle and the kids had gone out), so he looked up the Moonee Valley race guide and decided that the first four favorites were certainties.

With forty pounds in his pocket he headed for the course and put ten pounds on the first - lost! Ten pounds on the next - lost! Ten pounds on the next - lost! With ten pounds left, "Lord"

QUOTES

Committees: A group of the unfit appointed by the unwilling to do the unnecessary.

All things I really like to do are either immoral, illegal or fattening.

Too much of a good thing can be wonderful.



"I can take 120 words a minute - if you say them slowly"

The English language does have lots of funny little quirks that appear to defy any rules or even logical explanation. This little gem attempts to correct some of these apparently odd features, with a strange result. The article is from a U 3 A newsletter by an apparently anonymous author. it's also on the internet.

(Hint. It's easier to make sense of and funnier if you read it quietly aloud.)

The European Union have announced that agreement has been reached to adopt ENGLISH as the preferred language for European communications, rather than GERMAN, which was the other possibility.

As part of the negotiations, the British government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a five-year plan to phase in what will be known as EuroEnglish (Euro for short).

In the first year, "s" will be used instead of the soft "c". Certainly, Sivil servants will resieve this news with joy. Also, the hard "c" will be replased with "k". Not only will this klear up konfusun, but typewriters kan have one less letter.

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekond year, when the troublesome "ph" will be replased by "f". This will make words like "fotograf" 20 per sent shorter.

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be expekted to reash the stage where more komplikatated shanges are possible.

Governments will enkourage the removal of

double letters, whish have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the horrible mes of silent "e"s in the languag is disgrasful, and they would go.

By the fourth year, peopl will be reseptiv to steps sush as replasing " th" by "z" and "w" by "v".

During ze fifz year, ze unesesary "o" kan be dropd from vords kontaining "ou" and similar shanges vud of kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of leters.

After zis fifz yer, ve vil hav a reli sensibl riten styl. Zer vil be no mor trubls or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi tu understand esh ozer.

Ze drem vil finali kum tru!

Well there it is. I thought it was amusing but one of my teacher friends assures me that it's about on a par with some of the essays he has to mark.

However, it was a bit worrying to discover that it was not as bad to type out as I thought it would be, so, maybe there is some logic in it, but the computer 'Spell Check' couldn't cope.

NOTICE TO PAST AND PRESENT SHELL FIREFIGHTERS

At a recent social lunch at the Shell Club, it was suggested that a get together of past and present Shell Firefighters and their partners be held at the Shell Club on Melbourne Cup Day, Tuesday November 3rd, 1998 for a luncheon.

It is hoped you will attend to make this function a success, and talk over old victories or otherwise of our time in the Shell Fire Service.

At this time, we can discuss making it an annual event and what format it should follow. At a time getting closer to this day, you will receive a reminder and an acceptance date (Approximately 1.9.98), to enable a booking to be made.

Please give this your support as we were/are a part of a unique Fire Service.

Hoping to see you Melbourne Cup Day 1998.

For further information contact Sam Freeth - telephone 03 5277 0280

LETTERS

Dear Editor

Relative to PP stations, I helped to relocate the old Heidelberg station (14) to Deer Park (44D). Ex DO West and I went out to Deer Park to peg out the site, on arrival we found the two external boundaries were stone walls, we set out to find the 4 surveyors pegs with 3 under the walls. I said to Mr. West I will look for the 4th one in the paddock, he said not to worry as we take our measurements from the hidden ones, after we pegged it out.

Tom York and I started to dig the post holes. It was like trying to dig through 250mm. of concrete and after a week I decided to look for the 4th peg and found it, when I lined it up with our set out. One corner stump hole was 1 metre outside the boundary line instead of 1 metre inside so we had to redig another 20 odd holes. Tom said he had dug enough bloody holes then watched me dig the rest. After that we got Ex 14 station onsite and working.

Old 14 station was closed in 1953 and relocated to Glencairn Ave. Deer Park 1953-1954 and the new station (43) opened in 1967. We travelled to Deer Park every day by the Tramway bus from the city.

Re PP articles in Water Off.

In 1954 while stationed at No1, I was given the petrol schooner for the day. On my list was PP station Croydon, I had to get the key from Ringwood, open Croydon, Drive H/Car out and fill it up with petrol then return the key and petrol docket to Ringwood. I can't remember what type of appliance it was but I thought it was a Bedford!

To; The Editor, "Water Off"

Enclosed herewith is a photocopy of an original certificate which was recently found among family papers. My uncle, Herbert J. Bligh (now deceased) was in the Merchant Navy during the 1939 - 45 war and was required to attend a course of instruction in fire fighting, a course he satisfactorily completed. He was issued this certificate signed by the then Chief Officer, David Kemp.

Lionel E. Rose

The certificate, pictured right raises questions like - "who were the trainers, to what extent were these auxillary firefighters trained and

Re the article on PP Stations and Hose Carriages

When I joined in 1954, there were 4 PP Stations, Greensborough, Croydon and 2 out west. They were manned by a S/PP and 3 other PP's. All were paid a retainer and extra for every drill or turnout. Names I recall were A. Snow S/PP (who did the same job for the Melbourne Harbour Trust), B. Ellingsen and J. Curran.

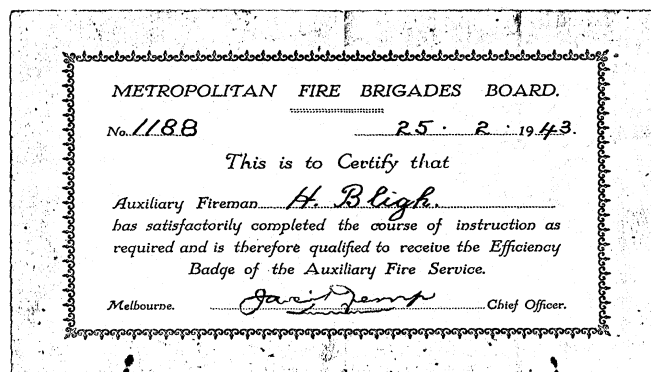
The original station was a tin shed at Stubby's Garage in Main St. Greensborough. The hose reel was towed behind the News Agent's car, he was Geoff Butterworth's father. When the MFB arrived they built a station in Church St. The shed was later moved to a sports ground in Ivanhoe.

The Hose Carriage was a 1934 Bedford with no doors, single wheels at rear, cable brakes and one way radio. Word back was possible if you were near a Street Fire Alarm (which was not often) or wait for the backup to arrive.

Some years later it was fitted with a 70 gallon tank and 3/4 inch hose reel. They were the fastest appliance in the job, but that ended when the tank was fitted. They become top heavy, the brakes could not handle the extra weight and dual wheels were never fitted. As a result turning out was made so hazardous that I understand some of the PP's turned religious.

When no PP's were available, a stand-by was sent up (usually from 14 Stn.). The names of these fellows (listed below) would make a who's who of the job in the 50's and 60's, but unfortunately most of them have passed away.

Bill Eaton, Bert Price, Jim Bohan, Stan Dean, Slim Johnson, Col Burton, Laurie Trewin, Wally Shanks, Arthur Pearson, Jack Lock, Eddie Howard, Russ Coulter, Jim Holmes, Wally O'Shannesy, Cliff Walker, Bill Strick, Jack Hayton, Laurie Murray, Jack Smith, Colin Lunn, Max Jarrold, Frank Hodder, Royce McVilly, Cliff



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