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TURNOUT

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THE UNITED FIREFIGHTERS UNION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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WEST AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

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During the Margaret River fires, Molloy Island in the Hardy Inlet was evacuated as the fires coming from the Milyeannup district threatened the East Augusta area.

Utilising the only means of access to the island the FRSWA Medium Pump and Career crew were ferried across the waters to assist the brave Molloy Island Bushfire Volunteers lead by FCO and Captain John Matten who stayed behind to defend what potentially posed a serious risk.

The 'Medium' was driven from the Training Centre and after approximately 17 years of faithful service in the metro area the grand old lady had her first river cruise to assist in the protection of a yet another community, albeit a long way from home.

Editor

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On the 31st of May 2011 over 300 members of the United Firefighters Union Western Australian Branch, with support from some Police and Unions WA officials, stood outside Parliament House and sent a very strong and determined message. It was heard by the Premier and an impromptu address by him, to the membership was made.

There was a roar of disapproval when comment was made that the rally was organised to bring attention for greater wages. There was a look of shock on the face of the Premier as he quickly realised this was not accurate.
Politicians, bureaucrats and Senior Managers just don't get that UFUWA members are not dollar driven but concerned for and protective of conditions that have been hard fought over many decades.

This was the day that the call for 'Jo must go' had its beginnings, obviously that message was heard long and loud, I can still hear the echo.

Editor

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Well 2012 is here and I take this opportunity to wish you all a successful and healthy new year. I especially acknowledge those among us that are coping with illness and or injury and wish you a speedy recovery.

2011 is a year to remember for the United Firefighter Union members across Australia with the introduction of Presumptive Legislation, a momentous event for professional firefighters.
The Instructors classification that has been ruled on by the WA Industrial Relations Commission is another development that needs to be recognised also as a landmark for UFUWA determination.
It was a year in which we experienced some of the worst incidents in our careers and hopefully they are not repeated and in the future we will be better positioned in both resources and training to deal with them.

Organisationally we do have renewed hope as the cycle of administrative stupidity that had a demoralising effect on us seems to have reached full circle and now with the appointment of our new CEO we will return fully to a service that is truly operationally focussed.

So, rather than dwell on the past it is far better to concentrate our efforts on the future in our shared responsibility of making this service and organisation as good as it can be.

Finally we have the mandate to evaluate, consider, develop and implement renewed pathways of education for all of our emergency services personnel. This renewed direction will hopefully ensure a more competent and educated leadership that will be promoted on merit, experience and educated capacity. We need leaders that are intelligent, operationally competent, inclusive, honest, and committed to the job if they are deserving of our loyalty and respect. We have seen enough of promotion based on internal politics and factional following.

It has long been a confusion and frustration to many of our members why the Public Safety Training Packages (PSTP) have not been adopted in our promotional pathway.

The PSTP is used for our Trainee Firefighters to Certificate II.
Certificate III is gained after 3 years of study in the Firefighter Development Program.
Station Officers study and complete Certificate IV.
This is where it stops and one could ask what about Diploma and Advanced Diploma?

Light is starting to dawn on marble heads and let's hope that this national pathway, that is already available, can be woven into District Officer and above development.

Other national brigades have used this approach for many years and the organisation not providing a learning environment for all its personnel is a vocational moral injustice.

It is interesting to note that within the PSTP are Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas in Emergency Management, Firefighting Management, Community Safety, Fire Investigation and State Emergency Services Operations for example and one would be right in questioning why this pathway of training has not been adopted before now.

Addition can be made in learning materials to enhance existing elements and local context is an example of that.

Further enhancement in the science of our vocation can be embedded to provide for more comprehensive training materials.

These packages also contain significant elements of Management and the previous belief of importing Management Diplomas into our vocational training is misguided and demonstrates a complete lack of knowledge of management content already written into the PSTP.

It is hoped that if the PSTP education is adopted how it should be, that tertiary education would follow and the organisation would be well advised to work with a given university in a partnership to develop and deliver Degree and Masters Programs in Emergency Management, utilising some uniformed personnel as lecturers in Units that are appropriate to so.

For others that we represent within the UFUWA there are streams of education within PSTP that are designed for Communications and Community Safety/Built Environment for example, that should have also been offered to further educate and recognise their competencies nationally.

As an organisation operationally, the Margaret River/Nannup/Milyeannup fires have demonstrated the undeniable value of interagency cooperation both strategically and tactically at bushfires. Many agencies including Department of Conservation, Local Government, Bushfire Brigades, Career and Volunteer Firefighters, private units, Volunteer Marine Rescue, Police, State Emergency Services, Civilian Support Staff, Public Utilities, Support Organisations, Community Groups and many others too numerous to mention worked together effectively to battle these disasters.

This is my last Turnout as Editor. I took on the role to fill the vacancy and overwhelming personal commitments and tenure of office have and are due to affect this.

In closing, I would like to recognise the valuable contribution that my peers have made on the Branch Committee of Management over the last 3 years and in particular, the services that have been provided by the Secretary has been outstanding, we are very fortunate to have him in this position.

I am optimistic that the years ahead in our chosen vocation will see considerable positive change and that many opportunities for those that deserve it will be offered.

As I have said before and will continue to reiterate, you the serving Firefighters of Western Australia continue to make the organisation look great operationally, let us all now extend ourselves to help clean up a few other less polished areas and many of you have already started to do to do this. What some non operational personnel do not realise is that we have a depth of talent from within our own ranks that would make many other organisations look ordinary. We don't need consultants to tell us what we already know and nor do we need them to offer advice on how we should go about our business. The notion that their temporary employ is a responsible expenditure of public monies is folly and a carry over of 1990s thinking that we need to convince politicians of.

I know that many of you are still studying at University and other providers. Some of you are doing Masters and PHD programs and it is to you people that we will look to in the future to take leadership positions.

We are living in challenging and exciting times and we need to reflect, savour and direct them.

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Strength in Unity.

Rob Forster
Editor

Dräger

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A lot has happened over the last 12 months. My last report was written in March and our last Turn Out Edition came out in June. Where has the year gone! In 2011 we encountered our worst summer fire season in the Metro area ever with 72 homes lost in the Kelmscott/Roleystone fires of February, 2011. I must pay tribute to all the crews that attended that fire, including my crew from Bassendean. A job well done to every one of you. Not one life lost. That is a testament to the courage and valour you all showed under extreme conditions that day on the 6th February, 2011 and it will go down in history as a catastrophic day for the State of Western Australia. A day 72 homes were destroyed but not one life lost. Many questions have been asked about the ability of all the Fire Services of W.A. as to their capabilities to handle such a fire. Many people have said that no amount of fire trucks could have saved that day. That is a matter of conjecture because our Fire Services have been under resourced for many years.

Two Reports were conducted. The first – An Operational Review by Stuart Ellison, paid for by FESA and as we thought, no surprises, all was deemed well in FESA. The second Report was ordered by the Premier and Cabinet and was conducted by the retired Federal Police Commissioner – Mick Keelty. This Report had wider terms of reference and was reporting back directly to the Premier and Cabinet without any interference from FESA.

The Report took 5 months to conduct and Keelty interviewed many stake holders. I've got to say, I was a little disappointed with some of the comments. In my view a Report like this should deal with facts and they should be backed up with evidence. It appeared to me that many of the comments made were hearsay and too much emphasis was placed on Volunteer statements, some of which were not relevant and clouded the situation. Some of these statements were not investigated or tested. Yes, mistakes were made but when Volunteer crews start self-deploying and defying operational orders, no wonder the blame game began as was evident in the Report. That Operational failure with regard to some volunteer crews being able to self deploy is still outstanding and needs to be addressed through legislative change - there should be one disciplined chain of command. So I would hope our senior Managers take the necessary action, and address these rogue crews before this summer's fire season, particularly the crew leaders. The UFU is very concerned that our Members will be working alongside some undisciplined people this summer and that could jeopardise crew and community safety. The other factor that was dealt with in the Keelty Report was the war going on between DEC and FESA. This had been festering since the Borabbin Fires in late 2007. It is clear from the Report that this conflict between the two Departments was not helpful during this incident, with each trying to win the high moral ground. I am not going to say who is right but what I will say is when two Departments cannot work together to get the job done, both are equally to blame and heads should roll in both Departments and the people responsible need to be held to account. As it happened the CEO of FESA was removed from her position and has been transferred to another agency. I am yet to see a tear shed by anyone, certainly not from within our Union membership.. As far as I am aware no DEC senior people have suffered the same fate. See this as you may but I would have thought DEC had some issues with their Management as well. Let's hope the attitudes and culture change in DEC as well.

Harrison Ward's removal comes as a welcomed relief for the UFU. The Union has been on the record many times going back to 2007 saying that our Service was being mismanaged and that we had documented evidence suggesting nepotism, cronyism and an attitude of complete disregard for the UFU and its Members concerns on many serious issues. The OSH Audit was one such issue where the previous CEO denied there was a problem. It was only after much lobbying of Members of Parliament that we finally got an OSH Audit. This OSH Audit was so bad and condemning of FESA's OSH practices that the Authority would not release it to us. The Union had to go to through the Freedom of Information and OSH complaints processes to get a copy of the Audit. But what this process showed was the lengths that a poorly led organisation would go to cover up the bad practices that were happening within FESA. And this was one of many long running disputes the UFU had with Harrison Ward. The Perth Fire Station debacle was another that became an embarrassment for the Premier and the Liberal Government. Harrison Ward's inability to talk and negotiate with the UFU on all matters was the stuff of legends. The previous CEO appeared to have convinced the Minister that the UFU were liars, trouble makers and not representing the majority of its Members. In the Union's opinion this lead to the Minister freezing the UFU out of meetings which effectively left FESA to run unchecked with a devastating impact on operations and services to our communities. Out of frustration we appealed to the Labour Party through Margaret Quirk to get our messages heard in Parliament by the Government.

The latest EBA negotiations really showed how bad things had become. Again the CEO contracted negotiators to do the work of FESA. Even though the contractors had no knowledge or understanding of our Industry and as such they wanted to apply a predominantly industrial mine site set of work practices to our service. All in the name of "fatigue management". The enormity of this ill-conceived, poorly thought out plan, caused much angst, anger and frustration amongst the Membership which led to our demonstration on the steps of Parliament House, dressed in Level 2 PPC. This I believe was when the penny dropped for the Premier, Colin Barnett. "We the Fire Fighters of Western Australia are not happy". We weren't happy with everything about FESA. The Management of FESA was at an all-time low. Every Member of Parliament was on notice from the day of our protest. For the Premier Colin Barnett to come out and address you all was a defining moment for all members. Because I believe it was the catalyst to the consideration by Government that all was not good within FESA. The Keelty Report then gave the Premier the impetus to deal with the damage that had accumulated over many years.

It makes me very pleased, because all the hard work was worth it. What started with Dave Bowers has continued with Graeme Geer and Lea Anderson. I feel blessed to have worked with such talented hard working people and thank them on your behalf. I also pay tribute to all of our BCOM Members from 2005 to 2011. A job well done. The Members that you select to serve you all have done a fantastic job, and you should be very proud of their hard work and commitment.

I believe our service is well on the way to returning to a better place. Let's all hope so anyway.
I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very safe, happy and prosperous New Year.

Kevin Jolly
President

It has happened - the struggle for justice that members and your Union officials have championed to have FESA made accountable is occurring and we live in interesting times!

The Union was a lone voice when trying to raise concerns about the direction the Fire Service was headed. We are lucky that the impetus did not involve the loss of lives - the loss of 72 houses was catastrophic enough for the right people to start listening and to insist on those in leadership being held responsible and accountable for their actions and lack of action over many years - in particular for the running down of our Fire Services.

We now have the opportunity to make sure the community receives the best fire service, and a service that can protect them and their homes.

The new CEO Wayne Gregson is saying the right things; hopefully he will secure the funding to ensure that he can deliver the changes needed. The Union looks forward to having the opportunity to be genuinely consulted. For too long under the old regime FESA just sent the Union their decisions about what would happen and they then dressed this up as consultation even though there was no genuine input from the Union representing professional front line fire fighters.

The campaign for better assistance for firefighters who have succumbed to cancer is progressing well. I anticipate by the time this Turnout is published the Fair Protection for Firefighters Bill will be new Commonwealth law. This is a great achievement for our members and the efforts and courage of the firefighters with cancer and their families who stood up and told their stores is applauded.

This campaign for the new laws is the most significant achievement of the National Union in our history. Peter Marshall (the National Secretary) has championed this initiative tirelessly. Thanks to Peter and everyone in our National Union Office.

The Bill covers our brothers and sisters in the ACT and Aviation branches. The next step is to campaign for the legislative changes in each State. We will be pursuing the changes with vigour to ensure that firefighters in Western Australia are also looked after properly. In September 2011 I had the honour of attending the IAFF Memorial for Fallen Fire fighters in North America. The memorial was held over five days in Colorado Springs. The local Union (Local 5) did an amazing job in looking after the families of the 87 fire fighters who died last year in Canada and the USA. The memorial was a truly moving event with each family reviving the IAFF flag from the Firefighters Honour Guard, who served with their lost Comrades. We need to embrace this most respectful ceremony and have a similar memorial in Australia and we need to do more with our memorial in Kings Park (near the base of the DNA tower, close to the road).

I would like to bring to every member's attention some of the great achievements that our Union has made in the last six years. WA Firefighters and Officers have had very good wage outcomes from the last 3 EBA negotiations, we are about to witness the restructure of FESA and our National Union has campaigned for significant new legislation. This has occurred because we are united and have hard working Officials, Committee Members and Delegates. As we go into the New Year, the three year term of the current Committee of Management expires. The great achievements that our Union has made will only continue through the hard work of a few and the support of all. I encourage all members to take the opportunity to become part of the hard working few - as Delegates and Committee Members.

I wish you and your families and friends a safe and prosperous New Year.

Graeme Geer
Secretary

I hope all of you, your families and friends had an enjoyable holiday season and the New Year is a safe, happy and healthy one.

There are few matters that I need to draw to your attention which mostly have arisen as a result of services that we provide to you as individuals, as well as some of the disputes that we have had over the last 12 months.

As you are all aware the new CEO is keen to change the culture of FESA and alone a couple of infamous departures from senior executives will not achieve this goal - the Union has on your behalf been firm and at times tough in our negotiations and we will continue to ensure that we represent you strongly. Any new working relationships have to be premised on respect and genuine consultation and communication. For too long our senior officers have worked in an environment where operations were emasculated by administration and where the provision of frank and fearless advice was not welcomed. The Union looks forward to establishing more positive working relationships based on respect and there are signs that the cultural "broom" sweeping through the organisation will be thorough and uncompromising.

Issues that need your attention:

1. Update Your Details:

Please make sure that when you change your address or telephone number that you advise the Union office by email - admin@ufuofwa.net.au.

When you marry, divorce or separate or have children please make sure that you update and change your will, your beneficiaries for the Firefighter's Benefit Fund and Superannuation.

If you do not have a will then please contact the Union office to make an appointment for you with Gibson and Gibson, getting your will organised is a free service that you can access as a result of your Union membership.

2. Grievances:

Grievances occur all the time and are best settled at the lowest possible level - that is between the parties involved. If you need help then speak to your Delegate or Station Officer or contact the Union Office.

Make sure that you have realistic expectations of what can be achieved - sometimes both parties need to recognise how they could have handled matters better and often there is a need to work towards re-establishing a positive and professional working relationship to ensure that the same issues do no re-surface.

When there are problems between two or more members the Union's role is to ensure that due process is followed and natural justice is afforded to all parties involved. It is not the Union's role to take sides in such disputes. The Union is interested in making sure that all disputes are settled at the lowest possible level and that wherever possible, common sense prevails.

The experiences that many of our members have had in the last couple of years arising from grievances have for the most part not been good and the Union does not believe that FESA's procedures and ways of dealing with such matters is efficient or effective. We have seen too many cases cross over into disciplinary matters and we have had too many members participate in so-called investigations without Union advice or representation. Remember to use your common sense, try and settle issues at the lowest possible level and if you need help then contact the Union office to organise an appointment with one of the Officials or me.

3. Your Rights to Union Representation:

If you are being investigated, or your have been requested to attend an interview about a matter that could have disciplinary ramifications you have the right to insist that the time of the interview or investigation is re-scheduled to ensure that you have Union representation.

If Management request a meeting with you - the following principles should apply:

1. Everyone has the fundamental right to representation at meetings with your employer if the meeting is to discuss any matter which may have an impact on your employment.
2. If the meeting is described to you as being "informal" but the nature of the meeting changes and you are uncomfortable, you have the right to request that the meeting is terminated until you can arrange union representation.
3. If the meeting is formal, you have the right to know the purpose of the meeting.
4. You have the right to know what you are suspected of doing or not doing.
5. Your have the right to take reasonable time to think about your response and this could be some time after the meeting. You do not have to answer all questions or complaints without being able to seek advice and / or representation.
6. If you take a Delegate or co-worker as your representative, they have a right to speak and to ensure that your are being treated fairly and that your rights are being protected.
7. If you need to seek further advice from the Union Office then you have the right to call an adjournment to the meeting and to seek that advice or to ask that the meeting be deferred until you have organised representation from an Official or Officer from the Union.

DO NOT succumb to pressure to complete the interview or have "an informal chat" - you have the right to be represented and to be able to seek advice. If you need urgent assistance outside of normal office hours then make sure you contact the DUTY PHONE on 0433 927 232 and if the Branch Committee representative on the duty phone cannot assist then he or she will call one of the Union's Officials or me.

Lea Anderson
Industrial Officer

Friday the thirteenth unlucky for some, but not me on the thirteenth may 2011 at 3.45 I stood on top of the highest mountain in the world! and it was pitch black I couldn't see a thing. I was the first person to stand there that day and after a few minutes shivering and contemplation I decided to wait for sunrise. Huddled behind a small snowy ridge amongst the many prayer flags and personal items that people had left to please the mountain gods I watched people start to arrive .It was a quiet day by Everest standards due to it being an early summit attempt ,the weather at minus 27 plus wind-chill was by Everest standards not to bad. Half a dozen people came and went as I sat there they took a quick photo in the dark then headed down I began to question whether it was right to wait I'd taken a quick photo before my camera died then tried to radio base camp to say I'd made the summit but couldn't get through. An hour later as the sun began to rise it was all worth-while ,bringing with it a promise of warmth the light began to advance across Tibet it was the most amazing scene that was worth all the effort.

The trip began in Kathmandu where I met the other member of the expedition thirteen of us in all, four women and nine men all varying ages and backgrounds I weighed them up wondering who had whatever it took and more importantly did I.

After sorting out the logistics we flew into Lukla airport landing on the tiny air strip which I've since found out is on the list of most deadly runways, which makes sense as it has a wall at one end that's 45 degrees and a sheer drop at the other. However we landed safely and began the eight day trek into base camp mixing it with various acclimatization climbs along the way.

Base camp at 5334 m higher than any mountain in western Europe is no mean feat, trekkers were getting left by the wayside even helicoptered out suffering from the onset of altitude sickness .Fortunately all our group made it though even at base camp you were out of breath putting on your boots or walking to the cook tent this all made for internal mind games of how we were possibly going to get to the summit a further two and a half km higher.

After being at base camp about a week I set my alarm for 6.30 am the next morning for a 4.30 start through the ice fall, it has to be early as later in the day it would start to melt and become too dangerous to pass through. The year before it had taken climbers 8 hrs to get through to camp one a mere 500 m higher but after three and a half hours and many crevasse crossings I stood at camp 1 .Unfortunately not by my amazing ability it was just easier this year a bit like firey schools the one before was always harder.

So this is how it went for the next few weeks up to camp 1 back down rest up to camp 1 sleep the night up to camp 2 in the morning then back to base camp before the afternoon meltdown climb high sleep low was the general rule.

Unfortunately our weather info wasn't top notch and we got caught in the infamous Everest weather on numerous occasions where it was all you could do to stop the tent blowing away with you in it, many other expeditions lost tents through not being in them when the storms arrived.

The trip to camp two wasn't too bad except for the dangers of the icefall a place where the true heroes of Everest the sherpas are extremely scared of they move through there at a fast pace carrying huge loads refusing to clip into fixed lines as it slows them down and that means more time in the icefall.

The climb to camp 3 is where the work starts the Lhotse face is an 80 degree slope of snow and ice and rises up to 7000 m where the air is thin. The task for the day was up to camp 3 and back to camp 2 .I set off on an early start again with Nelson a 26yr old American who climbed at the same pace as me which was a little unusual as he was 6 ft 7 and I'm barely 5ft .As we got to the bottom of the main slope about an hour in we'd left the rest of the group behind and we sat for a little rest but as I spoke the worst thing happened my words were all messed up I knew what I wanted to say but it was coming out all confused. Nelson looked a bit bewildered mainly because he couldn't get my accent anyway so he just nodded politely. I ushered him to carry on and sat there for ten minutes saying my address and date of birth over and over till it came out properly then I made the

decision to carry on and keep this little episode to myself. If I told the guides I may not be allowed to continue and I wasn't going to let a little speech defect stop me. The rest of the climb to camp three went well I arrived shortly after Nelson at the tents that had been set up by the Sherpas. Camp 3 is chiseled into the ice on the side of the mountain you have to be roped up at all times people have died going for a pee and not clipping in slipping on the ice and sliding nearly a km down the Lhotse face. We stayed for an hour the allotted time to get the benefit of the higher altitude then headed down passing the other climbers of our expedition still heading up but unfortunately not everyone was there the Lhotse face had claimed the first three of our group who had decided it wasn't for them.

The next day we were supposed to head up again to camp3 and sleep there this time but Everest with its very own weather pattern had other ideas, another storm, and we were battened down in camp two. The forecast was it would be like this for a few days so we decided to head down to base camp for a rest and some better food though most people's appetite by now was diminishing even though we knew no fuel meant no summit.

Early may arrived and we got the rumor of a summit window on the 11th 12th of May but most expeditions chose to ignore it and wait for the usual window of about a week later. The window is when the jet stream winds stop on the top of Everest long enough to climb into the death zone (above 8000m) to the summit and back without getting blown off.

By this stage there had been two deaths on the mountain one at camp three and one at camp two so most people were getting a little edgy but the thought of getting a quieter window with less people going for the summit which means you can move faster and less chance of frostbite sounded good.

We set off straight to camp two on the 9th may then the ten remaining climbers set off for camp three the next day .I was with Nelson following the same routine but felt really bad this day no energy but slogged up to the base of the Lhotse face where again my words began to play up I was becoming a little anxious at this stage and a lot weaker than normal. I sent Nelson off again he was a strong climber I didn't want to slow him down a few of the others had caught me by this point and I was at my lowest the closest I'd come to turning back but my words came back to normal and though still feeling bad the encouragement of the others helped me to go on .What took me 4 hrs last time took me 7 hrs to complete but I'd made it to camp 3 time to boil some ice for water and get some food.

The climb to camp 4 begins steep then traverse across and over the yellow band and up to the south col which is where you rest for ,supposedly ,a few hours before heading off about 11 pm for the summit. The col (camp 4) is just below the death zone and is extremely cold and our expedition leader advised us all to avoid staying there at all costs. The place is littered with bodies and although when the sun is out it looks a beautiful if not chilly place it can turn deadly in an instant.

The next morning on the 11th may after a freezing night with not much sleep due to the feeling of suffocation due to the lack of oxygen I got ready to head to the south col not quite sure how I'd feel after the previous day I took my time and set off last but to my surprise I felt good. It could have been due to the fact we were all now on oxygen 2 liters per minute but I slowly overtook everyone and arrived at the col to look for camp 4 that should have been set up by the Sherpas previously .The camp wasn't there and neither were any Sherpas I sat alone, other than a few people from other teams, at the south col for 1 and a half hours trying to keep warm looking at the remains of people who never quite made it. The wind was howling and it was cold I huddled down and eventually a Sherpa or two turned up pointed in the direction of the tents buried under snow and we dragged them out and set up camp 4 at 8000 m.

This is where it gets a bit crazy we were supposed to attempt the summit that night after a few hours rest but the weather had other ideas we were pinned down at camp 4 for 36 hrs with little food and limited fuel for melting snow .As we were told to spend as little time as possible here there was a little unease ,just below the death

zone your body is slowly dying there's no more acclimatization at this point so it was a little worrying having to spend this much time there which in the end would cost some of the expedition members their summit. We lost 3 more people between camp 3 and 4 it had just become too hard with just a third of the oxygen here than at sea level even with supplementary oxygen it was still difficult to breathe after a few meters of climbing .However with 7 people left on the night of the 12th may we set off for the summit it was 7.45 pm black other than the round circle of light from my head torch which for the next few hours would become mesmerizing as I plodded upward. The first 4 hrs flew by it was steep but I was the first person that day so i could keep moving and keep warm it wasn't like the horror stories of people queuing and standing still for an hour or so. I'd past the balcony by this time one of only a few spots where you can stand flat and take a rest and was working my way along a ridge with a severe 3 km drop on one side when the rope suddenly veered off tight digging into the snowy ridge .I tried to pull it up but it was too tight I had to disconnect and make my way along the rest of the ridge with no protection .I waited at the other side for the sherpa who casually informed me there was a dead Japanese climber from the night before still attached to the rope !

It didn't really sink in at the time I felt good and continued chasing my dream higher and higher it turns out he was an experienced climber who had twice summated Everest and was doing it to raise money for victims of the Japanese tsunami .He was on supplementary oxygen and had a full team of Sherpas ,had I known that at the time I may have thought twice about carrying my novice ass up the rest of the way...

However at 3.45 am I arrived at the summit

My friend Nelson after coming across the dead climber went on a bit further but his nerves a little shot by the experience and some very cold fingers decided he would head back down he was an hour from the summit, a difficult but brave decision. Of the four remaining women one would make the summit and the others a bit worse for wear from the extra hours at camp 4 turned round early .The other summiteers was Jan a crazy 50 year old base jumper from Germany who is hoping to return and base jump from the top on the Tibetan side a sample of the crazy people that Everest draws towards it some seeking fame and fortune and some just chasing dreams.

Now what can I do next...

Kevin Farebrother

John Steenson – Pioneer fireman of Western Australia

John Steenson was one of a handful of pioneer firemen in the state of Western Australia. Unlike many that came and went, John Steenson stood the test of time serving an enduring 48 years in various fire brigades in and around Perth. By all accounts he was held in high regard by the Perth community in general and firefighters in particular.

John Steenson was born in Belfast, Ireland in 1862. There are little if any details regarding his parents or siblings as many of Ireland's records have been lost. John's life in Australia began on November 14th 1885 when the 3 masted, 596 ton iron barque Aikshaw[1] arrived in Fremantle from London with 19 other passengers[2]. John disembarked into a very different world; that of the colony of Western Australia.

John Steenson [center front] and crew, 1919

He appeared to settle quickly into his new life. By 1887 he was employed as a machinist at the West Australian newspaper and had already joined the just formed Metropolitan Voluntary Fire Brigade (Perth). It was with joining the volunteers that John would soon form a friendship with the most influential person in the history of the WA fire brigade, James McFarlane Lapsley. Their acquaintance is the substance of this article.

In the earliest days of the brigade John distinguished himself as the presentation of a certificate by then Superintendent Lapsley in 1898 attests to:

> *"The Superintendent referred at some length and in eulogistic terms, to the good services rendered during many years by ex-fireman Steenson, and expressed regret that the circumstances should have compelled him to sever his connection with the brigade"*[3]

The connection was not severed for long however. In 1902 he reappeared on the roll of the newly formed North Perth Volunteer Fire Brigade (NPVFB) as inaugural apparatus officer[4]; a position which marked him as 3rd in charge. The resignation of first captain Edward Bolton and the death of captain Frederick Maller in 1908 saw John take the captain's role. He would remain with the North Perth brigade until he retired as the View street station keeper in 1931.

John was an athlete of note in the colony acquitting himself well in the fields of fire brigade competition, tug of war, roller skating and rowing. The latter sport saw John Steenson as stroke

1 http://www.mightyseas.co.uk/marhist/maryport/built_elsewhere/aikshaw.htm
2 http://members.iinet.net.au/~perthdps/shipping/
3 Western Mail, Friday 29th April, 1898 p12.
4 West Australian, Monday 13th July, 1903 p7.

spend time with the diminutive James Lapsley as coxswain. J M Lapsley was the second captain of the then brand new Swan River rowing club which was formed in 1887. Lapsley was to have a race, the Lapsley fours named in his honour and John Steenson had his son go on to row for the club, winning the Lapsley fours in 1914. As far as the roller skating mentioned previously goes:

> *"The ½ mile handicap for firemen was the moans (sic) of bringing forward a large number if competitors. It was won, after an exciting race by J Steenson, one of the scratch men."*[5]

The race was conducted inside the Perth Town Hall, then home to the brigade and Perth social life.

The advent of the 1909 fire brigades act meant all independent brigades would eventually come under the control of the metropolitan fire brigade headed by superintendent Lapsley. As history shows, Lapsley became the first chief officer. Steenson however went from captain and being occasionally referred to as chief officer of the previously independent North Perth fire brigade to be the first station officer there. His crew consisted mainly of auxiliary firemen until the passing of the years saw permanent staff take the reins.

On the 24th of March 1910 John Steenson signed the first ever brigade order of the WA fire brigade, brigade order number 1. It was co-signed by Chief Officer Lapsley. This honour no doubt bestowed upon John Steenson by his friend James Lapsley.

John passed away in 1935, just 4 years after his retirement and only 4 years after Lapsley died. His pall bearers included chief officer Gerhard, deputy chief officer Flynn, UFU president Moylan and UFU vice president Harding. His send off did not differ greatly to that which would normally be reserved for higher ranks than station officer, such was the regard in which he was held.

5 Western Mail, Saturday 23rd February, 1889

LEST WE FORGET

As some of you will already know, I am one of the organisers of the Fire and Rescue Service Flag Party. The Flag Party attends formal ceremonial occasions to assist with the running of these events for the Fire and Rescue Service. Some examples are, Trainee Fire Fighter School March out parades, ANZAC Day Parades and we were honoured to attend the funeral of SFF Todd Liddington.

Not long before ANZAC Day 2011, I was approached to organise a Flag Party to march on the day. After ringing all the usual Flag Party members, I realised I was going to have trouble getting a group together. All the usual members were either on duty, or had prior family arrangements. I ended up with only one person other than myself, and he was going to cancel other plans to attend.

I decided I would tell the DO organising our part in the event that I was unable to supply a Flag Party for that ANZAC Day. I was not happy to do this, but felt I had no choice.

I was contacted later by the Parade Commander and asked if I would attend and carry the Fire Brigade Flag on my own, which I agreed to. On the day, I arrived at the meeting point expecting to see some other Firies and a lot of volunteers, as the Easter Championships were on the Saturday and Sunday before. To my surprise, when we lined up at our allocated start point, there was only about 25 or so volunteers, one retired Firefighter, the Chaplain, the Parade Commander and myself.

I was very disappointed with this turnout, and although it was expected that numbers would be down due to ANZAC Day falling on the Easter weekend, for no-one to show up from Fire and Rescue was a shock for me. I also received feedback that FESA, who provides a free sausage sizzle and drinks for those that march, at the Education centre afterwards, were not impressed with the turnout either. Say what you like about FESA, they do fully support Fire Fighters marching on ANZAC Day.

I spoke to a few people about what could be done to improve this in the future, and this article is one of the things suggested to me. I thought I could use this forum to explain to you all why Firefighters march on ANZAC Day and why I feel it is important for the tradition to continue.

Firefighters have told me in the past that they don't feel comfortable marching on ANZAC Day, as they are not ex servicemen, and I understand their view, however Firefighters don't march only because they have been in the Armed Forces.

As some of you will no doubt know, "Universal Military Service" was introduced in January 1911 after a visit from Lord Kitchener in 1910, and at his recommendation. It continued to provide 3 months compulsory military training until it was abandoned in 1929.

In 1939, Robert Menzies re-introduced the scheme but added a "List of Reserved Industries and Occupations". Every male between the ages of 21 to 41 was conscripted unless your occupation was on the list and you were above the age listed. I have seen a copy of the "List" in the Reid Library at the University of Western Australia. It's entry for Firefighters is as follows:

Fire Brigades –
Full Time Members, Public Fire Brigades
Part Time Members, Public Fire Brigades
30 Years.

This means that not only were Firefighters (full time or volunteer) who were less than 30 years of age not conscripted; they were not allowed to volunteer, even if they wanted to.

So, during WW1, Firefighters were encouraged to "join up" but during WW2 they were not allowed to participate (if under 30). You can imagine how that went over with some people at home.

The tradition of observing a public holiday on 25th April for ANZAC Day first began in 1921, when it was agreed to at the State Premiers Conference of that year. Western Australia was ahead of the game however, as we had begun marching on ANZAC Day in 1916 and we have been doing it ever since. Returned servicemen who had become Firefighters found it difficult to march in the early days because they were on duty and unable to be released.

The RSL WA, who is responsible for organising and running ANZAC Day Parades in Western Australia, decided to allow Firefighters (and Police), who could not march otherwise, to march in their current uniform. When I spoke to the RSL in researching this article, they told me that the practise of Firefighters marching on ANZAC Day was "steeped in tradition" and they encouraged as many Firefighters as possible to march to remember those who came before us.

In further research, I also decided to look at what happens in other states. I found some very interesting statistics. In NSW, more than 160 Firefighters took part in the 2009 ANZAC Day March in Sydney. About 200 Firefighters took part in the 2011 ANZAC Day March. Fire and Rescue NSW holds a remembrance service and wreath laying ceremony at City of Sydney Fire Station prior to the march. This tradition has been followed since 1928!

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade's Charity Running Club in Victoria has completed ANZAC Day memorial runs from Canberra to Melbourne in 2005, 2006 & 2007, and in 2008 ran from Gallipoli, through Turkey, Greece, Italy, France and Belgium and finished in London.

Now, I am not proposing that we start up a running club and run around Europe, nor do I think that 200 Firies should turn up next ANZAC Day however, if you have ever wondered about it and thought you might like to march, or you are interested in becoming part of the FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE Flag Party, at least now you know that although the origins of ANZAC Day marches may be military, you will be welcomed to march on ANZAC Day, even if your background is military or not. If you try it and don't like it, sobeit.

For me, it is about saying thank you and showing respect for those who came before me and what they had to suffer for us all.

I would like to thank the Australian War Memorial – Research Section, the University of Western Australia – Reid Library and the Western Australian Branch of the RSL for their assistance in providing information to research this article.

Thanks for reading.

Gary Cope
B Platoon
Maddington Fire Station

Call for interest in the proposed UFUWA Marching Band

The United Firefighters Union Western Australia Branch is calling for expressions of interest for any members that may be interested in being part of a Pipe, Wind and Percussion Marching Band.

Consideration will be given to relatives and friends of the UFUWA members particularly those that may be Bagpipe musicians.

Retired Firefighter Toby O'Brien will coordinate and organise many of the arrangements and even train a couple of Band Majors if that is your desire.

If you play a musical instrument that suits the requirement of a Marching Band contact the Editor, Rob Forster who will provide more details.

Editor

Wanted – Motor Sport Fans

The Australian Formula 1 Grand Prix needs you!

The Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (CAMS) is seeking more Volunteer Fire Marshals to be part of their Officials Team in Melbourne on 15 -18 March 2012.

CAMS Fire Marshals are the trained Fire & Rescue personnel located at fire points around the circuit, in pit lane and on mobile fire/rescue units. Many are volunteer firefighters from the CFA/RFS with some others being career firies from around Australia.

Being a Volunteer Fire Marshal obviously means there is no payment. CAMS supply the required PPE, lunch, a few beers every night, a Thank You Dinner and a couple of general admission passes. There is no assistance with travel or accommodation costs.

CAMS require all Fire Marshals to be accredited and that will require new officials to attend a short induction course the Wednesday before the Grand Prix.

The Grand Prix is held Thursday thru to Sunday with the F1's on the track for 3 days. V8 Super Cars, Porsches, celebrity races and others make up the support categories.

Fire Points are usually manned by 2 or 3 fire marshals (at least 1 has previous experience), with extinguishers, and they are responsible for the part of the race track in front of them up to about 50 metres either side. Standing behind a concrete safety barrier 2 metres away from a screaming Formula 1 race car traveling up to 300km/h is a thrilling experience.

I would suggest that only motor sport enthusiasts attend as being put in the same spot for 9 hours a day for 4 days could get boring. I've been lucky enough for the last few years to get fire points near the crowds and the big screens.

The CAMS Officials application form is on their website.

For more information contact me on 0403 307768 or alane@fesa.wa.gov.au

Andy Lane

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It's been a while since the word "Transfield" graced the pages of the Turnout Magazine, and I thought that it was high time (and a good time) that the greater union membership heard from the minor players on the field down at Fleet Base West in good 'ole Rockingham town. I will leave it up to my respected delegate colleague at RAAF Pearce to give you the "down low" on what is currently happening in the Bullsbrook section of town in another edition.

To refresh the memories, Transfield Services FRS provides 24/7 response coverage at Fleet Base West (HMAS STIRLING) and RAAF Pearce (which includes the Gin Gin air operations area). The rank structures are a little different to the FRS, but the purpose is the same. The essential difference between the 2 sites is that FBW is more geared to domestic i.e. structural / HAZMAT / RCR incidents with air crash rescue response, whereas the Pearce crews are primarily air crash rescue response.

I took over as delegate in about February 2011 after the previous delegate was unceremoniously sacked by Transfield management due to issues that were so cloudy that rain was a distinct possibility. The fallout from this still permeates the work area, but I am determined that we move on and focus on the real issues – keeping management accountable whilst remaining committed to providing the best fire and rescue service that Navy (in my case) needs. I guess that I am not Robinson Crusoe when I say that being the delegate presents its own set of interesting obstacles and associated challenges. But change does not happen without effort, and I am doubly determined to see that we set the bar for management to follow.

2011 EBA was the big-ticket item for us and while it wasn't as protracted as the FRS campaign, the negotiations were nonetheless interesting to say the least. Management has a new IR Manager on their team, and his tactic of coming to the negotiation table initially without any hard monetary offer was ballsy, if nothing else. But, we have achieved a good outcome for our members, and management will also eventually understand that we are serious about what we do, and that is not always about the almighty dollar.

There are a number of issues that are loaded into the Howitzer and are ready to be fired off. The first will be the age and decrepit state of the appliance that masquerades as the Stirling Pump (MP). It is a sad day when you publicly come out and state that you would prefer the oldest FESA FRS Series 3 Scania medium pump over our current Hino BOS (bucket of ……) any day of the week. Our pump has been around for about 10 years now, and should be put out to pasture. And then whilst your pump is away getting something in the order of $40,000 worth of repairs done to the chassis, the "hot spare" is more like a cold spud. Nothing says second-rate more than a similar appliance with completely different internal locker layout so the LT No. 1 and 2 members have their individual BA set lying sideways in the LT lockers where their turnout bags / PPC should be. So high on the post-EBA agenda will be a "what's the strategic plan for a decent medium at FBW?" Their answer will assumedly be high on the jocularity factor.

Management have also recently appointed a long-overdue Fire Services Manager (FSM). The only problem with this move is that he doesn't come from and operational fire & rescue background - only a RAAF and management background. Given the fact that the new FESA CEO seems to be saying the right things one can only hope that our new FSM is a man of his word when he talks about bringing standards up and competencies to match the skills. Watch this space.

So how do I see the road ahead? I don't see any walls being put up, and any obstacles along the way will be classified as speed humps only. My colleague at RAAF Pearce and I are united in our quest to bring the two Transfield Fire & Rescue Service stations together so that we can achieve as a unified team and keep management well and truly honest. Without unity, it's the team of champions as opposed to a champion team. I prefer the latter option, and that's what I am working to. And I am always grateful for the support of numbers from our FRS members, which I accept is the bulk of the Union membership here in the West.

Brendon McLaughlin

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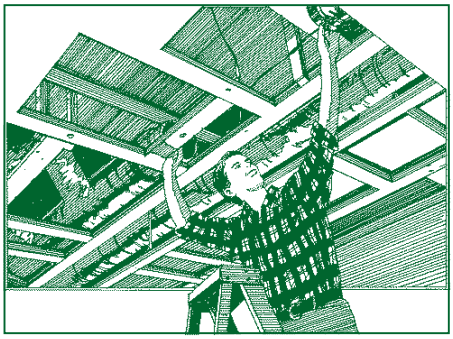


September 11th is a date that evokes a lot of emotion and reflection, possibly more so for Firefighter's around the world than at any other time. Something that was very evident by the sheer amount of Firefighters who attended some of the commemorations around New York on the 10th anniversary. Whether it's because we have an affinity for the 343 Firefighter's that lost their lives on that day or just because it reminds us of the potential dangers we face every shift, it's a time that we can think about our role in the community and the sacrifice that many of our colleagues have made before us. For the lucky few of us that got to share that day with the Firefighter's of the FDNY and to hear their stories first hand, it reminded us of the strong kinship that we share and the depth of our connection to men and women around the world doing the same job as us.

A handful of Firies and some of their partners from WA Fire & Rescue decided to accept an invitation to attend a more personal commemoration at the Chinatown Fire House. We were overwhelmed by the generosity of these fire fighters who welcomed us like family. These gentlemen have a special story of their own from 9/11.

Chinatown's Ladder Company 6 and Engine Company 9 were quick to respond to the calls that morning as they are less than 2 miles from the World Trade Centre. They were entering the North Tower when the second plane hit at 9:03am. They saw the reflection of the explosion off another building and went in anyway. The crew members from Ladder Company 6 had climbed up over 30 storeys when the south tower collapsed 9:59. It was slow going through the thick stream of people trying to get out. They quickly realised that the South tower had collapsed and decided that if it could fall, so could the building they were in.

They made the decision to evacuate and started making the long way back down the stairs knowing that the clock was ticking. They had an easy passage down compared to the throngs of people trying to get out on the way up but they were exhausted.

On the 16th floor they came upon a Port Authority worker who was helping an older lady awkwardly down the stairs. The Firefighter's offered their help and began to assist Josephine Harris, a 59 year old grandmother, down the stairs. But she was exhausted. She had come down from high up in the tower and her legs would no longer carry her. They were making slow progress.

At the fourth floor she collapsed and insisted the Firefighters carry on without her. They did not and the decided to stay with her. The decision saved their lives. Minutes later at 10:24am, the second tower collapsed with all 6 of the Ladder Company and Josephine inside. It took 10 seconds for the tower to collapse and the Firefighter's said they could hear every floor coming down on top of each other, each time getting faster and faster. In the aftermath, 16 people survived from that stairwell. One was being blown down all the way from the 22nd floor while others were on the 1st. They were the only survivors from both buildings to survive the collapse and it meant that miraculously, no one from the Chinatown station was killed at 9/11. For them it's a strange mix of emotions. Keiren Willhelm explained while they are elated that no one at their house got killed, they are equally devastated by the number of colleagues they lost from other stations. Like the next house to the north of theirs that lost the entire platoon.

A handful of Firies from WAFRS got to experience that story first hand from the company in Chinatown. One of the survivors, Sol D'Agostino still works there while the others have moved on. We stood in silence as the entire company, dressed mostly in their best uniform, for a moments silence for the plane that hit the first tower, then the second, then for each building collapse, a moment for when the pentagon got hit and finally for the doomed flight 93.

It was clearly an emotional day for the members of the FDNY but they welcomed us into their House, offered us breakfast and refreshments, and showed us around their station and also the few artefacts that were recovered and identifiable as belonging to that company. Like the small piece of what remained of their fire pump which could be held up by one person. The rest was obliterated in the collapse.

I had countless offers of thanks from many members of the FDNY from all ranks for joining them on that morning, as I'm sure the other WAFRS firefighters did. They were amazed and thankful that we felt so deeply for them that we wanted to share with them in the moment. Personally I was shown that through tragedy comes resilience. I saw the bond we share as firefighters alive and well and just as strong between our colleagues across the world as it is across the dinner table on shift. It is a day I will remember for those reasons and what we can achieve when we stick together.

Mark Hatty

DODGEBALL - A TRUE UNDERDOG STORY

For decades, competitors of the World Police and Firefighter Games have battled it out in a range of gruelling events to establish where the most superior athletes lie. Traditional marquee events like the Ultimate Firefighter, the Half Marathon, the Arm Wrestling and even the Gaelic Football have witnessed heroics and gut-wrenching performances not even the Olympics would be lucky to produce. And at the 2011 NY games, like a lone cowboy stumbling into town and squaring off against the villainous sheriff, a new legend was born – DODGEBALL!

Our team, a variable bunch of misfits and loveable loons led by Captain Jason Dunn entered the Jacob Javits Convention Centre with high but unlikely hopes. Up until our team photo and warm up 30 minutes before the game, our training had involved watching Dodgeball the movie and skimming over an old rule book one of the boys had found in a skip bin in the mid 80s. Sure our knowledge was minimal but this was New York baby - the "concrete jungle where dreams are made of". Our positive attitude alone would at least get us to the finals right!?

Stepping out onto court was like entering a Hollywood film set. There was a booming soundtrack playing over the PA, an over enthusiastic announcer/commentator with a few quick one-liners, and bikini clad cheerleaders (both men and women) provided amusing entertainment.

Fans and supporters from all over the world cheered from the sidelines dressed in different traditional apparel; Norwegian's wore Viking helmets, Polynesians wore grass skirts and the NZ FRS team wore sheepskin hats and rugby socks. And apart from one dust up between the NYPD & FDNY, the mood and vibe of the Dodgeball arena was unmatched at the games. Everyone was in good spirits and having a laugh.

Our referee for the first 10 games was a tall leggy brunette with a penchant for the Aussie accent, and she was nice enough to explain the updated rules of the game to us literally within seconds of the first showdown. "Now there's 6 balls on the court and I don't have 6 pairs of eyes, so if you get hit, be honest and walk off the court" she said; an aspect of the game which perhaps we were the only ones to hear and would later prove to be our downfall. "Other than that, enjoy."

We lined up on the rear of the court and peered confidently at our first opponents – Norwegian Firefighters. As the starting clock counted down I remember the ref telling us that although games can run for 5 minutes, most only last about 1 to 2 minutes. "3, 2, 1 Dodgeball!" our team ran on court and balls rained down on us from every direction like artillery shells on a Normandy beach… we lasted 18 seconds. "Norway wins!"

A little embarrassed but not disheartened, our team strategized, and with better tactics was able to beat the Kiwi's in the second game, as well as a few others along the way. Our final tally was 6 wins and 12 losses. In the end we discovered that it's a game of luck, a game of excitement, and a game of great spectacle. We may not have won the gold medal, or even made it to the finals, but these stallions of fortune certainly won the crowd's heart and brought back a truckload of respect. In fact, the Nassau Police Department labelled the WA FRS Dodgeball team "the gentlemen of the tournament" because of our honesty during our games, and our willingness to have a laugh over a few beers at the end of the day's play… twist our arm.

Special thanks to Jason Dunn for organising and leading the team, and congrats to my teammates Benny Abbott, Pete Carroll, Mark Hatty, Rusty Jones, Glen O'Donnell and Matty Parks, as well as our second night 'ring ins' Johnny Calabrese, Lethal Lee Draman, Stuey Glenn and Bronson "Dodge This" Franceschi. The games now have a new marquee event – Dodgeball! I can't wait for Belfast in 2013.

Callum Bydder

GAELIC FOOTBALL REPORT
New York 2011

"We're not just a group of blokes in a footy team that have become mates. We're a group of mates that have put together a footy team. And that's different."

The 2011 New York Police and Firefighter Games saw the advent of a few "firsts" for the WAFRS. It was the first time a bloke got married at one. It was the first time 4 guys shared 2 beds and it was the first time we entered a Gaelic Football Team. Only one of those it seems, was a bad idea.

A fair bit of interest was generated by the idea of putting together a team and pretty quickly a core group of guys were training at Wellington Square, getting their heads around the rules. Once the lads thought they had a grasp of it all we went and watched a local Gaelic match and realized we still had a fair way to go. After watching the first ten minutes of the game, Mort Boe turned me and exclaimed; "We need to do more training". And so the preparations took a step up and after more skills sessions, scratch matches and coaching… we were ready.

Our first game was against the NYFD who were the reigning gold medalist from 2009 and all from strong Irish backgrounds. They expected an easy game, but were

given a nasty surprise. They found themselves only just in front at half time against a Western Australian Team that had clearly taken the time to learn the game, practice and implement a game plan and who were playing with every intention of winning a medal. Not only that but the physicality of our game had them rattled and they were down two players after the first ten minutes. We took full advantage of that and ran all over them in the second half, finishing agonizingly short of victory in a game that ended in a draw.

We went on to lose to the NYPD but beat the Northern Territory in what was a pretty physical game that at times threatened to spill over. To our boys credit they kept their composure and refrained from retaliating, knowing we couldn't risk anyone getting sent off and missing the finals. The Northern Territory had no such concerns and threw what they had at us but where no match for a focused team who still had aspirations of playing off for a medal.

The drawn game against the NYFD came back to haunt us as it meant we were tied for second position on our side of the draw, in a system that sent the top two teams from each division through to the finals. Subsequently we had to play an extra match against the NYFD to see who would go through with the NYPD into the finals against Northern Ireland and a 2nd NYFD team. Again, we found ourselves down at half time by two points but scored an early goal to go one point ahead. We held that lead for all but the last 20 seconds of the second half, even took it out to 2 points, but conceded a very late goal to lose by a point and miss our chance to play in the finals. That NYFD team went on to win Bronze, the NYPD Silver and Northern Ireland won the Gold.

While the boys were bitterly disappointed to see a team win a medal we felt we could beat, they also knew that what they had achieved as a team was something to be proud of. They prepared themselves thoroughly and took an Irish dominated competition by absolute surprise, clearly winning their respect. Every Irishman there took the time to approach the WAFRS and express their gratitude for the effort we had taken to learn their game and play it in the spirit it is meant to be played in. The Northern Irish explained that they cheered in all the teams we played against as they didn't want to have to play us in the final. While that didn't make missing a medal any easier to take, it was still quite a compliment.

Unfortunately, team sports have a reprehensible way of reminding you of hard lessons you've already learnt. While it was something we would've preferred not to be reminded of, it was drilled back into us how every second, every inch, every moment of a game matters. But that handful of Gaelic Footy games also reminded us of how much a group of mates can achieve in a short period of time.

A quick thank you must go to the West Australian Gaelic Football Association for their support, in particular the Morley GFC. Thanks to Leon Berthelson, who really was the driving force behind organizing the team and along with his team mates ran his heart out all day.
Well done lads, let's get ourselves over to Ireland in 2013 to pick up the medal we left in New York.

Brendon McMalthouse

STATION COMPARISONS

G'day everyone. I wanted to tell you all a little story about something that occurred to me the other day.

I started thinking about all the vacancies we now have at Maddington since the opening of the new "State of the Art" Ellenbrook Fire Station.

I mean, 6 guys have gone to Ellenbrook from Maddington!

Now, I don't know how your station was effected by the opening of this fandangle new station, you may have lost some personnel here and there or maybe some of you didn't even know it had opened, I don't know, but to lose 6 fire fighters from one station seemed a lot to me.

Some of you may not know this either, but FESA has spent almost $1,000,000 on the fit out to accommodate relievers at Maddington, and it opened less than a year ago, so you would think our station should be at least as good as anything that opens for business now, shouldn't it?

Anyway, I decided to drive out to this so called "State of the Art" station at Ellenbrook and see for myself what all the fuss was about, and how it compared with Maddington.

I personally, can't see any difference at all between the two. I took a few photos though, because I'm a poor judge of these things. How do you think they compare?

State of the art BA Servicing area at Ellenbrook

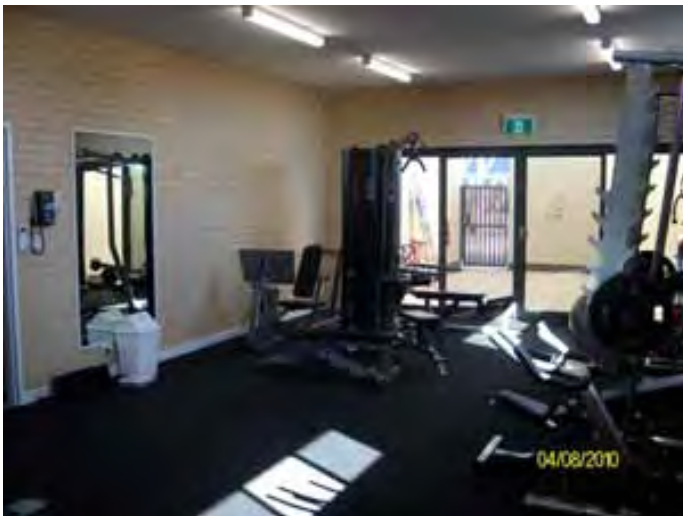
State of the art BA Servicing area at Maddington

State of the art staff car parking at Ellenbrook

State of the art staff car parking at Maddington

State of the art Engine room ventilation at Ellenbrook

State of the art Engine room ventilation at Maddington



State of the art Gym at Ellenbrook

State of the art Gym at Maddington

State of the art stand alone PPC storage at Ellenbrook

State of the art PPC storage in the Hallway at Maddington

Well, there you have it ladies and gentlemen, as I said, exactly the bloody same. Personally I don't understand why some of those who went to Ellenbrook don't just harden up a bit.

Or maybe I should transfer to Bassendean?
Thanks for reading.

Gary Cope

CAMP COURAGE 2011

On Sunday the 18th September Career Firefighters and Medical staff from PMH ran a camp for children who were recovering from burns at Earn Halliday recreation centre in Hillary's.

The children aged between 8 and 12 years participated in activities such as team building and trust games, indoor rock and crate climbing, the giant swing, basketball and indoor hockey. (Personally I was exhausted by the end of the day.)

The aim of the camp was to provide a day of fun for the children who for much of their lives miss a lot of camps and fun activities due to injury and/or time away from family, friends and school whilst recovering. It was also an opportunity for Career Firefighters and PMH staff to provide support for families of children who get burned by creating networking opportunities.

The children who attended the camp were invited by PMH staff who had witnessed their initial injury and their long and arduous journey of recovery. Many of the children did not know each other well except for maybe seeing each other for treatment in hospital.

Their burns ranged in severity and age. Some scarring was not initially obvious and some was very obvious. Some told me their stories about how they were burned and what sort of treatment they had been having. One young girl told me of how when she was younger she accidently pulled a hot drink onto herself, burning her neck, arms and chest.

The children all wore burn socks or body suits, to cover and protect their healing skin, and each of them will be required to be out patients at hospital for their growing years and potentially their entire lives to consistently monitor and address issues such as scarring and infections.

I believe the camp ran very well and was an enormous success. The children and staff had lots of fun, and often it was difficult to tell who was having more fun, the children or the Firefighters. Many of the children and parents thanked us for putting on such an enjoyable day.

I would also like to acknowledge that not only did the children and families finding the day enjoyable and rewarding, so did the PMH and FRS staff. I personally found that seeing these children full of energy running around, overcoming such fears as not knowing anyone, and participating in new and challenging activities, such as climbing up a pile of wobbly grates as high as the ceiling, then jumping off, so rewarding. Having seen injuries sustained from burns firsthand, Firefighters rarely get to see people recover and often wonder what happen to particular people. It was nice to see and understand the process of recovery from a traumatic injury such as burns.

A big thanks must go to:
All Fire & Rescue Career Fire Fighters who contribute to the Career Firefighters Fund for Children
District Officer John Truswell, Station Officer Russell Perring and Senior Firefighter Keiren Mussen along with PMH Burns Ward staff Dr Fiona Woods, Nurse of the year Tania Mc Williams, Paul Darcy, Paul Taylor, Shelley Gibbons and Stella for their endless dedication to the recovery of these children.
Firefighters FF James Hislop, FF Kieth Mc Carren, FF Daniel Clements, FF Brad Shaw and D Platoon from Duncraig Fire station for volunteering their time and effort on the day.
Clause from Miss Mauds, Murray St Perth. For catering Camp Courage with delicious food.
Team leaders at Earn Halliday
Rotary
Fire & Emergency Service Authority
United Firefighters Western Australia

Over 200 children under 15 each year require inpatient treatment in PMH each year with the highest percentage being 1-4 year olds (44.5%). Majority of burns are caused by scalding (53%), followed by contact, then flame or explosion.

For more information about burns refer to:
Kidsafe
http://www.kidsafe.com.au/

The McComb Research Foundation
www.mccomb.org.au/

Burns First Aid

1. Check for Danger & Call for Help
Watch out for hazards such as electrical wires and fire. If it is safe to do so; stop, disconnect or remove these hazards before you help the patient to avoid injury to rescuers, bystanders or the patient. If the scene is unsafe, call 000 or the relevant authorities for help.

2. Stop the burning
Stop, Drop, Roll. Remove the burning source or move the patient. The source of heat or burning should be stopped and the patient should be removed from the burning source. This includes removing burned clothing, unless it is stuck to the patient. Jewellery on burned limbs should also be removed as it may constrict when swelling occurs over the next few hours.

3. ABCs
Remember to monitor Airway, Breathing and Circulation as part of basic life support. Call 000 if the patient is unwell.

4. Cool the burn for 20 minutes
Never use ice, oils or creams Cooling methods should be applied for at least 20 minutes and be administered as soon as possible.
Cooling the wound is very important, it can significantly reduce the size of injury as well as reduce pain and swelling. Cooling the burn has an effect up to 3 hours post injury.
Clean, cool running water between 5-25°C is the best choice. Wet towels, refreshed with cool water every 2-3 minutes or burn specific gel sheets are useful alternatives.
Lakes, oceans, rivers and swimming pools can also help cool the burn, but there is an infection risk in still water. As such, these cooling methods should only be used when other first aid options are unavailable.
Ice or icy water can cause further injury. Never use water below 4°C as it causes reduced skin blood-flow which can increase skin damage.
Chemical Burns are serious
Chemical Burns require additional irrigation and urgent medical attention for treatment specific to the chemical injury. If you are unsure of the chemical involved, bring the chemical bottle or label to the hospital.

5. Cover the wound
Wet clothes or towels are good dressings. Dressings help reduce pain and infection. Wet, clean, cotton dressings are a good choice. Gelbased burns specific dressings are an alternative.

6. Avoid Hypothermia
Cool the wound, but warm the patient
Hypothermia is a risk of over-vigorous patient cooling, especially in children and the elderly.
Attempt to keep unburned areas of the skin dry and warm, remove wet clothing and wrap the patient in a blanket.

7. Seek medical aid urgently
Present to your doctor, local emergency
department or call an ambulance.

Burns first aid saves lives and prevents further injury

From The McComb Research Foundation
Article and photographs: Station Officer Claire Finucane President Career Firefighters Fund for Children.

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