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TURNOUT

This journal is published on behalf of
THE UNITED FIREFIGHTERS UNION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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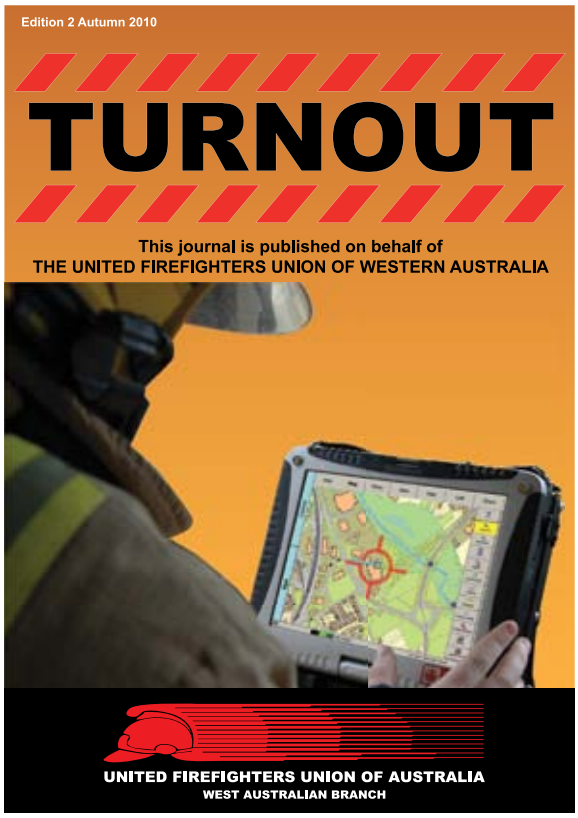

Could this be our next MDT or are we just dreaming?

UFU Dinner

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The revamped Turnout Magazine (Issue 1) was very well received by 99% of our members. It has been great to see the magazine lying around stations with the articles forming many discussion topics around the table.

As stated in the first issue, my aim is for the magazine to be used as a forum for all UFU members. If you believe things can be done better, don't hesitate to contact me either by phone or e-mail to voice your opinion.

As the magazine evolves, I hope to be fielding numerous "Letters to the Editor" and receiving photos (3MB or >) that can be published for all to share.

WINTER TRAINING

Apart from attending incidents, the most important part of our daily, monthly and yearly work schedule is our training.

By the time this article goes to print, I am hoping that a Winter Training Program is in the closing stages of being developed. Not some wishy washy program which uses the two allocated days to catch up on training not completed from a previous year and not a theoretical session about an SOP which has not been endorsed. What I am talking about is meaningful training. Training that is relevant to what we do in the real world, training that is challenging and training that is enjoyable.

I, like many, have been disappointed with the quality of Winter Training or Skills Enhancement Programme (SEP) offered in recent times. Our core business, as I see it, is fighting fires, combating rescues and rendering hazardous material incidents safe. This is what career firefighters need to be practising at a forum like the SEP.

Before I continue, let me say that not all the training that has been delivered at Forrestfield Training Centre has been poor in recent times. The single day of Manage Injuries Course was an excellent example of what we should expect every SEP. But this one day, in my opinion was the exception to the rule.

As you can see, I am passionate about training (firefighters at Fremantle will back me on this!), however, it is frustrating to spend two days at Forrestfield each year driving away thinking things could have been so much better.

So, what can our leaders and us do to improve on past SEPs?

1. Firstly figure out a program. Station Officers need to speak to Firefighters, District Officers need to speak to Station Officers and Superintendants need to speak to District Officers. Look at what the guys on the ground feel they need to work on and what managers believe could be improved.
2. Plan early. If training centre doesn't have enough time to construct a program and test it, there's a good chance it is going to be average at best.
3. Provide facilities required to carry out the training. How good would it be to have a burn building that we could use to simulate house fires realistically? A facility where we could safely do a search and rescue using equipment such as Thermal Imaging Cameras, extinguish a fire and then practise some overhaul and salvage. Maybe we need to look outside of Forrestfield for part of it.
4. Commit an appropriate time for the training to be completed. If two days isn't enough, there is no reason why Station Officers can't be given a couple of follow up drills to complete back on station once the initial course has been completed.
5. Make it attractive for trainers to want to be involved. Two ways to do this is to pay appropriate remuneration and up-skill the trainers before the program takes place. I believe the trainers should be made up of Superintendants, District Officers, Station Officers and Senior Firefighters.
6. Involve the UFU and the OSH Committee. Management need to be prepared to consult from the start, listen and make necessary changes where appropriate. It would be a shame to do all of the above only to have disruptions due to industrial action.
7. The above is going to cost money. Money well spent. An investment that ensures we perform our jobs more effectively and more safely. Have a budget which will satisfy the program.

The beauty of the Winter Training Program is that it provides consistency in training due to the fact that the same core of trainers are delivering the same content. It gives crews an opportunity to work with stations they don't normally work with and bounce ideas off each other. The SEP provides an opportunity for Station Officers to do some specialist training as well as Firefighters. It enhances morale.

Subjects we could cover could include;
Communication - Review radio message procedures
Incident Command / AIIMS
Bushfire Suppression – back burning techniques
Driver Training - off road, on road, simulations
Foam - Bulky Bins, ground monitors and Aerial Appliances
Internal Firefighting Techniques
Search and Rescue / BA Procedures

THE EDITOR

I recently read an article which surveyed 6400 employees about job satisfaction. Out of a possible five choices, respondents ranked "opportunities for personal growth" to be the No. 1 reason they took their current job and the No. 1 reason they've stayed at that job. That's ahead of pay and the ability to balance work and personal life.

Unfortunately, 21 percent of respondents reported that their organizations didn't provide adequate opportunities for personal growth.

SPONSORS

Sponsorship of Turnout is vital. Thanks to all who have put their hands in their pockets to support our union. One of our sponsors - Rebecca Hall from KidzaBuzz has provided us with some complimetary voucher books. These will be used as prizes for Turnout contributors.

This edition, Dean Symmans, Peter Sutton and Craig Edmonds receive a FREE KidzaBuzz Voucher Book for their contributions to Turnout

CONGRATULATIONS

The past few months has seen some of our members progress through the ranks.

Congratulations to Ian Bransby, John Biggs, Alan Crossman, Ken Holyoake, Paul Hughes, Mel Ismail, Kim Van Aalen and John Warin who have all been promoted to the rank of Station Officer.

Also congratulations to Kim Lambkin, Brad Delavale and John Henderson who were recently promoted to the rank of District Officer.

While these guys are coming to terms with new roles and responsibilities associated with the big bucks, it is important for them to remember that the union needs all its members to be active and supportive of our cause.

Danny Mosconi

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THANK YOU

To all personnel from C platoon involved with the landing collapse at Ballajura on the night of the 31st.

Just a short note of thanks for your efforts on the night, from myself on behalf of my wife and all the other injured.

The way the rescue effort was carried out and the compassion displayed by all personnel at the incident was outstanding, and made me proud to have been a former member of this Service.

You may not receive any accolades from Senior Management but be assured your efforts were recognised by the people that count, the injured.

Courtesy Perth Now

My wife was the last person carried out and her reflection of the night was being carried out by six hunky Firefighters and will probably stay with her forever.

I sent an email to both Craig Hynes and Eddy Brooks with a recommendation that every person, Fire , Police and Ambulance who attended that incident be recognised with a commendation, to date (3/11/2009) no reply has been received.

Once again our thanks.

Keith Maynard (Former District Officer with WAFB)

"Editors Note - I was advised that Keith sent a similar letter to the Commisioner of Police who responded within 2 hours and the Director of St Johns, who responded within 4 hours"

From the magnitude of responses the Union has received from the membership, the new edition of Turnout has been a fantastic success. Thank you all for your support. This now paves the way for good dialogue and robust debate. We received only one negative comment so we have adjusted "the tone" a little in this edition- thanks for that feedback.

We moved the Union Office on the 4th January, 2010 into the old North Perth Fire Station at 21 View Street North Perth after the completion of some renovations and I must say it is fantastic. If you haven't already seen it, drop by and take a look - it really is special.

The Union has been as busy as ever, but you wouldn't expect anything different really when you consider who we are negotiating with on a regular basis.

We have just finished our Country Regional Visits (except for the Pilbara and the Kimberley, and we will try to get to you guys soon.) The Country visits included all the Regional Offices as well as the Country Career Stations. To my knowledge, this is the first time that this has been achieved.

It has been a very useful series of trips gathering and collating much information, disturbingly though the picture that is being portrayed of the Authority raises many concerns. Some would say: "Well I'm not surprised by that", but honestly - how bad does it have to get before someone with power and influence does something about it. I just hope it's not a fatality that starts the process.

I'm sorry we missed some of you on the January 2010 visits, but Graeme's car is not 4 wheel drive, so the logistics of getting to you when you are approximately 200kms east of Norseman in the Fraser Ranges is a little out of our way - but we will catch you next time. I thought it important to mention this because fighting and managing fires in the remote takes lots of resources and these members were out there for days in the heat, smoke and dust doing their job.
Great work Guys.

What we found from every Region was that most of the issues were very similar, but the stand out issue was the 320/8. It must be said the Authority is taking the piss with this and the work loads.

Not one person said they were happy with how the Authority applies this working arrangement. Most said they were always working excessive hours and found it hard to manage. Does the Authority actually care what effect this has on a person's welfare and wellbeing, not to mention their family life?

The simple facts are that these Managers have too many responsibilities and are fast becoming "a Jack of all trades and the Master of none". This was quoted by several Managers and is very realistic!

This is not the way employees should be treated and certainly even more so Emergency Workers.
When is the Authority going to wake up?

The time has come to overhaul this ad hock system before we have more Managers 'burn out'. I do recall the words that were spoken when this system was first introduced, "Once your 320 hours are up, turn off your phone and stay at home."
Well quite frankly, that can't and doesn't happen in the Country, and if you did that you wouldn't last 5 minutes. The Community expects a service and the Authority knows this and takes full advantage of our members' dedication and service.

The other issue is when our members do have a day or two off, their work load just backs up so on return there is double the work to get through. This is another deterrent - and it only works to the employer's advantage.

The Authority needs to come to the table with a much better policy, and this should include reducing some of the responsibilities and workloads that these Managers are currently performing.

One obvious area is training. This should be managed and coordinated by the Training Centre, conducted by a dedicated Training Cadre from specialised areas. Sound familiar?

Yes, I know what you're saying, we did have one once and yes- it worked extremely well.

On another issue, the Union has made it known to the Authority that it was about time our Country Station members were afforded the benefit of automatic BA Backup to Structure Fires and Hazardous Materials spills, just like every Fire Fighter in Perth, and in the Modern World for that matter.

Can anyone imagine what it would be like to have no Immediate Backup to a Structure Fire, Hazardous Materials Spill, or a Road Accident Rescue?

The Authority is now on the record and has written to your Union saying it doesn't support an increase to the minimum manning for Country Stations. THIS IS UNBELIEVABLE.

This is an outrage and clearly shows that the Authority has no understanding or respect for what Fire Fighters do at work and for the community.

The Union is advocating for an increase in all Country Station staff by 2 Fire Fighters per shift, making it possible to have immediate BA backup. (1 Station Officer and 5 Fire Fighters per shift.)

Adding a Medium tanker fully crewed to supplement the Pump and Light Tanker.

Not a big ask you would think, and certainly very justified when you look at how big these country City's are now, not to mention Climate Change and having readily available crews to combat Bush Fires with adequate resources before these fires become Wild Fires of Mass Destruction.

Early suppression is the key to minimising losses, but you must have the resources to achieve this.

It would be nice if the Authority could come to your Union with proposals of increasing staffing levels in Country Stations because they are concerned about your welfare, and they want to change the 320/8 System to a fairer and safer, more family friendly system because they care about every employee's welfare.

Sadly the Authority doesn't and won't care for your welfare unless they undergo a radical change for the better, and that's why your Union is there to fight for your rights.

In closing we have a lot of members who are unwell, either sick or injured, and our thoughts are with you all and we wish each and every one of you a speedy recovery.

Kevin Jolly

Since the creation of FESA I have been amazed at the ability of the Authority to preach the benefits of values and yet they demonstrate none in their practices.
The struggle between the Employer and Workers is constant and on going, with periods of working well together and periods that are characterised by confrontation.

The reality is that organisations only function well when the employer and employees work together.

At the moment the Authority is trying to push ahead with a plan that the workers believe will not deliver the minimum service to the community that the community expects and deserves.

The Authority has tried to follow up this new direction by preaching the FESA values to the workers but it does not embrace or demonstrate these values in its practices.

The recent launch of the Air Support services in Busselton demonstrates that the Authority is more interested in grandstanding than in service delivery. While they conducted joy rides around Busselton no one bothered to invite the local Regional Director or inform the local Area Manager of the launch of the expanded Air Support services. No one had bothered to let the nearest career Station know how, when or where the Air Support services is to interact with them on the ground. Air support can not extinguish fires, they only slow them down, but there has been no increase in on the ground firefighters to put the fires out and no training for the existing firefighters in the region.

Why does the Authority have a bigger media department than the Premier? I believe a fire engine on the road will save more lives than another Level 8 Director in Media. Instead of decommissioning frontline appliances perhaps some of the bureaucrats who have mis- managed the planning and design of stations, are responsible for staffing (including recruitment) and provide the general administrative service delivery to the fire brigade should have their salaries diverted into putting trucks on the road.

The choice the government has, and the justification they have to make to the community is: should government pay one CEO over $4,000 a week or should they pay Firefighters to keep fire appliances on the road throughout the year? Recently we have seen an unprecedented level of the decommissioning of fire stations and appliances. I can hazard a guess as to which priority the community would support. Perhaps spending even more money on changing the Authority to a Department will keep more Firefighters on the road. Department heads get paid around $8,000 a week so when the decision makers consider a re-structure they could look at diverting the CEO's pay and then we would have more Firefighters to protect the community..... food for thought.

Since the creation of the Authority there has been a massive explosion of Directorates and Managers across the State and apparently we will see more to come with another restructure in the country proposed which could divide the South West into two regions even though we do not have two career fire stations in the South West - and while another station is planned for Bunbury (and when is the estimated date of arrival?) there is nothing in the pipeline for Dunsborough or Busselton. While we acknowledge there is a need for the support structures we must question why there is not an increase in Firefighters delivering the service to match the administrative growth . A new regional office with Directors and Managers makes no sense without increasing fire fighting resources on the ground level.

The question is when will the Authority engage the employees who do the protecting and saving of lives?

When will the Directors from within the various structures of FESA "get out of the spa" to ask Firefighters what they need to protect the communities they work in?

We have just suffered one of the greatest losses of property in the State's history at Toodyay. It was not a Bush Fire it was 42 Property Fires.

When will the Authority take the responsibly of protecting the community seriously. In 2004 the Auditor General recommended:
" FESA should continue to identify and remedy any under-resourcing of brigade appliances and equipment while the risk based model for allocating resource is finalised."

Has the risk model been finalised, will it deliver more resources or justify the neglect of our country areas and the north, east and south suburban corridors of Perth?

Why have none of the growing communities around the state been supplied with firefighters, appliances and equipment that is designed to respond to property fires? Why is there not a medium tanker in Albany, Bunbury and Geraldton and why is staffing on the country appliances not set at 1 & 5 to ensure breathing apparatus SOPs can be followed?

NSW has over 30 aerial appliances, , Queensland has 17 , Victoria has 12 and WA has only 2.5.We do have high rise outside of the CBD and we do need sufficient resources to match the growth and development across regional and metropolitan WA.

So I ask again - When will the Authority engage the employees who do the protecting and saving of lives?

When will the various Directors from within the structures of FESA "get out of the spas" to ask Firefighters what they need to protect the communities they work in?

I look forward to some answers on your behalf so that we can continue to serve and protect the community and WA.

Graeme Geer

BOB WOODS

All recent firefighter graduates would be familiar with the "United Firefighters Union of Australia (WA Branch)- Bob Woods Trophy for the Highest Practical Achievement".

This trophy is awarded to a graduate recruit from each Firefighter School who has achieved the highest results across all practical assessments.
The Union has traditionally awarded a trophy but has only in recent years renamed the trophy in Bob Woods' honour because the Union recognised an opportunity to commemorate our gratitude for Bob's achievements as both a unionist and a firefighter.

Bob Woods was a career firefighter for 28 years and in that time he served at both North Fremantle and Fremantle Fire Station. Bob's active union service began in 1984 and he served as both the National President of the United Firefighters Union of Australia as well as the President of the Western Australian Branch. Bob travelled the world and worked with our international comrades to improve wages and conditions for firefighters.
Bob Woods' tireless service for our members was recognised when he was awarded Life Membership of our Union in 1992 and his work included offering the union industrial and political direction to the Union, organising the Annual Dinner, serving on the Superannuation Fund and editing the Union's journal - Turnout - for nearly 5 years.

An example of Bob Wood's achievements includes the organisation of the Unions first National Conference in Perth - Bob Woods secured the Brigade's support for a welcome function hosted at the Perth Fire Station and a vehicle for the National President to use during his visit to WA which included a trip to Kalbarri. This support and working relationship from the days of the Brigade is unheard of in 2010 and we can only continue the struggle to reclaim our traditions and to fight for a more positive working relationship in an environment with a completely different industrial landscape to the one Bob Woods worked in, and in a context where management is pushing for more generic emergency service leadership. We will strive to emulate Bob Woods' strength and resilience.

Bob Woods was also awarded the Australian Fire Services Medal in 1993 and is one of the few firefighters (as opposed to more senior officers) to have joined the ranks of AFSM recipients.
Bob Woods' community service did not end when he retired and he was an active member of the RSL, he fought for the social and political recognition of our Vietnam Veterans and he campaigned for benefits and services for our Totally and Permanently Incapacitated veterans.

Bob Woods was a great mentor for firefighters, he was a good listener and a practical man who achieved much for others. He was very modest about his contributions and everyone I have spoken to remembers his larrikin streak and sense of humour.

He died on the 25th of July 2006 after contracting asbestosis and was predeceased by his son, Shawn and survived by his wife Sharon, daughter Kirsty and his two beloved grandchildren - Sarah and Jake.

For those of you who have been honoured with the presentation of the UFU Bob Woods Trophy for the Highest Practical Achievement, and for those of you who continue as proud firefighters and unionist please remember the man behind the trophy - Bob Wood AFSM and Life member of the United Firefighters Union of Australia (WA Branch).

*It is a great honour to pay tribute to a wonderful man and unionist - Bob Woods. I gratefully acknowledge the help of Owen Davies and many of our retired members who have spoken to me about Bob Woods and his achievements - all credit to those people but any mistakes in this article are my own.

Lea Anderson

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A NEW FUTURE

2009 was a year of revelation for FESA and the Career Training Department of the Forrestfield Training Centre (FTC).

Like many other Agencies throughout government in the '80s and '90s the accountants' approach of cost cutting, resource starvation and general inability to recognise need created a situation that would eventually fail and impact heavily on those services that were originally put in place to ensure competent, credible and efficient results.

The Training Centre for the Fire and Emergency Services at Forrestfield was no exception.
To use one example, there is no argument that the concept of 5 years of study (Firefighter Development Program, FDP) after the Trainee Firefighter (TFF) course, culminating in Senior Firefighter status is a sound one. One could argue that there was an acceptance of the approach with some relief that FRSWA firies would receive a valuable pathway of learning so that they could serve the community in a manner that the same community would expect.

Unfortunately the resources in the Career Training Department to facilitate the concept far from matched the workload that was generated. As a consequence of this, assessments, activities, scenarios and general day to day administration was left to decay for years.
With the changing of some of the original personnel that had become tired through trying to keep up with the workload while fighting with an unlistening and uninterested administration the whole concept finally ran aground and sunk.

There were many casualties and they were not only the firefighters that the concept was designed to serve, it included the staff at the FTC and their morale and credibility through no fault of their own. Through a great deal of work by a dedicated team of uniformed people that were put together to try and overcome this situation some rectification of the 'disaster' has been made.

It has also required that some FDP firies repeat work that was originally presented but because it could not be verified by copies, occurrence book or monthly record of work entries. The compliance requirements of State Regulators, who would have had an unsympathetic view, demanded this.
In the big picture the intervention by uniformed personnel has been a success but unfortunately career personnel have suffered - some more than others as a result of the misplaced documentation.

The experience and exposure publicly of this unnecessary episode has had a positive effect on the way Career Training is now staffed. An embarrassed organization, not wanting a repeat of the past, to it's credit, has strategised a new future that has increased the human resource by 3 uniformed positions and 1 civilian clerical (12 month) position.
The structure of the department is yet to be completed but, through a process of consultative management, need and trial by implementation the Career Training Department is confident that a return to the efficiencies of many years past is possible. It will take some time, the task is a large and difficult one.

The administrative organisation has committed to renovation of the the Training Centre complex. All departments will be affected and Career Training will benefit with an increase in office area that will be considerable.

The next stage of organisational development, it is hoped, will include the return of Career and Major Incident Training back to the control of Operations for it's own determination and that Corporate Services retain the administration and compliance responsibilities of the Training Centre.
This hope is to include Operations controlling all aspects of Fire Services at the Training Centre from recruitment through to Career pathway. The time for the unsuccessful experiment is, in the mind of all operational people that are the spearhead of this organisation, finished.

In conclusion the pain is not over, the Career Training Department has a great deal of work ahead of it in the development of new procedures to replace those that had been developed over years of training by our forebears and forgotten or lost through short sightidness, lack of commitment and the human resource to retain them. The department needs to develop, update databases, recording, Training Resource Kits (TRKs), TFF courses, FDP, OMP and ensure that it can service its customers, you the firie in a manner that you deserve.

We have great hope. Yours in Unity.

Rob Forster

Most people who know me well will probably say I am ADHD, which is fine, but this certainly has allowed me some adventurous times in the last 15 years of service. Many have even mistaken my ADHD with ambition, wrong! Although times have changed a lot since I got in (some for the good and some for the bad), in general a firie without 2 stripes really had a hard time having his voice heard when it came to offering their opinion on things. Firefighters in my opinion are becoming better educated which is seeing a gap being filled between the ground floor and upper management (I wish I could say our senior officers instead). I do not consider myself a negative person and always find time to smell the roses and think about how far we have come since I first joined. Everyone needs to look back occasionally to appreciate that things have changed for the good. This doesn't mean things can't get better.

Over the last few years, my promotion and positions within BA, Hazmat and USAR have allowed me to research equipment and then propose changes to make our job both safer and more efficient. I could possibly accept and understand 100 years ago why we didn't have equipment as good as other Fire Brigades around the world (these brigades I refer to are those which have been around a lot longer than ours - why can't we learn from their mistakes, embrace their research and not re-invent the wheel?). Back 100 years ago, tall ships and penned letters were the modern form of communication. Today in the year 2010, the lack of proven equipment in our state, often equipment that has been added due to deaths or serious injuries to fire fighters, is perplexing.

It is easy to sit back and complain. In the two years I was BA Officer I got it all the time. "This is wrong", "Change this" or "Do that". My standard reply would be to put it in an e-mail so I could both (1) Remember it and (2) Start the paper trail. Nine out of ten people never bothered spending the five minutes to even write. If it was important enough I would action it myself anyway. So, when I decided to write reports after doing research over a number of years, I highlighted four pieces of equipment that I decided to pursue. These were (1) Thermal Imaging Camera's; (2) Mobile Data Systems (no, these are actual data systems, not a glorified pager); (3) Binoculars and; (4) Breathing Apparatus Rapid Deployment Boards.

My strategy was simple. It would go nowhere if it came just from me, a Snap at Maddington Fire Station. So, I kept it simple and filled in all the paperwork, sent covering letters to all career stations and highlighted in bold "SIGN HERE IF YOU AGREE". I then asked two things (1) Send the signed paperwork to your District Officer and (2) Send a copy to me. So what has happened since then? I received all the signed copies back from most of the stations who then submitted it as requested (it is disappointing not to say all, even after I appointed rep's at each station to look after it, but that's life). Then, the paperwork was in the hands of the gods (so to speak). I waited several months, never heard a peep, probably because FESA at this point did not actually have a Research and Development Section.

It has now been about 18 months since I sent the first correspondence. I was recently updated with the following:

1. Thermal Imaging Camera's - we are looking at funding to expand this capability, as well as utilising the USAR TIC's which can then be made available for training when required.
2. Binoculars - research paper was written by ORRD recently, the recommendations were endorsed – being binoculars will not be supplied.
3. BA Boards were referred to BA Officer for review and consideration
4. MDS - the English system was apparently not compatible with WA's mobile network, however that said, the available hardware is currently being researched, and once completed, a PAT or group will be convened to determine what data is required at the user's end. This review group will consist of SO's and FF's.

At least the proposals are on their scope. To be honest I never really thought they would get anywhere. My intention was to create a paper trail so that if there were ever any incidents as a result of not having this equipment readily available, I would be the first to make myself known to the investigation team or the coroner. At some point, someone will need to be accountable. We still may have tall ships, but we also have access to coronial enquiries, information sharing, national working groups on all things, e-mail, internet, skype, you name it, it is there. If the military can contact someone in the middle of the desert in a sand storm, if a BFB Chief Bush Fire Control Officer can bring up a map of the area we have just had a fire at, if Western Power can access all and sundry about their power system, if WA Police can access all type of records from their vehicles, why can't we readily access all our Pre Plans, hydrant maps, UBP's, Special Risk Plans, Chem Data on route to an incident? (Oh, by the way, NO it is not good enough that it is in hardcopy in the back seat of the pump. We need to get out of the dark ages!)

So, my advice, take it or leave it. We all need to get better on reporting hazards and near misses. When it comes to filling out that box which says "How could this have been prevented?", if appropriate, write an answer which specifies equipment we need but don't have. Here is an example considering binoculars have now been rejected! - You are the crew of two tasked to dress in Chemical Splash Suits to identify a product at a Hazmat Incident. You follow procedures, approach upwind uphill etc etc, but on arrival the wind shifts or the product ruptures or you make a human error as seen in training all the time - you step in the product! You then find out after the HAG Side 2 is received that the level of protection is actually Gas Suits - oops. This plays on your mind, causes stress and anxiety, all which could have been avoided by the use of a pair of binoculars from the comfort of the pump. 2 Splash Suits $170, 2 Pairs Nitra Solve Gloves $20, Duct Tape $3.50, a pair of binoculars Priceless (well only $150 for a good pair). I am sure even a FESA accountant could do the math (oh not to mention reducing stress to the poor firefighter). So my point is, when you next go to a job where binoculars could have negated the need for you to walk in that 70 metres, fill in a hazard report (don't think its not worth it, do it then!)

Finally, I will conclude with Thermal Imaging Camera's. Fact! They are not designed for overhaul, they were designed for rescue. Fact! They have multiple uses, not just fire but also Hazmat, Road Crash Rescue and bush fires. Fact! Do not mistake ease of use with easy to use! Training is required. Firies have got into severe trouble by over relying on them. Fact! They are cheap!! TIC's are a must on every appliance! Personally I have missed a child in a search in a house fire and this is something I have had to live with. Hopefully in the near future this will never have to happen again. So my second point is, when you next go to a job where a TIC could have negated the need for you to stay in a Structure Fire any longer than necessary, or if a TIC could have helped you find someone quicker, fill in a hazard report (I say again, don't think its not worth it, do it then!)

Seriously, its 2010 and we are searching using touch and feel! Bring back the tall ships I say.

Peter Sutton (Station Officer)

"It is not good... you have leukaemia."

These words still seem surreal to me some nine months after diagnosis. I can only imagine the emotion felt by a doctor who has to deliver the news.

In disbelief one of my mates tried desperately to comfort my wife by telling her maybe they got it wrong. The Royal Flying Doctor and St Johns transported me to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. My wife followed on a Skywest flight after my sons were taken into the homes of close friends.

After a bone marrow biopsy it was confirmed I had aquired Acute Promyelocytic Leukaemia. Being acute the chemotherapy began immediately with tablets and intravenous.

Emotions are strained. How did this happen, what did I do to end up in this situation. I must find out and warn others. I shy away from attention in life, however I am inundated with cards from family, friends, firees and kids I have coached at surfclub. I start to realise that I am not in a good way. My health starts to degenerate. The Chaplain visits. My wife sleeps on a makeshift bed next to me. Almost seflishly I wonder have I surfed my last wave, have I kicked the footy with my kids for the last time.

My home is now Ward G73. I will spend an initial five weeks here being cared for by an unbelievable team of nurses, doctors and assorted specialists. A psychologist visits on a regular basis offering advise and directing my questions to the correct doctor searching for answers. Blood products and transfusions become daily practice.

My sons arrive from Albany. I do not want them to see me this way. I can see they are scared of what the future holds, but they are brave and growing up fast.

My crew from Albany drive up to visit me. We try to joke. Everyone is uneasy.

The phone rings often. Firies I have lost contact with call. Some visit. All are concerned.

With an improvement to my health I plead to my wife to return home with my sons. In Albany my lawns are mowed, meals arrive on the doorstep from friends. Firewood is delivered. People care.

My hair starts to fall out. Other side effects to the chemotherapy test the nursing staff for answers. I am not permitted any fresh food.

No fruit or salads as I have no immunity to infections. Visitors are screened for colds. Some weeks later my dad tells me he thought I was not going to make it.

Day 35 arrives. My immunity improves. I am discharged and return to Albany to watch my sons play footy. My youngest son shaves his head with a mate to raise money for the Leukaemia Foundation. The support is overwhelming and emotional.

My surfing firie mates take me to the beach. They do not realise how weak I am. I can only watch them surf. It still stirs me how much they care and want me back the way I was.

I "enjoy" a month at home before returning to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital for a month of intravenous chemo, followed by a month off and then another month as an out-patient. Three monthly bone marrow tests confirm I am in remission.

For the next two years chemotherapy is taken in tablet form. Monthly blood tests are conducted and three monthly bone marrow tests will take place.

I did not want this to be a dramatic piece about "my journey", however I am in disbelief at the number of Fire Fighters touched by cancer in the last twelve months. Have I been oblivious to this disease until now, or is something not right?

In my search for answers I have read books, Googled and talked to many. To me cancer was caused by "free radicals" which destroyed my immunity system. The doctors told me that had I not been fit, I would not have got to this point. I am driven to return to full operational duties.

We work in a dangerous industry. Use the the station gym and programs available. Utilise your holidays. Please give blood. Keep pushing for better PPE and OSH conditions. Enjoy life.

My family doctor confirmed recently, time is something I now value.

Dean Symmans (Station Officer, B Shift Albany)

THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED - LANCE DAVEY

Have you ever been in company of someone who has been consistently tapping on something and the noise has driven you mad?

You know tap, tap, tap …Stop it please!!

Well I spent 4 years on shift with Lance and I think the only time he wasn't tapping on something was when he had a guitar in his hands! BUT… it always sounded good and musical. What drove me mad was that I couldn't make it sound like that no matter what I tried. He was musical, everything had a tune and every situation had an appropriate song. Guitar, drums and even some keyboard were his tools of choice, all self taught. It was a pleasure to have him on shift.

He was also called "King of the Kids" everywhere we went they flocked to him and he always responded by getting to their level and being a kid himself. He loved that. Lance taught many of the station kids including my son guitar and gave to them the love of music that Lance had himself. Passing his legacy on I guess and in doing so perhaps making this world a better place.

Lance enjoyed giving a bit to anyone that was near and there are too many stories to tell for this time. However I well remember one school visit to the local Christian college where we were giving a talk to some grade 3-5's on a hot summer's morning. Lance had one hose and I had another, a line of kids ready to "play "fireman and a teacher overseeing each. As they came thru Lance had a little joke with one kid about wetting the teacher, then another, another and all of a sudden it happened. Teacher got soaked and the Officer who was near her, then a kid from my group got Lance and it was on! In a matter of seconds all the teachers' firemen and kids were soaked thru…without any permission or dry clothing!! Great fun and Lance was once again "King of the Kids"

Lance, we will miss you and your antics always. A true friend and one you could trust with your wife!

As one of our colleagues said so well, "The day the music died"

Dave Nieuwpoort

ROB REED

Robert Reed
Husband to Janet Reed
Father to Corey and Sarah
02/08/1963 – 29/10/2009
In Rob's words his passing was a "TRAGESTY".

Rob joined the Fire Service in 1995 and spent 3 years at Canning Vale, 1 year at Perth Station and then arrived at Spearwood in May 1999. He then became a Senior Fire Fighter and a permanent member of A Shift Success in 2000. Rob was a respected and dependable Fiery who went about his job with a minimum of fuss.

Rob was content with the love of his family, friends and a job he loved. He would often say when I was revving him up about maybe actually doing something in the station gym that might generate some sweat or when indulging in another chocy from the fridge "But I'm Happy".

He had a great sense of humor and would constantly step up and provide the station with hilarious statements known as "Robisms" or acts of questionable intelligence like; putting the diesel nozzle in my pocket without draining it first. Driving away from a fuel bowser without removing the hose and going to great lengths to hide the evidence to prevent a trophy which in fact got him awarded a trophy for trying to prevent a trophy. These are just a few of the many trophies Rob received at the station.

Some of Rob's "Robisms" are;

- TRAGISTY: tragedy / travesty
- LINQUILOSIST: linguist / ventriloquist
- DUSOME : duo / twosome
- SICKTIFICATE : sick certificate
- TITS FOR BRAINS: tits on a bull / shit for brains
- RESTERVATION : restoration / renovation
- SNIGGLE : snigger / giggle
- WIEZE : wind / breeze
- KIDDLE : kiss / cuddle
- SCARAH : Sarah / scared
- CHUNGALOW: Bungalow / Chalet
- DEXAMITE dynamite/ explosives
- Stummy: Stomach/ Tummy
- Thinny :thin / skinny

Throughout Rob's illness he remained positive and was determined to fight it. He stood strong and never complained about what was happening to him. His strength and courage throughout this time is a testament to the digger that he was.

Rob Reed's death from Renal Cancer and now Terry Sheehan's fight against Renal Cancer has reminded us all of how precious our lives are and the people we share them with. We must continue to try to improve our heath and safety in our workplace and push for greater support from our employer.

Cian Evans (A shift Success)

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Editor's Note - Due to the timing of the Annual Dinner and the printing of Turnout, a comprehensive article of the Annual Dinner Night will be featured in the next edition of Turnout

A AND B PLATOON CHRISTMAS TREE 2009

The A and B platoon Christmas Tree for 2009 was held on Tuesday the 22nd December on the Matilda Bay foreshore in Crawley. This event has a very long history within the Fire Brigade going back some 50 or more years... apparently. Historically, this event has been held for the firefighters from Perth Fire station and their children to help celebrate the coming Christmas and to allow some fun family time before the onslaught of summer and the Bushfire season and little has changed over the years except that now the event caters for firefighters and their children from all stations which is a fantastic evolution. This year more than 200 attendees enjoyed a wonderful day down at the foreshore and included firies from many stations stretching from Joondalup in the north to Maddington in the south and all points in between.

This years event was met with very pleasant weather conditions (for which everyone breathed a sigh of relief given the 40 degree day "enjoyed" by C and D shifts earlier in the month) and included many of the usual fun activities such as canoes to paddle on the Swan, 2 bouncy castles, ride on jeeps which allowed firies and their children to spend some wonderful fun time together. In addition to these activities this year saw the return of face painting and the debut of the giant bubble making toys which were both great hits with the kiddies. As usual another favorite with the big and little kids alike was the abundance of free icecreams and soft drinks which saw many return visits to the van by all.

Shortly before lunch was served the highlight of the day saw Santa arrive on the back of a vintage pump but this year he managed to sneek in almost un-noticed by the children.... although they soon tracked him down! Santa proceeded to hand out presents to the excited little tykes as they waited patiently for their turn with the Big Guy and the photo opportunity for Mum and Dad. All this occurred with the sweet smell of sausages cooking on the BBQ in the background under the careful control of tongmasters Wyeth, Renton, deGaris and Speller. With the formalities over participants tucked into beautiful lunch which also included some wonderful salads provided by several of the guests and a big thank-you to them. Following all this everyone was able to make the most of all the fun games and activities with full stomachs. Eventually, the day slowly began to wind down around 2 and everyone began to drift off home and I hope all enjoyed a great day out spending some quality time together before the "silly" season really kicked off in earnest.

I wish to extend a big thankyou to all who assisted before and on the day and I sincerley hope that everyone enjoyed themselves and I look forward to the day next year.

Greg Henry

CYCLO SPORTIF - “GOT A BIKE?”

Cyclo Sportif started in 2004 with the concept of getting more people into cycling. The club runs social cycling events in an attempt to get all those riding around on their own to get together with mates or like minded fellow cyclists and enjoy well organized social team time trialing events. The concept of Sportif racing is to use the basic rules of team time trialing though changing its focus to a social aspect NOT a racing one. Teams have a minimum of 5 and a max of 9 members and work together as a rolling group to cover a set course as fast as they can. Unlike true time trialing Cyclo Sportif states that you only go "as fast as your slowest member" and you should finish with all members that started.

Each event is approximately some 6 weeks apart and consists of 3 different events covering the same course but of varying distances - The "A" distance 90k, "B" 60k "C" 30k and the occasional family ride of 10k.

In its first season most of us rode under the banner of a local bike shop (I rode for The Ark Angels we where sponsored by the Ark cafe & "Bike Force Fremantle") and there was a couple of hundred members at each event.....a good start. Over the next few years Matt Wakeling (who joined "The Angels" in 06) and I found ourselves coming across more and more Firefighters that were riding for their local shop or team.

At the start of the 08 season SO Derrin Rodriguez owner of "STAR International" offered to sponsor a team under his new companies' banner. We managed to have at least one team at all events for that season and did a great job of both working as a team and looking after each other and in the rankings of time taken to cover each course.

In the 09 season the UFU of WA allowed us to place their logo on our sleeves as we are predominately Career FFs or members of an emergency response group and Derrin stepped up again organizing a completely new and very professional looking cycling kit that he sells to us well under the cost of manufacture. This past season saw us fielding at least one team and more often than not we had two or three allowing us to let the riders grade themselves and ride in a team covering their chosen distance at a pace that they were capable of maintaining. The membership of Sportif saw some 900 persons turning up to ride in some events; it is currently the largest organized Cycling group in WA.

This year Sportif has be renamed Bicycling Western Australia and is adding more events to its calendar. Matt and I will be managing the teams for Derrins' STAR International again and we would like to extend an invitation for like minded Firefighters to join us and take your cycling to a new level. These events are very well organized and the entry fee includes a well catered meal, prizes for various "feats" achieved on the day and is a great family day out. Your membership to Bicycling WA also gives you ride insurance, should something happen to you whilst riding anywhere your income and various medical costs are covered!

So if you have a road bike and enjoy your cycling have a look at the web site http://www.bwa.org.au/ look at the Sportif series. Please dont think that you are not up to this we already have a good number of "A" distance members but seek more of those that would just enjoy the social event. If you feel that you or some of your mates could do some of these events please feel free to contact:

Matt at mudgewa@yahoo.com.au or myself

Paul at paullie412004@yahoo.com.au

SFF Paardekooper and Wakeling

WA FIRE BRIGADES GOLF CLUB 2009

Another very successful year was had by our golf club in 2009. On average 45 players attended the years fixtures with the first wash-out for many years occurring during the winter. Our Club Champion James Ferguson defended his title to again take the honours this year. The 2009 nett winner was Sel (not Sven) Anderson playing equal to his handicap of 10 over the three rounds in August. Other individual winners from the club championships were; A Grade – Jim Bell, John Lyons, Don Cruickshank and Keith Van den Bergh. B Grade – Nathan Stevenson, Dave Bull, Geoff Millar and Peter Norman. C Grade – Jeff Patience, Brian Hickey and Brad Jones.

The Golfbox Consistency Award with points accumulated over the entire season went to James Grindley. Grade winners with maximum points were; A) James Ferguson, B) Peter Norman and C) Jeff Patience.

In the first week of November WA golfers hosted the 33rd Australasian Firefighters Golf Championships with 180 golfers from all states, territories and New Zealand competing at Mandurah Country Club. Laurance Scrap Metals in Malaga was the naming rights sponsor for the event after the withdrawal of Scania which had sponsored the event for 10 years. Other major sponsors that assisted making the event very successful were PBI Gold Performance Products, National Fire Solutions, ME Bank, Kimberley Accommodation, Police and Nurses Credit Society, Matso's Brewery, Draeger,FESA and as always the WA branch of the UFU. Away from the golf course a very enjoyable day was had by all that attended our Melbourne Cup day with exclusive use of Pinjarra racecourse and welcoming and presentation functions with 250 persons attending. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the assistance given by tournament helpers, both from the club membership, retirees, friends and staff at Mandurah Fire Station.

The WA team of James Ferguson (Capt.), John Lyons, Don Cruickshank, Peter Norman, Jeff Patience and Keith Van den Bergh (res.) were the Champion and Stableford team winners. After leading by only 4 strokes after the first day they held on to win the championship by 12 shots from South Australia while enduring a 30 minute stoppage due to a thunderstorm. James Ferguson was the best performed team member over the two rounds to be named in the Australasian team. Other individual winners for the 36 hole competition were; James Ferguson (A Grade nett winner), John Litterick (A Grade nett r/up), and Alan Cope (Veterans nett winner). Grant Cowper was named the PBI Gold 54 hole stableford winner which included his score from the practice round held on the Monday. The week of golf culminated in a 6 man ambrose event at The Cut with 174 players taking the tee for a shotgun start.

In December 2009, the WA Fire Brigades Golf Club donated a $5000 cheque to the Peel Health Campus Foundation, to fund fit-out equipment for the new $3M childrens ward, from funds raised during the Australasian week from players fines / donations, Calcutta auction and a raffle.

The club is looking forward to another great season in 2010 commencing in March, culminating with the 34th Australasian event in New Plymouth, New Zealand in November with 30 golfers attending, some with partners. New members are always welcome and if you have not got a golfer in your station or office please contact the Capt, Rob Steel at B shift Belmont FS or myself for an introduction to the club and it's members.

Peter Norman (President WAFBGC C Shift Mandurah FS)

WAFRS RUGBY

Its official, the WAFRS Rugby Union will take on the well fancied WA Police team for the Chubb Fire Safety Cup as a curtain raiser & charity match before the Western Force's home game against the Canterbury Crusaders at Members Equity Stadium, in April. Details will be available closer to the date as will a website dedicated to the WAFRS Bullex Dragons.

We have also organised two trial matches, prior to the big one, playing local clubs. The first being a Sunday afternoon affair to be played at Cottesloe's Harvey Field on the 28th of February, followed by a sundowner and BBQ (and more than likely on to the Cott for the Sunday session). In March it will be off to the affectionately known Goat Park (obviously not just A Shift!) to take on the mighty Curtin University RUFC. All are welcome to either watch or participate. These trial matches are the perfect opportunity for anyone with little or no experience who would like to try their hand at rugby. If you want to strap on your boots and pull on a jersey you WILL get a run during these matches.

Matt Wakeling has offered to coach the team in the lead up to the clash with the Police team, and in a recruiting coup Mark Hatty has secured the Services of Western Force/Wallaby Number 8 Richard Brown as a guest assistance coach (pictured with Matt). Whilst things went a little quiet on the training track in the past few months, plenty has been going on behind the scenes. The club is currently seeking incorporation and has received great support from RugbyWA and the Western Force.

Now that we have put our reputation on the line we have some work to do to build a competitive team, particularly for the Police fixture, being played shortly before they head off to the National Police Championships – needless to say they will be well prepared and eager to make up for their Aussie Rules team's performances against our boys. Our success depends on a commitment from players! A lot of work has gone on behind the scenes to get this up and running, all we ask is that we all make an effort to get to the training sessions (even if it means getting a short term standby) – the rewards will be worth it.

2010 Sponsors:
Derrin Rodriguez has been busy on the Sponsorship front and we are pleased to announce a number of new sponsors to the Club. We have also ordered our playing strip along with training singlets and polos. You will be able to view the strip on the website soon so keep an eye out for the web address. Supporter polos will also be available later in the year.

Any other fundraising ideas and input would be welcomed. We would like to thank and acknowledge the following sponsors:
- Bullex Australia – "Smart tools for real training"
- Fire & Safety WA
- Safety Direct Solutions (SDS) • STAR International
- Fire and Rescue Safety Australia (FRSA)
- Chubb Fire Safety

Diary Dates:
Sunday 28th February Scratch Match vs Cottesloe RUFC combined 3rd/4th Grade.
Sunday 21st March Scratch Match vs Curtin University RUFC.
Friday 23rd April Chubb Fire Safety Cup - WA Fire & Rescue v WA Police to be played as a curtain raiser at a Western Force game against Canterbury Crusaders at Members Equity Stadium. (Final details TBC)
Dates to be advised Rugby 7s and 10s throughout 2010 RugbyWA Competition
9th & 10th October Bali International 10s

For further information on training contact Matt on 0415 363 520
For any other enquiries contact Pommie- 0417 955 251, Mark-0421 244 874 or Roddy-0412 446 841

WAFRS FOOTBALL CLUB - FIRIE SPIRIT STANDS TALL TO DEFEAT COPPERS

Friday the 19th February will go down as the day the WAFRSFC ground out it's gutsiest win yet in it's brief but successful history, the boys turned on an awesome gut running display of committed team football to defeat the WA Police "Hogs" under lights at Fremantle Oval. The final score line showed a 12 point margin our way 11-7-73pts to 9-7-61pts.

The game started with our boys heading into a strong south west Freo Doctor and matching the Hogs in a tightly contested 1st quater 3-1 a piece, a great result for us. Tragically we lost Phil Smith early in the term with an ACL injury that saw him finished for the night and likely the season with a recon pending the surgeon's verdict.

The second term gave us the wind so our game plan went from short hit ups into it to launching long to the goal square from forward of centre, we didn't capitalise on our F50 entries which allowed the Hogs to again match it with us on the scoreboard taking us into the half time break pretty well even.

Into the wind in the third quarter was a massive challenge, if we were to have a win it was this quarter that we needed to break even or get in front, the boys were amazing. Our 1%'s and team orientated football lifted to another level, we used the ball so well into the wind with short hit ups maintaining possession and waiting for our opportunities, composure and patience was the order of the day and we ordered up big. we won the quarter and went into the 3 quarter time huddle 10 pts up.

I could smell it, a win was in reach. The huddle was electric, the supporters were going off and we nailed our message for the last. Run your guts out, attack from behind the contest and drive forward with everything you have. We dropped Joel Dack behind the contest as a sweeper, it worked a treat, he was everywhere as was our entire back line and mid field. The boys were cramping and run off their feet, when it was goal for goal mid way through the Hogs got within a kick. Our boys turned it on and banged on two unanswered goals to put us 3 kicks up and in the drivers seat, we went into tempo footy mode and slowed things down. Our ball use was smart and deliberate, the pain of minutes earlier had disappeared and we knew we had done enough and victory was ours. The siren went and we went off, the gutsiest win yet by the revamped green and gold jumper. Ecstatic is the only description I can give you of my feelings right then, pride and a genuine feeling of brotherhood followed shortly after.

There were no passengers that night, everyone had a massive dip and gave their all, our best was Joel Dack, followed by the skipper Troy Stubberfield and Vice Captain Leon Berthelsen. The UFU 1% award went to our key defender and 1% machine Michael Taylor who just destroyed everything that came his way. Big Sheriff had a great tussle with Hogs and South Fremantle legend Marty Atkins in the ruck, Marc Papalia was dynamic off half back, Russel Walton was our Mr Fixit mid to h/f to h/b to wing, he was everywhere and was always at the bottom of the pack putting his body on the line for his mates. The Hogs gave our skipper Troy Stubberfield their shield for our best player as voted by them, we gave our shield to their best in Marty Atkins who also got the game ball from the umps as best afield.

In the rooms after the game we enjoyed a well earned beer with our supporters and sung the song, we spoke about the spirit that was shown out on the ground and how we have inherited these traits from our senior men who have gone before us. Tradition is important to our club and plays a huge part in building our culture and growth as a football club. Sadly we were informed that SFF Kieran Mussen's son Daniel who had been battling brain tumors for the last 4 years passed away during our game. Our thoughts are with you Kieran, the rooms shared a minutes silence in his memory and dedicated our win to his fighting spirit. Rest in peace Daniel Mussen.

Thanks to Steve Longo who has produced our team polo shirt which went on display for the first time, many thanks go to our sponsors

"The Royal on the Waterfront" in East Perth, UFU of WA, FESA and the game sponsor Altitude Real Estate. The WAFC has again thrown it's support behind us with WAFL field and boundary umpires and 3 brand new footballs for the game.

Our Chaplain Ron Wingate and his team as always were looking after us with the sausage sizzle, and without our gracious hosts the South Fremantle Football Club this game under lights at such a great venue would not happen.

The Hogs are hungry for their first win and next year will be a cracker, don't miss it !

Our annual beers and babes boat cruise went off like a fire cracker, 60 of the boys on board made for a very entertaining day out on the water with much tomfoolery and a newly found initiative in "Nude Hour".. If you missed this years trip don't miss next years it will be bigger again.

2010 Fire Fighters Ball update: We have listened to your feedback in regard to the ticket price and dropped it back to $169 single and $300 double so you're saving $70 on a double. We have already had great interest at the full price so now with this reduction we can cater for everyone's budget and hope that you all get behind us and get on board. It will be a top shelf function and the highlight of the year.

If you want to invite your personal friends to sit at your table feel free to do so, there will be heaps of singles there with the nurses and admin girls upstairs all getting on board, so organise your tables now, complete and return the seating list on your station. We want to lock away the numbers and start collecting money by end of March. Your support is vital to it's success. We can build this into a huge event on the calendar and a tradition will be created which can only increase camaraderie and our strength as Firies.

Our next battle is against the Royal Australian Navy in mid October and then our interstate road trip to Sydney to play NSWFB and some sampling of the Harbour City's night life and tasty beverages soaking up the culture of cosmopolitan Sydney !

Cheers

Ricky Curtis (Coach FRS Football Team)

CAREER FIRE FIGHTERS FUND FOR CHILDREN

The CFFC made a donation of $2000 to Radio Lollipop on behalf of Career Firefighters on the 23/12/2009 to ease hardship to families during December, a busy time of year where often there is a higher number of ill/injured children at a financial/emotional difficult time for the families.

Thank you to (left to right in photo) Station Officer Russell Perring, District Manager Steve Matthews and FESA Chaplain Ron Wingate (CFFC Committee members) who presented the cheque on behalf of CFFC members.

Claire Finucane (President CFFFC)

There has recently been 4 new positions created - "SHOO's" (State Hazard Operations Officer). These have started on shift, 2 FRS positions, 1 BFS position and 1 SES position. The role encompasses "State Alert" and "Natural Hazards State Wide" and "various other responsibilities".

I am unaware of their full job description but they are available to be called upon when extra bodies are required in the Comcentre. There has been some criticism about their role but it has never been directed at the individual, just the process in setting it all up. They are all keen and willing to help out when necessary.

Having the Delta shift has improved our efficiency and does allow our staff to take reasonable meal breaks most of the time, some CSO's (Sean, Jeanette and Julie) have put their hand up recently to act in the role as Fcad Data Officer, this is a day duties position that involves improving our call/dispatch processes, Kev Gray and Julie Duxbury's extensive experience and understanding of the systems and processes in place has enabled our progress with Fcad to move forward whilst working with the IT department, namely Marlowe Greif (Fcad guru).

Manager Comcentre (Kev Gray) is a 1 man band who is continually trying to improve the functionality of the Comcentre whilst putting out spot fires. These are generally issues pertaining to mobilising and do pop up occasionally. They are usually caused by the constraints we have to work under and also due to the ignorance and lack of understanding of how we function, the world is full of ignorant people including myself, it's how we deal with it that makes all the difference. DM Comcen normally has a seasonal DM during summer, unfortunately this hasn't eventuated.

Over the years we have all heard some real clangers over the network that has brought a little joy to our day. New Station Officers seem to predominately fall into this category, however at times we all have a moment that we would love to replay and start again.

This is just an example of some of those moments that we can ALL relate to, names have been deleted to protect the innocent.
6AR operator to appliance on wrong channel "Metro 1..you are coming through on 6PR".
CSO running late for work phones SOO and says "I'm backdooring it right now".
SO reports DBA activated by Walter cooking toast, blood sugar level 2.5, no sign of fire.
CSO puts fire call over at Freo, ATT ATT crew of Fremantle 1st, thermal alarm call to Sundance Backpackers etc, that's a call for crews of "Sundance" Backpackers, thermal alarm call etc.
And the best one is "6AR to Helitac 68, proceed normal road conditions"

Due to the increase in radio traffic, it is imperative that you check your radio busy light before transmitting, this will minimise the amount of transmissions coming over the top of one another and having to repeat yourself, also if you don't get a reply from 6AR,6IP, don't assume we received your transmission, you will need to try again until you get a reply.

David Wilson (D Platoon SOO)

On Friday the 5th of February 2010 the Union held the first of several "Office Openings" for our new North Perth Fire Station together with the membership of the Retired Firefighters Association.

To mark the occasion, Branch President Kevin Jolly, Branch Secretary Graeme Geer and many members of the Branch Committee welcomed our Retired Firefighters and Officers to our new Union headquarters and offered the Retired Firefighters a permanent home for their records, including access to office space for any work they need to fulfil. This offer was graciously accepted and it brings to a close the era of moving to and fro between the homes of the various Executive Committee members from the Retired Firefighters Association and the previously owned Joint Unions building.

Together with Graeme Geer, Kevin Jolly honoured our past members and in paying tribute he set out the reasons for organising the first and most important of our celebrations for the new Union headquarters. In his speech, Kevin Jolly gratefully acknowledged the foresight of our members over the last few decades in acquiring assets and building a strong financial basis for the Union. He also paid tribute to the struggles and victories of our past members who established the Firefighters Benefit Fund, our Superannuation Scheme, the holiday homes and many of our conditions of employment - including the 10/14 shift roster.

The Retired Firefighters and Officers in attendance were delighted to celebrate the opening of the new headquarters and welcomed the opportunity for the Union to stand alone with independence whilst celebrating our tradition and heritage. The new Union headquarters have presented the opportunity for the Union to reclaim some of our history and several of the retired firefighters and officers celebrating the opening had served at the old North Perth Fire Station. John Casley spoke on behalf of the Association in response to Kevin Jolly's speech to our retired members and his words were much appreciated by all in attendance.

There were many funny stories and a few escapades were recounted. Finally, we can put to rest the mystery of where the fire pole was placed - there was no fire pole in the North Perth Fire Station and we can confirm that in old Station's early years, the Officer and his family would have lived upstairs with the firefighters being quartered downstairs at the North Perth.

Our thanks to all those who were able to join us on the day, especially those union members who cooked the barbeque and prepared the salads and organised the room and drinks for our honoured guests who included many characters and raconteurs - we cannot list them all but they ranged from retired Chief Officer John McMahon, Tony Harris, Owen Davies, Ron Harley, Bob Cooke, Graeme Benthien through to recently retired members.

Lea Anderson

BASSENDEAN FIRE STATION

It's a rainy winter's morning when I arrive at Bassendean Fire Station. I get out of my car to unlock the padlock on the front gate. I quickly open it and drive in to the rear yard. The relocated Balcatta carport is full from the night shift cars so I park out in the open. I hop out and sprint 20 meters in the pouring rain jumping the potholes and traversing the uneven, cracked bitumen that is our tennis court/training ground. I make it to the engine bay saturated and lose my footing on the slippery floor. I recover and enter the tunic room. It is small and cramped with tunic bags on all hooks and some dumped on the floor. A bike is also stored. I lift my heavy bag from its 2 metre hook and feel the strain through my cold body.

On entering the watch room the air-conditioners are blaring on heat trying to warm the station. The government is giving out free insulation to cut carbon emissions but for some unknown reason we still don't have it. My sinuses block up instantly with the 60 year old dust falling from the ceiling space and dispersing throughout the rooms. In the combined kitchen/dining/lounge/training room I fight for space trying to out manoeuvre 6 other people. The newspaper is open on the tiny kitchen table and everyone has to lift their bowls and plates for the reader to turn the page. The kitchen bench isn't much chop either.

Dan, Johno and Bluey arrive. No, they are not Firies but contractors. They're here so often they have their own food lockers and coffee cups and very soon will have to start paying Rec club fees. I wonder what their here for this time? Maybe it's to fix the cracked bitumen again, to repaint the flaking asbestos, to replace the falling ceilings or to fix the engine bay doors. This time it was to paint the interior and they did a typical Spotless job. Just don't close any of the doors. apparently if the door is open you don't have to paint behind it and don't worry about the paint on the carpet boys. A wire brush and some elbow grease will remove it.

After checking the appliances, it's exercise time. To use the bitumen for tennis or basketball we need to do a workplace assessment before use. It seems to be the same every time. Cracked, loose under foot and uneven. The gym seems a much safer option. The gym is a demountable sweatbox/icebox away from the station. I enter and turn on the heritage listed air conditioner that was taken out from one of the bedrooms and relocated to save money. It's noisy and ineffective but we learnt a long time ago to make do. I start my work out, and then the bells go off. Structure fire.

On returning from the structure fire we service the gear. There is no designated BA servicing room so we use the general sinks on the end of the engine room. Although we follow appropriate FESA decontamination of the sinks I would hate to know what they've been used for during the week. They are just under cover but the outside elements can still reach us.

With only one shower for Fire Fighters we argue who is the wettest and dirtiest. I wait patiently to shower sitting wet and contaminated. It takes awhile but eventually it's my turn. Fingers crossed no one flushes the toilet or uses a sink. Hot, cold, hot, cold.

These are some issues facing us on a regular basis but over the years there have been many others:
- The "Cave" which is a bedroom with no windows but a bathroom fan for ventilation
- The storage shed is once again away from the main building where you have to brave the weather to reach it. It's a little shed just 3x2 meters with a ceiling height of 1.8 metres. At night you have to remember to take a torch because there are no lights.
- The rear yard which is roughly 400 square meters which we shared with the Bassendean Volunteers and their three appliances?
- The tower which just got replaced recently after being condemned for many years. All training and practical exams had to be conducted on the station roof or the volunteers training track in Ashfield.
- The watch room ceiling which just got replaced after realising the fluoro light was the only thing holding it up.
- The carport which we had to organise for ourselves to remove from Balcatta Fire Station and reassemble at Bassendean.

I have only mentioned the negatives but there are also good things about being at "Club Med" Bassendean. Sadly after serving the community for many decades the poor old girl just needs to be replaced. Management tells us that our new station isn't far away but with FESA still not owning the land we believe we will be in our little humble abode for many more years to come.

Bassendean Fire Station can be summed up by the famous quote from Forest Gump. "Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get".

Not only do we dream of a new station - we dream of our station being located in the heart of our fire district - not stuck in some back corner.

Paul Markovic

TRIVIA - WHY ARE FIRE ENGINES RED?

I was asked this question a while ago and thought it was time to do some research. I have come up with three answers ranging from absurd to plausible.

1. Cause there's eight wheels on them and four people, and four plus eight is twelve, and twelve is a foot and a foot is a ruler, and Queen Elizabeth was a ruler, and Queen Elizabeth was also a ship, and the ship sails the sea and in the sea is fish and fish have fins, and the Finns fought the Russians and the Russians were red and that's why fire engines are red.

2. The most widely-accepted reason that fire engines are painted red dates back to the 1800s -- a time when there was a lot of competition between the fire brigades of neighboring cities and towns. The firefighters of each brigade took great pride in their pump. Each brigade wanted their rig stand out by being the cleanest, having the most brass, or being a regal color. Because red was the most expensive color, that's what color most crews chose to paint the pump.

Other sources cite the tradition of painting fire engines red going back to the early 1920's. Henry Ford wanted to make cars as inexpensively as possible and only offered cars in one color: black. With all of these black vehicles on the road, the fire service began painting their vehicles red in an effort to stand out.

3. Fire engines are painted to be easily visible for safety reasons. Not all fire engines are red and the decision on color is made at a local level. Many cities are beginning to use a bright yellow-lime color instead of red. Studies have shown that this is much more visible to a wide variety of people. Going to a fashionable, but not functional color like black or gray would never happen for safety reasons.

SO Craig Edmonds

Caffeine high Trevor got into the wrong car

MARINATED LAMB CHOPS WITH MANGO SALSA

Mango Salsa

2 Mangoes, peeled and diced
2 slices red onion
2 sliced shallots
2 finely chopped red chillies
1/2 cup finely chopped mint
4 Tbsp fresh lime juice
2 Tbsp olive oil
salt flakes
ground black pepper

Combine all ingredients and allow to stand for several hours before using.

Marinated Lamb Loin Chops

8 Lamb chops
1 Tbsp each of basil, mint
1 clove garlic, crushed
3 Tbsp apricot jam or similar
2 Tbsp soy sauce
1 tsp ginger, crushed

Cut excess fat off chops. Combine all other ingredients and pulse in blender till smooth. Pour mixture over chops and refrigerate to marinade overnight. BBQ chops and brush with marinade during cooking.

Loin chops can be substituted with cutlets or de-boned leg of lamb(bake).

This is a great recipe for making a day in advance. Perfect for planning a bbq in the hot weather this summer. Enjoy with cocktails such as Long Island Iced Tea or a nice minty Mojito.

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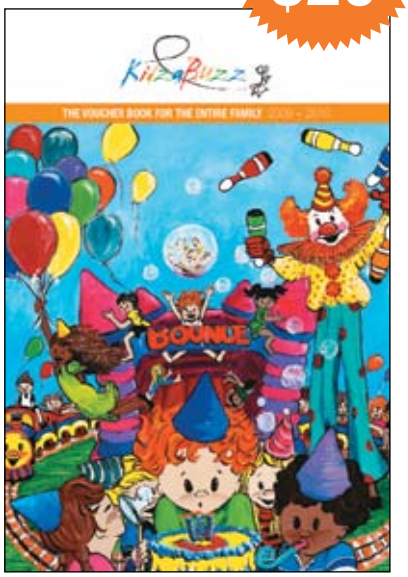

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