

Fireground

autumn 2005



► Community Education Hits the Streets in 2005

AUTUMN 2005

Official Journal of
The Tasmania Fire Service



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Cover: Community Education Vehicle
with Sacred Heart Students



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From the Chief Officer



Once again Australians were reminded of the dangerous and destructive power of bushfires when nine people were tragically killed and much property destroyed on the South Australian Eyre Peninsula in early January. Again the questions of how and why it happened are being asked. Without straying into that area I think there are a number of lessons we need to heed from the South Australian tragedy.

Regardless of our vigilance and firefighting capability weather conditions can, do and will occur that drive fires with such speed and intensity as to completely defy our ability to control them. During such events it is critical for people to understand and know how to behave to survive.

For a number of years we have been encouraging people in areas at risk from bushfires to plan their response to bushfires. Either go early, which often is not always practical because of the lack of warning time. Or prepare, stay and defend.

Those residents who choose to stay must be prepared. Preparation of their property particularly through the creation of a defensible space along with being appropriately dressed and knowing how to behave when the fire arrives are vitally important for survival of people and their properties.

Most people accept that houses can be rebuilt but a life lost is irreplaceable. But staying to defend the house is not just about protecting property. Staying and using the house as a refuge to protect from the radiant heat can be vital for personal survival from bushfires especially when they burn under extreme weather conditions. We must keep reminding people that houses do not spontaneously explode and it's much safer inside than outside where they are unprotected from the radiant heat of the fire.

History shows that most people who die during bushfires, die from the effects of radiant heat when they were caught unprotected in the open or fleeing in cars. Houses protect people and people protect houses.

While at times as firefighters we may be powerless to prevent or control bushfires, they are survivable if people make plans including knowing how to prepare and behave when they occur. It is important that all of us in the TFS take every opportunity to promote and encourage safe bushfire behaviour at every opportunity.

Community Education Hits the Streets in 2005

Hitting the streets of Tasmania this year are four new highly visible School Education Vehicles.

Sporting state-of-the-art computer generated graphics, there's no doubt as they navigate their way around the state, the four full time School Education Instructors will not be hard to spot.

"It's sure to be a big hit with the kids" said Kelly Marriott, Community Education.

Chris Tomes from Community Education said "We see this exciting new initiative as enhancing current fire awareness campaigns and programs by providing a high profile platform to display fire safety messages and promote the TFS tag line 'That's All It Takes'".

"These vehicles, while primarily used for the School Education Program, will also be used at other TFS promotional events, such as campaign launches, displays etc" he said.

The full colour decaling is made from a long life vinyl that is fade resistant and washable. The same product is used on bus advertising. The vinyl has an adhesive backing and is easily removed from the vehicle, without damage, when necessary.

"Our Community Education vehicles travel approximately 80,000 km's plus statewide each year, including small towns, remote communities and cities. We're confident our fire safety messages will be seen by thousands of travellers, motorists and pedestrians in all areas" said George Auchterlonie, Community Education.

Several fire safety messages aligned with the School Education Program and current fire safety campaigns will be displayed on the vehicles including: "Protect Your Family"; "Make Sure Your Smoke Alarms Work"; and "Make A Plan To Get Them Out Alive". The TFS tag line "That's All It Takes", 1800 000 699 and www.fire.tas.gov.au will also be displayed.

Community Education has instigated similar initiatives in the past including:

- Decaling of 10 fire trucks throughout the state. Due to be completed February 2005;
- Decaling of a Volkswagen Beetle for the "Spot A Fire Bug" campaign in partnership with the Southern Board of Crimestoppers;
- Providing web site address decals for all TFS vehicles; and
- Advertising on buses and shopping trolleys statewide.

Community Education's four decal'd Corolla Wagons are located: one in Devonport, one in Launceston and two in Hobart.

Look out for one in your area soon.



The above photos show concept artwork - see the "real thing" on the cover!

From Preolenna to Indonesia Tasmanian Aid to Indonesia

By Manager Engineering Services, Leon Smith

As part of the more urgent first stage response to the Indonesian Tsunami crisis, the Tasmanian Government formulated an agreement with Incat Australia, Brittany Ferries, AusAID and the Hobart Ports Corporation to enable the delivery of urgently needed goods and equipment via an Incat high speed catamaran vessel on its delivery voyage to Europe.

The catamaran left Hobart on Saturday 22nd January 2005, with an anticipated arrival in Jakarta approximately four days later. After a request from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Tasmania Fire Service donated a 1975 MFR Bedford appliance complete with pump-set and hose reels, as well as fabricated a slip on unit to be utilised on a flat tray Hilux that had been donated by Toyota Australia.

Both units are bound for Banda Aceh, where they will be utilised for water transport as well as washing down during the clean up effort. After receiving the request 24 hours prior to the departure of the vessel, Leon O'Brien (Acting Foreman, Appliance Fabrication), oversaw the fabrication of a slip on unit, which was fabricated from second hand components from other projects and fitted the unit to the donated flat tray on the Hobart wharf.

The MFR Bedford appliance was recently removed from service at Preolenna in the North West and destined for disposal, after their appliance was upgraded to a Mercedes 911, which was made available after the commissioning of tanker pumpers in Burnie and Devonport.

It is nice to think that in a small way, we as an organisation have contributed to the relief effort in Indonesia. Thanks again to Engineering Services staff, who completed the project in a very short timeframe.



Charity Christmas Giving

This Christmas TFS staff participated in the Salvation Army's Christmas Cheer Appeal whereby staff brought in gifts to place under the Christmas Tree for donation to charity.

Salvation Army representative Captain Simon Damen collected the gifts and a further donation of \$400 at a special afternoon tea on 21st December. This enabled them to deliver hampers, toys and other gifts to families and senior citizens.

Thanks to all staff for their generous donation and enabling the Salvation Army to make Christmas enjoyable for others.



New Regional Chief Appointed



The most recent senior appointment was that of Tony Davidson to the position of Regional Chief South. Tony officially took up his new position in November 2004. This position is somewhat different to the old Regional Officer position in that it incorporates the role of Brigade Chief Hobart and is to be supported by a Deputy Regional Chief in the near future.

Tony believes that the new roles and functions of the Regional Chief and the Deputy Regional Chief will see a much greater whole of region approach to both brigade management and emergency incident response. In the future we will see a much more flexible approach to where our people work on a daily basis. This will provide the opportunity for career staff to transfer on a needs basis to areas such as the Districts and Training, and as a result there will be beneficial spin offs for both the career and volunteer members across the region

Before joining the Hobart Fire Brigade in the mid 70's Tony was a boilermaker welder and his last job was on the reconstruction of the Tasman Bridge. He says he can still remember the freezing cold wind howling down the river and the need for the extra layers of clothing to keep warm enough to be able work. There were no regrets about leaving all that behind as life in the fire brigade was too good to be true - well almost. Grown men running around a fire truck singing out numbers and changing around until someone burst out laughing and consequently facing the wrath of the Drill Officer. The calls to the College

of Knowledge (Mt Nelson) in the early hours of a freezing winter night and nary a real fire; the chimney fires on those wet or frosty nights when roofs were slippery and you just knew that people did it to get the Fire Brigade to clean their chimney; those long hours wearing Proto in the tunnels in the BA complex, that wasn't training - that was just an endurance test. But nothing stays the same.

Opportunities came and with promotion to Station Officer he took a particular interest in fire appliances and then was coerced into transferring to the East Coast before being promoted to District Officer Tamar in 1994. He transferred back to Hobart in 1997 as the Acting Brigade Chief and subsequently became the Deputy Regional Officer/ Brigade Chief the following year. Since that time he has undertaken a major role with the Multi Agency Co-ordination group and incident management teams across the state as well as the co-ordination of mainland task forces. At brigade level he was the project manager for the new amalgamated Fire and Ambulance stations at Glenorchy and Goodwood along with the redevelopment of the Melville Street site in Hobart.

He still fondly recalls his days on shift at the Hobart Fire Brigade both as a firefighter and an officer and being a member of its then very competitive cricket team. His stint in the East Coast District in 1993, which he believes was the turning point in his career, was highlighted by the February 7th fires at Richmond and the following summer being part of Task Force Tiger in New South Wales. As the District Officer Tamar he had the opportunity to work with luminaries such as Ron Patmore; Mike Moore; Rodney Read and of course Graham Otley, all of whom showed him how the North can do it better or at least differently.

The stand-outs of his career to date: being appointed as the Brigade Chief Hobart; being a member of the 2000 IMT Taskforce that went to the USA; being awarded the AFSM; and being involved with the 120th anniversary of the HFB.

Outside the Fire Service Tony still likes to work with his hands, particularly building renovations, and has almost completed the restoration of his home in West Hobart.

On a lighter note when asked what was the greatest challenge facing him as the new Regional Chief South, his response was "as an ardent Collingwood supporter I wonder how I will gain credibility when at least 50% of the people out there already hate me!"

Sad - but true Tony! (Linda Lacy Editor)

From the Training Ground

By District Officer Training Services, Paul Salter

Attendance at Courses

The 2005 annual training plan has been finalised statewide with a record number of courses planned for 2005. Each regional training plan is now available via TFS ON-LINE. To enhance the potential number of participants at each course, a mail-out process has been established to forward confirmation of attendance and relevant course information to each nominated participant and will commence very shortly. Training Services is keen to improve communication channels to TFS volunteers and believe that these are a couple of strategies to begin the process.

To enhance this process we need your support in responding with course nominations. Training can be flexible to suit your Brigade needs including delivering courses during the day on week days. Extra training props and facilities are being developed at Bell Bay and Three Mile Line in Burnie to assist training delivery. As much as possible we will bring the training to you. This plan is to achieve the training gap identified from the recognition process by the end of 2008, we can provide the training, and we need your support in attending courses.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Part of our requirement as a registered training organisation is to make available a process to apply for recognition of prior learning to candidates who believe they can demonstrate current competence in a particular unit or units (course). This is not the same as the RCC process used to change all firefighters into the new training system, the Public Safety Training Package. An RPL application requires the candidate to formally prepare a written application for each unit for which the candidate seeks recognition. This application must be on the approved TFS recognition form and be supported by evidence to demonstrate competence for that unit.

How to apply for RPL

Training Services will advertise for recognition applications via internal email, the Fireground publication and the intranet

prior to April and October each year or at other times based on organisational demands. A person applying for recognition should seek advice from his / her supervisor or an assessor prior to application.

The application shall be completed on the relevant TFS Recognition Application Form available through the intranet. The recognition application must be complete with supporting evidence to demonstrate the candidate's competence against the elements and performance criteria of the unit. This may include Certificates or Statement of Attainment; workplace documents or reports; supervisor's reports; evidence of work practices; training records etc or demonstration of skills in the workplace or simulated exercise. The onus is on the candidate to provide the evidence to demonstrate competence.

The recognition application must be forwarded to the District Officer Training Services at Cambridge by the 22nd April 2005.

Recognition can be granted only for units that are included within the Tasmania Fire Service scope of registration and are applicable to the candidate's career stream pay point or volunteer firefighter skills matrix.

Assessment of RPL applications

Applications will be assessed by a recognition panel against nationally accredited competency standards to ensure the evidence supplied is authentic, valid, reliable, current and sufficient. The recognition panel will consist of appropriate assessors for the unit being assessed. The recognition panel will document the assessment and provide results to the applicant and Training Services. The applicant will be contacted by the recognition panel if further evidence is required to determine competence. This may be in the form of further documentation, an interview or practical demonstration.

Applicants will receive a statement of attainment for the units assessed as competent.

Editorial

By Editor Linda Lacy

Over the last few years it has been wonderful to receive more and more articles from TFS members around the State. There are times, though, when I receive articles which I cannot print because they may offend some readers, even though the author has written the article in good humour and not intending to offend anyone. If you are writing an article, can I please ask that you make sure its contents are not going to offend either the people mentioned in the article or the many

readers of Fireground who may not understand the 'local jokes'. Thanks for your help with this and keep those articles coming!

We're still needing your photos too - keep sending them in - but remember to let me know what the photo is about - a paragraph may be enough, although I can't promise I won't ask for more! Thanks for all your support - the quality of Fireground keeps on improving due to you all.

Amalgamation of Brigades

By Regional Chief South, Tony Davidson

At the December 2004 meeting of the State Fire Commission, approval was granted for the amalgamation of the Bothwell, West Bothwell and Hollow Tree Brigades. They are now known as the Bothwell Fire Brigade.



The West Bothwell and the Hollow Tree Brigades were originally formed to spread the workload of the volunteers in the general Bothwell area and to provide for the strategic placement of resources in the area. Prior to that time the Bothwell Brigade, whose members generally lived in the township, were responding to all fires in the greater Bothwell area. Many of these fires were bushfires remote from the town.

In recent years, however, all three brigades have experienced difficulty in mustering a full crew response, dependent on the time of day and day of the week. The current membership of the West Bothwell and Hollow Tree Brigades was not sufficient in numbers for them to operate efficiently or effectively as stand alone brigades. As a consequence the Bothwell Fire Brigade were responded to all calls which occurred in the West Bothwell and Hollow Tree response areas.

The process which lead to the amalgamation is outlined below:

- Discussions between the three brigades and District management have taken place during the past twelve months in an effort to resolve the above matters;
- All three brigades voted unanimously for the amalgamation to occur;
- It was proposed that the current appliances allocated to West Bothwell and Hollow Tree Brigades would remain in their present location;
- It was agreed that all West Bothwell and Hollow Tree officers would become firefighters with the new Bothwell Brigade. That is, they would resign from their current officer positions;
- All members of the new brigade would have pagers tuned to the Bothwell Brigade frequency;
- The new brigade membership will develop appropriate response procedures in consultation with district management.

District Officer Bill Burke and Field Officer Paul Horne are confident that the amalgamation is in the best interest of the greater Bothwell community. I am pleased that this amalgamation has been achieved with little fuss and goodwill by all those involved. The local community can be assured of a more effective and efficient service from the new brigade.

Role of Group Officers

Group Officers have played an important role in Tasmania over the past 35 years. Initially our Group system was based around the CFA model with its main function to co-ordinate and control operations at incidents where a number of brigades were present. At this time the Group system assisted in managing large incidents in the absence of the Incident Control System (ICS).

Since the introduction of ICS into TFS in the early 90's the role of the Group Officer as the co-ordinator of resources and controller of large incidents has changed but their other roles have further evolved. These are to support their brigades and foster inter-brigade co-operation in the Group and to assist with fire management planning in their Group area.

Group Officers still have operational responsibilities. Primarily their role during incidents is not to manage the incident but ensure the incident is managed.

The Chain of Command establishes the Brigade Chief (or most senior officer present) of the responding brigade as the Incident Controller (IC) of a Level 1 incident, however, a Group Officer may become the IC if both Brigade Chief and Group Officer mutually agree.

Additionally Group Officers may be appointed to a position in an Incident Management Team (IMT) managing Level 2 and 3 incidents subject to their availability and competence. At any incident, regardless of its level, Group Officers are usually well placed to be able to provide local knowledge and assistance to IMT's.

In December 2004 the State Fire Commission approved an amendment to the Chain of Command. In essence this amendment authorises a Group Officer to take action to establish a management structure to help manage incidents once they begin to escalate. This is prior to the formal appointment of an IMT by a District Officer or more senior officer. For example the Group Officer may confer with Brigade Chief and decide that the IC needs support to manage the incident and appoint a person to manage the logistics. It may even be that the Group Officer elects to undertake that function himself. It would be expected that if greater support is needed the District Officer would be contacted and arrangements commenced to establish a formal IMT. This new amendment is to facilitate quicker support for IC's and to streamline the management of incidents in their critical early stages.

North West Regional Headquarters to Move!

By Regional Officer North West, John Streets

As a result of the staff increases in the areas of TasFire Equipment; TasFire Training; and Training Services in the North West Region, and the need to implement the new Public Safety Training Package for our career and volunteer firefighters, we have outgrown the Regional Headquarters and it was time to look for a new home.

The State Fire Commission approved the upgrade of facilities in the North West Region, and as a result the Director of Corporate Services Mike Gallagher and the North West Regional Officer John Streets attended the auction of the Telstra Administration and Service Centre which is situated at 15 Three Mile Line Burnie. The building is on a 1.5 hectare site and is adjacent to the existing TFS mechanical workshop. The State Fire Commission was successful in purchasing the property, and should have possession in mid February 2005.

It is proposed that the upgrade will be in two stages. Stage one will involve the redesign of the administration area, office block, kitchen, toilet/shower facilities, major incident room, meeting areas and the upgrade of the outside of the building including landscaping. It is envisaged that this project could be completed by the end of the current financial year.

The second stage which is planned for the next financial year will be the development of the training rooms and the outside training area which will be based on the Northern Region model.

We are currently employing an architect and draughtsman to provide conceptual plans.



Chris Grabs a Masters!

Last December District Officer Chris Arnol received his Masters Degree in Public Management. He is pictured here receiving his parchment from Sir Eric Neal, the Chancellor of Flinders University, at his graduation ceremony in Adelaide. The Degree covered things like:

- Structures and Styles of Government;
- Policy Analysis and Decision-Making; and
- Strategic Management of Public Sector Organisations



When asked about it Chris said, "While I have never really liked studying I do enjoy learning and it seemed only natural to follow up my fire service qualifications with a tertiary award. If we have a look around, the Fire Service probably fares very well in the qualification stakes and I am grateful for the support the TFS has given me with this. I do think in this day and age organisations like ours need to have managers who are well equipped as professionals and most of our District Officers have some form of tertiary education behind them." Chris also has an Associate Diploma of Applied Science (Fire Technology); he is a Member (by examination) of the Institution of Fire Engineers and has completed other post-graduate studies in Applied Management and Public Sector Management.



The TFS seems to be a quiet achiever in higher education. We now have a number of people with degrees in a range of disciplines i.e., Commerce, Accounting, Forestry, Business Administration, Training and Emergency Management. A number of career firefighters have come to us with degrees and others like Justin Young from Finance and Andrew Newell from Human Resources who featured in recent editions of Fireground have pursued work-related qualifications. (Linda Lacy Editor)

Phasing out of Lead Replacement (LRP) and Super Petrol

By Manager Engineering Services, Leon Smith

As everyone is no doubt aware, the phasing out of super petrol led to the introduction of Lead Replacement Petrol (LRP), which was designed as an interim measure for use in older vehicles requiring a 97 octane rated fuel. LRP is basically 96 octane and has valve seat anti-recession additive blended into the mix during manufacture rather than lead based additive.

Since the introduction of LRP, the demand has diminished due to a combination of a reduction in the number of older vehicles requiring the product, as well as an increase in demand for premium unleaded due to an increased amount of new vehicles requiring premium unleaded fuel. Gradually throughout Tasmania, LRP will reduce in availability, requiring premium unleaded to be utilised, with an additive placed into the appliance tank during filling. All retail outlets sell either 'flashlube' or 'valve master' additives, which is a liquid

valve seat anti-recession additive. Premium Unleaded has an octane rating very close to that of Super, negating the need to re tune air fuel mixtures.

Plain unleaded fuel should not be used in older appliances that were designed for super petrol as the octane rating is significantly different and will result in very poor performance and overheating. BP are in the process of developing a 98 octane unleaded fuel for high performance vehicles in the near future and when available will be once again more suited to the older appliances (once again with an additive like 'flashlube' for valve lubrication).

Please note that all portable pumps, generators and small equipment should run 91 octane unleaded fuel and there is no requirement for premium unleaded to be utilised.

Metro Backpacker Fire

By Station Officer Launceston Fire Brigade, Al Williams

Recently Launceston Fire Brigade's C Platoon responded to two calls in the space of seventeen days at the Launceston Metro Backpackers with two very different outcomes. The first fire was minor resulting in no injuries and with damages estimating approximately \$10,000. The second fire was major resulting in serious injuries and a fatality, with a damage estimate of approximately \$800,000.

First Fire - 14th December 2004

The two storey heritage listed building situated at 16 Brisbane Street Launceston was originally constructed as a funeral parlour and had in recent times been converted into a backpacker hostel accommodation facility catering for up to seventy people. The building was fitted with a local alarm.

On the 14th December 2004, fire crews from the Launceston Brigade were called to a fire in a kitchen on the second floor. On arrival crews were met at the door by the night manager who had the occupancy list in hand and had evacuated all occupants. The building was heavily smoke logged on the second floor but the fire was relatively small and quickly extinguished. Initial investigations suggested the fire started in the garbage bins under the kitchen bench and due to the absence of any other ignition sources the most likely conclusion was that somebody had emptied one of the many ashtrays from the rear deck into the bin before all embers had cooled.

During overhaul crews took the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the layout of the building and noticed that access to the rear of the building could only be gained from a laneway that originated off the opposite side of the city block and ran through a large enclosed car park. No access to the top floor was provided at the rear of the building.

Second Fire - 31st December 2004

On Friday 31st December 2004, Launceston fire crews were again called to a structure fire at the Launceston Metro Backpackers with the message "twenty people trapped on the roof space".

Turning the corner into Brisbane Street, crews were confronted with an exceptionally well lit view of the other end of the block as the fire was already venting through the roof and had spread across most of the top floor. People were scattered from the front entrance of the building to the opposite side of the road and a large group had gathered at the intersection on the end of the block. The Rocherlea crew were called to respond with the new snorkel in tow and police were requested to close off the street along the front side of the block.

The first arriving crew positioned themselves outside the front entrance of the building and the second crew at the rear lane on the opposite side of the block. BA crews at the front (Brisbane Street) entered the building on the ground floor which was smoke logged but mostly unaffected by fire and found that the one and only staircase leading to the second

floor was unusable due to the severe fire damage already sustained. Access to the second floor was gained from the outside using ladders leading to the front balcony, however, firefighters could only enter approximately one to two metres inside the balcony doors as the heat was too intense to go any further and firefighting was conducted from the balcony.

The BA crews at the rear (Cameron Street) were also experiencing difficulties as the canvas hose used in place of the high pressure hose reels (which were not long enough to reach inside the building) kept bursting due to the amount of broken glass in the rear porch area. A ten metre ladder was used to gain access to the rear landing on the second floor which extended out from the kitchen / dining areas and firefighting operations were conducted from there as again the fire was too intense and the dining room floor too unstable for a safe entry to be made.

A short time after operations had begun from both sides of the building the snorkel had arrived and was set up as an observation deck to monitor any fire spread to the adjoining buildings should it have occurred. At this stage only a small percentage of roof section had collapsed and extinguishing operations from the snorkel monitor were not practical as efforts were still being made to gain entry onto the second floor to search for the missing occupants. These efforts were cut short when the large landing at the top of the stairs directly below the venting roof section collapsed. Any thoughts of internal rescue attempts were now abandoned completely as the building became more unstable and priority was given strictly to extinguishment. Some good news at this stage was that the number of those missing had decreased to "possibly four" as people returned from a night on the town. The crew members at the rear of the building were first to make some headway in extinguishing the fire, gaining control over the dining, lounge and kitchen areas leaving the bulk of the fire burning in the two front dormitory bedrooms and shower block, by this time other sections of the roof had given way. The snorkel and a heavy pumper was repositioned to the Tamar Street side of the building as it could now be used to support extinguishing efforts but after setting the appliances up it was found that the monitor could not be moved due to an electrical fault. This restricted its use as an extinguishing medium.

Firefighting operations continued for some time with the assistance of the Prospect Volunteers. The police had relocated 65 of the occupants from the backpackers to the Old Launceston Hotel and five others to the Launceston General Hospital suffering burns, lacerations and smoke inhalation. At 0550 hours a stop was placed on the fire with the number of missing persons now reported at two. With the aid of the morning light the structural damage became more apparent as the brick façade on the front of the building had cracked and could be seen leaning slightly out towards the footpath. Crews continued to dampen down hot spots

over the next hour or so and any part of the second floor found in a sound enough state was searched, during this period another person presumed missing was accounted for leaving only one remaining and police were able to confirm that this person would most likely be found in one of the front bedrooms. At approximately 0745 hours the deceased was located in a bedroom.

The day shift took over operations where they spent most of the following day putting out hot spots while assisting the USAR team employed to stabilise the building and the fire investigators. Building Fire Safety also conducted an inspection and found that the fire safety procedures in place complied with Australian Standards. TFS Fire Investigators determined that the point of origin of the fire was on the ground floor in the vicinity of the stairs.



The Recovery - a USAR Operation

By District Officer Launceston Fire Brigade,
Mark Dobson (TFS USAR Co-ordinator)

At around 0830 hours an assessment of the building's integrity was conducted by structural engineer Glenn Prien and District Officer Mark Dobson. It was determined that parts of the facade had suffered serious heat damage and there was a possibility that it could become even more unstable once salvage and overhaul operations were initiated. Some parts of the upper floor were also deemed unsafe.

A decision was made to mobilise an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team to the incident. Career staff from Launceston and Devonport Brigades responded and were supported by a local scaffolding contractor who erected a work platform and stabilising scaffold adjacent to the building. The USAR operation was co-ordinated by Station Officer Russell Kerr.

A significant portion of the façade was cut into sections using specialist hydraulic powered cutting equipment and then removed in manageable sections. Timber shoring was then utilised to shore up parts of the floor that had been damaged by the fire.

Once the USAR operation had been completed the formal fire investigation was then conducted in a much safer environment. The removal of the façade has also made the site much safer for the general public considering the front of the building adjoins the Brisbane Street footpath.

This incident has highlighted the USAR capability of TFS following our recent Category 2 course in October 2004. We now have the ability to assess the structural integrity of a building and provide shoring to make our working environment much safer, particularly where a formal fire investigation or other post fire operations are required.



Fire safety in backpacker (hostel) accommodation in Tasmania

By Manager Building Safety, Phil Oakley

Information and activities

There are approximately 75 backpacker establishments in Tasmania;

Backpacker establishments can be classified as either a Class 1b building (capable of accommodating 12 persons or less and are not covered by General Fire Regulations 2000) or Class 3 (more than 12 persons and covered by GFR's). Around 30 - 40% of backpacker establishments are Class 3 (approx 35)

Fire safety information has been developed and is available in the form of brochures and on the TFS web site. Information covers:

- Owner/occupier obligations;
- The standard to which maintenance works is to be undertaken;
- TFS contact details.

TFS wrote to all backpacker operators approximately 18 months ago informing them about fire safety concerns in these facilities and provided them with the information brochure.

Building Safety has undertaken audits in most Class 3 backpacker establishments in Tasmania in the past 2 years.

Most are already compliant and officers are working diligently with the remaining operators to ensure these establishments are made as safe as reasonably possible (within the law) for occupancy.

General Fire Regulations requirements

Owners or occupiers of backpacker establishments are required to:

- develop, practice and maintain an evacuation plan which has been approved by the Chief Officer;
- ensure all installed fire protection equipment is maintained by a permit holder and in accordance with the relevant Australian Standard/s;
- ensure exit and emergency lighting is operational at all times;
- ensure exits are not fitted with unapproved locking devices;
- ensure exits remain clear and unobstructed at all times;
- ensure unobstructed access at all times to installed fire protection equipment and essential services

Occupants of backpacker establishments are required to evacuate the building in the event of fire or alarm of fire.

Building Safety at Full Strength

By Manager Building Safety, Phil Oakley

Building Safety is now back to full strength following two recent additions to the team. Steve Davison and Wayne Viney have been appointed to the unit as Consultants in Hobart and Burnie respectively and in doing so were also promoted to the rank of Station Officer. Both will bring with them a wealth of knowledge and experience gained through their brigade and field work.

Steve is a seventeen year veteran of the service and replaces Mark Klop who has moved to the position of Regional Fire Investigator South. Wayne has worked with the service for sixteen years and replaces David Homan who has moved back to the Burnie Brigade.

I would like to welcome Steve and Wayne to the Building Safety team and wish Mark and David all the best in their new careers.



Safety Advisors - Adding to your Safety

By Project Officer OH&S, John Green

Through the 2003 / 2004 fire season the Multi-Agency Co-ordination Group (MAC Group) acknowledged the continuing focus on fireground safety by appointing Safety Advisors to several level 3 incidents. Level 3 incidents are those which continue to grow in size and complexity with a serious involvement of multiple tenure classes. Subsequently each of the three firefighting agencies have adopted the principle of deploying Safety Advisors to all level 3 multi-agency incidents where Incident Management Teams (IMTs) are appointed with the ongoing intention of employing Safety Advisors throughout the summer fire season.

Each agency may implement the Safety Advisor initiative on different criteria but the role and responsibilities within the IMT will be the same. That is, the Safety Advisor will have no operational role to perform except for focussing on all aspects of safety. Importantly, the appointment of a Safety Advisor will not relieve any individual, crew leader, sector or divisional commanders and/or the IMT of their continuing responsibility for their own and other member's safety.

Safety Advisors will be the Incident Controller's "eyes and ears" out on the fireground and will work under the delegated authority of the Incident Controller. Safety Advisors will be selected from experienced personnel who have knowledge, skill and experience in bushfire fighting and who are aware of some of the more complex issues involved in conducting firefighting operations safely. The Safety Advisor's role and responsibilities will include, but are not limited to:

- Obtaining an initial briefing from the Incident Controller;
- Attend (where practical) Incident Management Team meetings and briefings;
- Independent risk assessment of existing fireground hazards (including consideration of risks likely to emerge in future shifts) and develop a range of actions to prevent or mitigate such risks;
- Identify and report to the Incident Controller on any significant unsafe condition or practice;
- In consultation with the relevant chain of command, act to stop any activity involving imminent threat of significant injury and immediately inform the Incident Controller. Thereafter, liaise with the appropriate officer within the chain of command to ensure the rectification of any health and/or safety issue;

- Monitor the development of the Incident Action Plan and provide safety advice on proposed strategies and tactics;
- Monitor the briefing process to ensure safety information is passed down to all members;
- Monitor all personnel to ensure they are systematically accounted for, supervised within the recommended span of control and are managed within participating agencies' safe working systems and practices;
- Monitor the health, safety and welfare of all personnel at the incident by ensuring appropriate use of personal protective clothing and equipment, work and/or task rotation (rest and recuperation), adequate and timely refreshments (energy and hydration) and monitoring excessive working hours and travelling time (adding to fatigue);
- Maintaining a safety log (recording all communications and actions).

The Fire Service is far more active year round in fire suppression and accordingly intends to include the Safety

Advisor role into a wider application than does the MAC Group. Currently the appointment of a Safety Advisor at smaller incidents has always been at the discretion of any Incident Controller who may choose to appoint a Safety Advisor to assist as and where necessary, however, continuing health and safety awareness is requiring greater effort and increased responsibility to ensure firefighter and public safety.

Initially we will be appointing Safety Advisors for all TFS controlled level 2 incidents with the intention of including Safety Advisors at "significant individual incidents" such as Hazmat and/or major structural/ industrial fires. Furthermore, the additional requirements of training and the need for our people to gain the necessary experience may see the inclusion of Safety Advisors at many more incidents into the future.

As with most new strategies, some minor adjustments will be required to secure the Safety Advisor's role within operations. Personnel selection, minimum competency requirements and organisational documentation (SOPs, training manuals and performance criteria etc.) will be made available as the role develops.

Any constructive suggestions or recommendations should be forwarded to the author.



FIAAI Heavy Tanker Project

By Manager Engineering Services, Leon Smith

During a post-fire visit to Flinders Island in 2002, the Tasmania Fire Service gave an undertaking to the Aboriginal Community (Flinders Island Aboriginal Association Incorporated, FIAAI) to fabricate a dedicated firefighting resource for use in both the protection of their own assets, as well as those of the wider Flinders Island community.

During primary discussions with the FIAAI, it became evident that a heavy tanker appliance, with a large water capacity with both high pressure and volume capability would be well suited to the risks on the Island. Although the organisation has firefighting capability in the form of slip on units on utilities, as well as a bulk water carrier, a specific need for a dedicated appliance that could be readily despatched was identified. The FIAAI subsequently applied for and were granted \$50,000 by the Federal Government to purchase their own firefighting appliance. The TFS consequently began exploring options for the acquisition of a suitable chassis for this application, considering issues such as predominant risk, isolation, terrain and compatibility with TFS resources on the Island. It became apparent during the early phases of the project that due to both budget constraints and timeframes, the most appropriate way to achieve the desired result was to source an existing appliance, then undertake modifications and a refurbishment.

After contacting several national fire agencies, the TFS sourced a 4000 litre JCS Isuzu single cab heavy tanker appliance that was recently decommissioned from service with the Department of Sustainability and Environment in Victoria. After purchasing the appliance for \$35,000 it was shipped to Cambridge, where a major refurbishment was undertaken by Engineering Services staff.



Photo courtesy of The Mercury Newspaper

Basically, the appliance was stripped of everything but the integral 4000 litre water tank and re-built from tray level. The original appliance utilised a petrol 9 horse power Briggs and Stratton with a GAAM MK100 centrifugal pump, with 2 low pressure reels, layflat dead reels and a reserve water tank of 1200 litres. The refurbishment entailed the replacement of the deck, modifications to the rollover/crew haven including removal of the pumpset from within the workspace behind the cab, relocating it to the rear of the appliance. The petrol Briggs and Stratton was replaced by a Ruggnerini diesel with recirculation

from the main supply, coupled to a high pressure Darley centrifugal, and a high pressure 30 metre reel was fitted to the rear deck. A single 30 metre 19mm live reel was fitted to the rear undertray and the locker configuration was changed to incorporate breathing apparatus (for the future), as well as stowage for tools and equipment to deal with both structural and vegetation incidents.

Engineering Services staff completed the project in direct consultation with members of the FIAAI, with the majority of work completed after normal working hours as not to interfere with the completion of the Isuzu and Toyota capital projects project plan.



I would personally like to congratulate the members of Engineering Services for the completion of this project and am very pleased to have had the opportunity to consult with the Aboriginal community of Flinders Island to produce an appliance suited to the specific needs of the residents of the greater Flinders community. The appliance has been accepted on behalf of the FIAAI by Mr John Clarke and will be transported to the Island in early February 2005.

34th North West Regional Competitions

By Clerk North West Region, Michelle Clarke

The 34th North West Regional Competitions were held at Latrobe High School on 3rd October 2004.

There were ten junior teams compared to four last year with Chudleigh and Evandale submitting two teams each. Senior teams were down as well as ladies teams - come on guys we need you!

Results were:

Senior Aggregate	won by Wesley Vale
Combined Aggregate	won by Wesley Vale
Junior Aggregate	won by Tarleton



Spagfest 2004!

Believe it or not - there is an annual charity event called Spagfest. It is a spaghetti eating competition with teams from different professions. TFS defending champion Jock Crome once again participated in a team of four. Other members were Giulia Russo, Mark Bryant, Keven LeFebvre and Matt Lowe.

TFS once again took out the honours with Spagfest Champion being Mark Bryant! Well done team!



Prospect Brigade Tsunami Firewood Raffle

By Leading Firefighter / Charity Co-ordinator Prospect Brigade Oliver Breeze



Recently a few of us were in the station talking after training, when the subject of the Tsunami Disaster in South East Asia was brought up. Needless to say it was immediately suggested that we, as a brigade should give a donation. We brain-stormed an idea that may generate good financial gain in a very short time, not the most original or unique proposal but an age old money maker amongst Volunteer Fire Brigades - "The trailer load of firewood raffle," sound familiar?

The day was soon upon us to cut the wood. Three members arrived out to a farm with 5:1, trailer, chainsaws and PPE to start work, only to be met by the farmer with his cheque book in hand, to hand over our first donation and give us direction to the nearest clump of dry firewood, we were off to a fantastic start. Moments later we were heading to a bush block to start the work when we were approached by another wood cutting group (I think they may have been attracted to the big shiny red truck). Once we told them what we were doing they very kindly directed us to a large tree they had already fallen - this was fantastic firewood - they insisted we take it and they could soon find another. One hour later we were all done, loaded up ready to raffle.

Friday afternoon arrived and myself and firefighter Dave Chambers took to the Prospect Vale Market Place

with the 5:1, flashing sign, trailer load of firewood and a few smoke alarms of course. The next two and a half hours were frantic and encouraging as we had people queue up to either give a cash donation or buy tickets. Dave and I were constantly being approached by generous members of the local community giving all their loose change. By close of business Friday night we had just under \$300.

Saturday morning we started around 8.30 am and it was soon realised it was going to be another big day. We had only been there for about an hour when Southern Cross Television turn up to help publicise our Tsunami appeal. So with a quick phone call to Andrew Comer, I was given permission to go live, uncut on the big screen - well not quite - but a short interview was conducted. It was amazing how we had so much media coverage so quickly, with all outlets advertising our appeal. We had a very busy day Saturday with again another overwhelming response to our firewood raffle. By mid afternoon we had raised a little over \$1000.

In just over a week the Brigade had managed to go from an idea to a \$1000 in the bank for a very worthy cause. In general we were overwhelmed by the sincere generosity of the community, the goodwill and support shown by all those involved.

Special thanks to the following for their assistance in making it all happen so quickly and efficiently: District Officers Andrew Comer and Mark Dobson; the Management of the Prospect Vale Market Place; Stephen Bastow; Sophie Murphy; Southern Cross Television; the generous landowner for his support (he is also a volunteer firefighter); finally all members of Prospect Brigade and their respective wives, partners and family for setting aside the time to help out on short notice.

Well done Prospect!



2005 A Bumper Year for International Exchanges

By State Co-ordinator for the International Firefighter Fellowship, Chris Tomes

2005 is turning out to be a bumper year for the International Firefighter Fellowship Program with a total of five firefighters participating in the exchange program this year.

The following lucky firefighters will be overseas this year:



James Newstead (Launceston Fire Brigade) is exchanging with:

Terry Peters from Powell River Fire and Rescue, Powell River, British Columbia, Canada

Commencement date 15th January 2005

Conclusion date 5th January 2006

.....



Rick Mahnken (Launceston Fire Brigade) is exchanging with:

Daniel Searle, Devon Fire and Rescue Service, Devon, England

Commencement date 26th October 2004

Conclusion date 26th October 2005

.....



Stewart McKinlay (Hobart Fire Brigade) is exchanging with:

Keven LeFebvre, Edmonton Fire Department, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Commencement date 22nd September 2004

Conclusion date 22nd May 2005

.....



Sheryl Griffith (Launceston Fire Brigade) is exchanging with:

Jason Keveren of Devon Fire and Rescue, Devon, England

Commencement date 25th March 2005

Conclusion date 25th March 2006

.....



Gary Johnson (Launceston Fire Brigade) is exchanging with:

Scott Wallace, Edmonton Fire Department, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Commencement date 4th April 2005

Conclusion date 26th February 2006

Whilst on exchange firefighters learn about the operation of overseas fire services and the techniques and equipment they use to combat emergencies. As this is a professional development initiative firefighters are expected to present a report and share their experiences when they return. In return, the visiting firefighter will be able to share information about their own brigade, the objective of the exchange being a training, knowledge sharing and networking exercise for international fire brigades. This is also an exercise in

developing professional networks across fire services around the world.

Do you want to know more about the International Firefighter Fellowship Program? Visit the TFS website <http://www.fire.tas.gov.au/mysite/Show?pagelD=colViewIFF>

Information packs are available by contacting Chris Tomes, State Co-ordinator for the International Firefighter Fellowship. c.tomes@fire.tas.gov.au , 6230 8641, 0419 120 159



Firefighter Exchange

By Firefighter Launceston Fire Brigade, Rick Mahnken

Induction and Training

On 6th November 2004 I started my first day on shift as an Australian exchange firefighter in Exeter. Exeter is located within the county of Devon, which is in the south west of England.

The Exeter Fire Brigade is part of the Devon Fire and Rescue Service and was built in 1931. Whilst Exeter is not the largest city within Devon (population of around 100,000) it does have the honour of being the busiest station dealing with about three thousand shouts a year.

On 13th December I completed a four-day fire behaviour and breathing apparatus conversion course. It was a fantastic course and I gained some very valuable knowledge on different suppression techniques. I will elaborate on this course in my next report. I am very glad to have finished the course as I have been on shift over a month now and have not been operational. This course means that I am now operational and the process of getting standbys for me has now ceased.

The induction has been a little disappointing as it has been extremely hard finding a place in the team when you are not operational. That hurdle is now out of the way and I can confidently say that I am settled and am enjoying the opportunities and experiences that the exchange has to offer.

Station Info

The station works on a similar system to the Tasmania Fire Service whereas they have whole time and retained firefighters. The crewing works on a minimum of nine firefighters and two officers at any one time. The whole time firefighters are provided with two main pumps, a water

bowser, hydraulic platform, environmental pod and an incident command pod.

The main appliances are Dennis Sabres and have an 8.3 litre 6-cylinder turbo diesel engine. The pump itself is a Godiva, two-stage centrifugal rear mounted pump. It is capable of delivering 2700 litres a minute at 7 bar and has a tank capacity of 1800 litres. The foam proportioning system is around the pump via external pickup only - no onboard supply.

Strategic Direction

Exeter Fire Station is currently going through a major restructuring process. Because the world has changed over the last few years, so too has the fire and rescue service. Once the focus was all about fires and accidents, now the demands are changing from introducing school children to the basic concepts of fire safety to responding to major threats. The realisation of needing new personal skills as well as practical tools has led to the introduction of the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS). This system is based on roles not ranks, it gives firefighters, managers, specialists and support staff in the service a national benchmark for their skills.

Community Partnerships

The Devon Fire and Rescue Service Exeter have a number of partnerships and ongoing projects with the community. In a short amount of time I have experienced and seen in action some very good examples, which include things like the Car Clear Partnership.

The Car Clear Partnership is not confined to Exeter and I am writing about nearby Bristol's Car Clear Partnership as some statistics are readily available. In 2002 the county of



Avon experienced an epidemic of vehicle arson. Many areas of Bristol (a city in Avon) looked like war zones with burnt out and vandalised cars littering the streets.

The Car Clear Strategy is simple, and it involves:

- Community involvement
 - providing a 24 hour hotline for the public to report vandalised abandoned vehicles (average calls in Bristol are 500 per month!).
- Targeting potential offenders -
 - delivering a one hour interactive presentation to all 14 year olds in Avon, which shows the consequences of vehicle arson.
- Immediate targeted vehicle removal
 - 2,500 vehicles removed each year within 30 minutes of identification and crushed within 24 hours, and a further 3,500 vehicles removed each year within 24 hours of identification and crushed within 24 hours.

The Partnership has been an outstanding success with a 40 per cent reduction of vehicle arson in just three years.

Summary

The exchange has not only given me an opportunity to experience new things professionally but also personally.



Recently we had a holiday travelling through England, Scotland and Wales. One of the highlights for me was visiting St Andrews in Scotland. It has the oldest golf course in the world and is where golf originated. Too bad I didn't have my clubs! We were also lucky enough to experience a white Christmas, which is usually unheard of this far south.

There are still many things to look forward to and lots to experience. I am collecting resources and promotional material to bring home with me. In the meantime, I will continue to send interim reports of my exchange experience.

Bushfire Information

By Information Officer Fire Management Unit, Danny Reid

In early November 2004 I transferred from Training Services to the Fire Management Unit (FMU) for a six month period. I had heard a lot about FMU and had watched interviews and read newspaper articles with comments by Ken Burns, but I did not have a great understanding of how FMU worked, however, here I am with the grand title of Information Officer!

During the fire season one of the functions of FMU is to collect information from the field and Incident Management Teams.

The information collected enables FMU to answer questions such as:

- How big is the fire?
- What resources do we have at the fire?
- What are they doing?
- How long will they be there?
- If aircraft have been deployed, what are they doing?
- How long will they be there?
- What is threatened by the fire?
- Does the public need to be informed about road closures, smoke travel, possible relocation, defending their property, etc?

Keeping the TFS website updated

The last point is particularly important as the public, the media, the Police, Forestry and Parks all rely on the website as a source of information on the current bushfire situation.

When people can see a large plume of smoke in the distance, and it is rapidly getting bigger and appears to be moving in their direction they will want to know:

- Where to seek information?
- Is it going to affect them?
- How should they prepare?
- How should they behave?
- If they are not at home, should they return?
- If they are at home, should they stay?
- Will they be affected by road closures?
- What are we doing for them?

The answers to all of these questions can be found on the TFS website so you can appreciate just how important it is to ensure that the information on the web is as current and accurate as possible.

The website is updated by 0900 hours, 1300 hours and 1700 hours when the fire situation is quiet. When the situation becomes more active the web is updated as fires occur and situations change. Information from our website is also used on a national website called Fire Watch so the rest of the country is able to have a look at what is happening and what we are doing.

FMU can also provide information to the field about weather, both current and predicted, the availability of aircraft, what other incidents are active, the resource allocation to those incidents and the location of current permit fires.

Sounds easy in theory, but in practice it is a little more difficult. Whilst I am very much aware that the people in the field are busy, extracting incident information from them on some occasions is like pulling teeth, but providing accurate and timely information is something that must be done if we are to keep people informed.

The information that we give out is only as good as the information we receive so if it is not forthcoming I will be giving some gentle reminders.

Everyone likes to be recognised for their efforts - and if you don't tell us - we can't do that. Give me a call on 0437 987 225.



Cataract Gorge Rescue

By District Officer Launceston Fire Brigade, Mark Dobson

At 1412 hours on Australia Day 2005, FireComm alerted the Launceston Brigade to assist the Tasmanian Ambulance Service (TAS) with the rescue of a person who had fallen from the Cataract Gorge walkway on to rocks near the South Esk River in Trevallyn.

On arrival at the scene, approximately 500 metres south of Kings Bridge, TFS crews liaised with TAS Rescue Paramedics and decided that the patient, suspected to have spinal injuries and concussion, needed to be placed in a rescue stretcher and removed using vertical rescue techniques.

A rescue team was mobilised and arrived at the site at 1500 hours. A rope system was set up by firefighters whilst paramedics treated the patient prior to removal.

The Cataract Cruises vessel *Lady Launceston* was put to good use in the rescue operation. Once the patient had been secured in the stretcher he was lowered onto the boat and transported to Home Point to a waiting ambulance.

TFS and TAS crews worked extremely well together and the entire operation was completed in a little more than an hour.



What is “Change Your Clock, Change Your Smoke Alarm Battery”?

By Acting Manager Community Education, Chris Tomes

The TFS and Duracell have again teamed up to run a campaign to urge all Tasmanians to “Change Your Clock, Change Your Smoke Alarm Battery” on Sunday 27th March. The campaign aims to link the practice of changing your clock at the end of daylight savings with replacing the battery in your smoke alarm to ensure they are kept in working order.

Why have Duracell teamed up with the fire services?

By working with fire authorities Duracell helps create awareness of the life-saving importance of operational smoke alarms in all households and buildings in the community.

Duracell also supports similar programs with the fire services in South Australia, Victoria, and Western Australia and smaller campaigns in Queensland and New South Wales.

What does the campaign involve?

The campaign runs over a two-week period, from 14th March, to the end of daylight saving on Sunday 27th March.

It includes:

- Advertising in metropolitan, suburban/regional and ethnic newspapers, metropolitan and regional radio, and a new television campaign ad during the last ten days in March;
- Campaign posters and shelf tags in major retail outlets where batteries are sold;
- Campaign messages printed in supermarket catalogues and delivered directly to households; and
- A media relations campaign to generate publicity through newspapers, radio and television.

How can you help?

The most effective way to raise awareness is through creating media publicity.

A media relations program co-ordinated by Community Education will target the major media outlets. For instance, publicity will be generated in metropolitan newspapers, radio news and talkback, and television news, however, your station/brigade can help support this campaign by generating local publicity through fire station and community activities.

Key Messages

The TFS and Duracell urge all Tasmanians to “Change Your Clock, Change Your Smoke Alarm Battery” on Sunday 27th March.

For around \$5, a battery for your smoke alarm is the cheapest life-saving investment you can make to protect your home and family.

The most important battery operated device in your house is your smoke alarm and the Tasmania Fire Service encourage

the use of a long-lasting alkaline battery to ensure your smoke alarm's effectiveness until the end of daylight saving next year.

Only a working smoke alarm can save lives.

The campaign is proudly supported by Duracell.

Campaign Logo

How to create a local media story

The “Change Your Clock, Change Your Smoke Alarm Battery” campaign is about creating awareness in the public in an effort to increase the number of operational smoke alarms in the community.

Local Newspapers

Contact your local newspaper (editorial department) at least three weeks prior to the campaign. Advise the editor or journalist that the campaign is coming up and that there are a range of stories and photo opportunities available.

Community Education has media releases available for you to use by contacting George Auchterlonie, Community Education 6230 8443 or 0418 145 746.

Photo: You may wish to invite the local newspaper to come to the fire station and take a photo of you with a smoke alarm and a Duracell battery. Other photo opportunities for the local paper may include a recent victim of a house fire standing in their burnt out home holding the smoke alarm and battery, “smoke alarm saves occupants from fire”; firefighters educating school children on the importance of working smoke alarms; firefighters changing smoke alarm batteries at an important community centre such as a Scout Hall; or a picture of a firefighter helping an elderly or disabled person change the batteries in their smoke alarms.

NOTE: It is very important that only Duracell batteries are used in this campaign, as Duracell is our supporter. Available by contacting George Auchterlonie, Community Education 6230 8443 or 0418 145 746

Local Radio (where applicable)

Contact your local/community radio station the week commencing 14th March. Advise the producer/presenter the campaign has been launched and a TFS spokesperson is available for interviews to discuss the campaign; the importance of smoke alarms in saving lives; statistics such as an estimated 84% of Tasmanian homes now have a smoke alarm installed and that it is vitally important that they are working smoke alarms. About half the fires causing property loss or death occur in the home and most fatal fires occur at night, while people are asleep. Encourage the public to take this opportunity to help family and friends unable to change their own smoke alarm batteries, etc.

Suggested Local Activities

You can help expand the reach of the campaign in your area by organising additional activities. We have listed some suggestions below, but use your imagination, work with existing relationships and expand on past activities.

Help spread the message to ethnic communities by utilising any TFS personnel with second languages. This may include a visit to ethnic clubs and community facilities to discuss the importance of smoke alarms.

Ask the local library, bowling clubs, tennis clubs and other community centres to place a poster (contact Community Ed) in a prominent position to remind the public and/or members to change their smoke alarm batteries on Sunday 27th March.

Suggest a local hardware store combined with the local newspaper give away 10 smoke alarms in the lead up to Sunday 27th March. Smoke alarms can be given away with Duracell batteries.



TFS Online for the “Hottest News in Town”

By Director Corporate Services, Mike Gallagher

A number of enhancements have been made to TFS Online since the last edition of Fireground and there are many other proposed enhancements in the pipeline.

TFS Web Site

Summary of changes to Current Bushfire Map

Changes have been made to the Current Bushfire Map on the TFS Web Site to provide more information to TFS staff and the public. There has been more information added to make the display more informative.

New Community Fire Safety Information

Boating information

Caught in bushfire information

TFS Intranet






Commissioning of Intranet Bookshelf

The Intranet Bookshelf has been commissioned and a large amount of corporate information has been transferred to the Forms and Workplace Instructions folders. A glimpse of what can be found is detailed below. There is still a significant amount of information to be transferred to the Bookshelf so don't be concerned if you open a file and find it is still to be populated.

Forms

-  Administrative
-  Fire Investigation
-  Operational
-  Payment Claims
-  Personnel
-  Public Interest Disclosure
-  Volunteer

Workplace Instructions

-  Awards & Enterprise Agreements (limited access)
-  Business Rules
-  Customer Services Charter
-  Fire Service Act & Regulations
-  General Procedures
-  SFC Policies
-  Standard Operating Procedures
-  TFS Administrative Instructions
-  Volunteer Handbook

Reports that can now be accessed from existing Intranet that are being transferred to TFS Online

Operational Type	Personnel Type
<p>ASSIGNMENT REPORTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landmarks by Assignment Number <p>D.B.A. REPORTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alarm Activity Log Alarms by Concentrator Number False Alarms Isolated Alarms Premise Alarm Details Untested Alarms <p>MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landmark Incidents Pagers by Brigade RMS Resources Spreadsheet <p>OPERATION REPORTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brigade Mobilisation Brigade Response Time Brigade Travel Time Call Handling Time Caller Detail Fire Investigation Firecomm Performance Incidents by Various Parameters Operator Performance <p>PERMITS REPORTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current Permits Summary Permit Region Report 	<p>AWARDS / ELECTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Election Report National Medals Service Awards <p>CONTACT LISTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brigade Membership Contact List Mailing List Mailing List - Rank, District, Region Mailing List - Exclusions Contact List - Secretaries Contact List - Group Officers Contact List - Position Title <p>TRAINING REPORTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course Occurrence Report <p>GENERAL REPORTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Details Personnel Count Permit Officers

WORK IN PROGRESS

- Members' Contact Details - additional field for Emergency Contact Details
- Members' Contact Details - removal of pager details as this field is not used
- Members' customised site map - individual site map
- Members' Online Email authority - provides contact details and permission to provide email details to your union, association or other representative body

Photo Competition Winners

When photos are received for Fireground, they are not necessarily submitted by the photographer. In these instances the names we have received will be published and the prize money will be split between the person submitting the photo and the actual photographer. Remember, please advise the name of the photographer for each photo submitted.

The winning photos from this edition are:

1st place



Photo submitted by District Officer Rob Deverell (\$100)

2nd place



Photo submitted by Cheryl Dando,
Primrose Sands Brigade (\$50)

How to enter:

Simply send your photo with details of the incident and name of photographer

Please ensure digital photos are of 3 megapixels and above, also ensure date stamp is off.

Photos may be of any TFS event or incident

May include TFS personnel in turnout gear or uniform

Any photo submitted to Fireground automatically becomes an entry to the competition

All photos become the property of the TFS and may be used in any publication or displays with acknowledgment made of the photographer

Post them in to:

Linda Lacy

Editor - Fireground

GPO Box 1526

HOBART TAS 7001

or email them to: fire@fire.tas.gov.au

Library News

Weblinks

Fire Watch

Ninemsn has released Fire Watch - a site dedicated to Australian bushfire information. You will need Flash to view features such as the bushfire history timeline and video archive.

<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/firewatch/>

interFIRE

This Resource Centre is a compilation of documents, tools, abstracts and references to help you explore specific fire and fire investigation topics.

<http://www.interfire.org/resourcecenter.asp>

Tasmanian Photos Online

Explore the State Library and Archives Office photos databases.

<http://images.statelibrary.tas.gov.au/>

<http://resources.archives.tas.gov.au/archphotos/searchmenu.asp>

Videos

Chain reaction. Oakleigh, Vic : Safety Image Pty. Ltd., 1991
1 videocassette (24 min.) + training manual.

The program covers the use of chainsaws in the following areas: personal safety requirements, preparation and maintenance procedure, cutting techniques, dangers of incorrect use.

Confined space safety : if in doubt, stay out. Channel 1 Training Videos. Ferntree Gully, Vic. : Channel 1, 2004. 1 videodisc (DVD) (29 min.).

The film alerts workers to the different types of confined spaces, their possible dangers and shows proper procedures for confined space entry. Includes a PDF Trainer's Manual.

Trial by fire. Australian Broadcasting Corporation , 2003. 1 videocassette (60 min).

An insight into the workings of Australia's volunteer firefighting brigades. Captures the humour, adrenaline and the camaraderie of the people who make up Australia's country fire services.

New Books

Command safety / Brunacini, Alan V. Peoria, Ariz. : Across the Streets Productions, 2004.

The objective of this book is to improve the safety of firefighters who go into the hazard zone and do the job. The Incident Commanders who have the responsibility of commanding and managing those operations must have the ability to create the strategic support that ensures that personnel will always return from the hazard zones alive and unhurt.

Hazardous materials for first responders / International Fire Service Training Association.

Stillwater, OK : Fire Protection Publications, Oklahoma State University, c2004.

LP-gas code handbook / Lemoff, Theodore C. Quincy, Mass. : NFPA, 2004.

Trench rescue : awareness, operations, and technician levels / Martinette, C.V. [U.S.] : [C.V. "Buddy" Martinette], 2002.

Women at Ground Zero : stories of courage and compassion / Hagen, Susan. Indianapolis, IN : Alpha Books, c2002.

A collection of stories told by female firefighters, police officers, paramedics, EMTs, and others who responded to the events of September 11 and its aftermath.

Contact Enola or Rebecca in the Library during business hours for more information or to borrow these items.

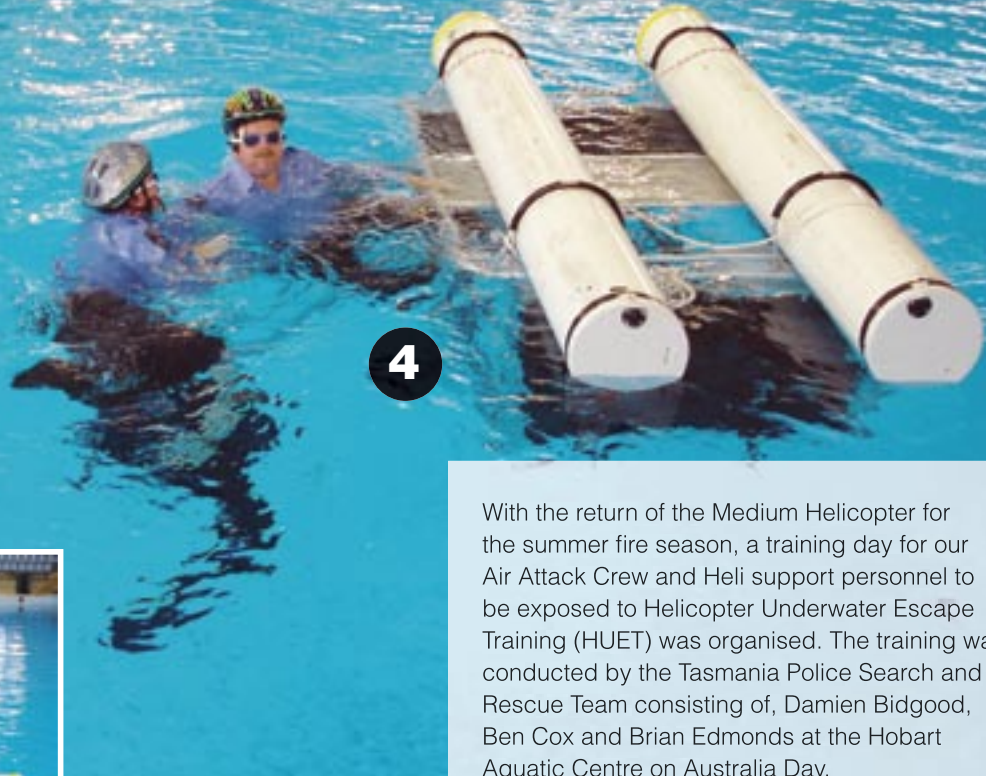
Ph: 6230 8679 or 6230 8681

Email: library@fire.tas.gov.au

or drop into the State Headquarters building,
Corner Argyle and Melville Streets, Hobart

Helicopter Underwater Escape Training

By Leading Firefighter Fire Management Unit, Marcus Skelly



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With the return of the Medium Helicopter for the summer fire season, a training day for our Air Attack Crew and Heli support personnel to be exposed to Helicopter Underwater Escape Training (HUET) was organised. The training was conducted by the Tasmania Police Search and Rescue Team consisting of, Damien Bidgood, Ben Cox and Brian Edmonds at the Hobart Aquatic Centre on Australia Day.

When the Medium Helicopter is dispatched, it is crewed by the Pilot and a Tasmania Fire Service Air Attack Officer. The helicopter's main role is for water bombing in high risk urban interface areas. The water supply method can be by either a sling tank (bambi bucket) or a belly tank. When filling the belly tank the helicopter has to hover close to the surface of the water with a suction hose (snorkel) dipped into the water for approximately 60 seconds. As the helicopter is working in close proximity to the water there is a slight risk that the machine can come into difficulty and enter the water, this training focussed on practising participants in underwater escape training should the helicopter invert and submerge.

The training crew consisted of the pilot John Rocks, engineer Roger Matthysen and TFS staff, Andrew McGuinness; David McGuinness; Ian Cawthorn; Mark Suhr; Ken Burns and Marcus Skelly. The training started with a theory and safety brief, and then it was into the pool. The first exercise consisted of the crews exiting the aircraft when it was in an upright position and progressing through to in an inverted position harnessed into the seat with blacked out goggles and a door jam.

Remaining focussed while strapped into a seat with a four point harness upside down in the water is challenging, but it was a challenge the crew accepted and accomplished safely, and in high spirits.

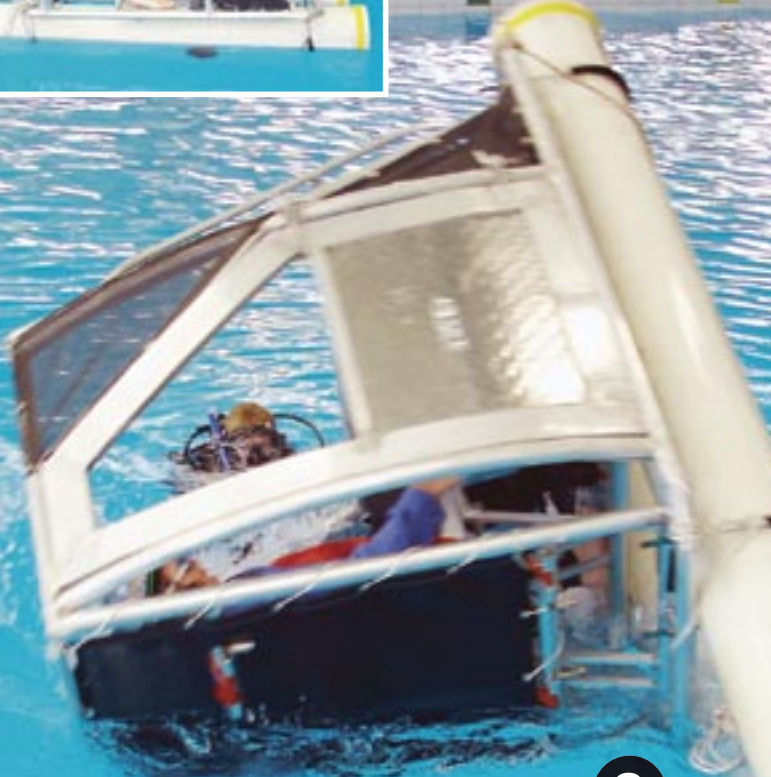
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Christmas for Launceston Volunteers

By Acting Regional Chief North, Mike Brown

There were BIG Christmas presents galore!

Launceston volunteers from Rocherlea, Ravenswood and Prospect Brigades 'turned out' in big numbers to the Youngtown Regional Complex just prior to Christmas.

Several volunteers were awarded National Medals and TFS Long Service badges in recognition of their service to the TFS and their communities. In presenting the awards Acting Regional Chief Mike Brown acknowledged the significant contribution made by the many Launceston volunteers in assisting and supporting the Launceston Brigade, and also the increasing role Launceston volunteers have been playing in assisting in other areas of the region (indeed across the State) as members of task forces and strike teams.

Volunteers then left their partners and children to the socialising while Leon "Alfie" Smith lead the firefighters through the workings and attributes of the two new tanker/ pumpers and the two new Canter medium tankers, ably assisted by Northern Region workshop staff and firefighters from LFB D Platoon.

Prospect and Ravenswood swapped over gear from their old appliances then enjoyed a festive barbeque.

All three LFB support brigades now have a tanker/pumper; medium tanker and a light tanker, this standard mix now offers uniformity and flexibility together with the capacity to maintain local operational needs whilst still being able to provide support out of area for taskforces.

Thanks and congratulations to Leon and his team for once again producing some of the very best fire appliances in the country.

It was a very merry Christmas to all!



Request for information: observations of bumblebees in native vegetation

By Dr Andrew Hingston, Geography & Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania

A feral population of the Eurasian bumblebee *Bombus terrestris* was discovered in Hobart in 1992 (Semmens et al. 1993). The effectiveness of this bee as a pollinator of greenhouse tomatoes has prompted repeated calls for its importation to the Australian mainland, where it does not yet occur. However, enormous harm has already resulted in Australia from deliberate introduction of animals that were believed to be harmless or beneficial, and this may also be the case if bumblebees are introduced to the Australian mainland (Low 1999).

The most important factor influencing the severity of an imported pollinator's ecological impact is its capacity to become established beyond the agricultural areas where the target crop is grown (Cunningham et al. 2002). A survey of the distribution of bumblebees in Tasmania up to autumn 2001 found evidence of them breeding in all of Tasmania's major types of native vegetation, including within six National Parks and the most remote parts of the World Heritage Area (Hingston et al. 2002). The conclusion drawn by Hingston et al. (2002), that bumblebees were breeding across a large part of southern and western Tasmania, was subsequently questioned by Goulson et al. (2002) because Hingston et al. had accepted sightings of only two bees in one day as evidence of colony establishment. Goulson et al. (2002) argued that these may have been sightings of the same bee. However, more than 10 bumblebees were seen (by one person) in one day at 23 of the 51 locations where Hingston et al. found evidence of breeding in native vegetation, including within the most remote areas from human settlement (Hingston et al. 2002).

Because of the ongoing debate over the capacity for bumblebees to invade native vegetation, and the time that

has passed since their distribution was last surveyed, I would like to survey the distribution of bumblebees in Tasmania during the coming spring, summer and autumn.

I would appreciate it greatly if people could let me know of any places where they see more than 10 bumblebees in one day in native vegetation between spring 2004 and autumn 2005.

References

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Semmens TD, Turner E, and Buttermore R (1993) *Bombus terrestris* (L.) (Hymenoptera: Apidae) now established in Tasmania. *Journal of the Australian Entomological Society* 32, 346.

Dr Andrew Hingston
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Welcome Todd

By Manager TasFire Equipment, Nik Masters



TasFire Equipment is pleased to announce the appointment of Todd Edsall to the position of Senior Fire Equipment Officer, North. Based at TFE's new offices in Youngtown, Todd will manage the operations of TFE's busy Launceston office.

Originally from the north coast of Tasmania Todd has significant experience in a number of positions. Todd recently moved back to Tassie from Melbourne where he was a Pit Boss at Melbourne Crown Casino for ten years (should be the man to see for the good oil on getting a winning hand at Blackjack!).

Welcome to the TasFire Equipment team Todd.

Fire Investigation

By District Officer East Coast, Gerald Crawford

Fire investigation is just one of the many skills that firefighters need in their role as firefighters. The Tasmania Fire Service has a duty under the Fire Service Act 1979, Section 8 (1) g, h to determine the origin and cause of all fires.

The TFS has one of the best Fire Investigation Units in Australia. We have people from other Fire Services, Defence, Insurance Companies, and many other organisations come here to receive fire investigation training and this expertise has only been achieved by commitment, dedication and hard work by a number of Fire Investigators over the many years that this unit has been set up.

Fire Investigation is not a glamorous job, as some people would have you think. At times it is a dirty, arduous and stressful job that not everyone is suited to. It requires someone with an eye for detail and who is methodical in their work.

There have been some changes to the operating procedures within fire investigation over the last few months. There is no longer an automatic response of two Regional Fire Investigators to fatal fires, in most instances involving a fatal scene there will only be the Regional Fire Investigator and a qualified fire investigator. Some fatal incidents and fires of significance will require both Regional Fire Investigators, but this will be determined by a Senior Officer.

Under the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement of 2004 Regional Fire Investigators are entitled to two weekends off duty out of every four weekends in the month.

Most fires requiring investigation will be done by the on shift fire investigators and field staff within the districts. This will

reduce the workload of the Regional Fire Investigator and also ensure that those people who are qualified investigators maintain their skills in this area. There will also be some administrative changes regarding compilation of reports and access to these reports.

Mark Klop has been appointed as the Southern Region Fire Investigator with the position in the North/North West being filled in an acting capacity by Tony Johnson and Peter Flett. A permanent appointment for the Northern position should be finalised in the next few months.

Most districts have incorporated the Protect and Preserve Incident Scene course into their training programme for 2005. This course is mainly for officers and I would encourage all officers at some stage of their 5 year term to attend this course. If you need more information on this course contact your District Officer.

With summer here, or has it already gone, remember that all vegetation fires need to be investigated as well. Very few fires are started by cigarettes or broken beer bottles, yet a lot of brigades still put this down as the cause. Most vegetation fires are small and won't need a formal investigation, unless it is a series of fires within an area. All vegetation fires of significance should be investigated by a qualified wildfire investigator. Within the TFS, Parks & Wildlife Service and Forestry Tasmania there are some 80 plus wildfire investigators.

If you need any information in regard to fire investigation please contact your Regional Fire Investigator or myself.

Hobart Fire Brigade Retirements

By District Officer Brigade Operations, Gavin Freeman

Trevor Morris

Trevor retired on the 18th January 2005 after 25 years service. Trevor spent many years on A Platoon with Hobart Fire Brigade before transferring to D platoon in the latter part of his career.

Trevor attended many memorable fires including the cool store fire in South Hobart where he, along with others received a letter of commendation from the State Fire Commissioner for his efforts in rescuing a trapped firefighter

Trevor has had keen involvement in the TFS Golf Club and will also be remembered by many of his workmates for his 'prophet' like predictions. Trevor has left us to embark on a new career and we wish him and his family well and look forward to seeing him from time to time.

Doug Fife

Doug Fife joined the Hobart Fire Brigade in 1989 and quickly made his mark when, while still on the recruit course he marched into the firies mess and asked Senior Firefighter "Gonzo" Hitchings to get some chairs for the recruits, a good display of organisational ability but just a little early maybe?

Doug progressed through the ranks to senior firefighter earning the nickname "Bungee" along the way due to his love of outdoor pursuits. He was an active contributor to the Tasmania Fire Service and developed assessment packages for appliance operators, most recently he was heavily involved in the development of Training Resource Kits for the Public Safety Training Package.

We all wish Doug well in his future endeavors.

Launceston Firefighters Conduct Ground Breaking Smoke Alarm Survey

By Acting Manager Community Education, Chris Tomes

During the months of November and December 2004 Launceston firefighters conducted a smoke alarm survey of 400 households in the Launceston area.

Launceston firefighters approached Community Education mid way through last year asking if they would be able to gather data on smoke alarms. This was in direct response to the tragic loss of life in house fires several weeks before. Community Education jumped at this idea knowing that this valuable work may lead to more accurate information that could help shape future fire strategies.

With the help of the Fire Management Unit a list of households across several suburbs was compiled. It was agreed, for accuracy of statistics, that a minimum of 400 households would need to be surveyed. The next step was to design a questionnaire, brief the Launceston District Officers who then briefed the firefighters, and to provide resources such as batteries and smoke alarms.

The survey was enthusiastically undertaken with the firefighters going to each address with a script and a list of questions. Each householder was first asked if they wished to participate in the survey, with most people more than happy to do so. To increase the accuracy of the survey firefighters were required to enter the household, after gaining permission, to check out the placement of the alarm, whether it was working etc. If a household was found not to have a smoke alarm the offer was made to fit one at no cost. If the battery was flat it was replaced at no cost.

The survey was completed in around six weeks, a job well done. Thanks to everyone involved. The information gained from this survey will help shape future home fire safety campaigns.

Community Education is currently compiling and analysing the data.

HOME FIRE SAFETY SURVEY

Survey # _____ (survey number obtained from address list)

1) Do you have smoke alarms installed
 Yes (If yes, tick and proceed to question 2)
 No Why? (If no, provide reason and proceed to question 7)
 Never installed
 Taken down due to false alarms
 Other, specify _____

2) How many alarms do you have? **Number** _____

3) Test each alarm:
 If not working, give reason

	alarm 1	alarm 2	alarm 3	alarm 4
a) Battery flat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Battery incorrectly fitted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) No battery fitted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4) Where are the alarm(s) located?
 Tick which applies

a) Hallway (front)	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Hallway (main)	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Bedroom 1 (main)	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Bedroom 2	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Bedroom 3	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Lounge	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Other: specify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

5) What type of smoke alarms do you have installed? (check) **Number of Alarms**

a) Battery operated	Interconnected <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
	Not Interconnected <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
b) Mains (hard-wired)	Interconnected <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
	Not Interconnected <input type="checkbox"/>	_____

6) How many of the alarms are installed correctly according to the attached diagram? (check)
Number _____

13) _____ of the following would best describe your household income? Yes No

Less than \$20 000	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$20 000 - \$35 000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$35 000 - \$50 000	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$50 000 - \$65 000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$65 000 - \$80 000	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than \$80 000	<input type="checkbox"/>

14) _____

15) If there are children at home please ask the following:
 a) Has your child/children ever participated in the School Fire Education Program?
 Yes No

16) No. of batteries installed by TFS _____



Tasmania Fire Museum, Glenorchy Campus Opening

By TFS Museum Member Terry Gill
Photos by TFS Museum Member Don Jones

At 1300 hours on Sunday 5th December 2004 Chief Officer John Gledhill formally opened the Tasmania Fire Museum, Glenorchy campus, unveiling a plaque to mark this milestone. This campus is located within the Tasmanian Transport Museum complex, at Anfield Street Glenorchy, just over the road and railway line from the Northgate Shopping Centre car park and next to the Glenorchy Olympic Pool and KGV Oval.

Twenty five years ago the Tasmania Fire Museum held its inaugural meeting in early 1979. This made the ceremony doubly significant, because the TFS had just celebrated 25 years since its creation on 1 November 1979.

It was pleasing to see amongst the invitees, Kerry Cornish, the then Deputy Director of Urban Brigades and David Doran the Deputy Chief Officer of the Hobart Fire Brigade at the time. Kerry was the person who encouraged interested career and volunteer fire service members to come together to create the Museum and it was David who, as the inaugural president, successfully steered it through its early years.

So what has happened in the last 25 years? In the beginning the Museum's aims were modest, starting with development of a collection of fire service memorabilia and selling fire service souvenirs to raise funds for restoration of fire service artefacts.

With the increasing interest membership grew, as the Museum headed towards October 1983, a significant milestone in the history of our fire service. This was the centenary of passage of the Fire Brigades Act 1883, which formalised establishment of Hobart and Launceston Fire Brigades, each under the management of a statutory board.

Over a week long series of events in Hobart in October 1983, the Museum was a significant participant. Its participation included striking a centenary medallion, restoring of a



number of historic fire service appliances and crewing those appliances in parades and demonstrations.

It was this event that also saw fire service management recognise our service's cultural heritage being legitimate activity to be pursued and interpreted for the wider public by a body like the Museum. It was also seen as a means of raising the fire service's profile in the community. Tangible evidence of this recognition came with the fire service's purchase from private owners, of two former Hobart Fire Brigade Ford fire appliances, for the Museum to faithfully restore and display. From this point, the Museum continued to grow towards its own next milestone; the granting of registration as a volunteer brigade under the *Fire Service Act 1979*, by former, State Fire Commissioner Jim Stewart. This action brought the Museum completely into the fire service family and confirmed the informal recognition and support it had been receiving across our service.

As it stands today the Museum has come a long way. It has two very active branches in the southern and north-western regions and a fledgling branch getting under way in the northern region. It has in its collection a range of fire appliances and other artefacts that represent many eras of Tasmania's fire service history, including the first appliance to arrive in colonial Van Diemens Land in 1827.

In addressing the audience of some fifty odd members and invited guests, including spouses and retired fire service members the Chief Officer mentioned how the fire service recently had been able to help the Museum to achieve one of its long held goals; a permanent site where it could display part of its collection and interact more directly with the public. This had been done in two ways.

In the early 1980's the first appointed State Fire Commissioner, Gayle Paltridge gave the Museum an indication, that any future redevelopment or modernisation of Hobart Fire Brigade head station, could include provision for the Museum to occupy the original heritage listed 1911 Argyle Street frontage.

Following completion of construction of a new Hobart Fire Brigade head station in Melville Street, the fire service was able to make this undertaking a reality in July this year. Since then four historic fire appliances have been on display at the Museum's Hobart Fire Brigade.

Secondly, when the Strahan Fire Station was scheduled for reconstruction a few years ago, it was agreed that the Museum could use the fabric of the former station building to be the basis of a fire station to house and display part of its collection. This involved a weekend expedition to Strahan by Museum members, with appropriate transport to recover the needed structural components and their placement into storage. In parallel with this, the Museum had been negotiating for some time with the Tasmanian Transport Museum Society, to establish a facility at its Glenorchy complex. The result is the Glenorchy Campus, in the form of a three bay fire station and adjacent meeting room/office/sales area. We are grateful to the Tasmanian Transport Museum Society for allowing us to be part of its complex.



In his remarks, the Chief Officer indicated that there had been many who have been involved in the construction of this Museum building and mounting of its displays, both from within the Museum membership itself and the wider Tasmania Fire Service. In congratulating everyone involved, he particularly mentioned the contribution made by Building and Maintenance Supervisor Craig Johnston and his team. Mr Gledhill expressed the hope that the Museum would continue to prosper and thanked everyone for their dedication and commitment to the Museum and its aims.

He also formally announced that as part of the current redevelopment of the Training Services complex at Cambridge, it will continue to include a storage facility for the Museum, as part of the fire service's ongoing commitment to support Museum activities.

As our fire service can trace its roots back to early colonial times, we are one of Tasmania's oldest continuously operating public institutions. The Glenorchy development and the Museum as a whole around the State, are celebrations of that proud record.

Opening hours at Tasmania Fire Museum sites are as follows:

Hobart Fire Brigade Campus, Argyle Street Hobart - Open by prior arrangement. Display includes 1827 manual fire engine, 1911 Leyland turntable ladder - HFB No 6 1940 Ford hose carriage/pumper - HFB No 5, and 1959 Dennis turntable ladder - HFB No 44, together with firefighting PPE, small gear, communications equipment, old photos, etc. Our presence at this site fits in nicely with the excellent building conservation work the service is doing to other parts of the old HFB 1911/1926 Argyle Street frontage.

Glenorchy Campus, Tasmanian Transport Museum complex, Anfield Street Glenorchy - Open first and third Sundays monthly (Entry fee to total TTM complex, \$6 adults and \$3 children U15). Display includes 1938 Ford hose carriage/escape - HFB No 2, and 1967 Ford 350 hose carriage/light pumper - GFB No 1, together with firefighting PPE, small gear, old photos, etc. Historic appliances from the Museum's own collection or on loan from brigades, are cycled through this site on roughly a three to four month basis.

Would you like to get involved? If you are a serving or former Tasmania Fire Service member; (career, retained, volunteer or support staff) and you share our interests, we would welcome you as a member.



Look Up In the Sky

By District Officer Fire Management Unit, Ken Burns

Helicopters have played a role in bushfire fighting in Tasmania for many years.

The versatility of helicopters is such they can be used for a wide range of tasks, including:

Reconnaissance, mapping, transporting firefighters and equipment, command and control, aerial incendiary operations and water delivery.

Delivery of water may take the form of dropping water directly on the fire from a fixed belly tank or slung bucket under the helicopter. It may also involve delivering water using a slung bucket to refill portable dams which can be used as a water source for tankers, or it may involve slinging "heli-bladders" of water to the fireline to provide firefighters with a portable water source.

Historically, Tasmania's helicopter fleet has consisted of light helicopters capable of maximum payloads up to 600 kg, which means in cases they may be limited to transporting as little as 400 litres of water.

For the second year running, TFS has access to a medium capacity fire bombing helicopter, a Bell 212 capable of delivering up to 1590 litres is on an eight week (January - February) contract.

Based at Cambridge, the helicopter's (Helitack 721) primary role is initial attack of bushfires in high risk urban interface areas.

The Commonwealth Government has committed \$5.5 million per year to assist the National Aerial Firefighting Centre

(NAFC) to acquire and deploy additional firefighting aircraft throughout the country, Helitack 721 is one of those.

The "National Fleet" consists of eleven fire bombing helicopters ranging in capacity from 9000 litres (Aircrane) to 1100 litres (B3 Squirrels). Additionally there are three light helicopters used in a support role for the larger helicopters and there are two fixed wing, single engine air tankers (SEATS) based in Western Australia.

The concept of a national fleet is to provide for higher capacity aircraft to complement the existing base load of aircraft within individual states.

All NAFC contracted aircraft meet rigid specifications which ensures a high level of safety, and if appropriately managed, effective and efficient performance.

As the existing contracts which individual states have with local suppliers time out those contracts will be reviewed to ensure consistency with NAFC standards. Ultimately firefighting aircraft throughout Australia will all meet the same specifications.

By their nature, helicopters at bushfires are highly visible and usually attract the attention of media and other onlookers. Equally there is a tendency for firefighters to be distracted by their presence and/or have high expectations of what they can do.

While helicopters can be used in many roles, undoubtedly their role in delivering water has the highest profile.



Firebird 701 (Squirrel AS355F-1) the primary role of this helicopter is reconnaissance, intelligence gathering, and mapping, it is fitted with 240 volt facilities and has mobile phone facilities in the front as well as the rear seat, it is capable of transporting up to 5 passengers its maximum bucket capacity 545 litres



Firebird 719 (Squirrel AS350 B2) TFS Air Ops personnel undertaking Hover Entry Training

Capable of carrying 5 passengers, the B2 is new to the skies in Tasmania, although falling into the light category it is a more powerful helicopter and is capable of slinging a 900 litre bucket

It is important to remember that helicopters of their own accord do not put fires out. Helicopters can provide support to the firefighting effort but to be effective they must in turn be supported by those on the ground.

Once a helicopter has released its load of water, ground crews should immediately follow up and attend to any remnant fire in the drop zone.

Under the right conditions a helicopter can take the heat out of the fire, but the ground crews must mop-up and black out, if not, the operation will fail.

Effectiveness also relates to the amount of water being delivered. With light helicopters the payload can be as little as 400 litres.

On a windy (turbulent) day the best of pilots will struggle not losing some of this between the pick up point and the fire with even more lost because of wind and canopy cover over the fire.

The value of light helicopters is more efficient performing other roles such as reconnaissance, mapping, command and control etc.

Helicopter operations are not without risk, particularly on hot, dry and windy days, so if the operation is not being effective or inefficient think of a smarter way to do business.



Firefighters taking delivery of 500 litres of water in a helibladder



7500 litre Buoywall Dam being filled by a helicopter to provide a water source for refilling tankers

Value of Air Resources in Recon

- fire area
- topography
- fire potential
- direction & R.O.S.
- amount of live edge
- flame height
- forest type
- spot fire, hot spots, hazards - realtime
- progress of backburns
- likely control lines
- access for vehicles/crews
- crew hazards
- potential threats to assets
- possible aircraft usage for initial attack
- location of natural helipads, water points etc

Compare the value of this type of intelligence collected from a good recon flight to the effectiveness of a light helicopter trying to drop 400 litres of water on a turbulent day!



Helitack 721 (Bell 212) in Bellytank mode delivering 1400 litres of water/foam



Helitack 721 drawing water from a buoy wall dam set up close to the fire enabling quick turn-round time



Firebird 712 (Bell 206B) primarily a recon crew transport helicopter capable of carrying 4 passengers

Christmas Around the State

Northern Region

By Clerk Northern Region, Lisa Gilbert

Our first Christmas at our new Youngtown Complex proved to be a hit, with 32 people attending from different divisions, making it quite an enjoyable day. The traditional day began with breakfast then we trudged back to work for the long awaited lunch time - it was a delightful meal prepared by Carol and Karina.

This year it wasn't only Christmas celebrations but we were also farewelling two of our long serving colleagues. Graham Otley and David Tomkinson. So after a few farewell speeches it was time to get down to business, Santa!

It was quite a gathering of people in the end with volunteers arriving to join in the festivities - with brigade members from Evandale all the way to Bell Bay.

Various Christmas functions were held around the State, here are just a few.



Southern Region

Members of Hobart Fire Brigade Christmas Party - Glenorchy Station

By Acting Field Works Officer Hobart District, Peter Tavasz

Approximately 260 adults and children attended this year's Christmas party at the Glenorchy Station. The weather was fantastic and the people providing entertainment were kept busy with enthusiastic children. Santa was swamped but still managed to pass out the Christmas stockings and have his photo taken dozens of times. Special thanks to B Shift for their help throughout the day especially manning the BBQ. A great day was had by all!



State Headquarters

A large number of staff from various divisions attended a BBQ at State Headquarters on Christmas Eve. Santa even called in for a quick visit and photo session



Lauderdale Christmas Lolly Run

By Third Officer Lauderdale Brigade, Paul Baker

Lauderdale's 37th consecutive annual lolly run commenced rain, hail or shine on Christmas morning.

Three thousand bags of lollies were packed the week before and were distributed amongst the families of the Lauderdale community. The run commenced at approximately 9 a.m. and took two hours to complete the drive making many stops along the way.

Santa hitched a ride on Lauderdale's 1929 Chevrolet, which recently found a new home at the Tasmania Fire Service Museum. The chev has been in every parade since it started way back in 1967.

Every member of Lauderdale Brigade enjoy participating in the parade and giving something back to the community which supports us throughout the year. Thanks Lauderdale Community for your support!



History of the St Patrick's River Valley Country Fire Brigade - the first 35 years

11th November 1969 to 11th November 2004 - 35 years of diligent service

By Second Officer St Patrick's River Brigade, Richard Rees

This is part two of a series of articles on St Patrick's Brigade

Fundraising

Over the years the brigade has fought many fires of all sizes and types, from house fires and vehicle fires, to intense forest fires. In between fighting fires the brigade members also had time to play, and organised 'Pig Roasts' for fundraising as well as social Brigade BBQs. Over the years they have also taken part in the 'Annual Christmas Santa Lolly Run' throughout the district, as well as supporting annual charity activities for children with disabilities at the Myrtle Park Recreation Ground for the St George's School. They have also collected donations for the Annual Salvation Army 'door knock appeal'. These activities are still supported to this day.

The New Fire Station

Jim Imlach remained as the Brigade Captain for many years to come. His main priority at this stage was to find a permanent fire brigade headquarters. In 1987, after many discussions with the State Fire Commission, an area of ground for a proposed fire station was located at the corner of Targa Hill Road and Myrtle Bank Road at Myrtle Bank.

The Launceston Field Naturalist Society (Skemps) owned the property. It was about 300 metres away from the Brigade Captain's residence. The owners of 'Skemps' were happy for the St Patrick's River Brigade to occupy the corner site in return for the State Fire Commission to pay a small fee. This agreement was accepted and has remained in force ever since.

The State Fire Commission accepted the proposed site. The Brigade members at the time assisted with the ground preparation and poured and completed the concrete slab. The members also assisted in the construction of the colourbond steel, two-vehicle bay, fire station. In addition to this the Brigade members also completed other site work with the supply and construction of the HEC (Aurora) power pole. In providing this time and labour, they saved the State Fire Commission a considerable amount of money.

Official Opening

With the completion of the Fire Station, an official opening ceremony was organised by the State Fire Commission for Saturday the 16th April 1988. This was followed by afternoon tea hosted by the Brigade members. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services at this time, the Hon Mr Geoff Pearsall MHA, officially opened the new station. (It should also be noted that the White Hills Fire Station was also officially opened that afternoon by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services at White Hills).

Official guests at the opening of the new fire station included the State Fire Commissioner, Mr J Stewart and Mrs Stewart; the A/Director Country Brigades, Mr A Thompson and Mrs Thompson; the Director Urban Brigades, Mr G Lowe and Mrs Lowe; the Regional Chief Officer, Mr M Porter and Mrs Porter; the District Officer North East, Mr B Finger and Mrs Finger; and the Hon Dr Frank Madill and Mrs Madill.

Brigade members at the time included Brigade Captain Jim Imlach; Second Officer and Secretary Brenda Imlach; Third Officer Steven Caswell; Fourth Officer Neville Calvert; Peter McMurray; Ray Saltmarsh; Ian Millen; Elson Cresswell; Leigh Gleeson; Heather Saunders; Ian Dundas; Bruce Tole; Chris Tole; John Tole; Helen Poxan; Peter Imlach; Robert Robotom; Wal and Glad Imlach; John and Kaye Hunter; Mel Cairns; John Cairns; Maurice Hendley; Brett Arkless; Reg Collings; Jim Ellenberger; Fred Denholm; Leslie Denholm; Jack Quinn; Christine McMurray; Hubert Leslie; Bill Stagoll; Neil Clayton; Harry Stackpoole and Jack Kaye.

Changing Times and New Members

During the late 80's and the 90's, the brigade's main focus was to recruit new members. Some members were aging and gave their brigade membership away, whilst others moved away from the district due to work or family circumstances. The experience base of the brigade was starting to dwindle. Ongoing recruiting was important to increase the number of active members. Some of those new members recruited during 1989 were Scott Mills (now Brigade Chief as at 2001), his brother Paul Mills (now Fourth Officer as at 2001), and their father Victor Mills, a volunteer firefighter.

Their family moved into the District in 1988, coming from Newnham. They settled at the Myrtle Park Recreation Ground taking over the responsibility of running the Kiosk and the Camping/Caravan Park facilities from the Launceston City Council.

Other members who moved into the District at this time were Brian Medcraft and his wife Christine who moved to Mt Arthur Road at Patersonia in 1989. Brian had retired from the Army after twenty years' service in the Australian Army Medical Corps. Brian's brother Max was a founding member of the Brigade, but moved to Queensland to live. Both Brian and Christine are still active volunteer firefighters, and have a son Brian (BJ) who is also a firefighter with the brigade.

In 1996 Murray Galloway moved to Myrtle Bank from South Launceston. Murray joined the brigade and has been very handy with the maintenance of the brigade equipment, being the 'regular fire appliance driver', and becoming the Third Officer in 2001.

In 1996 Ric Rees and his wife Sherry moved to Targa from Sydney after both serving in the Australian Army. Ric had previously been a firefighter in the New South Wales Rural Fire Brigade and became a local volunteer firefighter in 1997. He retired from the Australian Regular Army after 27 years' service in 2001, after spending time as an Army Career Adviser in Launceston. He became the Second Officer in 2002.

The New Millennium

In 2001 Jim Imlach finally retired as the Brigade Chief, and his wife Brenda as the Secretary and volunteer firefighter. They sold their home at Myrtle Bank and moved to St Helens to enjoy a well-earned retirement.

At the 2001 Brigade elections, Scott Mills was voted in as the new Brigade Chief. Murray Galloway became Third Officer and Paul Mills as Fourth Officer. Angela Mills (nee Harrison) became the Brigade Secretary. Brett Arkless remained as Second Officer until 2002, when he moved away from the District, and was replaced by Ric Rees after the December election.

In July 2003, with the introduction of the Public Safety Training Package, many members found that their civilian qualifications gave them additional qualifications as volunteer firefighters. Courses became a priority to qualify the new members in Basic Skills and Bushfire Tactics. Yearly course training programs were introduced at District/Group level, enabling brigades to nominate personnel to attend a variety of courses to improve their skills and knowledge.

In August 2003, the original fire truck the 1970 International C1310, 4 x 4, 4-1 appliance was retired. A replacement truck was received from the Weymouth Brigade. This was an International D1610, 4 x 4, 3-1 appliance, with a greater water capacity.

On the 1st November 2003, the Brigade Chief Scott Mills married his long time fiancée Angela Harrison on the banks of the St Patrick's River at Myrtle Park. The bridal party was transported to and from the wedding on the 'newly acquired' 3-1 appliance. The reception was held at the Myrtle Park Hall with many brigade and family members in attendance.

St Patrick's River Brigade 2004



Back row (left to right) - Tamara Mills; Jason Tole; Nigel Calvert; David Hayne, Wayne Harrison; Brigade Chief Scott Mills; Second Officer Ric Rees; Third Officer Murray Galloway
Centre row (left to right) - John Verhulst; Fourth Officer Paul Mills; Victor Mills; Brian Medcraft (Snr); Ken Harrison



Front row (left to right) - Christine Medcraft; Fleur Hayne; Denise Verhulst; Secretary Angie Mills
Absent - Neville Calvert; Bruce Tole; Brian Medcraft (Jnr); Michael Rigby; Tanya Upston; Clarissa Upston
This photo is of past members from the last 35 years at our recent reunion
(Left to right) - Ray Saltmarsh; Jim Imlach; Glenn and Elsie Woodbury; Helen Poxon and Brenda Imlach

With a warning that the fire season 2003/2004 was going to be very dry, a major bushfire took place in the Underwood, Hollybank and Patersonia areas during the period 20th - 25th January 2004. The St Patrick's River Brigade was the first brigade to respond to the fires in the Patersonia area. Over the period the 21st - 23rd, the brigade was involved with asset protection and mop up in the area of Prossers Road. Approximately fifteen appliances were involved from a variety of brigades/groups in support as well as Forestry, civilian water tankers and the TFS Bell Helicopter, water bombing hotspots. The fire was eventually



Official Opening of current fire station at Myrtle Bank in 1988

stopped from crossing Patersonia Road and spreading to the Nunamara area. This fire was one of the biggest fires the brigade has had to tackle over its 35 year history.

More next issue.

Scania 92 Refurbishment

By Manager Engineering Services, Leon Smith

As part of the organisation's pumper upgrade strategy, the refurbishment of the Glenorchy 2 series Scania pumper has been completed. This project sees the finalisation of the Scania refurbishments for the Southern Region, leaving only the initial FL80 freightliner for refurbishment. The refurbishment of the 2 series included a retarder and brake modification, emergency lighting upgrade, interior upgrade including the fitment of head restraints, 'AS' roller shutters with lit strip lighting, foam and water level indicator upgrades, pantograph BA brackets, as well as the addition of slides to the majority of compartments after a manual handling assessment. The rear bodywork was also modified to house the 'WAKU' multi fold ladder, negating the need to access the roof to unhouse the ladder. The total project of 8 weeks



duration totalled \$40,000, which included in excess of 300 hours of labour.

This appliance began its life in Hobart and was relocated to Burnie in 1996 as first turnout after the purchase of the initial Freightliner pumper within the Southern Region. The implementation of the pumper relocation strategy within the career brigades statewide has allowed this appliance to be upgraded and placed into service as first turnout at Glenorchy, where it is

very well suited to the topography and risks of the area. The fact that this appliance at 14 years of age was worthy of an upgrade to this extent is testament to the quality and resilience of the Scania product. Well done to Engineering Services on both the very high standard of workmanship, as well as the completion of the project in the allocated timeframe.

Bombs Away

By Junior Firefighter Midway Point Brigade, Caitlin Ernest

On Monday 17th January 2005 Midway Point Junior Firefighters Hayley Fra; Kendall Healy; Stuart Ernest; James Ernest; Joe Searle; Andrew Krakowski and Caitlin Ernest had an opportunity to have a look at the helicopters the Tasmania Fire Service uses to help fight bushfires.

When we arrived Helicopter Resources pilot Ward Bremmer showed us around the Squirrel helicopter. It can drop water from a bambi bucket, carry equipment in a sling underneath or carry four passengers. It is used a lot for reconnaissance at fires. It has two engines and uses 200 litres of fuel an hour.



We then went over to "Helitack 721" which is the large water bombing helicopter here for the fire season. We were shown over it by pilot John Rocks and engineer Roger Matthyson. We were able to sit in it, see all the different parts and ask questions. It can carry 1400 litres of water in the belly tank or 1600 litres in a bambi bucket on a long line. It can also carry equipment or 12 passengers. When it is water bombing the pilot is helped by a TFS Air Attack Officer. It uses 380 litres of fuel an hour which is a lot. It has to have a fuel tanker with it wherever it goes.

We couldn't go for a fly, but it was loads of fun and very interesting.

Many thanks to Ward, John and Roger for showing us around.

Joe, James, Stuart, Andrew, Caitlin, Hayley and Kendall

Volunteer Fire Brigades Competitions

By Secretary VFBC Committee, Brian Rainbird

On 13th November 2004 in overcast conditions, twenty two senior and twelve junior teams competed in the 35th Annual State Competitions hosted by the Risdon Vale Brigade.

Seniors competed in five events and for the second consecutive year Bowen Brigade were the overall winners followed closely by Dunalley.

Juniors participated in three of the senior events with Richmond being the successful brigade followed closely by Maydena.

Lindsay Duggan Memorial Trophy won by Bowen Brigade

Russ Livingston Memorial Trophy won by Legana Brigade

Best Presented Brigade won by Maydena Brigade

The Volunteer Fire Brigades Competitions Committee wish to thank all judges and officials for their tireless work throughout these competitions.

Looking forward to your participation at Wesley Vale in November 2005.

To the TFS and all our sponsors including The Mercury (Davies Bros Pty Ltd); My-T-Built Pty Ltd; Norske Skog Pty Ltd and Rankin & Bond Pty Ltd without your contribution these competitions could not exist.



What's in a name? "The Butt Box"

By Regional Chief South, Tony Davidson



It is a well recognised fact that fire brigades world wide are built on and steeped in tradition, culture and folklore. Many have their own special shrines and monuments. The Hobart Fire Brigade has its own holy grail "The Butt Box", which like the test cricket "Ashes" urn is insignificant in itself, but very important in the history of the HFB.

"The Butt Box" was in fact a small tin mounted on the end of a brick pier (wall) in the main station at the HFB Headquarters in Argyle Street. It was used by officers and firemen (firefighters) to butt their cigarettes prior to lineup (smoking was commonplace on fire stations in those days). We know it was well and truly in place prior to 1946 as photographs of the day clearly show it.

You might ask "why was it so special?" Well, it was seen in early days as the measure of your seniority in the brigade. When the platoons line up at the commencement of a shift the most senior fireman (firefighter) stood alongside "The Butt Box" and all the others on duty line up according to their length of service to his left.

Many, if not all of us, who started their career with the HFB stood at the end of the lineup and as we looked to our right to

see the most senior who was at "The Butt Box" we looked up to them as being the most experienced, able and competent man on the shift. We could only wonder at what it would be like to stand at "The Butt Box". At times being a junior on the shift you might get reasonably close if an officer called for "all firefighters to the main station" after two or three crews had left the station - you were still at the end of the line but only three from "The Butt Box". Then of course there were the times when because of holiday changeover there could be over twenty firefighters in lineup and you ended up standing on the footpath in Argyle Street. That really put you in your place as far as standing anywhere near "The Butt Box".

For many of us it was something that never seemed achievable. It would be true to say that there was significant pride in standing next to "The Butt Box" and when a more senior firefighter came in from an outstation or returned from leave the status of the previous number 1 was diminished in the eyes of we juniors.

It is reputed that the distinction of standing next to "The Butt Box" had a direct affect on the careers of many who were of the opinion that being number 1 on the shift was of much greater status than being a junior officer.

But alas, things never stay the same, and with the introduction of the rank of senior firefighter tradition was broken (much to the dismay of the old guard) and those sometimes more junior in terms of service members moved up the line passing over the older hands.

That was "yesterday" and today we don't line up in the main station next to "The Butt Box" and promotion on merit and competence to do the job prevails.

We are currently searching the Museum Stores to locate it, however, if anyone is looking after it, please let me know so as part of the HFB refurbishment and the creation of the Museum we hopefully will reinstate "The Butt Box" to its rightful position.

It's nice to see that Tony Davidson remembers what it was like to be a junior member and how he set his sights on getting closer to "The Butt Box". Now that he has recently been promoted to the position of Regional Chief South he certainly doesn't have to begin his day out on Argyle Street! (Linda Lacy Editor)

Time out for a laugh

Some friars were behind on their belfry payments, so they opened up a small florist shop to raise funds. Since everyone liked to buy flowers from the men of God, a rival florist across town thought the competition was unfair.

He asked the good fathers to close down, but they would not.

He went back and begged the friars to close. They ignored him. So, the rival florist hired Hugh MacTaggart, the roughest and most vicious thug in town to "persuade" them to close. Hugh beat up the friars and trashed their store, saying he'd be back if they didn't close up shop. Terrified, they did so, thereby proving that only Hugh, can prevent florist friars.

Light Tanker Anyone?

By Manager Engineering Services, Leon Smith

The first year of the five year appliance fabrication strategy is well underway, with the fabrication of the major componentry and chassis wiring continuing for the fifty five Toyota Landcruiser Light Tanker Appliances. The fabrication process involves the initial wiring of the chassis, including the fitting of both UHF and VHF, as well as a 12 volt battery guard system, which will be standard fitment to all operational appliances in future builds. The battery guard unit basically monitors the battery voltage and isolates the batteries when voltage drops below a preset level required for starting. Once activated, the system is reset by the driver from within the cab, subsequently reducing the incidence of flat batteries and non starts. During the wiring process, the looms are fitted and terminated with waterproof plugs, enabling fitment of the cab guards and rear bumpers by appliance fabricators during the assembly process.

At this stage, 23 x 560 litre water tanks have been completed (Matt Childs substantiating his statement of completing 1 tank per day), along with 22 aluminium trays (fire body chassis). Mass production of the rear trays, lockers and remaining hardware will continue during February 2005, after which time assembly will begin.

The commissioning of the 55 new light tanker appliances this year will see the decommissioning of all petrol, as well as early model 4 speed diesel appliances. At this stage, two Diesel Technicians and nine Appliance Fabricators are committed to the 2005/2006 Build Program, which is on target for completion in June 2005.

The ramifications of working around Toyotas for so long is that the Toyota attitude starts to shine through ... the fellas seemed pretty keen to wear these t-shirts around the workshop amongst workmates but for some unknown reason they were apprehensive to wear them home of a night!!

I wonder why (Linda Lacy Editor)



Workplace Feedback Trial

By Co-ordinator Human Services, Steve Willing

The TFS has been working towards a Workplace Feedback System for career and divisional staff for a few years now, but no-one has had time to keep the project moving. Legislation says we have to have one - it's up to us to determine what form it takes.

Over the last couple of years, a group from a wide variety of work areas has helped develop a system to trial. Now we're up to starting the trial to work out what style of system will best suit different areas of the organisation. Some things we know already - it will be:

- Confidential;
- Two-way;
- Applied to ALL staff;
- Low maintenance;
- For personal development, not pay, promotion or discipline.

Certain work groups have been asked if they will trial the system. They are: four career brigade platoons spread across Devonport (A), Burnie (B), Hobart (C) and Launceston (D) Fire Brigades; TasFire Equipment (Hobart); Communications; Northern Regional Office; Cambridge Complex and Finance. Work groups that agree to be part of the trial will receive training in March and April and the trial will run from May 2005 to February 2006. Information will be available as the trial progresses, and you can talk to people who are involved in the trial to find out how it's working.

Once the trial is completed, we'll listen to everyone's experiences and use them to help create a useful system for the organisation. We aim to get it up and running in late 2006.

So who has taken on this project now? I joined TFS in November 2004 and the role of Project Officer is part of



my job as Co-ordinator Human Services. I started out farming in South Australia where I fought a few bush and grass fires with anything from wet bags to graders. We had 25 crews on our place once - courtesy of a delinquent builder, a haystack, an angle grinder and a fire ban! Feed and fences went, but house and sheds were saved - and I have always wanted to put something back into the Fire Service since then.

I spent a few years as an advisor with the Department of Primary Industry in western Queensland where I found a passion for learning about how people tick (ironic really, because I originally liked farming because I didn't have to deal with people and their

problems!) I came to Tasmania and looked for work that combined personal development with the bush - and found Outdoor Education. For ten years I loved the nomadic life of an outdoor leadership instructor, mostly on wilderness expeditions (walking, canoeing, sea kayaking, ski touring, dog sledding) in the Kimberley, the Rocky Mountains and Alaska - and even got paid (not much) for it!

But Hobart and its community always beckoned, so I returned to continue working in leadership and management and spent a couple of years providing leadership training and mentoring to Hydro and Green Corps. Last year was a big one for me - new wife, new house and new job! Now I'm happy be settled in Hobart, but I still like to get out walking, skiing and paddling - and I'm dreaming about a few acres one day...

Besides the Workplace Feedback System, I'll also be looking after diversity and discrimination, resolutions, leadership and coaching and mentoring systems. I'm in State Headquarters on the ground floor, next to the water cooler - stop in for a drink, otherwise I hope to see most of you as I get out to the regions and brigades.

Jack's on the way back!

Last August our Stores Officer Jack Campbell had a serious accident suffering head injuries when he fell from a ladder whilst accessing a mezzanine floor in the Headquarters Store. Jack remained in a critical condition for a few weeks in the Intensive Care Unit of the Royal Hobart Hospital before spending quite some time in the hospital. He's been home since early October and undergoing rehab and physio and steadily improving.

Jack and Sandra attended the Southern Staff Christmas BBQ on Christmas Eve much to the delight of everyone. Welcome back Jack, we are glad to see you looking so well and hope to see you back in the Store in the near future.



Training packages “unpacked”

By Co-ordinator Learning Systems, Suzanne Bacon

What's a training package?

Just a bundle of standards for work performance, like the Australian Standards for fire extinguishers for example. How you reach that standard is with a “learning strategy”, which can include reading written material, attending a training course, watching someone else do it, practice in a simulated environment etc. You (and others) know you have reached it by doing an “assessment” by someone who “knows their stuff” and is qualified to make sure that the assessment is valid, fair, reliable, sufficient and relevant.

TFS has been moving from a modular approach to competency based training under the Australian Fire Curriculum to the new Public Safety Training Package. This change has created some concerns and confusion for members.

Training packages are another language - don't try and translate them from courses or modules or anything else. A module will not equate directly to a competency, however, old course material from the modules might be useful sources of learning for what you may need to reach the standard described in the Training Package. Modular based training meant each module had to be tested or an exam done. Training Packages are much more flexible as an assessor can assess several standards or competencies together and do one “lump sum” or what we call a “holistic assessment” around several competencies.

While exams, written tests and learning through books and attending face to face training still have their place, the emphasis is now on wherever possible “learning while doing” and assessing performance in “live” or “real” situations. How you learn and what resources you use to learn, depend on the task and will vary with each person's learning style. If you can demonstrate performance of groups of tasks to the required standard listed in the training package, you are deemed to have specific collection of skills and knowledge that are then “packaged” into a recognised qualification.

Unlike study at school and university you usually don't set out to get a qualification as a goal in itself, rather you learn what you need to do to do your job well and then the qualification you gain is really the icing on the cake and is a form of reward and recognition for the knowledge, skills and experience that you have gained over a period of time.

This sounds very simplistic because the core concept of training packages is simple. Some extra ribbon and wrapping is necessary to make sure that the standards we reach are



consistent and that everyone gets the skills they need at the right time and in the right place.

How do I fit in?

I was appointed in November 2004 as the Co-ordinator Learning Systems, with the aim of having a service wide co-ordinated strategic approach to learning and development that supports all staff. Career and volunteer firefighters and officers already have good training systems in place and under further development. A priority is to put similar systems in place for everyone else! Through a consultative process, I will co-ordinate the availability of appropriate structured training for all employees using national standards. Where ever possible, I hope to put in place arrangements to use some management level units from the Public Safety Training package for non-operational staff.

This will create a common understanding around leadership and management issues in the TFS. In addition to my role with training packages, I will also be co-ordinating the TFS strategic learning and development priorities, creating management and supervisor development programs, and providing advice and guidance to managers and members on development opportunities and career options. The challenge and excitement of all this is balanced by getting away to our land at Snug where my husband and I are slowly building a rock house, in between a cool beer on the veranda in summer and a full bodied red in front of the open fire in winter while spotting shooting stars.

But why me? Well, I have been involved in the Training Reform agenda from its earliest days starting in the mid 90's with the Veterans Affairs Human Resources and National Learning Teams, and then later in Tasmania with Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources as we developed a strategic approach to learning and development and negotiated the complex process to become a Registered Training Organisation. I had previously worked in commercial building construction and open cut mining in Australia and overseas, changing careers to get involved in the various changes around competency based learning and then later Training Packages. For the first time skilled people in the workforce were given credit and awarded qualifications for what they already knew and learned on-the-job. So as you might have gathered, I am pretty passionate about making training packages work for us with a minimum of bureaucracy.

Ragwort Raid!

By Brigade Chief Pipers River Brigade Andrew Frankcombe

Saturday morning 29th January 2005 saw a number of Brigades; predominately from the Dalrymple Group, participate in an unusual but valuable operation.

The annual "Ragwort Raid" which now is in its sixth year, originally saw two brigades from the group assisting other community volunteers to remove this invasive plant from the roadside. Ragwort itself was once a garden herb and like most declared plants in Tasmania, escaped from garden cultivation. The plant itself can be toxic to livestock and reduce pasture production by competing with grasses. It is very easily identified during December / January because of its bright yellow flowers which if not burnt or buried can produce thousands of seeds and of course produce more plants. In small patches the easiest way to remove it, is to simply pull it out and destroy.

This year Hillwood; Bell Bay; Weymouth; Lebrina; Pipers Brook; and Pipers River, from the group participated. In addition, it was pleasing to see some members of Rocherlea volunteers under the control of Brigade Chief Dale Cleaver, in attendance.

The morning commenced with brigades moving from their prospective stations and clearing ragwort from the roadsides as they transit to Pipers River Station. Roads covered and areas of heavy infestation are recorded on the Tamar Valley Weed Strategies database for future reference.

This exercise is invaluable to brigades as it allows crews to practice and develop many skills they may require in an emergency situation. These include road and topographic knowledge, potential water supplies, navigation and co-ordination of resources. It also gave members valuable experience in using and understanding the benefit and sometimes limitations of using "Fireground" channels when operating radios. With the range and topography of the Dalrymple Group area, members, were at times challenged with having to change from repeater to



Fireground channel, further developing underpinning knowledge and skills which are vital when firefighting.

The morning culminated with a lunchtime BBQ at Pipers River Station where volunteers had the chance to meet, compare vehicles and socialise with other members in a relaxed atmosphere.

If there are other Brigades who have this ragwort problem in their area I would ask that you consider this event for future. The benefits are not only reduction and elimination of ragwort, but invaluable training for TFS volunteers.

Facilities - Repairs, Maintenance & Additions

The TFS has recently issued a new policy statement covering, facilities - repairs, maintenance and additions as follows:

The State Fire Commission through the Tasmania Fire Service has a duty of care and responsibility to its members and the Tasmanian community to provide safe and secure buildings and facilities.

It is the State Fire Commission policy to ensure all its buildings and facilities are built and maintained in accordance with the relevant Building Codes and Australian Standards.

To facilitate this:

- All building works including renovations, repairs and maintenance must be undertaken by qualified tradespersons.
- All electrical work must be undertaken by a licensed electrician.
- All plumbing and or draining works must be undertaken by a licensed plumber/ drainer.

No new work is to be undertaken unless:

- Approval has been given by the relevant Director/ Regional Chief
- Funding has been approved.
- Necessary Council approval has been gained.
- Requests for minor maintenance should be directed to relevant Managers and or District Officers.
- All minor maintenance must be undertaken by qualified tradespersons.
- All electrical work must be undertaken by a licensed electrician.
- All plumbing and or draining works must be undertaken by a licensed plumber/ drainer.

Requests for all works or maintenance should in the first instance be forwarded through relevant Managers or District Officers who will, provided they have the necessary financial delegation (Policy Statement 9/93), approve or otherwise the works. If the estimate for the works is greater than their financial delegation the request will be considered by the relevant Director/ Regional Chief.

Operation Hydra

By Acting Consultant Community Education, George Auchterlonie

In mid January 2005 Tasmania Police approached the Tasmania Fire Service with a proposal to try and stem the recent spate of deliberately lit grass and scrub fires in the suburb of Clarendon Vale. Throughout December 2004 and January 2005 there had been in excess of 45 suspected deliberately lit vegetation fires. Police had their suspicions, but not enough information to arrest and charge persons.

Sergeant Genevieve Hickman of Clarence Plains Police Station and District Officer Chris Arnol instigated a program which involved a firefighter and a police officer door-knocking over one hundred houses in the Clarendon Vale area. There were a number of "hot" houses included in the doorknock. Hot houses being homes of suspected offenders.

The purpose of the door-knock was to heighten the awareness of the public, make them understand the potential of what these fires could develop into, and consequently provide police with some descriptions of possible offenders such as clothing colours, push bike and motor bike descriptions and where possible even a photo. We wanted the public not to become complacent of what was happening just because, as yet, the fires had not resulted in a major catastrophe.



The fourteen fire and police officers that were involved in the door-knock reported a pleasing response with lots of information coming forward that should assist the police in some apprehensions.

From our point of view we just wanted the fires to stop. It is too early yet to measure the success but I will report back in the next issue. In addition a community meeting is planned later this month to discuss the effects of fires in the community. This will involve Fire, Police and Parks and Wildlife.

Photo Gallery



This photo was taken on the 11th January 2005. The fire had been knocked down but the sunset in the background made the setting.

Photographer Cheryl Dando Primrose Sands Brigade



Birds eye view from the Grand Chancellor - photo taken by James Smith Prospect Brigade at the TFS 2004 Conference



Ulverstone Grandstand fire on 12th January 2005 at 1.03 am. approximate damage \$500,000.

Photos submitted by Leading Firefighter Burnie Fire Brigade, Shayne Andrews



A boat fire which B shift attended on 26th December 2004 in Berriedale Bay. It had to be accessed via the river on the Police launch 'Dauntless'.

Submitted by Station Officer Hobart Fire Brigade, Phil Smith





New Year's Eve in Burnie - bonfire on the beach which D shift lit for a large beach party.

Photos submitted by Leading Firefighter Burnie Fire Brigade, Shayne Andrews



Training at King Island - photos submitted by District Officer Arthur Rob Deverell

The Chief Officer expressed his deep concern over this photo - it was a training exercise. Brigades don't usually pose for photos while the fire burns. Linda Lacy - Editor.



Shayne Andrews and Heath Batten learning the ropes during Mc Happy Day!

Photo submitted by Leading Firefighter Burnie Fire Brigade, Shayne Andrews



D shift in Burnie assisting with Boonie's walk to raise funds for bone marrow research.

Photo submitted by Leading Firefighter Burnie Fire Brigade, Shayne Andrews

On The *Move*

A list of recent personnel changes within the Tasmania Fire Service

The following Career Personnel changes have been effected

Arrivals

South	Susan Burns	Clerk, TasFire Training	15th November 2004
South	Ellie Poynton	Clerk, Corporate Services	17th November 2004
South	Suzanne Bacon	Co-ordinator Learning Systems	22nd November 2004
South	Steve Willing	Co-ordinator Human Services	29th November 2004

Departures

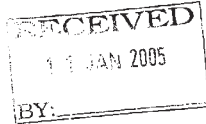
North	David Tomkinson	Technical Officer	24th December 2004
South	Trevor Morris	Senior Firefighter	18th January 2005
North	Graham Otley	Regional Officer	9th February 2005

Elevations

South	Tony Davidson	Regional Chief South	25th November 2004
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The following Volunteer Brigade Officers have been elected by their Brigades

BRIGADE	OFFICER	APPOINTMENT	BRIGADE	OFFICER	APPOINTMENT
Togari	John Van Loon	Brigade Chief	Bell Bay	Colin Youd	Second Officer
	Ian Stanley	Second Officer		Clive Watson	Third Officer
South Arm	Barry Heather	Second Officer	George Town	Andrew Taylor	Brigade Chief
	Glenn Palmer	Third Officer		Glenn Summers	Second Officer
Barton	Brett Arnold	Fourth Officer		Quade Whitehead	Third Officer
	David Taylor	Brigade Chief	Ricky Hill	Fourth Officer	
	William Skerritt	Second Officer	Blessington	Ronald Murphy	Brigade Chief
	Ken Arnold	Third Officer		Paul Rice	Second Officer
Winnaleah	David Gatenby	Fourth Officer	Steven Faulkner	Third Officer	
	Arthur Taylor	Brigade Chief	Robin Richardson	Fourth Officer	
	Michael Cooke	Second Officer	Ross	Eddie Freeman	Brigade Chief
	Rodney Mullins	Third Officer		William Bennett	Second Officer
Nubeena	Ronald Bayldon	Fourth Officer	Ricky Mansfield	Third Officer	
	David Tatnell	Second Officer	Wayne Mayne	Fourth Officer	
	Shane Williams	Third Officer	Ben Lomond	Ian Hoggett	Group Officer
Allan Wrigley	Fourth Officer	Bradys Lake		John Jago	Brigade Chief
Port Arthur	Peter Williams	Brigade Chief	David Hean	Second Officer	
	Gareath Plummer	Second Officer	Bernard Lockwood	Third Officer	
	Christopher Richards	Third Officer	Kimberley	Maree Nichols	Fourth Officer
	Trevor Briggs	Fourth Officer		Alwyn Parker	Brigade Chief
Tea Tree	Brendon Daft	Third Officer		John McCormack	Second Officer
Oatlands	Phillip Worldon	Third Officer	Wendy Gaffney	Third Officer	
Elizabeth Town	Darryl Walker	Brigade Chief	Wilmut	Noel Parker	Fourth Officer
	Richard Bennett	Second Officer		Bruce Gibbons	Third Officer
	Gerald Richards	Third Officer	Channel	Robert Greenwood	Brigade Chief
	Fiona Angus	Fourth Officer		Dave Cooper	Second Officer
	Loongana	Anthony Swindale		Brigade Chief	Mark Goodwin
Irishtown	Michael Docherty	Second Officer	Snug	Barry Duggan	Brigade Chief
	Anthony Timms	Third Officer		Glen Hughes	Second Officer
	Taffy Finney	Brigade Chief	Riana	Michael Horder	Third Officer
Tom O'Halloran	Second Officer	Wayne (Sam) Ling		Brigade Chief	
Wayne Marthick	Third Officer	Gary Morse		Second Officer	
Bruce Cornish	Fourth Officer	Chris Talbot		Third Officer	
				Gerry Clarke	Fourth Officer



**Tasmania
POLICE**

Western District Administration
88 Wilson Street
PO Box 19
BURNIE
Tel: (03) 6434 5240
Fax: (03) 6434 5316

Ref: SB/CIL

File Ref: W- 11132/04

7 January 2005

Mr John Streets
Regional Officer
North West Region
Tasmania Fire Service
PO Box 1015
BURNIE TAS 7320

Dear Mr. Streets

I am writing to you regarding action taken by Strahan Fire Brigade Captain Kerry Hamer at a recent accident scene at Strahan on the 2 December 2004.

I have received a report from Sergeant P Gatward of Strahan in which he commends the action of all persons at the scene but requested your attention be drawn in particular to the actions of Mr Hamer.

The injured person was situated in the immediate area of an undermined power pole with "live" power lines down in the area. The injuries sustained to the person required immediate attention.

Mr. Hamer assisted treating the injured person under real threat and hazard from the suspended power pole and lines.

Please pass to Mr Hamer my appreciation and those of the police involved, for his courageous and valued assistance given under dangerous conditions.

Yours sincerely

S B BONDE
Commander

13 Tianna Rd
Lindisfarne 7015

Tasmanian Fire Service: Re Natone Hill Bushfire 12th January

To all the "MEN IN YELLOW" & their support crews, both on the ground, & in the air, we would like to thank you for your big efforts in fighting the fire, & containing it, without people or property loss.

We were out at the time the blaze started, & returned to find a spot fire 30metres from the back door. Fortunately, our good neighbour got that one out, but it was re-assuring to have you blokes patrolling throughout the night, in case it got away again.

The next morning, the fire was burning down the hill towards the house, & you blokes knocked it out, including a no of tree stumps that were well alight.

The swirling winds didn't make you're job any easier, but thanks again for a great effort!!!

Trev & Marg Cole

Career Brigades Shift Calendar 2005

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
M								1				
T		1	1					2			1	
W		2	2			1		3			2	
T		3	3			2		4	1		3	1
F		4	4	1		3	1	5	2		4	2
S	1	5	5	2		4	2	6	3	1	5	3
S	2	6	6	3	1	5	3	7	4	2	6	4
M	3	7	7	4	2	6	4	8	5	3	7	5
T	4	8	8	5	3	7	5	9	6	4	8	6
W	5	9	9	6	4	8	6	10	7	5	9	7
T	6	10	10	7	5	9	7	11	8	6	10	8
F	7	11	11	8	6	10	8	12	9	7	11	9
S	8	12	12	9	7	11	9	13	10	8	12	10
S	9	13	13	10	8	12	10	14	11	9	13	11
M	10	14	14	11	9	13	11	15	12	10	14	12
T	11	15	15	12	10	14	12	16	13	11	15	13
W	12	16	16	13	11	15	13	17	14	12	16	14
T	13	17	17	14	12	16	14	18	15	13	17	15
F	14	18	18	15	13	17	15	19	16	14	18	16
S	15	19	19	16	14	18	16	20	17	15	19	17
S	16	20	20	17	15	19	17	21	18	16	20	18
M	17	21	21	18	16	20	18	22	19	17	21	19
T	18	22	22	19	17	21	19	23	20	18	22	20
W	19	23	23	20	18	22	20	24	21	19	23	21
T	20	24	24	21	19	23	21	25	22	20	24	22
F	21	25	25	22	20	24	22	26	23	21	25	23
S	22	26	26	23	21	25	23	27	24	22	26	24
S	23	27	27	24	22	26	24	28	25	23	27	25
M	24	28	28	25	23	27	25	29	26	24	28	26
T	25		29	26	24	28	26	30	27	25	29	27
W	26		30	27	25	29	27	31	28	26	30	28
T	27			31	28	30	28		29	27		29
F	28				29	27		29	30	28		30
S	29				30	28		30		29		31
S	30				29		31			30		
M	31				30					31		
T					31							

A DAY NIGHT

B DAY NIGHT

C DAY NIGHT

D DAY NIGHT