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Diamond Harbour first for FMV

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A recent joint night exercise between Waikanae and Paraparaumu brigades (career and volunteer staff) and Wellington Free Ambulance involved several vehicles, in a complicated smash involving fire and extraction.

Photo: 111 Emergency.
Hundreds of personnel in major crash exercise

The possibility that London may experience a plane crash in the central metropolitan area was played out recently through a major exercise in a huge derelict Victorian flour mill site in London’s Docklands.

Real pieces of Boeing 737 fuselage, landing gear and bits of wing, real fire and smoke, amputee actors, over 100 casualty volunteers from London University’s paramedic course, and 220 emergency services personnel, made it a realistic exercise.

A specialist rescue team from the London Fire Brigade took a month to create the disaster scene using about 400 tonnes of rubble, and while it was known an exercise would take place, emergency personnel did not know until arrival and recce that the big shout was thankfully not real.

The three-day exercise was the biggest in LFB’s history and played out over a wide area with firefighters trained in water rescue searching the water for survivors, and specialist police marine diving teams undertaking evidence recovery over the course of the following two days. Working black boxes were dropped in the Thames for dive teams to recover.

Photos: London Fire Brigade and Stefan Rosseau of AP.
Smart helmets see through thick smoke

New ‘smart’ helmets are being developed to help firefighters see in thick smoke and darkness.

The Vienna University of Technology’s ProFiTex system uses infrared sensors on the helmet to project real-time, colour-coded surface temperatures onto a head-mounted display, allowing first-responders to judge whether a room is safe to enter. The outline of people trapped inside also appear on-screen via thermal imagery technology.

Christian Schoenauer said the eyes of the system are provided by a depth camera that creates a live, 3D model of the building. “We use the depth information to create a model of the environment of the house, or of a room, and then we map the thermal information onto that model, so what we get in the end is a textured 3D model which, for example, could be sent to an operational commander.”

That information can then be sent via fibre optic cable woven into a firefighter’s guide rope.

Professor Hannes Kaufmann said one major problem to be decided on is how much information to relay directly to firefighters.

For example, if we reconstruct the floor and it’s fully intact but one second later the floor breaks down and we still show a fully intact floor, this could be very dangerous.”

He eventually plans to incorporate high-power infrared lasers into the design that can pierce through thick smoke and reveal obstacles.

Swedish designer Omer Haciomeroglu has included a heads-up display in a futuristic helmet to offer improved vision and to provide information.

The helmet solves low to almost no visibility in highly dense smoke problems, the need to keep contact with walls to navigate, or the need to carry and constantly check thermal imaging equipment.

The Selective Active Noise cancellation feature cancels the sound of the user’s breathing and enhances the potential structural crack and victim sounds, in order to provide better information for the ‘smoke diver’ and better communication with team members.
‘Lunacy’ raises money and awareness

As if the Sky Tower isn’t enough exercise for most, a group of northern firefighters decided to make it a whole lot tougher and walk from Waitangi to Auckland central, arriving just in time to do the climb.

This excusable lunacy was part of a blossoming commitment from firefighters to fundraising under the banner of the New Zealand Firefighters Charitable Trust. The trust was formed about 10 months ago and operates out of Birkenhead VFB.

Chairman SO Tom Foster said the Trust was sparked by doing events to raise money for the likes of Sky Tower and the Leukemia Trust, and it became obvious people would respond better to an ‘organisation’.

“The main problem was identity. Something people could see as a legit fundraiser. We went to a law firm in Auckland to get set up and they said they liked what were doing, and established the trust for free!”

The marathon was an idea from Tom and fellow Birkenhead firefighter, SFF Maaka McKinley, so, of course, they had to take part. A group of Birkenhead firefighters walked 303km from Waitangi and co-ordinated with organisers to go straight into the Sky Tower climb. “Otherwise we would have frozen up,” said Tom.

Brigades along the route joined in and $7700 was raised to add to the Leukaemia Trust’s pot. Tom said social media proved effective in raising awareness of the walk. There were running repairs and minor injuries along the way, all displayed on social media. “That seemed to bring the people out.” Blisters were the major problem, along with muscle twinges and cramps.

Raising money wasn’t the only imperative. One of the Trust’s aims is to raise fire safety awareness and every opportunity was taken along the walk to talk to the public.

Vice-chairman Maaka said the firefighters wanted an identity everyone can relate too. “As a charitable trust, the options of fundraising in the future for other needy organisations open up more organisational and fundraising support options.

“The walk was a major challenge, even for the fitter ones of the group. Ages ranged from 52-18yrs. We all encountered physical and mental barriers, especially when we walked 91km over a 36-hour period from Mangawhai to Wellsford, then the 60km leg down to Helensville. Coming into Auckland and seeing the Sky Tower on the horizon was a good feeling. We felt and knew that we had achieved a lot over the walk and the end was now in sight. The tower was the easy bit – it only took a few minutes!”

Maaka said firefighters went to the Leukaemia Kids Club last year and meet the kids and parents. “On the day of the climb up the Tower we met these kids in Victoria Park.

Passing the Kaukapakapa pub: Maaka McKinney, Connor Doughty, Tom Foster and Jimmy Rattray. Photo: Stuff.
They escorted us up to the tower where we met all the firefighters. That was an amazing feeling. Not only to see the kids, but also the warm welcome that we received from fellow firefighters. The camaraderie that we have as firefighters from all industries and services, really hit home.

“We will definitely be doing something again next year. This time we would like to incorporate more involvement from other brigades,” said Maaka.

The NZFCT is keen to see the good work expand and hopes a national identity will emerge from these blistered beginnings. “The big walk has boosted the Trust’s profile and it would be great to think other firefighters can pitch in and put together regional committees to give a focus to major fundraising.

Anyone interested in this can contact us through the Birkenhead station or check out the website http://nzfct.webs.com/ or www.facebook.com/nzfct.trust,” said Tom.

Runathon
Firefighters in various locations took to the treadmills the following weekend in an effort to push this year’s fundraising over the $1 million mark. The Auckland Airport team ran the equivalent of the length of New Zealand.

Pictured: one of Birkenhead’s finest doing it hard on a treadmill at Sylvia Park.

The final figure for all 2014 Sky Tower fundraising is $908,000.

Tapaki, Williams retained
Erroll Tapaki and Owen Williams have been confirmed for an extra term of four years as Region 4 and 6 board members of the Firefighters Welfare Society.
18 honoured for earthquake rescue work

Eighteen Christchurch firefighters have been awarded the New Zealand Bravery Medal as a result of their work inside the collapsed PGG and CTV buildings after the February 2011 earthquake.

The rescues were carried out under the constant threat of aftershocks and on occasion, the tunnels they were working in moved, pressing against their chests and backs. The firefighters worked in spaces between 30 to 70 cms high, meaning there was no room for protective equipment. In some cases they worked in dense smoke. Some also assisted with amputations.

National Commander Paul Baxter noted that the individuals chosen to receive the honours represented many others who worked alongside them.

“The fact that none of our people sustained major physical injuries is almost miraculous, considering the strength and frequency of the aftershocks. The emotional scars, of course, are a different matter. I know this took – and may continue to take – a huge toll on many of our people and their families.”

The recipients were:
SFF Stephen Acton
SFF Luke Burgess
SFF Richard Green
SFF Terrence Gyde
SFF Craig Jackson
FF Joshua Kumbaroff
SFF Michael Lennard
SFF Simon Payton
SFF Richard Platt
SO Paul Rodwell
FF Scott Shadbolt
SFF Steven Smylie
FF Cory Stewart
SFF Mark Whittaker
SFF Michael Yeates

FF Shane Cole
SFF Kevin Crozier
SFF Richard Green
SFF Terrence Gyde
SFF Craig Jackson
FF Joshua Kumbaroff
SFF Michael Lennard
SFF Simon Payton
SFF Richard Platt
SO Paul Rodwell
FF Scott Shadbolt
SFF Steven Smylie
FF Cory Stewart
SFF Mark Whittaker
SFF Michael Yeates

Top shelf

Silent death (article)
by Bill Whitley
Source: Consumer, Jun 2014, p19-21
What’s it about? The latest consumer test results of home smoke alarms. Test included photoelectric, three-dual sensor and ionisation models. Flaming and smouldering fire tests were conducted at the BRANZ fire laboratory.

Vehicle extrication techniques (book)
by Ian Dunbar
(Netherlands: Holmatro, 2013)
What’s it about? An operational guide to vehicle extrication techniques. Provides clear, coloured diagrams and illustrations, with simple explanatory text. Includes vehicle design and construction, rescue tools and equipment, crew organisation, basic vehicle extrication techniques (including stabilisation), and safety. Ian featured in the previous edition of K1.

Last call

Dick Gouldburn
Retired. Various Auckland stations.

Ray Bray
Retired CFO Turangi. Formerly Manapouri.

Peter Donnellan
Retired SO Wellington

Ron Williams
Retired SO Wellington

Peter Keirnan
NHQ

August 2014
Female Gold Star numbers rising

The female presence in firefighter ranks is now permanently established, but few have yet had the opportunity to be awarded the Gold Star. However, the numbers will be boosted before the end of the year.

The first female recipient was Rosemary Higgins who served 23 years in the Hamilton control room, then completed her service with Pauanui in 2000. Te Karaka VFB features strongly in this niche of UFBA history with the next two women with 25 years’ service in 2005, Sarah Brown and Hineatu Ngatoro, who were the first two female operational members to achieve the milestone. Hineatu and husband Henry were the first husband and wife partnership to both achieve the honour.

UFBA historian Sandy Lawson’s research shows other Gold Star husband/wife duos since then have been: Jo-anne and Thomas Maguigan (both 2006) of Tapanui, Lynette (2008) and Jack (1990) Winwood of Okaihau, Debbie-Kaye (2013) and Brian (2003) Gardner of Lake Tekapo, and Vivienne (2014) and Michael (2012) Butcher of Kirwee. There are brother and sister Gold Star duos and a father and daughter duo. Other female Gold Star holders are: J.A. Wills, Southern Communications; T.M. Bath, Ngatea; S.M. Reeves, Omarama; S.Burnside, Kumeu; J.A.Neve, Nelson.

Sandy says the Fire Service Commission held to the official stance of not enrolling woman members, even after the centennial UFBA conference in Dunedin in 1979 moved that the UFBA recognise the operational service given by women members.

“Previous similar remits had been submitted, but were unsuccessful, in part due to FSC opposition, and some considering the UFBA could not go against official policy. However, in 1979, the UFBA eventually went its own way on that issue.”

How many women have been denied a Gold Star due to the ‘official position’ is not known, said Sandy. “For instance, I don’t know of any substantive research on whether any of the women who filled the brigade ranks during the World War II, carried on after the men returned.”

Gold Stars

Gold Stars for June and July are:

- Peter Wood
- Andrew Whyte
- Rex Murray, Michael
- Stevenson
- Harold Clarkson
- Shayne Morgan
- Charles Corbett, Grant
- Gray, Kenneth Monk,
- Jamie Nicol
- Christopher Dobson
- Arthur Kee
- Shane Gourlay
- Neil Alexander

Developer wanted for new fire system

Developer wanted for new fire system

Devonport entrepreneur Graham Munro is looking for a business partner to develop his SensorJet, a low-cost, fire-suppressing invention that he has patented in major markets, including the U.S. and the EU.

Developed after his own scare with an unattended breakfast fry-up, the SensorJet system involves two components: an infrared sensor in the ceiling, and a bench-mounted water jet that rises up then sprays a fine mist of water when the ceiling sensor detects a fire.

Yes, pouring water on a fryup fire is an absolute NO. But SensorJet’s cool mist displaces oxygen, smothering out the fire. “Rather than manufacture, we’re looking for a large market incumbent like Tyco, Bosch or Honeywell to partner with,” he said.

“We’re preparing to approach major market participants now. We have advisors on board who have successfully completed similar deals in big industries.”

The technology is simple, with low manufacturing risk, he says. With volume manufacturing, he sees SensorJet retailing in the $250 to $400 range.
Isolated on the ‘other side’ of the Grey River, the village of Blackball was forced into setting up a brigade in 1963 after a series of house fires.

The rugged surrounds of the West Coast coal mining community meant getting there was the long way round for any neighbouring brigade. Frank McGuire was one of the pioneers of Blackball firefighting and received his 50 Year Medal at the brigade’s recent golden jubilee.

“Blackball was set up as an auxiliary of the Ngahere brigade, which was only three miles away, but across the river. After the bridge was washed out in 1966 and never replaced, we became a brigade in our own right,” he said. Many of the original members of the brigade came from the committee that held the public meetings to discuss the brigade formation.

“I didn’t attend these two meetings as I was working and staying out of town quite a lot of the time. I had no intentions of joining up, but was approached more than once by members and they persuaded me to join.” Fifty years later he is the only foundation member.

The brigade has had its ups and downs, but mostly there has been a solid core of a few long-time members. “The mines then, as now, were in decline. The Blackball Mine closed in 1964 and the state mill at Roa closed in 1967, resulting in the loss of some more of the more senior members. We managed to carry on, but it was a struggle. Money was always a problem, but we managed to build a station for our recently arrived Dennis engine (ex Wellington). CFO Bill Moutford had his own building company and his contacts were put to good use in building a station.”

Frank said Blackball was perhaps unique in that it had both a CFO and a chairman. These two particularly, had vast experience and many contacts who were of great help fundraise. “When the Fire Service Commission took over, the funding was no longer a problem but the paper war commenced! However, everything improved – finance, training and gear.”

**St John crossover**

Motor accidents and ambulance assists have been a big part of Blackball’s callout tally, said Frank. “St Johns has been in the town longer than the brigade and a lot of brigade members have been, or still are, members. We have always had close ties with St Johns and they never hesitate to call us, be it for manpower or any type of assistance we can provide.”

A price of progress says Frank, has been the advent of mobile phones. “We get far more calls from the public that turn out to be non-events. But, better safe than sorry!” Another change for the better is that all brigades now work in very well with each other. “No more do we have the ‘my patch, your patch’ mentality.”

Frank started as a fireman and worked up to a DCFO, then took a step back to Station Officer to allow the advancement of an up-and-coming CFO pending the retirement of the original Chief.

“In time he took over as CFO and I went back to DCFO. In 1987 he put in his resignation and I became a reluctant CFO. I had made
Blenheim. A bit of a bugger, really, as we only wanted the runs to be used where brigades could only muster two members to train. But now two-member teams seem to be the norm.”

While a lot of the original organising committee were miners, very few of the firefighters have been miners. “We've probably got the same amount of drivers, timber workers, managers, people working in local business, and a couple of retired people, as we’ve had miners,” said Frank. Blackball is not exempt for daytime manning problems as most members work out of the town.

The former Wellington brigade’s Dennis was in Blackball 1964-1974, then sold to C.F.M Christchurch. It is now at McLeans Island in Christchurch.

up my mind to hand in my resignation at the next meeting. But before I could do this, the CFO told me he was going to do the same. After some debate I was talked into staying on as CFO. It was only to be a short time but it ended up being 10 years. Thanks to the help I had from the brigade, but mostly from the secretary, Janice McGuire and the treasurer, Val Donaldson. I stepped down in 1996 and worked my way down the ladder.”

Competition kept interest
Blackball has never had a big workload and a big part of keeping brigade members interested has been the competitions. “We have had three teams at competitions in the past. We also had a brigade competition with drawn teams, which members were very keen on.

“As I was on the WCFBA competition panel, myself and another long-time competition member, Les Neilson, drew up a number of two-man runs. We tried to make them as practical as possible and based on what you would do if you attended an incident and you were short on manpower. e.g. one man can take the key and bar with stand pipe.

“This meant disregarding a lot of UFBA rules, but the runs worked out very well and the WCFBA ran them at Sub Association and West Coast events.

“They were later inserted into UFBA competitions and were first run at Renwick, 1976 competitions team: Back row – L. Neilson, W. Mountford (coach), K. Lee. Front row – F. McGuire, B. Donaldson.
“In the early days we trained up local men not in the brigade and they helped those members who were in attendance. This wasn’t a problem in those days. This is the reason we pushed to have women members accepted into the service. Joanne MaGuigan joined our brigade officially on 05 November 1981. I think she was either the first, or one of the first, women to be accepted in the UFBA.”

Legends
‘War stories’ about anything on the West Coast tend to grow into legends. An often told tale of the early days – There was a brigade social at the hotel, but Frank was sick and didn’t attend. The alarm sounded and he turned out. Being the only sober one there, he got in the driver’s seat.

They only had a short hosereel, so had to back over a bridge across a drain to get in range. “I got some stick for this – for being the sober driver and ending up with the truck in the drain. What they neglect to tell was that I was being directed back across the bridge by the members who had been at the social.”

On 23rd February 1973 at 1500 hours, the brigade got a call to a telephone pole in Roa Rd. The Dennis didn’t quite make it to the fire as it had a fuel problem (when it got hot it developed a fuel lock and always at the worst possible time).

“I arrived home from work some time later and got it running again. In the meantime, the fire had quickly spread, taking off up the ridges and swept over and along the ridges and into the gully where the mine workshops and other buildings were. These were completely destroyed along with the coal bins.

“The fire carried on up the gully towards the tv translator building. We had three teams spread along the hills and we had a major struggle to get water up to the tv building. We had a 600 foot forestry hose up the hill and the FWMP pump was ‘hard out’ to get some water up there. We managed to save the building with no damage”.

The brigade didn’t get much rest that night and the next day as we had three calls in two hours. Overall it was six calls in two days – a big bulge in the brigade’s normal workload.

Frank also recalls getting a call to a fire at Moonlight, which is about 10kms away and a section of road called ‘The Zig Zags’ lay in between. “Those who were in the back of the Dennis say the trip only took eight minutes but when they arrived, some couldn’t let go of the grab handles as their hands were locked in fear.”

50 Year Medals
50 Year Medals have also been presented recently to:

| Winston Steen | Cambridge |
| Neville Jacobson | Dannevirke |
| James Powdrill | Kaikohe |

Back then, after a call, the publican (who was a firefighter) would open up for a few drinks. “Many a time it took longer to get home from the pub than it did to attend the call,” said Frank.

Students study new set of skills
Senior Hutt Valley secondary students spent some of their July holidays participating in a week-long UFBA/EMQUAL training programme in safety awareness, risk management and emergency response skills.

The programme is an opportunity for students between 16 and 18 years of age to achieve a range of credits in risk awareness and emergency response at levels 1 to 3 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. “One of the core objectives is to provide students with a set of transferable skills which will stand them in good stead whatever vocation they choose,” said EMQUAL’s Bill Robertson.

The programme also aims to contribute toward injury prevention and a reduction in preventable accidents involving young people by providing them with the skills and knowledge they need to make safe decisions. Programme participants will be better prepared to prevent accidents and respond when they happen.
Tom Reid  
**top driver**

Christchurch Airport’s Tom Reid is the 2014 driver’s challenge champion. With two firsts and two seconds in the five categories, he came home ahead of Grant Scothern from Te Puke.

The contest challenges driver’s theory knowledge and skills and smoothness of operating a fire truck including reaction to obstacles, braking, and other hazards faced while on emergency response, and also how to park a fire appliance in a space little bigger than itself (see below).

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French joy-rider finally nabbed

Wearing a firefighter’s uniform he bought online, a French teenager repeatedly stole emergency vehicles and took them for joy rides. Witnesses said he usually roared off at high speed, sirens blaring and the lights flashing.

Police said the boy, who has no driving licence, first stole an emergency vehicle, hitting two other stationary fire engines.

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Welfare AGM

The New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society 2014 AGM will be held at the Tapkapuna fire station, 10 September at 1900 hours. There are major changes to the rules to be voted on. If you live in the area, please come to the AGM and have your say.

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New ACT truck

Fraser Fire’s latest metro fire truck for ACT – very similar to the NZFS Type 3. The main difference between the ACT and South Australian appliances Fraser has produced are ACT has a mid-mount pump and SA, a rear-mount pump.

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Three months later he stole another fire brigade vehicle and then an ambulance, which was also red. Police managed to stop the ambulance before it reached the motorway, but at the cost of a badly dented police car.

His final escapade involved stealing an emergency van, which he drove onto a motorway, with police in pursuit. He was returned to his father with a summons to appear before a juvenile court. However, he managed to give his father the slip, and stole yet another small emergency vehicle. He was finally detained after a motorway chase at speeds of up to 105mph, during which he smashed through toll barriers and finally collided with a police car.

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Photo: *Jason Prendergast, Greymouth.*
Hawera wins ARRO

New Zealand firefighters made a big impact at the 2014 ARRO challenge with Hawera winning the title and Rolleston following it home in second place.

This is New Zealand’s best result at ARRO and Hawera broke the 10-year drought since Thames took the title in 2004. Hawera was dominant, winning the extraction and entrapped challenges, third in the controlled rescue and was named best technical team and best medical team.

Rolleston was third in the extraction and entrapped challenges.

The trauma challenge was won by Queensland’s Redland City brigade, the ARRO SES Director’s Shield went to VICSES and the Singapore Civil Defence team was awarded the Spirit of the Challenge title.

Hard work and long hours

Behind the broad smiles at the Hawera brigade has been a lot of hard work and long hours.

The new ARRO champions took a pragmatic approach to the challenge, looking at competing against each scenario, not against other teams. “We broke our training down and worked out game plans,” said SO Julian Godderidge. “Instead of just cutting up cars, we concentrated on individual areas of each of the components – what we might be expecting to face when we competed. It also meant each member of the team knew what their job was, and how to perform it.”

A successful challenge requires long hours of fundraising to pay for flights, accommodation and meals. “On top of that, three hours a week training in addition to normal brigade duties. That is massive for those who work shifts and have young families.” Then there is the pressure of being put into isolation before competing. “So much goes through your mind: what are we going to be faced with? What are we going to be looking for?”

ARRO champions they might be, but Julian says there is always room for improvement. “It’s finding the little details that will give the edge over the other teams. And continuing to work to achieve the perfect score.”

After a quantity of Holdens had been dismembered and the sound of equipment died away, Julian said hearing the brigade’s name being called out four times for winning a category was mind-blowing. “It was like a dream. And then to hear that we won the overall event – well, words just couldn’t really explain what was going on in our heads.

“ It’s truly a moment that will stick with us for a very long time.”
Rural roustabouts

Rural firefighters who liked the idea of the Romanian off-road fire/rescue truck in the previous issue, will love the small brother – the GHE-O Firefighter. It is a genuine two-seat extreme off-road racing car that can carry a hose, a 250L water tank and extinguishers.

The concept behind the car is to provide command and control access to any off-road area in any weather and any situation. With the right driver, the manufacturer says the Firefighter has no limits on any terrain – and the promo video bears this out.

The car is the result of many years' experience in intense off-roading racing, and its speed across broken country is what separates it from the average 4-wheel drive.

It features a heavy duty 5-gear automatic transmission with lockable axles and is powered by 270bhp (performance version) engine on petrol, or 203 bhp on diesel.

Argentina's latest forest fire trucks come equipped with Orlaco thermal imaging cameras, mounted on a rotating and elevating unit on the front bumper that enables the driver to see where he is going, even in thick smoke.

The first 32 off-road trucks of the new fleet being built by Portugal's Jacinto (pictured right) were delivered earlier this year.
A move toward multi-function appliances is gaining ground in the United States, especially in the counties, as more fire departments struggle to stay afloat, and thinking outside of the box has become an imperative.

For instance, Volusia County has purchased four of Braun’s new Patriot pumper/ambulances (pictured left), specifically designed for volunteer units. The appliances cover EMS, light rescue and light fire suppression. The new design has a Waterus full CAFS system with 1135 litres of water and 113 litres of foam, a hose bed and a large transverse compartment for extra fire and extrication equipment storage, such as hydraulic cutters and rams. The ambulance module (lengthways with rear entry) features a shadowless lighting system.

Pierce built a custom-made ambulance/pumper (pictured right) for Broward in Florida which has a long slice of highway through the Everglades called Alligator Alley. The significant number of rollovers and distance from other EMS stations in this rural area led Chief Neal de Jesus to opt for a purpose-built hybrid.

“The majority of the calls in this area are single-vehicle rollovers with multiple victims, so the vehicle is designed with a longer wheelbase than a standard engine. Although it probably couldn’t be used easily in an urban setting, on a long stretch of highway the turning radius isn’t a problem.”

The rear of the cab, used for EMS transport, has stretcher room across the vehicle and is climate-controlled for patient comfort. The firefighting system is a 5678 lpm Hale pump, 1893L tank, and Husky foam system.

The patient accommodation does not affect standard crew accommodation in either vehicle.
Foundation members Lloyd Perriman and Brian Hart helped Porotobello celebrate its 50th.

Golden brigades

The new fire station swallowed the crowd during the inauguration of the Tairua fire brigade 50 years ago.

Legend says Tairua got the brand-new Ford V8 because career staff didn’t want an open back appliance.
Construction begins on Chch emergency centre

Fletcher Construction has been awarded the main contract to construct the new Christchurch Justice and Emergency Services Precinct.

The $300 million anchor project, led by the Ministry of Justice, brings together all justice and emergency response agencies in one location. The 40,000 square metre precinct will house courtrooms, Police, Corrections and a purpose-built, state-of-the art emergency operations centre for NZFS, St John’s and Civil Defence.

Construction of the precinct began this month and the complex is due to open by the end of 2016. When fully operational, the precinct will house approximately 1100 workers and accommodate 900 visitors every weekday. Specialist design of the precinct will ensure emergency services and civil defence response systems remain operational in an extreme seismic event.

Downer, the early works contractor, is nearing completion of the precinct’s ground stabilisation and improvement, during which more than 25,000 cubic metres of soil has been stabilised – equivalent to 10 Olympic size swimming pools – with 3500 cu m of cement placed to support a heavy duty 1.2 metre thick concrete raft that will be the base for two of the precinct’s three buildings.


The centre does not include City station.

Pictured is the architect’s impression.

IYV not to be worn on uniform

It appears the International Year of the Volunteer Medal is not a medal, but an award.

Advice from the Herald At Arms is that the IYV and the IY +10 are ‘private awards’ and, not being ‘official’ decorations, are not to be worn anywhere on uniform.

The subject came up when a firefighter was having his medals remounted and was told the IYV was not a Royal, New Zealand or official UN medal – therefore an award. So it can be hung on the wall in its case, but not on your chest. (More on this next issue)
O’Connor NRFO

Kevin O’Connor has been appointed National Rural Fire Officer. He is currently Deputy Director-General of DOC’s Conservation Services Group.

DOC is responsible for providing 24-hour fire cover for about a third of the country and, with 500 trained staff, maintains the largest rural fire fighting capability in New Zealand.

Volunteer value being revisited

PricewaterhouseCoopers will value the contribution from volunteer fire brigades, updating a report to the NZFS in 2009. This is the first step in PwC’s independent assessment of the UFBA’s organisational and funding model, and part of the UFBA’s review of its strategic focus, role, and operational model with respect to delivering on the recommendations of the Fire Review Panel.

PwC will also review the UFBA’s governance and organisational structure to ensure it is fit for purpose, review the current funding model in light of changes and extensions to the nature of the work of fire brigades, assessing changing demographic patterns, and identifying impacts of the Fire Service Panel report to the UFBA.

UFBA CEO George Verry said the work of fire brigades has changed significantly and the UFBA needs to make sure that is reflected in the contracting arrangements with the NZFS. “We want PwC to help us determine what an appropriate Service Level Agreement could be that would meet the operational funding needs of the UFBA and allow for flexibility in terms of our grant income.”

Demographic and societal influences, as well as attitudes toward volunteering continue to shift. He believes it is important to invest in in-depth research in these areas. “We need to know what the implications of all of these things are so we can plan for the future.”

K1 on Facebook

K1 has finally joined Facebook, opening up another avenue for discussion and news dissemination. There is so much happening out there with volunteer and career brigades that it is simply not possible to publish enough editions of K1 to handle it, even if we know about it.

We are sure that a lot of interesting day-to-day stuff happens with brigades and firefighters that could be shared on an informal basis, and we hope you will use the Facebook page for that purpose. Discussions are encouraged on technical issues and seeking answers to problems. Photos of unusual incidents, local competitions, unusual training nights, fundraising, local milestones, etc, are encouraged. No ‘selfies’ or personal agendas.

In its first two days, K1 had over 3000 views.

Storm suprises for northern brigades

The latest big storm to rip through northern regions had a couple of surprises for firefighters. A Kaitaia brigade driver had to take evasive action to avoid being hit by a falling tree, but in the process, the fire truck ended up in a roadside ditch. CFO Colin Kitchen said luckily the truck didn’t tip, so no-one was hurt.

All four Kaitaia trucks were in operation during several wild nights in the north with a top gust of 168km being recorded. Ironically the brigade had earlier rescued a driver from his car that was crushed by a tree. Kaitaia also rescued a woman from her house after a tree fell across it, trapping her in her chair.

Four appliances, a lighting rig and a 4WD were sent from Auckland to assist Northland brigades.

Thames also had a surprise – after freeing a car from a fallen tree and downed power lines, the crew was greeted by the cries of a very newly-born babe.

The storm had emergency services and power companies scrambling across Northland, Auckland and the Coromandel – over 20,000 homes lost power. Many homes lost their roof.
Almost $A500 million will be paid to members of the Black Saturday Kilmore East-Kinglake bushfire class action – the largest in Australian history.

The parties have agreed, but once it has received court approval, the sheer volume of the claims means it will take up to 18 months to distribute the settlement.

The bushfire survivors sued electricity provider SP AusNet, claiming it was negligent in failing to maintain power lines that ignited the Kilmore East/King Lake bushfire in February 2009. The group also sued Utility Services Corporation Ltd, contracted by SP AusNet to maintain the line, and the Department of Sustainability and Environment, for allegedly failing to reduce fuel loads.

The action included 1700 personal injury claims, 4000 claims for uninsured or underinsured property loss and 5000 insurance claims.

SP AusNet said the settlement was reached without admission of liability. Experts accepted the conductor that broke and initiated the fire was damaged by lightning, which compromised it. Its liability insurers will pay its contribution.

The class action was so large the state government funded a purpose-built courtroom to accommodate the teams of barristers, expert witnesses and large numbers of people interested in attending the trial.

The Black Saturday bushfires killed 173 people, injured 414 people, destroyed 2100 homes and displaced 7562 people – 120 people were killed by a single fire in the Kinglake area alone.

It is estimated the energy released by the Black Saturday bushfires was the equivalent of 1500 Hiroshima atomic bombs. A total 1,100,000 acres were burnt. The average speed of the fires was 12km per hour, however, sometimes the fires travelled up to 600m per 30 seconds. Spot fires were recorded 35 km ahead of the main fire fronts.

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National Commander Paul Baxter spends a lot of time on the road visiting career and volunteer brigades and attending all sorts of functions and meetings. His recent visit to Darfield to deliver its new Type 1 appliance turned out to be significant for a number of reasons.

Darfield DCFO Allan Fielding explained that on that day 56 years ago, the brigade took delivery of its first appliance, a Bedford, like the new one, coincidentally made in New Zealand as well. It was also the brigade’s birthday.

The National Commander advised it was the 100th vehicle of this type constructed around an Iveco chassis and future roll-outs would include a significant number of enhancements.

Pictured are the original and the latest Darfield appliances.

Photo: NZFS – reproduced with permission.

Disney has joined the Ad Council, the U.S. Forest Service, and the National Association of State Foresters to launch a new series of public service advertisements featuring scenes and characters from Disneytoon Studios’ animated film *Planes: Fire & Rescue*. The adverts are an extension of the wildfire prevention campaign, featuring the iconic Smokey Bear, who is 70 this year.
Diamond Harbour first for FMV

Diamond Harbour is the first to trial the new concept vehicle, the FMV.

National Commander Paul Baxter told K1 the vehicle is simply a prototype and will go to three first response brigades to test it in various conditions.

“The future of the vehicle, or any further production, is dependant on how well the trial goes and what the people who use it think. Any further production would probably target those brigades that often have to ‘hold’ a patient until a road ambulance or helicopter arrives. This provides a safe clinical environment for the patient until that can occur.”