

# RIP, Fire Police

Looking back at the history of the Fire Police as they transition towards their new brand – Operational Support. *Page 3*



PHOTO: Mark Potter

## ► Brigade To-Do List

### Obituaries

Every year at the Annual Conference, the UFBA honours deceased firefighters by reading their names out in front of the entire delegation.

If you have an obituary to submit from the past year, email them to [jane@ufba.org.nz](mailto:jane@ufba.org.nz). Please remember to include the date of birth, date of death, brigade and rank.

### Update Your Brigade Details

New CEO or Secretary? Has your brigade address or contact details changed? Have you launched a new website or gotten a new email address?

Help us keep our records up to date by going to [www.ufba.org.nz](http://www.ufba.org.nz) and taking two minutes to complete the Update Brigade Details Form.

## Member Forum

Find out what other members are talking about and join the discussion in the UFBA members forum.

Just go to [www.ufba.org.nz/forum](http://www.ufba.org.nz/forum) and post your comments on the UFBA member forum. *NOTE: You must be a registered user of the website and logged in to participate.*

## Sign Up for the UFBA E-Newsletter

Have the latest UFBA news delivered straight to your inbox. Just log onto [www.ufba.org.nz/user/register](http://www.ufba.org.nz/user/register) and register as a member to start receiving your own copy electronically.

## Spreading the News

We're always interested in hearing about what's happening in brigades around the country. If you have a story you'd like to share with the wider membership in our newsletter, email us at [news@ufba.org.nz](mailto:news@ufba.org.nz).

## ► Recognise the man holding the Webb Ellis Cup?

In the words of the Webb Ellis song written by radio sports host Miles Davis, it has taken UFBA CEO George Verry 24 years to get his hands on Webb Ellis again.

George was CEO of New Zealand Rugby Football Union from 1990 to 1996, and has never missed a Rugby World Cup Final.

"Since this photo," he jokes, "I've grown my teeth and lost my hair."

Visit the UFBA website find the link to the Webb Ellis song we're referring to.



PHOTO: Mark Potter

*After nearly 150 years, the name "Fire Police" is disappearing. The New Zealand Fire Service has dropped the title and now all those presently serving as Fire Police will be known as Operational Support. This month, the country's biggest and busiest volunteer unit, Auckland Fire Police, is holding a function to mark the change. The Fire Police badge has been proudly worn nationwide by volunteers who have faithfully served their communities and supported firefighters over the decades. We recall the history of Fire Police on the eve of their demise...*

### Earliest Units

The first known unit in New Zealand was formed in Christchurch in August 1867, known as the Salvage and Fire Police Corps. Members did not have long to wait before their first major fire, and two months later the Canterbury Press newspaper reported

*"... a destructive fire at Christchurch College at which Fire Police turned out in good numbers and rendered all the assistance in their power..."*

This unit — like so many fire brigades and fire police corps of the time — had its ups and downs and stops and starts, and in Christchurch there was a falling out when the unit declined to respond to fires with the hook-and-ladder. Despite differences, however, they combined to respond to a red glow above the Port Hills one October night in 1870. It was no scrub fire — Lyttelton town was ablaze. The Star reported, "The Mayor of Christchurch sent a special train last night carrying the steam fire engine and the fire brigade, together with the hook-and-ladder company and fire police. On reaching Lyttelton, the brigade

*(continued on next page)*



PHOTO: Mark Potter

found that two-thirds of the town had been burnt down, but actively set to work and succeeded in checking it in about two hours, ten minutes..."

Christchurch Salvage and Fire Police later separated. An attempt to restart Fire Police in 1908 failed. Insufficient volunteers offered their services and to this day it seems there was no revival.

Kaipoi appears to have formed the second Fire Police Corps. The fire that engulfed the local hotel in March 1871 was probably the first they attended, just weeks after their founding meeting. Lyttelton enrolled Fire Police in 1873 after a series of serious fires in the town. The oldest hotel in Canterbury, the Mitre, had escaped the Great Fire of Lyttelton in 1870 but fell victim to flames and was destroyed in August 1875.

According to the Star newspaper "... had it not been for the Constables and Fire Police, a great deal of valuable property would have been stolen, and as it was, there was much damage through breakage, and etc..."

Many towns followed the first three corps, enrolling able and trusted citizens as Fire Police. Of the main centres, Wellington Fire

Police was up and running in 1877 and, after a couple of breaks, survives to this day. But early on, Dunedin City Council decided against Fire Police in 1880. Auckland was a long way behind. Its unit did not form until 1933. Not all Fire Police Corps were well resourced and lack of funding often led to disbanding. The Wanganui Corps, strapped for cash in 1881, could not afford insignia or uniform so decided on their own simple badge of office, writing "... in the meantime we will substitute a white handkerchief for the armet badge..."

There is often reference to purchase, maintenance and use of ropes and lines by early Fire Police Units — today white barrier tape is preferred for crowd control!

### Pre-Date Police

Many Fire Police Corps predate the formation of New Zealand's single national police force in 1886. Thus while Fire Police were on the job supporting their local brigades, they were often joined by militia of paid or volunteer soldiers whose duty it was to provide the provincial policing teams of the day. Hence Christchurch Fire Police were told they had to work "as one,

alongside the fire brigade, salvage corps and the volunteers."

Many of those enrolled in the early days included pioneer settlers, businessmen and those in the professions. But not everyone thought that membership should be confined to reputable businessmen — in 1871 a Letter to the Editor of the Wanganui Herald advocated wider recruitment:

*"I will readily grant that their (businessmen) moral influence is enormous, but how many of them could keep their heads, could make their voices heard above the din of a fire, could run 50 yards without being blown, or could forcibly deter excited individuals from needless waste? – I am &c. Q."*

### Legislative Authority

Most provinces in New Zealand had adopted a Fire Brigade Act in 1865, which included provision for Fire Police and gave authority to enrol members and swear them in as constables while they were deployed at fires. Public Notices in The Southland Times, March 1887 seeking volunteers for the new Invercargill Fire Police Corps spelt out what was wanted: "...men whose duty

it shall be to attend at any fire to aid and assist the regular police force to watch over any property saved, to preserve order and to carry out any instructions, which may be given by any fire inspector in command..."

Were Fire Police needed? The newspaper Marlborough Express thought so in an editorial in December 1876 advocating the establishment of Fire Police in Blenheim. The article states, "It is a well-known fact that in nearly every town there are men who make it their business to rob those whose places are on fire. While everybody else is watching the progress of the flames they are engaged in carrying off any valuables. They can do this with impunity where the police force is small. There should be somebody whose special duty it would be to protect salvage from such persons. What is the use of saving property from the flames if it is to be stolen?"

### The Oath

From the very earliest days nearly 150 years ago, Fire Police have been sworn in as special constables, able to act while deployed at fires. All members were sworn in before a Justice of the Peace, usually taking the oath on the Bible. Until very recently when the change to Operational Support was signalled, Fire Police have continued to be sworn in, though usually only once when they join the Unit and not annually, as was formerly the case. The Oath has effect until the member is legally discharged. And the wording of the Oath, sworn until recently, differs little from that first administered in the 1860s, except "the Queen" being referred to in the text back then was Victoria!

### Fire Police and the NZFS

Fire Police Units in many cities and towns over the decades grew up alongside, but unconnected with, the local fire brigade. Fire Police usually had their own officer in charge, sometimes called a Captain. The Corps managed its own affairs and sometimes had its own priorities on the fireground. This division often led to conflict. In the 1970s legislation pertaining to Fire Police was changed to bring them all under the umbrella of a national fire service. Fire Police could only be established by the local Chief Fire Officer and in line with Fire Service Commission policy. Even so, it's true that some Fire Police have continued to operate in isolation. Integration as new Operational Support members might remedy this.

### Fire Police and the UFBA

For 100 years, Fire Police and the UFBA were uneasy bed fellows. In December 1878, Fire Police were present at one of the defining events in New Zealand fire brigade history when the United Fire Brigades' Association (UFBA) was founded in Christchurch. It now comprises some 520 brigades with 10,000 members.

But the relationship was not to last, despite Fire Police being involved with the UFBA right from its formation. Their eligibility for membership in the UFBA was on again, off again, considered again, denied again until 1934 when it was decided they were definitely not entitled to belong. The matter lapsed and Fire Police were shut out for another 50 years when finally they were welcomed as members. In the meantime, in 1969, Fire Police formed their own National Association which oversaw mutual matters and issued service honours until 1984 when the UFBA conference at Greymouth once again approved Fire Police membership. So more than 100 years after taking part in the founding of the UFBA, Fire Police were

allowed to join the Association. Perhaps the relationship came of age in 2007 when one of their number was appointed to the UFBA's governing body — its Board of Directors.

### The Future

Fire Police duties have altered over the decades to cater for the many and varied changes in technology which, many times over in 150 years, have revolutionised fireground procedures. Now Fire Police find that they themselves are in transformation, dropping the familiar and proudly-worn nameplate, "Fire Police" in favour of a new title — "Operational Support". NZFS top executives say it's a reformation, a new look at the way these personnel will support those on the fireground and, while it's business as usual, there's new opportunity for a wider range of approved duties, a confirmed list of PPE entitlements, greater effort toward nationwide uniformity and integration, and later the prospect of a structured training programme.



ABOVE: On 29 October, the Auckland Fire Police held a function marking the end of an era, and launched their new website under the new brand "Operational Support" at midnight. Visit [www.aucklandoperationalsupport.org.nz](http://www.aucklandoperationalsupport.org.nz) and check it out.

# Time for a New Designation for Rescue Tenders?



PHOTO: Graeme Booth

By Graeme Booth M.N.Z.M.  
UFBA Past President & CFO Laingholm Volunteer Brigade

Throughout this country there are a large number of fire appliances carrying rescue equipment that are not designated rescue tenders. There are several reasons for this. For some brigades, the number of rescue calls may not justify seeking full rescue tender status. Other brigades are equipped with a Type 1 fire appliance that doesn't have the locker capacity to carry a full range of rescue equipment and still function efficiently as a pumping appliance.

But when a motor vehicle crash with entrapment occurs, an appliance that doesn't have full rescue tender status may be the closest. It's not a problem if the incident is in the brigade's own response zones, but if the call is to a neighbouring brigade that doesn't have rescue equipment, the Communications Centre will send a rescue tender, often from some distance away. It may even drive past the station of the brigade with rescue equipment that won't have turned a wheel. Why? Because at present there's no way the communications centre will know that there was an appliance with rescue equipment closer to the scene.

So I'm putting up a proposal and I would like to hear what brigades think about it. Within my own region, I've circulated the idea amongst brigades with appliances carrying rescue equipment that aren't designated rescue tenders, and have received unanimous support.

## So here it is...

I suggest that the 9 radio call sign be used to deploy pumping appliances carrying rescue equipment (but not in quantities large enough to be classified as pump rescue tenders with 7 designations). Such appliances would always be backed up by a 7-designated appliance, but would be deployed to rescue incidents (such as a motor vehicle crashes with persons trapped) if closer than the nearest 7-designated appliance.

The 9 designation was originally reserved for light emergency tenders — many based on vans that were sometimes dangerously overloaded. In recent years, the New Zealand Fire Service has followed a policy of doing away with these vehicles — in most cases moving the rescue equipment onto a pumping appliance, then giving it a 7 designation.

My research shows that there are very few appliances using the 9 designation left — possibly only two. But there are dozens carrying rescue equipment that are simply classified as pumping appliances, and have a 1 or 2 designation as a result.

I can't claim this as my own idea. Several years ago Dave Stackhouse and Dave Mitten from Christchurch proposed a rapid intervention tender — a standard pumping appliance carrying a minimum of rescue equipment but sufficient to stabilise and to allow the crew to gain access to the trapped victims. This proposal was greeted warmly when aired at the annual Auckland CFO/DCFO's forum and I believe at other such forums around the country, but never went any further. A crucial reason was the

identification of rapid intervention tenders by Communication Centre staff members. At that stage the 9 designation was in use by numerous light rescue tenders.

I suggest that the 9 designation be considered for pumping appliances that are already carrying some rescue equipment. (In one or two cases, the equipment is carried in an ancillary vehicle, such as an Ultralight, and might have to be moved to the station pumping appliance to comply). Minimum equipment would likely include a powered combi tool, step chocks, glass control and a turf block.

Such appliances would respond to motor vehicle crashes with persons trapped if closer than a designated pump rescue tender, but the pump rescue tender and any other resources would respond as well.

The primary role of the crews of the designation 9 appliances would be stabilisation and gaining entry. They might handle light entrapment, but the extrication of heavily trapped victims would most likely be handled by the crew of the 7 designated appliances.

So now let's look at costs. These should be minimal because the proposal would initially apply only to those brigades already equipped with the appropriate level of rescue equipment. Some training costs would be incurred, but these could be minimised adding the skills required as an extension of the bi-annual motor vehicle accident/pump response course for brigades. And there would be some extra costs of inspecting and repairing the additional rescue equipment. *(Continued on next page)*



PHOTO: Graeme Booth

*Time for a New Designation for Rescue Tenders?*  
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What if a brigade with no rescue equipment decided to upgrade to a 9 designation status? Obviously the first port of call would be to get the blessing of their area and regional managers. After that, they would begin fundraising, or maybe the region or area would allocate them older but still serviceable rescue equipment that had become surplus after upgrades had been carried out on 7 designated appliances.

What's this proposal about? Giving improved service to the public, especially those unlucky enough to become trapped in a motor vehicle after a crash.

Before signing off I must reveal a personal interest in this in that my own brigade has a good range of rescue equipment on its number one appliance, but has not sought rescue tender status for a couple of reasons. Firstly, we don't attend large numbers of rescues and secondly it would have meant giving up our great Type 1 CAFS appliance, which is ideal for the narrow, hilly roads we operate on.

Please give me your feedback. I'll be at the UFBA Conference in Invercargill (sitting down the front with the other Past Presidents) or you can email me at [graeme.booth@fire.org.nz](mailto:graeme.booth@fire.org.nz).



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PHOTO: Grant Harper

ABOVE: Silverdale's Lewis Trickett gets the hang of Australian gear during the Australasian Firefighters Championship in Port Macquarie.

## Weston VFB Opens Doors to the Public



The Weston Fire Brigade held a very successful open day on Saturday, 17 September. A large turn out of families was particularly pleasing as many of the displays focused on safety and education.

The public were able to view the recently refurbished control room, the brigade's water tanker and the new fire engine. Also

featured was a state-of-the-art mobile Command Unit from Dunedin. This unit was recently used in the Christchurch earthquake aftermath and was a major part of the emergency services response. Supporting the Weston Fire Brigade on their Open Day was a St John ambulance on display. This also proved popular.

Information videos and static fire safety displays also helped keep everyone informed and amused. One of the highlights for many children was the appearance of Flint and Amber from the Fire Safety School Education Programme.

## NZ Runs with the Aussies in Australasian Firefighter Championships

The Australasian Champion Carterton team defended its title and — with teams from Silverdale, Greymouth, and Clyde — represented New Zealand in the Australasian Firefighters Championship in Port Macquarie, Australia from 14 to 16 October.

The last time an Australasian Championship took place in 2009, it was on New Zealand soil in Rotorua, with very different results — Carterton won it all and five of our eight teams placed in the top 10 overall.

This year, Silverdale was the top-placing New Zealand team at 14th overall followed by Carterton (17th), Greymouth (23rd) and Clyde (27th).

All the teams — selected based on their first-place rankings in the Regionals earlier in the year due to the postponement of the Nationals — represented the UFBA and New Zealand well.

In a typical year, the teams would have had months to prepare and adapt to the Australasian rules and events. But with the Australasians taking place before the UFBA Nationals this year, training for the Australasians took a back seat to preparations for the rescheduled UFBA National event taking place in Carterton in the first weekend in November.

Competing on Australian turf posed some challenges for our teams. Not only is the Australasian Championship based on a completely

different set of Australian events and rules, the teams had to use all Australian equipment without having the opportunity to train on it beforehand. Last year, two New Zealand runs were incorporated into the event, but this year, they were removed — giving the New Zealand teams no advantages.

"Just using Australian gear on their runs is something pretty tricky to get used to, especially when you don't train using their gear," said Silverdale Captain Lewis Trickett. "They certainly do things differently there. The 'double bight' hose is an odd piece to try to use quickly. And there were a few new ones like the dodgy sprint up the 6 metre ladder, which was interesting. I don't think any Kiwi was ever going to get a top time in that run."

"We were impressed with the event overall. In the future, it would be good to see a run or two from each state or country using their respective gear to make it a true Australasian event."

Wayne Robinson of Carterton seconded Trickett's comments. "New Zealand is 50 years ahead of Australia with some of the equipment," he said. "And with the timing between the Australasians and the Nationals, it was difficult to train for both events at the same time. To us, it's far more important to do well in the Nationals, so that's where we've been focussing our training. We had a great time at the Australasians, and now we're looking forward to the Nationals."

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*Australasian Firefighters Championships  
(continued)*

"We thoroughly enjoyed the event," said Greymouth Captain Jason Prendergast. "The boys loved it. It was so good to have a go with their gear and meet some different people in the same game."

In recent years, Carterton and Silverdale have both been very strong Waterway teams, and the tight competition between them and the many other experienced and well-trained teams should make for an interesting and exciting National event.

"It's all on for the Nationals," said Trickett. "We had a broken team member in Oz, and now we have a fully-fit five man team and are aiming to claim a National title."



PHOTO: Grant Harper

ABOVE: The Carterton team between runs.

## ► NZFS Library Recommended Reading

### Wind-driven structure fires: adjusting tactics and strategies (article)

By Kris Garcia  
Journal: *Fire Engineering*, v164 no5 (May 2011) p87-91

For wildland firefighters, knowledge of weather and wind conditions is a key tactical tool. So why are wind conditions not part of the structural firefighting tactical kit?

Kris Garcia, a veteran of the US fire service, draws lessons from wildland firefighting and encourages structural firefighters to work with nature, when wind becomes a factor in a fire. The key point he makes is that during size up, firefighters must assess the wind and then anchor their coordinated suppression efforts on the windward side. If the wind is unpredictable, your tactics should be flexible to mitigate the risk that conditions may change at any time.

His thoughts are based on 25 years of experience, including as a US battalion chief, and he is not afraid to use the research to back up his advice. He quotes work by the Fire Department of New York, and Dan Madrzykowski of NIST (the US National Institute of Science and Technology).

Garcia includes a table showing the effect of different wind speed on smoke and the surrounding environment. Observing the level of movement of leaves on the ground, or tree branches,

can help you estimate the corresponding wind speed. He notes that if you measure wind speed at ground level, you can expect about one and a half times the wind speed 9 metres (30 feet) up. At 36 metres (120 feet) above the ground, wind speed will be twice what it is at ground level.

He includes a discussion of ventilation and door control to manage the flow of air in a building. He also looks at multi-storey buildings. He borrows the wildland firefighting acronym of LCES (Lookouts, Communication, Escape Routes, and Safety Zones) and applies it to structure fires.

Contact your Fire Service Library to have the full article sent to you - [infoc@fire.org.nz](mailto:infoc@fire.org.nz) or phone us on 04 496 3687.

### Visit the NZFS Library staff at the UFBA Annual Conference

April Flux from the Library Services team, is looking forward to meeting delegates at the UFBA conference in Invercargill in November. April will be at the NZFS stand, so be sure to stop in!



PHOTO: Darrel Surman

## 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb Honours the Fallen

As a tribute to firefighters who have died in the line of duty over the years, the Firefighters Welfare Society ran its annual Memorial Stair Climb in Auckland at the old BNZ building at the corner of Queen & Swanson Streets.

Before the actual climb, the names of deceased firefighters were read out including those lost from overseas companies and those from the 9/11 tragedy. A prayer was offered and then a bagpipe player signalled the start of the climb.

BA tallies with deceased firefighters' names were handed out this year for each climber to carry with them.



## ► Gold Stars and 50-Year Medals

Congratulations to the following recipients of Gold Stars and 50-Year medals for the months of September and October:

### September Gold Stars

John McColl, Timaru  
Alastair Thornley, Timaru  
Brendan Jeffs, Tauranga  
Richard Moreland, Tauranga  
Robert Scott, Tauranga  
Murray Jagger, Whangarei Heads  
Neville Jenkins, Patutahi  
Peter Hair, Patutahi  
Robin Ashby, Dunsandel  
Jeffrey Marshall, Ashburton  
Roy Rose, Wanaka  
Garth Campbell, Wanaka  
Richard Gutschlag, Gore  
David Chambers, Rangiora  
Paul Martin, Rangiora  
Owen Alexander, Clevedon  
Bruce Jones, Clevedon

William Rackham, Kawerau  
Zane Rackham Kawerau  
Lance Berry, Rongotea

### October Gold Stars

Shane Watson, Feilding  
Iki Talamahina, Tiwai  
Kevin Sutton, Kaitangata  
Gregory Rendall, Thames  
Kenneth Brokenshire, Thames  
Grant Hurley, Patea  
Joe MacNamara, Ruakaka  
Colin Hirst, Halcombe

### October 50-Year Medal

John Arnold, Morrinsville

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