

Wiltshire Retired Firefighters Association



Newsletter
The Branch
January 2020

LUDO GETS A WELL DESERVED 'GONG' Ludo Macaulay honoured with the MBE



Ludwig Macaulay MBE

The news that WRFA member, Ludo Macaulay, had been made a Member of the British Empire (MBE) in the Queen's New Year's Honours List was greeted with great delight throughout this Association.

Never has this award been more richly deserved and the short citation attached to the official announcement



mentions that the award has been made in recognition of the work Ludo has done for the Fire Fighters Charity and for other community service.

Ludo will never be forgotten for being the man behind the foundation of the highly successful **Three Peaks Challenge** that provided a range of teams from all over the country and from many organisations the opportunity to pit themselves against each other in who could produce the fastest time in completing the climbing of Snowdon, Scafell Pike and Ben Nevis. The 'Three Peaks' ran for many years and was only ended in 2018.

But Ludo ran with great competence and commitment other sporting events over a long period of time and I doubt that anyone can calculate the precise amount of sponsorship that brought cash into a great many charities.

Throughout his service in Wiltshire Fire Brigade and for many years thereafter Ludo was a staunch supporter of the *Fire Services Sports and Athletics Association* and few can match his record of loyalty and service to the FSSAA.

But Ludo's service to the community, and particularly to young people, extended beyond the fire service. He was outstanding as a commissioned officer in the Royal Air Force Voluntary Reserve and gave much time to providing leadership to the Air Cadets in the south of Wiltshire.

Ludo has served for a long time on the Executive Committee of this Association and we hope he will continue to do so for many years to come. Congratulations, Ludo!

New Members Welcome

MICHAEL GURR

Mike retired after completing pensionable service as a wholtime firefighter from 1968 to 1997. All his service was in the Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service, most of it at Newbury. He has retired with his wife, Lorene, to Calne.

The two incidents that stand out in Mike's memory are the Hungerford Massacre and the Windsor Castle fire. At the Hungerford job Mike recalls how peculiar it felt to have to be escorted by heavily armed police as protection against the gunman. At Windsor Castle Mike recalls getting a clear view from the roof of the convoy of furniture vans arriving to remove items of value to safe storage. Welcome, Mike, we wish you and Lorene many years of fellowship with us.



Mike



Jean

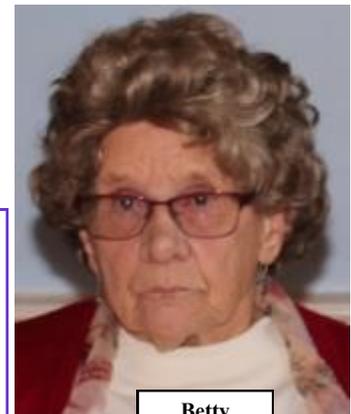
JEAN JONES

Jean recently lost her husband, David, who served at Marlborough. We warmly welcome Jean into our association and hope to see her at our social events often.



WINIFRED (Betty) CARTER

Winifred is the widow of a firefighter who served at Warminster. We have been very pleased to see Betty at two of our social events already. Keep up the good work, Betty!



Betty



Marion

MARION TAYLOR

Marion was recently bereaved when her husband, Ernie, passed away. We extend the hand of friendship and greeting to her as she joins us.

Ernie retired as the station officer in charge of Wootton Bassett (now Royal Wootton Bassett) Fire Station. We hope Marion takes full advantage of her WRFA membership over the coming years.



NEW LFB COMMISSIONER

Danny Cotton (picture left) was forced to retire earlier than her preferred date (April 2020) when the Mayor Of London bowed to pressure from the Grenfell Tower survivors. Danny has been succeeded by Andy Roe (picture right) who joined the LFB in 2002 aged 27 after service as an army officer. Mr Roe took up his appointment on 1st January 2020.



FBU JUBILANT ABOUT PENSION VICTORY

In December 2019 an Industrial Tribunal delivered its “remedy” decision on the fire pension case won by the FBU at the High Court a year earlier. The effect is to place all 6,000 firefighters who were on the 2015 fire pension scheme back onto the 1992 or 2005 scheme. This means that they can retire between 50 and 55. The case has implications for a whole raft of other public pension schemes. It is estimated that this will benefit thousands of people on public service pension including judges! It will cost the Government an estimated £4billion



Matt Wrack
FBU General Secretary

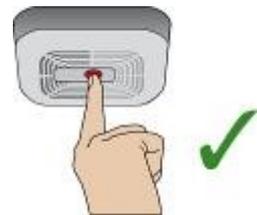


HETEROSEXUAL CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

In December 2019 the law was changed to allow heterosexual couples living in a partnership but unmarried to bind themselves legally to each other in law. It is likely that this will have implications when one or both is in receipt of a fire service pension. The WRFA is awaiting clarification.

SMOKE ALARM FAILURES

The Local Government Association has published statistics showing that in nearly 40% of residential fires a battery powered smoke alarm failed. The hard wired alarms performed better but nearly 20% of those failed too. This puts emphasis on the need to test smoke alarms regularly.



PENSION INCREASES 2020

The calculation of any increase in the fire service pension is based on the Consumer Price Index in September every year. In 2019 the CPI showed an increase of 1.7%. It is therefore a reasonable assumption that fire pensions will increase by that percentage from 6th April 2020.

State pensions will be increased by 4% from that date too.





Lest We Forget How WRFA marked REMEMBRANCE



The Dorset & Wiltshire FRS and our association marked the 2019 remembrance period in more than one way. At national level, Crew Manager **MICHAEL GRIMSHAW** from Chippenham was one of the drill instructors for the public services contingent who paraded at Whitehall.

Michael Grimshaw is pictured in readiness for the parade to move off and march past the Cenotaph. This is the second year Michael has been honoured by being chosen as a foot drill instructor. Before joining the fire & rescue service Michael held a commission in the Royal Air Force Regiment.



Revd. Gary Gotham

On 9th November WRFA held an event as usual to pay respect to the memory of those killed in war.



The **ACT OF REMEMBRANCE** at **Devizes Town Hall** was conducted by the Revd Gary Gotham. The service was preceded by a two-course lunch and a concert by Devizes Town Band.



Wreath laid during the WRFA Act of Remembrance



Tucking in to the lunch



Devizes Town Band



The band's vocalist encouraging us to join in the singing of war-time popular songs.



How the WRFA celebrated **CHRISTMAS**



The table bearing the raffle prizes generously donated by the members attending the Christmas Lunch on 15th December 2019 at Shaw Country Hotel. The raffle raised £233.00 for the Fire Fighters Charity



The party in full swing.

Delicious food.
Good company
Delightful surroundings.
Incredible value for money
All the ingredients of a very successful Christmas celebration.



Our Chairman, Chris Wannell, circulating around the room to say 'hello'. Here he is speaking to George and Sue Pratt.

CHARITY STREET COLLECTION SUCCESS



Christmas 2019 saw Chris Wannell's veteran turntable ladder again touring a few areas of North Wiltshire collecting money for the FIRE FIGHTERS CHARITY. The participating stations were Westlea, Cricklade and Chippenham. The magnificent sum of £3,206.00 was raised. This means that Chris and the volunteers have over the years collected just short of £100,000. Chris hopes to hit the £100k total at Christmas 2020.

Photos by courtesy of Danielle Owens





**Health
Matters**
News of those who are unwell
or recovering from illness



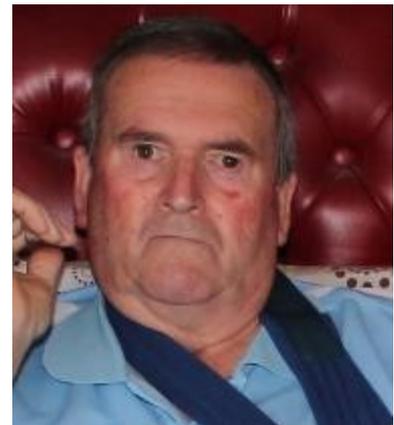
REVD DAVID WAKEFIELD



David is continuing a course of treatment to slow the growth of the tumour in his skull. He is aware that despite the excellent care being given by the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford his illness is terminal. His optic nerve has now been damaged and he is blind in one eye and has only limited vision in his other. David reports that he is grateful for the love and care being extended to him by family, friends and church members. David is also thankful for the offer of any support that the WRFA can give to him and Liz. Through this page David has asked that his best wishes and warmest regards be sent to all WRFA members, particularly those with which he served.

PETE WIXEY

It is planned for Pete to go into GWH, Swindon in early January for surgery on his abdomen. Pete has had a long list of serious illness and injury in recent years and he is due better luck a health. We therefore hope that his stay in hospital this time will be short and recovery will be rapid.
He deserves nothing less.



MAURICE JOHNSON

Maurice Johnson has been into John Radcliffe Hospital twice recently. On the first occasion he had gall stone problems. The more recent case was a bout of abnormally fast heart rate. He is now restored to normal vim and vigour and is back at his home in Oxford. We wish Maurice well for the rest of 2020 and beyond.





SOCIAL EVENTS
Get them in the diary!

SPRING LUNCH
Wyndham Arms
Hindon Road, DINTON SP3 5EG
Sunday 29th March 2020 1.00pm
Booking form with this newsletter or download from website



SUMMER LUNCH
11.00 am Annual General Meeting 1.00pm Lunch
Shaw Country Hotel, Shaw SN12 8EF
Sunday 7th June 2020

AUTUMN LUNCH
1.00pm Sunday 27th September 2020
THE HORSE GUARDS
Brokenborough, Malmesbury SN16 7HZ



Christmas Lunch

Shaw Country Hotel

Bath Road, Shaw SN12 8EF

Sunday 13th December 2020
1.00pm

MOURNING DECEASED COLLEAGUES



Since the publication of the last edition of our newsletter in September 2019 we have been much saddened by the loss of the following members. All of whom will be sorely missed. Rest in peace.

ERNEST FRANCIS GEORGE TAYLOR (ERNIE)

Ernie passed away in hospital after a long struggle with ill health. Ernie served with distinction at Royal Wootton Bassett and rose to become the retained station officer in charge of the unit. He was accorded service honours at his very well attended funeral on 14th October 2019 at North Wilts Crematorium.

PETER JESSEN

Peter retired after many years as a firefighter at Swindon and he was known to many WRFA members with respect and affection. His funeral took place at Kingsdown Crematorium on 23rd December and was well attended by Peter's former fire service colleagues as well as family and friends. He was 91 years old.

GEORGE JOHNSON BEM

George Johnson's very long life ended peacefully on Christmas Eve. He was one of the oldest members of the WRFA and he tried very hard to support the Association in every way possible right up to his death in his 90s. He served for many years at Marlborough and reached the rank of Sub Officer. His passing will be mourned not only by his family and former fire brigade colleagues but also by his wide circle of friends in and around Marlborough.

The following have recently passed away but were not members of the WRFA.

Arthur Hayward

Arthur served Wiltshire Fire Brigade as a cleaner at Brigade HQ.

Frank Houlihan

Frank served as a retained firefighter at Royal Wootton Bassett.



**NEST PROTECT
SMOKE
& CARBON MONOXIDE
ALARM**

Wins high praise on test



The Consumer Protection Association that publishes *WHICH* magazine has recently conducted its own series of tests on smoke and carbon monoxide alarms sold for use in domestic premises.

The tests revealed a number of alarms that quite simply were not fit for purpose and these alarms probably account for many of the alarm failures contained within the statistics revealed by the Local Government Association (see page 3 in this newsletter).

The alarm that came out way ahead of the others is the **NEST PROTECT** marketed by Nest Labs Europe Ltd. It is a combined smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm.

It scored very highly for reliability and for effectiveness in detecting smoke and carbon monoxide. The alarm does give verbal recorded messages but the alarm signals are also in the form of 'bleeps'. To distinguish between smoke and carbon monoxide the bleep signals differ. On test a voice message helps to recognise the difference.

There are battery powered versions of the alarm and also a hard wired option which is slightly more expensive. The battery powered alarm retails at about £95.00.

Batteries may be expected to last at least five years.

One additional feature not found in other alarms of the type is a movement sensor that in darkness causes a low light level to emit from the alarm if it detects movement.



Australia Ablaze



HRH Prince Charles has broadcast a message expressing admiration for the work of the firefighters struggling to deal with the bushfires currently spreading in many areas of Australia. New South Wales and Victoria are the two states worst affected. The Prince also sent his sympathy to the families of the firefighters who have lost their lives fighting the fires which are the worst in history. Police report having arrested over twenty people for starting some of the fires

BOOK SHELF

The place where members share their recent experience of books.



ARNHEM

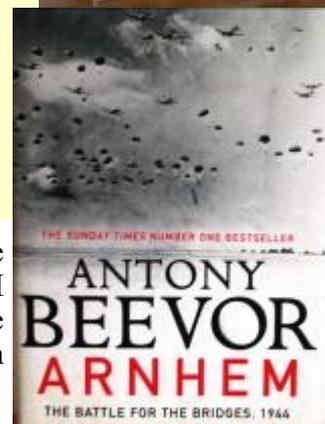
The Battle For The Bridges 1944

By

Anthony Beevor

ISBN 978-0-670-91866-9

Reviewed by **DAVE HAMMOND**



Following my attendance at the 75th anniversary commemoration service at Down Ampney church in Gloucestershire of the Arnhem operation I was given a book by my family that I feel would be of interest to anyone who has an interest in military history. . The book is entitled as shown above.

On September 17th 1944 one of the most daring (some would argue foolish) military operations in World War II commenced. It was called **Market Garden** and it was in reality two separate but interlinked operations, **Market** being the airborne phase and **Garden** the ground force phase. The overall plan was to take and hold a number of strategic bridges which crossed various rivers in Belgium and Holland. In theory, if successful the operation would allow allied forces to thrust from Belgium into the heart of Nazi Germany and end the war by Christmas 1944.

The plan was conceived by Field Marshall Montgomery and General 'Boy' Browning. Montgomery was at the time in command of all the British and Canadian forces that had landed in Normandy from D-Day onwards. Browning was the commander of the British 1st Airborne Division.

The details of the plan which had been approved by the Allied Supreme Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, involved the insertion of thirty thousand British, American and Polish troops behind enemy lines by parachute and glider to secure the bridges. The ground forces were then tasked with racing at speed to secure the bridges, the final one being at Arnhem.

Beevor's book explores in detail the plans for the operation from the allies' side and the subsequent response from the Germans. The author also focuses on the friction that at times became hostility between the allied commanders. Major General Sasabowski of the Polish Independent Parachute Brigade was treated both during and after the operation in an appalling manner.

The book deals with the apparent disregard for intelligence gained by aerial reconnaissance and from information supplied by Dutch civilians in the Arnhem area. This intelligence failure was to have a significant if not disastrous outcome for the airborne forces and the attempts to resupply them.

Despite Market Garden being deemed to be an overall failure, elements of it were a success. The British did reach Arnhem Bridge and held it for a number of days before being overwhelmed by the enemy. The American airborne were successful in taking their objectives, allowing the ground forces to get within a few miles of Arnhem before the decision was taken to withdraw the surviving British and Polish forces.

Arnhem was finally liberated in April 1945 having suffered from considerable shelling and fighting.

The book is an excellent and very detailed read. I recommend it to all members of the WRFA.

Dave Hammond

Justice For Grenfell?

Not for eight years!

Phase 2 of the Public Inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire disaster is scheduled to start in February. There are many who are wanting to receive the outcome of the inquiry fairly quickly but the news is that they are likely to be disappointed. It has been announced that the final report should not be expected in less than eight years.



Photo by Shutterstock

This has added to the concerns of

those who fear that the inquiry will not bring to justice those who are personally responsible for the disaster because some of them will probably have passed away. Just some of answers to the questions that it is hoped will be revealed by the inquiry must surely include:

- *Who was the individual who signed off the testing of the panels that caused the rapid external spread of fire?*
- *Why did the Building Regulations not make the use of these panels very clearly unauthorised by law?*
- *After the six death fire at Lacanal House in London in 2009 why did the Government pay so little heed to the coroner's recommendation regarding review of the building regulations and retro-fitting of sprinklers?*
- *Who was the individual responsible for the fire safety management and fire risk assessment of Grenfell Tower?*
- *Why has so much time passed before action is being taken to remove the potentially lethal cladding from 174 high rise residential buildings in England?*

There are important lessons to be learnt from this tragic fire but the pedantic way that the legal system approaches the task of learning and publishing those lessons increases the risk of the tragedy being repeated. Many lawyers and bureaucrats will get rich on the length of time that this inquiry is taking. Let us hope that their gain is not at the cost of more human lives. **JOHN CRAIG**

DISCLAIMER

This newsletter is published by the WILTSHIRE RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION
Views and opinions published in it are not necessarily shared by the
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service

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