



Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Service February 2007

Brigade Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2007

FROM THE PRESIDENT

This is the first newsletter of 2007 and so far this calendar year we have been spared further fires. The Lawson's Long Alley fire, which burnt over 15,000 hectares in the Grose Valley in November, was a major incident. Not discounting how dangerous it could have been for the villages, it was certainly a good training exercise for the whole Brigade. All our Deputies led at least one crew and a record number of fire fighters crewed our trucks.

This has provided the Brigade with a much needed confidence boost and renewed interest in Brigade activities and training in general. At the first two training sessions this year on the first Sunday mornings of January and February, over 20 people attended each session, and at the February training morning 20 people passed the Aviation Basic Knowledge exam, a lead up to other aviation training opportunities. All are to be congratulated on their efforts in attending training, and passing the exam.

The challenge now is for the Brigade to stay ready to fight future fires, both by having well-maintained equipment, and trained personnel to crew the trucks. Beth Raines is organising a roster for equipment maintenance so that each fire-fighter will take personal responsibility for the maintenance of a small piece of equipment. In this way, a large job is spread around a large number of people, rather than the total responsibility falling to Beth. If you have not yet chosen your favourite piece of equipment to maintain, please see Beth.

Elsewhere in this Newsletter, Penny Ewing has outlined the vast range of training opportunities available with something to suit every one of you. I urge you to consider further training during the year.

Thank you to each and every one of you for your continued support of our Brigade.

David Howell, President

TRAINING

The deployment of so many Mt Wilson / Mt Irvine personnel to the November fires is a timely reminder of the importance of training. Whether you live on or off the mountain, knowing what to do on a fire ground or even around your house in those extreme circumstances can be life saving. We cannot stress too much how important it is to undertake even the most basic levels of training.

In 2007, the RFS will have a wide range of courses on offer to volunteers. They are for all skill bases amongst both active and support members. Here's just a few: Basic Fire Fighter, Village Firefighter, First Aid, Chain Saw Operation, Crew Leader, Traffic Control Operator, Bush Fire Support, Catering Assistant and Crew Leader, Communications Assistant – so there is a course for everyone. We encourage all RFS members to undertake some of the many courses available this year. The only cost to you is your time.

The 2007 training calendar is now finalised and a complete course list will be available at the Mt Wilson RFS station from early February. Details of each course will be available along with course dates, locations and the prerequisites required. In most cases, there is a choice of dates and locations.

(continued...)

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Training is varied and covers a broad spectrum of information. For example, the Basic Fire Fighting (BF) course covers both practical bush fire fighting skills, pumping, emergency procedures and what to do to prepare your home. So even if you don't want to be on the fire ground, the knowledge you gain on the course can be put to great use around your own home throughout the year. The Senior First Aid (SFA) course guides you through the procedures to follow before an ambulance or doctor arrives at an emergency. Undertaking just these two courses will benefit all Mt Wilson / Mt Irvine residents and RFS volunteers both during a fire and everyday life.

Course Enrolment

The number of individual courses to be held has been reduced this year, so it is important that you register your interest as soon as possible to avoid missing out.

Firstly you must complete a 2007 Nomination Form to register for the course. The form **MUST** be signed either by our Captain, Peter Raines or Penny Ewing (Training Co-Ordinator). Once signed, fax the form to Robert Vinzenz, L&D Officer at Blue Mountains HQ – fax: 4782 6786. Alternatively, once you have filled out the form, fax it to Penny Ewing for signature (Fax: 8235 1122) and she will forward it to Rob Vinzenz.

A 2007 Course Nomination Forms is included in this newsletter. They are also available from the RFS shed, Peter Raines, or Penny Ewing (Ph wk: 8235 1111, home: 9955 9165, or email: pewing@kinglink.com.au) who will fax you a form.

Once your nomination form has been received, Robert Vinzenz will notify you of your course acceptance prior to the course. Course work books where applicable will be sent to your nominated address prior to the course's commencement.

Early Nomination Dates

The February and March course dates below require **immediate nomination** and we recommend you complete the attached Nomination Form and fax it to Penny Ewing (8235 1122) to secure your place on the course.

Course	Location	Course Date	Nominations Close
Advanced Firefighter (AF)	Wentworth Falls RFB	17,18, 31 March, 1 April Assessment: Sat 2 Jun	2 March
Village Firefighter (VF)	Megalong Valley RFB	3,4,5,17,18,19 March Assessment: Sat 12 May	16 February
Traffic Control Operator (TCO)	District Office	Sat 24 March	2 March
Basic Firefighter (BF)	Bell RFB	11, 24 & 25 March Assessment: Sun 29 Apr	28 Feb – get in early

If you would like to participate in any of the above courses, but the nomination close date has passed, please contact Penny or Peter to check if space is still available.

Additional Course Dates

In addition to the early courses above, later course dates are detailed on the next page.

Support Personnel Training

We encourage all RFS personnel to undertake training. Those volunteers in a support role should consider the Traffic Control Operator or First Aid courses as a means of offering valuable support to the active crews on the fire ground in an emergency.

Please take the time to review the complete course list at the Mt Wilson Station and contact either Penny Ewing, Peter Raines or Doug Wood if you have any further questions about the most suitable courses for your circumstances.

The more personnel we have trained, the stronger and safer our brigade will be during an emergency.

Happy training!

Penny Ewing, Training Co-Ordinator

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Course	Location	Course Date
Basic Firefighter (BF)	Lawson RFB District Office	21 & 28 Jul, 4 Aug Assessment: Sat 1 Sept 27 & 28 Oct, 3 Nov Assessment: Sat 1 Dec
Village Firefighter (VF)**	Winmalee RFB	13, 14, 15, 27, 28, 29 July Assessment: Sun 23 Sept
Advanced Firefighter (AF)**	Wentworth Falls RFB	7, 8, 21, 22 July Assessment: Sat 29 Sept
Crew Leader (CLW, CLV, CLS)**	District Office	CLW - 15, 16, 17 June CLV - 22, 23, 24 June Assessment: Sat 13 Oct CLS 27, 28, 29 July Assessment: Sat 22 Sept
Chain Saw Operator – Cross Cut Chain Saw Operator – Tree Fell	District Office/ Blackheath & Bullaburra RFB District Office/ Blackheath	14 & 15 Apr Assessment: 12 May 26 & 27 May including Assessment
Traffic Control Operator (TCO)	District Office	Sat 24 March (9-12am & 1-4pm) Sat 8 July (9-12am & 1-4pm)
Senior First Aid (SFA) Refresher (must have current SFA)	Blaxland RFB Winmalee H.S. District Office District Office Winmalee H.S. District Office	26 & 27 May 18 & 19 August 01 & 02 September 13 & 14 October 03 & 04 November 24 June

** Please discuss this course with Peter Raines or Doug Wood before completing Nomination Form.

AREA CO-ORDINATORS PROVE TO BE SUCCESSFUL INNOVATION

The November Lawson's Long Alley fire tested our abilities to respond co-operatively over the 18 days of the Section 44. This was the first time our new voluntary Area Co-ordinators worked to ensure people in their area were fully informed of the fire's status and its likely effects. Our appreciation and thanks go to all the Area Co-ordinators for their valuable contribution.

Feedback in the debriefing sessions after the fire identified key areas which apply to the community as a whole. The Area Co-ordinators were uniquely placed to provide the information to enable the community to feel in touch and informed.

1. Knowing what is going on

Fire update information was available – if you knew how and where to get it! The feedback highlights the most timely, accurate and useful information sources were:

RFS internet sites: www.bluemountains.rfs.nsw.gov.au and www.rfs.nsw.gov.au
Bureau of Meteorology site for weather forecast updates – www.bom.gov.au

These sites can be accessed directly, or via <http://mtwilson.rfsa.org.au>

Mt Wilson fire shed telephone message service (4756 2040) provided valuable and up to date information for residents as far as resources allowed. This service will be improved in the future to provide current information more frequently and comprehensively.

Radio from local FM stations was limited by poor reception. The best source of news updates was ABC 702 AM. Fire Control in Katoomba has committed to provide 702 with future emergency updates for broadcast.

Fire Control ran a 'real human' telephone service on 1 800 679 737, and many residents found this service truly valuable. Fire Control has been requested to maintain this service during future events .

2. Knowing who to contact

While we may feel we know everyone, many of our neighbours may be elsewhere in an emergency, and out of ready contact. While the Mt Wilson/ Mt Irvine telephone book is valuable, urgent contact may need additional information, such as off-mountain telephone details, which is now being compiled by the RFS for use in emergencies.

Also, as a result of our experience, in future emergencies, Area Coordinators will advise the emergency control centre of information relating to any ill or disabled residents in our community.

The presence of out of area fire crews highlighted a need to revise and clarify our local community property and residency maps. The maps will be revised and updated in line with the BMCC transition to rural numbering for the Mounts.

3. Making it happen

The Area Coordinators worked hard, and earned the appreciation of all. The Blue Mountains District Community Education folks were impressed with the effectiveness of our Area Coordinator program, and have recognised our effort as a role model for other remote communities. In turn our message to the District is, as a priority, to continue helping us by ensuring the communications such as radio, internet and telephone services are delivered at the best possible level.

Ross Kelly, Vice President



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Comments, contributions and suggestions welcome!

Find us at <http://mtwilson.rfsa.org.au>

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C O U R S E N O M I N A T I O N F O R M



BLUE MOUNTAINS

1. COURSE INFORMATION. *(Please only nominate one (1) course per Nomination Form)*

Course Name:..... *(e.g. Crew Leader Wildfire)*

Course Code:..... *(e.g. CLW01)*

Date(s):.....

2. APPLICANT INFORMATION.

Surname: First Name:..... DOB:...../...../.....

Firezone Number:..... *(if known)* Brigade:..... Rank:.....

Postal Address:.....
(including postcode)

E-Mail Address:.....

Years in RFS:..... Driver's Licence Class:..... *(if applying for RFD Courses)*

After Hours Ph:..... Business Hours Ph:..... Mobile:.....

3. CURRENT CERTIFIED RFS QUALIFICATIONS. *(PLEASE CIRCLE APPROPRIATE LEVEL)*

BF VF AF CL CLW CLS CLV GL Other

If Other, please specify:.....

NB. Proof of certification must be produced to your Brigade Captain to be eligible for intake.

4. SPECIAL NEEDS OR REQUIREMENTS.

.....
(Please indicate above, any disabilities or dietary needs that may need to be taken into consideration)

Applicant's Signature: Date:...../...../2007

5. CAPTAIN'S RECOMMENDATION – NOMINATION APPROVAL

- a) I recommend that the member mentioned above be considered to undertake the training course as indicated and I have sighted all relevant certificates, etc (and Driver's Licence for RFD nominations), as proof of the pre-requisite qualifications.
- b) Course nomination and selection must be in accordance with the access and equity requirements in the Code of Practice for the delivery of training, assessment and certification in the RFS. In cases where there are multiple applicants for a course, could you please indicate the priority order (1=highest priority. Use each number only once for the year).

Captain's Signature: Date:...../...../2007

Name:..... Priority Number:..... *(see 'b' above)*
(BLOCK LETTERS)

Please return completed form to the L&D Officer, no later than four (4) weeks prior to the commencement of the nominated course.

Fax: (02) 4782 6786

Office Use only: ADMT0013/2007 Doc. No. Rec'd Date:..... Ent'd FZ