

COMMISSIONER'S INTERNAL BRAVERY & SERVICE AWARDS CEREMONY 2009



NSW
RURAL
FIRE
SERVICE



The NSW Rural Fire Service Internal Bravery and Service Awards

The Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service, in recognition of acts of bravery and outstanding service, has established an internal awards system. The Awards were instituted on 1 February 1999. The establishment of an internal awards system is authorised under the Rural Fires Act 1997 and accompanying Regulations. Eligibility for these Awards is extended to all members of the Service as defined within the Act and Regulations.

Nominations for awards must be lodged in accordance with the guidelines and on the prescribed nomination form. The Guidelines and Nomination Form are available on the Rural Fire Service Intranet and Public Websites and on MyRFS. Copies are also available from Region, Zone, Team and District Offices. Nominations for Internal Bravery and Service Awards close annually on 1 October for presentation on St Florian's Day, 4 May in the following year.

Nominations are sent to the Awards Committee. The Committee consists of representatives from the volunteers and salaried staff of the Service appointed by the Commissioner and is required to fully examine each nomination for eligibility. Once a nomination has been assessed and deemed to be eligible, the Committee then makes a formal recommendation to the Commissioner. If a nominee accepts the nomination, the full details of the member being recognised are then officially listed in the RFS Awards Register. Individuals may be nominated for the Medal for Valour, the Commissioner's Commendations for Bravery and for Service or the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Individual and/or Units). Brigades or formally comprised units may also be nominated for the Unit Citation for either Bravery or Service.

The functions of the Awards Committee notwithstanding, the Commissioner may award an Internal Bravery or Service Award to any person at any time and for any reason.

The nomination sequence encompasses all levels of management or command. For example, in the case of a nomination being generated by a brigade, the captain of the brigade must endorse the nomination form. The nomination must be forwarded to the next level of command, being the District/Team/Zone Manager who must also endorse the nomination and then forward it to the Region Manager. This final endorsement of the Region Manager allows the form to be sent to the Rural Fire Service Awards Committee for evaluation and recommendation to the Commissioner.

All nominations are held in strict confidence. Nominees are advised in writing once a nomination has been approved by the Commissioner, though at no time is the nominee advised of the origin of nomination. The Executive Officer of the Awards Committee will also acknowledge to the nominator the receipt of the nomination for an award by the Awards Committee but otherwise maintain the confidentiality of the system and will not provide information regarding awards.

At the Awards Ceremony on 4 May 2009, 14 individual and 1 group recipients are to be acknowledged by the Commissioner. Drawn from the Service's Regions and Headquarters these recipients are presented with Awards in recognition of outstanding bravery or service. The fourth of May is chosen each year for the Awards Ceremony as it is the Feast Day of St Florian, Patron Saint of Firefighters and International Firefighter's Day.

The Order of Proceedings

National Anthem

NSW RFS Pipes & Drums & State Protocol Squad

Welcome to Guests

Russell Taylor AFSM, Master of Ceremonies

Prayer

Senior Chaplain Ron Anderson, AFSM

Address

Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons, AFSM

Address

The Hon. Steve Whan MP
Minister for Emergency Services & Minister for Small Business

Presentation of Awards

Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons, AFSM

Lunch

Recipients and their guests are invited to join the
Commissioner for lunch in the Snowgum / Grevillea Room

Official photographs of each recipient will be taken during the presentation. Unit recipients can be photographed following the conclusion of proceedings. Every recipient will receive a complimentary photograph.

We wish to thank the NSW RFS Pipes & Drums and State Protocol Squad for their assistance during today's festivities.

The Commissioner's Commendation for Bravery

Awarded to recognise an act of courage under hazardous circumstances where the risk to life has not been as significant as to warrant the Commissioner's Medal for Valour but is worthy of recognition.

Deputy Captain Raymond Malcolm (Mon) MacKellar

Weethalle RFB, Bland / Temora Zone

On Tuesday 7 January 2008 after hearing a loud explosion and observing thick black smoke, Deputy Captain MacKellar, an active member of Weethalle Rural Fire Brigade responded to the incident in his private vehicle to investigate. On arrival he observed an overturned Petrol Tanker and trailer with the tanker on fire. He located the driver of the tanker through the thick black smoke and flames and managed to pull the driver away from the burning vehicle and comforted him on the side of the road. The tanker exploded into a fire ball soon after. The driver of the tanker was flown to Concord Hospital suffering severe head injuries and burns to 50 percent of his body. The tanker was totally destroyed in the fire ball and the Mid Western Highway was closed for approximately 10 hours while a total of ten fire appliances from the Rural Fire Service and NSW Fire Brigades controlled the blaze. Damage to the road was extensive and required resurfacing. Subsequent investigation revealed that the tanker was carrying approximately 120 kilolitres of fuel when the driver lost control of the tanker causing it to rollover. Deputy Captain MacKellar's brave actions saved the life of the driver at the scene and brought credit to himself and to the Rural Fire Service.

The Commissioner's Unit Citation for Service

Awarded to crews, brigades, groups or organised units to recognise outstanding service of a meritorious nature, such as group actions in relation to fire service duties, group work performance, or other outstanding or meritorious service not involving bravery.

Mungindi Rural Fire Brigade

Moree Plains

Captain Kym Stanford

Senior Deputy Captain Linda Riley

Deputy Captain Lloyd Betts

Deputy Captain Anthony Saunders

Firefighter David Newman

Firefighter Casey Riley

The Mungindi Rural Fire Brigade provides fire protection to the community of Mungindi situated 120 kilometres north-west of Moree. It is the only source of fire protection for this community. Since May 2007, the Brigade has attended six village fire incidents of suspected arson and all have occurred in the early hours of the morning. While on scene at these incidents the Brigade members have acted promptly and professionally in meeting the fire threats imposed despite the intense radiant heat generated by these fires. A total of three properties were saved through the swift actions of the Brigade. Two were occupied houses, a third the town's only Doctors Surgery. The remaining fires involved caravans and a prime mover. In all cases the swift and professional actions of the Brigade also prevented the spread of these fires to adjoining premises. It is of significance that the nearest backup to the Brigade is an average of 40 minutes response time away. The swift and efficient actions of the Mungindi Rural Fire Brigade in meeting the fire threats imposed upon their community by a suspected arsonist is consistent with the best traditions of the Rural Fire Service and is a shining example of the role of these brigades in isolated communities.

The Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Individual)

Awarded to recognise service or outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties, administrative leadership, or exemplary performance of a specific project or task. The Certificate of Commendation may be awarded to an individual or unit for service beyond the scope of responsibility normally expected of that person or unit in their assigned duties and is therefore worthy of acknowledgement and commendation.

Group Captain Terry Best

Northern Tablelands

Group Captain Terry Best has provided invaluable assistance to the Annual Region North Field Exercises from 2001 in the role of Catering Manager. He unselfishly gave up weeks of his time in the lead up to each years exercise to prepare menus and order the catering resources for up to 500 personnel over the course of the exercise weekend. He has total responsibility to oversee the ordering, preparation and service of up to 3000 meals, comply with Government Food Handling Guidelines and recruit and manage a volunteer work force of up to 30 personnel from across the Region. The members of the Region North Exercise Committee are adamant that the Region North Exercises would not have been as successful as they have been without his involvement and Group Captain Best is deserving of commendation.

Superintendent Boyd Townsend

Northern Rivers Team

Superintendent Boyd Townsend achieved international acclaim recently when he was chosen as the winner of the "Changing the World" category for the Annual MapInfo Meridian Awards. The two programs developed by him in consultation with the Rural Fire Service GIS Unit, Map Desk and Helifire, will have a significant impact on the way the Rural Fire Service can plot fires and provide accurate information regarding what is occurring on the fireground in a time critical manner. Both of these programs allow users with a basic mapping knowledge to create maps that Incident Management Teams can rely on and can use to make informed operational firefighting decisions. Through his innovation, Superintendent Townsend is deserving of commendation.

Deputy Captain Barry Freeman

Blue Mountains

Deputy Captain Barry Freeman joined the Mount Wilson-Mount Irvine Rural Fire Brigade in 1999 and served in the positions of Secretary, Deputy Captain and Captain, becoming a Deputy Group Captain for the Blue Mountains West Sector in 2005. During his time as Brigade Captain he developed and nurtured the Brigade into one of the most active and capable brigades in the Blue Mountains. He currently holds the rank of Deputy Captain. A major achievement was the development of a strategic water supply program for the brigade area through the coordination of local effort and successful grant applications. Through his leadership he was also instrumental in the development and implementation of the pilot Ambulance First Responder Program resulting in the Mount Wilson-Mount Irvine Brigade becoming the State's inaugural First Responder Rural Fire Brigade.. He continues to represent the interests of volunteers on the District Committees and his management and facilitation skills provide remarkable guidance to these committees and deserving of commendation.

Superintendent Anthony Place & Deputy Group Captain Peter Mooney

Mid Lachlan Valley Team

Superintendent Anthony Place has been the Learning and Development Officer for the Mid Lachlan Valley Team since 2003 and Deputy Captain Peter Mooney has been the District Training Officer (Volunteer) since 2005. They have always had a passion for training and for the delivery of mainstream Service courses across the Team's area. They both recognised the need for specialist training for rural remote areas. As a consequence they developed the bush fire grasslands package which, because of its duration and content, quickly became popular with the volunteers who were previously reluctant to complete training. They then fine tuned the Crew Leader Grasslands Package and also implemented this training. After the successes of these courses, volunteers in the area sought more practical training and they subsequently developed the Village Structural Grasslands Course. Their initiatives have provided an alternative to the mainstream training available and this has seen hundreds of volunteers undertake training in rural remote areas who were previously not interested in such training. Grasslands training is now being recognised by other Zones and Teams and being added to their training calendars. Their personal efforts in the development and delivery of training are ensuring the ongoing development of firefighting skills and are deserving of commendation.

Deputy Group Captain James Jamieson

Rosebank RFB, Northern Rivers

Deputy Group Captain Jamieson's involvement with the Rural Fire Service has continued to grow since becoming a volunteer in 2001. He quickly became deeply involved with his Rosebank Brigade and displayed his leadership abilities by quickly becoming Deputy, then Senior Deputy and eventually Captain of the Brigade. Since obtaining his RFI and RFA qualification he has instructed and assessed at almost all courses conducted by the Northern Rivers Training Team. Since the Operational Command Vehicle No 1 arrived in the area, he has been heavily involved in the refurbishment of the vehicle making it an extremely useful extension to the command and control facilities of Incident Management. He also had a major input into the design and production of the Communication Trailers that are co-produced with the Rural Fire Service Association. Since gaining his Group Leader and ICS/IMT Planning and Operations qualifications he has been very involved with Section 44 fires. His willingness to shoulder responsibility and tackle workloads is coupled with his unflinching cheerfulness and he has become a shining example for others to follow and deserving of commendation.

Communication Officer Henry Michael Earle

Barwon Darling Communications

Communications Officer, Henry Michael Earle has been a member of the Rural Fire Service since 1962. He immigrated to Australia in the late 1950s. He joined the local brigade which in later years became the Warrumbungle's Rural Fire Brigade. In 1978 he joined the NSW Corrective Services and relocated to Goulburn Gaol and joined the Windellama Brigade until he relocated to Bathurst Gaol and joined the Duramana Brigade. He became North East Group Captain with Evans Shire and held this position from 1988 until 1998. Apart from his service at a number of serious fires over the years, while with Corrective Services he was instrumental in the training of prison inmates as an emergency response team with trustee inmates being trained to basic firefighter level. He was also involved in the Correctional Services Prison Industries group in the manufacture, conversion and maintenance of fire tankers, pumps and training aids for use by brigades across Evans Shire and the Sydney basin. He continued with local brigades after his retirement. In 2004 he established the Barwon Darling Communications Brigade, holding the position of Captain. This highly trained and competent brigade is frequently requested as a vital resource to manage communications for Section 44 bush fire emergencies. His long and dedicated service is an inspirational example to others and is deserving of commendation.

The Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Unit)

Awarded to recognise service or outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties, administrative leadership, or exemplary performance of a specific project or task. The Certificate of Commendation may be awarded to an individual or unit for service beyond the scope of responsibility normally expected of that person or Unit in their assigned duties and is therefore worthy of acknowledgement and commendation.

Gulmarrad Rural Fire Brigade

Clarence Valley

The Gulmarrad Rural Fire Brigade has made outstanding efforts in response to a range of serious high profile incidents. These include a number of horrific motor vehicle accidents on the Pacific Highway and most notable, two major structure fires within the central business district of the town of Maclean. On 27 February 2006, the Brigade was called to assist NSW Fire Brigades firefighters with a major structure fire in Maclean. The fire started in heritage building shop premises and whilst the premises were destroyed the initial assistance and co-operative efforts of the attending firefighters ensured that the adjoining premises were saved. On 6 May 2008 the Brigade was again called to support the NSW Fire Brigades Maclean Station in response to a structure fire at the Maclean Video Store, Gulmarrad 1 and 7 Call Signs were the second and third appliances on scene. Again the initial co-operative efforts of the attending firefighters effectively contained the fire and prevented destruction of the adjoining premises. Through its actions, the Gulmarrad Rural Fire Brigade demonstrated the highest level of professionalism and provided an inspirational example of what can be achieved through interagency cooperation. In so doing, they have brought great credit upon themselves and the Rural Fire Service and are deserving of commendation.

St Florian's Feast Day, the Fourth of May

Firefighters in most European countries celebrate 4 May as St Florian's Feast Day as well as International Firefighters Day. This has been a tradition in central Europe for more than 150 years.

Born about 250AD in Cetium (now in Austria), Florian joined the Roman army and angered the Emperor Diocletian when he refused to persecute Christians in the area. Florian gave himself up to the soldiers of Aquilinus, the governor, when they were rounding up the Christians. He was twice scourged, half-flayed alive and sentenced to be burnt alive. While being set on fire he challenged the Roman soldiers to light the fire, saying "If you do, I will climb to heaven on the flames". As the soldiers were apprehensive, they took another path and threw Florian into the river Enns with a stone around his neck.

About 600 years later, in approximately 900-950AD a monastery was built near Florian's tomb, and the village of St Florian grew around it. St Florian was adopted as the Patron Saint of Poland, following an incident when a person was saved from a fire by invoking St Florian's name. Since then, St Florian has been invoked against fire and has been generally regarded in most countries as the Patron Saint of Firefighters.



St Florian's Day

4 May 2009

Headquarters, NSW Rural Fire Service
15 Carter Street, Homebush Bay