
The Glenbrook Voluntary Fire Brigade

The Glenbrook Voluntary Fire Brigade was formed in 1942 by George Bunyan as Captain, and with Stan Edwards as his Deputy. It consisted of a "lift on" tank unit which was stored in the rear yard of George's home and butcher's shop in Ross Street. Stan Edward's Oldsmobile truck was used for transporting it.

As there was no water laid on in the early days, tanks, wells and dams were the only water supply. The dams were at Hodgson's, Bruce Road, Latimer's, Lucasville Road and Bland's Station Street plus the lagoon in Glenbrook Road. There were also very deep wells at Bland's and at Wood's in Brook Street (now Woodville Street). St. Peter's Anglican Church bell rang to warn people of fire. After World War 2 ended the air raid siren for use during the war, which was fixed to the corner light pole at Forrester's garage, was used until the new Fire Station was built by volunteer labour and opened in October 1951. This building is now used as the Lower Mountain S.E.S. Station.

During the war years, with most young men in the Services, only older men or boys were available, so it was 'one in all in' situation. That is when I first started fire fighting.

In 1945, Council purchased an ex RAAF pumper trailer which was stored at Charlie Forrester's garage and towed by private vehicles. In 1950, Melton Knowles, an Engineer member built a unit from a 1936 Dodge truck (ex Bonds' Hosiery) purchased from Stan Edwards for 200 Pounds. A secondhand fuel storage tank and the motor and pump unit from the trailer were used.

In later years an instrument for measuring bearings was set up in George Bunyan's front garden in Hare Street which was reasonably high. This was used for sighting of distant fires and used later by Glenbrook/Lapstone Rural Fire Brigade on the tower next to the station in Hodgson road. As the old instrument (known as an 'Alidade') was replaced by a newer version, it was given to 301 NSW Fire Brigade Station for their local collection of fire items.

The 1936 Dodge Fire tanker was sold to Castlereagh Bush Fire Brigade (from memory for 100 Pound) where it gave many more years of service.

Some funny incidents from the past: The local publican of the temporary Lapstone Hotel bar next to Forrester's garage provided a free beer to members of returning crews. A local resident blackened his face, sat in the park and lined up each time. The barman, after the third time around, recognised him and said "*you have been to a few fires today mate*", that put an end to his scheme.

During a fire at Emu Plains, where only wet potato sacks were being used, a lady resident was standing near us in her backyard. When the flames were approaching her house she became so worried that she slipped off her slacks, dipped them in the drum of water and used them to help beat out the flames.

On another occasion we were at a fire in Fletcher Street, Glenbrook. The boys were putting water on the outside toilet when I came along and said "*let the toilet burn and save the house*". With that a lady exited the said toilet saying "*let it burn, be damned, I was in there*". Apparently the boys had seen her enter the 'loo', but I had not.

During a fire in the area of the present day Blaxland High School, we were told to go to the copper Kettle Tea Rooms on the Western Highway for free tea and scones. It was a 'stinking hot' day. The lady came out of the kitchen dressed only in a bra, panties and apron and said to the fire fighters, "*don't mind me dressed like this, so "bloody" hot in the kitchen*". the boys replied "*no worries love, just keep up the tea and scones*".

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