

August 2022

Hello & welcome to the NARF West Midlands Newsletter.

Now things have got a little more back to normal we hope you are keeping safe & enjoying the relaxed situation.

Postage is becoming a big problem for our mailshots so this is likely to be the only one this year. Our thanks go to the Brigade for agreeing to share the cost of this mailing.

Chairman's Comments.

As you are no doubt aware the Brigade has started using a new computer application for pension payments but has had several problems. One of these was the fact that it should have been 'talking' to the HRMC (tax) computer but wasn't. This resulted in an array of up and down pension payments, changes to tax codes and even death notifications to some members. Paul Gwynn, head of pensions, and his team have been working hard to correct the errors and assures everyone that the problems have been sorted out although it might take some months for the new figures to work their way through the HRMC system.

If you still have problems contact paul.gwynn@wmfs.net or 0121 380 6972 although it might take some time for an answer.

Another problem was the P60 and pension slip posting, which has since been referred to the Data Protection Ombudsman, as information was visible through the envelope window causing a possible data breach. ACO Gary Taylor, Director of Service Delivery has written to all pensioners apologising and giving details of help available to check if your security has been breached.

Sometime ago the West Midlands Committee decided to issue certificates to all those who had been NARF members for 25 years or more. Also, it was agreed that all members aged 90 or over would have their subscriptions paid for by their Borough. This is now completed.

It's that time of year again for our prize draw. Monies raised goes towards a Christmas gift to widows of ex members. There is no obligation to buy tickets but please support it if you can. Details are on the last page of this letter.

I have attended various meetings at National, Regional & Local Level, as well as acting as National Membership Secretary & acting President. I have also acted as standard bearer for several local funerals.

Sadly, Jim Chen, one of our volunteers in the NARF Office at Erdington passed away in February and so if anyone can give some time on a Wednesday please get in touch.

John Littleton

Aston Update.

Work continues on the museum at Aston Fire Station. Items are being unpacked from storage and placed where they are needed. It is hoped the museum will be a great resource for the Brigade as well as an interesting visit for others. However, it is not likely to open till next year.

The Firefighters Memorial Trust.

This years' 'Service of Remembrance & Wreath Laying' will take place on 4th September 2022 & next year's 'Service of Commemoration' will return to the National Memorial Arboretum, Arlewas on 18th June 2023. Details will be on the trusts' website when finalised.

George Farenden's Book.

Those who remember George Farenden (ex 'A' Division) may be interested to know he has written a book called 'Jack Wolf-The Recruit'. Although it is fiction it is loosely based on his time at Aston Fire Station in the 70's & even includes a murder mystery. It is published by Austin Macauley and available from normal outlets.

Deaths.

The deaths of ex members are now listed on the website www.wmнарf.net

Meetings & Events.

Information about the Boroughs meetings & events is available on the above website.

Prize Draw 2022.

Please find enclosed two books of tickets for this year's Prize Draw. Monies raised goes towards a Christmas gift for widows of ex members.

The draw will take place on 5th October 2022 at the NARF Office at Erdington Fire Station at 1200 hrs.

1st Prize £500 2nd Prize £200 3rd Prize £100 4th Prize £50 10 Prizes of £25

We hope you take part but there is absolutely no obligation to take part or take the two books.

Tickets are £1 each (1 Book £5, 2 Books £10) Single Tickets allowed.

No need to return unwanted tickets.

Please make cheques out to 'WMFS Pensioners Association'

Put your name, address & phone number on the stub (small part) & return them to us in the envelope provided, remembering to put a stamp on it. Keep the main part (large part) for your records.

If you wish to pay directly into our account, please do so but **let us know**, using your name as the reference.
Our A/C is Lloyds 34058668 Sort Code 77-85-14

Further tickets are available from Ian Forrester 0121 451 2086 or valandian@hotmail.co.uk