

# The Brass Helmet



*July - Sept 2009*

*Official Newsletter of the Fire Brigades'  
Historical Society of QLD*



*Redcliffe HP Car 2*

*Saturday, February 15, 1969  
Golden Fleece Oil Terminal Fire*





# Contacts

Visit our website at [www.firemuseum.com.au](http://www.firemuseum.com.au)

**Patron:** Kevin Walsh  
**President:** W A (Alex) Nixon P: 07 3359 6495 E: wion@ozemail.com.au  
**Vice President:** Bruce Darra P: 07 3886 9429 E:  
**Secretary:** E S (Jock) Honeyman P: E:  
**Treasurer:** Laurie Brunnings P: 07 3886 0665 E:  
**Postal:** Fire Brigades Historical Society Qld Inc, YMCA Old Petrie Town,  
 Dayboro Road Kurwongbah QLD 4503  


---

**Newsletter Editor:** Jonathan Barr P: 07 3261 5042 E: mazdajon@aol.com  
**Webmaster:** Matt Hayes P: 0439 739050 E: matt@firecall.com.au

The Queensland Fire Museum is operated by the Fire Brigades Historical Society of Qld Inc, and is located at YMCA Old Petrie Town, Dayboro Road Kurwongbah.

It is open to the public Sundays from 8am to 1pm.

New members Welcome

## Memorabilia

A large range of firefighting memorabilia is available from the Queensland Fire Museum.

One of our specialities are brass and alloy cast items as shown on the right. Apart from the hose coupling, all items are produced exclusively for the Museum by local craftsmen.

All items are available for sale or produced to order from the Museum.

Prices are:	Brass	Alloy
Firefighters Axe	\$180	\$90
Half Helmet	\$25	\$17-50
Full Helmet (small)	\$35	\$25
Full Helmet (large)	\$45	\$35
Half Coupling	\$90	\$60



Also available is a large selection of fire fighting photographs in both postcard and cigarette card sizes. These can be purchased in sets or as individual cards.

These outline in photographic history the early days of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade through the Queensland Fire Service, Queensland Fire Service and the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority eras.

Several of these appliances are on display at the Museum, including the 1958 Mack, 1959 Dennis TTL and the 1939 NSW Dennis Pumper.

A small selection of the postcard sized items is shown on the right. Should you wish to purchase items and are located outside Brisbane we can organise postage for you.



*The Society was begun in the early 1980's by a small group of energetic firemen. After an enormous amount of time and effort and after several moves the Museum was established at what was originally known as North Pine Country Markets, now YMCA Old Petrie Town. There are two buildings, a replica Fire Station and the main Museum building.*

*The collection embraces all fire services; industrial, commercial, rural, military and of course the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service with the aim to preserve the history of fire fighting.*

*We have currently 14 historically significant fire appliances, including our newest addition, a 1983 Magirus Iveco DL37 Turntable Ladder recently donated by QFRS that was stationed at Southport.*

*The Museum (by appointment) can also cater for birthday parties, weddings (on the grounds) and bus tours.*

*Entry to the Museum is by coin donation which will help us achieve our goals along with restoring and repairing our historical fire engines and equipment. If you can help in any other way we would greatly appreciate your assistance, new members are always welcome.*

*Full Membership is \$10-00 per annum or Family \$15-00. Social Membership is \$25-00.*

*You do not need to be a current or past serving firefighter to join, membership is open to anyone with an interest in preserving our fire fighting history.*

# *Saturday, February 15, 1969*

## *Golden Fleece Oil Terminal fire*

On Saturday, 15th February 1969 at 0848 hours the first call was received regarding a fire at the Golden Fleece oil terminal on Kingsford Smith Drive at Whinstanes, Brisbane. When fire crews first arrived, under the control of CO George Healy, they were confronted with two 20,000 gallon elevated feeder tanks completely enveloped by fire. It is believed that when petrol was being siphoned from one of the tanks it caught fire, resulting in an explosion that caused flames and smoke to shoot 1000 feet into the air. As these two tanks were connected via pipes to other areas in the terminal the possibility of an inferno was cause for concern.

Foam was deemed to be impractical in trying to contain this blaze due to the height of the tanks, so efforts were made to cool the surrounding larger, fixed tanks with a capacity of approx one million gallons each that were within 20 feet of the fire. One of these contained aviation kerosene and was about half full, with the other  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of diesel fuel. The walls of the diesel fuel tank started to buckle from the intense heat and firemen climbed onto the top of the tanks to try to get closer to the fire. Explosions sent them back but they returned again and again to douse the flames. After several hours of effort and having the fire nearly out and only to reignite, it was finally reported as being under control at 1313 hours.

At an enquiry held into the fire in December of the same year, it was told that 16 firemen were injured at the fire along with Plant Supervisor Les Hewitt who was engulfed by flames as he was draining moisture from the tanks containing petrol when the first ignition occurred. It was also told that because of the outlet taps being inaccessible due to their elevated position that foam was unable to quell the flames. Modifications were recommended and later introduced to eliminate this from happening should a future fire occur.

This fire had the potential to become one of the most dangerous fires ever seen in Brisbane up until this time, but through the efforts of the MFB and the dedication of all firemen attending that day a major disaster was averted. FBHSQ President Alex Nixon was one of the attending firemen on duty at this fire and he has kindly provided the photos shown below.

*Source: Brisbane Ablaze, by Kevin Calthorpe and Ken Capell, © 2001 Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority*



**Above:** Firemen on top of the large tank aim water down onto the fire from above.

**Above Right:** Keep the water coming, 1958 Mack B505 pumper in action.

**Below Right:** The fire was right on the edge of the road but access was difficult.

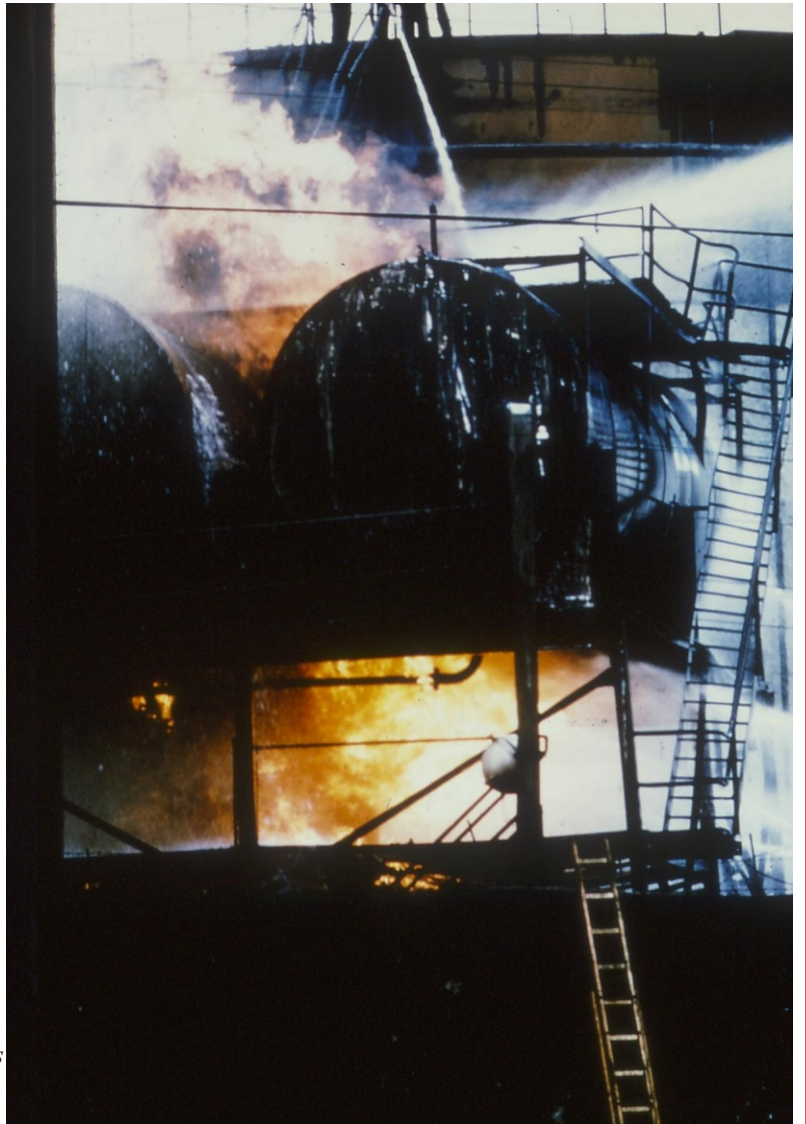
**Below:** The foam that proved to be useless runs down the front of the retaining wall surrounding the terminal. Note the firemen still on the top of the large tanks.







*Above: Empty foam barrels are taken away.*



*Right: How far the fire is actually above the ground is evident in this photo. Very difficult to try to contain along with the threat of an explosion. Note how the access ladder to the tanks has been distorted by the heat.*

*Below: A wonderful photo showing five lines of canvas trying to extinguish the flames up high, plus a foam cannon being used to try and douse the flames on the ground caused by the fuel run off.*





# Redcliffe HP Car 2, QFS Fleet 510

By Jon Barr

Whilst they are common place today, hydraulic platforms are only a relatively recent addition to the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service fleet. The one featured below is believed to be the first designed by the State Fire Council of Queensland back in 1972 to conform to their then new standardised fire appliance specifications. It was built on a 1973 Ford F750 truck chassis by Superior Industries at Northgate, for Brigade evaluation. Superior Industries were then a major appliance manufacturer along with building ambulances for the QATB. Whilst the trial was deemed to be successful and others followed, including another three based on the F750 platform, what makes this one a little special is the actual platform system used. Later versions utilised the Abbey system, but this one used an imported German unit.

Powered by a 330 cid, petrol V8 engine driving through a Clark 5 speed gearbox and Eaton No4, two speed diff the Ford was actually right up near the GVM of 24500 lbs (approx 12 tons) once the conversion was done and considerably under powered. When you also factor in the fact it was 8.8 metres long with a massive 2.5 metre rear overhang and a high centre of gravity it was also quite unstable. This was magnified once the platform was raised as it was only equipped with two rear stabiliser arms instead of the now current four. It had a reach of just on 4 stories, which is very low by today's standards.

Back in 2002 I stumbled across this appliance in a coal mine at Amberley. It had given them 12 years service as first response but due to new Workplace Health and Safety restrictions put in place requiring a diesel engined appliance to be used it was waiting until the final decision on its future was made. After many months of going backwards and forwards trying to save the truck (with little response from the mine) I was finally advised that it had in fact been cut up for scrap. Yet again, another important piece of Queensland's fire fighting history has been lost, but I at least managed to photograph it one last time before it was gone. For the record, when the photos were taken it had still only travelled 17,894 miles from new and was of course still fully operational.

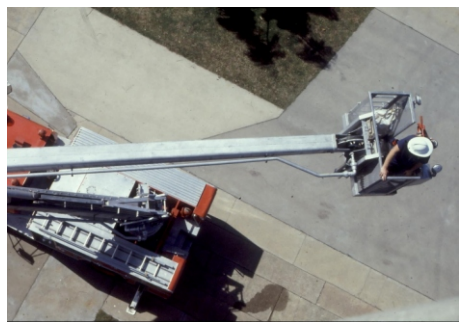
Of the three other Ford F750 versions, which were stationed at Toowoomba, Ipswich and Kemp Place in Brisbane, the only known survivor is the Toowoomba unit which has been preserved thankfully. The photos of Redcliffe Car 2 in service were taken by Alex Nixon to compare with the final photos I took seven years ago. Alex also recalls this appliance sitting idle at Annerley station towards the end of active service and I remember it sitting unloved against the back fence at the Q-Fleet disposal centre in Pineapple Street at Aspley during 1990 prior to being sold to the mine.



*Above: Redcliffe firemen stand proudly beside their new HP. With only two stabiliser arms at the rear the F750 was a little unstable.*

*Middle: Views of Car 2 in action outside Redcliffe Fire Station.*

*Below: Final resting place of car 2, at a coal mine just outside Amberley. It was cut up for scrap in 2002.*





# Queensland Fire Museum



Above: 1947 Dennis F1, ex NSWFB car 19, currently undergoing restoration at the Museum. Fitted with a 400 GPM pump.

Below: Vice-President Bruce Darra inspects progress on the restoration. It was decommissioned by NSWFB in April 1978.

