

Make Tankers Ten

A History of the Wangaratta Fire Brigades' Group



5 Section 5: The Group Brigades

Make Tankers Ten - the History of the Wangaratta Fire Brigades' Group is a book developed by dedicated members of the Group who have links to the rich history of the district.

The book highlights the formation of brigades, development of co-operative firefighting and the subsequent formation of the Wangaratta Fire Brigades' Group.

The history also tells of the legacy of the "Fathers of the Group" in influencing the fire service in this state.

The book and the stories it contains touch on the many people that have contributed their time and services from very early pioneering days through to modern times. The book brings together a rich and layered account of the pivotal role fire brigades play in our communities.

Orders are now being taken.

Please Email us on:
Make.tankers.10@gmail.com

Follow us on Facebook



Wangaratta District Firefighting Unit replacement 1944

4.13 Fire Brigade Demonstrations - Championships

Urban
20th May 1873. The first Combined Fire Brigades' Demonstration was conducted in Spring Street, Melbourne. Country brigades assembled by train to participate. These were representatives of city and town fire brigades from country Victoria. In this case it was a Torchlight Parade.

Wangaratta Fire Brigade was formed in 1876. Six members of the brigade attended their first Demonstration, now called Championships, at Ballarat in May of the same year, although it is unclear whether they competed.

New Year's Day 1877. The Ovens and Murray Advertiser give an account of a fire brigade demonstration taking place in Murphy Street Wangaratta at the New Year's Day Fete. The two Wangaratta brigades of the time took part.

New Training Track - Apex Park. As it became impractical to continue to practice in Murphy Street,

a new training track was sought in Apex Park. The first demonstration was held there in November 1911.

Worthy of note is that an early member of the brigade, John Jacobson Handley, was the inventor and maker of a hand-drawn hose reel for competition purposes. The introduction of hand-drawn hose reels into the fire service as firefighting appliances in the 19th century, was in fact a catalyst for urban fire brigade competitions as we know them. The hand-drawn hose reels are still used in urban championship events.

Wangaratta Fire Brigade winning team of 1901. Demonstration at Goulburn. Back Row L-R Berne Weicker, F. Marshall, G.C. Phillips, S. Ferguson. Front Row L-R B.E. Vincent, A. Jackson, S. Stewart, G. Huggins.

Handley's Hose Reel constructed by John Jacobson Handley.



I have seen a lot of fires, but none like this...

it was a hot, windy day - I was on a truck and in those days the trucks were very small and basic; our equipment was very limited.

It got to the stage where we couldn't see anything and the fire was coming over the top of us...