

SALUTE OUR FANTASTIC FIRE FIGHTERS!

Here is Tallong RFS President Chris Boland's account of the "catastrophic" long day and night in the life of the Tallong Brigade on Tuesday 8th January:

WHEN news came through of a potentially disastrous outbreak between the townships of Yass and Bookham, Tallong Brigade was put on stand-by as a strong, hot westerly steadily increased. Sure enough, a call came through to attend high voltage lines down at the corner of Highland Way and Long Point Road followed by a request to remove a fallen tree blocking the road south of Wingello.

Towards evening a second crew of volunteers arrived, mechanics, truckies and quarrymen knocking off from work, to maintain a nightshift at the fire-shed. The day crew headed for home... only to be summoned back with the news that the Yass fire had intensified and was threatening homes.

A volunteer crew under Crew Leader Carl Wise with Paul D'alcorn, Cliff Danckwardt and Chris Boland boarded Tallong 1 Bravo and set off for Yass in company with units from Marulan, Towrang, Parkesbourne, Tarlo and Collector.

With a command car leading and another bringing up the rear, the convoy approached the fire-ground around midnight, climbing a hill silhouetted against an ominous, intensifying red glow. The Tallong truck, immediately following the command vehicle, had nearly reached the summit when the fire front reared over the hilltop.

As there was obviously no chance of stopping the fire at that point, the order came to retreat

and form Asset Protection lines around threatened homes. Tallong was assigned the western end of a large homestead. The wind blowing the fire line towards the homes changed direction slightly and just before dawn, with that immediate threat downgraded, the taskforce was able to attack the fires in the growing daylight. With more than a dozen trucks now involved, the hillside fires were soon extinguished and blacked out. After a quick breakfast and refuel at Yass, Tallong 1 Bravo returned to the fire-shed just before midday on January 9th.

The weary crew climbed out of their overalls, closed the shed doors and were about to set off for home... when the call came to attend a fire at Munro Road where a grass fire had broken out near the air-strip. At that fire the crew exchanged ironic waves with the same Marulan crew who'd shared duties with them at Yass, and when a second Tallong crew arrived they again headed back to the shed to be greeted by news of a fire in the Shoalhaven gorge at Badgery's Creek Lookout. Asset protection was again assigned with fears the fire might climb out of the gorge, but the threat to homes eased after Captain Kevin Roberts called in helicopter water bombers to tackle the outbreak.

As always, our community spirit shines and we want to thank everybody who donated time and effort to help us.

New two-way radios bought with donations, including from the Tallong Community Focus Group, were issued for the first time and proved to be of huge benefit, allowing fire fighters to talk to their comrades as well as Regional fire Control Centres.

Important Diary Dates...

SUNDAY 24th FEBRUARY – Santa Sabina College is hosting an Open Day to celebrate 15 years on the Tallong campus.

Dr Maree Herrett, College Principal, and Mr Paul Holmes, Director of Tallong Campus have invited the Tallong community to enjoy a tour of the campus and facilities and join them for afternoon tea and/or lunch.

The Retreat and Outdoor Education Centre hosts programs from Santa Sabina College and other Schools, where participants learn about working with others, challenge themselves with activities such as the High Ropes Course while learning about the environment in the setting of the bush.

For catering purposes, please RSVP to 4841 0439 or tallong@ssc.nsw.edu.com.

SATURDAY 16th MARCH – Goulburn is celebrating with a Street Parade the 150th anniversary of the day that Queen Victoria nominated the place as Australia's first inland city. The Tallong Community have been invited to take part. We are asked to choose a decade from our past that might be a beginning or a particular milestone for the Tallong community and dress up and decorate a float to suit that period. It is an ideal way to promote this year's Apple Day event on Sunday 5th May. Contact us at northman@goulburn.net.au or 4841 0324 if you have ideas on the theme, have a vehicle for a float or simply to volunteer as a participant in the parade.

FRIDAY, 22ND MARCH at the Tallong Memorial Hall. Come for a scrumptious afternoon tea and hear the well-known broadcaster and writer INDIRA NAIDOO talk about her best-selling book – *The Edible Balcony* – about growing food in a confined space.

This is a coup for the TCFG as Indira is in heavy demand for author talks – we've been trying for more than a year!

The book is the story of how Indira transformed her tiny 13th floor Sydney balcony into a beautiful kitchen garden. She soon established a productive urban oasis that takes just ten minutes a day to maintain, yet provides her with an ever-changing selection of fresh fruit, herbs and vegetables. The book features 60 delicious recipes showcasing her home-grown produce, plus plenty of practical advice.

Indira is best known as a journalist and broadcaster over a 25-year career reporting and presenting for the ABC and SBS. She developed a cult following for her appearances on the McFeast show, Roy & HG's Club Buggery, Good News Week, the Glasshouse and the Fat.

Now in its fourth reprint, copies of the book will be available for sale and signing at Indira's Tallong talk. She will also be doing a lunchtime talk at the Goulburn Library on the same day. Booking forms will be in the March newsletter. Don't miss Indira.

Anzac Day Service in Tallong...

THURSDAY 25th APRIL

Anzac Day in Tallong will be commemorated with a service at the Memorial Hall at 10 o'clock followed by a community morning tea. We will remember those service people appearing on the Memorial Hall Honour Roll, people like Percy Malley, born in Tallong in 1883 to parents John and Bridget. He was the first soldier from the Southern Highlands to be killed in the First World War. In 1905, he married Catherine Warren and they had five children.

A prison warder by occupation, he joined the 13th Battalion AIF as a private on 18th September 1914.

He was listed as "Missing in Action" on 26th April 1915, and was declared "Killed in Action" on 28th April 1915 after a court of enquiry held in April 1916.