



'An Teach Bán'

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Monday, 1st June, 2020.

**The Honourable Mrs. Lady Justice S.Falk DBE
7, Rolls Building,
Fetter Lane,
London EC4A 1NL**

FAO Clerk S.Saleem.

My Ref: PB00820.

To Whom It May Concern.

Assistant Divisional Officer(ADO) F.M.G [REDACTED] MIFireE

Dear Mrs Justice Falk,

I have hesitated before acting as a referee for Mr G [REDACTED] for fear that my help in seeking correction to his pension may be taken to colour my view, or in a misconstrued way, to harm his quest for Justice for himself and others, especially our Widows with the pitiful imposition of the LFRS "Hardship Route", on them.

I rose to my first Station Command in Station Officer rank(2 impellors) in the Brigade at 'C36' Leyland(Day Manning) Lancashire in August 1972 as a Station Commander on the (96hr week) Residential System.

Later, uniquely, I was to command a second troublesome Station, 'C50 Preston' in 1981, as an Assistant Divisional Officer(3 impellors)/Station Commander with over 100 Officers and men (a Roman Centurion of old) with 7 Appliances responding 24/7 to over 4.5k calls per year.

The largest Station Command in the UK.

During my Command at Leyland I became aware of my opposite number, across the fells, at 'B76' Darwen, Station Commander, F.M..G [REDACTED] MIFireE in the adjoining Division. We never served together in the same Division, nor did we socialise.

Lancashire Brigade, outside London, was the largest Brigade in the UK with 61 stations.

Occasionally we would meet briefly on major incidents and at internal training courses.

He always struck me as a well turned out Officer, firm, fair, but not too friendly with lower ranks, but full of esprit de corps and self-discipline. Neither he, nor I, were particular in these professional attributes; that was the order of the day.

Station Commander G [REDACTED] had a wry sense of humour associated with diplomatic skills which he needed because at a later point, his Command included the residence of the Chief Fire Officer R. Watson CBE, who had himself risen to Brigade command through 'B76 ' Darwen.

Station Commander G [REDACTED] very active operational command, included its own numerous specialist high risk industrial/chemical factories, set against the traditional backdrop of Lancashire cotton mills.

Regularly his station would respond as a first due-in satellite for 'assistance' required at 'B71' Blackburn, a very busy station, second only in size and activity to Preston, to support evolving large incidents.

Clearly professional, he was by repute and operational contact highly competent, and well respected within his peer group in his Division, but had a reputation for constructively challenging senior management if he thought the occasion demanded which the 'establishment' might not regard as an endearing quality.

Station Command, was a multi-tasking role, which included a high Operational workload, allied with extensive Fire Safety legislative enforcement, all crammed into a 24/7, 96 hr week duty shift system, and then in 'progress', to 84 hr; finally to 78hrs which was ubiquitously recognised, in career terms as an essential preparatory 'qualification' for entry level to senior command, Assistant Divisional Officer(ADO), and thence advancing within senior command as a (graded) Divisional Officer(DO-Laurel wreath, Impellor, and a 'scambled' egg Cap).

Thus it was as expected that Station Commander G [REDACTED] would, and did rise, from Station Command, to ADO at 'B DHQ' Burnley.

Much has been written by current civilians in the LFRS in ignorance concerning the role of a Supervisory Assistant to a DO within the role of a Division. The role was not a casual affair; its duties were clearly defined in national legislation; factored into pay (The Grey Book); and encapsulated in Lancashire's own Brigade Orders.

Today's 'management structure' cannot be correlated to the well-ordered structures prior to 2005. Thoroughbred horses still cannot be compared to camels.

An Assistant to a DO(which included acting up and deputising) was *required and conditioned* to providing on the 24/7 residential system 96/84/78 hours pw (a precursor to Flexible Duty System) operational first response to all incidents requiring such a rank in the 3 station areas under his command; an additional part of ADO G [REDACTED] Supervisory duties was enforcement of Fire Safety legislation, direct control of all the thousands of Fire Safety references held by those 3 stations which may well be on mixed duty systems Retained(Part-time) /Day Manning /Wholetime; Fire Investigation, etc. There were 'office hours' and then there was the all pervasive 24/7 operational 'cover' and admin underpinning it all.

An arduous 24/7 life, with little time for family life, but in further preparation for the rise within senior Divisional Command.

In 2007 we met once more after many years of natural divergence where each followed his own path through life.

I was surprised that ADO G [REDACTED] remained an ADO until his compulsory discharge by injury from the Service. I had fully expected that he would continue to rise through the ranks of Divisional Officer indeed to Senior Divisional Officer command and I wondered why?

Belatedly I was to learn of a family crisis involving his son Thomas who had gone to Oxbridge and fallen victim to the stresses of academic life with its direct impact on ADO G [REDACTED] family life (all of which continues today) and of course his burgeoning career which unfortunately coincided with a no fault in-Service injury leading to his compulsory discharge from the Brigade. His cup runneth over...

Later In the midst of this continuing great family maelstrom in October 2006 when money was critical to medical treatment for his son the LFRS (Mr.Warren) 'decided' that Mr. [REDACTED] (aka 167+ others) had failed to inform them of Injury Award deductible DWP benefits.

In spite of providing dated copies of the documents he had supplied, *at the time*, as required by legislation the LFRS refused to acknowledge their maladministration ("because they could") and insisted that he repay over £7k, more in fact, than they alleged he 'owed'; it became a rancorous issue which indirectly led to other pension 'events'.

As a senior rank one of the virtues the Service teaches was good and accurate administration of records which on numerous occasions found their way into Coroners Courts, and the like.

It took 5 years and an Information Commissioner's Order to release Mr.G [REDACTED] Personal Record File which confirmed that none of his supplied documentation had in fact been retained in his pension file ~ insult to injury.

Much later this issue drew his attention to his miscalculated pension which is where he remains today.

In the interim I followed my own career which became heavily involved in voluntary ab initio international rescue work, founded in Lancashire in 1980, and ultimately serving the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office as its first Field Commander; later I was honoured by Her Majesty the Queen; President Yeltsin; the President of Armenia; and Dignitaries of other Nations where I have led Search, Rescue, Relief, and Training missions in the field at my own time and expense; a final international perspective of which was being awarded the Oklahoma Medal of Valour and granted Honorary State Citizenship whilst commanding 30 US personnel led by their Captains at the US Murray Federal Building Bomb atrocity in 1995; etc.,. This is not about me.

Earlier a long period of appointment by the Secretary of State on intensive voluntary work within HMP Prisons Service and on the Parole Board, nationally the first Fire Officer to be accorded such an honour, simply firmed up my ability to recognise the characteristics of men and women which at best can be a challenge to one's own values of integrity and honesty; qualities which I had undoubtedly recognised at an early point in ADO G MIFireE, even though regrettably, his obvious senior command capability and promotion potential were quite sadly truncated. Such is life...

It should be said that I only ever agree to provide References for individuals if I feel they are actually worthy of it, ADO G MIFireE, was, and now as a friend, is.

Yours Sincerely,

Divisional Fire Officer (Rtd) Grad I Fire E.



Order of Excellent Firefighter



Soviet Union PB00820

LSGCM for Exemplary Fire Service



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Oklahoma Medal of Valour & Honorary Citizenship



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