

EMERGENCY SERVICES FOUNDATION

SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME

REPORT OF

**Commander David Nicholson
Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board**

TOPIC

Management of Major Emergency Incidents

**(with emphasis on the impact of Civil Disorder and
Terrorist actions on Fire Service Procedures).**

April 1994

INTRODUCTION

Between August 23rd and September 26th 1993, I travelled overseas under an Emergency Services Scholarship to study the management of major emergency incidents by overseas Fire Services, with an emphasis on the impact of Civil disturbance and terrorist actions on Fire Service Operations.

To achieve as much exposure to and benefit from the overseas experience, I identified Fire Services who had significant involvement in providing Fire and Emergency Medical Services in difficult and challenging environments.

The study tour involved visiting Fire Services in the United States, United Kingdom, Germany and Hong Kong (see Appendix 1) and attendance at the International Association of Fire Chiefs Conference and trade display in Dallas.

The preparation and programmes prepared by all Brigades, particularly the London and Manchester Fire Services (Appendix 2), plus their assistance with accommodation, made the study tour extremely beneficial to me as a Senior Brigade Officer, that no doubt will have long term benefits to the MFB and other Emergency Services.

In preparing for the Study tour, specific issues which I regarded as key areas to investigate, were identified. These included:

1. Communications
2. Resource Management
3. Procedures during Civil Disturbances
4. Community Relationships
5. Aftermath of major incidents on the Community and Businesses.

In addition to the specific areas of interest which were addressed to varying degrees by the Fire Service visited, an array of information discussions and experiences was gathered on a range of diverse Fire Service issues.

Since returning from the overseas Study tour, the Australian Fire Services have been involved in an operation as significant to our Fire Services as were the L.A. riots to the L.A.F.D. and the 180 different fire agencies throughout the State of California that participated. This was the NSW Bushfires and the huge logistical and co-ordination demands on the States Fire Services.

My experience and research of the overseas Brigades operations in large and long duration incidents assisted in my personal preparedness in my role as Task Force Commander in NSW and tested the entire organisations ability to deploy, maintain, and establish effective command and control functions in difficult conditions.

Throughout the study tour across two continents, comparisons between Fire Service strategies and the social environment in which they operate, were able to be made. Whilst civil disturbances require special operational strategies, core emergency management arrangements must be capable of adapting to a range of varying scenarios and agencies. In addition, the Fire Services standing in the community and its involvement in major incidents, require solid understanding of its neutrality and community involvement with no link, however tenuous, to law enforcement issues.

During the tour, I amassed a considerable amount of information and reports on not only civil disturbances and major incidents, but exercises, training etc. These major documents are listed in Appendix 2. This report is an overview of the major relevant issues identified by myself.

COMMAND VEHICLE ON DISPLAY AT I.A.F.C. TRADE DISPLAY



THE UNITED STATES (Los Angeles City Fire Department, Longbeach Fire Department, Miami Fire and Rescue)

OVERVIEW

Many Fire Departments within the United States have been impacted by the deterioration and breakdown in the social structure and disregard of law and order by large sectors of the population in cities across the country. Los Angeles, Longbeach and Miami are all large cities who have experienced large scale rioting and arson, or whose firefighters and paramedics operate in an environment of continual danger and risk, not only from the threat of fire but from random and premeditated violence from the community they are employed to protect.

The L.A.F.D.'s first significant experience involving civil disturbance came in August 1965 when the "Watts Riots" erupted. Since that time, the Department has developed a number of procedures and directives on emergency operations during periods of civil disturbance incidents. Without a doubt the L.A.F.D.'s comprehensive use of the Incident Control System and extensive use of strike teams and task forces, enabled them to manage the 1992 riots and protect the cities infrastructure by prioritising and containing fires to prevent conflagrations, and prevent even worse destruction that did occur. The M.F.B. I.C.S. is based on the U.S. N.I.I.M.S. structure, which proved so successful and the management structure which allowed the L.A.F.D. to co-ordinate the huge amount of resources effectively.

The L.A.F.D. has a system of Phases in Tactical Alerts which can be implemented due to information reviewed by either the Fire Department or L.A. Law Enforcement Agencies. These range from:

- Phase 1** - pre-planning stage in anticipation of an event.
- Phase 2** - the implementation of tactical operational plans involving redeployment of resources.
- Phase 3** - commitment of resources into an impact area.

The MFB effectively used this principle in planning our commitment of manpower and resources to the NSW Bushfires earlier this year.

The L.A.F.D. Tactical Alert Manual is a comprehensive document which covers all aspects of:

- (1) Incident Command System.
- (2) Emergency Operations.
- (3) Resource Deployment.
- (4) Communications - Dispatch - Documentation.
- (5) Deployment.
- (6) Staging Areas.

TYPICAL AREA OF L.A. IMPACTED BY THE RIOTS OF 1992



To effectively manage an incident of the magnitude of the riots, the Command and Control system focused on its basic elements which contributed to the successful deployment and support of resources.

These were:

- (1) Strategy and Tactics.
- (2) Resource Management.
- (3) Mutual Aid Co-ordination.
- (4) Communications.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Highest priorities were firefighter safety and incident mitigation, with the main strategy priorities being prevention of conflagration, protection of the City's infrastructure and emphasis on protection of structures for habitable use, when resource capability is exceeded by incidents.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Incident Command System (I.C.S.) is designed to control and direct resources committed to an incident. The Incident Controller implements only those elements of the System needed and in the priority that will result in the greatest effectiveness.

MUTUAL AID CO-ORDINATION

The State of California has an extensive Mutual Aid System and over 180 agencies were involved during the 1992 disturbance. These agencies were formed into Strike Teams and operated as units within the Operational guidelines established eg. priority of protection, no internal firefighting etc. The Task Force strategy used by the M.F.B. in N.S.W. and the configuration of the appliances in a Task Force was the same principal as used in L.A.

COMMAND VEHICLE - LONGBEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT



THE UNITED KINGDOM (London Fire and Civil Defence Authority, Greater Manchester County Fire Service, Northern Ireland Fire Brigade)

OVERVIEW

The structure of the United Kingdom Fire Services is significantly different from that of the United States. In contrast to the 31,000 local fire departments in the U.S., the U.K. has just 63 local authority Fire Brigades, a local authority in the main being either a metropolitan or a shire county.

In the U.K., 68% of all firefighters are full time, compared to 25% in the U.S.

Within the U.K., the Home office has established a national standard of fire cover, monitors Fire Brigades performances over a range of criteria, compiles national statistics and monitors trends and advises Chief Officers on issues of importance on a regular basis. It also allocates the central government allocation of funding to the various Fire Brigades. In addition to the central government allocation, a precept from local authorities is gathered through taxation.

The national approach to the Fire Service is in stark contrast to the proliferation of autonomous Fire Departments in the U.S., and has the advantages of a national rank structure, standard of fire cover, and training for officers amongst other things.

However, it has some disadvantage in the restrictions on Fire Chiefs to change or remove outdated work practices and Union opposition to change due to the potential impact on other Brigades in the U.K. This has improved in the past few years. Additionally, the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority comprises 33 councillors appointed by the boroughs and corporation of London. This authority is a complete contrast to the recent recommendation of the P.B.R.C. for the M.F.B.B. to be restructured from a representative Board to an 'expert' Board of nine.

During my visit to the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade, my preconceived images of an environment of fear and intimidation in Belfast, and the operations of the Fire Service turned out to be relatively unfounded. The extremely high profile and presence of the Security Forces makes the streets very safe from normal city crime, but still obviously very much impacted by random terrorist activities. The Fire and Security forces have a very strong working relationship but have lived in an atmosphere of tension for many years. Their procedures relative to bombs and arson activity are well practiced, and extreme caution is the order of the day. A good exchange of intelligence occurs between the Security Forces and Fire Brigade, and swift support is always provided at fires. My time with the Fire Brigade in Belfast and touring of parts of the city not normally entered by tourists, was an unforgettable experience which only made the entrenched and bitter struggle being waged there more difficult to accept or understand.

MAJOR INCIDENT PROCEDURES, CITY OF LONDON

In London, the Cities Police Forces, L.F.B. and Ambulance Service have just completed and established a Major Incident Procedure. These procedures co-ordinate the response of the capitals emergency services to major incidents, and the overall command and control responsibilities.

The procedures are not unlike Victorians Displan arrangements but more complex due to the cities differing Police jurisdictions. However, the procedures identify four stages of a major incident: Initial Response, consolidation phase, recovery phase and restoration to normality.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

A unique, and according to Fire Brigade officers, effective designation of functions adopted by each service, are the titles of Gold, Silver and Bronze in relation to the responsible officers of each service. For example, the Gold officer is the Commander in overall charge of his/her Service and responsible for formulating strategy for the Incident. (Appendix 3).

Silver attends the scene, takes charge and is responsible for the tactics adopted by his/her Service to achieve the desired goal.

Bronze control and deploy resources with a sector or specific role.

At large incidents, a co-ordinating Group is established which is chaired by the Police (Gold).

This common designation of officers from all Services performing varying levels of responsibility integrates the service with a common terminology. The Joint Major Incident Procedure, signed off by the Police Forces, Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service is a unique common document, descriptive of each services operational arrangements.

The issue of Command, both preparing for the role of Command and also effective Command at an incident, was the subject of a number of speakers at the Dallas IAFC conference. Two incidents, the Windsor Castle Fire and the New York Trade Centre Bombing required not only very effective Incident Management Systems, but strong and visible command.

Chief Anthony L Fusco of the N.Y.F.D. stated that "When the New York Trade Centre was bombed, I knew my officers would do a good job. I could have stayed at some remote control point and directed operations, but I still wanted to see for myself and I think the crews wanted to see me there!". Senior Officers at big incidents have to be seen to be in Command by those at "the coalface".

In training for command, the issue becomes more complex at higher level. The use of effective simulation becomes more important. A number of systems have been developed overseas, and could be the subject of a research project in its own right. The Metropolitan Fire Brigade has limited facilities to continually train and test its Senior Command Officers, in long duration incidents of logistical and tactical complexity. However, it is an area in which additional resources should be directed to exploit the best of overseas systems. The use of simulators must not replace totally the practical use of resources in the field at exercises where personnel skills, personalities, and equipment capabilities are real and more obvious.

BERLIN FIRE BRIGADE

OVERVIEW

The Berlin Fire Brigade is currently being reorganised and re-equipped following reunification on October 3 1990.

The Brigade is responsible for all dangerous situations which affect public safety including fires, explosions floods etc, as well as providing the overall emergency ambulance service in Berlin.

It is also involved in Environmental protection. At one major station, I viewed a range of heavy equipment including cranes and earth moving equipment and a modular transport system similar to that used by the M.F.B.

Language difficulties made discussion on Incident Command Systems etc. a little awkward, but the hospitality and general overview of the Berlin Fire Brigade and its reunification into one Brigade was a great experience.

The Berlin Fire Brigade has 35 full time fire stations and 48 volunteer stations, plus 5 fire stations in industrial plants and 3 at airports.

MAJOR ISSUES

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The managing of extensive resources requires an Incident Management System which allows flexibility and expansion as dictated by the incident. It must be able to cope with multiple incidents and agencies. The co-ordinator of numerous concurrent incidents as in L.A., major explosions in the Central London area impacting on hundreds of thousands of commuters etc. or riots in the Belfast suburbs, require substantial knowledge and confidence of the key personnel in an I.M.S.

The basic planning for major incidents is common to most emergencies whether the source is the action of a hostile state, human failure or whatever. The range of risks which modern society faces is wide and unpredictable.

In L.A. considerable criticism was directed to the L.A. Police Department, quite justifiably, for inadequate planning and preparation. In addition the L.A.F.D. quite clearly had prioritised its operational tactics eg. firefighter safety, City infrastructure etc, whilst the L.A.P.D. had not, and competing demands for Police services impacted on the operational effectiveness of the Fire Department for some considerable time. Formal agreements between agencies must be in place before events occur. This is well established in the London authorities Major Incident plan, and in the Victorian Displan arrangements.

In the U.S., field experience has demonstrated that there are two parallel aspects to emerging incident management - technical and political. The technical aspects include the establishment of command and the creation of operational sectors with identified and defined key roles. The political aspects primarily pertain to the interpersonal and organisational dynamics of incident management, tended to be down played by many fire departments and more emphasised in Police agencies.

The Americans certainly have found that politics influence the administration and management of an I.C.S., with particular emphasis on organisational dynamics, conflict, compromise and communications. The most expedient time to address political issues is during the planning stage when inter-agency issues can be identified.

FIRE SERVICE AND COMMUNITY

Interesting comparisons between attacks on firefighters in the U.S. and the U.K. can be made, due to I believe, the differing roles of the Fire Services and the social environment of the two countries. For example, the Fire Service in the U.S. has extensive involvement in the Emergency medical service, with over 70% of calls of many Fire Departments being medical calls. The Fire Service in the U.K. is not involved in E.M.S. Both countries have had considerable civil disturbances in which fire officers have been badly injured or killed. However, attacks on firefighters in the U.K. appear to be more premeditated and "revengeful" than in the U.S. In Manchester, the trend to stone, verbally abuse and damage stations and appliances has increased dramatically over the past few years in areas of high unemployment, poor housing and general deprivation.

In Manchester, the degree of such incidents increased dramatically after the Strange Ways Prison riots when the public witnessed waterjets being aimed at prisoners on the roof of the prison. (Appendix 4).

It was assumed, incorrectly, that Greater Manchester firefighters were responsible and that firefighters were now "fair game" and would be treated with the same contempt as the Police.

This issue is one which our Fire Service must ensure does not compromise the Fire Services standing with all levels of society here. Melbourne does not experience periods of anarchy in the streets or large housing estates with 35%+ unemployment amongst the youth.

However, as can be seen from overseas experience, the Fire Service liaison or role with Police in civil disturbances is extremely sensitive and critical to ensure long term negative or adverse attitudes are not established within certain strata's of society.

It is my opinion that, whilst firefighters in the U.S. operate in extremely dangerous environments and suffer violent and aggressive outburst against them, their role in E.M.S. maintains a reasonably healthy respect across even the most violent in society. It is however, tenuous and suffered severe setbacks in L.A. during the riots when direct targeting of fire officers occurred.

In Belfast however, the Fire Service has maintained a relatively strong neutral base and has suffered only isolated incidents of serious reaction by mobs. Stoning of appliances however, is common.

THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

The M.F.B. in Melbourne has, for many years been actively involved in Community fund raising projects and enjoys a very credible standing in the community.

There is little indication at the moment that the Fire Service is not perceived in this way by all groups in the multicultural society which makes up Melbourne. However, Melbourne has seen many very major and serious demonstrations involving emotive ethnic and multicultural issues, in addition to protests on visiting Heads of Government, local issues and industrial actions.

The Police have acknowledged an increase in violence at some of these protests and differing techniques to gain publicity.

In discussions during my study tour with senior Fire Service officials, it was commonly stated that any uniformed service is seen as part of the establishment, and during unrest or protests, a legitimate target regardless of the role it is performing. This has already been experienced seriously in N.S.W. and in minor incidents in Melbourne.

Riots in the U.S. and U.K., and more recently Germany, have necessitated Fire Services to put time and effort getting the message across to the Community, especially the ethnic minorities, that the Brigade is a Fire and Rescue Service. The experience of the Greater Manchester Fire Brigade, and the long term damage caused by the communities perception of its role during the Strange Ways Prison Riot, is an indication of the damage that can be done to the Fire Service's independence in the eyes of the community in one incident.

Police and Fire Service Liaison

Good liaison between Fire and Police officers is vital before, during and after any incident which occurs.

This is not a surprising statement by any means to Senior Emergency Service Officers, but is critical during any emergency demonstration or disturbance. For example, a protocol for the Senior Police officer in charge of resources at any disturbance to ensure the Fire Service responds in a manner which does not inflame or provoke a crowd is important. For example, the burning of a effigy at a protest may not require the attendance of the Fire Service, but may result in a report of the fire to the Fire Service from an independent source. Quick accurate and appropriate communications to the Fire Service by the Police Commander must be provided to avoid unnecessary or inappropriate response, which could result in unavoidable involvement and damage the independence of the Fire Service in the eyes of some section of the community.

In Victoria, the relationship between the Police and Fire Services is strong, but a full understanding of each others operational procedures and capabilities amongst middle to Senior level officers requires greater emphasis.

Joint training sessions/exercises between Fire, Police, Ambulance and other agencies are essential, and do occur at a range of levels between the organisations, but must receive continual emphasis and high priority due to ongoing organisational restructuring, resource relocation and operational priorities.

BERLIN FIRE BRIGADE
WATER RESCUE APPLIANCE



GENERAL FIRE APPLIANCES



APPENDIX 1

ITINERARY AND PROGRAMME

- August 24 Los Angeles Fire Department
- Computer Aided Despatch Centre.
- Met with Senior Officers involved in the L.A.F.D. involvement during the riots.
- Visited Fire Station in riot area toured the area with the Battalion Chief.
- August 25-27 Longbeach Fire Department
- Inspected Fire Boat and Port Area.
- Met with Senior Officers and discussed a range of issues.
- Responded to numerous Medical emergencies with paramedic crews.
- Visited Training Establishment.
- Visited the Fire Station at the Navy complex.
- August 28 -
September 2 Dallas
- Attended IAFC Conference and Trade Displays.
- Attended a symposium on "Fire Chiefs at Cutting Edge Preparing for the Challenges of Command" by the Fire Service College U.K.
- General Session:
- New York Trade Centre Fire
 Incident Management System
 Fireground Accountability
- Toured Dallas Fire Department Communications Centre and Training establishment.

September 3-5 Miami Fire Department

Visited Miami Fire Training Academy.

Responded to E.M.S. Incidents.

September 7-11 London Fire Brigade

Major Incident Management Briefings.

Communications and Despatch Centre.

Visited Southwark Training Complex.

Visited Area Command Headquarters.

September 12-14 Greater Manchester Fire Brigade

Briefings on role in Civil Disturbances and a range of operational matters.

Visited Bury Fire Station.

Attended Driving School.

Communications and Despatch Centre.

Attended Greater Manchester Police Headquarters to study management and communications of major incidents.

Attended fire calls with Assistant Divisional Officer.

September 15-18 Northern Ireland Fire Brigade

Toured areas of concern to the Fire Service.

Visited R.V.C. Command and Information Room.

Visited Port area and Fire Beat arrangements.

Discussions on operational issues with Senior Officers.

Visited several Fire Stations.

September 19-22 Berlin Fire Brigade

Briefed on the structure and role of the Fire Brigade.

Demonstration of Equipment.

Communications and Despatch Centre.

Fire Boat and Maritime Firefighting facilities.

September 23-25 Hong Kong Fire Brigade

Visited Communications and Despatch Centre.

Met with Senior Brigade officials.

Visited Fire Station.

APPENDIX 2

DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS

L.A. City Fire Department

Tactical Alert Operations Manual - L.A. City Fire Department.

Long Beach Fire Department

High Rise Incident Command Manual.

Greater Manchester County Fire Service

Brigade Exercise Report.

Attacks on Firefighters and Equipment.

Civil Unrest, the Problem.

Australian Major Aircraft Accident. (P.I.A. conducted by officers of the G.M.C.F.S.)

London Fire and Civil Defence Authority

Major Incident Procedures - Trainers Notes.

People Protecting People.

Major Incident Procedures (LFB, Metropolitan Police, London Ambulance, City of London Police).

Dealing with Disaster (Home office).

Disaster - Dealing with the practical and emotional aftermath.

Northern Ireland Fire Brigade

Preplanning Fire Brigade Operations to deal with Terrorist Bomb Incidents.

General Information Brochure.

Berlin Fire Brigade

General Information Kit.

F.E.M.A.

Report of the Joint Fire/Police Task Force on Civil Unrest.

PROCEDURES

London Fire and Civil Defence Authority

Fire Brigade Procedures following Terrorist Incidents.
Civil Disturbances.
Bomb Incidents.
Incident Command Procedures.
Major Incident Procedure.
Civil Disturbances, Draft Home Office document.

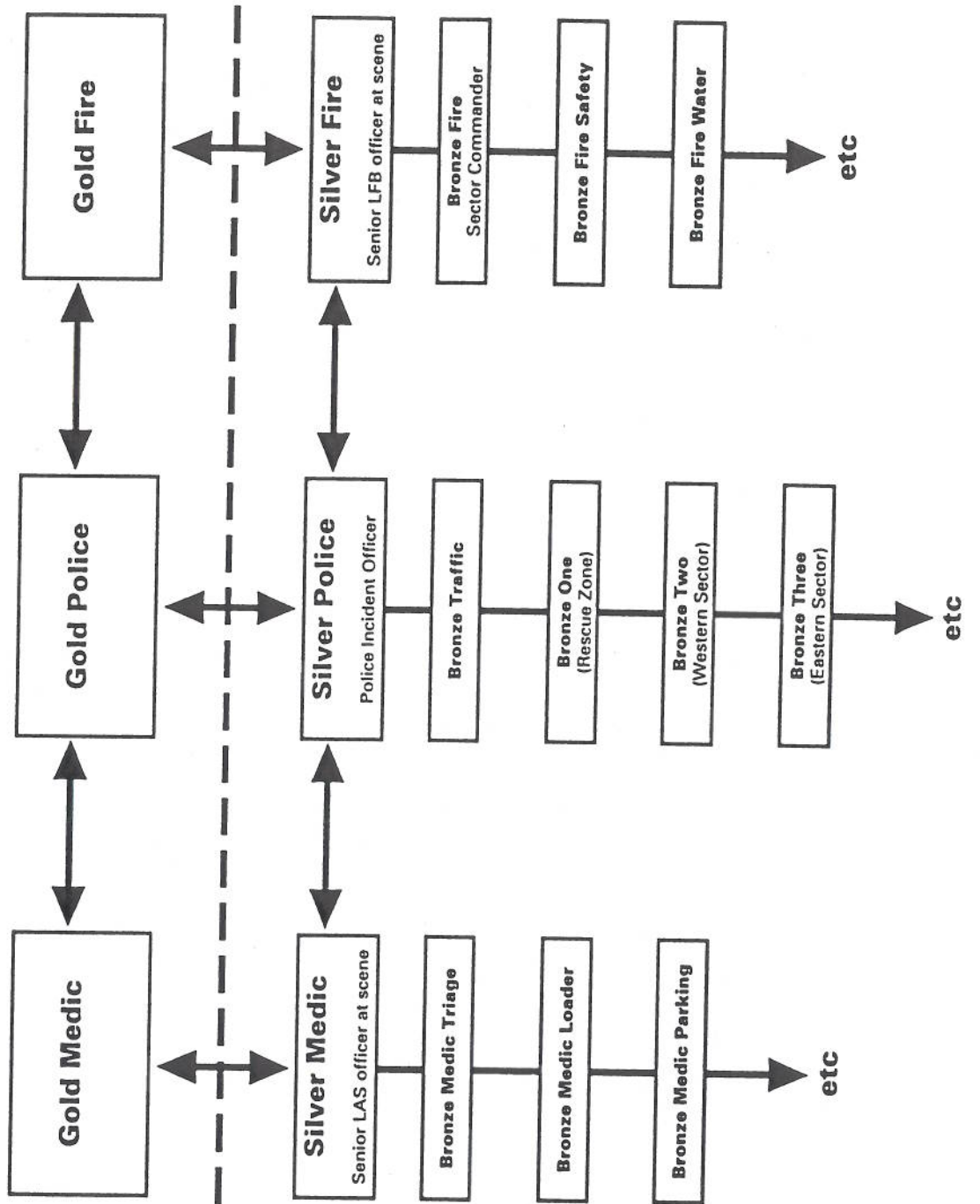
Northern Ireland Fire Brigade

Civil Disturbances and/or Terrorist actions.
Incidents involving Improvised explosive devices.

Miscellaneous

Disaster Recovery in the Information Age - Digital Computer Services.
Report on terrorist explosion and Fire at British Gas, Warrington, February 1993.
Standards of Fire Cover - Aerial appliances.
Testing Command skills with Simulation (Fire Service College).
Preparing for the Challenge of Command (Fire Service College).
The Fire at Windsor Castle (Fire Service College).
Grooming Future Chiefs (Fire Service College).
Numerous other brochures, notes and information from all Fire Services on a range of issues.

APPENDIX 3



MANCHESTER FIRE BRIGADE

APPENDIX 4

INCIDENT NUMBER	DATE	LOCATION	STATION AREA	NATURE
1089	6.01.92	Cheetham	A11	Stones thrown
2246	12.01.92	Gorton	E53	Stones thrown through Fire Station window
3398	18.01.92	Stockport	D41	Air rifle fired at Station
3472	18.01.92	Salford	A12	Missiles thrown at appliance from flats
4153	21.01.92	Cheetham	A11	Appliance stoned by youths
0516	3.02.92	Salford 7	A11	Bricks thrown at two Firemen by school children
1868	9.02.92	Urmston	A16	Occupiers at trace address abusive to F.S. Personnel.
6533	29.02.92	Salford	A10	Stones thrown at Crews attending a car fire
0712	4.03.92	Blackley	E51	Person firing air rifle at Fire Service Personnel on Station Yard.
4604	22.03.92	Wigan Kitt Green	B24	Fire Crews Subjected to abuse and stone throwing
5009	23.03.92	Wigan Kitt Green	B24	Bricks thrown at Fire Crews and Appliance
5431	26.03.92	Wigan Kitt Green	B24	Youths throwing missiles
5639	27.03.92	Fairbank Ave. Moss Side	D44	Crews verbally abused
3617	12.04.92	Laburnan Rd. Oldham	C33	Stones thrown at the appliance
3626	12.04.92	Laburnan Rd. Oldham	C33	Stones thrown at the appliance
3818	13.04.92	Wildmore Ave. Oldham	C33	Appliances stoned by youths
4562	16.0.492	Adswold Stockport	D47	Appliance and crews stoned by group of youths
6859	25.04.92	Worsley Hall Wigan	B24	Bricks thrown by youths at personnel and appliances
7310	27.04.92	Victoria Park Rusholme	E53	Youths throwing missiles

INCIDENT NUMBER	DATE	LOCATION	STATION AREA	NATURE
7584	28.04.92	Wildmore Ave. Oldham	C33	Youths throwing stones at personnel and appliances
7789	29.04.92	Bradford Manchester	E52	Gypsies slashing Fire Service hose. Make pumps 2 for security.
1189	5.05.92	Peel Lane Little Hulton	B23	Fire Service personnel attacked by youths throwing stones
1994	8.05.92	Holts Est., Oldham	C33	Bricks thrown at appliance and crew (brick hit Fireman in back but no injury).
5672	21.05.92	Royce Road Hulme	D44	Missile thrown at appliance
6267	23.05.92	Hulme Manchester	D44	Bricks thrown at appliance
7616	27.05.92	Greyfriars Court Salford	A10	Crews withdrawn following advice from Police due to youths firing air rifles in the area
8941	31.05.92	Beswick Manchester	E52	Abuse from youth
0169	1.06.92	Beswick Manchester	E52	Stones thrown at appliances
601	2.07.92	Salford	A10	Youths throwing missiles (Fire Officer injured)
1361	6.07.92	Salford	A10	Fire Service shot at
1732	6.07.92	Salford	A10	Police and Fire Service shot at with hand gun, ladder hit on appliance
3741	14.07.92	Salford	A10	Stones and metal objects thrown at fire crew and appliance