

DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF DIES IN CITY BLAZE

DEPUTY-CHIEF FIRE OFFICER L. GOODMAN, of the New Plymouth Fire Brigade died while fighting a fire in the basement of Egmont Chambers, Egmont Street, New Plymouth, this afternoon.

Mr. Goodman, who was in charge of the fire brigade's efforts to locate the seat of a fire in the basement of Messrs. Medley and Henderson's premises, had earlier become exhausted while endeavouring to make his way through dense fumes which came from the basement.

The outbreak occurred at 3.20 p.m., and Mr. Goodman had been in the basement for more than an hour before his body was removed after the basement had been flooded. For two hours, Mr. Goodman and other firemen, and fire police had toiled valiantly to get to the seat of the fire.

At 5.40 p.m. firemen used ropes to haul Deputy Chief Fire Officer Goodman from the flooded basement. The body was moved into a waiting ambulance as the great crowd stood in hushed silence.

Mr. Goodman had been in the basement for the greater part of one and a-half hours up to the time his body was brought out.

Hopes that he might be alive diminished when the smoke of the fire almost ceased after 5.15 p.m. A powerful electric floodlight was supplied by the City Electricity Department and ropes were used to get Mr. Goodman up to the floor.

Doctors rushed into the shop to examine Mr. Goodman when he had been brought to the shop floor.

The fire was seated in the basement of Egmont Chambers, owned by the N.I.M.U. and a general alarm at 3.20 brought two engines and fire police to the scene.

The basement is occupied by Messrs. Medley and Henderson, suppliers of office equipment, whose shop premises are above. The two sections are separated by a solid concrete floor. Also on the ground floor is the tobacconist and hair-dresser's shop of Mr. George Gillington.

The first floor is occupied by Messrs. Edward Lumley and Sons (N.Z.) Ltd., insurance representatives, while the Taranaki Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union and O'Riordan's Land Agency are on the top floor. The fire affected only the basement and ground floor.

Alarm given

The alarm was given when a clerk at the National Airways Office, which is opposite, noticed smoke issuing from the rear of the two-storied building, and telephoned Mr. Medley, as well as the fire brigade.

The basement, which Messrs. Medley and Henderson use as their workshop, contained at least 10 gallons of white spirit, a considerable amount of stock, mainly wrapped in cardboard, and almost the whole of the typewriters of the commercial classes of the Waitara, Stratford and Hawera Technical High Schools, which the firm is overhauling during the school holidays.

It took masked firemen more than 10 minutes to find the seat of the fire, down a small staircase into the concrete basement, but the fumes were so dense that little progress could be made.

The cause of the fire is a mystery. Mr. R. Henderson, one of the partners in the firm of Medley and Henderson, was in the basement early this morning when everything was normal.

In the first hour, the firemen used six containers of oxygen with their respirators, and soon after 4 p.m. a second lead of hose was brought into play. It was learned soon after 4.20 p.m. that a small staircase leading

to the basement had apparently been burned, and that Mr. Goodman was unable to find his way back to the ground floor of the building.

St. John Ambulance officers in attendance administered to exhausted firemen who could stand only a few minutes in the fumes, which even had a choking effect on the crowd yards away from the shop.

Dr. R. N. Wallis, and the Taranaki Hospital Board's ambulance were called at about 4.30 p.m., at



MR. L. H. GOODMAN (with cap badge showing) photographed during a Fire Prevention Week instruction course in New Plymouth last November.

which stage firemen could only crawl through the shop on hands and knees.

At 4.50 p.m., Mr. S. W. Sadler, 3rd fire officer came out of the building for the second time in a partly exhausted condition, but he was able to carry on his work, while other firemen recovered after a brief rest in the ambulance and attention by the ambulance attendants and St. John Ambulance officers.

Desperate attempt

About the same time the fire-tender arrived from Bell Block airport, and Mr. A. Scott, the airport fire officer, donned an asbestos crash fire suit in a desperate attempt to enter the building and find Mr. Goodman.

Mr. Scott lost no time in entering the building, but he was in a matter of only seconds when he had to disappoint the anxious firemen by returning to say that his suit prevented him from seeing anything when there were no actual flames.

At 5.10 fresh oxygen equipment was rushed in. Five times in 10 minutes masked men groped through the choking black smoke, but each time they came back without success.

Red Cross workers brought cups of tea to smoke-blackened rescuers. A hole was opened in the floor of the basement above the Mangatuku Stream soon after 5 o'clock. Firemen put a lead of hose in apparently a renewed effort to flood the basement.

Meanwhile as the crowd grew to huge proportions police and traffic reinforcements were brought in. Traffic patrol cars with public address systems cruised up and down the street ordering the crowd to keep back.

Soon after 5.15 p.m. a searching fireman returned to the street to tell other firemen that he had seen Mr. Goodman in the basement. From his remarks and general demeanour it was apparent that there was then no chance of saving the fire officer.

By this time the basement was probably deeply flooded as only a slight wisp of smoke was visible.

The chief fire officer, Mr. L. F. Hartley, is absent from New Plymouth.

Mr. Goodman, who was 45, was married with two school age daughters. He was appointed New Plymouth's deputy chief fire officer, in succession to the late Mr. A. W. Gooftwin, in October last year.

SOUTHERN DIVISION

SENIOR GRADE

Hawera 14 v. Kaponga 2.
 Eltham 30 v. Waimate 11.
 Opunake 5 v. Okalawa 0.
 Patea 14 v. Stratford O.B. 6.
 Athletic a bye.

POINTS TABLE

	P.	W.	D.	L.	For	Ag.	Ch.
Eltham	6	5	-	1	105	40	10
Opunake	6	5	-	1	55	40	10
Hawera	6	4	-	2	68	46	8
Patea	5	4	-	1	54	31	8
Waimate	5	3	-	2	52	64	6
S.O.B.	5	3	-	2	76	36	6
Okalawa	5	-	-	5	25	74	-
Kaponga	5	-	-	5	20	46	-
Athletic	5	-	-	5	21	101	-

JUNIOR GRADE

Hawera 6 v. Patea 0.

Athletic 18 v. Okalawa 3.

THIRD GRADE

Patea 21 v. Hawera 2.

Opunake 17 v. Hawera T.H.S. A. 0.

FOURTH GRADE

Hawera 11 v. Athletic 3.

Opunake H.S. 22 v. Patea 3

Waimate 8 v. Opunake 3.

LEAGUE

LEAGUE

SENIOR GRADE

Hawera 38 v. Athletic 18.

Patea 39 v. Waitara 12.

SENIOR RESERVE GRADE

Englewood beat Patea by default.

Waitara 17 v. Hawera 5.

HOCKEY

SENIOR MEN

NORTHERN DIVISION

N.P. 5 v. Stratford 1.

SENIOR WOMEN

SOUTH DIVISION

Stratford T.H.S. 6 v. Rovers 0.

Hawera T.H.S. 5 v. Stratford Old Girls B 2.