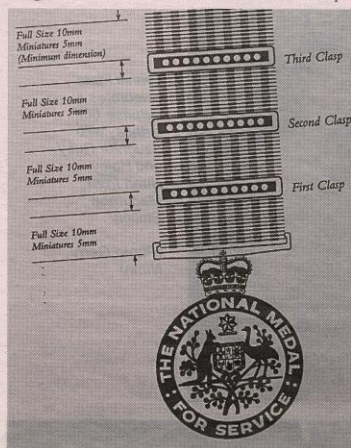


# Well Deserved Award for District Pioneer

by Veronica Hartnett  
Mintabie

A special ceremony was held recently in Mintabie for a resident who was instrumental in setting up an essential service in both Mintabie and Cooper Pedy.

Bill McDougall was the main driver for the formation of the Mine Rescue Squad in both communities, and his work with that organisation and later the SES resulted in him being honoured with the SES Service Medal and clasp.



Bill's medal with clasp

Bill, a very fit and active miner in his late 80s has recently retired to Mintabie after mining at Lambina since the mid 90s. He had no idea he was to receive his award and was coerced to the ceremony under the notion that he was to participate in a working bee.

The Cooper Pedy Mine Rescue Squad was formed in 1970, under Bills guidance. There was an early membership of about 12, all of who saw a need for the service given the growing number of miners with the possibility of serious accidents occurring.

Bill is eager to credit others with the success of the unit. He speaks of the help provided by the Cooper Pedy Police.

*In our endeavours to become established the Cooper Pedy Police assisted us by providing a meeting place and a lightweight truck for transporting our equipment to training and to rescue scenes as required.*



Bill McDougall receives his award from Dermot, SES Head Office



CFS Captain Jill Krebs talks to Bill about his early work with the Mine Rescue Squad

Bill remained as a founding member of the Mines Rescue Squad until he moved to Mintabie in 1986. Modestly he plays down his crucial role of setting up a similar organisation in his new community.

*After my arrival I was asked to help establish a Mine Rescue Service there. I agreed to give it a try. As one of a team of new members I used my previous experience to help establish the Rescue Service. Input towards this requirement came from others besides me and did a great deal in bringing about a good, well equipped working unit.*

What Bill doesn't mention is that in both communities there was a huge amount of work to be done in order to set up units capable of providing a safe, early response unit in the event of a mine accident. Everything had to be done from scratch. Rescue equipment could not just be bought, it had to be developed. Bill speaks of how he came up with the idea of a tripod windlass capable of being able to winch an injured miner out of a shaft, and then obtaining help in getting this cutting-edge equipment designed and made.

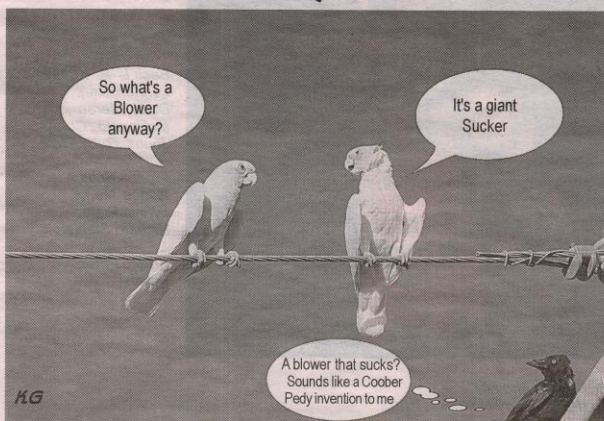
Bill was the trainer for the Mine Rescue Squad, setting up training sessions each Saturday so that the group was prepared for pretty well every eventuality. He does note, however, that...

*To the credit of Mintabie miners there were few mining accidents during the years I spent there. One mining accident occurred, fortunately, on the day of a Flying Doctor visit. A miner was quite severely injured when he fell from his bulldozer onto the ramp of his dozer cut. The Flying Doctor was able to attend at the accident scene and helped the Mine Rescue personnel in the treatment and retrieval of the patient. It was a tough climb for the stretcher team, though, in bringing the patient safely out of the deep cut.*

Bill remembers that the Mine Rescue Squad soon became a general emergency unit, working with the Mintabie nursing service to respond to whatever emergency occurred, including road traffic accidents. In other words, performing a similar task to that of the SES today.

All of the miners and the general community of both Mintabie and Cooper Pedy owes a debt of gratitude to Bill McDougall and the members of his first team of Mine Rescue personnel, as it was their voluntary work which ensured the pioneer miners felt a greater sense of security as they went about their hard and often isolated work deep under the ground. Our current services have built on the foundations of that early Mine Rescue Squad so that life in these tough outback mining communities is safer. Thanks Bill and your mates! You deserve every award and recognition possible.

## Bird's eye View



Thursday 14 March 2013

Cooper Pedy Regional Times

### DISTRICT COUNCIL OF COOPER PEDY



### \*\*\*ATTENTION TO OWNERS OF MINING EQUIPMENT\*\*\*

Council offers a free service to assist with blower or equipment moves to and from the opal fields and around the town of Cooper Pedy.

This service is offered Monday to Friday during business hours of 7:00am to 3:30pm and at least 24 hours notice is required.

Please contact Council each time you require to move any equipment and the Electricity staff will assist to ensure that damage does not occur to any of the power lines and associated equipment.

If these moves are made unassisted - any damaged caused by a blower or equipment replacement costs will be charged to the offender.

Distribution Supervisor  
Electricity Supply

Page 7