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My name is Michael Thomas Dowden. I am currently posted to the Red Watch, North Kensington and my current role is Watch Manager B. I have been in role at North Kensington for since February 2015.

On ~~the~~ Tuesday the 13th June 2017 I reported for duty at 2000hrs and was riding OIC of North Kensingtons Pump Ladder, G271.

At 00:55 hrs on the 14th June 2017 G271 and G272 were mobilised to a fire in flat 16 Grenfell Tower, incident number 076029.

En route to the incident control informed me via ~~radio~~ the main scheme radio further calls to fire were being received. This information was relayed to my crew on the appliance.

en route to the incident I accessed my mobile data terminal for the risk information for Grenfell Tower, and printed off the tactical plan details.

Both G271 and G272 approached the incident from Bore Road turning right into Grenfell Road.

Michael Dowden 

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G271 was positioned on the south west corner of Grenfell Tower. This was to allow the augmenting of the Dry riser.

I dismounted from the appliance and looked up at Grenfell Tower. On the Southern face of the block I could see a fire at the fourth floor level. It appeared to be confined to one compartment.

I was able to establish contact with the resident of the flat as he was at ground floor level. I asked him if anyone was in the property to which he replied 'no'. Everyone is out. I asked him what was on fire and he replied "its my fridge which is in my kitchen".

I briefed Cn Chris Secrett to set up the bridge head on the 2nd floor. Once he confirmed his water supply he was to commit BA.

I received a message from Cn Secrett that he could not command the fire lift as it was not operating.

Michael Bowden ~~inset~~

I recieved Airthe traffic from CM ^③ Secrett that he now had a water supply and he was ready to make a compartment entry.

I sent radio traffic ^{via the hand held radio} to oncoming appliances that I would need a BA crew from each appliance to report to the bridgehead on the 2nd floor.

G331, Kensingtons pump ladder was now in attendance. I detailed Wm Brian O'Reefe to go to the bridgehead liaise with CM Secrett and manage the BA resources.

I then detailed a crew from G331 to make ready a covering Jet, but not to point it into the compartment.

I requested CM Dave Davies to formulate me a message. This was done and sent.

I noticed that the fire had started to ignite the external cladding and was behaving similar to when magnesium/Aluminium burns, a almost sparkly effect.

I requested a grand motor to be laid out to supplement the covering Jet if required.

Michael Bousen ~~and~~

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At this point the external cladding ~~was~~ was becoming increasingly involved at a rapid rate. Owing to this fact I increased the resources to 6 pumps, 8 pumps, 10 pumps, 15 pumps (persons reported), 20 pumps, 25 pumps and 2 FRU's and 2 ALP's. This was resourced within a small time frame owing to the rapid fire growth at the external cladding. During my 15 year career as a fire fighter and officer I have never experienced such a rapid growth in fire on the external of a building.

As I had further resourced the incident more officers and fire fighters were now in attendance. I detailed Wm Paul Watson of Hammersmiths Pump Ladder to manage a BA staging area. He was to directly liaise with Wm Brian O'Keefe and feed the required BA weavers to the Bridgehead. At this point I was really concerned of the rapid fire growth on the external of the building as it had by now reached roof level.

Michael Dorden ~~and~~

Paddington Aerial appliance was now in attendance and I directed to site the appliance on the southern face and provide a water tower to the alight external cladding. The ground monitor was also working at this point. It seemed that we couldn't apply enough water to the external cladding as the rate at which the cladding was igniting was increasing.

Station Manager Loft reported to me along with station manager Andy Walton. I handed over to them that I currently had no reports of people trapped but on the 11th + 16th floors two residents were unable to leave due to illness + mobility issues. This information was received from Wm O'Keefe at the bridgehead. A team leader from the command unit was now in attendance and stated we were now receiving FSG calls. A decision was made that SM Loft would take ownership of the FSG calls and SM Walton would now take over as incident commander.

Michael Dowler 

I handed over to SM Walton (6) and detailed my actions up until this point, the resources in attendance and requested and the structure in place.

I was tasked by SM Andy Walton to stay at ground floor level and assist him as dic.

I can recall that a group manager approached us, took over from SM Walton.

We were both tasked to make our way to the fire sector + bridgehead to liaise with WM O'Keefe. - Making my way to the bridgehead I could see that the southern face of Arentell Tower was well alight. When I reached the bridgehead I remembered that CM Secrett had stated he couldn't command the fire lift. I was also unsuccessful in trying to operate the fire lift with an express key. At the Bridgehead I liaised with WM O'Keefe and another WM. We were detailing BA wearers to the location of the FSG calls being received. To assist in rescuing the casualties BA sets were being used as respiratory protection.

because of the severity of the ⁷ conditions on some floors. This is again something I have never witnessed in my 15 year fire service career. Further tasks throughout the incident involved carrying and assisting casualties out of the block to the triage area, helping resource the BA staging area, the hydration and welfare of fire fighting crews. I cannot be time specific with this tasks owing to the dynamic nature of this incident.

In my career within the LFB I have never witnessed or been involved with such a complex and challenging incident. This is in relation to the unusual and rapid fire growth on the external of the building and the large numbers of casualties involved.

Michael Dowden ~~works~~