

HISTORY OF THE *Queensland Ambulance*

Emerald

A public meeting chaired by Mr Hastings Donaldson, Chairperson of the Emerald Shire Council, was held on 24 September 1941, for the purpose of finding ways and means to form an ambulance service in the town and district of Emerald. It is believed that this move was originated by Mr Len Williams (who later became a member of the Emerald Committee) after he witnessed an injured stockman being taken from a train in Emerald and loaded onto a mattress on the tray of a motor truck which conveyed him to the local hospital. He was aware that towns smaller than Emerald had their own ambulance services and he could see no good reason why a service could not be established locally.

The outcome of this meeting was that an Honorary Centre was established under the control of the Springsure Centre. An Advisory Committee was elected consisting of the following members: G. Golik (Chairperson), L.E. Williams (Honorary Treasurer), S. King (Honorary Secretary), E. Coombs, J. Davidson, J.B. Davis, H. Barry and Rev G. Dann.

Mr G. Golik was appointed Honorary Officer-in-Charge and he was assisted by Honorary Bearers P.F. Hoffback, E.E.J. Coombs, R.E. Alexander, J.T. Allenby, V.F. Radloff, T.J. Pill, A.J. Sewell, J.E. Franklin and J. Davidson.

In 1943 the Honorary Centre became a Sub-Centre and ambulance officer J.J. Phillips of the Mackay Centre was appointed Officer-in-Charge. A house in Egerton Street was purchased and the service was operated from that place until 1946.

On 5 March 1945 Emerald was gazetted as a self-governing Centre and, on the recommendation of the Promotion Board in Brisbane, Superintendent E.C. (Chas) Haswell of Springsure was appointed Superintendent and Secretary.



First Superintendent E.C. Haswell

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When additional space was required in 1946, the Centre was moved to premises belonging to Mr E. McInnes, still in Egerton Street. This was the headquarters until 1952, when the present residence, corner of Egerton and Anakie Street was purchased from Mr R. Colwell. Temporary sheds were erected to accommodate the vehicles and sections of the residence were converted into a casualty room and office.

Some alterations and repairs were later made, but the arrangement was never meant to be permanent, so that in July 1963, probably the greatest step in the history of the Centre occurred with the opening of the present Centre building which cost \$17,000. Since the opening date the building has undergone a number of additions and alterations.

Chas Haswell retired in April 1962 after 52 years of meritorious service (one of six officers to accumulate 50 years or more of service in the State up to that time). Prior to becoming a permanent ambulance officer, he was employed at the Mount Morgan Mine at the time of underground mining. He retained his interest in mining throughout his life. He joined the staff of the Mount Morgan Centre prior to World War I. Following war service in Gallipoli (he participated in the original landing of the Anzacs), Egypt and France, he re-joined the Mount Morgan staff. Before establishing the Springsure Centre he served at the Wowan and Banana Sub-Centres. Following his retirement, he was made a Serving Brother of the Order of St John of Jerusalem.

The next Superintendent was Bob Haswell (the son of Chas) who had been appointed as an ambulance officer at Emerald in 1951.

With the development occurring in the mining industry in the Blackwater Area, it was seen that it would be an increasingly difficult task to provide an efficient ambulance service to that area from the Emerald Centre. In July 1966, the first extension of the service was made, with the opening of a first aid station at the Utah mine site. The Utah Company supplied the first aid room and a vehicle and Ambulance Officer R. Molyneux was stationed there, not only for the work in connection with the mine development, but also to serve the surrounding area.

The Emerald Centre now has six Officers-in-Charge based at Blackwater, Utah mine site, Gemfields, Middlemount, Capella and Tieri. There are also vehicles based at German Creek, Oakey Creek, Curragh, Gregory and Gordonstone mine sites.

In 1984 Superintendent Bob Haswell was appointed Superintendent of the Toowoomba Centre and was succeeded by the present Superintendent Philip Crawford.

Since the inception of the Emerald Centre as an independent Centre only three people have filled the position of Chairperson of the Committee:

1945 – 1984	Mr Bill Loch
1984 –	Dr Charles Whitchurch
Present occupant Chairperson	Mr Charles Munro

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Stations attached to Emerald Centre:

Blackwater

In 1968 a Sub-Centre building was completed in the fast-growing town of Blackwater with Mr G.G. Miller being appointed Officer-in-Charge. Blackwater has grown since its conception from a one-man Centre to its present size of five vehicles and six staff, with one of these officers supplying relief at the Utah mine site.

Blackwater is a dormitory town for five mines - Utah, South Blackwater, CSR Thiess South Blackwater, Cook Colliery, CSR Thiess Yarrabee and Curragh Queensland Mining.

The following have served as Officers-in-Charge: G. Miller, N. Pegg, G. Rodger, J. Laws, R. Davis, G. Becker, K. McEwan, J. Rimmer and F. Lawrence, the present Officer-in-Charge.

Blackwater has a fleet comprising two Falcon squarelines, one Ford modular unit and one Holden one-tonner.

The ambulance service has an Officer-in-Charge and a vehicle stationed at Utah and a Toyota 4WD stationed at Curragh mine sites. In addition to the new Sub-Centre building and officer-in-charge's residence, the Centre also owns a duplex unit for staff accommodation. Present staff members are Officer-in-Charge F. Lawrence, Senior Ambulance Officer T. Alloway, Ambulance Officers G. Maher, L. Baumann, T. Geysing and R. Raymond.

Middlemount

The township of Middlemount is a dormitory town for the operation of German Creek Mine and is situated 150 kilometres north-east of Emerald. An ambulance service was established in this town in 1981 with Officer G. Burrows taking up duties as Officer-in-Charge in September 1982 followed by Ambulance Officer D. Lewin who has since taken the position of Officer-in-Charge. Officer R. Muller took up duties as the second officer at Middlemount. He left in November 1985 and was replaced by Officer Ian Webb, until his appointment to Officer-in-Charge at Capella. Officer Webb was replaced by Officer K. Mayers who was replaced by Officer Shane Hayes.

The Centre building opened on 19 March 1983. The Centre has two vehicles, a Falcon square line and an F100 4WD, based at Middlemount and an F100 4WD at the mine site.

Capella

Capella QATB's new building was opened on 3 December 1983. Funds for this building were raised by a very hard working Benefit Committee which has continued to this date to support this service in Capella. One of the major sponsors of this service has been the Capella Rodeo Committee which in September 1985 donated a new 4WD ambulance to the Centre.

The first Officer-in-Charge in Capella was Officer Ray Smith who took up his position in October 1983. He was followed by Officer Noel Kross, Officer Ian Webb and Officer David Knight. This Centre has two vehicles - a Falcon square line and a Toyota 4WD.

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Capella is in an agricultural and grazing district. In recent times, it has become the home of miners from Gregory Mine. Capella's present Senior Ambulance Officer, John Newkirk, is stationed in Capella and supplies relief for the Officers-in-Charge in Capella and Tieri.

Tieri

Tieri is the dormitory town for Oakey Creek Coal Mine where the ambulance has a vehicle permanently placed at the mine site. Tieri Centre was opened on 6 October 1984. Mr C. Fixter was the first Officer-in-Charge and took up his position in February 1984. He was followed by Officer Noel Kross. The Centre is largely dependent on the mine activities as the town was built specifically to service Oakey Creek Mine.

Tieri has a Ford F100 vehicle with an F100 4WD stationed at the mine site.

Gemfields

Gemfields QATB is situated in the hub of the gem mining industry. The Centre was opened in December 1989 with funds being raised by a very hard-working Committee that is well supported by the Gemfields community.

Mr Michael Sleeman is the first Officer-in-Charge. Gemfields ambulance has an F100 ambulance vehicle.