

HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance

Mossman

The Mossman Centre of the QATB was established in 1921.

Promoted by a desire to render much-needed first aid to the people of the district, the members of Dr Sim's ambulance class called a meeting of residents at Lunn's Hall on 3 June 1921. Although the attendance was meagre, there was sufficient enthusiasm to determine to form a Branch Centre of the QATB.

A Provisional Committee, in accordance with the Brigade Rules, was later formed and operations commenced in July. The Committee consisted of G.W. Muntz (Chairperson), E.A. Owens (Hon Treasurer), E. Crank, C. Crees, D. Jack, G. Lendich and J. Simmonds with J. McCulloch as Hon Secretary.

This Committee appointed Mr J. Hendry (who had resigned from the position of Superintendent of the South Johnstone Centre) to the position of Superintendent of the Mossman Centre, and McCulloch, Owens and A.R. Ziegler as Honorary Bearers.

The first Centre building which was rented was located near the site of the National Bank in Mill Street. The Committee resolved that, as soon as a suitable piece of freehold land could be secured, it would erect a building to accommodate a married man, if necessary, with offices and a lecture room in which the Honorary Officers could be accommodated and classes continued by the Superintendent.

Transport of patients was one of the first problems to overcome. At first patients were transported to Port Douglas by the use of a litter and flat top carriage from the Mossman Mill. The patient would be loaded onto the litter, taken to the Mossman Mill and, after steam was raised on the locomotive engine, the patient would be loaded on to the flat top and then transported to Port Douglas Hospital.

Later a petrol driven rail motor was purchased. This vehicle was housed at the Mossman Mill and patients were transferred from the litter to it prior to transport to Hospital. Whenever the rail motor met with a train en route it would have to be removed from the line to allow the train to pass.

This method of transport provided to be time consuming so the Committee hired a taxi from Mr D.E. Jack to transport patients by road. This also had its drawbacks, especially in bad weather, when the road journey of 14 miles (22 km) would take up to four hours. Eventually, the Committee decided to purchase the taxi (an old Studebaker) and this became the Centre's first road ambulance vehicle.

Superintendent Hendry tendered his resignation while on holidays, on 25 September 1925. Honorary Bearer A.R. Ziegler carried on the Brigade work up to the time Superintendent M.A. Whittington of Clermont was appointed in December. Superintendent Whittington took office and carried on until his appointment as Superintendent of the Innisfail Centre in May 1928.



Superintendent A.R. Ziegler

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It was during Superintendent Whittington's time in office that the old Queensland National Bank building at Port Douglas was purchased and moved to the site of the present Brigade premises. Deputy Superintendent Henry Andersen of the Cairns Centre was appointed to the position of Superintendent at Mossman following the resignation of Superintendent Whittington. In later years, two of Henry's sons served the Brigade in different capacities. Henry Jnr. served on the permanent staff of the Cairns, Gordonvale and Brisbane Centres and later, while a public servant, was the Mossman Centre's representative on the QATB Executive Committee in Brisbane. Pat Andersen was a member of the Mossman Committee for 25 years, six of which were spent as Chairperson.



Centre building

The Mossman Hospital was opened in 1931 and this made it more convenient and easier for the transport of patients from Mossman (where the bulk of the people in the Mossman ambulance area lived) to the local hospital.

Superintendent Henry Andersen passed away in 1938 and Honorary Bearer A.R. 'Dick' Ziegler was appointed to the vacant position.

Superintendent Ziegler retired in August 1964 after serving the Mossman Centre for a period of 43 years. It was during his term in office that much progress was noted. With the generous support of the public and the careful handling of finance, a new modern building at a cost of \$27,000 was opened free of debt in October 1963. The official opening was performed by Mr J.A. Turner, President of the QATB Executive Committee. Driver Bearer Gordon Jones of the Innisfail Centre was appointed as Superintendent following the retirement of Dick Ziegler and Gordon held the position until his retirement in 1988.

Superintendent Ron James of the Hughenden Centre was then appointed to the vacant position.

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During 1980 land was acquired at Port Douglas as a site for a future Sub-Centre building. In 1982 a Committee was formed at Port Douglas for the purpose of raising funds for the construction of the Sub-Centre. A new Sub-Centre and residence for the Officer-in-Charge were erected at a tender price of \$208,400 and the official opening took place on 1 September 1990.

Since the establishment of the Centre the following people have filled the position of Chairperson of the Committee:

1921 – 1923	G.W. Muntz
1923 – 1924	J.M. Blain
1924 – 1937	G. Lendich
1937 – 1945	W.E. Jones
1945 – 1951	W.S. Johnston
1951 – 1981	O.R. Andrews MBE
1981 – 1987	P.W. Andersen
Present occupant Chairperson	R.D. Verrie