

HISTORY OF THE *Queensland Ambulance*

Beenleigh

In March 1919, a public meeting was held at the Beenleigh School of Arts to discuss the question of establishing a QATB Centre in the town. Quite a number of interested people attended the meeting including W.D. Grimes (Treasurer), W.H. Morse (Superintendent and Secretary) of the Brisbane Centre Committee and W.G. Wilson, State Secretary.

Following addresses by Grimes and Wilson, two propositions were put to the meeting - (1) The establishment of a Sub-Centre attached to the Brisbane Centre or (2) The establishment of a self-governing Centre. The meeting thought that Beenleigh was large enough to support an independent Centre.

A provisional committee was elected - C.W. Lubach (Chairperson), W.H. Simmonds (Hon Treasurer), W. Heck, H. Saverin, C.G. Spann, C.S.E. Doeblien and W.E. Benfer. During the month of October Mr Simmonds resigned and Mr Dauth was appointed to the Committee and to the position of Honorary Treasurer.

Mr T.H. Walker, who had been connected with the QATB in Brisbane, Bundaberg and Dalby was recommended by the Brisbane Committee for Superintendent and Secretary, and was subsequently appointed to that position.

Upon taking up duty Superintendent Walker canvassed the district for the necessary funds to purchase an ambulance car, an order having been given for a six-cylinder Oakland chassis, costing £375. This chassis was placed in the hands of Peels Ltd, Coach Builders of South Brisbane, to have a suitable ambulance body constructed, costing £155. By the time the Superintendent had completed the canvass of the district at the end of May, the completed car was brought to Beenleigh in June and placed in the intended Centre premises at City Road. These premises were subsequently purchased and were the location of ambulance operations until 1984.

The work of the Brigade for the first six months shows a total of 116 cases entailing a travel of 3098 miles. There were 220 contributors.

During 1920 Honorary Centres were opened at Bethania with Honorary Bearer T.A. Tesch in charge and at Russell Island with Honorary Bearer J. Jaynes in charge. Mr Jaynes was later succeeded by Mr Alex McKenzie. Mr G. Humburg was appointed as honorary member driver at Beenleigh.

In the 1922-23 financial year, Mr A. Weeks of Waterford was appointed Honorary Bearer, and supplied with a first aid kit. Emergency kits were placed at Woodridge in charge of Mr J. Towning and at Kingston in charge of Mrs C.M. Cordingley and Mrs Dollery, ATNA. Kits were also placed at Alberton and Carbrook in the care of the schoolmasters at these places.

In June 1931, the Committee endeavoured to get exemption from payment of the toll on the Loganholme Bridge. Just before the official opening, word was received that the request had been considered and that no fees would be enforced on the toll bridge over the Logan River. This meant quite a saving as in the previous year, ferry fares had been in excess of £10.

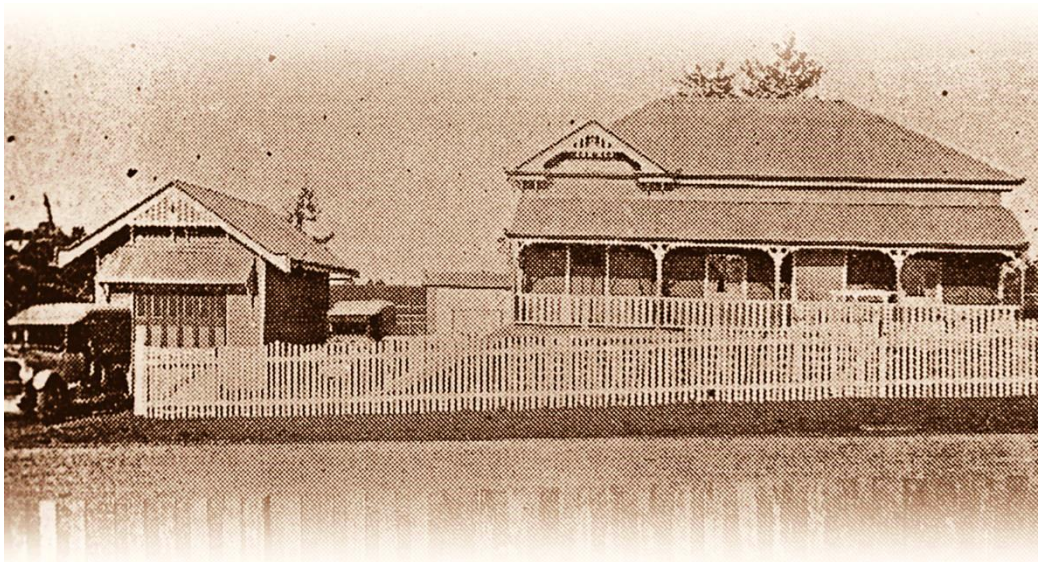
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In 1931 an outbreak of Diphtheria occurred in the town and the Ambulance proved of tremendous assistance in the speedy transport of patients for isolation and treatment.

In 1946 Superintendent Walker retired after having served the Brigade for a period of 38 years, the last 27 of which he was in charge of the Beenleigh Centre. Mr V.C. Ehrlich, a member of the Toowoomba staff, was appointed to the vacant position.

By 1946 the work of the Centre had so increased that the Committee found it necessary to engage a second paid officer. Ambulance Officer P.F. McMaster of the Brisbane Centre was appointed. Bearer McMaster resigned after a short term of duty and in January 1947 Bearer Geo. Willman, who had served for some years as an Honorary Officer, was appointed to the staff.

In May 1947 C.W. Lubach who had been Chairperson since the inception of the service in Beenleigh retired from the Committee. He was the recipient of the Brigade's 30-year service badge. Dr G.L. Wadeson was elected to the vacant position.



First premises 1919

In 1950 the Committee decided to demolish the existing garage and erect a modern building to house two cars and to incorporate a board room, office, casualty room and bearer's room. The cost of the new building was approximately £1100.

Also in 1950 the Committee equipped the cars with Trilene Inhalers and purchased an E&J Oxygen Resuscitator.

During the 1951-52 financial year, after fully investigating the matter, the Committee placed an order for a Stanford X-ray Machine. This machine was installed in the casualty room and the bathroom was converted into a temporary darkroom until suitable rooms could be built. A deposit of £200 was paid; it was the Committee's intention to canvass for donations towards the X-ray Fund. Upon applying to the Governor-in-Council for approval of expenditure for the money already spent, the Committee was informed that a Special Radium Committee dealt with the placing of X-ray machines and that no Ambulance Committee would be permitted to install such a machine. Following representations

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through the QATB State Executive to the appropriate Government Department the Committee reluctantly had to return the equipment.

During the late 1970s, the Beenleigh Committee could see that the service was outgrowing the City Road Centre. A decision was made to expand, and adjoining properties were considered for extensions. When these properties could not be obtained, other land was sought in the town area. When no suitable site could be found, the Committee approached the Lands Department through the Albert Shire Council and was consequently granted 5000 square metres of land in River Hills Road, Eagleby in 1980.

Architects were engaged to prepare sketch plans for new premises. The estimated cost of the buildings was \$1.3 million. This was in excess of the Committee's budgeted amount and, after modifications, the estimate was reduced to \$900,000. In 1983 the Committee felt the time was opportune for the calling of tenders. A contract was let at a tender price of \$630,000 and construction was commenced in August 1983 with a completion date of February 1984. The Centre was constructed using a sandwich panel system that was unique for this type of building in Queensland and this was a cost-saving factor.

Superintendents who have served at the Beenleigh Centre are:

1919 – 1946	T.H. Walker
1946 – 1958	V. Ehrlich
1958 – 1975	N. Fletcher
from 1975	J.B. Bryant

Chairpersons

Since the establishment of the service in Beenleigh the following people have filled the position of Chairperson of the Committee:

C.W. Lubach	Dr G.L. Wadeson
F.H. Saverin	A.J. MacArthur
F.W. Heck	E.J. Wilson
J. Robertson	J.M. Davidson
N. Cavendish.	

Stations attached to the Beenleigh Centre:

Woodridge Station

In 1961 at the request of the local Progress Association, a station was opened in Station Road, Woodridge. This station only opened between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. daily. A Benefit Committee was established and through their efforts in fundraising and further pressure from the Progress Association, the station was re-located to its present site.

One block of the land was purchased, and another was donated by the developer of the area. The Benefit Committee continued to raise money and the Senior Officer of the day, Mr N. Fletcher said that if a certain amount of money could be raised, he would ride a bike from Woodridge to Beenleigh, which he did. The Benefit Committee raised money on this event too by getting people to sponsor him.

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On completion of the current station, prior to the official opening, a violent storm de-roofed the station. The roof was repaired and once again the official opening was organised. Again, just before the ceremony, a hailstorm smashed all the windows.

The foresight of the Committee of the day in establishing this station meant that when the Government decided to construct 400 housing commission dwellings in the area, the Ambulance Service was already there to cope with the extra population.

Renovations and extensions were completed and officially opened on 8 June 1985.

Springwood Station

Springwood Station was officially opened on 29 October 1978.

As in the case of the Woodridge Station, requests from the local area residents, and the Springwood Lions Club, saw the Committee of the day investigating the possibility of establishing an ambulance station in the Springwood area.

Land was donated by Citicorp in Vanessa Boulevard, Springwood. Great assistance was received from the Albert Shire Council, which at that time was the local Council, and also from the Progress Association.

Four attempts were made to establish a Benefit Committee. The first three attempts ended in failure, but at the time of the fourth attempt an article was placed in the local paper saying it would be uneconomical to establish a Centre in Springwood without the appropriate support. Some 57 people attended the meeting, and a Committee was formed under the Presidency of Mr R. Andrew.

The local members of Parliament, Mr Ivan Gibbs and Mr Bill D'Arcy were present at the meeting, and commented that they wished they could get the same support at their political meetings.

The Benefit Committee raised a great amount of money by general fundraising and also by running a 'Buy a Brick' campaign for the new station.

The Committee stayed in existence until 1990 when it was disbanded due to diminishing attendance. At this time the local area was able to support the station with the number of subscribers contributing.

Park Ridge Station

Through the foresight of the Committee of the day, Park Ridge Station was established as part of a program of decentralisation.

Logan City Council and Beaudesert Shire Council made available the necessary land, which was formerly a water reserve.

A Benefit Committee was set up and this Committee still continues to raise money for the Station.

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The residential area immediately surrounding this station has, like Woodridge, expanded enormously since the station was opened, and the need for staff and vehicles to service the area has increased.

The station was officially opened on 29 May 1982.