

HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance

Dalby

For some time it had been felt that the increasing population and growing importance of the Dalby district warranted some organised system of first aid and transport for the sick and injured. The matter was taken up by the Dalby Chamber of Commerce which invited General Secretary of the QATB State Executive (Lt Col Hubert Harris) and Superintendent E.J. Llewelyn of Toowoomba Centre to a well-attended meeting held on 20 November 1913, in the Dalby Council Chambers.

His Worship the Mayor, Ald W.R. Hunter, presided, and explained the purpose of the gathering. The General Secretary referred to the organisation and working of the Brigade and described the manner in which Centres had been established throughout the State.

Mr T.W. Walker spoke of the activities of the Brigade in Bundaberg and then moved that a Centre be formed in Dalby. The motion was seconded by Mr Victor Drury (who in later years became the State President). Mr Drury stated that he had little doubt sufficient funds would come in to maintain a service.

Mr Lindsay moved that the Centre be a Branch Centre. The motion was seconded by Mr R.W. Potter and carried.

A subscription list was then opened up in the room, and £18,18s collected. The election of a provisional committee of seven resulted in V. Drury, S.W. Grant, T.W. Walker, R.W. Potter, A.P. Fuller, W.F. Donisch and F. Foster being appointed.

At a later meeting of the Provisional Committee Mr Victor Drury was elected Chairperson, Mr S.W. Grant Honorary Treasurer, and Mr T.W. Walker Honorary Secretary. Arrangements were made for the collection of contributions and the General Secretary promised to make arrangements for the opening of the Branch Centre at an early date.

At the first meeting of contributors held on 20 January 1914, the following Committee of Management was elected: R.B. McNaught (Chairperson), S.W. Grant (Honorary Treasurer), Victor Drury (Executive Representative), R.W. Potter, W. Hoffman, A.P. Fuller and T. Walker.

The Centre started operations in a shed in Cunningham Street owned by Mr William Clarke and provided rent-free. Mr Clarke also made his telephone available to the brigade. The plant consisted of a hand litter and the usual stock of first aid material.

The Committee appointed Deputy Superintendent Chas Williams of the Mackay Centre as the first Superintendent. He proved himself a most energetic and competent officer and the initial success of the Centre was due in no small way to his untiring efforts.

At this time the General Secretary informed the Committee that the Toowoomba Committee was prepared to hand over the Chinchilla Honorary Centre building to the Dalby Committee.

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It soon became apparent that the Dalby Ambulance had won the hearts of the residents, and contributions and donations began to increase. The Committee decided to look for better accommodation, and premises were leased in Drayton Street adjoining the residence of the Superintendent from where operations continued until 1917.

In 1914 Honorary Centres were established at Bell, Jandowae and Warra and staffed by the following people: at Bell - Honorary Bearer A.J. Stevenson and Honorary Member W.L. Downes; at Jandowae - Honorary Bearers R. Moore, S.J. Fisk and A. White; and at Warra - Honorary Member D.R. Fardon. In 1915 the Committee decided to invest in a Ford Motor Ambulance Car. Soon this little cream-coloured vehicle was well-known throughout the district, and, as one country lady remarked, was 'like a little canary flying through the timber'. This ambulance car touched the hearts of the country folks. They had never seen such practical expression of the alleviation of suffering brought so near home to them, and it was not long after the advent of the first ambulance car that all kinds of entertainments were arranged in every part of the district to augment brigade funds.

Also in 1915, Bearer W.H. Julian of the Ipswich Centre was appointed as the second permanent officer. Mr Julian was subsequently appointed Superintendent at the Yarraman and Toogoolawah Centres and in 1925 took up a position as Superintendent at Woollongong in New South Wales. His final service was as Superintendent of Lismore.

In 1917 the Committee decided to purchase a property and erect a permanent Centre building and Superintendent's residence. After mature consideration, a site in Stuart Street was secured, and shortly afterwards a scheme was launched to raise £500 to enable the erection of the necessary buildings. The response by the public was immediate, and the pound-for-pound Government subsidy gave the Committee £1000. A contract was let to Mr J.D. Draney, a member of the Committee. The buildings were soon completed and were officially opened by Dr Reginald Freshney (one of the three State Trustees and Chairperson of the Toowoomba Centre) on 5 January 1918.



Rail ambulance car and Superintendent E.D. Slaughter

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Upon representations to the Commissioner for Railways in 1917 permission was given to operate a rail motor ambulance on branch lines. At the same time the Railways Department consented to build a rail car for the brigade Committee. The rail ambulance was completed and commenced operations in 1919. Like other rail ambulances of its day, it was powered by a motor cycle engine. It carried a collapsible turntable that was placed on the rails to remove it from its shed and at its destination to turn it around for the return journey. In 1926 this unit was replaced when Mr Eric France of Toowoomba converted a Citroen chassis into a rail motor car. This Citroen vehicle had a chain drive. It served the Dalby Centre until 1946 when it was sold to the Mareeba Centre for the sum of £200. One ambulance officer who drove this rail ambulance while he was working at the Mareeba Centre (from 1946-1948) was Mr Ernie Bradley who in later years became the State Secretary.

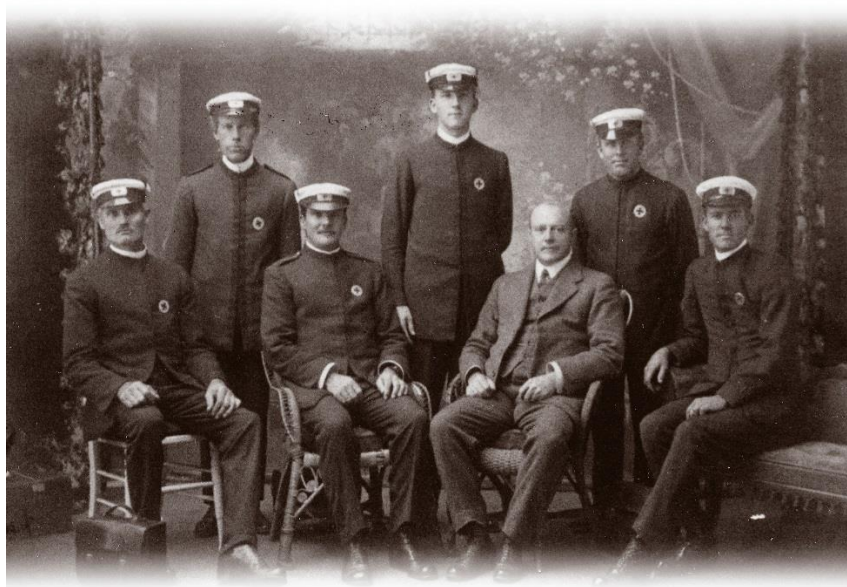
In 1917 the Honorary Centre at Chinchilla was re-established and an Honorary Centre was established at Tara under the control of Mr H.J. Woodfield. Two Honorary Centres were raised to the status of Sub-Centres in 1922 namely Chinchilla with J. Bowman in charge and Jandowae with W. Dineen in charge.

Chinchilla became a self-governing Centre in January 1931.

The Sub-Centre at Jandowae and the Honorary Centres at Bell, Warra, Tara and Meandarra were all administered by the Dalby Centre for many years. However, when local hospitals and local doctors arrived at Jandowae and Tara, the support necessary to keep the ambulance stations in those localities operating was not forthcoming. They were closed and the necessary ambulance service was rendered from the Dalby Centre.

In later years the QATB Committee at Miles established Sub-Centres at Meandarra and Tara.

Superintendent Williams resigned in 1918 upon his transfer to Superintendent of the Mackay Centre, and Mr E.D. Slaughter a former Superintendent of the Brisbane Centre, was appointed in his stead. Edgar Slaughter had previously held the dual position of Superintendent of the Brisbane Centre and Secretary to the State Executive Committee.



Staff, first Superintendent C.D. Williams (third from left)

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In the Annual Report of Committee for the financial year 1933-1934 the Chairperson made reference to the sale of an allotment of land near the railway station to the Dalby Town Council for the sum of £40. The following is an extract from the Brisbane Telegraph of 18 January regarding the sale of this land:

IF OIL IS STRUCK DALBY AMBULANCE COMMITTEE PREPARED

The Dalby Ambulance Committee made a remarkable offer to the Dalby Town Council at the last ambulance committee meeting.

An offer was received from the Council of £40 for a block of land owned by the ambulance, which had been selected as the most suitable site for the council's new bore.

The council has an arrangement with the Australian Roma Oil Company which is putting down the bore that if oil is struck the council is to receive five percent of the output from the first three producing wells.

The Ambulance Committee accepted the offer of £40 with a condition that if oil is struck it received one-fifth of the Council's five percent oil dividends.

Edgar Slaughter effectively guided the destinies of the Centre until his retirement in 1947. He had served the Queensland Ambulance for a period of 54 years.

Mr H.N. (Harry) Taylor Officer-in-Charge of the Moorooka Sub-Centre followed Mr Slaughter and served in the position of Superintendent until his retirement in 1972. Mr Victor Drury had been a member of the Dalby Committee since the inception of the Centre in 1913 and Chairperson for 23 years. In February 1939, he tendered his resignation in order to move to Brisbane to continue his office as President of the State Executive, an office he occupied from 1936 until August 1946 when he passed away at the age of 80.



Centre building 1918

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Mr Drury's keen interest in all aspects of ambulance brigade work and his earnest desire for the advancement of the service were generally recognised. He was Mayor of Dalby four times.

In 1957, due to the growth of the town and the increase in workload and plant, the Committee decided that a new Centre building was necessary. The new building was erected in Cunningham Street at a cost of £26,000 and officially opened by the Minister for Health and Home Affairs in January 1958.

Following the retirement of Harry Taylor, Deputy Superintendent Tom Chadwick was promoted to the position of Superintendent. Tom retired from the service in 1987 after having served the Dalby Committee for 41 years.

Superintendent Frank Fisher transferred from the Yarraman Centre to become the Dalby Centre's fifth Superintendent and is the present occupant of the position.

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

1914 – 1916	R.B. McNaught
1916 – 1939	V. Drury
1939 – 1944	J. Shaw Thompson
1944 – 1945	A. White
1945 – 1974	A.B. Carvosso
1974 – 1983	A.L. Schurmann
Present occupant	
Chairperson	K. Schreck