

# *HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance*

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## *Millmerran*

In 1912, in response to an invitation from certain residents in Millmerran, Superintendent E.J. Llewellyn of the Toowoomba Centre visited the town and was successful in establishing an Honorary Centre of the QATB. He appointed Honorary Officer R. Knight (who for some time was attached to the Honorary staff of the Toowoomba Centre) as Officer-in-Charge. Equipment included a rubber tyred litter.

Records show that an Honorary Centre was established at Kooroongarra in 1910 with Honorary Officer W. Gant in charge. This service closed in 1913 in consequence of Mr Gant leaving the district. At a cost of £28,10s, a building was erected at Millmerran on a site in the railway station yard in 1913. The following is an extract from the Annual Report of the Chairman of the Toowoomba Committee upon the operations during the year 1917.

‘Millmerran and District have this year worked wonders. A special appeal was made with the object of paying for the Ambulance car which has been placed in the district. Benefits were organised and a canvass made which resulted in a sum aggregating £220 being sent in; a very gratifying achievement. A Ford Chassis was purchased, the body being constructed in Toowoomba, the total cost of the vehicle being £256,135,8s. This will enable Honorary Bearer R.A. Knight to be within easy reach of those requiring his service and at the same time relieve the staff and plant at Toowoomba.’

Mr R.A. (Bob) Knight served as an Honorary Officer at Millmerran for many years, and he was later succeeded by his son Bob Jnr who subsequently left the district.



*Honorary Bearer R.A. Knight 1912*

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Mr Hugh Hodges then took over the work and, when Millmerran was made an autonomous Centre, he was appointed to the Honorary Staff by the Millmerran Committee.

In the period between the retirement of Mr Bob Knight, Jnr., from this district and the arrival of Mr Hugh Hodges, ambulance services were conducted by Mr Harry Brinkworth, station master at the Millmerran Railway. He was a qualified railway ambulance officer and was assisted by Mr Bill Erbs who would do the transport cases. At this time, Sister O'Leary conducted a private hospital in a residence that had been built by Mr Ted Pimm, Snr.

Mr Bill Erbs would transport patients from Millmerran to Toowoomba in one of his hire cars on unsealed roads that would become very boggy in the wet. Arrangements had been made between Mr Bill Erbs and Mr Llewellyn, Superintendent of the Toowoomba Ambulance, to dispatch a ambulance car from Toowoomba towards Millmerran. They would meet on the road and transfer patients from the hire car to the ambulance vehicle. On two occasions during wet weather, while transporting confinement cases to Toowoomba, Sister O'Leary and Bill Erbs had to attend to births on the roadside because of delays caused by the road conditions.

One occasion that is worthy of mention was the birth of a baby boy at the local private hospital. This baby boy required oxygen to keep him alive. Bill Erbs removed the oxygen gas cylinder from his oxy-acetylene welding plant, invented a water appliance to purify the industrial oxygen gas and, with the nursing of Sister O'Leary, the baby was kept alive and thrived to live a normal life. That baby was Mr Bill Watts of Bybera.

Mr Hugh Hodges was a capable and reliable ambulance officer and administrator. It was through his efforts and strongly supported by the members of the Millmerran District Advancement Committee that an Ambulance Centre was eventually established in Millmerran.



*Premises 1948*

On 29 October 1947 at the request of the Millmerran and District Advancement Committee, the Chairperson of the Shire Council convened a public meeting in Millmerran, and invited Mr A.E. Lavers (Chairperson), J.W. Rossbrook (Hon Treasurer) and Superintendent E.J. Llewellyn of Toowoomba Centre. These gentlemen outlined the work of an ambulance centre and emphasised the financial responsibilities entailed. The well-attended and very representative meeting unanimously decided to appoint a Committee, which was thereupon elected, and the work of fixing operational boundaries and

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obtaining self-government commenced. Self-government was granted on 17 August 1948 and steps were immediately taken to collect donations.

The first Committee consisted of R.C.L. Mullaly (Chairperson), O. Petersen (Deputy Chairman), A.D. Mitchell (Hon Treasurer), C. Erbs, L.J. Ott, B.J. Evans and K. Macqueen.

On 24 August 1948 applications were invited through the Executive Committee for appointment to the position of Superintendent/Secretary. On 19 September 1948, Ambulance Officer E.W. Bannerman of Toowoomba was appointed and, using an Ambulance vehicle lent gratis by the Toowoomba Committee, commenced duties on 4 October.

The Centre was initially housed in rented premises in Bruce Road. In 1949 the Committee purchased a block of land in Commens for £150 as a site for new ambulance premises.

Superintendent Bannerman resigned in June 1950 to take up an appointment as Superintendent/ Secretary of the newly-established Pittsworth Centre. He was succeeded by Ambulance Officer Theo Thieme of the Wynnum Centre.

The new Centre building (built by day labour) was officially opened on 11 October 1952 by Mr J.A. Turner MLA, Deputy President of the State Executive Committee. The total cost of the building was £3,822,2s 8d, plus new furniture and equipment, £242,4s 3d. The building was opened free of debt, showing that the residents of the whole district supported the establishment of an autonomous QATB service and had given freely. Superintendent Thieme was in charge of the project and he was ably assisted by R. Walker and E. Horner who willingly sacrificed higher incomes to help the QATB Committee.



*Superintendent T. Thieme*

Superintendent Thieme retired in 1966 and Superintendent Bob Jenkins of the Texas Centre was appointed in his stead.

Superintendent Jenkins retired in 1984 and Officer-in-Charge L M O'Mara of Buderim Sub-Centre was appointed to the vacant position of Superintendent and Secretary.

Superintendent O'Mara transferred to the Pittsworth Centre early in 1988 resulting in Superintendent Leo McNamara being appointed. Leo McNamara subsequently transferred to the Miles Centre and was succeeded by the present Superintendent Mr Barry Malone.

## **Chairpersons**

Since the establishment of an autonomous QATB Service in Millmerran the following people have filled the position of Chairperson of the Committee:

<b>1948 – 1952</b>	R.C.L. Mullaly
<b>1952 – 1958</b>	O. Petersen
<b>1958 – 1960</b>	W.A. Erbs
<b>1960 – 1965</b>	W.C. Fitzgerald
<b>1965 – 1969</b>	O. Petersen

**Present occupant Superintendent C.M. Erbs**