

HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance

Warwick

A succession of serious accidents within a few days towards the end of the last century aroused certain Warwick residents to the necessity for the formulation of a volunteer first aid corps, the members of which would be prepared to give their services when required.

In February 1900, a provisional committee instructed the secretary of the Warwick Technical College (Mr W. Stockwell) to apply to the City Ambulance and Transport Brigade, Brisbane for a copy of its rules and regulations, and to inquire if the proposed Warwick Corps would be permitted to affiliate with the Brisbane Brigade. In due course, a copy of the rules was received, together with advice that the mooted Warwick brigade would function as a separate unit, no provision at that time having been made for branches.



Centre building 1900

Some months later at a meeting attended by Doctors A.O.H. Phillips and C.W. Hunt, J.W. Wild, G.P. Barnes, C.H. Ward, H.C. Ransome, R.J. Shilliday, W. Stockwell and J.G. McDonald it was decided that an ambulance unit be formed in Warwick. In the meantime a few friends had subscribed towards the cost of an Ashford litter. The Technical College erected a disinfection shed on an allotment adjoining the School of Arts in Guy Street, on condition that the building would become the property of the ambulance unit when the cost (£35) was paid by instalment.

While the disinfection shed was being built, Dr Phillips conducted weekly lectures in first aid to the injured, under the auspices of the Technical College. In due course seven candidates were examined by Dr Hunt, and shortly afterwards four others presented themselves for examination. The successful candidates were W.H. Boyd, J.R. Ward, J. Jackson, J. Locke, W. Stockwell, F. Alborn, P. Moesser, H. Hake, H. Roggenkamp, J. Watkins and S. Benjamin.

HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance

Towards the end of 1900, Mr W. Stockwell was appointed Honorary Superintendent. Of the successful trainees, seven were appointed Honorary Bearers, the object being that they would share the duties between them. The first case was handled late in December involving the use of the Ashford litter (a wheeled stretcher) to transport a typhoid fever patient from his residence in Wantley Street to the hospital.

In 1901, having received its first endowment from the Government, the Warwick brigade was able to build a harness shed next to the disinfection shed. At that time the public was beginning to appreciate the good work of the small but efficient organisation, and a supporter lent the Superintendent a sulky and harness, while another friend made a horse available, when it was required. During 1901, 28 calls were answered and 69 miles were travelled.

At the end of the first year the brigade faced a deficit of £12 but, because subscription lists had been opened and were filling rapidly, the Committee was optimistic. The Committee comprised Hon Arthur Morgan MLA, Ald W.M. Morgan (Mayor of Warwick), Doctors A.O.H. Phillips and C.W. Hunt, G.P. Barnes, J.C. McDonald, J.W. Wild and W.H. Boyd.

The Committee decided in November 1901 to affiliate the Warwick Ambulance with the city Ambulance and Transport Brigade and appointed Hon Arthur Morgan as Warwick's representative on the State Executive Committee which was formed in 1902.

In common with the few other centres then operating in Queensland, the Warwick Brigade soon extended its operations to the country, storing collapsible stretchers at various railway stations, together with first aid outfits where there were persons capable of using them. The object of placing the stretchers at strategic points along various lines of railway was to facilitate the transport of country patients to the nearest station, where they could be dispatched by train to Warwick to be taken charge of on arrival by ambulance officers.

Indicating the favourable public response to its appeal for funds, the brigade in 1902 had converted its deficit of the previous year to a credit balance of £52.

Mr Stockwell resigned from the position of Honorary Superintendent in 1903 and Mr J.D. Kennett, who for a short time had been deputy superintendent, was given complete charge, thereby becoming the first member of the permanent staff.

As year succeeded year, the number of calls increased, and the specially equipped dog cart, to which the wheeled litter was attached when country journeys had to be made, was replaced by a horse ambulance of the army service type.

For a considerable time Superintendent Kennett was the only paid member of the staff, but in 1909 a permanent officer was drawn from the honorary ranks. This officer was Senior Honorary Bearer A.E. Kennett.



Superintendent J.D. Kennett

HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance

In 1907 the property at the corner of Albion and Percy Streets, containing nearly half an acre of ground, was acquired at a cost of £700. The brick building that was purchased with the land became the superintendent's residence, and a quantity of timber was obtained for the construction of a building to house the plant and form a disinfecting shed. These structures were built by the superintendent, who before applying himself fully to ambulance work, had been a carpenter.



Centre building 1907

In November 1907 an Honorary Centre was established at Clifton and a new litter placed in charge of Mr F.W. Wearne.

Further additions were made to the number of stretchers stored in country railway stations, with the report for 1908 revealing that five were located on the Killarney line, and six on the Goondiwindi branch.

Such was the public confidence in the ambulance that in 1908 most of the outside towns applied for the formation of honorary centres. With the assistance of the Warwick Committee, Ashford litters and first aid bags were supplied to certificated persons in Killarney, Clifton and Allora during 1909.

Needless to say, these honorary officers worthily upheld the already high traditions of the brigade. In July 1909 a meeting was convened for the purpose of arranging for a special effort for funds for the purchase of a four-wheeled rubber-tyred ambulance wagon, for use on country journeys. This addition to the plant, want of accommodation for honorary officers and a board room for meetings and classes, would have meant extensive alternations to the existing building and the Committee considered it best to erect a new ambulance station. In November 1909, Mr C.C. Dornbusch, architect, was requested to submit plans for a suitable building. These were accepted and tenders were called, and that of Mr S.

HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance

Noyes for £715 was accepted. The foundation stone was laid on 15 February 1910, by His Excellency the Governor Sir William McGregor and on 1 June the Committee entered into possession.

By 1910 the Clifton Honorary Centre had sufficient funds in hand for the purchase of a horse trap, while in the following year it was able to erect its own building.

Also 1910 a shed was built in Allora and Honorary Centres were formed at Lord John Swamp and Inglewood.

The ambulance wagon that was built by Mr W Flitcroft at a cost of £75 was brought into use in January 1910 and provided a great boon to country residents. The committee was compelled to dispose of the favourite pony, 'Punch', which was too small for the wagon. It was replaced by a grey horse, 'Jack'. In 1911 at Inglewood a building (8 feet by 13 feet) was erected on ground kindly lent by Honorary Bearer W. Moran. The Honorary Centre at Lord John Swamp was closed when Honorary Bearer J.J. Brazil left the district. In Clifton a building (18 feet by 22 feet) was erected on ground leased from the Railway Department.

During 1912 an Honorary Centre was opened at Leyburn, and a stretcher and first aid kit placed there in charge of Honorary Bearer S. Duxbury.

In August 1912 the Committee placed an order for a Cadillac ambulance car (the first of its kind in the State). This vehicle was capable of carrying three stretchers, two slung from the sides and roof of the car and one on the floor.

On 22 January 1913, Clifton was raised from an Honorary Centre to a Sub-centre and Mr J. Ison appointed Officer-in-Charge. In November the same year the General Secretary with Superintendent Kennett visited Stanthorpe and found a very strong desire on the part of the residents for the establishment of an ambulance system in their town. A public meeting was held in the School of Arts and it was decided to form a Sub-Centre of the Warwick Centre. The Sub-Centre was opened on 1 December with Deputy Superintendent A.E. Kennett as Officer-in-Charge. In 1915 the Stanthorpe and Clifton services were raised from Sub-Centres to independent Branch Centres.

After an active association of 14 years with the Warwick Centre, during which he worked strenuously to extend its operations and to foster public support, Superintendent Kennett passed away in December 1916. For some time his son (A.E. Kennett) was acting superintendent in Warwick and was then Officer-in-Charge of the Stanthorpe Sub-Centre. Shortly afterwards he was promoted to the Superintendency at Cairns, but after a few months enlisted with the AIF. He yielded up his life through illness in France just one week after his father's death.

Superintendent Kennett's place was filled by the promotion of Bearer W. Brest, who resigned in 1922. Applications were then invited to fill the vacancy and Deputy Superintendent G. Lefrancke was chosen. In 1921, the Committee purchased an allotment of land in Percy Street, adjoining the Centre building, at a cost of £500. The acquisition of this property enabled the Committee to proceed with its desire to erect a new residence for the Superintendent.

In 1953, a parcel of ambulance land with a frontage of 50 feet was donated to the Government as a site for the erection of a building for a Baby Clinic.

HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance

In its 1961-62 annual report the Warwick Committee recorded the passing of Mr Hugh Miller ME, State President and the Warwick Centre representative on the Executive Committee for 41 years. Mr Miller joined the Warwick Committee in 1911 and was the youngest member ever to be elected. He resigned from the Committee in 1940 when he left the district. He became State President in 1949 and remained so until his death in 1962.

On the retirement of Mr Gordon Lefrancke in 1964, Mr Doug Henning was appointed as the fifth superintendent of the Warwick Ambulance Service.

In 1966 the property containing the two storey wooden ambulance Centre, situated on the corner of Albion and Percy Streets was sold to an oil company. The money obtained from the sale of the property enabled the Committee to erect a modern brick Ambulance Centre building and Superintendent's residence. The total cost of the buildings including the workshop and furnishings was \$50,000. The official opening, performed by the President of the State Executive (Mr J.A. Turner), took place on 10 December 1966.

Superintendent Henning was appointed to the superintendency of the Toowoomba Centre in 1971 and was replaced by the present Superintendent Mr Ray Newitt.

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

1901 – 1906	Hon A. Morgan MLA
1906 – 1950	G.P. Barnes
1950 – 1951	J.H. Allison
1951 – 1971	G. Kirkegaard
1971 – 1976	W.R. Matthews
1976 – 1979 and 1981 – 1986	J.J. Fanning
1979 – 1981	J.R. Pullen
1986 – 1991	H.C. Angell