

HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance Yeppoon-Emu Park

Compiled with the assistance of Mr F. Mortensen.

As we turn back the hands of time and delve in to the archives of early records, combining them with some colourful (mainly sepa) memoirs of the Bearers of yesteryear, a composite history of the Yeppoon-Emu Park Ambulance service, as we know it today, unfolds.

Prior to 1959 the Yeppoon Coastal Community had no ambulance service to call upon. In case of accident or emergency the Rockhampton QATB, although 27 miles away, responded to cases in the area. The service provided by Rockhampton was efficient and adequate but obvious delays in treatment and transport were encountered through distances travelled and road conditions.

The first service provided to the Yeppoon Community consisted of a team of dedicated volunteers who had the health and well-being of the people in the Yeppoon area at heart.



Centre building

Mr Frank Mortensen gives an account of the early days:

Early history of Yeppoon Ambulance included a completely voluntary team of eight men. Vic Appleton, Kev Harris, Jack Golding, Charles Dryden, Kelly Aspinall, Les Siddens, Bill Farlow and myself. I must add that none of us were trained, we were a bunch of rookies. Our vehicles were supplied by Rockhampton, they were surely their oldest cars. One would stick in low gear

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and another would lose its lights if you hit a bump. Usually a good hard kick brought the lights back on. In spite of setbacks we serviced Emu Park, Yeppoon, Cooberie and Byfield. We divided our shifts into rosters and I had a the car every night. Rockhampton supported us by meeting us half way if we had a patient for Rockhampton Hospital. If our patients had broken bones, such as hips or legs, we transported them all the way. I might add the roads in those days were not good, very little bitumen and mostly dirt. I had that many maternity patients at night over the two years they called me "Dad" at the hospital. Fortunately I managed to get them all to Yeppoon Hospital on time, thank God. I knew nothing about bringing babies into the world. Fortunately, the patients did not know we were not trained bearers and we didn't tell them. Of the many patients we handled, only a man from Byfield died of an ulcer haemorrhage on the way into hospital. The worst accident I attended with Kelly Aspinall was a car smash where three people out of five died. We were informed by Rockhampton Ambulance that we could not have saved them because their internal injuries were horrific. The eight of us were good mates and we did our best with what we had and simple common sense. Once the Station was built we were able to hand over. This was a blessing because we were always worried with each case because we were untrained and our vehicle were unreliable. But we never let a patient down. Incidentally Bill Farlow and myself are the only ones of that gallant band of men still alive."

Realising the need to establish an Ambulance service on the Coast, the Rockhampton QATB purchased a building in the main street of Yeppoon in 1953.

During 1953-1954 a Sub-Centre was established with Officer-in-Charge T. Seaman. A Committee comprising V. Appleton (Chairperson), R. Welcome, T. Harris, G. Barlow, J. Elliott (Yeppoon) and H. Pershouse, T. Smithwick (Emu Park) was formed to assist the Officer-in-Charge in fundraising and promoting the service with a view to establishing a Centre in the near future.

Through Community support, the Centre was granted self-government on 5 December 1955 by the Honourable W. Moore (Minister for Health and Home Affairs).

The Yeppoon-Emu Park Centre was officially opened on the 30 April 1956, by the Honourable C. McCathie (Minister for Mines and Immigration).

Mr T. Seaman was subsequently appointed to the position of Superintendent of the Yeppoon-Emu Park Centre on the 21 December 1955.

The following Committee appointed to govern the Centre until the triennial election in 1958 comprised V.J. Appleton (Chairperson), N.A. Pershouse (Deputy Chairperson), T. Harris (Treasurer), T.E. Smithwick, J.S. Golding, G.L. Barlow and W.H. Farlow.

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In July 1956, the first Superintendent Mr T. Seaman resigned and Mr L. Beutel was appointed to the position. Realising the need for expansion in the Coastal Community, the Committee negotiated a loan to cover the cost of a new building. In November 1959, the building was commenced and was officially opened on 9 July 1960 by Mr V.E. Jones MLA. This building is still serving the needs of the Yeppoon-Emu Park District.

Superintendent Les Beutel resigned at the end of 1970 to take up his appointment as Superintendent of the Mackay Centre. Other officers who have filled the position of Superintendent are:

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| 1970 – 1982 | H. Lewington |
| 1982 – 1989 | G. Reynolds |
| Present occupant Superintendent | G. Johnstone |



Superintendent L. Beutel

Since the establishment of Yeppoon-Emu Park as a self-governing Centre the following people have filled the position of Chairperson of the Committee:

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|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1955 – 1956 and 1958 – 1971 | V.J. Appleton |
| 1956 – 1958 | T. Harris |
| 1971 – 1976 | W.H. Farlow |
| 1976 – 1979 | K. Cameron |
| 1976 – 1979 | M. Prior |
| 1980 – 1988 | Dr R. Channels |
| Present occupant Chairperson | C.N. Welfare |