

HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance

Biggenden

The Third Annual Report of the Maryborough Ambulance Transport Brigade for the year ending 30 April 1903 shows that a Branch was established at Biggenden with Superintendent Lawrence in charge. The plant consisted of one Ambulance Ashford Litter.

In 1920, Mr M.P. Loth of the Biggenden Service was appointed Superintendent of the Kingaroy Ambulance Transport Brigade, also a Branch of the Maryborough Brigade.

Following a request to the QATB Executive by residents of Biggenden for particulars regarding the formation of a QATB Sub-Centre, a public meeting was convened in November 1943. In attendance at the meeting were the President and General Secretary of the state body and representatives of the Childers Committee. The meeting decided to form a Sub-Centre and, with the approval of the QATB Childers Committee, applications were invited for an Officer-in-Charge. Ambulance Officer R.A. Sealey of the Bundaberg Centre was the successful applicant and he commenced duty in February 1944.

With a loan of £500 from the State Executive, the Childers Committee purchased a dwelling in Biggenden that became QATB headquarters.

With the approval of the Childers Committee and the State Executive the Sub-Centre at Biggenden was raised in status to an independent Centre in August 1944. Officer-in-Charge Reg Sealey was subsequently appointed Superintendent and Secretary.

The report of the first year of operations shows that the Committee opened Honorary Centres at Gooroolba, Coalstoun Lakes and Dallarnil. Honorary Bearers appointed were H.E. Windeknecht, W.T. Lawrence, G. Bubke, W. White, L.G. Bradford and F.P. Crosswell.

Members of the Committee at 30 June 1945 were C.N. Armstrong (Chairperson), S.B. Trigger (Deputy Chairperson), R.A. Beirs (Honorary Treasurer), L. Bates, F.M. Burkitt, S. Stewart, E. Kummerfeld and P.O. Trigger. Three members, namely T. Calder, G.F.E. Clarke and D.E.W. Springer had resigned from the Committee earlier in the year.

In 1946 an addition was made to the building in the form of a plant room to house the Buick ambulance vehicle. A portion of the work was done by voluntary labour.

About 1946 Mr M.H. Warner became the Centre's first representative on the QATB State Executive Committee.

The Committee lost the services of Superintendent Sealey in April 1949, when he was appointed to take charge of the newly-established Centre at Hervey Bay. Ambulance Officer G.E. Burgess of the Nambour Centre was appointed to the vacant position.

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In the same year Mr C.N. Armstrong (Chairperson) resigned from the Committee because of his transfer from the district and Mr S.B. Trigger became the new Chairperson of the Committee.

The Committee felt the time had arrived for the erection of a new ambulance building and, with this in view, a Building Fund Account was opened and efforts made to secure a suitable piece of land.

The new building was completed at a cost of £2000 and the official opening was performed by Mr W.A. Brand, MLA and Mr B. Corser, MP on 1 April 1950. The former premises were sold for £1,100.

In December 1950, the Chairperson, Mr S.B. Trigger resigned from the Committee due to ill health. D.H. Jones then became Chairperson and Mr F. Bayldon was appointed to the Committee.

Mr M.H. Warner, the Committee's representative on the State Executive Committee, resigned in 1954 due to ill health and was replaced by Mr G.H. Proctor.

Superintendent Burgess transferred to the Roma Centre in October 1954 and Ambulance Officer N.N. Fletcher of the Bundaberg Centre was appointed in his stead. Also in 1954 Dr H. Jones was replaced as Chairperson of the Committee by Mr W.T. Lawrence.

In 1958 Superintendent Norm Fletcher was appointed to the Beenleigh Centre and was succeeded by Ambulance Officer Hugh Wilson of Toowoomba who after six years of loyal service with the Biggenden Centre transferred to the Murgon Centre in January 1965.

The next Superintendent appointed was Mr Allen Pitt of the Murgon Centre.

In 1965 Mr W.T. Lawrence was awarded a Service Medal and Ribbon upon the completion of 20 years as an Honorary Bearer.

Superintendent Pitt established a Branch of the Queensland Ambulance Association in March 1965 and soon afterwards a strong Junior Branch at the Biggenden High School.

During the 1965-66 financial year, a plant room was erected to house the two ambulance vehicles and Brigade equipment, and to permit easy access to the street.

After serving on the Committee for 22 years, Mr W.T. Lawrence did not seek reelection at the March 1973 triennial election and Mr E.H. Giles subsequently became the new Chairperson.

The Committee farewelled Superintendent Pitt in September 1972 following his appointment as Superintendent of the Boonah Centre. Senior Bearer Trevor Larcombe of Roma was appointed to the vacant position.

Since the transfer of Superintendent Larcombe to the Ayr Centre in 1978 the following Officers have served as Superintendent and Secretary of the Biggenden Centre:

G. Reynolds
W.S. Warrener
T. Urquhart

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QATB Centre May 1983