

HISTORY OF THE *Queensland Ambulance*

Millaa Millaa

QATB services commenced in Millaa Millaa early in 1913 when the Atherton Ambulance Committee provided Honorary Member L.W. Compton with a fully-equipped kit. Later in the year Honorary Bearer L. Leighton took up residence some two miles from the town and was also supplied with a kit. At that time the settled portion of the district extended from 15 to 22 miles from the rail head, and in case of accident, efficient first aid treatment and careful transport meant much to patients.

In 1915 the township of Millaa Millaa was very fortunate to have the voluntary services of Mr A.A. Knudson who had relinquished his position as Superintendent of the Atherton Centre at the beginning of the year to take up farming in the Millaa Millaa district. Mr Knudson joined the QATB service in Cairns in 1907 and in September 1909 he was appointed Officer-in-Charge of the Atherton Sub-Centre. When Atherton gained self-government in 1912 he was appointed Superintendent.

At its meeting in January 1916 the Atherton Committee decided to place a collapsible stretcher at Millaa Millaa and sought the advice of Honorary Bearer Knudson as to its location. It was subsequently placed in Whereat's Store.

The roads in the district were mostly rough and difficult to traverse. During the latter part of 1917 the Millaa Millaa Progress Association organised a Sports Function and Art Union. Their purpose was to raise funds for a suitable field wagon for the Honorary Centre (and a suitable building in which to house it), as a better means of transporting the sick and injured. The benefit day was highly successful and raised £60.



Centre building

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A field wagon was purchased from the Cairns Centre and minor alterations were made to make it suitable for the Millaa Millaa district.

In September 1922, following representations to the Atherton Committee, a Sub-Centre with a permanent officer was established. The first Officer-in-Charge was Senior Bearer C.J. Anders of Atherton.

A Canvas and Benefit Committee was appointed to raise funds to finance the erection of a building in Wattle Street. In the latter part of 1923 the building was completed and occupied by Mr Anders.

Timber used in the building was donated in the form of logs, and teamsters hauled these logs to the railhead. They were then exchanged for sawn timber by Eacham Sawmills Ltd of Yungaburra.

Following representations to the Home Secretary, Millaa Millaa was gazetted as a self-governing Centre in October 1925. The first Committee consisted of C.F. Henley (Chairperson), I.S. Whereat (Hon Treasurer), A.E. Merrotsey, J.A. Arthur, W.J. Maxwell, R.J. Clarke and J.J. Brennan.

The first Superintendent was Mr C.H.N. Brewster who had been the Superintendent of the Goondiwindi Centre prior to that Centre being taken over by the local Hospital Board.

Prior to Superintendent Brewster taking up duty in December Officer-in-Charge J.J. Mullins (subsequently the first superintendent appointed to Bowen Centre) carried on the duties of Acting Superintendent.

On 22 January 1926 residents saw the first local motor ambulance vehicle. The horse drawn field wagon was replaced by the Dodge ambulance car. The field wagon was raffled and the horses and harness gear were sold by tender. It is interesting to note that in March 1921 the cost of two horses purchased by the Atherton Committee for the Millaa Millaa Honorary Centre was £29.



First Superintendent C.H.N. Brewster

Mr Henley died on 22 November 1928 and was succeeded by Mr W.P. Fox. Mr Fox served as Chairperson for one year and was replaced by Mr M. Palmer.

In June 1929, Superintendent Brewster transferred to the Mount Morgan Centre. Ambulance Officer T.C. Wadley of the Warwick Centre was appointed to the vacant position and served as Superintendent and Secretary until his resignation in March 1932. Ambulance Officer Hugh Ross of the Innisfail Centre was then appointed.

After 12 years, as Superintendent Mr Ross resigned. During his service at Millaa Millaa there were five different Chairpersons:

1933	A. West
1934 – 1936	J.C. Daley
1937 – 1938	F.G. Martin
1939 – 1943	F.W. Reise
1944 – 1946	D.V. Davis
1946 – 1948	Mr H. Thomson

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Senior Bearer J.J. Phillips of Emerald Centre, who succeeded Superintendent Ross, was in charge until the latter part of 1946 when Superintendent Bill Arnesen transferred from the Theodore Centre to take over. Bill served the Millaa Millaa Centre for more than 21 years.

During this time the service moved from Wattle Street and was relocated in Palm Avenue on the Hospital Reserve, where facilities were more readily available and accessible for the use of the Ambulance service. Mr George Brotherton donated logs, J.M. Johnston Pty Ltd permitted the use of their sawmill and mill employees donated their labour. One Saturday, the logs were hauled to the sawmill where they were converted to the required sizes of sawn timber and transported to the building site. All this work was entirely free of cost to the Ambulance Committee. To enable the building to proceed, many cash donations, both large and small were received. Mr A.E. Jenkins donated the dressed timber for the ceiling. Much voluntary assistance was given during the course of construction. The building was completed and occupied by 1 July 1954.

At the end of 1967, Superintendent Arnesen resigned and was replaced by Ambulance Officer Geoff Rolston of Innisfail who commenced duty in January 1968.

Upon the retirement of Geoff Rolston in 1979 Senior Ambulance Officer Wally Dare of the Mackay Centre was appointed Superintendent and Secretary at Millaa Millaa. He served in that position until his transfer to the Rosewood Centre in March 1983.

In April 1983 Mr Trevor Skinner, Officer-in-Charge of the Cardwell Sub-centre was appointed Superintendent and Secretary and following his transfer to the Collinsville Centre in January 1987 was succeeded by Mr F.G. Bochow formerly Officer-in-Charge of the Dimbulah Sub-Centre. John Bochow resigned in July 1989 and the present Superintendent Rod Muller was appointed. Rod had held a similar position at Aramac.

The appointment of Ambulance Officer B. Bragg on 1 January 1990 meant that Millaa Millaa once again became a two-officer Centre after a period of almost 40 years.

Chairperson for the period 1948-1970 was Mr K.H. Thomas who was succeeded by Mr H.J. Bimrose. Mr Bimrose served for a period of eight years until 22 May 1978. After the resignation of Mr Bimrose, Mr Don Fraser was appointed Chairperson and served in that capacity until 1982.

During the period from March 1982 to July 1987 Mr A. Carr was Chairperson. He was followed by Mr R. Heidke who filled the position until March 1989. Mrs C. Spehr held the position until June 1989. She was followed by Mr G. Crowther, the present occupant of the position.