

HISTORY OF THE *Queensland Ambulance*

Mitchell

In 1911 the QATB Toowoomba Committee established an Honorary Centre at Mitchell with Honorary Bearer G.W. Lewis in charge. Mr Lewis, a former resident of Chinchilla, had been in charge of an Honorary Centre there.

In July 1913, the Honorary Centre at Mitchell was raised in status to a Sub-Centre. Mr Lewis was appointed Officer-in-Charge with the rank of Deputy Superintendent.

The residents of Mitchell expressed a strong desire for an independent Centre. This led to a formal request being made to the State Executive Committee. The Committee, on being satisfied with the financial stability of the local service, gave the requisite authority.

The General Secretary (Mr R.B. Barrett) journeyed from Brisbane on 19 January 1915 reaching Mitchell at 8 a.m. the following day, accompanied by Superintendent Llewellyn of Toowoomba. The visitors were met at their journey end by Deputy Superintendent Lewis and after breakfast were taken for a drive out to sample the Mitchell hot water bore from a bathing point of view. The pleasure of the morning was somewhat marred by an unfortunate accident when Superintendent Llewellyn fell at the baths, severely lacerating his right knee. The incident however, showed that the QATB lived up to its motto of 'Ready Always' for Deputy Superintendent Lewis had his kit bag with him and out there in the midst of the black-soil plain, an ambulance officer rendered first aid to a fellow officer.

The General Secretary investigated the affairs of the Sub-Centre and made inquiries into the present and prospective finances in order to satisfy himself that the conversion to a separate Branch Centre was justified from a financial point of view.

In the afternoon of 20 January 1915, a public meeting chaired by Mr H. Bridgman, a local solicitor, was held in Hammond's Hall. Following an address by the General Secretary, Mr J. Searle moved that a Branch Centre be formed at Mitchell. This motion was seconded by Mr Hammond and carried unanimously. Mr Hammond then moved that the Committee of seven required under Brigade rules be as follows: J.G. Searle, J. Dobbin, H.E. Bridgman, J.H. Paterson, F. Brodie, B.T. Harris and S.J. O'Sullivan. This was seconded by Mr Adams and carried. Mr Bridgman was appointed Chairperson and Mr Paterson, Honorary Treasurer.

Mr G.W. Lewis was appointed as the first Superintendent at the same salary he received as Officer-in-Charge of the Sub-Centre. He operated the service from rented premises in Mary Street and was ably assisted by Honorary Bearers A.S. Cairns, F.R.E. Evans and H. Von Alpen and Honorary Member J.R. McSweeney of Mungallala.

In 1915 the plant consisted of a buckboard buggy, horse, harness and litter.
A group of ladies under the leadership of Mrs S.J. Gardner assisted in raising funds.

A Ford car was purchased from the Brisbane Centre in early 1916 and the wheeled litter was placed at Mungallala.

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In March 1917, the resignation of Superintendent Lewis was accepted with regret and applications were called for the vacant position. The Superintendent's wages were to be £3 per week plus free quarters and the successful applicant had to be able to drive a motor vehicle. Ambulance officer J.Y. Simpson of the Brisbane Centre was appointed to the position.

In later years three sons of Superintendent Simpson, Jim, Bill and Gil, served on the permanent staff of a number of QATB Centres.

At its meeting on 15 August 1917 the Committee decided that the Superintendent would arrange for the use of a motorcycle to canvass the district for contributions.

Dr F. Clarkson was appointed Chairperson on 26 July 1923 to replace Mr Bridgman who resigned after eight years in the Chair.

In September 1926, the Committee decided to erect a building to include a plant room to house two cars, an office/board room and a casualty room as soon as possible, as funds became available, at a cost not exceeding £400. The Centre building was completed in 1929 at a cost of £300.



Centre building 1929

Superintendent Simpson resigned in October 1940 and was replaced by Mr L.W. Borsereni, a member of the staff of the Roma Centre.

In 1947 Honorary Bearer C.J. Coddington was appointed to the permanent staff of the Mitchell Centre. Cliff Coddington had a very distinguished career, including attaining the positions of Assistant State Secretary, Supervisor of Training of the QATB Training School and Chief Training Officer of the New South Wales Ambulance Training School.

On 5 December 1977, the Mitchell Committee purchased the Australian Estates building for the sum of \$22,000 and converted the building into an Ambulance Centre. The official opening of the new Centre took place on 11 March 1978. The shed at the rear of the Centre was purchased for the sum of \$4,500 and converted into a residence for the Superintendent.

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Officers who have served in the positions of Superintendent and Secretary at Mitchell are:

1915 – 1917	G.W. Lewis
1917 – 1940	J.Y. Simpson
1940 – 1945	L.W. Borsereni
1945 – 1973	J.F. Holcombe
1973 – 1974	R. Hay
1974 – 1975	J.D. McLennan
1975 – 1981	N. Church
1981 – 1985	W. Collins
1985 – 1987	R.P. Black
1987 – 1991	H. Lewington
Present occupant Superintendent	Peter Kenell

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

1915 – 1923	H. Bridgman
1923 – 1924	Dr F. Clarkson
1924 – 1933	M.H. Simons
1933 – 1937	Dr H.C. Maling
1937 – 1940	A.H. Hansford
1940 – 1941	T.E. Southwell
1941 – 1950	W. Ewan
1950 – 1952	G. McLennan
1952 – 1954	J.E. Carlyon
1954 – 1961	C.F. Balsillie
1961 – 1973	J.F. Hobbs
1973 – 1977	J. Finch
1977 – April 1979 and August 1979 – 1982	E. Burey
April – August 1979	A.J. Mitchell
1982 – 1989	B. McCarroll
1989 – 1991	R. Thorne