

HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance

Roma

Prior to the formation of the QATB service in Roma, Mr A.C. Hoskins carried out the work of transporting patients to the hospital. He commenced this work in an honorary capacity in 1903. Dr A.A. Doyle then became interested and was responsible for the first, hand litter, which was purchased from public subscriptions.

In the work of transportation, Mr Hoskins was assisted by members of the Fire Brigade, namely J.H.D. Grant, J.W. Sparks, Mat Reid, J.J. Graham and Chas Moore. In those days the litter was housed at the Fire Station which was then in the main portion of the town. Transportation was over very rough roads, and the pushing of the litter up the hospital hill was no mean effort.

Mr Hoskins gained his First Aid Certificate in 1910 and continued his good work in an honorary capacity until the inauguration of the Ambulance as a Branch Centre of the QATB in October 1915. In November 1913, the QATB Toowoomba Committee established a Sub-Centre in Roma and appointed Mr J.J. Harland as Officer-in-Charge with the rank of Deputy Superintendent.

It is interesting to note that the first QATB service in the district commenced in 1911 when the Toowoomba Committee established an Honorary Centre at Yeulba with Honorary Bearer J.W. Booth in charge, after representations had been made by Mr J. McCulloch, Secretary of the Yeulba Progress Association. The plant consisted of a rubber-tyred litter.

On 8 October 1915, a meeting was held in the Roma Town Hall, with the Mayor Ald G.P. Williams presiding. Superintendent E.J. Llewellyn of the Toowoomba Centre was present and explained the advantages of converting the Roma Sub-Centre into a branch centre. After discussion, it was decided to form a self-governing branch centre in Roma, and the following were elected as a Provisional Committee: The Mayor, Ald G.P. Williams, R. Conlan, W. Miscamble, R. Bryant, R.D. Lovell, H.A. Watson and Dr. J.F. Merrilees. At the first meeting Ald Williams was appointed Chairperson and Mr Harland was appointed the first Superintendent.

The first important business to occupy the Committee's attention, was the proposal to purchase a motor ambulance, and Mr H.A. Watson, on behalf of the Wallumbilla residents, guaranteed £50 towards this project. In April 1916, the Ford car was delivered and proved a boon to the service. The report for the month of May showed the car had travelled 57 miles in that month.

In January 1917, Mr R.W. Berry joined the honorary staff that consisted of A. Hoskins and J.W. Booth. The Brigade at that time was housed in rented premises in Arthur Street.

The following is an extract from the Committee's Annual Report for 1917:

Last year we realised that the Ambulance Brigade by its work and usefulness had established itself in Roma forever, so your Committee looked round for a piece of ground, and were very fortunate in purchasing half an acre at the corner of Bowen and Charles Streets for £200. This is close handy to the Railway

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Station. Both the Motor Ambulance and the Land have been paid for. Now we want to put up a garage with office and dressing and fumigating rooms so that we can conduct our operations on the best and most up to date lines. We also require a cottage next door for our Superintendent to reside in and look after the property.'

The new Centre and Superintendent's residence were completed in the early part of 1919 and the Centre was officially opened by Dr. R. Freshney, one of the Trustees of the QATB and Chairperson of the Toowoomba Committee.

At the close of 1919, the Brigade plant at Roma consisted of two ambulance cars, and one rubber-tyred litter, also one rubber-tyred litter at Yeulba and one at Wallumbilla.

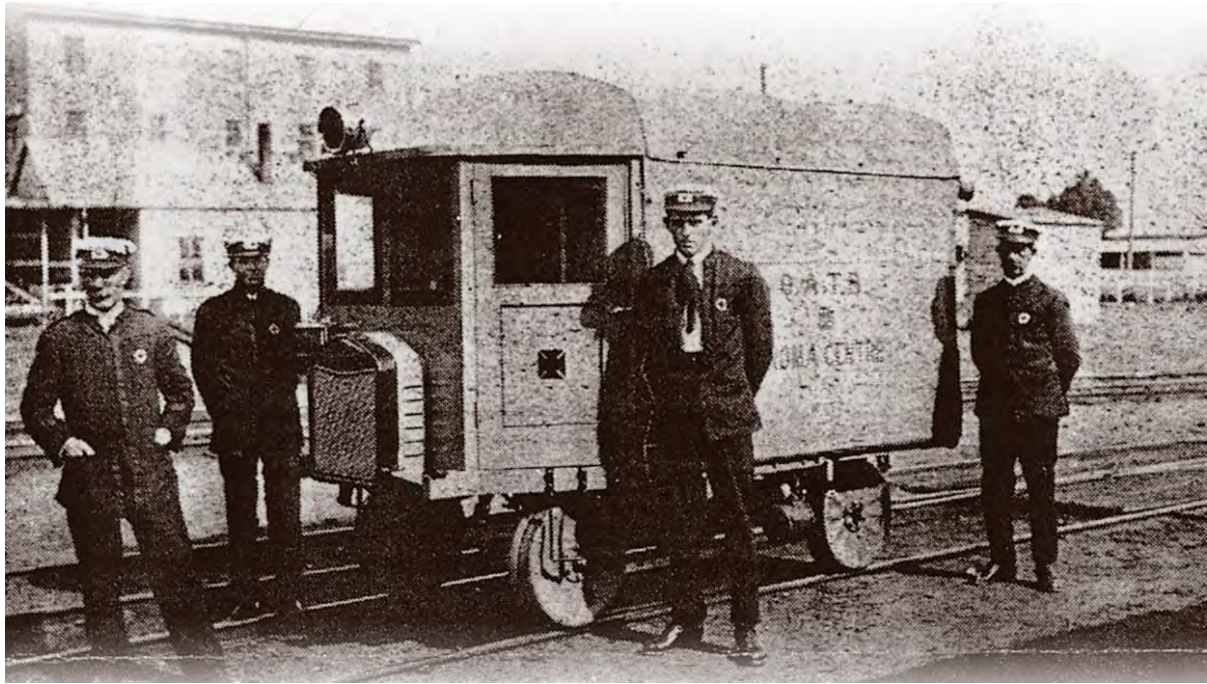
In August 1920, the work increased to such an extent that it was found necessary to appoint a second permanent officer, and Bearer W. Sloman of Toowoomba was appointed.



Building erected 1919

In 1921, a rail car was purchased to enable patients to be brought in from places on the Injune line during wet weather. The rail ambulance carried two lengths of line which were placed on the tracks for the car to run on to and then turned to face the way home to Roma.

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Rail ambulance 1924 with staff - Superintendent J. Harland, B. Berry, J. Keegan & B. Sloman

Superintendent J.J. Harland resigned his position as Superintendent in 1931 and was succeeded by Mr E.J. Llewellyn, a former Superintendent of Toowoomba. In 1932, Superintendent Llewellyn resigned having been elected to represent Toowoomba electorate in the Legislative Assembly. Superintendent W.E. Powell of Clifton was appointed to the vacant position.

On October 1939, the residents of Gunnewin and district erected a building on Ambulance land acquired through the Land Administration Board, and handed this asset over to the Roma Committee for the purpose of a first aid and rest room for that district. The Komine-Gunnewin Branch of the QCWA undertook to meet the cost of a tank and also to fence the allotment. This work was carried out at practically no cost to the Brigade.

With the opening of the Gunnewin facility, there were five honorary centres under the jurisdiction of the Roma Committee with the following Honorary Bearers in charge: Railway Workshops Roma (J.F. Sparkes and F.W. Sheppard), Yeulba (W.J. Johnstone and F.R. Cox), Injune (C.G. Wall), Gunnewin (Mrs C. Heenan) and Muckadilla (Sister C. Sutton). Early in 1946, Superintendent Powell relinquished his position for health reasons. Mr H. Drake, Officer-in-Charge of the Edmonton Sub-Centre of the Cairns Centre was appointed as Roma's next Superintendent.

Superintendent Drake resigned in December 1948 and was followed by Superintendent T.W. Teale who was previously Officer-in-Charge of the Sarina Sub-Centre of the Mackay Centre.

In September 1949, a Sub-Centre was established at Surat and Bearer T.G. Clatworthy was appointed Officer-in-Charge. Surat was gazetted as an independent Centre in 1950 and Officer Clatworthy was appointed Superintendent and Secretary.

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At the close of the 1950-51 financial year, a very valuable block of land was donated to the Brigade by Miss E. Hibberd in memory of her late father, mother and sister. The present Brigade premises at Roma now stand on that block of land.

A Sub-Centre was established at Injune on 29 April 1953 with Officer W.J. (Mick) McCartney as Officer-in-Charge. The service was operated from rented premises until the purchase of a dwelling in 1955. Injune Centre obtained self-government in 1959.

In 1956, the new Centre building in Arthur Street was completed and officially opened by Mr Hugh Millar MBE (President of the QATB State Executive) on 15 September in that year. Also during the year the Committee purchased a dwelling consisting of two flats at a cost of £2,250 for the use of bearers attached to the Centre.

Superintendent Teale transferred to the Rockhampton Centre in 1954, and since then the following Officers have served in the positions of Superintendent and Secretary:

1954 – 1974	G.E. Burgess
1974 – 1983	C.T. Wheat
1984 – 1987	R.D. Green
Present occupant Superintendent	R. Mackney

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

1915 – 1916/1927 – 1928	
and 1933 – 1934	G.P. Williams
1916 – 1917	H.A. Watson
1917 – 1920	W. Miscamble
1920 – 1922/1926 – 1927/1930 – 1931	
and 1935 – 1936	R.B. Collins
1922 – 1923	R.O. Lovell
1923 – 1924 and 1950 – 1958	Dr. W. Feather
1924 – 1925 and 1928 – 1929	A.L. Miscamble
1925 – 1926 and 1931 – 1932	J.J. Murphy
1929 – 1930	G.A. Legg
1932 – 1933 and 1942 – 1948	P.J. Flanigan
1934 – 1935	C. Brinkworth
1936 – 1942	A.L. Collins
1948 – 1950	R.B. Taylor
1958 – 1964	R.V. Johnson
1964 – 1976	H.W.R. Siggs
1976 – 1980	L.A. Maiden
1980 – 1989	T.E. Warren
Present occupant Chairperson	Keith Kimlin