

# *HISTORY OF THE Queensland Ambulance*

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## *St George*

This Ambulance Centre originated in simultaneous unconnected moves in two localities, St George and Boolba; in each instance those concerned were unaware others were working towards the same objective.

In September 1925, Mrs Mary M. Kemp, President of the Western Division CWA began correspondence with the QATB State Secretary regarding the establishment of a QATB service in St George.

At its meeting on 5 November 1925, the Executive Committee decided that, should the residents of St George ask that a Centre be established, their request would be endorsed and sent to the Home Secretary for approval.

Subsequently the Balonne Shire Council, on the motion of Cr H.C. Kemp, resolved that a public meeting be called by the Shire Chairperson (Cr D.R. Roberts) to consider the matter. The meeting was held on 15 December 1925. The General Secretary of the QATB, Captain E.R.B. Pike, who travelled from Brisbane to be present, explained the organisation and methods of establishing a Centre, and also what financial aid would be given by the Executive and the Government endowment. After discussion it was decided to establish the Centre.

Messrs A.W. Nixon, H.C. Kemp, J.S. Taylor, D.N.R. Munro, J. McMahon, G.O. Armstrong and E. Klinge were elected as a Provisional Committee. Office Bearers appointed by the Committee were A.W. Nixon (Chairperson) and H.C. Kemp (Honorary Treasurer and Acting Secretary).

St George was gazetted as a self-governing Centre by Order in Council of 26 December 1925. An account was opened with the QN Bank with £250 from the small group at Boolba (headed by Mr Nixon, Mr Taylor and W. Beardmore) that had been raising funds towards the future establishment of an ambulance service.



*Centre building*

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The first Superintendent was Ambulance Officer F.S. Morrison of the Brisbane Centre. He drove to St George in the Dodge Ambulance vehicle, which had been purchased by the St George Committee and commenced duty on 22 July 1926. Because at that time the arrangements for the purchase of the ambulance quarters had not been completed he had to board at one of the hotels for a time.

Income for the first year was £1,093 and expenditure (including the purchase of a dwelling that acted as brigade headquarters for £156 and the deposit on the car of £160) was £1,351, leaving an overdraft at the Bank of £258.

In July 1927, Mr H.C. Kemp was elected Chairperson and held that position until his death in 1966. Superintendent Morrison resigned in June 1928 to go into a private business. He was succeeded by Superintendent W.J.F. Weedon of the Tully Centre.

In 1928 the Committee appointed Mr E.J. Llewellyn MLA as its first representative on the QATB Executive Committee. The first Honorary Bearer appointed to assist the Superintendent was Mr C. Sayer.

In 1941 Superintendent Weedon was compelled to resign due to ill health. Pending the appointment of a replacement, Mr J.W. Booth acted in the position for some months. Ambulance Officer J.H. Beckman of the Wynnum Centre was subsequently appointed Superintendent and took up duty on 24 February 1942.

An Honorary Centre was established at Thallon in June 1942, with Mr A. Vogel in charge. During the 1950-51 financial year, the sum of £476 was collected at Dirranbandi towards the establishment of a Sub-Centre there, and a Provisional Committee consisting of S. Cole (Chairperson), H.W. Watt (Secretary-Treasurer), G.R. Gillespie, J.E. Hill, H.J. Crothers, G.O. Armstrong and J.W. McCarthy. The Sub-Centre was subsequently established and the first Officer-in-Charge was Ambulance Officer T.V. Green of the Pittsworth Centre who took up duty at Dirranbandi in October 1952.

Dirranbandi was raised in status to a self-governing Centre in 1958.

Due to the increased workload the Committee decided in 1949 to appoint a second permanent officer. The successful applicant for the position was Mr J.T. Albion.

By 1956 Mrs L.G. Kenny had completed over 30 years work on the Ambulance Ladies Committee. She was the recipient of a long service award from the State Executive. The Chairperson of the Centre Committee H.C. Kemp received a similar award.

In February 1959, Superintendent Jack Beckman transferred to the Charleville Centre and Superintendent Ed Turner of Dirranbandi Centre was appointed in his stead.

With the passing of Mr H.C. Kemp in 1966 the Centre suffered a great loss. Mr Kemp served continuously on the Committee since the establishment of the Centre and he was the Chairperson for 39 years. His long and valuable service was recognised by the presentation of a 40-year service badge to Mrs Kemp.

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The next Chairperson of the Committee was Mr H.J. Hill who served the Committee until 1978 when Mr E.C. McNelley was appointed and served in that position until 1992.

In the late 1970s the Committee decided to plan for new premises because the Centre building was inadequate and in a bad state of repair.

New premises were finally erected and were officially opened on 2 February 1985, by Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, Premier of Queensland.

Since the establishment of the Centre the following officers have served in the positions of Superintendent and Secretary:

<b>1926 – 1928</b>	F.S. Morrison
<b>1928 – 1941</b>	W.J. F. Weedon
<b>1942 – 1959</b>	J.H. Beckman
<b>1959 – 1973</b>	E.F. Turner
<b>1973 – 1981</b>	K.J. Smith
<b>1981 – 1984</b>	B. Newsham
<b>1984 – 1987</b>	R.J. Mackney
<b>1987 – 1990</b>	M.C. Miller
<b>Present occupant Superintendent</b>	<b>Rick Leonard</b>