

Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)
Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Nominal roll of Commissioners of the St John NSW

Lieut.–Col. T. S. Parrott Hon. Assoc.StJ VD	1901 – 1902
Capt. (Dr) G. Lane Mullins KSJ MA MD <i>(from 1904–10 he was also Brigade Commissioner of Australia)</i>	1903 – 1916
Dr T. Storie Dixon KSJ MB CM <i>(from 1910–12 he was also Brigade Commissioner of Australia; c.1920s self-appointed ‘Chief Commissioner for Australia (Western Australia excepted)’)</i>	1917 – 1920 (acting) 1921 – 1923
Col. (Dr) T. Morgan Martin CMG EsqStJ AAMC	1924 – 1925
Wg Cdr (Dr) Sir Hugh R. G. Poate MVO GCSJ MB ChM FRCS <i>(acting Commissioner from 1926)</i>	1926 – 1928 (acting) 1929 – 1941
Lieut.–Col. (Dr) W. Vickers DSO KSJ VD MB ChM FRACS	1942 – 1945
Col. (Dr) Sir George G. L. Stening GCSJ ED MB FRCS	1946 – 1951
Dr R. S. Steel OBE KSJ MB ChM MRCP FRACP	1952 – 1957
Dr S. G. Nelson MBE KSJ BSc MB BS MRCP FRCP FRACP	1958 – 1964
Col. (Dr) E. F. Thomson CMG OSJ MB ChB(NZ) FRACP FRIPH MCPA FHA	1965 – 23.6.1969
Brig. (Dr) G. N. Young KSJ ED MB BS MRCOG FRACS FRCOG <i>(from 1979–1984 he was Chief Commissioner in Australia)</i>	24.6.1969 – 23.6.1974
Dr P. W. H. Grieve KSJ MB BS MRACGP	24.6.1974 – 30.6.1980
Dr G. Killen AM KSJ MB BS	1.7.1980 – 31.12.1986
Dr B. Kinghorn KSJ MBBS FRACGP	1.1.1987 – 23.6.1993
Mr J. D. Spencer AM GCSJ FCA FLGA	24.6.1993 – 23.6.1999
Miss C. Purdie CSJ	24.6.1999 – 30.6.2005
Maj.–Gen. W. E. Glenney AO CSJ RFD ED	24.6.2005 – 4.6.2011
Mr K. J. Kelman OAM CSJ	24.6.2011 – 5.2014
Mr D. Moutia OStJ MNurs (Trauma Care)	6.2014 – 11.2016
Adj. Prof. J. Bendall CSJ PhD MM(ClinEpi) MBBS BMedSc(Hons) AdvDipParamedSc FANZCA FPA FANZCP GAICD	28.11.2016 – 09.2021
Mr I. Lowbeer CSJ GAICD	09.2021 –

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Lieutenant-Colonel (Doctor)

THOMAS SAMUEL PARROTT

Hon.Assoc.StJ, VD

Commissioner: 1901 – 1902



LTCOL Thomas Samuel Parrott, VD.¹

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Hon. Associate	1897	'Roll of Members of the Order of St John in N.S.W. (and Awards of Life Saving Medals)', St John NSW Archives; <i>Evening News</i> (30 April 1898), p. 2.

An important historical document to survive from the first year of operation of the St John Ambulance brigade in New South Wales is a list of the Centre's senior members. They were all so prominent that they effectively represented the Colony's leadership. In the words of Ian Howie-Willis:

The Sydney Establishment [ensured] that this could have been no hastily improvised Centre. At the head of its hierarchy were Lord and Lady Carrington as patrons. The president was the Chief Justice, Sir Frederick Darley, who was to keep this position for the next eighteen years. There were six Vice-Presidents – the Mayor, A. J. Riley; the Postmaster General, C. J. Roberts; the Commander of the Military Force, Major-General Richardson; the Commander of the Naval Force, Captain Hixson; the Inspector-General of Police, Edmund Fosbery; and J. E. Salomons, Q.C. There was a fifteen-man executive committee, of which Mayor Riley was chairman. Lieutenant-Colonel T. S. Parrott of the Army Engineers, who was to become the foundation Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade in New South Wales in 1901, was deputy chairman. The secretary replacing the late J. R. Street was a Captain Preston, and the treasurer was Captain Alfred Broughton.

Most of the ordinary committee members had similar Establishment and military connections. There were eleven of them altogether. Knaggs ... was a member. So, too, was Major F. Carew Hunt ... Others were Hanbury Davies, who was to remain on the committee for the next fifty-three years until his death in 1943 and who was to be its chairman 1910–20; Brigadier-Surgeon Williams, the Principal Medical Officer of the Military Force; and Captain Lee of the Naval Force. In addition to Knaggs and Williams there were four other medical men: Dr Vandeleur Kelly ... Dr (later Brigadier-Surgeon) Reuter E. Roth, who was to become chairman 1903–09 and the first Medical Officer in Chief of the St John Ambulance Brigade in New South Wales; and Dr T. B. Clune and a Dr Ellis. The president of the Trades and Labour Council was also a member, though he appears to have attended only one meeting of the committee in all the years his name was on the roll. The last member of the committee was

¹ 'Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Parrott', British War Memorial @ <https://www.wikitree.com/photo/jpg/Parrott-1451> (accessed 22 April 2020).

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perhaps its most distinguished. This was Philip Gidley King, who chaired the first annual meeting of the Centre ... the namesake of his grandfather, the third Governor of the colony and was the oldest son of Philip Parker King, the explorer and the first Australian-born admiral.¹

Whatever the cause of the delay between 1887 and 1890, the Sydney Centre was now alive and well.²

‘In recognition of distinguished services in furthering the St John Ambulance Association work at your centre’.
Sydney Morning Herald (23 September 1897), p. 4.

In 1897, the Crown created Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Samuel Parrott, an Officer of Engineers, an Honorary Associate, in recognition of his distinguished services in furthering the St John Ambulance Association work.³

Colonel Parrott has had a remarkable career. During the sixties he was engaged in pioneering and exploring work in West Queensland at the time the historical rush for new grazing country took place. He secured a large tract of rich pastoral country between the Barcoo and Thomson Rivers for the Duke of Portland, and explored a wide extent of country west of the Thomson. Removing to Victoria, he was in 1870–71, Government Surveyor for the Melbourne district. He returned to NSW about this time, and assisted in the formation of the trigonometrical branch of the Survey Department. In 1872 he attached himself to the then recently-formed corps of engineers, NSW Military Forces. A few years, after joining, he invented the sematrope, an instrument for transmitting messages by means of the reflected rays of the sun or the moon ... In 1885 he was appointed engineer officer on the staff of the NSW contingent that was sent to the Soudan. ... About 1887–1888 he was successful in introducing into Sydney the system of hydraulic power ... In 1888–1890 he lent valuable assistance in the work of the St John Ambulance Association, which was subsequently firmly set in operation in this State by the efforts of the late Lady Brassey. A few years ago he was made an honorary associate of the Order of St John, and on leaving the New South Wales Centre, was made a vice-president of the Centre. ... His decorations are: Soudan Medal; Order of St John; Khedive Star; South Africa Medal; and volunteer decoration.⁴

Building on ‘ambulance’ experimentation of the sort initiated by Superintendent H. J. Page, among others, within the St John Ambulance Association, a ‘Union of Ambulancers’ was established in 1899.⁵ G. H. Robinson, secretary of the CSR Ambulance Corps, was its secretary-treasurer. While the militarist ambulance corps of the industrial companies was a male-only affair among employees of those firms, this Union accepted both male and female volunteers. Like the St John sub-Centres, the Union arranged for medical practitioners to deliver lectures on first aid skills. With ‘ambulance’ momentum growing, the Ashfield sub-Centre established the ‘Western Suburbs Ambulancers’. Though not branded specifically as St John Ambulance undertakings, all these groups did indeed come under the St John Ambulance Association: this is evident in the fact they all submitted reports of their activity to the Sydney Centre.⁶ They would all have used Shepherd’s ‘little black book’ as their text.

The New South Wales Centre took great pride in granting leave-of-absence from St John Ambulance activity to four members of its Executive Committee to go to the Anglo-Boer War. Among them was the Chairman, Dr Robert Vandeleur Kelly, appointed a lieutenant-colonel in the New South Wales Army Medical Corps. The Deputy Chairman also went to South Africa – Lieutenant-Colonel T. S. Parrott, a career army officer of Engineers. Also departing were two experienced medical practitioners, both of whom were uniformed Reservist surgeons: Major Thomas H. Fiaschi and Captain Reuter E. Roth, each of whom went with the New South Wales Army Medical Corps.

Not long after achieving success with the treatment of Federation celebration crowds, the Sydney Centre was ready and willing to deploy its personnel in the same way for the Young People’s Industrial Exhibition on 2 June 1901. Volunteer first aid providers from sub-Centres at Balmain, the Western Suburbs and Glebe worked under the co-ordinating direction of Flora Read (Hon. Secretary of the Balmain sub-Centre), taking turns over successive days to attend the ambulance station. Because this was ‘hands-on’ provision of first aid (rather than instruction in it), the *Annual Report* for 1901 noted

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this Association endeavour under the title 'Brigade Work' of the 'St John Ambulance Brigade'. The principal officers of the Brigade were Lieutenant-Colonel T. S. Parrott, Commissioner; Major R. Roth, Medical Officer in Chief; Major J. H. A. Lee, Deputy Commissioner; and Captain G. Lane Mullins, Chief Superintendent. The report also noted an important change in the work of the former practice classes. Their efforts would be 'taken up by Divisions of the Brigade which are now forming, and under the direction of the Brigade Officers will be carried out more systematically and with increased vigour'.⁷



*Lieut.-Col. Thomas Samuel Parrott VD.*⁸

In September 1902, Sydney's St John Ambulance Brigade lost one of its leaders. Thomas Parrott, a veteran of the Anglo-Boer War and tireless worker for the creation of the Brigade was fare-welled from the Centre. Like so many soldiers who had served in South Africa, he had decided to emigrate there to live his life on the *veldt*.⁹ However, St John Ambulance was thriving and a lively *esprit-de-corps* was fostered by other veterans of the Anglo-Boer War, chief among them Major Reuter Roth DSO. This 'liberal trophy giver' (to quote Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* newspaper) was a keen sportsman.¹⁰ Roth's name was first on the list of the organizers of the St John Ambulance Association sports carnival held in November 1902. One of the key prizes of the day was his very own Roth Challenge Shield, but the presence of a large contingent of Army Medical Corps staff rivalled the interest evoked by this. Roth and Captain George Lane Mullins were the senior personnel present.¹¹

'Among the privates who joined in the 'seventies,' was Thomas Samuel Parrott, who rose to the position of Lieutenant-Colonel, and, as stated above, retired in 1902 under the age limit. Colonel Parrott has had a remarkable career. During the sixties he was engaged in pioneering and exploring work in West Queensland at the time the historical rush for new grazing country took place. He secured a large tract of rich pastoral country between the Barcoo and Thomson Rivers for the Duke of Portland, and explored a wide extent of country west of the Thomson. Removing to Victoria, he was in 1870-71, Government Surveyor for the Melbourne district. He returned to N.S.W. about this time, and assisted in the formation of the trigonometrical branch of the Survey Department. In 1872 he attached himself to the then recently-formed corps of engineers, N.S.W. Military Forces. A few years, after joining, he invented the sematrope, an instrument for transmitting messages by means of the reflected rays of the sun or the moon ... In 1885 he was appointed engineer officer on the staff of the N.S.Wales contingent that was sent to the Soudan. ... About 1887-1888 he was successful in introducing into Sydney the system of hydraulic power ... In 1888-1890 he lent valuable assistance in the work of the St. John Ambulance Association, which was subsequently firmly set in operation in this State by the efforts of the late Lady Brassey. A few years ago he was made an honorary associate of the Order of St. John, and on leaving the New South Wales centre, was made a vice-president of the centre. ... His decorations are: Soudan Medal; Order of St. John; Khedive Star; South Africa Medal; and volunteer decoration'.

Evening News (7 December 1910), p. 13.

Parrott, Thomas Samuel (1842–1917) by C. Neumann

This article was published in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 11, (MUP), 1988

Thomas Samuel Parrott (1842–1917), civil engineer and soldier, was born on 12 February 1842 at Bedford, England, son of John Parrott, tailor, and his wife Margaret Maria, née Buttery. Educated at Bedford School, he trained as a civil engineer and came to Australia in 1860, having been commissioned by the Duke of Portland to carry out pioneering and exploration work in western Queensland. He remained in Australia as a contract surveyor in Queensland. He became a government surveyor for the Melbourne district in 1870 and also had a private business, Parrott & Bryson, civil engineers and surveyors, there. On 4 June 1870, at Christ Church, Hawthorn, he married Alice Matilda Butcher.

In 1872 Parrott joined the survey branch of the New South Wales Department of Lands and the New South Wales Corps of Engineers (Volunteers) and on 20 August 1874 was commissioned as a lieutenant. That year he invented a new signalling device which he called a sematrope, an instrument based on using the reflected rays of the sun and the full moon; it was later superseded by the heliograph. In 1879 he submitted a plan for a bridge across Sydney Harbour. Parrott was promoted captain in 1884 and served as engineer officer on the staff of the New South Wales contingent to the Sudan in 1885, receiving the Egypt Medal with clasp and the Khedive's Star. He was made a brevet major on 18 July 1885. He had been eager to see active service and had applied for a year's leave of absence and accreditation to join any force which might be dispatched from India to operate in the Sudan so that he could increase the value of his training to the Corps of Engineers.

In 1886, at the invitation of the New South Wales colonial secretary, Parrott visited Europe and North America to report on coast and harbour defences. He presented his report in July 1887. He was then a partner in Parrott & Cameron, mining and civil engineers, Sydney. In 1894 he commanded No.1 (Field) Company, Engineers, and was employed on military survey duties in the Illawarra district. In September he was confirmed as major and in November was awarded the Volunteer Officers' Decoration.

Parrott became a brevet lieutenant-colonel on 29 March 1899 and embarked as a special service officer on 17 January 1900 for the South African War. He arrived at Cape Town on 18 February and was attached to the Royal Engineers who employed him on engineering works in the Orange River Colony. At Bloemfontein in May 1900 he formed the so-called 'Australian Pioneers' ('Flying Sappers') by mounting his engineers so that they could keep up with the mounted infantry. He left Cape Town for Sydney in the transport *Orient* in December 1900 and for his service received the Queen's Medal with two clasps.

On 11 October 1900 Parrott had been promoted substantive lieutenant-colonel and appointed to command the two field companies of New South Wales Engineers. He was placed on the retired list on 1 September 1902 and migrated to South Africa where he served as a transport officer during World War I.

Parrott's children shared his military interests. Sergeant Major H. F. Parrott, a Sydney draughtsman, served in the Australian Army Service Corps on Gallipoli and in Palestine in World War I; Quartermaster Sergeant J. H. Parrott, with the New South Wales Medical Corps during the South African War and the South African infantry in German South-West Africa (Namibia) and France in World War I; Captain A. K. Parrott, a geologist, with the 1st New South Wales Mounted Infantry in the South African War and in the South African infantry in World War I; Private S. C. B. Parrott, a mine manager, likewise with the South African infantry; and Parrott's daughter Amy ('Polly'), a nurse with the South African forces, died on active service.

Survived by his wife and children, Parrott died at Johannesburg, South Africa, on 22 February 1917 and was buried there.

Select Bibliography

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- H. T. Parrott, *The Character and Strength of T. S. Parrott in the Development of the Engineer Arm of the Military Forces, Australia* (typescript, compiled 1966, State Library of New South Wales)
- personal records, Colonel T. S. Parrott, DR List 685, 2nd Series (Australian War Memorial)
- records (Australian War Memorial).

Reference:

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C. Neumann, 'Parrott, Thomas Samuel (1842–1917)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/parrott-thomas-samuel-7963/text13865>, published first in hardcopy 1988, accessed online 22 April 2020.

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Surgeon–Captain (Doctor)

GEORGE THOMAS LANE MULLINS

KStJ MA MD

Commissioner: 1903 – 1916

1904–10

Brigade Commissioner of Australia



Surgeon–Captain George Lane Mullins.²

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Hon. Serving Bro.	1903	<i>St John Ambulance Association, Annual report (1903), p. 1; Sydney Morning Herald (24 October 1903), p. 8.</i>
Knight of Grace	1905	<i>St John Ambulance Association, Annual report (September 1905), p. 6; The World's News (8 July 1905), p. 9.</i>

Brigade uniforms and a militarized structure obviously presented no problem for the army men running the new organization. However, among civilian volunteers, it raised concerns about military conscripted. Storie Dixon worked hard to allay these fears; for example, visiting a meeting of the Balmain sub–Centre, then one of the biggest and most successful in Sydney, in order to declare that ‘no compulsory military obligation existed if members joined the Brigade’.¹² Dr Lane Mullins was equally eager to ease concern on this point, working through his short–lived publication, *The St John Ambulance Gazette*, to point out that the Association and the Brigade performed very different rôles. The Association provided first aid instruction and granted certificates of proficiency, the Brigade organized certificate holders to train them to apply First Aid to the public on public occasions. Both Storie Dixon and Lane Mullins emphasized that Brigade discipline was needed to maintain a high level of efficiency in serving the public. In the words of Ian Howie–Willis: ‘the uniforms allowed the public to recognize St John Ambulance personnel instantly, and were thus an aid to efficiency; and the hierarchy of ranks, too, facilitated efficient public service by providing a clear chain of command’.¹³

By this time, the conflict in South Africa had ended with British victory. New South Wales’s military men had only just returned from the war and were suitably proud of their achievements in so effectively conducting ambulance services. In the opinion of one leading member of the New South Wales Centre, Dr G. Lane Mullins, the St John Ambulance organization passed the test with honours.

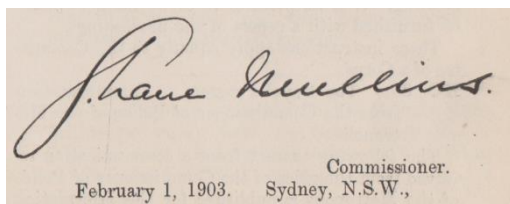
² ‘Soldiers of the King: The Story of the NSW Regiments: Army Medical Corps: XII’, *Evening News* (21 December 1910), p. 15.

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In 1902, Lane Mullins became the editor of the Centre's short-lived news magazine, *The St John Ambulance Gazette: The Organ of the NSW Centre of the St John Ambulance Association*. By 1903, he was also Commissioner of the New South Wales District of the Brigade when he praised the achievements of the military 'ambulance' services in the Anglo-Boer War.

The merger allowed for a demarcation between territorial zones of operation around Sydney, alleviating tensions arising from competition over patients and their treatment. Major Leonard Dobbin was the Secretary of the CATB, and he now became District Superintendent Secretary of the Brigade. It is clear that he was already known and respected within the Sydney Centre of the St John Ambulance Association, because HM The King created him an Honorary Associate of the Venerable Order in that same year of 1904. Two other CATB staff members joined the new Brigade Executive, but The Crown never honoured them in the way Dobbin had been. Dr George Lane Mullins became Brigade Commissioner of Australia; Dr Alfred Perkins its Medical Officer in Chief; Dr Thomas Storie Dixson, Deputy Commissioner for the New South Wales District; and Professor James Liebmann was district Chief Superintendent. Liebmann is an interesting character, having been a member of the St John Ambulance Association's South African branch. He migrated to Australia at the end of the Anglo-Boer War. Thus, he was a direct replacement for Perkins, who followed an opposite trajectory.¹⁴



February 1, 1903. Commissioner.
Sydney, N.S.W.,

*Signature of Dr George Lane Mullins.*¹⁵

The year 1904 marked the first stirrings towards the notion of 'federalism' among the St John Centres around the young nation of Australia. New South Wales had led the way with Australia's first Brigade units, now other States followed suit. This prompted the London headquarters at St John's Gate to appoint Dr George Lane Mullins, the New South Wales Commissioner of the Brigade, to a national leadership position as 'Commissioner for Australia'.¹⁶ At the same time a Sydney doctor, Alfred E. Perkins, became 'Surgeon in Chief for Australia'. These high-sounding titles appeared significant, but, in fact, it proved impossible for either man to exert any real leadership at a national level. Also, their London-appointed rôles were resented by the other States and Lane Mullins and Perkins were viewed (in the words of Ian Howie-Willis) 'as an extra and unnecessary link in the chain of command'.¹⁷ Perhaps perceiving this from the start, Lane Mullins did not attempt to move around the country to establish new Divisions, State Districts, or to enthuse the Brigade movement nationally. St John's Gate finally abolished the national Commissionership position in 1912.

In 1913 there occurred the significant milestone of the first appearance in New South Wales of the St John Ambulance Service Medal. HM The King awarded it to Dr George Lane Mullins, who became the first recipient of the medal anywhere in Australia. The Premier State had been the first to initiate Brigade activity and so it seems fitting that a key leader of that activity had achieved an Australian 'first'.¹⁸ The medal sat firmly within the Imperial honours system and recipients received permission to wear it on military uniform, at all appropriate times and in all places, alongside regular honours, awards and medals granted by HM The King. This gave it huge prestige and significance and made it a source of much pride for Brigade members, who either wore it or aspired to earn it.

While the Great War took place in Europe between 1914 and 1918, back home in Australia the older generation of men who had begun the St John Ambulance movement in Sydney were nearing the end of their time. One of the most prominent of them, Dr George Lane Mullins, died in March 1918. His rôle in the creation of the St John Ambulance Brigade drew an appropriate level of comment in obituaries:

The last tribute was paid to Lieut.-Colonel George Lane Mullins with full military honours yesterday ... The church was crowded ... Rev. Father Hartley referred to the great services which had been rendered by

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the late Lieut.-Colonel Mullins, not only in connection with the military hospital at Randwick, where for two years and a half he had the care of our sick and wounded soldiers, St Vincent's Hospital, and the Hospice for the Dying, but as an earnest and self-sacrificing worker in the Red Cross movement and the St John Ambulance organization ... Colonel Roth CMG DSO VD, represented the executive of the Red Cross Society and the Permanent Medical Referee Board.¹⁹

'Dr. G. Lane Mullins of Sydney, a Knight of the Order of St. John, is the Chief commissioner of the Brigade for the Commonwealth, and he is assisted by deputies in each State'.

Western Mail (25
November 1905), p. 33.

'He is the first Australian recipient of the Service Medal of the Order'.

Sydney Morning Herald
(13 June 1913), p. 8.



*Lieutenant-Colonel George Lane Mullins.*²⁰ *Armorial bearings of Dr George Thomas Lane Mullins, Knight of Grace of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem.*²¹

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Doctor

THOMAS STORIE DIXON

KStJ MB CM

Commissioner: 1917 – 1920

1921 – 1923

acting Commissioner

1910–12

Brigade Commissioner of Australia [self-appointed]

c.1920

‘Chief Commissioner for Australia (Western Australia excepted)’



Dr Thomas Storie Dixon (Brigade Deputy Commissioner from 1903).²²

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Hon. Serving Bro.	1903	<i>St John Ambulance Association, Annual report (1903), p. 1; Sydney Morning Herald (24 October 1903), p. 8.</i>
Knight of Grace	1919	<i>The Sun (18 December 1919), p. 7; Sydney Morning Herald (28 June 1920), p. 6.</i>

Dr Storie Dixon found a balance to the CATB attitude in the formation of an explicitly ‘military’ Division – the Royal Naval Sick Berth Reserve.²³ Members of the St John Ambulance Brigade and Association were to staff it.²⁴ The Government created the Reserve to supplement the Permanent Sick Berth Staff of the Royal Navy in time of National Emergency and Maritime War only. It was something of an élite unit, with candidates having to pass the Advanced First Aid and Home Nursing courses. Previously female-only, the Home Nursing courses now became available to men. On 12 April 1907, the first Home Nursing class for men was held at Glebe with seventeen men in attendance.²⁵ This was in an era when no male nurses worked in hospitals.

By 1910, Dr Thomas Storie Dixon, by now national Commissioner for the Brigade, was in a position to report to the Chief Commissioner for the Brigade Overseas at St John’s Gate – Major-General J. C. Dalton, a Royal Artillery officer and Knight of Justice of the Order. Storie Dixon’s summation of activity leading into the year 1911–12 demonstrates that the early problems experienced by the Brigade in New South Wales had been overcome (i.e. relations with the CATB and volunteer members’ fears of military conscription):

It appears to me that in no year since the foundation of the Brigade work in this State, have we been favoured with circumstances so unique or so likely to be productive of important developments in the near future, as those which have arisen during the year just ended.²⁶

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One sign of healthier times for Sydney's Brigade was evident in its provision of first aid services to large crowds during the 1911 coronation celebrations for George V. September 1911 marked the 21st anniversary of the Sydney Centre of the St John Ambulance Association, formed in 1890. The celebrations took place on 22 November in the Botanical Gardens, attended by over thirty Honorary Secretaries from sub-Centres around the State 'some having travelled a considerable distance'.²⁷ Mr Hanbury Davis related to them some interesting history of the early Centre in the then-Colony, and Dr Storie Dixson talked about the importance of Association work in first-aid training. According to the *Annual Report* of 1912: 'Enthusiasm continues to be shown in the work of the Brigade ... and during the coronation festivities many of the members of the Ambulance and Nursing Divisions responded readily for service in the public thoroughfares and rendered first aid in numerous instances'.²⁸



*Dr Thomas Storie Dixson MB CM.*²⁹

- Educ. Sydney Grammar School.
- Uni. Studies in Edinburgh, Dublin, Berlin, Vienna.
- Lectureship in *materia medica* and therapeutics, Uni. of Sydney (1883–1917).
- Lecturer, Uni. of Strasbourg (late-1880s).
- Deputy Commissioner for the Brigade (1902).
- Hon. Associate of the Venerable Order of St John (1903).
- Member, Linnean Society of NSW (President, 1903–5).
- Commissioner for NSW (1918).
- Knight of Grace of the Venerable Order of St John (1919).
- President, NSW Medical Board (from 1919).
- Trustee, Australian Museum (1918–25).
- Chairman, NSW Centre (1920–21).
- Life Vice-President, Highland Society of NSW.

Just as there had been problems with the CATB, so Dr Thomas Storie Dixson experienced issues with the CATC. He petitioned the Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas about ongoing tensions and demarcation disputes in terms of 'ambulance' work between the Brigade and the CATC. Finally, in 1912, when the position as 'Commissioner of Australia' disappeared, Storie Dixson was able to nullify Mullins' decree protecting CATC fund raising. That relieved at least one source of bitterness on the side of the non-CATC Brigade Divisions. St John's Gate wanted Storie Dixson to separate the Brigade from the CATC. The Deputy Commissioner for the Brigade Overseas, W. H. Morgan, said:

... that the ambulance movement should be looked on as consisting of two distinct parts, one concerned with transport, the other involving voluntary first aid and nursing. The need for both first aid and transport being worked in separate departments is not sufficiently realized in New South Wales ... and until this fact is fully recognized the work of the Brigade will not progress within the Commonwealth.³⁰

Dr Thomas Storie Dixson, well known nationally as a St John Ambulance identity by virtue of his national leadership role in the Brigade, stoked fears of actual invasion. The message he delivered to St John Ambulance volunteers is typified by these words:

There was a reality in the life of the Germans – a determination to get the world. Twelve years ago he had been told in Germany, 'We hate you and we will fight you'. The Germans ... regarded Britain as a barrier to their expansion, and had set their hearts on obtaining certain British possessions, such as New Guinea, New Zealand and Australia ... If Germany won, Belgium would be Heaven itself compared with

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what it would be in Australia. ... [Australians] would have to set their teeth if they were to do what they undoubtedly would do, in time – hold their country.³¹

In consequence, at the start of the war there was in New South Wales a ‘remarkable and unprecedented rush for Ambulance instruction ... [replacing earlier pre-war] apathy ... lack of interest ... [and creating] a most gratifying feature’.³² The unanimous offer from the leaders of Sydney’s medical profession to Lecture and Examine St John Ambulance classes supported this attitude. At this time, there were almost no female doctors in the profession, but a very large number of women found a practical outlet for service in the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) movement. The Department of Defence sponsored in conjunction with St John Ambulance and the Red Cross Society. Two St John Ambulance leaders, who were both soldier-doctors, had initiated Red Cross activity in the State: Reuter Roth and Robert Vandeleur Kelly. This emphasized the pre-existing close connection between all three groups.

During the Influenza Pandemic of 1918–19, Dr Thomas Storie Dixon cooperated with the Director General of Public Health, coordinating a substantial number of St John Ambulance volunteers. Because it struck at the whole community, irrespective of gender and age, unlike the recent war service this crisis called for both male ambulance workers and home nursing skills. Thus, women played a central rôle in the relief of suffering. Both male and female volunteers assisted in emergency hospitals or in the victims’ homes. St John Ambulance volunteers also staffed Public inoculation centres; for example, members of the Newtown Division of the Brigade were on duty at the Newtown Vaccination Dépôt. It was important for the volunteers themselves to be inoculated. The relief effort was gruelling. For example, Mrs Ida Withers, the Brigade’s Lady District Superintendent, expected a ten-hour work period from volunteers at the Railways Institute. They were making face masks for volunteer workers.

Dr Thomas Storie Dixon pioneered an interstate conference of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Melbourne in April 1920. The meeting was attended by senior Brigade officials from around the nation (Tasmania being the sole exception), due to Storie Dixon’s national prominence in the St John Ambulance movement. The principal outcome was the result of a strange combination of ambition and pragmatism: each State Centre of the St John Ambulance Association was encouraged to make representations to the London headquarters at St John’s Gate, requesting an independent Australian Priory with national jurisdiction. An Australian Priory, of the type envisioned by Storie Dixon, did not come into existence until 1946, but the question is not ‘why did it take two-and-a-half decades?’ Rather, the enquiry should be: ‘Why was St John’s Gate so immediately receptive to the idea, and what went wrong?’ Did the Order’s initial enthusiasm have anything to do with the 1920 Royal Tour by the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII), which drew an excited response from members of St John Ambulance? He was the future Sovereign Head of the Order. When he passed through Sydney on 9 June 1921, his presence inspired the attendance of 350 Brigade members. Volunteers from both the Nursing and Ambulance Divisions helped staff nine ambulance stations along the route – ‘a splendid opportunity to show their fully organized condition and usefulness’.³³

The response from London to Storie Dixon’s Australian Priory idea was surprisingly positive. In June 1921, the State Centres learned that St John’s Gate would ‘welcome the formation of a Central Council for the whole of Australia’.³⁴ It is important to emphasize that the Victorian Centre had given members the same intimation, when they had approached London about this same issue in 1916. This was a clear indication that the governing authorities at St John’s Gate favoured greater regional independence for St John Ambulance organizations spread around the British Empire. However, St John’s Gate positivity did not necessarily extend to the creation of a Priory, which was a special and highly prestigious administrative unit within the hierarchical organization of the Venerable Order of St John. Heedless of these concerns, the 1921 response prompted Storie Dixon into action. He convened a second inter-state conference. This conference took place in Melbourne, on 24 October 1921. The delegates (including Western Australia) voted unanimously to create a ‘Central Council for Australia’, appointing Storie Dixon as President, J. H. Lord (Secretary of the Victorian Centre) as General Secretary and A. H. Hansford (Chairman of the Victorian Civil Ambulance) as Treasurer. Their key task was to produce a draft constitution, ostensibly for the Central Council, but really with a view to defining the rôle and function of a fully-fledged Australian Priory.³⁵ Although all the State Centres had

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Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

participated in the call for independence, their enthusiasm for the idea varied considerably. Unsurprisingly, as leaders of the Central Council, Victoria and New South Wales were strongly in favour, as was the Hobart Centre. The Western Australian Centre opposed the Central Council outright and refused all involvement with it, as did the South Australian Centre.

While Storie Dixon was leading initiatives at the national level, in New South Wales his status was elevated to Chairman of the Association (1921–4).³⁶ In 1924, Dr Thomas Storie Dixon attempted to enthuse the State Centres for his Central Council for Australia.³⁷ The meeting he called had a ‘federalist’ agenda in the sense that Storie Dixon promoted the Australia-wide distribution of the New South Wales childbirth course and textbook. Here he was frustrated, not by the State Centres, but by St John’s Gate which smothered the initiative. Undeterred, Storie Dixon pushed forward with a second initiative to seek London’s permission to publish an Australian first aid manual. It carried the merit of specificity to Australian environmental conditions, which the standard manual did not cater for. The special Australian manual was a New South Wales initiative and St John’s Gate gave Dr Storie Dixon responsibility for drawing up an Australian supplement to the British textbook: he had already flagged the need for such an augmented volume in a Special Address to the Centre in 1922.³⁸ The Queensland, Victorian and South Australian Centres followed this lead, before the Ambulance Department of the Order at St John’s Gate appears to have withdrawn its support for the project. As Howie–Willis asserts, St John’s Gate remained hostile to suggestions from overseas branches of the organization for any rewriting of the British first aid manual to cater for local situations outside England with more relevant content.³⁹ An interesting issue raised during the conference was the regret that Australians were so infrequently honoured with membership in the Venerable Order of St John. This was a particular grievance among Brigade members, whose Service Medal was thought by London to be reward and recognition enough.

On 18 December 1924, St John’s Gate finally approved the constitution of the Central Council for Australia. For its part, the Central Council declared it would ‘co-ordinate, protect and advance the interests of the Order and the work of the Ambulance Department thereof within the Commonwealth in every way possible’.⁴⁰ An important outcome of the meeting was its approval of Norrie’s childbirth textbook. The Council agreed to distribute copies of it to State Centres around Australia, seeking their approval for its issue as the standard Australian St John Ambulance text on childbirth.⁴¹ The initial meeting of the now London-approved Central Council took place at the New South Wales Centre headquarters on George Street on 26 June 1925. Storie Dixon led the meeting as ‘Senior Officer of the Brigade within the Commonwealth (Western Australia excepted)’ – he was already using the self-appointed title ‘Chief Commissioner for Australia (Western Australia excepted)’. Representatives of most State Centres attended and Boles Reeves Rainsford represented the New South Wales Centre and Dr Thomas Morgan Martin the New South Wales District of the Brigade. Two Victorians were present who had been associated with the St John Ambulance movement since its inception: Dr Charles Bage and Dr Rupert Downes. One further key New South Wales identity was present – Colonel (Dr) James Adam Dick CMG VD MD FRCS(Ed), ‘Surgeon in Chief of the Brigade in Australia (Western Australia excepted)’.⁴² By the time of this meeting, St John’s Gate had considered Norrie’s childbirth text and decided against it as an unambiguous exertion of its authority.⁴³

In 1926, Sister Parry joined a select group of Australian St John Ambulance members who took part in a seven-month trip to the United Kingdom and Europe. At St John’s Gate, she studied methods of organization and administration, then travelled around Great Britain visiting Association sub-Centres and Brigade Divisions and inspected safety precautions in industry and mines across the ‘mother’ country. Dr Storie Dixon joined her on this trip. While this fact may give the impression they were equally active, unlike Sister Parry exactly what Dr Storie Dixon and the Central Council actually did back home in Australia is not clear. He certainly engaged in central headquarters-like activity: for example, compiling lists of St John bodies in each of the six States and producing a register of the members of the Order according to rank (by this stage including nine Knights of St John and sixteen Honorary Associates). Beyond this, neither Storie Dixon nor the Central Council had much of a rôle to play. Storie Dixon attempted visits (just as Sister Parry did), for example to Hobart and Perth while *en route* to England in 1926. In London, he probably advocated for the creation of an Australian Priory at

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St John's Gate.⁴⁴ In truth the Central Council met infrequently and was staffed by old men, most of whom had passed out of this life by the early 1930s.⁴⁵

From its inception in 1890, the New South Wales Centre of the St John Ambulance Association had reported direct to St John's Gate in London. Yet the State had exerted tangible national leadership, well beyond its old colonial borders. It had been the first to offer St John Ambulance first-aid training, the first to establish a Brigade and the first to create Cadet Divisions. This all contributed towards New South Wales being a loud and insistent voice, which demanded attention. The story of New South Wales leadership towards St John Ambulance 'federalism' is, initially, the narrative of Dr Storie Dixon's effort to convince London of the merits of the idea. Subsequently, it was the tale of how Dr Hugh Poate exercised effective leadership to achieve, and then consolidate, this long-held hope among Australian St John Ambulance personnel.

By 1929, it was clear that the way forward for 'federalism' was not *via* Dr Storie Dixon's Central Council. That body was underfunded and under-staffed, lacked disciplinary and managerial influence among St John Ambulance bodies around the country and, fatally, had no influence with St John's Gate in London. On top of all this, Western Australia resolutely insisted on separation from St John Ambulance entities elsewhere on the continent. Finally, in 1929, Storie Dixon's Central Council died at the hands of Sir John Hewett, an Englishman and senior dignitary of the Venerable Order who led a delegation to Australia from St John's Gate.⁴⁶

Sister Parry was a salaried administrator, receiving her wage from the New South Wales Centre. She was almost unique in this status as the majority of people involved with St John Ambulance were volunteers. In this way, St John Ambulance was a focus for the philanthropy of thousands of Sydney-siders. However, the negative aspect of volunteerism was that the organization relied on a wide cross-section of the community. Inevitably, some of those people attracted to St John Ambulance volunteering were there for the wrong reasons. Far from being harmless nuisances, self-seekers threatened not only the ethos of the Order of St John but also its credibility with the public. As St John Ambulance could only operate with public and governmental goodwill, it needed to maintain its high-minded principles in practice. An early crisis-point for its reputation came in 1924 at the Darlinghurst Ambulance Division of the Brigade (formed February 1920 with twenty-one members). Its leader was Superintendent Patrick Joseph Purtill JP, a Tramways Board inspector. The Division had grown rapidly and, by late 1922, it claimed to be performing 240 hours' voluntary public duty a week and treating 1,679 cases annually. These figures were very high and clearly worthy of praise. Purtill had established links across Sydney, as far afield as La Perouse and Balmoral beach where Divisional personnel staffed first aid stations on the weekends. This was in addition to regular sports-field attendance throughout the inner-western suburbs and including the University of Sydney ovals. Clearly ambitious, Superintendent Purtill planned to purchase property in Flinders Street, Darlinghurst, and develop it. Funds were raised *via* lotteries which resulted in Purtill handling large amounts of cash, all done in the name of the St John Ambulance Brigade (and using its badge branding), suggesting the explicit support and approval of Dr Thomas Storie Dixon as Commissioner for Australia. However, Purtill had not received permission to do any of this. Complaints to Brigade headquarters in Sydney soon followed.⁴⁷ There were clear fears of embezzlement of funds garnered from the public in the name of St John Ambulance. The questionable nature of Purtill's activity is evident in the fact the matter entered the legal system in 1924, reaching the High Court of Australia two years later.⁴⁸ The Purtill case highlights how difficult it was for the Brigade to discipline volunteer members. The best that Colonel Morgan Martin, the Acting Commissioner for New South Wales, could do was appeal to 'good taste ... [and] the benefit of the Brigade' for Purtill's resignation.⁴⁹

A demonstration of the real limits of Storie Dixon's influence came in 1931 with the re-emergence of the Purtill affair. Storie Dixon suspected Purtill of embezzlement of St John Ambulance funds, but the Commissioner had been unable to dislodge Purtill from his position. The Darlinghurst Superintendent had resisted all moves to unseat him. In September 1931, Dr Hugh Poate as Commissioner for New South Wales urged Storie Dixon to act against Purtill, 'an obnoxious type of man'.⁵⁰ Much correspondence then ensued between Sydney and London, where Sir James Sleeman as

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Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, was noticeably unimpressed with Storie Dixon's ineffectual treatment of a situation, which was continuing to cause huge embarrassment to the public image of St John Ambulance. In the end, Poate took the decisive action needed to conclude the sorry tale. He disbanded the Darlinghurst Division, a move supported by Sleeman in August 1932. Ironically, this dramatic, though decisive, move did not worry Purtill: he died before it took effect.⁵¹ In Sleeman's mind, the Purtill incident reinforced the existing prejudice against Storie Dixon while at the same time building a positive impression of the high level of leadership that Dr Hugh Poate exercised in Sydney. It is rather sad that the Purtill incident marked the end of Storie Dixon's involvement with St John Ambulance.

The dramatic year of 1932 concluded with the passing of Dr Thomas Storie Dixon. He died in December, aged seventy-eight:

'Dr Dixon was one of the foremost medical men in the State, and, although he had been ill for a prolonged period, the news of his death, which was not made public until today, came as a profound shock to his many friends. Dr Dixon was appointed president of the Medical Board in 1919, and for many years was president of the Institution for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind. He was also closely associated with the St John Ambulance organization, of which he was Chief Commissioner in Australia. From 1903 to 1905 he was president of the Linnean Society. He was a member of the Highland Society and of the board of trustees of the Australian Museum. Dr Dixon, for a number of years, was a prominent lecturer at Sydney University. It is understood that one of his last wishes was that his funeral should be of a private nature, free from all publicity'.⁵²

Dr Storie Dixon had devoted thirty years' voluntary service to St John Ambulance. An earlier writer was correct in pointing out that St John's Gate seems likely to have maintained the ineffectual Central Council, in a safely inactive form, as a gesture of respect to Storie Dixon during his dotage. It was disbanded in May 1933, soon after he had passed away.⁵³

By 1933, St John Ambulance Cadets were assisting at major public events, including Anzac Day and the Royal Agricultural Society's Easter Show. New South Wales led the way, as the Cadet movement was slower to get moving in the other States. Meanwhile the activity of the Association continued unabated. Sister Parry, now motorized, was achieving even more branch visits. Higher promotion within the Venerable Order of St John expressed her value to the New South Wales Centre: she became a Commander Sister in 1935.⁵⁴ It was a signal achievement for this hard-working woman:

Sister Parry, who is the first, and at the present time only recipient in the Commonwealth of this honour conferred by the Grand Priory of the Order, was invested by the Lieutenant-Governor (Sir Philip Street) at Government House, Sydney, on February 26. Sister Parry is the organizing secretary of the St John Ambulance Association, New South Wales Centre, and is the daughter of the late Dr Davenport Parry, of Picton, New South Wales.⁵⁵

The spirit of Dr Thomas Storie Dixon continued to exert its aspiration for an Australian Priory. Under his influence, the New South Wales Centre had passed a resolution in 1930 to support a 'federal' St John Ambulance body.⁵⁶ The creation of such an administrative unit was the central focus of a second significant and important official delegation that visited Australia in 1936. Many Australians felt it was time for independence from St John's Gate in order to achieve unity of purpose and action among the St John Ambulance bodies spread around the vast continent. Furthermore, Australia was alone among the 'white' British Dominions in not having a 'federal' governing body: South Africa (1921), New Zealand (1931), Canada (1934). This left Australia in the subservient position of having to rely on constant interaction with London and necessarily involving ongoing deference to the St John Ambulance leadership at St John's Gate. Certainly, the Australian Centres had been fractious. Some preferred to deal with London, rather than Storie Dixon, or the Victorians or other people from Sydney.⁵⁷ By the mid-1930s, most agreed that a 'federal' model was desirable. It was the central question put to Colonel James Sleeman when he led an official delegation to tour St John Ambulance operations in Australia in 1936.



Armorial bearings of Dr Thomas Storie Dixon, Knight of Grace of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem. The shield surmounts the Maltese Cross of the Order, which has its origins in the era of the crusades.⁵⁸

‘Commissioner for New South Wales of St. John Ambulance Brigade’.
Sydney Morning Herald (28 June 1920), p. 6.

‘Dr. Thomas Storie Dixon, president of the New South Wales Medical Board died in Sydney on December 9. He took his M.B. degree at Edinburgh in 1877. His work for the St. John Ambulance organisation, of which he was Chief Commissioner for Australia, won him the honor of a Knight of Grace of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem’.
Chronicle (15 December 1932), p. 45.

Dixon, Thomas Storie (1854–1932) by B. Cook

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This is a shared entry with **Hugh Dixon**

Sir Hugh Dixon (1841–1926), tobacco manufacturer and philanthropist, and Thomas Storie (1854–1932), medical practitioner, were born on 29 January 1841 and 10 April 1854 in Sydney, sons of **Hugh Dixon**, tobacco manufacturer, and his wife Helen, née Craig. Hugh was educated at **W. T. Cape's** Elfred House Private School then worked for Phillip McMahon, a timber-merchant. In 1856 he entered his father's firm and, with his brother Robert, became a partner in 1864. On 3 July 1866 at Raymond Terrace he married Emma Elizabeth (1844–1922), daughter of William Edward Shaw; her sister Alice married **Thomas Baker**.

The firm prospered, partly due to the impetus of the American Civil War, and expanded to Melbourne and Adelaide, where it became Robert Dixon & Co. On the death of his father in 1880 Dixon became head of Dixon & Sons Ltd and in 1883 built a massive warehouse and factory on the corner of Elizabeth and Park streets. In the late 1880s he introduced a profit-sharing scheme with employees. In 1903 he and his nephew (**Sir**) **Hugh Denison** organized the merger of the family companies with William Cameron Bros & Co. Pty, Melbourne; Dixon was chairman of the new British–Australasian Tobacco Co. Ltd. He was also chairman of the City Bank of Sydney, and the Strand Electric Lighting Co. Ltd, proprietor of the Strand Arcade and, in 1897–98, president of the Chamber of Manufactures of New South Wales. In 1904 he set up and became chairman of the Dixon Trust Ltd.

Staunch Baptists, Dixon and his wife originated many trust funds for the Church, including £10,000 for aged and infirm ministers. He was president of the Baptist Union of New South Wales in 1895–96, the Baptist Home Mission Society until 1926 and of the Young Men's Christian Association in 1900–02 and in 1909, and a director of Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. Lady Dixon was a life governor of the Queen Victoria Homes for

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Consumptives, the Women's Hospital, Crown Street, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and of the Infants' Home, Ashfield, a life vice-president of the British Empire League in Australia, the National Council of Women of New South Wales, and the Victoria League; president of the women's auxiliary of the Sydney City Mission and the Veterans' Home of New South Wales and vice-president of the New South Wales Home for Incurables, Ryde (to which they gave £20,000), and the Fresh Air League; she also founded the Sydney Medical Mission. Among Dixon's many benefactions were £5000 each to the Dreadnought Fund, the Chamber of Commerce War Food fund and the Y.M.C.A.'s building fund; and £7500 to the University of Sydney to buy a collection of minerals from the Barrier district; he and his wife were as charitable privately as publicly.

Dixon was a noted horticulturist and became a member of the Linnean Society of New South Wales in 1887 and the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science in 1898. At his home, Abergeldie, Summer Hill, his garden contained many exotic and rare plants; he contributed articles to such journals as the *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales*. Bespectacled and bearded with curling side-whiskers, he was knighted in 1921. Lady Dixon enthusiastically collected rare china and owned a tea-service that had belonged to Marie Antoinette.

She died in Sydney on 12 April 1922 and Sir Hugh at Colombo on 11 May 1926; they were survived by two of their six sons and by four daughters; one son Lieutenant Thomas Storie Dixon, Coldstream Guards, was killed on active service in France in World War I. Sir Hugh left his estate, valued for probate at £143,194, to his children and grandchildren.

Thomas was educated at Sydney Grammar School and privately by Rev. Barzillai Quaife. At 18 he went to the University of Edinburgh (M.B., C.M., 1877), where he was influenced by Lister. He studied in Dublin, Berlin and Vienna before returning to Sydney, where he was appointed lecturer in materia medica and therapeutics at the University of Sydney in 1883–1917. He spent two years leave at the University of Strassburg (Strasbourg), Germany, where he isolated the poisonous principle of the castor oil bean and translated O. Schmiedeberg's *Elements of Pharmacology* (Edinburgh, 1887) under the author's supervision, to meet the need for a text-book in English-speaking universities. On 11 October 1887 at Inch, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, he married his first cousin Janet Maria Holdway Storie, and added Storie to his name.

On his return to Sydney Dixon was honorary physician in 1889–1914, honorary consulting physician in 1914–21 and director of the department of special therapeutics in 1909–21 at Sydney Hospital. He helped to found the Renwick Hospital for Infants, was associated with the Greycliffe (Lady Edeline) Hospital for Babies, and the Sydney Medical Mission, and was president of the New South Wales Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind. Dixon was active on the New South Wales branch of the British Medical Association and was president of the Medical Board of New South Wales in 1919–32. He did devoted work for the St John Ambulance Brigade, published a pamphlet on its history in New South Wales in 1918, was appointed a knight of St John of Jerusalem in 1919 and was chief commissioner of the Commonwealth of Australia (Western Australia excepted) in 1923–32. He contributed several articles to the *Australian Medical Journal*.

Interested in science from his university days, Dixon was a councillor of the Linnean Society of New South Wales for fifty years (1882–1932) and its president in 1903–05. In 1898 he became a trustee of the Australian Museum, Sydney, and was president in 1918–25; there he helped to organize popular lectures and planned a children's museum. He also contributed valuable information on the preservation and display of specimens. A member for forty-four years, he was an honorary vice-president of the Highland Society of New South Wales and a member of the Geographical Society.

Dixon had suffered from diabetes for twenty years when he died on 9 December 1932 at his home, Edgewater, Cremorne; he was cremated with Presbyterian forms. He was survived by his wife and by three daughters; his estate was valued for probate at £7836.

Sir Hugh Dixon's eldest surviving son SIR William (1870–1952), businessman and collector of Australianiana, was born on 18 April 1870 in Sydney. Educated at All Saints College, Bathurst, he qualified as an engineer in Scotland in 1889–96. On his return to Sydney he worked for several years for Norman Selfe. He was a director of Dixon & Sons Ltd in 1899–1903, the British–Australasian Tobacco Co. Ltd in 1903–08, the City Bank of Sydney (1909–17) and of the Dixon Trust Ltd 1909–52 and Timbrol Ltd until 1952. William began collecting rare books and manuscripts for use in his 'own historical researches' but when he learned that the income from David Scott Mitchell's bequest to the Public Library of New South Wales could not be spent on pictures, he 'decided to give special attention to them'.

Dixon first offered his pictures to the State in 1919 and again in 1924, adding that he would bequeath the remainder of his pictures and collections of Australianiana, including manuscripts, books, coins and stamps, to the library on similar conditions to Mitchell's bequest: the Dixon Gallery was opened in October 1929. He later

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gave to the library other pictures, including a number by artists who accompanied Captain James Cook, its great bronze entrance doors, three stained-glass windows in the main reading room, and £15,000, the income of which is used to buy historical pictures.

In 1937–39 Dixon gave a total of £5000 to assist in establishing a library at the New England University College, Armidale, which is named in his honour; he also presented some 1500 anthropological specimens from Australasia, New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago to the Australian Museum. He was a benefactor and fellow of the Royal Australian Historical Society, contributing many articles to its *Journal*, and a member of the Geographical, Royal and Linnean societies of New South Wales. Like his parents, he aided hospitals and institutions and was treasurer and president of the Queen Victoria Homes. He was knighted in 1939. Although 'reserved and retiring', he was a 'very kindly gentleman', with neatly brushed hair and a trim beard and moustache. He was a member of Killara Golf Club, and was an excellent photographer.

Sir William, a bachelor, died in hospital at Chatswood on 17 August 1952 and was cremated with Anglican rites. His estate was valued for probate at £429,132; in addition to his promised bequests, he left all his shares in the British Tobacco Co. (Australia) Ltd (about £114,000) to the trustee of the Public Library to set up the William Dixon Foundation to benefit students by reproducing, with 'no editing whatsoever', manuscripts relating to Australasia and the Pacific, reprinting rare books and translating manuscripts into English. The Dixon Library, housing his great collections, was opened in 1959.

A portrait of Sir William by Norman Carter is held by the University of New England and Lionel Lindsay did a portrait etching.

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Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Colonel (Doctor)

THOMAS MORGAN MARTIN

CMG EsqStJ VD AAMC

Commissioner: 1924 – 1925



Colonel T. Morgan Martin with No. 2 Australian General Hospital at Mena House in Egypt. He is standing with the first batch of wounded Australian soldiers from Gallipoli (May 1915).⁵⁹

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Esquire	1921	<i>London Gazette</i> (8 November 1921), p. 8828; <i>The Sun</i> (9 September 1923), p. 5.



Dame Margaret Davidson, inspecting officer (8 September 1923).⁶⁰

L–R: (back row) A. S. Wilkinson, F. Holmes, ??; (front row) Mr B. Rainsford, Dr Storie Dixon (Commissioner), Dame Margaret Davidson, Col. T. Morgan Martin, Dr Sinclair.

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‘Colonel Thomas Morgan Martin who has been made a C.M.G. is the officer in command of No. 2 Australian General Hospital Egypt. The colonel was born in 1854 in County Waterford, Ireland, and was educated at Trinity College Dublin where he took his degree. He came out to Australia in 1880 and for 14 years practised in College street. He was placed on the reserve of officers of the Australian Army Medical Corps in 1897 as a lieutenant, rising to the rank of captain in 1900, major in 1903 and being gazetted lieutenant-colonel in 1911. With the outbreak of the Boer war in 1899 Colonel Martin went over to Africa, where he was present at operations in the Orange River Colony at Paardeberg, Poplar Grove and Driefontein. In the Transvaal he was in actions near Pretoria, Johannesburg and Diamond Hill and then again at Bethlehem, Wittebergen and Wittepoort, in the Orange River Colony. For his services he received the Queen’s medal with six clasps’.

Sydney Morning Herald (26 January 1916), p. 11.

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‘Thomas Morgan Martin’, *The Medical Journal of Australia*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (July 1928), pp. 67-68.

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Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Wing Commander (Doctor)

Sir **HUGH RAYMOND GUY POATE**

Kt MVO GCStJ MB ChM FRCS

Commissioner: 1926 – 1928

early–1926 acting Commissioner

1929 – 1941 acting Commissioner [for a second time]



Sir Hugh Poate (1957).

He was the first Chancellor of the Australian Priory of the Venerable Order of St John. Here he is wearing his regalia as a Bailiff Grand Cross of the Order.

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Serving Bro.	1928	<i>St John Ambulance Association, 38th Annual report (30 September 1928), p. 13; Sydney Morning Herald (10 August 1928), p. 10.</i>
Commander	1929	<i>London Gazette, No. 33567 (3 January 1930), p. 46; St John Ambulance Association, 39th Annual report (30 September 1929), p. 18; Sydney Morning Herald (31 August 1929), p. 22.</i>
Knight of Grace	1936	<i>London Gazette (23 June 1936), p. 4013; St John Ambulance Association, 46th Annual report (30 September 1936), p. 10; The West Wyalong Advocate (17 March 1936), p. 1.</i>
Bailiff Grand Cross ³	1955	<i>The Order of St John in Australia, 9th Annual Report of the Priory (31 December 1955), p. 30; The Canberra Times (19 December 1955), p. 2.</i>

By contrast, there now appeared on the St John Ambulance scene a dynamic leader from a younger generation – Dr Hugh Poate, Acting Commissioner for New South Wales in 1926 (Commissioner from 1929). As one St John historian has said: ‘His impact on the Brigade was evident from the outset’.⁶¹ In his position as Commissioner, Poate facilitated an increase in Brigade workload while simultaneously encouraging growing strength in its Divisional membership. While numbers increased at its lower echelons, the Brigade leadership was ‘professionalized’ by means of a new Staff School of Instruction,

³ G. R. Gayre, *The Heraldry of the Knights of St John* (Allahabad: Gaga Brothers, 1956), p. 165.

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initiated by Poate in 1926. Poate left the running of the School to two New South Wales Centre luminaries – District–Sergeant Francis George True (from 1926) and District–Officer William Batty Kubig (from 1934). The School's cadre staff gave advanced training to about thirty promising Brigade personnel annually, in Brigade procedure and medical knowledge and practice. The programme of instruction and examination ran for a year and became a necessary stepping–stone into the Commissioned ranks of the Brigade.⁶²



*Sir Hugh Raymond Guy
Poate MVO MB ChM
FRCS, as Commissioner for
the St John Ambulance
Brigade in NSW, at age 51
in 1936.⁶³*

- Born 16 January 1884, Summer Hill, Sydney.
- Educ. Sydney Grammar School (from 1896); University of Sydney (MB ChM 1907).
- Resident, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (1907–8).
- Fellow, Royal College of Surgeons, London (1908).
- Hon. Surgeon, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (1911–38).
- Lieutenant, Australian Army Medical Corps (1909).
- joined St John Ambulance Brigade (1913).
- Captain, 1st Field Ambulance AIF (August 1914).
- Major (February 1915).
- transported wounded from Gallipoli to Egypt.
- nicknamed 'Lightning' for swift / deft surgical technique.
- with No.3 Aust. Gen. Hospital, Abbeville, France (March 1916).
- Lieutenant–Colonel (February 1917).
- Surgeon to the RAAF (1929).
- Commissioner, St John Ambulance Brigade (1929–42).
- Lieutenant, Commandery of Australia, Venerable Order of St John (1941–6).
- Foundation fellow (1927), Councillor & President (1945–48), Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.
- Sub–Prior (later Chancellor), Australian Priory, Venerable Order of St John (1946–61).
- President, Medical Board of NSW & Foundation Chairman, Old People's Welfare Council of NSW (1957–61).
- published 57 medical journal articles (1915–49).⁶⁴

Colonel James Sleeman CB CMG OBE needed to see that St John Ambulance bodies in each State could work together. Sleeman's formal State–by–State inspection of the Australian St John Ambulance organization commenced in earnest in March 1936. After touring Queensland, Sleeman moved down to Sydney.⁶⁵ The Sleeman visitation was a particularly intensive tour, conducted by an impressive figure, a career soldier from a distinguished military family. Yet his was not a cold and distant personality and his oddities (he was Roman Catholic – later becoming a Knight of the Order of Malta – and a Cornishman) allowed him to interact with Australians in a productive way.⁶⁶ He also liked Australians, appreciating their loyalty to King and Empire and the discipline maintained among the Brigade Divisions. Ian Howie–Willis gives a detailed account of the Sleeman visit in his 1983 official history of St John Ambulance in Australia.⁶⁷ It is important here to focus on the Sydney aspect of the visit as it reveals much about the condition of St John Ambulance in New South Wales in the mid–1930s. What first struck Sleeman in Sydney was the Harbour Bridge, followed by his meeting with Dr Hugh Poate who headed the St John reception.⁶⁸ He met A. S. Wilkinson, the District Superintendent of the Brigade, and the last surviving member of the team of six from the New South Wales District who had represented Australia at the Royal Review of the Brigade at Windsor in 1912. Significantly, while in Sydney Sleeman was able to call on the Governor–General of Australia, Lord Gowrie. He was a Knight of Justice of the Venerable Order (and, in 1941, he would become a 'Knight Commander' as head of the Australian Commandery established in that year).

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Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

In Sydney, Sleeman's official delegation from St John's Gate in London could not help but notice the ongoing antipathy between the two main elements of the St John Ambulance organization. The Association and the Brigade were at each other's throats. As one St John historian has said:

He was visibly displeased that Bertha Parry, the Association secretary, was absenting herself from meetings where Brigade personnel were in attendance. He chaired a conference between the two foundations in Sydney, and when the issue of a Commandery for Australia arose, as it did time and again thereafter in every State, he pointed out that unless they could work harmoniously together they would never get their Commandery.⁶⁹

He spent nearly a fortnight in New South Wales, inspecting the annual parade of the Brigade at Government House where he saw a thousand members of Ambulance, Nursing and Cadet Divisions 'all well turned out and smartly uniformed, while their alert appearance showed the pride which they felt at belonging to our Brigade'.⁷⁰ Throughout his official duties, Sleeman wore his full-dress Chief Commissioner's uniform, as did District Commissioner Poate who accompanied him during his time in Sydney. They created a discordant image in the full sunshine, watching surf lifesavers go through their drills on Coogee Beach.

During the tour, Colonel Sleeman invested Dr Hugh Poate as a Knight of Grace of the Venerable Order of St John. This great event took place at a formal Brigade church parade in St Andrew's Cathedral in the presence of Archbishop Mowll and the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Philip Street (also a Knight of Grace of the Venerable Order and Chief Justice of the State). By this stage, Sleeman had formed a rightly very high opinion of Poate. He referred to Poate's 'wonderful work' as Commissioner which he thought was chiefly responsible for the health and strength of the Brigade in New South Wales. This clearly carried significance as Sydney was the strongest of the six Brigade Districts at that time. Sleeman was rich in his praise of Poate: 'That the Order possesses as its Brigade Commissioner in New South Wales one of the leading surgeons in all Australia is a matter for congratulation'.⁷¹ Despite factions and problems among the St John Ambulance personnel in Sydney, it is clear that Dr Hugh Poate was one of the chief reasons that Sleeman persuaded St John's Gate to grant Australia its independent 'federal' aspiration in the form of a Commandery (an administrative structure that fell short of the hoped-for Priory). It was no wonder that, five years later when the Australian Commandery came into being, Poate became the Commandery Lieutenant, the chief executive officer of the new federal structure. Although St John's Gate did not establish the Commandery until 1941, it was clearly underway and the spirit of Storie Dixson could rest assured that he had passed on the bâton of 'federalism' successfully to Poate.

In the spirit of optimism that followed the Sleeman delegation, in August 1936, the New South Wales Centre addressed a formal letter of welcome to the incoming State Governor, Admiral Sir David Murray Anderson KCB KCMG MVO. His Excellency had been recently invested with the cross of a Knight of Grace of the Venerable Order, added to which his vice-regal position in New South Wales as personal representative of the Sovereign Head of the Venerable Order of St John made the new Governor a natural focus of attention from the Centre:

The official representatives of the St John Ambulance Association and the St John Ambulance Brigade (Overseas) in New South Wales, respectfully expressing our loyal devotion to His Majesty the King, desire to extend to Your Excellency and Lady Anderson a hearty welcome to the State.

The Centre of the Association was formed in the year 1890, and since then has carried on its work ... During this period it has given instruction to over 104,000 persons in First Aid to the Injured and Elementary Home Nursing and Hygiene, and has recently expanded its activities to include the training of the citizens of New South Wales in Anti-Gas Precautions.

During the war, 230 members of the St John Ambulance Brigade Overseas (New South Wales District) served with the Australian Army Medical Corps, thirteen losing their lives, while good work was done by those who remained in the transport from State to State of returned wounded sailors and soldiers. The members of the Nursing Divisions enrolled themselves in large numbers in the Voluntary Aid Detachments, and attended to the wants of the sick and wounded as Aids in Convalescent Homes and in other capacities.

The Brigade in the New South Wales District totals 1,840 members, who are at all times ready and willing to serve the public, and last year rendered first aid to 54,791 patients at Sydney.⁷²

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To reinforce its strong sense of oversight by the Venerable Order of St John, in 1937 the ladies' 'Auxiliary Committee' of the St John Ambulance Association organized a 'Centuries' ball and pageant in the Sydney Town Hall to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the visit of Lord and Lady Brassey. The New South Wales Centre regarded that visit in 1887 as the foundation date of their St John Ambulance Association. Significantly, both Association and Brigade members joined in the celebrations led by Dr Hugh Poate and including a special investiture ceremony conducted by the Governor on 13 July – the exact anniversary of the original private vice-regal afternoon tea party attended by Lady Brassey. At the ball, there were fancy dress portrayals of important people and events in the history of the Order of St John through the centuries. The original hospitaller – the Blessed Gerard – was present, as were crusading Knights Hospitaller mixed in with modern ambulance officers and first aiders. The event was a telling indicator of the high level of morale among the State's St John Ambulance volunteers and it resulted in a financial windfall with over £140 raised for the benefit of the Association and the Brigade.⁷³ Interestingly, in 1940, the Centre's *Annual Report* revealed that Dr Poate had in his possession a framed, handwritten letter from Lady Brassey, written aboard the *Sunbeam* RYS, dated 12 July 1887. The letter was a relic of the New South Wales Centre as it concerned the preliminary meeting at Government House, Sydney, for the establishment of the St John Ambulance Association in Sydney.⁷⁴

High morale was lifted further still with the creation by Dr Poate of a District Headquarters brass band in 1938. The Brigade achieved this by taking over the defunct Bondi Beach Concert Band, assimilating its remnants as an Ambulance Division in its own right. It was a British Empire 'first', being the only band of its type anywhere within the Brigade Overseas. The man who had the honour of being bandmaster was Ambulance Officer Albert Baile. An enthusiastic committee supported him and it became one of the State's leading brass bands. A measure of its success is evident in its 'A' Grade Championship win in the State band competition of 1939. It existed for many years and was in high demand at Corps and District annual church parades, formal inspections, Association annual meetings and social (and fundraising) concerts.⁷⁵

On the administrative side, Poate initiated a Corps structure to the Brigade in New South Wales in 1938. Previous to this, the over-seventy Divisions had been co-ordinated from the Sydney headquarters. Poate now allowed greater decentralised control to accommodate the increasing volume of public duties across the State. Grouped in geographical Corps regions, each Corps comprised an average 300 members:

- No. 1 Corps (inner-suburban Divisions): Sydney Central, Balmain, Glebe and Leichhardt.
- No. 2 Corps (western suburbs Divisions): Auburn, Granville, Parramatta and as far west and north as Katoomba and Lithgow.
- No. 3 Corps (southern suburbs Divisions): South Sydney, Canterbury-Bankstown, St George, Marrickville, and as far south as Wollongong.
- No. 4 Corps (eastern suburbs Divisions): Paddington-Woollahra, Waverley and Bondi (formed 1939).
- No. 5 Corps (north shore Divisions) as far north as Newcastle (formed 1939).
- Distant country Divisions: Broken Hill, Goulburn, Canberra and Albury (remained 'unattached').

As the 1930s drew to a close the 'storm clouds [of war] gathered over Europe', to quote the British Prime minister, Sir Winston Churchill. St John Ambulance had achieved a fine record of service in the Great War and the New South Wales experience stretched back further still to the enthusiastic war 'comforts' supplied during the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa at the turn of the century. In anticipation of another large-scale conflict, the State's St John Ambulance bodies stood ready to do their bit. In Sydney, perhaps more than elsewhere throughout the country, the St John Ambulance leadership remained close affiliations with the armed services. For example, the principal medical staff of the St John Ambulance Brigade mostly also held senior rank in the medical services of the Navy, Army and Air Force.

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Colonel James Sleeman, Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, had witnessed the capacity and readiness of the Brigade during his official tour in 1936. At the time he had declared: 'the [Australian] Government might ... regard our Brigade as a unit of its Defence Force on mobilization ... the Federal Government had a right to call upon the Brigade in the event of mobilization'.⁷⁶ Brigade involvement in the Voluntary Aid Detachments (VAD) movement expressed this readiness to serve. After the First World War, the VAD diminished in size and activity. In Victoria, it remained active, but in New South Wales the VAD movement was re-invigorated in the mid-1930s at which time Dr Hugh Poate had the Brigade Divisions affiliate with it.⁷⁷ In the words of Mary Critch:

Voluntary Aid Detachments increased in numbers in all states during the 1930s. A handbook was issued to the Commandants of all Detachments in 1936. It contained detailed information about the organisation of a detachment and the conditions of service of its members: 'Administration of VAD is vested in a nine member Joint Central Council consisting of three representatives from each of the following: Australian Red Cross, Navy, Army and Air Force, [plus the] Order of St John. There is also a Joint State Council in each State. A State Controller, appointed by the State Council on the recommendation of the DDMS, is responsible to the Council for the efficiency of the members of the VAD, arranging periodical inspections and preparations for mobilisation as indicated by Military authorities, under the direction of the Minister of State for Defence. The State Controller makes himself cognizant of all activities undertaken by the VAD which are considered to be effective training for war or other emergency'.⁷⁸

Dr Hugh Poate (then Assistant Commissioner for New South Wales) encouraged Brigade Division enthusiasm for VAD involvement, stating:

Our Order has always taken part with the Military and Naval Departments of Empire as an auxiliary Service in times of National Emergency ... we as loyal subjects of the King may be expected to play [our accustomed part] if ever the dread shadow of war threatens our Home Land.⁷⁹

By 1934, thirty-four of the forty-eight adult Divisions in New South Wales had registered with the Commonwealth as VAD units. On 9 June of the same year, thirty-two of these units, represented by 415 of their members, paraded at Victoria Barracks. By 1938, the New South Wales District of the Brigade was confident enough to say that, if war broke out, it alone among the States was ready with 1,000 VAD men 'sufficiently fully trained ... to form two field ambulances, a casualty clearing station and a hygiene section for service in any part of the Commonwealth ... [alongside] 600 women ... fully trained in all nursing duties and air raid methods and their services could be utilized as hospital auxiliaries'.⁸⁰

In New South Wales, the Poate-initiated Brigade School of Instruction for prospective officers introduced two new courses in 1938: 'Anti-Gas Drill' and 'Air Raid Precautions'.⁸¹ These were thought to be so important that a senior military surgeon and 'gas' expert – Surgeon-Colonel (Dr) Augustus Lyle Buchanan MB FRCS – delivered lectures on the subject. His incendiary delivery style captured the mood of excitement mixed with fear present at that time among the St John Ambulance organization and its membership:

'No ordinary trench will protect a Civilian from a modern high-explosive bomb,' said Colonel Lyle Buchanan, in an address on the duties of air raid wardens, at St John Ambulance headquarters. 'The trench should be at least three feet wide, and seven feet deep,' he said. 'Otherwise it will not be effective. A modern high explosive bomb will penetrate 28 feet of concrete or 63 feet of earth or sand'.⁸²

Colonel Buchanan did not prevaricate. He disparaged the level of war-preparedness around the nation, declaring: 'We Australians are a sissy, cowardly lot when it comes to defence'.⁸³ His efforts were so highly valued that HM The King admitted him to the Venerable Order of St John as a Serving Brother in 1943.⁸⁴

In an atmosphere that favoured sensible preparation, Hugh Poate approached the New South Wales Governor, Lord Wakehurst, in July 1939 on the issue of the Australian Commandery. No-one had heard anything about it since Sleeman's departure over three years earlier. After consulting with other vice-regal figures in Victoria and South Australia, Wakehurst wrote to St John's Gate seeking assurance that

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Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

the Order of St John would create a Commandery in Australia. Meanwhile when, on 3 September 1939, the Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, announced Australia's entry into the war, it resulted in a huge public demand for first aid and home nursing training and air raid precautions instruction. The New South Wales Centre was able to reduce the instruction fee from 5 shillings to 3 shillings and 6 pence, training 11,822 pupils in the first year of the war. This was almost treble the 1938 figure. The Centre sold 16,000 copies of its first aid textbook and soon ran out of copies despite having 'ordered books in quantities previously undreamed of'.⁸⁵ As all this was occurring, Wakehurst was still waiting for a reply to his letter, but none appeared, prompting another approach in November 1939. The commencement of the Second World War added immediacy to the Commandery issue lest a focus on the war overwhelm it.⁸⁶ The Order finally established the Australian Commandery in 1941, but the story of exactly how that occurred (and what rôle Poate played in it) forms part of the general narrative of the war years of St John Ambulance in New South Wales canvassed in the following chapter.



The Governor, Lord Wakehurst, at the march past by St John Ambulance Brigade cadets from the NSW District (c.1938).

During the War, the Air Raid Precautions (ARP) and Voluntary Aid Detachments (VAD) attracted St John Ambulance members as volunteers. Dr Hugh Poate had laid the foundations for ARP involvement as early as 1936. The same was true of his visionary involvement in the VADs. Poate had had the Brigade Divisions re-affiliate with the VAD movement when the latter re-formed in the mid-1930s. By the late 1930s, the Association was also heavily committed to training VAD members. While the ARP was male, the VAD deployed women to work in military hospitals for the duration of the war. From 1940, there was 'a steady demand for full time VAD members', who received their training at the major metropolitan hospitals. In the New South Wales District, the Commissioner of the Brigade, Colonel (Dr) Wilfred Vickers DSO VD, was the State Controller of the VAD movement. New South Wales members of the national VAD Council included Hugh Poate, Lady District Superintendent Dr Frances McKay and Colonel Frederick Maguire CMG DSO VD. Furthermore, eleven members of Nursing Divisions served throughout the war with VAD units in overseas postings or on hospital ships, in operational theatres of the war. In other words, though they remained civilians their service would expose them to enemy action. A further fifty-four VAD volunteers staffed general hospitals or the blood transfusion service.⁸⁷

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St John Ambulance Nursing Division members participate in the Hospital Saturday Fund Appeal Day (14 March 1941).⁸⁸

During his visit to New South Wales in 1936, Colonel Sleeman had admired the patriotic spirit of the Brigade under the leadership of Dr Hugh Poate. Now he could see that spirit in action in war work. It prompted the Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, to express his satisfaction to the Governor General, Lord Gowrie, in September 1940:

I feel it is only right to let you know how gratified we are at St John's Gate with the magnificent work being done throughout Australia, in all its several States, by the Association and Brigade of our Order. Not only has the increase in strength been exceptionally good, but from all reports I have received the spirit of service and standard of efficiency have been equally fine. As head of our Order in Australia, and as its Governor General, I should be most grateful if you could find time to let those in charge of our work in all States know the deep satisfaction which we in England feel for the magnificent response of Australia in all the many aspects of the war effort'.⁸⁹

The Army reorganized the VAD movement in September 1941, after which date it became an exclusively female service. The remaining male VAD units joined State and National Emergency Services for ARP duties. From this time too, VAD women who entered the Army on a full-time basis joined the Australian Army Medical Women's Service (AAMWS). Many St John Ambulance members joined the AAMWS.

Lord Gowrie, acting in his new position of Knight Commander of the nascent Commandery, nominated the executive officers. Gowrie only did this after consultations with Poate. Not only was the Commandery headquarters to reside in Sydney, its Executive was heavily weighted towards New South Wales. It included Poate as Commandery Lieutenant; the Most Rev. H. Mowll, the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney and Primate of Australia, as Chaplain; and Dr Wilfred Vickers, then Assistant Commissioner of the Brigade in New South Wales, as Director of Ambulance. Victorians and Queenslanders also played a part on the Executive, but it is important to note the fourth and final New South Wales man: Commander R. Griffiths Bowen RN (ret'd), a former Council member of the Western Australian Centre and now Secretary to the New South Wales Association Centre. St John's Gate appointed him Commandery Secretary.⁹⁰ On 24 October 1941, Gowrie received London's approval and, on 11 November, he was informed: 'Grand Prior and Chapter General approve. Please take action'. With full approval for the Commandery to function, Gowrie requested the Association and Brigade in each of the five member States to nominate two representatives each, to populate the Commandery Council. From New South Wales came Dr Athol Mobbs and Dr Harold Norrie (Association) and Tom Henderson and Dr Clement Verco (Brigade).⁹¹ The inaugural meeting of the new Australian Commandery took place at Admiralty House, Sydney, at 8.00 p.m. on Monday, 19 January 1942. The Commandery's second meeting resolved to form the Joint Federal Council with the Red Cross.⁹²

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In 1942, the recently formed St John Commandery for Australia took up the issue of St John Ambulance/Red Cross interaction. This took the difficult matter at local level out of the hands of Athol Mobbs, yet it remained the responsibility of New South Wales men: Dr Hugh Poate led the special committee established to confer with the Red Cross. The Order of St John had recently elevated Poate from the position of Commissioner of the Brigade in New South Wales to that of Commandery Lieutenant.⁹³ The letter containing Poate's proposals, conveyed to the Red Cross, expresses the fine and high-minded spirit of the man:

The desirability of conversations to ensure mutual support for common objectives and to prevent overlapping [has been] in the minds of members of the Order in Australia. The two bodies have much in common. Both are concerned with the prevention and mitigation of human suffering in peace and in war. Enormous and increasing demands are being made upon the Red Cross Society in fulfillment of its statutory obligations. The Order of St John feels it might help to share the burden imposed by war and sees a useful field of further co-operation in the problems of reconstruction which will arrive after the war.⁹⁴

The Red Cross agreed to Poate's suggestions and within four months sub-committees were formed in each State. Dr Mobbs reported to the Commandery Chapter meeting in Sydney in June 1943 that the New South Wales subcommittee had met and solved several matters. However, little occurred after that and the Joint Federal Council was not mentioned again.⁹⁵ It appears the Red Cross was a reluctant partner and it is true that both it and the local St John Ambulance were operating under heavy pressure from their parent bodies in Great Britain. Furthermore, by the end of the war it was clear the Geneva leadership of the International Committee of the Red Cross had resolved on a new policy of not working in tandem with kindred bodies, including St John Ambulance (Britain), the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (Rome) and the Johanniter Orden (north-eastern Europe). Despite this apparent half-heartedness on the part of both St John Ambulance and the Red Cross, membership of these organizations was a source of pride for volunteers based on their sense of having achieved significant wartime service in each. One stirring and tangible example of this sense of achievement is evident in the bookplate commissioned by Dr Frances McKay. Designed and executed by the noted female artist-engraver, Ella Dwyer, it demonstrates Dr McKay's pride in service with three great humanitarian organizations: St John Ambulance, the Red Cross and the VAD.

	New South Wales	Victoria	South Australia	Western Australia	The four States combined
1915	1:182	1:142	1:228	1:123	1:164
1938	1:644	1:536	1:493	1:809	1:533
1939	1:223	1:128	1:602	1:196	1:191
1940	1:115	1:84	1:66	1:77	1:93
1941	1:108	1:79	1:121	1:47	1:89
1942	1:60	1:45	1:110	1:32	1:53

Ratio of pupils in St John Ambulance classes to State populations (1915, 1938–42).⁹⁶

Dr Hugh Poate, the Commandery Lieutenant from 1941 to 1946, was soon to become the first Chancellor of the Australian Priory of the Venerable Order of St John of Jerusalem.

‘Wing-Commander H. R. G. Poate, in St. Andrew’s Cathedral yesterday, was invested as Knight of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. The ceremony was the first of its kind in Australia, and was carried out by order of the Duke of Connaught who is the Grand Prior of the Order’.

The West Wyalong Advocate (17 March 1936), p. 1.

‘Sir Hugh Poate, one of Australia’s most distinguished surgeons, who achieved international fame ... was chancellor of the Order of St. John, in the Priory of Australia. In both world wars he held key medical commands in the Australian Services. Embarking as a captain in the First Field Ambulance of the 1st

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A.I.F., he was promoted to major at Gallipoli and later a lieut.-colonel on the western front. He first was associated with the Medical Services of the R.A.A.F. in 1928 and became a Group Captain in World War II. Sir Hugh was a foundation member of the Royal Australian College of Surgeons and became President of the College in 1945'.

Canberra Times (28 January 1961), p. 7.



Dr Hugh Poate, Commissioner of the NSW District of the St John Ambulance Brigade, at the annual Brigade inspection at Government House, Sydney (c.1938).



Armorial bearings of Sir Hugh Poate MVO MB ChM FRCS, Australia's first Bailiff Grand Cross of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem.⁹⁷

This coat-of-arms demonstrates the heraldic privileges enjoyed by Bailiffs Grand Cross within the Order via the inclusion on the uppermost part of the shield of the arms of the Venerable Order. Bailiffs Grand Cross also have the right to petition either the College of Arms (England) or the Lord Lyon King of Arms (Scotland) for heraldic supporters to stand on each side of the shield. Sir Hugh does not appear to have done this. His other British Imperial honours are depended from the shield on their ribbons.

The arms of the Order born in chief on the shield, the supporters and honours are for the personal use of the Bailiff Grand Cross during his or her lifetime. Descendants inherit a right to the armorial bearings without these additaments.

Poate, Sir Hugh Raymond Guy (1884–1961) by Ian Howie–Willis

This article was published in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 11, (MUP), 1988

Sir Hugh Raymond Guy Poate (1884–1961), surgeon, was born on 16 January 1884 at Summer Hill, Sydney, eldest surviving of five children of Frederick Poate, surveyor, and his wife Julia Frederica Elvina, née Rooke. He attended Sydney Grammar School for six years and in 1902 enrolled in arts at the University of Sydney; next year he switched to medicine (M.B., Ch.M., 1907). He won the Haswell prize for practical biology and the John Harris scholarship, spent his vacations in the physiology laboratory investigating the pituitary and thyroid glands, was secretary and president (1907) of the university medical society, edited its journal, played baseball and became a sergeant in the Sydney University Scouts.

A resident in Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Poate continued his research on ductless glands and conducted routine pathology work. In 1908 he went to London and next year became the first Sydney graduate admitted to a fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons, England. Returning to Sydney late in 1909, he set up practice in Macquarie Street and was appointed demonstrator (and later examiner) in anatomy at the university. On 14 September 1910 he married Beatrice Ellis at St Andrew's Cathedral; she died in childbirth next year. In 1911–38 Poate was honorary surgeon at R.P.A.H.

Commissioned in the Australian Army Medical Corps in 1909, in August 1914 he enlisted as a captain in the Australian Imperial Force, helped to recruit the 1st Field Ambulance and was promoted major in February 1915. He was in charge of transports ferrying wounded back from Gallipoli to Egypt. During these voyages he spent much of his time operating, earning the nickname 'Lightning' for his swift and deft surgical technique. At the British Consulate, Cairo, he married Aida Diacono (d.1952), daughter of Italian parents, on 30 March 1916. He moved with No.3 Australian General Hospital to England in September, then to Abbeville, France, in March 1917 and during the heavy fighting at Ypres often operated for sixteen hours a day. He had been promoted lieutenant–colonel in February. Eventually his health broke down, and he was repatriated late in 1917.

Back in Sydney, Poate conducted a busy private practice, operating mainly at R.P.A.H. He regularly undertook country tours in a chartered Tiger Moth aircraft. In 1929 he was appointed consulting surgeon to the Royal Australian Air Force, and was group captain during World War II. In 1938 he became lecturer in postgraduate surgery and director of the surgical unit at Prince Henry Hospital.

As his practice flourished, Poate consolidated his reputation and published fifty–seven articles in medical journals between 1915 and 1949. He continued to pioneer new methods and therapies. Although skilled in orthopaedic, cranial and thoracic surgery, he became an international authority on thyroid surgery and was the first Australian to introduce medical treatment for hyperthyroidism, using 'thio' drugs.

Poate was a foundation fellow, councillor and president (1945–48) of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, president of the Medical Board of New South Wales and foundation chairman of the Old People's Welfare Council of New South Wales (1957–61). He was also a philatelist and president of the Orchid and the (Royal) Horticultural societies of New South Wales. He belonged to the Australian and Royal Sydney Golf clubs.

Deeply interested in the Order of St John of Jerusalem, Poate joined the St John Ambulance Brigade in 1913 and was State commissioner in 1929–42; the brigade flourished under his direction. He influenced all areas of the work of the order and its relations with its English headquarters and the Crown; in 1935 he was appointed knight of grace. When a commandery was formed to unite the order's State branches in 1942, Poate became its administrative head. In 1947, when the commandery was granted priory status as an independent branch of the English order, Poate became its chief executive as sub–prior, then chancellor. Under his direction, St John rose to national prominence as a voluntary agency specializing in health care and training. In 1955 he became the first Australian to be promoted bailiff grand cross.

Appointed M.V.O. in 1947 and knighted in 1952, Poate was a man of great integrity, committed to the highest standards in all he attempted. His bustling energy and insistence on prompt, efficient service might have led some to think him brusque, but most colleagues admired his kindness and hospitableness, his encouragement of junior associates, concern for his patients, courtesy, lively sense of humour and personal charm.

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Survived by a daughter of his first marriage and three sons and two daughters of his second, Poate died on 26 January 1961 at his Bellevue Hill home and was cremated with Anglican rites. His portrait by Joshua Smith hangs in the headquarters of St John Ambulance Australia, Canberra.

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Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Lieutenant-Colonel (Doctor)

WILFRED VICKERS

DSO KStJ VD MB ChM FRACS

Commissioner: 1942 – 1945



Colonel Wilfred Vickers, Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade (1942-46).⁹⁸

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Serving Bro.	1936	<i>London Gazette</i> (23 June 1936), p. 4015; <i>St John Ambulance Association, 46th Annual report</i> (30 September 1936), p. 10.
Officer	1937	<i>London Gazette</i> (1 January 1937), p. 3; <i>St John Ambulance Association, 47th Annual report</i> (30 September 1937), p. 5; <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> (14 July 1937), p. 16; <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> (29 July 1936), p. 13.
Commander	1940	<i>London Gazette</i> (21 June 1940), p. 3778; <i>St John Ambulance Brigade, 38th Annual Report</i> (1940), p. 9; <i>St John Ambulance Brigade, 39th Annual Report</i> (1941), p. 6.
Knight of Grace	1945	<i>St John Ambulance Brigade, 43rd Annual Report</i> (1945), p. 6; <i>St John Ambulance Association, 50th Annual report</i> (30 September 1940), p. 9; <i>Northern Star</i> (21 November 1945), p. 5.

Dr Hugh Poate had laid the foundations for ARP involvement as early as 1936. The same was true of his visionary involvement in the VADs. Poate had had the Brigade Divisions re-affiliate with the VAD movement when the latter re-formed in the mid-1930s. By the late 1930s, the Association was also heavily committed to training VAD members. While the ARP was male, the VAD deployed women to work in military hospitals for the duration of the war. From 1940, there was 'a steady demand for full time VAD members', who received their training at the major metropolitan hospitals. In the New South Wales District, the Commissioner of the Brigade, Colonel (Dr) Wilfred Vickers DSO VD, was the State Controller of the VAD movement. New South Wales members of the national VAD Council included Hugh Poate, Lady District Superintendent Dr Frances McKay and Colonel Frederick Maguire CMG DSO VD. Furthermore, eleven members of Nursing Divisions served throughout the war with VAD units in overseas postings or on hospital ships, in operational theatres of the war. In other words, though they remained civilians their service would expose them to enemy action. A further fifty-four VAD volunteers staffed general hospitals or the blood transfusion service.⁹⁹

Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)

Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Colonel (Dr) Wilfred Vickers DSO VD, was the State Controller of the VAD movement.

The stresses of the war years had probably contributed to the early death in March 1946 of the Commissioner, Colonel Wilfred Vickers.

‘Dr. Vickers is State Controller of the Voluntary Aid Detachments, and staff officer of the St. John Ambulance Brigade’.

Sydney Morning Herald (29 July 1936), p. 13.

‘The King who is Sovereign Head of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, has sanctioned the promotion of Colonel W. Vickers to the grade of Knight in the Order for the State of New South Wales within the commandery of the Australian Commonwealth. Colonel Vickers, one of the State’s leading orthopaedic surgeons, has given a lifetime of service to the Children’s Hospital at Camperdown. He is a chairman of the Board. He is also consulting surgeon at the Parramatta District Hospital. He resigned as president of the Castle Hill and District R.S.L. at the recent annual meeting. Colonel Vickers lives in Old Northern Road, Castle Hill’.

The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (30 January 1946),
p. 2.

Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)

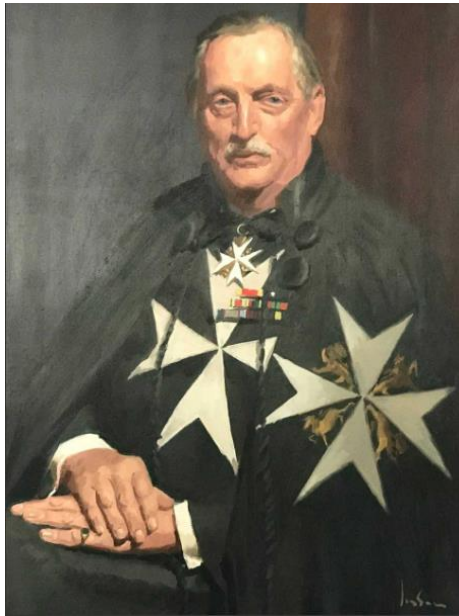
Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Colonel (Doctor)

Sir **GEORGE GRAFTON LEES STENING**

Kt GCStJ ED MB FRCS

Commissioner: 1946 – 1951



Sir George Stening, second Chancellor of the Australian Priory of The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem (Official portrait by Graeme Inson, 1978).¹⁰⁰

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Officer	1946	<i>St John Ambulance Brigade, 44th Annual Report (1946), p. 6.</i>
Commander	1952	<i>Sydney Morning Herald (3 January 1952), p. 2.</i>
Knight of Grace	1956	<i>London Gazette, No. 40679 (6 January 1956), p. 142.</i>
Bailiff Grand Cross	1971	<i>Canberra Times (27 January 1971), p. 3.</i>

The stresses of the war years had probably contributed to the early death in March 1946 of the Commissioner, Colonel Wilfred Vickers. Men recently returned from the war repopulated the Brigade's senior ranks: Colonel George Stening became Commissioner, with Lieutenant-Colonel Dr E. MacArthur Sheppard ED as District Surgeon. Sheppard was typical of many talented and experienced post-war senior leaders. During the war, he had been Commanding Officer of the 2/10th Australian Field Ambulance, a POW in Singapore and Borneo for three years and Mentioned in Despatches for his outstanding service.¹⁰¹ At local level in New South Wales, a benefit of the war's conclusion was the return to the Headquarters Brass Band Division of its original Bandmaster, Albert Henry Baile. He had received leave to join the Army in 1941, was demobilized in May 1946 and recommenced band duty in August. During his absence, the Acting Bandmaster was Charles Bignall, who received a Priory Vote of Thanks for his efforts during the war years as well as having won the affection of many of the band members he conducted (as witnessed by the kind dedication engraved on a very fancy Bandmaster's bâton presented to him in 1945).

Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)

Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Another innovation of 1957 was the creation by the Australian Priory of an annual conference for the salaried State Association Secretaries. The Priory held the first of these in Sydney in December 1957. The conference met under the presidency of Dr George Stening, the recently appointed Director of the St John Ambulance Association within the Priory.¹⁰² At this conference, Stening heard of the Association's advances in making 'extensive' use of its 32mm and 16mm films for instructional purposes, with obvious good effect. For example, in 1958 the films contributed to an increase of 777 in the issue of First Aid and Home Nursing Certificates. Junior Certificate awards were up by 189 certificates.¹⁰³ In April, in major city parks, there occurred public demonstrations and instruction in artificial respiration as part of the annual 'Save a Life' week. St John spent over £400 on instructional literature distributed in support of the activity.¹⁰⁴ In a lovely echo of the shared origins of each organization, the St John Ambulance Association formed a reciprocal arrangement with the Royal Life Saving Society (Australia) 'linking the two organizations closely together'. Now, St John Ambulance's Dr W. E. George sat on the Council of the Society, while one of their members joined the Executive of the Association. Both bodies had their origin in New South Wales due to the strenuous efforts of Dr Reuter E. Roth in the 1890s/early-1900s.¹⁰⁵ At Priory level, the Priory appointed Major John Frederick Martin MVO MBE ED as Priory Secretary. He had been Private Secretary to the previous Governor of New South Wales, Lord Wakehurst, whom he had accompanied to many meetings of the St John Ambulance organization.¹⁰⁶ Martin remained Priory Secretary from 1958 to 1966, eventually being promoted to the grade of Officer Brother within the Order.¹⁰⁷

the much-regretted news of the death of Sir Hugh Poate, on 26 January 1961, at his Bellevue Hill home. His passing drew a formal statement of regret from The Right Hon. The Viscount Dunrossil, Prior of the Order *ex officio* as Governor-General. Poate's successor as Chancellor was another New South Wales man, Colonel George Grafton Lees Stening. He had been, for many years, a protégé of Poate, having come under Poate's influence in 1927 when he was a resident graduate at Poate's hospital in Sydney, the Royal Prince Alfred. Stening knew at the time that Poate 'put on a strange uniform and did charitable work at weekends' and, at Poate's urging, Stening joined the St John Ambulance Brigade. He rose through the ranks to become Commissioner of the New South Wales District from 1946 until 1952, joined the Priory executive as Director of Ceremonies and subsequently served as Director of Ambulance (the Association), before becoming Receiver General. As one prominent St John historian said: 'Having been both a Brigade Commissioner and the country's senior-most Association officer, Stening was perhaps better placed than anyone to effect a reconciliation between the two foundations in his home State'.¹⁰⁸

Dr George Stening had worked hard, long and consistently for St John Ambulance. He also enjoyed formidable social connections. His wife, Kathleen Mary, was the daughter of media tycoon, Robert Clyde Packer, and sister to Frank Packer, which placed the Stenings at the centre of a vibrant Sydney social life. Kathleen Stening exploited these connections positively for charitable purposes *via* her leadership of the Linen Guild with which she was involved for over thirty years. In recognition of her services to St John Ambulance, HM The Queen admitted her to the Venerable Order as a Serving Sister in 1966. She was, subsequently, over the next two decades, promoted to the grade of Officer Sister (1970), Commander Sister (1980) and Dame of Grace (1989).¹⁰⁹

In fact, at this stage in New South Wales there was strong support and co-operation between the St John Ambulance Association and the Brigade. With Stening in charge and the divisive characters of the past long gone (Parry, Newton Daly, Ardill-Brice), positive interaction was visible in the operations of 1961. For example, on Anzac Day the Association provided refreshments to the crowds, while 200 Brigade members were on duty along the route.¹¹⁰ Further strength in St John activity is evident in the rise in certificates issued into 1962, with 821 Senior Certificates and 198 Junior Certificates, making the total number of certificates issued a record 11,055. To achieve these outstanding results, instructors used visual training aids 'extensively', assisted by a stand-alone 'Health Week' event in October.¹¹¹ Mrs Rita Mitchell, always a great organizer, designed a float for the 1962 Sydney Warratah Spring Festival; members decorated it with 50,000 black-and-white paper flowers, hand-made by herself and a dedicated band of helpers.¹¹² The achievements of 1962 were sustained into 1963, with an increase of an additional 600 certificates issued. Furthermore, riding the wave of this renewal of interest in training,

Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)

Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

St John put much energy into re-training lecturers and instructors in the teaching of External Cardiac Massage. Dr Bruce Clifton arranged the team of medical officer instructors in conjunction with the film "Pulse of Life".¹¹³ Meanwhile, St John House was able to provide accommodation on its ground floor for the offices of the Australian Priory. The Sydney-based Priory headquarters was a fitting reflection of the New South Wales leadership provided to it since inception in 1946.¹¹⁴

Colonel (Dr) Sir George Grafton Lees Stening ED MB FRCS.

- Commissioner (1946–52).
- Officer (1946).
- Commander (1952).
- Knight of Grace (1956).
- Director of Ceremonies.
- Director of Ambulance.
- Receiver General.
- Chancellorship (1961).
- Knighted Bachelor (1968).
- Bailiff Grand Cross (1971).



'Thirteen knights and two dames ... were announced in the Queen's Birthday Honours Lists [for 1968] ... [including] Colonel George Grafton Lees Stening, of Bellevue Hill, Sydney, chief executive officer of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, for distinguished service to the order'.¹¹⁵

*Sir George Stening as Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade in NSW (1951).*¹¹⁶

In 1965, the New South Wales Centre of the St John Ambulance Association at long last formed an Association-Brigade co-ordinating Council of the type desired by the Priory since the late-1940s. By this time the original opponents of such a body had passed on – Ardill-Brice died in 1955 and Newton Daly in 1958. The more conciliatory figures of Mr Charles Stewart and Pastor Reuben Hare had replaced both in 1956.¹¹⁷ The New South Wales Council was formed at the urging of Colonel (later Sir) George Stening, Poate's successor as Chancellor. The inaugural meeting occurred under the presidency of The Honourable Sir Kenneth Whistler Street on 27 November 1965. Dr George Stening, the Chancellor, attended as did the Priory Secretary, Major Martin, and nominees from both the Association and the Brigade.¹¹⁸ The close working relationship between the State-level St John Ambulance and the national Priory was about to be distanced by the creation of a Priory headquarters in Canberra, the national capitol. In 1966, St John Ambulance in New South Wales received a new Deputy Prior, the highly respected Sir Roden Cutler, 32nd Governor of the Premier State, who served the interests of the Order for the next fifteen years.¹¹⁹

'Goulburn District Ambulance Division of the St. John Ambulance Brigade achieved a notable success on Saturday afternoon when competing against four metropolitan teams, they won the Henderson Shield, donated by Inspector A. T. Henderson, of N.S.W. Transport Service. ... Dr Stening, who conducted the individual tests, commented on the excellent way in which the Goulburn team finished its work. In this department Goulburn obtained 142 out of a possible 150'.

Goulburn Evening Penny Post (24 November 1936), p. 3.

'Thirteen knights and two dames ... were announced in the Queen's Birthday Honours Lists ... [including] Colonel George Grafton Lees Stening, of Bellevue Hill, Sydney, chief executive officer of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, for distinguished service to the order'.

Canberra Times (8 June 1968), p. 1.

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Gordon N. Young, 'Sir George Grafton Lees Stening ED, MB BS, FRCS(Edin), FRACS, FRCOG, GCStJ', *The Medical Journal of Australia*, Vol. 166, No. 5 (March 1997), p. 273.

Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)

Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Doctor

ROBERT STANLEY STEEL

OBE KStJ MB ChM MRCP FRACP

Commissioner: 1952 – 1957



Dr R. S. Steel (1957).⁴

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Serving Bro.	1947	<i>St John Ambulance Brigade, 45th Annual Report (1947), p. 11.</i>
Officer	1953	<i>St John Ambulance Brigade, 51st Annual Report (1953), p. 9.</i>
Commander	1955	<i>St John Ambulance Brigade, 53rd Annual Report (1955), p. 12.</i>
Knight of Grace	1959	<i>St John Ambulance Association, 13th Annual Report (31 December 1959), p. 32.</i>

For his services during the visit, HM The Queen made the Brigade's Commissioner, Dr Robert Steel, an Officer of the Order of the British Empire.¹²⁰

'St. John Ambulance Brigade NSW Commissioner Dr Robert S. Steel today appealed to all employers to allow employee brigade members time off during the Royal visit. Dr Steel said members would be called on for voluntary public duty during the visit'.

Sun (20 January 1954), p. 17.

Robert Stanley Steel

M.B., Ch.M., M.R.C.P., F.R.A.C.P., F. in M. (Mayo) : Sergeant, 38th Battery, A.F.A., A.I.F., France. Enlisting 20th August, 1916, and sailing 9th November as gunner with 8th Reinforcements 4th Divisional Ammunition Column, joined battery as signaller 26th June, 1917, and served until demobilisation. Promoted extra-regimental corporal and, in January, 1919, E.R. sergeant. Tutor in Medicine. Early education at Fort St. High School.¹²¹

⁴ Photographs: 1957, box 4.

Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)

Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Doctor

SELWYN GRAHAM NELSON

MBE KStJ BSc MB BS MRCP FRCP FRACP

Commissioner: 1958 – 1964



Dr Selwyn Nelson (left), as Deputy Commissioner (following his term as Commissioner), with fellow Deputy Commissioner, Mr Noel Hayton (centre), and the District Surgeon, Dr Hoddle (right), at Newcastle on the occasion of the Corps Inspection (24 October 1959).¹²²

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Serving Bro.	1951	<i>St John Ambulance Brigade, 49th Annual Report (1951), p. 7.</i>
Officer	1957	<i>St John Ambulance Brigade, 55th Annual Report (1957), p. 16.</i>
Commander	1959	<i>St John Ambulance Brigade, 57th Annual Report (1959), p. 11.</i>
Knight of Grace	1964	<i>St John Ambulance Brigade, 62nd Annual Report (1964), p. 7.</i>

The decade of the 1960s began with great enthusiasm for the future of St John Ambulance Association first aid instruction. In 1960, there was a ‘marked increase’ in the number of such classes, with an overall increase in certificates of a staggering 1,624 (including an increase of 310 Junior Certificates on the year before). There was also much enthusiasm about the ‘outstanding’ increase in branches at Broken Hill and Canberra.¹²³ Even in Papua and New Guinea, the Association was contemplating the purchase of land on which to build a headquarters building. Members of the Brigade took an active part in the Convention on Life Saving Techniques held in Sydney between 12 and 19 March 1960. The Convention brought together experts from America, Africa, Asia and Europe to discuss both theoretical and practical methods of life saving. A particular focus was on resuscitation techniques after drowning and the hazards of marine creatures. The Commissioner, Dr Selwyn Nelson, was one of the organizers and Secretary Rapporteur for the Medical Section. District Surgeon, Dr Neville Hoddle, compared a Brigade demonstration of first aid methods. Staff Officer, Miss Pert, arranged the ‘casualty faking’. A positive outcome of the Convention was a ‘firm recommendation’ to adopt the expired air intermittent positive pressure method of artificial respiration (known as mouth-to-mouth and mouth-to-nose method) and this was soon being described in a supplement to the *St John First Aid Manual* and accepted by St John’s Gate as a recognized method of artificial respiration.¹²⁴

‘St. John Ambulance Brigade Priory in Australia has awarded a vote of thanks to Mr and Mrs W. Munro, of St. John Road, Blaxland. The award was recommended by the priory for services given to the ambulance training centre next door to the Munro residence. The presentation was made last weekend by the commissioner for the brigade in N.S.W., Dr Selwyn Nelson’.

Nepean Times (29 November 1962), p. 1.

Selwyn Graham Nelson

b.23 November 1908 d.8 July 1996

OBE KStJ BSc Sydney(1929) MB BS(1930) MRACP(1939) MRCP(1947) MRCP Edin(1947) FRACP(1954) FRCP(1969) FACRM(1980) MD(1984)

Selwyn Graham Nelson's career in rheumatology spanned a period of forty years during which time there were spectacular advances in the treatment of rheumatic diseases. His career saw the emergence of rheumatology from relative obscurity into its deserved place among the medical specialties.

Selwyn Nelson was educated at Sydney Boys' High School and later went on to study medicine at the University of Sydney, graduating in 1930. He did his residency training at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPA). In 1933 he married Wilhelmina Rowohl (Willa), who had been a fellow medical student, and together they established a general practice in Blayney. Just before the war they moved back to Randwick, Sydney, and passed their examinations for membership of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians.

While in general practice Selwyn had been attracted to the care of patients with chronic disease. He was commissioned by Sir Herbert Schlink, chairman of the RPA hospital, to investigate trends in rheumatic diseases with a view to setting up an arthritis clinic. In 1947 Nelson qualified for membership of both the London and Edinburgh Colleges of Physicians and gained further experience in his area of special interest. On his return to Australia he devoted himself wholeheartedly to the care of people with arthritis and related conditions, establishing and developing the arthritis clinic at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. His success was a tribute to his hard work, determination and example. As an associate physician he did not have access to the inner circle of influence, and so he had to work harder and with less support than some in other specialties. His success was recognized by his appointment as consultant rheumatologist when he retired from the active staff in 1986. When the combined arthritis unit at the Royal Prince Alfred and Rachel Forster Hospitals was later established, his colleagues were proud to name the unit in his honour.

Selwyn will be remembered by his patients for the expert care and compassionate support which he provided and by his colleagues for the pivotal role he played in promoting the specialty, helping to establish the committees, associations, foundations and clinics which were essential to the development of rheumatology. He was one of the small group in Sydney who worked tirelessly to establish the Australian Rheumatology Association (ARA) and the Australian Rheumatism Foundation and to help define the shifting and sometimes uncertain borders between rheumatology, physical medicine and rehabilitation. When the time came to set up a regional league in the Asia/Pacific area, Selwyn helped to persuade sceptics in the International League Against Rheumatism (ILAR) that such a move was appropriate. His efforts were rewarded in 1961 with the establishment of the South East Asia and Pacific Area League Against Rheumatism (SEAPAL) – now known as the Asia Pacific League of Associations for Rheumatology (APLAR). He served as its foundation president. When it was the turn of SEAPAL to provide the president-elect of ILAR, the position was offered to Selwyn, who was the International League's vice president at the time. Because of his uncertain health and his age, however, he felt that he should decline the honour, and nominated his colleague, Ray Robinson, in his place.

His chronic asthma did not diminish his capacity for hard work, or his willingness to extend his sphere of influence and to sit on countless committees. If his breathlessness sometimes added an edge of impatience to his voice during lengthy debate, it did not reduce the force of his argument, and may have brought some discussions more quickly to the conclusion which he sought. But there was never any suggestion of haste in the care of his patients.

His interests and influence extended beyond rheumatology. His voluntary activities included service as commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade and as chairman of the postgraduate committee in medicine of the University of Sydney.

Willa was a wonderful companion to Selwyn. She was herself a member of the ARA and attended most of its local and international meetings with Selwyn. They had two sons. The death in 1989 of their son, David, a noted immunologist and head of the Kolling Institute at the Royal North Shore Hospital, was a terrible blow to them both. Selwyn is remembered with admiration for the dignity and courage with which he spoke about David at the faculty meeting to which he was invited when his son's death was recorded.

Selwyn retired from clinical practice on his 75th birthday, but retained his capacity for hard work, his enthusiasm for travel, and his devotion to his grandchildren.

J E Hassall

[*Fellowship Affairs*, Sept 1996].¹²⁵

Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)

Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Colonel (Doctor)

EDGAR FREDERICK THOMSON

CMG OStJ MB ChB(NZ) FRACP FRIPH MCPA FHA

Commissioner: 1965 – 23.6.1969



Portrait in oils of Dr Edgar Frederick Thomson, by Graeme Inson.

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Officer	1965	<i>St John Ambulance Brigade, 63rd Annual Report (1965), n.p.</i>

Throughout 1965, the Brigade found its membership ‘fully extended’ in the effort to maintain first aid attendances at a large range of public events and activities. Sadly, recruitment of new volunteers continued to lag behind losses, while the number of sporting facilities increased markedly around the State. The result was the Brigade’s inability to satisfy all requests for assistance, especially mid-week. Duties performed in 1965 exceeded 80,000.¹²⁶ Supplying the high public duty needs of the State was the ‘chief concern’ of the new Commissioner, Colonel (Dr) Edgar Frederick Thomson.¹²⁷ There was, however, no doubting the very high morale of the Brigade. This was visible in its attitude towards the newly appointed Governor of New South Wales:

Sir Arthur Roden Cutler VC was sworn in as Governor of New South Wales at a ceremony at Government House on January 20. The Brigade joined the St John Council for NSW, and the St John Ambulance Association in presenting an address of welcome to His Excellency and Lady Cutler.¹²⁸

The situation of the Brigade was not quite so hopeful. The Commissioner, Dr Edgar Thomson, had very much hoped for ‘an influx of new members’ in 1967, but this proved not to be the case. His based his desire for the increase on the need for fresh blood to relieve the burden of duties on the time of existing members. He also wanted to satisfy the increasing demands for voluntary first aid attendance ‘now being experienced in many parts of the State’.¹²⁹ However, membership did not increase at all, while there was a loss of 30 members on aggregate from the previous year. The only hope came in the fact of an increase in Cadet numbers. The Cadets were the hope for future adult staffing but, for the time

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Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

being, the Brigade faced a distressing outcome to a year's recruitment effort. In the words of Dr Thomson:

We have to face the situation that while there is considerable public goodwill towards the Brigade in New South Wales, and its services are much in demand, the replenishment of its resources in man- and woman-power has small appeal. We can only do our best in the circumstances.¹³⁰

Back home in Australia in 1968 the Brigade Commissioner, Dr Thomson, was able to report a modest increase in the number of volunteers – sixty new members. Two-thirds of them had belonged to a Cadet Division, vindicating the high hopes for recruitment placed upon this arm of the Brigade. An encouraging new development was the registration of new Divisions in the western region of the State: Mayfield (near Newcastle) and Portland (near Lithgow) 'where the cadet movement shows signs of developing strongly'.¹³¹ A cadet-dedicated newsletter added further encouragement. St John launched *Cadet News* at Lithgow and it proved to be a valuable means of circulating items of interest among divisions in the local region and around the District. Superintendent Barry Walker initiated the publication and received thanks in the Brigade's *Annual Report*. Of particular concern to the Brigade was the threat posed by bush fires to the 'Sir Hugh Poate Training Centre' at Blaxland. Many members reported for duty at the emergency centre at Springwood and carried out public duties, but, fortunately, the fire caused little damage to the Centre or the broader Mountains population. Members repaired or replaced burnt woodwork and fence-posts and 'there were many willing hands to do this work at the end of the year'.¹³²

Thomson, Edgar Frederick (1903–1977) by James C. McAllester and W. D. Refshauge

This article was published in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 16, (MUP), 2002

Edgar Frederick Thomson (1903–1977), pathologist and army officer, was born on 4 April 1903 at Invercargill, New Zealand, son of New Zealand-born parents Frederick Augustus Thomson, carriage-painter, and his wife Ada, née Neal. Educated at Southland Boys' High School and the University of Otago, Dunedin (M.B., Ch.B., N.Z., 1926), Edgar worked (from 1927) for the professors of pathology and bacteriology at the Otago medical school before becoming assistant-pathologist at Christchurch Hospital in 1929. On 10 December that year at the Presbyterian Church, Owaka, he married Ellen Doris Latta. In 1933 he was appointed bacteriologist at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney. He resumed his former post at Christchurch in 1937, but returned to R.P.A.H. in 1939 and that year began lecturing part time at the University of Sydney.

In December 1939 Thomson organized the blood-grouping of all members of the 16th Brigade, Australian Imperial Force. The task was completed in three weeks and with such precision that no soldier was subsequently reported to have received incompatible blood. On 22 May 1940 Thomson was appointed major, Australian Army Medical Corps, A.I.F. He sailed for the Middle East in October as pathologist to the 2nd/5th Australian General Hospital. After briefly commanding a British mobile bacteriological laboratory, he embarked for Greece with the 2nd/5th A.G.H. in April 1941. During the campaign his vigilant concern for the health and welfare of members of his unit endeared him to them. He assisted Matron K. A. L. Best to evacuate the nursing staff to Crete without loss of life.

Thomson returned to Australia in March 1942 and commanded the 2nd/3rd Mobile Bacteriological Laboratory from October. In May 1943 he was appointed assistant-director of pathology at Land Headquarters, Melbourne. Promoted lieutenant colonel in October 1944, he visited army medical units in the field and helped his chief E. V. Keogh to make arrangements for manufacturing penicillin in Australia. Thomson transferred to the Reserve of Officers on 8 March 1946. Active in the Citizen Military Forces as commander of the 1st General Hospital (1952–57) and as deputy-director of medical services, Eastern Command (1957–62), he retired with the rank of honorary colonel.

Back at R.P.A.H., Thomson had become director of the Fairfax Institute of Pathology in 1947. He was the hospital's general superintendent in 1958–66. As chairman (1947–68) of the Australian Red Cross Society's national transfusion committee, he encouraged co-operation between State directors of the Blood Transfusion Service. In 1963 he was appointed C.M.G. He chaired (1963–66) the Australian Drug Evaluation Committee and the National Health and Medical Research Council's antibiotics advisory committee; his long experience with antibiotics proved invaluable in guiding national policy on their use.

Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)

Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Thomson was founding president (1956–57) of the (Royal) College of Pathologists of Australia and the first recipient (1977) of its gold medal for outstanding service. He was a council-member and president (1956–57) of the New South Wales branch of the British (Australian) Medical Association, and a councillor of the federal organization. As the A.M.A.'s full-time secretary-general in 1967–72, he was frequently involved in negotiations with the Commonwealth government. Survived by his wife and their two sons, he died on 4 September 1977 at R.P.A.H. and was cremated. Graeme Inson's portrait of Thomson is held by the Australian Red Cross, Melbourne.

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Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)

Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Brigadier (Doctor)

GORDON NEVILLE YOUNG

KStJ ED MB BS MRCOG FRACS FRCOG

Commissioner: 24.6.1969 – 23.6.1974

1979 – 1984 Chief Commissioner

Picture?

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Officer	1970	<i>68th Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, 1970: The St John Ambulance Brigade, New South Wales District (1970), n.p.</i>
Commander	1974	<i>Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, 1974–5: The St John Ambulance Brigade, New South Wales District (1975), n.p.</i>
Knight of Grace	1980	<i>Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, No. G 3 (20 January 1981), p. 71.</i>

For the Brigade the year 1969 saw it receive a new Commissioner, Brigadier (Dr) Gordon Neville Young ED. He did not have an easy induction into the world of St John Ambulance. Even though he had ‘followed its activities with interest and admiration for many years’, he found in his new responsibilities both ‘interest and challenge’.¹³³ He had not served with St John Ambulance previously and had only his high-level military organizational training on which to fall back in order to cope with the stresses and strains of his new volunteer position. He had oversight of 144 Divisions in addition to five newly registered Divisions in 1969 – three Ambulance Cadet Divisions (Manly, Narrabeen, Mount Hutton) and two Nursing Cadet Divisions (Gymea, Wallerawang). The Brigade disbanded three Nursing Cadet Divisions during the year at Bathurst, Bondi Beach and St George.¹³⁴

Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)

Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Doctor

PETER WILLIAM HARVEY GRIEVE

KStJ MB BS MRACGP

Commissioner: 24.6.1974 – 30.6.1980

Picture?

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Serving Bro.	1967	<i>St John Ambulance Brigade, 65th Annual Report (1967), n.p.</i>
Officer	1972	<i>St John Ambulance Brigade, 70th Annual Report (1972), n.p.</i>
Commander	1975	<i>Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, 1974–5: The St John Ambulance Brigade, New South Wales District (1975), n.p.</i>
Knight of Grace	1980	<i>Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, No. G 3 (20 January 1981), p. 71.</i>

The Brigade received a new Commissioner in 1974 on the retirement of Brigadier (Dr) Gordon Young ED. Dr Peter William H. Grieve took up office from 24 June 1974. The appointment coincided with a new development in the Brigade – examinations to maintain personnel efficiency. The results were very satisfactory and ‘the importance of these examinations is fully realised’.¹³⁵ District Superintendent, Mr L. J. Carrington, organized another well-attended Headquarters Training School. The Brigade presented a fifty-year jubilee certificate to Fairfield Ambulance Division, previously known as Merrylands–Cabramatta Ambulance Division, and another to Paddington–Woollahra Ambulance Division at functions hosted by the District Superintendent on behalf of the new Commissioner.¹³⁶

Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)

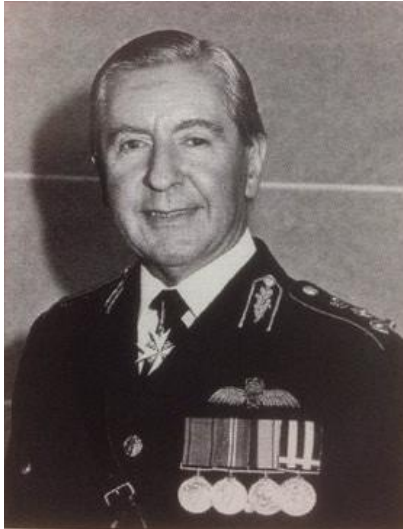
Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Doctor

GEORGE CAMPBELL KILLEN

AM KStJ MB BS

Commissioner: 1.7.1980 – 31.12.1986



*Dr George Campbell Killen AM.*¹³⁷

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Serving Bro.	1970	<i>68th Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, 1970: The St John Ambulance Brigade, New South Wales District (1970), n.p.</i>
Officer	1976	<i>Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, 1976–7: The St John Ambulance Brigade, New South Wales District (1977), n.p.</i>
Commander	1982	C. A. Campbell, Priory Secretary, to J. D. Spencer, Secretary St John Council for NSW, 19 March 1982: 'Honours and Awards'.
Knight of Grace	1987	<i>Admissions and Promotions 1987: New South Wales.</i>

In 1980, the Brigade received a new Commissioner, Dr George Killen. He oversaw the rebuilding of the 'Sir Hugh Poate Training Centre' at Blaxland, and praised Sir John Pagan, the Deputy Chairman, and all those associated with the Appeal to raise funds for the project. In Killen's words:

Not only is this building the most ambitious financial enterprise attempted by the New South Wales District, but the re-birth of the Training Cadre coincides with a new approach to training and efficiency within the District.¹³⁸

Dr Killen was adamant that in an age of modern techniques and rapid advances in medicine, the Brigade could only remain relevant and effective based on high-level member proficiency and training. Thus, he initiated a number of changes in the Brigade that, by 1981, were resulting in 'increased energy, enthusiasm, enterprise and expansion'.¹³⁹ Changes in senior appointments facilitated new directions. The Brigade appointed Mrs Ruth Bray District Officer in Charge of Ambulance and Nursing Cadets in accordance with the progressive policy of having a single officer in charge of both males and females. The Brigade appointed Mr Geoffrey Ticehurst to be its Recruiting Officer, which resulted in a 'sharp increase' in enrolments. Brigade members 'earning approbation from all the umpires and observers' during an annual well-attended Disaster Exercise at Kingsford Smith Airport.¹⁴⁰ Expansion in country

Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)

Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

areas was unusually strong with new Divisions registered in Dubbo, Port Macquarie, Manning District, Moruya and Kiama. Closer to Sydney, the City of Gladesville Ambulance Section was registered. At Blaxland, builder completed the new lecture hall and the first dormitory of the 'Sir Hugh Poate Training Centre', just needing furniture to be finished. However, one tragedy of 1981 for the Brigade was the loss of Dr Montague V. Mutton, Corps Surgeon, Western Corps, who was shot at his surgery by an intruder. He had joined the Brigade in 1968 and HM The Queen had admitted him to the Order of St John as a Serving Brother in 1977 in recognition of his excellent contribution to St John Ambulance.¹⁴¹

'The Australian Medical Association Council is expected to consider appealing against the doubling of medical registration fees from £1 to £2 at a meeting next month. A spokesman for the A.M.A. indicated this today when commenting on protests made by Sydney doctors who objected to the increase. He called the fee "exorbitant". Dr G. C. Killen, of Rose Bay, in a letter to the Medical Journal, demanded to know who authorised the 100 per cent increase and for what purpose would the increased revenue be used'.

Canberra Times (15 July 1964), p. 10.

Dr George Campbell Killen (1925–1998) George Killen was born in K irribilli New South W ales on 25 F ebruary 1925. The son of George K illen of Q uirindi, New South W ales. He was educated at K nox College and The K ings School. As soon as he turned 18 , George enlisted in the C itize n Air F orce and soon began aircrew training. He completed his elementary A ight training at the 5AA) base at I arromine, I ew South :ales, completing 1 hours' A ying in Tiger 00th aircraft. He completed his A ying training at the 5AA) base at Point Cook in V ictoria, accumulating 10 hours' A ying in A irspeed O[ford planes. The Oxf ord, nickn amed the ' Ox- box' , was used to prepare complete aircrews for the [B ritish] R oyal Air F orce (R AF) B omber Command and as such could simultaneously train pilots, navigators, bomb aimers, gunners, or radio operators on the same A ight. George was promoted to Sergeant Pilot and awarded his F lying B adge (' W ings') on 16 January 1944. He was posted to the U nited K ingdom on 12 March 1944. I n the U K George attended No. 20 Advanced F lying U nit, where he completed a further . hours' A ying on O[ford. He was then posted to 21 Operations Training U nit, which had formed in January 1941 at the R AF base at Moretonin- Marsh in Gloucestershire to train night bomber crews using the V ickers W ellington. George undertook the B eam Course at the No. 1520 B eam Approach Training F light. B eam Approach was a guidance method for pilots returning to base at night. They had to learn to follow a signal in Morse code beamed to them from the airfield. :hen they were μ on the beam' they would be guided to a safe landing. George was then selected to undertake a Staff Pilots' Course and completed 38 .5 hours on Avro Anson aircraft. He was promoted to)light Sergeant Pilot on 1 July 144 and :arrant Officer Pilot on 16 July 1945. He was subsequently posted to the R AF base at W est F reugh, 8 ki lometres south- east of Stranraer in W igtownshire, Scotland. :hilst undertaking instructional A ying at :est)reugh, he A ew an additional 199 hours on Avro Ansons, 107 hours as F irst Pilot (i.e. captain) . :arrant Officer Pilot *C .illen's final posting in the 8. was to the 1o. Air Crew Holding 8nit at *amston in I ottinghamshire. %y this time he had completed 4. A ying hours. He returned to Australia and was discharged at the %radfield Park 5AA) base at Lindfield, Sydney, on O arch 14. After his discharge, George Killen enrolled in the medical course at Sydney U niversity. After his graduation he worked as a resident medical officer at the 5oyal Prince Alfred Hospital. ,n 14 he entered general practice at R ose B ay. Dr Killen' s career in St John Ambulance began when he was appointed Divisional Surgeon of the Paddington- W oollahra Ambulance [men' s] Division of the St John Ambulance B rigade on 8 May 1964. He subseTuently filled many other positions. He became Corps Surgeon for 1o. 1 Corps in December 1. He was appointed District Staff Officer in June 14 and was promoted to District Surgeon in August 1977. I n July 198 0 he was appointed Commissioner for New South W ales, a position he held for the next six years. He always proudly wore his Pilot' s W ings on his B rigade uniform along with his St John decorations and war service medals. Dr Killen also served St John in various other capacities. He was a member of the State St John Council and the exe cutive committee of the St John Ambulance Association (Training B ranch) . He also chaired the Ophthalmic B ranch in New South W ales. He was admitted into membership of the Order in 1970 and was later promoted through the grades, becoming a K night of Grace in 198 8 . He was awarded the Service Medal of the Order in 1975. At the time of his death in December 1998 , two months short of his 74th birthday, Dr Killen had spent 34 years in St John. Dr Killen had many professional and community involvements beyond St John Ambulance. Among others, he was a member of the medical

Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)

Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

education committee and an examiner for the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. He was a preceptor for student training, a tutor in clinical medicine and a member of the executive of the medical postgraduate committee at the University of New South Wales. He spent a term as the president of the Eastern Suburbs Medical Association; and he held various positions within the State Emergency Service, including that of State medical training officer.

Source: Trevor Mayhew, 'St Johnnies who served with the Royal Australian Air Force', *Proceedings of the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia*, Vol. 15 (2014–2015), pp. 61–62.

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Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Doctor

BRUCE EATON KINGHORN

KStJ MBBS FRACGP

Commissioner: 1.1.1987 – 23.6.1993



Bruce Kinghorn as a members of the St John (NSW) Board of Directors, consultant advisors, and management (1990).¹⁴²

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Serving Bro.	1984	<i>Admissions and Promotions 1984: New South Wales.</i>
Officer	1987	<i>Admissions and Promotions 1987: New South Wales.</i>
Commander	1993	<i>The Order of St John in Australia, 47th Annual Report of the Priory (31 December 1993), p. 33.</i>
Knight of Grace	2011	<i>St John Ambulance Australia (NSW), Annual Report (2011), p. 21.</i>

‘Dr Kinghorn commenced in St John in 1973 as the Divisional Medical Officer of Gladesville Adult Division. Since his appointment to the Grade of Commander, he was appointed as the State Medical Officer from 1994–1998; State Council from 2005–2010 and the Training Branch Committee from 2007–2008. Dr Kinghorn used his clinical skills with the introduction of the annual Skills Maintenance Program and implementation of infection control practices. Bruce introduced several clinical policies which moved the organization into a new sphere of clinical service to the community and he ... also established the NSW Clinical Governance Committee which regularly reviews clinical practice of FAS members with a view to improving and standardizing clinical practice and managing risk’.

The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, Investiture, Sunday, 20 May 2012.

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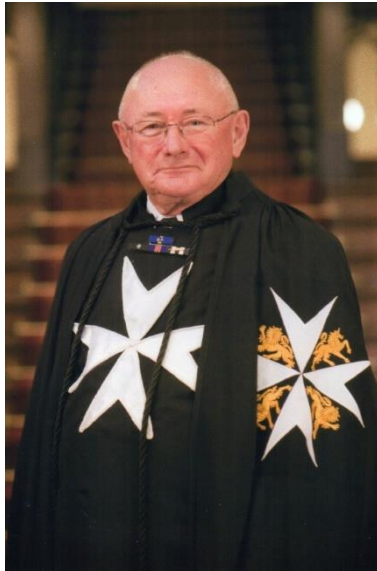
Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Mister

JOHN DAVID SPENCER

AM GCStJ FCA FLGA *

Commissioner: 24.6.1993 – 23.6.1999



Mr John David Spencer AM FCA FLGA, President of the St John Ambulance (NSW) State Council in 2017; Mr Spencer's armorial bearings as a Bailiff Grand Cross of the Order of St John.

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

Grade	Date	Source
Serving Bro.	1975	<i>Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, 1974–5: The St John Ambulance Brigade, New South Wales District (1975), n.p.</i>
Officer	1979	<i>St John Ambulance Brigade, 77th Annual Report (1979), n.p.</i>
Commander	1985	<i>St John Ambulance Association, NSW Centre: Annual Report (1985), p. 18.</i>
Knight of Grace	1990	<i>Admissions and Promotions 1990: New South Wales.</i>
Bailiff Grand Cross	2006	<i>St John Ambulance Australia, Annual Report 2006 (2006), p. 32.</i>

The Olympic Games presented an awesome challenge. The *Annual Report* of 1997 outlined the expectations of St John (NSW). These included coverage of 100 training sites and forty venues across Sydney; twenty-four hour Olympic Stadium and Village services sustained over sixty days; command and support staff throughout; opening and closing ceremony support. Overall, it was estimated this might involve support for over 115,000 spectators, 10,000 athletes, 5,000 officials, 10,000 performers and as many volunteers. It was acknowledged that 'no other single organization in Australia, can mobilize members trained in first aid, provide the communications support to integrate with other Emergency Service organizations or have members trained to lead and manage an operation of this kind'.¹⁴³ As Commissioner, Mr John Spencer led this team that had oversight of the 250 defibrillators expected to be deployed and 100 members selected to undertake a special Major Event Management course. He predicted that:

Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)

Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

The Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games will provide St John in Australia with one of its greatest challenges in its 109 year history but will result in a stronger, better trained and equipped membership committed to serving the people of New South Wales.¹⁴⁴

In 1998, the Olympic Co-Ordinating Authority awarded St John's Sales and Service Division a tender to supply the Olympic Stadium with first aid equipment in addition to medical and drug testing rooms. Altogether, this tender was valued at \$80,000 for St John Ambulance (NSW). St John (NSW) and the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 12 March 1999.¹⁴⁵ It would be nice to think the spirit of optimism created by the Olympic event accounts for our State's victories in the 1998 National Cadet Camp and First Aid Championships hosted in Sydney in January 1998. New South Wales teams won the team event as well as the individual event. The State also hosted the Commonwealth Cup, St John's international cadet first aid competition, and won the championship against the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Singapore and Canada. On a more intimate level, Betty Stirton's Community Care Branch launched an initiative called LinkAGE, designed to provide companionship to the frail and elderly in nursing homes. St John (NSW) expanded LinkAGE across the State in March 1999, on completion of a successful six-month pilot programme. In line with new legislation, St John (NSW) implemented a Child Protection Program and Head Office held a day of child protection training for all members involved with children on 21 November 1998.¹⁴⁶

The major challenge facing Mark Compton as St John (NSW) Chairman was the awesome task of overseeing the organisation's preparations for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Here the experience he had gained as Director of Marketing gave him two important advantages: a good sense of St John (NSW)'s financial capabilities and a strong notion of its reach as an advertiser. In 1999, the organization enjoyed a surplus of \$513,272 and the Operations Branch had performed every bit as strongly as it had done historically: in that year providing 185,720 voluntary duty hours and treating 33,000 casualties. Direct responsibility for marshalling these forces lay with former Commissioner, John Spencer. His 'inspired leadership' (to quote the *Annual Report* of 1999) lay in managing the more than 850 St John Ambulance members who had registered with SOCOG their willingness to volunteer throughout the duration of the Olympic Games. Mr Spencer developed the rosters for their service and oversaw equipment purchasing in addition to organizing a series of test events at each key venue. By the end of 1999, on the eve of the Games, Spencer and his team had significantly developed these training programmes.¹⁴⁷

It is important to recognize that the Olympics were one very large, but not all-consuming event for St John Ambulance (NSW) through the later 1990s. The Training Branch continued its regular activities, sustaining the high number of classes: in 1999, it conducted 4,405 training courses, resulting in first aid certificates for 63,146 Sydney-siders. Furthermore, in the same year, St John (NSW) gained accreditation from the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board as a Registered Training Organization (RTO). This newly acquired RTO status created fresh opportunities in the field of tertiary study and the potential for expanded industry linkages. For example, RTO status prompted the Training Branch to establish a new committee in December 1999 in order to conduct a rigorous overview of its functions and responsibilities. Significantly, the Community Care Branch celebrated the tenth anniversary of its Program to Aid Literacy in the Primary School reading program. It now operated in 130 schools thanks to 380 active volunteers, contributing 12,800 hours. This un-traditional St John Ambulance activity was proving successful in easing human suffering: 93 per cent of children benefitted from the programme, with 74 per cent demonstrating a marked improvement in literacy skills. Finally, St John (NSW) reached out to the Pacific islands to offer first aid instruction, in a reminder of activity dating back over decades. This time Mr Alan Stewart travelled to the Solomon Islands to conduct a First Aid Refresher and an Instructor Accreditation Course for fifteen local St John Ambulance members many of whom belonged to the Islands' Health Department, Fire and Police Services.¹⁴⁸

For John Spencer there was a very public form of recognition for his efforts during the Olympic Games. HM The Queen admitted him as a Member of the Order of Australia for service to the community through St John Ambulance Australia and through the provision of first aid services for the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games. In the words of Mark Compton:

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Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

This well-deserved honour is in recognition of 50 years of selfless dedication to St John Ambulance and an extraordinary contribution to the great success of the medical planning and services for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. John Spencer was a 'Gold Medallist' of those Games and his admission to the Order of Australia is proper recognition by the Australian Community of his efforts.¹⁴⁹

John Spencer had joined St John Ambulance (NSW) as a Cadet in 1949 with the Orange Ambulance Cadet Division. Sixty-five years later, he had served in many capacities, including NSW District Treasurer, Chief Superintendent (Australia), District Superintendent and Commissioner in NSW. While Commissioner he managed the St John (NSW) involvement in the 1994 Sydney bushfires, gaining valuable organizational experience in advance of his outstanding Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games management in 2000. Olympic organizers in China and London recognized his prominence, in consequence of which he advised them on Olympic Games first aid services in advance of their own hosting of the Games in 2008 and 2012 respectively. Mr Spencer was a member of the St John Council for NSW in the capacity of Secretary (1975–84) and elected member (from 1984) for over forty years. In July 2017, the Council appointed him President for a three-year term.

'John Spencer joined St John as a Cadet in 1949 with the Orange Ambulance Cadet Division. During a St John career of over 65 years he has served in many capacities including NSW District Treasurer, Chief Superintendent (Australia), District Superintendent and Commissioner in NSW. While Commissioner, he managed the St John involvement in the 1994 Sydney bushfires, the Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2000. He has advised China and London on Olympic Games first aid services. He has been a member of the St John Council for NSW in the capacity of either Secretary (1975–1984) or elected member (1984– current) for nearly 40 years. In July 2017, he was appointed President of the Council for a 3 year term'.

Notes to NSW members of the Venerable Order – J.D. Spencer.

Miss

CHRISTINE PURDIE

CStJ *

Commissioner: 24.6.1999 – 30.6.2005



Christine Purdie as one of the Board of Directors of St John Ambulance (NSW) (2003).¹⁵⁰

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Serving Sis.	1986	<i>St John Ambulance Association, NSW Centre: Annual Report (1986), p. 18.</i>
Officer	1991	<i>Admissions and Promotions 1991: New South Wales.</i>
Commander	1998	<i>Admissions and Promotions 1998: New South Wales.</i>

In the year following the Olympic Games, in 2001, it is amazing that there appears to have been no real dent made by it in the normal operations of St John (NSW). Annual revenues had been affected negatively by the need to meet the obligations of St John (NSW Trust) Limited, but volunteer activity in all branches persisted apace. The Program to Aid Literacy (PAL) programme increased to 468 volunteers and the LinkAGE initiative now had sixty-five volunteers working across twenty-three nursing homes. There was also enough time, energy and resources to produce a brand new video: 'First-Aid – Your Licence to Care'. By the end of 2001 the video had been distributed free of charge to more than 350 high schools around New South Wales. There was even a restructure with the creation of a Volunteer Service Branch to encompass Operations, Community Care and the Ophthalmic Hospital Branches.¹⁵¹ Most notably the Christmas Day bushfires of 2001 required a large co-ordinated effort from the Commissioner, Christine Purdie, who implemented the State Disaster Plan that St John (NSW) had developed. Good planning ensured that forty members were ready to go within an hour of the call to action. Altogether, St John volunteers gave 4,000 hours' service during the crisis. The success of the response won particular praise for Regional Commanders Lynn Berghofer, Rhonda Sneddon, Norm Beattie and Neil Walker.¹⁵²

The Operations Branch took its own initiative with the Commissioner, Christine Purdie, personally leading a recruitment drive around the State. Her efforts included Dubbo, Inverell, Port Macquarie, Tamworth, Kingscliff, Armidale, Dorrig, Lismore, Wagga Wagga and Albury. St John (NSW) launched a new Cadet Division at Brisbane Waters, providing opportunities for involvement for the youth of the Woy Woy area.¹⁵³ Sadly, this newest Division would lose its first Superintendent in tragic

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Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

circumstances within its first two years. Mike Rozier lost his life fighting the January 2005 bushfires in the region.¹⁵⁴

The creation of an Operations unit in Albury justified the efforts made by Commissioner Purdie, as did the recruitment of 249 Operations Branch volunteers in 2003.¹⁵⁵ The year 2003 also marked the centenary of volunteer activity for Australia's oldest ongoing Operations Units. The Glebe Ambulance Division and Glebe Nursing Division had come into being in March 1903. In anticipation of this anniversary, Glebe volunteers initiated an oral history programme that gathered valuable reminiscences from some of its oldest living alumni.¹⁵⁶ The quality and commitment of St John Ambulance volunteer staff generally was evident in the award of two Medals of the Order of Australia in recognition of their provision of medical assistance to victims of the Bali bombings – Peter Lorimer (Chief Nursing Officer) and Kevin Blake (Divisional Superintendent, Katherine Division).¹⁵⁷

‘Miss Purdie joined the Operations Branch (Balmain Division) in 1969. She has performed 3,733 hours of public duty and attended 884 instructional meetings. During the past 29 years of dedicated voluntary service she has held numerous senior administrative positions including Divisional Superintendent and Corps Superintendent. Miss Purdie is a member of the NSW State Council, District Finance Committee, District Staff Committee, Operations Branch Committee and the Blaxland Training Centre Committee. On all these committees she makes a significant contribution. She was appointed as an Instructor in 1978 and as an Examiner in 1982 and has instructed 99 and examined 616 first aid courses’.

*The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem,
Investiture, May 1998.*

Major-General

WARREN EDWARD GLENNY

AO CStJ RFD ED *

Commissioner: 24.6.2005 – 4.6.2011



Maj-Gen. Warren Glennie at the opening of the new Conference Wing at the 'Sir Hugh Poate Training Centre', Blaxland (12 March 2011).¹⁵⁸

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Commander	2007	<i>St John Ambulance Australia, Annual Report 2007 (2007), p. 30.</i>

By that stage, St John (NSW) was in a sound financial position, with a surplus of \$87,000. Trusted senior serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) officers led it. The Chairman was an ADF legal officer (he took three months' leave to serve in Iraq in 2007) and the new Commissioner was Major-General Warren Glennie AO RFD ED (ret'd). He was a former Honorary Ambulance Officer in the MacArthur District Ambulance, before all Districts were absorbed to become NSW Ambulance Service. The trend towards the appointment of salaried full-time staff continued. For example, St John (NSW) employed a Fundraising Co-Ordinator to grow the St John Society and a Grants Co-Ordinator to focus on the various Federal, State and Local Government, club and private organization grants that were available and for which St John (NSW) could apply.¹⁵⁹

June 2010 marked the stepping-down of Major-General Warren Glennie AO RFD ED (ret'd), having finished his six-year term as Commissioner of First Aid Services. He remained in service as a Board member. Chairman Peter Collins recorded his gratitude to Major-General Glennie for his 'excellent leadership of our "Black and White" troops out there in the field delivering first aid at so many community events throughout the year'.¹⁶⁰ The same month witnessed the launch of a new initiative – the first to originate from the Burwood headquarters. Everything Can Wait was a first aid awareness campaign aired on television, broadcast on radio and advertised in the print media, it was the start of a long-term initiative to make first aid part of everyone's life and urge members of the community to learn first aid. The same desire to ease suffering lay behind a Youth and Road Trauma Forum that engaged over 14,000 senior high school students in a car accident scenario, important at a time in their lives when they were learning to drive. Alongside refurbishment of the Burwood building to fit St John Ambulance's needs and facilitated by the assistance of a grant from the Department of

Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)

Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, there was the addition of a further wing at the Blaxland site.¹⁶¹ Now exerting national-level leadership as Chancellor of the Order of St John, HM The Queen created Professor Mark Compton a Member of the Order of Australia for service to the community, particularly through St John Ambulance Australia and through executive and volunteer roles with a range of hospital, health care and medical research organizations. The Olympics featured prominently in that success.

‘Mr Glenny has held the position of Commissioner of First Aid Services and Member of the St John (NSW) Board for the past three years. He is currently also Deputy Chairman of the Board. During this time Mr Glenny has provided First Aid Services with exceptional leadership, energy, time and diplomacy. He brings a lifetime of experience from the Australian Army Reserve and from his business career to the position of Commissioner’.

*The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, Investiture,
Saturday, 10 May 2008.*

First Aid Services Commissioner In June, Major General Warren Glenny (Rtd) finished his six year term as Commissioner of First Aid Services for St John (NSW). “As I completed my term I remain grateful for the opportunity to have been your Commissioner. I have during my term had a number of wonderful experiences and met and served with individuals who by their dedication and service are wonderful contributors to St John and their community. My gratitude to all who have served with me and who in times of need have provided support and encouragement. During the last few weeks of my term, I signed a large number of certificates acknowledging the efforts of Cadets Thanks to all for their work and also for the Officers who have devoted time and effort to assist Cadets with their achievements. My best wishes for the future. My thanks to staff and members for their support and I trust opportunities see ongoing contact.” Warren Glenny will continue to serve as a Director of the St John (NSW) Board. Succeeding Warren Glenny as Commissioner is Ken Kelman who has more than 30 years experience with St John. Ken worked for the South Australian Ambulance Service when St John held the license for running this service. “One of the highlights of my time with St John has been seeing the next generation of young people coming through the ranks. Half of the St John (NSW) membership is under 25, so they are the future of the organisation. My initial plans as Commissioner include a better understanding of why people leave the organisation and what St John can do better. We need to be flexible and reiterate that people’s time is precious. We need to understand that there are a lot of members pursuing studies, professional careers along with things like starting a family. There are great opportunities for our members and St John can encourage that. “ Ken Kelman also has plans to grow the youth movement of St John and work closely with the NSW Youth Council.

St John NSW, Highlights of 2011, p. 3.

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Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Lieutenant Colonel Warren Edward Glenny, E.D. 1 Jul 1972 – 30 Jun 1975

His first involvement with the Regiment was in the 1st R.N.S.W.L. Cadets, from 1950 to 1953. His National Service training was from August to November 1953, and he then passed into the ranks of the Regiment; lieutenant, 14/12/1955; captain, 27/8/1959; major, 17/9/1963; lieutenant colonel, 1/7/1972.

After commanding from 1/7/1972 to 30/6/1975, he was posted to 2nd Training Group located at Ingleburn, and became Chief Instructor TAC 5. On 1/9/1979 he was appointed Colonel (Armour), Headquarters 2nd Division Field Force Group; then, in July 1981, he became Colonel (Projects), H.Q. Training Command, until promoted to Brigadier with command of 5th Brigade on 1/1/1984. Also, as from 1/4/1984 he was appointed Honorary A.D.C. to the Governor General for a period of three years.

During Jan 68 was in SVN for operational experience.

At the end of his command of the brigade, he moved to Melboyne, promoted Major General and given command of the 3rd Division after a year the Division was amalgamated with the 2nd Division, and General Glenny became its commander, then Commander 2nd Division until Nov 1994. When he was awarded the AO and retired from the Army, he was appointed Honorary Colonel of the Regiment, succeeding Sir Laurence Street. General Glenny relinquished the Honorary Colonelship in 2012, handing over to Colonel Long.

In civil life he was a company executive in a retail chain. From early in his adult life General Glenny has been very active in community affairs, such as voluntary ambulance and fire brigade, politics and especially the Parramatta Foundation Week on the committee of which he served from 1964 to 1981. He is now (2010) Commissioner of the St John Ambulance in NSW.¹⁶²

Mister

KENNETH JOSEPH KELMAN

OAM CStJ JP CFSIA

Commissioner: 24.6.2011 – 5.2014



*Ken Kelman.*¹⁶³

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Serving Bro.	1993	<i>London Gazette</i> , No. 53224 (19 February 1993), p. 3109
Officer	2003	<i>Admissions and Promotions 2003: New South Wales.</i>
Commander	2012	<i>St John Ambulance Australia (NSW), Annual Report (2012)</i> , p. 26.

‘Ken Kelman joined St John (SA) as a Divisional Officer, a Divisional Superintendent and Regional Staff Officer prior to joining St John (NSW) after transferring to Sydney in 1995. He has held appointments as a regional Staff Officer and Regional Superintendent of Sydney No. 2 Corps and Acting Regional Superintendent of Central Western Region. Since being promoted to the Grade of Officer in 2003, Ken has held the position of Chairman of the Western Regional Management Committee and more recently as State Support Services Officer prior to being promoted to the role of NSW Commissioner’.

*The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, Investiture,
Saturday, 4 May 2013.*

St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) announces new Commissioner

8 May 2014

Download a [PDF version](#) of this media release.

Mr Didier Moutia has been announced as the incoming Commissioner of St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) at the charitable organisation’s Annual General Meeting held last night.

The Chair of St John, Tony Thirlwell OAM, formally made the announcement of Mr Moutia’s appointment which will be effective at the end of June 2014 following the retirement of current Commissioner Ken Kelman.

Commissioners of the St John Ambulance Brigade (New South Wales)

Compiled by Dr M.R. Glozier

Mr Moutia, a registered nurse and product manager at InterSystems, has been a member of St John for thirty years beginning his involvement with the voluntary organisation at the Wentworthville Combined Division in 1984.

In the years following, Mr Moutia served in various roles including Divisional Nursing Officer and State Operations Officer with the most recent three years spent as Assistant Commissioner (Strategy and Planning).

The role of Commissioner is responsible for the First Aid Services provision of St John in their delivery of voluntary health services to the wider community. The strategic role focuses on quality and development of capacity and capability of First Aid Services.

The Commissioner is also a member of the St John Board and performs the duties of a Director on the Board.

“I am honoured and humbled to be appointed in this crucial role. Our outgoing Commissioner Ken Kelman has made great progress during his tenure and I am excited by the challenges that lay ahead,” said Mr Moutia.

“I look forward to moving the organisation forward, supported by the amazing volunteers and staff of St John (NSW).”

St John is a family passion for Mr Moutia. His wife Isabelle is Superintendent of Granville Combined Division and their three sons Loic (11), Olivier (10) and Philippe (8) are St John junior members at Blacktown City Cadet Division.

Source: <https://www.stjohnnsw.com.au/st-john-ambulance-australia-nsw-announces-new-commissioner/>

Ken Kelman came into the role of Commissioner and has more than 30 years experience with St John in voluntary roles. I look forward to Ken’s continuing contribution in this tremendously important role. We are now reaping the benefits in several areas from foundations laid over the last few years: the benefits from physical consolidation into the Burwood Headquarters are now apparent and relationships across all functional areas are being strengthened. The Blaxland Training Centre is demonstrating its value as numerous membership groups benefit from the upgraded facility. The new Constitution is in place and is reflecting a will on the part of the entire membership to modernise and put in place contemporary standards of governance to better meet our corporate responsibilities.

St John (NSW), *Annual Report* (2011), p. 6

Kenneth Joseph Kelman OStJ Director Year appointed: 24 June 2011 Commissioner St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) Chartered Fellow, Safety Institute of Australia Member, RABQSA – Lead Auditor Safety Justice of the Peace NSW Industry Executive for past 20 Years in Health & Safety in Construction Industry

St John (NSW), *Annual Report* (2011), p. 31

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Mister

DIDIER LOUIS MOUTIA

OStJ MNurs (Trauma Care)

Commissioner: 6.2014 – 11.2016



*Didier Moutia.*¹⁶⁴

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Member	2007	<i>St John Ambulance Australia (NSW), Annual Report (2007), p. 13.</i>
Officer	2013	<i>St John Ambulance Australia (NSW), Annual Report (2013), p. 10.</i>

‘In June 2014, Didier Moutia was appointed as a Commissioner after a 31–year volunteer career with St John. Not that Didier has been counting the years. He was first introduced to St John as a fifteen year old when he became a cadet. At the time, the idea of learning about first aid appealed to him immediately. “The Cadet Program was also about having fun with a balance of leadership and community,” he says. “I have a lot to thank St John for and I want to ensure the youth members of today and the future enjoy the same opportunities I did.” The early skills Didier gained as a cadet laid the groundwork for his career and life path. Among his volunteer management roles, Didier was influential in transforming the Granville Division into a well–equipped, financial unit supported by a large membership base Didier’s operational experience is supplemented by his strategic initiatives. His impact has been felt in State Operations, where he decentralised decision making by forming specialist teams around event planning, logistics, communications and BERT. He has also driven IT systems and e–learning solutions for volunteers to maintain up–to–date first aid knowledge An avid cyclist, Didier is still actively involved in volunteer duties as part of BERT and is always keen to understand the issues impacting divisions and finding ways to test new policies and procedures. “I hope my term will see the emergence of a revitalised St John, one that provides great opportunities without losing the focus of our role in the community and that it remains a modern and relevant organisation,” explains Didier. Outside of his voluntary duties, Didier is a registered nurse and product manager at a medical technology company. His wife and three sons are also members of St John’.

St John Ambulance Australia (NSW), Annual Report (2014), p. 13.

Didier Moutia has been a St John (NSW) volunteer for over 30 years in management roles and in providing frontline health services. His extensive experience in health care includes providing direct clinical services in high acuity settings and health information technology.

ST JOHN (NSW) ANNUAL REPORT 2014, p. 9.

From Cadet to Commissioner I n June 2014, D I D I E R MOUTIA was appointed as Commissioner after a 31–year volunteer career with St John. Not that Didier has been counting the years. He was first introduced to St John as a fifteen year old when he became a cadet. At the time, the idea of learning about first aid appealed to him immediately. “The Cadet Program was also about having fun with a balance of

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leadership and community,” he says. “I have a lot to thank St John for and I want to ensure the youth members of today and the future enjoy the same opportunities I did.” The early skills Didier gained as a cadet laid the groundwork for his career and life path. Among his volunteer management roles, Didier was influential in transforming the Granville Division into a well-equipped, financial unit supported by a large membership base.

Appointments Divisional Nursing Officer (1996 – 1998) Divisional Officer in Charge (1998 – 2000) Divisional Superintendent (2000 – 2008) State Operations Officer (2008 – 2012) Deputy Commissioner (2012 – 2014) Commissioner (2014 – present) Honours & Awards 1992 Certificate of Merit 1992 Grand Prior’s Badge 1994 Certificate of Appreciation 2001–2014 Service Medal Bars 1–3 2003 Priory Vote of Thanks 2007 Admitted to the Order of St John as a Member 2013 Promoted to Officer of the Order of St John

Didier’s operational experience is supplemented by his strategic initiatives. His impact has been felt in State Operations, where he decentralised decision making by forming specialist teams around event planning, logistics, communications and BERT. He has also driven IT systems and e-learning solutions for volunteers to maintain up-to-date first aid knowledge.

An avid cyclist, Didier is still actively involved in volunteer duties as part of BERT and is always keen to understand the issues impacting divisions and finding ways to test new policies and procedures. “I hope my term will see the emergence of a revitalised St John, one that provides great opportunities without losing the focus of our role in the community and that it remains a modern and relevant organisation,” explains Didier. Outside of his voluntary duties, Didier is a registered nurse and product manager at a medical technology company. His wife and three sons are also members of St John.

ST JOHN (NSW) ANNUAL REPORT 2014, p. 22

Didier Louis Moutia OStJ, RN, MN (Trauma), BHSc (Nursing), JP Director Appointed: 24 June 2014 Commissioner St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) Member of Governance Compliance and Remuneration Committee Justice of the Peace Member, Royal College of Nursing Member, NSW Nurses and Midwives Association Certified Health Informatician Australasia Qualified TAE Trainer and Assessor Industry Executive for the past 17 years in Healthcare and Health Informatics

ST JOHN (NSW) ANNUAL REPORT 2014, p. 41

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Adjunct Professor

JASON BENDALL

CStJ PhD MM(ClinEpi) MBBS BMedSc(Hons) AdvDipParamedSc FANZCA FPA FANZCP
GAICD

Commissioner: 28.11.2016 – 1.9.2021



Commissioner Jason Bendall at the annual St John NSW awards ceremony, Maclaren Hall, University of Sydney (26 October 2019).

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Member	2010	<i>St John Ambulance Australia (NSW), Annual Report (2010), p. 27.</i>
Officer	2017	<i>Program for the Investiture for the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, Government House, Saturday, 6 May 2017.</i>

‘Dr Bendall joined St John as a cadet in 1987, and progressed through a number of leadership positions while completing PhD and medical studies and currently holds the position of State Professional Officer. Dr Bendall is a key member of the Clinical Governance Committee’.

The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, Investiture, Saturday, 7 May 2011.

‘For significant service as the Chief Professional Officer and Deputy Director Training, St John Ambulance Australia and State Professional Officer and Divisional Medical Officer, Adamstown RSL Cadet Division, St John Ambulance Australia (NSW)’.

Program for the Investiture for the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, Government House, Saturday, 6 May 2017.

Biography

Associate Professor Jason Bendall is the Clinical Dean at the Manning Clinical School within the Department of Rural Health. Jason completed his undergraduate studies in 1991 completing a honours degree in medical science before becoming a paramedic. Jason graduated with a medical degree and (MBBS) and a PhD in medicine in 2004 subsequently specialising in anaesthesia. Jason has undertaken further postgraduate studies in clinical epidemiology and biostatistics.

Jason's clinical and research interests include paramedicine, prehospital and retrieval medicine, clinical anaesthesia, resuscitation, trauma and acute pain management.

Jason is the Convenor of the First Aid sub-committee of the Australian Resuscitation Council and is a member of the International Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR) first aid task force.¹⁶⁵

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Mr

ILAN LOWBEER

CStJ

Commissioner: 1.9.2021 –



Ilan Lowbeer.

Admission / Promotion within the Order of St John

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>
Member	2010	<i>St John Ambulance Australia (NSW), Annual Report (2010), p. 27.</i>
Officer	2019	<i>Admissions and Promotions 2019, Government Notices Gazette, No. C2019G00946 (22 October 2019).</i>

‘Since his admission to The Order in 2010, Mr Lowbeer has continued to fulfil significant roles at a state level. He is currently the Deputy Commissioner, Advisory. He has drawn upon his corporate and professional knowledge to influence, lead and improve cultural change and governance. Mr Lowbeer has contributed to improving the St John brand and is an effective ambassador for St John. He has had significant input in the development, implementation, and success of important welfare strategies such as the Peer Support program and the Chaplaincy program. Mr Lowbeer has demonstrated his versatility and agility in the application of his talents to a range of portfolios over a sustained period’.

*Investiture for the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem,
Government House, Friday, 14 May 2021.*

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¹⁶⁴ 'Didier Moutia, Product Manager Nursing', LinkedIn @ https://www.linkedin.com/authwall?trk=gf&trkInfo=AQF1vQnPw7M7mAAAAXGgLS5Io9621KpQ4klnvYnC7U9Cj5ZCnqgxCf__Cs9EsCuh9J4XQdMKJnKk2475B5Ls4-wcKsVlffkVguqHQE62RjWphid8P0447iIv1IfPzychBKISlkl=&originalReferer=https://www.google.com.au/&sessionRedirect=https%3A%2F%2Fau.linkedin.com%2Fin%2Fdidiermoutia (accessed 22 April 2020).

¹⁶⁵ 'Career Summary: Associate Professor Jason Bendall', University of Newcastle @ <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/profile/jason-bendall> (accessed 22 April 2020)