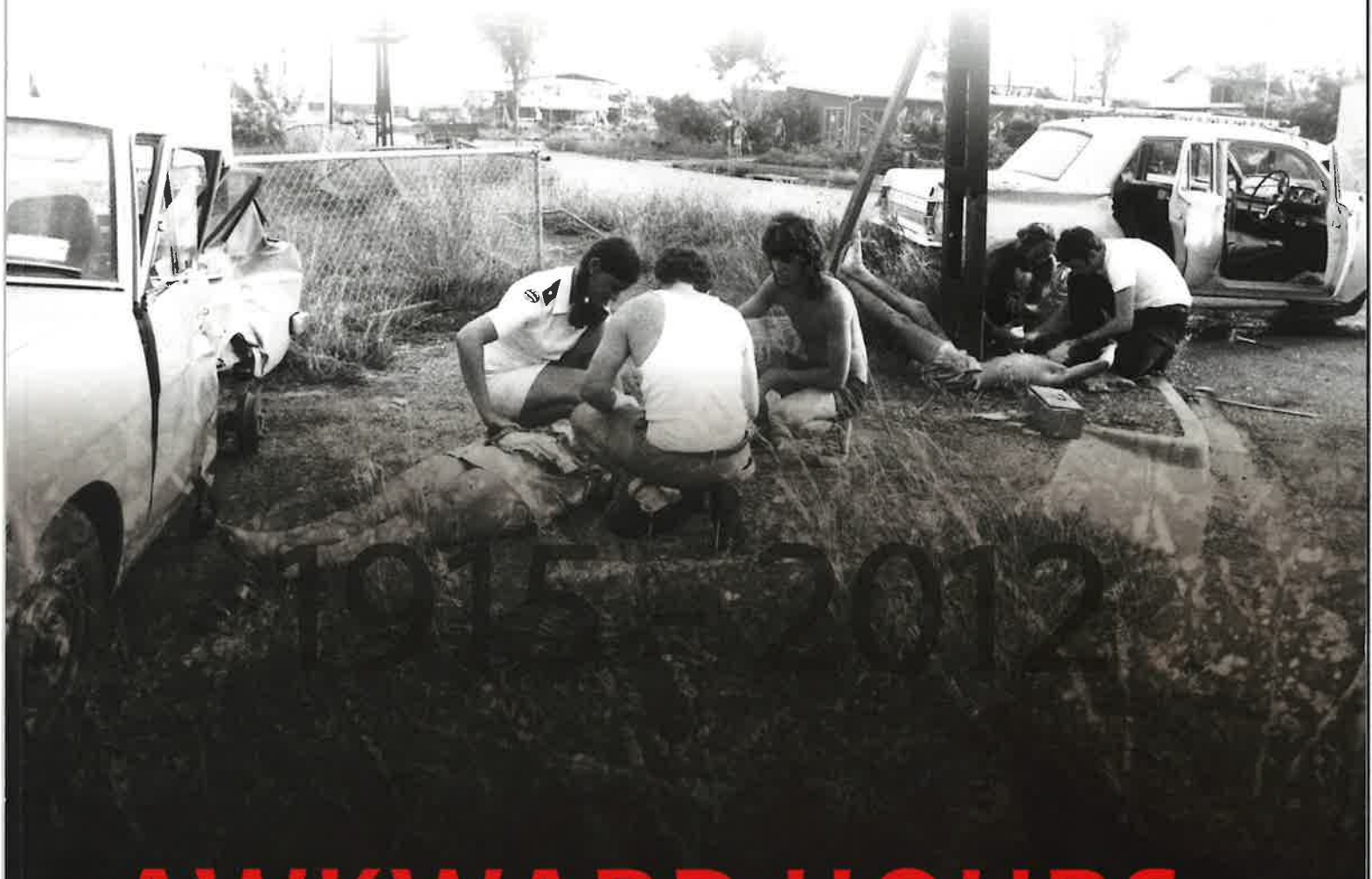


# AWKWARD HOURS, AWKWARD JOBS

## A History of St John Ambulance in the Northern Territory 1915 - 2012

The Volunteers

Frank Dunstan

# Awkward Hours, Awkward Jobs

**A History of St John Ambulance in the Northern Territory**
**1915—2012**

**The Volunteers**

by

**Frank Dunstan**
and members of the St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Historical Society

**St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc.**
2013

***Author's dedication:***

This book is dedicated to the late Pat McQuillen OStJ. It was her book, *"Saved Any Lives Today"* that provided the inspiration to research and write this much larger work.

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The Volunteers

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*Cover photo:*
Mandy Holden and Phil Langdon, 1976

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# EXPLANATORY NOTES

This book has been written by regional areas in chronological order, rather than by theme or by Divisions. In some areas, notably Darwin, the Divisions were so intertwined that it was difficult to separate them into individual chapters. Also, the size of the project coupled with a tight deadline meant that it was easier to write it this way. A proposed future revised electronic version should solve this problem.

Australia went over to decimal currency on 14th February 1966. The pound (£) became two dollars which is now a dumpy little brassy coin that in 2012 has probably the same spending power as ten cents had in 1966, if that. All currency values prior to 1966 are expressed in pounds, shillings and pence without decimal equivalents in brackets. To do so would be to give a false impression of the real value of the amount stated. A pound was a lot of money; two dollars is no big deal in 2012.

Pre metrification all distances in Australia were in the very awkward Imperial system of measurements with the mile (1.6 kilometres) as a basic unit. Places down the Track from Darwin and other major centres were at the such and such mile. The Works Depot at Parap was at the 2½ Mile; present day Coolalinga was just called the 19 Mile and so on. Ambulances met up on the Stuart Highway for patient transfer at the 45 Mile, or wherever. These historical distances have been preserved in this book without metric equivalents in brackets. Readers interested in knowing the kilometre equivalent may choose to do the calculations if they wish.

Most of the photographs reproduced in this book were found in St John Ambulance historical archives at the Richard Morris Centre, Casuarina and the Bernie Kilgariff Complex, Alice Springs. In many cases they were uncaptioned with photographer unknown. Many that were captioned used Post-it notes, sometimes incorrectly and in often illegible or hard to read handwriting. Captions and names of people in those photos used in this book were determined after a lot of detective work. Photographers or sources of photographs have been acknowledged where known.

People's names in this book appear as they were published in the original documents, newspaper or magazine reports. Where obviously misspelled they were corrected, using spellings in more reliable documents such as Divisional Registrations and Annual Returns.

Unfortunately, in the early days most people were just an initial and their first, or given names weren't published. These were put in where known. In some cases, just surnames were published without even an initial, making it extremely difficult to further identify the person.

Blocks of text in *italics* and/or inverted commas (quotation marks) are direct quotes from source documents and appear as originally written without amendment. Obviously missing words are enclosed in square brackets [ ] and breaks to skip irrelevant parts the text are indicated by ...

Some words which are normally capitalised, such as Brigade, are left in lower case if this is how they appeared in the original text.

Some spelling errors are indicated by *(sic)* to show that this was the original. However, Not every spelling or grammatical error is so marked.

All these blocks were double checked to ensure that the text and spelling was the original authors' and not mine. This was done to ensure authenticity in that original documents were not doctored in any way to suit this history.

# ABOUT THIS BOOK

I guess you could call me an accidental historian because there was certainly no intention of embarking on this or any other project when I joined the St John Ambulance Historical Society. In fact, I only joined in the hope of getting stories for our weekly newsletter, *Vollie News.*

Read on and I'll tell you how it all came about.

The first seed for this book was planted when Cadet Hayley Cockman sent *Vollie News* an image of what seemed at first glance to be a medal of the Order of St John. It had a white Maltese Cross supported by a black riband, but with lions between the arms of the cross rather that lions and unicorns. An enquiry with Priory Librarian Dr Ian Howie-Willis suggested the medal may be Masonic. Searching the internet found this to be so and an article was published in *Vollie News.*

The following week a second article was published about the Service Medal of the Order of St John. This led to my being asked to join the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia. I joined, but without any intention of getting seriously involved. It's not easy putting out a weekly newsletter that must be interesting and joining the Historical Society was seen as a way of getting stories to put in *Vollie News.*

Soon after joining I was given two books. The first was titled *To Be Faithful True and Brave,* by Dr Bill Wilson. Bill was commissioned by the St John Council to research and write the history of St John Ambulance in the Northern Territory. At the time it was felt that there was nobody within the organisation able to carry out this work and Bill was a professional with a Doctorate in History. Anyone interested in getting hold of a copy of Bill's book should ask at the Volunteer Office in the Richard Morris Centre, Casuarina. They have many copies and should be only too happy to give them away.

The second book was *Saved Any Lives Today?* subtitled *A History of St John Ambulance in Alice Springs NT* and written by Pat McQuillen OStJ.

I was so impressed by Pat's book that I suggested to Volunteer Coordinator Gwyn Balch that we should write something similar for the whole of the Northern Territory, not just a single region. Little did I know what my big mouth was getting me in for.

Gwyn replied, "I like the way you think", and before I knew what was happening a meeting was called for local members of the Historical Society and the ball started rolling. This was in June 2011.

At the meeting I was instructed that this history was to be about the Volunteers only and not to include the paid Ambulance Service. However, in the early years and for some time after St John took over the ambulance services from the Department of Health there wasn't a clear dividing line like there is today and this historical work reflects that.

St John Council members are also volunteers, but because other members of the Historical Society indicated their intention to produce a separate publication about them and the Commissioners, they have been mainly excluded from this book.

There had been some half hearted attempts at writing a history in the past, but these were little more than brief documents containing sketchy information and many factual errors. They did supply some interesting research leads though as well as one or two historical red herrings. One thing I soon noticed was that each seemed to have obtained information from their predecessors and in so doing had perpetuated original errors.

One notable repeated error was that Darwin Division moved into their new headquarters on Ross Smith Avenue and started their ambulance service in 1960. My research found that building didn't commence until mid 1961 and the Division relocated to a half finished building in August 1963. The Division didn't get its first proper ambulance, a Volkswagen Kombi van, until March 1962 and that

was based at Superintendent Jack O'Hare's Nightcliff clinic.

A repeated red herring was the possibility that Lady Brassey may have started a St John Ambulance Association Centre when in Port Darwin in September 1887. One could call Lady Annie Brassey an evangelist for St John Ambulance in that wherever she travelled with her husband, Lord Brassey, in their yacht *Sunbeam* she tried to establish local centres of the Association. Unfortunately, she caught malaria before the yacht arrived in Port Darwin where they stayed just 17½ hours before sailing again. Lady Brassey died seven days later and was buried at sea on the 14th September 1887.

Research for this project started with the internet. This could be done at home without driving the 140km round trip into town from my rural block every day. I soon found the National Library of Australia's Trove website containing many old newspapers. Part 1 of this book has material from that source.

Another useful site belonging to the Northern Territory Archives Service lists many Oral History transcripts. Bill Wilson and others conducted interviews with several St John members a decade or more earlier and the transcripts of these interviews were available to read and copy. This saved me from interviewing these people whose memories were much fresher then. Two or three trips were made to the NT Archives building in Cavenagh Street and several transcripts were purchased.

One thing I learned early in this project was to distrust old memories because they often did not match records and reports of the day. I also found that by personal experience when reading copies of *Navy News* from the 1960s and early 1970s. My recollections of events from my Navy days weren't exactly accurate.

Using references in Bill Wilson's book some very useful documents were obtained over the internet from the National Archives of Australia.

When Archives had been exhausted I then started going to the Northern Territory Library in Parliament House, Darwin. This meant spending day after seemingly countless day searching copies of old newspapers on microfilm. At first I went there with a list of key dates obtained from those earlier histories to search around, but soon found those dates to be wrong, so threw the list away and started searching every available issue of the *Northern Territory News* since it first started in 1952. When the *NT News* was exhausted I went on to regional newspapers.

Scanning microfilm, often of poor quality, is very hard on an ageing pair of eyes, but the results were well worth the effort. The early newspapers in Darwin and other regional centres greatly supported the St John Ambulance Brigade and contained a wealth of information about the various Divisions' activities.

The Library would only let me book a microfilm reader for two hours, but there were many days I spent up to five or six hours straight on a machine, there being nobody else wanting to use them. Other days I just got my two hours. After driving an hour into town and then walking 20 minutes from a free parking area it hardly seemed worth the effort for just two hours in the Library, but the amount of research necessary meant that every bit counted, regardless how small. The days when I drove into town and walked those 20 minutes to find the Library closed because of some Parliamentary function or other ceremony made me wish the Library was located elsewhere.

I took regular breaks from the Library by going to the Richard Morris Centre, Casuarina to search and scan the many archived documents and photographs that have been collected over the years. As word spread of my activities more material started to appear and it wasn't unusual to call in and find a new box of historical documents or photographs.

So as to not become overwhelmed with research material I started writing it all up at home in the cool of the evening and into the night. A rough draft was started in Microsoft Word and

then copied over to Microsoft Publisher as each section was tidied up and finished. Word is a very versatile program, but it lacks a lot of the formatting features of Publisher.

A lot of time was also spent on selecting and enhancing suitable photographs to be used in the book. Some of the old damaged photos were quite a challenge, but came out surprisingly well.

A particularly exciting time was when Commissioner Steve Peers brought up several boxes of archival files from Alice Springs. This resulted in my spending a very cold week in Alice in July 2012 to browse and scan many more historical records and photographs. The trip was well worth while in that I obtained records from Alice Springs, Ayers Rock and Tennant Creek. There were also many Darwin records such as memoranda, letters and Routine Orders. Old South Australian Routine Orders also contained useful information.

At first the project seemed so overwhelming in the allowed time frame that it was proposed to split it in two with Volume 1 to be about Darwin, Palmerston and the rural area, and a later Volume 2 to cover all regional centres. Fortunately, it all came together and resulted in this single book.

In addition to the general history there are a lot of lists in the appendices—Members of the Order, Divisional leadership, award winners and so on. This took a lot of detective work and there is no guarantee that the lists published in this book are complete. They are as comprehensive and accurate as I could make them, though.

As the book grew larger and larger it became time to call a halt lest it get out of hand and not be finished by the deadline. As a result there are events and people omitted from this history. Not because they weren't wanted, but because I just stopped searching. Enough was enough.

There is a fair bit of material deliberately excluded from this history. There are confidential reports that were considered best left confidential. Others were hearsay reports of inappropriate behaviour without supporting evidence. There are also very bitter letters of resignation. We have Privacy laws for good reason and none of that material is in anybody's interest to be aired in public.

Readers may find a lot of loose ends in this book with areas they wish I had explored deeper. These are a combination of poor records of the day and a lack of time to spend chasing up more information in a very large project with a tight deadline. While I would have liked another six months or more to work on this book I just did not have that luxury.

Producing this history was an exciting adventure and well worth the many hundreds of hours of effort, but I'm glad that it's over and wouldn't care to do it again, at least not at this pace with the pressure of a deadline to meet.

I expect a lot of feedback from retired members—and from some who are still members—and this will be taken on board with research to continue towards bringing out a revised edition in a few years time, perhaps as a CD version or whatever the technology of the time.

The title, *Awkward Hours, Awkward Jobs,* was discovered when researching the St John Ambulance Brigade's activities in the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy, Christmas 1974. Bruce Jones of Batchelor Combined Division crewed an ambulance to the point of burn out after Tracy and that's how he summed up those punishing days and nights. *Awkward hours and awkward jobs*. My sincere thanks to Bruce for permission to use that magnificent understatement in the title of this book.

**Frank Dunstan MStJ**
Berry Springs NT
January 2013

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Frank Dunstan is a retired pensioner who somehow found himself researching and writing his first book at the age of 70. He lives on a bush block in the Darwin rural area and occupies much of his time as a non uniformed volunteer with St John Ambulance.

Born on a farm north of Geraldton in Western Australia during World War 2, Frank spent his childhood shuffling between the farm, Darwin and Perth. He joined the Navy at the too young age of 16 and paid off in 1972 after serving on a variety of ships and shore establishments. Then followed a return to the Northern Territory in late 1973 where he has worked and lived ever since.

Retiring at Christmas 1999 he got heavily involved in volunteer work for St John Ambulance, Bushfires NT and the local environment. Better known in St John as founding editor of the Operations Branch newsletter *Vollie News* than as a historian, he enjoyed the excitement and challenge of discovering the long forgotten struggles and achievements of the St John Ambulance Brigade in the Northern Territory.

Frank has a determination to tell the world about the pioneers who overcame many obstacles to found St John Ambulance in the Territory and build it into the great organisation we all know and enjoy today. He hopes that this book will inspire others to take up the challenge and have a go at tasks that may seem daunting, but can be achieved with determination and perseverance.

Frank will retire from volunteering one day, but not just yet. He has been bitten by the "history bug" and plans to continue research towards bringing out an updated version of this book one day.

Perhaps in time for the next National Conference to be held in the Territory?

# GLOSSARY

| | |
|---|---|
| **A&E** | Accident and Emergency |
| **AGM** | Annual General Meeting |
| **Ambo** | A colloquial term for an Ambulance Officer; also applied to any uniformed member of St John Ambulance Brigade/Operations Branch. |
| **AOTC** | Ambulance Officers Training College—now called Paramedic Training College |
| **Association** | The training and first aid manual publication branch of St John Ambulance. Renamed Training Branch in 1987. The Association established in Darwin in 1953 was intended to be more of an executive governing council than a training body. |
| **ASSPA** | Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness |
| **Auxiliary** | Usually refers to a local fund raising body, but in Darwin in the early 1960s it went far beyond that in that it assumed the role of a governing council. |
| **Berrimah Line** | The boundary between the City of Darwin and the Municipality of Litchfield. This is the line beyond which Darwin traditionally loses interest in the remainder of the Northern Territory. It is very real and still exists today, although it is moving with increased urbanisation. St John Ambulance have worked hard over recent years to dismantle their Berrimah Line. |
| **BF4** | Personal Record card—replaced by OB2. |
| **Brigade** | The branch of St John Ambulance that provides a uniformed first aid service at public events and also a volunteer ambulance service. Renamed Operations Branch in Australia in 1987. Now known as First Aid Services. |
| **CBD** | Central Business District |
| **CCT, CC&T** | Casualty Care and Transport—an ambulance qualification course |
| **CEO** | Chief Executive Officer |
| **CMF** | Citizen Military Forces |
| **Comms** | Ambulance Communications centre |
| **Community Care** | A branch of St John Ambulance Australia responsible for community welfare projects. Has been disbanded and revived in the Northern Territory. |
| **Corps** | A regional division within a District. The Northern Territory was a Corps of South Australia and after independence was split at one stage into Northern, North Eastern and Southern Corps. The Corps system was abolished during the Operations Branch restructure in 1997. |
| **CS** | Corps Superintendent |
| **CSM** | Corps Sergeant Major |
| **CSNC** | Corps Superintendent Northern Corps |
| **CSO** | Corps Staff Officer |
| **CSSC** | Corps Superintendent Southern Corps |
| **Council** | St John Ambulance Council, Northern Territory |
| **CWA** | Country Women's Association |
| **DAO** | District Ambulance Officer |
| **DCA** | Department of Civil Aviation |

| | |
|---|---|
| **District** | A major and largely autonomous regional area of the St John Ambulance Brigade/ Operations Branch, headed by a Commissioner. In Australia each State and Territory comprised a separate District. The term was replaced by State/Territory in 2000. |
| **Division** | A local working unit of the St John Ambulance Brigade/Operations Branch comprising a minimum of 12 members, although that is now flexible. |
| **DO** | Divisional Officer |
| **DS** | Divisional Superintendent |
| **DSM** | District Sergeant Major |
| **DSO** | District Staff Officer |
| **EAR** | Expired Air Resuscitation |
| **ECOP** | Emergency Call Out Plan |
| **ETA** | Estimated time of arrival |
| **FA** | First Aid |
| **FAP** | First Aid Post |
| **IAC** | Introductory Ambulance Care—a preliminary ambulance qualification course. |
| **IV** | Intravenous |
| **JESCC** | Joint Emergency Services Communication Centre—usually abbreviated as Comms |
| **MLA** | Member of the Legislative Assembly |
| **MO** | Medical Officer |
| **NCO** | Non Commissioned Officer |
| **NTES** | Northern Territory Emergency Service |
| **NTFRS** | Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service |
| **OAC** | Officer Administering Command |
| **OIC** | Officer in Charge |
| **PR** | Public Relations |
| **PVT** | Priory Vote of Thanks |
| **RDH** | Royal Darwin Hospital |
| **RFDS** | Royal Flying Doctor Service |
| **RN** | Registered Nurse |
| **Section** | A unit of the St John Ambulance Brigade/Operations Branch of less than 12 members and attached to a Division. Now an obsolete term. |
| **SMP** | Skills Maintenance Program |
| **SRN** | State Registered Nurse |
| **TEP** | Territory Enterprises Propriety—operators of the Rum Jungle Uranium Mine. |
| **TO** | Territory Officer |
| **Track, The** | The Stuart Highway |
| **Triennium** | A three year cycle, starting 24th June which is the tenure for senior appointments in the St John Ambulance Brigade/Operations Branch. Commissioners can only serve for two consecutive triennia. The date celebrates the birth of Saint John the Baptist and is the anniversary of the foundation of the uniformed St John Ambulance Brigade in 1887. |

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Our special thanks to the following people without whose help this historical work would be so much poorer.

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**Hayley Cockman**
**Debbie Garraway OStJ**
**Marian Grayden**
**Lesley King DStJ**

Other major contributors:

| | |
|---|---|
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| **Pat McQuillen OStJ** *(dec.)* | For the inspiration to commence this project and for her historical research material |
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| **John Pohl** | For your photographs and story of the Darwin Ambulance Service in the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy |
| **Peter Poole KStJ** | For sharing your memories and helping to correct a few points |

Thanks also to all who contributed documents and photographs to the St John Ambulance Australia (NT) archives over many years and to the people interviewed for the Northern Territory Archives Service Oral History unit. Your memories were much fresher then and have contributed greatly to this history.

Sincere thanks to Francoise Barr of NT Archives and to the friendly, helpful staff at the NT Library in Parliament House, Darwin.

# PART 1:
# THE LONG ROAD TO BRIGADE AND ASSOCIATION

This first Part describes the efforts to introduce St John Ambulance to the Northern Territory before the Second World War and the attempts of a Sydney based Priory to re-introduce St John to a war ravaged city of camp dwellers, efforts that were abandoned as futile until successfully brought about by Territorians themselves in the early 1950s.

# Chapter 1
# THE EARLY YEARS

The first clue found of any involvement by St John Ambulance in the Northern Territory is in 1915 with an item on the agenda of the Palmerston District Council for an *"application of the Red Cross Society for the use of the Town Hall for two nights a month for first aid classes on the return of Dr. Holmes."* [1]

On Thursday 16th September 1915 the *Northern Territory Times and Gazette* advertised that the St John Ambulance Association, in affiliation with the Red Cross Society, was forming a St John Ambulance Class, to be held twice weekly under the direction of the Chief Health Officer, Dr. M. J. Holmes. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. would be charged to defray cost of bandages, splints, lighting, etc. A St John Ambulance First Aid Certificate would be issued to all who passed the examinations at the end of training.

Later, on 28th October the paper advised that the St John Ambulance class would be held in Mr Andrew's office at Government House on Friday October 29th.

There are earlier newspaper reports of a strong Red Cross presence in Darwin, but nothing about St John Ambulance, so we can only surmise that while away Dr. Holmes had met with a St John Ambulance Association down south and arranged to conduct first aid training and examinations, and to award certificates on their behalf. Priory Librarian Dr Ian Howie-Willis informed that this was common practice, saying *"someone with a St John first aid certificate would see the need and arrange for a class to be taught. The class would then be run from a local 'sub-centre' of the home State."* [2] Examination results had to be sent back to the parent Association and it often took several weeks for the certificates to be returned.

St John now fades from available Territory records until 1928 when the *Northern Standard* published a disturbing Letter to the Editor that resulted in Darwin finally getting its own ambulance. It has been reproduced in full because to just quote selectively would reduce its impact.

> *Sir,--Again a smack at the Health Authorities. Recently a Government employee was badly burned about the body and face at the Katherine. He was sent on the local express to Darwin for medical treatment. No proper arrangements for his conveyance were made. Instead of being placed in an ambulance waggon he was put on a crude mattrass (sic) in a carriage, exposed to the intolerable jolts so noticeable on a journey on our toy railway, suffering intolerable pain. On arrival at Darwin he was met by a constable driving a bone-shaking, half-bred species of automobile-truck (a credit to our police force). He (the injured patient) was requested to get in the back of this broken-down utility truck. The patient was in no condition to face a probably rougher ride than his previous one, so a friend of his, looking after him, refused to allow him to be placed in the bone-shaker, supplied by an ungrateful Government to its faithful servant and chartered an up-to-date hire car to take him to hospital, where he is now suffering great pain. This incident can only be regarded as an affront to the civilised workingman, and should awake the lethargy of our local Acting-Government rubber stamp.* [3]

The Darwin Town Council had been talking about procuring an ambulance through the Government for at least three years,[4] and this finally stirred some action causing them to propose launching an appeal for a motor ambulance to be stationed at Darwin for public use. The annual sports meeting held to raise funds for the local Band would be held instead to procure an ambulance and *"it was decided to communicate to the St. John's Ambulance Society, Melbourne, ascertaining the cost of such an ambulance so that*

*it might be known how much a public appeal should call for."* [5] One newspaper suggested that *"a branch of the St. John's or some other ambulance society would be formed"* [6] to run the ambulance service.

Mr W. J. Nichols, who had proposed making a public appeal to obtain an ambulance for Darwin, was informed by the Chief Health Officer, Dr Cook, that the Government had allowed for an ambulance in Estimates and that it should reach Darwin within six months.[7] A motor ambulance for Darwin Hospital arrived on the *Malabar* in March 1929 .[8]

There are several newspaper reports of the ambulance over the next few years, but none that include St John or any other 'ambulance society', and the reports indicate that it was operated by hospital orderlies.

The next mention of St John in Darwin was in 1936 when it was reported that:

> *"the first organised aircraft 'crash squad' in Australia, is being formed and trained by Dr. H. L. Carruthers, Commonwealth quarantine officer, who recently arrived at Darwin. Classes have begun at the Darwin aerodrome on St. John Ambulance methods, and practice drills are being carried out."* [9]

Later that year the results of first aid examinations from courses held by Dr. Carruthers were published, with the following being successful:

> Messrs. H.F. Cooper, H. Hilditch, H.D. Hagarty, H. Luke, M. Luke, R.K. McCaffery, M.R. Smith, W.M. Stewart, C.L Simpson, D.A. Smyth, and H. Widdup.
>
> The Gold medal was won by H.F. Cooper with the excellent mark of 92 per cent.[10]

St John seems to have had a stronger presence in 1937, as reported by the *Northern Standard* on Friday 12th February:

> *ST. JOHNS AMBULANCE*
> *PLANS TO EXTEND MOVEMENT IN N.T.*
>
> *In 1936 an ambulance movement was inaugurated in Darwin. Many local residents were provided with the opportunity to avail themselves of a training in first aid methods. Some attended the course but did not take the examination and of those who did over 90 per cent were successful. These results were eminently satisfactory. Plans are now in hand for the purpose of extending the movement considerably in the forthcoming 1937 session. A divisional superintendent of St. Johns has been appointed and the movement in the Northern Territory has been affiliated with the Victorian section.*

Unfortunately, we have been unable to discover any further information, or even the name of the divisional superintendent. However, one could assume that most, if not all of the successful candidates listed above would have been members, and dare we go even further to suggest that Gold Medal winner Cooper may have been divisional superintendent? The trouble with assumptions though, is that they are often wrong and without evidence must remain wishful speculation.

The Victorian connection would most likely come about if Dr Carruthers had been transferred from Melbourne to Darwin. If, in common with many public officials, his stay in Darwin was just two years the movement may have died out without his continuing guidance. No records have been found in Victoria of any Northern Territory connection for that period.[11]

A letter received by Alan Bromwich in 1986 further adds to the mystery of southern oversight:

> *I have been searching for a request made some time before Mr. Bradbury's approach to Adelaide, for "the re-establishment of a St. John Centre in Darwin" or words to that effect. Unfortunately I cannot find the reference to give you the exact wording nor the date and there was no further reference to it. I rang Jack Revitt and he confirmed that the Northern Territory had had a Sub-Centre, but that it was attached to either Victoria or New South Wales and that State did not wish to continue with the oversight.*[12]

The letter goes on to say that Mr Shapter

definitely confirmed that the Northern Territory was a Sub-Centre of the New South Wales Centre and that Association Secretary Miss Marjorie Higgins made more than one trip to the Territory to oversight the Sub-Centre. There is nothing in the letter to say when, or even what decade this occurred. It did, however include Miss Higgins' address, but after half a century there probably seemed little point in writing to her.

The newspapers for the remainder of the 1930s and the start of the war report first aid training carried out for the Red Cross Society with no mention of St John until a 1941 wartime plea by the Air Raid Precautions (ARP) wardens for *"250 men who are willing to give one evening per week to become trained in first aid"* and become stretcher bearers. At the time only 28 men were enrolled and a new course was to start soon. The instructor was to be Mr Webb of the St John Ambulance Association with lectures given by doctors of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps.[13]

However, these pleas fell on deaf ears and ARP First Aid Head, lawyer Brough Newell resigned his position on Friday 22nd January 1942, just four weeks before the first Japanese bombing raids, because of:

> *"the absolute apathy of the men of Darwin. A handful have been working hard to train themselves as first aid men and stretcher bearers but the numbers are absolutely inadequate to deal with the civilian casualties which are likely to occur in the smallest of attacks."* [14]

After the Japanese entered the war by bombing Pearl Harbour in December 1941 most of the women and children were evacuated and the Territory became a military garrison, even more so after Darwin was bombed in the first of many air raids on 19th February 1942.

In July 1944, Mr Richard T. Holland wrote from an Adelaide River Works camp to the Minister for the Interior about starting up an ambulance service in the Territory *"when peace again reigns on the earth".* He was *"a fully trained Ambulance Officer with over 16 years experience"* and before the war had been Acting Superintendent in the Blackheath NSW Division of St John Ambulance Brigade (Overseas). He wished to discuss this with the Minister when he went south on leave at the end of the year.[15]

A copy of Mr Holland's letter was forwarded to the Administrator, Mr. C.L.A. Abbott, who looked favourably on the proposal, but *"it would be impossible to make any definite plans at present".* [16]

The war still had more than a year to run and after that it took time to demilitarise the Territory. There is no further record of Mr Holland and it is obvious his proposal did not go ahead. Darwin's ambulances were based at the hospital and operated by the Department of Health, crewed by hospital orderlies and nurses.

# Chapter 2
# BRIGADE AND ASSOCIATION

### 1946

In 1946 the war had been won and Darwin was opened to civilians once more. Sailors, soldiers, airmen and service women were demobilised and returned to a peacetime life.

A move to have a St John Ambulance presence in the post war Northern Territory was initiated in May 1946 by a letter sent to the Northern Territory Administration from Group Captain Hugh R.G. Poate, head of *The Commandery of the Australian Commonwealth*. The letter mentioned a visit to Headquarters of the Australian Commandery by Lady Mountbatten and asked *"the question of forming a St. John Ambulance Association and later a St. John Ambulance Brigade at Darwin."* [1]

This letter was forwarded to the Chief Medical Officer whose tardy reply was that *"a large proportion of the citizens of Darwin would be interested in learning the salient features of first aid"* but that they were below establishment with doctors and it was doubtful one could be spared to give lectures.[2]

The reply to Poate added that conditions were difficult in Darwin[3] and that the proposal to form an Association should be postponed for about six months and they should write again early in the new year.[4]

In November 1946, a proposal was received from Mr J.J. Phillips of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade to set up an ambulance service in the Territory.[5] The Chief Medical Officer responded that the setting up of an ambulance service would be most desirable but that Mr H. Nudl had *"some such project in view."* [6]

This Mr Nudl was quite an entrepreneur. He asked *"that the N.T. Administration should purchase and supply the Ambulance vehicle, the linen and necessary hygiene equipment."* He would supply a driver, clean, maintain and garage the vehicle and wanted payment for mileage. He was obviously unqualified in that *"he and the driver would require training in a St. Johns Ambulance course of first aid."* The proposal also said that *"he would not be prepared to carry natives in his ambulance."* [7]

Nudl wanted St John training, but without the St John ethos of *Pro Utilitate Hominum*—in the Service of Mankind, that meant caring for all people, regardless of creed or colour.

Shortly after, a letter was sent to Mr Phillips declining his proposal.[8] While not in the records, it appears that Mr Nudl's enterprising proposal was also rejected. At the time there were two ambulances at the hospital operated by the Department of Health with one soon to be transferred to Alice Springs, so there was seemingly no great urgency to expand the ambulance service.

A letter from the Secretary, The Priory of the Australian Commonwealth at the end of December 1946 was replied by the Government Secretary that *"conditions are much the same in Darwin as explained"*. There were still problems in obtaining Medical Officers, the *"accommodation problems are practically insoluble at present"* and the proposal should be postponed until later in the year.[9]

### 1951

St John seem to have given up on Darwin for at least the next five years. Under Association rules a doctor was required to conduct first aid lectures and examinations and in immediate post war Darwin the shortage of doctors was a major obstacle.

Nothing more is heard of St John in Darwin until November 1951 when the *Northern Standard* reported that *"Girl Guides are taking a series of lectures on first aid under the tuition of Mr C. Bannerman ... A former St John's Ambulance man."* [10]

### 1952

On 29th January Charles Bannerman wrote to The St John Ambulance Association, Sydney, the letter being passed on to the Priory as the governing body for Australia.[11] We don't have a

copy of Bannerman's letter, but the reply tells of the difficulty in establishing a St John Ambulance Association Centre in any part of Australia away from the State where it must be approved. The reply complains of their frustrations with Darwin: [12]

> *During the past few years, several attempts were made to establish the St. John movement in Darwin, but without success. In the first case, Lady Mountbatten during her visit there gave names to the Sub-Prior and we wrote to various medical authorities but without any result. Later the Secretary-General, London, requested us to use the services of a Northern Territory official who had been appointed in Darwin direct from London, and was established in one of the Government offices. When the writer was in Darwin some years ago, the same enquiries were made without any results.*

The letter went on to suggest that Bannerman:

> *"approach the Administrator with a view to obtaining a Patron or President, either a leading official or a medical officer, and the names of not less than five or six persons, who would be responsible as a Centre, also the names of qualified persons such as medical officers, to carry out lectures and examinations, and others like yourself to carry out the instruction."*

Bannerman wasted little time and on the 18th March the Administrator wrote: [13]

> *"Following our discussion, I desire to advise you that I will find extreme pleasure in being associated with the founding of a St. John Ambulance Association Centre in Darwin."*

Administrator Wise was newly arrived in the Territory and had been Premier of Western Australia for two years after the war. Darwin would have settled down from many post war problems by now and the two year rotation of public officials should have seen some new faces leading previously disinterested departments.

On the 2nd May the *Northern Standard* reported that an inaugural meeting to form *"a branch of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade ... by members of the Department of Civil Aviation"* was held on Monday 28th April 1952.

Officers elected at the meeting were: [14]

- ◊ President, Norman Bradbury
- ◊ Secretary, R. Chamberlain
- ◊ Treasurer, J. B. Kelly

Over 60 members of DCA were interested and instruction in first aid started the next Friday night with theory lectures given by Surgeon Lieutenant J. O'Donoghue, a Royal Navy surgeon on loan to the Royal Australian Navy. Bradbury, a fully qualified St John officer, was in charge of practical classes on Monday nights for men and Wednesday nights for women.

It was intended that all who qualified would be available for sporting and other functions and to man a first aid post at the forthcoming Darwin Show. The hope was to eventually form a full St John Ambulance Brigade in Darwin.[15]

There is no mention of Bannerman in this or any other report about the Brigade, but his interest was the Association which was concerned with training and administration, whereas the Brigade primarily carried out first aid duties. Bannerman was elected a vice-president of the Association when it was formed the following year. Later correspondence with DCA and the Administrator suggest that they were independent and not in communication with Bannerman.

There were 18 successful candidates in examinations held by Dr I.W. Alderman and in July 1952 the newly founded *Northern Territory News* reported that:

> *"17 members of the DCA staff were presented with St John Ambulance certificates at an inaugural dinner at the Hotel Darwin on Saturday [26 July 1952] ... It is believed to be the first time St John's Ambulance lectures have been given in the Northern Territory."* [16]

Successful candidates would continue monthly lectures for the rest of the year and would do their second course in 1953 .

On the 7th of August DCA Regional Director R.B. Crampton wrote to the Administrator describing the training and activities of St John within DCA:

> *... numerous requests have been made for the service of first aid personnel. At the present Darwin Show the Department of Civil Aviation First Aiders manned a First Aid Post. During the two days of the Show Department of Civil Aviation Staff were in attendance from 10 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. and treated fifty-seven patients, three of these were conveyed to Hospital ...*[17]

The letter went on to say that the team wished to form a St John Ambulance Brigade and that it was necessary to obtain Vice Regal Patronage, which they requested from the Administrator.

It would appear from the Administrator's reply that these activities within DCA and the request for Vice Regal patronage had been made independently of Bannerman. He enclosed a copy of the Priory's letter to Bannerman and advised that the position of Administrator did not exactly fall within Vice Regal status.[18]

Two weeks later Reg Gross, Regional Director for DCA informed the Administrator that the matter had been discussed with the St John Ambulance executive who felt *"that your appointment is within the spirit and the intentions leading to the title of 'Patron'."* [19] The Administrator replied that he *"shall be pleased to accept the kind invitation extended to me to become Patron of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade."* [20]

Things started moving and on 25th October the *Northern Territory News* reported: [21]

> *The St John's Ambulance unit formed at DCA has been advised that the South Australian Division has authorised the formation of a St John's Ambulance Brigade for Darwin.*
>
> *All persons holding St John's certificates may become members of the brigade and the scope of ambulance work here will be considerably widened.*

On the 6th November the paper reported that Bradbury, who was head of the DCA Fire Service, and Surgeon Lieutenant O'Donoghue were leaving that weekend to conduct courses at Daly Waters, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. The classes were primarily for DCA personnel, but open to others interested by contacting their local DCA officer-in-charge.[22]

**1953**

This was followed by a series of notices and news items referring to the St John Ambulance Association, although as we shall see the Association had yet to be officially formed. The Navy was very supportive of St John, additional to Surgeon Lieutenant O'Donoghue. Mr Dick Lucas, in charge of the Navy Sick Bay, was addressing a series of Tuesday night meetings of the *"St. John's Ambulance Association in the NAWU Hall. Started early last year, the Association now boasts about forty members."* [23]

On the 14th May 1953 it was reported that Bradbury had just returned from a visit to St John centres in all southern capitals. Bradbury said that he had been given the whole hearted support of Sydney Headquarters (Priory) for the formation of a St John Centre in the Territory and that steps would be taken immediately to bring this into being.

> *"This means that the movement in the Territory would become autonomous, controlled by its own council. At present St John Ambulance activities in the Territory are controlled from Adelaide."* [24]

Bradbury must have misunderstood Priory's intentions because the Territory was to remain under Adelaide's control until finally being granted autonomy as a District in late 1976 and full autonomy for the Council with a new Constitution in 1977.

On Tuesday 26th May 1953 the inaugural meeting of St John Ambulance Association was held in the Cavenagh Street Recreation Hall with 34 people attending. The minutes record an apology by the Administrator due to a previous engagement, but great pleasure to accept *"patronship"* of the Association.

The Secretary, Mr Max Clements *"introduced the District Superintendent of the St John*

*Ambulance Brigade, Mr Bradbury, who read his authority to form a sub-branch of the St. John Ambulance Association in the Northern Territory."* [25]

Mr Bradbury then *"explained after very careful consideration he had selected the following as the first council ..."*

| | |
|---|---|
| Patron: | His Honour, the Administrator, Mr. F.J.S. Wise |
| President: | Dr. Watsford, Deputy Director of Health for the Northern Territory |
| Vice Presidents: | Commander Green, Navy |
| | Colonel Wheeler, Army |
| | Wing Commander Cooper, RAAF |
| | Mr. S. Drysdale |
| | Mr. Charles Bannerman |
| Divisional Surgeon: | |
| | Dr. Quinn, Superintendent of Darwin Hospital |
| Hospital: | Mr. Jack Cobb, Secretary of Hospital |
| | One doctor yet to be named [26] |
| Police: | Constable Ninnett |
| Banks: | Mr. Jeffries, Manager of the Bank of NSW |
| Crown Law: | Mr. J.W. Nicholls |
| Works: | Mr. F.G. Vidgen, Director of Works |
| Press: | Mr. Jeffers of the Northern Territory News |
| Fire Brigade: | Mr. Chaffey, Chief Fire Officer |
| DCA: | Lieut. Col. Dyce (retd.) |
| Clergy: | Father Flynn |
| Business Houses: | Mrs. Sweetman |
| Rum Jungle: | Mr. Christie, Secretary of Territory Enterprises Prop. |
| Railways: | Mr. Hockley |
| DCRA: | Mr. Marr (Pro Tem) |

Also three members of St John Brigade

Charles Bannerman had been associated with the St. John Ambulance Brigade since 1926 and was most gratified to see that the Association had got away to such a good start and he considered it an honour to be one of its Vice Presidents.

Norman Bradbury then read a list of classes to be held in the near future and a proposal to hold a Home Nursing and Child Welfare course later in the year. Dr Watsford then read a copy of the Western Australian Constitution of the St John Ambulance Association and it was moved that the council draw up a draft constitution based on that.

A vote of thanks was given to Mr Bradbury *"for the good work he has put into the Brigade during the past twelve months."*

Six weeks later the draft constitution was ready for presentation to a public meeting on Monday 13th July. It provided for a council of 25, with eight members to be nominated and the other 13 elected.

Organisations which would be represented by nominees were North Australian Railways, Northern Territory Police Force, Darwin Fire Brigade, Department of Civil Aviation, one each, and Northern Territory St John Ambulance Brigade and the Department of Health, two each.[27]

With the formation of the Brigade and now the Association, St John Ambulance was finally established in the Northern Territory, although as we shall see it was on very shaky ground.



Jean and Norman Bradbury

# PART 2
# St. JOHN AMBULANCE IN DARWIN AND SUBURBS

## Background Information

At first the St John Ambulance movement centred around public service employees, the Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) in particular, and was helped considerably by the Royal Australian Navy with instructors and a venue for meetings and training. Superintendent Norman Bradbury was officer in charge of the DCA Fire Service with a very supportive employer.

After the Brigade was started in Darwin, Bradbury and Surgeon Lieutenant O'Donoghue travelled inland to spread the message and conduct first aid training. In November 1952 they left to hold courses at Katherine, Daly Waters, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, chiefly for DCA personnel, but open to all comers. [1]

Of the 33 people who sat the exams there were only five failures. *"To ensure that the theory and practice of first aid that they obtained during their courses is not forgotten, successful candidates have formed a St. Johns first aid unit in each town."* The units would also *"undertake first aid work at sporting and other functions and will be ready to attend any emergency cases."* [2]

Under Association regulations a doctor was required to give lectures and examinations, which was later relaxed to allow 'Lay Instructors' to conduct courses with a doctor to give the examination, and still later changed to allow qualified and approved Lay Instructors to give examinations as well.[3]

As described in Part 1, Bradbury wanted freedom without southern control for the Territory from the very beginning, but it was to be a long 23 years before independence from South Australia as a Brigade District was achieved in September 1976, with full autonomy for the Northern Territory St John Ambulance Council being granted on 16th July 1977. [4]

It would seem that the original Association and its council were formed primarily as a governing body to manage an independent Territory, more than to carry out first aid training and issue First Aid certificates, but with Priory requiring the Territory to be a sub-centre under the control of South Australia the Association was short lived and not revived until 1977.

The St John Ambulance Brigade was segregated with men forming Ambulance Divisions and women in Nursing Divisions. Even the Cadets were segregated along the same lines. Twelve members were required to register a Division and due to the often low numbers of volunteers Combined Divisions with men and women were formed in the Territory and elsewhere in Australia.

The Territory was for many years cursed with a floating population that adversely affected St John Ambulance Brigade membership, as well as most employers. Public servants mostly did their obligatory two years before eagerly heading back to the comforts of southern 'civilisation' once more. Private sector workers often didn't even last that long. No sooner would the Brigade build up a strong membership of trained first aiders and ambulance crews than it all seemed to collapse and another recruiting drive and training program began.

This still affects the paid Ambulance Service and at the 2012 Investiture and Graduation Ceremony at Government House, CEO Ross Coburn made a heartfelt plea for the graduating paramedics to please stay in the Territory.

The population stabilised to a fair degree after the Territory gained self government on 1st July 1978 when many government departments transferred to the new Northern Territory Public Service. Private enterprise was still afflicted with a floating workforce though, but this has also settled in recent years.

While there is plenty of work in Darwin, extremely high rents in the 21st Century and very long waiting lists for public housing drives many newcomers away.

# Chapter 1
# 1952—1974

In this chapter we describe how St John Ambulance developed in Darwin and went on to start new first aid posts, units, sub-centres, sections, sub-divisions and Divisions in the suburbs and eventually a full volunteer ambulance service. Events of 1952 and 1953 to establish the Brigade and Association covered in Part 1 are not repeated here.

### 1952

Some early members of the Brigade:

- ◊ Norman Bradbury, Divisional Superintendent; officer in charge DCA Fire Service. Promoted to Corps Superintendent in 1954.
- ◊ Jean Bradbury, advisory nursing sister and in charge of the Nursing section.
- ◊ Dr John J. Quinn, Divisional Surgeon; Resident Medical Officer.
- ◊ George Brooks, Sergeant; employed by the Department of Works and later owned a motel at Parap. Promoted to Superintendent in 1954.
- ◊ Joe Ruddick; member of the Darwin Fire Brigade and active union man.

One of the first duties of the newly formed DCA St John unit was to set up a first aid post at the Darwin Show in 1952. [1]

### 1953

An Ambulance Division was registered with hopes for a Nursing Division as well. The date of registration is unknown, but certainly before May 1953 when Bradbury is named in newspapers as "*District Superintendent of the St John Ambulance Brigade*". Previous historians tried to obtain the date from St John in South Australia and from National Headquarters, but without success. Darwin Adult Division's Jubilee Certificate has a registration date of December 1953, but this is seen to be more of a convenience than a reality.

Foundation members included Norman Bradbury (Superintendent), George Brooks, George Carlton, Robert Clayton McKenzie* (Divisional Officer), Ernest Pickersgill, William Barnes (Transport Officer), Joseph Ruddick, John Joseph Quinn (Divisional Surgeon).

At first the newly formed Brigade and Association relied on the generosity of various individuals and organisations for premises in which to hold their meetings and training. *The Northern Standard*, a newspaper owned by the North Australian Workers Union (NAWU) was one early benefactor. In June 1953 they received a letter of thanks from the St John Ambulance Association for providing a room adjacent the *Standard* office for training and meetings.[2] This generosity was no doubt helped by Joe Ruddick's active union membership.

The expanded Division was now moving to the much larger Belsen Hall. Belsen Camp[3] must have been a pretty rough place to have been named for one of Nazi Germany's most notorious death camps and its Hall seems to have proven unsatisfactory because the Brigade didn't stay there very long. At a meeting in October *"a vote of thanks to the Naval Officer in Charge, Commander Green for his kindness in making premises available for meetings and instruction classes"* was recorded. The meeting expressed its frustration at having to rely on this generosity and would consider approaching the NT Administration for assistance in finding premises of their own.[4]

A first aid post at the Darwin Show treated 96 patients and *"36 used the Ladies Rest Room."* Convalescents from the Hospital were transported to the Show, escorted around the grounds and

* Most newspaper reports in Darwin and Alice Springs name him as McKenzie Clayton, or as Mr Clayton.

returned to the Hospital by members of the Brigade, completely free of charge.[5]

The Basketball Association held a series of Testimonial games with one on Tuesday 18th August to benefit the Brigade. *"During intervals, St. Johns teams will compete for the Justice Kriewaldt Trophy."* [6] Justice Kriewaldt was a renowned supporter of baseball and also known to donate trophies for other sports as well. Perhaps this was for First Aid competitions? Unfortunately, the following week's paper makes no mention of the result and we may never learn who won the Trophy or what it was for.

The Brigade held a Flag Day in November to raise funds. They also did charitable work at the Darwin Hospital, visiting every Sunday morning distributing books and magazines. Patients allowed to leave the hospital were taken to their homes for dinner and returned to the hospital that evening.[7]

**1954**

Weekly fund raising functions and dances were started at the home of George Brooks in February, but although extremely popular only lasted for a month:

> *The St. John Ambulance Brigade weekly dance which was held at Nightcliff last Sunday night was even more successful than anticipated and it is with very much regret that the committee announce that they have been obliged to discontinue this popular weekly feature, therefore, no dance will be held next Sunday.* [8]

Perhaps the neighbours complained about the noise? People have to go to work on Monday morning and Sunday night may not have been a good time to hold a noisy dance in a residential area, even though it was still pretty much a bush suburb in those days.

All this time the Division had been looking for its own headquarters and Commander Green came to the rescue once again by providing use of an old Navy building with heavily barred windows located on Section 305 Cavenagh Street, between Bennett Street and the Esplanade. Harry Chan Avenue did not exist then and Cavenagh Street continued through to the Esplanade. Superimposing an old map over a Google Earth image has the building located right in the middle of where the Darwin City Council's Civic Centre now stands.

This pre-war building had been damaged during Japanese bombing raids and was compulsorily acquired by the Commonwealth from the estate of Lee Lim on 17th January 1946 at a cost of £2,959.

A problem occurred with the Brigade's occupation when it was learned that the building had been transferred from the Navy to the NT Administration and was scheduled for demolition to make way for a recreation area.

Effective from 22nd April 1954 a rent-free tenancy agreement with the NT Administration was signed for the old building to be shared with the Second Darwin Boy Scout Troop, each occupying separate halves. The lease was made on a fortnightly basis because of the planned demolition, but this wasn't expected to happen within the next few years and the Brigade would be given plenty of notice to vacate.

A letter from Australian Archives describes the building as *"containing two shops of mud brick construction with two skillion areas off the side walls and open verandahs attached to front and rear walls. The skillion areas are each partitioned into three rooms with mud brick walls and the whole building with the exception of the front verandah has a concrete floor. There are no washing or toilet facilities on site."* [9]

The building was further described as having red clay brick walls and a corrugated iron roof with wooden purlins.

George Brooks, who had been instrumental in obtaining the building, *"whitewashed the 'cell', bought furniture and a typewriter and set up office."* The Darwin City Council refused to supply power to the new St John headquarters, so hurricane lamps were used for lighting until the Navy came to the rescue with a power line. The Division then bought a lighting plant from army disposals to overcome future power problems.[10]

On Thursday 13th May, South Australian Commissioner Dr F. Mugford conducted *"the first inspection of the Association ever held in Darwin at Belsen Recreation Hall"* which indicates a return to that location, perhaps for just that one parade. On Saturday afternoon the 15th of May at 3.00pm Dr Mugford officially opened the "new" Ambulance Centre in Cavenagh Street.[11] This became known as St John Hall and had to be better than the previous situation of continually moving from site to site.

Dr Mugford next visited Mataranka and Tennant Creek, and then conducted an inspection in Alice Springs where he announced the formation of a full Division for the town and that Norman Bradbury was to be promoted to Corps Superintendent in charge of the whole Northern Territory.[12] George Brooks then took charge of the Darwin Division as Superintendent, effective from 1st July and Herbert Hockley became Divisional Officer.[13]

> *The St. John Ambulance Brigade was making "great strides forward" in the NT the Commissioner for SA District (Dr. F. K. Mugford) said yesterday. Dr. Mugford returned to Adelaide on Sunday morning after a fortnight's inspection tour of the NT. He said he had visited ambulance units at Darwin, Katherine, Daly Waters and Alice Springs.* [14]

This suggests that regional St John units set up by Bradbury in late 1952 were still operating.

During 1954 the Brigade put in more than 3000 hours and treated nearly 900 cases. At the end of 1954 there were 51 members in Darwin: [15]

| | |
|---|---|
| Ambulance Division | 3 officers, 1 NCO, 33 privates |
| Nursing Section | 1 officer, 6 sisters |
| Ambulance Cadets | 1 officer, 4 cadets |
| Nursing Cadets | 1 officer, 1 NCO, 28 cadets |

Attendances by members at various duties during the year totalled 724: casualty room 250, racing 3, shows 16, motor-cycle races 45, sundry sports 269, attendances off duty 21, occupational therapy and hospital visiting, 94.

2000 hours were put in at casualty rooms, with 12 hours at race meetings, 64 at agricultural shows, 135 at motor-cycle races and 807 at sundry sports. It is probable that these casualty rooms were at members' places of employment where they were first aiders. [16]

The Darwin Cadet Division was formed on October 2nd, the registration signed by Dr Mugford on 6th January 1955 and the registration sanctioned by the Chief Commissioner on 1st February.

Founding members were Herbert Hockley (Superintendent), Charles Moody (Divisional Surgeon), Shirley Richens (Sergeant), Grant Tambling (Corporal), Cadets Pat Anderson, Elna Angeles, Jill Bland, Valerie Summerton, Pat Wayne, Veronica Williams, Evelyn Mayo, Anne Williams, Cathie Nickels, Jeanette James.

Grant Tambling went on to become a leading MLA, then Federal Member for the Northern Territory, later Senator and after that Administrator of Norfolk Island.

**1955**

While accommodated in a sub-standard leased building themselves, the Darwin Brigade proposed a very ambitious project, which was to build and operate an Old Men's Home at Rapid Creek.

The Brigade would have an officer on duty all the time – a member of the nursing section during the daytime, and a male member of the Division sleeping on the premises every night. One substantial meal a day would be provided by the Brigade, a chef being engaged for the purpose, and the residents given the use of a kitchen to prepare their other meals. If they were unable to do so without help, they would be assisted. Transport to and from Darwin would be provided one day a week and there would be a canteen on the grounds to buy other personal needs. They could also have their own gardens, if they wished.[17]

However, while people agreed it was a good idea it failed to gain support and although revived the following year shortly before Bradbury's departure, nothing more is heard of the proposal after that.

*Continued Page 14*



**The Darwin Cadet Division in front of the Cavenagh Street headquarters, circa 1959**

*From left:* Graham Hickey, Michelle Hanson, Maureen James, Mary Hickey, Robyn Chan, Marie Franklin, Mr Jack O'Hare, Kay Withnall, Dot Hickey, Christine Rawlings, nk, Sue Williams, Mr Bob Lawrie – the remainder not known

Mary Hickey later became one of the first nursing cadets to join the adult division in 1961. Jack O'Hare succeeded Hockley as Cadet Superintendent, but that date is unknown. A report in the *Northern Territory News* of Wednesday 2nd September 1964 says that he came to Darwin in 1959, which if correct would date this photo around 1959 or 1960.

Photo No PH0336/0073 from the Joseph M. Ruddick Collection held by the Northern Territory Library, with the following caption:

*Taken at the speedway. At the rear of the 4 wheel drive Chev ambulance (bought for 30 pound after WW2 in a collection of army vehicles)*
*L-R: George Payne (a wharfie, married a Flynn); ? Chin (one of the W G or R Chins - a St Johns cadet); Summer Hayes (a St Johns cadet); J M Ruddick. The ambulance was usually kept at Joe Ruddick's place. Date uncertain, probably 1956.*



This would have to be the same 'ambulance' bought from DCA, reportedly at auction for £200. (Bramley, *Outback Ambulance* 1983). Looking at the photo you see a truck with a high tray and a canvas canopy open to the dust of the dry season and heavy monsoonal rain of the wet. A vehicle with hard suspension totally unsuited for use as an ambulance and little wonder the Brigade didn't keep it for long. Rod Bramley wrote about the old blitz in *Outback Ambulance* and that *"this magnificent vehicle was then superceded by a Ford Customline, purchased second-hand and subsequently pranged"*.

Sometime during the year Norman Bradbury was awarded a Priory Vote of Thanks for his work in establishing the Brigade in the Territory.[18]

In September the Division made its first move towards establishing an ambulance service in Darwin when they purchased a second hand ambulance from the Department of Civil Aviation. The vehicle was a 1942 Chevrolet, ex army and commonly known as a *blitz wagon*. It was done up, painted in St John colours and used for public duties. Corps Superintendent Bradbury said that *"a special squad of brigade members was undergoing a special course of training in transport work"* that would qualify them to crew the ambulance. [19] Statistics for the year have 29 people transported by ambulance, possibly from public duties to the Hospital.

The truck is believed to have been garaged at Joe Ruddick's home in Parap and disposed of the following year. These old blitz wagons were quite common in Darwin after the war.

Bramley and Dahlenburg[20] give the following statistics:

"Records [believed to be held by George Brooks] show the division had two Superintendents, one Divisional Officer, one sergeant, five corporals, one private and two nurses. The superintendent was Mr Brooks and Mr Barnes was transport officer. Other names on the BF11 are V. Ellons, George Carlton, J. Christie, A.S. Farmer, K. McMahon, C. Payne, E.W. Pickersgill and Herbert Hockley."

The Brigade seems to have had a crash in numbers since the previous year and everyone was now in charge of the lone private and brace of nurses. The second superintendent would have been Herbert Hockley, in charge of the Cadet Division. For many years, Cadet Officers were members of Adult Divisions and seconded to the Cadets.

Activities were particularly strong during 1955 with 164 people treated at public functions, 29 transported by ambulance, 180 treated at the clinic in Rum Jungle, and a further 620 people treated on general public duties and 512 cases treated by paid First Aiders. Cases treated off public duty totalled 143 and an additional 30 casualties received attention.[21]

**1956**

The Old Men's Home was brought up again in January and *"the idea was hailed everywhere because there has long been a crying need for a home in the North."* [22] It received no more support than before and was heard nevermore.

Norman Bradbury's last official act in the Territory was to close down the defunct Alice Springs Division in late March before travelling on to Adelaide for a St John conference, and then to Perth on transfer with his job.[23] With no divisions outside Darwin, Adelaide apparently saw no further need for a Northern Territory Corps Superintendent and he was not replaced.



The Commissioner-in-Chief, Sir Otto Lund (left) visited Australia in 1956 and met Corps Superintendent Norman Bradbury (right). SA District Surgeon Dr John Pedler (centre).

Attending the Conference in Adelaide in March 1956 was Bradbury's last official duty for the Northern Territory Corps before transferring to Perth with his job.

Divisional membership was listed as:
George Brooks, Superintendent; Herbert Hockley, Cadet Superintendent; Victor Ellans, Acting Sergeant; Raymond Johnson, Acting Corporal; James Christy *(sic)*, Arthur Stanley Farmer, Kenneth McMahon, Charles Payne, Ernest Pickersgill and Stephen Quong. Ten of the 21 members resigned during the year.[24]

The Darwin Branch of the Australian Labor Party wrote a letter to the NT Director of Health complaining about the poor standard of the Department of Health's ambulance service. On one occasion when an accident victim had to wait twenty minutes or more for an ambulance. *"... one vehicle was immobilised with a flat battery and when another vehicle was eventually used it hit a pole while reversing from the garage."*

A callout to a house explosion in Parap resulted in the Fire Brigade arriving first, followed by the Police and trailed by the ambulance, even though all three were notified at the same time. The letter didn't say what the time difference was between arrivals or the distance each had to travel, so this could be unfair criticism.

> *I fully realise that Ambulance Brigades throughout Australia have set a very high standard of efficiency. I can also appreciate any staffing problems you may have. However, the failure of your Brigade to meet the expected standard is something that greatly concerns all sections of the community.* [25]

The Department's reply gave the excuse that the orderlies who drove the ambulances were employed as orderlies and could be anywhere in the hospital carrying out their duties with delays in finding them. There were no pagers or mobile phones in those days.

The only alternative seen was to employ full time ambulance drivers. This would necessitate three men to work eight hour shifts with a relief for days off, *"which would mean 4 or 5 extra staff doing nothing"*.

The next suggestion was to approach the Fire Brigade for firemen with First Aid Certificates *"to undertake emergency calls between the hours of 11pm and 8am when the delays appear to occur"*.

Hand written notes at the bottom of the letter say that a buzzer system would be installed throughout the hospital to summon orderlies for calls, but to be used as little as possible to avoid disturbing the patients.[26]

**1957**

A letter from the Department of Health sent to all Territory Hospitals, and also to the Australian Labor Party started with the paragraph: [27]

> *At the recent Legislative Council sittings the question was asked – "In view of the recently introduced charges for ambulance services how sick does a person have to be before an ambulance will be made available?"*

Now, other local St John historians have claimed that the Northern Territory ambulance service was always free until St John took over and started charging fees. This letter indicates that the NT Administration brought in ambulance fees in 1957, long before St John had any sort of regular ambulance service. In 1974 the Department of Health charged $1.30 pick up fee, so it was obviously just a nominal amount.

The letter goes on to say that while the ambulances were always available to indigent persons, those who had their own transport or could afford a taxi and were not too sick for that form of transport should use that and leave the ambulances free for emergencies.

It would seem that the fee for service was brought in to deter people from using ambulances as a free taxi service, a problem that still exists today among certain groups entitled to free ambulance transport.

Superintendent George Brooks advised a crisis of membership in May, with the danger that the Brigade would close without more support. Eighty people had received first aid certificates in the three years he had been in charge and there were 24 successful candidates in the latest class.

He also launched a Building Appeal to raise £5000 for a new headquarters, with £1500 for a new ambulance.[28]

The Brigade applied for Government financial assistance through the cultural grants fund, but was unsuccessful. A letter was received from the Assistant Administrator in June which said he *"should be able to give you some indication of the Administration's line of approach to your application within two weeks ... "*, but there was no further response that year or the next.[29]

In July the Brigade announced what was to become its most spectacular fund raising event of all time. This was to be an annual Danada parade on the public holiday of Monday, 5th August:

> *In the morning, there will be a monster procession of decorated floats and marchers, with the emphasis on floats and contingents dressed in their national costumes. The procession will end at the reserve on the Esplanade where floats will be judged. A shield will be awarded to the best decorated float.*
>
> *The international flavor will continue in the evening when a festival will be held at the Town Hall. Groups have been invited to attend, again in national costume, and to contribute items in the form of national songs and dances. The festival highlight will be the International Grand March and dance.* [30]

Danada stood for "Darwin National Day" and was also held at other times in following years, notably the Queen's Birthday public holiday in June.

Incomplete records deny us information about how the 1957 Danada Parade went, but it must have been a success, growing in size each year it was held.

**1958**

There were still more problems with the Hospital's ambulance service as shown in a disturbing letter written to the Director of Health on 19th May.

Three days earlier an aerial ambulance was returning to Darwin with two seriously ill babies and their carers on board. At midday they requested by radio that an ambulance meet them at the airport at 12.45pm. The Air Traffic log showed this as having been phoned to the hospital at 12.07pm.

On arrival in Darwin there was no waiting ambulance and a call to the hospital got the reply that "the ambulance is on its way now."

When the ambulance finally arrived at 1.05pm the orderly in the passenger seat apologised for being late. When asked to explain he replied, "I've said I'm sorry and I don't have to give you an explanation".

The driver said that he had been held up in Ward 2. Sister Nichol was offended by the first orderly's insolence and didn't accept the other's excuse.

Investigation by the Department of Health revealed that the message had been passed on to the first orderly as soon as it was received. He was at lunch at the time, but returned to the ward in sufficient time to arrive at the airport at 12.45pm. Then he forgot all about it until roused by the second call after the aircraft had arrived.[31]

Once again the Brigade applied for a Government grant, but this year didn't even get the courtesy of a reply and *"could not understand the Government's attitude to St John in this matter ... the Darwin brigade looked after the first aid needs of all sporting activities in Darwin"* and:

- Needed a first-aid centre to give full cover to all sporting activities and areas around Darwin.
- Had raised money for a building fund itself but needed a total of £3000 to £4000.
- Needed £1200 for the purchase of an ambulance.
- Had 10 trained field workers, but needed 20. Cost of retaining 20 in the field would be about £1000 per year.
- The Brigade trained all police in first-aid. The Brigade's Superintendent, Mr George Brooks was the only man in Darwin with the necessary qualifications for this work.[32]

Brigade treasurer, Mr Bob Lawrie said:

*"it was absolutely necessary that brigade here obtain or build a hall. The present facilities were most unsuitable. There was no power and the building had long since been condemned*

*(and that) they agreed with the former Health Director, Doctor Humphrey, that the brigade should conduct the full ambulance service throughout the Northern Territory."* [33]

So, even as early as 1958 there were calls for St John to take over the ambulance service from a very inefficient hospital based system.

After the old Cavenagh Street building was finally vacated by the Darwin Division and the Scouts it was described as being *"in a very dilapidated condition due to normal wear and tear (the red clay bricks disintegrating, the corrugated iron very rusted and corroded) ... the entire brick foundations ... are disintegrating."* [34] At the time of demolition in 1965 it was valued at just £50.

Later in the year the Brigade boasted £1800 in the building fund and Superintendent George Brooks was quoted as optimistically saying that as soon as the Administration gave permission and a site they would start building immediately.[35] The new centre would accommodate two ambulances and have casualty and lecture rooms. When built, *"the brigade would be 'on tap' 24 hours a day"* and there would be public first aid courses.

A second batch of police recruits had just completed training, and since inception the Brigade had treated more than 4000 cases. [36]

**1959**

By August 1959 there hadn't been much financial progress with just £2000 in the kitty, but optimism was as high as ever. *"The brigade is ready to go ahead immediately and build a station which will be used for instruction and training"*, and *"a subcommittee has been appointed to approach local builders for plans, specifications and cost details"*. [37]

That same month South Australian Secretary Phillip Ferrier visited Darwin and while there met senior Northern Territory Administration officials and commenced negotiations for the leasing of suitable land on which to erect a new St John headquarters.[38] The South Australian St John Council was granted a 99 year lease, from September 1959, on a block of land on Ross Smith Avenue, Fannie Bay (modern day Parap).[39]

However, this arrangement caused problems with the Brigade obtaining a government building subsidy. The land was in the name of St John in Adelaide, whereas under regulations no grant could be made to a body with holdings in other states.[40] The Darwin branch wrote to Adelaide headquarters asking for title to the land so they could qualify for an £1800 subsidy, and title was transferred in November 1960 to the NT Group of Alan James (President of the Auxiliary), Alfred Miller (Brigade Secretary), George Brooks (Darwin Divisional Superintendent), John O'Hare (Darwin Cadets Superintendent) and William Cooper.[41] The lease was eventually converted to freehold title during the 1994-95 financial year.[42]

The Annual Report was *"very happy to see divisional strength increased to twelve, and a Cadet Division of over twenty"*. [43]

**1960**

In February 1960, while the Brigade still had only £2000 in its building fund it optimistically reported that work would begin soon on a new £8000 station that would accommodate two ambulances and *"include a casualty room, recreation room, three offices and living quarters on the ground floor and big lecture rooms on the top floor"*. There would be someone on duty all the time because *"at the moment people come to our homes for treatment."* [44]

This year's fund raising festival included a Danada Queen competition. The Queen would reign for 12 months and be the contestant who raised the most money for the Brigade. This would become an annual event with the Queens as honoured guests at all St John Ambulance Brigade functions. [45]

The Danada Day procession was on the public holiday, Monday 1st August, and included more than 30 floats from business houses, Government departments, sporting groups and the Police and Citizens Youth Club. Danada Queen, Miss Peta Green, and the visiting Albany Queen were carried on the St John float. The route was along Cavenagh, Knuckey, Smith, Bennett, and Mitchell Streets, then along the Esplanade to Darwin Oval where trophies were awarded for the best floats. Prizes were also awarded for the best group of marchers from a sporting organisation and a special prize for the

best marching girls' team. [46]

By the end of July the building fund had grown to £3000, much of it raised in the previous month.[47] There is no record of how much money the Brigade gained from the Danada festival.

In October it was announced that work should start before Christmas on the new £16,500 station. Funds were available for a start on the £12,000 first stage and before the end of the year a grant and appeals should provide the balance.[48]

At the Brigade's Annual General Meeting in October it was voted to form an Auxiliary with a council of the following officers: [49]

| | |
|---|---|
| Patron | The Administrator, Mr J.C. Archer |
| Vice patrons | The Mayor Mr N. Cooper; Master of Supreme Court Mr H. Leader |
| Medical advisor | Dr D. Mouncey |
| Surgeon | Mr D. Cooper |
| Nursing advisor | Matron Downey |
| President | Mr Alan James |
| Vice-presidents | Messrs. Van Eck and Metcalf |
| Secretary | Mr R. (Van) Millbank |
| Treasurer | Mr H. Howarth |
| Publicity officer | Mrs P. Wright |
| Almoner | Mr D. Alley |
| Liaison officer | Mr J. Williams |
| Executive committee | Messrs. D. Miller, D. Panting, J. Pyers, P. Bray, C. Perkins, Hillman, Thomas, James and Metcalf. |

The makeup of the council suggests that it was much more than a mere auxiliary and more of a governing council over the Brigade and later events showed this to be so. When the Territory achieved sub-District status in 1965 the surviving Auxiliary committee officers joined the St John Council.

The Auxiliary's role was stated as: [50]

- ◊ Raising funds
- ◊ Constructing workshops, sheds, garages, and other buildings
- ◊ Furnishing all Brigade buildings
- ◊ Acquiring land for Brigade activities
- ◊ Helping in sales of work, bazaars, entertainments, competitions and displays for the benefit of the Brigade
- ◊ Engaging secretaries, organisers, solicitors, accountants or any persons needed for the proper function of the Auxiliary

After the meeting Mr Millbank announced that the Brigade was forming a Nursing Division that would *"help when the hospital needs extra staff ... several women were being trained in the nursing division. When instruction was complete they would be fully qualified to help at the hospital in disasters or epidemics".*

The meeting also voted to launch a £3000 Territory-wide Christmas Appeal, construction of a permanent Cadet camp out of Darwin and an *"all out drive on badge week".*

The Brigade had over 70 Cadets in the Darwin and Nightcliff sub-Divisions.[51]

This is the first we read of sub-divisions in Darwin and Nightcliff. It's known that Jack O'Hare established a first aid post and dressing clinic in his home at Nightcliff, but it's thought that this happened after he became Superintendent of the Darwin Division. George Brooks also lived in that suburb, along with other Brigade members, so it's not surprising to read about a sub-division out there.

However, there was trouble brewing between the Brigade and the new Auxiliary with heated exchanges at a meeting of the St John Auxiliary Council being prominently reported in the press. There was a power struggle looming between Superintendent Brooks and Auxiliary secretary Millbank, one that Brooks was to eventually lose.

The Auxiliary had become involved in the establishment of a Civil Defence committee in Darwin without informing Brooks. The meeting proceedings were recorded and *"on the tape St John's Superintendent George Brooks accuses the council of discourtesy and Auxiliary secretary Mr R. Millbank accuses Mr Brooks of seeking sole control of all St John activities in Darwin."*

Brooks said that his understanding was that

the Auxiliary should help the Brigade, not interfere with its workings, and he wanted it made clear how much power the Auxiliary had over the Brigade.

He complained that *"it was hard to keep active St John members up here because of the floating population. At one time, there had been 15. This had dropped to six and at present there were eight."*

Millbank responded that the Auxiliary had done everything possible to help the Brigade, raising money and securing films and lectures. Civil Defence *"means the lives of 20,000 people in the Territory and there is not one fully trained man in the NT capable of carrying it out".*

"St John sponsored the move", said Mr Millbank, "because civil defence came first and foremost in the saving of lives in disaster. But when the committee is formed St John will probably have only one man on it – and he will be a trained man, probably Superintendent O'Hare." [52] At the time O'Hare was Superintendent of the Darwin Cadet Division.

Millbank continued: "It can do only harm to spread reports that the Brigade is a weak body. This committee is 27 strong and has done a mighty job to strengthen the Brigade and secure the co-operation of citizens."

Brooks responded that he wasn't seeking personal kudos and *"had devoted seven years of his time and even made enemies in his own family, trying to keep the Brigade going."* [53]

The prominent newspaper headline stated that the tape recording would probably be sent to the St John Commissioner in South Australia.

Bramley and Dahlenburg's History[54] states: *"In a detailed submission to the Administrator of the NT, Mr Brooks proposed the formation of a Civil Defence Branch in Darwin."* Wilson[55] wrote that *"nineteen sixty saw ... Brooks propose the formation of a Civil Defence Branch in the Northern Territory. No records remain of this proposal ..."*

This sceptical old historian would need to see a copy of that proposal because the news report is fairly clear that it was the Auxiliary's initiative and done without Brooks' knowledge. Bramley and Dahlenburg got a lot of their information directly from Brooks, which as you will read should be treated with caution. Wilson got much of his information from Bramley and Dahlenburg without checking further. Government of the day was pretty good at keeping records and if Brooks' proposal ever existed it would be easy to retrieve from Archives.

**1961**

Brooks came on board with the Civil Defence movement and in early January outlined plans for the mass teaching of first aid in Darwin to train as many people as possible to cope with any amount of man-made catastrophes. The Brigade would *"teach people how to cope with radiation burns, high explosive bombs, phosphorus bombs and other emergencies."* [56]

This was the nuclear age with a massive arms race between the USA and USSR to see which could build the greatest number of the most devastating and terrible weapons of mass destruction. The Cold War was at its height with a lot of paranoia about an imminent nuclear war.

Work on the new centre on Ross Smith Avenue didn't commence in 1960 as planned, with just a foundation stone supposedly laid, and it wasn't until April 1961 that the lowest of five tenders was accepted and negotiations entered with the builder.[57] A double page spread in the *NT News* of Saturday 28th October 1961 names the builder as P.G. Gabel Pty Ltd.

On Wednesday 31st May the South Australian Commissioner, Dr Harvey Hurst, and South Australian Council secretary Mr Phillip Ferrier arrived in Darwin and immediately attended a St John Ambulance Auxiliary meeting. The following night they met with the Brigade and on Saturday attended a parade that included all Brigade members, the Home Nursing Division, Cadets and parents.[58]

Dr Hurst put George Brooks on the retired list and appointed Mr Charlie Perkins[59] acting superintendent of the Darwin Division.[60] Other appointments were Mrs A. Flockhart as Nursing Officer of the Darwin Nursing Division, Mr Eddie Calvert as Divisional Officer for Nightcliff and Mrs P. Dieckmann as Nursing Officer of the Nightcliff

Nursing Division.[61]

While in Darwin Dr Hurst and Mr Ferrier presented eight bedside pillow phones for the use of patients in the Ward 1 TB section of Darwin Hospital. These were a gift of the St John Auxiliary and designed to rest on the pillows close to the patient's head. [62]

Later that month Cadets Yvonne Metcalf, Mary Hickey and Elizabeth Dieckmann became the first Darwin girls to join the adult Division after passing tests set by Dr Hurst.[63]

The newspaper story showed them pictured with Cadet Superintendent Jack O'Hare who took command of the adult Division after Charlie Perkins relinquished the position for health reasons, having only held the job a short time, although the actual period is unknown.[64] Unfortunately, the microfilm photo was too poor quality to reproduce here.

In June, the Brigade began a fund-raiser in Nightcliff to buy a mobile first aid unit to be based at Jack O'Hare's dressing and first-aid station in Sandalwood Street, Nightcliff. The vehicle would also be used as an ambulance in emergency cases.[65]

The previous week a nine-years-old snakebite victim had been taken to O'Hare's house and from there driven to the hospital. *"The snake bit Pat Lee as he walked home from a local picture show in the dark. His sister Dianna, a St John cadet quickly applied a tourniquet and stopped a passing motorist who drove them to O'Hare's house."* [66]

South Australian historians wrote about the early Brigade in Darwin and that:

> *Mr. O'Hare had converted one room of his home at Nightcliff, a suburb of Darwin, into a Casualty Room. He worked at the Hospital as an electrician and was apparently allowed to use his home as an outpatients department of the hospital for he was supplied with medical stocks far above the usual first aid equipment and his treatments often more than ordinary first aid. Those beyond his treatment he sent on to the hospital which, in turn, sent back patients for after care, or follow-up treatments. He would roster members of the division, especially the nursing members, for duty at his clinic to gain experience in dressing wounds etc.* [67]

Meanwhile, work was progressing on the new centre and O'Hare was reported to have said that the Brigade would establish a division in Fannie Bay very soon and that Brigade members living in Fannie Bay who belonged to other divisions would transfer to the Fannie Bay Division.[68]

At the end of October there was a double-page spread in the *Northern Territory News* that announced the new £15,000 centre would hopefully be opened early in December. *"Brigade members plan to make the official opening a gala day with floats, marching girls and massed bands taking part."* [69]

The new headquarters was described as an all-brick two storey building with reinforced concrete floors; recreation room and showers; a huge hall on the top floor for meetings and lectures; a garage capable of taking two ambulances; a casualty room; three offices on the ground floor fitted with toilet facilities; concrete wash yard behind the building; and with a space left behind the building for two



Yvonne Metcalf, Mary Hickey and Elizabeth Dieckmann



flats for Brigade officers.

The Brigade had received a £2000 grant from the Government, and still needed a further £4500 to complete the project, but was confident in raising the money.

If the building was finished on time the Brigade would hold a Danada procession on the same day as the official opening. The annual Danada festival had been delayed this year because the *"organisers felt that so many other charities had staged ceremonies in an effort to raise funds that it would be better to postpone it."* If the building wasn't completed in time the official opening would be held the following April because of the high cost of insuring against rain during the wet season.[70]

Despite their best efforts the Auxiliary failed to raise the necessary money and there was no grand opening ceremony or Danada festival that year. There were just too many charities chasing donations from a relatively small population.

Other information about the Brigade in that newspaper spread included: *"Brigade men use walkie-talkies to keep in touch at big sporting and outdoor events"* that *"were particularly valuable where speed was needed to reach an injured person"*. Also: *"As well as doing a hundred other duties St John Ambulance Brigade officers find time to help doctors and nurses at Darwin Hospital. They sterilise dressings, change bandages and wheel patients from wards. The men also act as relief ambulance drivers."* [71]

The Brigade also bought for £50 a life-size head and shoulders manikin to demonstrate mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. The manikin was named Charlie, supposedly *"after Brigade officer Charlie Perkins of Fannie Bay"*. [72]

Brigade members had a busy time at Rugby League matches that year with as many as 22 players hurt in one match, some seriously. One Brigade man reportedly said: *"When I'm on duty at a rugby match I sometimes feel I've done as much running as the players."* [73]

To raise funds for the new headquarters the Brigade announced a quest for 'Mr and Mrs Northern Territory' [74] with the winners being the married couple who raised the most money for St John Ambulance. First prize was two week's holiday on the Gold Coast with free air fares and £100 spending money. The winners were to be announced at a function at the Hotel Darwin on 16th December following a giant carnival the day before.

Unfortunately, the newspaper that announced the winners is missing from the NT Library collection and we have no idea who they were, or even if the giant carnival took place at all.

In late November ex-Superintendent George Brooks launched a savage attack on the Brigade through the press. He complained about falling numbers and that the Brigade was no longer able to cover all public duties, telling the *NT News* that *"when he had charge of the local brigade it had been able to cover all sporting fixtures here"*.

It would seem that Brooks was quite bitter about his 'retirement' and had a very short memory regarding fluctuating Brigade numbers when he was in charge. Just 12 months previously he had complained about low membership in his public brawl with the Auxiliary.

He went on that *"St John's men were being used to work on ambulances at the hospital when they could have covered public fixtures"*. Brooks opposed a move by the Brigade to obtain a hall for the Nightcliff Division, saying that the money and effort would be better spent on consolidating the Darwin section into a complete Brigade. Yet the split into sub-divisions had happened when Brooks was Superintendent. Brooks attacked the number of Cadets, claiming there were more than 50 at present and nearly all girls, anyway.

O'Hare's response was that the Brigade comprised 10 men, 36 women and 64 cadets, the latter exactly half boys and half girls. He defended making members available to the Health Department, saying that the Brigade would get its own ambulance in January. *"Male members were working with the hospital ambulances, giving whatever help they could when needed, and gaining valuable experience for the time when they would have to operate the brigade's own ambulance."*

Female members were working in the Hospital outpatients to gain experience for the dressing station when the new headquarters opened.

A hall was needed at Nightcliff so that members could meet in their own area because *"the brigade would lose members if it insisted on them coming all the way from Nightcliff for their meetings".*[75]

Your author is a rural dweller who regularly drove up to 140km round trip to attend meetings and to research this book and shakes his head in wonder every time he reads about the townies' reluctance to travel even short distances.

**1962**

At the beginning of March while on holidays, NT Assistant Administrator Mr Reg Marsh picked up the Brigade's new ambulance in Sydney and *"drove it most of the way to Alice Springs"* and from there on to Darwin.[76] By *"most of the way"* it's assumed that Marsh put the ambulance on the train from Port Augusta to Alice Springs to avoid that section of the notorious unsealed car wrecking Stuart Highway in South Australia.

Reg Marsh formally handed the new ambulance over to the Brigade on Monday 12th March 1962.[77] The air-conditioned Volkswagen Kombi Van, costing £1000, was to be based at Jack O'Hare's Nightcliff clinic. It could carry two stretcher cases, one reclining, and two patients with the driver plus an attendant in the rear.

It was much later reported that the ambulance answered an emergency call out that first night: *"This coincidence was as if to show how necessary this public organisation is."* [78]

At the end of March the Auxiliary reported that a lack of money had stopped work on the new Fannie Bay head-quarters. They had applied to the Regional Grants Commission for a £5000 grant, hoping to get at least £2000, but received nothing.



The VW ambulance at the Nightcliff Clinic

Auxiliary Secretary Mr Van Millbank blamed the National Heart Appeal for last year's Danada festival being cancelled, losing the Brigade about £1000.[79] However, nothing would stop this year's parade which was planned for the Queen's Birthday public holiday on Monday 4th June.

After the parade the *Northern Territory News* proclaimed:

> *"The colorful, mile-long procession of decorated floats, gleaming new motor vehicles, marching girls in glittering uniforms, two bands and other marchers made yesterday's Danada Day parade Darwin's best ever."* [80]

Thousands of applauding spectators lined the streets and followed the parade to the Esplanade to watch the judging. A float by the Bagot Social Club styled the 'Bagot Boomerang Recovery Squad', had Aborigines in full corroboree paint grouped around a giant rocket carrying a spaceman complete with space suit and helmet. A placard at the rear proclaimed "My Boomerang Won't Come Back", after a popular song by British comedian Charlie Drake.

The Darwin Musical Comedy Society's float had members of the cast of "Oklahoma" in full costume singing songs from the show.

The Chinese float told "The story of the Two Loves" while the dragon cavorted to the accompaniment of fireworks.

The Aquatic Sports Association float had a fisherman trailing a shark along the roadway at the end of a line, while his fellow angler in a dinghy had the sort of luck that needs a stop at a fish shop on the way home.

The Darwin Garden Club had a most attractive float, *"profusely decorated with shrubs and carrying a collection of flowers with a tiny little girl's face forming the centre of each flower."*

A winning float was a tiny one *"shaped to resemble a car battery and, with the driver completely concealed, chuffed its way just ahead of the huge Darwin City Council staff float."*

Leading the procession was the City of Darwin Brass Band with the Caledonian Pipe Band towards the rear. Motor vehicle dealers took the

opportunity to show all their new models in the parade.

> *"Carnival time was on right from the moment the floats reached the Esplanade. With a brief lull during tea-time, stalls and side shows did a roaring trade with a hundred and one varieties of things to eat and drink plus knock-'em-downs, coconut shys, and the usual fair games."*

In the evening there were displays by marching girls, exhibitions of trick riding by the Darwin Motor Cycle Club and a corroboree. Prizes were awarded to the Nightcliff marching girls, the Bagot Social Club float and the mobile car battery.

> *"The most decorative float was judged to be the Junior Red Cross entry, featuring girls of all nations in national dress, as an indication of the international nature of Red Cross."* [81]

An amusing aftermath happened when the raffle was drawn during the carnival, or rather it wasn't drawn after all. Regulations required raffles to be drawn under police supervision, using a barrel supplied by the police. Two days before, Auxiliary Secretary Van Millbank took all ticket butts to the police station where they were checked and stripped out of their books. On the carnival day the barrel was picked up from the police station and *"in the presence of several locally prominent people, St. John's Auxiliary secretary Mr. Van Millbank invited the Assistant Administrator (Mr. Reg Marsh) to draw the winning ticket. Mr. Marsh put a hand into the barrel – and found nothing."*



Danada Parade 1960
*Photo PH0132/0051 from the Peggy Womersley Collection, Northern Territory Library*

The barrel was empty. It turned out *"the barrel usually used by the police for drawing such raffles was in use at the Stuart Park Pre-school centre on Saturday. And pending its return the St. John tickets were deposited temporarily in another container."* [82]

What happened after that isn't in the available records, but we hope that the ticket butts were found and that all turned out well in the end.

This year's Danada festival was so successful that the Brigade had even bigger plans for 1963. It would be expanded into a week-long Festival of Arts ending with a procession and Gala Day on the Queen's Birthday public holiday. The Council elected Mrs "Aunty Billie" Pitscheneder, Tom Abbott and John Hopkins as Danada Festival Week organisers, with Van Millbank as festival secretary.[83]

A meeting was called by the Danada organising committee for Thursday 18th October to hear suggestions and discuss plans for next year's festival. It was proposed to be a week-long festival, finishing on the Queen's Birthday public holiday, 3rd June. Fourteen southern sideshows had already been booked for a Fun Carnival to run on the Esplanade each night of the festival.

> *"Other suggestions received included a combined water carnival, an international soccer match, speedway championships, a Scottish night, corroborees, wrestling and other sporting fixtures."*

Also proposed were a business exhibition and a Hall of Films.[84] And that's it – another frustrating historical dead end. Newspapers for May and June 1963 make no mention of Danada or any other festival to be held at that time. Those around August, the other time Danada was held, also make no mention of any festival. Danada was obviously cancelled, but we don't know why. The Darwin City Council held a month long *Festival of Darwin* in July 1965 [85] along the same lines as the proposed week-long Danada festival, and the Brigade lost an important fund raiser, although they did receive donations from the Festival committee.

During research for this book the *Festival of Darwin* website[86] was browsed to hopefully find some answers, only to read a claim that the Festival began in the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy, starting as

the Bougainvillea Festival in 1978. It may have been revived after Tracy, but old newspapers tell that the Festival of Darwin started long before that with its origins in St John's Danada Day.

Bramley and Dahlenburg stated in their History that in 1954 *"a button day called DANARDA DAY was held to raise money"*. This was repeated by Wilson in his book. That's a bit like calling Mount Everest an ant hill. That bit of misinformation would have come from George Brooks, who as we have read had a grudge against St John.

In August it was announced that popular Assistant Administrator Reg Marsh was to be transferred to Canberra. At a farewell function hosted by the St John Ambulance Auxiliary, president Alan James announced that "the new St. John Ambulance building in Ross Smith Avenue will be called the *Reg Marsh Building, St. John Headquarters*". [87]

Ever imaginative, the Brigade expanded its activities and in September the public were advised that three people were training to form a parachute squad for the Darwin Brigade. They were two police officers and a nursing Sister who worked at the Darwin Hospital. *"The squad was being formed for use in bush emergencies where it might not be possible to reach an injured person quickly other than by dropping in a trained man or sister."* New recruits were wanted for this squad.[88]

On the 12th May 1963 Superintendent Jack O'Hare made his first two parachute jumps[89] at Batchelor for the squad, now called *"paramedics - a term new to Darwin. Paramedics are trained St. John personnel who have undergone a parachute course"*. [90]

The paramedics were taken over by Civil Defence in June 1965.[91] Your author could find no reports that the paramedics of either organisation were ever used in an actual emergency rescue.

Serge Cattonar, who was in charge of the NT School of Parachuting, was a member of St John Ambulance and the driving force behind the squad. The Brigade's fluctuating numbers could have been the reason why Serge and the paramedics went over to the much stronger Civil Defence.

Jumping out of aeroplanes with a first aid kit was shown to be a dangerous job when in early April 1966 *"a member of the paramedics Section of the Civil Defence and Emergency Services Organisation broke his thigh in his first parachute jump."* The Civil Defence paramedics section had been established in June the previous year and since then its members had made a total of about 150 parachute jumps.[92]

The daredevil paramedics weren't confined to Darwin, though. Yvonne Hansen from Alice Springs wrote about them for Pat McQuillen, but didn't give the year this happened.

> *"Sergeant Alan Metcalf from the Police Station trained some of our men in the field of Paramedics. They were trained to jump out of 'planes with a parachute. This was because a lot of parks like Kings Canyon were being developed and that was how the police, firemen and St John people were going to rescue people who were down there."* [93]

At the Auxiliary's Annual General meeting a new executive was elected: President, Mr. Alan James; vice-Presidents, Messrs. J. Williams and R. Wood; secretary, Mr. J. Montgomery; treasurer, Mr. Tom Abbott; organisers, Messrs. Abbott and J. Hopkins; organising-secretary, Mr. Van Millbank. Councillors: the Misses M. Dukes and S. Montgomery, Mrs. P. James, Messrs. S. Wakeford, J. Gault, Martin Smith, T. Dunne, Alan Miller, D. Gee and the Mayor, Mr. Cooper.

The meeting was told that during the year an ambulance worth £1000 had been purchased, £1100 had been spent on medical equipment, a permanent stall erected at the showgrounds and there was £1000 in the building fund. [94]

General Secretary of the South Australian St. John Ambulance Brigade Mr Phillip Ferrier arrived in Darwin on Tuesday 9th October with big plans for the local Brigade. *"A large scale program is planned in the Territory by the St. John Ambulance to give first-aid training to people in Government Departments and private business."*

Ferrier was quoted as saying that the Brigade would now go out to students: *"We envisage*

*factory and office lectures on first-aid with simulated injuries for the students to study and practice on."* Down south there were scenarios of simulated car accidents and casualties with realistic injuries *"so that students could acclimatise themselves to the sight of blood and deal with actual casualties".*

When Ferrier was asked about autonomy for the Territory he replied that the population would have to be at least 100,000 for that to happen.[95]

In his book, *South Australians and St John Ambulance*, Ian Howie-Willis wrote about the "gunners" from South Australia. They made infrequent visits to their northern Divisions saying they were "gunna do this" and "gunna do that", but little or nothing ever came of their promises. Territorians found that if they wanted something done they went and did it themselves, generally ignoring Adelaide.

**1963**

The year started with a plea for more members, the shortage being brought about by the floating population and members being on holidays. Many people in Darwin went south for their annual leave, so they couldn't be called on to help out. The Royal Tour was to visit Darwin later in the year and the Brigade would need sufficient trained members to handle the expected large crowds. However, the Brigade did not need any more cadets at this time.[96]

Superintendent O'Hare also spoke of the new parachute squad, known as "paramedics". He said that five members had now completed their ground training and made jumps, two of them being quite experienced.[97]



A realistic training exercise

In July, Brigade statistics for the previous 12 months to the end of June were released:

1,241 cases of illness and injury had been treated, 626 of them being in the Nightcliff and Rapid Creek area. An outpost at Timber Creek had treated an additional 40 cases.

The Brigade answered 141 calls for its ambulance from Nightcliff to town. This cost about £1 a trip and it was only rarely that the Brigade received a donation in return. The service was free.

Members put in a total of 4,745 man-hours for the year and distributed free to the public medical equipment such as bandages and plasters to the value of £248/5/-. [98]

Senior Transport Officer from South Australia, Mr Jock Berry carried out an inspection and audit in July, *"and the local Brigade had now been granted a higher status".*

The following new appointments were made: Superintendent Jack O'Hare, Administration; Sergeant Arthur Bourse, Transport; Sergeant Geoff Pyers, field ambulance; Sergeant George Tye, paramedics; Sergeant Serge Cattonar, parachute training; Sister E. McKenna, nursing; Mrs. E. Gold and Miss E. Dickman*, cadets.[99]

Superintendent Jack O'Hare said that the Brigade was making an all-out drive to finish off the ambulance station at Ross Smith Avenue, Fannie Bay, and it was hoped to have it completely furnished and operating very shortly.[100] Four weeks later a working bee was held to finish off painting the new station prior to its opening.[101]

The following week all was ready and in the evening of Thursday 15th August 1963 the new building was officially opened by the Director of Health, Dr. Ian Byrne and "officially named the *Reg Marsh Building, Saint John Headquarters, Northern Territory*." [102] There was no plaque unveiling ceremony and the name was never marked on the building, causing it to fall into disuse and to be completely forgotten a few short years later, but hopefully revived by this book.

Although the *Reg Marsh Building* is named in the 1967 Annual Report, Marian Grayden, who

* Probably a misspelling of Dieckmann

joined the Brigade in 1967 wrote to the author: "Reg Marsh – I have heard the name, but only after Richard Morris' name selected for Casuarina Centre. 'Well, the other centre was given name of Reg Marsh, wasn't it?' No one knew or could explain further. Reg's name was not seen on the building or ever mentioned during my time." [103]

After the opening and naming ceremony Mr Terry Irvine, president of Darwin Rotary, handed over the keys of a "new" ambulance to Jack O'Hare. Rotary bought and had airconditioned a former Territory Enterprises Propriety ambulance with £800 raised mostly at the Darwin Show. [104]

This completed Stage 1 of the construction, rather less than originally planned as it lacked the much needed second floor with its meeting and training hall. Two members would sleep at the station on call every night and it would also be used *"as a training centre for the paramedics, ambulance transport, field ambulance and women's nursing sections."* [105]

The Brigade was now operating ambulances from two stations; the VW Kombi at Nightcliff and the Ford at Fannie Bay. Calls were increasing and costs were rising and the need to start charging for ambulance services was raised.

In the past two years the Brigade had answered and treated 1508 casualties from the Nightcliff station and in its first three months the new Fannie Bay station had attended 51 calls. Now, in December, the two stations were answering in total more than 40 calls per month.

To help meet rising costs the Brigade was now asking for *"family subscriptions of one shilling per week, or £2/2/- a year. This would entitle families to all ambulance services without further payment."* Subscribers could have the shilling deducted from their pay each week if they preferred. *"A casual charge rate would be announced soon. In the meanwhile families were being asked to give the shilling a week subscription consideration."* [106]



President of the St John Auxiliary, Mr Alan James; Director of Health Dr Ian Byrne; Mr Terry Irvine; and Superintendent Jack O'Hare.

It's not known what that casual charge rate was for ambulance transport and how long the system lasted. What is known is that the Brigade brought in another subscription scheme on 1st April 1973 and yet another in September 1976, the last scheme to stay.

At the annual Christmas party, Superintendent O'Hare released some statistics for the past year: Nightcliff had treated 1,342 cases and made 53 ambulance transports in 1962; in 1963 there had been 4,430 treatments with 160 ambulance transports. The additional treatments were for residents with transport difficulties in going to the hospital.

The Fannie Bay station had made 83 ambulance transports since opening in August. 500 casualties were treated at sports meetings in 1962, with only 312 this year because many were now being treated at either of the stations. The 25 Division members gave a total of 520 hours of voluntary service every week at an average of 21 hours each. *"Included in these are the hours when at least two members are in attendance 24 hours a day at both stations."* Senior members gave another 15 hours every week to hold lectures and classes for police, Government departments, schools, sports clubs and the public.[107]

> *"Sister Irene Mitchell had started new ambulance nursing classes which were unique in Australia and further home nursing classes. The ambulance nursing classes bridged the gap between the time first aid was applied and the patient arrived at the hospital. During 1963, division members had been trained in first aid by officers from South Australia and doctors and sisters from the Commonwealth Department of Health for whose help the brigade was grateful."* [108]

Brigade driving officer Greg Clissold reported

there were now five fully trained drivers with another 15 in training.

**1964**

Improvements on the new centre at Fannie Bay were ongoing and in February more than 30 volunteers from Apex spent a weekend building a concrete ramp in front of the new ambulance centre.[109]

The Brigade entered one of its cyclical financial downturns in April with a news report stating that *"The St. John Ambulance Brigade might have to curtail or end its activities in Darwin, unless it gets more support from organisations and individuals."*

The Auxiliary held its Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 7th April with the only organisations bothering to send representatives being the Darwin Turf Club, the School of Parachuting, the Motor-cycle Club, the Rosicrucian Order and the RAOB Club.

The meeting was told that the cost of running the Brigade was around £200 a month which took priority over completing Stage 2 of the *Reg Marsh building*. The Brigade still relied completely on fund raising and direct donations to maintain its activities, there being absolutely no Government assistance at this time.

Some statistics were given: There were now 33 active members in Darwin and Nightcliff working 495 voluntary hours per week, or around 26,000 hours per year.

Alan James was re-elected president of the Auxiliary, Messrs. G.F. Kellett and K. Jarvis vice-presidents, Miss A. Donnell secretary and Mr. Tom Abbott treasurer with Mr. J.W. Kelly as publicity officer.[110]

*Northern Territory News* columnist Jim Kelly came to the Brigade's aid with a scathing attack on sporting organisations that *"have again displayed base ingratitude to the brigade."*

Despite receiving at least two circulars about the AGM asking to send along representatives many organisations just couldn't be bothered, despite using the Brigade's first aid services. This had been the second attempt at holding an AGM, the first being abandoned due to lack of interest.

Kelly particularly slated the NT Football League, the NT Rugby Football League and the NT Hockey Association for failing to attend.

> *"All three have the regular services of the Brigade at all their fixtures, their injured players are treated and in some cases taken in the Brigade ambulance to hospital – all by volunteer helpers without charge.*
>
> *"Last year 1600 patients were treated at the Nightcliff centre, 175 were treated in their own home, 300 odd were attended at sporting fixtures. A total of 2,400 for the year."*

Unless the Brigade received more help in raising money it would fold and *"it would be a sad commentary on the much-vaunted open-heartedness of Darwin"* if that happened.[111]

Well, at least the Rugby League weren't going to take what they considered unfair criticism. In a letter to the editor they stated their generosity towards St John over the years with some considerable donations and the proceeds from benefit matches given to the Brigade. However, last year the Brigade could not attend Sunday afternoon matches due to a lack of members, forcing the League to employ their own first aid attendant. Now, *"all Rugby injuries are treated by the club's own trained medical men and the League's own medic."* [112]

With the Danada festival now history the Auxiliary had to find other ways of parting the citizens of Darwin from their spare cash. On Sunday 24th May the Auxiliary staged:

> *"a three-hour non-stop variety show which includes items ranging from a display of parachute-jumping to a man-versus-horse foot race" at the Fannie Bay racecourse.*
>
> *"First off the mark at 9am will be a parachute jump by four 'paramedics' – ambulance officers who have been trained in parachute jumping – followed by an exhibition of treatments of a simulated casualty."* [113]

The crowd of more than 1000 saw:

◊ A racehorse just beat ace Darwin sprinter Ray Nagus over 100 yards.

- ◊ A sudden wind change send a parachute into the yard of a home half a mile from the target area.
- ◊ SA and NT champion diver Robert Muir in a brilliant trampoline display.
- ◊ Local motorcycle speed stars in action.
- ◊ A fierce display of the deadly Karate by a black belt expert.
- ◊ An archery and a foils and sabre display.
- ◊ A car dropped from a crane by Road Safety Council organisers to demonstrate the effects of a 45 mph crash
- ◊ Fire Chief "Robbie" Robbins give some sound advice about fire prevention

Aunty Billie Pitscheneder and husband Peter ran the refreshment stall. Admission was any reasonable donation and £150 was raised for the Brigade.[114]

In September some 'facts' were published about the Brigade,[115] but the story has so many errors that other information that can't be verified elsewhere must be treated with caution, but here goes with the 'good' stuff anyway:

- ◊ Just a few weeks previously the Brigade took delivery of a new Holden ambulance, building the fleet to three vehicles. Perhaps not so 'new' as a later report suggests it was a 1954 model. [116]

South Australian *"training officer Mr. Revitt, when delivering an ambulance to Darwin stopped at towns on the way to give a lecture and demonstration of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and show the film 'Pulse of Life'."* [117] This extract from the 1964 Annual Report indicates that the vehicle was bought second hand from St John Ambulance, South Australia.




- ◊ There were now 30 members and 17 cadets at the two stations.
- ◊ There was an outpost at Timber Creek in charge of Mr J.H. Rawle, and new posts were expected to open at Howard Springs and Berrimah.
- ◊ The ambulances transported an average of 60 persons a month to hospital and private doctors' surgeries.
- ◊ 1600 minor casualties had been treated at Nightcliff last year, 600 at Fannie Bay, 80 at the Darwin Show and 200 during the Walkabout.
- ◊ Continuous first aid classes were conducted every Monday night at Fannie Bay for the public, with home nursing by demand.
- ◊ The cost of running the Brigade was about £6,000 a year.

Another story in the same paper reported that: *"There are some in Darwin who give as much as 60 hours a week, on top of the normal working hours, to this humane service."* [118]

**1965**

There was trouble in the north with Indonesia staging its Confrontation of Malaysia and with Australian forces actively involved in the conflict. Paranoia whipped up by a sensationalist press had people in Darwin with a completely unfounded fear of attack by Indonesia. In this climate the Civil Defence Organisation boomed, taking over some functions that had previously been the province of the St John Ambulance Brigade.

Administrator Roger Dean announced in February that the Civil Defence Organisation was about to start a program of first aid training to Certificate standard:

> *"aimed at giving one Darwin resident in every five a basic knowledge of first aid procedures ... The Civil Defence Organisation was already providing first aid classes on Wednesday evenings, resuming for this year on*

*March 3, and wanted to provide classes on other evenings, and in the afternoons, as more residents enrolled."* [119]

Meanwhile, the Auxiliary was in yet another financial downturn. The Annual General Meeting in May was told that a £2500 pound-for-pound subsidy offered by the Government to complete building the new headquarters was in danger of being lost because it had not been able to raise enough money for the building fund. All money raised was going to support the ever expanding Brigade activities with little left over to complete the *Reg Marsh building*.

To overcome these financial difficulties Auxiliary President Alan James held talks with the Minister for Health, Mr Swartz, regarding the possibility of a Government subsidy for the Brigade's operational costs. The Minister showed interest and advised that he be sent a written submission through the NT Director of Health. This would be done when the year's figures were available.[120]

Alan James made a plea for more volunteers to join the Auxiliary, while Superintendent Jack O'Hare gave out some Brigade statistics in May:

- 18 adult members assisted by Cadets averaged 624 hours each of voluntary service for the year, more than 12 hours per week.
- The Nightcliff and Fannie Bay centres continued to provide a 24-hour service as emergency centres and dressing stations for patients attending the hospital and private practitioners.
- Nightcliff had treated 2235 patients, Fannie Bay 281, Howard Springs 103, Adelaide River 42, and an unknown number at Berry Springs.[121]

More statistics for the Brigade were released in July:

- Volunteers at the Fannie Bay station worked an average 21¾ hours per week during the last six months, with an average 15 members in that period.
- Total hours were 8416; ambulances travelled 3602 miles carrying 233 patients to hospital.
- 129 casualties were treated at the dressing station, an average of about five per week.
- Ten calls were made to meet with the Adelaide River emergency ambulance for patient transfer and transport to Darwin Hospital.

The Brigade was now going to issue monthly figures and those for June from the Fannie Bay Headquarters were:

- Average membership was 16, with 1422 hours of duty at an average of 89 hours each.
- Ambulances answered 27 calls and transported 28 patients over 297 miles. The dressing station treated 18 casualties.[122]

Of significance with these figures is that unlike earlier, they now refer only to the new Fannie Bay headquarters with no mention of Nightcliff. The Nightcliff station was in Jack O'Hare's residence and he disappears from future newspaper reports. However, there is a photograph (*page 20*) captioned as being taken inside the Nightcliff Clinic in October 1966. A South Australian history states that he handed over as Superintendent in January 1967 and left Darwin to take up a position as first aid officer on Groote Eylandt.[123]

Dave Watters is reported in newspapers as being Acting Superintendent from January 1966 until September that year when Barrie Fricker took over.

This year's fund raising spectacular was a 'pole-sit' in late October. Radio station 8DN announcers Renton "Ren" Kelly and Tom Needle spent 48 hours on Darwin's first marathon pole-sitting session to raise funds for St John Ambulance.

At 5.00pm on 22nd October they climbed a 25ft. (about 8m) pole specially erected in Raintree Park. A platform on top had a telephone, sleeping bags and almost certainly broadcast equipment. The truly remarkable Aunty Billie Pitscheneder was there to feed the pole sitters.

The sleeping bags may not have had much use because the *NT News* reported:

*A News staff member who passed the platform at 1 am on Saturday said there were a dozen musicians beating out bright music to a*

*crowd approaching 300.*

*Apart from constantly answering the telephone and exhorting listeners to send in bigger and better donations, the two men were kept busy answering an unending barrage of wise-cracks and comments from onlookers at the foot of the pole.*

*Throughout the scorching heat of Saturday and Sunday they kept up an unflagging stream of comment and announcement despite the discomfort they must have been suffering.*

The appeal was an outstanding success and raised £1,100 for the Brigade.[124]

South Australian Commissioner, Dr J.M. Pedler and Brigade Secretary Mr Ortmann, went to Darwin to assist in the establishment of the Northern Territory as a separate sub-District of the Brigade in South Australia. Dr William A. "Spike" Langsford, Principal Medical Officer for the Northern Territory, was appointed Deputy Commissioner.[125]

At a meeting in Darwin on the 8th November 1965, a Branch Council of the Order of St. John was formed with the Administrator, the Hon. R.L. Dean, as its President, and Dr Langsford as its Chairman. The Certificate of Incorporation was issued on 12th September 1966.[126]

In January 1966 the Acting Superintendent of the Darwin Division, Dave Watters, released statistics for 1965. At the end of the year there were eleven active members and the Division had worked a total of 13,848 hours. The report calculated this to be *"the equivalent of 1259 each or about 7½ weeks voluntary time given by each member."*

The station answered 435 calls and transported 453 patients a total of 7869 miles at an average of 17 miles for each patient. 217 casualties were treated at the station, including re-dressings. There were also eleven trips to meet up with the Adelaide River ambulance for patient transfer.[127]

Interestingly, the Annual Return for the Darwin Combined Cadet Division was signed by Grant Keetley as Acting Superintendent of Cadets from 1963. This would have made Grant 13 or maybe barely 14 years old when he assumed that position. He signed the 1968 return as Superintendent and rose through the ranks to become District Superintendent on 1st January 1979.

The Annual Return listed six boys and five girls under Grant's command this year, all of whom were stated as joining on the 2nd January 1965.



Administrator Roger Dean and Deputy Commissioner Langsford at the half built *Reg Marsh Building.*

**1966**

The Assistant Administrator, Mr A.V. Atkins stressed the need for the public to be trained in first aid when bystanders were unable to assist at electrocution of a man at Rapid Creek in February.

Mr Atkins pointed out that the Civil Defence and Emergencies Organisation, in conjunction with the St John Ambulance Brigade, the Royal Lifesaving Society and other organisations conducted regular first aid classes where mouth to mouth resuscitation and external heart massage were taught.[128]

These classes were open to the public with no obligation to join Civil Defence. Group training was also available for clubs and other organisations.

Later in the month it was reported that Acting Superintendent Dave Watters would be attending a two weeks instructors' course at the Mt Macedon Civil Defence College in Victoria. This course would concentrate on the organisation of casualty rescue and collection operations.

Civil Defence was having a recruiting drive aimed at doubling the present number of 500 volunteers already active throughout the Territory, numbers that St John could only dream about.[129]

Meanwhile, the Auxiliary was in deep trouble once again. President of the Auxiliary, Alan James said that *"in recent months almost all the work of the auxiliary had fallen on the shoulders of himself and his wife and those of the secretary, Mr Tom Abbott and Mrs Abbott."* [130]

It was decided that the formation of what was in effect a state council, albeit still under Adelaide's control, gave the perfect opportunity to reorganise the Auxiliary. At a public meeting on Monday 28th February the following officers were elected:




Mr Alan James, president; Mrs Pat Abbott and Mrs Gleason, vice-presidents; Mr Tom Abbott, treasurer; Mrs Williams, secretary. A draft constitution was to be drawn up, based on one submitted from South Australia.[131]

There were more troubles with the ambulance service based at the Darwin Hospital. A station wagon was used to attend a fatal accident at Nightcliff on 18th April instead of an ambulance. Two Health Department ambulances were under repair with the Department of Works, a third had gone to Hayes Creek, and a St John ambulance on standby could not be started.[132]

In response to perceived criticism the Brigade responded that it was not uncommon for the Department of Health to request the loan of ambulances while theirs were under repair. The VW ambulance was at the hospital at the time of the accident and had been on loan for five weeks with no indication of when it would be returned. The ambulance had been in good mechanical condition when it was loaned.[133] This was the same VW that members described as *"poorly maintained and quite gutless"* just a couple of years later.[134]

An application to the Minister for Health for an annual subsidy to assist the Darwin Combined Division resulted in an annual grant of $2,000 for five years from 1st July 1966, on the proviso that the level of activity was maintained. It was felt that this subsidy, with assistance from the Auxiliary, would cover operational expenses but would not provide for capital expenditure on vehicles and major items of equipment.[135]

An application for a regional grant was successful and $7,000 on a dollar for dollar basis was granted in October to complete the *Reg Marsh Building*.[136]

The Division started a Nursing section in July with four female members enrolled for a series of lectures on theory and practice of first aid.[137]

Barrie Fricker took over as Superintendent from Dave Watters in August .[138]

A very realistic training exercise was staged at East Point in late December. The scenario was a bus accident with 16 casualties, played by Cubs of the 3rd Division of Darwin. *"They were daubed in greasepaint and plastic injuries supplied by the Civil Defence that would have turned the strongest stomach."*

When the first ambulance arrived the two ambulance men and a nurse tended the "injured" but *"were at first hampered by Ron Watkins, scoutmaster, alias bus driver, who performed some suitable hysteria over a particular casualty."* He was calmed and became one of the first two casualties taken away to the St John headquarters at Parap, which served as an emergency hospital.

The exercise had been organised by Superintendent Barrie Fricker, and volunteers who took part included Grant Keetley, Ray Edwards and Gerry Goodhand.[139]

Statistics for 1966 as published:[140] The Darwin Division had 14 *"hard working men"* who answered 352 calls and carried 455 patients, and also attended varied public duties. They worked 11,219 voluntary hours, putting in three or four nights a week duty, plus one evening of training.

> *"In addition to the work by the ambulance drivers and first aid men, valuable contributions were made by St John nurses who staffed the dressing station at Fannie Bay ambulance depot."*



The half built *Reg Marsh Building* sometime between mid 1964 when the Brigade took delivery of the Holden ambulance and 1967 when the building was completed. The author was told of a time capsule buried under the flag pole.

The annual report stated: *"The two Ambulance vehicles operated by the Darwin Division have reached the end of their economic life and will require replacement."* [141] The Ford and Holden had both been acquired second-hand and the Volkswagen was now only used for public duties.

The Cadet Division had picked up and Acting Superintendent Grant Keetley now had eight boys and ten girls under his command.

**1967**

It was reported in January 1968 that the Division started to provide the full Darwin ambulance service between 5.00pm and 6.00am week days in February 1967.[142] However, in April 1967: *"Recently the Brigade had taken over all ambulance calls to the hospital between 5.30pm and 7am and during the weekend."* [143]

Unfortunately, very few St John records survived Cyclone Tracy and it's impossible to determine which is correct. The 5.00pm time is repeated in several other news stories, so we'll take that as being more accurate.

At the AGM of the St John Auxiliary in April a new committee was elected: President, Alan James; vice presidents, Messrs. G. Gepps, Wagner and Mrs Setton; secretary, Mrs Mary Williams; treasurer, Mrs Evelyn Fricker; publicity officer, Mrs Wagner. Mr Abbott tendered his resignation as treasurer because of other commitments.

The Darwin Combined Division now had 22 male members and 11 females.[144]

In June, Divisional Officer Morris Setton was in charge of a recruiting drive aimed at doubling numbers from 30 to 60.

> *"The News will publish a series of articles telling the story of the brigade and its work, and there will be further publicity through radio stations, posters around the town and slides at picture theatres."* [145]

The Nursing section, which had started in July 1966 with four members, now had 14. They became the first St John Ambulance nurses in Australia to go out on ambulances and also

attended public duties at Rugby League matches, Australian Rules football, soccer, car and motor-cycle racing, marches and processions.

> *"At the Fannie Bay headquarters, the nurses attend to any injuries brought there and also act as communications officers. In the near future, they will be operating the two-way radios to be installed to give a faster and more efficient service to the public."*

There was an active social club and *"of special interest to the women and girls are demonstrations and lectures in make-up and grooming, cookery, dress-making which have been arranged for the near future."* [146]

As part of the recruitment drive the *NT News* published some information about the Brigade:[147]

- ◊ Superintendent Barrie Fricker, 28, started as a Cadet 18 years ago and served seven years as a Cadet Superintendent and another seven as a full time ambulance officer.
- ◊ Divisional Officer Morris Setton, 39, is an insurance company manager in Darwin, had seven years with St John in SA and is an ex-corporal of the West Torrens Transport Division and Marion Combined Division. He was an instructor in first aid classes in Adelaide and is a member of the combined training committee here.
- ◊ Others to play a leading part in the local organisation are Sergeant Gerry Goodhand, Corporal Ray Edwards, Nursing Officer Sister Marion Rowlands, Nursing Sergeant Kay Atkinson and Nursing Corporal Maravan Dyer.
- ◊ With 30 active members, a total of 1900 hours were worked in May for an average of more than 15 hours per member per week.
- ◊ No. 1 ambulance covered 199 miles, and No. 2 drove 573 miles to answer calls to 34 accidents and 13 sick calls, plus six cases of transporting people to hospital.
- ◊ The total of 53 calls did not include attendance at many sporting and other functions.
- ◊ Within the next fortnight the brigade expects to have two-way radios installed to maintain contact between headquarters and its ambulances.
- ◊ Sergeant Kay Atkinson, a first year nurse at the Darwin Hospital, operates the ambulance transport section at headquarters between 5.00pm and 6.00am on weekdays and 24 hours a day at week-ends.

The recruiting drive was a success with the Brigade exceeding its target and recruiting 33 new members.[148]

Fortunately for the Brigade, prominent Darwin builder Angelo Maddalozzo was a member of the St John Council and with his generosity the *Reg Marsh Building* was completed during the year completely free of debt. Floor tiling, curtain making and grass planting were done by Division and Auxiliary volunteers.

During the year the Auxiliary purchased a two-way radio network consisting of a base station at the *Reg Marsh Building* and two mobile units for the ambulances. This was assisted by the generosity of an Alice Springs resident, Mr Reg Harris. [149]

In her book, *"Saved Any Lives Today?"* Pat McQuillen wrote that her research found there were three men named Reg Harris in Alice Springs at that time, but was unable to discover which was the generous benefactor.

The base radio was initially installed in the crews' sitting room, which was the second room on the left, the first being a first aid and treatment room for the many people who called in. When the top floor was completed a corner was sectioned off, fitted out and the base radio relocated. This was called the watch-room and as well as communications was used for administration work, duty rosters and the like.[150]

The Brigade held its first annual ball at Government House in September, hosted by Administrator Roger Dean.[151] These became prestigious affairs with live bands, entertainers and visiting dignitaries in attendance. Mess dress was introduced for officers and the balls raised much needed funds for the Brigade.

On Sunday 26th November the Territory's inaugural first aid competition was held at the Darwin Town Hall, but out of six teams nominated, only two showed up. The *NT News* lists the teams that failed to front as being from the Commonwealth Railways, the Department of Civil Aviation, the Royal Life Saving Society, the Student Nurses' Board and Territory Enterprises Limited in Batchelor. The teams that competed were St John Ambulance and Red Cross.

Now, that adds up to seven teams for this ancient author, but we suppose the reporter was employed more for his journalistic skills than his mathematical prowess.

The competition was very keen with St John winning by the very narrow margin of three points, scoring 327 out of a possible 410. Superintendent Barrie Fricker said he had no idea why the other four teams failed to turn up for the competition.[152] St John donated the shield and Barrie Fricker was chief judge. See if you can work out why the other teams didn't show.

At the beginning of December a badly injured Australian Rules player was stretchered on a wooden door to the back of a ute for transport to Darwin Hospital because there was no ambulance in attendance. Barrie Fricker told the *NT News* that the ambulance had been withdrawn because officials had informed a crew that the *"ambulance was a bloody nuisance"*. [153]

After a schoolboy died on the ground some time ago the Brigade had been asked to have an ambulance stationed at Gardens Oval each Saturday. For the next three weeks an ambulance was in attendance parked near the entrance gates to allow for rapid exit, but cars kept parking so as to block the vehicle's getaway. The ambulance crew pointed out to officials on each of three Saturdays that cars must be prevented from blocking the quick exit of the ambulance.

On the fourth Saturday the same thing happened. Again the ambulance driver drew the attention of officials to the parking problem. He was told that the ambulance was *"a bloody nuisance, always in the way"*, and that the Football League had a number of qualified trainers who could handle any emergency.

In response to this blatant rudeness and lack of co-operation the ambulance had been withdrawn.

The Division's statistics for 1967 as published in the *Northern Territory News*: [154]

- ◊ Membership during the year increased from 20 to 75.
- ◊ Manhours worked (1967) 21,388, (1966) 11,219.
- ◊ Patients conveyed (1967) 720, (1966) 455.
- ◊ Public duties (1967) 220, (1966) 70.
- ◊ The two Divisional ambulances travelled 10,239 miles, attended 431 accidents and made 88 transport calls.
- ◊ The number of sickness calls dropped sharply to 176 in 1967, compared with 352 in 1966.
- ◊ The appointment of Dr Roger Gauthier as divisional surgeon would lead to a more comprehensive training program being available.

> *"Mr Fricker said the busier year followed a decision last February that the brigade would answer all calls between 5pm and 6am."*

However, the 1967 Annual Return had different figures with a total of 59 members that included: Surgeon Roger Gauthier, Superintendent Barrie Fricker, Nursing Officer Marion Rowlands, Divisional Officer Morris Setton, Transport Officer Raymond Edwards, Sergeant Gerald Goodhand, Nursing Sergeant Kay Atkinson, 4 Corporals and 49 Privates/ Nursing members.

Although Kevin Kettle is listed without any rank he was appointed Corps Staff Officer Grade IV for the Northern Territory Sub-District on 20th February 1968. There are names of known members, such as Marian Grayden, missing from the Annual Return in St John's archives, so that could be a preliminary copy with the final version lost.

The Cadet Division had 17 members, with Grant Keetley, Acting Superintendent; Ronald Whetsone, Sergeant; and Corporals Danny Pearsall and Lorraine Thomas. Garry Schoolmeester, who we will read more about later, is listed for the first time as a Private.

**1968**

Barrie Fricker complained about the lack of house numbers in Darwin streets. Ambulance crews often found it difficult to find houses on urgent call-outs and recently it had taken 15 minutes to locate a house where a man had suffered a heart attack, requiring CPR. Crews called out at night asked callers to make sure they left a porch light on, but to confuse the situation they often found a number of houses in the street had porch lights on at the same time.

Even where numbers were displayed, they were often too small or badly placed and there was confusion created by irregularity of numbers. *"Some people give a house number when they ring for an ambulance, and some give the block number."*

The Brigade wrote to the Darwin City Council asking for suggestions in solving the problem of house identification, and the meeting of Committees referred the question to the council's budget meeting.[155] For many years the Darwin City Council was notorious for deferring decisions and up to Cyclone Tracy many houses were still just marked with lot numbers rather than street numbers.

Due to prolonged absences interstate of Deputy Commissioner Langsford the 1967 annual inspection was deferred until 18th February 1968. At the parade Dr Langsford presented warrants of appointment to Superintendent Barrie Fricker and Divisional Officer Morris Setton.[156]

The ambulances were getting old, but the Brigade couldn't afford to replace them and extensive repairs were carried out to keep them going. The Ford and Holden had both been acquired second hand and the Kombi was now just a public duties vehicle.

Geoff Carter's memories of the Kombi: *"The Volkswagen could not be considered an ambulance. It was very, very poorly maintained. It had been an ambulance ... it was certainly quite old and very, very gutless."* [157]

Steve Peers told the author that the Kombi was still around when he joined in 1977, but it was very unpopular with its six volt electrical system. Warning lights didn't work properly and the vehicle was unreliable. [158] To help alleviate the problem, Superintendent Fricker brought up an ambulance on loan from South Australia in late May. [159]

The Darwin Combined Division formally adopted the South Australian *Ambulance Transport Nursing Manual*, with all members required to qualify in that as well as in First Aid.[160] Up until now ambulance crews had just been qualified first aiders, but with a need for more advanced training Garry Schoolmeester and Ron Whetstone became the first ambulancemen from Darwin to complete the new ambulance training course. Superintendent Barrie Fricker awarded their epaulettes in an historic ceremony on Thursday 13th June.[161]

Highlight of the St John Ambulance Brigade ball held at Government House in July was the graceful dancing of lovely Filipinas Gloria Garcia and Pining Brown. Sophie Havrylack was chosen as belle of the ball and presented with a sash by the Administrator, Mr Roger Dean.

Hostesses at the ball were Mrs Judith Gepp, Mrs Viviene Kohlweg and Mrs Sharon Watters. Guests at the official table were the Thai Foreign Minister His Excellency Dr Thanat Khoman and Madame Khoman. Others at the table were Mr and Mrs Roger Dean, Dr and Mrs Langsford, Mr and Mrs Alan James and Mr and Mrs Kevin Kettle.[162]

The annual First Aid competitions were held in September. The 1968 Annual Report doesn't say how many teams competed or who they were, only that the individual event was won by Phil Carne of Darwin Combined Division with the team event won by the NT Police team, led by Constable H. Shindler.[163]

In early November (official date 3rd February 1969) Divisional Officer Morris Setton became Superintendent when Barrie Fricker was promoted to Corps Staff Officer, which *"would enable him to devote more time to training activities for which there was a growing demand"*. He had a background in training with the St John Ambulance Association in Victoria.[164]

In a plea for more members jointly issued by the Administrator, Mr Roger Dean, and Deputy Commissioner Langsford, some more statistics were published. In 1966 St John ambulances had averaged only 459 miles a month in answer to an average of 30 calls, but this year ambulances had monthly averages of 1056 miles and 70 calls. August had been the record month so far with 2174 miles on 130 calls. Eighty-four percent of this year's calls had been to road accidents.

They said a decrease in road accidents would relieve the strain on the Brigade and if people could not become Brigade volunteers, they could at least help by exercising more care on the roads.[165]

Unfortunately, both pleas fell on deaf ears with a poor response to the recruiting drive and the usual driving standards on the roads.[166] Christmas was coming up when many people went south for their holidays, depleting Brigade numbers and the pool of potential volunteers.

CSO Kevin Kettle was awarded the Service Medal of the Order of St John at the annual parade in November, being the first recipient in the Northern Territory, although he had only arrived from Victoria in 1967. Warrants of appointment were presented to Divisional Surgeon Dr Roger Gauthier; Nursing Officer, Sister Marion Rowlands; and Divisional Officer, Ray Edwards. [167]

DCA radio technician Geoff Carter joined Darwin Combined Division in December, having been transferred in his job from Adelaide where he was an active St John member. He had spent a couple of months in Darwin in 1966 and in that time attended ambulance calls and public duties with the Division.

His extensive communications expertise came in very handy for the Brigade that was *"just in the throes of buying some new two-way radios for the ambulances. Obviously it fell on my shoulders to install it in the cars and to get it going."* The first thing he noticed was that the base radio antenna was just welded to the top of the flagpole. Geoff's pleas to have the antenna upgraded fell on deaf ears: *"We don't have the money. We can't do it."* [168]

In early December Kevin Kettle made a request to Adelaide to establish an Association Centre in Darwin. Adelaide promptly referred the matter back to Deputy Commissioner Langsford, and then it would need to go to Priory for approval. In May the following year it was reported as *"not recommended at present"*.[169] Another attempt to establish an Association was made in 1975 and it was finally accomplished in January 1977.

Just before Christmas the Brigade advised that duty hours had been extended to round the clock from Christmas Eve until New Year's Eve. Two crews of three members and a radio operator would be on duty at all times to cope with the expected increase of traffic accidents. *"After a break on New Year's Eve, the crews will return to 24-hour a day call from 5pm on December 31 until 6am on January 2."* It was expected that most of the 55 Darwin members would be called on at least once during the holiday break.[170]

Statistics for 1968:

Ambulances travelled 12,899 miles on 1,170 calls with 1,158 patients in 1968 compared with 10,288 miles on 763 calls with 796 patients in 1967. Brigade members attended 312 motor vehicle accidents in 1968 compared with 175 the year before. 30,086 voluntary hours were worked in 1968, 22,181 in 1967.

Ambulances travelled 1,045 miles in December, made 94 calls, carried 85 patients, attended 21 motor vehicle accidents and worked a total of 3,080 voluntary hours.[171]

The Darwin Combined Cadet Division's annual return had a stable membership of 17 Cadets, nine boys and eight girls, under the command of Superintendent Grant Keetley.

**1969**

The Brigade launched a fortnight long campaign in February to double the strength of its active membership. Divisional Officer Ray Edwards was in charge of the recruiting campaign that would have special features in the press and on the radio. Television had yet to come to Darwin, so could not be used.

The Brigade had 66 adults and 15 cadets and wanted to recruit at least another 50 adults and 20 cadets. The Division could no longer man the station on Ross Smith Avenue during the daytime on weekdays, but were on call with the ambulance service from 5.00pm on week days until 6.00am on the following morning, and from 5.00pm on Friday until 6.00am on Monday.

Two full crews slept over at the centre on call and each week there were 112 members on duty, all this with only 66 adults who were not always available due to work commitments.[172]

The Auxiliary was also desperate for members. Currently there were eight, meetings were often attended by three, and the situation was quite bad. After its heady days the Auxiliary was now being run mostly by Brigade members' wives, with CSO Kevin Kettle's wife Pat as secretary-treasurer.[173] Alan James was still the hard working president.

To support the recruiting campaign Morris Setton described the training of Brigade members: [174]

"Upon joining the division and subject to acceptance, a member is known as a trainee ambulanceman or as a trainee nurse. He joins a first aid class and is placed on the duty roster, performing his duties under the supervision of a fully qualified member.

"The course takes three months during which time he receives a thorough grounding in first aid. When he has obtained his first aid certificate, he goes through an ambulance transport nursing course which again lasts for three months and in which time he is thoroughly trained in all aspects of ambulance transport work."

Nursing Officer Marion Rowlands described the training and duties of female members: [175]

"The nurses undergo a house nursing course which also lasts three months and then go through the ambulance transport course. The most recent extension of duties for female members is helping the staff of the Darwin hospital by working in a ward. Nurses are also rostered for a weekly duty which entails being a part of the ambulance crew."

Qualified members could be put through a driving course to qualify as a restricted driver. As such "he is always with an unrestricted driver, cannot drive to an emergency call and cannot drive whilst a patient is in the ambulance".

A restricted driver could eventually apply for an unrestricted driver's permit which would then make him senior crew member. Qualified members were also required to undergo communications training.[176]

Female members could go out on the ambulances, but were not allowed to drive and there were some men who were opposed to women even going out at all. Crews consisted of two males and sometimes a female, but never just a male and female.[177] This attitude persisted into the late 1970s as remembered by Pat McQuillen when she was a member of Casuarina Combined Division in 1976:

> *Some of the fellows who didn't even like having women on the vehicles, they used to be really nasty to you. One particular gentleman, who I think everyone in Darwin at the time knew, was notorious for not being nice to ladies.* [178]

This attitude was also found when Pat moved to Alice Springs in 1978. The ambulance service was run by the hospital orderlies, but when they were busy they called in St John *"and the St John men went. Although I was a fully qualified ambulance officer and they were only first aiders they never did call me".* Pat put this down to the 'Berrimah Line syndrome' rather than sexist. She was from Darwin and not to be trusted.[179]

However, in Darwin a lot seemed to depend on who you went out with. At one time Pat was on a public duty with Vince Wright, the driving instructor when they got a call to a motor vehicle accident on a Code 1, or Code Red as it was in those days. When Vince told Pat to drive she replied that she couldn't drive Code 1. "You can now", was his reply and that's how she became a Code 1 driver.[180]

Cadet Superintendent Grant Keetley talked about the Cadets: [181]

"The cadets' first objective is to obtain their preliminary first aid and home nursing certificate. From there they work to gain 12 proficiency certificates, making them eligible to become a

Grand Prior cadet. After they complete 200 hours duty they receive a special service shield.

"Cadet training is broken up into weekly lectures, practical work and occasional weekend camps. On reaching the age of 16 a cadet who has an adult first aid certificate is transferred into the adult division."

The recruiting campaign brought in 14 new members in the first week and another six the following week, which was disappointing as the Brigade had hoped for at least 50. The latest five new members were gained from the second lecture in the current first-aid course.

These courses, which were open to the public, were conducted by a combined committee of St John and Red Cross, with NT Director of Health, Dr W.A. Langsford as chairman. There were three courses per year with each lasting three months. Divisional Surgeon Dr Roger Gauthier gave the latest lecture on anatomy and physiology.[182]

On Friday 28th February a second pole-sit began in an effort to raise $4000 needed to buy a new ambulance for the Brigade. 8DN radio announcer Ralph Bain and Jaycee member Dick Hooper climbed to the top of a 36 feet (a bit over 11 metres) pole in Raintree Park by fire brigade ladder at 5.00pm.

Up top was a canvas bunting shelter with *"most mod cons"*, including a portable toilet.[183] The shelter was necessary because it was still very much the wet season and the photo published in the *NT News* showed cloudy skies.

On the Monday a spokesman for Jaycees, who organised the highly successful appeal, said the final figure after all donations had been counted was $10,091.27, with the usual promised donations still outstanding.[184]

On Friday 28th March a cheque for $8517.82 was presented to Kevin Kettle by Ren Kelly from 8DN, bringing the total from the appeal to more than $9000, Apex having already donated $600.[185] That was more than double the target and a credit to the pole-sitters, radio 8DN, Jaycees and other organisers involved.

The Brigade wasted little time ordering their new ambulance from the Ford Motor Company in Victoria. It was a new prototype with *"fully automatic transmission on a basically truck-type chassis but with independent front wheel suspension, special smooth-riding rear suspension, special oversize tyres, a fibre-glass body, new arrangements for loading stretchers, and double-width rear doors which folded right back along the sides."*

Delivery in Melbourne had been promised 12 weeks from the date of ordering and the ambulance was expected in Darwin in about four months.[186] Unfortunately, this was an era of militant unionism with seemingly endless disputes in almost every industry. Strikes were long and protracted and timed to cause the maximum disruption to the community and damage to the economy.

The promised 12 weeks dragged out to 16 months with the Hartnett ambulance not being delivered until August 1970.[187] Tired of waiting, the Brigade bought a new Holden ambulance from South Australia with funds raised mainly by the Darwin North Rotary Club, taking delivery in June 1970.[188]

In May 1969 members of the RAAF No 2 Control and Reporting Unit (2CARU) at Lee Point donated the cost of a new radio aerial to the Brigade. LAC Laurie Gilchrist, who was also a volunteer with the Brigade, obtained permission from the Commanding Officer of 2CARU, Wing-Commander Stan Williamson, to collect donations from other members of the unit. All contributed and $102 was collected, the cost of a new aerial. The gift was handed over by Wing-Commander Williamson at 2CARU on behalf of the unit.[189]

Geoff Carter remembered differently in that one of their volunteers, Phil Carne, was in the RAAF with 2CARU at Lee Point. Somebody had bought a radio tower through disposal auctions and wanted around $100-$120 for it, *"and it was a very, very good tower"*. Although it wasn't actually a tower, but a 120ft guyed mast that sat on a pinnacle base.[190] The men at 2CARU raised the money, bought it for St John Ambulance and presented it as a Meccano set. Geoff approached the DCA line section to erect the tower after Division members dug the hole, and they did just that.

*"For the first year that I was here we dug the hole at the back of the ambulance station, and it was a huge hole, a very big hole, and went down significantly enough to provide a very good base foundation for the tower."* [191]

Despite their very, very big hole and very good base foundation the tower was felled in Cyclone Tracy early on Christmas morning 1974 – along with most of Darwin.

Geoff also recalled:

*"With the frequency that we were using on St John at the time (82.26 MHz) our ambulance service communications far exceeded most of the others (police, fire brigade, Health Department ambulance). There were areas, especially down the track getting towards Adelaide River, where our service which ... had a superior antenna would get through when sometimes the police and fire wouldn't."* [192]

Darwin Combined Cadet Division held their annual inspection on Sunday 1st June. The Division had doubled in number to a total strength of 34 members that now included eight Juniors. Inspecting officer Kevin Kettle commented: *"It is pleasing to see the keenness and standard of dress and conduct of this Cadet Division."*

This year's annual ball was held in the gardens of Government House on Friday 26th June. Tables and chairs were set out on the patio and guests at the official table were the Administrator Mr Roger Dean and Mrs Dean, St John Ambulance Deputy Commissioner Dr W.A. Langsford, Corps Superintendent Kevin Kettle and wife, and Dr and Mrs R. Lee. A special guest at the ball was Miss Myra Vatiliotis, Miss Charity Queen 1969, who was the St John candidate in the Festival Queen contest. Miss Elly Van Dudheusden was proclaimed belle of the ball and presented with her sash.[193]

End of financial year statistics were published in July for the previous 12 months up to 30th June:

The three ambulances travelled 14,814 miles, transported 1126 patients and answered 1151 calls. 237 calls were to motor vehicle accidents and 433 for public duties, the remainder being *"maternity calls, home accidents and 'mercy missions' to the city's sick and aged."* Brigade members worked 34,892 voluntary hours in the period.

Operating costs for the last financial year were $8000. The Brigade installed mobile two-way radio sets in its three vehicles, carried out improvements to Brigade headquarters and bought and equipped two new vehicles, one being the Hartnett Ford on order from Victoria.

This was all financed by money raised by St John volunteers, a $2000 Government subsidy, $2500 raised by Rotary North and the $9000 raised during the pole-sit earlier in the year.[194]

The Brigade was starting another recruiting drive to build up membership.

*"The brigade goes on standby at 5 o'clock every afternoon, when the Health Department ambulance goes off duty. The first shift answers all calls that come in up to 10.30 pm, and the five "live in" ambulance men handle all calls that come in through the night."* [195]

We have some information about the St John first aid station set up at the Darwin Show, at the main entrance directly opposite the secretary's office. As well as the Brigade's first aid post and radio communications, the St John Auxiliary had a refreshment bar with pies, pasties, sandwiches, tea and coffee, etc. Outside was a recruiting and information stall to sign on any new members.[196]



Kevin Kettle, Dr Roger Gautier, Dr W.A. Langsford, Roger Dean, Barrie Fricker, Grant Keetley, Morris Setton

Darwin's Mayor Harry Chan, president of the Legislative Council, and St John Councillor died in Darwin Hospital on Tuesday 5th August.[197] Harry Chan Avenue is named in honour of this very popular and well-loved man.

Alderman Bill Richardson succeeded him as Mayor and as St John Council secretary,[198] but also died in office in 1971.

First aid competitions were on again at the end of September, still with only two teams competing. This time the scores were even closer than in 1967 with St John beating a police team by half a mark in the team section, and the police turning the tables by the same winning margin in the individual competition.

The competition was organised by Barrie Fricker and Kevin Kettle who were *"disappointed that there were not more teams"*. The report didn't say who the judges were or if again they couldn't understand why no other teams competed.[199]

This little gem was discovered during research for this book. On Monday 6th October 1969 an *NT News* story proclaimed:

> *"More trained people were needed to treat road accident victims in the Territory, executive officer of the Automobile Association of the NT, Mr Fred Brown said yesterday. Mr Brown said that in view of the increased rate of accidents in the Territory, there was need for another voluntary ambulance service to supplement work done by the St John Ambulance Brigade."* [200]

Naturally, the Brigade was unimpressed and neither was your author, more than 40 years later. This simplistic solution ignored the fact that St John Ambulance was engaged in a constant struggle for members and funding to carry out its operations. A second voluntary ambulance service wouldn't increase the pool of potential members or available funds, but rather exacerbate the situation with one, or even both organisations giving up and going out of business. Darwin was just too small for competing volunteer ambulance services.

Mr Brown got his name in the papers – and this book – and it's hoped he was happy with that.

First aid training courses were up to 14 weeks, with two hour weekly classes. There was often a high drop-out rate which was unsatisfactory to both Brigade and trainees. A course was held over two weekends in December which would have hopefully solved this problem. Marks still had to be confirmed by Adelaide before certificates could be issued.

The Division was so anxious for new members over the holiday period that: *"Those who have gained provisional passes will be issued with uniforms ... and attend Wednesday night's parade. They will also be rostered immediately for ambulance duty."* Divisional officer of training and recruiting, Mr Ray Edwards, expected the pass mark to be very high.[201]

The Brigade's ambulances provided a 24-hour emergency service all over the holiday period, starting 1.00 pm Christmas Eve.[202]

On the 27th December the *NT News* published a lengthy tribute to St John Ambulance, written by staff journalist Terry Dahlenburg, who also happened to be a St John volunteer. Some points in that story worth repeating are: [203]

◊ Deputy Commissioner Dr W.A. Langsford joined St John as a cadet in Auckland, New Zealand and graduated to the adult division. He served as a medical orderly during WW2 and came to Darwin in 1952. *"Assisted and encouraged by the then Assistant Administrator, Mr Reg Marsh, he helped establish St John here and was later invited to join as Deputy Commissioner."*

The trouble with that last statement is that neither Langsford nor Marsh are mentioned in any records or newspaper reports about St John in the 1950s and were not nominated for the original Association's Council. If they both *"helped establish St John here"* it was very quiet and in the background.

◊ CSO (Administration) Kevin Kettle joined in 1946 when he was nine and came to Darwin in 1967, being appointed Corps Staff Officer Grade IV for the Northern Territory Sub-District on 20th February 1968 and promoted to CSO Grade III on 4th June 1969.

Additional information about Kevin Kettle: He was a police officer who worked purely in a staff role in St John, never on the ambulances. Geoff Carter said: *"The main driver of all the work here in Darwin, at the time I got here (in 1968) was Kevin Kettle. He clearly was the OIC of everything ... Kevin was certainly the driving force."* [204]

- ◊ CSO (Training) Barrie Fricker joined as a junior cadet 23 years ago (in 1946) and graduated to the adult section in 1958. He was with the Victorian Civil Ambulance and Melbourne Harbour Trust Ambulance for a total of seven years, moved to South Australia and became involved with cadet training for two years, then came to Darwin.
- ◊ Divisional Superintendent Morris Setton joined St John in Adelaide in 1960, rose to corporal and came to Darwin in 1966 after service at West Torrens and Marion.
- ◊ Divisional Officer Ray Edwards was responsible for the recent successful recruiting and training drive and is 2-I-C of the division. He joined in November 1966 when Darwin had only eight members, growing to about 60 members today. Membership has been as high as 90 but fluctuates between 50-80. The latest recruiting drive resulted in 18 new members.
- ◊ Divisional Officer Barry Matthews is in charge of transport and responsible for keeping the vehicles in top condition. He is also responsible for the rostering of crews for ambulance duty and for public duties, including football, races, drag races and walkathons, ensuring that enough personnel are on duty.
- ◊ Grant Keetley is Superintendent in charge of Cadets training and administration and has been with St John for nine years after joining as a cadet.

However, annual returns have Grant joining in 1958 at the age of eight, so this would make eleven years, not nine. He was also Acting Superintendent at a very young age from 1963 and Superintendent in 1968.

- ◊ Cadet training here seems to be a family affair because Grant's assistant is his wife, Rosemary (formerly Rankin). Rosemary has charge of the nursing section of the cadet division and acts as assistant administrator.
- ◊ The other female officer is Sister Marian Grayden, tutor sister at Darwin Hospital and nursing divisional officer in charge of training with Ray Edwards. Marian joined St John in 1967.
- ◊ Corporal Phillip Carne is Brigade secretary and also secretary of the social club. Phillip, a radio technician with the RAAF, joined St John in 1968 and was promoted to corporal in February this year.
- ◊ Mr Mick Paspalis gave the division a wonderful Christmas present – a $2200 Toyota panel van.

Statistics for 1969: Ambulances attended 1,101 calls and transported 1,090 patients over 14,590 miles. Volunteers attended 227 motor vehicle accidents, 394 public duties and worked 28,879 hours.[205]

**1970**

There was a 24 hour strike by non-medical staff at the Darwin Hospital at the beginning of March. Red Cross organised sixty volunteers to take over duties such as laundry, cleaning, cooking and serving meals, washing up and some driving.[206] The next newspaper report said that one hundred volunteers turned up to work at the hospital.

The orderlies were also on strike, but the hospital did have a trained ambulance crew available. St John placed two ambulances and a radio operator on standby for the duration, but didn't get a single callout.[207]

The following Sunday a large accident scenario was staged on the access road to the Darwin High School. The *"scene of carnage"* was a collision between a bus loaded with passengers and a car with 40 casualties suffering various injuries.

> *"Plastic replicas of serious external injuries were stuck onto the victims, and people 'acted out' their injuries to make the exercise as realistic as possible."*

Three ambulances ran a shuttle service between the scene and a makeshift hospital at St John headquarters on Ross Smith Avenue. St John volunteers attended the scenario dressed in anything from full uniform to shorts and thongs and miniskirts.

The scenario was so realistic that a rubber-necking driver ran into the back of another vehicle, but fortunately nobody was injured in the real accident.[208]

NT Administrator and St John Council President Roger Dean finished his term of office on the 3rd March and was succeeded in both positions by Fred Chaney.

Long serving Auxiliary president Alan James retired to Queensland in 1969 and by the time of the April 1970 AGM the Auxiliary's membership was down to Mr David McGlogan as president, Mrs Margaret Setton acting treasurer, Mrs Pat Kettle and two members, Mrs June Carne and Mrs Barbara Griffith.[209]

The result of the AGM isn't known, but just over a week later the Brigade started another recruiting and fund raising drive. The Auxiliary wanted wage earners to donate ten cents per week, tax free and the Brigade held an open day at Ross Smith Avenue headquarters. The success of the Auxiliary's ten cents per week fund raiser isn't in the available records, though. Ten cents doesn't sound much these days and even allowing for the massive inflation of the mid 1970s and '80s it wasn't a great amount back then, either.

St John had recently expanded services to Hayes Creek, half way between Katherine and Darwin and were now getting up to one hundred calls per month, compared with ten a month five years ago. With the onset of the dry season and the start of most sporting fixtures and other events the Brigade would be stretched to cover all duties.[210]

The membership drive was successful with 21 new recruits who were put through a concentrated weekend training course followed by examinations the following weekend. [211]

Here's another of those 'shake your head in wonder' stories:

A lady bitten by a centipede called out an ambulance twice in the one night in June. On the first call she was transported to hospital, kept under observation and returned home. At 4.00am the lady was in such unbearable pain that an ambulance was called again. Taking her to hospital the crew diverted to drop her children off with a friend.

> *"The ambulance officers were just terrific. Normally with volunteer workers they do what is absolutely necessary and don't go out of their way to do more."* [212]

We just couldn't believe that last statement reported to have been made by a patient who had obviously never done any volunteer work herself. As a volunteer of many years experience,[213] your author found the opposite to be true. It's the volunteer who puts in the extra effort and works long hours without a break when the paid worker wants to take the correct smoko and meal breaks and to knock off at the designated time. Volunteers don't go on strike or hold industrial disputes. The volunteer works by choice, the paid worker by necessity.

Meanwhile, the Brigade was still waiting to take delivery of the long overdue Ford ambulance and tired of waiting had bought another Holden to replace the older 1954 appliance which was quite worn out.[214] The long awaited four berth Ford Hartnett ambulance finally arrived in August. [215]

This was described by Rod Bramley as a monster with a mind of its own that took a lot of physical and mental effort just to steer it in the required direction. Major modifications were carried out that included sway bars, different springs and wide tyres. Drivers were required to have a special St John licence to drive the beast. Needless to say, they never bought another.[216]

The annual ball was held at Government House at the end of June. Mrs Rosemary Keetley was presented the Belle of the Ball sash and given a bottle of champagne by the Administrator, Mr Fred Chaney.[217]

The Darwin Combined Cadet Division held a parade and enrolment ceremony on Friday 25th September. Twenty new cadets, smartly dressed in their new uniforms, were enrolled by Deputy Commissioner Langsford and CSO Kevin Kettle. Nola Dacy was named Cadet of the Year and promoted to sergeant. John Henry and Jennifer Bagley were also promoted as NCOs.[218]

It was competition time again in mid October with a scenario of a rock climber having lost his footing and seriously injured after a heavy fall. Teams were from Nightcliff Boy Scouts, Civil Defence and St John Ambulance.

The team event was won by Bob Collins, Robin Clayton, and Malcolm Doyle of St John. Individual winner was Ron Henry from Nightcliff Boy Scouts, followed by Ian Holland of St John and Dennis Grant of Civil Defence.[219]

During the year the Brigade's volunteer ambulance service was set back an hour, starting at 6.00pm in the evening and still finishing at 6.00am week days when taken over by the Department of Health.

Motor vehicle accident (MVA) statistics released in mid November showed the carnage on the roads. In 1967 St John ambulance crews attended 175 motor vehicle accidents, 312 in 1968, a drop to 227 in 1969 and so far this year had attended 208 to the end of October.

*"These figures are only for the times the division is on call – 6pm to 6am weekdays and throughout all weekends and public holidays and could probably be doubled by adding the calls answered by the Health Department ambulance service at the hospital."* [220]



The 1970 Annual Parade



***Left:*** The Territory's second Service Medal of the Order of St John was awarded to CSO Barrie Fricker [221]

***Below:*** CSO Barrie Fricker and Deputy Commissioner Langsford



Morris Setton transferred to the Reserve in September and on 18th December Divisional Officer Bill Keelan was promoted to Superintendent of Darwin Division.

Statistics for 1970:

Ambulances attended 2,197 calls and 2,829 patients were transported over 28,056 miles. St John volunteers attended 255 motor vehicle accidents, 150 public duties and worked 26,809 hours.[222]

**1971**

Department of Health ambulances based at the Darwin Hospital were the victim of budget cuts. Of the three ambulances in use and a dubious fourth on standby, only two were fitted with radio equipment with a maximum range of about five miles. Replacement of these radios and new sets for the other vehicles was deferred for the third year running.[223]

The Darwin Combined Division experienced severe financial difficulties during the year, together with the usual cry for new members. A population explosion in the northern suburbs put heavier demands on the Brigade's services with members working longer hours, more than double for the same period last year – 2513 hours in May this year compared with 1171 in May 1970. Membership was fairly much the same with 56 officers, NCOs, first aiders, drivers and nurses.[224]

Financial difficulties were brought about when the $2000 annual Government subsidy was withdrawn and the mid June newspaper report implies that this was before the expected expiry date of 30th June.[225]



The 1971 combined annual inspection and church service was conducted jointly by Anglican Bishop Mason (*left*) and Catholic Bishop O'Loughlin (*right*). Dr Langsford is in the centre, standing.

The St John Council for the NT had been forced to borrow $1000 from St John in South Australia just to keep going. *"To put it mildly, we are financially embarrassed."* Publicity of the Brigade's plight brought in some very generous donations to keep the volunteer service operating, but *"it was very much a 'hand in mouth' existence."* [226] On 1st July the *NT News* reported that the Department of Health made an interim grant of $4500 to get the Brigade out of difficulty.

The St John Council was evaluating the cost of providing fulltime ambulance services in Darwin which would mean paid staff during the day and volunteers at night. This would require financial help from the Government and an annual subscription scheme similar to down south.

"Darwin is the only major city I know where ambulance services are provided free after hours," said Council Treasurer Peter Fewell.[227]

Divisional Superintendent Bill Keelan said that the Division needed more equipment and training aids, namely three portable oxy-viva units costing around $300 each and resuscitation dummies, training charts, slides and films, movie and slide projectors and Anatomical Annes. Late in the year, a grant from the Government enabled the Division to buy the training aids. Tyres for the ambulances were generously provided free of charge by Goodyear, BM Auto Sales, Que Noy Tyre Service and John White Tyre Service.[228]

The current recruiting drive was disappointing with only five new members signed up, but it was hoped to gain more from the first aid course about to start with 20 candidates. Courses were as long as 13 weeks with one lecture per week and a dropout rate of about 50 per cent.[229] In previous times of crisis courses had been held over two weekends to overcome the heavy attrition rate and accelerate new recruits being put on duty.

Now that financial problems were eased by the new $4500 annual Government subsidy it was time to think about expanding into a 24-hour ambulance

service for Darwin. The Department of Health was considering submissions for a permanent service by St John that would also be discussed at a meeting when Assistant Director General of the Department of Health, Mr D. Dunlop, visited Darwin.[230]

With an ever increasing workload needing more members another public first aid course was held at the St John station in early September. Public first aid courses had previously been run in conjunction with the Red Cross, but were now completely taken over by St John. This course was nine weeks duration with an examination at the end.[231] However, from a class of 40 the Brigade only recruited one new member.[232]

The cry for new members was constantly repeated without success and in December the Brigade was down to 54 volunteer drivers, first aiders and nurses. With more and more calls and a fast approaching holiday season, members were being sorely overworked.[233]

The cadets didn't have the same membership problems as the adults and in September steps were taken to establish a cadet division at Casuarina. A successful class was conducted by Divisional Officer (Cadets) Bob Collins and Private Godfrey Lowe, with hopes of having a division registered in the near future.[234] By mid October they had 12 boys who met at the Alawa primary school on Friday nights at 7.00pm.[235]

The Casuarina Ambulance Cadet Division was registered on 20th February 1972 with the Casuarina Nursing Cadet Division registered on 20th October 1973. The Nursing Cadets were started by Frank Simmons, assisted by Sister Maureen Holden.



Divisional Superintendent Bill Keelan, Deputy Commissioner Spike Langsford, CSO Barrie Fricker

Maureen, better known by her later married name of Mandy Langdon, became Officer in Charge of the Nursing Cadets.

Statistics for 1971:

The Brigade in Darwin worked 28,673 duty hours, being 26,659 transport and 2014 public duties. Ambulances attended 242 road accidents, 367 other accidents and transported 3287 patients a total 36,163 miles. [236]

**1972**

An interesting little story in the *NT News* in February stated in its last paragraph that *"a recent innovation was the launching of television's first aid classes by Corps Staff Officer Barrie Fricker on NTD-8."* Television was new to Darwin and the Brigade was quick to take advantage of this medium.[237]

The story also said there were 35 cadets under Superintendent Grant Keetley, who had held the job since 1963, and more were needed in the 14-16 age group.

> *"After qualifying in first aid, new cadets could then gain proficiency certificates in such things as civil defence, child welfare, child minding, map reading, desert survival, home nursing and signals."*

A public first aid course started Monday night, 14th February with a record enrolment of 76, ages ranging from teens to fifties. The course was over ten weeks with examinations at the end. Training officer Sister Marian Grayden said St John was pleased with the result, but it was too early to say how many recruits would come from the class.[238] A few days later, Superintendent Bill Keelan gave out some Brigade statistics and said that enrolment for the first aid class had swollen to 90.

Marian Grayden wrote in her History: *"One large intake – just under 100 people surprised all – coped with practically by an instructor to each syndicate of 10 people."* [239]

In 1962 the Brigade had one ambulance – the VW Kombi – that carried 65 patients over 1275 miles on 61 calls. By 1971 the Division's four ambulances carried 3287 patients over 36,163 miles

on 2626 calls. They also had a utility for general purpose work.[240]

With a population explosion in the northern suburbs there was a need to service this area and in May CSO Kevin Kettle announced a plan to build a $60,000 station at Casuarina in Dripstone Road near the new police station. But first there was a need to raise $30,000 to match the Government's dollar for dollar subsidy and there were no immediate plans for fund raising. A new Division would also be established at Casuarina.[241]

With the closure of its mine the Mt Bundey Social Club wound up in June and donated their cash balance of $1778.28 to St John Ambulance. This money was to go into the Casuarina building fund.[242]

South Australian District Staff Officer and secretary of the Brigade, Mr Wally Thompson and chief training officer, Mr Jack Revitt arrived in Darwin on Thursday 6th July and presented a new Holden Belmont ambulance they had brought up from Adelaide. It had travelled by rail to Alice Springs and from there driven to Darwin. The notorious 'south road' was still unsealed and the railway terminated at Alice Springs.

The news story describes the $4000 vehicle as being air-conditioned and the first of the Division's fleet of four to have an electric warning device. The device wasn't specified, but was most likely a tone horn or siren because there's a news story about the ambulances being fitted with red flashing lights on 1st January the following year.

The Rotary Club of Darwin North, the Speedway Ladies Association and the Darwin Festival Committee had contributed *"heftily"* towards the cost of the vehicle.[243]

At a ceremony at Government House on Wednesday 5th July, the Administrator Mr Fred Chaney invested CSO Kevin Kettle as a Serving Brother in the Order of St John.[244] This was the first investiture in the Territory with those of Roger Dean and Spike Langsford carried out in South Australia. It is interesting in that Mr Chaney was not a member of the Order himself. Nowadays, Administrators are invested as Knights or Dames of the Order soon after they agree to become Deputy Prior of the Order in the Northern Territory.

Fred Chaney succeeded Roger Dean as President of the St John NT Council, but the title of Deputy Prior was still in the future and Patron had lapsed with the advent of the St John Council in 1965.

The following weekend the St John annual ball was held at the Darwin Civic Centre. Members and guests attending from Adelaide River were Wesley and Nancy Whitmore, Eddie and Hilda Gill, Leon and Violet Portier, and Bronte Roebuck. This seemed to be a much more informal affair than previous balls held at Government House, with not a uniform or mess dress in sight. Or did the press photographer just go for the out-of-towners this year, ignoring the more formal Darwinites? Unfortunately, the available newspaper photos on microfilm are too poor quality to reproduce here.[245]

Later in the month employees of the Darwin City Council, including the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk, agreed to make weekly donations of ten cents to the St John Ambulance Brigade building fund. This seems more a 'feel good' gesture than practical, with ten cents being a trifling amount. It's of little value today and was no big deal in 1972, either.[246]

Bill Keelan was promoted to Corps Staff Officer Grade IV on 13th September, being replaced as Divisional Superintendent by Geoff Carter. Other promotions on the same date were: Frank Simmons, sergeant; Rod Bramley, corporal; Peter Winckler, corporal.

At the Darwin Division's annual inspection and church parade on Sunday 24th September, Deputy Commissioner Langsford presented warrants of appointment to Divisional Officer Pat Calway and Cadet Training Officer Godfrey Lowe of Casuarina. Father Healey of the Catholic Church and the Anglican Bishop in the Territory, Bishop Kenneth Mason conducted the church service.[247]

On 6th November Deputy Commissioner Langsford went on leave and from there to another position in Canberra.[248] Doctor Colin Mills was appointed Deputy Commissioner the following year.

That was the end of Dr Langsford's informative Annual Reports, there being none for 1972, or until Alan Bromwich took over as Commissioner in 1978.

There were new revamped ambulance competitions in December with teams vying for the Alan Bromwich Cup. Teams from the Navy, Army, RAAF, Civil Defence, St John Ambulance Brigade and Department of Health competed.

This competition came about through the Hospital's head orderly, Mr A. Ganley, trying to upgrade the Hospital's ambulance service and the training of the orderlies. The cup was Ganley's suggestion to improve levels through competition and rivalry.[249]

The scenario was an industrial accident where two workmen had fallen off a collapsed scaffolding pulling live electric wires with them. One was trapped under the wreckage and the other electrocuted. To add to the drama the "mother" of one of the victims had to be calmed and the "father" developed a heart attack.

The RAAF team won the event, judged by Alan Bromwich, RAAF medical officer Squadron Leader Thompson, and Civil Defence director Rex Berriman.[250]

Statistics for the year:

The four ambulances carried 3,116 patients a total 35,570 miles on 2,481 calls including 278 motor vehicle accidents. Members also attended 151 public duties and worked a total of 27,790 voluntary hours.[251]

**1973**

On the 1st January the Brigade's ambulances were fitted with red flashing lights to make them more visible to other motorists.[252]

A recruiting drive in January attracted more than 50 new members and to *"establish a permanent nucleus of members and stabilise station strength,"* a second drive was planned for February with a training course to start in March.[253]

The St John Council brought in an ambulance subscription service starting on Sunday 1st April, saying that *"services provided by the St John Ambulance Brigade in the Darwin and Adelaide River areas will not be free"* after Tuesday 1st May.

Charges were $10 for a callout plus 50 cents a mile. It was hoped that in addition to paying costs for the ambulance service, it would also provide enough money to start work on the new Casuarina Centre.

To manage the subscription scheme the Brigade had its first fulltime paid employee, Mrs Margaret Beardwood.[254] The new scheme got off to a poor start and by mid June the Brigade had only signed up 120 subscribers and received payment of just $24.50, having sent out bills for more than $1300.[255]

In April, Director of Health Dr Des Travers disclosed in the Legislative Council that the joint ambulance service provided by the Health Department and St John Ambulance was under review. In answer to a question by Member for Nightcliff, Mrs Dawn Lawrie, he said *"six ambulances were on order to the department, and if any decision was made to alter the service, the information would be tabled."* [256]

The Institute of Ambulance Officers (Australia) was formally launched in Canberra on 30th July 1973. Dr Langsford had transferred to Canberra the previous year and was ideally situated to represent the Territory at this inaugural meeting. CSO Kevin Kettle joined him and both were instrumental in founding a division of the Institute in the NT. Both were Founder Fellows and were the first NT councillors of the institute.

Initial committee was Kevin Kettle, Clement "Eddie" Edwards (Adelaide River), Cathy Milne as Secretary, A. Ganley (Darwin Hospital Head Orderly), Sister Marian Grayden, Sister Ellen Pitts (Adelaide River), Grant Keetley as Chairman.[257]

The Casuarina Nursing Cadet Division was registered on 2nd October 1973, Superintendent Sister Maureen Holden.

Ambulance competitions for the annual Alan Bromwich Cup were held in October and won by the team of Corporal Rod Bramley and ambulance

attendant Phil Langdon of St John Ambulance.[258]

Other teams were from the Army, RAAF and Department of Health. There is no record of the competition ever being held again and the Alan Bromwich Cup is held by St John Ambulance in the Bernie Kilgariff Complex, Alice Springs.

At the annual parade on Saturday 27th October, Deputy Commissioner Mills said that the Brigade had *"asked the Government for financial assistance to begin a full-time service in Darwin"* and hoped the new Casuarina centre would be opened the following year.

> *"Highlights of the brigade's expansion in the past year were strengthening of the Alice Springs division, the opening of a cadet division at Casuarina and a senior division at Batchelor and change-over to a paid service with the introduction of a subscriber scheme."* [259]

**1974**

Darwin Division promotions on 4th January: Rod Bramley, sergeant; and corporals James Quigley, Philip Harrison, Phil Langdon, Peter Brearley.

Cadet Superintendents John O'Donohoe (Darwin), and Frank Simmons (Casuarina) sent out a call in February for more boys and girls aged 11 to 16 to enrol. Training at the Fannie Bay ambulance station and at the Jingili Primary School covered first-aid, home nursing, ambulance transport nursing, fire-fighting, rescue, survival and air crash procedure. After ten weeks the cadets would be eligible to join the Brigade and attend public duties with qualified crews.[260]



Rod Bramley, Alan Bromwich and Phil Langdon with the Bromwich Cup

Appointments made on 17th April: Dr Alan Bromwich, Corps Surgeon Grade III; Boyne Litchfield, Superintendent Batchelor Combined Division. The Division was registered on 4th April.

The Brigade had its usual membership problems during the year, but also some good fortune. In August, Mr Albert Albany, an *"English migrant who made his fortune in land south of Darwin"* gave the Brigade $30,000 which would go into the building fund for the new Casuarina Centre, now estimated to cost $200,000.[261] Like the escalating costs for the *Reg Marsh Building*, the final price for the post cyclone Casuarina Centre was to blow out to $750,000.

A Corps staff meeting in August noted that there were problems with all Divisions outside Darwin and that they should be given support before any new divisions were formed, especially Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.[262] Unfortunately, coming events meant that they didn't get that support until much later and both Divisions almost failed as a result. The same meeting recorded that Corps staff were visiting Katherine and Gove (Nhulunbuy) *"to discuss with interested people the potential for future establishment of new divisions."*

At the annual parade on Sunday 11th August, Deputy Commissioner Dr Colin Mills told members *"that the Australian Government was to be asked for more money and possibly a full-time ambulance service."* [263] The August Corps staff meeting recorded: *"Dr Mills, Mr K. Kettle and Mr Keelan to meet and prepare contingency plan for a full-time ambulance service with paid staff."* [264]

One week later Mr Matt Carroll, First Assistant Director-General, General Policy Planning and Legislation and Mr Peter Griffin, Director of Finance came up from Canberra for discussions with the St John Council on plans for the Brigade to take over all ambulance services in Darwin. It was hoped that this would be accomplished with St John taking over by Christmas.[265] This was followed by a letter from St John Council Chairman Alec Fong Lim to Minister for Health Dr Everingham seeking financial support for a paid manager, typist and training officer in preparation for a complete take-over of the Darwin

ambulance service by 1st July 1975.[266]

*See Appendix F for more information.*

Geoff Carter was reluctantly promoted to Corps Staff Officer (Training) in August and was replaced by John O'Donohoe who had previously been Superintendent of the Darwin Cadets. DO Helen Sanders now took over as OAC of the Darwin Combined Cadet Division.

A new Holden V8 three-berth ambulance was delivered to the Brigade in late October, having been driven from Brisbane by CSO Geoff Carter. It had two standard stretchers with a third fitted to the roof on the left hand side. The new ambulance came with the latest piece of equipment, a chair to lift patients up or down difficult stairways. [267]

Land for the new Casuarina ambulance headquarters on the corner of Dripstone Road and Goodman Street was granted under a special purpose lease on 26th October.

As though prompted by Fate the *Northern Territory News* had a double page feature just before Christmas about a rescue training course just completed by Brigade male and female volunteers. Emergency Services instructor Frank Simmons was quoted: [268]

> *"It's no use standing around waiting for somebody else to bring out your patients – they have a better chance if you can go in and do the rescue work yourself."*

For eight weeks St John members learned how to rescue people from the top of buildings, down ship's holds and manholes, out of burning buildings, and from the top and bottom of sheer cliffs.

Journalist Terry Dahlenburg finished her piece with the prophetic line: *"It also proved that if a disaster does hit Darwin, St John Ambulance members, like the Boy Scouts, will be prepared."*

Disaster did hit six days later when Cyclone Tracy ripped Darwin apart on Christmas Eve. St John Ambulance volunteers were more than just prepared, they were magnificent.

# Chapter 2
# Cyclone Tracy

This story about Cyclone Tracy is a composite with information obtained from reports written by Grant Keetley, Teerse Stal and John Pohl; NT Archives Service oral history series NTRS 226, Items TS 831 & TS 1015, and *Outback Ambulance*, December 1994.

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A common story to come out from Darwin before Christmas Eve was the general complacency of the population about the approaching cyclone. Earlier in the month cyclone Selma had veered harmlessly away and it was felt that this would do the same. Besides, it was Christmas Eve and that meant party time in good old Darwin town.

The Bureau of Meteorology had issued cyclone warnings all day and it wasn't party time for DO Rod Bramley. With Superintendent O'Donohoe on leave in Adelaide he was in charge of the Division, a role he took seriously. At 1.00pm the Brigade was informed by Civil Defence that if the cyclone continued its present course Darwin would get a direct hit. Rod knocked off his job at the Motor Vehicle Registry to spend the afternoon at the ambulance centre making preparations until the duty crew arrived at 6.00pm. The Brigade put into operation their Emergency Disaster Plan, extra staff were called in to assist the rostered crews, medical stores and vehicles were checked.

Other Brigade members were contacted and told to stay at home until the cyclone passed and then report to the Ambulance Centre if possible. If they couldn't get through they were to administer first aid treatment in their local areas until they could make contact with the Ambulance Centre.

By the time the sleep-on shift arrived at 10.30pm it was obvious that the cyclone was heading straight for Darwin. The police rang to advise they had recalled all their cars and that the ambulance service should do the same and not attend any further callouts as it was now too dangerous to be out on the road.

CSO Grant Keetley rang the Ambulance Centre just before midnight to advise that he would be arriving in about an hour's time. Kevin Kettle left the Centre just after midnight to go on duty at Police HQ on the Disaster Co-ordinating Committee as Ambulance Liaison Officer.

When Grant arrived with his wife and two children they saw that the Centre was flooded with about 7.5cm of water flowing through the ambulance bay. They joined the crew upstairs to wait out the first part of the storm. At the station now were Rod Bramley, Grant Keetley, Bill Keelan, James Quigley, Pat and Lindsay King, Tony Bowland, Garry Schoolmeester, Denis Tuckerman and Peter Stenson. Also taking shelter were Grant Keetley's wife and children and Rod Bramley's wife.

Not long after, at about 1.00am the upper floor was awash from horizontal rain streaming through the closed louvre windows, and then the power failed. At about 1.40am an air-conditioner was blown in across the watchroom, narrowly missing the duty radio operator, Nurse Pat King. The crew then spent the next 30 minutes trying unsuccessfully to cover the hole and to protect the communications equipment against the fury of the cyclonic winds and rain.

Then the first call came through for help – somebody nearby in Freer Street, Fannie Bay, was bleeding badly from extensive lacerations caused by flying glass. It was impossible to leave the station in those conditions, so instructions for treatment were given over the phone.

During the calm as the eye of the cyclone passed over, Grant Keetley and Rod Bramley drove out to attend their patient, but were unable to find the house. Street signs were blown away and the roads heavily littered with swirling debris. When they returned to base a decision was made to relocate downstairs for increased safety should the roof get blown away. The crew room was a shambles, flooded with a thick layer of mud on the floor, but this could be coped with until it was safe to leave.

As they were moving their communications

equipment, water, gas lights and gas stove downstairs during the still calm period, at about 3.00am, the radio tower collapsed onto the corner of the roof and one of the ambulances, severely damaging the vehicle. A quick damage survey was carried out and Bill Keelan, Garry Schoolmeester and James Quigley left to return to their homes. During the lull two DCA radio technicians who were living in the Ross Smith Hostel behind the Centre came across and offered to restore the radio communications. They were advised to return to their shelter and come back when the cyclone had passed.

Then as the eye passed and the winds resumed their fury it became a frightening battle to prevent the doors from blowing in with the danger the winds would demolish the building. During the blow the crew *"decided on a plan of action, if we were still here after it passed over".*

The winds died down about 6.00am on Christmas Day and about fifteen minutes later the exhausted group emerged to survey the damage. Radio communications were out due to the fallen aerial, two ambulances were damaged, the watch-room was flooded, telephones were out, and louvre banks on the rear side of the upstairs hall had caved in.

Immediate priorities were:

- ◊ To re-establish communications with the hospital, police and fire brigade.
- ◊ Establish communications between base and ambulances .
- ◊ Find crews for the ambulances.
- ◊ Round up volunteers to staff the first aid post and casualty clearing centre, which soon became overcrowded as people started coming in for treatment.
- ◊ Provide accommodation, food and drinking water for the crews.
- ◊ Provide some form of sanitation.
- ◊ Get electricity for the centre.

The DCA technicians came straight over and radio communications were restored by 8.30am. Geoff Carter remembered:

> *"... in the last of '74 I purchased from a place out near Ironstone Lagoon a radio tower and another antenna. I'm not quite sure, I think we were anticipating putting that down at Adelaide River, but this was a triangular mast; it was a proper self-supporting tower. I do remember a couple of trainees that I'd had up, working with Civil Aviation. They were staying at Ross Smith Hostel and they actually, on Christmas Day, stood up this second-hand radio tower and put an antenna on top and re-established communications for St John."* [1]

Ambulances were checked, ignitions dried and made operational by 6.20am. The ambulances were sent out straight away, fortunately finding that earthmoving equipment was already out clearing tracks through the debris on major roads. One ambulance was sent to Police HQ to provide a radio link between the services, and the Police supplied a two-way radio that was placed in the Centre's radio room. A Health Department Ambulance linked the Hospital into the system. No communications were established with the Fire Brigade.

The First Aid treatment room was cleaned and emergency stores brought out. Members' wives and children helped to quickly clean the crews' quarters to extend the treatment area, which after 15 minutes became overcrowded. All able patients wearing shoes were sent upstairs to help remove the broken glass from the lecture hall. Broken louvres were replaced and a sheet of iron nailed over the remaining window frame.

During the early hours of the morning volunteers began turning up in greater numbers at the ambulance station, realising that their services would be desperately needed. Others went to first aid centres established in schools to treat the many casualties.

At 9.00am Divisional Surgeon Dr David Beardwood arrived and took charge of the First Aid post. Some ex-nursing sisters and a medical student from the local area also arrived to help. As casualties turned up at the station it was noticed that a very common injury was cut feet from all the broken glass. Darwinites were more used to going about barefoot or wearing thongs than with shoes or boots and that came with a price. The St John

Ambulance crew learned from their patients the full extent of the devastation.

By now they had used up all their dressings and bandages, so police permission was obtained to remove all useful medical supplies from the local pharmacy. Dr Beardwood and his staff began carrying out minor surgery to the many casualties. Lacerations were sutured, fractures immobilised and tetanus, typhoid and cholera injections given. Patients requiring further treatment were transported to the hospital.

At 9.50 a crew arrived from Batchelor led by Superintendent Boyne Litchfield. They were put to work cleaning the Centre, recording names of all members present, looking after food distribution and digging latrines. When the rest of his team returned to Batchelor Bruce Jones stayed in Darwin as attendant in an ambulance with a routine of driving around town treating casualties on the spot, transporting to Casuarina Shopping Centre – it was being used as a casualty station – and transporting to the ambulance centre on Ross Smith Avenue. Casualties definitely did not want to be taken to the hospital in fear of being evacuated south.

DCA solved that day's water problems by supplying six 200 litre containers of drinking water. A kitchen, under the control of Terry Dahlenburg, was set up on the top floor of the building to feed the casualties and St John volunteers. Being Christmas Day there was no shortage of food around.

Rod Bramley: *"Our families were there with us. The wives and kids cleared up, helped and cooked meals. It was soup and stew throughout. All we had was tinned stuff."* [2]

Bob Collins, who drove one of the ambulances: *"No shortage of food, as everyone'll tell you. It was Christmas and we had ham running out of our ears. The volunteers at the ambulance station, that weren't working on the cars, provided all that stuff ... there was no shortage of tucker—it was laying everywhere. That was the least of our worries."* [3]

The lack of electrical power was quite a problem. Corporal Philip Harrison and one of the DCA radio technicians, P. Adams, were put in charge of electrical supplies and managed to get emergency battery power for the radios that day. Harrison also got hold of vehicles, overalls, boots and electrical equipment from DCA stores.

That afternoon after a verbal fight with the Hospital's Head Orderly, Dr Beardwood got control of all Hospital ambulances for the St John Centre which was operational, whereas the Hospital was out of action. There was an immediate improvement in Darwin's ambulance service. St John had effective communications and crews and made good use of the extra ambulances.

At about 11.30pm medivacs began from Darwin airport using RAAF Hercules aircraft, the first being completed by 3.00am. Every available ambulance was used, travelling in convoy and returning with off-loaded medical supplies. There was no power at the Hospital, lifts weren't working and patients to be evacuated had to be carried down stairs on stretchers. Seriously injured patients with drips attached had to be carried with extreme care down stairs that were never designed for that sort of work. It was hard, back-breaking work with two per trip and a couple of sitting patients. An uncomfortable sleep for the crew in the back of the ambulance, then up before dawn to start again. Medivacs always seemed to happen at night.

Dr Beardwood's medical post worked 36 hours straight without a break. Records weren't kept in that hectic time, but it was later 'guesstimated' that up to 2000 people were treated on Christmas Day alone, not counting patients transported to other casualty centres.

Casualties were treated on the spot by roving ambulance crews, serious lacerations and fractured limbs were given immediate attention and the more seriously injured were transported to casualty centres and the Hospital.

Crews also had the grim task of taking care of the dead. On one occasion while taking a corpse in a body bag to a funeral parlour that had been set up as a morgue the crew backed in but couldn't get anybody's attention. They assumed that whoever was in charge was just out the back having a break, or a drink or something. The scene was eerie, like in a B grade horror movie with bodies on the floor and coffins stacked around all over the place, as well as their body on the stretcher.

Suddenly, up popped a body from out of one of the coffins!

Being tired, overworked and on edge it

frightened the daylights out of them. The person in charge had climbed into a coffin – one of the newer padded ones – for a quick sleep, heard them banging about and sat up.[4]

Volunteers worked without relief for three days and nights, with crews sleeping on the stretchers in their ambulances with the radios turned up to high volume in case of call-out.

All the debris on the roads played havoc with the ambulance tyres and they quickly ran out of spares. Bruce Jones' ambulance was sent to Markham Ford with pink requisition slips to get more spare wheels. They were in the car yard stripping wheels off the vehicles when they were confronted by armed police with guns drawn and pointed in their direction.

They were just dressed in overalls with caps left in the ambulance and seemed to be a pair of looters caught in the act. Waving the pink slips was to no avail until the police were taken back and shown the ambulance being loaded with the 'looted' wheels. [5]

*Scary stuff.*

Don DeGiglio, one of the South Australian ambulance officers brought in to relieve the Darwin crews, later said about conditions in Darwin: [6]

> *"The cops were very much like cowboys ... acting like the bloody Wild West and carrying shotguns and all this for looters and things. I can remember walking along with a bag of cool drinks over my back ... this cop car comes screeching alongside us, the shotgun dropped out of the window pointing at us, claiming we were looters ... They were quite scary times."*

Other reports make special mention of the New South Wales police who were brought in to support the local constabulary. The local police were quite good and cemented their already high reputation with the population, but the NSW police *"had bloody armoury strapped all over them, and guns hanging off their hips, and carrying rifles and shotguns openly around the place. They were loathed by everyone ... "* [7]

On Boxing Day, Dr Beardwood and Grant Keetley had a meeting with Director of Health, Dr Charles Gurd to advise him of the situation and how they were coping. They requested that St John control all ambulances during the emergency since they had the communications and people to run the service. This control was given.

Dr Beardwood and Grant then visited their volunteers in all casualty clearing centres to boost morale and let them know that help was available if needed. These became daily visits until the end of the month.

In the afternoon there was a trip to Woolworths to get a change of clothing for the members. Anthony's in Smith Street supplied the Brigade with six tents, glassware, camp stretchers, sheets and dry bedding – a gesture that was very much appreciated. Kemp's City Sports Store also supplied unspecified equipment, possibly the tents and camp stretchers. These weren't donations as the members believed at the time because the St John Council was later invoiced for the goods.

Casualties kept coming in to the Centre for treatment, not wanting to go to the hospital in fear of being evacuated south. Work finally slackened off a little in the afternoon when it became mostly redressing, so Dr Beardwood took the opportunity to set up another medical centre in the Aviation Club. By 8.00pm the Ambulance Centre's medical post was closed, allowing the weary crew some relaxation and a well earned rest. That night Terry Dahlenburg and her catering team prepared the first sit down meal the medical crews had been able to enjoy in two days, turning the lecture hall into a restaurant and serving up a roast dinner.

> *"Terry really turned on a show for all, waiting on us hand and foot and giving all present individual attention. The dinner was the first break most of us had since Christmas."*

After dinner a skeleton crew stayed on duty while the remainder took a coach to the DCA Fire Station for their first shower since before the blow. Then back to collapse in bed, just in time to get up for another medivac.

Just to show how dedicated were our team of heroes Mrs H. Tuckerman, who assisted with the catering for three days, was found to have a

fractured jaw on arrival in Adelaide. The pain must have been dreadful, yet she soldiered on until evacuated south.

Meanwhile, the ever resourceful Philip Harrison had found some generators, restoring lights and refrigeration to the Centre.

The following day, the 27th, the Department of Health assumed control of all medical centres and after a full day of inoculations Dr Beardwood closed down the Ambulance Centre's treatment facility.

St John volunteers saw a lot of fear in the community from seriously injured people who refused to go to the hospital in case they were forcibly put on a plane and evacuated south. This wasn't just the occasional person, but quite common. People with fractures and other serious injuries just wanted to be splinted or otherwise patched up, but definitely didn't want to go near the hospital.

There were callouts to the airport to treat distressed people. The situation at the airport has been described as a total shambles in the early days of the evacuation. Women with babies and young children were forced to wait at the airport without facilities for up to twelve hours and became quite distressed.

Heart wrenching for the crews was to farewell their wives and children in front of the Ambulance Centre before they were loaded onto a bus and taken to the airport for compulsory evacuation south. The city was in ruins with no power, running water or proper sanitation and there was a very real risk of an outbreak of disease.

That same day, loaned vehicles were returned to DCA, the water supply returned and more generators were found to enable the Centre to become more functional.

Around midday Superintendent O'Donohoe arrived from Adelaide and advised that there were six fully manned St John ambulances in Adelaide ready to come to Darwin. It was decided that the relieving crews were needed, but not their ambulances. A meeting took place with the Disaster Controller who, after a lot of persuasion by Dr Beardwood, finally agreed to allow them to come to Darwin.

After three days and nights of constant work the St John volunteers were absolutely exhausted and needed relief.

At 6.30pm on Sunday 29th December a team of twelve full-time St John Ambulance officers from South Australia, under the command of Transport Superintendent Peter Gebert, flew in to provide that relief. They weren't universally welcomed though, as many Darwin Brigade members saw this as a takeover by South Australia and that local volunteers weren't considered good enough to run an ambulance service they had worked so long and hard to build. Some derisively called the South Australians 'Storm Troopers', a name they adopted with pride in true Aussie fashion.

John Pohl, one of the South Australian contingent, wrote that they were greeted at the airport by some rather bedraggled local ambulance staff and travelled in Grant Keetley's bus into the Ambulance Centre. The sight of all the devastation was quite a shock to the newcomers and on arrival at the Ambulance Centre they saw a tent city populated by St John volunteers and their families. With their homes destroyed they just moved into the Centre where they were close to their duties. [8]

On the same day the Department of Health caused problems when they asked when could they have their ambulances and crews back. An urgent call was made to Deputy Commissioner Mills in Katherine who advised he would be in Darwin the following day for a meeting with Director of Health Dr Gurd.

On the 30th a more powerful generator was installed at the Centre to improve the power supply. A meeting in the morning with Dr Gurd, Peter Gebert and local senior St John officers secured the Department of Health ambulances under St John control for at least another two weeks. That morning all Darwin crews were relieved by the South Australians.

As soon as the local crews moved out the relieving ambos cleaned up the Centre, scrubbed the cars inside and out and moved their gear into the building. Most of them slept upstairs in the training hall.

The newcomers found the ambulance transport work to be rather light in the almost deserted city, with occasional transports of Aboriginal patients from the airport to the hospital.

One doctor left his Valiant car at the Centre, saying, "I'm not coming back, so the ambulance service can keep the car!" It was fitted with a 2-way radio and used as a staff car. John Pohl, who was employed as a service technician at the St John Ambulance Hindmarsh workshop, found a garage open for business and arranged to have the ambulances serviced there.

The next job was to improve radio communications, so on finding a new tower a concrete base was laid, a crane hired and the tower erected. The military came to their aid with a diesel generator to improve the Centre's power supply.

There was no shortage of food and beverages which were supplied free of charge. "*We dined sumptuously on barbecue cod fillets. We soon got tired of living on tinned food though, and hired a chef who was no longer required at one of the local restaurants. For a vegetarian he cooked up a mean meat dish!*" [9] This chef worked at the Centre as a volunteer and was later paid for his work by the St John Council.

The southerners were hit hard by the tropical wet season climate and soon learned to carry out their chores in the cool of the early morning and evening. The rest of the day was just too hot and sticky to do much except emergency work and ambulance transports. The rest of the time was spent trying to keep cool and stave off boredom in reading, eating, drinking, washing clothes and assembling jigsaw puzzles. They soon found that using bleach to clean heavily stained shirts had the unwanted side effect of turning once white material a nasty shade of yellow.

The Storm Troopers gave the *Reg Marsh Building* its first ever coat of exterior paint, using part of the old radio tower for scaffolding. "*The Northern Territory ambulance management are probably still swearing at us for turning their once low maintenance centre into a regular, costly painting exercise!*"

The Navy supplied a new hot water service just before most of the South Australians returned home. The old unit had been badly damaged by the cyclone, but in the tropical climate the lack of hot water was no big deal.

The *Northern Territory News* was quick to resume publication and on Friday 3rd January reported that Peter Gebert was *"very proud of the effort by the men and women of the Darwin division during the cyclone emergency."* Mr Gebert said: *"After they have had a rest and rehabilitated themselves we will be looking for support from the volunteer section of the brigade."* [10]

We must also be proud of the effort put in by members of other divisions from down the track. In a Cyclone Tracy anniversary article published in the December 1994 *Outback Ambulance*, Bruce Jones of Batchelor Division said:

> *"When it was all over and Darwin was being rebuilt, the services did a great job, everyone got praised – but can never remember the ambulance service receiving a thank you ... think all the other Services received some recognition. The Ambulance Service certainly deserve some recognition. Awkward hours and awkward jobs."* [11]

"*Awkward hours and awkward jobs*." Quite an understatement, Bruce – and a good title for a book.

Dr John Quinn, who had been Darwin Division's founding Divisional Surgeon, was on duty at Darwin Hospital in the aftermath of the Cyclone and said in a later interview:

> *"... the only people I think I had a major involvement with were, first of all, the St John Ambulance Service, who were magnificent. Certainly the Northern Territory Police who – I think, just as our own people did, they just appeared from everywhere, often in positions of considerable personal stress, and got on with their jobs."* [12]

CSO Grant Keetley wrote the following undated letter to Deputy Commissioner Dr Colin Mills:

Dear Sir,

Somehow all of the following members listed below should be given special recognition of some description for the many services they performed for the injured and frightened people of Darwin on Wednesday, December 25, 1974, Christmas Day.

These people gave service to the community which was far, far beyond the call of duty and what could ever have been expected from any human being in the time of personal loss and suffering to help other members of the Darwin Community who were injured, sick, frightened and dying.

Except for these few this tragedy would have been greater:

W. Keelan, R. Bramley, G. Schoolmeester,
J. Quigley, D. Robinson, A. Schneider (DCA),
P. Adams (DCA), B. Dahlenburg, H. Sanders,
R. Keetley, P. King, L. King, P. Stenson,
T. Bowland, D. Tuckerman,
Dr David Beardwood.

Grant Keetley signed as *OIC Darwin Disaster District Ambulance Service, St John* and left himself off the list. Dr Mills forwarded the letter to the St John Council noting that he fully agreed with the recommendation.

The South Australian "Storm Troopers" were:

Peter Gebert, Ray Benzie, John Burton,
Bob Campbell, Don DeGiglio, Lee Francis,
Mike Horsman, Malcolm Pascoe, John Pohl,
Peter Simms, Teerse "Charlie" Stal,
Graeme Stewart.

## Roll of Honour

This list was taken from CSO Grant Keetley's report. Unfortunately, in those days almost everybody was an initial, not a first name. These have been put in where known. Misspelled names have also been corrected, where known. Page 3 of the list of names was missing and as a result many people are not included.

| Name | Duties | Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Terry Dahlenburg | Arrived at the Ambulance Centre at 9.30am Christmas Day and stayed until New Year's Day. Initially on First Aid duties, then took charge of the catering. | 115 |
| Mrs R. Bagley | Arrived at Casuarina High School at 7.30am Christmas Day and did First Aid duties all day. Went to the Ambulance Centre on Boxing Day and worked there until New Year's Day. | 105 |
| Doreen Kerr | Worked at Nightcliff High School and the Ambulance Centre from Christmas Day until 3rd January, mostly cleaning and catering. | 92 |
| Helen Sanders | Worked at the Ambulance Centre as radio operator, cleaning and cook's assistant from Christmas Day until 3rd January. | 50 |
| Miss S. Bagley | Cook's assistant from 28th December until New Year's Day. | 75 |
| Cathy Milne | Worked at the Ambulance Centre from 11.00pm Christmas Day until 30th December. | 90 |
| Barbara Henderson | Worked at Retta Dixon Homes and then moved to Batchelor. | nk |
| Janet Tiller | Worked at the Ambulance Centre from 2.00pm Christmas Day and worked until the 30th December. | 90 |
| Margaret (Beardwood) Warwick-Taylor | Worked at the Ambulance Centre from 11.00am Christmas Day to 30th December | 30 |
| Mrs R. Bramley | Arrived with husband Rod Bramley on Christmas Eve and worked until 28th December cleaning and as catering officer. | 90 |
| Rosemary Keetley | Arrived with husband Grant Keetley during the cyclone and worked as SRN assisting the doctor until 27th December. | 48 |
| Marian Grayden | Worked at the Casuarina High School as SRN from early Christmas morning. | nk |
| Isobel Burton | Worked at the Casuarina High School as first aider from early Christmas morning. | 24 |
| Viviene Kohlweg | Worked at the Casuarina High School as first aider from early Christmas morning. | 24 |
| Pat King | Arrived at Ambulance Centre at 6.00pm Christmas Eve on rostered duty and stayed until 30th December. | 80 |
| Dorothy Bentley | When not flying with Connair did duties at the Centre. | 24 |

| Name | Duties | Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Mrs H. Tuckerman | Assisted with the catering from the afternoon on Christmas Day until the 28th, when evacuated south. On arrival in Adelaide was found to have a fractured jaw. | nk |
| Ellen Pitts | In charge of the Adelaide River first aid post from Christmas Day until New Year's Day. | 84 |
| Rod Bramley | Arrived at the Centre 3.00pm Christmas Eve to prepare for the cyclone. Remained on duty all night and was responsible for vehicle maintenance until 29th. | 90 |
| James Quigley | Extra crew at the Ambulance Centre during the cyclone. Communications Officer until 29th. | nk |
| Bill Keelan | On duty at the Centre from just after midnight until about 3.30am during the cyclone. Returned at 9.00am and formed radio communications link to Police HQ. | nk |
| Kevin Kettle | At Ambulance Centre from 8.00pm Christmas Eve to just after midnight, then at Police HQ as Ambulance Liaison Officer on Disaster Co-ordinating Committee. | nk |
| Tony Bowland | Rostered crew from 6.00pm Christmas Eve and remained at Centre until 28th. Ambulance crew on Christmas Day, then stores collection and garbage disposal. | 60 |
| Lindsay King | On duty at the Centre during the cyclone. Worked at the hospital as an electrician and on duty at the Ambulance Centre at other times. | 20+ |
| Denis Tuckerman | On duty at the Centre from 6.00pm Christmas Eve until 3.00pm the next day. Left to find his family then returned until New Year's day. | 80 |
| Dr David Beardwood | In charge of the Ambulance Centre's casualty post from 9.00am Christmas Day until 29th. Twice daily visits to all casualty stations and negotiating with public officials. | 100 |
| Ron Warwick-Taylor (Beardwood) | Worked at the Ambulance Centre from Christmas Day to New Year's Day. | 30 |
| Philip Harrison | Reported to the Ambulance Centre at 8.00am Christmas Day and put in charge of repairing electrical wiring and restoring power. | 90 |
| Geoff Carter | On duty with DCA at the airport during the emergency. | |
| Ian Downing | Communications operator from Christmas Day until New Year's Day. | 80 |
| Mr P. McComit | Stores Officer and in radio room from Christmas Day until New Year's Day. | 90 |
| Bob Brennan | In charge of Ambulance Centre from Boxing Day until New Year's Day, responsible for stores, cleanliness and discipline. | 90 |

| Name | Duties | Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Mr B. Schneider (DCA) | Offered to repair communications during eye of cyclone. Arrived back at 6.30am to get system operational by 8.30am. Worked continuously on radio maintenance until February 1975. | 100+ |
| Mr P. Adams | Assisted Schneider working on radio and power at the Centre. | 100 |
| Mr B. Binyon | Came in for treatment and stayed as volunteer traffic controller in front of Centre for five days (as non-member). | |
| Kenneth Grayden | Assisted with first aid at Casuarina High School from Christmas Day until 29th. | 35 |
| Hubert Kohlweg | First aid duties in the Casuarina area and at the Gaol. | |
| Ian Brock | Worked mostly at the Darwin High School, also the Ambulance Centre, from Christmas Day until New Year's Day. | 80 |
| Gordon Milne | Worked at the Ambulance Centre from Christmas Day until New Year's Day. | 90 |
| Frank Simmons | Worked with Civil Defence and Emergency Services from Christmas Day until New Year's Day. | |
| John O'Donohoe | Took up duties as Divisional Superintendent on returning from Adelaide on 27th. | 144 |
| Garry Schoolmeester | On duty Christmas Eve and worked as ambulance driver until New Year's Day. | 80 |
| Peter Stenson | On duty Christmas Eve and worked as first aider for several shifts. | 30 |
| Alwyn Kerr | Non-member who assisted with odd jobs and washing for five days straight. | 30 |
| Mr P. Woods | Department of Health Ambulance – worked with St John Christmas Day until New Year's Day. | |
| Mr P. Garhame | Department of Health Ambulance – worked with St John Boxing Day until New Year's Day. | |
| Boyne Litchfield | Batchelor Divisional Superintendent – in charge of Centre organisation and sanitation, Christmas Day until 27th. | 36 |
| Gordon Onn | Batchelor – assisted Darwin crews on Christmas day. | 12 |
| Bruce Jones | Batchelor – ambulance crew from Christmas Day until 27th. | |
| Clement "Eddie" Edwards | Adelaide River Divisional Superintendent – operated road side first aid post at Adelaide River. | |
| Bob Jarmyn | Assisted in clean up of Centre on Christmas Day. | 10 |

| Name | Duties | Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Geoff Price | Assisted people in his local area, arrived at Centre at 10.00am Christmas Day. Collection and delivery of food and medical supplies, and garbage disposal. | |
| Mr P. Codrington | Involved in rescues at Nightcliff from first light Christmas Day, first aid treatment until 4.00pm, then reported for duty at Police HQ. | 10 |

*Not on list because of missing page—other persons involved are unknown*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Grant Keetley | Ambulance OIC during the emergency | |
| Bob Collins | Ambulance driver from Christmas Day until relieved by the South Australians | |

# Chapter 3
# 1975—1995

**1975**

At the St John Council meeting on 13th January Dr Alan Bromwich was voted in as a member of the Council. Other points in the minutes: [1]

- ◊ Letter to the Minister to take over the Ambulance Service full time;
- ◊ Dr Mills to action letter to St John South Australia thanking them for assistance and for reimbursement to Federal Government. (The minutes don't say why the Federal Government needed reimbursing though, or for how much. Perhaps the minutes were poorly worded and reimbursement was made by the Government?)
- ◊ Letter with commendation to Her Majesty the Queen for all Brigade members.

  The next Council meeting expanded this point to suggest that recognition of Brigade members from Darwin and South Australia during the emergency period following Cyclone Tracy may be expressed by a letter of commendation from Her Majesty the Queen as Sovereign Head of the Order.
- ◊ St John Council to pay voluntary cook.
- ◊ St John men to be kept supplied by 'Pauls' – the local milk and soft drink supplier.

A hand written note on the Minutes says that this first meeting after Cyclone Tracy was held at Lim's Hotel that still had several inches of water on the floor.

There was an urgent need to rebuild the Darwin Division so that they could resume duties at the ambulance station and allow the relieving crew from Adelaide to return home. To facilitate this, a meeting was called by Peter Gebert for Monday 13th January to discuss the future of the Division.[2] There's no record of this meeting in St John archives, but it must have been successful and by mid February CSO Grant Keetley was calling for more cadets to join and for more adults to enrol in a current public first aid course being held at the ambulance station.[3]

The minutes of a Corps meeting of the 3rd June record that the radio room in the station had been moved downstairs to the cyclone secure area and that the new radio and telephone system was almost complete. They also announced new appointments: Frank Simmons, Officer in Charge Casuarina Ambulance Cadets; Cathy Milne, Superintendent Casuarina Nursing Cadets; Helen Sanders, Divisional Officer supervising cadet services until appointment of a permanent officer.

The Corps meeting also decided to write to the St John Council recommending the establishment of an Association.

The next Corps meeting on the 5th July reported that Kevin Kettle was on six months leave of absence and that John O'Donohoe would act as Corps Superintendent in his place, while still retaining his substantive rank of Superintendent of Darwin Division. Having worked so hard and for so long for St John to take over the full Darwin ambulance service, Kevin Kettle left town and didn't return when it was about to be finally achieved. He had applied for the position of Manager and was one of the three short listed applicants, but when the job went to another he left the Territory in disappointment. John O'Donohoe was confirmed as Corps Superintendent in November.

When you read the successful applicant's qualifications and experience, Kevin Kettle didn't stand a chance.

Deputy Commissioner Mills announced that Mr Warren Burgess had been appointed the first full-time Manager for St John Ambulance in the NT, and would take up his duties in August. Corps Surgeon Alan Bromwich met and interviewed Warren Burgess in Adelaide and had no hesitation in recommending him for the position. Alan was also a

Lieutenant Colonel in the RAAMC Reserves and met Major Burgess, a Reserve officer at an Army function the night before the interview.

Warren Burgess had been a member of the St John Ambulance Brigade for 25 years, the last ten full-time, and for the past four years had been in charge of the Victor Harbour ambulance service in South Australia. He had also been a CMF member for 18 years, rising to the rank of major in the 3rd Field Ambulance.

> *"In 1973 he spent 11 months in the UK and US on a study tour with Rotary International Fellowship, studying management, operations and ambulance resuscitation techniques.*
>
> *"Dr Mills said the appointment of Mr Burgess as manager was the first full-time appointment made by St John Ambulance in the NT."* [4]

Mrs Margaret Beardwood, employed full-time to manage the subscriber scheme less than two years previously, seems to have been forgotten. But then, major disasters can do that.[5]

Later in the month, the NT Division of the Institute of Ambulance Officers elected the following: Clement "Eddie" Edwards, president; Peter Winckler, chairman; Rod Bramley, vice-chairman; Cathy Milne, secretary-treasurer; Marian Grayden, Ellen Pitts and Grant Keetley, committee. [6]

St John Council Chairman Alec Fong Lim reported in July that verbal advice had been received for St John to take over the ambulance services in Darwin, but with nothing so far in writing and with no specific details. They wrote to the Minister of Health, Dr Everingham, to express their concern in the delays in finalising negotiations and to object to the requirement that St John charge for ambulance services and introduce a subscription scheme. The trade union movement in Darwin was vigorously opposed to charging for ambulance services and they had no wish to have industrial action directed against St John.[7]

In a letter to the NT Director of Health, Dr Charles Gurd, the Council repeated their opposition to charging for ambulance services and insisted that the public be made aware that it was Government policy, not St John's. [8]

The threat of problems with the union movement must have been quite real because St John was no stranger to charging for ambulance transport and subscription schemes, having introduced them before Cyclone Tracy.

It would seem that the Government was reluctant to formally transfer the ambulance services to St John when the Director General of Health wrote in November 1977 that the transfer was to be acknowledged only at that time.[9]

Warren Burgess started work as the first full-time manager for the St John Ambulance Brigade in the NT in August. *"Mr Burgess, a volunteer member of the brigade, is South Australian State champion in first aid and home nursing, and will join the Darwin division."* [10]

At the same time Teerse "Charlie" Stal started as the Brigade's first full-time training officer. He had come to the Territory with the South Australian ambulance contingent after Cyclone Tracy and stayed on as acting Officer in Charge of the post cyclone ambulance service. [11]

In the same newspaper report: *"Deputy Commissioner, Dr Colin Mills, said the appointments were part of a build-up of St John Ambulance services in the NT. A proposal was now before the Government for St John to take over administration of Darwin's ambulance services."* At present the service under St John management was run by volunteers and four paid staff on loan from the Department of Health.[12]

The Brigade held its annual parade and inspection on Sunday 31st August. Dr Mills told members that they were commended for their work during the Cyclone Tracy emergency and later this year the Brigade would be awarded a Priory Vote of Thanks. Copies were to be made, framed and distributed to the various Divisions, with the original framed and kept in a secure place.[13] The award was made by the Chief Commissioner at the 1977 Annual Review.

At the parade Dr Mills presented a warrant of appointment to Superintendent John O'Donohoe. He said that Batchelor and Adelaide River divisions had amalgamated and the people of Pine Creek had asked that a division be established there. Plans

were also going ahead to establish an adult division at Casuarina.[14]

At a staff meeting on 3rd November:

*"A special cadre for older cadets is to be established for those about to transfer to adult divisions. The object is to prevent wastage of cadets who transfer to the adult division but find difficulty in adjusting to the age gap."* [15]

The author found no further mention of this "special cadre" and isn't sure whether or not it actually went ahead. A Youth Division was started at Palmerston in 2010 to help ease cadets into adulthood.

New appointments were announced in the *Northern Territory News* on Monday 17th November: Rod Bramley was promoted to Superintendent of Darwin Division; John O'Donohoe to Corps Superintendent (effective 1st October); Bob Brennan to Corps Sergeant Major; Warren Burgess as District Staff Officer Grade III (effective 29th September); Phil Langdon as acting Divisional Officer; Terry Dahlenburg as Sergeant; Beth Dollisson, Garry Schoolmeester and John Elliott as Corporal.[16]

The NT Division of the Institute of Ambulance Officers held a seminar in the Darwin High School theatrette on Saturday, 22nd November. Opening address and welcome was given by NT Director of Health, Dr Charles Gurd. Guest speakers were Dr D. Webling (Oxygen and its uses), Dr A. Walker (Childhood emergencies), Dr Lionel Crompton (shock) and Mr Warren Burgess (ambulance services overseas).[17]

A "Letter to the Editor" in late November complained of the *"misuse, abuse, and over-use of the Darwin Ambulance Service for trivia."* Instances given were:

- ◊ A barmaid at the Berrimah pub had a cut foot to which an ambulance was summoned, with the result that the driver applied a dressing.
- ◊ A two-year-old child who had accidently swallowed an overdose was being rushed to hospital when the ambulance needed to be diverted because it was called to another "overdose." When the driver knocked on the



The inspection party at the parade: Superintendent John O'Donohoe; Commissioner of Police Bill McLaren; Superintendent Adelaide River-Batchelor Eddie Edwards; Deputy Commissioner Dr Colin Mills and Divisional Officer Rod Bramley, with cadet officers Cathy Milne and Helen Sanders.

Note the expressions and postures of the male Brigade officers.



door he was greeted by a smiling woman who announced she had not taken any tablets but had summoned an ambulance to frighten her husband.

*"The short-sighted, self-centred and reckless people who are responsible for the using of the ambulances as a free taxi should, I feel, be made to realise that ambulances are not in abundance but are vehicles of essential and emergency case only, and not otherwise able to attend emergencies if they are occupied as a vehicular ferry."* [18]

Unfortunately, the problem still exists today and probably always will.

Some statistics for 1975: 3600 patients were carried over 63,000 km. Members also attended 290 sporting events and volunteers gave 21,000 hours of duty.[19]

**1976**

Deputy Commissioner Mills wrote to the South Australian Council in February recommending the following promotions and admissions to the Order of St John: [20]

- ◊ Tom Abbott to be admitted as Officer. Tom had been a member of the Auxiliary from 1960 and a foundation member of the Council since 1965, holding positions of Secretary and Treasurer.
- ◊ Brian Young to be admitted as Officer. Brian had been a member of the Council for five years, four as Deputy Chairman and the last as Chairman.
- ◊ Kevin Kettle SBStJ to be promoted to Officer. Kevin had been a Brigade member in the NT for eight years, Corps Superintendent for six years and a Councillor for six years, holding the post of Treasurer.
- ◊ Corps Surgeon Alan Bromwich for admission to the Order as Serving Brother. Alan joined the Brigade in 1973 and became a Councillor in 1975.
- ◊ Warren Burgess SBStJ to be promoted to Officer.
- ◊ Grant Keetley to be admitted as Serving Brother.
- ◊ Marian Grayden to be admitted as Serving Sister.
- ◊ Yvonne Hansen of Alice Springs to receive a Priory Vote of Thanks

The letter stated that the Territory had at that time only one Serving Brother [Warren Burgess] and two Officer Grades of the Order [Dr Mills and Dr Gurd].

The South Australian Council accepted recommendations for Tom Abbott, Brian Young, Warren Burgess and Alan Bromwich. Grant Keetley and Marian Grayden were to be held over until the following year. Kevin Kettle was address unknown in Victoria and not accepted. Yvonne Hansen had already received a Priory Vote of Thanks in 1968 and would not receive another.[21]

Each District had an annual quota for admissions and promotions in the Order and the Territory still came under South Australia, with awards parsimoniously shared with their northern sub-District.

In February, Maureen Holden (later married name "Mandy" Langdon) and Beth Dollisson (later married name Shepherd) broke into a male dominated world to become Australia's first full-time female ambulance officers, both having answered a newspaper advertisement. *"They don't know what the reaction was from the men behind the scenes when their applications were discussed. But they do know there have been no hassles for them as far as being women is concerned."* Mandy had been a trained nursing sister for nine years and spent more than two years working at the Darwin Hospital before joining St John Ambulance staff. Mandy had also helped start the Casuarina Nursing Cadet Division and was its first OIC. Beth was a Corporal in Darwin Division.[22]

Mandy started on 2nd February, with Beth being employed a week later on the 9th, so Mandy could rightfully claim to be the first full time female Ambulance Officer in Australia.

Others appointed at the same time were Darwin Division volunteers Rod Bramley (Divisional

Superintendent), Garry Schoolmeester and Lindsay King. Interstate appointees were South Australians Malcolm Babb from Loxton and Clem Larcombe from Mount Compass. Clem was appointed on 3rd May.

That same month Warren Burgess announced that a recruiting campaign would begin immediately for volunteer members for a new division to be started at Casuarina. An eight weeks first aid course would begin on 11th March , followed by a course in Casualty Care and Transport. The courses would be held *"in a community hall on the site of the proposed new ambulance station at the corner of Dripstone Road and Goodman Street, and cost $13 and including a textbook."* [23]

At the end of the month a promotion for the new division was held at the Casuarina Shopping Centre. Deputy Commissioner Mills said the new division would be established by two experienced Darwin members, Bob Brennan and Terry Dahlenburg, using a nucleus of qualified members from Darwin Division. Ten people had already signed up for the new division.[24]

Pat McQuillen heard of a first aid course advertised on the radio and decided to give it a go.



Beth Dollisson and Mandy Langdon

Riding out to Casuarina on her motorbike she came across a couple of demountables "round the back of Coles". Wondering if she was in the right place, she went in and signed up for the course with a nice lady wearing a white uniform (Terry Dahlenburg). There was an ambulance parked outside, and on asking if there had been an accident was told "That's one of ours". "Oh!"

Pat sat down next to another lady who said: "Won't it be great when we do our course and get one of those nice white dresses with the shiny silver buttons?" Pat, who was just there to do a first aid course and wondering what she was getting herself in for, thought: "Well, I can't get up and walk out. I'd sort of lose face, be a bit of a shame job." [25]

Pat stayed and did the course and that was the start of a lifelong membership with St John Ambulance, most of it in Alice Springs. Pat was made an Officer of the Order of St John and wrote about her experiences in that wonderful book, *"Saved Any Lives Today?"* subtitled: A History of St John Ambulance in Alice Springs NT. The book is now out of print, but if your local library has a copy it is well worth reading. There may also be copies available at the Volunteer Office, St John Ambulance Casuarina Headquarters.

When the first aid course finished in mid May Dr Mills presented certificates to the successful candidates.[26]

The new Casuarina Combined Division was officially formed on Thursday 20th May with a ceremony to sign on new recruits and transferees from Darwin Division. Some of the names are Superintendent Bob Brennan, Divisional Officer Terry Dahlenburg and new members Pat McQuillen, Helen Turner, Russ Fletcher, John Williams and Gil Mortimore.[27] A newspaper report said there were 15 new recruits for the Division.[28]

Members who transferred from Darwin Division included: Joy Burgess, Cynthia Lees, A. Ross, V. Wright, K. Day, John Elliott, B. Bagley, D. Martin. [29]

The Chief Commissioner approved formation of the Division on 4th July and volunteer crews began operating the ambulance on 26th July.[30]

Long gone were the days of the old Auxiliary with its grand, imaginative fund raising schemes when the NT St John Council asked South Australia for help with the building fund for the new Casuarina headquarters. In response to this plea Transport Officer Peter Lafsky was seconded from Adelaide to assist with public relations and fund raising.[31] He had directed the last appeal in South Australia that raised well over $300,000 and was the right man for the Territory's building appeal.[32]

The appeal was launched on the 30th June seeking to raise $100,000 from the public for the new centre. The appeal ended with a door-knock on Sunday 25th July. Pat McQuillen, like many other St John volunteers, took part in the door-knock:

> *"One Sunday we had this big appeal that we had to go all around town doorknocking for money. I got the Stuart Park area, and ... you wouldn't believe the money those people gave to St John. It came out, you know, thirty, forty, fifty dollars, every house! And then some of them would say: 'What did so-and-so up the road give you at number sixty-two?' And I'd say: 'Oh, two hundred dollars,' which it wasn't, it was only sixty or something, and they'd say, 'Oh, we'll match that,' or 'We'll double that, what he gave.'*
>
> *"We staggered back to the centre with about a thousand dollars, or something."* [33]

The door-knock raised $13,000 and *"in post Cyclone Darwin this was a magnificent response and illustrated the community's appreciation of the efforts of St John personnel who worked tirelessly throughout the post cyclone period."* [34]




Casuarina Divisional Superintendent Bob Brennan (*left*) receives a cheque from the Apex Club of Arafura

By mid September the building appeal reached $75,000 with a cheque for $500 from the Kiwanis Club.[35] In October it was announced that architects Talbot, Hunt and Partners had won the design for the new Casuarina headquarters.

Richard Morris recalled in a later interview:

> *"We had a fund raising. We were getting some support, some financial support from the government, but we actually raised nearly half a million dollars. Ella Stack, who was the Lord Mayor of Darwin at that time, she was also the Chairman of the Cyclone Tracy fundraising thing ... that fund happened to have a couple of hundred thousand dollars left over, and Ella, who coincidentally was on our Council at the time said: 'Well, I may be able to help here' ... we got $250,000 or thereabouts ..."* [36]

At the end of June the city's three Lions Clubs donated a $12,000 emergency care (Em-Care) vehicle with money mostly raised at the Beer Can Regatta. The Em-Care ambulance was developed by the St John Ambulance Brigade in South Australia. *"Medical teams who have used this ambulance applaud the design."* [37]

Some comments about the Em-Care ambulance from Territorians:

*Alan Caust wrote:* [38]

"Also in Darwin was one of the new Em-Care Ambulances that had been designed in Adelaide SA. Tops for city use but useless on the long hauls needed in the NT. The Em-care was built on a Holden One-tonne chassis and had a lazy axle – hence it's 6 wheels. The rear opening was a ramp and a lift up back dark glass window/door. In many ways it was the fore-runner to Ambulances having drop-down stretchers, as staff would have to carry in a stretcher where only the front wheels dropped on to a bench in the patient cabin.

"The rear stretcher wheels remained locked in the upright position. In Adelaide a harness affair had been added, whereby the attendant in the patient cabin would secure themselves into a harness as they were able to stand in transit and

treat the patient. My personal experience is that this device was not fitted to the vehicle designated as Car 20E (Echo) in Darwin. I used the harness in Em-cares in Adelaide – great on acceleration, but hopeless on deceleration. Like the driver hit the brakes, you just got thrown forwards!"

*Peter Poole wrote:* [39]

"We had one of the 6 wheel ambulances. Ours was 20E, two zero Echo; they were an interesting vehicle based on a Holden one tonner with a lazy axle behind the back axle! They were a single stretcher vehicle with a low floor, the back door folded down to form a ramp that the stretcher was rolled up. The stretcher remained in the elevated position so the attendant stood whilst treating the patient. Access around the stretcher allowed the attendant to treat from both sides.

"My only specific memory of a case in 20E was going to One Mile Dam with Gordon Bowman, when access was from McMinn and Barneson Street. It was during the wet season and Barneson Street was two wheel tracks, we soon lost traction when we drove into the mud; being the attendant on the case I had to get out and push.

"Glen Denmeade could probably tell you some good stories about his many and varied exploits driving 20E."

The Australian Government acknowledged the hand-over of Darwin ambulance services to St John in August and after self government the new Northern Territory Government agreed to the hand-over in other centres as well. Alice Springs and Tennant Creek were transferred to St John on 1st July 1979 and Katherine on 3rd January 1980.[40]

For a third time, St John Ambulance introduced charges and a subscription scheme for the ambulance service in the greater Darwin area. *"Following agreement with the Government, St John would operate the city's only ambulance service, in Darwin, Adelaide River and Batchelor."* [41] This was manned by paid staff between 6.00am and 6.00pm weekdays and by volunteers at all other times, similar to pre-cyclone days when the Health Department ran the daytime service.

There were problems with the Casuarina Cadet Ambulance and Nursing Divisions with a solution that they be temporarily combined and placed under the direct supervision of CSO (Cadets) Grant Keetley for a period of six months. Frank Simmons was to be promoted to Corps staff, but indicated that he would step down as Superintendent with a view to starting a new cadet division at Howard Springs.[42] Frank took up the staff appointment and it was to be another five years before a cadet division started at Howard Springs.

Friction between paid staff and volunteers was raised at a staff meeting in November. While not a condition of employment, paid staff were expected to undertake volunteer activities in either an administrative or training role. Some members of the regular staff were doing their share, in some cases more than their fair share, while *"others are not making any effort to contribute to the volunteer effort at all"*.







***Right:*** South Australian Em-Care showing stretcher loading

Morale amongst volunteers was low, especially in Darwin Division and it was felt that the increasing day-time responsibility placed on the Divisional Superintendent, Rod Bramley, was affecting his volunteer capacity. It was recommended to promote Bramley to a Corps posting and place the Division under the command of Divisional Officer Phil Langdon. [43] Bramley was one of the first Brigade members to join the paid service and eventually became Chief Superintendent in the Ambulance Service.

On Wednesday 4th November, Dr Colin Mills presented Service Medals of the Order of St John to Training Officer Charlie Stal and CSO (Cadets) Grant Keetley. Grant was the first Territorian to receive a Service Medal, Charlie having served most of his time in South Australia.[44]

At the staff meeting of Monday 6th December: *"All officers drank a toast in Commandery Port to commemorate the formation of the new District and congratulate the new District Headquarters staff."* [45] The Brigade had been granted full District status by the Chief Commissioner on 30th September 1976.[46] Perhaps it had taken some time to get hold of the special port for the occasion?

With the new District we now had Commissioner Colin Mills OStJ, District Surgeon Alan Bromwich and District Superintendent Warren Burgess SBStJ, all appointments effective 3rd November 1976. Northern Territory Corps was redesignated Darwin Corps on 14th December. This encompassed Divisions on the Darwin metropolitan area, plus Adelaide River and Batchelor.[47]



Deputy Commissioner Dr Colin Mills pins the Service Medal on Grant Keetley, watched by Charlie Stal

Commissioner Mills made the following appointments subject to approval by the Chief Commissioner:

- ◊ District Nursing Officer: Marian Grayden
- ◊ District Staff Officer Grade IV: Rod Bramley
- ◊ District Staff Officer Grade IV: Teerse Stal
- ◊ OAC Darwin Corps: Grant Keetley
- ◊ OAC Darwin Combined Division: Phil Langdon
- ◊ Divisional Superintendent (Cadets): John Elliott

A "family tree" dated 14th December lists the following leadership, as well as those mentioned above: [48]

- ◊ Assistant District Superintendent, Rod Bramley (effective 6/12/1976);
- ◊ District Training Officer, Charlie Stal (6/12/1976);
- ◊ Corps Superintendent Darwin Corps, Grant Keetley (13/12/1976 – 12/3/1977);
- ◊ Corps Surgeon Darwin Corps, Lionel Crompton;
- ◊ Superintendent Casuarina Combined Division, Bob Brennan;
- ◊ Superintendent Adelaide River/Batchelor Combined Division, Clement Edwards;
- ◊ OIC Batchelor Section, Vince Johnston;
- ◊ Superintendent Alice Springs Combined Division, Glanville Lindholm;
- ◊ OAC Tennant Creek Combined Division, Glen Hogben.

Marian Grayden's appointment as District Nursing Officer Grade II was confirmed on 23rd December, as were those for Rod Bramley, Charlie Stal and John Elliott of Darwin Combined Cadet Division.

As a fine Christmas present the people of Wollongong and the West Wollongong Apex Club presented new Ferno scoop stretchers to the St John Ambulance Brigade in Darwin, making the Brigade the first ambulance service in Australia to

use these American made stretchers. The $1400 used to buy the stretchers was raised from a benefit night in Wollongong after Cyclone Tracy.

> *"We heard of the unique ambulance service in Darwin and the vast distances covered and decided that the stretchers would be a practical aid to Darwin people. The people of Wollongong are parochial, but when a disaster strikes in Australia or the world they dig deep and give generously."* [49]

Statistics for 1976:

Volunteers worked 67,324 hours and treated a total of 1158 casualties. Of these hours 63,241 were on ambulances, while 556 of the casualties were treated at public duties.

Members also treated 19 patients at casualty rooms, 64 at exhibitions and shows, 34 at racing events, 8 at picnics, 24 at other sports and 30 while on other duties. Off-duty members treated 64 patients.

The duties were carried out by adults of the Alice Springs, Casuarina, Darwin and Adelaide River-Batchelor Combined Divisions and Casuarina and Darwin cadets. Casualties carried and treated by the Darwin and Casuarina paid service are not included.[50]

## 1977

Casuarina Ambulance and Nursing Cadet Divisions combined on 1st January to form the Casuarina Combined Cadet Division under OAC Jill Schoolmeester.

Due to a lack of members in January the Casuarina Centre was forced to suspend sleep-on shifts from Monday to Thursday, with service maintained by standby crews on call from home.[51]

The Brigade got two new ambulances in May, one being a gift from Mr Albert Albany. The vehicles were "Superior" built in Brisbane on a one-tonne Holden chassis with automatic V8 engine.

The interior was planned by Brigade officers in Darwin, based on the Em-Care Ambulance. The main stretcher was trolley-type and could be wheeled instead of carried and adjustable for height. The second stretcher converted to a wheelchair and an emergency stretcher could be suspended from the roof. Other new innovations were a scoop stretcher clipped to the interior roof and battery operated portable suction apparatus.

The new vehicles cost $16,000 each and brought the Darwin district fleet, which included Adelaide River and Batchelor, up to ten vehicles – two clinic ambulances, one mobile first aid unit that could double as an ambulance, the Em-Care, the two new vehicles, and four others.[52]

Darwin Division OAC Phil Langdon complained in May of a lack of numbers to fill ambulance rosters. An agreed solution was that CCT recruits should be put through quickly and a driver with two trainees used when necessary. It was also agreed to allow females to do sleep-ons with a caravan for male quarters in this event as it was not acceptable to use all female crews.[53]

A contract was signed on Tuesday 28th June for the building of the new headquarters and ambulance station at Casuarina. The Government gave $240,000 for the project, money left over from the Darwin Reconstruction fund. Successful tender was from Russell Thomas (NT) Pty Ltd. [54]

The biggest enrolment ceremony in the history of St John cadets in Darwin was held Friday 1st July when 40 new cadets were presented with their certificates by District Surgeon Alan Bromwich. The parade for the combined enrolment of the Darwin and Casuarina Cadet Divisions was inspected by Commissioner Dr Colin Mills. [55]

The weekend of 16th-17th July was described as the most significant weekend in the history of St John in the NT.



On Saturday 16th the Chancellor of the Order in Australia, Colonel Sir George Stening presented awards in the Order of St John to four people for outstanding service to the Brigade.

- ◊ Mr Brian Young admitted as Officer Brother; a member of the St John Council for five years, and former vice chairman and chairman.
- ◊ Mr Tom Abbott admitted as Officer Brother; secretary of the St John Council for 14 years.
- ◊ Mr Warren Burgess promoted to Officer Brother; District Superintendent for St John and a member of the Brigade since he joined as a cadet 26 years ago.
- ◊ Mr Alan Bromwich admitted as Serving Brother; joined the Brigade in 1973 as Corps Surgeon and had been on the Council since 1975. He was recently appointed District Surgeon and was responsible for training procedures.

Later at the luncheon Sir George cut the last tie between the NT and South Australia when he presented the Constitution to the new chairman, Mr Richard Morris, which declared the St John Council in the NT to be an autonomous body.

At a combined parade at the Civic Centre on Sunday 17th Sir George presented a framed Priory Vote of Thanks to the NT Commissioner Dr Colin Mills in recognition for the St John Ambulance Brigade's meritorious service to the community in the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy.[56]

The parade and review were attended by chiefs of the Army, Navy and RAAF in Darwin, the Chief Judge of the Supreme Court Mr Justice Forster, the Mayor Dr Ella Stack, Police Commissioner Bill McLaren, Fire Brigade chief Peter Holtham, Grant Tambling MLA, Bishop J.P. O'Loughlin and members of the St John Council.

At the parade Dr Mills presented warrants of appointment to Mr John Elliott (Superintendent Darwin Combined Cadet Division), Mrs Jill Schoolmeester (Divisional Nursing Officer, Casuarina Combined Cadet Division), Mrs Mandy Langdon (Divisional Nurse, Darwin Combined Division), and Mr Teerse Stal (District Staff Officer).[57]

The ninth convention of the Australian Ambulance Authorities was held on Thursday 18th – Friday 19th August at the Darwin Travelodge. It was officially opened by majority leader, Dr Goff Letts and chaired by NT Director of Health, Dr Charles Gurd. Topics for discussion were the use of helicopters as ambulances, the standardisation of ambulance radio frequencies throughout Australia, reciprocity of ambulance services and ambulance subscriptions and carry fees as tax deductions.[58]

There were problems with getting Divisions to attend public duties in Darwin, especially with



Alan Bromwich SBStJ, Warren Burgess OStJ, Sir George Stening KStJ, Brigadier John McKinna KStJ, Tom Abbott OStJ, Brian Young OStJ



Sir George hands the new Constitution to Chairman Richard Morris

members of Casuarina Combined Division not wanting to go into Darwin to pick up cars.[59] It was also a case that most volunteers preferred to do ambulance shifts rather than attend public duties.

Darwin Division had even bigger problems in that *"almost all from Superintendents to Divisional Officers in the Darwin Division had intimated their intention to resign or go on leave."* [60] Doreen Kerr was appointed OAC in December, much to the benefit of the Division.

Dr Colin Mills left the Territory in November and resigned his position as Commissioner. District Surgeon Alan Bromwich wrote to the Chief Commissioner asking that the resignation not be accepted in a hurry, hoping that Dr Mills would return, meanwhile offering to fill in as Acting Commissioner in his absence. [61]

When it became obvious that Dr Mills was not coming back, Alan Bromwich was appointed Commissioner on 16th February 1978, effective date 28th February.

The NT Trades and Labour Council lashed out at St John in December, demanding a return of the ambulance service to complete Health Department control and manning. Getting rid of St John would allow a cheaper and more effective service.[62]

> *"Due to the vested interests of some people in the hierarchy of the Health Department in Darwin who are volunteers to St. John Ambulance for the purpose of public self-esteem, the ambulance service has gradually been shifted into the hands of St. John with the final coup on mid-week 6 pm to 6 am service taking place after the night of Cyclone Tracy," Mr. Kincade said. "We suggest that St. John is an excellent body for training people in first aid and attending sporting functions, but that in the interests of public health the Health Department is in a far better position to provide a cheap and effective ambulance service."*

How soon and conveniently had the union movement forgotten that they were consulted in August 1974 and had been in favour of the ambulance service transferring to St John control.

> *Discussion with union. Union officials favour full-time ambulance service separate from the hospital with salaried staff of high quality. They especially emphasised qualifications as a pre-requisite to joining the full-time ambulance service and were not particularly worried about career opportunities for the existing orderlies employed on ambulance duties.*
>
> *They consider volunteers must be associated with the full-time ambulance service.*
>
> See Appendix G for full text

The Government very quickly responded that it would not resume control of the Darwin ambulance service. The Minister for Health, Mr Ralph Hunt, said he had the highest regard for the excellent work done by the St John Ambulance Brigade in Darwin.[63]

> *"It was vitally important for the public to recognise the tremendous voluntary contribution, 30,000 hours this year that would otherwise have to be provided at taxpayers' expense. It was ridiculous to suggest that a service run by the Department of Health could be run cheaper."*

However, the TLC wasn't going to give up and the following March resumed its attack on St John after an electrocution when the victim allegedly lay screaming on the ground while waiting 30 minutes for an ambulance to arrive without a doctor on board. St John responded that the ambulance arrived twelve minutes after being called and that doctors only attended depending on the nature of the call.[64] The Department of Health hadn't sent doctors with their ambulances as a matter of routine, either.

Letters to the Editor in the *NT News* claimed that the Union's gripe was because they had failed to get full time St John Ambulance officers to transfer from the Ambulance Officers Association into the Miscellaneous Workers Union (MWU).[65]

December Routine Orders proclaimed a change

in volunteer ambulance officer qualifications to take place in 1978. At present they were:

- ◊ current First Aid certificate with annual re-examination required;
- ◊ current Casualty Care and Transport certificate with annual re-examination required;
- ◊ drivers required to satisfactorily pass a Brigade driving test; and
- ◊ to pass a medical and chest X-ray examination.

These would be replaced by a single Ambulance Officers Training Certificate with the first course starting in February 1978 and lasting five months. A recruiting campaign was to be held in January for new recruits for the course. The academic period of approximately one hundred hours would be continually assessed with recruits having to complete one year before a final assessment.

*During the academic training period with the Ambulance Officers Training Centre, recruits are to be rostered with their Divisions as trainee/observers with normal duty crews and also encouraged to attend normal Divisional Parade Nights.*

On the completion of the Central Course trainees would return to their Divisions as Ambulance Officers Grade 1, either as driver/ attendant or driver only. After satisfactorily completing their first annual re-examination they would be classified as Ambulance Officers Grade 2.

*Current members of the Brigade who failed or did not sit for re-examination in 1977 in either first aid and/or casualty care and transport will be graded as Ambulance Officers Grade 1 – attendants only and as from 1st January 1978 are not permitted to participate as a full crew member, i.e. Driver or Attendant until they complete an annual re-examination in these subjects during 1978.*

*Personnel who failed to requalify at a re-examination in first aid in 1976 and 1977 are to be removed from the Brigade as at 31st December 1977.*

**1978**

The Brigade applied to become a registered operator for the Duke of Edinburgh Award in January. With many subjects compatible with Grand Prior proficiency certificates it was felt that this would increase the scope of Cadet training.[66]

The perpetual need for more volunteers continued with recruiting officer John Hill issuing a press release on 17th January. The previous year 5226 patients were transported over 99,591 kilometres and the work load was increasing. The report doesn't say whether these figures were for the whole service or just the volunteers.[67]

The recruiting drive was such an outstanding success that it was terminated early. By the start of February, 51 firm applications had been received with 30 from the public and seven each from




The new Casuarina Headquarters under construction

Darwin and Casuarina Combined Divisions and seven cadets, with a further 15 enquiries being considered.[68] With the influx of new members problems with filling ambulance rosters and attending public duties were solved for both Darwin and Casuarina Divisions.

The subscriber scheme was also reported to be a success with 1344 subscribers at the end of the first year and a 90 percent renewal rate. A campaign and door knock was to begin to sign on more subscribers.[69]

The appointment of Alan Bromwich as Commissioner was confirmed on 16th February. Lionel Crompton was appointed District Surgeon (effective 21st March) and Chairman of the Association and took over as Chairman of the Promotion Examining Board.[70]

Charlie Stal was redesignated Senior Training Officer on 6th March and John Hill became Training Officer on the same date.

Promotion Examining Boards were appointed, with District Surgeon Lionel Crompton as Chairman of the Ambulance and Nursing Personnel Board, and with District Superintendent Warren Burgess, District Nursing Officer Marian Grayden and Corps Superintendent Grant Keetley as the other members.

The Ambulance Cadets and Nursing Cadets Board had Grant Keetley as Chairman and DSO Charlie Stal and CSO Frank Simmons the other members.[71]

Administrator for the NT, Mr John England and Mrs Polly England were admitted to the Order of St John as Commander Brother and Commander Sister by Governor General Sir Zelman Cowen at a private investiture on the 2nd April. This was attended by Commissioner Alan Bromwich and Mrs Rosemary Bromwich, District Superintendent Warren Burgess and Mrs Joy Burgess, with one male and one female cadet (names not given). [72]

Mr England was the first Administrator to be admitted to the Order since Roger Dean was invested as Commander in 1966 and promoted to Knight in 1969.

In late March the *NT News* published a photo with the headline **800-year-old brick here.** The caption went on to say that the *"brick from St John's Tower in London was flown to Darwin courtesy of Qantas ... it was presented to the St John Ambulance Brigade during a brief early-morning (4am) ceremony at Darwin airport."* [73]

Richard Morris said in an interview with Dr Bill Wilson: *"I organised a brick from St John's Gate to come out to Australia and one of my mates in Qantas flew it in for us."* [74]

Alan Caust disputes this claim and asserted: *"Warren Burgess ... always told me that it was he that organised that stone to be sent FOC by Qantas from St John's Gate in London."* [75]

Marian Grayden wrote: *"NT News had a photo of Warren and the Qantas pilot with the Clerkenwell Stone at 'handover time'. The 800 year old brick arrives, as heading. As you might guess 'brick' really upset a few – I can back up that Warren was involved."* [76]

The minutes of a staff meeting in November 1977 recorded: *"A brick from the St John Gate for the new Casuarina Centre has been approved by Priory. A brick from the original Headquarters at the Darwin Naval Base will also be acquired."* [77] St John Council minutes also call it a brick.

It seemed that all the St John heads called it a "brick" and that's where the *Northern Territory News* got its information.

On Monday 3rd April, Governor General Sir Zelman Cowen laid the Clerkenwell Stone in an informal ceremony at the new Casuarina Centre, attended by members of the Casuarina adult and cadet divisions.

Priory Librarian Dr Ian Howie-Willis wrote about the Clerkenwell Stone for *Vollie News*: [78]

> *Re your lump of rock, if indeed it is from St John's Gate, it will be from the former church of St John about 50 metres away from The Gate. The church took a direct hit from a German bomb during the Blitz in 1940. The church, which dated from the late 1100s but had been reconstructed in the 1600s, was demolished. All that remained was the original underground crypt. In 1958 the church was rebuilt, but using modern red brick rather than*



Governor General Sir Zelman Cowen laying the Clerkenwell Stone at Casuarina Headquarters



This temporary brick setting was later demolished and the stone and plaque mounted in a larger block with the stone from Naval HQ. That block was itself later demolished and both stones and plaques now reside in the Colour Cabinet at the Richard Morris Centre, Casuarina – as the centre is now named.

*the original biscuit-coloured sandstone. The crypt remains in its original mediaeval form. Pieces of the bombed church were sent to various overseas Priories including our own Australian Priory. In fact the foundation stone of our former Priory HQ building on Canberra Avenue (which I've retrieved and is now on display in the new HQ at The Realm Hotel).*

*The actual stone was probably quarried near Caen in Normandy, France, the source of much of the sandstone used in building Britain's mediaeval churches & public buildings.*

The new centre was handed over by the architects in July, allowing administrative staff to move in on the 11th and the duty crews less than two weeks later.

At a Corps Officers' meeting in April, Bob Brennan, Superintendent of Casuarina Combined Division raised the matter of paid staff in the ambulance service. To directly quote the minutes:

*"What is wrong with local Brigade members? Other than the original 4 or 5 all paid staff had been 'imported' from other states. It was an insult to the local Brigade, were there ever likely to be career opportunities for local Brigade members. It was noted that in the past some paid staff had been recruited from the street without even a first aid certificate. It would appear to indicate that there was a lack of confidence by the Management in the Brigade and its running of the Ambulance Service."* [79]

The Minutes continued with a lengthy argument that volunteers were considered good enough to man the out of hours service, but were only being used as a stop gap while less skilled and experienced personnel were being imported.

The author understands that this was always a difficult area for St John Management. When they employed local volunteers for the ambulance service they were accused of bleeding the Divisions of their experienced members. If they didn't employ volunteers they were accused of discrimination. When people were recruited from interstate they were just as likely to leave for a "better" job back down south when qualified, leading to a very high staff turnover. Catch 22.

At the 2012 Investiture and Graduation Ceremony there was a heartfelt plea to the graduating paramedics to please stay in the Territory, showing that there are still many who use St John as a way to get high quality paid training and experience they can use to get that "better" job down south.

At the next District meeting Warren Burgess addressed the unwarranted criticism. He stated that the higher entry standards now required by the ambulance service meant that not all volunteers would be suitable. Of fourteen staff members employed to date, ten were Northern Territory recruits, one ex NT and three from interstate. Only one had been employed from outside the service. [80]

The Department of the Northern Territory sold the Brigade a 22 ft. (7m) airconditioned caravan for $1125 to be used as a mobile First Aid Post. Rod Bramley and Mandy Langdon did the preliminary fitting out and Phil Langdon installed the radio equipment. The van was first used at the Apex On-the-Beach carnival on the May Day public holiday and treated 26 casualties. The Apex Club of Nightcliff would refurbish the van later in the month and it would then carry both Apex and St John logos.[81]

At an Investiture ceremony held at Government House on Wednesday 24th May the Administrator, Mr John England, promoted Dr Charles Gurd to the grade of Commander Brother of the Order of St John; Chairman of the St John Council Richard Morris was admitted as Officer Brother; and members admitted as Serving Brother or Serving Sister were Rod Bramley, Grant Keetley, Teerse Stal, Joy Burgess and Marian Grayden.

Priory Votes of Thanks were awarded to Clement "Eddie" Edwards of Adelaide River, Glanville "Lindy" Lindholm and Joan Boyt-Cullis of Alice Springs, and Doreen Kerr of Darwin. [82]

The Administrator had a busy year presenting awards to St John members, this time in July at a passing out parade for recruits who had just completed five months training in first aid, casualty care and transport and driving.[83] Dux of the course

was Lesley King, who went on to be promoted through the ranks to Deputy Commissioner and became the first female member in the Northern Territory to be invested Dame of Grace in the Order of St John.

Darwin Combined Division represented the Territory at the Australian Nursing Championships in Canberra in June with team members DO Doreen Kerr, Shirley Woods and E.J. Wruck; Individual was Sergeant Joy Burgess. Despite the sub-zero temperatures Joy achieved equal second in the Individual event. Unfortunately, the team trailed the field: *"The Commissioner extends his congratulations to our representatives who reflected credit on the Northern Territory and were in no way disgraced."* [84]

The Territory's first District Nursing Cadet Championship was held at the new Casuarina Headquarters on 25th November. Casuarina Combined Cadet Division won the First Aid team event and Darwin Combined Cadet Division narrowly beat Casuarina in the Nursing team event.

In the Individual events, Darwin easily won the First Aid while the Nursing was a tied score. Casuarina was declared District Team Champions with Darwin as Individual District Champion.

The winners now qualified to represent the NT at the Australian Nursing Cadet Championships to be held at Ipswich in January 1979. The appointed representatives were: DNO Jill Schoolmeester, Manager; DNO Anne Twigg, Assistant Manager. Team members were Nursing Cadets Tonya Wood, Donna Bramley and Brenda Moore. The Individual was Helen Dollisson and Cadet Leader, Peggy Moojen.[85] No results of the competitions were found in early 1979 records, so it's assumed the girls came home empty handed.

Pressure was put on Warren Burgess to relinquish the position of District Superintendent and concentrate on being Manager of the Ambulance Service.[86] Whether this was a genuine concern about his heavy workload or somebody coveting the position is not known, but the District Staff minutes do record a spiteful encounter. He relinquished the position on 31st December and on 1st January 1979 Grant Keetley was appointed Acting District Superintendent (Administrative). Warren Burgess was then appointed DSO Grade 1 – District Ambulance Officer. [87]

It should be noted that the spiteful comments at the staff meeting were not made by Grant Keetley.

Statistics for 1978 – the whole of the Territory:

- ◊ The Brigade transported 5247 patients over 128,008 km with members giving 29,664 hours voluntary service.
- ◊ Volunteers attended 1875 public duties for 10,553 hours and treated 1877 casualties.



*Presented to Joy Burgess.*

AS THE FIRST INDIVIDUAL COMPETITOR
TO REPRESENT THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
IN THE AUSTRALIAN NURSING CHAMPIONSHIPS
HELD AT CANBERRA ON JUNE 24TH 1978.



Casuarina Combined Cadet Division lost three members when Sergeants Peggy Moojen and Tanya Brand, and Nursing Cadet Monique Van Der Maas graduated to the adult division in September. With them are CSO Frank Simmons and DNO Jill Schoolmeester (*2nd from left*).

◊ The Brigade fleet consisted of 11 ambulances, three sitting case/administrative vehicles, one training unit and two first aid caravans.[88]

Training for new recruits was now a single combined first aid, casualty care and transport and nursing course in several modules over 100 hours with constant assessment throughout. At the completion of the first aid module successful candidates received their first aid certificates which enabled enrolment into the Brigade. During the next phase recruits were required to attend ambulance transport duties under the supervision of a fully trained ambulance crew.

On graduation from their five months training the recruits joined a Division of their choice to gain experience in public duties and ambulance work. At the end of their first year they returned to the Ambulance Officers Training Centre for a final assessment before being awarded their Casualty Care and Transport Certificate.[89]

A 1978 briefing note tells us that there were now Combined Adult and Cadet Divisions at Darwin and Casuarina providing public duty, first aid and full ambulance services from Casuarina HQ and the Ross Smith Avenue station. Paid crews operated the ambulance service 6.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday with volunteer crews at other times. The Communications Centre was operated 24/7 by paid staff. Three ambulances operated on week days with two on nights and weekends.



Commissioner Alan Bromwich presents Glen Denmeade with the Individual Championship trophy

A Commissioner's Commendation was made in December to *"Private Malcolm J. Babb for initiative and prompt action to prevent the spread of a fire in the kitchen at the Darwin Hospital on 26th May 1978".* [90]

**1979**

The Territory sent a team of Nursing Cadets to the national first aid championships in Ipswich, Queensland. Tonya Wood, Donna Bramley and Belinda Moore of the Casuarina Combined Cadet Division competed in the team event, Helen Dollisson of Darwin Cadets in the Individual event and Peggy Moojen of Casuarina as Cadet Leader. Cadet Divisional Nursing Officers Jill Schoolmeester and Anne Twigg went as managers.

The girls came seventh, but this was the first time that a team from the Territory had competed and there were a lot of nerves with a drop in morale when they saw the level of the other teams competing.[91]

Chief Justice Forster presented certificates to new St John recruits Glen Denmeade, Graham Jones, Julie Jones, Robert Bremner, Linda McConnell, Gail McGrath and Ronald Mitchell at a graduation ceremony in February. Dux of the course was Jan Cecchi with Dianne Pollock most dedicated student.

Glen Denmeade joined St John as a cadet in 1944 at Parramatta, graduated to the adults as an ambulance attendant and driver, and after many years in the Australian and New Zealand armies, followed by a stint with the RAAF – he must love uniforms, or something, just can't decide whose – when he found himself in Darwin in 1979. Glen didn't waste any time and within a week found himself competing in the NT District first aid championships where he won the individual event.

Competing teams were from Darwin, Casuarina and Alice Springs with the winning men's team of Tony Beckitt, Lindsay King and Ted Wiltshire from Darwin Division.

The winning women's team of Joy Burgess, Beth Shepherd and Chris de Vries were also from Darwin Division. Shirley Woods was individual winner.

Casuarina nursing team Jane Hozier, Monique Van der Maas and Naomi Lugg won the first aid section by one point from Darwin.[92]

The winning team was now to go to Perth to compete in the National Championships. Phil Langdon was appointed Team Manager and Training Department assisted in training exercises to ensure the team would be fully trained by June.[93] The Territory team came fourth in the competitions, with only 30 points separating first to last places. Commissioner Alan Bromwich, sent a telegram, "Half way up this year, the top next year."

The Territory was split into Northern and Southern Corps in April, with the demarcation line being between Dunmarra and Elliott, on the same line as used by the Department of Health.[94] Bob Brennan became Superintendent of the Northern Corps and Brian Males Superintendent of the Southern Corps.[95]

A cliff rescue training exercise became the real thing when things went terribly wrong at Dripstone Cliffs in April. CSO Frank Simmons, whose day job was a training officer with the NT Emergency Service, and Ambulance Officer Malcolm Aslin fell nearly eight metres down the cliff face to the beach below when their supporting ropes slipped anchorages and gave way. Frank suffered two broken ankles while Malcolm had back injuries.[96]

As though timed to cheer him up Frank Simmons was allowed out of hospital to go to Government House to be admitted to the Order of St John as Serving Brother on Friday 4th May.

The following Investitures were also made: St John Councillor Mr Des Hyde, Serving Brother; St John Councillor and Darwin Mayor, Dr Ella Stack, Serving Sister; District Training Officer Graham Morrison, Serving Brother; Divisional Officer (Casuarina) Terry Dahlenburg, Serving Sister. [97]

Marian Grayden was awarded the Service Medal of the Order of St John.[98]

A single sentence in the minutes of a Staff meeting in May announced: *"The St John Ambulance Brigade was officially incorporated on 24 April 1979".*[99] Warren Burgess was elected Public Officer of the new incorporated body.

At the annual District Review at the Civic Centre on Sunday 27th May the Administrator Mr John England said that the Brigade had achieved a high standard of community service and was held in high esteem.[100] Warrants of appointment were made to: Mandy Langdon, Divisional Nursing Officer, Darwin; Jan Cecchi, Divisional Nursing Officer, Casuarina; Lesley King, Divisional Nurse, Casuarina; Anne Twigg, Divisional Nursing Officer, Cadets.[101]

Other appointments announced were: Dr D. Webling as Corps Surgeon and Dr E. Giblin as Divisional Surgeon for Darwin Combined Division.[102]



Frank Simmons, on stretcher, drinks a toast with Des Hyde, Graham Morrison, Dr Ella Stack, John England, Mrs England, Dr Charles Gurd and Terry Dahlenburg

The day finished with a poolside barbecue with the usual reluctant swimmers given an unwanted ducking – until it came to Alan Bromwich, *"but he stood his ground, pipe clenched between his teeth and muttered dark threats about possible demotions. Everybody chickened out and Alan went home dry."* [103]

There was frustration in June with continuing problems getting public duties covered by the Divisions. *"Public relations are required with the Divisions for stimulation purposes."* [104] The following month it was reported that the Darwin Combined Division was "foundering" and that Bob Brennan and Mr Wilmington were both being considered to take over as OAC.[105]

An Officers and NCOs meeting was held in July to discuss and resolve problems with morale and communications in the Brigade. Key points raised were:

- ◊ Staff turnover, which was affected by Darwin's floating population, the work load and inefficient management.
- ◊ Poor attendance at training nights which contributed to lower efficiency and standards. Suggestions for improvement were that both Divisions (Darwin and Casuarina) should meet fortnightly on alternate weeks, to have regular joint meetings and generally improve the standard of the training program.
- ◊ A shortage of drivers that created problems with ambulance rosters. It was suggested that the role of drivers and attendants should be interchangeable as far as possible to improve standards and experience.

The system was that the more qualified crew member drove the ambulance while the less experienced person attended the patient.

- ◊ Lack of discipline and respect towards officers and senior NCOs. No solutions were discussed at the time, but people were already unhappy with the rigid militaristic system that was abolished almost twenty years later.
- ◊ A variety of complaints about communications breakdowns.

*It was generally agreed that Brigade morale was bad and that communications and human relations equally so. It was suggested that the overload of ambulance duties created more problems than any other responsibilities such as public duties and could be contributing to staff turnover.* [106]

The Casuarina Lions Club donated a $1200 Resusci Anne mannequin to the Brigade in September. The Lions had won a $1000 special fund raising award for the previous year's Miss Personality Quest and used it to buy the CPR training aid.[107]

Casuarina Combined Cadet Division found itself leaderless when Superintendent Ian Blackmore left the Territory to take up a position with St John in Adelaide. The Annual Inspection was impressive with 64 members present. However, there was a very sour note when an inspection of the records found that for the six months period prior to Ian Blackmore taking over *"no records of any substance were kept, no banking done, filing system was in a shambles and personal records were inaccurate"*. Blackmore had tried to sort out the mess, but with limited success and was probably happy to be heading back down south.[108]

In November the Commissioner appointed Mrs Doreen Kerr as Superintendent of Darwin Combined Division and Rod Twigg as Superintendent of the Darwin Combined Cadet Division.

On the 19th November, St John Manager Warren Burgess was awarded the National Medal for 15 years service at an investiture ceremony at Government House. It was the first National Medal awarded to a full time ambulance officer in the NT.[109]

In December concern was raised with the serious problem of not having enough volunteers to attend public duties, etc. To overcome this problem in the short term it was recommended to crew ambulances with one volunteer and one paid staff member over the holiday period.[110] The arrangement was put in place and worked extremely well.

**1980**

At the start of the year a team of Cadets went to Melbourne to compete in the National First Aid Championships; Andrew James, Lloyd John and Ian Lucas of Alice Springs in the team event, and Kelvin Harris of Casuarina in the individual event. They were accompanied by Rod Twigg as team manager and CSO Frank Simmons.[111] Because Ansett had generously given a 50% discount on the fares, five other cadets were able to give moral support. Kelvin Harris came third in his event, but the team didn't fare so well by trailing the field.[112]

Investitures this year: Anglican Bishop Kenneth Mason admitted as Chaplain of St John Ambulance in the NT; Dean Clyde Wood admitted as Officer Brother (sub-chaplain); Commissioner Alan Bromwich promoted to Officer Brother; District Surgeon Lionel Crompton admitted as Serving Brother; District Staff Officer John Hill admitted as Serving Brother.

Priory Votes of Thanks were awarded to CSNC Bob Brennan, Glen Hogben of Tennant Creek, Phil Langdon and to Peko Wallsend-Warrego Mines.[113]

The speedway was such a popular public duty that restrictions on numbers attending had to be imposed in July. In future a contingent of eight adults and three cadets only would be allowed to attend. [114] The main problem with large numbers attending a single duty is that other less popular duties don't get covered and the reputation of St John Ambulance suffers.

On Sunday 4th May Governor General Sir Zelman Cowen officially opened the new Casuarina Headquarters by unveiling a plaque and stone from the old Naval Headquarters building, supposedly similar to the stone from which the old St John Hall in Cavenagh Street had been built. At the ceremony the Rev. James Taylor blessed the building and *"all who work for St John in the cause of humanity."* [115]

However, a letter from Australian Archives to Rod Bramley dated 24th April 1980 describes the old St John Hall as being of mud brick construction with red clay brick walls that were crumbling when the building was demolished in 1965. This suggests that the stone unveiled by the Governor General is a bit of a fraud. The letter predates the Opening Ceremony, but isn't date stamped when received. This information was probably known before the Ceremony, but by now it would have been far too late to change anything and the mistaken identity has persisted until exposed by this old historian.

Alan Caust told the author that he was on duty at the new headquarters during the Ceremony and witnessed a time capsule being buried under the 'Great Stone'. It was a round PVC pipe, sealed at both ends and contains historical records, newspapers of the day, listings of Council Members, Divisional records and so forth. It was supposed to have been retrieved twenty years later but is still there and quite inaccessible.

Marian Grayden wrote to the author confirming the existence of a time capsule, although she wasn't there when it was buried. She remembers the 'Big Rock' and comments, "How is it going to work being there", re size and position. "It



Cadet competitors at the airport with Rod Twigg (*left*) Commissioner Alan Bromwich (*right*) and Frank Simmons (*2nd right*).



may be in the way."

St John Council minutes for February 1979 report that Peter Tedder was hoping to arrange for a ceramic time capsule to be made at the Darwin Community College and that if this couldn't be done then a stainless steel capsule would have to be purchased.

Alan's report of a PVC pipe would suggest that the ceramic capsule had been made by the College. Subsequent building expansion programs mean that the time capsule is now buried deep under concrete where it will remain for a long, long time. That's the problem with burying time capsules and not retrieving them when circumstances change.

The block containing the stones and plaques was removed from the foyer during later renovations as it was just too big and now in the way. Marian Grayden wrote to the author that it was moved to a small outside courtyard that staff used for smoko, morning tea, etc. It was affected by the weather in this exposed position and the Clerkenwell stone looked in danger of permanent damage. There was a lot of discussion on how to remove both stones from the block without damage and eventually the task of doing this was given to the NT Museum.

The Memorial Stone was sent to the Museum for restoration in February 1990 and in November it was reported that tests were carried out on the stone, but it was found that no substance would remove the stone from its surround without damage and it was advised that the cement should be chipped away with care.[116]

In January 1991 it was decided that: *"a stone mason be requested to remove the stones from the existing surrounds, cost not to exceed $100. The stones should then be mounted on a substance strong enough to protect and enable relocation in the event of a change in premises and so that they can be placed in a cabinet for display."* [117]

The following month: *"Museum has been contacted and stones will be delivered for assessment by marine archaeologist. Stones will be in place in display cabinet in time for Priory."* [118] However, progress was slow and in December 1991 the Museum advised that the concrete had been cut away from the stones and they would be placed on display for some time at the Museum. [119]

In July 1993 the stones were still on display despite continuing efforts to have them returned. It seems there was a price to pay for having them restored and it's not recorded when they were finally wrested back from the Museum.

The plaque for the Clerkenwell Stone reads:

"The stone is from the Church of the Grand Priory of the Order of St John which was built at Clerkenwell London between 1148 AD and 1185 AD. The original Priory Church was consecrated at a ceremony performed in March 1185 AD, but some 200 years later was destroyed during the rebellion of 1381 AD.

"The Priory Church and the Gate House in which is housed the present day Headquarters of the Order was rebuilt and finally finished in 1504 AD by Grand Prior Thomas Docwra.

"In May 1941 the Priory Church was gutted by incendiary bombs and all of its fine interior was destroyed. The four walls, however, remained and have been retained in the restored Church rebuilt in the same style as the former building and completed in 1958. Fortunately throughout the centuries the original crypt beneath the Church has survived unharmed.

"This original stone from the Priory Church was kindly donated by the Grand Priory of the Most



At the National Championships in June 1980 the Northern Territory team won by a margin of 14 points. [120]

The team was: Manager Clem Larcombe; team members Robert Tremethick, Ian Williams, Jane Hozier and Individual competitor Yvonne Van Der Maas.

*Above: Competition winners*
*Ian Williams, Robert Tremethick, Jane Hozier*

Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem."

The plaque with the Naval Headquarters stone reads:

"The Darwin Combined Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade was formed in 1953 and was the first Foundation of the Order of St John established in the Northern Territory.

"Instructional meetings were held in various schools and halls until the following year when an old building in Cavenagh Street near the present Civic Centre in Darwin was offered as a Divisional Headquarters.

"This old building, now demolished, became the home of the St John Ambulance Brigade until the new St John Ambulance Centre in Ross Smith Avenue, Parap was occupied in 1960.

"The original headquarters was constructed of local stone similar to this stone obtained from the old Naval Headquarters, The Esplanade, Darwin.

"It will serve as a memorial to the birth of the Order of St John in the Northern Territory upon which Foundation the work of humanity and charity may continue in accordance with the great principles of the Order embodied in the mottoes 'Pro Fide', and 'Pro Utilitate Hominum'."

Now that the Territory was a District in its own right it was felt that the Brigade should have its own colours and Commissioner Alan Bromwich wrote to the Chief Commissioner in May requesting the granting of colours. District strength of 600 was normally required, but the Territory with its small population now had 359 members at the end of 1979, or 0.4% of the population. This was four times higher than the rest of Australia as a whole and well above South Australia. There was no hesitation and approval was granted almost immediately.[121] Colours would have to come from England, taking about ten weeks.

Government budget cuts meant a severe reduction in funding for St John Ambulance which flowed through to the Brigade, especially the Cadet movement. Cadet Divisions were required to curtail recruiting and defer issuing uniforms until Cadets obtained their First Aid Certificates and in the case of Juniors not issuing uniforms until completion of a statutory period of attendance. Other ideas were for Divisions to raise their own funds for uniform purchases, imposition of a bond for uniforms with part refund on return and to recondition and re-issue returned uniforms.[122]

Problems with covering public duties seemed to be never ending: *"Lack of manpower, facilities and leadership seem to be a major problem"*. It was suggested that Divisions run public first aid courses to recruit members interested only in public duties. Sporting bodies were to be encouraged to provide their own first aid personnel to cover their events.

Brigade members preferred to do ambulance duties and to overcome this problem it was suggested that an officer delegate duties rather than members nominating for duties of their choice. It was further stated that the public duty crews weren't impressed with late starts and the way they were treated. [123]

This is an ongoing problem that occurs today. The author experienced events being cancelled or relocated on numerous occasions with the organisers not bothering to inform St John, yet the very same people kick up a fuss if their duty doesn't get covered. Lack of courtesy and taking St John for granted is quite common.

Another Building Appeal was launched in September, this time to raise money for commitments over the next few years, estimated to cost $1.8 million:

- Renovations at the Darwin Centre
- Extensions at Casuarina Headquarters
- New headquarters at Adelaide River
- Temporary headquarters at Jabiru as a base for further expansion
- Garaging facilities at Batchelor
- New headquarters at Katherine
- Completion of renovations and additions to existing building at Tennant Creek
- New headquarters at Alice Springs
- Garaging facilities at Ayers Rock

A St John Ambulance Building Appeal Committee was appointed with Dr Charles Gurd, Appeal President; Greg Hoffman, Appeal Chairman; Dr Ella Stack, Member of Council; Dr Lionel Crompton, Association and Brigade representative; Geoff Stolz, Member of Council; Richard Morris, Chairman of Council; John Fillmore, member of Council; Peter Tedder, Member of Council; Ian Spooner, Council Secretary; Warren Burgess, Manager; Alan Markham, Appeal Director.

Peter Lafsky from St John in South Australia, who directed the 1976 appeal, was coordinator for the Alice Springs and Tennant Creek area.

The appeal was launched in each centre on Monday 15th September with a reception in Darwin at Government House hosted by Mr Justice Forster on behalf of the Administrator, Mr John England. Civic receptions were held in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

Targets were set at: Darwin, $46,000; Alice Springs, $25,000; Tennant Creek, $8,000; Katherine $10,000.[124]

Doorknocks were held in Darwin, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek on Sunday 12th October. An earlier doorknock in Katherine on 28th September raised $1600. [125]

That champion of charitable causes, Auntie Billie Pitscheneder helped out by raffling a pair of buffalo horns and collected $682.84 for the appeal.

Other fund raising activities included a special charity night on the anniversary of the opening of the Don Hotel Casino. From opening time Tuesday 14th to closing time on Wednesday morning all profits from the gaming and cabaret areas would go to the St John Ambulance Building Appeal.

The Darwin Cinema held a special charity premiere of the award winning Australian movie *Breaker Morant* and a "Summer '80 Fashion Spectacular" was held at Casuarina Square to aid the appeal.[126]

By the 15th October the appeal had reached $22,056 with over $14,000 having been raised in Darwin, $1720 in Tennant Creek, $3852 in Alice Springs and $1662 in Katherine.[127]

The appeal raised a total of $65,000 and while not reaching the target was considered an outstanding success.

**1981**

This year the annual District Review was held in the evening of Sunday 21st June at the Civic Centre gardens, inspected by Commissioner Alan Bromwich and the Administrator, Commodore Eric Johnston.

The St John Ambulance Ball was held on Saturday 29th August at the Darwin Community College 'Breezeway'. Members were asked to invite their friends in order to make it a successful night. The committee catered for 230 persons with finances tailored for that number to attend *"or we will face another financial embarrassment as we did last year. The Casuarina Combined Division Social Club came to the rescue and paid the outstanding debts and is owed $220 which is to be recouped this year".*[128] We have no further information about how the Ball went, but it's hoped it was a success and they recouped last year's losses.

At a ceremony at Government House on Thursday 10th September, Governor General Sir Zelman Cowen invested the Administrator, Commodore Eric Johnston and Mrs Johnston as Commander Brother and Commander Sister, Council members Peter Tedder and Geoff Stolz as Serving Brothers and Brigade members Doreen Kerr and Sister Ellen Pitts as Serving Sisters.[129]

The Governor General also promoted Dr Charles Gurd as Knight of Grace of the Order of St John. At the following civil investiture Dr Gurd was made a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George.

Chief Commissioner Brigadier Young presented Grand Prior Awards to sister and brother Cadet Sergeants Anne and Peter Hoschke at the Cadet Parade on Friday 27th November.

Senior Training Officer Charlie Stal resigned from the Brigade on 21st July to take up a new position as Secretary of the St John Ambulance Association in Victoria. Earlier in the year he had unsuccessfully applied for the position of General Manager, recently vacated by Warren Burgess.

There were five new Divisions registered in 1981:[130]

- ◊ Katherine Combined Cadet Division (DS Rob Tremethick)
- ◊ Tennant Creek Combined Cadet Division (OAC Dick Visscher)
- ◊ Howard Springs Combined Cadet Division (DS Wayne Dillon)
- ◊ Sanderson Combined Cadet Division (DS Norm Turner)
- ◊ Nhulunbuy Combined Division (DS Grant Wiggins)

**1982**

The April staff meeting minutes recorded: *"Corps Superintendent P. Winckler agreed to look into the matter of members saluting and showing respect to officers."* [131] How times have changed since then. Operations Branch was largely demilitarised in the 1997 Restructure and nowadays most members won't even wear uniforms to Divisional training nights and any officer who asked to be saluted would be laughed at. There are still one or two who mourn the passing of those regimented days of quasi-militaristic pomp and ceremony, but the rest have moved with the times.

In June, the Promotions Board approved Private Peter Poole to be promoted to Divisional Officer of Darwin Combined Division.[132] This was the start of Peter's rise through the ranks to Divisional Superintendent, District Superintendent and then Commissioner in 2006.

St John first aid instructors held a five weeks Preliminary First Aid course for Casuarina High School students who had chosen to learn resuscitation and how to deal with first aid emergencies as an elective subject. *"Perhaps it's about time first aid was introduced as a compulsory subject in schools."* [133]

That little news story and an advertisement resulted in more Preliminary First Aid courses being held in July in the mid year school break.[134] Nightcliff Primary School conducted a Preliminary First Aid course in September with 45 in attendance.[135]

Sanderson Combined Cadet Division enrolled 27 cadets on Friday 4th June. The same night more than 20 cadets signed the BFC/RS form (now OB1) to form Dripstone Combined Cadet Division.[136] Casuarina Combined Cadet Division had become too large and unwieldy, necessitating the formation of another Division in the area.

Cadet Divisions were flourishing and in September the registration of the Dripstone Combined Cadet Division was sanctioned by the Chief Commissioner. New Cadet Division Leanyer was meeting at Malak Primary School with 45 members and Nhulunbuy had 20. The Northern Territory now had almost 500 cadets. [137]

The Territory scooped the pool by winning the team and individual National First Aid Championships in Sydney on Saturday 26th June 1982. Clem Larcombe and Lesley King coached Christine Turner, Chris de Vries, Robert Elliott and Tim Rayner in their winning effort.[138] Chris de Vries was the Individual champion.

In the October Cadet Competitions Dripstone won the NT championships in both first aid and home nursing. The Ambulance Cadet team was Jason Graefling, Neil Roberts and Florent Alcidi; the Nursing team was Anne Pitman, Janelle Orrick and Sophie Kainasidis.

Individual Ambulance Cadet winner was Tim Pitt-Lancaster of Alice Springs; individual Nursing Cadet winner was Anne Hoschke of Casuarina. Helen Proudfoot of Casuarina was winning Cadet Leader – she was the only competitor.[139]



Christine Turner treating her "patient" during competitions

The Darwin First Aid caravan had been *"used extensively this last year and is showing signs of fatigue and water damage."* The suggestion was to send the van to Katherine and purchase a new unit for Darwin, subject to finance being available, estimated a bit over $21,000. Quite naturally, the Katherine Brigade were a little browned off with being sent Darwin's cast off that required extensive work. Rod Bramley wrote: *"I feel that for $4000 the standard of caravan that we are proposing to send is good value and will give them an interest and project to upgrade in their passive time."* [140]

Concern was raised in November about the number of Brigade members being summoned to appear in Court to give evidence into fatal road accidents, with twelve members being summoned over just one accident.[141] Rod Bramley pursued the matter with the Crown Law Department and it was agreed in future to only summon those actually required to give evidence.

**1983**

General Manager Colin Burden advised the Executive at the February Council meeting that a rift between Service and Brigade was developing and causing conflict. It was hoped that meetings later in the week would resolve the situation.[142]

In March there was a call for Divisions to nominate male members for Ambulance Member of the Year and females for Nursing Member of the Year. There were selection criteria with marks awarded:[143]

| | |
|---|---|
| Years of service/Offices held | 10 |
| Duties undertaken | 10 |
| Certificates held | 5 |
| Competition involvement | 10 |
| Training activities | 10 |
| Appearance – dress | 15 |
| Ability to communicate to public | 20 |
| Community Service | 20 |

The competition was open to all adult members of the Brigade. This came from National Headquarters, so it's assumed that each District would submit their two nominees to National HQ for selection as National members of the year.

Nominations from the Northern Territory were Lesley King and Brian Males.

There were problems with Cadet numbers, with Casuarina Combined Cadet Division having 180 members at one stage, forcing them to hold split training nights and then divide into more Divisions in the northern suburbs. To curtail this explosion the Northern Corps brought in a policy of no new Divisions and no new Cadets until numbers stabilised at manageable levels of 50 for existing Divisions. There would be no members under the age of ten unless the family were already involved.[144]

At the following District Conference it was agreed that a ratio of one adult per six cadets be maintained – this was crossed out with 10-12 inserted.

A report from the Katherine Cadets stated: *"Juniors are the last lot of people you want in a Division. There are many other organizations which cater for Juniors far better than St John. They are – Brownies and Cubs. Juniors take up a lot of our valued time and scarce manpower in this organization."* [145]

The author was told by various members that St John Juniors are little more than a free babysitting service.

Plans for what was to become *Outback Ambulance* magazine were outlined by General Manager Colin Burden at the March staff meeting. The quarterly magazine would involve all foundations of the Order and the Institute of Ambulance Officers in the Territory.[146] The first issue of *Outback Ambulance* was in December 1983. Since then it's had an erratic career and is now published as a single annual edition.

At the 1983 District Review CSO Terry Dahlenburg was awarded the Service Medal of the Order of St John for 12 years efficient service.

Commissioner Alan Bromwich was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. [147]

The April staff meeting noted *"some members*

*present felt there was a need for incentives to be developed and to relieve out-of-pocket expenses incurred by volunteers"* and that such incentives could assist with rostering difficulties. *"Other members felt that as it is a 'voluntary' organisation it may act in some instances as a deterrent."* [148] This problem still exists today with St John searching for effective 'reward and recognition' schemes to encourage members to attend public duties and carry out other duties within the organisation.

First aid competitions were held in April to select a team for the National Championships to be held in Melbourne later in the year. The scenario for the first aid test was a terrorist bomb explosion at Casuarina Square.

The winning team were Darwin Division's Peter Poole, Sharon Wilson and Michelle Hanton with 422 points. The Patient Care trophy went to Casuarina Division's Jim Haldane, Tony Oxford and Donna Buck. Individual champion was Christine Turner of Casuarina Division.[149] Chris went on to win the Individual Championship at the Nationals in Melbourne, although the team was unplaced. [150]

The Lord Prior, Sir Maurice Dorman arrived in Darwin in June as part of his trip to the antipodes for the centenary of the foundation of St John in Australia, to be celebrated later in the month in Melbourne.[151]

At the Cadet competitions held at Dripstone High School in October, Darwin won the aggregate and grand champion trophies and Casuarina's Helen Proudfoot won the Cadet Leader trophy for the second year in succession. Howard Springs won the nursing and Nhulunbuy won the first aid championships.[152]



Savastianna Saloukos, Helen Proudfoot and Florent Alcidi in the Kiss of Life marathon

Thanks to a Northern Territory Government grant, work commenced on additional training facilities at Casuarina during November. Working during the wet season isn't easy, but builders Sitzler Bros. completed the works on 26th March 1984.

On 22nd December five cadets from Casuarina Combined Cadet Division became world record holders in the "Kiss of Life". It took 270,516 inflations in 295 hours at Hibiscus Shopping Town to claim the new record. Team members were Anne Hoschke, Colleen Proudfoot, Florent Alcidi, Helen Proudfoot and Savastianna Saloukos, with witnesses Michel Mereau and Lena Abbott. [153]

Brigade statistics for the whole of the Territory as at 31 December 1983:[154]

There were now 11 adult and 13 cadet Divisions; 30 District and Corps staff, 149 Ambulance and 139 Nursing adults; 257 Ambulance Cadets and 29 Juniors; 297 Nursing Cadets and 71 Juniors.

Volunteers worked 15,561 public duty hours, 110,831 transport hours and treated 1,584 patients. This gave an average of 130 hours per member for the year.

**1984**

The National Cadet Championships were held in Alice Springs 4th—11th January, with 134 cadets from all States and Territories. Competitions were held at Sadadeen High School on 7th January. NT representatives were:

- ◊ Team – Evangelo Vrodos, Michael Petrelis, John Henderson
- ◊ Manager – Christine Turner
- ◊ Individual – Timothy Pitt-Lancaster (Katherine Combined Division)
- ◊ Cadet Leader – Lloyd James (Alice Springs Combined Division)

Team and Individual events were won by NSW,

Cadet Leader by Victoria; Timothy Pitt-Lancaster came second in the Individual event. [155]

Annual District First Aid Competitions were held on Saturday 14th April. The winners were:

- ◊ Team–Darwin Combined Division; Kate Hanna, Michelle Hanton, Sharon Wilson.
- ◊ Team manager, Mrs Barbara Henderson.
- ◊ Reserve was Michael Young.
- ◊ Individual Champion–Rayleen Ohlson from Tennant Creek Combined Division.

Cadet numbers were getting out of hand in some Divisions with the following in May:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Darwin: | 25 attending, | 28 on books |
| Leanyer | 35 | 70 |
| Casuarina | 80 | 127 |
| Sanderson | 80 | 87 |
| Dripstone | 25 | 35 |
| Howard Springs | 29 | 34 |

A Cadet Officers Meeting on 14th May determined that no Juniors would be allowed into the Brigade until further notice, unless 10½ years of age and able to begin first aid training immediately. There were to be no new Cadets in Casuarina or Sanderson for the remainder of 1984 without the sanction of DSO (Cadets).

All Cadet Divisions were to have a Divisional Parents Association by the end of September with a representative from each Division to form an executive Parents Association. Associations would be responsible for fundraising, assisting in supervision with camps, social and other activities. It was hoped that after a while some of these parents would join the Brigade themselves.

The Northern Territory hosted the annual Priory Convention and National First Aid and Home Nursing Championships in the week commencing 18th June. Some 200 delegates from all States and Territories *"participated in meetings, the Annual Church Service, social functions and the National First Aid and Home Nursing Championship competitions"*. [156]

Receptions were held at Government House hosted by the Administrator, Commodore Eric Johnston; at the Darwin Civic Centre hosted by Lord Mayor Alec Fong Lim; and at Pee Wee Camp hosted by Minister for Health Nick Dondas. The latter *"was attended by 300 St John representatives and everyone agreed that the choice of venue was excellent, taking full advantage of the outdoors on a tropical Darwin evening"*. [157]

Competitions were held at the Darwin High School on Saturday 23rd June and attended by Governor General Sir Ninian Stephen and Lady Stephen. The Team event was won by Peter Bailey, G. Green and Mrs F. Smith of Victoria, with the Individual trophy going to Joy Burgess of South Australia. Joy had previously been a Territory champion and member of Darwin and Casuarina Divisions.

The *1984-1985 Annual Report* said: *Competitions were not as successful as in recent years. However, the idea of dropping them from our program was rudely dismissed and support for them is apparently high.*

The Brigade Dinner Dance followed the competitions.

Commissioner Alan Bromwich, Dr Kerry Kirke and Grant Keetley transferred to the Reserve at the end of the triennium on the 24th June, being succeeded by Dr Lionel Crompton as Commissioner, Graham Morrison as District Superintendent, and Dr Gerry Goodhand as District Surgeon.

Alan Bromwich remained as a St John Councillor, eventually becoming President of the Council before retiring in 2012.

At a District Staff Meeting on 3rd July 1984 DSO Chris De Vries advised that Leanyer Cadet Division would be closed the first week after school break when the division would amalgamate with Sanderson.

DSO Lesley King investigated the feasibility of providing a hospice in Darwin and contacted various organisations in the southern states for information on the matter. Replies were very informative, but the project didn't go ahead.

Lesley wrote that she *"asked the Manager of the Ambulance Service, Colin Burden, about the possibility of St. John Council adding a Hospice to*

*their list of services. I didn't get too much back from them - except that they thought it was a good idea - but I couldn't do it on my own so after a couple of requests for support which wasn't forthcoming I abandoned the idea."* [158]

This was more than a decade before the Territory's controversial *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act* that legalised euthanasia in the Northern Territory. This Act was overturned by the Commonwealth in 1997, and although invalid still remains as an NT Government statute.

One can only wonder if euthanasia would have become an issue at all had Lesley received support for her hospice twenty years before the NT Department of Health finally built one on the grounds of Royal Darwin Hospital in 2005.

The Training Cadre was revived with participation from G. Graham, T. Wilson, Rees Van der Molen, Errol Priestly, R. Bartlett, M. Young, Charlie Cuff, Peter Winckler, N. Norris, Rod Bramley and T. Crosby. [159]

In September, Rayleen Oxford of Tennant Creek joined Michelle Hanton, Kate Hanna and Sharon Wilson of Darwin to compete in the Home Nursing section of the Pan Pacific Golden Jubilee First Aid and Home Nursing Competition in Singapore, with Graeme Morrison as team manager. The Western Australian Commandery was Champion Ambulance Team with Singapore the Champion Nursing Team.

**1985**

Early in the year a Drum and Fife Band started for cadets at the instigation of Commissioner Lionel Crompton. This was first raised in July 1984 and by January 1985 instruments had been ordered and sheet music obtained.

> *... the band is to have its first practice this week (March 1985). Initially the drums will practice in Howard Springs and the fifes in the Northern Suburbs. The new fifes make a noise when blown, a remarkable advance on the previous models. The drums have been decorated in St John colours, black and white.* [160]

The *1985-1986 Annual Report* stated that the Cadet Band gave its first public performance in late 1985 and since then had improved in proficiency at an impressive rate.

> *Their first ceremonial duty was to play the salutes, a slow march and some incidental music at the Review. They performed well.*

The Cadet Band Division was registered on 19th May 1986 with Sister Ellie Pitts as Superintendent and Mrs Pat King as Sergeant Major/Bandmaster.

Read pages 302-309 for more information.

Chief Commissioner Peter Falkland attended the District and Corps Staff Officers meeting on Saturday 27th April. He addressed the meeting and said that many of the Territory's problems were no different than at National level. Points raised on the agenda, such as public relations and patient care in the home were before the National Committee.

> *"This Committee was looking at the Organisation as it existed at present, its strengths and weaknesses and was trying to build on the strengths and eliminate the weaknesses to try to put it into shape for the future."*

District First Aid and Nursing Competitions were held on Saturday 27th April with the winning team being Kate Hanna, Pat Broderick and Lenaire Brown of Darwin Division.

Champion individual was Christine Turner of Howard Springs Division. Other winners were Cadet Leader Helen Proudfoot of Casuarina Cadet Division and Cadet individual Toni-Maree Semple of Alice Springs Cadet Division.

Darwin was the winning cadet team, Casuarina won the adult team nursing and Darwin won the First Aid and aggregate score.

Medallions and trophies were presented by Chief Commissioner Peter Falkland and NT Administrator Commodore Eric Johnston.[161]

On 21st May Northern Corps was divided into Northern Corps (Darwin region) and North-Eastern Corps (Adelaide River, Batchelor, Katherine, Jabiru and Nhulunbuy). North Eastern Corps Superintendent was Darwin based Steve Peers with

CSO Wayne Dillon and CSO Peter Walker.

In 1984 DSO Frank Simmons recommended the Brigade consider an almoner. A steering committee of Frank Simmons, Terry Dahlenburg and Marian Grayden was formed in May 1985 to investigate the matter further. It was suggested to change the title to Welfare Officer and that there would be no finance involved with the position. In August 1985 the members of the steering committee became a Brigade counselling service for any member.

At the District Staff meeting of Wednesday 29th May 1985 Commissioner Crompton presented Warrants of Appointment to Craig Cousins as Northern Corps Superintendent, CSO Bernice "Terry" Dahlenburg and DSO Richard Holt. Marian Grayden was awarded a 17 year bar to her Service Medal of the Order of St John.

Rod Bramley reported in June that the first volunteer paramedic in Australia, Craig Cousins, had graduated and was working on road duties.

A meeting was held at the Casuarina Ambulance Centre on Thursday 15th August to launch and enrol members for the St John Ambulance Community Care nursing project. The group became members of Casuarina Combined Division to be trained by the Divisional Nursing Officer.[162]

The basic entry requirement to join the Brigade was a current First Aid Certificate, but Registered Nurses were exempt, although encouraged to do the course in order to gain insight into the Brigade.

Lesley King, who was the driving force behind this project, wrote:

"Basically I had a number of members and senior Cadets qualified in the old St John Home Nursing program, but with no call for their services, hence their skills were not getting used. I approached the hospital to see if they could help there but the response was pretty slow so I asked my nursing colleagues in the Community Nursing area if we could help with patients being nursed at home - which is what we were trained for.

"The response was immediate and pretty soon we were busy most of the week with home assistance for families who needed to get out for a few hours and needed someone to look after their relative without having to pay for a nursing call out.

"Other patients were referred to me by the Community Health Nurses because they lived alone and needed assistance with bathing and getting to bed at night. We were also asked to attend a child who had brain damage of some sort - I have forgotten the details - and the Doctors wanted to try the new 'constant therapy' with this patient at home. That meant having someone sit with them and talk to them, move their limbs etc. as often as possible. Some of our senior Cadets did this duty. [I don't have the name of the child and from memory it only lasted a few weeks as the child did not respond.]

"The other area Cadets worked in was after school hours care of Downs Syndrome children at home - so mum could attend to the rest of the family and get dinner organised. They also did regular duties at the Harry Giese Centre.

"The nursing project ended because St. John deleted the Home Nursing course from their list of qualifications for members. Some of the skills taught in that course were then included in the first aid course, but not with enough scope to satisfy a competent home nursing requirement for the Health Dept." [163]

It seems that in the need for funding the St John Council considered putting advertising on ambulances. This caused outrage in the Brigade and the District Staff meeting of Wednesday 28th August 1985 moved the motion: *"The Brigade express extreme disappointment and dismay at the proposed introduction of slogans/advertising on ambulances."* This was passed unanimously and the Commissioner was requested to bring the motion to the attention of the Council.

The September *Brigade Report to Council* had some good news of the Darwin area and not so good about regional centres. In the Northern Corps, which encompassed Darwin and its rural area, ambulance duties still claimed most of the voluntary effort, but public duties were still well

attended by adults and cadets. *"Increasing interest in domiciliary care for patients is emerging, the nursing group now being active."*

In the North Eastern Corps, the Adelaide River Division was on the point of collapse and would be absorbed into Batchelor. Adelaide River Division was finally closed on 1st July 1986.

Southern Corps *"continues to struggle along below strength".*

Late in the year, District Superintendent Graham Morrison moved to Adelaide with a new job. Lesley King acted in the position for a few months before being confirmed in the position in early 1986.

General Manager Colin Burden's position as Deputy Commissioner was sanctioned in September.

**1986**

The Australian Cadet Competitions were held in Adelaide on 4th January. The NT cadets excelled in the Team and Cadet Leader events, taking out first position and the Individual scored a place, giving the Territory the highest aggregate score and that trophy as well.[164]

The Cadet Leader event was won by Helen Proudfoot from Casuarina Cadet Division, and the team event was won by Evangelo Vrodos, Michael Petrelis and John Henderson from Darwin Cadet Division. Reserve was Evan Papandonakis.

Toni-Maree Semple from Alice Springs was the Individual competitor. [165]

Helen Proudfoot was selected in the four member team for the International Championships that followed the Nationals. The team did quite well, coming a close second to the English.[166]

On Sunday 9th March, Jason Graefling of Dripstone Cadet Division and Sonya Arnold of Casuarina Division were returning to Darwin after a family picnic at Berry Springs with Jason's father, Police Sergeant Garry Graefling at the wheel. They were almost run off the road by another vehicle and a bit further on came across a cloud of dust and the scene of an accident.

The young ambos grabbed the car's first aid kit and prepared for action. They first saw a baby lying on the road, but there was nothing they could do for the poor innocent victim.

When somebody said there were two more people who needed attention they saw a man dazed and lying on the road up against the back of a vehicle. They were also directed to a woman lying across the seat of another vehicle further up the road.

While they calmly and professionally treated their casualties, Sergeant Graefling followed a vehicle to the Noonamah Hotel and held the driver who had telephoned for help.

Back at the accident scene: *"All the time the mother and father were asking about their baby – but we couldn't tell them."*

There were about ten people standing around, a bit panicky and not knowing what to do. After the ambulance had left with their patients our young heroes were applauded by the onlookers as they drove off.[167]

The Northern Corps report for the May District Conference stated that Casuarina Division had a large number of Service staff and Cadet Officers whose other commitments reduced the number of members available for Divisional duties. Promotions to Corps and District often came from this Division, further exacerbating their problems. The younger members who were not ambulance trained covered the many public duties allocated to the Division.

Darwin Division was described as being stable with longer serving members. However, there was an evident shortage of members and also five Cadet Officers who were committed elsewhere. Morale was excellent with a good turn up of members, a good training program and a shared workload.

A report on the Training Cadre says that it *"was established during the first quarter of 1985 with its primary function being to coordinate and implement IAC Phase I and II programs. To a lesser extent the Cadre has a responsibility to assist in Divisional Training and in the conducting of Annual Re-examinations."*

Current membership was Mr N. Norris, Charlie Cuff, Mr M. Boyle; Mr D. Elliott, Tony Oxford, Pat

Calway and Lyn Holgate.

Peter Walker, Mark Chilton and Wayne Dillon also provided their services to the Cadre from time to time. Brigade members from Darwin and Casuarina Divisions attended IAC sessions on a regular basis to refresh their own competencies and assist in practical training sessions.[168]

A new recruit training syllabus was designed by DSO Norris that would rely heavily on a tutor-apprentice system for on-road training. This new system was designed to get new recruits trained and on the road earlier where they would develop practical clinical skills more rapidly.[169]

The District Staff meeting on 2nd July agreed on a retirement age of 65 – with discretion. This was later increased to 72 and in 2002 was changed to be flexible depending on the fitness of members to continue.

Prospective members would now be required to undergo a criminal history check, interview and physical fitness examination before being accepted into the Brigade. They were waiting on information from other States re physical standards for duty members with the intention to implement a physical fitness, education and aptitude standard for the NT.

Descriptive titles for Divisions such as Ambulance, Nursing and Combined were to be dropped, except for the Cadet Band Division.

In August as a way of raising funds the Council decided to start charging organisations for Brigade volunteers to attend Public Duties. This resulted in duties drying up overnight and for those that continued volunteers unfairly copped the flak from organisers. It was proposed that funds raised would underwrite the latest recruiting campaign.[170]

In October, Dr Crompton received a letter from National Headquarters criticising the charging for Public Duties. His reply indicated that although the decision had been made by Council and not the Brigade it was supported by him as a very necessary approach to responsible fund raising and utilisation of resources.[171]

The matter of charging for Public Duties was discussed in Council in November. Dr Charles Gurd had taken up the matter with Priory on his recent trip to Canberra and this had been discussed at length. It was suggested that invoices reflect charges for equipment and administration costs rather than charges for volunteer services.[172]

On the 1st May 1987 the unpopular policy of charging for foot personnel attending Public Duties was rescinded.

Northern Corps Superintendent Craig Cousins recommended that District adopt the black Akubra hat for members to wear on public duties, especially for the coming papal visit. The Staff meeting in October opposed the purchase of these hats, the approved regulation hat being white with an 8cm brim.[173]

Craig won in the end though, as the hat currently worn nationally by Operations Branch is the black Akubra style.

The recruiting campaign concluded in October with 78 enquiries and 50 attending orientation programs. Dr Crompton said that the result was the best ever achieved from a recruiting program while Colin Burden advised that a major concern was the lack of interest in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine.[174]

In November, a book of Brigade Memorabilia was presented to the Commissioner by DSO Terry Dahlenburg. Alan Bromwich offered to become the Brigade Historian, so the book was given to him. The Commissioner moved a vote of thanks to Terry for her outstanding contribution to the Brigade over many years.

**1987**

On the 1st January 1987 all operations of St John Ambulance in Australia became a single public title, St John Ambulance Australia, with all NT foundations, establishments, the Council and Ambulance Service known as St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc. The Governor General, as head of the Order in Australia became the Prior and all State and Territory heads, Deputy Priors.

At the February District Staff Meeting a

resolution was passed to dissolve the St John Ambulance Brigade, Northern Territory District Inc. and transfer all assets to St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc.

The Notice of Intention was published in the *NT News* and the *NT Government Gazette*. The assets would then be transferred after 28 days and the Brigade automatically dissolved three months after lodgement of a Notice of Completion with the Corporate Affairs Commissioner.

The Brigade's new name, which was to become Operations Branch, was still under discussion.[175] One suggestion was Public Duties Branch, but this was rejected as not properly descriptive of the volunteer role, especially in the Northern Territory where public duties were just one part of their activities. Nowadays it's known as First Aid Services.

The St John After Hours Care Scheme was announced in January with two members currently performing active duties and a total of six members participating.

Newly accredited Darwin Institute of Technology based training was adopted early in the new year in order to unify training with that of the paid service and to national standards.

The demands of this training were so high that it resulted in an unsustainably high dropout rate for new recruits, as well as some longer serving members. The *1986-1987 Annual Report* stated:

> *This year our numbers are seriously depleted, the biggest impact being the loss of a high proportion of new recruits. Over the next Christmas period we will have difficulty meeting our commitments to ambulance transport duty, but should cope.*
>
> *Our members are severely strained. Volunteers perform most of the ambulance transport duty at nights, weekends and holidays, that is to say most of the time. A Territorian injured in an accident is most likely to be aided, treated and transported by a crew of volunteers. Attendance by paid crew is likely only during normal daily working hours.*

The Annual Report went on to say that a protracted reduction in volunteer numbers would result in a declining standard of care to Territorians, *"since it is unlikely that funds would be found for a paid after-hours service".* On a brighter note, the Annual Report did say that:

> *The continuing commitment and dedication of our volunteer personnel again highlights the importance of these Territorians to St John and specifically to the people of the Northern Territory. Their contribution this year totalled some 144,000 hours, which is valued at approximately $2.16 million.*

Colin Burden received a letter from Telecom requesting information to assist the introduction of the 000 Emergency Service which was expected to commence during May 1987.

Colin Burden earlier had talks with Minister Don Dale about a site for a Cadet Camp and other activities, where he was advised to put in a submission with the Department of Lands. CSO Winckler advised the possibility of the AIM site at Coomalie Creek and also a possible site at the 35 mile Acacia Creek.[176]

In August they were offered the choice of two sites at Darwin River Dam. A block near Section 224 was selected the following month and the Commissioner was asked that a submission to Lands Department go ahead as soon as possible to ensure St John did not miss the opportunity.

By November the school in Palmerston had expressed interest in a joint venture with the Cadets over the development of a camp site. Also, the Scouting Association would meet on 6th December to decide whether or not to divide their block, Curragundi, on the Darwin River Dam Road. DSO Holt was to attend the meeting and he was also reminded that a Foundation had been set up with a view to acquiring land for St John.[177]

In December a letter was received from Lands and Housing regarding the Cadet Camp land allocation. The Department advised that as the Scout movement had a large property they were willing to share, they must reject the application.

An undated Operations Report – most likely February – has Garry Schoolmeester appointed as District Officer Ambulance Training. He was to assume control as co-ordinator of the Training Cadre, Operations and Training Departments of the Northern region for Brigade Training.

The Training Cadre was disbanded in March with all Recruit Ambulance Training now conducted by the Ambulance Officers Training College (AOTC). Garry Schoolmeester was given the portfolio Special Projects, Liaison, Assistant DAO and On-Road Supervisor at District level. He suggested that Ed Sinclair and Graeme Rayson now be given a rank that acknowledged their contribution to the volunteer service and that the rank should be above Divisional Superintendent.[178] They were both appointed DSO Grade IV (Training).

At the District Conference on the 3rd May, Northern Corps reported:

- ◊ Northern Corps covered the Darwin area as far south as Howard Springs/Palmerston. Corps staff was Corps Superintendent Craig Cousins, Corps Surgeon, and CSOs Rob Tremethick, Doreen Kerr, Lena Abbott and Glenn Getzin, who was being transferred to Alice Springs for six months with his employment.
- ◊ Divisions within area: Darwin, Casuarina and Howard Springs Adults; Darwin, Casuarina, Howard Springs, Sanderson and Band Cadets.

**Frank Oakley Simmons SBStJ**

Frank Simmons turned 66 on the 7th June 1987 and compulsorily retired from St John Ambulance.

Frank was a Victorian who served as a Gunner in the Australian Army during WW2. He came up to Darwin for three months in 1961, driving for a removal company, and stayed for the rest of his life. Now there's a familiar story ...

He joined Darwin Combined Division on 11th December 1967, was promoted to Corporal in May 1970, Sergeant on 13th September 1972, and became Superintendent of Casuarina Ambulance Cadet Division on 4th July 1973. When his Division amalgamated with the Casuarina Nursing Cadets in January 1977 to form the Casuarina Combined Cadet Division he was promoted to Corps Staff Officer, and in December 1981 to District Staff Officer Grade IV.

As an instructor with Civil Defence, which evolved into NT Emergency Service, he provided rescue training for St John Ambulance members.

Frank was invested into the Order of St John as Serving Brother at a ceremony at Government House on 4th May 1979. He was on a stretcher at the time, having broken both ankles in cliff fall during a rescue training exercise.

Besides St John, Frank was involved with the Red Cross, the Royal Life Saving Society, Legacy, Camp Quality, Royal Flying Doctor Service and Neighbourhood Watch. He set up the Top End Services Club and helped form the Legion of Frontiersmen in Darwin. In 1984 he was awarded Top End Citizen of the Year and in 1992 received an award for Outstanding Community Service from the Casuarina Community Foundation.

Frank Simmons died on 20th July 1995 aged 74.



NT Administrator John England pins the Order of St John on Frank Simmons

◊ The three adult divisions between them completed the following for the year (1986):

| | |
|---|---|
| Public Duties | 3,814 hours |
| Ambulance Duties | 32,582 hours |
| Other Duties | 5,933 hours |
| Division Meetings | 2,296 attendances |

◊ Casuarina Division suffered an inability to keep the same Divisional Superintendent for any length of time. There were a large number of Service and Cadet Officers, reducing the number of members attending Divisional training. Promotions and employment into the Ambulance Service were often from this Division, leaving a large number of first aid only trained members.

◊ Darwin Division members were longer serving than other Divisions. It had the same Superintendent for an extended period, allowing for continuity of management with consistent ideas. There was excellent morale with good attendance at training nights. The work load was shared among members.

◊ Howard Springs as a relatively new Division was suffering severe membership shortages. It was located in an area where everyone was committed and recruiting unsuccessful. They had not been able to maintain a suitable long term Superintendent and did not receive any real outside assistance with duties. There were communications problems and receiving information via the grape-vine had a detrimental effect on Divisional morale.

◊ With the disbanding of the Northern Region Training Cadre recruit ambulance training was now conducted by the AOTC. During the last year three volunteers successfully completed the course in Advanced Ambulance Care, now making four who had qualified.

◊ The Performance Test introduced during the year was initially seen as a method to stop volunteers from doing ambulance duties. After the first tests were completed it was found that only physically small members or the very unfit were unable to perform the test successfully.

◊ The Associate Diploma of Emergency care was invoked during the year on volunteer members who were performing ambulance duties. The effect of this decision on the members had been enormous. Members joined St John to give to the community and did not expect to be required to attend courses that were seen to be totally irrelevant to ambulance work.

◊ Membership of Divisions that were not ambulance qualified had increased, allowing members to concentrate on Public Duties. The introduction of a charge to organisations for foot personnel reduced Public Duties to almost nil. Removal of the charge should reverse that. During the year the main public duties not covered were either due to extremely late notification or occurred during working hours.

◊ Membership was stable with recruitment matching resignations. Poor communications were causing considerable concern for Corps and Divisions.

◊ Ambulance hours of coverage remained stationary and performance of these duties by members came under increasing supervision and critiquing.

◊ There were real problems with maintaining consistent Divisional Superintendents.

In mid May Sanderson Cadets DO John Evans proposed Bingo machines for fund raising in the Darwin area. The scheme had raised $3,000 per month in South Australia and Evans offered to set up and maintain them.

The Bingo machines had little enthusiasm from potential outlets and Richard Holt suggested punch boards to be run at Divisional level. The District Treasurer was dubious, not considering them a satisfactory method of fund raising.

Rod Bramley conducted the Annual Inspection of Casuarina Division and expressed deep concern over its viability. DSO Michael Mereau volunteered to attend their next few training sessions to determine the exact nature of their problems.[179] He found a lack of active members, problems between paid staff and volunteers, frequent leadership changes creating problems and poor leadership.

There was another attempt by Casuarina Cadet Division on the Kiss of Life world record. Rules were received and the Administrator officially opened the marathon at 11.30am on 27th June. The team was DO Florent Alcidi, a veteran of the previous marathon; Corporal Leanne Schneider; Corporal Andrew Mereau; Corporal Mark De'Souza and Ambulance Cadet Jarrod Kovarik.

Pizza Hut supplied free lunches and Video Connection provided entertainment for the team. The Village Pharmacy gave free medical supplies as needed while the Meat Barn of the Village provided bacon and sausages for breakfast, with DS Barbara Henderson providing the eggs.

> *"In the 3rd hour of Day 13 – July 10th – these courageous cadets managed to demolish the already existing record held by their Southern counterparts (NSW). Not happy with just breaking the record, the team all of whom were under 21 years of age, carried on EAR for a further eight days. This was to ensure that they did not have to repeat their performance in the near future."* [180]

The Kiss of Life was a success and raised $3,527, with $100 from sponsorship and $1,070 expenses.

The Australian First Aid National Competitions were held at Gloucester Park, East Perth on Saturday 21st June 1987. The Northern Territory contingent scored brilliantly:

- ◊ The Individual, John Henderson, won the Donald Douglas Trophy with a score of 259, beating the Victorian competitor by one point.
- ◊ The team of Tammy Mott, Tricia Wormald and Kathy Stevenson of Casuarina Division easily won the Sir George Stening Trophy, and
- ◊ They also easily won the Gordon Young Highest Aggregate Trophy.

ABC-TV aired some damning allegations against the St John Ambulance Service on the *7.30 Report* in August. This led to the *Pauling Enquiry* that found most allegations to be unfounded and motivated by an ongoing industrial dispute, but there were some organisational problems that needed to be addressed. Because it did not directly concern the volunteers it is outside the scope of this book and will receive no further mention, except for this paragraph in the *1987-1988 Annual Report*: [181]

> *During the year members were subjected to hostile action by some individuals in the paid service who sought thereby to further their industrial aims. This resulted in a serious strain to the relationship between voluntary and paid staff.*

Commissioner Lionel Crompton conducted a staff review at the end of his first triennium and made the following changes, effective 30th September 1987: [182]



*Standing:* DO Florent Alcidi, DS Barbara Henderson, Corporal Andrew Mereau, Cadet Jarrod Kovarik, Corporal Mark De'Souza
*Kneeling:* DSO Michael Mereau, Corporal Leanne Schneider



National Competition winners Tricia Wormald, Kathy Stevenson, Chris De Vries (Trainer), Tammy Mott and Gordon Bowman (Manager)

- ◊ North Eastern Corps to be disbanded with their divisions incorporated into Northern Corps.
- ◊ Craig Cousins to be promoted to District Staff Officer Grade III (Records and Administration), with Charlie Cuff replacing him as Northern Corps Superintendent.
- ◊ Steve Peers to become Southern Corps Superintendent, with Mike Burgess to take up a Corps Staff Officer position.
- ◊ Gordon Bowman to District Staff Officer Grade II (Training and Competitions).
- ◊ Rod Bramley to District Staff Officer Grade II (Protocol, Planning and Special Projects).
- ◊ District Sergeant Major N. Dexter *"to return to Casuarina Division where he is urgently needed".*
- ◊ Garry Schoolmeester to District Staff Officer Grade II (District Ambulance Officer).

Michael Dunn relinquished the position of Casuarina Divisional Superintendent in September with CSO Glenn Getzin appointed OIC.

Members were canvassed about the amalgamation of Darwin and Casuarina Divisions with positive results. However, this wasn't to happen for more than four years when the amalgamation also included Palmerston and Rural Division.

Charlie Cuff gave a report in November on findings on training and recruiting by a sub-committee made up of members of divisions within Northern Corps.

Currently with ambulance volunteers the order of priority was Driver, Attendant and Trainee as third person. It was proposed to emphasise patient management by having the most qualified officer sitting in the back with the patient, rather than driving the ambulance. The qualification priority would then become Attendant, Driver and Trainee.

It was also proposed that while on duty qualification makings be worn, rather than rank.[183]

**1988**

The Commissioner presented Warrants of Appointment to Gordon Bowman (Operations Branch Training Officer), Garry Schoolmeester (District Ambulance Officer), Craig Cousins and Charlie Cuff (Corps Superintendent).[184]

The Australian Cadet First Aid Championships were held in Perth, WA in early January and the NT team scored well. Individual, Christine Webb of Casuarina came second overall; the Team of Andrew Grey, Manoli Roussos and Stephen Tsoulkalis from Darwin also came second; and Cadet Leader Linda Lee from Sanderson came in sixth place. Manager/Trainer was Barbara Henderson.

At a small ceremony on 27th January, Mr Don Cooper, Manager of Westpac Casuarina handed over a new trophy cabinet to St John General Manager, Don McLeod.[185] That small cabinet has long been outgrown with the need to store and display more and more trophies. Even the latest cabinets are now too small and trophies can be seen stacked on cupboards and shelves in the Volunteer Office at Casuarina.

The NT First Aid Championships were held at the Casuarina Town Square on Saturday 23rd April in conjunction with the District Weekend, with teams coming from Darwin, Casuarina, Sanderson, Nhulunbuy, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. Five scenarios included a chainsaw accident, a gas bottle explosion, a camping accident, a building site accident and an office accident.

Medallions were presented by Chief Officer Cadets, Joan Patterson, and trophies were presented by Dr Charles Gurd, President of the St John Council.

Winners were:

| | |
|---|---|
| Cadet Leader: | Rob Ashby, Alice Springs |
| Cadet Team: | Darwin Cadets |
| Adult Individual: | John Henderson, Darwin |
| Adult Team: | Darwin |
| Team Aggregate: | Darwin |

The team came fourth at the National Adult Competitions in Perth in June, the individual came sixth and the team was unplaced overall.

St John took over the running of the VJY Outpost Radio Network on Wednesday 1st June,

operating the HF system as a radio telephone exchange until 8.00pm, then as an emergency medical link until 7.00am. Telecom (now Telstra) supplied all the equipment and a new room was built on top of the Casuarina ambulance bay to house the new VJY complex and ambulance communications room.[186]

The *1987-88 Annual Report* commented on the decline in volunteer numbers due to increased *"education requirements for Ambulance Officers coupled with a decline in the willingness of the public to provide voluntary services to St John".* This had impacted on volunteers manning ambulances with extra hours of duty for paid staff, resulting in additional pressures on salary and wage resources.

The August District Staff meeting discussed the issue of short staffing problems and suggested a solution of placing volunteers with paid staff on the ambulances. This had been successfully done in the past when there was a shortage of volunteers.

In August and again in September the amalgamation of Darwin, Casuarina and Sanderson Cadet Divisions was proposed for the purpose of training. It was suggested that more officers would be available on meeting nights which would give more time for training to take place. A different venue would be chosen and a new name for the Division. The Commissioner gave approval in principle and advised that if the amalgamated Division ran well that consideration would be given for Juniors to join.[187]

The amalgamation went ahead in January 1989 with John Evans as Divisional Superintendent.

There was an unsigned multi page feature in November 1988 Routine Orders about friction between paid staff and volunteers. The story alleged that volunteers were being sidelined from transport duties so that paid staff could get more overtime work and hence a larger pay packet. It went on to say that two hundred active volunteers did transport duties worth about $2,000,000 per year and reduced costs to a Government that would not fund a fully paid ambulance service. The collapse of volunteer services in Jabiru, Yulara and Adelaide River had not resulted in replacement by paid services or in extra funding.

> *"The relationship is strained at the moment, but is basically sound. I call on all members of St John NT now to commit themselves to renegotiation of a harmonious relationship."* [188]

Craig Garraway, who joined Darwin Division as a volunteer in 1988, described the Division as the best to belong to:

"The people we had, we had a really great bunch of people. We probably had about thirty to forty volunteers on a regular basis. There was an extremely good social atmosphere ... It wasn't just a matter of just doing the ambulance side of stuff. People interacted socially after hours. We did a lot of things together, camping trips and stuff like that, so it became a really big family in the end.

"We were the one to be in, because we were very proactive with our training and very well organised, and we had a very good social atmosphere, so a lot of the other divisions wanted to join us simply because we really enjoyed what we were doing and had a good time as a group." [189]

**1989**

A proposal to integrate Service and Operations Branch ambulance officers under a 'Transport Division' banner was discussed at the inaugural Operations Committee meeting in January. Commissioner Lionel Crompton agreed in principle with the idea, but the proposal needed to be discussed by the Divisions before any decision could be made by Operations Branch. The Divisions obviously didn't think much of the idea as there are no records of any Transport Division.

The same meeting discussed a proposal to construct a new ambulance centre at Coconut Grove from which all Darwin crews would operate. The Commissioner and all Committee members strongly supported the proposal and resolved to put it before the Council. The proposal included the sale of the Darwin Centre at Parap and subsequent relocation of the Darwin Division. It was thought appropriate to consider combining Darwin and Casuarina Divisions, the formation of a Transport

Division and the relocation to Coconut Grove all at the same time.[190] St John Council supported the plan that would see Casuarina become strictly a Headquarters and Training Centre and the Darwin Centre vacated. Later, a site at Marrara was chosen as more suitable.

Well, the members of Darwin Division weren't exactly overjoyed with this idea. It was their home and many had quite a sentimental attachment to the Darwin Centre. During research for this book the author was told by one prominent Darwin Division member that he was especially proud of the building "because the members built it themselves". They didn't, but the myth continues into the 21st Century, hopefully busted by this book.

A memorandum from Darwin Divisional Superintendent Peter Poole suggested that it would be more cost effective to modify and utilise the existing Darwin Centre as the ambulance station for Darwin. Necessary modifications to the building – removal of dividing walls, equipping of study and dormitory areas – could be carried out by Operations Branch members over a few days. Telephone lines were already in place.

The main argument was that response times for calls in the Darwin and airport areas would be a lot quicker from Parap than from Marrara.

> *"The reason for requiring a new centre is to overcome perceived problems which have arisen at Casuarina with Service operations. I have stated previously that revised management and discipline procedures would considerably reduce these problems. If service employees have set their minds on moving to a new building then active and passive resistance to working from Darwin will arise."*

The memo concludes with: *"Darwin Operations Branch members are apprehensive at proposal to dispose of Darwin Centre."* Peter Poole attended the St John Council meeting in June to discuss his memo.

A letter from St John to the Department of Lands and Housing in October broadly stated that due to problems with financing the proposal was deferred indefinitely.[191] The Marrara proposal never did go ahead.

First aid competitions were held in May at the Palmerston Shopping Centre. The scenario was a staged accident between a motorcyclist and a shopper with a laden trolley. Lots of simulated blood and gore were managed skilfully by Darwin Division who won the team event and aggregate trophy, and by individual winner Toni-Maree Semple of Palmerston Division.

The Cadet Band played for the shoppers after presentations by the Administrator.[192]

Commodore Eric Johnston finished his term as Administrator of the Northern Territory on 30th June and also as Deputy Prior for St John Ambulance. At a farewell parade on 4th June the Cadets were there in force, under the command of DSO(C) Robert Tremethick and DO Ruth Whitford. Lesley King wrote:

> *"The Colour Party did an excellent job – so proper!! You amazed me!*
>
> *"The morning was brightened by some music from the Cadet Band and sustained by morning tea – thank you Carol Green, Leonie and Kezia."* [193]

Long serving member Doreen Kerr retired on 8th July after 25 years with St John. Doreen started volunteer work with St John in 1964 in Western Australia when her children were in the Cadets. She joined up too and went on to do transport duties during the day as well as public duties at many social and sporting events.

Doreen, husband Alwyn and family came to the Territory in 1972 and before long she joined the local ranks of St John. Once again she carried out transport and public duties as well as training new recruits to the organisation. In 1974 she became involved with helping and training the younger cadets.[194]

In the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy, Doreen worked at the Nightcliff High School and the Ambulance Centre at Parap from Christmas Day until 3rd January, mostly cleaning and catering. Her husband Alwyn also helped out for five days straight.

Divisional Officer Doreen Kerr became OAC of Darwin Combined Division in November 1977 and

was promoted to Divisional Superintendent in November 1979. She was further promoted to Corps Staff Officer, Northern Corps in May 1982.

Doreen was farewelled at a dinner function at the Tai Hung Tol Restaurant in Parap with many of the friends she had made in St John over the years.

First Aid Competitions were held at the Casuarina Shopping Centre on the 30th September. The competitors treated their 'casualties' over four hours in five scenarios. The realistically graphic simulated injuries contributed to large crowds gathering around the scenes.[195]

The competition winners were:

| | |
|---|---|
| Adult Individual | Christine Turner, Casuarina |
| Adult Team | Casuarina Adults |
| Cadet Leader | Michael Petrelis, Darwin |
| Cadet Individual | Donna Webb, Darwin |
| Cadet Team | ? |

To confuse the results, *Outback Ambulance* has Casuarina Cadets as the winning Cadet Team, while the 1989-1990 *Annual Report* has the Darwin Combined Cadet Division Team No 2 as the winners.

**1990**

Peter Poole relinquished his position as Darwin Divisional Superintendent at the beginning of the year, while Florent Alcidi was promoted to CSO (Cadets) with Andrew Hodges promoted to CSO (Admin).

The Australian National Cadet First Aid Championships were held in Hobart this year and on the 2nd January a contingent of 14 competitors, managers and supporters left Darwin to test their skills. The Championships were held on the 6th January with the following results:

- ◊ Individual: South Australia, first; Mark de Souza (NT) fourth.
- ◊ Team: Darwin Cadets Manoli Roussos, Andrew Grey and Jarrod Kovarik won this event.
- ◊ Cadet Leader: This was won by Western Australia, with the Territory's Michael Petrelis placed seventh.
- ◊ Champion District: South Australia first with the Territory coming in sixth.

Winning the team event meant that the Territory would represent Australia in the Commonwealth Competitions to be held in Auckland, New Zealand in May. The Northern Territory Government generously granted $4,000[196] for expenses to the team of Manoli Roussos, Jarrod Kovarick, Andrew Grey and Trudy Fuller who did quite well by coming in second place.[197]

Christine Turner was honoured by being chosen as a member of the contingent that travelled to New Zealand for the Commonwealth Games public duty. A skiing accident took the gloss off the trip when it put her in hospital with a broken leg.

Marian Grayden felt there was a need for the history of St John in the Territory to be collated and requested that a questionnaire be sent to previous members of St John whose whereabouts were still known.[198] The returned questionnaires are in archives at St John Casuarina, but much of their information is vague and of little value. In April a History of St John in the Territory had been compiled and forwarded to ex members of St John.[199]

At a ceremony at Casuarina Headquarters on Thursday 5th April, attended by staff, members of the Order, adult and cadet volunteers, the Cadet Flag and the NT District Colour were formally placed in a custom made colour cabinet.

The cabinet was built by Eddie Wright of Darwin Division with finance from Batchelor Adult Division, Alyangula Division, Nhulunbuy Combined Division, Casuarina Adult Division, Palmerston Cadet Division, Lions Club of Darwin, the cadets' Kiss of Life World Record funds, Northern Corps, BHP Petroleum, and other small donations.[200]

John Evans resigned as Superintendent of Darwin Cadet Division and Glen Denmeade was nominated for Superintendent of Casuarina Adult Division.[201] However, DO Denmeade stayed on as OIC until promoted to a Corps staff position the following year.

At a Rotary North Club dinner on Monday 18th June, Cadet Julie-Ann Kirby was presented the Club's prestigious Youth Merit Award for service, dedication and leadership to the community. The article in *Outback Ambulance* said:

> *"The granting of the award followed an accident where Julie-Ann, with very little assistance from a large crowd of adult and children onlookers, provided the much needed and vital first aid. The accident involved a young boy who had been knocked from his bike, was unconscious and suffered cuts, severe grazing and bleeding from his ears. In a very short time, Julie-Ann had taken control of the situation and was rendering the valuable first aid until the arrival of the ambulance."* [202]

Dr Iain Ping, Director of Accident and Emergency at Royal Darwin Hospital, took over as Commissioner from Dr Crompton on 24th June. Commissioner Ping presented Marian Grayden with her second Bar for 22 years service with St John at the District Staff meeting on 26th July.

The Commissioner and District Superintendent Lesley King would be going to Darwin Adult Division to discuss the OIC position. The Division had been running quite smoothly despite the fact that nobody was officially in charge.[203] Other records show both Bill Cook and Eddie Wright signing paperwork as OIC at the time, so the leadership seems to have been a shared role. The leadership problems were solved when Howard Mellor was recognised as OIC in October.

The General Regulation that previously required Cadet Officers to be taken on the strength of an Adult Division and then seconded to a Cadet Division was deleted during 1990. Cadet Officers were now members of Cadet Divisions. This would make Adult Division numbers more realistic rather than inflated by phantom members not available to the Division.

At the Cadet Competitions on Saturday 29th September, individual champion Trudy Fuller won the right to represent the Territory at the National Championships in Sydney. The winning team members were competition veterans Andrew Grey, Jarrod Kovarik and Manoli Roussos.

Craig Garraway described how he joined the Ambulance Service in 1990 from Darwin Division:

"It was basically done through a personnel clerk. I never put anything in writing. It was just [that] I rang up and said: 'Are there any positions?' and they pretty much kept a file of people ... who were interested, and basically that's how I became involved.

"The way people were employed back in those days was, the volunteers were usually taken into the ambulance service. They never — very rarely advertised outside, because the volunteers were already trained, so they could just take them out of the volunteer ranks and put them into the ambulance service.

"That's been happening for a long, long time. What we did find though, it actually depleted the ... good volunteers, because most of the people joined to get in the ambulance service, and the volunteers were continually trying to replace themselves." [204]

**1991**

Due to the tightening security around Darwin, and in particular at the Airport, there was seen to be a need for St John personnel to carry identity cards and these were issued to most members by the end of February. Expiry date was 31st December each year and members not efficient for the year would not be issued a new card.[205]

Also, persons not efficient for two years would no longer be members of Operations Branch. They must also be efficient for transport duties each year and if not efficient they were not permitted to work on the vehicles.[206]

Adult First Aid Competitions were held on Saturday 27th April at the Police Training complex at Berrimah, with teams and individuals from Darwin and Alice Springs competing for the opportunity to represent the Territory at the National Championships in June.

Using the Police Training Centre provided the opportunity to view the scenarios from all angles via elevated walkways. Challenges included bicycle

accidents, kitchen disputes, collapsed patients and home nursing.

*Individual Section winners:*

| | |
|---|---|
| Home Nursing | Scott Sly, Alice Springs |
| First Aid | John Suringa, Darwin |
| Individual winner District: | |
| | Scott Sly |

*Team section winners:*

| | |
|---|---|
| Home Nursing | Craig Humfrey, Darwin |
| | Lucinda Burgess |
| | Richard Gosper |
| First Aid | Debbie Savill, Alice Springs |
| | Joan Hunt |
| | Scott Keetch |
| Team winner District: | Debbie Savill, Alice Springs |
| | Joan Hunt |
| | Scott Keetch |

Team Managers were Noel Talbot, Alice Springs and Barbara Henderson, Darwin. [207]

Dr Alan Bromwich advised the District Staff in May that Dr Ping had resigned as Commissioner with Steven Baddeley to take up the position after 23rd June. In the interim, Dr Bromwich would be Acting District Commissioner. Dr Ping resigned due to his prolonged absences from Darwin, making him unable to fulfil his duties and responsibilities.

In May, the Darwin Cadets were calling for help. Christine Webb had resigned, leaving Barbara Henderson as the only remaining officer. Parents were asked to help with paperwork and records as no other officers were available.[208]

Meanwhile, there were also problems with the Adult Divisions filling ambulance and Public Duties rosters due to a lack of numbers. With ever increasing standards for ambulance crews many volunteers found it harder and harder to find the time to carry out the extra training required, reducing the ranks of ambulance qualified members. By October the problem had become worse and it was becoming increasingly difficult to cover the "sleep-on" shift with some having to be covered by Service crews.

Priory 1991 was held in Darwin this year from Sunday 16th to Saturday 22nd June, a week-long conference broken with social activities, first aid competitions, church services and parades. The venue was the Sheraton Darwin Hotel and by all reports it proved to be a most suitable place to hold the conference.

In addition to the many Priory and Operations Branch meetings there was a special St John health seminar, Health in the Tropics; an Operations Branch Seminar, Fair Go; and an address by Sir Stephen Miller on the Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem.[209]

The Australian First Aid Championships for adults were held on Saturday 22nd June. The NT Museum of Arts and Science at Bullocky Point provided the grounds for the competitions which were completely different to previous years in that the team and individual events were incorporated into the one scenario. The story in *Outback Ambulance* said:

> *This scene revolved around a fictitious northern neighbour Urtucaria and two boats of refugees landed on the coast of Darwin. Following the landing and after having suffered at the hands of sea pirates, both boat loads of people were involved in armed conflict each believing the other to be hostile. There were twelve patients, nine involved in the team event and three for the individual event. Injuries, realistically made up by a casualty simulation team, included amputated hand, burns – 30%, head injuries, leg ulcers, crushed fingers, gunshot wounds to the chest, fractured clavicle and the usual array of abrasions and lacerations.* [210]

Competitors came from Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

- The Douglas Donald Trophy for the winning team was awarded to the New South Wales team of Helen Banu-Lawrence, Rosemary Hegner and Dianne Lawrence.
- The Sir George Stening Trophy for the winning individual went to Victorian Darren Sparkes.

◊ The Gordon Young Trophy for the highest aggregate score was awarded to Victorians Elizabeth Deveny, Sarah Loader, Stephen Oakley and Darren Sparkes.

A who's who for July: Steven Baddeley, District Commissioner; Lesley King, District Superintendent; Wayne Dillon, Acting Corps Superintendent; Sue Cooper, Corps Ambulance Officer; Glen Denmeade, CSO (Admin); Rod Hocking, CSM; Toni Gullefer, OAC Palmerston Adult Division; Carol Forbes, OAC Casuarina Adult Division; Pat King, Superintendent Band Division; Bill Cook, OAC Darwin Adult Division.

Lesley King approached Peter Poole about taking on the job of Divisional Superintendent of Darwin Adult Division once again, but he declined.[211]

Concern was raised in October that due to the lack of numbers new recruits were covering Public Duties alone and that some were not fully trained in communication procedures. It was suggested that as long as the recruits were advised that they stick within guidelines of their first aid training they would be covered in event something going wrong.[212]

Your author experienced this problem a decade later when as a green recruit he found himself attending duties alone, all the time praying that there would be no serious casualties. His baptism of fire came at the 2001 Darwin Cup when there were just two St John volunteers on duty for a crowd of many thousands. After a quiet start they were kept rather busy until late at night. Doing duties alone never bothered him after that.

A meeting was held on 26th October to discuss the amalgamation of Darwin and Casuarina Divisions. Palmerston currently had eight members, less than the twelve required to stay a Division and they could become a Section carrying out only Public Duties or amalgamate. The meeting voted overwhelmingly for amalgamation of all three Divisions. The name would be Darwin Division, commencing 1st January 1992 and meeting at the Casuarina Headquarters on Wednesday nights, starting 12th February. Wayne Dillon would oversee the Division until a suitable Superintendent could be found.

Commissioner Baddeley, accompanied by District Superintendent Lesley King, met with Palmerston members on Wednesday 13th November and the five members attending agreed to amalgamate due to the lack of training resources available at Palmerston. However, they wanted their Division to be re-established if they were able to recruit sufficient numbers.[213] It was to be more than another decade before this happened.

Bill Cook resigned as OIC of Darwin Division at the end of October leaving Don Kelly and Sharon Swan to jointly manage the Division until the end of the year.

The problem with volunteers filling ambulance duties continued and in November the Council made it known they were *"reluctant to agree to integrated shifts because of dissention experienced in the past. An informal integrated system has been in place for the past 18-24 months with Service and Volunteer members working well together."* There was no need to formalise this arrangement and the person in charge was the one with higher qualifications.[214]

**1992**

National Cadet First Aid championships were held at Casuarina Square on Saturday 4th January. The Territory's team was Kelly Scholz, Paulo Fernandes and Romaine Oorloff, all of Darwin, with individual competitor Sally Haines from Alice Springs.[215]

The Commonwealth Cup, an international St John first aid competition for cadets aged between 15 and 18 years was held on Monday 6th January, with teams from New Zealand, Canada, Wales, England and Australia competing.

This followed the National championships held over the weekend with the Victorian team of Helen Deveny, Sarah Smith, Jacinta Kelly and Michelle Moore earning the right to defend the title for Australia. Team manager was Arthur Jones.

Also up for grabs was the New Zealand Army trophy. This was usually contested by Australia,

New Zealand and Fiji, but the Fijians failed to nominate a team this year.[216]

The Australians claimed all trophies in realistic scenarios that included a country road accident involving a car with four passengers, a motorcycle with another two people and a glider that had been forced to make an emergency landing.

A second scenario involved a disabled person in a wheelchair who was being helped down a staircase when one of the two helpers slipped and they all fell heavily to the bottom.

The person responsible for these scenarios was competition manager Andrew Hodges. The winners were announced by Chief Commissioner Professor Villis Marshall with awards presented by the NT Administrator, Mr James Muirhead.[217]

The new amalgamated Darwin Division commenced for the year on 12th February and was reported to be working quite well. Divisional Officer Lindsay King had put together an excellent training program that included the Skills maintenance Program and ambulance training.

Attendance at training nights was initially very high, but there was a noticeable reduction over the following six months with some members only attending the required number of nights, while others attended other courses, internal and external.

Public duties increased dramatically during the year to the extent that they couldn't all be covered. The problem with volunteers turning up for duties that were cancelled with the organisers not bothering to inform St John persisted, as it probably always will.

DO Toni Gullefer was responsible for recruitment and induction of new members, as well as assisting with counselling services. She also helped with establishing and maintaining divisional records and was noted for assistance with Polocrosse duties, especially with the fund raising day that gained $654 for the Division.

When the Divisions first amalgamated the records, especially personnel files, were found to be poorly maintained and in disarray. Division members who helped sort out the mess were Toni Gullefer, Sharon Swan and Gaye Reynolds, greatly assisted by CSO Sue Cooper.

Other people mentioned favourably in the Divisional Report were Chris Garland who *"has shown confidence and readily accepted responsibility assisting the running of the division. Chris is a hard working officer and has the respect of all the members"*. Judy Markwell was rostering officer.

The Division reported itself to be in a sound financial position due to donations mostly from the Polocrosse Association. A grant from the Endowment Trust was used to purchase a shade tent for public duties.[218]

The original Certificate of Registration of Darwin Cadet Division was taken by Kezia Purick to John Coe at the Museum to have writing restored or saved from further fading.[219] That certificate is now a prized possession in historical archives at Casuarina Headquarters, being one of the earliest known surviving documents of St John Ambulance in the Northern Territory, apart from those held in National Archives.

The problem with volunteers on ambulance duties was ongoing and one proposal was to pay them as an incentive for this work. In April the Commissioner reported to District Staff that the St John Council was:

> *"not in favour of paying volunteers in any situation other than as temporary casual employees of the Ambulance Service. Payment for emergency filling of rostered shifts creates problems in volunteer ranks. An example is that a member will cancel a voluntary duty to do a paid duty. It is generally agreed by Council that payment for services should not be allowed to bias the integrity of volunteers. Council President Dr Gurd will address this issue when in Canberra."* [220]

At the April District Conference the Ambulance Service put forward a proposal for payment of ambulance volunteers in that a Volunteer could be employed to replace a Service Officer on annual or emergency leave. If a paid shift was vacant the officer who worked that shift would be paid.

However, there would be no payment for volunteers doing volunteer shifts and no volunteer would be offered payment to cover for another volunteer who could not fulfil their duty.[221]

The following month:

> *"Council supported whatever steps need to be taken to ensure Ambulance duty roster is filled. Payment can only be offered to volunteers for paid shifts, not volunteer shifts. Volunteers may accept payment for shift in lieu of professional officer or funds can be paid to members' Divisions."* [222]

The annual NT District Weekend kicked off with the Officers' Meetings on the evening of Friday 10th April. The adult and cadet competitions began at 7.30am the following day with the setting up of a scenario designed by Ed Sinclair and conducted and managed by Barbara Henderson. The scene was a camping trip that went horribly wrong.

Darwin Cadet Division was the practice team for the adjudicators and handled the scenario very well. This team was in training for the Cadet Competitions.

The two competing adult teams were:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Alice Springs | Individual | Scott Sly |
| | Team | Joan Hunt |
| | | Scott Keetch |
| | | Cheribun Ruediger |
| Darwin | Individual | Trudy Fuller |
| | Team | Richard Gosper |
| | | Romaine Oorloff |
| | | Pauline Pedley |

Results were close with Darwin winning both events.[223]

The original venue of the NTU campus grounds for the annual parade was cancelled because of Cyclone Neville, but over 250 members still attended at the Northern Territory Police Training College's parade ground. The inspection was carried out by Administrator Austin Asche, accompanied by Commissioner Baddeley and Acting District Superintendent Peter Poole.

The church service, conducted by the Very Reverend Murray Johnson OStJ, Dean of Darwin, followed the parade and this was followed by a barbecue for one and all.[224]

The concept of naming a Volunteer of the Year was raised in July, but was not awarded this year. A hand written note on the District Staff Meeting Minutes states: *Letter of Thanks; unable to propose someone.*[225] Unfortunately, the August Minutes that corroborate the hand-note does not give the name of the Letter of Thanks recipient, if there was one.

A proposal for getting Aboriginals involved in St John activities was made at the July District Staff meeting. Marian Grayden explained that many years ago Darwin Division had experimented with Kormilda College where two members had been trained and recruited.[226] The Commissioner was to organise something, but it wasn't until 2002 that a Cadet Division started at Kormilda College that included Aboriginal students as members.

There were Aboriginal female cadets in Alice Springs in 1978 under the guidance of Pat McQuillen and a Cadet Division was started at Yirrkala in 2010.

The Northern Territory Cadet competitions were held at Casuarina Square on Saturday 26th September. Alice Springs Cadets sent two teams and two individuals, while Darwin Cadets had two teams, three individuals and two Cadet Leaders. Palmerston Cadets provided a team and individual to test the scenarios. The winners were:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cadet Leader | Trudy Fuller | Darwin |
| Individual | Ben Mooney | Darwin |
| Team | Mary Simonato | Darwin |
| | Paulo Fernandes | |
| | Dannielle Bilike | |
| | Terina Bailey (reserve) | |

Ever resourceful, CSM Rod Hocking thought that first aiders on horseback would be just the thing for public duties. With their added height they would be able to see over the heads of crowds and then quickly gallop off to any incident requiring medical assistance. Not only would it get them

there a lot quicker over long distances, but also a lot fresher than if they had to walk laden with first aid kits and other equipment.

Horses would be obtained from the Wongabilla Pony Club and transported in police horse floats. St John would need to supply suitable equipment for these "mounties" and probably provide training as well.

Andrew Hodges presented Rod's submission to the November District Staff meeting. They checked with South Australia for problems they may have had with mounted first aiders and then rejected the proposal as unsuitable and impractical. [227]

The November Corps Officers' Meeting reported that they had four adult and five cadet divisions with consideration being given to forming a section at Mandorah.

**1993**

The National Cadet Championships were held at the Rosebud Secondary College, Victoria on 9th January. The Territory's competitors were the winners of last year's competitions, led by Team Manager Jenny Kirby.

Each section had two scenarios; a motorcycle/ bicycle collision and camping scene for the team, and a home nursing scene featuring a baby with a high temperature and an angina patient at a First Aid Post for the individual. The Cadet Leaders gave Mr Smith his lunch in a home nursing scene, followed by a stabbing and heroin overdose requiring EAR.

Victoria won all three sections of the championships with the NT Cadet Leader coming third, team sixth and individual trailing in eighth.[228]

A flyer outlining the role of St John was sent to the NTFL in February following continued abuse from crowds towards members, with 3000 flyers to be handed out to people passing through the gates.[229] Treating injured players on the field was seen by the crowds as holding up the game and that was simply not on. Advising injured players not to return to the field also earned them abuse, sometimes from the players themselves.

When the author attended NTFL public duties eight years later there were sports medicine people to look after the players while St John members gave them backup when and if requested. Our role was to look after the crowd.

In September 2002 Frank Haydock had problems with the sports medicine people at a public duty. He was advised not to treat players on the field and wasn't permitted to treat a non-playing child. When asked why he was told that St John was only there for the insurance.[230]

By April Northern Corps reported that members of Darwin Division were now staffing ambulances from 6.00pm to midnight during the week and all weekend, finishing midnight Sunday. A number of Operations Branch members had been employed as casual staff during the year, fostering a friendly relationship between Operations Branch and the Ambulance Service.[231] All ambulance



Humpty Doo Divisional Superintendent Greg Payne ready for action at the Fred's Pass Polocrosse



Steve Peers mounted and ready to outrace the ambulance to any emergency at the Brunette Downs races

qualified members in Northern Corps were required to complete 50 ambulance duties per year to maintain their ambulance skills.[232]

The annual District Weekend was held in Alice Springs this year, commencing with the Officers Conference on Saturday morning 24th April, First Aid Competitions in the afternoon and the Officers Mess Dinner that night. The following morning started with the Anzac Dawn Service on Anzac Hill, then the District Conference, followed by the Parade and Church Service and finishing with the wind-up barbecue.

Competition results: [233]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Individual: | 1st | Joan Hunt | Alice Springs |
| | 2nd | John Burton | Darwin |
| Team: | 1st | Robert Legg | Darwin |
| | | Mary Simonato | |
| | | Romaine Oorloff | |
| | 2nd | Trevor Sellick | Alice Springs |
| | | Paul Bray | |
| | | Tim Hatchard | |
| | | Paul Maybank – reserve | |

In response to a detailed submission by Rob Tremethick to disband the Corps structure, something that seemed to foster mixed feelings, the Commissioner stressed its importance to the NT and that it would remain in its present form. Two short years later Dr Baddeley was to have a completely different point of view when it was proposed to disband Corps as part of a major restructure of Operations Branch in the Northern Territory.

Training Branch wanted to buy a training manikin suitable for training ambulance officers, one that had features such as defibrillation, intravenous infusion, intermittent positive pressure ventilation, airway insertion, haemorrhage control, airway maintenance and even palpating peripheral pulses. However, the cost of $15,000 was rather high, so Gordon Bowman thought up the idea of riding bicycles to Katherine as a fund raiser.

Bike rides were organised around Darwin to provide training and develop a team spirit. Times were staggered to cater for shift workers.

With Gordon Bowman as captain, coach and selector the riders and support crews assembled at Casuarina just past midnight on Saturday 26th June. The bus and two training vans were loaded with food, bikes and lots of water.

The agreed method was for the riders to leap frog each other and as the first riders, Trudy Fuller and Tanya Bruce, left Casuarina Centre the next riders raced off in one of the vans to the 10km mark. When the first riders got to the 5km mark, the van following them radioed ahead and those riders started. This process was repeated until daylight to ensure they covered as much distance as possible while it was cool and the road quiet.

One rider, Richard Costa, crashed over his handlebars, striking head and face on the hard road surface. Jenny Gehrig was following in the support van and she calmly administered first aid and arranged transport to hospital. The value of helmets was shown in that it probably saved Richard's life.

Daylight saw the riders on the very steep climb south of Hayes Creek, about halfway to Katherine. After 12 hours and 20 minutes the ride was completed, a supreme effort for all involved.[234]

The eternal problem with filling Public Duties was raised once again and it was suggested that Northern Corps develop an incentive program to encourage members to attend duties.[235]

This year the annual Northern Territory Cadet Competitions were held at the Karama Shopping Centre on Friday 1st October, organised once again by Ed Sinclair and Barbara Henderson.[236]

Winners were:

| | |
|---|---|
| Individual: | Jaryiah Kirby, Cadet Band |
| Team: | Danusha Cubillo, Darwin |
| | Dannielle Bylicki |
| | Paulo Fernandes |
| Cadet Leader: | Romaine Oorloff, Darwin |
| Junior Individual: | Christine Frampton, Palmerston |
| Junior Team: | Tessa Cubillo, Darwin |
| | Tracy Rauch |
| | Jody Harpley |

Mrs Jose Perkins announced the VB Perkins Memorial Scholarship in October. Money was now

available to help St John members to continue with their studies in a health related area.[237]

Victor Bruce Perkins, founder of Perkins Shipping and ex-POW who had worked on the notorious Burma-Siam railway, had been a St John Councillor since 1977, eventually becoming Council President. He died on 2nd November 1992.

Concern was expressed by the District Secretary that people were joining Operations Branch solely to enrol in ambulance training courses. Operations Branch supplied their uniforms, etc. and would not get any value from these members as they were not interested in doing Public Duties, which was the prime function of Operations Branch; they only wanted to do ambulance training. Member numbers looked good on paper, but in reality the numbers doing Public Duties were minimal.[238]

**1994**

The Australian Cadet Championships were held in conjunction with the Annual Camp in Adelaide this year. The winners of the 1993 NT Competitions, accompanied by Manager Jenny Kirby represented the Territory.

No results were given in the *Outback Ambulance* article, except to say the NT competitors did not bring home any trophies on the day.[239]

DSO Ed Sinclair was offered the position of District Ambulance Officer, but considered that the position wasn't warranted as emphasis should be on first aid for Operations Branch, not ambulance training. The Commissioner felt that with ambulance trained members within the NT District that the position was warranted. Ed Sinclair stated she would prefer the portfolio of PR, but accepted DAO for six months, to be reviewed July 1994.[240]

How times had changed since the emphasis of St John in the Territory had been on building and maintaining a volunteer ambulance service, with public duties taking a poor second place.

At the time of writing this history (2012) there is just an occasional volunteer ambulance operating from the Darwin Centre. And there are still ongoing problems with getting members to attend public duties.

Frank Haydock applied to rejoin Operations Branch and was appointed Superintendent of the Cadet Band on 25th March.

At the District Conference held in April concern was expressed that the number of members on the books was not a true figure of Divisional strengths. Southern Corps stated that they added members who had joined the Ambulance Service and were lost to the Divisions.

When members who had not attended meetings for a period were followed up it was found that they had moved or left town without bothering to advise the Division.

There was also concern that the two year period that a Division must hold an inefficient member on their books was too long and that it should be changed to a period of 3-6 months unless the member applied for leave.

The cost of uniforms for new members who dropped out before reimbursing St John with their time at public duties was also raised. Commissioner Baddeley proposed that they should pay for their uniforms, but this was rejected by the meeting.

> *The Commissioner stated that the prime function for members of Operations Branch was to provide first aid to the public and in the majority of cases it was through public duties. The NT was special in that it also provided expertise to the public through ambulance services. He did not think that the two should be separated as they were. Darwin Division had problems with man-power with plenty of members on the books but not many actually doing public duties."* [241]

Cyclone Tracy was coming up for its 20th anniversary at Christmas and celebrations included a feature in the December edition of *Outback Ambulance* and a function for St John "veterans" at the Darwin Centre on Saturday 17th December. This was arranged by Geoff Carter, who had been Darwin Divisional Superintendent from 1972 – 1974 and was CSO (Training) at the time of the Cyclone.

At the December District Staff meeting the Commissioner raised the topic of people joining Operations Branch just to enrol into ambulance training courses. There was now an increase of people wishing to join Operations Branch with the sole intention of doing ambulance training at Operations Branch expense. A proposal that all new members should complete six months of efficient service before being eligible to enrol in ambulance training was accepted by the Commissioner.[242]

However, this was short lived and in April the following year, because the current rule of ambulance qualified members doing 50 ambulance duties per year had not been followed, there would no longer be any restriction on members waiting to commence formal ambulance training, i.e. having to spend six months in Operations Branch first.[243]

**1995**

On the 1st January Mandy Langdon was seconded from Northern Corps as Darwin Divisional Superintendent for a period of 12 months. This was extended another six months after which she went back to Corps as Nursing Officer.

Toni Gullefer was appointed CSO (Special Projects), but before leaving Darwin Division she recommended that it relocate back to the Darwin Ambulance Centre which they had left for Casuarina in January 1992 when the three Darwin region Divisions amalgamated. They moved in August 1995 and stayed there until 2002 when they moved back to the more spacious Casuarina Centre. They must have been homesick though, because they went back to Parap again in May 2010.

At the March District Staff meeting Commissioner Baddeley stated that the Corps Superintendent was the most important person required to attend District meetings as he was the link between District and the Divisions. He must attend all meetings and if unable must delegate a representative to attend on his behalf.[244]

Edeline "Ed" Sinclair was appointed to the new position of Volunteer Services Manager and commenced duties on Monday 3rd July.

> *"The primary responsibilities of the position are the recruitment, retention and training of an appropriate number of voluntary resources for St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc.*
>
> *"In order to ascertain the number of volunteers required to adequately cover the roster an audit of the number of duties requested and the number of duties covered was undertaken. The second part of the audit was to review which Officers were covering which duties. Not surprisingly [Ed] found that most of the duties, in fact 87%, were being done by the same group of Officers, many of whom do regular ambulance duties."* [245]

The situation where a small percentage of volunteers does the majority of the work is an eternal problem and not confined to St John Ambulance.

Ed Sinclair transferred to Nhulunbuy in early December, vacating the position of Volunteer Support Manager. Ed also advised she would be resigning as District Ambulance Officer, but this was declined by the Commissioner as not necessary.[246]

District Cadet Competitions were held in Darwin on the 6th October. Darwin Cadet Division won the team event, Palmerston Cadet Chrissie Frampton won the Individual and Cadet Leader Dean Franklin defeated Ben Mooney by one point. Ed Sinclair organised the scenarios once again.[247]

# Chapter 4
# Operations Branch Restructure

DSO Robert Tremethick put forward a proposal in 1993 to disband Northern and Southern Corps. There was a lot of discussion on the matter and in April that year the *"Commissioner had voiced that if the Corp was working in its present form then it should not be changed. District Officers had voiced overwhelming support for their Corps Staff Officers and had assured the Commissioner that the lines of communication were working well".*

It was decided that the Corps structure would remain and that any future changes would not be considered without consultation with all concerned.[1] The following month the Commissioner stressed its importance in the NT and that it would remain in its present form.[2] Earlier in February, Northern Corps had lodged a protest over Tremethick's proposal, some concerned that their positions would be made redundant if it went ahead.

At the August 1995 District Staff meeting Commissioner Baddeley stated that Chief Commissioner Villis Marshall was keen to look at a different model for running St John other than the existing military style. He would like the NT, as one of the smallest Districts, to experiment for a three year period on a different model.

Council Minutes reveal that Commissioner Baddeley had been averse to the militaristic culture of St John ever since he began his tenure, so the Chief Commissioner shouldn't have had any problems getting his ideas across.

Consultant Hugh Munro, who had done work for St John in the past, was to provide an advisory report which was duly produced. Unfortunately, Mr Munro met an untimely death requiring another consultant to produce an advisory plan for the restructure.

More information was made available in December when the proposed restructure was outlined and discussed by District Staff. Putting it simply, the proposal was to dismantle the militaristic structure of Operations Branch and run it on a business model. The Corps tier was to go with Corps Staff absorbed into District, which would be called the Board and the Commissioner would become Chairman.[3]

There would be a professional Operations Branch Manager responsible to the Board to oversee, make decisions, and assimilate all areas. Divisions would be called Branches under a Branch Manager, formerly the Divisional Superintendent. NCOs were to be abolished, their role being taken over by officers appointed by the Branch Manager who in turn would be appointed by the Board on recommendation of the Operations Manager. Appointments were to be competency and not seniority based.

Cadet Divisions would be exempt from the experiment, and smaller Divisions such as Nhulunbuy and Batchelor could apply for exemption.

All members were to be made aware this was an experiment and a cooperative venture.

Commissioner Baddeley gave a talk on the proposed restructure at a Special District Staff Meeting on the 12th December. Over the past year or so he felt that there were certain elements of the traditional St John that may be affecting the ability to function as a provider of First Aid to the community. While the management model for St John had served well for many years it may not be appropriate to carry St John into the 21st Century. The world had changed and St John must change with it in order to attract and retain members.

This was the basis of the proposed experiment. Commissioner Baddeley had discussed the matter with the Chief Commissioner earlier in the year and both were of a like mind and keen to give it a try. The experiment was to commence at the start of the new triennium on a three year trial. The change would be a business model for a medium to large sized company with branches throughout the Territory. The existing three tier structure had a fairly rigid hierarchical level, which was not the way

an efficient business would run. Branch Managers would have greater autonomy to run their Branch in that they would decide who they wanted in each position. The Board would not impose any conditions on the Branch Manager to select those assistants.

Previously, all NCO and Officer vacancies within Divisions were advertised with successful applicants being appointed by a Promotions Board, and later by Corps/District.

Corps and District were to be abolished with the Board replacing all layers above Branch Managers. The whole system was to be done away with and then to only put back what was required. The process of putting things back was important and if people wanted something they had to come up with a good argument as to why it was needed; then would follow a long discussion process.

The commodity being dealt to the community was first aid hours, which was to be the sales target and figures. Each Branch would have a sales target with the Branch Manager responsible to account for it.

Initially, Corps and District Staff would sit on the Board with the Commissioner as Chairman. A District Surgeon would not be required. The most important person on the Board would be a General Manager in a fully paid position.

A working subcommittee was set up and in February 1996 they presented their report to the District Staff meeting. Commissioner Baddeley thanked the subcommittee for their hard work and reminded them that this was an experiment and that the only way to know if it was right was to put it to the test.

The initial hypothesis was that the present structure of Operations Branch was too militaristic which decreased the ability to attract people and then to retain them as members. The Territory had been asked to do this as it was a small District and if it worked it could apply to the whole of Australia.

The Commissioner would not insist on taking on this experiment if the majority of members on District felt that it was counterproductive or dangerous and he appealed to District Staff to proceed with the experiment. The Commissioner would draft a letter to set out the guidelines and seek a written response from all District staff.[4]

The letter contained the following proposals:

1. Cadet Divisions to be exempt from all changes.
2. The hierarchical system to be altered:

a) Both Northern and Southern Corps to be abolished, with Corps members becoming equal members of the District Staff.

b) Divisional Superintendents to be made members, perhaps non-voting members of the District Staff.

c) Members of the District Staff to be given areas of responsibility with vertical responsibility to appropriate members of each Division.

d) The present rank marking to be replaced by a proficiency marking.

e) Divisional Superintendents to be given increased autonomy over their Divisions and the capacity to appoint whoever they feel necessary to fulfil specific functions within their Division. It is anticipated that the Superintendent would be able to go outside Operations Branch's membership to seek individuals with specific expertise and in whatever field they so *(this paragraph was left hanging with the sentence incomplete).*

3. Certain functions at the present time performed by the District Staff members to be amalgamated as much as necessary with the corresponding function of the ambulance service (e.g. finances, public relations and computerisation).

The letter went on to say that the members were being asked whether they felt the proposals should be considered any further and that should there be an overwhelming feeling that they were inappropriate then it would not proceed.[5]

A response to the letter was tabled in March with an overall positive result. Two members voted against the changes, but not totally negative. Council had discussed the proposed changes and there was general enthusiasm and acceptance, but with some advice as they were aware that this was

the biggest thing to happen to St John for a long time.

It was suggested to employ a consultant to conduct interviews to find out the feeling of the members as a first important step. There needed to be a benchmark, say 66%, for this to go ahead. The Commissioner did not want it to appear as though this was being forced on the members against their will.[6]

Council Chairman Richard Morris arranged for KPMG Management Consulting to review Operations Branch in the Northern Territory with the principal objective of recommending structural changes.

Lesley King and Peter Poole were tasked with working out a list of people to be interviewed as it was very important to obtain the feelings of members before proceeding.[7]

The May 1996 District Staff meeting discussed the proposed changes with these points made: [8]

- ◊ There was a strong feeling that rank was a recognition of what people had done for St John and not just a rank.
- ◊ There were feelings in the Divisions that this was already decided and that it would happen regardless. At the end of the three years it would continue whatever the outcome. This was being forced on the members.

It was suggested to move slowly with Divisional changes and firstly move towards amalgamating District with Corps.

KPMG's review was launched in June 1996, continued through the remainder of the year and finalised with a second stage member survey from November with final returns in January 1997.

The review included interviews with forty Operations Branch members and a confidential and anonymous questionnaire survey of all members seeking their written input. Respondents did have the option to provide identification of individual locations and years as a member. Approximately 190 questionnaires were distributed with 89 responses returned, or 46.8% of the total.

The report made the following recommendations:

- ◊ Elimination of the paramilitary structure and modification of the culture in the leadership and management of Operations Branch affairs.
- ◊ Retention of the more positive 'military' influences in the Divisional system (uniforms, rank, discipline, etc.) for pride, recognition and public face purposes.
- ◊ Elimination of Northern Corps and a restructuring / downsizing of management to remove duplications and reflect essential functional roles.
- ◊ Consideration of regional management appointments in northern and southern areas.
- ◊ Competency and business based approaches to senior officer appointments and to member recruitment, training and promotions.
- ◊ Flexible and rotational movements of senior officers including retention strategies to maintain their valued support of the Divisions.
- ◊ Investigation of a paid component for District Superintendents as a recognition given the heavy volunteer management loads.
- ◊ A major reduction in administrative loads and clearer delegations.
- ◊ Confirmation of the Operations Branch coordinator role creation and a suggested new role of Operations Branch Training Officer.
- ◊ Specific officer accountabilities for increased leadership, mentoring and team building inputs to Divisional activities.
- ◊ Modifications to training demands, content of courses, training duration and training resources.
- ◊ A rethink of the physical separation of the Darwin Division and Ambulance Service given the revealed team and communications losses.
- ◊ A creative approach to increase volunteer recognitions, to lift the divisional culture and to reduce apparent social shortfalls.
- ◊ Development of a buddy system and adoption of a stronger team building and human relations focus in divisional activities.

Results of the interviews carried out Territory wide showed that there was perceived to be a lack of true motivational leadership. There was

administrative control, but there was a need for *"caring participative leaders who are team builders".*

Problems with member retention outside the major centres of Darwin and Alice Springs centred on a low variety of tasks, boredom, communications distance and training demands. There needed to be proper recognition of volunteer contribution beyond the 12 Year Service Medals. Members pointed out not being thanked when demands were often unreasonable and personal costs for fuel, etc. not being met. Volunteers felt they were unsupported by positive recognition for their efforts.

The promotions system was seen as poor and depending heavily on who you knew, rather than the management and personal skills of a normal workplace.

District was seen to be bureaucratic and out of touch with the Divisions and failed to appreciate that communications between the two were stifled.

Corps was seen to be a bottleneck that needed to be eliminated, with the Operations Branch pyramid structure flattened. The Northern Corps came in for particular criticism in that it was seen to be a mail box only, with a paramilitary stance and should be eliminated. Southern Corps was seen to work quite well, though. They had good leaders and a team based organisation.[9]

The report had many more pages of recommendations that won't be reproduced here, but the survey did find a mandate for the change and that it should be carried out without delay. Throughout the report is repeated several times the need for a 'buddy system' for new and inexperienced members, something the author found not to be in place when he joined just four years later.

The restructure was implemented, but seemingly without much enthusiasm by the Divisions and in November 1997 the Commissioner expressed his disappointment at the lack of response received from most Divisions to implement the changes. The Commissioner tasked District Staff members, including Divisional Superintendents, to go back to their Divisions and discuss all the changes with their members to ensure that all Divisions were following the same changes.[10]

By February 1998 the changes had been implemented, but not quite as much as originally envisaged. Divisions were still Divisions and not Branches; Divisional Superintendents still wore their rank markings and were not Branch Managers; Corps had been abolished, but District was still District and not the Board; and the Commissioner was still the Commissioner.

Divisional Superintendents could now appoint their own officers; NCOs had gone and with them much of the militaristic structure of Operations Branch in the Northern Territory.

In discussion with Operations Branch members who were there at the time the author was told that the restructure was unpopular and some blame Commissioner Baddeley for *"ruining Operations Branch".* Others blame his successor, Andrew Hodges, who implemented the changes as District Superintendent.

It was a consultative process with more than half the members too apathetic to respond. Australians are traditionally conservative in that they don't readily accept change, especially not radical change. After the triennium many of the changes were gradually done away with.

# Chapter 5
# 1996 to 2000

### 1996

Mandy Langdon's term as Darwin Divisional Superintendent expired on 30th June and she returned to Northern Corps staff as Corps Nursing Officer. Peter Poole took over the reins of Darwin Division once again on 23rd July and Andrew Hodges became District Superintendent/District Treasurer on the same date. [1]

A fitness for duty test was brought in during September that required all members to complete 10 minutes of CPR and to be signed off each year as having completed the test. *"A series of experiments were completed in NSW that showed a person doing 10 minutes CPR was working at less than 50% capacity."* [2] Darwin Division commenced fitness for duty tests at the start of 1997 with assessments taking place with an accredited instructor being responsible for signing off the form in the SMP book.

The October District Staff meeting [3] reported the perpetual complaint of *"Public Duties at Darwin Division still not being covered properly, with three requested PD's cancelled due to lack of manpower."*

The minutes also reported that Cadet Competitions were won by Darwin Cadet Division with Individual winner Kelly Hickey and Cadet Leader Chrissie Frampton. The *Northern Territory News* provided more information, saying that the competitions were held in early October at Nungalinya College, Casuarina, between six teams from Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.

The winning team of Tessa Cubillo, Daryl McPherson and Renee Watts from Darwin Cadet Division would be going to the National Championships in Perth next year.[4]

In November, Darwin Cadets Divisional Officer Mary Simonato received an award for Community Service in the Young Australian of the Year Awards.

### 1997

In early January, Mary Simonato led a team of five cadets to the National Cadet Camp and First Aid Competitions in Perth. Renee Watts, Daryl McPherson and Andres Caspillo won the trophy for being the best overall in the team challenge, Cadet Leader Ben Mooney came in third place, and Kelly Hickey was fifth individual competitor.[5]

Paulo Fernandes was appointed Cadet of the Year with Ben Mooney runner up, they being the only two nominations. Commissioner Baddeley presented the certificate and lanyard to Paulo at the District Staff meeting on 15th February. Paulo was then invited to attend all future District meetings.

Commodore Eric Johnston AO OBE KStJ died on 26th February 1997. He was NT Administrator from



1st January 1981 to 30th June 1989. Commodore Johnston served St John firstly as Patron and then as Deputy Prior from 1st January 1987. St John members acted as ushers in the church at his state funeral.

The 1997 National Priory Conference was held at the Beaufort Hotel in Darwin in June with more than 250 delegates from all around Australia attending. A National Instructors' Seminar was held in conjunction with this at the Mirrambeena Resort.

Australian First Aid Championships were on Saturday 21st with the Capitular Procession and Church Service the following day.

New South Wales won the team event with the Territorians coming in fifth place. There was a rather entertaining story in *Outback Ambulance* written by Matthew Nish about the NT Competition team from Nhulunbuy, with team mates Mark Twomey and Bruce Whittington.

Individual competitor was Andrew Hebbron and team manager was Jenny Kirby.

Council Chairman Richard Morris was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the Queen's Birthday honours list and later in the year another honour was bestowed on him when the Casuarina Ambulance Centre was named the *Richard Morris Centre*. Richard joined the St John Council as Treasurer in 1973 and succeeded Brian Young, General Manager of the *NT News*, as Council Chairman in 1977. He retired in 2000 and was succeeded as Chairman by Mike Mooney.

Peter Poole advised the October District Staff meeting that Darwin Division had 20-25 members attending meetings, but there were still ongoing problems filling public duties. The Commissioner asked Peter to begin changes to existing DO/NCO ranking in line with the Operations Branch restructure.[6]

The November meeting discussed recognition of qualifications and decided on a blue bar for the Certificate of Ambulance Studies and a yellow bar for the Associate Diploma. These were to be worn on epaulettes.[7]

Ben Mooney was presented with the Cadet of the Year Award at the Officers' Mess Dinner in December. He was also elected as National Secretary for the Australian Youth Council.[8]

At the same function Rebecca Tunks of Palmerston and Rural Cadet Division was given a Letter of Commendation. Commissioner Baddeley also presented Mandy Langdon with her Honorary Members Badge, being the first in the Territory to receive this award.[9]

**1998**

Early in the year Alan Bromwich was appointed President of the St John Council, *"a very fitting reward for a gentleman who has worked tirelessly for St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc. for so many years in every conceivable capacity".* [10]

In June, Marian Grayden proposed the establishment of a memorial garden, a concept that was agreed by District Staff and referred to Council for further consideration. It was suggested to utilise the reverse of the brick structure at Casuarina that displays the company's name, with suitable plaques adhered to the brickwork. Lesley King suggested that in addition to a plaque a remembrance book be compiled.[11] Names suggested for the memorial were:

- Victor Bruce Perkins AM CStJ – founder of Perkins Shipping and President of the NT St John Council
- Boyne Litchfield – Superintendent of Batchelor Combined Division
- Commodore Eric Johnston AO OBE KStJ – NT Administrator and Deputy Prior
- Frank Oakley Simmons SBStJ – Superintendent of Casuarina Ambulance Cadet Division, then CSO and DSO
- Joy King—volunteer member of Darwin Division in the 1960s and '70s and Secretary of the Cadet Band
- Wally Wycisk – hospital orderly who was also a St John volunteer in the 1960s and '70s
- Bill Keelan – Darwin Divisional Superintendent, then CSO
- Roger Dean CBE KStJ – NT Administrator and

first President of the NT St John Council

◊ James Bell MBE OStJ—Endowment Trust Chairman

Marian asked in August if the Remembrance Garden was going ahead. She suggested a small garden be made at the rear of the current Casuarina building, subject to future building extensions. Other suggestions included a brick sized plaque inside the building. Administration Officer Gwyn Balch obtained quotes from funeral companies with brochures that were presented to the next District Staff meeting. Plaques were to be of simple design and placed where clearly visible to public view.[12] The matter was raised at the next St John Council meeting, but no feedback was passed back to District.

The garden was raised again in November 2000 after the tragic death of popular young member Tony Iliou, but again nothing happened.

The author's observances at Casuarina HQ are that expansion programs have left little room for a Remembrance Garden and it is straining at the seams with overcrowding. The Volunteer Office made a welcome move when Mechanical Services and the Store/Sales relocated to Winnellie, but on the other side senior Ambulance Service staff are sharing offices. Perhaps it's time for the Volunteers to relocate to their own premises away from Casuarina. Should that eventuate the new site would be the ideal place to put in a remembrance garden. This needs to be taken off the "gunna" list and become a reality. In the meantime, this book will serve as a memorial to our late members. We only hope it does them justice.

With Sue Franks on long service leave Gwyn Balch took over as Administrative Officer in July on limited tenure for a six months period. Fifteen years later she is still in the job.[13]

The Sydney Olympics were coming up in 2000 and there was a call for volunteer first aiders for this massive event. DSM Rod Hocking advised that he had names of fifty interested members. Fund raising was a concern and he had contacted a few people about grants; it was thought SOCOG may cover some of the costs. He was asked to prepare a submission with requirements for the Commissioner who would then send "begging letters" to local Councils, Departments, etc. seeking funds.[14]

Rod Hocking advised in August that the cost of attending the Olympics would be about $2,000, but that cost could come down considerably. He also suggested taking a coach and the public duty bus.

Jenny Kirby took leave from Darwin Cadets in August and was temporarily replaced by Di Munro who recruited a few members from Darwin Adults to help out with the cadets.[15] In December, Mary Simonato stated a willingness to take over as Divisional Superintendent in the New Year which she did under the name of Mary Wilkie.

The Commissioner requested that Cadet Divisions nominate cadets for the "Peter Falkland Memorial Award" by the 1st October. They were reminded that it was not to be called the "Cadet of the Year Award". [16]

Michael Holmes was announced winner of the Peter Falkland Memorial Award in November.

**1999**

The National Cadet Camp was held in Alice Springs from 31st December 1998 to 8th January 1999 with Cadet competitions on 2nd January.

Unfortunately, it didn't rate a mention in *Outback Ambulance* or in District Staff Meeting minutes, so the results are not known.

Darwin Adult Division reported in February that the call-out plan had been activated over the Christmas period for Cyclone Thelma. The Division had an increase in new members, but a lot of resignations made for a high turnover. Even with the decrease in public duties over the wet season, the Division still had problems with coverage.[17] The situation improved in April with the Division now having 40 members with most public duties being covered.

Band Division Superintendent Frank Haydock complained in March about the lack of public duties for cadets. It was directed that copies of all suitable duties be sent to Cadet Divisions and that the Public

Duties folder be left in a place accessible to Cadet Superintendents.

Palmerston Cadets' Superintendent Dawn Bat asked for permission for cadets to attend night duties. This was granted by the Commissioner on condition of parental consent and the Divisional Superintendent or an adult member also being in attendance.[18]

Comms moved from the Casuarina Centre to the Joint Emergency Services Communications Centre (JESCC) at the Peter MacAulay Centre, Berrimah. This created problems for the Darwin Cadets gaining access to training rooms and their shed. Gwyn Balch was to arrange for keys to training rooms and a lock for the shed and for a letter to be sent to Operations Manager Trevor Sellick to allow Operations Branch access to other areas of the building.[19]

The start of a new triennium on 24th June saw Andrew Hodges promoted to Commissioner; Sue Cooper to District Superintendent; Gwyn Balch, District Secretary; Di Munro, District Officer; Stephen Baddeley, District Surgeon – all other positions remained unchanged. In August, Virginia Dowson succeeded Rod Hocking as District Sergeant Major and Steve Peers became District Officer, Alice Springs.

The appointment of Andrew Hodges as Commissioner broke the cycle of Surgeons filling the position. Succeeding Commissioners Peter Poole and Steve Peers are both long serving volunteers who joined St John as Privates in the late 1970s and worked their way up through the ranks of the Brigade and then Operations Branch.

Long gone were the days when volunteers joined St John into a first aid course run by the Brigade and on completion were issued their uniforms and went onto the ambulances or into public duties. Recruits now had to have a current Senior First Aid certificate before being accepted into Operations Branch and the way to get that was through a paid public first aid course run by Training Branch or another organisation, such as Red Cross. These costs were to be reimbursed on completion of six months satisfactory active membership on recommendation of the Divisional Superintendent.

Frank Haydock took leave from the Band Cadets to spend time in the UK, with Karen King taking over the Division in his absence. Frank returned in November after a well earned break and Karen took over again when Frank was absent the following April.

Darwin Division lost a few members to new District positions and some in the Ambulance Service were transferred to other Territory centres. Public duties dropped off in October, but so had the enthusiasm for members to cover them. [20]

A proposal to raise the minimum standard of ambulance officer training was made in November. This was that *"all ambulance officer training include a current certificate, medical emergency drugs (exam to be passed each year) and complete a minimum of twelve volunteer shifts per year"*. Volunteer ambulance officers would have twelve months to complete the examination. The proposal had the support of the Regional Manager and Training Department. [21]

Volunteers were sought for the Sydney Olympics public duty with the following NT members selected: [22]

| | |
|---|---|
| Tennant Creek | Deborah Snow |
| Alice Springs | Paul Maybank |
| Nhulunbuy | Howard Smith |
| | Carol Worbs |
| Katherine | Sonya Arnold |
| Darwin | Di Munro |
| | Kylie Munro |
| | Pat Murray |
| | Helen Zahos |
| | Mark Grayden |
| | Natalie Higgins |
| | Naomi Porreveccio |

In June 2000 the St John Council granted a payment of $200 to all volunteers attending the Olympics.[23]

A major event training exercise took place in the early hours (3.00am) of Saturday 27th November. District Superintendent Sue Cooper activated the ECOP list and contacted members with a few minor problems. As a result of the phone calls 17 people would have responded to a real emergency, a few couldn't come as they were working the next day, one was sick, five no answers and seven calls were to answering machines. [24]

The scenario was set at the Berrimah prison with 20 prisoners escaping through the razor wire and taking two prison officers hostage. They were then holed up in a shed nearby while negotiations were taking place. During this time hostages were dismembered, shot and assaulted.

When St John volunteers arrived on scene they were directed to attend some injured prisoners near the outer fence. However, security of the prisoners complicated transporting the patients, resulting in delays that would have placed lives in danger during a real situation. There was also a lot of waiting around while negotiations with the escapees took place. This was finally resolved with tear gas and Prison Officers entering the shed. In the process there were some real casualties that brought a stop to the exercise, fortunately with nothing serious. [25]



***Standing:*** Jaclyn Braund, Donna Stone
***Seated:*** Tony Iliou, Michael Holmes

**2000**

Darwin Adult Division had a steady flow of new members early in the year, but wanted to concentrate on retention rather than recruitment. The Division had its problems too. There was difficulty getting ambulance duties covered and still the continuing matter of volunteers being verbally abused at the NTFL. On the brighter side, Glen Denmeade and John Carman were now looking after the Division's administration. [26]

The Cadet Band recommenced on 6th February with 18 cadets and two juniors, having lost six members over the Christmas break. Only six cadets were doing music and the Band was unable to play at the Palmerston Festival. [27]

Adult First Aid competitions were held at the Pint Club, Marrara, ably managed by Di Munro. Teams were all from the Darwin area with one Individual coming up from Alice Springs. Winning team members Michael Holmes, Tony Iliou and Jaclyn Braund and winning Individual Donna Stone qualified for the National Competitions to be held in Adelaide in June. [28]

Approaches to Commissioner Hodges to have NCOs reinstated in Adult Divisions were advised that he would consider this provided there was *"a well articulated, well substantiated reason for the change"*. An informal survey of members in Darwin showed 60% interest in becoming an NCO, compared with only one interested in becoming an officer. [29]

Darwin Division reported a steady stream of new members in September, many of them ADF personnel. Public duties were difficult to cover, especially ambulance duties, with very few volunteer members ambulance qualified. A lot of the new members lived in Palmerston and the rural

area and there was seen to be a need for new Divisions in those areas in the near future. [30]

Cadet First Aid Competitions were held in Alice Springs in October:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Team event:* | |
| First | Kate Anning, Alice Springs |
| | Peter Williams |
| | Julie-Anne O'Bryan |
| Second | Susan Rosenzweig, Palmerston |
| | Eliza Thomas |
| | Kristine Halfpenny |
| Third | Jessica McKenna, Band |
| | Alexi Milne |
| | Julian Gerste |
| *Individual:* | |
| First | Samantha Martin, Palmerston |
| Second | Ben Farkas, Alice Springs |
| Third | Maddie Haslett, Band |
| *Cadet Leader:* | |
| First | Kylie Munro, Band |

Samantha Martin was awarded Palmerston Junior Citizen of the Year; Kylie Munro to be AYC representative for the next 12 months and Ben Farkas was the NT representative for the international competitions to be held in Malaysia. [31]

A Panel Discussion at the October District Conference brought up the point that there was a lack of ambulance qualified volunteers because as soon as they qualified they were employed by the Ambulance Service. This made covering public duties that required an ambulance very difficult. The response was that it was a good thing that volunteers could gain employment with St John and that most returned to the volunteers anyway. Divisions needed to consider why they didn't stay in the volunteers.[32]

The author noted in his time in uniform that paid ambulance officers who were also members of Operations Branch in Darwin rarely did volunteer ambulance duties. If volunteers could not provide a crew at an ambulance duty then a paid crew would be called in, often with people who were also members of Operations Branch. They would not do an ambulance public duty unless they were paid.

Marian Grayden requested that each Division have two divisional historians to collect information such as statistics, awards, programs, newspaper clippings, special events, etc. This was thought to be a great idea and supported by all attending the November Staff meeting. [33]

The idea of a memorial garden was raised again with the sad death on 16th October of a much loved young member, Tony Iliou.

Born on 30th April 1981, Tony joined the Darwin Cadet Division at the age of ten, gained his 200 hour Special Service Shield in 1998, and graduated to the Darwin Adult Division as a Cadet Leader. Tony was nominated three years running for Young Australian of the Year through his work with St John. He was also studying nursing at NTU with the aim of working overseas.

A local first aid champion, he competed interstate in National competitions with his close friends Jaclyn Braund and Michael Holmes.

Tony was described as a wonderful young man with an infectious smile that won everybody's hearts. In an *NT News* story his brother in law Peter Andreou said: "I have not met a more caring, loving person in my life." [34]

It was by chance that he was diagnosed with a heart complaint in 1999. During volunteer training they were working on electrocardiograms when the instructor did one on Tony and found that he had an irregular heart rhythm. He was given the printout and saw a doctor soon after. The diagnosis was an enlarged heart and to come back again in 12 months time.

Tony Iliou was just 19 years old when he collapsed and died of a heart attack while playing at home with his three dogs.

St John Ambulance provided a guard of honour with the Cadet Flag at Tony's funeral, held at the St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Cavenagh Street.

A request was made by St John to have a street in the new Palmerston suburb of Farrar named in his honour, but this was rejected. In 2005, First Aid Unit Car 55 was named *Tony Iliou* for a 12 months period.

# Chapter 6
# Into the 21st Century

**2001**

Once again Peter Poole relinquished his position as Superintendent of Darwin Adult Division, the job being taken on by Divisional Officer Pat Murray. Darwin Cadets Superintendent Michael Holmes resigned and was succeeded by Keith Robinson.

To overcome problems with accredited Divisional trainers, Training Branch agreed for Di Munro and Jan Rowell to develop a "mini course" to be run over a weekend. This would give members the credentials to teach first aid within their divisions. They would not be able to give any RPLs or to teach outside St John. This course became *Train Small Groups*, the first part of a Trainer and Assessor qualification. [1]

Territory Officer Human Resources, Kylie Home developed an exit interview form for feedback on why people were dropping out of Operations Branch. *"Bruce [Wilde] identified the problem on why members don't cover public duties – is it possible to use this type of questioning to solve this problem?"* [2]

The reasons why many members don't, or won't do public duties would have to be many and it seems to be an eternal problem that is not confined to St John Ambulance. A lot of people join volunteer organisations for the wrong reasons and then find themselves unable or unwilling to get involved in working within the organisation.

The National Cadet Competitions were held on 6th January in Canberra on the ANU campus grounds with the Territory's team finishing fifth overall, just 23 points behind the winner. Individual competitor Samantha Martin finished in sixth place. DO Scott Loechal trained the competitors; Sam showed real dedication in travelling to Alice Springs for training.

Team members Kate Anning, Peter Williams and Julie-Anne O'Bryan came from Alice Springs , while Samantha Martin was from Palmerston.[3]

The St John Council was looking at establishing cadet divisions in outlying and remote communities and would use new Councillor Bob Collins' experience in these areas to develop this plan. As a Cadet Divisional Officer, Bob was instrumental in helping start the Casuarina Ambulance Cadet Division in 1971. He worked in Maningrida prior to entering politics and had experience with remote communities.

In March, all Divisional Superintendents were asked to nominate a Territory Officer as liaison person for their division. If they failed to nominate, then the District Superintendent would appoint an officer for them. Alan Caust accepted the Tennant Creek Adults and Cadets and Di Munro took on the Cadet Band.[4] Virginia Dowson "adopted" Batchelor Division and would assist with an increased level of ambulance training.

Other Territory Officer "adoptions" were Glen Denmeade, Humpty Doo Cadets; Steve Peers, Katherine and Alice Springs Adults; and Pat McQuillen, Alice Springs Cadets

Phil Langdon asked in June how some people had been accepted as members who seemed to be unsuitable. The Commissioner advised that Divisional Superintendents had the responsibility to interview and to recommend all new members, with a possible three months probationary period.

The author's experience the following year as Superintendent of the brand new Humpty Doo Adult Division was that some new members were being signed up by the Volunteer Office at Casuarina and sent out to the Division as a *fait accompli.* The Division wasn't always consulted or given the opportunity to interview prospective members, and some of the people signed on by the Volunteer Office didn't stay long at all. It seems to have been a case of "we need more volunteers and anyone who has a current Senior First Aid certificate will do".

At the Tennant Creek Officers Workshop the

problem with unsuitable new members was discussed and the fact that it was taking up to four weeks to process medicals and police checks should be enough time to weed out those who may have second thoughts about committing to St John.

The Annual NT District First Aid Competitions were held at the Katherine Ambulance Centre, managed by Phil Langdon. The team scenario was in a home workshop where Dad had an accident while fixing his boat's outboard motor to be ready for the Easter break. The Individuals were confronted by three young bushwalkers suffering heat exhaustion.

Team winners were Michael Holmes, Jaclyn Braund and Romaine Oorloff. Scott Loechal won the Individual competition.[5]

National Adult First Aid Competitions were held in Brisbane in June. The Operations Branch Newsletter didn't give any results except to say that the team of Michael Holmes, Jaclyn Braund and Romaine Oorloff, and Individual Christine Turner gave a good account of themselves.

Scott Loechel, who had qualified for the Nationals by winning the Territory competitions had to withdraw after breaking a leg a couple of weeks before. Competition veteran Christine Turner took Scott's place.[6]

Cadet First Aid Competitions were held at Palmerston Oasis Shopping Centre in July. The team scenario was a security guard chasing a juvenile shoplifter who crashed into a lady wheeling her shopping trolley. All three received injuries in the incident. The individual scenario was a couple sitting down for a coffee and donut when one person choked on a piece of donut, knocking over the coffee which scalded the other person.

Cadets travelled from Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine, as well as local divisions. The Cadet Band topped the field by winning all sections. The eternal Phil Langdon was applauded for managing another successful competition.[7]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Team: | 1st | Phillip Jackson, Band |
| | | Alexi Milne |
| | | Ben Danvers |
| | 2nd | Justin Murphy, Humpty Doo 1 |
| | | Byron May |
| | | Kathryn Ainsworth |
| | 3rd | Susan Rosenzweig, Palmerston |
| | | Jessie Sinclair |
| | | Kristine Halfpenny |
| Individual: | 1st | Maddie Haslett, Band |
| | 2nd | John Payne, Humpty Doo |
| | 3rd | Amy Polkinghorne, Alice Springs |
| Cadet Leader: | | Kylie Munro, Band |

It was decided to form a cadet division for students at Kormilda College and in September there were 26 students and five adults interested in joining. The first meeting was planned for Tuesday 16th October after school. It was anticipated that teachers would take over running the Division.[8]

NCOs were reintroduced during the year for adult divisions.

The annual Volunteering NT Awards Ball was held in late October at the MGM Grand to recognise the contributions of volunteers in the Northern Territory. This was a special event to celebrate the International Year of Volunteers.

Seven St John Ambulance volunteers were nominated for the Emergency, Safety and Crime Prevention section: Peter Poole, Glen Denmeade, Di Munro, Pat McQuillen, Kylie Munro, Noel Talbot and Vicki Macmillan. While not winning any awards, Glen Denmeade did become a finalist in the Emergency section. [9]

The Annual Parade was held in Alice Springs as part of the Alice Springs Adult Division's 40th birthday celebrations. [10]

**2002**

The annual National Cadet Camp and Competitions were held in Adelaide this year. Territory competitors were Johnathan Haslett, Ben Danvers and Alexi Milne in the Team event, Individual Maddie Haslett, and Cadet Leader Kylie Munro.

The only results we have is a bold statement in the January 2002 Operations Branch Newsletter: *Congratulations to our competitors on third place.*

St John Council agreed to disband the Community Care Branch in the NT as it was seen to be duplicating the activities of organisations such as Red Cross and Anglicare and St John needed to focus on its core role of delivering first aid.[11]

However, this wasn't to be the end of involvement in this area and the latest St John Ambulance Community Care Program was officially launched on Wednesday 16th March 2011 at a ceremony at Casuarina HQ.

There were problems with the Kormilda College Division. It was basically being managed by Palmerston Cadet Susan Rosenzweig who was a Year 12 student at the College, and was in need of a Superintendent. There was difficulty with training and getting somebody to start at 3.30pm at the end of school classes. Training was in the Kormilda Library and went to 4.30pm.

There was no stability with staff and it was feared that they would lose members to the Duke's Mob unless additional staff were found. In April there were ten members attending regularly, with only two of them boarders at the College.

The Commissioner had discussions with the Council about Kormilda and was advised that it was not an Operations Branch Division, but a project of the St John Council. The original idea was to encourage participation by Aboriginal students, but that didn't seem to be working as most of the current members were non-aboriginal.

By July, all new members had received their preliminary first aid certificates, were issued uniforms and could attend public duties.[12] The Cadets did their first public duty at the College Sports Day and did a great job treating 43 casualties.

Susan began training Aboriginal students in preliminary first aid in the dormitory and started with twenty attending on Saturday 31st August. Unfortunately, she was leaving school in another eight weeks and another person was needed to take over the training.[13] The following July, Susan was still assisting with training and the division still didn't have a Superintendent.

Twenty five members of the Kormilda College Division attended the 2002 Annual Parade and saw Susan Rosenzweig awarded a well deserved Cadet of the Year.

The only information we have been able to unearth on the Adult First Aid Competitions is that they were held in Palmerston on Saturday 16th March with an open Mess Dinner that night when trophies were presented to:

Team: Michael Holmes
Jaclyn Braund
Romaine Oorloff
Individual: Scott Loechal

Team manager for Sydney competitions would be Graeme Owen.[14]

Darwin Adult Division would be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2003 and plans were underway for the Jubilee. Marian Grayden contacted the Darwin City Council about a Key to the City; National HQ advised that a certificate is issued for a Jubilee Year and they just needed to know the exact date of registration.

However, that date seems to be lost forever. There are no local records and none in South Australia. It didn't even rate a mention in the 1953 South Australian Annual Report. For convenience, National HQ called it December 1953, but was most likely early in that year.

There would have been some noses out of joint in the paid Ambulance Service when long serving volunteer Peter Poole was awarded Ambulance Officer of the Year for 2002. Peter first qualified as an Ambulance Officer in 1979 while a member of the Tennant Creek Combined Division. Ever since then he had been doing regular ambulance duties regardless his rank or position with St John. Nowadays the award is called Paramedic of the Year.

Frank Haydock had problems in September with the sports medicine people at a recent public duty. He was advised not to treat players on the field and wasn't permitted to treat a non-playing child. When asked why he was told that St John was only there for the insurance.[15]

The September Cadet Meeting noted that there had been problems with senior cadets transferring to adult divisions. A suggested solution to keep them in the cadet divisions was to promote them to Divisional Officers Grade VI once they turned 18. They would then have six months to complete the Officers Course before being promoted to Grade V.

The Commissioner would also produce an Order allowing senior cadets to remain in cadet divisions until the age of 25. These senior cadets could then be used as instructors, but once promoted to Divisional Officers they would no longer be allowed to compete in Cadet Competitions.[16]

**Bali Bombing**

On Saturday 12th October 2002 terrorists exploded bombs in Bali that killed 202 people, including 88 Australians, and left another 240 with varying injuries.

St John called in paid ambulance crews and volunteers to handle the expected influx of casualties to be evacuated from Bali to Darwin.

Your author was on a football public duty at Fred's Pass Reserve the following afternoon when he got a phone call requesting names of Division members able to come into Casuarina HQ that night to assist with transport of casualties from the airport to Royal Darwin Hospital. The Humpty Doo Volunteer Ambulance drove into town that night with some members on board, while others used their own transport. Other ambulances and crews came up from Batchelor and Katherine.

Rather than rely completely on old memories, the following account is indebted to Intensive Care Paramedic Andrew Wheeler, who wrote an excellent account of the operation for *Outback Ambulance.* [17]

There was an operational briefing at 9.30pm with a duty roster for crewing etc. given by Deputy Operations Manager Mick McKay and Andrew Wheeler. The first aircraft with up to thirty seriously injured casualties was expected at 11.00pm. Crews then set about checking their ambulances and all equipment in preparation for the job ahead. Darwin was to be a focal point of the operation to evacuate the casualties to Australia and they prepared for a long night.

Nine ambulances, including the Humpty Doo Volunteer Ambulance, were on duty for this operation. The Palmerston and Darwin Centre ambulances were left to cover normal operational requirements in the Darwin region.

Two other teams, each headed by a paramedic were assigned to the airport and Hospital. Operations Manager Trevor Sellick and Deputy Operations Manager Mick McKay led a team of Operations Branch members at the airport. Warren Purse, by day a paramedic in the Army, took charge of a team of volunteers at the Hospital.

When the aircraft failed to arrive the crews were advised that the ETA was now 1.00am and to get a bit of rest. Bodies found a bit of vacant floor until roused around midnight.

At about 12.30am the fleet of ambulances drove through deserted streets to be met at the airport by an array of media and other waiting services. They were guided onto the tarmac by Australian Protective Services, RAAF Police and Northern Territory Police. Ambulances lined up waiting for the arrival of a RAAF Hercules C-130J with fifteen patients on board.

It was a long anxious wait with equipment, such as chair stretchers, being taken from ambulances to the aircraft unloading team. Crews were pleased to see NT Administrator John Anictomatis appear to wish them well.

When the aircraft finally arrived and the extent of the operation was known, ambulances were called forward to start the operation.

First to board the aircraft, Andrew Wheeler *"entered into a dimly lit world of canvas stretchers and misery. Several of the walking patients brushed past to a waiting ambulance, their faces frozen with mixed emotion of sadness, pain and relief."*

One patient had died during the flight and the Humpty Doo Volunteer Ambulance was tasked with taking him to the mortuary at Royal Darwin Hospital. After waiting awhile, the staff arrived to take charge of the body. The ambos felt compassion for the poor man and were more than a little dismayed at the mortuary staff's callous flippant attitude towards him. It was a relief to hand over

the body and get away from them.

Back at the airport, the first stretcher patient to be unloaded was a man with fifty percent or more burns and trauma. Despite this he was still conscious. The next patient was intubated, unstable and with no palpable pulse. Andrew Wheeler travelled to RDH with this patient, together with an anaesthetist and nurse. The patient had eighty percent or more burns and blast injuries. Andrew gave special mention to the volunteer first aider who travelled with him, saying: *"she worked with us giving her all and more".*

Ambulances were met at the Hospital by Warren Purse and his team of volunteers. Patients were quickly and efficiently unloaded and wheeled away. Stretchers were replaced with those from previous ambulances, quickly made up with new linen.

All patients were cleared from the aircraft in less than 25 minutes and the ambulances returned to Casuarina HQ to await the next aircraft, expected at 7.00am. It was find another patch of vacant floor and wait for the call.

The second aircraft contained 22 stretcher patients, advised to be in worse condition than those who arrived earlier. The ambulances returned to the airport in daylight with traffic now on the roads. Because of this they were given a designated route to drive to the Hospital with lights flashing and police on traffic duty at every intersection to give the ambulances right of way.

Ambulances once again lined the tarmac waiting for the aircraft to arrive. Andrew Wheeler was again the first paramedic to board the aircraft. *"As I walked on I stopped to take in the sight. This time a greater sense of dread filled me, the inside of the aircraft was a cave of silent misery, no patients moaned or complained, they just waited. Patients stacked three high filled the aircraft, all of them sustaining horrific injuries."*

After delivering their patients to RDH the first ambulances returned to the airport for the remaining six patients who had been unloaded from the aircraft and placed under the shade of the Hercules' wing.

At the Hospital, a frustrated Warren Purse reported that his boss had demanded that he turn up for work that day. Despite having been up all night, Andrew Wheeler took over from Warren and continued on at the Hospital. The ambulance crews and volunteers were then stood down and sent home.

The new Command Team of Craig Garraway and Kevin Blake, OIC Katherine, advised that the next aircraft was due in at 10.00am. This was changed to ETA 12.30pm with a second aircraft following.

The need for relief crews saw a lot of different people rounded up. At the Hospital were Andrew Wheeler, two Operations Branch volunteers, a communications officer and a student paramedic.

With ambulance crews in short supply the Hospital team was surprised to see St John CEO David Baker drive up at the wheel of one ambulance, as well as an accountant and a mechanic.

> *"The Supply and Marketing Manager caused a bit of a problem at the Hospital, so pleased with himself driving an ambulance. He was smiling and came to a soft almost perfect stop in front of A&E. He went to turn the beacons off, only to find the siren switch. The sight of him madly stabbing the control pad to switch off the obviously faulty switch (as he believes) caused a brief amount of constructive commentary and laughter."*

Twenty five patients came in the latest convoy, suffering *"horrific burns to their face, torso, arms, legs and compounding this were the blast injuries with torn and peppered broken limbs. Despite the injuries, all patients [showed a quiet] dignity. They were truly an inspiration to all those around them, who in return doubled their efforts to assist them."*

St John crews returned to Casuarina HQ for debrief and advice that from now only walking wounded and minor stretcher patients were expected.

The next phase of the operation was to remove injured from RDH to southern medical facilities, primarily burns units and intensive care units. This was carried out by duty crews, students from an intensive care paramedic course and by RAAF personnel.

Shortly after, all personnel involved with the operation were invited to the great hall of Parliament House for a reception to honour their efforts that night and over the following days.

At an investiture ceremony held at Royal Darwin Hospital on 29th October 2003, St John Ambulance Chief Executive Officer David Baker, Operations Manager Trevor Sellick and Officer in Charge Katherine, Kevin Blake were honoured with the Medal of the Order of Australia for their contribution to the Bali response. [18]

**2003**

National Cadet First Aid Competitions were held in Brisbane in January. The team of Alexi Milne, Nicholas McKenna and Jonathan Haslett from the Cadet Band finished in 5th place, individual competitor Fletcher Jackson and Cadet Leader Phillip Jackson were unplaced.

To sort out problems with public duty coverage the Superintendents of Darwin, Palmerston and Humpty Doo Adult Divisions were instructed to roster a weekly duty officer to be responsible as the point of contact for public duties. The Superintendents were to meet and decide how the duties were to be allocated.[19]

The existing system was that all public duties were posted in a book that was left in the kitchen at the Richard Morris Centre, Casuarina with a first in first served basis for who attended particular duties. Rural area members were unhappy with the system because of some of its ludicrous outcomes. Members north of the notorious Berrimah Line would refuse some nearby duties because they were "rural area and not their responsibility" while hogging a popular duty much further to the south to the exclusion of rural members who lived nearby.

Ambulance training for volunteers was discussed in July. The Commissioner spoke about access to ambulance training with minimum parameters before being accepted into the AOTC. Members must be contributing to the division and the Divisional Superintendent must be satisfied with their service before making recommendations to the Ambulance Operations Manager and AOTC. Service to the division could include other than public duties, such as helping with administration.[20]

Darwin Adult Division celebrated its Jubilee with a march through the city on Saturday 9th August 2003. Members from Darwin, Palmerston and Humpty Doo Adult Divisions marched through the city streets with cadets from Darwin, Band, Palmerston, Humpty Doo and Kormilda Cadet Divisions.

Assembly was at the Darwin City Council Chambers with departure at 10.30am down Cavenagh Street, up Knuckey Street, down the Smith Street Mall and through to the Civic Park behind the Civic Centre. This was near the location of Darwin Division's original home, which was located where the Council Chambers now stand.

Lord Mayor Peter Adamson presented Commissioner Andrew Hodges with a Certificate of Appreciation from the City of Darwin. Administrator and Deputy Prior John Anictomatis gave a speech in which he thanked St John Ambulance for their work during the Bali Bombing evacuations.

The Annual Parade held in the Marrara Indoor Stadium also celebrated the 50th anniversary of Darwin Adult Division. More than one hundred Adults and Cadets paraded before family, friends and special guests.

Presentation of awards and service medals was made by Commissioner Hodges and Administrator John Anictomatis. The Jubilee Certificate was presented to Darwin Divisional Superintendent Pat Murray, then Mrs Anictomatis cut the celebration birthday cake.

The celebrations ended with a Reunion Dinner at *The Hub* in Palmerston, when many former members told tales tall and true to serving members.[21]

**2004**

A proposal by Alice Springs Divisional Superintendent "Henry" Lawson to establish a Training Cadre was approved by the Commissioner with Territory Officer Training Virginia Dowson to form the group. The previous cadre had been

responsible for Divisional ambulance training, but was disbanded when this was taken over by the AOTC.[22]

This latest incarnation of the Training Cadre would provide a group of people across the NT to provide support to divisions on training issues. Vicki Macmillan would take on Management training and Graeme Owen was looking after Drug Protocol training.[23]

However, later reports suggest that the cadre wasn't all that successful and it seemed to just fade away.

One thing that keeps cropping up in Minutes for this period is insurance issues. Just about everything undertaken by St John, especially when dealing with the public or external agencies had a comment about insurance. As Australians follow American fashions with the trend of suing everyone and everything on the least pretext St John had to be very careful to cover its back in all dealings with the public.

Certain activities that wouldn't be covered by St John Ambulance insurance, such as the Humpty Doo Cadets entering a soft drink can boat in this year's Beer Can Regatta needed parents to consent and take responsibility for the activity. The March Operations Branch meeting amended this to the activity being covered by the event organisers' public liability insurance.

The Commissioner withdrew the use of blue bars on volunteer uniform epaulettes. These had been introduced to be worn by members with a Certificate of Ambulance Studies with a yellow bar worn by those with the Associate Diploma.

The new rule was for ambulance qualified members to wear a single yellow bar, but only by those currently performing ambulance duties. When performing a paid ambulance duty they would wear greens with technical rank markings.[24]

The Commissioner gave an update on the Kormilda College Cadet Division in October. Training Branch was now assisting with weekly training, but it had been difficult finding suitable volunteers to manage this division. Vicki Macmillan had done a great job looking after this Division as well as her own Humpty Doo Cadets.

To overcome this problem the St John Council was looking at paying someone to manage the division, and also at opening a second school division. This was seen as a significant move away from the traditional volunteer aspect of Operations Branch, but as previously stated by the Council, this was not an Operations Branch division but a Council project.[25]

In 2005 Kelly Raven was appointed to the new paid position of School Divisions Coordinator, working out of the Volunteer Office at Casuarina.

Virginia Dowson spoke about the new Patient Transport Officer (PTO) Course. This Ambulance Service initiative was introduced to combat the lack of ambulance qualified volunteers. This course gave a level of training for members to be able to go on the road to support a qualified officer of the Ambulance Service.

They would gain knowledge of drugs, ambulance driving and all equipment on the vehicles. To successfully complete the course they must be prepared to give a big commitment and those who wished to gain a formal qualification could then go on to complete the Clinical Studies course.

The PTO course was being run by Training Branch with no certificate at the end. Operations Branch members who completed the course would be able to do ambulance public duties with the ambulance marked "First Aid Vehicle".

It was currently being trialled in the Darwin area and with courses in Tennant Creek and Katherine. The course was self paced with log books to be completed. Deputy Operations Manager Mick McKay later reported that PTO courses had been run in Darwin, Katherine and Nhulunbuy with a total of 23 students.[26]

## 2005

Territory Superintendent Sue Cooper resigned from St John and Peter Poole was promoted to Deputy Commissioner in February, then succeeded Andrew Hodges as Commissioner on 24th June. Steve Peers was promoted to Territory

Superintendent on the same date. Andrew Hodges completed his second triennium, the maximum allowable term as Commissioner.

All State and Territory Officer Cadets' positions were to be declared vacant and readvertised using new selection criteria. The Commissioner and all NT Cadet Superintendents confirmed that TOC Noel Talbot had their full support.

Adult First Aid Competitions were held in Darwin on Saturday 23rd April. The Alice Springs team of Glen Auricht, Geoff Kain and Kate Anning were winners for the second year running, with Scott Loechel from Tennant Creek winning the individual section. Competition Manager was Dean Franklin.[27]

These members, with Team Manager Paul Berry, then represented the Territory at the National First Aid Competitions in Melbourne in June. *"Although they didn't come home with the trophy they participated in great style and spirit and did the NT proud."* [28]

Kelly Raven was appointed to the new paid position of School Divisions Coordinator, working out of the Volunteer Office at Casuarina. The job entailed working with and establishing cadet divisions in schools with boarding students. Because many of those students had trouble attending normal cadet divisions of an evening it was decided to bring St John to them.

Kelly's first job was to take over the Kormilda College Cadet Division from Vicki Macmillan and her volunteer helpers. Kormilda still lacked its own Superintendent and Divisional Officers and in the interim had been attached to the Humpty Doo Cadet Division with Vicki as OIC.

Kelly found it to be a big challenge with most of the Kormilda Cadets having English as a second language, necessitating a change in training program and teaching style. With a lot of juggling and hard work she succeeded in eliminating the need for a second instructor from Training Branch.

With Kormilda settling in Kelly was able to turn her attention to other schools, such as St John's College and Marrara Christian School.[29]

The Marrara Christian School Cadets held their first meeting on Tuesday 9th August, with regular weekly meetings to be held each Tuesday from 3.30pm to 5.00pm. Kelly Raven, assisted by two school staff members welcomed 21 female indigenous students aged between 13 and 16 years to the first meeting.[30]

In November this school division was described as *"an unusual situation"*. Kelly was the only adult with up to 30 children on the list, but with spasmodic attendance that left her with concerns about the continuity of training.

Inspecting Officer Lesley King saw that Kelly had a good rapport with the children who *"were attentive to her and worked diligently at their CPR exercise"*. There was seen to be little or no support from school staff and there was no parade held as Kelly felt it a little soon for any general organisation. Uniforms were still to be supplied for the cadets.

The Division was operating under handicaps of no storage space for equipment and lack of assistance from school staff and *"due to the unique circumstances this group does not function as a Division yet"*. [31]

A probationary period for new adult members was discussed during the year. It was suggested that new members not be issued with epaulettes until after a qualifying period. However, the feeling was that as a current Senior First Aid certificate was the entry requirement there should not be a probationary period. Mentoring would be more beneficial and it was recommended that new members should spend a minimum number of hours accompanied before going out on duties alone. A final decision was deferred pending the start of the new Skills Development Program. [32]

Frank Haydock and Rosie Ballinger were awarded Rotary "Shine On Awards" at a ceremony at Government House on 30th June. The awards are presented to people with a disability who contribute to the community.[33]

Frank was a long serving member of St John who had been Divisional Superintendent of the Darwin Adult and Cadet Band Divisions, as well as Corps Staff Officer and Territory Officer.

Rosie was once a cadet in Darwin and Casuarina Cadet Divisions and for the past six years had been secretary/treasurer of the Palmerston Cadet Division. She now worked as assistant to Gwyn Balch in the Volunteer Office at Casuarina.

Steve Peers was awarded a Medal in the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Queen's Birthday Honours list *"for service to the community through St John Ambulance Australia"*.[34] Steve joined St John as a volunteer in 1977 and the Ambulance Service in 1979. Truly an honour well deserved.

After attending a public first aid course Kate Upton expressed interest in starting a Cadet/Junior Division at Wagait Beach. She was interviewed by the local paper, contacted the local council and put up notices about a public meeting. Commissioner Peter Poole, Kelly Raven and Vicki Macmillan travelled to Wagait Beach for the meeting at the sports ground on Thursday 25th August.[35]

Nothing came of this.

Cadet First Aid Competitions were held in Alice Springs in conjunction with the annual camp. The competitions, set in the ground of the Alice Springs RSL Club, were contested by five teams, seven individuals and four Cadet Leaders. The winning team of Stacy-Lee Cannons, Kristie Leaf and Stella Hubel were from Humpty Doo; Individual Alex Haslett from Darwin and Cadet Leader Emily Macmillan from Humpty Doo.[36]

The Annual Parade was held at the Kalymnian Hall on Saturday 19th November with more than 150 members from Darwin, Palmerston, the rural area, Batchelor, Katherine and Alice Springs in attendance. The newest members from Marrara Christian School were also there, although still waiting on their cadet uniforms.

Divisional Superintendent Romaine Oorloff was presented the Jubilee Certificate to celebrate the Darwin Cadet Division's 50th anniversary. A letter from Grant Tambling, Administrator of Norfolk Island and one of the original members of the Darwin Cadet Division, was read out.[37]

**2006**

Pat King re-joined St John early in the year as an affiliate member. She was currently a human resource manager and also studying for her chaplaincy. Her role was to contact ex-members and members who hadn't attended divisional training and provide feedback to the Superintendents. She would also be *"setting up a St John 'alumni' and look at annual dinners, newsletters and other ideas to bring back ex-members to rejoin the St John family."*

When contacting members she found non attendance due to family or work commitments. Others complained of lack of mentoring and being pushed into doing public duties on their own.[38]

Revamping the Operations Branch quarterly newsletter was discussed at the start of the year. It would now be regular and include photos and contributions from all divisions. The newsletter would be expanded to ex-members and Council members.

Despite this, when a weekly newsletter, *Vollie News*, did start in November the divisions, apart from Humpty Doo Adults, took a very long time to support it with photos and contributions. Talking about something and actually doing it often don't coincide.

Frank Dunstan re-joined Operations Branch in July as an affiliate member of Humpty Doo Adult Division. With no duties assigned he started a weekly divisional newsletter just for something to do. In October, Territory Superintendent Steve Peers and Volunteer Co-ordinator Gwyn Balch asked Frank to expand it into a Territory wide newsletter. *Vollie News* was born on 2nd November 2006. *Read the full story on pages 294-296.*

**2007**

In February, Sheryl Rossiter took over as OIC of Darwin Cadets for six months.

Darwin Adults reported that only one in seven prospective new members turned up after initial contact with the Volunteer Office, then of those who joined only one in seven stayed in the Division.

Most members were working and found it hard to maintain contact with the new people. [39]

Alice Springs successfully defended their title as Northern Territory Adult Competition Team champions. Team members Glen Auricht, Amanda McNeill and Geoff Kain won the right to represent the Territory in the National Adult First Aid Competitions. Kate Anning won the Individual section. Competition Manager was Christine Turner with Claire Chandler as run through Individual.[40]

NT Cadet First Aid Competitions were held at Marrara Christian College on Sunday 30th September, with Competition Manager Christine Turner. Jacob Pietsch of Alice Springs won the Cadet Leader event in a scenario that involved two people riding on pushbikes and running into a pedestrian talking on a mobile phone. There were fractures, lacerations and a suspected spinal injury.

The Individual winner was Claire Chandler of Cadet Band, second was Josh Butler of Palmerston and Caitlin Iggleden of Alice Springs came third. Their scenario involved four people fooling around a fountain when two fell off injuring themselves, hitting another while the fourth had an asthma attack. There were some gruesome injuries with exposed intestines, lacerations and fractures.

Band Team 1 members Rachel Fox, Alex Haslett and Amy McKay won the team event in a scenario where two adults went off leaving three kids playing netball. Two boys climbed the pole, bringing it down to hit the girl and knock her unconscious. One of the boys jumped clear of the pole grazing his knees while the other dropped a bottle with resultant broken glass. There were lacerations, embedded glass, fractures and a head injury to treat.

Band Team 2 members Sarah McLaughlin, Chantelle Dobunaba and Kelsey Smith came in second place, while the Alice Springs team of Gavin Henderson, Cassie Iggleden and Jade Harris came third.[41]

Steve Peers was appointed to the newly created position of Manager, Volunteer Services in July. This position required him to work closely with the CEO and Commissioner in the recruitment, retention, promotion and organisation of voluntary resources and to also head up the *"somewhat dormant Endowment Trust fund-raising activities, in conjunction with former Commissioner, Andrew Hodges"*. [42]

**2008**

The Northern Territory starred in the annual National Cadet Competitions by winning the team event for the first time in 17 years. Team members were Rachel Fox, Alex Haslett and Amy McKay, plus individual competitor Claire Chandler.

The National Cadet Camp was at Neerin, Victoria, and in a State known for its devastating bushfires it was only natural that the competition scenarios would be based on that theme. The first activity required the team to set up a first aid post unassisted by outside help from Adults or Cadet Leaders. A total of twelve casualties came to the post with injuries of snake bite, severe burns, embedded objects, head injuries, chemical burns, fractures, bleeding and general illness.

The second activity required the team to assist in the Bushfire Command Post as part of the Incident Management team.

Blue bars on epaulettes were reintroduced in April to indicate that the member was a First Responder, having completed Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the First Responder Accreditation Program, plus the previous two year's SMP and submitted the signed declarations in the back of the books to the Volunteer Office.[43]

However, they didn't last long and were abolished a little over six months later with new name tags to identify First Responders. The only bars to be worn were: Red, Registered Nurse; Green, Enrolled Nurse; and Yellow, Qualified Paramedic. A member could wear more than one bar for multiple credentials.[44]

The annual Bassinthegrass public duty was very busy for all St John members who took part. In addition to the two paid Paramedics there were 33 volunteers who worked a total of 213 hours.

Ninety five casualties were treated for a range

of conditions and six were transported to Royal Darwin Hospital. People were treated for asthma, eye injuries, cut feet and hands, lacerations, twisted knees and ankles with numerous Band-aids and Panadols.

Patients were transported to hospital with suspected broken arm, dislocated shoulder, dislocated knee, snake bite, chest pain and suspected spinal injury. [45]

There were some senior staff changes with the start of the new triennium on 24th June. Peter Poole retired as Commissioner with Steve Peers taking up the position. Mick McKay took on the role of Territory Superintendent vacated by Steve. *Vollie News* reported about our new Commissioner:[46]

"Steve was born in Mansfield, Victoria and was educated at the Benalla Technical College. In 1964 he joined the RAAF with postings to Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Darwin.

"In 1973 Steve returned to Darwin to take up employment with the NT Housing Commission. After attending a first aid course in 1977 he joined St John Ambulance as a Volunteer and in 1979 joined the full time Ambulance Service. Steve was one of the first staff members to establish the service in the Barkly region.

"Steve remained in Tennant Creek until 1982 then transferred to Alice Springs. He completed paramedic training in 1985 and then spent three years in Darwin before being promoted to Operations Manager Alice Springs.

"In 2005 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia *'for service to the community through St John Ambulance Australia'*."

Noel Talbot retired as Territory Officer Cadets on 24th June, with Kimberlee McKay the new TOC. Narelle McLaughlin took on the job of Superintendent of the Cadet Band.

Jan Knight (Rowell) retired and moved to Queensland in July. Jan was a Training Branch instructor who had been a volunteer member of Darwin Division for many years. A farewell morning tea was held at the Richard Morris Centre on Jan's last day, Thursday 3rd July. [47]

In mid July Darwin Division member Brian Ch'ng, a Registered Nurse and Student Paramedic, travelled to Sydney for the World Youth Day, a Catholic Youth Festival with 223,000 registered pilgrims taking part. This was to be just the first of Brian's many trips to major public duties in the southern states, all of which were chronicled in *Vollie News*. Brian was appointed Territory Nursing Officer later in the year.

Other Territorians among the 700 St John volunteers at the Festival were Greg and John Payne of Humpty Doo. [48]

Cadet First Aid Competitions were held at the Batchelor Area School on Sunday 28th September. The Cadet Band were champions once again, taking out the team and individual events.

Team members were Rachel Fox, Amy McKay and Sarah McLaughlin, with Claire Chandler as Individual. Matthew Sperling of Palmerston was winning Cadet Leader.

Competition Manager Christine Turner prepared the scenarios in the school's sand pit area that included an unconscious casualty, lacerations, fractures and abrasions.[49]

**2009**

On Saturday 7th February much of Victoria was razed by devastating, unstoppable bushfires in extreme weather conditions. St John Ambulance volunteers travelled from around Australia to help out with this massive disaster. Five NT members went to Melbourne on Monday 2nd March to assist St John Victoria in the Mount Waverley Communications and Control Centre.

The contingent was Stuart Anderson and Brian Ch'ng from Darwin, Justin Hankinson and Darrin Whatley from Tennant Creek, and Rob Rudland from Alice Springs.

Yvonne Cole of Marrara was on holidays in NSW and travelled to Victoria with the NSW contingent. Felix Ho, on holidays in Victoria, also offered to help.[50]

In March it was announced that St John Ambulance (NT) and Carers NT had formed a partnership to provide volunteer assistance for

socially isolated people in the community. Clients of Carers NT ranged from the frail aged to adults or children with a disability and their carers.

Services to the clients could be simply sharing a cup of coffee, helping with the shopping, going to the movies or on a day's outing. It could also be more involved with first aid training, changing dressings, showering, etc.

Probationary adult members who needed to be under supervision on public duties could volunteer unsupervised with Carers NT after a short induction course. Palmerston Cadets were trialling the program with senior cadets aged 16 years and over. The cadets could choose to visit a young client aged 16 to 25 years and be accompanied by an adult member. [51]

On 16th April a refugee boat code named SIEV 36 with 47 refugees and two crew on board was set on fire and exploded after being boarded off Ashmore Reef by Defence personnel from *HMAS Childers*. The boat had originally been intercepted and boarded by *HMAS Albany* the day before and then handed over to *Childers* that morning.

Five refugees were killed and many of the survivors were badly burned. The injured were treated by Defence medics while *Childers* sailed to the tanker *Front Puffin* from where the most serious were heli-lifted to Truscott airbase in Western Australia. *Albany* continued on to Darwin with other casualties.

At Truscott the casualties were again triaged and flown to Darwin, Broome, Perth or Brisbane hospitals for urgent medical assistance.

*HMAS Albany* arrived in Darwin around 1.10pm Friday 17th April to be met by a contingent of police, other officials and St John Ambulance paramedics and volunteers. *HMAS Childers* arrived three hours later.[52]

*Vollie News* reported that:

> *"a total of 29 patients were treated, triaged and transported by a team made up of St John Ambulance Volunteers and Paramedics between Thursday evening and Saturday afternoon. Twenty one of these patients were transported directly to [Royal] Darwin Hospital, suffering severe to minor burns, with the remaining eight patients transported to aircraft for transfer to Brisbane for further treatment."*
>
> *"The St John Ambulance NT Paramedic team is grateful for the assistance and dedication provided by our volunteers over the past few days and we extend our thanks to them for their exceptional efforts."*
>
> *Mick McKay*
> *Operations Manager Northern* [53]

Bunnings in Palmerston provided the venue for this year's Adult First Aid Competitions with the scenario being a first aid post that the store's patrons visited with various injuries and aliments. There were lacerations, burns, heart problems, headaches and one who had a fight with a forklift – the forklift won, by the way.

Palmerston Superintendent Angie Butler was the Competition Manager this year, ably assisted by a host of adjudicators, casualties, scene manager, scorers, a communications officer and casualty simulation staff. Oh yes, and don't forget the competitors.

The winning team of Christine Turner, Marion McLauchlan and Shaun Washington came from Palmerston, and winning Individual was Kate Anning of Alice Springs.[54]

Commissioner Steve Peers celebrated 30 years with the St John Ambulance Service in April. Steve started as a volunteer with Casuarina Combined Division on 6th February 1977, where he was renowned for the amount of volunteer ambulance duty hours he put in, reputedly double his paid work.

In 1979 he was offered a job with the Ambulance Service, which he started on 30th April 1979. He was one of the two founding members of the St John Ambulance Service in Tennant Creek, also becoming Superintendent of the Tennant Creek Combined Division and then Southern Corps Superintendent. He also worked in Darwin and in Alice Springs where he has been ever since.

Steve held many positions in the Brigade and Operations Branch through to Commissioner for two triennia, starting 24th June 2008.

Arnah Holland, a cadet with Marrara Cadet Division saved the life of her four-year old cousin using skills she had learned with St John. While babysitting on Thursday night, 9th July her cousin was objecting noisily about being told to go to bed after he finished eating an apple, despite it being long after his bedtime. His sulking turn was ignored by the older kids until he came out crying and coughing.

Remembering what she had been taught about choking, Arnah delivered two back blows, scaled down to allow for the child's very young age. The second blow brought up a lot of apple from his throat onto the carpet.

Not knowing what was going on the child was initially frightened of Arnah because she had hit him, but after a while he came over for a cuddle and it was explained to him what had happened.

The next morning when the event was described to the child's mother she asked for his back to be examined because he bruised easily – no bruising.

*"She said that it was fine if he was bruised because I had saved his life!"* [55]

Arnah was awarded a Commissioner's Commendation for her life saving efforts.

Cadet First Aid Competitions were held in Alice Springs this year with the local team of Kristy Janssen, Jaime Janssen and Ben Janssen making it a family affair by winning their event.

The Cadet Band scored trophies for the other two events with Sarah McLaughlin the Individual winner and Amy McKay the top Cadet Leader. A Darwin and Band Combined team were first for drill.[56]

**2010**

National Cadet First Aid Competitions were held in Adelaide on Saturday the 9th of January, a scorching 42 degree day. The Territory sent a team of the Janssen siblings Ben, Kristy and Jaime from Alice Springs, Cadet Leader Amy McKay and Individual Sarah McLaughlin, with Team Manager Geoff Kain and TOC Kimberlee McKay.

Melissa Kain and Rachel Fox acted as the run through team in scenes that included an amputation, red back spider bite, stroke and burns.

Sarah McLaughlin placed second in her event and the whole team came in fifth place overall.[57]

Sarah was selected for the Australian team in the competitions at the International Youth Festival in Christchurch, New Zealand. Fellow travellers from the Territory were Amy McKay and Kristy Janssen.

The competitions were held on Australia Day and the Australian team of Sarah McLaughlin (NT), Heidi Starr (NSW), Jess Armstrong (ACT) and Michael Smith (VIC), were confronted by a scene of a smoky car with three patients and two bystanders. There were burns, lacerations, dislocations and an unconscious patient.

This was followed by a pairs test in a large tower and another with a plane crash. After lunch were individual tests of an asthma attack, allergic reaction, epileptic fit and a quad bike accident.

Australia came fifth in the team test; Sarah and Jess were second in the pairs, with Heidi and Michael fifth; and in the individual test, Michael second, Sarah fourth, Jess fifth and Heidi eighth. Overall placing for Australia in the competition was fifth. [58]

The very last NT adult first aid competitions were held in Darwin on the last Sunday in March. National HQ decided that adult competitions would no longer be held as part of the National Conference and that the States and Territories were to decide whether or not they would continue in their jurisdictions.

Teams and Individuals were from Darwin and Alice Springs with Competition Manager Christine Turner. The winning team was Peter Poole, Les Anson and Brett Devitt from Darwin, with team manager Kaye Griffin. Winning individual was Kate Anning from Alice Springs.[59]

The winners now went to Melbourne for the last ever National Competitions, but *Vollie News* was only sent photos without a story or results, so it's assumed that our competitors came home without any trophies.

The Young Achiever Awards were held on Saturday 10th April with two St John members receiving Certificates of Achievement; Amy McKay

with The Minister for Young Territorians Excellence in Youth Leadership Award and Sarah McLaughlin with the Somerville Community Service Award.

Darwin Adult Division moved back to the Darwin Ambulance Centre, Parap and celebrated with a social night on 17th May. The old *Reg Marsh Building* rejoiced with volunteers using its facilities once more after eight years absence.[60]

The Lord Prior, Professor Anthony Mellows visited Darwin and conducted the annual Graduation and Investiture Ceremony for St John Ambulance NT at Government House on Wednesday 2nd June, together with Deputy Prior and Administrator of the Northern Territory Mr Tom Pauling.

The Lord Prior of the Order of St John is the most senior non-royal member of the organisation, representing HM Queen Elizabeth II, as the Sovereign Head of the Order.

At the ceremony Peter Poole was promoted to Knight and Lesley King as Dame of the Order of St John.

Lord Prior Anthony Mellows and Mrs Elizabeth Mellows were then welcomed with a function at the Palmerston Volunteer Centre on 4th June.

> *The Lord Prior was impressed with the way we celebrate in the Territory with our outdoor barbeque. It was a wonderful dry season evening and sunset which was the perfect setting for our volunteers to share an informal get-together with the highest non-royal member of St John.*
>
> *After meeting and talking with the members and their families he was presented with a number of gifts including a framed photo of the Investiture and Graduation ceremony which he attended last week, a tie, scarf and Territory pins and a book with photos of the Northern Territory.* [61]

St John introduced a single system of "One St John" Commendations to replace the Commissioner and Chief Commissioner letters of commendation and meritorious service certificate.[62] The new system provided for three levels of awards:

- ◊ Bronze – awarded by State/Territory program head (e.g. Commissioner, Chair of Community Care, Ophthalmic Chair, Chair of Training) for high or noteworthy achievement in that program.
- ◊ Silver - awarded by a State/Territory Board Chair for excellent achievement in the application of skills, judgment or devotion to duty in that State/Territory.
- ◊ Gold – awarded by the Chancellor for situations of superior achievement or devotion in the application of skills, judgment or dedication to duty of national significance.

As a result of the 2009/2010 Operations Branch Business Plan most Divisions were equipped with a First Aid vehicle and Divisions were asked to submit a "Wish List" for divisional resources.[63]

Trevor Riley, long term St John Council member and Patron of the St John Ambulance (NT) Endowment Trust, was appointed Chief Justice of the Northern Territory Supreme Court.[64]

Cadet Competitions were held in conjunction with the annual camp at Lake Bennett in September. Five teams, five individuals and one cadet leader competed for this year's trophies.

Cadet Leader Amy McKay of Band Division had a scenario with two people swimming in the lake when one complained of cramp and disappeared under the water. The other person dragged the casualty out of the water and was hysterical, yelling for help. The patient was initially conscious and not breathing, but after five minutes CPR showed signs of life while remaining unconscious.

The individual scenario, won by Sarah McLaughlin of Band Division, had a snakebite victim, nosebleed and a barefoot casualty who stepped on a piece of glass.

The team event had to deal with the aftermath of a punch-up over football. Casualties fell against barbecues, had pain in forearms due to punching, unconsciousness, choking fits and a later casualty had a badly cut hand. Winning team members were once again from the Band: Adam Ryan, Alex Chin and Matthew Fox.[65]

**2011**

Over the Christmas period the Volunteer Office staff at Casuarina HQ moved from their cramped upstairs room to the newly built offices in the vacated Sales/Store and Mechanical Services area.

There was now a dedicated reception area for Rosie Ballinger and individual offices for Gwyn Balch, Kelly Raven and Volunteer Support Manager Steve Peers on his trips to Darwin.

Very welcome was a large store room for all those bits and pieces necessary to managing a volunteer organisation and also for the ever increasing historical archives.[66]

The new Office was officially opened at a ceremony on Wednesday 16th March.

Michael Mooney, Chairman of St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc., and Andrew Bruyn, Chairman of the Endowment Trust were made Members of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours list.

Student Citizen Awards were made to Leanne Eltagonde of Palmerston Cadet and Youth Divisions; Christine Gardiner of Palmerston Cadet Division; Luke McLaughlin of Cadet Band; Paige Wilson of Palmerston Cadet Division, and Lauren Coghill of the Cadet Band.

Young Citizen of the Year awards went to Ky Baker, Kasey Baker and Ashleigh Baker of Nhulunbuy Cadet Division.[67]

Cyclone Carlos formed over Darwin from a tropical low in mid February. On its way north the low dropped a lot of rain, hovered around Darwin for a while until it was upgraded to a Category 1 cyclone, then headed south overland again, causing severe flooding in its path.

St John volunteers were on duty during the cyclone with Peter Poole taking command of the volunteer call-out while Kelly Raven and Brett Devitt prepared the first aid kits. Kieren Brown, Benny Butler and Pat Murray prepared the cyclone shelter kits.

Ron Owen, Rod and Cathy Hocking, Anthony Kleidon, Brett Devitt, Amy McKay, and Narelle and Sarah McLaughlin were on duty at the various flood and homeless shelters. Greg Payne and Peter Poole did the night shift at the Foskey Pavilion in the Darwin Showgrounds.[68]

An ambulance, Car 76, had a mishap in the Royal Darwin Hospital grounds during the cyclone when a large tree toppled across its front end. Smaller branches speared through the windscreen on the driver's side. Fortunately, nobody was injured.[69]

Lesley King was one of eleven women recognised in the 2011 Tribute to Women celebrations. The award was made by the Minister for Women's Policy to honour women who made a significant contribution to the Territory. Lesley was recognised for her 33 years of voluntary service to St John Ambulance and the community.[70]

The St John Ambulance Community Care Program was officially launched on Wednesday 16th March at a ceremony at Casuarina HQ. The program is run in partnership with Carers NT and Home and Community Care. Naomi Gardiner, who was instrumental in program development, was promoted to Territory Officer Community Care with the responsibility for overseeing the program. Others in the Community Care organising group were Lesley King and Kelly Raven.

> *Through the Volunteer Social Support Service, our Community Care members can help provide a range of services for frail aged people, younger people with disabilities and their carers who are socially isolated, which support independence at home and in the community to prevent premature or inappropriate admission to residential care.* [71]

The Richard Morris Community Spirit Award was also launched on the same day, with the two winners being Christine Turner for the Greater Darwin area and Darrin Whatley from Tennant Creek for Regional areas.[72]

> *The Richard Morris Community Spirit Award is given [to] ... St John NT Volunteers who openly display a great Community Spirit. Due to the high level of commitment of volunteers across the Territory there are two annual awards – one for Greater Darwin, which*

*includes Darwin, Palmerston & Humpty Doo and one to include all other regions – Batchelor, Nhulunbuy, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. The winners are given the opportunity of attending the National St John Member Convention.* [73]

At the Annual Investitures Angie Butler was promoted to Dame of the Order of St John, Chief Justice Trevor Riley was promoted to Knight and Dawn Bat was promoted to Officer. Ron Owen was admitted as a Member of the Order in a ceremony in Alice Springs later in the year.[74]

Recipients of the new Commendations during the year were:[75]

- ◊ Brett "Benny" Butler, Silver; for arranging driving courses and other events for volunteers and also for his contribution to recording the history of St John and regular features for the newsletter.
- ◊ Narelle McLaughlin, Silver; Narelle often used her first aid skills in a local shopping centre where she worked to assist members of the public.
- ◊ Belinda Graham, Silver; for her work with the CEO and Members of the Board and her voluntary contribution assisting the volunteers with fundraising.
- ◊ Samantha Cameron, Silver; for her work with the Tennant Creek Cadets.
- ◊ Geoff Lohmeyer for his contribution to volunteer training and providing first aid courses for the general public.
- ◊ Cadet Bianca Stubbs for assisting a young girl who was injured at the Katherine Show in July. A nine years old girl was hurled from "The Crazy Dancer" Ride. Bianca was enjoying some time at the show and was the first person on the scene, being close to the ride when she heard people calling for St John Ambulance.

  Bianca thought that it may be for someone with something mild like vomiting after a ride. She made herself known as a St John Cadet, and was quickly rushed over to "The Crazy Dancer" ride and was confronted with a young female who had some horrific injuries. Bianca started to assess the scene and started treating the patient until the paramedics arrived. The paramedic said that Bianca did a fantastic job, she kept a level head and her knowledge and assistance at the scene was superb.[76]
- ◊ Cadet Axl Dethmore was at the airport in July going to Perth when he noticed a lady was in need of medical attention. She was unsteady on her feet and started to collapse. Her distressed husband helped her to the ground and looked around for help. Axl went to her aid, assisted the lady then handed over to Fire and Rescue and the Federal Police. The lady and her husband were very grateful of Axl's assistance.[77]
- ◊ Joylene Kain, Bronze; for her work with the Alice Springs Cadet Division

Darwin Adult Division stalwart Peter Poole teamed up with Greg Payne of Humpty Doo Adult Division to provide ambulance coverage for the 2011 NT Variety Bash. The event started at Daly Waters on 7th August and finished at Longreach, Queensland seven days later, then back home to Darwin after being away for eleven days.

Their role was to follow the field which resulted in not seeing the many scams and pranks the Bashers get up to. Being at the back of the field they assisted the mechanics and sweep to get ailing vehicles going again. Most importantly, they picked up the urn used for morning tea and delivered it each afternoon to the pathfinder for use the following day.

There were two notable cases on the trip. The first involved a collapse at Urandangie with the patient being further checked at Dajarra and Boulia Health Clinics. The second case was a rollover of a four wheel drive vehicle towing a large trailer and boat. This happened at Quart Pot Creek, just east on McInlay. The two occupants were travelling on a fishing trip to Karumba on the Gulf of Carpentaria. The boat came off the trailer which broke the tow hitch. The car left the road and rolled sideways one and a half times coming to rest on the driver's side about 20 metres off the road.

Fortunately for them, this happened right in

front of the ambulance as it was heading east at 100km/hr.

*"We just braked hard, drove over to the vehicle and started treating! There was no movement or noise from the car as we approached ... however, after we called out and started opening the passenger door the driver emerged. He was covered in bull dust from his head being adjacent to a hole in the windscreen and the vehicle sliding along the ground ..."*

Apart from a minor abrasion below the right eye he appeared uninjured. The passenger was caught up in the seat belt and required assistance to get out of the vehicle. An assessment of both patients showed only superficial injuries. Greg called 000 on the satellite phone while Bashers who had witnessed the crash helped to make the vehicle safe, erect shade for the casualties and collect all the equipment scattered around the crash scene.

After an hour a policeman arrived from McInlay to take charge, taking an hour to assess the scene. All this time Peter and Greg monitored their patients. When they developed pain to a wrist and elbow respectively, RICE treatment was applied.

The policeman transported the casualties back to McInlay while Peter and Greg continued on to Winton in their ambulance. Meanwhile, the other Bashers had some excitement when they came across a car on fire a little further up the road.

Peter and Greg went to the Mt Isa rodeo on Friday night and met:

*"the Queensland Ambulance Service Area Director, Mt Isa OIC and some of the workers. They showed us a new ambulance based on a Troop Carrier, very different to the way our machine was set up. We also visited the Winton ambulance station.*

*"Our vehicle Car 32 received some attention during the bash; the NT Police "defected" it at Avon Downs. The Cowboys (Bash Car 1860) used it without permission somewhere between Camooweal and Urandangie; we "reported" this to the Dajarra police who "arrested" them on their arrival at Urandangie. It also was "a hit" with the children in the Mt Isa rodeo parade."*

There was a rat plague in Boulia and several people who slept on the ground in swags reported rats getting a little too friendly during the night. When one person asked, "What can you do for a rat bite to the lips?" the treatment recommended by the local clinic was to clean the wound and get a tetanus shot.

Then it was back to Darwin after being away for eleven days.[78]

The annual Cadet First Aid Competitions were held at the Free Spirit Resort in Palmerston on Sunday 2nd October, with Hailee Skinner as Competition Manager. The competitions were held under the shade of the trees, with a breeze to bring some relief on a very hot and humid day.

Teams came from Nhulunbuy, Katherine and Alice Springs, but those competition veterans from the Cadet Band took home all the trophies once again. The winning team members were Luke McLaughlin, Alex Chin and Gemma Gray, with individual Sarah McLaughlin and Team Manager Amy McKay.[79]

The official NT Volunteer of the Year Awards were held in early December and St John Ambulance won the inaugural *Volunteering SA & NT Award for Organisational Excellence*.[80]

Members of the Cadet Band showed the true Christmas spirit by packing and sending Care Packages to our troops in Afghanistan. The packages were filled with lollies, games, shortbread biscuits, bon-bons and an assortment of other goodies brought in by members of the Division.

It was the Sports Class' role to become Santa's little helpers by packing the boxes, decorating Christmas cards and then sending the boxes free of charge with Australia Post. There were enough goodies for twelve boxes to give our soldiers some Christmas cheer. [81]

A letter to say 'Thank You' was received from the International Security Assistance Force–Afghanistan in March 2012. [82]

It was a very busy New Year's Eve for Peter Poole. The day started with horse races at Fannie

Bay with Simon Spillett. A hot, humid mostly uneventful day until the heavens opened to cool things down.

Peter's next duty was to pick up Brad Brown and Emma Johnson (aka Simone) from the Darwin Centre after washing the vehicle and then to the Foskey Pavilion for the New Year's Eve bull ride.

> *"Our quiet corner became an island between the paths taken by the bikini contestants and the bull riders having a breather. One of the judges (of the bull riding) advised us that we were going to be in for a big night. He said that the small arena did not provide much room for the gate openers, clowns and thrown contestants to get out of the way. How correct he was!"*

It was a very busy night with numerous soft tissue injuries to the legs from contestants being thrown by bulls into the railings.

> *"One rider was lined up by a bull who was about to launch the rider out of the arena when one of the clowns jumped in front of the bull and smothered the attack; incredible stuff."*

An ice bucket was organised for the ice packs, the St John issue ice packs being too small. One rider was transported to hospital.

After the bull riding the crew went on the road in their ambulance, attending a variety of cases, mostly alcohol related. *"We finished up at 5.00am and went home; it was too cloudy to see the comet."* [83]

**2012**

This year's Cadet First Aid Competitions were held in Perth with the winners of the NT Cadet Competitions representing the Territory.

Sarah McLaughlin won the individual section in a beach scenario that had an unconscious swimmer with a head injury and a surfer bleeding from a cut femoral artery. The Territory's team of Luke McLaughlin, Alex Chin and Gemma Gray were unplaced in their beach casualty scene.[84]

Territory Superintendent Mick McKay was awarded the prestigious Ambulance Service Medal in the 2012 Australia Day Honours list. [85]

Other St John members to receive Australia day awards were St John Council Member Fran Kilgariff who was made a Member of the Order of Australia and Felix Ho, who won a Darwin City Council Citizen of the Year award.

Student Citizen Awards went to Luke McLaughlin of the Cadet Band, Humpty Doo Cadet Hayley Cockman, and Claudia De'eb of Marrara Christian College.[86]

At a function at Government House on Saturday 18th February, St John's latest Deputy Prior, NT Administrator Sally Thomas was invested as a Dame of the Order of St John by the Governor-General, Quentin Bryce.[87]

St John Chancellor Dr Neil Conn honoured Commissioner Steve Peers with a Gold Commendation for his dedication and work with the volunteers in the Northern Territory.[88]

This year's NT Cadet Competitions were held in October with the first thunderstorm of the coming wet season forcing a hurried move from the Howard Springs Nature Park to the Palmerston Volunteer Centre. [89]

The Centre was quickly set up to look like a camping site that included tents, trees and two 2.5m canoes. The shed was set up for the Cadet Leaders as a First Aid Post with trail walkers arriving for treatment.

Winners of the competitions were Cadet Leader Sarah McLaughlin, Individual Benjamin Chow and the team of Luke McLaughlin, Ben Finocchiaro and Alexandria Chin, all from the Band.

# PART 3

# PALMERSTON AND THE DARWIN RURAL AREA

**Rural First Aid Posts**

**Howard Springs**

**Palmerston and Rural**

**Palmerston**

**Rural Response Group**

**Humpty Doo and Litchfield**

# Chapter 1
# Rural First Aid Posts

The first record found of St John Ambulance in the Darwin rural area was that in September 1964 first aid posts were expected to open in the near future at Berrimah and Howard Springs.[1] Nothing further is heard of Berrimah, but figures released in May 1965 had 103 patients being treated at Howard Springs and an unknown number at Berry Springs.[2]

Another First Aid Post was set up as a pilot project in 1985 in the home of Margo Robinson on Reedbeds Road, Berry Springs, not far from Old Bynoe Road. By way of support a First Aid course started under Frank Hoschke on 25th September at the Berry Springs School.

The aim of the project was to provide first aid services in populated areas not presently serviced by permanent local medical or ambulance facilities. It would utilise local residents provided with a first aid kit and trained in first aid, with telephone links to ambulance Communications.

The Post started in August 1985 and road signs were erected on 27th September. It lasted less than a year and closed in April 1986. The service was *"withdrawn for evaluation purposes and to determine the effectiveness of future development of such a facility."* [3] The location on a back road may have been a problem because it was said that the post would be relocated on a major road in the area. There are no further reports of a First Aid Post in the Darwin rural area so it's taken that St John didn't go ahead with the plan.

Another idea was for St John members living in the rural area to have signs posted on their properties, but that doesn't seem to have happened, either.

Other posts have been at Dundee Beach, but the St John Ambulance involvement with these was short lived.

# Chapter 2
# Howard Springs

In May 1979 the formation of a Division at Howard Springs was discussed at the monthly staff meeting. An ambulance could be supplied, but not without a lot of preparation being first carried out. [1] After having trained the Territory team in the recent National First Aid Championships, Phil Langdon was asked to run first aid classes at Howard Springs and to assist the locals with forming a Division; he was seconded from Darwin Division to Training Department for this period.[2]

The next step was to hold a public meeting at the Howard Springs Primary School in November to see if there was enough interest to establish a Division in the area. Phil Langdon commenced a first aid course at the school soon after for potential members, with eleven reported attending. Newspaper reports gave out some dates and more information, but Staff meeting minutes said that those press releases were incorrect, so they won't be repeated here.

The Divisional Registration was completed by 20th June 1980, firstly as a Section attached to Casuarina Combined Division, and then as a Division in its own right when sanctioned by the Chief Commissioner on 29th October 1980.

Founding members were OAC Phil Langdon, Hans Allmich, Helen Gould, Edna Grainger, Helen Hasewski, Mary Lacy (Casuarina Combined Division), Belinda Parry, Edeline Sinclair (Casuarina Combined Division), Mary-Ellen Whiting, Fay Wyatt, Shirley Woods (Darwin Combined Division), Susan Maruna and Virginia Scott.

In July 1980 the new members were doing their CC&T course, but further first aid courses for the area were postponed due to Phil Langdon's coming transfer to Nhulunbuy – where he helped set up another Division. At the July staff meeting CSNC Bob Brennan considered a new OAC for the Division, but there was to be no ambulance for the time being. Bob Brennan also *"did suggest that members from Howard Springs could at a later date, man the ambulance at Jabiru at weekends."* [3]

That was a bit of a joke in that just three years earlier members of Casuarina Combined Division wouldn't do public duties with the excuse that the ten kilometre trip to Darwin Centre was too far to pick up a vehicle. Jabiru is more than 200 kilometres from Howard Springs, but this probably wouldn't have deterred rural residents. In regional centres, Alice Springs Division members went to Tennant Creek (more than 500 km) on occasion to help out with public duties and Tennant Creek Division members travel 350 km to Brunette Downs each year for the annual race meeting. Just a short run in the country, really.

There are no records of Howard Springs members actually having gone to Jabiru for weekend ambulance duties, but this doesn't mean that they didn't go, as records of the period tend to be vague and incomplete.

While Phil Langdon was busily starting up another Division in Nhulunbuy, Edeline "Ed" Sinclair capably took charge at Howard Springs. When the Langdons returned in July 1981 Phil was promoted to Divisional Superintendent and Mandy became Divisional Nursing Officer.

Ed Sinclair took over as OIC in November 1982 and then as Divisional Superintendent until February 1985.

The Howard Springs Combined Cadet Division was formed in October 1980 under the command of Shirley Woods, who was succeeded on 12th October 1981 by Divisional Superintendent Wayne Dillon. Wayne had previously been Superintendent of the Katherine Cadets and came with good experience for the job. The Cadet Division was registered on 21st November 1981.

Shirley took charge as OAC of the Cadets once again when Wayne transferred to Jabiru in mid 1982 with his job in the Ambulance Service. Colin Mason was Divisional Superintendent of the Cadets from November 1983 and Gareth Graham in February 1985.

The date is uncertain but the Howard Springs adult and cadet Divisions relocated into Palmerston after the new Ambulance Centre opened in Rolyat Street in early 1985 and sometime during the year had a name change to Palmerston and Rural Divisions.



Undated photo (probably 1983) captioned as *Howard Springs District Competition winners*. Brian and Joyce Maden centre, others not known.
Howard Springs won the Nursing Championships in 1983.

# Chapter 3
# Palmerston

The St John Council started planning for ambulance services in Palmerston in May 1981, in conjunction with various Government departments and the Palmerston Development Authority. Planning briefs outlining required ambulance facilities were submitted and in December 1982 St John were requested to supply the Palmerston Development Authority details of requirements for leasing facilities within the new Health Complex due for completion in April 1985.

Local Member, Barry Coulter MLA expressed concern at the lack of ambulance services in the interim with the request for an ambulance to be stationed in Palmerston immediately. Negotiations were held with the Department of Health and the Minister approved the necessary funding to enable an interim service until completion of the new Ambulance Centre.[1]

St John started ambulance operations at the Palmerston Fire Station on 29th January 1985. The rostered shift was from 8.00am to 4.00pm with Centre Officer Tim Wilson and Ambulance Officer Brad Cormick.[2]

The new Palmerston Ambulance Centre in Rolyat Street was handed over by the developers, Carine Nominees, on Monday 1st April 1985.

Volunteers were required to cover out of hours ambulance shifts in the evening and on weekends, but found difficulty in doing this, especially on weekends.[3] Tony Oxford was now Divisional Superintendent of the Adult Division with Shirley Woods once again in charge of the Cadets.

Tony, son of St John member Christine Nathanael, joined St John as a cadet at the age of 12, joined the paid Ambulance Service and was a qualified paramedic at age 23, eventually becoming Darwin Regional Manager.

Northern Corps reported in May 1987 that the Howard Springs Division was suffering severe membership shortages. It was located in a new developing area with most people heavily committed elsewhere. The original members lived in the rural area with their businesses and properties to care for and most Palmerston residents worked at jobs in Darwin. Getting new members was a problem and recruiting had been unsuccessful. The division was unable to maintain a suitable long term Superintendent and didn't receive any real outside assistance with their duties. Most information trickled to the members via 'the grapevine' which was detrimental to morale.[4]

The Division changed its name to *Palmerston and Rural* in 1985, so it would appear that the Darwinites were a little slow in catching up.

The new Ambulance Centre didn't allow for volunteer meetings and first aid training and space to carry out these activities was an ongoing problem for years to come. It was a small operational Ambulance Centre and on Division nights the place was overcrowded with volunteers and duty ambulance crews getting in each other's way.

While it was noted that there needed to be suitable facilities in Palmerston in order to attract and retain volunteers, a lot was promised with little actually delivered.[5]

Norm Turner became Superintendent of the Cadet Division in October 1986 with Geoff Whatley and Wayne Hunter as Divisional Officers. Norm was a member of the Ambulance Service who came from Casuarina Combined Division and had been Superintendent of the Darwin Cadets and Sanderson Cadets before that. Geoff and Wayne were full-time ambulance officers, so there was a wealth of experience to train and manage the Palmerston and Rural Cadet Division.

However, just to confuse the issue, Norm Turner's BF4 has him as Divisional Superintendent (C) on 10th October 1986 and on Reserve on 21st September 1986, returning to active duty with the Palmerston Cadets on 1st June 1989. One can't be on Reserve and active at the same time, so there must be an error with the date of appointment as Cadet Superintendent. The Operations Branch Report in the September 1989 *Outback Ambulance* confirms his return from the Reserve.

The records have Geoff Whatley as Acting Superintendent of the Cadet Division in July 1987 and Superintendent from 1st February 1988, relinquishing the position in 1989 when Norm Turner took over from 31st August 1989 until February 1990.

The viability of the Palmerston Centre was questioned in December 1987 due to a lack of volunteers to crew the out of hours service and it was decided to use crews on standby at home when not available for Centre duty.[6] These problems persisted into the following year when DAO Garry Schoolmeester reported difficulty with ambulance coverage by both Service and Volunteer crews. There was however, a recruit course of 14 in February 1988 that was hoped to improve matters.[7]

During this time the Cadet Parent Committee supported the Cadet Division in Home Nursing courses, administration and helping with other activities. Mrs Kim Haddely was one of the parents who excelled in helping to run the Division, *"turning up every Monday night without fail and volunteering for any task no matter what the job might be"*.[8]

After two years in the job Adult Superintendent Brian Maden retired and was succeeded in April 1989 by Andrew Hodges, who was further promoted to Corps Staff in December that year. Divisional Officer Toni Gullefer then took charge of the Division as OAC. Toni did well in the position and on Australia Day 1991 was named Litchfield Citizen of the Year for her work with St John Ambulance.

Recruiting and retaining adult volunteers was always a problem in Palmerston and the local rural area and in October 1991 with just eight members, less than the required twelve needed to remain a Division, the adults were given a blunt choice. They could either become a Section carrying out just public duties or amalgamate with Darwin and Casuarina Divisions.[9]

The Commissioner and District Superintendent met with the Division on the 13th November and the five members attending agreed to amalgamate due to the lack of training resources available in Palmerston. However, they did ask that their Division be re-established if they were able to recruit sufficient numbers.[10]

The new amalgamated Darwin Division took effect from 1st January 1992 and the Palmerston Division ceased to be.

This did not affect the Cadets though, and they persisted, all the while having their own problems with finding a suitable venue for their training and to store equipment.

Divisional Officer Lyn Holgate took charge of the Cadet Division when Norm Turner departed in early 1990. Lyn was a full-time Ambulance Officer who later in the year won the Territory Institute of Ambulance Officers Annual Championships with team mate Toni-Maree Semple. They won all three sections, Trauma, Resuscitation and Driving and that also won for them the overall aggregate trophy.[11]

However, Lyn's study commitments as an Ambulance Officer meant that she had to take leave from the Cadets, so the position of OIC was filled for a short period by Pat King, who was also Superintendent of the Cadet Band at the time.[12]

David Hoschke became OAC of the Cadets in February 1991 and was confirmed Superintendent in December 1992. Divisional Officer Trudy Fuller then took over managing the Division when David took leave in November 1993.

In 1994 Ambulance Officer Matthew Nish wrote a very entertaining story for *Outback Ambulance* about a haunted Palmerston Ambulance Centre and an "exorcism ceremony" the ambos conducted to expel the unwanted ghostly visitor.[13] Several years later your author was told stories of a ghostly presence at Palmerston, but others who used the Centre and slept over wrote that they had experienced nothing supernatural while there.

Dawn Bat became Acting Superintendent in March 1994 and was confirmed in the position in August, bringing much needed stability and experience, having been a founding member of the Nhulunbuy Combined Division in 1981 and starting

the Nhulunbuy Cadets in late 1982.

Assisted by the very experienced Divisional Officer Phil Langdon and by Trudy Fuller the Division flourished and in October 1994 the Palmerston team of Tracey Bell, Nigel Green, Bradley Watts, Chrissie Frampton and Makaylia Bretag, trained by Trudy Fuller and Toni Gullefer, won the team event at the NT District Cadet First Aid Competitions in Alice Springs. They now qualified to represent the Northern Territory at the National Championships in Brisbane the following January.[14]

The National Championships aren't mentioned in any reports for 1995, so it's assumed that the team didn't come home with any trophies.

Phil Langdon took charge as OIC of the Cadets while Dawn Bat took six months leave in 1996.

The Cadet Division had an outstanding achiever in Makaylia Bretag.

- May 1997 - awarded Palmerston Junior Citizen of the Month.
- 26th January 1998 – Palmerston Young Citizen of the Year.
- September 1998 - nominated for Young Australian of the Year.
- 2001 – Grand Prior's Badge.

1997 saw the start of a *5 Year Plan* to re-establish the Palmerston Adult Division. Dawn Bat spoke to personnel at Robertson Barracks and there was a possibility that facilities at the base could be made available, although only short term. She also inspected a Community House in Palmerston that was available to hire at $10 per night.

Darwin Divisional Superintendent Peter Poole suggested that it might be better to alter the existing Centre in Rolyat Street. The Commissioner would take the matter of the lease of the Palmerston Ambulance Centre to the St John Council and the potential for alterations to accommodate Operations Branch.[15]

In December, Peter Poole was to approach somebody who may be interested in becoming OAC of a Palmerston Adult Division, but nothing more was heard of this proposal. Meanwhile, Dawn was involved with establishing the new Humpty Doo Cadet Division and had ongoing problems with suitable facilities for her own Cadets, so plans for a resurrected Palmerston Adult Division were put on the back burner.

Dawn's frustrations with broken promises and unsuitable facilities for the Cadets culminated in a very strong letter to Commissioner Andrew Hodges in January 2000.

She had met with the Regional Manager and Training Manager four years previously regarding difficulties with space for the Cadets. Her suggestions to overcome the problem were vetoed, supposedly because of cost.

Dawn's next approach was to contact the Health Department for permission to use one of their rooms in the Community Health Centre for training. This was agreed and they used the room until renovations made it no longer available. They were then offered the Community Care room which they had used ever since.

Their circumstance had been raised at several District Meetings over the years and even brought to the attention of the St John Council. Commissioner Baddeley said that money was not a problem and they would be relocated to more suitable premises when they could be found. Dawn was introduced to Chairman Richard Morris at an Officers' Mess Dinner and he repeated that money was not a problem and that a suitable venue would be found.

During a later discussion he repeated that money was not an issue and if the Palmerston Cadet Division and the community could show a sincere effort to establish a venue it would be viewed very favourably, even to the extent of suggesting that the Cadets might like to draw up some plans to show what would meet their needs. There were some very interesting designs submitted by the Cadets.

Shortly after this Dawn inspected the TIO offices with Brendon Quirke and Ross Coburn to see if this would be suitable for the Cadets and a future adult Division. *"We agreed that this venue would be fine, but then for some reason, which I believe is cost, this fell through".*

Dawn's next move was to go with Brendon to

inspect the old vacated Westpac Bank building which was also deemed suitable. She spoke to the Mayor of Palmerston, Annette Burke, about security patrols in the area on Division nights and also to the Police, who assured her that this would be possible.

> *Many phone calls later and discussions at District meetings failed to come to a favourable decision, again it was money that was supposedly the problem although I had been told at a District meeting that money was not a problem. I have not been given any other reason for why either of these two venues were unsuitable.*

Meanwhile, Dawn approached the Regional Manager and requested use of one of the Ambulance Centre's 'sleep-on' bedrooms for storage and to use as a small group training area. This was agreed and they were supplied with chairs, a noticeboard and a white-board. Exclusive use of the room didn't last long when the ambulance crew moved a bed in. This was removed when the Cadets resumed after school holidays, but then two beds appeared. *"Despite promises on several occasions over a period of time from visiting District staff and by phone, the beds remain to this day."*

The Palmerston Ambulance Centre was a small working station, totally unsuited to be shared by ambulance crews and volunteers.

Other possibilities investigated were the Palmerston Rugby Union Club, NT Emergency Services, the 1st Driver Scout Hall, the Somerville Childcare Centre and the Palmerston Red Cross Centre. None of these were suitable for Cadet training.

Rebecca Tunks acted as OIC of the Cadets in Dawn's absence, resigning from the position in June 2000. With 30 cadets on the roll Mandy Langdon assisted with training for the remainder of the year.

Rosie Ballinger, who had once been a cadet in Darwin and Casuarina Cadet Divisions, was recruited to assist with administration and finances.[16] Rosie is still working with the Palmerston Cadet Division in 2012, and is also employed in the Volunteer Office at the Richard Morris Centre, Casuarina. She was awarded Operational Support Member of the Year in 2011 for her volunteer work at Palmerston.

The Cadet Division moved to the Palmerston YMCA in October/November 2000, but it wasn't really suitable as it only had one room which was difficult for training a number of groups. They had asked to use the now vacated Rolyat Street premises, but without answers had been obliged to move.[17]

The November Superintendents' Meeting also recorded that Cadet Leader Samantha Martin had been awarded Palmerston Junior Citizen of the Year.

Dawn Bat was promoted to Territory Officer Special Projects in 2001 with the task of developing a building in Palmerston and the re-establishment of an adult division. Both goals were achieved with the building being the first to open in late 2002. Dawn later cheekily suggested that it should be named "The Bat Cave", an honour she rightfully deserves although one doubts that this sort of adventurism in naming St John's buildings would be acceptable to the rather conservative authorities. With Dawn's promotion, Phil Langdon took over as acting Superintendent of Palmerston Cadets.[18]

Dawn became OIC of the Palmerston Cadets once again in July 2001. She was conducting public First Aid courses for Training Branch in Palmerston at the time and Shane Burry was on one of the courses. At the end of the course Dawn gave her spiel regarding the need and benefits of being a volunteer and managed to recruit Shane for the Cadet Division. Shane was OIC from 5th November 2001 and promoted to Divisional Superintendent on 21st December. Dawn continued to mentor and assist him for a while following his appointment. He also volunteered in the office and learnt quite a bit about the inner workings of St John.

Shane Burry transferred to Darwin Cadet Division as Superintendent and Kelly Raven became Palmerston Cadet Divisional Superintendent, with both appointments on 9th September 2002.

When the Northern Territory Government invited the St John Ambulance Service to participate

in the new Palmerston Health Precinct their initial response was to advise that they would be happy to participate, subject to appropriate financial arrangements and the ability to retain Rolyat Street on precisely the same terms and conditions as had previously applied.

St John was advised they could retain the Rolyat Street premises provided they met the full lease cost. This was a significant amount and *"outside what we believed to be the true spirit of the St John presence in Palmerston".*[19]

Accordingly, St John advised the Minister for Health in January 2001 that they declined the Government's offer to relocate the Ambulance Service as it would result in a fractured presence and without a home for the Operations and Training Branches.

Shortly after, the Minister informed St John that he would provide freehold title to a block of land adjacent the new Health Precinct on which they could construct their own purpose built Operations and Training Branch Centre.[20]

The contract was awarded to Sitzler Bros who took just 13 weeks from start to final completion, with a few more weeks for final fitting out and exterior landscaping. The building was ready for occupation at the end of 2002, being held up by bureaucratic delays in obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy.

Funding for the new Centre was mainly from the St John Property Holding Company and the Endowment Trust. Fund raising activities were conducted with good support from members, business and the general public. The Nightcliff Shopping Centre and Rite Price Hardware came in for special mention when Rite Price donated a whole month's takings 50-50 to St John and Somerville Community Services.[21]

Other fundraising efforts included the Buy-a-Brick campaign. For a donation of $100 people could have their name engraved in a brick to be permanently installed in the new Volunteer premises.[22] These bricks were laid on an area of lawn at the Centre rather than on a wall and some are showing signs of wear with the writing fading.

Dawn attended meetings of several service clubs in the area including Lions and the Palmerston Regional Business Association, with several bricks being sold in this way. A promotion was held in the Shopping Centre as well with evident community support.

The Palmerston Hub ran a raffle every Friday night with proceeds going to community groups that applied. The condition was that members of the group had to be there to sell tickets and promote the raffle. Dawn successfully applied and quite a bit of money was raised with minimal effort by only a few people.

The keys of the new Volunteer Centre were handed over by the builders on Friday 8th November 2002.

The Humpty Doo Adult Division were in need of a new meeting place and applied to St John management to be able to use the new unoccupied Palmerston Volunteer Centre. This was agreed, but the actual move was held up while waiting on a Certificate of Occupancy from the NT Government. Because of this delay they didn't start training in Palmerston until January 2003.

The new Palmerston Adult Division officially formed at a meeting on 23rd January 2003 with Allan Hough as Superintendent. However, the Division was never registered and still hadn't been at the time of this book being published at the start of 2013.

Despite its lack of a birth certificate the new Division excelled by being awarded Adult Division of the Year for 2003. Dawn Bat, who had worked so hard for the Cadets and to make the new Volunteer Centre a reality, was awarded Adult Volunteer of the Year.

Allan Hough stood down as Superintendent in December 2004, being replaced by Ron Owen. When Ron moved to regional areas with the Ambulance Service he was succeeded by Angie Butler in April 2007. This was the beginning of that dynamic duo, Angie and Brett "Benny" Butler in the Territory.

Benny was a Sergeant in the Army, while Angie had been a St John volunteer in Brisbane and was a Commander in the Order of St John. Benny is one of those larger than life people in St John who will do anything for you and is only too happy to help out

at a moment's notice. He promoted Palmerston Adult Division through the Operations Branch newsletter, *Vollie News* and did the same for Katherine and Alice Springs Divisions when his work with the Ambulance Service took him to those Centres.

Benny went to Katherine in August 2009 for a six months period that stretched out to eight. While there he assisted in running the Heritage Anzac Course for the Katherine Cadets, working with Superintendent Natalie Clark.[23]

Benny was named Adult Volunteer of the Year in 2009 when Palmerston Adult and Cadet Divisions were both awarded Division of the Year. This was the second year running for Palmerston Cadets, a truly remarkable achievement.

Palmerston Adults won the honour again in 2011 and Benny was awarded a Commissioner's Silver Commendation *"for arranging driving courses and other events for volunteers and also for his contribution to recording the history of St John and regular features for the newsletter".* [24]

Palmerston Cadet Leader Matthew Sperling was honoured on Australia Day 2009 when he was awarded Palmerston Young Citizen of the Year.[25]

Palmerston Youth Division held its first meeting on the night of Tuesday, 6th October 2009. The meeting was attended by 13 cadets and adults from a range of Divisions, as well as the Division's Superintendent, Kelly Raven. Special guest on the night was Territory Officer Cadets, Kimberlee McKay.[26]

The Youth Division was established to bridge the gap between maturing cadets to young adults between the ages of 16 to 25. The Division was registered on 18th August 2010.

Christine Gardiner of Youth Division was awarded Cadet of the Year for 2012.

Palmerston excelled by being awarded Adult and Cadet Divisions of the Year for 2012. Their citation in *Vollie News* read:

> *Both divisions have thrived this year; the Palmerston Cadet Division has separated their cadet and junior training due to the increase in numbers. The adult division has had a very successful year, they have held driving courses, fundraising events for the Ophthalmic Week, organized the annual Bowling Challenge and has regularly contributed stories and photos for the Vollie Newsletter.* [27]

# Chapter 4
# Rural Response Group

In February 1985 the Koolpinyah Branch of the Country Liberal Party (CLP) raised the issue of a rural ambulance centre and the Department of Health asked St John for comments. The reply explained the existing network of services and the lack of sufficient workload to support a rural centre.[1] The Minister for Health wrote to Koolpinyah CLP expressing similar views to St John and that with the new Palmerston Ambulance Centre becoming operational a rural centre was not necessary.[2]

Another call was made in December 1989 when Litchfield Shire President John Maley called for a 24-hour ambulance service to be based in the rural area, with the Palmerston ambulance to be relocated to the Arnhem Highway turn-off. St John's response was that finding sufficient volunteers for a full-time service was always a problem.[3]

Doctor Lionel Crompton of Humpty Doo wrote a Letter to the Editor of the *Litchfield Times* in early 1996 complaining that it had taken half an hour for an ambulance to arrive at his surgery after being called out for a patient. Dr Crompton had been Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade for two triennia in the 1980s and was now a St John Councillor and Chairman of the Community Care Branch. He asked for people to ring him and with enough interest he would organise the next step.[4]

The letter received a good response and a public meeting was called for anyone interested in forming a rapid response medical group. The meeting was held at the Rural Old Timers at Bees Creek on Wednesday 3rd April, 7.30pm. Volunteers would be involved with time critical urgent calls only, not with routine sickness and injury.[5]

The outcome of this meeting wasn't reported in either the *Litchfield Times* or District Staff Meeting minutes, but in August, Darwin Divisional Superintendent Peter Poole was in communication with Dr Crompton about starting a new Division in the rural area.[6]

A First Aid course was started at Humpty Doo on Wednesday 18th September with the aim of forming a Division in the area. Dr Crompton indicated that he would prefer the Division to come under Operations Branch rather than Community Care. Dependent on how many people responded, the new group would start as an annex to Darwin Division with initial leadership coming from Darwin. It was hoped that rural people could eventually run the Division themselves.[7]

There was enough interest to form a group and in November, Jan Rowell and Toni Gullefer held a Senior First Aid course for new members at the Rural Old Timers hall, with another planned for the following February.[8]

In June 1997 it was reported that Martin Kelly from Training Department was to provide monthly instruction and that the group had been issued with overalls and first aid kits.[9]

At the next District Staff meeting a desire was expressed to consolidate the Group into an annex of Darwin Division. There was also concern about vehicle insurance with Rural Response Group members attending accident scenes in their private vehicles.[10]

In September 1997 the Group was meeting at the Humpty Doo Hotel. The Commissioner was to discuss the Group with Dr Crompton, with a long term plan that it should combine with the Palmerston Adult Division when that was eventually restarted.[11]

The Group never did become an annex to Darwin Division and at the October 1997 Staff meeting concern was raised that the Community Care Branch was carrying out first aid duties and that the Rural Response Group should be members of Operations Branch.[12]

Dr Crompton advised Commissioner Baddeley that the Group weren't interested in joining Operations Branch as they were *"being utilised only for emergency response to accidents"*.[13]

In October the *Litchfield Times* ran a report on the Rural Response Group. Members were Gillian Ascoli from Berry Springs, Brian and Joyce Maden from Humpty Doo, Karen Jessop from Howard Springs, Anna O'Mahoney from Humpty Doo, and Lionel and Pat Crompton from Hughes. Callouts had been to motor vehicle accidents, a stabbing, angina and heart attacks and a baby reported not breathing. The Group were pleased with their efforts, arriving up to 20 minutes before an ambulance in several cases.[14]

Then the Group just seemed to fade away. With their refusal to join Operations Branch it would seem that support dwindled and that was it. In the same month as the glowing newspaper report some Rural Response Group members were attending a first aid course at Humpty Doo and enquiring about starting a Cadet Division in the area. The following year the Humpty Doo Cadet Division was formed with Brian Maden as Superintendent.

The 1997-1998 *St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Annual Report* stated:

> *"Dr Crompton's Community Care Branch/ Humpty Doo Rural Response Group continued to deliver a key service to the rural area and the concept was expanded this year with the establishment of a similar response unit for the Cox Peninsula area, serviced by Graeme Watson."*

This response unit at Cox Peninsula was never mentioned in any District Staff Meeting minutes, probably because it came under Community Care Branch. The author heard about it when he was a uniformed member and that Mr Watson had completed a Clinical Studies 1 course with the AOTC.

Peter Poole said that he had once attended a public duty with someone whose name he couldn't recall from Mandorah on Cox Peninsula.

# Chapter 5
# Humpty Doo and Litchfield

District Staff reported in December 1987 that there had been requests from Humpty Doo students for the formation of a Cadet Division in their area. This was to be followed up by DSO Ed Sinclair, through DSO Richard Holt.[1] There is no further mention of this in any St John records and it's obvious that nothing came of it.

In October 1997 Dawn Bat, an accredited trainer with St John and Superintendent of Palmerston and Rural Cadet Division, conducted a Senior First Aid course at Rural Results, an aerobics and fitness centre behind the current Humpty Doo supermarket. At the conclusion of the course some of the participants, who were also parents of young teenagers, asked if there was a possibility of forming a Cadet Division in the Humpty Doo area. After explaining what was involved and stressing that parental involvement was necessary Dawn agreed to seek permission to go ahead and start the process.

As Dawn was already in charge of a Cadet Division she couldn't manage another, so Rural Response Group member Brian Maden indicated that he was willing to "give it a go" in charge of the new Cadet Division provided he had plenty of assistance.

Dawn agreed to help establish the group and assisted by notices in local school newsletters, newspaper advertisements and an item in the Northern Territory News [2] she held a public meeting on 14th February 1998 at Taminmin High School Library. Sixteen prospective Cadets and their parents attended, including Dr Lionel Crompton and several other senior St John members. It was decided to start a Cadet Division at Humpty Doo with meetings to be held Monday nights from 6.00pm to 8.00pm.

During a visit to Taminmin High School to seek permission to use the school as a meeting place Dawn was able to meet with Therese Peck, the school nurse who was also a member of Dr Crompton's Rural Response Group.[3] Therese agreed to take on the role of Divisional Officer in charge of training, but again with assistance. Brian's wife Joyce, along with several parents, agreed to support the group by providing supper and conducting fund raising events and maintaining administration.

Brian's association with St John dated back to December 1982 when he joined Howard Springs Combined Division and became Superintendent of Palmerston and Rural Division, as the Division was renamed after moving into Palmerston. He also had a military background, serving with the British Army in places such as Egypt, Jordon and Cyprus before ending his army career in the Parachute Regiment.

The first meeting of the Humpty Doo Cadet Division was held in the music room at Taminmin High School on 2nd March 1998, attended by 18 probationary plus two uniformed Palmerston Cadets who were transferring to the new Division. A Parent Committee was formed at this meeting and Kym Sullivan, a nursing officer in the Army and ex St John South Australia Corps Superintendent, taught the cadets some basic parade skills.[4]

On the 9th March, five more probationary Cadets enrolled, but one of the original Palmerston Cadets dropped out because of transport problems. One uniformed ex Palmerston and one Palmerston Cadet joined, giving a total of 26 Cadets. Three were already in uniform and one ex Tennant Creek Cadet was qualified in Preliminary First Aid. A halt was then put on new enrolments until after the Preliminary First Aid course to be undertaken by the new Cadets.

Brian wrote in his April report:

> *"My thanks go to Dawn [Bat], Sue [Franks] and Kym [Sullivan]. I was more than a little apprehensive about taking on this position after being out of SJA for so long. However, with their continued advice and occasional assistance I am confident of the success and growth of this new Division."* [5]

Deputy Commissioner Lesley King visited the new Division on 16th March and reported a keen and organised group with good support from adults involved and an evident spirit of cooperation.[6]

Therese Peck conducted the Preliminary First Aid course which all Cadets attended and passed. This now enabled them to be issued with uniforms and attend public duties with St John Ambulance Adult volunteers. Brian taught the new cadets the military history of St John Ambulance.

The Humpty Doo Cadet Division was registered on 10th May 1998. The letter accompanying the OB1 Registration form to National HQ requested that Palmerston and Rural Cadet Division now be referred to as Palmerston Cadet Division. There was now a genuine rural Cadet Division, making the Palmerston Cadets' old title redundant.

Founding members were Superintendent Brian Maden, Divisional Officer Therese Peck and Cadets Kathryn Ainsworth, Kate Banaghan, Julie Banaghan, Timothy Blott, Kye Brown, Daisy Buysman, Samantha Clark, Vanessa Clough, Amanda Capponi, Angela Capponi, Kristy Frakking, Sharna Frakking, Alice Hageman, Victoria Hart, Sharmane Hussie, Ross Jacobsen, Alisson McMaster, John Payne, Aimee Peck, Erin Williams, Jack Quinn, Lisa Dolkens, Toni Dolkens, Sarah Miles and Lauren Taylor.

Alice Hageman and John Payne later graduated to the Adult Division and then joined the Ambulance Service as Student Paramedics.

Humpty Doo Cadets marched in the Territory Day Parade, this being their first public duty and first time in uniform.

Joan Hunt, a long serving Cadet Divisional Officer from Alice Springs who had recently transferred to Darwin showed interest in joining Humpty Doo.[7] When Therese Peck took time off from the Division, Joan joined as Divisional Officer.[8]

The Cadet Division held its Induction Ceremony on Monday night, 20th July at Taminmin High School. Twenty-one Cadets were officially enrolled in the Division and presented with their Preliminary First Aid certificates and epaulettes.[9] The Division's Registration Certificate was also presented at the ceremony.

Humpty Doo Cadets attended the Royal Darwin Show public duty in July.

Brian Maden reported in September that on average twenty cadets attended each meeting. They still needed assistance and advice from other Divisions, though.[10]

Cadets Angela Capponi and Alice Hageman showed they had learned their first aid lessons well when they very capably managed medical emergencies in September.

Angela's sister Amy had an accident on a swing at home when she struck her head on the frame. Angela stopped the swing and got Amy down, putting a towel on her head to stop the profuse bleeding. The girls' mother fetched Dad from his lawn mower and "they thought it was a big emergency", said Angela. "We washed her head and it stopped bleeding ... but she had a terrible headache." [11]

Future paramedic Alice had two incidents to test her new skills. When three-year-old Molly fell on her arm and came in screaming Alice got out the first aid kit. "She wouldn't let me touch it so we propped her arm on a blanket and her mum took her to hospital."

The next day at Livingstone Reserve a boy complained he had been bitten by something. He complained of a sore foot, so Alice got out the first aid kit and bandaged him up. Somebody rang an ambulance while they drove off with their patient, meeting up at the Elizabeth River Bridge.

> *The ambulance officers were very impressed with Alice's bandaging skills and the boy was none the worse for his experience.* [12]

In October, Humpty Doo entered an all girls and an all boys team in the NT Cadet First Aid Competitions with John Payne as individual competitor. John and both teams came in a respectable third place. There were six teams and nine individuals in the competitions.

Not wanting to downplay their achievements, Deputy Commissioner Lesley King reported that the standard of the competitions was quite low and this needed to be addressed regarding training for the winning team attending the national competition.[13]

Two Humpty Doo teams contested the 1999 Cadet First Aid competitions and again finished in third place. The two teams were Kathryn Ainsworth, Angela Capponi and Terri Gillet-Eurell (Team A) and Ross Jacobsen, Timothy Blott and Laurelle Brock (Team B).[14]

Alice Hageman was named Cadet of the Year at the Division's first annual Inspection and Presentation night on Monday 14th December 1998. Angela Capponi was awarded Most Improved Cadet and John Payne was Most Promising Cadet.

Kathryn Ainsworth and John Payne received 100 per cent attendance awards. All foundation members and Secretary Annette Capponi received medallions and certificates at the ceremony.[15]

In March 1999, Brian Maden reported that Joan Hunt would be leaving for Katherine in April and Therese Peck would not be coming back to the Cadets. There was to be an Induction Ceremony on 22nd March and a Family Care instructor was urgently needed.[16] Brian later advised that he would not be with the Cadets next year, so a search was started for his successor, a position that took some time to fill.

An NCO course was held in August with two cadets from Humpty Doo selected to attend. Both passed and later in the year Alice Hageman was promoted to Cadet Sergeant and John Payne to Cadet Corporal.

Brian resigned as Divisional Superintendent and from St John in August 1999. Since retiring from work three years previously he had less free time than when he was working and it was now time to pursue his other interests. The Humpty Doo Cadet Division was in excellent shape with 26 members who were continuing training in preliminary first aid and resuscitation. The Cadets had been awarded a number of proficiency certificates and badges in subjects ranging from animal care to Knowledge of the Order of St John.[17]

With no new Superintendent to be found, Darwin Divisional Superintendent Peter Poole suggested that two District members attend the Humpty Doo Cadet Division each week and one of those members attend with a new District Officer the following week. This would ensure continuity of training each week.

Lesley King suggested that Humpty Doo become a school based division that meets straight after school. Other ideas were for a notice to go in the *Litchfield Times* and for Volunteer Co-ordinator Gwyn Balch to contact the local Member, Chris Lugg MLA, to see if his office could help. Lesley was to contact Brian Maden to ensure that all parents had been made aware of the situation.[18]

Tanya Griffiths, who worked at Casuarina Ambulance Centre, took on the job of Divisional Superintendent and was warmly welcomed at the October District Staff meeting. Brian officially handed the Division to Tanya on Monday 11th October 1999.[19]

The Division decided to take on a junior group in July 2000, with an initial eight signing up and numbers later stabilising to five. Humpty Doo Juniors were hard to start as the other Cadets needed attention from the adults as well. There weren't enough adult members to look after the Juniors and there was some exhaustion in the ranks which suggests that the idea hadn't been carefully thought out. Luckily, two parents and senior Cadets Alice Hageman and John Payne offered to help. The new parents had to learn first aid, which they did and began the year in uniform. The Juniors saw the year out with their Grade 3 first aid badge and three interest badges. These were cooking, craft and sport.[20]

At the annual District Parade on 14th October 2000, new awards were introduced for Volunteer of the Year and Division of the Year with Humpty Doo being awarded Cadet Division of the Year. This was quite an achievement for the Territory's newest Division and a credit to the hard working adult leadership.

Tanya Griffiths resigned at the end of the year and was succeeded as Superintendent by Vicki Macmillan who reported to District staff in February 2001 that training would be held on Monday nights, starting 5th February. There had been quite a few

enquiries about membership which would put a strain on the room at Taminmin High School. Five adults were helping with the Division and a Parent Committee would be established this year to assist with fund raising.[21]

Brian Maden had started a Parent Committee, as had Tanya Griffiths and now again would Vicki Macmillan. It would appear that Parent Committees had a short life at Humpty Doo.

The Cadets were busy over the Christmas period attending public duties and overalls were made for Cadets attending motor sports. These were paid for by fundraising and sponsorships.

A Code of Behaviour was developed by the Division and sent to Territory Officer Cadets, Noel Talbot who asked that it be sent to all Divisions for comment. Vicki, a qualified First Aid trainer, would be holding a first aid course for the Humpty Doo Cadets in March, assisted by Territory Officer Bruce Wilde. The cost of $50 per cadet would be reimbursed by District.[22]

In March, Vicki reported that five uniformed adult members of the Division were now looking after the 60 cadets who were attending each week and there was a need for additional room at the school to accommodate these numbers.[23]

Territory Superintendent Sue Cooper stated that Cadet Divisions did not have to accept every applicant and waiting lists were a way of controlling numbers.

Cadet Divisions in Darwin's northern suburbs had gotten out of hand with very large numbers and it now seemed that history was repeating itself with Humpty Doo going down that same path.

With the success of the Cadet Division it was felt that the time was ripe to start an Adult Division in the area, only this time under Operations Branch. With this in mind an advertisement was placed in the *Litchfield Times* on 14th March 2001 to invite interested residents of "Humpty Doo & hereabouts" to a meeting to establish an Adult Volunteer Division of St John Ambulance in the rural area. There would be two main areas of public duty, namely to provide first aid at public events in the area and to help sick and disabled people in their homes.[24]

Numbers attending the meeting weren't stated, apart from being "a good turn out" [25] and about six people signed expressions of interest.[26]

A sign-on night for the new Adult Division was held at the Taminmin High School at 7.30pm Tuesday 5th June with a large turn up expected after the enthusiasm shown at the public meeting. However, the two and a half months since the meeting had been enough to sort out the faint hearted and only five prospective new members showed up. Of these, only Greg Payne and Kevin Rice had attended the public meeting. Other new members were Frank Dunstan, who had recently joined Darwin Adult Division, and ex cadets Wes Field and Peter Collins.[27]

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Andrew Hodges, Territory Superintendent Sue Cooper, St John Council President Alan Bromwich, Volunteer Coordinator Gwyn Balch, Territory Officers Glen Denmeade and Di Munro, Darwin Divisional Superintendent Pat Murray, St John Council member and local GP Dr Lionel Crompton, Humpty Doo Cadet Superintendent Vicki Macmillan and the other adults of the Cadet Division, and the new Division's mentor, Brian Maden.

Brian was persuaded to come out of retirement to mentor the group until they were able to have their own officers to manage the Division. Brian mostly worked in the background organising instructors, doing the paperwork and working towards getting the group registered as a Division. He left the actual running of the group to the members themselves. A 'pecking order' soon evolved with Frank Dunstan and Wes Field the most likely contenders for the Superintendent's position.

In consultation with the Cadet Division's Superintendent it was decided to hold weekly instruction meetings concurrent with the Cadets. Vicki Macmillan was an accredited St John First Aid trainer and offered to help the new adult group with Skills Maintenance Program (SMP) and other instruction. Senior Cadets who were required to do the SMP and the new Adults would attend joint sessions. However, this and other offers of help never eventuated and a rift quickly developed between the Adult group and the Cadet Division's leadership.

The Adult group's first meeting was held at Taminmin High School 7.00pm Monday 18th June 2001. Initial training was in ambulance and clinic vehicle familiarisation, radio procedures and other practical skills. SMP training, under Darwin Divisional instructor Graeme Owen, commenced 20th August independent of the Cadets who had gone their own way.

On 8th October an Advanced Resuscitation and Defibrillation course was held. This was well attended and included senior Cadets and some Darwin Division members.

At first the Adult group was a Section attached to Darwin Adult Division and one Darwin member, Bernadette "Bernie" Edwards, transferred to the new Section, while a resident of Darwin's northern suburbs. Another Darwin member, Kylie Morris, supported the fledgling group by attending training nights and public duties, although she stayed a member of Darwin Adult Division.

Kylie had flown Lear Jets before becoming a St John volunteer and in a dramatic career change went on to join the St John Ambulance Service, initially as an Emergency Medical Dispatcher at JESCC, and then on the road where she eventually graduated as a paramedic.

Due to a lack of members with St John experience and the very steep learning curve about how St John operates, Frank Dunstan and Bernie Edwards regularly attended training nights with Darwin Division at Parap as well as at Humpty Doo. Frank travelled a round trip of 130km to do this, putting to shame previous Casuarina Division members of the 1970s who wouldn't do public duties with the excuse that 10km to the Darwin Ambulance Centre at Parap was too far to pick up a vehicle.

In order to quickly gain much needed practical experience some members, notably Frank, Bernie and Greg started doing regular public duties in the rural area, as well as in Darwin. As a retiree Frank was able to do weekday duties as well.

Recruitment of new members for the Adult Section was slow and they were advised to change their training night from Monday in order to attract more people. Then the very same people said that if they did change they would lose their Darwin Division instructors as Monday was their only night available. Catch 22.

Graeme Owen expressed frustration with coming out to Humpty Doo and stated that the group should have their own instructors, so with nothing to lose arrangements were made with Taminmin High School to change the training to Tuesday nights, commencing January 2002. The change was prompted by more than just the desire to attract new members; it was also used to get some distance from the Cadet Division, the relationship being quite bad.

The 2001 Annual Parade was held in Alice Springs to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Alice Springs Adult Division. Frank Dunstan drove south for the parade while Humpty Doo Cadet Superintendent Vicki Macmillan and Cadet Divisional Secretary Lee Payne travelled by bus. Vicki Macmillan was awarded Adult Volunteer of the Year at the presentation ceremony after the Parade.

Attracting new Adult members was still difficult and with Brian Maden keen to return to his Humpty Doo Homestay business, the Officers of the Humpty Doo Cadet Division "joined" the Adult Section, together with two senior cadets, in order to get the required twelve names to register a Division. At best it was a very rough and ready way to get the numbers that proved unnecessary because when the meeting night was changed to Tuesday in 2002 enough new recruits joined to enable the Adult Division to have been registered in its own right without phantom members.

The OB1 Registration form was signed by the members in early December, then by local staff and the Commissioner on 23rd January 2002 and sanctioned by the Chief Commissioner on 11th February. Founding members were Divisional Superintendent Frank Dunstan, Divisional Officer Bernie Edwards and Privates Wes Field, Greg Payne and Kevin Rice. Others were senior Cadets Ross Jacobsen and Alice Hageman. Cadet Officers who "joined" the Adult Division were Vicki Macmillan, Nola Hutchins, Elaine Drahm, Kelly Raven and Lee Payne.

Elaine soon left the Cadets to become a full-time member of the Adult Division, followed by Alice Hageman and much later by Lee Payne.

Elaine was a foster carer with several children in her charge, as well as a volunteer with St John Ambulance; truly a very remarkable woman.

The new Adult Division worked hard during the year and built up a membership of sixteen at one stage, not counting the Cadet Division officers who took no role in the Adult Division other than being names on the OB1. Public duties attended by Humpty Doo Adult Division members in Darwin and the rural area were far in excess of other Divisions. As the members gained experience more and more training was done 'in house' without having to rely on external instructors. Lessons learned on Darwin Division training nights were brought back to Humpty Doo to be passed on to the members.

On 28th May 2002 the Adult Division took delivery of Car 56, the *Humpty Doo Volunteer Ambulance*. This was an old V6 Holden moduled stretch utility that had been in service in Katherine since November 1993 and was pensioned off, then resurrected for the new Humpty Doo Adult Division. Although officially an ambulance it was primarily used as a public duty first aid vehicle with the very rare callout to a rural emergency as a first response. It did, however, transport patients to Royal Darwin Hospital on occasions when no other ambulance was available.

The stated role was that the ambulance would only ever get called out when there was no paid crew available. This situation was highlighted when a paid crew responded on Code 1 to a report of an unconscious person on the road verge at Hopewell Road, Berry Springs. This response with a 100km round trip from Palmerston for a sleeping drunk could have been avoided had they called out the Humpty Doo Volunteer Ambulance that was parked just 3km from the incident. It could have also saved a life had the person been in genuine distress.

The Humpty Doo Volunteer Ambulance was formally handed to Divisional Superintendent Frank Dunstan by Minister for Health, Jane Aagaard, at Parliament House and the "Humpty Doo Ambulance Service" officially commenced on the 1st July 2002. Applications were called for people to man this service, but a lack of suitably qualified members meant that it came to nothing and the vehicle was primarily used for public duties.

Adult Division members turned out to help with patient evacuations after the Bali Bombing disaster in October, with Car 56 being one of the eight ambulances in the convoy. Having just the one stretcher it was given the sad duty of transporting to the morgue at Royal Darwin Hospital a person who had died on the flight from Bali. In the morning convoy Car 56 had the happier task of transporting an injured patient to Royal Darwin Hospital.

An Adult Divisional newsletter was started in September 2002 and the December edition published the following statistics:

There were now 15 members, 12 of them active. The Division's total of 4183 hours for the year to date included 1915 for public duties, 17 for ambulance call-outs and 12 for patients treated off-duty. The remaining time was spent on training and administration. 296 patients had been treated by Division members during the year. This worked out as an average of 349 hours per active member.

Duties for the year using Car 56 included following a three day cycling tour, the Katherine to Darwin fund raising bike ride, weekly polocrosse and the week long National Championships, an Open Day at Gunbalunya in Arnhem Land, Fred's Pass Rural Show, rodeos at Robbie Robbins Reserve, various school sporting events in Darwin and Palmerston, Aussie Rules football matches at Fred's Pass and Gardens Oval, Catalina Park Motocross in Palmerston, Motocross Enduros at Adelaide River and other rural areas, rural car rallies, Mindil Beach Markets and many more, too numerous to remember.

Car 56 was also taken to various schools in the rural area to demonstrate to the students, and was on public display at the Palmerston Shopping Centre at a St John promotion one Saturday morning.

Training for the year included the annual Skills Maintenance Program and a lot of scenario based practical exercises. Scenarios were designed and

managed by the very competent Corporal Byron May. The Division also started using Casualty Simulation (cas sim) with Divisional Officer Bernie Edwards quite a natural in this area. However, it was far too time consuming to prepare a scenario using cas sim on a Divisional training night, so this was more something to experiment with than of practical use.

A phenomenal first year for the Division was rewarded at the 2002 Annual Parade when it was named Adult Division of the Year and Frank Dunstan was awarded Adult Volunteer of the Year. Corporal Byron May was given a Commissioner's Letter of Commendation for outstanding performance while still a cadet at an accident involving a car and teenage skateboard rider.

Truly a remarkable achievement for a new Division, still learning but no longer wet behind the ears.

Meanwhile, there were some high achievers among the Humpty Doo Cadets. John Payne and Kathryn Ainsworth were both Dux of Year 9 at Taminmin High School, Laurelle Brock received the ASSPA Award for Best Aboriginal Female Student, and Justin Murphy and Amy Rice received other awards.[28]

Cadet Sergeant Emily Macmillan was named Peter Falkland Award winner for 2003 and Ross Jacobsen received an Ambulance Union Award.[29]

The Humpty Doo Adults decided that meeting at Taminmin High School was unsatisfactory and on several occasions the caretaker had to be hunted up because he had forgotten to unlock the classroom. To solve this problem other venues were considered, including Lakeview Hall at Fred's Pass Reserve and the Humpty Doo Volunteer Fire Brigade's depot. In November the Division applied to St John management to use the newly built, but still unoccupied Palmerston Volunteer Centre. This was agreed, but the actual move was held up while waiting on a Certificate of Occupancy from the NT Government. Because of this delay they didn't start training in Palmerston until 14th January 2003.

Superintendent Frank Dunstan and Divisional Officer Bernie Edwards resigned from the Division and St John Ambulance in mid March 2003. Their departure caused a bit of turmoil and it was proposed to join Humpty Doo Adults with the new Palmerston Adult Division, but that was vetoed by Territory Superintendent Sue Cooper.[30]

Greg Payne took charge of the Division and was officially appointed Superintendent on 10th July 2003. His Warrant of Appointment was presented by Commissioner Andrew Hodges at the Operations Branch Meeting on 4th September.

The Humpty Doo Cadets celebrated their 5th Birthday at a parade on 26th May 2003. Commissioner Andrew Hodges officiated and 28 new Cadets were enrolled and presented with their epaulettes. Special guests were past Superintendent Brian Maden and Territory Officer Dawn Bat. Dawn was called the 'Grandma of the Division', a name she still wears with pride.

Emily Macmillan was named the Division's Cadet of the Year, Elizabeth Payne was Most Helpful Cadet and Kiran Klessa was Most Improved Cadet. John Payne was promoted to Cadet Leader.[31]

Cadets Lauren Jacobsen, Kathryn Ainsworth, Emily Macmillan, Khalia Hutchins, Megan Zabell, Melissa Miller and Kiran Klessa received their Bronze badges in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Ceremony at Parliament House on 29th August. Vicki Macmillan received a certificate in appreciation of her work as coordinator.[32]

To top off a successful year, Humpty Doo was awarded Cadet Division of the Year at the Annual Parade and John Payne received the Ambulance Union Award. Grand Prior's badges were presented to John Payne and Emily Macmillan.[33]

Towards the end of the year Humpty Doo Adult Division relocated to the Rural Old Timers and Friends Association hall on Bees Creek Road, not far from Freds Pass Reserve.[34] In early 2004, Division members started to provide monthly blood pressure and blood glucose level checks for the Old Timers.[35]

A proposal for the Humpty Doo Cadets to enter a soft drink can boat in the 2004 annual Beercan

Regatta wasn't approved by St John management as it wouldn't be covered by St John's insurance. Parents would be required to give permission and take responsibility for the activity.[36] It was later decided that the event organisers' public liability insurance would cover the activity.[37]

On 1st February 2004 the 'Humpty Doo Adults and ring-ins' entered a team in the Crocolympics, held in Bees Creek. The team of James, Ross, Byron, Sam, Lauren and Felicity called themselves Feral Ambos and ended up being champions on the day. Events were wet, muddy and physical, with the local volunteer firies making sure that everybody stayed cool. The Feral Ambos' trophy for winning the Crocolympics featured a crocodile with individual prizes for each competitor.[38]

Cadet Sergeant Emily Macmillan was a semi finalist in the Young Achiever Award for Community Service and was also selected as a member of the Chief Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians.

Khalia Hutchins, Tim Blott and Lauren Jacobsen received their Grand Prior's Badge during the year.

Cadet Officers Lyn Jacobsen, Lee Payne and Vicki Macmillan contested the Adult First Aid Competitions in Alice Springs, coming in second place behind Alice Springs. They were then invited to be the run through team for the National First Aid Competitions in June.[39]

In October, Adult Division members were granted permission to work with the frail aged. The proviso was that no paid worker was to be disadvantaged by St John volunteers.[40]

On 18th November, Cadets Ross Jacobsen, Kathryn Ainsworth, Emily Macmillan, Lauren Jacobsen, Kiran Klessa, Melissa Miller and Megan Zabell were awarded Silver Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Emily Macmillan and Shaun Washington both received the 'Australia Day Student Citizen Award' for 2005 from Kormilda College and Litchfield Christian School. Hailee Skinner was accepted as a regional representative on the 2005 Chief Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians.[41]

Vicki Macmillan resigned as Superintendent of Humpty Doo Cadets and from Operations Branch in October 2005 and was temporarily replaced by Nola Hutchins, assisted by Marion McLauchlan. However, the Division seemed to go to pieces with a perceived lack of support from Operations Branch management. Cadet numbers dropped drastically and those remaining were to be advised to join Palmerston Cadet Division if they wished to continue with St John. The officers stated their intention of also transferring to Palmerston.[42]

Territory Superintendent Steve Peers visited the Division on 28th November and discussed their problems. He stated an intention of visiting again on the 2nd February 2006 and a determination to find a replacement Superintendent for the Cadets.

Adrian Rossiter became OIC in April 2006 and was confirmed as Superintendent in July.

In May 2006, Humpty Doo Adults complained of having lost members, making them short staffed for the Freds Pass Rural Show public duty.[43] Attrition of members was an ongoing problem for the Division and when your author re-joined as an affiliate member in July he saw Divisional training nights cancelled because of nonattendance by uniformed members. There were nights when nobody but the Superintendent and your author turned up. These problems persisted and the Division reported difficulty in getting training sessions going with three members turning up in February 2007 .[44] However, attendance did improve later in the year.

Humpty Doo Adults were awarded Adult Division of the Year for 2006 at the Annual Parade, held in the Kalymnian Hall, Marrara.

In February 2007 Superintendent Greg Payne suggested reintroducing a Rural Response Group.[45] Greg wrote for *Vollie News*:

> *"What started as an Area First Aider for volunteer rural assistance to the Ambulance Service now looks like being called Community Response Volunteer. I see it involving comms skills, triage and observations training. Basically being a good set of eyes, ears and hands for Comms so the urgency of the*

*situation can be determined more reliably in times of Service overload."* [46]

Greg reported in September that the Community Response Volunteers were close to starting, with phones having been purchased and evaluated in the rural area.[47]

At the start of 2007 Humpty Doo Cadets moved from Taminmin High School to a leased hall down the road. Marion McLauchlan was promoted to Divisional Officer in charge of the Juniors. Hailee Skinner was to teach the Orange Book, assisted by Adrian Rossiter. Henri Raafs was appointed Stores Officer.[48]

The Adult Division reported that 2007 was a very busy year. Members gave more than 1700 voluntary hours at public duties up to 30th June. September was a particularly busy month for the Division. With Car 56 out of action they used its sister, Car 55 to good effect.

*"Lee, Greg, Lyn, Lauren and Debbie had a great production line going at the Motocross last Saturday night (1st September). As soon as we had one at the first aid post we got another callout. We ran out of stretchers, oxygen and other gear. The ambulances were running all over the place so we had to wait for them. In the end we transported the last patient in car 55. We then got another job in Palmerston when we left the Hospital. Lyn and I would have got to bed by about 0400. Have seen something nearly as busy before, but that Saturday was mayhem. The job numbers for that day were into the nineties before we got home."* [49]

Humpty Doo Adult Superintendent Greg Payne was awarded Adult Volunteer of the Year for 2007. He was admitted to the Order of St John as Serving Brother at the Investiture and Graduation Ceremony at Government House on Thursday 22nd May 2008. To make it a family affair, his wife Lee and son John received Priory Votes of Thanks at the same Ceremony.

Alice Hageman graduated at the 2008 Ceremony, becoming the first Humpty Doo member to become a Paramedic in the Ambulance Service.[50]

Marion McLauchlan became OIC of the Cadet Division in 2007 and received her Superintendent's epaulettes at the combined Humpty Doo Adults and Cadets' Divisional Parade, held at the Village Green on the 29th of April 2008. This year was an important milestone for the cadets as it marked the 10th anniversary of the Cadet movement in Humpty Doo. The birthday cake was cut by retired Superintendents Brian Maden and Vicki Macmillan.

To commemorate this occasion, souvenir mugs were made and cadets were issued souvenir shirts.[51]

Humpty Doo Adults combined with the Palmerston Adult Division in September 2008 to hold joint training nights at the Palmerston Volunteer Centre. [52]

Greg and Lee Payne were honoured at the Litchfield Council 2009 Australia Day Awards in recognition for their work as members of St John and in the Humpty Doo community.[53]

Car 56 was traded in for new Car 107 in March 2009. The old vehicle had previously served with the Ambulance Service in Katherine and was returned to Katherine in early 2010 as Car 156 redecorated in greens for the Volunteer Division . It must be quite some vehicle as it has now been serving St John for 20 years, although Katherine members were heard to express frustration with the old ambulance in November 2012.

Superintendent Marion McLauchlan resigned from Humpty Doo Cadets early in 2009 and was replaced for a short period by Robyn Timney. This was followed by a parent/officer meeting attended by a number of concerned parents and Territory Officer Cadets Kimberlee McKay to determine who would next take on the role. Jason Cockman, father of one of the cadets, joined and began helping Divisional Officer Nola Hutchins to manage the Division. Jason had an ambition to become Superintendent, but with limited experience he was

asked to assist Nola while learning how St John operates.

The position of Superintendent was offered to Nola without it being advertised and she assumed the role in May 2010. Jason resigned around this time.

The Adult Division reported being *"still very light on numbers"* in July 2009 with a need to return *"to the shops on Saturday mornings for more recruiting".*[54] The *2008-2009 Annual Report* gives 17 members, so a lot must have been inactive which seems to be the case with some Divisions.

Being *"light on numbers"* with active members was an ongoing problem with the Adult Division and Superintendent Greg Payne complained of having to attend public duties alone on numerous occasions.

Cadet Hayley Cockman was awarded Litchfield Young Citizen of the Year for 2010 at the Australia Day Ceremony at Lakeview Hall on 26th January.

Greg Payne reported in June that Adult Divisional Sergeant Barbara Klessa earned a nomination for the Save a Life Award while *"taking samples of water at Mindil Beach. A snapping handbag (crocodile) was eying up a tourist and our vigilant member used step one of DRABCD to avert a messy situation. We all thought Barbara did such a good job with the media as well and gave her the 2010 Bites and Stings Award."* [55]

Highly respected former member Brian Maden died on 16th November 2010 at the age of 75. Brian led a very adventurous life that included being a paratrooper in the British Army and later as a champion skydiver in Australia.

Brian's involvement with St John was as a member of the Howard Springs Combined Division and Superintendent of the Palmerston and Rural Division as it was renamed after moving into Palmerston. Later on he was a member of Dr Lionel Crompton's Rural Response Group and from there became founding Superintendent of the Humpty Doo Cadet Division when it started in 1998. Brian came out of retirement for six months to mentor the new Humpty Doo Adult Division in 2001.

*Au revoir*, Brian, you were an incredible man.

Anthony Kleidon and Barbara Klessa branched out from the Humpty Adults to form their own Division in the outer Darwin rural area. On Sunday 26th June 2011 they set up a display and First Aid Post at an open day for the Acacia Hills Volunteer Bushfire Brigade to promote the Litchfield Rural Response Division.[56]

The inaugural meeting was held at the Livingstone Reserve on Tuesday night, 30th August 2011 with eleven interested people attending. These included several from Acacia Hills, as well as your author who lives about 20 minutes drive away. Humpty Doo member Robyn Wilson, who lives just a short hop down the road from the Reserve also attended. Anthony became the new Division's Superintendent, with Barbara as Divisional Officer.[57]

When asked about the Division's name, Barb Klessa told the author that *"it just sounded good at the time ... we liked LRRD as we wanted to sound ready for action ... we have been getting called all manner of names from Litchfield Adults to Livingstone Volunteers.*

*"To be honest I just say 'Litchfield Volunteers' these days."*

When asked how she would prefer the Division to be named in this book, Barb replied, "Litchfield Rural Division". *Read Barb's story on page 310.*

Nola Hutchins resigned as Superintendent of the Cadet Division in late 2011 and was replaced by Henri Raafs as acting Divisional Superintendent.

# PART 4

# REGIONAL CENTRES

**Adelaide River and Batchelor**

**Alice Springs**

**Ayers Rock**

**Tennant Creek**

**Elliott**

**Warrego**

**Katherine**

**Nhulunbuy**

**Alyangula**

**Jabiru**

# Chapter 1
# Adelaide River and Batchelor

In response to requests from residents of Adelaide River on the Stuart Highway 110 km south of Darwin the St John Ambulance Brigade in Darwin sent Divisional Nursing Officer Dick Gailer to the town on Sunday 14th March 1965 to establish a new branch.[1]

Mr Gailer's week long stay was successful and on Tuesday 13th April the Adelaide River emergency ambulance carried its first patient. When two year old Josephine had a severe asthma attack Mrs Hazel Darwen, wife of the Adelaide River policeman, called out the owner of the private vehicle that was now the emergency ambulance. When they set out another phone call alerted the Darwin Hospital which sent one of their ambulances to meet up on the highway. The two emergency vehicles met at the 32 mile where Mrs Darwen and Josephine transferred for the remainder of the trip to Hospital. The new service proved its worth by getting Josephine to the Hospital more than an hour sooner than would have otherwise been the case.[2]

Less than a week later the Adelaide River volunteer ambulance transported two patients in the one day at the start of the Easter holidays. On the Friday they were called to transport a Department of Works employee who had fallen and sustained a head injury. This time they met up with the Darwin based ambulance at the 44 mile to transfer their patient.

Just before midnight on the same day they were called out again to transport a casualty from a motor vehicle accident. The changeover on this occasion was at the 45 mile and the patient reached the hospital at 2.20am.[3]

Unfortunately, while the names of the first three patients were reported, we don't know the name of the generous person who provided the vehicle, or the names of the other volunteers, apart from Mrs Darwen. They are just some of the many unsung heroes who serve the community with St John Ambulance.

In May 1965 the St John Ambulance Brigade reported that the new Adelaide River centre had treated 42 cases in just six weeks since starting [4] and in June there were ten calls made to meet with the Adelaide River emergency ambulance for patient transfer and transport to Darwin Hospital. [5]

Because the Adelaide River vehicle also met up with Darwin Hospital ambulances we don't know how many trips it made in that, or any other, period.

Your author was unable to discover any more information about activities in Adelaide River until a regional ambulance service for Batchelor and Adelaide River started in 1972.

When the Rum Jungle Uranium mine closed in May 1971 the Territory Enterprises Pty Ltd mine ambulance was left at the Batchelor Health Clinic for the use of Ellen Pitts, the local Sister in charge. The vehicle had been offered to St John Ambulance, but they declined. The keys to the ambulance were officially handed to Sister Pitts in November 1971 by Mr Les Woolcock, officer in charge of the mine's decommissioning.

After what was described as *"a somewhat stormy beginning"* a public meeting was held in Batchelor on Wednesday 29th March 1972 to establish the Batchelor Adelaide River District Ambulance Service (BARDAS). A committee was formed with the following members elected: Bruce Jones, President; Sister Ellen Pitts, Secretary/ Treasurer; committee members Hugh Van Heythuysen, Roslyn Jones, Kevin Onn, Jim Nicholls, Don Roebuck and Malcolm Leach.

A subscription scheme to fund the service was $12 for families and $6 for singles. The BARDAS ambulance was kept at the Batchelor Clinic with Bruce Jones and Dean Von Einem on call for after hours emergencies. [6]

St John Ambulance held a first aid training course at Adelaide River in early 1972 and on 21st May the Adelaide River Combined Division was

formed. The Division Registration was signed off in the Territory on 6th October, but it was another six months before the South Australian Commissioner signed his approval on 18th April 1973. The Chief Commissioner sanctioned the registration on 8th June 1973.

Founding members were Superintendent Clement "Eddie" Edwards, Peter Gill, Boyne Litchfield, James Nicholls, Leon Portier, Violette Portier, Sister Ellen Pitts, Allen Price, Hazele Price, Donald Roebuck, Wesley Whitmore. Glen Lynch and Carroll Lynch.

The BARDAS ambulance made news for all the wrong reasons in 1972 when the driver ended up in hospital himself. On Saturday 18th November, Bruce Jones transferred his patient who had been injured in a motorbike accident to a Darwin based St John ambulance he met on the Stuart Highway. Returning to Batchelor he was forced to swerve violently when a horse ran out in front of the ambulance on the crest of a hill near the 41 mile. The vehicle rolled twice and was extensively damaged. Bruce suffered injuries to his hip and another ambulance was despatched from Darwin to take him to hospital. [7]

The township of Batchelor was now without an ambulance service and urgent talks were held between the Northern Territory Administration and the Department of Health to rectify the situation.

> *At present the nearest ambulance is the St John at Adelaide River, about 20 miles from Batchelor.* [8]

Without an ambulance, BARDAS folded and negotiations were held with St John for them to take over the Batchelor ambulance service. A St John first aid course was advertised to be held in Batchelor over two weekends in July 1973, which would be followed by an Ambulance Transport Nursing course. A minimum of ten participants were required and interested people were asked to contact Bruce Jones or Sister Helen Rollond. [9]

The first aid course was held over three weekends in September, finishing on Sunday 23rd and immediately on completion a local Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade was formed with Bruce Jones as Officer in Charge.[10] The ambulance was still kept at the Clinic and now had duty rosters displayed throughout town at the Police Station, the Clinic, on the Notice Board and at the Rum Jungle Recreation Club. St John Ambulance at Adelaide River could be contacted 24 hours per day by ringing the Adelaide River Police Station. [11]

The local newsletter, *Jungle Juice,* reported a "mock accident" staged in Batchelor in November. A "20 stone man" (that's about 91kg) was lying in a gateway with a fractured kneecap and other injuries.

> *To the rescue flew Margaretta Von Einem and Geoff Richardson, armed with bandages and splints, with which they proceeded to wrap up his wounds and prepare him for admission to hospital.*

It was expected that their patient, Kevin Onn, would walk again.

A "Ranch Night" was held at the Rum Jungle Recreation Club in early 1974 with $81 raised for the new St John Ambulance Division. This was greatly assisted by Meneling donating the steaks. Thanks were given to Lyle Deveson and Louie Robichaux of the Club's entertainment committee and to Boyne Litchfield for his "culinary consistency". President Bruce [Jones] was thanked for his support. [12]

The Batchelor Combined Division was registered in South Australia on 9th April 1974 and sanctioned by the Chief Commissioner on 11th May 1974. Boyne Litchfield transferred from Adelaide River to Batchelor and became Divisional Superintendent on 17th April. [13]

Other founding members were Douglas Barrie, Lyle Deveson, Joseph Grice, Ronald Hee, Vincent Johnston, Bruce Jones, Kevin Onn, Geoffrey Richardson, Dean Von Einem, Patricia Bennett, Rita Brooker, Robina Johnston, Margaretta Von Einem and Fay Cavenough.

All were graduates of the first aid course that resulted in the formation of the Division, apart from Boyne Litchfield and Dean Von Einem who received

their training in 1972 in Adelaide River.

Sister Ellie Pitts was responsible for training both Adelaide River and Batchelor Divisions. The training was held in Adelaide River with Batchelor members car pooling on training nights.[14]

In August 1974 the Darwin Corps reported that Batchelor Division was weak and that the vehicle donated by the mining company had been transferred to Adelaide River. This indicates that the BARDAS ambulance wasn't written off, but had been repaired. Douglas Barrie wrote in his book, *The Heart of Rum Jungle,* that St John sold the old Rum Jungle mine ambulance by tender to a Darwin building contractor for $825.[15]

The same Corps meeting reported that an American, Mr W.G. Grace [of Mount Bundey Station], had offered to assist St John to build an ambulance station in Adelaide River and buy a replacement ambulance. There was a question mark with this and it seems to have been wishful thinking as nothing ever came of it.[16]

Batchelor Division's 1974 Annual Return lists 14 active members with their first cadet, Carol Deveraux. They attended six road accidents and 28 other accidents and transported 35 patients over 3069 miles.

When Darwin was devastated by Cyclone Tracy the Batchelor ambulance and volunteers travelled north on Christmas Day 1974 to help out. Adelaide River members set up a First Aid Post on the highway for Darwin evacuees. Bruce Jones crewed an ambulance in Darwin to the point of burnout and dropped out of St John.

The full story is in *Part 2: Chapter 2, Cyclone Tracy*.

In mid 1975 Boyne Litchfield expressed a wish to retire when another Superintendent could be appointed. Because both Batchelor and Adelaide River were small Divisions it was proposed they should be amalgamated, subject to discussions with both Superintendents. [17]

Eddie Edwards was initially opposed to the amalgamation, but CSNC O'Donohoe seems to have talked him around to the idea. A meeting was held in Batchelor on 29th July 1975 to discuss points in a letter written to O'Donohoe by Edwards and Divisional Nursing Officer Ellie Pitts. Edwards would be Superintendent of the Adelaide River/Batchelor Combined Division and Vince Johnston was to be appointed Divisional Officer and OIC of Batchelor. Total strength of the combined division was 21 members.

Dr Lionel Crompton agreed to be Divisional Surgeon. His fortnightly clinic visits to Batchelor coincided with training nights, which would have suited both parties. Sister Ellie Pitts would be responsible to Dr Crompton for training and would make regular visits to Batchelor with Eddie Edwards to maintain liaison between the two Sections.

Non reliable members were to be weeded out prior to amalgamation. It was noted that some Batchelor members refused to carry out their Ambulance Transport Nursing (ATN) examinations. A decision on this matter was deferred by Corps staff.

The Divisions merged and were registered as Adelaide River/Batchelor Combined Division on 12th November 1975. [18]

An eight weeks first aid course started in Batchelor on Wednesday 7th April 1976 that was hoped to gain more members and ease the workload of the six on the ambulance roster. Attendance at the course was very encouraging and greater than expected numbers meant changing to a larger venue. [19]

With a need for a home for the Adelaide River Section negotiations were held with the Department of Health to acquire the Health Clinic building and land. In February 1977 it was reported that the matter was progressing satisfactorily and the building would be handed over to St John on completion of the Department of Health's tenancy in a few weeks time. [20] The building was vacated soon after and a lease taken on the premises from 3rd May with the Adelaide River Section given approval to move in. Negotiations were in progress with the Department of Lands to obtain a permanent block of land for the Division. [21]

Ellie Pitts took over as OAC of the combined Division while Superintendent Edwards was on leave from 26th October 1977. Ellie is recorded as being OAC from 9th December. [22]

The 1977 *Annual Return* has a Divisional strength of 19. There are some pencilled in entries for members joining as late as October 1978, so it would seem that there was also a disruption with Divisional paperwork. During 1977 the two ambulances travelled 7338 kilometres, attended 26 road accidents and 13 other accidents, transporting 69 patients.

In January 1978 it was noted that the OAC of Batchelor had gone on leave and closed the ambulance service without informing St John in Darwin.[23] Superintendent Edwards returned from leave in March and moved to Batchelor with Corps hoping this would improve the situation.[24] However, there was little change and a couple of weeks later there were complaints with the call out system and the manning of the Batchelor ambulance.

> *An almost total collapse exists due to apathy on the Section and townspeople ... suggest a mini-recruit drive to stimulate interest.* [25]

There was a need for Corps Staff to go to Adelaide River on a weekly basis to assist in the running of meetings. A working bee needed to be held at the Adelaide River Centre *"as the Council had given approval for work to proceed with upgrading the building etc. but to date nothing had been done on the matter."* [26]

Superintendent Edwards resigned soon after and Sister Ellie Pitts became OAC of Adelaide River on 1st May 1978. Vince Johnston was OAC of Batchelor.

On the 10th of April Ellie advised Darwin Corps that a training program was in place and running smoothly. A First Aid Course had commenced at Adelaide River with assistance from Training Department who had been requested to organise the examination on 3rd May. The course had eight potential members from Adelaide River and two from Batchelor. It was hoped that a course to be held later in Batchelor would have greater numbers from that area.

Due to the Brigade's requirement that Nursing members hold Home Nursing qualifications a course would be run shortly. Although males were not excluded there were several husband and wife members in the Division with wives given priority. Another course would be held later for the husbands who may wish to attend.

Vince Johnston reported that the roster was always filled at the Batchelor station, but there were problems with holding regular training nights due to members' work commitments. Because of the variety of vehicles that had been at Batchelor there was regular vehicle orienteering instruction.

There were currently only three members available at Batchelor, but this would improve as people returned from leave.

> *DNO Pitts requested the assistance of Officers of the Corps to get the Division back on its feet. Assistance in the past from District level in all matters from training through to administration had been lacking.* [27]

Problems in Batchelor were ongoing and the May 1978 District and Corps meeting reported that Corps Superintendent Grant Keetley had been unable to arrange a meeting in Batchelor.

> *There are insufficient members and lack of leadership seems to be the main problem. It is felt that the ambulance service is not available 24 hours a day and the problem must be sorted out.* [28]

It was further reported that the Batchelor Sister had transported a patient with a suspected fractured pelvis on a mattress in the back of her car. District Superintendent Warren Burgess checked this complaint and found that *"the ambulance was not requested or considered necessary [by the Sister] on the occasion."* [29]

In June, approval was obtained from the Department of Health to park the Adelaide River ambulance at the Health Clinic, rather than the Police Station. [30]

Both Sections of the Division were in crisis and in July 1978 Adelaide River had just three active members, with two of them being away on leave. Batchelor had just one active member, Ros Jones, and in her absence the ambulance was manned by the Sister at the Health Clinic.

> *A lethargic attitude still exists which was made even more apparent at the public meeting held recently when no-one turned up in support. Also, a circular was distributed re the ambulance service, but unfortunately none were returned.* [31]

The situation improved and in August there were eight prospective members in Batchelor, which increased to sixteen in November, including officers on reserve.[32] The *Northern Territory News* reported on the night of Wednesday 15th November 1978 when eight new recruits received their first aid certificates. They were married couples Gary and Christina Jones, James and Lesley Kelly, Guisseppe and June Pirri and Lynette Stone.[33] Ros Jones, reported in the newspaper as a new recruit, was an existing member, having qualified on 3rd May 1978.

Adelaide River had a full strength of five in August and the notation that "*Training Department has offered to assist in showing this Division the manner in which vehicles should be maintained*" indicates some serious problems with the ambulance care and maintenance. [34]

Adelaide River's problems persisted into 1979 with just four members, being too few to man the ambulance at all times. Darwin staff stipulated that they must be informed immediately when this occurred and that such instances must coincide with the Batchelor ambulance being manned. [35]

District Superintendent Grant Keetley and St John NT Manager Warren Burgess went to Adelaide River to sort out the roster system with hoped for improvements in the near future. A door knock was to be conducted on 29th February to hopefully gain another six members. [36]

A First Aid Course started in Adelaide River on 24th February 1979 with seven attending.[37] All seven graduated and a Casualty Care and Transport course started soon after with eleven trainees. As a result the strength of the Adelaide River Section doubled. [38]

Batchelor still had big problems and when District and Corps staff members attended a meeting in March only three out of fourteen members showed up. The lack of enthusiasm was quite evident. It was suggested to promulgate a circular among the local members to encourage attendance at fortnightly meetings for the next 12 months.

There was also potential for a Cadet Division, but a problem with finding somebody to lead the cadets. [39]

Training was ongoing with a CC&T course in Batchelor and members going to Darwin for driver training. Adelaide River members also attended driver training and all passed a First Aid examination held on 9th May.[40] Nursing Officer Anne Twigg from Darwin Division held Home Nursing Instruction in Adelaide River. Also, a local teacher's aide indicated interest in starting a Cadet Division. [41]

Problems with some members causing trouble prompted Ellie Pitts to request that District Superintendent Grant Keetley attend the Adelaide River Division to help rectify the matter. As a result, one member resigned while the other decided to attend a further nine Divisional meetings and complete training in Home Nursing and CC&T.[42]

However, this wasn't the end of problems with these members and in November 1982 it was reported that the local policeman got involved and took sides against Ellie Pitts.[43]

Leadership problems persisted in Batchelor with a noted lack of enthusiasm prompting Commissioner Alan Bromwich to write a letter in July requesting an improvement in the next few weeks.[44] Nothing changed and a lack of leadership was still being reported in March 1980.

A Preliminary First Aid course was held in Adelaide River with 13 children passing, enabling a Cadet Division to be started. The Divisional Registration form was signed off in Darwin on 24th

October 1979 when they became a Section attached to the Adelaide River Combined Division. They became a full Division when the registration was sanctioned by the Chief Commissioner on 4th March 1980.

Founding members of the Adelaide River Combined Cadet Division were Superintendent Carol Reidel; Ambulance Cadets Graham Cox, Daniel Dellar, Jacob Dellar, Michael Pitts, Richard Reidel and Jed Fawcett; Nursing Cadets Rebecca Byrne, Ellen Cox, Patricia Cortes, Yvonne Davidson, Susan Hogan, Katrina Roebuck, Teruzita Corpus and Vickie Dellar.

A lot of documents in this period refer to Batchelor Division and Adelaide River Division, giving an impression that the amalgamated Division had split into two separate entities. Ever since Eddie Edwards resigned in April 1978 the amalgamated Division had been without a Superintendent with both Sections operating as separate groups under an OAC.

Sister Ellen Pitts was appointed probationary Superintendent of the Adelaide River Combined Division on 14th November 1979. [45]

She was also named as Superintendent of Batchelor Division in the 1979 Annual Return, being pencilled in as Superintendent in the list of Divisional members. Other Batchelor Officers listed were Boyne Litchfield (Superintendent, Reserve) and Vince Johnston (Divisional Officer, Reserve). Of the 15 other names, most were crossed out, giving a total strength of five members. It would seem that with many resignations, Ellie had been called in to take charge of a foundering Division.

In March 1980 with just five members in Batchelor a door knock was proposed to gain more recruits. While the adults were struggling, a Cadet movement had started and there were now 17 cadets in Batchelor, but with so far no attempts to register a Cadet Division. [46]

Ros Jones took command as Superintendent of the Batchelor Cadets on 25th April 1980; however



Adelaide River Officers and Cadets, 8th November 1981—Sister Ellen Pitts (left) and Commissioner Alan Bromwich (centre)

the date of registration of the Batchelor Combined Cadet Division is unknown. Various people have compiled lists of Divisional registrations over the years and Batchelor Cadets appears in none of them. Routine Orders for 1981 list Division and Section registrations between October 1979 and November 1981 with no mention of Batchelor Cadets. The *1981 St John Ambulance NT Annual Report* lists new Divisions, but not Batchelor Cadets. This makes it appear that the Batchelor Cadet Division was never registered.

The Batchelor Cadets folded in early 1982 when Ros Jones relinquished the position with nobody else willing to take over. They started again in 1985 with Des Thornton as Superintendent. A notation in the May 1985 District Staff meeting minutes said they were out of recess and now a functional Division with a Superintendent and two Divisional Officers. One could take it from this that everybody assumed that the Division had been registered and as it had only been in recess there was no need for re-registration. Unfortunately, Routine Orders for the 1980s are very scarce in St John Archives, making it difficult to delve any deeper into this matter, but the available evidence points to the Batchelor Combined Cadet Division having fallen through the cracks and was never registered.

The area's ambulance service was discussed in May 1980 when it was determined that Batchelor averaged 2.8 trips per month and Adelaide River had 3.2. It was considered to base the whole system at Batchelor, but decided to maintain the status quo. [47]

Corps Superintendent Bob Brennan attended the Division in Adelaide River for a few weeks during May *"to broaden administration matters and duties"*, while Cadet Superintendent Carol Reidel went to Darwin each Friday to observe how a Cadet Division was managed.

Batchelor completed a First Aid course, with a CC&T course scheduled to start in June. Bob Brennan also suggested that a vacant house be converted for use as an ambulance centre.

*DSO Burgess to raise the matter with the Building Committee chairman, although it has been programmed that a building be constructed to house the ambulance.* [48]

It took another ten years before that building was finally constructed.

In June it was reported that the Headmaster of the Batchelor School had refused St John's use of the school for Divisional meetings. CSNC Brennan wrote to the Headmaster and sent copies of the letter to the Commissioner and Director of Education. [49]

The problem was resolved when rooms at Batchelor College were made available. [50]

Lyn Stone took over as OAC of the Batchelor Combined Division on 30th September 1980 and had her appointment as Superintendent recommended for substantiation on 6th October 1981. [51]

The 1980 Annual Return lists nine active members and that the ambulance travelled 2000 miles attending eight road accidents and one other accident and transported 21 patients. All of the original members had now gone, leaving Cadet Superintendent Ros Jones as the longest serving volunteer. Other members who joined earlier in 1973, Boyne Litchfield and Vince Johnston, were both listed on the Reserve.

When Ros Jones relinquished the position of Cadet Superintendent the now vacant position was advertised with applications closing Friday 16th April 1982. This date was later extended to Friday 7th May, but with no applicants and without a leader the Cadets folded.[52]

To overcome the problem of low membership a public meeting was held in Batchelor on Wednesday 9th June 1982. Twenty eight people attended and 12 indicated they would like to undertake training to maintain the Division and ambulance service. Ros Jones told the meeting that another two residents unable to attend were also interested in joining the Division. Senior Training Officer Graham Morrison was approached by a further two interested people after the meeting.

The following was made clear to the meeting:[53]

- ◊ The Division would not be allowed to continue operations without 12 members.
- ◊ Ambulance services were available to the town from Adelaide River (½ hour) and Darwin (1 hour).
- ◊ A First Aid course followed by a CC&T would commence at Batchelor on Monday 5th July 1982.

Twenty one people passed the First Aid course and 16 started the CC&T course, with 14 finishing and qualifying as Student Ambulance Officer/Driver in December. [54]

Ros Jones wrote in *Outback Ambulance*: [55]

> *"in 1982 we had twenty two members, our highest enrolment since the inception of the Division. At times our numbers have decreased to two and at the threat of losing the ambulance unless we could muster up some more volunteers people have rallied and given us the support we have needed to maintain a Batchelor Division."*

In November, District Ambulance Officer Rod Bramley received a compliment about Batchelor from a paid ambulance crew about a patient transfer. They were reported to be well dressed, efficient and completed a perfect patient hand over.

> *"I can't remember when I have had praise about this Division previously and would credit officers Haldane, Wilson and training staff for their performance."* [56]

Batchelor Division's 1982 Annual Return lists 22 members, with 15 having joined that year. Officers were Superintendent Lynette Stone and Divisional Officer Vince Johnston.

The Promotion Selection Board met in May 1983 and discussed the appointment of a Divisional Superintendent for Batchelor Combined Division. Lyn Stone wished to resign from the Brigade and Ros Jones applied for the vacant position. Ros had previous experience as Superintendent of the Cadets and through her active interest in the Adult Division was *"essentially responsible for maintaining the St John Service at Batchelor."* She was to be appointed on six months probation. Ros was confirmed in the position and held the Division together for another ten years.[57]

Sister Ellie Pitts transferred from Divisional Superintendent supernumerary Adelaide River to Casuarina Combined Division on 23rd April 1984.[58] From there she went on to become founding Superintendent of the Cadet Band Division in 1986.

The OAC of Adelaide River, Paul Nouwens, tragically died in a motorcycle accident in August 1984. The Brigade supplied wreaths and pallbearers for the funeral. [59]

Batchelor Combined Division's 1984 Annual Return is nicely typed, but members have now been reduced to initials in place of given names. There were now 16 members, four of whom were officers. The method of reporting had now changed with less information required about ambulance transports. Division members gave 62 hours on public duties and 193 hours on transports.

The Batchelor Cadet Division restarted on 17th May 1985 with Des Thornton as Superintendent and Divisional Officers Marion Young and Ken Hogg. There were five Ambulance Cadets and ten Nursing Cadets.[60]

In September 1985, St John Council was informed that Adelaide River was so weak that it would probably be absorbed into Batchelor. [61]

The 1985 Annual Return for Batchelor shows that Brigade volunteers had now been given membership identity numbers. These were obviously allocated by Division in alphabetic order, rather than by date of the member joining St John. We see new recruits having lower ID numbers than people who had been members for years. The Division now had 17 members who gave 90 voluntary hours at public duties, 231 hours on ambulance transport duties and 57 hours for miscellaneous duties.

In June 1986 a decision was made to withdraw the ambulances from Batchelor and Adelaide

River.[62] The Adelaide River Division closed and the ambulance was withdrawn on 1st July due to declining numbers and the very low workload in the area. Batchelor remained to cover both areas and there was an effort to boost their falling numbers.[63] Brigade members in Adelaide River and future recruits were encouraged to join Batchelor.[64]

The *Northern Territory News* reported that Adelaide River had dwindled with just two volunteers to run the ambulance service. In the past year Adelaide River transported 17 patients and Batchelor had only 14 transports.[65]

Batchelor Combined Division's 1986 Annual Return now has one officer, Superintendent Ros Jones, five Privates and three Nursing members. They attended 33 instructional meetings and gave 47 voluntary hours at public duties, 8067 hours on transport duties and 6 hours miscellaneous. The dramatic jump in transport hours would mean that they were now recording standby hours as well as actual time on the road.

Corps Superintendent Craig Cousins wrote to Ambulance Service Operations Manager Garry Schoolmeester in September 1987 that the garaging of the Batchelor ambulance left much to be desired. There was past talk of a carport, but that was all a load of hot air. He suggested a shade cloth shelter high and wide enough for the Department of Health dental bus/van to also fit under. There was also the need for a battery charger to keep the vehicle batteries topped up as they presently went flat from the suction unit.[66]

Ros Jones wrote to Craig Cousins in November 1987 about the Division's training needs, equipment storage and a shelter for the ambulance that was parked out in the weather.[67]

The Division ideally needed a lecturer from Darwin to conduct ambulance training each week, or at a minimum at least fortnightly, but weekly for specific courses. There needed to be training guidelines for Batchelor and listed qualifications for Ambulance Officers. There had never been a Driver Instruction course held in Batchelor and should be at least once per year.

There should be combined training with Casuarina and Darwin Divisions at least twice per year and a mock accident scene utilising all three Divisions. Training was also needed in extricating someone trapped in a vehicle using the Jaws of Life.

At present all equipment was stored at Batchelor College with a strong probability that they would want their room back next year. Would it be possible for St John to get a demountable from the Government to be used as storage/training room? Public First Aid courses would still be conducted in the Batchelor College complex. A demountable would need furniture, toilet facilities and be airconditioned.

Batchelor Town Planning should be approached for a block of land on which St John could erect a permanent ambulance shelter.

District Staff acknowledged the problems in Batchelor with a request for the St John Council to approach Lands Department for some land and a demountable building to be purchased as a centre.[68]

Garry Schoolmeester and Craig Cousins visited Batchelor on Monday 8th February 1988 *"to research current problems with housing and shelter for the vehicle."* [69]

The vehicle had never been housed properly which led to the deterioration of every vehicle stationed at Batchelor. Various options had been discussed over a long period of time, but never acted on. The Division was soon to lose their storage area at the College, leaving just the classroom where they held meetings and training.

> *"It has now come to a point where a decision has to be made on the future of the Batchelor service. Either we support them and commit finance to giving them a home or we withdraw our services from this area."* [70]

There was land available in Batchelor, listed in order of priority, and both would require finance from St John:

- ◊ Land adjacent to the Fire Station obtainable from Lands and Housing. St John would need to erect a carport or garage for the vehicle and erect a hall which could be shared with the Fire Brigade. Power, water and sewerage would need to be connected and it could be possible

for the firies to share costs.

◊ Land adjacent or at rear of Health Clinic was also available, requiring the same buildings and services.

*"If we do not commit to housing the Division our problems will continue."* [71]

It was decided that DSO Rod Bramley and CSO Peter Winckler should approach the local Member, Terry McCarthy MLA to try to resolve the problem.[72] It was Commissioner Lionel Crompton who discussed the matter with Terry McCarthy and he asked for a submission for a long term solution that would go to Cabinet in due course. In the meantime the ambulance was to be housed with the Fire Brigade with a roller door installed for protection.[73] This storage solution never happened.

Both Batchelor Divisions were inspected on 13th September 1988 where the Cadets performed well and their Division was running smoothly.

A letter of thanks was sent to Ros and Bruce Jones, as well as to their employers *"regarding their absence for so many hours during the recent emergency in that area"*. [74]

Ros and Bruce were called from work just after 8.00am to Tolmer Falls in Litchfield National Park. The roads were gravel and corrugated, it was January and the middle of the wet season. A tourist travelling with a friend had walked around to the top of the spillway at Tolmer Falls, this being before the area was closed to tourists. One of them, an engineer of some description, threw a stone over the falls into the pool below and counted how many seconds before the stone hit the water. He decided it was a safe distance to jump from the top and he did just that. His engineering skills were less than perfect and he hit the water at an angle, fracturing his sternum and with a stable neck fracture. However, these injuries were unknown at the time of rescue.

His friend called out and the injured person yelled back that he was safe on a rock ledge in the water and to go and get help. It was sundown, there was little to no traffic on the roads and the friend eventually fell asleep in the car. It obviously didn't occur to him to drive off to seek help.

The next morning a man from Transport & Works came along and used his radio to call for police and ambulance, hence the callout for Bruce and Ros Jones.

The Police Task Force, local Police from Batchelor, and ambos Bruce and Ros edged their way down into the deep Tolmer gorge. The gorge and creek bed were covered with various and very beautiful ferns and rainforest creepers that you would pay a small fortune for at a nursery. The giant boulders that needed to be climbed over along the flooded creek bed made the going extremely slow in some places.

On arrival at the flooded plunge pool the Task Force members and Bruce stripped down to their jocks and swam across the turbulent waters with a Stokes Litter and a cervical collar. The water was roaring over Tolmer Falls above them as Bruce checked the patient, applied the cervical collar and guided the Task Force members to load the patient into the Stokes Litter. At first the Police thought there were enough people to support the litter and patient as they swam back, but the water was too rough and too deep. One swam back to get a Bog Bag from a Police vehicle and using this aid they were able to swim and support the patient in the litter.

By this time the Channel 8 helicopter had arrived with reporter Andy Bruyn, who was busily getting a story together for the evening news.

Ros examined the patient with Primary and Secondary surveys and ascertained that he was suffering from hypothermia from being exposed to the waterfall spray all night on his rock ledge, and that he had a suspected fractured sternum and sore neck. Needless to say, they treated him as a spinal.

Next was the arduous trip back. The Police did a fantastic job in carrying the patient in extremely difficult and flooded terrain. But it was very slow. They had to walk a few kilometres before they could reach an area where the Police could get in with their 4WD Toyota Landcruiser. Bruce and Ros sat on the floor in the back with the patient with their legs braced against the litter to try and keep it stable. The driver seemed inexperienced in four-

wheel driving, with the vehicle slipping and sliding up the near vertical slope and even slipping backwards. Only a little, but enough to alarm the ambos.

Suddenly, there was the helicopter in a very small clearing. The litter with the patient was tied onto the back seat and stuck out both sides; Ros jumped in the passenger seat and off they flew up the gorge to the Tolmer car park in a short, but very memorable trip with magnificent scenery.

The chopper at first didn't want to transport Bruce, but a bit of persuasion changed their minds. After all, the ambulance would have had to wait until he made the arduous overland trip back, much to the discomfort of the patient who needed to get to hospital without further unnecessary delay.

The ambulance had an extremely slow trip back along the unsealed, badly corrugated Litchfield Park Road. After leaving their patient at Royal Darwin Hospital, Ros and Bruce made it back to Casuarina Centre in time to watch the Channel 8 news and see themselves on television promoted to "paramedics at the scene". By the time they cleaned the vehicle, fuelled up and got a bite to eat, not having eaten since breakfast, then driving home, they had been on that particular job in excess of twelve hours.[75]

The saga of premises and ambulance parking continued into October 1988 when it was advised that the Division was pursuing sharing the Fire Station for meetings and ambulance parking. St John needed to obtain a lease on an area adjacent to the Fire Station to build a parking bay for the ambulance with $10,000 allocated in the current budget for the project. It was hoped that in the future a meeting hall for use by both services could be built.[76]

The following month there was some action with Garry Schoolmeester making a request to Lands Department for a vacant Crown Land site adjacent the Volunteer Fire Station on which to build a shed. The Department of Health was persuaded to allocate $7,000 in the current budget for the project.

A price from suppliers in Darwin for a 9m x 6m shed was $4,711 in kit form, $9,500 erected. There was no Lions Club in Batchelor, but they would help with construction in a joint effort with St John members. All money saved would go to have power and telephone connected.[77]

Ros Jones wrote a story for *Outback Ambulance* in late 1988 in which she reported that the Division had seven members on the books, six of whom were active on the ambulance. All six sat their Basic Introduction to Ambulance Care examination on the 7th November, examined by Corps Superintendent Charlie Cuff, Darwin Division OIC Glenn Getzin and Lindsay King. Kathy Stephens and Wayne Dillon played the patients. Wayne had been in charge of training for the Batchelor Division during the year and had done an admirable job.

People thanked for training were Lindsay King, Glenn Getzin, Sue Williams, Rod Hocking, Heather McGowan, Graeme Rayson and Gordon Bowman.

Between 10th January and 9th November 1988 Batchelor responded to 51 callouts. October was particularly busy with eleven callouts in a twelve day period. On 10th October there were three jobs in the day. A breakdown of all these cases gave 13 motor vehicle accidents, eleven for sickness, seven maternity, six cardiac, two snakebite, one attempted and one actual suicide, one anaphylactic shock, one hypothermia, one aircraft crash, one work accident, one gynaecology, one sporting accident one domestic accident and three Ambulance Not Required (ANR).[78]

The new shed for the ambulance was a long time coming and finally became a reality when it was officially opened on Thursday 3rd May 1990. However, while the shed was now up it lacked facilities for the Division, such as power, telephone and a toilet/ablutions block. Donations for the fitting out were received from Jackie Hargraves of Rum Jungle Motor Inn, Gaden Drilling, Woodcutters Mine and the Adelaide River Progress Association.

The Batchelor ambulance service extended as far south as Emerald Springs, north to the Manton Dam area and into Litchfield National Park. There were also the occasional mine transports and evacuations from Batchelor and Adelaide River Health Clinics. With evacuations, the ambulance

usually travelled north to meet up with a Darwin ambulance for patient transfer. However, there were times when the Batchelor ambulance needed to travel all the way to Royal Darwin Hospital, a round trip of 200km for the crew.

Public duties included the Adelaide River Show and races, and polocrosse carnivals held over Easter and during August and September.[79]

A concrete apron in front of the shed was completed in July 1990, thanks to a donation from the Adelaide River Progress Association. Water was connected in November and shelving was installed. The electrician worked after the Christmas break to get everything ready for the New Year.

In early February 1991, Public Relations Manager Kezia Purick organised high visibility sign writing to be done on the shed. At last everybody could see who owned that mysterious new silver building in town.

During 1990 the Batchelor ambulance attended 64 cases and transported 74 patients. These included 15 motor vehicle accidents, three industrial accidents, two sporting accidents, seven domestic accidents, 27 sickness cases, nine maternity and one drowning.

Divisional stalwart Des Thornton transferred to Alice Springs in late 1991 where he became Superintendent of the Alice Springs Cadet Division. Des came in for special praise in that he had been *"a most reliable ambulance officer and he will be sorely missed by the people of Batchelor, probably more so than many of them ever realise! Thank you Des ... for all the voluntary hours you have given over the years."* [80]

With Des Thornton's departure and nobody willing to take charge, the Cadet Division folded once again.

In October it was noted that further training was needed to upgrade skills in observation and a Driver course was being organised for the following month.

> *"Most members of Batchelor Division were Advanced First Aiders and not Ambulance Qualified, so the question was raised whether it should be classed as a Mobile First Aid Post."* [81]

The next news from Batchelor was in 1993 when Tracy Watts from the AOTC conducted an Introduction to Ambulance Care course for new members.

> *"This is assisting the new members cope with the problems of being a considerable distance away from Darwin's aid. Batchelor provide a valuable service to the Batchelor/ Adelaide River area and are very often unrewarded and forgotten in their endeavours."* [82]

Ros Jones wrote in May 1993 that with the Division halfway through the current IAC course, one had dropped out due to work commitments and others were working very long hours with their jobs and unable to attend. Of those who could attend regular training, two were unable to cope with the amount of study required. While not many were expected to pass the IAC theory, they did appreciate the time that was put into their training.

> *"Tracy has been a great support to us and has a great deal of faith in our abilities. How she keeps going I don't know. I just hope that all her work in the Ambulance Training department is appreciated and that most importantly she doesn't get burnt out from her job."* [83]

It was Ros who suffered burn out after a decade as Superintendent and she and husband Bruce took leave from Operations Branch in late August 1993. [84]

Bruce had re-joined St John in December 1987 and now returned to the Division in February 1994 while Ros resigned as Superintendent and took 12 months leave until February 1995. Donna Stone had been OIC since Ros first took leave and now became Divisional Superintendent,[85] a job she held until 2003.

The Batchelor IAC course was halted in late September 1993 due to a lack of numbers and the ambulance service was restricted with insufficient qualified volunteers.[86]

There was interest shown in restarting the

Cadet Division in 1994, but this was put on hold because of the lack of adult members.[87]

With members of Batchelor Division not wanting to enrol in an IAC course, District Staff decided they should finish the SMP and remain as a First Aid response unit.[88]

The departure of Ros Jones as Superintendent meant the end of her very informative articles in *Outback Ambulance* and other reports. It also coincided with the end of regular mention in District and Corps meeting minutes and the recorded history of the Division now becomes quite vague.

With a lack of ambulance trained volunteers in the area a public meeting was held on Wednesday 23rd May 2001 to recruit new members. The region was becoming increasingly busy with tourists visiting Litchfield National Park and there was a growing need for a locally based ambulance service. The meeting was attended by Territory Superintendent Sue Cooper, Territory Sergeant Major Rod Hocking and Ambulance Operations Manager Trevor Sellick.[89]

There was no mention of this meeting in subsequent Operations Branch meeting minutes and its outcome is unknown.

Despite their problems the Division continued to provide a volunteer ambulance service and in 2006 were on-call and rostered for the ambulance for 48,033 hours, as well as providing 285 hours of first aid coverage at community and sporting events.

Bruce Jones was awarded a Priory Vote of Thanks in 1993, admitted to the Order of St John as Serving Brother in 1996 and promoted to Officer in 2008. He received the 22 Year Bar to his Service Medal of the Order of St John in 2007.

Ros was honoured by being admitted to the Order of St John as Serving Sister at an Investiture at Government House, Darwin, in May 1989 [90] and was promoted to Officer in the Order of St John in 2006. She received the 32 Year Bar to her Service Medal of the Order of St John in 2012.

Ros was further honoured by being awarded the Centenary Medal on 1st January 2001 *"for many years service to St John Ambulance in the Batchelor and Adelaide River areas"*. [91] She also received a Coomalie Citizen Award on Australia Day 1995 in recognition of volunteer hours with St John Ambulance.

Donna Stone, Ian Castle and Richard Skinner were awarded Priory Votes of Thanks in 1997. Donna was admitted to the Order of St John as Serving Sister in 2004 and Richard was admitted as Serving Brother in 2006. Bruce Garnett was awarded a Priory Vote of Thanks in 2009 and was admitted to the Order of St John as Member in 2012.

Donna Stone resigned as Superintendent in 2003 with her successor, Ian Castle, being appointed on 10th July. Ian resigned in August 2006 and was succeeded by Bruce Garnett.

Batchelor was awarded Adult Division of the Year in 2005 in recognition for their hard work in maintaining a volunteer ambulance service as well as covering all public duties in their area.

In 2007 the Darwin Lions Beer Can Regatta donated a new Mercedes ambulance to the Batchelor Division. The combined efforts of the Lions Clubs of Casuarina, Nightcliff, Litchfield and Palmerston raised $50,000 over three years at the Regatta. This was matched dollar for dollar by the Lions Clubs International Foundation.

The St John Volunteers in Batchelor donated their time to the community responding to major incidents, accidents and transporting patients to Darwin from the Batchelor Community Health Centre. [92]

However, these days there are no ambulance callouts at all for Batchelor and the vehicle is just used for public duties.

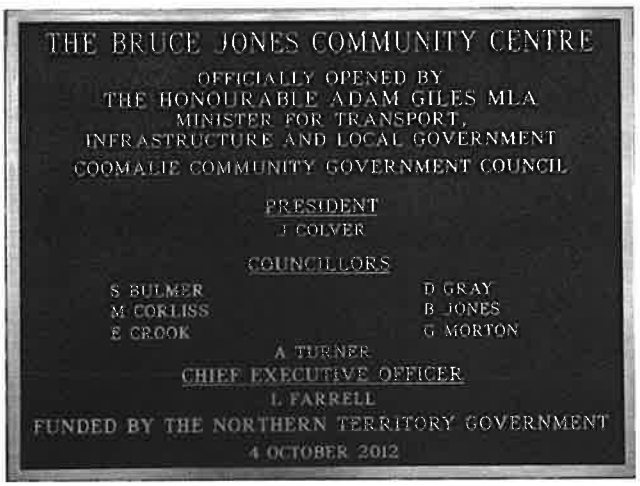
Bruce Jones finally retired from St John in January 2011. As well as volunteering with St John, Bruce was and is also:

- Founding President of the Batchelor-Adelaide River District Ambulance Service in 1972.
- OIC of the Batchelor Combined Division from its foundation on 23rd September 1973 until

the Division was registered on 9th April 1974 with Boyne Litchfield as Superintendent.

- ◊ A volunteer in the Batchelor Fire and Emergency Response Group for many years and was awarded the 30 Year Service Medal.
- ◊ A volunteer with the Batchelor Tourist Information Centre.
- ◊ A member of the Coomalie Council since the inauguration of the Council in 1991 and is currently Vice President
- ◊ A volunteer with the Clean Up Australia campaign
- ◊ Coomalie Community Australia Day Citizen of the Year in 1999
- ◊ 2008 NT Achiever of the Year in the Australia Day Council Awards

On 4th October 2012 the new *Bruce Jones Community Centre* was officially opened in Batchelor by Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Local Government, Adam Giles MLA.[93] The honour was to recognise Bruce's 21 continuous years as a Coomalie Shire Councillor and his many more years of voluntary service to the community.



# Chapter 2
# Alice Springs

### A false start

The first record found of any St John activity in Alice Springs was a short newspaper article in July 1952 about the Centralian Football Association seeking the assistance of St John Ambulance men at the oval for the Sunday games. Les Poole had volunteered his services and the Association now needed another to assist him; training would be given to whoever volunteered. [1]

This was raised by Reg Harris, skipper of the Federal Club after four players had been taken to hospital for treatment during a match and a number had to stand down for some weeks because of injuries.

When Pat McQuillen[2] interviewed Les Poole many years later she found that he had learnt his first aid in Quorn, South Australia. He came to Alice Springs in 1936 with the Department of the Interior and later worked for the railways. Les started as first aid man at the football just after WW2 ended and only stopped when St John took over.

The football was always played on Anzac Oval on Sunday afternoons in the winter when the Ghan was in town. Train crews played and later formed a team of their own, Railway Rovers.

> *"In later years some of the train crews did volunteer duties around town at public functions as many belonged to South Australian Divisions. When Alice Springs had a Division of their own these railway men became its backbone and helped to keep the Division alive and well."* [3]

In November 1952 Norman Bradbury and Surgeon Lieutenant O'Donoghue travelled to Daly Waters, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs to conduct lectures in *First Aid to the Injured*, primarily for DCA personnel, but also open to the public.

The *Centralian Advocate* announced that Alice Springs would soon have the opportunity to form *"a detachment of the famous St John Ambulance Brigade"*. The Brigade *"would be pleased to hear from qualified First Aiders or others interested in becoming members of the Brigade or nursing detachment"* to contact Mrs Rawle at the Hospital or Mr Chamberlain in Darwin. [4]

Bradbury conducted examinations and enlisted eight members into the newly formed section of the Brigade, and Mr Claude Merrill, *"a qualified St. Johns man since 1942, was appointed District Superintendent"*.

Other members of the section were: Mrs. R. Williams, Messrs. Reg de Fontaine (secretary and ambulance man), J. Heggie, L. Hickman (treasurer), Clive Wright, Archie St Clair, R. Peacock, I. McLeod and D. Lowry.

Claude Merrill said that the Brigade would seek the support of all sporting bodies, provide the usual St John services and hold weekly classes and monthly lectures at which he hoped local doctors would give talks.[5]

The worth of the new Section at football matches was expressed by the *Centralian Advocate* in July 1953 when it reported that *"District Superintendent Claude Merrill has been present every Sunday. He is always onboard when a player goes down."* This was considered much better than having players risking serious injury at the hands of *"willing, but unskilled team mates or spectators"*. [6]

Norman Bradbury returned to Alice Springs in late October 1953 with Darwin Divisional Officer McKenzie Clayton to give a series of lectures on first aid at the public school.[7] They later returned in early November and attended the Pioneers Football Club's trophy night when Claude Merrill was thanked for his work during the season.[8]

On the 13th November it was reported that first aid classes and lectures were held every day and night in Alice Springs the previous week by Bradbury and Clayton. Examination papers were set by Chief Medical Officer Dr Welton and Dr Moody conducted the theory tests.

Bradbury was impressed with the interest shown that *"augers well for the future of the*

*brigade that will be formed here".* He and Clayton were sure there would be plenty of trained men available for sporting functions in the area. They thanked Mr Hall, Head Teacher of the Alice Springs School, and the Boy Scouts organisation for their help during the week.[9]

The *Centralian Advocate* reported that a *"revival meeting"* was held on Tuesday night, 17th November to elect officers of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Alice Springs.

Why *revival meeting*? Did the reporter think that St John Ambulance was a religious sect or was he referring to the fact that officers had been elected the previous year? The answer to that is lost to history.

The following officers were elected, or in some cases re-elected: Mr Claude Merrill, President; Mr Kevin Neander, secretary; Mr Lyle Hickman, treasurer; Mr Bill Brown, ambulance officer; Mr Jack Rawson, sergeant; Mr Austin, corporal.

The meeting decided to investigate forming an Association to act as the executive body, but there is no record of this actually happening.

Classes with practical demonstrations of first aid and general Brigade work were held Tuesday nights at the Youth Centre with newcomers welcome and anyone could apply to sit for examinations.[10] Later in the month it was decided to hold Brigade meetings every second Tuesday night at the Scout Hall.[11]

A Button Day was held on Saturday 14th November and during the morning in Tennant Creek Mr Harold Hagan and an unnamed Darwin member collected £28/15/3, quite a good amount for the time. The amount raised in Alice Springs isn't known, but the largest donation of £15 was received from the Central Australian Football Association.

Because St John Ambulance in the Territory was still a sub-centre under South Australia all first aid certificates had to be issued from the Association in Adelaide and it was mid December before the examination results came through. Ten out of fifteen entrants passed the first year exam and Claude Merrill passed his second year test. The successful first year members were Mrs T. Webb, Mrs D. Hickman, Mrs B. Oliver, Messrs A. Drew, H.J. Hogan, D.L. Hickman, Alf McRae, S. Oughtred and A. and V. Browne.[12]

Brigade Secretary Kev Neander launched an appeal for reading material for patients at the Alice Springs Hospital and also advised that further examinations would be held in the New Year.[13]

In February 1954 the Brigade announced that meeting nights at the Scout Hall would now be held every Monday instead of Tuesday. Classes covered all aspects of First Aid to the Injured and were open to all interested members of the public.[14]

South Australian Commissioner Dr F.K. Mugford arrived in Alice Springs on Sunday 23rd May 1954 after having visited Darwin and other northern centres. He announced that a full division of the Brigade would be formed in Alice Springs soon with Alf McRae as Superintendent and Bruce McKane, a Brigade member from Darwin, as second in command. With the start of a new division Norman Bradbury would now be promoted to Corps Superintendent to oversee St John Ambulance activities in the Northern Territory.[15]

In mid June the Brigade reported that three men, Superintendent Alf McRae, Ambulance Officer Bruce McKane and Claude Merrill had treated 49 casualties since 16th May. These comprised 35 cases at football, eight at hockey, three at junior league football, two off-duty cases and one miscellaneous.

There were now eight fully trained members with another four women and eight men undergoing training. [16]

The *Centralian Advocate* advertised in July that the Northern Territory Corps of the St John Ambulance Brigade was organising a fund raising NT Queen Competition. A long list of rules was published with nominations closing 8th August with B. McKane, PMG and N. McRae, care gaol as contacts in Alice Springs. [17]

With no entrants by August the closing date was extended to the first week in September and

the entry fee was reduced from £50 to £5. Alice Springs girls would have their fare paid to Darwin for the judging and the winner would receive a wardrobe of clothes and a trip to New Zealand with all expenses found.[18]

No further reports on this contest were found in Darwin or Alice Springs newspapers and it's not known how it went or if it even went ahead.

Despite the promising start Brigade members actually doing first aid duties were disappointing and in August the *Centralian Advocate* reported that a total of 77 casualties had been treated at sports meetings in June and July by just two active members, Alf McRae and Bruce McKane. These casualties comprised 58 in senior football and 13 in senior hockey. There were only five injuries in junior football and hockey, none of them serious.

Training classes had been reduced to monthly and then cancelled due to lack of support. Classes were initially well attended, but had fallen off to just one or two attending and it was considered unreasonable to ask a doctor to hold lectures for such a poor showing.[19]

A July 1955 *Centralian Advocate* report names Bruce McKane as Superintendent with one other unnamed person as the active membership of the Alice Springs Division. They were so far below strength they could not provide adequate cover for the Sunday football and when McKane had been on leave early in the season there was no St John attendance at all.

Bruce McKane commended an appeal by the secretary of the Central Australian Football Association for more trainers and if any came forward the Division was prepared to put them through a first aid course.

> *"The need for more trainers and ambulance men was shown last Sunday when, with players going down like ninepins, only one ambulance officer was on the ground."* [20]

To try to alleviate the problem first aid courses continued through the year, but seemingly to no avail. Courses were open to all comers with no obligation to join the Brigade and consisted of two lectures a week for four weeks at the Scout Hall.

The Brigade deteriorated even further until there was just one active member, Bruce McKane, and in March 1956 Corps Superintendent Norman Bradbury had the unhappy duty of closing down the Alice Springs Division.

Bradbury expressed dissatisfaction with the people of Alice Springs for their lack of support, saying: *"As long as one is prepared to do the work the other people are prepared to let him do it."* A lot of people had done first aid courses with St John, but very few joined the Brigade.

> *"During the last twelve months only one man, Mr Bruce McKane who came down from the Darwin Division to Alice Springs has carried the St. John Ambulance Brigade in Alice Springs.*
>
> *"At the end of the last class in this town, in October, nine passed the examinations, none of whom are now prepared to give any time to what we have been trying to teach them. Nevertheless, it is with great reluctance that I have to close down the Alice Springs Division, but I have no intention of letting one man do all the work.*
>
> *"Apart from the work done by Mr. McKane, Mr. R. Porter and Mr. I. Pash have assisted on occasions."* [21]

**The in-between years**

With the demise of St John Ambulance in Alice Springs the Red Cross Society took over First Aid training with Sister M. Purcell delivering lectures at the Youth Centre on Thursday nights. Sister Gooch of the Alice Springs Hospital broadcast a series of twelve Home Nursing lectures over the Flying Doctor network. Copies of the lectures were made available on application to Red Cross.[22]

The need for a reliable ambulance service was shown in 1957 when the Alice Springs Taxi Owners' Association offered to provide a driver for a 24-hour ambulance service in the town area, provided the Government came good with financing the proposal. They claimed that the small population of Alice Springs did not warrant the expense of maintaining a 24-hour service, but with urgent

cases, such as maternity or serious accident they would respond immediately to any callout.[23]

With No St John Ambulance Brigade in town first aid cover at sporting fixtures was carried out by qualified men on an individual personal basis.[24]

**Revival—a new start**

At a public meeting[25] held in the Church of England Hall, Bath Street, on 28th October 1960 the sixteen people attending decided to form a Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade and elected a provisional committee of Mr Stan Carn, President; Mr Joe Kerrison, secretary; Dr Iceton of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Honorary Surgeon; Mr Ron Shepherd, Treasurer. Committee members were Mesdames D. Andrews and R. Shepherd, and Messrs Graham Jones, Peter Hansen and P. Birrell.

After Dr Iceton explained the aims, work and ideals of the St John Association a decision was made to apply for official recognition to the South Australian Centre of the St John Ambulance Association.

Readers will note that they applied directly to South Australia and not to Darwin. Many Alice Springs residents and early Brigade members were expatriate South Australians who felt a far closer affinity to Adelaide than to Darwin and it was natural for them to look in that direction. Norman Bradbury had not been replaced as Corps Superintendent and in 1960 the Darwin Division had enough troubles of its own and most likely wouldn't have been interested, anyway. Direct oversight of Alice Springs from Adelaide continued until late 1974, long after the Territory was made a sub-District of South Australia.[26]

Due to their small numbers it was decided to start a combined ambulance and nursing division with a cadet division for boys and girls aged between 11 and 16 at a later date.

A joining fee of two shillings and sixpence was decided and the date of 9th December set for the first aid examination with an examiner from South Australia expected in town on that day. Lectures were held every Monday night until December, given by Dr Iceton and assisted by Reg Priest, Stan Carn and Ron Shepherd.

With some members of the newly formed group holding current first aid certificates it was decided to draw up a roster of qualified men and nursing aides to attend the town's main sporting functions such as cricket, basketball and horse races. If any other sporting bodies wanted first aid coverage they were asked to contact Joe Kerrison on Railway Terrace.[27]

To get the new group started a portable stretcher, a *Jordan Lifting Frame*, was donated by the NT Medical Service, compliments of Dr C. Webb, Director of Health for the NT.

Twenty four people, including four children, attended the Brigade's first training night *"in the St John Hall"* on Monday 31st October 1960. Dr Iceton lectured on anatomy and afterwards Reg Priest, Stan Carn and Ron Shepherd assisted in the demonstration of primary bandage slings.[28]

On Monday night, 6th February 1961, a meeting was held at the Church of England Hall attended by Bert Palmer, a Divisional Officer from South Australia with twelve years experience and now manager of Central Australian Tours Association (CATA) in Alice Springs. Bert explained that twelve members, including women for the nursing section, were needed to register a division.

Last year, railway men Stan Carn and Ron Shepherd held a beginners course in first aid with six people passing. New classes started this year were *"not only to instruct people in the valuable art of scientific first aiding"* but to get enough members to form a division.[29]

Thirty-three people attended the meeting at which Constable Graham Jones was elected President from retiring President Stan Carn. Others elected at the meeting were Peter Hansen as secretary-treasurer and committee members Gool Mahomed, Stan Carn, Yvonne Hansen, Clarry Smith, Kelly Hargraves, Ron Shepherd, Miss Roger-Jones and Vic Patterson.

A new first aid course of ten weeks duration would commence the following week, taken from the new First Aid manual, which was *"now the combined authorised manual of the St John Ambulance Association, St Andrew's Ambulance Association, and the British Red Cross Society"*.

Adult members were asked to pay one shilling per lecture, with junior members under 16 exempt.[30]

The following week, 17th February, Bert Palmer attended the meeting of 35 people in full Divisional Officer's uniform as the group's new instructor. Dr Iceton conducted the first evening lecture on bone structure, muscles and joints of the human body. Bert Palmer then lectured on the practical first aid side of *"bandages, dressings, gauze, lint, emergency dressings and compresses".* [31]

Training continued under Dr Iceton and Bert Palmer, with Stan Carn stepping in while Bert was away on business. The *Centralian Advocate* started calling the Church of England Hall, *St John's Hall* quite regularly after this. There were very detailed articles in the newspaper about the group's training lessons to hopefully stir up interest in a town that had shown so much apathy to let the earlier St John Ambulance division wither and die.

The weekly detail is indicative of a reporter actually taking part in weekly instruction meetings, rather than relying on press releases as happens today.

At the meeting of 3rd March, Constable Jones announced that he was shortly leaving Alice Springs for southern climes and wished to resign as president. The members then elected Clarry Smith in his place. Thirty-six members attended that meeting at which Peter Hansen read a letter from the St John Ambulance Brigade in South Australia about forming a division of the Brigade in Alice Springs.

The group had apparently also enquired about wearing St John armbands on first aid duties, but the letter stated that the armband could only be worn by the group after they were registered as a Division with each member in possession of a current first aid certificate issued by the St John Ambulance Association.[32] Despite this, at their meeting on Monday 20th March the group voted to wear the armbands anyway. They reasoned that without the armbands they may be refused entry as first aiders to sporting fixtures and other gatherings in town. Mr N. Hargrave volunteered to have a dozen armbands made, which would be issued to rostered members at Monday night lectures. They were black with a white cross and worn to public duties until the members got their uniforms.

At the same meeting, Mrs E. Heron, a Brigade member from Victoria with many years experience in home nursing was elected to the committee.[33]

Instruction in first aid extended to the local Boy Scouts and Stan Carn demonstrated new methods of resuscitation *"with the aid of a 'patient' of the Holger-Nielsen and Schafer methods of artificial respiration".* Members were asked to bring a blanket and wear suitable clothing the following week so that they could practice the methods of artificial respiration themselves.[34]

In a blow to the First Aid Group, popular surgeon Dr Iceton was suddenly transferred to Darwin in April *"with no apparent reason".* The group's new surgeon, Dr Peter Wells and his wife were introduced at the meeting on Monday 10th April by president Clarry Smith. Dr Wells then instructed in unconsciousness after which Bert Palmer instructed in fracture management using triangular bandages.

Membership of the group now stood at fifty, more than enough to form a division. Registration forms were being prepared and would be sent to the St John Ambulance Brigade in Adelaide for endorsement.[35]

On the 28th April, bold headlines in the *Centralian Advocate* proclaimed that a St John Ambulance division had been formed.

Bert Palmer announced that permission had been received from St John HQ in Adelaide to form a Division in Alice Springs. There was also interest in starting a cadet division. When Bert addressed students at the High School, *"students showed a keen interest in the proposal and it was hoped that parents would encourage their children to become members".*

Children who had been attending the adult group's meetings on Monday evenings would now start at 7.00pm and finish by 8.15pm so as to be not kept out so late at night. First aid exams for adults and children would be held in the first week of June.[36]

The Alice Springs Combined Division was formed on 24th April 1961 and registered on 17th July with Bert Palmer as Divisional Superintendent.

It must have been a welcome relief for South Australian Commissioner Dr Harvey Hurst and Secretary of the South Australian Council Mr Phillip Ferrier when they arrived in Alice Springs after some of the turmoil in Darwin where they had been obliged to "retire" Divisional Superintendent George Brooks. They met all Division members, *"including parents of children wishing to become cadets"* at the Church of England Hall at 8.00 pm Monday 6th June. [37] Dr Hurst and Mr Ferrier gave short lectures on the history of the Order of St John after which Dr Hurst *"gave an extremely enlightening practical demonstration of the new oral type of resuscitation (mouth-to-mouth)".*

A grant of £100 was given to the Division by Southern District HQ and a manikin was to be donated for the members to practice oral resuscitation.[38] This manikin didn't last long in Alice Springs and was soon sent up to Darwin Division.[39]

First Aid examinations were held on Monday 19th June with Superintendent Palmer and Dr Wells *"most impressed with the standard of work and the efficiency of the candidates".* The parade was to be held next week with all Divisional members, candidates and cadets asked to attend. The Division hoped to start new classes in first aid and home nursing in the near future for adults of both sexes and for cadets.

The Division received a timely donation of £10 from the Show Society after their attendance at the recent Alice Springs Show. The donation would help purchase much needed medical supplies and equipment. The Division also needed money to help with purchasing uniforms.[40]

The new Division held their first parade on Monday 26th June at the RAOB (Buffs) Hall in Todd Street, next door to the Memorial Club, where they would now be holding all future meetings. New officers were appointed on six months probation: Dr P. Wells, Divisional Surgeon; Mrs P. Wells, Divisional Nursing Officer; Mrs Mellora, Divisional Nursing Officer; Mr Stan Carn, Divisional Officer; Mrs Lila Heron, Divisional Officer (nursing); Mr Gool Mahomed, Sergeant; Miss D. Roger-Jones, Sergeant (nursing); Mr J. Birrell, Corporal; Mrs Hansen, Corporal (nursing); Mr L. Long, Sergeant (cadets); and Miss O. Goddard, Corporal (cadets).

Grey uniforms were decided for the Division and a fund-raising committee formed.

> *"The Superintendent reminded members that the Brigade was entirely voluntary with no colour, creed or religious bars. This applied also to any person in need of assistance as St John members are 'always on duty'."* [41]

The fund raising committee was called a social club with a membership of Gool Mahomed, president; Miss C. Zingg, vice-president; Mr Ron Shepherd, secretary-treasurer. Members of the committee were Mesdames I. Mahomed, Cheatham, Jackson, Yvonne Hansen, Robertson, Heron and Shepherd; Miss Goddard and Mr R. Hargraves.

The committee, which was more an Auxiliary than a social club, arranged to hold a jumble sale at Fogarty's Corner on Saturday, August 5.[42]

New grey, black and white uniforms were ordered for the men from Adelaide, with the women given the task of making their own under the guidance of Divisional Officer Lila Heron.[43]

At the Monday 17th July meeting, Bert Palmer announced the appointment of Divisional Officer Stan Carn to the Cadet Division, with Sergeant Peter Hansen being promoted to Divisional Officer in the adult Division.

The members had a busy weekend with the usual public duties and also attended the United Church Sunday School picnic on Undoolya Road where thirteen children *"were treated for minor cuts, bumps and abrasions and members on duty performed a total of 24 hours of duty".* [44]

At the end of July the Social Club was disbanded and reformed as the St John Auxiliary, Alice Springs with the function of raising funds for the Alice Springs Division. [45]

First aid classes commenced on Monday 14th August at the RAOB Hall in Todd Street. The ten weeks course was open to the public for a fee of one pound or five shillings for juniors. Members of the newly formed Alice Springs Red Cross Branch also attended. Red Cross wasn't new to Alice Springs, but had recently expanded its activities and was offered full support from St John.[46]

On Saturday 7th October 1961 the Divisional Parade was inspected at the United Hall in Bath Street by the Northern Territory Administrator, Mr Roger Nott, in his first official duty as Patron of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Alice Springs. Mr Nott told the members that: *"he was pleased to accept the position of patron because he was aware of the fine work the St John Ambulance Brigade was doing and he wished them every success in their ventures".*

Other officials accompanying Mr Nott were the Minister for Territories, Mr Paul Hasluck; Mr Vic Halbert, MHR for Moore in NSW; and District Officer Mr Dan Conway.

Mr Hasluck congratulated Mr Nott on his appointment and said that consideration would be given to Government subsidy on a pound for pound basis. *"Inquiries would be made to see if a mobile first aid unit could be procured for the Brigade's use during attendances at various local functions."* [47]

These political "promises" never eventuated and the Brigade was always in need of funds. Their first ambulance was donated by the Apex Club in 1970. Until then members used their own vehicles to attend sporting functions as far away as Aileron, Barrow Creek, Harts Range and Yuendumu, usually at their own expense.

Note that the Division was back in Bath Street. The following year the *Centralian Advocate* had the Division meeting at the Methodist Hall in Bath Street. The Uniting Church in Australia is a union of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches, so the United Hall and Methodist Hall were probably the same place.

The Division held its first meeting for 1962 on Monday 26th February in the Methodist Hall, Bath Street. With Superintendent Bert Palmer down south on business, Cadet Superintendent Peter Bassel was delegated acting adult Divisional Superintendent in his absence. Peter Bassel, from Thebarton Division in South Australia, announced that Kelly Hargrave had been promoted to Cadet Divisional Officer.

> *"This promotion will please all sports followers in the town, as Kelly is a well known figure at all sporting functions and has worked unselfishly for several months."* [48]

With a Superintendent and Divisional Officer it would seem there was now a full Cadet Division in Alice Springs. However, Pat McQuillen stated in her book:

> *"Records from that time show only six Cadets were issued with a book and bandage and nowhere else is any other mention made of a Cadet Division until 1977."* [49]

The April 1962 meeting was held in the Commonwealth Hostel's recreation room, with representatives from Red Cross, DCA and the Department of Works attending. Superintendent Palmer was spending a lot of time out of town and it was expected that he would *"soon be back with us again as his business itinerary which has kept him down south for the past few months has now been terminated".* [50]

The Commonwealth Hostel was where acting Divisional Superintendent Peter Bassel was resident during his stay in Alice Springs. His business completed, he returned south on 16th April.

The Division continued to meet in the Hostel, but with disappointing attendance at the new first aid course. Cadets and intending cadets were now asked to attend lectures and parades each Monday evening at 6.30pm, commencing 20th April.[51] Adult classes started at the same venue, 8.00pm.

At the meeting of Monday 14th May, Bert Palmer informed members that the Division had been able to procure relatively permanent quarters courtesy of Legion Cabs; they had been granted full use of the building next door to the paper shop (Marrions Newsagency) in Todd Street. Meetings started there the following Monday, same times,

for Cadets and Adults.[52] Chairs were needed for the new meeting place and an appeal for donations was made through the *Centralian Advocate.*[53]

Division members were thanked by the Centralian Show Society for their "*staunch support*" at the two days of the Alice Springs Show in June. To bring in much needed funds, St John members ran a "white elephant" stall at the Show.

In mid June, surgeon Dr John Hawkins offered to help with instruction in the first aid courses, mainly in anatomy. Membership had dropped dramatically during the past year and the Brigade now had just seven trained adults and eight qualified junior cadets. There were 27 cadets and adults in the current first aid classes, but these would not be available for first aid duties until after they completed the course. [54]

The call for new members was successful and thirty prospects attended Dr Hawkins' lecture on the Anatomy and Physiology of the human body on 19th June.[55]

Secretary of the St John Auxiliary in Darwin, Van Millbank, visited Alice Springs in late June and in an interview with the *Centralian Advocate* castigated the people of Alice Springs for their selfish attitude and lack of appreciation for the local Brigade.

He said that he was sickened by the almost total lack of public support for St John in Alice Springs. He attended the football at Traeger Park where St John volunteers treated two badly injured footballers. One had a broken arm, while the other had fractured ribs. Millbank said that he was shocked to see that there were absolutely no facilities at the ground for treating injured people. *"In Darwin all parks were equipped with hot water and facilities for the treatment of injured people."*

He said that in most Australian towns of 5,000 people there were *"at least 16 to 24 active nursing aides and usually a Division of 12 male stretcher carriers".* In Alice Springs there were only two or three "bearers" and most of their equipment was paid for out of their own pockets.

At a meeting on Monday night, 25th June 1962 to try to win support for St John, only two officers, one NCO, one private and two outside ladies attended.

Millbank said that there were always people willing to hang onto St John's coattails and bask in any publicity when it's offering, but who couldn't be found when there was work to be done and sacrifices to be made. *"... here in Alice Springs we have to go down on our knees and beg for help to do a job designed purely to assist the general public."* [56]

This story about the local Division's lack of funds and equipment brought a quick response from the Darwin Division with the gift of two fully equipped first aid kits, flown to Alice Springs by airline ANA (Ansett). Some members made their own first aid kits and Sergeant Gool Mahomed's kit is still in Alice Springs at the Bernie Kilgariff Complex.[57]

Gool Mahomed was born in 1907, the son of an Afghan camel driver and Scottish mother. When his mother died at a young age Gool left school at the age of 12 to work with his father on the camel train. They did many trips from the rail head at Oodnadatta to Alice Springs carting freight with their camels. When the railway came to Alice Springs in 1929 it made the camel trains redundant, so Gool worked as a boundary rider/ stockman before becoming a railwayman in 1932.

He joined the newly formed Alice Springs Division in 1961, using his own vehicle to attend duties. He finished his connection with St John when transferred to the North Australian Railway in Darwin in 1968.



The St John Auxiliary held a very successful food and cake stall in July and sold lottery tickets for a Datsun Bluebird station wagon. The *Centralian Advocate* reported that St John Ambulance thanked all for *"their help in raising the fine figure realised"*, but didn't give the amount raised.[58]

Football matches were played at Traeger Park in August that raised more than £70 for the Brigade. The following week there were more details published about the charity games played at Traeger Park on 6th August. St John Ambulance received £87/6/- from the benefit day provided by the Central Australian Football League, the Umpires' Association, officials of the Amoonguna football team, and the Central Australian Hockey Association. The Traegar Park and Town Oval Trustees charged no fees for use of the playing fields on the day.[59]

Sometime during the year Divisional Officer Peter Hansen transferred to Tennant Creek with his job as a fireman. While there he helped start the Tennant Creek First Aid Group that later became a Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade.

In mid August an unconscious player with a head injury was transported to hospital by private car after receiving treatment on the ground. This caused the *Centralian Advocate* to call for St John to have a fully equipped ambulance for such emergencies.[60]

St John volunteers used their own vehicles on public duties with a sign on top identifying as a St John Ambulance Brigade Field Unit.

It would seem that the hospital based ambulance service was no better than that of Darwin and other Territory centres and subject to many complaints with ambulances not being available in an emergency. Ambulances were either broken down or out bush and the Department of Health even had to borrow ambulances from St John in South Australia to make up the shortfall.[61]

The Minister for Health, Senator Wade announced in November that two new air-conditioned ambulances had been ordered and should be delivered by the New Year.[62]

The Brigade launched a membership drive in early December to boost numbers in preparation for the Royal Tour next year. This same call was being put out in Darwin and there was expected to be a big demand for first aid services with the large crowds attending the event in the afternoon heat.[63]

After the Rugby League final at Traeger Park in late August 1963 the players and officials showed their appreciation to St John volunteer Yvonne Hansen. The players of both teams, Wests and United, lined up on either side while Mr Wes Rose, patron of the Centralian Rugby League Association, handed Yvonne a donation for St John Ambulance.

> *Mr Rose warmly thanked her for her consistent attendances at games throughout the season and for her expert attention to injured players.*

Yvonne responded that it had been a real pleasure to look after the boys, to the spontaneous applause of all players.[64]

A call was put out in January 1964 for the organisers to provide an enclosed area or tent for St John volunteers after the Aileron Rodeo when the two women members on duty treated thirty seven people for injuries and numerous others for heat exhaustion. In the one case where privacy was needed, blankets were held around the patient.[65]

The Division seem to have moved from the Legion Cabs building when in February 1964 a Home Nursing course was to start in *"the St John Hall, Church of England, Bath Street"*. The course was open to the public, male and female.[66]

A 'good news story' was published in the *Centralian Advocate* in January 1965. At the break-up party of a Government Department it was found that one of the new employees was in for a bleak Christmas. He had only just started with the section and had a very poor pay packet to tide him over the break. One of the bosses started a kitty for him with a pound. Then all fourteen Aboriginal employees of the section donated ten shillings each.[67]

The next pay day the beneficiary tried to repay

the money, but all of the Aboriginal workers refused to accept it. A gift is a gift. So the whole amount was dropped into the St John Ambulance collection box at the work place, *"passing on the Aborigines' gift to an institution that deserves greater support from the general public".* [68]

Despite generosity like this the local Brigade was in financial strife when competitors of the 1965 Easter Rodeo at Aileron were advised that St John Ambulance would not be in attendance. The last rodeo at Aileron had depleted resources to the extent that a little over £30 remained in the Brigade's bank account, too little to replenish first aid kits and provide transport and accommodation for the three-day event.

St John members had been paying to restock medical supplies out of their own pockets, but it had reached the stage when enough was enough.

At the last rodeo, St John volunteers treated forty casualties, but this year the contestants *"will need to recognise that when they enter the arena they will do so at their own risk, because no first aid will be available to them if they are hurt."*

The *Centralian Advocate*, a staunch supporter of St John Ambulance, announced that their office would remain open until 6.00pm [Saturday, 15th April 1965] to receive cash donations for St John members to attend the Aileron rodeo. *"Which all adds up to a rather grim ultimatum. If the funds come in, first aid will be available. If they don't it won't."* [69]

The *Advocate's* threats worked and St John Ambulance volunteers treated eight casualties at the rodeo. Four suffered head injuries, one was badly winded when kicked by a horse, two had minor injuries and another was admitted to hospital with fractured ribs and head injuries.[70]

The Division had moved once again when a First Aid and Re-examination Course was advertised to commence at the Civil Defence Headquarters, Stott Terrace in September 1965. The course was open to the public on payment of £1/5/-.[71]

More problems with the hospital based ambulance service were brought to light in a *Centralian Advocate* editorial on 28th September 1967. It was reported that it took about twenty minutes for an ambulance to reach the scene of a road accident near the Old Timers' Home. With a population exceeding 7,100 Alice Springs now deserved a 24-hour ambulance service.

> *"Perhaps it is not possible or economic to set up a full-time St John Ambulance network, but it must be possible to provide a better service than is being given to the town at present."*

The editorial went on to acknowledge that there were acute staff shortages at the hospital, but if that was the reason for long delays *"which seem to occur almost every time there is an emergency call for an ambulance"* it was unfair to the residents of Alice Springs.

> *"It is time they appointed staff to be on call 24 hours a day, and not partly employed in other capacities which make them unavailable immediately in an emergency."* [72]

This same story was being repeated in all towns in the Territory. There was no Ambulance Service as such. Ambulances were operated by the Department of Health from local hospitals and driven by a duty orderly who had his normal hospital duties to attend. There were no mobile phones or pagers in those days and it could take some time to locate the orderly for an ambulance call. If the case warranted he would take a nursing sister from the emergency department.

Ambulances were not designed, nor equipped for ongoing patient care during transport and operated as a matter of 'grab and run'. Alan Bromwich described them as little more than *"taxis with horizontal fares"*.[73]

The problem was being alleviated in Darwin with St John Ambulance volunteers conducting an out of hours ambulance service from their station in Parap, but it was to be another twelve years before St John took over the ambulance service in Alice Springs.

Centralian Tours established first aid posts at Heavitree Gap Caravan Park and Ayers Rock to cater for their tourists. The posts were staffed by

fully trained nursing sisters, St John Ambulance officers and a doctor. *"The staff at both first aid posts were brought especially from Melbourne for the undertaking."*

Now, one can take it that St John Ambulance volunteers would not have travelled up from Melbourne into another District – the South Australians wouldn't have liked that very much at all – and that local volunteers would have been used. Also, with no St John Ambulance Division yet at Ayers Rock it's not stated if Alice Springs volunteers went there to help.

The posts were 20ft by 30ft (approximately 6m by a bit over 9m) marquees with a doctor continually travelling between them. In its first week, the post at the caravan park treated more than ninety cases ranging from fractures to dysentery.

The posts, which supplied free treatment for all tourists, were established because they did not have time to spend long hours waiting at the hospital for treatment.[74]

Stalwart and founding member of the Brigade in Alice Springs, Yvonne Hansen was awarded a Priory Vote of Thanks dated 1st June 1968 in recognition of her services. It was signed by Governor General Lord Casey as Prior, and by Chancellor Sir George Stening. This is a large impressive document that was held in high esteem, compared with the A4 certificate handed out today.

Yvonne was recommended for a second Priory Vote of Thanks in 1976, but this was rejected by South Australia. One was all she could have. Nowadays she would have been nominated for admission to the Order of St John, but while the Territory was still under South Australian control that was out of the question. Each District had an annual quota of admissions and promotions in the Order and these were very parsimoniously shared with their northern divisions. Only the very top brass could hope to rise to those heights and just before independence as a District in 1976 the Territory had to beg for them.

A *Letter to the Editor*[75], many years later in October 1982, wrote about *"that never tiring woman Mrs Ron [Yvonne] Hansen ... rated as Queens Honor listing in my book as I personally know the work she put into keeping St John's alive".*

Other names of foundation members that Reg Preece mentioned in his letter were railway employees Gool Mahomed, Billy Brown, Max Benson, Albert Pressley, Archie St Clair, Charlie Ah Chee and a little later Bill West Law and himself.

Public duties included Aileron Rodeo, Barrow Creek Races, Harts Range and Yuendumu Sports week-end.

In May 1969 the Apex Club launched an appeal for funds to buy an ambulance for St John in Alice Springs. The appeal, expected to run for three years, was started with an auction that hoped to raise $300.[76]

At the end of January 1970 the fund stood at $607 with an estimated $3500 needed to buy the ambulance. There was no intention at the time for St John to provide a call-out service and the vehicle would be used at sporting fixtures in the area. It would carry enough equipment to set up an independent first aid post, leaving the vehicle free for transport duties. It was hoped that the vehicle could be bought by the end of the year and fund raising activities included a caravan lottery and a rodeo to be held in August.[77]

Two months later the fund had reached $1022 after a charity film night at the Pioneer Drive-In when $215 was raised. The Country Women's Association and the Central Australian Racing Club made donations of $50 and $100 respectively.[78]

Fund raising exceeded expectations when it was announced that the Apex Club would officially hand over the new ambulance at the rodeo on 22nd August 1970. It would be fully equipped with oxygen and resuscitation equipment and include a marquee tent to set up a first aid post.[79]

The new ambulance was officially handed over to Mr Jack Revitt, Chief Training Officer for St John Ambulance in South Australia, in front of a crowd of 3000 at the event which raised an estimated $3000 for Apex.[80] The Rotary Club of Alice Springs helped St John by paying for the petrol for the next few years.[81]

Now that they had a new ambulance it was time for the Brigade to gain on-road experience and

in September the Medical Superintendent of the Alice Springs Hospital, Dr John Hawkins, released details of a proposal for St John to operate from the Hospital at night. This was after an unnamed St John representative from Darwin visited Alice Springs to speak with members. The scheme would start with St John volunteers taking over on Saturday nights for a three months trial period. *"Officers would be stationed at the switchboard and take calls direct and attend calls with a qualified sister."*

It was considered that putting an orderly on call for ambulance duties couldn't be justified because the call average was less than one per night. Unpaid St John volunteers were the answer and this would give them valuable experience.[82]

Barry Bohning, a hospital orderly, ambulance driver and also volunteer with St John said that the St John volunteers, men and women, went out on the ambulances as third person.[83]

Saturday night work from the Hospital went beyond the three month trial period, but came to a halt in July 1971 over a financial dispute with the Department of Health. The news story said that the service would cease unless an agreement was reached over financial arrangements by 4.00pm the following day.[84] There were no further details and what the fuss was all about is not known.

South Australian General Manager, Phillip Ferrier carried out an Inspection of the Alice Springs 'Section' on the 14th October 1971 and reported:

> *"Visits from Darwin rare, if ever. This Section could thrive with closer help, but will not do so without oversight from outside. Banking and the keeping of cash books for example is not kept up-to-date. The other dilemma which faces Alice Springs is that the strength of the Section is being outstripped by demands for its services, the growth of motor cycle sports and the distances required to go to such things as race meetings at Hart's Range place a considerable strain on the few active members."* [85]

This suggests that the Alice Springs Combined Division had been downgraded to a Section due to low numbers. Later reports also call it a Section and they continued to have a low membership until 1978.

The Division seems to have made yet another move when they announced a first aid course to be held at the Civil Defence Hall in Stott Terrace, starting Monday 12th March 1973. The Brigade also asked for new members, minimum age eleven years for juniors and up to fifty for adults. [86]

A letter from Divisional Secretary Glanville Lindholm to Corps Staff Officer Kevin Kettle in September 1973 indicates his willingness to *"have a go at it, that is if you think that I can carry out the duties as required".* [87]

The duties aren't stated in the letter, but on 25th October Glanville "Lindy" Lindholm "had a go at it" and was appointed Officer Administering Command of the Alice Springs Combined Division. He was confirmed in the position of Divisional Superintendent on 4th January 1974.

Darwin based St John management finally took some interest in their southern Division when Deputy Commissioner Colin Mills visited Alice Springs in August 1974. He reported that they were small in number and needed support from the St John Council and Brigade Corps staff, especially in recruitment of cadets and a divisional surgeon. Corps Surgeon Alan Bromwich was to canvass for a surgeon and visit Alice Springs in September. Dr Mills was to return in November and discuss support from the St John Council.[88]

After his visit, Alan Bromwich reported that the Division was small in number with just six or seven adults. A new member, headmaster of a primary school, was a good potential for training officer. The Alice Springs Division needed its own station instead of continually moving around.

Previous Saturday night hospital duties had assisted with recruitment and provided useful training for the volunteers. The Division was to be encouraged to recommence at the hospital if they had sufficient members. If they could return Dr Mills would approach the Hospital Superintendent on their behalf. [89]

A letter dated 15th January 1975 advised that the Division was unable to carry out Saturday night Hospital duties because of the Speedway being held bi-monthly for about eight months of the year. This duty required three men in the centre of the track, leaving insufficient members for the Hospital. Lindy suggested Friday or Sunday evenings instead.

An undated letter, possibly mid 1975 states that hospital duties could only be undertaken Friday nights and not full-time due to a lack of members. [90]

Lindy wrote to Dr Mills on the 30th September 1974 to thank him for showing an interest in the Division. He referred to a telephone conversation they had the previous week and stated that there were blocks of land in Alice Springs, but they were either unsuitable, rezoned for housing, or suddenly made unavailable for unknown reasons. There was one suitable block in South Terrace that could be shown to Dr Mills on his next trip to Alice Springs. Approaches to the Lands Department over several years had been met with a bureaucratic run-around, so the Division had to be content with what accommodation they could get.[91]

Another undated letter, possibly mid 1975, states that Lindy had been in contact with the Lands Branch to be told that *"someone from Adelaide had been in last September or thereabouts and found out what is available and have things in hand"*. It would seem strange that St John in Adelaide would do this without informing the local Division. Or was this a continuation of the bureaucratic run-around?

A letter from Lindy to CSO Bill Keelan dated 6th October 1974 contains the line: *"Seeing that we are now autonomous, and have no ties with Adelaide ..."* This indicates that until recently the Alice Springs Division had been directly administered by St John Ambulance in South Australia and not from Darwin, despite the Northern Territory having become a Sub-District in 1965 under Deputy Commissioner Langsford.

Was this the notorious *Berrimah Line* in play, or was it because South Australia hadn't wanted to give limited autonomy to all the Territory, just the Top End? It could be that after Phillip Ferrier's inspection in 1971 that the South Australians moved in to make up for Darwin's indifference.

Regardless, Adelaide did not surrender control easily. A letter from Lindy dated 29th July 1975 states: *"I would like to get something clarified, as things are at the present it is rather confusing. Do we answer directly to Adelaide or to you? We sometimes get directions direct from Adelaide and are we to obey same without any guidance from Darwin?"* [92]

A reply from Darwin wasn't found in archives.

On Christmas Day 1974, Cyclone Tracy ripped through Darwin and the southern Divisions were left to their own devices without the much needed help from Darwin. Alice Springs volunteers did give much needed help to the people leaving Darwin, though. St John Ambulance members spent long hours at the Alice Springs airport and at road blocks just north of the town to help with evacuees.

Phil Langdon, who had transferred from Darwin just two months earlier, recalled being at a road block just north of town where Service Clubs were assisting evacuees. As one car drove up, obviously ex Darwin, a Service member spoke to the driver, asking what assistance the family needed, and so on. A little girl in the back seat wound the window down to hear what was going on.

> *The Service member turned to the girl and said "Hullo, what's your name." The girl had a big smile on her face and said "My name is Tracey." She then burst into tears and cried "But I didn't do it."* [93]

An undated letter advises Dr Mills of a first aid course to be conducted by Phil Langdon in February 1975 at which they hoped to recruit enough cadets to form a division. Another letter recommends that Phil take charge of a promising Cadet Division. Three cadets attended regularly, with another six prospective members.

Registered Nurse Mandy Langdon came to Alice Springs with husband Phil and soon began to conduct the first Home Nursing lectures, a requisite for female members, but optional for males.[94]

The Brigade received a grant of $1500 for the purchase of a radio for the ambulance so that they could contact the hospital from outlying areas.[95] Darwin advised them to purchase the radio and that they would also send an old VHF valve set they no longer required.[96]

A Corps meeting held in Darwin in June 1975 noted that policy would be to rapidly expand Alice Spring Division and that to achieve the build-up the need for local fund-raising should be reduced and a block of land acquired to build a home for the Division.[97]

Lindy wrote to Deputy Commissioner Mills in July requesting permission to purchase a block of land at the next auction sales in order to erect *"some type of temporary building until the Council sees fit to erect a permanent building".* [98]

Not a lot seems to have happened towards expanding the Division or in acquiring a block of land when Corps Superintendent John O'Donohoe and District Staff Officer Warren Burgess conducted a tour of inspection of regional centres in November 1975. They found that Tennant Creek was all but defunct and that Alice Springs wasn't much better. At the Annual Inspection on Monday evening 17th November at the Buffs Hall on Gap Road the Section consisted of the Superintendent, a Sergeant, two Privates and one Nurse.

The meeting place was a dirty hall that could not be used for public First Aid courses, or attract new members.

> *"The existing members have got themselves into a rut and quite frankly I am of the opinion they have no idea of helping themselves to get back on top again."* [99]

Lindholm needed a lot of help to build and keep his Division running, but Darwin could only do so much with visits and seminars, etc. He would need to be brought up to Darwin for further on the job training at least once a year.[100]

To show the state of the Division's records, when asked in September to provide the hours of personnel in the Division to the end of 1974 the best they could come up with were wild estimates of hours since the date of enrolment. [101]

| | |
|---|---|
| Nursing Member Joan Hunt | 22,000 |
| Sergeant Yvonne Hansen | 5,400 |
| Nursing Member Joan Boyt-Cullis | 628 |
| Private Peter Smart | 500 |
| Superintendent Lindholm | 5,000 |

The letter further stated that Yvonne Hansen had joined the Brigade in Alice Springs in 1961; Joan Boyt-Cullis joined in Elizabeth SA in 1965; Joan Hunt joined in Alice Springs in 1969; Peter Smart joined in Alice Springs in 1971; and Lindy joined in Alice Springs in 1971. He had joined the Unley SA Division in 1954 *"where most of the outside practical training was done".*

This would give Joan Hunt an average of around 4,400 hours per year, an unbelievable figure. It's also interesting to note that they still had just five members at the time.

Yvonne Hansen wrote for Pat McQuillen that *"we never had the time to take photos and lots of our old records were lost when Lindy's car was set on fire".* When this happened wasn't stated, but it could account for not knowing the members' hours.[102]

District Superintendent Warren Burgess conducted the Annual Inspection in 1976 and reported considerable improvement over last year.

> *"A worthwhile attempt was made by the Alice Springs Division to conduct a much improved inspection. A slight improvement in strength was noted and enthusiasm is high although the Division lacks a number of amenities."* [103]

The Division was busily chasing a new meeting place in December 1976, sending the details to Darwin and requesting an urgent answer as *"this type of space is in demand and no doubt it will soon go if not acted on quickly".* [104]

The following March, Lindy wrote to Darwin about Government owned demountable buildings that had been used as emergency accommodation in post cyclone Darwin and were soon coming on the market. *"... by the time these units are available we could have the block of land that has been promised ..."* [105]

In March 1977 the Alice Springs Division was renting a building while waiting for their land and had been promised a second ambulance, second hand from Darwin.[106] The ambulance finally arrived in September, driven down by DAO Rod Bramley who carried out an inspection while in Alice Springs. He reported that the Division was quite acceptable, so the long overdue support from Darwin seemed to be having the desired effect.[107]

The *Centralian Advocate* advised that a new eight-week first aid course would start on the 27th June from the Hartley Street headquarters of the Brigade. These were in Dr Peterkin's consulting rooms that were soon outgrown by the Division, which at this time had eleven members.[108] The course was attended by twenty eight people and the Brigade gained another three members.[109]

Their next move was in June 1978 from Hartley Street to a large shed in the industrial area in Elder Street opposite Ross Engineering. The shed was large enough to house all their equipment under the one roof.[110]

The Lions Club of Alice Springs donated a first aid caravan to the Brigade that was officially handed over at the Camel Cup race meeting on Saturday 3rd September 1977. The six metre 'van came equipped with a two-way radio, oxygen resuscitation equipment and an entonox analgesic unit. Brigade members could also live in the 'van while attending race meetings and the like out of town.[111] They had previously used a caravan belonging to the Lindholm family.

Something must have happened to the caravan to make it unavailable not all that long after delivery. Minutes of Staff Meetings held in Darwin say: *As yet the caravan still has not been delivered [to Alice Springs]* (6th March 1978); and, *Alice Springs now have their mobile First Aid Caravan* (1st May 1978). Had it gone up to Darwin or elsewhere on loan with a tardy return? Unfortunately those two brief notes are all to be found in the records and nothing more is known.

At that time Darwin was buying a caravan from the Government to be converted into a first aid, communications and accommodation unit and the Alice Springs caravan may have been loaned in the interim. The very hot summer months have few public duties in Alice Springs and their caravan would have been parked away sitting idle.

Then again, it may not have been loaned. After all, why should Darwin need a first aid caravan in the wet season? There are very few public duties and cyclones that turn caravans into scrap metal and matchwood. The answer is unknown.

Andrew Boyt-Cullis put ads in the local papers on Sunday 23rd October 1977 to announce a Preliminary First Aid course as a pre-requisite to joining St John Ambulance as a Cadet. The first meeting was to be held on 27th October at 80 Hartley Street, the old Blood Bank building.[112]

There was a good response and he quickly wrote to Darwin requesting permission to start a Cadet Division in Alice Springs. The adult Division nearly always had some cadets among their number and even had Cadet Officers in the early days, but never cadets in sufficient number to form their own Division.

Permission was granted and the Alice Springs Combined Cadet Division was signed off in the Territory on the 29th March 1978. Eleven cadets and two officers were enrolled on the 28th April at a ceremony attended by the Mayor of Alice Springs, George Smith, Commissioner Alan Bromwich and CSO Frank Simmons from Darwin.

The new Cadet Division was sanctioned by the Chief Commissioner on 26th July 1978 with Andrew Boyt-Cullis as Officer Administering Command. Other original members were Christine Boyt-Cullis, Divisional Officer; Ambulance Cadets Brenton Baker, Jeffrey Bartlett, Simon Hockley, Brian Hunter, Andrew John, Brian Knott, John Lindholm (a Cadet since December 1975), Mark McElligott, Michael Parker; and Nursing Cadets Fiona Kieghran and Helen Knott.

The Adult Division also improved and in March 1978 was reported to now have fifteen members.

Pat McQuillen transferred with the Education Department from Darwin to Yirara College, Alice Springs in 1978 and that also meant a transfer from

Casuarina Combined Division. Wanting to be a part of the Alice Springs Division, but without any contacts in town she looked up the phone book and found a number for St John Ambulance with Mrs Yvonne Hansen. Pat rang the number and Yvonne confirmed that she was the secretary. She wasn't all that friendly, but: *"... she told me where the meeting was, and what time, and everything. She said she wouldn't be there, though."*

Pat went to the meeting dressed in full uniform to find about eight or ten people in plain clothes. They stared at her, and then went back to fussing over a lady, Joan Hunt, with a new baby. When they got around to asking Pat where she was from: *"Oh, didn't Mrs Hansen tell you I rang up?" ... "Oh no, she doesn't talk to us anymore."*

Pat couldn't remember what they were supposed to be doing that night, only that *"they spent a lot of time gossiping ... so, I sort of asked around, you know, who was doing what, and who was the Superintendent, because nobody introduced themselves or anything."* [113]

Division members did volunteer work at the Hospital on Friday and Saturday nights. Unlike the original scheme where they were on call for ambulance duties, now they helped out in Casualty, *"doing things like the trolleys, and changing sheets, and changing beds, and holding trays while the nurses or doctors did sutures, really just helping the orderlies".* [114]

When the orderlies were busy and couldn't respond to ambulance callouts they called in St John, *"and the St John men went. Although I was a fully qualified ambulance officer, and they were only first-aiders, they never did call me."* [115]

Pat put this down to the *Berrimah Line* syndrome. She was from Darwin and not to be trusted. She had experienced similar discrimination in Darwin from some of the men who were opposed to women working on the ambulances and she may have been generous by putting the Alice Springs attitude down to the *Berrimah Line*.

She had the last laugh though, because when St John took over the ambulance service in 1979 she was a member of the very first duty crew. Qualified personnel now crewed the ambulances, not first aiders.

The long promised block of land was promulgated in the Government Gazette in early 1978 and a submission for St John Ambulance to take over the Ambulance Service in Alice Springs was made to the Government.[116]

Lease documents for the block were signed in April 1978 and returned to Lands Branch. The property was required to have improvements carried out by 1st October, consisting of fencing and a garage to the value of $5,000.[117] However, this block in Wilkinson Street was unsatisfactory and the Minister for Health, Ian Tuxworth, requested they find another. Negotiations were held with the Aboriginal Hostels Corporation who agreed to allow St John to have some land in Telegraph Terrace. When the Department of Lands declared St John to be in default of the covenant over the Wilkinson Street block they were placated when all was explained.[118] This was followed by bureaucratic delays in rezoning the new block that further set back the building program and increased the costs with inflation. [119]

DAO Rod Bramley reported in August that the Adult Division had improved considerably, with busier, more active members. They had now moved to more suitable premises in Elder Street, but still needed support from Darwin. This was to be carried out with visits every three months.[120]

District Surgeon Lionel Crompton carried out the Annual Inspection in November and reported that the Division now had twelve members, but needed more. The Cadets were very keen and included four Aboriginal members.[121]

Pat McQuillen encouraged some of the students from Yirara College, teenagers Doreen Noonan, Bessie Graham, Patricia Frank, and Pauline Allen to join St John as Cadets. Pat had introduced first aid as a hobby activity for her students and after twelve weeks asked if any wanted to learn more by joining St John. The response was so great that Pat set a written test and selected the four with the highest marks.[122]

On the 23rd November 1978 the *Centralian Advocate* had a photo of Glanville Lindholm and Joan Boyt-Cullis holding newly awarded Priory

Votes of Thanks, *"one of the highest honours the St John Ambulance order has to offer ..."* Joan had been a member of St John for sixteen years, with the last ten in Alice Springs. Lindy had joined the Brigade in 1954 and came to the Alice Springs Division in 1970.[123]

In those days a Priory Vote of Thanks was about the highest honour that ordinary members in the Northern Territory could hope to achieve.

The Cadet Division's *Annual Report* for 1978 gave out more information on their activities during the year. At the end of July they held a training camp at Hamilton Downs Youth Camp with training centred around fracture immobilisation.

In August there were Preliminary Home Nursing examinations conducted by Sister B. Eastwell of the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service. Six passed initially and another four passed re-examinations a few weeks later. *"Twelve probationary Cadets, including five Aboriginal students from Yirara College, passed the Preliminary First Aid examination."*

The Cadets joined the Adults for the Annual Inspection on the 23rd October, conducted by District Surgeon Lionel Crompton and DSO John Hill. Twelve new Cadets were enrolled into the Division.

Commissioner Alan Bromwich and District Superintendent Warren Burgess attended the Parade on the 3rd November. This was a combined Parade with Cadets and members of the Adult Division. Priory Votes of Thanks were presented to Joan Boyt-Cullis and Glanville Lindholm and ten Cadets received their Home Nursing certificates.

During the year 22 Cadets attained their Preliminary First Aid certificates; ten attained Home Nursing and qualified for their first proficiency badge.



Bessie Graham and Doreen Noonan from Yirara College

Cadets attended duties that included the Mt Ebenezer 12-hour motor cycle Enduro, the Finke Desert Race, the Bangtail Muster May Day Parade, the Alice Springs Show, Henley-on-Todd, Camel Cup, Alice Springs Rodeo and the usual round of football matches, cycling and motor-cycle events, show jumping, horse racing and speedway. The Cadets also assisted the Apex Club of Central Australia with babysitting during their District Conference.

Andrew Boyt-Cullis finished his report with the paragraph: *"I believe that you will be as proud of this Division's achievements in its first year as the Division is itself."* [124]

In January 1979 it would seem that the Commissioner was unimpressed with the Alice Springs Adult Division: *"At Alice Springs the same problems exist – cadets are more impressive than the adults."* [125]

By way of supporting this, Cadet Division OAC Andrew Boyt-Cullis wrote to Superintendent Lindholm on 2nd January complaining about the unkempt state of the Alice Springs Headquarters. He suggested that both Divisions clean the station, offices, vehicles and outside area on a week about roster. The Cadet Division should not have to do this on their own as they were not the only ones who used the premises.

> *"Once the building and Units are maintained to a high standard of cleanliness, the Brigade in Alice Springs will take more pride in their premises."* [126]

Commissioner Alan Bromwich visited Alice Springs for two weeks, commencing 26th January 1979. While there he attended a Cadet Parade and an Adult training night. With the forthcoming takeover of the Ambulance Service there was a need for a strong Adult Division to support the Service. In Darwin the paid crews operated the Ambulance Service during normal working hours, the same as the Department of Health ambulances had done, and this would be the same for regional Centres as they were taken over.

Unlike the Darwin Division, which had operated an out-of-hours ambulance service for several years, the Alice Springs Division merely transported patients to hospital from sporting events and carried out casual ambulance duties when Hospital ambulances were unavailable. After the takeover they would be expected to provide the out-of-hours service in Alice Springs and would need a higher standard of training and physical fitness to carry out these duties.[127]

St John's takeover of ambulance services in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek was confirmed on 1st March with a story in the *Centralian Advocate* and an advertisement calling for staff for both Centres.

Because of the geographic separation between Alice Springs and Darwin with the notorious *Berrimah Line* effect, Commissioner Bromwich wrote to the Chief Commissioner requesting permission for a second Corps to be established in the District in which Tennant Creek would be directly responsible to Alice Springs. [128] There had been a Darwin Corps for several years now that included the Darwin metropolitan Divisions, as well as Adelaide River and Batchelor. Having a Southern Corps would give these Territorians a degree of self government they had previously been denied.

The Territory was split into Northern and Southern Corps in April 1979, with the demarcation line between Dunmarra and Elliott.[129] Brian Males, Regional Officer in charge of the Alice Springs Ambulance Service, became Superintendent in charge of the Southern Corps.

Brian Males came up from South Australia where he had been a full time officer with the St John Ambulance Service in Adelaide for the past eleven years. At the time of his appointment to the Alice Springs position he was a supervisor/ coordinator in the Adelaide Metropolitan Ambulance Communications Centre. Brian had also been an active volunteer in the Brigade since 1967, and in recent years was a qualified training officer responsible for recruit training in Adelaide.[130]

Superintendent Lindholm seemed not to fit in with the changing times with the need for a far more professional ambulance orientated Division and District Staff meeting minutes record that he was to be offered a staff appointment on the newly created Southern Corps. One could say that he was being kicked upstairs as a gentler way of replacing him as Superintendent.[131]

By way of reinforcing the new situation, District Superintendent Grant Keetley and Brian Males held a meeting with Lindy to inform him that all Brigade property and equipment that had been stored at Lindy's home for want of somewhere better were now the responsibility of the Regional Officer and were to be handed over.[132]

It isn't recorded whether or not Lindy was actually offered the Corps staff position, but that he transferred to the Reserve. He didn't go meekly though, and Commissioner Bromwich travelled to Alice Springs in June to hear Lindy's Right of Redress.[133]

Brian Males became temporary Officer in Charge of the Alice Springs Combined Division until another South Australian, Norm Bartlett, was appointed OAC and then Superintendent in November 1979.

Pat McQuillen wrote: [134]

> *We were ... informed that Lindy was no longer our Superintendent and a new man from South Australia was named. We in Alice Springs knew nothing about this new man but we did know how hard Lindy had worked to keep St John going in Alice Springs and it was public knowledge at the time that many local people took offence at the way Lindy was 'retired'.*

Yvonne Hansen wrote: [135]

> *I was really hurt and disgusted how the existing members were treated when the full-time officers first took over in 1979.*
>
> *Even though I had retired by then and many townsfolk were not amused either, but that was progress. I couldn't believe about Lindy but at least the new regime couldn't take away my Priory Vote of Thanks ...*

Yvonne later gave her Priory Vote of Thanks to St John Ambulance and it now resides in a cupboard at the Bernie Kilgariff Complex, Alice Springs.

The owner of the premises occupied by St John advised an intention to sell and that the lease on the Elder Street building was to be terminated on 31st July. St John now needed another home and this was aided by a visiting Telecom technician from South Australia, who was also a volunteer with St John. He had just removed the telephones from the recently vacated CATA workshops on the corner of Hele Crescent and the Stuart Highway. St John Ambulance quickly took a lease on the building, described as a tin shed, where they remained until a final move to their own home in October 1982.[136]

Manager Warren Burgess travelled to Alice Springs on 12th June 1979 to receive an operating grant from the Department of Health for the ambulance services in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek. The Alice Springs service would start with four ambulances, two that came down from St John in Darwin and the others from the Hospital and needing *"a lot of work done on them to bring them up to St John standards".*[137] In the interim, two ambulances were hired from South Australia at $11.50 each per day while the Department of Health ambulances were being renovated. [138]

With the coming take-over of the ambulance service there was an all out recruiting campaign for more volunteers to man the out-of-hours service. As with Darwin, this would be from 6.00pm to 6.00am and on weekends and public holidays. The attraction of the ambulances worked like magic, resulting in 31 volunteers being on the books.

The date to start the new service was the 1st July 1979, and as this fell on a Sunday the first St John Ambulance crew on duty in Alice Springs, starting at 8.00am were volunteers Neil Russell, Pat McQuillen and third person Ivor Stephens.

Pat McQuillen described the appointment of Officers and NCOs in the Division as having happened at a meeting when Brian Males just told people what their new ranks were. Her heart was set on becoming a sergeant, but was very surprised to have been named as Divisional Officer.

That was it. No consultation or advertising of vacancies as happened in the Top End, just people appointed to positions.[139]

Statistics for 1979 as at 30th September: The Alice Springs Combined Division had three male officers, being Superintendent Norm Bartlett, the Divisional Surgeon and a Divisional Officer. There were five female officers: the Divisional Nursing Officer, one Divisional Officer, two Divisional Nurses and one supernumery. With other ranks there were two male sergeants, one male and one female corporal, and 27 male members.

Division members attended 1102 duties for 7688 hours and treated 564 casualties. Ambulance duties, included in the totals, were 565 for 3825 hours.[140]

At the start of 1980 Alice Springs Cadets Andrew James, Lloyd John and Ian Lucas went to Melbourne to compete in the National First Aid




First Day crew: Neil Russell, Pat McQuillen, Ivor Stephens



Alice Springs 1979
Steve Peers, Dr Kerry Kirke, Wayne Dillon, Grant Keeltey, Norm Bartlett, Brian Males, Alan Bromwich

Championships, having earned that right by winning the NT Championships team event in 1979. They didn't do too well in Melbourne and trailed the field.[141]

There were concerns about Cadets being more interested in ambulance work than first aid and it was stated that some adult members did not like having Cadets on the cars at all. In March 1980 it was decided to allow Senior CCT qualified Cadets aged 14 to 16 to do trainee transport duties on weekends. They were not to go on bush trips and could be excluded from specific jobs at the discretion of the Home Duty Officer.[142]

Problems in the Cadet Division culminated with Andrew Boyt-Cullis being transferred back to the Adult Division in early 1980. He was replaced by Geoff Knott, a scientist with the Water Division of the Department of Transport and Works. Sadly, Geoff died of cancer in 1983. Neil Coley then took charge of the Cadets.

Alice Springs Cadets went to Darwin for the NT Cadet Championships on 30th August 1980. Competitors were Nursing individual, Frankie Upton; Nursing team, Helen Knott, Sonia Blaschek, Viola Wickstein and Melanie Quinn.

The boys were represented by First Aid individual, Lloyd James; First Aid team, Simon Hockley, Shane Lancaster, Timothy Lancaster and Justin Hockley. The Team Manager was Mrs June Blaschek, assisted by Peter Lancaster.[143]

The only results found on record were that the overall winners were from Casuarina.

Bureaucratic delays held up work on the new Ambulance Centre with the land needing to be rezoned.[144] To pay for the new Alice Springs regional headquarters and for other building works, St John launched a Building Appeal throughout the Territory on Monday 15th September. The appeal was launched in Alice Springs by the Mayor, Mr George Smith. Alice Springs was set a target of $25,000 and Mr Peter Lafsky, coordinator of the 1976 building appeal for the Casuarina Headquarters, came up from South Australia to manage the appeal in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.

Doorknocks were held in Darwin, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek on Sunday 12th October. By the 15th October the Territory total had reached $22,500 with $3852 raised in Alice Springs. A lack of records for the period denies us the total finally raised.

Part of the fund-raising included the inaugural St John Ambulance Anniversary Cup staged by the Central Australian Race Club at Pioneer Park on 18th October 1980. This was to be held every year close to the date of St John taking over the Ambulance Service in Alice Springs. There was a perpetual cup with the names of the winning horses, owners and riders inscribed on the base.

The second St John Cup race was held on 4th July 1981.

St John Ambulance sent out letters in October 1981 advising that they would now begin charging for the use of ambulances at various public functions. The cost of $15 per hour would start on the 1st December 1981. Naturally, this annoyed the Racing Club which had been so generous to St John and they invited Regional Ambulance Officer Brian Males to their March 1982 committee meeting to explain why they should continue with the Charity Day in July now that St John Ambulance was levying them with charges. There was no St John Cup race in 1982.

The dispute seems to have been settled because the Cup race was held again on Saturday 10th September 1983. There were skydivers, ambulance demonstrations and displays, and a $1 per ticket lottery with prizes donated by Sitzler Bros, Repco and the Gap Motor Hotel. Entry fee to the racecourse was $3 for adults with children free. St John Ambulance made a net profit of $893 on the day.

The St John Cup, last of four races for the day, was won by Noble Ned, owned and trained by Mr and Mrs R.J. Moody of Bradshaw Drive. A hand written note by Pat McQuillen states that they still had the Cup in September 1989. The race was never run again.[145]

The Alice Springs Combined Division had a leadership change in June 1981 when Norm Bartlett was promoted to Southern Corps staff; David Gillatt

then took over as Divisional Superintendent.[146]

The combined adult and cadet Annual Inspections were held in June with Commissioner Alan Bromwich, Grant Keetley, Dr Kerry Kirke, Brian Males and Norm Bartlett as the inspecting party.

At the parade Peter Smart and Joan Hunt were awarded Priory Votes of Thanks for their service to St John Ambulance in Alice Springs.[147]

The 1981 Annual General meeting was held on the 19th October. The Alice Springs Combined Division now had 37 members, with 26 holding CCT certificates. The Division had three male, one female and one supernumery officer. Other ranks were one sergeant, two corporals, sixteen privates and one nursing member. Two members were in Reserve, but there was no Divisional Surgeon with Dr Perrie resigning due to work commitments.

Up to the 30th September the Division covered 266 public duties totalling 1801 hours and 683 transport duties for 3883 hours. Monday night meeting attendance was poor with just 25% of members showing up.

There were some significant sources of income with the largest being from the Central Australian Racing Club with $741.

The Transport Report mentioned the universal problem of some members doing more than their fair share of the workload while others needed to be reminded of their obligations in relation to duties. Changes to the fleet were listed, together with a complaint about the dirty condition of vehicles, inside and out.

To assist members going away on bush duties the St John Council would purchase a basic kit of food supplies. It would then become the responsibility of the Division to replenish the kit. Extra food purchased by members attending the duty would be considered for reimbursement.[148]

The District Staff Meeting held in Darwin in April 1982 reported that the Alice Springs Combined Division was short on numbers. The Meeting also reported that the new Alice Springs Centre was behind schedule but progressing satisfactorily.[149]

In July 1982 the Adult Division had a total strength of 44 members, with 32 being active. Of the total, 17 were Driver/Attendants, eight attendants, ten trainees, six Field Duty members (three active), one administrative and two on the Reserve.[150]

Numbers of active volunteers available for ambulance duties steeply reduced to nine in November with paid officers having to be called in to fill the shortfall. The District Secretary, Ian Spooner, would conduct a recruiting drive next February in order to increase numbers.[151]

One reason for the reduction in volunteer numbers was due to their gaining employment with the Ambulance Service. They were still doing ambulance duties, only now they were being paid.

In response to enquiries about establishing an ambulance service in Ti Tree, the town was visited but did not appear to be viable at this stage. Nine people out of 30 residents attended a public meeting to consider the formation of a Section in the town. Seven expressed interest but were concerned that they were too few to maintain a regular service.[152] No St John Ambulance service was started in Ti Tree.

Later in the year it was proposed that Car 31 be based at Erldunda, at the intersection of the Stuart and Lasseter Highways for highway emergencies. St John was to provide training for the locals who would respond to calls and house and maintain the vehicle. If successful, this would be followed up at Ti Tree and at Frewina on the Barkly Highway.[153] There is no further mention of this proposal in any available records and it is uncertain whether or not it went ahead.

Pat McQuillen described the Finke Desert Race of June 1982, so very different to how it is run in the 21st Century: [154]

> *"The highlight of June was, and still is, the Finke Desert Race. As was the custom in those early days, all the competitors, bikes only, lined up in one straight line and the mayor stood on the back of a ute, fired a shotgun and the race started. It was then one big scramble to get in the front row. There were very few serious accidents when the race started like that. It*

*was a matter of all hands on deck and just a skeleton crew was left behind to cover the town."*

Nowadays the Finke Desert Race also has cars and is a major logistical exercise for St John Ambulance with paramedics and volunteers coming from all over the Territory to take part.

The new Regional Headquarters was finally built and in October 1982 it was eagerly occupied by the volunteers and paid crews. Brian Males described it as a *"magnificent building, something everybody connected with St John both past and present can be proud of".* He stressed that now that they were away from *"old, used and dilapidated"* furniture and fixtures there was a need to maintain a high standard of cleanliness and care for the new facilities and equipment. *"It has its compensations though in that it will be far easier to maintain our reputation for having the cleanest fleet in the country!"* [155]

Quite a turnaround considering that twelve months previously the Division's Transport Officer had complained of the dirty state of the vehicles.

In November, DAO Rod Bramley attended a meeting in Alice Springs where Brian Males raised the issue of poor volunteer response and coverage. There were only nine active volunteers for ambulance duties with paid officers having to cover many of their shifts.[156]

At the end of December the adult Division reported 37 members, with 25 being active. Three were on field duties with the remainder on the ambulances. The Monthly Report had 13 active driver/attendants and three active attendants. This was an improvement on the previous month, although not significant.[157]

The new Ambulance Headquarters was officially opened by Charles, Prince of Wales and Princess Diana on Monday 21st March 1983, but not without some prior dramas. Five days before the event the heavens opened with the heaviest rain that Alice Springs had seen in years. *"The Todd River flooded, the streets flooded, the powerhouse flooded and the town all but shut down."*

The rain died to a drizzle by the Sunday afternoon allowing the headquarters to be cleaned up. A big problem was that the front lawn where the ceremony was to be held was a quagmire. One quick thinking member remembered that a dodgem car sideshow was in town, but couldn't operate because of the flooding. They generously loaned their steel floor plates that turned swamp into solid surface. The sun came out on the day and everything went as planned.

Prince Charles asked the honour guard, *"Saved any lives today?"* and Pat McQuillen used that as the title for her book.[158] Pat also wrote that it was *"the most frequently asked question of every volunteer at every duty attended".* Your author's experience is that the most commonly asked question was "where are the toilets?" but didn't think that a very good title for this book.

Official guests at the ceremony included the NT Administrator, Commodore Eric Johnston in his role as Patron of the St John Council of the Northern Territory Inc., accompanied by his wife Mrs Joan Johnston.

Others were Dr Charles Gurd, President of the St John Council; Chairman Richard Morris and Mrs Morris; Commissioner Alan Bromwich and Mrs Rosemary Bromwich; The Right Reverend Kenneth Mason, Wing Commander Meares, Minister for Health Ian Tuxworth and Mrs Tuxworth.

The headquarters had taken nine months to build for a total cost of $730,378.74 with most of the funding coming from the Northern Territory Government.[159]

Problems with getting enough volunteers to man the ambulances continued into 1984, although public duties were still being covered. In August it was reported that a lot of public duties had been covered by paid ambulance officers, but now an increase in ambulance workload with a resultant rise in overtime meant that they were not available for public duties. It seemed an act of desperation when DAO Rod Bramley suggested, *"Maybe we have to take a hard line and delete all public duties and transfer emphasis on ambulance coverage unless more community support is given".* [160]

Brian Males left St John Ambulance to become Regional Manager of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Norm Bartlett was promoted to Acting Corps Superintendent Southern Corps (CSSC) from 5th February 1985.

A popular public duty at Mt Ebenezer, 250 km south of Alice Springs was described in the June 1985 *Outback Ambulance* as *"dirty, dusty, but a hell of a lot of fun".*

Eight adult members and four cadets took two ambulances and a caravan to the 8HA 12-Hour Enduro Desert Race in April. The duty crews, with mascot Shatsi, left Alice Springs after work on Friday night to set up the first aid post and an eyewash station before the race started at midday, Saturday. Sleeping arrangements for the St John volunteers were cadets in the ambulance and adults in the caravan, the annex and a private vehicle.

The race circuit was 65km and took the bikes about 45 minutes to cover. *"They keep going until either the bike packs up, the rider gives up or the 12 hours is completed."*

The race continued until midnight Saturday with an ambulance at the top of the course (checkpoint 3) and a foot patrol with portable radio at checkpoint 1.

Cadets were the eyewash patrol, an essential duty as part of the course went through a lime area, creating an unwanted hazard for the riders.

Some 45 casualties were treated during the event, none serious. In past years there had been some major accidents, necessitating an aircraft to be on standby in Alice Springs. The only serious injury was when a spectator successfully amputated a finger while horsing around on Sunday morning.

The crews woke to find themselves covered in a very thick layer of dust on Sunday morning, the residue of a night time dust storm. More patching up of injuries discovered in the sober light of day and then pack up and return to Alice Springs.[161]

At a motorcycle accident on 22nd October 1985 Cadet Sergeant Michael O'Donohue and Cadet Justin O'Donohue administered first aid treatment before the arrival of the ambulance. The Cadets gave an exemplary handover of the patient and assisted the ambulance with equipment. A congratulatory memorandum was sent to their Acting Superintendent, Peter Kemp.[162]

When Commissioner Lionel Crompton visited Alice Springs in February 1985 he reported problems between Brigade and Service personnel. His suggestion was that volunteers would benefit from going on road duties with Service staff to gain further experience.[163]

This seems to have worked and in March and again in July 1986 it was reported that the relationship between the Brigade and the Ambulance Service had improved, as had volunteer ambulance activities.[164]

There were more improvements and in January 1987: *"Mr Wilson advised he was delighted at input from Brigade over last six months with performance of duties and support in general."* Vic Wilson was the Southern Regional Manager in charge of the Ambulance Service.[165]

At the May 1987 District Conference, Divisional Superintendent Peter Simms was thanked for motivating his members to successfully cover ambulance and public duties. New members were joining the Adult Division and those inactive for some time were being culled.

Transport duties by qualified Brigade officers were increasing, reducing overtime and penalty payments for full-time officers. The Division was very active and the 6.00pm – 11.00pm Monday to Friday roster was being maintained, with one position on the roster for 3.00pm shift Saturday or Sunday with a Service officer.

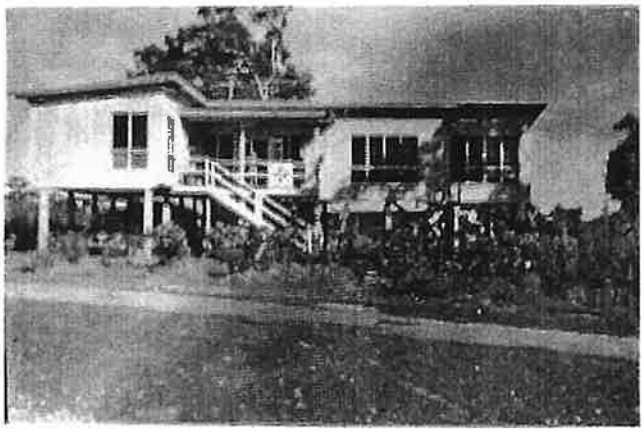
Peter Simms was asked to alter this to provide more coverage at weekends. His response was that it wasn't possible at the moment, but he could provide staff at short notice and aimed to cover not only the required hours, but also to relieve the Service of the requirement to roster crews over weekend.

Corps Superintendent Mike Burgess thought that wasn't possible until the third quarter and not possible to cover as much as the Darwin Divisions for another two years.

# Darwin



**1961:** Yvonne Metcalfe - Mary Hickey - Elizabeth Deickman



**1960s:** Jack O'Hare's Nightcliff home and clinic





**1960s:** Darwin Division members on a training night





**1970:** CSO Barrie Fricker
Dr WA Langsford
nk
DS Bill Keelan
DS(C) Grant Keetley





**1975:** Darwin Division on parade. Inspected by Police Commissioner Bill McLaren and DO Rod Bramley

**1978:** District Superintendent Warren Burgess applying Casualty Simulation injuries to a "patient".



**1970s:** Dianne Watson, Ron Beardwood, Phil Langdon, Margaret Beardwood at an accident scene




Doreen Kerr and Bob Brennan—probably late 1970s



**1977:** Commissioner Dr Colin Mills inspecting cadets on parade



**1978?:** NT Administrator John England inspecting cadets on parade



**1979:** Commissioner Alan Bromwich and Individual Champion Shirley Woods



**1978?:** NT Administrator John England inspecting the Annual Review



**1976:** Dr Colin Mills presents First Aid Certificates to Judy Day, Pat McQuillen, Graem Harding, Helen Turner, John Williams, Veronica Balch and Roma Wood.
This was the start of the Casuarina Combined Division. *(page 65)*




Not known—it appears to be Frank Simmons and Grant Keetley (?) loading a casualty onto a stretcher on what may be a night training exercise—it could also be the real thing.



**1980:** National Championship winners Ian Williams, Robert Tremethick, Jane Hozier *(page 81)*



**1960s:** Cadets loading a "patient" into the Holden ambulance at Parap Headquarters

# Cyclone Tracy



Carnage seen at the airport



Darwin Ambulance Centre 30 December 1974



Looking for Garry Schoolmeester's car under his collapsed house, January 1975



Lifting rubble off Garry Schoolmeester's car located under his collapsed house



Erecting the "new" communications tower



Replacing hot water service on roof of Darwin Ambulance Centre 27 January 1975

These photographs from Cyclone Tracy courtesy of John Pohl, Murray Bridge, South Australia

# Cyclone Tracy



Spare ambulances behind Darwin St John Centre
January 1975



Combined fleet lined up in front of Ambulance Centre
January 1975




Darwin St John ambulances January 1975




Lee Francis and Peter Simms cleaning ambulances
30 December 1974



"Storm Troopers" from Adelaide, January 1975

Lee Francis, Don DeGiglio, Peter Simms, Bob Campbell, John Pohl, Graeme Stewart, Charlie Stal, Malcolm Pascoe, John Burton

Absent: Peter Gebert, Ray Benzie, Mike Horsman



Peter Gebert and Graeme Stewart painting the
Darwin St John Centre—January 1975

These photographs from Cyclone Tracy courtesy of John Pohl, Murray Bridge, South Australia

# Darwin 1977



Kay Brown, Bob Brennan and Pat McQuillen at Darwin Ambulance Centre




Pat McQuillen at the Casuarina Headquarters construction site



Helen and Norm Turner




Pat McQuillen at the temporary demountable centre at Casuarina




Roma Wood

The photos on this page are from the Pat McQuillen collection held in St John Ambulance archives. Pat was a member of Casuarina Combined Division and Bob Brennan was Divisional Superintendent





Darwin Ambulance Centre, Parap

# Investitures



**1978 Investiture**

**Standing:** Dr Charles Gurd CStJ, Rod Bramley SBStJ, Teerse Stal SBStJ, Grant Keetley SBStJ, Richard Morris OStJ

**Sitting:** Joy Burgess SSStJ, Marian Grayden SSStJ



**1981:** Joan Hunt receiving her Priory Vote of Thanks from Dr Kerry Kirke in Alice Springs



**1988:** Norm Turner being invested Serving Brother by NT Administrator Commodore Eric Johnston



**1981:** Governor General Sir Zelman Cowen knighting St John Council President Dr Charles Gurd CMG CBE KStJ



**1990:** Governor General Bill Hayden knighting St John Council Chairman Richard Morris KStJ



**2010:** Lord Prior Professor Anthony Mellows knighting Peter Poole KStJ



**2011:** NT Administrator Tom Pauling knighting Chief Justice Trevor Riley KStJ



**2008:** NT Administrator Tom Pauling knighting Bernie Kilgariff AO JP KStJ



**2009:** Lesley Ling DStJ was the first Northern Territory volunteer to be invested Dame in the Order of St John

# Investitures



**1988:** NT Administrator Commodore Eric Johnston investing Steve Peers as Serving Brother



**1998:** Marian Grayden being promoted to Commander in the Order of St John by NT Administrator Dr Neil Conn



Pro Fide

Pro Utilitate hominum

The Priory in Australia

of

The Grand Priory in the British Realm

of the

Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem

At a Meeting of the Priory Chapter

held on

First Day of June 1963

it was RESOLVED that the

Special Thanks of the Prior and

Priory Chapter be conveyed to

Yvonne Hansen

of

South Australia

for

Services rendered to the Order

within the Priory.

Casey Prior

Chancellor



**1981:** Peter Smart receiving his Priory Vote of Thanks from Dr Kerry Kirke in Alice Springs



**1977:** Alan Bromwich SBStJ

# Awards



**1983:** Terry Dahlenburg being awarded the Service Medal of the Order of St John by NT Administrator, Commodore Eric Johnston




**1997:** Commissioner Steve Baddeley with Cadet of the Year Ben Mooney



**1997:** Commissioner Steve Baddeley presenting the Honorary Members Badge to Mandy Langdon



**2008:** Noel Talbot with an award from Alice Springs Cadet Division on his retirement as Territory Officer Cadets



**2011:** Commissioner Steve Peers awards a Bronze Commendation to Humpty Doo Cadet Axl Dethmore



**2008:** NT Administrator Tom Pauling presents the Grand Prior's Badge to Humpty Doo Cadet Shaun Washington

# Awards



**2002:** Byron May is awarded a Commissioner's Commendation by NT Administrator John Anictomatis



**2011:** Rosie Ballinger is awarded Operational Support Member of the Year by Commissioner Steve Peers



**2003:** Dawn Bat is awarded Adult Volunteer of the Year by NT Administrator John Anictomatis



**2007:** Commissioner Peter Poole presents Gwyn Balch with a bouquet of flowers



**2008:** Commissioner Steve Peers awards Kelly Raven with Cadet Division of the Year for Palmerston Cadet Division



**2012:** Commissioner Steve Peers is awarded a Gold Commendation by Chancellor Dr Neil Conn

Casuarina Headquarters 4th May 1980











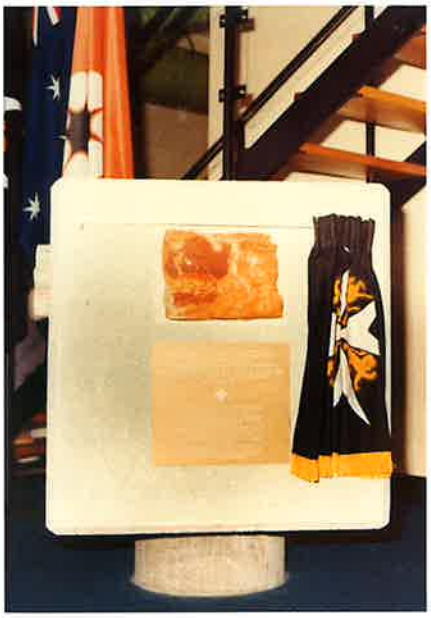






# Casuarina Headquarters 4th May 1980













The Clerkenwell Stone and Naval Headquarters Stone on display in the Colour Cabinet at the Richard Morris Centre, Casuarina



**1981:** Car 49 Rescue vehicle lighting a night accident scene with its stemlight




**1983:** Kiss of Life world record at Hibiscus Shopping Centre



**1981:** Mandy Langdon, Commodore Eric Johnston and Commissioner Alan Bromwich



**1981:** Commodore Eric Johnston and Teerse "Charlie" Stal



Toni Gullefer, Litchfield Citizen of the Year
Australia Day 1991




Public Duty crew with the VW ambulance
Probably late 1960s or early 1970s

# Competitions



**1983:** Competition winners Sharon Wilson, Michelle Hanton and Peter Poole with Commodore Eric Johnston



**1983:** Individual Competition winner Christine Turner



**1984:** National Cadet Competitions



**1989:** Michael Petrelis being awarded the Cadet Leader Championship trophy by District Superintendent Lesley King



**1980s:** Helen Proudfoot with a "casualty"



**2010:** Brett Devitt and Peter Poole at the very last National Adult First Aid Competitions

# On Parade



**1970s:** Cadets on parade at Darwin Ambulance Centre



**1977:** Annual Parade



**1981:** NT Administrator, Commodore Eric Johnston inspects the Annual Parade with Commissioner Alan Bromwich and District Superintendent Grant Keetley



**1981:** Cadets on parade in various uniforms and plain clothes



**1992:** District Superintendent Peter Poole and NT Administrator Austin Asche inspecting the 1992 Annual Parade



**1980s:** Commodore Eric Johnston inspecting the Cadets, accompanied by District Superintendent Lesley King and Commissioner Dr Lionel Crompton

# Celebrations



**2003:** Lord Mayor Peter Adamson presents Commissioner Andrew Hodges with a Certificate of Appreciation for Darwin Adult Division's 50th Anniversary



**2005:** Darwin Cadet Division's 50th Anniversary NT Administrator Ted Egan, Patron Nerys Evans, DS Romaine Oorloff, Commissioner Peter Poole, Chairman Mike Mooney



**2003:** Dawn Bat and Brian Maden blow out the candles on Humpty Doo Cadets' 5th birthday cake



**2008:** Vicki Macmillan and Brian Maden cut the Humpty Doo Cadets' 10th birthday cake



**2011:** Dawn Bat and NT Administrator Tom Pauling cut the Nhulunbuy Adult Division's 30th birthday cake




**2011:** Alice Springs Adult Division's 50th birthday cake



Elaine Drahm



Alan Caust



Frank Dunstan and Glen Denmeade



Lesley King and Chief Nursing Officer Beth Dawson



Barbara Henderson, Gordon Bowman and Lesley King



Noel Talbot and Sue Cooper

# People



Paulo Fernandes, Cadet of the Year



John Anictomatis and Frank Simmons



Tony Iliou, Jacklyn Braund and Michael Holmes



Brett "Benny" Butler





Pat King




Bill Fullwood



Noel Talbot and Pat McQuillen



Bruce Jones



Brian Maden



Reece and Makaylia Ravlich



Mandy Paradise and Mark Ferguson



Aileen and Bernie Kilgariff



Kieran Brown and Michael Hatfield



Paul Berry and Steve Peers



Susan Rosenzweig and Makaylia Bretag



Batchelor Division members, with local Member Rob Knight MLA, after the 2010 Anzac Dawn Service at Adelaide River

# Cadet Band









**1990:** Governor General Bill Hayden watches the Band play at the National Competitions










# Cadets



Kormilda College Cadets with Territory Officer Noel Talbot



**2007:** Alice Springs Cadets at the Anzac Day service



**2007:** Band Cadets on Clean Up Australia Day



**2009:** Giving blood to Red Cross



**2010:** Treating a casualty at the Freds Pass Rural Show

# Cadets



Paramedic Alice Hageman provides an arm for Axl Dethmore to practice taking blood pressures



**2011:** Patrick of the Cadet Band packs a Christmas Care package to be sent to our troops in Afghanistan



**2008:** Peter Falkland Cadet Claire Chandler with Commissioner Peter Poole



Humpty Doo Cadets and Juniors working for an interest badge



**1980s:** Hoschke family



**1979:** Pauline Allen and Patricia Frank of Yirara College Alice Springs



**1970:** Deputy Commissioner Langsford shaking hands with DS Joe Zigenbine. The bearded sergeant may be Bert Pearce, but this is uncertain.



**1970:** Bill Fullwood , centre—members without coats not known




**1970:** DS Joe Zigenbine shows Dr W.A. "Spike" Langsford the Division's new ambulance



**1970:** Tennant Creek Combined Division members at the Annual Inspection



**1980:** Opening of the new Tennant Creek Ambulance Centre

Minutes of 'The Last Great Corps Meeting' held 2.09.97

Present S Peers P McQuillen C Grave ( as she was last month) N [illegible]
Apologies J Hunt

Minutes read.
Driving. A driving course will be held later in the year for ambulance officers. A change as of the 1st of July re driving the Coaster Steve to check with MVR.
Exercise for September due to go ahead on the Saturday 20th of September.
Comps at Tennant arrangements are well under way.
Nat Comps in Sydney, Noel and Pat going.
Passed as read by Pat seconded Collen

NEW BUSINESS
Noel
Keeping tabs on Cadet Division
Pat.
Cadet division practising for N.T. competitions in Tennant Creek in Next school holidays. Visit from Air Corps on the 18th of September with supper and movie night on the 25th .
Colleen
Money reinbursed for Comps from 1996
Bus Driving. Set a specific Time.
The Changes . Division thought ' Changes are not really needed.'
Disaster exercise for 20th of September.
Cadets needed from 1600 till 2130.
Will talk to cadets tomorrow night.
Steve
Changes
A telephone hook up for 9am Saturday morning.
Will discuss with "The Changes" with 'Topenders"
Friday the 5th at 5.30 on Centre to discuss questions for telephone conference on Saturday.

Meeting closed 2030. Next meeting to be held 13 October.
Once again the McQuillen Fresh Bread Bakery opened in time for supper and all present tucked their toes under the table.

FIRST MEETING OF THE CENTRAL DESERT DISTRICT OF THE N.T.

This inaugural meeting was held in Alice Springs on the 13.10.1997 at 1900h.

Present: Assistant Commissioner Steve Peers.
Divisional Superintendent Alice Springs Adult Division Colleen Grave.
District Officer & Alice Springs Cadet O.A.C. Pat McQuillen.

Apologies: Assistant District Superintendent Noel Talbot.
Divisional Officer Cadets Joan Hunt.

New Business

The Memo dated 09.10.1997 was read and discussed.

The appointment of a Divisional Superintendent to any Division was considered to be too much of an important position to be just issued to a member. It was felt that there was too much at stake, the reputation of the Division, and the reputation of St. John for this position to be filled by a member who had not had any training in the ways of St. John, the ways of the Northern District and the ways of the Central Desert District.

The members present at this meeting wished it be known that some type of package should be in place to give any member who wished to be considered Superintendent material, an insight into what is expected of a Superintendent. For example, a modified Officers Course would be a good starting point, but other factors to be considered would be, management skills, people skills, counselling skills, conflict resolution skills, financial skills and a commitment to the time needed to be a Superintendent.

For this position, a signed Duty Statement would not suffice, as a Superintendent is the Face of St. John to the public and to keep us held in our current high esteem, a Divisional Superintendent must be chosen with care.

Colleen to follow this up by obtaining a copy of an Officers Course document and begin to modify it.

1997 Annual Inspection

The 1997 annual inspection is to go ahead on October the 20th at 1930 with both the Cadets and Adult Division on Parade.

There is one presentation to be made to an Adult Division member and many presentations for the cadets as well as an Enrolment ceremony.

Pat to organise for Cadet Parents Association to assist with serving supper. Meeting closed at 2030. Next Meeting November 24 1997.




**1970s:** Glanville "Lindy" Lindholm



**1979:** Motorbike Scrambles, Arunga Park



**1983:** Princess Diana unveils a plaque to open the new Alice Springs Regional Ambulance Centre




In the Bangtail Muster Parade



**1979:** Cadets and staff from Yirara College Pauline Allen, Pat McQuillen, Bessie Graham, Patricia Frank, Judith Holland, Doreen Noonan

*Below*—**2008:** At the Desert Park on the occasion of St John Council member Bernie Kilgariff's investiture as Knight in the Order of St John





Bernie Kilgariff AM KStJ





**1980:** Handing over the new ambulance at Ayers Rock






Ambulance at Ayers Rock (Uluru)



**1988:** Alyangula Combined Division opening ceremony with Dr Norton cutting the cake







**2007:** This patient at the Brunette Downs Races insisted on having his heavily pregnant Black Headed Python "Betsy" with him while being treated



**2009:** Humpty Doo DS Greg Payne with his scaly patient



**2010:** Mel Petersen with a scaly friend at a Palmerston public duty



**2010:** Monika Muir treated 2Cav's wedge tailed eagle mascot for heat stress at the V8 Supercars public duty





**2010:** This ambulance was caught in Cyclone Carlos—fortunately nobody was injured

*photos courtesy Simon Spillett*

Public duties were well attended, although there was consternation about the Council's policy of charging for foot volunteers. At the horse racing, members who were once provided free food and soft drinks were now told to pay for them.

Division members were also travelling to Tennant Creek to assist with public duties, the local Division having very few members.

The Corps Superintendent regularly visited Alice Springs Divisions, but not in Tennant Creek because of a lack of funding. The Southern Corps operated with no funds and no bank account.[166]

Lord and Lady Cathcart visited Alice Springs at the end of September 1986. Cadet competitions were in progress on the day, which ended in a joint Alice Springs Adults and Cadets parade. The Lord Prior then presented Competition winners with their prizes.[167]

In February 1988 it was reported that Alice Springs members were covering ambulance duties on weekends and the odd shift during the week, a reversal of what had been done the previous year. An IAC course had started last December with eight students. If they all stayed this would give the Division a significant boost in numbers that could allow extended hours of ambulance coverage.[168]

On-Road Supervisor Tony Oxford wrote a very informative story for *Outback Ambulance* in June 1988. Severe flooding in Alice Springs had resulted in the loss of lives and damage in the millions of dollars. St John had two vehicles out of action through water damage, with others needing overnight repairs to keep the fleet operational. Kentucky Fried Chicken was thanked for feeding the crews throughout the floods at no charge.

Public duties so far that year included the 'Droving 88' event at Newcastle Waters, the Camel Cup and the National BMX titles. The Finke Desert Race was coming up and this year it would include cars for the first time.

Other coming duties were the Alice Springs Show, Expo, a recruiting drive and the Concours De Elegance. St John was assisting the latter as a fund raiser. Other members were assisting the National Heart Foundation to organise a 24-hour Indoor Cricket Marathon with the possibility of more fund raising for St John.

Recently retired Senator Bernie Kilgariff was appointed to the Executive Committee of the St John Council in January 1988, and elected as Chairman of the Territory Ophthalmic Hospital Fund Raising Committee. Bernie was the first Councillor from Central Australia and he took a lot of interest in St John Ambulance in Alice Springs, especially the Cadet movement.

When Norm Bartlett resigned in November 1989 after ten years in Alice Springs the entire fleet of ambulances lined the railway line and farewelled him on the Ghan with flashing lights and blaring sirens.

Norm was returning to Adelaide to take up a position with Australia Post. He came to Alice Springs to help Brian Males set up the new Ambulance Service in town and also took over management of the Alice Springs Combined Division. The Division had been in the doldrums for years and needed to transform from a small group of first aiders into a much larger volunteer ambulance service.

Norm remembered the Elder Street premises as a place of disrepair, covered in red mud and grease and he wondered what he had gotten himself in for when he first arrived in town. He found himself working day and night travelling over rough roads to places as far away as Ayers Rock. Roads were so rough that vehicles had to be put over the pits for inspection after every trip. Norm was retiring because at age 51 it was time to have a rest and move over for younger people.[169]

Southern Corps reported in April 1991 that the Alice Springs Combined Division had experienced growth in the past nine months and that 192 public duties were attended in 1990.

Brigade training was progressing well with all current members having completed the Skills Maintenance Program (SMP) by the end of May, enabling them to go on with Ambulance Equipment Skills and Advanced First Aid. The IAC course had

five members pass in 1990, with another eleven enrolled for the next course starting in May.

The Division currently had 34 members with another five waiting on medical approvals.[170]

The Cadet Division had grown too large for the Ambulance Centre and hired the Masonic Hall nearby, thanks to assistance from the Endowment Trust. Applications to join the Cadets were so high that a ceiling of fifty members was imposed and a waiting list commenced.[171] A Junior Division was started, possibly around this time, but the date is uncertain. An attempt to start a Parents Association only attracted a couple of interested parents.

In October 1990 the Brigade was inspected at the Ambulance Centre by Commissioner Dr Iain Ping, District Superintendent Lesley King and by Southern Corps Superintendent Steve Peers.

Corps Staff Officer Eileen Calway-Pridham presented proficiency badges in signalling and handicrafts to the cadets, as well as service stripes. Ian Gillatt received a 200-hour badge and Robert Ashby was promoted to Cadet Leader. Trophies were awarded to high achievers Sally Haines and Deborah Croker. Most improved cadet was Michael Geraghty.

The 1990 Cadet Competition Team of Judy Hunt, Matthew Coleman and Matthew Wyatt, who represented Alice Springs at the annual NT Cadet Competitions in Darwin, were recognised at the parade. Team managers were Joan Hunt and Noel Talbot.

Adult member Patrick Calway was presented his 12-year Service Medal.[172]

Adult First Aid Competitions were held on Saturday 27th April 1991 at the Police Training complex at Berrimah, with teams and individuals from Darwin and Alice Springs competing for the opportunity to represent the Territory at the National Championships in June.

Scenarios confronting the competitors included a domestic violence scene that left a man unconscious on the floor with stab wounds to the chest and his wife on the floor with burns to her back from boiling water. This was complicated by the woman's sister, suffering from bronchitis and the flu, and also having a syncope attack. The Alice Springs team of Debbie Savill, Joan Hunt and Scott Keetch won this event.

Alice Springs competitors Scott Sly and Ian Gillatt took out first and second places in the individual competition that saw them treating two patients with head and foot lacerations and one with a fractured elbow. Team Manager was Noel Talbot.[173]

This now qualified the Alice Springs champions for the Australian First Aid championships in Darwin in June 1991. However, they didn't fare so well against their interstate competitors, coming sixth in the team event and with Scott Sly coming fourth in the individual event.[174]

At the NT Cadet Competitions held in the Ford Plaza in October, Sally Haines of Alice Springs won the individual event, while Darwin were the team champions.[175]

The Brigade celebrated 30 years of operation in Alice Springs with a gala dinner at the Gapview Resort in November. People attending included Glenn Aslin, Sharon Anderson, Karyn Bremner, Joan Hunt, Scott Keetch, Barry Jongkryg, Noel and Liz Talbot, Des and Paula Thornton, Pat McQuillen, St John Councillor Bernie Kilgariff, Steve Peers, Phillip and Penella Rimon, Mayor Leslie Oldfield, Mark Savill and Debbie Blake.[176]

The birthday cake was made in the shape of a Maltese Cross and was cut by long serving member



Alice Springs champions.
*Back row:* Ian Gillatt, Scott Sly, Scott Keetch
*Front row:* Joan Hunt, Debbie Savill, Noel Talbot

Joan Hunt and Barry Bohning, a member from the 1960s.[177]

In April 1992 the Brigade's policy was that all public duties had to be covered before anybody would be rostered on for road duties. New members would be urged to join as first aiders only with no pressure to continue studies.

Drill would be practised once per month in full uniform *"after Darwin comp weekend, obvious that not many knew what and how to do drill"*. [178]

The annual District Conference was held in Alice Springs in 1993, commencing with the Officers Conference on Saturday morning 24th April, First Aid Competitions in the afternoon and the Officers Mess Dinner that night. The following morning started with the Anzac Dawn Service on Anzac Hill, the District Conference, followed by the Parade and Church Service and finishing with the wind-up barbecue.

At the Conference, Southern Corps advised it had introduced a sponsor system where an experienced member shows a new member 'the ropes'. A similar system applied in Northern Corps. Alice Springs Cadets currently had 27 regularly attending and the Adults had 40 members.

Adult Divisional Superintendent Pat McQuillen advised that the Division had a newsletter that worked well in keeping members informed. The Commissioner suggested that the Northern Divisions should start a similar newsletter.

On behalf of the editor of *Outback Ambulance*, Leonie Harvey requested input from Operations Branch members. Steve Peers stated that a great deal had been forwarded from Alice Springs, but very little appeared in the magazine.[179]

In the Adult Competitions, Joan Hunt of Alice Springs was the winning individual, while their team of Trevor Sellick, Paul Bray and Tim Hatchard managed second place.[180]

This qualified Joan to compete in the National Championships in Adelaide later in the year. However, as a Cadet Divisional Officer this didn't fit in with the rules that allowed only one Cadet DO in the team, and not as the individual.

In the National Competitions, South Australia won the Individual event; Victoria won the team event and also the highest aggregate score. It wasn't reported who replaced Joan Hunt as NT individual competitor.

Denise Hayter (Jeffries) moved from Alice Springs when her policeman husband, Sergeant Bob Jeffries, was transferred to Avon Downs Police Station, 50km west of the Queensland—Northern Territory border. Bob's district included 270km of the Barkly Highway that gets very busy in the tourist season.

Denise was a volunteer with St John in Alice Springs who had completed the Certificate in Ambulance Studies, which proved very useful in such a remote location. Before leaving she approached the staff at the Alice Springs Ambulance Centre and begged as much gear and first aid supplies as she could get. Avon Downs had a population of seventeen people with five at the Police Station and the other twelve at the cattle station two kilometres away.

The closest ambulance and medical facilities were at Camooweal across the border in Queensland. Emergency backup was available from the Royal Flying Doctor in Mt Isa. Cases that Denise dealt with included station staff coming off horses and motorbikes, being kicked by cattle and barbed wire injuries. There were heart attacks and psychiatric patients as well as some serious motor vehicle accidents.

Denise wrote an excellent account of her experiences that was published in the Winter 1997 edition of *Outback Ambulance*.

The Alice Springs Show public duty was at the start of July. Des [Thornton] spent a long lonely day at the showgrounds on Thursday while they were setting up. The Friday was very hot for July with a very big crowd. This year the First Aid Post was in a demountable without running water and in a different location than before. The new location was problematic in that it was far from the arena and too close to the car dealers and their extra loud noises. Calls on the ground control PA system couldn't be heard over the noise.

*The St John crews were kept busy with people overcome by the heat, children with minor injuries and wannabe boxers coming in for a patch-up after a pasting in the ring. Paul Bray and Robert Thomas did hourly resuscitation demonstrations at the St John stand.* [181]

Later in the month Division members attended the Kulgera Gymkhana, down the Highway just a bit short of the South Australian border. It was a two day duty with an overnight stay at the Kulgera Hotel. Saturday was mainly horse events, but Sunday was fun day with motorbikes in the dirt in the morning. In the afternoon there was cow tail throwing, egg and spoon race, bob the apple, three legged race and a step the measured distance competition.

A ball was held at night in the Gymkhana grounds to add to the fun. *"Oh yes, one patient required treatment, at the Hotel."* [182]

St John "Save a Life Week" was held in the Northern Territory from 10th October. It was a community promotional week with the media involved, public displays and the offer of free CPR classes to make people realise the importance of learning First Aid. Public demonstrations of CPR were held and all Territory centres had an open day on Saturday 16th October.[183]

Pat McQuillen produced a very informative Annual Report for 1993 in which she outlined a few 'firsts' for Alice Springs: The District Review was held in April and, *"without blowing our own trumpet too loudly, it was one of the better District Reviews ever held".* [184]

Other 'firsts' were the publication of a monthly newsletter; the first Family Care Course; the first NCO course that was written and programmed in Alice Springs; the first National St John Week in which volunteers assisted with the ambulance display in town; and the first introductory Extended Patient Management course, designed to assist members starting the 1994 IAC course.

Pat was also the first female Superintendent of the Alice Springs Adult Division in its 33 year history. Yvonne Hansen had taken charge of the Division on occasions as OIC during the 1960s and early 1970s, but as an NCO, not as an officer.

Membership averaged between 32 and 38 for the year and more than 200 public duties were covered. There was a new duty at the Drag Racing, held at the old airstrip. The Finke Desert Race was bigger than ever, as it is every year, and was a success due to continued close cooperation with NTES.

At the end of year Christmas Dinner, Paul Maybank was presented the Superintendent's Award.

The Annual NTES and St John Ball was held at the Melia Hotel on Saturday 22nd May 1993 with TV stars Gary Sweet and Sonia Todd as special guests. Local comedian Fiona O'Loughlin *"once again stunned the audience with her routine that helped to make the night one to remember".*

The Ball was sold out 48 hours prior to the night. *"The combined Emergency Service Ball has achieved the status of being the best patronised ball in Alice Springs."* [185]

In response to a member survey, IAC lectures were held on Monday nights in March 1994, in addition to normal Wednesday meetings. However, despite a large number of members suggesting this, very few non IACs actually turned up and the trial was deemed a miserable failure.

*Over the years we have found that when we have two lecture nights running in the same week, numbers on both nights slowly drop away. This month [March] has proved no exception, in fact even worse than usual.* [186]

March 1994 was also a difficult month for rostering public duties. With the duties being allocated Wednesday nights, the low turnout meant fewer people nominating for public duties.

A list of Brigade members was published in May 1994:

| | |
|---|---|
| Divisional Superintendent | Pat McQuillen |
| Divisional Officer | Debbie Savill |
| Divisional Ambulance Officer | Tony Oxford |

| | |
|---|---|
| Sergeant | Don Kelly |
| Cadet Superintendent | Des Thornton |
| Divisional Officer Cadets | Joan Hunt |
| Corps Superintendent | Steve Peers |
| Corps Staff Officer | Noel Talbot |
| plus 24 members | |

From January to the end of October 1996 the adult Division attended 159 public duties for 3005 hours.

In the first term of 1997, twenty four cadets successfully completed the Knowledge of the Order course with Jessica Hosking scoring 100% in the written paper and David Pearson getting 97%. As these results were obtained just before Anzac Day both of these cadets were chosen to lay the Cadet Division's wreath on Anzac Hill.

The cadets had to use both the Masonic Hall and the Scouts Hall for two groups doing a Family Care course. Charles Swartz from the Adult Division coordinated the course, assisted by nurses Mrs Hughes and Mrs Matthews who taught the classes.[187]

There were some big names in town on their way to the Priory week in Darwin. They included Chief Commissioner Villis Marshall, Chief Superintendent Lynne Allen-Brown, Chief Surgeon Franklin Bridgewater, Chief Officer Cadets Lyn Dansie and Assistant Secretary Dr Barry Price.

In town at the same time were St John Councillors Alan Bromwich, Mike Mooney and Neil Weeks from Darwin, and Bernie Kilgariff from Alice Springs.[188]

In line with the Northern Territory Operations Branch restructure, Southern Corps was disbanded and held its last official Corps meeting on the 2nd September 1997. On the 13th October they held what they defiantly called the *First Meeting of the CENTRAL DESERT DISTRICT of the NT.* A general feeling was that Southern Corps was working just fine, so why get rid of it? Under the new system Steve Peers was now Assistant Commissioner, Noel Talbot was Assistant District Superintendent and Corps Staff Officers were now District Officers.

Not wanting to lose their limited autonomy that had been granted when Southern Corps was created in 1979 they called the realm of the 'Topenders' Northern District and themselves, the Central Desert District. This didn't last long and they soon accepted the reality of the new order.

The Annual National Cadet Camp was held in Alice Springs in January 1999. Participants were accommodated at Yirara College, 10km from the town centre. The camp included sports challenges, a trip to Ross River Homestead, and first aid competitions on Day 3.

The scenario was a cricket match that must have turned into a slaughter because there were a range of injuries that included impaled objects in the thigh, black eyes, unconscious patients, a snake bite, walking wounded with broken bones and the uncooperative bowler who seemed to have caused all the injuries.

New South Wales won the team event; the winning individual came from South Australia with the Northern Territory in second place. Winning Cadet Leader was from Queensland and the South Australians were the aggregate winners.

After that there were Aboriginal Cultural Experience tours and trips to the Desert Park. There were other trips to Hermannsburg, Wallace Rock Hole, Stanley Chasm, Simpson's Gap and Ellery Big Hole. Then there were town tours that took in such places as the Aviation Museum, School of the Air and the RFDS base.

The final day's activities included a trip to the Camel Farm south of town and then the completion of the Sports Challenge. The Camp finished with a formal dinner and *"presentations for all sorts of things and the wonderful evening of entertainment by each contingent putting on an item at the camp concert".* [189]

In late 2000, *"Alice Springs Cadet Ben Farkas travelled to Perak in Malaysia to compete with the Australian Team in the International First Aid Championships. Ben and team mates Melissa Thurston from Western Australia, Glen Docherty from South Australia and Aaron White from Victoria excelled in their treatment of a car crash*

*victim by winning the competition".* [190]

There were twelve teams in the Competitions, one from each country including the local Perak team. The first scenario was a car accident with ten minutes to complete, followed by a second scene with a casualty requiring resuscitation. With a five minute time limit for the resuscitation the Australians revived their casualty within 45 seconds of the starting whistle.

The Australian team placed first in the Competitions, followed by Malaysia and Singapore. The winners brought home individual trophies and the St John International Competition shield bearing their names.[191]

In mid 2001 Regional Manager Steve Peers spoke about problems with recruiting and retaining volunteers in Alice Springs. Volunteers were staying about four years on average and then moving on, often transferring with their jobs. Steve said that when he joined as a volunteer (in 1977) he had no trouble doing twenty or thirty hours per week, but now it was difficult to get people to do as little as six hours per week. People were too busy working and no longer had the spare time for volunteer work.

The ever increasing training standards required for ambulance work and time needed to achieve the necessary qualifications had reduced the number of volunteer ambulance officers greatly. More and more volunteer ambulance shifts had to be filled by paid officers which cut greatly into the operating budget.

> *"If we could operate as we should, with volunteers after hours and weekends, that would make a big difference, whereas we have no volunteers to do ambulance work after hours or on weekends."* [192]

The dawning of the twenty-first century was a time of achievement for the Alice Springs Cadet Division with Peter Williams becoming Peter Falkland Cadet of the Year for 2001 and Kate Anning winning the award for 2002. Both were promoted to Cadet Leader at the start of the 2001 second semester.[193]

At the combined Adult and Cadet Parade on 13th March 2002, St John Councillor Bernie Kilgariff presented Kate Anning with her Grand Prior's badge. She was the first cadet in Alice Springs to achieve this award.[194]

In June 2002, Kate received a Commissioner's Letter of Commendation for exemplary assistance at an accident involving a pedestrian and motor vehicle in Alice Springs. The casualty sustained leg fractures and lacerations with suspected spinal injuries.

> *"She took control of the casualty during all stages of treatment until loaded in the ambulance. It is a measure of her ability that none of the three paramedics attending questioned her role in controlling the loading of the casualty on a scoop stretcher and subsequent lifting."*

The paramedics were so impressed with Kate's performance that they invited her to travel with the casualty to Alice Springs Hospital and *"Paramedic Wayne Bevan reported that she showed the same level of skills on the journey that had been displayed at the scene."* [195]

Kate Anning was promoted to Cadet Divisional Officer later in the year and became OIC of the Juniors in 2003.[196]

Alice Springs Adult Division celebrated their 40th birthday in 2001. This was done in grand style with the annual District Weekend, a Council Meeting, an Ambulance Operations Managers' Meeting, an Operations Branch meeting and the Annual Parade all held in Alice Springs in the first week of October. This date was chosen to coincide with the first inspection of the newly formed Division in 1961.[197]

Top enders sent a bus full of volunteers to the Alice while others drove down in their own cars. St John members came from all over the Territory to attend the celebrations.

The Annual Parade on Saturday 7th October was attended by more than seventy volunteers and inspected by the NT Administrator and Deputy Prior, Mr John Anictomatis.

The Commissioner and Administrator presented medals and awards to volunteers;

Council Chairman Mike Mooney and CEO David Baker presented Ambulance Service awards. A special presentation was made to Bernie Kilgariff for his contribution to St John.

The Mayor of Alice Springs, Fran Erlich presented Operations Manager Steve Peers with a Certificate of Thanks to recognise the contribution of St John Ambulance to Central Australia.[198]

Fran Erlich and Territory Officer Cadets Noel Talbot presented the Alice Springs Cadet Division with trophies for Cadet Division of the Year for 2002. Warrants of Appointment were presented to Cadet Divisional Superintendent Ian McKie and to Territory Officer Info Technology Paul Berry.[199]

Alice Springs Cadet Corporals Chloe Cheslett, Sara Rilstone and Jessica Lowe won the team event at the NT First Aid Competitions held in Katherine in June 2003. This earned them the right to represent the Northern Territory at the National Cadet Competitions held in Hobart in January 2004.

Sergeant Amy Polkinghorne came second in the individual competitions while Sergeant James Berry gained fourth place. Team Manager was Ian McKie.[200]

A brief article on the Alice Springs Juniors was published in the December 2003 edition of *Outback Ambulance*. They had started up three years previously with Divisional Officer Skye Bowey in charge, followed by Kate Anning and then by Rebecca McKie. There were twenty Juniors on the books, with most having older brothers or sisters in the Cadet Division.

Territory 2004 First Aid Competitions were held in Alice Springs with the scenario being in one of the *Henley-on-Todd* boats in the dry river bed.

Competition Manager Paul Berry set up the scene that was won by the Alice Springs team of Kate Anning, Glen Auricht and Geoff Kain, with Scott Loechel from Tennant Creek winning the individual event.[201]

The Alice Springs Cadet Division held their presentation night on Wednesday 25th February 2004 at the Masonic Hall. Highlight of the evening was when Bernie Kilgariff, St John Councillor and Patron of the Cadet group, presented Sara Rilstone with the Peter Falkland Award.

Three Juniors moved up to the Cadet Division and many First Aid and Proficiency certificates and badges were presented.

Rebecca McKie and her mother Barbara were both promoted to Divisional Officer. It was now quite a family affair with father Ian McKie as Cadet Divisional Superintendent.[202]

In June 2004, Alice Springs was given the honour of hosting the first ever St John Ambulance National Conference held outside a capital city. The focal point for the conference was the Alice Springs Convention Centre with meetings also held in the Crowne Plaza.

During the conference two historical books were launched: *Saved Any Lives Today?* By Pat McQuillen; and *To be Faithful, True and Brave* by Dr Bill Wilson. The first book is a history of St John Ambulance in Alice Springs while the latter was commissioned by the St John Council and purports to be a wider history of St John Ambulance in the Northern Territory.

Both books, in their individual way, provided inspiration to research and publish this historical work.

Craig Garraway wrote a very interesting account of the 2005 Finke Desert Race for *Outback Ambulance*: [203]

The event, held in the middle of a freezing desert winter, attracts up to 500 competitors and now forms part of the Australian Off Road Championships. Finke Community is 229km from Alice Springs with competitors racing there on Sunday of the June long weekend and returning the following day. The size of the field means that there can no longer be a single line-up start as was done in the bikes only days. Starting positions are determined by a prologue event at the start/finish line on the Saturday.

The sheer size of this event has turned it into St John NT's largest public duty for the year, with volunteers coming from all over the Territory to

brave the cold and help out. Several Ambulance Service Paramedics also volunteer their time to support this event.

Planning starts weeks beforehand with many long hours spent on what is a major logistical exercise. In 2005, extra vehicles came from Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek. Volunteers came from Alice Springs, Katherine, Darwin, Palmerston, Humpty Doo and Tennant Creek Divisions.

Colleen Grave took charge of communications at race control for the three days of the event. Paramedics at this location were Lenaire Keatch from Katherine and Bridget Oudeman from Alice Springs.

Trevor Keatch from Katherine looked after the post at Deep Well, 61km from Alice Springs, with local Noel Talbot. This fairly quiet post was a breakfast stop for the two pursuit helicopters.

Rodinga, 92km from Alice Springs, was looked after by Dave Macmillan from Darwin and Humpty Doo members Bev Hillier, Lyn Jacobsen, Byron May and Matthew Meir.

> *Matthew survived a scary moment after narrowly escaping being hit by an out of control buggy rolling through the bush. Matthew, who was using a jerry can as a seat, now has a very small squashed jerry can.*

Matthew had just moved to stretch his legs, this action possibly saving his life.

Alice Springs Divisional Superintendent Henry Lawson was in charge of Bundooma, 136km from Alice Springs. He was joined by his partner Jenny and helicopter Paramedic Chris Kupke.

Mt Squires at the 180km mark was attended by Palmerston Division members Ron Owen, Narelle Orford and Graham Irwin. Saturday night they had to drive down to Finke to transfer a patient with a fractured clavicle. A Finke crew was supposed to meet them half way, but were too overwhelmed with patients to leave there.

The Finke crew were Andrew Naden, Gary Carter, Toni-Maree Elferink, Kate Anning, Sally Luchich and Cheryl Paull. Most patients were treated at this location and this year four casualties were evacuated to Alice Springs by RFDS at 3.00am.

Helicopters were crewed by Craig Garraway, Sandra Schmidt and Chris Kupke. Sandra's chopper was tasked with keeping pace with the leading vehicles and bikes to provide a rapid response to any accidents at the front of the field.

Craig's chopper followed the field and accounted for all competitors at the end of the day. He was also tasked with coordinating air and ambulance responses in conjunction with the Communications Officer.

Chris Kupke's larger helicopter with a stretcher on board had the job of evacuating casualties from along the track.

There were 95 casualties treated with all manner of fractures and dislocations.

The Annual Cadet First Aid Competitions were held in Alice Springs on Sunday 2nd October 2005. With a home town advantage there were nine competitors from Alice Springs, five each from the Band, Darwin and Humpty Doo, and two from Palmerston.

The competitions, set in the grounds of the Alice Springs RSL Club, were contested by five teams, seven individuals and four Cadet Leaders. The winning team of Stacy-Lee Cannons, Kristie Leaf and Stella Hubel were from Humpty Doo. Individual winner was Alex Haslett of Darwin and the winning Cadet Leader was Emily Macmillan from Humpty Doo.[204]

A contingent from the Alice Springs Cadet Division joined Paramedic Andrew Naden at the main First Aid post at Apatula Community for the 2007 Finke Desert Race. The Cadets wore a specially designed uniform of red baseball caps, red and black polo shirts and blue jeans for the event.

Injuries encountered included blisters, fractured clavicles, sprains and strains, lacerations, abrasions, dehydration, hypoglycaemia, fractured fingers, dust in the eyes and exhaustion. Over the three days on scene it was estimated that around 150 casualties were treated, including redressing of wounds.

The Finke contingent were Paramedic Andrew Naden, Territory Officer Ian McKie, Divisional Officers Barbara McKie and Rebecca Jones, Cadet Leaders Jake Pietsch and Melissa Golding, Cadet

Sergeants Caitlin Iggleden and Michelle Ellis, Cadet Corporal Cassie Iggleden and Adult Divisional member Kate Anning.

Support crew were Jake's mum, Steph' and her brother Eric, Melissa's friend (former Tennant Creek Cadet) Caitlin and Nades' better half Rose.[205]

Alice Springs Cadets were delighted when Michelle Ellis was named Cadet of the Year for 2007 at the Annual Parade in Darwin. The award was accepted on Michelle's behalf by Peter Falkland Award winner Amy McKay of the Cadet Band.

It was an all Alice Springs show when the team of Amanda McNeill, Glen Auricht and Geoff Kain, and individual competitor Kate Anning represented the Territory at the National First Aid Competitions in Canberra on Saturday 22nd June 2007.

Long term Alice Springs member Steve Peers was appointed to the newly created position of Manager, Volunteer Services in July 2007. The job required taking a leading role in the recruitment, retention, promotion and organisation of voluntary resources and to also lead the Endowment Trust fund raising activities. [206]

At the start of the triennium, 24th June 2008, Steve Peers was promoted to Commissioner of Operations Branch in the Northern Territory. Steve joined St John in 1977 as a volunteer with Casuarina Combined Division and was recruited into the Ambulance Service in Tennant Creek in 1979.

Steve was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2005 Queen's Birthday honours list for service to the community through St John Ambulance Australia. He was invested as a Knight in the Order of St John by Administrator Tom Pauling at Government House on Thursday 28th May 2009.

All of St John were saddened by the death of Pat McQuillen on 14th September 2008. This is how *Vollie News* reported the story:[207]

> *"Last week we received the very sad news that Pat McQuillen had passed away. Pat died peacefully on Sunday 14th September after a battle with cancer.*
>
> *"Pat joined St John in Darwin in 1976 after completing a first aid course and moved to Alice Springs a short time later. She was a very active member until she retired and moved to Avoca in Victoria in 2005. She was an integral part of some of the major events in Alice Springs such as the Royal Visits, 1983 and 1988 floods, rail accidents, aircraft crashes, National Cadet Camp and the official opening of the Ambulance Centre. Being able to witness these events first hand allowed Pat the opportunity to continue with her interest of the history of the organisation. Pat was instrumental in documenting the history of St John in Alice Springs and in 2004 published a book called* Saved Any Lives Today?
>
> *"Pat has left a wonderful legacy of the history of St John in Alice Springs and she will always be remembered by her many friends in St John."*

St John Councillor Bernie Kilgariff was invested as a Knight of the Order of St John at a ceremony in the Alice Springs Desert Park on Saturday 11th October 2008. Officiating at the ceremony was Chancellor of St John in Australia Dr Neil Conn, a former Northern Territory Administrator, and the current Administrator Mr Tom Pauling.

At the investiture Bernie's daughter Fran Kilgariff, also a member of the St John Council and former Mayor of Alice Springs, was admitted as a Member of the Order.[208]

The accolades continued for Alice Springs with Geoff Kain being awarded Adult Volunteer of the Year for 2008 and the Alice Springs Adult Division named as Adult Division of the Year.

Territory Officer Cadets, Noel Talbot and wife Liz retired from St John in the Northern Territory on Friday 30th October 2009. Noel was a railwayman who joined St John Ambulance in South Australia in 1980. He transferred to Alice Springs and retired as Yard Supervisor in 1995 after 37½ years with the railways. Noel then got a job with St John as Sales Consultant, becoming well known throughout Central Australia in communities and cattle stations.

He became Superintendent of the Alice Springs Adult Division in August 1990, was promoted to Corps Staff and became Assistant District Superintendent in 1997. Noel was Territory Officer

Cadets for his last eight years with St John.

Liz Talbot was a non uniformed volunteer with St John Ambulance in Alice Springs for many years, helping with the Cadet Division and at various other functions.[209]

Noel and Liz retired to Kadina in South Australia. Although now living down south they maintained contact and return to the Territory every year to help St John with the annual Show circuit, from Alice Springs to Darwin. They re-joined St John in South Australia in 2012 as Operational Support volunteers.

Cadet First Aid Competitions were held in Alice Springs in 2009 with the local team of Kristy Janssen, Jaime Janssen and Ben Janssen making it a family affair by winning their event.

The Cadet Band scored trophies for the other two events with Sarah McLaughlin the Individual winner and Amy McKay the top Cadet Leader. A Darwin and Band Combined team were first for the inaugural Drill Competition.[210]

The first public duty of 2010 was on the Australia Day weekend at the Deep Well Moto X Enduro. There were 85 riders racing in an official top temperature of 47 degrees on the day, although the burning red sand would have been very much hotter than that. To beat the heat some of the competitors brought generators to run fans and air conditioners. Some even brought wading pools and there were wheelie bins with ice water for immersion cooling of contestants.

While there were no problems with dehydration, two casualties were transported to waiting ambulances on the old South Road. Owen Auricht, OIC Kulgera Police, drove while Kate Anning attended, allowing the event to continue while Dianne and Deidre held the fort.

Casualties included suspected broken ribs, concussion, heat exhaustion and one boy driven to town by private car with a suspected broken clavicle.[211]

Bernie Kilgariff died on 13th April 2010. After retiring as Senator for the Northern Territory, Bernie joined the Council of St John Ambulance as a Board Member in 1987 and was promoted to Commander within the Order of St John in 1999 and invested as Knight of the Order in 2008.

Bernie was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1989 for services to the community and was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1996. More honours came his way when he was awarded the Centenary Medal in 2001 and was named as Senior Australian of the Year for the Northern Territory in 2004.

Bernie had a very strong attachment to the Alice Springs adult and cadet volunteers and while aged in his 80s he regularly volunteered in *"teaching St John Ambulance Cadets about the historical aspects of the Order of St John and the ANZAC tradition, whilst continuing his role on Council".* [212]

An Alice Springs ambulance, car 55, was named *Bernie Kilgariff* in his honour and in 2011 the Alice Springs Ambulance Centre was renamed the *Bernie Kilgariff Complex*.

A State Funeral service was held on Thursday 22nd April 2010 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church with St John Ambulance volunteers forming the Guard of Honour.

Geoff Kain resigned as Cadet Superintendent, with Tuesday 7th September 2010 being his last day. He was given a good send off by Cadets and Adult Division members at the Tuesday night Divisional meeting. Geoff was moving out to one of the local communities to continue his nursing career.

He must have left big shoes to fill, with the position of Superintendent still being vacant in December 2012. Unlike other Divisions, the Alice Springs Cadets didn't fold, but were kept going through the efforts of Sue Gibson, Andi Pelligrin, Paul Berry, Glen Auricht and Caitlyn Iggledon. The Juniors were supervised by Leanne Henderson and her group of Parents.[213]

Territory Officer Paul Berry was listed as Cadet Superintendent in the *St John Ambulance 2012 Annual Report.*

The Deep Well Motocross was on again in 2011 with much milder weather this year – only 42°C compared with 47 degrees in 2010. Ron Owen, Kate

Anning, Emma Griffiths and Deidre White arrived at 7.30am to be greeted by over friendly ants that soon disappeared underground as the day got hotter and hotter. There were only two casualties, nothing major and nobody transported.[214]

Heavy rain caused many duties to be cancelled in March, especially the BMX which was disappointing for the Cadets, still without a Superintendent or Cadet Leader.

Duties in 2011 included the CDU Open Day, Pioneer Park horse races, Speedway and a full weekend of Motocross Enduro at Orange Creek Station, about 90km from Alice.

Deidre White and Emma Griffiths made the dusty trek to the Enduro to find one casualty already waiting for them. Divisional Superintendent Glen Auricht, wearing one of his many other hats, had been preparing the track for the afternoon junior riders when he came off his bike. With a fractured clavicle, four fractured ribs and tendon damage to his left shoulder Glen was driven to meet up with an ambulance coming from Alice Springs.[215]

In September 2011 the volunteer members of St John Ambulance in Alice Springs celebrated fifty years of service to the community with three events:

- A member dinner on Thursday evening, 15th September at Madigan's in the Desert Park.
- A cocktail function in the Council Chambers on Friday 16th hosted by Alice Springs Mayor Damien Ryan.
- A ceremony where the Alice Springs Ambulance Centre was renamed the Bernie Kilgariff Complex, followed by morning tea. The ceremony was attended by Mrs Aileen Kilgariff and members of the Kilgariff family.

Special guests for the celebrations were St John Chancellor Dr Neil Conn, Council President Alan Bromwich and former Northern Territory Administrator Ted Egan and his partner Nerys Evans.

A number of presentations were made at the cocktail function to recognise the contributions of members of the Alice Springs Adult Division. Ron Owen was admitted as a Member of the Order of St John; Kate Anning and Geoff Kain received their 12 year Service Medals; and Divisional Superintendent Glen Auricht received his 17 year Service Bar.

A Bronze Commendation was presented to Joylene Kain for her work with the Alice Springs Cadet Division and a Silver Commendation was presented to Samantha Cameron for her work with the Tennant Creek Cadet Division. [216]

A further accolade for Alice Springs was when Territory Officer Paul Berry was awarded Adult Volunteer of the Year for 2011.

# Chapter 3
# Ayers Rock

In 1979 the township of Yulara was still in the future with tourists catered for at several motels and other services around the base of Ayers Rock, now called Uluru, although the airport is still signposted as Ayers Rock. The area was still a Northern Territory National Park and handing back to the Aboriginal traditional owners and the takeover by the federal National Parks and Wildlife Agency was still waiting for the coming of the Hawke Labor government.

Nineteen seventy nine was also the year that St John took control of the Ambulance Service in Alice Springs with Brian Males in charge as Regional Officer. He was also Superintendent of the Southern Corps in the St John Ambulance Brigade and advised Darwin HQ in September that a Division was in the process of being formed at Ayers Rock with twenty interested people.[1]

District Training Officer Graham Morrison travelled down from Darwin to assess the situation and conducted a First Aid course at the end of October.[2] The Ayers Rock Combined Section attached to Alice Springs Combined Division was registered on 11th November 1979.

Morrison reported to Darwin that fifteen residents had qualified and joined the Brigade, enough to form a Division. A superintendent had been selected and paperwork initiated to register the Division. A staff member would be sent from Alice Springs on a monthly basis to provide training and maintain interest. Negotiations were underway towards procuring a vehicle for the new Division.[3]

Ayers Rock Combined Division was registered on 4th March 1980 with Ian Cawood of the Conservation Commission as the Superintendent.

An ambulance was obtained and on Saturday 12th April, Alice Springs Divisional Officer David Gillatt and Ambulance Officer John Loadsman drove to Ayers Rock for the handover. They arrived just after midday to be told there was a change of program due to an ABC film crew wanting to record the handover at 3.30pm.

Making good use of the intervening time, Gillatt and Loadsman handed over stores and explained necessary Brigade forms. Vehicle maintenance was arranged by Ian Cawood, using Territory Parks and Wildlife mechanics. The vehicle would be garaged in a bush carport, there being nothing else available at the time.

The Holden panel van was washed of road dust, cleaned and handed over at 3.30pm.[4]

After the ceremony, David Gillatt discussed the communication network with Ian Cawood and the Department of Health (DOH) nursing Sister. Identifiable needs were for a house-to-house network and communications between the ambulance and the Sister. The local policeman suggested that perhaps Emergency Services could provide house-to-house sets. There were also two hand-held radios kept exclusively for emergencies on the Rock and it was suggested that the Emergency Services Regional Officer be contacted with a view of supplying hand-held radios for the Sister, Ian Cawood and the Police house.

There was concern about the availability of the DOH base radio as it currently shared the Police aerial which greatly inhibited its availability for the DOH. To complicate matters the aerial was being relocated in the near future, leaving the DOH without a long range service.

The new ambulance was to be available for callout 24 hours per day with patients transported to the Health Clinic for treatment and appraisal for evacuation by the Sister. Until the communications problems were sorted out the Sister was advised to attend St John callouts "*in another vehicle and then proceed to the clinic in order to treat the patient prior to evacuation*".[5]

That afternoon a stowage exercise was conducted by removing all equipment from the ambulance and then getting members of the Division to replace it. Training continued the next morning with instruction on use and maintenance. Emphasis was placed on the Jordan Frame stretcher, Hare Traction Splint and AMBU sucker.

Communications were again discussed and it

was agreed to use the Territory Parks and Wildlife radio for direct communication with Corps Superintendent Brian Males in Alice Springs, although with no definite schedule times discussed. All non urgent communications were to be by mail.[6]

Meanwhile, work had started on the new proposed township of Yulara, with basic infrastructure such as roads, water supply, etc. being built under the new NT Government's capital works program. The Yulara Development Company Ltd. was set up by the Government to develop tourist accommodation, staff housing and a shopping centre.

> *When the new facilities became fully operational in late 1984 the Commonwealth Government terminated all leases for the old motels near the Rock and the area was rehabilitated by the National Parks Service, now called Parks Australia. Around the same time the national park was renamed Uluru Kata Tjuta and its ownership transferred to the local indigenous people, who leased it back to Parks Australia for 99 years.*[7]

In common with other Territory centres, only probably more so, the Rock had a high turnover of staff and Ian Cawood left the area some time in 1981. Divisional Officer John Beasy then took over as OIC until Gregory Fyfe assumed command as Superintendent on 6th October 1982.

Around this time the Southern Corps Staff in Alice Springs were considering a cadet division for Ayers Rock if there was sufficient interest. There obviously wasn't as there are no records of any members of cadet age in the Ayers Rock Combined Division.

St John's General Manager Colin Burden visited the site of the proposed Yulara Tourist Village towards the end of April 1982.[8] The June District Staff Meeting minutes say that he *"selected a site, however, funding has been withheld and as a consequence the project deferred".* [9]

The cost to establish an Ambulance Centre at Yulara was estimated at around $350,000,[10] but this was a time of NT Government belt tightening and cut backs, and Government funding wasn't available for the project.

A newspaper report in 1985 said that *"in 1981 when discussion about the Yulara Resort development had taken place, the original concept had been for a proper emergency services complex containing police, ambulance and fire brigade".* This had not gone ahead.[11]

The Division's 1982 *Annual Return* gave a strength of eleven with Gregory Fyfe as Acting Superintendent and John Beasy as Divisional Officer. Of the eleven members, only one was inactive.

During the year six members left the area including Divisional Superintendent Iain Marshall. Many of the members were married couples which had the compound effect of doubling Brigade losses when people resigned.

The ambulance travelled 5,424 miles, attended two road accidents, three other accidents and transported eleven patients. The Division held nineteen instruction meetings during the year.

Royalty visited Ayers Rock in March 1983 with Prince Charles and Princess Diana calling in after opening the new St John Ambulance Centre in Alice Springs. The Ayers Rock ambulance turned out for the occasion with Divisional Officer John Beasy and Private Martin Roff attending in full uniform.[12]

Superintendent Gregory Fyfe resigned on 20th May 1983 and on 4th August Phillip Asmussen was appointed Divisional Superintendent.

On the evening of 18th August 1983, an intoxicated Douglas Crabbe was refused service at the bar of the Inland Motel after having been drinking there for some time. He confronted bar staff, got involved in a fight and was ejected from the premises at 12.30am. Crabbe then walked to the nearby Uluru Motel, unhitched one of the trailers from his road train and then drove the Mack truck and remaining trailer back to the Inland Motel at high speed, through the car park and crashed through the block wall into the crowded bar, crushing the people there.

*"Leaving the engine running he then got out of the truck, smiled down at one of his victims, stepped over some bodies and ran."* [13]

Four people were killed instantly and another died in hospital in Alice Springs after five and a half hours of surgery to save her life. After the crash the dining room adjacent the wrecked bar became an emergency clinic for the injured victims.

Crabbe was caught at the Yulara village 22km away the following morning. He was sentenced to life imprisonment with a thirty years non parole period for the murders. He appealed the verdict and was ordered a retrial where he was again convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment with a non parole period of thirty years. Crabbe was transferred to prison in Western Australia to be closer to his family and is eligible for parole in 2013.

Brian Males, who was Officer in Charge of the Ambulance Service in Alice Springs, said in a later interview:

*"The system at that time was that, if people were to be evacuated from outlying areas, it had to be approved by the District Medical Officer. Quite often, they would not give permission for people to be evacuated, for whatever reason ...*

*"I guess the thing that brought it to a head was when Crabbe drove his road train through the motel at Ayers Rock. We received the call on our communications facility, at the ambulance centre. Our duty communications officer rang me and said: 'This is what's happened. I can't really ascertain how many people are injured or the severity, but there are a lot of people involved.' I spent an hour and a half talking to the DMO about getting aircraft down there, and it didn't happen.*

*"It was only after I took two ambulances and my own Falcon sedan. I took four paramedics with me, and two other ambulance officers drove the ambulances, because they were pretty slow F100s. We went down, and we got down there in record time. It was at night, and the first aircraft actually landed at the same time as we arrived by road. That was after an hour and a half's delay when I just said, 'Well, I'm going.'"* [14]

The call for help came through on HF radio that was scratchy and breaking up and it was impossible to get a real feel for what was actually happening. St John just knew there was big trouble at the Rock. They travelled some four hundred and eighty kilometres at night to get there.

With four people dead and many more injured, the delay in sending outside help must have had repercussions because after that, St John Ambulance were given a lot more freedom in making their own decisions about whether or not to respond to calls for help in outlying areas.

Commissioner Alan Bromwich wrote a Letter of Commendation to members of the Ayers Rock Division, St John Ambulance Brigade, dated 14th November 1983:

This letter is to commend your Division on its outstanding performance in caring for the casualties at the Inland Motel disaster on 18 August, 1983.

The reports I have received from various sources indicate that your response was rapid with sixty percent of the total divisional membership arriving within ten minutes of the disaster and that you carried out your duties in a calm and professional manner.

Without your efforts it is clear that the death toll would have been much greater.

You have all acted in a manner worthy of the highest traditions of the Brigade and exemplifying its motto "Pro Utilitate Hominum" – "For the Service of Mankind."

In 1984 the Ayers Rock Combined Division was awarded a Priory Vote of Thanks for the Inland Motel disaster.

The Division's 1983 *Annual Return* lists ten members, with Phillip Asmussen as Superintendent and John Beasy and Mrs Debra Coles as Divisional Officers. Five members resigned during the year, including Superintendent Gregory Fyfe.

The ambulance travelled 6065 miles, attended

four road accidents and four other accidents, transporting 41 patients. There were 68 patients treated off duty, compared with nil for the previous year.

There was no *Annual Return* for 1984 found in St John archives, but a few Monthly Reports give some idea of activities during the year.

In January 1984 there were four callouts, all being transfers; three were from the clinic to airport and the other to Mt Ebenezer to meet up with an ambulance from Alice Springs. Two members left the area and resigned from the Division.

The ambulance attended two callouts in March and had four transfers, two of them being to Mt Ebenezer. Six new members joined and completed their first aid course.

In May there was one callout, three transfers and one public duty.

There were problems in June with a lack of members available for callouts due to work commitments. The Division asked for advice about non-members from the motels being used as drivers when no others were available. They were concerned about the legal ramifications of a non-member having an accident while driving the ambulance.

A reply to their query isn't on record.

Commissioner Alan Bromwich carried out an inspection of the Division in August 1984 and reported to the St John Council that the present limited operation at Yulara had reached a critical stage through the lack of full time staff, inadequate facilities and limited volunteers.[15]

Submissions to the Government for funding in the 1984-1985 financial year to build permanent ambulance facilities and the employment of two permanent ambulance officers were unsuccessful.

After discussions with the Secretary of Health regarding funding, and on advice from the Department of Health, St John withdrew the limited ambulance service from Yulara, effective 1st January 1985.[16] The ambulance itself was withdrawn on 31st January.

The Yulara Corporation and Department of Health were advised that the ambulance would not be returned until a full time staff member or working division was in operation. Guarantees were needed from employers that workers would be released to attend callouts.[17]

St John Ambulance PR officer Graham Morrison was reported in the *Sunday Territorian* to have said that three years of talks with the Yulara Corporation and the NT Department of Health had failed to get funding for a permanent base for a full time ambulance officer. As a result, St John had no building in Yulara and the ambulance was being looked after by the Conservation Commission, often *"stored out in the open under a gum tree, so to speak."* [18]

With the loss of their ambulance the remaining volunteers lost interest and when numbers fell to three *"it was decided at that stage to put the Division on leave as it was not practical to service that small a number, nor cost effective".* [19]

The Yulara Corporation supplied a list of twenty people interested in maintaining the ambulance service. St John sent them all a recruitment letter, but received just four replies with only one considered suitable for ambulance duties.[20]

The July 1986 District Staff meeting reported that the Division wasn't to be closed as there was the possibility of reopening the centre in future.[21]

The Department of Health requested a second-hand ambulance for Yulara in 1986, and St John *"subsequently released a vehicle for coverage at the Resort and within the Park."* [22]

The Yulara Corporation now needed trained people to operate their ambulance and in November 1986 St John provided an Introductory Ambulance Care course. However, a letter of appreciation from Yulara caused concern to the St John Council about the implications of the letter. General Manager Colin Burden suggested that a reply be sent to Yulara *"indicating that the training received was purely an introductory ambulance course and in no way qualified personnel as ambulance officers and therefore reference to St John was not appropriate".* [23]

The *St John Ambulance (NT) 1986-1987 Annual Report* stated that enquiries for reinstatement of St John services at Yulara had been rejected until such time as the NT Government agreed to fund a paid professional operation.

In February 1987 the *Centralian Advocate* published a rather grim story about the current state of the Yulara ambulance service: *"Tourism Minister Ray Hanrahan said on Wednesday night [25 February 1987] the Government guaranteed a new ambulance would be at Yulara shortly."* [24]

The current ambulance had been obtained second hand from St John the previous April and was plagued with problems, including mechanical breakdowns. Yulara Town Manager Bruce McRae agreed that the ambulance was a "bomb" but it had been completely overhauled three weeks before when a new engine was fitted. Then it broke down on its way back to Yulara after the overhaul.

On at least one occasion local doctor Paul Cotton had to use his own vehicle because the ambulance broke down and the previous May it had run out of fuel on the way back from Curtin Springs after having attended a car accident, leaving the doctor and his critically injured patient stranded.

Now, one can't really blame anyone but the driver for a vehicle running out of fuel and to report this as a 'defect' is rather misleading.

The Department of Health was responsible for maintaining the ambulance, while the Yulara Corporation was responsible for the training of volunteers. Dr Cotton described the Yulara Corporation's management of the ambulance service as "irresponsible" and the training of volunteers as "deplorable neglect".

> *"I would like to have people who are able to go out with the ambulance on an emergency and know what to do when they get there.*
>
> *"At the moment it's a cowboy outfit – and you can't have a cowboy outfit in a five star resort."*

Dr Cotton conducted weekly training sessions for seven volunteers with no obligation to do so.

Bruce McRae countered these claims by saying that the Corporation had put a group of volunteers through an intensive Introductory Ambulance Care course last November, but as that course had now been phased out by St John the Corporation was seeking a professional ambulance officer to man the ambulance and assist with training.[25]

Colin Burden advised the St John Council in March that he had received a letter from Yulara stating *"their intention to appoint a full time ambulance officer to operate the ambulance service and to provide ongoing training to auxiliaries".* Mr Burden said that he expected a St John officer to resign in the near future to take up the position.[26]

Centre Officer John Woods left St John in Tennant Creek to take up the Yulara position. In August he wrote to St John *"seeking recognition of the Yulara Ambulance Service to allow volunteers of the Service to enrol in the Associate Diploma course".*

Colin Burden received a telephone call from Dr Cotton that same month enquiring what qualifications or certificates people would obtain after completing courses conducted by John Woods. He was advised that St John would not issue certificates.

A second letter was received from John Woods asking to purchase stores and equipment from St John. This also was refused.[27]

A sale is a sale, but one can guess that St John were pretty peeved at losing one of their experienced ambulance officers, especially to a situation where the Government had refused funding for St John to provide the same service.

Colin Burden then advised the St John Council that he expected to receive a letter from Yulara advising *"they could no longer operate the ambulance service and requesting assistance from St John Ambulance".* [28]

The residents of Yulara must have been wondering about the Government's promise of a new ambulance when the *Centralian Advocate* reported in July that *"the controversial Yulara ambulance broke down again on Monday and a station wagon was being used as a replacement".*

Dr Cotton said that he had not been informed that the ambulance had broken down. *"We don't know until we call for an ambulance and various shapes and sizes of station wagons arrive".* [29]

It would seem that the Government's promises had been a load of hot air when on the 29th July the *Centralian Advocate* announced that Minister for Health and Community Services Don Dale had finally bowed to public pressure and agreed to grant $50,000 for a new ambulance for Yulara. The Yulara Corporation was expected to buy the new ambulance within the next six months.

Mr Dale claimed that *"public perceptions about the reliability of the old ambulance were false. Yulara's present ambulance had become the target of a concerted public campaign over the last two years, despite agreement about its reliability from the town manager and a local private doctor earlier this year."*

Dr Cotton denied that he had ever said that the ambulance was adequate, quite the opposite. The ambulance had a long history of unreliability that had been reported to the Minister by Dr Cotton in writing and to the Health and Community Services Department Secretary by Yulara Corporation CEO Otto Alder.

In October, Minister Don Dale ordered an urgent enquiry into ambulance and medical services at Yulara. Opposition MLAs Wes Lanhupuy and Neil Bell claimed *"there was only one ambulance and ambulance bearer, that the Yulara Health Clinic was too small and that there was no pharmacy".*

Mr Dale said that *"the ambulance controversy had been resurrected several times since early 1985 when St John Ambulance closed the service it used to run in the area.*

*"St John had pulled out because calls on the service were infrequent and there had not been enough local volunteers to man it."* [30]

The Health Department had supplied Yulara with an old refitted St John ambulance that had a few problems with break downs. More than $22,000 had been spent on the vehicle that might be adequate for the next few years. This compared with buying a new vehicle for more than $55,000 plus extra for fitting out.[31]

In January 1988 the St John Council expected an approach from the Department of Health to provide an ambulance service due to problems being experienced by the Yulara Corporation.[32]

On Sunday 21st June 1992, the Minister for Health and Community Services, Daryl Manzie, officially opened the new Royal Flying Doctor Health Service at Yulara. RFDS NT Operations Manager, Steve Burns: *"The RFDS has been providing medical staff for three years and took over the residential nursing staff and ambulance service last year."* [33]

It could have saved a lot of hassles had the NT Government agreed to fund St John for a full time ambulance service when first requested. But then, we all have 20/20 hindsight, don't we?

# Chapter 4
# Tennant Creek

After having helped start the St John Ambulance Brigade in Darwin in 1952, Norman Bradbury and Surgeon Lieutenant O'Donoghue held a series of first aid courses at inland Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) centres, being in Tennant Creek from 23rd to 28th November 1952.[1]

The classes were primarily for DCA personnel, but also open to the public. The successful candidates formed St John first aid units in each town to undertake first aid work at sporting and other functions and also attend any emergency cases. They were to be visited by the local resident medical officer once a month to ensure their standards were maintained.[2]

Nothing more is heard of these units, but in May 1953 Bradbury visited Tennant Creek to organise first aid training, starting 19th May with Dr N. Brustolin to carry out the major part of the instruction.[3]

Corps Superintendent Bradbury transferred to Perth with his job in March 1956 and his position in St John was left vacant until Kevin Kettle was appointed CSO of Northern Territory Corps in 1968.

Training continued and First Aid certificates were awarded to six Aboriginal men from Warrabri (now called Ali Curung) in November 1956. They were instructed by South Australian, Mr I. Pash and examined by Dr Lyttle in Tennant Creek.[4]

On Friday 24th November 1961 the *Centralian Advocate* advertised a meeting to be held in the Tennant Creek Fire Station the following Monday, the 27th *"to discuss and form either a section or a division of the St John Ambulance Brigade"*. Present at the meeting were Messrs Joe Zigenbine, R. Maher, L. Hite, C. Greenslade, Bill Fullwood, C. Stanton, R. Harris, T. Whitely, C. Smith, P. Bruin and Mesdames L. Tuxworth and Leweczko. Also attending was Peter Hansen, a Divisional Officer with St John in Alice Springs who was relieving for a period at the fire station in his job as a fireman.

Officers elected were Joe Zigenbine, president; Mrs L. Tuxworth, secretary-treasurer; and Mr R. Maher, publicity officer. The remaining attendees formed the committee. Their members included two registered nursing sisters, a certified first aid instructor, and a dedicated first aider for president. They called themselves the Tennant Creek First Aid Group.[5]

The *Centralian Advocate* reported that the First Aid Group held a meeting on 6th March 1962 where it was decided to conduct a St John First Aid course in Tennant Creek, commencing 16th April. Girl Guide mistress Mrs W. (Marjorie) Fullwood accepted an invitation for senior Guides to attend and CWA members were also expected to participate. An invitation was given to all interested persons to contact Marj Fullwood in town, Bill Fullwood at Nobles Nob, or Hilda Tuxworth at Peko. [6]

The meeting also discussed affiliation with the St John Ambulance Association and a reply was expected from the secretary of the Alice Springs Division on this matter. They also wrote to Darwin and Adelaide, but without success. No replies were ever received and it took a much higher authority to get some attention from St John.

The following month the Group advised that it had treated 98 cases during the last basketball season.[7]

First aid courses were held and by mid June 1963 there were more than 20 certified first aiders in Tennant Creek.

Meanwhile, Tennant Creek was still without an ambulance and a report in the *NT News* on 14th February 1963 stated that the town would get a ground ambulance that year, although it was not possible to get an aerial ambulance or a surgeon for the hospital.

On Saturday 16th March 1963 Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip stopped at Tennant Creek airport as part of their Royal Tour. Hilda Tuxworth said that the First Aid Group attended dressed all in whites with black ties. The Queen approached the group and asked where were their St John insignia?

They explained that they had tried to join St John, but their efforts had been ignored. The Queen turned to her aide and instructed him to find out why their letters had been unanswered. [8]

The person in the photo foreground standing behind the Queen is Tennant Creek District Officer Gordon Williams, so it would have been he who received the instruction.

Bill Fullwood wrote that two weeks later the group was notified of the intention to send a high ranking officer up from Adelaide. At a well attended meeting at the local school Mr Jack Revitt told of the *"heavy responsibilities of discipline, paperwork, acquisition of a building, an ambulance and the keeping of records"*.[9]

Mr Jock Berry from St John in South Australia visited Tennant Creek in July where he announced acceptance of the group's application to join St John.

On 12th September the *Centralian Advocate* reported that at a recent meeting at the home of Mrs Fullwood: *"The Tennant Creek First Aid group has been wound up and has become the Tennant Creek section of the St John Ambulance Brigade"* attached to the Alice Springs Division. Joe Zigenbine declared that the group no longer existed and that this was the first official meeting of the Tennant Creek Section of the St John Ambulance Brigade. Unfortunately, the date of this meeting wasn't given and we don't know exactly when the changeover happened.

Office bearers elected at the meeting were: Officer in charge, Mr Joe Zigenbine; sergeant, Mr Bill Fullwood; secretary, Mr R. Young; treasurer, Sister Hilda Tuxworth.



Queen Elizabeth talking to the Tennant Creek First Aid Group—Bill Fullwood on the far left

Tennant Creek Combined Division was registered on 17th April 1964.

Tennant Creek could justifiably claim to be probably the only Division in the world that got its start by command of the Sovereign Head of the Order.

Some founding members of the Division, with information taken from BF4 personal record cards:

- Joe Zigenbine joined Tennant Creek Combined Division as Superintendent on 7th October 1963.
- Bill Fullwood was Sergeant on 21st October 1963 and Divisional Officer on 12th October 1964.
- John Tuxworth was Corporal from 12th October 1964 and Sergeant from 20th August 1966.
- Hilda Tuxworth was Nursing Officer from 9th December 1963, retiring on 1st June 1970
- Alvin Morton joined on 1st November 1963, and was promoted to Sergeant on 12th October 1964
- Jessie Bishop joined as Treasurer on 6th December 1963
- Eileena Knox joined on 6th December 1963
- Mary Edwards joined on 9th December 1963
- Frank Reilly joined on 11th December 1963

Peko employees supported the new Division by making small weekly pay deductions, collection tins were placed in the pubs and clubs and they received some cultural grants, soon becoming quite financial.[10]

At first the new Division did public duties in town and at the Renner Springs races. They would borrow a couple of stretchers from the hospital and drive Bill Fullwood's station wagon. Hilda Tuxworth described the Renner races as being just a pool of bull dust – that's the dust as fine as talcum powder that hangs in the air and gets in absolutely everywhere and everything. Get bogged and it runs back into the hole as fast as you can dig it out. Hilda only went to the Renner races once, but Joe and Bill were regulars over the years, putting up a tent to treat their casualties in some sort of shade. The people at the races were very generous and the

local race club always sent a donation to the Brigade.[11]

Local first aid training was carried out by Hilda and Joe in town and out at Peko where Joe worked as a first aider. Hilda worked as a nursing sister at Peko and later out at Warrego. The company paid men with first aid certificates an extra 10 shillings per week because it was keen to have a pool of trained first aiders on all shifts. Lectures in town were held at the school and a doctor would give the written, oral and practical examinations.[12] They also conducted first aid training for the Civil Defence Organisation.

There was a high turnover of members in 1964 with many leaving the district for greener pastures. Members worked 600 voluntary hours at baseball, softball, basketball, races, boxing, the Anzac Day march and the TC walk. Volunteers treated 500 cases, from abrasions to fractures.

During the year they obtained a block of land on a special purpose lease over the road from Bill's place and bought a shed from Peko for their new headquarters.

Superintendent Joe Zigenbine went to Adelaide in January 1965 for further training that included working on the road with an ambulance crew and on his return two first aid classes were held. In March, bronze medallions were presented to Joe Zigenbine, Divisional Officer Bill Fullwood, Corporal John Tuxworth and Private W. Baker for passing three consecutive annual examinations supervised by a qualified doctor.

At the March meeting it was reported that Private Des Bruder was transferring to Darwin Division after serving in Tennant Creek for the past 12 months and new recruits Mrs Vera Johnson and Sister Ray Cowan were joining the Division. Bill Fullwood resigned as secretary to concentrate on his Divisional Officer duties and secretarial work was taken over by Private Frank Reilly.

The *Centralian Advocate* reported on 24th November 1966 that Deputy Commissioner Langsford had conducted the annual inspection at the home of Bill Fullwood and that *"a move may be made for the erection of a building and then the purchase of an ambulance ...".*

Dr Langsford's 1966 Annual Report stated:

*In Tennant Creek the Combined Division, although small in numbers, is very active and has succeeded in obtaining a grant of land and a regional grant to assist in the erection of their temporary headquarters building. A public meeting was held recently in Tennant Creek to initiate the formation of an Auxiliary.*

Bill Fullwood said about what was to become St John's first home in Noble Street:

*"... Peko sold the old stores shed to St John's Ambulance for, I think it was fifty dollars. A complete 60 x 20 building which we brought in and stored in my backyard until I myself practically built the present St John's Ambulance building with that."* [13]

Bill later wrote that they paid just five pounds for the old Eldorado store, so it was obviously just a nominal price. He and Joe pulled it down and transported it into town where it lay in pieces in Bill's backyard for the next year or so. In his spare time and on weekends Bill started to erect the building. He said that he put the building up by himself, apart from the concrete floor and roofing. Bob Reed's kids steadied the steel frames with ropes while Bill bolted on the rafters. [14]

Steve Peers, who transferred to Tennant Creek in 1979 as second Ambulance Officer, said:

*"The station was the tin shed in Noble Street. It was a one bay area. When we went down there it was necessary that we divide the end off. One side was for the toilets and the other was for the office. So, we had two desks in the office and we were able to park one car*




The original Noble Street Headquarters. The sign indicates that the photo was taken in 1979 or 1980.

*in the garage, but we mainly had that turned out to use as a training hall and we'd park our cars out in the street."* [15]

Alan Caust, who lived in the building for a short period in late 1979 as third Ambulance Officer described it as, *"stinking hot, even though we had air conditioners"* with *"a cement floor and two rooms at the back, and a toilet at the back, with no back door or anything. It was just a shed with a roller-door and it was pretty hot and pretty hard."* [16]

Bold headlines on the 23rd February 1967 reported that membership of the Division was at its lowest since their beginnings as the Tennant Creek First Aid Group and that a recruiting campaign was to be held featuring a series of lectures and practical demonstrations of first aid. In the five years since foundation over 90 first aid and 16 home nursing certificates had been issued.

The 1968 Annual Report stated:

*Whilst the number of members of this Division may be small they all have great hearts and continue to cope with numerous demands made upon them. The fact that they are now occupying their new Centre has given them great encouragement.*

In April 1970, a Ford Falcon van was purchased from Ford Bros., the local Ford dealer for $3,000, converted into an ambulance and garaged in the building.

Bill Fullwood told of early problems in that




Bill Fullwood with the new ambulance

over the years when they had a list of names with their private phone numbers at the Hospital they were never called on. It was always their dream that they would be of some use, but there was too much opposition from people who considered them to be "amateur doctors".[17]

In a Letter to the Editor of the *Tennant & District Times* Bill recalled a fatal roll over at the 5 mile bend, where it took the Hospital's ambulance an hour and a half to arrive on scene. The driver had been off duty and couldn't be located. The St John ambulance could have been there in minutes, but wasn't called.

Hilda Tuxworth, who was in charge of the Brigade's Nursing section said about those times:

*"... we submitted to the hospital a panel of ten names of [ambulance] drivers and I was able to go along as sister, if they wanted it – if they wanted to use our services. One doctor actually said to me, 'I'll have nothing to do with you. You are a lot of band-aid sticker onners.' So that was the attitude of most doctors. I will say some of them would've, but then it didn't seem to fit in with regulations, but happily now, St John has been called in and is doing all the ambulance work."* [18]

The prejudice towards St John didn't change much over the years and at the time of the handover of the Ambulance Service to St John in 1979 the Matron of the Hospital expressed concern regarding the training level of the new ambulance crews.[19] The Hospital ambulances had been crewed by orderlies with little or no ambulance training apart from just being drivers whereas St John had experienced qualified ambulance officers.

Superintendent Joe Zigenbine resigned on 17th June 1971 and moved to Queensland, handing the Division over to Sergeant Bert Pearce.

Bill Fullwood had health problems and records show him being ill in 1967 and having resigned in June 1968 for health reasons. He re-joined, but quit again for health reasons in July 1972.

On Australia Day 1983, Bill was named Tennant Creek's *Citizen of the Year* and on Australia Day

1990 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of his service to the community.

Deputy Commissioner Langsford's October 1971 Inspection Report lists Superintendent Pearce, five Privates, one Reserve, one Cadet and six Auxiliaries. *"In spite of difficulties and loss of their former Superintendent this small Division continues as a keen functional unit"* that was *"much improved over last year's inspection".*

A prominently headlined story in the *NT News* of 21st September 1973 told of chronic problems with the Department of Health ambulance service operating out of the Tennant Creek Hospital. When an ambulance broke down on its way to an accident the police were reported to have said *"such breakdowns were frequent"* and that *"we were able to transport them to hospital in the police car."*

The report continued that the Department of Health was to hire an ambulance from Adelaide for ten weeks at a cost of $30 per week. Chairman of the Tennant Creek Town Management Board, Ian Tuxworth, who was to become Minister for Health and later Chief Minister after Territory self government, said: *"It is ludicrous to be bringing an ambulance up from South Australia when we have a perfectly good one available here."* [20] Ian was one of Hilda's sons.

It would seem that the mentality of wanting nothing to do with the *Band-Aid sticker onners* was still quite strong and had permeated upwards in the bureaucracy.

However, the Division had its own problems and suffered greatly with the departure of Joe Zigenbine. The Darwin based District and Corps Staff were aware of problems and reported in a meeting of 21st August 1974: *"Tennant Creek – weak but has vehicle, money and land; needs support."*

Unfortunately, Darwin was soon to have even bigger problems with Cyclone Tracy and Tennant Creek didn't get that much needed support. In November 1975 District Staff Officer Warren Burgess and Corps Superintendent John O'Donohoe carried out a tour of inspection of regional centres and reported that Tennant Creek:

> *"... is one-hell-of-a-mess. Total Brigade strength is Superintendent Mr H.G. Pearce and Auxiliary Mr Marks. St John Association was formed in 1963 under control of Joe Zigenbine who handed over to Pearce in June 1971. From records to hand it would appear they averaged 8 members per year until early 1972, when it went down-hill fast.*
>
> *"During the term of Mr Zigenbine, money was raised to purchase an ambulance, this task was accomplished in early 1970. Also he and other members dismantled the old Eldorado Mine Store and re-erected it in Noble Street as the first SJAB Headquarters in Tennant Creek. It is not lined inside, the interior and equipment is covered in inches of red dust, including the ambulance.*
>
> *"In its present state the Brigade is unable to hold first aid classes, or attract new members, when this is all we can offer in way of Headquarters."* [21]

The report continued that Superintendent Pearce had health problems and would be leaving the area in the near future and that any fault for the state of the Division lay more with Darwin and Adelaide for their lack of support than with Pearce.

It's not recorded, but the Division must have been put on notice and with no improvement during the following six months, a decision was made to disband the Division by 1st July 1976.[22] One thing that hit the Division hard was retrenchments by Peko-Wallsend in 1975. The Peko mine wound down in 1975 and closed in 1976 and other smaller mines were mothballed. The copper smelter was a flop and closed around the same period.[23]

The Fates smiled on the Brigade with the timely arrival in town of Mr Glen Hogben, just like the cavalry in an old Western melodrama. Glen came up from South Australia where he had been a member of the Marion Division since April 1967 and then Peterborough from March 1972, bringing nine years of experience with him.

Bert Pearce resigned from the Brigade on 21st

November 1976 and was immediately replaced by Glen Hogben as OAC.

The 1976 Annual Inspection report by District Superintendent Burgess stated:

> *"The new Officer Administering Command at Tennant Creek, Mr G.A. Hogben, had done a tremendous amount of work in the short time since moving into the town. The building and grounds have been tidied and cleared, all stores located and returned to the Centre and the vehicle has been checked and returned to operational standard. Mr Hogben proposes running a first aid class in the new year and a number of people had already indicated their assistance."* [24]

The improvements were ongoing and in April 1977, *"Mr Hogben is enthusiastic and appears to have established a new lease of life in Tennant Creek."* The first aid course was completed and the Commissioner, Dr Mills, invited to present certificates. [25]

It was District Surgeon Alan Bromwich who visited in May to present the Certificates[26] and would be writing to Dr Jayachandran about appointment as Divisional Surgeon.[27]

The August inspection *"revealed improvement in the strength of the Division"* and that *"the new ambulance was well received by both members and the general public".*[28] The old 1970 Ford Falcon ambulance was in very good condition with just 8000 miles on the odometer and was to be sent to Darwin to be used as a training unit rather than being sold.[29]

By October the Division was providing a full service in the area and Council had approved renovations to the building with a *"new garage door, security of windows, etc."* [30]

District Superintendent Warren Burgess and District Staff Officer John Hill visited Tennant Creek in March 1978:

> *"Everything seems to be going well at this Division, strength consists of 7 adult members, 2 cadets and 19 probationary cadets. A senior male member is prepared to take over the supervision of these cadets. They have in excess of $4000 in an interest bearing deposit which will be used for upgrading their building and furnishing."* [31]

Numbers seem to have dropped sharply during the year because when District Surgeon Lionel Crompton conducted the Inspection in late 1978 he reported that it was *"encouraging although it was only 3 adult members strong for the inspection. The cadets now 11 in total are also very keen."* [32]



The Tennant Creek Combined Division at the 1978 Inspection. Dr Lionel Crompton (*left*) and Glen Hogben (*right*)

By January 1979 the building had been improved considerably and negotiations were being held to acquire part of the old Tennant Creek Hospital to use as a new headquarters.[33]

The Chief Commissioner approved the formation of a Southern Corps in March 1979 with the demarcation line between Dunmarra and Elliott, placing Tennant Creek under the control of Alice Springs. Commissioner Alan Bromwich also announced the appointment of District Staff Officer John Hill to Tennant Creek.[34]

On Monday 11th June the Minister for Health, Ian Tuxworth, presented a cheque for $24,000 to John Hill for operating expenses and on 1st July 1979, St John Ambulance officially took over the ambulance service in Tennant Creek and Alice Springs from the Department of Health, together with their ambulances. John Hill, Regional Ambulance Officer in charge of Tennant Creek was joined by Ambulance Officer Steve Peers.

Steve, who went on to become Operations Manager in Alice Springs and later Northern Territory Commissioner of Operations Branch, said: *"I went down there in May. I think I returned to Darwin for a few weeks when our daughter was born, and then we moved down there for the official opening of July 1979."* [35]

Steve's departure from Darwin was reported in the *NT News:* [36]

> *"St John Ambulance Officer Steve Peers and his wife Ros were farewelled by Casuarina Division members last night. Steve joined the division when there were only a handful of volunteers and as one of the mainstays chalked up almost 80 hours a week, double his paid job! Now he's off to help pioneer the St John Ambulance Service in Tennant Creek – and is one of only two regular staff charged with establishing a volunteer division. What will his hours be then? Ros suggests he should buy his own ambulance – he practically lives in one now, and should have one to sleep in."*

Casuarina Divisional Officer Terry Dahlenburg whose day job was journalist for the *NT News* was responsible for that little snippet. [37]

When Steve first moved to Tennant Creek his accommodation was a little flasher than Alan Caust's would be when he came down from Darwin a few months later. Steve was found a room in the almost gutted old nursing home. He found a lot of medical equipment in the room and on asking was told that it was all out of the mortuary which was currently being refurbished. He moved from there into a house and was joined by his wife and children.

Few records had been kept of the workload of the old Department of Health ambulance service staffed by nursing sisters and hospital orderlies. Now that there was a professional ambulance service in town it was utilised a lot more than the old arrangement.

John and Steve quickly saw that the job was too big for just two people and they would need a lot of help from their volunteers. John Hill's qualifications as District Training Officer coupled with Steve Peers' tireless energy were just the thing to build up the Division. With foresight they started a recruiting drive on arrival in May and began an Ambulance Officers Recruit Course on the 12th June.

The recruits' six months training comprised First Aid and Casualty Care and Transport, and being rostered on supervised ambulance duties. Dux of the course was Private Peter Poole,[38] who had joined Darwin Division in February 1979 and transferred to Tennant Creek with his job.

When transferred back to Darwin, Peter rose through the ranks, holding just about every position from Divisional Officer through to Commissioner in 2006.

There's just something about Tennant Creek that seems to produce future leaders for St John Ambulance in the Territory.



Glen Hogben, Steve Peers, Warren Burgess, John Hill

Other recruits who qualified as Ambulance Officers Grade One were: Privates William Harris, Brendon McCarthy, Bruce Pascoe, Dick Visscher; Cadet S. Kappler; Nursing Members Susanne Afianos, Narelle Bremner, Maureen Hayes, Maureen Kiesanowski, Pamela Lee, W. Lembke, Cheryl Lyons, Deanna Seal, Joannah Visscher; Nursing Sisters Tracey Byrne, Carolyn Thomas and Rosanne Gross.

The Division prospered and by 1st July 1979 had 20 adult members and 18 cadets.

Glen Hogben resigned in August that year and DSO John Hill took over as OAC until a trained replacement could be found. *"Mr Peers will take over the cadets and as he is a qualified youth instructor, it was felt he would do a good job."* [39]

The Ambulance Service road crew consisted of John and Steve during weekdays, and one paid and one volunteer Ambulance Officer with several trainees after hours and on weekends.

Volunteer ambulance shifts could mean leaving Tennant Creek at 6.30pm and travelling to Elliott or Newcastle Waters to attend a motor vehicle accident and returning by 7.30am in time to go to work.

The vehicles didn't hold much fuel, about 80 litres, and at 2.5km/litre needed regular stops to refuel on long trips. When on *Code Red* – now called *Code 1* – the siren was activated a kilometre or two before the next roadhouse, night or day and on arrival there would be somebody at the bowser waiting to refuel. A mandatory phone call would be made to John Hill, the roadhouse staff would donate an iced coffee to the crew and it was on the road once more.

> *"Management knew we had a problem and decided that new vehicles with double the fuel capacity were required. These vehicles were put into service; however they had bigger motors with double the fuel consumption of the old vehicles."* [40]

When District Surgeon Lionel Crompton visited Tennant Creek on 18th October 1979 he reported that two full time staff were insufficient to meet the demands on the ambulance service. Volunteers were of limited value in that their average stay in the area was short, whereas the time to train them to accepted standards was relatively long. The long callouts at night made them unfit for duty the following day, so full time staff would have to attend distant calls with volunteers being used for local jobs.

The training program had been adapted to suit local needs, but the short tenure of residents made it difficult to select and train a suitable Divisional Superintendent. A recent ad for daytime volunteers received no response and there was no immediate prospect for volunteer help to lighten the full time staff workload.

The Hospital had overcome their prejudices and liaison was excellent. Dr Hughes had started preliminary training in the administration of IV fluids and nursing sisters were available to attend distant transports.

Communications were a big problem in that the Centre was unoccupied when the duty crew responded to a case. Calls were then taken by a Sister in Outpatients who called out the second crew. Neither HF nor VHF radios worked very well, and contact was lost when ambulances left the town area.[41]

The paid officers' workload was spread a little when Alan Caust transferred from Casuarina in November 1979 as third Ambulance Officer.

Commissioner Alan Bromwich travelled to Alice Springs In December 1979 and reported that on stopover at Tennant Creek airport, *"a patient was loaded onto the plane from the ambulance [and he] noticed a considerable difference in the ambulance and crew – it was a well driven and clean vehicle."* [42]

Statistics for 1979:

| | |
|---|---|
| Patients treated/transported | 520 |
| Voluntary duty hours | 5816 |
| Ambulance kilometres | 18182 |
| Public duties | 122 |

On Monday 10th October 1980, Minister for Health Ian Tuxworth opened the new St John

Ambulance Centre in Tennant Creek. A ward block of the old Tennant Hospital, shared with the Community Crèche, had been extensively renovated and a four berth ambulance bay added. The new Centre had training facilities for volunteers, ambulance crews and public first aid courses. There were also dormitories for duty crews, lounge, kitchen, offices, storeroom and a workshop.

Total cost of the renovations and ambulance bay was $126,250 plus an extra $10,000 for furnishings and internal fittings. This had been met with a $110,000 subsidy from the NT Government and the balance through a recent Territory wide building appeal.

The Tennant Creek Council wrote to St John in July 1981 requesting to lease the now vacant Noble Street building for a drop-in centre. The Minister for Health wrote in May 1982 asking that the Noble Street block be returned to the Department of Lands and that St John sell the building. It was sold by tender in November to the Community Care Program for $5,000 on request of the Tennant Creek Council.[43] The building was later named *Fullwood Hall* in honour of the man who built it and who had lobbied the local Council for the building to be used for community service.

On the 23rd July 1980 the Elliott Section of the Tennant Creek Combined Division was formed with ten members, three male and seven female.

Tennant Creek Cadet numbers grew under Steve Peers' guidance and in March 1980 there were now approximately 20 cadets and steps were being taken to register a Cadet Division.[44]

The Tennant Creek Combined Cadet Division was registered on 31st July 1981 with 14 cadets under OAC Dick Visscher. Original members were: Cephas Gough, Shane Kappler, Scott Peers, Neville Reed, Judith Byrne, Sharon Kappler, Selina Kliendienst, Helen McPherson, Megan O'Donnell, Dianna Polovich, Jennifer Reed, Christina Roberts, Tracy Vipond, and Kathy Visscher.

In August there was concern about uniform issues due to the high turnover rate of cadets.[45] Money was tight from Government cutbacks and a proposed solution by District was a general *"curtailment of cadet recruitment to predetermined levels, [and] deferring issue of cadet uniforms until a cadet obtains his First Aid Certificate [to] remove the need for issues to uncommitted recruits."* [46]

John Hill stayed on as OAC of the Adult Division until June 1981 when he was transferred back to Darwin. Steve Peers was then appointed Divisional Superintendent, being succeeded by Carol Brown in early 1982 when Steve was promoted to Corps Superintendent.

The Adult Division went downhill fast and by December 1981 there were only three volunteers left in the region with a resultant extra workload for paid staff. Public duties were being carried out by paid ambulance officers while on call.[47]

On the 11th December, Steve Peers towed a Resource First Aid caravan down from Darwin. The front section comprised an office and residential section with cooking and ablution facilities for three people. The rear medical section was specially fitted out in Darwin. The 'van was fitted with VHF and UHF radios and would be manned by volunteers at public duties and emergencies or disaster situations. The medical section still required further fitting out, but would eventually be identical to an ambulance in content and equipment.

The caravan had been made available by generous donations from the Lions Club of Tennant Creek and Peko Wallsend staff and employees, who were awarded a Priory Vote of Thanks in appreciation for their efforts. The balance was made up by a grant from the NT St John Council.

The 'van had its first outing on the 20th December to the Wauchope Gymkhana, where all profits were donated to St John.

On Tuesday 23rd March 1982 the Tennant Creek Brigade was inspected by Commissioner Alan Bromwich, District Superintendent Grant Keetley and DSO Brian Males.

At the parade Carol Brown was promoted to Superintendent, Tennant Creek Combined Division; Dick Visscher to Superintendent, Tennant Creek

Combined Cadet Division and Steve Peers to Corps Superintendent Southern Corps.

In common with every other Territory Division, adult volunteer numbers went through a cyclic crash and in April 1982 the Division was down to four active members, including Carol Brown.[48] Carol resigned in March 1983 and the records for that period indicate a lot of self destructive fighting within the Brigade, each accusing the other of inappropriate behaviour. Needless to say, the Division suffered greatly as a result.

The Division improved soon after and a membership list for 19th July 1983 has the Tennant Creek Combined Division strength of 15 adult members with three seconded to the Cadets and seven active. Warrego Section had eight members with five active; Elliott Section had nine members with four active.

Wayne Dillon transferred to Tennant Creek as Senior Centre Officer in October 1983, replacing Alex Sutton who had resigned to move interstate. Wayne was a very active member of the Brigade, having been the founding Superintendent of three new Divisions – Katherine Combined Cadet Division, Howard Springs Combined Cadet Division and Jabiru Combined Division. It was hoped that his experience would give the Tennant Creek Brigade a much needed boost.

The 1983 Annual Report names Tony van Hooff as Superintendent and Divisional strength of four male and three female members, with three officers seconded to the Cadet Division.

District Ambulance Officer Rod Bramley reported in August 1984 that the majority of duties were being covered by paid staff and an increase of Warrego members attending the Centre on weekends to cover duties made little impact.

In September, Rayleen Oxford of Tennant Creek joined Michelle Hanton, Kate Hanna and Sharon Wilson of Darwin to compete in the Home Nursing section of the Pan Pacific Golden Jubilee First Aid and Home Nursing Competition in Singapore. The Western Australian Commandery was Champion Ambulance Team with Singapore the Champion Nursing Team.

Tony van Hooff transferred to Alice Springs in November with DO Tony Oxford taking over as OAC. The 1984 Annual Report has DS(C) Hendrick (Dick) Visscher resigning on 19th October and several other resignations from the adult Division after a brief membership. Neil Coley was listed as DS(C) from 16th May, but transferred to Queensland, date not stated.

District Superintendent Graham Morrison travelled to Tennant Creek for the annual inspection on the 15th March 1985. Cadet of the Year was awarded to Corporal Anna-Marie Cutrale and Most Improved Cadet was Corporal Ben Clark. Cadet Sergeant Jennifer Reed graduated to the



**L to R:** Dick Visscher, Grant Keetley, Carol Brown, Alan Bromwich, Brian Males, Steve Peers



Cadet Corporal Raelene Ohlson won the trophies for Individual in First aid and Home Nursing at the District Competitions held in Darwin on 14th April 1984. Her manager was Tony Oxford.

Adult Division.

Tony Myers was promoted to Divisional Superintendent Cadets and Tony Oxford to Superintendent of the Adult Division.[49] Tony van Hooff returned from Alice Springs as Senior Centre Officer, resigning on 22nd May 1985.

Tony Oxford reported a Divisional strength of 15 in April with 129 duties carried out in the first quarter for 710 hours. Because of low numbers there was no Introduction to Ambulance Care (IAC) course planned for the year; a driving course would be held in May in Tennant and Elliott. An In-Hospital training program had been organised and was also expected to begin in May.

He felt that there was a lack of communication in the region and suggested a quarterly Corps meeting in Alice Springs or Tennant Creek attended by all Corps and Division Officers.

Cadet Competitions were held at the Mary Ann Dam over the Easter weekend with teams from Alice Springs and Tennant Creek competing for the right to represent Southern Corps at the competitions in Darwin.

The Tennant Creek team of Ben Clark, Anna Marie Cutrale and Shaun Hanson won the Southern Corps Geoff Knott Memorial Team Trophy. Toni Maree Semple of Alice Springs won the Southern Corps Individual Trophy. Toni Maree went on to win at the District Championships later in the year.

DAO Bramley returned to Tennant Creek in June and reported that an IAC course would now be starting in July with nine trainees. He attended a Divisional meeting and was impressed by the improvement of the Division.

CSO Errol Priestly transferred to Tennant Creek in July as Senior Centre Officer, Barkly Region and Divisional Superintendent Tony Oxford transferred to Darwin in his job with the Ambulance Service.

At the August annual Inspection, CSO Priestly promoted Mrs M. Gibson to DO Adult Division, Bradley Sanderson to DO Cadet Division and Trevor Gibson to Divisional Ambulance Officer, Cadets.

The 1985 Annual Return was signed in late February 1986 by Divisional Officer M. Gibson as OAC. There were seven male and six female adult members, with three seconded to the Cadets.

The 1985 Cadet Division Annual Return was signed in mid April 1986 by DO Bradley Sanderson as OAC. J.A. (John) Myers was listed as DS(C) from 27 February 1985. There were seven boys and 16 girls, with many resignations due to parents leaving town.

Mr L. Kelly was appointed Adult Divisional Superintendent on 4th February 1986.

The 1986 District Conference Report stated that the Division had seen no growth that year with Divisional strength at 16 with 14 active, most being First Aiders. Five members resigned in the latter part of 1985, leaving the Division with nine active members, three of whom were seconded to the Cadets. The Divisional Superintendent had transferred to Darwin and an OIC was now in charge.

Statistics for 1985:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Divisional meetings | 38 | |
| Public Duty hours | 904 | 64.5 average |
| Hospital hours | 555 | 39.6 |
| Transport hours | 1984 | 141.7 |
| Miscellaneous | 638 | 45.5 |

The 1986 Annual Return had Brendan Quirke signing as OAC in late July 1987; T.J. (Trevor) Duncan was listed as Superintendent from 10th November 1986. Divisional strength was six males and three females.

Dick Visscher returned to the Cadets as Superintendent on 14th November 1986, but the Annual Return wasn't signed until 11th April 1988 with Bradley Sanderson as OAC. There were two boys and 16 girls in the Cadet Division.

A District Staff meeting on Wednesday 28th January 1987 reported there were just two active members besides paid staff, covering five nights from 6.00pm to 7.00am. The unnamed Divisional Superintendent had plans for a recruiting campaign.

The 1987 Annual Return was signed in late April 1988 by Corps Ambulance Officer (CAO) E. Calway as OAC. Divisional strength was seven male and two female members, with one seconded to

the Cadets.

The Cadets' Annual Return listed DO Bradley Sanderson as OAC, but was signed in late April 1988 by CAO Calway. There were seven boys and nine girls in the Division.

Tennant Creek Cadets entered two teams in the 1988 Annual Northern Territory St John Cadet competitions. The teams travelled to Darwin on Thursday 21st April with Alice Springs Cadet Robert Ashby who won the Individual competition. Darwin Cadets won the team event. Eileen Calway and Michael Brooke trained the Tennant Creek team.

The Tennant Creek and newly founded Warrego Cadet Divisions held their annual Inspection and Awards presentation in October, officiated by DSO(C) Richard Holt from Darwin. Other officials were Mrs Eileen Calway-Pridham and DS(C) Michael Brooke.

Mrs Yvonne Fenwick and Mrs Kathy Muir were commended for their work in forming the Warrego Cadet Division.[50]

In the December 1988 issue of *Outback Ambulance*:

> *The normal round of public duties have been ably covered (mostly by paid staff, as volunteers are a rare commodity). We have, in the Region, had the [Tennant Creek] show, Rodeo, Newcastle Waters which saw the start of the Bicentennial Last Great Cattle Drive, the NT BMX titles, Australia Day at the Mary Anne Dam and the regular races and speedway.*

The 1988 Annual Returns were both signed by CAO Calway-Pridham as OAC. Divisional strength was six male and one female; Cadets were nine boys and ten girls. Michael Brooke was listed as Cadet Divisional Superintendent from 10th October 1988.

The June 1989 *Outback Ambulance* reported that the Tennant Creek Cadet Division's 24 members met every Thursday night from 7.00pm to 9.00pm. Leadership was provided by District Staff Officer Graeme Rayson, Corps Ambulance Officer Eileen Calway-Pridham, Divisional Superintendent Michael Brooke and Divisional Officers Darren Nelson and Nicole Lawler.

The Cadets were the largest contingent in the Anzac Day March and for the first time put a float in the annual Goldrush Festival. After the parade they were on first aid duty, *"running around trying to find someone, anyone, or anything that they could put a Band-aid on or help".*

The next news is from a District Staff Meeting of Wednesday 13th December 1989 that reports a severe loss of members in Tennant Creek with difficulties for the Divisions. DSO Rayson would be making a trip to Warrego to assess the situation.

There were vacancies advertised in Routine Orders for Superintendents of Tennant Creek Adults and Cadets, and for Warrego Cadets, a situation that remained for some considerable time.

In mid March 1990, DSO Rayson reported a severe cut back in numbers for all volunteer organisations in the Tennant Creek region and although the Divisions were still operating it was difficult to get members to take up officer positions.

The Promotions/Review Committee Report of 30th April 1990 stated *"the situation appears to be no officers and has been like this for some time."*

By August the Division's bank account had been frozen because it was overdrawn. District Treasurer Leonie Harvey was *"instructed to acquaint any new members with the correct methods of operating a St John Account should the Division become operational."* [51]

In early October 1990, District Superintendent Lesley King went to Tennant Creek to conduct the Annual Inspections.

> *"This Division is apparently non existent for all practical purposes. Despite adequate notice of the event there were no Divisional records available and no Officers or members made an appearance on the arranged date and time.*
>
> *"This was very disturbing from the point of view that the previous District Officer at Tennant Creek ... had indicated that though the ranks were thinning out the Division was still viable. There was mention of finding an appropriate Superintendent for the Division*

*and that a member had agreed to act as OIC until someone was appointed.*

*"As no documentation was presented I could not audit the records to assess the state of play. I therefore suggest that unless leadership is forthcoming fairly promptly from this area the Division should be closed as there is no way of maintaining responsible standards.*

*"The same applies to the Cadet Division. No evidence of its existence was presented on the 4/10/90 as arranged."*

The Cadet Division had either already closed or was shut down around this time.

Nothing changed for the Adults in the following six months and on the 1st May 1991 the Acting Superintendent Barkly Region, Clem Larcombe, reported, *"At present there is no one in charge of the Tennant Creek Combined Division and it is virtually non existent."*

He went on to recommend Bradley Gough for the position of Officer in Charge of Tennant Creek Combined Division which was approved by Lesley King effective from 3rd March 1991.

The next available report was from a District Conference on 12th April 1992 when Corps Superintendent Steve Peers advised that Tennant Creek was increasing in strength with ten members and that the Cadet Division looked like restarting.

A Southern Corps meeting held in Alice Springs on 7th September 1992 reported that the Tennant Creek Cadet Division was up and running again with several previous cadets returning to the Division.

The *Tennant & District Times* had a story on the revived Tennant Creek Cadet Division in December. The Cadets had started up again after two years and new Cadets were presented their first aid certificates by Corps Superintendent Steve Peers and CAO Eileen Calway-Pridham.[52]

The cadets combined with the adults and were not in a separate Division and in September 1993 there was confusion over whether it was a Cadet and Adult or Combined Division. This was resolved the following month when it was decided to classify as a Combined Division due to the low numbers. There was also a vacancy order out for Divisional Superintendent and Divisional Ambulance Officer.

At a District Staff meeting of 6th August 1994: *"Concerns from Southern Corps re Tennant Creek Adults currently lacking leadership. R. Smith, Acting DO, may not last as he is also looking after cadets."*

Jason Danbury was approved as OIC in December 1995 . He relinquished the OAC position in June 1996, to be replaced by Michelle O'Dea.

A 3rd September 1998 report stated that Tennant Creek was almost ready to separate the Adult and Cadet Divisions.

The 1998 Wet Season edition of *Outback Ambulance* reported:

*"Tennant Creek Combined Division have attended a number of public duties in the last two weeks including Netball, the NT Primary School Softball Exchange and the Tennant Creek Rodeo ... six people required transportation to hospital from the rodeo, the volunteers in attendance were Wayne Bevan, Beryl Humphries and "Doctor" Marcel Wolf. All three officers did a very professional job helping dispel the belief held by some of the Tennant Creek community that the volunteers are "just a band-aid Brigade". Wayne and Marcel are enrolled in the Advanced Diploma and Beryl is enrolled in the Certificate in Ambulance Studies by correspondence."*

By the 1st July 1999 the Tennant Creek Adults had 19 members busy with Public Duties. The Cadets had 19 female and 12 male cadets, 27 with Preliminary First Aid and two with Senior First Aid. The Division expected a decline in a few months with the coming closure of Warrego Mine." [53]

Bill Fullwood OAM was the distinguished guest at the annual St John Ambulance Inspection and Presentation ceremony held on Saturday night, 27th November 1999, officiated by Commissioner Andrew Hodges and District Superintendent Sue Cooper.

On Tuesday 17th October 2000, Territory Officer Alan Caust presented Tennant Creek with the inaugural award of Adult Division of the Year, an astounding effort for a Division with such a

troubled history. Justin Hankinson was now in charge of the Division, a position he held for the next decade.

The Division's Annual Report for 2000 listed 18 adult members (12 active) and 15 cadets (10 active). Barry Bradley was Divisional Officer with Private Lynda McMeekin overseeing the Cadets, Acting DS(C) Len D'Ugo and DO(C) Kylie Smith both having left in the latter half of the year. Lloyd Brooks was the Divisional Trainer.

Justin Hankinson brought stability to a Division with a previously very high turnover in leadership and on several occasions none at all.

Territory Officer Alan Caust organised an Officers' Mess Dress Dinner that was held in Tennant Creek on the last weekend in February 2001. The dinner was not only for officers, but also for paid staff and volunteers of all ranks. The local *Tennant & District Times* gave the event a full page photo pictorial and said that commissioned officers attended from Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Gove – as well as from Tennant Creek.

The following month, Alan Caust asked that all members use post nominals on correspondence and other appropriate areas. Some answered the call, but most continued life as usual, using post nominals on rare occasions. By instruction of the Governor General on 14th August 1982, post nominals for the Order of St John are not recognised outside the Order.

Justin Hankinson lost his hair and mo at the Memorial Club on Friday 25th May 2001. This was to help raise money for the Leukaemia Foundation and the Division. Volunteers Kirsty and Jim also lost their locks, while Training Officer Lloyd Brooks had his chest hair removed. More than $4200 was raised on the night.

At the annual Divisional Parade in September 2002, officiated by Commissioner Andrew Hodges, special tribute was made to Territory Officer Steve Peers, one of the original ambulance officers in Tennant Creek.

> *"Justin Hankinson ... presented Mr Peers with a gift of appreciation and thanked him for his tireless support he had given to the Tennant Creek Combined Division."* [54]

Scott Loechal, Officer in Charge of Barkly and also a volunteer with Operations Branch contested the St John National Championships in July 2004 and took home the Individual trophy, after having won the Territory competition earlier in the year. The championships were held in Alice Springs, with Western Australia taking out the team event.[55]

On 30th October 2004, the Tennant Creek Adult Division celebrated its 40th anniversary and 25 years since St John took over the ambulance service from the Department of Health. Guest of Honour was founding member Bill Fullwood.

Bill died on 17th February 2005 at the age of 94, ending a very remarkable life. The Fullwood ambulance was used as his hearse with St John Ambulance volunteers among the pallbearers.



Justin Hankinson gets a new hairstyle to raise funds for the Leukaemia Foundation and St John




Bill Fullwood with the ambulance named in his honour

Justin Hankinson was awarded Adult Volunteer of the Year for 2006. Justin's tireless contribution to the community in volunteer ambulance work and public duties included obtaining and refurbishing an old minesite building into a modern first aid facility. Officer in Charge Marcel Clark said:

> *"He coordinated the entire project, from acquiring a building to transforming it into a multi-use facility. The refurbished donga is now permanently located at Brunette Downs Station for use at major events including the annual race meeting. It is fantastic for Mr Hankinson to be recognised with this award and it truly recognises the hard work and commitment of a local volunteer."* [56]

On Australia Day 2007, Justin Hankinson was named Tennant Creek Citizen of the Year. As well as his volunteer work for St John, Justin was also Captain of the Tennant Creek Volunteer Bushfire Brigade.

The Annual Brunette Downs Races public duty was on again in 2007. Local volunteers Justin Hankinson, Darrin Whatley and Carol Dohnt were joined by Alice Springs Paramedic Bridget to provide medical coverage for the event. They departed Tennant Creek in the Alice Springs bus and a four-wheel drive ambulance in good time for the 350km trip. Unfortunately, the ambulance suffered mechanical problems and had to be left at the Barkly Homestead. Knowing that their presence was vital to the event they continued onto Brunette in the bus. Fortunately, the Police at Avon Downs were informed of the situation and brought the Avon NTES vehicle which was equipped as an ambulance.

The St John First Aid building became their home and treatment area for the duration of the race meeting.

> *"The weekend provided the usual challenges we have all come to expect from Brunette – long nights caring for casualties in freezing weather, intermingled with periods of relaxation and frivolity."*

One casualty provided a challenge for the crew when he would only allow treatment if he could have his favourite pet with him, a heavily pregnant Black Headed Python named Betsy. This gave a photo opportunity of a man who was one of the very few to successfully breed this species of snake. He was looking for support to continue his work and only too happy to have the photo published in *Vollie News*.[57]

Heavy rains on the Saturday night that turned the black soil plains into a sea of mud brought the activities to a halt. There was concern that the St John crew may be stranded for some time, but after a lot of consultation it was decided to risk driving the bus out.

Carol had travelled with husband Brian in his Bushfires NT four-wheel drive that helped the bus over 12km of muddy track to the Barkly Stock Route. After two hours of mud they were relieved to safely make it to the sealed road. The Bushfires vehicle then came in good use for hosing the muck from both vehicles before resuming their journey home.

> *"Once going, Brunette did not fail to provide challenges to those attending. The weekend turned out to be an outstanding example of what a group of people can achieve when they work as a team.*
>
> *"The weekend provided several challenging and unexpected situations that fell outside what those attending a duty would normally have to deal with. The team's tenacity and great sense of humour meant that St John was still able to provide full coverage for the events despite the numerous obstacles that had to be overcome."* [58]

In March 2009, Justin Hankinson and Darrin Whatley joined five other volunteers from the Northern Territory to help out with the Victorian bushfires still raging after Black Saturday. *En route* to Alice Springs they stopped to assist at a highway accident where a car had been knocked into the path of a road train, the delay almost causing them to miss their flight to Melbourne. [59]

There were more honours for Justin when he was admitted as a Member of the Order of St John and awarded the Service Medal of the Order at the annual Investiture and Graduation Ceremony at Government House, Darwin, 28th May 2009.

# Chapter 5
# Elliott

On the 23rd July 1980 the Elliott Section of the Tennant Creek Combined Division was formed with ten members, three male and seven female. Original members were: Richard Patrala, James Rennie, James Taylor, Veronica (Bonnie) Absalom, Denise Carew, Auriol Collins, Shirley Cooper, Glenda Sharp, Theresa (Ruth) Tilney, and Divisional Nursing Officer, Sister Lynette Dowd.

SRN Susan Tolley's name isn't on the Division Registration form, but her BF4 card has her joining the Elliott Section on 11th July 1980 as OAC.

In June 1981 it was stated that St John were to take over the [ambulance] operations at Elliott, but there was concern about volunteer levels in the town. [1] The takeover was postponed due to lack of funding and voluntary strength, and it never did go ahead.[2]

Corps Superintendent Brian Males reported in April 1982 that community support in the town was excellent and that donations had been raised for a vehicle and training aids.[3] A visit by Barkly Region Senior Centre Officer Alex Sutton on 21st July reported spending an interesting evening with an enthusiastic group who felt they were the "forgotten few". Their OAC Susan Tolley was on long service leave and it was proposed for Veronica Absalom to be appointed acting OIC in her absence, and Ruth Tilney as Voluntary Secretary. However, the 1982 Annual Return lists Ruth Tilney as OAC, so there was obviously a change of plans.

The Section now had 14 members, 10 being first aiders and the other four CC&T qualified. The first aiders were anxious to have CC&T training in order to increase their qualifications. A problem in the town was that the local ambulance was under the control of the Health Department and there was uncertainty about St John members' authority to drive the vehicle. Lack of ambulance driver training and qualifications was another issue for the Section.

Tennant Creek Superintendent Carol Brown and Alex Sutton agreed to visit the town fortnightly to provide regular support and training.[4]

On 20th March 1983, Tennant Creek Divisional Superintendent Tony van Hoof wrote the following report: [5]

> *This Section is progressing quite well. On Thursday 17 March, Shane Wood and myself went to Elliott and held an examination night. Altogether six people were examined, three for a re-exam and three for an initial CC&T exam. This leaves 2 more to be re-examined. There are now eight CC&T qualified people at Elliott. I have briefly spoken to some Elliott members re the formation of a Division at Elliott. The idea was well received and I feel certain that they will be quite capable of running their own Division. I have made it clear that we will still assist them where possible. I am confident for the future of the Elliott Section.*

A little over two months later on the 29th May Tony van Hooff wrote a very frank report on a Section with severe problems. There was a lack of leadership and strong personal antagonism within the group.

Promises made by Training Department about Training Packs and regular visits by Training Officers had not been kept, causing disappointment and a drop in morale. *"... the Group believed they were sold out and left to their own devices."*

There was a very small work load in Elliott without any callouts in the past two to three months. As a result members could not maintain their skills and felt inadequate. Because of this Sue Tolley was reluctant to send a crew out without herself in attendance. The report further stated that the available staff in Tennant Creek were having to spread themselves too thinly to service the various Sections (Warrego and Elliott) and there was need for a permanent Training Officer in the Barkly Region.[6]

The Elliott Section was disbanded, date not known, but most likely in 1985.

# Chapter 6
# Warrego

On the 5th August 1982 Tennant Creek Divisional Superintendent Carol Brown wrote a memo to Southern Corps Superintendent Steve Peers in which she stated that a submission had been made to commence a Brigade Section at Warrego and that mining company Peko-Wallsend was very supportive.

This item had been underlined in red by the recipient with the hand written comment that no written authority had ever been issued. Below this in black was a later notation: "NTA6 issued 10.11.82" which must have been the required authority and date to commence the Section.

The Tennant Creek Brigade Monthly Report for March 1983 reported that the Warrego Section was working quite well with several members doing third person ambulance duties and confidence that all doing the CC&T course would pass. OAC Cynthia Parkinson was doing a great job to the point of having additional training nights and conducting some individual training at home.

However, there was perceived to be an 'undercurrent' or problem that Tony van Hooff, OAC Tennant Creek Combined Division, had been unable to uncover, but suspected it may have something to do with the relationship with Peko. He requested that the Corps Superintendent discuss the problem with Mrs Parkinson.

The 1983 Annual Return lists Cynthia Parkinson as OAC from 30th March 1983 and having resigned in May. The front page has Margaret Routledge as OIC, so it's assumed she took over from Parkinson. There were a lot of resignations and Section strength was three male and two female.

A District Staff meeting in August 1984 reported that an *"off-line vehicle can be supplied to Warrego for response and transport if approved by Department of Health"*. There are no further reports and it's not known whether or not this went ahead.

In June 1988 DSO(C) Richard Holt announced plans to start a Cadet Division at Warrego and arrangements were made for an Inspection and Enrolment ceremony of Adults and Cadets in October. The Cadets were reported to be an active Division with all members having completed their preliminary first aid by 1st September. Richard Holt and CAO Eileen Calway-Pridham went to Warrego on Thursday 20th October for the official opening and enrolment ceremony for 18 cadets.

The Cadet Division Registration form was raised the same night with Yvonne Fenwick as Divisional Superintendent, Kathy Muir SRN as Divisional Nursing Officer. Shane Epiha and Jayne McCorkell were nominated as Corporals in the new Division. Other members were Christopher Warrener, Clinton Muir, Luke Muir, Alfredo De Moura, Sivan Kievit, Alan Abolencia, Dale Epiha, Jodi Warrener, Debbie Warrener, Fiona McCorkell, Tamar Kievet, Tomasz Jasinski, Martin Watson and Melanie Watson.

Division Registration was sanctioned by Chief Commissioner Peter Falkland on 20th February 1989.

Mining communities suffer periodic ups and downs, more so than major Territory centres and at the February 1990 District Staff meeting: *"Warrego Division is holding on just – advised that a person may take over running Division, but no paperwork."*

When District Superintendent Lesley King went to Tennant Creek in 1990 for her futile annual inspection she reported:

*Warrego Cadet Division – As there was no representative of this Division available for discussions I am not able to comment on its possibilities. No records were submitted on the arranged date and this will need to be followed up by the Corps Superintendent. After such an enthusiastic start I would be reluctant to close the Division but again the reality of responsibility must be addressed. I will withhold any further action until Mr Peers' report is available.*

Warrego Adult Section and Cadet Division both closed, dates unknown, but before April 1991. [1]

# Chapter 7
# Katherine

Prior to St John's takeover the Northern Territory was reputed to have one of the worst ambulance services in Australia and the following news stories were not uncommon at the time. Ambulances were operated from Territory hospitals by the Department of Health and crewed by hospital orderlies, often untrained in first aid and who merely picked up and transported their patients. Medical care was provided by nurses on the occasions they went out with the ambulances.

In January 1965 the *Northern Territory News* reported that an accident victim in Katherine lay in the gutter for about three-quarters of an hour before the town's ambulance arrived.

This was reported to the Town Management Board and the Medical Officer in charge of the Katherine Hospital, Dr Dunnett, who said that the regular ambulance driver was away from the town on leave at the time. Disciplinary action had been taken and he did not think such a thing would happen again.[1]

Research has shown that times estimated by the public are often exaggerated and where emergency services keep records their times are usually considerably less than those claimed by onlookers.

On New Year's Day 1971 an Aboriginal woman had a miscarriage at Mataranka, but the medical authorities in Katherine decided not to despatch the ambulance because *"the driver had to have his New Year's Day off."* As a result the patient was transported to Katherine in a private vehicle.[2]

It seems that the Hospital had just the one driver with no standby. Did the driver really need to have the public holiday off, or had he partied too hard the night before and was in no fit state to drive the ambulance? Would they have shown the same callous indifference to an emergency in Katherine, or would they have somehow found another driver? None of this is recorded and must remain speculation.

St John Ambulance Brigade District Staff Officer Warren Burgess and Corps Superintendent John O'Donohoe visited Katherine In November 1975 as part of a grand tour of regional centres. They met up with the Katherine Department of Health Secretary who *"felt sure SJAB would be well received in Katherine"*. The Manager of the Government Employment Office, Dan Darcey, was an ex-member of the Brigade in Darwin and a useful local contact.[3]

Les MacFarlane MLA, Member for Elsey, wrote to St John Council Chairman Alec Fong Lim on 19th November to enquire about starting a Division in Katherine. Les had raised the sorry state of the local hospital based ambulance service more than once in Parliament and would have been glad to have it replaced by a better St John Ambulance service.

The Council's reply was positive in this regard, resulting in Deputy Commissioner Mills, Burgess and O'Donohoe attending a public meeting on Friday 16th January 1976 at the Crossways Hotel Functions Room. The notice for the meeting was put in the *Katherine Informer* by Les MacFarlane.

Dr Mills advised the thirteen people at the meeting that the initial purpose was to form a Division to provide qualified first aid cover at various public duties and not to take over the ambulance service at this stage.

At this time St John was operating the ambulance service in Darwin, Adelaide River and Batchelor and the residents of Katherine may well have hoped that their local ambulance would also be run by St John.

A local Division would require about 18 to 20 people with a strong management committee to assist with fund raising. The enthusiasm shown by the meeting was such that Dr Mills would forward a letter to Katherine by the end of the month to outline the requirements and to encourage formation of a Division.[4]

Contact people in Katherine were Graham Killian (Education), Majib Aboutaleb (A.I.B.), Max King (Health), Werner (Tourism) and Charles Cuff (C.E.S.).

In May, the District Staff reported that with nothing further happening in Katherine the Deputy Commissioner would write to Mr MacFarlane to find out the current situation.[5] The following Staff Meeting had nothing to report and after that, Katherine dropped out of the records.

This was the period when the first paid ambulance officers were being employed in Darwin, a new Division was starting in Casuarina, a building appeal for the new Casuarina HQ was being launched and the Tennant Creek Combined Division was all but defunct with Alice Springs not much better. They had their hands pretty full in Darwin and left Katherine to Les MacFarlane. He may have been too busy with parliamentary duties to do a lot, but that is pure speculation. All that is certain is that no St John Ambulance Division was established in Katherine in 1976.

It was only when the call went out for volunteers to crew an after-hours ambulance service that numbers dramatically jumped in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek. The lure of flashing lights and sirens was irresistible and having been told that this wouldn't happen in Katherine may have dampened their enthusiasm.

With regional ambulance services being taken over by St John throughout the now self governing Northern Territory it was time to put some serious effort into starting a Division in Katherine. It was essential to have a pool of trained volunteers to support the full-time St John Ambulance Service when it started.

Notices appeared in the *Katherine Advertiser* in mid July 1979 advertising for a Regional Ambulance Officer and an Ambulance Officer for when St John was to take over the ambulance service.

The position of Regional Ambulance Officer went to Allan Collins, married with three young children, who had been with St John in South Australia since 1970. He served in the Adelaide Metropolitan area and had been OIC of the Bordertown and District Ambulance Service. A qualified driving instructor, he was also responsible for the training of volunteer ambulance officers within the Upper South East Ambulance Zone in South Australia. He was a delegate to the St John Country Ambulance Services Association in South Australia and an Associate of the Institute of Ambulance Officers, Australia.[6]

Warren Burgess and Colin Hamilton went to Katherine in July to organise First Aid classes, to be held at the Katherine Rural Education Centre from 13th to 24th August. Darwin's mobile First Aid caravan was to be taken down to the Katherine Show and several ambulance officers would also be attending.[7]

There was a presentation night on 11th September for graduates who passed the First Aid course. This was attended by Commissioner Alan Bromwich, District Surgeon Lionel Crompton and Senior Training Officer Charlie Stal. The night was extremely successful and showed a lot of local support for the Brigade.

A CC&T course was prepared by DSO Morrison and Colin Hamilton for those people interested in becoming volunteers. St John was scheduled to take over the Katherine Ambulance Service in January 1980 and trained volunteers would be needed to man the out-of-hours service.[8] There were 25 enrolments for this course and 18 went on to graduate in December.

A notice in the *Katherine Advertiser* on 13th September advised of the formation of a Division in Katherine. Members of the public with a current First Aid certificate and former members of the St John Ambulance Brigade were cordially invited to assist in establishing the Division. Meetings would commence Thursday 20th September 1979 at 7.00pm. [9]

No venue was stated, but they did give a Darwin phone number to ring. One supposes that in a small town as Katherine was at the time, they assumed that everybody would know anyway. Or did they just forget to put in that essential bit of information?

The Darwin First Aid caravan went down to Katherine for the new group's first public duty on the 4th November. What or where wasn't stated, just that it was their first public duty.[10]

On Tuesday 4th December the Mayor of Katherine, Pat Davies, presented certificates at the

first Graduation Parade, held at the St John Ambulance Katherine Regional Centre, 1131 Victoria Highway. These were rented premises that included a garage, workshop office and a training hall.

Eighteen people survived the six month's training in Casualty Care and Transport to provide the nucleus of the ambulance service, due to start in the New Year.[11]

On Thursday 3rd January 1980 at 10.00am, Dr G. Schroeder, the Acting Medical Superintendent of Katherine Hospital, handed over the keys and officially transferred the Department of Health ambulance service to St John Ambulance.

In charge was Regional Ambulance Officer Allan Collins, supported by Ambulance Officer Brian Koennecke and a team of qualified volunteer ambulance officers. Allan also took charge of the volunteer Division and became their first Superintendent.

The new Ambulance Service offered the following benefits to the Katherine region:

- ◊ Three modern fully equipped ambulances.
- ◊ Continuous service by trained, fully competent ambulance officers immediately ready to respond to calls for help.
- ◊ A training centre for teaching first aid to the community together with facilities for training volunteer ambulance officers.
- ◊ A home for the Katherine Combined Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade.
- ◊ Establishment of a Cadet Division to provide a useful leisure activity for boys and girls 11 – 16 years of age.
- ◊ Provision of first aid services at sporting functions and wherever large crowds gather.
- ◊ Provision of a trained body of men and women, boys and girls ready to respond in times of natural or national disasters.
- ◊ Operation of the "Medic Alert" scheme.

In line with Government policy the ambulance service would no longer be free and a basic call-out fee would be charged, plus a charge per kilometre.[12]

The Katherine Combined Section, attached to Darwin Combined Division, was registered on 17th May 1980.

The Katherine Combined Division was registered on 29th October 1980 with the following founding members: Allan Collins, Superintendent; Dr James Scattini, Divisional Surgeon; Brian Koennecke, Divisional Officer; Florence Lansdowne, Divisional Nursing Officer; Privates Raymond Boreham, Dennis Dowling, Robert Fabian, Norman Rankin, Ronald McClelland, Brian Taylor, Father Charles Zory; and Nursing Members Barbara Allwright, Irene Atkins, Barbara Koennecke, Julie McGuirk, Dorothy O'May and Pauline Pitt.



Mayor Pat Davies awarding certificates at the Graduation Ceremony




Dr Schroeder hands the keys of the Hospital ambulance to Regional Ambulance Officer Allan Collins

The next step was to form a Cadet Division and all interested parents with children aged between 11-16 years were invited to a meeting at the Ambulance Centre, 8.00pm Friday 9th May 1980.[13]

Another notice in the *Katherine Adviser* said that the Cadets would be starting on Friday 30th May 1980 from 8.00pm to 10.00pm at the St John Centre, Victoria Highway.[14]

The Katherine Combined Cadet Division was signed off in the Territory on 26th February 1981 and sanctioned by the Chief Commissioner on 31st July 1981. Founding members were: Wayne Dillon, OAC; Barbara Koennecke, no rank given; Ambulance Cadets Edward Bell and Christopher Clinton. Nursing Cadets were Bernice Avenell, Julie-Anne Byers, Donna Clair, Anita Clinton, Carmel Croyden, Tanya Cunningham, Coralie Fox, Katherine Koennecke, Susanne Millar, Anne Puet, Margaret Snodgrass, Joanne Buckley and Elisabeth Bader.

The local service clubs were quick to support the Brigade. The Katherine Rotary Club donated a Resusci-Baby in May 1980[15] and the following month the Katherine Apex Club donated an Anatomic Anne.[16] Both items of equipment would be used for resuscitation training for Brigade members and in public First Aid classes. In August, the Katherine Lions Club donated an overhead projector worth $470.[17]

Some time during the year Minister for Health Ian Tuxworth inspected the Ambulance Centre and *"congratulated the service on the work it was doing and the crews for a dedication to service which had few parallels in the modern day workforce".* [18]

St John operated three ambulances in an area that extended to the Western Australian border, the Gulf of Carpentaria and south to Newcastle Waters. First Aid courses were to begin soon at Pine Creek and Mataranka and *"an ambulance service is to be established at Pine Creek later this year".* [19]

In response to a request from the people of Pine Creek a public meeting had been held in November 1975. At the meeting District Staff Officer Warren Burgess and Corps Superintendent John O'Donohoe got the impression that the people didn't really want to join St John, they just wanted an ambulance. O'Donohoe wrote in his report that *"I feel that with their transient population problem and the personality of some of those present at the conference the Brigade would end up with nothing but trouble with the proposed venture".*

At the time they attended motor vehicle accidents in a station sedan with a stretcher in the back. When it was explained that they would have to become a Section of St John and undergo full training the meeting became engaged in "irrelevant questions" and was closed. [20]

Establishing a volunteer service at Pine Creek was raised again by the Department of Health in November 1985, but was declined because *"six volunteers is not sufficient to run an ambulance service".*[21]

St John's 1980 Building Appeal was started with a doorknock in Katherine on Sunday 28th September. The planned Territory wide building program needed $1.8 million and the target to be raised in Katherine was $10,000.

Chairman of the Katherine Appeal, Alderman Patrick Murphy announced that members of St John, the Lions and Apex clubs collected nearly $1700 on the doorknock, with more money still coming in. [22]

Incomplete records mean that we don't know the final amount raised in Katherine, but on 15th October it was reported to be $1661.78.[23]

In October 1981 the Promotion Selection Board recommended the following appointments: Ted Wiltshire, Superintendent Katherine Combined Division; Robert Tremethick, Superintendent Katherine Combined Cadet Division.

Rob Tremethick's appointment was confirmed in Routine Orders as being from 21st November 1981, but Wiltshire isn't mentioned, so he must not have taken up the appointment. Regional Ambulance Officer Wiltshire left Katherine on 12th February 1982.

The Katherine region had ten volunteers in December 1981 who covered only Thursday, Friday and Saturday volunteer duties. Few bush trips were undertaken and no sleep on duties due to work commitments.[24]

A confidential report dated 4th February 1982 details a lot of morale problems within the paid Ambulance Service, mostly due to personalities and leadership. The report also suggested that because staff were involved in very little trauma or ambulance type work they should be rotated to Darwin on a fortnightly exchange basis, *"for the purpose of rejuvenating their ambulance skills and maintaining their interest in their career and also for enhancing a working relationship with other members of the staff".*[25]

In April 1982 the District Staff reported:[26]

*"Restructuring in Katherine with Mr Van der Molen, now Centre Officer Grade II, the senior service officer in town. Mr Van der Molen is currently administering the Division and has a regular parade attendance of about 12 members."*

Volunteer and paid officers trained in Advanced Life Support were now working unsupervised as part of normal crews which resulted in more paid staff becoming active in the volunteer roster. While this may have seemed great to District Staff in April, it had an undesired side effect later in the year.

Commissioner Alan Bromwich, Grant Keetley and three members of the Promotion Selection Board visited Katherine in May and after consultation agreed that Rees Van der Molen be appointed Superintendent of the Adult Division.[27]

By June there were now seven ambulance officers employed full-time in Katherine and all were members of the Brigade. A CC&T course for volunteers was to commence in the next few weeks with 15 in the class.[28]

The Darwin First Aid caravan had been *"used extensively this last year and is showing signs of fatigue and water damage."* The proposal was to send the van to Katherine and purchase a new unit for Darwin, subject to finance being available, estimated a bit over $21,000. Quite naturally, St John in Katherine were a little browned off with being sent Darwin's cast off that required extensive work. DAO Rod Bramley wrote:

*"I feel that for $4000 the standard of caravan that we are proposing to send is good value and will give them an interest and project to upgrade in their passive time."* [29]

Shades of the Berrimah Line! They weren't even giving their clapped out cast off away, they were selling it to them! And yes, it did go to Katherine the following year, but at least it was renovated first. The $4000 was raised by donations from the Katherine Lions Club.[30]

District Superintendent Grant Keetley and District Secretary Ian Spooner visited Katherine in September following the resignation of several volunteer members. At a meeting it was made clear that they were being prevented from undertaking transport duties, hence the dissatisfaction. DAO Rod Bramley was made aware of the problem and was to take action to remedy the situation.[31]

Bramley reported to District Staff that the centre had settled down to a more productive relationship Brigade/Service wise and the resignations had not affected the Division to any great extent. Rees Van der Molen was on leave and the Division was being administered by Brian Carnegie-Smith who appeared to be doing a good job.

Brigade training was undertaken by Errol Priestly and over the past six weeks had given the Division a reliable ongoing training commitment.

The mass resignations of volunteers must have affected the Brigade more than originally admitted. When CSNC Peter Winckler conducted a driving course in November and qualified three members for driving duties, *"It is felt that once the community see these people driving it may help to dispel the feeling that the Service doesn't want volunteer participation."* [32]

In a small town like Katherine the resignations would have had repercussions for the Brigade and acted as a deterrent for recruitment of new members that continued for some years. Paid staff were now doing after-hours ambulance shifts previously carried out by volunteers, although the September meeting implied that this was by design and not just through low volunteer numbers.

Volunteers not doing their out of hours shifts would have meant more overtime for paid crews and a bigger pay packet. This allegation was published in November 1988 Routine Orders about Darwin and may well have applied to Katherine in 1982.

The St John Ambulance *1982-1983 Annual Report* stated problems with ambulance staffing in Tennant Creek and Katherine in particular. *"A recruiting campaign in these areas in early 1983 did not produce the hoped for results and the problem remains."* The report blamed a high population turnover as the major problem.

In August 1984 there was still no change in membership, but existing members were now doing a greater share of the workload.[33] However, the District Staff Meeting later in the month reported: *"Enthusiasm appears to be high in all Centres, apart from Katherine."* [34]

The 1983 Cadet report had a much brighter picture for the Cadet Division. Superintendent Rob Tremethick had three adult assistants, seven Ambulance Cadets, eight Nursing Cadets and two female Probationers.

Since April 1982 the Cadets had participated in their first Camp at Douglas Hot Springs, their first ever competitions and eight Cadets had just recently participated in an NCO course. District Nursing Officer Lesley King assisted the Division by travelling to Katherine on several occasions to lecture and examine a Patient Care course for the Cadets.[35]

In January 1984, Cadet Timothy Pitt-Lancaster came second in the individual event at the National First Aid Championships held in Alice Springs. Tim transferred to Katherine from Alice Springs where he had twice been NT individual champion and in 1981 represented the Territory in the National Championships in Tasmania.[36]

The Ambulance Service and volunteers relocated from their leased premises on the Victoria Highway to the Community Health Centre in Kintore Street on 3rd December 1984. This was in response to a proposal made to the St John Council by the Department of Health.[37] The Ambulance Service was now in a more central location with shorter response times to emergency callouts.

A letter from the Katherine Hospital Board to the Department of Health in early 1985 suggested returning to the old system of hospital based ambulances utilising orderlies as more cost effective than St John's service in Katherine. This letter was forwarded to St John who sent "a suitable reply".[38]

With St John having considerably raised the standards of ambulance transport and pre-hospital care there would have been quite an outcry from the media and public if there was a return to the bad old days in a penny pinching exercise.

On 21st May 1985 Northern Corps was divided into Northern Corps (Darwin region) and North-Eastern Corps (Adelaide River, Batchelor, Katherine, Jabiru and Nhulunbuy). North-Eastern Corps Superintendent was Darwin based Steve Peers with Corps Staff Officers Wayne Dillon and Peter Walker.

The Adult Division's membership crisis worsened and in January 1987 there was only one active volunteer and paid Officers Clem Larcombe and Brian Carnegie-Smith. During the 1986 recruiting campaign no enquiries at all were received. Rod Bramley was at a total loss how to motivate the town. It was hoped that when the RAAF base at Tindal came on line there may be some improvement.[39]

By August, the local ambulance staff seem to have given up and on her visit District Superintendent Lesley King noted *"a lack of enthusiasm in Katherine as far as acquiring new members is concerned."* [40]

The Division had only three active members in April 1988, there having been no response to a recent recruiting campaign. The future of this Division was now in question.[41] These active members included paid ambulance staff who were also volunteers.

The position of Superintendent of the Cadet Division was advertised in May and it was also

decided that the Adult and Cadet Divisions would now meet on the same night. Superintendent Clem Larcombe proposed that Cadets nearly 16 and doing Cadet IAC could go out as third person on the ambulances. DSO Richard Holt warned that the legal ramifications of doing this needed to be considered first.[42] In June, District Staff stated that the current policy was that Cadets must be 15½ years of age to go on the ambulances.[43]

The Cadets amalgamated with the Adults and folded late in 1988, but the date is unrecorded and uncertain.

Brian Carnegie-Smith was rewarded for many years voluntary service when he was admitted to the Order of St John as a Serving Brother at Government House, Darwin in July 1990.[44]

In September 1991 the *Katherine Times* reported that there was now only one active volunteer in Katherine and four recruits.

In 1993 there was continuing concern about volunteer numbers and in November, Service Officers Brad Gough and Kevin Blake expressed interest in restarting a Cadet Division. However, there was concern that due to Service commitments they would not have the time to maintain a cadet group.[45] It was to be another seven years before Katherine had St John Ambulance cadets once again.

The Ambulance Service received a new ambulance in October 1993, a moduled Holden V6 stretch utility. This vehicle, Car 56, was rebadged the Humpty Doo Volunteer Ambulance in 2002 and was returned to Katherine in mid 2009 as Car 156 in green First Aid colours. It must have been showing its age because in late 2012 Katherine members expressed a wish to see the last of the vehicle.

There were just two active volunteers in early 1995 with three in training. Four of the six full-time officers also did volunteer work, but their priority was to the Ambulance Service.[46]

Later in August the Masonic Foundation and Freemasons Katherine Lodge of Fidelity donated a Heart Start stimulator and a Resusci-Anne manikin to the Division. These gifts were accepted by Regional Staff Officer Brian Carnegie-Smith, OAC of the Division.[47]

In September, the *Katherine Times* published a plea for more volunteers. Of the five current volunteers, *"two are overseas and pregnant respectively".* The shortage of volunteers was putting a strain on paid staff with the only way to get a weekend off was to go to Darwin and leave the phone behind. Brian was hoping that somebody would be able to start up the cadets again. There were about twenty young people interested, but nobody available to run a Cadet Division.[48]

The September recruitment drive was described as the most successful ever held in Katherine when seven people attended an open night and three signed up to join the Division. This would mean that Service members wouldn't have to spend so much time doing voluntary public duties and it would ease their workload. There was still nobody willing to take on a Cadet Division, though.[49]

Brian Carnegie-Smith recommended Kevin Blake and Lenaire Brown for Priory Votes of Thanks in February 1996. Lenaire had been an active volunteer since 1983 at Casuarina, then Darwin and was currently a very active member in Katherine.

Kevin started his service with St John as a volunteer with Darwin Division in 1988 and had been a very active member of Katherine Division since 1992. He was heavily involved with public duties and operational training.[50]

Things move slowly in large organisations and neither received the PVT, but both were admitted to the Order of St John as Serving Sister/Brother in 2001.

Brian Carnegie-Smith resigned as OAC of the Division in March 1996 and handed over to Lenaire Brown.[51] Regional Manager Craig Garraway became OAC In October and Lenaire assisted with secretarial work.[52]

The team of Lenaire Brown, Robyn Jackson and Tanya Atkins went to Darwin in May 1996 for the

District First Aid Championships.[53] Unfortunately, these competitions rated just a photo spread without captions or text in *Outback Ambulance* and didn't even rate a mention in District Staff minutes, so we don't know the results and how the Katherine team fared. It wasn't reported in the following week's newspaper, so one could assume that no trophies came back to Katherine.

There were now six full-time Ambulance Officers in town: Regional Manager Craig Garraway, Bob Fabian, Brian Carnegie-Smith, Kevin Blake, Paul Gsodam and Bruce Anders. There were also twelve volunteers, but another eight were needed.[54]

Volunteers helped to cover shifts while paid Ambulance Officers were out of town or tied up with other work. Volunteers also covered public duties in such places as Timber Creek, Mataranka and Daly Waters. They attended rodeos, horse races, camp drafting and speedway.

The ambulance service covered an area to the Western Australian border, north to Hayes Creek and south to Dunmarra.

**Katherine Floods, January 1998**

*This account was obtained from Regional Manager Craig Garraway's Flood Report, an article published in Outback Ambulance, and an interview with Kevin Blake by Dr Bill Wilson in 2001. Other flood and weather information was sourced from Wikipedia and the Bureau of Meteorology.*

Australia Day, Monday 26th January 1998, wasn't a day for celebration in Katherine. A low pressure system over the Gulf of Carpentaria developed into Tropical Cyclone Les two days earlier. The cyclone moved westward overland and went from cyclone strength to a rain depression that inundated the Katherine, Daly and Roper River catchments. Rain began falling in Katherine on the 25th and a heavy deluge continued almost without letup until the early morning of the 27th with 448mm of rain recorded in the Katherine River catchment. Heavy rainfall earlier in the month had saturated the catchment areas and this latest deluge had a dramatic impact on the river system.[55]

Early on Australia Day morning, with the Katherine River at 17 metres the town was placed on a 100-year flood alert. The river had risen to this level from just 9 metres at 7.00pm the previous evening.[56]

When delivering a patient to the Hospital's Accident and Emergency department, St John Ambulance paramedics were advised that the Katherine District Hospital was to be evacuated. This information was passed on to Craig Garraway who was away in Darwin as Acting Regional Manager. Concern was raised that although the Counter Disaster Plan stated that the Ambulance Service was to be officially notified by the Katherine Police when the water level at the High Level Bridge reached 14 metres, no such notification had been received.

Ambulance staff members and volunteers were put on notice to prepare to evacuate the Hospital and a phone link was established with the Katherine Police HQ.

At 10.00am, with the river now at 18 metres, all available St John members were called in to the Ambulance Centre. Ambulance Officers Peter Coon and Anton Bartolovic were sent to check the highway between Katherine and RAAF Tindal. This is where the patients of Katherine District Hospital would be evacuated and it was essential that this be done before the road became impassable.

Paramedic Bob Fabian was sent to the Communications Centre at Police HQ to ensure that St John got accurate information of the developing situation.

First Aid posts were set up in evacuation centres at Katherine High School, MacFarlane Primary School and the newly built but not yet opened Casuarina Street School. One of these shelters became isolated by flood waters and the St John members on duty took charge as shelter coordinators through nobody else there able or willing to assume the role. With no food or cooking facilities they broke into the canteen and organised all the cooking and sleeping arrangements.[57]

At midday the river level was still around 18 metres. The evacuation of the Hospital was well under way with major assistance from the RAAF who provided a bus without seats that could transport eight stretcher patients. Obstetrics and paediatric patients were transported in a large

RAAF truck. The evacuation was carried out efficiently and in a timely manner. The last two patients, who had been in theatre, were transported by ambulance to RAAF Tindal.

With all Hospital patients evacuated the St John Ambulance crews now relocated to Police HQ and a temporary hospital was established upstairs in the only room available. This created difficulties in that patients had to be carried upstairs, there being no elevators.

Craig Garraway arrived from Darwin at 4.00pm with Ben Minchin. Craig took control of Ambulance Operations at Katherine Police HQ, relieving Bob Fabian who left to attend his own residence and belongings. Initial advice was that the river would peak at 8.00pm that night, but this did not occur for another 24 hours.

At 6.00pm with the river level at 19 metres the residents of Katherine were officially advised to evacuate.

> *"Some 2,000 people had to abandon their homes and most of their possessions to the swirling waters; many lost everything. In many cases, evacuations were a "last minute" exercise - partly due to complacency but, in at least some cases, people put off leaving for fear of looters."* [58]

The high level bridge was now closed and the Highway south was blocked due to water flowing over the road. St John reported a fairly uneventful night with just two patients transferred from evacuation centres to the temporary hospital.

At 6.00am Tuesday morning a state of emergency was declared in Katherine with the river breaking its banks in several areas and the main street now one metre under water. The river was still rising and was now at 20 metres.

One of the Katherine Paramedics – the author of the report in *Outback Ambulance* that provided much of this information, but who chose to remain anonymous – was sent on a job to an isolated house. A teenager had been cut on the foot, lost a lot of blood and was going into shock. The trip was made by Lloyd's Helicopter and the teenager stabilised and evacuated to Tindal. Returning to Katherine they were diverted to rescue two people stranded on the roof of their house. The people were winched into the chopper which returned to Police HQ, the area outside having been turned into a helipad catering for about four choppers.

At 4.30pm the river peaked at 20.4 metres, passing the previous record of 19.3 metres set in 1957, and the town was now well under water. In some areas elevated houses had water up to their balconies and the central business district had two metres of swirling muddy water flowing down the main street.

Beswick community to the south of Katherine with a population of about 500 people was also flooded and in need of evacuation. Much of the thanks for support in Katherine and surrounding communities belong to the RAAF who did a magnificent job.

Chief Minister Shane Stone declared Katherine, Daly River and outlying communities to be a Disaster Area on Wednesday 28th January.[59]

Around noon that day a relieving contingent of St John personnel arrived from the south. Alice Springs Regional Manager Steve Peers despatched five vehicles with supplies to feed relieving staff and extra food and water for local ambulance officers.

The relieving contingent were Martin Scaife from Tennant Creek in Car 32 Troop Carrier, Paul Bellman in Car 21 twin berth Land Cruiser, Trevor Sellick in Car 22 Troop Carrier, Fleet Supervisor Kyron Wright in the workshop ute and Sales Representative Noel Talbot, a long term volunteer in Operations Branch, in a bus with an Emergency Support trailer.

With the Stuart Highway cut to the north and Darwin in imminent threat of a cyclone it was decided not to deplete Darwin of St John resources at this time.[60]

The arrival of the southern crews gave the Katherine staff a much needed break. *"We all started getting pretty frustrated at having steak sandwiches for breakfast, lunch and dinner and the fact that some members could not see their own homes."*

It appeared that every Service available had converged on Katherine Police HQ, causing severe overcrowding that increased the frustration.

By Thursday the river retreated to within its

banks but Katherine East, on high ground, was still cut off from the submerged central business district. Police now allowed four wheel drive access for people to return home to assess the damage. The Ambulance Centre had been under water to desk height, about 1.3 metres. Everything on desks and above was undamaged, but everything below, including most records were destroyed.

> *"It was decided by the Department of Health that anything that had been in the water was to be condemned. It was not safe to keep it. So all our furniture went, all of our equipment went, most of our medical stores. Just about everything in the building was decided that it had to be thrown away."* [61]

NTES personnel assisted by clearing furniture and mud from the Centre and the Ambulance Bay became the staff's new living and working quarters. The cleaned out training hall became a dormitory for up to twenty people. There was no power and the water out of the taps was considered unsafe for drinking. Outside the building were piles of mud and the ruined contents of the Ambulance Centre.

Friday was spent cleaning out the Centre and it was time to organise relief staff for St John personnel. Members had been working twenty hours per day or more, either working on the ambulances, working from the helicopters in rescue duties or at the three evacuation centres. These centres catered for up to 600 people each and the main problem now was risk of infection; there was later an outbreak of gastroenteritis in town.

Power and water supplies were out and the sewage system was also out of action. St John members were relieved at the evacuation centres by registered nurses.

The Stuart Highway north of town opened on Friday evening and the following morning Kevin Blake and Earl Richardson arrived from Darwin with generators and food. To further assist, another three staff, Mark Savill, Scott Hollingsworth and Sheree Schneider came up from Alice Springs. This allowed Katherine staff to return to their sodden homes and start the heartbreaking clean up. They had sacrificed a lot to serve the community while suffering themselves.

Regular shuttle runs were organised to get food from Darwin and there were rosters for cooking and cleaning duties. *"Basically everyone just pitched in, cleaned everything up, salvaged what they could and tried to restore the building as best they could."* [62]

The floodwaters receded and went, the essential services resumed and life slowly returned to normal. The Ambulance Service had no telephones for about a month after the flood. Contractors ran a cable from where the PABX once was in the building to an outside telephone. They operated with just the one line, and no fax or computers.

The Centre needed a lot of rebuilding work. Plasterboard walls disintegrate in water as people find out all over Australia after floods. Floor coverings and cupboards also needed removal and renewal. All the internal fittings in the building had to be stripped out and that went on for about six months.

The Centre was run on a makeshift basis while working around the contractors. The option to temporarily move to another location was discussed and dismissed.[63]

On the 30th January, Prime Minister John Howard visited Katherine and announced relief payments of $1000 for each adult and $200 for each child affected by the floods.

The St John Ambulance Endowment Trust made relief payments to all ambulance officers who had been affected by the floods. When Lenaire Brown asked if volunteers would receive payments the Commissioner responded that St John Council had allocated significant amounts of money to assist volunteer members affected by the floods.

Paid staff and volunteers on duty throughout the emergency were:

*Katherine staff*:

Craig Garraway, Paul Derrick, Anton Bartolovic, Peter Coon, Jason Callanan, Bob Fabian

*Katherine volunteers:*

Brenton Baille, Neil Robinson, Mike Cooper, Natalie Higgins, Nicola Lubbock, Lynda Smith

*Darwin:*

Kevin Blake, Earl Richardson, Wayne Hunter, Steve Plahn, Ben Minchin

*Tennant Creek:*

Martin Scaife

*Alice Springs:*
Paul Bellman, Trevor Sellick, Kyron Wright, Noel Talbot, Scott Hollingsworth, Mark Savill, Sheree Schneider

After a lot of enquiries at the 2000 Katherine Show there was seen to be enough interest to start up the Cadets once again and in November Phil Langdon, who had transferred from Darwin was asked to assist and run a First Aid course for them. About ten High School students enrolled and became the first Cadets in Katherine for more than a decade.

Adult members Mark Ferguson, Lenaire Keatch, Brenton Baille and Lynda Smith were the driving force behind getting the Cadets up and running in early 2001, with Lenaire becoming OIC.[64] They were combined with the Adults until August 2005 when they separated into their own Division.

The Northern Territory Cadet First Aid Championships were held in Katherine in July 2003. In the scenario they were visiting a house to attend a mother who required medication when her children fell off a ladder while retrieving a ball from a roof. Injuries included deep lacerations and fractures.

Cadets came from Alice Springs, Katherine, Humpty Doo, Palmerston and Darwin. Alice Springs won the team event with the Katherine team of Belinda Bremner, Joanne Caples and Gary Jackson coming third. Katherine's Cadet Leader, Fletcher Jackson, came second.[65]

The Katherine Adult and Cadet Divisions separated on 19th August 2005 with Matthew Pearce in charge of the Adults and Trevor Keatch as Superintendent of the Cadets. They were presented with new Registration Certificates by Commissioner Peter Poole at the November Annual Parade in Darwin. There were now 31 Cadets and 27 Adult members in Katherine.[66]

**Katherine Floods, April 2006**

*This account was sourced mainly from a report written by Matthew Pearce.*

In common with other Australian towns and cities built on flood plains, Katherine was once again flooded in April 2006. Residents were given their first flood warning on Wednesday 5th April and the town centre was under water before noon the next day. The river peaked at almost 19 metres at the High Level Bridge and a State of Emergency was declared on 7th April.[67] Many homes were flooded with up to two metres of water and outlying residents upriver had to make hurried night time escapes due to the very rapidly rising waters. In the aftermath during the clean up, survivors told your author that they had little or no warning and barely escaped with their lives.[68]

On Wednesday 5th when the Stage 3 flood alert was sounded Divisional Superintendent Matthew Pearce called all his volunteers to put them on standby and told them to prepare their homes for flooding. They were also asked to prepare to assist should there be any evacuations.

Matt was also a paid Ambulance Officer and that night while delivering a patient to the Hospital from Kalano was advised that they were preparing to evacuate. All items had been moved above floor level as the Hospital was in imminent danger of flooding.

While ambulances were evacuating patients to RAAF Tindal an evacuation centre was set up at the High School gymnasium. Some Operations Branch members set up a First Aid post at the High School while others assisted with the Hospital evacuation. The evacuation went well, as did that of the Rocky Ridge nursing home. All this happened in the middle of the night with evacuations finishing about 4.30am. At this time there were about fifty people seeking refuge and three St John volunteers on duty at the High School.

At 8.30am Thursday the river at the Katherine Bridge was 18.25 metres and expected to be at 18.8 metres by midday. The flood sirens had yet to sound and there was no evacuation of the town underway, but people were warned to be prepared to move.

After calling into the Ambulance Centre for a meal, Matt Pearce picked up a volunteer at the High Level Bridge and drove out to the High School. On the way he noticed that the drains had backed up and were flooding between the evacuation area of Katherine East and the CBD and remainder of the town. Matt radioed a warning to the Ambulance Centre that they should evacuate.

The ambulances relocated to the NTFRS Fire Station where they were warmly welcomed.

At that time the flood water sirens still had not sounded, although the water had already started to flow over the road. Matt wrote in his report that they sounded 45 minutes late at about 10.45am.

Matt set up a First Aid Post at the High School and another at MacFarlane School where most of the evacuees were going. With little medical work the volunteers at the High School initially assisted Red Cross with registering people.

In the afternoon there were now enough volunteers to set up a third First Aid Post at the Casuarina Street School. By mid afternoon there were up to 700 people registered at the three evacuation centres with numerous tourists in caravans parked near the centres.

By Thursday night most of the main street was flooded with water in the shops. Katherine East was isolated from the town by a fast flowing river of water that did not recede until Saturday; the evacuation centres stayed open until Monday morning. Volunteers who had crossed the river to help were stranded until Saturday and being away from their families, some of them worked 24 hours straight. Swags were set up in the First Aid rooms, but sleep was difficult with people in constant need of attention.

Volunteers who lived in the high and dry East Side worked 12 hour shifts or longer at the First Aid Posts.

With most people having left the Casuarina Street shelter on Thursday night the First Aid Post was closed down and the St John volunteers redeployed to the other two centres.

Matt wrote:

> *"I was very impressed with the vollies, some of them who spent many days away from family, some of them who were constantly there and available whenever something needed to be done; others who offered their own houses and food to those vollies who could not get home. They were constantly on the lookout for each other and looked after themselves most of the time ..."* [69]

The two First Aid Posts were manned 24 hours per day treating cases such as fits, an exhausted pregnant woman and lots of dressings and bandages. Even though there was an emergency hospital set up at the High School the First Aid Post was maintained as it took a lot of pressure off the hospital staff by looking after the minor injuries and ailments. More than fifty people were treated at the Posts, plus numerous Panadols, band aids and advice.

The exhausted St John volunteers were relieved by some Department of Health nurses on Sunday. Matt Pearce praised these volunteers who *"put in the hard yards ... and did a magnificent job"*:

Paul and Michelle Vella, Tracey Ramm, Tim Laurie, Sandra Taylor, Leanne Stubbs, Christine Sutherland, Steve Johnson, Lenaire Keatch, Simone Kleinig, Bill Backhouse, Eugene Boisvert and Lucinda Buckland.

> *"Thanks to Martin Scaife who coordinated things. My fellow ambulance colleagues also supported the volunteers and helped them out. Everyone worked like a well-oiled machine and things got done with minimal problems. Overall the whole St John team put in a fantastic effort."* [70]

Commissioner Peter Poole visited Katherine after the floods and presented the volunteers with a plaque in appreciation of their efforts.[71]

Your author drove to Katherine on Monday 10th April with a Territory-wide Bushfires NT contingent to help with the clean-up. However, this book is all about volunteer ambos, not volunteer firies so we'll leave it there.

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The volunteer commitment improved in 2007 to a degree where fortnightly training nights became weekly with volunteers keen to learn all

aspects of First Aid and Ambulance work. Divisional Training Officer Geoff Lohmeyer developed presentations for each week's training, travelling an hour and a half each way on training nights.

Operations Branch and the Ambulance Service had an excellent relationship and worked closely together, facilitated by OIC Martin Scaife. Training included extrications from vehicles assisted by the local NTFRS firies.[72]

There was a bit of excitement for the Katherine ambos in January 2010 when a young wallaby jumped through the plate glass front door of Health Care Services next door in the shared building. Steve Rudder, Benny Butler and Matt Schepsi were on Ambulance Service duty that day. They managed to catch the very frightened wallaby and administered first aid before putting it on a stretcher and driving to the nearest vet. A laceration to the right side of the wallaby's face was sutured and after a night to recover it was released back into the wild.[73]

On Thursday 28th July 2011, the Rotary Club of Katherine and Katherine Regional Community Bank – Bendigo Bank, presented the Katherine Adult Division with a new Disaster Response Trailer. Funds for the trailer were also granted by the Northern Territory Government. The trailer would be used for natural disasters, public duties and First Aid training in rural and regional areas.[74]

# Chapter 8
# Nhulunbuy

Nhulunbuy, on the Gove Peninsula, is a bauxite mining town on the north-eastern tip of Arnhem Land. In the early days everybody just called it Gove, rarely Nhulunbuy. It's built on the land of the Yolngu people with non Aboriginals needing permits to travel outside the township and minesite area, although under the Northern Territory Intervention the need for non indigenous people to get permits to enter Aboriginal communities was scrapped.

The only way in or out for most people is by air, with the other alternative being over 700km of rough road, also needing a permit to drive on.

The mine was operated by the North Australian Bauxite and Alumina Company (Nabalco). This was a joint venture of Switzerland based Alusuisse (70%) and Australia CSR. When Alusuisse was taken over by Alcan the Gove operation was renamed Alcan Gove Pty Ltd. This was in turn taken over by Rio Tinto in 2007.

The story of St John's involvement in Nhulunbuy starts in 1975 when it was noted by Darwin Corps that *"Mr Des Harrington of Health Department, Gove, and Mike Tremellen of Nabalco expressed interest in starting a division in Gove."* [1]

Following a letter from Deputy Commissioner Mills, Corps Surgeon Alan Bromwich and Training Officer Charlie Stal travelled to Nhulunbuy on 19th February 1976 for discussions with Des Harrington and Mrs Joan Cook. They found a lot of interest for a Division with six adults having first aid certificates and 25 children potential members.

Des was considered suitable for appointment as Officer Administering Command and Mrs Cook, with previous Brigade experience, in charge of cadets.

A public meeting was to be arranged to generate further interest and formalise starting a Division. Some hospital orderlies were also keen on undertaking Casualty Care and Transport training.[2]

Charlie Stal returned to Nhulunbuy in late March where he addressed a meeting at the area Primary School. Ten adults and 17 children showed considerable interest in joining the Brigade and Mike Tremellen, First Aid Officer for Nabalco, was approached to conduct a first aid course. Mrs Cook agreed to conduct a preliminary first aid course, but because she was leaving the district Mrs Sinclair would take over from her.[3]

The Brigade report to the St John Council in May stated: *A firm commitment to establish a Division at Gove on completion of a first aid course is also assured.* The Manager's report stated that a Division of the Brigade was likely to be formed with 14 cadets and about 8 adults.[4]

The following month they reported slow progress in starting a Division and after that it seems to have ground to a halt.

Nhulunbuy now drops out of the records until July 1979 with a brief note in the Staff Meeting minutes: *"Mr Grant Wiggins from NABALCO is interested in opening a Division at Gove."* [5]

Grant Wiggins was a Brigade Divisional Officer from Queenstown, Tasmania. He had been a member of St John since 1968, and was now working for Nabalco.[6]

Then there is no further mention of Nhulunbuy until July 1980 when Phil Langdon was about to transfer there with his job as a Telecom technician. Phil was a very experienced member, having joined the St John Ambulance Brigade's Marion Division in South Australia in October 1966. He had just recently started a Division in Howard Springs and would be the ideal person to get things going in Nhulunbuy. St John management in Darwin wanted to utilise Phil and Mandy Langdon's transfer to Gove.

> *"They have been commissioned to look at the situation and report to CSNC Brennan. DSO Stal stated that he also has contacts in Gove and suggested that Mr Langdon contact him."* [7]

However, before the Langdons left Darwin, Manager Warren Burgess announced there had been a cut back in funding and that it would be a year of containment rather than progress, with Nhulunbuy not to go ahead that year.[8]

Phil and Mandy Langdon went to Nhulunbuy in September 1980 and the next Corps meeting recorded that *"Whilst in Gove Divisional Officer Langdon has been requested to investigate possibilities of forming a Division there and also probabilities for leadership."* [9]

Phil wasted little time and reported promptly back to Darwin that *"interest has been shown in First Aid Courses at Gove. Mr Wiggins from Tasmania is assisting with Courses."* [10] Phil initially had problems with the local unions who *"thought he was treading on toes"* and when that difficulty was sorted out he started the first aid classes. On 26th November, twenty people sat the exams with all passing and a second course was run in January 1981.[11]

Following the success of these courses, Phil placed an advertisement in the *Gove Gazette* in February 1981 seeking interest in forming a Division in the town.[12] A public meeting was held in the Primary School on 4th March 1981, attended by a small but enthusiastic group of people, most of whom had recently completed the first aid course.

With less than the required twelve members the group became a Section attached to Casuarina Combined Division, with the following officers:

- ◊ Grant Wiggins, OIC
- ◊ Margaret Annells, Nursing Officer. Margaret was in charge of the Aerial Medical Service and had been a Grade VI Officer in Unley, South Australia.
- ◊ Dawn Horrocks (now Territory Officer Dawn Bat), Secretary/Treasurer. Dawn was an ex-nurse and now a school teacher at Nhulunbuy.

The Production Sedan Car Club from the local speedway assisted the new Section with a donation of $60.

Phil and Mandy Langdon transferred back to Darwin soon after, returning to Howard Springs Division where Phil was appointed Superintendent and Mandy as Divisional Nursing Officer.

The Nhulunbuy Combined Division was registered on 8th November 1981 with Divisional Superintendent Grant Wiggins, Divisional Officer Dawn Horrocks, Divisional Nursing Officer Margaret Annells and Sergeant Jeff Baker.

That same month Darwin District Staff reported that *"Mrs Horrocks had stated that a number of children in Nhulunbuy were interested in joining the Cadet movement but there was difficulty in obtaining leaders."* [13]

When Phil Langdon transferred back to Nhulunbuy with Telecom in 1982 he arranged for Sergeant Dobbe of the Northern Territory Police to hold driving courses for Division members so that they could be assessed as ambulance drivers for St John. The Department of Health then gave permission for St John members to use a local ambulance for duties at the speedway and various other functions. Before this a hospital orderly had attended sporting events in the ambulance.[14]

With the need for a place to hold their meetings, Dawn was able to negotiate with Nabalco to have use of a disused laundry block at the town flats.[15]

Phil's next initiative was to start an Ambulance Officers training course in April 1982, using the *Casualty Care and Transport* manual from St John in South Australia. Twelve members who wished to work on the ambulance enrolled in the course, with others also attending to gain the higher training.[16]

Meanwhile, Dawn had become an accredited first aid trainer and began holding public first aid courses in the old laundry block. Grant and Jeff also gained their instructing accreditation and they conducted many first aid courses over the years.

Dawn held a public meeting in late 1982 to gauge the interest in starting a Cadet Division. The Nhulunbuy Combined Cadet Division was formed on 29th November 1982 with Mrs Pat Harper, wife of the local fire chief, as OIC.

Founding Cadet members were Bernice Franklin, Tamara Parker, Rebecca Horrocks, Barbara Hultgren, Tracey Reeve, Suzanne Wollin, Robert Baker, Scott Baker, Rodney Griffin, Peter Harper,

Timothy Harper, Geoffrey Horrocks, David Mathieson, Anthony Mees and Richard Horrocks.

Registration was sanctioned by the Chief Commissioner on 5th September 1983.

The Red Cross Hall was used for meetings and Dawn assisted Pat with training and running the Division. *"The Cadets attended many duties and gained valuable experience. We were fortunate to have a very supportive parent group as well as support from the adults."* [17]

St John volunteers now attended most sporting events including three codes of football, hockey, speedway, motor bike events, school sports and many public functions.

> *It was nothing to start a duty at 8.00am with junior football and finish the day around midnight at speedway. We set up public displays whenever we could and promoted St John and recruited at every opportunity.* [18]

Nhulunbuy Cadet Jason Moore was the hero of a near drowning incident while on holidays in Darwin. On Saturday, 29th September 1984 Jason and his brother Simon were at the Shady Glen Caravan Park talking to a woman who was conducting a survey.

Jason saw something floating under the water and jumped into the pool to grab the woman's drowning baby. It was *"all purple and blue and had frothy stuff, like a milkshake coming out of her mouth"*. Jason called for somebody to phone for an ambulance and then lay the baby down on the edge, turning her head *"so the stuff came out of her mouth"*. She was obviously breathing and didn't need resuscitation. *"She stopped frothing at the mouth and settled down – her mum picked her up and she threw up, so I knew she was going to be all right."* [19]

An adult had been given undeserved credit for the rescue, prompting Jason's parents to correct the newspaper story. It's amazing just how many people are prepared to claim or accept credit for the good deeds and achievements of others.

The Adult Division had 16 members in 1987, having been as high as 22 at one stage. Sporting bodies and social clubs were generous in their support and the Division was able to purchase training aids for their public First Aid courses. These included two resuscitation Annies, a resuscitation baby, a full size skeleton, and models of the heart, eye, brain, lungs and a full size Anatomic Torso. There was also a full sized model of the spinal column with pelvis, many wall charts, publications and an overhead projector. They had a collection of First Aid videos and a casualty simulation make-up kit.

Public duties included Motocross, BMX, rugby, Aussie Rules, speedway, hockey, softball, soccer, swimming carnivals and picnics. The Division conducted two public First Aid courses per year and in 1987 approximately thirty Aboriginal Health Workers gained their St John certificates.

> *The relationship with the Nhulunbuy public and the Gove District Hospital is quite pleasing with the assistance from both sections being endless.* [20]

This view was supported at the 1988 Annual Inspections for both Adult and Cadet Divisions when it was reported that the Divisions were well respected in the local community.[21]

The NT First Aid Championships were held at the Casuarina Town Square on Saturday 23rd April 1988 In conjunction with the District Weekend. Teams came from Darwin, Casuarina, Sanderson, Tennant Creek, Nhulunbuy and Alice Springs.

The Nhulunbuy Cadet contingent was led by Superintendent Ray Hargreaves, Team Manager Karen Hubberd and her assistant, Dianne West. The competitors were team leader Natasha West, Tammy Harper and David Heffernan with reserve Jenny Olmos. Jason Moore, hero of the near drowning incident in 1984, was individual competitor.

There were nine teams competing in two scenarios. The first was a construction site with three accident victims and the second scene had a gas bottle explosion with three horrifically injured victims.

Nhulunbuy came in third place after Darwin A and Casuarina A.[22]

The Nhulunbuy Combined Division had a steady membership during 1988 with five males and seven females. Public first aid classes were held, including one for Aboriginal health workers from various outstations. Public duties included Rugby League, Moto Cross, BMX, Australian Rules Football, Speedway, Gove Picnic Weekend and Gove Triathlon.

Commissioner Lionel Crompton and District Superintendent Lesley King conducted the Annual Inspection that included a formal parade, inspection of the books and finished with refreshments.

> *"The Division is fortunate to be able to use the Gove District Hospital for regular training sessions especially in patient care ..."* [23]

The Cadet Division advanced strongly during the year, aided by DSO Richard Holt who visited to conduct training sessions.

The Cadet Division closed in 1990, the date uncertain. Cadet Divisions usually fail because of a lack of adult leaders, not because they run out of willing cadets and this was most likely the case in Nhulunbuy.

The Cadet Division restarted in 1993 and was registered on 13th July under Superintendent Bev Bennion. Commissioner Steve Baddeley, District Superintendent Peter Poole, CSO Cadets Barbara Henderson, Darwin Cadets Superintendent Jenny Kirby, DSO Ed Sinclair and Corps Superintendent Wayne Dillon travelled from Darwin in October 1993 to inspect the Adult and Cadet Divisions. Grant Wiggins and Wayne Dillon were presented with 22-year bars to their Service Medals at the inspection.[24]

Commissioner Baddeley gave a speech about how pleased he was that the Cadet Division had recommenced and presented the Registration Certificate to Bev Bennion. Preliminary First Aid certificates were then presented to nine young Cadets who could now attend First Aid duties.[25]

In August 1993 it was reported that the St John Ambulance Service was planning to send an ambulance officer to Nhulunbuy to run the service after hours and on weekends and whenever the hospital was short staffed. He would also train volunteers to assist with the ambulance service.[26] The reality was that this was to be a complete take-over of the ambulance service as had happened in other Territory centres, not just an out of hours service.

Up until then a four-wheel drive ambulance operated out of the Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department, staffed by an orderly as driver and a nurse for medical expertise.

St John advertised the position and Ambulance Officer Craig Garraway, currently serving in Katherine, applied and got the transfer. Craig was given a bit of an agenda and on arrival at Nhulunbuy was picked up at the airport in an ambulance and driven to a completely empty house at No. 4 Beagle Circuit. There was nothing in it and he was told to go and find some furniture and that this would be his new home, office and ambulance centre. With that sort of reception it would appear that he wasn't exactly welcome in town, which he found out to be the case.

> *"When I actually went to Gove it was made quite clear to me that the Operations Branch, or the volunteers, wanted nothing to do with me. History had shown that in the past when these sort of things were thought about, that it was all dropped back onto the volunteers, and they were left with the pieces. So they were very anti me coming across there and having anything to do with the community ... the first month was very fiery. I went to a couple of meetings there and it was made quite clear to me what they thought of me being there."* [27]

The St John Ambulance NT *1993-1994 Annual Report* stated that St John took over responsibility for the Nhulunbuy Ambulance Service in November 1993. All the initial antagonism had been resolved by the time of the report's publication: *"From all accounts, our additional presence in Nhulunbuy has been welcomed by residents, Operations Branch members and St John employees."*

The official date of the ambulance hand-over was 8th November 1993, ending the previously free

service and bringing Nhulunbuy into line with all other major Territory centres.

Craig's first couple of weeks were spent furnishing the house, setting things up and making contacts in town. The next phase was to advertise for *'Casualty Care Officers'* as ambulance drivers. Although unpaid volunteers they were completely separate to the Operations Branch.

Craig spent a lot of time making friendships in town and explaining that he wasn't here to ruin their system, but to improve things. This was a long term venture that would not fall over in six months with the local St John volunteers being left to pick up the pieces. The local volunteers were already heavily committed with public first aid duties around town and just didn't want the extra work of running an ambulance service if this did fail.

The Casualty Care volunteers were set up and the Operations Branch members were left to continue their first aid duties without taking on any extra work with the new ambulance service. Over time, Craig set up training opportunities for his Casualty Care volunteers and a lot of them took up ambulance studies and joined the Ambulance Service.

Craig gradually won the Operations Branch members over and after six or seven months they came across wanting to get involved with the new service.

Another ambulance officer, Julie Severin, was sent over on three months tenure once the system was up and running. Craig had been given a free hand in setting up the service, so they worked on an on-call system.

They started with the one ambulance, which was the same one that had picked Craig up at the airport. The hospital's ambulance was purchased as a spare vehicle and brought up to St John's standard. This now gave two ambulances based at the house. It was a three-bedroom house with one bedroom each for the ambulance officers and the other for their office. The lounge room was the training centre.

Communications were through Darwin. Triple zero calls went to Darwin and were relayed back by either mobile phone, landline or by radio.

Being on call all the time meant taking the ambulance everywhere, even to the golf course. "... *we were able to park the ambulance in the middle of the golf course and actually play golf around the ambulance ...*" [28]

After twelve months, Craig Garraway returned to Katherine, satisfied that he had achieved all his goals and there was now a working St John Ambulance service in Nhulunbuy.

St John held discussions with Nabalco and the Nhulunbuy Corporation in 1994 about acquiring a long-term lease over a parcel of land suitable for developing a joint operational and residential facility.[29]

Both the Adult and Cadet Divisions were in crisis in 1996. The Adults had just four members on their books with another two on leave of absence. The last four recruits had become Casualty Care Officers and were not interested in attending Divisional meetings. Grant Wiggins was still around, but the Division was now being run by Divisional Officer Jeff Baker.[30]

The Cadet Division was in danger of closing as the OIC wasn't keen to continue in the role. The interim plan was to amalgamate with the adults, which would require alternative arrangements for larger meeting rooms. There was also a complaint that Cadet proficiency badges weren't being received.[31]

Grant Wiggins was due to return to Tasmania in June and an engraved silver tray and St John cuff links were sent from Darwin and presented by Jeff Baker prior to Grant's departure.

The state of the Division's books was reported to be very bad and all paperwork was forwarded to the District Treasurer for audit prior to Jeff Baker taking over as OAC.

The OIC resigned from the Cadet Division at this time and there was now a need for somebody, who didn't need to be a first aider, to run the Division.[32]

The Divisional crisis deepened in July and it was proposed that the Commissioner discuss with Human Resource Manager David Baker and

Business Manager Ross Coburn, *"the main aspect based on CCO officers joining Ops Branch, without having to meet efficiency requirements of Ops Branch so that [the] Division does not cease to exist".*[33]

Jeff Baker recruited two new members in August and the Division carried on meeting once per month in combined training with the CCOs.[34]

Jason Moore took over the cadets in October, with four turning up on a regular basis, but there were still problems. At the Annual Inspections only two cadets were on parade and Jason advised that he was transferring to another job in Western Australia.[35]

Dawn Bat visited Nhulunbuy in July 1998 to farewell Jeff Baker. While there she noticed a lack of members available for public duties and that the CCOs were only interested in ambulance work, which was their core role, anyway. Superintendent Julie Roggio relinquished her position and people found it difficult to cope with all the paperwork.[36]

Simon Bialek agreed to take over the role of Superintendent, but needed help in the job. Operations Manager Trevor Sellick was going to Nhulunbuy in November and would assist, as would Peter Poole who was also travelling there with his job.[37]

Howard Smith was the next Superintendent in April 1999. The Division picked up under Howard's leadership and in August they had nineteen members busily attending public duties and a fund raiser was started for members attending the Sydney Olympics.[38] Howard Smith and Carol Worbs were selected as members of the Northern Territory contingent for the Games.

The Division had 29 members at the end of 2001, with five having been recruited during the year. There were no cadets, although René Baker and Carmen Haig were working towards restarting a Cadet Division. It was hoped that the Cadets would be up and running in early 2002, but there were problems in finding a suitable venue for meetings and training.

The majority of public duties in 2001 were at local sporting and cultural events, notably the speedway, the Northern Territory BMX titles and the week-long Garma Festival organised by the Yothu Yindi foundation. Volunteer members also assisted the Ambulance Service with many hours spent on road duties during the year.[39]

A small Section of the Division started in 2001 at the nearby Aboriginal Community of Yirrkala. The purpose of the Section was to promote the activities of St John and provide an emergency first aid station with the opportunity for community members to develop first aid skills.[40]

The Yirrkala-Dhanbul Council provided a small rent free room for the Section which was to be made available for St John members attending public duties at the Yirrkala Oval and also for after hours treatments when the Health Clinic was closed. Non urgent cases were currently being treated by Howard Smith from his home in Yirrkala.[41]

Howard Smith relinquished the position of Divisional Superintendent in April 2002 and handed over to John Prior, with Howard staying on as Deputy Divisional Superintendent.[42]

Territory Superintendent Steve Peers visited Nhulunbuy in late August 2005 to assist with the changeover when Martin Scaife, OIC of the Ambulance Service, was succeeded by Wayne Bevan. Wayne took charge of the volunteers temporarily[43] until René Baker assumed command as Divisional Superintendent on 22nd September.

The two full-time Paramedics and one part-time Casualty Care Officer were supported by nine volunteers, *"two of whom reside at Yirrkala, but camp at the St John's premises at Gove District Hospital when on duty".* [44]

Wayne and the other Paramedic, Ray Roles, worked on a 48 hour roster with volunteers on call for 12 hour shifts.

Acting Ambulance Service OIC Wayne Goodrem wrote in 2006: [45]

> *"... in the best traditions of St John Ambulance ... the commitment and the dedication to duty that our volunteers show in that small community is nothing short of*

*amazing. Most work full time then manage to help out by working shifts on call as a crew member with a career paramedic during the week and weekends. Being called out at all hours of the day or night. What was particularly refreshing about these amazing people was their attitude towards what they were doing and their willingness to learn. Nothing was too much trouble for them. To be able to call someone up at two o'clock in the morning to say we have an airport [transfer] and receive a cheerful "no worries, see you in a minute" really summed up what these great people are all about."*

On Tuesday 18th April 2006 at 5.08pm AEST a Cyclone Watch was declared in Nhulunbuy for severe tropical Cyclone Monica. Every volunteer in town made themselves available for ambulance duty.

*"I admired the courage of a couple of the volunteers that took first aid supplies and returned to their communities to help if needed with the knowledge of, if things had been bad they would be cut off and on their own for a while."* [46]

Early on 22nd April the cyclone was in the Gulf of Carpentaria and assessed to have attained Category 5 status. The cyclone shelter was opened at 8.00pm, requiring first aid cover. This was provided by volunteer student paramedics Arleen Watson and Troy Pickett, assisted by René Baker and Ruth Haig.

At 8.00am Sunday 23rd the Met Bureau advised that gale force winds were expected at 9.30am and the sirens to take shelter were sounded.

Nhulunbuy was lucky in that Monica missed the town by 30km, although strong winds toppled a few trees and dumped a lot of driving rain. The Cyclone shelter closed at 9.00pm and at 11.00pm the town experienced power outages and strong winds as the tail of the cyclone had a final go at them on its way west.

Monica was predicted to make a direct hit on Darwin, but fortunately crossed the coast 35km west of Maningrida and tracked south to hit Jabiru and Oenpelli as a Category 1 cyclone. Monica then followed the Arnhem Highway to Darwin as a weakening tropical low, much to the relief of the anxious residents.

Cadets started once again in 2007 under the guidance of Paramedic Mandy Paradise and Makaylia Bretag. A notice was published in the *Arnhem Courier* in August 2007 to see how much interest there was in the community. Twelve cadets attended on the first night, 10th September, with another six showing strong interest.[47]

Makaylia had been a Grand Prior Cadet in Palmerston and received many other awards for her service to the community with St John Ambulance. She was now a student paramedic in the Ambulance Service.

Mandy took over training for the volunteers and career Ambulance Officers, *"which has proven to be a big hit all round, with a new direction and renewed sense of enthusiasm"*. [48]

The Nhulunbuy Cadet Division was registered on 11th April 2008. Founding members of this latest incarnation were Mandy Paradise, Superintendent; Makaylia Bretag, Divisional Officer; Reece Ravlich, Divisional Officer; and Cadets Caitlin Lobenwein, Christian Frick, Emma Andrews, Jasmine Pascall, Jayne Drzezdzon, Jonathon McBride, Kaitlin Durbidge, Kasey Baker, Kayla Ashworth, Keely Lobenwein, Ky Baker, Teal Barnes, Tiffany Christison, William Pickett, Rebecca Hill, Emily Lilly, Aubrey Hawthorne, Hazem Jebeili, Fatin Jebeili, Joshua Quick, Jason Spivey, Joshua Case, Mitchell Case, and Mikaela Bridge.

A presentation night, attended by local Member, Syd Sterling MLA, was held on 14th April where sixteen cadets received their Preliminary First Aid certificates. Other special guests were Senior Sergeant Travis Wurst from Nhulunbuy Police, Fire Chief Graham Johnson, Pastor Phill Sampson and his wife Eleanor and about twenty family members. Acting CEO Ross Coburn and Deputy Operations Manager Craig Garraway flew from Darwin for the ceremony.[49]

When Nhulunbuy resident Des O'Sullivan thought it would be a good idea to ride his pushbike

some 700km from Nhulunbuy to Jabiru to raise money for charity the Tour de Arnhemland was born. St John Ambulance was chosen as the beneficiary of all funds raised during the bike ride.

Twenty two riders, sixteen bicycles and six support vehicles left Nhulunbuy in July 2008 hoping to make enough money to purchase a "heartstart machine". Well, the overwhelming support of the Nhulunbuy community resulted in more than $30,000 being raised. This was used to purchase a Pulse Oximeter, Defibrillator, equipment for the St John training centre and a vehicle for St John volunteers to use at public duties in the area.[50]

At the Annual Inspection on 27th July 2009, Commissioner Steve Peers presented a Warrant of Appointment to Mandy Paradise as Superintendent of the Cadet Division and promoted Mark Ferguson to Superintendent of the Adult Division. Mark was also OIC of the Ambulance Service.

Phill Sampson and Kylie Newport were promoted to Sergeant in the Adults and Emily McIntyre to Cadet Corporal.[51]

The Yirrkala Cadet Division was launched on Wednesday 24th February 2010 when eight indigenous students attended their first meeting. Mandy Paradise took charge of this Division in addition to the Nhulunbuy Cadet Division.[52]

Yirrkala is about 20km from Nhulunbuy with a mainly indigenous population. The Cadets held their training sessions at the Yirrkala School each Wednesday afternoon, assisted by teacher Cameron Begg. There were some language difficulties as English is a second language for the Yolngu students, but this was being overcome with help from some of the older cadets.[53]

Deputy Chief Commissioner Kieran Brown *"worked in the Darwin office for several months producing new first aid learning resources for the students. The First Aid Practice Sheets are highly illustrative and will be presented in Yolngu language to further engage the students."*

The sheets were designed to provide fun learning activities and a Trainer Guide was being written to accompany these resources.[54]

When tropical cyclone Paul threatened Nhulunbuy in late March 2010 the St John volunteers were put on standby and stayed that way for four days. Superintendent Mark Ferguson wrote that *"we had all our volunteers able and ready to respond if needed. The support was overwhelming and great to see ... it was great to see a small town like Nhulunbuy show so much commitment. Well done to all the volunteers."* [55]

Paul passed over Nhulunbuy as a tropical low and tracked south, forming into a category 1 cyclone around Cape Shield in the Gulf of Carpentaria. It continued south and then turned west to cross the coast where it was downgraded to a tropical low.

Nhulunbuy Cadets Ky Baker, Kasey Baker and Ashleigh Baker received Young Citizen of the Year Awards at the 2011 Australia Day ceremony in Nhulunbuy.[56]

The volunteers received a donation of a family pack of manikins in February 2011, thanks to the generosity of Rio Tinto. The pack consisted of an adult, child and baby for CPR, and a full body adult to practice defibrillation and another to practice inserting airways.

The seventeen adult volunteers and three full-time paramedics provided a 24/7 service to the Gove Peninsula. There were also fourteen young people in the Cadet Division.[57]

The combined Annual Divisional Inspections were held on Monday 21st March 2011, attended by the NT Administrator Tom Pauling, Mrs Tessa Pauling, Lynne Walker MLA, Town Administrator Dr Ross Theedom, St John CEO Ross Coburn, Deputy Chief Commissioner Kieran Brown, Commissioner Steve Peers and Territory Officers Craig Garraway, Mandy Paradise, Kelly Raven and Dawn Bat.

Mandy Paradise received her Warrant of Appointment as Territory Nursing Officer and Rebecca Dexter was promoted to Superintendent of the Cadet Division. Michael Davy received his Warrant of Appointment as Superintendent of the Adult Division. After many speeches and awards to Adults and Cadets, Mr Pauling awarded certificates to Mandy Paradise and Mark Ferguson from the

Priory in Australia of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, thanking them for their efforts in Nhulunbuy.

As it was the 30th anniversary of St John Ambulance in Nhulunbuy a birthday cake was produced and cut by Mr Pauling and Territory Officer Dawn Bat.[58]

The Tour de Arnhemland was on again in July 2011 with 22 riders traversing the dirt road from Nhulunbuy to Mataranka to raise money for charities in the area. They were unable to get permits to use the 2008 route to Jabiru because that road had been badly damaged the previous wet season and there were cultural issues with the traditional owners.

Support crews included nine cars, a small truck and seven trailers full of water, food, camping gear and bicycle spare parts.[59]

Tour de Arnhemland donated $32,000 to the St John Ambulance Volunteer First Aid Services. Des O'Sullivan, organiser of the ride, was given a plaque in appreciation of his hard work.[60]

Reece and Makaylia Ravlich returned to Nhulunbuy in early 2012. Reece was appointed Superintendent of the Cadet Division and Makaylia as Divisional Officer.

Teresa Holdsworth was appointed Acting Superintendent of the Adult Division in March 2012.

# Chapter 9
# Alyangula

Groote Eylandt sits in the Gulf of Carpentaria off the east coast of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. There are Aboriginal communities at Umbakumba and Angurugu and the township of Alyangula services the GEMCo manganese mine. A lot of people won't work there because of its remoteness – "if the only way in or out is by aeroplane, forget it!" – and many who do are there to make a fast buck and out again. Your author, who made several work related trips to Groote during the 1970s and '80s, was offered a job at Alyangula in 1984 and knocked it back.

In common with many mining towns its fortune swings on the fickleness of international markets and the value of the Aussie dollar and a fall in prices can have a devastating effect on the workforce.

Despite these drawbacks a strong Division was formed there in 1988, but it only managed to survive for three short years before being closed down, seemingly unfairly, by the Darwin based District HQ in 1991.

The first recorded interest in starting a Division at Alyangula was in April 1987 when Training Officer Gordon Bowman reported that Groote Eylandt had people interested in voluntary membership.[1]

However, things moved slowly and it was to be almost a year before anything concrete really happened.

A public meeting was held on Wednesday 2nd March 1988 to determine interest in starting a Division. Nine locals attended the meeting where it was reported that the Eylandt had sixteen people with Advanced First Aid qualifications ready for membership. J. McCrystal and Philip Knott were seen as potential Superintendent and Divisional Officer.[2]

A Division was soon formed with the Registration being signed by the NT District Commissioner on 13th April and sanctioned by the Chief Commissioner on 10th June 1988. Original members were:

Philip Knott, Superintendent; Brian Searston, DO; Michael Shailer, DO; Andrew Brelsford, Edward Ross, David Bird, Richard Goldfinch, Gregory Hinchcliffe, Paul Galyer, Graeme Johnstone, John Plunkett, Awel Knott, Jacqueline Purdon, Susan Gigney, Carol Cutler, Eileen Husband, Linda Piil and Therese Philliskirk.

Dr Robert Norton joined as Divisional Surgeon soon after on 3rd July.

The May 1988 District Staff Meeting minutes report that the District Superintendent, District Treasurer, Corps Superintendent, General Manager and PR Manager were to visit Alyangula from 10th to 13th June to mark the founding of the new Division. The District Treasurer was to arrange a flag for the new Division and to check with the Purchasing Officer on the availability of uniforms.[3]

Eileen Husband wrote in the June 1988 *Outback Ambulance* that the Division had eighteen members, some working as ambulance officers in Mine Rescue and others as Occupational First Aiders on the minesite. The first official function was to be on the 12th June at the annual Regatta Day. They also hoped to be visited that weekend by Commissioner Lionel Crompton, General Manager Don McLeod, District Superintendent Lesley King, Corps Superintendent Charlie Cuff and HR Manager Kezia Purick for an official handing over ceremony.

However, the official foundation ceremony for the Alyangula Combined Division didn't take place until Sunday 16th October. Heavy rain moved the ceremony from the well shaded local park to the local Community Hall.

> *"Once the official ceremony was over, members and guests spent a pleasant afternoon tucking into a cold buffet which the ladies of the Division prepared, the highlight of which had to be the wonderful cake which was decorated for us by local lady, Mrs Ann May. The cake was decorated in red and white, with the St John cross in white.*
>
> *"The job of cutting the cake went to our Divisional Surgeon, Dr Robert Norton, who of*

*course did a very professional job.*

*"We shall all remember the day with great pride, and we wish to say thank you for the encouragement, help and advice we received from our Darwin officials; thanks for sharing our day with us."* [4]

Dr Norton left Groote Eylandt in February 1989 for a well deserved holiday after a two-year stint before taking up a posting on Bathurst Island.

Michael Shailer was promoted to Acting Divisional Superintendent on 19th June 1989, and there followed regular notices in the *Eylandt Echo* newspaper about first aid training courses and meeting nights. Shailer signed the 1988 Annual Report on 24th January 1989 as Divisional Superintendent, so he must have been OIC at the time. His acting rank was rescinded in April 1990 due to failure to complete the Officers Course.

The 1990 Divisional Inspection Report states that the Division was functioning with minimal officer support and only a few active members, even though there were about 26 at the opening of the Division. There were 400 people on the island with St John certificates and St John enjoyed a high reputation in the community. The group was supported by GEMCo with good funding.

*"Though genuine in their commitment the group lacks the structured environment needed to guarantee good training. This Division needs to be assessed in Skills Maintenance to qualify as efficient ... doubt they will finish the programme this year."*

The *Eylandt Echo* ran a story in April 1991 calling for more volunteers. The Division had ten adult members, but needed more. Around this time GEMCo was offering voluntary redundancies, so there must have been a mining downturn that impacted on Division membership.

*"In Alyangula, the St John Ambulance crew can often be seen standing by at Touch Football and Aussie Rules games, swimming carnivals and Picnic Day festivities. In addition the group also provides public demonstrations on Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation techniques when requested."* [5]

In July it was noted that:

*Officer/NCO Correspondence Course – There seemed to be problems with communication between OIC and members at Alyangula and members had not received material forwarded. Research material difficult to locate.*[6]

CSO Wayne Dillon was requested to investigate the matter. Three weeks later: *Alyangula OAC had not yet responded to queries regarding resource material for Officer/NCO Course.*[7]

By September with still no reply to District Staff's correspondence:

*"There has been no further communication with the OAC at Alyangula. A letter was to be forwarded to Alyangula. It was agreed that enquiries should be made as to the closure of the Division."* [8]

The following month:

*Closure of Alyangula Division: A letter had been forwarded advising of this decision and a petition plus letter of protest had been received. A request for statement had been received from the Editor of the local newspaper, "Eylandt Echo" and a statement had been sent.*

*Commissioner agreed that closure was open for reconsideration, but only if the people of Alyangula take positive steps for improvement.* [9]

The statement published in the *Eylandt Echo* announced the closure of the Alyangula Combined Division effective from 30th September 1991.

*The closure of the Division was considered necessary because the number of volunteers required to run the group efficiently had dropped below the minimum of 12.*

*According to the District Commissioner ... Dr Steve Baddeley the decision was made after "prolonged discussion" at the district meeting held in Darwin last month.*[10]

Dr Baddeley advised the St John Council that *"with considerable regret he has taken the decision to close the Alyangula Division due simply and solely to active membership having declined to an almost negligible level"*. Council agreed that in view of the membership level this step was both necessary and appropriate.[11]

Shutting down the Division was expected to have a severe impact on many of the community outdoor activities which had become used to having uniformed St John members on standby during local sporting events. It was proposed to approach the local Mine Rescue Team to take over St John's first aid duties, but that was doubtful due to their six day roster and workload.[12]

This was no defunct, foundering Division that was closed down. Other Divisions had been in far worse straits with membership and survived to bounce back. Meetings minutes of the time make no mention of "prolonged discussion" and there is no record of anyone from St John in Darwin actually travelling to Alyangula to assess the situation first hand. Closing down a Division is a drastic move and to do so by mail is very curious.

The Termination Hold File dated 10/08/93 lists ten members of Alyangula Combined Division terminated with the closure and their activity for the first half of 1991. These statistics to the end of June aren't reproduced here, but do show a still active Division. With closure at the end of September there was no quarterly report, neither were other records returned to Darwin.

With ten members, some more active than others which is typical of all Divisions, they were a lot stronger than many others have been without their being closed, so there must have been a deeper reason than that stated of having less than the required twelve members. Active membership had not fallen to negligible levels as reported to the St John Council and Termination Hold File records bear that out.

The OIC's failure to reply to written "please explain" demands may have annoyed people in Darwin, but that surely shouldn't have been justification to close down the Division without at least an inspecting officer travelling to Groote Eylandt to assess the situation.

The 1990 District Inspection Report for Tennant Creek Adult Division stated: *This Division is apparently non existent for all practical purposes. Despite adequate notice of the event there were no Divisional records available and no officers or members made an appearance on the arranged date and time.*

The report continued with a recommendation that *"unless leadership is forthcoming fairly promptly from this area the Division should be closed"*.

A memorandum from the Superintendent Barkly Region (Clem Larcombe) to Corps Officer, 1st May 1991 states: *At present there is no one in charge of the Tennant Creek Combined Division and it is virtually non existent.*

Despite these damning reports an apparently defunct Tennant Creek Combined Division was allowed to survive to bounce back, while a viable Alyangula Division was shut down.

In September 1991 there was only one active volunteer in Katherine, with four recruits. The other members were Ambulance Service personnel. Another ailing division that was allowed to survive.

In October 1991 before the amalgamation of Darwin, Casuarina and Palmerston Divisions it was noted that Palmerston had only eight members, less that the required number to remain a Division. They were given the option of staying on as a Section (of Darwin Division) and just carrying out public duties or joining the new amalgamated Division. The five members who attended a meeting with the Commissioner chose to amalgamate.[13]

There is no record of Alyangula being given the option of becoming a Section of another Division, say Nhulunbuy, so their having less than 12 members seems more of an excuse to close the Division than a valid reason.

The only thing that these other Divisions had in their favour was that their local ambulance services were run by St John and the Divisions were propped up by paid Ambulance Service officers. Alyangula was a remote mining town without that option.

The St John Ambulance (NT) *2009 Annual Report* mentioned an enquiry about establishing a division and for first aid training on Groote Eylandt. The report also said that *"establishing volunteer divisions in these areas poses some challenges including training appropriate leaders, providing first aid instructors and ongoing support"*.

At the end of 2012 there was still no St John Ambulance presence on Groote Eylandt.



Commissioner Lionel Crompton presents the Certificate of Registration to Alyangula Divisional Superintendent Philip Knott



Jabiru temporary headquarters

# Chapter 10
# Jabiru

The township of Jabiru in Kakadu National Park, approximately 250km east of Darwin, was originally built to service the nearby Ranger Uranium Mine. In the early years it was a community of demountable buildings with accommodation and recreational facilities for the mine workers and construction contractors.

In those early days the only contact that St John Ambulance had with Jabiru was to meet with a Department of Health vehicle to evacuate a patient to hospital in Darwin.

The Jabiru Town Project Joint Venture wrote to St John in April 1979 requesting an ambulance specification. The Company's intention was to provide an ambulance for their needs and then hand it over to St John. They were advised that the Department of Health had the same intention, but there would eventually be a need for two ambulances in Jabiru.[1]

Funding was provided by the NT Department of Health for St John to provide a full time ambulance service and in August 1980, Senior Centre Officer Garry Schoolmeester and Ambulance Officer Casey Hoppe established an ambulance centre from a caravan near the Health Centre. Operations commenced on 11th August with eight jobs carried out in the first week. After that full crews were sent from Darwin on a two weeks rotating roster.

*The crews, besides doing response work, helped out the sisters in the clinic, changing dressings and treating cuts. On one memorable occasion over 75 patients were treated in the same day.*[2]

Staff accommodation consisted of a rented caravan adjacent to a carport in the Jabiru East Caravan Park, close to the Health Centre. Communications were via a telephone extension from the Ranger Uranium Mine switchboard in parallel with the Health Centre. Radio communications were linked to the Ranger Uranium control point at the main gate, the Health Centre and by HF radio via the Outpost Radio network and a St John frequency in Darwin.

The Jabiru Town Development Authority approached St John about hiring an ambulance for the townsite and construction camp. This was in response to industrial action following a number of incidents in the area. Although the current St John ambulance was based just 11km from the town, it was emphasised that the Authority wanted a service dedicated to the construction camp.

The Jabiru Township Development Authority was advised that if they provided accommodation and paid the salary of an ambulance officer until 30th June 1981, then St John could provide this service which would also back up the existing service.

A two bedroom demountable with carport was provided at the Jabiru Township site and an additional paid ambulance officer was appointed. However, the Department of Health was tardy with handing over the ambulance purchased by them to establish the original service. An ambulance had been sent from St John's Darwin fleet, but a second couldn't be spared. [3]

By the end of 1980 construction was at its peak with up to 2,500 people living in Jabiru East. The construction camp's wet canteen did a roaring trade with resulting problems from excessive alcohol consumption.

The Department of Health pulled out of Jabiru in early 1981, leaving St John to run the ambulance service. With many problems in Jabiru, it was intended to consolidate the service into the townsite and leave the mine unattended. The mine had its own ambulance with a first aid attendant to cover the area.[4]

By June 1981 most minesite construction work was completed and the contractors were leaving

town, so it was now time to dismantle the camp and build a proper town and town centre.

The Jabiru Town Development Authority approved $25,000 funding to St John, but that was considered insufficient to cover the cost of the ambulance service. St John Council decided to provide on-site ambulance services whenever possible until a more permanent arrangement could be made.[5]

In early 1982 it was decided to establish a permanent ambulance centre and in March, Wayne Dillon was appointed Centre Officer with Graem Harding as Ambulance Officer. Most of their time was spent conducting first aid classes in town and at the minesite.

Their next step was to start a Division to provide a pool of volunteers for ambulance duties. Wayne had been Superintendent of the Cadets at Howard Springs before being transferred to Jabiru and Graem had been Divisional Ambulance Officer of the Howard Springs adults, so both had a solid background with St John volunteers.

The Registration for Jabiru Combined Division was signed on 10th June 1982 and sanctioned by the Chief Commissioner on 23rd June.

There were thirteen members listed with Wayne Dillon as Divisional Superintendent, Graem Harding as Divisional Ambulance Officer and Sister Joy Miller as Divisional Nursing Officer. All members were male, apart from Sister Miller.

One of the new members was local Doctor, David Atkinson, listed as Private, who was forced to return to Darwin on the 16th August by the Department of Health, being replaced by rotating resident doctors for three to six month periods.[6]

The other founding members were Roley Fletcher, Ronald Cheetham, Roger Bartlett, Kenneth Cartwright, Stewart Hendry, John Monaghan, David Hunn, Paul Thomas and James Dargan.

> *After being press-ganged with the words "How would you like to drive an ambulance with red lights and sirens?" 13 stayed and completed the CCT course.*[7]

There had originally been fifteen names on the Registration form with two crossed out, so it would seem that not all wanted to drive an ambulance with flashing lights and sirens.

However, the euphoria of a new Ambulance Service was short lived when the local newspaper, *Jabiru Rag*, reported that: *"St John's Ambulance is to withdraw its services in the Jabiru area from September 3rd. Both the Health Dept. and Jabiru Town Advisory Committee are to investigate alternatives to St John's, which is receiving an annual subsidy of about $200,000 from the Health Dept and the JTAC, to provide an ambulance service".* [8]

This front page story brought a strong rebuttal from the Jabiru Town Advisory Council in which it stated that it had never at any time granted a subsidy to St John for the ambulance service and therefore never withdrew any subsidy.

The Council had been advised of the matter at a meeting with the Minister for Health, Ian Tuxworth, on Tuesday 3rd August.

The planned withdrawal of the ambulance service brought a strong reaction from the residents with a petition committee formed and a public meeting called. The meeting was cancelled *"until further notice due to prior commitments of Parliamentary members".*[9]

A "Letter to the Rag" complained about *"one of the most deplorable acts taken by a public body against a single community"* when Minister for Health, Ian Tuxworth withdrew *"the paltry $25,000 subsidy to St John Council to operate its necessary service in this District".*

The letter went on to state that *"in a recent letter to residents, the Minister of Stealth (sic) stated that Jabiru residents were only 40 minutes away from specialised Hospital care via the Air Ambulance Service".*

This had been misleading in that a recent case *"from time of illness to hospitalization took 5 hours via the Air Ambulance",* whereas St John could have had him in Darwin Hospital in three and a half hours.

An Air Ambulance would have difficulty responding to a vehicle accident at the South Alligator, requiring St John to despatch an ambulance from Darwin, taking up to three hours. *"A Jabiru based ambulance could be there in 20-30*

*minutes at any time of the day or night."*

A petition was circulating in Jabiru that all residents were urged to sign. The letter finished by giving business and home phone numbers of the local Member, Leader of the Opposition, Minister of Health and Chief Minister.[10]

The following week Chief Minister Paul Everingham hit back with a long telex message to the *Jabiru Rag*. In it he stated that in the year of self government, 1978, St John had received a grant of $0.57M that had escalated to $2.25M in 1981/82 and $3.67M was being asked for in 1982/83.

*"As you can see, St John has not suffered the same financial constraints that are being placed on other areas of Health Care services."*

St John received 65% of its annual budget by direct Government grant, with transport fees accounting for 25% of that amount, the Northern Territory Department of Health paying approximately 85 – 90%. This combination brought Government's contribution to St John almost 85% of its total budget. *"By way of comparison other states contribute 33% towards the budget of their ambulance service, and are not charged for patients transported on their behalf."*

At Jabiru, the Government had provided St John with a new $26,500 ambulance to provide the service. St John received from the Department of Health approximately $1,000 per trip from Jabiru, which would rise to $1,500 per trip on 1st September, three times the cost of hiring an aircraft.

During the past financial year the Health Department had paid $150,000 to transfer patients from Jabiru to Darwin. The Department paid the Ambulance Officers' salaries, bringing the Government contribution to $180,000 per annum. The Government grant covered operational expenditure for the Jabiru Centre, and up until this year the Jabiru Town Development Authority had contributed $25,000 per annum to the service.

It was the cessation of this subsidy that prompted St John to inform Minister Tuxworth that the service would be withdrawn. St John had not discussed this with Mr Tuxworth, the Department of Health, or the Jabiru Town Advisory Council.

The Government's view was that if St John could not operate the service with this level of funding, the Government and Council would need to find an alternative evacuation service.[11]

However, the Jabiru Town Advisory Council advised the previous week that it never at any time granted a subsidy to St John and ergo it never withdrew any subsidy. This is contrary to St John NT Council meeting minutes which report the Jabiru Town Advisory Council had indeed granted a $25,000 subsidy. St John later wrote to Ranger Uranium Mine requesting that they provide the subsidy instead, but this was refused. St John then decided to drop the matter in their best interests due to all the negative publicity.

The telex gave some dramatic figures, but failed to say that at Self Government, St John only had a paid Ambulance Service in the Darwin metropolitan area and since then had taken over the ambulance services in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine, necessitating the rise in funding.

St John heavily subsidised the ambulance service in all centres by using volunteers after hours and on weekends, saving the Government a substantial amount by not having to fund a fully paid service. St John also had 100% volunteer ambulance services in Adelaide River, Batchelor and at Ayers Rock that received no Government funding.

Meanwhile, the petition strengthened to nearly 1,000 signatures out of an adult population of 1,100 which was enough for everybody to see sense and St John to stay in Jabiru. Graem Harding went back to Darwin, leaving Wayne Dillon, the ambulance and his volunteers to continue the service.

> *"A regular Officer from Darwin will relieve Wayne on alternate weekends until the volunteers have sufficient experience to take over the after hours workload."* [13]

The demountable Centre was removed and the Ambulance Service and Brigade volunteers were allocated two rooms and amenities in the new Hospital complex.

The St John Ambulance, September 1982 Ambulance Report stated that Jabiru now operated solely with one officer and a volunteer. A relieving officer would be sent every second week to relieve Wayne Dillon at weekends. The flat at Jabiru had been retained to house the relieving officer and volunteers on a sleep shift.

The new premises at the Hospital consisting of two rooms and amenities were more than adequate for St John's purposes with training and operations being able to be carried out successfully in the new area. This was segregated from the hospital by exterior locks, thus maintaining hospital security after hours.

There were currently thirteen volunteers midway through CCT and several were being used as restricted drivers.[14]

Problems with the volunteers occurred in May 1983 when it was reported that Ranger Uranium Mine was paying St John trained personnel $10 per hour for *"manning of the mine site after hours"*. This was having a detrimental effect on volunteer numbers available to St John.[15] A meeting was held with Ranger management and an agreement reached to limit the number of St John volunteers used on the mine site to two or three. [16]

The Ambulance Service and volunteers settled in to the stage where they were ready to start a Cadet Division and in March 1983 the cadets started under Roley Fletcher, an experienced member who had been with St John in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia before coming to the Territory. The Jabiru Combined Cadet Division was registered on 5th September 1983 under Superintendent Ron Cheetham.

Wayne Dillon transferred to Tennant Creek as Senior Centre Officer in October 1983 and was replaced in Jabiru by Kym Eden, who also took charge of the Cadet Division as OIC on 18th October.

Shirley Ball became OIC of the Adult Division a month before Wayne left and was promoted to Divisional Superintendent on 30th October 1984.

Commissioner Lionel Crompton reported to the St John Council in September 1985 that: *"Jabiru remains strong and should be able to handle the work load in this area if the Service has to withdraw"*. [17]

In July 1986, DAO Rod Bramley (also Chief Superintendent of the Ambulance Service in Darwin) advised District Staff that: *"due to the declining workload in the Jabiru area it has been decided to hand over responsibility of ambulance services at Jabiru to the Health Dept."* [18]

The full time Ambulance Officer was to be withdrawn on 1st September. The very low case load meant that the paid and volunteer officers could not maintain their skills on the road and this was the prime reason for closing the centre.

Corps Superintendent North Eastern Corps, Steve Peers visited Jabiru to discuss the situation and *"was advised that the division could not cope with manning of the ambulance for any longer than three weeks"*. [19]

The *Jabiru Rag* reported on its front page on 3rd July that St John had been forced to reconsider the service in Jabiru because of the high cost ($50,000 p.a.) for a minimal case-load averaging 1.3 jobs per week. The Minister for Health, Mr Tom Harris, was reviewing sponsorship of St John Ambulance services and had asked for rationalisation in some areas. Jabiru was a very expensive service to run and the ambulance officers were not getting sufficient work to maintain their skills. After the service was taken over by the Department of Health using volunteer drivers the weekly statistics were published in the *Jabiru Rag*. Many calls were airport transfers and some weeks there were no calls at all.

St John Operations Superintendent, Garry Schoolmeester, assured the Town Council that although Ambulance Officer Kym Eden was being withdrawn that week, the Service would continue with officers rostered on relief from Darwin, or with trained volunteers until the Health Department took over the ambulance service.[20]

The St John Council was informed in August that a meeting had been held in Jabiru with the Department of Health, Town Council officials, Rod Bramley, Dr Crompton and several volunteers regarding the transfer of the Ambulance Service to

the Department of Health. The meeting's outcome wasn't stated in the St John Council minutes, only that: *"It was agreed that the matter should be left in abeyance until further developments".*

A telex was sent to the Regional Director, Department of Health, confirming the temporary handover of the ambulance on 1st September, the withdrawal of the temporary Ambulance Officer and return of accommodation to the Housing Commission.[21]

The *Jabiru Rag* published a notice from the Town Council that bemoaned the loss of the St John Ambulance service. There were not enough volunteers to man the ambulance that had been left in the town and the Council was asking for at least thirty volunteers to join the St John Ambulance Brigade. This would mean a commitment of about three hours training once per week and then to go on the roster. Anyone unsure of their ability to cope in an emergency could join as just a driver and learn to use the equipment. Nobody was going to be thrown off the deep end as there would always be an experienced person in attendance.

> *"We need a local Ambulance Service and if no-one else will help us, we have to help ourselves."* [22]

The following week the *Jabiru Rag* reported that the town was now without regular ambulance coverage and that St John had packed up and gone, leaving a Division with just five or six local members to carry on.

Minister for Health, Tom Harris, advised the Jabiru Town Council that a converted Toyota Troop Carrier would be supplied as an emergency ambulance for the community.

The front page of the *Jabiru Rag* also had an advertisement for volunteers to join the St John Ambulance Brigade. *"... it seems certain that under-supply of volunteers now will hasten the burn-out of existing volunteers."* [23]

The situation continued to dominate the front page of the *Jabiru Rag* and on 25th September there was a very bold headline, **"DRIVERS WANTED".**

The story stated that although the local Brigade was now in recess, the Health Department had arranged a roster of trained personnel to handle local emergencies. They needed about thirty volunteers on roster to drive the Troop Carrier Ambulance. Drivers would only be required to drive the vehicle, nothing more. The job would be purely non-medical.[24]

There was an overwhelming response to this plea for help.

The Jabiru Health Service suffered another blow when it was announced that as from 13th November 1986 there would only be one duty Sister available each day for call-outs from the Health Centre. This meant that if the Sister was out on a call in the ambulance, now named "Harry", there would be nobody in the Health Centre.

Of concern was the fact that the ambulance was not fitted with a 2-way radio, meaning that it had no communications once it was away from the Health Centre.[25]

St John sent an ambulance officer back to Jabiru for the month of January 1987, but only on an interim basis until the Health Department employed an orderly for the Health Centre. Further: *"Council is now concerned that if the Nursing Staff have refused to attend calls in 'Harry' then the new orderly will not be of any value unless a trained paramedic."* [26]

It would be most unusual to find a trained paramedic working in a regional health centre as an orderly. One should wonder at the person's background and actual qualifications.

Duty rosters for drivers were published every week in the *Jabiru Rag*, together with numbers of callouts. At first there were so many rostered on that they doubled up, possibly as trainees; this reduced to one per shift by March.

With only three interested members the Jabiru Combined Division finally closed, possibly April 1987, although the date is unsure. It's not known when the Cadet Division closed. Cadets just don't get the same amount of news coverage as adults.

# PERSONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This section contains the personal experiences of St John Ambulance volunteers in the Northern Territory. They contain a wealth of information not found in other written records and add greatly to this history.

**Marian Grayden** tells of her experiences as a volunteer in Darwin from 1967 through the remainder of the 20th Century.

**Frank Dunstan** tells of the trials and triumphs of producing a weekly volunteer newsletter.

**Joy Burgess** relates an amusing incident following the official opening of the Casuarina Headquarters.

**Peter Poole** tells of his experiences as a volunteer Ambulance Officer in Tennant Creek in 1979-1980.

**Pat King** tells the story of the Cadet Band's first ten years.

**Alan Caust** relates how he came to Darwin in 1978 as a paid Ambulance Officer and volunteer.

**Barbara Klessa** describes how the Litchfield Rural Division began.

# Marian Grayden

Memories of Darwin from 1967 to the present

**NT history snippets**

- ◊ The NT came into being when explorer John McDouall Stuart crossed the continent from south to north in the 1861-1862 expedition.
- ◊ Britain put the Territory under care and government of South Australia in 1863.
- ◊ As a result of Stuart's efforts the overland telegraph line was laid in 1872. This linked Australia via Darwin to England and the rest of the world. Commemoration plaque is on the Esplanade.
- ◊ The capital of NT is Darwin, but this was originally called Palmerston.
- ◊ Setback to growth of the NT, in particular Darwin, included:
  - * cyclones in the 1800s
  - * the bombing of Darwin (World War II) beginning in February 1942
  - * cyclone Tracy in 1974
  - * floods in 1998 affecting Katherine

**St John Ambulance Association and Brigade**

St John activities commenced in the mid 1950s, a division in Darwin and FA course lectures were approved by and managed overall by St John in Adelaide. Alice Springs also attempted to get a division going, but things didn't stabilise properly until the 1960s saw progress. Mr Bannerman initiated enquiries. Mr Bradbury was Darwin Division's first Superintendent

**Spread/growth of the divisions:**

Within a few years divisions (some with a shaky start), appeared throughout the NT. Adelaide River, Batchelor, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Nhulunbuy and several in Darwin area as population grew, built up areas spread and mines opened.

**Terminology**

- ◊ Association was responsible for texts and training. Now named Training Branch.
- ◊ Brigade referred to FA trained, uniformed members, covering FA venues, now known as Operations Branch.
- ◊ District – each State or Territory was known by this term but later changed to just State or Territory.
- ◊ Community Branch – a variety of topics may be covered, an example is assisting school children with reading difficulties.
- ◊ Service personnel – refers to paid ambulance officers.

**General Information Relating to Darwin and Top End**

Seasons in the NT consist of simply the wet and the dry, the dry being from 1st May until 1st October with only a rare shower sometimes in July/August. Average temperature is 17-18° at night to 29-30° by day. Humidity is very low during the dry, so for NT cold nights. Alice Springs is always colder. [1]

The Wet – the remaining months have average temperature of 25-35°, heavy rains and storms, monsoonal activity and high humidity. This of course may bring about flooding, cut roads and unfortunately the risk of cyclones. Goods being delivered by road occasionally get held up by a flooded road, and delays and shortage of various supplies are not unusual. "It's on the truck" or "Ghan" was a frequent expression.

Transport to and from southern cities to the NT was primarily by air – time consuming and costly, or by road – taking several days, needing suitable vehicles and adequate preparation.

Having your own car or means of transport within towns was an advantage as public bus

[1] These figures apply only to Darwin, Palmerston and suburbs. The Northern Territory covers a large area that extends across different climate zones. Even the rural area adjacent Darwin has much colder dry season nights and hotter wet season days than Darwin.

Seasons in the Territory are much more than just the wet and dry. The indigenous people of Kakadu have seven seasons, but the Balanda (white man) generally has four in the Top End that include the build-up to the wet and the season of knock-'em-down storms that herald the coming of the dry season. ***FD***

services were very limited. Taxis were available. Although sea access was available, it was not widely used. Train was basically freight, Darwin to Larrimah.

**Medical services**

- ◊ Darwin: Hospital – ground level star shaped layout wards with no air-conditioning. A brick stories section was built in the late 60s/70s
- ◊ Aerial medical services: taking patients to and from outlying areas
- ◊ Ambulances – hospital based, defence owned, mine operated
- ◊ Leprosy/TB still being controlled – a Leprosarium was at East Arm
- ◊ Annual chest X-rays required in a lot of employment areas – A mobile X-Ray unit parked routinely in various town locations allowing people to 'drop in'.

**Growth/Buildings**

- ◊ Houses, hotels, shopping complexes, schools in Darwin and main centres down the track to Alice Springs
- ◊ Mining – Iron ore/bauxite/uranium/copper/ gold in many sites throughout the NT.
- ◊ Houses mainly on stilts for coolness, hardly anyone with air-conditioning
- ◊ Aboriginal camps – several existed in close proximity to town, the main settlement was Bagot. These people were St John's constant customers with everything from chest conditions, wounds obtained in fights, injuries received by crossing roads, especially at night, and childbirth, to a band-aid needed with a mug of tea!
- ◊ The Stuart Highway – spanning 2834 Km - is still known as "The Track", a two lane highway from Darwin in the north to Port Augusta in the south. People in Alice Springs call the section of the Highway to Port Augusta the "South Road".
- ◊ Two years work tenure applied to many jobs due to remote area/tropical conditions.
- ◊ 50s – 60s no TVs or mobiles. Two way radio for vehicles not available till late 60s – early 70s.
- ◊ Recreation: fishing especially for barramundi very popular and still is. Sport regardless of weather – many varieties e.g. AFL, basketball, softball, tennis, squash, horse racing, speedway, polocrosse, bush trips, camping. Annual events: rodeos/show/ later beer can regatta.
- ◊ Cinemas – Parap and Star in town – Wednesday was western night – large Aboriginal audiences. Both with approx. 1/3 rows in front of screen open to sky, rest covered. Later the Drive-In at Nightcliff came to be and was well supported.
- ◊ Own activities organised and creative by families, workplaces and clubs.

As this narrative involves background for St John in Darwin the following should get a mention:

- ◊ The quick high rise and fall of tides – necessity to realise this if involved in getting patients off of boats small or large in the harbour.
- ◊ The abundance of wildlife, interesting and different but some nasty and dangerous. Tiny, such as mosquitoes, to large, like snakes and crocodiles. There are compensations, largely tropical shrubs/plants and beautiful exotic flowers, plus tropical fruit, e.g. mangoes.
- ◊ Sunburn / dehydration / heatstroke can affect anyone.
- ◊ Even the sea has stinging jellyfish.

Police/Emergency Services [then known as Civil Defence] all liaised as necessary.

Public First Aid courses were run by Red Cross and St John – often St John lecturers and examiners helping in Red Cross venues.

**Darwin Division NT 1960s**

All of previous information affected members and St. John in some way, from the way they lived and played to St John control still being with SA. No Corps or District situation existed.

I joined the Division in 1967.

As I saw things then:

- ◊ The division was sometimes referred to as Darwin Combined Division. This was because male and female members were in the same

division. In bygone days a division was either Ambulance Division (males) or Nursing Division (females). Cadets units were the same. Darwin was one of the early combined efforts, the initial reason being not enough of either sex to make up separate divisions and the remote area situation.

- ◊ A block of land in Parap had been obtained on a 99 year lease and a two storey ambulance centre was built. Ground floor was completed and the top floor still to come – this became the site of a divisional exercise with ready made concrete, bricks, and tools to suit. Later painting, laying floor tiles etc. were jobs taken on by divisional members.
- ◊ The members were a mix of government workers, railway employees, defence personnel, hospital staff such as student nurses and orderlies. The majority would be classed as young people.

**Officers and NCOs**

- ◊ Were keen, enthusiastic and led by example. Their drive was very infectious. Superintendent Barrie Fricker and DO Morris Setton were at the helm. All wanted membership to grow, divisions to increase and the NT to become a 'District' (current term 'Territory').
- ◊ Cadet division met each week at the centre, never any shortage of children wanting to join
- ◊ Ambulance service – St John had permission to be the provider of ambulance coverage in the town and local surrounds, each weeknight from 1800 to 0600 hours, all weekends, and public holidays. The hospital ambulance, staffed by orderlies, dealt with weekdays from 0600 to 1800 hours. The service by St John was covered entirely by volunteers! There were no two way radios.
- ◊ Long distances could be involved in ambulance call outs, on occasions a meeting point would be arranged half way and patient transferred either from a private vehicle or mine ambulance. Distance was described as "35 miles down 'down the track', turn left onto dirt road for 5 miles." Patients were always collected and no ambulances lost. Nevertheless, experiences such as getting bogged, and on another occasion a flat tyre have occurred. The situations dealt with quite ably, with Australian language to assist!
- ◊ Social activities – seemed to be part and parcel of belonging to the division, very active, well attended and quite creative.
- ◊ The auxiliary – members, mostly wives, girlfriends of St. John personnel, did a multitude of jobs, helping to make curtains etc. for the new building, getting involved with social events, do fund raising, and found time for a Tupperware party or similar now and again.
- ◊ Keeping fit – this was stressed together with keeping up fluids (water). Many members played a sport or swam anyway. A small group coming from or going to the pool was seen as it was close by the centre or a 10-15 minute basketball game at the rear of the ambulance hall before or after shift at weekends was encouraged.
- ◊ Uniforms – traditional black trousers, white shirt with peaked cap for men. White dresses and white (lady bowler style) hat for women. The Divisional Nursing Officer was the only member with grey epaulettes (changed to black in 1999). Stars/crowns indicated rank of officers and bars professional qualifications – e.g. Red bar = RN, yellow bar = qualified ambulance officer. Bars were worn on black epaulettes. Cadets wore berets. Stockings ('grey mist') for the ladies, and chevrons for NCOs. Dresses and shirts had silver metal buttons, embossed with the St John Emblem.

  Note: a few years later changes occurred – women dressed the same as the men, hats for all were black Akubra style with wide brim.
- ◊ High profile and support for St. John Ambulance Brigade in the NT was held by the Department of Health, headed by Dr Spike Langsford, the Matron and the Darwin community.
- ◊ The latter was demonstrated in many ways e.g. I used taxis quite often to go on duty or get home, being in uniform. I had quite a few free

rides, with "she's right mate, St John do a good job". A box of fresh figs, and on another occasion a large container of mangoes was left at the centre to help ourselves, these grown locally down the track.

- ◊ Clubs such as Lions and Rotary were also supportive.
- ◊ The Northern Territory Administrator was a patron, later changed to Deputy Prior under Governor General's title of Prior.

**General Rules in the Division**

- ◊ Female to be 3rd crew member only on ambulance.
- ◊ Females were not to drive.
- ◊ A midwife to be collected from the hospital for maternity calls.
- ◊ Humidicribs to be collected from the hospital for babies coming into the hospital via Aerial Medical Services.
- ◊ Signing for and return of unused ampoules for Hayward Butt inhalers.
- ◊ Signing for and return of unused morphine and syringes, which was only allowed if RN or doctor present on long distances, usually a weekend venue.
- ◊ IVI were carried, doctor to commence if one present. Crew member could monitor during trip.
- ◊ Personal FA kits were encouraged and checked regularly to ensure they contained up to date basic materials, no grandma's treatment, ointments etc. Some stock replacement was allowed. Kits were a valuable asset in the car, at home or on a bush trip.
- ◊ Appearance was considered important so unwritten rules came into play.
- ◊ Shoe polish was kept on centre, a member shown where it was kept if needed.
- ◊ Suitable colour underwear was necessary under white dresses, and on occasion a reminder was necessary. The men didn't seem to object too much the first time but really didn't approve – 'it wasn't St John' – so in both cases the 'slip' didn't occur a second time by any persons concerned.
- ◊ Keeping long hair tied back, no nail polish, excess jewellery not worn was my 'thing'! Loss, injury to self and patient, plus consideration of hygiene was behind this.
- ◊ Newcomers were made aware of sunscreen, sunglasses and fluid needs. A few cases of sunburn were seen even so.
- ◊ Changes did occur eventually of course with reference to first statements, due to increased knowledge and qualifications, changes in techniques and equipment and not discriminating between male and female. Backup and availability of improved medical services has contributed.
- ◊ Linen collection for centre and vehicles plus washed and reusable crepe bandages had to be obtained from the hospital laundry prior to each 6.00pm shift or during Saturday shift. On return to centre the routine was rolling of bandages and sheets for stretchers to be correctly folded ready for use. Vehicles were cleaned inside and outside if needed at the start of a duty. Definitely no cards, games etc. until rolling, folding etc. completed.
- ◊ Vehicles had to be filled with petrol at local dealers. Later an on-site bowser was installed at the rear of the ambulance centre.

**Training**

- ◊ Basic FA courses were organised regularly as members were not allowed to do duties unless holding a valid certificate.
- ◊ Annual re-exams were maintained for everyone including officers/NCOs.
- ◊ Some members preferred to do public duties only and not be involved with ambulance duties. This was quite acceptable.
- ◊ High level and extended material was part of training for ambulance personnel. These members also had to practice tyre changing and two berth conversion and later converting two berths to four. They had instruction in basic vehicle maintenance. Texts such as CCT and ATN were used, always more covered, as these books were very basic. To help a large folder of information and techniques was kept up and added to. It was left hanging on the main noticeboard for perusal of members.

- RN Mandy Langdon, who had joined the division, prepared a weekly information sheet, outlining one condition e.g. asthma signs and symptoms, basic care and drugs. Both of these methods were appreciated.
- Driving courses were essential and a crew was termed as driver, attendant and 3rd person if a female or other male was available.
- Rescue techniques were also included, using pulleys, knots, abseiling, lashing stretchers and managing a Stokes litter were covered by Emergency Services or Fire Brigade. Annual checks were necessary for everyone. One practical exercise was done with Emergency Services which involved getting patients out of a house on stilts via an upper window. All's well that ends well!
- A much later occasion brought disaster to an instructor – a fractured lower limb on the rocks. We told him he need not have gone that far for realism.
- Guest lecturers – many people gave their time and expertise with topics wide and varied e.g. reptiles. I noted a couple of empty front rows and crowding to see at the back. Me too. I wonder why? Well, the reptiles were alive. Police forensic work with do's and don'ts at a possible crime scene, was very popular. A physiotherapist gave theory and practice of crutches, sticks, wheelchair management, transfers and stairs. Topics such as melioidosis, Ross River fever, and leprosy proved of interest as all related to the Top End. Blood Bank staff explained A&P and transfusion details. When applicable a real patient e.g. recent stroke or colostomy case was brought in – they agreed and liked the chance to contribute, a way of providing knowledge and care for others.
- Cultural aspect of some nationalities and Aborigines were discussed. I did note that although many Greek and Italian people were in the community it was rare for one to join St John. Two young Aboriginal boys were encouraged to join, but the venture was not successful and they eventually left. Perhaps too early to contemplate the cultural blending.
- Home nursing courses were dealt with too. I was able to bring in agar plates from the hospital laboratory so fingers, hair etc. could be put on and the result watched by the individuals. Before and after hand washing proved valuable. For the sake of interest and experience, the Hospital Administrator and Matron gave approval for Home Nursing qualified members to be rostered to one ward one evening a week to assist in basic ward work. This was received well on both sides, and some jobs were left for the St John nurse on a regular basis, as well as opportunities to practice a bandage, take temps and have a go at BP recording so everyone was happy. Many comments regarding their smart appearance and capabilities pleased me too.
- Threefold training night would fit in nicely every now and again. An injury or condition was dealt with by three groups: First aiders, home nursing and ambulance. For example, fractured leg using simple FA techniques, improvisation, or ambulance - perhaps using an air splint, bringing in lifting and loading and pain relief. A home nursing group would deal with the patient on return home, possible POP, on crutches use, and organising the bed. All working in different areas at the same time.
- Individual members lecture – tried and quite successful. Once a month a member was invited to be the evening lecturer. They could choose the topic as long as it was relevant to St John and the division. So many items cropped up from history to route to a certain location – quickest way of course. Many were innovative and I think trying to outdo the usual instructors which they quite often did. I know I've thought to myself 'why didn't I think of that!'
- New equipment or change of techniques – had to be shown, demonstrated and each member qualified in use. This was an ongoing process.
- Exercises were carried out regularly on centre, locally or down 'the track'. I've mentioned one earlier on the incomplete centre building. All would involve members as patients, make-up artists, usually very good and realistic with their bruises, bleeding, fractures etc. On one occasion, all members were with me upstairs,

and officers/NCOs at a meeting downstairs. Suddenly there was a terrific explosion, lights all out and yells from below. At the scene there was smoke everywhere, officers staggering out to the ambulance bay, uniforms blackened and tattered, varying wounds cuts, burns and fractures. Everyone was a very good actor, the whole thing quite realistic. Everything was organised secretly and I must add fire brigade and police had been pre-warned in case neighbours dialled 000. FA and triage came into play, overall a very good result. Some members were quite shaken by the event, assuming it to be real and people they knew involved. There was a lot of cleaning up and great relief when all was over. I had to take the blame for upsetting some people – 'you knew and didn't tell us'.

- ◊ A victim had wandered away from the crash site at another exercise. Vehicles cleared the scene and returned for debriefing, when a private car delivered the man to the centre. Faces became red, ears deafened and curtains singed. The good old Aussie speech was at work. To my knowledge, that never happened again.
- ◊ Being a patient in exercises is not all jam and honey. I volunteered and was lashed to a Furley stretcher ready to be transported across a creek, the nearest small bridge was out of use and of course the accident was on the wrong side for an ambulance pick up. I got over on foot, after a big 'carry on' by me to get me out of this thing! I wasn't very polite I might add. I had been laid on a bed of ants!
- ◊ Long distance instructing. There were always requests for a one only lecture e.g. church group/women's club and often FA courses out of Darwin, Adelaide River and Batchelor approximately 95km – they were the closest and I went on a few occasions and included a home nursing topic. A weekend FA course for miners at Frances Creek iron ore mine was interesting. Leaving Friday evening for prompt Saturday morning start. We were given visitors accommodation, meals in the mess room, and because dessert was yummy, had another lot for supper, so there were perks to these trips
- ◊ First Aid lectures given at the Darwin RAAF Base gave us the privilege of lunch at the Officer's Mess.
- ◊ Another venture tried on one occasion was a home nursing course for Nhulunbuy. Theory and written exam was done with me, via correspondence, practical work supervised by an RN working at the local hospital. It appeared to work.
- ◊ Officer and NCO courses were always provided locally, but by 1986/7 correspondence format was attempted for all NT divisions to standardize study information and to have consistency to give all members the same opportunity. This system was not ideal, but worked reasonably well and was an improvement to previous arrangements. It remained in place for 10 years.
- ◊ Public FA courses were ongoing as certificates were needed for work and families in remote locations felt more secure. So I found myself occasionally getting involved if someone was on leave or just as examiner.
- ◊ St John ambulance cadet divisions grew like mushrooms, so again to help out if they had no divisional nursing officer or the person was away, I covered home nursing lectures and exams, plus an odd topic that may be needed in proficiency courses to obtain their Grand Prior Badge. Another regular course for the cadets was Knowledge of the Order. I didn't mind really as history of St. John was interesting for me (I already included some in the officers course). It was different from FA and home nursing and proved challenging to make it interesting. Later a trip overseas allowed me to visit Clerkenwell in London, and I was able to add to my historical knowledge.
- ◊ Divisional Meeting Nights: the basic format was parade, fall-in in three ranks, roll call, fill duty rosters and onto the relevant training session. A half-time coffee break and onto part two of the training session. If any official event was imminent, such as annual divisional inspection or visiting dignitary, attention, turns, salute etc. would be polished up, but

never a great hassle. Having defence force members involved helped, rest kept pace. Divisional members always made an effort and presented well. This showed more so at annual parades, and when flanking the ANZAC parade as happened on a few occasions. It was members like me that had to concentrate on what they were doing! A standby crew was always organised for each shift including night shift. Occasionally before the start of the night I'd have a 10 minute women's get together – gave them a chance to air grievances, suggestions etc., some of which concerned the male members, usually we could sort things out amicably. It was often referred to as 'women's business.' Sometimes getting together away from centre was arranged, more of a social do. Demonstration of syrup dumplings or a line dance was done, the music 'Baby Elephant Walk' became well known, coffee, gossip then home. Each get together was a different topic.

◊ At the end of meeting nights, several people lived in the same direction, which passed a small coffee shop, so if time allowed a stop-over for cheese-cake and coffee.

◊ Fundraising – most members and auxiliary helped to raise money, which was put towards new ambulances, equipment, training aids etc. Everything and anything given a go, from raffles, collecting in the pubs to our lottery and pole sit. The pub visits brought on an argument as to whether we were St John people or Salvation Army. All was clearly marked and we were in uniform. For some 'under the weather' customers we agreed to whatever they decided, declined many 'offers', had a lot of laughs and still ended up with good results.

The annual lottery was very successful and ran for a few years. People got to know about it and would call into the centre to see if tickets were on sale yet. Others got theirs at the NT Show FA room. It was drawn at the Show.

The 'pole sit' in the town park over a weekend with a local radio DJ helping raised enough money to purchase our first four berth ambulance. People were going in to see the fellow up the pole.

◊ Divisional scrapbook was started by a couple of members, helped along by Terry Dahlenburg, who was employed by the local newspaper. Photos, articles, newspaper clippings etc. were collected.

**Public duties**

These were many and varied, school fetes, all variety of sports, horse races, speedway, annual events like the Darwin Show held over three days and Adelaide River races, a weekend event. Some were more popular than others, but fairness came into play, taking turns, or an old hand taking a newer member.

When permission was given for two members to work in the hospital casualty department one evening per week, it was decided other public duty requests had to be filled first and there were no great grizzles about that. Basketball for a long time had a regular first aider – (Walter) Wally Wycisk (hospital orderly) - and he was referred to as their St. John man.

As with all duties, situations change. Sometimes there were no jobs yet next minute something unusual or serious. Speedway and horse racing always had an ambulance crew present as well. Lemon meringue pie or similar for coffee break at the speedway, taken by one member Isobel Burton, who was a great cook, always saw offers to cover that event. At the end of one season there was a St John race, drivers handing over their cars to a member, of course great enthusiasm for this, one car did turn over but no one was hurt.

I took a turn at most duties as it helped when specific venues or duties cropped up in discussion. I had a better idea of what they were talking about and felt more able to contribute.

The 'walkabout' as it was called started at dawn 15 miles down the track and entrants walked back into town, ending at the Esplanade. A few St John men would enter as a team, picked out as they wore their uniform caps. An ambulance cruised up and down just in case. When passing our boys, great acting occurred, suggesting pick up and drop off at the finish line. No such luck, a friendly wave only. At the completion it was a case of treating

dehydration, collapses and blistered feet. I always found it very cold and windy being the dry season. I guess it was only 17 or 18, but nevertheless I was pleased to see the sun come up and 10.00am or even later come around when last stragglers turned up.

Adelaide River races often produced outlandish things. We slept at the local policeman's house, camped in the garden, the girls in the area nurse's clinic room. Ellen Pitts was a St John member then. An invite to sit in the members stand to watch a race sounded great, but I couldn't see anything. However, sure enough, a tiered arrangement of wooden benches, covered on three sides and a roof of corrugated iron was there. At least you were out of the sun and had a place to sit!

Other incidents that occurred e.g. a 'willy willy'. All over in seconds, frightened people only, but damaged cars. This was something I had heard of but never seen. Another time there was a request for antibiotics for "'Charlie', who wasn't at all well. The people were quite upset when we said we didn't carry them, so we offered to see 'Charlie' – maybe we could help in some way. That made them happy but – a big BUT – Charlie turned out to be a prized pig!

Dinner and joining in the dancing at the local inn finished things off for us. The children's last event of the day was 'catch the greasy pig'. The policeman looked after it overnight, saw it well greased and released it and boy could it run!

Accommodation on one occasion was in disused railway workers huts, the bonus here was large numbers of rosellas (*Hibiscus sabdariffa L.*) growing wild so after a long busy weekend, we picked fruit. As you might guess, rosella tart and rosella jam was available a few days later.

Mishap on one trip back home. Sunday evening hymn singing on the radio, Superintendent Bill Keelan, driving and singing Onward Christian Soldiers at top note, when three large kangaroos bounded across the road in front of us and it was impossible to miss them. There was a terrible thud on the bonnet, and the sound of broken glass. The animals disappeared into the bush. We stopped to check the vehicle – dents and broken headlights resulted. After his loud JC and hitch of his trousers, a habit the superintendent was well known for, he got back in and continued hymn singing, and we were under way again. I was glad it wasn't the windscreen. I wondered if our appeal to JC beforehand would have helped. The kangaroos must have been wallabies. I don't think there are kangaroos in this part of the Top End, the wallabies just grow a little each time this tale is told.

Darwin Show duties always produced odd incidents. The normal divisional meeting night, prior to opening of the show was always 'come in old clothes and clean up the FA area at the show ground'. I did note there was always a few 'can't make it' messages, nevertheless it was good fun, with everything clean, stocked and ready to go. An ambulance crew slept there that night, a safety precaution, plus on hand FA available for the showground workers and stall holders.

Many may remember the first customer, a show organiser, always early on opening morning, had a Radox foot bath and left to have an hour's sleep before the public were allowed in. Then the usual array of cuts, dehydration, sickness often after hot dogs, Pluto pups, steak sandwiches and fairy floss, aided by Ferris wheel rides or similar, turned up for assistance.

The boxing tent with several 'boxers' standing on a raised platform, with the organiser beating a drum to attract attention seemed to go on forever. Young fellows eager to show their skills could do a round or three with their choice of boxer. As would be expected, many needed FA of some sort.

A sideshow attraction that caused us a few problems was a man sticking sharp objects into his arms and legs or giant safety pins through chest skin etc., all done with lighting and showmanship flourish. His spiel included 'I've got first aiders and paramedics on hand if you feel faint'. This wasn't organised by any means, it's just that inquisitive St John members went into the tent. The problem was a few bods felt squeamish and turned white as sheets, therefore returned to the FA centre to sit down for half an hour to recuperate. They were teased by others, bludging on the job, they said. Everyone laughed over the situation later. I did go to see what was being done. Quickness and sleight of hand and sometimes artificial blood was the

answer. Nevertheless, the tent always seemed to be crowded

A group effort by a cadet division was on display in the gardening section one year. They had spent weeks beforehand on the seeds and plants. No prizes were won but the cadets were pleased with themselves and everyone had to go and look.

I have to be honest, apart from enjoying the duty, I was able to have a toffee apple, check on my craft entries, which I did every year and had free entry!

*Quirky titbit:* Johnny Cash recorded 'Ring of Fire', and the record was brought in by a member and played for everyone's enjoyment. At this point, liked by most people. The number of times it was played over the ensuing weeks was not liked. The record disappeared, but no one had touched or seen it. The grouching and grizzling went on for at least a week, when it was decided Johnny Cash was better to listen to than the grizzles. The record reappeared, but wasn't played as often.

Open first aid competitions were held in the old Darwin Town Hall on Mitchell Street, and proved to be of interest. Railway, RAAF, Police, Defence, Red Cross were all entered. The Police team won on one occasion, but I must add that their coach was a St. John member!

Open ambulance competitions were held. This allowed entrants from any site running an ambulance. A crew of two and they could use their own vehicle. The first time RAAF won the Bromwich Cup, a trophy donated by Mr Alan Bromwich, a Darwin Hospital surgeon with St John connections. SAD FACES AT ST. JOHN.

The next year glee and celebration – St. John won it. The two crewmen were volunteers Rod Bramley and Phil Langdon.

The 70s saw a female team enter the National First Aid competitions for the first time. The system then was female teams one year, male the next. Then it changed to mixed entrants and later officers could be on the teams. There were also individual events. Our girls Doreen Kerr and Shirley Woods didn't win, but gained experience. They were given a medallion as a piece of NT history for being first entrants. Over the years both adult and cadet competitions have continued to run.

THE NT ACHIEVED BOTH AN ADULT AND CADET NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP TO PUT IN THE RECORD BOOKS.

International Competitions: A cadet team went to New Zealand and in 1984 the NT adult team (K Hanna, R Oxford, S Wilson) had the honour of representing Australia in competitions held in Singapore. All competitions mean many extra hours put in by members and their trainers. Costs and fundraising have had to be considered.

Mixed state/Territory team saw Andrew Hebron involved as NT representative in the Australian Team, Singapore, 1995.

**Radio and 2-way Communication**

Erection of a radio tower and installation of radio at the Parap centre gave added interest and a boost to the division. This brought with it the need for instruction in radio usage in the vehicles, and 'watchroom' procedures. Another duty had become available, which I did many times. Initially distance of reception was limited, but much better than none.

Visitors to the Division included southern St John people in Darwin on holiday. Alice Springs colleagues, a very occasional person from St John administration in Adelaide, the local Mayor and the NT Administrator as divisions expanded. Later separation from SA saw Priory representatives visit and there have been dignitaries from Clerkenwell, UK headquarters, also Governors General.

**The ambulance centre as social hub**

Regular crew did the sleep-on shift – Ray Edwards, Gerry Goodhand and Wally ?, with a standby crew organised. A couple took interest and usually looked after the front lawn area. Every shift, other than meeting night, had people call in for coffee, a chat or stay to play board games or cards, or study for their own occupation.

Helping each other was just accepted – babysitting, house renovations, a casserole turning up if someone was sick were but a few situations.

An unknown expertise showed up many times. Darwin St John people are expert at grass planting. I wonder if Canberra knows? Anyone with a new garden to fix had ready-made St John grass edge cutters 'with the roots on' taken from one person's house and then transplanted into another's barren patch, or picking up a load of topsoil, and going on to spread it. Hot, tiring and backbreaking, but there was usually drinks or sausage sizzles on completion. Later it was potting, taking cuttings and watering.

A mini fete was held complete with coconut shy, plenty of home cooking and plants available.

A Christmas party for members' children was always popular and how else could Santa come but in an ambulance? To answer questions this was so he could rest in the back between Territory stops, and it was too hot for reindeers, or too wet!

Christmas Day duty crews were usually bachelors, so that people with children could be at home. Great for them as many lived in hostels, caravans etc., did their own cooking and liked having company and somewhere to go. There was a bonus Christmas lunch provided gratis by the local Parap Hotel, always plenty for tea the next day. Some of the women would go beforehand, set the table for the crew and show off their decorating skills.

The centre was usually a hive of activity, as most of the others would call in at some stage of the day. Extras such as cake, mince pies, chocolates, drinks (non alcoholic) being brought in by them and some community groups. The visitors also ensured that no food was wasted!

**Other social ventures**

A get together at a person's home was usually a theme such as a Roman night, everyone to come in togas. *Li'l Abner* saw everyone sitting outside on hay bales, some penned farm animals on hand, some dressed as seen in the cartoon strip – arranged by Sgt Sandy.

Progressive dinners, with participants going from house to house, soup at A, entrée at B, main course at C, dessert at D, and finally coffee. It meant only having to prepare one item, and you were free to progress to other venues.

The annual St John Ball, held several times at Government House, was very successful – tickets always sold out. A live band played and the Venue, not seen by locals as a rule, gave it prestige. The Administrator and any official guests he had staying at the time were always present. This was an occasion to wear it, so we saw the introduction of 'monkey jackets' – i.e. Dress Uniform. The officers did scrub up well and looked quite impressive. Other venues were the Darwin Turf Club, and the Darwin Civic Centre after it was completed. Dress dinners occurred later, another occasion for dress uniform.

*Quirky titbit*: we collected a snake bite victim, his mate travelled with him, having told us that he had caught the snake and put it in a sack, so we could see the variety. 'Good idea', we said, 'you can show the doctor and us at the same time when we reach casualty department'. The patient was duly transferred to a couch, doctor present, plus us, the crew. The sack was opened and upended and within seconds the only person in the room was the patient, the rest of us out by the quickest exit. The animal was still alive and quite angry. We hadn't asked – I assumed it was a dead one we were transporting.

Lesson – NEVER ASSUME ANYTHING.

**Community events**

These were usually participated in, members representing St John. I've mentioned the Walkabout, decorating floats for various parades, plus two that come to mind – providing entertainment and party food for pensioners at their meeting venue as a Christmas goodwill effort. The food side of things was no problem, whereas suitable entertainment was a different matter, so the Superintendent tried to drum up enthusiasm. He was asked what, if anything, would be his contribution. Someone suggested he'd make a good 'dying swan', ballet style. On the night, unbeknown to many, appropriate ballet music starts up, and from a side door a tutu-dressed Superintendent Carter appears, does an ungainly dying swan act (or was it the Sugar Plum Fairy?), to loud applause. Definitely no Robert Helpmann, but a good sport. A sing song rounded off the evening.

Not many divisions can say they had a Charity Queen, but the late 60s saw that title going to a Darwin Division member, Myra Vatiliotis (Skinner). An attractive student nurse, with the help of friends, members and the auxiliary, put in a lot of work doing various things and raised the money to gain the title.

Joining in a search party for a person lost in the bush is another occurrence.

**Guinness Book of Records**

An attempt was made by Casuarina Cadet Division to obtain the 'kiss of life' (resuscitation) record for the longest continuous effort, encouraged and supervised by Cadet Superintendent Lena Abbott. It was held at Hibiscus Shopping Centre, attracting many onlookers. They managed to do it, although I'm not sure if it still stands at the time of writing.

**Ceremonial occasions**

These were varied but most held annually:

- ◊ Divisional inspection I've already referred to.
- ◊ Annual parade, where as many divisions as possible or reps from far away centres parade together and usually there is a church service.
- ◊ Housing or laying the Colour was a special occasion. NT was granted a Colour (1988) as a District in its own right, no longer attached SA. This flag is only used at elite events – similar idea to a regiment trooping its colour. A cabinet was made by Ted Wiltshire, a carpenter member, to house the flag. This was done with pomp and ceremony. The Colour is kept at NT St John headquarters.

**The Order of St John**

The Order holds an annual Investiture at Government House. Guests who are previous recipients of an Order Award wear their robes or insignia. These days graduates of ambulance study diplomas receive their certificates at the same time, wearing gown and red stole. It's an important occasion for all.

**Priory meetings**

The national governing body meetings are in a different state/territory, each taking a turn, annually. A chance for Territory officers to meet others, ask questions and raise ideas. The NT has been host on a few occasions.

District meetings in the NT are held monthly. These started after the NT was granted District status.

**Administration**

Everything had to be recorded/logged, such as duty hours for each member, attendance at meetings, petrol consumption, sending appropriate paperwork south for issue of uniforms, certificates etc. while still under SA management. Programmes, notes, notices and accounts still had to be maintained, even when the overall workload was growing, and divisions expanding. Somehow we managed. Training programme and re-exam dates were always put on the board with members endeavouring to be available to maintain their 'efficiency'.

New building features started to appear in Darwin; escalators, high rise buildings incorporating lifts, so having a look at these initially by St John gave a better fuss free entrance if any ambulance was called. Knowing locality of stair exits, and that a stretcher would actually fit into lifts helped. Hard hats had to be worn if going onto building sites.

*Quirky titbits:* A walking patient had to be collected from Mandorah on the far side of Darwin Harbour, and a lengthy road trip was avoided by a police offer to use their launch. It was decided the crew would wait on the wharf, and I'd go in the launch. The trip was fast and rough, rough, rough. Extreme winds and choppy water prevailed. The patient was fine and asking me 'you alright Mrs?' No, I wasn't, feeling extremely nauseated and had a face to match my uniform. We made it to the wharf! Perhaps the crew were wiser than I. I just drew the short straw.

Transferring member from Adelaide brought his trumpet and practised quite often whilst waiting for a call out. We usually managed to close a door on him, being a learner the sound was not good on the ears. But enough was enough, he was

eventually told to stop and get rid of it, and they didn't say put "It in its case!" The technique improved over time and I've heard him play quite often on Anzac day.

**Corps**

The transfer of a southern St John Corps Officer, Kevin Kettle, to Darwin division in the late 60s helped greatly in many ways. He turned a hand to tiling the floor of completed upstairs section of the ambulance centre, and was instrumental in getting a Corps approved and in negotiations to let the NT become a District.

Later he was in discussions re the possibility of full time ambulance coverage, and in 1973 brought about a NT Institute of Ambulance Officers committee, now known as ACAP. All St John members were supportive of this concept. I was a member of this committee for many years, initially on editorial panel when the Institute was starting a national magazine, now titled 'Response', and it's still being printed today. NT's first contributor was Rod Bramley. There were varying grades of membership.

To allow upgrade for long time ambulance officers the opportunity was given for applicants to sit an exam (1976). Two three hour papers were issued at the same time in all territories/states on the same day. At first there were a few wanting to do it, from the Adelaide group of personnel in the division, and locals, which included me.

By the time of the exam day I was the only one left, the others having pulled out. My decision was to go ahead. I'm glad I did, I passed The Big M, we said. The NT was the only area with 100% pass rate. I don't think anyone enlightened other states that only one person sat! I've already written about the NT Institute growth separately, so won't repeat it here. I'm now a life member of ACAP. In 2011 the name changed again, now known as Paramedics Australasia.

**Exercise at Casuarina Square (mid 1974)**

The new shopping complex was functioning, and was quite a drawcard for the Darwin population, so St John made the most of an opportunity to display its abilities, with all the publicity and hopefully, donations, and/or new recruits. Some people always reconsider attending a FA course.

Another realistic, well planned exercise got underway, close to the main entrance of the Casuarina complex. Car wreckers had delivered their load, patients in place, appropriate sound effects started, police present and then St John ambulance siren – all systems go. Crowd collected, acting and covering eyes, some parents took their children away, told them it wasn't good for them to look.

The main local Cadet Superintendent, Grant Keetley, and I gave commentary to the locals watching. Stalwart volunteer crews, like Rob and Peter Brearly, giving up more of their time that weekend.

**Christmas day – Cyclone Tracy**

Much has been written and recorded regarding this event, describing happenings, how people fared, the scenery and the restoration period, yet they never seem to cover adequately how it was. Being present, witnessing the devastation, will never be forgotten. A policeman who lived in the same street helped me crawl out of our wrecked house. Looking back at it I couldn't believe that just over my head was ceiling and roofing material plus broken glass and a garden covered in debris, even a complete kitchen sink and stove from the house next door resting on the far lawn. In the distance I could see the sea – all buildings flattened in between. It seemed unbelievable.

People started to collect in schools, as they had space and some dry rooms. A large room at the high school near me became the first aid room. Materials available for cleaning and dressings were very skimpy to start with, but gradually bits and pieces arrived – some people who had FA kits in their car or at home went back and retrieved them so eventually we had enough basic gear to cope.

Supplies from the nearest chemist shop appeared, legally or illegally I don't know. I didn't ask. Cuts were pulled together fairly successfully with butterflies and covered. The person was advised if stitching was needed and to come back when tetanus injections were to hand.

The worst case was a lady with severe lacerations to her legs from flying corrugated iron. She was carried into the school on her detached kitchen door. Relatives had packed and covered the wounds with tea towels which at that stage looked a gory mess. Nevertheless, it did the job. Repacking stopped further haemorrhaging, and she was taken by ambulance when one finally got to us. How glad I was to see a familiar crew! Remember all roads were covered in debris, which had to be cleared before the vehicles could get anywhere. She was eventually transferred to Adelaide for treatment, with a happy ending.

A couple of days later, the Department of Health provided tetanus material, a queue formed non-stop from daylight to dark for the injections.

Apart from injuries, people with asthma, diabetes etc. started to appear, and these were dealt with in the best way we could, obviously no ready to hand oxygen or insulin. Fortunately a doctor and her family came in for refuge; babies were her department, so it was lovely to refer all baby problems and feeding dilemmas to her.

Sterility was a problem. My supply of Wet Ones and wipes soon ran out and only a trickle of water was available. On the whole very few situations of infection occurred. Some of the wounds that I was able to check on healed up well, only a butterfly or two used.

On a plane going south during January a bald head with butterflies was seen by me. Well and truly healed. I spoke to him and he recognised me. When I said dressings weren't needed anymore he said he was leaving them on to show his relatives his cyclone wounds!

On return a couple of weeks later I saw a devastated bare Darwin, trees just trunks, hardly any limbs and no leaves, very noticeable from the air. I had missed the aerial spraying, but did get a cut foot when I got back to our house remains. Bits of glass seemed to show up even years later. Entry permits were brought in for anyone wanting to come to Darwin, and a reason had to be given.

A police officer was very good, organising people, getting toilets in school grounds, even rounded up kids to get outside in the heavy downpour for a shower (at this point very necessary). He went too in his purple underpants!

Gossip and St. John discussion later seemed to vouch that each school or other collection place had one or more St John members doing their bit. The ambulance centre suffered some damage, movement of gear from downstairs to upstairs was necessary due to flooding. Loss of a vehicle because the radio tower fell on it meant two way radio problems. No problems arose in getting extra crews. The volunteers did a magnificent job, even though all had personal troubles too. St John Divisions down the track helped and responded well for the convoy of vehicles leaving town or with supplies coming into Darwin.

**An Important Decision**

Official permission to conduct full time ambulance services was granted immediately. With no qualms, the volunteers proceeded to do just that.

At the End of December arrangements were made for a small group of 12 South Australian personnel to come to Darwin, led by Peter Gebert, to relieve the Darwin fellows, allowing rest, attention to their own homes and families. The local members felt a degree of resentment about this arrangement as it seemed as though their operation was being taken over. Mr Teerse (Charlie) Stal stayed on as ambulance training officer.

**January 1975**

A block of land in the northern suburbs had already been earmarked for a new ambulance centre, so the cyclone brought forward discussions, planning and placement of demountable buildings on the site as soon as it could be arranged. Hence, ambulances worked from here as well as Parap centre. The Casuarina division was born with the demountables as their home.

Members were clearing and patching their properties, with elevated floors being covered and/ or sealed to become a roof, makeshift walls put around the pillars on stilt type houses, and under the house became living quarters. Quite a few officer meetings or get-togethers were held in these surroundings.

Amusing in a way, occasionally a lone toilet still

in place on what was becoming a roof, not useable of course.

A husband and wife, Gerry and Carol Goodhand, both members, came to our aid to help clear and clean house remains and the block. Another loaned us a car till ours was repaired. That was Grant Keetley, who normally ran a car hire service. All help was gratefully received, the examples mentioned was the way each St John person assisted another.

Following on was the rebuilding process, again a very welcome sight for me. I was holding reinforcing steel rods in between brickwork, whilst concrete was poured. A divisional girl arrived with a casserole and rolls, "for your dinner tonight" she said. "I guess you'd be too busy to be cooking". At that point I didn't really know if there was bread for a sandwich, certainly no thoughts re cooking.

Meanwhile 'back at the ranch' St John commenced FA courses to cover demand. They seemed ever ongoing. I helped when I could. Meetings for divisional members recommenced as soon as possible, plus an influx of new recruits were seen. Now there were many ideas and topics brought into the training programme.

Added to this were two other things that everyone kept an eye on: a) their name in the newspaper stating date and time that the army of helpers sent from south would be at their address to clear debris etc. Owner/occupier had to be present and starting time prompt; b) building supplies were available to the public as they arrived, e.g. roofing sheets, a set number per house-hold, so if you needed the item, you had to have transport and be in the queue to get it. Mattresses and blankets, one per person, were dealt with in the same way. Many people had trips to collect water from the main water pipe line into Darwin.

From this brief coverage of some aspects of life after Tracy, you can see most people were very occupied with their own employment requirements as well, but still fitted in St John. I must not forget the grass planters were still available when needed.

Demountables were placed in the hospital grounds for temporary staff accommodation. I was granted permission to have a room – work had to go on as usual. A new intake of student nurses was due in April and went ahead as planned. The January intake missed out – you can see why!

The liner Patris was moored in Darwin Harbour and acted as a floating hotel to provide emergency accommodation post cyclone. A Divisional meeting became a visit to the liner. Being shown cabins, dining rooms etc. aimed at helping any future need to collect a patient, plus rise and fall of tides was displayed very well. The area/level we entered the ship was different to exit point.

Meal centres were opened in different locations – food basic but quite good. A break or time off made a change having a proper sit down meal.

**Changes for St John**

FULL TIME AMBULANCE SERVICE FOR DARWIN AND LOCALITY.

Volunteers appropriately trained were allowed to work with service personnel. Orderlies who had manned the hospital ambulance were offered employment, on the proviso that they met St John training levels. A few did, and they were St John members too, but others declined.

A bridging course as I called it was done, with help from some of the medical staff. It included A&P, legal or clerical aspects as applicable, and if possible, appropriate equipment, e.g. cardiac monitoring, ECG recording. The doctor went through application of leads, reading basic ECG strips and supervising their practise on each other.

**Institute of Ambulance Officers seminars**

I helped to organise these and they were very helpful, blended in well with the bridging material and were attended by Institute members, St John volunteers and some service staff. The first one was held in cyclone damaged Darwin High School auditorium. No air conditioning, and lighting ran off a generator, which I think we took ourselves. Being early post Tracy, it was decided to class this as 'open house', so adverts saw a mixed audience, public, couple of backpackers, a couple of doctors from the hospital, even the Matron turned up.

St John people from Adelaide River and Batchelor headed by Superintendent Eddy Edwards,

arrived by bus to support the event at the crack of dawn. A day out for them.

The topics covered were hopefully of interest to all levels. Dr Gurd and Mr Bromwich MC'd events, both connected to St John.

Displays of poisonous plants and photos of incidents attended by St John were presented by Gordon Milne and Terry Dahlenburg, and were of great interest.

Training Branch became established and took over the St John public FA course training locally and further afield.

**NT Ambulance Service**

One by one other St John centres down the track to Alice Springs and east to Nhulunbuy were organised with vehicles, staff, training etc. to have all areas under the St John flag. BARDAS [the Batchelor and Adelaide River District Ambulance Service] vehicle also came to St John.

**Manager appointment**

Warren Burgess became Manager for the Ambulance Service. He came from South Australia, his wife, Joy, having transferred to Darwin Division, both very supportive of volunteer and Institute activities.

*Quirky tit bit:* From the end of December 1974 on, we always had a sprinkling of members who had seen service in Adelaide. I've mentioned relief take over not accepted by some, and I know it niggled people because so many times, on duties FA or otherwise, re vehicles, equipment, paperwork etc. you would hear "in Adelaide we do...( or don't or can)" and so on that was opposite whatever they maintained we said or did.

When members grizzled or raised the point I always said forget it, don't worry about it and dismissed it. But on one lecture occasion "in Adelaide we.." was stated to me. I clipped him off before he finished "you are not in Adelaide now, this is the Northern Territory, so what did you want to say or ask me?" Dead silence ensued, then three or four little "here here's" were heard. Then everyone laughed, we were all friends on the job really. Yes I did put the foot down so I'm owning up.

Demountables in the hospital grounds were mostly for staff accommodation, but one was used as a lecture room for ambulance officer training until the new centre was ready. I helped in a couple of sessions at the beginning.

Blackouts occurred now and again. I was present when one interfered with the Casuarina Division's meeting night. The Superintendent, Bob Brennan, decided they'd wait a half hour and if no light came on everyone could go home. Lo and behold into the demountable came 'Florence', as she was nicknamed, complete with lantern. The Superintendent's wife, Monica, came from home, knowing the division would be in the dark, so all systems go as usual. St John just keeps going. The electricity remained off all evening.

Blackouts, now called 'outages', happen during the wet due to storms etc., but the above situation was partly due to loading/repair work going on. However, an outage has featured twice this week in the dry whilst I've been dealing with this written material, with no Florence to hand! Just another aspect of living in the Territory, which needs to be considered when running an ambulance service. Also in home life, fridges, deep freezers, stoves being a few items affected. Public duties can be affected too – so BE PREPARED FOR ANYTHING.

**Cadet Knowledge of the Order**

This topic had to be covered before obtaining a Grand Priors Badge, so was tolerated by some cadets, however, there were times that made the course a little different and remembered.

On one occasion a visiting official from Clerkenwell came into the lecture room, listened for half an hour and offered to help out. His history was informative and the children thought it great.

A member of NT St John Council agreed to fill in for me on two sessions. A different face made a difference. He was a member of the Order, said he'd have to do some research and did a good job. Proved to be an eye opener I think. A local doctor and member of the Order came to one session complete with robes and insignia. This was something not seen or known much about by any of the cadets present.

A cadet group that has always stayed in my

memory was given the option of presenting history material, in any format they thought would be interesting or different, two or three together or as an individual.

The efforts were of high standard. Four acted bits of the past, to great applause. A word search, crosswords, two versions of quizzes were done and certainly made me think too. I hope they remember at least some of it.

**Unforgotten moments**

A rodeo public duty – usually hot, tiring and dusty, with the occasional headache, graze and lost child. Riders bruised, limping, but usually ready to go again or be at the next rodeo.

One that I attended had all the above, plus a very irate bull that threw his rider then charged through the fence. People falling and scattering everywhere, we expected the worst, but fright, tears and a few grazes was all that resulted. The bull stood quietly in amongst nearby trees watching proceedings and I was certainly watching him.

Another animal-involved tale occurred at the Darwin Races. The race had ended, jockeys still on their mounts when suddenly one tossed his rider, prancing, kicking etc. within two feet of the fallen jockey. Attempts to calm and control the horse seemed to take ages. The crew hopped out to help but I stayed put and said I'm not going anywhere whilst the horse is still performing. The jockey was OK, playing 'doggo' until the horse was taken away.

Caring for a very sick Aboriginal person is never easy. One I remember was a tribal elder who perhaps should have sought medical aid long before we were called. His family and extended members were waiting, begging us to do something. The situation became a resuscitation attempt – unfortunately to no avail. The wailing and noise was a sound never to forget.

Childbirth very occasionally occurs in an ambulance. A long distance call to pick up a woman in labour resulted in just that; we travelled slowly and pulled to the side of the track for the head to pop through safely. Meanwhile a car had pulled alongside a couple of times asking if we were OK (ambulance going slow), and did we need help etc. (when vehicle stopped). I asked the ambulance driver to be tactful, thank him and send him on his way. We had a safe delivery, happy mum, celebrating crew, Jim and Ken, how clever they were, and a husband at the driver's window explaining it was his wife on board! All's well that ends well – he saw wife and baby, then we completed the trip.

**St John Headquarters NT**

The new building got underway very quickly. The Governor General, Sir Zelman Cowen, laid the foundation stone in 1978 and was present again to officially open the ambulance centre in 1980. Two stones of historical interest were involved in the ceremonies – one taken from the old naval headquarters on the Esplanade in Darwin. It was similar to stones used in one of St John's original meeting places. The other was a stone from the crypt in Clerkenwell, London. This was flown from the UK courtesy of Qantas in 1978. Both were encased in a concrete plinth inside the building, which was later moved to an outside location. Unfortunately, NT weather disagreed with the stones and concrete so to preserve the crypt stone in particular, removal was necessary. The NT museum and other advisors came to the rescue, the concrete was cleaned off and the two stones now reside happily in the colour cabinet.

**Extension of NT St John Headquarters**

Three extra rooms were added for training purposes. Sadly the original FA room (for anyone calling in for minor care or stick staff) and room allocated for a library come study area, was swallowed up as administration sections in the mid 1990s.

In 1995 the Casuarina building was named the Richard Morris Centre after long serving Chairman of the NT St John Council. Darwin Division moved to Casuarina in 1992 following amalgamation of divisions. Back to Parap centre for their regular meeting in 1995, but returned to the Casuarina centre in 2001.

**Uniting of some Divisions**

Changes in schooling, employment, expiring two year tenures and shortage of officers became a problem. The St. John nucleus at Howard Springs moved when facilities became available and became Palmerston and Rural Division. 1992 saw Palmerston, Casuarina and Darwin divisions combining at Casuarina Centre, and the group electing to retain the original name of Darwin Division.

Another merger occurred in the mid 70s with Adelaide River and Batchelor. Closure of some divisions have occurred for similar reasons, e.g. Alyangula and Jabiru in the 1980s.

**Cadet Divisions**

Cadet Divisions suffered the same fate, resulting in Casuarina, Sanderson, and Darwin Cadet Divisions uniting, whilst Warrego and Dripstone are examples of closures.

**The Cadet Band**

This division was formed in 1985. The only cadet band in Australia, with Ellen Pitts (RN) as Superintendent, Pat King as Bandmaster, Dr Crompton as drum instructor and Lesley King as pianist. An hour of musical tuition and practise was given prior to going on to FA and other cadet activities. Small concerts were given on occasions such as inspection night or for a visiting dignitary.

Instruments were mostly recorders, but occasionally other musical talent appeared, all were encouraged. Great assistance to their musicianship was given by Frank Haydock, who had been Superintendent of Darwin Adult Division and later took over as Divisional Superintendent of the Band. Frank played trumpet with the Darwin Symphony Orchestra and is currently a member of the Darwin Brass Band.

**St John insignia and awards**

Seen in the NT during my time, but some have changed and some are no longer issued. Those no longer issued are indicated by an asterisk - *. For some items included, perhaps it's a case of "did you know?"

*Emblem:*

Eight pointed cross representing the Eight Beatitudes – merciful, pure, peacemakers, persecuted, humble, comforters, meek, righteous.

Four arms represent prudence, temperance, justice and fortitude.

Features on buttons, shoulder flashes, hats, badges, certificates, flags. Often surrounded by the words St John Ambulance Brigade, with the last words, [Passant Guardant], replaced with 'Australia.' Unicorns and the lions at each angle were at the bequest of Queen Victoria in 1888.

*Uniform Markings:*

- ◊ Black tie and St John tie pin for formal occasions.
- ◊ NCO chevrons - originally on the sleeve, now worn on epaulettes.
- ◊ Crown (Edward style) and stars on epaulettes of Officers, Corps and District staff.
- ◊ Gorget patches for District staff. (now termed Territory staff). These are worn on the collar, a symbolic reminder, and relate to the metal protection worn at throat level during times when armour was worn. Police and military personnel also use this distinguishing feature.
- ◊ Red piping on hat, epaulettes and gorget patch indicates a medical officer.

Bar on epaulette:

Red – Registered Nurse

Yellow – qualified ambulance officer (paramedic)

- * Silver – Corps Officer
  Green – enrolled nurse
- * Purple – psychiatric nurse
- * Blue – volunteer with certificate of Ambulance Studies

- * Cadre on epaulette referred to a training section instructor.
- * Medallion - issued after three successful annual re-exams in FA. It was later deleted and a certificate issued with the Medallion printed on it. There are a few members and ex-members who proudly own one of the original medallions.
- * Home nursing badge – cloth emblem worn on

right front of female dresses, whilst men had a silver cross on the left shirt pocket (originally near cuff of a long sleeve shirt), but short sleeves worn in the NT.

*Cadet Uniform Insignia: (as of 2010)*

- ◊ Letter C moved from sleeve to epaulette for cadet officers
- ◊ Wavy white line on epaulettes – cadet leader
- ◊ Small square badges – proficiency topics – worn on sleeves
- ◊ Grand Priors Badge – replaces 12 proficiency badges (one of these must be Knowledge of the Order). Holder may continue to wear it on adult uniform
- ◊ Blue band on epaulette indicates the cadet holds a Senior FA Certificate
- ◊ Service badges – black star each year for first 2 years then black bar worn above left pocket after 3 years.
- ◊ Blue lanyard and silver aiguillette for Cadet of the Year retained for one year. First Recipient was Paulo Fernandes in 1992 (also known as Peter Falkland Cadet of the Year Award).
- ◊ Red lanyard and gold aiguillette for Youth Leader of the Year – also known as the Peter Falkland Youth Leader of the Year Award.

*Service Personnel*

- ◊ Shoulder flash – map of NT with embossed St. John Cross. Working uniform is green overalls with reflective strips, level of training/ qualification shown on shoulders.
- ◊ Honorary members badge issued from Headquarters in Canberra. First NT recipient was NT Mandy Langdon in 1997. She was the first NT Corps Nursing Officer
- ◊ Olympic Games 2000 commemorative badge. This was awarded to all St John volunteers who did duties throughout the period of the Games, held in Sydney, Australia. The NT volunteer contingent was:

  Sonya Arnold
  Mark Grayden
  Natalie Higgins
  Paul Maybank
  Di Munro
  Kylie Munro
  Patrick Murray
  Howard Smith
  Des Thornton

These members came from the following divisions:

  Alice Springs
  Darwin
  Katherine
  Nhulunbuy

Note: all divisions took part in public duties related to the Olympic Torch Run in the NT which commenced at Uluru.

*Ambulance Service Medal*

Announced in Commonwealth Gazettes, signed Queen Elizabeth II and John Howard, Australian Prime Minister. One allocated annually for a service or volunteer ambulance officer in the Northern Territory. First recipient Jim Leigh, service personnel.

The Medal is suspended on a ribbon featuring alternate red and white chevrons edged with a narrow black line. The circular medal is silver embossed with the eight-pointed star emblem on its surface. In the centre of the emblem is a small gold circle with a wreathed edge featuring an embossed gold emblem within its border.

*Service awards*

- ◊ Three years in NT – ochre coloured ribbon worn on shirt
- ◊ 12 years – service medal (issue by national headquarters) on vertical black and white striped ribbon. Black and white ribbon worn on shirt, replacing ochre ribbon
- ◊ Additional five years – silver bar added to above medal. Cross added to ribbon
- ◊ Additional five years – repeat of above – two bars and two crosses
- ◊ Additional five years – repeat of above – three bars and thee crosses
- ◊ Additional five years – Gold Bars and crosses thereafter.

St John's Wort, a plant with medicinal properties, is featured on service insignia and some other badges.

**Flags**

- ◊ Basic flag – black with St John cross, flown at FA centres/ambulance centres
- ◊ Cadet flag – colour black, St John cross, fringe of gold.
- ◊ Colour – granted in 1988. St John Cross on a black background, fringe of black and white . Gloves are worn handling the Colour, and colour saluted if passed when uncased.

The latter two are kept at NT Headquarters and only used at ceremonial occasions. For each a flag party of three persons is required.

- ◊ NT flag – black and ochre with centre Desert Rose and Southern Cross on black.
- ◊ Australian National Flag – blue, Union Jack, Federal Star and Southern Cross. Usually present and incorporated in official functions.

*For general interest*

- ◊ Ambulance cross – used in old St John books – was developed by W. Edwards in the 1920s. He linked the eight white cross points with eight qualities of an effective first aider: observation, resource, explicitness, perseverance, tact, dexterity, discrimination, sympathy.
- ◊ Roundels – the St John Association and Brigade both used a circular badge on textbooks, badges etc., used in Australia until 1987.
- ◊ An updated roundel refers to St John Ambulance only or with Australia added.
- ◊ 1st January 1987 saw a red strip background with cross and beasts in white, seen on letterheads etc. and used for all branches of St John.

National Ambulance Authorities Convention – was held in Darwin in the late 70's. A dinner was held at the Telford Hotel, as many of the representatives were connected to IAO and this allowed great opportunity to get all heads together with lots of discussion.

Northern Territory Became a District in 1976 – separated from South Australia at last. Sir George Stening, Chancellor from St. John Headquarters came to Darwin in 1977 to deal with official documents. A service was held in the Anglican Cathedral, which was newly built following Tracy's destruction, and a dinner held at the Travelodge Hotel on the Esplanade. Now there could be an NT St. John Council and Corps.

**Corps**

There were initially Northern Corps and Southern Corps. This increased to a third Corps – North Eastern – as divisions spread. Over time it reverted to Northern and Southern Corps.

**Scouts – Instruction Course** – Late 70s.

NT Scouts organised a weekend course in instructing techniques. They had brought leaders from South to cover a variety of subjects and methods that could be used no matter where you were involved in teaching. The area known as Tracy Village was the venue. Demountable huts on the site were now vacated, so Scouts hired the complex. People taking part were provided with accommodation and meals etc. for the weekend. Groups like St. John, Red Cross, Youth leaders were invited.

I went with three others, stayed overnight, as an early start was on the cards. The biggest problem to me was green frogs – they seemed to be everywhere. A couple of times I asked the males to clear the shower and toilet before I'd go in. I'm not a 'bush' person.

The Scouts were well organised, lots of participation, overall an informative weekend. Different faces and ideas made it worthwhile.

Note: Tracy Village – so called as the huts placed on the land were put there immediately after cyclone Tracy to house workers involved in rebuilding Darwin. The site now has a club/ restaurant on it but the name remains.

**Camping**

Camping was a feature of life as a cadet in St. John. They may be divisional, mixed divisions, or as a National event. NT camps are held regularly. Ratio of adults to cadets is respected, and sometimes adult members help out. My one and only St. John camp effort was as a Cadet in the UK. Pitching

tents, making a clothes hanging rail for towels and to hang up your uniform was involved, as was taking a turn preparing meals and clearing up. Each morning there was a tent inspection – it had to be clean, tidy, and sleeping area straight etc.

A few proficiency topics were offered and all cadets were expected to choose one and complete it during camp time. Hiking and swimming were available, but English weather / temperatures don't always co-operate kindly. Getting to and from tents in the rain, trying not to let any into the tent, and then a hard sleeping patch wasn't my idea of fun. Nevertheless I don't think it did any of us any harm and I still remember those days. As you might guess I was not a volunteer for NT camps.

**Ideas and Wish List**

Many ideas have been brought up in discussion over the years. Examples:

- ◊ Cycling members, and a motorbike group in uniform with basic equipment, available for dispatch from home to a call in close proximity enabling quick first aid prior to the arrival of an ambulance, or perhaps making an ambulance unnecessary. Obviously we had keen cycling and motorbike riders as members at the time. It never came to fruition, but in hindsight and even in today's world maybe they were a step ahead.
- ◊ Museum – I have brought this topic up, I think there should be somewhere in the NT, preferably attached to an ambulance centre, one room or more for display of past equipment, text, uniforms etc. So much has changed even in my time with St. John, but what has happened to the no longer used items? I did suggest the Northern Territory museum could be approached, for space and to look after it, or to act as curator for setting up.
- ◊ Memorial courtyard. I've previously mentioned in St John circles that there should be a small garden or courtyard put aside, as a memorial to stalwart long serving members who have passed away with some method of having a name inscribed there. I'm sure some family members would appreciate it. I had hoped the NT Headquarters might have provided a suitable spot. We have an honour roll boards for Councillors, Commissioners (usually short tenures), yet a long serving member may just fade away.
- ◊ Library / computer / study room. A very necessary place for trainees and as a reference centre for all St John personnel. Hopefully this will be planned into all new centres or will be added to centres. Any that may be present please don't swallow up into offices etc.
- ◊ Small first aid room – at all St John meeting centres for 'drop in' customers that need minor attention. There were rooms of this kind originally at Parap and Casuarina, but eventually got used for other things. Perhaps other centres have retained such a spot.

**Communications**

As I've already stated, radio for ambulance vehicles initially and mobile phones were not available. A room downstairs at Parap centre was used as a communications room when equipment and radio tower was forthcoming. Later a space was adapted upstairs. We referred to it as the 'watch room'. When St John Headquarters was completed, radio operations moved there.

Coming into the picture were computers. VJY outpost radio service provided an emergency radio link to islands and remote locations, first licensed in 1935. It was operated by Amalgamated Wireless Association, then by OTC in 1946-1971. Telecom Australia took over until 1988. The first authentic air raid warning given in Australia in February 1942 came via this network.

1988 saw St John NT take over operations and VJY moved to its new location at the Casuarina centre. With progress and technology changes, VJY was phased out and all emergency radio calls are now received at a large police complex, combining police, fire brigade and ambulance communications operators working in the same location.

The area covered is vast, from the QLD border to the WA border, from the islands above Darwin to approximately 1000 km south of the NT. Satellites are in and broadband looming, even TV in process of change to HD.

*Quirky tit bit:* One year on completion of our first aid coverage at Adelaide River Race weekend, we decided to have a leisurely sit down dinner at Adelaide River Inn prior to the long drive back to Darwin. One car and one ambulance, packed with camping, first aid gear and the individuals' bags were parked outside. Meals duly ordered, they smelt delicious, first one served, when someone came in and said "there's been an accident up the road a bit".

I offered to have a look and send back in if I needed them, so their meals wouldn't go cold or be wasted. However, nothing in sight to the right or left of the highway and I thought someone was playing a joke. I walked to the slight curve of the roadway, still nil to be seen, then a car pulled up to me and gave the same story, "up the road a bit". On checking with the driver "a bit" was approximately five miles! Hence a run back to the inn, so the ambulance could attend. The rest of us followed in the car, helped to unload the vehicle whilst FA etc. was being attended to, then had to convert it ready for two patients.

The crew proceeded onto hospital. The rest of us debated on the side of the track the best way to put the unloaded gear in the car, plus get ourselves in. I think the police came to our rescue and took some of the bags back to Darwin in their vehicle. All in all a late night return trip, and worse we never got our ordered dinners – *c'est la vie*!

**Equipment**

Centre FA room held basic dressing materials e.g. Band-Aids, sterile gauze, cotton and crepe bandages. Lotions such as saline or cetrimide for cleansing. Small sterile dressing packs and *tulle gras* were also available. Liniment for aches here and there and Katers Lotion for bites and itches were often required. Calamine lotion was another life saver for some people. Panadol was standard for pain relief and 'butterflies' very useful for pulling edges of a wound together. Ambulance stock was on hand if something more serious e.g. burns, fractures, 'dropped in'.

The main changes were individual packaging of lotions and dressings, with adherent sections and tapes non allergic. Katers, Calamine and liniment possibly in tube format are still used in homes.

**Stretchers**

Furley – often present for mass usage, railways, and mines. Opening, closing, blanketing method shown and practiced.

Rescue need – Stokes litter, lashing techniques and relevant knots practiced

Jordan frame and scoop introduced. Members were checked annually for proficiency.

**Pain relief**

Self administered Trilene via a Hayward Butt Inhaler. This involved glass ampoules being inserted in the cylinder and a register kept re stock, usage, date issued. Onto Penthrane/Entonox

Morphine/Pethidine could be sanctioned by Health Department Pharmacy. Two doses only with proviso it was to be given by a MO/RN on duty or likely to be at the location. Now a wider variety of drugs are carried with a drug protocol in place. Ambulance crew at the appropriate level of training can administer.

IV equipment was always carried, but a MO had to commence it. Members could assist and monitor when running. Nowadays trained personnel can deal with it.

- ◊ Oxygen – Oxyviva introduced and a variety of masks.
- ◊ Splints – wooden, improvised, air splints and Hare traction splints have all had a turn.
- ◊ Neck collars brought in.
- ◊ Dressings – pre-packed individual dressings, non-adherent variety, large burn packs.
- ◊ Bandages still have a place, as some people allergic to adhesives. Compressed pad with bandage attached and cotton ones were common. Conforming variety – a cross between cotton and crepe, now widely used, onto crepe, useful as a support. Elastic net, Tubigrip and Tubegauze (this needs applicators) may be seen.
- ◊ Gloves of course for everything.
- ◊ Airway management – airways and intubation may feature.
- ◊ ECG – monitoring now commonplace.

- ◊ Defibrillators – semi-automatic defibrillator now taught and members checked annually. These may now be found sited in large companies or sporting grounds.
- ◊ 2004: SAED and oxygen allowed to be part of adult competitions.
- ◊ Blood pressure readings now commonplace.
- ◊ CPR gadgets and interosseous techniques in use and being trialled. CPR ratio has changed too.
- ◊ Esmarchs – the basic triangular bandage still in use in a variety of ways.

  Note – a doctor prior to Esmarch is also credited with the triangular bandage.
- ◊ Vehicles – many varieties and inner layouts have been used but deserve a write up on their own.

The above is a small insight into changes and increased studies for today's volunteers and ambulance crews. Revision is ongoing to keep abreast of up-to-date first aid, patient care and technology.

*Tit bits:*

- ◊ Outback Ambulance Magazine came on the scene in 1983; articles and NT stories told, members contributing.
- ◊ International camp and competition – 1992 – hosted in Darwin. Base camp was the university. *(Note: Actually I think it was at the old Hospital site – Robert Tremethick was the camp organiser.)*
- ◊ Priory meeting held at the Casino Mindil Beach was a first time occasion for Northern Territory in 1984.
- ◊ Community Care Branch commenced 1983. This was originally called Fellowship Branch.
- ◊ Post cyclone reunion held at Parap Centre. Other get-togethers are organised occasionally.
- ◊ Tug of war held in the Mall, Darwin. St John entered a team.
- ◊ Emergency Games at Fred's Pass Show. St John joined other services in the friendly competition.
- ◊ Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Many cadets have worked towards this award.
- ◊ Stone bottle of port (1989), specially organised in a commemorative bottle destined to be a collector's item.
- ◊ Naming of ambulances. The general public was invited to submit suitable names. The selected names were duly painted on the ambulance fleet.

**Membership – people**

I'm sure I've seen hundreds of people become members, most within service to the community at heart. Some have added to their futures in employment and education, maybe for a few, St John on their resume has added some prestige when actual time and commitment was next to minimal. Backgrounds have been varied, personalities different and there have been people best described as likeable characters.

Darwin St John has played a part in providing other states with qualified personnel, a couple are now doctors, and quite a few members have become RNs.

One ex member from some time ago wrote to me recently saying that she was in the process of doing an Aged Care course in NSW, and had gained "brownie points" she claims, due to my sessions of past Home Nursing.

As in all large groups of people, not all is easy, smooth and plain sailing. Unfortunately a few members have gone off the rails, ambulance staff have exited and in most cases this means their help with the cadets and volunteers is also lost.

Members placed in officer roles sometimes just don't fit in the position after all, same as service members progressing to management roles don't always manage so well. For example, promotion is expected in some cases, a divisional officer being made Superintendent of a Division, excellent as a DO but when upgraded, the excellence drops to good or less, for numerous reasons, and the Division as a whole becomes mediocre. Is there a place for tenured higher positions in service/ Divisions/Territory officers? There are probably a few who would consider the last sentence should have applied to me!

There are people who have given freely of

their time over long periods then somehow slip away to other things or move interstate and are never officially recognised.

Odd bods for want of a better word have turned up offering their services. One story – "head injuries should have intracranial pressure relieved" he said. He'd done this on a few occasions and could show us how it should be done!

Another potential member had his own personal helicopter (white) kept in a hangar at the airport. He was willing to place the St John logo on the craft and use it to collect/ferry patients into Darwin for us. Enquiries and actual checks when going to and from the airport on medical evacuations didn't find it and nobody knew of a white helicopter. Both possibly had good intentions, or did they? However, neither joined us and I think the Division was said to have a full quota of members!

Sadly Darwin Division and other NT Divisions have lost excellent members to terminal illnesses and ageing. I wonder what they'd think of the progress, or is 'evolution' the word?

**Role changes**

The changes brought about by districthood, full time ambulance service and having paid training officers for staff and public courses, also saw a change for me. I became the first NT District Nursing Officer.

This meant more administrative type duties. I did miss divisional activities but it was time for someone else to take over, change of ideas and a new face. Contact with members was still present, many remaining friends and writing from interstate even today. Cadet Home Nursing and Knowledge of the Order still featured on my schedule.

Adult Home Nursing unfortunately was phased out because of a perceived discrimination issue against female members. Males didn't have to do the course unless they wished to but it was compulsory for female members. This was seen as discriminatory so the decision from National HQ was to discontinue the course.

The main instructional programme that I put in place and maintained until 1997 was Adult Officer/ NCO course for all NT divisions by correspondence, plus kept an eye on promotional aspects.

Case card checking (OB 12) – all divisions patient report sheets were a necessary job – a copy to the patient, one to the hospital, and one kept by St John. Completion, accuracy of the written report, plus type of treatment given was important. Drugs, times and right or left side injuries indicated, the latter occasionally showed slips, the wording said R arm, diagram showed left. The biggest bugbear to me was the poor spelling, illegibility and a unique St John pidgin English came to light, giving me many headaches and frustrations. Messages written or verbal down the line never cured it, and I have wondered how the experts at texting have coped, or has this form of spelling crept into the OB12s. Maybe all will be solved if 'touch pad' format comes in. Of course, incorrect spot can be touched!

Competitions, meeting and ACAP interest was ongoing.

**Clerical help**

Fortunately for me, having paid staff provided a clerical person to deal with much of the volunteer paperwork aspects. My requests to research something and type notes etc. have always been ably done, regardless of their increasing workload, limited space and endeavours to organise archives.

Sue Cooper was always helpful and for many years now Gwyn Balch has been my backbone, and a resource centre for every member and his dog – a big thank you.

**"Little bit different in the Territory"**

This phrase has been said to me many times since coming to the NT and has proved to be correct. It comes to mind when considering events/ sports that occur here and the list keeps growing. All hoping to have St John members present, some needing an ambulance available.

Alice Springs holds the Camel Cup Race, a no horse event. Henley on Todd, the Centre's Henley on Thames, boat race on a river bed, no proper boats or water! Big event like the Masters Games, a mini Olympics for older competitors, and the Finke Desert Race for bike fans, as it implies goes out into desert terrain. All have become tourist attractions and regular events.

Darwin has a Beercan Regatta, no proper boats, only ones made by community groups or individuals from drink cans. The Mindil Beach markets have become extremely popular during the 'Dry'. Glenti draws large crowds, The Solar Car race to Adelaide is of great interest, whilst two other big events now on the St John calendar are the V8 race for rev heads, and the Arafura Games, bringing many competitors from overseas.

On top of this, all divisions down the track have their share of sports, shows, fetes, camp drafts to cover. AFL matches, international cricket games also feature, plus international Rugby Sevens, Operations Branch and Service members combining to cover the venue.

**General Regulations - Northern Territory only – amendments 1997**

Regulations were in an administrative hand book issued from National headquarters, the basic rules for all members in Australia. This covered a variety of aspects for training requirements, approved certificates, affiliates, numbers in a division, authorised establishment of officers and ratio etc., insignia to be worn, efficiency requirements, disciplinary action to name but a few.

Commissioner Baddeley asked for changes in the NT to run for a three year trial. Among these changes were:

- ◊ Corps strata to be deleted.
- ◊ District staff nominated by District Superintendent in consultation with the Commissioner. Tenure dependent on the task, i.e. portfolio appointee.
- ◊ No further appointments of professional officers i.e. Medical, Nursing or Ambulance.
- ◊ No training officer portfolio.
- ◊ Divisional Superintendents to appoint and terminate their own divisional staff. Applied also to Secretaries.
- ◊ No appointments of NCOs.
- ◊ Promotion exams to be deleted.

Changes to efficiency requirements, e.g. public duties, divisional meeting attendances, were made and those members wishing to obtain an Annual Practising Certificate to enable continuation of ambulance duties had to cover several items amongst which were:

- ◊ Continuous quality program (CQI).
- ◊ Attain specified number of points each year in different areas such as public duties, seminars, courses, instructing.

Membership of Operations Branch to lapse automatically in case of officers/members returned as non-efficient for one year.

**Checking/Caring**

Unfortunately times have changed, bringing in tighter security checks for adult and cadet members. Caring for cadets has always been a priority, e.g. cadets being accompanied by an adult on duties, sufficient ratio of adults to cadets at camps, and ensuring they are picked up at the end of meetings by a parent or approved person, and this is known by cadet staff. Much research, discussion and getting together with other youth groups has gone on. Lesley King, who has held many higher positions, plus filled in for me on occasion, has done all the ground work in the protection policy and outlining St John NT protocols.

**Stained glass windows**

The windows were commissioned for St John headquarters in Canberra. One was St John Wort, others were floral emblems from each State and Territory. A window represents the NT with the portrayal of Sturt's Desert Rose.

**The new millennium**

October 1999 saw St John history being made. A new international structure was listed.

1. Dissolution of the Grand Priory and Chapter General.
2. Grand Council replaces it, and is now the supreme governing body of the Order.
3. Priory of England created.

In future, decisions on the policies and direction of the Order will be taken by all the Priories, with Great Officers meeting as the Grand

Council.

A church service was held in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, as this year marked 900 years since the founding of the Hospitaller Order of St. John in Jerusalem. The City of London also hosted a dinner at the Guildhall in honour of St. John. Some 740 guests attended, with Australia represented. Alan and Rosemary Bromwich represented the Northern Territory.

25th October, 1999: Grand Council met for the first time at St. Johns Gate, Clerkenwell. One decision as follows re the Ophthalmic Hospital.

The St. John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem is its new name. The Order retained ownership of the land and the buildings, but transferred operational assets to the hospital to be managed from Jerusalem.

◊ 1860s saw a renewed interest in first aid, for the English community which spread world wide.
◊ 1883 was the beginning of St. John in Australia.
◊ 1888 – Queen Victoria granted a Royal Charter – an Order of Chivalry.]

**Darwin Adult Division Jubilee 2003**

The celebrations included a march through the streets of Darwin at the invitation of the Darwin City Council, to acknowledge the contribution of St. John volunteers.

Lord Mayor Peter Adamson presented Commissioner Hodges with a Certificate of Appreciation, followed by morning tea in Civic Park. The Army Band led the parade.

The Annual Parade at Marrara Stadium was the occasion for a 50th Birthday Cake, to be cut by the Administrator's wife, assisted by Cadet Emily Macmillan. The St. John Jubilee Certificate was presented to Divisional Superintendent Patrick Murray by Administrator Anictomatis. Darwin Adults held a reunion dinner at the Hub in Palmerston. Darwin Cadet Division held their Jubilee in 2005.

**Occurrences with National and International Attention**

1. The Bali Terrorist Disaster in 2002 – resulted in most injured people being brought to the Royal Darwin Hospital, with St. John service personnel transferring patients from airport to hospital, and again if a person was moved interstate. Volunteers were available when and if required.
2. The attempted assassination of one of Timor's top politicians – Jose Ramos Horta. He was flown to Darwin for emergency treatment.
3. Asylum Seekers Boat Explosion, 2009, off the Territory coast. Once again injured were brought into Darwin and St. John transport ferry system put into action.

**Bricks for Palmerston Centre**

A fund-raising effort to get the Palmerston Ambulance Centre built involved 'Buy a brick and your name will be on the brick'. This venture was a little different and was supported well by the public. The bricks are situated outside the building in a grassed area left of the entrance. The building opened in 2003.

**Australian Expressions**

These have had to be explained to me in some cases, or picked up as I went along. The first was of course 'Pom'. The only 'pom' I'd heard of was a brand of dried potato, and I couldn't see how that fitted in with a person!

'A wriggle on' was not a snake, and 'I reckon' or 'What do you reckon' had nothing to do with calculations. All seems very simple, but initially people did tease. Geography was not helped when 'gone bush' could relate to any part of Australia, and there is no real 'black stump'. 'Middies' and 'schooners' were not ships.

I was wary too when dinars and zacs got mentioned prior to decimal currency. I've learnt most terms by now, and I know 'How you going' isn't expecting 'by taxi' or 'bus' as an answer.

Territory ways include 'barbies' [not dolls] and 'bring a plate' is expecting a bit more – something on it!

Even nursing has its oddities, and lo and behold

items cropped up in St. John work too. I didn't ask, but waited to see results when a gurnsey got mentioned. I had no idea what they were talking about. Thoughts of Guernsey in the Channel Islands or a woolly jumper came to mind. I now know, the term mostly used in South Australia I believe.

Lizards – Frilled neck, Ta-ta, Blue tongue variety I've seen, and it seemed strange that Darwin or NT lizard had not cropped up before. Once again – tongue in cheek – this turned out to be crocodiles. Is there anything left to twist!

**Priory in Australia of The Order of St. John**

Usually referred to locally as 'Priory'. The Australian arm of the Order of St. John and as indicated in context, the government thereof. Early days used the term 'Priory' to describe a unit within the order with its own authority over a specified geographical area.

Members of the Order of St. John who reside in Australia are the members of Priory. The Australian Priory began in 1946. St. John in Australia had previously been classed as a Commandery. Western Australia chose to remain a Commandery within Australian Priory.

St. John the Baptist Day is 24th June. Each year during this week meetings are held in a different State/Territory and representatives of Training, Operations and other branches from all States and Territories meet. These days it is referred to as The National St. John Conference.

*Titles*

PRIOR: head of Priory, traditionally the Governor General.

DEPUTY PRIORS : one from each State and Territory e.g. in the NT the position is held by the Administrator.

I have a feeling that the term Priory will still crop up, like the word Brigade. Tradition dies hard.

**The Most Venerable Order of The Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem**

- ◊ Usually referred to as The Order of St. John.
- ◊ Is a Royal Order of Chivalry.
- ◊ Queen Elizabeth II is its Sovereign Head.
- ◊ Has a specific task of work – rendering aid to sick and wounded, those in danger, etc.

Mottos of The Order:

*Pro Fide* – For the Faith

*Pro Utilitate Hominum* – for the service of mankind.

Vote of Thanks: a certificate that can be issued to an individual or group or company for services to St. John.

**Grades of Membership Within the Order**

These grades are recognition of service that has been sanctioned by the Queen.

- ◊ Serving Brother or Serving Sister was the first level - this has recently changed to 'Member'. The awardee is presented with a silver emblem on a black ribbon, plus miniature for evening wear.
- ◊ Officer – symbolized by a white enamel emblem on a black ribbon plus miniature.
- ◊ Commander – receives a larger white enamel emblem suspended on a black ribbon to be worn around the neck or mounted on a black bow for ladies, plus miniature, and a mantle.
- ◊ Knight or Dame – receives emblem as above, plus miniatures and a full size insignia badge to be worn on the left side; mantle for ceremonial occasions.
- ◊ Bailiff Grand Cross.- as above plus vest with insignia of the Order worn beneath mantle.

The medals or miniatures are worn on formal occasions; a ribbon bar representing the medals is worn on working uniform.

The mantle is a long black cloak/robe embroidered with the emblem on its left side and is to be worn on ceremonial occasions.

I was nominated as a Serving Sister in 1977; upgraded to Officer in 1985, then Commander in 1999. I relinquished my membership in 2007.

The St. John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia is slowly growing, ably steered by Priory Librarian and Historical Society Secretary Dr. Ian Howie-Willis.

National Office Move 2008 – The Priory's library and heritage collection was moved to its new home – The National Office premises in the Hotel Realm precinct in Barton, Canberra, where a display of the stained glass windows that I've previously mentioned provide a link to the old building.

The Canberra Avenue building was sold. A new logo was designed by Mr. James Cheshire. The central shield shows the arms of the Priory with R and L display of emblems from each State/Territory, Federation Star on top, plus the Kangaroo and Emu either side.

*'A Century for Australia'* and *'The Zambuks'*, books written by Historian Dr. Ian Howie-Willis, both contain material of interest regarding NT.

**St. John Services - Northern Territory Connection**

*Opthalmic Services*

Longstanding services have been given to the St. John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem and still continue. In more recent times eye examinations, operations and care have been available for needy people in Timor courtesy of St. John. Closer to home, these eye care programs have been functioning in the NT. I mention this as day-to-day St. John first aiders may not be aware of this activity.

*Mining*

There are many mines operating in the NT. All employ paramedics. Most companies negotiate with St John authorities to obtain a St John paramedic for a set tenure, or as holiday relief.

*Survey Ships*

Similarly many survey ships obtain a paramedic to be at sea with them for several weeks at a time, again working through St John NT authorities.

*Timor*

When Timor began to stabilise following hostilities and to rebuild main facilities – e.g. airport, runway etc., there were UN Peacekeeping forces there to assist. St John NT was approached and asked if they could provide paramedics to be available as medical back-up whilst reconstruction was occurring. Several paramedics accepted this venture and stayed for a few weeks.

**The New Millenium – One Decade Gone**

To round off this never-ending story, I'll mention a few items stated in the Annual Report for 2010.

*First Aid Instruction*

Continues to travel far and wide to mine sites, stations, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Borroloola and many other places with strange names.

*Lord Prior's Visit:* Professor Mellows and his wife visited Darwin.

*Chief Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner:* Visited Darwin and Alice Springs.

*Palmerston Youth Division*

Has been formed to bridge the gap between maturing cadets and young adult members.

*Possible Formation of a Cadet Division at Yirrkala*

Discussion was held with elders and the school Principal. Eight indigenous students attended the first meeting. (This is approximately 40 years since our first effort to incorporate Aboriginal people as members.)

*Member Recognition Weekend*

This was breaking from tradition of the normal Annual Parade/Review. The weekend included a Member Recognition Night, Superintendents and Officers meeting, Member's Dinner and a church service.

Service Medals and Awards were presented. The National CEO Mr Peter LeCornu was present.

*National First Aid Competitions*

The last one was held in Melbourne in 2010. Discussion is to be held to determine if adult FA competitions will continue in the Northern Territory.

*Inaugural Drill Competition – Cadets – 2009*

Was held in Alice Springs in conjunction with the Cadet First Aid Competitions and NT Cadet Camp.

Drill Competition results – 1st place to

combined team of Darwin and Band Cadet Division members.

*Annual Members Reunion:* Held at Casuarina Club.

*The Graduation/Investiture - 2010*

The Lord Prior, Professor Anthony Mellows OBE, TD, KStJ, attended and presented awards.

Four preceding Deputy Priors for the Northern Territory plus the incumbent Deputy Prior were all present on this occasion – a unique event. They were:

Mr. Austin Asche, AC, QC, KStJ;
Dr. Neil Conn, AO, KStJ;
Mr. Ted Egan, AO, KStJ;
Mr John Anictomatis, AO, KStJ;
Mr Tom Pauling, AO, QC, KStJ.

*Community Support*

Still present – a portion of money raised at the Carols by Candlelight 2010 is to go to St. John volunteers.

**Darwin and Other Centres in NT**

- ◊ Roads are increasing, shortening time of travel, some now multi-lane. Buildings and suburbs expanding and 'China Town' again on the agenda to get built.
- ◊ A gas plant is to come to NT, which will provide jobs and increase revenue.
- ◊ The Ghan now completes its run from Adelaide through to Darwin.
- ◊ Increased numbers of defence personnel now live in the NT.
- ◊ The Darwin Harbour is more widely used, with cruise liners frequently seen and a live cattle export industry using the venue.
- ◊ 'Outback Ambulance' and Response' magazines are still published.
- ◊ Power outages – 'blackouts' – still annoy people.
- ◊ Reptile incidents also occur.
- ◊ The phrase re short supplies of anything – 'it's held up on the truck' or now 'the Ghan' has not gone away, and I think timing of most things will always remain associated with 'the wet' – before – after – or of course in the 'dry'.

My obtaining a First Aid certificate and maintaining validity plus Ambulance Transport and Home Nursing certificates gave me self satisfaction. (I didn't want to be expecting members to do what I wouldn't do, or hadn't done.) Over the years I've been helped and supported by all levels of St John personnel, and I'm grateful.

I hope this little tale is easy reading and has bits of history that may have got lost in time. Someone else may like to keep the story going. I'm told that at last, 'there's movement at the station' and as was discussed many moons ago, the ambulance vehicle maintenance area at Casuarina HQ is no more – they have moved to Winnellie and the space has been renovated to accommodate the Volunteer offices, providing them with a much needed upgrade and working space.

There is the beginning of the next volume.

PRO UTILITATE!



Grant Keetley, Rosemary Keetley, Marian Grayden, Ken Grayden



Marian Grayden being promoted to Commander in the Order of St John by NT Administrator Dr Neil Conn



**1978 Investiture**

**Standing:** Dr Charles Gurd CStJ, Rod Bramley SBStJ, Teerse Stal SBStJ, Grant Keetley SBStJ, Richard Morris OStJ

**Sitting:** Joy Burgess SSStJ, Marian Grayden SSStJ

# Frank Dunstan MStJ

The story behind *Vollie News*

### Early newsletters

Over the years there have been various Divisional newsletters, notably in Alice Springs when Pat McQuillen was in charge of the Cadets and then the Adult Division. Unfortunately, these newsletters usually cease when people move on and their successors don't bother to keep them going.

The Volunteer Office produced a quarterly newsletter, simply called the *Operations Branch Newsletter,* up until early 2006. This was purely an information sheet with no input from the members or Divisions, although it was proposed to expand it shortly before its demise. The *Operations Branch Newsletter* ceased when *Vollie News* started.

### How *Vollie News* began

In 2006 I was a volunteer firefighter with Darwin River Volunteer Bushfire Brigade. This was a very busy Brigade and numerous wildfires and prescribed burns made sure we didn't get a lot of free time to ourselves in the dry season. In that year I attended a total of 92 fires as well as spending three days in Katherine in April helping to clean up after the floods. In late December I went to Victoria on the first of two deployments to their bushfires. This may seem a lot, but it was only a practice run for the following year.

I went to the Richard Morris Centre, Casuarina in July 2006 to renew my Senior First Aid qualification and during a lunch break went around to the Paramedic Training College to have a talk with Warren Purse. Wozza told of a few personnel changes since my time as a St John member, including the news that Peter Poole was now Commissioner. It was this conversation that influenced my decision to consider re-joining St John.

It was the next day that I went up to the Volunteer Office to say "hello" to Gwyn Balch. We had a good talk and she asked me to rejoin St John as a volunteer.

Well, I thought about it and attended a couple of meetings with my old Humpty Doo Adult Division. While I was tempted, I decided that I couldn't really be a full time volunteer firefighter and an efficient St John volunteer at the same time.

Gwyn and Divisional Superintendent Greg Payne wouldn't take no for an answer, so I agreed to come back, but only as an affiliate, now called an Operational Support member. Then I found that the Division had nothing for me to do as an affiliate and wondered what was the point in just being a name on the books.

Greg had a weekly info email that he sent out to the Division, so for something useful to do I decided to turn it into a Divisional newsletter.

In October, Territory Superintendent Steve Peers and Gwyn asked me to expand the newsletter to cover the whole of the Territory and on the 2nd November 2006 *Vollie News* was born.

At first it was sent out Monday nights in two separate editions; one that included Public Duties for Darwin, Palmerston and Humpty Doo, and another without duties for the remainder of the Territory. The Public Duties were dropped in April 2007 and *Vollie News* became a single edition.

I was given full freedom on how I wanted to run the newsletter and decided from the start that the emphasis would be on promoting the achievements of our volunteers, rather than being just an information sheet.

### A very shaky first year

*Vollie News* almost didn't survive its first year. 2007 was to be my busiest year as a volunteer bushfire fighter ending in burnout. On 27th December 2006 I went to Victoria on the first of two deployments to their bushfires and in 2007 attended a further 106 fires locally, most of them in an intense four month period. Added to this were numerous days spent on fire grounds mopping up after bushfires. This is dirty, filthy work that is more

tedious and tiring than actually fighting fires. At age 65 it was just too much and I ended up burnt out.

Fatigue that's with you all the time and that won't go away, and that took two years to get over. That's what burnout in your mid sixties does to you.

To come home after dark from a fireground hot, tired and dirty knowing I had to send out a newsletter that night was very hard. You have no idea how hard it was. That went on for week after seemingly endless week, but somehow the newsletter still managed to be put together and sent out.

I came close to turning my back on the newsletter and it was even proposed to make it fortnightly instead of weekly. Fortunately, Gwyn would have none of that and as a result *Vollie News* is still a weekly newsletter—and I am still at the helm.

**There's a frog in my computer . . .**

*Vollie News* had another bad spell at the start of 2008. During the wet season a little frog got in the back of my computer's power pack through the large vent holes and caused the computer to short out. This failure extended to the hard drive and the external wireless modem.

Replacing the computer was easy with just a trip into Darwin and part with some cash. The modem was another story. My internet service provider was told of the problem and circumstances and offered to replace the modem under warranty. I won't go into details, but it was almost two months of hair wrenching frustration before I got back onto the internet. No *Vollie News* for that period.

I had also been lazily doing monthly backups to DVD, so lost the unbacked data files. The old hard drive was unreadable and I couldn't use it as a slave drive for data recovery. I just hope those missing *Vollie News* are on file in Darwin because I don't have archive copies.

To insure against further computer problems I bought a second PC as an emergency standby, a laptop to send out the newsletter when away from home – provided there's a good signal – and three external hard drives for multiple simultaneous daily backup. If the modem ever fails I will just go into town and buy another instead of going through all those hassles again.

**Better times**

In February 2009 it was decided to put the newsletter out later in the week and it was sent to the Volunteer Office on Wednesday nights for later distribution, usually on Friday, but not always. This delay allowed for corrections and last minute additions.

After this dubious start the newsletter gradually caught on with more and more people sending in contributions. It was feast or famine with contributions though, and one week there may be a 17 page edition while the following it could be struggling for content. Occasionally there was no newsletter al all because of no new content.

It isn't easy putting out a weekly newsletter that must be interesting and entertaining to retain a following and a lot of effort is needed to fill pages when contributions dry up. I tried puzzles and writing stories about life on my rural property; there were stories and photos from my bushfire experiences and items poached from copyright expired publications on the internet. Historical stories and photos were run quite successfully and feedback on these pages helped fill the gaps in our recorded knowledge.

*Vollie News* got a fair bit of feedback, mostly favourable. Criticism received by me was confined to petty nit picking, while the high point was when I learned that the Lord Prior, Professor Anthony Mellows, was on the mailing list and quite a fan.

Our humble newsletter was described as:

> *... the liveliest & most attractive & most readable of any St John newsletter produced anywhere in Australia. It's a great little journal and a great credit to all who play a part in its production.*
>
> *Ian Howie-Willis*
> *Priory Librarian*

As well as throughout the Territory, *Vollie News* is sent to St John Ambulance Australia National HQ, all State branches, members of

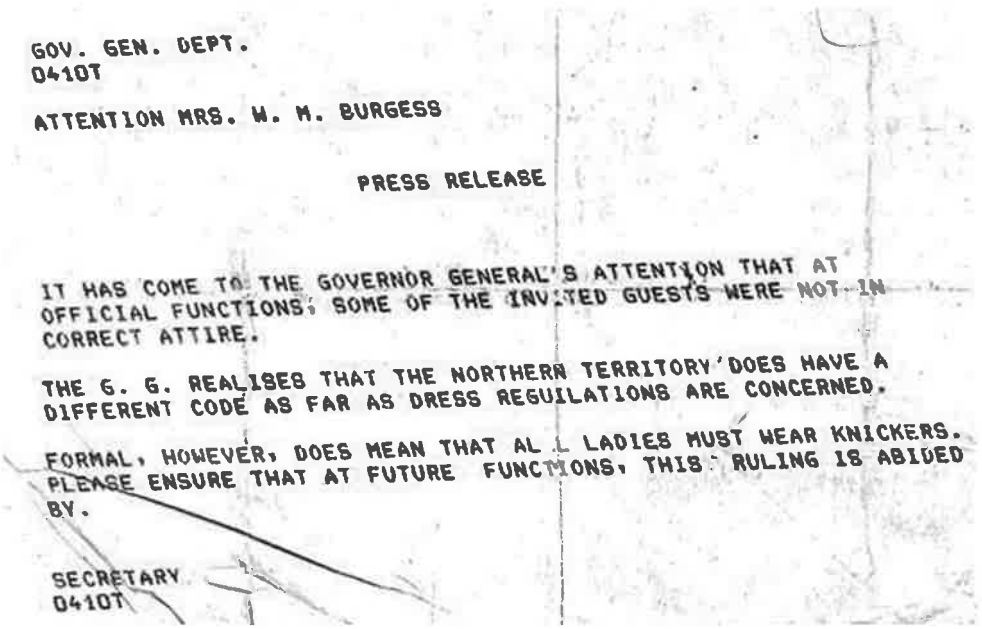
interstate Divisions and overseas to England, Canada and Singapore. Not bad for a little rag from "Outback Australia".

After starting on this Historical Project in June 2011 I soon discovered that it was consuming all my time and I couldn't work on the newsletter any more. I also felt that it was time for a generational change with a younger person in charge with new ideas. Hayley Cockman very enthusiastically volunteered to become the new editor and her first edition was on Thursday 25th August 2011.

Unfortunately, things didn't quite work out as planned and I was asked to take over the newsletter again in early November. However, this put me back into the situation of spending too much time on *Vollie News* and neglecting the History.

I relinquished the newsletter to Troy Singleton in early April 2012 and he soon put his own stamp on *Vollie News* with a complete redesign. Unfortunately, things still didn't quite work as planned and I was asked to take the newsletter on once again. *Vollie News* is too good a thing to let die, so I agreed to do this, even though there was still a lot of important time intensive work to finish on this book.

I guess I'll stick with the newsletter now until I'm too old to continue. The next time I surrender *Vollie News* it will be for keeps. Age will make sure of that.



GOV. GEN. DEPT.
0410T

ATTENTION MRS. W. M. BURGESS

PRESS RELEASE

IT HAS COME TO THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S ATTENTION THAT AT OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS, SOME OF THE INVITED GUESTS WERE NOT IN CORRECT ATTIRE.

THE G. G. REALISES THAT THE NORTHERN TERRITORY DOES HAVE A DIFFERENT CODE AS FAR AS DRESS REGULATIONS ARE CONCERNED.

FORMAL, HOWEVER, DOES MEAN THAT ALL LADIES MUST WEAR KNICKERS. PLEASE ENSURE THAT AT FUTURE FUNCTIONS, THIS RULING IS ABIDED BY.

SECRETARY
0410T



# Joy Burgess MStJ

Memories of the Opening of the Casuarina Ambulance Centre

The organisation for the opening of the Casuarina Ambulance Centre on Dripstone Road, was mainly in the hands of my husband Warren Burgess, who was manager of The St John Council for the NT Inc. from 1975 until 1981.

As the centre was being opened by the Governor General Sir Zelman Cowen all areas of the event had to be exceptionally well organised, timings finely tuned and many very strict protocols conformed to.

As well as supporting Warren in every way I could, I was a Sergeant in the Casuarina Division and as such was heavily involved in the catering for afternoon tea, setting up, repatriation and many other activities both prior to and on the day. I was part of the guard of honour for Sir Zelman, as was our oldest son Wayne, a St John cadet, with daughter Dale in the colour party.

That evening the Administrator of the NT was holding an official dinner to which Warren and I were invited and I had fine-tuned my duties to allow sufficient time to shower and dress for this formal function after a busy day in uniform.

Clearing the Centre after the formalities, afternoon tea and guests departing took longer than anticipated and as I rushed away leaving others to finish, Warren caught me and said "We have to leave in 20 minutes. I have to pick up a tape of the National Anthem on the way in and we can't be late." So home I rushed and gathered my clothes then into the bathroom for a very quick shower, hair washed, dressing and whoops! I had my panty hose but not my knickers. Never mind would put on panty hose first then knickers over the top when I went back to the bedroom for my shoes. Dry hair, make-up on and Warren was saying. "It's time we were gone." Half way in to Darwin I realise – no knickers. Oh well. The outside is presentable. No one would know and I was wearing panty hose.

We arrived at the dinner on time and after many, many weeks of busy, solid organising and coordinating it was good to relax, sit back and let others do the work.

About a week later I was sitting in Warren's office when one of his staff came in and handed him a Telex, saying "This just came in. I thought you needed to see it straight away." I moved to withdraw but Mandy said "I think you should stay."

As Warren read his expression became most concerned then turned to horror before laughing out loud and handing the Telex to me. It read:

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF AUSTRALIA, SIR ZELMAN COWEN.

PRESS RELEASE

IT HAS COME TO THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S ATTENTION THAT AT OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS, SOME OF THE INVITED GUESTS WERE NOT IN CORRECT ATTIRE.

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SECRETARY

The girls had mocked it up to look so official that he was easily fooled.

After this they gathered and made a speech acknowledging that he did the hard work and organisation needed for the opening but it was the hierarchy who received all the accolades on the day while he was not mentioned.

They presented him with a trophy engraved *"Our Boss. 'Unsung Hero' of the opening. 4/5/80. We Love You."*

# Peter Poole KStJ

Some Reminiscences of Tennant Creek in 1979-1980

Tennant Creek is an interesting town that takes its name from the creek a couple of kilometres north of the town. John McDouall Stuart named the creek after an associate, a John Tennant of Port Lincoln SA on 6 June 1860. A repeater station on the Overland Telegraph was constructed near the creek in 1872; the buildings still exist and are well worth a visit. The Tennant Creek region was the site of Australia's last gold rush in 1930s. It is rumoured that the site of the current Tennant Creek town was decided when a truck carrying supplies (alcohol) to miners broke down or became bogged by the Overland Telegraph. The supplies the truck was carrying were unloaded at the site and the (hotel) town grew around it.

St John Ambulance took over the running of the ambulance service in Tennant Creek on 1 July 1979. The Department of Health had run the ambulance service up until then with nurses, orderlies and doctors providing crews. Tennant Creek was in a state of flux at the time, Peko Mines were still operating the Warrego Mine and processing plant and operating the satellite underground mine at Gecko. The smelter had been opened and closed as a result of the first oil crisis and stood as a forlorn monument in the middle of nowhere beside the Warrego Road.

An export meat works was being constructed south of the town. Ian Tuxworth was the local member of the NT Legislative Assembly. The Tennant Creek telephone exchange was still manually operated, which meant that to make a call you lifted the hand piece and listened for the operator to say, "Number Please?" you then gave the number or the name of the identity you wished to speak to and you were connected; very personalised service.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service did not have any presence in Tennant Creek; if the Doctor in charge of the hospital decided that a plane was required to get medical staff to a remote locality then the twin engine high wing Partenavia monoplane owned by the local charter company would be hired. It took time to remove seats from the plane, source and load equipment, fasten the stretcher in and find a doctor and nurse to crew the plane, so an ambulance was normally sent to an incident immediately with the plane following some time later.

St John sent John Hill and Steve Peers to Tennant Creek as paid officers to establish the service. John Hill had been Training Officer in Darwin and Steve Peers was a Casuarina Division volunteer who joined the Ambulance Service in 1979. Alan Caust joined Hill and Peers in November 1979 as a third paid officer. Relieving officers were Norm Turner and Jenny Gehrig.

The manning of the ambulance was based on the two paid officers responding during working hours and a paid officer and a volunteer responding after hours at night and on weekends. St John had two levels of priority for responding to cases, Red and Green; Red was lights and sirens, and Green was drive within the normal road rules. If the case was a red and in town the paid officer would drive directly to the location, the volunteer would drive their own vehicle to the case and then at the completion of the case return to pick up their vehicle. If the case was a Green or Red out of town the paid officer would pick up the volunteer on the way.

A real problem with early operations out of TC was that the HF radios never worked and telephone services were minimal with public telephones at the wayside inns being the best communication; an advantage of the manual exchange system was that you never needed any money to get connected.

The area covered by Tennant Creek stretched from Barrow Creek in the south to north of Elliott in the north on the Stuart Highway and from Three Ways out to Barry Caves on the Barkly Highway. Outside of the Tennant Creek area Katherine, Alice

Springs and Mt Isa were the nearest major medical centres.

The majority of the highways were still the World War 2 vintage roads with sections of the Stuart High-way near the Devil's Marbles, north and south of Tennant Creek and a section near Churchill's Head / Maryvale having been upgraded. Barry Caves was one of two roadside inns on the Barkly; it was of very poor quality and along with Frewena was purchased by the NT Government and closed after the Barkly Homestead, at the intersection of the Barkly and Tablelands Highways, was constructed.

Anyway, enough of the scene setting and into the workings of TC. Car crashes remote from Tennant Creek were the main tasks that took crews out of Tennant. Two cases to Elliott and one to Barry Caves stayed in the memory:

We were despatched one evening to north of Elliott for a car which had hit a cow and it was suspected that two people were injured. Elliott had a health centre with nursing staff but it was decided to send an ambulance and the plane. Elliott is about 250km north of TC with the airstrip being north east of the town on the edge of the black soil plain of the Barkly Tableland. The paid officer and I thought, "Could we get there before the plane?" It seemed like an interesting exercise in elapsed times and relative velocities that would help pass the time; also being in the night we could see the plane's navigation lights and know when we had lost the exercise. Anyway, the plane passed over us just short of Elliott, but we got to the scene near Newcastle Waters Creek before the plane's passengers had left the terminal. There was no one at the scene which was very lucky from our point of view as the cow had been dead for however long it takes to decompose, swell up and then burst when hit by a car at high velocity. Decomposed cow was everywhere; when we found the driver of the car he advised that the headlights of an oncoming vehicle were very bright so he had pulled off onto the shoulder at speed and hit the cow. The driver did not need transporting, however the trip was not wasted as the Health Clinic had a body they wanted transported back to TC. I suspect the paid officer [Alan Caust] believed in ghosts so it was an interesting trip back to TC.

We were despatched one Saturday morning to Elliott to transport a bloke who had injured himself in a car crash. We had a crew of three; one paid officer and two volunteers, the third person was a young lady whose St John issue overalls only added to her compassionate aura. The driver was not seriously injured and was a little under the weather from something he had consumed the night before. As we commenced the trip back to TC he was very subdued, however I'm not sure if it was the oxygen, our caring treatment or the third person's aura, but a remarkable recovery occurred over the two plus hour trip. By the time we were approaching the TC town limits the patient had recovered and was trying to organise dinner that night with the third person. We left him at the hospital.

The case to Barry Caves was another night drive to a single vehicle rollover for a male patient with suspected spinal injuries; after a couple of hours driving just short of Barry Caves we came across the rolled vehicle but no patient, we drove on to Barry Caves and there was the driver sitting up at the bar maintaining his fluids. We transported him back to TC.

The tyranny of distance certainly sorts out the injured from the uninjured; it is a remarkable contrast to some of our public duties where we are on the scene as the crash / fall happens and the casualty has yet to develop some of the longer term signs and symptoms from the trauma they have suffered and before the adrenalin rush has subsided.

# Pat King OStJ

The Band Division's first ten years

*Pride, Presentation and Performance*

In 1984 Commissioner Dr Lionel Crompton expressed his interest in a Cadet Fife and Drum Band. This was unique because at that time there were no Cadet Bands in Australia and as far as we could ascertain anywhere within St John Ambulance (SJA) globally.

**Lionel Crompton**

'There was a sentiment that the St John Cadet movement was modelled too much on other youth movements - army cadets, scouts etc. Therefore a new approach might tap into youth who as yet had found nothing appealing in current youth groups.

An adult division had been formed, based on the use of (and interest in) motorcycles, and it had been active and successful in traditional SJA activities as well as in its field of special interest.

Cadets and motorcycles seemed a bit radical, but the innovation was interesting.

A Cadet had drummed the Divisional and Priory Processions into the church service at a recent South Australia Priory Week, and this seemed a possible area of interest without straying too far from the traditional basis of St John culture - this still being heavily influenced by the British Army Medical Corps at that time.

So the idea took hold. Pat King knew about music (I didn't, I was into drumming). She ran with the concept and brought the Band Division to fruition, sustaining it for many years. The Band inspired many young musicians and their adult mentors, did brilliantly in the Cadet First Aid Competitions, and kicked off numerous careers in medicine, nursing and allied health. And mostly, they had a pretty good time, which is a fine thing for youngsters and elders alike'.

**The Beginning**

Ellie Pitts was asked to be Superintendent and Pat King Sergeant Major/Bandmaster. The name and object of the Division were discussed and the conclusion was drawn that the Division should be called the Band Division so that it was also open to adult members who played an instrument and were keen to join. It is also meant the balance of ages did not restrict it to a Cadet Division if numbers dropped, it could be taken over by adults.*

The first meeting of the Band was held in March 1985 in the GP Room of the Nakara Primary School. There were 14 Cadets, Commissioner Lionel Crompton, Lesley King, Ellie Pitts and Pat King. Lionel taught the drummers Rene Caldwell, Jason Graefling, Marika Paterakis and Anti Paterakis. Lesley played the piano and Pat conducted the Band.

The numbers of Cadets attending steadily started growing. Cadets from other Divisions were able to join the Band for music and then returned to their own Division for all other activities. These Cadets mainly came from Casuarina, Dripstone and Sanderson Divisions. Band Division Cadets joined with Casuarina Cadets for their First Aid Training. The Cadets met at 5.00pm then at 6.30pm had tea and moved to their respective Divisional training nights. At that time all Cadet Divisions met on a Friday night.

The first camp was held soon after the Division commenced. This was a time of team building, music, marching and fun. It was held at the PCYC Pony Club, 'Wongabilla' at Berrimah. Helen and Bob Jeffries took on the role of Camp Parents while Naomi and Eddie Wright assisted with music and marching.

Right from the start the Cadets struggled with the fifes so it was decided that we would bring together all their other musical talents as they all played recorders and some played flutes and clarinets and guitar. After this change the number started to grow again. It was also decided to open the Division to juniors as there were so many very talented youngsters eager to join. At that time we were the only Division in the Darwin area with juniors.

**Scholarships**

The Band owned three flutes and two clarinets. Each year these were made available to promising musicians for the coming year so that they could learn to play them.

**Performances**

The Band performed at a wide variety of venues and occasions. Each Christmas they played Christmas carols in shopping centres and at nursing homes. These included Northlakes, Hibiscus, Casuarina Village, Palmerston, Oasis and Nightcliff Shopping Centres. The Nursing Homes included Tracy Aged Care, The Salvation Army and Chan Park at Palmerston.

The Cadets marched in the Bougainvillea Parade, Anzac Day Parade and Festival of Palmerston where they won the award for the 'Best Presented'.

Beckie Kernich was an excellent Drum Major who practiced long and hard swinging the Mace and leading the band when they marched in the parades. Rene and then Ben Graetz played the bass drum when marching.

They performed at Divisional Inspections, District Parades, the National Competitions in Darwin 1990 and the International Cadet Camp 1992.

**Music**

Hogan's Heroes, Star Wars, Disney Medley, Scotland the Brave, Ode to Joy, Click Go the Shears, Botany Bay were some of the favourite tunes played by the Cadets.

**Camps, Sleepovers and Social Events**

Each semester the Cadets had one social event such as a camp during the dry season, dinner out, movie, ice-blocking at the Water Gardens or a sleepover. After the initial camp at Wongabilla Pony Club (1985), the Cadets went to Lake Bennett (1988), Howard Springs Scout Camp (1989 and 1990), Douglas Hot Springs (1991), Golden Sands (1992), and Berry Springs. Sleepovers were usually held at either Darwin Centre or the old Palmerston Ambulance Station.

The favourite game for camps was Storm the Lantern. Cadets excelled at organising their own camp-fire activities. It was a sorry day for Bill Herd when they discovered that he was on his first camping trip. From then on he was on the receiving end of nearly every practical joke in the book. They also told Wayne Snell they were going to cut off his famous Merv Hughes moustache. He was beset upon and tied very firmly to a chair by a number of Cadets who in later years confessed they were only going to cut one hair, but he did put up a strong battle.

The Cadets groaned at the thought of learning how to wash and iron their own uniforms, but thoroughly enjoyed the 'spit and polish' method of achieving an excellent shine on their shoes. This was taught by District Officer Sue Cooper.

We had a saying that 'don't take entertainment, take Evan (Wright)'. Evan's classical guitar playing at the campfire was guaranteed to settle everyone at bed time. This of course was after Evan, Simone Bartlett, Tracy Krajsek, Rene Caldwell and Karon Neely had provided an excellent night of fun and laughter.

During one sleep over half the Cadets went to a live performance at the Darwin Entertainment Centre. It was comical to see the looks of apprehension as about 30 children arrived and filed into their seats. No one in the audience had to worry as the children were mesmerised by the show and as quiet as church mice. For many of these children it was the first time they had been to a performance like this, they were so excited.

At the International Cadet Camp in 1992 the Band was responsible for running the Canteen. This was a huge task and was only achieved with the assistance of the parents.

**Grand Prior Badges**

Grand Prior Badges were awarded to Simone Bartlett and Karen King. This is the highest award for a Cadet.

**Competitions**

Cadets very quickly started winning prizes at competitions which spurred them on even more to go further.

**Divisional Officers, NCOs and Volunteers**

As with every Cadet Division we lacked

divisional officers. Our first officer was Bill Herd who agreed 'only to teach them senior first aid'. Wayne Snell was recruited to 'only teach the Cadets first aid' as was Heather McGowan. None of them were asked to help with social events, paperwork or any other activities but they all saw the kids having so much fun they didn't want to miss out so helped right across the board.

Volunteers were appreciated and valued. Adult members came from other Divisions to assist by giving lectures and helping at social events. Parents helped on divisional nights by helping prepare food, assisting Cadets with badge work and most importantly as Secretary. Our first Secretary was Kaye Bartlett who held that position for a number of years. She was followed by Joy King and then Karen King.

Volunteers included Lionel Crompton, Lesley King, Sally Roberts, Rohan and Kerry Penhale, Dianne and Bill Caldwell, Nerilie Wright, Rosemary and John Carson, Eddie and Naomi Wright, Janelle Orrick, Craig Humfrey, Phil Harrison, Dawn Bat, Sue Cooper, Rod Hocking, Margaret Clarke and many more.

**Format of typical evening**

After the Division grew to the size that we needed to be able to teach our own first aid classes we met from 5.00pm till 9.00pm. There were three levels of musicians: Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced as well as Drummers. They all practiced from 5.00pm to 6.30pm. Tea was from 6.30pm till 7.00pm.

At 7.00pm Cadets went on Parade before heading off to their different classes. There were three Junior Levels, Preliminary First Aid, Home Nursing, Senior First Aid and Skills Maintenance. Final Parade was at 9.00pm. We had wondered if the evening would be too long but the Cadets coped extremely well.

**Meeting places**

Nakara Primary GP Room – excellent as there was a piano. We started out here when there was no need for a kitchen and extra rooms.

Casuarina Ambulance Station – we met at the ambulance station on the few short occasions we were 'homeless'. It was very unsatisfactory to have a band with drums in close proximity to the Ambulance Communications Room which, at that stage was located on that Centre.

Casuarina Baptist Church – was excellent but we were only able to use for a limited time due to the Church's own requirements.

Nakara Pre-School – good as there were many 'corners and rooms' for the many different groups.

Church of the Latter Day Saints – of all the places we met, this suited our needs the best. The building had a large courtyard which meant that Cadets were safe at all time. There were numerous rooms for small groups of players, a kitchen and a hall for the band to practice as a group. Once again our time here came to an end when the church needed the buildings on Fridays.

Duriba Nurri Centre – Henbury Avenue – Once again we found a home that had many of the things we needed but was small.

**Special Memories**

The Cadets soon became interested in the First Aid Competitions and began to take home trophies.

Terence Donovan (Neighbours) attended the 1992 Divisional Inspection and awarded the prizes. This was a wonderful surprise for the Cadets and a befitting reward for all their hard work during the year.

Both Bill Herd (Adults) and Simone Bartlett (Cadets) were part of the Colour Party at a Divisional Inspection.

**Feedback from Officers, Cadets and Parents about their days with the band**

**Kaye Bartlett** – I thoroughly enjoyed my years with the Band Division. I loved the interaction with the Cadets, every week brought something new. I felt privileged to hear them begin to learn a new piece and then progress through to performance level and an immense pride in them the day they marched and played in the Bougainvillea Parade, not an easy feat for a group so young.

**Catherine Bresson** – The Band was always a lot of fun.

**Dawn Bat** – I remember teaching Preliminary First Aid to groups of enthusiastic new members. I enjoyed listening to the Band practice once they had mastered a new tune. (Dawn still talks about meeting Terence Donovan – Pat)

**Beckie Kernich** – I joined the Band when I was introduced to it by Rene Caldwell and I remember riding my bike to practice at Nakara Primary as my parents were not very involved in my endeavours. I mostly played recorder but for a short while I rewrote the tunes so I could play my alto saxophone as well (1988/89). I was Drum Major when we marched as a band in the Bougainvillea Parade and a few other parades. I remember taking incredibly good care of that mace when I took it home and I would practice for hours to get it right for parades. I remember visiting Government House for a function and we played at the Church on Bees Creek Road for a Christmas concert. I went to the Wongabilla camp and also went to the camp at Howard Springs (in 1990 as I had my driver's license then).

At the time I was with the Band I was also with the Casuarina Division, so I remember being very busy at the time. I would ride my bike to band practice first and then back to the Brigade meeting. It all got a bit blurry because I was working towards my Grand Prior Badge at the time too. I did 2000 hours of community service as part of that and I would fit some of that in between school and band practice. A lot of it was at the Harry Giese Centre, near the Dripstone High School.

I remember becoming an NCO while I was still with the Band Division and also being Cadet of the Year. These would have both been in 88, 89 or 90. I think there were a few unique people around at the time I was and it was really a pleasure when I look back on it now.

It was a real pleasure to have a 'family' that I could depend on in those years. When I look back at it my time with SJA gave me some valuable skills for the future. The ability to have some leadership roles and to help to train the juniors in first aid was incredibly empowering and I think Rene and I did a pretty good job in this role. From memory Rene and I became NCOs at the same time and it was always a pleasure to work with her. You were always very encouraging Pat and I appreciate that a lot.

**Batchelor Cadet Division, Superintendent Des Thornton** – the Batchelor Cadet Division, with its relatively small numbers 12 – 18, really enjoyed being at camp with the Band Division. The camps were an opportunity for Batchelor Cadet members to mix with other Cadets and share activities.

**Rohan Penhale** – It has been a long time but I remember the enjoyment on Cadets' faces when they learned a particular skill, a simple thing such as applying a bandage or an arm sling. It may not have always been 100% correctly done or even the right arm or leg being used but it worked and that was the point. With laughs and practice it fell into place very quickly and I bet that those same Cadets who would now be young adults will remember some of those basic first-aid treatments. There for me is the joy, to have been given the privilege to teach youngsters something that they will carry with them throughout life, the basics of "First-Aid". From teaching our Cadets I learned a valuable skill. If you can teach young children you can teach adults. I have used lessons learned from Cadet nights to be able to teach adults "basic first-aid" skills, all over the world, from Australia to Mauritania, from Vietnam to Israel and a few countries in between.

**Matthew Bakunowicz** – It was fun, I enjoyed being in the Band.

**Simone Bartlett** – St John Cadets and the Band Division were a major part of my life during my adolescent years. It was a small close knit group which would meet weekly to practice music, first aid, socialise and have fun. The whole concept of a "Band" is that its members work/play together as a group and this fundamental feature was the basis of the Cadets learning about responsibility, reliability and being a team. The fact that it was enjoyable made it easy. When I think of my time in the Band Division, I think of the friendships I made, performing at many community events, developing skills in music and first aid, and later taking on leadership roles. Many families were involved with

the running of the division which allowed lots of social activities to occur such as camps, going to concerts, sleepovers etc. We were all one big family and when tragedy or misfortune hit our cadets and their family, everyone would pitch in to help out. There are too many fond memories to write down however, I am always thankful that I had that special period in my life.

**Tracy Krajsek** – Band all seems like a world away. Growing up in the Band and Cadets was an adventure, the camping and the activities we did with the different volunteer work, I remember the most ( Oh! and drill, I liked it). The hours of playing music and then performing in our uniforms was a wonderful experience as a kid. (I think we sounded great?? :-) back then I thought we were fantastic. The pride I had when I put on the uniform and the feeling that I could save the world. Still to this day it is the only thing I could or would iron.

A lot of kids would come and go at Cadets, but a lot of us stayed, it was like family. We had so much fun and great times. As we got older it became more serious with doing the advanced courses and important to show the younger Cadets how to help someone in need. Looking back it was fun and exciting, with lots of laughs and friendships made. It gave me a grounding and I am sure has influenced me today.

**Rene Caldwell-Harris (Caldwell)** – fun, different and what I needed at the time to survive!

**Melissa Dash –** I found Cadets to be very fulfilling as a child. I made great friends, went on awesome camps and also got to learn music and first aid.

**Karen's mother Pat King** – Karen was just so keen to play with the Band, she didn't have long to wait but at her young age it must have seemed an eternity. She loved music and at home was practicing many of the tunes the Band played. Like all the children at that time she took pride in what she was doing. I do feel that her time as a Cadet helped her greatly as she moved into adulthood. It was lovely that as an adult she went back to the Band as Secretary.

**Karen Aughterson (King)** – I remember sitting watching the Cadets do their band practice when I was too young to join in. I was so excited and couldn't wait to become old enough to be a junior. I wanted to play the recorder and march just like they did! Eventually I was able to join. Overall my times as a Cadet were some of the best memories of my childhood. I made some great friendships, learnt a lot of practical things and it built my confidence. I always looked forward to Friday nights. It was obvious that all the adults who came to help out cared about us and did everything to make sure we had a great time. After I left Cadets I found that I was missing being a member of St John. Since both parents were involved in St John it had been such a big part of my life since I was born. It was a second home. So when Frank Haydock asked me to take over as secretary after Joy's passing I jumped at the chance. I found the leap from Cadet to Secretary and Divisional Officer an interesting one which I sometimes struggled with, however, seeing the next generation of Band Cadets coming through was really nice. They were a great group of kids and I hear a lot of them have gone on to do really good things with their lives. Looking back on my Cadet years if I had the chance to do it all again I would and I wouldn't change a thing.

**Mitu Kaur's parents –** Mitu learnt discipline that helped her into adult life. She had fun and always enjoyed the music and social events.

**Kerrie Wood (Penhale)** – All my family enjoyed participating. It was a group of wonderful children with no bullying, dishonesty or disrespect. All the children that attended learnt values that are needed in life and blended together to create a group that could work together and have fun. The youngest of my family was not old enough to participate but he made a perfect food inspector and taste tester. He was the food security guard while it was being prepared even though he had to stand on his toes and peep over the edge of the counter.

I have many good memories of the laughter from impromptu concerts and activities at sleepovers. All the children that attended learnt

medical, musical and life skills. They have grown up to become productive adults we can all be proud of. I believe we can thank the wonderful people that gave their time to create a place with fun, positive values and needed skills for achieving this.

**Sonia Jacobs (Ramsay)** – As for me: I remember we all held a lot of pride in our uniforms and their presentation. Shiny shoes were inspected! I remember many hours of music practice along with marching at the Casuarina Station. Many friendships were formed, and apart from playing music and performing we had a lot of fun, not to mention our First Aid education.

I'm a qualified Remedial Massage Therapist specialising in sports injuries, but more recently have been in Human Resources. Great to cast my mind back to some fond memories.

**Chris's mother Pat King –** Chris went from being one of the toddlers at Cadets 'cos mum was there' to being a Cadet in his own right. It was with a huge amount of satisfaction that I watched him growing and becoming involved, learning first aid and playing in the Band. This was a good time for Chris and he too wore his uniform with pride. I don't ever remember having to tell him to hurry up and get ready. On Camps I didn't have to worry about him as he always had someone wanting to look after him although I do remember while they were Storming the Lantern he was used as a decoy! Was that cheating?

**Chris King** – The camps were a lot of fun, especially playing Storm the Lantern at Douglas Hot Springs.

**Evan's mother Nerilie Wright –** Evan loved participating in something different to the usual Darwin activities of sport etc. It suited his musical abilities and intellectual personality and he revelled in the responsibility of assisting at events and being tested in real situations. He was always dressed, organised and ready to go on a Friday night.

**Susannah's mother Sally Bailey (Roberts)** – I played a very small role but thoroughly enjoyed what I did and that Douglas Hot springs camp. Kaye and I put them through their paces so they could earn a library badge (that sounds a bit like Brownies) and I enjoyed that also.

**Susannah (Roberts) MacNaughton** – I remember the camps and sleepovers being the most fun, we all got along so well together and had a similar sense of fun and mischief; Storm the Lantern was always the highlight as was your warm Milo. I enjoyed the fact that our training was so diverse - learning and performing music, marching drills, first aid and volunteering for the Royal Darwin Show, BMX, and childcare centres. Teenage years can be tricky but I think the friendship and support, that came with being a Cadet, was a diversion from undesirable distractions and gave us good grounding for adulthood.

**Ben's mother Adela Graetz** – Ben enjoyed playing in the band and always looked forward to attending. I feel joining the band helped Ben achieve both social and musical skills, which was important in pursuing a successful and rewarding career in Performing Arts.

**Ben Graetz** – I remember marching with the big base Drum and thinking to myself "Please don't fall or trip! Please don't fall or trip!" The camping trips were also a great highlight and memory for me.

**Veronica (Ronnie) Crompton** – Band Division was my second family that I got to see on Friday nights. Being able to play an instrument I loved, combined with learning to save lives, was rewarding to say the least. The camps, sleepovers and duties were educational and heaps of fun. The teachers / trainers / supervisors were all wonderful and I made some great friends of all ages!

**Adam Bakunowicz** – Thoroughly enjoyable experience with a wealth of great people to share it with. The Howard Springs trip was one not to forget ... both the theatrics of Karen King, and Wayne's mo.

**Jackie's father Paul Garbutt** – The one thing that I can remember is that Jackie always loved getting dressed in her uniform and getting that beret' "just

right". I think she was going for the French provincial look.

**Jackie Garbutt** – I was only part of the band for a short time when I was nine years old. I still have my folder and sheet music in the chequered black and white bag, but I haven't played music since. Every now and then if I stumble across a recorder I can still play 'Scotland the Brave' by heart! I remember loving rehearsals and watching you (Pat) count out the music. I always wanted to learn the drums, but I left too soon. My greatest memories were putting on my uniform because I loved the beret, and the time we played at Government House (it was really hot!) and of course Christmas Carols at Casuarina Village. From a nine year olds perspective, I thought we were pretty good.

**Where are they now?**

- ◊ Kaye Bartlett received the St John Priory Vote of Thanks in 1994.
- ◊ Wayne Snell lives in Queensland. After becoming an Ambulance Officer with Queensland Ambulance he went on to work in Occupational Health and Safety.
- ◊ Rohan Penhale says after leaving Darwin he joined an International Oil Drilling company and worked as the rig's Medic and Safety Training Officer for 12 years. He returned to Australia and settled down to driving Public Transport buses in Adelaide, where he lives with his Vietnamese wife and their children.
- ◊ Bill Herd and Heather McGowan both passed away in late 2003.
- ◊ Rene Caldwell worked with St John Ambulance both on road and as an Emergency Medical Dispatcher
- ◊ Simone Bartlett – Emergency Consultant Doctor
- ◊ Tracy Krajsek – Scientist
- ◊ Katherine Miller and Mitu Kaur – Engineers
- ◊ Evan Wright – Psychologist
- ◊ Beckie Kernich – has a degree in Environmental Science and a number of qualifications in other fields.
- ◊ Catherine Bresson played with the Military band for many years
- ◊ Ben Graetz went to NIDA
- ◊ Ardie Docherty became a Social Worker
- ◊ Matthew Bakunowicz received a gift from Oprah Winfrey to help with his work with disadvantaged children, and he also went to AIS to play basketball.

**Handing over to new Superintendent Frank Haydock**

By the end of 1993 Pat King was ready for a break and requested to be placed on the Reserves List. In 1994 Frank Haydock took over as Superintendent. Frank brought to the Division more extensive musical talents so the band now included a wider range of instruments. During that year Joy King passed away and Karen King (former Cadet Band Member) took over the role of Secretary.

**Finally, from Pat King.**

I found my time with the Band Division to be incredibly challenging and hugely rewarding. Organising all the first aid classes for each week, ensuring that all the teachers and equipment were ready, preparing for the Band and organising the food was extremely time consuming. This load lightened when more adults and parents started volunteering to help. It is amazing that we had so much support from parents. Camp and social events were a breeze as the juniors idolised the seniors and the seniors thought the juniors were cute so they were looked after. The middle age group all got on very well together and were very well behaved but still managed to get up to mischief. Yes, they were caught playing strip poker!

For me, there were many highlights which included the honour of providing the entertainment for a Government House Open Day, playing at the National Competitions with the band being congratulated by the Governor General. Playing at the nursing homes and then the interaction between the Cadets and the Golden Oldies although one little old lady squawked to 'get that horrible noise out of here'! Seeing the Cadets marching in parades and playing was a huge achievement especially when they won the award at Palmerston.

We were often referred to as a Friday night

baby-sitting group. We decided if that was how some of the parents saw us, at least the children were learning and having a ton of fun in a positive supportive environment. There were the usual political challenges within the organisation but we were determined that these would not affect the Cadets and did our best to make sure that is the way it was.

During my time with the Band some of the families went through tragedies that no family should ever have to face. The Cadets and their parents rallied around offering support both practical and emotional. They were like one big family.

I thank in particular Lionel Crompton for offering me the challenge, Lesley King for her musical talent and support, Bill Herd, Wayne Snell, Heather McGowan, Rohan Penhale, Kaye Bartlett and Joy King for their commitment to the Division.

The Band Division members had pride in what they did, pride in their performances both musically and first aid and pride in the presentation, how they looked and what they did. We were certainly proud of each and every one of them.

We acknowledge that there were many more Cadets and Adults involved with the Band but regret that this time we were not able to contact everyone. We would like to hear from you so that we have your contact details for future activities relating to the Band Division.

*This report was compiled by Pat King and edited by Kaye Bartlett with thanks to the many who contributed.*

# Alan Caust OStJ JP

It was a cold, windy and rainy night at the old Adelaide airport at West Beach in South Australia. It was mid-1978 and I was about to depart to the tropical city of Darwin in the Northern Territory of Australia. It was close to midnight.

I was scared of such a long journey by myself – I had just turned 20. After three attempts at joining the paid staff in Darwin I had finally achieved my goal. I had been a volunteer for three years on ambulances in South Australia. John Hill (Training Officer) had interviewed me and Warren Burgess (General Manager) had also come down to interview candidates – and failed me miserably with my driving "test"; I had only recently gained my licence.

I had received a letter from Warren – no need to re-apply – just tell me what you are up to with St John Ambulance. It was a fast letter that I sent to him in response. My parents were shocked that I was leaving the nest – I had received a letter of appointment and within it were bookings for my flight, my car was to travel by road train to Darwin – I basically had a week to get organised. As a single guy and with Mum's help I stuffed all my worldly belongings into my car and Dad followed me for its delivery to the trucking mob.

At the airport I bid farewell to my family and friends. It was the last time I saw my Dad. I arrived at 0300 at the old Darwin Airport. As I was crossing the tarmac, I was shedding my winter clothing – sheese, those engines must be hot! They weren't – it was simply the humidity of Darwin. Warren was dressed in shorts and a light shirt. The ceiling fans in the airport were roaring – I had never seen one. Warren drove me to the Baptist Church Hostel and I hit the room that had no air conditioning. By now it was about 0400. I felt like a lost soul and hit the hay. I couldn't sleep because I heard a jolly cockatoo chirping. It wasn't a cockatoo – it was a Gecko!

At about 0800 I wandered down Ross Smith Avenue to the Parap Centre. The first people I was introduced to were Mandy Langdon and Rod Bramley. My career had started!

In this text that Frank Dunstan has kindly put together I feel it more important to relate about the people, rather than cases and experiences. I have contributed many times to our NT *Vollie News* that have been so kindly printed – alongside our NT *Outback Ambulance* magazine.

Parap Centre was basically our Headquarters as Casuarina was still being built. Mandy and Rod were really welcoming. I still recall Mandy saying she knew I was from South Australia – why? – because I had no hair on my knees! She was an ex-nurse (a profession I too later took up) and was one of the communication officers. She was a scream so to speak – I really liked her. Rod too was a nice bloke. He had the difficult job of being the Centre Officer and in many ways treated me like a son. It was taking weeks for my car to arrive and he was about to lend me an old single-stretcher ambulance with the old silver trumpet siren so that I could get around. I am glad my car eventually arrived – because the damn thing was a 3-speed stick on the steering wheel. Even when I drove it – I grated every gear!

Warren had his office located at the front of the centre. Although I feared him – he was the most supportive and wonderful man – as was his wife Joy. He was a no-nonsense sort of guy; he was ex-Army and had been the OIC in Victor Harbour in South Australia. After he left I always remained in contact with him – I admired him because he had a huge impact on my life. One afternoon on a Sunday I was doing a volunteer shift with a Mrs Henderson. We were in car 20Echo. The radio crackled and I was to attend to the General Manager's home address in Casuarina. Crikey I thought – what have I done wrong now! I was always in trouble. I blame it on youth now.

Joy opened the door and ushered me inside their modest home. I knew something was up as Joy had kindly placed two orange juices on the coffee table and quietly closed sliding doors on leaving the room. I was alone with my General Manager.

"Your Mum has rung me; your Dad passed

away this morning." I was shell-shocked. That wonderful man organised flights to Adelaide that very day for me to go home in Adelaide. I still remember flying still in uniform after hurriedly packing. He always looked after us guys and girls. He was strict – but had a heart of gold. I did his Vale in our *Outback Ambulance* Magazine with Joy sending up a pic to be included.

The only time I saw him "grumpy" was when dumb-dumb here, on a volunteer shift, managed to almost blow up an ambulance. We used to store extra "c" size oxygen cylinders in our side lockers. We had an MFA (malicious false alarm) for an MVA (motor vehicle accident) on Bees Creek road – it was dirt back then. We were careening down the dirt in convoy with police and fire appliances. On the return journey I noticed a "c" size oxygen bottle on the road – it had been run over by everyone! I pulled up and ripped down the roadside to find it had a twisted neck and I knew it was a full cylinder. I stared in disbelief back at the ambulance – we had a side locker hanging open. I very carefully placed it on a stretcher in the rear of the ambulance and snuggled it very carefully with belts and blankets. These things are like torpedoes if they rupture with such high pressures – it is liquid oxygen!

Warren came over to the Casuarina centre and nearly blew my own socks off! I will never forget how carefully he decanted the contents until the cylinder was empty. One cool guy! He laughed later as he had a great sense of humour.

They were interesting yet difficult times for a budding new ambulance service after the cyclone in 1974. My own impression remains however – if it weren't for the volunteers in those times – we would definitely not enjoy an ambulance service today that is second to none. I will never ever forget my own beginnings as a volunteer.

# Barbara Klessa

How a small idea grew into a new Division

In mid 2011 two St John Volunteers, Anthony Kleidon and Barbara Klessa, who reside and work in the Darwin Rural area (Litchfield Municipality) were chatting about the fact that the rural area now has in excess of 20,000 residents and an ever growing tourist population. They were chatting about the fact that there was a large geographic divide between the Divisions around Darwin and the next one in the township of Batchelor in Coomalie Shire when they had the bright idea to canvass local rural residents to find out what the interest would be in a St John Division in a fairly remote location.

Off they went to the Acacia Hills Volunteer Bushfire Brigade open day and within a few hours had 34 signatures of interested people.

Looking around for a convenient venue they visited the Livingstone Reserve and were immediately invited to use the facilities for Divisional Meetings, at no charge, until the Division was established. 18 months later we are still there and the Committee do not want any payment as they are delighted to have volunteer first aid locally available.

We started to meet every Tuesday evening and quickly established a group of 9 regular attendees. By November 2011 we were ready to ask people to sign up as members and commence their First Aider and First Responder Accreditation.

Throughout 2012 we continued to meet and to attend public duties. Where possible we do duties in the local rural area and have been seen at rodeos and motor cycle competitions. The main events for two years now has been the responsibility in coordinating first aid for the four day Freds Pass Rural Show and attending a three day remote (very remote) fishing competition run by Rotary International in Kakadu National Park. The local Rotary Club have become supporters of the Litchfield Rural Response Division (LRRD) and we recently took delivery of a complete set of manikins (manikin family) with which to practice CPR and also offer CPR training to local rural residents.

We hope to continue to grow and find a set venue and hopefully have a vehicle at our disposal so we can be called out to attend to scenes when required.

# APPENDICES

**Appendix A** **Peter Falkland Award**

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**Appendix G** **Divisional Formation and Registrations**
Dates when Divisions were formed and registered. Includes volunteer First Aid groups and volunteer Ambulance Services that became St John Ambulance Divisions.

**Appendix H** **Plan for takeover of Darwin ambulance service by St John Ambulance**
Outline of the Department of Health's plan in 1974, from a document provided by Alan Bromwich.

# Appendix A
# Peter Falkland Award

In early 1992 the Chief Commissioner sent out a memorandum to all Districts about the Peter Falkland Award, a memorial to his late predecessor, Major General Peter Falkland. The idea was that Cadets should research and write an essay on a given topic. Completed essays would then be sent to National HQ for judging and the winner would be Peter Falkland Cadet of the year.

Commissioner Baddeley was keen for the Territory to be involved and urged local cadets to submit entries, but without response. Most cadets when asked about the Peter Falkland Award said they had too many school and cadet commitments to take on another time consuming project. The topic probably didn't help, either.

The general feeling within District Staff was that *The Good Samaritan* wasn't a good topic for the modern generation. The Commissioner stated that it was important to encourage entries as the NT had a high profile in other states and to have no entries for the second year in a row was not a good image.

To gather support Commissioner Baddeley spoke to the cadets at the Divisional Inspection on the 16th October on the subject of *The Good Samaritan*. Afterwards there was some interest shown in writing an essay, but cadets expressed concern that there was only one award and there was not a grading for the younger writers. District Superintendent Peter Poole was to approach the Commissioner about an encouragement award for the runner up or some sort of incentive to encourage entries.

In December it was suggested that the Peter Falkland Award essay be written as a group project by the Cadet Divisions and suggestions were put to cadets to write about suitable persons in today's community and the best assignment would be the entry for the Northern Territory.

However, none of this seemed to work and by March 1993 the cadets were still reluctant to prepare essays. Suggestions made to encourage participation included Cadet Proficiency Badge work and school essays. It was also felt that the required subject matter could deter Cadets from writing.

The Commissioner took the Territory's concerns to Priory and returned with the news that the Peter Falkland Award essay had been replaced by a project with a topic chosen by the NT: "Design an Induction Package for Cadets".

Despite this, by October there was still no response and the Commissioner stressed that cadets were to be encouraged to participate and that entries from the NT must be forthcoming.

The next report is from August 1994 when the latest subject was to create an educational game that enhanced first aid knowledge and/or St John knowledge. This was now open to cadets and adults under 21 years and could be a group project assisted by parents and Divisional Officers.

Things were getting anxious in October when the Commissioner stressed the importance of entries from the NT for this award and suggested it be a compulsory project for all Cadet Divisions. District Staff agreed that the cadets needed to be stimulated into action with ideas from Cadet Officers.

It took a lot of time and encouragement, but in May 1995 National Headquarters received three entries, with two being from the Northern Territory. Certificates of Appreciation were issued to all three.

It was finally realised in August 1995 that the Peter Falkland Award was not a success and that it would be replaced by a District Cadet of the Year award. However, this was pretty much *ad hoc* at the moment with no selection criteria or real idea how to go about doing this.

Things move slowly in St John and in December District Staff recommended that Divisions forward nominations with a detailed submission outlining why this Cadet is the best, to be judged by a District panel and the award made. A closing date for

nominations was set at 14th April 1996, in time for selection of a National Cadet of the Year.

As an incentive the Cadet of the Year would have a trip to Priory and to National HQ paid for by St John.

No nominations were received from any Cadet Division. When asked why, Tennant Creek, the only Division recorded as responding replied that they had nobody suitable to nominate.

Finally in June, Darwin Cadet Division sent in a single late entry for Shirley Patterson. Due to the lateness Commissioner Baddeley took the nomination to Priory with the intention of first assessing the quality of other entries before submitting Shirley for the national competition.

The Territory's entry was not submitted and the national award was won by an unnamed NSW Cadet Leader. A letter of congratulations was sent to Shirley Patterson.

All Districts were to follow similar guidelines that would be distributed for the next selection. All Districts ordered lanyards for the Cadet of the Year; gold for ceremonial and red for Divisional meetings. The gold lanyard was to be kept in the Colour Cabinet and issued for ceremonial occasions.

The Commissioner was keen to have this award given a higher profile and CSO (Cadets) Barbara Henderson was to visit Divisions and talk on the award. Deputy Commissioner Lesley King was to talk to members in the Southern Corps Cadet Divisions on her coming visit. Nominations were to be received by the end of November 1996.

Just two nominations were received: Ben Mooney from the Band and Paulo Fernandes of Darwin Cadet Division. Paulo was appointed Cadet of the Year, but things were still pretty much *ad hoc* when it was reported that Barbara Henderson was to contact all Cadet Divisions to ascertain what they thought the duties of the Cadet of the Year should involve.

Paulo was presented his certificate and lanyard at the District Staff Meeting on 15th February 1997, and invited to attend all future meetings. This invitation turned into a demand when the Commissioner noted a month later that Paulo had missed the last two meetings and that perhaps runner up Ben Mooney could attend when Paulo was rostered on at his work.

Well, they finally got around to doing something and the following selection criteria and duties were put forward:

*Selection criteria*

- ◊ The cadet must be efficient in accordance with General Regulations
- ◊ Have a minimum service time of three years with the Division
- ◊ Have a good knowledge of the Divisional structure and observe its internal discipline
- ◊ Have completed Knowledge of the Order proficiency
- ◊ Have displayed initiative within the Division
- ◊ Participated consistently in Divisional activities
- ◊ Personal presentation, integrity and discipline to a high standard.

The award would be open to any Cadet under 21 years who met the criteria.

*Role of Cadet of the Year*

The suggested activities below were formulated in conjunction with Paulo Fernandes and include Australian HQ recommendations per Dr Barry Price (9-7-96).

- ◊ To wear red lanyard for 12 month period and to receive a cloth badge to recognise the award after that time.
- ◊ To wear gold/red aiguillette on ceremonial occasions.
- ◊ To act as Aide de Camp for the Commissioner when required; and for the Chief Commissioner at Priory when requested.
- ◊ AYC affiliation or representative for Division/ District. (AYC reps presently have a two year term and the present thought is that they should be elected by their peers.)
- ◊ Co-ordinate/liaise within the cadet leader project.
- ◊ Be instrumental in recruitment of new cadets; conduct orientation sessions; set up "minder" plan for new members.
- ◊ Visit other Divisions; activity liaison, etc.
- ◊ Write a Cadet newsletter/report for publication.

Now, that's quite a list of duties to impose on somebody after they have received an award, even if Paulo did help with compilation. It's far better to let somebody know beforehand what they are getting themselves in for than to hit them with it afterwards.

It seems that Paulo's work commitments were such that he couldn't attend Priory and visit National HQ and Ben Mooney was asked to stand in for him.

Ben Mooney was named Cadet of the Year for 1998 and Commissioner Baddeley presented his award at the Mess Dinner on 13th December 1997. Additional to his other duties he was also required to act as assistant to the Cadet Co-ordinator throughout the year.

The Cadet of the Year award was short lived in its current form and in August 1998 the Commissioner requested that Cadet Divisions commence the process of choosing a Cadet to be nominated for the Peter Falkland Memorial Award. Divisions were reminded that it was not to be called the Cadet of the Year Award. Nominations closed on 1st October, to be presented to the November District meeting.

Michael Holmes was named as winner of the Peter Falkland Memorial Award for 1999.

Subsequent winners:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2000 | *nil* | |
| 2001 | Peter Williams | Alice Springs |
| 2002 | Kate Anning | Alice Springs |
| 2003 | Emily Macmillan | Humpty Doo |
| 2004 | Sara Rilstone | Alice Springs |
| 2005 | Amali Laine | Kormilda |
| 2006 | Michael Hatfield | Band |
| 2007 | Amy McKay | Band |
| 2008 | Claire Chandler | Band |
| 2009 | Karl Staben | Palmerston |
| 2010 | Julie Murray | Palmerston |
| 2011 | Leanne Eltagonde | Palmerston |
| 2012 | Hailee Skinner | Youth |
| 2013 | Sarah McLaughlin | Band |

A separate Cadet Volunteer of the Year was introduced in 2000, together with new Adult Volunteer of the Year and Division of the Year awards.

In 2009 the Award was changed to *Peter Falkland Youth Leader of the Year* with these criteria:

The Peter Falkland Youth Leader Award is open to members of Operations Branch between the age of 16 and 25 years. The essential selection guidelines for candidates for the Award are as follows. They must:

- ◊ be of a minimum age of 16 years;
- ◊ have completed three years of membership;
- ◊ have a minimum of six proficiency certificates achieved (or equivalent demonstration of learning and skills development);
- ◊ have completed a minimum of 150 hours of service (public duty, other volunteer, meeting hours training hours);
- ◊ have completed a leadership course (Cadet NCO, CMDP or equivalent);
- ◊ have not previously won this award;
- ◊ have well developed leadership, inter-personal and communication skills and ability to represent the cadet movement

# Appendix B
# Cadet Awards
## Grand Prior Badge, Commissioner's Award and Special Service Shield

### Grand Prior Badge

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1981 | Anne Hoschke | Darwin |
| | Peter Hoschke | Darwin |
| 1985 | Johanna Van Den Berghe | Sanderson |
| 1986 | Jacinta Francis | Darwin |
| | Minas Petrelis | Darwin |
| | Helen Proudfoot | Casuarina |
| 1987 | Linda Lee | Sanderson |
| | Florent Alcidi | Casuarina |
| 1988 | Sharon Cain | Sanderson |
| | Selso Lobo | Sanderson |
| | Michael Petrelis | Darwin |
| | Kathryn White | Sanderson |
| 1990 | Robert Ashby | Alice Springs |
| | Beckie Kernich | Casuarina |
| | Kelly Scholz | Darwin |
| 1991 | Kathlene Doult | Sanderson |
| 1992 | Paul Mellor | Darwin |
| 1994 | Terina Bailey | Darwin |
| | Catherine Clarke | Band |
| | Danusha Cubillo | Darwin |
| | Mary Simonato | Darwin |
| | Simone Bartlett | Band |
| | Karen King | Band |
| 1996 | Kylie Garland | Darwin |
| | Andrew Hebbron | Darwin |
| | Tessa Cubillo | Darwin |
| | Romaine Oorloff | Darwin |
| 1997 | Ben Mooney | Band |
| | Peter Morris | Band |
| 2000 | Kelly Robinson | Darwin |
| 2001 | Makaylia Bretag | Palmerston |
| 2002 | Kathryn Ainsworth | Humpty Doo |
| | Kate Anning | Alice Springs |
| 2003 | Jonathan Haslett | Band |
| | Khalia Hutchins | Humpty Doo |
| | Emily Macmillan | Humpty Doo |
| | John Payne | Humpty Doo |
| | Sheryl Watson | Darwin |
| 2004 | Timothy Blott | Humpty Doo |
| | Lauren Jacobsen | Humpty Doo |
| | Brooke Chin | Darwin |
| | Nerissa Brumby | Darwin |
| 2005 | Mitchell Carlos | Darwin |
| | Madeleine Haslett | Darwin |
| | Natasha Watson | Darwin |
| | Rebecca Colangelo | Kormilda |
| | Rachel Francis | Darwin |
| | Kristian Andersson | Darwin |
| | Jason Francis | Darwin |
| 2007 | Claire Chandler | Band |
| | Julie Murray | Palmerston |
| 2008 | Shaun Washington | Humpty Doo |
| | Geraldine Turner | Palmerston |
| | Rachel Fox | Band |
| | Alex Haslett | Band |
| 2010 | Christina Francis | Darwin |
| | Krystal Kent | Darwin |
| | Hailee Skinner | Humpty Doo |
| | Michelle Watson | Darwin |
| 2012 | Hayley Cockman | Humpty Doo |
| | Emily Colbran | Youth |
| | Leanne Eltagonde | Youth |
| | Christine Gardiner | Youth |
| | Kristy Janssen | Alice Springs |
| | Angela Murray | Youth |
| | Samara Staben | Youth |
| | Shannon Raven | Youth |

## Commissioner's Badge

| Date | Name | Division |
|---|---|---|
| 20 May 2005 | Geraldine Turner | Band |
| 14 Dec 2005 | Ben Ellis | Alice Springs |
| 21 Sep 2006 | Shaye Talbot | Alice Springs |
| 13 Mar 2007 | Tara Poulton | Alice Springs |
| 16 May 2007 | Louise Jettner | Band |
| 25 Sep 2007 | Alexandria Chin | Band |
| 23 Feb 2009 | Gemma Grey | Band |
| 7 Dec 2009 | Blade Thorne | Alice Springs |
| 26 Dec 2010 | Luke McLaughlin | Band |
| 14 May 2012 | Lowitja Knight | Alice Springs |
| 14 May 2012 | Kara Korman | Alice Springs |
| 14 May 2012 | Kaylyn O'Dwyer | Alice Springs |

The Commissioner's Badge is awarded to a St John Junior on obtaining nine Interest Certificates, one of which must be 'Knowledge of the Order'. When the Junior becomes a Cadet, the Commissioner's Badge may be worn on the Cadet uniform.

Juniors who have become Cadets can continue working for their Commissioner's Badge up to their 13th birthday.

## Special Service Shields

| Year | Name | Division | Hours |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1986 | Linda Lee | Sanderson | 1000 |
| 1987 | Leanne Schneider | Casuarina | 1000 |
| 1992 | Danusha Cubillo | Darwin | 1000 |
| 1993 | Danusha Cubillo | Darwin | 1200 |
| 1995 | Tessa Cubillo | Darwin | 1000 |
| 1996 | Tessa Cubillo | Darwin | 1500 |
| 1997 | Tessa Cubillo | Darwin | 2000 |
| 2008 | Sarah McLaughlin | Band | 1000 |
| 2009 | Geraldine Turner | Palmerston | 1000 |
| 2012 | Geraldine Turner | Palmerston | 2000 |

Special Service Shields are worn over the right pocket and range from 100 hours to 2000 hours.

# Appendix C
# Commissioner's Awards

At the Annual Parade on 14th October 2000, new awards were introduced for Volunteer of the Year and Division of the Year with the inaugural winners being:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Adult Volunteer of the Year: | Jan Rowell | Darwin Adult Division |
| Cadet Volunteer of the Year: | Jonathan Haslett | Cadet Band |
| Adult Division of the Year: | Tennant Creek | |
| Cadet Division of the Year: | Humpty Doo | |

Service Medals and bars awarded:

| | |
|---|---|
| 12 Years: | Rod Hocking, Frank Haydock, Jan Rowell, Dawn Bat, Bruce Jones, Sonya Arnold |
| 17 Years: | Alan Talbot, Ros Jones, Noel Talbot |
| 22 Years: | Brian Carnegie-Smith, Steve Peers, Pat McQuillen |
| 27 Years: | Joan Hunt |
| 32 Years: | Phil Langdon, Marian Grayden |

Harry Murphy was presented a Certificate of Appreciation for his assistance with covering public duties.

**2001**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Adult Volunteer of the Year: | Vicki Macmillan | Humpty Doo Cadet Division |
| Cadet Volunteer of the Year: | Kylie Munro | Cadet Band |
| Adult Division of the Year: | Katherine | |
| Cadet Division of the Year: | Cadet Band | |

Service Medals and bars awarded:

| | |
|---|---|
| 12 Years: | Kevin Blake |
| 17 Years: | Ed Sinclair, Sue Cooper, Lenaire Keatch, Alan Caust |
| 22 Years: | Lesley King, Peter Poole |

**2002**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Adult Volunteer of the Year: | Frank Dunstan | Humpty Doo Adult Division |
| Cadet Volunteer of the Year: | Susan Rosenzweig | Palmerston Cadet Division |
| Adult Division of the Year: | Humpty Doo | |
| Cadet Division of the Year: | Alice Springs | |

Service Medals and bars awarded:

| | |
|---|---|
| 12 Years: | Glen Denmeade, Bruce Wilde |
| 17 Years: | Simon Spillett, Des Thornton |

| | |
|---|---|
| Certificates of Appreciation: | Glen Denmeade, John Carman, Shane Burry, Linda Fazldean, Liz Talbot, Doug Smith (NT Police), Vanessa Cutriss (Kormilda College) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Commissioner's Commendation: | Byron May, Kate Anning | |
| Ambulance Employees Australia (AEA) Annual Cadet Award: | | |
| | Ross Jacobsen | Humpty Doo Cadet Division |
| Commissioner's Cup for Katherine to Darwin Bike Ride: | | Rosie Ballinger |
| Bike Ride Encouragement Award: | | Kasey Ballinger |

**2003**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Adult Volunteer of the Year: | Dawn Bat | Territory Officer Special Projects |
| Cadet Volunteer of the Year: | Amy Polkinghorne | Alice Springs Cadet Division |
| Adult Division of the Year: | Palmerston | |
| Cadet Division of the Year: | Humpty Doo | |

Service Medals and bars awarded:

| | |
|---|---|
| 12 Years: | Romaine Oorloff, Craig Garraway |
| 17 Years: | Andrew Hodges, Craig Humfrey |
| 27 Years: | Brian Carnegie-Smith, Patricia McQuillen |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ambulance Union Award: | John Payne | Humpty Doo Cadet Division |

**2004**

There were no Volunteer Recognition awards this year.

**2005**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Adult Volunteer of the Year: | Christine Turner | Darwin Adult Division |
| Cadet Volunteer of the Year: | Amy McKay | Cadet Band |
| Adult Division of the Year: | Batchelor | |
| Cadet Division of the Year: | Alice Springs | |

Service Medals and bars awarded:

| | |
|---|---|
| 12 Years: | Pat Murray, Paul Maybank |
| 17 Years: | Frank Haydock, Jan Rowell, Christine Turner, Rod Hocking |

**2006**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Adult Volunteer of the Year: | Justin Hankinson | Tennant Creek Adult Division |
| Cadet Volunteer of the Year: | Claire Chandler | Cadet Band |
| Adult Division of the Year: | Humpty Doo | |
| Cadet Division of the Year: | Cadet Band | |

Service Medals and bars awarded:

| | |
|---|---|
| 12 Years: | Wayne Bevan, Ian Castle, Richard Skinner, Glen Auricht |
| 17 Years: | Rod Hocking, Bruce Jones, Kevin Blake |
| 22 Years: | Lenaire Keatch, Des Thornton |
| 27 Years: | Lesley King, Peter Poole |

**2007**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Adult Volunteer of the Year: | Greg Payne | Humpty Doo Adult Division |
| Cadet Volunteer of the Year: | Michelle Ellis | Alice Springs Cadet Division |
| Adult Division of the Year: | Darwin | |
| Cadet Division of the Year: | Cadet Band | |

Service Medals and bars awarded:

| | |
|---|---|
| 17 Years: | Romaine Oorloff |
| 22 Years: | Angie Butler, Bruce Jones, Simon Spillett, Christine Turner |
| 27 Years: | Ros Jones |

**2008**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Adult Volunteer of the Year: | Geoff Kain | Alice Springs Adult Division |
| Cadet Volunteer of the Year: | Sarah McLaughlin | Cadet Band |
| Adult Division of the Year: | Alice Springs | |
| Cadet Division of the Year: | Palmerston | |

Service Medals and bars awarded:

| | |
|---|---|
| 12 Years: | Virginia Dowson, Martin Scaife, Justin Hankinson |
| 17 Years: | Craig Garraway, Steven Bone |
| 22 Years: | Noel Talbot |

Commissioner's Commendations: Geoff Lohmeyer and Sherry Crowley, Katherine Adult Division for their work attending a helicopter crash at Mataranka.

McLaughlin Family (Narelle, Sarah, Luke and Hayley) of Cadet Band Division for assisting with a motorcycle accident on their way to Divisional training.

**2009**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Adult Volunteer of the Year: | Brett (Benny) Butler | Palmerston Adult Division |
| Cadet Volunteer of the Year: | Leanne Eltagonde | Palmerston Cadet Division |
| Adult Division of the Year: | Palmerston | |
| Cadet Division of the Year: | Palmerston | |

Service Medals and bars awarded:

| | |
|---|---|
| 12 Years: | Makaylia Ravlich, Marcel Clark |
| 22 Years: | Dawn Bat |
| 32 Years: | Steve Peers |
| 42 Years: | Phil Langdon |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Commissioner's Commendation: | Arnah Holland | Marrara Cadet Division |

**2010**

A new award of Operational Support Member of the Year was introduced to recognise non uniformed members who mostly work unnoticed in the background.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Adult Volunteer of the Year: | Kimberlee McKay | Territory Officer Cadets |
| Cadet Volunteer of the Year: | Kristy Janssen | Alice Springs Cadet Division |
| Operational Support Member of the Year: | | |
| | Frank Dunstan | *Vollie News* editor |
| Adult Division of the Year: | Nhulunbuy | |
| Cadet Division of the Year: | Tennant Creek | |

Service Medals and bars awarded:

| | |
|---|---|
| 12 Years: | Paul Berry, Sheryl Rossiter |
| 17 Years: | Pat Murray, Adrian Rossiter, Paul Maybank |
| 27 Years: | Angie Butler |

**2011**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Adult Volunteer of the Year: | Paul Berry | Territory Officer |
| Cadet Volunteer of the Year: | Bianca Stubbs | Katherine |
| Operational Support Member of the Year: | | |
| | Rosie Ballinger | Palmerston Cadet Division |
| Adult Division of the Year: | Palmerston | |
| Cadet Division of the Year: | Darwin | |

Service Medals and bars awarded:

| | |
|---|---|
| 37 Years | Alan Bromwich |
| 32 Years: | Lesley King, Dr Lionel Crompton, Peter Poole |
| 27 Years | Chief Justice Trevor Riley, Lenaire Keatch |
| 22 Years | Michael Mooney |
| 17 Years | Wayne Bevan, Stephen Baddeley, Glen Auricht |
| 12 Years | Stuart Anderson, Geoff Kain, Kate Anning |

**2012**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Adult Volunteer of the Year: | Barbara Klessa | Litchfield Rural Response Division |
| Cadet Volunteer of the Year: | Christine Gardiner | Youth Division |
| Operational Support Member of the Year: | | |
| | Kirah Gustafson | Community Care |
| Adult Division of the Year: | Palmerston | |
| Cadet Division of the Year: | Palmerston | |

Service Medals and bars awarded:

| | |
|---|---|
| 32 Years | Ros Jones |
| 27 Years | Dawn Bat, Christine Turner, Simon Spillett |

# Appendix D

# The Order of St John in the Northern Territory

Including Priory Votes of Thanks (PVT)

| Year Gazetted | Name | Award | Position in St John |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1955 | G. Norman Bradbury | PVT | Corps Superintendent |
| 1966 | Roger L. Dean | Commander | President, St John NT Council |
| | Dr William Langsford | Officer | Deputy Commissioner/ Council Chairman |
| 1968 | Jack O'Hare | PVT | ex DS Darwin Division |
| | Yvonne Hansen | PVT | Alice Springs |
| 1969 | Roger L. Dean CBE | Knight of Grace | Northern Territory Administrator<br>President, St John NT Council |
| 1970 | Dr William Langsford | Commander | Deputy Commissioner/ Council Chairman |
| | Alan James | PVT | St John NT Council/Auxiliary President |
| 1971 | Kevin Kettle | Serving Brother | Corps Staff Officer |
| 1974 | Dr Colin Mills | Officer | Deputy Commissioner |
| 1975 | St John Ambulance Brigade NT Sub-District | PVT | Cyclone Tracy |
| 1976 | Warren Burgess | Officer | Manager/District Superintendent |
| | Brian Young | Officer | St John NT Council |
| | Tom Abbott | Officer | St John NT Council |
| | Alan Bromwich | Serving Brother | District Surgeon |
| 1977 | Dr Charles Gurd CBE | Commander | President St John NT Council |
| | John England ED | Commander | NT Administrator/Patron |
| | Mrs Polly England | Commander | Patroness |
| | Richard Morris | Officer | Chairman St John NT Council |
| | Rodney Bramley | Serving Brother | District Staff Officer |
| | Grant Keetley | Serving Brother | Corps Superintendent |
| | Teerse Stal | Serving Brother | District Staff Officer |
| | Joy Burgess | Serving Sister | Sergeant, Casuarina |
| | Marian Grayden | Serving Sister | District Nursing Officer |
| | Joan Boyt-Cullis | PVT | Alice Springs |
| | Clement Edwards | PVT | DS Adelaide River |
| | Doreen Kerr | PVT | OAC Darwin |
| | Glanville Lindholm | PVT | DS Alice Springs |

| Year Gazetted | Name | Award | Position in St John |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1978 | Desmond Hyde | Serving Brother | St John NT Council |
| | Frank Simmons | Serving Brother | Corps Staff Officer |
| | Bernice Dahlenburg | Serving Sister | DO Casuarina |
| | Dr Ellen Stack CBE JP | Serving Sister | St John NT Councillor |
| | Albert Albany | PVT | Donor |
| | Rotary Club of Darwin | PVT | |
| | Rotary Club of Darwin North | PVT | |
| | Rotary Club of Darwin South | PVT | |
| | Lions Club of Darwin | PVT | |
| | Lions Club of Nightcliff | PVT | |
| | Lions Club of Casuarina | PVT | |
| | Sister Ellen Pitts | PVT | DS Adelaide River |
| | Keith Cavill | PVT | |
| | Boyne Litchfield | PVT | DS Batchelor—retired |
| 1979 | Rt. Rev. Kenneth Mason | Chaplain | |
| | Alan Bromwich | Officer | Commissioner |
| | Very Rev. Clyde Wood | Officer (Sub-Chaplain) | |
| | Lionel Crompton | Serving Brother | District Surgeon |
| | John Hill | Serving Brother | District Staff Officer |
| | Robert Brennan | PVT | CS Northern Corps |
| | Glen Hogben | PVT | OAC Tennant Creek |
| | Phillip Langdon | PVT | OAC Howard Springs |
| | Employees and Staff, Peko-Wallsend – Warrego Mines | PVT | |
| 1980 | Dr Charles Gurd CMG CBE | Knight of Grace | President St John NT Council |
| | Commodore Eric Johnston | Commander | NT Administrator/Patron |
| | Joan Johnston | Commander | Patroness |
| | Geoffrey Stolz | Serving Brother | St John NT Councillor |
| | Peter Tedder | Serving Brother | St John NT Councillor |
| | Doreen Kerr | Serving Sister | DS Darwin |
| | Ellen Pitts | Serving Sister | DS Adelaide River |
| | Gordon Milne | PVT | Darwin |
| | Peter Tregonning | PVT | |
| | Maureen Langdon | PVT | DNO Darwin |
| | Peter Smart | PVT | Alice Springs |
| | Joan Hunt | PVT | Alice Springs |

| Year Gazetted | Name | Award | Position in St John |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1981 | Grant Keetley | Officer | District Superintendent |
| | Brian Males | Serving Brother | CS Southern Corps |
| | Alan Markham | PVT | Building Fund Appeal Director |
| 1982 | Dr David Kerry Kirke | Serving Brother | Deputy Commissioner |
| | Phillip Langdon | Serving Brother | DS Howard Springs |
| | Victor Perkins | Serving Brother | St John NT Councillor |
| | Ian Spooner | Serving Brother | District Secretary |
| 1983 | Richard Morris | Commander | St John NT Council Chairman |
| | Norman Bartlett | Serving Brother | CSO Southern Corps |
| | Colin Burden | Serving Brother | GM/Secretary to Council |
| | Lindsay King | Serving Brother | DAO Casuarina |
| | Trevor Riley | Serving Brother (Assoc) | St John NT Councillor |
| | Maureen Langdon | Serving Sister | Corps Ambulance Officer |
| | Alistair Bailey | PVT | St John NT Council Treasurer |
| | Stephen Peers | PVT | CS Southern Corps |
| | Gregory Hoffman | PVT | St John NT Council |
| | John Fillmore | PVT | St John NT Council |
| | Wayne Dillon | PVT | DS Jabiru |
| | Gordon Bowman | PVT | District Staff Officer |
| 1984 | Commodore Eric Johnston | Knight of Grace | Patron |
| | Rt. Rev. Clyde Wood | Chaplain | |
| | Alan Bromwich | Commander | St John Council |
| | Dr Lionel Crompton | Officer | Commissioner |
| | Very Rev. Murray Johnson | Sub-Chaplain | |
| | Clem Larcombe | Serving Brother | DS Katherine |
| | Garry Schoolmeester | Serving Brother | District Officer |
| | Lesley King | Serving Sister | District Nursing Officer |
| | Ayers Rock Combined Division | PVT | Inland Motel disaster |
| | Lions Club of Darwin | PVT | |
| | Mr P Gilmartin | PVT | |

| Year Gazetted | Name | Award | Position in St John |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1985 | Rodney Bramley | Officer | District Ambulance Officer |
| | Victor Perkins | Officer | St John NT Council Deputy Chairman |
| | Dr Ellen Stack | Officer | St John NT Councillor |
| | Malcolm Aslin | Serving Brother | |
| | Alistair Bailey | Serving Brother | St John NT Council Treasurer |
| | Craig Cousins | Serving Brother | CS Northern Corps |
| | Rees Van der Molen | Serving Brother | Various incl. DS Katherine |
| | Red Cross Society Blood Bank | PVT | |
| 1986 | Colin Burden | Officer | Deputy Commissioner |
| | John Fillmore | Serving Brother | St John NT Council Treasurer |
| | Dr Gerald Goodhand | Serving Brother | District Surgeon |
| | Richard Holt | Serving Brother | DSO Cadets |
| | David Rosenberg | Serving Brother | Ex-Casuarina Combined |
| | Grant Wiggins | Serving Brother | DS Nhulunbuy |
| 1987 | Marian Grayden | Officer | District Nursing Officer |
| | Steve Peers | Serving Brother | DSO Southern |
| | Robert Tremethick | Serving Brother | CSO |
| | Dr Keith Solomon | Serving Brother | St John Council |
| | Norman Turner | Serving Brother | Reserve—ex DS Darwin & Sanderson Cadets |
| | Edeline Sinclair | Serving Sister | DSO Training |
| | Barbara Henderson | Serving Sister | DS Darwin Cadets |
| | Jessica Hoschke | Serving Sister | Casuarina |
| | Tennant Creek Lions Club | PVT | |
| 1988 | Lindsay King | Officer | Darwin |
| | James Bell MBE | Officer | Endowment Trust |
| | Frank Hoschke | Serving Brother | Casuarina |
| | Hanns Glenn Getzin | Serving Brother | CSO / OIC Darwin Adult Division |
| | Peter Poole | Serving Brother | Darwin |
| | Roslyn Jones | Serving Sister | DS Batchelor |
| | Christine Nathanael | Serving Sister | Palmerston and Rural |
| | Lena Abbott | PVT | CSO |
| | Reginald Burgess | PVT | |
| | Lucy Cooper | PVT | Darwin |
| | Peter Hoschke | PVT | Casuarina |
| | Peter Simms | PVT | Alice Springs |

| Year Gazetted | Name | Award | Position in St John |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1989 | James Muirhead QC | Knight of Grace | NT Administrator/Deputy Prior |
| | Richard Morris | Knight of Grace | St John NT Council Chairman |
| | Margaret Muirhead | Commander | Patron |
| | Bruce Perkins AM | Commander | St John NT Council President |
| | Dr Lionel Crompton | Commander | Commissioner |
| | Gordon Bowman | Serving Brother | DSO (Training & Competitions) |
| | Brian Carnegie-Smith | Serving Brother | Katherine |
| | Tony Oxford | Serving Brother | Various, incl. DS Palmerston & Tennant Creek |
| | Peter Simms | Serving Brother | Alice Springs |
| | Graeme Rayson | Serving Brother | Regional Superintendent Barkly |
| | Susan Cooper | Serving Sister | CSO |
| | Leonie Harvey | Serving Sister | District Secretary |
| | Joan Hunt | Serving Sister | Alice Springs Cadets |
| 1990 | Dr Ellen Stack | Commander | St John NT Council |
| | Lesley King | Officer | District Superintendent |
| | Peter Butler | Serving Brother | General Manager |
| | Patricia King | PVT | DS Cadet Band |
| | Frank Haydock | PVT | CSO |
| | Edward Wright | PVT | OIC Darwin |
| 1991 | Dr Keith Solomon | Officer | St John NT Council |
| | Trevor Riley | Officer (Assoc) | St John NT Council |
| | Walter Talbot | Serving Brother | DS Katherine |
| | Wayne Dillon | Serving Brother | Corps Superintendent |
| | Toni Gullefer | PVT | OAC Palmerston |
| | Patricia Broderick | PVT | Darwin |
| | Eileen Calway-Pridham | PVT | Southern Corps Ambulance Officer |
| | Patricia McQuillen | PVT | Alice Springs |
| | Christine Turner | PVT | Palmerston and Rural |
| | Noel Talbot | PVT | Alice Springs |
| 1992 | Alan Bromwich | Knight of Grace | St John NT Council |
| | Margaret Muirhead | Dame of Grace | Patron |
| | Clement Larcombe | Officer | Regional Superintendent Katherine/TC |
| | Barbara Henderson | Officer | DSO Cadets |
| | Stephen Baddeley | Officer | Commissioner |
| | Rt Rev Richard Appleby | Chaplain | |
| | Michael Mooney | Serving Brother | St John NT Council |
| | Gordon Milne | Serving Brother | Cadet Bamd |

| Year Gazetted | Name | Award | Position in St John |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1992 | Lucy Cooper | Serving Sister | Darwin Division Nursing Officer |
| | Patricia King | Serving Sister | DS Cadet Band |
| | Kaye Bartlett | PVT | |
| | Fritz Risler | PVT | Darwin |
| 1993 | Austin Asche AC QC | Knight of Grace | NT Administrator/Deputy Prior |
| | Dr Valerie Asche | Dame of Grace | Patron |
| | Stephen Peers | Officer | Superintendent Southern Corps |
| | Peter Poole | Officer | District Superintendent |
| | Edeline Sinclair | Officer | DSO |
| | Bernard Kilgariff OAM | Serving Brother | St John NT Council |
| | Patricia McQuillen | Serving Sister | Alice Springs |
| | Craig Humfrey | PVT | Darwin |
| | Bruce Jones | PVT | Batchelor |
| 1994 | Dean Michael Chiplin | Sub-Chaplain | |
| | Dr John Edgar | Serving Brother | District Surgeon |
| | Noel Talbot | Serving Brother | Alice Springs |
| | Peter Winckler | Serving Brother | Corps Superintendent |
| | Dean Franklin | PVT | Darwin cadets |
| | Robert Mariotti | PVT | |
| | Romaine Oorloff | PVT | Darwin Cadets |
| | Janice Rowell | PVT | Darwin |
| | Mary Simonato | PVT | Darwin Cadets |
| 1995 | *Nil for this year* | | |
| 1996 | Dr Lionel Crompton | Knight of Grace | St John NT Council |
| | Bernie Kilgariff | Commander | St John NT Council |
| | Dr Keith Solomon | Commander | St John NT Council |
| | Trevor Riley | Commander (Assoc) | St John NT Council |
| | Michael Mooney | Officer | St John NT Council |
| | Robert Tremethick | Officer | DSO |
| | Michael Barrett | Serving Brother | St John NT Council |
| | Bruce Jones | Serving Brother | Batchelor |
| | Dawn Bat | PVT | DS Palmerston Cadets |
| | Joy King | PVT | Secretary, Cadet Band |
| | Andrew Hodges | PVT | District Treasurer |
| | Des Thornton | PVT | DS Alice Springs Cadets |
| | Glen Denmeade | PVT | CSO |

| Year Gazetted | Name | Award | Position in St John |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1997 | Dr Neil Conn AO | Knight of Grace | NT Administrator/Deputy Prior |
| | Mrs Lesley Conn | Dame of Grace | Patron |
| | Stephen Baddeley | Commander | Commissioner |
| | Marian Grayden | Commander | DSO |
| | Tony Oxford | Officer | Regional Manager Darwin |
| | David Baker | Serving Brother | General Manager |
| | Janice Rowell | Serving Sister | DO Darwin |
| | Colleen Grave | PVT | DS Alice Springs |
| | Patrick Murray | PVT | Darwin |
| | Jeffrey Baker | PVT | Nhulunbuy |
| | Donna Stone | PVT | DS Batchelor |
| | Ian Castle | PVT | Batchelor |
| | Richard Skinner | PVT | Batchelor |
| 1998 | Peter Poole | Commander | DS Darwin |
| | Patricia McQuillen | Officer | TO Alice Springs |
| | Frank Haydock | Serving Brother | DS Cadet Band |
| | Denise Jeffries | PVT | Avon Downs |
| 1999 | Joan Johnston AO | Dame of Grace | Patroness/Patron 1981-1989 |
| | Andrew Hodges | Officer | Commissioner |
| | Bishop Philip Freier | Chaplain | |
| | Brendan Quirke | Serving Brother | Training Manager |
| | Craig Garraway | Serving Brother | Deputy Regional Manager Southern |
| | Neil Weeks | Serving Brother | St John NT Council |
| 2000 | Noel Talbot | Officer | TO Cadets |
| | Patrick Murray | Serving Brother | DO Darwin |
| | Ross Coburn | Serving Brother | District Treasurer |
| | Rod Hocking | Serving Brother | Territory Sergeant Major |
| | Dana Dobrowska | PVT | Admin Support for Cadets |
| | Brian Maden | PVT | Ex DS Humpty Doo Cadets |
| | Diana Munro | PVT | Territory Officer |
| 2001 | John Anictomatis AO | Knight of Grace | NT Administrator/Deputy Prior |
| | Jeanette Anictomatis | Dame of Grace | Patron |
| | Susan Cooper | Officer | Territory Superintendent |
| | Janice Rowell | Officer | DO Darwin |
| | Alan Caust | Officer | Territory Officer |
| | Lenaire Keatch | Serving Sister | Katherine |
| | Kevin Blake | Serving Brother | Katherine |
| | Glen Denmeade | Serving Brother | Territory Officer Administration |
| | Simon Spillett | Serving Brother | Darwin |

| Year Gazetted | Name | Award | Position in St John |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2002 | Lesley King | Commander | Deputy Commissioner |
| | Michael Mooney | Commander | St John NT Council Chairman |
| | Steve Peers | Commander | Territory Officer Remote Area Liaison |
| | Dawn Bat | Serving Sister | Territory Officer Special Projects |
| | Romaine Oorloff | Serving Sister | DO Darwin Cadets |
| 2003 | David Baker | Officer | General Manager |
| | Annetta Albanese | PVT | Training |
| | Robert "Henry"Lawson | PVT | DS Alice Springs |
| 2004 | Ted Egan AO | Knight of Grace | NT Administrator/Deputy Prior |
| | Nerys Evans | Dame of Grace | Patron |
| | Frank Haydock | Officer | Territory Officer Administration |
| | Donna Stone | Serving Sister | Ex DS Batchelor |
| | Sylvia Klonaris | Serving Sister | Training Admin. |
| | Vicki Macmillan | Serving Sister | DS Humpty Doo Cadets |
| | Kenneth Grayden | PVT | Darwin Division 1960s/1970s |
| | Linda Haslett | PVT | Cadet Band |
| 2005 | Andrew Hodges | Commander | Commissioner |
| | Brian Carnegie-Smith | Officer | Katherine |
| | Christine Turner | Serving Sister | Darwin |
| | Sonya Arnold | Serving Sister | Operations Branch member |
| | Rosemary Ballinger | PVT | Palmerston Cadets secretary |
| | Makaylia Bretag | PVT | DO Palmerston Cadets |
| | John Carman | PVT | Affiliate member of Darwin Division |
| | Justin Hankinson | PVT | DS Tennant Creek |
| 2006 | Ross Coburn | Officer | St John NT Council Secretary |
| | Roslyn Jones | Officer | Batchelor |
| | Brendan Quirke | Officer | Manager Education & Training Services |
| | Roland Chin | Serving Brother | St John NT Council Treasurer |
| | Michael McKay | Serving Brother | Territory Officer Training |
| | Richard Skinner | Serving Brother | Batchelor |
| | Gwyn Balch | Serving Sister | Volunteer Coordinator |
| | Debbie Downs | Serving Sister | Executive Secretary |
| | Kay Gargett | Serving Sister | Personnel Officer |
| | Dr Janice Schmitzer | Serving Sister | St John NT Council |
| | Paul Berry | PVT | Territory Officer |
| | Greg Payne | PVT | DS Humpty Doo |

| Year Gazetted | Name | Award | Position in St John |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2007 | Bernard Kilgariff AO JP | Knight of Grace | St John NT Councillor |
| | Michael Mooney | Knight of Grace | St John NT Council Chairman |
| | Tom Pauling QC | Knight of Grace | NT Administrator/Deputy Prior |
| | Tessa Pauling | Dame of Grace | Patron |
| | Noel Talbot | Commander | Territory Officer Cadets |
| | Paul Berry | Serving Brother | Territory Officer Info Technology |
| | Gregory Payne | Serving Brother | DS Humpty Doo |
| | Martin Scaife | Serving Brother | OIC Katherine |
| | Virginia Dowson | Serving Sister | Territory Professional Officer |
| | Frances Kilgariff | Serving Sister | St John NT Council |
| | Marcel Clark | Serving Sister | Tennant Creek |
| | Kate Anning | PVT | Alice Springs |
| | John Payne | PVT | Humpty Doo |
| | Lee Payne | PVT | Humpty Doo |
| | Sheryl Rossiter | PVT | OIC Darwin Cadets |
| 2008 | Steve Peers | Knight of Grace | Commissioner |
| | Lesley King | Dame of Grace | Territory Officer Human Resources |
| | Rt Rev Bishop Gregory Thompson | Commander | |
| | Craig Garraway | Officer | Territory Officer Major Events |
| | Bruce Jones | Officer | Batchelor |
| | Lenaire Keatch | Officer | DS Katherine Cadets |
| | Patrick Murray | Officer | DS Darwin |
| | Annetta Albanese | Member | Training |
| | Glen Auricht | Member | DS Alice Springs |
| | Wayne Bevan | Member | DS Nhulunbuy |
| | Makaylia Ravlich | Member | Nhulunbuy |
| | Justin Hankinson | Member | DS Tennant Creek |
| | Frank Dunstan | PVT | *Vollie News* Editor |
| | Rebecca Jones | PVT | Operations Branch member |
| | Kelly Raven | PVT | Territory Officer Training Support |
| | Rotary Club of Darwin Sunrise | PVT | |
| | Combined Lions Club | PVT | Beer Can Regatta Committee |

| Year Gazetted | Name | Award | Position in St John |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2009 | Peter Poole | Knight of Grace | Commissioner 2005—2008 |
| | David Baker OAM | Commander | Chief Executive Officer |
| | Kevin Blake OAM | Officer | Operations Manager Southern Region |
| | Rosemary Ballinger | Member | Palmerston Cadets Secretary |
| | Geoffrey Kain | Member | DS Alice Springs Cadets |
| | Dr Arun Mahajani | Member | |
| | Paul Maybank | Member | Alice Springs |
| | Kimberlee McKay | Member | Territory Officer Cadets |
| | Lee Payne | Member | Humpty Doo |
| | Kelly Raven | Member | Territory Officer Training Support |
| | Sheryl Rossiter | Member | DS Darwin Cadets |
| | Sue-Ellen Skinner | Member | Humpty Doo |
| | Mark Cullenane | Member | Communications Supervisor |
| | Bruce Garnett | PVT | DS Batchelor |
| | Geoff Lohmeyer | PVT | Territory Officer Training |
| | Daphne Marsh | PVT | Maker of Care Bears |
| | Marion McLauchlan | PVT | DS Humpty Doo Cadets |
| | Linda McMeekin | PVT | OIC Tennant Creek Cadets |
| | Matthew Pearce | PVT | Katherine |
| | Tour de Arnhem | PVT | Fund raiser for Nhulunbuy |

In 2010 the Awards system was changed so that Priory Votes of Thanks were now primarily used to recognise support from external individuals and organisations.

| Year Gazetted | Name | Award | Position in St John |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2010 | Chief Justice Trevor Riley | Knight of Grace | St John NT Council |
| | Angelina Butler | Dame of Grace | DS Palmerston |
| | Dawn Bat | Officer | Territory Officer Special Projects |
| | Ronald Owen | Member | Alice Springs |
| | Andrew Bruyn | PVT | Endowment Trust |
| | Colemans Printing | PVT | |
| | Nicole Dunn – Ward Keller | PVT | Solicitors |

| Year Gazetted | Name | Award | Position in St John |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2011 | Brendan Quirke | Commander | Training Manager |
| | Roland Chin | Officer | St John NT Council |
| | Pat King | Officer | Member Support Officer |
| | Michael McKay | Officer | Territory Superintendent |
| | Brian Ch'ng | Member | Territory Nursing Officer/Darwin |
| | Frank Dunstan | Member | *Vollie News* Editor |
| | Mark Ferguson | Member | Deputy Territory Superintendent |
| | Mark O'Shaughnessy | Member | Mechanical Services |
| | Donna Peters | Member | Senior Finance Officer |
| | Warren Purse | Member | Paramedic Training |
| | Tracy Watts | Member | Marketing |
| 2012 | Sally Thomas AM | Dame of Grace | NT Administrator/Deputy Prior |
| | Duncan McNeill | Knight of Grace | Patron |
| | Ross Coburn | Commander | Chief Executive Officer |
| | Gwyn Balch | Officer | Volunteer Co-ordinator |
| | Virginia Dowson | Officer | Territory Officer Training |
| | Debbie Garraway | Officer | Executive Secretary |
| | Kate Anning | Member | Alice Springs |
| | Bruce Garnett | Member | DS Batchelor Adults |
| | Mandy Paradise | Member | Territory Nursing Officer |
| | Henri Raafs | Member | A/DS Humpty Doo Cadets |
| | Steve Rudder | Member | DS Katherine Adults |
| | Regina Sellar | Member | Alice Springs Training |

# APPENDIX E
# Divisional Leadership

**Darwin Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1953 | G. Norman Bradbury | DS | Promoted to Corps Superintendent |
| 1 July 1954 | George Brooks | DS | On Retired List 1 June 1961 |
| 1 Jun 1961 | Charlie Perkins | A/DS | Relinquished the position due to illness, date not known |
| 1961 | Jack O'Hare | DS | Had been Cadet Division Superintendent – now in dual role |
| Jan 1966 | David Watters | DS | Acting Superintendent |
| 6 Sep 1966 | Barrie Fricker | DS | Promoted to CSO Grade IV on 3 February 1969 |
| 3 Feb 1969 | Morris Setton | DS | To Reserve 15 September 1970 |
| 18 Dec 1970 | Bill Keelan | DS | Promoted to CSO Grade IV on 13 September 1972 |
| 13 Sep 1972 | Geoff Carter | DS | Promoted to Corps |
| Aug 1974 | John O'Donohoe | OIC | Transferred from DS Darwin Cadets to OIC Darwin Adults |
| 14 May 1975 | John O'Donohoe | DS | Promoted to Corps Superintendent 1 October 1975 |
| 1 Oct 1975 | Rod Bramley | DS | Promoted to Corps |
| 6 Dec 1976 | Phil Langdon | OAC | Divisional Officer |
| Dec 1977 | Doreen Kerr | OAC | Divisional Officer |
| Nov 1979 | Doreen Kerr | DS | Promoted to Corps |
| 26 May 1982 | Anthony Beckitt | OIC | Divisional Officer |
| 16 Aug 1982 | Anthony Beckitt | DS | Resigned |
| 3 Jan 1985 | Frank Haydock | DS | Promoted to Corps |
| 10 Oct 1988 | Peter Poole | DS | Relinquished position February 1990 |
| Feb 1990 | Eddie Wright | OIC | |
| Jul 1990 | Howard Mellor | OIC | |
| Feb 1991 | Bill Cook | OAC | Resigned end of October 1991 |
| 1 Nov 1991 | Don Kelly<br>Sharon Swan | OIC | Joint management role |
| | *Amalgamated with Casuarina & Palmerston Divisions 1st January 1992* | | |
| 1 Jan 1992 | Wayne Dillon | DS | CSO - Temporary DS for six months |
| 4 Jul 1992 | Toni Gullefer | DS | Promoted to CSO (Special Projects) |
| 1 Jan 1995 | Mandy Langdon | DS | Term expired 30 June 1996; to Corps Nursing Officer |
| 23 Jul 1996 | Peter Poole | DS | Relinquished position 14 December 2000 |
| 7 Apr 2001 | Pat Murray | DS | To Territory Officer Logistics 18 September 2008 |
| 24 Jul 2008 | Kevin Heslop | DS | Resigned 16 December 2008 |
| 3 Apr 2009 | Kaye Griffin | DS | To Territory Officer |
| May 2012 | Brett Devitt | DS | Acting for 3 months |
| 20 Jul 2012 | Aaron Brooks | DS | |

**Casuarina Combined Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 15 Jun 1976 | Bob Brennan | DS | |
| 25 Oct 1980 | Terry Dahlenburg | OAC | |
| 24 Sep 1981 | Terry Dahlenburg | A/DS | Promoted to Corps 12 October 1981 |
| 12 Oct 1981 | Craig Cousins | DS | Promoted to Corps 16 August 1982 |
| 16 Aug 1982 | Peter Walker | OIC | |
| 20 Oct 1982 | Peter Walker | DS | |
| Mar 1983 | Lindsay King | OIC | Divisional Officer |
| 21 Sep 1983 | James Haldane | DS | Transferred 1 January 1984 |
| | | | *No records for this period* |
| 19 Dec 1984 | Glenn Getzin | DS | |
| 9 Apr 1985 | Garry Schoolmeester | DS | |
| 14 Aug 1986 | James Nichols | DS | |
| 18 May 1987 | Michael Dunn | DS | Resigned |
| 19 Sep 1987 | Glenn Getzin | OIC | CSO |
| Feb 1989 | Glen Denmeade | OIC | Divisional Officer – promoted to Corps |
| 11 Feb 1991 | Carol Forbes | OAC | Transferred to Alice Springs |
| *Amalgamated with Darwin Division 1st January 1992* | | | |

**Darwin Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dec 1954 | Herbert Hockley | DS | Duration of tenure not known |
| 1959 ? | Jack O'Hare | DS | Darwin Division Superintendent in 1961 |
| 1963 | Grant Keetley | A/DS | Acting Superintendent from 1963 – at age 13 |
| 1 Jul 1967 | Grant Keetley | DS | Promoted to CSO Grade IV (Cadet) 31 July 1974 |
| 31 Jul 1974 | John O'Donohoe | DS | Acting DS Darwin Combined Division, August 1974 |
| 5 Jun 1975 | Helen Sanders | OAC | Relinquished appointment 15 June 1976 |
| 16 Jun 1976 | John Elliott | OAC | |
| 23 Dec 1976 | John Elliott | DS | Transferred to Reserve 6 March 1978 |
| Apr 1978 | Helen Sanders | OAC | Divisional Officer |
| 13 Jun 1978 | Anne Twigg | OAC | Nursing Member |
| 4 Sep 1978 | Rodney Twigg | OAC | |
| Nov 1979 | Rodney Twigg | DS | |
| 10 Dec 1979 | Norman Turner | DS | Relinquished 30 September 1980 – transferred to Casuarina Combined Division |
| 30 Sep 1980 | Ronald Mitchell | DS | Resigned position 25 December 1982 |
| | | | *No records for this period* |
| 28 Sep 1983 | Terrence Gilmore | DS | |
| 3 Aug 1987 | Barbara Henderson | DS | |
| | *Amalgamated with Casuarina and Sanderson Cadets in January 1989* | | |
| 1 Jan 1989 | John Evans | A/DS | Acting |
| 4 Jan 1990 | John Evans | DS | Relinquished position April 1990 |
| Jul 1990 | Florent Alcidi | OIC | |
| Oct 1990? | Christine Webb | OIC | |
| 5 May 1991 | Barbara Henderson | OIC | |
| 31 Dec 1991 | Barbara Henderson | DS | |
| 14 Sep 1992 | Jenny Kirby | DS | |
| 7 Aug 1998 | Di Munro | A/DS | Temporary |
| Jan 1999 | Mary Wilkie | DS | |
| Jul 1999 | Michael Holmes | OIC | |
| 10 Sep 1999 | Michael Holmes | DS | |
| 5 Dec 2000 | Keith Robinson | DS | |
| 9 Dec 2002 | Shane Burry | DS | Resigned 24 March 2003 |
| 10 July 2003 | Romaine Oorloff | DS | |
| Feb 2007 | Sheryl Rossiter | OIC | For 6 months |
| 20 Feb 2009 | Sheryl Rossiter | DS | |

**Casuarina Ambulance Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 20 Feb 1972 | Godfrey Lowe | DS | |
| 4 Jul 1973 | Frank Simmons | DS | Promoted to Corps in early 1977 |
| *Amalgamated with Casuarina Nursing Cadets to become Casuarina Combined Cadet Division 1st Jan 1977* | | | |

**Casuarina Nursing Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 Oct 1973 | Maureen Holden | OIC | Mandy Langdon |
| 8 Jul 1975 | Cathy Milne | OIC | |
| *Amalgamated with Casuarina Ambulance Cadets to become Casuarina Combined Cadet Division 1st Jan 1977* | | | |

**Casuarina Combined Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Jan 1977 | Jill Schoolmeester | OAC | |
| Jan 1979 | Ian Blackmore | DS | To August 1979 |
| | | | *No records for this period* |
| 1 Jun 1980 | Frank Hoschke | OAC | |
| 7 Nov 1980 | Mr C. Gott | OAC | |
| 12 Oct 1981 | Lena Abbott | DS | Promoted to Corps 23 May 1984 |
| 24 Nov 1984 | Ian Rogers | DS | |
| 10 Oct 1986 | Norman Turner | DS | |
| 6 Nov 1988 | Florent Alcidi | DS | |
| *Amalgamated with Darwin Cadets in January 1989* | | | |

**Sanderson Combined Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 21 Nov 1981 | Norman Turner | DS | On leave 9 July 1985 |
| 1983 | Colin Mason | OIC | Temporary OIC in absence of DS due to illness and holidays |
| 1985 | Eddie Wright | OIC | DO on 28 August 1985 |
| 1 Mar 1986 | John Evans | DS | Tenure ended 2 June 1987 |
| 8 Dec 1987 | Eddie Wright | DS | |
| *Amalgamated with Darwin Cadets in January 1989* | | | |

**Leanyer Combined Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18 Nov 1982 | Clem Larcombe | DS | Transferred to Katherine 23 May 1983 |
| 21 Sep 1983 | Philip Taylor | DS | Transferred to Katherine in 1984 |
| *Amalgamated with Sanderson Cadets in July 1984* | | | |

**Dripstone Combined Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 Jun 1982 | John Williams | DS | |
| 6 Nov 1982 | Yvonne Van der Maas | DS | On leave from 1 April 1984 – 1 April 1985 |
| 1984 | Robert Tremethick | DS | Promoted to Corps 19 December 1984 |
| nk | John Pini | OIC | Named as OIC on 1984 Annual Return |
| 27 Feb 1985 | Frank Hoschke | DS | To 19 August 1986 |
| *The fate of this Division is not recorded* | | | |

**Cadet Band Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 Feb 1986 | Ellen Pitts | DS | On 12 months sick leave from 8 April 1986 – then to Reserve |
| 19 May 1987 | Pat King | DS | On Reserve List 4 December 1993 |
| 25 Mar 1994 | Frank Haydock | DS | Promoted to Territory Officer 15 January 2004 |
| 24 Nov 2003 | Linda Haslett | DS | Resigned 7 December 2004 |
| 28 Sep 2005 | Kimberlee McKay | DS | Promoted to Territory Officer Cadets |
| 10 Jun 2008 | Michael Hatfield | A/DS | |
| 18 Sep 2008 | Michael Hatfield | DS | Resigned 3 November 2008 |
| 8 Dec 2008 | Narelle McLaughlin | A/DS | |
| 6 May 2010 | Narelle McLaughlin | DS | |

**Kormilda College Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 16 Oct 2001 | | | No particular OIC |
| 2002 | Susan Rosenzweig | OIC | Palmerston Cadet and student at College |
| 2003 | Vicki Macmillan | OIC | DS Humpty Doo Cadets |
| 2005 | Kelly Raven | DS | School Divisions Coordinator—paid position |

**Howard Springs Combined Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 20 Jun 1980 | Phil Langdon | OAC | Transferred to Nhulunbuy with job |
| Sep 1980 | Edeline Sinclair | OIC | OIC during Phil Langdon's absence |
| 5 Jul 1981 | Phil Langdon | DS | |
| 15 Nov 1982 | Edeline Sinclair | OIC | |
| 30 May 1983 | Edeline Sinclair | DS | |
| 26 Sep 1983 | Errol Priestly | | Supplementary DS |

The Division relocated to Palmerston and became Palmerston and Rural Division

**Palmerston and Rural Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 27 Feb 1985 | Tony Oxford | DS | |
| 18 Mar 1987 | Brian Maden | DS | |
| 9 Apr 1989 | Andrew Hodges | DS | Promoted to Corps 15 December 1989 |
| 1 Mar 1990 | Toni Gullefer | OAC | |

The Division closed and amalgamated with Darwin Division on 1st January 1992

**Palmerston Adult Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9 Dec 2002 | Allan Hough | DS | Relinquished position 9 December 2004 |
| 19 Jan 2005 | Ron Owen | A/DS | |
| 28 Sep 2005 | Ron Owen | DS | Transferred with job in Ambulance Service |
| 26 Mar 2007 | Angie Butler | DS | |

Palmerston Adult Division was still not registered up to the end of 2012

**Marrara Christian Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9 Aug 2005 | Kelly Raven | DS | School Divisions Coordinator—paid position |
| 18 Sep 2008 | Yvonne Cole | DS | |

**Howard Springs Combined Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Oct 1980 | Shirley Woods | OAC | |
| 12 Oct 1981 | Wayne Dillon | DS | Transferred to Jabiru |
| 16 Aug 1982 | Shirley Woods | OIC | |
| 10 Nov 1983 | Colin Mason | DS | |
| 27 Feb 1985 | Gareth Graham | DS | |

The Division relocated to Palmerston in 1985 and became Palmerston and Rural Cadet Division.
It was renamed Palmerston Cadet Division in 1998 when the Humpty Doo Cadet Division was registered.

**Palmerston and Rural Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1985 | Shirley Woods | OIC | |
| 10 Oct 1986 | Norm Turner | DS | BF4 records him as being on Reserve 21 September 1986 to 1 June 1989 |
| Jul 1987 | Geoff Whatley | A/DS | |
| 1 Feb 1988 | Geoff Whatley | DS | |
| 31 Aug 1989 | Norm Turner | DS | In position until February 1990 |
| 1990 | Lyn Holgate | OIC | |
| Late 1990 | Pat King | OIC | Cadet Band Superintendent |
| Feb 1991 | David Hoschke | OAC | |
| 10 Dec 1992 | David Hoschke | DS | On leave from 3 November 1993—3 May 1994 |
| Nov 1993 | Trudy Fuller | OIC | |
| 9 Mar 1994 | Dawn Bat | A/DS | |
| 5 Aug 1994 | Dawn Bat | DS | Promoted to Territory Officer Special Projects in 2001 |
| 1 Mar 1996 | Phil Langdon | OAC | While Dawn Bat on leave |
| | Rebecca Tunks | OIC | Resigned August 2000 |
| Aug 2000 | Makaylia Bretag | OIC | In charge while DO Phil Langdon absent |
| 1 Sep 2001 | Phil Langdon | OIC | |
| 5 Nov 2001 | Shane Burry | OIC | |
| 21 Dec 2001 | Shane Burry | DS | Transferred to Darwin Cadet Division |
| 9 Sep 2002 | Kelly Raven | DS | |
| 21 May 2010 | Julie Murray | DS | |

Name changed to Palmerston Cadet Division in 1998

**Humpty Doo Adult Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jun 2001 | Brian Maden | | Mentor until December 2001 |
| 13 Feb 2002 | Frank Dunstan | DS | Resigned 18 March 2003 |
| 10 Jul 2003 | Greg Payne | DS | |

**Humpty Doo Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 Mar 1988 | Brian Maden | DS | Retired |
| 5 Aug 2000 | Tanya Griffiths | DS | |
| 16 Feb 2001 | Vicki Macmillan | DS | Resigned |
| Oct 2005 | Nola Hutchins | OIC | |
| 14 Jun 2006 | Adrian Rossiter | DS | |
| 2007 | Marion McLauchlan | OIC | |
| 2008 | Marion McLauchlan | DS | Relinquished position 1 January 2009 |
| 16 Jan 2009 | Robyn Timney | DS | Resigned 21 September 2009 |
| Sep 2009 | Nola Hutchins | OIC | |
| 6 May 2010 | Nola Hutchins | DS | Resigned to move interstate |
| Late 2011 | Henri Raafs | A/DS | Grade VI |

**Litchfield Rural Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 30 Aug 2011 | Anthony Kleidon | A/DS | |

**Adelaide River Combined Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 27 Jun 1973 | Clement Edwards | DS | |
| 9 Dec 1977 | Ellie Pitts | OAC | |
| 14 Nov 1979 | Ellie Pitts | DS | Transferred to Darwin on 23 April 1984 |
| April 1984 | Paul Nouwens | OAC | Accidental death |
| 2 Oct 1984 | Peter Walker | OAC | Divisional Ambulance Officer |

Adelaide River Combined Division closed on 1st July 1986

**Batchelor Combined Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 23 Sep 1973 | Bruce Jones | OIC | Had been President of BARDAS |
| 17 Apr 1974 | Boyne Litchfield | DS | Relinquished position |
| Dec 1977 | Vince Johnston | OAC | Transferred to Reserve |
| 14 Nov 1979 | Ellie Pitts | DS | Transferred to Darwin on 23 April 1984 |
| 30 Sep 1980 | Lynette Stone | OAC | |
| 1981 | Lynette Stone | DS | |
| 8 Aug 1983 | Ros Jones | DS | Relinquished position |
| 14 Dec 1993 | Donna Stone | DS | Moved to Darwin |
| 10 Jul 2003 | Ian Castle | DS | Resigned 15 August 2006 |
| 26 Mar 2007 | Bruce Garnett | DS | |

Adelaide River and Batchelor amalgamated and the new Adelaide River/Batchelor Combined Division was registered on 12 November 1975

**Adelaide River/Batchelor Combined Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12 Nov 1975 | Clement Edwards | DS | On leave from 26 October 1977 to March 1978 and resigned April 1978 |

The two Sections seem to have split into separate Divisions again with the departure of Superintendent Edwards, but this is uncertain due to incomplete records

**Adelaide River Combined Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18 Sep 1979 | Carol Reidel | OIC | |
| 25 Apr 1980 | Carol Reidel | DS | Division closed, date not known |

**Batchelor Combined Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 25 Apr 1980 | Ros Jones | DS | Division closed in early 1982 when Ros relinquished position |
| 17 May 1985 | Des Thornton | DS | Division closed again in 1991 when Des went to Alice Springs |

**Alice Springs Ambulance Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dec 1952 | Claude Merrill | DS | Section only |
| May 1954 | Alf McRae | DS | Division registered 8 July 1954 |
| 1955 | Bruce McKane | DS | Division closed March 1956 |

**Alice Springs Combined Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 24 Apr 1961 | Bert Palmer | DS | Spent long periods interstate away from Division |
| Mar/Apr 1962 | Peter Bassel | OIC | DS of Cadets—acting during Palmer's absences |
| | Yvonne Hansen | OIC | NCO—acting during Palmer's absences |
| Circa 1965 | Kelly Hargrave | DS | |
| 1968 | Barry Bohning | DS | For 12 months |
| 1969—? | Yvonne Hansen | OIC | No clear leadership for this period |
| 25 Oct 1973 | Glanville Lindholm | OAC | |
| 4 Jan 1974 | Glanville Lindholm | DS | Offered Corps position—on Reserve instead |
| May 1979 | Brian Males | OIC | Temporary position |
| Nov 1979 | Norm Bartlett | DS | Promoted to Corps |
| 8 Jun 1981 | David Gillatt | DS | |
| 1983 | Phillip Harper | OAC | |
| 8 Sep 1983 | Phillip Harper | DS | |
| Jan 1985? | J. Wood | A/OIC | Signature on Annual Return |
| 17 May 1985 | Peter Simms | DS | |
| 20 Aug 1990 | Noel Talbot | DS | |
| 20 Apr 1992 | Debbie Savill | OIC | Acting during Superintendent's absence |
| 17 Nov 1992 | Pat McQuillen | DS | Promoted to Corps on 6 March 1995 |
| 8 Mar 1995 | Andrew Wilson | A/DS | |
| Nov 1995 | Colleen Grave | OAC | |
| 7 Sep 1996 | Colleen Grave | DS | |
| 1 Feb 2000 | Robert (Henry) Lawson | DS | Relinquished position October 2003 |
| 7 Nov 2003 | Glen Auricht | DS | |

**Alice Springs Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 26 Jul 1978 | Andrew Boyt-Cullis | OAC | Returned to Adult Division |
| Early 1980 | Geoffrey Knott | OAC | |
| 8 Jun 1981 | Geoffrey Knott | DS | Died in 1983 |
| 8 Sep 1983 | Neil Coley | DS | |
| 26 Apr 1984 | Michael Burgess | OIC | Divisional Officer |
| 11 Jul 1985 | Peter Kemp | OAC | |
| 14 Oct 1986 | Kevin Heintze | | |
| 11 Mar 1991 | Roger Holloway | OAC | |
| 3 Dec 1991 | Des Thornton | DS | |
| 15 Oct 1992 | Joan Hunt | OIC | Temporary to 1 March 1993 |
| 27 Feb 1997 | Pat McQuillen | OAC | |
| Jul-Aug 1997 | Di Munro | OIC | During Pat McQuillen's absence |
| 19 Feb 1998 | Sandra Schmidt | A/DS | |
| | Paul Maybank | DS | |
| 5 Apr 2001 | Paul Berry | OIC | |
| 5 Oct 2001 | Paul Berry | DS | |
| 3 Sep 2002 | Ian McKie | DS | Resigned as DS on 31 December 2005—promoted to TO |
| 21 Jul 2004 | Barbara McKie | OIC | Temporary during Superintendent's absence |
| 19 Apr 2007 | Barbara McKie | DS | |
| 16 Apr 2008 | Geoff Kain | DS | Resigned 7 September 2010 due to bush job |
| | | | Position still vacant in December 2012 |

**Ayers Rock Combined Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 Nov 1979 | Ian Cawood | OIC | |
| 25 Feb 1980 | Ian Cawood | DS | Left the area in 1981 |
| 1981 | John Beasy | OIC | DO |
| 25 Feb 1981 | Iain Marshall | DS | Left the area in August 1982 |
| 6 Oct 1982 | Gregory Fyfe | DS | Resigned 20 May 1983 |
| 4 Aug 1983 | Phillip Asmussen | DS | Resigned in 1985 when Division closed |

**Tennant Creek Combined Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sep 1963 | Joe Zigenbine | OIC | |
| 7 Oct 1963 | Joe Zigenbine | DS | Resigned on 17 June 1971 |
| 18 Jun 1971 | Bert Pearce | OAC | Resigned 21 November 1976 |
| 22 Nov 1976 | Glenn Hogben | OAC | Resigned August 1979 |
| Jun 1979 | John Hill | OAC | Transferred to Darwin 7 February 1981 |
| 17 Feb 1981 | Steve Peers | OAC | |
| 8 Jun 1981 | Steve Peers | DS | Promoted to Corps Superintendent |
| 12 Mar 1982 | Carol Brown | DS | Resigned March 1983 |
| 17 Mar 1983 | Tony Van Hooff | OAC | |
| 15 Nov 1983 | Tony Van Hooff | DS | Transferred to Alice Springs |
| 29 Nov 1984 | Tony Oxford | OAC | Transferred to Darwin |
| 27 Feb 1985 | M. Gibson | A/OIC | |
| 4 Feb 1986 | L. Kelly | DS | |
| 10 Nov 1986 | Trevor Duncan | DS | Died 18 May 1987 |
| 1987 | Brendan Quirke | OIC | |
| 10 Nov 1988 | Michael Brooke | DS | |
| 1988 | Eileen Calway-Pridham | OAC | Corps Ambulance Officer—signed Annual Return as OAC |
| 3 May 1991 | Bradley Gough | OIC | |
| 3 Dec 1993 | Andrew Wilson | OIC | |
| 9 Mar 1994 | Andrew Wilson | A/DS | |
| April 1994 | | | *Position vacant* |
| 1995 | Bradley Gough | OIC | |
| 21 Nov 1995 | Jason Danbury | OIC | |
| 1996 | Richard Jones | OIC | |
| 8 Oct 1996 | Michelle O'Dea | OAC | |
| 27 Nov 1997 | Michelle O'Dea | DS | |
| 2 Mar 1998 | Bradley Gough | OIC | Relinquished position November 1999 |
| 5 Aug 2000 | Justin Hankinson | DS | Relinquished position |
| 25 Mar 2010 | Marcel Clark | DS | |

**Tennant Creek Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jul 1981 | Dick Visscher | OIC | |
| 12 Mar 1982 | Dick Visscher | DS | |
| 16 May 1983 | Neil Coley | DS | |
| Oct 1984 | John Myers | OAC | |
| 26 Feb 1985 | John Myers | DS | |
| 1985 | Bradley Sanderson | OAC | |
| 14 Oct 1986 | Dick Visscher | DS | |
| 10 Oct 1988 | Michael Brooke | DS | Division closed in 1990/restarted in 1992 combined with Adults |
| 1999 | Len D'Ugo | OIC | |
| 2000 | Lynda McMeekin | OIC | |
| | Justin Hankinson | OIC | DS of Adult Division |
| 2006 | Lynda McMeekin | OIC | |
| 2008 | Matt Presnell | | |
| 1 Oct 2008 | Sam Cameron | A/DS | |
| 6 May 2010 | Sam Cameron | DS | |

**Elliott Section attached to Tennant Creek Combined Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11 Jul 1980 | Susan Tolley | OAC | On long service leave mid 1982 |
| 1982 | Ruth Tilney | OAC | May have resigned mid 1983—unsure |
| | | | *Section closed late 1985 or early 1986* |

**Warrego Section attached to Tennant Creek Combined Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nov 1982 | | | Not known |
| 30 Mar 1983 | Cynthia Parkinson | OAC | Resigned in May 1983 |
| 1983 | Margaret Routledge | OIC | Signed 1983 Annual Return as OIC |
| 1984— | *Not known* | | *Not known when Section closed* |

**Warrego Combined Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| June 1988 | Yvonne Fenwick | OIC | |
| 20 Oct 1988 | Yvonne Fenwick | DS | Division folded in 1990 |

**Katherine Combined Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 20 Sep 1979 | Alan Collins | OIC | Regional Ambulance Officer |
| 17 May 1980 | Alan Collins | DS | |
| | Ted Wiltshire | OIC | |
| 14 May 1982 | Rees Van Der Molen | DS | Transferred to Darwin |
| 23 Jul 1982 | Brian Carnegie-Smith | OIC | |
| 29 Sep 1983 | Clem Larcombe | | |
| 15 May 1990 | Walter Talbot | | |
| 1991 | Brian Carnegie-Smith | OAC | |
| 1 Apr 1996 | Lenaire Brown | OAC | |
| 11 Nov 1996 | Craig Garraway | OAC | |
| 11 May 2002 | Kevin Blake | DS | Transferred to Alice Springs |
| 2005 | Matthew Pearce | OIC | |
| 13 Dec 2005 | Matthew Pearce | DS | Resigned 26 November 2008 |
| 27 Jul 2009 | Martin Scaife | DS | |
| 17 Sep 2009 | Steve Rudder | DS | |

**Katherine Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 30 May 1980 | Wayne Dillon | OIC | |
| 2 Feb 1981 | Wayne Dillon | DS | |
| 12 Oct 1981 | Rob Tremethick | DS | |
| 1984 | Glenn Aslin | DS | |
| Nov 1984 | P.J. Taylor | OAC | |
| 1985 | Peter Kemp | OAC | |
| 17 May 1985 | Lindsay Tremethick | DS | |
| 1988 | | | *Division closed* |
| 2001 | Lenaire Keatch | OIC | Restarted as a Section combined with the Adults |
| 2002 | Kevin Blake | OIC | |
| 3 Aug 2005 | Trevor Keatch | DS | Relinquished position 18 September 2006 |
| 16 Oct 2006 | Martin Scaife | DS | |
| 2008 | Sandra Taylor | DS | Resigned 9 March 2009 |
| 26 Mar 2009 | Natalie Clarke | DS | |
| 17 Feb 2001 | Rhys Dowell | DS | |

**Nhulunbuy Combined Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14 Nov 1981 | Grant Wiggins | DS | |
| 1994 | Bev Bennion | | |
| 1995 | Jeff Baker | OAC | |
| 21 Apr 1997 | Jeff Baker | DS | |
| 1998 ? | Julie Roggio | | Relinquished position |
| 1998 | Simon Bialek | OIC | |
| 29 Apr 1999 | Howard Smith | DS | |
| 22 Sep 2005 | René Baker | DS | Resigned 19 February 2007 |
| 20 Mar 2007 | Wayne Bevan | DS | |
| 21 Jan 2009 | Reece Ravlich | DS | Left town for Port Hedland |
| 23 Jul 2009 | Mark Ferguson | DS | Transferred to Darwin |
| 17 Feb 2011 | Michael Davy | DS | |
| Mar 2012 | Teresa Holdsworth | A/DS | |

**Nhulunbuy Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 Jun 1983 | Pat Harper | DS | |
| 1 Oct 1984 | Norrie Smith | DS | |
| Jan 1987 | Ray Hargreaves | OIC | |
| 15 May 1987 | Ray Hargreaves | DS | Division closed in 1990 |
| 5 Jun 1993 | Beverley Bennion | | Division restarted 3 June 1993 |
| Oct 1996 | Jason Moore | OIC | Division closed at the end of 1996 |
| 29 Mar 2008 | Mandy Paradise | OIC | Division restarted 29 March 2008 |
| 1 Apr 2009 | Mandy Paradise | DS | Transferred to Katherine |
| 13 Jan 2011 | Rebecca Dexter | DS | |
| 2 Mar 2012 | Reece Ravlich | DS | |

**Yirrkala Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 24 Feb 2010 | Mandy Paradise | DS | |

**Jabiru Combined Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10 Jun 1982 | Wayne Dillon | OIC | |
| 17 Jun 1983 | Wayne Dillon | DS | |
| 8 Sep 1983 | Shirley Ball | OIC | |
| 30 Oct 1984 | Shirley Ball | DS | |
| 1985 | Kym Eden | OIC | |

**Jabiru Combined Cadet Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mar 1983 | Roley Fletcher | OIC | |
| 5 Aug 1983 | Ronald Cheetham | DS | |
| 18 Oct 1983 | Kym Eden | OIC | |

**Alyangula Combined Division**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 13 Apr 1988 | Philip Knott | DS | |
| 19 Jun 1989 | Michael Shailer | A/DS | Division closed 30 September 1991 |

# APPENDIX F
# Brigade/Operations Branch Senior Management

**Commissioners**

| Start Date | Name | Title | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8 Nov 1965 | Dr William A. Langsford | Deputy Commissioner | The NT became a sub-District of South Australia on this date |
| 1972 | Dr Colin Mills | Deputy Commissioner | Dr Langsford left the NT in Nov 1971 |
| 30 Sep 1976 | Dr Colin Mills | A/Commissioner | The NT became a District on this date |
| 3 Nov 1976 | Dr Colin Mills | Commissioner | |
| Nov 1977 | Alan Bromwich | A/Commissioner | Dr Mills left the Territory |
| 28 Feb 1978 | Alan Bromwich | Commissioner | |
| 24 Jun 1984 | Dr Lionel Crompton | Commissioner | |
| 24 Jun 1990 | Dr Iain Ping | Commissioner | Resigned May 1991 |
| May 1991 | Alan Bromwich | A/Commissioner | Temporary |
| 24 Jun 1991 | Stephen Baddeley | Commissioner | To District Surgeon |
| 24 Jun 1999 | Andrew Hodges | Commissioner | |
| 24 Jun 2005 | Peter Poole | Commissioner | |
| 24 Jun 2008 | Steve Peers | Commissioner | |

The Northern Territory became a sub-District of South Australia on 8th November 1965 with Dr W.A. "Spike" Langsford as Deputy Commissioner under the South Australian Commissioner. When the NT became a full District on 30th September 1976, Dr Colin Mills became Commissioner, effective date 3rd November 1976.

**Deputy/Assistant Commissioners**

| Start Date | Name | Role | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 21 Jun 1982 | Dr Kerry Kirke | Deputy Commissioner | To Reserve 24 Jun 1984 |
| Sep 1985 | Colin Burden | Deputy Commissioner | Left the NT late 1987 |
| 8 Aug 1994 | Lesley King | Deputy Commissioner | |
| Sep 1997 | Steve Peers | Assistant Commissioner | |
| Feb 2005 | Peter Poole | Deputy Commissioner | Commissioner on 24 Jun 2005 |

This position is only occasionally filled

**District/Territory Superintendents**

| Start Date | Name | Comments |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Nov 1976 | Warren Burgess | Manager of the St John NT Council |
| 1 Jan 1979 | Grant Keetley | To Reserve 24 Jun 1984 |
| 24 Jun 1984 | Graham Morrison | Left for a job in South Australia in late 1985 |
| 6 Nov 1985 | Lesley King | Acting until confirmed on 30 April 1986 |
| 1992 | Peter Poole | To Darwin Divisional Superintendent |
| 23 Jul 1996 | Andrew Hodges | Promoted to Commissioner |
| 24 Jun 1999 | Sue Cooper | Resigned Feb 2005 |
| 24 Jun 2005 | Steve Peers | Promoted to Commissioner |
| 24 Jun 2008 | Michael McKay | |

# APPENDIX G
# Divisional Formation and Registrations

The following list is in alphabetic order by area and chronologically within the area, and includes Sections attached to Divisions, but only if they were registered as such. We have also included local First Aid groups (*in italics*) that became part of St John Ambulance.

Not all Divisions were registered and this is indicated by NR. Many Divisions had name changes over the years which are also listed. Not all registration dates are known and these are indicated by the year and month, or year only. Descriptive titles for Divisions, such as Combined, were dropped in 1986 unless it applied to combined Adult and Cadet Divisions.

| Division | Formed | Registered | Sanctioned | Closed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adelaide River Combined Division | 21 May 1972 | 18 Apr 1973 | 8 Jun 1973 | 1 Jul 1986 |
| Adelaide River Combined Cadet Division | 1979 | 24 Oct 1979 | 4 Mar 1980 | nk |
| Adelaide River/Batchelor Combined Division | 1 Sep 1975 | 12 Nov 1975 | | *Faded away* |
| *Batchelor Adelaide River District Ambulance Service (BARDAS)* | 29 Mar 1972 | | | |
| Batchelor Combined Division<br>Batchelor Adult Division | 23 Sep 1973 | 9 Apr 1974 | 11 May 1974 | *Name change* |
| Batchelor Combined Cadet Division | 25 Apr 1980<br>May 1985 | NR<br>NR | | May 1982<br>1991 |
| Alice Springs Ambulance Section<br>Alice Springs Ambulance Division | Dec 1952 | 8 Jul 1954 | | Mar 1956 |
| *Alice Springs First Aid Group* | 28 Oct 1960 | | | |
| Alice Springs Combined Division[1]<br>Alice Springs Adult Division | 24 Apr 1961 | 17 Jul 1961 | | *Name change* |
| Alice Springs Combined Cadet Division<br>Alice Springs Cadet Division | 27 Oct 1977 | 29 Mar 1978 | 26 Jul 1978 | *Name change* |
| Ayers Rock Combined Section<br>Ayers Rock Combined Division | Sep 1979 | 11 Nov 1979<br>4 Mar 1980 | | Feb 1985 |
| Alyangula Combined Division | 2 Mar 1988 | 13 Apr 1988 | 10 Jun 1988 | 30 Sep 1991 |
| Band Cadet Division | Jan 1985 | 27 Apr 1986 | 19 May 1986 | |
| Casuarina Ambulance Cadet Division | Sep 1971 | 20 Feb 1972 | | 31 Dec 1976 |
| Casuarina Nursing Cadet Division | | 2 Oct 1973 | | 31 Dec 1976 |
| Casuarina Combined Cadet Division | 1 Jan 1977 | | | Jan 1989 |
| Casuarina Combined Division | 20 May 1976 | 15 Jun 1976 | 4 Jul 1976 | 31 Dec 1991 |
| *DCA First Aid Group* | 28 April 1952 | | | |
| Darwin Ambulance Division<br>Darwin Combined Division<br>Darwin Adult Division | Oct 1952 | 1953 | 1953 | *Name change*<br>*Name change* |

| Division | Formed | Registered | Sanctioned | Closed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Darwin Cadet Division | 2 Oct 1954 | 6 Jan 1955 | 1 Feb 1955 | |
| Sanderson Combined Cadet Division | 9 Oct 1981 | 15 Oct 1981 | 21 Nov 1981 | Jan 1989 |
| Dripstone Combined Cadet Division | 4 Jun 1982 | 4 Jun 1982 | 23 Jun 1982 | nk |
| Leanyer Combined Cadet Division | Sep 1982 | 19 Nov 1982 | | Jul 1984 |
| Howard Springs Combined Division | Nov 1979 | 20 Jun 1980 | 29 Oct 1980 | *Name change* |
| Palmerston and Rural Division | 1985 | | | 31 Dec 1991 |
| Palmerston Adult Division | 23 Jan 2003 | NR | NR | |
| Howard Springs Combined Cadet Division | Oct 1980 | 21 Nov 1981 | | *Name change* |
| Palmerston and Rural Cadet Division | 1985 | | | *Name change* |
| Palmerston Cadet Division | 10 May 1998 | | | |
| Palmerston Youth Division | 6 Oct 2009 | | 18 Aug 2010 | |
| Humpty Doo Cadet Division | 2 Mar 1998 | 14 Mar 1998 | 10 May 1998 | |
| Humpty Doo Adult Division | 5 Jun 2001 | 23 Jan 2002 | 11 Feb 2002 | |
| Litchfield Division | 30 Aug 2011 | NYR | | |
| Jabiru Combined Division | 10 Jun 1982 | 10 Jun 1982 | 23 Jun 1982 | Sep 1986 |
| Jabiru Combined Cadet Division | Mar 1983 | 5 Sep 1983 | | nk |
| Katherine Combined Division | 20 Sep 1979 | 17 May 1980 | 29 Oct 1980 | *Name change* |
| Katherine Adult Division | | | 19 Aug 2005 | |
| Katherine Combined Cadet Division | 30 May 1980 | 26 Feb 1981 | 31 Jul 1981 | 1988 |
| Katherine Cadet Division | 2001 | | 19 Aug 2005 | |
| Kormilda Cadet Division | 16 Oct 2001 | | | 2010 |
| Marrara Christian Cadet Division | 9 Aug 2005 | | | 2010 |
| Nhulunbuy Combined Division | 4 Mar 1981 | | 8 Nov 1981 | *Name change* |
| Nhulunbuy Adult Division | | | | |
| Nhulunbuy Combined Cadet Division | 29 Nov 1982 | 6 Jun 1983 | 5 Sep 1983 | 1990 |
| Nhulunbuy Cadet Division | | 5 Jun 1993 | 13 Jul 1993 | 1996 |
| Nhulunbuy Cadet Division | | 29 Mar 2008 | 11 Apr 2008 | |
| Yirrkala Section | 2001 | | | nk |
| Yirrkala Cadet Division | 24 Feb 2010 | | | |
| *Tennant Creek First Aid Group* | 27 Nov 1961 | | | |
| Tennant Creek Combined Division | Sep 1963 | 14 Apr 1964 | | *Name change* |
| Tennant Creek Adult Division | | | | |
| Tennant Creek Combined Cadet Division | 1978 | 17 Jul 1981 | 31 Jul 1981 | 1990 |
| Tennant Creek Cadet Division | 1992 | | | |
| Elliott Section | 11 Jul 1980 | 11 Jul 1980 | | 1985 |
| Warrego Combined Cadet Division | 20 Oct 1988 | 22 Nov 1988 | 20 Feb 1989 | 1990 |
| Warrego Section | 5 Aug 1982 | 10 Nov 1982 | | 1990 |

# APPENDIX H

## Plan for takeover of Darwin ambulance service by St John Ambulance

PLAN FOR TAKEOVER OF ST JOHN AMBULANCE SERVICE
Monday 26/8/74
Darwin Hospital Board

The Board agrees in principle to separating ambulance services from the Hospital. And supports a separate service for 24 hrs a day, staffed by competent ambulance qualified people.
They had no fixed views on the method of finance other than a heavy subsidy would be required from the government. They favour St John.

Tuesday night 27/8/74
St John Council are ready to accept responsibility for a 24 hr service on 1 July 1975.
They favour Government subsidy for all services provided by St John – not simply for ambulance transport service.
They say retention of volunteers and local money-raising are essential to maintain community participation.
They favour community participation and support a free ambulance transport service or at nominal standard fee.

Wednesday morning 28/8/74
Discussion with union. Union officials favour full-time ambulance service separate from the hospital with salaried staff of high quality. They especially emphasised qualifications as a pre-requisite to joining the full-time ambulance service and were not particularly worried about career opportunities for the existing orderlies employed on ambulance duties.
They consider volunteers must be associated with the full-time ambulance service.
There were mixed feelings about financing – a free ambulance service is desirable though it could lead to excessive demand and the provision of a taxi-like service.

STRATEGY PLAN FOR ST JOHN AMBULANCE TO PROVIDE A 24 HOUR 7 DAYS A WEEK AMBULANCE SERVICE FOR THE NT

Initially this is to be confined to the Darwin metropolitan area.

OBJECTIVE

- ◊ Target date for takeover of full-time ambulance service – 1 July 1975
- ◊ To provide a lump sum grant to St John allowing for the employment of a full-time ambulance manager and typist as soon as possible – to prepare conditions of employment, organisation requirements, etc.
- ◊ To employ a full-time ambulance training officer – by February 1975
- ◊ To prepare training syllabus and qualifications required for employment of ambulance personnel – by March/April 1975
- ◊ To recruit full-time ambulance staff – by June 1975
- ◊ To train full-time ambulance staff to required level during June 1975
- ◊ To begin ambulance services full-time – 1 July 1975
- ◊ To prepare a draft five-year capital works programme – by 30 October 1974

RESOURCES

DARWIN HOSPITAL AMBULANCE SERVICE
Personnel: 4 + 1 supervisor – will be part of recruitment pool – though not necessarily all or any
No volunteers
Equipment: Ambulance vehicles and equipment could be handed over to St John
High frequency radio – could be handed over to St John if required

ST JOHN EXISTING EQUIPMENT
6 ambulances
Ambulance station, Fannie Bay
Pool of volunteers would be a source of recruitment for full-time staff
Regular ambulance volunteers including cadets and nurses – approximately 60
St John Association – an executive body able to determine and approve standards of training and skills required for local NT needs
Medical staff for assisting training:

| | |
|---|---|
| Corps Staff Surgeon | Mr A Bromwich |
| Divisional Surgeons | Dr Beardwood |
| | Dr Spicer |
| | ? Dr Hensen |

ST JOHN BUILDING REQUIREMENTS FOR FULL-TIME AMBULANCE BY 1975

DISTRICT HQ – Casuarina – with facilities for:
St John Council meetings – board room; St John Brigade meetings and file accommodation; Manager's office/ secretary, reception area; Clerical staff accommodation; Staff room; In service training facilities; Duty staff – night accommodation – single rooms with shower and toilet, messroom for meals; Volunteer room, divisional training; Tea room etc.; Watch room, radio shack, etc.; Public training room may be combined; Cadet division room
Parap – City Division Ambulance Station with training room, staff room, office, community training facilities

BY DEC 1978
New town and Sanderson ambulance centre

BY DEC 1976
Alice Springs Ambulance Centre

BY DEC 1978
Adelaide River ambulance centre

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140 St John Ambulance, Ambulance Report, September 1982
141 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Monday 8 November 1982
142 Minutes of Executive/Finance Committees Meeting, Tuesday 15 February 1983
143 Memo from Brigade Secretary, 9 March 1983 Member of the Year Competition
144 Minutes of District Staff Meeting ,Tuesday 29 March 1983
145 1983 District Conference, Cadet Officers' Meeting, 16 April 1983
146 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Tuesday 29 March 1983
147 *Annual Report 1982-1983,* St John Ambulance NT
148 Minutes of Combined District and Corps Staff Meeting, 16 April 1983
149 *Northern Territory News,* Tuesday 19 April 1983
150 *Ibid.,* Wednesday 29 June 1983
151 *Ibid.,* Thursday 9 June 1983
152 *Ibid.,* Monday 3 October 1983
153 *Outback Ambulance,* June 1984
154 *Annual Report 1983-84,*St John Ambulance NT
155 *Outback Ambulance,* June 1984
156 *Ibid.,* March 1985
157 *Ibid.*
158 Email from Lesley King, Wednesday 20 June 2012
159 District Ambulance Officer's Report, August 1984
160 Brigade Report to Council, 19 March 1985
161 *Northern Territory News*, Monday 29 April 1985
162 Untitled form letter, Lesley King, 8 August 1985
163 Emails, Lesley King, Wednesday 20 June 2012
164 District Conference 1986, Cadet Report
165 Memo, DSO(C) R. Holt, *Australian Cadet Championships – Adelaide January '86*, 24 February 1986
166 *Northern Territory News*, Wednesday 14 January 1986
167 *Ibid.,* Monday 10 March 1986
168 DSO Winckler to DAO N. Norris, Report on Training Cadre, undated
169 *Annual Report 1985-1986,* St John Ambulance NT
170 Minutes of Executive/Finance Committee, Wednesday 27 August 1986
171 *Ibid.*, Wednesday 29 October 1986
172 Minutes of Council Meeting, Wednesday 26 November 1986
173 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, 22 October 1986
174 Minutes of Executive/Finance Committee, Wednesday 29 October 1986

175 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, 25 February 1987
176 *Ibid.*, Wednesday 28 January 1987
177 *Ibid.*, Tuesday 24 November 1987
178 *Ibid.*, 28 April 1987
179 *Ibid.*, 19 May 1987
180 *Outback Ambulance*, September 1987
181 *Annual Report 1987-88,* St John Ambulance NT
182 Letter, Lionel Crompton to R. Bramley, 14 September 1987
183 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Tuesday 24 November 1987
184 *Ibid.*, Wednesday 10 February 1988
185 *Outback Ambulance,* March 1988
186 *Ibid.*
187 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 14 September 1988
188 Routine Orders 4/88, 25 November 1988
189 NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 113
190 Minutes of inaugural Operations Committee meeting, Thursday 19 January 1989
191 Letter, Peter Butler to Greg Scott, Department of Lands & Housing, 11 October 1989
192 *Northern Territory News*, Monday 1 May 1989
193 Memo, District Superintendent Lesley King, 19 June 1989
194 *Outback Ambulance,* September 1989
195 *Ibid.,* December 1989
196 *Northern Territory News,* Thursday 8 March 1990
197 *Outback Ambulance,* April 1990
198 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 7 February 1990
199 *Ibid.*, Wednesday 18 April 1990
200 *Outback Ambulance,* September 1990
201 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 16 May 1990
202 *Outback Ambulance,* September 1990
203 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Thursday 26 July 1990
204 NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 113
205 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Thursday 24 January 1991
206 Minutes of Corps Meeting 2 February 1991
207 *Outback Ambulance,* June 1991
208 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 22 May 1991
209 *Outback Ambulance,* September 1991
210 *Ibid.*
211 Minutes of Corps Meeting 6 July 1991
212 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Thursday 10 October 1991
213 *Ibid.*, Saturday 16 November 1991
214 *Ibid.*
215 *Northern Territory News,* Friday 3 January 1992
216 *Ibid.*, Monday 6 January 1992
217 *Ibid.,* Tuesday 7 January 1992
218 Darwin Combined Adult Division Report by DS Wayne Dillon, undated
219 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 6 March 1992
220 *Ibid.*, Saturday 4 April 1992
221 Minutes of District Conference, Sunday 12 April 1992
222 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 16 May 1992
223 *Outback Ambulance,* June 1992
224 *Ibid.*
225 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 4 July 1992
226 *Ibid.*
227 Memorandum, CSM (nth) R Hocking to DSO A Hodges, 20 July 1992
228 *Outback Ambulance,* March 1993
229 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 13 February 1993
230 Minutes of Operations Branch Meeting, Thursday 5 September 2002
231 Northern Corps Report, District Weekend 1993
232 *Outback Ambulance,* June 1993
233 Minutes of District Conference held at Alice Springs, Sunday 25 April 1993
234 *Outback Ambulance,* September 1993
235 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 3 July 1993
236 *Ibid.*, Saturday 2 October 1993
237 *Outback Ambulance*, December 1993

*238* Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 6 December 1993 *(this date is incorrect as Saturday was not the 6th)*
*239* *Outback Ambulance*, March 1994
*240* Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 12 February 1994
*241* Minutes of District Conference, Saturday 23 April 1994
*242* Minutes of District Staff meeting, Saturday 10 December 1994
*243* Minutes of District Conference, 29 April 1995
*244* Minutes of District Staff meeting, Thursday 16 March 1995
*245* *Outback Ambulance*, December 1995
*246* Minutes of District Staff meeting, Saturday 4 November 1995
*247* *Ibid.*, Saturday 7 October 1995


**Part 2: Chapter 4 — Operations Branch Restructure**


*1* Minutes of District Staff meeting , Saturday 17 April 1993
*2* *Ibid.*, Saturday 8 May 1993
*3* *Ibid.*, Saturday 2 December 1995
*4* *Ibid.*, 10 February 1996
*5* Letter: Commissioner S. Baddeley to All Members, 29 April 1996
*6* Minutes of District Staff Meeting, 2 March 1996
*7* *Ibid.*, Friday 15 March 1996
*8* *Ibid.*, Friday 10 May 1996
*9* NT St John Ambulance Operations Branch Review; KPMG, 28 February 1997
*10* Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 6 November 1997


**Part 2: Chapter 5 — 1996 to 2000**


*1* Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 20 July 1996
*2* *Ibid.*, Saturday 14 September 1996
*3* *Ibid.*, Saturday 5 October 1996
*4* *Northern Territory News,* Wednesday 2 October 1996
*5* *Ibid.*, Tuesday 21 January 1997
*6* Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Thursday 9 October 1997
*7* *Ibid.*, Saturday 6 November 1997
*8* *Ibid.*, Thursday 5 February 1998
*9* *Outback Ambulance,* Dry Season 1998
*10* *Annual Report 1997-1998,* St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc.
*11* Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Thursday 4 June 1998
*12* *Ibid.*, Thursday 6 August 1998
*13* *Ibid.*, Thursday 9 July 1998
*14* *Ibid.*
*15* Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Thursday 6 August 1998
*16* *Ibid.*
*17* Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Thursday 11 February 1999
*18* Minutes of District Conference, Saturday 1 May 1999
*19* Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Thursday 6 May 1999
*20* *Ibid.*, Thursday 7 October 1999
*21* *Ibid.*, Thursday 11 November 1999
*22* Memorandum from Gwyn Balch: Olympics 2000, 17 November 1999
*23* Minutes of Superintendents Meeting, Thursday 8 June 2000
*24* Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Thursday 2 December 1999
*25* *Outback Ambulance*, Dry Season 2000
*26* Minutes of Superintendents Meeting, Thursday 24 February 2000
*27* *Ibid.*
*28* *Outback Ambulance*, Dry Season 2000
*29* Minutes of Superintendents Meeting, Thursday 3 July 2000
*30* *Ibid.*, Thursday 14 September 2000
*31* *Ibid.*, Thursday 9 November 2000
*32* District Conference, *The Panel Discussion*, Saturday 14 October 2000
*33* Minutes of Superintendents Meeting, Thursday 9 November 2000
*34* *Northern Territory News,* Wednesday 18 October 2000


**Part 2: Chapter 6 — Into the 21st Century**


*1* Minutes of District Meeting, Thursday 1 February 2001

2 *Ibid.*
3 SJANT Operations Branch Newsletter, March 2001
4 *Ibid.*
5 *Ibid.*
6 SJANT Operations Branch Newsletter, July 2001
7 *Ibid.*
8 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Thursday 6 September 2001
9 *Outback Ambulance*, December 2001
10 *Ibid.*
11 Minutes of Superintendents' Workshop, Sunday 20 January 2002
12 Minutes of Operations Branch Meeting, Thursday 4 July 2002
13 *Ibid.*, Thursday 5 September 2002
14 *Ibid.*, Thursday 11 April 2002
15 *Ibid.*, Thursday 5 September 2002
16 Minutes of Cadet Meeting, Thursday 10 September 2002
17 *Outback Ambulance,* December 2002
18 *Ibid.,* December 2003
19 Minutes of Operations Branch Meeting, Thursday 6 February 2003
20 *Ibid.*, Thursday 3 July 2003
21 *Outback Ambulance*, December 2003
22 Minutes of Superintendents Meeting, 17 & 18 January 2004
23 Minutes of Operations Branch Meeting, Thursday 5 February 2004
24 *Ibid.*
25 Minutes of Superintendents Meeting, Tennant Creek, Saturday 30 October 2004
26 *Ibid.*
27 SJANT Operations Branch Newsletter, May 2005
28 *Ibid.*, August 2005
29 *Outback Ambulance,* July 2005
30 Commissioner's Report September 2005
31 Cadet Reports, November 2005 – Lesley King, Territory Officer/HR
32 Minutes of Superintendents Meeting, Thursday 7 July 2005
33 SJANT Operations Branch Newsletter, August 2005
34 www.itsanhonour.gov.au/honours/
35 Commissioner's Report September 2005
36 SJANT Operations Branch Newsletter, November 2005
37 *Ibid.*
38 Minutes Superintendents Meeting, Saturday 21 January 2006
39 *Ibid.*, Saturday 10 February 2007
40 *Vollie News*, 8 May 2007
41 *Ibid.*, 2 October 2007
42 *Ibid.*, 17 July 2007
43 *Ibid.*, 22 April 2008
44 *Ibid.*, 2 December 2008
45 *Ibid.*, 3 June 2008
46 *Ibid.*, 22 July 2008
47 *Ibid.*, 17 June 2008
48 *Ibid.*, 9 September 2008
49 *Ibid.*, 30 September 2008
50 *Ibid.*, 5 March 2009
51 *Ibid.*
52 http://www.watoday.com.au/national/what-really-happened-when-asylum-seekers-boat-exploded-20090424-ah3k.html
53 *Vollie News,* 23 April 2009
54 *Ibid.*, 30 April 2009
55 *Ibid.*, 18 July 2009
56 *Ibid.*, 1 October 2009
57 *Ibid.*, 28 January 2010
58 *Ibid.*, 11 March 2010
59 *Ibid.*, 1 April 2010
60 *Ibid.*, 6 May 2010
61 *Ibid.*, 10 June 2010
62 *Ibid.*
63 *Annual Report 2010,* St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc.
64 *Vollie News,* 4 November 2010
65 *Ibid.*, 30 September 2010
66 *Ibid.*, 6 January 2011
67 *Ibid.*, 3 February 2011
68 *Ibid.*, 24 February 2011
69 *Ibid.*, 10 March 2011
70 *Ibid.*
71 *Vollie News,* 24 March 2011
72 *Ibid.*
73 *Outback Ambulance,* December 2011
74 *Vollie News,* 30 June 2011
75 *Outback Ambulance,* December 2011
76 *Vollie News,* 7 November 2011

77 *Ibid.*, 7 November 2011
78 *Ibid.*, 25 August 2011
79 *Ibid.*, 6 October 2011
80 *Ibid.*, 8 December 2011
81 *Ibid.*, 15 December 2011
82 *Ibid.*, 5 April 2012
83 *Ibid.*, 5 January 2012
84 *Ibid.*, 22 March 2012
85 *Ibid.*, 2 February 2012
86 *Ibid.*
87 *Vollie News,* 23 February 2012
88 *Ibid.*
89 *Vollie News,* 25 October 2012


**Part 3: Chapter 1—Rural First Aid Posts**


1 *Northern Territory News,* Wednesday 2 September 1964
2 *Ibid.,* Thursday 20 May 1965
3 *Litchfield Times*, Thursday 3 April 1986


**Part 3: Chapter 2—Howard Springs**


1 Minutes of District and Corps Staff meeting, Monday 7 May 1979
2 *Ibid.*, Monday 2 July 1979
3 *Ibid.*, Monday 7 July 1980


**Part 3: Chapter 3—Palmerston**


1 St John Ambulance Australia (NT), *Annual Report 1984-1985*
2 *Outback Ambulance,* June 1985
3 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 26 June 1985 – Operations Report
4 Minutes of General Meeting District Conference, Sunday 3 May 1987
5 Submission for the Upgrading of Crew Accommodation and Training Facilities at Darwin and Palmerston Centres: DSO Craig Cousins, 30 November 1988
6 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 9 December 1987
7 *Ibid.*, Wednesday 10 February 1988
8 *The History of Palmerston St John Ambulance Cadet Division*: Makaylia Bretag, undated
9 Amalgamation Meeting, 26 October 1991
10 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 16 November 1991
11 *Litchfield Times*, 30 August 1990
12 Bretag, *op. cit.*
13 *Outback Ambulance,* June 1994
14 *Suburban*, 13 October 1994
15 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, 6 November 1977
16 Minutes of Superintendents Meeting, Thursday 3 July 2000
17 *Ibid.*, Thursday 9 November 2000
18 Minutes of District Meeting, Thursday 1 March 2001
19 Memo, Palmerston Property Issues, February 2001 – David Baker and Andrew Hodges
20 *Ibid.*
21 *Outback Ambulance,* December 2002
22 Palmerston Regional Business Association, November 2002
23 *Vollie News,* 6 May 2010
24 *Outback Ambulance,* December 2011
25 *Vollie News,* 5 February 2009
26 *Ibid.*, 22 October 2009
27 *Ibid.,* 29 November 2012


**Part 3: Chapter 4—Rural Response Group**


1 Minutes of Executive/Finance Committee Meeting, Tuesday 19 February 1985
2 Minutes of St John NT Council Meeting, Tuesday 19 March 1985
3 *Litchfield Times,* Thursday 21 December 1989
4 *Ibid.,* Thursday 29 February 1996
5 *Ibid.,* Thursday 21 March 1996
6 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 17 August 1996
7 *Ibid.,* Saturday 14 September 1996
8 *Litchfield Times,* Thursday 21 November 1996
9 *Ibid.,* 28 June 1977
10 *Ibid.,* 10 July 1997
11 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 6 September 1997
12 *Ibid.,* Thursday 9 October 1997
13 *Ibid.,* 6 November 1997
14 *Litchfield Times,* Thursday 23 October 1997

**Part 3: Chapter 5—Humpty Doo and Litchfield**


1 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 9 December 1987
2 *Northern Territory News,* 10 February 1998
3 *Litchfield Times,* 7 May 1998
4 Report for District Meeting, March 1998 – Humpty Doo Cadet Division, Dawn Bat
5 Report for District Meeting, 2nd April 1998 – Brian Maden, Humpty Doo Cadet Division
6 Cadet Report to April 2nd, 1998 – Lesley King
7 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, 9 July 1998
8 *Ibid.,* 6 August 1998
9 *Ibid.*
10 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, 3 September 1998
11 *Litchfield Times,* 17 September 1998
12 *Ibid.*
13 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, 5 November 1998
14 Researched by Hayley Cockman
15 *Litchfield Times,* 17 December 1998
16 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, 4 March 1999
17 *Litchfield Times,* undated cutting
18 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, 2 September 1999
19 *Ibid.,* 7 October 1999
20 Research notes by Hayley Cockman
21 Minutes of District Meeting, 1 February 2001
22 *Ibid.*
23 Minutes of District Meeting, 1 March 2001
24 *Litchfield Times,* 14 March 2001
25 *Ibid.,* 21 March 2001
26 Payne, Greg: *A Short History of St John Ambulance in the Humpty Doo Area, Northern Territory,* October 2001
27 Dunstan, Frank: *A Brief History of St John Ambulance, Humpty Doo Adult Division,* 19 October 2001
28 Operations Branch Newsletter, January 2002
29 *Outback Ambulance,* July 2003
30 Minutes of Operations Branch Meeting, 8 May 2003
31 *Outback Ambulance,* July 2003
32 Minutes of Operations Branch Meeting, 4 September 2003
33 *Outback Ambulance,* December 2003
34 Minutes of Operations Branch Meeting, 6 November 2003
35 *Ibid.,* 5 February 2004
36 *Ibid.*
37 Minutes of Operations Branch Meeting, 4 March 2004
38 *Outback Ambulance,* June 2004
39 *Ibid.*
40 Minutes of Superintendents Meeting, 14 October 2004
41 Researched by Hayley Cockman
42 Letter, Humpty Doo Cadet Division to Steve Peers, 21 November 2005
43 Minutes of Superintendents Meeting, 4 May 2006
44 *Vollie News,* 27 February 2007
45 Minutes of Superintendents Meeting, 10 February 2007
46 *Vollie News,* 27 February 2007
47 *Ibid.,* 4 September 2007
48 Minutes of Cadet Superintendents Meeting, 10 February 2007
49 *Vollie News,* 4 September 2007
50 *Ibid.,* 27 May 2008
51 Researched by Hayley Cockman
52 *Vollie News,* 23 September 2008
53 *Ibid.,* 5 February 2009
54 *Ibid.,* 16 July 2009
55 *Ibid.,* 17 June 2010
56 *Ibid.,* 30 June 2011
57 *Ibid.,* 1 September 2011


**Part 4: Chapter 1—Adelaide River/Batchelor**


1 *Northern Territory News,* Monday 15 March 1965
2 *Ibid.,* Wednesday 14 April 1965
3 *Ibid.,* Monday 19 April 1965
4 *Ibid.,* Thursday 20 May 1965
5 *Ibid.,* Tuesday 6 July 1965
6 *Jungle Juice,* April 1972
7 *Northern Territory News,* 20 November 1972
8 *Ibid.,* 24 November 1972
9 *Jungle Juice,* June 1973
10 *Ibid.,* September 1973
11 *Ibid.,* October 1973

12 *Ibid.,* February 1974
13 Boyne Litchfield, BF4 personal record
14 Information provided to the author by Ros Jones
15 *The Heart of Rum Jungle,* Douglas R. Barrie, 1992
16 Minutes of St John Corps Meeting, Saturday 24 August 1974
17 Minutes of Brigade Meeting, Saturday 5 July 1975
18 South Australian District Routine Orders RO75/7
19 *Jungle Juice,* April 1976
20 Minutes of District and Corps Staff Meeting, Monday 7 February 1977
21 *Ibid.*, Monday 9 May 1977
22 *Form BF1 – Annual Return and Record,* Adelaide River/Batchelor Combined Division, 1977
23 Minutes of District and Corps Staff Meeting, Monday 16 January 1978
24 Minutes of Meeting of Officers of Darwin Corps, Monday 13 March 1978
25 Minutes of District and Corps Staff Meeting, Monday 3 April 1978
26 *Ibid.*
27 Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Officers of the Darwin Corps, Monday 10 April 1978
28 Minutes of District & Corps Meeting, Monday 1 May 1978
29 *Ibid.*, Monday 5 June 1978
30 *Ibid.*
31 Minutes of District & Corps Meeting, Monday 3 July 1978
32 *Ibid.*, Monday 6 November 1978
33 *Northern Territory News,* Friday 17 November 1978
34 Minutes of District & Corps Meeting, Monday 7 August 1978
35 *Ibid.*, Monday 8 January 1979
36 *Ibid.*, Monday 5 February 1979
37 *Ibid.*, Monday 5 March 1979
38 *Ibid.*, Monday 2 April 1979
39 *Ibid.*
40 Minutes of District & Corps Meeting, Monday 7 May 1979
41 *Ibid.*, Monday 4 June 1979
42 *Ibid.*, Monday 13 August 1979
43 District Staff Meeting, Monday 8 November 1982 Ambulance Report
44 Minutes of District & Corps Meeting, Monday 2 July 1979
45 Memo, District Superintendent Grant Keetley to Superintendent E. Pitts, 14 November 1979
46 Minutes of District and Corps Staff Meeting, Monday 3 March 1980
47 *Ibid.*, Monday 5 May 1980
48 *Ibid.*, Monday 2 June 1980
49 *Ibid.*, Monday 7 July 1980
50 *Ibid.*, Monday 18 August 1980
51 Minutes of Promotion Selection Board, Tuesday 6 October 1981
52 Administrative Order 2/82
53 Minutes of District Meeting, Thursday 10 June 1982
54 Training Report, 9 September 1982
55 *Outback Ambulance,* December 1987
56 District Staff Meeting, Monday 8 November 1982 Ambulance Report
57 Minutes of Promotion Selection Board, Monday 9 May 1983
58 Routine Orders, M2-84
59 District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 29 August 1984
60 Minutes of Promotions Board Meeting, 17 May 1985
61 Brigade Report to Council, 18 September 1985
62 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 4 June 1986
63 *Ibid.*, Wednesday 2 July 1986
64 St John Ambulance NT, *Annual Report 1985-1986*
65 *Northern Territory News,* 7 July 1986
66 Memorandum CSNC to Manager Ambulance Operations, September 1987
67 Memorandum: Superintendent Batchelor Combined Division to CSNC, 13 November 1987
68 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 9 December 1987
69 Minutes of District Staff Meeting – DAO Report, Wednesday 10 February 1988
70 *Ibid.*

71 *Ibid.*
72 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 10 February 1988
73 *Ibid.*, Wednesday 11 May 1988
74 *Ibid.*, Wednesday 14 September 1988
75 Story provided by Ros Jones
76 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 26 October 1988
77 *Ibid.*, 30 November 1988
78 *Outback Ambulance,* March 1989
79 *Ibid.*, September 1990
80 *Ibid.*, March 1991
81 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Thursday 10 October 1991
82 Northern Corps Report, District Weekend 1993
83 *Batchelor Division Report* for Meeting 29th May 1993
84 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 4 September 1993
85 *Ibid.*, Saturday 12 February 1994
86 *Ibid.*, Saturday 2 October 1993
87 *Ibid.*, Saturday 6 November 1993
88 *Ibid.*, Saturday 12 February 1994
89 *Ibid.,* Thursday 10 May 2011
90 *Litchfield Times,* 29 May 1989
91 www.itsanhonour.gov.au/honours/
92 *Outback Ambulance,* December 2007
93 *Vollie News,* 25 October 2012


**Part 4: Chapter 2—Alice Springs**


1 *Centralian Advocate,* Friday 11 July 1952
2 McQuillen, *Saved ..., op. cit.*
3 McQuillen, *Saved ..., op. cit.*
4 *Centralian Advocate,* Friday 14 November 1952
5 *Ibid.,* Friday 12 December 1952
6 *Ibid.,* Friday 24 July 1953
7 *Ibid.,* Friday 23 October 1953
8 *Ibid.,* Friday 6 November 1953
9 *Ibid.,* Friday 13 November 1953
10 *Ibid.,* Friday 20 November 1953
11 *Ibid.,* Friday 27 November 1953
12 *Ibid.,* Friday 18 December 1953
13 *Ibid.*
14 *Centralian Advocate,* Friday 19 February 1954
15 *The Advertiser (Adelaide)* – Monday 24 May 1954
16 *Centralian Advocate,* Friday 18 June 1954
17 *Ibid.,* Friday 9 July 1954
18 *Ibid.,* Friday 13 August 1954
19 *Ibid.,* Friday 13 August 1954
20 *Ibid.,* Friday 1 July 1955
21 *Ibid.,* Friday 23 March 1956
22 *Ibid.,* Friday 30 March 1956
23 *Ibid.,* Friday 30 September 1957
24 McQuillen, Pat: *A History of St John Ambulance in Alice Springs 1952-2001*
25 *Ibid.*
26 Letter, G. Lindholm to W. Keelan, 6 October 1974
27 McQuillen, Pat: *A History ...,* op. cit.
28 *Centralian Advocate,* Friday 4 November 1960
29 *Ibid.,* Friday 3 February 1961
30 *Ibid.,* Friday 10 February 1961
31 *Ibid.,* Friday 17 February 1961
32 *Ibid.,* Friday 3 March 1961
33 *Ibid.,* Friday 24 March 1961
34 *Ibid.,* Friday 17 March 1961
35 *Ibid.,* Friday 14 April 1961
36 *Ibid.,* Friday 28 April 1961
37 *Ibid.,* Friday 9 June 1961
38 *Ibid.,* Friday 16 June 1961
39 *Ibid.,* Friday 14 July 1961
40 *Ibid.,* Friday 23 June 1961
41 *Ibid.,* Friday 30 June 1961
42 *Ibid.,* Friday 7 July 1961
43 *Ibid.,* Friday 14 July 1961
44 *Ibid.,* Friday 21 July 1961
45 *Ibid.,* Friday 4 August 1961
46 *Ibid.,* Friday 11 August 1961
47 *Ibid.,* Friday 13 October 1961
48 *Ibid.,* Friday 2 March 1962
49 McQuillen, *Saved ... op. cit.*
50 *Centralian Advocate,* Friday 30 March 1962
51 *Ibid.,* Friday 10 April 1962
52 *Ibid.,* Friday 18 May 1962
53 *Ibid.,* Friday 8 June 1962
54 *Ibid.,* 15 June 1962
55 *Ibid.,* 23 June 1962
56 *Ibid.,* 29 June 1962
57 *Ibid.,* 6 July 1962
58 *Ibid.,* 13 July 1962

59 *Ibid.,* 17 August 1962
60 *Ibid.*
61 McQuillen, *Saved ... op.cit.,* p.8
62 *Centralian Advocate,* Friday 23 November 1962
63 *Ibid.,* Friday 7 December 1962
64 *Ibid.,* Friday 5 September 1963
65 *Ibid.,* Friday 30 January 1964
66 *Ibid.,* Friday 27 February 1964
67 *Ibid.,* Friday 7 January 1965
68 *Ibid.,* Friday 14 January 1965
69 *Ibid.,* 14 April 1965
70 *Ibid.,* 22 April 1965
71 *Ibid,* 16 September 1965
72 *Ibid.,* 28 November 1967
73 NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 976
74 *Centralian Advocate,* 5 September 1968
75 *Ibid.,* 15 October 1982
76 *Ibid.,* 29 May 1969
77 *Ibid.,* 29 January 1970
78 *Ibid.,* 25 March 1970
79 *Ibid.,* 2 July 1970
80 *Ibid.,* 27 August 1970
81 McQuillen, Pat: *Saved ...,* op. cit., p.10
82 *Centralian Advocate,* 17 September 1970
83 McQuillen, Pat: *Saved ...,* op. cit., p.38
84 *Centralian Advocate,* 22 July 1971
85 Report of Staff visit to Pine Creek/Tennant Creek/Alice Springs Saturday 15 Nov 1975 – Wednesday 19 Nov 1975
86 *Centralian Advocate,* 8 March 1973
87 Letter, G. Lindholm to K.C. Kettle, 17 September 1973
88 Minutes of meeting of St John Ambulance Corps Staff, Wednesday 21 August 1974
89 Minutes of Meeting held at [Darwin] Ambulance Station, 2 October 1974
90 Letter, G. Lindholm to Dr C. Mills, undated
91 Letter, G. Lindholm to Deputy Commissioner, St John Ambulance Brigade, 30 September 1974
92 Letter, G. Lindholm to K.C. Kettle, 29 July 1975
93 Autobiographical document written by Phil Langdon, undated (possibly 2003)
94 McQuillen, Pat: *Saved ...,* op. cit., p.11
95 Letter, G. Lindholm to Dr C. Mills, undated
96 Minutes of Corps Meeting, 3 June 1975
97 *Ibid.*
98 Letter, G. Lindholm to Colin Mills, 29 July 1975
99 Report of Staff visit to Pine Creek/Tennant Creek/Alice Springs Saturday 15 Nov 1975 – Wednesday 19 Nov 1975
100 *Ibid.*
101 Letter, G. Lindholm to J. O'Donohoe, 22 September 1975
102 McQuillen, Pat: *Saved ...,* op. cit. p.33
103 Minutes of District and Corps Staff Meeting, Monday 6 December 1976
104 Letter, G. Lindholm to W. Burgess, 7 December 1976
105 Letter, G. Lindholm to W. Burgess, 2 March 1977
106 Minutes of District and Corps Staff Meeting, Monday 7 March 1977
107 *Ibid.,* Monday 5 September 1977
108 *Centralian Advocate,* 23 June 1977
109 *Ibid.,* 8 September 1977
110 McQuillen, Pat: *Saved ...,* op. cit. p.13
111 *Centralian Advocate,* 8 September 1977
112 McQuillen, Pat: *Saved ...,* op. cit. p.27
113 NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 1021
114 *Ibid.*
115 *Ibid.*
116 Minutes of District and Corps Staff Meeting, Monday 6 March 1978
117 *Ibid.,* Monday 1 May 1978
118 Various Minutes of Meetings of St John NT Council, 1978-1979
119 Minutes of Executive Meeting of St John NT Council, Thursday 28 February 1980
120 Minutes of District & Corps Meeting, Monday 7 August 1978
121 *Ibid.,* Monday 6 November 1978
122 *Centralian Advocate,* 19 April 1979
123 *Ibid.,* 23 November 1978
124 Alice Springs Cadet Division Report, 1978
125 Minutes of District & Corps Meeting, Monday 8 January 1979
126 Letter, A.S. Boyt-Cullis to G.A. Lindholm, 2 January 1979
127 Minutes of District & Corps Meeting, Monday 7 May 1979
128 *Ibid.,* Monday 5 March 1979
129 *Ibid.,* Monday 2 April 1979

130 *Centralian Advocate*, 5 April 1979
131 Minutes of District & Corps Meeting, Monday 5 March 1979
132 *Ibid.,* Monday 7 May 1979
133 *Ibid.,* Monday 4 June 1979
134 McQuillen, Pat; *A History of ...,* op. cit., p.7
135 McQuillen, Pat; *Saved ...,* op. cit., p.33
136 *Ibid.,* p. 14
137 Minutes of District & Corps Meeting, Monday 4 June 1979
138 Minutes of St John NT Council Executive Committee Meeting, 24 May 1979
139 NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 1021
140 Return of Divisional Strength as at 30th September 1979, Alice Springs Combined Division
141 *Northern Territory News,* Monday 14 January 1980
142 Officers & NCOs Meeting, 23 March 1980
143 Memo, Geoff Knott to Rod Twigg; *NT Cadet Championships 30/8/80*, 14 August 1980
144 Minutes of District and Corps Staff Meeting, Monday 3 March 1980
145 File of documents marked St John Cup, held in St John Ambulance archives, Alice Springs
146 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 20 June 1981
147 McQuillen, Pat; *Saved ...,* op. cit., p.16
148 Various reports, Alice Springs Combined Division AGM 19 October 1981
149 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 17 April 1982
150 Memo, *Divisional Strength*, Divisional Superintendent Alice Springs Combined Division, 23 July 1982
151 District Staff Meeting, Monday 8 November 1982 Ambulance Report
152 Minutes of District Meeting, Thursday 10 June 1982
153 Minutes of [Southern] Corps Officers Meeting, Wednesday 20 October 1982
154 McQuillen, Pat; *Saved ...,* op. cit., p.17
155 Memo: *New Regional Headquarters;* B.R. Males, 22 October 1982
156 District Staff Meeting, Monday 8 November 1982 Ambulance Report
157 Monthly Report for December 1982, Alice Springs Combined Division
158 McQuillen, Pat; *Saved ...,* op. cit., p.18
159 Document titled *Official Opening of the St John Ambulance Regional Headquarters, Alice Springs*
160 August 1984 Ambulance Report – Bramley
161 *Outback Ambulance,* June 1985
162 Memo, *Vehicle Accident, cnr. Bath St and Stott Tce.,* M. Vaughan 24 October 1985
163 District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 27 February 1985
164 *Ibid.,* Wednesday 27 March 1985
165 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 28 January 1987
166 Minutes of General Meeting, District Conference, Sunday 3 May 1987: Southern Corps Report: (M.J. Burgess)
167 *Ibid.*
168 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 10 February 1988
169 *Centralian Advocate,* 29 November 1989
170 Southern Corps Report, April 1991
171 *Ibid.*
172 *Centralian Advocate*, 12 October 1990
173 *Ibid.,* 10 May 1991
174 *Ibid.,* 26 June 1991
175 *Ibid.,* 8 October 1991
176 *Ibid.,* 5 November 1991
177 McQuillen, Pat; *Saved ...,* op. cit., p.22
178 Minutes of Brigade Meeting, 15 April 1992
179 Minutes of District Conference held at Alice Springs, Sunday 25 April 1993
180 *Outback Ambulance,* June 1993
181 Newsletter, Volume 1, Number 6, July 1993
182 *Ibid.*
183 Newsletter, October 1993
184 1993 Operations Branch Annual Report, Pat McQuillen
185 Newsletter, Volume 1, Number 4, May 1993
186 Newsletter, March 1994
187 Cadets Newsletter, June 1997
188 *Ibid.*
189 Report, 1999 National Cadet Camp – Alice Springs
190 *Centralian Advocate*, 1 December 2000
191 Report by Ben Farkas, undated

192 NTAS: NTRS 226; TS 1023
193 Alice Springs Cadet Division Newsletter, September 2001
194 *Ibid.,* April 2002
195 Letter, Craig Garraway to Andrew Hodges, 4 June 2002
196 Monthly Report, Alice Springs Cadet Division, January/February 2003
197 McQuillen, Pat; *Saved ...,* op. cit., p.25
198 *Outback Ambulance,* December 2001
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11 *Sunday Territorian,* 14 February 1985
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20 *Ibid.*
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22 *Annual Report, 1985-1986,* St John Ambulance Northern Territory
23 Minutes of Council Meeting, Wednesday 26 November 1986
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29 *Centralian Advocate*, 27 July 1988
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32 Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting, 27 January 1988
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1 *Northern Territory News,* Thursday 6 November 1952
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4 *Ibid.,* Friday 16 November 1956
5 *Ibid.,* Friday 8 December 1961
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7 *Ibid.,* Friday 13 April 1962
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14 *Tennant & District Times,* Friday 3 December 1999
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22 Minutes of District and Corps Staff meeting, Monday 26th April 1976
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25 *Ibid.*, Monday 4th April 1977
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31 *Ibid.,* Monday 6th March 1978
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35 NTAS: NTRS 226, Item TS 1023
36 *Northern Territory News*, 7 August 1979
37 Last heard about in 2010, Terry was living on the Gold Coast and still doing volunteer work for St John.
38 *Tennant and District Times,* 14 December 1979
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43 Minutes of Joint Meeting of Executive and Finance Committees, Tuesday 31 August 1982
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46 *Ibid.,* Monday 1st September 1980
47 *Staffing Requirements,* St John Council NT, 10 December 1981
48 Minutes of the Combined Corps and Staff Meeting, Saturday 17 April 1982
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51 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Thursday 9 August 1990
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54 *Tennant and District Times,* Friday 6 September 2002
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57 *Vollie News,* 26 June 2007
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**Part 4: Chapter 5—Elliott**


1 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 20 June 1981
2 *Ibid.,* Monday 16 November 1981
3 *Ibid.*, Saturday 17 April 1982
4 Memorandum, Centre Officer Barkly Region to Corps Officer Southern Corps, 29 July 1982
5 Brigade Monthly Report: TC Combined Division, 28 March 1983 - Elliott Section
6 Confidential Report, A.P. van Hooff to S. Peers

**Part 4: Chapter 6—Warrego**


1 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 24 April 1991


**Part 4: Chapter 7—Katherine**


1 *Northern Territory News,* Monday 25 January 1965
2 *Ibid.,* Friday 12 February 1971
3 Report of Staff visit to Pine Creek/Tennant Creek/Alice Springs Saturday 15 Nov 1975 – Wednesday 19 Nov 1975
4 Minutes of District and Corps Staff Meeting, Monday 19 January 1976
5 *Ibid.,* Monday 17 May 1976
6 *Katherine Advertiser,* 20-26 September 1979
7 Minutes of District & Corps Meeting, Monday 2 July 1979
8 *Ibid.,* Monday 3 September 1979
9 *Katherine Advertiser*, 13-19 September 1979
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12 *Ibid.,* 10-16 January 1980
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18 *Ibid.,* 1980 (undated cutting)
19 *Ibid.*
20 Report of Staff visit to Pine Creek/Tennant Creek/Alice Springs, Saturday 15/11/75 to Wednesday 19/11/75
21 Minutes of Meeting of St John Council for the NT, Wednesday 27 November 1985
22 *Katherine Advertiser,* 2 October 1980
23 *Northern Territory News,* 15 October 1980
24 *Staffing Requirements,* St John Council NT, 10 December 1981
25 Memo, J. Hill, Regional Ambulance Officer Darwin to Manager/Operations Superintendent
26 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 17 April 1982
27 Minutes of Promotion Selection Board, Thursday 3 June 1982
28 Minutes of District Meeting, Thursday 10 June 1982
29 St John Ambulance, Ambulance Report, September 1982
30 *Katherine Times,* 7 July 1983
31 Minutes of District Meeting, Monday 13 September 1982
32 District Staff Meeting, Monday 8 November 1982 Ambulance Report
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34 District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 29 August 1984
35 Katherine Cadet Division Annual Report, 15 April 1983
36 *Katherine Advertiser,* 22 December 1983
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39 Minutes of District Staff Meeting – Operations Report, Wednesday 28 January 1987
40 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, 4 August 1987
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45 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 6 November 1993
46 *Outback Ambulance,* June 1995
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49 *Ibid.,* 4 October 1995
50 Memorandum, Brian Carnegie Smith to District Secretary Sue Franks, 16 February 1996
51 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Monday 1 April 1996
52 *Ibid.,* Saturday 5 October 1996
53 *Katherine Times,* 1 May 1996
54 *Ibid.,* 24 May 1996
55 http://www.bom.gov.au/lam/climate/levelthree/c20thc/flood6.htm
56 *Outback Ambulance,* Dry Season 1998, "The Day Katherine Floated Away", anonymous
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58 http://www.bom.gov.au/lam/climate/levelthree/c20thc/flood6.htm
59 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1998_Katherine_Floods
60 Operations Report, Katherine Flood, 26th January 1998 – Craig Garraway, Regional Manager Katherine/Barkly
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65 *Katherine Times,* July 2003 (undated cutting)
66 *Ibid.,* 30 November 2005
67 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katherine,_Northern_Territory
68 Information provided to the author by flood survivors, April 2006
69 Report on 2006 Katherine Floods by Matt Pearce, Superintendent
70 *Ibid.*
71 *Outback Ambulance,* August 2007
72 *Ibid.*
73 *Vollie News,* 18 February 2010
74 *Outback Ambulance,* December 2011


**Part 4: Chapter 8—Nhulunbuy**


1 Minutes of Corps Meeting, 10 September 1975
2 Minutes of District and Corps Staff Meeting, Monday 1st March 1976
3 *Ibid.,* Monday 5th April 1976
4 Minutes of Meeting of NT St John Council, 12 May 1976
5 Minutes of District & Corps Meeting, Monday 2 July 1979
6 Grant Wiggins' BF4 Record
7 Minutes of District and Corps Staff Meeting, Monday 7 July 1980
8 *Ibid.,* Monday 18 August 1980
9 *Ibid.,* Monday 6 October 1980
10 *Ibid.,* Monday 3 November 1980
11 Howie-Willis, Ian, *The Zambuks,* op. cit., p.174
12 Bat, Dawn; *Brief History of formation of Nhulunbuy Division in 1981*
13 Minutes of the District Staff Meeting, Monday 16 November 1981
14 Howie-Willis, Ian, *The Zambuks,* op. cit., p.174
15 Bat, Dawn; op. cit.
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18 *Ibid.*
19 *Northern Territory News,* Tuesday 2 October 1984
20 *Outback Ambulance,* September 1987
21 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 9 March 1988
22 *Arnhem Courier,* 6 May 1988
23 *Outback Ambulance,* December 1988
24 *Annual Report 1993-1994,* St John Ambulance Australia (NT)
25 *Arnhem Courier,* 29 October 1993
26 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Saturday 14 August 1993
27 NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 1067
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30 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Monday 1 April 1996
31 *Ibid.*, Saturday 27 April 1996
32 *Ibid.*, Saturday 15 June 1996
33 *Ibid.*, Saturday 20 July 1996
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36 *Ibid.*, Thursday 1 October 1998
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39 Nhulunbuy Combined Division, *Annual Report 2001*
40 *Operations Branch Newsletter,* July 2001
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42 Nhulunbuy Division, *Monthly Report,* 27 April 2002
43 Commissioner's Report September 2005
44 *Outback Ambulance,* December 2005
45 *Ibid.*, December 2006
46 *Ibid.*
47 *Vollie News,* 28 August 2007

48 *Ibid.*, 4 September 2007
49 *Outback Ambulance,* December 2008
50 *Ibid.*
51 *Vollie News,* 6 August 2009
52 *Ibid.*, 4 March 2010
53 *Ibid.*, 29 April 2010
54 St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc., *Annual Report 2011*
55 *Vollie News,* 6 May 2010
56 *Ibid.*, 3 February 2011
57 *Arafura Times,* 9 February 2011
58 *Vollie News,* 31 March 2011
59 *Northern Territory News,* 26 July 2011
60 *Vollie News,* 1 March 2012


**Part 4: Chapter 9—Alyangula**


1 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 28 April 1987
2 *Ibid.*, Wednesday 9 March 1988
3 *Ibid.*, Wednesday 11 May 1988
4 *Outback Ambulance*, December 1988
5 *Eylandt Echo,* 12 April 1991
6 Minutes of District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 3 July 1991
7 *Ibid.*, Wednesday 24 July 1991
8 *Ibid.*, Saturday 14 September 1991
9 *Ibid.*, Thursday 10 October 1991
10 *Eylandt Echo,* 11 October 1991
11 Minutes of the Council Executive Committee meeting, Thursday 26 September 1991
12 *Eylandt Echo,* 11 October 1991
13 Amalgamation Meeting, 26 October 1991


**Part 4: Chapter 10—Jabiru**


1 Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committee of St John NT Council, Thursday 12 April 1979
2 *Outback Ambulance,* June 1984
3 Manager's Report to St John NT Council, 30 October 1980
4 Minutes of Executive Meeting of St John NT Council, Thursday 5 February 1981
5 Minutes of Combined Executive and Finance Committee Meeting of St John NT Council, Thursday 8 October 1981
6 *Jabiru Rag,* Wednesday 11 August 1982
7 *Outback Ambulance,* June 1984
8 *Jabiru Rag,* Wednesday 11 August 1982
9 *Ibid.*
10 *Ibid.*
11 *Jabiru Rag,* Wednesday 18 August 1982
12 *Outback Ambulance,* June 1987
13 Memo from Operations Superintendent – Northern Region: *Jabiru Ambulance*, 25 August 1982
14 St John Ambulance, September 1982 Ambulance Report
15 Minutes of Executive/Finance Committee Meeting of St John NT Council, Tuesday 17 May 1983
16 *Ibid.,* Tuesday 21 June 1983
17 Brigade Report to Council, 18 Sept 85
18 Operations Report to District Staff Meeting, Wednesday 2 July 1986
19 *Ibid.*
20 *Jabiru Rag,* 3 July 1986
21 Minutes of Executive/Finance Committee Meeting, 27 August 1986
22 *Jabiru Rag,* 26 August 1986
23 *Ibid.,* 4 September 1986
24 *Ibid.,* 25 September 1986
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