

The history of ambulance services in Tasmania

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1826, the word *ambulating* referred to moving or movements such as “*ambulating the political compass*” (Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 7/06/1826) and “*as far as regards to New Norfolk, to per-ambulate the town, was impossible, as the mud in all the streets and footpaths, varied from 18 inches to 4 feet in depth*” (The True Colonist Van Diemen’s Land Political Despatch 18/08/1837). Nearly 200 years later the word *ambulating* in this context would be normally reference the ability to move or movement. Except when referencing global war efforts, predominately through the early-mid 1800’s unrefined searches on Trove.nla.gov.au for “ambulance” return *ambulating* in this context.

AMBULANCES AS FIELD HOSPITALS

Ambulance was used to describe medical treatment stations points during the French Revolution. This may be because French Soldier/Surgeon, Baron Larrey was recognised by Napoleon Bonaparte as a genius who revolutionised the treatment of wounded soldiers in the field of battle. Larrey saw insufficiency and danger in the practice of carrying wounded soldiers from the distance of the field of battle to receive the surgeons attention and many dying as they traversed the route to the ambulances. He ordered that the wounded soldiers should be cared for, even under the fire of the enemy, and that military surgeons should share with their comrades the dangers of war; from this arose his system of ambulance carriages, containing every necessary provision for acting on the spot. (The Age, Melbourne 13/02/1858).

Dominique-Jean, Baron Larrey (1766-1842) is described as a French military surgeon in the service of Napoleon he introduced field hospitals, ambulance service and first-aid practices to the battlefield. Larrey began his medical studies with his uncle in [Toulouse](#) and, in 1787, traveled to [North America](#). Returning to Paris, he continued his studies and during the Revolution, in 1792, was attached to the Army of the North. He eventually became principal surgeon of the French Army and thereafter followed [Napoleon Bonaparte](#) in almost all his campaigns—in Egypt, in Italy, in Germany and Austria, in Russia, and, finally, at Waterloo. Napoleon made him [baron](#) of the empire. After the fall of Napoleon, Larrey’s medical reputation saved him, and he was named a member of the Académie de [Médecine](#) at its founding in 1820. Larrey was the first to note the contagiousness of trachoma (1902) and published the first description of [trench foot](#) (1812). (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Dominique-Jean-Baron-Larrey>)

1831, it was reported from physicians and surgeons returns from several hospital in Paris struggling after the French Revolution where 7,000 men were rendered ‘*unfit to fight*’ and 1700 wounded received into the hospitals and ambulances. (Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 10/02/1831). In 1845, crowds of rushing people at Mourillon, France when fire engulfed the rich shipping district resulted in an ambulance for the sufferers being established at Mourillon (Morning Chronicle, Sydney 17/12/1845), “*the hotel is turned into an ambulance for the wounded*” when the papers reported on the French Revolution (Colonial Times, Hobart 9/06/1848) and “*the Theatre Historique, now called the Opera National, served as an ambulance*” (The Moreton Bay Courier, Qld 10/04/1852).

The medial inspector of the French Army in the East, Dr Levy reported in 1855 that “*divisional ambulances were well appointed and the central ambulance service had been usefully developed; a*

group of tents, and a barracks for 115 patients offering a greater scale than the divisional establishments” (Empire, Sydney 18/01/1855).

In 1891, the Premier of Tasmania was called upon to send a nurse and ambulance tent to Strahan (The Mercury, 2/10/1891). This tent was to manage indigent cases of typhoid fever and to address the fact that there were no nurses in Strahan (the Mercury 13/10/1891) and was finally removed in April 1892 (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 20/04/1892).

In 1904, a war correspondent referred to ambulance wagons and hospital tents (Examiner, 4/01/1905).

AMBULANCES IN THE WAR EFFORT

1852, the first reference of an ambulance being utilised to move a person appeared to describe an incident in the Massacre on the Boulevards in the French Revolution where *“at length got an ambulance and three workmen, and we carried him down to the Rue St. Honore on our shoulders”* (The Courier, Hobart 27/03/1852). The first Australian newspaper reference of an ambulance being a moving transport was from the French Revolution *“then a yellow flag was seen, announcing the approach of an ambulance, or long covered vehicle filled with wounded soldiers; then hearses; more prisoners, more ambulances”* (The Sydney Morning Herald, 5/06/1852). In 1854, the world was again preparing for war and His Royal Highness (Prince Albert) visited the troops at Woolwich where he *“examined carefully the ambulances which are now being made with the utmost despatch in the carriage department”* (Adelaide Times, 21/06/1854)

The emergency of the Ambulance corps in England was reported in The Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal, 22/04/1854 reported to its readers that *“at a great military hospital in Paris the attendants are daily exercised in the ambulance duties; and under the inspection of medical officers and hospital sergeants go through all the evolutions that would be required of them in action”* and the *“the Duke of Newcastle... stated that the newly-constituted Ambulance corps would leave this country, furnished with ample stores”* to join the war (The Sydney Morning Herald 22/08/1854). It appears that they would have strengthened the numbers of the *“310 of the ambulance corps and their train”* who arrived at Constantinople on 17/07/1854 onboard the transport ship Tynemouth Shipping Gazette and Sydney General Trade List, 23/10/1854). In November 1854, the papers reported that *“the Ambulance corps had been completely crippled by the death of the drivers and men belonging to it”* (Empire, Sydney 24/11/1854). The poor selection of the men was addressed in a report by the medical officers – old soldiers addicted to free living and spirits who in 1855 were referenced as *“at the commencement of the war a plan was invented, and carried out, by which a number of Chelsea pensioners were sent out as an ambulance corps to attend on the sick.... The whole of them were so weak as to be unable to perform the most ordinary duties”* (The Sydney Morning Herald 12/01/1855).

The transportation of the wounded received more focus in 1855 *“Our ambulances were soon filled, and ere nine o’clock they were busily engaged in carry loads of men, all covered with blood, and groaning, to the rear of the line”* (The Sydney Morning Herald, 22/02/1855) and April 1855, *“one-horse four-wheel ambulances”* were being built in England for the war (Adelaide Observer, 7/04/1855). The use of ambulance mules at the Siege of Sebastopol was reported in 1855 (The Sydney Morning Herald 28/04/1855). *“The Ambulance cars were also busy, so that no delay took place in doing all that mortal hands could do”* (The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 25/05/1855) and *“the ambulance carts were of too heavy a description, and in some*

respects very inconvenient.... French means of removing their wounded was by baskets" (The Argus, Melbourne 21/06/1855). The ambulance cars, 20 in number, weighted about 14 or 16 cwt and the compartment in them were so narrow that a man could barely move in them; but had been constructed expressly to prevent the wounded men rolling around in them as they traversed the country (the Sydney Morning Herald, 3/07/1855). In July 1855, litters (carolets) were supplied to the war effort in Sebastopol by the general ambulance. (Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer, 25/07/1855). In 1858, ambulance chairs to carry the wounded from the battle field were first mentioned in the Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser, 4/01/1859.

In 1854, the use of ambulance was also reported in the American battle in New Orleans with the Camanche Indians. *"sent an express to Fort Ewell, and in the course of two or three days an ambulance and Dr. Head arrived"* (The Sydney Morning Herald, 29/12/1854)

Ambulances were referenced in the wars in Italy, New Zealand, America from 1854 onwards and in 1889 London was making efforts to establish a complete street ambulance system (The Tasmanian, 18/05/1889). In June 1890 it was reported that 150 ambulances were to be provided for London to transport persons injured or suddenly taken ill in the streets (Launceston Examiner, 21/06/1890).

In 1900, the newspapers graphically recounted numerous reports of the retrieval work of the ambulance men in the Boer War under the Red Cross flag including how they *"were not allowed to come up, and our soldiers carried the dead to their wagons on stretchers, improvised from sacks with a couple of poles"* (The Mercury, 17/02/1900). The work in this environment must have been unimaginably horrific, and the death rolls also included Volunteer Ambulance corps.

In 1904, it was reported along with the whole Army Medical Corps proceeded to camp with Launceston troops where the Commanding Officer (Captain Skinner) *"hoped to put into good practice at stretcher drill and ambulance work"*. (Daily Telegraph, 29/03/1904).

The papers reported that the German Emperor had given orders that three Scotch sheep-dogs, from Forfashire, trained in ambulance work were to be presented to the Ambulance Corps (Examiner, 30/06/1904). In 1914, a team of ambulance dogs, trained to carry succor to the wounded in the field of battle, marched past with the garrison of Paris at the review of Longchamp (Daily Telegraph, 17/02/1914).

In 1905, the Examiner reported that the Ambulance wagons paid for by the Russians appeared to never have been constructed and the money pocketed by a few highly-placed officers (11/01/1905). The lack of ambulances was also mentioned when the cry that the ambulances, doctors, medicines, medical supplies including bedding were insufficient (Examiner 17/03/1905). The Mercury reported on 21/03/1905 how Japans focus was on preventing infectious diseases in their preparation of ambulance equipment (The Mercury, 21/03/1905).

In 1906, *"the Minister of Defence finds that a great deal of money spent on field ambulance equipment might have been better expended in armament and munitions, and has decided to spend no more in this direction, on the ground that the equipment will probably never be required, and, if it is, horses and vehicles can be requisitioned"* (The Mercury, 14/05/1906)

In 1906, the work of re-organising the Army Medical and Service Corps was approaching completing and a field ambulance line was to replace Bearer Company and Field Hospital. A cavalry field ambulance was also to be established (Daily Telegraph, 7/02/1906).

An article about an ambulance being left behind with 6,000 wounded when the 2nd Corps D'Armee retreated into Metz and finding itself within the Prussian lines appeared in the Mercury, 13/04/1912 and further revelations in the North West Post 14/06/1912.

In 1907, the Tasmanian Garrison company was designated the Tasmanian Garrison Ambulance (Daily Telegraph, 27/05/1907, p.5). On 5/10/1907, this unit was assigned to the Australian Army Medical corps (Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, 5/10/1907, p.1230). In June 1908, The Commonwealth called for applicants to join the Australian Army Medical Corps Reserve including other ranks such as Chemists, Chemists Assistants, members of recognised Ambulance Societies and Special trades (vix Male nurses, instrument makers, carpenters, harness makers, drivers etc) (Daily Telegraph, 24/06/1908, p.8). When this corps attended the Kitchener Camp at Ross, they were under the command of Captain D.H.E. Lines and the No 5 Field Ambulance was under the command of Captain J.A. Newell (Daily Post, 5/10/1910, p.8). The Tasmanian Garrison Ambulance was listed attending the Easter camp in 1911 as 1 officer, 9 men, 3 horses and the No.5 Field Ambulance as 1 officer, 19 men, 4 horses. (The Mercury, 16/03/1911, p.8)

In 1912, and referencing Melbourne, the rules for field exercises were relayed that "it is high time that the horsed ambulances, should give way to motor ambulances, as they have done in other armies" (The Mercury, 3/10/1912) and also to the "B" section of the No.5 Field Ambulance leaving Hobart after inspection by Inspector-General, Major-General Kirkpatrick (Mercury, 1/02/1912). In April 1912, the Army Medical Corps erected a very efficient field hospital at the Military Ross Camp with the No.5 Field Ambulance from Launceston and the Tasmanian Garrison Ambulance from Hobart and three ambulance wagons that would take four patients each. The combined forces included 60 men and 17 horses (Mercury, 8/04/1912).

In 1913, the mechanical lorry was becoming very popular amongst European armies with its extra strong body and the ability to convert the rear portion into a field kitchen, an ambulance or a searchlight wagon (Daily Telegraph, 16/12/1913).

In 1914, the site for the concentration camp for the Tasmanian contingent of the Australian Imperial expeditionary force was selected at Brighton Junction and the Army Medical Corps, tent sub-division "C" section field ambulance was identified as two officers and 29 others (Examiner, 14/08/1914) and the St John Ambulance Association (Southern Tasmania centres with the assistance of the Red Cross committee formed voluntary aid detachments to supplement the Australian Army Medical corps (Daily Post, 2/09/1914) and the War Office, London appealed for 250 motor drivers for the motor ambulances at the front (Examiner, 7/09/1914). The Salvation Army Commissioner Hay announced the Salvation Army would provide a field ambulance brigade and 500 nurses to nurse the sick and injured of the troops (Daily Telegraph, 8/09/1914).

A motor ambulance fund was set up in Tasmania to raise £300 to purchase an ambulance for the Voluntary Aid section of the Red Cross Society (the Mercury, 22/09/1914). There are far too many articles in regards to the use of ambulances in the war efforts to mention, but an example is the North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay times reported the gifting of 500 motor ambulances to the Red Cross in London on 26/10/1914 and the Examiner reported that seven motor ambulances were all hard at work via a report from Dr Shields in regards to the Australian Voluntary Hospital (Examiner 26/09/1914).

On 13/08/1915, the Daily Telegraph shared an article about the death of Private Simpson, of the 3rd Field Ambulance and his donkeys. An article well worth reading on the challenges of retrieving the injured from the front line.

*DAILY TELEGRAPH – Fri 13 Aug 1915
DEVOTION TO DUTY - SOLDIER AND HIS DONKEYS.
WORKING AMIDST SHOT AND SHELL.*

In the last military orders appears several reports from the official press representative with the Australian forces at the Dardanelles- In the course of a report dated June 12, from Gaba Tepe, he says : 'On the evening after the big Turkish attack on May 19 some of us were sitting yarning, whilst the sun set over the sea, turning the craters of Imbros unto the dull grey of an elephant's hide, set against a background of the most delicate rose, when someone passing said, 'I suppose you've heard that the man with the donkeys is dead?' It came as a real shock. Everybody knew that man with the donkeys, and everybody knew that if ever a man deserved honor in this war it was he. He was a stretcher bearer. Few people knew his name. To most he was Scottie, or Murphy; those who called him the one called his donkey the other. He was really Private Simpson, of the 3rd Field Ambulance. When first we arrived at Anzac there were landed a number of donkeys, which it was thought would be useful in carrying water and food to the firing line. Donkeys will live on a diet of little more than sticks. It was found from the first, however, that the animal for this work out and away the best is the mule. He drinks much less than a horse, and the amount of work he gets through on these steep hills is an eye-opener. The donkeys are the favorites with the men on account of their temper, but there are not many of them now remaining.

It was some time during the first night of our landing that Private Simpson annexed one of these donkeys. He knew the loads they carried in Egypt, and it struck him that they would be especially useful for carrying down men wounded in the line, He put a Red Cross brassard around the donkey's head, and started business at once. He went off and camped with his donkey amongst the Indians who drive the mules, and fed with them, and all the day and half the night he made continual trips to and from the firing line; every one used to meet him time and again coming down the gully with wounded men sitting on the little animal beside him. You cannot hurry a donkey very much, however close the shells may burst, and he absolutely came to disregard bullets and shrapnel. The man with the donkey became fatalistic — if they were going to hit him they would, whatever his precautions. For nearly four weeks he came up and down that valley - through the hottest shrapnel, through the aimed bullets of snipers and the unaimed bullets which came over the ridges. When the shells were so hot that many others thought it wiser to duck for cover as they passed, the man with the donkey calmly went his way as if nothing more serious than a summer shower were happening. Presently he got another donkey, and started to work with two of them. He was coming down the gully on the morning of May 19 after the attack, clearing some of our 300 or 400 wounded — the Turks lost twice that many thousand — when he passed the water guard, where he generally took his breakfast. It happened this morning the breakfast was not ready. 'Never mind,' he said to the engineers there, 'get me a good dinner when I come back.' But he never came back.

He and his two patients were nearing the end of their journey when he was shot through the heart and both of his wounded men were wounded again.

'The -commander of this section- of our line told me that the man with the donkey had been worth 100 men to him. The colonel, of the ambulance to which he belonged had from the first so recognised the value of his work that, he was given a roving commission, and allowed to camp and work entirely on his own, almost as if he were a separate unit. All he had to do was report; once a day to his unit. The moment he fell someone else took on the work with donkeys.

AMBULANCE RESPONSES OUTSIDE AUSTRALIA

1903, “Novel first-aid-to-the-injured boxes are to scattered in the streets of Paris. Outwardly the apparatus resembles a lamp post letter-box, and it contains a small medicine chest, a folding stretcher, and a telephone for signalling the nearest ambulance station. Access to the box is by breaking a glass panel” (Examiner, 17/02/1903).

In 1903, the first mention of a motor ambulance appeared in the Tasmanian News (31/03/1903) when a story was relayed from London that “in a motor ambulance that took him away” and on 5/12/1905, the Mercury also reported a Mr Vogrich who was “removed in an automobile ambulance to a fashionable Clinique in the Bois de Builogne”.

In 1910, at the funeral of King Edward, over 1,000,000 spectators attended. The newspapers of the day reported that over 1,100 St John Ambulance men treated 6,114 patients, mostly women who fainted (Mercury, 23/05/1910). The same year also saw stories of Florence Nightingale work in Scutari where she arranged an ambulance service, ministered to the sick and wounded on the field and brought order into the hospital (Daily Post, 16/08/1910).

In 1912 in Minnesota, baby carriages (perambulators) were required to carry two white lights in front and a red light in the rear after a clumsily-worded law passed Legislature, designed to compel horse-drawn vehicles to illuminate their way at night. The law compelled “other users of wheeled vehicles” to also comply (Kalgoorlie Miner, 1/01/1912).

FROM HORSE DRAWN (OR HAND DRAWN) TO MOTORISED

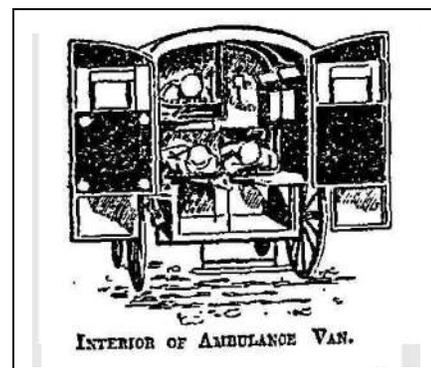
In 1904, The newspaper also reported “an ambulance wagon was being sent from Hobart to be at the disposal of the Army Medical Corps” (Daily Telegraph, 29/03/1904) and a mention occurred of the “increasing utility of the “Ivel” motor for military purposes in the drawing of water-carts or ambulances right up to the firing line” when the Examiner reported on its “Around the World” section of its paper, 24/06/1904.

The Ivel Agricultural Motor was light, powerful and compact. It had one front wheel, with a solid rubber tyre and two large rear wheels like a modern tractor. The engine used petrol, or paraffin and was named after the Ivel River in Bedfordshire, England. It had one forward and one reverse gear. A pulley wheel on the left hand side allowed it to be used as a [stationary engine](#), driving a wide range of agricultural machinery. The large water tank positioned next to the operator's position is for cooling the engine. The 1903 sale price was £300. (Source: <https://zimfieldguide.com/manicaland/1903-ivel-agricultural-motor-no-141-mutare-museum-one-only-seven-still-exist-today>)

The first motor ambulance, built to order of the United States Army appeared in 1906. It was a white steam car. Beyond its lengthened wheel base – 10ft 8in – it was an ordinary 18hp car. The United States War Department gave the car a severe testing before it purchased, and the decision to have a motor ambulance is really the outcome of some manoeuvres in 1904 (Examiner, 10/04/1906).

In 1906, the story featured in all Tasmanian newspapers where Mr Tilden, a member of the Governors staff in San Francisco was shot dead in an automobile by six citizen patrol men. The automobile had been used as an ambulance to convey the sick and wounded to hospital and flew the red flag. (Examiner, 25/04/1906).

In 1906, the Tasmanian News provided an update on St John Ambulance Association competitions in Great Britain for various railway companies. The article included an image of the interior of the ambulance van (Tasmanian News,



17/12/1906). And in 1911 a police electric ambulance was also in use in London (Huron Times, 7/01/1911). In 1914 it was reported that the London County Council was introducing a number of street motor ambulances to be at six stations (The North West Post, 17/03/1914).

In Tasmania in 1912, the Mercury advertised that the Tasmanian Mail for 16/07/1912 had eight pages of illustrations including a handy ambulance - a motor-car by which an injured man was conveyed 42 miles to Hobart (Mercury, 18/07/1912) while in London, mention of an electric ambulance being used in Bishopsgate occurred (Mercury, 13/12/1912).

In 1913, the French military were of the opinion that cycle cars could be used as ambulances as their speed was triple that of the horse ambulance and their narrow width and low weight enabled it to travel through lanes (Examiner, 16/05/1913). At the same time an exhibition was held in London which included vehicles, including ambulances, that ran on paraffin, benzole alcohol as well as petrol (Daily Post, 29/05/1913) and Frances first sportswoman, Marie Marvingt was dreaming of ways to invest an aeroplane that might be used as an ambulance to convey wounded soldiers from the field of battle to the base hospital (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 19/11/1913). 1913 was also the year that Elizabeth Davison, a suffragette was killed at the running of the Derby at Epsom course when she invaded the course and grabbed the bridle of King George's horse, Anmer. Her horribly mangled body was removed by the ambulance corps (Examiner, 10/06/1913).

In 1914 the Military placed an aeroplane at the disposal of the Red Cross Society to demonstrate its use in removing wounded from the field (Daily Telegraph, 3/02/1914).

In 1932, the Mercury made mention that the Hobart ambulance were compelled by regulations to abide by by right-of-way rules where in English cities, the supreme right-of-way was shared by both English ambulances and fire-engines (Mercury, 28/04/1932, p.6)

AMBULANCES IN AUSTRALIA

The earliest references to ambulances in Australian papers, that were not related to wars, refer to ambulances as being processes of moving people or equipment. In 1844 an enterprising bush pioneer woman, Mrs Chisholm sought subscriptions to purchase a horse and covered cart to assist her in her "*ambulance of charity*" to move emigrants from Sydney to country districts. (Morning Chronicle, Sydney 7/02/1844) and in endeavouring to address the need to constantly move commissariat supplies and labourers to for the requisite parties to accompany surveyors "*a perpetual ambulance would appear indispensable*" (The Sydney Morning Herald, 1/03/1849).

In 1857, two ambulances that had returned from the Crimean War were offered for sale in Sydney and were listed as "*They were used to bring the wounded men from the field of battle. They will make a first-rate omnibus or a moveable house, or any other conveyance*" (the Sydney Morning Herald, 21/05/1857).

In 1862 an ambulance was purchased by Hobart Hospital (refer to Ambulances in Tasmania section).

In 1881, the ambulance corps in New South Wales were referenced when "*The ambulance corps entered Mrs. Connor's house with the view of thoroughly cleansing and fumigating the various rooms*" in reference to a small-pox outbreak (The Mercury, 1/08/1881) and in December of the same year, after a sixth child of a family in Woolloomooloo contracted small-pox "*these premises have been thoroughly purified by the Ambulance Corps, and have been railed off from the public*" (The Tasmanian, 10/10/1881).

In 1882, the first mention of an ambulance appears in Melbourne when the chairman of the Health Committee of the City Council confirmed *“an ambulance tray wagon, with a tilt and spring mattress will be purchased. This will be kept at the police depot, Victoria barracks. A horse and harness will always be available there. The 17 local Boards concerned will share the expense, and in the meantime the chief Secretary has authorised the Central Board to defray them”* (Launceston Examiner, 2/02/1882)

On 8 July 1882, South Australia formed an ambulance corps when *“Colonel Downes announced the formation of an ambulance corps. He wanted 24 suitable men for enrolment”* (Launceston Examiner, 12/07/1882).

An ambulance was in use in Victoria by 1884 when, when Melbourne papers made reference to the Melbourne small-pox rumour, *“... were conveyed to the new sanatorium at Williamstown in the ambulance wagon, where they will remain for some days under the care of Dr Embling”* (Launceston Examiner, 5/06/1884).

In 1885, the Queensland *“government expressed a desire that steps should be taken for the forming of ambulance corps”* (Mercury, 1/05/1885). In 1906, a report on the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade appeared in the Examiner 26/02/1906 indicating the brigade in Brisbane had been established 13 years prior and was registered under the Hospital Act in 1897.

In 1884, New South Wales were reporting the ambulance corps had been largely increased as a result of small-pox spreading (Tasmanian News, 2/12/1884). In 1885 and in response to uprisings in Egypt, the military was preparing a complete volunteer ambulance service of 750 men that was expected to be ready within a week. The equipment consisted of ambulance wagons, surgery and pharmacy wagons, general stores, stretchers, medical comforts, medicines, instruments, etc. It was also to include a proper complement of trained bearers a great many of whom had already received full course and instructions in this subject (Launceston Examiner, 17/02/1885). A report in the Daily Telegraph (3/08/1889) mentioned *“two horses attached to an ambulance wagon belonging to the Little Bay Hospital bolted at Neutral Bay, after the driver had been unseated by an accident to the footboard”*.

In 1904, the newspapers reported of a terrible fatal accident that happened within three miles of Drouin, Victoria where two ladies were thrown into the mud and attended by several members of the ambulance society. First aid was rendered and artificial respiration were tried without success on the deceased young lady (The North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times 8/07/1904).

In 1912, one of the first mentions of describing a patients conditions appears in the newspaper when describing a man found lying in the streets in Melbourne. His condition was critical (Huron Times, 31/01/1912).

In 1913, St John Ambulance is recorded as having a motor ambulance that transported patients from a motor vehicle accident to the Alfred Hospital (Examiner, 4/02/1913) and again for another accident near Portland (Huron Times, 8/03/1913). Sydney was also reported to have used a *“civil ambulance motor”* to take a corpse away from Woolloomooloo (Mercury, 8/08/1913).

AMBULANCES IN TASMANIA

Hobart

In January 1862, Hobart Hospital purchased an ‘admirable ambulance for the conveyance of patients’ where two attendants could travel with two patients (Mercury, 11 Jan 1862). It went on to

explain that the patient who had been too often brought to the hospital in cabs could be conveyed from his own door to the hospital bed, without change of posture, and without fatigue. In 1880 a by-law for the City of Hobart Town was posted in the Mercury (19/04/1880) advising “*an ambulance for the conveyance of persons suffering from a dangerous infectious disorder is provided, and can be obtained at the General Hospital*”. In 1886 the ambulance was used to transport a murder victim, Jane Margaret Oakes to the Hospital (Tasmanian News, 8/09/1886). In 1887, reference was made to an ambulance that had been in use for about 10 years being “*much in want of painting*” (Tasmanian News 15/10/1887)

On 28 Aug 1877, the Board of Management at the General Hospital, Hobart requesting the Municipal Council to put a stop to the dangerous practice of carrying patients affected with contagious diseases (diphtheria) in the public vehicles of the city. The hospital authorities are prepared on their part to provide (with the sanction of the Government) ambulances (horse/cart) or carriages properly fitted up for the purpose, and ready for use at a very short notice. (The Mercury, 28 Aug, 1877, p.2).

In 1882, the Superintendent of Police, wrote to the City Council of Hobart Town “*pointing out the desirability of providing an ambulance wagon or other means for carrying dead bodies to the hospital morgue, instead of the present stretcher borne on the shoulders of four policemen*” (The Mercury, 06/05/1882). By December 1883, this ambulance cart was recorded as being used (Tasmanian News, 28/12/1883).

In 1886, the Hobart Hospital Board wrote “*to the Government for an ambulance and horse, to be provided for conveying fever patients to the hospital*” (Daily Telegraph, 16/04/1886). Photos of this special ambulance were referenced in the Hospital Board meeting (Daily Telegraph 18/06/1886). In 1887, the Central board of Health suggested that the names and numbers of people who utilised this ambulance should be recorded by the gatekeeper (Tasmanian News 15/01/1887). In 1898, the Modern Cycling Agency offered to fit the ambulance with Dunlop pneumatic tyres free of cost to the Hospital (Tasmanian News 13/05/1898). When the Trasvaal (Boer) war was declared in 1899, the Tasmanian Government converted the two ambulance wagons into transport wagons to send to accompany the unit sent from Tasmania (The Mercury, 4/11/1899). No mention of the replacement ambulance is found until a letter to the Editor, that Hobart Hospital commencing process to acquire a second ambulance van (The Mercury, 13/12/1902).

The Mercury 23/03/1903 mentions an “*antiquated ambulance, with metal-tyred wheels*”. In April 1903, the Hospital Board reported that “*during the month authority was given for the repair and renovation of the ambulance*” (Tasmanian News 18/4/1903). Bemusingly, around this same time there was a horse named ‘Ambulance’ that featured regularly in the newspaper of that time until it retired around May 1903.

The Hobart Hospital Board indicated that rubber tires would be fitted to the ambulance van (Daily Telegraph, 9/07/1904) and the Queenstown Hospital Union also reported that rubber-tyred wheels could be obtained from Melbourne and the cost to make their ambulance at the Mount Lyell M and R Company would be between £14-£15 (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 13/07/1904).

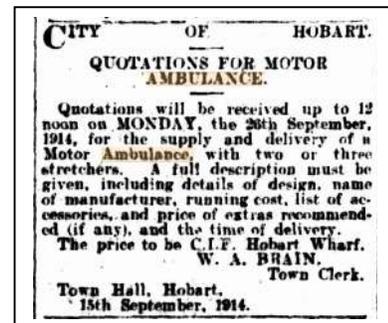
The Mercury, in 1904 included a letter of concern in regards to people being required to stay 50-60 yards away from the infection disease hospital and “*the dangers of patients being conveyed through thickly-populated portions of the town in ambulance vans*” (Mercury, 28/06/1904) and the Board of Management of the Hobart Hospital had rubber tyres and other improvements made to the

ambulance “and now patients were conveyed to and from the hospital in very great comfort” (the Mercury, 10/12/1904).

In 1907, the Hospital Board was calling for a “proper ambulance” to be purchased as the current ambulance was in a dilapidated state (The Mercury, 9/11/1907) and calls on the Government to provide a properly equipped ambulance van to convey dead bodies commenced (Daily Post, 2/10/1908). The unsatisfactory state of the ambulance was still in the media in 1909 (Daily Post, 15/09/1909) and again in 1912 when the Superintendent of the Fire Brigade Board suggested that citizens might form a St John Ambulance and the ambulance could be stored at the Fire Brigade station (Daily Post 7/09/1912). In 1913, these calls continued at Council level (The Mercury, 5/11/1913) and continued in August 1914, Alderman Nettlefolds motion to purchase a motor ambulance was passed (Daily Post, 4/08/1914) with an estimated cost of £250-£350.

In 1912, diphtheria outbreaks were being recorded in different parts of Hobart. The hospital ambulance was used to transport patients from the train station (The Mercury, 3/08/1912). In July 1913, the Mercury reported that the Vaucluse ambulance had been disinfected 83 times along with 231 premises related to 101 cases of infectious diseases compared to 133 in 1911, 125 in 1910, 107 in 1909 and 134 in 1908. The cases in 1913 were 81 cases of diphtheria, 7 of scarlet fever, 1 of puerperal fever and 2 of ophthalmia neonatorum (The Mercury, 22/07/1913).

In 1914, quotations were being sought for a motor ambulance for City of Hobart (Mercury, 16/09/1914) and it was noted that “Launceston had a similar car and it worked well” (Daily Post, 13/10/1914) and Cramp Bros were reported as building the body for the new city motor ambulance (Huron Times, 24/10/1914) and the Health Committee recommended that authority be given to purchase a motor-ambulance for use in connection with the Infectious Diseases Hospital as the present system of hiring a horse-drawn ambulance was inefficient (Mercury 11/05/1915). In 1915 the motor ambulance arrived for the City of Hobart and was housed at Mr R Nettlefold garage who was to find a chauffeur to drive it, when necessary (Mercury, 6/07/1915, p.4)



In 1923, the Tasmanian Ambulance and Transport Brigade had received 537 calls and the cases dealt with were Sickness 387, accidents 78; infectious diseases 23; racing clubs 40 and miscellaneous 9.(The News, 13/10/1925, p.3). the same article went on to indicate that the Brigade was in a position to secure a new ambulance to replace the old Ford Ambulance which had been used for many years and a new garage was in the course of construction. In 1926, case load had increased to 682 and a new Austin motor ambulance had been secured (The Mercury, 17/08/1926, p.10).

Launceston

In 1881, attention was being drawn to the Launceston Hospital Board that “an ambulance for the conveyance of people suffering from infectious diseases” (The Tasmanian, 23/07/1881). In September 1881, Launceston was also commencing the process of acquiring an ambulance. At that time neither Melbourne or South Australia had ambulances, but Sydney had an ambulance corps that was being used and ambulance stations were being established throughout London (The Tasmanian, 24 September,1881). The auditing of hospital accounts for the ambulance are referred to in the Launceston Examiner, 18/09/1886. In July 1887, the Launceston Hospital Board chairman stated that the Government had granted an ambulance for Hospital use (Launceston Examiner,

29/07/1887) which was built by Excelsior Carriage Factory and a detailed description was provided in the Launceston Examiner 26/08/1887 included "*the inside of the ambulance is painted and varnished all over, without any trimmings whatsoever, so as to be more easily disinfected; it is also fitted with a wide door to admit the stretcher, which runs on rollers on angle iron rails Outwardly the ambulance is artistically finished off*". The ability for the four wheeled wagon, weighing about half a ton, to convert to carry as many as nine people was further described in the Launceston Examiner 26/09/1887. Commentary that "*this ambulance van represented a paupers hearse*" were made in the Launceston Examiner 2/10/1887 and that it had been called the "Black Maria" along with suggestions that it should be painted a lighter colour in The Mercury 18/11/1887. Initially this ambulance was free to use, but in November 1887, the Launceston Hospital board recommended the cost of the horse hire be added to the hospital dues of any self-supporting patient (Daily Telegraph, 8/11/1887).

In 1894, the Chairman read a letter from Dr. Pike requesting an ambulance for conveying patients to hospital. The only option was a float as offering "Black Maria" which the public appeared uninterested in utilising after the small-pox outbreak (Launceston Examiner, 16/02/1894). In 1898 a replacement ambulance for Launceston was finally in place (The Mercury 18/03/1898) but "Black Maria" was again in action during 1903 small-pox outbreak (Daily Telegraph, 11/8/1903). In 1911, a "Black Maria" was reported in the Ulverstone area (The North West Post, 8/07/1911) but it is not clear if it was the same cart. In August 1919, the name "Black Maria" was still given to a motor ambulance in Launceston, and there were again calls to change the outward appearance of "that deadly black, repulsive-looking, motor ambulance" (Examiner, 25/08/1919). Around this same time, globally and in Tasmania, the reference "Black Maria" tended to relate to vehicles used to transport prisoners.

The use of the Launceston Police Ambulance was referenced in several articles including Daily Telegraph, 25/03/1902. The Army medics authorities, mindful of the sufferings caused to many wounded soldiers in the late war by the late war offered a prize of £100 for the design of a military ambulance. The winning design, built by the Royal Army Carriage department at Woolwich, weighed only 23 cwt and was capable of carrying six men laying down in comfort (Examiner, 11/10/1902).

A new ambulance stretcher that was used by the Red Cross Brigade at the Carrick Races was made in the short space of one day by Messrs R Bauld and Son (North Western Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 20/03/1906).

In 1908, St John Ambulance corps informed the Examiner that an ambulance would be purchased for Launceston It would be a "lifter" pattern – that is, on wheels, so that the body part could be removed and carried into any building if required (Examiner, 17/10/1908). This litter arrived in December 1908 (Daily Telegraph, 26/12/1908).

A call went out to raise £100 for an ambulance and ambulance equipment (Daily Telegraph, 24/02/1909) and by 29/03/1909 £168 15s 3d was raised (Daily Telegraph, 24/05/1909). This was a horse drawn vehicle (Daily Telegraph, 11/08/1909) and a detailed description of its construction was provided to readers (Examiner, 9/03/1910). In May 1910 the Ambulance Committee was challenged with finding a body to assume responsibility (Examiner, 24/05/1910) and eventually the Board of Management for the General Hospital agreed (Daily Telegraph, 27/05/1910).

In 1911, the Launceston General Hospital committee recommended the ambulance be not taken beyond a radius of twelve miles from the GPO Launceston. This however included Longford,

Evandale, Perth, Rosevears and Carrick (The Mercury, 17/11/1911) and ambulance repairs in that year totalled £10 2s 6d.

Ambulance lectures

In 1880, the Mercury (6/07/1880) reported that ambulance lectures became a means of preparing for casualties in war. The Artillery are preparing for casualties by going in for a series of ambulance lectures, embracing such useful and interesting points as the treatment of an ecchymosed eye, poulticing of fractures, sewing up bullet wounds, putting a dislocation in splints, probing of contusions, and other important matters which may be of service before the recruits are grey-headed and the benefits of the honorary surgeons of the volunteers being encouraged to offer these. In the same year, South Australia was offering Weatherly's Ambulance Lectures for 1s. In July 1882, Dr Benjafield delivered the first of a course of ambulance lectures in connection with the Ladies Christian Association, intended to instruct the public what to do in cases of accident previous to the arrival of medical aid, or when it cannot be obtained. The Ladies Christian Association had a movement on foot to establish a home for trained nurses (Launceston Examiner, 24/07/1882)

Ambulances in towns (A-Z)

Beaconsfield

In 1906, Mr Payne drew attention to the necessity for an ambulance in the town and the Beaconsfield Town Board commenced obtaining a design and estimate of costs (Daily Telegraph, 11/07/1906) and in 1911, the St John Ambulance Society built a convenient little type of vehicle at a cost of £25 but a few months after it arrived it was discarded as the authorities purchased a horse ambulance. The hand vehicle, after being discarded by Beaconsfield, was sent to Launceston (Daily Telegraph, 29/08/1911). In 1915 there is mention of the Warden making arrangements for housing of the council's ambulance (Examiner, 20/01/1915)

Bellerive

First aid classes reported as having commenced at Bellerive by St John Ambulance Association under Dr Heyward (Daily Post, 13/07/1915)

Bothwell

The 1912 paper reported of an agonising journey of over 7 hours for a patient, Walter Crocket, whose foot was almost severed in two at a Hydro site in the lakes to Bothwell. The same paper considered that the Hydro should provide an ambulance for easier and quicker conveying of injured men to Bothwell (Daily Post (8/03/1912).

Burnie

Burnie began building a fund to purchase an ambulance (North Western Advocate and Emu Bay Times, 1/05/1905) and also an ambulance society in town (Daily Telegraph, 1/05/1905). In 1906, a grand concert was held at the Town Hall to augment funds to provide the ambulance (North Western Advocate and Emu Bay Times 3/08/1906). The sum of £11 was raised (the cost of the Latrobe Ambulance) (North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times 7/09/1906) and the ambulance arrived in November 1906 (North Western and Emu Bay Times 16/11/1906).

A further ambulance stretcher was agreed to be purchased in 1912 (The North West Post, 6/07/1912).

In 1954, Burnie boasted a new ambulance (Advocate 2/04/1954, p.5)

Campbell Town

The Board of Management for Campbell Town Hospital met, and decided to purchase an ambulance for the hospital for “patients coming by train or residents taken ill” (Daily Telegraph, 9/08/1905) and the formation of a first aid class under St John ambulance rules would occur (Daily Telegraph, 8/09/1914).

Circular Head

In 1927, Circular Head commenced trying to get an ambulance for themselves (Advocate, 12/09/1927).



Devonport

The year 1909 saw the first calls for an ambulance for Devonport (North Western Advocate and Emu Bay Times 17/11/1909). In 1912, the Mersey Marine board approved the purchase on an ambulance stating “there was nothing like it in town” (The North West Post, 20/08/1912).

Evandale

In 1914, St John Ambulance classes were agreed to be formed at Evandale (Daily Telegraph 2/09/1914).

Gormanston

An ambulance was recorded as arriving at Gormanston in 1910 (Daily Post, 30/07/1910) and was formally taken over by the Council (Daily Telegraph, 9/09/1910).

Hagley

Senior girls of the newly formed Girl Guides at Hagley were given instruction in ambulance and first aid in preparation for the return of the wounded soldiers (Examiner, 20/07/1915)

Huonville

Movement in establishing a St John Ambulance Association in Huonville was reported in the Huon Times, 5/06/1915) and it was reported as having commenced teaching first aid classes there under Dr Allester in the Daily Post, 13/07/1915).

Latrobe

The year 1902 saw fund raising commence for an ambulance for the Devon Hospital (Daily Telegraph, 30/10/1902).

In 1905, the members of the Latrobe ambulance classes were reviewed by Dr Kendall and several members were elected to form an ambulance corps (North Western and Emu Bay times 1/12/1905). The ambulance corps attended the Latrobe Bicycle Sports Day on Boxing Day that year using a tent and equipment (The North West Post, 29/12/1905).

In 1905, Latrobe hospital received a quote of £7 10s to construct an ambulance by Mr Behcher (the North Western Advocate and Emu Bay Times 26/01/1905) and was noted for delivery within “two weeks” (Daily Telegraph, 9/03/1906). In 1906, funds were being raised for an ambulance litter as the

present methods of conveying patients to the hospital and elsewhere was very incomplete (Examiner, 27/02/1906). In the same year it was reported that "Latrobe was the only town in the State which had a properly-trained ambulance society" (The Mercury, 30/04/1906). In November 1906, it was agreed that the ambulance would be stored on the verandah at the Town board Office (The North West Post, 8/11/1906).

The cost of the ambulance litter to the Red Cross Association was listed as £10 10s and a further £5 for an ambulance case containing "first aid" necessaries (The North Western and Emu Bay Times, 28/01/1907).

An ambulance was purchased for Latrobe (the North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay times, 6/04/1910).

In 1927, Devon Hospital commenced fund raising for an ambulance (Advocate, 2/02/1927) and in September 1927 a mention that an appeal would commence (Advocate, 12/09/1927). In 1928 a telegram was read at the Devon Hospital Board of Management that identified that permission was sought to call the first ambulance 'the Bert Hinkler'. The same meeting went on to identify that future hospital developments must include air ambulances to serve the North and West Coasts (Advocate, 14/05/1928, p6). Squadron-Leader Hinkler gave permission for his name to be used (Examiner, 14/05/1928). By November 1928, over £1000 had been raised and the ambulance landed from Melbourne (Mercury, 5/11/1928, p5).

The Advocate reported in 15/11/1928 that Hobart had an ambulance, but is of a very inferior kind. Launceston has one on a still lower grade. The "Bert Hinkler" provided for the Devon Hospital is the first real ambulance in Tasmania, and is said to be equal to, and probably superior to, any in use in Victoria. The chassis is a Hudson super six. The wheel base is 127 inches and this is a big factor to smooth and easy running. The body was made of wood, with windows that could be automatically opened, and on the top a series of small windows which could also be opened for ventilation It had two stretchers which moved in grooved beds of rollers and air beds (rubber coverings which are filled with air). It was fitted with Sanax First Aid outfit, in which every necessity for emergency is stored neatly. There were also 2 bucket seats in the back. There was an electric light in the back and another electric light in the "ambulance" sign on the windscreen. The ambulance was well shod with large Barnet Glass balloon tyres and a spare wheel. The ambulance was bluish grey and in a circle on each side are the words "Devon Hospital". (Advocate, 15/11/1928, p9). A photo of the vehicle accompanied the extensive news article.

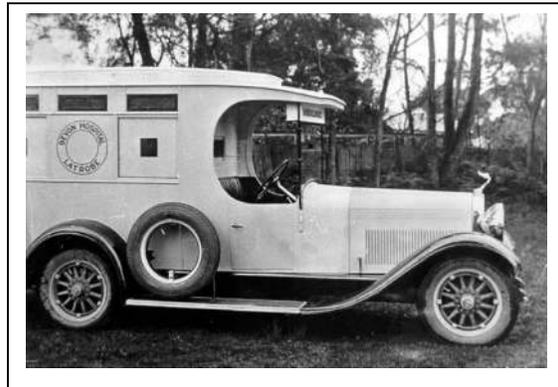


Photo courtesy utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/A/Ambulance

Linda

Calls for an ambulance for Linda commenced in 1909 after a dozen miners carried an injured comrade from Linda to Queenstown. Both the hand ambulance (as used in Queenstown) and a horse ambulance were to be considered (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 16/11/1909 & 19/11/1909). A hand ambulance must have been purchased as it was stored in one of Councillor Hine rooms, but when he required the room, he requested it be moved (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 2/06/1911). In 1913, a

public meeting was help to establishing a fund to provide free use of the ambulance (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 9/04/1913).

Lyell

A meeting in 1910 showed that £100 had been raised for an ambulance to be used in the district to convey sick and injured to the Queenstown Hospital (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 17/03/1910). This ambulance was supplied by the St Andrews Ambulance co in Melbourne and arrived with repairs needing to be done to one of the lamps and another pairs of straps to swing the No.2 stretcher (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 23/07/1910). This ambulance was purchased for the sum of £75 from St Andrews Ambulance Co (Zeehan and Dundas Herald 23/11/1910). A disgruntled reader advised the Zeehan and Dundas Herald on 11/04/1912 that every person, rich or poor, who required the service had to pay the sum of 30s with £1 to be paid in advance.



New Norfolk

Mrs Greenwood of New Norfolk began inquiring about starting first aid classes at New Norfolk (Daily Post, 13/07/1915). In 1947, the possibility of organising a roster to embrace voluntary drivers in the event of an ambulance being obtained for use in the New Norfolk Municipality was mentioned (The Mercury, 1/03/1947, p.22)

Penguin

The call for an ambulance service at Penguin first commenced with the Rifle Brigade members volunteered to instruct a local ambulance class if one was formed (Mercury, 13/08/1914).

Queenstown

In 1902, Queenstown hospital approved the purchase of two ambulances – one to be placed at the Smelters and the other at the Hercules mine (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 12/02/1902) and an ambulance corps was formed in connection with the union (The Mount Lyell Standard and Strahan Gazette, 9/04/1902). Fund raising for the ambulance for Queenstown Hospital included an annual football match (Zeehan and Dundas Herald 1/08/1903).

In May 1904, the Queenstown Board approved the purchase on an Ambulance (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 12/05/1904). Queenstown Hospital Board meeting approved the erection of a shed for their ambulance (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 17/07/1905) and the annual meeting in 1906 reported “an ambulance for the use of those desirous of conveying patients to the Hospital has also been acquired, and should prove a boon to those having need of its services” (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 27/01/1906). This ambulance was commented on in 1906 “*Mr Treanor said there was no doubt that the ambulance was not suitable. He himself had been an eye witness of a female being conveyed on it, and one of the men wheeling the ambulance had to stoop in a most uncomfortable position all the way*” (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 12/03/1906). The necessary alterations were left in the hands of the Visiting Committee. By May 1906, these alterations to the “*much-abused ambulance were reported as having been attended to*” (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 14/05/1906)

In 1906, the diary of Mr D.K. Rhodes was reviewed with recollections of the days of Penghana when apparently the ambulance corps was among the first body formed, and the names of members were listed (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 11/07/1906).

In 1912, a cyclonic gale struck a two-roomed dwelling near Mount Lyell, and one occupant was thrown 100 yards away from where the building stood. One other occupant was transported by ambulance to Queenstown Hospital (Examiner, 12/03/1912). A new hand ambulance was supplied by the United Friendly Societies in Queenstown for the sum of £25 landed (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 21/09/1912). The mechanisms of this stretcher were explained in the Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 22/11/1912.

In 1915, Ensign Gould commenced inquiries with St John Ambulance Association about commencing first aid classes at Queenstown (Daily Post, 13/07/1915).

Scottsdale

An ambulance stretcher was purchased and held at the Scottsdale Council Chambers after complaints by the Railway department against their stretcher being so frequently used for outside purposes (North-Eastern Advertiser, 28/02/1911)

Stanley

A call for intending members of the Red Cross Society, under the regulations of the St Johns Ambulance Corps was advertised in the Circular Head Chronicle 9/09/1914.

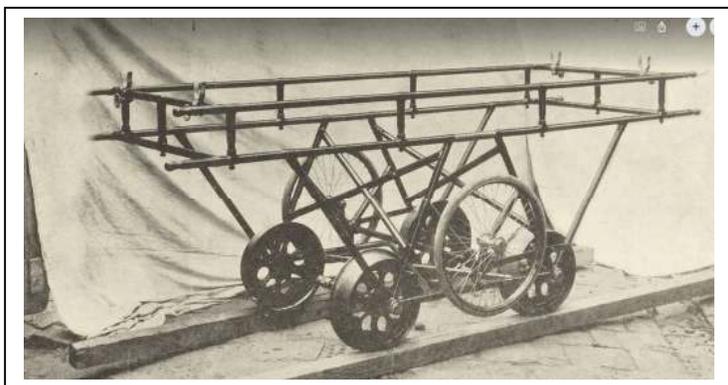
Ulverstone

In 1903, a military ambulance is mentioned as being in use in Ulverstone (The North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times, 28/03/1903). Fresh outbreaks of small-pox saw the General Hospital in Launceston seeking a suitable vehicle which could be converted into an ambulance for removing patients to Carr Villa (Examiner, 25/06/1903). A horse was borrowed to transport a "suspect case" and the owner refused to take the horse back until it was fumigated and vaccinated (Examiner, 26/06/1903).

In 1904, the North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times (8/12/1906) reported that the Town Board adjourned their meeting to allow the members to accompany Miss Vernon and her pupils to view the new ambulance that they had presented to the town. It had been purchased for £11. Miss Vernon and her pupils went on to formally present an ambulance to the town of Burnie in 1906 (Daily Telegraph, 7/12/1906). The North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times reported on 20/06/1906 that a new ambulance litter had been constructed by Messrs R. Bauld and Son for the Red Cross Brigade which was very neat and presentable with its blackwood body and hickory wheels and the bottom covered with strong canvas.

Zeehan

In 1906, the Zeehan Hospital Board appointed a committee to obtain an ambulance carriage similar to that used at Queenstown (The Mercury, 12/09/1906). The cost was £17 10s (including rubber tyred-wheels £5 10s) which was considered rather excessive by the Chairman (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 12/09/1906). The



Board determined that a horse ambulance would be the best for the Hospital (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 15/11/1906). In 1908, a fancy dress football match was held to raise funds for an adequate

ambulance service for the Zeehan and Dundas Hospital (Daily Telegraph, 7/08/1908). Mr George Howe developed a working model of a proposed ambulance to be developed for the Zeehan and Dundas hospital that would run along the 2ft gauge tramway so prevalent at Zeehan, on four wheels, and by a simple lever action those four wheels are lifted and a pair of centre wheels are left free upon which to run the ambulance along the road or footpath (Examiner, 8/09/1908). This ambulance was built in Melbourne and presented by the joint efforts of the UAOD and IOOF, arrived in December 1908 (Examiner, 24/12/1908 and Zeehan and Dundas Herald 8/01/1809).

In 1910, the Zeehan Hospital *“decided to approach the Government, through a member of the district, on the necessity to provide a motor ambulance between Williamsford and Zeehan to convey patients to the hospital”* (Examiner 9/02/1910). In 1911 Zeehan was reported to have a new ambulance stretcher that combined lightness, comfort and hygiene. It was built by Robert Andersons works, Melbourne and had a frame built of bicycle steel with a moveable hood and apron for wet weather and could be used independent of the ambulance (Examiner, 9/01/1911).

In 1911, the Zeehan Hospital Board was requesting this ambulance be placed in the hands of the police but the Commissioner could not fall in with the idea (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 14/06/1911) In 1913, it was reported to be in bad repair and the writer was requesting it be placed in the control of the Hospital Authority (Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 19/09/1913) and in 1914 it was reported as being replaced (Examiner, 9/09/1914).

Ambulance Cars - Railway

In July 1886, the Railway Ambulance Corps were kept busy with a railway accident near Avoca for the opening of the Fingal Railway (Daily Telegraph, 1/07/1886) and the Launceston Hospital Board received a report that recommended they obtain a wheeled ambulance embodying the latest improvements, also that a hand or chair ambulance be supplied (the Tasmanian, 20/11/1886).

A round up of the events of 1903 was reported in the Examiner, 1/01/1904 and included that a trial run of the ambulance train had occurred in August 1903. The Chief Medical Officer of Health examined the railway ambulance car at Launceston, which had been fitted up during the recent epidemic and found it in good order (Examiner, 5/03/1904).

In 1905, patients were still transported by railway to awaiting ambulances. The Examiner reported on 19/04/1905 that *“a youth names Clive Archer, aged 17, arrived by train from Burnie last evening, and was conveyed on the police ambulance to the General Hospital”* and in 1906 *“The Railway Department sent a special carriage to bring him into town, and at the station the police ambulance was in waiting to convey him to the hospital”* (Examiner, 4/07/1906).

In 1912, trains were still being used to transport patients from Penguin to Launceston to be met by the ambulance (Daily Telegraph, 4/01/1912).

In 1928, the Devonport Railway team won the Tasmanian Ambulance Shield in the competition and were to head off to the interstate competition (Advocate, 31/10/1928, p.5)

Ambulances at Horse races

Ambulances regularly attended horse races before 1904 and in March 1904 at the Longford races, the need for an ambulance was obvious when a rider died and *“the necessity for an ambulance was very apparent, as a float had to be procured to remove the body from the course to the Royal Hotel”* (Daily Telegraph, 18/03/1904) and calls commenced for *“every racing club in the State should have an ambulance on the course, in case it is required during the progress of a meeting”* (Daily Telegraph,

23/03/1904) and went on to say that *“the purchase of a hand ambulance would be a trifling expense to a race club”*. The Tasmanian Racing Club reported in the Daily Telegraph /08/1905 that it had purchased an ambulance.

The appearance of a well-appointed ambulance wagon at the races at Mowbray attracted some attention. Hitherto an open vehicle with a couple of stretchers was replaced by a light-running covered-in van with the red cross painted on each side (Daily Telegraph, 27/11/1905).

In 1906 the move away from hand ambulances was being focused on when *“if an horsed vehicle, fitted up as an ambulance, was kept in readiness on the course, jockeys who meet with bad mishaps and need medical attention could be speedily conveyed to the casualty ward”* (Daily Telegraph, 21/04/1906)

An ambulance was purchased for the Hobart Military Ordnance store (the Mercury, 30/06/1910)

Legislation and Regulations

The Red Cross Convention 1864 governs the treatment of the wounded on the battle field. (Zeehan and Dundas Herald 21/05/1906)

The Public Health legislations were extended in the Colonies in 1886 where under the Public Health Act of 1885, each Local Board was required to appoint a medical officer of health and where an infectious must be reported by the Local Board to the Central Board, which has the power to make regulations in such matters, and hospitals, ambulances, etc under that statute. (The Mercury, 24/07/1886). This included providing proper arrangements for how the ambulance was to be driven and horsed (Launceston Examiner, 27/09/1887) when a small-pox outbreak occurred. A call to vaccinate undertakers, ambulance drivers and disinfectors against small-pox was requested by the Launceston Town Council and reported in the Daily Telegraph 25/10/1887.

A Gazette extra-ordinary was issued in regards to regulations providing for smallpox hospital accommodation, ambulance arrangements and general matters (Daily Telegraph, 11/07/1903). This include *“accommodation should be in readiness for the ambulance driver, and those who come in contact with the disease”* (The Mercury 21/07/1903).

The Public Health Act 1903 (sections 37, 38, 39) dealt with the transportation of infectious patients to infectious disease hospital (The Mercury, 15/06/1904).

In 1913, the Motor Traffic Act, 1907 was amended for the definition of “motor vehicle” to include *“or for the purposes of any fire brigade, nor any vehicles whilst being used for police patrol of ambulance purposes”* (Examiner, 27/10/1913). In 1914, the Minister of Public Works instructed that men engaged on “big works” were to be supplied with an ambulance as a means of conveyance in case of accidents (The North West Post, 28/07/1914).

In 1915, the City Council recommended regulations in regards to the use of ambulance in accidents (free of charge) and medical and surgical cases (minimum charge 5 shillings) with no guarantee that the ambulance would be made available for any cases except accidents (Daily Post, 3/08/1915). In 1921, the Launceston City Council initiated the ambulance service and a year later was addressing the lack of provision in the Corporation Act to authorise the council to provide and run ambulances (Examiner, 21/02/1922, p.4).

In 1923, the Ambulance Transport Brigade should be formed in Hobart (World, 6/06/1923, p.12) and in Sept 1923 the Tasmanian Ambulance Transport Brigade was formed (World, 25/09/1923, p.2).

In 1932, the bill to create the Southern Tasmanian Ambulance Transport Service Board was first read (The Mercury, 17/11/1932, p.2). This Ambulance Bill was to set up a committee of control and received Royal Assent in December 1932 (The Mercury, 24/12/1932, p.6).

In 1941, the formation of the Northern Tasmanian Ambulance Transport Board was being sought (Examiner, 30/08/1941, p.6) and the Constitution announced (Examiner 10/10/1942, p.4)

In 1949, the Minister for Health (Dr Turnbull) began seeking the attitude of Municipalities to create a Tasmanian Ambulance Board (Examiner, 9/02/1949, p.3).

By 1953 the costs of transporting patients was causing concerns for the Northern Tasmanian Ambulance Board where it charged only £16 to go to Hobart and the Hobart Ambulance charged £28-30 (Examiner, 1/02/1953, p.3). The same article indicated that each ambulance in the North was now fitted with a resuscitation outfit and that the cases being dealt with in the North per month were 108-135 over the prior three months.

VOLUNTEERS IN AMBULANCES

In 1881, Volunteer Ambulances were first reported when *“at a review which took place at Windsor before the Queen in July, a complete bearer company, composed wholly of Volunteers, and fully equipped with stretchers, ambulance wagons etc were present. This was the first public appearance of a complete company of trained volunteer bearers, but now that the Commander-in-Chief has sanctioned two men per company of each volunteer corps being specially trained in ambulance drill, who after receiving certificates of competency, will wear a distinguishing badge on their uniform....”* (The Tasmanian, 27/08/1881).

The scare caused by the threatened war with Russia, early in 1878, once more revived the martial spirit of Tasmania and a defence force was authorised to be raised for the colony. The Hobart and Launceston Artillery were formed and an ambulance corps established (The Tasmanian, 4/04/1885). The Tasmanian News in 1885 reported the House of Assembly was advised *“that Hobart and Launceston Officers had been sent to England for their recommendations to be complied with”* (Tasmanian News, 12/09/1885).

The Rifle Club movement

In July 1880, mention of volunteers and ambulances occurred in the Mercury with weekly instructions being given to both officers and non-commissioned officers (from the Volunteer Ambulance Corps under the Rifle Brigades) in using bandages, stopping haemorrhage, treating accidents and gunshot wounds, using ambulance stretchers (The Mercury, 21 July 1880). Around this period, Ambulance Lectures were regularly occurring in Hobart and Launceston and by the late 1880s were also occurring in other townships. In 1897, the Ambulance corps were reorganised and were placed under the charge of Surgeon-Lieut. Giblin (The Mercury, 10/07/1897).

By 1883, the emergence of Volunteer races to hone the skills of the volunteers were occurring (Launceston Examiner, 9/05/1883) and the Southern Tasmanian Volunteer Artillery Regiment Ambulance corps treated a patient at a volunteer military drill (Tasmanian News 11/11/1884).

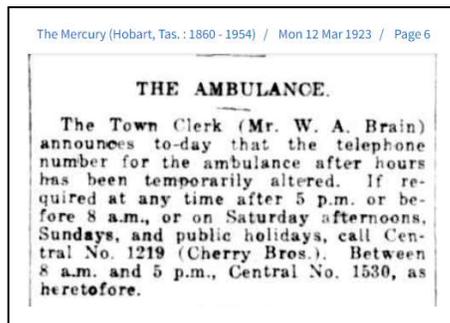
The Volunteer Movement in 1886 cited recommendations that the defence forces in each of the Australian colonies to form ambulance corps had not been given much attention by the authorities in Tasmania and references Ambulance associations being formed resulting in rendering of prompt and practical assistance in cases of accident or sudden illness until professional aid can be obtained (Tasmanian, 25/12/1886).

Dr E.L. Crowther was the Captain Commanding in 1880 (Mercury 10/01/1880) and in 1914 he wrote to the Editor of the Mercury indicating that he was willing, as one of the first Tasmanian volunteers, to instruct a limited number in first aid and ambulance work (Mercury, 4/08/1914). By 1915, Dr Crowther was an instructor for St John Ambulance. (Mercury, 22/03/1915, p.3)

In 1914, the Rifle Club movement issued useful information including *“members must be between the ages of 18 to 60 and must pass a test as to eyesight. Any unable to pass on this account will be enrolled for other volunteer units helpful in local defence, such as ambulance work”* (Mercury, 11/09/1914).

In 1890, Ambulances classes began being taught at the Presentation Convent School which offered *‘occupation of a practical character to our young ladies’* (The Mercury 1/1/1890). The YMCA was also providing lectures on “Nursing and Ambulance” in Zeehan (The Mercury, 20/05/1890) which may indicate the focus was more on Ambulances as field hospital environments. The inaugural meeting of the Hobart Ambulance and Nursing Association was held (Tasmanian News, 9/08/1890)

By 1887, the hospital, military and railway all had their own ambulances and St John Ambulance Association, also had formed and had commenced providing first aid in some towns.



The Ambulance Society Launceston branch met on 12/04/1887 with Lady Hamilton chairing the meeting. (Daily Telegraph, 13/04/1887) and in Hobart in 1889 (The Mercury, 21/06/1889).

When a Typhoid outbreak occurred in Sandy Bay in 1887, hourly use of this ambulance to transport typhoid patients from Sandy Bay was recorded (The Tasmanian, 25/03/1887). In 1888, the Chairman of the Hobart Hospital Board read a letter *“from Frederick Woods, driver of the ambulance, asking for some slight recognition of his*

services, as during the typhoid epidemic in the prior year and opinion was expressed that he was entitled to something. The Chairman said that all they could do was to recommend him to the Government for a gratuity” (Tasmanian News, 10/03/1888). In 1888, the young lad who had been driving the ambulance for 3 years was awarded £3 10s (Mercury 14 Apr 1888) and presented with a silver watch from the Board in recognition of his service (Tasmanian News 2/05/1888). Woods was still listed as the driver in 1902 when *“the driver (Woods) of the Hospital Ambulance did not know (so he said) who ordered him to take the children to Sandy Bay”* (The Mercury, 8/07/1902). In 1888, the Mercury reported that Frederick Woods was a cab driver in a coronial inquest (Mercury, 16/10/1888, p2).

In 1894, occupational health and safety began to be focus on safe lifting practices (Launceston Examiner, 16/02/1894).

In 1899, Volunteer long-service medals were granted to Launceston Artillery Ambulance-Sergeants Thomas Carr and Alma Mills (The Mercury 29/08/1899)

In 1906, the Ambulance Corps marched in a parade headed by the band of the Derwent Regiment (Examiner, 17/09/1906). In 1915, the Hobart municipal tramways formed a class for instruction in first aid and ambulance work, with members of the Hobart ambulance division rendering valuable assistance (Daily Post, 7/05/1915).

St John Ambulance

St John Ambulance formed Ambulance brigades in Launceston (31/03/1887) which was affiliated with the Victorian Association, Deloraine (1887), Scottsdale (1890), Ulverstone (1892), Hobart (1890), Zeehan (1902) (missed a few)... Evandale (1911),

The Hobart branch of St John Ambulance Association was resuscitated in 1928 (Mercury, 5/10/1928, p.6) and at the Investiture at Government House in 1938, Dr Gregory Sprott was made a Knight in the British Realm of the Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem. His citation indicated that through his efforts the Association had formed in Hobart in 1909 and then revived in 1928. It was also on his initiative that the Southern Tasmanian Ambulance Transport Service had been formed. A further recipient at the same awards, Mr Colvin had been associated with the first St John Ambulance Brigade in Hobart in 1917 (The Mercury, 17/02/1938, p.14).

In 1912, several newspapers reported that the King had reviewed 15,000 members of the St John Ambulance Corps at Windsor. The corps included a number of overseas representatives (Examiner, 25/06/1912) and in Hobart, calls to establish a St John Ambulance in Hobart as a solution to the lack of a City Ambulance were being made (Daily Post, 18/09/1912).

Hon. J W Evans, G.M.G., M.H.A. as president of the St John Ambulance Association, Tasmanian Centre, was presented with a medal for long and meritorious 19 years of service including London during the Queens Jubilee and the King's Coronation (Mercury, 17/10/1912).

In 1915, St John Ambulance brigade returned to providing first aid at the Regatta after a few years absence from that event (Mercury, 3/02/1915). In May 1915, the Mercury encouraged citizens to join the St John Ambulance Association as Hobart had up until recently at that point been without a civil organisation competent to render first aid and give skilled assistance in the transport of the injured or wounded and that had driven the formation of the divisional brigade (Mercury, 25/11/1915).

YWCA – Young Womens Christian Association

In 1912, advertisements to attend either Ambulance or dressmaking classes were appearing in the papers (Mercury, 11/04/1912) and that these classes would commence around 5 July 1912 (Mercury, 27/06/1912).

Tasmanian Ambulance Brigade

The World newspaper was in Hobart between 1918-1924. In 1923, it was unanimously decided that an Ambulance Transport Brigade should be formed in Hobart and that the City Council would subsidise the venture to the extent of £250 for a start. The annual costs estimate for the first year were £3520 and £810 per annum recurring expenses (World, 6/06/1923, p.12). At this time there was only one ambulance and a concern was raised that if two calls were made simultaneously present conditions might result in a loss of life (World, 6/06/1923, p.12). In September 1923, this brigade was being referred to as the Tasmanian Ambulance and Transport Brigade (Mercury, 12/09/1923, p.2), Kingborough declined to use this service but Clarence decided to pay for the ambulance as they used it (The Mercury, 13/09/1923, p.2). There was dissatisfaction at the service being provided and in Sept 1923 the Tasmanian Ambulance Transport Brigade was formed and the Council was asked to hand over their ambulance to their care. They also requested that the old firebell station in Bathurst Street (just above Murray Street) be given to the brigade as a headquarters for the ambulance. The City Council was still to control the infectious diseases ambulance for cases for Vacluse Hospital. (World, 25/09/1923, p.2). In 1924 the Tasmanian Ambulance and Transport brigade agrees to take over the transport of infectious patients as well (The Mercury, 25/11/1924, p.9).

In 1928, Launceston was reported as having “facilities of a kind, but they were nothing to boast about”. It also had two antiquated ambulances (one for infectious diseases only) and no properly trained bearers (Daily Telegraph, 6/01/1928, p4).

In 1940, the difficulty in getting patients into the ambulance because the driver had no help was raised and it was pointed out that it would be costly to have two men on an ambulance at once (The Mercury, 24/09/1940, p.5)

In 1943, a volunteer ambulance service was provided in Glenorchy to address the plight of mothers wishing to reach a maternity hospital. This service was backed by the Glenorchy Council. (Mercury, 30/07/1945, p13) and in 1947, New Norfolk Council was raising the prospect of obtaining volunteer drivers to operate an ambulance service (Mercury 4/09/1947, p6). In 1948, drivers of the Huon ambulance were to be paid £1 a month during their roster periods. Driving the ambulance at weekend and late night cases were the responsibility of drivers who had volunteered (Mercury, 12/05/1948, p6). A tribute was paid in 1950 to Rev D. W. Bailey who had for seven years prior been one of the original volunteer drivers of the Huon Ambulance (Mercury, 23/12/1950, p7).

February, 1959 St. John Ambulance had taken over the operation of the Hobart Ambulance Service and formed the St John Ambulance Transport Division. 1961 Ambulance Services in Burnie, Launceston, Devonport and several country centres were now operating under St John Ambulance.

In 1970, Ambulance Services taken over by Tasmanian Government after St John Ambulance withdrew from this service provision across the State.

1982, the Ambulance Act was introduced.

Info to be investigated.....

The first dedicated ambulance was recognised by the Chief Secretary Department Hobart for the Tasmanian Government on the 15 June 1910 This was built after a public subscription. At that point Hobart had a private horse drawn vehicle that was used to transport patients although the driver was not a Hospital employee. The vehicle was build by pane body works in Launceston and was later converted to a dodge? Chassis It ran out of the Launceston Fire Station. Previous transport of patients was by a litter on bike wheels and also a cab service that was in South Launceston also transported patients to the Launceston Hospital.

It might be worth a call to the History Room at Swansea ... they had an essentially private ambulance to which locals paid an annual subscription until the early 1990s ... in the back of my mind is the idea that that it's origins were quite early but the curator (

Moe Ferris

) will either know herself or be able to point you in the right direction.

Hi Pam, do you have Ian Howie-Willis' "A Century for Australia"? It has a lot of good Tasmanian ambulance detail in it but I can't find my copy at present. (Damian Bester)

The history of ambulance services in Tasmania

Ambulance Services developed slowly in Tasmania. In the nineteenth century people depended on family and friends taking them to a doctor or hospital, and from 1887 St John Ambulance provided first-aid treatment in major towns.

Large hospitals provided their own ambulance services: in 1887 the Launceston General Hospital possessed an ambulance wagon, and in 1909 '*a handsome and efficient horse ambulance*'. The need for ambulances grew with the appearance of motor vehicles, which could take people to hospital faster than horses, but which at first few individuals owned. Some municipal councils began to provide ambulance services, occasionally combined with a fire brigade, but action was haphazard.

In 1923, a public meeting in Hobart asked that the government run an ambulance service, and the Southern Tasmania Ambulance Board was set up, with municipal councils and the government paying subsidies. In the 1950s Glenorchy and the Royal Hobart Hospital set up their own ambulance systems, and in 1959 St John Ambulance took over services in major towns. This proved too large a task for a volunteer organisation, and in 1970 it was taken over by the government, which has run the ambulance service since. Private services were set up in various areas in 1999.

In 1982, Ambulance Tasmania (formerly known as Tasmanian Ambulance Service, was established by the Ambulance Services Act 1982 and operates within the Department of Health.

Acknowledgement to: [Ambulance Services - Concept - Companion to Tasmanian History \(utas.edu.au\)](http://utas.edu.au)